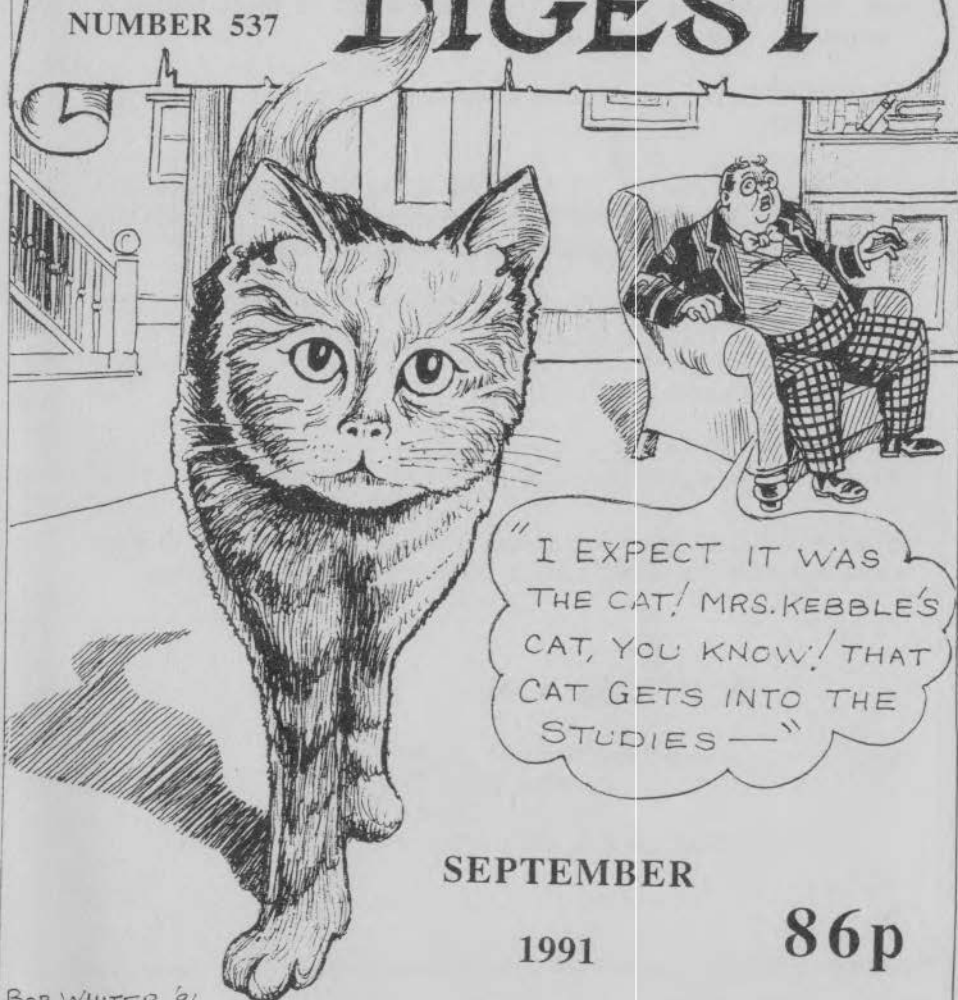


STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOLUME 47

NUMBER 537



" I EXPECT IT WAS
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CAT, YOU KNOW! THAT
CAT GETS INTO THE
STUDIES — "

SEPTEMBER

1991

86p

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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Founded in 1941 by
W.H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

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VOL. 47

No. 537

SEPTEMBER 1991

Price 86p



You will gather from the picture at the top of this editorial that I am thinking again of our C.D. Annual. I should, as always, welcome contributions from you about the stories, pictures, writers, artists and editors of our favourite magazines, comics, etc. It is helpful to me and to our printers if contributions could be received well in advance of the Annual's publication date, which is generally in early December, so I look forward to receiving articles long, medium and short, by mid-October if possible please - and the sooner the better.

You will see that I have enclosed with this issue the order form for the Annual, and, as always, have kept the price as low as I can, bearing in mind increased printing and postage costs since last year. Soon I shall be giving you 'trailers' of some of its contents and, judging from the

contributions which I have already received, it will be up to its usual high standard.

I have been looking at some letters about last year's Annual. The general feeling seems to have been summed up by Mr. Baldock of Cambridge who wrote:

"The C.D. Annual is a glorious book through which we are able to re-live our youthful dreams in the company of the heroes of those other years when the world, it seemed, was less complicated, less hectic, more sun-lit and full of promise. When the roars of Billy Bunter echoed along the Remove passage at Greyfriars, and the thud of a football in the playing-fields formed the rhythm of much of our young lives....Yes, through our annual we can happily re-enter those realms of adventure and fun...."

AN OLD FAVOURITE IN NEW ADVENTURES

Elsewhere in this issue is a review by Catherine Humphrey of a brand new Jennings book, *Jennings Again*. This wonderfully entertaining story shows that the author, Anthony Buckeridge, has lost none of his skill and verve, although this is the first adventure of the hero of Linbury Court School to come from him for over fourteen years. Although Jennings seems the embodiment of eternal boyhood, it is actually 41 years since the first book in his saga, *Jennings Goes to School*, was published in 1950, and, as many of us remember well, the stories began as radio plays on the B.B.C.'s CHILDREN'S HOUR in 1948. Anthony Buckeridge has a special link with our collecting circle as he has recently consented to become the Vice-President of the Northern Old Boys' Book Club.

MARY CADOGAN

We are sad to hear of the passing of two long-standing subscribers to the C.D., Mr. William Lister of Blackpool, and Mr. Jack Bellfield who was, until fairly recently, the Secretary of the Midland O.B.B.C. Some of you will remember reading Bill Lister's articles in the C.D. over the years; he was always a pleasant and helpful contributor, and will be much missed. A tribute to Jack Bellfield by Mr. Geof Lardner of the Midland Club appears below.

JACK BELLFIELD

Jack died at the age of 79 on July 24th, having been taken ill about two weeks earlier. He had been a member of the Midland Club from its inception and Secretary for many years until stepping down a year ago.

A primary school teacher for nearly thirty years, Jack was an avid searcher for knowledge, his life centring on his books and his church. As well as his old boys' books he read widely and was extremely erudite, quoting history, philosophy or theology on the least excuse.

Essentially a shy man, Jack never married and did not find it easy to make close friends. He had great difficulty in coming to terms with the death last year of Tom Porter, his friend of forty years, and it is likely that this hastened his own end. He was generous - if he sold a book it would be at a fraction of its value; more often than not he would make it a gift - and something of an innocent in worldly matters.

In his later years increasing deafness made it difficult for him to participate effectively in our club meetings, but rarely, if ever, did he miss one. He was an integral part of them and we shall miss him.

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Thanks to the generosity of Miss Hood, the Library possesses large numbers of items from Charles Hamilton's own collection at Rose Lawn. If the approach of autumn inclines you to be interested in borrowing from our comprehensive stocks of Magnets, Gems, Populars, Schoolboys' Owns and Boys' Friend libraries (all originals) please send two first-class stamps for a copy of our catalogue which provides full details about our postal service.

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SEXTON BLAKE AND DETECTIVE WEEKLY

by J.E.M.

Number 7

This month we return to Baron von Kravitch and his daughter, Elsa. *The Banker's Box*, by G.H. Teed (DW 22), begins with a dramatic account of the exodus of Jews from Germany into Poland. It is 1933, the year of Hitler's rise to power. Among the refugees, disguised as the poorest of the poor, is a wealthy banker, Louis Rothstein. He carries a box containing a fortune in jewels ... and close behind him is the bad Baron....

