

STORY PAPER

52p.

Collectors Digest

Vol. 40

SEPTEMBER 1986

No. 477



Bob Whiter '86

RECENT COLLECTIONS PURCHASED. Here are some of the items.

SCOUT in publisher's binding, in bright almost as new condition. Vol. 1, 1908 and onwards; around £15 per volume; exceptional.

Some more Captains. Post-war Thomson's some in bound volumes. Now left only 1960's & 70's. Also DIXON BRETT small and large.

PENNY PICTORIALS. Another lot of 17 vols., publisher's file copies; some have faded spines.

BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY: Ken King, Rio Kid, and others.
UNION JACK: bound vols. and singles. S.B.L's: over 900, all series.

EAGLES: Vol. 11 and later only. Bound Boys' Friends and Heralds.

COMICS include more Pucks, Rainbow, Sparkler, and all the others usually in stock.

H. BAKER FACSIMILES: all in stock. Last one of these will be "Good-bye Greyfriars" special edition No. 100: £12.95. Some time in October. You can order now' Book Clubs as usual.

Prompt orders per post. Payment on receipt of goods as invoiced. A visit advised to see "Aladdin's Cave". You are very welcome' Just a ring to arrange a suitable time for a visit.

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STORY PAPER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Founded in 1941 by
W. H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

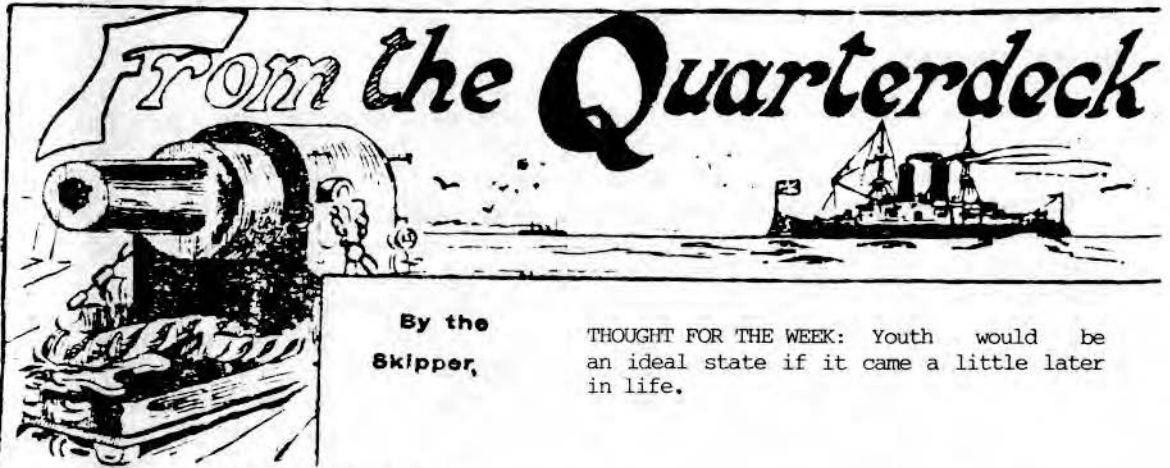
VOL. 40

No. 477

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By the
Skipper,

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: Youth would be an ideal state if it came a little later in life.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

It's bound to do so. After all, the good old C.D. has been slipping through letter-boxes all over the world for just on forty years, and items which appeared long ago come fresh to a new generation or to the old hands who have forgotten. Themes which we conned over long ago - we discussed them month after month crop up again now and then and all the old ardour is revived.

That is what has happened over the Orwell business. Long years ago we wrote on the matter in a seemingly endless stream of words from all and sundry. And then it died a natural death - for a while. Now, in recent months, that old theme of Orwell

and his weird and wonderful ideas has been revived, and a new generation is enjoying sifting through it all.

The trouble with Orwell is that he did not have a very thorough knowledge of his subject. As a professional scribbler, any subject was grist for his mill, and he happened to land on the topic of Frank Richards and his long-running pre-war Greyfriars. It was just a theme which occurred to him - in the bath, possibly - and he wrote it with a political slant. A welcome subject for an article, as dozens of previous ideas had produced articles.

Unexpectedly, for Orwell, Charles Hamilton replied to it. That reply was not watertight by any means, and, had Orwell had a greater knowledge of his subject - like one of us, say - he could have written a pithy reply and shot a hole or two in the author's arguments.

But, as we said earlier, Orwell did not really know very much about that subject he had embarked upon. So he let it slide, maybe saying to himself "Better luck next time."

IRONY OF FATE

When I was a very young man, at the very start of my teaching career, I went one day for two interviews. One was at Surbiton. The other was at the South West London College in the Castlenau at Barnes. As a result, I was offered both posts, so I had the agony of making a choice. I chose Surbiton. It occurs to me that had I decided on the South West London College at Barnes the entire structure of my life would inevitably have been much different from what it became. I'm a bit of a fatalist. I don't think these things happen by chance. I believe in a Guiding Hand.

A few years ago I read an excellent biography on the film star Errol Flynn. The biographer made one point in particular about Flynn. That rather racketty film hero was a consummate liar; it was impossible to put any faith in anything he said.

It was proved that Flynn was a pupil at several excellent English schools, being expelled from most. He boasted that he was a resident pupil at the South West London College at Barnes.

"That was a lie," commented the author of the biography. "I can find no evidence that there ever existed such an educational establishment as the South West London College".

I knew better. For once, Flynn may have been speaking the truth. That college could easily have become my first teaching post. A wild thought, if I had gone there, I might have had Errol Flynn as one of my first pupils.

I wrote to the author and told him that, for once, he had misjudged Flynn. In a charming reply (I forget the author's name now) he told me that he had earlier heard from old pupils of the SWLC at Barnes. He assured me that if the book should be reprinted he intended to add, as a correction to his text, my own comments on the subject.

THE C.D. ANNUAL

It is getting towards Annual time again. How the months fly by, and the older one gets the faster they seem to go.

I must confess that the Annual hung in the balance this year. Production costs continue to rise year by year, which means that there must be some anxiety as to whether my loyal readers will continue to support it. It has been a problem and a worry, and the easy way out would have been to give it a miss.

But this is such a special year - our fortieth edition, our Ruby Jubilee. Actually it is my own 28th Annual.

To be or not to be - that was the question. But I have a feeling that my readers, in view of the "specialness" of the occasion, would wish me to carry on, and will be ready and anxious to give it their loyal support as in days gone by.

So with this issue of C.D. comes your order form for the Ruby Jubilee Edition of the C.D. Annual. I hope to have your usual support. It will help if you order in good time, as it will not be possible to print many extra copies to allow for latecomers.

And if you like to include your Season's Goodwill messages or to announce your wants or what you have for sale, then it will all help to lubricate the works and keep the wheels turning smoothly.

THE EDITOR

ANOTHER OLD READER PASSES ON

We are deeply saddened to record the death recently of Dr. Robert Wilson of Castle Douglas in Scotland. "Dr. Bob" had been in the hobby right from the beginning, and his support of C.D. goes back to the very start of it all. He loved the C.D., and his letters, month by month, were always a joy to receive. Here at C.D. we shall deeply miss his enthusiasm and his loyalty.

Dr. Wilson had a very large bound collection of the Hamilton papers, and he also had a keen interest in the Union Jack and the Sexton Blake Library. But Greyfriars was his first and his best love. So another grand old-timer has left us for happier shores.

 WANTED Pre 1942 Sexton Blake Publications, also other 1920's - 1930's Boys papers and comics. Can offer various duplicates in exchange if preferred e.g. Nelson Lee's B.F.L. Also sets of cigarette cards. K. Townsend, 7 North Close, Willington Derby, DE6 6EA.

Danny's Diary



September 1936

With Modern Boy's first issue of the month the new Captain Justice series ended. The story was entitled "The Man who stole Titanic Tower", and it told how Justice finally beat the man who had gained possession of Justice's mid-Atlantic stronghold. So once again we have said good-bye to Captain Justice but I'm sure he will be back again ere long.

