

STORY PAPER

# COLLECTORS' DIGEST

DECEMBER  
1937

VOL 41  
NO 492



Christmas Greetings

ALL BEST WISHES to my customers/friends for Christmas and the New Year!

If you wish to call one day I would be delighted to see you. The largest stock spread over two floors, full of 'goodies' at the keenest prices; shop around and see for yourself! Six days a week (afternoons) except Tuesdays. Please ring first and arrange a time. Also a good mail service.

Complete HOWARD BAKER stock, Facsimiles and Book Club specials; list available.

Your list of wants appreciated. I don't do a catalogue as stock changes too frequently, and is too large to list.

Many bound volumes.

Many end of the year bargains you must not miss!

## N O R M A N   S H A W

84 Belvedere Road,  
London, SE19 2HZ

Telephone: 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. 492**

**DECEMBER 1987**

**Price 59p**

(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.)



## OUR BUMPER CHRISTMAS NUMBER.

You'll see that this December C.D. is an enlarged one, in honour of the festive season and because I am in the happy situation of receiving so many fine articles from our contributors. This issue brings to all of you my warmest seasonal greetings, and my thanks for your loyal support since I took over the reins from Eric Fayne the beginning of the year. It also brings Eric's Christmas wishes to all C.D. readers. We hope that you will enjoy this Yuletide number, in which many favourite characters are featured. Christmas

would not be Christmas without them of course, and hopefully the C.D. will be an appetiser for your various individual feasts of Christmas reading from the old papers, the Howard Baker reprints or the volumes of the Museum Press. Happy reading - and a Happy Christmas to You All!

In between your reading and family celebrations I hope you will try your hand at our seasonable Quiz. Don't be afraid to send me your answers even if you can't complete every one. (You won't be alone in this, I'm sure. Remember our recent song title quiz, in which two answers defied us all!) We are indebted to Margery Woods for patiently and lovingly preparing the present quiz, and for providing the prizes. We are indebted, too, to Henry Webb, who has drawn our special Christmas cover!

### 'THE REAL-THING'

In preparing this issue, and the Annual, I have been struck yet again by the sometimes exuberant and sometimes moving way in which authors like Hamilton, Brooks, and Blake writers, 'Hilda Richards' and 'Marjorie Stanton' conveyed the true spirit of Christmas. Much is said nowadays about the commercialization of this very special time - but as long as we can turn to these writers (and of course to the work of the artists who illustrated their stories) we know that no amount of commercialization can ruin the real essence of Christmas. Let us raise our glasses then to 'the real thing' which can never be dimmed, and to the ideals and values which the old story-papers have given us. And let us remember too all those who helped to establish our collecting circle who are no longer with us, and the many good and true friends who have helped over the years to keep it alive.

Lastly, I must thank again most warmly the many, many readers who have written me such appreciative and encouraging letters since I started to edit the C.D. My only regret is that I cannot answer you all individually.

**MARY CADOGAN**

\* \* \* \* \*

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS: I hope your festive joys will not be too dampened by this announcement that as from this issue the price of the C.D. will have to rise, because of increased printing costs, etc. to 59p(plus postage) each month. Some of you ask if you could send yearly rather than six-monthly subscriptions. I would be prepared to accept these, on the understanding that, if postage costs should rise during the twelve month period, subscribers would send extra to meet these costs. Several readers have asked me to set out the subscription rates,

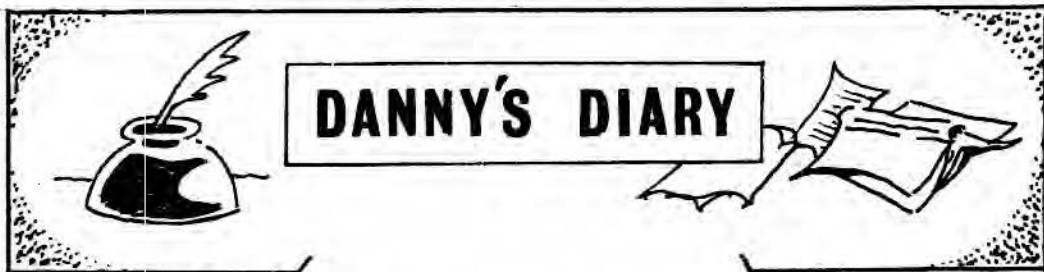
so those for the U.K. are shown below. (I will fully explain the various overseas subscription rates to readers living abroad as and when their subs. are due for renewal.)

**C.D. SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR U.K. READERS:**

For six months (by first class mail) £4.62: : (by second class mail) £4.32.

For one year (by first class mail) £9.24: : (by second class mail) £8.64.

\*\*\*\*\*



**December 1937.**

My brother Doug gave me the new Holiday Annual for a Christmas present, and it helped a lot towards my very Merry Christmas, for I am pleased to record that it is a splendid Annual this year. For some years past the Holiday Annual has been a bit tame, but this year it is a real winner with some splendid stories. The cost is now 5/- whereas at one time the Annual was six bob. I'm not so keen on the thick cardboard paper, but everything else is fine.

A St. Jim's Christmas tale is "The Shadow over Eastwood House". It is about a sinister poisoner named Bloore, who is Lord Eastwood's secretary, and Wildrake recognises him from the outback. Lord Eastwood hasn't half been unlucky with his staff in his time. A ripping, gripping Greyfriars tale is "Mutiny on the Spindrift." About a mutiny at sea with Wharton and Bob Cherry being there to help the wounded captain of the ship, as the result of the boys' midnight escapade. The Rookwood tale is also great. Called "Lovell on the Warpath" it tells of a new Maths master at Rookwood named Mr. Skinforth, who is a counterfeiter as well as a Maths master. Like Lord Eastwood, Dr. Chisholm was also unlucky with his staff down the years.

There is also a tip-top Rio Kid adventure, as well as other good tales of Greyfriars and Rookwood.

For Christmas I bought Doug the new Agatha Christie book "Murder in the Mews". I read it privately before I gave it to him to make sure that it was suitable for him. It is a Hercule Poirot book of "short" stories, but it is unusual in that there are only 4 stories in the book, and they are much longer than the normal Christie short stories. They call these of "novella length". The tales are entitled "Dead Man's Mirror", "The Incredible Theft", "Triangle at Rhodes", plus the one "Murder in the Mews" which gives the book its name. I loved it all, and so did Doug.

There has been a terrible train crash at Castlecary. It occurred in a

blizzard and 35 people were killed, and a great many injured.

This is the month for Christmas Numbers, and there have been some lovely ones. One of the earliest was that of Modern Boy. It was the second issue of the month. It was "greatly enlarged" but the extra pages are really full of advertisements. Sweet are the uses of advertisement, as old Spokeshave said. The Rio Kid and Captain Justice make Modern Boy a great paper these days. The two opening Kid stories are "Lynch Law" and "Mule Kick Gets His Man". The Rangers have bagged the Kid at last, but not for long. All the same, things in Texas are too hot for the Kid now, so he rides away into the west. Then comes a bit of a surprise, for we find the Rio Kid in Hollywood. There is a film director named Cyrus Ponk, which takes a bit of swallowing. The opening story in this series is "the Rio Kid in Hollywood" followed by "The Fifty Thousand Dollar Prisoner". A film star is kidnapped by Spanish John, the most feared man in Hollywood. And the Kid goes to the rescue of the prisoner. The stories are good and well-written, of course, but, somehow, the Rio Kid seems out of place among the Talkies. Like seeing Dick Turpin riding past the trams in New Cross. Not quite right. Still ---

The Captain Justice tales are science fiction, as they call it nowadays, with a vengeance. Professor Flaznegel's invention of a magnetic ray has brought the mysterious planet Nuvius speeding towards the earth from outer space. This month's Justice tales are "From Outer Space", "Rivals for the Planet", "First Stop, Nuvius" and "Lost in Space".

Usually in the run-up to Christmas the films in the local cinemas are nothing to shout about, but this year's crop has been very good. Mum and I saw "For You Alone" early in the month, starring Grace Moore and Cary Grant. It is really a girls' picture, but I enjoyed it. An opera star in Europe takes on a husband simply to get into the United States. Some nice songs in it. Another time, Clark Gable and Jean Harlow were in "Saratoga", a drama of the racetrack, passably good. This is Jean Harlow's last film, for she died before it was completed.

A pleasant hour or so was passed by Ralph Reader in "The Gang Show" which was a kind of musical revue staged by scouts. On the afternoon of the day after Boxing Day (Christmas Day was on a Saturday this year) we went to see "Topper", and I enjoyed it a lot. It is about a banker who is haunted by ghosts, and it is very suitable for Christmas. It stars Cary Grant and Joan Bennett, but it was Billie Burke who was gorgeously funny. And toward the end of the year I saw Anna Neagle in "Victoria the Great". Though it was history it was fine entertainment.

