

1992

1992

# COLLECTORS

# DIGEST

1992

1992

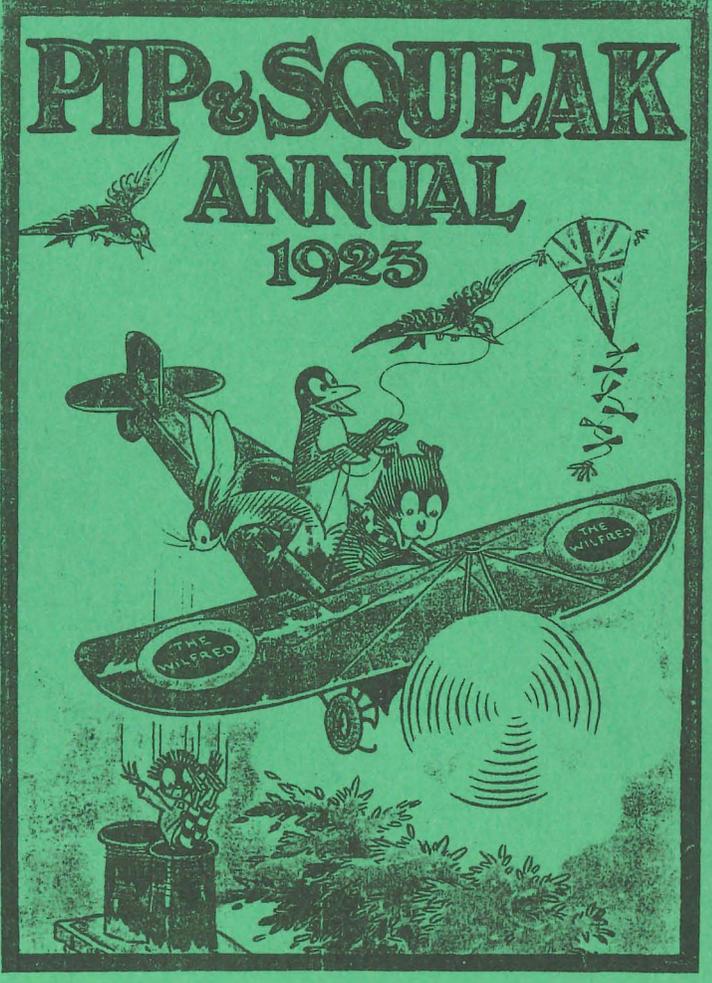
ANNUAL



1992

1992

# Happy Xmas





---

EDITOR: MARY CADOGAN, 46 Overbury Avenue, Beckenham,  
Kent. BR3 2PY

---

(COPYRIGHT. This Annual is non-profit making and privately circulated. The reproduction of the contents, either wholly or in part, without written permission from the Editor is strictly forbidden.)

### FOREWORD FROM THE EDITOR

Once again I have the joy of presenting C.D. readers with another Annual which, I feel certain, fully lives up to the high standards set by contributors in past years. As always too, it conveys my Christmas greetings to you all, and the hope that the warmth and delights of the festive season will be followed by a peaceful and happy New Year.

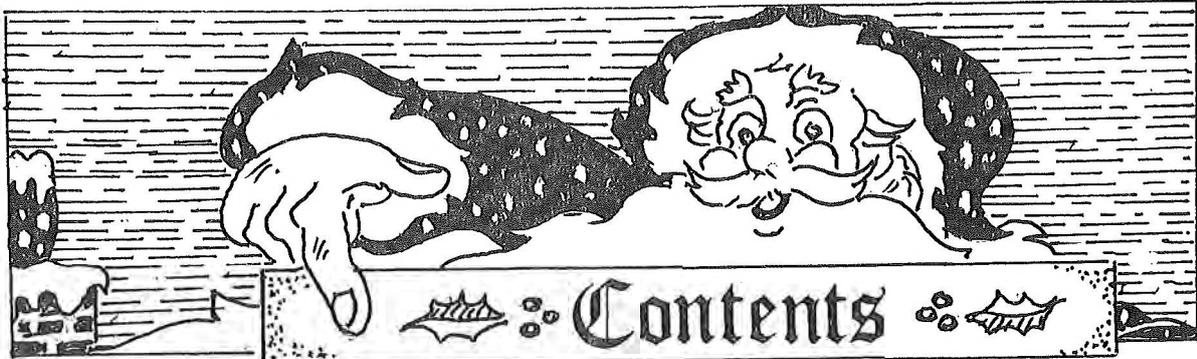
This year's contents are rich and varied. Most aspects of our hobby are covered: there are articles for detective-story enthusiasts, glowing memories of nursery comics and papers, glimpses of high adventure, visits to our favourite fictional schools, recollections of juvenile cinema-going - and, of course, some celebratory seasonable articles.

Hearty thanks are due to our contributors for researching and writing articles and stories, and for producing poems and pictures. Henry Webb, as usual, has provided our cover illustration and many of the article headings. I am especially grateful to him this year because, knowing that he was due for a spell in hospital, he laboured intensively to provide as many illustrations as possible before having to go away. As I write this foreword, he is recuperating, and I know that all C.D. readers will join me in sending sincere wishes for his speedy return to good health. I would like to thank Irene Wakefield, who has kindly given us more of her husband Terry's lively pictures - which are now a regular feature of our Annual. As ever, I am deeply appreciative of the courtesy and co-operation of the staff at Quack's Printers in York who help to produce both the Annual and the monthly C.D., and of Eric Fayne, our former Editor, for frequent words of encouragement and cheer.

Last, but very far from least, I thank all of you, dear readers, for your loyal support and constant flow of kind letters. To you and yours - a right Merry Christmas - and happy reading throughout the New Year.

*Mary Cadogan*

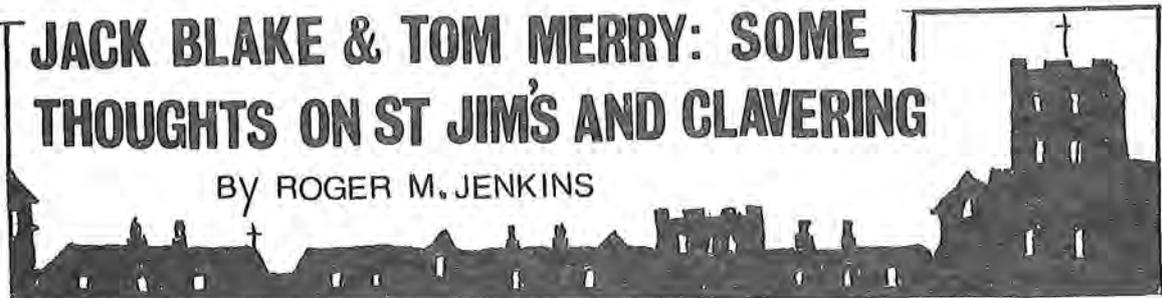
---



Pages 3 - 7	Jack Blake & Tom Merry: Some thoughts on St. Jim's & Clavering .. .. .	Roger M. Jenkins
Pages 8 - 12	Send for your Badge today - The Clubs of Yesteryear .. .. .	Norman Wright
Pages 13 - 17	Going to the Pictures .. .. .	Ernest Holman
Pages 18 - 20	Not the usual kind of Annual .. .. .	Ray Hopkins
Pages 21 - 23	Alfred Edmeades Bestall .. .. .	John Beck
Page 24	More St. Jim's Boys to Guess .. .. .	Bob Whiter
Pages 25 - 29	Greyfriars Echoes .. .. .	Ted Baldock
Pages 30 - 34	The Boy's Own Paper .. .. .	Geoff Lardner
Pages 35 - 41	The Silent Three & Robin Hood's Bow ..	Marion Waters
Pages 42 - 48	Justice Island Revisited .. .. .	Ian Bennett
Pages 49 - 53	Greyfriars, St. Jim's & Rookwood; An Academic Review .. .. .	Peter Mahony
Pages 54 - 62	Noel Raymond, Debonair Detective ..	Dennis L. Bird
Pages 63 - 67	Treasured Comics .. .. .	Michael Rouse
Pages 68 - 70	Forever Chums! .. .. .	Bill Bradford
Pages 71 - 73	Our Story Papers in the Second World War ..	L.S. Laskey
Pages 74 - 75	The Christmas Number .. .. .	Ray Holmes
Pages 76 - 82	Brought to Account .. .. .	Leslie Rowley
Pages 83 - 85	The Intrepid Two .. .. .	C.H. Churchill
Pages 86 - 88	Brave Scottie Remembered .. .. .	Len Hawkey
Pages 88 - 89	Yuletide Vision .. .. .	Ted Baldock
Page 90	Happy Hours Unlimited .. .. .	
Pages 91 - 95	The Children's Friend .. .. .	Mary Cadogan
Pages 96 - 97	I Hate Christmas .. .. .	John Bridgwater
Page 97	Answers to Picture Puzzle .. .. .	
Pages 98 - 99	More about Flashman .. .. .	Mark Taha
Pages 100 - 101	Biggles Pops the Cork! .. .. .	Jennifer Schofield
Pages 102 - 103	Schoolgirls on the Small Screen .. .. .	Mary Cadogan
Pages 103 - 104	Sherlock Holmes & Sexton Blake & Nelson Lee	Bill Lofts
Page 105	The Immortals .. .. .	Bob Whiter
Page 106	Flips Pages .. .. .	
Pages 107 - 117	A Christmas Enigma for Babs & Co. ..	Margery Woods
Page 118	The Greyfriars Club .. .. .	R.F. Acraman

# JACK BLAKE & TOM MERRY: SOME THOUGHTS ON ST JIM'S AND CLAVERING

BY ROGER M. JENKINS



Although Charles Hamilton's first stories appeared in print in the late nineteenth century, the first real point of interest today is the tenth of November 1906, when the first St. Jim's tale appeared in Pluck No. 106. The heroes of St. Jim's were Blake and Figgins. The stalwarts of the Shell were then unheard of, and those famous papers the Gem and the Magnet were then unborn. Incidentally, the St. Jim's stories in Pluck were published under the name of Charles Hamilton: the pseudonyms came later.

This first St. Jim's story was entitled "Jack Blake of St. Jim's" and describes his arrival as a new boy. He met Figgins & Co. on his way to school and, having endured the usual quota of insults from them, he proceeded to incur the displeasure of George Herries, Captain of the Fourth. After suffering the usual indignities meted out to new arrivals, Blake was allowed his hour of triumph at the end when he was instrumental in foiling a plot of Monteith against Kildare. Tom Merry first appeared as a rather mollycoddled boy with a quaint manner of speech, but Jack Blake was the same from beginning to end.

The St. Jim's tales were clearly intended to form a series, albeit intermittently. No. 108 continued the Monteith-Kildare feud, and the atmosphere of brooding suspicion came over strongly. No. 110 was about a new boy called Barby, but the new boy in No. 112 was far more important. He addressed Mr. Kidd, the housemaster, in these terms:

"Well, kindly have diwections given for my twunks to be taken up to my wooms," said D'Arcy, with a wave of his hand. "I should like to have my tea sent up immediately. The tea must be stwong and the muffins hot. If the muffins are cold, I will have a complaint made to the doctah. You had also bettah get my bath pwepared, and the bath must be clean. I should also like you to see that the bedclothes on my bed are aired. Now, my man, wheah are my quartahs?"

To the chums of Study No. 6, Gussy confided these remarks:

"I think it most incosdewate of Dr. Holmes to give me so small a woom. But my aunts told me I should have to submit to a gweat many discomforts at a big public school. Now, my boys, what are you all doin' in my woom? I weally can't have my quartahs cwoweded like this."

It is not always the case that editors have good ideas, but the day when H.J. Garrish suggested the introduction of a character modelled on Beau Brummel lines was indeed a red-letter day.

No. 114 related how Blake was unjustly suspected of theft, No. 116 saw Monteith at odds with Kildare again, and No. 118 dealt with Mr. Ratcliffe spying on Mr. Kidd in the hope that he could get him dismissed. Incidentally, these three stories were adapted for Gems 253-5, with appropriate changes and additions.

Mr. Kidd stands out in these Pluck stories as a subtle character-drawing, a well-meaning man not always too sure of himself. It was a pity that he later left the school in the same manner as Mr. Bootles later left Rookwood, to be supplanted by a more forthright and straightforward successor. Once Mr. Kidd had left St. Jim's, the soubriquets of Kids and Rats were no longer appropriate for the juniors of the rival houses.

After the first tale of rebellion "Mutiny at St. Jim's" in No. 120, there was a three-week gap until "Missing" in No. 123, when Gussy was kidnapped by a gipsy, and Inspector Skeet made his first blundering investigation. Marmaduke Smythe appeared in No. 125 and was sentenced to expulsion for an attack on Blake. The victim nobly forgave

his attacker, but suggested that Marmaduke make a fresh start in the New House, and Figgins & Co. were furious to have him put in their study. "The Reformation of Marmaduke" came in No. 129, whilst the twelfth - and final St. Jim's story in Pluck - was in No. 132, and dealt with Kildare's weak natured cousin, Micky Kildare.

These twelve stories, nearly all illustrated by Shields, have a distinctive driving force behind them, many of them of a better quality than some of the early Gems and Magnets. They are original and distinctive, portraying both the happiness of youth and a deadly seriousness of purpose, not sophisticated but vital. To leave these Plucks and to turn to the early halfpenny Gems is like putting back the clock.

## DOUBLE-LENGTH TALE OF TOM MERRY!



Tom Merry's first appearance was in No. 3 of the halfpenny Gem dated March 30th, 1907. Miss Priscilla Fawcett was taking her darling Tommy by train to begin school at Clavering College, where Mr. Railton was headmaster, Mr. Quelch his form-master, and Wingate later elected School Captain. Tom Merry was dressed in a velvet suit with a pretty bow tie, and Miss Fawcett fussed about his health in a highly exaggerated fashion, whilst Tom Merry spoke a literary style of English that was even more old-fashioned than Miss Fawcett's clothes. When she later sent him a parcel, it was not full of tuck as Tom Merry and his friends had thought: instead, it contained patent medicines, a chest protector, and a hot-water bottle. It seems reasonably certain that Charles Hamilton never expected the fortnightly Tom Merry stories to be long-running or he would not have saddled the hero with such a ridiculous guardian. It was a perfectly acceptable situation for a comic character like Coker to have an old sketch like Aunt Judy doting on him, especially as he was not perceptive enough

to realise what a figure of fun she seemed to be, whereas Tom Merry was sensible enough to realise how Miss Fawcett appeared to the outside world, and his embarrassment was made perfectly clear.

One of the mysteries that lasted all through the Gem to its conclusion was Miss Fawcett's exact status, and why all Tom Merry's relatives left everything to her. In the first story, it was stated that she was his old nurse and that he had had a tutor at home to prepare him for public school entry. By the time of Gem No. 11 she was referred to as his old governess, though the word nurse was occasionally repeated. In Victorian and Edwardian times, a governess was little better than a superior servant, as exemplified in

Jane Eyre, and a nurse was even lower in status than that. How could a domestic servant become a guardian? And how could a nurse also be a governess?

The first mention of Tom Merry's relatives was in No. 14 when it was revealed that his cousin, Philip Phipps, was trying to engineer Tom's disgrace so that he would not inherit the fortune of his uncle, General Merry, who was serving in India. In the year 1910 we were informed that Miss Fawcett had been entrusted to manage the fortune of Tom Merry by his late father. She invested in South American railways on the advice of Crooke's father, and lost all of Tom Merry's fortune. We can only imagine what possessed Mr. Merry to entrust the management of all his money to a nervous, woolly-minded servant. General Merry had been captured by the Afghans, and could not be appealed to for assistance. Cousin Ethel took Miss Fawcett to Eastwood House and Tom Merry, refusing to accept charity, eventually became a down-and-out in London. The whole scenario of a dishonest financial adviser and a young person living rough in the Capital has a remarkably modern air to it. In the end, Lowther got in touch with another uncle of Tom's, an Arizona rancher called Mr. Poinsett, and he came to England to provide a financial rescue (though Miss Fawcett was never to be allowed to handle the capital again) and he reproached Tom for not getting in touch himself, reminding him of Tom's visit to Arizona in the past. And so another uncle was mentioned in the stories, but Miss Fawcett still ran the home at Huckleberry Heath, assisted by the faithful Hannah and a small army of servants. Incidentally, all this was forgotten by 1939, when Miss Fawcett was apparently in possession of a large fortune of her own, and James Silverson was trying to disgrace Tom so that Miss Fawcett would leave her fortune to James. Even this version raises another question: why should Miss Fawcett have taken domestic employment as a nurse or governess if she was so wealthy? Whichever explanation is chosen, there are always more questions than answers.

All this has digressed a long way from the halfpenny Gem where the origins of the problem are to be seen. Clavering College closed its door for the last time in No. 11, when Mr. Railton revealed that a moneylender owned a mortgage on the College and he intended to foreclose, in the manner of a Victorian melodrama. Apparently there was a seam of coal underneath which he proposed to exploit. Presumably the school was privately owned by Mr. Railton and run as a business for personal profit. A person as astute as Mr. Railton might have been expected to arrange finance from a more reliable source, but of course Charles Hamilton had to give some reason for the closure of the school. Mr. Railton arranged for his old friend, Dr. Holmes, to accept the pupils whose parents wished them to move to that school. Most of the Shell seemed to have moved over as well as Herr Schneider and Mr. Railton himself. Miss Fawcett turned up, removed Tom's etons and gave them to a poor person, and left him another velvet suit so that St. Jim's would see him at his best. It is possible that Charles Hamilton was intending to build up Miss Fawcett into an Aunt Judy type of caricature and then changed his mind later. Be that as it may, with No. 11 the St. Jim's stories moved from Pluck to the Gem, which featured the new enlarged school every week from that time. Clearly, Tom Merry could not be placed in the same form as Jack Blake, since one would then have had to be subordinated to the other. So they were placed in different forms, and from this attempt to accord them equality came an almost insoluble problem: with whom was the reader supposed to sympathise?

This amalgamation presented St. Jim's with a problem that never affected Greyfriars or Rookwood. Tom Merry & Co. were rivals to Jack Blake & Co., though both were united against the New House. There were too many centres of interest, and another result of all this rivalry was a tendency for too many stories to be based on ragging and japing between the forms and the houses, so giving an impression of rather juvenile, unsophisticated story-telling, which was certainly not true of the stories as a whole. Indeed, in No. 2 of the penny Gem, Miss Fawcett came to stay at the school to act in the role of peacemaker, much to Tom's embarrassment: even Cousin Ethel had to try hard to avoid laughing at Miss Fawcett. Another factor in all this rivalry was Rylcombe Grammar School which often resulted in fights in the village street, apart from more involved pranks. One has only to consider the part that Highcliffe played in the Magnet to realise the difference - the dramatic situations quite outweighed Ponsonby's spiteful horseplay.

Special School Tale by Chas. Hamilton.



THE SWELL OF ST. JIM'S WAS A PITIABLE OBJECT TO LOOK AT. "MY HAT!" EXCLAIMED BLAKE. "NOBODY WOULD TAKE YOU FOR A HOWLING 'WELL NOW." (See page 15.)  
NO. 133. VOL. 2. NEW SERIES

Having merged Clavering and St. Jim's, the author must have realised that he was left with a lot of dead wood to be pruned as soon as possible. On the other hand, he presumably had to take into account the loyalties of old readers, and Martin, who was writing in the Gem, could not be too cavalier with the creations of Charles Hamilton who used to write in Pluck. Accordingly, alterations were made slowly. Mr. Railton became Second Master for the time being, which allowed Mr. Kidd to continue as housemaster of the School House for a few more weeks. Both Digby and Lowther left St. Jim's, allowing Tom Merry and Manners to be called (by the author) the Terrible Two, which was certainly truly alliterative, unlike the Terrible Three.

In the event, this attempt to reduce the number of main characters was doomed to failure, possibly because of pressure from readers. No. 27 of the halfpenny Gem opened with Lowther at home with his uncle at Huckleberry Heath (within sight of Miss Fawcett's Laurel Villa), bemoaning the

fact that he hadn't had a row in weeks. His uncle had rather summarily removed him from St. Jim's and engaged a tutor, but when his uncle went abroad Lowther re-appeared at St. Jim's in disguise as a new boy, and of course he was allowed to remain. It was not until No. 1 of the penny Gem that Marmaduke Smythe and Robert Digby returned, the title of the story appropriately enough being "The Gathering of the clans". Digby's parents who lived in Devonshire, had sent him to a school in that county but eventually gave in to his request to return to St. Jim's. He was certainly a very distinctive character in those days: he had been eating toffee in the train, and deliberately spoiled D'Arcy's lavender gloves by seizing him with both hands, and he declared he was the same old Dig:-

"You'll see me shoving rats into your hat-box, and pouring treacle over your best waistcoat, just as I used to do," said Digby.

"Oh, weally."

"And sitting on your silk hat and sewing up your Sunday trucks, Gussy. Oh, we shall have ripping times now."

Later readers of the Gem saw nothing of Digby's sense of fun: in the end, he became just a name to most of them.

This seems to have been the last time Charles Hamilton attempted to reduce the cast at St. Jim's. With the spotlight firmly on both the Fourth Form and the Shell, there was ample opportunity to spread the new boys around, but in fact the Shell did not attract so many: Talbot, Grundy, and Racke were the most prominent newcomers, but the Fourth received some widely featured characters, such as Levison, Cardew, Clive, Hammond,

Lumley-Lumley, Wildrake, Kuomi Rao. Julian, Trimble, and others, many of whom continually featured in the stories after their first appearance. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, although Tom Merry became established as the leading character, the Fourth form contained the more interesting personalities.

Another problem was the fact that most new boys in the Gem tended to remain as permanent characters, and hence the list became overloaded, as Eric Fayne has pointed out. With unscrupulous boys like Racke and Trimble there was no real difficulty, whilst with those who were intended to be comic, like Grundy (though I tended to regard him as an unmitigated nuisance in the stories), the situation could be managed without upsetting the status quo too much. It was the decent characters like Talbot and Wildrake who began to hog the limelight to the exclusion of the old-established characters, and here Charles Hamilton's touch was a little less than sure.

The ultimate question cannot be avoided - was St. Jim's a failure? I do not think that anyone who has read widely in the Gem would feel himself able to subscribe to that opinion. On balance, it seems that St. Jim's was a success despite all the handicaps from which it suffered. Perhaps the best proof of this is the evidence of contemporary readers who paid out good money to buy the old papers. Whereas the Magnet ran longer than the new series of the Gem, St. Jim's was not only older than Greyfriars but also, in the annals of the Amalgamated Press, the longer-running school.



Regards to all from the South Pacific.

REG V. MOSS, KHANDALLAH, WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

\*\*\*\*\*

Down in the forest something clicked,  
Spoils in a sack which have just been nicked.  
I ain't got money to buy presents as such,  
But wishes to you don't cost very much.  
Have a great Christmas.

JOHNNY BURSLEM

\*\*\*\*\*

Regards to all my old friends of the London Book Club. I'm still going strong!

BOB MILNE

\*\*\*\*\*

Season's Greetings to all hobby friends from

KIT AND RON BECK (LEWES)  
NEIL, SUSAN AND DAVID BECK (POLEGATE)

\*\*\*\*\*

Happy Christmas everybody. WANTED: Penguin Crime Paperbacks, First Editions, W.E. Johns Hardbacks, Paperbacks.

PAUL GALVIN  
2 THE LINDALES, POGMOOR, BARNSLEY, S. YORKS., S75 2DT

\*\*\*\*\*

Happy Xmas and Best Wishes for the New Year to you all.

BILL BRADFORD

\*\*\*\*\*



I suppose there must be something of the magpie about me for I have always been attracted by the bright, colourful badges that were so often given away in packets of cereal or offered for a number of clipped coupons in the pages of comics and story papers. Likewise I find the brashly printed cards and games depicting one or other of my favourite, or not so favourite characters irresistible. Over the years I have built up quite a collection of these trashy treasures and often spend time looking through them. They are potent reminders of one's youth.

One of the nice things about badges is that, like stamps, they do not take up a lot of room. Mine live in an album constructed from an old photograph album with pages cut from an old velvet dress. (Tom Merry take note. If you still have the velvet gear you first turned up at school in there may be a use for it yet!) Unlike stamps, these badges have a bright chunkiness that puts them in the realms of coins rather than G.P.O. produced stickers. Six velvet pages no larger than the pages of a Magnet contain almost twelve dozen little gems. Let's have a look at some of them.

The first page is very full, containing a mix of characters from comics and newspapers. In the top left hand corner is The Daily Express Rupert League badge, an enamelled shaped head of the little bear on top of a red shield. This badge was on offer to Rupert readers during the 1930s and '40s, and there seem to be quite a lot of them about. Far more rare is the Scottish version. So far the only copy I have managed to find is one dug up with the aid of a metal detector, and most of its enamel is sadly lacking. Equally difficult to find and as yet an item that has eluded me is the Rupert birthday postcard which was sent out to members of the Rupert League.

Next to Rupert on the page is the smiling face of that un-ferocious feline, Tiger Tim. This is another shaped badge and quite a difficult one to find. Looking through my copies of Rainbow I can find no mention of the club and have a feeling that it was not inaugurated until the 1940s. Tim was the subject of quite a bit of merchandise material over the decades, and although the badge is the only T.T. item in my own collection I have seen puzzles and games bearing the images of the boys of Mrs. Bruin's School.

Gloops is a character with whom I am not very familiar, but his "Thmile" shines out from three different badges, one enamel and two button. The Daily Mail's tail knotted mouse, Teddy Tail by name, had a 'league' of his own with a splendid enamel badge. Over the years there were a number of varieties, all basically the same shape but with slight variations. For years, decades even, members of the league received a beautiful postcard on their birthdays. There were many designs, possibly a different one every year, and all those in my collection were painted by Foxwell. One lucky friend of mine has the original artwork for one of the cards in his collection.

Newspapers were particularly fond of forming clubs, or leagues, for their characters. A.K. Happy, of Japhet and Happy fame had a badge depicting his smiling face, and next to that one on the page is the splendid Bobby Bear Club badge, put out by the Daily Herald. One of my childhood memories is of reading the adventures of Pip, Squeak and Wilfred. By the time I was old enough to take an interest these three intrepid creatures were coming to the end of their run, but never-the-less they left a lasting impression on me, and I was glad to be able to add a couple of badges relating to them to my collection. The Wilfred League of Gugnuncs badge depicts a pair of rabbit ears against a deep blue background with the letters WL between them and OG on either side. Anyone unfamiliar with the trio

would be hard pressed to work out what the initials stood for. While the WLOG badge is very common the one reserved for 'Grand Gugnuncs' is very scarce indeed. It is made of hall-marked silver and depicts Wilfred with a stick and bundle over his shoulder; a beautifully crafted shaped badge.



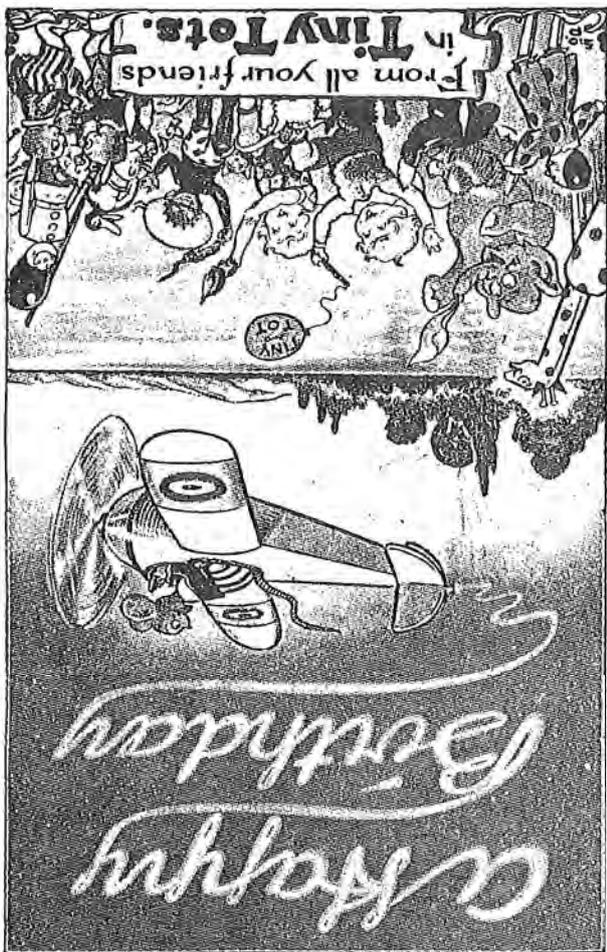
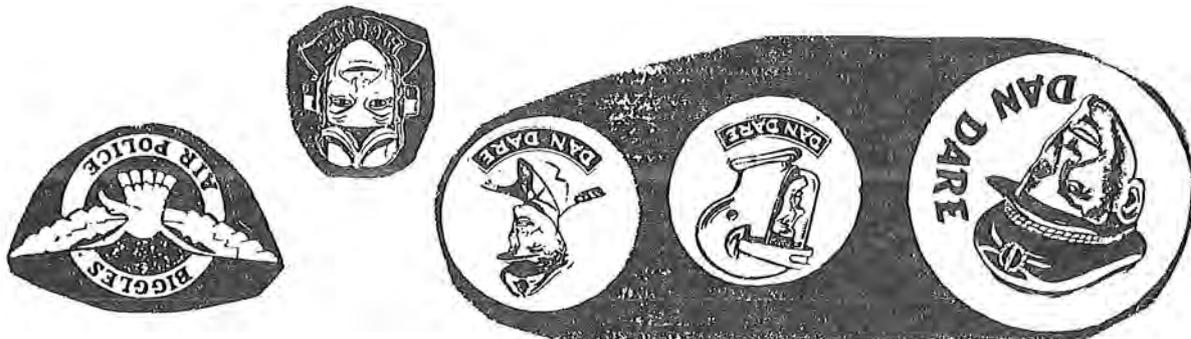
The Daily Sketch Birthday Club had a badge depicting Uncle Oojah, the elephant. It seems that in the 1920s and 30s every newspaper wanted a children's club of some sort. Does anyone remember the Sunday Referee? I certainly don't, yet there can be hardly a person in the kingdom who has not heard of the famous actress who lent her name to their club. The Shirley Temple League had a lovely pictorial enamel badge with an excellent likeness of the young film-star on it. As with so many clubs it too sent its members birthday cards, though they never came near to the quality of those sent by the Teddy Tail League. Other newspaper related badges in my collection include Daily Record Chums Club, Merrytimes Club, Evening Herald Tinkerbell Club and the Portsmouth News Chipper Club. I am sure that there are possibly dozens more that have so far eluded me.

My earliest boys paper related badge is one produced by the Boys Magazine for their league. It is a shaped metal badge depicting the head of a red indian wearing his war bonnet. It must have been a popular club as I have come across several copies of the badge. Unlike most of the others mentioned so far, it did not have a pin but was designed to be worn in the lapel button hole.

That great institution, the Boys Own paper, had to have a badge and when I finally found a specimen I was surprised at its tiny size. No more than three quarters of an inch across, the badge bears the letters B.O.P. in blue on a golden globe surrounded by a white border bearing a Latin motto. The same paper offered its readers another badge during the late 1930s. This was the Skywaymen badge related to the regular monthly column, originally written by W.E. Johns. This was another difficult one to find, but I am pleased to say a fine copy now has a place in my collection.

A badge that is **not** there on the velvet page is that offered by Knock-Out Comic to those wishing to join the Knock-Out Flying Club. For a 1½d stamp the tin button badge could be theirs, and those whose registration number was published in the comic they would receive a shaped metal Flying-Officer badge. So far I have searched in vain for both badges.

During my peak comic reading days, in the 1950s, almost every single comic seemed to have a club. The first I remember joining was The Robin Club, Robin being Hulston's comic aimed at the very young. I can remember my anticipation when waiting for the



postman to drop the small package through the letter-box. But it was well worth the wait. The Robin Club badge was a shaped robin with an enamelled red breast. As I grew up I joined, in turn, the Swift Club and finally the Eagle Club. Female friends who revelled in the adventures of Lettice Leefe and Kitty Hawke joined the Girl Adventurers. All of the Hulton comics offered shaped metal badges, complete with 'dangle holes' for those energetic enough to recruit new members. I must admit that as a child I never did manage to acquire any stars but the Eagle Club badge now in my collection has two stars, denoting that its original owner was an energetic recruiter of new members. In March 1982 the new Eagle was launched and in the second issue readers were given a 'wonderful free gift', an Eagle badge. Although this was at least four times the size of the original Eagle badge of the 1950s it was only made of plastic and, alas, it had no pin. To fix it to your Dan Dare jumper, or whatever item of apparel you chose, you had to use the piece of double sided sticky tape that was provided - a fixer hardly likely to survive the ravages of time.

I have a number of tin Dan Dare button badges in my collection. Two of them, one showing the pilot of the future in his standard green kit and the other depicting him wearing a bright yellow space helmet, were given away with Dan Dare belts and braces, two of the hundreds of items of Dan Dare merchandise that flooded the shops during the 1950s. Two other badges of the space hero were given away in more recent years by the new Eagle. The only other Eagle character who seems to have had a badge to himself is that Rider of the Range, Jeff Arnold - the cowboy who never changed his shirt. (Or at least if he did he must have had a plentiful supply of the same colour and design!)

Another spaceman who had his own club was Red Ray, found tucked away in the pages of T.V. Comic. His adventures were drawn by Roland Davies, a name familiar to devotees of Modern Boy, to which he often contributed illustrations of racing cars, etc. Red Ray only lasted in the comic for two years or so but during that time his popularity led to the Red Ray Space Raynger Club being formed. Members received a nicely designed red (of course) badge bearing the image of the spaceman. Other favourites from the '50s include the badge bought at the Boys and girls Exhibition, that given to members of the Childrens Book Club and the Archie Andrews Lollie club, produced by Meddowcream Ltd.

Three enamelled badges given with comic clubs during the 1950s were those offered by Girls Crystal, School Friend and Mickey Mouse Weekly. The Girls Crystal Club had a badge in the shape of a butterfly with rich red enamelled wings. The School Friend Birthday Club had a shaped blue bird as its badge. Mickey Mouse Weekly had a badge that did not depict any of the famous Disney characters, probably for copyright reasons: instead readers were invited to join the Jungle Club and its badge depicted a slinking tiger.

As a collector of all things connected with Enid Blyton, it is not surprising that I find almost a whole page of my badge album devoted to badges inspired by characters and clubs that were associated with that prolific writer. Enid Blyton's Magazine formed a club soon after it began, and readers could obtain the bright shield shaped badge. Members who introduced a number of new members were promised a special "leader's" badge, but so far I have never seen one of these and wonder if they were ever actually issued. (If any Collectors Digest readers have them, could they please write and let me know - even if they do not wish to sell them.) All of Blyton's clubs were formed to help one charity or another and one of the earliest she was concerned with was the P.D.S.A. Supporters could receive their yellow Busy Bee club badge for a small sub. and, if they collected a certain amount of cash for the P.D.S.A., they would receive an additional badge with a blue background. Another organisation that benefited from Blyton's enthusiasm for doing good was the Sunshine Home. Money raised by readers went to help blind babies.

Noddy features on many badges. Kelloggs offered eaters of Ricicles the chance to obtain a shaped metal Noddy badge in 1962 and later added five further characters to the list. Over the years there have been many tin button badges devoted to the little nodding man, but the best Noddy badge of all was that obtained from Chivers by sending in jam labels. It is a real little jewel in red and blue enamel. The recent revival of interest in the Noddy books has resulted in a large number of modern Noddy badges being produced.

Blyton's Famous Five, who celebrate their fiftieth birthday this year, also had their own club and badge. Funds raised went to help a child's hospital ward.

Many products offered badges to young consumers. Who can forget the Ovaltineys with their song and programme on Radio Luxembourg? There were a number of League of Ovaltineys badges over the years, usually incorporating a large LO in their design. I also have an LO 'gold bar' in my collection but have no knowledge as to how members went about gaining one of these. Equally long running was the Cococub club, an organisation for those who drank Cadbury's cocoa. The original badge was in blue and white enamel depicting one of the Cococub animals. Mine has a 'leader' dangler hanging from it, though only those familiar with the secret Cococub code would realise that the letters MFBEFS spell 'leader'. Before the war there were several Cococub annuals and a regular magazine with stories and puzzles. During the 1950s Cadbury up-dated the club by shortening its title to C Cub. There were at least three C Cub badges and two C Cub annuals, neither of which turn up very often.

Clarks, makers of fine shoes, had a very posh badge for their Lucky Two Shoes Club. It consisted of a silver horse-shoe with a red centre bearing the legend 'Clarks Lucky Two-Shoes Club League of Foot Freedom'. Hanging from a dangler hole was a pair of silver shoes. Far more down to earth were the tin button badges issued by Murraymints to go with their popular '50s television commercials. Who can forget those comic cartoons as the soldier told the sergeant major that he would just have to wait ("I'm sorry serg' you'll just have to wait, I'm finishing my Murraymint, the too good to hurry mint"). Murraymints produced badges for each of their cartoon characters: the soldier, Robin Hood and the cowboy.

There were dozens of other products that tempted purchasers with badges and my collection contains more than a few of these, but now it's time to shut the album and put it back in the cupboard. There is no time to look at the badges of Muffin the Mule, Biggles Air Police, Sunny Stories Club, Spitfire fund and a whole load of others. Soon the pages will be full, for there seems to be no end to the number of character related badges that keep coming out now, or turn up from days gone by. My collection keeps on growing and every now and then I still find a real gem to add to it.



FOR SALE: Complete set of Magnet facsimiles in good condition.

D. BALL

'QUIETWAYS', 42 BARNWELL ROAD, MELKSHAM, WILTS, SN12 7DG

\*\*\*\*\*

Wilfredian League of Gugnuncs Lapel Badge on offer to first with correct password.

GEORGE HOWARD, 92 ALMA ROAD, WINDSOR, SL4 3ET

\*\*\*\*\*

Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year to all Hamiltonian Old Boys and Girls.

From LESLIE KING, CHESHAM, BUCKS

\*\*\*\*\*

Best Wishes to all readers and continuing success to our magazine and its Editor.

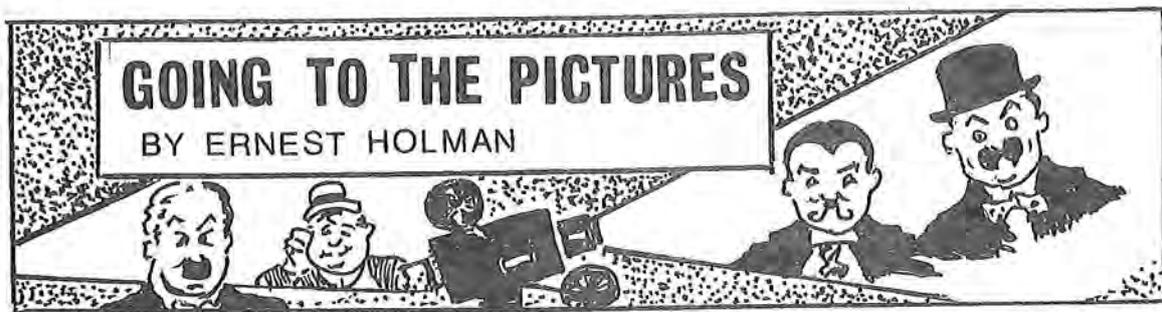
LEN HAWKEY, 3 SEAVIEW ROAD, LEIGH-ON-SEA, ESSEX.

\*\*\*\*\*

Happy Xmas to all Collectors, especially members of the S.W. Club.

MAC

\*\*\*\*\*

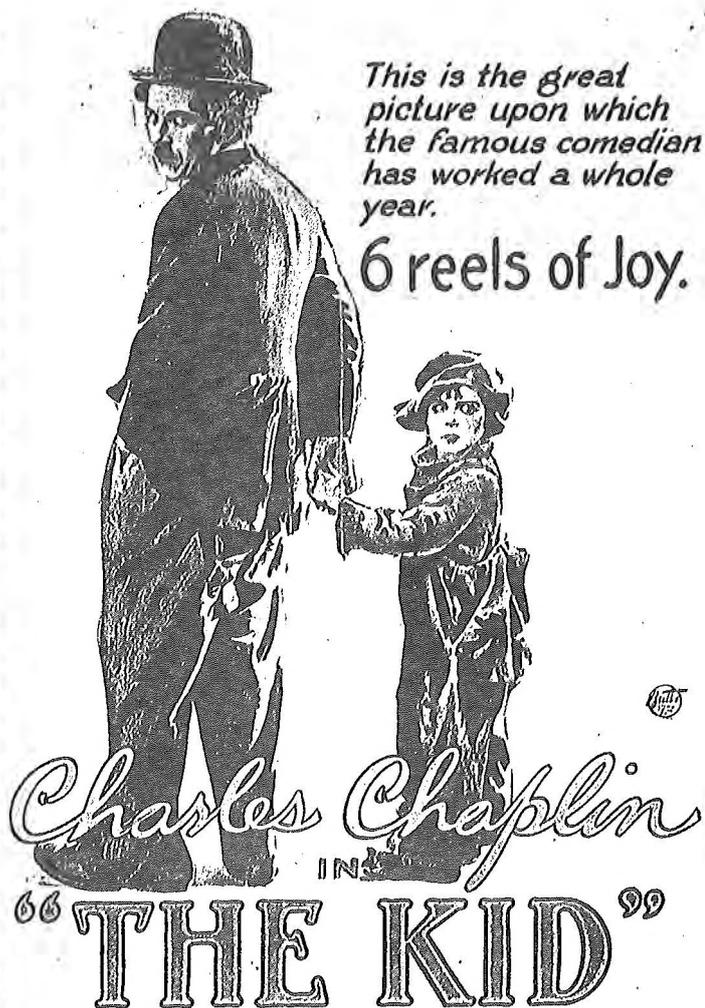


Anniversaries are never very difficult to find - in our Hobby they are always cropping up; some of much fond memory, others less recalled but nevertheless of nostalgic remembrance. In our own personal lives, they are frequently in evidence - for instance, I have just realised that it must now be seventy years since, in the twenties, I first started 'going to the pictures'.

Memory, however, soon came up against reality - when I was trying to give a sequence to events. It just didn't work out and, not surprisingly, I had recourse to refer to that most valuable of adjuncts, the 'reference books'. Then so much of the past returned as I fingered and thumbed my way through the pages of items devoted to the Silent Era of the Screen. In the end, I decided that (for the most part) chronology was out. I now make the attempt to bring out those so-well remembered times of a schoolboy attending at the local Cinema.

Just when I first went to 'the pictures' is beyond recall: I suppose I must have been taken by my mother or father, or both, at the beginning. At that time 'Way Down East' with Richard Barthelmess and Lillian Gish (and the other epics of the two Gish sisters) would have been around. (One also has to remember that in those days, many earlier films were reshowed. Only occasionally was the 'latest release' available.) I doubt if those particular films were 'up my young street' but perhaps I enjoyed the supporting programme.

