

The Schoolgirls' Own

VOL. 45
NO. 529



JANUARY 1991

**HAS MADGE MINDEN
BEEN TO THE PICTURES?**

(An incident from "Misjudged by Her Chums!" the grand school story in this issue.)

86P

2d

NEW YEAR GREETINGS TO ALL MY CUSTOMERS/FRIENDS

Recently purchased a large collection of a well known collector! Collection is a VERY COMPREHENSIVE one, includes almost all, with a few exceptions - the **complete bound volumes** of the MAGNET, half-years, and same GEMS. Thousands of single issues, also, as usual.

The C.D., beautifully bound in years from Vol. 1 to end of December 1987, Vol. 41., No. 492. Binding in fine cloth, and gilt lettering on spine with motif. Binding alone would cost £8 per volume; all as new. £400 the set, a joy to behold!
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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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W.H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

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JANUARY 1991

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Between Friends



A HAPPY NEW YEAR

I send warmest greetings to all of you and the hope that peace and happiness will be yours throughout 1991. The New Year is, of course, a time for fresh starts and resolutions. I remember Colonel Wharton's injunction to Harry to make up his mind to bear more patiently with Bunter, and try to make a better man of him! It is reassuring, when one's own New Year resolutions are so often short-lived, that even the sturdy Captain of the Greyfriars Remove could sustain this particular resolution only in fits and starts. Reforming the Fat Owl proved to be a task which was as unrewarding to Wharton and Co. as it was amusing to readers.

One fresh start which I'm sure everyone will applaud is the new series that starts in this issue of the C.D. You will see that in *Danny Looks Back* our diarist is again dipping into his deep well of memories for our delectation. He gives us a new look at some very old stories, which go back beyond the time of his already published diaries. It is good to have Danny writing again for us, and he tells me that this month's article is the first of a short series. Not too short, I hope.

I would like to draw your special attention to the information about The Greyfriars Club on pages 16 and 17 of this issue. To our regret this announcement, prepared by the Club's Chairman Mr. R.F. Acraman, was inadvertently omitted from our Annual. We are therefore rectifying the situation by placing it in this month's C.D. so that all of you can keep up to date with the Club's activities.

I have been browsing through the recently published catalogue of all the currently available Howard Baker volumes. This wonderfully useful and informative 28 page illustrated stock list is available from the publishers free of charge. All you have to do is to send a self-addressed A5 envelope, bearing 22p in stamps, to Howard Baker Press Ltd., 27A Arterberry Road, Wimbledon, London, SW20 8AF.

Happy Reading!

MARY CADOGAN

**MR. JOHN GOODCHILD:
a tribute from Darrell Swift of Happy Hours Unlimited**

Those readers who were able to obtain copies of the splendid reprints of such books as DIMSIE and JENNINGS, with their lovely presentation, will be sorry to hear of the untimely death of the publisher, John Goodchild.

Mr. Goodchild was also instrumental, along with his partner, Christopher de Lazlo, in publishing Mary Cadogan's book CHIN UP. CHEST OUT, JEMIMA! under the Bonnington Books imprint.

In the dealings we have had with Mr. Goodchild, we always found him to be obliging and courteous, and it was obvious that he was keen to further the extent of good quality juvenile literature. Our sympathy goes out to all at Jade/Bonnington Publishers - but we welcome the good news that their publishing concern will continue.



SUNDAY MORNING WITH THE LEAGUE OF THE GREEN TRIANGLE

by Mark Caldicott

There was a Sunday morning in early October which was unseasonably warm and sunny. Moreover, the rest of the family had deserted me and an unusual interlude of peace was in the offing. I took an extremely large pot of tea, a full toast rack and a quantity of marmalade out into the garden and settled down to read E.S. Brooks' account of Nelson Lee's first encounter with Professor Cyrus Zingrave and the League of the Green Triangle (NLL 1st Series No. 23 onwards). (I feel at this point I should reassure Mr. Bill Bradford, from whom this volume was borrowed, that the pages and the marmalade were kept entirely separate!) There followed a period of total escape into ESB's world of imagination.

Zingrave and the Green Triangle was probably one of the first major inventions of ESB, the first set of characters appearing over a series of episodes. He must have considered them a success, for they appear again and again.

The whole saga begins with a rich young man, Douglas Clifford, refusing to join the Triangle. He is imprisoned on a remote Scottish island, knowing the identities of the Triangle's leaders but unable to reveal his knowledge. After a fluke escape, he is rescued by Nelson Lee and, disguised as an older man to protect his life from Zingrave, forms a pact with Lee and Nipper to fight the Triangle in secret. Clifford has the additional problem that he has fallen for Zingrave's step-daughter, Vera. Successive episodes deal with Nelson Lee's ongoing battle with Zingrave's organisation. One by one its leaders fall into traps set by Lee, with Zingrave unaware that it is Lee who is the architect of his downfall. When Zingrave finally comes to realise the part played by Lee in his affairs the two become arch-enemies.

The next encounter is chronicled in Nugget Weekly (No. 9 onwards). After a number of episodes in which Lee foils the criminal schemes of Zingrave's men, the Triangle succeed in attacking Lee outside his Grays Inn Road rooms, injecting him with the 'germ of insanity'. (Strange how it has taken until now for researchers to suggest that schizophrenia is a viral illness when ESB knew this all the time back in the nineteen-twenties!) Fortunately, Nelson Lee is able to dash back to his laboratory and inject himself with the antidote. He is then able to feign insanity in order to penetrate Zingrave's criminal stronghold and frustrate the Triangle's scheme.

Later in the Nugget Weekly series, Zingrave joins forces with another of ESB's Nelson Lee Library characters, Jim the Penman, and their combined efforts almost defeat Lee and Nipper before the detectives come out on top.

There is a further sighting of the Triangle in a Blue Crusaders series in Boys' Realm (New Series, nos. 74-80). These adventures begin when the Crusaders

football team move to Bannington Grange as their new team headquarters. They find themselves plagued by ghostly apparitions and strange happenings. Ultimately the hand of Zingrave is suspected, and there are further adventures before the Crusaders triumph.

The final re-emergence of Zingrave and his organisation is in NLL 2nd New Series (Nos. 1-3, 102-109, 117-118). A freak accident in the grounds of St. Frank's reveals the presence of a member of the Triangle. Lee is soon on the trail, revealing a plot to steal the R202, the biggest airship in the world, to use it to terrorise the city of London. There is a battle aboard the airship which has disastrous results when the airship crashed down onto St. Frank's itself. The school is temporarily closed and a number of its students moved to premises adjoining Nelson Lee's Grays Inn Road consulting rooms. This select band form the Cub Detectives of Nelson Lee's Detective Academy. Together they take on the might of Zingrave's Green Triangle, and, of course, eventually subdue the enemy. There is a last skirmish later in this series, after the Cub Detectives have once again returned to the newly-rebuilt St. Frank's, but as far as I am aware there is no further appearance after NLL 2nd New Series No. 118.

To return to my Sunday morning relaxation in the company of those early adventures: it seems to me that writers who have the gift of transporting their readers to a world of undemanding, pure adventure, and who succeed in inducing in their readers such a sense of escape, with its attendant benefits of relaxation and enjoyment, deserve recognition. The world of literature does not seem to have a place for masters of the art of the adventure story. The literary criticism of E.M. Forster is typical. In his "Aspects of the Novel" he characterises a type of reader who says:

"I like a story. Very bad taste on my part, no doubt, but I like a story. You can take your art, you can take your literature, you can take your music, but give me a good story."

