

**SEXTON BLAKE'S OWN PAPER!**  
**DETECTIVE** *Weekly*  
**2p**



Every Thursday  
No. 311—  
From May 4th,  
1939.

**SEXTON BLAKE** on **the AIR!**  
*Story of the great Radio-Play Inside*

*also*-**LONG COMPLETE SEXTON BLAKE THRILLER**

VOL. 41

No. 490

OCTOBER 1987

BOUND VOLUMES: LIONS -  $\frac{1}{2}$  years, in navy-blue cloth, gilt lettering, 1950's-60s. Also VICTORS 1950s, 60s, 70s, maroon cloth, antique finish, as new: 1950s - £25; 60s - £22; 70s - £16.

MODERN BOY, new bindings,  $\frac{1}{2}$  years Vols 1 and 2 - £50 each.

ROVER, HOTSPUR, GOOFY AND PLUTO 1960s and 70s.

BOYS WORLD VOL. VI. bound 1883-84 Nos. 1 - 39. Of great interest to cricketers, contains large pull out plate with Famous English Cricketers, W.G. Grace, G.F. Grace and others in colour - 1880. There is also another coloured plate of famous cricketing guests, and many fine serials - £42.

Large stock of other very early volumes, BOYS FRIENDS, BOYS HERALDS, GARLAND, etc. going cheap to clear.

Good stock of the usual bound vols. of MAGNETS, GEMS, POPULARS, etc.

Can still offer some early green GEMS, tatty reading copies, some without covers - 50 for £25. (Usually sell if good at £4 to £5 each!) My selection.

All HOWARD BAKER facsimiles and Book Club Specials available. On these the postage charge is only £1 - for any quantity.

With the very high prices around I've kept my feet on the ground. My prices are as keen as they always were! Visitors most welcome to see some of the goodies, but please ring first. I've still got the largest stock anywhere!

**N O R M A N   S H A W**

84 Belvedere Road, Upper Norwood,  
London, SE19 2HZ. Tel. 01-771-9857

Nearest station is B.R. Crystal Palace

# STORY PAPER 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  
(1959 - January 1987) by Eric Fayne

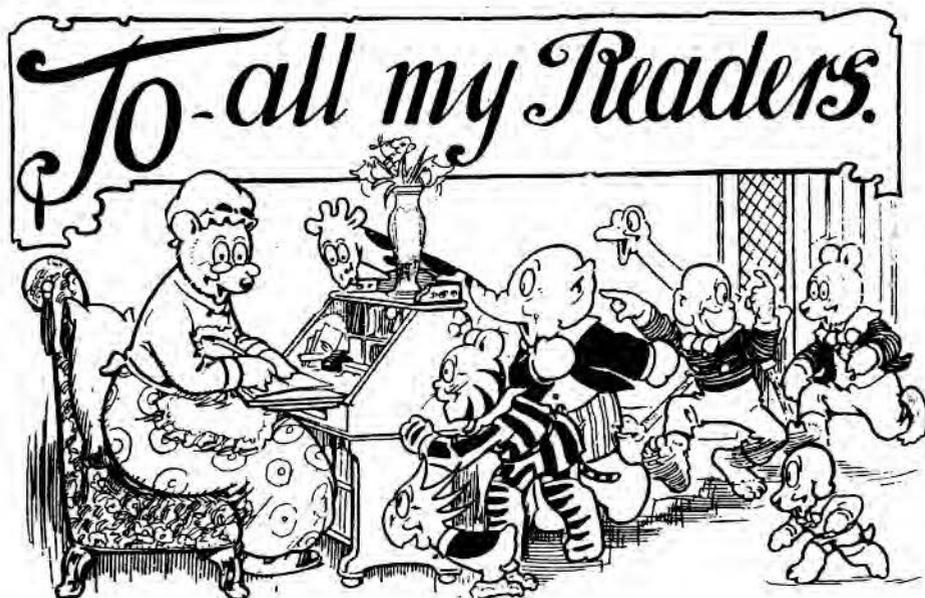
VOL. 41

No. 490

OCTOBER 1987

Price 52p

(COPYRIGHT. This magazine is non-profit making and privately circulated. The reproduction of the contents either wholly or in part, without written permission from The Editor, is strictly forbidden.)



## OLD FAVOURITES REVIVED:

It is the fate of many collectors to find one book in a favourite series particularly elusive. A striking example, of course, is Richmal Crompton's William the Lawless, the lack of which mars a great number of otherwise complete collections of William books. I was fortunate enough to be given a mint copy of this some years ago, but - as C.D. readers may notice from my occasional 'wants' ads

- a book in another long-running series which has always eluded me is The Chalet School and Rosalie. Unlike all the others in Elinor Brent-Dyer's Chalet School series, this originally appeared in paper back. Happily (and here I feel there should be a tremendous fanfare of trumpets!), it is now once again available. Armada, who are gradually working their way through the series, reprinted it a few weeks ago, so, at long, long last, my Chalet School collection is complete.

The book is set in the middle period of the saga when the Chalet School was temporarily housed in the Welsh border country. (The staff and students had by then been forced to flee from the Nazis twice - first from their original location in the Austrian Tyrol, and next from the Channel Islands in which they had, rather unfortunately, tried to put down new roots.) Their adventures began in the mid nineteen-twenties and continued to unfold until Elinor Brent-Dyer died in 1969. Her fictional school, in its lush lake and mountain setting, had its own special place in the girls' story genre; founded by a young Englishwoman, it was international, trilingual and non-denominational. (The author herself was a teacher, and the Founding Headmistress of the Margaret Roper Catholic School, in Hereford.) An intriguing amalgam of foreign glamour and British 'grit', the Chalet School soon caught the imagination of readers, and a long-lasting club was formed, which attracted a large membership from many parts of the world.

Life at the Chalet School was never dull: the school buildings, for instance, in one of the books are threatened with destruction by fire, storm and flood (not all at once of course!). Girls fall into icebound rivers or are stranded on exposed mountain sides. In the first five books alone, Joey, the heroine of the saga, manages to save the lives of six girls and one dog. The Chalet School and Rosalie, although rather less dramatic than some of the Alpine adventures, is still a jolly good read in the best traditions of the school story. It is satisfying to reflect that this book, and the 39 other Chalet School stories reprinted so far by Armada, appeal to today's schoolgirls as well as to those of us who were devouring them during the 1920's-'30s.

Other publishers are realizing that a good story has much to offer the children of our television age. D.C. Thomson have recently resuscitated that celebrated story-paper, Adventure, by bringing out a lively and well-produced summer special of that name. A proper story-paper (and not a comic) of 32 pages, it carries six tales of derring-do, with colour and black and white

pictures. One story is set in Red Indian country; there is some sci-fi fantasy, mythical adventures, an S.A.S. mission, a co-ed school story and a football episode. Hopefully this Adventure special might do well enough to persuade D.C. Thomson's to revive it as a regular weekly story-paper.

The same enterprising publishers have further demonstrated their historical pride in their juvenile publications by issuing a bumper book in celebration of the forthcoming Golden Anniversaries of the Dandy and Beano. (Called Dandy, Beano: The First Fifty Years, this is now in the shops at £4.95. Norman Wright will be reviewing it, and writing about the indestructible Dandy, in a forthcoming C.D.)

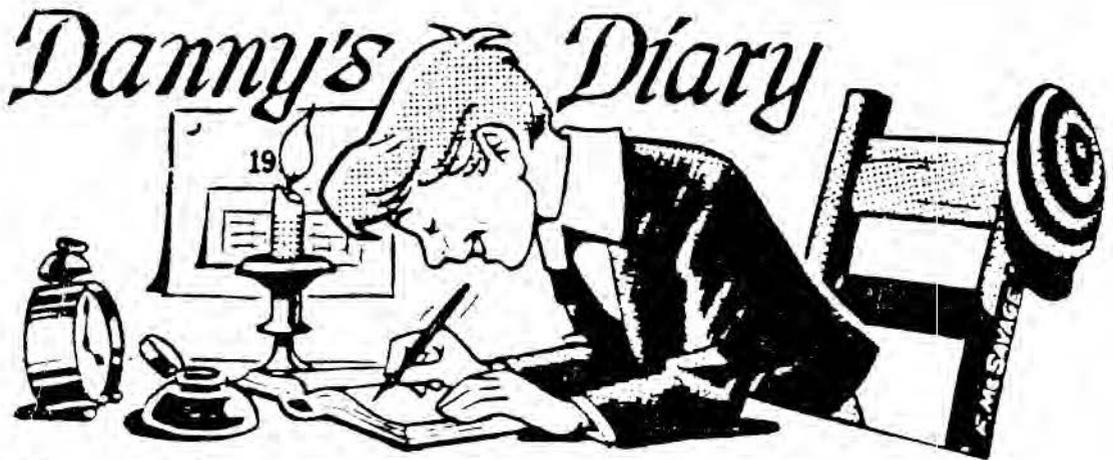
### OUR OWN ANNUAL:

I would like to thank those who have already ordered copies of the C.D. Annual, and to remind other readers to send their orders in the fairly near future, if possible, please (£6.75, which includes post and packing for the U.K., or £7.35 for overseas).