The Biggles serial "Biggles in Africa" has continued throughout the month. I like a western series about the wild horse Thunderbolt, and the series about Nick of the Newsreels is pretty good.

This month the first King Edward the Eighth postage stamps have been issued which is good news for stamp collectors.

There is a new Agatha Christie book out. It is called "Cards on the Table" and it stars Hercule Poirot. It is one of the best Christie's I have ever read, and it is very cleverly written and thought out. A man is murdered in a room where two tables of bridge are being played. At one table there are four people playing, all of whom have got away with murder in the past. So we have to decide which one of the four is guilty. A grand tale. Doug bought it for 7/6 and he let me read it.

There is sad news from Nottingham where the trams have been scrapped. They have been replaced with trolleybuses and motor buses.

A scrumptious month in the Gem, continuing the story about the arrival of Talbot. Opening tale is "The Schoolboy Cracksman". When a big burglary occurred at Glyn House it was obvious that an

expert cracksmen was at work. But who was likely to suspect that the cracksmen was a mere schoolboy - a junior in the Shell at St. Jim's?

Next tale in this really memorable series is "The Toff's Enemy". Talbot has got the police guessing, but there is a boy in the school who suspects him - and that boy is his most dangerous enemy - Ernest Levison.

Then came "The Toff at the Cross-Roads". St. Jim's and his new friends are having their effect on the Toff, and he has to decide whether to continue on the path of crime or to follow the straight and narrow path. An enthralling story.

The final of the month brings a change from the heavy drama of recent weeks. The story is "Jolly Jinks at St. Jim's. To Tom Merry and Co. the birthday of Mr. Linton is an occasion for celebrating but to Figgins & Co. it was the chance to work off a record jape on their School House rivals.

The very early Magnet stories of Greyfriars are still being serialised every week in the Gem and they alone are worth the tuppence the Gem costs. A mighty fine paper all round.

There has been a tragic accident at a sporting meeting in Belfast. A car competing in the Belfast Tourists Trophy skidded and dashed into the watching crowd. 8 people were killed.

As usual, we have had some wonderful evenings at the local cinemas. Franchot Tone was good in "Exclusive Story". A rather charming Shirley Temple film was "The Littlest Rebel". A little girl from the South persuades President Lincoln to release her father.

A wee bit stodgy but quite interesting was "Rhodes of Africa" starring Walter Huston. A rough diamond miner becomes Prime Minister of Cape Colony.

A bit horrific was "The Invisible Ray" which starred those two horror men Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi. A scientist discovers an element which turns him into a homicidal maniac. My Mum didn't like this one at all, but I enjoyed it.

A British musical was "Limelight" starring Anna Neagle. A chorus girl helps a street singer to become a star. Arthur Tracy was in this one, and it has made him famous on wireless where he has become known as "The Street Songster."

Finally a tip-top Tarzan film "The New Adventures of Tarzan" with a new Tarzan, Herman Brix.

In the Schoolboys' Own Library we come to the fourth and last of the volumes covering the series about the Greyfriars chums in

China. It is called "The Beggar of Shantung" (lovely title!) Prisoners in Pan-shan, in the heart of China, Harry Wharton & Co are threatened with death by torture. That is their sentence for defying Tang Wang, head of the Red Dragon Tong. Then, unexpectedly, the Beggar of Shantung comes to their aid. The best adventure story I have ever read.

The other S.O.L. is "Nippy from Nowhere", continuing the St. Jim's chums' caravan holiday, but it is not by the real Martin Clifford and is a bit of a waste of money.

There is good news. From next month there are to be 3 S.O.L.'s each month instead of 2, the third one being a St. Frank's tale.

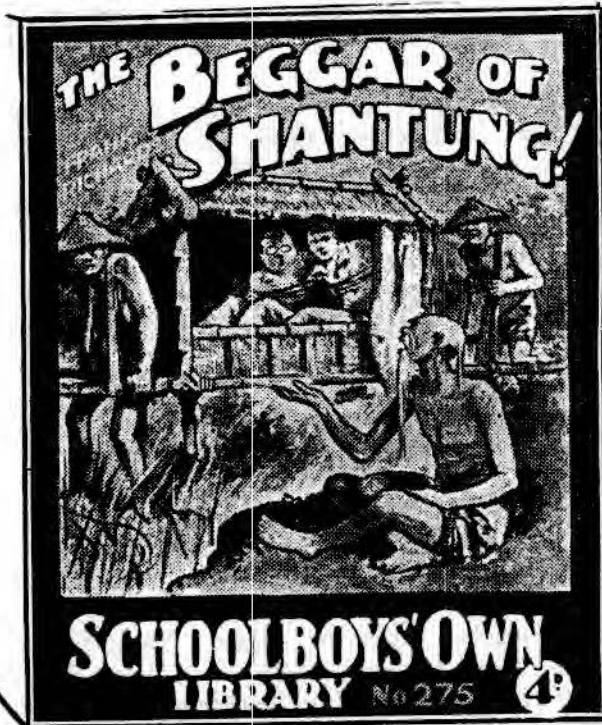
In the Boys' Friend Library I had a Captain Justice tale, "The Weed Men", with Capt. Justice and his pals up against awful creatures

from the Sargosso Sea.

In the Sexton Blake Library I had "The Seaside Cafe Crime" by Warwick Jardine. This is a clever story featuring Dearth Tallon, the reckless adventurer, and his beautiful woman associate, Sandra Sylvester, and Sexton Blake is dangerously involved with it all.

In Surrey, the town of Surbiton has become a Borough, and, to celebrate the event, the Mayor went the rounds of all the schools.

The magnificent Magnet started off with the final story of the Muccolini Circus series. Entitled "The Boy Who Knew Too Much" it tells how the spy, Signor Muccolini, determines to shut Bunter's mouth once and for all. But Ferrers Locke takes a hand, and down comes the curtain on a good series.



Prisoners in Pan-shan, the stronghold of the all-powerful Chinese Mandarin, Tang Wang, Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry and Billy Bunter have never before been in such dire peril! For the chums of Greyfriars can do nothing to avert the terrible fate which threatens them—death by torture! Can help come to them in time? Read this all-thrilling yarn of schoolboy adventure in China. It's the story of a lifetime!

Then came a single story "Johnny Bull on the Run." Johnny's cousin, Lucas Bull, is left in charge of the works in Yorkshire while Johnny's father is away. And Lucas decides that Johnny should spend the rest of his holiday at work under Lucas' orders. But Johnny has other ideas.

Next tale is "Schemers of Study No. 7", and tells how Peter Todd and Co of study 7, back at school, go on the warpath.

Finally came the start of a new series with "His convict Cousin". James Loder, Convict 22, has escaped from prison, and he is believed to be hiding near Greyfriars. Wibley plays a big part in this story.

There is a new paper on the market entitled "Football Weekly", but I'm not a football fiend so it won't capture my tuppence. And in the final Test Match, at the Oval, England beat India by 9 wickets. Thank goodness for that.

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

S.O.L. No. 275 comprised the final three stories from the Magnet's splendid China series of the late summer of the year 1930. S.O.L. No. 276 "Nippy from Nowhere" comprised the final two stores of the Gem's substitute holiday series of the year 1926.

The 1936 Gem story "The Schoolboy Cracksman" (the second Talbot story) had been "Hero and Rascal" in the summer of 1914.

The 1936 story "The Toff's Enemy" had been "The Hidden Hand" in 1914. The 1936 story "The Toff at the Cross-Roads" had the familiar abstract title "The Parting of the Ways" in the summer of 1914.

The 1936 yarn "Jolly Jinks at St. Jim's" had been "A Birthday Celebration" some months before the Toff tales in 1914. As Danny reminded us, it was Mr. Linton's birthday.

WANTED: 'The Letters of Frank Richards'; 'The St. Frank's Jubilee Companion' 'E.S. Brooks Bibliography'. Please write, stating price: A.N. Godfrey, Meadowbank, Hall Lane, Harbury, LEAMINGTON SPA, Warks.

MAGNETS: 1645, 1653, 1655, 1661, 1667, 1670, 1675, 1678, 1679, 1683, offered in exchange for "The Schoolgirls' Own Annual 1929". PAYNE, 69 HIGH STREET, HEADCORN, KENT.

