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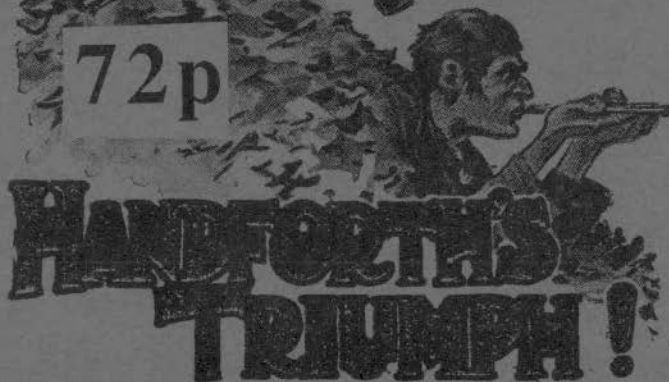
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Vol. 43

No. 508



72p



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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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W.H. GANDER

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Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

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The Editor's Chat



YOUR LETTERS

I have received many letters from C.D. readers commenting very favourably on the new format of our little mag. (Not so new now, of course, as our new print and page size came into effect from the January issue.) I wish to thank everyone who took the trouble to write to me about this; your comments are always appreciated.

Several readers have written as glowingly about possible future subjects for articles as they have done about the C.D.'s new look, and it seems that from the many letters received there is general agreement about what our future plans might be. Everyone feels strongly that what I described as the main pillars of the magazine (Hamilton, Brooks and the Sexton Blake saga) should continue to be strongly represented. One or two readers pointed out that the C.D. is the only publication in existence which deals primarily with story-papers, and there are other journals which specifically cater for comics, for the EAGLE exclusively, and for W.E. Johns's Biggles stories. (So far Biggles is covered by a magazine published in Holland which is in the Dutch language, with just one or two pages in English. However, I understand

that plans for an English language Biggles periodical are in hand. We will keep readers informed about this.)

Nevertheless most people who wrote to me seemed to feel that the C.D. **should** give some space to the 'new' papers; one reader rather wily pointed out that EAGLE is now nearly 40 years old and hardly a youngster any more! I think that perhaps we should not institute a regular column for any further papers or comics but continue to try to include items on Just William (which many readers seem to favour very much), Eagle, Biggles and others. So, please, do remember that I can only publish what you care to send me. I will, as always, be looking for a good range of articles from you on your favoured subjects and themes.

Several readers wrote with warm appreciation of the articles on the Cliff House and Morcove girls which are now a fairly regular part of the C.D. Mr. R. Whiskin of Cambridge expressed the hope that more attention might be given to B.O.P., CHUMS, CAPTAIN and authors of school stories (such as Alfred Judd) to whom we have not so far given prominence. Mr. R. Hardinge from Wimbledon suggested that he would like to see recorded in the C.D. readers' impressions of long gone publications like PUCK, KINEMA COMIC, TRIUMPH, LOT-O-FUN, BOYS' CINEMA and GIRLS' CINEMA.

Yet again I realized, when reading your various letters, that our hobby seems absolutely inexhaustible, in terms of both comment and enthusiasm.

So now it is up to you, dear readers, to furnish me with lots of lovely articles. Happy writing, and happy reading!

MARY CADOGAN



ANOTHER STRANGE CHARACTER

by C.H. Churchill

Last month I wrote about the strange characters introduced into the Nelson Lee stories by E.S. Brooks, and dwell on that of Dr. Karnak. Let me now mention Colonel Clinton who was featured in the "Soldier Housemaster" series of early 1919.

The series ran from No. 187 to No. 194, old small series, of course, and was one of the most original ever penned by E.S.B. Mr. Stockdale,

the Housemaster of the College House was away ill and Clinton was appointed in his place.

The Colonel had a splendid record in the war and was heavily decorated, so the juniors especially were prepared to welcome a war hero. Little did they know! From the beginning the Colonel showed that his war experiences had warped his outlook and he persisted in treating the boys as if they were cadets in his army. He could not get away from army procedure. He made the Remove in particular do drilling, marching and other army routines in all their spare times.

Clinton was engaged, secretly, with a man called Hardy who lived locally, in playing about with poison gas and experimenting with it. He was spotted once or twice wearing a gas mask and this caused much comment.

As the weeks passed the Colonel became more mentally disturbed, and even went to the length of making the boys dress up in outrageous uniforms. This was too much for the Head who dismissed him.

In revenge, Clinton plotted to get Dr. Stafford charged with murder by faking his own murder and providing evidence that incriminated the Head. Actually the dead man was Hardy. Nelson Lee, naturally, came to the rescue and proved the innocence of Dr. Stafford. Clinton fled, and barricaded himself in a house and defied all comers. A siege developed and it was quiet a while before it was resolved, and the Colonel removed to an asylum.

I think this was one of the best series ever written by E.S. Brooks as it contained all sorts of ingredients, with so many twists and turns. Comedy, drama all in rich supply. Furthermore what a character was the Colonel!!



A SEXTON BLAKE GALLERY

Number Two: Some of the Bad Guys

(Illustrations by Eric Parker:
Montage and captions by J.E.M.)

George Marsden Plummer, probably the oldest of Blake's long-running criminal antagonists, was a renegade detective who made his debut ninety

years ago in the UJ, being finally dispatched in 1933 in Detective Weekly. Here, (1) he is engaged in some typical skulduggery in *The Prisoner of the Harem*, UJ 1471.

A crook from a rather different mould was Rupert Waldo the Wonderman (2), a modern Robin Hood created by E.S. Brooks. Waldo was an endearing character for whom most of us had a very soft spot - even if we sometimes felt a bit uneasy about his "superman" qualities.

The sinister Prince Wu Ling (3) was head of the dangerous Brotherhood of the Yellow Beetle. Bearing some remarkable similarities to Sax Rohmer's Fu Manchu, Wu Ling made his bow in the UJ just a year before the first World War. One of the G.H. Teed's favourite characters, Wu was still going strong in the 1930s.

Mr. Reece (4) was boss of the global Criminals Confederation, created by Robert Murray. A great favourite with UJ readers, the long-running Crim Con series was actually give a repeat run.

Mr. John Smith (5), Reece's rival for leadership of the CC, is shown here making an unexpected call on Sexton Blake in *Enter the President*, UJ 1484. Smith's subfusc dress and mild manner - concealing, of course, a very ruthless nature - were in nice contrast to the snarling, repellent Reece who, one often felt, would have been arrested on sight!

Sometimes involved in the nefarious activities of Wu Ling, Dr. Huxton Rymer - another colourful Teed creation - was a brilliant surgeon (there was never anything commonplace about Blake's opponents) who had turned to crime. Here (6) he waits to ambush Blake and Tinker in a tale of torrid parts, *Gamblers' Gold!*, DW 16.

Monsieur Zenith the Albino (7), created by Anthony Skene, was surely the most exotic and best-remembered crook ever to cross swords with Sexton Blake; (Zenith did literally carry a swordstick). Seen here, untypically with a pistol, he is certainly running true to form in assisting a glamorous Russian lady to steal the famous Romanoff jewels, *Seeds of Sleep*, DW 21.

