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Volume 44  
No. 518

FEBRUARY 1990

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# STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

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## The Editor's Chat



## NO LONGER A 'NEW GIRL'

I was reminded at the January meeting of the London Old Boys' Book Club that I had become a member of it exactly twenty years ago. I know that when I went to my first meeting I certainly never intended becoming a regular attender of these gatherings; it was curiosity which prompted me, coupled with a strong desire to see some of the original Magnets which would be available from the Club's Library. However, from that January 1970 meeting I was 'hooked'. It was such a joy to encounter so many kindred spirits and such warm camaraderie. Club meetings often bring to my mind Tagore's words: 'And in the beauty of friendship let there be laughter and sharing of pleasures'. There is lots of sharing at all of our book Clubs, as indeed there is with the C.D., and I should take this opportunity of thanking the very large number of readers who sent me Christmas cards in December, and New Year greetings then and in January. Your kind comments about the magazine make clear how much it means to you, and this kind of appreciation, of course, is an inspiration to any editor. Since I became seriously involved in collecting children's books and papers, time has truly flown. For a long period I felt like a new girl; the hobby circle was old-established when I came into it in 1970. However, after twenty years amongst you all I must surely have

come of age! I much enjoy the friends and fulfilments that my interest in juvenile fiction has brought, including the satisfactions of writing and editing.

## A PLEA

It is always good to receive articles for the C.D., but I would like to remind contributors of one or two things that would save me and/or our printers in York a lot of time and trouble. Typed manuscripts are, of course, generally easier to read than hand-written ones; it is, however, helpful if typescripts could be made in double line-spacing (so that essential corrections and comments for the printer can be added) and if margins on both left and right-hand sides of each page can be reasonably wide. Not everyone has access to a typewriter, so I am always prepared to accept handwritten manuscripts. These should, naturally, be very clearly written, bearing in mind that neither I nor the ladies who do the final typing of the magazine at the printer's know everything about all branches of the hobby! Articles in which names, or numbers (of a particular series, etc.) are difficult to decipher cause many problems. For me, the preparation of the C.D. has to be fitted into a very busy life; time is at a premium and it is difficult to find enough of this precious commodity to consult reference lists, books or papers from my collection simply in order to check a series number or the spelling of a character's name. So bearing all this in mind perhaps I can suggest that every potential contributor's belated New Year resolution should be the production of very clear - as well as very interesting - manuscripts!

With many thanks and good wishes to you all for your loyal support.

MARY CADOGAN

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**AROUND THE WORLD WITH SEXTON BLAKE**  
Number 2

by J.E.M.

Here are Blake and arch-criminal Huxton Rymer (can you spot either or both of them?) in a squalid bar somewhere in Papua which, at the time, was part of the Dutch East Indies. This tense and dramatic scene from nearly sixty years ago occurs in *Gambler's Gold* (DW 16), another exotic and exciting tale from tropical climes by globe-trotter G.H. Teed, as ever brilliantly illustrated by Eric Parker. If Teed certainly knew the places of which he wrote, he could not have been better served artistically; and this Parker drawing could hardly be bettered as an example of the artist's skill.



(If you didn't identify the main protagonists of the story, Blake is standing at the back, second from the right and Dr. Rymer is the bearded man just below him and to his left.)

\*\*\*\*\*



## FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD

by Jack Greaves

Throughout the old series Nelson Lee, E.S. Brooks has prominently mentioned this vital commodity in many of his stories, particularly at tea-time when the juniors partook of tea in their studies. This seems to have been the most popular meal of the day, mainly due perhaps to its informality, different from the breakfasts and dinners which were always taken in the hall with the masters being present.

One would have to be "stony" to partake of this, but if a chap was quite popular he was usually able to cadge tea with friends in other studies until such times as the expected letter arrived from home and funds were plentiful once again. When this happened, supplies of tongue and boiled ham were much in evidence. Normally, however, the most frequently used and mentioned item of food was the humble sardine, which was consumed throughout the junior forms in vast numbers.

Mrs. Hake's school-shop, where supplies of home-made cakes, pastries, beef patties, and other tempting items could be obtained, was always popular.

When Fatty Little arrived (in Old Series 228), food was mentioned more frequently as Fatty's whole life centred on it. He had such a huge bulk to fill that he was always hungry. He spent all his pocket-money on trying to stop the pangs of hunger from creeping on. Everybody was always staggered at his immense appetite, and, even though his father paid extra fees to the school to enable Fatty to have larger meals, he was still hungry afterwards.

In the various barring-out series which occurred after Fatty Little's arrival at St. Frank's, the food department was left in his capable hands. He was a superb organiser and cook, and these were the periods when at last his appetite was satisfied and he could eat all day if he wished.

He and his helpers concocted some excellent meals, while Nipper could carry on organising other important matters. If any food came into short supply, however, it was of course Nipper's responsibility to organise raids to the school store rooms, or to await the arrival of the lorries bringing food consignments from Belton and Barrington. These would have to be intercepted so that the revolt could carry on with the food front securely stocked.

I have always been impressed by the excellent sketches drawn by E.S. Briscoe which appeared in Nipper's Magazine during 1922. These depict places of interest within St. Frank's itself and also the surrounding countryside, including the monastery ruins, the porter's lodge, Big Hall, the ruined mill on Barrington Moor and Nelson Lee's chambers in Gray's Inn Road.

The sketch shown here shows that summer has arrived, for the shop door and windows are open. The homely Mrs. Hake is behind the counter and I suppose she would be feeling quite pleased as she was certain to sell gallons of various types of "pop" and, of course, plenty of ice-cream.

The lone figure outside the shop is obviously Fatty Little. One wonders what is going through his mind? 'Great doughnuts! I'm starving and "stony" too! I can't last until teatime. Shall I approach Mrs. Hake for some beef patties on credit - but what if she refuses? Perhaps I'll be able to raid somebody's study cupboard? Great jumping bloaters, I'm getting weaker every minute.'

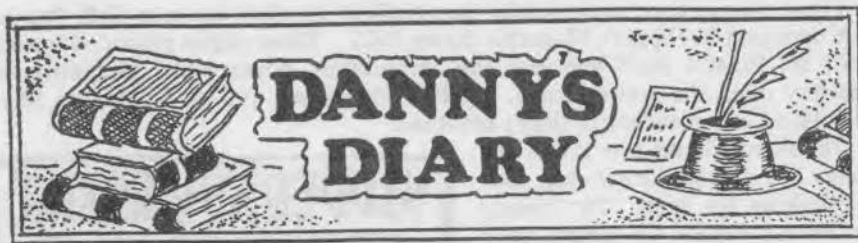
I have already recorded about 350 items of food and drink, mentioned in the Old Series. This steadily-growing list includes many ordinary items such as meat-pies and roasted potatoes, etc. However during the School holidays, particularly in foreign areas, more exotic items are mentioned. On the arrival of the new boy, Solomon Levi, Brooks introduces us to various types of Jewish food. So all in all food played an important part in a schoolboy's life at St. Frank's, especially if he had a plentiful supply of funds. Otherwise life could be a little dull, particularly with the thought of having to partake of tea in hall.



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FEBRUARY 1940

The clocks went on an hour on the 25th of the month. Mustn't grumble in war time, but Summer Time in February is pretty awful. I don't like getting up in the dark and toddling off through the dark freezing mist to school. Still, it's much worse for our fighting forces, so I won't grumble.

A mixed bag in the Fourpenny-halfpenny Libraries. The Greyfriars Schoolboys' Own is "The Schoolboy Forger". Jim Valentine, who was "Dick the Penman" among the criminal fraternity (good word, that!) has come to Greyfriars to turn over a new leaf and start a new life. But the one-time boy crook finds it hard to live down his past.

The second S.O.L. is "Told in the Tuckshop" which is made up of the earliest stories in this series which once appeared in Modern Boy. Goffin is a new boy in the Fifth Form at Greystones, and he tells tall stories which hold his listeners spellbound. They don't have the same effect on me, though. I see that this collection is by John Beresford, which is a bit odd, as the Tuckshop tales which appeared in the closing weeks of the Gem were by George E. Rochester. So evidently more than one writer handled this series.

