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JANUARY 1995



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SPORTS REPORT The cricket is not going too well down under. 1995 is a West Indies summer. I am hoping to field 'A Greyfriars Readers Eleven', against the Caribbean Cricketers early in the season. So net practice on little side during March this year please.

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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

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A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

First of all, I must wish C.D. readers everywhere a wonderfully happy, prosperous and peaceful New Year. It hardly seems possible that we are now in 1995 and that the turn of the century seems almost in sight. On New Year's Eve I found myself remembering the day before 1950 began. It seemed strange then to be poised at the middle of the twentieth century - and now we are nearing its end. (It is interesting to reflect that the juniors of St. Jim's and Greyfriars will soon have been with us for ninety years!)

1994 was marked by the publication of a good number of excellent books on nostalgic themes. This suggests that there is still time and inclination in the modern world for consideration of older values and traditions. This pleasing process will no doubt continue during 1995, and one of our C.D. contributors,

Mr. R. Hibbert, is launching an attractive nostalgic venture this month with a fine series of Captain Justice reprints (see details elsewhere in this issue).

I would like to thank readers for the warmth and volume of their Christmas greetings. As always, my husband and I very much appreciated your cards and letters. I hope you will all understand that, although it is not possible for me to reply personally to everyone who wrote to us, the thanks which I now send through this editorial are deep and sincere.

With kindest wishes for good fortune and good reading in 1995.

MARY CADOGAN

GOOD INTENTIONS

by Ted Baldock

Hades is full of good meanings and wishings

(Herbert - Jacula Prudentum)

Resolutions are those often grandiose intentions which we see fit to impose upon ourselves, usually at the commencement of a new year. They, in common with most other things, have their lights and shadows. The abiding principle should of course be continuity. The perpetuating of a traditional mode of behaviour, a renewed determination to pursue for another year the good ideals and precepts of the year - and years - which have gone before. And closer to home a no less fervent participation in the furtherance of the 'Hamilton' legend (such is its status now). Causes tend to fade and die from lack of enthusiasm and support, thus it is very comforting to see that although it is now thirty-three years since Charles Hamilton left us, the interest in his writings is no less alive and vigorous now than in the hey-day of his literary activity. This is indeed unusual from any aspect, it is quite a remarkable phenomenon for our chosen type of literature. Thus one of my resolutions, one which I am determined shall not be allowed to slide into abeyance, is a continuing support for our hobby. Every passing year is, I feel, instrumental in building one more supporting bastion for an already solid edifice. May Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood et cetera, continue to gather upon their ancient facades all the benign trappings of age and dignity. May the storms of Winter and the heat of progressive Summers merely add to their overall 'presence' - a part of our particular heritage, ad infinitum.

On the other hand, when we hear for instance, Bob Cherry or Vernon Smith, vowing by all the canons of schoolboy rules and etiquette that they will forbear to kick Billy Bunter next term, we know by instinct and long experience that this is a resolution which cannot possibly be maintained (neither do we expect it to be) as it is not only second nature but quite natural to visit these energetic reprovals upon the person of the Owl of the Remove and other fellows of a like ilk. We know that it must be for their ultimate good.

Well might Hamlet say from the depths of his indecision - "This conscience doth make cowards of us all; and thus the native hue of resolution..." It would appear that there exist at least two species of resolution; one which we would expect a fellow to adhere to through flood and fire, and another which would apply only up until that point when it becomes imperative that one should take swift and firm action (in our case with the business end of a boot) whatever our former intentions may have been. One cites the hapless Owl as a typical case; this may obviously be extended to many more equally deserving cases.

It would be quite alien to see the drowsy Mauly become suddenly animated and leap from the couch in his study with a shout (itself quite out of character) of "Race you down to the nets you chaps". Yet more alien would be the spectacle of Billy Bunter hot upon his heels, demanding in an excess of enthusiasm 'first knock'. Surely such resolves, and their

resultant actions, would lead us quite justifiably to believe that these characters had taken leave of their senses. Similar reactions would apply should we chance upon Harold Skinner or Gerald Loder of the Sixth, making jolly blazes of their entire cigarette stocks and racing papers in the privacy of their studies, and vowing never again to darken the doors of the 'Green Man' or 'The Three Fishers'; never more in fact to stray from the 'straight and narrow'. Or Gosling swearing (without profanity on this occasion) by all the Gods and GateKeepers everywhere to abstain for evermore from imbibing fiery waters of all descriptions, and from accepting any further emoluments from the fellows at terms end. The very thought of 'Gossy' refusing to accept a half-crown tip would be quite unacceptable - indeed outrageous. No, it just would not be 'cricket' and certainly not legitimate resolution. Such resolves and their inevitable consequences would alter forever the entire colour and atmosphere of Greyfriars. The scene would be irrevocably changed, morally perhaps for the better, but aesthetically? Well, possibly there are some resolutions which it would be as well merely to consider - and finally reject. Ex nihilo nihil fit.



THE MYSTERY OF THE STREET MUSICIAN BY JOHN G. BRANDON.
By Ian Godden

The best article I have seen on the work of John G. Brandon appeared in CD 211, July 1964, and was written by Geoffrey Wilde who showed a marvellous understanding and appreciation of the work of one of the best of the yarn spinners ever to appear in the old boys' papers. Readers who are interested in Brandon should consult this article in which they will find much to think about.

Brandon's series character in the 55 yarns he wrote for the Sexton Blake Library was the Hon. R.S.V. Purvale, a knockabout aristocrat, who, when bored with London life, was wont to sign on in a tramp steamer as an ordinary seaman or stoker, doing the roughest and dirtiest jobs with huge gusto. Of course he had the physique for this sort of manual work and was as tough as they come. What a marvellous, larger-than-life character he was; afraid of nobody and relishing any sort of rough-house, he was a man who, despite his monocle and general silly-ass manner, put fear into the black hearts of villains in just about every seedy port on the globe. Brandon was very good at describing fights and other violent episodes but without the sinister overtones of sadism and general nastiness so popular these days. Black and white were

pretty clearly defined in Brandon and the enthralled reader had no doubt whatsoever that the forces of right would prevail, which is as it should be.

The Mystery of The Street Musician appeared in the SBL as No. 619 in the Second Series in 1938 when Brandon was at the height of his prolific powers. Purvale stops, in a London street, to talk to an old sailor playing a frightful dirge on a concertina and begging for coppers. The sailor turns out to be a villain called Joe Judd whom Purvale remembers from his past sailing days. Judd has some important information to give Purvale and an appointment is made for next day at a Chinese dive down at the docks but Judd is murdered before the meeting can take place. In his pocket is found a treasure map of an island in what was then the Dutch East Indies. After various adventures in London, Purvale, his off-sider 'Flash' George Wibley, Sexton Blake and Tinker set out for the Malay Archipelago to try and find the treasure, closely attended by the villains who also have a map. There are splendid descriptions of Singapore and points south as they were in the old days and the treasure is eventually located and the villains routed.

This is just the sort of yarn that Brandon excelled in and he is in good form here. Blake and Purvale always worked well together just as he did with McCarthy in place of Blake in the books.

I don't know if Brandon is much read today but he deserves to be as he was one of the best writers of action tales that we have had.



SIX TO KILL

by Mark Caldicott

Many years ago, when my collection of early Norman Conquest stories was meagre, it had an appallingly large gap. I possessed "Vultures Ltd." and "Six Feet of Dynamite", but nothing in between. As followers of Conquest will recognise, a whole phase of the Norman Conquest sequence, the period when he occupied Underneath The Arches, was a closed book - or, to be exact, eight closed books. When Margaret, proprietor of my local second-hand bookshop rang to say she had discovered a copy of "Six To Kill" in some house-clearance books, and did I want it, my enthusiasm must have been obvious. Here was a title from the very heart of this unread sequence.

When I called to collect the book I was surprised to find that Margaret would not accept any payment. 'It's in such a poor condition I almost threw it away,' she explained. 'I couldn't possibly sell it.' Here was an honest bookseller, for whilst it is true that the book looked as if it had been fished out of a stagnant pond and hung out to dry, the text was complete and entirely readable. A less scrupulous dealer, sensing the value of this particular book to me, would have gone for a quick and substantial profit. The ensuing argument was

settled by payment of a very modest "research fee". Honour was preserved on both sides, and honour, we agreed tacitly, was important.

