

STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOL. 44

No. 523

JULY 1990

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BY
FRANK
RICHARDS

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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

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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



In my editorial last month I mentioned that towards the end of the summer the C.D. would be starting a new feature on OTHER FAVOURITE DETECTIVES. To whet your appetite for this I can't resist using this story-heading from a 1920s *Merry & Bright* as a 'trailer'. I think the illustration must be by George Wakefield; the stories, if not in the highest tradition of the sleuthing genre, were certainly fun! I feel that Sexton Hyde and his engaging assistants will certainly merit a little space in our forthcoming new feature. Don't forget to send me notes and/or short articles about detective characters who appeal to you, especially if they are generally overshadowed by the 'greats', such as Blake and Lee. Incidentally, going back to Sexton Hyde and his quartet of female sleuths, does anyone know whether the *Merry & Bright* stories ever explain how he comes to have the same Christian name as Blake?

BACK TO THE BEGINNING WITH DANNY

As promised last month we are now repeating the first item ever published from Danny's Diary, complete with its original heading in which our redoubtable diarist looks as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. I think many of you will enjoy this peep behind some of the scenes of 1912, together with Danny's lively comments on them.

ANNIVERSARY UPDATES

Adrian Perkins of the Cambridge Club, who is an indefatigable enthusiast of Eagle, sends details of a Dan Dare exhibition currently running (until September) at the Atkinson Art Gallery, Lord Street, Southport. A very attractive 16 page souvenir brochure has been published, in celebration of the exhibition and, of course, the 40th anniversary of the *Eagle*. It is appropriate that the exhibition should take place at Southgate, as this was the birthplace of the Dan Dare strip (because *Eagle* editor, the Rev. Marcus Morris, and the artist, Frank Hampson, both lived there and planned the early adventures in Morris's vicarage). Hawk Books have issued four more anniversary publications, and Fleetway have issued a *Dan Dare Summer Special*.

Not to be outdone, William Brown is the star of an exhibition at Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood, in London, which will run from the beginning of August until the beginning of November. This, of course, is to mark the centenary of William's creator, Richmal Crompton.

The centrepiece of the exhibition will be a life-sized 'stachoo' of William by Graham Ibbeson. C.D. readers might also like to watch for further readings of William stories by Martin Jarvis on B.B.C. Radio 4 (in early August, I believe), and my own 45 minute programme of tribute to Richmal Crompton, *The Woman Behind William*, which Radio 4 plan to repeat on Sunday, 22nd July at around 4.00 p.m.

Happy looking, listening and reading!

MARY CADOGAN

WANTED: Books by Berkeley Gray and Victor Gunn. Also by Edwy Searles Brooks under own name and other pseudonyms. Also E.S.B. Bibliography by Bob Blythe.

A. McKIBBIN, 1 Hudson Close, Lammack, Blackburn, Lancs., BB2 7DQ.

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THE BANNINGTON FETE AND FLOWER SHOW (Part 2)

By Jack Greaves

On the actual day of the fete there was always a charity cricket match between the best men picked from the local Bannington Clubs against a visiting county. This year it was the turn of Eastshire. It was a foregone conclusion that the visitors would win as these county sides had only lost on one previous occasion.

The cricket ground was away from the fete area and the match took place in the afternoon.

This charity match coincided with the recent arrival at St. Frank's of Jerry Dodd, the Australian Boy, and Jerry's Uncle, William Dodd, who was in England with the Australian cricket tourists, knew that his nephew was quite a good player himself and he had a chat with Mr. Newman, the Captain of the Bannington Club.

It was arranged that Jerry should be given a chance to play in the team for this match.

There was a lot of criticism at St. Frank's when this was announced, but some of the boys were quite pleased at his inclusion and Jerry himself couldn't believe he had been given this chance against the visiting professionals.

The match commenced at 2.30 p.m. and through the all-round brilliance of Jerry, the match went in favour of the amateurs and a great victory was achieved, this being the first time the visiting county team had been beaten for 12 years. Jerry returned to the school in triumph and there was such a commotion in the Triangle that the Headmaster, Dr. Stafford, came to the conclusion that half the school had suddenly taken leave of their senses. There was no doubt that Jerry was the most popular boy in the school at that moment. He was not only the idol of the juniors but he had gained the full admiration of the senior forms.

This was not the height of his achievements, however, for he was picked to play in the next test-match to be held at Earl's Grounds in London, when he again proved what a gifted player he was. This brought to an end another term at St. Frank's. The school broke up for the summer holidays with some of the juniors being invited over to Montana to the ranch of Mr. James Farman, father of the Remove junior Justin B. Farman. This proved to be another interesting series, but for Jerry Dodd the memories of the Bannington Fete and Flower Show would live for a long time.

BRIGANDS, DESPOTS, TYRANTS AND REVOLUTIONS

by Jim Sutcliffe

All these had their place in the Nelson Lee holiday series, and exciting reading they made too, as Edwy Searles Brooks excelled in the writing of stories like these.

The majority of Nelson Lee adherents despise the later years of the Old Paper but one such holiday series appeared in 1931, comprising Second New Series Nos. 79 to 83. The setting is the Balkan Mountains, where Victor Orlando, the young schoolboy King who had arrived at St. Frank's only a week or so before the Summer vacation, has been kidnapped and flown by plane to his half-brother, Prince Zeno of Caronia, who intends to keep Victor in an impregnable mountain stronghold while he (Zeno) mounts the throne. The story is based on the earlier 1921 Togossa Series, also set in the wild, mountainous Balkan country.

In the Caronian story, the ubiquitous Lord Dorrimore sets off with a party of St. Frank's juniors and Moor View girls to try and locate the kidnapped king, but decides to leave Nelson Lee out of the party as he feels Lee might well veto the trip in view of a pending revolution in that country.

Dorrie's party arrives in Galvarad, the capital, and is installed in a modern luxury hotel in a city of modern shops, buses and cars. After a brief sight-seeing tour they all leave in an antiquated tran for the Kazatova mountains, where the excitement starts, for no sooner have they arrived when a band of armed wild horseman gallop into the small town, led by the Chief brigand, Miklos Keiff. They force the party to follow them on horseback through canyons and gorges to the mouth of a great cavern into which they are left with guards. Miklos Keiff returns



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New Series No. 80.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY.

August 1st, 1931.

alone. Now comes a great surprise, the brigand reveals himself as Nelson Lee in disguise. He had apparently arrived in Caronia some days before Dorrie's party, having gathered from some earlier remarks made by Dorrie that he would be reckless enough to bring the boys and girls into danger. Nelson Lee had found out Miklos Keiff's whereabouts and had captured him, with the help of some of the Grand Duke's agents. His spell as the brigand is shortlived, for the real brigand chief is soon in power again and, after a brief but fierce battle (in which Umlosi, who up to now had been in the background, puts up a great fight) the party is rounded up and put to work, even the the girls being forced to do the washing and cooking.

