

# STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOL. 49

No. 595

JULY 1996

*The Story Paper*

## Collectors' Digest



Bob Whiter  
-1996-

*He seeks it here, he seeks it there,  
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# STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

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Founded in 1941 by  
W.H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST  
Founded in 1946 by  
HERBERT LECKENBY

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

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VOL. 49

No. 595

JULY 1995

Price £1.10

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## MORE SPECIAL OCCASIONS

One delightful aspect of our hobby is the number of celebratory events connected with it. Early in June, my husband and I attended the special meeting of the Cambridge Club which marked its Silver Jubilee. It hardly seems possible that this Club has already been in existence for 25 years: it is indeed true that, as we all grow older (or 'more mature' as some friends prefer to say) the years scamper by with surprising rapidity. (I have described this special gathering in more detail in the Club Reports section of this issue.)

The London Old Boys Book Club Luncheon Party, to celebrate the C.D.'s first 50 years, will take place in September, when the Museum Press's

book to mark our magazine's Golden Jubilee will also be launched. Watch this space for details.

With literary societies very much in mind, I'd like to draw readers' attention to the fact that the second issue of the Just William Society's magazine (edited by David Schutte and myself) is now available. Information about the society can be obtained from its Secretary, Michael Vigar, 15 St. James's Avenue, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex TN40 2DN. We understand too that there is the possibility of a William Le Queux Society coming into being. Anyone who is interested should write for details to Yvonne Le Queux, Ark Cottage, Chapel Road, Mendelsham, Stowmarket (Tel: 01449 - 766474).

Happy Holiday Reading.

MARY CADOGAN

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**LEAVE THE POOR KID ALONE!** by Una Hamilton Wright  
(Based on a talk given to the S.W. Club in May 1996)

Seeing that Charles made his name as Frank Richards by writing school stories, I thought it would be interesting to consider his attitude to some of the things that make up school life, notably **HOMEWORK!** When reading the stories we notice that homework is something that regularly occurs and, although grumbled about mildly, no-one seriously questions the need for it. Certainly the author never led his readers astray, never suggested that homework might not be a *good* thing, might not *really* be necessary. Could we really hazard a guess at Charles Hamilton's attitude to homework from reading the **MAGNET** and **GEM** stories?

I don't know how familiar you are with the article in **PUNCH** in November 1960 in which my uncle was offered the Ministry of Education. In it he declared that he would abolish Homework, "this relic of barbarism". He believed that boys should be provided with Latin cribs and made to use them so that they could get the story quickly and easily, and he also thought that if they got the hang of the story, particularly a blood and guts tale, they would *want* to push on and read it all. He believed that instead of history homework, historical novels should be read, such as **QUENTIN DURWARD** and **IVANHOE**. Of course he advocated applying his new methods to Latin, not only its literature but its horrendous grammar: "A boy is like a deponent verb. He may be passive in form - under his form-master's eye - but he is always active in meaning. Pluperfect indicatives and imperfect subjunctives, taken neat, will never rouse his enthusiasm. But the pill may be coated with jam. I am considering a plan for providing Latin versions of vigorous and tuneful popular songs which boys love to bawl, for use in schools. What boy would not enjoy singing, or shouting, say **WALTZING MATILDA**, even in Latin? Or one of Mr. Gilbert's entertaining lyrics? This will enable him to realize that Latin actually is a human language with a kick in it, and by no

means the dust and ashes he has supposed it to be." The author then quotes his Latin version of the famous song from PINAFORE: "I polished up the handles so carefully....." etc.

In a letter to his friend and fellow-writer, George Foster, Charles wrote "Latin looks to me likely to be our last link with civilisation. There is no end of controversy about what should be done with the teenager who revels in pop music. I would suggest taking him by the back of the neck and jamming his silly head into a Latin Grammar!"

My uncle was always very worried that I would work too hard at school and college, and while he urged me to master Latin, he at the same time warned me of the dangers of overworking: loss of good looks etc. I had a habit of taking homework to bed and falling asleep over it. Many a time did my mother find Caesar's Gallic Wars on the floor beside my bed, having fallen from my senseless hands! While I was swotting for University Finals my uncle wrote to mother "I hope that Una is not working too hard. I have only the vaguest idea of what work she is doing. The most important thing is not to overtax her eyes. The fee simple is not worth spectacles." He had suffered severely from eye-strain and was terrified that his enthusing me study-wise might result in damage to my sight. It didn't, fortunately, I didn't wear glasses, but a third of my fellow-students did.

Charles believed that many unnecessary facts were crammed into children's heads, "Memory is like a ship that can carry only a certain burden."

Writing to George Foster in December 1960, he again reflected on the problem: "I believe that the young people are worked too hard for their tender age, and that the result later is slowness and dullness of mind. Forced growths are never any good, in the long run. Health and happiness should be the main aim of childhood, and the unformed mind should be led very, very gently along the paths of knowledge. Indeed, I shouldn't wonder if a great deal of the juvenile delinquency we hear so much about, may be caused by numbing the young intelligence by too much school-mastering. Well-meaning cranks are the child's deadliest enemies. Perhaps our wise men may discover some day that the best way to produce a good and useful citizen is to leave the poor kid alone!

"We spend millions, if not billions, on what is comically called Education: and the result is that the young generation are ceasing to read, and taking wholly to pictures, like their remote ancestors in the caves. We are producing a race of troglodytes, with intelligence on the level of strip cartoons and the telly. The immense popularity of these two modern horrors ought to be a warning to the official fatheads that they are on the wrong track."

As evidence that the official educationists *were* on the wrong track he noted that "the brightest boys in the class do not always shine with such effulgence in the big world after schooldays", and that on the other hand "the dunce at school may turn out an exceedingly clever fellow in later life."

He advocated that games should take precedence over classes, on fine days lessons should be stopped and the pupils turned out to play. 'Mens sana

in corpore sano' but 'Corpus' must be 'sanum' if mens is to be sana. Open-air activities should take first place.

Elaborating on the subject of games he noted that "even so simple a game as 'Ducks and Drakes' will not be neglected. In these democratic days any Tom, Dick or Harry may aspire to a political career culminating in Cabinet rank, as many of my colleagues can testify. A favourable wind on the HEATH may blow him into Downing Street. Any ambitious lad may end up as Chancellor of the Exchequer. In such an event proficiency in "Ducks and Drakes" will enable him to carry on unchanged the traditions of that high office."