With keen anticipation I began the story, and soon became absorbed in the whirlwind action typical of the early stories. Conquest is witness to the startling effect on three gentlemen of a newspaper announcement of the death of the Earl of Chalston. A minute later, one of them is stabbed to death and Conquest gives chase to the murderer. The killer escapes, but not before Conquest has discovered that he is wearing a mask. Instead of going home Joy and Norman speed off to Chalston Manor to seek some explanation, and there they witness "A black man! A black man devoid of all clothing except a loin-cloth". The mask was to disguise the fact that the killer was a black man. This was exciting stuff, and I read on with enthusiasm.

As the basis of the plot of this story became revealed, however, I found that for some reason the ESB magic was clouded. The story lacked credibility. This is rather a strange criticism to make of an ESB story. Enthusiasts will recognise that to get the maximum of enjoyment from Brooks' stories you don't have to worry too much about credibility. You just need to give your critical faculties a holiday and take a joyride of adventure. Realism is not the cornerstone of ESB's style. He is, after all, the creator of Waldo the Wonder man. ESB's tendency to go 'over the top' with his stories had not affected my enjoyment in the past. And yet here, in this story, although the action was as fast as ever, the thing didn't quite work.

Recently I acquired a copy of *Six To Kill* in a more acceptable condition, and it prompted me to re-read the story - with the same negative internal response.

The basis of the plot, as with the basis of many of ESB's more exaggerated stories, (and indeed of the phenomenon of Waldo the Wonder Man), is to take an isolated but known medical phenomenon and develop it into a story line. The phenomenon here is that of the "throwback". Before coming into the title, the Earl of Chalston had married an Australian girl who had Aboriginal blood somewhere in her past. The product of the marriage of two white people was, as is possible in such cases, black Aboriginal. The effect on the aristocracy of introducing a black man into their ranks was too shocking for the Earl to contemplate, and so his son, known as Towomba Dick, is confined to a tower where he is educated in the manner of an earl's son. At night, however, the savage in him surfaces, and he dresses in a loin-cloth and stalks the grounds of Chalston manor. Come off it, Mr. Brooks!

When ESB writes a story, everything is subsumed into the plot. There is not time for introspection and careful character delineation: keeping up the pace and the storyline is the prime aim. It is said, however, that every writer is a moralist whether it is intended or not, and ESB's stories are strongly rooted in a particular value system. The value system is the public school ethic, and for the most part it is an admirable one. But, as in this story, the other side of the coin sometimes reveals itself. To sympathise with this plot one has to accept that the aristocracy is superior to all other classes of society, that a black man could never be good enough for the aristocracy, that aborigines are savages and that it is their nature to be killers despite being educated. It is a value system closely allied with the old imperialist role of Great Britain, annexing the "primitive" and "uncivilised" countries of the world and imposing a social order in which their own cultural values were considered to be inferior and valueless.

The notion of a superior aristocracy and upper class is expressed in various ways in ESB's writing, one of which is his treatment of other races. In an early Nelson Lee story ("*The Yellow Shadow*", NLL OS 111) the detective fails to capture his quarry, Huntley Ferroll because in saving the life of the Chinaman Ah-Foo, Lee trips over a loose brick and Ferroll escapes. (Incidentally it was that loose brick, it could be argued, which was responsible for the whole St. Frank's saga.) This eventually results in Lee's capture. Lee tells us:

But for that incident with the Chinaman I would have captured Ferroll without the slightest difficulty.

But I don't think anybody will accuse me of negligence or carelessness because I went to Ah-Foo's assistance. The man was a Chink, no doubt, but Ferroll had been choking the life out of him. And a Britisher can't stand by and see a man choked to death without interfering.

Here are demonstrated clearly the two faces of the public school ethic: on the one hand is the laudable sentiment that an Englishman is honour-bound to go to the assistance of a fellow being, whilst on the other there is the less praiseworthy sentiment that the fellow-being in question is inferior and of little value, being only a Chinaman.

It is not only other nations which are inferior, but other social classes. Often in Brooks' stories, working class characters lack intelligence, are garrulous, have "rheumy eyes", and are "beery" individuals. Night watchmen and porters of small back-street hotels seem to be singled out as typical of working class individuals of this type. And ordinary country dwellers are usually portrayed as slow-thinking rustics.

There are exceptions to the rule, of course. Umlosi, a native chief, ('I s'pose he'd call himself a member of the royal family', says Lord Dorrimore) is portrayed as brave and wise. Mandeville Livingstone, a tramp, is loyal, trustworthy and quick witted. These are, however, exceptions.

"Six to Kill" remains among my least favourite Conquest stories, simply because its ill-founded central idea pervades the entire story. However, this work remains a fascinating insight into the value system underpinning the Brooks stories. The paradox of the public school ethic is evident in many of Brooks' stories, and most starkly in "Six To Kill". This kind of ethic is not as evident in our culture as it may once have been. Consequently, perhaps, there is less evidence these days that a gentleman's word is his bond, that a man's honour is his greatest possession, or that it is his duty to go to the assistance of a fellow in danger be it friend or enemy. If I believed that such values could only be supported within an ethic which also required a sense of innate superiority, elitism and racism, then I would be happy to abandon them to the story book, and not regret their passing. However, I see no reason why the good points of the public school ethic cannot be retained whilst discarding the unacceptable elements.

I have written in a previous article of my mixed feelings, in recommending these stories to my children, precisely because of this paradox. My experience since then has been heartening, and leads me to believe that our culture has moved forward in a positive way as far as racist and elitist ideas are concerned. It seems to me that children now are capable of recognising the sounder values of these old stories, and can learn from them. At the same time they do seem capable of recognising, and discarding as ridiculous, the smug superiority and innate prejudices the stories sometimes display. The value of the old stories is that they do, as a whole, and despite their occasionally unforgivable faults, preserve a moral sense which we are in danger of losing.

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PELHAM BOND

by Bill Lofts

Pelham Bond featured in Golden Penny Comic from the first issue dated 14th October, 1922, in a series of stories entitled "The Mystery Man". A scientific detective he certainly was mysterious on account of a strange, steel visor-like mask which he wore, through which his jet black eyes gleamed. No one had ever see his face, and no-one had any idea where he came from. He had just arrived, seemingly in the heart of London from no-where and started his detective agency at 'Mystery Mansion' in Mayfair. He would see all who were in distress or trouble of any sort, when no fees were required for his services.

The author was 'Henry Leonard' which hid the identity of Hugh Fennel, who was a subscriber to the Collectors Digest till his death at Kilburn in 1956. On the staff of Amalgamated Press in the early days, he poured out sketches and stories for the comic papers. He also contributed to D.C. Thomson Ltd. An expert on the Penny Bloods, I knew him well, meeting him many times.

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Related by : HENRY LEONARD.
Illustrated by : G. LARD.

As John Paulington stood beside The Mystery Man, he perceived a narrow portion of the hat steel slide silently away, and a faint acropolis rose up through the aperture. Simultaneously a man, garbed from head to foot in a tight-fitting black uniform, sprang down and saluted "The Mystery Man."

THE 'HAUNTER' OF WHARTON LODGE

by A.W. Godfrey

Christmas Eve night at Wharton Lodge. Outside, the winter wind howled through the elms in the drive and whined round the old eaves. Snow dashed against the tightly closed French windows and every so often slipped from the roof onto the frozen ground.

Inside however all was warm, bright and cheerful. The chums of the Remove together with Billy Bunter's sister Bessie and Harry Wharton's uncle, Colonel Wharton were seated around the blazing log fire after an excellent dinner. Miss Bunter was meanwhile filling in any remaining crevices with the contents of a large box of chocolates. "We are anxious to hear about this Ghost that is supposed to haunt the place at Christmas Sir," Bob Cherry addressed the Colonel. The latter paused to light a large cigar.

"First, where is that boy Bunter?" he enquired. "If he has finished eating he might like to hear the story." Billy Bunter, the fat Owl of the Remove, however was still engaged at the dinner table, much to the astonishment of the butler Wells and his Staff, to whom it was a matter of conjecture as to how soon he would burst.

The Colonel at last cleared his throat and commenced. "It was about a hundred years ago this Christmas when Sir Humphrey Wharton sought refuge from his enemies in this house. Suddenly on Christmas Eve the front door burst open and a group of fanatics stormed in, murdering everyone in their path, and finally slew Sir Humphrey in this very room. The story has it that his Ghost roams these corridors at this time of the year; all rubbish of course."

A silence fell on the room. "They were certainly troubled times Sir," remarked Frank Nugent at last. "What rot!" ejaculated Miss Bunter through mouthfuls of chocolate. "If I saw a ghost I'd jolly well kick it, I --." She broke off suddenly as a sudden sound echoed weirdly from the corridor outside.

"Groan!"

