

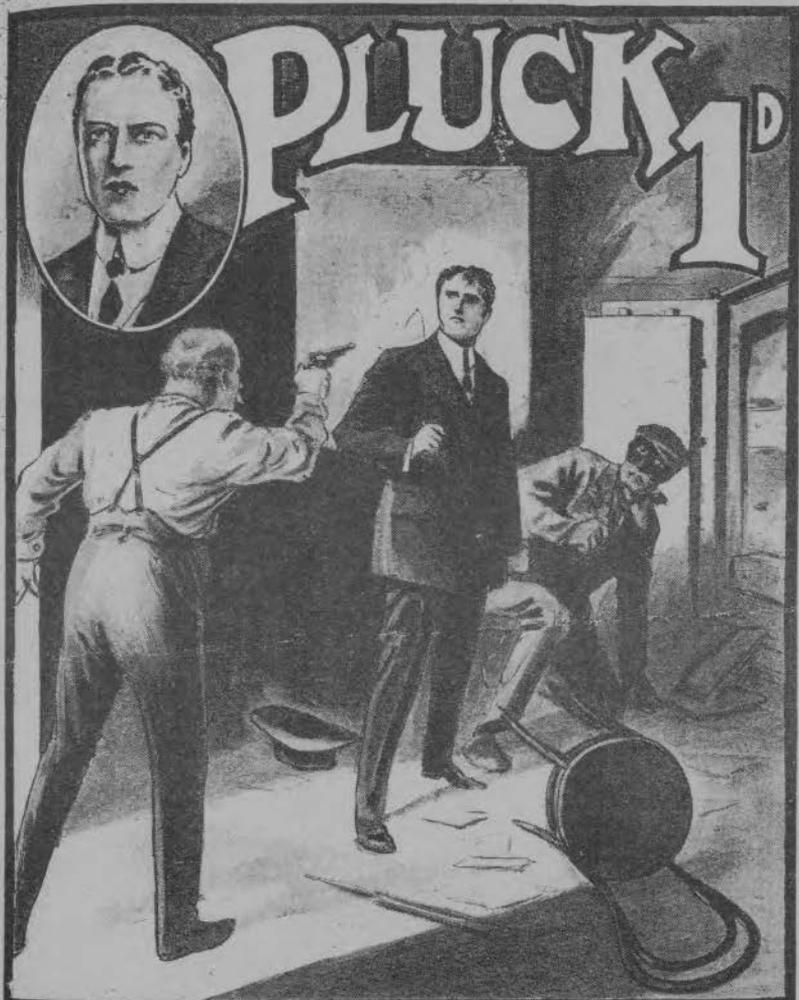
STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOLUME 45

No. 538

OCTOBER 1991

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A THRILLING DRAMA OF A LOST PERIOD IN
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86p

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IT'S WORTH A VISIT!

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

S.P.C.D. Edited and Published 1959 - January 1987 by Eric Fayne

VOL. 45

No. 538

OCTOBER 1991

Price 86p

THE EDITOR'S CHAT



author's Nancy series, *Nancy in the Sixth* proved equally difficult to find. However, ultimately they arrived.

For just about twenty years now I have been endeavouring to acquire the first *Girls' Crystal Annual*, dated 1940. The others came along fairly easily, especially as I was prepared to accept even somewhat battered copies to complete my set, but that first Annual never seemed to crop up. I didn't see it in dealers' catalogues; no-one ever responded when I advertised for it; indeed if I had not seen an illustration of it in the *Girls' Crystal* itself I would have felt sure that it just did not exist!

The other day an extraordinarily kind acquaintance realized that I was seeking it. She had a copy, but as her main collecting interest is focussed on the 1950s she generously decided that her copy of the 1940 *Girls' Crystal Annual* would be more at home in my collection than hers, and let me have it! Wonder of wonders! Joy of joys! I am thrilled to have it to complete the

COLLECTING JOYS

I'm sure that many C.D. readers will have found themselves at some time in possession of an entire run of papers or annuals with the exception of one copy, which seems to be ever elusive. I have often had to wait for months, years, even as long as a decade to get some last elusive book or paper. I know that with Dorita Fairlie Bruce's *Dimsie* books, it seemed that *Dimsie Head Girl* would never come my way; with the same

series, and because it is a very good annual from the contents point of view. (I think I'll have to write an article for the C.D. about it!) It is rather worn, and minus a spine - but it shines like a beacon on my shelves. Its presence there illustrates the generosity of one book collector to another, and the goodwill that we so often encounter in our hobby. (I now have all the *School Friend*, *Schoolgirls' Own*, *Girls Crystal* and *Golden Annuals*, though I still require two copies of the *Popular Book of Girls' Stories* to complete that set.)

OUR ANNUAL

Now for news of the forthcoming *C.D. Annual*, which I trust will give you all as much pleasure as that precious *Girls' Crystal Annual* has given me! I promised to give you 'trailers' of some of its contents, so here goes: Jeffrey Richards has written a superb article (from his Radio 3 1990 broadcast) on THE WORLD OF WILLIAM, J.E.M. has provided an illustrated article on Sexton Blake's involvement 'with the fair sex', Edward Baldock has given us more Greyfriars vignettes, in both prose and poetry, E.G. Hammond has written about his favourite *Magnet* series and John Springhall describes some of the delights of collecting Annuals (from *Eagle* and *Film Fun* to *Chick's Own* and *Tiger Tim's*). Jack Greaves once again focuses on St. Frank's in a lively and detailed article, Len Hawkey explores THE MAGIC WORLD OF UNCLE OOJAH, Ernest Holman takes us to Blandings Castle, John Bridgwater sends CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM THE THRILLER and, from Canada, R.T. Rudd looks nostalgically at his marvellous collection of *Modern Boys*, *Magnets*, *Gems*, *B.O.P.s* etc. And there is much more - which I will describe next month. If you have not already ordered your Annual, please do so without delay. The cost is £8.50 for readers in the U.K. and £10.00 for overseas readers. (Both prices include the cost of postage and packing.)

Next month's issue of the C.D. will be a celebratory one - to mark an important anniversary, and an important milestone in Hamiltonia.

Happy reading!

MARY CADOGAN

THERE IS STILL TIME
to obtain this Splendid
Annual





RANDOM RAMBLINGS ON "FATTIES"

by C.H. Churchill

In the school story literature of our youth it seemed to be the thing for every school to have a fat boy in the cast. All the most popular schools had one. My particular favourite one had Jimmy Little thought up by E.S. Brooks. This lad became quite a leading figure in the St. Frank's yarns in the early days. He was always on hand as a first class cook when any Barring Out or Scouting series was featured. He was the nicest of all the fat boys in the various papers. He became rather forgotten in the later Lees when Brooks was forced by editorial pressure to star Handforth at the expense of Nipper, etc.

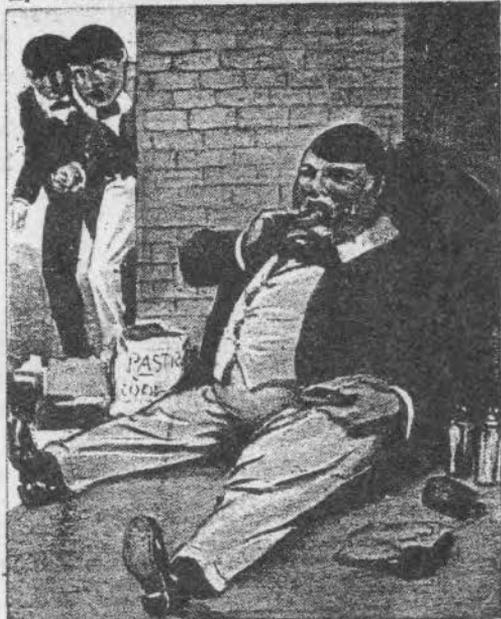
The most famous fat boy, of course, was Bunter in the Magnet. Although he was a horrible little bounder he was a remarkable character created and developed by Charles Hamilton. I often thought that if he played his tricks in my house as he did at Wharton Lodge, etc. he would never have been allowed there again. In the stories, however, he came back again like a bad penny. He was always on the scene. His minor, Sammy, was a more or less minor character as was Wally Bunter.

In the Gem we had two fat boys: Fatty Wynn of the New House and that awful thing, Baggy Trimble. Wynn was a good boy and was in the Football eleven but Baggy, well, the less said the better.

Tubby Muffin was the Fattie at Rookwood. Another rather minor character. I think we only read of him occasionally.

No. 228.—SPLENDID ENLARGED NUMBER BEGINS TO-DAY!

