

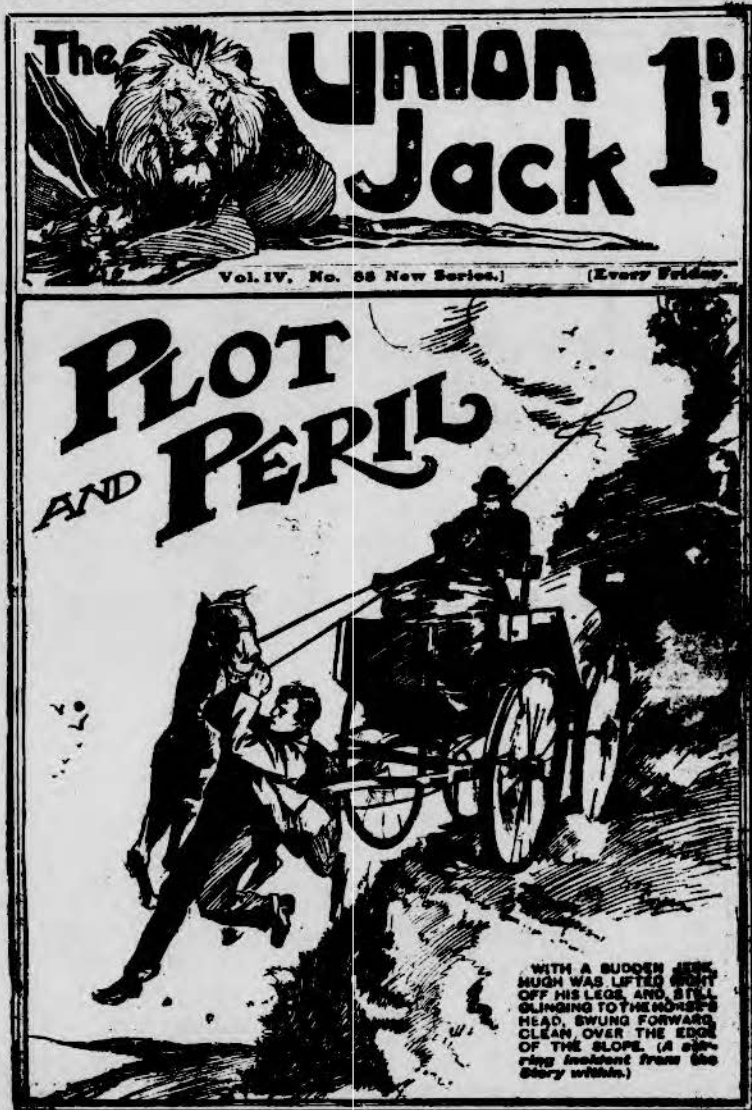
STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Vol. 41

No. 482

FEBRUARY 1987

A TALE OF THE RHONDDA VALLEY.



52p

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COLLECTORS' DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Founded in 1941 by
W. H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST: Edited and Published
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BETWEEN OURSELVES



A TRIBUTE ...

It is with a deep sense of responsibility (as well as with some trepidation) that I take on the editorship of our much loved C.D. To follow in the footsteps of its founder Herbert Leckenby, and of Eric Fayne, who has so devotedly edited it for over 27 years, is a challenging task and I must ask your indulgence if my efforts fall short of their distinguished achievements.

I am sadly conscious of lacking Eric's encyclopaedic knowledge of the hobby, and his long-reaching memories of events and personalities associated with the old papers.

On the occasion of the C.D.'s recent Ruby issue several of us paid tribute to Eric's dedication and expertise, and now that he is relinquishing the editorial chair it is again appropriate to convey to him our deepest thanks and appreciation. So many tributes have come through my letter-box for him this month, that this issue could be devoted entirely to them. I have had to make a selection which, as you will see, appears now; later on, perhaps, we shall be able to publish more of them.

I am delighted that although Eric has asked me to take over as editor he has promised to continue to play an active part in the C.D. He will write something for every issue, and thus remain a strong influence on the magazine, as well as a counsellor, confidant and friend to its new editor.

... AND AN APPEAL

I have been a C.D. reader and a member of the Old Boys' Book Club for 17 years - yet I often still have the feeling of being a 'new girl' in the hobby. I hope, therefore, that many readers will dig into their store of memories of our favourite papers and support the C.D. by writing for it. This is a fervent plea to regular contributors to keep their articles coming, and to any potential new writers to put their pens (or preferably typewriters) to paper on any subjects of special interest to them.

Ideas and suggestions will always be welcome - and I feel sure that I can look forward to your support. Don't forget, too, that it helps the C.D. when you advertise your 'wants' or 'for sales' in it.

CHILDHOOD REMEMBERED

Recently, when reading an ancient and battered copy of the Girls' Crystal on a train journey, I realized that the couple sitting next to me were surprised - and slightly pitying - to see a far from young lady so immersed in a schoolgirls' paper.

I'm sure they thought I was reading a child's 'comic', and that I must therefore be an extremely backward reader with a low I.Q. Snippets of their conversation suggested that they were the sort of people who had long ago and very fully 'put away childish things'.

I couldn't help reflecting on what they were missing!

I remembered how, sometime soon after the last war, I felt I'd grown up, and must get rid of my remaining children's annuals (the weekly papers, alas, had by then long since been disposed of). So I put away my so-called childish books. Like so many of us, of course, I lived to regret this when, years later, my interest in the Magnet, the Schoolgirl and other papers was happily rekindled.

When I began - a quarter of a century after I thought I'd outgrown them - to read again of the Famous Five and Barbara Redfern & Co., I was intrigued at how well their exploits stood up to adult appraisal.

One could be critical about the stories' cliff-hanging contrivances, bizarre coincidences and occasional stereotyping of characters - but on the whole plots were amazingly inventive, an exciting range of friendships and rivalries was compulsively presented, and the authors told their tales with tremendous skill.

Above all, they expressed innocence, idealism and an optimistic outlook. Thank heaven we can still read them, and let them colour our lives, today.

MARY CADOGAN - YOUR NEW EDITOR

* * * * *

ERIC FAYNE - APPRECIATIONS

FROM ROGER JENKINS, London O.B.B.C.

It must have come as a considerable shock to readers of Collectors' Digest to learn that Eric Fayne, who had so magnificently managed our cherished magazine for all these years, has now decided that the time has come to hand over the reins to his successor.

Eric has referred to the fact that the founder of the magazine, Herbert Leckenby, held on too long, but he has modestly forgotten to mention the enormous difficulties that he inherited when he first took over with No. 155 in November 1959, following the first editor's sudden death the previous month. Herbert was a real old Yorkshire character, an excellent writer and an enterprising editor, but - and it is no detraction from all his achievements to say this - he was an inadequate business man. He never removed a subscriber's name

from his mailing list, whether he paid or not, and as a consequence the early Collectors' Digests contained repeated editorial complaints about unpaid subscriptions, though many of these vital records seem never to have been committed to paper. All these financial problems had to be tackled by Eric as well as the formidable task of assuming the editorship. There were prophets of doom when Herbert founded the magazine ("You will never get enough material to last for more than a few issues") and equally there were Jeremiahs around when Eric took over ("Nobody can replace Herbert") but all were triumphantly confounded. Even the typists at the York Agency at that time told me that they enjoyed working for the Collector's Digest, as it was such a change from the church magazines that they then specialised in.