"What was that?" gasped Bessie and hurriedly sidled behind the Colonel.

"Groan!"

The strange noise reverberated again.

There was a general gasp from the Removites and even Colonel Wharton looked startled. Bessie Bunter gave a loud screech of terror, her desire to kick the ghost having apparently evaporated. "It can't be!" muttered Frank Nugent. "The cantfulness is terrific." replied Hurree Singh. "The ghost fullness is preposterous."

Colonel Wharton recovered himself with an effort. "No servant would dare play such a trick!" he boomed.

"Groan!" -- it came again.

"We'll soon settle this!" he said and striding to the door, flung it open.

It was no Ghost of an ancient Wharton that was revealed however but the plump form of William George Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove, who, holding his capacious stomach and bending almost double, staggered into the room.

"G'rooh, I say you fellows I think I'm dying!" he gasped. I don't think I should have had that last helping of Turkey, or it may have been the sixth helping of Christmas Pudding. It was so good, not like our Chef makes at Bunter Court of course, but jolly good, or it may have been the Candied Fruits or even the Nuts."

"Ha, Ha, Ha!"

"You disgusting boy!" snapped the Colonel, "You have obviously grossly over-eaten at dinner; you must control your gluttony -- and also Cook is missing a dish of Mince Pies from the pantry since yesterday and she says she saw you in the vicinity; what have you got to say". "Oh really Sir I was nowhere near the pantry yesterday," replied Bunter between groans. "You can ask Wells, he saw me there!"

The Colonel seemed at a loss for words. "In fact," continued Bunter, "I saw Wells eating Mince Pies just afterwards."

"I am afraid that is not correct Sir", came the voice of Wells the butler, who had silently entered the room at this point. "As the Staff will confirm Sir, I do not indulge in mince-meat comestibles!"

"Oh really Wells, as -- as a matter of fact it was the cat. I remember now seeing it in the pantry, - not that I was there at the time!" continued Bunter cautiously.

"Ha, Ha, Ha!"

"You untruthful, ridiculous boy!" roared the Colonel, then suddenly remembering the courtesy due to a guest, even such a peculiar guest as William George Bunter, he added quickly, "Come Bunter, my sister will give you something to soothe your stomach, and let this be a lesson to you."

The Owl of the Remove was led away, uttering a series of groans that the Spirit of the late Sir Humphrey Wharton might well have envied. In fact it seemed that the Lamentations of Job were rivalled by those of W.G. Bunter.

"My brother Billy was always the greedy one of the family," observed Miss Bunter, turning up her snub little nose. "Why people cannot control their appetites at the meal table, I'll never understand. Just pass me that box of Almonds and Raisins Bob Cherry, I seem to have finished these chocs."

However, these remarks emanating from Miss Elizabeth Bunter, and remembering her prowess at the dinner table, second only to her brother Billy, caused the chums of the Remove some amazement and carefully concealed amusement!

THE END

(How Miss Bunter came to be at Wharton Lodge at Christmas is of course another story!)



CRIME AT CLIFF HOUSE

by Margery Woods

Part 7 The Crypt and the Secret Societies

The secret society has always been a favourite theme in school stories, and Cliff House was no exception in its exploitation of this particular genre. The school was ideally situated to provide suitable scope for the various permutations of plots. One sometimes wonders uneasily about the risk of subsidence of the buildings, so plentiful were the secret passages and subterranean ruins, all possessing the right degree of ancientness and eeriness. Apart from the school itself and its Clock Tower there was a ruined priory with the requisite crypt and a secret tunnel linking it to the Clock Tower, plus a seemingly unlimited supply of old houses of varying degrees of dilapidation. Cross match these desirable ingredients of atmosphere with the sociological make-up of the pupils and staff and no author need be lost for exciting and mysterious plots. For the pupils of the school were not all daughters of

**THE SOCIETY versus THE SCHEMERS: A Powerful Complete Tale
of Exciting Happenings at Cliff House School**



The **SIGN** *of the*
Scarlet Star

WATCHED! Spied upon! Ever dogged by the unscrupulous Edwina Brookdale—still Babs & Co. are determined to carry on—to save the play. Secure in their secret organisation, the Scarlet Star, they give blow for blow, until—

comfortably off conservative middle to upper class parents. Some came from poorer circumstances, and, it seems, more than a few from undoubtedly criminal backgrounds, and how better to fight crime and injustice than a secret society, to maintain the anonymity of the good and protect the welfare of the threatened? One such instance was excitingly portrayed in the series featuring the Society of the Scarlet Star (SCHOOLGIRL 382, 383, 384, 385: November 1936).

The first story sets the scene. The Fourth are rehearsing a new play, to be put on at the Courtfield Theatre, for which Mabel Lynn's playwright father is coming back from Canada and bringing with him a famous impresario, John Sirrett. The first hint of treachery to come is discovered by Mabs herself while trying to make a phone call and getting a crossed line, during which she overhears parts of a call by a man and a girl. The gist of this hints at an old tragedy concerning the death of John Sirrett's baby daughter years previously, the danger to the callers should the new play be allowed to go on, and the presence of a girl at Cliff House who on no account must John Sirrett be allowed to see. The callers are Edwina Brookdale and her father, and also implicated is Edwina's cousin Miles at Friardale School.

The girls are not aware of all this at first, and still trust the prefect Edwina who has always seemed quite a decent sort. When things start going wrong Connie Jackson is the one they blame, unfairly for once, while Edwina cultivates a deceptively friendly attitude towards the chums. But secretly she is contriving one evil frame-up after another. First Connie, then Jimmy Richmond, and, the worst of all, poor hapless Bessie, when a glass case of very valuable glassware belonging to a master at Friardale is shattered by Miles Marchant. This results in diplomatic relations really being broken off between Friardale and

Cliff House, which is disastrous for the play as the boys are involved in the production. The girls still have no suspicion of Edwina but at the end of this first story the plot comes round full circle with Babs overhearing another phone call, and this one exposes the treachery of Edwina and her rascally cousin Miles. Now that the girls know their enemy they can begin to plan their fight for the play.

In *Pledged To Save The Play*, we meet the Society of the Scarlet Star, ten members, including Jimmy Richmond and the boys, determined to thwart Edwina. Disguised in the traditional hooded robes and masks, the secret society hold their meetings in the crypt of the old priory ruins and rehearse the play. Naturally they have to dodge Bessie, who suspects a secret Feast from which she is being excluded; they also have to dodge Edwina, who is watching them like a hawk now, aided by her prefect's authority.

On one occasion they have to lock her in a hut in the woods, from which she manages to escape and almost turns the tables on the chums by staying away from school all day, being reported missing and then turning up at Callover, dishevelled and apparently exhausted, with her tale of perfidy against Babs.

This results in detention for the chums. There follows much thrust and parry as the girls endeavour to outwit Edwina and continue their forbidden rehearsals. Fortunately there is a secret tunnel between the old priory and the Clock Tower, by which the chums manage to get back into school unseen while Edwina, still stalking them like a predator, sits in wait on the steps outside, there to be discovered by Miss Primrose and a very innocent-looking Babs after the Head has discovered the detained girls sitting quietly in detention long after the time is up and Edwina nowhere to be seen. Her gloating vigil to trap the chums ends in her looking very foolish and does not please the Head. This round definitely goes to the chums!

But their triumph is shortlived when Janet Jordan, playing decoy, stumbles and takes a bad fall at the old quarry, breaking a bone in her foot which effectively takes her out of the play, and then Marjorie Hazeldene's vicar father sends for her to leave school before end of term in order to help him with pre Christmas parish work. Things look bad for the girls, and at the end of this story the true motive behind all the villainy begins to emerge.

Edwina's father is actually the brother of the famous John Sirrett, and had abducted his brother's much loved baby daughter, leading John Sirrett to believe that the baby is dead. But the child is still alive, a pupil in the Fourth, Lucy Farraday. And now that Janet is out of the cast Lucy, as understudy, is now in the play. Edwina is appalled when she learns of this. For not only had her father done this dreadful thing, for ten years he had kept this secret. Leaving the child with the gypsies he had hired to kidnap her, he then gave her to an accomplice called Farraday to bring her up in the belief that Farraday was her father while he cheated her from an inheritance rightfully hers. It is no wonder that Edwina is desperate.