Sexton Blake and Tinker, disguised as tourists, are soon in Germany on the trail of both Baron and box but, as ever with Teed's writing, it is the firm grasp of political events and his convincing foreign settings that really give the story its life. It is also worth pointing out here that, well after 1933 when this yarn appeared, the ill-treatment of Jews by the Nazis was being denied or played down even in this country. Teed understood very well what was going on.

Once again, Parker's work catches the flavour and atmosphere of the story as well as the character of some of those involved. This drawing shows an angry von Kravitch with a woman accomplice and an apprehensive fellow-plotter.



W. HOWARD BAKER and WILFRED McNEILLY by Bill Lofts

I was greatly interested in the article in July C.D. regarding the pen-name of 'W.A. Ballinger' - plus other comments on Wilfred McNeilly. Some points I would like to make, as I knew both quite well, especially at the time the stories were published.

It was certainly news to me that the 'Howard' in Bill Baker's name was tagged on, as we often used to discuss the people who had the Howard Baker name. I was told it was an old family name that originated from Somerset (where his family came from), probably the most well known being a Chelsea footballer (goalkeeper) who could kick the ball from one end of the field to the other - no mean feat when the usual distance is just past the halfway line. But this is a minor point and not important.

It is not surprising that the impression was given that Bill Baker and Wilfred McNeilly were in collaboration, by the number of stories where both had a hand. But the actual explanation was simply that McNeilly, an Ulsterman living in Northern Ireland, was a most colourful person and unreliable at times with his manuscripts. 'Wilf' who always wore a black beret, told me he spent his spare time fishing, though I suspect it was also on drinking binges. Consequently his writing schedule got miles behind. His method of writing was simply first to send a rough synopsis to Bill Baker. If Bill agreed, it would be sent back, with the go-ahead. Then often he would wait apparently in vain for the completed story. When it finally arrived it would be hurried, needing a lot of revision. Therefore Bill Baker thought, quite rightly, that as he had put so much work into it, it would be published under a joint house-name.

When he did have the time, McNeilly could write a good story, which would of course appear under his own name. Personally I liked 'Wilf' who used to call me "the chap with the kind face". He told me once that he never counted words, but estimated that every sheet of paper inserted into his typewriter was worth £2. His assertion that he was 'Peter Saxon', correctly described by Jack Adrian, would have been just put down to when he was 'in his cups', but it went further than that when The British Library altered their catalogue of entries (now thankfully corrected by the connection I have with one of their officials). McNeilly died of a heart attack not long after this affair, when all his misadventures were forgotten.

It is perfectly true that some years ago I left my own record book of Sexton Blake titles with Bill Baker to fill in the original authors of the new look '5th' and '4th' areas. But all were filled in eventually. So was the Press Editorial Syndicate list, that had all the non-Blake Science Fiction, Horror Occult, and Guardian Series.

Reverting to McNeilly, his actual living was made writing girls' and women's fiction for Fleetway Publications under a variety of names. Down in a Fleet Street tavern with E.L. McKeag, former editor of pre-war girls papers, 'Wilf' used to join us, but this often ended with a heated

argument, with McKeag having the same problems as Bill Baker in getting finished material.

It can also now be revealed that a number of manuscripts in the Press Editorial set-up were originally obtained from a literary agency not far from Sloane Square. They were eventually so much rewritten that the original writer would not have recognised his own script.

Regarding some stories mentioned by Jack Adrian, I can well remember 'Down Amongst the Ad Men' as, working then in a leading Agency as Chief researcher, I was astonished how accurate the set up was. In my mind it could only have been written by a person who had worked or was working in one. Copywriters I know often pen tales. Bill agreed that the original story was penned by one, but then gave it to McNeilly who was reputed to have once worked in an agency. When it was eventually returned, Bill as usual had to do a lot of rewriting and revision, adding the quip to me later that all 'Wilf' could advertise was Irish Whiskey!

Certainly (to be fair Jack Adrian only used the correct word 'probably') McNeilly never had anything to do with the trio of stories dealing with the First World War Royal Flying Corps. They were written, I believe, by a man named Watson, but rewritten by Peter Chambers. McNeilly could only fly his kite, was another quip from Bill.

Bill's great topic was talking about his love of Greyfriars, and perhaps politics - especially South Africa and Rhodesia. He had no interest at all in Sport. Easily the best writer in his stable for horror or the unusual was Martin Thomas, whilst the most prolific for romantic yarns was Rex Dolphin ('Marion Lang'). Both have died in recent years like McNeilly, and like Bill Baker, from heart attacks.





IN PENSIVE MOOD

by JAMES W. COOK

It is a remarkable thing that at my age, nearing eighty-three, I should look forward at bed-time to reading again those old stories of the adventures of the boys at St. Frank's. My current choice is the SOUTH SEAS series of 1922, and it has taken me over the same trail as that which took me to my present home.

When Lord Dorrimore's party, which consisted of twenty boys and Nelson Lee on board the S S WANDERER, went in chase of the LOTUS LILY, the chinese yacht that had kidnapped the Chinese junior Yung Ching, the trail led through to the Mediterranean, past Malta and to Cairo. I still remember our stay in that City of the Caliphs with fondness. And our climbing the Pyramids ... from there we went by coach to SUEZ, but on the way stopped at ISMAELIA where stones were thrown at the coach injuring a passenger. I never realised, when in my schooldays I read that grand series, that I would travel over that same trail. Neither would it occur to me that I would visit a South Sea tropical island in the future. Now that I live in the South Pacific I have seen a few tropical islands, but, as the poet says somewhere, it is better to travel hopefully than to arrive.

Since that long-ago time I have wanted to find that island where the boys were cast-away following the shipwreck but, alas, that island is no more; it was totally destroyed in the eruption. But I have seen islands very similar in the Pacific and my thoughts go back to the story of the St. Frank's boys that thrilled me so many years ago.

But this was no ROBINSON CRUSOE adventure. This was a large party of men and boys, and whereas Crusoe had just the solitary partner there were twenty boys, Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore, plus Umlosi and the crew of the SS WANDERER.

But after a series of actions with indigenous natives, and a Heaven-sent arrival of a plane, the entire party were transported to the South Polar areas -- however, that's another story.



Nelson Lee's Rooms in Gray's Inn Road

There is a similarity in the BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY of February 29th in a 1924 story called POTS OF MONEY. When Handforth is sent on an errand for Nelson Lee, the leader of Study D encounters a strange man who puts a proposition to him, a very strange suggestion. It is that Handforth must spend £500 in three days but with certain conditions - that nobody must be told where he obtained the money, and also that nothing is to be bought over ten shillings.

This story came back to mind in a recent TV film called BREWSTER'S MILLIONS about an 'ordinary guy' who has to spend 30 million dollars in a month to claim a 300 million dollar inheritance. Incidentally a film called BREWSTER'S MILLIONS was first shown in 1914 and it leads me to wonder if old Edwy Brooks had it in mind when he wrote POTS OF MONEY. Somebody once claimed that there's nothing new under the sun.....we don't have to look far these times to agree with that!



COLWYN DANE - THE CHAMPION DETECTIVE

by Derek Adley

The Champion was a boys' paper that had started life in the traditional style of other A.P. papers of the period and had featured a number of detective such as Moreton Stowe and Curtis Carr, in their way all owing something to Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee. Indeed a couple of Sexton Blake stories did feature in early issues. After two or three years, however, the style and content of the paper changed, and the 'old' type detective vanished from its pages. Not long after this transition, short stories of Colwyn Dane, the famous detective of Benton Street, W. in London, commenced in 1928 and ran in every issue for the next 27 years until the paper's demise in 1955.

Colwyn Dane was very much in the mould of Dixon Hawke and was obviously Amalgamated Press's challenge to D.C. Thomson's sleuth. Dane had none of the motivated thought of Sexton Blake, and the stories were written in the Thomsonian modernisms - even down to the naming of his assistant 'Slick', and on occasions the yarns would follow a fantasy vein.