The Digest has an unparalleled record of regular publication, in view of the fact that it is only an amateur magazine, and in terms of years it has already exceeded the life-spans of the Magnet and Gem. Eric has carefully nurtured its two essential qualities: regular monthly issues and material restricted to the hobby. Of the first quality, Gerry Allison once remarked to me that the magazine at the beginning of the month and the OBBC meetings towards the middle of the month all kept interest ticking over nicely. So far as the second quality is concerned, one has only to think of magazines that attempted to widen their scope into other kinds of collecting, like stamps or match-box labels, to realise what a recipe for disaster that was.

Eric has also modestly said nothing about the chores of being a single-handed editor, of typing material, checking proofs, awaiting the parcels from York, and then addressing all the envelopes, packing them, and putting them in the post himself - too many to go into a letter-box, of course. He has said little about the personal sacrifices he has made over these twenty-seven years or more, how holidays had telescoped themselves into day-trips and how his personal life was continually being eroded by the inexorable demands of the magazine. It is probable that few subscribers realise just how much of himself Eric has given to the Collector's Digest for more than a quarter of a century.

Herbert had certainly been wise when he nominated Eric as his successor, just as Eric has made a perceptive choice in asking Mary to take over, and as we all express our heartfelt thanks to Eric for his unrivalled achievements, let us also extend our gratitude and best wishes to Mary, who assumes the mantle of editor with

this issue. She is a professional writer of considerable acclaim, and Eric's choice is an eminently suitable one. Long may the Collector's Digest thrive!

FROM MARGERY WOODS, Scalby, Yorks.

The arrival this morning of the first issue in 1987 of our favourite magazine brought a shock which rapidly wiped the happy, musing smile of nostalgia off my face. Our beloved Editor was retiring. This was to be his last Skipper's Chat.

I didn't like what I was reading at all. My first instinct was to sit down straight away and write my protest: You can't do this to us, Eric. What will happen to our magazine?

And then I realised the sheer selfishness of such an instinct. For while we have all enjoyed our greatly loved CD dropping unfailingly through our letter-boxes during the first week of every month how often have we reflected seriously on the amount of unseen work behind Eric's marvellous editorial record? How many hours have been devoted to preparing the copy for each issue and ensuring that each month's deadline was met? Hours when perhaps Eric sometimes wished he could relax in front of the fire, take a warm and purring Princess Snowee on to his knee and read a favourite book. But no, copy had been late in reaching him, or was not sufficient, and the typescript had to reach the printer by the weekend. So the fire, and the favourite book, and the disappointed Princess Snowee would have to wait a while. Yes, the past twenty-eight years have been a tremendous labour of love.

Thank you, Eric, for all the pleasure your hard work and devotion to The Hobby have brought to so many. It is no small achievement to have created so strong a sense of belonging in so many people of different ages and so wide a range of occupations, drawing us all into a lovely circle of friendship.

Yes, we shall write to you, be sure of that. And we'll give loyal support to Mary --- the only writer I can think of who could take over these very special reins. So welcome, Mary, and our love to you always, Eric, surely now our Editor Emeritus.

FROM DARRELL SWIFT, Northern O.B.B.C

Over the past years Eric has achieved the impossible - how on earth he has produced a magazine like the C.D., month after month, year after year to such a high standard, beats me... I have some idea of the amount of work involved in producing such a

magazine - the frustrations and anxieties... Eric has done an absolutely marvellous job over the past 28 years.

I know I speak on behalf of all members at Northern O.B.B.C..... How delighted we are to be closely associated with the magazine: it started in the North of England, is still printed in Yorkshire, and now our Club's Co-President is the Editor! Welcome, Mary, and we wish you all the best in the Editorial Chair.

FROM BILL THURBON of the Cambridge Club

It was with great sadness that I read of Eric's farewell in the Digest. He has done a wonderful job, and kept alive, amid difficulties, the work so well begun by Herbert. Jack Overhill and other members of the Cambridge Club join me in gratitude for all that Eric has done over these long years for our Hobby. May I also say that in laying down the editorial task he has passed it on to one who will continue the true spirit of our loved 'Digest'.

Let me conclude with the wish that Eric may long be spared to remain associated with the 'Digest', even in his successor's hands, and with Kipling's praise of famous men:

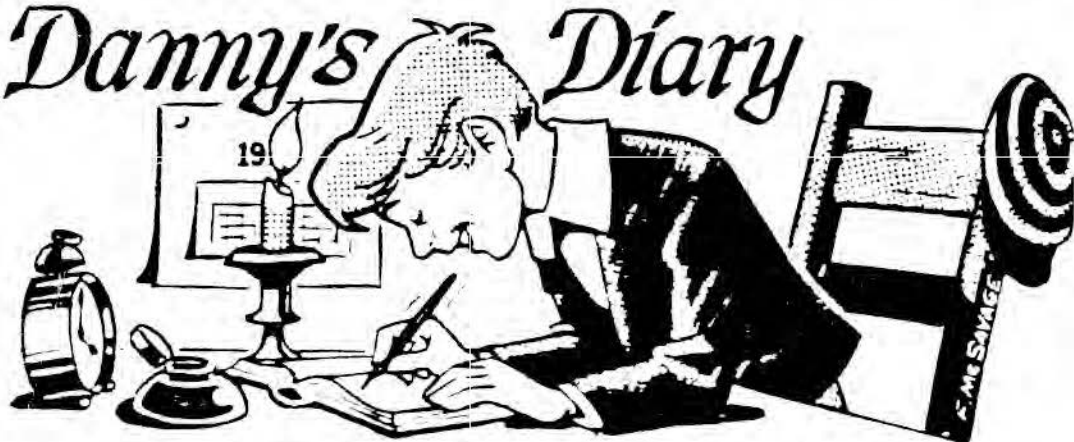
'For their work continueth
And their work continueth
Broad and deep continueth
Greater than their knowing.

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Danny's Diary



FEBRUARY 1937

An average month, so far as the monthlies are concerned. The Greyfriars story in the Schoolboys' Own Library is "Harry Wharton's Rival". Stories with Wharton in the lead are always good, and this one is no exception. Colonel Wharton impresses on his nephew that they must not be extravagant as money is a bit tight. Owing to a set of circumstances, Harry comes on a scrap of a letter written by the Colonel, in which the Colonel says "Certainly no man can be expected to bear for ever the burden of a thoughtless, selfish, and ungrateful nephew --". So Wharton gets the idea that he is a "burden" to his uncle. He decides to break away from the family, and to sit for the Founder's Scholarship so that he can be responsible for his own fees at Greyfriars.

He has a mighty quarrel with the Bounder, and, at the end of the story, Vernon-Smith becomes Junior Captain in Wharton's place. This is a good tale, and it goes on next month.

The next tale in the S.O.L. is "The School for Slackers", a story about High Coombe School, where the school has "dry rot". But a new Headmaster, Jimmy McCann, takes over, and brings about changes. I remember reading these High Coombe stories before in Modern Boy.

The third S.O.L. is "The Spendthrift of St. Frank's". The Hon. Douglas Singleton, a new boy at St. Frank's, is worth a quarter of a million pounds, and he proceeds to waste his wealth in a manner which leaves the St. Frank's chaps gasping.

In the Boys' Friend Library I had "The Black Mole" by George E. Rochester, all about the invention of a giant tank that can burrow underground like a mole. And in the Sexton Blake Library I had "The Case of the Murdered Financier" by John Creasey. This is a terrifically exciting story and I enjoyed it.