WANTED: Gems. Nos. 859, 861, 898, 1022, 1024, 1057, 1086, 1088, 1089, 1090, 1094, 1096, 1097, 1120, 1121, 1132, 1180, 1181, 1391. Also 1641 to 1663 inclusive. Also The St. Frank's Jubilee Companion. Betty Hopton, "Karunda", 79 Scalpcliffe Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs. DE15 9AB. Tel. 0283 65806.



DANGEROUS "LADY"

by J.E.M.

Though we seem to see and hear a lot more about it these days, there is nothing new about female impersonation. From the drama of the Ancient Greeks to the theatre of the Bard women's roles have been performed by young men and boys - a tradition still familiar in our own time. At my old grammar school, as at so many others, the annual Shakespeare production followed this practice (at one performance of The Tempest, I recall, we were startled to see a very tough sportsman from the Lower Sixth transformed into a most gentle and fetching Miranda!). Pantomime, of course, has long had its own "drag" tradition, with girls as principal "boys" and men as comic "dames".

If, as Shakespeare says, all the world's a stage, then impersonating the opposite sex is as old as mankind. It is also as old as crime, real and fictitious - which brings me to the saga of Sexton Blake and one of the most extraordinary crime syndicates to cross swords with our tireless sleuth. The Double Four, a gang led by no less than the king of a small Balkan state, was surely one of Gwyn Evans' most exotic creations. It certainly recruited some very usual characters. Appearing first in the UNION JACK, the Double Four was later revived with an entirely new membership, in DETECTIVE WEEKLY. The opening story in the second series is, appropriately, The King Crook's Comeback (DW No. 38) and involves, among other things, the theft of half a million pounds from a shady financier, Baron von Meyerstein. This gentleman is himself plotting to gain an oil concession in the country ruled by the leader of the Double Four. Thus super crook meets king crook and Double Four soon stands for double cross!

Enter Mrs. Lexington Courtland, a ravishing and bejewelled American widow. The Baron is immediately captivated by her and

and is even charmed by her small, lisping son. He is indeed quite literally bowled over by the pair when the child renders him unconscious with a gas gun, while his mother removes the half million in cash and securities. A lively illustration by the inimitable Eric Parker shows a bubble-haired imp delivering the coup de grace, his mother, a striking blonde in slinky black dress, meanwhile locking the door against intruders. Mother and offspring, needless to say, are not what they seem. The little "boy" is, in fact, a thirty-odd-year old dwarf while his "mother", "Mrs. Lexington Courtland" is really Lou Lamont, once billed on the American stage as the Greatest Female Impersonator in the world and now a stalwart of the Double Four.

In Sexton Blake's casebook there was never a shortage of glamorous - and dangerous - females: Yvonne Cartier, Roxane Harfield Marie Galante, Kathleen Maitland, June Severance, Mary Trent, Vali Mata-Vali and many more - the list is almost endless. But, among Blake's many adversaries in skirts, "Mrs. Lexington Courtland" remains a rare, if not unique, bird. Perhaps that is what makes "her" nearly as memorable as all those seductive ladies who really were what they seemed.

(FOOTNOTE: The cross-dressing theme also cropped up in the old school stories. If I remember correctly, Gussy of St. Jim's was more than once infatuated by a pretty girl who turned out to be a male practical joker.)

PLAGIARISM AND SWIPING

By Jack Adrian

Before things get too out of hand, I think it might be a good idea to put this whole Agatha Christie-Lewis Jackson business (first noted by Ann Clarke, commented on by Bill Lofts) into perspective. First of all, yes of course Jack Lewis (Lewis Jackson) pinched the "Bells and Motley" plot. What he did not do is plagiarise.

In the field of popular fiction (and in the field of serious literature too) there is, and always has been, a clear distinction between plagiarism -- or the lifting of material from someone else to incorporate into, or pass off as, one's own without any significant alteration (i.e. copying it directly) -- and what is known in the trade as 'swiping' -- or the utilisation and extension of someone-else's good idea so that it is transformed into something different and (it is to be hoped) better. This latter is what Lewis did.

And before anyone out there accuses me of merely playing with words or feebly trying to get him off the hook, I'd better point

out two things: (1) there really are only about half a dozen original plots in the whole wide world (and most of those go back to Greek myth), and, following on from that, (2) swiping occurs even in the very best of circles and is generally regarded by most professionals as a perfectly fair method of creation. Christie herself was not averse to it. As the writer and critic H.R.F. Keating has noted, she "did not scruple to seize, and improve upon, ideas from many contemporary whodunit writers".

Ironically, the 'Mr. Quin' stories themselves are in fact an extension (and not a very good one) of Baroness Orczy's 'Old Man in the Corner' stories. Even more ironically, "At the Bells and Motley" is not far from being the poorest of them all. It is totally static and more or less absurd, since the villains are discovered through what can only be described as the wildest guesswork: no court in the land would convict Jack the Ripper himself on the kind of 'evidence' presented. Actually Jack Lewis cheered the plot up no end, ironing out the essential fatuities and banishing Blake himself from centre-stage for most of the action then cleverly (at least, within the story's context) bringing him back to drop a revelatory bombshell before tying things up.

Certainly "The Problem of the Gardener's Cottage" is a better story, as such, than "At the Bells and Motley" (which, incidentally, originally appeared in the Grand Magazine in 1925). It is also -- and this is worth pondering -- 20,000 words longer. Hardly plagiarism.

Boys' and girls' fiction in particular is full of swipes. Charles Hamilton took any number of worn-out old plots and dressed them up anew, often quite brilliantly; likewise Edwy Searles Brooks. In the Blake field, amongst many others, both Robert Murray and Gwyn Evans (the best-loved Blake writer of them all) swiped like mad. No one should be horrified at this, or even worried about it. When a writer has to bang out two or three stories a week, come rain, shine or Monday morning mal-de-vie, month after month, it is hardly surprising that he or she will grab at anything to fulfil the quota. All is grist to the mill -- even someone else's plots. The art lies in what you do with them.

This is not to say that outright and direct plagiarism did not occur. It did. Rather more often than one might think, and by writers of seemingly unimpeachable probity. It has to be said that were the gaff to be blown quite a few reputations would tumble. But what would be the point? Personally, I prefer my idols to have feet of clay: they're so much more human and approachable.

There is only one famous writer in the field (now dead) whose chronic depredations ought to be brought to life, if for no other reason than that he actually made a living out of plagiarism, something remarkable in 20th Century fiction. Indeed, you'd probably have to go back to the 18th Century -- and the extraordinary plunderings of the abominable Curll ("that most perfect compendium of impudence") -- before you'd find his equal. One of these days I'll chronicle his outrageous piracies.

Incidentally, it's not quite true to say that the finger of suspicion has never been pointed at Jack Lewis (I'm sure Bill was simply being kind by not mentioning it). His last thriller -- or perhaps it would be more correct to say, the last SBL published under the 'Lewis Jackson' pseudonym -- The Man From Persia (3rd 244) is a direct plagiarism. In this case however -- and I must stress this -- I'm not at all convinced that Lewis was actually responsible, and it wouldn't surprise me to discover, not for the first time, that an editorial hand was behind it.



Always the Bridesmaid - but never the Bride?

Part 4.

by W.O.G. Lofts

Whilst Sexton Blake was growing in popularity all the time, Nelson Lee had to make do with odd serials appearing from time to time in The Boys' Friend, The Boys' Realm, Boys' Herald, Comic Home Journal and even in the comic paper The Jester. The early part of 1915 saw William H. Back have the germ of an idea of expanding his detective field of fiction even further, by having not only having a monthly Sexton Blake Library with a 60,000 long story, but also a Nelson Lee Library as well. The difference here that the stories would be much shorter, appear weekly and be priced

Id compared to the Blake's 3d.

At some stage Maxwell Scott had sold the copyright of his character to the Amalgamated Press, and so they were free to use other writers to continue the saga of the Grays Inn Road detective.