The stories appeared originally as by Rupert Hall, a pen-name of Edward R. Home-Gall. In later stories, however, the author was given as 'Mark Grimshaw' an editorial name to cover a number of writers, though in the main the stories were actually written by Ernest McKeag and Harry Belfield. Ernest McKeag wrote about 300 of the Colwyn Dane stories before the war. All those from 1939 until the shut down of the paper - with possibly a few exceptions when he was indisposed - were by Harry Belfield.

For the first couple of years Slick Chester, Dane's assistant, was the central character, the first yarn being entitled 'Detective Slick's First Scoop'. Gradually Dane took over the main character role, though of course Slick still appeared, and throughout his long run Dane always had him to rely on. A young man, presumably older than Tinker or Nipper, he drove to his master's cases in Dane's super sports car.

Because the stories were short, they never led to any real character-building, as was the case with his rival Dixon Hawke, and little could be gleaned of the detective's or indeed his assistant's, background, of his family or his fads, fancies or education. There is a definite feeling that Dane was created not only for a different generation but also a different age-group. In the main the Colwyn Dane stories stuck to brief and snappy cases and if the names were changed to Dixon Hawke and Tommy Burke, would have read as well in a Thomson publication.

Dane was essentially a home based detective, for the brevity of the stories did not allow much scope for world-wide investigation, but of course there were exceptions. In 1933 he embarked on an ambitious case against American gangsters. The first in the series was 581, 18th March 1933, 'Colwyn Dane at Grips with Chicago', ending with 593, 10th June, 1933, 'Colwyn Dane Cleans Up Chicago'.

During the war the Dane stories took on a patriotic tone but the authors did not really go over the top with this theme for there was still plenty of home bred crime to keep the detective occupied. He had his fair share of strange cases and opponents as some of the titles suggest: 536; The Weird Case of the Whisperer: 554, Jailed by the Joker: 574, The Case of the Chinese Menace: 600, The Shadow. 629 Scorpio Enemy of the World: 643, Dellini - Demon Dentist: 810, The Case of the Electric Spy, and 1157, The Case of 'Z' the Super Spy.

The last Colwyn Dane story to be published in Champion was in issue 1729, 19th March 1955, 'The Case of the Big Top Rivals' the paper then being incorporated with TIGER. It was natural that Colwyn Dane should also appear in the Champion's companion publications, Champion Library and Champion Annual, but strangely the former only published two issues featuring the detective: No. 204 dated July 1937 'The Outlawed Detective' (which first appeared in Champion 701 to 709 in 1935) and No. 268, March 1940 'The Sign of the Grinning Dragon' (also a reprint that commenced in the weekly in 716 in 1935).

The Dane stories in the Champion Annual followed the familiar weekly pattern and could well have been reprints. A selection of these titles is as follows: 'The Winged Phantom' (1937), 'The Stolen Tailors Dummies' (1938), 'The Riddle of the Eyes' (1940), 'The Case of the Tattooed Marathon Runner' (1951) and 'The Case of the Boat Race Avenger' (1953). Any reader who has copies of the Dixon Hawke Case Book should take a glance at the index. The list above would be well at home in the latter's pages for it would seem that even the Dane titles had a Thomsonian ring. When the Champion was incorporated with the Tiger some of the series were transferred, the familiar authors too continued in this paper. But unfortunately there was no space available for Colwyn Dane and the series then ended, never to be resurrected.

**BRIAN DOYLE LISTS SOME OF THE INTERNATIONALLY-FAMOUS
 AUTHORS WHOSE WORKS APEARED IN OLD BOYS' MAGAZINES.**

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| P.G. Wodehouse ("The Captain", "Chums") | R.M. Ballantyne ("BOP") |
| John Buchan ("The Captain") | G. Manville Fenn (BOP, Chums) |
| Jules Verne (Boys' Own Paper") | G.A. Henty (BOP) |
| Arthur Conan Doyle ("BOP") | |

WANTED: The Gem No. 57, The Ranger - 1931, The Thriller 1937-38, The Champion 1940, The Triumph 1940, Girls Own Paper 1940-1947, Collins Magazine for Boys and Girls 1950, The Junior Mirror 1954-1956:- PAUL MARRIOTT, 8 The Heath, Leighton Buzzard, Beds. LU7 7HL. Tel. 0525-382669.

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By

ROGER M. JENKINS

No. 240 - Magnets 1187-8 - Prout's Lovely Black Eye Series

At the height of its Golden Age, the Magnet could always be relied upon to amuse, to entertain and to portray characters in a new light, in a manner that both surprises and convinces. This is the classic litmus test for rounded characters, as distinct from mere caricatures, and there is no doubt that Charles Hamilton's creations were people whom we really know in depth. The 1931 series about Prout's lovely black eye completely fulfilled all these requirements.

This November series began with atmospheric sea fog, rolling in from the coast. Out in the quad, the Famous Five, weary of Coker's self-appointed leadership (which of course took them in the wrong direction), bumped him and made their own way into the House. When Prout loomed up, Coker mistook him for a Removite and punched him in the eye. Prout mistakenly assumed he had bumped into something in the fog, and when Gosling had conducted him to his study he saw he had collected a prize black eye. It does strain credibility a little, perhaps, to suggest that a bruise will attain its full visual effect so quickly, but presumably the author may be allowed some licence. Incidentally, Prout tipped Gosling for his services but both of them knew it was to buy Gosling's silence.

The most interesting development in this pair of stories is Capper's character. Hitherto he had seemed something of a nonentity, but it is revealed that at some earlier date he had sported a minor black eye and explained it as an accident with a punchball. Prout had cast scorn on this threadbare excuse, and Capper now had great glee in approaching Prout "as a friend" and urging him to tell the truth, since only a blow could cause a black eye, not a bump in the fog. Capper comes over as rather an oily person who enjoyed someone else's discomfiture. When Prout later collected a raspberry nose, Capper was in his element, urging Prout to lean on his arm and walk as steadily as he could, implying of course that Prout was intoxicated and had collected this injury in a drunken brawl.

"But - but lean on my arm, pray let me assist you. Think of the sensation it would cause if you were to fall, or even to stumble! Think of the boys, sir, think of the Head!"

If Capper was enjoying himself at Prout's expense, it may be that Prout had richly deserved this humiliation by reason of his habitual air of superiority and patronage in the past.

The interesting feature of this series is the fact that neither Prout nor Capper comes over as an attractive personality. There can be no doubt that Hamilton must have enjoyed writing this tremendously, but it is a story without a sympathetic character at its centre. The reader views it with the same ironic detachment with which it was written. Perhaps the last word should be allowed to Puck - "Lord what fools these mortals be."

Books



"FOSSILISED FISH-HOOKS - IT'S JENNINGS AGAIN!"

"Jennings Again" by Anthony Buckeridge. Macmillan, 1991. £7.99.

(Reviewed by Catherine E. Humphrey)

Jennings is back! - and Anthony Buckeridge's touch is as sure as ever.

I've been a Jennings fan since the early 1950s when I was younger than Jennings - I remember my awe when he had his **eleventh** birthday in "*Jennings and Darbishire*" - and I consider myself something of a connoisseur! I've had slight reservations about one or two of the 1960s/'70s books, but this new one is back to real vintage Buckeridge.

We're definitely in the 1990s, with Space Invaders and Green issues looming large, though not destroying the "essence of Jennings" that brings us back to the books again and again. Here is Jennings' usual mixture of

misguided enthusiasm, conscientious efforts to put things right, and total inability to explain clearly - especially to Mr. Wilkins - how he came, for instance, to be handcuffed to the garden roller. And helping Miss Thorpe with an ecological project results in further chaos.