England, who started off well by winning the first two Test Matches in Australia, are not doing so well now. In the Third Test which was played at Melbourne, Australia won by 365 runs - quite a victory. And in the Fourth Test which was played at Adelaide, Australia won by 148 runs. So the score to date is two wins each, and the fate of the Ashes will depend on the last game which starts next month.

The Modern Boy is not all that hot just at the moment, though the Captain Justice stories by Murray Roberts are good. First Justice tale of the month is "Mystery Ship", with Justice, in the Flying Cloud, searching for Professor Flaznagel. Next week brought "The Million Pound Prisoner" with Justice still searching in the Yellow Sea for the missing Professor. The theme goes on next week with "Pirates' Lair". And, final of the month, "The Pirate Chief" in which Capt. Justice and Co. invade Yong Huey's stronghold, still in search of Professor Flaznagel.

Also in Modern Boy there is a new motor-bike racing series by Kaye Campson. Christopher and Columbus, two young, hard-up speed fiends have designed the finest motor-bike ever - they call it "The Silent Torpedo". There is a new serial "Tabu Dick" about a white boy in the African wilds. He is called "The Boy Who Mustn't be Touched".

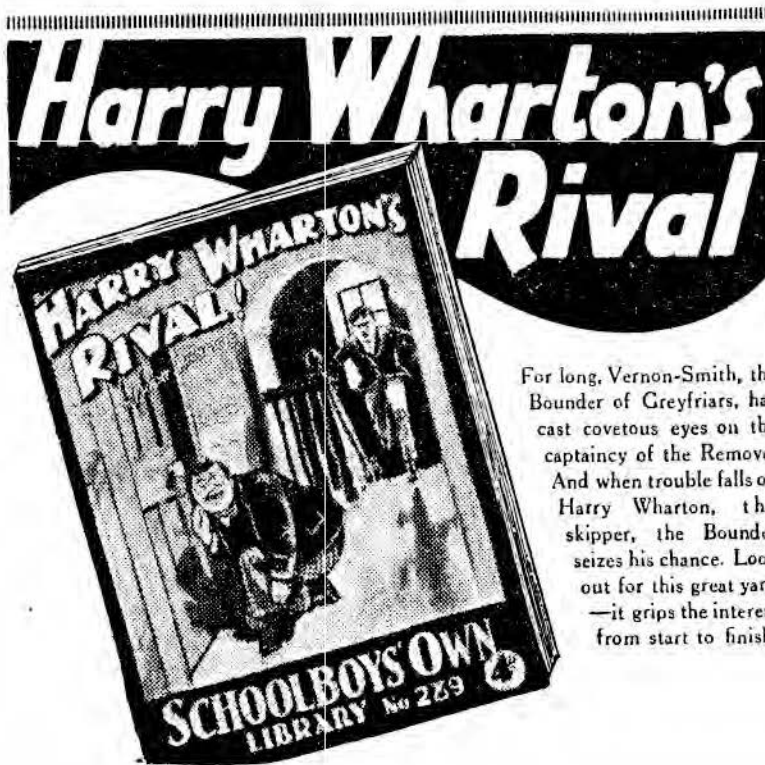
There has been a bad railway disaster at Sleaford where an express jumped the rails. Four platelayers were killed, and some passengers on the train were injured.

In the Magnet they are giving away Free Gifts in the form of photogravure cards of Britain's Defenders.

Throughout the month the barring-out series about the rebellion against Mr. Hacker, the temporary Headmaster, has continued. I don't think it has really been a very good series. A good barring-out needs plenty of drama, but this one is mainly slapstick, and it is too far-fetched.

First tale of the month was "The No-Surrender Schoolboys", in which the boys barricade themselves up in the school tuckshop. The front cover shows Mr. Hacker bound and gagged in a chair.

Next week brought "Holding the Fort" in which Mr. Hacker



For long, Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, has cast covetous eyes on the captaincy of the Remove. And when trouble falls on Harry Wharton, the skipper, the Bounder seizes his chance. Look out for this great yarn—it grips the interest from start to finish.

called in Police-Constable Tozer plus a gang of local boozers and bruisers. Then, next week, came "The Fighting Form" in which Mr. Hacker tells Wingate to "Bend Over", and the Greyfriars Captain replied "Don't be an ass!"

Finally "The Prisoner of the Stronghold" which has a cover showing Mr. Hacker, in mortar-board and apron, washing-up the dirty crocks for the rebels. And Vernon-Smith punches Mr. Hacker full in the face. Then Mr. Quelch turned up - and it was all over. Thank goodness. All too farfetched by half, which I can't remember ever feeling before over a Magnet series.

A jolly good month in the local picture palaces, starting off with Irene Dunne, Allan Jones, and Paul Robeson in "Show Boat", a story of the lives of the people on the old Mississippi show boats. Some lovely songs in it, and a good story.

Mighty fine is "Mutiny on the Bounty" starring Charles Laughton, Clark Gable, and Franchot Tone. Splendid, adventure at its very

best. Charles Laughton was also on this month, this time with Elsa Lanchester, in "Rembrandt", the life story of the famous 17th century painter. This one is highly praised by everyone - it is a British picture - but I, personally, like the Mutiny one better.

Rather a weird film was Lionel Barrymore in "The Devil Doll", about a man who escaped from Devil's Island, and disguised himself as a woman selling dolls which murder those who sent him to prison.

Charlie Chaplin had a girl named Paulette Goddard with him in "Modern Times". It has sound, but no dialogue, and is nothing like so funny as his shorter comedy pictures were.

A bit slow but quite amusing was "The Man Who Could Work Miracles" starring Roland Young. He finds he has the gift to work miracles, a gift given him by a sporty angel.

And then "San Francisco". Every other film pales into insignificance beside this one. Set in 1906 at the time of the earthquake, it stars Clark Gable, Spencer Tracy, and Jeannette Macdonald - and it is a truly lovely film all the way through.

A good month in the Gem, which started off with "The House-master's Peril". This one is about a madman who comes to the neighbourhood of St. Jim's to have revenge on Mr. Railton.

A very good school story is "The Fighting Prefect" in which Mr. Ratcliff is threatened by an Old Boy who comes back to St. Jim's to give his old master a hiding. The master is saved by Darrell, whom he has treated rather meanly.

Then came "The Secret Society of St. Jim's". Knox, the prefect, becomes very obnoxious, until a Secret Society takes a hand.

Final of the Gem's month is "The Return of the Toff". Having forsaken his life of crime, Talbot would give anything to be back with his friends at St. Jim's. But he is a fugitive, hunted by Scotland Yard, till a brave deed earns him the King's Pardon. Great tale.

The lovely old Greyfriars tales from the early Magnet carry on in the back pages of the Gem. This month several weeks have been devoted to one of my great favourites among those early Greyfriars tales. It is "The Faddist Form-master" and tells how a diet fanatic, Mr. Chesham, becomes master of the Remove for a while. Lovely.

A chap at school gave me the newish paper, The Pilot, which has the start of a new series entitled "Will Hay at Bendover". Good fun, in a way, but not really my cup of tea. And Doug bought a Thriller this month which contained a Leslie Charteris story "The Return of the Saint".

ERIC FAYNE COMMENTS ON THIS MONTH'S "DANNY'S DIARY"

S.O.L. No. 289 "Harry Wharton's Rival" comprised three-and-a-bit stories of the 7-story Harry Wharton series of early in 1932. 1932 had been Wharton's year with a vengeance, for, later on, in the autumn of that year, was to come the second Wharton-Rebel series, a big highlight of Magnet history. "Harry Wharton's Rival" reads quite well in the S.O.L., but, in parts, it lost quite a few chapters of the original.

