

# STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

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JUNE 1995

## BILLY BUNTER THE HIKER



FRANK RICHARDS

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# STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

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## BETWEEN OURSELVES

Last month I made another extremely pleasurable visit to California where, once again, I was struck by the feeling that I seemed to be in typical Rio Kid country. On this trip I had more time than usual to walk the wilder trails, and, resting by rocky streams, I almost expected to see the Kid - or one of his Western movie equivalents - ride up and lead his horse to drink from the water's edge. As Bob Whiter pointed out in last month's C.D., Charles Hamilton's ability to project the atmosphere of the West - and indeed of other far-flung locations which he had never visited - was remarkable.

This intense feeling for atmosphere is, of course, more usually associated with his Greyfriars stories, and it was good on my return from California to find a further batch of Bunter book facsimiles awaiting me. Once again, Hawk Books have done a splendid job with these reprints. It is a joy to read



HE PERCEIVED THE FAT OWL IN THE VERY ACT  
OF SLITTING IT OPEN

the stories in pristine condition, with all the freshness of the originals in their brightly coloured dust-jackets and clear type-faces.

The books are **BILLY BUNTER THE HIKER**, **BUNTER COMES FOR CHRISTMAS**, **BILLY BUNTER'S POSTAL ORDER** and **BILLY BUNTER'S FIRST CASE**. The last mentioned two are set entirely in the world of Greyfriars and its immediate environs, while, as their titles suggest, **BILLY BUNTER THE HIKER** and **BUNTER COMES FOR CHRISTMAS** are holiday stories, one with the background of the woods, meadows and lanes of Sussex, Hampshire and Berkshire in summertime, and the other featuring Yuletide activities at Wharton Lodge. Each of these two vacation tales includes the bonus of opening chapters conveying events at Greyfriars (high-jinks in the quad, Bunter touting for holiday

invitations, and some delicious class-room encounters between Quelch and the Bounder and the Fat Owl, etc.). **HIKER** and **CHRISTMAS** (both from the late 1950s) are illustrated by C.H. Chapman, who is to many of us the definitive Greyfriars artist, while **POSTAL ORDER** and **LAST CASE** (from the early '50s) are pictured by R.J. Macdonald, whose work was traditionally associated with the St. Jim's stories in the **GEM**. I believe that, in fact, Charles Hamilton had a preference for Macdonald's illustrations, and it is interesting to compare his version of Greyfriars with Chapman's in this present batch of facsimiles. There is no doubt that Macdonald has done a good job in trying to maintain the Greyfriars atmosphere but to my mind Chapman, despite his tendency for caricature, still comes out better. I wonder what C.D. readers think about this? (Our cover picture this month is by Chapman and the line-drawing in this editorial is one of Macdonald's from **BILLY BUNTER'S POSTAL ORDER**.)

All four of these books are a wonderful read for anyone going off now on holiday; as ever, Charles Hamilton, as 'Frank Richards', can be relied upon to create a relaxing and expansive mood. (The books at £14.95 each can be obtained from bookshops or direct from Hawk Books, Suite 309, Canalot Studios, 222 Kensal Road, London W10 5BN.)

Elsewhere in this issue of the C.D. we are looking at some other exciting reprints: Malcolm Saville's Lone Pine books are being reissued by Scholastic publications, and a scrumptious collection of Second World War ephemera is now available in THE WARTIME SCRAPBOOK by Robert Opie, published by New Cavendish books.

As always I wish you HAPPY READING.

MARY CADOGAN

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**Laurence Price writes about:**

## **THE ROAD OF COURAGE**

*The last great "Eagle" comic strip by Frank Hampson*

"The Road of Courage", the story of the life of Jesus Christ, was to be the swan song and the last strip that the great Dan Dare artist, Frank Hampson, would draw for the Eagle comic. It ran from Spring 1960 until Spring 1961, fifty-six episodes in all, and it was a sustained work of draughtsmanship of the highest quality, entirely worthy of its subject.

With this work Hampson fulfilled a lifetime ambition to illustrate the life of Christ. He sought and gained permission to go to the Holy Land, all expenses paid, and accurately research his material, taking photographs, visiting libraries and museums, and buying clothing to ensure the authenticity of his costumes.

Marcus Morris, who had left as editor of Eagle at the end of 1959, was credited as writing the text; quite apt as he had been an ordained Anglican vicar.

Some artistic licence was, nevertheless, taken with the story, and the miraculous events of the Nativity, for instance, were played down. But what gave the story some extra and imaginative bite was the parallel telling of the life story of Jesus Bar-Abbas, the same Bar-Abbas who will be released in place of Christ by Pontius Pilate.

The story begins with the call by Caesar for a census throughout the whole Roman Empire, including, the known trouble spot of Judaea.

A riot is soon underway in Jerusalem against Caesar's taxes and a most Dan Dare-like centurion gives the order to charge. Involved in the fracas is a young Bar-Abbas who, feeling the city, finally takes refuge in the house of Joseph Bar-Jacob, a carpenter of Nazareth.

There is some further stretching of credibility as Bar-Abbas actually travels to Bethlehem with Joseph and the pregnant Mary, not betrothed or engaged as in the bible, but already his wife.

They talk together on the road of the coming Christ and Bar-Abbas promises he will fight for him against the Romans, assuming him to be a warrior Messiah.



Mary duly gives birth to Jesus in a stable in Bethlehem but there is little, in any suggestion, of a miraculous birth and no mention is made of the shepherds. Bar-Abbas departs.

Three astrologers do, however, appear before Herod and emphasis is placed on the terrible massacre of the baby boys in Bethlehem, with some understated comic paper dialogue from one of the assassins on the dreadful event that is about to take place.

"Killing babies? Cor, what a job!"



Very little is known or recorded of the early life of Jesus, and this paucity of facts allows for a meeting between Jesus and his friends and the now adult Bar-Abbas. Simon, a friend of Jesus, is persuaded by Bar-Abbas to join the rebel cause and hence becomes Simon Zealot who, as the bible later records, becomes a disciple of Jesus and renounces his rebel ways. The young Jesus incidentally has earlier performed his first 'miracle' on Simon by drawing poison from a wound caused by a snake bite.

One other dramatic event is portrayed when the boy Jesus witnesses a mass crucifixion of Zealots at Sepphoris. In a deeply moving series of frames, the fear of the young Jesus at the prospect of such a death is poignantly depicted.

So much for such deviations from the Bible story.

Other key events in the life of Jesus are more accurately and beautifully portrayed. These include His baptism on the River Jordan by John the Baptist, His temptation in the wilderness, His calling to discipleship of the fishermen, Peter and Andrew, curing the sick and the lame, performing miracles, dining with tax collectors and sinners, talking to eager crowds and the feeding of the five thousand, plus numerous confrontations with the Pharisees.

Then in one memorable frame 'with his disciples, Jesus sets out for Galilee - and the road of courage to Jerusalem'.

Palm Sunday and the triumphal entry of Jesus on a donkey into Jerusalem were once more beautifully depicted by Hampson. Then followed the events of the Last Supper, His betrayal by Judas Iscariot in the Garden of Gethsemane, the mockery of a trial and his appearance before Pontius Pilate, culminating in the release of Bar-Abbas and the crucifixion and death of Jesus on Calvary on Good Friday. Much had been made of the terrorist activities of Bar-Abbas in the story and he had eventually been captured and sent in chains to Jerusalem.

The wonderful events of Easter Sunday were portrayed sympathetically by Hampson



when the three women found the stone rolled away from the empty tomb. Mary Magdalene was the first to see the risen Christ in a simple frame that needed only two words.

"Mary!" "Master!"

The story concludes as Jesus leaves His instructions: "Spread the good news to all the world. Teach them what I have taught you - and remember - I am with you always - even to the end of the world".

The Eagle was the comic that most publicly and successfully lived up to its stated aims of providing wholesome Christian values to young boys. With this one strip that aim was most perfectly realised and, for me, next to Dan Dare, it remains the other great memory of an outstanding boy's comic, the like of which it is sadly improbable we will ever see again.

