

STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Vol. 41

APRIL 1987

No. 484



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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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W. H. GANDER

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HERBERT LECKENBY

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BETWEEN OURSELVES

EASTER PARADE

Easter and - hopefully - Spring will almost be upon us when you read this editorial so, in celebration, this month's C.D. is an enlarged 'special' - an Easter Parade of articles, stories and pictures. The extra pages are an Easter Egg gift from me to you, made possible by the enthusiastic band of contributors who continue to send so many fine items for publication. In wishing you a Happy Easter I trust that the season's promise of hope and renewal will be fulfilled for every one of you.

VISIT TO THE NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

Last month I had the very great pleasure of spending a few days in Leeds, to meet members of the Northern Club with whom I spent several truly happy hours. What never fails to fascinate me is that, after so many years, all of us are still brimming over at Club meetings (and in the C.D.) with things to discuss about our hobby. It is really ever-green.

On this theme, and particularly for the benefit of our newer readers, I would like to draw attention to the ever-growing list of publications from the Museum Press relating to the work of Frank Richards and other authors of our favourite papers. The complete range of these publications is described elsewhere in this issue of C.D, and we understand that a further Museum Press opus is somewhere 'in the pipeline'.

A TRIBUTE

Although it has nothing directly to do with old boys' books, I feel I must mention the Zeebrugge ferry disaster for, while I am writing this editorial, we are all still suffering the shock of this. It is a tragedy which will long be remembered - but so too will the bravery and self-sacrifice of the rescuers from Britain, Belgium and elsewhere. There is a lot in the modern world to criticise - but human resilience and the spirit of self-sacrifice are happily still very much to the fore. The Zeebrugge sinking highlighted many indelible images of courage; one which I will not forget is of the young man who made himself into a human bridge in order to save his family, friends and many of his companions in distress whom he did not know, but was determined to help. Am I stretching our feelings for the old papers too far to suggest that the traditions of service and responsibility - as embodied in heroes like Harry Wharton by Tom Merry - are still very much alive in both old and young people today?

MARY CADOGAN

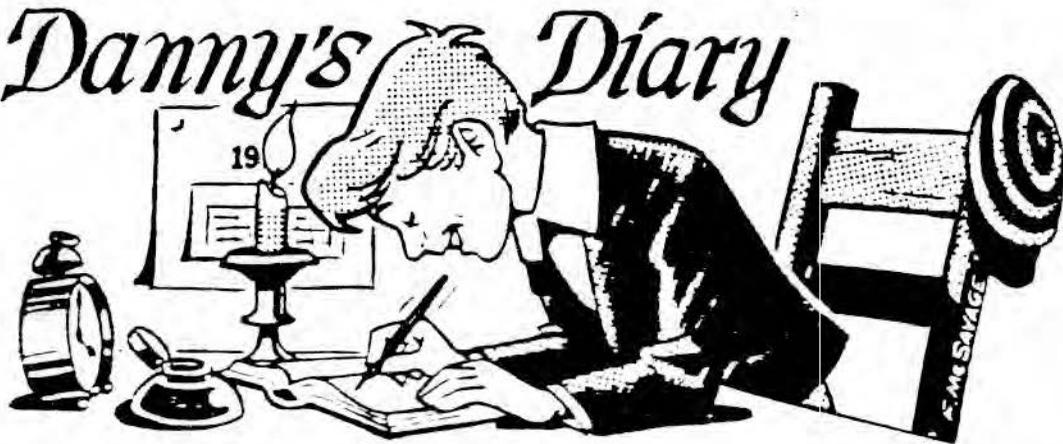
OBITUARIES:

Sadly we have to report the passing of two more members of our collecting circle. Alf Hanson, of Urmston, Manchester, died early in the New Year, at the age of 75, after spending Christmas with his family. Many of us will remember his enthusiasm for the Nelson Lee, and his skill in illustration. (Perhaps we shall be

able to publish some of his pictures soon in the C.D.)

'Bert' Holmes of Barrow-in-Furness, died peacefully in hospital on February 20th, aged 81, after being ill for some time. He had been interested in old boys' books since the mid-1960's and, like Alf Hanson, will be missed not only by his family but by friends in our hobby. (We are indebted to Mr. C.S. Raven and Mr. A. Dacre for notices of Alf's and Bert's death.)

Danny's Diary



APRIL 1937

In Modern Boy a new series has started this month about Len Lex, the Schoolboy Detective. It commenced in the second issue of the month, and the opening tale is entitled "Kicked Out". It is just before the start of the new term at Oakshott School, and Inspector Nixon of Scotland Yard is telling his nephew, Len Lex, that a new boy named Tunstall is going to Oakshott for the new team.

Tunstall the grandson of Sir Gilbert Tunstall, and Sir Gilbert has pulled strings to get his grandson into Oakshott, for Tunstall has been expelled from a Yorkshire School. Tunstall was found guilty of all sorts of misdemeanours like betting, breaking bounds, and general blackguardism. But Tunstall claims that it was Varney, a cousin at the same Yorkshire School, who plotted and caused the expulsion of Tunstall. However, Tunstall starts off badly at Oakshott by smoking in the study.

In the second tale "Asking for the Sack", Len Lex is puzzled as to why Tunstall seems to be trying in every way to get himself sacked from Oakshott. The last tale of the month is "Bully of the Fifth", and it is Tunstall who is an out and out bully. And Len Lex is more and more puzzled at the behaviour of the new boy. The series continues.

It has been a very bad month on the railways. There have been no less than 3 bad train accidents. Two of these have been near London. In fog there was a collision at Bow, and though nobody was killed, 13 people were seriously injured. But a worse accident occurred at Battersea, where there was a high speed collision; 10 people were killed and 11 were badly hurt.

The third accident occurred at Crewe. A train came off the lines as it approached the station, and some of the carriages went up on the platform. Nobody was killed, but a large number of people were injured.

A wonderful month in the Libraries. Some tip-top stories. In the Schoolboys' Own Library the Greyfriars story is "The Fugitive Schoolboy". It introduces Frank Levison of St. Jim's. He runs away from St. Jim's to escape trouble, and finds shelter with his friends at Greyfriars. But he didn't know that his action was to lead his brother Ernest, once a Greyfriars boy, into disgrace.

The 2nd S.O.L. is "The Fourth Form at Rookwood". This clearly is made up from a good number of early Rookwood tales. Tubby Muffin thinks he has become rich owing to the death of his Uncle Joshua, but suddenly Uncle turns up at Rookwood. Then there are a number of chapters devoted to the rivalry with Bagshot School. There is a long section devoted to Mornington. He does a good turn to Jimmy Silver, but when Jimmy gives him a chance in the football team, Morny lets the side down. Van Ryn plays his part as a ventriloquist in one section, and there is another section devoted to larks on April Fools day. All told, a lovely book.

The third S.O.L. is, of course, the St. Frank's one, and it is entitled "The Spendthrift's Lesson" and continues the long story about Singleton of the Remove. He has spent a quarter of a million pounds in a few weeks, and does not stop until he is penniless.

Pierre Quiroule is back this month in the Sexton Blake Library, and it is quite a long time since the last one. It is "The Mystery of No. 13 Caversham Square" and it introduces Granite Grant, Mlle.

Julie, and Bertrand Charon. It is a very eerie tale, enough to give you nightmares, and it has a sinister criminal who calls himself "The Snake".

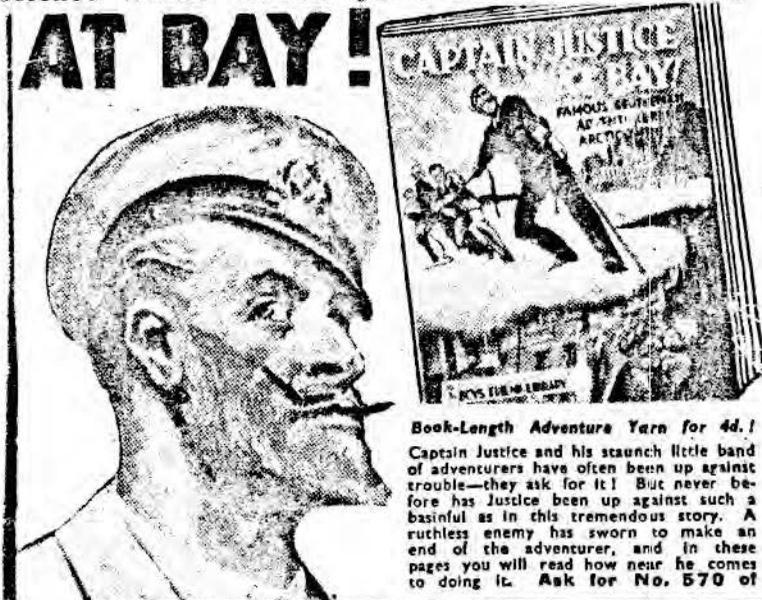
In the Boys' Friend Library, the Rio Kid is back again, in a wonderful story entitled "The Rio Kid's Gold-Mine". I loved every word of it. There is also a Captain Justice tale, "Captain Justice at Bay". A ruthless enemy has sworn to kill him.