1½^d THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY 1st



They saw Jimmy Little helping himself to their lusk with evident enjoyment.

THE FAT BOY OF ST. FRANK'S

A Story of School Life and Detective Adventure in LONDON CITY, introducing NELSON LEE and NIPPER and the Boys of St. Frank's. By the Author of "Six Men in a Skiff," "The Mystery of Red's Wharf," "The Haunted School," etc. October 18, 1914.

Cedar Creek did not miss out. We had Chunky Todgers who, I remember was so often chewing maple sugar. He was often featured but was not a good example of boyhood.

At Wycliffe, Jack North introduced Porson one of Harris's cronies. However he was quite a decent fellow, playing in the Footer team, although a rather colourless character.

Thinking of these fat boys in literature made me realise that Fatties are about in real life. I have met a few in my time. In a factory where I was on the staff I had a fellow in the office who was rather heavyweight. When a cup of tea was offered at 4 p.m. (this was before tea and coffee breaks were invented) he always produced a paper bag of fancy cakes into which he used to dip. Another case was at the end of the war. I was on the staff of Field Marshal Alexander at Caserta near Naples. In the code and cipher room I had a wireless operator called Jones. He was a very nice fellow from Wales. He was another Fatty Wynn and very fond of his meals. One more case comes to mind. At school a few (?) years ago now there were two brothers and both of them were rather fat and grubby. Neither was popular. The point is that their name was GREED!!

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/S 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: 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.

WANTED: Modern Boy 324, 335, 337, 338, 339. Any reasonable price paid. ROY PARSONS, 'Foinaven', Church Hollow, West Winterslow, Salisbury, SP5 1SX.



SEXTON BLAKE AND DETECTIVE WEEKLY

by J.E.M.

Number 8

Sexton Blake's authors were always dazzlingly inventive; there was certainly nothing commonplace about the criminals they pitted Blake against. But it is doubtful if any created a more unusual crook than Gwyn Evans did - the reigning monarch of a Balkan state, no less!

King Karl of Serbovia either ruled a bankrupt kingdom or had extremely expensive tastes. His felonious targets were always of the multi-million pound kind (and that was nearly 60 years ago). He led a gang of seven and, together, they were known as the Double Four. Don't ask me why; perhaps they were just trying out some very simple arithmetic.

Karl's criminal courtiers were members of no aristocracy - unless you count the "aristocracy" of crime - but a very colourful lot they were. This exotic band included a midget (who could pass for a child), a female impersonator (also very useful), a giant Swede (the inevitable "heavy"), a very sinister German with hypnotic powers, a Borstal-educated cracksman, an Italian conjuror who is also a master of disguise, and a Chicago gangster in the class of Al Capone.

All this is about as believable as the Drones Club or Our Gang but it made for some very enjoyable hokum. Originally appearing in the UNION JACK, the Double Four were briefly revived in DETECTIVE WEEKLY and our illustration is from *The King Crook's Comeback* (DW 38). Try it; I defy you not to be amused and entertained.



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Editor's Note: As a tribute both to a popular Blakean character and a much-loved contributor, we are reprinting the following from a C.D. of over 40 years ago (no. 37, January 1950).

THE STORY OF NIRVANA

by Josephine Packman

As this is my first venture into the field as a writer I hope any errors will be overlooked in my endeavour to relate the "story of Nirvana".

Some of our Sexton Blake fans are rather inclined to ridicule the stories in the "Union Jack" dealing with the affairs of Tinker and Nirvana; but for myself, being at a young and impressionable age when I first read these yarns, way back in 1925, I must admit they were great favourites of mine, and I can remember at the time regretting very deeply that nothing more was ever heard of Nirvana and her immediate associates Marie and Phillippe the Fox.

The whole series only ran to thirteen numbers spread over the period from October 1925 to December 1926 and were written by that very famous author of so many Sexton Blake yarns, George Hamilton Teed, and were set against the background of some quite exciting adventures, many of which led Sexton Blake and Tinker to different parts of the Continent.

In No. 1149, the series commenced with the affair of the Duchess of Rayland's Diamond Necklace which had been stolen by Nirvana. A short prologue gave an episode in Tinker's early boyhood when he first met Nirvana, then a small child trained as a pickpocket by her elder sister, Marie. Years later, when Nirvana has become a famous dancer, these two young people met again, at the Ball given by the Duchess of Rayland, but Nirvana, still under the influence of Marie, steals the necklace, and by using Tinker as an unconscious ally, involved him in all the subsequent troubles. However, Tinker's one aim was to get Nirvana away from Marie, but unfortunately she insisted upon staying with her sister until she had solved the mystery which surrounded her parentage.

Tinker kept this affair a secret from Sexton Blake, thinking that nothing more would be heard from Nirvana, but in the next yarn, No. 1150, the



"What does the Tango Kid mean to you?" demanded Tinker gruffly. Suddenly Nirvana's head fell on his shoulder and she gave a great sob as he held his arm the tighter.

From U.J. 1159
Nirvana's Secret

activities of a gang of forgers are traced to Marie, Phillippe the Fox and Flash Brady, by Tinker, and in order to protect Nirvana he had to confess to Blake; but in the end Nirvana was allowed to go free.

The third adventure, related in No. 1156, took place in Sicily, that Island of deadly Vendettas, where once again Tinker met Nirvana, and armed with the knowledge that her associates were also on the island he was able to help Sexton Blake break the vendetta of the Bellamo family, of whom Phillippe was a member. It was during this period that Nirvana realised just what Tinker meant to her, and that he was trying to help her break away from Marie, but always the urge to discover the truth about her parents was too strong and Nirvana stayed on with Marie.

In No. 1159, a very seasonable Christmas story, was the finding by Nirvana of her long-neglected mother and the brother she had never seen, but who had also been ruined by Marie, and under the name of the Tango Kid was well-known to the police. Marie and her two unworthy friends did their best to fasten the guilt of a jewel theft on to Nirvana's brother, but here Sexton Blake stepped in and thwarted their plans.

From here on I feel I must just list the remainder of the series, with a brief mention of the titles and characters, otherwise the article will become too long and take up much valuable space in the C. Digest.

No. 1161, "The Mystery of the Painted Slippers", involved another of my favourite characters, Dr. Huxton Rymer, who, with Marie, was on the trail of the painted slippers, in the heels of which had been hidden some valuable diamonds. No. 1168, entitled "Nirvana's Ordeal", brings the first part of the series to a close, with Nirvana being able to devote herself to her mother, and then rather a long time was allowed to elapse before the first of a series of six stories appeared in No. 1198, called "The Mystery of Room No. 7". The stories concerned the efforts of the wealthy and unscrupulous Augustus Keever to get Nirvana into his clutches, but behind everything there lurked the sinister shadow of the mysterious Monseigneur X.



Blake fell back in sudden amazement as a wealth of golden hair tumbled down over the "boy's" shoulders.

From U.J. 1161,
The Mystery of the Painted Slippers

Each story was complete in itself. No. 1199, "The Case of the Sheffield Ironmaster", saw Blake and Tinker in Sheffield, and from there, in the "Affair of the Derelict Grange" (U.J. No. 1200), they travelled to Cornwall; and incidentally, the popular Yvonne then came on the scene, by offering to care for Nirvana.

In No. 1201, Tinker, who had been sent to Palestine, was shipwrecked in the Adriatic, and through being rescued and taken to Venice, was able to help Blake once again to outwit Monseigneur X, and incidentally, to rescue Nirvana, who had been prevailed upon by Keever to accompany him to Venice with the promise of revealing where her father was to be found.

In No. 1202, "The Clue of the Two Straws", Sexton Blake with the aid of both Yvonne and Nirvana, was able to clear up the scandal of the forged Polonian bonds by breaking up the gang of forgers and arresting Keever.

The final meeting between Blake and Monseigneur X occurs in Spain. The story of the mysterious Monseigneur ends amidst the mountains of the little state of Andorra, but Blake was enabled to discover the true identity of Nirvana's father, and in the last episode of this series, No. 1208, "The Adventure of the Two Devils", Nirvana and her parents are united, but only after Tinker's final efforts to get her out of Marie's clutches.

As I remarked at the beginning of this article, nothing more was ever heard of these interesting folk; and I, for one, was extremely disappointed that Marie did not get the punishment she deserved.

**The Old Boys' Books Club
Northern Section**

INFORMAL LUNCH WITH SPECIAL GUESTS

Saturday, October 12th, 1991
At: THE WHITE HORSE - Wakefield

Guests of Honour:

Our President - Mary Cadogan
Editor of the "C.D.", broadcaster and author

Our Vice-President - Anthony Buckeridge
Broadcaster and author of the celebrated
JENNINGS books including the latest: "JENNINGS AGAIN"

Also attending: our own member WILLIS HALL
author and playwright and formerly of
the Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall partnership.