Equally importantly, it remains a lasting tribute to the excellence of the great artist that was Frank Hampson.

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## THE FILMS OF THE BOOKS - OR VICE-VERSA by Derek Hinrich

Before the First World War *The Union Jack* carried numerous stories with our hero's name in the title - Sexton Blake in various places: in China, in Baku, in Patagonia or wherever - or Sexton Blake undertaking a variety of occupations: Beefeater, Gamekeeper, Shopwalker and so on.

But in the golden age of the '20s and '30s his name rarely, if ever, appeared in a title in the DW, UJ, or SBL. There was no need. Yet it was invoked in that of each of the three films - two in 1935 and one in 1938 - which starred George Curzon as Blake. It was presumably considered a selling point.

I have the stories on which the first two of these were based - SBL 2/449, *The Blazing Launch Murder* by Rex Hardinge (which was filmed as *Sexton Blake and The Bearded Doctor*), and UJ 2/1378 "They Shall Repay" by G.H. Teed (which became *Sexton Blake and The Mademoiselle*). As far as I know I have never seen either of them (well, I can't remember all the films I saw with my parents when I was six!).

David Quinlan's *British Sound Films 1928-1959* is dismissive of the first as an "improbable crime thriller, reminiscent of a silent serial. A famous violinist is found dead, ace detective Sexton Blake suspects foul play. A sinister bearded doctor threatens a girl and a young insurance man with a similar fate if they refuse to sign away the dead man's effects. Blake uncovers a plot to defraud an insurance company." This was produced and directed by George A. Cooper who had made two of the silent Blake films with Langhorne Burton in 1928. The initial murder in Hardinge's book is accomplished with a catapult

(rather after the manner of Dorothy L. Sayers' *Murder Must Advertise*). It is some time since I read it, but by the end I think the body count was about as high as that in *Hamlet*.

According to Quinlan the consensus of opinion of critics at the time was that the film was "poor" but the next was a shade better - "average". Of it he says, "Better Sexton Blake adventure in which the lean sleuth is asked by a financier to recover a parcel of stolen bonds. He finds that his employer is a crook, and that the bonds were stolen by a young girl, posing as 'Mademoiselle' to avenge the ruin of her father by the financier." *Posing as 'Mademoiselle'* sounds a little garbled, surely, to those of us who know and love our Teed! This film was directed by Alex Bryce.

Neither of these films apparently survives: at any rate they have never surfaced on television, even at two a.m. The third one has. Indeed *Sexton Blake and The Hooded Terror* is preserved in the National Film Archive: the first time I saw it (subject to the rider above!) was in a season on "The Detective in Film" at the National Film Theatre and it has been shown two or three times on Channel 4. Quinlan thinks more highly of it. "Sexton Blake tackles The Hooded Terror, a world-wide crime organisation and its mastermind, known only as The Snake. After several brushes with death Blake unmasks philatelist Michael Larron as The Snake. But, concentrating on rescuing the beautiful Julie from a hideous fate, Blake allows The Snake to wriggle away to scheme another day. Thriller is foolish but fast and fun." The critics at the time rated it as "good". This third film was produced and directed by George King who had, perhaps, a more substantial body of work than his predecessors. He made a version of *The Case of The Frightened Lady* which I remember fondly from my boyhood, but his most notable film, starring Leslie Howard, was *The First of The Few*, the biography of R.J. Mitchell, the designer of the Spitfire.

Having read the other two stories on which this trio of films was based, I have often wondered how *Sexton Blake and The Hooded Terror* compared with SBL 2/569 *The Mystery of No 13 Caversham Square* by Pierre Quiroule, so I borrowed it from the Sexton Blake Library to find out.

Well, altering the title must on this occasion have helped, for the book's hardly catch the imagination. That apart, the film follows the novel quite closely, though there are some minor alterations and two major. For instance, Granite Grant, one of Quiroule's regular characters, has barely a walk-on role at the beginning (a first screen appearance for David Farrar) and is not seen thereafter, whereas in the novel he is in at the death. The first big change, however, is to reveal the principal villain to the audience quite early in the proceedings and to show his machinations in parallel with Blake's hunt for him. In the book Michel Larron, alias "The Snake", the leader of the Black Quorum, only appears twice, and though he has henchmen, the other members of the Quorum do not appear (though they are rounded up afterwards) but here they do - though mostly only to say, "Rhubarb". The other major change is that in the book "The Snake" does not escape but commits suicide to cheat the law.

The film is full of excitement and movement and has many nice touches, as Norman Wright has pointed out in his splendid *Celebration of Sexton Blake*. I particularly like the wax gamblers, one of whom subsequently comes alive - Mlle Julie has been hiding - a touch reminiscent of *The Avengers*.

Something that has always intrigued me is that when the members of the Black Quorum assemble - they of course all know each other and are anyway first shown together in plain clothes at a stamp auction - they all solemnly dress up in black robes, somewhat after the style of the Klu Klux Klan, although no-one else is present, and then, halfway through their meeting, they take their hoods off. Bit inconsequential, that.

Tod Slaughter certainly makes a splendidly full-blooded villain of Larron and the enlargement of the role in comparison with that in the book is fully justified. His casting also rendered any attempt at who-dunnitry superfluous, unlike another British thriller of 1937, *Dark Journey*, recently shown on Channel 4, which was much concerned with the problem of the identity of the head of the German secret service in Sweden in the First World War. This all seemed totally unnecessary for, as a friend said to me, "With Conrad Veidt in the cast, who else could it be?"

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## CAN GIRLS PLAY FOOTBALL? NOT HALF!

by Ray Hopkins

At least they can, according to Edwy Searles Brooks' "The Mystery Goalkeeper", in which a magnificent match is played between the St. Frank's juniors and the River House School led by Hal Brewster. The River House School wins simply because their goalie will not let through any of the shots made by St. Frank's. The goalie is not a big husky like Handforth, who has a bad time because he seems to be distracted by one thing and another, not only by the presence of Irene Manners, but also by the antics of Willy who mimics his brother's movements from a position behind the goal.

Arthur Jones' drawings of the River House goalie in NELSON LEE Old Series 497, 13 Dec 1924, are in no way feminine oriented, although Edwy's descriptions are. "Sim and slender as a giddy girl," says Handy. The St. Frank's juniors are convinced that it is Doris Berkeley pretending to be a boy after a glimpse of her familiar features, though they don't seem to notice that the hair is shorter. And Brewster refers to the goalie as Norman. Well, he'd hardly refer to his goalie as Doris, would he?

Reggie Pitt, who's always been rather sweet on Doris in a chummy 1920's schoolboy way, is bitterly disappointed in her magnificent performance. "I didn't think Doris was such an out-and-out tomboy," he complained.

Even that nasty of Fullwood is set up by E.S.B. as he passes the Moor View gates and observes a slim young fellow dressed in football gear kissing one of the girls in the porch. He thinks he may have seen Handforth "makin' love to Irene," as he puts it and stops his bicycle at the gate to jeer as Handy steps forth. But when he catches a glimpse of the footballer's face and finds Handy's rugged features not there, he thinks he recognises the delicate features as those of Doris Berkeley. "How would you like to kiss me for a change?" he asks. Brooks, carrying on the joke against not only the reader but a member of the cast, as it were, comments, "For one boy to slap another in the face was a somewhat extraordinary proceeding." The mystery footballer might have received a slap back if Fullwood hadn't been in a hurry to see a man about a horse.

Doris herself had started the whole fiasco when, a few days before the match with the River House juniors, she told Pitt (who is Captain of the Fourth in this story) and Archie Glenthorne that it was a good job girls weren't allowed to play football. She for instance would have no trouble in beating Archie or, as she puts it in her breezy language, "I could easily whack you at football, Archie," a riposte to Archie's statement that football was 'hardly a proper pastime for delicate young ladies.' Pitt tells Doris it was OK for girls to play cricket, or hockey, or netball, but football was far too rough, and he would bet that one shot at keeping goal would be enough to satisfy her curiosity. Doris retorts that she might have the chance one day and Pitt would lose his bet.