This 41st Annual will be brimming over with good things. Our regular - and some new - writers are at the top of their form: so too are our illustrators - Harry Webb, Terry Wakefield, Bob Whiter and Norman Kadish. To whet your appetite for the articles and stories, let me mention the following selection: Les Rowley entertainingly writes on About the Hols - or Bunter's Dilemma, focussing on Greyfriars in the run-up to Christmas; 'J.E.M.' deals perceptively with The Supporting Cast in many of our favourite papers; C.H. Churchill tackles The Cads of St. Frank's; Nick Godfrey and John Bridgwater each cover some intriguing aspects of Blakiana: Esmond Kadish brings some favourite Cliff House characters to vivid life in The Captain, the Tomboy and the 'Bull', while Ray Hopkins whisks us off once again into perilous, far-flung parts in the company of the Morcove chums. And next month we'll dip again into the Annual's contents to 'trail' further forthcoming delights'

MARY CADOGAN

\*\*\*\*\*  
 WANTED: Howard Baker, Magnets, volumes 17, 18, 29, 39. Also Bunter Books, with D.W.s. Evadne Price Jane books. William books with D.W.s. Elsie Oxenham, E.M. Brent-Dyer books. William The Lawless, with/without D.W.  
 FOR SALE: Greyfriars Holiday Annuals, (originals) 1926, 1928, 1930, 1931, 1929. Good condition. E.M. Turner's Boys Will Be Boys. James Gall, 49 Anderson Avenue, Aberdeen. Tel. Aberdeen 0224-491716.



## October 1937

The Rio Kid is galloping into new adventures in his welcome return in Modern Boy. In this first series he is staying as a guest of the bunch on the Lazy S ranch. The owner of the ranch is worried because rustlers are running off with lots of his cattle, and it seems clear that some spy in the ranch is giving information and aid to the rustlers. The only man on the ranch who is antagonistic to the Kid is Handsome Harris.

The month's first story is "The Lonely Hut". There was something sinister about the hut which stood out on the range. In the hut the Rio Kid sat in the silence awaiting trouble - and it came.

The second tale is "Moonlight Stampede". The rustlers have started the mad stampede, and, among the cowboys, rides the Rio Kid, determined to outwit the cattle thieves.

Next came "Traitor's Trail". Where the rustlers are hiding out in the foothills is a mystery, till the Kid, now the foreman of the Lazy S, takes a hand. In the next tale "Watchers of the Range", the Kid sets a trap for the rustlers.

The final yarn of the series, "Rustler's Secret" brings a surprise for the Lazy S bunch when one of their number, Handsome Harris, is exposed as Scarface, the chief of the rustlers. A tip-top western series.

The latest series of Captain Justice in Modern Boy is set in Tibet, and has Midge in a leading role. Midge has come by a strange jewel, and he finds that one flash from this jewel works wonders. The titles of this month's yarns are: "The Black Arrow", "The Mystic Eye", "Avalanche", "Mountain of Mystery", and "Eye of Argos".

A pretty good month in the monthlies - the fourpenny ones. "The Boy Who Knew Too Much" is the Greyfriars S.O.L. and continues the story of Lancaster. The one who actually knew too much is Harry Wharton - he knew that Lancaster was "The Wizard" - and so Wharton was kidnapped to keep him from telling what he knew.

The St. Jim's S.O.L. is "The Schoolboy Airman" which completes the story of Angelo, who wanted to train as an airman but was sent to St. Jim's. This one has another tale about Skimpole tacked on at the end as "make weight".

The St. Frank's tale in the S.O.L. is "The Kidnapped Schoolboy". Dick Goodwin is a newcomer to St. Frank's, and he has a secret which he is careful to keep from his schoolfellows.

In the Boys' Friend Library there is a lovely collection of Rio Kid stories under the title of "The Six-Gun Outlaw". It's great - like the Rio Kid always is.

Another B.F.L. I had this month is entitled "Crooks' Academy". A rather daft tale about a school where the Headmaster is a crook, and he always wears a mask, as do all the other masters. They are out to train their pupils as criminals. I wonder what my Mum would have said if my Headmaster had worn a mask when she went to interview him about me.

I have had two Sexton Blake Libraries this month. One is "The Stolen Submarine" by Stanton Hope, and other is "The Melbourne Mystery" by J.G. Brandon which stars R.S.V. Purvale. Both are fairish reading.

We have been to a Music Hall twice this month, and in each case we saw a tip-top revue. At New Cross Empire we saw Scott and Whaley in a revue entitled "Sanctions". A play on words, of course. We have heard quite a lot lately about the sanctions which Britain and other countries have imposed on Italy on account of the doings of old Musso. The second revue was "Splinters of 1937" which stars Hal Jones. In this revue "all the ladies are gentlemen", and it is supposed by come from the "Rouges et Noirs" concert party which the soldiers got together to entertain the troops during the Great War. We saw this one at Ilford Hippodrome

Canon Dick Sheppard, the famous cleric, has died suddenly of a heart attack at his home near St. Paul's.

A lovely month in the Gem. The opening story is "Skimpole's Scrape" and this is a sequel to the last story of September in which Skimpole thought he had won £40 for his invention - but he hadn't. And Skimpole had spent the money. So Tom Merry & Co. set about raising the wind. Next came "The New House Riot" about a barring-out against Mr. Ratcliffe, led by Redfern.

Then a lovely tale, "The Toff's Dark Hour". It is a shock to Talbot when he meets at Rylcombe Station an old friend of his underworld days. Her name is Marie Rivers, the daughter of the criminal, the Professor, and she is her father's accomplice in crime. But it is an even greater shock when Talbot learns that Marie is taking up a post at St. Jim's, as a nurse.

Next, "The Boy They Betrayed" tells of the wicked plot by the Professor to disgrace Talbot and compel him to return to the gang. And in the last Gem of the month we had "Standing by the Toff" in which Tom Merry and his friends rally round Talbot. A lovely series. At the back of the Gem there have been the old Magnet series about Aliens at Greyfriars. All good fun.

Not a very great month at the local cinemas. Warner Oland and Boris Karloff were in a neat thriller entitled "Charlie Chan at the Opera". I wasn't all that keen on an ice-skating film entitled "One in a Million". Doug said that its new star Sonia Henie was awful pretty but I thought the film was pretty awful. About the daughter of a Swiss innkeeper who becomes an Olympic skating champion.

"Wings of the Morning" is a British film in Technicolour, and there are some

# The Boy Who KNEW TOO MUCH!



**DICK LANCASTER**, idol of Greyfriars, a crook! It is a great shock to **HARRY WHARTON** when he makes the sensational discovery. But he little realises that the secret he has discovered spells danger for him!

nice scenes in it, though the story is slight. It stars Henry FONDA and Anna Neagle. "Elephant Boy" was another one without much story, though the new boy star Sabu is good. In the film he is the son of an elephant keeper.

"Dreaming Lips" was another British film, this time starring Elizabeth Bergner. I found it heavy-going, though Mum liked it. But the very best of the month was the Marx Brothers in "A Day at the Races". The brothers help a girl who runs a sanatorium and owns a racehorse. The race at the finish is absolutely stunning.

In the Magnet the whole month has been given over to the further adventures of Skip the pickpocket. Skip rendered a big service to Coker of the Fifth, and in October's opening story, "Coker Takes Control", Coker took Skip in hand to try to reform him. In the next story, "Coker's Big Idea", Coker persuades his Aunt Judy to wangle Skip into Greyfriars as a pupil. So next week we had "Skip of the Remove". "Give me a chance, and I'll run straight", vows Skip. But Harry Wharton and his friends cannot forget the new boy's past. So Skip does not have an easy time of it at Greyfriars.

But next week in "The Outcast of the School" Skip suddenly finds himself the hero of the school. The Cliff House girls figure prominently in this story, and Skip rescues Bessie Bunter from a watery grave. The final tale of the month is "Bad Lad Smithy". The Bounder finds the shadow of the sack looming over him, and the only one who can save him is Skip, the ex-pickpocket. Miss Bullivant, the maths mistress of Cliff House, begins to take a prominent part in the series

- and wily readers like me begin to wonder.

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

S.O.L. No. 313 "The Boy Who Knew Too Much" was the third part of the Lancaster Series to feature in the monthly and comprised two and a half stories from that series which had appeared in the Magnet in 1931. S.O.L. No. 31 "The Schoolboy Airman" was the final part of the Gem's Angelo Lee series. This S.O.L. comprised the last two stories of the series which had appeared in the Gem in the autumn of 1927, plus a third story "Skimpole's Telescope" from nearby in the same period of the Gem to make weight in the S.O.L.