The St. Frank's S.O.L. is "Rebellion at St. Frank's". When the Headmistress at St. Frank's put the boys under petticoat rule, they enjoyed the joke. But when the Lady-Head starts introducing cranky new rules, Nipper & Co. are compelled to kick so a barring-out breaks out.

None of the stories in the Knock-Out Library or the Bullseye Library (which the lovely old B.F.L. has become) appealed to me so I didn't bother with them. I dallied over one entitled "The Aussie at Highcliff" - but as the name of the school we

## The Schoolboy Forger!

To his schooffellows—Harry Wherton & Co., of the Greyfriars Remove—Jim Valentine is just a new boy. To certain lawless characters outside Greyfriars, however, he is known as Dick the Penman, a forger of considerable skill. How Jim Valentine fares in his new surroundings is told in this super story of Harry Wherton & Co. of Greyfriars.

Two other book-length school yarns you will enjoy:

No. 398  
Told in the  
Tuckshop!

No. 399  
Rebellion at St.  
Frank's!





loved had an "e" on the end plus the fact that the author's name was unknown to me, I saved my 4 1/2d.

I had two good new Sexton Blake Libraries, though. "The Riddle of the Gas-meter" by Gilbert Chester was quite a good thriller, and "The Mystery of Gold-Digger Creek", by G.H. Teed is an interesting yarn which starts off in Burma and moves to Papua. So, some good stuff in the Libraries, but not a tip-top month all round.

Towards the end of the month R.A.F. planes shot down 3 Hun planes near the East Coast.

Some pretty good stuff in the local cinemas, where we spent plenty of happy hours in spite of the war. "Rulers of the Sea" concerned the first voyage across the Atlantic of a steamship. It starred Doug Fairbanks Junr. and Margaret Lockwood. In the same programme was Lucan and Mcshane in "Old Mother Riley Joins Up." A bit crude, these Old Mother Riley films are, but one finds oneself laughing. Mum just loved "Bachelor Mother" with Ginger Rogers and David Niven. About a shopgirl who finds an abandoned baby, and people suspect all sorts of things.

A long and exciting film is "Only Angels Have Wings" starring Cary Grant and Rita Hayworth, about the men who fly cargo planes across the Andes. And a vamp steps in and causes a rumpus. Will Hay was glorious in "Where's That Fire?". Edward G. Robinson was in "Blackmail" where a man comes out of prison after serving a term for a crime he didn't do. Shirley Temple was in "Susannah of the Mounties" about a little girl who is the only survivor of a massacre of the wagon train in which she and her parents were travelling. And Susannah is adopted by the Mounties. I always find Shirley Temple a pain in the neck.

"It's a Wonderful World" was a good thriller comedy, starring Claudette Colbert and James Stewart. A girl is kidnapped by a suspected murderer, and she helps him to track down the real murderer. Jolly good. Finally a tip-top spectacular, "The Rains Came" starring Myrna Loy and Tyrone Power, about a disaster which struck India.

One evening Doug took me to the first house at the Shepherds Bush Empire. In the programme were Renee Houston and Donald Stewart who sang joyfully; Tommy Trinder who made us laugh; and Will Hay in a school sketch entitled "The Last Day of Term". All these artists had been booked to appear in the Royal Variety Performance which was due to be held last November at the Palladium. But owing to the outbreak of war, the government didn't like a big crowd of people gathered in one spot, so King George reluctantly cancelled the affair. I suppose there won't be any more Royal Variety Shows till after the war.

Things keep pretty quiet over here, but in France things are happening - and at sea. A U-Boat sank the liner "Sultan Star" in the Atlantic, and then that sub itself was sunk by a British warship. Good for our Navy. Mr. Churchill has estimated that Germany had lost half her U-Boats by the end of 1939.

And what have I left? The glorious Magnet. The series has gone on all the month about the mysterious Mr. Lamb who gets more sinister every week. And every week the feud between Mr. Lamb and the Bounder seems to get fiercer. The first Magnet of the month is "The Japer of Greyfriars". Vernon-Smith believes that Mr. Lamb is "as crooked as a corkscrew" and is determined to make Lamb sick of the Remove. Next came "The Secret of the Dugout". Harry Wharton & Co. want to know what is hidden behind the green door of the dugout at Sea View. This was

followed by "The Thief in the Night", and Wibley plays a big part in this one. He impersonates Mr. Quelch, and for some reason Mr. Lamb is badly startled.

#### ▲ BLACK-OUT BLUNDER!



Redwing gave his chum a quick look of inquiry. "Sacked?" he almost whispered. "Yes!" muttered Vernon-Smith. "I'm going—in the morning!"

Final of the month is "A Black-Out Blunder!" Someone has laid violent hands on Mr. Lamb in the black-out, and Vernon-Smith is blamed for it and expelled. But John Robinson, the Head's chauffeur (he hasn't much petrol in war-time) takes a hand and saves Smithy's bacon - much to everyone's amazement. But, actually, John Robinson is really Ferrers Locke in disguise. This series goes on next month. It is turning out to be a very long series, though it is enthralling reading, which is the main thing.

### ERIC FAYNE comments on this month's "Danny's Diary"

S.O.L. No. 397 "The Schoolboy Forger" comprised 3 stories (the second section in the S.O.L.) of the 11 story Dick The Penman series from the Magnet at the start of 1933.

With regard to the month's second S.O.L. "Told in the tuckshop" (reprinted from Modern Boy, as Danny indicates) one wonders whether this can have had anything like the same appeal as a Rookwood story would have had. But presumably the S.O.L. had reached the end of anything on Rookwood which would have been suitable for the medium.

"Susannah of the Mounties" was Shirley Temple's last film of any consequence. As a precocious little girl she had stunned nations, but she had none of that appeal when she was tried in one or two parts as an adolescent.

A closing thought. Danny mentions "The Aussie at Highcliff", a story which appeared that month in the Knockout Library. The yarn was credited to T.C. Bridges, but whether it was a new one or a re-print I have no idea. But it seems odd that a writer should have used the name "Highcliff" for his school at that time, and strange that the A.P. should have accepted a name so like that of Hamilton's famous and loved school.

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## ESMOND KADISH

### A Tribute from Maurice Hall

It is with great regret that I have to write on the death of Esmond Kadish, a kind and valued member of the hobby. With the recent death of Norman Kadish we have lost two great members of the band of Hamilton enthusiasts. That they were brothers only makes the matter worse, for Esmond had only just managed to accept Norman's death, when his health, affected by a heart problem, caused him to collapse whilst out shopping. He was uncle to his brother's girls and they and the whole family are conscious that they have lost a much loved character.

Esmond was a great reader of the old papers, taking an interest in both the boys' and girls' issues. He wrote many articles for club magazines. His major interest was the schoolgirl papers, though he was still a great lover of the *Gem* and *Magnet*.

As a teacher, before he retired, Esmond must have had a chance to put some of Hamilton's ideas into practice, and I have no doubt that his pupils benefited from this background love of the stories.

This quiet and gentle man always managed to make me feel at ease when we talked on the hobby. His knowledge and well thought out articles made interesting and stimulating reading to the members of the hobby. Born 7th November 1923, when the companion papers had just gone into coloured covers, Esmond died on the 15th December 1989, a sad loss to all his friends at the time when Christmas was approaching.

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#### Editor's Note:

I shall miss Esmond's regular and perceptive letters about the old books and papers. With very deep appreciation of his contributions to the C.D., I am proud and happy to publish this month the last article which he sent me.

## THOSE LIVELY BOBIN HEROINES!

by Esmond Kadish

An editorial reference to "The Silent Six", which appeared as a footnote to Marion Waters' article on schoolgirl secret societies, in the 1988 C.D. ANNUAL, set me musing on the serials written by John W. Bobin for the girls' papers in the early thirties.