The River House custodian just got to the ball as it was about to enter the net. It was one of the most magnificent saves that had ever been made on Little Side.

Right after this conversation, Doris runs over to Hal Brewster, the River House Junior Captain, also present, and has a little chat with him. Pitt observes her amused expression when she returns and for one moment wonders if ... but no, it wouldn't be allowed!

During the game, "Norman," or Doris as the St. Frank's team now believe the River House goalie to be, makes one marvellous save after another and, after four of these, Reggie and Co. realise the River House goalie certainly is no novice. But the mystery is where has she learned to play so proficiently? Handforth is so impressed he rushes over to congratulate the opposing goalie, addressing him as "Miss Doris". The goalkeeper "laughs merrily" and answers in "a demure voice". Legs being pulled all round by the look of it as Pitt and Co. realise when Doris herself strolls over and introduces the miraculous goalie to them as her brother Norman.

Norman changes his demure expression into a boyish grin and explains that he had to slap Fullwood's face to aid the planned deception though he felt like punching him. Doris's plan to make Pitt eat his words would not have been possible had it not been for the fact that Norman Berkeley had, unbeknown to the St. Frank's juniors, only just joined the River House School as a pupil and the fact that he had "always kept goal for his old school and was reckoned to be pretty good at it."

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# OTHER FAVOURITE DETECTIVES

## HAMILTON CLEEK

Hamilton Cleek was an ex-cracksman who reformed, later becoming a Scotland Yard Detective, appearing in books, and at least one magazine in the 1910 to 1932 period, both here and America.

Known as 'The Man with Forty Faces', Cleek was born with a rare characteristic in having a plastic face. He could contort this in an amazing number of ways, making a perfect disguise without having to use make-up. Aged between 25 and 35, his normal appearance was slim and aristocratic. Faultlessly dressed, he was a person with perfect manners.

Thomas W. Hanshew, the creator aptly entitled his first book that introduced the character 'The Man with Forty Faces', a collection of short stories that were believed to have been published in Cassells Magazine. Others followed called 'Cleek of Scotland Yard', and 'Cleek the Master Detective'.

by Bill Lofts

A BUMPER NUMBER WITH FOUR COMPLETE STORIES



## The Riddle of the Scarlet Minstrel

Being a Further Exploit  
— in the Career of —  
Hamilton Cleek, Detective

By Thomas W. &  
Mary E. Hanshew

CHAPTER I

**The Herald of Death**  
SPEEDY-FOOT SAUNDERS of South York peered on the telephone receiver from where it stood on the desk, and gave the answer he expected in a hoarse, gruff voice.

"Hello, Hello!" came the familiar strains of the opening bars of "God Save the King."

"It's all right to this time on a day like this, Cleek. I've need of you, old chap. A case of the nature. Come over as quick as you can. I've got a good job, and I'll be out in five minutes." "Right!" And in case time I'll be waiting at the corner with the limousine, and we can be off and away in the glow of a Jiffy-Transformer.

He noticed the receiver with a little sigh of relief, picked up his hat and memorandum book, and sped there into the avenue apartment.

The apartment he had said, but it was even less than that, when Cleek, together with his business adviser, passed the corner and, after a few minutes' wait, the limousine drew up to the door of the hotel.

He extended a hand to Cleek and made it business as usual.

"Step into the limousine, my dear fellow. I've something on my mind, but I'll not say a word to you, but I'll say to you—be sure you are not followed, and I'll be out in five minutes."

"Right you are," Cleek said, as he stepped out and the door was shut. "I'll be out in five minutes with Leonard, and the car will be out here. Now what is it? What kind of a case is it? Hush, hush, or what?"

"Well, I hardly know what to describe it," he responded, hesitating. "It's a case of a gentleman (Scarlet Minstrel), Cleek—who has a particular family feud, and I've seen a fellow who is out to do it. Hush, hush, or what?"

"Hush, hush, and the name of the family is important?"



CAUGHT RED-HANDED

"Exactly what I expected," Cleek whispered, slipping from behind his portfolio to that of Douglas. "Well, we'll catch the Scarlet Minstrel red-handed this time."

Like the traditional detectives of the early period, Cleek had a cockney assistant, a snub-nosed ginger haired youth of 19, with the most unusual name of 'Dollops', and they drove about London in a red limousine.

A strange thing about the author is that it is firmly believed he died after the first few stories, and they were then continued firstly by his wife, Mary E. Hanshew, then by his daughter Hazel P. Hanshew. The latter is said to have studied closely his notes and ideas of Cleek's creator. Surely some sort of record of writing as a family in the realms of detective literature.

Hamilton Cleek was reprinted in CHUMS (1920/21), as well as being adapted for a stage, and a film-serial production.

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## THAT DESERT ISLAND SYNDROME...

by Margery Woods

### Part 1 - The Girls' Crystal

It is a rare and extremely well-balanced personality who can state with total honesty that he or she has never wished to escape from the reality of an existence suddenly become unbearably onerous; be it bullying at school, a tyrannical boss or unpleasant colleagues, the stress of a troubled family, a period of ill-health, or even just the British climate. Suddenly there is the longing to escape, to warmth and one's own private space far beyond the reach of the telephone, the nagging and the worries, where even a new set of problems would not be unacceptable, rather a challenge to spur a troubled spirit into fresh ingenuity. Where better than one's very own desert island?

# THE Cruising Merry-makers



Sally & Co. had decided it was going to be great fun to be "Crusoes" on the desert island. But there was mystery as well as adventure there. For one by one Sally's chums began to disappear . . .

The Crusoe theme has long both intrigued the imagination and provided a sturdy peg on which to hang innumerable stories. As far as the storypapers were concerned, the Crusoe theme was rarely out of print for very long, making allowances, of course, for the

fact that a great deal of licence had to be taken in the construction of the tales, that the Crusoe background could never be genuine. Poor old Robinson was condemned to his solitary existence for a considerable time before the most famous footprint in fiction suddenly appeared on the sand... But for storypaper serials this would not have sustained a long serial requiring frequent and highly dramatic curtains to keep youth's attention span at a suitably high tension. For this there had to be conflict in abundance and plenty of action, and to provide these there had to be characters to interweave the motives and the reader identification.

During the decade of the forties to early fifties the Girls' Crystal was a rich source of island tales, well written and compact --- they had to be during the paper shortage --- and, as the only survivor of A.P.'s famous stable of storypapers, it no doubt had the editorial luxury of the entire team of star writers available.

A great favourite was Daphne Grayson's (G. Cecil Graveley) long running series, The Cruising Merrymakers.

They sailed happily along, aboard the *Southern Queen*, through most of the war years, blithely oblivious to U-Boats and a major land, sea and air war raging across the oceans of the world, and in 1941 were bound for, of all places, Hawaii! But they too managed to get themselves stranded for several weeks on a forbidden island where they took to the Crusoe life with joy and gusto, not forgetting to follow the time-worn ritual of all captives by scratching each new day's date. The requisite native girl soon found them, Sally was made

No. 314.  
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EVERY  
FRIDAY.

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

AND "THE SCHOOLGIRL"

Week  
Ending  
October 25th  
1941.



A Thrilling Story of Mystery and Adventure on a Desert Island, by HAZEL ARMITAGE

white queen of the island, and then visitors from a yacht, supposedly sent to rescue them, proved to be very unwelcome. The Merrymakers series was a gentle one, each story complete in itself, but in the island series loosely linked by the strand of seeking for Hazel's father who had been kidnapped and kept on a nearby island. Soon they were back aboard the *Southern queen*, for more shipboard frolics and probably a luxurious mode of living undreamed of by the thousands of little readers back in war torn Britain.

This was escapism in every sense of the word, at a time when opportunities of escaping the grim reality of war were virtually non-existent.