Afternoon informal get-together at the home and library of our Secretary.
Evening meeting at our normal Leeds venue with all our guests and members.
A warm welcome extended to all. Further details from Darrell Swift, 37
Tinshill Lane, Leeds, LS16 6BU.

OTHER FAVOURITE DETECTIVES



FORTHRIGHT and TREW!

by Len Hawkey

It has long been acknowledged that writers of crime fiction yield to no-one in their ability to dredge up bizarre plots and extraordinary detectives, and nowhere is this more evident than in boy's fiction. We have encountered many such characters in the pages of our magazine over the years, but I have recently happened upon two who must come pretty near the top of the list.

THE LEAGUE of DREAD

*Being the
Thrilling Adventures of
VERNON TREW, the detective, &
CLUTCH, the Man-tracking Dog.*

Clutch disguised as a Sheep Dog.

Clutch disguised as a Collie.

Clutch, the man-tracker, and his master, Vernon Trew.

CLUTCH IN SOME
OF HIS MANY
DISGUISES -
INCLUDING WOLF-
HOUND AND
TERRIER
ILLUSTRATIONS
BY "VAL"
READER
and
REGRET MORROW

Vernon Trew, who appeared in several stories written for the Big Budget and the Boys Leader in the very early years of this century, was the brainchild of Donovan Mart - one of the pseudonyms of W. Le Breton Martin, a prolific author, killed, so Bill Lofts tells us, in a Kensington road accident in 1944. All detectives seem to be, by definition, "famous", but Vernon's main asset was his bull-terrier "Clutch"! Pooh, say you - no match, I bet, for Pedro, Dirk, Strongheart, Flash or even Lassie! Ah, but Clutch had one very rare attribute - he was a master of disguise! His remarkable ability to transform his

appearance, and thus fool the most suspicious rogue, is amply demonstrated by the accompanying illustrations. I'm a bit puzzled about that telescopic tail, though. Never mind - next time you see an innocent little poodle trotting towards you, watch out! It may be Clutch!

So - Vernon Trew was not your run-of-the-mill sleuth, but neither was Stalwart Forthright! The creator of this handsome and virile investigator is never given in *The Jester* (1920/1921); but he could afford to sneer at such rivals as Sexton Hyde and Martin Steel (See C.D. 527, November 199) - they had only 16 girls to share between them, whereas Stalwart Forthright had at least a dozen, all to himself. beautiful and intrepid Kitty Clive held pride of place with, behind her, a full team of footballing lady detectives, known as "The Yorkshire Roses"! For good measure there was always the fearless bloodhound "Buller" to help them when danger threatened - danger usually being in the form of the fiendish Chu-Fang-Chow. Little could he have realised what he was up against - especially as the lady footballers always seemed to have a match in the area where his latest crime was due to take place.

There were occasions when Kitty herself had to take the field, but it is not known if the great Stalwart ever took part - doubtless he would have had to disguise himself as the (Forth)-right back!

When shall we ever see the like of Vernon Trew or Stalwart Forthright again? Or even Clutch and Buller, let alone the Yorkshire Roses. They are gone, like the lovely silent films of which some of the story titles - "Whispering Voices", "At The Fatal Hour" and "The League of Dread" - are so reminiscent, far away down Memory Lane.

A THRILLING CHRISTMAS DETECTIVE STORY.



Introducing Stalwart Forthright, Kitty Clive, and the football girl detectives.

From *JOLLY JESTER* 1921

drawn by J. Louis Smyth

GRAND NEW SPORTING AND DETECTIVE SERIES.



These intensely dramatic stories, each quite complete in itself, tell how Stalwart Forthright, assisted by Kitty Clive and her team of beautiful and courageous football girl detectives, sets out to break up a gang led by the amazing international crook, Chu-Fang-Chow.

THIS WEEK:
WHISPERING VOICES.

A LAMENT FOR LOST SCHOOLGIRLS

by Mary Cadogan

Much has been said about the traumatic closure of the MAGNET in May 1940, and the loss to the world of 'The Battle of the Beaks' and other stories which Hamilton had apparently written to complete the just begun and extremely promising series. However, nothing has been written about the ending of the SCHOOLGIRL which was, for its loyal and devoted readers like myself, an utter tragedy. It is true that the girls' paper, unlike the MAGNET, was able to include a short statement to the effect that the current issue, no. 564, would be the last, because of wartime circumstances beyond the editor's control, but appetites were whetted by a trailer for next week's story. 'The Feud Between the Prefects' (presumably by John Wheway). I often wonder what happened to the manuscript for that, and whether or not it was ever completed.

"THAT ELUSIVE AFRICAN IMAGE!" Magnificent LONG COMPLETE Cliff House School story inside.

Now that Helen Hunter, once such an unpopular prefect at Cliff House School, has reformed, Barbara Redfern & Co. are delighted to back her up. And when Helen is made temporary Head Girl, and put in charge of an important swimming event, they are almost as thrilled as she at her chance to establish herself completely. But—Connie Jackson, Helen's one-time friend of the Sixth, has other ideas! While Babs & Co. do all they can to help Helen score a triumph, Connie does everything to prevent it. Let HILDA RICHARDS tell you in her own enthralling way what happens, NEXT WEEK, during—



The FEUD BETWEEN the PREFECTS!

The last Cliff House Story in the SCHOOLGIRL was 'That Elusive African Image', which featured Bessie Bunter in a starring role, and its last words - in view of the paper having to end - strike in retrospect a somewhat ironic note:

...Babs and Mabs, beaming now at Miss Charmant, who was smilingly nodding, laughed loudest and longest of all. Bessie Bunter's ju-ju had not turned out to be an image of such ill-omen, after all.

(Who knows - perhaps that 'ju-ju' was jinxed.

From the SCHOOLGIRL to SCHOOL-DAYS is to move from a very popular paper to one that is rarely sought or collected. SCHOOL-DAYS' lack of appeal is rather surprising. I must admit that I gave it scant attention until I acquired some years ago a run, in almost mint condition, from number 1 to number 77. To be honest, it was a year or two even then before I really looked at these papers, which had come



to me as a gift. When I did, I was impressed by their attractive covers and illustrations, and by some of the fictional contents. Published by the Amalgamated Press, SCHOOL-DAYS was apparently intended to be somewhat up-market, with a few real-life photographic news snippets, and serious articles ('The Teaching Profession' by A Schoolmistress; 'Great Admirals and Great Generals', etc.) which were vaguely reminiscent of the worthwhile but uncharismatic CHILDREN'S NEWSPAPER of the 1930s, which my parents loved but about which my brother and I remained extremely cool!

There were gems, however. As previously mentioned, the covers were lovely; some were by A.E. Bestall. There were some attractive give-aways (including 3 lovely colour plates of Christopher Robin episodes by Ernest Shepard, which were still tucked into my copies of the paper) and stories by 'famous writers for girls' including Christine Chaundler and Elsie Oxenham. (There were two 12-episode serials by the latter - 'St. Margaret's' and 'The Return of Dorothy Cheyne'. In view of the collectability and prices of Oxenham books today I should have thought that these two serials alone would have made SCHOOL-DAYS a paper to be sought by dealers as well as collectors!)

It seems surprising that despite all this quality, the paper did not do very well. It had a short run, and from no. 76 onwards, the 'famous writers for girls' were replaced by the tried, talented and tested team of male authors who had already done so much for girl readers in SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN, SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY and SCHOOL FRIEND. These were Horace Philips (as Joy Philips), John Wheway (as Heather Granger) and L.E. Ransome (as Ida Melbourne). However, it was too late for even these members of the old school to save the paper.

In retrospect I lament its passing. It ran only from November 1928 to May 1931. Its demise, however, may have paved the way for even brighter items in the A.P.'s still running girls' papers, and brought about the creation of the GIRLS' CRYSTAL a few years later.



Danny was "Looking Back", in recent issues of C.D., at the very early work of Charles Hamilton. Danny made a passing reference to "King Cricket", probably the great author's first story of note, and the one which set his feet firmly on the opening mile of the seemingly endless road to Fame.

So recent articles have comprehensively covered the start of the St. Jim's stories in PLUCK, the Clavering stories in the great new paper, the GEM - and how St. Jim's absorbed Clavering in the opening months of the Gem.

That just leaves "King Cricket", which probably started it all, hiding modestly in the shadows of Time. So all we have to do, to wind up Danny's Looking Back at the Beginning, is to turn the spotlight (or, more appropriately, the sunlight) on to "King Cricket".