After Wu Ling's Yellow Beetle Brotherhood and the world-wide Criminals Confederation came the Double Four, a villainous group which, if much smaller than the other two organisations, had the distinction of being led by a European monarch no less - His Royal (and criminal) Majesty, King Karl of Serbovia, also known as the Ace! Created by Gwyn Evans, the Double Four underwent a number of membership changes over the years. The group shown here (8) consists of the Ace himself (in evening dress, medals and sash) with, clockwise round the table, Lou Lamont, female impersonator, the Hon. Dickie Tregenna, "scion of a noble family" turned to crime, Professor Wolfgang Nacht, an ex-surgeon with a sadistic streak, Cesare Ravetti, "a count by courtesy, a crook by inclination", Colonel Tiny a sinister dwarf, Olaf Olsen a murderous Swede and Killer Cray a Chicago gunman. This colourful little group are drawing lots to decide who will assassinate Sexton Blake! Story: *The Doomsman of the Double Four*, DW 41.



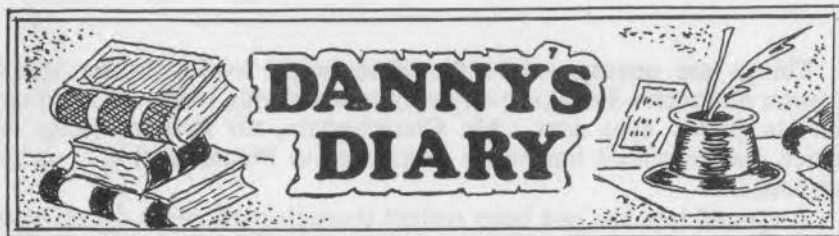
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APRIL 1939

Once again it has been a good month in the Fourpenny Libraries. The Greyfriars story in the Schoolboys' Own Library is "Billy Bunter's Cruise." This is an Easter holiday tale. Bunter invites a number of fellows to be guests on the "Sea Nymph", a yacht belonging to his cousin George, but when they arrive they find they are expected to pay for their holiday. The ship sails round the British coast and in the final part they pick up a man from the sea, who turns out to have robbed a bank at Margate. Coker is also among the "guests." This tale will carry on next month.

Second S.O.L. is "Rookwood Calling", which is a collection of Rookwood tales on different themes, all good. In one part Lovell befriends that worm, Gower, who is in debt to Joey Hook, the bookie. In another bit, Putty alters Carthew's advert for a bike he is selling for £5. He changes the ad to ten bob - personal callers only. Then in another section, Tommy Dodd brags that he will beat the Classical footer team with Cuffy in goal. But Jimmy plays Gunner in his side in goal, which evens things up. (This is the same plot as a recent Gem tale, "Tom Merry's Boast.") Finally, Lovell runs up the bids, for fun, at an auction - and gets a big trunk knocked down to him. But there is really more in that trunk than meets the eye, and Lovell has the last laugh. Lovely S.O.L. this one, with its variety.

The St. Frank's S.O.L. is "Hidden Gold", with the cadets still in camp on the island. They find a hoard of gold, but a number of criminals are after that gold.

A Sexton Blake Library I had this month is "The Great Air Swindle" by John Creasey. Very topical, with the threat of an invasion of our islands by a foreign power. Thrilling stuff.

I had no less than 3 Boys' Friend Libraries, but my Gran pays for all my books from the newsagent, Mr. Bragg. "The Outlaw Raiders" is a Captain Justice tale about foreign air pirates who land in England. Then "South Seas Treasure" is a King of the Islands tale, which I once read in Modern Boy. And a final one I had is "Chums of the Bombay Castle" by Duncan Storm. The Bombay Castle tales are very farcical, but Doug says they appeared long ago as serials in the Boys' Friend, so I buy them to keep myself up to date.

In real life, Cambridge won the Boat Race (the 91st) by 4 lengths.

Things are uneasy out in the wide, wide world. After Hitler's invasion of Czecho-Slovakia everybody is wondering where he is going to turn his greedy eyes next. Mr. Chamberlain, for Britain, along with France, has promised immediate assistance to Poland if that country is threatened.

A special law has just been rushed through parliament for all young men between 20 and 21 to do 6 months' military training. But a lot of people in parliament, along with some newspapers, are saying that it is merely putting the wind up the general public. It's nice to turn to my papers for a bit of light relief.

I always have Modern Boy every week, though I really like it the least of all my papers. Of course, school stories come first with me. Still, there is some pretty good reading, and the appeal varies. There is a new series of railway tales by Alfred Edgar, and I like these, but I am not so keen on the motor-bike racing tales and the war stories, of which there are usually plenty. The main attraction just now is the Captain Justice tales by Murray Roberts, illustrated by Ibbetson. Of course the Justice tales are very far-fetched, but, in their way, they are interesting and exciting. First tale this month is "They Came in Silence". "They" being the insect army of Sheik Hussein. Next came "Hussein's Hostage" in which Prof. Flaznagel falls into the trap laid by the insect army. Next "Dash for Freedom" with the Professor pushing his Arab captor into a room with giant gnats, and then bunking for freedom. "Winged Warriors" came next, with Captain Justice attacking Hussein with an army of wasps. Wow! Final of the month is "Captain Justice Attacks", with our hero carrying on with his war against Hussein and his spiders, plus his terrible ants. I look under my bed every night to make sure that none of Hussein's insects is in hiding there.

The Magnet has been mighty fine again, as always, all the month. The long series has continued about the mysterious night prowler at Greyfriars, and the Old Greyfriars Boy, Crocker, who has set up shop as a cobbler near the school. First of the month is "The Clue of the Purple Footprints". Someone has robbed the Headmaster's study, and has left a vivid clue behind him. Then the following week came the final story in the series, "Drake Gets His Man." Jack Drake, the boy tec, is at the school calling himself James Duck, and, at long last, the awful Crocker is brought to justice.

Next came the start of an Easter holiday series, with "Billy Bunter's Easter Trip." Owing to a malicious trick by the Bounder, Harry Wharton & Co. get stranded on Black Rock Island off the Cornish coast. This is followed by "The Mystery of Black Rock Island", where the boys determine to find out the mystery of this Cornish Island where they have been marooned. Finally came "The Kidnapped Millionaire", with Mr. Vernon-Smith trapped by a hard-up estate-agent named Rance, whom the millionaire had regarded as nothing but a bit of mechanism to carry out his

wishes. This series goes on next month. I wish that my Easter hols lasted as long as those of the Greyfriars pals.

Nice varied month at the local cinemas. "If I were King" is pretty good, about France hundreds of years ago, with Ronald Colman as the hero, though the film is really stolen by Basil Rathbone as the arch villain, Francois Villon.

"Boys' Town" was lovely, with Spencer Tracey as Father Flanagan and his school for bad boys, who are led by Mickey Rooney. Topping. Then more French Revolution in "Marie Antoinette" with Norma Shearer and Tyrone Power.

I wasn't very keen on Sonja Henie in "My Lucky Star" which had a thin story as a framework for a lot of skating. But I loved George Formby in "It's in the Air", about a goofy new recruit in the Air Force. Good fun and nice songs. And the whole family liked "That Certain Age" starring Deanna Durbin and Melvyn Douglas, about a girl who fell in love with an older man. More lovely songs, too. Fianlly, a light, jolly, musical, "Carefree" with Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire.