Bobin had not only contributed Sexton Blake tales and written serials for the boys' papers as John Ascott and Victor Nelson, but, as Katherine Greenhalgh, he had created the first girl "investigator", Sylvia Silence, for the SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY in 1922. Using the rather more euphonious pen-name of Adelle Ascott, he introduced a second "problem-solver", Lila Lisle, in 1930, in the SCHOOLGIRL'S OWN. The third, and most celebrated, of his teen-age girl detectives, Valerie Drew, first appeared in the WEEKLY in 1933. However, Bobin also wrote some vivid and fast-moving school and adventure serials, as Adelle Ascott or Gertrude Nelson, for the girls' papers before his death in 1935.

One such school serial was "The Quest of the Silent Six", for the WEEKLY of 1932-33. If "Sylvia Silence" had been a trifle staid and proper in the twenties, Shirley Carew, the leader of the "Silent Six", was every bit a madcap in the thirties, often giving vent to such schoolboy expressions as, "Not on your sweet life, old egg!". Shirley's relationship with her "no. 2", the Dutch girl, Gretchen van Houten, is both robust and forthright: "Be silent, Dutchy, and tread warily - if you can with big feet like yours!". Gretchen, whose fractured English provides the comedy relief, usually retorts with some such remark as, "Vas mein face made for you to play mit, aind't it?" when someone accidentally trips and sits on her features. The "six" were so popular that the girls - Shirley, Gretchen, Inez Lawton, Pam White, and the Downer twins, Dolly and Margaret - later appeared in a second serial, "The Silent Six Under Canvas", and were also featured in at least three, "ten-page, long, complete" tales in the WEEKLY: "Shadowed by the Silent Six" (no. 540), "Rivals to the Silent Six" (no. 549), and "Adventures Afloat with the Silent Six" (no. 561).

"Gertrude Nelson" featured other "cheery and resourceful" heroines in several other school serials in the WEEKLY. Clarissa Kent, a tomboy who is expelled from Ravenswood for an act she is innocent of, becomes a pupil at a neighbouring school, and returns in secret to her former school, disguised as "The Shadow", to prove her innocence. In another 1933 serial, "The Scholarship Co." (Jill, Faith, and Joan) pledge themselves "to stand by each other and, if necessary, to fight the whole school". As well as resisting the school's "Smart Set", the trio endeavour to solve the secret of a mysterious stone gargoyle. (It took me some time before I found out what a "gargoyle" was when I first read this tale in 1933!). A third school story, "The Schoolgirl Headmistress", has the heroine, Stella Mason, playing a dual role, when her headmistress mother falls ill. (Guess what!)

The heroines of "Bess of the Backwoods" (SCHOOLGIRL 181-194), and "Diana's Voyage of Thrills" (195-209), two serials which Bobin wrote in 1933, are equally resourceful. Amongst other feats, Bess O'Dell and her horse, Monarch, leap over a "bottomless chasm" to escape pursuers. Bess also manages to escape her captors after being handcuffed to an upright beam, and also rescues her chum, Hal. Singlehandedly, she stops a runaway train loaded with timber, by springing from her sledge to the engine, as it draws level, and applying the vacuum brake. She also unsuccessfully tries to pinch out the fuse to the dynamite which will ruin Mr. O'Dell's logs and, in the subsequent explosion, is immersed in icy water. In spite of

all this, as well as being lost in a blizzard, she manages to find the time to nurse her father when he is shot by villains. Not to be outdone, Diana Lane, in a South American setting, leaps on to the back of a sparring crocodile in order to cross a river; struggles onto the roof of the speeding carriage of a runaway cattle-train, in an effort to reach the brake; hurtles over a ravine to escape bandidos; climbs over the side of a ship in motion to peer through a porthole.

A lively lot, these heroines of Bobin's!



Di set her teeth, and in a flying leap hurtled over the water—right on to the back of one of the huge crocodiles engaged in merciless combat! Would she ever reach the safety of the opposite bank?

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## CLIFF HOUSE DIARY - February

Edited by BARBARA REDFERN (and MARGERY WOODS)

I'm ashamed to admit that this month's Diary will consist only of my editorial letter. Don't blame me, blame all the enthusiasts in the Fourth who cried: "Oh, yes! Let's start the Cliff House Magazine again."

Clara promised a sports page. Marjorie has a super new needlework book she got at Christmas and wants to review. Bessie invented a new trifle, Jemima has been to an antiques fair, and Mabs saw three new shows in Town over the hols. So where is all this promised editorial material?



Faded away. Half of Cliff House has had the flu' and says it is incapable of thinking, let alone creative writing. Bess made herself sick testing the trifle and is now not quite sure about it, and Clara is furious.

She says she's got so many lines off the Bull it will take to half term to get them all done. She says new girl Julia is a troublemaker, and landed her right in the mire with the Bull, and then refused to own up. I'm afraid Julia has not made a good start. Hilary has settled in quite well, is amiable to most of the girls but hasn't struck up a friendship with any one in particular. Diana and Julia did not hit it off and we can see ructions approaching between those two. You know our Firebrand! Her good resolutions are wearing off already.

So that's all, chums. Better luck next month if I can roust all these lazy slackers into picking up their pens...

Your chums, Babs.

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## "THE GREYFRIARS TREASURE SEEKERS" (Part Two)

Chronicled by Leslie Rowley

Back in Study No. 12, the eight juniors happily dismissed Bunter from their minds, except for a mental resolution to 'counsel' him as to the error his ways, though it was doubtful, extremely doubtful, whether the 'counselling' would conform to the same interpretation as that of Mr. Quelch!

The spread had been a good one. Sosses, done to a golden brown by Tom Redwing had joined eggs from a frying pan held by Frank Nugent. Sandwiches and cakes had followed in profusion, washed down with countless cups of tea. It had been a good spread but, like all good things, had come to an end. Now was the time to discuss their strategy and tactics for what they excitedly contemplated as a treasure hunt. After prep they would write to their parents and guardians for the permission required, but there was no harm in planning ahead. The copies of the document that Quelch had handed to them were examined and discussed.

"Earlier on, Mauly was wondering what happened to jolly old Septimus Clarke. It would be interesting to know whether his people had him committed or whether they got another school to take him---"

"If he went round telling everyone that he saw a ghost he might well have ended up at the eighteenth century equivalent of Colney Hatch", observed the Bounder. "I'm all for scouting through the vaults. There may well be another place similar to the one in which that rotter Kranz held Cherry, Reddy and me. This time we can take inspection lamps and a decent cable running from the mains. Look at this rough plan on the back of old Catterhall's notes. It might be drawn to some kind of scale---"

"Smithy's the chap for the strenuous life", observed Lord Mauleverer who was elegantly disposed on the chaise longue, "but if someone will hand me that "Directory of the Nobility" from the bookcase, it will be the first jolly step to finding out if there are any descendents of dear old Septimus!". Whilst the others were busy discussing an exploration of the vaults beneath the School, Mauleverer was making notes from the weighty tome on his lap. He had not finished, nor had they, when the time for call-over came and, together, they all left the study.

The following Saturday there was no football fixture, and the weather was so putrid that practice was called off and the fellows were left to their own devices.

The other seven looked for Mauleverer, but found him not. It transpired that he had been collected in a car and carried away to some unknown destination.

"Fat lot of use, that lackadaisical slacker is", growled the impatient Bounder. "I vote that we get going with our examination of the vaults." He pointed to a heavy canvas bag that he had brought with him. "That contains a reel of extension cable, together with adaptors and bulbs. But it would be as well to take flashlamps too. You fellows game?" The others nodded assent, and Wharton went to get the key to the vaults from Mr. Quelch.