"King Cricket" was fully covered in one of our "Let's Be Controversial" articles in this magazine over 20 years ago. It was one of the most popular in the entire long series. Somehow it caught the eye of the world-famous CRICKET SOCIETY, and the entire article was published in "The Journal of the Cricket Society" in the Autumn edition of 1974. We felt honoured and delighted, and I still treasure the issue and the charming letter from Mr. J. Coldham, the Editor of the Cricket Journal.

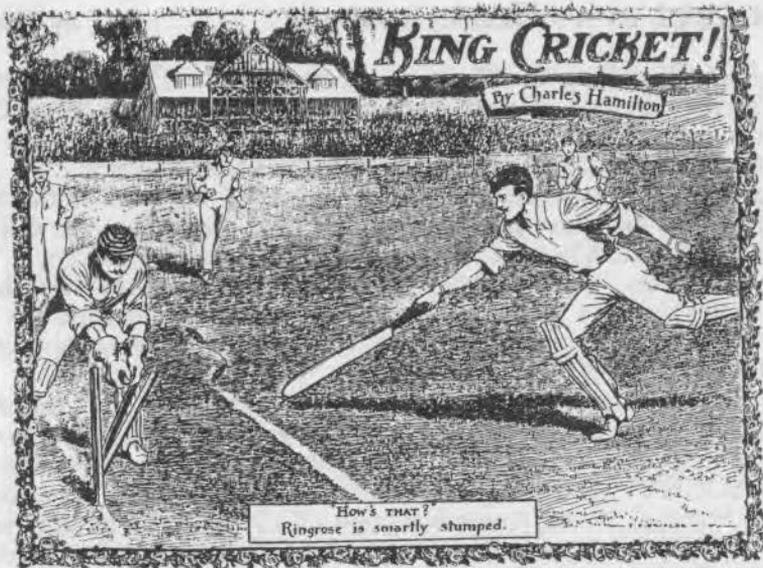
How better, then, to wind up our "Looking Back" to the Hamilton beginnings, than to re-publish here and now, that very article.

KING CRICKET IN A GOLDEN SUMMER

Knockers are all too fashionable nowadays. Those who knock the old papers usually have but little knowledge of their subject. Those who knock Britain are a slimy lot who gain attention far beyond their merits. As for the cricket knockers, they, like the poor, have always been with us. Ever since we were children the cricket knockers have been telling us that cricket is dead or dying, and we almost believe them - until the sun shines. There is nothing wrong with cricket that a sunny day won't put right.

I am not sure whether the sun shone constantly in the summer of 1907, but it was certainly a golden summer for the cricket-loving readers of the Boys' Realm, a paper under the Direction of Hamilton Edwards. From early May until mid-September the paper was packed with a variety of complete cricket stories plus articles by experts on the game. The star attraction, however, was a long serial entitled "King Cricket" by Charles Hamilton. That it was the title of the serial and not the name of the writer which was expected to "put the story over" was proved by the fact that many instalments were published without the name of the writer being attached. In those days serials were all the rage in papers for boys and for girls, and it was customary for one artist to be commissioned to illustrate every instalment throughout the run of the serial. The artist who illustrated "King Cricket" was E.E. Briscoe, who was probably more successful drawing adults and rural backgrounds than he was later on with schoolboys.

Charles Hamilton, at that time, was only on the threshold of his wonderful success, and, in several ways, "King Cricket" was one of the most remarkable tales he ever wrote. In this column, I once, quite inaccurately, described "King Cricket" as a school story. It is a story of county cricket, and all the main characters are adults.



"King Cricket" is a famous tale. All Hamiltonians know of it, yet, paradoxically enough, few have ever seen it.

At one time - and I don't know how it came about - Hamilton was reputed not to be good at writing about cricket and soccer. So far as cricket is concerned, he gives his critics the lie with "King Cricket". The story is packed with cricket matches, and he never puts a foot wrong. The only slip, during the run of the serial, was made by a caption writer who printed: "Ringrose is smartly stumped!" while, as the author and the artist make quite clear, Ringrose was actually run out.

Even more remarkable is the county cricket background, and it is clear that there is not much in connection with the county cricket competition that the writer did not know about. The descriptions of the fixtures and of the grounds on which they were played were indicative of a man who was steeped in county cricket lore - and loved it.

Some of the games were lost; just a few of them were won; some were washed out by rain, and particularly striking are the chapters where Loamshire is supposed to be playing Hampshire at Southampton, yet the rain streams down constantly over three days while frustration grows among the men.

Some of the fixtures are merely mentioned in passing; others are described in full. Loamshire meets Yorkshire at Bradford; the Yorkshire players of 1907 play their parts in the sequence. This introduction of many real, living people into the tale makes "King Cricket" unique among Hamilton stories.

Lord Hawke and George Hirst of Yorkshire; Woolley and Hardinge of Kent; and plenty of other famous players take the field and have their day and their say in "King Cricket".

The tourists that year were the South Africans. They met Loamshire at Loamchester, and thrashed the home team. The touring South Africans played their parts, including Vogler, who "had been on Lords' ground staff last year".

Loamshire was playing Kent - the champions - at Tonbridge, and on the third day of the match, Arthur Lovell, the captain, ordered one of his players from the field. Surrey was played at the Oval, Essex at Leyton; Lancashire at Old Trafford, and Lovell's men met

C.B. Fry's men of Sussex at Hove. And all the way through, the real life players were opposite to Hamilton's fictional characters. It is an astonishing tale.

Though there is a lot of cricket, each match is completely different from the fixture before and the one after. Hamilton was too sound a writer to believe that descriptions of cricket matches were sufficient to make a story. Comedy is lacking, but there is plenty of drama, and even a smattering of romance.

The cut-and-thrust of the changing-room jealousies is vividly brought to life, and the picture of county cricket, as it was then, is brilliantly portrayed.

Loamshire was at the bottom of the table. The reason for their lowly position was that the county had always been an all-amateur side. No pro had ever played for Loamshire.

Owing to a reversal of his fortunes, Lovell had to become a professional. Half-way through the tale, he became the captain - a pro captain. It made all the difference to Loamshire.

Social reformers like George Orwell could hardly have faulted "King Cricket" for having a snob angle, for a pro was the hero of the story and the real-life pro-players were shown in glowing colours. But it is possible that social reformers would despise cricket as the essence of snobbery, and would condemn making the boys of a nation interested in such a game.

The names of the fictional players are familiar to old Hamiltonians: Lovell, Valance, Lagden and Ponsonby. One or two episodes remind the well-read Hamiltonian of the cricket drama and excitement so finely developed in the Stacey series, nearly 30 years later. Just here and there, in "King Cricket", Hamilton drops into the present tense. It was a common trend among writers, all those years ago, and it gives "King Cricket" a quaintly pleasant old-fashioned flavour when it happens.

It seems strange that this fine story was only reprinted once - in the Boys' Friend Library - where, according to rumour, it was pruned. Yet it is obvious to anyone that the introduction of the real-life players of 1907 made it difficult for the tale to be re-issued a year or two later. And my beloved Kent have not been champions since 1913, yet I love them just the same.

Of course, Charles Hamilton never won the fame which was enjoyed by Frank Richards and Martin Clifford. Otherwise, surely such tales as "Rivals of St. Kit's", "Redfern Minor", "Arthur Redfern's Vow", tales as "Rivals of St. Kit's", "Redfern Minor", "Arthur Redfern's Vow", and "King Cricket" would have been revived in the thirties. Of these, "King Cricket" was the only period piece, due to its real-life players. It is, indeed, a mystery why the school stories were not featured in the Schoolboys' Own Library, and one would have thought that the S.O.L. would have been an excellent medium for "Cousin Ethel's Schooldays" and "The School Under Canvas", especially as the latter was only reprinted once after its serialisation. One can only believe that nobody thought of it.

At the start of this article I spoke of a golden summer. According to "King Cricket", 1907 was a wet summer, with the rain often streaming down the pavilion windows while the players fumed and fretted in the changing-rooms. 'Twas ever thus!"

* * * * *

(Some years after the article was written, Kent remedied the situation, and became Champions in 1970. - E.F.)

* * * * *

THE FRIENDLY DAYS

by Ernest Holman

According to tradition (!) schooldays are the happiest days of one's life. In most cases, I am sure that this is a retrospective statement - comparing one's current existence with those long-past days when Youth was King. Frank Richards implied, in his famous Orwell response, that if a lad was not going to be a success in his future years, why spoil his present happiness by indicating such a possibility.