Boys' Friend Library No. 593 "The Six-Gun Outlaw" came originally, of course, from the Popular. The collection had been reprinted before in the B.F.L. some years earlier under the same title. One wonders idly why they never reprinted such stories as "After Lights Out" which Hamilton wrote specially for the B.F.L., and, of course, delightful Hamilton yarns like "The School Under Canvas". Were they half-asleep in the editorial office?

The 1937 Gem story "Skimpole's Scrape" had appeared under the oddly inappropriate title of "The Last Hope" in the Gem of a few weeks before Christmas in 1915. The 1937 yarn "The New House Riot" had been "Redfern's Barring-Out" just after Christmas in 1915.

The 1937 Talbot series' "The Toff's Dark Hour", "The Boy They Betrayed" and "Standing by the Toff" had been, respectively, "The Call of the Past" (the tale which first introduced Marie Rivers), "Cast Out From the School", and "Loyal to the Last", in early 1916. It was a superb threesome - the best of all the Talbot series. There is no doubt that in early days, in splendid tales of this quality, Talbot was immensely popular with readers. As time went on his light dimmed as he was overplayed, and the subs, eager to pour thick cloying sentimentality over the theme, seized on Talbot and his past and wore it thin.

In passing, this superb series, plus two earlier Talbot tales "Talbot's Triumph" and "Talbot's Christmas" (the latter never reprinted) would be well worth the attention of Mr. Howard Baker for his lovely "Specials". And call it "The Toff Story".

The film "Wings of the Morning" which Danny saw in 1937 was the first British film to be made in Technicolour.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 "Various pre-war duplicate O.B.B's for exchange e.g. Nelson Lee Library O/S and N/S. Sexton Blake Library etc. Some post war material. Few annuals. K. Townsend, 7 North Close, Willington, Derby, DE6 6EA.  
 Phone Burton-On-Trent, 703305.  
 \*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*  
 WANTED: Howard Baker facsimile Bunter and the Courtfield Cracksman. Must be in good condition. H. Webb, 74 Whitland Close, Stoke Park, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP2 9YT.  
 \*\*\*\*\*



**"THE MYSTERY OF EILEEN DARE."**

by C. H. CHURCHILL

Jim Cook in his most interesting article in August C.D. gave the view that it would have been nice to have read that Nelson Lee had married Eileen Dare. No doubt it would have pleased us all to have read of such an event, disregarding the fact that Lee was quite a lot older. However, I can explain how it could not have happened.

Eileen first appeared in N.L. No. 57 dated 8 July, 1916 in pre St. Frank's days. Her father had been schemed against by a collection of crooked business men (under the leadership of one - Roger Haverfield) known as the "Combine". He had been wrongly accused of treason through their machinations. He had been sentenced to death but died in his cell the night before this could take place. Eileen, devastated by this, had sworn vengeance and from this idea E.S. Brooks developed a series of detective adventures comprising sixteen stories, commencing as mentioned above in No. 57. Nelson Lee became involved and together with Eileen eventually brought all the crooks to justice and Haverfield to his death.

Anyone reading this screed might wonder what all this has to do with Jim's idea of she and Lee marrying. The answer is in N.L. No. 115 dated 18/8/17 entitled "Eileen Dare's Triumph". In this final story of the series she more or less saved the life of an airman, Captain Billy Masters. His plane crashed very near to where Eileen and her aunt Esther were motoring. She dashed to the rescue and managed to pull him clear before the machine caught fire. Their friendship developed from there, and eventually they become engaged, much to Lee's and Nipper's approval if it was needed! In view of this the question of her marrying Lee never arose and could not do so. They were very good friends through their adventures fighting the Combine.

Eileen appeared again (still unmarried) in N.L. No. 130 "The Phantom of Tregellis Castle" dated 1/12/17. She also went on the summer holiday adventure of 1918. Captain Masters appeared in No. 130 but not in the summer stories. He was said to have been in America on Air Force business.

In later years Eileen was mentioned a few times and some short stories appeared in which she was featured but these were not written by Mr. Brooks. We never read that she married Captain Billy in the end. She just disappeared into the mists of time. A mystery indeed.

\* \* \* \* \*



## MULTI MEDIA BLAKE, PART FIVE

by Norman Wright

Mayflower Books published the first two issues of the new format Sexton Blake Library" in February 1965. The slim paperbacks were badly distributed and difficult to find in the bookshops. Longstanding readers had been promised that one in four issues would be a reprint of a Blake classic. The reprints were a long time materialising and when the "Case of the Bismark Memoirs" did appear in issue 28, I personally found it a big disappointment, never having been keen on any of Pierre Quiroule's Blake stories. There were no further early reprints, an indication that others shared my opinion. After staggering on it came to an end after only 45 issues in 1968. In spite of the demise of the "Sexton Blake Library" the late 1960's saw an upsurge in Blake's popularity.

A new series of Blake radio plays began on 24th August, 1967 with a story entitled "Lilies for the Ladies". There were at least fourteen plays in the series all of them written by Donald Stuart. The leading roles of Blake, Tinker and Paul Dane were played by William Franklyn, David Gregory and Heather Chasen respectively.

The actors were excellent in their roles, building up a good rapport with

each other. The stories were diverse in their themes. "First Class Ticket to Nowhere" was very much of the time while others including "The Vampire Moon" - a tale of evil orientals and man eating fungus - was vintage Blake. "A Murder of Crows" was a novel idea, with everyone named Crow being bumped off by the murderer, just to make sure he got the correct victim! William Franklyn was ideal as Blake, his versatile voice made the most of the scripts without the slightest trace of 'sending it up'. David Gregory's Tinker could not fail to please, and he was not once called Edward Carter.

Chief Inspector Coutts, played by Wilfred Babbage, appeared in some of the stories. Mrs. Bardell was mentioned, but never actually appeared. The series was produced by Alastair Scott Johnston.

Sexton Blake's T.V. debut was in a series of period plays set in the 1930's. Lawrence Payne played the detective and Roger Foss took the part of Tinker. The serials, which ran for several seasons in the late 1960's had such titles as "The Great Train Robbery", "Captain Nemesis" and "The Case of the Gasping Goldfish". They were intended for children and proved to be very popular. A picture strip version ran in "Valiant" comic which also gave away a series of picture cards entitled "The Adventures of Sexton Blake". Cards were also given away with Sam Portex Gum, but at the time of writing it is not clear whether or not the two series of cards were the same or not.

In 1968 "valiant" Book of T.V.'s Sexton Blake" was published. "Mystery and suspense with the most famous detective of all time", ran the blurb. The book was modelled on the Blake annuals of the late 1930's and consisted of stories, adventure strips and factual articles on police methods. An abridged version of "Sexton Blake Detective" from "Union Jack" no 2 was dredged up and reprinted. The story, which had originally appeared in May 1894, had previously been reprinted in the second of the pre war Sexton Blake Annuals.

There were at least nine T.V. serials with Lawrence Payne and there would no doubt have been more if it had not been for a tragic accident. While filming a duel for the series Payne suffered an injury, and in spite of five operations lost the sight in one eye.

After the success of the T.V. series Dean and Co. published hardbacked editions of four prewar "Sexton Blake Library's". They were incredibly good value for money at 2/6d each.

The last T.V. appearance of the duo to date was in Simon Raven's serial "Sexton Blake and the Demon God" screened in 1978. Jeremy Clyde, a one time pop singer, played Blake and Philip Davis played Tinker. The tale of Egyptian mummies and ancient curses had little style and left one yawning in spite of the 'cliff hanger' endings to each episode. A novelisation of the serial was published by Mirror Books. It was, as far as I am aware, the last original Blake story to be published. Such a poor tale would have been a sad note on which to end, but luckily things seem to be looking up a bit. The bumper Blake omnibus "Sexton Blake Wins", published by Dent and containing nine reprinted tales from the 1920's and 1930's is, perhaps, an indication that some publishers still think there's commercial life in the old dog yet!

THOSE LADIES AGAIN

by J.E.M.

Re: Anne Clarke's letter (August C.D.)

Ms. Clarke may be surprised that my list of Blakian ladies (C.D. 485) stopped short of the Paula Dane - Marion Lang era but, as I carefully pointed out, the so-called "New Look" Blake belongs to a different world entirely. In fact, for me, the high-powered, sexed-up, organisation-man Blake has about as much to do with the "real" Blake as Philip Marlowe (or Sam Spade or Mike Hammer) has to do with Sherlock Holmes. For me, as for many other readers, Sexton Blake (and, therefore, his ladies) "died" around 1940.

On the ladies I did list, I referred the reader to articles in C.D. numbers 331, 371, 385, and 398. Meanwhile, herewith a few more odd scraps of information on some lesser known females, dredged up from my files:

Fifette Bierce: confederate of Kestrel the Master Mummer, created by Lewis Jackson. First appearance UJ 620.

Camille Despard, Friend of the Black Rat, alias Inspector Hazard of the Paris Sureté. First appeared UJ 701.

Claire de Lisle: UJs 904, 909, 918 and 923.

Julia Fortune: Brit. Secret Service Agent. UJs 1013, 1038, 1182 etc.

Gloria Dene (Dean?): Decoy of a criminal called the Gargoyle. UJ 1307.