Forster sees pure story-telling as the antithesis of great literature. The story is the necessary evil of the great novel, a framework through which the great writer can explore the social values of his time, practise on us his philosophy of life, examine his own soul, and exorcise his innermost fears. Forster writes:

"When my brain decays entirely I shall not bother any more over great literature. I shall go back to the romantic shore where 'the ship struck with a fearful shock', emitting four demi-gods named Fritz, Ernest, Jack and little Franz, together with their father, their mother and a cushion, which contained all the appliances necessary for ten years' residence in the tropics. That is my eternal summer, that is what Swiss Family Robinson means to me... a reminder of early happiness. And until our brains do decay, must we not put all this aside when we attempt to understand books?"

I find it very difficult to understand this viewpoint. What is wrong with writers who help us maintain that eternal summer? There seems to be a great unfairness about the world of literature that writers like ESB, and so many others celebrated in the pages of CD are not regarded as having lasting literary merit. Surely writers who can maintain such a high quality of workaday craftsmanship in plotting, invention and storytelling deserve recognition. I acknowledge that not everyone would relish reading of the League of the Green Triangle. My view is subjective. But I do think that escapist literature can enrich the quality of our lives in a way

which serious literature cannot, and as such deserves a place alongside it. For myself, I do not wish to spend a beautiful Sunday morning with Dostoyevsky; give me ESB every time!



SEXTON BLAKE PENNY PICTORIAL REPRINTS IN THE 1927 POPULAR

by Ray Hopkins

My collection of the POPULAR is so minute it might almost be termed a handful so that it doesn't get browsed through very frequently. On a recent "decco" the name Goona Pearls in the title of a Sexton Blake yarn rang several loud bells which caused me to hasten back to the John Bridgwater article in the June SPCD. No mention there of the 1927 POPULAR. Heavens! Am I on the verge of an important discovery? Next port of call must be the Sexton Blake Catalogue produced by the Sexton Blake Circle in the 1960s and the Supplement thereto compiled by Len and Josie Packman. No record of my POPULAR story in these two publications. Apparently my tiny group also contains other PENNY PICTORIAL reprints as listed below.

<u>Penny Pic No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>POP. No.</u>	<u>Title</u>
53 (1908)	The Jewel Maker	438, 19 Jan. 27	The Case of the Artificial Rubies
633 (1911)	The Mystery of Box 'B'	444, 30 July 27	The Mystery of the Theatre Box
639 (1911)	The Goona Pearl Mystery	447, 20 Aug. 27	The Case of the Goona Pearls
644 (1911)	The Mystery of the Three Sovereigns	448, 27 Aug. 27	The Three Sovereigns

The Theatre Box in POPULAR 444 is indeed Box 'B'. Had the name Goona been omitted from the title in POPULAR 447, I would have been none the wiser and this article would never have been written.

It is something to wonder at the way the Amalgamated Press trundled out reprints over the years. "A Penny Saved (in authors' fees) is a Penny Earned" is a very real fact in this type of periodical publishing. From the PENNY PICTORIAL, 1907 to 1913, to the POPULAR in 1927 (there are

probably other years I know nothing about) and then on to further airings in the DETECTIVE WEEKLY, as recounted by John Bridgwater in the June SPCD, is really rather good going. Perhaps that is why the detective in the latter stories was re-named. No one would connect Marcus Max with Sexton Blake and the Amalgamated Press didn't realise that researchers in embryo would grow up to reveal its publishing secrets years later in the pages of the SPCD.

THE RUBY MAKER!

In the hollow of his hand Maxwell holds a glittering pile of rubies—his own—and yet he is starving! It is a strange adventure Sexton Blake finds himself involved in this week!



A Thrilling Story of
SEXTON BLAKE,
Detective.

*From THE POPULAR, 438: a reprint of
"The Jewel Maker" from PENNY PICTORIAL 453*

AN AMAZING THEFT!

The famous Goona Pearls disappear in mysterious circumstances. Who has stolen them? That problem Sexton Blake means to solve when he sets out on the trail!



A STIRRING LONG COMPLETE YARN OF SEXTON BLAKE,
THE WORLD-FAMOUS DETECTIVE!

*From THE POPULAR, 447: a reprint of
"The Goona Pearl Mystery" from PENNY PICTORIAL 639*



SLEUTHING SNIPPETS

by W.O.G. Lofts

There was once a Detective Inspector Jimmy Silver, who appeared in at least two novels in the thirties. Entitled 'The Midnight Mail' and 'Don't Shoot Darling' the books were written by Henry Holt. Most curiously the Scotland Yard Detective was portrayed with a very easy, happy-go-lucky



air, with the same temperament as the famous boy at Rookwood, in fact. Nothing is known about the author, except that also stories of his appeared in *The Thriller*, a companion paper to *The Boys' Friend* that houses our Jimmy Silver. Perhaps Henry Holt read of him as a boy? Similarly another admirer of Jimmy Silver was John Creasey, the famous detective writer, who told me so in a letter.

According to the Lofts/Adley dossier 'The Crime Fighters', up to about 1970 we discovered thirteen detectives with the name of 'Smith'. Probably the most famous would be Sir Denis Nayland Smith of Scotland Yard - who fought against the evil of Doctor Fu Manchu - the world famous character of Sax Rohmer.

There are eleven detectives of the name of Brown, the most famous being 'Father Brown' the creation of G.K. Chesterton, who was a Catholic Priest attached to St. Francis Xavier's Church, Camberwell.

Whilst we stand to be corrected, we found only one detective of the name of Green: Gregory George Gordon Green who owned the 'Gees' (obvious name) Detective Agency off of Haymarket, London. There was a series of books about this character, who was a very large, lanky, awkward man, similar to Horace Coker, though certainly competent at his job. He was created by Jack Mann, whose books are widely collected for their element of super-natural happenings.

(NEXT MONTH: Harold Hood)



A wonderful thing has happened. My brother Doug has been put in charge of a long run of a paper named PLUCK which was on the bookstalls a long time ago. Before the other war, in fact.

Doug's pal, who is older than my brother, has gone into the Air Force to help to demolish old Hitler, and he - the pal, not Hitler - has placed these lovely papers in Doug's care to look after them until he comes back from the war.

They are wonderful because they contain all the very first St. Jim's stories, before Tom Merry, his chums, and Mr. Railton came on the scene. And, marvel of marvels, Doug has taken pity on mouth-watering me. He says that I can read them all so long as I treat the papers with reverence and stop breathing while I read them.

And, gosh! They are breath-taking.

They all appear under the name of Charles Hamilton. Martin Clifford hadn't been heard of then, but any nitwit can see clearly that Martin Clifford of Gem fame was actually Charles Hamilton who thrilled and tickled and delighted the readers of Pluck.

Going over them all, it is quite clear that Charles Hamilton was well known and very popular with Pluck readers. Every few weeks he seems to have contributed a school story, sharing the limelight with S. Clarke Hook who wrote a series about Lyncroft School among others. Hook, in fact, was even more in evidence than Hamilton in those far-off days.

Browsing over all those Plucks I find a story or two by Hamilton about ROOKWOOD School. Not OUR Rookwood, the one we love so much, but another one. Glyn is the Captain of Rookwood and his fag is named Trimble. How those names tickle the memory. Hamilton also wrote of Lyndale School, which is really odd, considering that Hook was writing of Lyncroft. Must have been a bit confusing for those ancient readers.

But it's really only the St. Jim's tales which interest me. I can't enter all this in my ordinary Diary each night, so I'm going to make a complete entry at the back of my Diary where there are a number of blank pages for the writer's convenience.

The St. Jim's stories appeared fortnightly. The first one is "Jack Blake of St. Jim's", and the copy of Pluck is dated 10th November 1906. The Editor commented that "This is the opening story of a series which will without doubt become very popular." (He little guessed JUST HOW POPULAR. "You said a mouthful, Ed!" the Rio Kid would ejaculate.)