They escape when Irene and Co, find some poisonous berries which they put in a stew they are cooking for the brigands (not sufficient to kill, but enough to render them helpless while the party make their escape). They are soon caught by more of the brigands, and trapped in a mountain gorge after the exit pass is blown up. Meanwhile the revolution is under way and they can see in the darkness searchlights and flashes of gunfire. Under Nelson Lee's leadership they manage to capture an ammunition train on its way to the rebel army. Nelson Lee drives this through the enemy lines, and they eventually reach the royalist forces. Seeing an airport with a large airliner standing by, they abandon the train and Nelson Lee, himself an experienced pilot, takes control of the plane. With King Victor, he flies into Galvarad, after which the revolution collapses. The adventures over, Lee and Dorrie's party return to England and St. Frank's.



AROUND THE WORLD WITH SEXTON BLAKE

by J.E.M.

Number 7

A sinister island somewhere in the South Atlantic Ocean is the setting for our latest celebration of Blake's overseas case-book. Volcano Island (UJ 1500) is the headquarters of the world-wide Criminals' Confederation and Blake's task is to penetrate its nerve centre. Ironically, in the end, it is nature herself which destroys the crooks' nest but not before Blake and some of the CC's leaders have escaped to fight another day.

The Crim Con tales by Robert Murray were among the most popular in the Blakian saga and, in my opinion, this one is the finest, told with pace and relish. As these illustrations show, Eric Parker is also in fine form. His first drawing depicts a bit of piracy on the high seas, one of the CC leaders, Sir Philip Champion taking over a merchant ship at pistol point. In the second illustration Blake, disguised by a beard and seaman's

dress, is hoping the Confederation's president, Mr. Reece won't recognise him.



VINTAGE BLAKE

by Reg Hardinge

Enclosed is a photocopy of an advertisement from page 25 of the *Union Jack Library* for the week ending Saturday, 20th May, 1911. I'm sure that many C.D. readers will be interested in this theatre advert. Fancy, two different Sexton Blake productions running simultaneously, one in Yorkshire and the other in Lancashire. People were lucky in those days, weren't they?

I am also including a photocopy of the back page of the same number of the *U.J.* H.M. Lewis depicted the future Duke of Windsor (born on June 23rd 1894, he was approaching 17 then) in a tight situation in the adventure story in *The Boys' Friend*. Much of H.M. Lewis's work was, of course, devoted to the *U.J.*

FOR ONE WEEK ONLY!

An Enthralling New Sexton Blake Drama will be produced at

BRADFORD, PRINCE'S THEATRE.

Under the title of

HUSH-MONEY;

OR,
The Disappearance of Sexton Blake,
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Six Nights, commencing Monday, May 22nd.

May 20th: THEATRE ROYAL, LEEDS.

MANCHESTER, ALHAMBRA THEATRE.

Six Nights, commencing Monday, May 22nd,
the Magnificent Melodrama,

Sexton Blake, Detective,

will be produced.

May 20th: THEATRE ROYAL, BARNSELY.

U.J.—397.
Is the title of the grand Sexton Blake novel
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"LONG LIVE THE KING!" A Stirring New Coronation Serial,
 by Maxwell Scott, Starts in this Week's Superb Empire Number
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One of the foreigners sprang upon Archie Manners, grasped him by the throat, and bore him to the ground; and as the young Prince of Wales recovered from his brief bewilderment, and tried to rescue his friend, he was clutched by the second man, who held him firmly around the waist.

See the Grand Empire Number of
THE BOYS' FRIEND. Id.

Now on Sale At All Newsagents.



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(EDITOR'S NOTE: Last month we brought you the final regular entry which Danny made in his famous Diary. This month, just for the novelty, we thought you might like to go back to the beginning of it all, which C.D. introduced to you exactly 28 years ago. So here is what Danny wrote in his Diary in the distant, quieter world of 1912.)

DANNY'S DIARY

MAY 1912

There's been an awful lot of newspapers out lately. A chap's pocket-money goes just nowhere, these days. Last month there was the "Dreadnought", and a day or two ago my brother Doug brought home a new one called "Cheer Boys Cheer". The editor of this one is Hamilton Edwards, who runs the Boys' Friend. He always seems a bit smug to me. Doug says he teaches us to lead clean lives, but I think we wash too much anyway. Jessie, our maid, gets chapped hands from washing them too much, and she puts Melrose on them.

"Cheer Boys Cheer" is a fat paper - 36 pages, and that's four pages bigger than the Magnet. It's nearly all serials, too, so I don't think I should like it. Doug says that "Nipper's First Case", all about Nelson Lee and Nipper, by Maxwell Scott, is good, so I may try it.

They've just put a statue of Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens, and I went with Mum to have a look at it. It is chiselled in bronze by Sir George Frampton. I told Mum I would rather have seen a statue of Tom Merry, and she laughed.

Nothing very worth-while in the Gem this month. I suppose the best story is "Figgy's Folly". It was good in parts, especially the train smash, but it was a kind of love story about Figgins and Cousin Ethel. My pal, Lindsay, says that his sister cried over it, but I thought it a bit soppy. Flossie Lindsay says it's the best Gem she has ever read, so we don't all see things in the same way. There's quite a good series of short thriller tales running in the Gem, about a detective called Kingston, and his assistant, Dolores. They are written by Robert W. Comrade.

We went to Clacton for Whitsun, going down on the Clacton Belle. A big ship with giant paddle-wheels. It rolled a bit after we left Southend, and Mum kept sniffing her smelling-bottle. She didn't like the trip much as it reminded her of the liner "Titanic" which hit an iceberg last month.

Dad bought me "Lot-O-Fun". I can't help laughing. He always splits his sides over Dreamy Daniel. Then he gives the paper to me and says: "Here you are, Danny. It's awful rubbish, but it'll keep you quiet for five mintues." Dreamy Daniel has had a space machine this last few weeks. He keeps going back down the ages with it. Underneath one of the pictures they printed: "There are speed traps for motor-cars and aeroplanes, but none for Dreamy's space machine."

Speaking of aeroplanes, the famous aviator, Wilbur Wright, has just died in America of typhoid fever.

Going back to "Lot-O-Fun", I only look at the pictures usually, but they have just started a new serial called "The Mystery of the Picture Palace", and I think I shall read this. I like going to the pictures, especially when they show plenty of comics. When I grow up I shall either run a picture palace or be a tram driver. I haven't decided which.



Every Saturday night, after Mum has finished her shopping in the Market, we go to the Popular Picture Palace. The seats are 2d, 4d, and 6d, and we go in the fourpennies (tuppence for me). Films are starting to get longer. The main ones are in 3 reels, or even 4. This month we saw what we are sure is the loveliest picture ever made. It is a Biograph picture called "Enoch Arden". Mum and I couldn't help crying in some parts of it. It is made by a man called D.W. Griffith, and his wife, Linda Arvidson, plays the feminine lead in it. Mum and I love the Broncho Billy Anderson pictures, and a lovely one this month was "The Cowboy Coward".

On the boat, Doug had the latest Boys' Friend 3d Library. It was a school story called "The Fourth Form at St. Basil's", by Henry St. John. It's advertised as an 80,000 word story. Fancy 80,000 words for threepence. It's indelible!