There has been a minor upheaval in the Gem. For a good many years now they have been re-publishing the very early St. Jim's stories. These have been grand, though of late the general quality has dropped a little. Now the re-prints have come to an end, and I'm not really sorry, for the real Martin Clifford is writing new stories for our splendid old paper. I am just a wee bit sorry that the new series is yet another travel one, and so we have the Greyfriars chums tripping round the coast in a ship, and the Benbow boys out in the West Indies, and now the St. Jim's chaps on an air liner bound for Brazil. And, though I enjoy the travel stories, I prefer school tales.

So, in the first Gem of the month, we have the last of the re-prints. That is "The St. Jim's Hunger Striker" who is Gussy who goes on a hunger-strike in preference to apologising to Mr. Selby.

Then the start of the BRAND NEW series, opening with "The Flying Schoolboys". Lord Eastwood is providing the air liner, and he insists that the boys be accompanied by a responsible adult - his trusted "man" whose name is Pawson. But before they leave, Gussy has a strange adventure in Wayland Wood. A nervous American entrusts Gussy with a mysterious little black box, which is being sought by a villainous 'dago' named Beppo. Next came "Peril in Paris", with Beppo on the trail of the black box. Then, "The Stowaway of the Silver Swallow", with the giant plane taking the schoolboys further on their journey, little knowing that the awful Beppo is hidden in the plane. Next, "The Dead City", with the plane landing in the Cevennes Mountains and the chums exploring the Dead City with a guide who turns out to be treacherous. The series goes on next month. It looks like being a long one.

The Gem's Cedar Creek tales have been glorious. In "Frank Richards & Co's Cruise", Frank and his chums get adrift in a balloon. Next comes "Handsome Alf." The chums land safely, only to come up against the

awful Alf. Then "Gun Law" with Frank & Co up against gangsters - and grizzlies. They win through and the little adventure is over.

Next "The Gentle Shepherd". Back at Cedar Creek there is a new master, a Mr. Shepherd, a gentle fellow who seems born to have his leg pulled. Last of the month "The Terror of Thompson", in which Mr. Shepherd proves himself not so gentle, when he deals successfully with Bunch Fives, the bully of the cow town. A glorious month for Cedar Creek.

The Benbow tales have gone on with the trip to the West Indies. First "The Mysterious Document", with Daubeny stealing the document which has been entrusted to Jack Drake. Next "Lost at Sea" with Drake's feud with Daubeny ending with Drake falling overboard in the dead of night. Then "The Mutiny Ship". Drake is picked out of the sea, only to find that the ship which has saved him has been taken over by mutineers. Last of this little series is "The Scuttled Schooner", with Drake rescued and making up with Daubeny at the end.

Final of the month is "Mischief-Makers of the Benbow", with Daubeny's pals trying to renew the trouble between him and Drake. All pretty good reading.

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

S.O.L. No. 367, "Billy Bunter's Cruise" comprised the first three stories from the 5-story Easter holiday series of the Magnet in 1933. S.O.L. No. 368 "Rookwood Calling" is a truly excellent S.O.L.; ideal if you are introducing someone to Rookwood for the first time. It comprised 7 consecutive stories, on varied themes, as Danny relates, which had appeared in the Boy's Friend of the Autumn of 1923.

The final reprint story of Danny's first Gem in April 1939, "The St. Jim's Hunger-Striker" was a sub story which had appeared under the same title in the Gem of a few weeks before Christmas in 1920.

Then, as Danny tells us, came the new stories, written in every case by the genuine Martin Clifford. So, though neither Danny nor the rest of us knew it then, the Gem was now entering upon its final phase. It is a sad thought, but there is joy in the knowledge that the lovely old paper never really died. It has lived on in the hearts of those of us who loved it so much - and it will go on living while we remain.

The Cedar Creek tales in the Gem that month of April, comprised 5 consecutive stories from the Boy's Friend, commencing from mid-May 1918. "Frank Richards & Co's Cruise" had borne the same title in 1918. "Handsome Alf" had been "Adrift in the Sky". "Gun Law" had originally been "Dropped from the Clouds". "The Gentle Shepherd" had the same title on each occasion. "The Terror of Thompson" had been "Pluck Will Tell" in 1918.

Of the Benbow stories in Danny's April 1939 Gem, the 5 tales had appeared consecutively in the Greyfriars Herald from the start of July 1920. "The Mysterious Document" had the same title on both occasions. "Lost at Sea" had been "Foes of the Benbow". "The Mutiny Ship" and "The Scuttled Schooner" had each had the same

title both times. And "Mischief-Makers of the Benbow" had been "From Foes to Friends" in 1920.

The film "Carefree" was the last of the series of lovely musicals - there were 10 in all - which Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers made to delight picturegoers in the thirties. They were RKO productions released by Radio Pictures in this country. Some ten years later Rogers and Astaire came together again in a musical entitled "The Barkeleys of Broadway", made by M.G.M. The film critics slated it unmercifully, and I daresay it was inferior to the earlier ones from RKO, but I recall that we played it in the Small Cinema, and it went down well, so I don't suppose it was all that awful.

As readers of C.D. are well aware, it was as a result of my campaigning, when I was fed up with the long, long run of sub stories, that the Gem editor decided to reprint the old Blue Cover stories. I never regretted it, and as the "experiment" lasted for 8 years, it was obviously a good decision. Then, early in 1939, when the subs were once again catching up with the original writer, I suggested that they should ask Charles Hamilton to write completely new tales for the Gem. And they did just that, so the Gem's history was to end in a blaze of glory.

Cliff House Corner

by Margery Woods

Several factors contributed to the increasing freedom of women after the turn of the century and not the least of the benefits brought by this new freedom was the spread of popularity of open-air sports and activities. Guiding did much to make camping acceptable for girls, whose Victorian forbears would have succumbed to the vapours at the thought of their daughters capering round a campfire, brewing their own nectar and plunging into the nearest pool or river at the drop of the sun's hat. The writers of girls' stories were not slow to exploit these new popular themes, and perhaps not enough credit is given them for their influence in introducing youngsters, albeit vicariously, to the fun of taking to canvas.

One of the earliest Cliff House camping series ran in the SCHOOL FRIEND during July/August 1922. The whole Fourth Form, complete with its mistress, Miss Bellew, set off for a summer vacation camp where no less a formidable character than Miss Bullivant herself is to join them. This would seem a strange departure from the holiday jaunts a decade later when Babs and the chums roamed the world happily, more or less free of adult supervision. To spend their precious holidays complete with all their form mates --- foes as well as friends --- and their mistress, to say nothing of the Bull thrown in for good measure, would then have seemed unthinkable to Babs and Co. Even the name of this early camp, Military Meadow, suggested a certain amount of regimentation.

Despite this, high spirits abound. There is much japing, lots of the usual backchat, chivvying of Bessie Bunter, and the grumbling of the great Augusta Anstruther-Browne, to whom the rough and tumble of camp life is sadly beneath her dignity, but virtually no plot or real conflict strengthens the first story.