Jack Blake is at the gates of St. Jim's, which has two Houses - School House and New House. School House boys are called "Kids" after the name of their Housemaster who is Mr. Kidd. New House boys are called "Rats" after their Housemaster Mr. Ratcliff. Blake is described as between 14 and 15 years of age, clean-limbed and clear-eyed; a face, if not exactly handsome, pleasant and frank, and good to look upon. Three youths turn up at the gates - a tall, thin lad named Figgins, a fat boy named Wynn, and a third named Kerr, described as a freckled youth with red hair. I never again recall that description of Kerr. They are "Rats".

After a bit of a rag, two "Kids" come along. They are Herries, the Junior Captain of St. Jim's, and Digby, who share Study No. 6.

Blake is put into Study No. 6 with Herries and Digby, and soon makes his presence felt. The story develops into what I think is called melodrama. School House First Eleven is due to play the New House on the footer field. Monteith and Sleath plan to take Kildare out of the game by sending him a fake telegram saying his father was ill, and to go home at once. The wire is signed by Kildare's brother, Harry Kildare. (One would have thought "Harry" would be sufficient in this case, saving a copper on the surname.) Blake is able to expose the plot, so Kildare plays in the game and wins.

A fortnight later St. Jim's was back again. In between came the Pluck Christmas Double Number, 60 pages for 2d. Ah, me! The 2nd St. Jim's tale (24th November, 1906) is "Our Captain". Blake, of course, is well to the fore, but it is mainly a story of the seniors and the rivalry between Kildare and Monteith. These two have a fight. Guess who wins! These opening two St. Jim's tales are well-illustrated by Leonard Shields.

The 3rd story (8th December 1906) is "The Rivals", once more mainly continuing the Sixth Form rivalry theme. I wonder whether, originally, they

intended these tales to be about older boys. Sleath is elected treasurer for the school's sports funds. This one is illustrated by G.M. Dodshon.

With the 4th tale (22nd Dec. 1906) we come to "The Swell of St. Jim's". Kildare asks Blake to take under his wing a new boy "who has had a rather indiscreet upbringing". He is to go into Study 6 - so, very early on, that famous den had its full complement.

The new boy gives his name: "Arthaw Augustus D'Arcy". I wonder how long before he drops "Arthaw" and becomes "Arthur". Rather tall for his age. Clad in Etons that fitted him like a glove. The silkiest of silk hats. Delicate lavender kid gloves. He wore an eyeglass and looked around him with languid interest. He lisps. "Where is the portah - aw - to take in my twunks." Percy Mellish throws a crust at him, and D'Arcy complains to Mr. Lathom. But in an incident later D'Arcy refuses to tell tales. The boys call the Swell "Aubrey". So far nobody has called him "Gussy". I wonder who gave him that nickname - and when? I shall find out. This 4th tale has Shields back as the artist.

Mum has just called out "Danny, it's time you put your light out. Go to sleep. There may be an air-raid."

I'll continue with these early Pluck tales tomorrow. They're great. History. Glorious history! More soon, Diary.



EVERY
SATURDAY.

ONE
PENNY.

[VOL. 5, No. 112, NEW SERIES.]

Our Long, Complete School Tale!

An illustration of a young boy sitting at a desk in a study. He is wearing a cap and a jacket, and is looking into a mirror. On the desk are various items, including a book, a pen, and a small lamp. A suitcase is open on the floor next to the desk, and a small figure is visible inside it. The background is a simple sketch of a room.

The Swell of St. Jim's

Or, the Adventures of Arthur Augustus and how he fared at the hands of Jack Blake and Figgins & Co.

Eric Fayne Comments on "Danny Looks Back:

Danny was a lucky lad to have the chance of reading those initial St. Jim's stories, by Charles Hamilton - before Martin Clifford and Tom Merry came on the scene and took over. Very few of today's enthusiasts can have had that opportunity.

Anyone with experience of reading Hamilton in *PLUCK* would have no doubt, long before they knew for certain, that Hamilton was the real name of Messrs. Clifford, Richards, and Conquest.

There was a lovely "solid" feeling about those Edwardian papers. The solidity of the British Empire, perhaps, as we knew it then. In 1906 the penny papers had 36 pages, with the covers having a slightly thicker, polished quality. It was a solidity which was never quite recovered after it disappeared early in the 1914-18 war.

It is fascinating that Herries was Junior Captain. He was immediately outshone. In later times I cannot recall even one St. Jim's story with Herries in the lead, though he had some fame reflected from his famous dog, Towser. In 1910 in the *Gem* we came on a delightful romp "Herries' First Prize", with Towser carrying off the honours and his master reflecting his glory. But, for the most part, both Herries and Digby were names to the fore in the supporting cast, but that was all, as the years scurried away.

D'Arcy, turning up in the 4th tale, was very much a stock character of Edwardian fiction, though Hamilton developed him into the charming "Gussy" we came to love as time passed. The monocle was, perhaps, a minor mistake on the author's part. I can't imagine any school allowing a pupil to wear an eyeglass on the end of a cord, even had any parents been absurd enough to wish it.

As for us - well, of course we got accustomed to Gussy's monocle and loved it, however impossible it would have been in real life.

BULLIES, BEAKS AND FLANNELLED FOOLS

AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
OF BOYS' SCHOOL FICTION

1742 - 1990

by

Robert J. Kirkpatrick

(SEE PAGES 18 - 20)





BOOKS: FROM FAIRIES
TO FLASHMAN

FLOWER FAIRY books, by Cicely Mary Barker (Frederick Warne, £3.99 each): **SCRAP BOOK** by Sheila Coe (The Box of Delights £2.25, by post): **THE CHRISTMAS STORY, TOLD THROUGH PAINTINGS** by Richard Muhlberger (Gollancz, £9.95).
REVIEWED BY MARY CADOGAN

When I was about four years old I had to play the part of a flower fairy (the Bird's Foot Trefoil or Lady's Slipper) in a Sunday School entertainment. I was given a picture, to help my mother to make the appropriate flame and yellow dress for me, and a poem which I had to memorise and recite on the great day. At the time, of course, I had no idea that the illustration and verse were the work of Cicely Mary Barker, whose Flower Fairy books have never lost their refugent appeal. First published as long ago as 1923, they are now reprinted by Frederick Warne in near facsimile editions which retain the charm and precision of the originals. I know several adults, from a wide-ranging age-group, who will sieze on these to complete their sets of Flower Fairy books. Many present day children will also surely respond to them. The titles are **FLOWER FAIRIES OF THE SPRING: OF THE SUMMER: OF THE AUTUMN: OF THE WINTER: OF THE WAYSIDE: OF THE GARDEN: OF THE TREES**, and **A FLOWER FAIRY ALPHABET** (eight books in all). Each is a little gem. Cicely Barker's pictures, far from being wishy-washy fantasies, are skilful studies of real children as well as of flowers and trees in botanical detail. Over nearly five decades, her images of youthful innocence have become embedded in our imaginations. Her pictures seem definitive (if one can say this of anything as nebulous as fairies!). Frederick Warne are to be congratulated on the excellence of their editions of these appealing books.

Sheila Coe's **SCRAP BOOK** is a lively, 42 page booklet comprising scraps culled from old magazines, papers, books and other sources. Its flavour is late-Victorian and Edwardian, and it provides fascinating insights into the manners and mores of those times. I particularly appreciated the hints for hostesses on how to give a garden party for 100 people for Four Guineas; also the fashion notes and the section on games - hoops, marbles, kites, etc. The interesting snippets are profusely and atmospherically illustrated. The book can be obtained by callers at The Box of Delights (which is a shop) for £2; it can be sent by post for £2.25. The address is 25 Otley Street, Skipton, N. Yorks., BD23 1DY (Tel: 0756 790111). Proceeds from the sale of this attractive booklet will be donated to the Wheatfields Hospice, Leeds.