Judith Major: Wife of the Scorpion. UJ (numbers not known).

Glory Sale: Girl Reporter. SBL No. 71 and others.

Kathleen Maitland (Broadway Kate): Husband of Ezra Q. Maitland.

Denise Drew: the "Carrier Pigeon" or crook's messenger. First appearance UJ 1252.

Mlle Miquet (the Butterfly): friend of Dirk Dolland, the Bat. Was dropped when Dolland reformed.

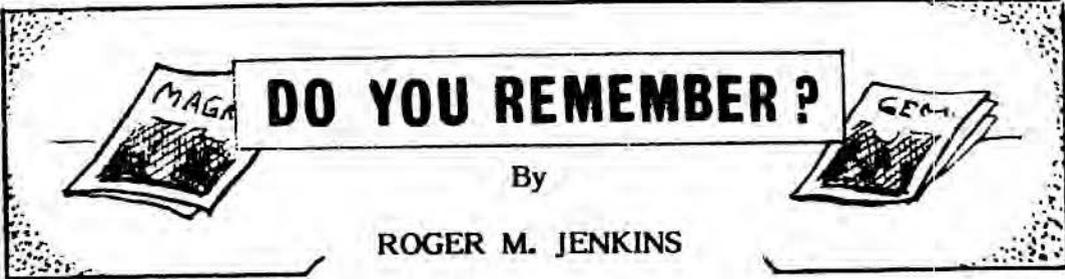
Nhin Kee: SBL (first series) 360.

Farima: SBL (second series) 129.

Jessica Slessor: UJs 1288 and 1295.

Biwi: SBL (second series) 189.

\* \* \*



**DO YOU REMEMBER?**

By

**ROGER M. JENKINS**

**No. 225 - Magnets 1434-9 - Portercliffe Hall Series.**

There were still some good things in the Magnet in the year 1935, and the opening number of the series with the promising title of "Fish's Holiday Stunt" began with a seemingly trivial incident which nevertheless made a great deal of difference to the ultimate course of events. Kipps, the conjurer, took a letter of Bob Cherry's and apparently threw it out of the window into a strong wind. Bunter tried the same trick with a letter of Fish's, and of course the letter got lost. Fishy kept kicking Bunter until he found the letter and, when Bunter did in fact chance to come across it, it happened to come open in his hands and he discovered that Mr. Hiram K. Fish was renting Portercliffe Hall with an option to purchase, and that a number of juniors could be invited as they would come in useful. Fishy was boasting that his father had purchased the Hall, and Bunter blackmailed his way into the party by threatening to expose Fishy's boasting.

The composition of the holiday party was unusual. In addition to the Famous Five, who were glad to come as Wharton Lodge would be empty that summer, there was Vernon-Smith, Wibley, Kipps, and Alonzo Todd. It was Alonzo's glorious swan song in the Magnet, and he had intended going hiking with his cousin Peter, walking about half a mile a day and lecturing about Nature en route. Bunter achieved an invitation for Alonzo because he was such a soft touch for borrowing money. Although the group seemed heterogeneous, in fact all had vital parts to play in the plot, apart from Wibley who seemed to be there merely to add to the humour.

The young Lord Portercliffe, after paying death duties, was so impoverished that he was obliged to live in Switzerland: the Swiss franc was very low in those days. His father had hidden a hoard of sovereigns and Bosanney, his former secretary, had apprised Mr. Fish about this. Mr. Fish hoped to find the cache and then purchase Portercliffe Hall with Lord Portercliffe's own money, a sharp sort of transaction that appealed to the transatlantic minds of the Fishes. The juniors were to help in rooting about the place, but no one reckoned on the ghost in period costume that survived even bullets from Mr. Fish's own revolver. Of course, it was Bunter who found part of the hoard and he went round Margate passing sovereigns, to everyone's extreme surprise.

This was the last Magnet summer holiday set in a stately home, and it

possessed all the fascination of that period of luxurious living, with a butler, footmen, a stable of horses, and a garage of cars. It was also a piece of supreme self-indulgence on the part of the author, as I realised when I visited Charles Hamilton and he voluntarily indentified the local mansion on which Portercliffe Hall was based. Not only were there a number of scenes in Margate but the juniors even walked along the beach to Kingsgate, where the author lived, and were cut off by the tide in an exciting episode that had nothing to do with the plot, but it must still have afforded Charles Hamilton some amusement to bring his fictional characters almost to his own front door.

The series developed in style, with no repetition. The early part was devoted to tricks by the hosts to try to get rid of Bunter, then came the ghost, the discovery of the secret passages, and finally the battle of wits between Mr. Fish and the man playing ghost, all embellished with some humour and some dramatic incidents involving the juniors. Needless to say, Mr. Fish did not succeed in cheating young Lord Portercliffe who came into his fortune in the end. Magnets 1434-9 constituted a fascinating series that shed a delightful glow of pleasure for all the paper's readers in that far-off year 1935. As I was one of those readers I can personally vouch for the truth of this assertion!

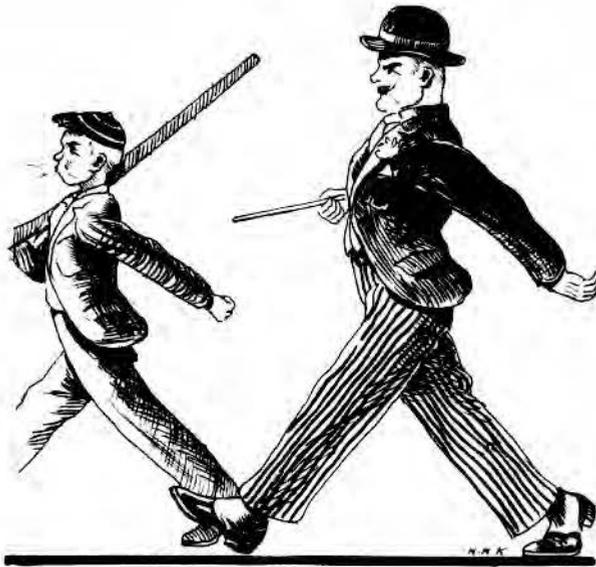
\*\*\*\*\*

### **SCHOOLMASTERS REMEMBERED (No. 2): A.J.M.** by Norman Kadish

I think Frank Richards never used a P.T. master as a model for one of his important characters. Am I right? I have slight recollections of a Sergeant in the Rookwood stories, but don't remember any character of physical training becoming a major fictional personality. In St. Frank's a Sergeant is also mentioned, I think, but again only vaguely. A.J.M. or Mr. Marley was the exact opposite. He was a real-life ex P.T. Regimental Sergeant-Major (Meritorious Service Medal) and a champion gymnast. A shortish, burly figure, yet still intensely agile in his 50s and 60s. He 'took us' for gymnastics with apparatus. We had the full equipment, horizontal parallel bars, rings, horse and ropes, and he still gave displays of the 'grand circle' (circling flat out) at the age of 50 plus.

We had a school battalion; no uniforms, but in each form-room was a rack filled with wooden shaped rifles with brass trigger handles. On the bugle sounding, we all dashed, grasped a rifle, 'fell-in' in the playground and marched over 'the downs' (a park-like group of local fields) behind the school band. Often I saw this burly figure vault the railings, keeping his flock together, with his short swagger stick under his arm.

I well remember an occasion in the gym. We all had to have full gym equipment, white trousers, wide, two-coloured school belt and vest and shoes. Marley was checking over our shoes, which we stored in our individual lockers. Looking over his glasses at us



'fags' and remarking on the odd pairs of gym shoes, he finally added, à la Mrs. Malaprop: 'I don't want you boys to have any more of these cosmopolitan shoes!' As stated in the old boys' section of the school magazine, 'No slackness or slovenliness ever escaped his eagle eye ...but beneath a stern exterior there was an innate love of his school, his colleagues and his boys'.

I was one of his 'blue-eyed' boys, taking part in the inter-house gymnastic competitions, and leader of one of the rope-climbing teams 'hands-only' section. I took an evil delight in descending slowly so that other boys, with longer legs to be carried, did not regard this little exercise with too much favour. Learning to swim I was taken by Marley on a sort of fishing rod (probably his own invention, the school gym belt being fastened round my middle), down to the middle bath and deep end, myself splashing away with imitation strokes. Unfortunately, the head part of me overbalanced and dipped under water. I came up like a frantic half-drowning kitten. Still, it did not do me much harm, and I am still a fairly competent swimmer.