The second week brings *The Mystery of the Tower*. A japer is at work again, culminating in the wrecking of Miss Bullivant's tent. That irascible lady announces that the planned outing to Hooker's Tower, where Bessie insists she has seen a ghost, is cancelled and she is going to devote herself to enforcing the strictest camp discipline. Augusta and Marcia decide to ignore this edict and go to explore the tower. Meanwhile, the Danes, girls from Danesford Hall, a school near Cliff House, are on a cycling tour which has brought them to the area where Cliff House is encamped. Bessie, however, insists that her ghost was no prank-playing Dane. Miss Bellew returns after a brief absence to meet indignant reports

In this issue
SPECIAL CAMPING-OUT NUMBER OF "THE
CLIFF HOUSE WEEKLY!"



No. 154. Vol. 5.

Three-Halfpence.

Week Ending July 31st, 1920.



MARCIA AND NANCY GET MIXED UP IN THE TENT!

from the Bull and her luckless charges, plus the news that Augusta and Marcia have been missing for ten hours. The Bull seems strangely unconcerned about this, while Babs and Co. have decided that the Danes have kidnapped Augusta and Marcia. When a ruse by Mabs gains the information about a raid planned by the Danes for that evening Babs and Co. are waiting for them. The marauding Danes are captured but are quite genuinely bewildered by accusations of kidnapping. Nor had they played ghost to frighten Bessie.

Old enmities are forgotten as the Danesford girls join the search parties setting forth to look for the missing girls. Eventually Babs discovers a secret passage in the tower which leads to a forgers' den where Augusta and Marcia are being held. But Babs and her companions become captives too until a valiant rescue by Clara, via an ancient chimney, and the arrival of the police winds up the story and the forgers are caught.

Story number three featured a runaway horse, a green caravan, a newcomer called Ruth, and a secret cache of valuables. Bessie, in her eternal quest for sustenance, invades the green caravan and is carried away when it is driven off by two suspicious characters. Bessie is rescued by Grace Woodfield and Flora Cann of the Fifth, who have hired the green caravan for their holiday. Somewhat confusingly, there is another character called Ruth, who is also known as Kate, and a woman called Alice. They are former employees of the old lady who originally owned the caravan. After her death it was sold, and the two ex servants, who considered themselves underpaid while in her service, are now in search of jewels and money they suspect to have been concealed in the caravan by the old lady. Just as the hiding place is discovered Miss Bellew receives an express letter (perfectly timed!) and a copy of the will with a request that she lock up the caravan until the solicitors can reach the camp. Ruth, who after all is proved innocent, is invited to join the camp, the two ex-servants are let off with a stern talking-to and nice little legacies left to them by the old lady, and the camp resumes its normal routine --- until story four, which winds up the series with the arrival of a procession of pygmy princesses.

Miss Bullivant finds herself acting as interpreter during the guided tour of the camp to which the exotic visitors are treated. What Miss Bullivant might have said had she ever discovered how young Doris Redfern and her giggling cronies of the Third pulled off quite the best jape of the holiday probably would not bear printing! By the end of the camp half the school and its neighbours seemed to have visited the Fourth in the camp at Military Meadow.

Down the years Cliff House had several camps, although camping was not confined to holidays. On one occasion, when the Fourth Form dormitory was to be redecorated Miss Primrose agreed, somewhat doubtfully, to a suggestion by one of the school governors that the Fourth should go under canvas while the refurbishing of the dorm was done.

Miss Charmant was to accompany the girls, the site was a meadow near Pegg, and apart from Bessie's natural anxiety regarding the culinary side of the business the girls were delighted at the prospect. Even the fact that lesson schedules would be adhered to strictly did not dim their excitement.

But even before they actually move in the chums find a mysterious girl trespassing there. She seems frightened when challenged, and tender-hearted Babs feels sympathy for her. The mystery girl is dismayed to find that so many schoolgirls are to camp on that particular site.

Lydia Crossendale does not share the chums' love of camping and finds fault with everything. Nor is she pleased when Bessie, who has been put in charge of the catering, selects her for the menial task of peeling a mountain of spuds. Lydia gets her revenge by tipping a pot of pepper into the soup, but unfortunately for Lydia the mystery girl has entered the kitchen tent and when discovered turns to flee, inadvertently knocking over the cooker. The sabotaged soup goes flying, and the rest of the dinner. The hungry Fourth is in no mood for mercy towards the mystery girl, and more trouble ensues when a fire starts in the store tent, although there is little mystery about its cause. Rule-breakers like Lydia Crossendale should not



"YOU can peel the potatoes," said Bessie loftily. Lydia Crossendale glared furiously. She had done nothing but grumble ever since they had arrived in camp and now Bessie, in full charge of the cooking arrangements, meant to teach the Fourth Form snob a lesson!

indulge in exclusively made cigarettes distinguished by a green band round the tip. Lydia's calling card could scarcely be more distinctive.

Lydia's attempts to ruin the camp are nicely interwoven with the story of the mystery girl, Anita, who is living in a nearby cave with her escaped convict father while they seek a hidden box containing the papers which prove his innocence and the guilt of his former partner in his stockbroking business. With the help of the chums the hiding place is found --- under Miss Charmant's tent! Miss Primrose's reaction to finding a gang of girls apparently intent on excavating a mine under Miss Charmant's bed need not be described. But all ends happily in the true Cliff House way when Anita becomes a guest at the camp, her father's innocence is proved, and of course Lydia gets off scot free. But what would we do without the Lydias and the Augustas and the Dianas of our beloved Cliff House world?



By

ROGER M. JENKINS

No. 231 - GEM No. 127 - "DARCY'S BANK BOOK"

It is always something of a surprise to realise that schoolboys, many of them from poorer homes, paid their weekly pennies for the Gem in order to read about the extravagances of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and the manner in which he spent his 'fivahs' like water. Many a household would run for a month on five pounds in the far-off year of 1910, but presumably the readers were fascinated by the stories and not feeling envious of a fictitious character. At all events, at the beginning of this particular story Gussy was stony broke. It is uncertain, however, whether readers were expected to sympathise with him, since the entire story was written in a highly ironic vein that appeals to adults but might have puzzled some unsophisticated readers.

Gussy had written several letters and sent three telegrams to his father, explaining that his weekly allowance was spent and asking for another fiver, but Lord Eastwood unaccountably failed to answer. D'Arcy told his friends that he always respected his father, and had disobeyed him in only one respect: "He has always impressed upon me to be vewy careful in the company I keep. However, I allow myself to stwetch a point in that respect, as I don't want to dwop you fellows -". Eventually they concoct a letter of remonstrance to Lord Eastwood, and it is posted just before Dr. Holmes informs D'Arcy that his father wished to make him more responsible with money and he was handed a cheque book with a bank balance of £50, which Gussy optimistically imagined would last a year.

Of course, what with lavish hospitality and some chicanery on the part of others, the whole balance was used up in the same week, and the Bank refused to honour any more cheques. Gussy attempted to put this matter right by drawing a cheque in favour of the Bank, and told the astonished manager that it could be paid out of the Bank's reserves. He returned, disappointed, to St. Jim's, to find indignant creditors waving worthless cheques and Lord Eastwood surveying the sad result of his experiment.