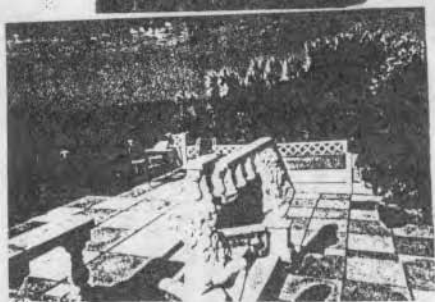
The Traveller's Joy Fairy

THE CHRISTMAS STORY, told mainly through some of the great paintings of the Nativity is a book on which many Christmas book tokens might well be spent. The pictures are finely reproduced in full colour and, combined with Richard Muhlberger's interesting and informative commentary, they warmly set the seasonal scene. As the book's jacket blurb claims, this represents 'a unique and fascinating journey to Bethlehem'.

DANDY BEANO - GREAT STORIES FROM THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS. Published by D.C. Thomson and Co. Ltd. at £5.59.
Reviewed by Norman Wright.

For the third year running D.C. Thomson have produced another bumper selection culled from their two famous comics. Unlike the previous volumes in the series this offering concentrates on the adventure strips and stories that were a regular feature of Beano and Dandy during the first quarter century of their existence.

In past issues of *Collectors Digest* I have waxed lyrically over Jimmy and His Magic Patch and it will therefore come as no surprise to readers that I find the contents of this volume totally to my taste! Within the book's 144 pages all the adventure heroes of my Beano and Dandy reading days are to be found in abundance. Tom Thumb, Danny Longlegs, Jimmy Watson, Jack Flash, Jeneral Jumbo and a host of others are all there to remind us of the superbly drawn strips that the two comics have featured. As would be expected many of the strips are from the pen of Thomson's greatest comic-strip artist, Dudley Watkins. His work is well represented in the strips reprinted, and my only real disappointment is that the four complete 'Jimmy and His Magic Patch' strips which are reprinted towards the back of the book are the work of Paddy Brennan rather than of Dudley Watkins.
(Continued on Page 18).



THE GREYFRIARS CLUB first established in January 1977 to give more personal direct encouragement and feedback to the publishers of the beautiful reproductions of the MAGNET & GEM (and allied magazines) by means of club meetings at which members could personally meet the publisher and discuss further new reproductions and which club is now in its 14th YEAR OF QUARTERLY MEETINGS many of which have been attended by our Hon. President Howard (Bill) Baker and the late Miss Edith Hood (Hon. President of the FRANK RICHARDS MUSEUM & LIBRARY Trustees); - have great pleasure in extending THE HEARTIEST CHRISTMAS GREETINGS to our President and to all hobby connoisseurs of goodwill and integrity everywhere, not forgetting Eric and Mary, our Editors of the C.D./A's, and in particular all those members who have written to your Chairman conveying their news and good wishes. As always, membership of the club is COMPLETELY FREE. For further advices see our previous announcement in the 1988 and 1989 C.D. Annual.

...the first year was this has been apart from the odd touch of sadness when we heard of the

What another grand year this has been, apart from the odd touch of sadness when we heard of the loss of another old member, Esmond Kadish, who passed away earlier this year, and our sympathy goes out to his family in their tragic loss. Your Chairman was happy to be able to respond to Esmond's relatives request to help them to dispose of his collection to our good friend, Norman Shaw for some thousands of £'s, which sum they were delighted to accept. At a subsequent meeting at the castle, Renee Kadish expressed the thanks of the family.

Members will be delighted to know that, following in the footsteps of his brother who had long since obtained his degree of B.Sc (Hons), our second son Roger recently qualified as an A.C.C.A (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) and, needless to say both are doing extremely well in their chosen professions. Your Courtfield hostess (Shown above) has also been a Fellow of the A.C.C.A for a number of years. Also this year, your Chairman received his patent (Shown above) for the above Arms and Crest for which he was proposed and seconded, and which were granted two years ago by the King of Arms. Purchase of further property at Kingsgate Castle by your Chairman was also completed earlier this year, thus enlarging our freehold in this lovely old castleright on the very edge of England, with its concealed entrance to the long underground tunnel from the main hall to the sea - used for smuggling in past centuries, and guarded at the sea end by a solid inch-thick iron door. The courtyard of the castle, and our private terrace is also shown above. I think our Frank must have used the castle as a basis for his stories many times, as it is just a short walk along the clifftop from Percy Avenue where he lived, and it is surely a fitting home for the FRANK RICHARDS MUSEUM & LIBRARY.

At our last two meetings we visited the lovely old Greyfriars monastery in Canterbury as well as the beautiful old Cathedral. At the last meeting members attended at the castle a large barbecue was arranged with some 30 attenders, closing with a really professional fireworks display, and a really great time was had by all.

Spring meeting at the castle will be on Sunday 7th April 1991, but private viewing of the museum by club members can only be arranged by written or telephoned appointment to your Chairman R.F (Bob) Acraman, Curator of the FRANK RICHARDS MUSEUM & LIBRARY & Director of Kingsgate Castle.
Telephone Kingsgate Castle 0843 64460 or Stevenage 0438 352930.

The editor of the volume has selected his material with an eye on variety. The strips chosen are drawn from all periods of the two comics' history as well as from several annuals. The result is a volume that will appeal to the casual reader as well as the hardened Beano and Dandy enthusiast.

Most of the strips reprinted originally appeared in either black and white or red and black. For 'Great Stories From the First Fifty Years' they have all been coloured. I have to admit that it took me time to get used to seeing my old black and white favourites in full colour - rather like seeing a 'colourised' version of an old black and white Hollywood classic - but once I accepted it I found the book repeatedly readable and I have looked through it at least half a dozen times in the week it has been in my possession.

so there it is, another lovely volume from D.C. Thomson containing many memorable strips at a price that just cannot be beaten. So if you are wondering what to acquire with that Christmas book token hesitate no longer; exchange it for a copy of this book and spend a few hours in the exciting company of 'Crackaway Jack', 'Black Bob', 'Young Frankie Drake' and the other Beano and Dandy adventurers.

BULLIES, BEAKS AND FLANNELLED FOOLS: An Annotated Bibliography of Boys' School Fiction, 1742-1990. By Robert J. Kirkpatrick. Published by (and obtainable from) the Author, at 244 Latimer Road, London, W.10 6QY. Price: £8.00 including Postage & packing. 120 pages.
Reviewed by Brian Doyle.

The name of Robert Kirkpatrick has been familiar to readers and collectors of boys' school stories since he began issuing his splendidly-informative and often amusingly-annotated catalogues of books for sale around 1987. He was, and continues to be, to the best of my knowledge, the only dealer who specialises solely in this fascinating and rewarding field of English literature.

Now Mr. Kirkpatrick places us further in his debt by writing and compiling the first-ever comprehensive Bibliography of boys' school fiction, from 1742 right up to the present.

His coverage is enormous and widely-researched and deals with hard-cover books of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, paper-backed 'Pocket Libraries' (such as the Schoolboys' Own Library), the books and paper-backs of Charles Hamilton, adult novels and crime stories set in schools, plays and films, TV productions, 'Penny Dreadfuls' and anthologies.

Details are arranged in lists, mainly under authors, giving publishers, number of pages, and date of publication, and the adult novels have annotated paragraphs giving brief summaries of story, background, etc.

The boys' school stories range over such favourite authors as Harold Avery, R.S. Warren Bell, Richard Bird, Anthony Buckeridge, Hylton Cleaver, Desmond Coke, R.A.H. Goodyear, Frederick Farrar, Gunby Hadath, Alfred Judd, Michael Poole, Talbot Baines Reed and P.G. Wodehouse, as well as relative unknowns such as the Reverend James Alexander's TRUTH AND LOVE, or SCHOOLBOYS AND THEIR TEACHERS (1860) and Arthur Herman Gilkes' THE THING THAT HATH BEEN, OR A YOUNG MAN'S MISTAKES (1894). The 1742 publication (as indicated in the title), incidentally, was Thomas Spateman's THE SCHOOLBOY'S MASK: a Play in Five Acts, said by Mr. Kirkpatrick to be the first major, as opposed to incidental, appearance of a school in prose. It pre-dates what is usually

acknowledged as the very first school story, Sarah Fielding's *THE GOVERNESS*, or *THE LITTLE FEMALE ACADEMY* (1749) by seven years.