The Magnet, in spite of its new pink cover, has been absolutely gorgeous this month. And I'm getting used to the pink cover, where Mr. Shields does all the illustrations, and I'm beginning to like it. The opening tale is "Bunter's Orders", a single story, and it is a masterpiece. Walker, the prefect, is spread-eagled and swished in the misty evening, by Frank Nugent and Vernon-Smith. If discovered, the two juniors will be expelled - and Bunter happened to be there, and saw them do it, and recognised their voices as they fled. And Bunter has been promised a handsome tip if he bags a place in the Remove football eleven. So Bunter gives his orders to the skipper, Harry Wharton - as the price of his silence about the attack on the prefect.

---

Next week came the start of the Christmas series, the opening story being "My Lord Bunter". Young Lord Reynham, a delicate lad, is being sought by kidnappers. So his guardian decides to put the real lord into hiding and replace him at Reynham Castle by a brave, fearless, and noble lad who will be the lord for the time being. And Bunter, through a series of rib-tickling events, is chosen to play the part.

Next came the Magnet's Christmas Number with the main story being "King of the Castle", with Bunter established as the Lord of Reynham Castle. And Bunter invites Harry Wharton & Co. to go with him as his guests - and his body-guard. Finally "The Wraith of Reynham Castle". It's all a real dream of delight for Magnet readers over Christmas. How lucky we are!

Over the Christmas my Gran always treats us all to a visit to a London pantomime. This year, however, we did not pick a pantomime. We went, on New Year's Eve, to the new show at the Victoria Palace, "Me and My Girl" which stars Lupino Lane. It's a great show, with a lovely tune about the Lambeth Walk.

For me there has been another Christmas treat. For the second month running the Fourpenny Libraries have been absolutely tip-top.

The Greyfriars S.O.L. is "The Phantom of the Towers". I remember reading this in the Magnet. A ghastly phantom is said to haunt Mauleverer Towers - and the Greyfriars chums are there for the Christmas vac. Lord Mauleverer has a

**On a Christmas Eve some hundreds of years ago, the wicked Earl of Reynham was found murdered! According to legend, the phantom of the wicked earl haunts the castle—and it is death to meet him! Plucky as they are, the thought of the ghostly vision is unnerving to Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, who are spending the Christmas vacation at the castle.**



sinister manservant named Orris. Wow! One of the best Greyfriars Christmases.

The St. Jim's S.O.L. is "A Lion at St. Jim's". This is not a Christmas story, but it introduces Sankey's Circus, and it is good light reading, with Wildrake and Levison playing big parts in it.

The third S.O.L. is "The Ghost of Bannington Grange". The St. Frank's juniors spend their Christmas in an old mansion with an evil reputation. It's startling and good Yuletide reading.

A special treat in the Sexton Blake Library is a new Barry Perowne novel, "Raffles' Crime in Gibraltar". And of course it is Sexton Blake versus the famous cracksman. Lovely stuff.

The Boys' Friend Library is a winner with "The Rio Kid's Return", and there is a lovely King of the Islands story by Charles Hamilton entitled "Chums of the Islands". So, a really Happy Christmas in the fourpennies.

What on earth are they thinking of at the Amalgamated Press? First the Magnet changes to a pink cover. Now, worse still, the lovely Gem has changed to what they call a "pocket size" paper with a mustardy plain cover. The splendid red, white, and blue cover has gone. I don't like it at all. My beloved Gem will never be the same again. They say that catastrophes come in threes. I dread to think what the third one may be. Will they print the School-boys' Own Library sideways on instead of up and down? I dunno.

Back to the Gem. The Christmas holiday series has continued with Tom Merry & Co. in France. The month's opening tale is "Gussy in Gay Paree!". Next came the Christmas Number, a lovely one, and the last of those wonderful coloured covers. The story is "The Ghost of the Ruined Chateau". A spiffing Christmas tale. Lost somewhere in France late at night, the St Jim's chums seek shelter in a desolate chateau - to find that the old ruin has a grisly ghostly guardian. Gorgeous! It ran from cover to cover.

Then, in the first of those "pocket" issues came "Grundy the Hypnotist" which is about - well, Grundy as a hypnotist. In this issue there is one of the lovely old Magnet Christmas tales, "The Famous Four's Christmas". There were only four of them in those days. Lovely old tale. Finally a new boy comes to St. Jim's. His name is Bagley Trimble, but, because he is fat, he gets called Baggy. The story is "Trimble the Twister". I never liked Trimble, but it was interesting to read of his start at St. Jim's.

\* \* \* \* \*

### ERIC FAYNE comments on this month's DANNY'S DIARY.

Danny was right. The Holiday Annual which he received for Christmas 1937 (dated 1938) was an excellent one, mainly made up of fine Hamilton stories. It is arguably the best H.A. of the Thirties.

Of the main stories, "Mutiny on the Spindrift" was a long story from the Magnet of the Spring of 1913 when it had been tamely entitled "Chums Afloat". The St. Jim's story "The Shadow Over Eastwood House" had been the Gem's Christmas Number in 1921 when it had been entitled "Lord Eastwood's Christmas Party". (Incidentally, among my most valued possessions, is the original painting which the artist Briscoe did for that 1921 Christmas Gem cover.)

The Rookwood story "Lovell on the Warpath" comprised an excellent pair of



---

tales which appeared in the Boys' Friend in January 1925 under the respective titles of "Up Against the Fistical Four" and "The Rookwood Detective".

And so, in Modern Boy, Danny has reached what was really the final series in the magnificent Rio Kid saga. Now the Rio Kid is in Hollywood. As I commented some time ago, the Kid was a complete anachronism in the Hollywood of the Talkies, and it made one doubt whether the author ever fully understood the character whom he had created. An outlaw like the Rio Kid could never have lasted beyond the early years of the present century. As communications improved, the Law would soon have caught up with him.

So it is exactly 50 years since the Gem abandoned its familiar and much loved red, white and blue cover, and became a "pocket-size paper" in a mustard shroud. It was a shock for Gem regulars, and it seems impossible that it is 50 years since it happened. Danny wondered whether the Gem could ever be the same again. It never was. The old paper still had some splendid moments to come, and the old faithfuls remained loyal. But something precious had been thrown away, never to be recovered. For the knowledgeable in Gem history there has always been a mystery about the Chateau Cernay series which was published in the Gem for Christmas 1937. For after being well into 1915 with the reprints, they now went far back to 1909 for the Cernay series. The 1937 "Gussy in Gay Paree" had been "Tom Merry in Paris" in 1909, and "The Ghost of the Ruined Chateau" had been "The Terrible Three's Christmas Party" in the Christmas Double Number of 1909. Why, then, was this leap back made? Why was the series omitted when it should have appeared some years earlier in the natural sequence of events of the reprints? Well, the answer to that one is obvious. The story, under the title "The St. Jim's Ghost Hunters", had been re-published in the Schoolboys' Own Library at Christmas' 1933. But a mystery remains. Why publish that story, in the S.O.L., at the very time when the Gem was reprinting the early Gem stories and the Cernay series would soon be due. I can only think that there was a misunderstanding between the Gem editor and whoever was managing the S.O.L. at that time. If, for some reason, there was any bad feeling between the two men, the publication in the S.O.L. may have been deliberate. A fascinating episode in Gem history.

With the first mustard-covered tale in 1937, "Grundy the Hypnotist", they went forward again. It had appeared under the same title at the very start of 1916. The final story of 1937 "Trimble the Twister", the tale which introduced Trimble, had been "The Bounder of St. Jim's" the following week at the start of 1916.

The Grace Moore film "For You Alone" had been released in the States under the title "When You're in Love".

1937 was a vintage year for Agatha Christie. "Murder in the Mews" was the third Poirot book published during the year. The American edition, published under the title "Dead Man's Mirror" contained only three of the four stories which featured in the English edition, "The Incredible Theft" being omitted. For this reason the English edition has always been much sought by American fans of Christie. One story in the volume, "Triangle at Rhodes", was extended, a few years later, into the full-length Poirot novel "Evil Under the Sun".