It is interesting that Charles Hamilton expressed his opinions on education and the direction in which it was drifting thirty-six years ago. He could see the signs and the pointers, perhaps it is the nation's tragedy that he wasn't appointed Minister of Education for real.... when making his recommendations on educational policy he had certainly done *his* homework. Perhaps it would have been better if he had let his ideas filter through into his stories.

*(Copyright, Una Hamilton Wright)*

## **FRANK RICHARDS Minister of Education**



*"... to provide all schools with an ample supply of cribs."*

*(Picture drawn from the PUNCH article by C.H. Chapman)*

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**ENTITLED VILLAINS:** A light-hearted look at some top-drawer Blakian crooks by J.E.M.

Not a commonplace man himself, Sexton Blake could hardly be expected to bother with run-of-the-mill criminals. His adversaries, inevitably, were at the top-end of the Rogues' Gallery; and so that we should make no mistake about it, they were often at the top end of the social scale as well. Aristocratic and titled bad lads to come up against our sleuth were numerous indeed, though it was always made abundantly clear that they were mostly foreigners.

Take Prince Menes, King Karl of Serbovia and Prince Wu Ling from, respectively, Egypt, the Balkans and China. They could hardly have been further from our own Royal and noble families, could they? Slightly nearer home - but still of course not natives - were other crooks with impressive handles to their names. Count Bonalli and Count Carlac, for example, were instantly recognisable as dreaded Europeans, 'Count' not being an English title. In fact, from Bram Stoker's Count Dracula and Wilkie Collins' Count Fosco onwards, there has been no shortage of such sinister aristocrats from across the Channel. Then, slightly lower in the pecking order of Blake's adversaries, were Baron Beauremon and Baron von Kravitch.

The only English nob of any consequence to take on Sexton Blake was a mere knight, Sir Philip Champion of



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EVERY THURSDAY

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the Criminals' Confederation, and he of course turned up trumps in the end. Of Blake's most famous and enduring opponents who lacked titles, the most distinguished is surely Zenith the Albino. But then his aristocratic pedigree was always taken so much for granted that a title would somehow have diminished his aura of superiority. Can one imagine a Count Zenith or a Baron Zenith?

I can think of only a handful of long-running Blakian rogues whose names carried no handle of *any* kind. George Marsden Plummer, the renegade policeman; John Smith, President of the Criminals' Confederation, the Hales (Gilbert and Eileen) and Rupert Waldo come to mind: all commoners but certainly much more than mere common criminals; (perhaps some of you can add to the list but you won't find it easy).

When Blakian writers got tired of, or ran out of aristocratic labels, they went in for professional academic ones. Dr. Satira, Dr. Huxton Rymer and Dr. Ferraro, to name but three, were very memorable creations. Perhaps "Doctor" struck a small note of menace since we are all just a mite afraid of medics, even though we appeal to them soon enough when we are ill. Also pitting their wits against Blake were a number of top-line academics (or former academics) e.g. Professor Jason Reece and Professor Kew. Here is another title to disturb us. Even when they are not sinister or downright mad, professors have always been a bit worrying. Every elderly ex-student, remembering examination days, will recall:

"The profs. are a terrible, terrible crew,  
You never can tell what a prof. will do,  
You might be ploughed or you might get through -  
Oh, I wish the results were out."

Now, what about the ladies? Surely some sex discrimination here in the matter of titles? I can find only one titled female to cross Blake's path more than once and this was Ysabel de Ferre who was, I believe, a duchess. She *did* gain a unique distinction is trying to abduct Blake and forcibly marry him! Clearly she must have been descended from some mediaeval Borgia - like family.

Other famous females - adventuresses and criminals - from the Saga were totally lacking in titles, either social or scholarly. Yvonne, Roxane, Vali-Mata-Vali, Miss Death, Marie Galante, June Severance and Olga Nasmyth - not a title among them. As for medical or other academic degrees, not a highly educated female to be found. Shame, I say. I hope the first modern author to revive Sexton Blake will do something to restore the balance.

[*Afterthought:* Perhaps some of the Blakian ladies were just being modest about their antecedents or achievements. After all, Blake himself was medically qualified but whoever heard him addressed as Dr. Blake?]

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**WANTED:** Original Magnets, not printed in facsimile, between numbers 204 and 702. Must be complete. Also "The Boys Magazine" 1922 to 1934. "The Pink One". W.L. Bawden, 14 Highland Park, Redruth, Cornwall, TR15 2EX.





## .....AND THEN ARCHIE'S REAL AUNT APPEARS!

by Ray Hopkins.

Archie Glenthorne's Aunt Sophie had turned up at St. Frank's and, in an incredibly short space of time after lunch and long before tea-time, had succeeded in creating havoc to such an extent that Archie himself was left with a denuded study; Phipps, Archie's valet, and Handforth had received rather unpleasant cuts on their bodies from the belligerent lady's umbrella. Also Mr. Pyecraft, the sour-faced master of the Fourth Form had been sent crashing to the floor twice and finished up at the bottom of the Ancient House steps, blinded by a bag of burst jam tarts flung by Handforth at the hastily fleeing aunt Sophie. "She" had turned out not to be a lady at all but a brilliant boy actor called Cyril Graham, who had recently joined the ranks of River House School and who had perpetrated one of the best japes ever on the unsuspecting St. Frank's juniors.

Mr. Pyecraft, of course, has no idea that the fleeing juniors who have cannoned



Handforth buried the bag of jam-tarts. Of course, he meant to hit the flying figure of "Aunt Sophie," but unfortunately, "Aunt Sophie" ducked—and Mr. Pyecraft, the irascible Fourth-Form master, stopped the bag with his face. Splosh! The paper-bag was thin. It burst, and the tarts spread themselves over Mr. Pyecraft's visage in a fearful mess of jam and pastry.

into him are anybody else but juniors of his own school. It is not until he is informed by a Sixth-Former exactly who they are, and also the identity of the "lady" whom he rather indistinctly recalls as following on their heels, that he realises they are River House juniors and therefore he cannot force them to accept condign punishment from him. He will have to grit his teeth and accept the fact. This is especially galling to a man of his temperament. Hate and revenge are a large part of it, which he is able to direct at the schoolboys in his charge in much the same way as does Mr. Ratcliffe, the New House master at St. Jim's.

So Mr. Pyecraft is in a fine state of inner fury when he stomps into the East House and is approached in a gentle, polite way by a strange lady whom he does not recognise. She is tiny, looks old-fashioned as to clothing and is wearing a veil. Mr. Pyecraft holds his breath and stands rigid when he catches the drift of her request. Is she in the right building, she enquires. She is looking for her nephew, a boy called Archibald Glenthorne!

