

# STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOL. 40

No. 469

JANUARY 1986

A SPECIAL "DOLLY JOBLING" NUMBER!

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## The School Friend

Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday



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# STORY PAPER

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# COLLECTORS' DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Founded in 1941 by  
W. H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by  
HERBERT LECKENBY

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## T. B. REED & THE B.O.P.

In our "Postman Called" pages this month a reader is seeking information concerning the early days of the Boys' Own Paper and the Talbot Baines Reed stories which featured therein. I think I cannot do better than devote a space here to answering the questions.

The B.O.P. was born early in 1879, and on the first page of the very first issue there was an article entitled "My First Football Match" by an Old Boy. The author was Reed. There followed a series of athletic sketches as the months passed, and Adams of Parkhurst is said to have become a very living personality to readers of the magazine. Later these sketches were published in a hard cover

book, "Parkhurst Boys", and this figures on a good many bookshelves, including my own.

In the August of 1879 came Reed's first school tale, in two chapters, entitled "The Troubles of a Dawdler". This, along with other "shorts" by Reed, can be obtained today under the title "A Book of Short Stories".

It was the skill shown in these short stories and sketches that prompted the editor of the B.O.P. to suggest to Reed that he should try his hand at something more ambitious. The result was "The Adventures of a Three-Guinea Watch" which started as a serial in the B.O.P. in 1880. A great tale, worth buying in hard-back today.

"The Fifth Form at St. Dominic's" appeared in 1881, over a hundred years ago, to be immediately followed by the lovely tale "My Friend Smith", a story of School and Business Life.

"The Willoughby Captains" came next in 1883-4, and then "Reginald Cruden", a tale of City Life in 1885. "A Dog with a Bad Name" started the B.O.P.'s ninth volume in 1885, and a year later came "The Master of the Shell", a public school story, and one which I have always found a bit tame.

A historical novel "Sir Ludar" followed in 1890 - I have all Reed's books in my Library but have never read this one. 1891 brought "The Cock House at Fellsgarth", on which Hamilton's St. Jim's framework seems to have been built, and then, in 1892 came the final serial "Tom, Dick, and Harry", a sparkling tale of its type.

Reed died too prematurely, after a long and painful illness, while still only on the verge of early middle life. He was not much over 40.

I have one story in my complete Reed collection which is not mentioned here in connection with the Boys' Own Paper. That one is "Follow My Leader". There is something of a mystery about it for me, for I cannot trace it to the B.O.P. Yet, if it did not appear there, then where did it come from? My own volume of the book was published by Cassell, somewhere about 1914 it appears, but there is nothing to indicate its origin.

Was it a novel which Reed wrote especially for the hard cover market? - If so he was making a radical departure from his normal custom. Has any reader of C.D. ever come across it in ancient copies of the B.O.P.? It's a fascinating little problem.

### BESSIE AGAIN

Returning to this month's "Postman Called" column, I find that

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Mr. Roger Jenkins enquires, pertinently enough, what I thought of Hamilton's post-war "Bessie Bunter of Cliff House School". I have the book in my vast Hamilton collection, of course, though it is many, many years since I read it. I have an idea that this told largely of the earlier Bessie, and I recall with certainty that the author made Miss Bellew the Fourth Form mistress, probably being ignorant of the fact that Miss Bellew had married a Mr. Hartley and retired from school life long ago.

Also, he did not allow any restriction on the introduction of Greyfriars to bother him, for there are several chapters dealing with Greyfriars, Greyfriars boys, and Greyfriars masters.

Roger mentions the belief that Hamilton got an agreement, some 25 years earlier, that Greyfriars should not be mentioned in the School Friend stories. I wonder whether there is any solid evidence that Hamilton was responsible for the ban. One assumes that he would have had no definite "right" to impose such a restriction, and it seems a little pointless when many other writers were using his schools and characters in "sub" tales. More likely, I would think that it was an editorial decision, imposed with the idea that over-exposure of Greyfriars might lessen the impact of the Magnet.

Can the Cliff House fans tell us whether Marjorie's brother, Peter, was ever mentioned in the School Friend yarns - was there ever a holiday series set in the Hazeldene home? And did Bessie ever mention her brothers in the School Friend tales about her?

Roger commented recently that two public schools - Greyfriars and Highcliffe in the same vicinity - was an unlikely factor. And, as I commented last month, when a writer created yet another public school in the same vicinity, it just didn't make sense.

### THE NEW YEAR

I wish all my loyal readers a very happy, peaceful, and prosperous New Year. The best is yet to come. May 1986 be your very best year yet.

### THE EDITOR

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WANTED: Cassell/Skilton Bunters; Newnes' William in dust wrappers; also books by E. Brent-Dyer, A. Brazil, E. J. Oxenham, and Howard Baker Magnet Volumes. COLIN CREWE, 12b Westwood Road, Canvey Island, Essex. Telephone No. 0268-693735.

# Danny's Diary



## JANUARY 1936

The King is dead. It seems too awful to be true. Only a few weeks ago we were listening to his Christmas Broadcast to his People from Sandringham. He was the first monarch to speak to his subjects through the medium of wireless. His first broadcast was on Christmas Day 1932, just over 3 years ago. And his last broadcast was three weeks ago.

In the middle of January this year it was announced that the King had a cold, with some fever. At first the illness was not regarded as serious. And at 9.25 p.m. on the evening of January 20th, we were told that "The King's life is moving peacefully towards its close."

A week later came the funeral services, with dignitaries present from all over the world.

Even now I can hardly believe it. All my life there has been King George the Fifth. Now he is gone, and we have started out on the reign of King Edward the Eighth.

A big change has come over Modern Boy with the return of Ken King of the Islands and Biggles. The new South Seas stories are excellent. The opening tale is "South Seas Scallywag". Ray Paget is the scallywag. He is the bad boy of the family, sent out to the South Seas in the hope that Ken King may be able to tame him and make a man of him.

Then came "Ken King's Runaway". The scallywag has only one

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wish - to get away from Ken King and the "Dawn". He is ready to face hungry sharks in his determination to escape.

Next comes "Cannibals of Kua". The scallywag has laughed at Ken's warnings, but he stops laughing when the cannibals gather him in for their cooking-pots. Final of the month is "Head-Hunters' Lair". Ken goes after the bad lad, and it looks as though Ken may join his runaway deckhand in the cannibals' larder. I can't wait for next week. A grand new series,

Biggles is back in a new serial "The Gold Flyers". There is also a new serial "Son of a Spy" by Richard Essex. And there is a Geo. E. Rochester series about Jimmy Dawes who is out to become Middle-weight boxing Champion of England.

There has been a nasty accident on the Great Western Railway, always noted for its fine safety record. It happened in the early hours of the morning, before daylight, in the middle of January. The Paddington-Penzance express was rushing west - the Penzance sleeper, it is called. Ahead of it was a goods train of 53 trucks. These were turned into a siding near Shrivenham, and when the goods train was safely out of the way, the signalman at Shrivenham set his signals to all clear for the Penzance express. But the signalmen had not seen the red light at the back of the goods train as it went into the siding, and what he did not know was that half a dozen trucks had broken away from the goods train and had been left behind on the main line.