Eventually, accompanied by other boys, usually with an 'elder' youth, I was allowed to go 'alone' to the Cinema. The biggest draw for us boys then was, undoubtedly, Charlie Chaplin. All his earlier shorts were shown from time to time, often, more than once; but by now Charlie was appearing in six-reelers. (The Gold Rush, 'The Kid', 'The Pilgrim', etc.) Some memories remain fixed: Charlie eating his boots, the 'heavy' throwing away the Kid's treasured toys, and - above all - Charlie's mime of David and Goliath.



Written and directed by Charles Chaplin  
A First National Attraction

We were a typical group of neighbouring boys, ever ready (with parental agreement AND payment!) to visit not only our own 'Picture House' but the surrounding houses under such names as 'Scala', 'King's Hall', 'Rink', 'the Cinema' and so on. Mind you, 'going to the pictures' was just one of our activities. The County Ground was within a cricket ball's throw, and there we could delight in the presence of such as Hobbs, Sutcliffe, Douglas, Woolley and Hendren. In the winter, the local Amateur Football team played at one end of the ground, where we all supported our own 'Blue and Lily Whites' (rosettes attached, naturally!). All this, plus games of all sorts, sport, adventure et al - and not forgetting the constant exchange of comics and story papers. Enjoy them we did, but they never prevented us from our Picture visits. We went, whenever opportunity offered, in twos, threes, fours or more. With one exception!

I'll call him Cyril. A serious boy, of very serious parentage and far removed from the pleasures of our set. (A modified Skimpole, perhaps.) None of our many interests was for him. He just held himself aloof - but he nevertheless occupied his time with us in a continuous attitude of 'head-shaking'. We tried our best to 'shoo' him off but he just wasn't 'shooable'. Tall, thin, bespectacled, yet he never qualified for a nickname. We had our Fatty, Scraggy, Meaty, Spotty, Barmy, etc., and all taken in good part. With any other boy than Cyril, he would have become known as Skinny or (because of his glasses) Harold. Poor old Cyril, though, was never so-described.



In addition to Charlie, perhaps our greatest hero was cowboy Tom Mix. There always seemed to be one of his films around somewhere and we never missed them. We were never very successful in our imitation of Charlie's walk, Harold Lloyd's climbing and so on - but with cowboys we were well away. Many a street, field or garden battle was waged between Cowboys and Indians, Goodies and Baddies. When some of us obtained scooters, we were soon 'astride'. One foot furiously propelled our 'horse', one hand held the handle-bar and the other held a water pistol: thus we 'rode the range'.

One day we became a Warren, under the auspices of the Daily Mirror's 'Uncle Dick'. In true Pip, Squeak and Wilfred manner, we set about preparing our own Gugnunc Magazine. We all contributed on any subject worthy of classing as an 'essay', and with the help of one of 'our' sisters (she was known to be a 'typer') we issued our one-copy only Magazine. Set out on headed paper 'Franciscan Warren' supplied by 'Uncle Dick' (our meeting place was Francis Road), it passed from hand to hand. Sometimes it took a long while for the next recipient to receive the copy but we knew then that an adult had been reading it, also. Perhaps the front page of our first issue should not escape mention. What could it consist of but - a large picture of Tom Mix, with his horse Tony? Subsequent 'fronts' were Charlie Chaplin and Harold Lloyd, amongst others. We had to fight 'feminine' pressure to avoid soiling an issue with a portrait of Mary Pickford!

Cyril, of course, was not only disdainful of our efforts but visibly shocked by the name of our Warren. He had also expressed horror at the use of 'Greyfriars'. We had asked him to put his 'views' on paper for us to publish (it would no doubt have been 'edited') but he just wasn't forthcoming. His sneering remark on seeing the front page of our first issue was 'Cowboys - ridiculous!'. Still, we had a good local reception for our efforts otherwise.

Memories of a typical cinema programme come flooding back. Pathé Gazette, Pathé Pictorial, a short comedy (Fatty Arbuckle, Larry Semon, Snub Pollard, Andy Clyde)

always a serial ('Avenging Arrow', 'Tiger Band', 'Miracles of the Jungle') and then, of course, the Big Picture. How the Pit Pianist earned money then. I suppose the serials were the most absorbing - cliff-hanging, saw-creeping nearer, train-approaching-tied-victim were always in evidence, as also was the reminder that it was 'To Be Continued'. Whether any of these serials then featured the legendary Pearl White I do not recall but they were of similar vintage.

October 18th, 1930. The KINEMA COMIC.

*The laughable larks of a lovable little lady!*

*The Larks of*  
**Louise**  
*Of Paramount*



**Fazenda**  
*Mack-Sennett Fame.*

This Week: "TICK"-LED HIM UP!

One of the most looked-forward to series at that time was the Sherlock Holmes sequence of pictures (Eille Norwood as the sleuth). When Moriarty and Holmes 'came to grief' we took a long while to let it sink in. Other names come drifting into one's mind. Helen Holmes, usually in some Railway adventure; 'whacky' Louise Fazenda, lassotwirling Polly Moran, adventurer Charles Hutchinson and so many more. One must not forget Clara Bow and Theda Bara (scamp and vamp) or 'Our Gang' (Spanky, Alfalfa, and the dog with a circle around one eye); Ford Sterling and the Keystone Kops, Buster Keaton, Chester Conklin. The names are endless. Tom Mix had his rivals, too - Buck Jones, Dustin Farnum, Jack Holt, Ken Maynard, William S. Hart.

I can recall only one looked-forward-to visit to the Cinema that wasn't concerned with the Film being shown. Our local Amateur team won the F.A. Amateur Cup and was billed to appear at a local 'House'. We got there very early - when the team appeared it has never ceased to amaze me how so many of them managed to crowd together on what, at that time, could be referred to as a 'stage'. The cheers, none higher than ours, greeted the players and went on for 'quite some time'. The film showing then? Sorry, I don't remember. I believe one of the Barrymores was in it - he killed a rich merchant for his money; the merchant returned as a ghost, played cards with his murderer and won all his cash back. (Well, something like that!)



So far, I have failed to make a mention herein of the 'Great Lover'. Well, to us the title was ridiculous: Rudolph Valentino was our swashbuckling hero and don't forget it! He was the daredevil of the Bull Ring, the Desert, the Front Line. All his films held lots of 'thrust'. (The episodes with his ladies merely held back the action!) When he died we were, of course, taken aback, much as we had been on the 'death' of Sherlock Holmes. Still, such events soon passed away. Hold hard, though! Here, the ladies came into focus. They took the death of Valentino very badly. Mothers, even Grandmothers, sisters, Aunts - all of them took weeks, months to get over the shock. (I suspect some of them never did!) We boys were not exactly sympathetic, but only Cyril sneered.

One day the school most of us attended arranged a free visit one morning to a showing of 'Ben Hur'. Ha! we thought, Cyril will at last visit a Cinema. Not Cyril,

though: a note from parents ensured that he stayed at school to study. The film itself, for us then, was memorable for the famous Chariot Race. It was one of the finest incidents I ever remember (perhaps Eddie Cantor in 'Roman Scandals' at a later date came near to achieving the same thrill). Our scooters became chariots and our brothers' and fathers' walking sticks turned the event into a joust. (We were never very kind to those canes - but they also made excellent hockey clubs!)

Our silent film world, however, could not continue indefinitely. We were growing older, employment was rearing its head - and the Talkies were coming in. The last Silent I recall seeing featured the then man-about-town Adolphe Menjou. The first 'all-talking, all-singing' showing I saw (surprisingly, it did **not** feature Al Jolson) was a film called 'The Perfect Alibi', of which I only remember its Theme Song, 'I've Never Seen A Smile Like Yours'. The Era of the Silent Days was about to depart.

It was during the 1980s that some of those films found a new place for themselves - on the 'Box'. Mostly they were edited versions, not always well carried out, but all the same of much interest to 'nostalgics'. Chaplin's 1940 version, with spoken commentary, of 'The Gold Rush' will always be welcomed on the small screen again. 'The Big Parade' featuring John Gilbert also came over well, due much to a very well-written musical score by Carl Davis. One especially gripping incident in this re-issued version is the slow march by Soldiers through an enemy wood - each step accompanied by a single drum beat.



No. 547. Vol. 11.

October 18th, 1930.

**Chester Conklin.**  
The Cheerful *Chappie*.

In: **STRETCHING IT TOO FAR!**

1. Chester believes in keeping fit, y'know. So the other morning there he was, hard at it with the developers. Suddenly somebody started messing about with the door knocker. "Hallo! . . . I wonder who that is?" cried our pal. "I'll see."

2. So he knocked off the exercise business and toddled to the front door.\* And there was the carrier with a hamper for Chester. "Sign here," said he. "There's nothing to pay, but it's thirsty weather and—thank you kindly!"

Most enthralling of all, though, must be the thrice-shown Television presentation entitled simply 'Hollywood'. Here we were shown how the 'tricks of the trade' were worked. The antics of Fairbanks were revealed as what they really were, for instance. At least, Harold Lloyd **did** perform his own stunts, even if an out-of-sight platform was beneath him.

Of course, many revelations were published over the years concerning much that went on in the land of films. Leaving aside the bulk of them - the human romance happenings! - some were of variable interest. For instance, Pola Negri's unsuccessful

attempt to turn Valentino's funeral into her own publicity stunt! Valentino's own image 'charred' by the statement that he was a very 'untidy eater': Charlie Chaplin's 'hard task-master' side. The latter provided, however, a most human touch - many of those actors, actresses and others who had been part of his films were included in a life-long Chaplin Pension scheme.

As well as thinking back to those picture-going days, I fall at times to wondering just what became of us boys? We moved away, we developed other and more personal interests - in fact, we lost touch. Where are we all now? Who still recalls those youthful days of 'togetherness'? Remote possibility - could just one of 'us' be reading this right now? We simply never heard of each other again: well, almost never.

The odd-one-out would, of course, be Cyril - who else? Cyril *did* make a name for himself: in the local paper during the 'thirties I read that he had come out 'on the wrong side of the law'. It is a sad reflection on my character when I say that, at the time, whatever thoughts and feelings came to me, sympathy was not present.

Poor lad - what a difference it might have made to him and his life if he could have joined us in all our many pastimes. In particular, if only had had accompanied us when (at every conceivable chance) we were 'going to the pictures'.



WANTED: S.O.L. 320, any reasonable price paid.  
DON WICKS  
4 WINDSOR STREET, EAST BURWOOD, VICTORIA 3151, AUSTRALIA

\*\*\*\*\*

WANTED TO PURCHASE: H.B. vol. 18, The Stacey Special. Also Story Paper Collectors' Digest Nos. 3, 18, 57 and 180 respectively (to complete a collection). Any original artwork of Shields, Macdonald or Chapman is welcomed. Write, with offers to:  
NAVEED HAQUE,  
152 SPADINA ROAD, RICHMOND HILL, ONTARIO, L4B 2V2, CANADA.  
*Season's Greetings to all Hobby Friends*

\*\*\*\*\*

FOR SALE: Girls' Own Annual. Seems 1920. Condition fair in my opinion. Offers. Happy Xmas and New Year to all readers.  
MATT R. THOMPSON, 13 ENNERDALE, VIGO, BIRTLEY, CO. DURHAM

\*\*\*\*\*

Seasons Greetings to all readers.  
WANTED - To complete long run - Dandy Comics, No. 728 and 923. Hotspurs: 125,133,135,136.

GEORGE W. TURNER  
25 LANGTON WAY, THORPE LEA, EGHAM, SURREY, TW20 8DS

\*\*\*\*\*

Christmas Greetings to all readers. Many, many thanks to the Editors (past and present) and all contributors.

ANDREWS, LAVERSTOCK, SALISBURY

\*\*\*\*\*

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.  
DAVID CRANG AND FAMILY, INDIAN QUEENS, CORNWALL

\*\*\*\*\*

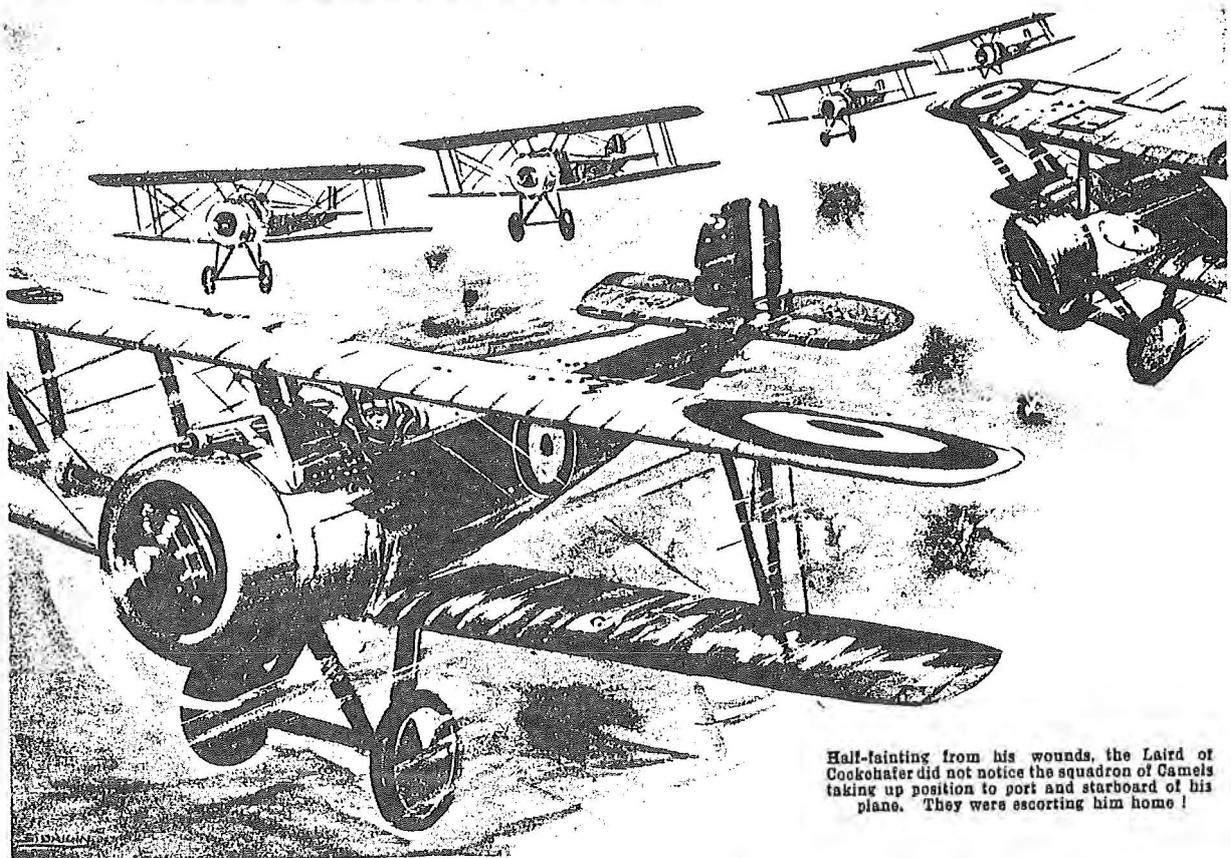
## NOT THE USUAL KIND OF ANNUAL

BY  
RAY HOPKINS



When I fell heir to an annual I had never before seen in all my collecting life - and I mean not one issue of those that were printed from 1932 to 1941 - it came by post and I couldn't wait to rip off the wrappings to see what a feast of fiction I was going to be presented with. Having heard of some of the gems that had appeared in the weekly version, I fully expected short stories - or long ones, if there was the space - featuring Ken King of the Islands, Biggles and, if I was lucky, Len Lex. But I learned later that I was two years too early for him.

From the foregoing, you will know that I am referring to the MODERN BOY'S ANNUAL, and the issue I was uncovering was the 1934 edition. Much larger in page-size than the same year's HOLIDAY ANNUAL, it is also much slimmer, containing only 192 pages, but printed on a smooth paper, possibly to make easier the reproduction of the many photographs it contains. Photographs? Oh yes, and articles galore which they illustrate! But where is all the fiction to which I was looking forward? There are almost two pages of Contents, but only three lines to cover the stories.



Half-fainting from his wounds, the Laird of Cockohafer did not notice the squadron of Camels taking up position to port and starboard of his plane. They were escorting him home!

*A thrilling Air-story of a young fellow who wanted to "do his bit" in the Great War—and of the Amazing Way in which he Achieved his Aim*

## The Lone Flyer!

By GEORGE E. ROCHESTER

Before I go any further, sniffing disappointedly, my experience of annuals has been that they tend to whet one's whistle for the weekly to which they are the year's end Christmas present, and, to do that they usually print stories featuring characters which have been presented in their programme the previous year.

I enlisted the aid of the SPCD's Danny (of Diary fame) to give me the idea of "what might have been", and I went through all the monthly issues featuring 1933 to see what treasures had been unveiled in the weekly MODERN BOY. No less than two series of Biggles stories, a "Flying Cowboys" series by George E. Rochester; two series of "Grey Shadow" stories by the same author; a King of the Islands series by Charles Hamilton (the eighth since the first in 1928); two series of Captain Justice yarns by Murray Roberts; two motor-bike series by Kaye Campson; a Standish serial by Percy F. Westerman; a school serial, "The Danes of Danehouse" by John Beresford; and an historical serial by Vice Admiral Evans about Napoleon, as well as other items. There was a new serial by Sir Malcolm Campbell entitled "Thunder Ahead". Danny says about Sir Malcolm, "I wonder if he knows he wrote a story," a very ha-ha remark and no doubt Danny was wryly thinking of the serial in the first number of MODERN BOY purporting to be written by Sir Alan Cobham.



Surely out of that lot of interesting characters... oh well, never mind, let's get to the stories in the annual. George E. Rochester is there with a Great War flying story; there is a railroad adventure in Canada and John Brierley's "The Silver Train"; Alfred Edgar is present in the setting he always does so well, motor-cycle racing. W.E. Johns is represented by an article telling of some of his war-time flying thrills and, in fact, his article is the only one containing the writer's byline.

When I got started on the articles, it was to find that they were so varied it would have been impossible not to have read some that interested me. I decided that this annual was, perhaps, nice for a change in its appeal to my frequently suppressed "thirst for knowledge" as against the part of my brain which more willingly laps up fiction.

"Mysteries of the Sea" inevitably brought up the greatest one of them all, that involving the "Marie Celeste", as well as other ships that had not come my way such as the 1890 schooner "Marlborough", a real-life "Flying Dutchman" which sailed the seas unmanned for twenty-five years before being sighted. Twenty skeletons were found aboard! Also, the British oil tanker, the "Toko", in the 1920s carrying 8,000 tons of

kerosene which vanished completely, leaving no trace of the huge amount of oil which it contained.

"Wrecking Trains for the Films" explained how clever trick photography was used, with a lightning switch from the real train to a model just before the crash into the sea from an open swing-bridge. It made me want to see again that one shown in the 1931 version of "The Ghost Train" but, alas, that will not be possible. I read a couple of years ago that this famous film, in which jolly Jack Hulbert plays a detective masquerading as what used to be known as a "Silly Ass" in order to corner some arms smugglers, was found totally disintegrated when the cans of films were opened. Be nice if a surviving print would turn up unexpectedly. Have a look and make a Hulbert fan happy!

Other articles explained how 78 rpm gramophone records were made. Also 6,000 feet of negative was taken of the 1932 Derby, but only 480 were ever projected. (This from an article on that old cinema standby, the Newsreel.) The construction of the new Piccadilly Underground Line (early 30s) is described. The thrilling adventures of an early "Lone Yachtsman" are detailed in an article headed by that title: Capt. Joshua Slocum repaired a sloop beached in a field, survived to write a book about his travels, set sail again but was then seen no more. Our more modern lone sailors return and are knighted and their brave little craft find a home on land to be visited and admired by tourists.

But my fantasy life is calling. I'm away to St. Jim's!



WANTED: The following GEMS in reasonable binding condition, nos. 1403-1414, 1417-1422, 1425-1426, 1428, 1433-1447, 1449, 1452, 1474, 1500, 1504, 1507, 1518, 1540, 1542, 1598-99, 1604, 1608, 1612, 1620, 1629, 1631. Several Gems for exchange.

ALAN DACRE, 7 LEOPARD STREET, WALNEY ISLAND,  
BARROW-IN-FURNESS, CUMBRIA, LA14 3QL

\*\*\*\*\*

Regards to the Editor, and Norman Shaw - wishing him well, and to fellow collectors. Good hunting of your wants.

J. ASHLEY  
46 NICHOLAS CRESCENT, FAREHAM, HANTS, PO15 5AH

\*\*\*\*\*

Greetings to all. WANTED: Malcolm Saville's "Where's My Girl?", Donald Suddaby's "Lost Men in the Grass", "Death of Metal", C.B. Rutley's "Diana of the Ranges".

SIMON GARRETT  
BATHWICK HOUSE, BATHWICK STREET, AVON, BA2 6NX

\*\*\*\*\*

Season's Greetings to all friends and fellow collectors. Does anybody have the few early C.D. monthlies and Annuals? I need to complete my collection. Please contact:

MARK STAFF, 6 ROCKFORD CLOSE, BOURNE MOUTH, BH6 4AZ

\*\*\*\*\*

Merry Christmas from NOSTALGIA UNLIMITED. If you did not receive my Comics/Story Papers Catalogue, and/or Newspapers/Magazine Catalogue in October, please send for your copy now! They are packed with reasonably priced goodies.

JACK WILSON  
19 DUNBEATH AVENUE, RAINHILL, PRESCOT, MERSEYSIDE, L35 0QH

\*\*\*\*\*

# ALFRED EDMEADES BESTALL

BY JOHN BECK



Alfred Edmeades Bestall was born one hundred years ago on 14th December 1892. The son of a Methodist Missionary he was a quiet unassuming man who was to establish himself as a major contributor of artwork to the twentieth century juvenile and adult market, as well as writing and drawing all the Rupert stories for the Daily Express from June 1935 to July 1965. It was particularly for his contribution to the Rupert Bear Saga that he achieved well-deserved recognition and fame in his later years when he found himself in demand for Radio, Television and magazine interviews.

Alfred Bestall's early training took place at the Birmingham School of Art just before the First World War. He referred to his war service as a member of The Army Transport Corp. in France as "four lost years" but still managed to while away quiet moments by drawing cartoons for *Blighty*, a magazine published exclusively for the troops. On demobilisation he joined an artist studio in London, and in a few years had sufficient magazine and other work to rent a studio of his own at Whitefriars. His cartoon and story illustration contributions appeared in *The Strand*, *Passing Show*, *Tatler*, *Sphere*, and *London Opinion*, the major society magazines that were amusing a population keen to forget the gloom of the war years. Bestall, who is on record as saying that in his early years he was influenced by Heath Robinson, also achieved his childhood ambition to become a contributor to *Punch*. This weekly magazine was the premier humour and satire publication of the day and attracted regular contributions from such major artists as Tenniel, Bernard Partridge and E.H. Shepard for whom he had an especially high regard. Alfred Bestall was to provide 112 pen and ink cartoons for *Punch* over the period 1922 to 1935. Many of these featured "child to child" or "adult to child" humour, identifying at this early stage of his career his affection for, and understanding of, youngsters. Contributions to *Punch* probably only ceased as his commitment to Rupert took over his total artistic output. Prior to 1935 he had also provided artwork for a considerable number of juvenile books and annuals, from pen and ink text illustrations for stories to full page colour plates and cover pictures.

When he was first approached to take over the daily strip from Mary Tourtel, Rupert's creator, who had to retire after fifteen years due to failing eyesight, he didn't realise he was also expected to write the stories. Up to this time apart from sharing the writing of "The Spanish Gold-fish" (published by Warne in 1934) with Dudley Glass, all he had ever done was provide the humorous titles to his cartoons. Early Rupert story plots, like Topsy, just grew as the story proceeded, and he claimed that later ones were often inspirations which came to him as he mowed the grass. His early instruction from the then Rupert editor, Stanley Marshall, was to move away from Mary Tourtel's Gothic/magic/witch/ogre style and provide gentler stories that were more child friendly. He was also told to adopt a style of penwork to provide a smooth transition from Mary Tourtel's and to make Rupert his own. This he did very successfully, as he modified the characters of some of the established major chums of Rupert while introducing others. Some of these were to become regular features of the Nutwood scene whereas others just made occasional appearances as particular plots demanded. Under Alfred Bestall's stewardship Rupert also became younger, enabling the child reader to look upon Rupert as a friend and to share in his adventures. Out of respect for Mary Tourtel, Bestall only started to sign his Rupert artwork after she died in 1948.

Rupert Annuals first appeared in 1936 when Stanley Marshall suggested that the Bestall newspaper stories to date be published in book form. Annuals still appear today in

much the same format as the first, though up to 1939 the internal pictures were printed in black and red only, and from 1940 the Annual became all-colour. Bestall was required not only to supply a full colour picture for the cover but also all the other internal illustrations, and, from 1950 onwards, he created some marvellously imaginative endpapers. From 1946 he incorporated paper models, many of his own invention, into specially written and drawn Annual stories and also provided instruction to enable the reader to construct the model. This interest in Origami led to Alfred Bestall eventually becoming President of The Origami society.

When Bestall "retired" from drawing the daily Rupert strip in 1965 at the age of 72, he still continued to provide artwork for the Annual until 1973, when he understandably got very upset as the picture he had provided for that year's Annual cover was altered, without reference to him, by the then owner of the *Daily Express*, Lord Beaverbrook. In all, Alfred Bestall wrote and drew 224 stories for the daily paper plus nearly 50 originals for the Annuals and Adventure Series, the latter being slim booklets that appeared quarterly from 1948.

Alfred never married and looked upon Rupert and his chums as part of his family. Occasionally real life people and creatures were incorporated into the stories. Morwenna was his niece who lived near Brighton, and Beryl, Pauline and Janet were real life Guides of the 10th Surbiton Troop. Dinkie, the black cat who made a number of appearances, belonged to one of the Guides, and other pets sometimes featured in stories in response to an owner's request.

For much of his working life Alfred resided at Surbiton, Surrey. It was convenient for London where most of his clients were based and he built strong connections with the local Surbiton Hill Methodist Church. In retirement he spent most of his time at his cottage in Beddgelert, North Wales, and seemed quite surprised when well into his eighties he started to get the recognition he justly deserved for his contribution to children's literature. There had always been a core of collectors of Annuals and other Rupert books, and the Lofts and Adley "Rupert Index" was published in 1978 in response to requests for a way to identify the early undated books. Then in 1982 Terry Jones produced his Channel 4 documentary on Alfred and Rupert, and then Paul McCartney was inspired to write the marvellous "Rupert and the Frog Song" (1984) which appeared with the delightful animated cartoon which was to become a video best seller. All of these airings, plus George Perry's book "A Bear's Life", published in 1985 ensured that Alfred Bestall's part in making Rupert a national institution was brought to a wider public attention.

"The Followers of Rupert" was formed in 1983. This is a society for collectors of Rupert books and ephemera who remember the little Bear with affection and collect the Rupert Annuals that were so much part of their childhood. Alfred Bestall was elected President, a post he held until his death in January 1986, aged 93, a year after he had received a well deserved MBE. At his request his ashes were laid to rest in his father's grave at Brookwood Cemetery in Surrey, and the bulk of his estate passed to his God-daughter Caroline Bott. Most of his early artwork, carefully parcelled up in brown paper, was included in the legacy and Mrs. Bott has subsequently exhibited at her house over 100 different items, including oil paintings that had been hung in the Royal Academy. A truly fitting memorial to one of the most talented of children's artists of the Twentieth Century.

---

(John Beck is the publisher of "The New Rupert Index" which updates the original Lofts and Adley guide. This 120 page book with many illustrations is available at £8.50 post free from John Beck, 29 Mill Road, Lewes, Sussex, BN7 2RU.)

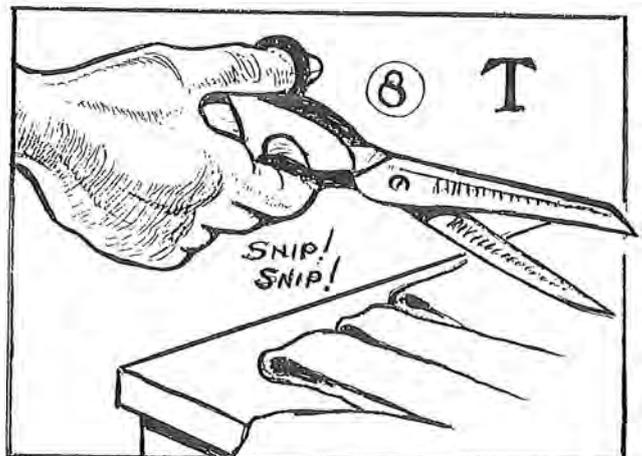
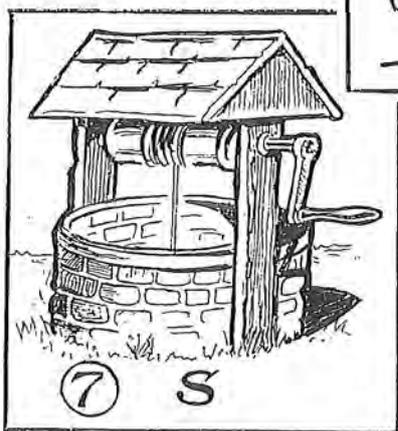
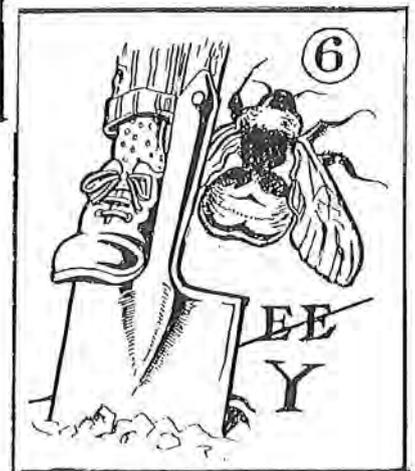
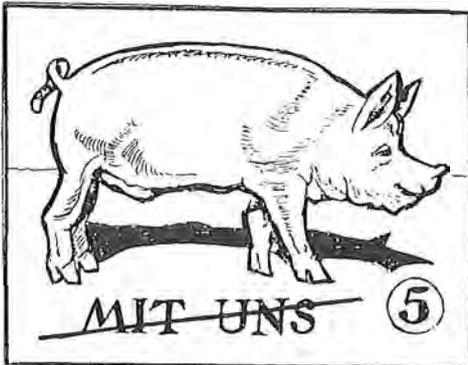
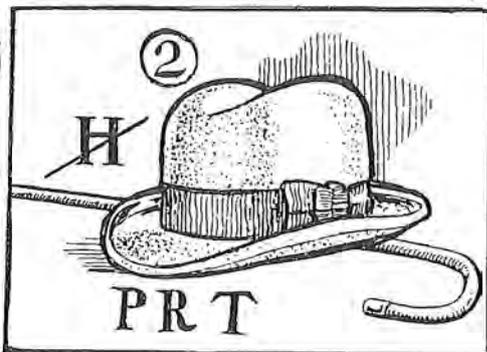
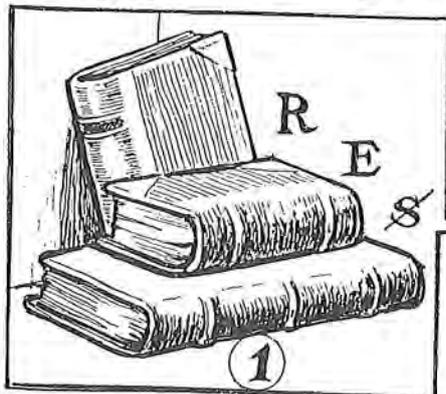
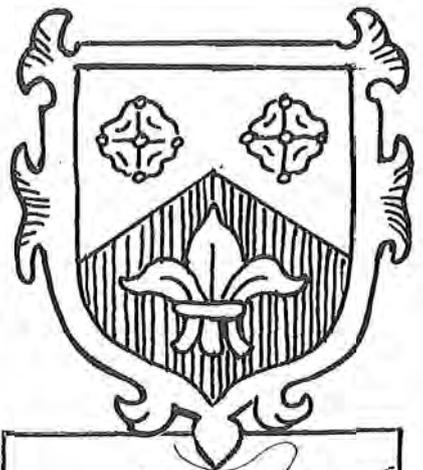


This page shows A.E. Bestall and Origami (photo by Robin Macey). The line drawings are of Rupert Bear, and two of Bestall's cartoons for PUNCH.



# "More St. Jim's Boys to guess"

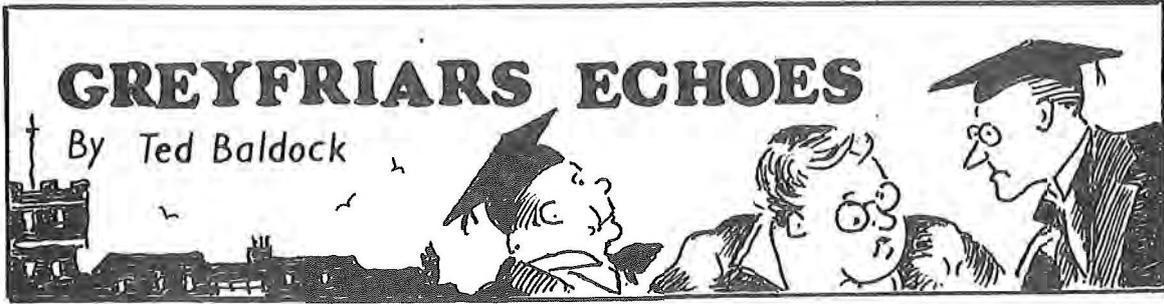
by Bob Whiter



ANSWERS ON PAGE 97

# GREYFRIARS ECHOES

By Ted Baldock



## SOUNDS REMEMBERED

Life is ...

A laughing schoolboy, without grief or care,  
Riding the springy branches of an elm.

Keats. *Sleep and Poetry*

Echoes reverberating through an empty house seem to magnify in intensity and take on a wistful note as they recede - where? One may imagine the effect of such echoes in the vast emptiness of a school with its labyrinthine corridors, numerous formrooms and studies. The sudden banging of a door at a distance would seem almost akin to an



explosion. Greyfriars, with its centuries of occupation by generations of monks and later of boys, is quiet and still in the depths of the Christmas vacation and presents an awesome atmosphere. When the last door has been closed, and Gosling's key has turned in the last lock, the great building is left to silence except for those unexplainable creakings and echoes, those faint murmurings and vibrations of past activities which become apparent only in stillness and silence.

One may stand before the window of Study No. I in the Remove passage and listen to the echo of many voices. Many voices and countless other sounds. Rags, battles, laughter and the tramp of conflict - even possibly the distant sound of chanted prayers. This was the abode of Harry Wharton and Co. or rather of Wharton and his bosom chum, Nugent. This was the scene of much off-lesson life of the fellows whose adventures we so avidly followed for many years. This was the doorway out of which Billy Bunter had been hurled so many times, and on other occasions invited in to the study tea.

There is the sound of many feet clattering along the uncarpeted passage outside: of voices raised in strenuous argument or quietly discussing school politics and sport. The life of the school going forward term after term about its daily business. One may perchance hear a sharp rap, or rather its echo, on the panels of the door and the acid tones of Henry Samuel Quelch enquiring for his head boy.

Study No. I, although a considerable distance (two passage-ways and a landing) from the Fifth form passage is not remote enough to dim the echoes of a stentorian voice occasionally issuing forceful edicts. Horace Coker must, during his long sojourn at Greyfriars, have produced so many violent vibrations that surely the atmosphere must be coloured by them. Also, of course, if one stands very quiet and listens carefully, one may catch the half-hearted protests of Potter and Green, the great man's study-mates.

There is a low murmur of voices from the direction of Masters Common Room with the occasional fruity boom as Mr. Prout sees fit to emphasise a point, followed by an acid riposte in tones which could only be those of Mr. Quelch. Faintly rising and swiftly dying comes the thin twitter of Mr. Twigg trying - unsuccessfully - to insinuate himself into the conversation. So do these reverberations continue in the stillness until, when term commences once more, they will be engulfed by fresh sounds of the uproar and tumult of school life.

\*\*\*\*\*

## GOLDEN DAYS

Sitting in a pleasantly sheltered spot on the breezy heights of Courfield Common, surrounded by blooming furze bushes and heather, one had a perfect view over a legend-steeped countryside towards the glinting waters of Pegg Bay, with the tiny fishing village of that name crouching beneath the great mass of the Shoulder, finding shelter from both off- and in-shore elements. Just inland lay the famed old pile of buildings with the familiar grey tower and quadrangle set in the midst of green playing fields - Greyfriars School. There it basked serenely in the gentle heat of early summer, its ancient walls and gables to the welcome warmth.

Having left the train at Friardale, I called in at Uncle Clegg's in the high street to refresh myself with certain harmless cordials, and to pass the time of day with the sociable old proprietor. Then I began making my way to this present delectable spot, my intention being, if possible, to discover something of the past. To sit and gaze, to think and dream, and try to recall some fleeting memories of the stirring events one associates with this lovely corner of Kent.

Well trodden tracks and pathways intersect the wide expanse of heathland, each in its own silent and timeless way holding a history of events quite its own. Schoolboy ambushes, japes, hurried expeditions, with perhaps a more serious purpose: all have played their part, all have added their individual echoes to the passing years.

There was a rustle on the path beneath my position, and a Greyfriars cap - I recognised it immediately - came into view, closely followed by another. Two fellows were approaching. As they drew abreast of my retreat we exchanged greetings, they paused and we drifted into conversation. They appeared to be preoccupied with a forthcoming cricket fixture, the first of the season with Highcliffe School. Much serious discussion was held, with myself a fascinated listener, concerning the 'form' of various members of their own eleven and that of Highcliffe. Suddenly they broke off and Harry Wharton (for it was he) turned to me and apologised gracefully for, as he put it, boring a perfect stranger with what must appear quite irrelevant details of school affairs. Little did either he or his companion Bob Cherry realise how completely I had become immersed in the pleasant exchanges, or how much I knew of this very subject under discussion, and how many times in former years this topic had been the central issue of the day.

Apropos of a remark by Bob Cherry, I enquired after Mr. Quelch, the Master of the Remove form whom I had not seen for many years. "Oh, the old acid drop is much the same as ever", he replied, "We believe that dear old Quelchy has discovered the elixir of perpetual existence. He seems not to change from term to term. Gets a little crustier perhaps, and still as sharp as the proverbial needle, and as just as jolly old Solomon himself". It all sounded very much like the Mr. Quelch I had known - how long ago? A lifetime spent among and instructing youth seemed to have imparted a timeless quality to his make-up. He was then, and apparently yet is, an institution. How many old boys throughout the world remember him with respectful affection I wonder, even if at times a little ruefully as they recall his undoubted expertise in the administration of punishment (in every case thoroughly deserved) and exquisite timing and direction when manipulating his ash. There can be little doubt that Henry Samuel Quelch made an indelible impact upon all the boys who passed through his hands. These and many more thoughts of Greyfriars wandered through my mind as I lingered in my pleasant refuge among the heather after the two Remove fellows had passed on their way. Finally a slanting sun suggested that it was time to bestir myself. Strolling quietly away towards Friardale there came, borne faintly on the slight breeze, small with distance, thin but distinctly audible the long drawn cheer, rising and falling. How many times in the past had I heard that sound as the prelude to another victory on the cricket or soccer field - in this case the former. Another accolade for George Wingate and his first-eleven stalwarts. It was all part of the great pattern.

\*\*\*\*\*

## AN UNSOLVED MYSTERY

It was a splendid pie. In the hierarchy of pies it could have been well described as an aristocrat. A noble example of the culinary art. Undoubtedly one of Mrs. Kebble's more inspired efforts. In producing such a pie it was evident that she had been at the very pinnacle of her form. Billy Bunter, an experienced and proven expert on pies - and how to remove them surreptitiously from their rightful owners - adjudged this particular creation as one of the finest to come under his practised eye. Mrs. Kebble had during her long career as cook at Greyfriars school produced many great dishes. But this particular pie stood out - as it were - from the ruck as something extraordinary; it was magnificent, it was a pie to write home about in the most glowing terms. Crust-wise it could not be faulted, such a crisp and brown aspect did it present. As to the contents, Bunter knew from previous patrolling activities in the vicinity of the kitchen that it was an apple pie, possibly also including blackberries. At the request of the Head (for whose table it was destined) cloves had been added which now gave off an aroma so celestial that Bunter could scarce contain himself from running into the kitchen and snatching it from under the very nose of its creator. Twice already he had been ordered from the area of the kitchen in appropriately sharp tones by Mrs. Kebble herself.

But the pie! It haunted Bunter like a large and luscious ghost. Its dimensions were such that even he had reservations about demolishing it in one sitting - although he was prepared to have a jolly good try. That pie in Bunter's scheme of things was going to be his if only the fates would transpire to glance kindly in his direction. That it was destined

for the Head's table he did not know. How could a fellow be expected to be cognizant of such minor details? There it stood in all its crusty glory on the kitchen table exuding its delightful aromas.

Mrs. Kebble was for the moment - fateful and unfortunate moment - absent from the kitchen. Kebble's voice calling had hurried her away into the back regions to see "what that man was up to now." The pie was unattended - and very, very vulnerable. No guard whatsoever had been mounted over it. Thus, sadly it was doomed never to reach the Head's table. A swifter and less dignified fate awaited it. That which we do not have, we do not really miss - or so it is said! One wonders if Dr. Locke managed to view the situation in some such philosophical manner.

On Mrs. Kebble's return the kitchen was found to be pie-less. Enquiries were at once instigated in many directions. Mrs. Kebble's cat, a frequent sojourner in that apartment, could hardly be implicated. Such a pie, were puss partial to such comestibles, would have taken her at least a week to consume. The net was spread wider but without success. The Fat Owl, with consummate, long-practised skill, had covered his tracks well. That monumental pie was never seen again; nothing but a faint aroma of cloves in the kitchen signified that it **had** ever been.

Harry Wharton and Co., with other members of the Remove, had suspicions amounting to near certainty as to the identity of the culprit. But suspicions are not proof, and they held their counsel, after informing Bunter in most pithy terms of their opinion of his lawless activities.



To round off an unsavoury episode an empty pie-dish, identical with that which had contained the vanished pie was found some days later in the inner recesses of Mrs. Kebble's capacious cupboard. To this day it remains an unsolved mystery who had placed it there, and William George Bunter was able to record one more "victory" in his compendium of tuck-pilfering. Retribution will, however, always have its way. The Owl suffered, as he deserved after such a surfeit of pie. Justice was done, and felt to be done, by the pie-lifter.

\*\*\*\*\*

## SNAPSHOTS

Look here, upon this picture, and on this ...