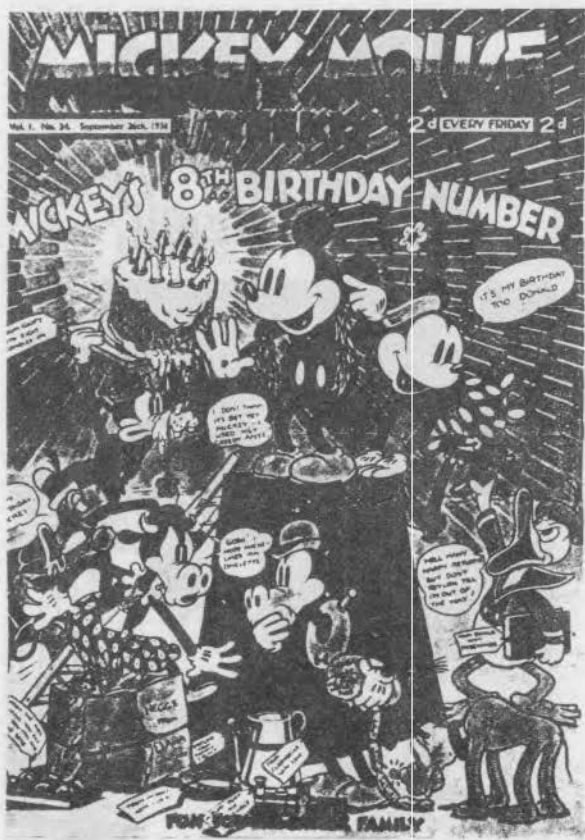
Anthony Buckeridge's ability to make his readers laugh out loud, while still retaining hold on reality, keeps his books worthy presents - Christmas, birthday, or simply un-birthday - for all ages from nine-ish upwards.

Editor's Note: As well as being available from book-shops, *Jennings Again!* can be obtained from **Happy Hours Unlimited** (see ad in last month's C.D.).



DISCOVERING COMICS by Denis Gifford (Shire Publications £2.50) (Reviewed by Mary Cadogan)

Many C.D. readers will remember this pocket-sized but crammed-with-good-things book which was originally published in 1971. It is now even more interesting, because the author, indefatigable as ever, has brought this informative and lively survey of the British comics scene up to date. It is amazing how much information and how many pictures can be provided in such a compact volume. My original copy is so well-thumbed that it has fallen apart, but nevertheless been lovingly hung onto! I much appreciate having this new and updated copy. It will revive a host of happy memories for several generations of comics readers.



8. Special edition: Mickey's eighth birthday as a film mouse celebrated in number 34 of 'Mickey Mouse Weekly', 26th September, 1936, the first British gravure comic; cover painted by Wilfred Haughton.

**LESTRADE AND THE GIFT OF THE PRINCE - M.J. Trow
(Constable, 1991) (Reviewed by MARK TAHA)**

M.J. Trow started writing his "*Lestrade*" books in 1985 because he didn't like the way Holmes' Scotland Yard foil had always been depicted as a loser; the earlier books followed the pattern of turning the tables by depicting Lestrade as the cool professional detective and Holmes as a hopeless dope addict. This latest one is "*Holmes - free*" (except for a brief mention - the Holmes figure this time is a Scottish private detective) and full of humour - enough bad jokes for a "*Carry On*" film, in fact (for instance, Lestrade's education at the "Academy for the Sons of Nearly Respectable Gentlefolk", detectives called Marshall and Snellgrove and Dickens and Jones). The plot itself is fairly routine - Lestrade's summoned to Scotland incognito in 1903 by Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, to investigate the murder of a servant girl. This expands, of course, into an attempt on Lestrade's life. More murders, Lestrade himself being arrested, for murder, a complicated plot - the unusual things about it including a fictional revelation that Queen Victoria had a child by John Brown: some readers may have heard the legend of the "Monster of Glamis" who grew up shut away and mad in Glamis Castle, a succession of royals being murdered by Jacobite plotters (including Prince Albert!) and the setting of a large part of the book in Glamis Castle, the residents including a 3-year-old girl called Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon.

I'm afraid I can't recommend this book. Compared with previous ones, I'm inclined to think that Mr. Trow could be losing his touch. I'm also sure that we'll find out one way or the other before long; the book ends with an obvious cue for a sequel!

**BRIAN DOYLE'S PERSONAL CHOICE OF THE TEN
FUNNIEST BOYS' SCHOOL STORIES EVER** (all hard covers
and excluding Charles Hamilton and E.S. Brooks)

- THE SECRET OF THE LAB. (J.E. Gurdon)
- THE PAPERS OF A.J. WENTWORTH/A.J. WENTWORTH, B.A. (RETD)/SWAN
SONG OF A.J.W. (H.F. Ellis)
- THE WORKS OF SMITH MINOR (J. Jefferson Farjeon)
- YOUNG SEELEY-BOHN (Donald Gilchrist)
- THE SHORT TERM AT GREYMINSTER (or any 'Mr. Dennett' book) (Hylton
Cleaver)
- POOR DEAR ESMÉ (A Harcourt Burrage)
- ALOYSIUS LET LOOSE ('Klaxon' (Cmdr. J.G. Bower and Barbara Euphan Todd)
- MY FRIEND SPECS McCANN (Janet McNeill)
- MIKE (P.G. Wodehouse)
- VICE VERSA (F. Anstey)

In Defence of Poor



Thomas

By
BOB
WHITER.

No, that doesn't refer to Doubting Thomas, Thomas Mann or even Thomas Merry; but to Mrs. Kebble's cat - her favourite feline Thomas. Whenever food is missing, the boys almost invariably accuse Bunter. Bunter in turn along with various denials and protestations of innocence, often blames poor Thomas.

The following passages will illustrate the point.

"Have you been grub-raiding in Vernon-smith's study, Bunter?"

"Oh! No!" gasped Bunter, "I only went there to borrow Smithy's algebra, Loder. I've got some to do, and I lost my book. If Smithy's cake's gone, I expect it was the cat! Mrs. Kebble's cat, you know! That cat gets into the studies --" (Magnet No. 1496 October 17th, 1936. *The Shadow of the Sack!*)

The Famous Five gazed at him. The other fellows roared.

"If your cake's gone, Wharton, I'm sorry. But I know nothing about it." said Bunter. "It may have been the cat! Mrs. Kebble's cat is always getting into the studies. I believe cakes like cats - I mean, cats like cake-" (Magnet No. 1499 November 7th, 1936. *The Secret of the Smuggler's Cave.*)

Poor Thomas has even been blamed for noise in the night, witness the following excerpt.

Prout, clearly, had heard some sound, for his study door was heard to open. They caught a glimmer of the light from the doorway, and the sound of a grunt in the dead silence of the night.

If he came out to investigate----- The Bounder felt his heart beat very unpleasantly. He knew that Wharton, at his side, was cool as ice; and, though he could not see him, he knew that there was a scornful smile on his face. "That cat!" Prout's muttering voice came in the silence. "I must speak to Mrs. Kebble about that cat! Upon my word!" (Magnet No. 1500 November 14th, 1936. *They called Him a Funk!*)

Returning to Bunter, we have a very amusing episode, when the fat owl looking in Smithy's study cupboard, with a lighted match, for tuck discovers only fireworks! Dropping the match when it burns down to his finger and thumb Bunter inadvertently sets off all the fireworks. The ensuing noise smell and smoke, bring Mr. Quelch to the Remove passage to investigate:

"To whom did the fireworks belong?" demanded Mr. Quelch. "Were they yours, Bunter?" "Not at all sir, I thought that beast had brought in tuck----"

"What!"