Some miles away, Lord Mauleverer was poring over the family archives of a family named Clarke - amongst the ancestors of whom there had been a former Greyfriars boy named Septimus! The other seven did not know about that whilst they were treading the cold dank flags of the vaults. They would know about it later. They also did not know that, nearer at hand, in the Anchor Inn at Pegg, James Soames threw down a magazine he had been reading with interest. It was called "The Collectors' Digest Annual" and Soames had been a subscriber, under another name, for several years. There was an article in that magazine entitled "Christmas Interlude" and it dealt with a legendary treasure hidden in the precincts of an unnamed public school. But its anonymity did not fool the valet and sea-lawyer of old. James Soames knew very well the name and location of that school. The son of a former employer of his attended the school. And, as he thought of Herbert Vernon-Smith, a smile came to the lips of James Soames. But it was not a nice smile, and the thoughts that passed through his mind were not nice either!

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"So dear old Septimus received the rest of his education under the guidance of tutors, and escaped being sent to an asylum although, later, he was to enter Parliament which was much the same thing!" Maully was putting the rest in the picture with regard to his scrutiny of the Clarke family archives. "Of course, there was quite a to-do when he was sent home from Greyfriars, and there is ample reference to the matter in the family papers. Sir Augustus Clarke, Septimus's pater, made his son write down a full account, with a view to going to law over the matter. The legal johnnies advised against it however. Said that it could bring discredit to the jolly old family name. I can understand that, you fellows. Remember my cousin Brian? A blot on the family escutcheon if ever there was. All the best families have them, of course---"

"Will you get on with it?" demanded the Bounder. "At this rate it will be dorm before we get any sense out of that slack ass!"

"Sorry, you fellows", apologised his lordship. "If you prefer the enlightening conversation of Smithy, here, I'll dry up! A fellow could do with a rest after spending the day reading endless yards of dismal handwriting."

"Shut up Smithy, and give Maully a chance", declared Wharton. "And Maully, please get to the point before we die of old age!"

"Well, to cut a long story short, Septimus encountered the ghost of Anselm, not in the vaults or secret passages you chappies have started to explore, but in the ruins of the old priory. From what he says, the old priory was in a better state than it is today and Septimus, who appears to have been a bit of a loner, used to visit the spot to get away from his schoolfellows. He refers to a "lower chamber", where he could shut himself off from the outside world. He would bring his school books with him

in order to swot, probably Latin, Greek, and all that tosh. The kind of pupil that Quelch would welcome in the Remove, I would think. Perhaps he swotted too much, went round the bend and imagined Anselm dropping in on him. Yet, his account reads lucidly enough to me. His description of parts of the School ring true, especially Chapel, which was much like it is today. He also mentions the stained glass window that was hidden during Henry's time and which was later to be incorporated in the chapel that was built in the time of Good Queen Bess. Septimus says that the picture in the window was identical to the likeness he saw in the Priory's lower chamber!"

"Is that all?" enquired the Bounder. "Seems we are just as likely to find the crock of gold at the end of the rainbow as to find Anselm's treasure - if any!"

"There's something in what Smithy says", admitted Wharton. None of us wants to embark on a wild goose chase. There are footer fixtures and footer practice to be thought of, especially for those of us who play. But, if Mauly has something further to add, let him cough it up!"

"I don't know if it is relevant", Mauleverer replied, "but the stained glass likeness of Anselm formed the single window in the Priory's "lower chamber" where Septimus used to spend his half hols. Apparently there were other "sightings" of Anselm since they are mentioned in the papers Sir Augustus Clarke got together in support of son Septimus, should the matter go to law. There is the question of the rough plan that appears on the back of Dr. Catterhall's notes. Well, I found the original amongst the family archives. Drawn in Septimus's own hand, it is listed in the archives as a freehand floor plan of the same "lower chamber". Now what made Septimus, a serious scholar, make such a sketch? Why should the family take the trouble that it did, in support of a son who seemed qualified for entry into an asylum? Probably because they considered Septimus less off his rocker than the then Board of School Governors! You fellows pursue the jolly old flying ball, if you wish. I think I'll exercise the grey matter in finding out the answers to those questions."

"I think we should help Mauly find the answers to his giddy questions", decided the captain of the Remove. "So long as we don't neglect the footer, especially in view of the fixture with St. Jim's in two weeks' time. Left on his own, he will probably go to sleep any way. Are we all agreed that we should take a squint at the priory ruins? And does that include you, Smithy?" Wharton enquired when six hands had risen in assent. There was a pause before the Bounder answered, but the sportsman in him came to the fore. If anyone was to let the side down, it couldn't be him. There was, however, still a reluctance in the way he raised his hand, but he raised it nevertheless.

"Then I'll see Quelch tomorrow, and let him know what Mauly discovered from the Clarke family archives, and tell him that we intend visiting the Priory ruins on Wednesday afternoon."

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Billy Bunter wanted to know! That state of affairs was nothing at all new! Bunter always wanted to know, especially about about matters that did not concern him. This curiosity explained his addiction to keyholes. It had proved a painful addiction! How many kicks Bunter had endured because of the habit, could not be computed without going into very high figures indeed! Only that morning he had



lent a fat ear to the keyhole of No. 1 study, when the door had suddenly opened and he had been dragged inside. Only the other day, Mr. Quelch had requested Harry Wharton & Co. to "counsel" Bunter on this error in his ways and their "counselling" had been very emphatic. When he was finally ejected, Bunter had felt that life was not really worth living! Temporarily, Bunter had abandoned the eavesdropping system for that of keeping observation. Bunter was still assured that something was up - in which assurance he was right. He was equally assured that that something would include a spread - in which assurance he was to be proved hopelessly wrong!

That afternoon he watched the party move off to the gates. It was just like the beasts, Bunter considered, to go for a walk when they could have got their jiggers out and gone over to Cliff House for a study feed with the girls. Still, they might only be going as far as Friardale, and Bunter was prepared to exert himself to cover that small distance if there was to be tea at Uncle Clegg's, and so he decided to follow on and to keep under cover until the bunshop was reached. To join up earlier would probably end in the pleasure of Bunter's company being declined.

The party did not strike out along the Friardale Lane as Bunter had hoped. Instead, they crossed a roadside stile and headed for the woods, happily unaware of the ferocious glare that Bunter directed at their distant backs. That distance gradually increased as the Fat Owl's faltering footsteps faltered still more.

The Priory ruins stood in a clearing, the starkness of its tortured and broken masonry reaching toward the grey of a wintry sky. In summer months it had a beauty and an attraction of its own. It could prove an ideal setting for a picnic under a blue and sunny sky. Now it looked more than a trifle foreboding, but the party of schoolboys was a lively one and their laughter reached out to dispel what gloom others may have felt.

"Well, here we are, you fellows", Harry Wharton laid down the holdall that he had been carrying. "We've got a couple of hours before daylight goes, but that needn't matter too much as we've all brought flash lamps with us and there are a couple of flasks of tea and some doughnuts for refreshment at half time. Not enough to have satisfied Bunter, of course, I thought that I caught sight of him further back, but he must have carried on down Friardale Lane."

"That, I suppose was the "lower chamber" that Septimus mentioned." Lord Mauleverer pointed to a broken archway through which stone steps, stained and smooth with the passage of time, led to deeper shadows below. The Bounder was the first to descend, as the others followed him into a small chamber, the bottom of which was some four feet below the level of the ground. Above that level traces of the higher limits of the chamber still remained among the broken flint and stone of long ago. This rubble was relieved by the broken framework of what would have held a single window through which the sun could have cast its welcome beams upon any friar of 'orders grey' that sought the chamber's shelter ages ago.

"Cheerless kind of place", observed the Bounder, stamping his feet on the damp flags beneath. "Floor sounds solid enough, though some of us know just how solid they built in those days." He stamped his feet again and the others followed suit. The noise of their stamping sounded like a sombre tattoo amidst the darker shadows. Redwing and Nugent had taken tape measures from their pockets and were busy measuring the sides of the chamber, noting down the various dimensions, so that a plan could be drawn for comparison with that which Quelch had given them.