The Penzance express, running under clear signals, crashed into the stray trucks and was wrecked. Two people were killed, and ten have been seriously injured.

I wonder where Shrivenham is. I've never heard of it till now. Somewhere near Swindon, I think.

There is rather a surprising book in the year's first editions of the Boys' Friend Library. This is entitled "The Fakir's Secret". It is a detective story about Nelson Lee and Nipper. The surprising thing is that it is by a man named A. Cartwright. One always thinks of E. S. Brooks in connection with Nelson Lee, though I know that Maxwell Scott wrote a lot of stories about Lee and Nipper as detectives. But I have never heard of Cartwright before. It is quite a good tale, mainly about Eastern cunning. Another tale this month in the B.F.L. is "Baldy of the Camel Corps", about Baldy's Angels, by Capt. Robert Hawke. But I did not buy this one, as I don't think I would care for it.

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Two stunning tales in the Schoolboys' Own Library. Really tip-top. The Greyfriars tale is "The Rebel of the Remove", with Harry Wharton in the unusual role of carrying on a bitter feud with his form-master. The other tale, also, is grand - a St. Jim's one entitled "The Stick-at-Nothing Schoolboy". It continues the lovely series about Cardew as Junior Captain of St. Jim's, and his feud with Tom Merry.

Another gorgeous Pierre Quiroule novel in the S.B.L. This one is "The Mystery of the Albanian Avenger". My Dad read it, too, and even he admits that it is a wonderful story, worthy of stiff covers.

The year's first story in the S.B.L. is "The Case of the Night Club Queen" by John G. Brandon. All about the underworld of London. The editor of the S.B.L. says that Brandon is the readers' Top Favourite among Blake writers. Not with me, he isn't!

"Murder on the Boat Express" by Rex Hardinge starts on a London express train roaring through the countryside. An unusual tale is "Blind Man's Secret" by Coutts Brisbane. A man from Africa has a secret that means fabulous wealth, but it depends on his abnormally good eyesight. And he suddenly goes blind as the result of a head wound. Dr. Ferraro comes to the rescue. He means to restore the man's sight - and to steal his secret.

In real life a man named Max Kassell has been murdered. I don't know much about it, but I think he may have been a London gangster.

Another lovely month of glorious Gems. First St. Jim's tale is "The Boy with Big Ideas" (clumsy title!). He is a new boy named Guy Vavasour, who is a fearful snob swanking about his blue-blooded ancestors. But pride goes before a fall. He is really Peter Smith whose father kept a pub, the Vavasour Arms, and made money and changed his name. However, Vavasour reforms, the chums rally round him, and he stays on at St. Jim's. I wonder why.

Next came "The Runaway". Arthur Augustus punched a form-master, and then ran away from school and had some startling adventures. Good fast-moving tale. Then "Fire Fighters of St. Jim's", with the School House and New House forming rival fire brigades. But they join forces when there is a big fire at the nearby Grammar School. Lovely yarn on unusual lines. Finally, one of the loveliest Gems ever: "Getting Even with Ratty". Great school tale of school-boy fun and japes.

The Rookwood series has continued all the month, with the

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usurper new character, Dudley Vane, playing a big - too big - part in all the tales. First tale is "From Foe to Friend", with Jimmy Silver and Co. still on holiday, and the newcomer Dudley Vane prominent. Lovell and Vane become enemies, but Vane saves Lovell's life. He would!

Next is "Sacked from the School". There has been a mystery man at work in the school, and on the first day of term, Mornington is adjudged to be that mystery man and is expelled. Next "The Rebel of the Fourth" with Dudley Vane giving the bullying Carthew a licking - but someone unknown lays the bully clean out. Final Rookwood of the month is "The Suspected Study". Can a member of Jimmy Silver and Co. be the mysterious ragger? It almost looks like it.

They are giving away sticky-back pictures every week with the Gem just now. All right so long as the newsagent's shop isn't at all damp.

Some great New Year programmes in the local cinemas. A full-length Laurel & Hardy film is "Bonnie Scotland" which has a lot of amusing moments, though I think their 2-reelers are better value for money.

I found Richard Tauber in "Hearts' Desire" a bit heavy-going, I'm not all that keen on operatic stuff. I'd rather have Laurel & Hardy. A nice little film was Jackie Cooper in "Dinky". A giant musical with masses of stars was "The Big Broadcast of 1936". The story is about a kidnapped radio heart-throb, though the story is really a sideline to all the different acts.

A very good drama was Paul Muni in "Black Fury" about a coalminer, the unions, and corruption. Tense and exciting story. Then a spectacular story about a cruise liner being taken over by pirates is "China Seas" which has a huge cast including Clark Gable, Jean Harlow, Wallace Berry and lots more. A great film.

A nice British film is Anna Neagle in "Peg of Old Drury". Another British film was "The Silent Passenger" starring John Loder. A fantastic but quite good film is "She" starring Randolph Scott and Nigel Bruce. It's from a Rider Haggard novel in which an ancient queen will live for ever - unless she falls in love.

As always, the gorgeous Magnet is well up to standard this month. January opened with the last story of the Christmas holiday series set in Polpelly in Cornwall. Vernon-Smith is the host and Harry Wharton & Co. - plus Bunter, are his guests. They are hunt-

ing for lost doubloons worth a fortune. But the ruthless Italian, Count Zero, is their rival in seeking the hidden fortune at Polpelly. Finally, with the inevitable help of Bunter, the schoolboys find the fortune. Not quite the best of Magnet Christmases, maybe, but pretty good.

Next week, back at Greyfriars, we have "Bunter's Bid for a Fortune". He goes in for the football pools, and wins a dividend - a shilling. He's lucky. Most people who enter the pools never win a sausage. This story is that rare bird, these days - a story that is complete in the one week.

Then the start of a grand new school series with "The Boy who Wouldn't Make Friends". He is Eric Wilmot, the nephew of Mr. Hacker. He didn't want to come to Greyfriars, and it soon becomes evident that he was expelled from his previous school, Topham. Final of the month is "The Outsider". Wilmot seems bent on making himself unpopular with everyone, and his uncle Hacker keeps putting a word and a spoke in for the new boy. I find it a very good series so far.

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#### NOTES ON THIS MONTH'S "DANNY'S DIARY"

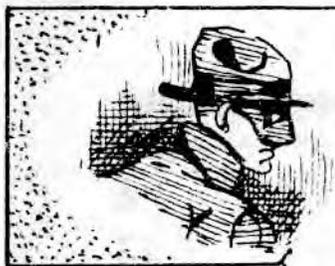
The S.B.L. Pierre Quiroule novel "The Mystery of the Albanian Avenger" had been "The Adventure of the Albanian Avenger" of the early summer of 1925 in the S.B.L.