\* \* \* \*

---

## THE C.D. CHRISTMAS QUIZ

(while the turkey and plum pud settle down)

by Margery Woods



1. Name the three saints associated with Christmas.
  2. Who designed the first Christmas card, and when.
  3. Who could be said to have invented Santa Claus.
  4. Who said, or wrote:
    - a) We'll keep our Christmas merry still.....
    - b) At Christmas I no more desire a rose.....
  5. Andrew had it first. Beryl just missed it---girls never have it, anyway, although a certain Miss Araminta Golightly actually had it three times, during the Reformation, of course, and old Grandfather Jeremiah Ramsbottom had it four times, but then he always managed to catch everything that was going. What was "it".
  6. In my first my second sat, but my third and fourth I ate. What is it?
  7. Identify these Christmas carols from the first lines of their second verses:
    - a) Born a Babe on Bethlehem's plain.
    - b) Then to the watchful shepherds it was told.
    - c) Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation.
    - d) Shepherds in the field abiding.
    - e) Led by the light of faith serenely burning.
    - f) Still through the cloven skies they came.
    - g) Christ by highest heaven adored.
    - h) They looked up and saw a star.
    - i) Fear not said he for mighty dread.
    - j) For Christ is born of Mary.
  8. What did the Christmas Cracker evolve from?
  9. In case your thoughts, like Bunter's, are still on food...

Who ate the pomegranate seeds and suffered.  
What time were the nuts and may gathered.
  10. Who said:
    - a) Part of the secret of success in life is to eat what you like and let the food fight it out inside!
    - b) If music be the food of love play on.
    - c) Hunger is the best sauce.
    - d) Who loves not wine, women and song?
    - e) Better be merry with the fruitful grape.
-

11. For the young in heart...
- Who went to sea with silver buckles.
  - Set out on a silver sea.
  - Set off with his opera hat.
  - Crammed everything into a week.
  - Wore a macaroni feather.
  - Sugars his hair and turns out his toes.
12. In what year was Cliff House School founded.
13. Who was the first pupil at Cliff House.
14. TO MAGIC 'N SHEER PLUCK.  
How many names of boys' and girls' papers can you find in these words?  
The letters may be used more than once and the target is at least 36.

(Lucky-bag prizes of storypapers to the senders of the first opened three most correct solutions. Entries to the Editor by January, 30th. HAPPY CHRISTMAS!)

\*\*\*\*\*



### CHRISTMAS ODDS AND ENDS.

by C.H. CHURCHILL

The four separate series of the Nelson Lee Library ran for seventeen years as many people know. In that length of time there were naturally seventeen Christmases. Each time this season occurred E.S. Brooks came up trumps and provided us with a first class Christmas story of small series of stories. As I said, most of these were superb but naturally a few were not quite so good as others.

All these except the first one were St. Frank's stories. The first one No. 78 "A Christmas of Peril" was dated 2/12/16 and featured Jim the Penman, Professor Zingrave and Eileen Dare. These three characters starred in their own series in the pre-St. Frank's days. No. 78 was the only time that all three appeared in the same story. Zingrave and Jim were in a few St. Frank's stories later on and Zingrave and his Green Triangle were again involved with

St. Frank's a few years later.

However, to revert to Christmas stories, E.S.B. usually went to town on these. We had parties at Castles, Towers, Halls, Manors, Granges, St. Frank's and one at an Abbey. Quite a number of these stories had an eerie atmosphere as well as plenty of party spirit. There were a few "ghosts" who, of course, turned out to be very human but it was very thrilling stuff.

My favourite is No. 130 "The Phantom of Tregellis Castle" dated 1/12/17. This featured Lord Dorrimore as well as Eileen Dare and her fiancé, Captain Masters. We were also introduced to Montie's aunt, Lady Helen Tregellis-West who often appeared in future at Christmas parties and holiday adventures where she acted as a sort of chaperone to the young ladies in the party.

In this story we read that Sir Montie was an orphan with no brothers or sisters. The main plot was about how Sir Montie was threatened by a foreign nobleman who attempted to kidnap him. In view of the above remarks it rather irks one to see a title of "Sir Montie's Minor" appear in a Boys' Realm story in 1922. It was by M. Nutbrown, who wrote a number of St. Frank's stories for that paper. Obviously he had never read any old St. Frank's stories and what about the Editor to allow it?

For seventeen years, therefore, Nelson Lee readers had something to look forward to come Christmastime when they would be transported in imagination to many and varied locations to join in all the festivities so aptly described by Edwy Searles Brooks.

### Why Not Spend Christmas with EZRA QUIRKE by WILLIAM LISTER

For the older generation Christmas is something special, if only for its memories. Memories of friends and relatives, whose faces lighted up when they saw you; of friends shaking your hand with loud cries of "A Merry Christmas"! Memories of get-togethers compounded of snow, carols, chicken and Christmas pudding!

I am sorry I cannot enthuse about the 1986-1987 type of Yuletide of "Let's get away from it all"; or getting stuck at the airport for 48 hours waiting for a strike to finish, and then sweating it out on some foreign shore. Some Christmas! But each to his own.

However, back to a real Christmas - and how? I'll tell you how: If you belong to the "Old Boys' Book Club" look up some of your old collection of Christmas Editions, or hurry with a letter to one of our excellent libraries: Greyfriars? Union Jack? or the Nelson Lee? There you will find Charles Hamilton Gwyn Evans and others; and the unforgettable Edwy Searles Brooks. Each and every one will bring to you the Christmases you used to know. Although I did not take the "Girls' Crystal" or "School Friend" (you ladies must think I'm a chauvinist

pig!) I did at least notice the seasonable covers which assured me the girls were enjoying Yuletide as well as the boys, and will continue to do so, no doubt. You ladies will find the Christmas you are looking for among those papers.

Having said that, may I return to the title of this article: "Why not spend Christmas with Ezra Quirke"? As you will not find this unusual character in any of the Yuletide editions, it is quite likely you have neglected him. Actually, the history of Ezra Quirke commenced on October 24th, 1925, finishing with the copy dated 12th of December, 1925, only a few days before the curtain went up on our Yuletide Festivities of 1925, remember them?

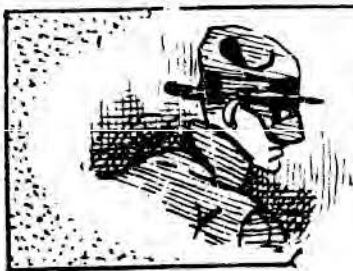
In fact, the closing words of the Ezra Quirke series are spoken by Nelson Lee and Nipper. I quote: "Yes! and St. Frank's is back to its old self again", smiled Nelson Lee, "and none too soon, either. Christmas is at hand, boys". "Christmas!" murmured Nipper dreamily, "I didn't realise it was so close!"

These words were followed by the editor announcing THE UNINVITED GUESTS, a grand Christmas holiday series introducing the boys of St. Frank's and the girls of Moorview. I mention this to show I am not asking anything unusual when I ask "Why not spend Christmas with Ezra Quirke?"

Covering late October and November, unfortunately there is no snow, there are no Christmas parties, no Christmas spreads. BUT - you will enjoy the dark nights, the winter gales, the wild October winds, and, out of the mists, the coming of Ezra Quirke, bringing with him mysteries and excitement you will never forget:

\* \* \* \* \*

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.



## BLAKIANA



### A BLAKE'S DOZEN

by J.E.M.

To qualify for my choice of twelve 'desert island' Blakes, every story has had to provide certain elements. First, and an absolute must, illustrations by Eric Parker; for me Sexton Blake without Parker is even less thinkable than Sherlock Holmes without Paget. Indeed, Parker's work was always a main attraction in itself. Then I have looked for stories with memorable characters and, not least a strong sense of atmosphere which has been more important than plot-line. Of course, nostalgia, naked and unashamed, has been the ultimate influence, which is why all but one of the tales listed appeared between 1932 and 1934 - the brief, exciting period of my youthful introduction to Sexton Blake.

In strict chronological order, my first choice is Robert Murray's A Million in Gold (Union Jack 1297), starring Paul Cynos, one of those quite unforgettable criminal characters to whom readers responded with very mixed feelings but rarely with indifference. Parker's exciting cover design for this UJ depicts the looting of a bullion van by the Cynos gang and nicely whets an appetite which is not disappointed.

My second, third and fourth choices are the last three tales in the UJ's famous "Proud-Tram" series: The Witches' Moon by Donald Stuart (UJ 1488), Fear-Haunted by Gwyn Evans (UJ 1489) and The Mystery of Blind Luke by E.S. Brooks (UJ 1490). These were all outstanding mystery thrillers by top-line Blake writers and, in each case, Parker's illustrations did them full justice. The cover for the Stuart story and the inside drawings depicting the sinister, derelict inn of the title are enormously atmospheric, matching the tale itself. Free-Haunted, which features that lively journalist 'Splash' Page, is an equally unforgettable story, again brilliantly served by Parker's work. His drawing of a working-class living-room, a murdered woman lying on the floor, is most evocative and sets



(The Witches' Moon, UJ 1488)

the scene of the story itself perfectly. The Mystery of Blind Luke introduces Waldo the Wonderman, and no more really needs to be said about this lively tale, except that it was deservedly placed first by readers in the competition connected with the series.