Indeed, as Mr. Kirkpatrick points out, although Thomas Hughes' *TOM BROWN'S SCHOOL DAYS* (1857) is often assumed to be the first boys' school story, it was preceded by at least 40 others.

But it was really *TOM BROWN'S SCHOOL DAYS*, followed by Frederick Farrar's *ERIC*, or *LITTLE BY LITTLE* (1858) and his *ST. WINIFRED'S* (1862) that actually 'launched' the boys' school story, as readers came to know the genre. Later the form (some might say format) was developed by such popular writers as Talbot Baines Reed with his many serials in the magazine *BOYS' OWN PAPER* (which began in 1879).

Mr. Kirkpatrick prefaces his listings of books and authors with a short but useful historical survey of the genre; this, I think, should have been longer and covered the field in more detail.

I have few criticism of this fascinating and essential new work. A comprehensive final Index would have been extremely useful. As it is, if you are searching for a particular author or book, you have to look it up in several different sections.

Traditionalist as I am, I was surprised to see listed eight books based on the dreadful *GRANGE HILL* BBC TV series which is set in a mixed comprehensive school whose pupils comprise mainly ill-spoken yobs and yobesses, whose exploits are almost solely concerned with sex, violence, crime and drugs. Rubbish such as this should not, in my opinion, have found a place in this Bibliography. It's akin to listing the works of James Hadley Chase or Peter Cheyney in a Bibliography of English Classical novels! In the same way, the 1979 film *SCUM* should not have been listed (but it is).

Whilst I was pleased to see my own *WHO'S WHO OF BOYS' WRITERS AND ILLUSTRATORS* listed in the Bibliography, I should have thought that my later book *THE WHO'S WHO OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE* was worthy of a mention, since it covers many school story authors and illustrators. And, though several books about children's literature are listed, there is no mention of Roger Lancelyn Green's marvellous book *TELLERS OF TALES* (originally published 1946 but revised and enlarged in the 1960s), which has a whole chapter on school stories plus bibliographical lists.

I could find only around 20 titles of boys' hard-cover school stories (that are in my own collection of around 1500 volumes in the genre) which are not included in Mr. Kirkpatrick's book, but I will refrain from boring readers by listing them all. Though I was surprised that Auberon Waugh's adult and quite famous school novel *THE FOXGLOVE SAGA* had been omitted, as well as a personal favourite, Gilbert Jessop's *CRESLEY OF CRESSINGHAM* (although Jessop's equally fine *ARTHUR PECK'S SACRIFICE* is included).

And, although Mr. Kirkpatrick lists over 30 illustrated editions of *TOM BROWN'S SCHOOL DAYS*, he omits two of my own favourite editions - those illustrated excellently by Leonard Huskinson (Heirloom Library, London, early-1950s) and by the famous Ernest H. Shepard (Ginn, London, 1959).

Mr. Kirkpatrick has an eye for the off-beat books. Readers like myself who remember seeing a seemingly-interminable series of somewhat shady-looking, plain-wrapped books bearing such titles as 14 - *A DIARY OF THE TEENS* and 16 - *A DIARY OF THE TEENS* (ranging from the age of 8 to 19) set largely in Prep and Public Schools and written by 'A Boy' - and often displayed amidst the male trusses

and other surgical aids in the windows of 'medical shops' in London's Soho, Charing Cross Road and seedy side-streets - are here revealed by Mr. Kirkpatrick to have been written by one Aubrey Fowkes, a pseudonym for the sinister though aristocratic-sounding R. Vere Cripps. They were published between 1937 and 1954, mainly for an adult audience, by the Fortune Press (ribadly dubbed by the knowing of the time as the 'Gay-Friars Press...')

Browsing through the long and exhaustive lists in this book is a joy, as well as being entertaining, informative and amusing. All sorts of 'records' leap out at the reader. The most prolific author of boys' hard-cover school stories (omitting the incomparable Charles Hamilton and Eswy Searles Brooks) is R.A.H. Goodyear with a total of 45 published books in the genre. Next in order of productivity are Gunby Hadath (43 titles, if you include books written under his pseudonym of John Mowbray), Avery (41), Cleaver (33), Poole (28), Bird (23), Buckeridge (22) and Judd (18). Remember, these are their boys' school stories - many wrote books of other types as well.

Avery notches up the longest writing career with 43 busy years, followed by Hadath with 40 years, Cleaver with 30 years, and Buckeridge (who is happily still with us at 78) with 27 writing years (his writing career seems to have ended in the 1970s after turning out all those 'Jennings' books).

The most popular words in boys' school stories in hard-cover titles seem to be 'School' 'Boy(s)', 'Captain' or the name of the leading character. Michael Poole is outright winner with 'School' appearing in no fewer than 22 of his book-titles.

There is much more I could mention, especially about the many plays and films based on school stories. But space precludes this.

BULLIES, BEAKS AND FLANNELLED FOOLS is an outstanding and unique contribution to the field of juvenile literature research and is packed with fascinating and useful information. For anyone who enjoys - or ever has enjoyed - reading boys' school stories, and there are about 3,750 listed here, Robert Kirkpatrick's book is a must. It provides hours of enjoyable, fruitful and nostalgic browsing and it also constitutes an important and unique new literary Bibliography (and the first in its field).

Kirkpatrick, R.J., of the Sixth, gets his school colours, is awarded the Cock House Cup, and is herewith elected Captain of the (Boys' Fictional) School...!

FLASHMAN AND THE MOUNTAIN OF LIGHT - George MacDonald Fraser (Collins Harvill). Reviewed by Mark Taha.

As a devout Flashman fan, I always waits impatiently for the next Flashman book, and it's always worth waiting for! This latest one is no exception; following on from the 1977 "Flashman's Lady", it covers his experiences in the first Sikh war of 1845-46 and, as usual, makes me want to read up more about it. Mr. Fraser confirms his standing as a historical novelist, not just a fiction writer, as he involves Flashman with political intrigue in the Punjab, the incredible Maharani Jeendan, one of those "modern Messalinas" he's always coming across (e.g. Lola Montez in "Royal Flash", Raneek Lakshmbai in "Flashman in the Great Game", Queen Ranavalona in "Flashman's Lady", Empress Yehonala in "Flashman and the Dragon"), her maid and sidekick Mangla, the unbelievable-if-not-true "Tartan Pathan" and "Man Who Would Be King", and the Sikhs' equally incredible Army, almost land pirates in their democratic structure, discipline and efficiency in combat, and general

depredations, the Khalsa. With historical characters like these, creating fictional ones would be superfluous. We almost meet again characters from the original "Flashman" General and Lady Sale, George Broadfoot, and Major Henry Havelock.

Flashy is his usual self: cad, womaniser, doing his best to stay out of danger and finding himself, scheming himself, even-up to his neck in it, the pawn of people in authority who believe his reputation; this time, he actually does some good service! I suppose that being adviser to an enemy general on how to "throw" a battle was right up his street; I always thought a clever coward like him would make an excellent general.

It's hard to recommend this book too highly; Mr. Fraser is my favourite living writer, Flashman my favourite character. I hope the next Flashman book will concern the American civil War; how even he managed to serve on the staffs of both sides... incidentally, the Mountain of Light is ... read the book!

THE MYSTERIOUS MR. EDWARDS

by Len Hawkey



MR. EDWARDS OF LONDON.