Danny is surely right. It seemed a curious thing to publish in the B.F.L. a Nelson Lee and Nipper detective story so soon after the end of the St. Frank's stories. According to Brian Doyle's Who's Who of Boys' writers, A. Cartwright was a non-de-plume of editor Twyman. One wonders whether the story was new in 1936, or whether it was a reprint from the early days. Any Lee fans know?

The 1935 Gem story "The Boy with Big Ideas" had been "Ashamed of His Name" early in 1913. It was possibly the Gem's only story featuring an upstart, though they figured fairly often at Greyfriars and Rookwood. Vavasour was left around as dead wood, and was never starred again.

"The Runaway" had been "D'Arcy's Dodge" a month or so later in 1913. "Fire-Fighters of St. Jim's" had been "The Schoolboy Fire-Fighters" the following week in 1913. "Getting Even With Ratty" had been a lovely and favourite blue Gem under the far superior title "The Scamps of the School" in mid-summer 1913.

A point we forgot to mention last month. A Shields cover in the Polpelly series - the last story of 1935 - had been a complete copy, down to the last detail, of an Arthur Clarke cover in an early Red Magnet Christmas Number. Years ago, in a C.D. Annual, we reproduced both covers side by side - one by Clarke and the other by Shields, with almost identical pictures. Obviously, Shields had carefully copied the Clarke picture.



## BLAKIANA



### PIERRE QUIROULE

from W. O. G. Lofts

I am practically certain that 'Pierre Quiroule' never read the 'Magnet' or 'Gem' as a youth, as I can well remember asking him about his boyhood reading. He attended a rather strict grey-coat school at Greenwich Village - where the reading of boys' papers was frowned upon. They were instructed from a very early age to read the classical hard-cover boys' stories 'Tom Brown's School-days', 'Treasure Island' - and so on. He was 15 when the 'Gem' came out, and had by then long put boys literature behind him, and only read adult literature. My own impression was that he did not care much for many of the boys' writers at Amalgamated Press, when in his opinion they did not know how to make use of words. In fact his own writing was really far superior than the market he was writing for, and was instructed by the controlling editor, William H. Back, to lower his standards a bit.

### SEXTON BLAKE IN THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY by C. H. Churchill

To me it is a little surprising that as E. S. Brooks wrote many Sexton Blake stories in the Union Jack which included Nelson Lee and Nipper, some fourteen in all, he very rarely included Sexton Blake and Tinker in his tales in the Nelson Lee Library. Admitted the Union Jack stories were wholly detective ones while those in the Nelson Lee Library were principally school stories with only a small detective interest, to me it seems a pity.

The first time we read of the Baker Street pair in the Lee was in No. 226 old small series dated 4/10/19 "The Mystery of Reed's Wharf", when Blake and Tinker joined Nipper in a chase by police launch down the Thames. They were after a barge which they suspected contained Nelson Lee and Tregellis West, imprisoned in packing cases. This was quite a good episode.

# THE SEXTON BLAKE

No. 303

Library 4<sup>00</sup>

The Leading Detective  
Story-Magazine.



## The Lost Expedition

A fascinating tale of mystery and adventure in British Guiana, introducing **GRANITE GRANT** and **MOLLE JULIE**.

31/10-28

The next time was soon afterwards in old series No. 236 dated 13/12/19 "Exit the Tyrant". This time Tinker turned up at St. Frank's on a visit, just in time to participate in the final episode of Mr. Howard Martin, the bullying Headmaster series.

In the next story "Dorrie's Christmas Party" No. 237 old series dated 20/12/19 it was stated that Sexton Blake and Tinker might be joining the party later but they never did arrive, more is the pity.

Then came a gap until No. 311 old series 21/5/21, "The Hounds of the Tagossa". This was the final story of the Mordanian series, and in this story Lee borrowed Pedro to help track down Ivan Grezzi the terrorist. Blake, however, did not appear. In a recent article of mine about Nelson Lee's dog, Boz, I pointed out that it was very strange for Lee to have to borrow Pedro when he had a good tracker dog of his own.

As far as I know, this is the total sum of the appearance of the Baker Street pair in the Nelson Lee stories in the Lee library written by E. S. Brooks. In the autumn of 1925, however, two Sexton Blake serials appeared. "The City of Masks" by Sidney Drew lasted from No. 537 old series until No. 552 and "The Calcroft Case" also by Sidney Drew from old series 557 to 567.

### DEATH OF 'MARTIN THOMAS'

Information has just reached me from Mr. W. Howard Baker of the death of 'Martin Thomas' the new look Sexton Blake author at the age of 72. He lived and I believe was born at Bristol. His real name was Thomas Martin, his pen-name reversed, and was a subscriber and contributor to the Collectors' Digest in the early days, being a friend of Herbert Leckenby the first editor. An expert on all aspects to Sexton Blake, he wrote many fine articles on the subject. I met him once or twice down Fleet Street in the sixties, and found him extremely knowledgeable on the old Blake as well as the new. His own writing career was mainly in paperbacks under various names, his main theme being the supernatural, and stories with a weird or ghostly tone. My last contact with him was in connection with a parody of Sherlock Holmes in a paper he edited in the late forties.

W. O. G. LOFTS

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A LETTER FROM ST. FRANK'S

By An Old Boy

It is strange how sometimes a small incident can spark off a chain of events from the past in one's mind.

When Hal Brewster, of the River House, visited Nipper about a football fixture, Hal happened to mention how a former River House junior had created a sensation following his expulsion. That junior was a Eustace Grell, a hulking youth of sixteen with shifty eyes, a mottled face and a receding chin, as Hal described him.

Expelled for theft, Grell's father sought to have his son reinstated on a technical point probably having in mind a similar event where a schoolboy had been accused of stealing a postal order and was later found to be innocent.

But what did transpire in Grell's case was that the junior's headmaster, or Principal to give him his official title, Dr. Molyneux Hogge, was not really entitled to sack the boy: such a privilege, it was found, was not in his terms of reference. Expulsions were always referred to the Governing Body to decide whether a pupil was to be expelled although Dr. Hogge's guidance was general adopted. In the end Grell was sacked, but it did highlight Dr. Hogge's invidious position of not being able to dismiss a junior without referring the matter to the Governing Body. Hal Brewster says the omission in the Head's contract has now been rectified.

Perhaps the head at St. Frank's should look up his terms of reference!

But it was mention of Grell that took me back to the time when Jack Mason - later to become Jack Grey - arrived at St. Frank's that started a chain of thought to include Alf. Brent. Both these juniors came to St. Frank's under another name. But whereas Brent came as Alf. Huggins to prove a point, Jack Grey arrived

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fully believing he was Jack Mason. The history of both these juniors' advent at St. Frank's makes very interesting reading.

Jack Grey's coming was to lead to an African adventure in search of treasure. Alf. Brent came to St. Frank's in the guise of a Cockney from Hoxton and whose 'father' was a bricklayer. But where the two incidents differ is that Jack 'Mason's' 'father' was a real Cockney; while Alf. Huggins' impersonation of a London Cockney failed although many of the juniors were not aware of this.