"I--I mean, I--I was just looking into the study cupboard, sir, to-to-to see whether Mrs. Kebble's cat had got at Smith's things, sir. That cat comes up to this passage sometimes, sir, an---and---" (Magnet 1029. November 5th, 1927. *A Great 'Fifth' at Greyfriars!*)

From the same Magnet, we have a less savoury interlude featuring poor Thomas in person, as it were:

"Mi--au--au--ooooow!" Tom Redwing started. It was the prolonged and mournful wail of a cat, and it proceeded from Study No. I in the Remove. Redwing, coming up the Remove staircase, stopped outside Study No. I. It was morning break, and hardly a fellow was likely to be in the studies at that time. Redwing was coming up to Study No. 4 to have another "go" at the heavy imposition he had to write out for Mr. Quelch. The howl of a cat from study No. I astonished him. Mrs. Kebble's cat -- rather a privileged animal in the House--- sometimes wandered into the Remove passage being rather encouraged by some of the juniors, who fed it with a reckless disregard of dietary rules for cats. No doubt the plump tabby had wandered into Study No. I ---but why it should be howling there so wildly was a mystery to Redwing. But as the animal was evidently in dire trouble the junior stopped and opened the study door to see what was the matter. A glance showed him what te trouble was and brought an angry frown to his face. The cat was tied by the leg to the leg of the study table with a strong cord. Edgar Bright, keeping out of the reach of scratches, was poking the animal with the sharp end of a cricket stump. the cat jumped and squirmed and writhed to escape the cruel jabs, but without success, howling wildly all the time.

Of course Redwing thrashes Bright with the same cricket stump for his ill treatment of poor Thomas. In fact his loud yells bring Mr. Quelch to the scene who, when learning the reason of Redwing's assault, takes Bright to the Headmaster for a flogging.

From Magnet No. 1175 August 23, 1930 *The Menace of Tang Wang* comes the last of these little cameos on Mrs. Kebbles's celebrated pusscat. Wun Lung has been making a very appetizing-smelling stew in his study. Bunter tricks him out of the room, locks the door and proceeds to devour the stew. By the time he unlocks the study door, the stew is all gone, and Wun Lung is naturally very upset.

"Cheer up kid," said Bob. "You can make another stew you know". "No can!" said Wun Lung, shaking his head dolorously. "Missee Kebble no got nother cattee."

"Wha--a--at!" Billy Bunter gave a jump and a horrid gasp.

"No can makee 'nother stew all same that stew!" wailed Wun Lung. "No got cattee!"

"Grooogh!"

"A kik--kik--kik--cat!" gasped Bob Cherry

"Oh Lor!" groaned Bunter.

"My esteemed and disgusting Wun Long," gasped Hurree Singh. "Did you make an absurd stew of an excellent and detestable cat!"

"Go and die in your own study, old top," said Bob. "We've no room for dead porpoises here. don't let Mrs. Kebble know you're scoffed her cat, or--":

"Groooooogh!:"

"She was fond of that cat, and she'll go to the Head, if she finds out that you've scoffed Thomas--"

"Hark!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. Through the open window of the dormitory floated a long-drawn sound--echoing through the summer night.

Miau--ou--au--aaaaau!

It was the well-known voice of Thomas the cat! Bunter started.

"Oh!" he gasped. "That--that's Mrs. Kebble's cat!"

GERTRUDE KENT OLIVER. 1871 - 1955 by TED BALDOCK

Authors, like coins, grow dear as they grow old;
It is the rust we value, not the gold.

Pope.

The name Kent Carr appearing among the short list of authors in Brian Doyle's article in the June 1991 issue of the *Collector's Digest* awakened memories of many happy hours of reading, also a certain regret that school story writers of her calibre seemed to have passed into limbo. There must be few - if any - comparable with her today.

Kent Carr may safely be considered as pre-eminent in the field of the Public School story during the first two decades of the century. "The Shaping of Jephson's" and "Caught Out" measure favourably against any work in the genre. That she possessed a profound understanding and love of boys is very obvious in her writings. The smaller boys are usually presented with tell-tale marks round their necks just above the Eton collar suggesting a less than particular attention to ablutions. One junior 'Fag' in "The Big Row at Rangers" enjoys the uncompromising soubriquet of "Muckworm" which is surely self-explanatory. Two short excerpts illustrate this colourful young character to a nicety:

'The Muckworm.....produced a pocket handkerchief, remarkable only for the fact that it might have been used to clean the grate with." And "'Ever wash, Muckworm?" "Yes Ware". "Well, that circle round your neck would take some beating," said Ware candidly. "If soap's no go, we'd better try pumice-stone." "You wouldn't, Ware," exclaimed the Muckworm, horror-stricken.'

There are distinct echoes of Billy Bunter here. These and numerous other little anecdotes concerning the Muckworm's appearance and habits demonstrate how clearly Kent Carr knew her boys. Needless to say, despite his many questionable personal habits plus a distinct aversion to soap and water, at heart the Muckworm is a decent little fellow.

The senior 'men' of course are all - with the exception of the 'shady types - everything that Public School fellows of the late Victorian-early Edwardian period should be. "Not Out" which appeared in serial form in the 'Boys Own Paper' in the early twenties, and "The Big Row at Rangers" capture unerringly the essence of a vanished era in the world of the school story, while in another genre ("Miss Elizabeth's Family" and "The Reign of Lady Betty") the author's great love of children is revealed. Certain writers rise above the mediocrity of the normal in specializing in a specific genre. Among these may happily be included Gertrude Kent Oliver.

THE CLAVERING STORIES

(An Echo of "Danny Looks Back") Comments by ERIC FAYNE

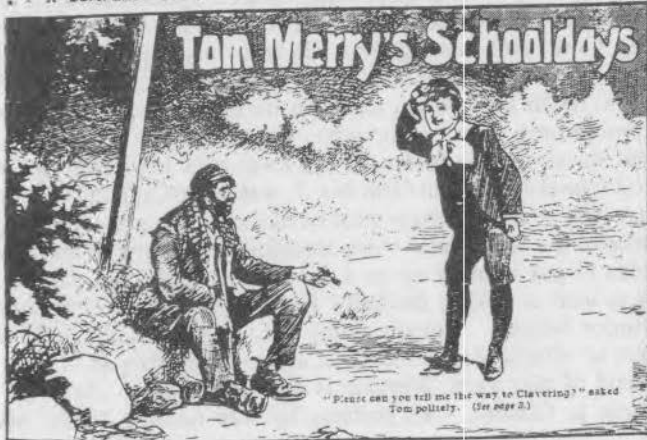
In recent issues of C.D. Danny looked back at the very first St. Jim's stories - all twelve of them - which appeared in *PLUCK*, under the authorship of Charles Hamilton. While those stories were running in *PLUCK*, the *GEM* started and introduced school tales of Tom Merry at Clavering, under the authorship of MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Now it is time to spend a few minutes to gather the threads together and browse over the Clavering stories in the *GEM*. There were five of them. As Danny commented, the *Gem* had been introduced as a new paper of adventure. But very soon it became a school story paper, destined to be one of the most famous school story papers in the world.

The first was entitled "Tom Merry's Schooldays", in the third issue of the *Gem* dated March 30th, 1907. The title seems a bit "inclusive" or "conclusive" for what was to be the opening tale of a series. Possibly Hamilton was influenced by the memories of Hughes' title "Tom Brown's Schooldays", which had delighted the young and the not-so-young some 10 years earlier.



• • • A COMPLETE STORY FOR EVERYONE, AND EVERY STORY A GEM! • • •



A Tale of School Life and Adventure. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The author tells us: "Tom was an orphan, and Miss Priscilla Fawcett had had charge of him since he was a baby. She had the kindest heart in the world, and she was devoted to Tom; but she drew rein a little too tight sometimes. Tom was getting on for fifteen. Miss Priscilla seemed to think that he was still six or seven.

"Tom was very fond of his old nurse; but he was very fond of having his own way, too."