*Hamlet*

As shafts of sunlight memories gleam  
 Within the grey old walls  
 On many a well remembered scene  
 What days my mind recalls.  
 Across the playing fields I see  
 Beyond the distant elms  
 The glittering ocean wide and free  
 These dear familiar realms,  
 Along the corridor of time  
 A figure, fat and wide,  
 A famous girth, a squeaking voice  
 A scuffle then to hide.  
 "I say you fellows don't rush off"  
 Indignant tones are raised,

"There's certain tuck which I must scoff  
This cake old Coker praised,"  
Aunt Judy has a hamper sent  
With foodstuffs overflowing  
And Coker is on vengeance bent  
It's missing, and he's glowing.  
The Famous Five their mark have set  
Forever on the scene,  
And all the rest we'll not forget  
Great days has Greyfriars seen.  
Old Gosling grunting by his Lodge,  
His eye upon the clock.  
While 'rorty' fellows try to dodge  
Of them he takes sure stock,  
And here a gimlet eye is seen  
Well known for penetration  
Sweeping wide bold details glean  
Hence prudent concentration.  
Dear memories these, forever green,  
Of schooldays' golden time  
Will linger on, where'ere we've been,  
In whatsoever clime.



Original artwork from any Comics or Children's literature always wanted. High prices paid for right items.

JOHN BECK  
29 MILL ROAD, LEWES, EAST SUSSEX, BN7 2RU.

\*\*\*\*\*

Season's Greetings to all Friends. Always interested in exchanging duplicate Boys' Papers, Nelson Lee's, S.O.L., B.F.L., S.B.L., etc.  
KEN TOWNSEND,  
7 NORTH CLOSE, WILLINGTON, DERBY, DE65 6EA.  
TELEPHONE: BURTON-ON-TRENT 703305

\*\*\*\*\*

Christmas Greetings to Everyone. Collection still incomplete. Biggles, Rupert, Richards, Schoolgirls Own Libraries needed.  
GEORGE SEWELL,  
27 HUMBERSTONE ROAD, CAMBRIDGE, CB4 1JD.

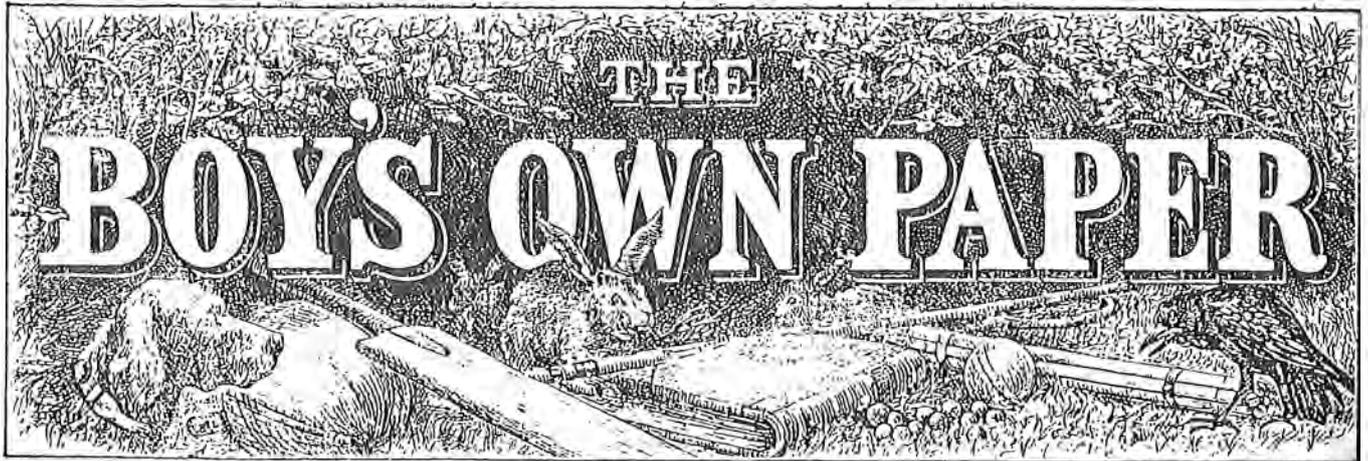
\*\*\*\*\*

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to All. Also a long and happy retirement and many thanks to Norman Shaw.  
D. BLAKE, THAMES, DITTON.

\*\*\*\*\*

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all Hobby Friends.  
BETTY AND JOHNNY HOPTON,  
79 SCALPCLIFFE ROAD, BURTON ON TRENT.

\*\*\*\*\*



by Geoff Lardner

Shortly before my thirteenth birthday I grew out of the Magnet, to which I had graduated from the Rainbow five years earlier. At least, I thought I had grown out of it until, thirty-odd years later, the late Howard Baker had his stroke of genius and I grew back into it instantaneously and joyfully. For I had read it through a great part of its golden Age. Beginning in the middle of the Dick Lancaster series, I had been regaled down the years with Africa, Egypt, Brazil, two lots of trouble for Harry Wharton, Dick the Penman, Smedley, the Popper Island Rebellion, the Greyfriars Secret Society, Edgar Caffyn, Stacey, Putnam van Duck and many more. What riches!

Money, however, was not plentiful in that summer of 1936 and I was allowed only one regular magazine on the family newspaper bill. For some time I had been increasingly drawn towards another publication. Older cousins had from time to time lent me copies of the Boy's Own Paper, usually in the form of the Boy's Own Annual - which always consisted of a year's monthly parts bound up together - and I had liked very much what I had seen. Hence came the decision to change, one which, for all my love of the Magnet, I never regretted.

Most of the copies I had seen came from the early 1920s, and once again I had unknowingly been feasting from a Golden Age. This was a period of cracking adventure stories from Captain (later Major) Charles Gilson, Geo. E. Rochester, Percy F. Westerman and others of the top class, alongside high quality school stories, very different from Greyfriars, by such as Richard Bird, Gunby Hadath and Hylton Cleaver. These were complemented by a range of features - articles on sport, hobbies, nature study, real-life adventure and a great deal besides. Altogether every copy contained a wealth of material to stimulate and feed a boy's curiosity and imagination.

The B.O.P., by the time I encountered it, was a venerable publication. Indeed it had begun its life as the first boys' magazine of any quality and went on to be by far the longest lived. It owed its birth, and for many years its continued existence, to an organisation called the Religious Tract Society. An Act of Parliament in 1870 had brought in universal elementary education, and within a few years the first ever literate generation of working class boys and girls was growing up. Concerned by the crude "penny dreadfuls", the staple popular reading matter then available for young boys, and aware of the limited appeal of the pious, preaching literature also much in evidence at that time, the Society set out to provide something wholesome, readable, interesting and educational.

How it succeeded! Number 1 appeared on Saturday, 18th January, 1879, and cost one penny. Even in those days of real money it was excellent value. Sixteen large, closely printed pages included such gems as "How I Swam the Channel" by Captain Webb, "From Powder Monkey to Admiral" by W.H.G. Kingston, "My First Football Match" by An Old Boy, "An Afghan Robber", "Out with a Jack-Knife" (nature study), "The Bogle" (a

Scottish ghost story), "My Monkeys and How I Manage Them", "Outdoor Sports and Pastimes", "Evenings at Home (Pleasant Hours with the Magic Lantern)" and a story-writing competition. Nothing like it had ever before appeared. It was an instant success.

## MY FIRST FOOTBALL MATCH.

BY AN OLD BOY.

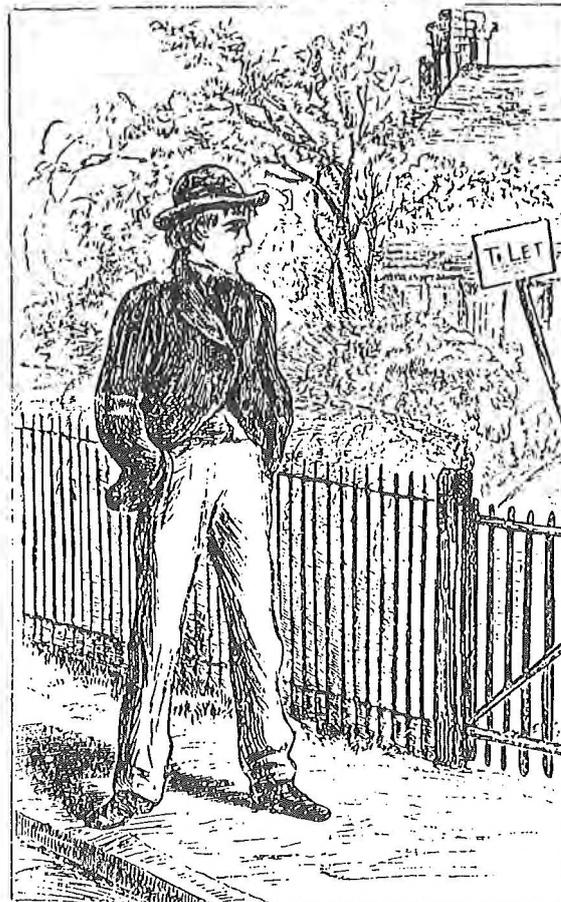


to-morrow."

IT was a proud moment in my existence when Wright, captain of our football club, came up to me in school one Friday and said, "Adams, your name is down to play in the match against Craven

## A STORY NEEDING WORDS.

Prize Essay Subject.—I.



## OUT WITH A JACK-KNIFE.

BY THE

REV. J. G. WOOD,  
M.A., F.L.S.,

Author of "Illustrated  
Natural History," etc.

THE Editor of this Magazine having asked me to show what could be done in Practical Natural History with no other apparatus than a common jack-knife, I have been out with such a weapon, and have had a capital time of it. Perhaps the reader might be tempted to go also, if only he knew what a fund of entertainment there is within his easy reach. Let all who like, then, follow me.

NUMBER ONE

Great writers and famous names appeared from the start. Jules Verne, R.M. Ballantyne and W.G. Grace all wrote in volume 2 and continued to contribute regularly for many years. The "Old Boy" who wrote the very first story in No. 1 was in fact Talbot Baines Reed. As with Verne, many of his most famous stories first appeared as B.O.P. serials. Many other celebrated authors were happy to write for the new magazine, amongst them G.A. Henty, H. de Vere Stacpoole, Conan Doyle and Algernon Blackwood.

One of the endearing features of the early volumes, to me at any rate, were the answers to correspondents. What makes them so fascinating is the fact that the enquiries were never printed, only the names of the correspondents and the answers. These were as brief as possible and it is sometimes tantalising to speculate on what the questions might have been. Often the replies were peremptory, not to say waspish. The following selection is from 1881.

"W.A. GIBSON - The addresses as given are sufficient."

"J.O. CARTER - We do not, for obvious reasons, answer such questions."

"C. PHILLIPS - The right side is the better, perhaps."

"A.R. - Bathe every day."

"J.R. - At Willesden Cemetery."

"R.W. - Once is enough."

"J.R.H. - You would be liable to imprisonment if captured, but your friends would be entitled to your clothes and chest."

Many of the most abrasive answers were provided by Dr. William Gordon Stables, one of the dominant figures in the paper's formative years. The most important influence, of course, was the first editor, George Andrew Hutchinson, whose brain child the B.O.P. was. He planned the style and the content, launched No. 1 and stayed in office until his death in 1913. Stables was the most prolific contributor in the first thirty years. A remarkable man who had travelled the world as a naval surgeon, he contributed fact, fiction, medical advice and articles on a variety of subjects. A third key figure was William John Gordon, Hutchinson's right hand man. He sub-edited, rewrote, revised, cut and checked the stories and articles from the beginning until 1933.



Boyhood's Dreams.

## “When I Leave School?”

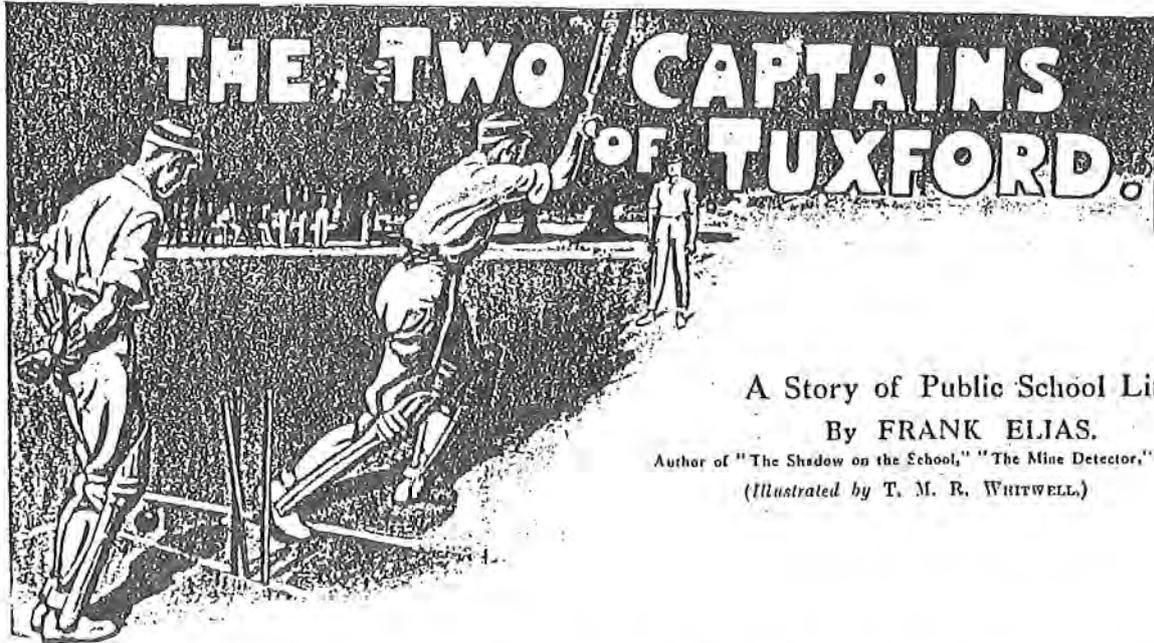
(In this new feature which commenced in the last volume, articles will continue to appear month by month giving particulars of various professions and businesses, etc., offering suitable careers to boys.)

Length of service such as this played a large part in the continuity of policy and style which was a feature of the paper. The pattern of stories, articles and features was maintained throughout the paper's life, only the subject matter developing with the years. Likewise the policy of employing the best authors and artists and the top experts of the day was always followed. Inevitably the standard fluctuated over time, but there was never a serious deterioration. A great help was the fact that over the paper's eighty-eight year life there were only seven editors.

Stories fell mainly into two categories, school and high adventure. Humour and sport, whilst not neglected, never dominated. "Like something out of the Boy's Own Paper" has become a cliché for impossible heroics and superhuman achievements, whether in fiction or in real life. I have always thought this a slander: such comparison, in my view, would be better made with the D.C. Thomson papers - "Like something out of the Wizard", say (which is not to demean the Wizard, a great paper but different!). The B.O.P. adventure fiction, always of a high quality, was never short of action, interest and thrills, but stayed for the most part in the realms of the realistic and credible. The school stories, always a favourite with me, gave a very different view of public school life from the Magnet, and one which I felt, for all the delights of Greyfriars, was probably nearer to the truth.

The stories were the backbone of the paper but its distinctive quality, throughout its life, derived equally from the excellence and diversity of the features. At the time I was buying it, in the late thirties, there was a regular nature article by "Hedgerow", a stamp collector's page by Stanley Phillips, a cycling piece by "Bywayman", a model aeroplane feature for "Skywaymen" and a page of jokes, "Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree". Every month there would also be several articles on "one-off" subjects. They were all (except the jokes) good solid factual articles, well written with nothing trivial about them.

The B.O.P. never in its life talked down or condescended to its readers. The one jarring note was struck for me by the "Padre's Talk", at best a high-toned moral lecture and frequently a straight sermon. I don't know how many boys actually read it. I never did. I got enough preaching at school and on Sundays. In my view that wasn't what a magazine was for. It is interesting to reflect on the effectiveness of this approach compared to the more subtle technique of Frank Richards, whose moral messages were accepted painlessly and without demur by just about all his readers. A well-meaning idea of the then editor, Robert Harding, "The Padre's Talk" was quietly dropped after a few years.



A Story of Public School Life.

By FRANK ELIAS.

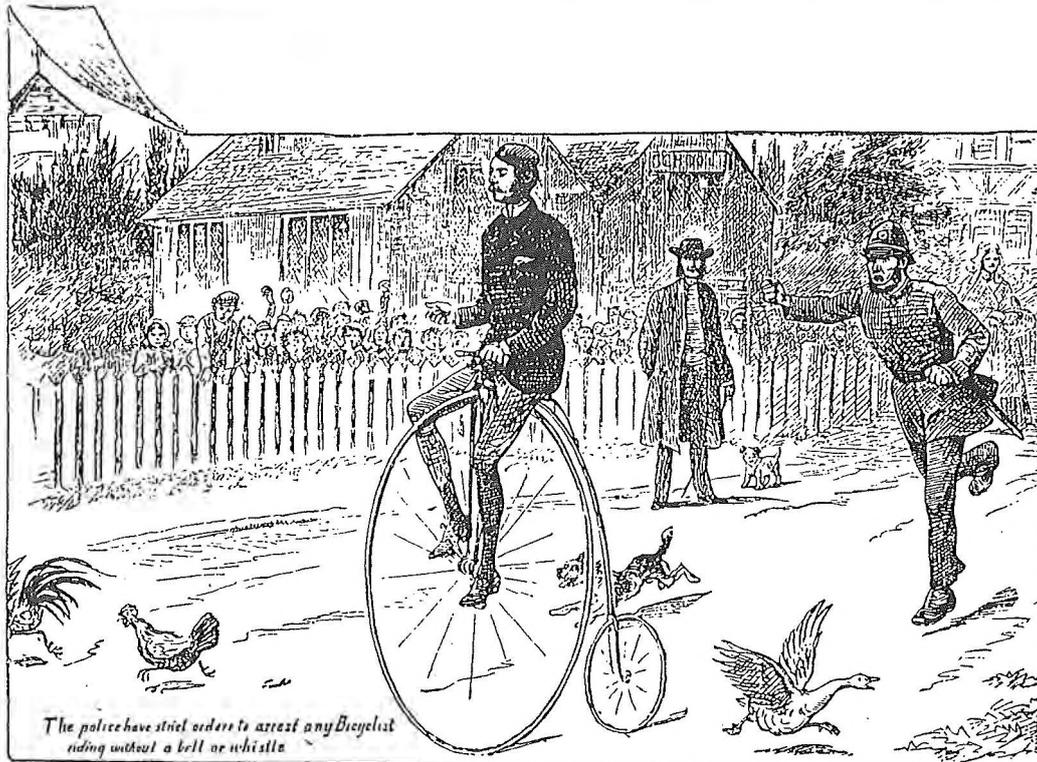
Author of "The Shadow on the School," "The Mine Detector," etc.

(Illustrated by T. M. R. WHITWELL.)

The paper was always lavishly illustrated, with finely detailed woodcuts in the early years, and for much of its life attractive coloured presentation plates were regularly given away. These, often beautifully produced and so big that they had to be folded to fit the book, might portray almost anything. Flags of All Nations; Royal Arms Through The Centuries; "groups" showing a variety of fishes, cricketers, pets, soldiers; real or imagined scenes of action and adventure; there was no end to the subjects. They were educational, stimulating and often delightful to behold. Many of the artists were famous names. As early as the 1880 Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, five of the artists showing had already had work published in the B.O.P. These colour plates are collectors' items in their own right and the buyer today of old volumes should beware, examining closely to ensure that they have not been removed.

Over the years the papers provide a rich field for the historian, particularly where science and technology are concerned. A series of articles on cycling in Volume 2 starts by advising the beginner to obtain "a small machine of modern construction with a driving wheel of about forty inches diameter." Forty inches?? When I was a boy the twenty-eight inch wheel was going out and since then it has been unusual to find one greater than twenty-six inches. Nowadays of course many are much smaller still. It is only after a moment's thought and a glance at the illustrations over the page that it dawns on one that the "machine of modern construction" referred to is in fact a penny-farthing. An article on "Our Merchant Navy" in 1887 is illustrated with pictures of ships fitted with both funnels and sails. A small electric motor for boys to make, described in 1896, is ingenious but constructed in precisely the reverse fashion to that which later became standard. Later came articles on motor bikes, crystal sets, model aeroplanes and so on. An article in October 1938 entitled "What is This Television?" had been predated by a feature on the inventor, John Logie Baird, five years earlier. Hobbies and "how to make" were always strongly represented.

To me the B.O.P. had two golden ages. The first fifteen years or so were truly magnificent, breaking new ground and providing plenty of lively stories which can be read and enjoyed today (as well as some badly dated ones which can't!). Then, to my taste, things went a little bit flat and dull until the half dozen years immediately following the first world war, when it was at its peak. A wealth of first class stories and articles, including regular superb adventure serials by Major Charles Gilson, went on for year after year at a consistently high standard. Probably the change from weekly to monthly format in 1914 had something to do with this.



4.—Friends and Foes.

#### OUR BICYCLING ARTIST ON A HOLIDAY TOUR.

I took it monthly from 1936 to 1940 and I still have my original copies, the earlier ones somewhat tattered. I love it although, looking back, it is clear that the quality had fallen off from a dozen years earlier.

By the second year of the war the paper shortage had made it a very slim periodical indeed. My son took it from 1954 to 1962, but it had shrunk to pocket size and was in every way a shadow of its former self. Shortly afterwards it gave up the ghost and the last issue was published in February, 1967.

The B.O.P. was in its day (and a very long day it was!), a towering giant amongst boys' magazines. Its motto: "Quicquid agunt pueri nostri farrago libelli" - "Whatever boys do makes up the mixture of our little book" was adhered to throughout its life. It has been estimated that up to 1939 it had published about eighty million words. A short article such as this can only scratch the surface. The reader who would like to know more is referred to the eighty-eight volumes (of which I have about half) or, if life is too short for that, to two excellent books published some years ago. I do not know whether they are still in print but if not they are well worth searching for.

"The Best of British Pluck", by Philip Warner, published by Macdonald and James in 1976, and "Take a Cold Tub, Sir!" by Jack Cox (the last editor), published by Lutterworth Press in 1982.





## THE SILENT THREE AND ROBIN HOOD'S BOW

BY MARION WATERS

It was a pleasant summer day in the early 1960s. The sunlight was shining through the elaborate stained glass windows of the 'Three Nuns' Hotel, near the town of Mirfield in the West Riding of Yorkshire. In the oak panelled dining room, a young couple were seated at one of the tables consuming their meal. The couple were smartly dressed in a sober fashion, but there was something furtive in their manner, and a shrewd observer would have guessed that they were up to no good.

"We must gain possession of Robin Hood's Bow as soon as possible", said the young man.

"Shawlees Church is not usually locked, we could help ourselves whenever we like", replied the young woman.

"The bow will be difficult to reach", said the man. "We shall have to choose our time carefully."

"We must make sure that none of the girls from that wretched boarding school is hanging about the church", said the woman, whose name was Sylvia.

"The way they sorted out that crooked councillor! We shall have to keep well clear of them", added her fiancé, who was called Robert. He peered round the room to see if anyone was listening before continuing the conversation in a quiet voice.

Seated at a table not far from Robert and Sylvia was a tall young man with prematurely grey hair, and deep set, melancholy eyes. He didn't look particularly alert but at the mention of that 'wretched boarding school' he began to pay close attention. "I think that Friday night would be a suitable time", said Sylvia, "as soon as it is dark". All this was carefully noted by the man at the adjacent table.

As Robert and Sylvia left the dining room they almost collided with a tall, heavily built woman with fair hair, who was about to enter the room.

"What on earth was that -- a female wrestler?" gasped Sylvia.

Heather Eastwood, the fair haired girl, was the acting librarian at Mirfield High School, the school to which Robert and Sylvia had referred. She had arranged to meet her fiancé, William Marshall at the 'Three Nuns' for a meal. Heather normally worked for the county library in the nearby town of Sowerby Bridge; she had been loaned to Mirfield School at the request of the headmistress.

Over their meal, Will related to Heather the conversation he had overheard. "They looked as straight as a bent half-penny", said Will, as Heather noted the description of the couple. "What did they mean when they referred to 'Robin Hood's Bow'?" "As you know, Robin Hood died at Shawlees Nunnery, less than a mile from where we are sitting", explained Heather. "He is buried in the grounds of the estate. His reputed bow hangs in the parish church".

"Is it really Robin Hood's bow?" asked Will, in a caustic tone. "You guess is as good as mine", replied Heather. "The bow has hung in the church for a very long time, I guess that it has become associated with the medieval outlaw by long tradition". "Why should anyone want to pinch it?" asked Will. "Are they just souvenir hunters, or is there a deeper motive?"

"I think there is more to this than a case of simple theft; I intend to seek assistance in the school, and to put a spoke in their wheel", answered Heather.

"Your friends in their funny green robes?" chuckled Will. "The Silent Three". Heather kicked him gently beneath the table with the pointed toe of her shoe. "You turncoat", she hissed. "You said I looked smashing in my robe".

"I was only teasing", was the response, "But you always look as though you will trip up in such a long garment".

"Betty and her friends are much more nimble than me", smiled Heather. The rest of the day passed in a pleasant manner for the couple. Then it was time for Heather to return to Mirfield School, with much to think about.

The following day, she was working in the school library. After lunch, the lower sixth had a free period, and many members of the form made their way to the library for private study. Among the girls in the library were Betty Roland, Joan Derwent and Peggy West. The three friends had come to the school the previous year to take advantage of its specialist sixth form courses. Miss Vanessa Dale's new public school had encountered a lot of opposition in the locality. A corrupt councillor and a traitor mistress had attempted to undermine it.

Betty, Joan and Peggy, acting as a secret society, 'The Silent Three', had foiled the plotters. During the course of their adventures, Heather had rescued the trio from a number of tight corners, and worked with them to bring the crooks to justice. It was a great help to the Silent Three to have an adult member, who could break bounds and had access to a car as well as having a detailed knowledge of the district.

Heather and the Silent Three avoided appearing too friendly in public. The girls always addressed Heather as 'Miss Eastwood' during school hours, and treated her with the respect due to a member of the school staff. When Betty requested a book, and the item was handed over, she was not surprised to find a note within it. When the Silent Three examined the note in the privacy of their study, it read: "Please come and see me this evening after lights out".

Some hours later when the school was wrapped in slumber, there was a faint swish of silk in study no. 9 on the sixth form corridor; then the robed and hooded figures of the Silent Three made their way through the darkness towards the main school building. They climbed the fire escape towards the row of attic bedrooms occupied by junior members of the staff. Heather made the girls welcome and when they were comfortably settled, she told them what she had discovered.

"We have a problem, sure enough", said Betty thoughtfully. "Shall we try and stop them stealing the bow?" asked Joan. "Wouldn't it be best if we followed them to see what happened when the bow was in their possession?" suggested Peggy. "I think we should have a look at this bow as soon as possible", said the older girl firmly.

The following day, the vicar of Shawlees Church was at work in the ancient building, when three smartly dressed schoolgirls, accompanied by a young woman, entered the church, and asked to see Robin Hood's bow. The girls were very attractive, and wore immaculate red and white striped blazers. The woman was tall, heavily built, exceptionally smartly dressed, with an air of quiet authority. The vicar assumed that she



must be one of the mistresses from the school. He pointed out the bow, which hung above the altar in the side chapel, and with his permission one of the girls lifted it down for examination. The visitors were amazed at its size and strength.

"Robin Hood must have been a very strong man indeed", said Heather.

"One had to start training with the long bow at a very early age", explained the clergyman. "I doubt if many men today could bend the bow".

"Is there any real proof that it really is Robin Hood's bow?" asked a girl with long fair hair.

"Only by tradition", smiled their host. "The bow is first mentioned in a church inventory of 1606. Experts say that it dates from the Tudor period. I suspect it was placed in the church by an admirer of Robin Hood, to help build up the tradition". While the conversation was taking place, the girls were carefully examining the bow, together with its quiver of arrows to see if these contained any secrets, but without success. They thanked the vicar for his help, and then made their way back to school.

"We're stumped", said Peggy. "There was nothing special about the bow, and it would require an exceptionally strong man to use it".

The following Friday evening, as darkness was falling on the Calder Valley, the two conspirators made their way stealthily towards Shawlees church. Little did they realize that as they made their way through the church yard masked eyes were watching their every move. The Silent Three and Heather, clad in their robes and hoods, were keeping a close watch, hidden among the tombstones. They saw Robert open the unlocked door of the church, and the plotters make their way into the darkened building. While Joan and Peggy kept watch outside, Heather and Betty silently followed the crooks into the church.

As Betty and Heather watched from the shadows, the bow and its accessories were removed from their place above the altar. Robert and Sylvia made a very thorough examination of these items while the hooded girls crept closer, hoping to overhear their conversation. Robert was concentrating on the quiver which contained the arrows. This was made of thick, untanned leather, which looked like suede. He produced a knife and began to cut carefully at the stitching which held the leather together.

"Just as I thought", he said. "The leather has two thicknesses, and something is hidden between them". As the two girls watched, Robert drew out a parchment, which crackled with age.

"Shall we challenge them?" asked Betty, giving Heather's arm a squeeze.

"Wait", said the older girl firmly. "Let us see what they are up to". Robert and Sylvia were attempting to decipher the manuscript, which was very old and written in Latin. Sylvia peered closely at it while her companion held the torch. Little did they realize that the robed figures of Betty and Heather were hidden behind a pillar, only a few feet away.

"It obviously refers to the grave of Robin Hood in Shawlees Park", said Sylvia.

"It's too late to go there tonight", murmured Robert. "We will study the parchment at our leisure, and visit the grave tomorrow night".

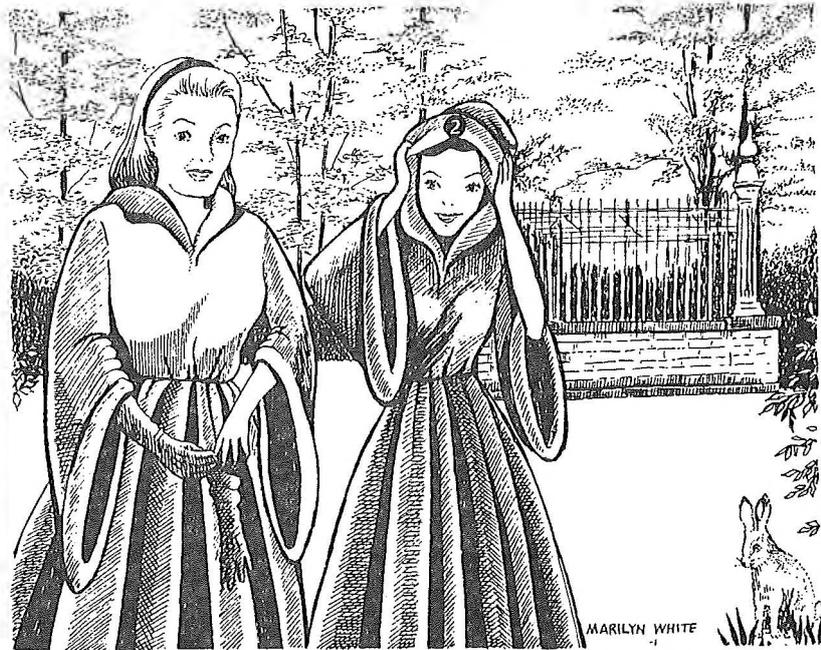
"Shall we take the bow and arrows with us?" asked his companion. "Yes, they may contain other clues", replied Robert. "We must take them with us". As the two thieves left the church, Betty and Heather made their way through the building, leaving by the unlocked door. In the shadows, Joan and Peggy were anxiously waiting. The robed girls watched as Robert and Sylvia left the church precincts and drove off in their small car. Peggy carefully noted the number.

"What happened in the church?" asked Joan. "They took the bow away with them", answered Peggy.

As the four friends made their way through the moonlight, Betty described what had taken place in the church.

"But what are they up to?" asked Joan. "Perhaps we shall find out tomorrow night", replied Betty. "It's time you were back at school", said Heather. "Lack of sleep will spoil your complexions". "Yes, Aunt Heather", chuckled the Silent Three.

Saturday afternoon at Mirfield High School was devoted to sport and both Betty and Peggy were fully involved. Colonel Oldroyde, the owner of the Shawlees estate and the chairman of the school governors, allowed the girls free access to his property, but Robin Hood's grave and its vicinity were strictly out of bounds. While the rest of the school were busy on the sports fields, Joan and Heather quietly made their way to the adjoining property. Hidden among the trees,



they slipped into their robes and drew up their hoods. The hood of Heather's robe did not bear a number, but she was much taller than the Silent Three. Another distinguishing mark was provided by her long, slim-fitting gloves, which she wore to conceal her ugly hands and arms. "Here we go", said Heather, giving the younger girl a hug.

Robin Hood's grave was located in a quiet corner of the estate, overlooking the river Calder. It was enclosed by a stone wall, which was topped by tall iron railings. A stone slab marked the actual grave. The slab had been badly damaged during the previous century, and a replica had been built into the surrounding wall. The atmosphere was peaceful, and birds could be heard singing in the background. Joan and Heather approached the grave in a cautious manner, for despite their robes they had no wish to be seen by the estate staff. They peered through the railings at the battered stone that lay within the enclosure.

"Is Robin Hood really buried there?" asked Joan.

"I think that it is just a tradition", explained Heather quietly.

"I understand that the grave was opened during the last century, but no signs of any internment were discovered". Beneath her mask, Joan's face showed her disappointment, she had always enjoyed tales of the famous outlaw, and it gave her a pleasant feeling to believe that his remains were close at hand. "Cheer up, my dear", said Heather kindly. "We can soon find you some old graves to dig up". As the girls returned to school, Joan said: "If it's not a real grave, why are they so keen to examine it?" "We will have to wait and see", replied Heather.

That evening, as soon as it was dark, Robert and Sylvia made their way through the trees to the grave. As before, hooded figures were observing them from the shadows. Using a skeleton key, Robert unlocked the gate in the railings and entered the enclosure. The robed girls crept closer, while Peggy crouched beneath the shadow of the wall around the grave. Her heart beating with anticipation, Peggy watched as the pair set to work with a crowbar to lift up the stone slab. It was a very difficult task; there were gasps for breath and the occasional rude word.

"What on earth are they doing?" asked Joan, straining to see what was happening behind the wall.

"Quiet, old girl", said Betty firmly, "or they will hear us".

At last, Robert and Sylvia managed to turn the stone over. Quickly, he produced a shaded torch, and they began to examine the stone.

"There is an inscription on the underside of it", he exclaimed.

"It's in Latin", said Sylvia. "I will see if I can translate it". Inwardly Peggy groaned, she had never understood Latin. Slowly Sylvia translated the inscription: "To the gatehouse, northwest corner, thirty bow shots, to the Dumb Steeple".

"What on earth does it mean?" asked Robert. "Let us go to the gatehouse and find out", Sylvia replied.

Taking the stolen bow with them, Robert and Sylvia hurried towards the gatehouse of Shawlees Hall, which was a relic of the old nunnery that had once occupied the site. The crooks quickly took up a position at the northwest corner, facing the Dumb Steeple - a stone pillar on the edge of the estate, which was clearly visible in the moonlight.

"It said thirty bow shots", said Sylvia, as Robert attempted to string the bow. The watchers had great difficulty in suppressing giggles as he tried to fit the bow string. Suddenly Heather slapped her thigh in eager delight. "Got it", she exclaimed.



The weedy looking man was still attempting to fit the bow string, when suddenly a commanding voice said, "Stop!". Robert and Sylvia spun round, and were confronted by a tall figure in a long robe and hood, whose face was concealed by a mask.

"Who are you?" gasped Robert, feeling very frightened.

"I am the Prioress of Shawlees", said the hooded woman. "Who are you to disturb my rest? Be gone, and leave me and my sisters in peace". Heather was a capable mimic,

and able to speak without a Yorkshire accent when necessary. Sylvia let out a scream as further robed and hooded figures appeared from the shadows, behind the 'Prioress'.

"I'm not stopping here", she cried in terror, seizing Robert's arm.

"She's no ghost, it's a woman dressed up", exclaimed Robert.

"Be gone", ordered Heather in a ghostly voice. "Doom awaits those who defy the wrath of the Prioress of Shawlees". Sylvia let out an ear-piercing scream, and dragged Robert away from the scene.

Once the plotters had fled, the Silent Three collapsed in fits of laughter.

"Heather, you were fabulous", laughed Joan.

"What on earth made you pretend to be the ghost of the Prioress?" asked Betty, almost splitting her sides with laughter. "It just came to me on the spur of the moment", explained Heather, as she gathered up the items that the couple had discarded.

Having made sure that Sylvia and Robert had left the area, the girls set to work to solve the puzzle. Heather positioned herself at the northwest corner of the gatehouse, and took a bearing on the Dumb Steeple, which was still visible in the moonlight.

"None of us could use the bow", explained Heather. "I doubt if many men could bend it either, but I am going to measure thirty lengths of the bow stave, from the corner of the gatehouse, and we will see what we can find". Quickly the girls set to work, and the necessary distance was measured out, the spot being marked by the crowbar the crooks had left behind.

"It's my belief", explained Heather, "that something is buried here. I guess that Robert and Sylvia were after it".

"We shall need tools to dig for it", replied Peggy.

"Look out, trouble!" gasped Betty, as the sound of footsteps could be heard approaching.

Torches were shone on the robed girls from different directions. The Silent Three clustered together, realizing that they were surrounded.

"Blimey!" said a homely voice. "We've caught the three nuns, plus the blooming Prioress as well". Out of the darkness appeared the burly figure of Mr. Earnshaw, the estate manager, in company with two gamekeepers.

"We've just chased off one pair of snoopers", exclaimed a keeper. "They looked as if they'd seen a ghost, and by goodness, here **are** the ghosts".

The estate manager was chuckling quietly. "They aren't ghosts, Tom, they are girls from the High School; they are the ones who sorted out that crooked councillor. They call themselves 'The Silent Three', though it appears they have one of their teachers with them", he added, indicating the tall figure of Heather.

"If I reveal my identity to you", said Heather, putting her hand up to her hood, "will you allow the girls to go, I can assure you that they have done no harm".

"That might not be necessary, madam", replied the manager, rather taken aback by Heather's air of quiet authority. "But you had better tell us what you have been up to".

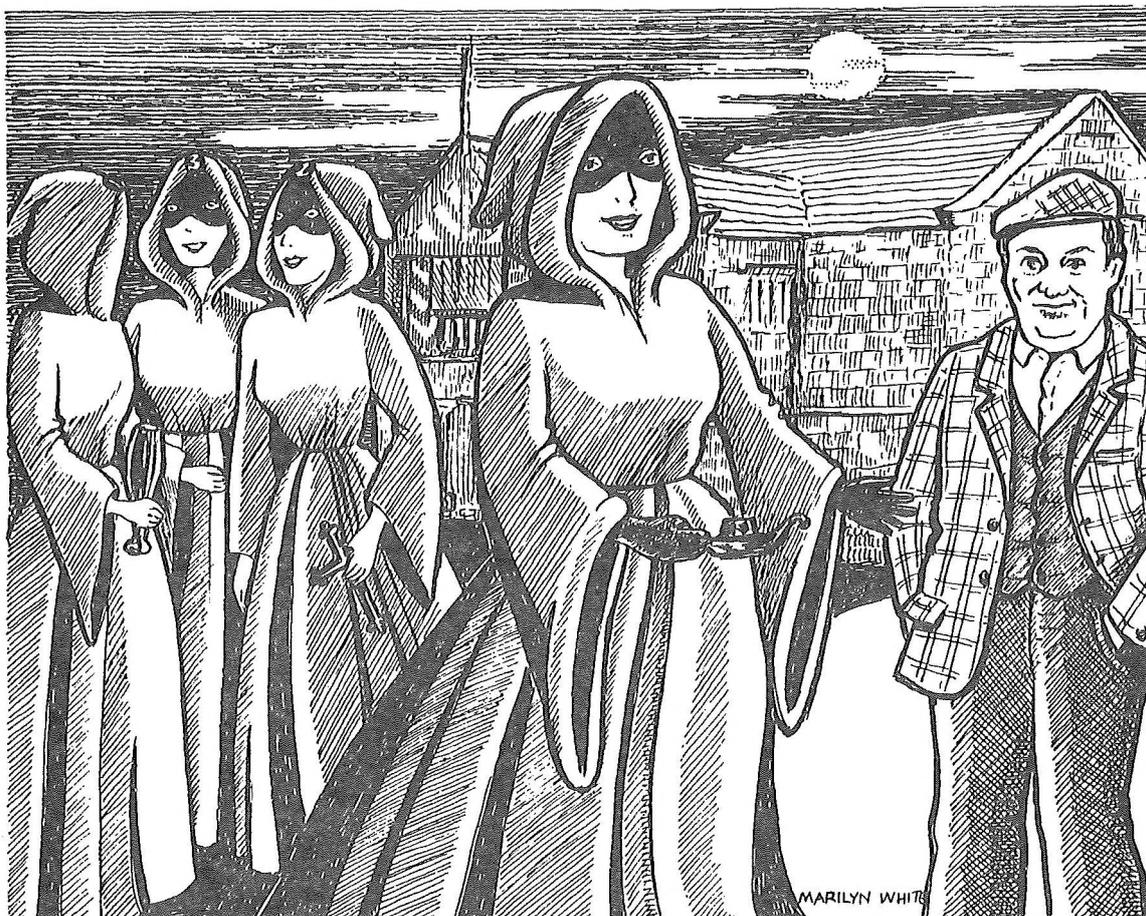
Quickly, the girls related the night's events, and produced both the stolen bow and the parchment to lend substance to their story. The keepers fetched tools, and set to work to dig at the marked spot. After some hard work, an ancient wooden chest was revealed. It was rotten with age, and fell to pieces when the men attempted to lift it. Heather picked up a metal object which had fallen from the chest.

"An incense boat from the old nunnery", she explained, displaying the object in her black, gloved hands. "It's badly tarnished, but I am certain that it is made of silver". Further items were revealed -- crosses, candlesticks, pattens, and a chalice. "This must be the silver from the nunnery, hidden at the dissolution", explained Heather. "The bow and

the parchment hidden in the quiver were clues left to enable the silver to be recovered at a later date".

"It must be worth quite a lot", added Joan. "That couple meant to steal it", said Peggy.

Mr. Earnshaw took Heather aside, out of sight of the keepers. "You had better tell me who you are, miss", he said quietly. "This is more important than I had imagined, but I will tell no one but the Colonel who you are. That I promise". Heather pushed back her hood and mask to reveal her homely looking face. "I know you", replied the manager. "You're the librarian at the school, the girls call you the 'Blacksmith'".



Heather replaced her mask, and smiled warmly. "The little girls call me 'Rupert Bear's Mummy'", she replied, indicating her rather generously shaped figure, and deep voice.

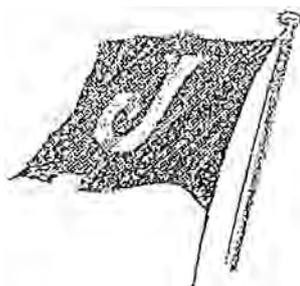
Meanwhile the Silent Three and the keepers had carried the recovered treasure into the gatehouse, and placed the valuables safely under lock and key. Dawn was beginning to appear in the eastern sky, as the girls and their helper turned to leave.