Schooldays, though, were undoubtedly the friendly days. This is a much more apt remembrance; there were opponents, rivals, enemies, of course - but through it all there were friendships that meant such a lot. No problems were so great that they could not be shared with each other and, in the strength of one another, things generally 'came out all right'.

The mention of the above author is appropriate, really, in that I have been thinking of all those junior friendships from his three main schools. Study by study, school by school, person by person, would be far too numerous a list to instance here. They were always pretty solid, true friendships, despite some youthful misunderstandings.

What, though, of the future of those schoolday associations. After the pupils left the establishments, which of those well-remembered friendships would have survived?

On the law of averages alone, several would have just faded away. Some would have remained as acquaintances; frequently, a correspondence would have sufficed. Many would have stayed on a quite friendly basis, with occasional meetings. In other words, the vast majority of those still existing would have been of the 'keeping in touch' variety.

The Groups were more likely to be the eternal chums as of old. Not much doubt that the Greyfriars Famous Five would continue strongly, even if Inky was away in his 'Kingdom'. One assumes that the Nabob would settle in his native land, even if he did later become Mr. Hurree Singh. (In a post-war story, he once made the remark that 'Bhanipur has not departed Pakistanfully'.)

Amongst the Five, there would undoubtedly be the strongest bond between Wharton and Nugent. Probably, Bob Cherry would always be friendly with Mark Linley - who, probably, became part of the group again, as in the very early days. (A thought, though! Would the Famous Set have stood the strain if Harry, and not Bob, had become brother-in-law to Hazel?)

St. Jim's and the Terrible Three, of course, come to mind. Here, I visualise not such a tight affinity, but their frequently meeting for renewal associations. Actually, I imagine Tom Merry's greatest life-long friend would have most assuredly been Reginald Talbot. As for Study 6 in the Fourth, Gussy would forever be arranging 'get togethers' - not only with Blake and Co. but so many others. Eastwood House, no doubt, would continue to flourish, with the next generation (Conway) as Overlord. (Pardon my ignorance, but if the eldest son became Lord Eastwood, what would that have made Arthur and Walter?)

To Rookwood and, first stop, the End Study and the Fistical Four. Somehow, I do not see a life-long association here. I have always felt that

Jimmy Silver would have settled where the *Boys' Friend* once wanted him to settle - Way Out West. Perhaps all four would be there together?

When one looks closely, not so very many pairings come quickly to mind in the sense of 'bosom pals', 'through thick and thin', etc. Other than a few mentions above, only one other association seems to come through. That of the Bounder and Redwing. Eyebrows may rise at the idea of such a friendship surviving in the hurly-burly of current life; all the same, I cannot see at any time that there would be a permanent breaking of friendship. As before, temporary 'hiccups' - but never more. Perhaps only in fantasy, but I was reminded of them not long ago when watching the film 'San Francisco'. Tom and Smithy - cast as Father Tim and Blackie.



TOM MERRY

Fantasy, did I say? Well, that is what this whole piece is, really. So there is no reason why I shouldn't finish on that note.

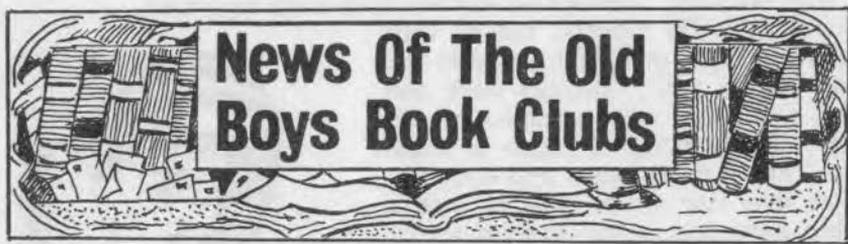
Of all the many Charles Hamilton juniors, whom would one select for a life-long friend? No hesitation on my part, of course - who but Tom Merry?

(Editor's Note: If I may be allowed to answer Mr. Holman's question, I would choose Clara Trevlyn from the Cliff House girls (for her robustness and honesty), Bob Cherry from Greyfriars (for his loyalty and also his joviality which would lift my spirits if they became depressed), Gussy from St. Jim's (because he is honourable in every sense of the word) and Madge Minden from Morcove (for her musicality and integrity). I realize, of course, that Madge is not a Charles Hamilton creation - but she is inspirationally linked to his stories and characterizations. It would certainly be interesting to know which choices of chums other C.D. readers would make.)

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.





CAMBRIDGE CLUB

For the first meeting of the Club's 1991/92 season we met at the Longstanton home of our Secretary, Tony Cowley.

This season will include our 21st Anniversary meeting. We intend to celebrate appropriately.

A 'busy' AGM was conducted before the major talk of the afternoon was introduced: Keith Hodgkinson delivered a highly detailed investigation of the Life and Times of the Popular Twentieth Century writer, Nevil Shute. We discovered much about the man and his books.

ADRIAN PERKINS

LONDON O.B.B.C.

Our September meeting was held at Bill Bradford's Ealing home where 23 members enjoyed a packed and varied programme. Bill Lofts gave a presentation entitled "What's In A Name?" in which he drew the attention of members to how accurately the names given to Greyfriars characters reflected the personalities of the boys. He also treated us to the benefit of his genealogical researches by giving origins of the character names and those of some of the members present at the meeting.

Tea followed and members were given the opportunity to relax in the garden or examine Bill's extensive and varied book collection.

Ray Hopkins then read an article from the Daily Telegraph entitled "There's Nothing Funny About a Comic Decline" by Ray Honeyford. Mr. Honeyford's main argument would appear to be that today's comics, such as The Victor, do little to stimulate the imagination of readers in the way that the old story papers did. George Orwell, he says, would not have been impressed. Ray's reading provoked a lively discussion among those present.

Phil Griffiths rounded off the proceedings with another of his excellent William readings. The story of "William and White Satin" was a hilarious account of William's efforts to avoid attending a wedding as a pageboy.

Warm thanks were expressed to our genial host for an excellent tea and his kind hospitality.

ALAN PRATT

NORTHERN O.B.B.C. REPORT

Chairman Joan welcomed the assembled 12 and a number of apologies were tendered indicating that the holiday season was not yet over. Paul gave some details concerning the W.E. Johns' meeting to be held in Nottingham in October - this meeting not organised on this occasion by Northern O.B.B.C.

Arrangements were discussed for our informal lunch to be held on 12th October, and we were all delighted to know that Mary Cadogan and Anthony Buckeridge would be with us, along with Willis Hall. A most enjoyable afternoon and evening is anticipated.

Keith and Margaret Atkinson reported on their recent visit to Richard Jefferies' country. Joan then presented an autumn anthology of readings from various works ably assisted by Geoffrey Good and William Hirst. A very refreshing change and most enjoyed by all. After refreshments, Geoffrey Good delighted us all by one of his inimitable readings from MAGNET 1307 where the Fat Owl endeavours to fool Mr. Woose in enabling him to leave the form so that he can procure a cake.

Our next meeting commences at 1.00 p.m. for lunch at THE WHITE HORSE in Wakefield on Saturday, 12th October, along with honoured guests. A warm welcome is extended to all.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

The Lake of Forgiveness

*THIS mound is named for Nurse Cavell—
A monument where cloud-banks dwell,
A God-made mound, a man-named shrine,
Unchanged through storm and summer's shine.*

*How better this than pile or shaft
Of marble, sculptured by man's craft;
Than columned temple, frescoed hall,
Which, with the years, decay and fall!*

*But this, which now a tribute stands,
Unmarred since the Creator's Hands
First moulded every point and crest,
A true memorial is—the best!*

*The snows upon it melt and trace,
Like tear-drops, down Mount Edith's face,
To form a pool which, for her sake,
Will e'er be called Forgiveness Lake.*

*Oh, that on national hearis as well
As shrines, ideals pure would dwell
Like mountain snows, from which would seep
Clear waters of forgiveness deep!*

CLIFFORD O. STEWART



Mount Edith Cavell, with Lake Forgiveness at the base.
Canadian Rockies, at Jasper National Park, Alberta, Canada
(A Canadian National Railways photograph)

*October 12th, 1991, marks the 76th anniversary
of the death of Nurse Edith Cavell*



REVIEWS BY
MARY CADOGAN

**DESIRABLE RESIDENCES AND
OTHER STORIES** by E.F. Benson
Selected by Jack Adrian (Oxford £15.95)

Jack Adrian, that enthusiastic hobbyist and spirited writer, has produced another volume which is pure delight. He has dug out a number of E.F. Benson short stories - both humorous and spooky - from magazines such as *Lady's Realm* and *Good House-keeping* for this fascinating compilation. There is a first book publication of a Miss Mapp story (which gives the compilation its title); over half the tales were written during the nineteen-twenties, and are full of unconsciously stylish period atmosphere, as well as redolent with Benson's waspish wit. A special bonus comes in the form of the six page introduction which is both informative and entertaining. (One day someone should produce an anthology of Jack Adrian intros. These would make a fascinating 'socio-literary' history!). It is impossible to single out one story from the collection for special comment, though I must admit to particularly enjoying the resurrected Miss Mapp exploit, and the skirmishes with the supernatural!