The newspapers have been full of a murder case. The body of a girl named Ruby Keen was found on a footpath at Leighton Buzzard. She had been strangled. A man named Leslie Stone has been arrested and charged with her murder.

A fairish month in the Gem. In "The St. Jim's Charity Fund" Tom Merry & Co. set out to raise money for the local hospital. There is plenty of fun in the story. Finally they challenge the First Eleven to a football match against the juniors. The seniors are annoyed, and turn out for the game in toppers, tail-coats, and white spats.

Next came "The Toff's Triumph", another Talbot tale. There is a new science master at St. Jim's and there is a big burglary

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BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY

at Glyn House. Talbot recognises Mr. Packington, the new science master, as the Professor, the leader of the gang to which he once belonged. Skimpole plays a big part in this tale. It is a tip-top tale, the best of the month.

Then came "The Housemaster's Bodyguard", a sequel to "The Housemaster's Peril" of a month or two back. Munro, Mr. Railton's enemy, escapes from prison, and when Tom Merry & Co. hear of the escape they form a bodyguard to look after the safety of their housemaster.

Last of the month is "Lure of the Footlights", all about Lowther's love for the stage. It brings back the old character, Mr. Curll. Mr. Curll is presenting a short play at Banchester Empire. His leading man gets ill, and Monty Lowther takes his place. So Lowther breaks bounds every night to act in the play "His Love Against the World".

At the back of the Gem, the Greyfriars tale has been "Under Petticoat Rule". The Head's sister, Miss Locke, takes charge of the Remove for a while. This is followed by another story, serialised from the early Magnet, introducing Ernest Levison. So we have Levison both at St. Jim's and at Greyfriars at present in the Gem. I shouldn't be surprised if this one turns out to be the one where Levison was expelled from Greyfriars.

I've had many happy hours in the local cinemas this month. Jack Holt was in an exciting motor-racing film "Crash Donovan". One that Mum loved was "Dodsworth" which has been highly praised. It is from a novel by Sinclair Lewis which Mum read, and it stars a big cast including Walter Huston, Mary Astor, David Niven and Paul Lukas.

A couple of British films were together in one programme. These were Max Miller in "Educated Evans" from a story by Edgar Wallace, and "Keep Your Seats, Please" starring George Formby and Florence Desmond, about a fortune which was hidden in one of six chairs. One I liked a lot was "My Man Godfrey" about a rich family who invite a tramp to be their butler and then find out he is richer than they are. This one starred William Powell and Carole Lombard.

A British picture I found a bit tame, though Mum liked it, was "The Beloved Vagabond", set early in the century with a jilted artist falling in love with an orphan girl. It starred Maurice Chevalier and Margaret Lockwood.

One I loved was "The Devil Takes the Count" starring Micky Rooney, Freddie Bartholomew, and Jackie Cooper. Another one I liked very much (though I wouldn't dare to mention at school that

ever I have seen it) was Shirley Temple in "Dimples", set just before the American Civil War, about a little girl and her wicked old grandfather (he is played by Frank Morgan) who went into high society and won all hearts. If the chaps knew I had gone to see it they would call me Dimples for the rest of my schooldays.

One night the whole family went to Holborn Empire where there was a marvellous variety show headed by Max Miller with a big spectacular act by Murray, who is an escapologist.

This month's first two stories in the Magnet brought to an end the series about the disappearances of Mr. Quelch's watchchain. It has been the best series in the Magnet for quite a while. The stories were entitled respectively "Keeping Quelch Quiet" and "The Heavy Hand". Bunter hid Quelch's chain, it eventually got into the hands of Ponsonby of Highcliffe, and Frank Courtenay of Highcliffe was under suspicion. Bad feeling developed between Greyfriars and Highcliffe. Lovely stuff.

Then came the Easter Holiday Series. In a way it is something of a sequel to the time, a few years ago, when the chums went to Kenya with Mr. Vernon-Smith's party. It seems that at that time Mr. Vernon-Smith got a "Concession" of some sort, and now some murderous Italians are after it.

In the first of the series, "Billy Bunter's Lucky Day", an attempt is made on the life of the millionaire, and Bunter is the means of saving him. As a result, Bunter gets an invitation to join the Bounder's holiday party at Seahill Park.

The theme continues in the final tale of the month, "The Shadowed Millionaire". At Seahill Park Bunter is a welcome guest of the Bounder, but not of the Bounder's other guests who are Pon & Co. of Highcliffe. There is great fun, mixed with the thrills, as Pon & Co. try to boot Bunter out of Seahill Park. The series continues next month.

All the time now, the covers of the Magnet are drawn by Shields and the inside pictures are by Chapman. I wonder why Shields doesn't do them all now, like he used to.

ERIC FAYNE Comments on this month's DANNY'S DIARY

S.O.L.No. 295 "The Fugitive Schoolboy" comprised the first half of the 7-story Magnet series from the Spring of 1923. So the powers-that-be went back a good many years to pick up this one. The opening story, when it appeared in the Magnet in 1923, had been adorned with the pleasantly quaint and old-fashioned title of "How Levison Minor Came to Greyfriars". Way back in 1923, it was

told in the Gem of the same period how Levison Minor had run away from St. Jim's. It seems rather odd that the St. Jim's side of the plot was not related in another S.O.L. at the same time that "The Fugitive Schoolboy" appeared.

S.O.L. No. 296 "The Fourth Form at Rookwood" is a lovely collection of early Rookwood tales, not consecutive, from the Spring of 1917. Simply great reading for the Rookwood fan.

So Pierre Quiroule was back in the S.B.L. after a fairly long break. I cannot trace that this one was a reprint, and think it was probably a new story from Sayer. It is an excellent novel.

"The Rio Kid's Gold-Mine" came fairly early in the series in the Popular. It had been reprinted once before in the B.F.L., in the summer of 1931. Its second appearance in the Library indicates the popularity of the character. It is, in passing, one of the finest of the Rio Kid yarns - and that's saying a mouthful, as the Rio Kid himself might say. The Captain Justice tale, of course, had run in Modern Boy some years earlier.

"The St. Jim's Charity Fund" of the 1937 Gem had been "Tom Merry's War Fund" late in 1914. These stories from early in the war often had a pronounced war flavour, and must have needed considerable adapting. In 1914 the juniors started a fund for wounded Tommies; in 1937 the fund was for the local hospital.

"The Toff's Triumph" of 1937 had been "Talbot's Triumph" in late 1914. This, in its day, was an exceptionally good Talbot tale, even though I feel quite sure that the excess of Toff stories at this period in the Blue Gem was instrumental in losing the paper its superiority over the Magnet, circulation-wise.

"The Housemaster's Bodyguard" was a substitute story which had appeared under the same title in the summer of 1914. It was a sequel to the sub story "The Housemaster's Peril". Originally there was a long gap between the original tale and its sequel, but they were parted by only a few weeks in 1937.

"The Lure of the Footlights" had been "Playing a Part" in the Spring of 1914.

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A LETTER FROM ST. FRANK'S

by Jim Cook

'Cry "HAVOC" and let slip the dogs of war...' (Julius Caesar).

Edwy Searles Brooks seemed to have a penchant for war in his holiday series. In the process of restoring lost kingdoms, scenes of carnage and massacre were described in toto, whether in the Sahara Desert of the arcane communities at the Poles, the Congo jungles and the North African Treasure Hunt; the South Sea Islands - even that mysterious Balkan Kingdom of Mordania ... The boys of St. Frank's, together with Lord Dorrimore, Umlosi and Nelson Lee brought victory to the oppressed.