Mr. Pyecraft sways, his thoughts in a whirl and the lady starts forward as though to help him. He is convinced that he is facing the impersonator from the River House who has the appalling impudence to return, still dressed in female clothing and obviously hoping once again to create havoc. This time the boy is going to carry on some strange game involving the masters and Mr. Pyecraft in particular, and this is why he has turned up in a building other than the Ancient House where Archie would normally be found.

Mr. Pyecraft really should have used his common-sense, and to have paused and wondered why the boy should have returned in less than an hour to the scene of his previous prank. What the angry master does not for one moment realise is that he is actually facing Archie's real Aunt Sophie from South Africa!

His silence is so lengthy that Aunt Sophie concludes the schoolmaster facing her must be ill: his flushed face and grinding jaws indicate that all is not well with him. Mr. Pyecraft listens carefully to her voice as she addresses him and concludes that, yes, that voice *does* belong to a schoolboy who is purposely giving it a falsetto lilt to make it sound like an elderly lady's tone. Mr. Pyecraft smiles inwardly, feeling that he can indeed exact some sort of revenge for his misfortunes which have caused such a lot of hilarity for the St. Frank's juniors.

In a move which might have made Aunt Sophie do what is known in comic parlance as a "double take", Mr. Pyecraft suddenly turns into a kindly old gentleman, anxious to let the visitor know that he cannot do enough to make her stay a happy one. This, to such an extent that some of the Fourth form boys, observing his unctious politeness, his smiles and his slight bows, are convinced that the unpleasant old geezer has just fallen head over heels in love! Mr. Pyecraft makes his way slowly, chatting amicably, across the Triangle on the way to the Ancient House, causing a wave of wonder and incredulity to pass over the watching juniors. By this time word has spread, and there is quite a crowd of Fourth Formers in a fan-like group a short distance from the two adults. Mr. Pyecraft is aware that they are being observed but does nothing to disperse the watchers - his plans are such that he wants an audience to be present when he un.masks and denounces the impersonator!

Before taking the lady to her nephew's study he would like, says Mr. Pyecraft, to show her around the school so that she can appreciate the architectural wonders with which they are surrounded. Aunt Sophie is dying for a cup of tea but feels that she must humour this strange man whose blowing hot and cold may perhaps hide some psychiatric disorder.

Handforth and Co. come on the scene at this point but, observing the softness with which the lady responds to Mr. Pyecraft, feel that this cannot possibly be the dragon which Archie remembers from his childhood. There is only one way to find out and Handforth, doing his usual barging-in act while others hesitate, enquires if the lady requires directing to any particular junior? Mr. Pyecraft is outraged at the interruption to his plan of revenge but, while he is gasping, Handforth learns that the lady is looking for her nephew, Archie Glenthorne, and that she must be the real one, coming hard on the heels of the false Aunt.

Meantime, Mr. Pyecraft is trying to trip up the supposed disguised schoolboy by asking awkward questions. He wants her to tell him whether the St. Frank's clock tower is of Norman or Tudor origin. He begins to sound so belligerent when she fails to answer that she fears he is the victim of some mental derangement and says she is going to leave him. Mr. Pyecraft forbids her departure, saying she must stay with him and accompany him on a long walk before they enter the Ancient House. In an aside he orders a fag to go to his study in the East House and bring him a cane. Grasping the opportunity, Aunt Sophie walks away but is brought up short when Mr. Pyecraft hastens after her and grips her tightly by the arm, making a comment from which Aunt Sophie is forced to assume that he thinks she is no a lady. Mr. Pyecraft staggers the listeners by informing her that he is quite sure that she is indeed NOT a lady. There is no reason for the man's rudeness, so therefore he must be off his head.

Aunt Sophie, at last revealing a warlike attitude that Archie may have recalled from his childhood, gives the impertinent schoolmaster a whack with her umbrella. At this point the fag runs up and gives Mr. Pyecraft his cane. The Fourth Form master feel the time has now come for the denouement in the little comedy and commands Aunt Sophie to remove her veil. He swishes the cane in an alarming manner, telling the bemused lady to hold out her hand. He knows who she really is, and he is now going to expose her in front of the onlookers, revealing that she is only a boy dressed up as a woman. Moreover, he is going to give the miscreant a good thrashing.

Aunt Sophie is convinced that the schoolmaster has gone completely mad, and courageously approaches him, snatches the cane away, orders him to go indoors and says she intends to have a doctor called to him at once. Mr. Pyecraft tells her he knows she is a River House boy in disguise, and insists that she remove her hat and her wig at once so that the watching juniors will know once and for all that she has failed to fool him, even though she may have deceived the watching crowd.

Upon being called an "insolent young puppy". Aunt Sophie feels she can do no more to reason with the "lunatic". When he darts at her, grabbing for her hat, she raises her umbrella and hits Mr. Pyecraft quite savagely across his shoulders and arms, following up as he backs off from her in sudden alarm. He runs away, followed by the angry lady still aiming at him with her weapon and still coming in contact with his body. Mr. Pyecraft is not in as good running condition as he might be, and Aunt Sophie is of a wiry build with no excess flesh to hold her back.

Archie, at this point emerging from the Ancient House, sees the chase, thinks his worst fears are realised and that this must be his real Aunt and, seeing her energetic treatment of Mr. Pyecraft, dreads the thought of having to go through a second rough treatment from a belligerent relative all on the same day. Is life really worth living, poor Archie thinks. But Archie must save Mr. Pyecraft from his avenging female who - horrors - must be his real Aunt - dear Lord, can he stand it?

Archie convinces Mr. Pyecraft that the lady actually *is* his real Aunt and not a disguised River House junior. Then Aunt Sophie, realising that she is at last facing her

own dear nephew, reverts to the sweet self she had been when first encountered in the East House. To the external credit of the watching juniors they remain silent rather than roaring their heads off at Mr. Pycraft's discomfiture, while Aunt Sophie urges that the dramatic scene be broken up before any other masters come on the scene. Mr. Pycraft, chastened and subdued, makes his forlorn way to his study in the East House.

Archie introduces Aunt Sophie to Handforth and Nipper on the way to the Ancient House, where his Aunt cheers Archie considerably by congratulating him on his nicely furnished study and says she would be grateful if Phipps could provide a refreshing cup of tea as soon as possible. Archie wonders why he had imagined his Aunt to be such a virago. Can it be that one's memory is often a liar and projects false pictures on to the screen in one's mind?

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(Rewritten from incidents in NELSON LEE LIBRARY, New Series 126, 29th September, 1928, and entitled "My Only Sainted Aunt!")