"You headmistress will hear of this night's work", said Mr. Earnshaw warmly. "Don't worry, miss, your secret will be safe with me".

Safely back on the school premises, the Silent Three warmly hugged the older girl.

"It was jolly decent of you to cover up for us", said Betty. "All part of the service", smiled Heather, as she removed her robe.





# JUSTICE ISLAND REVISITED

Being the Annals of CAPTAIN JUSTICE & Co, chronicled by IAN BENNETT  
(Sometime Chairman, Midlands O, B. B. C.) with Ronald Hibbert.

## WELCOME BACK TO CAPT. JUSTICE & Co.!



*Here they are—the old favourites, back on the job again! Left to right: Professor Flaznagel, Captain Justice, Midge, Len Connor, and Doctor O'Mally*

We all have our favourite characters from the weeklies we read in our youth. With few notable exceptions - Bunter and Biggles, for example, leap readily to mind - our favourites are now but cherished memories of happy reading in far distant days, like the papers in which they appeared. The late and much lamented *MODERN BOY* carried the adventures of *my* all time greatest favourites: Captain Justice and Co. They appeared in series after series in *MODERN BOY* virtually throughout the Thirties decade. Their appeal was primarily to those of us with scientific or technological tendencies, for the stories were, in the main, Juvenile Science Fiction, leavened with fantasy and highly imaginative, written at a time when today's technology was in its infancy and SF had yet to achieve the popular acclaim the genre enjoys sixty years on. This appreciation of the adventures of Captain Justice and Co. is offered as a tribute not only to the pleasure they gave so many *MODERN BOY* readers, but also as a mark of gratitude to their author and illustrator, before the memory fades.

'The clever creator of Captain Justice & Co.' (as the *MODERN BOY* editor called him) was MURRAY ROBERTS - one of several pen names used by that prolific author, ROBERT MURRAY GRAYDON (1890 - 1937). Personal details about him are scarce, but after his sad death, some, if not all, of the later stories were written by JOHN L. GARBUTT, using both Murray Roberts' style and name, to the end of *MODERN BOY*'s publication in 1939.

Whilst some of the early stories were illustrated by D.C. Eyles (and also a certain O.S.) the artist who really established the definitive visual image of Justice & Co, and drew the splendid illustrations for most of the series was ERNEST IBBETSON. He was a military artist of quite extraordinary versatility. No only did he succeed in portraying most convincingly all manner of amazing inventions, but his dramatic pictures depicted with remarkable technical accuracy planes and ships, cars and tanks, big game and even dinosaurs !

Ibbetson must have had a comprehensive photo library to ensure such realism over so wide a spectrum - even his backgrounds were authentic in every way, from desert to jungle, seascape to mountain range, ocean depths to stratosphere. His action figures were masterly, though at times facial expressions were clearly not his forte . . . however, his Captain Justice covers for *MODERN BOY* were some of the best published by that paper.

## THE CHARACTERS

CAPTAIN JUSTICE himself - the Gentleman Adventurer as he was called - was a classic boys' hero figure cast in the traditional British Empire Builder mode. By right Captain, Royal Navy, he adopted the soubriquet '*JUSTICE*', proclaiming his mission of vengeance in the early series, fighting the villains who forced him to resign his commission and who ruined and killed his father.

Though evidently a character in his own right - that jaunty cigar and rakish angled naval cap - it does seem possible to detect in Justice's persona, perhaps, the influence of Allan Quatermain, Raffles, Richard Hannay, Bulldog Drummond, plus, curiously enough, Captain Kettle, the creation of C.J. CUTCLIFFE HYNE and published in *PEARSON'S MAGAZINE* up to 1938. (Ibbetson's depiction of Captain Justice seems to have been influenced by this character). Justice was the archetypal charismatic leader, inspiring total loyalty in both his colleagues - and his faithful readers.

LEN CONNOR and MIDGE, the captain's first recruits, provided the essential youth appeal element - the characters with whom readers could identify. These inseparable chums' ages corresponded broadly with the *MODERN BOY* readership : Len Connor, the senior, already embarked on a career as a ship's wireless operator, whilst Midge, the red headed young skallywag, was still of school age and managed to do all the things schoolboys yearned to achieve adventurewise, as well as getting away with the cheekiest remarks to his 'elders and betters', notably Justice's second in command, a singularly tolerant, avuncular character.

This was the loyal DOCTOR O'MALLY; portrayed as a jovial, portly Irishman, full of strange oaths (fondly presumed to be the sort of thing necessary to establish an essential Irishness, one concludes). He and Midge provided light relief on occasion, suitably slanted to appeal to the schoolboy sense of humour - and why not, for that was precisely what Midge was, like most of *MODERN BOY*'s readers. O'Mally was in some ways a Watson-like character with a similar deep concern for his chief - plus, of

course, the others, especially young Midge.

Completing the team was the oddly named PROFESSOR FLAZNAGEL. (How to pronounce it ? Midge's 'Flazzie' seems the easiest solution.) The Professor was Captain Justice's scientific adviser : flowing white beard and hair, short sighted with pebble-lensed glasses, the old boy was colour blind and absent minded, but as a scientist - an absolute genius - every school boy's idea of a latter day Merlin, in fact ! He was master, clearly, of every scientific and engineering discipline. He could invent new metals and gases with amazing properties; his designs ranged from aircraft to submersibles, robots to civil engineering feats hitherto undreamed of. Often secluded away in workshop or laboratory, his return usually heralded another amazing adventure series for the redoubtable Captain Justice & Co.

## JUSTICE ISLAND

The eponymous Justice Island, Captain Justice's sea-girt base in the South Atlantic is somewhat difficult to pinpoint on the globe. There's a lot more research required before that issue is satisfactorily resolved ! Meanwhile, suffice it to say that Justice Island appears to be a smallish place no more than a couple of miles long and maybe less than half a mile across at its widest point, to judge from an aerial view on the cover of *MODERN BOY* 513. There appear to be some steep hills and cliffs round the harbour area with its breakwater and small town. The largest building is the great airship shed housing the *FLYING CLOUD* and there is a workshop and laboratory complex for Professor Flaznagel. Captain Justice's bungalow, just off the beach, is similar to the classic British Colonial Residency, complete with verandahs and flagstaff flying the Captain's black flag bearing the white letter 'J'. Geographical features include Connor Heights and, on the coastline, O'Mally Head.

## THE INVENTIONS

The very essence of the Juvenile Science Fiction story as delivered by Murray Roberts in the Captain Justice series was the never ending cavalcade of weird and wonderful inventions produced by Professor Flaznagel. The technical descriptions provided by Roberts were usually sufficient in detail to convince readers that the ideas were perfectly possible. Ernest Ibbetson's vivid illustrations, which often appeared to be complete down to the last nut and bolt, confirmed imagination as plausible fact and the stage was set. Some of the ideas proved to be remarkably accurate predictions of what future technology would achieve.

The *FLYING CLOUD* airship for example (named, incidentally, after an actual 19th century clipper ship) had no external power cars like our ill-fated *R 101* or the later Zeppelin *Hindenburg*. Murray Roberts envisaged not conventional propellers, but that the ship was driven "on the turbine principle - a flanged shaft running (axially) the entire length of the ship - revolving at high speed, creating a tremendous suction drawing it through the air at 300 mph". In other words it was a rudimentary turbo-jet and this episode (*Modern Boy* 243) was dated 1st October, 1932.

Then again, Justice & Co operated *helicopters* back in the Thirties and, in 1935, (*MODERN BOY* 403) Murray Roberts envisaged a miniature radio-controlled helicopter carrying a TV camera, instantly relaying a picture of what was below back to Justice & Co waiting by their TV screen. Not bad for Juvenile SF of such vintage.

Space precludes more than a passing reference to inventions like the *SOLAR EXPRESS* interplanetary rocket; the *TRACTOPIONEER* tracked exploration vehicle; the *SEA SLUG* underwater tank; the *BLACK ARROW* TV tracking system; *STATION A* mid-ocean aircraft staging post; *FLYING GLOBES* etc, but two deserve special mention.

*TITANIC TOWER*, an amazing mid-ocean base (before Station A) first mentioned in 1934 (*MODERN BOY* 331). Imagine the Eiffel Tower increased by a factor of 10 : four supporting legs straddling half a mile of open sea, with an aircraft landing platform between them 500 feet up, and, at the tower's summit, some 10,000 feet above sea level, an airship mooring mast like the old Cardington tower. This staggering engineering concept featured in several Captain Justice series before its final demise in 1937 (*MODERN BOY* 487) caused by a submarine earthquake.

The *GIANT ROBOT*, dubbed 'Herbert' by Midge (who else ?) which featured in what is, in my view, the best series of the entire Captain Justice saga (*MODERN BOY* 423 - 444). Unlike today's robot concepts (eg *STAR WARS* R2D2) this gigantic walking machine in the shape of a man required to be manned like a crane or a ship, its control tower being inside the great metal head. Access was via a lift inside the leg (sliding entrance door at ankle level). The huge machine is fully described (*MODERN BOY* 425) and Captain Justice's adventures in it above and below the sea form a splendid adventure tale vividly narrated by Murray Roberts and depicted by Ernest Ibbetson.

## THE SAGA

A complete listing of the Captain Justice series is included. the primary source is the *MODERN BOY* plus the *MODERN BOY ANNUAL*. *BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY* equivalents are shown. Only *MODERN BOY* first episode titles are quoted, but a full list of all episode titles has been compiled.

Apart from the early 'Revenge' stories and the *CHRISTMAS/MODERN BOY ANNUAL* stories, the balance of the series (some 26 in all) indicates a broad division of around 11 classified as *ADVENTURE* tales, whilst 15 are unquestionably *SCIENCE FICTION* stories. The demarcation is a matter of personal choice as several adventure tales have an element of fantasy.

The range of the Captain Justice saga is so wide and varied that it would be self-defeating to try to do more than pick out highlights in this appraisal.

Professor Flaznagel arrived in Series 6 and so did the Science Fiction emphasis. Series 8, the *STELLARIS ADVENTURE*, was the longest and introduced

an element of fantasy which was, perhaps, rather overdone. Series 11 and 23 apparently owed something to two of Conan Doyle's books: *THE POISON BELT* and *THE LOST WORLD* respectively. Series 13, an exciting and inoffensive tale of frog-like humanoids from the Sargasso Sea (a favourite locale for Captain Justice adventures) was pretty tame in comparison with, say, Doctor Who's *SEA DEVILS* of a much later generation. The straight adventure series (eg Series 12 [Africa] and 15 [India]) were well told with admirable local atmosphere. Series 20 and 21, my personal favourites, the *GIANT ROBOT* stories, were the best of all, and the final long series (33), a truly topical tale as the warclouds gathered that fateful summer. It was fitting perhaps that the four part *SPACE BOMB* series (34), the last Captain Justice story in the last *MODERN BOY* should have had a forward looking interplanetary theme.

Some measure of editorial reliance on Captain Justice & Co retaining reader loyalty may be deduced from the fact that after the first Captain Justice episode (*MODERN BOY* 146) more than 68% of subsequent *MODERN BOYS* contained a Captain Justice story. There was an astonishing run of consecutive series from July, 1933 to the end of December, 1934 (*MODERN BOYS* 369 - 412) and September, 1937 to May, 1938 (*MODERN BOYS* 503 - New Series 14). A Captain Justice series tended to average out at 9 - 10 episodes.

## A PERSONAL EVALUATION

In my view, the real tests of a good boys' story might simply be : *Did you enjoy it ? Will you remember it ?* I think Captain Justice & Co satisfied those criteria admirably and, let me add, I'd always buy next week's *MODERN BOY* if it had a Captain Justice story inside - that includes next Saturday !

No one would claim that Captain Justice stories were great literature, but the pleasure that they gave was out of all proportion to their literary ranking or academic merit. The juvenile mind was never much concerned with critical analysis, plot structure, prose style or degree of character realisation and little is to be gained by the application of adult criticism of such factors in later years.

To me the Captain Justice story was always a good read - sometimes an even better one - and I look back on them with the greatest of pleasure and, indeed, affection. Our debt to the old favourite authors, illustrators, editors and publishers endures happily in us all to this day. Long may it be so.

As for Captain Justice & Co, their epitaph might well have been written unwittingly by Murray Roberts himself. As Captain Justice & Co leave *THE HIDDEN LAND*, the newly restored young ruler asks his favourite old guardian, "*Shall we ever see such men again ?*" and the old warrior solemnly replies, "*Not until they come again, for there are none others like them in this world !*"

. . . . . And so, of every special favourite, say all of us !

## LIST OF THE JUSTICE STORIES

### MODERN BOY STORIES (1st Episode)

### BOYS FRIEND LIBRARY REPRINTS

SERIES	M. B. NOS.	DATE	TITLE	No.	DATE	TITLE
1	146-154	22. 11. 30.	CJ-Modern Pirate	405	Nov. 33	Captain Justice
2	178-185	4. 7. 31.	Return of CJ	446	Sep. 34	The Ocean Outlaw
3	200-209	5. 12. 31.	Outlaw of the Seas			
4	210-218	13. 2. 32.	Soldiers of Fortune	457	Dec. 34	Sols. of Fortune
5	219-227	16. 4. 32.	Justice on the Rocks			
6	243-248	1. 10. 32.	The Flying Cloud			
7	271-276	15. 4. 33.	CJ versus the Earthquake Maker	465	Feb. 35	The Earthquake Maker
8	282-301	1. 7. 33.	The Rocketeers	477	May 35	The Rocketeers
9	302-311	18. 11. 33.	The Secret Kingdom	485	Jul. 35	The Sct. Kingdom
10	312-323	27. 1. 34.	Pirates of the Sky	529	Jun. 36	CJ versus the Sea Eagles
11	324-334	21. 4. 34.	The World in Darkness	505	Dec. 35	The World in Darkness
12	335-346	7. 7. 34.	J & Co - Castaways	533	Jul. 36	Jungle Castaways
13	347-359	29. 9. 34.	The Terror of Titanic Tower	541	Sep. 36	The Weed Men
14	360	29. 12. 34.	The Ghost of Lowten Manor			
15	369-379	2. 3. 35.	Midge's Joy Ride	549	Nov. 36	The Hidden Land
16	380-389	18. 5. 35.	CJ on Secret Service	565	Mar. 37	CJ on Secret Service
17	390-398	27. 7. 35.	Vanished without Trace	570	Apr. 37	CJ at Bay
18	399-411	28. 9. 35.	Into the Unknown	573	May 37	The Raiders of Robot City
19	412	28. 12. 35.	Midge & Co make Merry			
20	423-432	14. 3. 36.	The Colossus from the Sea	629	Jul. 38	The Ocean Robot
21	433-444	23. 5. 36.	Strong Man of Maraboca	633	Aug. 38	The Rival Robots
22	447-448	29. 8. 36.	The Hunted Millionaire			
23	452-462	3. 10. 36.	The World's Last Secret	697	Dec. 39	CJ in the Land of the Monsters
<i>No. 697 was the last of the Captain Justice Boys' Friend Library reprints.</i>						
24	463-465	19. 12. 36.	Midge's Red Hot Christmas			
25	466-475	9. 1. 37.	The Earthquake	622	May 38	CJ on Thunder Mountain
26	487-496	5. 5. 37.	Wreck of Titanic Tower	626	Jun. 38	The Gold Raiders
27	503-512	25. 9. 37.	CJ's Airway	637	Sep. 38	CJ's Airway
28	513-523	4. 12. 37.	From Outer Space	641	Oct. 38	The Mystery Planet

### MODERN BOY NEW SERIES

29	1-14	19. 2. 38.	Siege of Station A	663	Mar. 39	The Flying Globes
30	31-42	17. 9. 38.	The Loot of London	665	Apr. 39	Outlaw Raiders
31	43-46	10. 12. 38.	J's Merry Christmas			
32	54-67	25. 2. 39.	City of Secrets	689	Oct. 39	City of Secrets
33	71-82	24. 6. 39.	Justice the Peacemaker			
34	84-87	23. 9. 39.	Space Bomb			<i>(No 87 was the last issue of M. B.)</i>

- 35 MODERN BOY ANNUAL, 1937 - The Tiger of Tai-Lung  
 36 MODERN BOY ANNUAL, 1938 - Captain Justice Surrenders

### SUMMARY

- 34 MODERN BOY SERIES (319 episodes)  
 2 MODERN BOY ANNUAL STORIES  
 24 BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY REPRINTS

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Apart from my great indebtedness to my collaborator, Ron Hibbert, in producing this appreciation, the collection of information begun more than half a century ago could never have been completed without the vital contributions of my good friends Mick Follows, for his extensive lists, and Eric Fayne for so kindly verifying titles once missing from my records.

Over the years I have much appreciated the help in kind or comment so readily given by John Gaut, John Geale, David Helps, Stan Knight, Bill Lofts with the late Derek Adley, and the late Tom Porter.

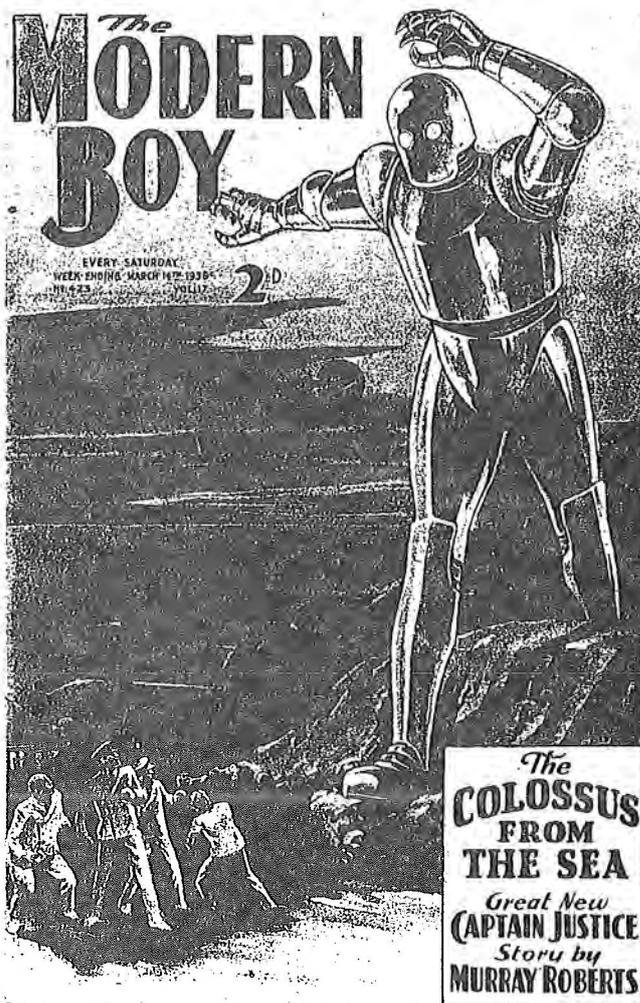
## REFERENCES

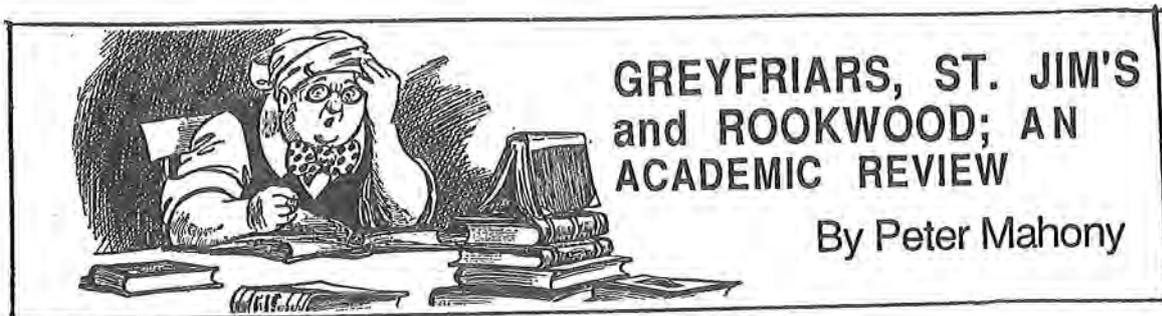
*The Men behind Boys' Fiction* by W. O. G. Lofts and D. Adley  
*Origins of the Boys' Friend Library* by W. O. G. Lofts and D. Adley  
*The Modern Boy Comic* (sic) (Book & Magazine Collector No. 76) by N. Wright

N.B. Mention of Captain Justice & Co may also be found in *Science and Fiction* by Patrick Moore, *Comic Inferno* by Brian Aldiss, *Billion/Trillion Year Spree* by Brian Aldiss and *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, edited by Peter Nicholls.

(Ian Bennett)

WRECK OF TITANIC TOWER!  
 NEW ADVENTURE OF CAPTAIN JUSTICE





What standard of academic education did Charles Hamilton's schools provide? Which school had the best teachers? Which Headmaster was the most effective? Which school produced the best scholars? Did parents get value for the fees? This article attempts to answer these intriguing questions.

### Organisation and Curriculum

Greyfriars was a one-house school; St. Jim's and Rookwood, though not necessarily carrying larger rolls, were divided into two houses each. At St. Jim's the division was purely a matter of accommodation: Rookwood had a Classical and a Modern side which followed different curricula.

All three schools had Second, Third, Fourth, Shell, Fifth and Sixth Forms; Greyfriars had an additional class - the Remove or Lower Fourth. Classical and modern languages, History, Geography, Maths and English Literature were included on all three timetables. Science was clearly available at St. Jim's (Bernard Glyn and Skimpole frequently indulged in laboratory experiments), while Rookwood, under the guidance of Roger Manders, provided a "Modern" education which included "Stinks" as a major subject. Art was taught, rather nebulously, by Mr. Woosey at Greyfriars; the other schools seem to have neglected this subject. Music was an individual extra; Games of course, were most important at all the schools.

The Sixth Forms consisted of the brightest scholars who intended to go 'up' to the Universities. The Fifths were probably the "Matriculation" classes; the Shells (Lower Fifths) were slightly younger - the Schools' Certificate forms. The Fourth Forms provided the Middle School base - the brighter boys moving up to the Fifth and matriculation; the less able probably leaving the school before becoming seniors. The Thirds and Seconds were in the first stages of secondary education. This pattern was clearly established at Rookwood and St. Jim's; Greyfriars, with a heavily - populated Remove, had a more complicated look about it. Rookwood was clearly a forward-looking school (Science and Business Studies as well as the traditional Classical education); St. Jim's appears the most solidly organised; Greyfriars smacks of ad hoc expediency.

### The Headmasters.

Dr. Locke of Greyfriars, though a respected academic, had frequent moments of weakness and indecision. To start with, Locke plunged himself and Greyfriars into debt, ending up under the thumb of Samuel Vernon-Smith. As a result he had to admit Herbert Vernon-Smith to Greyfriars to become a perpetual thorn in the flesh of authority. Secondly, he "chickened-out" when confronted by Miss Judith Coker and her umbrella, thus lumbering Prout's matriculation class with the egregious Horace James. Third, on at least two occasions, he appointed the wrong man to be Acting-Head in his absences. The best choice, Quelch, was passed over each time, because Locke was apprehensive about upsetting the "pecking order" of his staff. Greyfriars, under Prout and Hacker, had a disastrous time on both occasions. (I could go on - but won't.) Certainly, Locke depended heavily on Henry Samuel Quelch.

Dr. Holmes (St. Jim's) was much more firm and decisive. He had a good right-hand man in Victor Railton, who had been a Headmaster himself (of Clavering College, a

smaller school than St. Jim's). Holmes' firmness came out on several occasions, notably in dealing with the excesses of Mr. Ratcliffe and Mr. Selby. He also had a good 'manner' with the boys - his appeal to Tom Merry's good sense to resign as properly-elected School Captain and enable order to be restored between warring seniors and juniors was tactfully put and, consequently, accepted.

Dr. Chisholm of Rookwood was autocratic and self-opinionated. He brooked no argument - and was the only one of the three to be faced by a Masters' strike. Rookwood was, however, generally a well-run school. Chisholm was at the opposite end of the scale from the vacillating Locke. Holmes had the better qualities of both Locke and Chisholm, without any of their major weaknesses. In terms of their Principals, St. Jim's comes off best, with Rookwood second and Greyfriars a rather bad third.

### The Teachers

The Sixth Forms, with the three Heads, Mr. Railton and Mr. Manders doing most of their teaching, were equally well served. (Manders may have been tyrannical with the junior boys, but he seems to have had a rapport with Knowles & Co. of the Modern Sixth.) The Greyfriars Fifth, with 'Old Pompous' in charge, had a better ride than St. Jim's under the irascible 'Ratty'. Mr. Greely, at Rookwood, though almost as pompous as Prout, showed a good deal of character by standing up to his autocratic chief. He was probably a good teacher; boys respond readily to a man with gumption. Rookwood had the edge here, I think.

The Shell Forms contrasted sharply. Greyfriars and Rookwood contained mainly lack-lustre, dull, brained students; St. Jim's was a quality form. Mr. Hacker, another petty tyrant, no doubt got the work out of Hobson & Co. Mooney, at Rookwood, did no more than the minimum with the Adolphus Smythe set. Mr. Linton of St. Jim's was of a different calibre. Austere, erudite, strict and hard-working, he was from the Quelch stable, but without Henry's ruthless streak. He probably should have taught the Fifth, but I suspect the shrewd Dr. Holmes was onto an educational 'wangle'. The St. Jim's Shell was academically superior (though younger) to Cutts & Co. and Dr. Holmes allocated the better teacher to the better form. Mr. Ratcliffe's testy methods were unlikely to diminish the generally average prospects of St. Jim's Fifth. Linton, teaching Tom Merry & Co., was fairly certain to produce excellent results. I would place Linton with Quelch and 'Dicky' Dalton as Hamilton's top trio of teachers.

The Fourth Forms required good teaching and firm handling. Capper, at Greyfriars, had an easy task: most of the problem children were in the Remove! Lathom of St. Jim's, a mild little man, was a conscientious teacher - and did not seem to have any difficulties with discipline. Considering the boisterousness of Blake, Figgins & Co., Lathom must have had 'something' to survive so well. I suggest it was an ability to make the teaching interesting - no mean feat. Rookwood had two good'uns - first Mr. Bootles, then Dicky Dalton. Bootles was mild, like Lathom, but could be tough; Dicky was tough, like Quelch, but almost always genial. His handling of Public Benefactor No. 1. (Lovell's dodge to cheat his way through "CON") was masterly.

All of which brings us to Quelch. 'Henry' was clearly the best teacher at Greyfriars, yet he was asked to waste his scholastic abilities on the Remove. Nevertheless, he was a vivid illustration of what proper school-mastering entails - bringing up boys in the way they should go, rather than pushing them willy-nilly through examinations. The Remove contained enough clever students to satisfy Quelch's intellectual ambitions: he dealt with the other sort more efficiently than any other master in the three schools. Dr. Locke knew what he was doing when he gave the Remove to Henry!

The Twiggs at Greyfriars, Wiggins and Bohun at Rookwood, and Carrington of St. Jim's were adequate masters of the Fag Forms. The exception was Mr. Selby. The Third Form at St. Jim's was unruly (not dissimilar to the Greyfriars Remove) and needed very firm treatment. They got it from Selby, who, unlike the 'just beast' Quelch, was just a beast. Selby produced good results because most of his form were too scared to slack.

The foreign masters were really a joke. Charpentier, Morny, Monceau and Schneider never learned English properly; their 'methods' only succeeded in producing 'pidgin' French and German from all except the most gifted pupils. The Frenchmen were easy-going and unable to impose discipline; Schneider was a bad-tempered bully. Herr Gans of Greyfriars and Flinders of Rookwood were shadowy figures.

One man remains - Larry Lascelles. The appointment of a Maths specialist would imply that the Greyfriars form-masters were less widely qualified than their counterparts at St. Jim's. (Rookwood had a Maths specialist, too - the "Bull", who made only fleeting appearances in the stories.) Lascelles was certainly a good teacher, probably next best to Quelch on the Greyfriars staff. He also coached the games with success.

This assessment leads me to rate the St. Jim's staff, despite Ratcliffe, Morny and Schneider, as being the most effective of the three. Greyfriars and Rookwood are on a par, though the presence of Quelch perhaps tips the scales in favour of the older school.

### The Scholars

Promotion in Public Schools early in this century depended on University potential. Though some scholars looked forward to getting a Varsity place through sporting prowess (Blundell of Greyfriars could have been one of these), the majority required scholastic ability. The Sixth Formers of the three schools had this ability almost to a man. At Greyfriars, Wingate, Gwynne, North, Faulkner, Sykes etc. were good students; even Loder and Walker, despite their wicked propensities, were no slouches. Only Carne and the peculiar Ionides give the impression of lacking the drive to achieve. St. Jim's had a particularly good crop. Kildare, Darrell, Langton, Rushden, Monteith, Baker, Gray, Webb, MacGregor, Mulvaney Major and Knox - there hardly seems a dullard among them. Rookwood, with Bulkeley, Neville, Lonsdale, Brayne, Knowles and Carthew, was almost as strong. Frampton and Catesby could perhaps have been slackers, but it is unlikely with Roger Manders on their tails. All three schools had reason to be proud of their Sixth Forms.

The Fiftths are somewhat different. Greyfriars, if we ignore the awful Coker was of quite high-calibre. Blundell, Bland, Fitzgerald, Tomlinson, Potter and Greene came over as intelligent and reasonably conscientious scholars. Even the slack Hilton and the shifty Price were not lacking in brains. Hilton would probably have pulled his socks up at exam-time; Price would have contrived to scrape through. Prout would have refused to enter Coker for examinations: Coker, conscious of his own intellectual superiority, would not have seen the need for exams anyway!

Hansom, Lumsden, Talboys & Co. of Rookwood processed the smug self-satisfaction that generally goes with second-grade abilities. They really considered themselves cleverer than the evidence showed. As a result Mr. Greely may have had a crop of under-achievers.

At St. Jim's, the Fifth Form was really substandard scholastically. Gerald Cutts, easily the cleverest, was too much of a blackguard to do his best in the form-room. Gilmore, Prye and St. Leger had academic failure written all over them. Even the vacuous Le Fevre may have been hard-pushed to succeed. Greyfriars' Fifth comes out well ahead scholastically.

With the Shell Forms the positions are reversed. Hobson, Hoskins & Co. of Greyfriars rarely showed any academic ability. (Hoskins' musical talent - if any - would not necessarily mean that he was a bright scholar.) Stewart was the pick of the bunch, but there would not have been much in the way of exam successes among the rest. The present GCSE would have extended most of them.

Rookwood's Shell, dominated by the effete Adolphus Smythe, would have achieved even less than the Shell at Greyfriars. It really had the aura of a home for slackers and morons.

At St. Jim's the picture was much more inspiring. Of the 26 Shellites, 9 or 10 were very good scholars. Tom Merry, Manners, Talbot and Bernard Glyn were first-class;

Lowther, Noble, Dane and Gunn were not far behind. The long-winded Skimpole and the unscrupulous Racke probably had the brains to do well, though Skimpole's complacency and Racke's duplicity could have led to under-achievement. The back-markers would have been Grundy (of course), Scrope, Croke, Gore, Finn, Clampe and Gibbons. The rest - Wilkins, Jimson, etc - would have been better than average. Scholastically, The St. Jim's Shell was impressive.

The Fourth Forms of St. Jim's and Rookwood were also of very good calibre. Large in number - 38 at St. Jim's; 33 at Rookwood - they were a cut above Greyfriars, though Fry, Scott and Wilkinson were good students, Temple, Dabney, and the rest were probably sub-standard. In assessing the Fourth Forms, I shall by-pass Temple & Co. and compare the Greyfriars Remove (39 pupils) with St. Jim's and Rookwood's Fourths.

The Saints had some excellent scholars. Kerr, Levison, Brooke, Redfern, Owen and Lawrence were all intelligent and studious. (I am considering Levison in his reformed character - though the brains were always evident even in his rorty days.) Blake, Digby, D'Arcy, Julian, Wildrake, Clive, Roylance and Fatty Wynn were not far behind and were certainly steady workers. Figgins, Reilly, and Kerruish led a bunch of plodders which included Durrance, Mellish, Pratt and half a dozen others. Cardew was too idle - he should have been among the top group for intelligence, but spent most of his time with the stragglers. Koumi Rao, Contarini and 'Arry 'Ammond would have had language problems. That leaves Herries and Trimble footing the list. Herries was a good deal 'thicker' than most of Hamilton's leading characters (though Lovell of Rookwood ran him close); Trimble was St. Jim's Bunter - 'Nuff said! Really, the academic quality of St. Jim's Juniors was pleasingly high.

Rookwood's Fourth Formers consisted of about a dozen high-fliers; a similar number of average performers; and five no hoppers. Jimmy Silver, Newcome, Erroll, Mornington (if he felt like it), Oswald, Rawson, Conroy, Van Ryn and Tommy Cook were undoubtedly promising scholars. Peele and Lattrey, though black sheep, were not short of brains; neither was Clarence Cuffy, though he was probably capable of producing 'howlers' through failing to grasp what was required. 'Putty' Grace was most likely an under-achiever - too prone to waste time by practical joking. Tommy Dodd, Doyle, Raby, Flynn, Pons, Towle, Lacy, Wadsley, McCarthy, Hooker, Jones, Dickinson, the repulsive Leggett and Townsend and Topham comprised the middle group - all solid performers except perhaps the last three. That would leave Lovell, Higgs and Gower, as the laggards, with the excruciating Gunner and the hopeless Tubby Muffin bringing up the rear. Quite a vintage form, the Rookwood Fourth.

Finally, we come to the Greyfriars Remove (assessing the Fag Forms is not feasible - too little data available.) As a Form their scholastic attainments must be rated much lower than either St. Jim's or Rookwood's Fourths. Wharton, Linley, Penfold, Redwing, Peter Todd, Vernon-Smith and, hopefully Skinner had the ability to go on to University. Another group, Tom Brown, Squiff, Alonzo Todd, Nugent, Newland, Russell and Ogilvy could have matriculated, or at least obtained Schools' Cert. As for the rest - well, poor old Quelch!

Bull, Cherry, Bulstrode, Desmond, Morgan, Delarey, Hilary, Rake, Trevor, Treluce and Smith Minor were triers but limited in attainment. Hurree Singh, Wun Lung, Jimmy Vivian and Dupont would all have experienced language difficulties. Dutton should have been in a special school; Wibley and Kipps were marking time, contemplating their show-business ambitions; Fish was too steeped in business to benefit from a classical education. Mauleverer, Snoop, Stott, Bolsover and the appalling Bunter were bone idle or stupid or both. Alonzo Todd, by sheer hard graft, may have reached the Fifth Form; Skinner, through idling, could have missed it. Hazeldene, always an enigma, may have had brains, but his performance would have depended on the whim of the moment.

At best 14 could have gone on to the Fifth Form; the other 25 would have done no better than the Shell and the Schools' Certificate. Several would not even have achieved that. If Quelch had not been there to direct this precious bunch anarchy could well have

resulted. He certainly had a much harder row to hoe than Messrs. Linton, Lathom and Dalton.

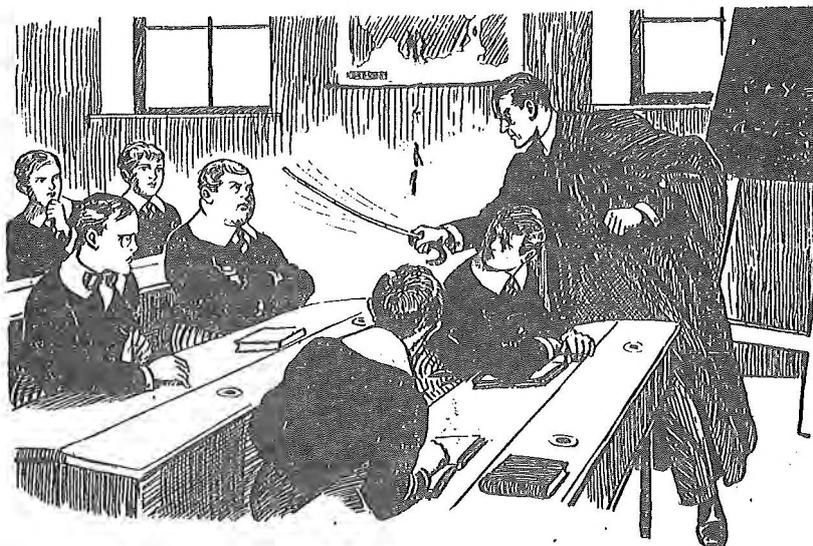
Summing up, I would place St. Jim's as the best school of the three, with Rookwood an enterprising second and Greyfriars a bit of a curate's egg.

The presence of so many 'freaks' indicates that Greyfriars may have had vacancies which Dr. Locke was pleased to fill with any applicants available, whatever their quality. There was little sign, during the long saga, of any permanent improvements or reformations among the unsatisfactory scholars. Quelch kept their excesses in check, but he was not super-human!

As a teacher, I would have enjoyed the St. Jim's Shell or the Rookwood Fourth (For my sins, I too often found myself dealing with Greyfriars' Removes!) As a parent, I would have chosen St. Jim's for my offspring, though I would have had a wary eye on that Fifth Form and its irritable master. The Saints were Charles Hamilton's first creation. I think he, too, would have had a soft spot for his eldest sons.



Johnny Bull returned the ink pellet with unerring aim. It would have been a "bullseye" had not Harold Skinner ducked. Plop! The ink pellet landed on the back of Mr. Quelch's neck, just above his collar.



"I have told you to bend over that desk, Wynn!" thundered Mr. Silverson. "I won't!" said Fatty. "You're not going to can me for nothing!"





## NOEL RAYMOND, DEBONAIR DETECTIVE

by Dennis L. Bird

### I. TWICE-TOLD TALES

'Tis hard to venture where our betters fail  
Or land fresh interest to a twice-told tale;  
And yet, perchance, 'tis wiser to prefer  
A hackney'd plot, than choose a new, and err.

- Lord BYRON, "Hints from Horace"

Thanks to Mary Cadogan and the British Museum Library, I have recently been able to carry out some research on Noel Raymond, the handsome young detective hero who flourished in the pages of the "Girls' Crystal" from 1935 to 1951. His creator "Peter Langley" was in fact Ronald Fleming, who also wrote as "Renee Frazer", "Rhoda Fleming", "Jean Emerson", and "Jean Vernon".

Several of the authors for the Amalgamated Press's girls' papers wrote prodigious numbers of tales featuring the same sets of characters. The Schoolgirls' Own Library - the famous monthly "yellow books" - published 90 novel-length stories about Morcove School by "Marjorie Stanton" (Horace Phillips), and in the same series there were 54 adventures of "Hilda Richards's" girls of Cliff House School (Bessie Bunter & Co.), mainly by John Wheway. And that other notable detective Valerie Drew featured in 218 short stories as well as 8 serials.

The prize, however, must surely go to "Peter Langley. His detectives Noel Raymond and June Gaynor appeared, between them, in no less than 551 short stories and 4 serials.

Or did they? That total of 551 is a little misleading. Closer investigation reveals a curious fact. From October 1935 - the "Crystal's" first issue - until December 1942 Noel appeared in a different story every week. Then suddenly Ronald Fleming's inspiration seemed to dry up. In the next 67 weeks, until March 1944, he took Lord Byron's advice; rather than choosing new plots, he mainly sought to "lend fresh interest to a twice-told tale." In other words, 57 of the Noel Raymond stories in those 67 weeks were reprints of cases already published.

Nor were those 57 Noel's earliest adventures. All the reprints were from the period February 1939 to September 1940, only three or four years earlier. Many readers, like myself, must have noticed that tales we had read when we were 9 or 10 years old were being served up to us again as teenagers.

Mostly these were straight reprints, but occasionally - even when the story was identical - Ronald Fleming took the trouble to re-write the opening and other passages. An example is "The Moonlight Skater". This first appeared dated 18th March 1939; when it was re-published (4th December 1943) with a different illustration, it also had textual differences.

Even stranger, seventeen stories turn out on a detailed analysis to be "reprints in disguise". That is to say, they have new titles, different characters, other locations - yet the plots and even the descriptions are almost identical. Let me instance "The Puzzle of the

Empty House" (2nd April 1938) and compare it with "The Hotel That Disappeared" (20th December 1941).

March 18, 1939



By PETER LANGLEY

December 4, 1943

This Week Noel Raymond Solves The Mystery Of—



By PETER LANGLEY

In both adventures, Noel escorts a girl to a house which he knows to be empty, only to find that there are people there to receive her. He is drugged, but eventually rescues the girl. Details differ: the girl is Irene Ralston in one, Peggy Jordan in the other.

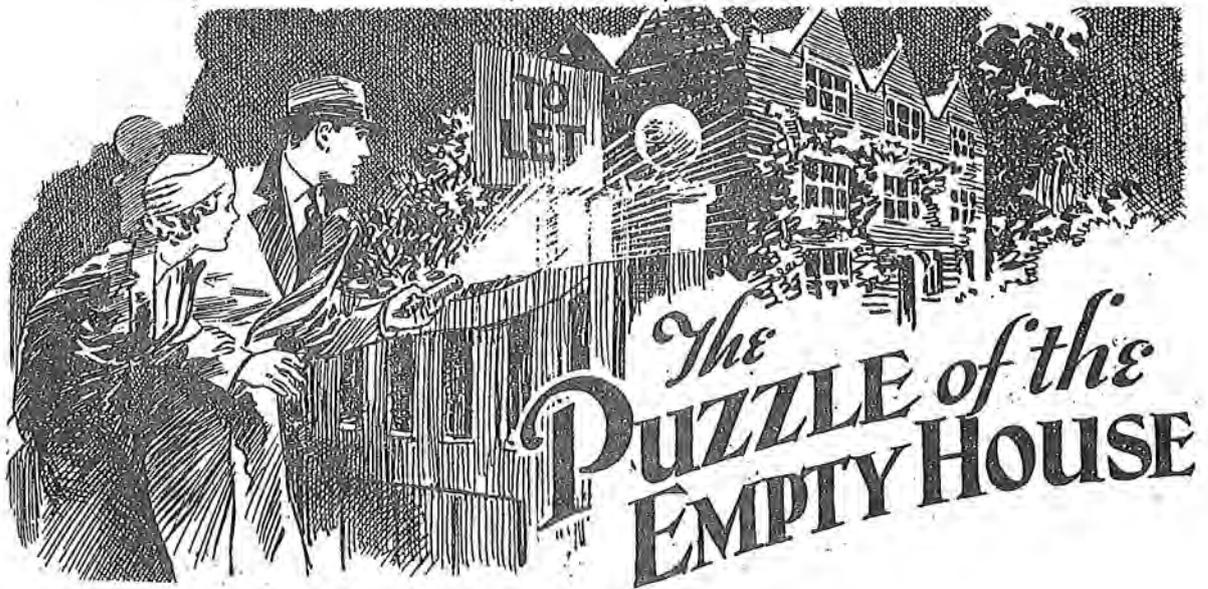
The house is The Laurels; in the second story it has become The Pines Hotel. But the incidents in the plot are exactly the same, and whole passages are reproduced almost word for word:

"*The Empty House*": "The sedate and bewhiskered manservant who might have stepped out of some old illustration... spruce young manservant in uniform... dark, attractive brunette..."