I brought the latest Magnet while we were in Clacton. I read it when we went out for a brake ride to St. Osyth. It's been a good month in the Magnet. By far the best story was "The Road to Ruin". Valence had been expelled for being friendly with Banks, the bookmaker. Wingate and Courtney asked the Head to give Valence another chance, but the Head was adipose and wouldn't. One day a new boy named Trevelyan arrived from Cornwall. Because he was Cornish he was dark and swarthy and had long hair. He saved Hazeldene from Banks. Doug says that Hazeldene used to be nicknamed Vaseline, because he is so greasy. This new senior, Trevelyan, turned out to be Valence in disguise. When the Head found out that he had saved Hazeldene, he gave Valence another chance. So Valence is back at Greyfriars for good. I think it's a bit indelible that Valence could really have come back and called himself Trevelyn and nobody recognised him, but it was a grand story.

Back at school after Whitsun my form started Euclid. Awful stuff. My pal, Carter, takes the Nugget Library, and he has the latest one: "Tafty & Co and the Billy Goat." I don't care for the Nugget but Carter laps it up.

A new automatic telephone exchange is being tried out at Epsom. The first in this country with a dial. They say it will take you 27 seconds to get a number instead of 62 seconds on the Old system. It takes us longer than that on our phone.

Flossie Lindsay lent me her new copy of Young Folk's Tales called "Mabel and the magic Goloshes." I read it when nobody was looking, and found it quite all right. I got the Union Jack this week. A good story called "The Cashiered Captain." Plenty of Tinker in it. I like Tinker.

The Cricket is going well at school. I wonder why the Magnet artist always shows the boys playing cricket with neckties on. He makes the pitches look awfully rough, too. Our sportsmaster would lay an egg if we turned out for games with ties on. Mum took me to the Chelsea Flower Show in the grounds of Chelsea Hospital. The King opened it the day before. I was a bit bored, but Haughty Culturists like it. In the evening, Dad met us, and took us to see "Ben Hur" at Drury Lane. Arthur Wontner was "Ben Hur" and Reginald Owen was "Messala." The race on the revolving stage was terrific.

The editor of the Magnet keeps printing letters from boys who run what they call an Anti-Magnet League. I wonder he bothers about such things. It's quite indelible!

ERIC FAYNE comments on the first DANNY'S DIARY

So Danny carries us back for a brief peep at the distant England of 1912. Not many of us were toddling around at that time, for a short look round and to wonder just how far PROGRESS has meant IMPROVEMENT.

There were any amount of fine weekly periodicals in the newsagents' shops, as Danny reminds us. At the top of the tree for boys (and girls too) there were the young Gem and the even younger Magnet. Tom Merry was one of the most popular fictional boys in the world. The Magnet had not yet caught up with the Gem. Martin Clifford had already specially written several long St. Jim's stories especially for the Boys' Friend 3d Library. In a few months time there would come on the market the Penny Popular, offering readers stories of what obviously were then the star attractions of the Amalgamated Press. They comprised Sexton Blake with Tinker; Tom Merry & Co; Jack, Sam and Pete.

When, a few months later, Danny was to open No. 1 of the Penny Popular - I assume that he must have bought it - he found that the first tale in the paper was "Tom Merry - New Boy."

There were at least two excellent coloured comic papers from the Henderson firm - Lot-O-Fun and Comic Life. There is nothing in the shops of 1990 to approach them even remotely. Danny reminds us that Lot-O-Fun was famous for Dreamy Daniel. I seem to recall that Comic Life was famous for Butterball and Tall Thomas, a couple of tramps. And there were masses of other comic characters, plus a number of good serials or series.

Barbara Redfern and Betty Barton were still waiting some years in the future, but in 1912 there were some excellent papers for girls, - the Girls' Friend, the Girls' Home, the Girls' Reader. And they had their heroines who went on and on. Pollie Green was one with her great pal, Coosha.

Danny mentions that, in early days, the nickname of Hazeldene at Greyfriars was "Vaseline". One wonders why that nickname was dropped after early days. Maybe "Vaseline" was a proprietary name, and, as such, subject to copyright. Maybe the makers of that excellent and necessary product protested to the A.P. Or, maybe, such an idea occurred to the editor. We shall never know why Hazeldene ceased to be called "Vaseline".

Danny reminds us that Saturday evening was the big shopping night. And then, maybe, the visit to the pictures.

By 1912, every town of any consequence had at least one largish and comfortable cinema. Odeons and Gaumonts were still far distant. Many, in 1912, were just called The Cinema. Or the Popular Picture Palace, or the Gem. With the passing of time those very places would call themselves with Plaza or the Super or the Majestic. By 1912, plenty of film-stars had made a name for themselves. Florence Turner, Maurice Costello, Lou Tellegen. Two charming young ladies, Mary Pickford and Mabel Normand, were beginning to catch the eye. The trade marks of various film companies were familiar and popular; the Hepworth Company of Britain; the American firms - Biograph, Lubin, Kalem, Vitagraph - and the French company of Pathe Frères.

"Figgy's Folly" was quite a famous Gem in its day. I seem to recall that there was a wee bit of controversy over it in the early days of Collectors' Digest. A few readers sighed, turned their eyes to heaven, and shed an unmanly tear. Some sniffed and said it was a fraction out of place in the Gem. But it was all good-humoured. And, in fact, we all sighed - as we looked back to that which was gone.

WANTED by Collector: Pre-1970 Williams, Bunters, Blytons, Biggles, Brent-Dyers, in dustwrappers. Also Rupert and other Annuals, Comic giveaways, Original artwork, associated Ephemera. High prices paid, or exchanged. JOHN BECK, 29 Mill Road, Lewes, Sussex.

WANTED: £20 each offered for "*Boys Friend Libraries*" featuring BIGGLES. £15 each offered for Biggles jigsaw puzzles. £3 each offered for "Happy Mags". £15 offered for B.F.L. no. 204, "Crooked Gold". Original artwork of Bunter, etc., always wanted. NORMAN WRIGHT, 60 Eastbury Road, Watford, WD1 4JL. Telephone: (0923) 32383.

"Mine" is not a magazine that ever gained any awards for its cover. In fact it should really be in the *Guinness Book of Records* for being the magazine with the all time boring cover. Never-the-less, I always peep inside copies in the hope of finding a contribution by one of my favourite writers. The issue for August 1935 did not reward me with a story by W.E. Johns or anything by anyone of any note. I was just about to put it back on the shelf amongst a pile of *Readers Digest*, when I happened to notice the inside back cover. It was very interesting, almost as interesting as if I had found a W.E. Johns story in the mag! The interesting item was an advertisement for a William competition. £25 could be won for 10 words! All the lucky winner had to come up with was a super slogan saying why William was the best-loved boy in the world.....Simple.

The second prize was £10 and for the lucky runners up there were copies of the first edition of "William The Detective", 7/6d first editions no less. The competition was to be judged by Richmal Crompton. To enter the competition readers had to obtain an entry form from either their newsagent or bookseller. My day would have been made if one of those ephemeral forms had slipped out of the magazine into my hand; alas one did not. I would imagine that the forms themselves are very rare indeed. I wonder if any reader remembers the competition. Were the results published? Who won? What were the winning 10 words? Does anyone still have an entry form? If I could have entered I must admit I would rather have won the first edition of "William The Detective", gleaming in its mint dustwrapper. I would have been quite happy for someone else to collar the twenty five quid!

MORE REVOLUTIONARIES

by Brian Doyle

In his interesting article (May SPCD), Ray Hopkins says that it is surprising that more stories of the French Revolution did not appear in the weekly papers and magazines, but seems to limit his researches to the BOYS FRIEND LIBRARY, SCHOOLGIRLS OWN LIBRARY, THE MAGNET and THE SCHOOLGIRL.