At last it seems that success is within Edwina's grasp when she manages to bring Miss Primrose to confront the girls in their disguises. It seems that they have lost the fight. But while this is happening Bessie, blundering around, has encountered Miles Martinet who proceeds to torment her, unaware that she is trying to reach Babs and Co to warn them that Primmy and Edwina are on the way. Bessie does not know that Miles has been banished from Friardale and is full of spleen, which he vents on poor Bess, actually threatening her with a flaming brand plucked from the gypsy campfire nearby. Bessie looks desperately for something, anything to hurl at her tormentor, and snatches up what she thinks is a stone. But it is soft, and Bessie decides to turn and run instead, still clutching the soft "stone". She reaches the girls, and the Head, in a state of stuttering collapse, and produces the "stone", which is Miles Martinet's diary. Even then Bessie does not realise the significance of what

she holds; all she can think of is that it proves her story of Martinet's attack on her. But of course it proves much, much more: the guilt of Edwina, her father, and Martinet.

With Miss Primrose's blessing, and the disgrace of Edwina, the play goes on, Major Lynn and John Sirrett arrive, and all would seem set for the happy ending. Until Lucy vanishes, and can't be found anywhere in the school. They had forgotten about the return of the gypsies and Gypsy Prince, who had carried out the abduction all those years ago. Now Lucy is his prisoner again, at the behest of Edwina's father. But Babs and Co. are soon on the trail. They trick the gypsy into taking a track that leads into a swamp, which efficiently imprisons caravan and occupants until the arrival of the police. Lucy is rescued, Edwina, her father, her cousin and Gypsy Prince are all arrested and at last the play can go on and the wonderful moment happen when John Sirrett is at last reunited with the daughter he had believed dead; scholarship girl Lucy, who would also come into the inheritance denied her for so many years.



SOMEONE hissed "Cave!" But too late. The door swung open and Edwina and Miss Primrose stood revealed. It seemed that nothing could save the Society now.

The Society of the Scarlet Star had served its purpose, and there was little regret at its disbandment. Bessie was the second heroine of the hour, the first, of course, was Lucy. And the play was a glorious success. What more could the Scarlet Stars wish?

(Next month: The Society of Justice!)

Your Editor says—



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



From MRS. CLARICE HARDING (SIDMOUTH): The C.D. Annual as always is packed with excellent stories and articles, with generous illustrations. How I loved "Happy Hours with Mrs. Hippo". She is such a dear and so also is naughty Tiger Tim. I am still working my way through the happy reading, but have enjoyed Margery Woods, Dennis Bird and Bill Lofts especially, and *of course* Charles Hamilton's "Silverwings," and the introduction to this by Una Hamilton Wright.

From BETTY HOPTON (CARMARTHEN): Thank you for the superb Annual, which was one of the best ever. I sat down to read it on Christmas night, instead of being glued to the telly, but there was no contest really, the C.D. Annual won, hands down.

From MARK TAHA (LONDON): I write this letter after - as usual - enjoying the Annual on Christmas Day. Roger Jenkins' article on the occasions when Quelch was at a disadvantage reminded me of reading Magnet 407 and not being very impressed with Wharton & Co: after laughing at Skinner's 'Jape of the Season' they ragged Skinner for perpetuating it. I must also say that the Greyfriars staff might be said to deserve our sympathies. It seems that Greyfriars was their home and they were rather at a loose end outside it. Is this generally the case with the staff of boarding-schools?

On another point, I enjoyed reading Una Hamilton Wright's article on the 'Birth of the Magnet', as her uncle's real life is always interesting. Perhaps she would be willing to clear up a few things I've been wondering about? For instance, did Charles Hamilton ever have an enemy called Gerald? I ask because every character he invented with that name - Loder, Knox, Cutts, George Gerald Crooke - was a 'rotter'.

I know that he wrote with authority about people who thought that they could spot winners or 'break the bank' at roulette, but did he also lose money on the Stock Exchange or through dealings with lawyers? It is just that his writings on city gents and solicitors seem to have almost had a personal grudge to them.

Finally, a suggestion for a future feature. How about an item dealing with what you and other Magnet readers took to reading when the Magnet folded in 1940? I know you once told me that you turned to the Girls' Crystal, but what did others do?

From DAVE WESTAWAY (EXMOUTH): In my early childhood I was captivated by a children's novel featuring a toy called 'JOINTED'. I remember a train journey and a villain called "Mr. MURGATROYD". Just recalling that much gives me an inner glow. It would have been published around 1949-52. Can anyone help me with the title or author please?

From RONALD FRAGNOLINI (LEICESTER): Bill Lofts' interesting article in the November C.D. about the probably origin of Netley Lucas's detective character, Tom Mex, suggested that the name was "borrowed" from the famous Western movie star TOM MIX,

fair enough that is highly probable. I would like to put the record straight about his next statement which was that he believed that TOM MIX died in a fire trying to save someone else from death in 1940. He got the year right, but TOM MIX got killed in a car accident. Wrong cowboy I'm afraid! It was that other famous western film star and ex-rodeo rider BUCK JONES (incidentally my very favourite hero as a kid) who was unfortunate enough to have got killed in a fire in a Los Angeles hotel in March 1942 when he went back in to try to rescue more people.

From MATT THOMPSON (BIRTLEY): Tom Mix crashed in his Rolls Royce in 1940. It is said on applying brakes, cases shot forward, and broke his neck, and he must have been going at a great speed.

Buck Jones, the western star, died in the fire, trying to save others. A real hero.

Incidentally, I happened to pass SUNDERLAND'S GRAND HOTEL, many years ago at about 4 p.m. (Tom Mix was appearing at the EMPIRE at the time) when out through the doors walked Tom Mix, who got into a taxi. I got quite close up, with others, mostly boys.

Before I retired, an old customer of mine gave me her father's visiting card, showing Tom Mix's autograph on the reverse side. Her father, an optician, had his shop in part of the GRAND.

From TED BALDOCK (CAMBRIDGE): *(Mr. Baldock also wrote about Tom Mix and Buck Jones, and then contributed the following comments.)*

It was amusing to read, in Margery Wood's recent article, about old Wingate losing - or almost losing - his heart to a young lady of the theatre. Many suns have risen and set since that bitter-sweet little episode. But, of course, good old Wingate in true Greyfriars style could be relied upon to do the decent thing. What a strange contrast from that world to the one in which we live today! It has been said that excesses of nostalgia are detrimental but I must admit to a certain weakness in that direction. If one can strike a reasonable and sensible balance between past and present all may be well. Three rousing Greyfriars cheers for nostalgia say I...

From GORDON HUDSON (CHESTER-LE-STREET): I have recently acquired a small booklet called "True Detective". It consists of 36 pages of short American crime stories, and was priced at 1/6. The paper is of very poor quality, and although there is no date, I presume it was printed in the 1940s. What is of interest, however, is that it was published by William C. Merrett, the publisher of Frank Richard's Sparshot series, and is laid out in similar type and style. Besides Sparshot, it is the only publication of Merrett's I have seen. I wonder, does anyone have any information about Merrett?

From COLIN MORGAN, DENBIGH: The piece headed 'Changing Times' by Alan James in CD 574 regarding the athletic records set by Wilson of THE WIZARD was of great interest. As some readers will know, fellow enthusiast and collector Derek Marsden and I are busy compiling 'The Wizard Index' and an exploration of the Wilson series is an important part. We had already discovered these 'changing times' that Alan refers to, although, peculiarly, the time for the mile in the first printing of 'The Truth about Wilson' was three minutes exactly! This story was printed in 1943 but referring to 1938. However, when the story was repeated in 1949 the time was changed to three minutes forty-eight seconds - an increase! Other times and distances were also changed. Incidentally, the Red Lion library quartet of paperbacks were published in 1962.

From BRIAN DOYLE, PUTNEY: May I make a small correction to Una Hamilton Wright's very interesting article in the December CD? She refers to 'H.G. Wells' 'Alf's

Button". This popular book was, of course, written by W.A. Darlington. It was published in 1919, later followed by two sequels, "Alf's Carpet" and "Alf's New Button", by a successful West End play, and at least one film version, plus another film "Alf's Button Afloat". The original novel was one of the biggest best-sellers of its time. Darlington wrote several other novels (a favourite of mine is "Wishes Unlimited") and was for many years drama critic of the 'Daily Telegraph'.

THE FRED HOLMES MYSTERY

by Len Hawkey

Norman Wright's obituary on Fred Holmes in the June 1994 issue of C.D. made sad reading. Yet another link with the magazines of yesteryear has gone, albeit that *this* Fred Holmes did not go as far into the past as others of that name.

Except for the THRILLER COMICS, the writer has not ready any of the other papers for which this artist worked, but apart from the tribute (and sketch) supplied by Norman, there was an interview with Fred Holmes in that excellent (though now, seemingly defunct) "GOLDEN FUN" Magazine, produced for a number of years by Alan Clark. This was in Issue No. 9, in 1979, and was accompanied with several fine examples of Fred's work. It did not, however, entirely clear up a mystery which has plagued the writer for a number of years.