Although records are no longer available of further conquests, perhaps we can imagine the intrepid holiday party in present-day theatres of war and subjugated people, with the boys and the Moor View girls in full battle-dress as a measure of topicality. For the girls were just as eager as the boys to participate in defeating tyrants. But back at the Moor View School for Young Ladies, where gentility reigned supreme, one would have been excused for believing that those sweet-young-things never took part in hostilities in the far corners of the world.

My view of St. Frank's today hasn't changed: the boys still recall the adventure of yesterday; the Moor View girls are forever ready and willing to embark with them to mysterious places, and to bring succour and relief to the downtrodden. But to get away from war and all its miseries, the gentle charm emanating from Moor View School is a holiday from the woes of life. There is only one girl who could be the counterpart of a St. Frank's cad - Joan Tarrant, who has been falsely identified with Claude Gore-Pearce. But Joan is pretty - in a flashy sort of way - and ever

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The St. FRANK'S APRIL FOOLS!



By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

All smiles, as cheery and as chirpy as ever, Nipper and his chums of the Remove are back in good old England. They little realise what a shock is awaiting them at St. Frank's; for they've forgotten that there's such a day as April 1st—and Irene & Co., of the Moor View School haven't! Start reading this screamingly funny yarn now, chums.—Ed.

ready to play a jape. Gore-Pearce, the son of a parvenu millionaire, is a person of no substance. However, Gore-Pearce and Joan are friends when it suits them, while the other members of Joan's Co. - Bessie Groves, Hilda Smith and Maudie Royce - seldom shine in the character firmament.

I have always found the adventures of the girls the more interesting. They were a little ahead of their time in their actions, but this was to project the future (Brooks was a pilot in describing young ladies as they might emerge in the years to come).

It appears that no restraint was fixed in Brooks' dealing with the girls' adventures, for at one period drugs featured in a story, when Irene Manners was accused of passing drugs at the school - an advanced subject then!

There was also the death of a St. Frank's senior, following a drinking spree, an event which made headlines in the national

dailies. But, apart from this, St. Frank's and the Moor View School for Young Ladies represented models of virtue, and one need never be ashamed of reading about these two fine institutions.

Always the Bridesmaid - but never the Bride? by W.O.G. Lofts

Part 8

Harold Robert May who lived then at Richmond was last seen during the Second World War years at Hammersmith, London, and one of my failures has been in never tracing him.

Now 'Monty' Haydon was a great admirer of the characters of Charles Hamilton he and his brother Rex reading the stories in boyhood days. 'Monty' had the view that it was a character that built up a following in a paper. 'Frank Richards' had built up Billy Bunter from a rather minor character to where he dominated the stories - which in his opinion had made the paper a success. Likewise the policy of the new editor would be to build up Oswald Handforth of St. Franks.

Alfred Edgar was certainly different in almost everything from Harold May. Keen, precise, he was also a most prolific writer of some merit, pouring out all types of yarns under his own name and others. A former engineer, his speciality was motor-racing as well as writing Sexton Blake stories. In 1931 he wrote The House of Thrills series in the blue covered Bullseye as well as the classical 'The Phantom of Cursiter Fields'. One could say he was on a par with Brooks in the writing field, and in later life, after writing two successful plays 'The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse' and 'The Man from Half-Moon Street', under the Barrie Lyndon pen name he went to Hollywood. Contacted some years ago by a film star friend there he declined to talk of his early days of editorships and writing. He died in 1973.

Edgar was instructed by 'Monty Haydon' to push the character of Handforth in the stories. Edwy Searles Brooks who was used to a free hand did not like this one bit, and in time began almost to dislike the character. There was even a boost of sorts for readers of The Gem to acquaint themselves with the character in the Handforth at St. Jim's' series (1059-63) in 1928. It was hoped that new readers of The Nelson Lee Library could be obtained. In fact, when I met Mrs. Frances Brooks after the death of Edwy, without any prompting she told me that Alfred Edgar and 'Monty Haydon' only wanted Handforth all the time, and it was no wonder that the creator began to lose interest.

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MY CHOICE OF SEXTON BLAKE STORIES

by WILLIAM THURBON

I was very interested in Jack Adrian's selection for the book SEXTON BLAKE WINS; but this took me back to much earlier stories, and I wondered what choice I would have made for a series of earlier Blakes?

My first choice is easy. I still have the copy, very tattered, but treasured, which I bought from a small paper shop, one summer school half-holiday in 1913 - Union Jack 504, June 7th, 1913: 'The Long Trail'. This was a Loosely and Lobangu story by Cecil Hayter. It was only in later years that I recognised Hayter had borrowed many things not only from Rider Haggard, but also from Conan Doyle. Primarily from Haggard: search for a missing heir ('King Solomon's Mines'), body in glazier, etc., tree men with darts. This tale was written soon after Doyle's 'Lost World' had been published, and pterodactyls and other prehistoric monsters also appeared. A story which I still recall with great pleasure. (I once said in an early Annual that while Hayter's Loosely and Lobangu were based on Allan Quartermain and Umslopogaas, by the time Tex Harding took over the characters they were based on Sanders of the River and Bosambo!)

My second choice would be a Mlle. Yvonne story. I have always considered Yvonne to be one of the best Blake characters; I think I would choose U.J. 501: 'The Detective Airman'. This was written in 1913 when the aeroplane was still a novelty, and big prizes were offered for first flights, etc. This story had Blake and Tinker competing in, and winning, a race around Great Britain. Meanwhile Yvonne was busy (both in a liner and in an aeroplane) in bringing about the downfall of one of her enemies.

U.J. 319: 'Sexton Blake, Scoutmaster' would be my third choice. I read this only when I was collecting vigorously in the 1960s. I was interested, since I have been connected with the Scout Movement ever since 1917, having been scout, Rover scout, Scoutmaster and Rover Scout Leader, and, from the outbreak of war in 1939 until the late 1970's, I held various District and County, Secretaryships. I am still an Honorary Vice-President of Cambridgeshire and several Cambridge Scout Districts. This tale is typical of the many boy scout tales written before 1914.

My fourth choice would be a story I have only read in the Penny Popular reprint: U.J. 177, 'Salvation Army Blake'. (The Popular reprint was called 'Sexton Blake's Mission!') A good 'period piece', with a sympathetic view of the Salvation Army as it was in the early years of the century. It introduces a figure who often appeared in the stories in the years before the Great War, Detective Inspector Will Spearing. (A detective Spearing also appeared in 'Pluck' before 1914.)

My fifth choice would be another Loosely and Lobangu story, in fact the first in which they appeared, 'The Slave Market', U.J. 171. Blake is here in a Haggard-style African story, searching for his old schoolfriend, Sir Richard Loosely, who has been captured by a slave-dealer. This story has echoes of Haggard's 'People of the Mist'.

My last choice would be a George Marsden Plummer tale. "Plummer" had a long run. He first appeared in U.J. 222, and was still around in number 1503.

(Editor's note: Bill's selection is extremely interesting. He - and I - hope that it may inspire other Blakians to write about their favourite stories.)

LOOK BACK IN WONDER

by Ernest Holman

In a hobby such as ours, it is never very difficult to take the mind over past years in order to find an anniversary of some sort. I have 'operated' in this field myself and am only too well aware of the number of 'dates' that have to be ignored, in order to prevent a mere sequence of statistics, figures or titles.

Having made that statement, my eye nevertheless alighted on 1927. Well, did anything of importance and/or significance in
(continued on page 19...)

ISOBEL NORTON AND THE SEXTON BLAKE CONNECTION

By Ray Hopkins.

Valerie Drew's career as a schoolgirl detective ran from 1933 to 1940. Her creator was John W. Bobin, well known elsewhere as Sexton Blake author Mark Osborne, who used the name Adelle Ascott for the Drew stories. His death in 1935 (Brian Doyle, 1964) resulted in the Valerie Drew stories appearing anonymously until 1937 when the name Isobel Norton was given as the author and continued right to the very end in 1940.