In fact, there were several notable tales of the French Revolution in the old boys' magazines. Four were by the excellent S. Walkey, justly renowned for his

£25 for 10 Words!

Sometime you must have read a "William" Book by Richmal Crompton—perhaps you have read them all . . . Can you say in a few words just what makes William the best-loved boy in the world? Say it smartly and say it well, and you may be the winner of an easy £25 slogan competition. To try will be a fascinating new game, as simple as it is interesting—and £25 is worth winning! No age limit! No entry fee! No brain storms! We just want a happy idea!

£25 - - First Prize
£10 - - Second Prize
 and
50 Consolation Prizes
 of 7/6 illustrated 1st Editions of *William the Detective*, the latest William Book just off the press.

Closing Date: Sept. 30, 1935

Adjudicator:
RICHMAL CROMPTON

NOTE. You can enter this competition through your newsagent or bookseller only. Ask him for free entry form and full particulars to-day.



WILLIAM

GEORGE NEWNES LIMITED

blood-curdling pirate yarns. They ran as illustrated full-length serials in CHUMS, as follows: COMRADES IN PERIL (Vol. 16, 1907-08); JACK-A-LANTERN (Vol. 18, 1909-10); WHEN THE GUILLOTINE REIGNED (Vol. 26, 1917-18); and THE ADVENTURES OF JACK-A-LANTERN (Vol. 30, 1921-22).

D.H. Parry also wrote two serials with the same background for CHUMS: HUSSARS OF THE WOLD (Vol. 28, 1919-20) and UNDER THE SWORD OF TERROR (Vol. 39, 1931-32). Charles Gilson contributed another French Revolution serial to B.O.P. titled JACK-WITHOUT-A-ROOF (Vol. 45, 1922-23), and Herbert Hayens gave readers of THE CAPTAIN another yarn in the same vein, THE FATAL LIST (Vol. 17 (April-September, 1907). I seem to recall that there were several others in other papers and magazines.

The French Revolution was very popular with novelists for many years, the best-known probably being Baroness Orczy's series of a dozen or so books featuring the 'Scarlet Pimpernel' (otherwise Sir Percy Blakeney). Others included Rafael Sabatini's IN THE SHADOW OF THE GUILLOTINE, THE LOST KING, and SCARAMOUCHE, Stanley Weyman's THE RED COCKADE, Henty's IN THE REIGN OF TERROR, and books by Dennis Wheatley, Vaughan Wilkins, and many others. I have lists in my files of around 100 more. And I haven't even mentioned the most famous of them all - Charles Dickens' A TALE OF TWO CITIES....



He's lazy, unreliable and crusty, but can you imagine Greyfriars without him? I'm speaking of course of William George Gosling gatekeeper and porter of the school.

When reading the Greyfriars saga, one gets the impression that Gosling is not only the oldest inhabitant, but also the oldest residing staff member at the college.

He can remember when the remove didn't have Mr. Quelch as form master, but a Mr. John Thorpe in charge (see the second Levison Return series 1927). He remembers when several old boys were in attendance - unfortunately the three that come readily to mind must be termed infamous rather than famous! Such people as Bartholomew Widders who returned with the intention of thrashing Mr. Prout (Magnet 1237, 1931). Franz Kranz who kidnapped Bob Cherry, together with the Bounder and Tom Redwing, to learn the secret of the gadget Major Cherry had invented (Magnets 1354-1358, 1934) "Kidnapped from the Air", Randolph Crocker Series (Magnets 1615-1625). And we mustn't forget Randolph Crocker alias

Rupert Crooke, who set up as a boot-repairer in the spinney adjacent to the campers

But of course Gosling hadn't been porter at the time of the Spanish Armada, nor the Battle of Waterloo! Allusions such as these were made only by facetious fags. As regards his true age, nobody knows for certain. Gosling was a little touchy about this. He owned up to fifty-five; in fact he had owned up to that age for ten years or more. But he was not a hundred, he was not ninety, and never had been ninety in his life.

His chief aversion seems to be work. His greatest joy is in reporting late-comers and any boy he sees breaking the rules. His other favourite occupations are sitting in his armchair, smoking his old pipe and sipping something from a bottle labelled milk (the strange thing being that the bottle in question is generally of a darker shade and a different shape from the one normally associated with milk), and last but not least, hoisting boys sentenced to a flogging. It's no secret that he thinks all boys should be drowned at birth!

Exception does prove the rule however, as was the case when Bunter was accused of throwing a tomato at Mr. Hacker. Telling Mr. Quelch "that fair play's a jool (jewel)", he owns up that it was an accident, and that it was he, Gosling, who threw the tomato out of the window, not knowing it had hit the master of the shell (Magnet 1654, *The Black Prince of Greyfriars*).

As well as the above example he figures in lots of other amusing incidents. Is there a door to be forced? Send for Gosling! Along he comes grunting and grumbling, carrying his tools, muttering something like, "drat them young rips!" While pounding on the chisel he has rammed in between the door and jamb, he is sure to miss, and hit his thumb!

'Suddenly the banging stopped and a wild and fearful yell rang out - "Yaroooop!" yelled Gosling frantically: He dropped the hammer, with a crash, jammed his left thumb into his mouth, and sucked it wildly.

"Yow-ow-ow" howled Gosling.

"What ever is the matter Gosling?" exclaimed the Head

"Yarooop!" roared Gosling.

"You are wasting time, Gosling!" said Mr. Prout severely, "You are wasting the headmaster's time"

"Ain't I 'ammered my thumb?" roared Gosling. "I can tell you, it's 'urt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came floating up from the Remove passage' (Magnet 1375, June 23rd, 1934).

Numerous such amusing incidents are recorded in the pages of the Magnet, but to my mind the classic of them all is to be found in "*The Vanished Sovereigns*", Magnet 1263. Bunter, unbeknowing, has taken the cigar-box containing Gosling's golden sovereigns and hidden it in Smithy's study, thinking it contains cigars. Gosling proceeds to the headmaster's study to report the loss, beginning with:

"Pinched!" said Gosling

"Nonsense!" said the Head.

"Wot I says is this 'ere sir-pinched!"

Space doesn't permit printing the rest of the dialogue, but the verbal exchange between porter and headmaster is conveyed in a masterly manner. I urge all those who have never read this story and cannot buy it, to contact my good friend Roger Jenkins and crave the loan of same from the London O.B.B.C. Library - or from the appropriate club to which they belong.

Gosling is also featured in the various articles and poems that have appeared over the years.

In the series "Greyfriars Correspondents" Gosling was the subject for No. 14. In Magnet 1390, Oct. 6th, 1934, Gosling was "Greyfriars Cartoon" No. 17 (artist purported to be Harold Skinner).

"The Stately Homes of Greyfriars" written by the Greyfriars Rhymster (Dick Penfold) Magnet 1518, March 20th 1937, told of the porter's lodge. This was again the theme in "The Greyfriars Guide" an entertaining page of facts about the school and its inhabitants. Entitled "A Tour of



Greyfriars", it was No. 2. The mast-head for this series had Gosling extending his arm and making a gesture towards a silhouette of the school.