Throughout their lives the Harmsworth brothers were staunch supporters of the British Empire, and the House of Windsor, and this was reflected in all their publications, whether adult or juvenile. This strong vein of patriotism is evident in many of the stories featured in their boy's papers, and on innumerable occasions the Monarch - in the shape of Queen Victoria, King George the Fifth, or George VIth - rewards some daring young

Britishers for saving the world, climbing Everest, flying to Mars, or some equally fantastic feat of "derring-do". Tribute must also be paid to the illustrators who invariably captured a clear likeness of the royal personage involved.

As well as Sherlock Holmes and Sexton Blake, other detectives were called to higher service, occasionally, but possibly the most intriguing introduction of royalty was in the Boy's Friend in 1921. Here, the boot was on the other foot, so to speak, as the royal personage - albeit somewhat veiled - was always performing some gracious service for a less fortunate subject.

These tales were about "The Mysterious Mr. Edwards, of London", and according to the Editor, in Issue No. 1057, they dealt with "a splendid character who is always out to help the everyday people with whom he comes in contact". The author was never named, tho' from the style it might have been either Cecil Hayter or Walter Edwards, both of whom were B.F. regulars, at that time. "Mr. Edwards" is described as follows:- "A slim figure in light-grey tweeds, with a soft-felt hat, set at a slightly rakish angle, - a young man of healthy well-poised stature, with tanned face, and an alert, eager, expression".



A VETERAN AT THE GAME! Mr. Edwards of London stepped noiselessly into the room and looked on in admiration. The man before him, unaware of his presence, was going at the punch-ball hammer and tongs, and the way in which he worked brought a smile of approval from the young man by the door.

"THE QUITTER", Fred Holmes, 1921

In his first exploit, "Mr. Edwards" saves Cralshire Cricket Club from extinction, provides for the purchase of their ground, and retention of their old professionals. He also plays for them against a rival county, and scores a creditable 39. In "Jemsey Bolt's Chance" he gets an apprentice jockey (sacked for allegedly ill-treating a champion racehorse) reinstated. Then, in "Saving the Cup" he rescues a football club, and plays in goal for them, into the bargain. "The Quitter" concerned an old pugilist, and his wayward son. "Mr. Edwards" contrives to make a man of the lad, while in the final story - "The Hound of Bleakdale" - he is instrumental in securing the release of a wrongly convicted man, and of reuniting him with his faithful dog.

The series itself, although written with panache, was not particularly remarkable, - nor was the theme of a wealthy "Robin Hood" going around and helping deserving cases. But to centre the yarns on a prominent member of the Royal Family seems unique: a number of hints are dropped from time to time, and once or twice "Mr. Edwards" is recognised, but in each case the person is discreetly silent. In 1921, the then Prince of Wales (for that is who "Mr. Edwards" undoubtedly was) was the idol of the "man in the street", and although the concept of building these tales around his generous reputation seems to have passed without comment,

one wonders what the reaction would be today, were some aspiring author to pick on Prince Charles, for example?

1921 was two or three years before I got round to reading the "Boy's Friend", but I would like to know how many of its readers guessed the identity of the mysterious "Mr. Edwards of London" - the real give-aways were the excellent illustrations of Fred Holmes, which should have readily confirmed any suspicions. Of course, some few readers, interested in artists, might ask "Who was Fred Holmes" - but that is another story - and, also, another mystery.

As to "Mr. Edwards", how sad it is to know what life really had in store for him. Had he known then what we know now, he may well have opted to remain that mysterious benefactor of the "under-dog", forever.



ROGER M. JENKINS

No. 237 - Magnets 1493-6 - Loder's Convict Cousin Series

As a general rule, unpleasant characters at Hamilton schools were the only ones who brought shameful disgrace upon their families. It is true that Paul Tyrrel was Bob Cherry's ne'er-do-well cousin, and Brian Mauleverer was best known as a beachcomber, but it was Loder who possessed the distinction of having a convict cousin at Blackmoor. Oddly enough, Loder had never seen his cousin and, though his father wrote to instruct him to take no notice of the announcement of his cousin's escape, since the name was a common one, the advice came too late: Loder's reaction to the news was known all over Greyfriars.

An added dimension to this series was Wibley's new play about a convict, and his masquerade added a piquant element to the plot. Incidentally, it was in this connection that Skinner displayed traces of his old mocking humour even as late as this: when Wibley asked him to go to Courtfield to fetch the convict costume, Skinner declared that he would like nothing better - but unfortunately it was his self-denial week and he had to deny himself the pleasure.

When the real convict appeared, it was strange that he seemed quite reasonable and civilised, and the arrival of a new temporary games master at Greyfriars under the name of Lagden (a favourite name for Hamilton to use when characters were not what they seemed to be) made it clear to old

readers that something suspicious was afoot. Whether Charles Hamilton intended a connection to be made between Lagden and old lag is open to question.

Echoes of greatness had not disappeared from the Magnet in 1936. The Bounder's feud with Loder was of great importance to the plot, since they were both in the position of having met the convict - indeed, he had pulled Vernon-Smith out of the river. What is more noticeable is Redwing's declining role in the stories. When the Bounder wanted advice he went to Wharton, and this was part of the growing emphasis of concentrating on the major characters. On the whole, this series was lively and varied enough, with sufficient twists and turns in the plot to maintain the reader's interest. Above all, it lasted for only four numbers and so it never outstayed its welcome. When the reader still feels he would like a series to have gone on longer, the author has done wisely to call a halt.



GORDON HUDSON (Chester Le Street): I see the November C.D. includes a list of the Blake films showing in 1929. But does anyone know what happened to the Blake plays? Are the scripts still available? I think the Donald Stuart play (I can't remember the name but I read the story in *Union Jack*) would be worth seeing.

W.O.G. LOFTS (London): In answer to P. Mahony (Nov. C.D.) the missing titles he requires of Lannagan stories in the Western Library (110 issues) are as follows: 25, Lannagan's Law. 29, Lannagan Strikes it rich. 33, Lannagan's Hunch. 37, Lannagan Gets Hired. 43, Lannagan Loads His Guns. 57, Odds Against Lannagan. 60, Kit of Slash K. 85, Lannagan's Lot. 88, Lannagan Hits Trouble. Nos. 2 Quick on the Trigger and No. 60 listed above were the only two without Lannagan in the title.

Both the Western Library and Sexton Blake Library were edited by Len Pratt with, of course, John Hunter writing for both. Lannagan was based a great deal on his other famous character Captain Dack of the tramp steamer Mary Ann Trinder, who helped Blake in many cases. Especially in having a slice of the proceeds of any spills! I knew the author very well, meeting him at his home at Worthing many times, as well as the Wine Lodge. An extremely nice man, he was fond of telling anecdotes of *Chums* and fellow authors. He died in 1961 aged 69. His output was enormous. He is now proved to have written at times the whole contents of *Boys Magazine*.

H. BLOWERS (Leeds): I was interested to read about John Hunter (P. Mahony, November C.D.). I picked up a hard-backed book recently, *Thunder Island*, by this author, published by George Newnes Ltd. Would I be right in thinking that this story was used as a serial under John Hunter's name in some publication of the amalgamated Press?

(Editor's note: Mr. Alan Dacre of Barrow in Furness sent me the poem GREYFRIARS YOUTH, printed below, and wonders if any C.D. reader can give him chapter and verse on it. He would like to know the name of the author, and whether (and where) the poem has been published. Could it have been in an early C.D. I wonder? Mr. Dacre was sent the poem by Mr. Bert Holmes in 1970, and the suggestion was then made that possibly it might have been written as a tribute to Charles Hamilton soon after his death.)

GREYFRIARS YOUTH

Throughout the world man oft his tried to find
The bloom of youth, to keep its life and power;
And yet, alas, it passes by mankind
Like freshness fading from a summer flower.

Although in spirit man does keep alive
This gentle charm fed by a youthful heart,
And oh! what cheer is due to those who strive
With brush or pen to give us works of art.

The mind that gave us Greyfriars and its haunts,
With schoolboys radiating health and cheer,
Has given love and joy that nothing daunts
To those who will forever hold it dear.