Just before the anonymous stories began, three of the stories were shown as having two authors. Elsie Trevor joined Adelle Ascott on the first two and Gertrude Nelson joined her on the third. Gertrude Nelson is, in fact, another pen-name of J.W. Bobin and was only added because the Silent Six partnered Valerie Drew in the third adventure. However, the name Elsie Trevor is another writer, better known in the girls' papers as Louise Carlton (Brian Doyle, 1964), and hiding the identity of yet another Sexton Blake author, Lewis Carlton.

Is it possible that the anonymous stories that followed the death of John W. Bobin were continued by Lewis Carlton? His



last serial using the name Louise Carlton ended in July '37. In July '37, the Isobel Norton by-line began. The final Elsie Trevor series began in Sept. '37, but ran to only five stories. Apart from one final short story by Louise Carlton in Jan. '38, that name and that of Elsie Trevor appear no more in the files of the Schoolgirls' Weekly.

However, there is another possibility. Isobel Norton "might have been a blanket pseudonym for a group of writers" (Mary Cadogan, 1981). "During the 30's (Lewis Carlton) formed a syndicate writing pool, which consisted of himself, John G. Brandon, J. W. Bobin and Donald Bobin". (Lofts/Adley, 1970). John G. Brandon died in 1941 (Brian Doyle, 1964) so he lived right through the end of the Valerie Drew stories, though none of the references mentions that this Sexton Blake author ever wrote for the girls' papers. However, Donald Bobin, who may still be alive "wrote extensively for Girls' Crystal... under the name of Shirley Halliday" and also worked as "Secretary to... John G. Brandon" (both quotes, Brian Doyle, 1964), and therefore he may have used the Isobel Norton name and wound up the Valerie Drew Saga.

Is 47 years too long ago and far away to solve the mystery of the real person behind Isobel Norton?

MORCOVE MINIATURES



DOLLY DELANE -

By TOMMY KEEN



Dolly Delane arrived at Morcove School in No. 15 of the SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN, the first new girl to be introduced after Betty Barton had made her appearance in No. 1. Dolly arrived when Betty, from being an outcast of the snobbish Fourth Form in the early issues, was, in No. 14 - 'Rivals for the Captaincy' - elected Captain of the form.

Dolly's introduction to Morcove pupils was not very encouraging. Three girls entered her train carriage at Barncombe. They were, unfortunately, the three remaining snobs of the Fourth (the others had all been influenced for the better by Betty) - Cora and Judith

Grandways, and Paula Creel. Dolly was surrounded by luggage and magazines, and Cora, ever ready to quarrel, told her in no friendly terms to move her belongings to make more room. To Cora's surprise Dolly apologised for the mess, and hastily made the carriage more tidy. Cora & Co. realised that Dolly was bound for Morcove and that she might be of use to them as a 'fag'. Cora suggests that Dolly asks the Headmistress if she can share the Grandways study. Miss Somerfield agrees, and Dolly really behaves like a servant to the sisters, being warned by Cora that she must not be friends with Betty & Co.

Betty Barton is, however, due to give a banquet to the form, for the honour of being elected Captain. A spirit stove used to boil the kettles is overturned, and a fire breaks out. Utter panic - with the girls rushing from Betty's study. They all appear to be safe, but suddenly comes a shout of 'Where is Tess Trelawney?', and Tess is evidently still in Study 12. Into the smoke and flames rushes Dolly, emerging a few moments later with the insensible Tess in her arms. Luckily, the fire is then put under control. Tess does not appear to suffer from her mishap, but Dolly is taken to the sanatorium. Here she recovers, and becomes friends with Betty & Co., especially Tess, with whom, 'to oblige', she promises to share a study. Dolly was then nicknamed the 'Doormat', because of her obliging nature, and all through the years, if anything had to be done in a hurry, Dolly would be the first to offer.

Dolly's parents lived in Hampshire, her father being a farmer. She did not appear too prominently in the early episodes, but from 1923 she featured in several good stories. One had the great Wembley Exhibition as its background; another concerned her parents. The farm was not paying, and unless Dolly could win a cash prize (by entering for a special examination) she would have to leave



THE NEW GIRL! Dolly Delane sat next to the driver's seat, and it was not long before she had luggage on her lap, luggage at her feet, and luggage all round her.

Morcover. Dolly, however, lost this to her study-mate, Eva Merrick, who won by cheating. (Tess and Dolly did not share the same study for long.) Eva eventually confesses, so Dolly returns to Morcover. But later Mr. Delane disposes of his farm and moves to a cottage near the school, where he has a small holding. Dolly is once again cheated of an honour when Grace Garfield (Dolly's current study-mate) claims to have saved an American girl's life. Actually the real heroine was Dolly who once more has to leave Morcover, but returns when her bravery is discovered. (Marjorie Stanton was evidently not too clear about who shared which studies - apart from study 12 - for Dolly, at various times, was with Tess, Eva, Grace, Trixie Hope and Helen Craig, and Etta Hargrove.)

In time she becomes a day-girl, and her chums are frequent visitors to the Delane's cottage. Towards the end of the SCHOOL-GIRLS' OWN's run, however, Dolly's parents become owners of a boarding-house, and for the 1934 Easter vacation Betty & Co. visit this as 'Dolly Delane's Paying Guests'.

A lovable character, not always to the fore - yet looking back, featured in more stories than I realised. Good old 'DOORMAT'!

(continued from Page 15...)

the Hobby occur sixty years ago? To my mind, most certainly the answer must be 'yes'.

Consider the output of Charles Hamilton at that time, in relation to his three schools. Rookwood stories had finished in the Boys' Friend (the latter itself only just saw 1927 out). St. Jim's stories in the Gem were in the midst of the unfortunate 'substitute' era. Yet what a different story with the Magnet!

'Sub' stories in that publication were by 1927 becoming few and far between. To myself, 1927 saw the great rebirth of the Magnet. With the Bounder of Greyfriars and Tom Redwing well to the fore in the 'Dallas' and 'South Seas' series, the stage was set for the future, with so many splendid series to come. Hamilton was at last able to give his undivided attention to Greyfriars. He did so in the greatest measure possible.

It may be merely a coincidence that the summer of 1927 saw the last Hamilton Holiday Series (Bootleg Ranch) in the Gem prior to 1939 as well as probably the finest Holiday series (South Seas) in the Magnet. Whatever it was, it appeared to be a case of 'Out with the old, in with the new'.

The year of 1927 must surely be placed as a significant one in the Hobby's 'Only Yesterday' memories.

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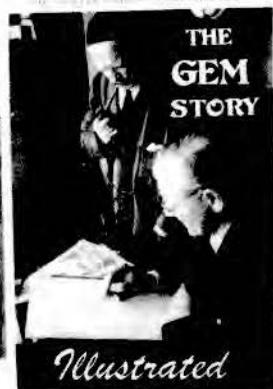
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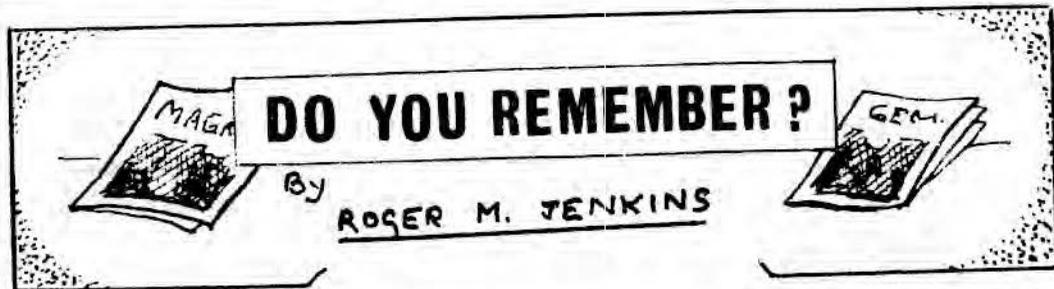
AN EX-PUPIL'S TRIBUTE TO ERIC FAYNE

from Cyril Duke

I wonder how many of your readers know that as well as having been the long serving Editor of the C.D., Eric Fayne is a very much loved ex-Headmaster to many generations of boys and girls... He was, in addition, an extremely innovative one, and his school was one of the first in the world to be equipped with first a 35 mm silent and then, when Talkies came in, a sound projector. He also took holiday parties in the long summer vacation of boys and girls down to the coast for 2/3 weeks at a time, and these were virtually adventure holidays 50 years ahead of their time.