The first issue of The Nelson Lee Library appeared on the 12th June 1915 and was entitled 'The Mystery of Limehouse Reach' - no authors name credited. The first Sexton Blake Library entitled 'The Yellow Tiger' did not appear until some 17 weeks later on the 20th September, so Nelson Lee here had a good start to build up a healthy readership before its rival started - but things unfortunately never worked out that way. Many years ago I was able to establish that the first Lee story was written by a mysterious 'A.C. Murray'. All that is known about him is that he contributed serials and stories to other papers with his brother Geoffrey C. Murray. A photograph of him in one of the early papers shows him to be a rather tough looking individual with convict type of haircut, whilst G.M. Down the Magnet editor (of whom later had much to do with the later issues of N.L.L.) obviously did not have a high opinion of him, describing him as 'in the ranks and unreliable. At a later date I did discover that his christian name was Archibald, was a shareholder in the Aldine Pub. firm as late as 1932, then living at some Army address in Suffolk.

The first issue was illustrated by 'Val' a top class artist, when the story in its rather thin 40 pages concerned the River Thames area. Mark Darren, W.J. Bayfield, J.G. Jones, G.H. Teed and R.M. Graydon, as well as the creator Maxwell-Scott, all wrote in the early numbers but it was in No. 5. 'The Great Submarine Mystery' by R.M. Graydon that one really got the first full description of the great Nelson Lee.

WANTED TO PURCHASE: Skilton/Cassell Bunter Hardbacks and Howard-Baker Magnet Volumes, odd items or suitable collection. Also William Books and Girls Stories by E.M. Brent-Dyer and Elsie Oxenham. Contact: COLIN CREWE, 12b WESTWOOD ROAD, CANVEY ISLAND, ESSEX. Telephone: 0268 693735.

MAGNETS WANTED to build up collection. Various numbers between 1 and 1683. But must be in immaculate condition. Not guillotined or sellotaped, torn or dirty. Fr. G. GOOD, THORNES VICARAGE, WAKEFIELD, WEST YORKSHIRE, WF2 8DW. Telephone WAKEFIELD 374009

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FIVE MINUTES WITH OUR AUTHOR

(Mr. Edwy Searles Brooks)

Interviewed By Our
Special Representative

ACCCEPTING the commission to venture forth and interview Mr. Brooks, I must admit I was somewhat curious. As it happened, I had never previously met the author of our St. Frank's stories, although I had often pictured him in my mind as a long-haired, elderly gentleman.

Imagine my surprise, therefore, when I was ushered into Mr. Brooks' presence to find that he is neither long-haired nor elderly, but a tall, youngish man, with fair hair, clean-shaven chin, and a fresh complexion. I am afraid I stared rather hard, for Mr. Brooks grinned as we shook hands.

"Very disappointed?" he asked cheerfully.

"No—not at all!" I replied, with haste. "In fact, I am quite pleasantly surprised. If you will forgive me for being so frank, I had imagined you to be far less prepossessing."

"Forgive you?" he chuckled. "You've believed me enormously. I hear that the Editor intends to publish a portrait of me at the same time as this interview, and I had been wondering by how many thousand copies the circulation would drop as a result! You have given me fresh heart! I breathe again!"

Mr. Brooks made me comfortable at once, and we were soon chatting amiably and contentedly. My first inquiry was a pointed one. I wanted to know how Mr. Brooks obtained all his plots and ideas.

"Well, now you've given me a poser," he replied, smiling. "Honestly, I cannot tell you. I only know that the majority of my ideas sprang developed."

"From what?" I asked.

"Oh, anything," he answered. "Some incident I may have chanced to see in the streets—an item in the newspaper—anything, in fact, connected with human nature or adventure or sport. Once I have a peg to hang my story on, the construction is more or less a matter of acute concentration, deep thought—and hard work."

"Then writing school stories isn't easy?" I ventured.



"Try it and see!" chuckled Mr. Brooks. "Mind you, I love all my characters, and regard them as my companions—as living persons. Without my St. Frank's boys I should be desolate."

"And your recreations, Mr. Brooks?" I asked, with interest.

"Well, they are rather numerous," he smiled. "I take a keen interest in football, cricket, motoring, the theatre, cinemas, and reading. I do quite a lot of reading, by the way, for there is no better food for the brain."

We continued our chat, and there is much more that I would like to set down, but I am afraid the space at my disposal is limited. But if any readers are sufficiently interested to express a desire for more, I have no doubt the Editor will satisfy them.

Yours sincerely,
Edwy Searles Brooks.

FOR SALE: C.D's No. 277 to date; £3 per year (12 copies); C.D. ANNUALS 1974 to 1979 and 1981, £3 each, all plus postage. Condition mint. Some earlier C.D's. H. Blowers, 25 Churchfield Road, Rothwell, LEEDS, LS26 0EJ.

WANTED Collector's Digest Numbers 1 to 60. Good Price paid. Mr. P. Galvin, 2 The Lindales, Pogmoor, BARNSELY, S. Yorks. SY7 2DT or phone. Barnsley 295613.



No. 217 - Gem No. 16 - "The Detective's Pupils" by Roger M. Jenkins

As a general rule, it is true to say that the penny series of the blue Gem contained the longest St. Jim's stories of all, but there were exceptions. For a few weeks in the spring of 1908, for example, the Alan Wayward stories occupied fourteen pages and the St. Jim's episode had to make do with a mere thirteen. Naturally enough, the St. Jim's tale suffered as a result of being deprived of its usual amount of space.

There was an unusual beginning, with Mr. Railton in the Junior Common Room reminding the juniors of the forthcoming warmer weather and of the opportunities for outdoor pursuits that trained the eye and the faculties of observation. He mentioned biology and entomology and then enquired if anyone had another pursuit to recommend. Skimpole suggested detective work, with the juniors solving sham crimes, and surprisingly enough Mr. Railton agreed. When Ferrers Locke arrived to take a holiday in the locality, the scheme appeared to be certain to succeed.

In the early days, Charles Hamilton was very assiduous in building up a detailed background. We learned that Tom Merry had a study in the new wing of the School House that was built when he arrived at the school, and the rooms were larger than those in the old building. We were told about a very rich dessert called half-pay pudding that was made for the Head's table by Mrs. Mimms, the House Dame. And D'Arcy uttered one of his early catchphrases "select, not to say swaggah" - about his circle of acquaintances on this occasion.

Ferrers Locke suggested a variation of the modern murder game. The participants were to draw papers from a hat, and the one with the inky paper was to commit the crime and the others were to solve it. Incompetence led to two inky papers being included, and so not only was Tom Merry's cricket bat stolen but the half-pay pudding also disappeared. All in all, "The Detective's Pupils" was an amusing

triviality, abridged by the final Alan Wayward story, a tale which, incidentally, seemed to be aimed at a much older readership. When advertisements in the Gem are scanned, it is legitimate to wonder exactly who the potential readership was thought to be: certainly, an advertisement to encourage the growth of a "nice manly moustache" could hardly have been directed at schoolboys. Perhaps it was hoped that fathers and elder brothers would scan the paper as well.

Finally, it is good to record that all was well the following week. There was a 23 page St. Jim's story, with D'Arcy continuing the detective work on his own initiative and being caned as a reward at the end.



FAIR PLAY

A Splendid School Tale.

By CHAS. HAMILTON.

(Hurree Singh was created 80 years ago when the author was young. Here is the Third Chapter of that memorable story.)

FAIR PLAY

By CHAS. HAMILTON

They were strong on football at Netherby, and they played it very well. The school game was Rucker, and Netherby College sent out a first fifteen that had a splendid record of success. There were Form teams, too, all in a good state of efficiency, and even the Third Form youngsters were quite up to the mark.

Redfern explained this to Hurree

Singh as they went down to the ground. Redfern was captain of his Form fifteen.

"How I should like to play the game!" exclaimed Hurree Singh. "I wish you would teach me, Redfern." Owen looked him over.

"Well, you ain't in bad form", he remarked critically. "Can you run?"

"Yes; I think so."

"Race me down to the ground," said Redfern.

And they started off. The Indian boy was slim and light of foot. He ran like a deer, and Redfern, who was the best sprinter in his form was hard put to it to keep up with him.