What pleasant thoughts of happy bygone days
That ancient pile of Greyfriars seems to give;
One walks again through lanes and pleasant ways,
The ancient elms and cloisters - yet they live.

The green of Friardale Wood, the summer sky,
The playing fields, the Close, and studies bright,
Where schoolboy laughter never seemed to die,
Where comradeship was law and hearts were light.

And those who lived at times within this sphere,
Their number spread in many distant lands,
All share these thoughts of youth so very dear.
Across the seas in spirit joining hands,

To wish a blessing on the one whose pen,
Made youth live on though years rolled swiftly by,
Who melted gloom in souls of youths and men,
And left a treasure house of thought that cannot die.

GREEN EYES AND LITTLE YELLOW GODS

Certain story themes seemed to attach themselves to particular girls during the long saga of the Cliff House adventures. With Babs, it was the loss of her treasured captaincy, and her championship of maligned and troubled characters. Other favoured themes grew naturally out of characterisation, so that the more lawless elements were seldom out of trouble, all of which provided ample scope for conflict and adventure. There were brothers, boyfriends, beleaguered relatives and jealous contemporaries, even a favourite mistress, all bringing problems for solution, sterling aims for the prestige of the school, and the endless tribulations of those unfortunates who seemed incapable of managing their own lives. All these combined to keep the pots of conflict and emotion ever on the boil. Material objects however, except in cases of theft did not lend themselves so easily as triggers of strong emotional stories, but not for the want of trying by successive owners of the Hilda Richards pen. Mabel Lynn got involved at least twice with mysterious items from more exotic regions.

The first occasion, which did not really take off from its introductory theme of legend and oriental mystery, took place at Mabs' own home, Lynn's Folly, in the SCHOOL FRIEND issue of January 1st, 1921 entitled THE SPECTRE OF LYNN'S FOLLY.

Mabs was entertaining ten of her school friends that Christmas and New Year, and a cosy gathering round the good old traditional log fire inevitably produced the tale of the legend of Lynn's Folly which had begun exactly one hundred years before. A strange, wizened Chinese sailor had come to the door and told Mabs' great grandfather that treasure was buried at Lynn's Folly. He had suggested that he and Mab's great grandfather should search together for it and split its value. When the Squire refused to agree to this the Chinese sailor became abusive and was thrown out, whereupon the sailor swore that ill fortune would befall the house. During the fracas the Chinaman had dropped a strange carved ivory charm, which still hung in the hall to that day and now seemed about to set up renewed scares connected with the old legend. For the Chinese sailor had been found dead in a snowdrift and his ghost had been reputed to haunt the old house ever since, no doubt in search of his lost ivory amulet.

Now strange bells began to tinkle, ghostly white shapes fluttered outside windows and along dark passageways, and soon the girls are mystified after seeing a ghostly presence with glowing green eyes, a presence which seems able to change and diminish or elongate its shape. However, when all the mince pies vanish, to be found later strewn across the floor and each one pierced by the ivory amulet, Bessie decides to take a hand, after suspicion of the mince pies mystery naturally fell upon her. As though Bessie would waste good mince pies by stabbing them though the heart with an old Chinese amulet!

So Bessie, unusually valiant in borrowed armour and with sword aloft, leads a ghost hunt. By now the deductive reader will be suspecting monkey business --- and the odour of red herring --- and sure enough a small monkey belonging to a friend of Mabs' brother, is captured and the mysteries are solved before the old year fades.

Much more sinister was the ancient and ugly bronze Aztec idol which came into Mabs' possession during the series MABEL LYNN'S MYSTERY IDOL,

(SCHOOLGIRL November 1934 and SGOL 684). The jewelled idol, with ten arms, was sent to Mabs by her father, who was touring America with his new play. Soon, mysterious events begin with the advent of Guatelama, the Guardian of the malevolent looking idol, whose voice is heard although he is not seen. An urgent message then arrives from Major Lynn, instructing Mabs to hide the idol and tell no one about it. Too late, already the whole school knows about Mabs' strange new possession. But she does hide the little bronze god.

The First of a Splendid New Series of Mystery Tales Featuring
Mabel Lynn and Barbara Redfern & Co. of the Fourth Form.



Mabel Lynn's Mystery Idol

by Hilda Richards

Returning from the midnight expedition that this necessitates, Mabs encounters an unpleasant man and woman who kidnap her and bundle her into a car. Cliff House girls are unfailingly resourceful and Mabs manages to drop one of her green slippers to leave a starting clue for Babs and the chums when eventually they discover that she is missing. The search begins promptly, after the merciless Clara has hauled her hockey team out of bed at the crack of dawn in order to put in some tough training. After a bracing start at the swimming pool she then chivvies them along the frosty lane to Friardale in a brisk jog, which is Clara's idea of a morning's tone-up, and thus the slipper is found. Also, an indignant Piper wants to know who opened the school gates during the night.

The chums, unaware of Mabs' nocturnal activities, believe the idol has also disappeared. Jemima takes a hand, and Pluto, Clara's Alsatian pet is co-opted into the detective team. Soon the girdle of Mabs' dressing gown is found, then the second slipper. Mabs has been imprisoned in the ruins of Friardale Priory.

The voice of Guatelama instructs her to dig through some fallen masonry in her cell, whereupon she will discover a way of escape. But Mabs has developed a feverish cold and is not in the best of health for masonry digging. Then John Wheway (the Hilda Richards of that time) introduces one of his chill, sadistic characters. Wheway was well aware of how psychological cruelty can be infinitely more menacing than the bullying kind.

Tony smiled. "Awake, I see", he said silkily. "Had a refreshing sleep, Miss Lynn?"

Mabs breathed deeply but did not reply.

"You look tired, little one", he said, eyeing her keenly. "You look ill, too... The drips from the roof did not trouble you?" he added pleasantly.

Mabs shuddered.

"It is moist, is it not", Tony went on purringly. "Last night I gave you a rug but it will be --- oh so terrible in the nights to come, without a rug, when you have had no food and nothing to drink; when hunger bites and thirst ravages you. But still", he shrugged, this is a distasteful subject, is it not?"

Even Tony's confederate, the woman called Clarissa, is afraid of him. But Mabs does succeed in tearing away at the fallen masonry and scrambling up an old chimney shaft to escape. Fleeing from the pursuing Tony she falls and hits her head, and the girls arrive just in time to prevent her recapture. Pluto can be very menacing and Tony decides not to argue with the powerful Alsatian.

But Mabs is not out of danger. She becomes very ill and loses her memory, and a specialist is called from London to tend her, bringing with him a special nurse. Here the plot advances into the realm which stretches to breaking point the credulity of the reader. Tony and the woman waylay the specialist, imprison him on Belwin Island, and pass themselves off as Dr. Ferado and the nurse.

Bessie becomes involved when, on her ceaseless quest for tuck, she hides her stolen goodies in an antique chest in Jemima's study. Jemima has worked out quite a few things for herself as, unfortunately for Tony, Jemima knows the real Dr. Ferado. She has also discovered the idol, hidden it in her antique chest, phoned the home of the real doctor and discovered that he had left for Cliff House two days previously. So Jemima sets off in search of the specialist, unknowing that Bessie, dipping into her hidden hoard, has found the idol. Bessie is terrified by the voice of Guatelama instructing her to hide it immediately.

Unfortunately, Jemima has slightly underestimated the ruthless Tony and is captured in her turn, to find herself imprisoned with the real doctor. Meanwhile, Mabs is still lost to the world of Cliff House and Babs, desperately worried about her chum, is also beginning to have her suspicions of the fake doctor and nurse.