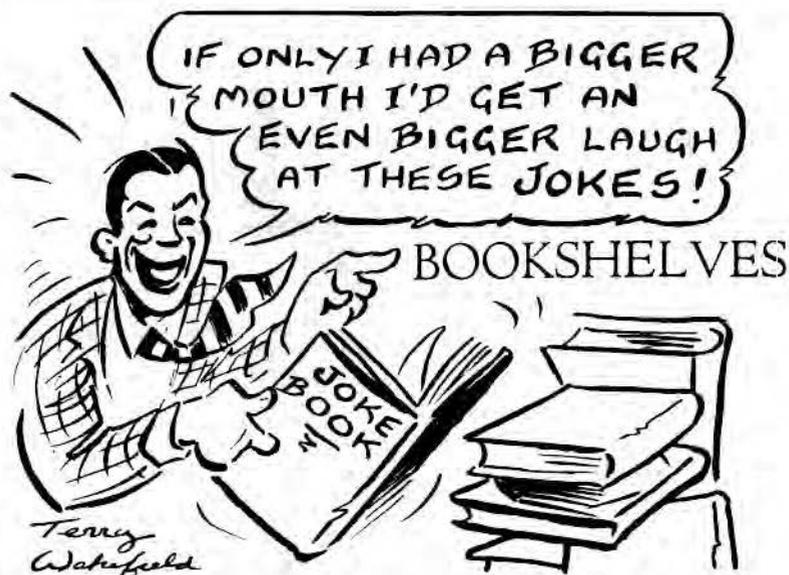
Again from the school magazine: 'Such brave (gymnastic) displays and indeed every part of his work, required long preparation and

---



gruelling exertion; and Marley, who did not spare himself, did not spare his pupils. They may have groaned under his iron discipline or grumbled against the demands he made upon their strength and their leisure, but they learned to know the joy of a job well done, and they will not forget the man who taught them that lesson.'

\* \* \* \*



**SUNNY SIDE UP** by Arthur Marshall (Hamish Hamilton £10.95).

Reviewed by Mary Cadogan.

Few writers and broadcasters are blessed with the gift of being consistently - and unmaliciously - funny. Happily, for decades now, that genius of frivolous geniality, Arthur Marshall, has remained unquenchable. *SUNNY SIDE UP*, his latest volume of rib-tickling reflections, is a delight to dip into. He casts his net wide and deep, exploring everything from British Railway catering to the vintage Girl's Own Paper's replies to readers' letters (health and beauty hints such as the use of perfumed cod-liver oil or chest expanders, and the rubbing of eyebrows with raw onion pieces are particularly rivetting). Amongst this book's many gems, there is much for those of us who have a passion for school stories: the works of Angela Brazil, always admired by Arthur Marshall, crop up on several occasions; there is a lovely school cricketing-umpire item, and some intriguing speculation about the schooldays of Dallas's J.R. (arriving at Eton with too much pocket-money and plenty of con. man schemes), and Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth (pictured by the irrepressible Arthur as 'a vigorous hockey captain - Cries of Sticks' - and a regular demon at the bully-off'). *SUNNY SIDE UP* is a 'must' to buy, beg or borrow.

**THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL RIVALS**

Frank Richards. (Howard Baker Book Club Special: £18.00)

Reviewed by Eric Fayne.

There is no mystery story in this collection of Red Magnets - but there is a puzzle. The puzzle is to find any connection between the overall title of the volume and the contents. There is no Grammar School associated in any way with

---

Greyfriars. Possibly the publisher had in mind Courtfield Council School or Highcliffe, both of which feature in separate stories. But what's in a title?

The volume comprises 6 consecutive Red Magnets from the autumn of 1914. Three of the stories are by substitute writers. The volume is marvellously fascinating for the Greyfriars historian and the Magnet collector. It is a joy to evaluate just how the old paper - and the authors - adapted themselves to the Great War which had started two months earlier.

From several weeks earlier the Greyfriars tales had lost a few chapters from the very long yarns which had been the rule in early days. The Magnet itself had lost 4 pages, the 32 pages being reduced to 28. It was still a superb pennorth. A war serial had been added, so now there were two serials pro tem instead of the normal single serial - and the war serial was often given pride of place, as the opening attraction in the paper. A war flavour, a patriotic fervour, was evident in most of the yarns.

In the first 6 years of the Magnet there had only been a mere handful of sub tales - just enough to give the Greyfriars creator a little rest, mayhap. Now, in 6 consecutive weeks, we get no less than 3 sub tales. It is known that Hamilton was in Europe when war broke out, and for a while he must have found difficulty in writing and in getting what work he was able to do through to his editor. We have an adequate explanation for the sub tales at this period. Yet, even after matters settled down again, from now on the subs were to play a large and larger part in presenting the stories as the years went by, and the reason for this is a matter for mere speculation. One thing is assured. It cannot have been that the sub tales were particularly popular with the average reader.

In the Magnets of the period covered by this volume it is intriguing to see how the sub writers adapted themselves to the work.

The volume's opening tale, "Won By Pluck", is a sub tale. Tom Merry writes to Harry Wharton to suggest that St. Jim's and Greyfriars should compete in raising money for a war charity. Mark Linley features in the essential heroic episode, and in the end the two schools tie, each raising £50.

Hamilton is back in "Foiling the Foe", a theatrically inadequate title. In a tale which may have gone over well in 1914. Wharton, and Trumper of the Courtfield School, are kidnapped on the beach, late at night, by German seamen whose cruiser has slipped into Pegg Bay. The German commander wants Trumper to pilot his ship in the bay, or the two boys will be shot. Trumper agrees to pilot the ship - and like a true patriot, piles the German cruiser up on the rocks. I wonder whether the absurdity of the plot struck the youthful readers of 1914. Would the Commander of a German cruiser really ask a schoolboy to pilot his ship? Maybe in 1914 they were ready to believe any imbecility of the Huns.

"The Photo Prize" is another sub story. A newspaper offers a prize for the best set of amateur snapshots, and Bunter sets out to win it. The next tale was another war yarn from Hamilton, and it was a famous tale in its day, though it is mainly forgotten now. It has the feeble title of "Looking For Alonzo", though the Magnet's red cover carries the far more striking caption of "Harry Wharton & Co. in France". Peter Todd gets the alarming news that Alonzo and his Uncle Benjamin are stranded in Switzerland following a holiday. The Bounder and Peter set out to find them. A sombre tale, but ingenious and exciting.

---

Undoubtedly the star turn of the book, and well worth the admission money.

Next "The Reign of Terror" would seem to be the first sub Greyfriars story from Samways. He must have been very young and inexperienced at the time. Gadsby of Highcliffe comes to Greyfriars as a dentist, Mr. Theodore Lugg, and proceeds to extract Greyfriars teeth. Tales of schoolboys in disguise always strain the credulity of the reader, but to imagine a schoolboy, disguised as a dentist, being right up against you without your realising that he is a boy in disguise with forceps, rather goes over the limit. This tale is so preposterous that it cannot miss giving you fun.

Finally, it comes to Hamilton to strain the credulity, in "The Black Footballers". Mr. Quelch becomes something of a tyrant, and bans a football match, against St. Jim's. Harry Wharton & Co., overcome the trouble by disguising themselves, as the title suggests.

So, a volume packed with interest, especially for the historian. And the production, as always with these lovely books, is superb.

### CRICKET BOOKS (PAVILION LIBRARY SERIES: £5.95 each)

Reviewed by Eric Lawrence.

#### THE BEST LOVED GAME by Geoffrey Moorhouse

The author spent the summer of 1978 touring England to discover how cricket was surviving the influence of Kerry Packer and the resulting upsurge in materialism, which was reported to be undermining the general health of the game. The fruits of his research are contained in this book where he covers cricket at all levels from school and village club to Test match, passing through League and Minor county on the way. The 1978 season was plagued with bad weather, and many of the matches he watched were affected by rain. Nevertheless, he has captured the fundamental nature of the game in a way not always achieved by other writers. It is suggested in the first introduction that part of the reason for this perception is the fact that Geoffrey Moorhouse is not a professional cricket writer, and he has therefore brought a fresh and sympathetic mind to his subject, a mind which has not become conditioned over the years to the gradual changes in the game.

This is a most absorbing book, one which is difficult to put down. It should be enjoyed by all who watch and savour English cricket at any or all of its stratas.

#### P.G.H. FENDER - A BIOGRAPHY - by Richard Streeton

Percy George Herbert Fender was considered by many knowledgeable cricketers to be the finest county captain who was never chosen to lead his country in Test matches. From 1914 to the mid-1930s he was one of the most controversial personalities in the game, immensely popular with players and spectators but regarded with some disapproval by cricket's hierarchy, probably because of his outspoken nature. This latter characteristic may have been responsible for him not being selected for the England captaincy. For about a decade he was captain of Surrey and he brought to that task a zest, sagacity and shrewd tactical ability unequalled in other countries.

---

The Australian-made television series "Bodyline" was quite popular with the general public, but was justly ridiculed by those who know cricket. It depicted Fender as someone who wore a monocle and played the ukelele, and I remember staring at the T.V. screen in amazement at this gross misrepresentation of the man. It might well have been a character from a novel by P.G. Wodehouse and it was described by his daughter as a "diabolical distortion" which had to be concealed from her ageing father.

Cartoonists however, loved Fender. Tall, thin, curly-haired, bespectacled, moustached and often wearing a sweater so long that the bottom nine inches or so had to be turned up, he was a dream subject and as such, was immortalised in the cartoons of Tom Webster and that fine Australian bowler Arthur Mailey.