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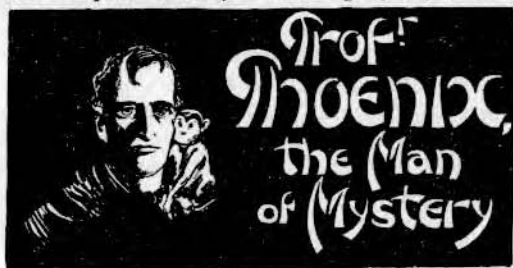


**PROFESSOR PHOENIX**

by Bill Lofts

Known as the Man of Mystery, this being the title of a serial in the 1918 issues of *Funny Wonder*, Professor Phoenix was tall and thin, his movements being suggestive of a panther. His face was thin and hawklike, devoid of expression, and marble-like. He wore a long black cloak, and a wide brimmed trilby hat.

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**THIS WEEK: THE COUNTESS' JEWELS.**

His eyes were dark and piercing, and at odd moments they glowed like red hot coals, for he possessed the power of hypnotism.

One could say he was a complete mystery man; he was friend to the honest, and a deadly foe to the dishonest. No one knew where he lived, and he disappeared as mysteriously as he came on the scene. Some maintained that he worked for Scotland Yard, but this was denied by the yard though they were certainly glad of his services to them in solving many cases.

To set off the effect of his astonishing dramatic look, he carried on his shoulder a small, highly intelligent monkey, with the name of Ishme.

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**LARRY MORLEY reviews: Radio Comedy 1938- 1968: A Guide to 30 years of wonderful wireless.**

By Andy Foster & Steve Furst, Virgin Books, £8.99, 270pp.

Here is a wonderfully nostalgic, comprehensive and entertaining book on Radio Comedy, those lovely radio shows we enjoyed when wireless was king.

Let me tickle your memories with one or two titles: *Mr. Muddlescombe J.P.* (1937-53) starring Rob Wilton; *Cads College*, with the Western Bros. (1937-38); *Band Wagon* (1938-39) with Arthur Askey and Richard Murdoch; the immortal Tommy Handley in *Itma* (1939-49); *The Happidrome* (1941-47) with Harry Korris and Robbie (Enoch) Vincent. Just a few of the dozens of variety programmes mentioned and reviewed in the book.

Each show is listed in detail with stars, supporting cast, times of transmission and script writers. The book is lavishly illustrated, and well worth £9 of anyone's money. Radio comedy was the age of the catch-phrase, some of them passing into everyday usage, "Mind my bike": "Don't forget the diver": "Aye thank you", and many more.

Some of the shows mentioned, I must admit I had never heard of before. For instance, Myrtle & Bertie (1935) with Claude Hulbert and Enid Trevor. This was a Radio Luxembourg show, presented by 'Monkey Brand' soap. (Ah, memories of Friday night baths!)

The book is divided into separate decades from the 1930s to the 1960s, as the title suggests: it will, no doubt, jog readers memories as they browse through it. I thoroughly recommend this book. When we look back radio was surely the home and the era of comedy stars, Askey, Dick Bentley Jimmy Edwards, Gillie Potter, Tommy Handley. The Goons: we will never hear or see the likes of them again. Go on, splash out the nine quid, or go to your local library, and have a good wallow in comedy nostalgia.

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**WANTED: ALL pre-war Sexton Blake Libraries, All Boys Friend Libraries., All comics/papers/ etc with stories by W.E. Johns, Leslie Charteris & Enid Blyton. Original artwork from Magnet, Gem, Sexton Blake Library etc. also wanted. I will pay £150.00 for original Magnet cover artwork, £75.00 for original Sexton Blake Library cover artwork. NORMAN WRIGHT, 60 Eastbury Road, Watford, WD1 4JL. Tel: 01923 232383.**

## DARRELL SWIFT WRITES:

I was very interested in Bill Bradford's article in Blakiana in the May C.D.

It was not until I joined the Northern O.B.B.C. in 1976 that I realised there was another author whose writings were similar to Frank Richards' when it came to school stories.

My first encounter with E.S. Brooks was the enjoyable reading of "The Barring-Out at St. Frank's" - the Howard Baker reprint of the Monster Library. Other Howard Baker offerings of E.S.B. were then read.

It is only in the last two years that I have discovered Norman Conquest and Ironsides novels and have thoroughly enjoyed them. - I only wish I had discovered them earlier when they were more readily available.

In answer to Clarissa Cridland and the prospect of obtaining mint copies of first edition books as could be available in the ephemeral shop in the T.V. programme "Goodnight Sweetheart", I suppose I would require the Chalet School series. Naturally, I should want the first editions of Conquest and Ironsides novels, and it goes without saying that I would need the beautiful pre-war thick editions of the William books. I don't suppose the Bunter books count, as they were all post-war as were the Jennings - but there would definitely be some W.E. Johns books published pre-war that I should like.

As a matter of interest, the creators and writers of some of the episodes of "Goodnight Sweetheart" are Marks and Gran, who are now established as two of the most prolific of our T.V. comedy scriptwriters. They came up with the idea of having a series of "Just William" grown-up, with Dennis Waterman in the lead. The writers came to one of the William Meetings to sketch out their ideas and some members were able to go to a recording of a pilot programme which was shown at a later meeting. However, the series never got off the ground and the pilot was not shown on television.



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## BOB WHITER WRITES:

I was very interested in Desmond O'Leary's article (May C.D.) on the passing of Terence Cuneo. You may remember in C.D. 474 of June 1986 I had written a short piece on him, having been a life-long admirer of his work. I also drew his likeness for the front cover. Soon afterwards Roger, my son, started attending the Saturday classes that Cuneo used to teach. Roger took along the C.D. and also some Magnets that contained Cuneo's illustrations to George E. Rochester's story "The Shadow of the Guillotine".

**CONTINUATION OF OUR SUPERB FRENCH REVOLUTION SERIAL!**



By  
**GEO. E. ROCHESTER.**

(Introduction on  
next page.)

Apparently Cuneo was very interested, and signed Roger's Magnets and sent along a nice message for me. Roger said he was a very kindly man and gave him lots of tips for his art work and every encouragement. I, of course, wrote and thanked the artist for his kindness. I also remember his wonderful gesture in painting the Household Cavalry's horse (the name escape me) that was badly injured by the I.R.A., and donating all the proceeds to the the victims' fund. The picture of him when 51, came out of the *Soldier* magazine. I think in the 1950s. And how about his father, Cyrus? What a tragedy! He bent down to pick up his dancing partner's brooch, which had fallen off her dress and one of her finger-nails grazed his nostrils. he died a month later from blood-poisoning!