What is interesting about this story is the relationship between father and son, D'Arcy being dignified and good-intentioned, but simple without

being a simpleton, whilst Lord Eastwood, a bit remote, comes over as generous and innovative. The political background to this story was Lloyd George's famous Budget of 1909 (that took a year to come to the Statute Book) and this created an additional form of taxation that bore heavily on the Lord Eastwoods of the time. D'Arcy wrote to his father stating that he had no hand in bringing in this Budget and ought not to have to suffer as a result. If there was a villain in the story, presumably it was Lloyd George, but Charles Hamilton, if he thought it, was careful not to nail his own political colours to the mast.

THE OLD, OLD STORY!

FOR A LONG TIME BILLY BUNTER HAS BEEN TRYING TO RAISE MONEY ON POSTAL ORDERS THAT HAVE BEEN LONG OVERDUE



BUT BUNTER KNOWS THAT THOSE P.O.s ARE COMING



LET'S HOPE THEY WON'T ALL ARRIVE AT THE SAME TIME!

He will lie, sir, with such volubility, that you would think truth were a fool.

'All's Well That Ends Well'

I often wondered in youthful innocence how one with the circumference of Billy Bunter managed to conceal himself, as frequently he did, beneath the seats of railway carriages. In those early, happy days of the 'Magnet' it did not occur to me that 'poetic licence' played a no small part in the construction of plot in the adventures of the Greyfriars fellows, as indeed it did over the whole spectrum of youthful literature. Memory seems to recall (certainly not experience) that the recesses beneath the seats of even first class compartments were extremely restricted, and usually dusty and far from salubrious, certainly no place of concealment for a public school 'man', (short of funds with which to purchase a ticket) who wished to retain his self respect.

However it should not be forgotten that Billy Bunter, from these grimy retreats, often overheard many revealing conversations upon which have hinged the essence of many Greyfriars plots, and which he had no inhibitions whatsoever in using for his own nefarious purposes. It was solely through Bunter's bilking propensities, condemn them though we may, that many adventures got underway for Harry Wharton and Co., the information thus clandestinely obtained giving the necessary 'thrust' to the plot. In the case of William George Bunter we must, I believe, forgive the obnoxious art of 'bilking'. Is it not quite in keeping with numerous other unfortunate traits in his character? Would we have it otherwise?

Bunter's antecedents, from such information as is extant, have certainly bequeathed very little in terms of nobleness of character to him, although this may in no way be put forward legitimately as an excuse for his labyrinthine approach to Meum and Teum. An insatiable desire for 'tuck', of course, exercises an insurmountable fascination over the mind of our 'Owl'. By what strange and tortuous manipulation of ideas within his fat cranium he arrives at the conclusion that "this cake is mine" is, perhaps, beyond unravelling by the normal intellect. By some strange telepathic process known to Bunter alone, tidings percolated through to him that a cake, a large confection, has arrived at Cliff House for the delectation of his sister Bessie. Now it is perfectly clear to the fat 'Owl' that half, or possibly two thirds of that cake should be destined for himself. Bunter's minor, Sammy, may make his claims shrilly heard, but they are as light and inconsequential as gossamer, they count for nothing, and his squeaking protestations pass completely unheeded.

Swift action is the order of the day. A 'jigger' is borrowed from the bike shed, quite unbeknown to its owner (Bunter's own means of transport being in its usual state of clinking disrepair). Thus we see him, disappearing fairly swiftly down Friardale Lane in a cloud of dust, his

little fat legs twinkling and plunging, taking the high road to Cliff House as though his life depended upon it. Haste is indeed necessary, for Billy knows his Bessie; he is only too cognizant of her fierce emotions concerning 'tuck'. Long experience dictates swift decisions and movement, and lends wings to his whirling efforts. Fresh masticatory worlds wait to be conquered at Cliff House, and (we may be sure) Billy Bunter will not be found wanting.

In his strange yet unerring instinct to track down and appropriate other people's tuck, and in his indignant denials of the resulting evidence of his guilt, William George Bunter reigns supreme. An unlikely hero perched on a precarious pinnacle, he has yet maintained his balance for well nigh a century and shows little sign of tottering. May he continue to enjoy the aura popularis.

A COUPLE OF ELEVENS

by Ernest Holman

Not long after the end of World War I, Richmal Crompton introduced the character of William Brown; soon after the end of World War II, Anthony Buckeridge presented J.C.T. Jennings. Some distance in time between their arrivals - but nothing like the distance one must be from the other when looking at their personal presentation.

If ever any two individuals were **NOT** as alike as two peas, it must surely be so regarding these two eleven-year-olds. William went to Day School (probably **regretfully** paid for by his father); Jennings was at a Boarding Prep. School (probably **hopefully** paid for by the male parent). Their way of life was entirely opposite - which may seem a strange way of referring to two youngsters both likely to inflict wounds on whoever was unfortunate enough to get mixed up with them. Just imagine - suppose you were living with the Browns on one side, the Jennings on the other! As Wodehouse would say, the imagination boggles!

Fortunately, the twain never met - after all, they were each quite capable of causing chaos by individual effort. No need to specify - they just did so. William, aided and abetted by Ginger, Henry and Douglas must have been, in his cheerful, breezy manner, the village terror. Jennings, however, apart from the unquestioned support of clergyman's son, Darbishire, never received other than reluctant assistance from the likes of Venables, Temple and Co. William, living at home, was the bane of his father's existence; being at school, Jennings was the scourge of poor old Wilkie (Mr. Wilkins, one of the Linbury Court masters, whose patience was frequently exhausted by J.C.T.J., although never sufficiently to cause him to seek new pastures.) By the way, Jennings' school had one notable attraction, not usually associated with Boys' schools - a young, presentable, good-looking Matron.

Both sets of stories are mainly chock-full of misdeeds, and, more notably, their after-effects. William, being recorded in short stories, would appear to have undergone more 'experiences': nevertheless, Jennings in the long stories managed to achieve quite a reputation for 'making bad things worse'. For about the last five years, the William adventures have been gradually making their re-appearances, both in hard-back and paper-back. So far, 26 books have been issued. At the moment, these seem to have slowed to only a trickle: come on, Macmillan, there are another 13 still to arrive on the bookshelves! The Jennings stories are also, I gather, to have a re-issue; unfortunately, it seems that they may be re-written. Whether by the original author (I somehow doubt) or by someone else (on the lines of the Bunter books recently 'revamped') is not apparent. (See Editor's note, below.)

All this has not really said a lot about the two characters, but I have been working on the premise that many of you will be well acquainted with both, and that no elaboration is needed. As different as two boys could be, they nevertheless provided (each in his own way) sufficient incidents on which to hang many stories.

From time to time, we hear or read of somebody selecting their favourite 'eleven' - not only in sport, but in other fields. In ANY list, the two elevens mentioned here MUST always be present!

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Macmillan have already issued several titles in the Jennings series, in good quality paper-backs. They have been only very slightly revised, by the original author, Anthony Buckeridge, and further titles are to be reprinted regularly.)

Books

**A HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S BOOK ILLUSTRATION, by
Joyce Irene Whalley and Tessa Rose Chester. (John
Murray/Victoria and Albert Museum, London, £35.00)
Reviewed by BRIAN DOYLE**

This is a lovely book, well-produced and profusely illustrated (as, indeed, it should be at the price). It covers the best-known illustrators of children's books, with examples of their work, both in black-and-white and colour, and should be on every children's book-lover's shelves.