My wife and I, who are now retired, are both ex-pupils, and - until business caused our removal from Surrey - our daughter was also a pupil of Eric's after the war. We would be grateful if you would publish this tribute to him.

* * *



No. 222 - Gems 251-2 - Grimes Series

by ROGER M. JENKINS

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, the Outsider of St. Jim's, was one of the more notable characters in the Gem from the time he arrived in 1910 until the outbreak of the first World War, after which he subsided into the background. The son of an American millionaire, he was totally unscrupulous and he was the major villain for a year or two until his eventual reformation, after which his study-mates, Mellish and Levison, took over that particular role. Even the reformed Outsider was capable of cynical humour and unexpected quixotic actions, and he never became as colourless as some of the other reformed rogues in the pages of Hamiltoniana.

One of Lumley-Lumley's unusual attributes was his friendship with Grimes, the errand-boy who worked for Mr. Sands, the grocer. When Lumley-Lumley had to leave St. Jim's for a while some time earlier, it was Grimes who had taken him in, sheltered and clothed him, and found him a job with Mr. Sands, and now the millionaire was prevailed upon to pay for Grimes to enter the Fourth form at St. Jim's. It was certainly a sensational move that was sprung upon Grimes, but of course in reality Grimes was never likely to have entered a Public School. The scholarship boys like Redwing and Linley and Brooke were given special coaching before they took an examination, but Grimes was all at sea when it came to academic work.

The two Gems dealt mainly with the hostility shown by Levison and Mellish and in particular the extreme cunning that Levison employed. The house page was called Trotter, and in the second number it was revealed that he was temporarily there from Greyfriars, luckily for Grimes, since Trotter could give evidence about Levison's conjuring tricks at that school, when Grimes was falsely accused of having stolen Levison's marked sovereign. (Readers of the red Magnet might well have been unable to recall Levison's conjuring ability, but that is neither here nor there.) Grimes did play a more positive part, however, in fights and football, which probably made him even more popular.

There was a good deal of philosophy in the series. Lumley-Lumley reflected that both dukes and dustmen had their troubles and that both extremes in society felt equally oppressed by them. He also recalled his early days when he and his father were in New York or San Francisco or Paris and they never knew how they were going to earn enough money for the next meal, and how happy and carefree those days seemed to him now. He was perceptive enough to realise that Grimes, though grateful, was not really happy at school, and indeed there was a later

scene when Grimes met his old pal Pilcher, the butcher's boy, who felt suspicious and hostile because he suspected that Grimes was feeling superior to him. In the end, when invited to do so, Grimes told Lumley-Lumley quite frankly that there was a lot of work to be done in the world but that St. Jim's was merely teaching how to live without doing any. Lumley-Lumley roared with appreciative laughter, and Grimes happily returned to his job as errand-boy. All in all, it was a series that posed a number of difficult social problems but not all the questions raised were given very satisfactory answers.



CLIFF HOUSE

By MARGERY WOODS

Criticism is frequently levelled at genre fiction on the grounds that the characters are stereotyped.

Take Cliff House. Right from the start of SCHOOLFRIEND the layout of characterization was sharply defined and carefully balanced. To ensure that reader identification would be complete the girls were even further delineated in the Cliff House magazine supplement which became a popular weekly feature in the magazine soon after the paper commenced publication. Here the girls stepped into new Journalistic roles, becoming aware of their readers yet still within their Cliff House characters.

Babs, (born leader, honest, fair, scrupulously impartial) was the obvious choice for editor.

Marjorie (poor Marjorie, she rarely had a chance really to assert herself) was cast as gentle homemaker and given the Needlework Notes page (how to make a dainty workbox/doll's bed/pretty kettle-holder).

Clara (of course) became the C.H. Magazine sports columnist, cookery was in the expert hands (spelling aside!) of Bessie and the not quite so expert hands of Dolly, while Mabs, predictably, followed her stars.

Back in childhood I used to feel somewhat unconvinced by Mabs,

the actress and mistress of disguise. Somehow, for me, she did not seem to have the full measure of show-biz flamboyance about her; Diana was the one who always seemed to have the true star quality. It was not until adulthood that I realised flamboyance is simply an outward show that can mask indifferent talent, while genius can be quite unassuming on the surface. So it is not always possible to appreciate, until adulthood and introspection come to one, how much skill and care went into the building up of these well-loved characters.

Stereotypes?

Any class of schoolchildren, groups of workmates, street community or holiday package tour will hold individuals who could be loosely fitted into a recognisable mould, be they leaders, followers, bullies or weaklings, gentle, domineering, grumblers, exhibitionists, kindly or uncaring. Authors utilise the common qualities and failings, blend them into permutations, much as nature does, and create characters we will recognise and with whom we will identify --- and identify against; who wants to be cast as villain!

But none of these characters are stereotypes, any more than we as individuals are stereotypes. They and we simply share the qualities and failings of human nature.

Stereotypes happen when authors fail to flesh their characters with credibility, not because they are characters in genre fiction. Any character in whom a reader can believe and go along with until the end of the story --- and want more next week --- can't be a cardboard stereotype. At least I don't believe so. What do you think? Tell us about your favourite believable character, and with whom you identified at Cliff House, or Morcove, or Greyfriars, or St. Jim's ---or within the exploits of Sexton Blake, perhaps.

And remember; stereotype is a useful umbrella word for lazy critics!

FOR SALE: Bunter Books, hard and paper-backs. Saint Novels, some with dustwrappers. Film Annuals 1950's, some pre-war. Radio Fun, Film Fun, Knockout Annuals. Pile of Rovers 1960's - stories, 60 odd £8.00.

Various other Annuals. Also rare 45s and E.P. records. List on request. Picturegoers 1950's. Larry Morley, 76 St. Margaret's Road, Hanwell, London, W7. Tel. 579 3143.

THE CLIFF HOUSE ENCYCLOPEDIA

by Esmond Kadish

By mid-1933, John Wheway, using the "Hilda Richards" pen-name, had already been writing the Cliff House stories in the SCHOOLGIRL for over a year, and had firmly established the popularity of his own version of the famous school. A series of twelve "glossy photo-cards of popular Cliff House characters", beginning with Bessie Bunter, was presented with the paper, (nos. 195 - 206), and an album - "Cliff House Portrait Gallery" - to keep them in, but a more ambitious project commenced in no. 203.

This was "The Cliff House Encyclopedia", which was completed the following year in no. 238, and was presumably written by Wheway, himself. Described as "an up-to-date 'Who's Who' and 'What's What' at Cliff House School", the pages of the encyclopedia measured seven inches by five-and-a-half, and were clearly intended to be cut out of the paper, and pasted in an exercise book. We shall probably never know how many enthusiastic young readers mutilated the paper, and destroyed the Cliff House story, in the process of doing so! Two or three pages were published each week, apart from an occasional lapse due to lack of space, and the final page of the encyclopedia numbered 64.

Page one consisted of the blue and orange cover which was, of course, printed on the cover of no. 203 of the SCHOOLGIRL. Inside were three pages



A group of some of your favourite Fourth Formers. Reading from left to right you will recognise Clara Trevlyn, Mabel Lynn, Marjorie Hazeldene, Bessie Bunter, Leila Carroll, Janet Jordan, Marcelle Biquet, Jean Cartwright, and Jemima Carstairs.

giving the "history" of Cliff House according to Wheway. Like all good fictional schools, it had started as a monastery and there is an illustration of "Ye Abbye of Ye Clyffe", showing its monkish inhabitants, on page 2. Besides such romantic legends as that of Benedict, the tragic monk, who died for love of the fair Charmion, we learn that, on the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539, Cliffe Abbye became a barracks; that Mary, Queen of Scots visited it in 1551; and that it became a school for Young Ladies in 1879, established by the chairman of the Board of Governors, Sir Willis Gregory (previously referred to by Wheway as Sir Gregory Willis!). Amongst famous old girls of the school was Mrs. Graham Winchester who unearthed the tomb of Queen Hatsheptra in the Valley of Kings in 1929 - clearly a formidable old Pharaoh, combining the qualities of Cleopatra and Hatshepsut!