It isn't easy to imitate the London Cockney as witness the peurile attempts by film makers and stage entrepreneurs. Records show that Alf 'Huggins' did stay with his supposed father at Hoxton to get 'atmosphere' but Alf. was sadly tutored. I think it was Nipper who easily saw through the disguise, but probably said nothing. Later Alf. Huggins turned out to be the son of Sir John Brent, who is on the Board of Governors. His son wanted to prove that he wouldn't be accepted at St. Frank's if he came as the son of what is euphemistically referred to as the Lower Classes. Alf. did have a torrid time with certain juniors, but he proved his point in the end.

Since those early days, times have changed. It is debatable whether for the better. But I must say the old times did offer more adventures and expeditions than now. St. Frank's hasn't changed in itself, but once you leave it and enter that other world that begins and extends from its environs, you feel you want to go back, to return to a lost horizon that is receding all the time; an horizon we shall never see again.

Jack 'Mason' was really the son of Sir Crawford Grey, but in a dreadful train accident in which Jack's parents had been travelling Jack's mother was killed and his father believed Jack had perished. But the baby had been rescued and Jack had been brought up by a stranger whose name was Mason and who was the sister of Grell. So Jack was led to think he was the nephew of Simon Grell.

A locket was involved in the affair that proved Jack's identity although only half the locket was in Jack's possession.

A very involved incident in Jack Grey's early life turned out to be rewarding. And although he really was Christened as Norman Grey he is still known as Jack today.

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#### A HIGHLIGHT OF THE LEE

by R. J. Godsave

In November 1925, a period when the Nelson Lee Library was riding on the crest of success, the Monster Library was born. This

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proved to be a truly remarkable publication over which much care and thought had been given. With an extremely well drawn three colour cover with an inside drawing by J. H. Valda and the size being approximately  $10\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $6\frac{3}{4}$ ", it made a handsome volume which was published around the 20th of the month and priced 1/-d. Undoubtedly it was wonderful value, although in those days 1/-d. was quite a lot of money. Altogether 19 volumes of the Monster Library were published, each consisting of a reprint of a series of the Nelson Lee Library. These reprints went back mid-June 1918 commencing with 158 o.s. Captain Burton's Quest.

Generally, a series of the Nelson Lee consisted of eight weekly issues, but occasionally a series was composed of ten Lees. Such was the case of the 'Hunter the Hun' series, which had it consisted of eight would probably have been the first series to be printed in the Monster. It is not easy to cut down from ten to eight and retain the continuity, which in the case of the Hunter series was not possible. On the other hand such a reduction could be made quite easily in the Singleton series as two of the Lees were more or less devoted to Singleton's adventures in London, and their absence made no difference to the continuity of the story. The same could be said of the Smale Foxe series which mainly centred on Ernest Lawrence, the College House boxer.

No. 158 o.s. Captain Burton's Quest was the forerunner of the famous Summer holidays on board Lord Dorriemore's yacht in the Nelson Lees to come. If one was fortunate to possess a complete run of Lees, or a complete run of the St. Frank's stories from o.s. 112 which was the first Nelson Lee to introduce St. Frank's, then one was acquainted with all the characters which had appeared. To many of the Lee readers in 1925 the Lees of the past years were a closed book as back numbers at that time were difficult to obtain. A certain amount of confusion could exist if one possessed at a later date the much treasured No. 112 'Nipper at St. Frank's' and then found that No. 113 was a Circle of Terror story 'The abduction of Lady Marjorie'. The alternating between detective and school stories was an editorial method of trying to find out if school stories would be popular enough for the Nelson Lee to become solely a school story with a detective element or continue to be a complete detective story. No doubt, competition with the Sexton Blake Library had some say in the matter. As the alternating detective stories were soon dropped it was obvious the St. Frank's stories with the detective element had won.

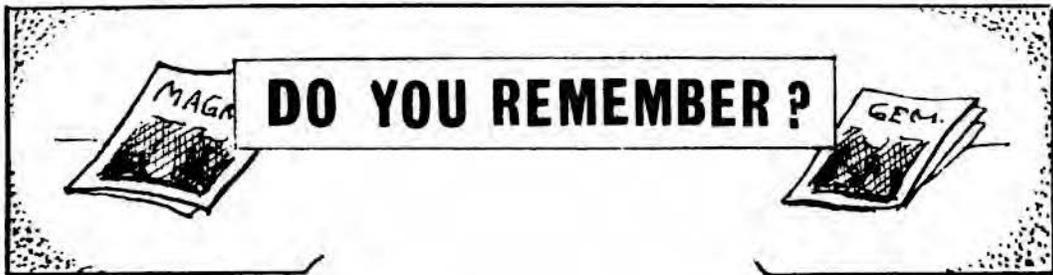
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It must be remembered that in the early 1920's radio was in its infancy and television was unknown. In the absence of any distraction of this nature the boys' and girls' papers become part of the average youngster's life. Out of, and sometimes in, school hours, exchanges of papers were the order of the day. I sometimes wonder how the mint condition of some of the bound volumes owned by collectors today have survived all those years. To my knowledge the majority of papers were creased in order to fit various pockets in order to hide them from teachers, and in some cases parents.

The Monster reprints cut out all the irrelevant matter such as the brief resume of what happened the previous week to ensure a complete story. Altogether nearly 200 weekly Nelson Lees starting at No. 158 o.s. and ending with 348 o.s. It has always been a source of regret to me that the Monster did not last two or three months longer when we, no doubt would have had the Reginald Pitt series in which he played for the Bannington Town Football Club as 'Abdullah' in order to earn money to send to his parents who had been swindled out of their money and home by doubtful investments. I also wish that the Island Camp series in which the St. Frank's Cadet Corps was introduced. With Handforth as sergeant it was certain to have its livelier moments. Also in this series Archie Glenthorne was introduced, who was destined to become one of the leading lights of the St. Frank's boys.

'Rebels of the Remove' was the last series to appear in the Monster. This was, of course, the famous Communist School series. At the end of the story the reader was invited to purchase No. 54 of the Schoolboys' Own Library 'Buying the Remove' 4d. A story of Ralph Leslie Fullwood's efforts to wrest the captaincy of the Remove from Nipper. Such was the end of an idea and a wonderful set of volumes containing some of the best of E. S. Brooks writings. It could be said to be a bonus to the readers of the Nelson Lee at that time. Whether the price of 1/-d. was found to be difficult to raise by the youngster at that time, and that the circulation remained static is one of the probable causes of its end.

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 GIVE US A CLUE! - Where to find SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY books. If you are considering disposing of your collection or just a few S.B.L.'s (1st and 2nd series) please contact me. Very best prices offered for books in good condition. TERRY BEENHAM, 20 Longshots Close, Broomfield, Chelmsford, Essex, CMI 5DX, tel. no. 0245-44309 (evenings).