"You'll do!" gasped Redfern, as they halted. By Jove, you can get over the ground! If you like to go into it, I'll shove you in the three-quarter line. Have you ever played footer before?"

"No."

"Hum" Your education has been neglected, my son. But just you stand about here, and watch us at practice, and afterwards I'll give you some tips."

"Oh, thank you!"

"Not at all. If you can play, there's plenty of room for you in the fifteen, I can tell you. We're got a match coming off that is awfully fearfully important, and I'm looking out for new talent."

Redfern said this with an air of importance that duly impressed Hurree Singh. The nabob had an immense admiration for the cock of the Third Form, and he listened to the words of Owen Redfern as to those of an oracle.

The Third Form players turned up, and Redfern soon had them hard at work. Hurree Singh watched them eagerly. He was anxious to know the ropes, and learn to play the wonderful game which he had heard was thought so much of in England.

Knowles was a three-quarter in the team and he played so very well. Of the rest, Redfern and Reggie Lawrence were the best but considering their age, all the youngsters played a good game. It had cost Redfern

a great deal of time and trouble to bring them to their present form.

While Hurree Singh stood looking on a number of boys came over from the Fourth Form ground to watch the juniors at practice. The Fourth Formers, being a Form above Redfern's adopted a lofty attitude towards the Third, whom they generally alluded to as the "infants" or "babes," and their manner was distinctly patronising as they looked on now. Hurree Singh heard their remarks, and began to feel indignant.

A tall, loose-jointed Fourth Former, with a tallow-coloured complexion, was loudest in his remarks, and most unpleasant. But as this young gentleman was afflicted with a stammer in his speech his observations did not sound so crushing as intended.

"These kik-kik-kids think they can p-play footer," he said, with a sniff. "Fuf-funny chaps, ain't they?"

"Funny ain't the word, Robinson" said another: "but they'll look funnier still when they meet us in the Form match."

Robinson laughed.

"Yes; I fancy we shall make them look sick!" he exclaimed. "We shall have to teach them a l-l-lesson for their chook-chook-chook-cheek!" Hallo there's that new addition to the Third menagerie, the nigger. Hallo Inky!" The nabob looked at him indignantly, and turned back his head haughtily.

Robinson winked to his friends, and reaching out with his foot, gave the nabob a shove that sent him staggering forward. His foot slipped on the damp grass, and he went down on his hands and knees.

He jumped up in a twinkling, his black eyes blazing. The nabob

was not much of a fighting man, but he had heaps of pluck and he went for Robinson promptly. The big Fourth Former had not expected that, and he staggered back before a hearty thump on the chest.

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "Of all the cheek!"

The next moment Hurree Singh was gripped in the strong arms of Robinson, and whirled off his feet. Robinson was looking dangerous. It was a severe blow to his dignity to be thumped by a Third Form youngster. But just then the players came streaming off the ground, and Redfern arrived on the spot, and he at once came to the rescue.

"Hallo, what are you up to, Robinson? Let our chap alone!"

"R-r-rats to you!" snapped Robinson. "He's had the cheek to punch me and I'm going to wipe up the ground with him!"

"Let him go!"

"Sha'n't!"

Now it was of no use Redfern attacking Robinson, who was a head taller and more powerful in every way. In a fight Redfern had no chance; but Owen had not learned to play the good old game of Rucker for nothing. He went straight at Robinson, and tackled him in Rucker style, and the next moment the captain of the Fourth Form was lying on his back with all the wind knocked out of him. Hurree Singh jumped to Redfern's side.

Robinson lay for some seconds with a dazed idea that the world had come to a sudden end, and then he arose slowly, looking absolutely ferocious. There seemed a good prospect of a general row between the Third and Fourth, but just

then a prefect bore down upon the juniors.

"What are you kids rowing about?" he exclaimed.

"These youngsters are cheeky," said Robinson loftily. "I wish you'd try to keep the lower Forms in better order, Lantham."

"Lower Forms, you cheeky young rascal! I suppose you are full-fledged seniors in the Fourth?" grinned the big Sixth Former. "Do you want me to box your ears, Robinson?"

Robinson turned red.

"Look here, Lan-Lan-Lantham-----"

"Shut up! If you want to speak my name, for goodness' sake let us have it all at once and not on the instalment plan. Be off with you. You kids are always making a row. I suppose you and Redfern are to blame as usual. You'll do fifty lines each, and bring them to me before you go to bed to-night!"

"Oh, I say, Lantham!" exclaimed Redfern.

But the prefect, without stopping for argument, stalked away. Prefects at Netherby were high-handed in dealing with juniors, and they found that it saved time to inflict penalties without making inquiries. Robinson looked grimly at Redfern.

"All your fault, you little beast!"

"All yours, you beastly bully!" retorted Redfern. "Only just wait till the Form match, and see what a licking we'll give you!"

Robinson looked inclined to commit assault and battery on the spot, but he restrained himself and walked away with his companions.

"We've still got ten minutes, Inky," said Redfern. "Come on,

and I'll show you something to begin with anyhow."

The Indian boy willingly accepted and so he received his first instruction in the grand old game. He proved an apt pupil, too. Knowles stood looking on with a sneer on his face, but that sneer was blotted out suddenly Redfern was instructing Hurree Singh in the mysteries of the dropkick, and the nabob was anxiously following his directions. Unfortunately, the ball flew in a direction different from that intended and before Knowles knew what was coming, the leather had plumped full in his face. He gave a yell and sat down suddenly.

The ball was in about the muddiest state it was possible for a ball to be in and Knowles's features had disappeared under a muddy veil.

"Thanks, Knowles" said Redfern calmly. "Awfully good of you to stop the ball. Chuck it back, will you?"

"You beast, you did that on purpose!" howled Knowles.

"I assure you I did not!" exclaimed Hurree Singh earnestly. "I have extreme regretfulness for the lamentable accident."

"You black brute!" Knowles departed wrathfully. Redfern grinned.

"Come on, Inky, it's time we changed." he said.

And so ended the first lesson.

"Are you really going to do the lines, Redfern?" asked Hurree Singh.

"Lantham's lines?" Oh yes! When you've been here a bit longer, Hurree my son, you'll know that a high and mighty prefect is monarch of all he surveys, and that his word is law to all us humble juniors."

"But you were not to blame."

"That makes no difference. Still, I dare say I shall find a chance of making both Lantham and Robinson sit

up, and that will make matters even, you see." said Redfern with a grin.

"There the little brutes are!"

It was a sudden shout, and half a dozen Fourth Form boys suddenly rushed out from behind the fives' court and threw themselves upon the comrades. They were led by Robinson, who had evidently lain in ambush for the purpose of visiting vengeance upon the heads of the Third Formers.

Redfern was not often caught napping, but he was just now. In a moment the two were bowled over by the rush of the Fourth Formers, and rolled helplessly along the ground by their grinning captors. Unable to get up, hardly able to struggle in so many hands, Redfern and Hurree Singh went rolling along the muddy ground breathless and gasping. A sudden cry of "Cave!" called off their assailants.

Redfern struggled to his feet as he was released. His head was swimming, and he was simply caked with mud. Hurree was in a similar state. The last of the Fourth Formers was disappearing round a corner. An awful figure in cap and gown was bearing down upon the two unfortunate juniors.

It was the doctor!

Redfern, with a gasp, seized Hurree Singh by the arm and raced him away and they vanished from the doctor's gaze like a beautiful dream, long before he had a chance of recognising them.

"That was a narrow squeak!" panted Redfern.

And he marched Hurree off to a bath-room to clean up.

"They've pretty nearly ruined our clothes", he muttered; "and

nearly got us into an awful row! We shall have to make things hum for Robinson. By Jove, I'll make the beastly bounder sit up! We shall be late for grub!"