**T**ERENCE TENISON CUNEO, now 51 years old, joined the Royal Engineers in 1940 and for most of his five years' service was a war artist, often being seconded to the Ministry of Information to paint propaganda pictures, to the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office and to the War Artists' Advisory Committee.

One of the most versatile of modern artists, Mr. Cuneo is widely known for his portraits and figures and paintings of ceremonial, military and engineering subjects. His best known works include the

Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in Westminster Abbey (presented to the Queen by Her Majesty's Lieutenants of Counties), the Queen's Coronation Luncheon at Guildhall, and a number of other Royal occasions.

The public can see Mr. Cuneo's work—in his favourite subject—in the station posters that he does for British railways.

Mr. Cuneo is married and has two daughters. "Who's Who" lists his recreations as writing, sketching, travel, riding and engine driving.

It was Mother Bearish who saved the situation when panic reared its mottled head behind the counter. She placed herself between the crowd and the most popular heaps of edibles, and used her ample weight to stem the invasion. Then she restored order by employing her voluble tongue, which she made honeyed and vinegarish in turn, according to the needs of the moment. R.A.H. Goodyear. Battle Royal School.

Crisis point had been reached. It was imperative that something be done, and that quickly. It was tea-time, that most congenial of times, but there was no tea. Imagine a more dire situation if you will. All possibilities had been rigourously explored and found wanting.

Peter Todd, Bunter's study mate (that 'beast'), had wolfed the last sardine and the last crust of bread. There had been an attempt - in fact there had been several attempts - to raise a small loan, to tide Bunter over a difficult period. All had proved abortive, some quite disastrous and painful. The fellows just did not seem to understand the requirements of a gentleman. Never had Bunter been more misunderstood than at such times as these.

"Is not a gentleman's word his bond?"

So argued the Owl on these occasions, but sad to relate his 'old pals' remained singularly unimpressed - and quite unforthcoming.

Shunned by all the fellows at this critical period, when they should have rallied round a chap, Bunter had been compelled as a last desperate measure of the penniless to contemplate that spartan ceremony known as 'tea in hall'. The situation was grave indeed. He had tried, heaven knew how he had tried, up and down the remove passage and further afield. Sad to relate, doors had been slammed on his fat little nose, his knocks and appeals had been ignored, he had been threatened with dire punishments if he did not take himself off, he had been kicked and jostled. It was indeed a cruel and unjust world, peopled by heartless beasts.

Tea in Hall, that last resort of the 'stony', consisted of good substantial fare - although perhaps lacking a little in imagination. Bunter, unfortunately a frequent partaker, had never found a great deal of nourishment in the 'Doorsteps and Dishwater', as the generality of fellows so eloquently described this meal. It was however the final and only choice left to those unhappy enough to be without funds, or a chum prepared to 'stake' them over a lean period.

Billy Bunter was a frequent visitor to 'Hall', it being a sad necessity. On a happier note it is gratifying to record that he always managed to put up a very credible show in the masticatory line at these frugal repasts. It was not uncommon for him to conceal wedges of bread about his fat person for toasting later at the study fire, providing of course that that beast Toddy had kept the fire going. This practice, had it been detected by the Remove master, would have resulted in lines at least, lecture a certainty, and most likely something rather more unpleasant. Bunter however was an old hand in the tuck smuggling line. He was seldom detected, happily for him.

Here the discerning may find an echo of their own schooldays when times were lean and one seemed to be always hungry, perhaps a natural condition with boys. An ordinary 'common or garden' seed cake on such occasions could be as manna from heaven, while a genuine fruit cake with marzipan topping was the ultimate in luxury.



Thus one may perhaps indulge a certain fellow feeling with the fat Owl without condoning - too fully - his conduct.

It would be interesting, and enlightening, to hear the candid views of Mrs. Mimble apropos Bunter's gastronomic capabilities. For she, of all people, was in a fair way to witness some of his best performances from her position at the counter of the tuck-shop. How interesting also would it be to hear the stories with which she regaled Mr. Mimble at the fireside on winter evenings. One may almost see Mr. Mimble slowly removing his pipe and staring in wide-eyed disbelief at the incredulous nature of her revelations. Which disclosures would no doubt be passed on to William Gosling over a glass - or two - at the appropriate time. Thus did the fame of William George Bunter grow and flourish and cause eyebrows to raise far beyond the bounds of Greyfriars.

It is not difficult to imagine that, thus disseminated, news of his prowess could well have become common knowledge to the rustics of Friardale village and even further afield.

It has been said that our reputations go before us, preparing the way as it were, until we take the stage. Shakespeare might well have written his well observed lines for *Troilus and Cressida* especially for the Owl of Greyfriars - had their paths chanced to cross:

My reputation is at stake:  
My fame is shrewdly gored.

Thus it is that Billy Bunter is usually the cynosure of many eyes when he steps abroad beyond the confines of Greyfriars. The contours of his figure at once arrest attention. The tightly stretched waistcoat and trousers, the fat head adorned by a pair of large owl-like spectacles, and a general aura of fatuity all contribute to an unforgettable vision. The standard greeting, "I say, you fellows!" and the less chummy repartee, "Beasts!" are recognised the world over, as are the frequent references to the short-comings of the Post Office regarding the non-delivery of postal orders. Plus the fact that he possesses none of - but has great pretensions to - the attributes one usually looks for in a 'Hero'.

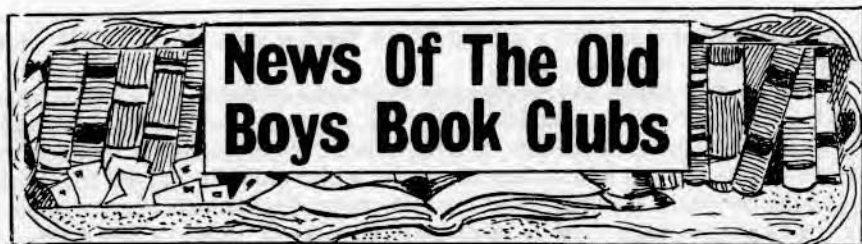
Over the years there has been little or no hint of any metamorphosis. Occasionally he is found to be in possession of certain facts and information, obtained in his own inimitable way, which is instrumental in clearing another fellow's name. These may be termed quasi-good points in an otherwise extremely suspect character.

All of this merely serves to deepen the mystery of his continued popularity. William George Bunter is certainly not by any criteria a character to be emulated. Beastly in so many ways, narrow and devious, possessed of a low cunning not at all to be admired. Yet he was - he is - the million pound schoolboy. Here is a strange enough paradox which readers of the 'Magnet' have been only too pleased to accept.