NO. 210 - MAGNETS 994-5 - ROGER QUELCH SERIES

by Roger M. Jenkins

Older readers tend to have a special liking for the adult characters, particularly the masters at Greyfriars. It would have been fascinating, for example, to have been given a whole Magnet devoted to the holiday adventures of Mr. Quelch, but of course the adult characters are of importance only in so far as they impinge upon the activities of the junior heroes of the stories. Consequently, Mr. Quelch's private life seems to have been almost a closed book, though we do know that he spent his holidays alone, and was pleased to receive an invitation to Wharton Lodge on more than one occasion. We are aware that he had a plump niece by the name of Cora, who appeared twice in the second decade of the century, but it was not until 1927 that we learned that he also had a nephew, Roger.

Roger Quelch was a pupil at High Coombe School in Devon, but his father was not satisfied with his scholastic progress, and it was arranged that Roger should attend Greyfriars for a trial period. Mr. Quelch was depicted with delightful irony as he discussed the matter with his nephew in his study:

Mr. Quelch knew what was good for a boy, better than the boy himself could possibly know. He was sure of that. Any disagreement on that point savoured of disrespect and frivolity of mind. Disrespect and frivolity were quite intolerable to Mr. Quelch.

What was mapped out for Roger was an entry for the Craven Latin Prize, with kind coaching from his uncle, with a long-term ambition of a scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford. Roger, though quite able, was not keen on work, and wanted to return to High Coombe where he was a pillar of strength in the football team.

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Thus was the stage set for conflict. As Roger said, "Uncles as form-masters are what some giddy novelist calls the Thing-too-Much". Perhaps it was surprising that Roger was acquainted with Saki.

The Magnets of the late 1920's contain some novel touches, such as the tea party in Mr. Quelch's study that ended in diaster. There was an amusing scene at Friardale Station, where the train went on to Lantham, not Courtfield as in later days. Finally there was the highly curious incident of Mr. Quelch being locked in his own study. With one exception (the time when Roger owned up to a misdeed) all the episodes were fresh and of absorbing interest. In the end, naturally enough, Roger had his way and returned to High Coombe in a neat pair of stories that might well have been extended to a much larger series in the 1930's.

It is only fair to note that Mr. Quelch was not just a figure of fun in this pair of stories. His frosty kindness was beautifully portrayed and even Roger recognised his uncle's sterling qualities. Although Roger was never featured again in the Magnet, he was referred to some time later when Uncle Henry kindly remembered his nephew's birthday. And who could fail to recall the remarkable letter Mr. Quelch began to write to Roger's father beginning "My Dear Brother"? What a formal family the Quelches must have been!

### POPULAR GIRLS AT CLIFF HOUSE SCHOOL - 1922

by Tommy Keen

Well, well, well! During the past few months I had toyed with the idea of writing an article for the C.D. Annual under the above heading, but finally dismissed the idea, thinking it might not be of too much interest.

Now, in the November issue of the C.D., Paul Galvin of Barnsley suggests an article on the very subject I had in mind. Yes, in 1922 from May to July, a series of absolutely delightful coloured cards were presented for ten consecutive weeks with the SCHOOL FRIEND. The pictures were by the celebrated Cliff House illustrator, G. M. Dodshon's and they were superb (although often Mr. Dodshon's illustrations were rather peculiar). The size of each card was approx. 2½" x 4".

For ten weeks, the Cliff House story featured the girl whose portrait was presented, and the 'Cliff House Weekly' was devoted entirely to the girl in question.

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These were the stories, in order of publication:

'Peggy Preston's Loyalty.' Peggy was the poor scholarship girl of the Fourth Form, the female equivalent of Mark Linley of Greyfriars.

'Clara Trevlyn's Test.' Not a favourite character of mine, and of course, initially introduced into the MAGNET by Frank Richards.

'Philippa Derwent's Pluck.' Philippa (usually known as Flap) was also a MAGNET character, first introduced by H. N. Pentelow in a serial in the GEM, 'The Twins from Tasmania'. Her brother Philip belonged to Highcliffe.

'Mabel Lynn's Masterstroke.' Mabel was the chief chum of Barbara Redfern (the Captain of the Fourth), and an actress of note. Rather like Wibley of Greyfriars, no disguise was too difficult for Mabs.

'Bessie Bunter's Task.' Billy's famous sister featured here, and shown in a most sympathetic light. Even the free portrait is most pleasant.

'Marjorie Hazeldene's Sacrifice.' Yes, the noble Marjorie, as she so often did in the MAGNET, suffered and suffered, but at least it had nothing to do with brother Peter.

'Barbara Redfern's Leadership.' Babs, the indomitable captain, leading her band of chums through dangerous adventures in Norway (for one week only).

'Dolly Jobling's Determination.' Dolly, the clumsy study mate of Marjorie and Clara features in this story (probably the dullest character of the ten). Dolly on very rare occasions cropped up in the MAGNET.

'Phyllis Howell's Chance.' My favourite Cliff House character, and first introduced by George R. Samways in 'School and Sport' in The Boys' Friend Library. Even in the MAGNET, she was much brighter than Marjorie and Clara.

'Augusta's Trust.' Augusta Anstruther-Browne, almost the female counterpart of Vernon-Smith, always alternating between good and evil. IN 1922 she was very good, and on very friendly terms with Peggy Preston, a girl whom at one time she despised.

Ten stories from the loveliest days of the SCHOOL FRIEND, before it diminished in size, and before Dodshon's illustration became a little bizarre, and on one of my rooms, I have, framed, a complete set of these charming pictures. Making them even more distinctive are the coloured backgrounds, three with red, three with yellow, two with green, and two with blue.

They are perfectly charming.

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## NEWS OF THE OLD BOYS BOOK CLUBS

### MIDLAND

10 members attended, which was better than expected on a bitterly cold night. We had a new member present, David Packwood, who proved to be a very fluent speaker and was warmly welcomed.

With both chairman and vice-chairman missing these days, it is difficult for your correspondent who takes the chair, especially as I am the oldest attending member, but the club must go on.

We spent some time arranging for our coming Christmas party. It promises to be quite an occasion.

Refreshments were provided by Joan Golen and Betty Hopton. Joan also paid for the tea and coffee, a very generous gesture.

I gave a general quiz of 15 questions which included a few on the source of Hamilton's quotations. Geoff Lardner and Ivan Webster tied with 14 correct answers. The prize was a Howard Baker reprint of a Red Magnet and Ivan generously insisted that Geoff should have the prize.

Final item was a game devised by Vin Loveday called Hamilton Families. It is amusing, but could go on endlessly so we had to fix a time limit.

We broke up at 9 o'clock, after a most entertaining evening.

Our Christmas Party is on 17th December, and members of all clubs will be made welcome. We promise you a good time.