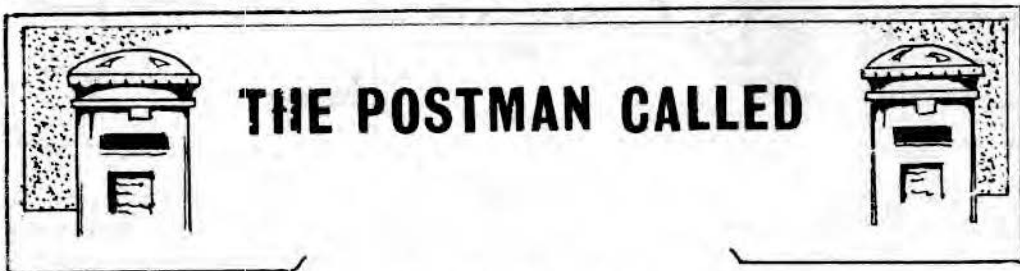
They were, and Redfern received fifty more lines from Mr. Lumsden. He made a wry face and put them down to the account of Robinson to be paid in full at an early date.



Most of us these days I suspect lead very busy lives, and do not always have as much time as we would like for reading. Speaking for myself; what with work, scouting and other numerous hobbies and interests, my chief reading time takes place in bed. I really look forward to that few minutes or so before slumber's chain binds me. The other night, as I was about to indulge in a cosy interlude with my favourite characters, my thoughts went back to the days of my youth - those days reading in bed was strickly taboo - even though my father was a great adherent. To use a word beloved of Frank Richards, as children, reading in bed was a surreptitious practice! You didn't dare to even turn on the bedside lamp for fear it might be seen, so the electric torch or flash light was pressed into service. With the bed clothes pulled up around your head, covering both yourself and the light (see our cover picture) you visited the land of enchantment until the arms of Morpheus claimed you; but ready at the slightest noise to extinguish the torch and assume a posture of being sound asleep should an enquiring parent put his or her head round the door. I was fortunate in one respect - my father ran a radio and bicycle shop, so it was comparatively easy to keep the flash light shining bright; i.e. fresh batteries and a bulb once every so often, although my father did on a couple of occasions query the "short life" of the batteries! After awhile I learned to

tell the difference between the footsteps of my parents and the other members of my family.

My brothers and sisters were duly sympathetic and never bothered my nocturnal reading sessions. My brother Ben who was working at Margate in those days and after spending a day at home, would often catch a late train back. En route down the stairs to the front door, he would open the bed room door and toss me a silver sixpence (guess what I spent it on?) with the admonition to be a good chap - this was generally followed with the question what the Bounder was doing, or had Gussy found out who had inked his topper - great days! Even now I don't think there is anything like a nice read in bed - especially when it's wet and cold outside and you're nice and cosy with one of the companion papers for company - yes one of the joys of life (in my humble opinion) is reading in bed!



G.A. LONGMAN (Bridgewater) May I take this opportunity, as a long term collector, though decidedly on the fringe of the hobby, of thanking you and your band of contributors for the hard and dedicated work, over many years, that have been put into making sure the Digest never fails each month.

EDWARD BALDOCK (Cambridge) The mention of the 'Circus series' in 'Danny's Diary' revived many pleasant memories and a few perhaps not so happy. Appearing at a very turbulent period in the thirties when distraction of almost any kind was welcome to counteract the daily 'sabre rattling' with which we were being regaled daily in our newspapers. Signor Muccolini was of course a very thinly veiled portrait of the infamous Mussolini, at that time the high-riding dictator of Italy, who was daily denouncing, threatening, promising, pledging and proclaiming at a prodigious rate (not unlike some of our contemporary politicians) presumably to keep 'upsides' with that other 'gentleman' who was somewhat similarly engaged at that time in Germany. Charles Hamilton obviously saw in him (Mussolini) the ideal pompous circus owner, and how astute he was in his selection. It was a splendid

series fully charged with all the old Hamilton bouquet. It gave much enjoyment and amusement I recall not only to myself but also to many of my friends. And what a splendid foil our 'owl' made to Muccolini, both possessing a degree of cunning and rascality. In the case of Bunter far beyond what may possibly be acceptable in a Greyfriars fellow. As Danny so succinctly states in his diary it was 'great stuff'. Finally it was interesting to read of a fact we so often tend to forget - rightly so I am inclined to think - that even in those halcyon days in the thirties the summers, some of them were wet and cold. Could this memory blank have some to do with rose-coloured spectacles?. (I hope I have the term and relevance correct).

It is the evocation of 'time' and the charm of the period captured in these early tales in the companion papers wherein lies their great attraction. It is further enhanced by the circumstances which we see afoot around us in these present days. The gulf is indeed a wide one and I think personally I can never be coerced (not even by the most sophisticated of computers) from thinking that what I term 'our world' of yesterday held so much more charm, grace and appeal. As we grow older in years - Grey friars 'men' never lose the spirit of youth - we tend to 'take in' new ideas less readily, preferring to cling to the old and proven standards of our youth. I have yet to be convinced that this could be a misguided conception.

ERNEST HOLMAN (Leigh-on-Sea) A word or two on the Orwell/Richards items that have appeared recently.

From quite a few years ago (late 60s, early 70s?) I have a recollection of a volume borrowed from a local Library. It contained, inter alia, Orwell's Essay on "Boys' Papers", immediately followed by Frank Richards' reply. In addition to these items from Horizon a note stated that the Editor of the Magazine (I think it was Cyril Connolly) had been surprised in 1940 to learn that Richards was still living! Elsewhere in this Library volume were some extracts from Orwell's letters to friends. One expressed his concern on learning that a reply to his article was to be published. "It is possible, wrote Orwell, "that I have made some mistakes."

As the years roll on, one's memory becomes at times not too dependable. By now, I just cannot remember the title of the Library book, neither do I recall the publisher or the Editor/Compiler. I do believe, however, that the gist of my foregoing remarks can be taken as 'near enough'. Today, one frequently sees new issues of Orwell Essays in the Book Shops. I have looked at several - all those containing "Boys' Papers" do not include Frank Richards' reply

or any of the relevant matter I have mentioned. I wonder what that Library book was - and whether you, or your readers, may possess a copy.

FRANK ELLIS (Dublin) When on the bus to town recently I noticed a newly opened confectionery shop and was surprised to see the name "Billy Bunter's" over the top. I visited the shop thinking I would find the owner a contemporary of my own and would have a chat about the old papers. I was disappointed. The owner was a very young man who had never seen a Magent or Gem. He knew nothing about our Billy. When discussing a name for the shop a friend of his said "Why not call it "Billy Bunter's", as he is a very famous character who was very fond of all sorts of confectionery?"

That is the story of Billy Bunter's shop in Dublin. With permission of the owner I took a snap, a copy of which I enclose.

BILL LOFTS (London) In answer to some recent queries. There was only one single story featuring, The Human Mole in 'The Bullseye'. This was original and in the series "The Man with a Thousand Faces" in issue No. 8 in early 1931 written I believe by Alfred Edgar. This featured The Mole Machine and its inventor Richard Hume. A check through the Companion paper "The Surprise" confirms it has no stories featuring a burrowing machine.

The opening stories in The Schoolgirls Own Library featuring Rockliffe School were anonymous but I do know that Horace Phillips was paid an honorarium for them, so they must have been reprinted from somewhere. A search through practically all back issues of girls papers has not so far brought this school to light. A large number of stories were original, and when the Library finally closed in 1940 I have records of at least a number of tales in hand. These will be revealed in one of a series of future articles.

SIMON GARRETT (Bath) In Sir Leonard Hutton's book "50 years in Cricket", he says that his interest in Indian cricket was "no doubt nourished by my being an avid reader of the Magent and Greyfriars match-winning batsman Gamset Ram Singh" Inky was mainly a bowler, and, as for his name, it looks as if Sir Leonard had taken his cue from the American reporters in the Hollywood series.

ALAN CAPON (Picton, Ontario) I recently watched a film called "North West Frontier" starring Kenneth More, Lauren Bacall, and Herbert Lom. I was interested to see in the credits that it had been "adapted from a screenplay by Frank Nugent."



NEWS OF THE OLD BOYS BOOK CLUBS

LONDON

The summer gathering at the Ealing residence of Bill and Thelma Bradford had a good attendance of 26 who enjoyed a very happy time. After the tea interval, devotees of Harry Maners and Mr. Twigg got busy with their cameras, thus there will be, no doubt, picture souvenirs of the meeting.