One day in August 1927 when playing for Surrey against Northamptonshire, Fender scored a century in 35 minutes and ended with 113 not out. This is still a first class cricketing record, although equalled a few years ago in grotesquely contrived circumstances.

Richard Streeton has written a fine and tasteful biography of a great cricketer who was also a great character. Fender died in 1985 at 92 years of age, just four years after the original publication of this book.

\*\*\*\*\*

### ANSWERS TO SONG TITLE QUIZ (From August C.D.)

- |                                   |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Two sleepy people.             | 13. Sweet Lorraine               |
| 2. Among my souvenirs             | 14. These foolish things         |
| 3. I'll see you in my dreams      | 15. When I grow too old to dream |
| 4. It's a lovely day tomorrow     | 16. My old shako                 |
| 5. Lazy bones                     | 17. The anniversary waltz        |
| 6. A pretty girl is like a melody | 18. Anything goes                |
| 7. Chorus gentlemen               | 19. All the things you are       |
| 8. Blue moon                      | 20. The birth of the blues       |
| 9. Deep purple                    | 21. Embraceable you              |
| 10. Once in love with Amy         | 22. Goody, goody                 |
| 11. Singin' in the rain           | 23. A foggy day                  |
| 12. Stardust                      | 24. I'll see you again           |

Our winner is Mr. G.W. Brickell of Bath, with 22 correct titles. (Nos. 7 and 16 stumped everybody!). The book token prize awarded by Mr. Eric Lawrence has been sent to Mr. Brickell.

\*\*\*\*\*



## LETTERS TO THE EDITRESS!

**BILL LOFTS** (London) I stand of course corrected on Alfred Edgar's editorship on Pluck. Somehow the date had got muddled up. He was certainly editor of that paper during its run under Addington Symonds, as he wrote about his ability on the paper during its run. Edgar, after The Nelson Lee Library days, probably went on the Startler/Bullseye/Surprise editorial group, where he wrote many of the most famous stories in Bullseye.

I greatly enjoyed Leslie Laskey's article on editorials. But it is a fact that some were not devised or written by the editor at all. "Come into the Office Boys and Girls" was the brain child of E.L. McKeag who was editor of various girls' papers, and had nothing to do with the Magnet staff. It was he who answered readers' queries for years, and all the editor (or sub-editor) had to do was to add the contents of next week's thrilling story. D.C. Thomson papers certainly had editorials - the most famous being Hotspur's 'Sez You' - so different from Amalgamated Press Ltd. It showed a breezy young man who addressed boys as equals - as chums - in a very friendly spirit, or treated readers as personal friends, and never in a condescending manner.

In answer to D.J. Hardman (Australia) in the August C.D., the school hardcover story "Cousins at Carsdale" was written by Hubert J. Robinson and published in January 1933 at 1/6d. by Nesbit & Co. He only wrote about four books, probably his most successful being "The Imposture Prefect" that had several reprints. I know nothing about the writer, though this may have been a non-de-plume for a better known author. (Editor's note: Mr. Robert J. Kirkpatrick and Mr. Ray Hopkins also gave us information about this book).

**C.H. CHURCHILL** (Exeter) Our Editor's remarks on her holiday in Italy, and seeing Vesuvius or Vesuvio as they say out there, were most interesting to me. I believe the last time an eruption of note was in 1944. I was around there at the time and well remember what a sight it was. By day masses of smoke and ashes and what-ever towering into the sky and at night the peak seemed to be on fire. We could see the glowing lava pouring down the mountainsides. Rather scaring, really, being as near as we were (courtesy of the Army!) Luckily we were soon off to Bari on the Adriatic, east of Naples. Even there, about 100 miles or so away, when it rained the rain was dirty from the dirt and smoke. We found on returning from journeys that we were absolutely covered with dirty grey dust which took some getting rid of. Later we were in a tiny village right behind Vesuvius called Africola. There the lava dust was inches thick everywhere and was so light that walking about disturbed it and we found we were walking about in a thick grey cloud knee high. We were thankful to depart. If anyone reading this was there at that time I should like to hear from them.

**ANTHONY E.L. COOK** (High Wycombe) Upon reading George Perry's Rupert, A Bear's Life, I note with interest that Alfred Bestall did the artwork for a publication "Eve" producing a certificate headed:-

(continued over/..)

## EVE

The Girls' Salon  
for the advancement of  
Art, Music, Literature and all  
good works among the younger  
readers of "Eve"

Can any reader offer some clue about a publication of this nature?

**PETE HANGER** (Northampton) I note that Danny is looking forward to "Another Wun Lung" China series. I have long held the opinion that this series was meant to be just that. But because of the Japanese invasion of China (July 1937) Frank Richards deemed it prudent to cut it short. Perhaps that is why we had two foreign holiday stories next year!

**G.W. MASON** (Torquay) If "Danny" (August C.D.) regards Grundy as a "bore", why did he buy, and read a (1937) watered down version of a (1915) Vintage Gem, the former with the obvious title of "Editor Grundy"? George Alfred Grundy, I consider, was always well adapted to the role for which he was created by Charles Hamilton, and his "image" was never intended to be subsequently reduced and dictorted by the blue pencils of indifferent, editorial assistants.

**GORDON HUDSON** (Chester le Street) I have just been reading one of the 5th series Sexton Blakes - "This Spy Must Die" by Peter Saxon. It was not a detective story, but simply a thriller. Blake had to try and get a man out of Russia. However it went at a very fast pace with plenty of thrills and excitement all the way through. Whilst I was reading it I thought what a pity it had not been made into a film. I am sure it would be every bit as, or perhaps more, exciting than any of the James Bond films I have seen. I think the film producers miss a tremendous number of good stories which could be turned into box office hits if only they were aware of what is available in our hobby.

\*\*\*\*\*



## CLIFF HOUSE CORNER

By MARGERY WOODS

Most ardent collectors have wild, wonderful dreams in which they go to an auction, or car boot sale or scruffy little junk shop and discover gorgeous piles of old storypapers sleeping under cobwebs in a forgotten corner -- at which point the dreamer usually wakes up. But occasionally dreams do come true, as one of mine did this week.

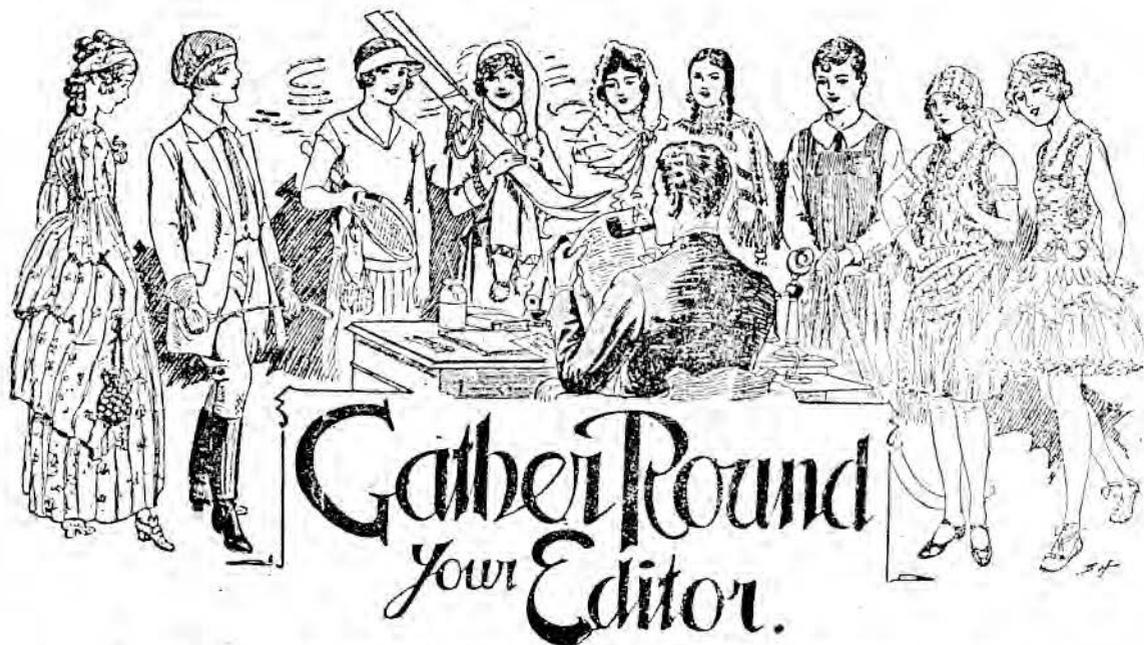
The phone rang, and a couple of days later -- on my birthday, which really made my day -- the whole of Vol. I of THE SCHOOLGIRL arrived at my door, courtesy of our caring Royal Mail. I haven't yet quite got over the shock, especially as the first six issues carried the seductive bait for new readers, six real photos of famous film stars, FREE! and two of these delightful little freebies had actually survived nearly sixty years between the pages. (Alas, Clive Brook was missing! Since seeing him recently in an old movie on Channel 4 I have understood what they meant by strong, silent, movie heroes.) But of much greater interest was the content of this new storypaper, the successor to the sadly defunct SCHOOLFRIEND.