S.O.L. No. 290 "The School for Slackers" was unusually recent for the S.O.L. It comprised 9 stories of High Coombe which had appeared in Modern Boy through the Spring of 1935, less than two years earlier.

Danny's reading of the Sexton Blake story "The Case of the Murdered Financier" reminds us that John Creasey wrote a handful of stories for the Sexton Blake Library. I wonder that one of our Blake enthusiasts has not written a critique of these Blake tales for our Blakiana column. A chance for one of the fans now?

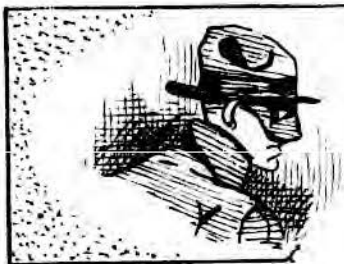
In the 1937 Gem, "The Housemaster's Peril" was a sub story which had appeared under the same title, in the Gem of very early in 1914. "The Fighting Prefect" had appeared, also under the same title, in mid-September of 1914, which was, of course, a good many weeks after the start of the First World War. This excellent tale of the old boy, Stoker, who came back to cane his old schoolmaster, had its theme used again, I feel sure, in a much later Magnet story, though I cannot recall it specifically.

The 1937 tale, "The Secret Society of St. Jim's" had been "The Secret Committee" the following week in 1914.

The 1937 story "The Return of the Toff" had been "The King's Pardon" in the late autumn of 1914. It is interesting to examine it for a moment. Most of the stories open for reprinting now had a distinct war flavour, and they needed a fair amount of revising to make them suitable for 1937. Some had too much war flavour for them to be used at all. In the original tale "The King's Pardon", Talbot had been pardoned for saving a troop train from being wrecked by a German spy. In the reprint, Elberfelt, the German spy, became Gonzales, a Spanish spy; the Great War was changed to the Spanish Civil War, going strong in 1937. Quite a neat transition.

Of the films which Danny saw in February 1937, two of them, "Show Boat" and "Mutiny on the Bounty" were re-made years later, after the war, and neither was a patch on the original, despite the new versions being in colour.

"The Faddish Form-Master", which Danny was enjoying at the back of the Gem, was one of the best known of early Greyfriars stories - a minor "classic", in fact. It had appeared twice in the Popular, each time as "The Faddist Form-Master". It appeared under that title in the very early days of the S.O.L. Yet, when I searched for that title, for the purpose of these notes, in the early Magnet, I could not find it. I traced it eventually. It comprised 3 halfpenny Magnets in 1908, under the respective titles "The Greyfriars Riot", "Four on the Warpath", and "The Triumph of the Remove".



BLAKIANA



SEXTON BLAKE AND THE KITCHEN SINK!

by J.E.M.

That drab and dreary period just after World War Two - the "austerity years" as they have been called - found a reflection in both art and entertainment. "Social Realism" became one of the new fashions: glamour was out, everyday reality was in. Artists painted pictures of kitchen sinks and it wasn't long before dramatists were writing their "kitchen sink" plays. Even the cinema was affected. It Always Rains On Sunday, a film made in 1947 (and how well its very title hits off the general mood) concerned a criminal on the run seeking sanctuary in his old East End haunts which were portrayed with a realism new to the English screen.

Examples of this 40-year-old trend are countless and it is not surprising that Sexton Blake himself was influenced by it. The master of what might be called Blake's "kitchen sink" cases was probably Lewis Jackson who turned out a number of impressive thrillers with stark and sombre backgrounds. Towards the end of the war itself, he wrote The Trail of the five Red Herrings (SBL, 3rd series, No. 101) in which a group of ex-servicemen pool their skills to carry out large-scale robbery. The point of the tale is that they are ordinary men of humble origin persuaded by a glib leader that society is indifferent to their war-time sacrifices. Needless to say, their crimes are frustrated by Blake who recovers the spoils but ensures that these essentially amateur crooks receive the minimum punishment (two of them "get away with it" altogether).

This story was decidedly in tune with its time, touching not only on social problems but suggesting there is a natural justice going beyond the courts. Blake, indeed, actually breaks the law to help these misguided men (on at least one occasion Sherlock Holmes did something very similar). If Blake's role in Jackson's tale is unusual, so also is the down-to-earth setting. This is a tough, gritty and memorable item from the casebook.

In 1946 came Down East (SBL No. 122) and The Case of the Night Lorry Driver (SBL No. 126), the titles nicely indicating the flavour of the stories. Down East has a working-class heroine pestered by a flashy, small-time crook while her husband is supposedly serving abroad as a soldier. The situation is not quite what it seems and it is not long before Sexton Blake becomes involved in criminal matters far from London's slums, but it is the East End atmosphere which leaves the strongest impression. The Case of the Night Lorry Driver, which I have already written about (Digest No. 442) also has a workaday background with unglamorous people (both honest and otherwise) in leading roles: an outstanding Blake yarn by any measure.

The following year Jackson wrote The Night of the 23rd (SBL No. 155) which opens with a domestic shooting in a squalid area of dockland - real "kitchen sink" stuff! Though the action is soon broadened to include more spectacular skulduggery, the back-cloth of mean streets and the people who live in them makes the most compelling contribution to the tale.

No doubt Jackson was not the only Blake writer in this period to produce stories with similar themes and settings but the tales I have referred to could hardly be improved upon as examples of their kind. If, as I have said, they are very much of their time they are none the worse for that. They also show Blake at his most human, recalling the best Gwyn Evans yarns, as well as providing lively and unusual entertainment. So, the next time you want a change from opera cloaks and swordsticks, locked-room mysteries, Chinese secret societies, exotic foreign settings, or the would-be sophistication of the later Blake, why not try these examples from the "kitchen sink" section of the great casebook? You will not be disappointed.

(Footnote: I am indebted to Christopher Lowder for recommending me to this period of Lewis Jackson's writing, though of course he can't be held responsible for any views expressed here!)

* * * * *

WANTED: Girls' Crystal Annual 1940. Popular Book of Girls' Stories 1935, 1936, 1941. Also Bidy's Secret: Maidlin to the Rescue, by E. Oxenham, Mistress Mariner: Sally's Summer Term by D. F. Bruce. The Chalet School and Rosalie by E. Brent-Dyer.

MARY CADOGAN, 46 OVERBURY AVENUE, BECKENHAM, KENT, BR3 2PY.



SENT TO COVENTRY

by Jim Cook

One of the cruellest forms of punishment inflicted on a schoolboy by his fellow students is 'sending him to Coventry' and the theme was often used in the stories of St. Frank's. But I have seen this form of banishment by popular vote on the factory floor, in offices, etc., and sometimes it can occur from a rumour or a mild peccadillo that is blown out of all proportion.

The schoolboy who boards at a public school who is thus ostracised will suffer more than the office worker or the factory mechanic, for the boy is necessarily confined to the school limits.

The origin of sending a victim to Coventry is said to begin in the Great Rebellion times when the citizens of Coventry once had so great a dislike of soldiers that a woman seen speaking to one was instantly tabooed, according to Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable.

It is very strange that this boycotting a person should now persist everywhere where the English language is spoken.

No doubt other countries have their particular kind of studied ostracism, but sending a person to Coventry seems to have reached the far ends of the Earth.

The duration of being sent to Coventry as written in the stories of St. Frank's depended on circumstances. And it wasn't always confined to fellows who were hitherto very unpopular.