Like Waldo, the Criminals' Confederation was always a guaranteed high-powered entertainment and my own favourite story of this crooks' international is my fifth choice. Volcano Island by Robert Murray (UJ 1500) provides a most exotic setting for the CC's activities, while the story, with Blake himself in most convincing form, simply zips along: in my view one of Blake's most exciting adventures. Parker's novel cover illustration gives us a dizzy, bird's eye view of the eponymous island and its criminal 'city'.

Though I have already nominated a Gwyn Evans story, a Blake's dozen without one of his Christmas tales would be unthinkable and my sixth choice is The Masked Carollers (UJ 1521), which includes a supporting cast of fascinating characters and some very nifty detective work by Blake. The seasonable atmosphere is excitingly conveyed by both author and illustrator and we are reminded yet

again what an unbeatable combination Evans and Parker always were.

(To be concluded in our next issue)



(Fear-Haunted! UJ 1489)





(The Girl in the Silver Mask - from The Masked Carollers UJ 1521)

\* \* \* \* \*

**WANTED:** Original Greyfriars Holiday Annuals, especially 1937. Bunter books, 1st editions with dust-wrappers. Thriller Picture Library Books. Richmal Crompton's WILLIAM books, particularly 'William the Lawless'. James Gall, 49 Anderson Avenue, Aberdeen. Tel: Aberdeen 0224 - 491716.

\* \* \* \* \*

CHRISTMAS AT WHARTON LODGE

by E. Baldock

## Part II: Arrival

At the back of Bunter's podgy mind there lurked a fear which was ever present on expeditions of this nature. It was the well founded fear that he would in all probability be kicked and shown - or rather thrown from - the gates of Wharton Lodge. Not that this would in any way deter the fat Owl. These unpleasant incidents were endemic in such proceedings, and he had suffered before many times, but always, like the warriors of old, he had returned to the charge, and usually managed to insert



his podgy person into the gathering. Bunter's knowledge of, and experience with, the gentle and sophisticated art of insinuation left nothing to be desired; they had never failed to stand him in good stead. These valuable attributes coupled with an outer skin of which an armadillo need not have been ashamed had enabled him to 'land' countless hols over the years at the expense of long suffering fellow guests. He would become entrenched, and then array himself in other fellows' 'clobber'. Bunter always travelled extremely light - but it took little less than an earthquake to move him, once installed. He was a sticker of the first order!

Considering all the circumstances Bunter felt no serious qualm about his ability to attach himself to the Christmas gathering at Wharton Lodge. The Colonel would, no doubt, fume and fret, which was quite unimportant so far as Billy was concerned. That beast Wells would make a point of being at his supercilious 'best', but he, after all, was only a menial and thus did not count anyway. Harry Wharton & Co.? Well, Bunter felt quite confident of handling them. Had he not done so many times before? And Wharton's Aunt Amy had, in the past, always come down on his side. She obviously recognized a gentleman, bless her. The auguries were good - or at least as good as they ever were.

Bunter stood outside the little station of Wharton Magna in the darkness. The wind was rising and hurling cold flakes of snow into his fat face. The village was deserted at this late hour and the last train, which had conveyed Bunter hither, had puffed and rattled away into the darkness some time ago. It was cold. Bunter was tired and, quite naturally, hungry; hardly a revelation this. He was very much in need of sustenance. The last nourishment, taken on board some hours ago, had been a railway sandwich, certainly not prepared that day, purchased with his last remaining funds. Wharton Magnus had retired for the night. No conveyance of any description was visible. Nothing but whirling snowflakes and darkness greeted the Owl. At that moment Bunter almost - but not quite - wished himself back in the bosom of his family at Bunter Villa,

with Sammy, his minor, snoring in an adjacent bed, and Bessie, his sister, contributing to the nasal symphony from her room across the landing, with the deep and regular leit motif underlying all from Mr. and Mrs. Bunter in their quarters. But they were all far away in snow bound Surrey, and Bunter was shivering outside the little station of Wharton Magnus feeling very much neglected and alone. Bunter was, in his own fatuous way, a fairly seasoned traveller. As mentioned, never did he encumber himself with excess baggage when visiting friends, travelling light and living off the country as it were. This should have impressed itself favourably upon Colonel Wharton, he being an old military gentleman with countless campaigns to his credit. But sadly it did not. The Owl's wardrobe was always to hand. Harry Wharton's jacket, Bob Cherry's best 'bags' and Frank Nugent's waistcoat - usually split up the back for greater comfort. Other small but necessary items were always to be found by a resourceful fellow, pyjamas and dressing gowns presenting no problems whatever.

It was a longish step to Wharton Lodge. This Bunter well knew from past experience. Being but a sorry pedestrian - and seeing no other alternative he groaned, took the first weary steps, and rolled off into the storm, the darkness duly swallowing him up. It was beginning to dawn on his fat intellect that if he was to reach Wharton Lodge - and food - that night it would have to be by means of his own un-aided efforts; a fearful prospect. He groaned once more and commenced his weary pilgrimage. He was familiar with the path, now black with shadows and deep with snow, having traversed it before, many times.

Thus he proceeded at a pace which would have done some credit to a rather tired, old snail; so slowly that the fast falling flakes filled in his footsteps almost before he disappeared into the gloom. "Beasts!" groaned Bunter into the unresponsive night, and one can only suspect that he had Harry Wharton and Co in mind. At that very moment those cheery youths were exchanging 'good nights', standing before the glowing embers of the fire in Wharton's 'den', all replete with a good supper and warm, sleep-inducing drinks, in direct contrast to the cold and famished 'Owl' wearily trudging along the road and slowly approaching Wharton Lodge in the lowest of spirits.

The Lodge was wrapped in darkness as Bunter, literally staggering by this time, made his erratic way up the driveway. Wells had long since made his final round of the outer doors and windows, ensuring that all was secure, and retired to his sanctum. The entire household had succumbed to the drowsy charms of Morpheus; even 'Briggs', Aunt Amy's cat, was snoring gently in his basket below stairs. Only the wailing of the wind souging through leafless branches along the drive, and the silently falling snow greeted the self-invited guest at his journey's end.

However, salvation proved to be not so far ahead. It was well into the small hours when a handful of small pebbles rattled against Harry Wharton's bedroom window. It proved to be a case of 'better to travel hopefully than to arrive'. It will be well, perhaps, to draw a decent veil of obscurity over the immediately resultant proceedings. Bunter was admitted, of course, in due time, but his advent was hardly celebrated with back-thumping and cheery words of welcome. No flags were flown! In his present state this meant little or nothing

to Billy Bunter. He had arrived. He had penetrated the stronghold. He had not - so far - been kicked out. He was now a member of the Christmas party; a guest, albeit a dubious one.

The Colonel was inclined to bark the following morning. Wells the butler displayed the iciest side of his urbanity. John the footman was at the peak of his superciliousness. Only the gentle Auntie Amy extended sympathy and anything approaching a welcome to the Owl, and even she had been known to wax rather jollier in the past. All this was as so much water off Bunter's fat back. He gave these signs and portents not a second thought. He was safely ensconced at the Lodge for Christmas, that was the important fact!

Before him there stretched an endless series of feeds. As much tuck as he could take aboard day after day so long as the vacation lasted. Or, as was likely to happen, until he stretched the patience of his hosts beyond reasonable limits and was forcibly ejected into the cold world to seek the more modest, yet adequate provender of Bunter Court, where, unfortunately, competition for the comestibles was infinitely fiercer than at Wharton Lodge.

Christmas morning! Bunter had risen late; very late, after the adventures of the previous night, much to the inconvenience of the chamber-maids, a trifle to which he gave not a second thought. A substantial breakfast was followed by an almost continuous series of 'snacks', with luncheon at mid-day a pleasant milestone, a species of super snack to break the monotony of the arid periods between. And then, Christmas 'night'! This was 'IT'. As Coleridge has said: 'The guests are met, the feast is set'. The board, brightly lit, was literally groaning beneath the weight of good things. Never had Bunter seen such a monumental turkey; almost never so many side-dishes and tureens. He smiled a beatific smile. His eyes sparkled behind his large spectacles. A fat, rather grubby hand reached forth prepared to uphold the honour of the Bunter tribe and do full justice to the occasion. Let us be munificent at this festive time and leave the Owl wallowing in the lap of luxury with the horn of plenty on one hand and his long suffering fellow guests on the other so to speak. To the ping of of buttons flying from Frank Nugent's waistcoat, we leave him surrounded by tuck, in the aura of that particular glory which is his alone.

\*\*\*\*\*

**WANTED:** Any two Rovers from years 1925 - 28. R. Keogh, 78 Greenvale Road, Eltham, London, SE9 1PD.

\*\*\*\*\*

**SALES OR EXCHANGES:-** Gems 1487, 1488, 1615, 1616, 1617. Wanted:- SOL's 32, 94, 108, 258, 283, 296, 308. "Always a Knight" (author unknown). Maurice King, 27 Celtic Crescent, Dorchester, DT1 2TG. (0305) 69026.