"Mind if I borrow one of those tapes?" Maully held a hand out and languidly took the retracting steel measure from Nugent. Standing on a piece of fallen

masonry he was just able to measure the broken stone skeleton that had held the window. Once again, the Bounder gave vent to an expression of impatience. "Is that silly ass thinking of getting a glazier in from Courtfield to effect repairs?" he demanded of the others, as the schoolboy earl noted the measurements on a piece of paper. It was true that he was only voicing the curiosity of the others, but they managed to control any sign of impatience themselves. Perhaps they were remembering previous occasions when Mauly had appeared to be doing something pointless when events had proved otherwise.

"Oh, let's give Mauly his head", Wharton remarked pacifyingly. "He's got some jolly old bee in his bonnet. Anything we can do to help, old chap?"

"Yaas! If some of you could take the dimensions of each and every flagstone it would save any further effort on my part. As you will see, the flags are of difference sizes, and that may be important."

His lordship leaned tiredly against the chamber wall as the others bent to do his bidding. After a very emphatic grunt, even the Bounder joined his pal Redwing, writing down the location of each stone together with its measurements as Tom read them out. They had barely finished, which was just as well, for the shadows outside the ruins were lengthening and the light within was fading into a deeper grey. It was time to be leaving the chamber that had so temporarily embraced them in the atmosphere of the past, and to emerge into descending dusk of the twentieth century. Their thoughts were now focussed more on cosy teas in their studies than they were on buried treasure, but those thoughts were suddenly broken by a cry in a voice they knew only too well.

"Help! Murder! Yaroo! He's got me! Rescue!"

*(To be Continued)*

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## " DENISE 'S DIARY "

**FEBRUARY 1940**

by Dennis L. Bird

"The Navy's here!" To a nine-year-old schoolboy, that was a thrilling cry - reported in the Press - which inscribed February 1940 indelibly on my memory. HMS "Cossack" (Captain Philip Vian in command) entered a neutral Norwegian fjord, boarded the German supply ship "Altmark", and released 300 British survivors of the ships sunk by the battleship "Graf Spee".

Nothing so exciting happened in the four SGOL books which came out on February 1 at the slightly increased price of 4 1/2d, but they were a vintage crop nonetheless. Three of them were sequels to previous stories; the other was a dramatic Hilda Richards saga, "She Meant to Rule Cliff House" (No. 717). "She" was a "tallish, slimly-built girl" of 16, Gail Greeves Gregory. Her father ran a plantation in India, where "she had ruled a thousand natives as despotically as any ancient queen... She did not mind being hated, but she did mind being a nobody!" A place in the Fourth Form at Cliff House was not at all to her liking. Her disdainful attitude rapidly alienated the Redfern chums, but she did not stay long in their class. Gail had influence, for her uncle was Sir Willis Gregory, chairman of the school's Board of Governors. Furthermore, Sir Willis was financially dependent on her

# THE YELLOW MASKS OF ST. FREDA'S

by Enid Earle

AN ENTHRALLING NEW SCHOOL AND MYSTERY STORY, SPECIALLY WRITTEN FOR THIS ISSUE OF THE LIBRARY

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THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY No 716

# SHE MEANT TO RULE CLIFF HOUSE

by Hilda Richards

A Magnificent Book-Length Story of the Early Adventures of BARBARA REDFERN and Co.

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THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY No 717

# QUEEN OF THE SECRET CITY

BY ANNE LAUGHTON

4 1/2

An Enthralling Adventure Story of a Lost World.

1.2.40

The Schoolgirls' Own Library No 718

# HER MYSTERY FOE IN SCREENLAND!

by Sylvia Marston

An Enthralling School and Film Story Featuring DENISE THE DANCER

4 1/2

1.2.40

The SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY No 719

father. So Gail secures rapid promotion to the Sixth; next she has herself made a prefect, and finally captain of the school - displacing the popular Stella Stone. She tries to have Barbara Redfern expelled, and she canes the fiery Rosa Rodworth.

The school is in chaos. Miss Primrose is away, ill; Miss Bullivant, the acting head, resigns over the Redfern crisis, and later Miss Charmant goes too. Backed by the pliant Sir Willis, Gail goes from tyranny to dictatorship - sealing up dormitories, closing the dining-room (to Bessie Bunter's particular distress). Far-fetched perhaps, but the narrative sweeps the reader along, wondering "whatever next?".

The punishment of Rosa leads to Gail's downfall; the Stormy Petrel, in revenge, sends out counterfeit letters summoning a meeting of the school governors. Appalled at what they find, the governors force Sir Willis to resign, appoint Miss Charmant temporary headmistress, and strip Gail of all her authority. And Gail? Does she return to India in a fury, as expected? "Well, I'm not! I'm beaten, but I'm not down. I won't give those kids the last laugh... I'm stopping on. I'm going to face it out. I'll show this school, anyway, that I've got the pluck to face up to misfortune." It is this angry courage, throughout the story, which makes Gail not wholly dislikeable.

No. 716, "The Yellow Masks of St. Freda's", specially written for the Library by Enid Earle, is a sequel to Ruth Maxwell's "Her Shadowed Schooldays". As Ray Hopkins pointed out in the November 1989 "C.D.", these are not by different authors as I thought, but both by a Mr. J.G. Jones who cloaked his identity under a variety of pen-names. The "Yellow Masks" (they were white in No. 698) are a secret society at school led by cousins Myrtle and Sonia Tarrant, trying to protect a self-willed heiress from kidnappers. It is not a very convincing tale.

Anne Laughton's "Queen of the Secret City" (No. 718) features Binnie Bowden, heroine of No. 697, "Mystery at Meads". That was a pleasantly light-hearted, very English story of a girl running a riding-school; this is an exotic variant on the Shangri-La theme. Binnie's mother and stepfather, on a holiday flight in South America, crash and are captured and held in the mountain citadel of an ancient civilisation, ruled over by the imperious Queen Eleta. Binnie and her friends set off to the rescue, and of course they eventually succeed. But they undergo some hair-raising adventures on the way - not least when they are about to be offered up as human sacrifices. But fortunately the mariner, Peter Cairne, had persuaded their captors to hold this on a day when he knows (no doubt from a pocket diary!) that there is to be a total eclipse of the sun. There is a gripping account of the eerie midday darkness which terrifies the superstitious people of the Secret City, and enables the intrepid Britons to bargain for their release.

Last of the February books was No. 719, "Her Mystery Foe in Screenland", by Sylvia Marston. When we last met the charming dancer Denise Laxton (in No. 687, "The Shadow of a Stranger") she had just become engaged and had signed a film contract. We now follow her later career, where a jealous secretary (no "mystery foe" - Denise knows well enough who she is) tries to break up the romance. All ends as it should, with the secretary shown up in all her mean malevolence and Denise marrying her dear Ray Faulkner. This is a gentle, appealing story on a more adult theme than most of the adventurous SGOL books.

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I have recently read again the Lamb Series in the Magnet and enjoyed it immensely.

This series which ran to sixteen issues (Nos. 1660-1675) was the longest school (as distinct from holiday) series in that paper and this length has been often criticised. However, in my opinion it is a superb story which is set in the first Winter and Spring of the 1939/45 War, and recaptures the atmosphere of that time. There are many references to the blackout, petrol rationing, air-raid warnings and minesweeping.

It is essentially a Vernon-Smith story, and any series with the Greyfriars Boulder playing such a major role is always absorbing reading for me. His long and bitter feud with Mr. Lamb, the new Art Master, dominates much of the story and contributes to its success. There is also the part played by Ferrers Locke in tracking down the mysterious cracksman known as "Slim Jim", and the disappearance of Mr. Quelch.

I savour that very nostalgic last Magnet Christmas spent at Wharton Lodge which is featured in the first part of this mammoth series. I have always been undecided as to my favourite Hamilton Christmas but not any longer. Good as the Cavandale and Polpelly series were, I now think that this Christmas with its war-time background eclipses both of these excellent stories.

This was a marvellous series and it is a sober thought to realise that it is fifty years since it appeared in those salmon coloured Magnets.

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## BOOKS

**POPEYE: THE 60th ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION.**  
Edited by Mike Higgs. (Published by Hawk Books at £14.95.) (Reviewed by Mary Cadogan.)