Nipper was at one period falsely accused of attacking a senior when Nipper was at the very height of popularity, but the senior's evidence was accepted and Nelson Lee's famous assistant was up for expulsion. He was also sent to Coventry by the majority of juniors and seniors.

It was a dreadful time for the captain of the Remove since he was innocent. But besides being accused of something he hadn't

done, and sentenced to be expelled, many former friends banished him by the cut direct.

Other forms of schoolboy punishment are when they inflict such derogatory expressions as funk or coward. And usually the term is quickly taken up and spread around, even though it may not be true.

It leads me to ask whether sending a boy to a Boarding School will make a man of him. Inherent disabilities or congenital weaknesses may create circumstances that will be misconstrued by schoolboys, and you have your 'funk' or 'coward'.

Sometimes the 'term in Coventry' can last a long time. To some it is mental torture of the worst kind, for we mostly are gregarious and find it very difficult to be otherwise as human beings.

It isn't so harsh when you have grown into adulthood, although even then to be sent to Coventry by your fellow workers can and does cause mental illness.

Usually in our schoolboy tales the victim does an heroic act that acquits him of the ostracism. But such acts are not always to hand in real life.

ALWAYS THE BRIDESMAID - BUT NEVER THE BRIDE?

by W.O.G. Lofts

Part 7

It should be explained that long before 1919, William H. Back had been deservedly promoted to Editorial Director, now having a group of papers under him which included Union Jack, Sexton Blake Library, Boys' Friend Library, and The Nelson Lee Library, each periodical having its own editor. By now the man in charge of the latter was Harold Robert May - a former newspaperman. Born at Lambeth in 1891 he had attended Dulwich College - where P. G. Wodehouse went, and, at a much later date, Bob Monkhouse, and our own C.D. subscriber Denis Gifford. Now Harold May was competent enough, but very easy going, in fact too easy going as he was regarded as something of a butt by his fellow editors. Edwy Searles Brooks on the other hand had quite a strong personality, and could be dogmatic at times in getting his own way in things. As things turned out, Edwy had almost a free hand in what stories were written; in fact he never wrote better than in the period under Harold May. In 1925 he penned what I would term the greatest mystery school series of all time, 'The Ezra Quirke' series (542-549) which was really clever, and showed what talent he had in the mystery

and detective field.

Around 1922 William H. Back who was still at the prime of life died suddenly abroad, and P. Montague Haydon took over his responsibilities. 'Monty', as he was affectionately known, had like 'Willy Back' worked his way up from office boy. During the First World War he had served as a Major, winning the M.C. 'Monty' also had a reputation of being a fairly easy man to deal with - as long as editor's papers had a healthy circulation. On the other hand, if a paper starting ailing he wanted to know the reason why, and quickly suggested ways of bringing it up to scratch. Around early 1926, and for reasons unknown, The Nelson Lee Library started to drop in circulation. Whether the novelty had worn off of a school/detective flavour, or its greatest rivals The Magnets and Gem were just the more popular one cannot be sure. But what happened, simply, was that Harold May was removed from his post as editor, and replaced by Alfred Edgar. According to Edwy Searles Brooks, May 'retired' - but this simply was not true. Official staff records held at Fleetway House show he was still employed there till 1932.

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RADIO BUNTER

By Simon Garrett

I wonder how many of our number caught the radio play Billy Bunter's Christmas Party on December 15th?

I tuned in with some misgivings, fearing a parody.

Instead, the one-hour play turned out to be a faithful, if abridged, version of the 1949 Skilton hardback. To me this is one of the best of the hardbacks, with Bunter enticing the Famous Five and Squiff as paying guests to his Uncle Carter's boarding house - Tankerton Hall. Like the hardbacks generally it has fewer Hamiltonian asides than the best Magnet series, and more dialogue, so loses less in the transition to the new medium.

The basic plot structure was so similar that it was easy to compare with the book as one 'listened in', and much of the dialogue was virtually unchanged. The voices were all very good, from the sneering Bounder to the debonair Inky, with Squiff and Johnny Bull giving us just enough of the Aussie and Yorkshire accents. Anything broader would have verged on caricature. Sensibly, adult actors were used. There was none of that weird variety of broken and unbroken voices that rather let down some of the old TV episodes. Only one quibble here: Bob Cherry's 'Hullo, hullo, hullo!'. It really does sound very forced when you don't drop the aspirates on the second two words.

But the real star was Bessie Bunter, and the delicious scene where Bob Cherry had to escort her from the railway station was given full value. Bessie on the radio was a far more precocious character, constantly trying to manoeuvre Bob under the mistletoe, but this aspect was handled in an extremely innocent and

good-natured way, and I feel sure that Mr. Hamilton would not have disapproved.

The original novel had various topical references:

Food Controllers, petrol rationing, Hubert Tankerton's plight as an impoverished ex-officer. These were omitted, probably rightly. They would have been confusing to many people, and added little. Fortunately, there was no attempt to replace them with modern topics, nor was any of the slang updated, and the timeless universe of Greyfriars was brilliantly sustained.

Perhaps it is unfair to compare 'Radio Bunter' with the television series. The latter were screened in the early days of the medium and television has more pitfalls, notably in casting. Still, radio seems to me the better way, and it seems odd that the BBC took about six decades to discover Bunter. Magnet readers must have formed a sizeable part of the 1930s radio audience. Anyway, they've broken their duck at last, so let's hope they'll continue the innings.

(Editor's comments: B.B.C. Radio repeated this broadcast a few days after the original transmission. It was nicely timed, as Christmas Eve 1986, of course, was the twenty-fifth anniversary of Charles Hamilton's death. A tribute to him by me was published in the December 17th issue of PUNCH.)

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CLIFF HOUSE CORNER

By MARGERY WOODS

A few anagrams from the Fourth Form --- but there's an invader among them!

1. Zeal made Jin her Rio.
2. Shadow or torr.
3. CIA's Marmite Jars.
4. Shun Harmer grim sea jet.
5. Bell Nyman.
6. Vyll An Carter.
7. Norra oil candy skate.

(The solutions will be given in our March issue.)



Madge Minden
By TOMMY KEEN

I wonder if we all have our own special favourite characters the magazines we still love to drool over, featuring the schools which fired our imagination so long ago - Greyfriars, St. Jim's, Rookwood, St. Frank's, and the two well known establishments which housed the girls of Cliff House and Morcove.

I know I have mine. Regarding the boys, Reginald Talbot of St. Jim's is, for me, my favourite character of all, but long before I had even heard of Talbot, or read the stories of Tom Merry & Co., and Harry Wharton and his chums, I had become greatly attached to a character appearing in *The SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN*, which my sister bought, and read avidly every Tuesday. Rather grudgingly she would allow me to look at this delightful little paper, two or three days after she had finished with it, and so I became acquainted with Betty Barton, Polly Linton, and the other girls of Morcove School. But one character in particular became an immediate favourite with me, and remained so for as long as I continued to read *The SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN*. The girl was Madge Minden!

What a lovely, quaint old fashioned Christian name, but Madge was a very popular name way, way back.

After Polly Linton became Betty Barton's first loyal friend, a moody, rather temperamental girl was introduced into the stories, not a new girl, but one who had remained in the background. This was Madge Minden, and she was to become one of Betty's closest chums.

Madge, however, when she was first introduced into the stories, was rather a complex girl, passionately interested in music, even to the extent of breaking bounds to visit the Theatre in Barncombe (Morcove's nearest town), where "Carmen" was being performed. Betty and Polly (nobly of course) also break bounds to meet the wayward Madge. Their friendship then became even closer.