One of the most prolific magazine illustrators of the period from around 1890 to the 1920s was T.W. Holmes. A very good artist, mainly for the Amalgamated Press, probably seen at his best in "The Boy's Friend", its companion papers, also "Chums", "Big Budget", etc., prior to 1918. He had a younger brother, Fred Holmes, arguably a much better artist, not quite as prolific, but a real master of black and white line. His work appeared mostly in the same range of periodicals as his brother, also from the mid-1890s. He contributed to "adult" magazines as well, such as "Wide-World", where he rubbed shoulders, as it were, with Warwick Reynolds, Stanley Wood, Reginald Cleaver, etc.

Fred always signed his name in full. Invariably full of action, his firm, forceful style was unmistakable. Yet, after the Great War, one looked for his signature in vain: but around the same time, there appeared a hitherto unseen artist, who signed his art-work merely "HOLMES" (as against the erstwhile "FRED HOLMES"). Just as the signature was different, so was the style. There were small similarities, as both (if there were in fact, two) were splendid artists, but whereas the pre-war Holmes had relied, to excellent effect, on fairly solid black against white, with very little "hatching" - or, indeed shading, at all - the post-war "HOLMES" used a finer line, and was more akin to Eric Parker, or D.C. Eyles in style. Could this be the "original" Fred Holmes, with a completely altered approach? Other illustrators - J.H. Valda for example had changed completely, between their early and later work. But J.H.V. had been aiming for a different market, and this was not the case with Fred Holmes, as he appeared in most of the papers mentioned above, plus newer ones, like "The

Champion", "Young Britain", many Children's Annuals, and "adult" mags, such as "The Grand" (in the Contents List of which, one issue shows his elusive Christian name as "Fred").

The original Thomas and Fred were "Geordies" from the Newcastle area, so it is no doubt coincidence that this last of the Holmes line, born in Buckinghamshire, bore the same two Christian names. He was certainly too young to be confused with any of his namesakes. So who were the other "Fred's"? Were there two, or only one, of them? If there is anyone out there who knows the answer, the writer would be most pleased to hear from them!

**THROUGH
TERROR'S
REALM.**

SIDNEY DRAEWS
BEST SERIAL
OF
GRAYDON GARTH.

START TO-DAY.

The Big Budget. Ltd

Editor: ARTHUR BROOKS
Art Editor: "YORKIE"

Vol. XX. No. 518. WEEK ENDING SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 1907. PRICE ONE PENNY.

"The Divers were swept assant by a wave and then swung clear of the water. A flood of light poured from the aerostat. Eager faces looked down."

The new reader will find a summary and introduction omitted.

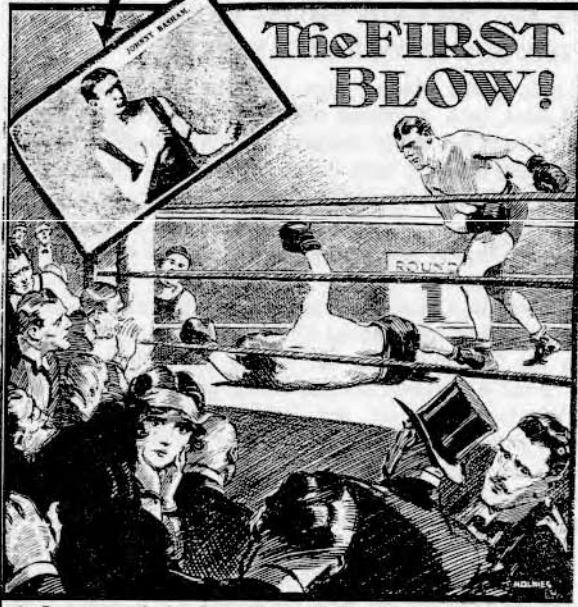
FRED OF PERIL—THE "GREAT WITCH" CAPTAIN—"FATHER'S SQUAD"

The Larkins did not sleep, he never will, and eventually, the hulls swaying from their hinges across a diver's path, the ceiling that spread across and upland away through the opening above his door. There's a shiver passed him and his lungs felt dry. The machine connected at his post. The creature had not responded. Time passed in motion, wings. Began, dipped, added. A great mass crept over the barrel that he could not reach. He saw the water, reaching, the net making to catch it, for the creature, of his nature, and the drag of weight of the heavy metal of cables at his feet.

"Water—water at last! Portents of discovery at last!" cried Bruce. "What! Safe water!"

It was only a dived, and Terry's eyes looked at him. They were neither bright nor bright, the spread, beyond, by nothing, the white sea, the wall. The stone was dark, and the light was better. He could see the sea, and was the

By Fred Holmes, 1907



A Sensation of the Ring—Knocked Out by the First Blow!

(Read of the remarkable ending to the Fairhol-Gordon Contest in the grand, long, complete story of the Clean-Swept Crusaders in this issue.)

Fred Holmes? (Boys' Friend 1922)

TEA IN TOYLAND.

◆◆◆
 Elizabeth and Mary Rose
 In Toyland chanced to be,
 And so they asked the animals
 To have a cup of tea.

◆◆◆
 Mr. Giraffe was well-behaved,
 And Mrs. Penguin too;
 But Mr. Jumbo brought his trunk
 In case the buns were NEW.

From The Joy Book Annual, Hultons 1922

A POSTSCRIPT TO "BRANDS FROM THE BURNING "

JACK DRAKE - THE BOY FROM BAKER STREET

by Peter Mahony

From time to time in the Magnet saga Jack Drake, the boy assistant of the famous detective, Ferrers Locke, took a crucial role. He solved the Mystery of the Christmas Candles (Magnet 723) and he nearly rescued Quelch from Slim Jim's Clutches (Magnets 1663-64). He even spent a whole term disguised as James Duck, a simpleton new boy in the Remove, while he unravelled the identity of the "Mystery Man of Greyfriars" (Magnets 1615-1625). Most Greyfriars fans knew that Drake used to be in the Remove before he left to join Ferrers Locke. What is less well-known is that he had a pre-Greyfriars existence which was somewhat chequered.

Drake first appeared in a Hamilton yarn at St. Winifred's School. Subsidence of the school's building foundations had caused Dr. Goring to transfer his pupils to temporary accommodation on the "Benbow", an old sailing ship which had been dry-docked for training purposes. When the stories started, Drake was an easy-going, insolent member of "The Bucks", St. Winifred's 'fast set', led by the arrogant Vernon Daubeny. In normal circumstances, Drake's downhill career would have accelerated, for his indulgent parents allowed him more money than was good for him. Circumstances, however, did not stay normal - for Hamilton was setting off on another reform and rehabilitation saga.

Mr. Drake had suffered business losses. The opening story found a self-centred Jack concentrating on an end-of-holiday spree with Daubeny & Co. while his harassed father groped helplessly for the words to break the news of their fallen fortunes. Jack goes with the Bucks still unaware of the true state of affairs - and comes home with the milk! Disappointed and disapproving, Mr. Drake tersely tells his son that the next term will be his last at St. Winifred's - unless he can land the Founder's Scholarship. Drake's petulant, "poor me!" reaction is sharply reminiscent of Peter Hazeldene. It is only when he finds his mother in tears at the prospect of losing their home that, belatedly, he feels ashamed of himself.

Resolved to do his best, Drake returns to school. On the train, he meets new boy, Dick Rodney. Rodney, whose father has been killed on naval service, is poor - like Drake - and glad to be admitted to St. Winifred's on half fees. They exchange confidences and decide to work together at their studies. With Rodney, a quiet determined lad, ready to play the "Good Angel", Drake's new resolutions looked set for success.

But not by a long chalk! Once at school the easily-led Drake treats his new friend shabbily and resumes his place with the Bucks. He does not tell Daubeny & Co. of his changed circumstances and relies on Rodney's discretion to keep the secret. A rowdy first day of term party in Daubeny's study pricks Drake's conscience and he retires to spend the evening swotting. Unfortunately, Raik & Co. of the Fourth take exception to "working - on first day of term?" and Drake gets a ragging.

Resentful, Drake promptly starts slacking - he probably wanted an excuse - and goes on an out of bounds excursion with Daubeny. He gambles £5 which he does not have on one of those 'dead certs' so beloved by Hamilton's 'brands'. Of course it loses, and Drake's I.O.U. is called in by "Gentleman" Smith. So much for filial concern and good intentions!