It was a somewhat unlikely situation, if we had bothered to consider it. We are told nothing of Tom's parentage or their background. Possibly they were an army family, for he had an uncle, General Merry. Presumably General Merry was responsible for Tom's childhood scene, but it seems curious that a boy, now approaching fifteen, should have an elderly nurse as his guardian.

Pausing a moment to consider, Harry Wharton's parentage was equally shrouded in mist, but his background with his uncle, Colonel Wharton, was much more definite and, perhaps, believable.

So in this first tale, Tom Merry arrives at Clavering. He is pedantic in speech, a bit reminiscent of Skimpole, maybe, never using a short word if a long one will serve the same purpose. In the course of a week or two, he soon got out of that.

At Clavering, Mr. Railton was the Headmaster. The German master, Herr Schneider, was very prominent, and he was to remain on the scene. Manners and Lowther were there, eventually to become Tom's closest pals, collectively known as "The Terrible Three". Gore was the school bully. He was to remain on the stage in future years. Strangely, the master of the Fourth was Mr. Quelch. The Captain of Clavering was Wingate - a splendid fellow, a great cricketer.

Greyfriars, of course, was not yet on the scene. The Magnet was still waiting in the wings. But Hamilton's propensity for repeating names was evident from very early days. Odd, perhaps, - for people's names are easy enough to invent, even if the telephone directory was not very large in the first decade of the century.

From now on, the Clavering stories appeared every fortnight, alternating with an adventure story.

The second tale, in Gem No. 5, was "Troublesome Tom." Full of schoolboy pranks and adventure, with Gore proving himself spiteful as well as a bully, and with Tom becoming on good terms with his schoolfellows. This story winds up with Tom fighting Gore, and beating him. It was only reprinted once - in PENNY POPULAR No. 2 in 1912, when that paper started and reprinted the old Gem tales. In 1931, much, much later, when the Gem itself went back to the beginning, they omitted "Troublesome Tom." Just why, we don't know. Probably they did not want to waste too much time before St. Jim's was back in the star slot in the Gem.)

The third Clavering tale, in Gem No. 7, was "Our Captain." The old Captain of Clavering has left. A new Captain must be elected. The prefect Wingate, backed by his chum, North, is a candidate. Also standing is Devigne of the Fifth. And Tom Merry decides to put himself up as a candidate. And Tom, having done several brave deeds as well as licking the bully, Gore, looks to be a firm favourite with the whole of Junior School. But the head, Mr. Railton, has a talk with Tom and persuades him to withdraw as a candidate, and to back Wingate.

At the end of that yarn, Wingate is the new skipper. And we learn that his christian name is Gilbert, - so perhaps he was nothing to do with George of Greyfriars!

In No. 9, the fourth Clavering tale is "Tom Merry on the Warpath". A cricket tale. The juniors challenge the Fifth to a match, and Devigne and his team are goaded into playing. And Tom Merry's eleven wins, with Tom himself proving to

be a star in waiting. So much so that, at the end, Wingate tells Tom "In future you will play for the First Eleven."

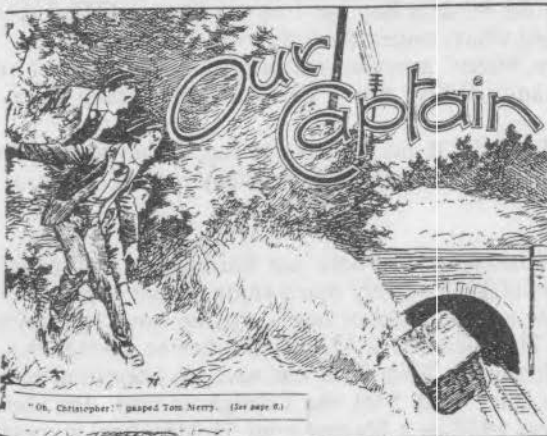
Hm, say the old cynics among us. But the lads of 1907 loved it.

Then, in Gem No. 11, came the 5th and final Clavering tale, "Tom Merry at St. Jim's". It seems that Clavering is having mortgage trouble, and money lenders are being unpleasant. So Clavering closes and merges with St. Jim's. Mr. Railton becomes Housemaster at St. Jim's (presumably the previous Housemaster, Mr. Kidd, was pensioned off). The Clavering middle school, it seems, became the Shell at St. Jim's. And some of the staff went along with them.

And after that, a St. Jim's story appeared every week, with Tom Merry ever-growing in popularity, and any thought of the Gem as an "adventure" paper buried in the past.

Five years later, in October 1912, the Penny Popular came on the market. Every one of the Clavering tales was reprinted. And the master of the Fourth was still Mr. Quelch, and the School Captain was still Wingate. And this in spite of the fact that Greyfriars had been going strong for 4 years in the Magnet. Does it suggest, perhaps, that Greyfriars was not yet at the peak of popularity.

And, 19 years later, when the early Gem tales returned to the Gem, all but one of the Clavering tales were reprinted. And the master of the Fourth was now Mr. Welch, and the School Captain was Felgate. By that time, they could not take liberties with Greyfriars characters. A final thought on Hamilton's propensity to repeat surnames. Was it not rather an endearing trait?



A Tale of Tom Merry's Schooldays.

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.



MARK TAHA (London): I've seen in the papers that there is a proposed *Dan Dare* TV series. Personally, I think it is being made too late; my ideal choice for the role would be the Roger Moore of the 60s or 70s. Today I'd suggest Jan Iles (Dashwood in 'The Bill') as Dan Dare and Joanna Lumley or Shirley Cheriton (Debbie in 'East Enders') as Prof. Jocelyn Peabody. Do any readers have other suggestions?

Reading the Gem's 'Old Bus' series of 1923, I was struck by a couple of letters in the Editor's column. One suggested Cardew as junior captain, the other disagreed. Shortly afterwards, there appeared my own favourite Gem series, in which Cardew did become junior captain. I wonder - was that only a coincidence or did Ian Masters of Stalybridge, who made the original suggestion, really gives Messrs. Hamilton and Down the idea? And were there any other cases of readers' suggestions becoming series?

IAN SCALES (Sittingbourne): A year or so ago, when I was in Manchester I came across your "Frank Richards - The Chap behind the Chums" and bought it. The book actually rekindled my desire to search for various stories that I had never read, through various book dealers. Recently I've been enjoying the Ken King and Rio Kid stories and part of the reason I'm writing is to ask if the C.D. has ever printed a full Bibliography or list of each character. I know, for example that Ken King appeared in the Modern Boy but I do not know what numbers, etc. I'm also intrigued to find out which stories about the two characters in later "Holiday", "Billy Bunter" and "Tom Merry" annuals were originals or reprints. I also noticed in an old issue of "Danny's Diary" that a Rio Kid picture strip story appeared in the "Modern Boy"!!

Editor's Note: I wonder if any readers can supply the bibliographical information requested by Mr. Scales. I should be very happy to publish this, if available, in the C.D.

JOHN LEWIS (Uttoxeter): I have just finished my first reading of the 'A Split in the Sixth' series of 1913. I very much enjoy serious stories about the Greyfriars seniors. I can now really appreciate how very true was Roger Jenkins' statement in A HISTORY OF THE GEM AND MAGNET when he asserted that, after the loss of Courtney and Valence, 'the Sixth form was never so interesting again'.

Mr. Hanger's letter (C.D. 536) was a delight to read. His choice of nos. 1516-1540 from the year 1937 as a Magnet mini 'Golden Age' is most discerning, and extremely interesting in that it goes against the generally accepted order of merit. If one abides strictly to Mr. Hanger's criteria of only using the shorter and, if possible,

non-holiday series, and avoids splitting any series to make up the number, then the above mentioned selection of 1937 Magnets cannot be improved upon as the best comprehensive introduction to the Greyfriars saga, especially if Highcliffe and Cliff House are to be included - and they must!