How many schoolboys, having attained maturity, have had and continue to have their characteristics repeatedly quoted in the high places of the land? In the Mother of parliaments, no less, in books, magazines and the national press. One must, I think, accept the fact whether we approve it or not that Billy Bunter is a phenomenon.

One may, therefore, have justification in feeling that something must be sadly amiss with a system which condones a public school 'Man' of such pretensions having to tolerate 'Doorsteps and Dishwater!' "Oh, really you fellows!"

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## **SOUTH-WESTERN O.B.B.C.**

Our meeting at Uphill on Sunday, 19th May 1996, commenced with a reading by E. Grant McPherson of a self-penned science fiction story "The Man from Venus". While walking on a beach, the narrator meets a stranger, clad in a metallic suit 'who is curiously cold to the touch' and 'vibrates like a dynamo'.....

We all enjoyed this atmospheric piece from Mac. Una Hamilton-Wright's interesting talk followed. Entitled "Leave the Poor Kid Alone", this dealt mainly with an article in Punch in 1960 by Frank Richards, in which he set out what he would do if he were appointed Minister of Education.

(Editor's Note: This talk is reprinted in this issue of the C.D.)

Laurence Price then spoke on "A Good Thrasing", comparing corporal punishment, as lavishly and lightly administered in the Greyfriars stories, with the very real descriptions of boyhood floggings as recounted by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the Greyfriars substitute writer, George R. Samways.

We then adjourned for a splendid tea, once more generously provided by Mrs. Salisbury. Tim Salisbury then showed some all-too-brief Billy Bunter extracts and other nostalgic reminders of classic children's TV.

Laurence Price gave the final talk on the life of Jules Verne and read various extracts from his works.

LAURENCE PRICE

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

Eleven assembled on a glorious Saturday evening for our annual summer break and barbecue at the home and library of our secretary in Wakefield.

Richard Burgon had brought along one of the free gifts he had found in the appropriate Magnet. These free gifts usually get separated from the original copies and either are collected or get lost. Nobody has produced a Magnet with the original stick of toffee enclosed, as yet!

There was general talk about the hobby, and Joan and Darrell spoke about the first meeting of the Yorkshire section of the New Chalet Club which had met in Huddersfield that very afternoon. They had both attended - representing Northern Club - and eight had been there. It is hoped that further meetings can be planned.

Our next meeting is 13th July, with our guest, Bill Lofts, and Dr. Nandu Thalange. We meet at 12 noon at the home of our Secretary for informal lunch at a local hotel, then free and easy at the home of Geoffrey and Vera Good. Our evening meeting is at our usual Leeds venue. Please feel free to attend on any part of this day. August 10th will be a selection of members' own items.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

## LONDON O.B.B.C.

Our June meeting at Wokingham was held in the excellent weather that usually accompanies this event, although the temperature for travelling was a little warmer than some would have wished. We have met at Wokingham almost every Summer since August 1962, which must be quite a record and we are most grateful to Betty and Eric Lawrence who cope with us despite personal adversities. The attendance of 14 members was about average for this venue, which is not too accessible for some.

Any Other Business included reference to the September Luncheon, now attracting some 51 guests, including members from all our other Clubs, plus overseas visitors. We still need further donations of books etc, for our Auction that afternoon.

The programme started with the traditional Quiz from Eric. He played on the piano extracts from popular and classical music; we had to identify the name of the piece and in some cases the name of the composer. Certain alphabetical letters there from produced an anagram, yielding the name of yet another composer. Only Colin Scofield came up with the complete correct answer. Bill Bradford read 'Memory Lane' the newsletter covering the meeting in June 1976, again at Wokingham. Some of us partook of tea in the garden, preferably in sheltered spots! Our informal chats on these occasions are considered by many as the highspots of the meeting.

Afterwards, Norman Wright read a chapter from Magnet no. 1118, describing Fisher T. Fish at his 'fishiest'. This was followed by an elimination Quiz from Eric Fayne, who we were so pleased to see again. Mark Taha handed in the correct solution while many of us were still nibbling our pencils. Finally, Eric Lawrence read extracts from 'A Policeman's Ball' by Harry Cole, being memories of a retired policeman, including those of his pre-war childhood. A long time since the members chuckled so much. Definitely an author to go on my 'Wants' list!

Next meeting will be at Ealing on Sunday, 14th July. Main subject will be Edwy Searles Brooks. Tea and tuck provided, so please let Bill know in good time if attending. Tel. 0181 579 4670.

BILL BRADFORD

## THE CAMBRIDGE CLUB

On Sunday, 2nd June, guests from various parts of the country arrived at Tony Cowley's Longstanton home to join members in celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Club. A gala programme had been arranged, with the highspots of a grand 'study spread', birthday cake and champagne toast, plus a wide variety of talks from members and visitors. The sun shone all day to bless the proceedings so that Tony's garden could be used for informal chats and group photographs.

After an opening address by Chairman Vic Hearn, the Club's President Bill Lofts introduced the various speakers. I kicked off with 'Fifty Years of the C.D.', which outlined a history of our magazine, giving special attention to contributions in it from Cambridge Club members, notably those great historians and enthusiasts, Jack Overhill and Bill Thurbon. Howard Corn then spoke about the post-war space and science-fiction paper 'Rocket', which followed in the steps of 'Eagle'. His assessment of why this interesting paper achieved only a brief run was fascinating. Next, George Sewell, a Cambridge book dealer who has found several of my elusive 'wants' spoke about his

personal book collecting experiences. Starting with an ambition to acquire all the Giles and Rupert Annuals, and the 'Swallows and Amazons' books of Arthur Ransome, George's book-hunting quest grew and widened - and his colourful reminiscences echoed those of many of us.



Roger Coombes gave us a detailed history of the 'Dr. Who' saga, with particular emphasis on its book publications. This was especially topical in view of the current T.V. revival of the Doctor's adventures, and appropriate too as a tribute to Jon Pertwee, who so recently passed away. Movie-buff Keith Hodgkinson contributed an item called 'The Magic of the Cinema', which treated us to some very early adventure-suspense episodes (from vintage Hitchcock to Robin Hood) which were watched with relish.

In 'Charles Hamilton, the Man', Una Hamilton Wright focussed on her uncle's early writing years, and of his responses when first asked by his publishers to write a school story. Previously he had concentrated on writing tales of adventure, often with naval settings. Una's talk gave new and valuable insights into how Hamilton rose to this challenge, which of course launched him on the golden era of his writing career. To round up the proceedings, Bill Lofts provided 'Some Memories of Sherlock Holmes', which gave historical and atmospheric glimpses of the literary life of Conan Doyle's ever-resilient and greatest character.