JACK BELLFIELD (Correspondent)

### CAMBRIDGE O.B.B.C.

The Cambridge Club held it's Christmas meeting at the home of Vic Hearn on Sunday, 1st December. There was a very good attendance and the Club welcomed new members, Howard Corn and Paul Wilkins, as well as the guest speaker, George Sewell.

George Sewell gave an absorbing, and at times hilarious, talk

on book collecting. George passed round a number of special items for inspection. His talk was received with warm acclamation.

Bill Lofts talked about his visits to Fleetway House, and the editors and artists he had met; of waiting to see editors who had to avoid boys coming to fix up matches with Greyfriars! Or people wanting to consult Sexton Blake. He recalled a fine picture of a Christmas cover of "Rainbow" in the reception room, and how this "went missing" when the A.P. moved from Fleetway House! He also recalled being asked to write a story about Dickens' "Tiny Tim". The Editor wrote back "hold that tiger". He gave his favourite authors as Charles Dickens, Charles Hamilton and Gwyn Evans.

After enjoying Vic's marvellous tea, we began a round of Christmas stories and experiences, most members contributing. Keith wound up the evening with a display of Christmas films. The meeting finally broke up with warm thanks to Vic and Mrs. Hearn for their hospitality, and a general exchange of Christmas greetings.

### LONDON

On arriving at the Liberal Hall, Ealing, for the Christmas Yuletide meeting, Roy Parsons handed members a copy of his Definition quiz which answers were to be given during the tea break. Winners were Ann Clarke, Mark Tala, Roger Jenkins and Eric Lawrence. Suitable prizes were provided and it was agreed that it was an enjoyable quiz.

The Mastermind contest was won by Brian Doyle and his chosen subject was The Golden Age of Broadcasting. Ann Clarke was runner up with questions asked on Sexton Blake.

Mary Cadogan mentioned the very fine Chums issue of Punch.

An excellent discourse by Bill Lofts on "Those wonderful Christmas Numbers". Bill mentioned the very artwork of a Christmas number, page one, the Rainbow, which was on a wall at the old Fleetway House and its eventual disappearance. A copy of a photograph of Gwyn Evans who wrote those wonderful stories with the Christmas theme, in the Union Jack, was passed round.

For the winners and runners up of the Mastermind competition, last year's winner, Don Webster had kindly donated prizes and thanks were accorded to Mark Jarvis for conducting the competition and to Duncan Harper for keeping the scores.

Bill Lofts' Nelson Lee quiz was won by Ann Clarke.

Finally, Roger Jenkins gave his customary Christmas meeting

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reading from Magnet number 1141.

Votes of thanks to Bill and Thelma for organising the successful meeting.

Next meeting at the Walthamstow venue on Sunday, 12th January, 1986, tea only provided so bring tuck.

BEN WHITER

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ROGER JENKINS (Havant): I was very interested in your remarks about Bessie Bunter. I had of course realised that her character had been softened considerably by later authors but this is the first time I have seen a reasoned justification for it. On the other hand, when I recall some of the Magnet episodes with the Bunters at home, Charles Hamilton's version of Bessie Bunter seems quite appropriate and she lasted longer than the version put out by other authors. What did you think of the Skilton hardback book "Bessie Bunter of Cliff House School"?

I understand that Charles Hamilton got an agreement that Greyfriars should not appear in any publication apart from the Magnet (and AP reprints). For that reason the later authors in the School Friend had to invent a new boys' school, which must have puzzled those readers who also saw that Bessie & Co. turned up at Greyfriars from time to time in the Magnet.

H. HEATH (Windsor): I would be pleased to learn the year when three of Talbot Baines Reed's school stories were published for the first time. The three stories are, "The Fifth Form at St. Dominic's", "The Cock House of Fellsgarth", and, "The Willoughby Captains."

"The Fifth Form at St. Dominic's" I understand was serialised very early in the life of the B.O.P. Could it be 100 years since

first publication? Presumably the other two stories were also serialised in the B.O.P.

HARRY PEMBERTON (Manchester): A great year for the C.D. A credit to all concerned. 12 issues, packed with varying articles on boys' and girls' papers. Worth every penny. A monthly tonic. I vote the Editor's pages and Danny's Diary the best features, but, to be fair, the rest come in a close second and in some cases equal. And what better way to close a great year than with the C.D. Annual.

WILLIAM LISTER (Blackpool): What a splendid Christmas cover on the December C.D.! It really brought the spirit of Christmas through the letter-box, and the other pictures and articles brought the festive season to any home.

J. F. BURRELL (Bristol): I was most interest in the article "Memories of Elizabeth Gertrude" in this month's Collectors' Digest. I think Charles Hamilton lost a great opportunity with Bunter as a character. I am sure he would have been a more popular character if he had left out the snobbery and what could sometimes be classed as blackmail. A nosey, greedy, lazy character with an air of injured innocence would have gone down much better. I have recently read the Ravenspur Grange series and it falls flat without Bunter and there are occasions when his nosiness could have done a lot towards the plot.

As far as the family is concerned although Mr. and Mrs. Bunter were both plump, they were different otherwise. Mr. B. gives one the impression of being intolerant but Mrs. is always ready to offer excuses for short comings.

Surely at least one of the children should have turned after her.

PETER PLOWMAN (Leeds): We have a saying hereabouts - "Good things often come in small packages". How well this describes the Collectors' Digest Annual, and not forgetting the slimmer monthly issues which precede it. This Christmas is my first as a C.D. reader and member, not least of the enjoyment of which will be reading the bumper bundle in the form of my initial C.D.A.

TED BALDOCK (Cambridge): The Annual volume arrived the other

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day - it plopped through the letter-box while I was yet in bed. No better or more pleasant start to the day can be imagined. Thus far I have only briefly glanced through the contents but it gives, even after such a cursory examination, every indication of being as good - if not better - than ever. The work and organisation involved in compiling such a volume must be daunting indeed, and I can fully understand and appreciate the sentiments expressed in your editorial - yet for all the work involved I am sure that at the end of the day you would have it no other way - for which the gods be praised. For we readers, and I am convinced for yourself and your colleagues, it must surely justify all the effort spent. It seems to get better from year to year. Perhaps it may be likened to good wine in that it improves with the passage of time. Also it is pleasant to think that we, as we grow older, become more appreciative also.

Fr. F. HERTZBERG (Hr. Bebington): I am interested that a correspondent in the current issue refers to only 11 stories in the "Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes". There were actually 12 in the Strand, but "our" story - "The Cardboard Box" - which took place partially in the Wirral and is, I think, the only time S. H. is recorded as visiting Cheshire, was omitted from the book publication because of some of its details, considered perhaps rather unsavoury; it did eventually appear in the later series "His Last Bow".

GEORGE SEWELL (Cambridge): I must congratulate you on another very successful C.D. Annual. I turned, of course, straight away to Mr. Buddle. Please, please, can a collection of Mr. Buddle stories be produced in the same format as the Annual? Then I could read and reread them at will, but when I only get two a year, it's asking a chap a bit much to wait so long. A chap hopes he waits not in vain!