John Wheway, writing as Hazel Armitage, did not lose sight entirely of reality in his **THE MYSTERY BOY OF CASTAWAY ISLAND** when the liner in which his party of characters were sailing to Australia was torpedoed by an enemy raider. Here again was the exotic island and the requisite "Friday", this time a white boy, accompanied by two fierce panthers. The villain was from the ship's crew and the conflict provided by Una, a spiteful girl jealous of Joan, the story's heroine. But Wheway fans were not disappointed by any lack of excitement and mystery surrounding the mysterious white boy who had lived on the island since childhood. There is a secret weapon, and an invasion of Germans, just enough to keep the reader firmly into the real-life period of reading, and lending the conviction that it could all be actually happening.



The Enthralling Adventures of Two Cheery Chums, Castaway on a Romantic Tropical Island.

By HAZEL ARMITAGE

Another serial contributed to the Girls' Crystal by Wheway was **AERIAL CASTAWAYS OF THE SOUTH SEAS**, this time a tale of two girls, Connie and Heather, Professor Lannet, and Drew Greenfield, the pilot of the plane which had crash-landed on the beach of their island. The girls lost no time in building a little hut of palm and bamboo which they christened Crusoe Cottage, while Connie's uncle and the pilot camped out in the plane.

These castaways have a serious mission, the search for a fabled white orchid with medicinal properties which is reputedly found only on a nearby island called Sunrise. The girls rig up a makeshift canoe from one of the floats of the wrecked seaplane and set off for Sunrise Island, which is near to their own. Here they meet Lulalu, who is frightened of white people but likes the girls, fortunately! They are intrigued by a shell pendant she wears which is carved in the shape of an orchid. Apart from telling them it belonged to her father, she refused any further information, even when the girls tell her the plant could save the lives of thousands of sick people. The discussion is interrupted by the arrival of Professor Lannet and Drew, who have denuded the plane of another float. They are furious and Drew says the island is full of hostile savages, a statement that does not tie in with Lulalu's claim that she lives alone on the island of Sunrise. First clue to the villain, who by the law of elimination, has to be Drew, out of the four of them.

The story develops into a battle of wills between the girls and Drew, with the Professor taking his side, naturally. The little island girl is victimised, blamed for the arrival of the war canoes of raiders from another island (shades of THE CORAL ISLAND!) who torch the castaways' little home and sparse supplies. The story unfolds of the Jungle Mountain on sunrise and its Temple, guarded by great birds who will admit only the Keeper of the Orchid to the Cave Garden where the orchid flourishes, while the islanders in the group fall victim to a sleeping sickness for which the cure may be so near to hand.

Far fetched? Perhaps not really when one remembers the periwinkle that grows in India and which possesses cyto-toxic properties used in the treatment of some types of cancer. Perhaps the great seams of gold discovered at the roots of the orchid, providing the motive for Drew's villainy, could belong to the realm of fantasy, but Wheway excelled in these wonderfully inventive stories set against vividly pictured settings, and this novel took the reader back to the cream of his Cliff House writing during the early thirties. He was always good at background colour, which when checked by any adult reader of nostalgia usually proved to be both accurate and informative.

Perhaps an island with a castaway school sounds unlikely? Renee Frazer made it work in a superb tale...

*(To Be Continued)*

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## A DARK HORSE

by Ted Baldock

On the blind side of Harvest House there was a window, through which a boy could pass at a late hour of the night with little fear of detection. Most of the boys knew of it, but only a foolhardy one here and there risked using it for a nocturnal outing.

R.A.H. Goodyear. *All Out for the School*

When William Gosling, the ancient school porter, closes and locks the gates each evening Greyfriars becomes virtually an island in the darkening Kent landscape. Seething with activity and sound during the day, the rhythm tends to slow down as night approaches. Legitimate pursuits and official duties cease, their place being taken by preparation and social activities, sports committee meetings, debating societies etc., up until bedtime. Then the pulse of the school drops to a very low rate as dormitories are occupied and lights are dimmed.

But activity by no means ceases completely. It is now when form-rooms, studies and passages are shadowy and silent that certain fellows begin to stir and embark upon less credible pursuits.

For example Gerald Loder of the sixth form has other 'fish to fry'. Loder is in Greyfriars parlance 'a dark horse', 'shady character', a less than admirable representative of the school. Also by virtue of the fact that he is a prefect he has to steer a very careful course in the pursuit of that which appeals to the less pleasant side of his character.

The dingy coterie at the 'Three Fishers' on the banks of the Sark are well known to Loder; they in turn are cognizant of rather more than is desirable of him. Hence there exists an uneasy alliance, a less than trusting relationship between them.

Greyfriars seems like an island after nightfall, and, as from most islands, escape routes and exits are not lacking. Certain box-room windows and ivy-clad walls provide avenues for quietly leaving the precincts. Being a sixth form man Loder enjoys the privilege of a study to himself which happily - or otherwise - facilitates matters enormously. His exits are usually made from his study window which is conveniently situated on the ground floor.

The lure of the smoke-filled tap room of the 'Three Fishers' must be potent for Loder. The low-slung lamps over the billiard table and the bar with its dark hued gleaming vintages exercise a fascination for him. In the blowzy room, blue with tobacco smoke and the less aromatic fumes of alcohol, cards around a green baize-covered table have in the past relieved him of far more money than he has been able to raise on the spur of the moment. Hence those little - oft-times extremely dangerous - scraps of paper, have come into being, those infamous I.O.U.'s which in the past have spelt disaster for so many fellows.

Perilous moments these for a sporting fellow. Thus have the 'gentlemen' of the establishment a certain hold over Loder as, with beery good humour, they urge him on to further excesses.

To do him justice he does frequently have feelings of revulsion within himself about his irresistible attraction to the fleshpots.

To what extent these nocturnal activities are known to Gosling is debatable. The Greyfriars gate-keeper is extremely ancient and, in his rustic way, very wily. Possibly his knowledge of the unofficial proceedings of some pupils is more extensive than may be imagined. It is likely that it is made worth his while upon occasions to become stricken by sudden deafness or restriction of vision. Gosling has a shrewd knowledge of boys and their modes of behaviour which have been demonstrated over many years by the 'rags' of generations of fellows. However, currency of the realm can work, and has worked, wonders. It has rarely failed to produce his at least temporary co-operation.

Thus Gerald Loder and other fellows of similar ilk continue in their 'merry' pursuits. Anachronistically, should Loder by chance become aware that Vernon-Smith (for example) is violating the rules by breaking bounds he will descend with righteous wrath in his capacity as a prefect and, should the culprit be caught in the act, the official ash is swiftly brought into active and skilful play. At times the course of true justice would appear to be somewhat tortuous. For the record it may be said that Smithy is rarely detected in his nefarious expeditions, being possibly some way ahead of Loder in the gentle art of covering his tracks.

Every institution, even among those beyond the world of school has its less than wholesome apples. A cursory glance at the daily press will fully clarify this. Greyfriars is no exception. It may be asked whether the on-going story of the school would be quite so interesting or exciting if these characters were non-existent. The happy fact remains that Loder is far from being a 'complete outsider'. He does possess redeeming features although

these are far from apparent at times. His retention of a place in the first eleven soccer team is no mean feat for George Wingate is a hard task-master. The fact that Loder manages to accomplish this seems to argue that there does exist in his make-up other facets more worthy than, as his great originator would have put it, playing the 'Giddy Ox'.

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**MALCOLM LEONARD SAVILLE (1901-1982)** by Anthony Cook

At this time, when we are looking at children's literature in and around the second world war period, it is interesting to note that Malcolm Saville published his first book in 1943. It is surprising that he did not do so until he was 41 years of age especially when one considers that he worked for Cassell and was Sales Promotion Manager for Amalgamated Press before moving to George Newnes. One thing is certain, however, Saville knew a great deal about children's books and was well aware of the kind of adventure stories young people enjoyed reading.

There is no doubting the fact that his first book "Mystery At Witchend", being produced as a serial on the radio programme 'Children's Hour', set the seal on his books for some years to come: this, combined with the eventual publication of twenty 'Lone Pine' books, as they came to be known, established him as one of the most popular and readable of children's authors. Some critics classed his work as bland and repetitive but his popularity proved them wrong. It is good that Scholastic are now reprinting the early Lone Pine titles, and that on the second-hand market his works are steadily climbing both in interest and price.