Through the years however, the moody temperament subsided,



and she became known as the musical genius of Morcove, becoming rather staid and sedate, but with occasional displays of fine detective work in solving some of the many mysteries which were always occurring (as in SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN No. 134 - "Thanks to Madge Minden").

Madge featured in one early series, when she was due to be expelled (quite wrongly of course), and in the final story of the series, her father and mother arrived at Morcove. In further stories through the years, Mr. Minden was always described as

Madge's widower father.

This series was issued in No. 58 of the SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN Library - "The Girl Morcove Misjudged".

During the first Christmas holiday series, she was introduced to Polly Linton's brother Jack, at Linton Hall, where the girls were spending the holiday. (Immediately, a rather special friendship began between Madge and Jack, which was to last until the SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN finished in 1938.)

This was an exciting series, with Madge becoming one of the leading characters, as she, and her school chum Tess Trelawney were kidnapped by Moorish people, and whisked off to North Africa. They were of course rescued, and from then on Madge and Tess became a twosome, sharing the same study at Morcove, which previously Madge had shared with another girl, Trixie Hope. As Madge was drawn to music, Tess was to art.

Madge Minden featured in many fine series (and years ago, when as a schoolboy, I wrote to 'Marjorie Stanton', 'she' replied saying that Madge and Tess were two of 'her' favourite characters), and in one series, Madge's father decided that she was too taken up with music, and that it would be of little use to her when she

left Morcove. To prove to him that music could be a career, Madge advertises for paying pupils (much to the derision of Cora Grandways & Co., the snobs of the Fourth Form).

Madge proves her point, when a 'step-cleaner' pupil, through Madge's tuition, becomes a brilliant pianist.

When, in the mid 1920s, after the visit of Jemima Carstairs with her smart shingled hair, almost the entire school surrendered their long tresses to the hairdressers' scissors, Madge remained an individual by keeping her own hair long and always neatly tied back with a bow of ribbon.

A well drawn character was Madge Minden, clever, attractive, and a good sportswoman, who, at the drop of a hat, could compose a brilliant musical score for any of the Christmas pantomimes performed annually at Morcove.

Possessing many of the qualities of Reginald Talbot of St. Jim's, and Tom Redwing of Greyfriars, Madge Minden, with these two boys, made a trio of whom I never tired.

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ODDS & ENDS

THE ERIC FAYNE COLUMN

I met with a little mystery in the run up to Christmas. I received a letter which did not bear the address of the sender. The envelope was postmarked Kelso, and the letter was signed "Jim". The writer said very kindly how much he always enjoyed C.D., and added that he had been a loyal reader since Number 14. Which meant he had been a reader for a very long time. But who was he?

We have a great many "Jims" among our loyal readers, but, searching my files, I could not trace any reader at Kelso. I should particularly have liked to have written to him, for he mentioned that he had suffered a severe stroke in August, and was, in fact, still in hospital. It may, of course, have been that the hospital was in Kelso.

I thank Jim for writing, and hope he will write me again giving me his address. I hope you will soon be fit and well again, Jim.

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SALE: ANNUALS: Dandy, Beano, Knockout, Radio Fun, Film Fun, 1950's, a few pre-war. Film Annuals (pre-war). Comics and film magazines, early rare Walt Disney items. Many other items. Larry Morley, 76 St. Margaret's Road, Hanwell, London, W7 2HF. Tel: 01 579 3143

THE PRINCESS SNOWEE'S CORNER

An unusual thing happened to me over Christmas. My man went away for the whole night on Christmas Day, and I was left alone. It was the very first time ever that my man has left me for the night. For a long time he wouldn't agree to go, but at last he did.

I was a bit worried, but it turned out all right, and I quite enjoyed it. Some nice human people who live in a country called Necksdore came in a good many times to put down fresh food and drink for me, so I had a good tuck in.

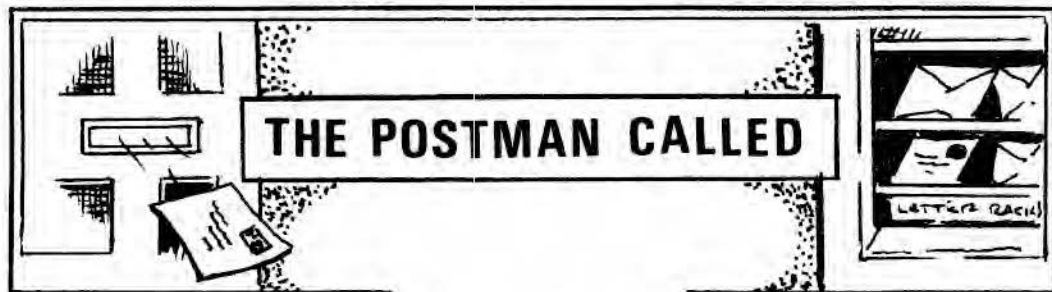
I often go hunting in the lands of Necksdore, and the nice humans don't mind a bit. And while I was alone they kept looking me up, tickling me, and saying nice things to me like "Aren't you a beauty!" They are very truthful folk.

And, of course, I have my own door so I can go in and out if I want to. My man left the heat on all over the house, so it was not bad at all.

When my man came back on Boxing Day evening I gave him a glare. In fact, I was quite catty. And I sulked a bit, to show him who makes the decisions in my home.

But, secretly, it wasn't bad at all. And I've had some nice letters from readers' pets, including one from Mehitabel Hunt of Sevenoaks. She lives with nice humans who came from Australia.

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JACK MURTAGH (Hastings, New Zealand): We would all be lost without the C.D. popping in our letter-boxes each month, and as one of the original subscribers I would feel part of my life was cut off if it didn't turn up. I have every issue of the C.D.'s and Annuals from No. 1, over 40 years without a miss. The first issue is in front of me now - November 1946. Price one shilling. I notice the price went up to one shilling and a penny with issue No. 2. A penny for postage. A far cry from prices and wages today.

S. KALAMUOKIS (Narwee, Australia): Disappointed not to see any mention of 80 years of St. Jim's -(viz. 1906-1986)- Charles Hamilton's

oldest and greatest school. However, congratulations on your Ruby Jubilee, and long may the magazine continue.

STANLEY A. PACHON (Bethlehem, U.S.A.): I have all the C.D.'s and I believe I started with the second year. I always had a keen interest in the English Story Papers. As I look over what is offered to juvenile readers today, I have to shake my head at what they have missed. Television will never replace the old time publications - for me at least.

JOHN GOCHER (Sudbury): I was very interested to read your comments with regard to Herbert Leckenby and the launching of the C.D. I remember when Maurice Bond seemed to take a dislike to John Hunter's Sexton Blakes, saying such things as "Why does this washout write?". Personally, Hunter was one of my favourites and still is for that matter.

Over the years I have enjoyed every issue of CD. It started in humble circumstances and now has obtained a place of honour among all amateur publications. Good luck to it; long may it continue. For years I have been trying to obtain copies of the Target Detective Library and also the C.I.D. Library, but have never been able to obtain one title. Maybe some day! Congratulations on the Annual. I have enjoyed it so much. I think it gets better every year and, without it, Christmas would not be the same. I'd rather miss the turkey.

BILL WATSON (Walton-on-Naze): I wonder if anyone can help me by giving me the exact title of a film about the man-made airport floating in the sea between England and the U.S.A. It was set in the years before planes were big enough to travel non-stop between the countries. The title of the film was "Floating Platform..." followed by a number. Can anybody tell me what that number was, to complete the title? I should like to purchase a copy of the film.