The encyclopedia - which is well illustrated - gave comprehensive information each week about Cliff House and its girls. We learn about its rules and regulations; are guided round its common rooms, crypt, cloisters and clock tower, are introduced to its mistresses, prefects, and animals in the Pets' House; and are given full details of the girls in the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Forms, most of whom will rarely, or never, be featured in the stories. Sometimes, Wheway seems to have his tongue firmly planted in his cheek, as when he refers to "Dahlia Dearborn Flame - the slimmest girl in the school", but the pages devoted to the girls of the Fourth give some nicely-drawn character sketches.

Inevitably, the encyclopedia includes a map of Cliff House and district - one which would probably cause a Greyfriars enthusiast to gnash his teeth in rage, since the famous Hamilton school is not included. However, Courtfield, the village of Friardale, and Friardale Woods and Common are there, and the map is quite acceptable to SCHOOLGIRL readers, giving the location of Friardale Boys' School, the Enterprise Film Studios, Monks' Folly, Hermit's Nest, Cliff Top Cottage, and other romantic - sounding places which Wheway featured in his tales.

Of course, the only drawback to compiling the information contained in the encyclopedia, is that some of it speedily becomes out of date. Still, it must have been a labour of love for Wheway - fun to write, and certainly most enjoyable to read, even today.

THE ERIC FAYNE COLUMN

Danny's mention, in his Diary for April 1937, of the real life murder, in Leighton Buzzard, of a young woman named Ruby Keen, strikes a chord in the memory.

One does not recall the crime. It was not one of the "classic" murder cases; it was just a sordid little murder which caught the headlines in the papers and was soon forgotten. Yet the name seemed strangely familiar in 1987. I wondered why. I soon found out.

Some years after the murder, Agatha Christie wrote a Miss Marple story "The Body in the Library." In 1942, to be exact. That "Body in the Library" proved to be the remains of a young woman named "Ruby Keene". It cannot have been a coincidence, but it was, clearly, cause and effect. For some reason, though I'm sure she had forgotten the real life murder, the name obviously remained in the facile mind of Mrs. Christie.

(Cont. over/..)

I wonder whether she ever knew, in later years, that she had used the name of a real life murder victim for her ill-fated character in the Miss Marple novel? Plenty of biographers have written on Agatha since she passed on. I wonder whether any one of them ever discovered that the name of that real life victim had been used in "The Body in the Library".

Or is S.P.C.D. the first one to spot it? It often is!

THE PRINCESS SNOWEE'S CORNER

An awful thing has happened in our house. Something that a Princess does not expect to happen when she agrees to live with some person. After all, we Cats have our Pride, like lions.

My man is a bit of a chump, really. One Friday evening I was snoozing on his desk near the radiator. He came up to his desk about 8 o'clock, and started to tap on that printing machine of his. I can't stand that tapping, so I got down and stalked out. As I passed the airing cupboard on the landing I saw the door was ajar. So I popped in and settled myself comfortably among the blankets never dreaming of disaster.

Bless me! When my man came out later, he saw the airing-cupboard was ajar - and closed it and turned the latch. He can't remember doing it, but he must have done. So there was I - locked in.

Later on there was such a to-do. Every ten minutes or so he went to the front door, to the side door, and to the back door, calling out all the time "Snowee, Snowee". I cried and howled. He kept going back and forth past the airing cupboard, and I howled and scratched the door, but he's as deaf as a post, and never heard me.

I couldn't see what was going on, but I heard plenty, and he has told the tale several times since to anybody who would listen.

By eleven o'clock that night he was really alarmed; by midnight he was despairing and frantic. He knew I wouldn't be out for hours, of my own accord, in that bitter weather. At midnight he put on a coat, and went round the nearby roads and searched the big garden of the unoccupied house next door. He didn't find me.

At one o'clock he went to bed, but didn't sleep. He kept going down to all the outside doors. And I kept crying. At four in the morning he got up, put on slippers, and a dressing gown over his pyjamas, took a torch, and went all round our gardens, back and front, searching and calling. His pyjama legs were soaked from the wet grass and shrubs, but he didn't care. He rolled into bed as he was. If I was gone, he didn't bother any more about anything.

He dressed about 7.30. No sign of me anywhere. He couldn't touch any food. A little later he telephoned round to a few people living near. They hadn't seen the Princess. They would have a good look round.

An hour later, my man got himself a cup of tea. He couldn't drink it. he broke down and sobbed. I'm ashamed to say he even reproached the Almighty. "It's too cruel, Lord —"

And my man swears that as he sat sobbing he heard a voice saying "Go to the airing cupboard". He got up from his chair, dragged himself upstairs to

the airing cupboard, opened the door.

And we stared at one another. I sprang out. All he kept saying was "Oh Snowee - thank God, thank God"!

A little later he went down on his knees and apologised to the Almighty. And I should think so, too!

I was ready to leave home for good. I was so angry; really catty. I had been in that cupboard well over 12 hours, and I could easily have stopped there much, much longer. But I forgave him. My man has no brain to speak of, but perhaps his heart is in the right place. Talk about Coker and Skimpole! Oh yes, I know all about those chumps. You couldn't live in our house and not know about THEM.



A PRIZE FOR BUNTER?

by LES ROWLEY

"Well?"

Henry Samuel Quelch regarded William George Bunter as that fat ornament of his form stood before him. He had said 'well', but that was merely a figure of speech. The expression on the Remove master's speaking countenance indicated that all was far from well. He had intended devoting a few of his scant leisure hours to the furtherance of his renowned "History of Greyfriars School" - a monumental work already running to thirty five volumes if Harold Skinner was to be believed.

Having finished with the form room for the day, Quelch had had reason to hope that his boys - like the cares that infest the day, had packed their tents like the Arabs and as silently stolen away. That that reason had been ill-founded was obvious by the presence of Bunter - an uncleanly and unwashed Bunter - in his study at the very moment when the manifold trammels of a schoolmaster were to have been put aside for the lighter cloak of authorship!

"P-p-please, sir," Bunter began hesitatingly, for one never knew how to take Quelch. "Please, I have come to you for advice. Seeing as you're my form master, sir, I thought you would be kind enough to help me."

The fierceness on Mr. Quelch's face diminished slightly, and he held in abeyance the intention to cane Bunter for slovenliness. For once in his fat life Bunter was seeking help from his form master. It was a unique occasion indeed but, since Bunter was prepared to recognise Quelch as a guide and mentor in time of present need, Quelch was prepared to set aside (temporarily, of course) his intention to cane him. If Bunter was prepared to treat Quelch as the genuine article, then Quelch was the man to respond.

"You may proceed, Bunter!" he replied in a more amiable tone.

"You see, sir, I want to enter for the Founder's Prize. If you-----"

"What do you mean, Bunter?" barked the Remove master in tones of amazement. The world in which we live is full of surprises, and Quelch had had his full share of them, but never such a surprise as this. If the statue of Socrates, on the top of the bookcase, had opened its mouth and said that it wanted to enter for the Founder's Prize Quelch would not have been more amazed. The Prize was attempted by the very best scholars in the junior forms, and not by any stretch of the imagination could Bunter have been counted among them! The Falstaff of the form was the most idle and most stupid member thereof. His construe - if such it could be called - had earned that lazy youth an acquaintance with the cane on more occasions than Quelch cared to remember. In English History, Bunter had been known to cite Mary Queen of Scots as the mother of Hereward the Wake. Bunter's attempts at spelling had been the cause of more outbreaks of mirth in the form room than a celebrated comedian could expect at the local Hippodrome. And it was this boy - this Bunter - who now had the audacity to inform his form master that he wished to enter for the Founder's Prize. The look on Mr. Quelch's face, as he regarded Bunter, would have made the fabled Gorgon green with envy.

"Are you venturing to jest with your form master, Bunter?" he enquired with a ferocity that would have done justice to a Royal Bengal tiger which had had its tail pulled.

Bunter looked uneasily across the desk at his irate form master. Now was the time for Quelch to smile encouragingly; to rise from his chair and to clap Bunter on the shoulder, and to say in tones of emotion. "Well done, Bunter! This is what I would have expected of you. Of course your name must go forward as an entrant for the Founder's Prize!"

Alas! Quelch neither did nor said any of these things, and why Quelch should imagine that Bunter was jesting was beyond the Fat Owl's comprehension. To be truthful, Bunter was in dead earnest, and he had a compelling reason for wanting his name put down for the Founder's Prize. But that compelling reason had nothing whatever to do with academic prowess!