But - and it's a big BUT - it leaves so many excellent and prolific illustrators out that it is of little use to the true enthusiast, to someone who really knows the subject.

The jacket-blurb states that the book is "a comprehensive history of illustration for children" and that it is "complete and authoritative", that it will "become the standard reference book on the subject" and that it is "fully equipped with an extensive bibliography". The book is nothing of the kind, in any of these categories, I'm afraid.

Can any such work be 'comprehensive' if it omits such illustrators as C.H. Chapman, Leonard Shields, G.M. Dodshon, Roy Wilson, James Horrabin, A.B. Payne, Hutton Mitchell, H.S. Foxwell, George Wakefield, Fred Bennet, Arthur Jones, T.M.R. Whitwell, E.E. Briscoe, R.J. Macdonald, Thomas Henry, Alfred Pearse, and Tom Browne? All these distinguished names will be known to collectors of boys' and girls' (and children's) stories as having illustrated many of the best-known characters of all time.



One of Hugh Lofting's illustrations for his long-running Dr. Dolittle books.

There is no mention of Frank Bellamy (who, after Frank Hampson, drew 'Dan Dare' for many years in *The Eagle*). No Eileen Soper (who illustrated numerous books by Enid Blyton (including the whole 'Famous Five' saga), no word about the illustrators of *Thomas the Tank Engine*, or *Postman Pat*, who sell in such vast quantities to today's children. One looks in vain for such brilliant artists as Jack Matthew, Stuart Tresilian, Rowland Hilder, Harry Rountree or Alice and Martin Provensen. Mary Shepard doesn't make it, although she illustrated the 'Mary Poppins' books (her distinguished father, E.H. Shepard is rightly there, but the authors say curiously of him that "he lacks Ardizzone's inner strength" (whatever that may mean). There is no Diana Stanley, even though she illustrated all those modern classics about "The Borrowers" by Mary Norton, no Ralph Steadman, no C.F. Tunnicliffe. Nothing, even, on the original "Wizard of Oz" artist, W.W. Denslow, and his prolific successor, John R. Neil.

V.H. Drummond, winner of the Kate Greenaway Medal (for distinguished children's book illustration) for 1966, and Gerald Rose, 1960 winner of the same Medal, are not there. This is not surprising, since the authors make no mention of either the British Kate Greenaway Medal, or

the American Caldecott Medal (both awarded in the field over many years), or supply lists of the recipients, which might have been useful. Perhaps they haven't even heard of these famous Awards?

I could go on listing other numerous omissions for several pages, but I won't be tiresome. Even the Bibliography, listing books on the subject, is incomplete, even, on a personal note, listing my own Who's Who of Boys' Writers and Illustrators, but omitting any mention of my later Who's Who of Children's Literature, which includes much information on over 40 illustrators.

Occasionally, the authors throw out statements such as "The 40s and 50s was not a time for especial quality in illustration. The post-war years can be seen more as a resting period..." Apart from its dubious grammar, this patronising opinion is staggering in its lack of knowledge and appreciation, and something about which I could write several pages, proving just the opposite.

The book is an attractive and enjoyable work so far as it goes. But it reminds me rather of a work I once read which claimed to be a comprehensive history of children's reading of the 20th century. It contained no mention of Frank Richards, Richmal Crompton, W.E. Johns or Malcolm Saville. Enid Blyton made it into a two-line, patronising footnote. In this rather sorry effort, even C.H. Chapman or Eric Parker don't rate a footnote. But don't tell Billy Bunter or Sexton Blake...!

"ENGLISH CHILDREN AND THEIR MAGAZINES 1751-1945

By Kirsten Drotner (Yale £16.95)

Reviewed by NORMAN WRIGHT

This book traces the development of the commercial children's magazine from 1751 to the early 1980's. It is not a nostalgic journey but a sociological study. The author follows the developing notion of 'childhood' from the 18th century, when only upper and middle class children enjoyed anything like a childhood with leisure time in which to read. Poorer children often had barely time to sleep let alone leisure for recreational purposes.

The changes in law prohibiting the exploitation of children in factories and mills, coupled with free state education, increased the potential market for juvenile publications. Religious groups were amongst the first to realise the potential offered by magazines for educating and indoctrinating the young. Magazines like "Child's Companion" and "Children's Friend" offered stories of a high moral order. Bunter would have been far from impressed with their messages of piety rather than wealth. As the Victorian era approached, articles on life in far flung places became prevalent. Grim details of savage tribal rituals and the like titillated

readers of Beeton's "Boys' Own Magazine" and a crop of other similar Victorian publications.

The mid 19th Century urban teenager expended his hard earned cash on 'penny bloods', those seemingly endless eight page parts that glorified the deeds of pirates, highwaymen and the like. B.O.P., founded in 1879, offered its readers stirring stories with less gore, and informative articles. It went some way towards breaking the monopoly of the 'bloods'. The G.O.P. came a year later. Drotner looks in depth at the magazines aimed at girls and notes how the social attitudes of the 19th century prevented their development at the same pace as those publications produced for young males.

Alfred Harmsworth's "Halfpenny Marvel" radically changed the reading habits of England's young. His appeal to parents was a masterstroke - "...If you see your children reading 'Penny Dreadfuls' take them away and give them the "Halfpenny Marvel" instead..." A.A. Milne was less sure, he claimed that Harmsworth "...killed the 'Penny Dreadful' by the simple process of producing a ha'penny dreadfuller..."

Harmsworth's success was partly due to his exciting and striking presentation and partly due to his introduction of papers that catered for all tastes. By publishing story papers with detective stories, school stories and adventure stories he could virtually corner the market. His great success in the school story field was "Magnet" and "Gem".

Kirsten Drotner's knowledge of "Magnet" and "Gem" is very limited. Even "Magnet" readers of a less than scholastic nature will easily spot the numerous mistakes in the sections dealing with Hamilton's papers. However annoying these may be they do not invalidate the author's purpose as the book does not set out to be a history of specific children's magazines but rather a sociological study of the relationship between the changing status of children and the magazines published to meet their changing demands.



Both the Amalgamated Press and D.C. Thomson had their fingers firmly on the pulse of demand and shaped their publications to grasp as large a share of the market as possible. Papers with declining circulations were reshaped, merged or discontinued. There was little sentimentality displayed. If fashions changed periodicals had to change, or meet their inevitable end. Reading this study reinforces my own view that "Gem" and "Magnet" would have undergone radical changes if their demise had not been brought about suddenly by the paper shortage. Tastes were changing during the late 1930s. In retrospect it was probably better that Hamilton's two great papers came to a sudden end rather than becoming mere shadows of their former selves.

This is not a book brimful of nostalgic illustrations, but it is a fascinating documentation of the changing reading habits of the young over the last two hundred years.