LESLIE LASKEY (Brighton): I am fully in agreement with Pete Hanger on his comments on Magnet stories in the year 1937. The '30s were characterized in the Magnet by the prevalence of long series, sometimes running for ten or twelve weeks. Some of these were, of course, among the greatest stories to appear in the paper. However, 1937 was a remarkable year in that throughout it only one series exceeded five weeks in length - the first such year, in fact, since 1929. The result was a period of unusual variety with some particularly good stories in the summer term period. The only long series, featuring the former pickpocket, 'Skip', was a good one of its type with a progressive plot development. I have a high regard for the 1937 Magnet, and I shall certainly not be parting with my copies - at any price!

TERRY JONES (Gloucester): I simply loved the editorial last month about the River Sark. My sentiments also. I even got out my red ink and underlined your words for future enjoyment, to grunts of approval. The two articles by Colin Cole and Edward Baldock made wonderful reading as well. Let no-one try to tell us the River Sark is 'just in the mind'!

CLARICE HARDING (Sidmouth): I loved the Editorial reference to the rivers, and the thoughts of Greyfriars which it conjured up in my mind, together with my own responses always to the peace and beauty of rivers.

BILL LOFTS (London): The three titles that Colin Partis could not recall in the Hamilton (Winston Cardew) love series by W.C. Merrett are as follows. 1. Peg's Angel, 2. The Man who came back and No. 4. The girl from Monte Carlo. In view of the recent interest in the post-war Charles Hamilton writings, it is worth noting that the biggest mystery remaining is whether he wrote a series featuring St. Kate's girls school in 1950. According to a correspondent 'Frank Richards' mentioned it in a letter, but it could be a case of a publisher accepting and paying for story/stories and then not publishing them.

According to my records, up-to-date Charles Hamilton created a total of 113 different schools, all listed and dated where they appeared, a record which in these days of non-new school tales can never be beaten by one single author.

FOR SALE: Holiday Annuals a complete set of the 22 originals 1920-1941. All in lovely condition.

Cassell/Skilton Bunter yellow jackets. A complete set of the 38 titles all in the delightful Chapman-Macdonald dustwrappers, very good copies, mainly first editions. Opportunity for Greyfriars enthusiasts to inspect these splendid books and make offers contact: To view: PATRICIA PHILLIPA CREWE, 12B WESTWOOD ROAD, CANVEY ISLAND, ESSEX. TEL. 0268-693735.

SOME D.C. THOMSON ANNUALS, by D.J. O'LEARY

THE HOTSPUR BOOK FOR BOYS 1937. (Part 2).

Now for a list and summary of the stories:

1. **THE SCHOOL OF TERROR** by Warwick Anderson.

A reign of terror descends on Waldon Abbey school when boys and masters begin to disappear. A crazed local had assumed the role and garb of the Inquisition in order to re-introduce it to Waldon Abbey where it had once reigned. The story has 3 full-page line drawings and 2 smaller ones. Including these, the story runs to 13 pages.

2. **JOCK RENNIE'S A.B.C.** by J.G. Robertson.

Rockvale School had no greater dunce than Jock. His despairing maths teacher, especially, determined to teach him the theorem of the isosceles triangle, and laboured long over him. But when a rival school steals the Rockvale flag, Jock shows his mettle by rescuing it.

Years later, on the North West Frontier, he repeats his brave feat by rescuing his lieutenant and the regimental flag.

When Jock Rennie V.C. returns to his hero's welcome in his old school, he can only stutter: "In the triangle A.B.C....."

3. **BILL HUBBARD, POT HUNTER** by Gordon Drew.

(This story is considered fully in Part 3 of this article, to be published in the October C.D.)



James was not to have the memorial insulted. Without hesitation he hit Harris on the jaw.

4. SAUCE FOR THE GANDER by Arthur Radcliffe.

Orphan Johnny's home-work is overwhelming him. The cow-punchers of the Flying O ranch, who are his only family, try to help him, but his teacher is stubborn and only when the cowboys demonstrate to him his ignorance of Western ways and how hard it is to absorb knowledge in too great doses, does he realize the error of his ways. The last set of lines his hard task-masters set him, and over which the exhausted schoolmaster falls asleep (just as the worn-out Johnny used to do over his homework) reads as follows: "Boys are like hosses - they shouldn't be overworked."

5. THE HEADMASTER OF KANAKA by C.V. Cunnison.

Westmore Academy, on a year's voyage around the world, are crossing the Pacific with their timorous teacher, Mr. Jaggars. Their ship, chartered cheaply, has a sulky and brutal crew who continually mis-treat the native sailor, Chamba. To the disgust of the boys, Mr. Jaggars is frightened to intervene and shocks the lads when his only observation is "...the black man probably deserves any punishment he received, and being a black man he does not feel it."

But things are set to change! Landing at a small island for fresh water, the ship begins to sink. The cowardly crew take the life-boats leaving the boys to drown. Now Chamba comes into his own. He takes over completely, re-placing the ineffectual Jaggars. He organises everything and instructs the boys in the arts of survival on a desert island. He also sets up a signal fire on a hilltop, to the boys' puzzlement.

When war-canoes appear approaching the island, the boys are calmed by Chamba, before whom these warriors fall in homage. He is their King, who had been treacherously kidnapped by the ship's crew from his own home island. Refloating the ship (which he had caused to sink in the shallow lagoon of Kanaka Island by secretly opening the sea-cocks) Chamba sails to the island where he guesses the crew has taken refuge.

When these charge aboard, expecting only schoolboys, they are met by fierce warriors and soon overpowered. Westmore Academy can continue their voyage, but the pupils will never forget the lessons they have learned from the Headmaster of Kanaka!

6. HEAD OF THE HOBOES by Crawford Kaye.

Big Bill Wallace, unemployed teacher, has to "jurnp a freight train" to travel from New York to the West to get to a promised job. He encounters three hoboies, on whom he practices his rusty teaching skills while they learn for the first time the "3 R's". When they rebel against his strict discipline, his trusty cane and boxing prowess keep them in order. But they get their own back when, getting off the train well before Bill's stop, they denounce him to the railway police. He manages to get clear but then has to wait for night-fall to catch another train. Idly picking up a discarded newspaper on a park-bench, he sees headlines about a local kidnap, with a copy of the kidnap note. Instantly he recognises the atrocious handwriting and recalls an overhead conversation between the hoboies. He rescues the child victim with the aid of his fists and cane, and proceeds in triumph to his job interview.

The boys of Shorthorn city have a nasty surprise when they "try it on" with their new teacher: "Never were a gang of boys more disappointed! For the remainder of the week most of them took their dinners off the mantelpiece, to such good purpose did Big Bill apply his cane!"

7. SHOOTING THE RAJAH'S BOLT

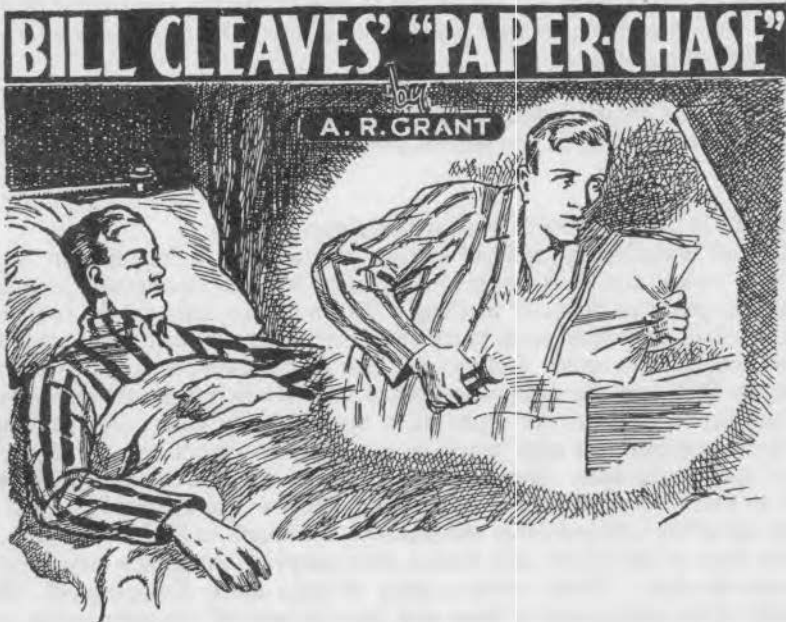
The boys of the Secret Service School in British India thwart a rebellion by a treacherous Rajah when they daringly destroy his imported rifles.