"*The Hotel*": "The sedate, elderly manservant with grizzled hair and old-fashioned sidewhiskers... smart young manservant in uniform... dark, fashionably-dressed girl..."

April 2, 1938

Meet Noel Raymond in this thrilling detective story—By PETER LANGLEY.



December 20, 1941

## *The Hotel That Disappeared*



By PETER LANGLEY

Other "paired stories" are "The Vanished Girl Secretary" (12th November 1938), which becomes "The Form-Mistress Who Vanished" (21st March 1942); and "The Torn Treasure-Chart" (22nd October 1938) and its near-namesake "The Secret of the Torn Chart" (23rd May 1942). Most notable of all is "The Vanishing Chessmen" (16th May 1942), metamorphosed only five months later into "The Secret of the Strong-room" (10th October 1942). And it had already done duty as "The Mystery of the Red Diamonds" (26th November 1938) - the only instance I know in which the same plot was used three times.

One wonders why Ronald Fleming took so much trouble to make all these tiny alterations. Would it not have been simpler just to reprint the earlier story as it stood? As we know, this was in fact the solution he adopted from late 1942. But why?

It is not as though he had given up writing; he was still very active as "Renee Frazer". Did he just get tired of Noel? It seems so, for the next development was a terse note in the 11th March 1944 issue that "Starting next Friday, the Noel Raymond stories will be replaced by a grand series of double-length complete stories, each featuring a different set of characters."

Fortunately that was not the end of Noel, although thereafter he was almost always accompanied by the rather tedious June. After an absence of more than a year, they returned in one of the long complete stories in April 1945 (perhaps by popular request?) and re-appeared sporadically over the next two years. Then a new regular series of short stories about them ran from April 1947 to November 1948 - 80 weeks continuously, with no reprints.

Stewart Pride ("Dorothy Page"), who later edited the "School Friend", knew Ronald Fleming well, and has some vivid memories of him. Apparently he came regularly to the "Girls' Crystal" office when Mr. Pride worked there, to plot about four Noel Raymond stories at a time. "He lived the stuff, sometimes prowling around the room, acting out different characters. I recall an incident when I was in the post-war plotting of Noel Raymond when he stood and dramatically clapped me on the shoulder, exclaiming: 'I arrest you for the theft, June Gaynor!'. The real thief had put the stolen jewels in the panniers of a fancy-dress costume June was wearing, thus hoping to smuggle them out and recover them later." The incident is in "Rosina's Astonishing Challenge", 26th June 1948.

Finally "the young detective" faded away in May 1951. By then Noel was over 40, and "Girls' Crystal" readers no doubt wanted someone younger to identify with. So - enter Colin Forrest, and Vicky Dare...

## II. HOW DID HE LOOK?

He was a man, take him for all in all.  
I shall not look upon his like again.

- William Shakespeare, "Hamlet"

---

There are many characters in literature who live for us not just in their creator's words, but in the pictures of a gifted artist. It is impossible to think of Alice in Wonderland without calling to mind Sir John Tenniel's fetching little blonde. Mole, Rat, Badger - and Pooh - are inseparable from the drawings of E.H. Shepard. Thomas Henry made William unforgettable, and even Arthur Ransome's untutored, rough-and-ready sketches are surprisingly effective in the "Swallows and Amazons" books.

So it is with our story-paper heroes and heroines. Tom Merry, Billy Bunter & Co. are imprinted firmly in our memories as shown in the old "Gem" and "Magnet" - so firmly that it comes as something of a shock to see the efforts of a more recent artist such as the late Reg Parlett (1904-1991), whose comic-strip Bunter was very different from the Chapman/Shields or even the Frank Minnitt images.

Some of the characters in the girls' papers also had their individual artist. Who can think of Cliff House School without remembering the illustrations of that fine artist Thomas E. Laidler? Was he, I wonder, related to Graham Laidler (1908-1940), the famous "Punch" artist who signed his work "Pont"?

The mettlesome girl detective Valerie Drew, seen first as a schoolgirl depicted by C.E. Montford, came to life much more vividly in the elegant yet forceful drawings of

C. Percival, who drew her (forgive the pun!) from 1933 to her sudden and lamented demise in mid-story in 1940.

The other great girls' paper detective of the time, Noel Raymond, flourished for much longer (1935 to 1951), so it is not surprising that several artists were responsible for his delineation. Unfortunately the "Girls' Crystal" never gave the names of its often very talented illustrators. In most cases I can identify them only by numbers.

*Artist No. 1*, the original, dealt with Noel for the first two years or so. I must say I do not care for his work. I say "His", because the Amalgamated Press seemed to staff its schoolgirl papers almost entirely with men. These early drawings feature people with large heads and contorted expressions, often taking up melodramatic - not to say manic - poses. Mr. Stewart Pride ("Dorothy Page") confirms my view; in a recent letter to me, he writes "Artist No. one I recognise only as an artist I have seen and didn't like."

In January 1938 *Artist No. 2* appears. This is the ideal, the definitive artist, who did for Noel Raymond what Sidney Paget did for Sherlock Holmes. I wish I could give him the credit he deserves by naming him. I can venture only a tentative identification. Was he perhaps J. Pariss, who drew such "Schoolgirls' Weekly" serials as "Queen of the Secret City" (1938)? Anyway, he illustrated the Raymond stories almost exclusively until their abrupt (happily only temporary) end in 1944. And he came back again in later years.



He had been drawing - un-named - for the "Girls' Crystal" for some time before he took over Noel. In particular, he had worked with the Raymond author Ronald Fleming ("Peter Langley") on two of the latter's "Renee Frazer" stories - "The Boy Who Mystified Marion" from December 1936 and "Her Cavalier of the Caves" from March 1937. I do not know why there was a change of artist - whether *Artist No. 1* left (he never seems to have drawn for the paper again), or perhaps died suddenly. Anyway, from 1938 *Artist No. 2* came into his own.

His characters are beautifully drawn - natural and realistic, the girls charming, the men strong and clean-cut. All are individuals, not stereotypes. He is particularly good at showing the various feminine emotions - fear, apprehension, enthusiasm, joy. The contrast with *Artist No. 1* is startling. Look at their different ways of treating the lovely jewel thief Rosina Fontaine:

*No. 1's* Rosina is artificial in the extreme, the artistic technique crude and coarse. *No. 2*, on the other hand, has perfectly caught the concentration on her face as she applies her cosmetics - and there is a bonus in the powerful depiction of Noel himself, in the corridor of the train.

Artist No. 1 "Girls' Crystal", 28th August 1937

# ROSINA THE TREASURE HUNTER



Artist No. 2 "Girls' Crystal", 27th December 1941



Even more telling is the comparison in one of the rare instances where both artists have depicted the same incident. *Artist No. 1* drew "Noel's Christmas Ghost Hunt" for the issue of 19th December 1936; he shows a crafty-looking Noel staring at a warning message, while two girls stand by him in stylized, hysterical attitudes. Some years later the story was reprinted in *Schoolgirls' Own Library No. 711* (7th December 1939), and *Artist No. 2* drew the identical situation. The two pictures are very similar, but with subtle differences. Noel now looks calm and resolute, the two girls are startled but quite natural.

*Artist No. 3* took over briefly for six stories in October and November 1938.

From the curiously elongated faces and rather stiff poses, I deduce that *No. 3* was Evelyn Flinders, one of the few women at Fleetway House. As Marion Waters mentions in the 1991 "C.D. Annual", Miss Flinders had the unlikely job of carpenter in a munitions factory during the Second World War, but in the 1950s she was back drawing the Silent

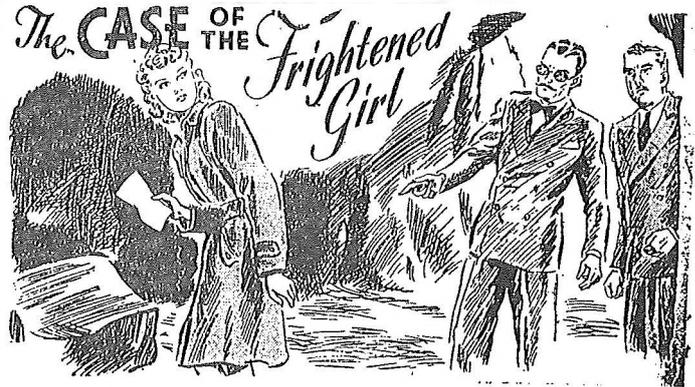
Three secret society in the "School Friend", and she also had another spell with Noel Raymond just before that.



Natalie opened her bag and gazed inside. Then she tumbled the contents on to the table. "My—my piece of the map—it's gone!" she faltered. But who could have taken it?

**Artist No. 3 (EVELYN FLINDERS)**  
**"The Torn Treasure Chart"**  
 22nd October 1938

Accused Of Being In League With The Green Rajah!



**Artist No. 4 "Girls' Crystal"**  
 16th March 1946

Noel, and *Artist No. 2*, disappeared in March 1944. The young detective returned just over a year later, in April 1945; from now on, he was inevitably accompanied by his niece June Gaynor, who became his partner. *Artist No. 4* here comes on the scene; he had just drawn the pictures for "Carol - the Last of the Lincolns" by "Hazel Armitage" (John Wheway), and he now illustrated the two serials "Detective June's Most Thrilling Case" (25th August to 15th December 1945) and "The Case of the Frightened Girl" (22nd December 1945 to 30th March 1946). He is good - but to my mind he lacks the finesse of *Artist No. 2*.

When the weekly short stories were resumed in 1947-48 for 80 consecutive issues, *Artist No. 2* made a welcome return. This period produced some of his best work.

Then, in November 1948 - just as in March 1944 - the regular stories abruptly stopped without explanation. There was not much more of Noel after that - two serials and ten "long complete stories" in two and a half years. A new illustrator, *Artist No. 5*, was brought in for a single story - "Noel Raymond's Strange Find" (22nd October 1949); he was one of the "G.C.'s" veterans, having drawn for such wartime tales as Hazel Armitage's "Marion of Mystery Kennels."

**Artist No. 2 "Girls' Crystal", 28th June 1947**

Sheltering From The Storm, Detective Noel And His Camp Friends Encounter An Eerie Mystery





The first of the remaining serials, "Detective June's Strangest Case: (2nd February to 6th May 1950), was illustrated by *Artist No. 3* again, Evelyn Flinders. "June and the Masked Jester" (1st July to 9th September 1950) saw the return of *Artist No. 4*, and a new concept of the once-dapper detective. He must now have been about 40 years old, but *Artist No. 4* shows him throughout in informal clothes with open-necked shirt, a more suitable rig for his younger days.

The two final short stories are very second-rate when compared with Noel in his vintage World War II years, and so are the drawings. Evelyn Flinders (*No. 3*) did "The Mystery Girl They Televised" (24th February 1951), and "The Vanishing Statues" (26th May 1951) was the first - and happily the last - effort of *Artist No. 6*. The less said the better about his uncouth style.

I prefer to remember Noel in his elegant, urbane heyday so excellently portrayed by *Artist No. 2*. This was art of real merit.



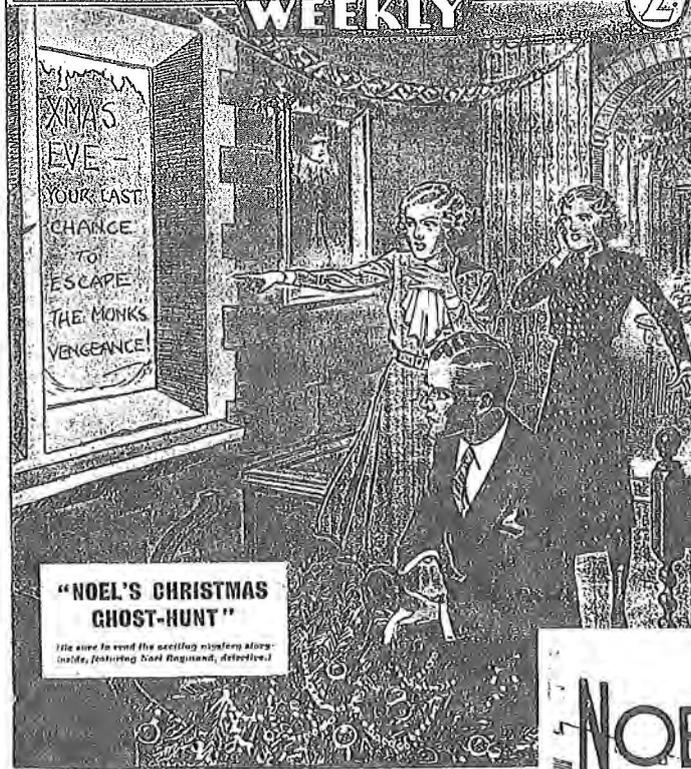
The professor gave a startled gasp as Noel unwrapped the queer object June had found in the Moaning Tower. It was a mason's trowel, and it had been broken off one of the bronze statues.

*Artist No. 6* "The Vanishing Statues"  
"Girls' Crystal", 26th May 1951

A CHRISTMAS NUMBER YOU MUSTN'T MISS!

# GIRLS' CRYSTAL

WEEKLY 2



Artist No. 1



Artist No. 2





### Christmas Day 1948

The relay radio has brought the King  
 Into our family circle for another year  
 The cockerel the pudding and everything  
 Have filled us full of festive cheer.

The front room is alive with its tree  
 The coal fire roars in the grate  
 There are more presents somewhere for me  
 I'm so happy I can hardly wait.

'Find a book for the boy' they say  
 I take the paper off with care  
 Each year he's here on Christmas Day  
 'The Adventures of Rupert Bear'

The fire roars away the room gets hot  
 Presents pile at the foot of the chair  
 Everyone is happy with what they've got  
 And I'm in Nutwood with Rupert Bear.

Of course, for me Christmas meant the annuals. Best of all Rupert. I loved the colours, the visits to Father Christmas in his castle in the clouds. The glimpse of the brightly coloured toys, the boats, the balls, many of the things which were not plentiful when I was a boy.

There were other annuals: 'Tip Top' I liked, with Gene Autry and Happy Bob Harriday, 'Film Fun', 'Knockout' any really that Father Christmas found for me. I remember those blue printed games advertising Cadbury's chocolate on the back of many of them.

It was a happy secure time. My father was back home again out of the RAF and we all went back to my Grandparents' house where I had lived with my mother while he was away.

Noel Coward wrote about the 'potency of cheap music', but there's an awful lot of potency in cheap comics too (if only they were!).



\*\*\*\*\*

In my dreams I find a market stall on which are all those comics I saw and read when I was a child: "Tip Top", "Wonder", "Comic Cuts", "Chips", "Film Fun", "Radio Fun", "Dandy", "Beano", the "Knockout".....

A market stall, perhaps, because when I was growing up in Ely in the late 1940s and early 50s, my grand dad had a trade stand on Ely Market on Thursday, Market day. He would arrange his cattle cribs, hen houses, ladders and gates in front of the Corn Exchange and he would do business from his wooden office in the shadow of the old grey Victorian porticoed front.

I would walk or later cycle round on my way home from school. I'd leave my bicycle with him and dive off among the stalls. On the far side of the Market Place was Thornton's stall - and he sold comics.

The great treasures I found there in the early fifties were those pocket libraries - the thriller comics, with Dick Turpin, Robin Hood, or better still classic stories like "Jane Eyre." Then there were some Edgar Wallace stories like "The Green Archer". How I would love to see them or own them again, but they seem to be very rare.

My parents sometimes brought home comics for me when I was young from Burrows in Ely High Street. Mrs. Plumb who was landlady of the "Rising Sun" pub which stood next to my grandfather's works and opposite where we lived sent me the 'Dandy' when her daughters had read it. Joe, the lad who worked for my granddad let me have copies of the "Wizard," but apart from Spadger's Island on the front, it was a bit old for me. I liked picture stories rather than the reading in the boys' books which had to be taken regularly to make sense of the stories.

When I was about ten my Auntie Rose took out a year's subscription for me as a present to a new comic. It was the "Eagle", and for a year I followed the adventures of Dan Dare and P. C.49 and the rest. Later for a while I deserted to Captain Condor and "Lion".

A few years ago now I found that I could purchase again some of my lost childhood. I visited Norman Shaw and Vintage Magazines in London and gradually put together a collection of my old favourites.

It's those pocket libraries from the very early 1950s that elude me. I sometimes think with some of those I could imagine that I was back in our old house, it was Thursday tea time with fresh fish from Ely market and a comic book to read before homework.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Comic Cuts

Billy Bunter has yelled his last "Yaroooh!"  
Julius Sneezer has gone down with the flu'.

Big Eggo's kept his head in the sand,  
Alfie the Air Tramp's come in to land.

Old Mother Riley has fought her last fight,  
Daughter Kitty can stay out all night.

Inspector Stanley's solved his last case,  
Wilson has clearly won his last race.

Laurel and Hardy have both gone west,  
Roy Rogers and Buck Jones have done their best.

Our Ernie's finally hung up his cap  
No more 'Daft I call it' from his old chap.

Keyhole Kate has spied through her last door,  
Happy Bob Harriday's smiling no more.

Old Ma Murphy's hung up her cane,  
Swift Morgan will never fly again.

Kit Carson's followed his last track,  
 Captain Condor won't be coming back.

Old age, has it finally caught her,  
 Pansy Potter, the strong man's daughter?

\*\*\*\*\*

# BILLY BUNTER

**THE FATTEST SCHOOLBOY ON EARTH**

**AS THE GREYHOUNDS CRICKET TEAM TAKE THE FIELD AFTER THEIR INNINGS AGAINST THE TEAM FROM CREAMBOURN COLLEGE, MR. QUELCH TELLS THE VISITING CAPTAIN OF OLD GREYHOUNDS TRADITION.**

**AS AN OLD TRADITION OF GREYHOUNDS, HE, THAT SHOULD A BATSMAN HIT THE BALL INTO THE PAVILION - THE SCORER SHALL STAND HIM TREAT!**

**COO! THE ROTTER (DIDN'T TELL ME THAT WHEN I WAS BATTING.)**

**AS I AM BOWLING - THERE WILL BE NO CASE OF THAT HAPPENING THIS AFTERNOON! HOWEVER, BUNTER, YOU SHALL FIELD AT THE PAVILION - JUST IN CASE!**

**I COULDN'T FIELD INSIDE THE PAVILION, SIR?**

**COO! IT WAS DOLLY GOOD OF OLD BUELCY TO PUT ME BY THE PAVILION! NOW I'LL BE FIRST IN FOR TEA - IF THOSE GREEDY ROTTERS FROM CREAMBOURN DON'T SCOOT THE LOT!**

Sneezer wasn't very pleased — When his graven image sneezed!

# JULIUS SNEEZER

THE SNEEZING CAESAR

**I WANT YOU TO MAKE A NEW BUST OF ME.**

**AM-TISHOO**

**AM-TISHOO**

FILM FUN

# OLD MOTHER RILEY

Featuring LUCAN & McSHANE

**(I'VE HAD THE WHOLE WORKS --- THE COMPLETE BEAUTY TREATMENT.)**

**MUDD'S BEAUTY PARLOUR**

**FED-UP WITH YOUR FACET THEN PAY US A VISIT!**

**ISN'T SHE A BEAUTY?**

**YES! AND WHAT A CHARMING BONNET!**

**!! PRIDE!!**

**THEY NOTICED HOW NICE I LOOK!**

**SHE IS A SPARKLER, ISN'T SHE?**

**SPORTS MODEL**

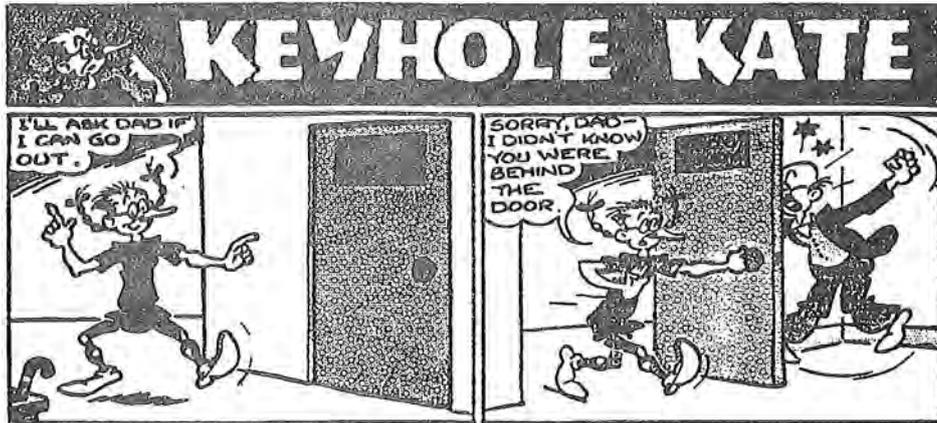
**SUPERDOOP CARS**

1. Our dear Old Mother Riley certainly believes in facing up to it, folks! So she visits the Beauty Parlour, and this puts a different complexion on everything, even Mu

2. She feels she's had her moneysworth when she hears the chapnies mention what a beauty she is and say kind words about her bonnet. She's worn it twenty years, too!

3. "How nice of them to notice!" she coos. But she might have thought otherwise if she'd seen that the smashing beauty with a bonnet they were talking about was a cat!

Two big noses, red as roses — And Katia earned hers, goodness knows!



Dickie tries to do his duty — But Old Ma Murphy is no beauty!



THE biggest dunc at Old Ma's school  
Is Dickie Dope, the champion fool.  
He's being kept in at school today  
And it looks like being a long, long stay.



For Dickie's got to make a sketch  
Before he goes — Unlucky wretch!  
His breath is all that he can draw,  
Or lemonade up through a straw!



Pansy Potter, the strong man's daughter





# INSPECTOR STANLEY

The MAN with  
4 THOUSAND  
SECRETS!

When a man cold-bloodedly plans a murder, he thinks he has thought of everything; but there is nearly always something that he has forgotten—something that he has not allowed for—as there was in the case which is down in Inspector Stanley's record-book as—



## The MAN in RAGS!

1 FUN 3! THE FAMILY FAVOURITE FOR FUN AND FICTION!



1,600.

Every Tuesday.

September 16th, 1950.



### AS GOOD AS GOLD



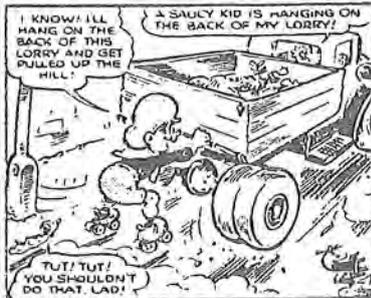
*Hallo, Folks.* "You have a heart of gold!" says Professor Hugh Wood to Stanley. "How do I know? Because the arrow of my gold-detector points in your direction. This machine is the wonder of the age, and it's yours for five bob!"

## OUR ERNIE

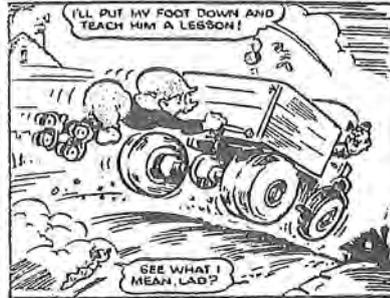
MRS. ENTWHISTLES LITTLE LAD



Now one thing that Our Ernie hates, Is climbing hills on roller-skates, And he decides he's had enough, When he begins to oant and ouff.



Well, t'other day, when in this plight, A motor-lorry came in sight, So Ernie grabbed the lorry's back, And followed swiftly in its track.



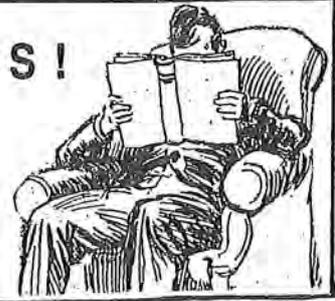
But lorry's driver, Charlie Chadd, Just quite by chance, had seen the lad, And Ernie soon found that his tow, Was fast becoming not so slow!



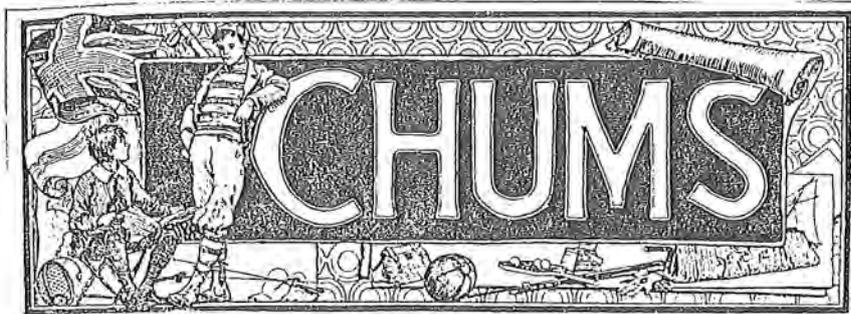


# FOREVER CHUMS!

by Bill Bradford



A hundred years ago, on the 14th September, 1892, there appeared the first issue of a boy's paper that is till sought and treasured by many collectors. The conception of *Chums* owed much to Max Pemberton, its first editor, who realised that there was no boy's publication in existence between the extremes of the parentally approved *Boys Own Paper* and the *Blood and Thunders* or *Penny Dreadfuls*. His aim, therefore, was to fill this vacuum.



VOL. I.—No. 1.]

SEPTEMBER 14, 1892.

[ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.]

## CONTENTS.

FOR GLORY AND RENOWN. (Serial Story.) By D. H. PARRY ... .. See page 1	
TWO HUNDRED FEET ABOVE GROUND ... .. 4	SOME OF THE DOINGS OF JULIUS CAESAR WHILEST IN BRITAIN ... .. 11
A CRUISE IN A TORPEDO-BOAT ... .. 5	HOW TO TRAIN FOR THE FOOTBALL SEASON ... .. 12
A CHAT ABOUT HARROW SCHOOL ... .. 6	OUR PRIZE PAGE ... .. 13
OUR READING CLUB ... .. 8	THE MINE OF MANUEL LOPEZ ... .. 14
THE WANDERING PIG ... .. 9	EDITOR'S CHAT, JOKES, PICTURES, ETC. ETC.
THE MAN IN THE BLACK SHEET ... .. 10	
(A Strange Story. By Max Pemberton.)	

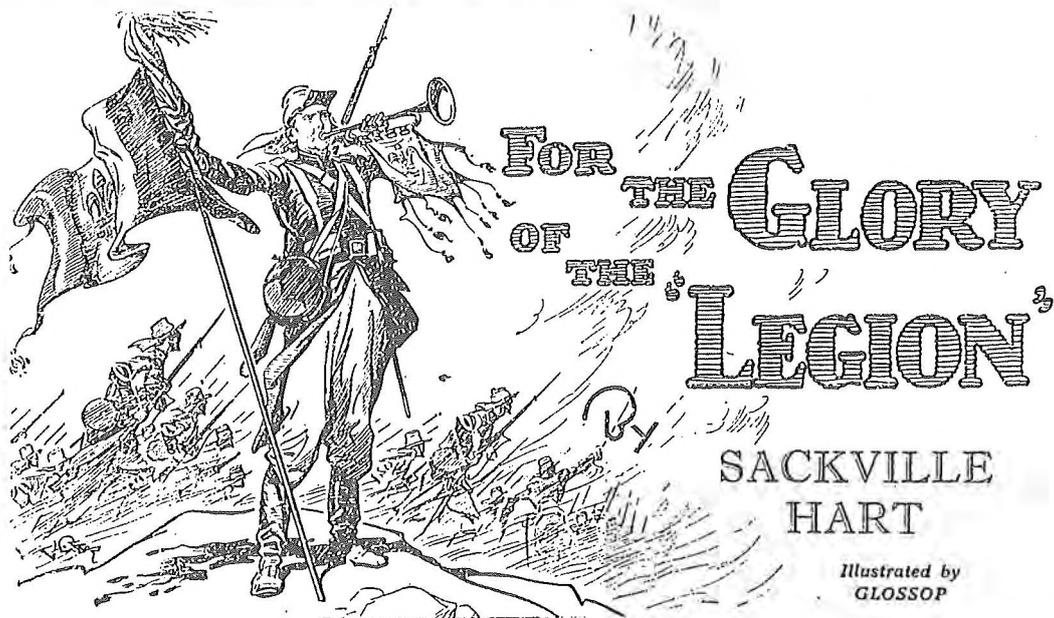


Published by Cassells and priced at one Penny No. 1 consisted of 16 pages (13" x 9") including the start of a historical serial by D.H. Parry, several short stories and numerous interesting articles. Parry was to write for *Chums* for over 40 years (sometimes as Morton Pike). Also in this issue Paul Hardy began his illustrations for *Chums*, and his work still appeared in the 1940 Annual. Pemberton relinquished his post after a year to concentrate on writing. But not before "The Iron Pirate" had appeared as a serial. He was succeeded by Ernest Foster, who was editor until 1907.

In September 1884 there began a serialisation of *Treasure Island* by R.L. Stevenson. This had made no impact when it had previously appeared as *The Sea Cook* in *Little Folks* but was now widely acclaimed. August 1895 saw the first story by S.

(Samuel) Walkey entitled *In Quest of Sheba's Treasure*. To many, Walkey was *Chums*, and his work was almost exclusive to that publication. He was writing for the annual as late as 1940. By 1908, the number of pages increased to 20. This was the year that saw the arrival of Capt. Frank Shaw and his memorable serial (the first of many) *The Peril of the Motherland*. At the same time, Julian Linley (R.N. Alec G. Pearson) introduced us to Captain Mostana, a Mexican brigand whose adventures appeared over many years. Indeed 1907-1914 saw some of the best years of *Chums*. The Editor at this time was Ernest H. Robinson, another successful author. During the war years of 1915-1918, the paper was edited by F. Knowles Campling, whose pen-name was Eric Wood.

By now there were strong patriotic overtones, but a reduction to 16 pages. Many authors were in uniform, and some were killed in action. About this time our old friend John Hunter wrote of the S.S. Mary Ann Trinder but no reference to Capt. Dack who was to emerge as her Skipper in the Sexton Blake Library in 1940! In April 1918 the price was increased to three half pence but we were down to 12 pages.



The 1920s saw the return of many former contributors and the arrival of a few notable new ones. It seems to take a few years for *Chums* to find its peacetime role, but by the end of the decade we were enjoying Gunby Hadath, Robert Harding, Michael Poole, George E. Rochester and Percy F. Westerman, many of whom had already become established writers in *The Boy's Own Paper*. Indeed, the roll of call of *Chums* authors is probably unequalled by any other Boy's Paper or magazine, as it also included such notables as Lt.Col. Brereton, Hylton Cleaver, Oswald Dallas, L.C. Douthwaite, Alfred Edgar, G. Manville Fenn, Sydney Horler, G.A. Henty, G.H. Teed, Rowland Walker, Edgar Wallace and Draycot M. Dell, who was also editor between 1926 and 1939.

In January 1927 The Amalgamated Press acquired *Chums* from Cassells, with little effect on the readers, now paying two pence per weekly copy. On 2nd July, 1932, it was announced that this issue, No. 2077, would be the last *Weekly Chums Publication*, although it would continue on a monthly basis. This materialised at 64 pages for a shilling and had some magnificent coloured covers, especially by Cecil Glossop. Alas, in July 1934 we learnt that thereafter *Chums* would survive only as an Annual.

These Annuals, from 1935/36 to 1941, contained only about half the number of pages previously published over 12 months and, with a few exceptions, the contents compared poorly with earlier years, when the wonderful long serials were the backbone of *Chums*. Incidentally, the last editor was William B. Home-Gall, elder brother of Edward R. Perhaps I have rather neglected the illustrators who did so much to popularise the paper. As well as Hardy and Glossop, let us not forget Fred Bennett, Gordon Browne,

Thomas Henry, Harry Lane, T.H. Robinson, J.H. Valda and Eric Parker, the prolific Sexton Blake Artist.

I should mention the earlier monthly issues which consisted of 4 weekly issues plus a coloured plate, and increased from six pence to one shilling over the years. I have had issues between 1914 and 1928 (apart from 1932-1934) but I do not know if monthly parts were available in earlier years.

Of considerable interest are the 8 or 12 page supplements (numbered in Roman Figures) in many weekly and monthly issues in the 1920s and 1930s. These pages never appeared in the subsequent annual, and my own collection contains a bonus of 1512 pages that do not appear in my Annuals. The stories therein are by leading authors, including Sax Rohmer and his Tales of Fu Manchu!

My personal association with *Chums* goes back to about 1930 when my father would read to me chapters of *Yo Ho For The Spanish Main* by S. Walkey from his old annual of 1909. On 31st October 1931, I purchased (and still have) my first weekly issue, just in time for the start of a new Walkey serial. That Christmas my Grandparents gave me the Annual 1931/32 which included a wonderful serial *Barracuda* by Paul Corydon (probably Draycott M. Dell), *Wings of Doom* by Geo. E. Rochester and *Under The Sword of the Terror* by D.H. Parry. What Boy could ask for more? *Chums* became, and still is, my favourite publication. In the words of the immortal bard:

"There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper" (Merchant of Venice, Act III, Scene V).



Season's Greetings to all Friars from

ARTHUR EDWARDS

\*\*\*\*\*

1930's Puck Comics and Annuals wanted.

VIC HEARN

20 WINGATE WAY, CAMBRIDGE. TEL: 0223 841189

\*\*\*\*\*

To be at St. Frank's with Hobby Friends for Christmas will be my dearest wish.  
May God bless you all,

JIM COOK, NEW ZEALAND

\*\*\*\*\*

Best Wishes to all members of the OBBC. Special thanks to Bill Bradford.

LARRY MORLEY

\*\*\*\*\*

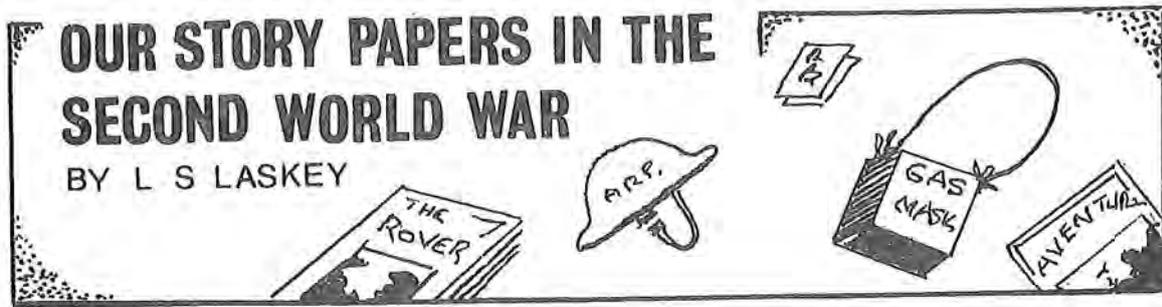
Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year to Madam Editor, Eric, Chris, Norman, Laurie, Les, Bill, Mac, and all Hobby friends. Still want C.D. Annuals 1947, 1948, 1953. OBBs to sell or swap.

Write

JOHN BRIDGWATER

5A SAULFLAND PLACE, HIGHCLIFFE, CHRISTCHURCH, DORSET, BH23 4QP

\*\*\*\*\*



"I have to tell you now that no such assurance has been received and that, consequently, this country is now at war with Germany."

These were the concluding words of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's broadcast announcement to the nation at eleven o'clock on the morning of Sunday, 3rd September 1939. His solemn message extinguished a people's last lingering hopes of peace. Nazi Germany had ignored the ultimatum to withdraw its invading troops from Poland. Now it was war.

Those of us who had been enjoying our school summer holidays wondered what was going to happen now. In fact, every aspect of our lives, both at home and at school, was going to be affected by the war in the months and years ahead. Even our beloved weekly story papers would not escape its effects.

Only a few minutes after Mr. Chamberlain had finished speaking there came the wailing sound of the air-raid sirens. Startled, we hurriedly grabbed our gas-masks and made our way down the garden to the recently constructed dug-out. We sat on the wooden benches, breathing the dank, earthy smell. It then occurred to me that, if I was destined to spend most of my time down here in future, I might not be able to collect my copy of the GEM from the newsagent's on Wednesday, or the MAGNET next Saturday. The shop was over a mile away. It never occurred to me then that there might come a week when there would not be any GEM or MAGNET to be collected. A few minutes later the steady note of the "all-clear" sounded on the sirens, and we scrambled up the ladder into the September sunshine. Nothing had happened. The warning had been caused by an unidentified aeroplane over the English Channel, which had turned out to be a French machine.

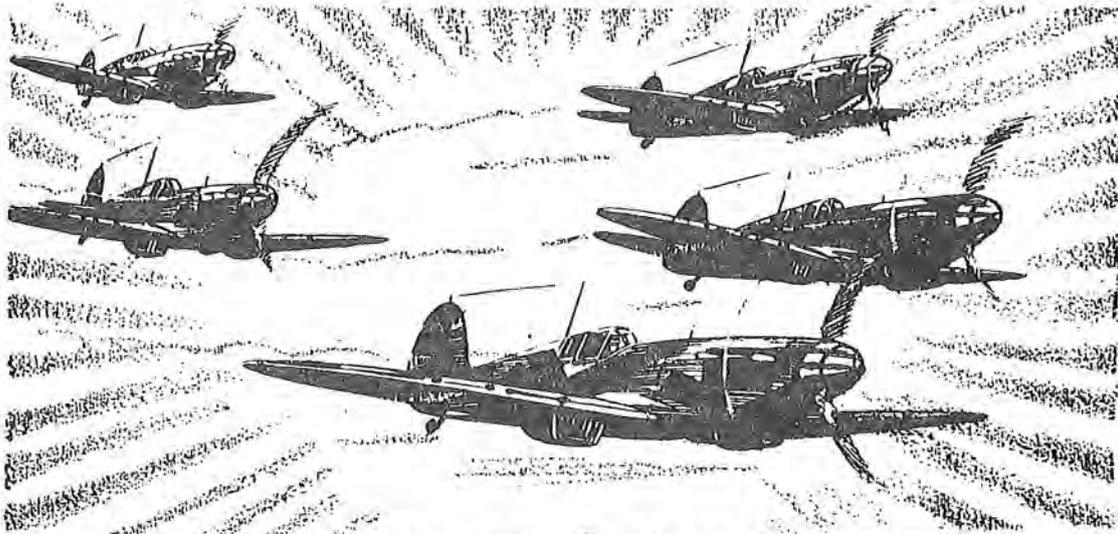
There were to be more more such alarms for some months. School holidays ran on for two more weeks. In the MAGNET Harry Wharton & Co. were still cruising along the River Thames in the "Water Lily". In the GEM Tom Merry & Co. were enjoying all sorts of exciting holiday adventures in far-off Brazil. The first mention of the war came after Greyfriars and St. Jim's had re-assembled, when there were references to such things as the "black-out" and A.R.P. drill. Then MODERN BOY suddenly closed down. This was an ominous pointer to bleak times to come. At the very end of 1939 came a much greater shock when the Gem was amalgamated with the TRIUMPH. At about this time the story papers began to shed some of their pages. The SCHOOLGIRL lost its attractive blue and orange cover and adopted a plain blue and white wartime uniform.

As a winter of bitter cold ended, the dormant land war in Western Europe erupted suddenly as German forces invaded and occupied Denmark and Norway. The result was an almost immediate crisis for publishers as the supply of wood pulp from Norway was cut off. In mid-May 1940, with the war now having spread to Belgium and Holland, came that sudden and shocking closure of many of Britain's magazines. Just previously, Harry Wharton & Co., holidaying in a house on the Kent coast, in the MAGNET, had been subjected to an attack by a raiding German bomber as the real war came home to them. Now their adventures came to an abrupt end as the MAGNET was closed down. With it went also the TRIUMPH, the THRILLER, DETECTIVE WEEKLY and the SCHOOLGIRL.

The surviving story papers were now on a war footing. Their page numbers were steadily reduced and stories of the war were now featured prominently. Editorial chats disappeared - and there were no longer any free gifts.

The war stories in the weeklies eventually covered many campaigns in various parts of the world. The HOTSPUR ran stories about 'Q' Spitfire Squadron on the Western Front in 1940. ADVENTURE published a story dealing with the Russo-Finnish War which had taken place during the winter of 1939/40. The same paper published the story of Julius Hoffer of the Black Front, a German political party which opposed the Nazi Party, and who was assisted by a British Secret Service agent named Vic Farson. The ROVER featured the Sudan Defence Force fighting Italian troops in occupied Abyssynia. In the CHAMPION the adventures of "Rockfist" Rogan, R.A.F. appeared weekly all through the war years.

A CHALLENGE FROM THE EAGLE SQUADRON OF GERMANY—  
AND HOW "Q" SQUADRON MET IT IN MID-AIR—WITH MACHINE-GUN BULLETS!



## **RECKLESS MEN of "Q" SQUADRON**

Through 1940 and 1941 the war news became grimmer and grimmer. The fall of France - the Luftwaffe's "blitz" on Britain's cities - Pearl Harbour - the fall of Singapore - the retreats in the face of General Rommel's Afrika Korps in the North African deserts. The bad news seemed never ending. Then came the Battle of El Alamein. This was the turning point of the war. Now the days of retreat were ending. Now it was the Axis Powers who would be on the retreat.

By now there had been two more casualties on the story-paper front. The SKIPPER and the long-running DIXON HAWKE LIBRARY had been lost. However, there were to be no more losses of that kind. The remaining four D.C. Thomson papers, together with the CHAMPION, the GIRL'S CRYSTAL and the SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY soldiered on until the end of the war, although the Thomsons now appeared only fortnightly.

In the case of the SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY, paper economy had been achieved by reducing the number of issues from four a month to only two. In this way the individual volumes retained their pre-war size of 100 pages. These chunky little wartime Sexton Blakes compare oddly with the thin weeklies of only a dozen or so pages. Many of Sexton Blake's cases were now involved with wartime matters as indicated by story titles such as 'The Mystery of the German Prisoner', 'The Loot of France', 'Raiders Passed' and 'The case of the Mystery Parachutist'.

The war was far less in evidence in the GIRL'S CRYSTAL'S stories. However, in 1943 came a tense serial by Elise Probyn about a young English dancer named Kay Royston who had been marooned in neutral Switzerland when the Germans over-ran

Western Europe. She had a brother who worked for the British Secret Service. When he was laid up with a gunshot wound, inflicted by a German frontier guard, Kay Royston carried out a mission on her brother's behalf which took her into occupied France. She had adopted the identity of a French girl who had a German permit to visit relatives in Switzerland but who had no intention of returning to France. Kay Royston led a hazardous existence in France, with the constant threat of being arrested by the Gestapo and having her British identity discovered.