"Answer me Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Are you so lost to propriety as to ridicule your form master? Answer me at once!"

"Please sir, I really want to enter for the prize. I wish to show my parents how good at things I really am.

My wanting to enter for the Prize has nothing to do with Games Practice - nothing to do with it at all."

The Remove master gazed at that hopeful member of his form, the light of understanding dawning on his angular features. It was a well known fact that boys entering for the Prize were excused Games Practice so that they would have more time to study. Quelch thought that he could understand Bunter's sudden, and unexpected, eagerness to enter a contest for which he was so eminently unsuited. The gimlet eyes wandered to where a cane lay on a nearby table, but once again he resisted the temptation.

"Very well Bunter," he said, a hint of sarcasm creeping into his voice, "I shall accept your assurance that your intentions are serious." Mr. Quelch

rose from his chair and went to his bookcase from which he selected a leaflet which he handed to Bunter. "This is a specimen paper giving the problems set in last year's contest. You will work on this paper, Bunter, as though you were entering for this year's Prize. I trust that your newly acquired interest in academic advancement will be reflected in your answers....."

"Does this mean that I'm excused Games Practice, sir?" Bunter enquired eagerly. He waited hopefully for assurance on that - to him - very important point. He waited in vain.

"No, it does not, Bunter! This unaccustomed pursuit of scholarship," Quelch's sarcasm was now almost ferocious, "must not be allowed to interfere with another unaccustomed pursuit of yours - healthy exercise. I shall watch your progress with close interest Bunter - very close interest indeed! I urge you to show advancement both in your answers to the specimen paper and in your attendance at games. In the absence of any such advancement, Bunter, I shall conclude that you have deliberately set out to deceive your form master. In such circumstances, Bunter, your punishment will be severe - most severe. And now, Bunter," Quelch picked up the cane at last. "I shall punish you for appearing before me in such a slovenly state. You will bend over that chair Bunter, and do not keep me waiting!"

Bunter's interest in Founder's Prize had suddenly evaporated into thin air. After Quelch had finished with him he was never like to display an interest in the Founder's prize again.



OUR BOOKSHELVES

REVIEWS BY

MARY CADOGAN

(Picture by Terry Wakefield)

LA CREME DU CRIME

Colin Watson's engagingly ironic and intriguing history of the Whodunnit, SNOBBERY WITH VIOLENCE has just been reprinted in paperback by Methuen (£4.95), and it is surely required reading for anyone who is interested in the Golden Age of detective fiction. Even if one does not always agree totally with his assessments, Colin Watson's relish for the stories, and his stylistic expression of the periods in which they are set, carry one along blissfully. (The same publisher is also reprinting Watson's Flaxborough novels in paperback at £3.50 each: BLUE MURDER and CHARITY ENDS AT HOME are wonderful examples of his skill in conveying the tangles of criminality which lie just beneath the surface of serene provincial life.)

In hardback John Sherwood's FLOWERS OF EVIL (Gollancz £9.95) adroitly combines gardening and Glyndebourne, pop music and Latin American politics with crime-solving. Celia Grant, botanist and brilliant amateur sleuth, is an attractive character to guide us through the complexities of crime and crisis.

* * * *

GHOSTS OF OLD ENGLAND by Terence Whitaker

(Robert Hale Ltd. £10.95)

England is one of the most haunted countries in the world - according to Terence Whitaker, with its 'galaxy of phantom monks, wailing spirits and gruesome ghouls that haunt our ancient castles, ruined abbeys and lonely churchyards'. Apparently spectres also haunt many other locations; their abodes range from historic buildings to busy high-ways and even Heathrow Airport! From castles to cottages, from churches to pubs., from music-halls to Shakespearean theatres, they walk and wail and manifest. This book is packed with vivid stories of hauntings. People who have supposedly encountered ghosts are interviewed, while other stories are more legendary. The nature of the book's subject hardly, of course, invites 'concrete' proof, but those who find it intriguing probably won't worry about that. An interesting aspect of this book is that many of the hauntings mentioned are supposed to happen in places which are open to the public. Would-be ghost hunters can therefore perform their own practical follow-ups, if they feel so inclined, on this

proliferation of screaming skulls, angry knights, ghostly cavaliers - and so on. (Shades of the Christmas spectral stories from MAGNET GEM, NELSON LEE, UNION JACK, SCHOOLFRIEND, etc.!)

* * * *

PURE ESCAPISM.

One has only to look at the superb profile on the cover of IVOR NOVELLO by James Harding (W.H. Allen, £13.95), to be transported from the ordinariness of one's daily routines into the romantic world of musicals like THE DANCING YEARS and KING'S RHAPSODY. Glitter, glamour, big dollops of charisma, as well as theatrical history, are conveyed in this lively biography of an immensely popular and creative 'star'.

OUR POST BAG

BILL WATSON (Walton on Naze) Re. Floating Platform One: I have just received a letter from Leslie Halliwell, Programme Buyer for ITV and Channel 4. He remembers this film well, and has just acquired it on behalf of Channel 4 and will play it this year sometime, so readers must look out for it. Please thank all readers who gave information about it.

FATHER FRANCIS HERTZBERG (Higher Bebington) Whilst delighted that Danny in the February issue states that beside San Francisco "every other film pales into insignificance", I must point out that, just like the fellow who drew pictures, so the lovely lady who appeared in pictures has a capital "D" in the middle of her name. (I think R.J. was "MacDonald", his name is sometimes spelled "Macdonald"; but I am sure of the spelling of Jeannette MacDonald, voted Queen of Hollywood in three successive years - and now almost forgotten, but not by the 1,500 members of the International Jeanette MacDonald Fan Club, who hold their 45th "Clan Clave" this June).

IAN BENNETT (Leicester) Does anyone have any information or references about the futuristic aircraft designs featured in that classic film Things to Come (London Films, 1936)?

R.E. SWIFT (Bebington) I like to think that my "Golden Years" of Boys Papers were the best. Born in 1921, I grew up in the thick of Boys' Fiction, and with the limited amount of pocket money, perhaps 2d. or 3d. per week, together with swopping with the "gang", we managed to cover nearly all of those wonderful mags. I saw the birth of the Bullseye, Surprise, Ranger, Wizard, Hotspur and more. The Black Sapper, Trig M'Fee, The Phantom of Cursitor Fields Morgan The Mighty, The Boys of Greyfriars School and St. Jim's, all made my childhood days a time of joy and wonder. If only the powers that be could reprint some of those 1930's Thompsons, then my September years could be as joyful!



MIDLAND O.B.B.C.

There was an attendance of 9 members on 24th February - still rather low but an improvement on January. The latest news of our chairman Tom Porter is that there is little change but he expects to leave hospital soon. Geoff Lardner is standing in for him and doing a good job.

Some interesting correspondence was read by Bill Lofts. Members are reminded that they have till May to pay their subscriptions. As usual Joan Golen, Betty Hopton and Ivan Webster were the generous founders of the feast at refreshment time. Your correspondent gave a quiz and, as usual, Geoff Lardner was among the winners. The St. Frank's Jubilee Companion was the prize. Ivan Webster read a very amusing chapter from The Boys of Bendover, and it was agreed that Charles Hamilton was not really at his best with Will Hay, and had created his own character instead. Betty Hopton then gave us a beautifully typed quiz.

JACK BELLFIELD

LONDON O.B.B.C.

The prodigious popularity of the Ealing meeting was manifest on Sunday, 8th March when the Club met for the first meeting which was presided over by the 1987 chairman, Norman Wright. Despite apologies for unavoidable absence by some of our regular attenders, there was a creditable attendance of 26. After the usual preliminaries Duncan Harper gave a reading from a Union Jack of 1928: The Case of the Siping Vampire. Duncan then quizzed members on the reading, and the winners were James Goddard, Roy Parsons and Jack Williams. Roy Parsons read the Herlock Sholmes story, The Missing Millionaire. The Memory Lane reading was given by Norman Wright and taken from Newsletter number 221 dated April 1971.

Brian Doyle read his dissertation on Old Radio and T.V. Shows which had appeared in a Collector's Digest Annual and featured most of the early Radio and T.V. sleuths who entrallled us.