Many of us who grew up in the 1930s probably best remember Popeye from his many cartoon film exploits, although whenever we could get hold of newspapers or comics which featured this caustic, beefy and rib-tickling hero we read them with relish. This bumper celebratory book is a 'must' for Popeye's fans. Many of its 128 very large pages are in full colour, and, as well as providing a wide range of the comic strips, it gives intriguing historical information about the eccentric sailor-man's creation and background (in an introduction by Bill Blackbeard), and about his appearances on the screen, from Max and Dave Fleischer's cartoons of the 1930s to video adaptations in the 1980s (when, apparently, Popeye has at last been forced to marry his long term, long-limbed and twittering lady-love, Olive Oyl). The colourful supporting cast, from

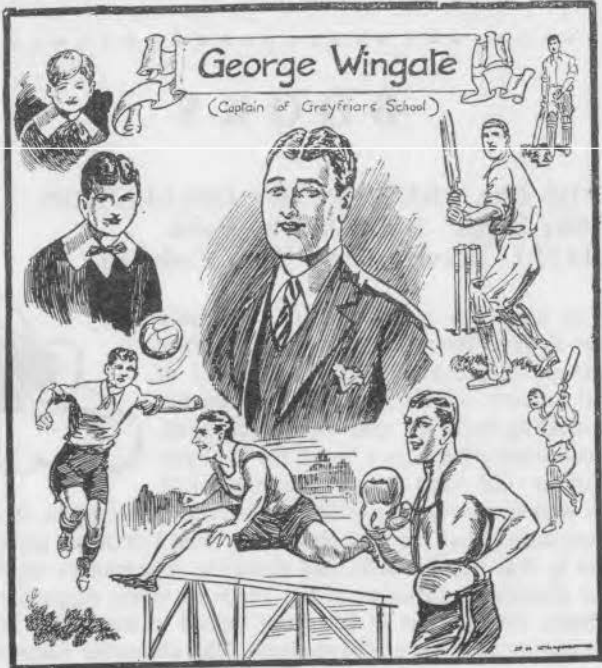
baby Swee'Pea and Wimpy to Toar and the Sea Hag, are well represented. I was particularly interested to learn something about the 'frail comic strip artist from Illinois named Elzie Crisler Segar' who originated Popeye in 1929.

**THE MONSTER SOCIETY OF EVIL. DELUXE LIMITED COLLECTORS EDITION. Published by Hawk Books at £75 including post and packing. (Reviewed by Norman Wright.)**

For those who like super-heroes Hawk Books, under their American Nostalgia Library imprint have published a special limited edition featuring Captain Marvel - The World's Mightiest Mortal - in "The Monster Society of Evil", an exciting twenty five chapter story that appeared in "Captain Marvel Adventures" numbers 22 to 46, originally published between 1943 and 1945. The book is an absolutely superb production, printed on glossy art paper in full colour and with a handsome slipcase. Original copies of "Captain Marvel Adventures" are almost impossible to find, and when they do turn up they are usually very expensive and invariably falling to pieces. This edition is limited to 3000 numbered copies and can only be purchased direct from Hawk Books, Suite 309, Canalot Studios, 222 Kensal Road, London, W10 5BN. The price is £75 including post and packing.

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# The Idol of the School!

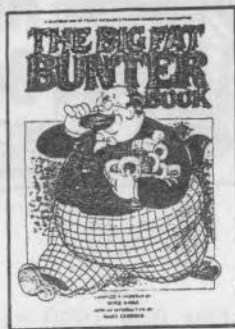




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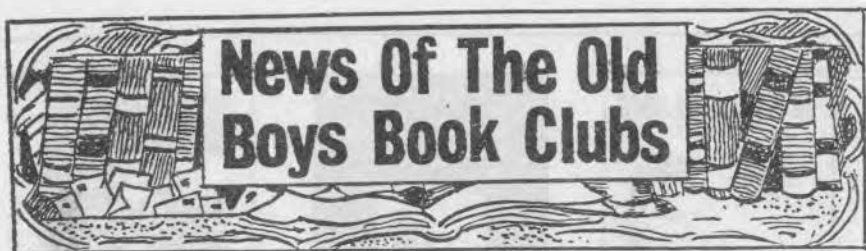
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### CAMBRIDGE CLUB

Our first 1990 gathering was held at the Cherry Hinton home of Adrian Perkins.

The meeting got underway with several quiz items: Paul Wilkins with a painstakingly-put-together videotaped film quiz (naming for 34 films excerpts their title, actors and actresses), and Adrian providing a modern music ('50s to the '70s) trivia quiz.

Keith Hodgkinson then presented a continuation of his series on Science Fiction in the Movies ('50s to the '70s) considering some themes commonly used in the genre.

ADRIAN PERKINS

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

This reports covers the meetings for November and December 1989, and January 1990 and is the last to bear my name, as I have now handed over my secretarial duties to Graham Bruton, my successor.

In November, we met at Walthamstow, on the first Sunday of the month as an experiment (to allow Remembrance Sunday to be kept free). Duncan Harper acted as secretary in the absence of your scribe. December saw the usual packed gathering at the Ealing home of Bill Bradford, to enjoy a festive programme and a sumptuous feast. The first meeting of 1990 was our A.G.M. and Brian Doyle was elected as Chairman, Graham Bruton as Secretary, with the librarians being re-elected 'en bloc' and Norman Wright remaining in charge of matters financial. Mary Cadogan spoke on Richmal Crompton: Phil Griffiths gave a very amusing *William* reading: Bill Bradford gave a presentation on the eminently collectable THRILLER, and it was noted that it was exactly 20 years since our C.D. Editor joined the O.B.B.C. Tempus Fugit!

MARK JARVIS



## NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

Our Lady Chairman Joan Colman, welcomed the 16 present at our January meeting. Thanks were extended to David Bradley who had been our Chairman for 2 years. One member commented that it was appropriate, in the year of the Ruby Anniversary of the founding of our Club, that we should have for the very first time a lady in the Chair.

Proposals for the exhibition at Leeds Central Library and two suburban libraries were discussed. It was proposed that, if possible, the exhibition should be "officially opened" at our Ruby Anniversary Lunch to be held in May.

Darrell gave a tribute to Miss Edith Hood, the faithful housekeeper for so many years to Frank Richards, who had lived at "Rose Lawn" until poor health had forced her to enter a residents' home in 1979. Darrell first met her in 1977 and he made a total of four extremely pleasurable visits to "Rose Lawn". Miss Hood had played a very strong part (even though she would not have realised it at the time) in the encouragement and furtherance of Frank Richards' writings, and we owed her a great debt for the way in which she looked after "the master" and, at times, listened to stories he had written, prior to their being sent off to a publisher.

Geoffrey read a hilarious piece from THE COURTFIELD CRACKSMAN with poor old Bunter, thinking he could persuade Harry Wharton to send a car for him to be taken to Wharton Lodge, only to find that the chauffeur had dumped him at Bunter Villa! Frank Richards at his best, complemented by Geoffrey's superb rendition.

JOHN BULL MINOR

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**HAMILTONIA ALL TYPES:** WANTED especially Holiday Annuals all years, Howard Baker Press and Club volumes, Dustwrapped Biggles, Bunters, Williams, Enid Blyton, Malcolm Saville, Jennings. Generous prices paid. Contact: COLIN CREW, 12b Westwood Road, Canvey Island, Essex. Tel. 0268 693735, Evenings 7.15 - 9.30 p.m.

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### Your Editor says—



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



**FROM AN ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTOR!** - I am most grateful to Irene Radford for acting as intermediary between Master Coker and myself (C.D. Dec. '89). In view of the - not unexpected - belligerent nature of Master Coker's letter, long may she stand between us!! However, I am taking no chances. I am asking our Editor not to print my full address and am, temporarily, changing my name to Semaj Egdoh.