\*\*\*\*\*

**GRANGE BINDERS:-** Rose Villa, Inkerson Fen, Throckenholt, Nr. Spalding, Lincs. We are currently running a 20% discount offer for the next three months. If you wish to find out more about this very special offer, phone John Naish on Wisbech (0905) 700758.

## CHRISTMAS BOOKS ROUND-UP

by Mary Cadogan

Nostalgia is the thread linking this selection of books which you might enjoy reading over Christmas, and indeed afterwards. These are books to savour, and to treasure.



At the top of my list must be the two current Howard Baker Club volumes (which will be fully reviewed in the next issue of C.D.). BILLY BUNTER'S UNCLE and THE CRUISE OF THE FAMOUS FIVE are productions in the usual sumptuous Baker style which take us back to the Magnet of 1914 and 1915. Highspots of these beautiful books are the Christmas Double Number, The Return of the Prodigal in BILLY BUNTER'S UNCLE and the story of Bunter's rescue of Cora Quelch in THE CRUISE OF THE FAMOUS FIVE. (£18.00 each, from Howard Baker Press Ltd.). Gorgeous stuff!

This year's RUPERT ANNUAL (Daily Express publications, £3.25) is splendid value as always, simply glowing with goodwill in every one of its full colour illustrated stories, its inviting covers and endpapers. It is the only children's annual in the shops today which has the sheer magic of all those wonderful pre-Second World War Annuals which we used to wallow in during this season.

Still in the world of anthropomorphized and immensely appealing animals, ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WALT DISNEY'S ANIMATED CHARACTERS (Hamlyn £15.00) is a truly lavish production of 320 very large pages, with hundreds of coloured illustrations, histories and assessments of Disney's gigantic cast of characters, and of his most famous films. Well worth the money, and the house-room which this truly bumper book has to occupy.

James Barrie's PETER PAN, of course, has special associations with Christmas, and those of us who have clapped our hands desperately and shouted in the theatre for Tinker Bell's resuscitation will enjoy PETER PAN AND THE ONLY CHILDREN by Gilbert Adair (Macmillan £7.95), which, surprisingly is the only sequel ever yet written to the classic story. Gilbert Adair is a sensitive and stylish writer, and this book, like his previous Carrollian story (ALICE THROUGH THE NEEDLE'S EYE), glows with wit and warmth.

Potent nostalgia comes in two books from Michael Joseph: A BOOK OF FRIENDS AND FRIENDSHIP by Celia Haddon (£4.95) and VICTORIAN WATERCOLOURS: CHILDREN by Adrian Vincent (£8.95). The first is a delightful anthology of poems and prose about friendship, illustrated with unashamedly 'cosy' and 'old-fashioned' pictures. The second is a superb selection of Victorian water-colours of children in various scenes and activities, with excellent descriptive texts.

Christmas Crime is at its most appealing in the Hogarth Press's AN ENGLISH MURDER by Cyril Hare (£3.95), a reprint of a 1951 story of a traditional country-house killing. The setting is deep snow as well as murky mystery during the festive season. Just right for reading while the turkey, plum-pudding and mince pies settle! In the same atmospheric vein comes LESTRADE AND THE LEVIATHAN by M.J. Trow (Macmillan, £8.95) in which Inspector Lestrade from the Sherlock

Holmes saga (now a Superintendent) is the sleuthing hero. The period is 1910; there are shades of Holmes in the background, because both Conan Doyle and Dr. Watson make brief appearances in the story, which I very much enjoyed despite one or two anachronisms. (Just how, for instance, can King George V's reference in that pre-Great War time to 'Wallis' be justified?)

Leaving the traditional detective genre, a more serious study of crimes, both unwitting and deliberate, is provided by Len Deighton in WINTER (Hutchinson £11.95). This chronicles the life of a Berlin family from 1899 to 1945, and shows how ordinary people can become involved, even with the best of motives, in the most hideous of anti-humanitarian actions. Crime at its most un-cosy; but nevertheless compelling for its evocation of period, and for its chilling truths.

The packaging of everyday things like food, drink, cleaning materials, cigarettes and toiletries tells us a lot about changes in the fashions and attitudes of society, and THE ART OF THE LABEL by Robert Opie (Simon & Schuster £12.95) takes us on a fascinating trip from Victorian labelling to that of the 1980's. Stunningly illustrated in colour, the book is as mouth-watering as many of the foodstuffs for which the featured labels and packages were designed. The section on games and fireworks includes some favourite characters from our old comics, like Pip, Squeak and Wilfred, Mickey and Minnie Mouse, and my particular vintage Disney favourites, Horace Horsecollar and Claribel Cow!

Lastly, it is worth looking on the shelves of W.H. Smith for the very moderately priced books in their Hamlyn Story Library and Boys and Girls Story Library series. Most of these are reprints from the 1960s or early '70s, and the contents include stories by some A.P. writers like Heather Granger, Anne Gilmore and Hazel Armitage (John Wheway of course), Janet McKibbin and Enid Boyten. EXCITING STORIES FOR GIRLS, ADVENTURE STORIES FOR GIRLS, and ANIMAL STORIES FOR GIRLS are especially worth looking out for. For boys, THRILLING DETECTION AND MYSTERY STORIES, selected by ex-A.P. editor Leonard Matthews, is fun (although sadly no authors' names are given), as well as STORIES FOR BOYS (edited by Leonard Gribble), both of which are in the traditional mould. HAPPY CHRISTMAS READING TO YOU ALL!

\*\*\*\*\*  
**FOR SALE:** The A.P.'s facsimile of Magnet No. 1 in brand new condition: £1; Magnet No. 394 "The Fellow Who Won", good copy but without covers: £1.50; Modern Boys Nos. 242 & 458, nice copies £1 each; Gems Nos. 477, 519, 791, 886, 1148, 1484, 1485: £1 each. School Cap (1953) Nos. 1 to 5 inclusive. Excellent copies, £6 for the 5; Silver Jacket (1956) No. 34, good copy 75p; p.&p. extra on all items. Disposing of just a few volumes of my vast collection of Girls Friend, Girls Reader, and Girls Home, from the 1st 15 years of the century; lovely mint file copies bound in half-years: £15 per volume.

Write: Eric Fayne, Excelsior House, Crookham Road, Church Crookham, Aldershot. GU13 0NH. (No reply if items already sold.)

\*\*\*\*\*

**WANTED:** Your surplus Xmas cards featuring FATHER CHRISTMAS himself - both traditional and comic. Postage refunded. Jack Greaves, 20 Cambray Road, Blackpool, FY1 2LX.

## GIFFORDIAN GALAXIES

(Reviewed by Norman Wright)

"ENCYCLOPEDIA OF COMIC CHARACTERS"  
by Denis Gifford. Published by  
Longman at £10.95.

Denis Gifford's new book, "Encyclopedia of Comic Characters" is a 'must' for anyone with an interest in British comics. In its 256 pages over 1200 characters from both the pre-war eras are discussed. Each entry includes the comic or comics in which the character appeared, together with

the years of his or her run. Where known the names of the artists are also given. After the nitty gritty details comes a potted biography of the character, written in an entertaining style aimed at giving the reader the feel of the character more than a history. Every entry is illustrated and the layout of the book makes it easy to use and pleasing to the eye. The index listing characters, artists and comics makes for quick cross reference.

Even in a work as comprehensive as this some characters have to be left out, though it took me some time to find a fairly major character not included in the book ('Ginger Tom' from "Knockout").

Inevitably there are some errors - for example 'Claude Duval' is credited to Pat Nicolle, when in fact he was created and drawn for many years by Fred Holmes. But this is a small quibble compared to the vast amount of information that the book contains. It will make a useful and welcome addition to my bookshelves alongside the many other comic related books by the same author already there!!

"THE GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO" by Denis Gifford. Published by Batsford (Paperback) at £9.95

This book was at the top of my Christmas list when it came out in hardback two years ago. It is a goldmine of nostalgia, refreshing details of favourite radio shows and rekindling memories of those that had become forgotten. Its encyclopedia format makes it easy to look up shows, characters and personalities. But be warned, once you start looking through it you will not be able to put it down! You may intend just looking up "I.T.M.A.", but a perusal of that interesting entry will shower you with a profusion of characters and personalities connected with the show. All those printed in capitals have their own entry in the book, so you look up those and so it goes on.

All tastes are catered for from Tony Hancock to "Journey Into Space", together with a wealth of information on the well known and more obscure shows, actors and characters from the B.B.C., Radio Luxembourg, Radio Normandy and other stations beamed at Britain. As well as the fascinating text the book is crammed



with a wonderful selection of interesting and varied illustrations; including photographs, song sheets, posters of radio personalities 'live' appearances, magazine covers and radio related book jackets.