LOUIS WAIN - THE MAN WHO DREW CATS by Rodney Dale
(Michael O'Mara Books, £25)

The front cover blurb for this beautifully produced and engaging book quotes H.G. Wells as saying 'English cats that do not look like Louis Wain cats are ashamed of themselves'. Certainly many of us grew up with his vibrant and varied feline images as our yardstick for what cats in comics and story-books should be. Even if we actually saw few authentic Louis Wain pussies, we came across drawing after drawing by illustrators who, either directly or indirectly, were influenced by his work. Rodney Dale charts the development of Wain's career from the early picturing of realistic cats to those anthropological characters who skated, played cricket, drove cars, attended dances and, in fact, did everything that human beings could do - and in a more appealing way. The



book provides a satisfying biographical study of the artist. The sombreness of his life (a short-lived marriage, frequent poverty and the mental illness which eventually engulfed him) makes an almost bizarre contrast with the exuberance of his grinning, knowing, leering and winking catty characters. The sadness of the fact that Wain's last years had to be spent in a mental home is somewhat alleviated by his never dimmed capacity to produce wonderful feline studies, and his continuing relish for drawing.

LOUIS WAIN - THE MAN WHO DREW CATS comprises 144 large pages, 32 of which are in full colour. There are literally dozens of black and white line and half-tone illustrations. A 'must' for Wain enthusiasts and for cat connoisseurs!

A CATLAND COMPANION by John Silvester and Anne Mobbs (Michael O'Mara Books, £15)

96-pages of further cat illustrations, and almost all of them in colour. This collection of pictures and expanded captions has been drawn from scraps, greetings cards, advertisements, books, prints and postcards from, roughly, 1880 to 1920. Its flavour is late-Victorian, and the quality of the reproduced illustrations is faithful to the period. The work of Louis Wain is, of course, well represented, and so too is that of Helena Maguire and Henrietta Ronner. The cats who parade and cavort through these vividly coloured pages are generally humanized and elegantly clothed. They drive cars, ride bicycles, decorate Christmas trees, go shopping, swimming and apple-bobbing. They also attend school, play musical instruments and love trying on new clothes. The Catland world is a curious phenomenon, which spilled over into many of the nursery comics - such as *Rainbow* and *Playbox* - which were part of our early lives. I enjoyed this book, but wish it had delved too into the cats from these and other comic papers.

SOME SLEUTHING STORIES

From felines to human ferrets with horrible crime mysteries to fathom! The Gollancz Crime paperback series continues to produce winners, including another about one of my favourite contemporary sleuths, the thespian Charles Paris, who, in Simon Brett's AN AMATEUR CORPSE (£3.50), continues to rise splendidly and ingeniously to challenges which might daunt a lesser detective. There is also another story featuring Martin Beck, who infuses warmth and humanity into the bleakest of crime puzzles (THE LAUGHING POLICEMAN £3.99, by Sjowall & Wahloo). A touch more raw, but equally gripping, is Dell Shannon's THE DEATH BRINGERS (£3.99), which involves the Mexican Lieutenant Mendoza of the Los Angeles Homicide Squad in a multi-layered murder mystery.

SOME D.C. THOMSON ANNUALS. By D.J. O'Leary The Hotspur Book for Boys 1937 (Part 3)

Two of the stories in the Hotspur 1937 Book are particular favourites of mine. THE HEADMASTER OF KANAKA is especially interesting because it raises the thorny question of racial stereotypes in boys' fiction. We have already noticed the cartoon illustrations of "Chinks" and "Coal-Blacks" on the front and back endpapers. These were intended to be amusing, and were so accepted by readers. It is only comparatively recently, in a very different world, that we have become sensitive, even possibly over-sensitive, to racial slurs.

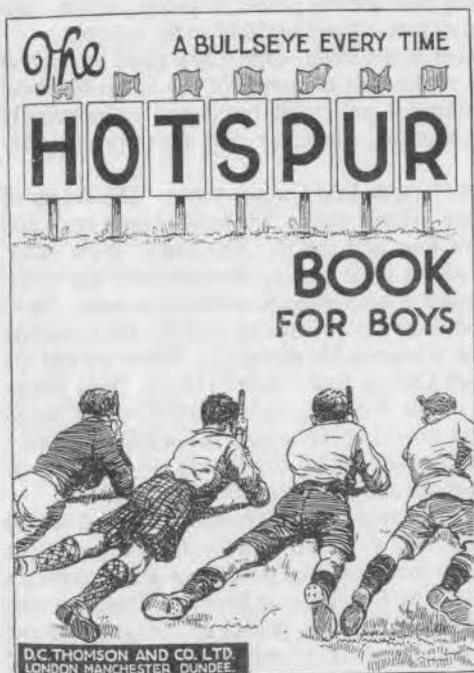
The casual use by earlier generations of writers of derogatory names for black or Oriental people make it seem that Britain was once, by modern standards, a hot-bed of prejudice. So it may have been, but usually unconsciously. The revulsion produced here by more systematic and organised attempts to promote racism, from the Klu Klux Klan to Hitler, shows how such prejudice was accepted only in so far as it did not conflict with British ideas of "fair play".

In THE HEADMASTER OF KANAKA the English schoolboys are revolted by the white crew's wanton bullying of Chamba, the native drudge, and their teacher's cowardly acceptance of it. But the reversal of rôles, when the castaways find themselves on the desert island, is illustrated vividly by Chamba's assumption of Jagers' mortar board. "Mr. Jagers stared blankly. His authority had been taken right out of his hands. It was Chamba who now gave the boys orders, and Chamba to whom the boys looked for guidance. The islander had put the master's mortar-board on his own head, and though the result was comical in the extreme, nobody laughed. Chamba intended it to be a sign of authority, and he certainly gave the boys to understand they were to obey his orders."

They soon find that when he is in his own world, he is the one with the necessary expertise to ensure their survival, not only in the basic essentials of subsistence but also through the confidence he inspires and organisation he imposes.

With his wise, capable and generous character, Chamba shows up the white men in the story as a pretty sorry lot. Perhaps even Mr. Jagers had learned not to see black men as inferior!

The other favourite of mine, which I re-read over and over, is BILL HUBBARD, POT-HUNTER by "Gordon Drew".



Toby Drew, captain of Red Circle school, is discussing with his fellow prefects, "Jumbo" Janes and Ginger Martin, the arrival of a new Sixth Former, Dan Harris, who is the brother of a popular senior who has just left.

It is the prefect's duty to help him settle in and manfully they try to do so. But Harris tries their tolerance too much when he insolently refuses to doff his cap before the Red Circle Roll of Honour, and even spits out his chewing gum in front of it. Infuriated by this disgraceful conduct, "Jumbo" intervenes and finds himself engaged in a fight with the aggressive Harris. "Jumbo", the school's champion boxer, is giving his opponent a well-deserved lesson when he falls and twists his knee. Typically, Harris takes advantage of this injury until Ginger Martin takes him on. Although game, however, Ginger is too small and light to cope with the big and powerful bully and is being badly mauled when Dixie Dale, the young and athletic master of Senior House, arrives. He makes Harris show due respect to the Roll of Honour.

With "Jumbo's" knee injury ruling him out of the Currie Boxing Cup, Red Circle's greatest sporting honour, everyone is horrified to hear that Harris has entered his name for the competition. Who can stop him now? The only possible opponent is "Big Bill" Hubbard. He is of comparable build to Harris and was once an outstanding boxer. But since the death of his study-mate in a climbing accident, he has become absolutely without interest in his former activities. He has lost all pride in himself, avoids exercise and does nothing but laze around his study all day.

The boys of the school try unsuccessfully several times to manoeuvre him into confrontations with Harris. Then a strange incident alters everything. The school captain encourages Harris to use a catapult to hit a potted fern. When Hubbard arrives on the scene in time to see the fern destroyed, he goes berserk and has to be prized off Harris by force. He rushes away to enter for the Currie Cup where he can face the suddenly hated bully in the ring.