Between 1943 and 1982 his output included the Lone Pine series (20), Jilly Family series (6), Buckingham Family series (6), Marston Baines thrillers (7), Mike & Mary series (7), Susan & Bill series (8), Nettlefold series (4), Lucy & Humph series (4), Misc (3), and Non Fiction (24).

Malcolm Saville wrote for children of all ages. His non-fiction books dealt mainly with the country-side and seashore and places of particular interest, and, written with flair, these were appreciated by children and adults alike.

He delighted in producing at least four volumes of any one fiction series, developing his characters and inviting readers to follow the adventures of 'old friends'. The main attraction was always his Lone Pine series which ran from 1943 until 1978, and with the formation of the Lone Pine Club he attracted readers on an international scale. It is a well known fact that many of his readers began to appreciate "Mystery At Witchend" as children and read the last volume "Home To Witchend", as adults.

So popular was this series that Malcolm formed the Lone Pine Club with members receiving Newsletters and an update on his new books, which was a great success. He liked young people to write to him and discuss the books, and he always replied to them. I still have a batch of letters from him, all hand-written. He was always willing to receive suggestions regarding the future of various characters and the way in which they might develop. From the results I can assure Saville fans that he really did take all comments to heart. This was the type of man he was, and meeting him confirmed this view. His readers were amongst the most important people in his life.

In writing the Lone Pine series over a period of 35 years he showed mastery as a writer of children's books. In the first place he wrote vividly about real locations which could be visited and with which many of his readers could and did become familiar. He

knew his areas well, not just geographically but historically and imaginatively. He could weave plots that managed to combine the past with the present, and gave his readers stimulus and interest without appearing to try to be educational. Another asset was that he allowed his characters to grow up, albeit slowly, a process which needed writing skill and a deep understanding of teenagers.

There was also a strict moral code to the stories but this was never obtrusive and at no point did it allow any of the characters to become 'prissy'. Far from it, for they tended to have faults, failings and misunderstandings which any normal healthy children possess during their formative years. Also the children came from varying backgrounds; this attracted readers who could empathise with one character or another without necessarily having to accept a stereotyped character as the norm throughout the series.

It is only fair, however, to note that Saville's stories had one weakness or fault. His villains tended to be the run of the mill 'bad eggs'. Only one of his baddies rose above this, a woman who became known as 'The Ballanger'. She appeared and reappeared from time to time and was certainly not just standardised. She was worried by, and harried, the Lone Piners, having a special aversion to the Morton twins with good cause.

A little now about the main characters. In the beginning the Lone Pine Club consisted of five members. The Morton family, who own Witchend and occupy it during the holidays, consists of Mr. and Mrs. Morton, David, and the twins, Mary and Richard. The three children appear in all twenty books. They meet and make firm friends with Petronella (Peter) Stirling whose father looks after a local reservoir. The fifth 'original' is Tom Ingles, a Londoner, who is working on a nearby farm owned by his uncle. Once these main characters have been established each book also features other young people, the most important being Penny and Jonathan Warrender. Jonathan's mother owns an old hotel in Rye. He and his cousin Penny are introduced in "The Gay Dolphin Adventure" and of course they soon meet up with and make friends with the Mortons.

The series includes a rich cast of secondary but memorable characters, such as the Romany family of Reuben, Miranda and their daughter Fenella who have an influence on Petronella Stirling's life, Harriet Sparrow from London to the timid Nicholas Whiteflower. Adults who pass in and out of the stories include 'Mr' (Detective Inspector) Cantor of the CID and James Wilson, a newspaper man, not forgetting the old retainer/housekeeper of Witchend, Agnes Braid. Finally drawn, each contributes to the overall thrills. The plots range from capturing German spies to finding hidden treasure and dealing with kidnapers, art counterfeiters and natural disasters. The stories have many twists and always rattle on at a good pace, keeping the reader guessing until the end.

I have one reservation about Malcolm Saville's work. The last book "Home To Witchend" brings together all the characters we have met throughout the series at Peter Stirling's eighteenth birthday party and the announcement of her engagement to David Morton. The story-line in this book is otherwise quite weak, and I feel that it is a little contrived. Yet for all those who followed the entire series through the years there is no doubt that the outcome is enjoyable.

For leaders who may be interested in location, I offer the following list of the complete series with title, year of publication, publisher and location (the latter being a very general indication): *Mystery At Witchend* - 1943 Newnes - Shropshire; *Seven White Gates* - 1944 Newnes - Shropshire; *The Gay Dolphin Adventure* - 1945 Newnes - Rye; *The Secret Of Gray Walls* - 1947 Newnes - Shropshire; *Lone Pine Five* - 1949 Newnes - Shropshire; *The Elusive Grasshopper* - 1951 Newnes - Romney Marsh; *The Neglected Mountain* - 1953 Newnes - Shropshire; *Saucers Over The Moor* - 1955 Newnes - Dartmoor; *Wings Over*

*Witchend* - 1956 Newnes - Shropshire; *Lone Pine London* - 1957 Newnes - London; *The Secret Of The Gorge* - 1958 Newnes - Shropshire; *Mystery Mine* - 1959 Newnes - Shropshire; *Sea Witch Comes Home* - 1960 Newnes - East Anglia; *Not Scarlet But Gold* - 1962 Newnes - Shropshire; *Treasure At Amorys* - 1964 Newnes - Isle of Oxney/Rye; *Man With Three Fingers* - 1966 Newnes - Shropshire; *Rye Royal* - 1969 Collins - Rye; *Strangers At Witchend* - 1970 Collins - Shropshire; *Where's My Girl!?"* 1972 Collins - Dartmoor; *Home To Witchend* - 1978 Armada paperback/1979 Severn House hardback - Shropshire.

For those who may be interested in the various illustrators, these include G.E. Breary, Bertram Prance, A.R. Whitear, T.R. Freeman and Michael Whittlesea. I am sure each of us has our favourites regarding illustrators, for leaving aside those I have mentioned I like the cover illustrations by Charles Wood. These, in my estimation, portray some of the leading characters as I myself see them. The series I have looked at are only twenty, or just on 30% of Malcolm Saville's output. Anyone wishing to look further into his writings would well advised to read both the Jillies Family and the Buckingham series. New characters, new locations and equally interesting reading for the same age group.

The last set or series produced were the Marston Baines thrillers. These were aimed at the advanced teenage reader with a new approach and they tried to catch the imagination of a new generation. Despite the author's continuing skill these did not make the desired impact. It was, in fact, the end of an era when so much, including many public standards, had changed, Malcolm Saville's standards had not, nor should they. It is something we have experienced before with other authors, and alterations in society's values do not make the author any less than what he is - a first class writer and storyteller.

In conclusion I should state that just over 25% of Malcolm Saville's writing was non-fiction. These books, concerned in the main with the countryside and the seashore, were first class. They are readable by both children and adults, for he wrote about the things he loved best and one or two are a particular joy to read.

All that I have written is just a little that could be said about both the author and his books. I hope that it might inspire C.D. readers to obtain second-hand copies of his books as well as the new reprints of *Mystery At Witchend* and *The Secret of Grey Walls*. As with many authors, Malcolm Saville's passing is a sad loss but most important of all, we should not allow his books to be lost or neglected.

**Editor's Note:** I endorse Anthony Cook's appreciation of Malcolm Saville's books, and feel sure that these will become popular with new generations of readers. The Scholastic reprints are extremely well produced, chunky paperbacks at £3.99 each. Let us hope that these are the first of many Malcolm Saville reprints.

As I mentioned in my editorial, I knew Malcolm well and was always impressed by his concern that the children for whom he wrote should have only the best. Amongst my collection (which includes all the Lone Pines, Marston Baines and many other Savilles) I treasure copies of two books which he published towards the end of his long life. These gave him great pleasure to produce, and I was proud to receive gifts of personally inscribed copies from him. They are *King of Kings*, his re-telling of the life of Christ, and *Words for All Seasons*, a compilation of poetry and prose chosen by him "from a lifetime's pleasure in words".