It is meticulously researched and in most instances gives the dates of first and last episodes of shows and serials. It is without a doubt the best book ever written on British radio shows and personalities.

\*\*\*\*\*

**THE LAST MORCOVE CHRISTMAS**

by Esmond Kadish

Strictly speaking, it wasn't really the very last Morcove Christmas. Marjorie Stanton subsequently contributed three seasonable Yuletide yarns for the SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN ANNUAL in 1936, 37, and 38, respectively, but this 1935 "Black Rider" series (776-9) was certainly the last such written for the weekly SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN. Sadly, the paper had only a few months to run, its final issue (798) appearing in May 1936.

The familiar country house setting is this time at Priors Wold - lovely name for an old manor house! - in the Cotswolds, to which Betty Barton and Co., and the five Grangemoor boys have been invited to spend Christmas by Mrs. Cardew, the "widowed mother" of Dave and Judy. (Dave, it should be explained, had formerly been known as Dave Lawder, and Judy's role, at one time, had been as the much put-upon sister of the shrewish Cora Grandways, now expelled from Morcove.) A strange, phantom-like figure - the Black Rider - has been seen, and is causing considerable perturbation





amongst the good country - folk in the vicinity of Priors Wold. Some of the chums first encounter him, whilst on their way to the house from the local station - an apparition in highwayman's cloak and three-cornered hat, astride a fine black horse. Ghost-like, he seems to vanish, leaving "absolute stillness except for the eerie crepitation of the snow".

Actually, the Black Rider is really Fred Turner, (Mr. Phillips might have given him a more romantic-sounding name!) whose ultimate goal is to collar the contents of the safe in the Priors Wold library. Maisie, his sister, is a maid in the house, and is unjustly suspected of being in league with him, when, in fact, she is doing all she can to dissuade him. The Black Rider's actual accomplice is Bella Darrington, a rather supercilious young woman, who turns up apparently exhausted, on the doorstep of Priors Wold, and is taken in by the kind-hearted Mrs. Cardew. Hospitable folk, these Morcovians! It must be nice to feel that if ever one happened to be wandering around the snowbound Cotswolds on Christmas Eve, and knocked at Betty and Co.'s door, one would almost certainly be invited inside to the Morcove and Grangemoor houseparty.

If any character can be said to be the "star" of this Christmas series, it's really Dave Cardew, who plays detective, unravels the mystery, and foils the schemers. In fact, he's so efficient, that there's some rivalry between Polly Linton and Dave - rather akin to those comedy-thriller films of the thirties, in which the detective's wife or girl-friend, piqued at being left out of the "case", decides to do some investigating of her own. Happily, as it's Christmas time, all ends well, with the Black Rider being rescued from drowning in a deep pond by Jimmy Cherrol: "it was his gum-boots, filling with water, that had helped to weight him down." Sensibly, Fred decides that reform is preferable to prison.

At this late stage in the Morcove saga, Mr. Phillips is, perhaps, aiming at making his style and his characters more up-to-date. True, at one point, the servant girl, Maisie, sweeps a hand across her forehead in agitation, as she might have done in a Morcove series of the twenties, but the limelight shines more fully on such new arrivals as Bunny (real name, Ann) Trevor, and her brother, Tom, who were introduced into the stories in the spring of 1935; and, of course, there are the other four well-contrasted Grangemoor boys - Dave, Jimmy, Jack Linton, and Tubby Bloot. At times, it almost seems as if Mr. Phillips has developed the Grangemoor boys at the expense of his Morcove girls. Betty

and Polly play a full part of course, and Pam Willoughby has a dramatic interlude of her own, when she wards off an attack by the Black Rider himself, whilst out for morning ride. But such favourite characters as Naomer and Paula are relegated to the background, and others, like Madge, Tess, and Helen Craig, are only briefly referred to.

It's not, perhaps "Marjorie Stanton's" most memorable Christmas series, but the Morcove magic is certainly still there. Sad, when you realise there wasn't going to be a SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN at Christmas the following year.

\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*



"Please, can you take me in for the night?" the stranger asked piteously. "I've been so frightened!" Betty Barton and her crowd of chums just inside the doorway listened intently. Had the girl encountered the Black Rider, they wondered?

---

## JOURNEY TO OZ

By Margaret Winterbottom

After reading Mary's review of the book THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ, in August's C.D. I thought readers might like to know a little more about this amazing land. That is if they don't already.

Lyman Frank Baum wrote 13 other books after the Wizard, almost a book a year until his death in 1919. The land of Oz is divided into four parts - the Gillikin Country, the Munchin Country, the land of the Quadlings, and the country of the Winkies. Right in the centre is the Emerald City, ruled by the Princess Ozma.

In Dorothy's first visit to Oz she meets the now famous characters, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, the Cowardly Lion and the Wizard himself, whose real name is Oscar Zoroaster Digs. Also there was Glinda the Good Witch and Mombi the Wicked Witch. In her subsequent visits she encounters many other strange and interesting characters. Characters like Jack Pumpkinhead, The Wooden Sawhorse, the Wogglebug, Bellina the yellow, talking hen, Tik-Tok the clockwork robot and the bad old Nome King, who is King Roquat the Red of the land of Ev. There is Scraps the Patchwork Girl, a jolly soul who hates dignity, and the evil Mombi who keeps a collection of heads, all with different coloured hair and different faces, which she can change at will. Dorothy's constant companion is Toto, described in the books as 'a little black dog with long silky hair and small black eyes'.

Since the original 14 there have been a further 30 Oz books by many different authors. The last one being THE FORBIDDEN FOUNTAIN OF OZ written as recently as 1980 and published by the Wizard of Oz Club.

The Land of Oz has appeared many times on film, the first one as far back as 1910 with Bebe Daniels as Dorothy. The 1925 version had Oliver Hardy as the Tin Man. Then, in 1939 came the definitive version with Judy Garland as Dorothy. In 1971 there was an animated version using the voices of such well known stars as Ethel Merman, Mickey Rooney, Risè Stevens, Danny Thomas and Liza Minnelli as Dorothy. There was an all black version in 1978 with Diana Ross as Dorothy, Michael Jackson as the Scarecrow and Lena Horne as Glinda. From the Walt Disney Studios came the final film Return to Oz. This had several well known faces from both Britain and America, Nicol Williamson, Jean Marsh and Piper Laurie. Dorothy was Fairuza Balk. These were only the more notable of the films, there have been many more. In 1960 there was a television version with Shirley Temple, Agnes Moorehead and Arthur Treacher. It is interesting to note that Shirley Temple, Agnes Moorehead and Arthur Treacher. It is interesting to note that Shirley was the original choice for the 1939 film but contractual difficulties put an end to that idea. Incidentally Shirley bore a much more correct resemblance to W.W. Denslow's illustrations of the little Kansas girl than ever Judy did. Even Deanna Durbin was once briefly considered.

No one grows older in the land of Oz, no one is ever sick or dies. All the birds and the beasts and the fish can talk. Dorothy, her Aunt Em and her Uncle Henry finally settle permanently in Oz and at last Toto reveals that he too, can talk.

The magic silver slippers which were of such importance to Dorothy in the first book, were changed into ruby slippers for the film. It was thought that

---

the red colour would show up more in technicolour.

(From the original 14 titles I still need two - RINKITINK IN OZ and THE SCARECROW OF OZ, to complete my collection. Of the other 30 I only have one. If any C.D. reader should know of the availability of these two titles I would be eternally grateful for the information!)

\* \* \* \* \*

## TALBOT'S EVENTFUL CHRISTMAS

By Tommy Keene

Christmas is here, it's the time we loved best, when we were young long ago. A line from an old song (recorded by Gracie Fields in the early 1930's), but how very true it is, when we cast our minds back, and know that the boys of Greyfriars and St. Jim's (and of course, the girls of Cliff House and Morcove), would always be sure of a White Christmas, even if we, who sat poring over their adventures, were merely experiencing the usual grey, chilly, rainy Christmases we had come to expect.

But snow is already falling over St. Jim's, when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy visits various studies to enquire if certain chums would like to spend the Christmas holiday at Eastwood House, the home of the noble Gussy. Yes, they would indeed, agree Tom Merry, Manners and Lowther of the Shell, Blake, Herries and Digby of the Fourth, and Figgins, Kerr and Fatty Wynn of the New House. Reginald Talbot of the Shell is also approached by D'Arcy, but "The Toff", as he was once known, demurs. He thinks he should perhaps go with Marie Rivers, the rather too angelic nurse at St. Jim's, to visit her father, John Rivers the 'celebrated Scotland yard detective', but once a notorious cracksman.