Phil Griffiths read a humorous story "William Goes to the Pictures" from Just William.

By means of a tape recording Graham Bruton conducted a quiz whereby single letters were taken and eventually formed the names of two Hamilton characters. Triple winners were Roy Parsons, Norman Wright and Eric Lawrence.

From Gem 600 - dated 9th August, 1919, Tommy Keen gave a reading about the St. Jim's caravaners with Circumstances the horse and how Gussy cycled into Aylesbury for supplies on a Thursday without success as it was early closing day.

Eric Lawrence conducted a quiz of fifteen clues that gave the names of Hamilton and Brooks characters. The 1, 2, 3, were Roger Jenkins, Leslie Rowley and Graham Bruton.

Prepared at short notice, Bill Bradford gave a good dissertation on the B.O.P. Bill has a magnificent collection of B.O.P'S and illustrated the talk with many fine specimens.

Votes of thanks to Bill and Thelma for their excellent hospitality. September meeting at the Beckenham home of Alex and Mary Cadogan. Full tea will be provided. Kindly inform if intending to be present.

BEN WHITER

NORTHERN

Meeting held: Saturday, 9th August, 1986

As our Chairman was on holiday, Darrell took the chair and welcomed the twelve people present - Bill Williamson making a welcome return after his illness. It was good to have Robert Kay with us again and congratulations were extended to Paul Galvin and his wife on the birth of a girl.

Our Secretary reported that Mary Cadogan had accepted our invitation to be Co-President (alongside Hubert Gregg) and the meeting was delighted to hear this: we look forward to seeing Mary with us in the near future.

Sample dust-jackets of Mary's new book "RICHMAL CROMPTON - THE WOMAN BEHIND WILLIAM" were available - this would seem to be a very interesting book to William fans and would be published in mid October.

David Bradley reported on the progress of the forthcoming Biggles Meeting which was creating some interest amongst fans and it would appear that it could be a successful gathering on 15th November.

Geoffrey Good had recently read a school story by Harold Avery and stated that the style of writing was not a patch on that of Frank Richards.

Geoffrey also told us that Howard Baker had just under 300 "Magnets" to reprint to complete his publishing programme but the dust-jacketed editions would cease at number 100 and further reprints would be in the Book Club Specials.

Darrell gave his third talk in the series on the background of the people who were of aid to Frank Richards - this week Edith Hood his housekeeper. Edith Hood had known Frank Richards for a period of 47 years and she had been his housekeeper for 30 of those. She was the one having real access to Charles Hamilton's life style - his likes, his dislikes his mannerisms. Edith Hood had played a very important part in the Greyfriars stories - without her support, F.R. would not have been the man he was. Miss Hood was now almost 81 and living in a retirement home at Broadstairs.

To conclude the evening, Margaret Atkinson presented one of her quizzes. Bill Williamson was the winner.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

WANTED: Thomson's Big Five 1930/40. Also 2nd-hand copy of D.C. Thomson's "Firsts" (1978) pre-war S.B.L's and odd copies of pre-war 1d and 2d comics. Will buy or exchange. Cunliffe 21 Millwood Ave, St. Helen's Merseyside, WA10 5BE.

A STROLL DOWN FRIARDALE LANE

By E. BALDOCK.

Much has been recorded concerning this time-honoured, yet insignificant 'way', through the years. It has existed, so we may assume, for so long a period, as have the venerable monastic building of Greyfriars itself, possibly reaching back still further into the mists of time. Ab initio, Friardale Lane may well have started life (lanes and tracks do indeed have lives of their own), as a path formulated by sheep or other domestic animals. Be this as it may, it has since assumed some renown as 'the way up to the school' in these later years. Friardale Lane conjures up memories both grave and gay. It has been the scene of so many encounters, amusing, drastic and dramatic. Any attempt at a comprehensive history of this ancient way would require research, time and resources, all of which in this case are somewhat limited. A few facts and episodes, interesting in that they illustrate certain recent (in terms of antiquity) incidents in the teeming life of this legendary way, may suffice.

We know that there exists in the lane a rather insalubrious wayside ditch which usually contains a far from pleasant deposit of mud and water in its remoter recesses, into which at various times certain members of the Remove Form - and the Fifth Form, one must not overlook Horace Coker in this context - have been precipitated, much to their wrath and discomfort. Cecil Ponsonby and Co. of Highcliffe, through force of circumstances, are not unacquainted with its malodorous depths much to the detriment of their elegant 'clobber'. It is by any standards an unpleasant feature of Friar Lane made even less inviting by a thick and tangled fringe of nettles whose stinging properties are known only too well by the victims of immersion, exit through them being necessary to reach the safer territory of the lane.

Sundry 'gentlemen of the road' in varying aspects of frowziness, all rather tattered and unwashed (as becomes all the tramps in Charles Hamilton's gallery of such characters) have lingered here to beg or exort alms - and other articles - from passing Greyfriars fellows, with an alternating degree of success, some receiving very short shrift indeed, others, temporarily at least, making a mild 'killing'. Retribution, however, is never far off. Many of these gentlemen have made the acquaintance reluctantly of the oozy deposits at the bottom of the aforementioned ditch, thereby making

contact with actual water, albeit well impregnated with mud and slime, for perhaps the first time in weeks.

Echoes of long-past battles and combats, Homeric in their fierce intensity, linger yet along this secluded way. Roars, yells and laughter intermingled as the day goes, now for one side, now the other. Gurgling and Spluttering as - shall we say - Coker, having described his rather graceful 'windmill' act involving the flailing of arms and legs as he performs a perfect arc in the air before disappearing into the noisome depths of the ditch, to rise an instant later a hideous spectacle, festooned with water-weed and dripping liberally with slime. Potter and Greene, loyal, but discreet as always, stand at a safe distance until the moment arrives to retrieve what remains of their leader. It is a lively picture, filled with traditional Greyfriars' action and one which never palls or loses its appeal. It retains all the humour and gaiety so long associated with brushes of this nature between Coker and those 'fags' of the Remove.

Mr. Quelch and Mr. Prout, although frequently failing to see eye to eye on many subjects appertaining to their respective Forms and much else, are oddly enough in the habit of taking country walks together in their off duty hours. Mr. Quelch, tall and angular, Mr. Prout, rather short and undeniably rotund, make a quaint pair observed proceeding along Friardale Lane, engaged in one of their pedestrian expeditions. At the commencement of these periodic Odysseys, should their way lie along the woodland footpath, Quelch's long and bony legs find no difficulty in negotiating the stile leading thereto. It is rather different matter with Mr. Prout whose legs are short and built not for energetic activity, and certainly not nearly so elastic as those of his colleague. Surmounting the stile presents for him some unwelcome problems, something akin to a climb which is finally accomplished with maximum of grunts, snorts and gasps; one suspects much to the grim yet discreetly concealed amusement of his companion.

Finally, and this must be pure supposition: it is probable that this favourite spot, with its amenities so suited to the situation; stile, bosky trees, quiet woodland surroundings and a periodic moon shedding silvery rays, all lending themselves to a desirable seclusion in close proximity to the school. Small wonder that it is utilised as a trysting place by the young and romantically inclined domestic staff from the school on their days 'off' to rendezvous with aspiring swains from Friardale and beyond. Is it not a highly suitable spot and, is it not quite within the bounds of possibility that even lordly members of the sixth form - under the influence of an accommodating moon -

have sat here and signed?. It is quite a thought. Would that we could throw upon a screen a kaleidoscopic 'life' of this famed and intriguing old lane, a series of receding views, bringing into focus the teeming activities associated with this ancient thoroughfare.

STARS AT 'STAR' SCHOOL

by Tommy Keen

A very minor character at St. Jim's, long discarded before the closure of the GEM, was the American junior, Buck Finn. Not such an unpleasant character as Fisher T. Fish of Greyfriars, but nevertheless, neither was he one of the more noble characters. However, way back in the far off days of 1920, in one story in the POPULAR, he become very popular indeed.