No. 390.  
Vol. 15.  
EVERY  
FRIDAY.

# GIRLS' CRYSTAL<sup>3!</sup>

AND "THE SCHOOLGIRL"

Week  
Ending  
April  
10th, 1943.



The Opening Chapters of a Thrilling Story Set In War-time France.—By ELISE PROBYN.

The WIZARD took its readers out to the jungles of New Guinea where allied troops were engaged with the Japanese forces. ADVENTURE had a story concerning the hunt for U-Boats which were preying on allied ships in the Persian Gulf.

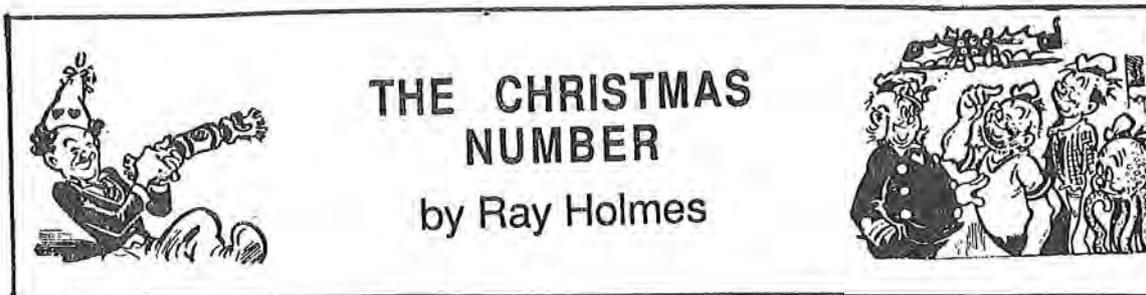
With the ending of hostilities in 1945 war stories largely disappeared from the story papers, but the austerity format of the issues continued for some years afterwards.

That these papers survived the war at all is remarkable, particularly when one considers that some of our national dailies such as the DAILY MAIL and the NEWS CHRONICLE were reduced to a single broadsheet which gave their readers just four pages of news.

All the surviving story papers ran on for many years into the post-war period. New generations of young readers discovered the CHAMPION, the WIZARD and the GIRL'S CRYSTAL.

In the more distant future fresh problems would beset the publishers. Changing tastes and falling circulations would eventually threaten these titles - but that is another story.





If anything could be guaranteed to bring a happy smile to the faces of the girls and boys of the 1930s it was the arrival of the Christmas number of their favourite weekly comic.

Not for them a daily dose of TV variety; their comic paper was for many the only source of fun. And the Christmas number was something special. Usually double the size of the weekly offering, it often contained a gift in keeping with the occasion - a Christmas cracker or party hat. One penny comic of the time in fact gave away a Big Game Shooting Pistol Complete with Animal.

The 1930s were the golden age for the British comic. The death blow which the Second World War gave to many treasured titles was still in the future, and the circulation was in full-swing. What better for an editor than to offer a superb Christmas edition, with gift to match, in the hope of keeping his new readers throughout the following year? That was the thinking of the times, and of course the people to benefit were the readers.

The list of titles seemed endless. Pennies were few and far between in those days, but for that sum one could have the choice of *Comic Cuts*, *Jester*, *Funny Wonder*, *Larks* and *Jingles*, just to name a handful.

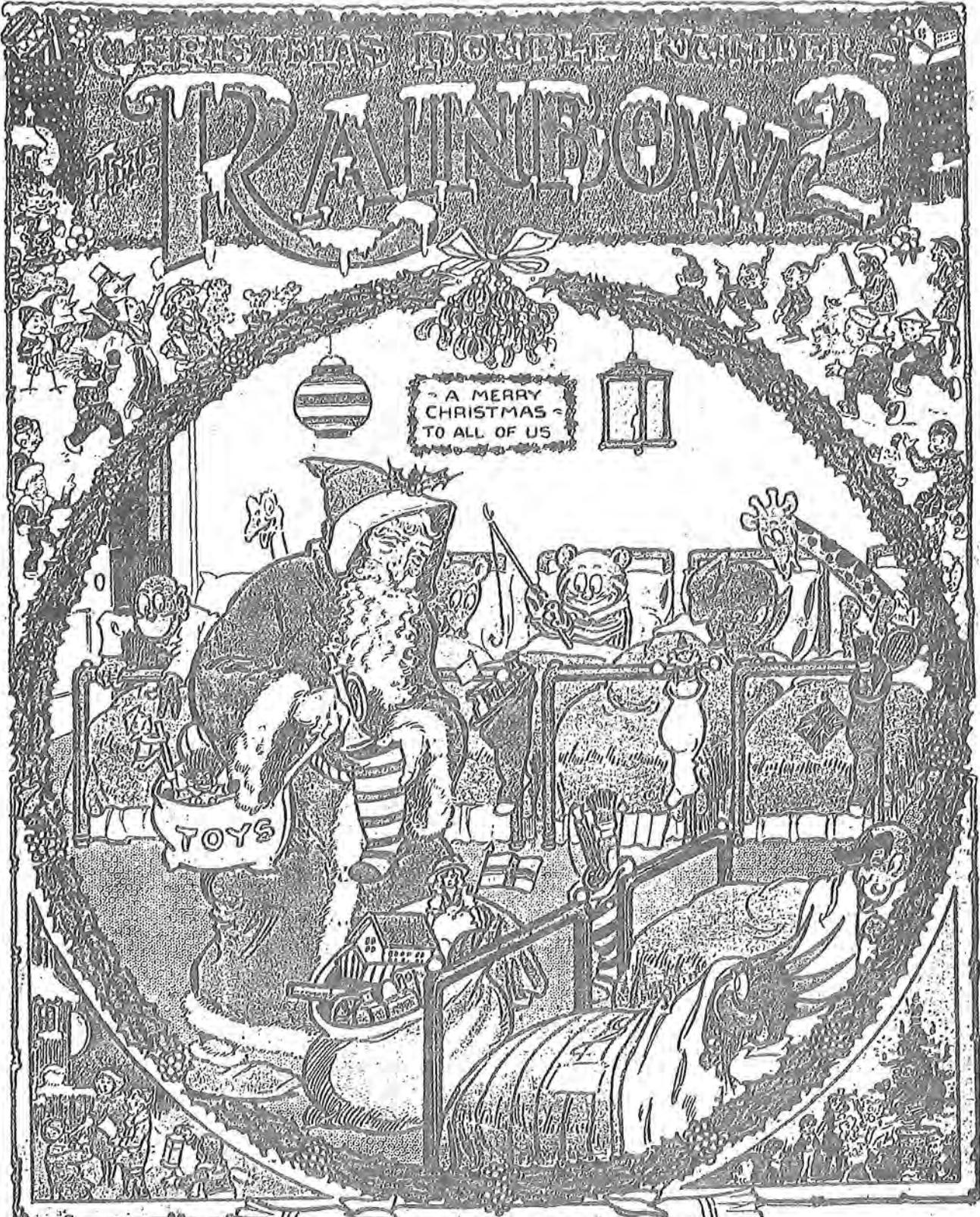
If the weekly pocket-money ran to twopence then *Film Fun*, *Sunbeam*, *Sparkler*, *Tiger Tim's Weekly* and *Rainbow* were available.

The 2d. comic contained more colour than the 1d. variety and the children who chose *Rainbow* were in good company, for that was the title which arrived at Buckingham Palace each week. No doubt the Queen when a child looked forward to its Christmas number as eagerly as any other reader.

All comics had their own leading characters: Alfie the Air Tramp claimed the front page of the *Joker*; Wearie Willie and Tired Tim, *Chips*; and the Bruin Boys were up to their tricks each week in *Rainbow*. *Film Fun* had real people such as Laurel and Hardy and Joe E. Brown to keep its readers happy.

Though the weekly situations might change, nothing changed for the Christmas number. Each year the title of the comic was crusted with snow. Mistletoe and holly would be in profusion. Mince pies and Christmas puddings would appear on every page, and if this wasn't enough to let the reader know it was the Festive Season the back page would contain a large illustration of all the comic's characters enjoying a Christmas party.

This was a wonderful sight, and, appearing in the days when possibly less than one family in a hundred could enjoy such festivities, it must have brought joy to thousands of children. It was always a difficult decision for them to decide which comic to buy. How they must have wished they could have been like Billy Bunter, who, through mistaken identity, was ushered into the dining room of the Hotel Splendide, and astounded the head waiter, who was showing him the Christmas menu, by saying "I'll have the lot!"

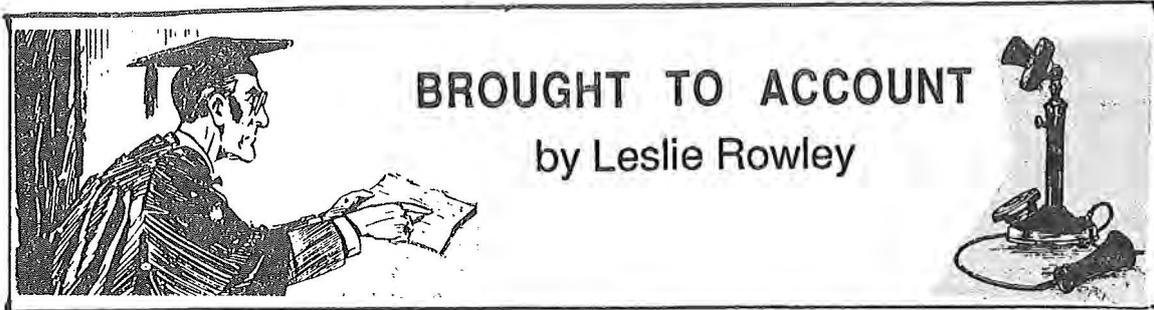


No. 98. Vol. 2.

Santa Claus did not forget to visit the Bruin Boys on Christmas Eve, and, of course, they all appeared to be fast asleep. But do you think any of them were? Just look at them! Joey doesn't look very sleepy, does he? Neither does Tiger Jim and Jacko. They found heaps and heaps of toys in their stockings, and they wish Christmas Eve were every night!

December 25, 1915.





## BROUGHT TO ACCOUNT

by Leslie Rowley

"Iniquitous!"

It was not one of Mr. Prout's favourite words, but 'unparalleled' and 'unprecedented' seemed expressively inadequate on this occasion. "Iniquitous", he repeated, for he was fond of the sound of his own voice, though he regretted that there were no ears other than his own to witness his indignation... He glared at the slip of paper he held in his podgy paw and uttered that single word once again.

It wasn't a case of third time lucky. Certain words if repeated a number of times, 'abracadabra' for instance, were reputed to possess magical properties - a kind of formula for setting things to rights. 'Iniquitous' was not among the accepted verbiage for bringing these happy things to pass. That piece of paper, and the figures thereon, continued to stare defiantly back at the Fifth-form master as he settled his considerable bulk into a protesting armchair before his study fire.

The glowing coals burned brightly in the grate, the flickering flames reaching out to find reflection on the bald patch so discreetly hidden in class by a strategically placed mortar board. It was a cosy scene from which Prout would normally draw comfort as he toasted his toes and sought respite from the fatiguing labours and frustration of having Horace James Coker as a pupil.

It wanted only a few days before the School recessed for the Christmas holidays. The Quad already lay under a seasonal blanket of snow. Every buttress and ledge bore its burden of white. Fresh flakes seemed to flutter incessantly down on every roof and chimney. The glass in window and casement sparkled with its frosty cobweb of rime. The trees in Elm Walk stood like frozen sentinels on parade.

There was no greater believer in Christmas than Prout. In both figure and feature, he favoured a latter day Pickwick. Today, his figure was as rotund as ever but the jovial countenance of the hero of Dingley Dell found no simile in the countenance belonging to the master of the Fifth. Colleagues and boys alike could normally be sure of a benign smile from him during this most joyous of seasons, but not so today. Today, Prout understudied the gentleman in the poem whose 'brow was set, whose eye beneath flashed like a falchion from its sheath'. Today, Prout was in receipt of his quarterly telephone bill!

Prout was a reasonable man - or so Prout liked to think. He realised the necessity of keeping the heads of privatised services in the comfort to which they were accustomed, Prout only wished that a similar salary formula was in operation at Greyfriars. Prout gazed again, with increased annoyance at that offending sheet of paper which informed him that the number of calls made on his telephone over the last three months had been calculated at £153. To which sum, piling Pelion upon Ossa as it were, a further sum was required to cover tax.

He was not a suspicious man, and his mind worked in peculiar ways its wonders to perform, yet even Prout was of the opinion that the telephone company was charging him for more calls than he had made. He wondered if his colleagues had received similar accounts that were open to question. At least he could find some consolation in sharing his problem with another. Whether others would find the same consolation in such a discussion was a moot point, a very moot point indeed.

"Come in," Henry Samuel Quelch almost barked that invitation in answer to the knock on his study door, and the frown on his face did not lessen as he saw that his visitor was Prout. If his Fifth-form colleague had come to complain about some member of the Remove, Quelch was prepared to join battle. For the nonce the Remove master favoured

his visitor with the briefest of nods. He did not ask Prout to sit down: no master ever did that for, once seated, Prout was a fixture that it was hard to dislodge until one had suffered the "when I was in the Rockies" syndrome, "when I was at Oxford" syndrome, or even both.

After looking meaningfully but unproductively at the nearby armchair, the Fifth-form master got going about the multifarious faults and inadequacies of the telephone service's accounts department, but he had only just got into his stride, when a tap on the door heralded the arrival of Capper and Twigg. The masters of the Upper Fourth and Second forms were both bearing identical slips of paper to that on which Prout was expostulating so emphatically to Quelch. A moment later, the master of the Shell crossed the threshold, the now familiar piece of paper clutched almost convulsively in a bony hand. Prout, having paused briefly for breath, was further interrupted by Quelch.

"It is obvious," the Remove master observed, "that we are all here for the same purpose. You have probably observed apparent inaccuracies in your telephone bills that render the charges quoted as-----"

"Iniquitous," interposed Prout triumphantly. "Iniquitous," he repeated, in case he had not been heard the first time. "I was just remarking to Quelch...", Prout was getting into his stride again. This time it was Quelch who interposed.

"Tea will shortly be served in Masters' Commons, I suggest we adjourn there where we can discuss the matter fully and in comfort. I have disclosures to make that I think will cause you all the utmost concern." Taking some notes from his desk, Quelch followed his colleagues along the passage to the staff common room.

The rattle of tea cups had faded away to the accompaniment of a final crunch from Hacker as he disposed of the last of the sardines on the last piece of toast. The beaks settled back in their chairs and waited anxiously for the master of the Remove to begin. He did not keep them waiting long.

"For some time now I have been of the opinion that I was being grossly over charged, or charged for calls which I myself did not initiate. As a consequence of this, I decided to accept the telephone company's offer to have further bills itemised. The bill I have received today contains these additional details. Thirty-seven calls are listed that were obviously not made by me. Twenty-one were made to Courtfield 233344; nine to Courtfield 567890 and seven to Courtfield 539022. These numbers are those belonging to "The Three Fishers", "The Cross Keys" and "The Bird in Hand" respectively. All of which are disreputable establishments and out of bound to all the boys and - I hope - not frequented by the masters themselves. There appears little doubt that your own telephones are being used by members of your forms, so lost to all sense of propriety that they are in regular communication with such places where gambling is the order of the day. Now such information, on its own, is not conclusive. We need further evidence, in pursuit of which I have had installed today a machine that records each and every call made from my telephone. I can only suggest and advise that you, gentlemen, do likewise."

There was a brief silence as what Mr. Quelch had said was allowed to sink in. Any silence was bound to be brief so long as Mr. Prout was a member of the audience.

"Quelch, my dear fellow, what a shock it must be for you to learn that a member - possibly several members of your form - are guilty, not only of frequenting such places, but of deception amounting to fraud. No member of the Fifth form - my form - would be guilty of such reprehensible behaviour. No fifth Form boy would be capable of even considering such despicable conduct. No boy of my form..."

"Nonsense, Prout. The mere fact that certain calls were made from my telephone does not indicate that the boy making the calls belonged to the remove. The culprit is more likely to belong to another form. Suspicion must fall on all forms - including your own. We shall be able more closely to identify the miscreant when his next call is recorded..."

"No Fifth form boy will be found to be involved..."

"No member of the Shell can possibly..."

"I deny most categorically any involvement of any member of the Upper Fourth..."

The denials came thick and fast, but Quelch thought that he detected a note of uncertainty in those denials. It was an uncertainty which he felt regarding his own boys and if that were not enough, Prout was on hand to remind him!

"A boy named Smith - no, Vernon-Smith - is a member of your form, is he not, my dear Quelch? Has he not been expelled or flogged for frequenting such places?" Prout was being patronisingly solicitous, but there was a bite in his words that reminded Quelch of the barbed comment he could expect from his colleagues in future. He sought for words with which to defend that boy of his form, but none came to mind.

"I am surprised at your insensate folly, Prout, to condemn a person on mere suspicion. I deplore your attitude..."

"And I, sir, fail to understand your ignoring of the facts. I fail to understand..."

"Only you, sir, can be responsible for your lack of understanding of this and any other matter." Mr. Quelch's voice sounded as though it proceeded from a refrigerator, yet inwardly he had a feeling of unease. What Mr. Prout had said about Vernon-Smith was based on well-known and well-established fact. Like a gudgeon rising to the bait, he had spoken, as was his wont, in defence of a boy of his form. Yet he could not help wishing that that boy had been someone other than the Bounder of the Remove. He rose to his feet.

"Further discussion is fruitless until the offender of offenders have been caught. I have put you on your guard, gentlemen. It is up to all of us to be vigilant." The Common Room door closed upon the Remove master as fresh discussion continued among his colleagues.

As he made his way back to his study, he imagined what the others were saying now that he was no longer in their presence - the sarcastic tones of Prout, the bitter words of Hacker, and the rest joining in. It was with burning cheeks that he pushed open the door of his study, and suddenly stopped in his tracks at the sight of the weedy youth therein.

For a brief moment it was difficult to realise who was the more startled, the Remove master or Stephen Price, the telephone receiver still held in an otherwise lifeless hand. The look of astonishment on Mr. Quelch's face gave place to an ironical smile, but there was little humour in his words as he addressed the wretched Price.

"What are you doing in my study?" Really, the question was superfluous, yet it gave the fifth-former a brief second in which to manufacture a lie.

"I was passing your study, Mr. Quelch, when I heard your telephone ringing and, thinking it might be something important I decided to take a message for you. However, it was simply the case of a wrong number so..."

"If that is the truth, Price, I will overlook your trespassing in my study. Fortunately your story can soon be verified or otherwise." Mr. Quelch walked over to a small table and tinkered with the box which lay on it. There came the sound of wheels softly turning accompanied by rather shrill squeaks. The Remove master pressed a button set in the box, the speeding wheels slowed and the squeaks suddenly resolved into normal speech. Price's face paled into a sickly colour as he recognised his own voice.

"Hello, Is that the "Cross Keys"? I wish to speak to Mr. Sanders. Tell him it's Steve Price up at the School." There was a short interval before a beery voice answered.

"That you, young Price? I was expecting to hear from you before this. In fact, I was expecting to see you so that you could settle. This is an expensive season and the fifteen quid you owe me is long overdue. Either you come down to the "Cross Keys" tonight and pay your due, or I'll be up at the school tomorrow to see your schoolmaster!! You know what that means."

"Please listen to me Soapy," the machine seemed to accentuate the fear in the boy's voice. "You can wait till next term: I-I-I'm expecting some pretty substantial tips for Christmas. If you can wait I'll see you get your money whereas if you complain to the Head you will get nothing..."

Mr. Quelch switched off the recorder, not waiting to hear if Soapy Sanders accepted Price's proposition. A bony hand gripped the Fifth-former's shoulder and firmly propelled him out into the corridor and in the direction of Masters' Commons. As master and boy neared that destination, the voice of Prout could be heard booming through the partly open door. The ironic smile on Quelch's face became more pronounced as Prout's fruity words came easily upon the ear.

"Much as one would wish to commiserate with a colleague whose form brings discredit to the School - much as one would wish to commiserate in such circumstances, other considerations must take precedent. This hallowed foundation with its valued traditions, honoured as they are in my form, cannot be treated with impunity by those who so wantonly disregard..."

Mr. Prout had assumed his favourite stance, his legs planted firmly apart, his podgy arms akimbo, his plump circumference almost obscuring the fireplace. A restless shuffling of feet from his audience indicated that Prout had been holding forth more than a little too long. There was an appreciative sigh as he was stricken with sudden dumbness as Mr. Quelch entered, urging a reluctant Price before him.

For a moment the fifth-form master stood with his mouth open like that of an expiring cod, but silence from Prout was always of short duration. He glared from Quelch to Price in anger then gave utterance.

"May one presume to enquire, Quelch, the reason - if any - why you have brought this Fifth-form boy, this boy of my form, to the Masters' Commons. If you have any complaint it could surely have waited until I was at leisure to deal with it."

"I have brought Price of your form here, Prout, for reasons that are of interest to the rest of us. A few moments ago I caught Price in the act of using the telephone in my study. He assured me that he had heard the telephone ringing and had entered my study to answer it in order to take any message..."

"Quite commendable. Such a thoughtful act is more worthy of gratitude than admonishment..."

"If true, yes. Unfortunately, as circumstances proved, Price was guilty of falsehood, and much else. The machine attached to my telephone has tape-recorded a conversation Price had with a man called Sanders - a habitué of the "Cross Keys" public house. It appears from the recording that Price owes the man money -- doubtless due to some obnoxious gambling transaction."

Mr. Quelch's words were spoken calmly, nevertheless they caused a stir of excitement among the other masters. Excitement, mingled with relief perhaps, that the unfortunate Price was not a member of their forms.

Prout gave that member of his form a glare that the fabled Gorgon would have envied, but Quelch had not finished yet.

"Much as one would wish to commiserate with a colleague whose form brings discredit to the School - much as one would wish to commiserate in such circumstances, other considerations must take precedent." The master of the Remove was parodying his colleague's own words: "This hallowed foundation with its valued traditions..."

Slam!

A purple-faced Prout with a white-faced Price in tow had departed hurriedly from that august assembly, sounds of unsuppressed merriment following them down the corridor - which neither of them joined in. Henry Samuel Quelch did not share in the merriment, feeling, perhaps, that he was above the common herd to be so demonstrative. But Capper, giving a sudden glance at those normally severe features, thought he saw more than the glimmer of a triumphant smile.

Dr. Locke sat in judgement on Stephen Price without delay. Whether the oncoming festive season influenced the Head in being lenient was not clear. By the time the ensuing flogging was over Price was left wriggling, and if he pondered at all on Dr. Locke's idea of

leniency it was to wonder where the venerable old Head packed all the muscle. Soapy Sanders, if he pondered at all on Price settling that little loan, had other matters to consider when P.C. Tozer called upon him. Acting upon a complaint from the Headmaster of Greyfriars the constable pointed out the errors of persons who engaged in gambling with minors and advised Mr. Sanders that it would be as well if that gentleman spent his Christmas in some other county than Kent.

However dissatisfied Mr. Prout, Stephen Price and Soapy Sanders may have felt in their various ways, Mr. Quelch did not share in that dissatisfaction. His Fifth-form colleague had been effectively silenced in his claims about the superiority of his form. In the spirit of this gentle rejoicing the Remove-master had dismissed Herbert Vernon-Smith from his thoughts. Had he but known, he was shortly to be reminded of that member of his form in a rather startling manner.

It was Quelch's turn to challenge the reverend Lambe to a game of chess, and it was to be their last encounter before the holidays. The two men were old friends and the master of the Remove valued his visits to the Vicarage as a pleasant respite from his form. Perhaps it was because of this that the evening's contest took longer than usual. Eleven strokes from the church tower reminded them both of the late hour and of the walk Mr. Quelch had to take before he reached the school and the shelter of his own room.

Outside, the dark of night was relieved by the crisp whiteness that the form-master crunched underfoot. He gave an appreciative glance at the Saxon church and wondered how many likenesses he would be seeing in the shape of Christmas greetings, and found himself looking forward to his forthcoming stay at Wharton Lodge... It was a heart-warming invitation that Colonel Wharton had extended, though it was doubtful if Harry Wharton and his friends would entirely share in the Colonel's enthusiasm for his guest. Beaks were a necessary obligation during term and one came to accept them as regular features on the scholastic landscape. Beaks during the hols were quite another thing!

Deep in thought, Mr. Quelch never heard the footsteps that came padding softly on the snowy verge of the lane until it was too late. A heavy and muscular grip on his shoulder swung him round and he found himself face to face with the battered and evil face of the man, whose other arm was raised with a threatening cudgel in its first. Had he but known it, this was the same Soapy Sanders who had been told to go earlier by P.C. Tozer. A round of free drinks at the "Cross Keys" had delayed Mr. Sander's departure and had whetted his desire for revenge. In the dark and lonely lane, the schoolmaster was easy prey to a rogue such as Sanders.

The stick that Mr. Quelch had brought with him, had fallen from his startled grasp and lay in the snow beyond his reach. Nevertheless, the Greyfriars master struggled, and let out with a fist which - more by accident than design - landed on his assailant's nose. The already threatening expression on the villain's face became more distorted, and a mixed stream of oaths threatened to turn the icy air blue. Under the attack, the form-master stumbled and the next moment was on his back with a hefty knee pinning him to the snow covered earth. Once again the heavy cudgel was lifted to strike viciously at the helpless man, when there came a sudden and unexpected interruption.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Bounder had spotted his form-master as he had left the village behind. He had no intention of being found out of bounds at that time of night with the only truthful explanation for being there that of spending a rorty few hours at the "Three Fishers" whilst his spare cash changed hands to those of Bill Lodgey. Smithy had kept behind the cover of convenient hedgerows, intending to distance himself further from his form-master when the opportunity arose. He was just as keen as Mr. Quelch to reach the shelter of Greyfriars School.

For a brief moment he held his breath as, through a gap in a hedge, he watched the sudden and vicious attack by Sanders but, brief as that moment was, he knew that he had no time to waste if he was to render help. Any thought of his punishment for being out of

bounds was dispelled at the sight of that crumpled form at the mercy of the ruffian gloating above it... With fists clenched, he ran from the shadows, his arm raised to deflect that terrible blow before it could land on its target. Deflect it he did, but at some little cost to himself. Smithy felt a thump to the side of his head as the cudgel made contact. He lost his footing on the slippery earth and slumped to the ground just as Mr. Quelch was struggling to his feet.

The distraction had been short-lived, but it had given the Remove-master the breathing space he needed! He had recovered his walking cane from where it had fallen, and lost no time in putting it to effective use; a terrific whack landed on Mr. Sanders' headgear, breaking the crown of a battered bowler hat and, judging by the fearful howl that went up from its owner, it seemed more than possible that Soapy's nut was broken as well! But Mr. Quelch had only just started. He really entered into the spirit of the occasion, and a whole series of terrific blows descended on Mr. Sanders' person until he could flee out of range and into the blackness of the night.

"My dear boy!" It was the first time that Mr. Quelch had addressed that boy of his form in such a solicitous manner. Throbbing from that blow though he undoubtedly was, The Bounder could still raise a smile at the thought of being so addressed after being found out of bounds at such a late hour.

"I will question you later about your being out of bounds at this time." For a brief moment Henry Samuel Quelch, the schoolmaster, took over from the attacked wayfarer who was grateful for the aid he had received in a time of need. "We are near Dr. Pillbury's House." The concern had returned to the form-master's voice as he helped the Bounder to his feet, "Lean on my arm, Vernon-Smith and we will rouse the doctor and ask him to look at you."

Like the page and monarch in the old carol, forth they went together, leaving behind them the scene of their struggle, where the snow lay dinted. But a fresh fall of snow was already covering their tracks as they reached the doctor's house.

\* \* \* \* \*

"You fellows never know anything," Bunter always liked being first with the news and, since keyholes were fitted to most doors, he had met with certain success. But Bunter could never leave a plain tale unvarnished and his accounts could be relied upon to have embellishment and exaggeration.

"I tell you Smith was lying there---"

"And you are lying here," interrupted the Captain of the Remove.

"Smithy was lying there," continued Bunter undeterred, "lying there in his gore, you know. Not expected to live - the bullet passed within inches of his brain - has anyone got any toffee?"

It appeared that no-one had any toffee or, if they had, they were not prepared to part with it, so Bunter prattled happily on, unaware that Vernon-Smith, accompanied by his pal Redwing, had entered the study and was standing behind the fat Owl as he continued.

"If Smithy doesn't recover, I shall expect to bag his armchair. After all, I was in his study once. Of course, it's likely that Redwing will say that it is his. It's deplorable the way some people - Ow! Yow-wow-wow, stop pulling my ear you beast!"

Bunter became aware, suddenly and painfully aware, that the Bounder was very much in the land of the living!

"Mind if I boot this fat frog out of your study, Wharton" grinned Smithy.

"Feel absolutely free, Smithy. In fact, Frank here, and I will lend a boot or two ourselves."

"Yah! Beasts! Yaroooh! Stoppit!"

Bunter managed to reach the door as four boots managed to reach Bunter. There was a sickening thud and a terrifying yell as the Falstaff of the Remove landed in the passage outside.

"I thought I'd let you fellows know that you aren't going to be deprived of my presence at Greyfriars after all," announced Smithy. "Of course, I had a right Imperial jaw from the Head. He mentioned the possibility of a flogging or the sack, but Quelch chimed in like a good man, made out that I'd risked serious injury in helping him out and that the blow on my nut was punishment enough. So here I am."

"Yet another stroke of luck for you, Smithy, but don't count on it too much next term. Now, are you and Reddy free to spend some of the hols with me and my friends at Wharton Lodge."

"Reddy's pater will be away at sea until after Christmas and my pater is in New Zealand, I'm sure that Reddy will be glad of some uplifting company, won't you, Reddy?"

"Take no notice of him Wharton," laughed Redwing, "I assure you that both of us are looking forward to it tremendously."

"Perhaps I'd better warn you that there will be two other guests before you make up your minds: Mr. Quelch who has been invited by my uncle, and Bunter who hasn't been invited at all. If you fellows don't mind..."

"I feel I owe Quelch something for standing by me, so I'll be on my best behaviour - honest injun! As for Bunter showing up, we'll both lend a hand in frogmarching him to the nearest station. We can discuss the niceties over the spread I'm giving at tea time. See you then."

\*\*\*\*\*

It was indeed a merry Christmas under the hospitable roof of Wharton Lodge. The turkey and its trimmings, the huge Christmas pudding, the mincepies, the glacé fruits the oranges and apples, the sweets and chocolates all in ample supply - a necessary precaution with a guest like Billy Bunter at the table. Henry Samuel Quelch could unbend and, apart from a little emphatic counsel to Bunter about the need for washing away the traces of so many good things from a greasy countenance, forgot for a while that he was a schoolmaster. Perhaps, as he sat in his corner seat and watched burning logs in the great fireplace send their bright flames up the vast chimney, the Remove master's thoughts would turn to recent events. In their various ways, Prout, Price, Soapy Sanders, and Vernon-Smith had all been called to account, and it was the worst boy in his form who had acquitted himself with credit.

The sound of youthful laughter came pleasantly to his ears...



Merry Xmas and a Prosperous New Year to all Hobbyists everywhere, especially to Mary and Eric, Ye new and old Editors of grand old "C.D." from  
STUART WHITEHEAD, HYTHE, SOUTHAMPTON

\*\*\*\*\*

Yuletide Greetings to all readers and lovers of our favourite Hobby,  
MARGERY WOODS, HARLEQUIN COTTAGE, SOUTH STREET,  
SCALBY, SCARBOROUGH.

Still WANTED: Schoolgirls Weeklies, Schoolgirls Own Libraries 1st Series.

\*\*\*\*\*



If any regular reader of the Nelson Lee Library was asked to name his favourite character in the stories apart from those resident at St. Frank's college, I would imagine that without any hesitation the answer would be Dorrie and Umlosi.

This intrepid pair were introduced in the N.L.L. prior to the St. Frank's stories. The first one was No. 107 old small series dated 9/6/17: "The Ivory Seekers". Here we were told that Lee and Nipper in east Africa met up with Lord Dorrimore, accidentally. They were old friends but had not met for some time. Dorrie was grumbling that he had been rejected for service in the forces as he had lost fingers of one hand to a lion some time previously. He was now after a cache of ivory he had heard about "up country" and tried to persuade Lee and Nipper to join him on this safari. Umlosi then turned up and was introduced to Lee and Nipper. He and Dorrie had been friends for some time. Umlosi was the half brother of the chief of the Kutana tribe in whose territory the ivory was located.



"Away, mongrels!" roared Umlosi. He disdained the bayonets which menaced him

Lee and Nipper then decided to join in, and the party journeyed to Kutaland and trouble resulted. In the upset, Umlosi and his half brother became at odds with each other and a fight to the death resulted. Umlosi won and thus became chief of the tribe as was the custom with them. The party then went in search of the ivory which was found, and all was well. This is a short précis of the story which I have made from memory. I have not read the story for years now. I sent No. 107 to my friend in New Zealand, Jim Cook, who had never seen it before!

Dorrie and Umlosi only appeared in one more story prior to being featured in St. Frank's tales, and that was in No. 119 old series, dated 15/9/17, entitled "The City of Burnished Bronze". This was a story about adventures in the desert in Africa. Dorrie asked Lee to help him find a friend who had disappeared that way some while ago. The party succeeded in this quest and the story included a fine account of a sand-storm.

In the stories of St. Frank's that followed, over the years Dorrie and Umlosi became regular characters generally in various summer holiday series. A number of times Umlosi was instrumental in saving some of the boys' lives, as when Handforth went "swimming"

in the Majarra river and also when he was caught in the grip of a giant clam on one of the tropical islands visited.

I know one thing. When this intrepid pair appeared in a story around June or July each year the reader knew he was in for a smashing series to come in the near future.



My Christmas stocking in the 1950s would not have been complete without a rectangular package, which, when unwrapped revealed the red covers of GIRL Annual. The annual, however, was for all seasons, winter revels jostled with spring flowers and beach frolics; so if I now wish to recall these Christmases I turn to the weekly December issues of GIRL. Here I can recapture snow-clad winter tales, the mystery of the Nativity, the merriment of parties, and the bustle of searching for Christmas gifts.

Advertisers discreetly exorted readers to consider Swiss wristwatches, a New Yorker bike with chrome mudguards, and all manner of board games. GIRL paraded its spin-offs: diaries, scarves handbags, etc. Publishers' adverts for their latest books had a high profile, and the paper ran a Christmas book column.

The editors offered participation in Christmas parties, Carol concerts, and Pantomime outings.

Once I get the December issues out I become lost with delight in the pages and pictures, but don't just take my word for it; let the illustrations speak for themselves.

cont. 27 December 1958

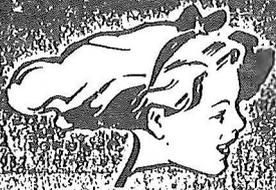


WISHING YOU ALL A MERRY CHRISTMAS

# Girl

EVERY  
WEDNESDAY

VOL. 6 NO. 1  
DECEMBER 1934



4½  
12

Wendy and Jinx, of Manor School, become friends with a young actress called Rowena Fay, a pupil at Fairbridge Academy, a nearby theatrical school. The two schools are planning a joint Christmas entertainment. An important script of Rowena's has been burnt, but the culprit has not been discovered. Rowena and Greta Paine are to be tested

for a film part. Wendy and Jinx suspect that Greta may be Rowena's enemy. Strange accidents occur to Rowena, and to keep a close watch on her, Wendy and Jinx borrow an old barn as a secret working place. One evening Rowena finds the key of the barn has been mysteriously moved. Later that night the school meet to go carol singing.

## WENDY AND JINX THE FAIRBRIDGE FEUD

EVERYONE'S  
HERE I THINK,  
WENDY. SHALL WE  
START OFF TO  
THE VILLAGE?

I THOUGHT  
WE'D BEGIN IN  
THE SQUARE. WHAT  
CAROL SHALL WE  
SING FIRST?

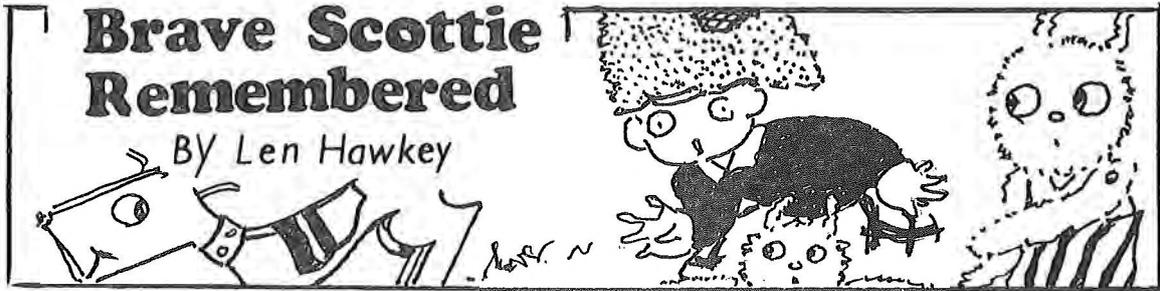
SILENT NIGHT — IT'S  
EVERYONE'S FAVOURITE!

LIGHTS GO ON IN THE VILLAGE, AND PEOPLE COME TO THE DOOR AS THE GIRLS SING ONE OF THE LOVELIEST SONGS IN THE WORLD...



# Brave Scottie Remembered

By Len Hawkey



A few months ago, in my daily paper, I came across a photo of a gent who makes articulated dogs! He had one of these creatures with him, and seemingly knocks them out for a mere £170 a time - a bit more if you want a large or even a life-size animal.

The article alongside inferred that this great idea was catching-on, and the enterprising manufacturer doing pretty well, thank you! What prompts me to bring this subject up is the fact that the articulated canine in the photo instantly reminded me of dear old Terence. Few people nowadays, except older readers or aficionados of children's comics, may recall Terence, the faithful companion of Scottie, Tim, & Binkie, favourites of many kiddies, including the writer, 70 years or more ago.

Their exploits featured in "Playtime", a magazine about the size of "The Magnet", launched by the Amalgamated Press (of course) on March 29th, 1919. This had 24 pages, (four in full-colour, as well as four in red, black & white) with marvellous frontcovers by Harry Rountree, and a full-coloured 6-picture "strip" on the back, headed "The Adventures of Brave Scottie". The caption underneath each frame was somewhat crudely versified (about on a par with Mary Tourtel's "Rupert") - of which the accompanying example is fairly typical.



¶¶¶¶¶  
 ¶¶¶¶¶  
 ¶¶¶¶¶

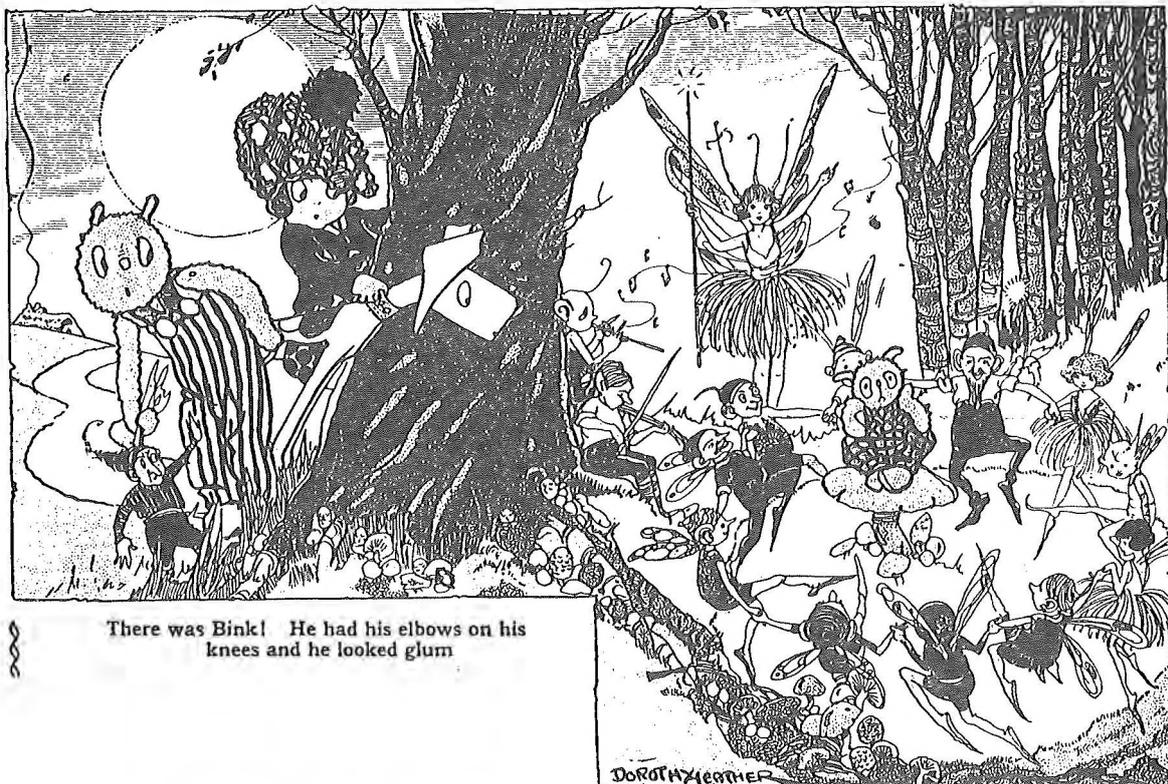
"To light a thing like this," Scott said,  
 "You need both skill and care!"  
 "You need a clear and steady head!"  
 Said Tim, as he stood there.

¶¶¶¶¶  
 ¶¶¶¶¶  
 ¶¶¶¶¶

At first there were just Scottie, Tim and Binkie, and they set off to explore the world, visiting various foreign parts, but after a while they settled down, presumably in the British Isles, to engage in all sorts of pranks and comic situations, on the same lines as their contemporaries the Bruin Boys, and similar mischievous characters. Some artists (I hardly

need mention J. Louis Smyth) impressed me even in my childhood, and Dorothy Heather, who created Brave Scottie, was one of these. The eponymous hero invariably wore an over-large Tam O'Shanter, with tartan kilt, short, crumpled gaiters and shiny shoes. He was a chubby, big-eyed laddie, with "bobbed" hair. Tim was a sizeable, slim Teddy-bear, usually attired in striped overalls, with braces, while Binkie was a smaller edition of Tim. The two bears were "articulated", just like the dogs mentioned above who are made for £170 each!

It was Terence, however, who was most akin to those animals. Terence was a true articulated dog, so thin he might have been fashioned from a single plank! He made his entry in Issue No. 57, on April 24th 1920, the same issue, strangely, in which the "Brave Scottie" heading was changed to "The Adventures of Scottie, Tim and Binkie". The trio were out for a country walk when Binkie '.....noticed a poor unhappy dog, whose face was seamed with care. Said Bink "Can I assist you, sir? You seem in some despair!'" In return for being helped over a stile (perhaps he was a bit lame) Terence saves his new friends from an angry bull, and thereafter he appeared in most - though not all - of their stories. In the "Wonderland" and then "Playtime" Annuals, these sometimes became stories extended to several pages, instead of the usual 4 or 6 "panels". In one of these, it was explained that Terence had once been the pet of a somewhat selfish little girl, who, on growing up, lost interest in him, so he must have been happy to find such congenial pals as Scottie & Co.