Big Bill struggles desperately to get fit, but when he finally meets Harris in the ring, it is soon apparent that his "wind" and stamina are in no condition to overcome a strong opponent. He is on the verge of being counted out when the noise of an accidentally shattered plant-pot brings him back to his feet. Kicking out the towel of surrender thrown in by his seconds, he knocks out Harris with a final might punch. Red Circle's honour is saved!

Later we discover the reason for Bill's change of heart. He had thought, as the school captain had intended, that the fern destroyed by Harris' catapult was the one which he kept in memory of his dead study-mate. But, in fact, it was a substituted one. He got so slack

that an "insult" to his dead pal was the only thing that had the power to galvanise him. But now he has realised how neglectful he has been of himself and his duty to the school.

And Harris? After his defeat, he soon leaves Red Circle! I have described this tale at length since it seems to me to embody some of the best elements of the English school story. Within the limits of the Thomson editorial policy of rapid and economically expressed action, we find the elements of emotion, suspense and mystery superbly combined.

I have always been a great admirer of the Hotspur Red Circle stories. The set-up of the school with its geographically based divisions - Home House, Colonial House, etc. - and the editorial policy of accepting the passage of time and the fact that pupils grow older, leave the school and are replaced, give the reader a great variety of characters and plots. These are counterpointed by the stable background of conventional school elements. There are satisfying themes of sport, inter-House and inter-School rivalry and the never-ending battle to "score off" the masters (particularly the pompous Mr. Smugg!). When we add the appeal of such typical titles as "The Red Planet Calling Red Circle" (1935), "Red Ruban Against Green Turban" (1937), "The Menace of the Whirling Bolas" (1952) or "Smuggly the Terrified Toreador" (1953) and the frequent arrival at the school of sinister Orientals, or fierce Zulus, we can appreciate the Thomson formula of combining in one story as many tried and trusted elements of adventure, school and fantastic humour as possible.

But in the story we are considering, Red Circle appears as a traditional school setting for a yarn firmly in the "classical" format dating back at least to Talbot Baines Reed. The central problems of coping with the bully, saving the honour of the school and restoring a slacker's self-respect could well feature in a story by Hamilton or Brooks. Together with the central situations and the quick moving prose we have the skilful use of suspense and mystery. The scene which I find most moving, however, is the incident at the roll of honour where the newcomer's boorishness goes beyond all excusable grounds and he has to be dealt with.

What a story! But what a pity that D.C. Thomson refused to "build up" or even name their authors in most cases! I think we would have even more hobby authors to esteem! Although we must remember in this regard the judgement of Bill Lofts: "When I was a boy I don't think I worried at all because no authors' names appeared on the stories (in the Thomson papers), and I don't think any other reader cared, either... Nearly all the stories, characters and series were editorially suggested to the author, and he was commissioned to write them... even when the story was finished it was subject to much editorial subbing and rewriting. Very few authors could lay claim to any particular character or to the whole writing of a popular series ... and with the editorial rewriting it is probably the reason that the style of all the stories appeared the same ... in many cases the editor could lay as much claim to have his name attached to the story as could the author." (A Tribute to the D.C. Thomson Papers and Red Circle School - THE MEN BEHIND BOYS' FICTION by W.O.G. Lofts and D.J. Adley 1970.)

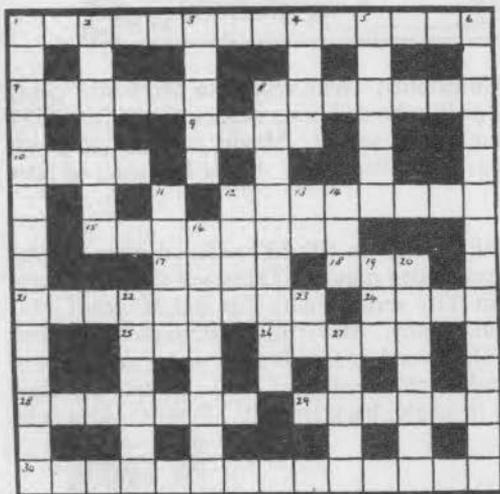
So what finally can we say about the annual? It is certainly an excellent example of the Thomson style. It is colourful, exciting, varied and fast-moving. It artfully mingles traditional themes of boys' fiction like adventure in India, the Wild West, gangsters, sport and, of course, school, with more modern interests such as psychology (BILL CLEAVES' "PAPER CHASE") and the Depression (HEAD OF THE HOBOES). There is humour, not only in some of the stories, but in the cartoons.

My only reservation would concern the illustrations, which are efficient, but little more (they carry no artists' names, of course). When one considers the many fine illustrators this country possessed - and possesses - and the excellent cartoonists featured by

Thomsons, it is disappointing to find, with some exceptions, a generally mediocre standard in the illustrations of the story papers and annuals. But you can't have everything!

A HAMILTONIAN CROSSWORD

by Keith Atkinson



CLUES ACROSS

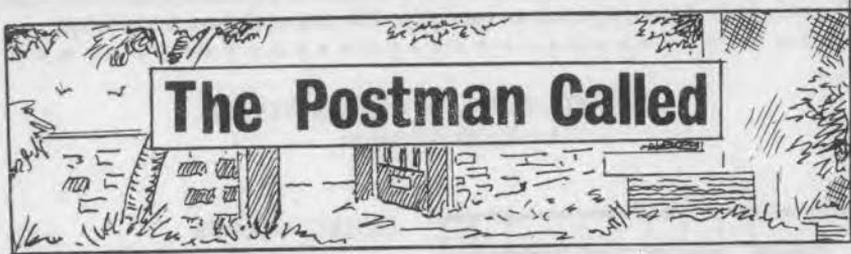
1. Solitary spot at Greyfriars (10,4)
7. Courtfield chauffer, and crony of Vernon Smith (6)
8. Unscrupulous Captain or means of punishment (7)
9. "---- ne va plus", call at Roulette (4)
10. Beat with birch (4)
12. Variety of apple (8)
15. Indian junior at St. Jim's (5,3)
17. What Bunter does after going upstairs (4)
18. Rocky peak (3)
21. Surname of coastguard's daughter at Pegg favoured by Coker (8)
24. Animal hunted by Prout in the Rockies (4)
25. Servant bribed by Kalizelos (3)
26. Drugged (5)

28. Greyfriars Old Boy expelled for theft (7)
29. Form of holiday which Bunter tricked the Famous Five into paying for (6)
30. Hidden means of ingress to Greyfriars (6,8)

CLUES DOWN

1. Sir Hilton's acrobatic nephew (3,2,3,6)
2. Birthplace of fisher T. Fish (3,4)
3. Colonel Wharton's nephew (5)
4. End of morning lessons (4)
5. Release money (6)
6. Early devotions (7,6)
8. Self-appointed leader of Study No. 7 (5,4)
11. Any Scholar at Greyfriars (5)
12. Fasteners (4)
13. Car organisation (1,1)
14. What Bunter often talks (3)
16. Obvious (8)
19. Awarded honour (1,1,1)
20. Vernon Smith's studymate (7)
22. Cavalry soldier (6)
23. Negative (2)
27. Capital visited by the Famous Five (5)

(ANSWERS NEXT MONTH)



UNA HAMILTON WRIGHT (Sutton Coldfield): With regard to Mr. Lofts' query about a possible series featuring a St. Kate's girls' school, I have a typescript called JUST LIKE PAM! 3,500 words, featuring St. Kate's girls' school. Maybe just one story was printed and the typescript is a sequel that was not called upon. Uncle had a lot of false starts just after the end of the war.

STEPHEN GARRETT (Bath): Mark Taha's letter in CD 537 recalled plans to film Dan Dare between 1975 and 1981. Rumour succeeded rumour. There was to be a musical version, then short animations, finally a lavish ATV series, James Fox and Rodney Bewes were said to have been booked to play Dare and Digby. Alas it all fell through. Let's hope for better luck this time, preferably with DC Dashwood as Dan Dare - an inspired piece of casting. Incidentally there was a very good radio dramatisation in 1990. It kept very close to the plot and style of the first Dare series in Eagle, back in 1950. Terence Alexander played Sir Hubert Guest!

B. HAMBLET (Hoylake): I often thought that Arthur Lowe of DAD'S ARMY would have made a good Mr. Prout.

PHILIP TIERNEY (Grimsby): I was interested in Eric Fayne's article on the early Clavering stories and think I know why "Troublesome Tom" was omitted from the Gem reprints which began in 1931 - on Eric's good advice to the editor.

"Troublesome Tom" had already appeared in the 1931 Holiday Annual, so many Gem readers would have only recently read it. Incidentally it was the first Tom Merry story I ever read.