Let us hope that the Cambridge Club will continue to thrive for a further of quarter of a century.

MARY CADOGAN

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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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## GEMS OF HAMILTONIA

from Peter Hanger

"Very well!" said the Head at last, compressing his lips. "The School will remain here while a search is made in the dormitories."

"I say, you fellows --" gasped Bunter.

"Was it you, old fat bean?" murmured Skinner.

Bunter was undoubtedly looking alarmed at the Head's last announcement.

"Beast! I say, that's all rot, you know," said Bunter. "I don't see keeping us here while they search."

"Bunter!" It was Mr. Quelch's sharp voice.

"Oh! Yes, sir! No, sir. Oh, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"I heard your remark, Bunter! For what reason do you object to remaining here during the search in the dormitories?"

"We shall be late for brekker, sir!" gasped Bunter

MAGNET 1202

He was not a pleasant man to look at. His clothing showed that he was not well off in this world's goods, and there were signs that even soap and water were beyond his means - or, at least beyond his inclinations.

GEM 1633

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "You haven't finished your lunch, surely, Bunter?"

"Yes - it's not much I eat, as you know," remarked Bunter. "I say, you fellows --"

"But so far as I noticed, you'd only eaten enough for six!" said Bob with a puzzled look. "What's the game - slimming?"

MAGNET 1526

.....Gussy's big idea was to put the New House in its place, and that idea was now so firmly fixed in Gussy noble head that nothing short of a surgical operation would have removed it.

TOM MERRY'S OWN 1952

Like most authors, Quelch was fond of reading his own works. They seemed so superior, somehow, to the works of anybody else.

MAGNET 1269

The ketch tore on - at a pace that would have made Bully Samson wish, had he seen her, that he was on board a "ten-cent yawl" rather than a heavy Dutch schooner with a bow like a Dutch cheese. The wind was stiffening every minute, and the Hiva-Oa men looked anxiously at the graceful cedar masts that were bending like whips under their load of canvas. But King of the Islands had sailed the Pacific in every weather - he had been through hurricanes in the reef-ridged seas of the Solomons, through heavy gales among the shoals of the Paumotus, through a roaring typhoon in the China Sea. He knew to an inch what sail his craft would carry in any wind. There was more than half a gale blowing when the sun dipped out of sight and darkness fell like a cloak on the Pacific.

It was not until the Polynesian crew were chattering with uneasiness, and Kit Hudson's face was grave, that King of the Islands gave orders to shorten sail. Koko, a figure of bronze, held on his course with one eye on the binnacle - not a slant of either

eye at the mountains of canvas overhead. His faith in King of the Islands would not have been shaken had Ken spread out his spinnaker in the teeth of a typhoon - not that King of the Islands was likely to do so.

Under short sail, the ketch still bore through the water.

Not a star gleamed in the sky; blackness, like a pall, lay on the Pacific. Red and green, the lights of the Dawn shone through the darkness as she tore on, with great billows heaving round her, and the spindrift lashing like whips at the faces of the men on deck.

BFL 577

Billy Bunter, except in his imagination, was no scrapper. Often and often he told the Remove fellows of fierce scraps he had had - in the holidays. Big bargees, according to Bunter, had gone down before him and begged for mercy.

But none of these terrific scraps ever happened at Greyfriars, or anywhere near the old school. Bargees on the Sark were quite safe from Bunter, whatever might - or might not - have happened to bargees in parts unknown.

MAGNET 1461

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## *BIGGLES & Co.*

### *The W.E. Johns Quarterly Magazine*

*First published in October 1989, Biggles & Co is a non profit making A5 sized illustrated magazine, in full colour covers, with forty-four pages of articles and stories by and about W.E. Johns, the creator of Biggles. Now in our seventh year, the Winter 1995 edition (number 25) included a complete Biggles story and a non-fiction article by Johns. The Spring 1996 edition will be published during March*

*UK Annual Subscription (four issues) £12. Single copy Back issues £4.00*

*Europe Annual Subscription £13.20. Single copy Back issues £4.30*

*Elsewhere Annual Subscription £17.00. Single copy Back issues £5.25*

*For more details on the magazine please write to:*

*John Trendler, 4 Ashendene Road, Bayford, Herts. SG13 8PX.*

**WANTED: original artwork** W.E. JOHNS related. Biggles, Worrals, Gimlet, Space, drawn by H. Leigh, Stead, Studio Stead or of course by Johns. **Christmas cards** or **prints** advertised in *Popular Flying* in the 1930s illustrated by Johns, Leigh or Stanley Orton Bradshaw. **Playing cards**, with Aircraft design signed Johns. **British Air League** albums illustrated by Leigh. **Skybirds** magazines, models. **Skyways** magazines. **Murder at Castle Deeping** by W.E. Johns, J. Hamilton Edition.

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# Nothing Suxceeds Like Suxcess



*In this amazing article HORACE JAMES COKER, of Greyfriars, tells "Holiday Annual" readers how he achieved success. We think it only fair to add that his hints to success, like his spelling, are not altogether reliable or to be recommended!*

"How did you acheeve your amazing suxcess?" is a question often addressed to me by admiring yungsters.

To a fellow like myself, who has been suxcessful in so many direcshuns, it's a question with a duzzen answers. So, for the benefit of ambitious lads who would fain follow in my foot-steps, here are a few tips.

First, if you want to rise to the dignified ranx of a senior Form, hard work and dilligent study alone will take you there. A chap with my varied interests, of corse, duzzent get much time for skool work, and I don't mind admitting that my Aunt Judy, by wacking the Head with her um-

brella till he agreed to put me in the Fifth, helped my skool career considerably. For you ordinary chaps, however, I recommend hard work and dilligent study only!

Suxcess in the grate game of footer is the next consideration. This is a very difficult thing to acheeve; the footer kaptin is usually fearfully jellus of your outstanding abillity on the footer field and tries to keep you out of the team as much as he can. My own method of dealing with the problem is to pour withering sarkasm over the jellus kaptin till he admits that I'm a grate player and puts me in the team. If this fails, I give him a "sock" on the jaw. This is one

way of achieving success as a footer player.

Naturally, it doesn't stop at that. When you get your place in the team, it's up to you to show them your real worth. The first time I got into the Form team, I took good care to see that I was in the limelight from the kick-off to the finish. I was here, there and everywhere. The fact that I was outside-left didn't imply that I was left outside, I can tell you!