**"J.E.M", Brighton:** Anent Mr. Wright's letter on the old papers' illustrators: I have Eric Parker's original illustrations for the covers of the following S.B.L.s: *The Secret of the Demolition Worker* by John Hunter (3rd Series, No. 31), *The Army Defaulter's Secret* by L.C. Douthwaite (3rd Series, No. 41) and *The Riddle of the Italian Prisoner* by John Hunter (3rd Series, No. 68). I am also fortunate in having actual copies of the S.B.L.s concerned and I still marvel at the brilliant quality of reproduction achieved by the old 3-colour half-tone process.

**W.O.G. LOFTS, London:** In answer to Gordon Hudson's query in Dec. C.D. There certainly are lists of Gerald Swan Publications around, we have a file in Lofts/Adley collections, though no index or catalogue has been printed as yet. Whilst there is an interest in the hobby I don't think sufficient numbers would make such work viable. The Schoolboys Pocket Library ran from 1941 to 1950, there being only 26 issues in nine years. Surprisingly enough its companion Schoolgirls Pocket Library in the same period had 36 issues suggesting that it was more popular than the boys. Whilst the identities of many nom-de-plumes on stories have been elucidated through the years, some are still elusive. The publisher Gerald Swan has always had great nostalgia to me, as I used to exchange my comics and boys papers at his bookstall when a boy. I met him again in the sixties and wrote up about his career in the Collectors Digest.

**RAY HOPKINS, Oadby:** I was interested in Mr. Bird's ("Denise's") mention of Clive Bancroft (this sounds like a film-star name, but I'm probably thinking of Clive Brook and George Bancroft, and perhaps that's where this nom-de-plume was manufactured, if not the author's real name (we shall never know for sure, now) but No. 708 was not his first appearance in the SGOL. He was also the author of No. 675, entitled "Girl Riders of Ghost Gulch" which can only be a Western. These two stories were both reprinted from SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY serials of 1937. Two other authors using male names are also buried in SW files but only as writers of complete stories. Owen Meredith in SW 798 wrote a boys' school story - surely a unique appearance in the girls' story papers - called "Debenham's Dare", and

Wallace Carr appears twice in SW 766 and 768. I can find no mention of Owen Meredith in any references I have, but my Lofts/Adley mentions Wallace Carr as having written for the B.O.P. Oh, isn't this an interesting hobby! Thank goodness for our hobby detectives!  
(Editor's Note: Wallace Carr also wrote for the Girls' Own Paper during the 1930s.)

**LARRY MORLEY, Hanwell:** Quite recently I picked up a mint copy with dust wrapper of MEET THE TIGER, the first Saint novel. It was published or reprinted in 1952 in a series called MASTER NOVEL SERIES (Ward Lock). The blurb on the back says that the Master Series consists of carefully selected and proved favourite works that are well worth reading and re-reading; authors such as Edgar Wallace, Rider Haggard, Conan Doyle, etc., and it also included works by authors of the present day, Leslie Charteris and Winston Graham. The book is an exact facsimile of the first edition with a picture of The Saint and Patricia Holm shaking hands with someone whom I presume is the "Tiger"; it carries also a small circle with the legend 'THE FIRST SAINT NOVEL'. I wonder if any reader can throw any light on this series for me?

**MARK TAHA, London:** I completely disagree with E. Baldock's opinion of Peter Todd, expressed in the September 1989 issue of C.D. Frankly I regarded his treatment of Bunter as that of an overbearing and unpleasant bully. I refer to occasions when he forced Bunter to join in runs and paper-chases by kicking or otherwise assaulting him on the grounds that "we don't slack in Study No. 7". Who did Master Toad (not a mis-spelling) think he was? If he chose to join in a cross country run, that was his business, but if Bunter chose to 'slack', that was his business. I would also like to mention the occasion when Todd snatched a comic from Bunter to tear up for use in a paper chase, 'playfully' holding it out of his reach. As an ex-victim of that kind of humour, I don't find bullying funny; I remember feeling a powerful desire to knock Toddy's oversized nose through the back of his head.

**DON WEBSTER, Richmond-upon-Thames:** Being an ardent reader of The Gem, and having read almost every issue, I am puzzled by one thing. From time to time the Magnet has given a list of Remove Studies and occupants, but I cannot recollect a list of Fourth or Shell form Studies and occupants at St. Jim's. We do know, however, that Tom Merry, Manners and Lowther are in Study No. 10 in Shell, and that Talbot, Gore and Skimpole share No. 9. What Studies do Grundy & Co., Noble & Co., or Racke and Crooke occupy? In the Fourth Form we know the four chums in Study No. 6, and that Cardew, Clive and Levison share Study No. 9, but what about chaps like Reilly, Trimble, Kerruish, Hammond and Julian? Another intriguing question! Are there any shell boys in the New House (Clampe may be the only one mentioned)?

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## NEXT WEEK ASK FOR "TRIUMPH"

by Norman Wright

"... How do pals. I hope old readers of the "Triumph" will forgive me if I address my first few words this week to the many thousands of readers joining us from the "Gem"..."

Thus the editor of "Triumph" began his chat in issue number 793. The previous week, as Danny regretfully recorded in his December diary jotting, had brought sad news for those who loved the "Gem". From the 6th of January 1940 the paper was to be merged with "Triumph", after a run of 1711 issues. Reading habits were changing and, like it or not, school stories no longer held the premier position that they had enjoyed during the 1920s and early 1930s. "Gem" had thrived throughout the 1930 on borrowed time, re-living its past glories in four hundred reprinted stories. When the shortage of wood pulp began to bite something had to go and "Gem" was one of the casualties.

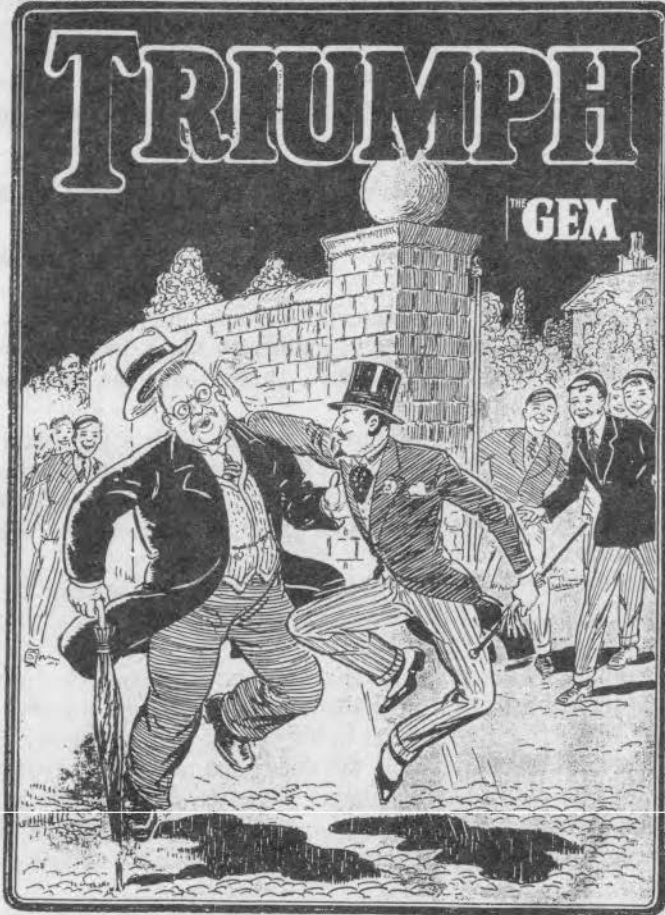
I wonder how many readers did buy "Triumph" next week? Danny probably kept his tuppence, put it towards another four-penny library, but other readers may have tried out the orange and blue covered weekly; let's have a look and see what they got for their money on 6th of January 1940. The opening story, headed "Thrilling and amusing-up-to-date School yarn" was far from that. Under the general heading "It's St. Jim's Again" was an 8000 word offering entitled "The Rival Schoolmasters" featuring Herr Scheider and Monsieur Morny. The story had a very dated feel about it, and I would guess that it was a very much abridged tale that had originally been published in the "Gem" during the 1914-18 war. The "Triumph" reprint added the odd reference to Nazis to make it appear 'up to date'. I could find no reference in the first volume of the "Charles Hamilton Companion" to a story with a similar plot being printed in the "Gem" during the First World War, so I assume it must have been a substitute story. It was a poor little affair, hardly up to the standard that "Gem" readers had come to expect of Martin Clifford. The title illustration and one spot illustration were by Macdonald. The paper's cover, drawn by Jock McCail, the prolific Swan artist, also depicted an incident from the story.