C.D. readers may like to know of the recently formed Malcolm Saville Society. Details are available form 10 Bilford Road, Worcester, WR3 8QA. Please send an SAE.

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Part 2

**Pecan** - An olive-shaped edible nut with a smooth, thin shell that grows on a kind of hickory tree of the walnut family, common in the southern and central U.S. The tree on which it grows Algonkian (compare Cree Indians pakan, hard-shelled nut).

**Pesky** - U.S. informal, troublesome; annoying; alteration of pesty pest.

**Placer** - Mining, the washing of loose sand or gravel for gold or other minerals, Spanish placer variant of placel.

**Plaza** - A public square in a city, town or place, Spanish plaza borrowed from Latin platea courtyard, broad street. Doublet of piazza place.

**Posse** - A group of men summoned by a Sheriff to help him. Medieval Latin Posse body of men, power (Latin posse to be able).

**Possum** - U.S. an *opossum*. A small mammal that carries its young in a pouch or on its back. The opossum feeds at night and when caught, pretends to be dead. Alkonkian (Powhatan) apasum, "Playing possum."

**Pronto** - U.S. information, promptly; quickly; right away. Spanish pronto (Latin promptus) Doublet of prompt.

**Puncher, cowpuncher or cowpoke** - in modern usage, a cowboy. Originally it referred to the men who rode the cattle trains and punched the cattle with long poles, thrust between the bars, to get them up or on their feet; a downed animal in a railroad car is likely to get injured or even killed.

# The RIO KID'S REVENGE

by RALPH REDWAY

*Thrills galore with the Boy Outlaw*



**Quirt** - A riding whip with a short stout handle and a lash of braided leather Spanish *cuarta* a whip long enough to reach the *cuarta* or guide mule, of a team of four (Latin *quarta*, feminine of *quartus* fourth).

**Reata** - A lariat *la reata* (Spanish). The rope used by cowboys to catch steers, etc. The word also used, *Lasso*, really only refers to the noose part. Spanish *Lazo* (Latin *laqueus* noose) Doublet of *Lace*. Also spelt *riata*.

**Rio Frio** - A river in Texas south west of San Antonio.

**Rio Grande** - A large river marking the border between the U.S. and Mexico for almost two-thirds of its length. Mexicans call the river *Rio Bravo* (bold river) or *Rio Bravo del Norte* (bold river of the north).

**Rio Pecos** - River and (*Town Pecos*) in Texas, made famous by judge Roy Bean's sign "The law West of the Pecos". The river is the largest branch of the *Rio Grande*. It runs beside the palisade of *Llano Estracado* (staked plain) a great level plateau in New Mexico and Texas. See *Spanish Bayonet*.

**Rookus** - Generally spelt *ruckus* or *rucus*. U.S. slang, a noisy disturbance or uproar, row (perhaps blend of the *ruction* and *rumpus*).

**Sand** - U.S. informal, courage; pluck; grit; (corruption of *sang froid* French?).

**Scallywag, scalawag** - U.S. informal, a good for nothing person, scamp, rascal. Origin uncertain.

**Shebang** - U.S. slang, An outfit; concern, an affair; event. Perhaps corruption of the French *Char a bancs*, a car with benches. "They went to a big shebang last night." Shelter, somewhat dilapidated.

**Sheriff** - The top law-enforcing officer of a county, elected in the U.S. by popular vote. Old English *Scirgerefa* (*Scir* shire + *gerefa* reeve).

**Shucks** - Informal, U.S. and exclamation of impatience, irritation, something valueless. *shuck*, a shell, pod or husk.

**Side kick** - Informal, a partner or close friend.

**Sierra** - A chain of hills or mountains with jagged peaks. Spanish *sierra* literally a saw (Latin *serra*).

**Siesta** - A nap or rest taken at noon or in the afternoon. Especially one commonly taken during the hottest hours of the day in Spanish speaking countries of the tropics or sub-tropics. Spanish *siesta*: Latin *sexta* (*hora*) sixth (hour) of the roman day (that is midday). Doublet of *sext*.

**Six Gun or six shooter** - In U.S. a revolver generally of large 1=calibre (.44 or .45) see *colt*. (Remington and Smith and Wesson were two other makes of several that were used.) Six shooters were, in the most part, only loaded in 5 of the chambers, the hammer resting on an empty one for safety.

**Slicker** - U.S. a long loose waterproof coat made of oilskin or the like.

**Slouch** - U.S. informal, an awkward or inefficient person! "He's no slouch when it comes to square dancing." Origin uncertain. Compare Old Icelandic *slokr* a louch, *sloka* to droop.

**Sombrero** - A broad-brimmed hat worn in the southwest U.S. and Mexico. Spanish *sombrero* ultimately, Latin *sub* under + *umbra* shade.

**Spanish bayonet** - Any of the several desert plants or yuccas of the agave family, having narrow rigid evergreen leaves with spines at the tips - one of the reasons advanced for the name given to the 'staked plain' or *Llano Estacado*.

**Steer** - 1. A young ox, usually two to four years old. 2. Any male of beef cattle German stier bull, old English steer.

**Stetson** - A felt hat with a broad-brim and high crown, worn especially in the Western U.S. John B. Stetson hat maker, first made in Philadelphia 1865. By the time Stetson died in 1906 his name took its place alongside that of Colt & Winchester and other great names of the west.

**Walnut** - 'The Rio Kid's walnut butted guns.' One of the trees whose wood has long used for gun butts and stocks. The original butts of the Colt pistol were made of one piece of walnut. Later on butts were made of other materials, such as bone, horn, pearl or ivory, these came in two halves, secured to the pistol by a horizontal bolt.

**Winchester** - Famous repeating rifle and carbine. In 1866 Oliver F. Winchester, in public the Lieutenant governor of Connecticut, in private a shirt maker, took over the volcanic Arms assets, and got B. Tyler Henry to redesign the *Henry* repeater and brought it out under the name of the first Winchester. Later the famous 1873 model came in three styles. The rifle held 15 cartridges, that of the carbine twelve and the half magazine model six. The popular 1894 model is still being made.

**Vamoosed, Vamoose** - U.S. slang, to go away quickly. Spanish vamos lets go.

**Yucca** - Any of a group of plants of the agave family, native to the warmer parts of North America, characterised by a woody stem with a crown of usually rigid narrow pointed leaves and an upright cluster of white, bell-shaped flowers as Adam's Needle and Spanish Bayonet, Spanish Ucca the genus name. Origin uncertain.

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*Footnote:* **Nahuatl**, any of a group of languages spoken by the Aztecs, Toltecs and other American Indian tribes of Central Mexico and parts of Central America.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE** - I am indebted to C.D. readers and contributors Dennis Bird and Ron Gardner for drawing my attention to the following truly fascinating book.

**THE WARTIME SCRAPBOOK:  
FROM BLITZ TO VICTORY 1939-1945  
By Robert Opie (New Cavendish Books £9.99)**

Here is a scrap book to end all scrapbooks, very large pages of full colour pictures culled from the extensive collection of the author/compiler (whose Museum of Advertising and Packaging - "The Pack Age" - in Gloucester offers many delights).

This scrapbook includes pictures dealing with many aspects of the war, especially those of the Home Front, from Ministry of Information posters, copies of the *Radio Times*, comic post-cards, advertisements, "Make Do and Mend" and "Dig for Victory" prints and - of special interest to C.D. readers - the magazines and weeklies that provided both adults and children with much needed respite and escapism during those wartime years.

Snippets from some of its intriguing pages are shown here - regrettably miniaturised and only in black and white, and not in the glowing colours of Robert Opie's book.



## FORUM

**JOHN WAKEFIELD (Twickenham):** It is especially interesting to see the reprint in your April Collectors' Digest of the Terry Thomas set from Radio Fun Annual.