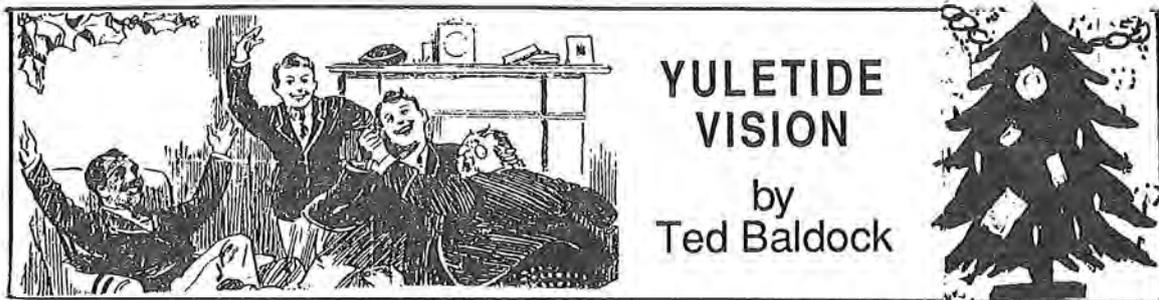
There was Bink! He had his elbows on his knees and he looked glum

The characters must have been fairly popular, as when "Playtime" was suddenly altered to the more usual tabloid size (24/11/23), Scottie, Tim & Binkie were promoted to the front page. How long they retained this eminence the writer cannot say possessing, alas, no copies of the paper of that period. This ran on until October 1929, when it changed its name to "Bo-peep". Counting both series, it had in fact lasted for 550 issues.

One may wonder why comic-paper biographers (Alan Clark apart) afford "Playtime" so little regard. The writer tends to feel that, along with its short-lived companion "Wonderland Weekly", it was, compared with its rivals such as "The Rainbow" or "Tiger Tim's Weekly", a wee bit *too* "up-market". It was, perhaps, more akin to "Puck" and

Editor "Uncle Dan" always used first class authors and artists. The former included Agnes Grozier Herbertson, Lewis Essex, Henry St. John Cooper, John Grenfell, etc., while amongst the latter were, as well as Harry Rountree and Dorothy Heather, Louis Smyth, Leonard Shields, J. MacWilson, Arthur White, Phil Swinnerton and Tom Peddie. "Playtime" also had the privilege of introducing Micky Mouse (some years before Walt Disney's similarly named character) and other amusing strips like MacWilson's "Timbertoes" and "Funland Frolics", "Mrs. Kittikats College" (L. Church) and "Billy & Dolly Jumbo" (A. White).

All these creations, and many others, too, are now largely forgotten alas - "sic transit gloria mundi". In the same newspaper that I mentioned at the beginning of this article was an advert exhorting me to read the Nobel Book Prize winner, in Penguin. This seemed to me a little odd, as I don't know much Penguin, and I'm a bit "too long in the tooth" to learn, now. Anyway, I'm thankful that the old Boys' papers and the Children's comics, were printed in English, so I'll stick with them, including the sadly neglected "Playtime", and, of course, "The Adventures of Brave Scottie"!



Again at Christmas did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth.  
Tennyson: *In Memoriam*.

A keen December wind is blowing across the park and through the leafless branches of the trees at Wharton Lodge. The chimneys of the old house are playing a deep and sombre symphony as it seeks out odd corners and angles. The ground, hard and frost-bound, is covered by a thin coating of snow. The greyness of the sky would suggest that this minor coating could be substantially increased before many hours have passed. The prospect of skating on the pond in the park is distinctly rosy.

Miss Amy Wharton is seated by the fire in the hall, spectacles half way down her nose, engaged in some intricate needle-work necessitating the use of many varied coloured threads. Silence and contentment reign. The crackling of logs in the wide hearth forms a pleasant accompaniment to the peaceful scene. Colonel Wharton, still exuding a distinctly military aspect, is seated opposite his sister, in a deep armchair puffing at a cigar, with a glass of fiery water at his elbow. A ponderous looking tome lies on the table beside him. Its title proclaims it to be a detailed history of British military campaigns in India, in particular the North-West frontier region, scene of much of the Colonel's own service. Likely enough the old warrior is fighting his battles over again, as he so frequently does in these later days.

All is well in the efficiently run little world of Wharton Lodge. Below stairs the portly Wells, long time Butler at the Lodge, is seated in his little parlour reading a day old copy of *The Times* passed on to him by the Colonel, this being a slack time in his butling day. John, the footman, an enterprising young man with dreams of vast wealth "one day"

is filling in a football coupon at the kitchen table. John is one of that numberless army of devotees in the hearts of whom "hope springs eternal", as week by week with admirable persistence he posts off the little slip of paper which could be instrumental in "changing the whole aspect of his life."

The winter term at Greyfriars has yet another week to run before Harry Wharton comes home for the Christmas holiday together with Huree Jamset Ram Singh, to be followed a day or so later by the rest of the famous Co who will also spend Christmas at the Lodge. Billy Bunter has been threatened that should he show his fat visage within a mile of Wharton Lodge during the hols dreadful things will be his lot. Such threats, rather like water flowing from the back of the proverbial duck, have very little - if any - effect. One may confidently expect that the fat Owl will materialize in good time for dinner on Christmas day. Has he ever failed so to do yet?

Mr. Henry Samuel Quelch who is generally a solitary gentleman during vacations has promised to spend Christmas and Boxing days at the Lodge at the invitation of Colonel Wharton, an old friend and one of the school governors. The classical scholar and the military man have much in common. One could imagine that the presence of the Remove master in the festive season could have a slightly dampening effect upon the spirits of Harry Wharton and Co. who might be supposed to have seen enough of him during term at Greyfriars. Not so. Mr. Quelch has a happy way of casting off his official robes when on holiday and, as Billy Bunter rather disrespectably remarked on one occasion, "he becomes almost human". Crusty features soften and acidity takes a decided tumble. He has been known to regale the company round the fire at Wharton Lodge with quite exciting tales of his far-off undergraduate days, laced with no mean streaks of humour. Henry Samuel Quelch has many rather well hidden depths, not all of them severe.

\* \* \* \* \*

Later we observe them all seated round the wide fireplace with the ruddy glow of blazing logs lighting up their faces, in an atmosphere of contentment and well-being.

Billy Bunter, who has of course turned up and been severely castigated but not turned out - for this is the season of goodwill - is beaming with well-fed complacency. His spectacles glinting in the firelight, his hand reaches out ever and anon to a dish of fruit placed conveniently near by, and he listens with tolerable patience to "old Quelch holding forth." In the background at a side table the portly Wells is superintending John in the preparations for a Christmas feast. Quietly and efficiently they go about their business while the voice of Mr. Quelch, carefully modulated to fit the hour and place (the Remove master does not lack a sense of occasion), relates with many details a famous pedestrian victory of long ago when his legs were rather more springy and elastic than - unhappily - is the case today.

A festive picture illumined by mellow lights from the past, reflecting an age whose clarity is undimmed by the passing of years or the introduction of less solid values. As lovers of Greyfriars, surely our minds turn naturally at this season to the drinking of toasts to the founder of this fascinating mini-world which retains such a powerful and undiminishing hold upon the imagination - Charles Hamilton!

Across the vista of the years  
The call comes ever clear,  
Dissolving gloom and other fears  
And brings those times so near:  
Frank Richards of the golden days,  
The "Magnet" and the "Gem"  
Those sunny days and schoolboy ways  
How dear we treasured them.



**A V E R Y  
H A P P Y C H R I S T M A S  
A N D N E W Y E A R**

**TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS, FRIENDS AND READERS OF  
"THE COLLECTORS' DIGEST"**

---

Some books for your Christmas and New Year reading:

Faithful facsimiles of the famous yellow-jacket Bunter books:  
with original unabridged text and illustrations including coloured frontispiece.  
From the imaginative publisher Hawk Books

**BILLY BUNTER OF GREYFRIARS SCHOOL  
BUNTER DOES HIS BEST  
BUNTER THE BAD LAD  
BESSIE BUNTER OF CLIFF HOUSE SCHOOL**

Each at £7.50

**BILLY BUNTER'S BANKNOTE  
BILLY BUNTER IN BRAZIL  
BILLY BUNTER AND THE BLUE MAURITIUS  
BILLY BUNTER AFLOAT**

Each at £8.95

---

New paperback editions of popular Biggles titles are now available:

**BIGGLES LEARNS TO FLY  
BIGGLES FLIES EAST  
BIGGLES AND CO.  
BIGGLES IN SPAIN  
BIGGLES DEFIES THE SWASTIKA  
BIGGLES IN THE ORIENT**

Each £3.50

---

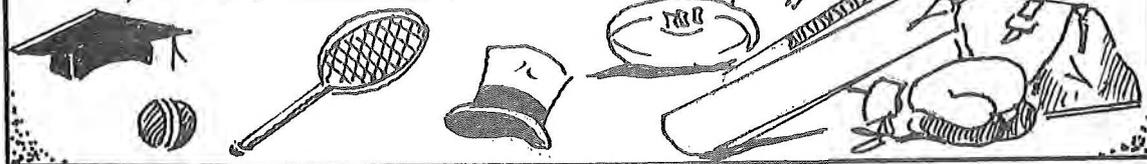
All books postage extra - no need to send payment with order as we will invoice you.

**H A P P Y H O U R S U N L I M I T E D**

**37 Tinshill Lane, LEEDS, LS16 6BU, England**

# The Children's Friend

BY MARY CADOGAN



Browsing in butterfly manner through my collection, I was struck by the atmosphere and charm of a monthly magazine published by S.W. Partridge & Co. called THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND. I only have the issues for 1895, and an 'Annual' which comprises the bound issues of 1918.

The late-Victorian numbers were sold at 1d. each with a Christmas Double Number costing 2d. Many of the stories were of the hearth and home, counting-one's-blessings variety, with a leavening of adventure and sport in boys' school backgrounds. The authors at that time were competent but undistinguished, although by 1918 gifted writers such as Ethel Talbot, H. Mortimer Batten, Dorothea Moore and May Wynne were contributing.

THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND is fascinating, for me, because of its illustrative material, its generally attractive lay-out, and the vivid sense of another age which it conveys. Its standard cover (by Harold Copping, one of its most regular artists) adroitly conjures the mood: the sense of family and security; the older brother a vigorous, rugby-playing schoolboy; his sister domesticated and book-loving; the sailor-suited younger brother joining with relish in his siblings' interests.



"Welcome to the old nest, little birdies!"

Several pictures and stories describe rustic idylls; poems and illustrations convey religious conviction, while factual articles frequently whisk young readers off to the outposts of Empire and other far flung places.

Most of all I enjoyed the 1895 Christmas number, which combines serious sentiments with seasonal fun (by Louis Wain and others). I am also intrigued by the magazine's regular advertisements for Monkey Brand Soap, Fry's Cocoa, Steadman's (and Keating's) Powder, Thomson's Corsets (obviously with Mother in mind!), Callard & Bowser's Butter-Scotch and, of course, Partridge's own Illustrated Books for the Young.

The character of the contents of THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND must have changed as the 1890s moved on to the early decades of the twentieth century. The mood of my bound (1918) volume is more expansive and adventurous than that of the 1895 numbers. Typical story examples are 'Under Wolfe's Flag' (with much military action and skirmishing with 'Redskins') by Rowland Walker, and 'The Wishing Well', a school story by Ethel Talbot.

For the moment, however, let us concentrate on Christmas. I'm sure you'll agree, from the following selection of almost-one-hundred-year-old pictures, that the season of grace and good will was wonderfully well celebrated in THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND.

No. 410. FEBRUARY, 1895.] [ONE PENNY.]

# THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND

THE INFANTS' MAGAZINE is the Best Penny Monthly for the Little Ones. (S. W. Partridge & Co.)

**CONTENTS.**

	PAGE
Raymond's Rival; or, Which Will Win? By JENNIE CHAPPELL	17
Keep Trying! Poetry ... ..	20
Illustrated Text ... ..	21
The Tale of a Tit. By F. SCARLETT POTTER ... ..	27
"Little and Good" ... ..	23
At the Browns' Party. By A. STUART FLETCHER ... ..	24
A Friendly Contest. By J. R. EASTWOOD ... ..	27
Amongst the Mexicans. By T. SULMAN	28
Our Letter Box ... ..	30
Prize Puzzles ... ..	30
Doll-Dressing Competition Award ... ..	31
Music: "Wait and See" ... ..	32

"THE CHILDREN'S SUNDAY." See THE MOTHERS' COMPANION, February. (Partridge & Co. 1d.)



TALES  
PICTURES  
PRIZE-COMPETITIONS

S. W. PARTRIDGE & CO. 9 PATERNOSTER ROW  
LONDON, E.C.

The Volume of THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND for 1895 may be had through any Bookseller; illustrated boards, 1s. 6d.; cloth, 2s.; gilt edges, 2s. 6d. Cloth Cases for Binding, 6d.; post free, 8d.



"She bears a load of holly-berries bright."

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

BY ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.

THE Christmas bells are ringing out,  
 And in the sparkling snow  
 A little, laughing girlie walks,  
 With both her cheeks aglow.

Her hat is off, she bears a load  
 Of holly-berries bright :  
 " Oh, what a blaze ! And oh, what fun !  
 We just shall have to-night ! "

Heavy the load, but light her heart,  
 And not one whit cares she,  
 As she tramps homeward through the snow,  
 A little lark for glee.

Hark ! how she carols as she trots  
 Towards the cosy fire ;  
 And, like the lark's, each moment sound  
 Her sweet notes high, and higher.

Well, here we are at home at last --  
 There's " Mother " at the door,  
 And even baby Tommy " crows " --  
 On all-fours from the floor.

Now, rich and poor, shake hands alike,  
 Let peace your bosoms fill ;  
 This holy time must surely teach  
 The lesson of good-will !

Ah, joyous is the Christmas-time,  
 And sweet shall seem our fare,  
 If we the bounty Heaven sends,  
 With poorer brethren share.

True happiness we all may find  
 Upon this earth below,  
 If we will try whene'er we can  
 To lighten others' woe.



"The Sweet Story of Old."

## CHRISTMAS GIFT BOOKS.



### THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND.

The Yearly Volume, coloured paper boards and cloth back, 1s. 6d. ; cloth, 2s. ; gilt edges, 2s. 6d.

Charming Stories, Interesting Articles, Indoor Recreations, Beautiful Pictures, Puzzles, Music, Prize Competitions, etc., etc.

### THE INFANTS' MAGAZINE.

The Yearly Volume, coloured paper boards, with cloth back and beautiful coloured Frontispiece, 1s. 6d. ; cloth, 2s. ; gilt edges, 2s. 6d.

Full of Bright Pictures and Pleasant Reading to delight the Little Ones. Printed in Large Type. A sure favourite in the Nursery.

London : S. W. PARTRIDGE & Co., 8 and 9, Paternoster Row ; and of all Booksellers.



Getting Ready for the Christmas Holidays.

(Drawn by Louis Watt.)

## XMAS for 1s. 3d.

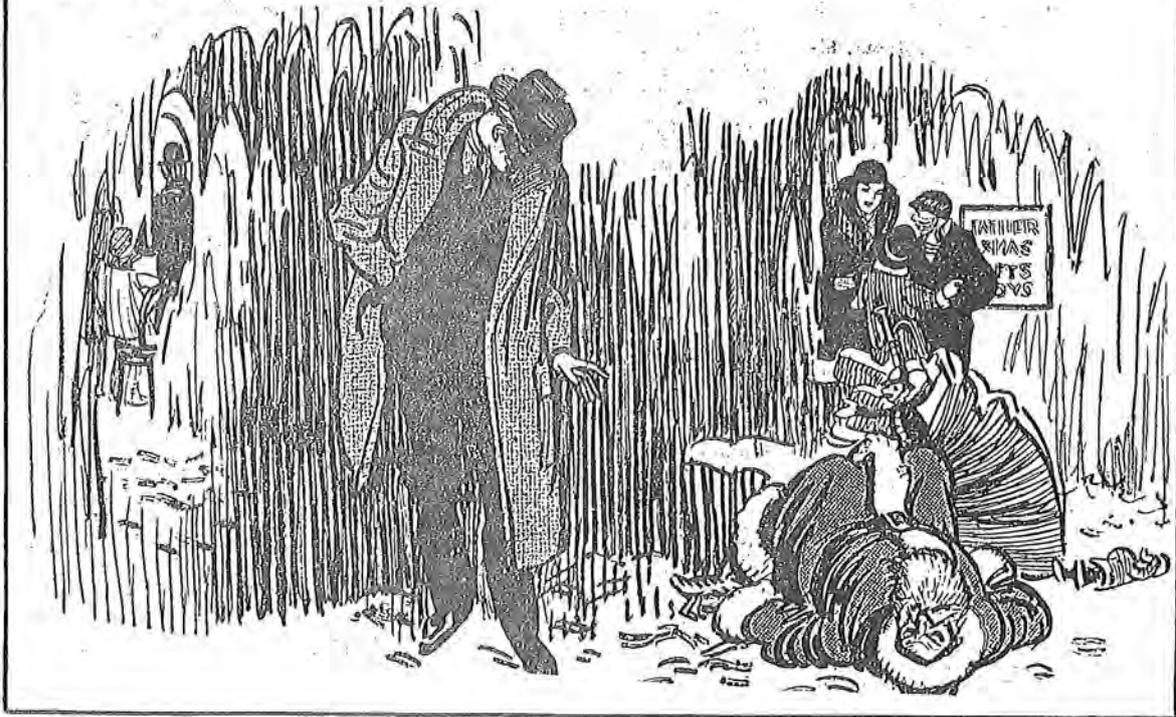
CARRIAGE PAID.

**A GREAT RUSH CERTAIN! SO WRITE TO-DAY!** "WE ASK FOR LITTLE AND GIVE YOU MUCH," which must cause the greatest demand on record. See below. Our latest "**HAPPY THOUGHT**" for the readers of this magazine is to make them an extra special parcel of Christmas Cards, and most surely we have not failed to do so. Simply write on a piece of paper your name and full address, and the words "**CHILDREN'S FRIEND**" **CHARMING XMAS PARCEL**, and post it, together with 1/3 Postal Order or 10 Stamps (a Shilling Postal Order and three Stamps much preferred), any day before Xmas, and you will receive by return, "**POST FREE ON APPROVAL**" (we repeat "on approval"), the choicest and prettiest collection of Art Novelties ever seen, **THE "IDEAL" CARDS FOR 1896 SEASON**. Novel, Choice, and Artistic in every item, far surpassing those of previous years, a selection to suit all, sufficient to post to friends and to decorate the mantelpiece, etc., to make the home bright and cheerful for Xmas. *Don't forget that all parcels are sent on "approval." Write to-day for me to look at. If you like it, keep it; if not, return it, and we will at once return your money in full. We can do nothing fairer than this to prove the great wholesale value of this "Charming Parcel."* All cards convey good seasonable wishes, and some have verses too. The first three cards are worth the small amount charged for the whole parcel. **A CHOICE AND ELEGANT BOOK-LET-SHAPED CARD** of artistic design, front prettily adorned with flowers either lavishly but **DELICATELY "JEWELLED,"** or insid on either side with Pretty Pale Pink or Blue-tinted **FANCY SILK** (real), forming as it were pretty silk curtains; two delicate leaves inside, with wish, verse, space for auto-graph, etc., the whole being daintily tied at the back with **PRETTY TINTED RIBBON OR SILK CORD AND TASSELS**; value 3d. A well-designed Comic Card, very amusing, representing a "**TRAVELLING SHOW**" of "**PUNCH AND JUDY**," separate parts for fastening together and to stand up to form the well-known favourite show, "Punch," "Judy," "Joey, the Clown," "The Beadle of the Parish," etc. Figures can be made to perform various antics with the aid of the fingers, and full printed instructions as to the working enclosed in every parcel, or equally as good shows of "The Happy Family," or "The Marvellous Menagerie," "Lovely Ella," etc., all working on the same principle. A Grand "**JEWELLED**" Folding Card, pretty shape, lovely flowers, fancy cut-out borders, value 4d. The Floral Standing Card, two pretty parts sliding from the centre to either side, like sliding doors, 6d. A Good Folding Card of comically-dressed Cats or Dogs playing with air-balls, 4d. A Very Pretty Country Scene, beautifully "**JEWELLED**" in lovely shades, 4d. A Beautiful Tri-fold Card, charming centres, pretty tinted flowers, violets or poppies, etc., 6d. A Sweetly Pretty "**SOUVENIR**" Card, fancy cut-out shape, "**PRETTY BIRDS**," etc., 4d. A very good and amusing comic imitation of Portocolling Animals, etc., "**PERFORMING POODLE AND PONY**," the dog being cleverly suspended in the air (by an ingenious and almost invisible wire arrangement) in the act of jumping over a pony's back; or the "**JUMPING MONKEY**," "Donkey and Clown," etc., all constructed with the clever wire attachment. A Lovely "**BLACK AND WHITE**" Series Floral Autograph Card, artistically cut-out borders, etc., 3d. A Good, Novel, Extending and Standing Card, cut-out centre, forming a Ship sailing into the Harbour, realistic lighthouse, sailors watching the ship, etc., or the "**PRETTY WINDMILL**," "**JOLLY MONKS**," etc., 3d. A beautiful "**JEWELLED**" Folding Card of pretty **FLOWERS**, etc., 4d. Besides all the above are given six more cards, value 1d. to 4d. each, all of choice design and finish, taken from a large stock of Folding, Jewelled, Fancy-shaped, etc., Cards. The whole contents as above, of this "**CHARMING PARCEL**" for 1/3 only, **POST FREE**, and we ask you, if possible, to write to-day, and help to avoid a "rush nearer Xmas. Our mottoes:—"**FORWARD WITH CHOICE ARTISTIC DESIGNS AND GREAT VALUE**," and "**A BIG TRADE, NOT A BIG PROFIT**." Address, **MESSRS. PAIN BROTHERS, Publishers and Wholesale "Art Traders," HANTINGS.** (Established 1859.)



# I HATE CHRISTMAS By John Bridgwater

Union Jack, 1,417—Special Christmas Number.



**SEXTON BLAKE** —DROOKS, AND CHRISTMAS! Specialty-written complete detective-and-mystery yarn, with a seasonable appeal, by that popular Christmas-story-writer, GWYN EVANS, in this ENLARGED 32-page issue. Also: new thrill-serial, "THE CROOKED BILLET."

**UNION JACK**

**THE MAN WHO HATED CHRISTMAS**

FREE  
in this issue!  
—these two  
splendid GIFT  
PICTURES  
in FULL  
COLOUR.

Fig. 1,417. EVERY THURSDAY. December 12th, 1930.

Christmas! A time when the old papers did their very best to spread happiness and joy in our young hearts with their splendid double numbers containing seasonable stories and pictures. But in 1930 what do we find? A Christmas number with a cover picture of Santa Claus about to be struck down by a dark, sinister figure behind him raising a heavy club over his head.

Inside we find such unheard-of things as "...Christmas is a lying time... one long orgy of hypocrisy and cant... an excuse for shopkeepers to overcharge scandalously in the sweet name of goodwill... one long orgy of gluttony and over-eating, misplaced sentimentalism, and a burden on the already staggering tax payer". Further on a leading character is saying to a group of children transported to an artificial jungle, "Don't be afraid children... I have brought you here to give you an idea of a land where Christmas is not. You have been fooled too long with silly stories about that hoary old humbug Santa Claus..."

There are pictures of Santa Claus being attacked in his icy grotto, of his limp form being carried home (not both

the same Santa) and the burning down of a Christmas Charity display: and, as if this were not enough to harrow the feelings of young hopeful readers, a group of poor children going to a Christmas treat is kidnapped. How can such dreadful things be offered to young readers eagerly anticipating all the joys of Christmas?

If you would learn how such an anti-Christmas came to be, and what happened to the unspeakable villain who brought it all about, our old friend and master of the Christmas story, Gwyn Evans reveals all in *Union Jack* No. 1417 of 13th December 1930. (What an appropriate date for the publication of such a tale.) The story is entitled "The Man Who Hated Christmas".

Incidentally, I do not really hate Christmas as suggested in my title, quite the reverse in fact, but it does make an eye-catching title in the Contents List of a Christmas publication!



## ANSWERS TO PICTURE PUZZLE

### "MORE ST. JIMS BOYS TO GUESS"

1. Richard (Dick) Brooke, fourth form, School House. Day Boy.
2. Percival Pratt, Study No.3, fourth form, New House.
3. George Gore, study No. 9 Shell form, School House.
4. John or Jack Blake, Study No. 6, fourth form, School House.
5. Reuben Piggott, third form, School House.
6. Robert Arthur Digby, Study No. 6, fourth form, School House.
7. Arthur Wells, sixth form, New House, Study No. 2.
8. Gerald Cutts, fifth form, School House, Study No. 15.

(Information from the Gem over the years and lists in various Holiday Annuals)



# More About Flashman

By Mark Taha



The second Flashman book "Royal Flash" (1970) was also excellent. It's divided into two parts, the first, set in 1842-43 after his returning from Afghanistan, features his meeting a young Otto von Bismarck and the legendary courtesan Lola Montez, "one of the loveliest girls I have ever seen in my life. No, THE loveliest." He has a passionate affair with her - and is later instrumental in having her exposed as a fake and in tricking Bismarck into the ring with ex-champ John Gully.

The second part of the book, set in 1847-48, features Flashy being lured to Munich by Lola, and then finding himself in a pastiche of "The Prisoner of Zenda" (it seems that he gave Anthony Hope the plot), forced by Bismarck to impersonate a Danish Prince at his wedding. It's an excellent adventure story although Flashman's outlook on life was somewhat different from Rudolf Rassendyll's! The book's villains include the fictional Rudi von Starbnberg, a German Flashman, only worse. The third book, "Flash for Freedom" (1971) begins with Flashy as a potential Tory MP. In his view "I could lie and dissemble with the best... Mark you, I've never been given to interfering in other folks' affairs..." However, an old enemy's cardsharpping results in a scandal, and Flashy is shipped abroad, in a slave ship commanded by a mad Classic-quoting ex-Oxford Don, John Charity Spring. His adventures this time include posing as a deceased Admiralty spy, having a fling with a Cockney madam - in New Orleans, slave-stealing on the "Underground Railroad", a job as a plantation overseer under the name Tom Arnold, nearly being sold as a slave, and making the acquaintance of a Congressman named Abraham Lincoln.

The fourth book, "Flashman at the Charge" (1973) is in my view the best of the lot. Early in 1854, Flashy prudently contrives an appointment to the Board of Ordnance to keep himself out of the Crimean War. However, he's then put in charge of a German prince, rapidly promoted from Captain to Colonel, and finds himself in the Crimea. The descriptive passages and historical content are brilliant (this is the one I got the essay from); first the Alma, then Balaclava, in which Flashy becomes the only man to stand with the Thin Red Line, charge with the Heavy Brigade, and then lead the Light Brigade (poetic justice; he caused the charge). He's captured and then kept prisoner by a giant Cossack nobleman, and finds his old schoolfellow, East, his fellow-inmate. They find out about a Russian plot to invade India, and escape during a peasants' rising. Flashman gets recaptured, confined with two Afghan leaders and sprung, and winds up fighting the Russians like a hero, winning a battle much to his astonishment (it turns out he was drugged with hashish!). Apart from the aforementioned, the antagonist this time is a real-life cold-blooded Russian nobleman and agent, Count Ignatieff, who also appears in the next book.

"Flashman in the Great Game" (1975) sees our hero back in Britain, a greater hero than ever. He finds himself dispatched to India by Lord Palmerston to get Ignatieff, who's stirring things up there, and on a diplomatic mission. Flashy does well with the Ranees of Jhansi although unfortunately, Ignatieff nearly gets him. Our hero goes underground as a soldier in the Indian Army, at Meerut, where the Indian Mutiny begins. He escapes, and then he's at Cawnpore, Lucknow, and on a mission (which fails) to rescue the Ranees. He does indeed meet Ignatieff again, likewise East, and his old Afghan friend, Ilderim Khan, one of the few men he seems to have liked, both of them killed at Cawnpore.

The book ends with Flashy becoming Sir Harry Flashman, VC - and then having the euphoria somewhat reduced by reading "Tom Brown's Schooldays". At the same time, a

serial story in the "Daily Express" called "Flashman and the Tiger" appeared; set in 1894, it featured a 72-year-old Flashman planning to kill a fictional character, Conan Doyle's Col. Jack Sebastian Moran, to save his grand-daughter's somewhat dubious honour. The denouement involves two fictional characters called Holmes and Watson.

"Flashman's Lady" (1977) fills part of the gap in "Royal flash". Flashman meets Tom Brown again, plays in a cricket match, and winds up on a cruise with Elspeth and a disguised Borneo pirate who kidnaps her. He joins up with "White Rajah" James Brooke in a rescue mission, only to wind up in Madagascar, enslaved by the incredible-if-not-true Queen Ranavalona.

"Mr. American", a 1980 novel about an American outlaw turned British country squire, sees an old General Flashman appear several times. He's still chasing maids and calling the King "young Bertie" at 87, and scheming, plotting and opposing involvement in the First World War at 92.

"Flashman and the Redskins" (1982) is in two parts, the first, a sequel to "Flash for Freedom", in which our hero marries twice and becomes an Apache warrior, among other things; the second, set in 1876, has him surviving Little Big Horn! "Flashman and the Dragon" (1983) set in 1860, sees our hero involved in political intrigue and the Chinese civil war of 1853-64; Mr. Fraser certainly needs his footnotes this time, as nobody would believe his descriptions (e.g. of the magnificent Summer Palace) otherwise.

"Flashman and the Mountain of Light" (1990) fills in the 1840 gap. Flashy's involved in political intrigue and the first Sikh war of 1845-46, and with more stranger-than-fiction characters like the "Tartan Pathan" and the Sikh Army - the Khalsa - who lose a battle due to Flashy's being their commander's adviser.

What's Flashman's future? Mr. Fraser is, I believe, planning a book on the Zulu war and I've been yearning for years to read his account of the American Civil War, in which our hero served on the staffs of both sides!

Furthermore, various writers have written books centred on characters from Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories; while Mr. Fraser's real-life characters make fiction superfluous, I believe that Flashman spin-offs could be written around German Flashman Rudi von Starmnberg, Cockney new Orleans madam Suzie Willinck, John Charity Spring, Ilderim Khan, and Elspeth's diaries (quoted in "Flashman's Lady"). And the "Oxford Mail" once said "they'll have Flashy as a set book in school one day". And why not? He's stimulated my reading of history. I also enjoy casting Flashman films!



Good Wishes to all readers.

MAURICE KING, 27 CELTIC CRESCENT, DORCHESTER, DORSET

\*\*\*\*\*

Happy Christmas to all readers.

ROSEMARY KEOGH, 78 GREENVALE ROAD, LONDON, SE91 1PD

\*\*\*\*\*

JACK HUGHES sends greetings to all Hobby friends. Wants booklets by H.L. Gee.

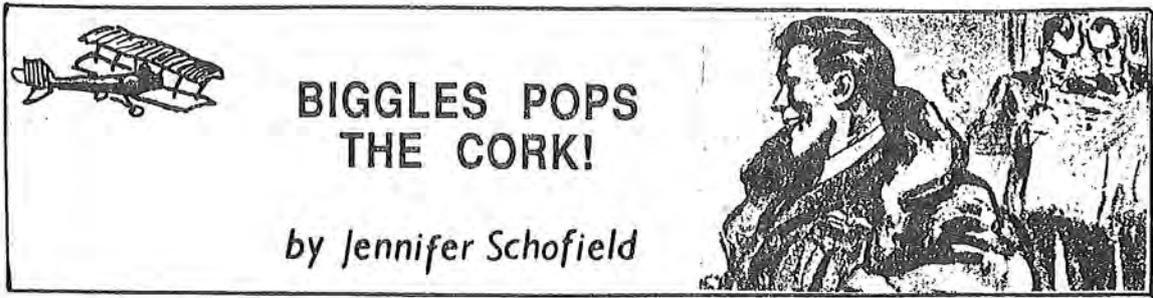
\*\*\*\*\*

Merry Xmas and Happy New Year to all Hobby friends from

JOHN BARTHOLOMEW

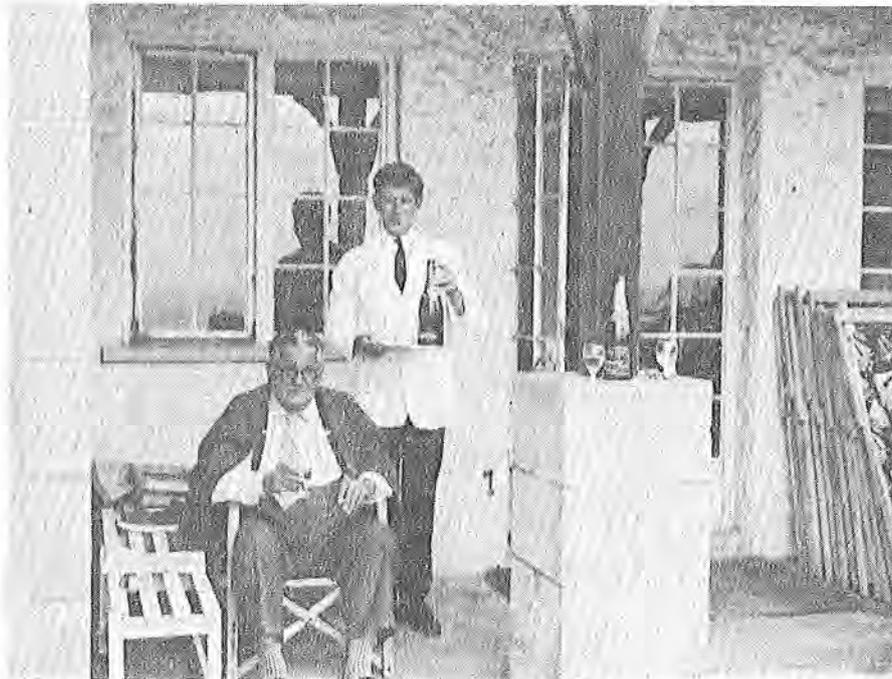
77 EDINGTON STREET, NORTH ROCKHAMPTON, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

\*\*\*\*\*



On a hotel balcony in Jersey, Captain W.E. Johns smiled into the camera, an open bottle of champagne beside him and further supplies to hand. Was he celebrating something in particular - or just exhibiting his usual joie de vivre? We shall never know, but a photograph captures that moment for us all to share.

We have a very special reason for rejoicing. The Centenary of Bill Johns' birth falls in 1993, and Biggles is still flying triumphantly on. His name itself has passed into the English language as a synonym for an "intrepid airman" of any vintage. The new paperbacks brought out by Red Fox are introducing him to yet another generation of boys and girls, and in spite of numerous attacks his popularity with fans of all ages remains supreme.



Many of us, too, continue to enjoy the wide range of Johns' fact and fiction, including the series featuring Worrals of the WAAF, dauntless airwoman and role model for many a girl in the 1940s, Gimlet, the King of Commandos and Steeley, the pilot representing the First World War heroes who found themselves unwanted and jobless in post-war society.

In 1993 Captain W.E. Johns will be celebrated as he deserves to be. There will be an exhibition devoted to him in the museum at Hertford, where he was born, and special functions in the town on his birthday, 5th February. Other events will include a luncheon at the RAF Club in Piccadilly, a show in his honour at the RAF Museum, Hendon, and perhaps most fitting of all, an aerial display of "Biggles' planes" at the Shuttleworth Collection.

What sort of celebration did Biggles himself enjoy? During the First World War, like the other young RFC officers, he would throw himself whole-heartedly into the periodic

"binges" in the Mess, when the tensions of the time could find relief in high-spirited ragging and horse-play. But it was not easy to escape from grim reality. On one occasion, when Biggles was roaring out an RFC song with his peers to the tune of "John Peel":

Oh, we were escorting 'twenty-two',  
Hadn't got a notion what to do,  
So we shot down a Spa-a-d,  
And an FE too,  
For we hadn't -"

there came the unmistakable "pour-vous, pour-vous" of a Mercedes aero-engine. "A Hun!" cried Biggles, and the next moment he led the rush for the sheds, leapt into the cockpit of a Camel and whirled into the sky, his tunic still open at his throat.

For a while the Christmas party given by "Wilks" at 287 Squadron aerodrome went with a swing, and no interruption spoiled the fun as Biggles and his comrades from 266 Squadron turned the tables successfully in an amusing hoax. The Christmas tree had been decked with worthless presents for the guests and valuable gifts for the hosts, but Biggles and Algy managed to change the parcels round and have the last laugh. Nuts and oranges were beginning to fly when a strange officer with a pale face brought shocking news - during the evening enemy aircraft had bombed 266 aerodrome, and the officers' Mess had been totally destroyed.

In the stories set in the Thirties and Forties the triumphant conclusion of an adventure was honoured in a more sophisticated fashion. Biggles, Algy and Ginger were entertained at the Savoy by the grateful Mr. Marton after they had rescued his son in "Biggles in Africa" (1936); they had to don their best bib and tuckers to dine with Cabinet ministers, after their signal services to the Empire in "Biggles Air Commodore" (1937). Biggles himself carried his friends off to the Café Royal at the end of "Biggles in Spain: (1939), and it was back to the Savoy at Air Commodore Raymond's expense, after the Second World War exploit described in "Biggles Defies the Swastika" (1941).

But in Air Police days life became drabber. Most stories ended as the heroes headed for home or even turned in for a good night's sleep, although Inspector Gaskin might suggest a drink to mark the winding up of a successful case.

Surely the best celebration of all in the Biggles series is the dinner-party Biggles gave when Ginger was awarded his Pilot's "A" Licence, at the beginning of "Biggles Hits the Trail" (1935). It was an exclusive affair; the only guests were Algy and Ginger, but the airman still rose to his feet and made a speech, for, as he said, he would be failing in his duty if he did not say a few words on such an auspicious occasion.

He told his audience how well Ginger had performed on his course and that he was expected to become a first-class pilot. Then, warming to his theme, he warned his blushing young protégé not to be over-confident, reminding him how much a pilot had to learn and how much he owed to the great pioneers of the past:

"Honour the traditions of courage, modesty and faithfulness in little things that they have set down as a guide for you to follow, and you will always be welcome at any place where airmen meet... And now I am going to ask Algy to stand up and join me in drinking the health of the fledgling who we both hope will be a credit to his machine, to us and aviation as a whole, in the old RFC toast..."

What is in the abstemious Biggles' glass? This time it has to be champagne!

"Soft landings!" declaims Biggles, his drink held high. On his sunny balcony in France, Captain W.E. Johns raises a brimming bumper and drinks deep, in acknowledgement of all he holds most dear.

We will also pledge this toast!

"And no dud engines," murmurs Algy.



## SCHOOLGIRLS ON THE SMALL SCREEN

by Mary Cadogan

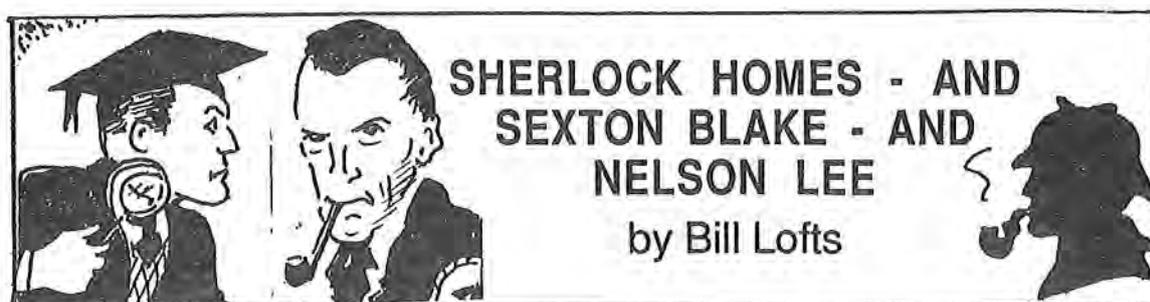


In the early summer of this year I agreed to take part in the BBC TV series called NOEL'S ADDICTS. The idea was that Noel Edmonds would interview me as a girls' story-paper 'addict' (I would, of course, have much preferred the word 'enthusiast', but the ways of TV light entertainment are fixed and unyielding!).

In fact, recording the programme at the Birmingham Pebble Mill studios was a most pleasant experience. The production and research team were immensely friendly, and I was extremely well 'looked after' from the moment I arrived in the morning until I was put in a cab for my Birmingham hotel late that evening. It was a bonus that Barry Hill - collector and doyen of vintage radio programmes - was on the same bill. I began my career at the BBC in the mid 1940s and returned there for a year or two in the '50s; I've always been a 'wireless' fan so Barry and I had many lively 'Do you remember...?' conversations at intervals throughout the day, between talking over production points with the producer and Noel Edmonds, and 'rehearsing'.

The format of the programme was that each interviewee first chatted with Noel about his or her passion, and then took part in a Quiz. For my interview, a brief playlet had been written on 'Daisy Pulls It Off' lines, with Susie Blake, Sherrin Hewson and Sophie Lawrence playing schoolgirl parts. A surprisingly authentic looking 1930s schoolroom had been erected: I came on as the Head Mistress and Noel Edmonds was 'the new biology master'.

It was all very high-jinkish, and took place before a large studio audience, but happily stage-fright didn't engulf me. I scored 12 out of 12 for the Quiz - it would have been awfully embarrassing to have 'dried' - and felt reasonably at ease as a 1990s Miss Primrose! The picture above is a memento of the occasion. Sophie Lawrence, on the right of the photograph, may be familiar to many C.D. readers as Diane of 'East Enders' fame. At the time of the TV programme she was touring in the title role of Denise Deegan's 'Daisy Pulls It Off' - a part which I'm sure she played to perfection.



They say that imitation is the highest form of flattery, and no great fictional character has been parodied more than Sherlock Holmes. Almost since he first appeared way back in Beeton's Christmas Annual in 1887 in 'A Study in Scarlet', thousands of parodies and pastiches have been written about him. In fact so many that several books have been published containing the best of them.

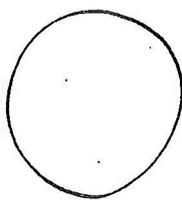
The tall, slender Baker Street detective with receding hair-line, dressed in his deerstalker hat and Inverness cape is easily recognisable in every corner of the world. The twisting of his name around is really unlimited. There have been Picklock Homes, Homelock Shears, Hemlock Bones, Shylock Tombs, Chublock Homes and, probably the best one in a comic, Sherbert Foams, which I think could never be beaten.