Gussy solves the problem, by inviting Marie and her father, so Talbot, of course, agrees. Also with the party are Wally D'Arcy of the Third with his great chums, Curly Gibson, Joe Frayne, and Jameson. (The previous year, Wally's companions had been Frank Levison, and Reggie Manners.)

During the train journey, snow is falling thick and fast, fields and hedges are covered as if by a magic white mantle. Gussy chats merrily away to his chums, heedless of a man standing in the corridor. He tells them that his father, Lord Eastwood is hiring another butler to help over Christmas, and that he has decided to use the gold plate, usually stored in safe deposit in London, for Christmas Day.

Lord Eastwood meets Gussy and his guests at the station, three cars waiting outside to take the party to Eastwood House. He had also hopes that the hired butler might be on the same train. The snow lay round about, deep, and crisp, and even. Talbot and Marie exchange smiles...Christmas together, and with such splendid companions.

Then drama takes over. Bingham, the new butler, arrives on the next train. A car is awaiting him but he becomes suspicious at the length of the journey, and finds he has been kidnapped. He is kept prisoner whilst his captor goes to Eastwood House as the butler, the false butler being a certain Jim Dawlish, now the leader of the gang with whom Talbot and John Rivers had once been involved. (He also was the man in the corridor on the train.)

Later, John Rivers arrives, and is told about the gold plate, and where Lord Eastwood is keeping it... in a locked oak chest. Rivers wakes at 2 a.m., and startles a marauder in the dining room. But there is more than one burglar, the dim figure of a boy, dressed in Etons, is noticed by Rivers, and Rivers is overpowered, and bound and gagged. The burglars escape with the gold plate.

As so many times before, poor Talbot is suspected, although not by Tom Merry & Co. and the following morning, after a sad farewell to Marie Rivers, Talbot leaves Eastwood House. The false Bingham, however remains.

It is the morning of Christmas Eve, and much is to happen. Talbot goes to an old barn in one of the snow covered fields, where a man, obviously ill, and frozen with cold, is lying. This man is another acquaintance from Talbot's seedy past, a Mr. Hookey Walker (who, in 1915, in one of the GEM'S most splendid stories, "Winning His Spurs", with the help of Talbot, sailed with his wife and ailing child to America, to start a new life as a reformed character). Evidently he was back again, but however did he find himself near Eastwood House at Christmastime, and how did he know that Talbot would be there?

But to hasten this article! Talbot sends a letter to John Rivers telling him of Hookey's plight. Then the lonely boy begins his long trek to nowhere. Meanwhile, Gussy suggests that he and his chums visit a 'haunted' house, several miles away, hoping perhaps that they might find the Toff.

Of course the haunted house is the place where the real Bingham is being held prisoner. From an upstairs window he sees the boys, writes a note, and drops it from the window, saying that he is being held captive, and that a man named Jim Dawlish has gone to Eastwood House in his place. Bingham is rescued by the boys, and taken to Eastwood House. Jim Dawlish drives away in one of Lord Eastwood's cars, but is chased, and captured, by John Rivers, using another of his host's cars. Dawlish is handed to the police, and would therefore spend his Christmas Day behind prison walls.



The gold plate is found at the house by Tom Merry & Co., but where is Talbot? "Poor old Talbot" says Tom Merry huskily, and the search begins. Luckily they go in the right direction, and Talbot is found in a fainting condition, by the roadside, on the way to London.

Now all is bright. Hookey is taken care of by John Rivers, and the entire party return to Eastwood House for Christmas Eve celebrations. Carol singers arrive, and coins are flung to them Gussy and his guests. Quite a day.

Talbot is very happy now...and Marie is, perhaps, even happier. Smiles between them are often exchanged, and Talbot is persuaded to play the piano. It is nearly Christmas Day, the snow is still falling, the lake will be frozen (there's always a lake), and Marie and the boys cluster round the piano, joining in lustily with the words of the lovely carol the Toff is playing, "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, Let Nothing You Dismay".

For the rest of Christmas, Merry Gentlemen they were indeed.

\* \* \* \* \*

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

The November meeting at Walthamstow was attended by twenty-five members, and commenced with a two minute silence in memory of Ben Whiter, who will be sadly missed by all.

Our Chairman, Norman Wright, reported that he had collected all relevant books and records from Ben's family. It was unanimously agreed that Les Rowley would now become the Club's Secretary, and Norman Wright the Treasurer, it having been decided to separate the offices of Secretary and Treasurer, to lighten the workload.

Duncan Harper conducted a quiz on Blakiana, of which joint winners were Horace Owen and Roy Parsons. Roy then spoke on the last Walkey story in the 1940 Chums Annual, in which Long John Silver was resurrected. This was followed by a talk by Stephen Goddard on G.A. Henty, specifically on four adventure stories set in America and which Stephen considered the fore-runners of the 'Western' as we know it. Next Meeting: December 13th at Ealing Liberal Centre, commencing at 3.30 p.m. Please, if attending, try and advise me by December 6th. A full tea will be provided.

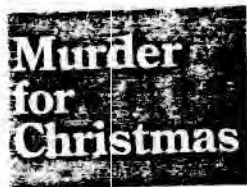
**BILL BRADFORD**

NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

There was an encouraging attendance of 15 at the 7th November meeting at the home of our Chairman, Keith Smith and his wife. We were delighted to welcome our associate members Geraldine and John Lamb from Macclesfield, and Nandu Thalange making one of his infrequent visits from Bolton. The theme of the evening was the novel one of 'Guy Fawkes and All That', featuring articles stories and items from story papers and magazines such as 'The Boys' Own' and 'The Scout'. Evadne Price's Jane Turpin's firework adventures were also featured, and mention was made of 'The Magnet's' stories of fireworks frivolities. During the splendid firework display in Keith's garden, we were easy in our minds knowing that Paul Galvin, a fireman by profession, was with us! A very enjoyable evening. Next meeting: Holy Trinity Church/S.P.C.K. Bookshop Cafe, Boar Lane, Leeds 1. Saturday, 12th December. - Our Christmas Party from 5.30 to 9.15 p.m. Associate members and visits will be very welcome.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

\* \* \* \* \*



Edited by  
Thomas Godfrey

An anthology which will provide Christmas Cheer for all those who enjoy a good murder story, from contributors such as Agatha Christie, Ngaio Marsh, Woody Allen, Dorothy Sayers, Damon Runyon and many more. Hardback £10.95 plus postage - payment on receipt.

All best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all readers of The Collectors' Digest from Happy Hours Unlimited. Our Number 10 catalogue of brand-new and second-hand books is now ready. Send 3 x 13p stamps for your copy. HAPPY HOURS UNLIMITED - 37 Tinshill Lane, LEEDS, LS16 6BU.

Golden Years No. 4. Now ready.

Contains "Investigations Unlimited" by Bill Lofts. "Modern Boy" by Tom Ebbage. Send International Reply Coupons value A4 dollars to John Tipper, P.O. Box 487, Strathfield. N.S.W. 2135. Australia. A4 size - post free Air-Mail.



Over two and a half centuries ago an author began work on an adventure tale which was to become one of the greatest bestsellers of all time. His leading character, said to be based on a real person's actual experience, made so tremendous an impact on readers' imaginations that the story set in motion a traditional genre of fiction that has reached down the years to this day. The author was, of course, Daniel Defoe and his story, Robinson Crusoe.

Robinson was to give a new word to the language, or, strictly speaking, to that hybrid known as Franglais, when the French reputedly coined the expression 'Robinsonade,' which also came in handy to define a specialised area of collecting for book squirrels everywhere.

It is doubtful if another expression the spin-off, was known in Defoe's day but it could well have described the results of his book on the world of publishing. Within months there were Crusoe editions, translations, and pirated versions appearing wherever in the world books were sold, while other authors rushed to produce their own versions of this winning theme. Crusoe became French, German, Dutch, Canadian, Hungarian, American, Arctic and many more. There was even an Ivan Robinson. Animal devotees could befriend Dog Crusoe, small boys could follow the example of Tom Sawyer and create their own pretend Crusoe world, and another great rival threatened to outdo Robinson's popularity when a certain Swiss family named Robinson were





cast away on an island so well endowed with virtually everything a family could need that it would surely be colonised to saturation point were its geographical location ever accurately pinpointed.

Nor was Crusoe's popularity limited to the printed word.

The world of grand opera embraced the castaway theme in Haydn's *L'Isola Disabitata* in 1774, where the heroine had thirteen years on her island, surely sufficient time for her to warble her way through enough arias to satisfy the most demanding clagues.

Later, Sir James Barrie brought the theme to the playhouse in *The Admirable Crichton*, and Sigmund Romberg consigned virtually his entire cast to an uninhabited desert island, there to sing out their hearts in his operetta *New Moon*.