Matters, already bad enough, get steadily worse. Pierce Raik (St. Winifred's Sidney Snoop) pries into Drake's correspondence - and lets out the secret. The Bucks promptly 'drop' their impecunious friend. Drake accuses Rodney of betraying his confidence and a fight ensues. Rodney, a redoubtable character, who has already licked Daubeny and Egan - at the same time! - wins the fight after eleven tough rounds. The obvious signs of combat land them in detention together. There, they resolve their differences and resume their friendly footing. (Drake, aware of his *'persona non grata'* status with the Bucks, was probably in an 'any port in a storm' mood.)

The unsavoury "Gentleman" Smith duns Drake for his £5 - even to the extent of calling him on Doctor Goring's telephone. A cloud of suspicion forms over Drake and "Gentleman"

Smith is requested to visit the Benbow. Tucky Toodles (St. Winfred's Fat Boy) heads off the sharper by the simple process of barging him from the gang-plank into the River Chadway!

With exposure temporarily averted, Drake, certain that Smith's implacability is due to the machinations of Vernon Daubeny, decides to sink or swim. He threatens to implicate the Bucks in his downfall. Daubeny, frightened for his own skin, bribes Smith to withdraw his allegations. Drake escapes punishment, but his reputation is sadly impaired.

The vindictive Daubeny retaliates by omitting Drake from the Junior Football team. Drake is shaken by this - he had taken his own place for granted, though he had been too weak to press the claims of other good players who were not in Daubeny's set. An eleven composed entirely of Bucks slacks its way through a 6-0 thrashing by Highcliffe.

Led by Drake and Rodney, the St. Winfred's juniors make life painful for the Bucks. To restore the balance of public opinion, Daubeny adroitly turns a general ragging into a confrontation between Drake and himself. They fight: Drake wins: but Daubeny, admired for his toughness in defeat, regains a lot of his lost standing.

The next episode involves a cross country run. Daubeny, whose dissipation's only slightly weakened his natural sporting ability, identifies Drake as his only dangerous rival. He arranges for him to be 'nobbled' - a stick thrown from the woods on a remote part of the course. The nobbling is successful, but the under-rated Rodney runs Daub into the ground - and takes the plaudits.

The next episode shows Daubeny's animosity at its worst. He sets out to spoil Drake's scholarship chances by disrupting his studies. Drake's study is ragged; his books and furniture are destroyed. Toodles is used as an unwilling alibi by Daubeny; Drake and Rodney have to accept the loss of their books and the consequent swotting difficulties. By borrowing books from less studious fellows they manage to keep working and foil Daubeny's aims.

"Bully him and he bucks up. Treat him well and he will feed out of your hand." The redoubtable Daubeny makes this reassessment of Drake - and changes his tactics. He offers Drake his old place in the Soccer XI. Flattered, the easy-going Drake accepts - and neglects swotting in favour of football - just as Daubeny expected.

The Redclyffe match is lost by 5-3, but Drake scores twice and the Bucks make a much better showing. Drake is invited to their 'celebrations' and his swotting suffers more neglect. With the Rookwood fixture looming, he gives up extra 'toot' with Mr. Packe and slips back into his old indolent attitude. Rodney offers good advice, but, as always, it is ignored - until too late.

On Rookwood day, Mr. Drake visits St. Winfred's and finds his hopeful son full of remorse and good intentions - but with not much of a track record to show for a term's work! Drake tries to pull out of the team - apparently a couple of hours attending his parent is all he needs to restore his credibility! (Drake's self-deception hereabouts matches the worst indulgences of Peter Hazeldene. Fob off the immediate problem and everything will be O.K.!) Daubeny refuses to let Drake off - why should any captain accept such a cavalier request? Drake, in guilty mood, plays poorly and Rookwood are well in control by half-time. During the interval, Drake quarrels with Daubeny and is ordered off by his captain. Returning to the Benbow, he meets his father, sadly disillusioned by a bad report from Mr. Packe. The "sending-off" further lowers Drake's standing. St. Winfred's lost 5-0. His father departs, hardly heeding the boy's promises to pull up his socks. Like many a parent, Mr. Drake had been there before!

With the support of the long-suffering Rodney, Drake resumes his studies. Daubeny, back to open warfare, sets in train a series of disruptions. Toodles is bribed to play a concertina in the study: Drake and Rodney retreat to the form-room. Raik and Chetwynd

turn up there for a fencing bout. Then the Bucks take it in turns to challenge Drake to a fight. Egan and Torrence are easily hammered - but time is lost in the process.

With the examination imminent, Daubeny plays his last card. Estcourt, another hard-up junior, is as dependent on gaining the Founder's scholarship as Drake is. He has over-swotted and gone stale - a fate that could hardly befall Drake! Daubeny plays on Estcourt's depression - and offers a way out. A drug in Drake's coffee on the exam morning would settle matters in Estcourt's favour. The worried boy listens to the voice of the tempter and takes possession of the drug. Waiting for the examination to commence, he has the opportunity to doctor Drake's drink - but at the last minute hurls the drug into the river. They sit the exam: when it is over, Estcourt gives Daubeny a thrashing.

Against all odds, Drake comes top of the list, with the unfortunate Estcourt second. The school breaks up and Drake returns with his future secured - but with an uneasy conscience about Estcourt. (Drake was obviously a bright boy - with only limited effort he won a scholarship that the plodding Estcourt had counted on). At home, he receives incredible news - Mr. Drake has recovered his fortune! To Drake's credit, he immediately asks if he can resign the scholarship in Estcourt's favour. Mr. Drake agrees - the burning brand is reprieved.

Drake's later career was much more positive. He returned to St. Winifred's; challenged Daubeny for the captaincy; lost narrowly; took a leading role in school affair; eventually gained the captaincy; and even set about reforming Daubeny. The St. Winifred's stories took a different turn when Hamilton shipped them off to the West Indies. After an adventurous cruise - with a melodramatic excursion into the South American jungle - Drake returned to England - and Greyfriars. His chum Rodney went with him.

For a time they provided a very potent opposition to Harry Wharton & Co. Indeed, Drake's better qualities gave him more potential as a successful leader than the temperamental Wharton. Faced with an 'impossible' possibility - the supplanting of Wharton by Drake - Hamilton solved the problem by taking Drake's fortunes full circle. Mr. Drake went broke for second time and Jack had to go to work. He joined Ferrers Locke and the rest - as they say - is history.

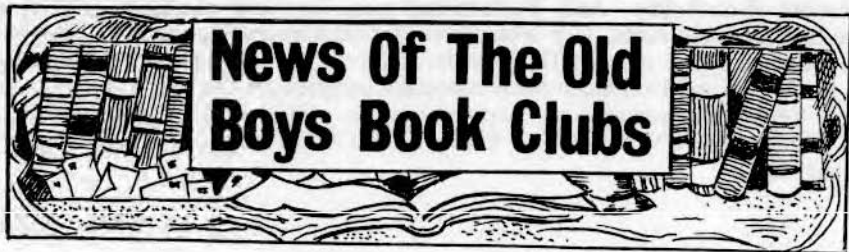
(A puzzling side-issue is the fate of Dick Rodney. I never did read the story of his and Drake's departure from Greyfriars. Perhaps a better-informed reader could regale us with an account of Rodney's departure/disappearance/demise?)

Ordered Off The Field By The Skipper! But It Was No Disgrace For Jack Drake—It Was Likely To Prove His Salvation!



DRAKE'S LAST CHANCE!

By Owen Conquest.



NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

A good attendance of 18 at our Christmas Party gave the evening a very convivial atmosphere. The festive table must have surpassed the very best of study feeds, and having two children with us made it feel even more like a party.

Joan had decorated the cake: William was the very appropriate theme, with the series running on television. Lists were available of the Club Library items that were available for sale. Geoffrey had brought along some duplicate items from his collection, donations for which boosted club funds.

A Bunter Drive (won by Donald Campbell) and a Christmas reading from Keith Atkinson soon made the time fly. A traditional toast to the club and to our founders was given by Geoffrey.

Club programmes for 1995 will be available in January. A very prosperous and happy 1995 to all readers of the C.D. from Northern Club.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

LONDON OLD BOYS BOOK CLUB

The twenty nine members and friends who attended the Christmas meeting at the home of Bill Bradford were treated to three Christmas readings from the three libraries. Roy Parsons read an excerpt from Nerki the Sorcerer series, Norman Wright chose a sequence from The Wandering Heir by Andrew Murray, Lastly, Roger Jenkins read from The Magnet, One Good Turn Deserves Another.