Our own Charles Hamilton obviously had so much admiration for the character that he created his own Herlock Sholmes in short stories reputed to be by the Greyfriars Remove detective, Peter Todd, and appearing in Greyfriars Herald, Magnet, and Gem. Americans thought so much of these stories that a volume of them was produced in the U.S.A.: also an essay, which I wrote in collaboration with Professor John Leland, in 'The Dispatch Box'. These parodies were also republished by Hawk books a few years ago. In my time I must have discovered quite a few buried in magazines, and only last year I found a very clever one which featured Sherlock Holmes against Raffles and other famous characters.

In September of this year, I found another in The Passing Show which is unique. This has Sherlock Holmes involved with our own great detectives, Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee, the very first time that all three have appeared together. Of the author I know nothing, except that he probably was a staff writer at Odhams Press, filling in odd features to interest the reader.

Full acknowledgements are made to him and Odhams Ltd. for presenting a most amusing and novel parody which will, I am sure, entertain present day admirers of the three great detectives, even though it appeared way back in 1936 - some 56 years ago.

In matters of travel, Phineas Fogg was a mere amateur compared with the truly great detectives of fiction.



ANTHONY GREY

DEAR WATSON

"Then," said Sherlock Holmes, "I'll not return till I've found him."

**S**HERLOCK Holmes snapped on his hat and took the Chief of New Scotland Yard by the hand.

"I'll not return till I find those pearls," he hissed. "Information which I have received leads me to believe they were taken from Liverpool to New York. I will look there first. Tomorrow I sail for New York. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," said the Chief of New Scotland Yard; and the great detective evaporated from the room.

"Now," said Sherlock Holmes as he ran up Whitehall, "we shall see something!" He dashed into the Underground at Trafalgar Square.

"Single to New York," he said.

"Change at Euston," said the booking-clerk.

**A** WEEK went by. A fortnight. A month. At last the Chief of New Scotland Yard began to wear a worried look. Five weeks passed and still no word from the great detective. The Chief of New Scotland Yard began to get busy. He called his staff together.

"Holmes must be found!" he barked.

"What can we do?"

"Send for Sexton Blake," was the best suggestion; and so the Chief sent for Sexton Blake.

"This is the position," he explained.

"Sherlock Holmes went out on the trail of the Duke of Blankstare's pearls five weeks ago. He went to New York. Since then he has not been heard of. Can you find him for me?"

Sexton Blake snapped on his hat, and took the Chief of New Scotland Yard by the hand.

"I'll not return till I have found him," he hissed. "From what you say, I am of the opinion that Holmes must have gone to New York. I will look there first. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," said the Chief of New Scotland Yard; and the great detective went out sideways.

"This," said he, as he ran up Whitehall, "is easy."

He dashed into the Underground at Trafalgar Square.

"New York," he said to the booking-clerk.

"Oh, yes. I know your brother," said the booking-clerk. "Change at Euston."

A week went by. A month. Two

months. Not a word from anybody. The Chief of New Scotland Yard was ageing rapidly. One day he realised that something had to be done, so he called his staff together.

"Sexton Blake is completely missing," he informed them. "What can we do?"

"Send for Nelson Lee," was the best suggestion; and so the Chief of New Scotland Yard sent for Nelson Lee.

"It's this way," he said. "Two months ago Sexton Blake went to New York on business for me. Since then he has not been heard of. What can you do about it?"

**N**ELSON Lee snapped on his hat and took the Chief of New Scotland Yard by the hand.

"I'll not return till I've found him," he hissed. "It is pretty obvious that Blake went to New York. I will look there first. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," said the Chief of New Scotland Yard, and the great detective spirited himself away.

"Child's play!" he said as he spirited himself up Whitehall and into the Underground at Trafalgar Square.

"Change at Euston," said the booking-clerk.

"Where for?" said Nelson Lee.

"New York," said the booking-clerk.

"Ah!" said Nelson Lee. "One day, if you keep on like that, you will be a great detective."

**A** MONTH went by. Two months. Three months. The Chief of New Scotland Yard was threatened with baldness. He was just about to call his staff together and seek their advice in the matter of Nelson Lee, when one bright morning, the door of his office opened and in came Sherlock Holmes.

"I have got the pearls," he said.

"No doubt," grunted the Chief. "But we have lost something far more valuable than pearls. We have lost Nelson Lee."

"Tell me," said Sherlock Holmes. "I have just come in through Asia and Europe. What has become of Nelson Lee?"

The Chief told him.

"Then," said Sherlock Holmes, "I'll not return till I've found him. I am of the opinion that Nelson Lee went to New York. I will look there first."

He went out. Months passed. One day the door of the office opened and in came Sexton Blake.

"I have been all over Asia and Europe," he explained, "but I am afraid

I have failed. I have no news of Holmes."

"Holmes sailed for New York six months ago," said the Chief of New Scotland Yard. "He went to find Nelson Lee for me, but since then I have not had a word from him."

"Leave this to me," said Sexton Blake. "I'll not return till I've found him. New York, eh? I'll look there first."

**A** YEAR later the office door opened again and in staggered Nelson Lee. He had come by way of Asia and Europe.

"Have I failed?" he gasped.

"Can't say," said the chief. "Sexton Blake was in here just a year ago today. He sailed for New York that very afternoon. We've heard nothing of him since."

"Don't lose heart," said Nelson Lee. "New York, you say? I'll look there first. Good-bye."

Two months later, by way of Asia and Europe, came Sherlock Holmes.

"Well?" he said.

"He passed through here two months ago," said the Chief. "Bound for New York."

"I'll look there first. Good-bye."

**A**LL this was many years ago. The last time Sherlock Holmes passed through London, on the trail of Nelson Lee, who was on the trail of Sexton Blake, who was on the trail of Sherlock Holmes, he was eighty-five and grey, but bearing up well. It was as recently as last Wednesday afternoon. He sailed for New York on Thursday morning.

"I will not give in," he is reported to have said, "till I find him."

Nor will he, the stout old soul.

Boys, be a detective and see the world.



## *The "Immortals"*



### IN MEMORY OF "FRANK RICHARDS" by Bob Whiter

Founder of Greyfriars, who told her story so well  
And in that service, eloquent but apart  
Achieved a name that never lost its spell  
Over your country's young at heart.  
Who saw your work accomplished, ere at length.  
Shadows of evening fell, and withered time  
Had warped your stature or resolved the strength  
That kept its manhood's prime.  
Great were your stories till you broke the earthly bond  
And not so far from the Greyfriars portal  
Your spirit passed into the great beyond  
And you became immortal!





# FLIPS PAGES



(INCORPORATING NORMAN SHAW)  
 ROBIN OSBORNE, 84 BELVEDERE ROAD, LONDON SE19 2HZ  
 PHONE (BETWEEN 11 A.M. - 10 P.M.) 081-771 0541

Massive stocks of illustrated publications competitively priced and including:-

**BRITISH** Comics, story papers, annuals, humour magazines - all types from the turn of the century to date.

**AMERICAN** comic books, newspaper comic sections and story magazines - all subjects - science fiction, fantasy, hero, crime, western, war, historical sport, romance, humour, and general fiction and 'funny animal' titles.

Stock is vast (and it changes almost daily) so that lists are not very practical or useful. Let me know your requirements and I can advise on availability.

Callers always welcome but please make an appointment.

# A CHRISTMAS ENIGMA FOR BABS AND CO.

by Margery Woods



## Chapter 1

"Oh, Bessie! What have you forgotten now?"

"Mum-my pink wrap --- it might be cold..."

"What might be cold --- you or the pink wrap?" chortled Clara Trevlyn heartlessly.

Bessie looked mutinous and Mrs. Lynn cast a wry smile at Barbara Redfern, Fourth Form Captain, and thus unofficial sorter-out of problems among her chums. "Go with her, Babs, dear, and maybe you should pack everything else she brought with her --- it could save time in the long run."

"Come on, Bess, quickly." Leaving the chums grinning, Babs hurried the plump duffer back into the hall of Lynn's Folly and upstairs to the room they were sharing during this Christmas holiday. The fluffy pink mohair stole, a pre-Christmas present from Bessie's mother, was found and stowed into a spare hold-all belonging to Babs, along with a hectically hued purple satin blouse which Bessie suddenly decided she could not live without for two days, and a box of toffees from an unspecified hiding place. Then she insisted on searching for a book of Christmas cookery, which baffled the patient Babs. "But you won't be cooking at Sherrilaynes, you ---"

The plumpest junior at Cliff House suddenly sat down on the bed, looking thoroughly miserable. Babs heart softened. "What's the matter, Bess? We're holding everyone up, you know."

"I don't w-want to go to this other house. I-I'm scared it'll be creepy. There might be a g-ghost. Can't we stay here, Babs?"

"Of course we can't! Mabs' parents and all of us are going. And where did you get the idea of ghosts, you silly duffer?" Babs smiled, even as she felt a flash of disquiet, which was not helped by the stentorian tones of Clara demanding to know how much longer they were going to be. The voice was followed by its owner.

"Well, what's the hold-up now?" the Tomboy demanded.

Babs told her, and motioned Clara to be silent. She sat down at Bessie's side and said gently: "Now tell me, Bess. You must have some reason behind this."

Bessie clasped two trembling hands together. She really did look perturbed about something. At last she said: "You won't tell, will you, Babs?"

Babs restrained impatience. "I can't tell what I don't know, now can I? Come on, before another search party comes up here."

Bessie took a deep breath. "I heard Mr. and Mrs. Lynn talking last night and Mr. Lynn said ---"

"Keyhole capers again!" cried Clara. "You ---"

Bessie glowered. "I didn't do it on purpose. "I came down to get my book, last night, and Mr. and Mrs. Lynn must have been sitting in those highbacked chairs and didn't hear me. I was going to speak to them when Mr. Lynn said it would have been far more sensible to have had Madeline over here for Christmas instead of all of us traipsing over to Sherrilaynes. And then Mrs. Lynn said she did ask her but Madeline said no, she wanted to spend Christmas in her new home, but she was finding the big old house a bit lonely and creepy." Bessie gulped a tremulous breath. "Then Mrs. Lynn said she'd felt she couldn't very well say no to Madeline, and there was something about a church as well, but then I saw my book and came back upstairs --- I didn't want them to think I'd been listening."

"But you were, weren't you?" said Clara sternly.

"Listen, Bessie." Babs patted the fat duffer's hand. "I'm sure that Sherrilaynes isn't going to be any creepier than this house would be on a dark stormy night. It's very old as well. But you're not scared here."

"Nun-no." Bessie did not look convinced. "But you're all here."

"And we'll all be there." Clara had a change of heart. She patted Bessie's shoulder and declared stoutly: "Never fear, we'll guard you night and day, Fatima. Now come on!"

A little unwillingly, Bessie allowed them to urge her downstairs and out into the unseasonably mild December morning to where the rest of the Party were gathered.

There were ten of them altogether. Babs and Clara and Bessie, their golden-haired chum Mabs, and her parents, their hosts this Christmas holiday. Gentle Marjorie Hazeldine waited patiently beside a more restless Janet Jordan, from the famous circus family, and smiled at some remark from Leila Carroll, the American member of the Co. Lastly, Jemima Carstairs, of the Eton crop, monocle and languid mien. Seeing Bessie still hesitant in the doorway of Lynn's Folly, Jemima stepped forward and grasped the fat one's arm firmly, to march her briskly to the big estate car. With a flourish, the elegant Jemima opened the door and sketched a salute. "Not quite the Bunter Roller, what, old thing, but if it breaks down we'll all roll you!"

Major Lynn made no effort to control his chuckle, nor did he lose any time in getting the protesting duffer stowed aboard. Jemima and Clara and Janet and Leila piled in joyously after Fatima, leaving Babs and Marjorie and Mabs to follow in the smaller car with Mrs. Lynn.

The merry group from Cliff House had been at Mabs' home since breaking up day. It was now the day before Christmas Eve and they were off to spend the next couple of days with Mrs. Lynn's old friend, who had recently returned from America.

"Did you remind the girls to pack warm things?" Mrs. Lynn asked as she eased the car out of the drive gates.

"Yes, mother," said Mabs. After a moment or so she said idly, "It must be very exciting suddenly to get a letter in the post one morning to tell you that you've inherited an ancient manor house you scarcely knew existed."

Mrs. Lynn smiled. "Exciting to you, perhaps, but it's proving unexpectedly expensive for Madeline, I'm afraid. They'd taken over a year to trace her --- she's the very last of the Sherrilayne line --- and of course with her descending from a very distant branch on the distaff side, plus having married an American and lived over there so long, it made the tracing of her quite a job. And of course the inheritance tax has landed on her; the manor itself is falling apart" ---

--- here Babs uttered a silent prayer of thanks that Bessie wasn't with them ---

--- "and hasn't had a thing done to it for years. Old Mr. Sherrilayne, who was a cousin several times removed, had lived on his own, in two rooms, till he died at eighty, and from what Madeline tells me he apparently hardly ever set foot in the rest of the house. And it's huge, more a mansion, much larger than our place."

"I can't remember you talking much about Madeline," Mabs probed gently, more to seek information about their destination than to indulge curiosity about the owner.

"No," said Mrs. Lynn. "We were school chums, but she married at eighteen and went to live in her husband's home town. He was a lawyer," she added absently. "I only met him once, after the wedding when they holidayed in Europe. Sad that he died so suddenly three months ago. I suppose in a way all this could be good therapy for her. I have a feeling she'll settle back here."

Mrs. Lynn's musing tone ceased as she negotiated a very narrow bend and an overladen lorry. Hazards passed, she added more brightly: "But don't worry, my dears. Although the mods and cons at Sherrilaynes are pure Victorian primitive --- if not Gothic! --- there are fires in the rooms we'll be using, it's been a mild autumn after a hot summer so the place isn't too chilly, and Madeline and I spent two exhausting days in London buying new mattresses and duvets, and various other essentials. Then we found four women from the village to come in every day for a week and gave the place a good spring-clean."

Despite her lingering unease about the nervous fears of Bessie, Babs had felt her sense quicken as she listened to Mrs. Lynn. There was something tremendously exciting about a vast old house that waited to be brought to life again, waited to be explored, with its atmosphere to enfold the newcomer, and perhaps ... Babs surrendered to a shiver, half delight, half the anticipation of dread... perhaps the silent shadows of long gone inhabitants still lurked within the ancient walls. With the transient memories of their hopes and fears, their loves, their hates, and their secrets...

## Chapter 2

Sherrilayne lay some twenty-five miles distant from Lynn's Folly, and about ten minutes later the little straggling village, which took its name from the old manorial title, showed its first outlying farms. A few modern homes edged the main road until it reached the narrow winding High Street of the village itself. At the top of the incline leading out of the far side Mrs. Lynn slowed and pointed to the left. "There's the new church, girls. It is being dedicated tomorrow evening."



The clean, simple lines of the little church were in perfect harmony with the centuries old thatched and timbered buildings that formed the hub of the village. The lane leading to Sherrilaynes turned off almost immediately, winding for half a mile before the high old iron gates appeared, marking the end of the lane. The grounds were sadly overgrown, and Babs could only guess at the number of staff it must have taken to keep the place immaculate. As they drove along the carriageway there were glimpses of an old rose garden framed by shrubs and backed by a copse of trees, and at the front of the house were the outlines of what had been formal lawns and herbaceous borders. Ancient statuary

dotted the grounds amid arbours and once stately rose walks, and a robin perched cheekily on an old sundial.

But the house itself still presented an imposing facade with its half-timbered gables and russet-red creeper partly veiling its diamond paned casements. At either side of the massive blackened oak doorway were signs of new life. Two big Christmas trees had been thrust into moss-stained urns and one already bore a lop-sided draping of fairy lights, while a large wheelbarrow nearby overflowed with holly. Then the door was hauled back and a petite lady with dancing fair curls as tousled as those of the Tomboy herself and a happy smile of welcome rushed out to greet the newcomers, with a special hug of welcome for Mrs. Lynn. There was a flurry of introductions, then Madeline urged them all indoors into the great hall, where coffee waited on a low table before the vast old fireplace.

The others were already ensconced: Bessie looking replete and happy in the big inglenook, the firelight reflections gleaming in her big spectacles and tinting her plump cheeks an even deeper red than usual. Babs felt a sigh of relief; the duffer seemed to have recovered from her earlier attack of nerves; Babs could relax, and let her artist's eye appreciate the richly carved panelling, the fascinating old minstrels gallery at the far end of the vaulted hall, the great paintings that peeped down over the broad staircase with its tall, finely carved finials that guarded it like sentinels. And then Babs' gaze was caught by the wide, wistful eyes of the girl in the painting above the mantel. Broad satin ribbons trailed from her blue dress, one hand held a small posy of sweetpeas, and the other restrained a bright-eyed white and tan Pomeranian dog. She was very beautiful

Mrs. Grey --- or Madeline, as she had insisted they call her -- shook her head smilingly as she intercepted Babs' regard. "I'm afraid I can't tell you much about the place or its history --- I'm trying to find out more myself. Although there is quite a lot to be learned from the locals. I've found a gardener already, by the way. He must be eighty if he's a day, and his grandfather was head gardener here in the old days. It's marvellous", she said, "he's so garrulous I know we're going to get loads of history from him."

"Whether you want it or not!" laughed Mabs.

"Oh, but I do! Now, girls, I hope you're going to help me to decorate for Christmas?"

"Oh, we'd love to!" they chorused.

"Good. Now, I'll show you your rooms." Alive with nervous energy, Madeline sprang up to lead the way, chattering volubly as she did so. They were not surprised to learn that the plumbing and wiring of the house was antediluvian, to say the least, and there were a few warnings they had to heed, until she was able to start the vast overhaul that would be necessary before the house reached the standard of comfort taken for granted in this modern age. "And I hope you're not scared of mice!" she added dramatically. "We've been setting traps like made for the poor little beasties, but one can't be too sentimental, I'm afraid."

"Mum-mum-mice!" exclaimed Bessie, and gave an ouch as Clara jammed a sharp elbow in the plump one's ribs. "Don't start!" hissed the Tomboy. "Or we'll know that the brave and valiant Bunter clan is scared stiff of a poor, harmless little mousie." One at least of the valiant Bunter clan subsided, albeit a little doubtfully.

Excitedly the chums tested the new mattresses on the very old fourposters in their rooms, hurled their possessions into vast cavernous wardrobes where they might disappear for ever, Jemima observed, and scampered along corridors and gallery and back downstairs to throw themselves into the joy of bringing Christmas to this long neglected house. Lunch came and went, Major Lynn was called into the garden to supervise the fixing of the big Christmas holly wreath with its flowing scarlet ribbons on the front door, fix the outdoor tree lights, then confer with Madeline and the new gardener, who had thoughtfully brought along a couple of hefty young assistants, over the right order of priorities for as much of a Christmas tidy-up as could be accomplished in the short time remaining. An electrician arrived to complete a much needed power circuit for kitchen and sitting room. The tree lights outside suddenly radiated Christmas triumph, and a cheer

went up when the tree in the hall followed suit, its tinsel and baubles shimmering a myriad of colours.

The hours of that day simply flew. A tide of wrapping paper ebbed and flowed across the hall floor as present packing got under way and the gaily decorated heap began to spread under the tree. In no time Madeline and Mrs. Lynn were announcing that the evening meal would be ready in five minutes.

Flushed and happy, the chums decided a quick apology for a wash was needed: only then did Babs realise that Bessie had been missing for at least half-an-hour.

"She'll be feeding her face somewhere," said Clara.

"Or sleeping off the treble helpings of lunch," laughed Janet.

Babs led the scamper up the great staircase, catching one of the finials at the baluster head as she whirled onto the gallery. Then a piercing scream halted her rush and stilled her laughter, stilled all their laughter. For a moment they froze, then began to run, towards the room where Bessie must be, towards the sudden loud crash that echoed and re-echoed through the house. And another scream.

### Chapter 3

Babs got there first.

She thrust open the bedroom door, a tremor of panic in her heart, then rushed in. The others crowded after her.

"Bessie!"

"What the ---?"

"What happened?"

Elizabeth Gertrude Bunter was standing on the bed, mouth open, drawing in breath for yet another piercing scream. A box of candies had scattered its contents over the floor, a small occasional table lay on its side under the window, a shattered china figurine lay in several pieces nearby, three books had joined the wreckage, and a walnut box had fallen, lid open, to spill its contents over the rug.

The chums looked at one another in dismay, then Babs stepped forward and reached up to grasp Bessie's arm. "Now what was all that about?"

"H-has it gug-gone?" Bessie palpitated, retreating back from Babs' grasp.

"Has what gone, you chump?" yelled Clara. "There's nothing, nobody here, but us -- and this!" She gestured accusingly at the damage.

"It-it was a mum-mouse! A big mouse! It ran right out! It ---"

"A mouse!" A monster mouse!"



"Did it chase you up there, Fattikins?"

"Ha ha ha!"

Babs did not join in the mirth. She was picking up the walnut box, scooping the simple, childish trinkets back into it, restoring the tray fitment, before closing the lid. Jemima murmured, "Ahem," and carefully set the table to rights. Marjorie, dismay in her expression, rescued the broken figurine, ruefully trying to match piece to piece, then shaking her head.

"Come on, Bessie," said Babs, "we've got to own up to Madeline about this and offer to pay for the damage. Goodness knows what that figurine might be worth."

"I dud-didn't do it on purpose," protested Bessie, allowing herself to be helped off the bed. "It made me jump, and--and the ---"

"The whole shebang collapsed with the vibrations," grinned Clara.

However, Madeline seemed unconcerned and made light of it all, much to Bessie's relief. Marjorie, noted for her skilful hands and patient fingers, offered to try to repair the figurine, and the incident was soon forgotten during the jollity and the meal which followed. It was not until she was getting ready for bed much later, in the same, room, which she was sharing with Bessie, that Babs found the long slat of polished wood.

Her first thought was of the table. If it had come from that the damage could be worse than they'd thought. But the slat of wood seemed complete on its own, with a curious, slender metal tab at one end. Could it have come out of the inlaid walnut box?

After a pause and a glance at the already snoring cause of the trouble, Babs took box and slat and slipped quietly into the next room where Mabs and Jemima were about to turn in.

Immediately Jemima said: "I've seen a box like that before. They were known as travelling companions --- sort of forerunner of the handbag, methinks." She set the box on the bed and opened the lid. "See, there's a velvet pocket in the lid, to hold writing paper, or letters. And these dinky little silver-topped pots held cream or whatever. Now," Jemima looked owlish, "there should be a secret drawer."

Carefully she lifted out the tray with its little velvet places and loops to hold manicure implements, and ran her fingers along the recess below. "Yes, here it is, and here is the spring, which fits into that slat you've been puzzling over."

It seemed so easy when you knew how, thought Babs, watching Jemima slip the thin piece of wood along the recessed part of the box, press it until it clicked and became virtually invisible.

"It's on the same principle as the writing slope," Jemima went on, putting an exploratory fingertip into the small compartment that held one of the little cut glass containers. She pressed the base, and Babs jumped as the slat of wood shot free on the surprisingly powerful spring. The Jemima gently drew out one of two tiny drawers that were now revealed.

"There's something it it!" cried Babs. "Oh, look! It's a miniature." She took it under the light and studied the beautifully painted portrait of a young man, little more than a boy, whose mischievous eyes were instantly reminiscent of the eyes in the picture downstairs.

There was a squeal of excitement from Mabs. "There's something in the other drawer --- a rolled up piece of parchment. Should we look?"

"Let's get the others, and go down and show Madeline --- they'll still be talking by the fire," suggested Babs.

"We'll let Bessie sleep, shall we?"

"And hope an army of giant mice doesn't invade the bed," giggled Clara.

Snug in dressing gowns, they trooped downstairs with their discovery and explanations. Mrs. Lynn went to make cocoa, the features in the miniature were compared to those in the portrait above the mantel, and all agreed that the boy and the girl were probably related.

"What does the parchment say?" asked Madeline, as youthfully excited as the girls.

Mr. Lynn had been carefully smoothing it open. A century or more of being curled up had made it difficult to flatten. He smiled. "I'm not sure whether this has any great significance, or not, but it may keep you amused for an hour or so tomorrow, especially if it rains."

"Oh, do get on with it, Arnold!" Mrs. Lynn urged her teasing husband.

"Very well." He cleared his throat and began to read, with all the resonance of a man who had spent so much of his life in the theatre:

"My first is in Rhythm but not in Rhyme,  
My second in Faith, which grows in Time,  
My third is in Ending, and also Beginning,  
My fourth is in Friendship but not in Sinning,  
My fifth is Inevitable, as Night follows Day,  
My sixth is in Love, as in Friendship's Way,  
My seventh is in Worship, for God Loveth All,  
My eighth is Adoring, to God I will call,  
My Whole is in Loveliness, a Prayer to bring Peace,  
Forgiveness and Music, May God's Love never cease."

There was silence for a moment, as his voice stilled. The girls looked at each other, then Madeline exclaimed: "I don't think I quite got that."

Major Lynn smiled. "I'm not surprised. It's a form of enigma, or rebus puzzle. The Victorians were very keen on them. No magazine for the family was complete without its page of puzzles to solve."

"But that sounded more serious," said Mabs. "I think there's a message behind it."

"I have just one message," said Mrs. Lynn. "And that's bedtime. You can puzzle your brains in the morning --- if you have time of course," she added mischievously. "It's Christmas Eve!"

But even Christmas was forgotten when they gathered after breakfast and made copies of the enigma, after which a great deal of letter eliminating went on, in a great many permutations on a great many sheets of paper. It was just before lunch when Major Lynn announced he had cracked it. "The answer has to be," he paused teasingly and Mabs groaned aloud at her father, "the answer is 'THE FINIAL'."

"The finial?" they echoed in puzzlement. "But what does it mean?"

"It means that is only the start of a trail of clues, probably from some long gone Victorian house party."

Jemima's monocle slipped to the end of its cord as she snapped her fingers. "Of course, why didn't the old brainbox think of that. Except, it could be the final clue, my old spartans."

"How do you know?" asked Clara.

"Because a finial is a sort of finishing touch, is it not?" Major Lynn nodded, and Jemima went on: "It's an architectural embellishment, ahem."

Loud groans greeted this display of knowledge. Major Lynn raised enquiring brows at Madeline. "Do you mind if we start dismantling your inheritance?"

"Feel free!" Her eyes sparkled. "This is fascinating, even if it doesn't come to anything."

"Thank you." Major Lynn rose from his chair. "I think we'll begin in the minstrels gallery. As the enigma was found in a girl's box we'll assume either she composed it, or she took part in the game whenever it was played. Therefore the finial in question would not be on the roof."

The carved oak rail enclosing the gallery had a low gate at its centre, flanked by two tapering finials decorated in vine and rose. The girls jostled eagerly to test them for mobility, but without success. There was no crevice or crack or inner cavity for concealment. Babs was the first to turn away, struck suddenly by a memory of the previous evening. Excitedly she raced along the gallery, to the head of the stairs where she'd swung round so exuberantly. That was a finial, surely! The tall, elaborately decorated piece atop the newel post. There were six of them on the great staircase. Already her chums were making for the others as she pulled and tugged and twisted at the solid oak. Yes! It was giving! Babs laughed deliciously and the chums came swooping along.

"It's stiff!" she cried, struggling against the tight twist of what would be a handcut thread, and Major Lynn came to help her, easing the reluctant joint into motion. At last it came free, was carefully lifted out of its pedestal, and Babs delved eager fingers into the cavity, heedless of splinters.

"Yes!" she cried, and drew out a tiny twist of paper.

"What does it say?"

"Quick!"

Her fingers trembling now, she unfolded the scrap of yellowing parchment. "It says --- get out my light, Clara, you chump --- it says: 'Where a body may rest and not turn to ice!'"

"Easy!" they chorused. "A fireplace!"

"But which one?" Madeline had joined the happy gathering on the stairs. "There are thirty-eight rooms that I've counted, without the attics. And they all have fireplaces."

"Oh no!" they groaned.

"And lunch is spoiling."

## Chapter 4

"Isn't it quiet?" remarked Mrs. Lynn, halfway through the meal. "We must organise something like this more often."

Mabs pulled a face at her mother, then Jemima said slowly: "The kitchen..."

"Come again?"

"It's the wording. The kind of thing a woman servant would say. 'Where a body might rest.' It suggests cook or housekeeper. Therefore a kitchen or servants' hall."

"Or a nursery," cried Babs.

They were off again, hot on the trail of the next clue. In the kitchen and the old servants' hall they found great iron hearths and timber surrounds that did not inspire. The nursery was on the second floor, still furnished with the plain deal furniture of a century before, a few books and a broken slate still lying where cast down by the last occupant, and a forlorn rocking horse whose flying hooves had stilled to rest many a long year ago. Major Lynn shook his head. "I don't think so, girls. Let's try the inglenook."

Downstairs they raced, and there, after an hour of much diligent searching, they found the spring in the rosette carving and drew out the third faded little piece of paper.

"Where music is enchanting, and my feet are dancing."

Mrs. Lynn and Madeline were into the routine by now. "Music room third on right, past the big drawing room," they chanted.

Mabs could not resist the grand piano, sadly out of tune, and the cases filled with music. While she browsed they solved the clue by what Jemima called the logical system of deduction. One danced to instruments, which in a home would be piano, violin or maybe flute at the time the clues were penned. And the violin, after a certain amount of cautious shaking and application of tweezers gave up its secret. Marjorie read it out:

"Trills are now silent, song no more heard,  
He flew to heaven, did my little bird."

They sat on the stairs to think that one out and silence descended again. "I know," exclaimed Janet. "It could be a bird bath --- there's one outside by the rose walk." Clara and Leila and Mabs hurried after her, but the rest remained where they sat, brows furrowed.

"It might be a pet bird, like Polly," Bessie said suddenly, and started with shock at the reception this suggestion received.

"Of course! Most Victorian homes had caged birds!" cried Babs. "Usually canaries. It says a little bird."

"This one is all yours, girls," said Major Lynn. "I must see to one or two chores while it is still light."

And so they set off on yet another trail.

There were four cages at different points in the great house, one extremely elaborate with its scrolled giltwork and stuffed tropical birds, the pathetic little feathered bodies still retaining traces of their flaunting brilliant plumage. But the cage they sought had been consigned to one of the topmost attics, amid the lumber and cast-offs of generations. In triumph they took it downstairs to read to the unsuccessful searchers:

"Sun marks the time, and green is the grass.  
Turn around, turn around, and watch time pass."

"The sun dial!" shouted Clara, "We've just been looking at it. Oh no you don't!" She won the race to the door. "This one is ours!"

The chums had virtually forgotten that Christmas Eve was passing unnoticed and that they still had last minute preparations to make and jobs they had promised to do for Madeline towards the celebrations for the great day. To say nothing of the special service of dedication they were to attend that evening at the new church. Something was driving them now. Instinct, curiosity, or something very strange, they did not know. All they knew was the compulsion to reach the end of a trail that was not just a nostalgic souvenir preserved from the past. There was something more...

Mabs' father was standing on the lawn, talking to the elderly gardener, when the chums raced outdoors. A pick-up truck stood on the drive and the two lads were loading sacks of garden refuse into it for disposal at the nearest tip. Already the grounds looked neater, more lived in, as though at last someone had begun to care about the old place.

They made for the sundial, and after seeing the truck drive away Major Lynn and the old man ambled towards the excited group of girls. The setting sun lit their flushed faces with winter gold and touched their hair with a bronze wash like that from an artist's brush. They were crowding round the sundial, trying to read its inky shadow, as though that might point to the secret.

Clara tired of waiting. She wrapped strong young arms round the moss-stained pedestal and heaved.

Nothing happened. It appeared to be immovably rooted in the earth. Babs looked at the heavy stone base on which it stood and knew that the open sesame did not lie there. She bent over the top, apparently at one with the rest, and placed her hands one at each side. "The rhyme says turn around, twice." Carefully, she exerted pressure, then more

firmly. Still no movement of the dial. Then Major Lynn came to her side. He added his strong grasp, pulling upward, then relaxing, and repeating the motion. There was the slightest of grating sounds. "Now," he said to Babs.

And the top platter of the dial began to move. Two complete turns moved under their hands, then it stopped. The girls held their breath as Major Lynn and Babs lifted off the complete top, to reveal a deep cavity within the pedestal. He turned. "Come on, Madeline. I think you should do the honour.

Her eyes wondering, she slid her hand into the cavity and drew forth a bundle about ten inches long. It was wrapped in what looked like oilskin, and firmly bound with broad tape that had once been white. "Shall I?" whispered Madeline.

No one thought of returning into the house. They stood there in the rich red-gold blaze of the setting sun while she sought the ends of the tape. Major Lynn produced a penknife and quickly severed it, and the oilskin fell away to reveal another layer of material beneath. She began to unroll it.

The sun discovered the first gleam of precious metal as the last fold dropped away to reveal the curved bowl of a chased and jewelled goblet. Acanthus leaves circled its base and facets that still scintillated with colour formed the adornment around its central stem. All the years of its incarceration had not completely dulled its very special beauty.

There was a choked gasp from the old man in rough gardening clothes who looked on. He crossed himself as he exclaimed: "I never thought to see that in my lifetime. That's the Reliquary Chalice. It --- it ---" he stopped, shaking his grizzled head as he sought and failed to find words to express his amazement.

"Let's go back into the house." Mrs. Lynn remained practical. "I think we could all do with a cup of tea or something."

"Or something!" Major Lynn echoed.

## Chapter 5

"Anybody in village'd tell you about the missing Chalice." Old Jed cupped his hands round a steaming mug of black-strong tea. "My grandfather used to tell us the tale of the church being robbed. Young tearaways had a drunken rampage that night, before they went off to join their regiment. Wrecked the place, they did. Threw the church plate over graveyard wall. It was all found next day, except Chalice. That was never seen again. And that night there were a terrible storm, and lightning struck the steeple. Nobody would go near church again, they said it had been desecrated. They went to St. Stephens on Haze Hill, and have done to this day."

Jed paused to take another swig of tea. Then he looked up. "They said ringleader was Charley Sherrilayne, that he'd taken Chalice for a crazy wager to wipe out a gambling debt. But he paid in the end with his life --- at Khartoum."

"But if this is a precious church relic or Communion Cup, we must get it back to the proper authorities so that they can investigate," exclaimed Madeline. "Do you think it is? And how did it get under our sundial? How long has it been there?"

"I think this may throw a bit more light on the mystery," said Major Lynn quietly, handing her a folded paper. "This was tucked in the folds of the wrappings."

Madeline scanned it with troubled eyes, and then nodded. Slowly she began to read:

"I do not know where to begin but somehow I must set this all down in the hope that some day a dreadful wrong may be righted. I am so afraid for Charley, that he may be found out, and that would break my dearest Ma-Ma's heart, because for her he can do no wrong. And she is not well these days. I have tried three times to return the Chalice, in a way that no one may discover from whence it came, but to no avail. Each time someone has seen me and I have had to turn back, and there is no-one I dare trust with this mission.

Now time is becoming so short, for on Saturday I shall become a bride and shall almost immediately set sail with my beloved James for India. I cannot think how to resolve this dreadful predicament, yet I can't in all conscience leave the matter as it stands. And so I shall leave the riddles we played at Christmas in our favourite hiding places and when I reach India I shall write to Charley and tell him what I have done, and tell him he must recover the chalice and see that it is returned. I pray God that he will.

Victoria Sherrilayne,  
January 10th, 1885."

There was a long silence when Madeline finished. Until a sputtering ember of wood fell from the fire. Clara, who was nearest, bent down to shovel the piece safely back into the grate. "And of course Charley was killed before he got the letter. And if he had, would he have had a change of heart?"

"Who knows?" said Mrs. Lynn. "But what happened to Victoria, I wonder?"

"That was the lass that never came home," said Jed. "She died just a year after her was married. Losing her after losing Charley was too much for the old lady. And there was nobody left then. That's when cousins from up in Lincoln took over, till only Albert were left here, and he had neither kith nor kin."

Babs looked up at the portrait. "That must be Victoria. I'm sure it is, and now she can be at peace."

"Yes," Madeline jumped up, "for we're going to take that fascinating discovery with us tonight and show it to the Bishop, and see what he thinks." She gave a great sigh to happiness. "I'm so glad I came to England to see Sherrilaynes for myself. And so thrilled you all came along to make this such a wonderful Christmas."

"We'll drink a toast to that," said Major Lynn.

"And to Victoria," said Babs, "who tried so hard to put things right."

"And succeeded!" they all agreed.

"I sus-say, you girls," piped Bessie, "don't forget you'd never have found the chalice but for me!"

Suddenly, amid the laughter, the first peal of the new church bell rang across the countryside, joyous carillons summoning the community to their new church --- and the wonderful unexpected restoration soon to be made.

Babs and Co. had solved their Christmas enigma: another wonderful Christmas awaited them. "And to think," Babs whispered mischievously to the fat one: "You didn't want to be here at all!"

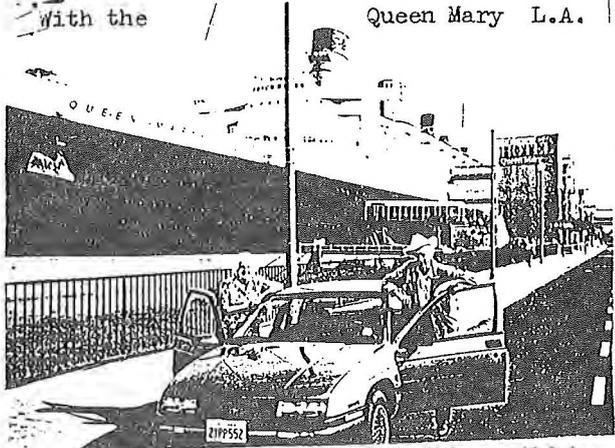


**Wanted:** to purchase 'Hal Read, The Running Man'; 'The Web of the Spider'; 'The Curse of the Curzons'; complete in serial form in THE PINK BOYS' REALM.

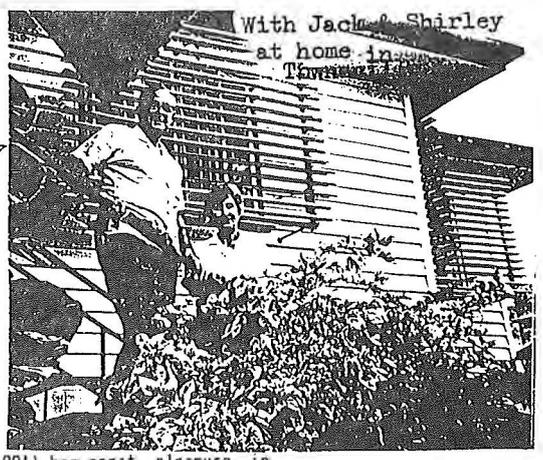
ROBERT STORY,

3733 ST. LAURENT COURT, MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO, CANADA, L5L 4T3

\*\*\*\*\*



With the Queen Mary L.A.



With Jack & Shirley at home in Townsville

THE GREYFRIARS CLUB now in it's 16th year (C.D Annual 1991 and C.D Jan 1991) has great pleasure in extending HEARTIEST CHRISTMAS GREETINGS to all hobby connoisseurs of goodwill and integrity everywhere, in particular our C.D editors past and present, Eric and Mary, and all those club members who have written to us with their news and good wishes, and regularly visited us in our homes throughout the past year - and indeed, the past thirty years! What a pleasure it was to visit some of these on the other side of the world, and enjoy their hospitality last December and January. What a pity there were no Club members for us to visit in Ireland when we spent 10 days touring around Killarney and Tralee in June.

Special greetings, also to member Rev. Jack Hughes and his wife, Shirley, who gave us such a wonderful time during the week they invited us to stay with them in Townsville, Australia. During that week we took a 30 mile boat trip out to the Great Barrier Reef in the Coral Sea, where we swam and saw the colourful fish and coral just 4 or 5 feet below the surface of the water. Later, Jack took us to visit some of his ex parishioners some 100 miles away at Home Hill where we joined in the Bible Class Christmas party and carol singing, and a great time was had by all. Bill and Betty invited us to stay the night, and the next day Bill showed us all over their sugar cane farm. Back in Townsville, Jack showed us more of the area, including the Billabong Animal Sanctuary and Palmetrum then it was time to return to Cairns for the flight to Sydney where we spent 10 days over Christmas with our son, Rob. Happy days, swimming on Bondi Beach, sailing and dining on the Bounty (The exact replica of the original), made for the film 'Mutiny on the Bounty', visiting member Sylvia Haynes's relatives, seeing the New Year's eve fireworks in the harbour, and two days at Katoomba in the lovely Blue Mountains 100 miles outside Sydney etc.

Special greetings, also, to Jim Cook who, with his son Lionel and family, made us so welcome on our next stop in New Zealand, (See full report C.D May 1992, p.5). Most regretfully, time did not allow us to visit either John Bartholomew or Dan Reed since we were scheduled to go on to Fiji for a week. While there, we hired a car and drove to Suva where we stayed for two days at the Grand Pacific Hotel. Was Dandy Peters one of the chained prisoners we saw working outside the great white castellated prison we passed just outside Suva? On to Honolulu for another week, swimming on Waikiki Beach, visiting Pearl Harbour and touring the island before handing back the Hertz car and flying on to California. After another trip to Disneyland we drove to San Diego for a couple of nights (Visiting Tijuana in Mexico), then booked another two nights on board the Queen Mary at Long Beach, spending the rest of our 10 days staying at Palm Springs, then Hollywood and calling at Venice Beach before handing back our hired Avis car and flying home. Outward bound on our independent tour we had a lovely time, spending a week each in Bangkok, Hong Kong & Singapore. The elegant Raffles Hotel - really palatial since it's refurbishment, is a 'must' - and other first class hotels in Bangkok and Hong Kong rate a return visit as two months was just not enough. The high standards in Hong Kong and Singapore, and their 'tubes', put London to shame.

However, back to business. For the reasons given in the last three paragraphs of the Club's announcement in C.D.A.1991, a meeting of the Greyfriars Club and Trustees will be held at Kingsgate Castle in January 1993 (Phone on 0438 352930 (Stevenage) or 0843 864460 (Castle) for details) to discuss the future of the Club and Frank Richards Museum.

R.F.Acraman Chairman/Secretary





A PRINCELY WELCOME FOR THE GREYFRIARS GUESTS!



A Merry Christmas to all our Readers

# BOYS AND GIRLS

Your Own  
Picture Paper

Daily Mail

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1934.

## TEDDY TAIL'S CHRISTMAS CALLER

A VERY  
HAPPY  
CHRISTMAS  
TO  
EVERYBODY.

THANK YOU,  
CINDERELLA.

FOXWELL.

"HULLO, boys and girls, here we are again," called a jolly voice, and the Whisker Pets faced outside to greet Father Christmas—in an aeroplane! "I should never get round in time in a sleigh, there are so many boys and girls waiting for me!" he explained. "Hurrah for Father Christmas and all his jolly friends," called Teddy Tail, and the Pets hurraled until they were hoarse! "Thank you!" carolled Cinderella and Dick Whittington. "See you at the pantomime!"