The date of number one was August 3rd, 1929, the cover a mixture of orange and purple, not to my mind as attractive as the predominately dark blue against orange of later years when the Cliff House girls of the delightful Laidler illustrations adorned the covers. The Editor's Page was on the inner cover and depicted the Editor with a fine array of attractive schoolgirl talent gathered round his desk. The inevitable pipe was much in evidence, no doubt to promote the safe, father-figure image of this new influence on impressionable young minds.

A.P. seemed determined to hook their readership this time. No less than four serials commenced in the first issue. CINDERELLA OF THE CIRCUS from the capable and reliable pen of Muriel Holden held the prime spot, and prime responsibility for ensuring that the reader continued to read on and reach serial number two, an historical adventure, IN THE DAYS OF THE TERROR, by Joy Phillips. Then to make a change --surely they'd caught their audience by then--- they presented a long complete story, THE SECRET OF THE OLD KEEP, by Louise Carlton, with old ruined castle, caravan, and a beautiful gipsy girl and mystery. Next---never let up!--- the serial format returned, this time by Elise Probyn, yet another of A.P.'s popular authors, entitled THE RIVIERA REVELLERS, perhaps to be a vicarious holiday experience for all those not-very-well-off children of those dark depression days to whom the Riviera was only a name on their school atlas and likely to remain just that.

Lastly, tucked away almost diffidently within the back pages was the only school story in the paper, the fourth serial, by Hilda Richards, THEIR FEUD AT SCHOOL, inviting the reader to meet Barbara Redfern and Co. of Cliff House School.

This Cliff House revival, whether by accident or design, began in a slightly different writing style to most of the C.H. stories in that the first two instalments were told from the viewpoint of Cicely Frome, a new girl just arriving at the school. The use of this writing method, widely used in much popular fiction, meant that new readers, most of whom, if not all, would be meeting Babs and Co. for the first time, were introduced to them and the school through the eyes of a newcomer. And so, without the need to resort to tedious narrative explaining who was who, who was a goodie and who was a meanie, the characters of the girls were instantly expressed and the leading lights registered in the readers' imagination. Later, the writing style falls back into the familiar "author omniscient", allowing the author to observe from a neutral angle or enter the heart of any one particular character, very useful for emotional impact and heightened reader-identification. But then, the A.P. story-spinners were skilled at their craft; the "right" method of treating a storyline came to them unflinchingly.



It was to be at least another two years before John Wheway took over Cliff House, but in those early days of THE SCHOOLGIRL he could be found getting into top gear for the years to come when Cliff House would reach what many devotees consider the great years of the school. Here in issue 16 of 1929 he gave us "a fascinating new serial" NAIDA OF THE MYSTIC NILE by Heather Granger, in which one can discern strange echoes of the future rather than the past when Babs and Co. would share many exciting adventures in Egypt and surely the most exotic of all Christmasses with the Princess Naida of Luxor

\*\*\*\*\*  
 DISPOSING of more of my collection, ANNUALS; Boys' and Girls' hard and paperbacks; Modern Boys, Lees, Gems, Magnets, etc. Bound and Loose. S.A.E. for full list. E. McPherson, 'Tynings', Upper Milton, Wells, Somerset, BA5 3AJ.  
 \*\*\*\*\*





## NEWS OF THE OLD BOYS BOOK CLUBS

### CAMBRIDGE CLUB

The first meeting of our 1987/88 season took the form of a visit to Neville and Ruth Wood's delightful home at Sweffling, Suffolk, on Sunday, 6th September.

Club business completed, Neville treated us to a presentation about the Art of Jacques Tati - highlighting the Frenchman's stylishly observed humour by showing a video of 'Mon Oncle' from the nineteen fifties.

After thanking our hosts for their lavish entertaining of our Cambridge party, we departed in the usual torrential downpour - unfortunately only too common this summer of 1987.

ADRIAN PERKINS

### NORTHERN OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

Holidays and other engagements inevitably led to a slightly lower attendance of ten at the 449 meeting of the club on 5th September. Revd. Geoffrey Good agreed to take the Chair and, after club business, delighted all present with a reading in his own, inimitable style, of Magnet 1277: 'Billy Bunter's Bad Luck', in which the Remove are troubled by a wasp. Later he read another humorous piece of Frank Richard's writing, this time from 'Greyfriars for Grownups' by L. Sutton (from Magnet 617, when Gosling became entangled with matrimonial schemes).

Between these two excellent items Harry Blowers gave us an unusual quiz entitled 'Fictional Characters of Law and Order'. As usual our oldest member Bill Williamson was one of the winners,

---

joint with Arthur Fortune. Refreshments were gratefully received, provided by Peter Plowman and David Bradley. As Johnny Bull Minor was absent on his summer holidays, a temporary reports secretary was found. Next month will see the visit of Bill Lofts, which we are all looking forward to. The date will be 10th October.

PAUL GALVIN

### LONDON O.B.B.C.

For the seventh time in the thirty-nine years of the Club's existence, we met at the Charles Hamilton Museum in Maidstone, Kent. After our welcome from our worthy President and Curator of the Museum, John Wernham, and preliminary conversations and get-togethers, we adjourned to the meeting room for a showing of two films. The first was the historic one of Charles Hamilton, and the Club's Margate luncheon party. The second was of beautiful Kentish locations, and scenes from Stratford on Avon and Oxford.

After the tea-break Graham Bruton conducted a Twenty Questions quiz, won by Mark Taha with Roger Jenkins in second place. Book prizes were awarded. Then came Mary Cadogan's excellent discourse entitled Charles Hamilton: A Lifelong Companion. To illustrate Hamilton's skilled use of language, Mary gave two readings from the Gem and Magnet respectively. One described the confrontation between Skimpole and Gussy about Socialism and 'bloated aristocrats'; the other dealt with the time the venerable Dr. Locke received a cablegram from Hiram K. Fish containing the mysterious message 'Keep Tabs on Fish', which Mr. Quelch had to translate into King's English for the worthy Greyfriars Head to understand.

Votes of thanks were accorded to John Wernham for his fine hospitality. Next meeting at 58 Stanwell Road, Ashford, Middlesex, TW15 3DV. 'Phone Mr. Litvak on 07842 53609. (A full tea will be provided, but kindly bring own cup or mug.) The date will be Sunday, 11th October.

BEN WHITER

---

---

## THE UNFOLDING ENIGMA OF ISOBEL NORTON

What a delightful surprise to hear from Bill Lofts that Reg Kirkham was responsible for the final, unfinished Valerie Drew serial in THE SCHOOLGIRL, a story paper this prolific author is not usually associated with. Apart from one of his usual hilarious Hilary Marlow serials, "That Joyous Adventure of Trixie's" (1932), and three adventure serials using his Pauline Stewart pen-name, "Schoolgirls in Peril" (1932), "Orphan of the Jungle", and "Delia's Quest for the Golden Keys" (both 1935), his work did not appear in THE SCHOOLGIRL.

Better known for his "Grand Laughter Stories" in THE SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY (1923 to 1933 as Joan Vincent and 1924 to 1934 as Hilary Marlow), his final appearance in this paper was a long, 24-week series as Hilary Marlow, "The Bright Sparks of the Family" (1936-37). His last humorous stories were both "New and Original" (not previously printed as serials) and appeared in the SGOL, "Wyn Had Such a Winning Way" by Hilary Marlow, and "Tilly Turns the Tables" by Joan Vincent (both 1939). The several gaps in production of the above stories could have been filled by work on the earlier Valerie Drew stories, the authorship of which Bill says he hopes to ascertain later.

The surprising thing about this new information is that Reg Kirkham has never previously been known as a detective story writer. It is sad that the war came and closed down all the girls' papers but one, probably stopping him from a whole new writing career. Only the GIRLS' CRYSTAL continued throughout the war and the resident detective story was carried on by another writer of humorous fiction, Ronald Fleming, who as Peter Langley wrote all the Noel Raymond detective stories from 1935 to 1951.

Reg Kirkham "retired from writing in 1940" (Brian Doyle, 1964).

**By Ray Hopkins**

ANOTHER 600 FOR MR. LISTER

by Father Francis

William Lister always manages to grasp the attention. In the July C.D. he asks HOW MANY WORDS WILL YOU READ IN 1987? The answer might surprise him. According to Toffler, Future Shock (1970), Americans are bombarded by 30,000 words a day. Ten million in 1987, Mr. Lister. A powerful instrument of mind control indeed - only by contact with the past can we have any chance of retaining a balanced and personal view. (The world of our old boys' papers is a splendid antidote.)