In the 1931 Holiday Annual on page 97 appears "A Day in the Life of a School Porter" which supposedly contains his answers to questions in an interview. It is quite interesting as it gives his duties for the day.

The accompanying picture shows "Gossy" performing his first chore of the day - namely ringing the rising-bell. It is of interest that in the earlier drawings Gosling is frequently shown wearing a top hat - could this have been a Sunday requisite?

Although he avows it is his solemn "dooty" to report any late-comers on rule-breakers, he is not averse to turning a blind eye should his palm be crossed with silver! But with all his faults, we love him still, and as said at the start of this treatise, can you imagine Greyfriars without him?

MORE MEMORIES OF THE EAGLE - FORTY YEARS ON

By Mary Cadogan

Following Norman Wright's and Mike Higgs's recently launched and highly successful *Dan Dare Dossier*, Hawk Books have produced four more books to celebrate The Eagle's 40th birthday. Instead of focussing again on the intrepid astronaut, these feature other characters who contributed to the paper's exuberant and appealing atmosphere.

The Adventures of P.C. 49 and *Harris Tweed, Extra Special Agent* (£4.99 each) consist of black and white strips; *Riders of the Range* and *Fraser of Africa* (£7.50 each) are in full colour. Each book includes an informative and entertaining introduction (*P.C. 49* and *Fraser* by Norman Wright; *Harris Tweed* and *Riders* by David Ashford) which is a gem in itself.

I was delighted to savour once again the thrilling, yet somehow ultimately reassuring exploits of P.C. 49 (Archibald Berkeley-Willoughby) who, of course, as depicted by actor Brian Reece, was a tremendous, long-running radio hero as well as a boys' paper star.

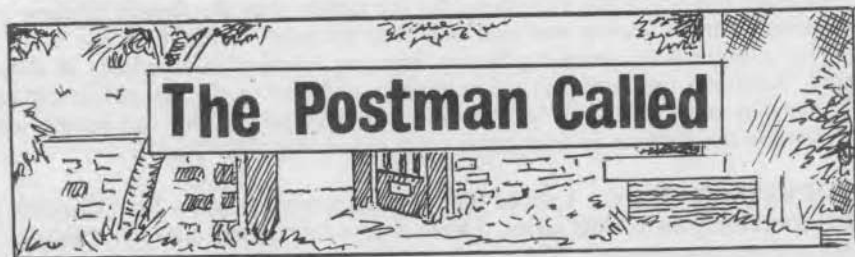
In contrast Harris Tweed, the bungling, bossy and boulderish special agent was, as David Ashford points out, a man we loved to hate. Seen in retrospect his bizarrely comic sleuthing adventures have a very slight Monty Pythonish flavour about them, which was quite unusual in juvenile papers of the period.

Eagle's editor Marcus Morris had a keen eye for exploiting popular radio series as picture-strips for his weekly publication. *Riders of the Range*, a musical drama which began its successful wireless run in 1949, was a natural choice for Eagle. It was to become Britain's longest running Western strip, with an authentic touch of Americana, yet a quality that was very much its own. The book's wonderfully atmospheric colour strips not only evoke the early days of Eagle but also the Western movies to which so many of us were addicted.



Fraser of Africa started later than the others, in 1960. In the tradition of *King Solomon's Mines*, yet in many ways in advance of its time (with conservation as a keynote) it represented high adventure at its zenith. The tough but sensitive Fraser makes an attractive hero, and the vivid, sun-bleached sepia-gold strips powerfully convey the East African settings.

Each of these four books gives full credit to the now near legendary originators, authors and artists, with welcome biographical and bibliographical information. Alan Stranks and John Worsley were responsible for *P.C. 49*; John Ryan for *Harris Tweed*; Charles Chilton, Jack Daniels and Frank Humphris for *Riders of the Range*; George Beardmore and Frank Bellamy for *Fraser of Africa*. Glittering talent, appropriately celebrated in this bright galaxy of books.



BILL LOFTS (London): I think Danny is right. There was a lot behind the scenes pertaining to the last Magnet, that we will never now know all the background of. Though I think that Charles Hamilton's only involvement, was in strongly protesting against the suggestion that the stories would eventually be going into a comic paper (*The Knockout*.) Main trouble at the old Amalgamated Press was that there was (as in all big firms) a lot of internal bickering and clashes of personalities. Decisions made, then rejected by higher authority. C.M. Down certainly had a chip on his shoulder. He should have been Director by 1940: instead he was cold-shouldered, and then sometimes reprimanded by seniors who had overhauled him in promotion. Several had started as office boys, when he was already a fully established editor. This caused strong resentment. My own theory is that the original idea was for the Greyfriars tales to be continued in *Knockout* in short episodes, but higher-ups then decided that Bunter was more popular in strip form.

But surely the biggest mystery is why nobody ever asked Frank Richards to rewrite the missing and unpublished stories during the last twenty years of his life. They could easily have been published in some shape or form.

M. FOLLOWS (Leicester): Something has been 'bugging me' for sometime now. The question is, just how old is "Danny" of Diary fame? The earliest C.D. I have is No. 300, 1971 and Danny is writing in 1921 - in No. 519, 1990, he's still writing about school, etc. Apparently he is, as Orwell once wrote of Bunter "hovering merrily on the verge of puberty!" Was there ever a Danny, did the diary peter out and was it carried on by other pens?

(Editor's Note: Danny is the only person who could answer Mr. Follows's questions. I wonder if he will do so?)

RON GARDNER (Leamington Spa): While my wife and I were on holiday last year in the Cotswolds, I bought a copy of the Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard. This was in it.

"Boat for sale - one religiously careful owner!"

The Rev. Tom Merry, vicar of Holy Trinity, Stroud, who rowed 120 miles down the Thames for charity last week, has put his specially-built wooden rowing boat up for sale - also for charity.

Mr. Merry made the trip from Lechlade to Teddington Lock with his wife Alison and their three children Alexandra, Kate and James.

'Apart from driving wind and rain on Wednesday night and Thursday morning, the journey went according to plan', Mr. Merry reported, and our only mishap was a broken oar, which we were able to patch up and continue to use'.

Although this was a new experience for the family, they are already thinking of undertaking a similar venture next year, this time in canoes on the river Wye".

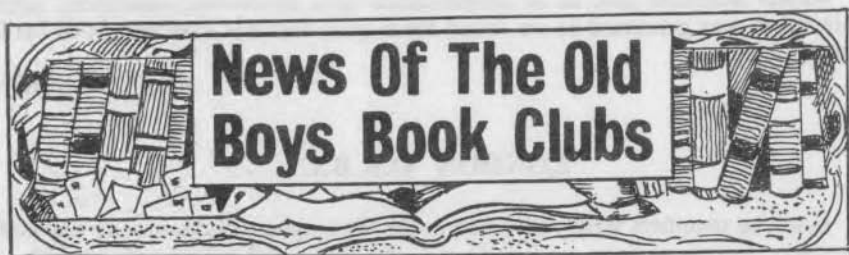
What a marvellous sounding family, bringing to mind faint echoes of those intrepid "Swallows and Amazons" of yesteryear, and also of an even earlier trip up the Thames by some fellows of St. Jim's in the mid-Twenties. One can almost hear somewhere in the distance an aristocratic voice ejaculating, "Bai Jove!".