Votes of thanks were accorded to Bill Bradford and his willing helpers who ensured that the busy tea pot was kept at the ready. Next meeting will be held at the Bisley, Surrey home of Roy and Gwen Parsons, the date being Sunday, 12th April.

BEN WHITER

CAMBRIDGE O.B.B.C.

The Club met at the home of Roy Whiskin on Sunday, 1st March. Members were pleased to receive an invitation from the editor of Eagle Days for an extended half-day away meeting in Northampton on Sunday, 10th May.

Roy Whiskin then gave the Club an insight into his personal tastes in films, describing his 'top ten' à la Desert Island Discs, and showing extracts from some popular films. Vic Hearn gave a very interesting thumb-nail sketch of Colwyn Dane, the detective from Champion during the 'thirties and 'forties. The meeting closed with a warm vote of thanks to Roy and his wife for their splendid hospitality.

TONY COWLEY

NORTHERN O.B.B.C.Saturday, 14th March:

A party of ten assembled at The White Horse in Wakefield for an informal lunch, the Guest of Honour being our Club's Co-President and Editor of the C.D., Mary Cadogan. After a very pleasant and relaxing time over lunch, we retired to the splendid library at Thornes Vicarage, the home of our Club Secretary, and indeed, an appropriate location for us to continue our informal hobby talk. Later we departed to our regular central Leeds meeting place for our meeting proper.

A total of seventeen were present to hear Mary explain how she became involved in the hobby, after her husband located a Howard Baker reprint which sent her on the trail of the old papers. From articles in the C.D. and its Annual, Mary teamed up with Patricia Craig to write the popular You're a Brick, Angela' - and other books published by Golancz. Mary gave a talk on girls' fiction (with passing reference to the detective genre, and the comics), illustrated by colour slides. All too soon the evening ended. Everyone agreed it had been a most splendid day, and we look forward to Mary's being with us again, very soon.

Our full year's programme is planned, and a copy is available on application to the Club Secretary, Revd. Geoffrey Good, Thornes Vicarage, Wakefield, West Yorkshire.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

BUNTER BECOMES HIP!

by Adrian Godfrey

In THE FRANK SINATRA SCRAPBOOK by Richard Peters (St. Martin's Press), there's a section entitled 'A Broad Dictionary' which includes the following entry:

BUNTER - a man who fails in almost everything he does, the opposite of GASSER.
(GASSER - a man or woman highly admired, considered to be the best or 'The End'!)

It must have been the 1929 visit to Hollywood which was to lead to W.G.B. having his name appropriated into hip American slang!

SCHOOLMASTERS REMEMBERED

by NORMAN KADISH

It is funny how we tend to link up some of the masters and mistresses we have known at school with Hamilton's pedagogical creations. Old Hacker of ill-repute, the source of a lot of trouble for the 'Famous Five', of course, is well-renowned.

There is one particular master who spent his days in the school I attended in the 20's and 30's. He never 'took' me for anything, but as a small boy I was very wary of him. He had silver hair, a small moustache and hunched shoulders. He always carried a



book under his arm. He was, perhaps, quite benign in reality, but to my 'fag-like' mind in those days he was someone to be avoided. He wore those half-lensed glasses and stared over their flat tops menacingly: 'Booooy - hundred lines by to-morrow!'

There are so many other characters I can think of and write about; I wonder if others would like to hear of them, and compare them with the Magnet, St. Jim's, Rookwood and Nelson-Lee characters? Or perhaps they would give their own recollections?

THE DARKER SIDE OF GREYFRIARS

by E. BALDOCK

William Shakespeare tells us that 'He needs must go, that the devil drives' (All's Well that Ends Well). One hopes that the title of this play may prove prophetic in the case of one fellow at Greyfriars School, Gerald Loder, who is constantly driven by less than admirable urges.

However, without Gerald Loder's devious machinations and scheming on so many occasions, of what pleasurable hours of reading would we have been deprived? Surreptitious late night card-sessions (Banker for choice) in his study with his bosom - and equally shady - companions, Walker and Carne, two jolly (?) fellows who lend more than a touch of purple to the prevailing atmosphere at these little soirées. With curtains closely drawn over the window (a necessary precaution against late prowling prefects or Masters enjoying a brief perambulation before retiring), and the light shaded over the table, the air is pungent with blue cigarette smoke. Also, placing them all firmly outside the pale of decent fellows, it hints at more than a passing whiff of potent spirits. Gathered around the table, completely engrossed in their 'manly' pursuits, we see the three 'black sheep' in their element.

Not a particularly elevating picture by any standards. It is certainly not a situation which would have appealed to George Wingate, the Captain of the school, or to his two close friends, Gwynne and Sykes. Nevertheless one feels they have more than a lurking suspicion that such late night revelries do indeed take place. As for the Head, it is better to draw a curtain of obscurity over such activities and his response, should even a hint of them reach his August ears.

Yet have not these clandestine activities held us in thrall scores of times over the years? Have we not, oddly enough, breathed sighs of relief when the three shady prefects have once again escaped detection and expulsion by a hairs-breadth? Why this concern for such wretched fellows? I suspect, because they are just what they are - nothing more. When, as on rare occasions, a spark of better nature emerges and glows for an instant, we are pleased to see it. But for the most part we are happy to observe with equanimity their less than creditable proceedings. They are part of a whole which would be somewhat dullish otherwise.

It is an inescapable fact that fellows in the great and far from perfect world beyond the gates of Greyfriars do (sadly) indulge in the narcotic weed, partake liberally of liquors of a fiery nature, play games of chance, and consider themselves 'no end dogs' for so doing. Little wonder that in the small and secluded world of school there exist 'rotten apples'. Loder & Co. represent the less commendable face of Greyfriars which throws into sharp relief the qualities of the 'good' fellows. Curiously, the deeper the shadows, the brighter are the illuminated places.

Yet I believe that a close scrutiny of the inner and hidden natures of Loder and others of a similar ilk would probably reveal some hints, though maybe thin and vague, of better things. With just the stimulus of sympathetic encouragement (which is not always forthcoming), they might become reasonably decent fellows. Loder has been known to rise to the occasion on the soccer field, and to do justice not only to himself but the First XI and the school. This proves that there are good things warring with the darker elements. General Loder may not be half as pure as the waters of Choaspes - but then, who can aspire to such purity?

MORE WILLIAM!

Richmal Crompton's lively little desperado seems popular everywhere these days. We have just heard that BBC Radio 4 will be broadcasting a different William story every morning from Monday, 13th April to Friday, 17th, read by Martin Jarvis. (At 8.43 a.m. - thus while Parliament is in recess William will be filling the 'Yesterday in Parliament' slot!)

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O FOR A BOOKE...

by John Bridgwater

Myra Stewart is correct in attributing the poem mentioned in C.D.'s March editorial to John Wilson. The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, 2nd Edition, adds:- "Lines written as a motto to a second-hand book catalogue - Lubbock "Pleasures of Life" ed. 1887, p.48". The Booklovers Anthology, edited by R.M. Leonard OUP 1911 - notes "This is often taken to be an antique. As a matter of fact Mr. John Wilson, a London bookseller, stated to Mr. Austin Dobson that he wrote the lines as a motto for one of his second-hand catalogues. Wilson, Mr. Dobson tells us, was amused at the vogue his lines eventually obtained". The quotation also appears in Everyman's Dictionary of Quotations and Proverbs. Both the Anthology and the Everyman quote the verse in "antique" form as follows:-

"O for a Booke and a shade nooke
 Eyther in-a-doore or out,
 With the greene leaves whisp'ring overhede,
 Or the Streete cryes all about,
 Where I may Reade all at my ease,
 Both of the Newe and Olde,
 For a jollie goode Booke whereon to looke,
 Is better to me than golde."

The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations gives the verse as you quoted it in C.D.

(Editor's Note: Our thanks are also due to Mr. John Geal for sending information about the source of this quotation.)

Your Editor says—



A BIG THANK YOU - for all your interesting and encouraging letters, which, sadly, I am unable to acknowledge individually. Thanks too to all readers who help the C.D. by advertising their WANTS and FOR SALES in it: to remind you, the rates are 4p per word, while a boxed, displayed ad. costs £20.00 for a whole page, £10.00 for half a page, or £5.00 for a quarter page.