Which brings me to another point, on which I'd be grateful for information from lovers of St. Frank's. Jim Cook refers to 'this most famous college in West Sussex'. Can readers confirm that this description of its county is a modern interpretation? As the divisions of Sussex, although centuries old, were only for some purposes of local government, they were rarely used as a county name; as now but more so the county was generally simply called "Sussex". (Editor's Note: I seem to remember that when we lived in Horsham some 25 years ago, we always referred to it as being in West Sussex, but that perhaps is 'modern'.)

And, having bored everyone by being pedantic, may I give the opportunity for readers to feel superior? I found Leslie Laskey's YOUR EDITORS WERE CALLING YOU gripping. But naturally only the two major groups were considered, and those of the Golden Age. To dare mention comics, latter-day 50s ones, and by tiddly publishers like L. Miller well that will brand me as a boundah!

Hulton Press did a good job with Eagle, and that always had an editorial, a real personal chat. But Miller's Captain Marvel and Captain Marvel Junior, and ABC's Captain Valiant/Space Comics did even better, they gave two editorials, and both a full page. (Actually one was from the editor, the other supposedly written by the hero of the comic.) So did DCMT Atlas in the early days of the Lone Star Magazine, a letter from the real-life Lone Star Rider himself.

American comics (even more a shudder down spines no doubt) long gave two pages to editorial matter - the Post Office would only allow cheap posting for 'literary items' and comic strips didn't count; it had to be wodges of words. Originally they were a couple of pages of fiction (one English imitation, Ace High Western, even had stories by the real and gen-u-wine Frank Richards) but later it was found cheaper to allow readers to fill the pages with letters, and later still a bit of an editorial crept into most of them, and

continues today. (Like the 'secret code messages' English imitations borrowed from the U.S.A. originals, and like much of the A.P. editorials, these are usually no more than trailers.)

\*\*\*\*\*

COLLECTOR REQUIRES PRE-1960 CHILDREN'S BOOKS - Bunters, Williams, Jennings, Biggles, Savilles, Elinor Brent-Dyer, Elsie Oxenham, D.F. Bruce - 1sts and reprints in dustwrappers. ANY PRE-1950 ANNUALS, especially Fudge, Felix, Radio Fun, Film Fun, Dandy, Beano, Knockout, Japhet & Happy, Tiger Tim, in fact any comic-related annuals, also card games, badges, etc. Also interested in pre-1960 comics and story papers, especially Beano and Dandy. Pre-1965 Broons, Oor Wullie, Dennis the Menace, Beryl the Peril. ENID BLYTONS pre-1950 1sts in dustwrappers, Sunny Stories magazine, pre-1960 strip books and Noddy items. Pre-war items particularly wanted. MOVIE/CAT BOOKS ILLUSTRATED by Allison Uttley, Kathleen Hale (Orlando), Racey Helps (Barnaby Littlemouse books), Molly Brett. RUPERT ANNUALS Pre-1966, any pre-war Rupert books/items illustrated by Mary Tourtel or Alfred Bestall. WALT DISNEY/MICKEY MOUSE pre-1943 annuals/books and related items (toys, games, etc.) SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN annuals and libraries pre-1950. Any intact cut-out books (Puffins or similar), any Baby Puffins. Pre-1960 Wisdens - any condition provided complete. P.G. Wodehouse 1sts and pre-war editions in dustwrappers. Collections/single items purchased. Top prices paid for fine copies (e.g. £100 plus, for pre-war Rupert Annuals). Some exchanges available. Phone evenings 0273-477555 or write John Beck, 29 Mill Road, Lewes, Sussex, BN7 2RU.

\*\*\*\*\*

FOR SALE: Magnet No. 355 (£1.30); Magnets 1392, 1412, 1443, 1444, 1451, 1456, 1491, 1533; Penny Popular No. 21 (1919); Popular 442; Cheer Boys Cheer No. 5 (1912): all at 80p each. Also the following, from the Bill Gander collection: slightly more than 50 copies of the Boys' Realm between 1905 and 1911, and about 30 copies of the Boys' Herald between 1906 and 1909; including some Christmas Double Numbers, and some instalments of Charles Hamilton, Sexton Blake, and St. Basil's; about 80 copies all told, all time worn (condition varies) but wonderful browsing and reading material for countless evenings: £30 the lot plus carriage.

Also Pluck Christmas Double No. 1913, £1. Pluck Christmas No. 1907, bound in brown paper covers without original covers £1.00; also Marvel Christmas Double No. 1907 (rough) 50p.

Postage extra on all items. Write ERIC FAYNE, 113 Crookham Road, Crookham, Hants. \*\*\*\*\*

# Your Editor says—

It helps the C.D. if readers advertise their WANTS and FOR SALE book and story-paper items, etc. in it. The rates are 4p per word; a boxed, displayed ad. costs £20.00 for a whole page, £10 for a half page or £5 for a quarter page.



\*\*\*



## From the EDITOR

4 New Street Square,  
London, E.C.4.  
23 July, 1954

**W**ERE you an EAGLE Club Member before the 18th of June this year? And, if so, have you sent in for your new Yellow Club Card which entitles you to all the new privileges without any extra charge?

If, for any reason, you still hold your old Red card, you should send it in now to EAGLE Club, EAGLE Reader Services, Long Lane, Liverpool 9, and it will be replaced for you by the new Yellow Club Card. Remember, please, to enclose an envelope addressed to yourself and bearing a 2½d. stamp.

It's possible some of you have lost your old EAGLE Club cards and so do not know what to do. If this is the case, write in to EAGLE Reader Services and tell them the card is lost, but give your date of birth, please, because it helps us to find your EAGLE Club number.

I WONDER how our sailplane is faring in the World Championships at this moment? I recommend you to watch the newspapers for the results - that's the quickest way you can find out how we are doing. I'll be telling you more about the actual Championships a few weeks from now.

**B**EN GEORGE WILLIAMS, aged 10, of 72 Fitzjohns Avenue, Hampstead, N.W.3, recently had to stand up to the great personal loss of his father's death. Ben saw there were jobs he could tackle which his father used to do and has proved himself to have a sense of responsibility which a very much older boy would be proud of. We are pleased to present him with his Silver EAGLE Badge.



Yours sincerely,

*Maxwell P. [Signature]*

YOUR  
OWN  
IDEAS  
WELCOME



JOIN  
NOW

FREE GIFT TO ALL NEW MEMBERS.

**LOOK!** HAVE YOU READ "SPACEMAN'S" COMPANION COMIC? IT'S A SUPER WESTERN CALLED **ACE HIGH** WESTERN COMIC

MEET :-

- ☆ GUN FIGHTER
- ☆ LIEUT. MIKE RONEY
- ☆ CHARLIE SIRINGO

**PLUS**

A TERRIFIC  
BLAZING ACTION WESTERN  
STORY, BY THE ONE AND ONLY

**FRANK RICHARDS**  
(AUTHOR OF BILLY BUNTER & CO. ETC.)

**DON'T MISS IT! ORDER TO-DAY!**





## GREEN MEADOW BOOKS

Kinoulton, Notts., NG12 3EN. Tel. (0949) 81723

3 Weekly Paper Lists available - MAGNET, GEM, and assorted, including GIRLS' CRYSTAL, GIRL, EAGLE, SEXTON BLAKE, NELSON LEE, etc. etc.

Regular Catalogues issued including all favourites

20p stamp appreciated, to above address

Visitors welcomed to the Bookroom, by appointment

### A.C.E. THE ASSOCIATION OF COMICS ENTHUSIASTS

ACE is now in its tenth year of providing information, entertainment and nostalgia to all collectors of comics and story-papers, cartoon books, annuals, and newspapers strips. As well as listing all current and forthcoming comics and publications of interest to collectors, our recent issues have ranged from Ally Sloper's 120th Birthday, to Leo Baxendale's historic settlement with D.C. Thomson over the Bash Street Kids, by way of a detailed checklist of all British contributions to MAD magazine. The 1987/88 subscription is £5 - exactly what it was in 1977! Editor/publisher: Denis Gifford, 80 Silverdale, Sydenham, SE26 4SJ.

### BUY, SELL OR SWOPS OLD BOYS' STORY PAPERS, COMICS AND BOOKS

BOOKS: Bunters, William, Biggles, Jennings, Henty, Brent-Dyer Oxenham, Magnet volumes. COMICS: Beano, Dandy, Radio Fun, Knockout Film-Fun, Rainbow, etc.

STORY PAPERS: Magnet, Gem, S.O.L., Champion, Hotspur, Rover, Skipper, Adventure, Wizard, etc. ANNUALS: Holiday Annual, Tiger Tim, Rainbow, Champion, Film-Fun, Radio Fun, Schoolgirls' Own, Beano, Dandy, etc.

No lists at present but do let me know what you need or have for disposal.

Contact: COLIN CREWE, 12B Westwood Road, Canvey Island, Essex. Tel. 0268 693735.  
Evenings: 7.15 - 9.30 p.m.

Edited: Mary Cadogan, 46 Overbury Avenue, Beckenham, Kent. Printed by York Duplicating Services, 7 Grape Lane, Petergate, York, YO1 2HT. Tel. York 25148.