Duncan Harper presented a talk on the Christmas tales of Sexton Blake in the Union Jack, Gwyn Evans and G.H. Teed being the most prolific yuletide authors.

The January meeting will be on Sunday 8th at the home of Chris, Suzanne and Duncan Harper in Loughton.

SUZANNE HARPER

CAMBRIDGE CLUB

We gathered at the Trumpington home of our Chairman/Treasurer, Vic Hearn, for our now-traditional-formal December meeting.

With short presentations members celebrated the time-of-year. First Vic introduced a 1930s' music and nostalgia quiz; then Howard Corn discussed chocolate, its manufacture, the many past and present companies involved and its frequent advertising in the

publications of our hobby. Andy Boyle related some Toy Town memories aided by some Hulme Beaman publications. Roy Whiskin briefly read from and then analysed the contents of the December 1916 issue of The Captain, and Tony Cowley introduced us to excerpts from the 1956 Xmas Duff Goon Show especially prepared for the BBC's Forces Overseas service. Keith Hodgkinson gave us a 'party piece' of an audio tape of a Yorkshire Monologue spoof of the Hovis TV advert, and finally Paul Wilkins provided a quick quiz with a Christmas theme.

ADRIAN PERKINS

MUSICAL LINKS

by Reg Hardinge

The other day, whilst flicking through the pages of my copy of that excellent compilation THE SEXTON BLAKE INDEX, the title THE THIRD MAN (E.A. TREETON) caught my eye. I immediately associated this with the HARRY LIME THEME with ANTON KARAS on the Zither. As I continued browsing, other pairings flocked into my mind, which I have set down as follows:-

CONSIDER YOUR VERDICT (REX HARDINGE)
GUILTY (AL BOWLLY WITH FOY FOX & HIS ORCHESTRA)

SEXTON BLAKE IN TURKEY (W.M. GRAYDON)
CONSTANTINOPLE (HENRY HALL & HIS DANCE ORCHESTRA)

HIS LORDSHIP'S VALET (A. MURRAY)
HE WAS A GENTLEMAN'S GENTLEMAN (HUTCH)

SETTLING DAY. (G.H. TEED)
FAIR AND WARMER (DICK POWELL)

THE SHANGHAIED DETECTIVE (E.S. BROOKS)
ON A SLOW BOAT TO CHINA (DORIS DAY)

THE MYSTERY OF THE MAD MILLIONAIRE (W. TYRER)
YOU'RE DRIVING ME CRAZY (THE TEMPERANCE SEVEN)

THE PRIEST'S SECRET (A. MAXWELL)
I'M CONFESSING (BING CROSBY)

WHO KILLED CARSON? (H.H.C. GIBBONS)
YOU'LL NEVER KNOW. (ALICE FAYE)

THE LOST LETTER (R.M. GRAYDON)
RETURN TO SENDER (ELVIS PRESLEY)

£.S.D. (W.J. BAYFIELD)
MONEY, MONEY, MONEY (ABBA)

THE STUDDERED FOOTPRINTS (E.S. BROOKS)
THESE BOOTS WERE MEANT FOR WALKING (NANCY SINATRA)

THE HIDDEN HAND (R.M. GRAYDON)
PUPPET ON A STRING (SANDI SHAW)

SEXTON BLAKE IN SOUTH AMERICA (A. SAPT.)
DOWN ARGENTINA WAY (BETTY GRABLE)

A CHINESE PUZZLE (G.H. TEED)
I'M THE HUSBAND OF THE WIFE OF MR. WU. (GEORGE FORMBY)

To conclude this pot-pourri I will merely say THE SONG IS ENDED, BUT THE MELODY LINGERS ON!

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FAIR AND WARMER



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WORDS BY
AL DUBIN
MUSIC BY
HARRY WARREN

London, England
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PARIS: ÉDITIONS FELDMAN, 21 RUE DE L'ÉCHOIÉRE
NEW YORK: 40 N. W. 11th St. 1934



6^D 1934
Copyright



More Adventures of Rupert: the 1942 Collectors Edition
published by Pedigree Books at £17.95

"More Adventures of Rupert", the seventh Daily Express Rupert Annual, is, as any Rupert collector will tell you, the rarest of the entire run. Originally published in the autumn of 1942, a time when the wartime paper shortage was really beginning to bite, the number of copies published was very limited and most copies that were printed seem to have been read to pieces making it almost impossible today to find a copy in really nice condition. Unlike its predecessors the 1942 volume was bound in card wraps that did not stand the wear and tear from small fingers as well as the more durable boards of earlier issues. Many Rupert collectors lacked an original of this Annual and I know that there was eager anticipation amongst many 'followers' waiting for its facsimile appearance. Unfortunately, due to technical problems, the reprint was very late in arriving and I doubt whether many copies made it to the shops in time for Santa's sack.

The quality of printing and production are of a high standard with just the odd frame slightly soft on definition - probably due to a fault in the original copy used as a master. The soft card covers seem fairly durable and as with the previous Pedigree issues a full colour slip case is provided to keep each individually numbered volume clean.

Eagle-eyed purchasers will notice that it is called a 'Collector's Edition' whereas the previous reprints have all been called facsimiles. The reason for this is explained on the slipcase where the publisher points out that two of the stories contained "...certain terminology that was acceptable at the time of publication but has been changed or deleted to bring it into line with present day sensibility." I consulted a friend who had a copy of the original edition and we compared the two volumes to find out what this unacceptable terminology was. In the story entitled "The Wrong Present" there is a toy gollywog but throughout the new edition his name has been shortened to Golly with a space left in the block of text where the rest of his name originally appeared. A minstrel figures throughout the story entitled "Rupert at Sandy Bay" and in the blocks of text a space has been left where he was originally referred to as nigger minstrel. If these stories were being reprinted in the "Daily Express" today I could quite understand the reason for these deletions; but have we really reached the stage where it is impossible to produce a facsimile edition of a collectors book without censorship? In Orwell's "1984" one of the characters spends his time re-writing history. In its small way this is what is happening here and I wonder who ordered these changes. Was it Express Newspapers, the copyright owners, or an editor at Pedigree Books?

This apart, I can thoroughly recommend the volume to every Rupert enthusiast who would rather pay £17.95 for a mint copy than fork out £200 plus for a tatty original!

Norman Wright

ONE CENTURY - NOT OUT!

by Tommy Keen

Many times through the years, it has been stated (almost stressed) by various contributors to the Magazine that the 1930s were the Golden Years of the MAGNET (even if not the GEM), and although I am not attempting to decry these statements, it has some little bearing on what I have to say.

Naturally the 1930s were the Golden Age for the boys who read the Greyfriars stories during those years, but surely for the boys who avidly read the stories during the 1920s, that was the Golden Age. Certainly to me, it was, and when one considers the marvellous series of that decade, "Levison at Greyfriars", "The Worst Boy at Greyfriars", the Sahara series, "Loder for Captain", and although just scraping into the 1930s, "The Courtfield Cracksman", I had nothing to grumble about. Also, and though I had to wait almost half a century to discover the fact, many of the single issue tales of the 20s were written by the rather maligned sub-writers.

I would also imagine that the boys who read the MAGNET and GEM during the delightful Blue and White cover days, considered THAT period the best ever.

Now to the real reason for this 'article'. When I was a very young boy, two stories which I read, one in the MAGNET, "The Heart of a Hero", and one in the GEM, "The Pluck of Edgar Lawrence", affected me greatly, especially "The Pluck of Edgar Lawrence," and although by the mid 1930s, I had moved on to Film Magazines, I always remembered this splendid sob-stuff story in the Gem. At that time, the name of the author underneath the title, MARTIN CLIFFORD, meant very little, it was the story which was the interest, but a couple of decades ago, when I found myself back in the world of Greyfriars and St. Jims, I discover that my favourite tale of those far off days was in fact, written by a certain George Samways.

George Samways, together with other sub-writers had the happy knack of mentioning lesser known characters, so one would occasionally read of George Bulstrode, Dick Rake, Trevor, Treluce, Hilary, and, by the hand of Mr. Samways, Archie Howell and Denis Carr, two characters of his invention. He was also the author of the very famous Boys' Friend Library of World War I days, "School and Sport", which received much publicity at the time, but all credit for the story being given to Frank Richards. This must have been very galling for Mr. Samways, but maybe he considered it just his job. I have reported before how I first met Mr. Samways, and had kept in touch with him for many years, but through failing health on his part (and maybe, to a certain extent on mine), we rather lost contact. However, at the time of writing this, I have discovered that he is still in the land of the living, and that on the 14th January, 1995, he will be one hundred years old.