T. HOPKINSON (Hyde): I notice that you are receiving letters from discerning readers concerning the LAMB series. I have always found these tales extremely well written and very entertaining. The wintry and snowy descriptions of the countryside around Wharton Lodge at Christmas are superbly vivid - one can almost feel the cold, such is the author's writing skill.

Lamb himself is one of C.H.'s most complex and sinister characters, and this really is a very good series. The question of its length is immaterial. We are reading about Greyfriars, etc., and that is all that matters.

Let us imagine the Lamb series had never been published in the 1939/40 Magnets, and only just recently discovered and published this year by Howard Baker.

What do you suppose the reaction would be? Very favourable and enthusiastic, you can bet! I am not saying this series comprises with the Golden Age Magnets, but these 'Salmons' have lots going for them, not least the superior writing style.



S. W. CLUB

Although the attendance was low at our May meeting, those of us who were there spent an enjoyable time. Bill Lofts commenced with a talk on Mickey Mouse, especially of his appearances in the Amalgamated Press weeklies.

Geoff Lardner then spoke on Rookwood School, mentioning that it was first heard of in Magnet 357 and appearing in the Boy's Friend 1915-1926.

After tea Bill concluded the meeting with a reading on Springheel Jack.

Before we closed we decided that the next meeting will be on Sunday, 23rd September, when we hope there will be a good attendance.

T. SALISBURY

CAMBRIDGE CLUB

Our May, 1990 meeting was held at the St. Neots home of member Robert Smerdon.

Bill Lofts talked to us about the life and times of Yorkshireman Herbert Leckenby. A deeply involved collector of Old Boys books and story papers, he gave us THE journal of the hobby, *Collectors Digest*, and suggested the regional clubs associated with it. Whilst for him the Golden Age was 1890 to 1914, the many anecdotes about the "King of Collectors", which Bill related, demonstrated that Leckenby was in touch with the Hobby throughout his long life.

Later, Robert gave us a fascinating reading from probably the cleverest and most timeless writings of Frank Richards; the altercation between Quelch and Hacker caused, in this case, by the able mastery of ventriloquism by W.G.B.

Our June meeting was held at the Duston, Northampton home of Howard Corn. Howard gave us an illustrated talk on 'Mad' magazine, which, primarily American, has some very strange origins indeed. One of the co-founders, W.M. Gaines, had the distinction of having a father who published the first comic-book title in the U.S.A. Gaines began the ghastly horror comic shortly after the end of World War 2.

John Wortan, along with Howard, the other co-editor of EAGLE TIMES (quarterly magazine for the 'Fifties Eagle Enthusiasts Society'), visited our club, introducing a discussion and a video recording made at the Southport Eagle/Dan Dare exhibition.

Robert Smerdon gave us an identification quiz concerning publishers' logos. Much mirth was generated as we found these quite familiar symbols much harder than one imagines.

ADRIAN PERKINS

LONDON O.B.B.C.

Fourteen members were welcomed to the Wokingham home of Eric and Betty Lawrence. Lovely again to see Eric Fayne, plus Ron and Kit Beck after so long. A quiz to start the proceedings from Bill Bradford, on all our favourite Companion papers. Next, Eric Lawrence at the piano can only mean a musical quiz, and 15 pieces with the song titles on the tip of the tongue gave everyone a lot to think about!

After tea, Eric Fayne treated us to a game quiz entitled ELIMINATION, which proved more difficult, the more names you eliminated. Bill Bradford followed with the usual monthly Memory Lane talk from June 1970 at, where else at that time of year but Wokingham of course. Finally the last half hour was spent in a pleasant discussion on all matters OBBC. A thank you to the hosts, and all the usual goodbyes.

Next meeting at 5 Queen Anne's Grove, Ealing, on 8th July. Kindly let Bill Bradford know if attending, on 081 579 4670.

GRAHAM BRUTON

NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

Chairman Joan welcomed the 14 present at our June meeting, and we were delighted to have with us the founder member, Norman Smith, from Harrogate, Norman had been instrumental in founding the club by placing an advertisement in the local newspaper in 1948 requesting those interested in the old papers to contact him: from then on, the club was formed, and inaugurated in 1950.

Favourable comment had been made concerning the Ruby Luncheon on 12th May and it was felt that a terrific day had been had by all.

Paul Galvin and David Bradley said arrangements were going well for the W.E. Johns' Meeting to be held in Nottingham in October, but that would possibly be the last of these meetings organised by Northern Club, and it was hoped others would take over. Darrell commented that the next William Meeting (in 1991) would be in Bury and that would be the last he would organise after 9 years at the helm.

We had to have a change in programme: our guest speaker on SCIENCE FICTION had to postpone his visit until August.

We were delighted to have Paul present "A Library Corner" in which he showed us a selection of items held in the Club Library (still in the process of being catalogued). Mostly, they were very old papers from the turn of the century. Paul commented on the fact that so few are sought after these days, the trends being more for "modern" items - the papers and comics of the 50's and 60's are now the fore.

Geoffrey Good mentioned that he had been told a genuine Number 1 Magnet had been for sale: needless to say, when he received it, it turned out to be the infamous single copy reprint - fortunately, Geoffrey did not lose out on the deal. To conclude, he read, in his own inimitable style, the very first chapter from that paper.

A strictly limited edition of the Club Ruby Anniversary mug featuring the Old Boys' Book Club shield and text black on white ceramic, can be obtained for £4.50 including postage from: Mr. D. Swift, 37 Tinsill Lane, Leeds, LS16 6BU.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR



They cater for all tastes at Greyfriars School on Sports Day!

Holidays are in the air again! We're all getting tremendously excited at the prospect of weeks of glorious freedom, of sun and sand and sea --- the wine dark seas of the eastern Mediterranean. Yes! We're sailing to the Greek Islands with Celeste, on her grandfather's yacht. There'll be twelve in the party, eight of us and Celeste, her aunt and of course her grandfather. Part of the time is going to be spent exploring the site of an ancient underwater wreck and there we'll be meeting Mr. Margesson's new secretary and a famous expert on marine archaeology. It promises to be the most gorgeous holiday of our lives. Tell you all about it when we get back. And now, over to Jemima.

* * * * *

The Mischief Makers of Cliff House

by J.C.

This month's Victim: Peggy Preston

When our illustrious Chronicler (Miss Hilda Richards to you) set down this particular episode for the official Annals of Cliff House she did not miss the opportunity of weaving in a natty little treatise on the technicalities of editorial layout and printers' procedures. With Peggy's jolly old pater being a professional printer Peggy, being the bright girl she is, knows all the jargon of the trade, insider secrets, so to speak. She took us all step by step through the process of transforming our tentative typings into a really superb magazine. And our Miss Richards didn't cut a single word. Good old Peg!

It all started with the news that a famous London daily was running a competition for the best school magazine. There was to be a first prize of fifty lovely crispers and a free course on journalism for the editor of the winning entry. Of course the Fourth just had to have a go!

Babs got the editorial committee together and went in search of Peggy (who writes the dandiest sports reviews!) only to find that Peggy was hard at work on a dummy layout that instantly settled any doubts about who should be editor of our magazine. During our first conference we even had Sarah Harrigan offering an article she'd penned (she didn't add that it had already been turned down by the local rag) and putting on her most affable manner.