J.P. McMAHON (Hailsham): I always look forward to the mixture of interesting thoughts and views expressed regularly each month in C.D. One item that has registered strongly is J.E.M.'s "WHY DO WE READ" in No. 536 (August).

It's pleasing to see one's half-formulated thoughts revealed so clearly - and satisfactorily...

However, it is a big subject, and standing largely in the centre, is the "AUTHOR'S VOICE", which, I suppose, means the whole personality of the writer.

J. Jefferson Farjeon can make a slice of bread and butter and a cup of hot tea a dream come true; and as everyone knows, Frank Richards can make the tuck-shop a sort of second Mecca. Obvious, the "AUTHOR'S VOICE" must change at times, otherwise we wouldn't get the 'GOLDEN AGE' of any particular writer.



Is it possible to have some additional comments on this subject "WHY DO WE READ".



By
ROGER M. JENKINS

Do You Remember?

by Roger Jenkins

No. 241 - Magnets 910-17 - Bunter Court Series

The early Magnet reprints were issued by Howard Baker Publishers Ltd. of Museum Street, and this company operated under the aegis of a famous publishing house. Each volume contained a complete series, no matter how long, and the price in those pre-decimalisation days was 42/- a volume (or 38/- to members of the London OBBC).

The first Magnet reprint was the Egypt series, a personal choice by Howard Baker himself, since he remembered reading the Schoolboys' Own Library reprint of 1940 and he had never been able to read the conclusion because the Library folded up suddenly. The second reprint was the long 1932 Wharton the Rebel series, and at this point Howard Baker consulted the London OBBC about the third reprint. I stated that, as Hamiltonian Librarian, it was the Bunter Court series that had the longest waiting list, and accordingly it was this series that duly saw the light of day once more in 1969.

When I visited Charles Hamilton, we discussed this series, and he admitted that in the beginning he was skating over the thinnest ice he had ever ventured upon. It has since been claimed that this plot was provided for him and, if that is the case, the person who constructed it could have done little work on its opening sequences. The first Magnet is crammed with the most unlikely events: a relative of Lord Mauleverer's uncle was thinking of renting Combermere Lodge for the summer at the rent of forty guineas a week, an enormous sum in 1925. Mauleverer was asked to report on its suitability but he felt too tired to go and accepted Bunter's offer to report for him, with Mauly's wallet to issue the necessary tips. Pilkins, the estate agent, thought that Bunter was Mauleverer, but Walsingham the butler knew him by his real name. Pilkins was then stunned in a car accident, and this left Bunter free to take possession of Combermere Lodge and have its name changed to Bunter Court. The Famous Five then agreed to accept Bunter's invitation.

Bunter was at this time a far from sympathetic character: he was depicted as astute, cunning, and quite ruthless. In addition, he seemed to be a shrewd judge of character. The deception was always on the verge of being discovered, and always averted with considerable dexterity until the inevitable crash. It is well-known how Bunter managed to deal with awkward customers: first Pilkins, then Walsingham, and finally D'Arcy were locked in the wine cellar in order to enable Bunter to prolong his imposture. Perhaps the last two numbers of the series with their account of Bunter's adventures while on the run have been rather under-rated, but the picaresque touch and the fertility of Bunter's continued evasions are all in character with the general tone of the series.

Howard Baker later declared that the Bunter Court series was the least successful in terms of sales but, as his first company went into liquidation and unsold stocks were taken over by the major publishing company, it may well be that this unfortunate episode had its effect on sales statistics. Whatever the success of the reprints, however, there is no doubt that the Bunter Court series has gone down into history as one of the legendary Magnet tales.

I TOLD YOU SO!

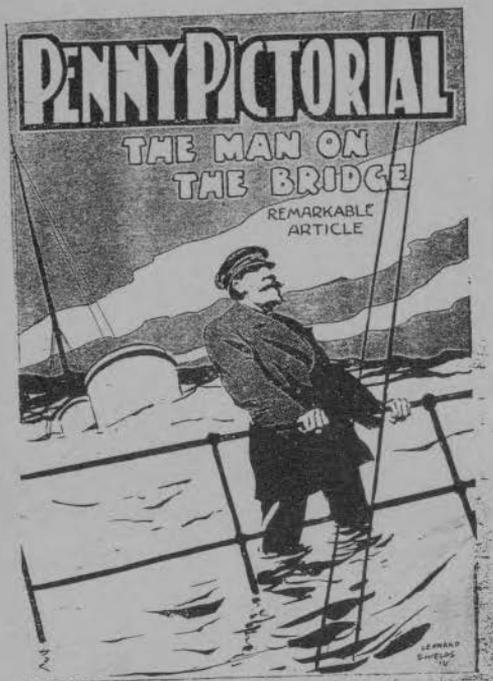
The Famous Five were feeling pain
And all because the pouring rain
Prevented football out of doors,
And football in the corridors
Engaged in by the Greyfriars' boys
Involved considerable noise,
And Gerald Loder's lashing cane
Administered with might and main
And indiscriminately used
Had left Removites feeling bruised,
And on this miserable day
A still small voice was heard to say
"I told you so!" said Bull.

When Loder found his study shipped,
And ink and soot around it tipped,
He guessed whose hands had done the deed
And with uncharitable speed
Once more the Famous Five received
A licking seen to be believed,
And sadly they bemoaned their fate
And wrung their hands in sorry state,
Swearing revenge upon the head
Of Loder, wishing he were dead.
But once again a voice was heard
Which spoke th'inevitable word,
"I told you so!" said Bull.

Said Cherry, "If once more you say
'I told you so', this dreary day
We'll tip you in the fountain full."
"But, I did tell you so!" said Bull.
Without a word the other four
Swept Johnny Bull from off the floor
And rushed him through the schoolhouse door.
As Johnny through the air did soar
Into the fountain with a roar
Those fateful words were heard once more,
"I told you so!" said Bob.

KEITH ATKINSON

LEONARD SHIELDS



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The "P.P." is the Paper for People who Think.

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The Best of the Monthlies! LONDON MAGAZINE.

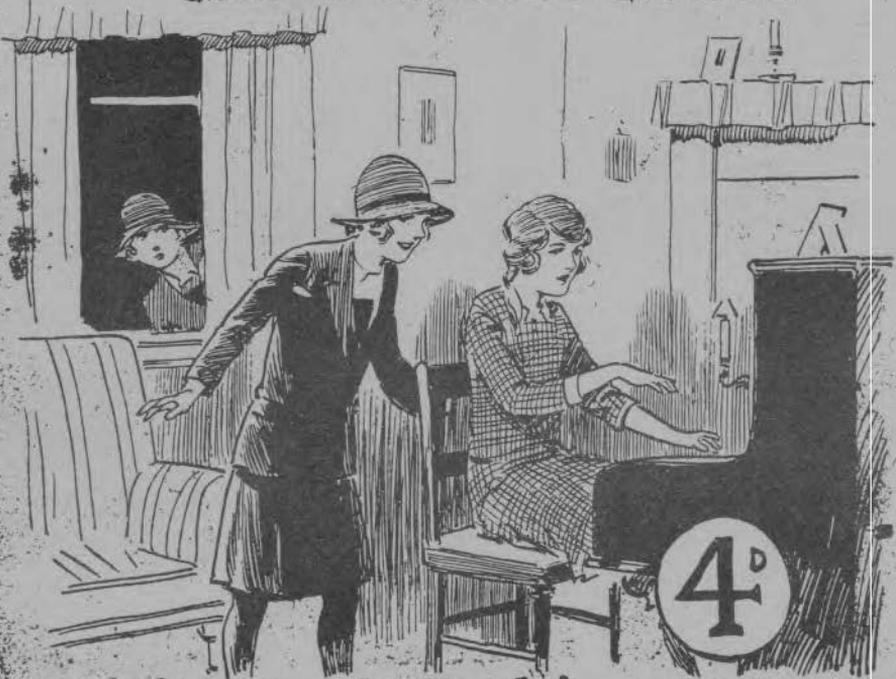
July 11th, 1914.

Len Hawkey comments on the versatility of Leonard Shields, which knew no bounds. As well as his Greyfriars and Morcove illustrations (see page 32 for an example of the latter) he drew for many magazines and comics. These two issues of *Penny Pictorial* from 1914 show some of his early work. Len Hawkey comments "I don't think he was ever employed on doing poster work, but had he been, I'm sure he would have been a match for the great poster artists like Wilkinson, Chas. Pears, Fred Taylor, etc."

MADGE MINDEN'S SECRET

BY
MARJORIE
STANTON

AN EARLY ADVENTURE OF THE
GIRLS OF MORCOVE SCHOOL



The Schoolgirls' Own Library No 151

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