I wonder if he will receive a message from the Queen? We are all indebted to Frank Richards, Martin Clifford and Owen Conquest (Charles Hamilton) but I, at least, am particularly indebted to George W. Samways.

Wishing you, George, wherever you are, a peaceful, very special birthday.

THE RETURN OF CAPTAIN JUSTICE

by Mary Cadogan

Great news for collectors is this splendid series of reprints of Captain Justice's exciting and intriguing adventures. I have been browsing through these stories by Murray Roberts and am extremely impressed by their lively inventiveness. Titles such as *The World's Last Secret!*, *Guardian of the Whirlpool*, *Clash of Giants*, *Shadow-men of Ambani!* and *Maze of a Million Traps!* suggest the colourful nature of these stories. The quality of reproduction of texts and pictures is excellent and makes for easier reading than faded or mouldering surviving copies of *The Modern Boy* in which Captain Justice's exploits originally appeared.

THE PRICES ARE:

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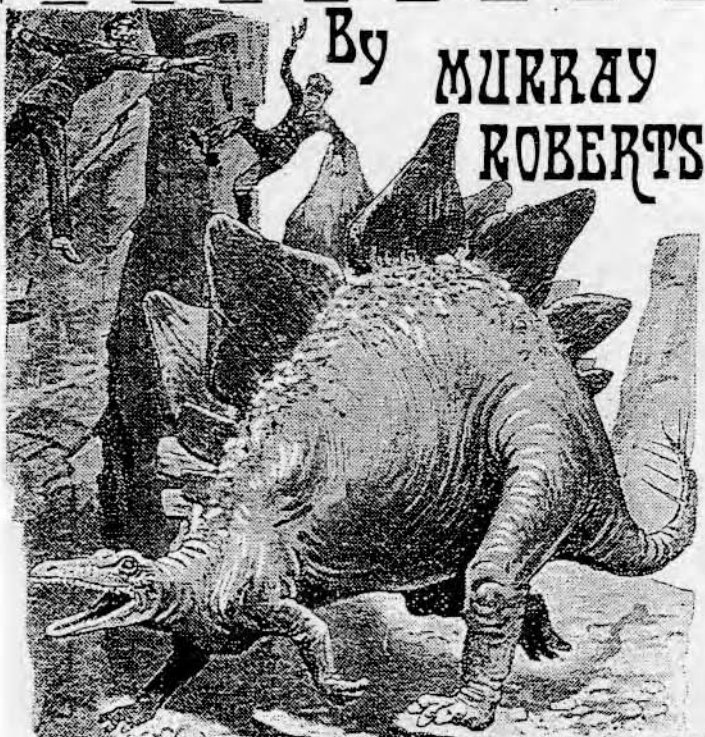
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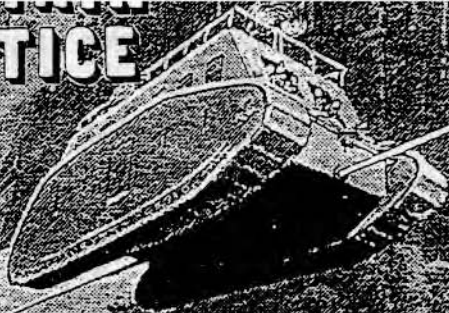


LAND OF MONSTERS



CAPTAIN JUSTICE'S 23rd ADVENTURE
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SERIES 18 OF
THE ADVENTURES OF
CAPTAIN
JUSTICE



RAIDERS OF
ROBOT CITY
BY MURRAY ROBERTS

Reprinted from the magazine
MODERN numbers 599 to 411,
BOY 28th Sept. to 21st Decr. 1935

The professor pulled down a switch, and there came the purr of great balance-wheels spinning smoothly at thousands of revolutions per minute. Midge's heart seemed to jump into his mouth as the huge car lurched forward along the slender line of steel.

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE GREYFRIARS SCHOOL MYSTERY. by Val Andrews (George Court, 67 Willoughby Lane, London N17 0QZ)

Ferrers Locke went there often enough, so did Sexton Blake on one occasion - so why not the man who inspired them? It's a pretty good story but Val Andrews should really have mugged up Greyfriars more before writing it. To detail the plot - it seems that Watson was an Old Boy of Greyfriars and is asked back there in 1912 by his old Headmaster, Dr. Locke; apparently, Mr. Quelch's History of Greyfriars manuscript has gone missing. No prizes for guessing the chief suspect. Watson's motive for calling in Holmes is partly to prove his innocence. The great man finds the business intriguing, so agrees to investigate. Holmes and Watson put up at the Cross Keys and are initially as prejudiced against Quelch as he is against Vernon-Smith. During the course of the story, we meet many Greyfriars favourites - Bunter, who talks Watson into lending him five bob till his postal order comes, Mrs. Mimble, Gosling and Prout, all there in Watson's day. Also Wibley and the Famous Five, it seems that Holmes once spent time in Bhanipur and Inky's English was "the style...used by the highest caste". Inspector Grimes, Uncle Clegg, Sir Hilton Popper (to whom Holmes and Watson are "rum-looking' johnnies), Redwing, Skinner, Banks (who tries the three-card trick on Holmes and even fights him), other masters, Peter Todd (Holmes knew his family law firm), and Wingate.

It turns out that the manuscript was taken by Skinner, and that the History of Greyfriars was a "cover". Apparently Quelch was writing stories under a variety of pseudonyms and was known to his publishers as Charles Hamilton. There are also no prizes for guessing his other pseudonyms. Apparently, his stories were inspired by Greyfriars events. There's an imaginary extract from the "Gem" featuring Baggy Trimble, Tom Merry, and a Mr. Ratcliffe. The story ends with Quelch inventing a detective called Ferrers Locke, and Holmes and Watson becoming regular readers, Holmes describing him as "the Schoolboy's Dickens".

This is certainly a well-written, exciting and amusing story; however, I must reiterate my earlier comment that Val Andrews should have mugged up Greyfriars more. I noticed several errors: Dr. Locke being eighty-five, Prout having been Watson's form-master (which would have made him over seventy), Mrs. Mimble having kept the tuckshop in Watson's day (ditto), Quelch only having been at Greyfriars for some ten years and having mutton-chop whiskers, his also being depicted as a snob (his attitude towards Messrs. Vernon-Smith and Fish), Peter Todd advising Banks, and bare back floggings. Furthermore, Trimble wasn't in the "Gem" in 1912, Ratcliffe (sic) was never his form-master, and there was no "fiscal four" (sic) at St. Jim's. One might say that this book has the drawback of all substitute stories - it may be good, but it just isn't the original.



The 1995 Enid Blyton Day.

Saturday 18th March 1995

Organised by Norman Wright

Everyone who attended the last two Blyton Days will be pleased to hear that plans are well under way for the **1995 Enid Blyton Day**. I have again booked the Chess Suite at Watersmeet in Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire a venue that will easily accommodate sixty people. The date is **Saturday 18th March 1995**.

Gillian Baverstock will be with us again and Barbara Stoney hopes to be able to attend. Our main speaker will be **George Greenfield**, who was for many years Enid Blyton's agent and friend. George knew Enid very well and his talk promises to give us all a rare insight into Enid, her world and her writing.

Time at the 1994 Blyton Day did not permit everyone to see the Noddy Ephemera Slide Show. This will be remedied in 1995 when I will be giving an extra long slide show with many, many more slides than those I had intended to show in '94!

Michael Rouse will be talking on the trials and tribulations of editing "Green Hedges".

In addition to the talks there will be displays of rare Blyton ephemera, etc. plus space for you to bring along rarities to show others. There will also be time to chat with other enthusiasts and to swap, buy and sell Blyton material.

Tickets cost **£6.75 per person** and will include morning and afternoon coffee or tea, as well as the special souvenir programme which, by kind permission of Darrell Waters Ltd., will reprint the scarce uncollected Five Find Outers story "The Five Find Outers and Dog Tackle The Mystery Sneak Thief", previously only available in a difficult to find 1960s annual.

Cheques for tickets should be sent, together with a large SAE to me at 60 Eastbury Road, Watford, Herts, WD1 4JL. (Cheques made payable to Norman Wright) The envelope will be used to send you your souvenir programme with map, prior to the meeting. Tickets will not be on sale at the door and numbers will be limited to 60. (In previous years over sixty people have wanted to attend) - So send now to avoid disappointment.

Norman Wright

Please send me _____ tickets (at £6.75 each) for the 1995 Enid Blyton Day on Sat. 18th March. I enclose cheque for £_____ made payable to Norman Wright, together with a large stamped addressed envelope

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

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