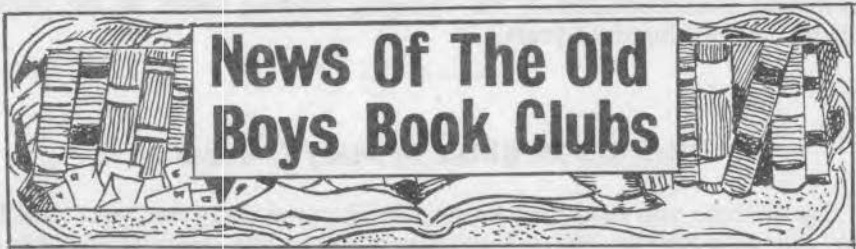
BOOKS IN BRIEF by Mary Cadogan

By the time you read this, Easter, which came early this year, will be over but with Spring and the promise of new life everywhere around perhaps it is still appropriate to mention EASTER by Jan Peinkowski (Heinemann £6.95). This beautifully produced book comprises Pienkowski's silhouette illustrations, with colour and 'gold leaf' backgrounds and decorations, to the Easter story. This unfolds in the magnificent and dignified words of the King James Version. Designed for children, it is nevertheless a book which many adults will relish. It will certainly have a permanent place on my shelves.

In very different mood, two detective stories which I have recently enjoyed are Mollie Hardwick's UNEASEFUL DEATH (Corgi £2.99) and Simon Brett's SERIES OF MURDERS (Gollancz £10.95). The first features the female detective Dorian Fairweather. An antiques expert, she finds herself trapped at a roadshow in Caxton Manor, which is isolated from the rest of the world in a raging snow-storm. And she has literally stumbled over a dead body, and realized that one of the group of experts snowed up with her is a murderer... The hero of Simon Brett's book is another of my favourites, the actor Charles Paris, who is constantly involved in amateur detection. Theatrical murder and mayhem make atmospheric reading: ironically, perhaps, Charles has to play the role of real-life crime investigator during a period of employment as a brainless bobby, Sergeant Clump, in a T.V. series.

One of the best and most appreciated of post-war Hollywood musicals was the 1954 re-make of A STAR IS BORN, with Judy Garland and James Mason in the leading parts. It tackled a serious theme for a musical, and its charismatic star-duo made the most of the plot's dramatic

and intense personal relationships and career challenges. In his book **A STAR IS BORN** (Andre Deutsch £17.95) Ronald Haver recreates the Hollywood of the 1950s, and takes his readers step by step through the making of this memorable movie. Like many other popular films, it seems to have had more than a normal quota of problems while being made. Even the selection of Judy Garland's co-star was difficult: apparently James Mason, who gave so much eventually to the role, was only the fifth choice - after Laurence Olivier, Richard Burton, Tyrone Power and Cary Grant! Apart from its interesting text, the book provides 25 full colour and 45 black and white photographs.



MIDLAND O.B.B.C.

The gloomy report of poor attendances in my last letter did not effect any improvement. Only six people turned up for our February meeting, which was however a very interesting one. Christine Brettell played a tape-recording of an appreciation of Frank Richards on the occasion of the publication of Mary Cadogan's recent book **FRANK RICHARDS: THE CHAP BEHIND THE CHUMS**. This was beautifully read, and the analysis of Frank Richards's "magic" was brilliant. (EDITOR'S NOTE: I think this must refer to a broadcast talk by Jeffrey Richards called **THE MASTER OF GREYFRIARS** which was indeed a splendid assessment of Frank's achievements.)

The refreshments were very good, thanks to the kind efforts of Christine Brettell and Ivan Webster. Those members who were not present missed a treat! There was discussion of the problems of running the club. Your correspondent then gave a 20 Questions quiz, and Ivan Webster gave a reading from the **MAGNET** Carboy series in which the joker of the Remove tries to fool Quelch, but gets 12 of the best on his bags.

We meet again on 21st March, to avoid Easter, and hope for a better attendance. Best wishes to all O.B.B.C. members everywhere.

JACK BELLFIELD

NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

It was a cheery party of thirteen (certainly not unlucky!) that assembled on 11th March at THE WHITE HORSE in Wakefield for lunch on the occasion of the visit of Mary Cadogan, our Club Co-President.

After a sumptuous repast, we made the short journey to the "Wharton Lodge" Vicarage, home of Geoffrey Good our Secretary, where we again had the chance to view his splendid library. There was plenty of time for informal chat or a walk round the grounds on this sunny spring day. Vera Good provided us with a wonderful afternoon tea.

Nineteen people attended our evening meeting, and David Bradley formally welcomed Mary and a new member from Grimsby, Colin Partis. Regrettably, Ellen, his wife, was unwell and unable to make the meeting. We were glad also, to see Bruce, John and James Lamb from Macclesfield.

Mary spoke on her reflections as the editor of the C.D. showing us the very first copy of the magazine and describing how the technology had improved over the years. We were given an insight into the co-operation between the printers in York and our editor in Kent. Mary then spoke on how the world wars had influenced the advertising that had appeared in children's papers. Some of these advertisements were very amusing!

After refreshments, and with the aid of colour slides expertly produced by her husband, Alex, Mary showed us some examples of the children's literature that had appeared in both world wars.

This was an exceptionally good meeting which in effect had commenced before 1.00 p.m. and finished after 9.00 p.m. We are looking forward to the next visit of Mary.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

CAMBRIDGE CLUB

Our March meeting was held at the Linton home of Roy Whiskin. A short business meeting was followed by Roy talking about his vast collection of hobby materials, fiction and non-fiction books, magazines and comic-books from the 1930s to the 1950s on subjects so diverse as detectives, famous criminal trials, films and TV, cowboys and school stories.

Edward Whitton gave a brief quiz on personalities in musicals, films and television. Adrian Perkins then talked on Hulton's National Weekly, PICTURE POST, and the Hulton Press enterprise. The Press began in late-1936 and PICTURE POST two years later. Whilst the Press lasted until it was taken over by Odhams in 1959, PICTURE POST ceased in mid-1957. 19 years of life, but what an impression it has made! Amongst

the field leaders that Hulton Press published were EAGLE and its companions, and DISC, possibly the most innovative pop music paper for the mid-to-late-1950s' teenagers.

BRIAN PERKINS

LONDON O.B.B.C.

We met once again at the Ealing Liberal Centre on March 12th, by the kind arrangement of Bill Bradford. Despite numerous absences there was a good attendance, with Graham Bruton deputising for Chairman Norman Wright.

After the formalities of business, Roger Jenkins mentioned the DAILY TELEGRAPH obituary of Eric Hiscock, and Mark Jarvis read chapters 10 and 11 of MAGNET 1289, 'Harry Wharton to the Rescue'. The Hon. Secretary also drew attention to a recent South London Press feature on the Labour Party's archives which was illustrated by a reproduction of a 1917 poster advertising a meeting to 'Greet the Glorious Bolshevick Revolution' at which one of the speakers was one H. Quelch.

Roger Jenkins teased our brains with one of his popular elimination puzzles. Bill Bradford was the winner. Much hearty and convivial conversation took place before, during and after the meeting. More hot air than a Greyfriars Masters' meeting!

Next meeting on Sunday, 9th April at the Harper Family Home, 23 Algernon Road, Loughton, Essex. We look forward to seeing you there.

MARK JARVIS

AUSTRALIANS NOTE - COLLECTION FOR SALE

Facsimile Vols. in original dust jackets. MAGNET vols. 1 to 73 plus others. GEMS 13 volumes.

GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY ANNUALS - 19 Vols. H.B. HOL. ANNUALS - 2, plus H.B. OMNIBUS. 30 BOOK CLUB SPECIALS in original boxes. MOVIE, CRICKET & GOLF HARDBACKS.

Apply R. White, 32 Gleeson Av. Forster. NSW. 2428. Australia. Ph. (065) 548009.

ALWAYS WANTED: Rupert Annuals Pre 1970 and one shilling adventure series. William books in dustwrappers. Please offer to John Beck, 29 Mill Road, Lewes, East Sussex.

Reluctantly I admit that my ideas for articles on the papers and characters with which we were so enraptured so many decades ago, are now perhaps beginning to run out. Also, as possibly in this instance, the subject might have been used before. However, as Greyfriars, St. Jim's, St. Frank's, Morcove, and Cliff House definitely belong to the first half of the century, I am going back to a long time ago... a very long time ago.

In December 1915, a long complete story of Greyfriars School was published in the "BOYS' FRIEND" 3d Library, entitled "School and Sport", an 80,000 word long story credited to the authorship of Frank Richards, but of course really written by one of that band of people known as sub-writers. This, however, is not an article on sub-writers, merely a brief account of the publicity which was given to "School and Sport" in those far off days of long ago. To me, this situation has made recent interesting reading. The story itself I have never read, having only glanced at a copy several years ago. Therefore, I cannot dwell on its merits, but if all that was printed was true, it was a terrific success.

The "BOYS' FRIEND" Library in question would have been on sale during the early days of December, but, less than a month later, it was stated in the MAGNET that already a huge reprint order had been executed. Evidently one reason for its great success was the introduction of a new girl character, a certain Miss Phyllis Howell. She was a new pupil at Cliff House, and, according to the Editor, she appealed greatly to the young readers of war-time Britain.

The Editor writes: "Those of my chums who have bought and read "School and Sport" the great Frank Richards masterpiece, have expressed themselves as being thoroughly delighted, especially with the vivacious Cliff House heroine, who exercised such a wonderful measure of influence over Bob Cherry, and spurred him on to great and chivalrous deeds on the playing fields. Most of my correspondents are anxious to know if this young lady can be introduced into the MAGNET. I have discussed the question with Mr. Richards, who states that he will be only too pleased to do so. I feel sure that the innovation of Phyllis Howell in future stories will go far towards still further enhancing the name and fame of the good old MAGNET."

Phyllis was evidently supposed to be a much brighter character than the mild Marjorie Hazeldene, or the outspoken Clara Trevlyn, and in MAGNET No. 415, a reader sends a poem regarding "School and Sport", containing one verse to the fair Phyllis:

"As for Phyllis Howell,
She's a charming girl:
When I read her doings
I was in a whirl!

Bring her in the limelight
Often as you can
Don't forget to do so,
Ed., you lazy man:"

and begs for another 3d "BOYS' FRIEND" Library.

Replying, the Editor states, 'I should like to remind my chum that Mr. Frank Richards is already considerably overworked, and that he wrote "School and Sport" at a time when he might have been inhaling sea breezes on the coast of Cornwall. He has already made many splendid sacrifices in order to entertain my chums, and we mustn't let him have a breakdown in health, or what would become of the MAGNET then?' (Send for the sub writers. T.K.)

And so, Phyllis Howell is brought into the MAGNET stories, beginning with No. 419, and most of the boys seem to be smitten by her charms, especially Horace Coker of the Fifth.

However, I am digressing from "School and Sport" and giving too much attention to Phyllis Howell (even in the SCHOOL FRIEND she was my favourite character), and evidently much praise was showered upon Frank Richards for a story he did not even write. This, surely, could have been most galling to the genuine writer (G.R. Samways), but then, maybe he considered it part of his job to set to and write an 80,000 word story.



With a cap in either hand, Miss Phyllis skated merrily back towards her friends. Ponsooby clattered bareheaded, white with fury. "You little minx!" he roared.

Merely having briefly glanced through the story in question, I know little about it, remembering vaguely that a brother of Phyllis Howell was mentioned (a brother who had been killed during the War), and I think a Cup was being played for in his honour, presumably by Greyfriars, St. Jim's, Rookwood, and Highcliffe - maybe more, but it is all so long ago, 73/74 years.

* * * * *

(The illustration is the first Phyllis Howell picture to appear in a MAGNET - No. 419. F.R. did continue occasionally to mention her in his stories, but by the mid 1920s (apart from the sub writers, and the Cliff House authors in the SCHOOLFRIEND) she was forgotten.)

* * * * *

JACK OVERHILL

A Tribute from Bill Thurbon

With great sadness the Cambridge Club reports the death of one of its founder members, Jack Overhill, at the age of 86. He was known to many people as an author and broadcaster, giving some fifty-five broadcasts for the B.B.C.

He will also be remembered as a fine swimmer, and the founder of the Cambridge Granta Swimming Club, taking a daily swim in the river for over sixty years.

The son of a shoemaker he worked with his father for some ten years, but he was to become first a commission agent, and then a writer. In 1946 he obtained a Bachelor's degree in Economics. Later he took up teaching shorthand and typing, and economics at the College of Arts and Technology. He published three novels and wrote many other books reflecting life in Cambridge over the past 75 years. Among his publications was THE SNOB, the life of a shoemaker, and an historical novel THE MILLER OF TRUMPINGTON. He was a great reader and collector of books, dating back to the early years of the century, and keeping up with literature of today. MARVELS, GEMS, MAGNETS, SEXTON BLAKES etc. were on his bookshelves, with books of recent times.

After his wife's death he gave the collection of his own stories and writings to the Cambridge Collection. Jack's diaries and novels 'represent a most important history of back-street Cambridge in the 1920s and 30s. Captured in them is the town side of life during that period' said Mr. Petty, the Librarian of the Cambridge Collection in the City Library.

His health was failing in the last two years, and he could rarely attend the Club meetings, but he kept up with the older Club members through the use of the telephone until the last weeks of his life.

From 1931 he had kept a meticulous Diary, noting among other items the first air-raid on Cambridge. His large collection of C.D. Annuals, up to the present year, was neatly bound, for Jack was orderly in all that he did.

He was a great man and he will be sorely missed by many, particularly by his fellow members of the Cambridge Club.

EDITOR'S NOTE: All who knew Jack will endorse Bill Thurbon's tribute. From my earliest collecting and writing days Jack was unfailingly helpful and encouraging. He sent me two letters during the last weeks of his life: one was in answer to my editorial about the future contents of the C.D., and the other was an extremely warm and appreciative note after reading my book on Frank Richards. I shall treasure these letters from a great collector and friend.



MEMORIES

The hours speed by—the months
fly on
And Time goes rushing like the
breeze,
And schoolgirl days and schoolgirl
ways,
Too soon become just memories.

Yet memories that always live,
For who'll forget in after years
The chums we made, the games we
played,
The dear old study up the stairs—

The study where we used to throng
If holidays should turn out wet,
With splendid teas and merry song
The years may pass—we won't
forget!

We won't forget the dear old
school,
The merry years of long ago,
The springtime showers, the
summer hours,
The autumn, and the winter's
snow.

The hours speed by—the months
fly on
Old Time goes rushing like the
breeze—
But schoolgirl days and schoolgirl
ways,
They form the finest memories!

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