Guatelama does not take long to find the whereabouts of Jemima and brings a message from her back to Cliff House. There are more mishaps, the message is mislaid and almost indecipherable by the time it reaches Babs. Then at last the chums set off on their rescue mission, taking Mabs with them and planning to capture Tony and get the key to the Belwin Island dungeon. All works out successfully. Clumsy Bessie manages to clobber Mabs on the head and restore her memory. Tony and the woman are arrested. Guatelama passes the guardianship of the idol to Jemima, and Major Lynn turns up, having discovered that the idol he had bought was actually stolen property and a very precious relic of Guatelama's tribe.

Barbara Redfern & Co. of the Fourth Form at Cliff House School
Have an Exciting Time Solving a Thrilling Mystery.



The SECRET OF THE IDOL!

by Hilda Richards

The eyes of the idol --- if not green --- prove to be rubies, and Major Lynn promises to restore it to the Aztec descendants to whom it rightfully belongs.

Mabs is restored to health, and everyone is happy --- except the unpleasant Tony. Which is exactly how it should be!

WANTED: by Collector. JOHN HAMILTON: Pre-War hardbacks, any title with or without D/W, including the 'Ace Series' 'Airmans Bookcase' 'Flying Thrillers' 'Sundial Mystery' and Adventure Library, and Airmans Bookclub editions in Dustwrappers. W.E. JOHNS: Any Pre-War hardbacks, with or without D/W, and Paperback editions of 'MOSSYFACE' (by William Earle) and any 'BOYS FRIEND LIBRARY' Editions, any condition considered. JOHN TRENDLER, 7 Park Close, Bushey, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD2 2DE. Tel. (0923) 31608.

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: Early BEANOS, good prices paid. Ken Humphreys, 9 Nottingham Road, Hucknal, Nottingham, NG15 7QN. 'Phone (0602) 632566.



J.W. GEAL (Hampton, Middlesex): The C.D. goes merrily on - good as ever! I am pleased at the increase of illustrations... they reproduce splendidly. The fine Louise Gunnis ones in the November issue have come out very well. I never, over the years, cease to be amazed at the quality of drawings in Victorian and Edwardian boys' books. There were some truly great artists at work in those days. More of the same, please!

J.E.M. (Brighton): Congratulations on November's C.D., such an outstanding issue that it is almost impossible to identify any highlights, such is the total effulgence!

However, I must say how much I enjoyed Len Hawkey's piece on Louis Gunnis - a truly masterly account - as well as Len's little poem by which I was genuinely moved.

Bill Lofts on Martin Steel and his ladies was a delight, as was Jack Greaves' nostalgic look at the old dance band days: a lovely and much appreciated departure, this.

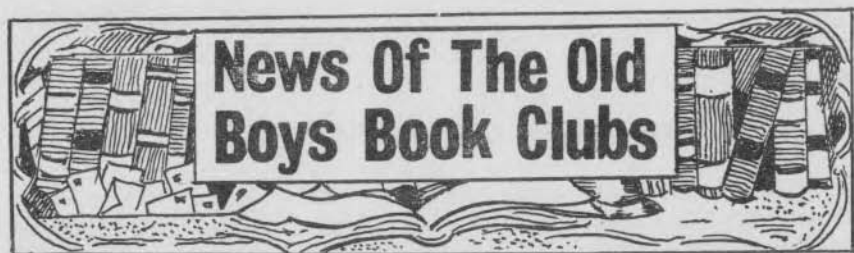
Finally, what a joy all the illustrations were. Again, selection is invidious but since I always had a soft spot for Shields, a special thank you for the Morcove drawings (pp. 4 and 32). Altogether a star issue.

MISS E. KEYLOCK (Litherland): I was amused to read Ernest Holman's article 'Going Up!' in the November C.D. as my own thoughts have often strayed to what might have happened if Frank Richards's heroes had been allowed to move up the school as naturally as we in the local Grammar schools did... My chief speculation halted at Temple and Co.'s reaching the Sixth while the heroes of the Remove became Fifth Formers. What would have happened in the vote for Head of Games? I can't imagine the Removites serving under Temple, while such candidates as Wharton, Vernon-Smith, Squiff and Tom Brown were available! I should think Hamilton would have produced a splendid series on such a theme: but it remains in the realms of fantasy, as the Amalgamated Press editors would have been loth to allow their money-spinners to retire into oblivion at the age of eighteen or nineteen. As it was, after an initial puzzlement, at the age of nine, that these characters remained fixed in time, except for changes in fashion of apparel, I took it in my stride for the next seven years, when preparations for public examinations interfered with my weekly Magnet and Gem.

MARK TAHA (London): I read with interest Edward Holman's speculative article on which Remove fellows would have got into the Sixth Form. I've always enjoyed this kind of speculation... However, I cannot entirely agree with Mr.

Holman's "predictions": I can see Bob Cherry becoming another Gwynne, Hazeldene another Valence or perhaps Walker, Bolsover or Skinner as potential Loders - but Vernon Smith a future prefect? I can't help agreeing with his own words, in 1939 - "I've no doubt I will eventually be turned out by the Head. He won't put up with me forever".

Also I've always thought these should be some "flashback" stories, dealing with the seniors in younger days - for instance, how did Loder manage to get as far as the Sixth without being bowled out?



CAMBRIDGE CLUB

As it is now the seasonal tradition of the Club, we met at the Trumpington home of Vic Hearn once again.

Vic presented a musical memories quiz concerning the decades from the 1930s to the 1950s. Later he showed several short films from the past (well, the 1970s), viz: the 1973 London Club visit to the Cambridge Club and the Club's visit to Dick Turpin's Hempstead. The Christmastime get-together continued with a miscellany of items including a Frank Richard's reading from Robert; seven Christmases, in Comics, from Howard, and in Annuals from Paul. A Keith Waterhouse reminiscence of Christmas comic's of his past, was read by Tony, and to round off the meeting, Keith showed the "Christmas with Tom and Jerry".

ADRIAN PERKINS

LONDON O.B.B.C.

Regardless of the snowy conditions, a good turnout was recorded for the Christmas meeting at Bill Bradford's home in Ealing.

Roger Jenkins gave us his Christmas reading from the Polpelly series. Full of atmosphere, and ghost to boot. This regular reading that Roger gives us every year is one of the most popular items at the London Club. The host, Bill Bradford, gave an illustrated quiz with the titles of various periodicals blocked out. Chris Harper, possibly with x-ray vision, saw through this test to win with flying colours.

Mary Cadogan next, with an item entitled 'Letters to and from Authors'. Mary's correspondence covered many of our favourites, including Dorita Fairlie Bruce, John Wheway and Charles Hamilton. Reading these letters gave an interesting insight into authors and their views. Mark Taha rounded off the proceedings with a difficult film quiz. Mark's quizzes have a habit of testing our brains to the full; he would not even let us off for the festive season!

Next meeting will be at Loughton on 13th January, 1991. Happy New Year to everybody.

GRAHAM BRUTON

NORTHERN O.B.C.C. REPORT

The first sting of winter came to us on Saturday, 8th December, and Leeds like many other places in Britain was gripped by icy blasts from the Arctic and very heavy snow falls. Roads were blocked in some cases and difficult to pass in many districts. Joan, our Chairman, decided to call off the meeting for the Christmas Party and word was passed round. It was considered unwise for people to venture out with problems resulting about getting home at night.

We are pleased to report that our Secretary, Geoffrey Good, is now on the road to recovery and we are looking forward to his being at meetings in the near future.

Our next meeting is Saturday, 12th January. We shall incorporate a New Year's Party along with our normal Club programme, commencing at 5.30 p.m. We shall be delighted to welcome guests.

We are delighted to report that Mary Cadogan is now our President and Anthony Buckeridge (author of the Jennings books) is our Vice President.

The Club programme for 1991 is now printed and we shall be delighted to send a copy to anyone who asks for one. Write to Darrell Swift, 37 Tinshill Lane, Leeds, LS16 6BU.

With all best wishes for 1991, from all at Northern Club.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

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