From his father in America, he learned that two friends of his father were visiting England, and that they hoped to call at St. Jim's to see Buck Finn of the Shell. These were not two ordinary friends... oh no. They were the world famous screen stars Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford, then at the height of their popularity.

Great excitement amongst the boys, and suddenly Buck Finn finds that he has more friends than he needs. Tom Merry & Co., the rest of the Lower School, and many of the seniors, all want to see their screen idols, and Buck, for the first time since his arrival at St. Jim's becomes increasingly important.

A large touring car turns in at the gates of St. Jim's, and there they were, Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford, actually in the grounds of the old school. The car stops, and Buck makes himself known.

"I'm right glad to meet you" says Mary, in her sweet musical voice."

Tom Merry disperses the crowd, and Miss Pickford leans over the side of the car, and touches his arm.

"That is very nice of you", she said, "what is your name?".

Tom blushed, and told her. He is therefore asked by Mary to help Buck Finn show them around.

Douglas Fairbanks stops to watch Kildare and Co. of the Sixth playing cricket, and is asked by the captain of the school to have a 'knock'. Douglas does, making a terrific hit. Mary is delighted.

Naturally, they have to meet the Head, who asks them to tea, but Mary 'prettily' refuses, as she says they have promised Buck Finn to have tea in his study, there to meet some of his

friends. The friends are, of course, Tom Merry & Co., and as many more of the Shell and Fourth, who can crowd into Buck's study.

"No wonder they call her the World's Sweetheart" says Tom Merry, when the famous guests are leaving, "even the Head has fallen in love with her".

The chauffeur comes out of Taggles' lodge, where he has been entertained by the 'lordly' porter, and the car leaves, with Doug smiling broadly, and Mary smiling sweetly, as they wave good-bye.

The famous had visited the famous!

But... I wonder who wrote this story! Surely it was not Martin Clifford, and I doubt if it was a repeat from the GEM. Maybe at the time however, it was read avidly by St. Jim's fans, and film fans alike.

I have only recently read this story, but the POPULAR to me, was not quite as popular as it was intended to be.. Perhaps the visit of Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford to St. Jim's was to help lagging sales!

THE POSTCARD CONNECTION

by Gordon Hudson

I have a small collection of modern postcards, mostly local, but there are also a few older ones which belonged to members of my family. Occasionally I borrow a book on postcards from the library to learn more about them. Recently, whilst reading one of these books, I suddenly realised there are connections between story papers and postcards. What drew my attention to this was seeing the name of Saville Lumley as a postcard artist.

Saville Lumley will be recognised as an A.P. artist; his work included Nelson Lee and Schoolfriend and Schoolgirls' Own Annuals. He also contributed to Chums and B.O.P. According to the postcard book, Lumley painted a series for C.W. Faulkner's "London Scenes", including "Flower Girls in Piccadilly", "Feeding the Gulls on the Embankment" and a "Recruiting Sergeant at Charing Cross". He also painted a military series for Gale & Polden, the Aldershot book and postcard publishers.

Harry Rowntree was another name mentioned, who specialised in animals and comic situations. He contributed to many papers, including The Captain and Playtime. I remember as a boy having a book of "Billy Stampers" (Transfers) all based on Rowntree's animal paintings.

Numerous postcards were issued showing the cherubic girls and boys painted by Mabel Lucy Attwell, probably best remembered for

her Lucy Attwell's Annual which was issued for many years. There was also a series by Jack Greena of his "Useless Eustace" cartoons from the Daily Mirror, although perhaps these do not have a strict story paper connection.

There are also connections with story paper publishers.

Charles Skilton, better remembered as publisher of the Bunter Hardbacks, issued a postcard series "London Life", which included an East End rag and bone man.

A number of cards were issued by book and magazine publishers as advertising matter. Many of these were given away with their publications. I have a nice Scottish Highland scene, with a statement that it was "Presented by D.C. Thomson & co." Although no name is mentioned, this was probably from an adult magazine. I also have a series of midget postcards (approximately half the standard size). These are of a sentimental type and state they were presented with Red Letter, which was a D.C. Thomson magazine.

I do not know whether any postcards were issued with boys' papers. I do have somewhere, however four cards which I purchased about 15 years ago in Coventry, which show reproductions of front covers of Champion, Hotspur, Wizard and Rover. I cannot recall the name of the publisher.

No doubt in time I will come across more connections between story papers and postcards, and I expect other readers of C.D. will also have information on this aspect of our hobby.

THE THREE FISHERS

BEN WHITER writes: Both Mr. Baldock and Frank Ricahrds are not very conversant with the licensing laws that prevailed at the time the Hamilton Schools were being written about. Both Joseph Banks of 'The Three Fishers' and Ben Cobb of 'The Cross Keys' would not have had their licenses renewed at the Brewster Sessions of the licensing Justices. In the time of the stories, betting on licensed premises was against the law and so was street betting. Thus Banks and Cobb would be out of business. Both the head of Greyfriars and the local contabulary knew what went on at the two aforementioned pubs, it is a wonder that those two rascals were allowed their licenses to sell intoxicating liquors. I write with experience as my late father was a licensed vicaller as was all of his forebears.

J.F. BURRELL writes: I refer to Edward Baldock's most interesting article on The Three Fishers. One is bound to ask though, how did such a pub come to be here in the first place and why did it have such a large garden. Was it a mansion that gravitated to become a pub? I suppose that there are precedents for such. It was obviously there long before the days of Inn Food, for which it would have been ideally suited and there is no mention of a landing place for

pleasure boats on the river. In any case the catchment area is on the small side.

It is strange, in a way, that it should be the haunt of betting men as a back street pub in Courtfield would seem appropriate. In fact one such pub, The Peal of Bells, is mentioned in Magent No. 1479, and there is much gossip there about the wages of the Popper Court servants being in arrear.

Perhaps as far as CH was concerned it was a bit too far from the school and although unlikely the Three Fishers suited his plots more. There are a number of instances of boys taking short cuts and hiding in grounds, the sort of thing that you could not do with a back street pub.

It is also a bit unlikely that in this comparatively thinly populated area there should be a number of bookmakers as they also frequented The Cross Keys.

PRINTING ERRORS - THEN AND NOW.

by Jim Cook

In all the thousands of words published in our hobby papers it was very, very seldom I came across a printing error. There was the odd one here and there, but nothing like there is today in newspapers and literature generally in spite of qualified proof readers.

But nobody seems to mind. Probably because printing errors very often create fun. I recall in the first edition of James Joyce's ULYSSES the printer's gaffe -- the paper the beard was wrapped in' for 'the paper the bread was wrapped in'.

Others I have come across are:- 'Windows three metres square' becomes quite different when the "N" is dropped.

And if a 't' is dropped in 'Immortal Opera' and say a 'g' is left out of "when a soprano' sings", the effect can be devastating.

I do recall one or two printing errors in the NELSON LEE LIBRARY but they didn't give rise to much grief. That was in the old days when education was an achievement. Today with the written word and the spoken word more available to us via the media spelling should be easier and printers' errors less common. On the contrary mistakes are as common as flies.

Those excellent Old Boys' Papers wre printed with a faithful regard for truth and if a colon or a comma missed the ink it wasn't the compositor's fault but the machine's.

Today, I lay the blame on the proof readers for silly errors that are allowed to reach the reader.

If our Boys' Papers, cheap in comparison though they were, could give us such highly quality print, why doesn't the literature of today demand the same.

High powered technical advances in printing are often blamed for errors now and the rush to meet editorial deadlines. Is one to assume these deadlines were jut as urgent for our Papers but that the people responsible were more thoughtful and loyal to their jobs?

Even the old comic papers that perhaps didn't need to be so precise with grammar and spelling since they were aimed at the younger reader were always excellent in diction.

Today we have come a long way in the fields of literature and the printed word, but what would have been terrible printing errors years ago are today just accepted mistakes that give rise to comic relief. We can smile at "a detective in the local police farce" and a bottle-scarred veteran" but it is a carefree attitude that isn't going to do any good to anybody.

I am indebted to the N.Z. HERALD for extracts from its editorial.