Peggy was desparate for us to win. Her mother was ill and needed convalescence in a warmer clime; the fifty pounds would be a godsend to Peggy's hardworking and not very well off family, and we all agreed that the prize should go to Peggy if we won. Unfortunately, Sarah Harrigan's affability came to a full stop when she saw Peggy's article among the copy submitted. And unfortunately Peggy, in a careless moment had penned a rather naughty cartoon of the Bull that captured that lady to the proverbial T. When the cartoon, and later a positively inflammatory article about the same lady, fell into her irate hand there was a frantic row. Lydia Crossendale got the blame for planting the libellous material in the Bull's den and denied it vehemently. Again unfortunately (what would we do without that useful word?) Primmy was called away and the Bull left in charge. She promptly took

"THE CLIFF HOUSE MAGAZINE MYSTERY!" Enthralling Long Complete story of Barbara Redfern & Co. Inside.

THE SCHOOLGIRL

No. 448. Vol. 18.
Week Ending
FEB. 26th, 1938.

EVERY SATURDAY

Incorporating
'SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN'



THE CARICATURE
AND—UNFORTUNATELY
—THE ORIGINAL!

(See this week's grand
story of the chums of Cliff
House School.)

Peggy off the job and forbade her to have anything to do with the magazine, which Babs was to edit, all under the surveillance of dear Sarah.

Meanwhile Sarah decided that Peggy's sports review wasn't worthy of inclusion and Babs insisted it was. She also insisted that Peggy was going to continue the editorial work in secret. Alas, this was an illfated idea which culminated in Peggy having to dive for cover under the study table when the Bull arrived with Sarah and we all had to try to convince her acid-drop highness that Peggy was miles away. We might have got away with it if Bessie hadn't blundered in to search for her missing fountain pen. Fatima is incapable of taking a hint and really blew it. There was a frightful rumpus during which Sarah got wrapped in the tablecloth, Peggy escaped, and the Bull threatened to ban the magazine altogether.

It never rains but what it deluges, as the ancient sage predicted. We had difficulty getting the printer to do the job because he was deluged with work, but finally he promised to take us on provided we got all the copy to him by the following evening. Dismay all round us scribes: there was nothing for it but to ignite the sacred midnight oil! We crept down from the dorm that night and propped the weary old eyelids apart, determined to finish the job. We would have, but for the sneaky advent of the Bull and her personal cloak holder, Sarah. We grabbed our papers together and fled via the fire escape, hoping we could beat the enemy back to the dorm. Yours truly, being of a tidy disposition hung back when we emerged on the dorm landing to pick up a bit of litter on the floor. Babs had rushed on into the dorm, and she fell over something; then Clara fell over her, and the other three followed like dominoes. Yours truly was jolly glad to miss that scrimmage, especially when the Bull caught up with it and started handing out impots and detentions with her usual generous hand. When the dust settled I sneaked in and saw the broken string trap across the dorm doorway that had provided the downfall of poor Babs and her merry writers.

There was no shadow of doubt now that the magazine and Peggy in particular had an enemy. The time had come for counterplot! Babs and the luckless filed into detention next afternoon, glum-faced because of the printer's deadline looming and Sarah parked on the throne of authority. Well, a certain phone call soon decoyed her, long enough for me to collect the parcel of copy and set off for the printers. But Sarah was waiting, ready to pounce. I made a suitably sighing job of handing over the parcel she demanded and went wearily on my way. It seemed so sad about all those rejections in the parcel, all those hopeful submissions that weren't good enough. But perhaps Sarah would enjoy reading them. By the time she did, the real copy was rattling merrily into type at the printers!

Our Sarah had been very naughty. She'd played in a recent Courtfield shield match and the local reporter had confused her slightly with Helen Hunter, who had scored three goals. But when Sarah's Uncle George read the erroneous report and fair glowed with pride over his niece's sporting prowess he decided to send her ten pounds as reward. But Peggy's sports review had the facts right, and when Uncle George investigated the discrepancy he was going to want his tenner back. So Sarah dared not let truth will out if she could help it. But fortune had not favoured the unfair Sarah, because when she set up the string booby trap she'd dropped that vital letter from Nunky. This was the missive yours truly stopped to rescue, and which made all clear. Of course the old conscience said I should return dear Sarah's personal property, but not just yet, as the fabled Saint Augustine prayed when asking for the blessing of goodness... My dear old Guy is a frightfully wise old bean,

y'know. He used to tell me, when playing a subtle game, always have something up your sleeve.

Well, Sarah huffed and puffed with ire, until we produced the letter. Our magazine was posted off and of course it won. Peggy's mum got her sunny holiday and Cliff House the honour and the glory. Alas, we never heard of Uncle George's reaction when he read the sports page...

THE DISTRICT AROUND GREYFRIARS

by Colin Cole

On all maps since, and including the 1940 Magnet map, Westwood Lane and Pound Hill appear, presumably as important thoroughfares. (There is one exception; Pound Hill is not marked on the Spiers map which was produced, I think about 1985 or 1986.)

Westwood Lane is generally shown as running from Friardale Lane towards and joining the Redclyffe Road. Pound Hill is shown as running from Friardale towards Lantham.

Despite extensive research, mainly in 1920-1940 Magnets, I have found no reference by Frank Richards (the genuine Richards) to these places. I have spoken to members of the Friars Club in connection with this matter but nobody has been able to provide a reference. It is possible, of course, that they were the creations of a substitute writer. They may have, at some time, appeared in a Holiday Annual or, in the Greyfriars Herald, but were not the works of Frank Richards.

I have a theory concerning Westwood Lane and there are good grounds for it. Westwood Lane may be a variant of Wood Lane (see Hazeldene's Uncle series - Magnet No. 1417 1935) or, Woodside Lane (see Coker and Mr. Poynings series, Magnet No. 982 1926). In the Butcher map, Westwood Lane is shown as running through Friardale Wood. Wood Lane is described by Frank Richards as running through the wood but Woodside Lane is described as running round the edge of the wood.

Both Wood Lane and Woodside Lane are nothing better than rutted cart tracks, not normally used by cars although a car could negotiate them. Although Wood Lane and Woodside Lane appear to follow different directions through or round the wood, realistically it is not uncommon for such a lane to do both.

I can offer no theory concerning Pound Hill. It is a complete mystery to me.

I should be most grateful if a reader of the Digest could point out a reference made to these places by the genuine Frank Richards (Charles Hamilton).

WANTED: Modern Boys, bound or singles. Bound vols. of The Gem, Nelson Lee, Biggles and Captain Justice, Boys' Friends Library. Other bound volumes of Story Papers for my collection. Many Howard Baker volumes required. P. GALVIN, 2 The Lindales, Pogmoor, Barnsley, S. Yorks., SY5 2DT. Tel. 0226 295613.

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 CREWE, 12b Westwood Road, Canvey Island, Essex. Tel. 0268 693735, Evenings 7.15 - 9.30 p.m.

"DENISE'S DIARY"

by Dennis L. Bird

This last Diary instalment ends the story of the Schoolgirls' Own Library. The revived series ran from 1946 to 1963, and just at first the books were the same length as their predecessors - 96 pages; the chief difference was the multi-colour covers instead of the familiar black and yellow.