Other fictional genres were linked to the Crusoe theme. One of the great classic writers of horror stories of the sea, William Hope Hodgson, took the reader to the most sinister of islands in *The Voice in the Night*, while H. de Vere Stacpoole's tale of a young brother and sister growing to maturity on a desert island in *The Blue Lagoon* shocked many readers when it was first published.

With the advent of mass market fiction as the nineteenth century wore on many of the authors of adventure stories for the young fell with enthusiasm to producing a whole new generation of serials and books based on the castaway idea. Marryat's *The Little Savage*, Kingston's *The Rival Crusoes*, and of course Ballantyne's perennial favourite *The Coral Island* were only three popular examples from the Crusoe plethora. Girls were not forgotten. Mrs. Herbert Strang brought out the feminine equivalents of Jack, Ralph and Peterkin in her tale of *The Girl Crusoes*, which was reprinted many times. (Did the name, Mrs. Herbert Strang, also credited with editorship of a wide range of up market girls' annuals from O.U.P., hide the identities of G.H. Ely and J. L'Estrange, I wonder?)

And so it was not surprising to find our own beloved storypapers putting out their variations of Crusoe in their own inimitable style. In the Nelson Lee Library 1922 summer series twenty fellows of St. Frank's' *Remove*, with Nelson Lee and Phipps, are shipwrecked on Lagoon Island after their ship founders in a fierce hurricane. Sturdy and resourceful as ever, the lads form a government to organise the vital business of survival. Phipps, the valet of Archie Glenthorne, is elected Prime Minister (shades of Crichton!) after Nelson Lee is injured and Lord Dorriemore and crew are believed lost when the *Wanderer* was wrecked (until of course Dorrie and crew are found to have been on the other side of the island all the time). Handforth (always my favourite St. Frank's character) holds the most important office of Minister of War. Fatty Little, naturally, is Minister of Food, and Cabinet meetings are convened, which possibly sounded not unlike certain other parliamentary meetings at places which shall be nameless. Lagoon Island had a great advantage in that unruly members of the meeting were dumped unceremoniously in the lagoon—Handforth's fate on at least one occasion.

To ensure there should be no let-up or lagging of thrills, the island carries its requisite complement of cannibals, pirates, a volcano, a sinister Chinese junk, a sea monster, which Handforth is quite convinced he repelled single-handed, and a somewhat disturbing predilection to earthquakes. Nipper's

# The CASTAWAYS of CANNIBAL ISLAND!

By FRANK RICHARDS



Magazine feature carried a fascinating additional commentary each week on the stories and a fund of informative snippets on the forces of nature as encountered by the St. Franks' party in the current story.

Frank Richards set a cracking pace for major school holiday series in 1927 with the South Seas treasure-seeking adventures of the Greyfriars chums in which they cross swords with the famous Soames (Magnets 1017-1026). Some ten years later he returns to the southern hemisphere with a ten-week series---in length the equivalent of at least two full length novels---during which the Famous Five manage to get themselves cast away not only once but twice. In this series we make a discovery about Lord Mauleverer:

"Nunky thinks it's a good idea for me to go and take a look at my island---"

"Your island!" yelled the Famous Five.

"Yaas."

"Oh my hat! You've got an island?"

Yes, Mauly had an island, and so the Chums set sail for Kalua, where Mauly hopes to find his black-sheep cousin. After a journey filled with the high jinks Richards could create so hilariously well, they reach the island and its colourful populace, including Ysabel Dick, who steals the whaleboat while the Chums are exploring a tiny uninhabited island. The Famous Five become real Crusoes, having their own Man Friday in the capable person of Popoo, the Tonga boy, who proves a veritable treasure in the survival stakes, able to make fire, find yams and various edibles, contrive a fishing net and husk nuts.

Bunter, naturally, is his usual objectionable self; with his appetite the last person to be stranded anywhere, let alone a desert island. But the Fat Owl of the Remove is a born survivor and despite his constant grumbles is always there during the many exciting adventures of the Chums. Mauly is kidnapped,

their schooner is hi-jacked and scuttled, they are tossed by a hurricane, tortured by heat and thirst, and then, yet again, castaways. This time they have unwelcome company on the island and for a moment we fear--- or hope!--- that Bunter is going to land in the cannibals' cooking pot. But his invaluable gift of ventriloquism saves the well-filled skin once more: Bunter falls on his fat feet and becomes Big Chief Bunter. Waited on hand and foot by frightened natives, with as much grub as even Bunter can pack away, he begins to feel that life might have possibilities after all. Monarch of all he surveyed, Bunter was also he who must be obeyed!

The notion of a white stranger inexplicably being accepted as a god or ruler occurs often in the storypapers. Elise Probyn (John McKibbin) elaborated on the idea in another island story, *In Quest of the Sun Queen* (Schoolgirls' Own Library 437), in which a party of boys and girls are plane-wrecked in Papua, and Gloria of the golden tresses is set up as the tribe's Sun Queen, expected to work minor miracles and placate the wrath of the gods. Mabel Lynn has a similar experience when the Cliff House girls holiday in Africa and her golden hair results in her sudden elevation to exalted ranks, much to the disgust of former queen M'lizi, the quaint little lion girl who was one of John Wheway's most endearing characters. But she is another story on her own.

When the school *Friend* was launched in 1919 its lead serial was *The Girl Crusoes*, by Julia Storm, in which a party of schoolgirls with three mistresses are left aboard a helplessly drifting ocean liner after an enemy cruiser had looted the vessel and captured the crew and all male passengers. Fortunately, Josephine---Joe for short---knows all about ships, even liners, and while Miss Whiffen and Mademoiselle, the French mistress, take to their cabins with mal de mer, or maybe cold feet, Joe organises the girls, gives the headmistress a crash course in seamanship (nice role reversal here) and succeeds in bringing the ten thousand ton *Utopia* through a violent storm and safely into harbour-- or rather, the island's lagoon.

This story ran for twenty-six weeks, during which time the girls rescue two black waifs, build a railway and a cement turtle pen, discover treasure and undergo the trials and tribulations requisite to all Crusoes worthy of the name. A follow-up serial by the same author began immediately in issue twenty-seven, with the girls returning a while later to Diamond Island. By now a school for girls has been established on the island, and the two serials must have found favour with the readers for when the new companion paper for girls, *The Schoolgirl's Own*, made its debut in 1921 the first serial was *Castaway Jess*, again by Julia Storm, in which Jess and her blind father and the faithful Jin are driven aground on Diamond Island by a tidal wave---for sixteen weeks. The original characters are introduced, and the island school is still going strong on the far side of the island, sadly unbeknown to Jess during the first month of her castaway existence until Joe, Pat and Co discover the newcomers. Again, as in *School Friend*, there was an immediate sequel by the same author, *On The Track of Treasure*, but by this time one begins to feel that this desert island is far too well colonised for the Crusoe basis to have any validity.

Rather disappointingly, the desert island theme does not appear to have been much explored at Morcove. Betty and Co. seemed to stay faithful to North Africa

for their holidays, with occasional sorties to Turania. Nor did the Cliff House girls allow themselves to be caught by the tide, so to speak, more than once.

Their principal claim to Crusoe fame was vested in Grace Kelwyn during the early days of School Friend. Like Julia Storm's Josephine, Grace was a victim of a World War I enemy and cast away alone on her island for three long lonely years. There she finds traces of an earlier Crusoe's sojourn, never dreaming that it had been her doctor father's colleague. In the old hut she discovers utenstils, a precious book whose title we are not told, and simple furnishings. Later, amid wreckage from some earlier boat's misfortune, she comes across a crate of crochet cotton. After devising hooks of bone she utilises her great find and makes curtains, covers, a quilt and a canopy to shade her from the sun's fierce glare.

## The Schoolgirl Castaways!



A Magnificent New Long Complete Tale of the Girls of Cliff House School, introducing Bessie Bunter and Grace Kelwyn, the Girl  
:: :: :: from the Desert Island. :: :: ::

By **HILDA RICHARDS.**

Of the storypapers' girl Crusoes, Grace is the one who brings most conviction, her author creating a sense of a genuine Crusoe character who touches our hearts and conveys something of the the effects such an experience would have on so young a girl. So that we remember Grace long after we forget the others.

The desert island story was still a peak favourite at the time of the story papers' heyday; later it became less easier to convince the more knowledgable young readers. After the second world war horizons did not seem so distant or mysterious, and to be cast away now, at least on an island with the means of supporting life, one would be more than likely to bump into a holiday camp round the next headland. But sometimes, in a quiet moment, it is sweet to dream and reminisce, of an island lost in time, where our childhood friends fight for the things in which they believe and overcome those who would bring evil. And if one listens, who knows, the echoes of their laughter still ring happily down the years...

(For more information about Grace Kelwyn, see Mary Cadogan's comprehensive and fully researched feature about her in C.D. Annual for 1978.)