My father, Terry Wakefield, started the Terry Thomas sets for Film Fun in 1957 and, soon after, someone at the Fleetway - either Jack Le Grand or Phil Davis - thought it would be a good idea to base some of the wheezes at the West Country pub, the Jubilee Inn, kept by Terry Thomas' sister and her husband (Mr. and Mrs. Tuck).

So Dad went down there to see the place and then featured the Inn (plus Mr. and Mrs. Tuck and their St. Bernard dogs) in three sets involving Terry Thomas in various hunting, shooting and fishing wheezes. It was one of the rare occasions when sets featured real places but, alas, we do not have the copies of Film Fun in which they appeared nor, of course, the originals, which were rarely returned to their artists.

The sets were drawn in August 1957 and would have been published about five weeks later.

As you know, a lot of the material in the annuals was reprints of earlier sets, with just the main character changed. Dad did the 'All's Fair' alteration for the Radio Fun annual to one of his own pre-war Film Fun sets - probably George Formby - with just a new heading, changes to the balloons where necessary and Terry Thomas' head pasted onto that of the previous character - a fiddly job involving bits of gummed paper and lots of Chinese white!

**LESLIE LASKEY (Brighton):** I would agree with reader Naveed Haque that Charles Hamilton always excelled in stories that dealt with the rather complex character of Harry Wharton. If your readers were ever invited to name their favourite "MAGNET" series my choice would certainly include the two Harry Wharton "Rebel" series, the Ralph Stacey series, the 1932 "Downfall" series, and the Arthur da Costa series. All were outstanding.

There might have been one more to add to the list if it had not been for the sudden newsprint crisis in April 1940. The last issue of THE MAGNET contained what appeared to be the start of a new Harry Wharton series.

The "GEM" had ended with a very long series centred on Tom Merry himself. The GEM's amalgamation with THE TRIUMPH was obviously planned some time before and the author would undoubtedly have been given notice of it. The longest of all St. Jim's series ended in the week before the amalgamation. No doubt Charles Hamilton was aware in the spring of 1940 that the publishers planned to close down THE MAGNET at the end of July if the long decline in its circulation had not been halted by then. A final Harry Wharton series may have been intended by the author to match the Tom Merry series that had ended THE GEM.

The final scenes in the last GEM story were set at Laurel Villa, Tom Merry's home. Possibly the last planned MAGNET story would have ended in the setting of Wharton Lodge where the long Greyfriars saga had begun all those years ago.

**TED BALDOCK (Cambridge):** What a happy thought was that of putting Jemima Carstairs on the cover of the April C.D. Dear ever young Jemima. I recall having quite a 'crush' on her in the dog-days. Looking back I think it must have had some connection with her monocle - that could have been the fascination. I never failed to read my sister's copy of *The Schoolgirl*. This item of information was never divulged to my chums. We were far too manly and independent to have any 'truck' with girls, yet I certainly had a weakness for Jemima - odd creatures boys!

I read with much interest Bill Bradford's thought provoking article on the 'Boys Friend Weekly' in the April issue of the C.D. How well one remembers those old - I called them 'Rainbow' sized - green papers in which James Silver and Co. played leading roles.

**J.E.M. (Brighton):** Much enjoyed the contributions on what readers turned to after World War Two killed off the old favourites. For myself, of course, as for many other "oldies", juvenilia was well behind us when the *dies irae* arrived. But how wonderful in much later years to rediscover the great comics and story-papers and see them not only through the mists of nostalgia but with the socio-historical hindsight that maturity brings - and which your own publications have so brilliantly exemplified.

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## DISCOVERIES AND DELIGHTS

by John Bridgwater

The replies to Mark Taha's question as to what we read after the *Magnet* set my memory ticking over. I soon realised that my "after O.B.B.s" reading started about 10 years earlier than the period in question. The *Thriller* and *UJ* encouraged me to move on to Edgar Wallace's *Sooper* and *Educated Evans*, Agatha Christie's *Tommy and Tuppence* and the *Saint* books. These were followed by A.E.W. Mason's Inspector Hanau stories and Dorothy Sayers "Detection Mystery and Horror" series. (The latter gave me a few nasty moments until I got used to them.) About the same time I discovered Launcelot Hogben's *Primers for the Age of Plenty* (who else remembers them?) and Frank Buck's *Bring 'Ern Back Alive*". Remember the film? Two of my school teachers widened my horizons, for which I am eternally grateful, by introducing me to such gems as *Robinson Crusoe* and *Lorna Doone*. They also put me on to Conan Doyle's *White Company* but I could never get past chapter 1, even though it was (and is) to me a local story. I did a lot better with Collin's Crime Club books, and R.M. Ballantine. The BBC Children's Hour launched me on to Macaulay's wonderful "Lays of Ancient Rome" and Tennyson's *Enid and Geraint* (somewhat different from today's children's programmes!). *Ivanhoe* was read by the light of an electric torch under the bed clothes, quickly followed by *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*

and *Catriona*. Some time in the early 30's I obtained a set of Dickens' works, aided by coupons cut from the *Daily Mail*. At the period in question as a young adult I was a member of "Readers Union" and "World Books" book clubs. By this time I had tackled Aldous Huxley's *Ends and Means*, Hitler's "Mein Kampf" and got on to Lin Yutang's "My Country and My People". (Ever since this book I have had a great respect for the Chinese people.)

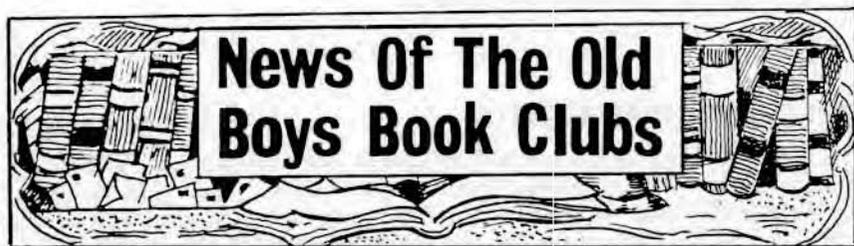
So thus began a life-long journey (even a pilgrimage) through that territory called Literature. A journey that has become a circular tour with a joyous homecoming to the starting point, to O.B.B.'s again. The chronology of these reminiscences is rather awry, but this is the way memory works. Things go *in* in the right order but they come *out* all higgledy-piggledy! At least that is the way of it for this Old Boy and it is exceedingly pleasant to relive past pleasures, no matter what the order.

Two high points in my pilgrimage insist on being recalled (from a few years later). A long stay in military hospital turned into a golden memory by two Everyman collections of Shakespeare plays (my very first reading of Shakespeare), the *Oxford Book of English Verse* edited by Q., and two volumes of Richard Jefferies (also a first time). The other, my disgust at finding only one book left in a troopship library, and that book, *Jane Eyre*, turning into sheer enjoyment as I read. And as if this were not delight enough being loaned *Quo Vadis* immediately afterwards by a discerning fellow passenger. I also enjoyed a Beverley Nicholls' gardening book on that voyage.

But enough of this Sunday afternoon rumination. The widening of the scope of the C.D. is a very good idea. I particularly like Eric's Small Cinema series printed some years ago. I would welcome further articles on the old films. Any possibilities?

Very best wishes.

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### CAMBRIDGE CLUB

For our May meeting we met at the Duston, Northampton home of Howard Corn.

After our usual short business meeting, we listened as Howard told us the tale of the biggest 1950's disaster in the juvenile publishing field, claimed to be the first Space-age publication for children, the 1956 ill-fated attempt to rival *Eagle*. Howard provided a wide-ranging resumé of the state of the various comics and magazines on the market of that time, which pointed out that several titles were at their peak (particularly *Eagle*): that much should have been obvious, especially in the field of colourful photogravure publications like *Eagle*, *Express Weekly* and *Mickey Mouse*. The publishers of the new title - *The Rocket* - were the "News of the World" newspaper group. They were having great success with their *TV Comic*. However, that was aimed at a young market, and *The Rocket* was

designed for older boys and girls. *The Rocket's* format was similar to that of *Eagle*. Despite having a War hero as editor - Douglas Bader - and claiming to have a well-known panel of scientist advisors, the stories were seen to be trivial... Apart from the front page strip, it seemed that most things in the 16 page publication were reprints from American newspaper comic supplements such as Flash Gordon and Brick Bradford. Not surprisingly it was short-lived.