RAY HOPKINS (Oadby): The contents of the Annual cover such a wide range of subjects, and all of great interest, it's going to be difficult to know where to begin. Lots of one's favourite O.B.B.C. writers again appear, testifying to lots of hard work and midnight oil. It is quite a thrill to look back and realise just how many Christmases have been made brighter by the C.D. Annual.

Going back to the November C.D. your Editorial sent me to Vol. 1 of the Captain to read "Acton's Feud", but P.G.W.'s memory

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had let him down. It doesn't appear in it. However, the title was so familiar I kept searching and finally found it in Vol. 3. You must read this story some time. Acton is a very good "bounder" type.

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JUST MY OPINION

by M. R. Thompson

Scroungers, that is what they are - a couple of scroungers. To whom am I referring? Potter and Greene, of course. Definitely scroungers.

Do they at any time back up Coker whenever he has thought up some silly scheme to get his own back on a master, or to rag one of the Remove studies? Do they stand by him whenever he decides to wallop one or more of the Remove? usually more. After all ten men against three is more of an even match than ten against one. Though they would end up with most bruises that are dished out by both sides. If a hamper turns up from Coker's Aunt, they consider Coker a real friend - shall we say a fair weather friend? They are willing to travel the world at his Aunties expense, but to spend their holiday with Coker and her at his Aunties home is more than their friendship will allow, and they disappear out of sight faster than the Invisible Man.

I decided to visit Coker in his study and to enlighten him as to the true facts. Scroungers, that's what they are, Scroungers.

I had noticed that a hamper had been delivered to Cokers study earlier in the day, but this has nothing to do with my calling to see Coker about P. and G. Purely goodness of heart on my part - I just do not like Scroungers.

I knocked on the study door, I could hear the sound of crockery being moved about and no doubt someone was laying the table for a hearty meal.

"Come in, you silly ass, the door is open."

It was more like the sound of thunder, than a human voice. I had hold of the door handle at this time and could feel the vibration.

I opened the door and walked in. This is quite on the cards when I come to a door. I open it and walk in.

Coker was at the table arranging things. Jam Tarts, fruit loaf and among other mouth watering comestibles, trifles, that were a sight for sore eyes. And at that moment my eyes were so wide open, I definitely had sore eyes.

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Coker looked around, stared and then said, "Who are you? What circus have you escaped from? You're the oddest looking monkey I've every seen". This did not go down at all well with me, having many times convinced myself, quite easily, that I am the rugged handsome type, an athletic figure and quite a picture to behold. I stood up to my full height of 5' 5", I was wearing very thick socks that afternoon.

"I did not come here to be insulted, but to give advice", I said.

"ADVICE", Coker shouted, "Give ME advice. If you were 60 years younger I would give you a good thrashing, advice".

I was getting nowhere. I was beginning to feel as old as Coker insinuated 76/77. I am nowhere near that age. I may look that age, but the extra years have been added on since entering the study and talking to Coker.

"Scroungers", I said, "that is what they are, Coker, Scroungers, Potter and Green are not true friends".

"You've come to tell me that" said Coker, "I know, I am quite capable of working things out for myself without an old dodderer interfering. I have already kicked them out of the study and told them not to come back. I don't need them. Whatever will happen to them now that they do not have my guidance and help is of no concern of mine. I agree with you, they are Scroungers."

I was still wondering whether or not to kick his shins, calling me an old dodderer. Then I thought, if Coker hits me with one of those sledgehammers, known to all and sundry as fists, I may not come out of the coma for quite a while, and my nose would be on the same level as the rest of my face.

I sat down at the table.

"Since you are here you may as well help me to get rid of this lot." Coker pulled up his chair and we started on the 'goodies'.

I must admit I cleared most of the food from the table, even the crumbs were not forgotten. I gave a sigh and relaxed for a few moments. I then got up from the table and went to the door.

"Where are YOU going, all the clearing up is to do and the washing and drying, then after that you can make the fire. Now that you are here you can 'fag' for me, otherwise I will forget your age and give you six strokes on the seat of your pants with this poker" - said Coker.

I opened the door quickly, darted through it and was away like a flash of light. Glancing back, still at the gallop, I saw Coker

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at his study door and shouting "You're a Scrounger, that's what you are, a Scrounger".

I was glad to get back to my Sitting Room. I will have to get a stomach harness. It is very uncomfortable running when one's Tummy is swinging from side to side.

I wonder when Coker will be receiving his next hamper? I'd better stick around, after all, I am a scrounger. If the food is right I don't mind the name. I've got no shame. I'm the only scrounger that I can stand.

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THE ROOKWOOD SPECIAL

by Ernest Holman

As 1985 gave way to 1986, I found myself thinking back - firstly, seventy years, then sixty years. For by the end of 1915, the new Rookwood stories had become an established part of the weekly Boys' Friend. Yet, one decade later, 1926 was to see the end of Rookwood in that publication. It is no secret that Boys' Friend itself disappeared soon afterwards.

What a host of memories are included in a period of just over eleven years, especially when it is realised how short were the stories each week. About a hundred cover-to-cover later Magnet stories probably equalled the entire Rookwood output.

Rookwood, however, believed in the 'dead but won't lie down' philosophy. Reprints of earlier stories had appeared - and were still so doing - in the Popular when Rookwood ceased its weekly yarns. By 1926, the Schoolboys' Own Library was a regular publication and for the remaining time up to the second world war, quite a lot of the Rookwood saga was reprinted in its pages.

Which brings me to my use of the word 'memories'. Not of the Boys' Friend - by the time I was a regular of the Companion Papers, Rookwood had almost faded. So memory to me is the Popular, and - above all - the S.O.L. I doubt if I am alone when I say that the reprinted stories of Jimmy Silver and Co. in the monthly Library recall my view of the Rookwood scene. Plus, of course, knowledge in place of memory as far as the Boys' Friend is concerned - an essential part of my education expertly provided by the Great Daniel!

It is not my intention to refer to stories or characters - they are quite capable of speaking for themselves. I have, however, some questions to ask. What is it that still appeals? How can one appreciate stories that are reprinted and, often, abridged - or even altered?

Why does a reader look forward to perusing yarns that appeared for only a short while and in short length?

I don't know any of the answers - but, with a toss of what hair remains, will say that the stories DO appeal, ARE appreciated and, most certainly, I always look forward to re-reading them.

There is SOMETHING about Rookwood. Whatever it is, it is undoubtedly of a very special nature!