8. BILL CLEAVES' "PAPER-CHASE" by A.R. Grant.

Happy-go-lucky Bill Cleaves of Marley College is staggered to discover that his only chance of staying on at school, as his widowed mother wishes, is to win the extremely difficult Merton Scholarship. He studies past papers carefully and notes that certain questions seem to recur. He slaves away at preparing these questions and when the exam papers arrive he happens to see the Head put them away in his desk. Later that night he has a vivid dream of looking at the papers and seeing some questions he has not prepared. He revises them just in case but suffers pangs of conscience when he finds the actual exam is just what he had seen in his dream. He wins the scholarship but confesses his "cheating" to the Head, emphasising that it was done in his sleep.

The Head is amazed and explains that the exam papers were not left in his desk that night. He has the solution of what must have happened. "There's a wonderful part of our mind known as the subconscious. Scientists say that this part of our minds is always on the alert.... our subconscious has straightened all out while we are apparently fast asleep...."

So Bill has not "chased" the exam papers; his hard work and careful preparation have earned him success. He can stay at Marley!



9. THE FANCY-DRESS XI by Mortimer Graves.

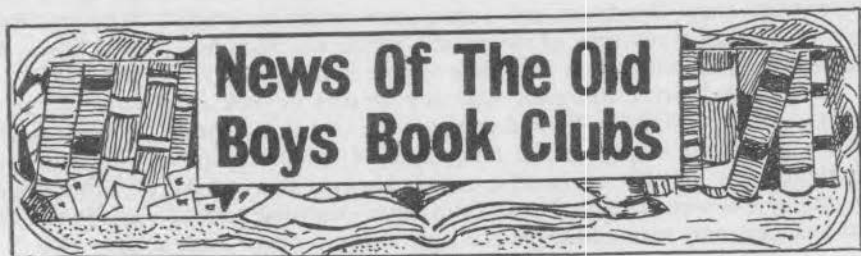
New sportsmaster Bob Perry is puzzled by Jock Forbes' erratic goalkeeping for Pemberton School. He saves "impossible" shots but lets "soft" shots beat him. by chance Bob finds out the reason for his problem. In the next game, a crucial one, he orders the team to wear a new strip with black and white bulls-eye design. Despite protests, his team change into them and Jock plays a blinder "steady as a rock when he was not flashing about like a comet....". Bob Perry has solved the problem of dealing with a goalkeeper who is colour-blind!

(N.B. In one study of Thomson sporting heroes, a similar approach by Baldy Hogan of the post-war Adventure is pointed out. "He it was, when he discovered that his goalkeeper was colour-blind, who had the brilliant notion of putting a unique bullseye pattern on the shorts and stockings of his team. A design which, surprisingly enough, has still to be duplicated by the makers of modern football strips!" (NOSTALGIA by John Cargill Thompson 1985).

10. BUSTER WATT's "HAT" - Trick by James Tolmie.

Buster teaches a well-deserved lesson to the spoiled St. Clair at the school concert where the latter's arrogant incompetence is clearly revealed to all, even his doting father. It takes all of Buster's conjuring skills to remedy St. Clair's disastrous tricks!

(To be continued.)



LONDON O.B.B.C.

Seventeen members gathered at the home of Roy and Gwen Parsons for the August meeting. Once the formalities were over the entertainments began with Eric Lawrence reading an article that had appeared in The Telegraph entitled "Lots of Change From a Fat Owl". The entertaining piece had been written by Steven Fry. Next on the agenda was a talk by Roy on P.G. Wodehouse's contribution to "Chums". The author of "Mike" only wrote one serial for "Chums" and that was something of a pot-boiler entitled "The Luck Stone", written under the pen-name Basil Windham. Roy displayed his fine copy of the volume for 1909 containing the said serial.

Everyone was cudgelling their brains for the answers to Graham's quiz, and Eric Lawrence succeeded in obtaining the winning score, closely followed by Don Webster.

We all enjoyed a super tea, and, like Bunter, we ate and talked and talked and ate. Bill Bradford read the Memory Lane newsletter and then Norman Wright read a story, written by Laurie Sutton, concerning Coker and his motor bike.

The main item in the second half of the meeting was a talk by Bill on Annuals. Members were asked to name their favourite year book, and needless to say the Holiday Annual featured prominently.

All too soon it was time to thank our hosts and then begin our journeys back home. Next meeting will be at the Ealing home of Bill Bradford.

NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

Chairman Joan welcomed a small attendance of eight to our August meeting, but this was held at the height of the summer Holiday season, so it was considered quite a good attendance. There were many apologies from those unable to attend.

The new Jennings book by our vice-President, Anthony Buckeridge, was on view; the publishers had made a good job of its production.

Arrangements were discussed concerning our October informal lunch and afternoon-evening meeting with out President, Mary Cadogan and we were delighted to hear that, all being well, Anthony Buckeridge will be with us too. All non-members of the Northern club will be welcome to join us for the afternoon and/or evening, and our Secretary can provide details to anyone interested in joining us for this very enjoyable occasion.

Keith Atkinson, our very renowned poet, delighted us with six of his new compositions about Greyfriars, and a long poem which he entitled "William's Busy Day". Keith had typescripts of the poems, which we were delighted to have. No doubt these poems will appear from time to time in future editions of the C.D.

After refreshments, Margaret Atkinson present us with a light hearted bit of fun, "Celebrities' Faces". We had to guess the owners of the faces from various pictures published in papers and magazines of the past - and it was not easy. Amazingly, one member achieved 6 correct answers from a total of 12 questions. Congratulations were extended to Graham Drye - especially in view of the fact that most members only managed to get one right answer or even none at all!

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

S.W. CLUB

Next Meeting will be at 20 Uphill Road, South Uphill,
Weston-Super-Mare, (Tel. 0934 626032) at 2.30 on 22.9.91.
Guest Speaker: Mrs. Una Hamilton Wright.

Great Days at Greyfriars

First Day of Term

By Dick Penfold



The holidays have run their course,
We're back to school's monotony ;
And now must turn our minds, perforce,
To Latin, Greek, and Botany.
Farewell to the vacation's joys,
The sweet, delightful summer-time ;
New term commences ; Greyfriars boys
Will have a somewhat glummer time !

Bob Cherry's back ; he sheds a tear,
And Smithy's sad and sorrowing ;
While Billy Bunter's also here,
Back to his deeds of borrowing.
" Will some kind fellow," he inquires,
" Lend me a bob right speedily ? "
Then to the tuckshop he retires,
Devouring doughnuts greedily !

Hallo ! There's Fisher Tarleton Fish.
He shakes my hand most clammyly ;
There's Skinner, too ; and I could wish
He'd stayed home with his family.
There's Squiff and Brown, a merry pair,
Both full of gay absurdities ;
Who is that giant over there ?
Why, Coker, on my word it is !

Welcome to all the Greyfriars throng !
A noisy, vast community ;
Let's hope that we may get along
In friendliness and unity.
May all the days of this new term,
Be happy days and jolly days ;
We'll play our parts with courage firm,
Refreshed by recent holidays !

Your Editor says—

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



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