Later Keith Hodgkinson presented a video compilation of film excerpts showing a very personal choice of very pretty starlets from the past few decades.

ADRIAN PERKINS

### NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

A welcome from our chairman to the fourteen members at our May meeting.

Joan gave a summary of the recently held "Just William" meeting at Hay-on-Wye, which had been excellent and well attended.

Paul spoke about the Club Library. We had recently decided to dispose of some items and members and associate members had been given the first option and a number of items had been sold.

Mark Caldicott's item was entitled "Norman Conquest", and it actually explained what each book in the series written by E.S. Brooks meant to him. A book is not just a story, but part of one's life, as he illustrated. He became "hooked" in 1961 on the Norman Conquest books and it was only two years ago that he managed to find the final volumes to complete his collection of 43 stories. The earlier books had a quick pace that left one almost breathless but as the series continued, the pace slackened. Mark was able to give some story behind his finding each book - often amusing. He was able to tell of his delight when he managed to find the book in the series with the title "Mr. Mortimer Gets the Jitters". Although Mark said he did not think in later life there was the excitement one found in earlier days when discovering a much sought-after book, most members disagreed vehemently!

Our youngest member, Eleanor Caldicott, spoke about Beatrix Potter. She had recently discovered the book "The Magic of Beatrix Potter" by Margaret Lane in her local library and was able to give us some interesting facts and figures about this celebrated author. One of our members, Regina Glick, mentioned that she was, in fact, a member of the Beatrix Potter Society.

Our June and July meetings have been "turned about" - we are having our barbecue at our Secretary's home on June 10th, and July 8th sees the visit to the Club of Clarissa Cridland and Ann Mackie-Hunter who are to speak on the "Chalet School".

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

### LONDON OLD BOYS BOOK CLUB

Two interesting talks were given by members at the April meeting held at Loughton. Graham Bruton spoke about Max Miller, obviously a great favourite with Graham, and showed a clip from Hoots Man in which Max played a commercial traveller.

Mary Cadogan talked about her employment with the BBC at the very start of her career, and about her friendship with Arthur Askey, whom she had greatly admired.

Dave Marcus presented a Hamilton quiz, the winner being Mark Taha and Ray Hopkins read from Gem number 580, 22nd March 1919, The Rival Entertainers.

The guest speaker at the May meeting was Roger Coombes, from the editorial panel of Eagle Times who entertained members with a fascinating talk on the history of The Eagle which was published from 14th April 1950 until it was merged with The Lion in 1969.

Vic Pratt spoke about the Beano artists, notably Davy Law, creator of Dennis the Menace, and Leo Baxendale, creator of The Bash Street Kinds, Minnie the Minx and others.

The meeting on June 11th will be at the home of Eric and Betty Lawrence in Wokingham. The annual luncheon will be held on Sunday, 3rd September at The Roebuck, Buckhurst Hill, Essex, on the Central Line tube.

SUZANNE HARPER

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## Your Editor says



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

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No. 14 William George Bunter MAGNET No. 1140

(Bunter is at Wharton Lodge during the holiday)

"Bunter rolled out. Outside he ran into Wells, the butler. He beckoned to the butler with a fat finger.

"Don't go Wells". "My duties sir - " "I haven't finished yet. The fact is," said Bunter coming closer to the butler and speaking in a very confidential tone. "The fact is Wells, I left home in rather a hurry yesterday." "Indeed, sir."

"And I quite forgot to put my purse in my pocket, Wells. I find that I'm here entirely without money Wells." "Really, sir."

"Yes really! You get a pretty good screw here, I believe, Wells?"

Wells gasped. "I am quite satisfied, sir."

"That's right," said Bunter approvingly. "Servants, as a rule, are a dissatisfied lot. Ungrateful, lazy, and dissatisfied, I've found them. Always be satisfied, Wells, and never be cheeky. That's a good rule for people of your sort."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" gasped Wells. "I will try to profit by your advice, sir. You really are very kind."

If there was a note of sarcasm in Wells' voice, Bunter did not notice it. Sarcasm was wasted on William George Bunter.

"I'm always kind to servants, Wells," he said. "You see, a fellow of really good family always is. But to come to the point, I find myself here entirely without cash. I can, of course, phone home."

"The telephone is at your service, sir."

"Exactly," said Bunter. "But in the meantime there are one or two little things - I don't generally borrow money from servants, Wells, but I'm making an exception in your case."

"Are you, sir" said Wells doubtfully. "Yes. I'm going to let you lend me a couple of pounds till I can get some cash from home," said Bunter.

"You are very kind, sir - "

"I mean to be kind," said Bunter. "Nothing snobbish about me I hope. Servants are human after all. I believe in treating a servant as a friend, so long as he's respectful and knows his place, of course. I should never stand any impudence. You know your place, Wells."

"I hope so, sir."

"Now about that couple of pounds," said Bunter. "I haven't the slightest objection to borrowing it from you, Wells, regardless of the difference in our positions."

Wells gazed at Bunter. He made no motion to produce cash."

\*\*\*\*\*

**WANTED:** ENID BLYTON, W.E. JOHNS, CROMPTON. First editions in wrappers and ALL ephemera related to these authors. ANY original artwork related to Bunter, Blyton, Biggles, Eagle or other British comics and boys papers. ALL Boys Friend Libraries by W.E. Johns and Rochester. Many "Thriller" issues and first editions in wrappers by Charteris required. NORMAN WRIGHT, 60 Eastbury Road, Watford, WD1 4JL. Tel. 0923 232383.

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## TRAINING COKER

"This way, you men!" Bob Cherry yelled, and hung precariously  
With one hand from the crowded train at Lantham, "Get to me!  
Wharton, Inky, Nugent, Bull, this way old beans!" he urged.  
His chums pushed through the surging crowd, and on the coach converged.

But others, nearer than the Co., were seeking seats as keen.  
"Here's room!" said Coker of the Fifth, "Here Potter! Come on Greene!"  
Bob Cherry stood there like a rock. "Hard luck, all booked," he smiled.  
"Don't be a young ass," Coker glared. "Now bunk, or I'll get wild!"

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry, with a grin, "Just run away and play!"  
Coker spent no more time in words, and rushed into the fray.  
Bob, though sturdy, could not hope to stand against the three.  
He grabbed a heavy bag and smote, and Coker flew back free.

Coker's left fist caught Potter's nose, his right bedimmed Greene's eye.  
Two howls awoke the echoes as Bob Cherry called "Bye, bye!"  
"Pile in, you men," Bob chuckled, as the Co. came on the spot.  
The Famous Five were safe inside, the Fifth Formers were not.

"Young sweeps!" roared Coker, in a rage, and charged as if insane.  
Potter and Greene, caressing hurts, moved farther down the train.  
Coker hurled into the coach and landed halfway there.  
His head and shoulders were inside, his legs waved in the air.

Johnny Bull sat on his head, and Bob on shoulders stood  
As Coker gurgled in the dust, and thirsted for their blood.  
A laughing crowd enjoyed the sight of Coker's frantic scene,  
And Cherry chuckled with delight, "Have you had enough, old bean?"

Coker, with a frantic wrench, had dragged himself away.  
A crimson, tousled, dusty heap, in breathless disarray.  
His hat, shied from the carriage, landed at the feet of fags  
Who dribbled it and kicked it till it fell apart in rags.

The carriage door was closed and held as Coker struggled back.  
He wrenched the handle, but in vain, and Coker's look was black.  
Five grinning visages looked down as Coker learned his lesson.  
The engine shrieked, the Famous Five were left in sole possession.

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AEDINE

# ROBIN HOOD LIBRARY

2<sup>d</sup>



As Will Scarlet was carrying his burden up the path, with Robin Hood following, big pieces of rock were hurled at them from the top of the cliff.

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