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### AN EARLY AVERY

by Edward Baldock

'Ease makes children, it is difficulty that makes men." Quoting this dictum from Samuel Smiles, Uncle Bob commences his 'fatherly' talk to his young nephew Frank upon the advantages of going to a good school. 'A fellow must rough it a little to bring out the merit in him you know, and an English public school is just the place in which to refine the good mettle from the dross'. Uncle Bob had a fine turn of phrase upon occasion and he desired above all to stiffen the resolve of his young nephew Frank, who hitherto had led an extremely sheltered existence with his widowed mother and two adoring sisters, and such education he had so far received had been assimilated in this gentle company. Frank absorbed those pearls of wisdom from his uncle in a thoughtful silence. But, as my old Sergeant-Major was wont to say 'He'll do, there's good stuff in him'. He realised that if he were to scale any heights, however modest, he would do well to fall in with this plan arranged for him to go to a real school. The preliminaries are soon completed, the goodbyes said, a few furtive, yet not unmanly tears shed and Frank, together with sundry trunks, cases and, of no small importance, a 'tuck' or play box is en route to Stonefield School. Before him a new world of adventure, work and sporting endeavour.

Thus does Harold Avery's 'Frank's First Term' begin. Of course, in his innocence he falls into all the time-honoured snares and japes thoughtfully prepared by the old hands and perpetrated upon 'greenhorns' since time immemorial. However, quickly the 'good stuff' in him rises to the surface and he soon blends in with the general scene and makes a very fair impression in his first term. Thrust into the rough and tumble of Public School sport proves a somewhat traumatic experience for Frank whose previous acquaintance with cricket had been confined to playing with a soft ball with his two sisters on the lawn in front of the house, and

being bowled 'under-arms'. Thus his confrontation with the hard reality, vigorous bowling and much shouted advice to say nothing of a 'real ball', may be well imagined. Yet he acquitted himself not at all badly, having always in his mind one of Uncle Bob's last injunctions, namely: 'face up to it boy and you'll win'.

The episode of rescuing the flag by Frank and his friend the 'flycatcher' on the Head's birthday, is not without its symbolism although very briefly narrated. It is a telling little vignette in the progress of our hero into the full acceptance by the school at large. The motif running through the entire story like a theme tune is, to play the man and play the game - how terribly old-fashioned this appears today. Never however becoming too intrusive, it is present as an undercurrent to all the adventures and situations which befall our hero and his companions.

Avery began his writing career at a time when many of the established authors of school stories tended to wax over-sentimental with the result that much of their work has a cloying and maudlin effect which for many proved unacceptable. He, however, cannot be accused of aping, in any sense, this failing. Cowper, in his 'Conversation' tells us that: 'A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct: the language plain, and incidents well linked'. Few will disagree that Avery fulfils these precepts admirably and naturally. There is about his writing a freshness, a style just breaking free from the restrictive nineteenth century inhibitions and helping to establish the new and more robust standard which we have since come to admire and expect in the modern public school story.

Many echoes of Greyfriars are to be found in this tale of Stonefield - although I believe it precedes that ancient foundation as a school by a number of years. March, the captain of the school, has many of the characteristics of Wingate and is described as having 'hands hard and horny with cricketing corns' (obviously a man to be reckoned with). Mr. Kean, Frank's form-master, although possibly less crusty than Mr. Quelch; he appears not to have had the wearing daily experience of a Billy Bunter, obviously fully understands boys and the promptings which motivate their behaviour. John Lord, or as he is known to his friends 'Lord John' is a composite blend of Vernon Smith and Angel of the fourth, while Cobb, the school porter, is inflicted by many similar failings as is dear old Gosling of immortal memory, being addicted to becoming exceedingly congenial towards the end of term when possible 'tips' are in the offing.

'Frank's First Term' is in the great tradition of public school stories. In it one finds not a few echoes of Thomas Hughes' 'Tom Brown' and less admirable, in my view, a suggestion here and there of Dean Farrar. The odd blemish may be easily overlooked, the whole presents a first class tale of schol life in the late nineteenth century. Harold Avery's first serial 'The Triple Alliance' appeared in the Boys' Own Paper in 1896, a public school story, which was later published in book form and ran into several editions. In this particular sphere and time he had few equals. Certainly he has no recognisable counterparts today.

Avery belongs to that exciting era in the development of the public school story spanning roughly 1890-1920, when the field was open, fresh and ripe for inventiveness and experimentation - as Charles Hamilton once remarked, referring to his own youth: 'in those spacious days there was ample room for everyone'. Avery's style left nothing to be desired. Reading his work and that of his contemporaries today, one cannot but help realising how much we have lost in terms of literary excellence and story construction.

From all of which it may safely be assumed that I am a confirmed Avery enthusiast.

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FOR SALE: More Gems: 1155 to 1159; 1161 to 1164; 1167 to 1172; 1174 to 1180; 1146 to 1149; 1151; 1153-1154; mainly nice copies 80p each. Penny Populars: 147, 156, 158, 172 (year 1915) £1 each plus postage. 276 (year 1918) 80p plus postage. Gems 1071-1072, 830, 835 £1 each plus postage; Magnets: 1157, 1169, 1630 £1 each plus postage; Rough Magnets 904, 1459, 1520 at 25p each plus post. Rough Gems 853, 1160 25p each plus post; Rough Magnets 1108, 1448 at 25p each plus post. A.P. post-war publication "Best of Magnet & Gem" £1.25 plus postage; Post-war full set of Gold Hawk Tom Merry stories (11 copies) £6 the set plus postage. C.D. Annuals (brand-new condition) 1958 £3.50 plus postage; 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973 £2 each plus postage. Schoolboys' Own Libraries 338 "Price of Loyalty", 276 "Nippy from Nowhere", 359 "Shanghaied Schoolboys", 281, "St. Jim's in Revolt", 344 "The Saving of Selby" £1.50 each plus post. Howard Baker Books: "Rebel of St. Jim's", "D'Arcy the Runaway", "Boys of St. Jim's": £2.50 each plus postage. Post-war hardback "Secret of the Study" 25p. Postage extra on all items. Write ERIC FAYNE (no answer if items already sold).

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NORTHERN

Christmas Party on 14th December, 1985

It was a cheery party that assembled at our new accommodation, on a mild evening. The water crisis that had hit many parts of Leeds had fortunately not affected the city centre so we were able to obtain water. However, some of the beverages that had been contributed were a little bit stronger than water!

The "study feed" was a splendid affair - the best we have had for a number of years.

The new Rupert annuals facsimile of the very first issue, was on show. An excellent reproduction had been made.

A number of games - usually on the hilarious side - were played with the ever-popular "Bunter Drive".

To conclude, our Secretary read in his inimitable style from the book "Greyfriars For Grown Ups". Atmosphere was added, by Keith Smith playing a few bars on his mouth organ, to indicate the passing of time in the story. A fitting way to end our party.

We at Northern Club, take this opportunity of wishing everyone all the best for 1986. We are always pleased to welcome visitors at our new address on the second Saturday of each month, from 6.30 p.m., Holy Trinity Church, Boar Lane, Leeds 1 - three minutes' walk from the railway station.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

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FOR SALE: Howard Baker reprint volumes, Greyfriars Press, and Specials; many O/P. Some O.S. Leeds. S.a.e. for lists. John Beck, 29 Mill Road, Lewes, Sussex. BN7 2RU.

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THE EDITOR WISHES ALL HIS READERS A  
BRIGHT, HAPPY, AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.

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