JOE CONROY (Liverpool): I read with interest Brian Sayers' article in the Oct. C.D. on the Big Tops. Then, reading Ernest Holman's article in the Nov. C.D. re the Bunter hardbacks set me thinking. Frank Richards appeared to love the circus - he wrote enough stories about them. Yet, in all the Bunter hardbacks, as far as I know - and I have all of them - there is not one circus story. I wonder if he had it in mind to write one, but left it too late. We'll never know.

F. STURDY (Middlesborough): It is rather ominous that we have the title "Good-bye to Greyfriars" for the latest of the Baker facsimiles. None of the issues included seem to give rise to such a title on which to hang a volume. I hope that I am, indeed, wrong. Another point. It is passing strange to me the importance given to the inclusion of a dust-jacket in the sale of books. It seems to make such a difference in the final cost. If a book was important to me, the text would be the saleable point. I suspect that, like paintings, books are now becoming investments for the future. Like the "Let's Be Controversial" articles (and I deplore the irregularity of their appearances), it's just my point of view. What's yours?

PAUL GALVIN (Barnsley): November saw the 40th Anniversary of "Collectors' Digest" and December the 40th Annual. During these two months I also completed my own collection of C.D.'s and Annuals, and I would like to thank everybody who was so kind to reply to my adverts and help me complete my collection.

I have been subscribing to the C.D. for only about 2 years, so my knowledge of the hobby is limited - but just think of the pleasure I have to come reading these past years of the C.D. for the first time. Many thanks for this year's (1986) issues, and the Annual which was a Christmas treat.

ESMOND KADISH (Hendon): A lovely 'Annual' this year - as always, of course! Amongst other delights were Coker and Cardew, and I learned quite a lot about William's creator, Richmal Crompton. What is left of my hair rose dutifully on end when I read about the Cliff House spooks, and I cheated only once in solving Bob Whiter's Rookwood puzzle! I also pondered on why Mr. Buddle should want to hide his GEM inside The Times (personally, I think The Times should be firmly folded up and hidden within the GEM!), and I've firmly resolved never to be found guilty of plagiarism in 1987. Seriously, it was a most enjoyable and attractive-looking Annual.

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"BERT" HOLMES of 8 St. Luke's Avenue, Barrow-in-Furness, thanks all C.D. friends who kindly sent him cards at Christmas time. He was unable to reply, owing to having been in hospital for an operation, but he deeply appreciated the kindly thoughts. He sends his Best Wishes for the New Year to all friends.



NEWS OF THE OLD BOYS BOOK CLUBS

CAMBRIDGE O.B.B.C.

The Cambridge Club met on Sunday, 4th January, 1987, at the home of Adrian Perkins. Apologies were received from Chairman Vic. Hearn and from Bill Lofts. In the absence of the chairman Edward Witten was in the chair.

The Club learned with great regret of the resignation of Eric Fayne from the editorship of the Collectors' Digest, and recorded their appreciation of his long and devoted work in that office. They welcomed with very great pleasure the news that his successor would be Mary Cadogan, to whom they wished a long and happy term as Editor.

Paul Wilkins opened the programme with a long, and hilarious presentation of a film on "Those Saturday Morning Serials" of the past, that reminded the older members of the past glories of the silver screen before the "box" became to replace it in our homes. Howard Corn followed this item with a recording of an exhibition of boys' and girls' papers, covering a wide section of this side of the hobby.

After enjoying Mrs. Perkins delicious tea Keith Hodkinson gave a selection of Science Fiction films from the Cinema. His long, and entertaining show included scenes from "Venusian", "First Men in the Moon", "The first Moon shots", "Star Wars", "Capricorn one", "Meteor", and "Westworld".

The meeting closed with warm votes of thanks to Adrian and Mrs. Perkins for their hospitality, and to Paul, Howard and Keith for their entertaining items.

The next meeting of the Club will be on 1st February at the home of Tony Cowley.

W. THURBON

LONDON O.B.B.C.

Indispositions and inclement weather conditions curtailed the attendance at the Walthamstow meeting to sixteen members. However it was a very convivial gathering. There were only three items on the entertainment side of the meetings. Les Rowley gave a reading from one of his Christmas effusions, Bill Lofts rendered a very fine discourse on the way the juvenile characters of the old books have been brought up-to-date somewhat and this provoked a lively discussion. The many parodies of the characters were mentioned including the Herlock Sholmes and the St. Sam's stories in the Greyfriars Herald.

Roy Parsons gave a very good treatise on P. G. Wodehouse and his connection with the Captain magazine. Roy has now completed his collection of the entire 50 volumes of that excellent boys' magazine of our youth.

Chris and Duncan Harper rendered sterling work in the kitchen and provided a very fine tea. They were suitably thanked and an early termination of the meeting took place for those who had a long way to go home.

Next meeting is the A.G.M. at the Liberal Hall, Ealing on Sunday, 8th February. Tea will be provided but bring own tuck.

BEN WHITER

NORTHERN O.B.B.C REPORT

Meeting held: Saturday, 10th January, 1987

The first bad night of the winter resulted in our having only nine of our regulars turning up but we were delighted to welcome three visitors (and hopefully new members) - Adrian Sacks and his fourteen year old daughter from Ilkley: Paul Savion who had made the long journey from Kingston-upon-Hull.

Keith Smith was indisposed, so Darrell took the Chair for our A.G.M. which had been brought forward three months as we had a number of important items to discuss. The positions are all held by the same people for a further year, except for one very important change. After many years as Librarian and Treasurer, Mollie Allison felt it was now time to relinquish the jobs to someone else. Paul Galvin is our new Librarian and Revd. Geoffrey Good is our Treasurer.

Mollie was given a hearty round of applause for all the hard work she has put into the Club over the years.

Expressions of delight were made by Members when they found

that our own Co-President and editor of the C.D., Mary Cadogan, would be coming to our meeting in March and plans were made for tentative arrangements.

Reference was made to the 25th Anniversary of the death of Charles Hamilton at Christmas, 1986, and the fact that very little comment had been made about it. A small piece had appeared in "The Times". (Editor's comment: And a tribute by me in PUNCH!)

Paul Galvin paid tribute to all the hard work of Eric Fayne, with a talk on the history of the C.D. Mention was made of the famous Number 3A and the edition in which the first Northern Club report appeared, and of other interesting points from notable articles of the past.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

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TOM BROWN AND GREYFRIARS

by E. Baldock

Recently I discovered in the corner of one of my shelves a small green volume, long overlooked. It was an edition of 'Tom Brown's Schooldays', a reprint of 1894. It is ascribed on the title page as being by 'An Old Boy', a custom which Thomas Hughes and many other Victorian authors were prone to adopt for various reasons. 'Tom Brown' alongside 'Sandford and Merton' probably signal the beginning of the great tide of Public School literature which followed. Traces of them may be found in much that followed in this new field.

Fashions may change, but the spirit remains much the same. Life was perhaps a little tougher, and discipline somewhat more stringent in application in Tom Brown's day, yet I suspect it was none the less enjoyable for that. Did not the system produce some very illustrious characters? It is evident by looking at the splendid gallery of soldiers, administrators, political leaders, and many great Empire builders, who were initially inspired by their training with a spirit which today we may well envy.