"Gem" readers were invited to write in and correspond with a "Triumph" reader. "...I want the "Gem" readers to feel they are joining a great party of friends, and perhaps this correspondence idea will help us to bind ourselves into a closer bond of friendship..." rambled on the editor.

Once the St. Jim's tale was read what else did the "Triumph" have to offer? The longest story was "Mad Carew's Dawn Patrol", an R.F.C. adventure written by Rupert Hall, pen name of Edward. R. Home-Gall. It was quite an exciting tale though the outcome was very predictable. It featured Dick Miller, a youthful fighter pilot who was ordered home when it was discovered that he was only fifteen years old. The lad proved his worth and produced a borrowed birth certificate from a namesake that made him appear to be nineteen years old. His C.O., 'Mad Carew' was persuaded to let him remain with the squadron.

# TRIUMPH

THE GEM



NO. 774. THE 31

EVERY TUESDAY 31.

With Entine January 31st, 1996

The paper also contained a long picture strip instalment of "Derickson Dene", an inventor marooned on an unknown planet. It was not a particularly well drawn strip but did serve to add variety to the paper. Crime stories were popular, and "Triumph" carried two. "Murder on the Newstand" was a short tale of gang warfare featuring Dick Danvers, a plucky young orphaned newspaper boy. Reading that first story one could not help feeling that by the end of the series Dick would turn out to be somebody's long lost son.

Another popular subject was football and "The Football Cracksman" managed to incorporate both sport and crime genres. Why was handsome Steve Bradshaw, the brilliant centre forward of Milton Rovers, a secret cracksman? I have no doubt that the answer would have been revealed if I had persevered

with "Triumph" for a few more months. As it was, "Triumph" did not last long after it incorporated the "Gem", and even "Superman", who appeared in two longish black and white strip reprints, was unable to save the paper from being swallowed up by "Champion" on 1st of June 1940. In turn "Champion" was devoured by "Tiger" in March 1955. Taking things to their logical conclusion I suppose all "Gem" readers should now be out buying their weekly "Tiger" comic!

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## THE SIGN OF THE FUTURE

by Ernest Holman

As the last decade of the nineteenth century got under way, Sherlock Holmes made his second appearance. Lippincott's Magazine in February 1890 introduced readers to 'The Sign of Four'. (Later that year, Blackett brought the story out in hardback.)

This particular Holmes' adventure is, to me, quite a significant one - it established the Holmes Technique which had already been touched upon in 'A Study In Scarlet'. From 'Four' onwards, starting with the forthcoming Strand chronicles, 221b Baker Street and its two principal occupants became fixed in the mind for all time.

In Chapter One, Holmes is taking his seven percent solution of cocaine - Watson sees fit to protest. All his arguments, even the medical ones, merely prompt from his companion the remark that his mind rebelled at stagnation. His practice, he states, has recently extended to the Continent; he shows Watson a letter of appreciation from a prominent French official detective. Watson thinks that the writer is that of a pupil to his master; Holmes lightly replies that his services had been rated too highly but does point out that his own Works are being translated into the French language. Here the good Doctor learns of the depth to which Holmes has penetrated in criminal knowledge and procedure. The detective agrees with Watson that the genius he has for minutiae is of great importance.

He gives an immediate example of this by describing the Doctor's recent activities. Observation tells Holmes that a visit was made to a nearby Post Office, which leads to a deduction that Watson had despatched a telegram. When reasons are given, Watson - not completely convinced by them - asks permission to apply a test. He then hands over a watch that has recently come into his possession, feeling that Holmes' rather dogmatic attitude might not be justified when asked to 'deduce' from the object.

Holmes remarks that there is hardly any data, pointing out that the watch had been lately cleaned. He does throw out the view, however, that Watson has inherited it from his elder brother, who in his turn had received it from their father. Watson, so far, has little to say - but springs rapidly and indignantly to his feet when he is told that the elder brother had untidy habits, was a man who threw away his chances and died, after taking to drink. From this watch, Holmes added, nothing further can be gathered!

Watson (very illogically) accuses Holmes of having made previous enquiries about his brother. It wasn't possible, pointed out an embittered Doctor, for anyone to deduce all that had been said from the watch. Holmes immediately apologises that he had regarded the matter as rather abstract, forgetting that it was very personal to his companion. At some length, Holmes justifies his own deductions and it is then Watson's turn to offer apologies. In order to get back on a more normal relationship, Watson asks what Holmes may have on hand just at present. He is informed that there is nothing new, hence the need for the cocaine.

No more appropriate time, then, for a knock to sound upon the door. The Landlady, bearing a card upon a salver, informs the detective that there is "a young lady for you, sir." The lady's name, then unknown to either of them, was Mary Morstan.

I believe that this first Chapter (taken in conjunction with Chapter Two in 'Scarlet' - both entitled 'The Science of Deduction') set the future seal on the adventures to come. 'Four' led to the Pondicherry Lodge episodes and enabled Watson to learn much of his companion's successful methods (perhaps the item about dog Toby and the creosote might be overlooked!) Above all else, Dr. John Watson found himself a wife.

Watson, of course, wrote about the affair eventually. (He never made a correction in Chapter 7, where the word 'card' should have read 'cord'!) It is very fortunate that the author was not discouraged by Holmes' lack of enthusiasm for 'A Study In Scarlet'. Neither was he deterred in any way when the detective refused to congratulate him on his forthcoming marriage. A lot about Holmes was revealed as he told his friend that he considered love to be an emotional thing and that whatever is emotional is opposed to that true, cold reason which he placed above everything. "I should never marry," Holmes states, "lest I bias my judgement." The story ends with a long, white hand reaching for the cocaine bottle. Fortunately, Holmes' occupation ever afterwards prevented any suggestion of stagnation, as Watson was frequently to record. (At one time, making some sort of claim to having weaned Holmes from the habit.)

"The Sign of Four' surely was the final outline in the shape of things to come!

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**WANTED:** Various copies of THE SCHOOL FRIEND, SCHOOLGIRL and SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY. **SPECIALLY WANTED:** Girls' Crystal Annual 1940: Popular Book of Girls' Stories 1935, 1936, 1941. OVALTINEY RULE BOOK also wanted. Good prices paid. MARY CADOGAN, 46 Overbury Avenue, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 2PY.

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## POEMS OF GREYFRIARS by Keith Atkinson

### No. 2 - NIMBLE NIMROD

Paul Pontifex Prout  
Is exceedingly stout,  
Which hinders his peregrinations.  
When a much younger man  
He was sporting a tan  
Received in more wild destinations.

He terrified Bisley,  
Then went hunting grizzly  
'Mid Rockies and wide open spaces.  
The great catastrophe is  
He lost all his trophies  
Whilst hanging from rocks by his braces.

It is his proud boast  
That he potted the most  
Of the bears with his long trusty weapon.  
But if he met one today  
He would shoot on his way,  
In fact it's the gas he would step on.

His portly proportions  
Result in exhaustions  
When hiking with Quelch or with Hacker.  
He would not have to pant  
Like an old elephant  
If his waistline became so much slacker.

In telling tall stories  
About his past glories,  
At shooting a line he's the best.  
But when shooting a gun  
It is wisest to run,  
Before he is put to the test.

The only safe spot  
Is the one where he's not,  
When Prout tries to show his true grit.  
If a burglar should call  
And Prout shoots down the hall,  
Well, that's all that he's likely to hit.



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