By summer 1947, however, the length was much reduced - paper was scarce in those austerity days. "Companion to the Sultan's Daughter" by Margery Marriott (No. 22, August 7, 1947), a reprint of a 1939 "Girls' Crystal" story, was a mere 64 pages, as were all the later issues. This meant a drastic curtailment of the original weekly serials. A direct comparison can be made, for I have Hazel Armitage's

"The Skating Impostor" in both formats. It was first published in 18 episodes (about 104,000 words) from January to May 1941. When it re-appeared on December 1, 1949, as SGOL No. 78, it had been pruned to just 39,000 words; nearly two-thirds of the plot had been excised.

There were only two books a month post-war, instead of four, and Morcove and Cliff House Schools vanished utterly. Jane Preston, Elise Probyn, and other regular writers continued to contribute school stories, but there was now more emphasis on adventure yarns featuring slightly older girls. One of these was an engaging auburn-haired would-be actress, Gaye Leaman. She first appeared in early 1948 in the "G.C." in a Dorothy Page serial, "Assistant to the Secret Agent" (a husky young man named Peter Kirby and known as "Mr. X"). I do not know if it was reprinted in the SGOL, but its sequel certainly was. This was "The Return of Gaye and Mr. X" (No. 98, October 5, 1950). Both stories have much in common - they are really variants of the same plot. Each features a Moriarty-like scoundrel, a brilliant organiser with a vast network of lesser crooks all willing to do his bidding. In the first tale, the plan is to flood Britain with forged banknotes and clothing coupons (a nice period touch, that); in the SGOL book the intention is to steal a large art collection from a museum. Coincidences abound, and the plots creak appallingly, but Peter and Gaye come quite vividly to life, and there is a dramatic description of a vital chess match in which Gaye defeats the arch-criminal.

"Foolish, my dear young lady", he said mildly, 'for with my king I shall take your queen -'. He paused, with a tiny exclamation. For he had seen what Gaye had seen before. She had now only to move her pawn and his king was checkmated! 'Ah!' he breathed. 'Now! Move, young lady. Finish the game by checkmating me!'. Her eyes blazing with excitement, Gaye had taken up her king's pawn, but now she hesitated, tensed, for if she completed the move the secret of the chess-set

No. 78. - "THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN" LIBRARY.

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By HAZEL ARMITAGE

Mystery and thrills in this grand ice-skating story.

THE RETURN OF GAYE and MR. X

BY
Dorothy Page



would be revealed... Gaye threw caution to the winds. 'Checkmates!' she cried, and pegged the pawn home in its new square."

And she manages to conceal the hidden clue which manifests itself.

Both adventures end in Ireland, and the two are unique in that the chief villains are killed, one by a time-bomb, the other by gunshot. I know of no other instances of violent death in any Amalgamated Press stories. The author, "Dorothy Page" was in fact Stewart Pride, who had just become editor of the revived "School Friend" weekly, so perhaps he was given a little more freedom of action than other writers.

A third story of Gaye and Mr. X, "The Waxwork Secret Agent", came out in the 1951 "Girls' Crystal Annual". A curious aspect is that in all three cases the master-crooks are never named; they are referred to anonymously as "The Count", "The Professor", "The Stranger".

Peter Kirby is a younger, less debonair version of the famous sleuth Noel Raymond. Noel himself appears in two of the second-series SGOL books: "Detective

June's Strangest Case" (No. 121, October 4, 1951), and "June and the Masked Jester" (No. 133, April 3, 1952). The first is certainly his niece June Gaynor's most ridiculous and unconvincing case, for it postulates that she and the valet Parker are completely taken in for half the book by a bogus Noel Raymond. I simply do not believe that impostors can deceive close relations with whom they are in daily contact! Noel was never at his best when the rather tedious June was around, and these two stories are a feeble end to his distinguished career.

I have only two other SGOL books, both Ruritanian romances by Margery Marriott which had been serials in 1939 and 1940. These are "Princess on Probation" (No. 206, March 3, 1955) and "Guardian to the Royal Fugitives" (No. 224, November 3, 1955). The series apparently went on for a few more years until No. 400 or thereabouts, ending in 1963. It is not these thin, gaudily-coloured books that I remember with affection from my childhood; they were an unsatisfying substitute for the good old "yellow books" of pre-war which gave me and my sister so much happy reading.

No. 133.—"THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN" LIBRARY.

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June and the Masked Jester

An enthralling mystery story, featuring those famous detectives, June Gaynor and Noel Raymond.

By PETER LANGLEY

ONCE UPON A TIME

by Ernest Holman

King Richard III is not a character likely to crop up in our Hobby. However, reading recently that some of the present day doubts about his History really had their origins as far back as the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (some say even earlier) I found myself musing on our Hobby. Just when did all the research into papers, books, stories, etc., really commence?

When I look at many items, notes and so on that I have gathered together in the past, one thing is very clear. Whatever I may have decided for myself, the bulk of it all was provided by many others - far too numerous to mention but well-known to us all. I made quite a few 'discoveries' on my own behalf - but not a single one of them would have been possible without the previous researchers.

Whatever I eventually decided was based on the earlier works of so many interested Hobbyists - and I wonder how much we tend to take their findings for granted. We do so, of course, because they are the opinions of experts - and experts very often find themselves an unappreciated set of people. Actually, I do not believe in our particular Circle that this is so.

To try and trace just when the first beginnings were is (for myself) just 'not on'. When Story Paper Collector was started, it was to lead to the Old boys' Book Clubs as well as today's C.D. From then onward, the whole project branched out. Even before the War, though, there were those (some still amongst us, others sadly departed) who had more than an idea about things. The substitute stories were spotted by eagle-eyed readers, as were the more-than-one identity of a writer. Such matters never ever occurred to me then, when a name appeared against a story. Now, how thankful I am for all those many and varied revelations given by those great people, and by those who followed.

So - who first took the plunge, and when?

EDITOR'S NOTE: As a small tribute to two pioneers in the Hobby we are ending Mr. Holman's interesting article with a reproduction of a cover of W.H. Gander's **THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR** and an impression of Herbert Leckenby, the originator of the C.D., by Magnet artist C.H. Chapman. (The Chapman picture was part of a London O.B.B.C. tribute to Leckenby which appeared in an earlier C.D.)

THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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No. 106 of Pluck, November 10, 1906: the First St. Jim's Story



No. 4.

THE OWL'S CRY

"I say, old Smithy, hold on please!
Five bob is all I need!
For I am sagging at the knees
And fainting for a feed."

"But with a loan I shall improve
And really feel quite nimble.
Across the quad just see me move
For tarts from Mrs. Mimble."

"My postal order's not here yet,
That really is the rub.
I'm feeling very sharply set,
And I simply must have grub."

"I say, old chap! I say, old sport!
My friend, to say the least,
I find that I'm a little short,
Stop kicking me, you beast!"

"I say you fellows, hear me, pray!
Five bob I wish to borrow.
My postal order's on the way
And I'll pay you back tomorrow."

"I haven't had a bite since lunch,
Except a cake and chocs
From Coker's study. Just a munch,
A measly little box!"

"Dear old Harry! Dear old Frank!
My pals for a many a year,
Lend me five bob, then you I'll thank.
Yaroooooh! Leggo my ear!"



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