In George Wingate, the Captain of Greyfriars we can surely trace echoes and connotations with 'good old Brooke' and has not Gerald Loder and possibly Carne inherited some of the characteristics of the incorrigible Flashman? There are in fact, should one care to study them, many facets of the Rugby of the mid and late nineteenth century reflected in the Greyfriars we know today - even down, in the early days, to the method of inflicting the occasional flogging by hoisting the victim upon the shoulders of the school porter. A

tradition and practice now happily defunct.

Many of the junior common room activities must be instantly recognised. The nature and pastimes of boys change but little over the years. Arguments, tussles, japes, teasing - NOT however any more 'roasting'. One does not read of a Bunter at Rugby in Tom Brown's times; surely there must have been some junior who would have qualified - not in any way in the same league with our own William George, who is unique, but a lesser model. Our Bunter burgeoned forth as a 'one off' type of character, neither preceded nor likely to be followed by another such. Minor editions there may be, but only one 'Owl'.

Certain similarities may be traced by the use of a little imagination between Tom and East with Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent. Both pairs are drawn together by instincts and circumstances which swiftly developed into permanent friendships, East and Nugent having many facets of sympathy and forbearance towards their sometimes less patient companions.

Whether the Rugby of Tom Brown's day possessed a Mr. Quelch or a Paul Pontifex Prout is not clear; this is somewhat shadowy territory. Possibly they did exist in a minor form, but as ripe and rounded characters I think Greyfriars holds the palm in this respect. Crustiness and pomposity side by side. Yet who would say that they lacked popularity or the affection and loyalty of their charges - a strange paradox.

The life of Tom Brown's Rugby certainly survives in the old quadrangle and form-rooms of Greyfriars, modified to a degree and perhaps a little more civilised, but in essence much the same.

A final thought. What would Tom Brown, Brooke, Flashman or indeed the 'Old Boy' himself have thought and said had it been, by some magic process, revealed to them that a century hence Public Schools would be admitting to their ranks members of the opposite sex? One quakes to think what would have been the reaction of the great Dr. Arnold. Happily for us, Greyfriars will remain forever a male preserve. Imagine poor Mr. Quelch having the control and jurisdiction of young ladies. No, it would just not do. And Horace Coker, although a perfect gentleman, would have, we may be sure, very strong feelings concerning such an incursion into male preserves. It is daunting to contemplate the endless tirades the long suffering Potter and Green would be subjected to. With William George Bunter it would of course be quite different. Ever convinced that he is the ultimate as a 'ladies man' he would probably swell to bursting

point and become completely insufferable should such an innovation ever occur. A fatuous Owl is one thing - a lady-killing Owl is quite another, which would be totally unacceptable. As for Tom Brown and his contemporaries, probably not in their wildest dreams did they envisage such a revolution.

(Editor's Note: There was that wonderful early series about girls at Greyfriars when the Cliff House Fourth Formers had temporarily to share the Remove's form-room - and form-master. Clara and her chums nearly drove Mr. Quelch to despair, which underlines Mr. Baldock's point!)

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AWAY MATCHES - AT ROOKWOOD

By J.F. Burrell

With reference to the location of Rookwood School, mentioned in the January C.D. by Ernest Holman, in one story Charles Hamilton placed the school in Sussex, but whether this was a matter of convenience or a slip of the pen is hard to say. The school was, however, generally considered to have been in Hampshire and even if one placed Rookwood at the most eastern extremities of Hampshire in the Aldershot area or at Emsworth (between Chichester and Portsmouth), it was still a long way for a Greyfriars team to go to matches.

Supposing Rookwood to be in the Aldershot area, for an all day game of cricket one could get there for a late morning start by arriving at North Camp at 11.42 a.m. This meant getting to Ashford (some 25 miles away) for 8.35 a.m. Supposing it, on the other hand, to be at Emsworth one had to be at Ashford even earlier (at 8.20 a.m.) and Emsworth could not be reached until 12.18 p.m. Despite what Mr. Holman suggests, trains were much slower, and the Coast Lines from Hastings to Portsmouth were not electrified until 1938, nearly at the end of the Magnet era.

For these journeys it is doubtful if Gosling would have approved of ringing the rising bell earlier for 'them young rips'. A road journey to Ashford would have been out of the question, as Charles Hamilton was still conveying teams to local matches in horse brakes. He would probably make things even more impossible as he had no idea as to what time all day matches started. There are instances of Mr. Lascelles playing in a county match that started at 10 a.m.!

As for Bunter, assuming that he could not wangle the morning off, and it is a pretty fair assumption, how would he get on? He would arrive at North Camp, at 5.21, almost too late for tea, and at Emsworth at 8.09 p.m. (just in time for supper if anyone was prepared to oblige).

Bibliography: Bradshaw's Timetable Summer 1928.

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Rookwood Personalities.



Tom Rawson
A Scholarship Junior
Well up in Glass and an
excellent Goalkeeper



Adolphus Smythe
Leader of the
"Nuts"



John Maek
Porter and
Lodgkeeper



George Bulkeley
Captain of Rookwood
A Splendid
All-Round Sportsman



Mark Laitrey
The Cad of the
Fourth Form



The HEAD.

Reginald
Muffin.
Shown at his
Favorite
Fashime!



The Famous Fistical Four.



Lawrence Neville
Chum of George Bulkeley
and Captain of Boxing



Jimmy
Silver



George
Raby



Arthur
Newcome



Arthur Edward
Lovell



Dicky
Dalton.
The Popular
Master of the
Classical Fourth



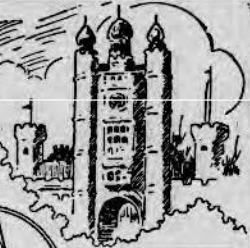
Mr Herbert
Munders, M.A.
The Unpopular
Modern
House Master.



Valentine
Springy



Mark Carthew.
The Black Sheep
of the
Classical Sixth



A ST. FRANK'S "NUGGET"

By Leslie S. Laskey

Mr. C.H. Churchill's recent articles on the stories of St. Frank's prompt me to comment on one uncommon feature of the short-lived "Nugget Weekly". This attractive little paper printed both cover pictures, and also some internal illustrations, in a full range of colours, an unusual venture for an Amalgamated Press juvenile paper at that time (1920). The five colours used were red, orange, yellow, blue and green. The St. Frank's story illustrations in these colours made a striking contrast with the usual black and white drawings.

This five colour process was almost identical to that used by Cassell's for the front and back cover pictures in their weekly paper "The New Boy's World" as long ago as 1906.

Mr. Churchill posed the question of why the Editor of the "Schoolboy's Own Library" selected the story "The Great Fire at St. Frank's" as the first Nelson Lee Library tale to be reprinted, when there were numerous earlier stories which might have been used.

I would suggest that the story of the great fire might have been chosen because of its dramatic impact. This was one of the earliest St. Frank's stories I ever read, for the "Nelson Lee" had been before my time, and I can well remember the impact that Edwy Searles Brooks's vivid description of the disastrous fire made on me at the time.

After such drama and excitement, I was eager to read more of Mr. Brooks's stories.

Perhaps there were many other boys who felt the same way?

FROM R.V. MOSS (New Zealand)

'Bray' - a reply to Len Wormull's question in 'The Postman Called':
January C.D.

The word 'Bray' as used in Proverbs (A.V.) seems to be of old French origin. It means to pound - grind small. Hence - to pound the mortar.

This is one of those occasions where a modern version of the Bible has its use. The N.E.B. makes the meaning clear:-

'pound a fool with pestle and mortar
his folly will never be knocked out of him'