When the centre-forward looked as if he couldn't manage the ball on his own, I rushed in and took it from him. When the goalie was in difficulties, I rushed back and helped him. The jellusy shown by the rest of my side was truly amazing. They yelled and shouted at me so much that the opposing team were dubbed up with laughter most of the time! Owing to mistakes on the part of others, I scored 3 goals against my own side and we lost 3-nil. I came



The fact that I was outside-left didn't mean that I was left outside! When the centre-forward looked as if he couldn't manage the ball I rushed in and took it from him.

off the field feeling well satisfied with myself, and that fact enabled me to put up with the cheap sneers and gibes of the rest. A grate man gets used to that sort of thing!

Then there's the problem of achieving success in the social life of the skool. My tip is: take the deepest possible interest in everything, whether it's anything to do with you or not. Above all, remember to take command. If it's a party, be the life and sole of it—do all the singing and tell all the funny stories. You'll get plenty of fun out of it yourself, and if the rest pretend to be fed up to the teeth with you, you'll know it's only their jellusy. There's always someone about ready to akkuse you of being an interfering bizzybody, but a really grate man can afford to ignore such taunts.

I need hardly tell you to preserve your dignity. Fags and other small fry can be kept in their places by clipping their ears or tweaking their noses. With seniors, it's just as well to tell them now and again what a dignified fellow you are. In time, if you tell them often enuff, they'll appreciate it.

But when all is said and done, nothing succeeds like success. The fact that I've succeeded again and again makes it easy for me to climb higher and higher on the Ladder of Life. Fellows often larf when I tell them this—one of the things I can never understand is why fellows larf so much when I talk—but you can't get away from the facts!

Well, I've told you how to achieve success. But I don't suppose for a moment that you'll do it.

Your name's not Horace Coker, you see!



# JEMIMA'S VITAL HOLIDAY MISSION

## PART ONE

by Margery Woods

### Chapter 1

"Not coming with us!"

"Jimmy--- what's happened? You---"

"We've got everything planned. Why?"

Jemima Carstairs, the elegant, Eton-cropped chum of Barbara Redfern and Co. of the Fourth Form at Cliff House School, looked ruefully at the six astonished and disbelieving girls grouped round her in Study No. 4. In one hand she held a folded paper and a dangling chain attached to two rather hefty keys. "I've just come from the higher sanctum, Primmy's Pad, y'know, and the Guv's been on the blower. I'm needed to help out Aunt Louise --- courtesy aunt, y'know, who's an old and very dear friend of ours, and look after things while she's away."

"Such as?" they demanded in chorus.

"Oh," Jemima gave an airy gesture, "a valuable old manor house, and Oscar."

"Oscar?"

"An almost as valuable Siamese cat."

"A cat!" hooted Clara Trevlyn, who despite being a staunch lover of animals was not entirely happy when one threatened to interfere with her holiday plans to entertain her chums at Trevlyn Towers. "Can't Oscar go into a cattery?"

Jemima shuddered. "I gather that Oscar would throw forty cat fits at the merest mention of a common boarding house. He's a pure-bred seal point with a pedigree as long as your arm. He has his special diet and all his own little comforts to help him through the tribulations of day-to-day living." Jemima adjusted her monocle and looked sadly at the circle of concerned faces. "Sorry, old kidlets, one of those things sent to try us. I have to leave straight after lunch or I'll be late for preparing his tea."

Babs, usually perceptive, realised that behind Jemima's usual badinage there was something rather more serious than caring for a pampered Siamese. She said slowly, "You'll be leaving Scamp in Pets' House?"

"Afraid so," Jemima sighed. "Anyone coming to see me off?"

Although three days remained before official breaking-up Miss Primrose readily granted permission and the chums escorted Jemima to Friardale Station and helped stow her and her belongings on board.

"You'll keep in touch?" Babs said anxiously, "and remember that we won't be so very far away if you need us."

"You could come over to us, or we could trundle over to you," put in Clara.

"That's a promise, my jolly old spartans." Jemima waved as the train began to move, then she settled back in her seat, her expression abruptly sobering. Although she was as disappointed as the chums at having to cancel her holiday plans, Jemima knew she could never have refused the strange and sudden request that had come out of the blue that morning. And as Babs had perceived, there was a sense of something serious, and urgent, behind it all. There had been worry in Colonel Carstairs's tone when he had spoken to Jemima that morning, and frustration at the official business which even now was carrying him away by plane to Europe. There was no time to explain all the details, he said, and Aunt Louise had been distraught to the point of incoherence when she had contacted him in desperation the previous night. But he would telephone Jemima at Faraday Manor at the earliest possible moment; meanwhile, he knew he could trust Jemima to keep an eye on the manor and the lordly Oscar. As far as he knew Louise was taking Toby, her ten year old son, with her to London, from where no doubt she

would be contacting Jemima. Colonel Carstairs had also provided Jemima with two names and their telephone numbers she could get in touch with should any emergency occur.

Jemima affixed her monocle more firmly and unfolded the slip of paper. Under the address of her destination and the practical details were the names of two close colleagues of her father's. One of them was a famous and extremely redoubtable barrister.

"Curiouser and curiouser," murmured Jemima. Just why should her father consider that she may be in need of a barrister!"

\* \* \* \* \*

The sleepy village of Faraday lazed under the golden haze of high summer as Jemima ambled along the main street. She had been a young child when she last visited Aunt Louise but she knew she would recognise the manor as soon as she saw it. Yes, there was the opening to the little lane that led to the gates, and there was the manor, a long, uneven ramble of Tudor beauty, white walls and age-blackened timbering, leaning slightly at one end as though it sighed with the weight of its age. There was a knot garden to the left of the front expanse of lawn, a rose walk with rustic bowers, and an ancient folly glimpsed through the shrubbery at the west side of the grounds.

Jemima sighed; no time to indulge her love and appreciation of antiquities: Oscar might be yelling his head off with disgust at such unwarranted neglect! She fished out the keys and marched up to the heavy studded door, then gasped as it flew open before she'd even inserted the key.

A raucous blast of heavy metal ravaged the golden peace and a girl stood there. A tall girl of about eighteen, with frizzy untidy hair that been bleached, no doubt expensively, to leave dirty grey roots showing. Her skin was pallid, her eyes small and her expression unwelcoming.

"Well," she glowered, "what do you want?"

"To come in, my merry ray of sunshine," Jemima beamed. "This is Faraday Manor? The home of Mrs. Louise Lincliff?"

The girl began to close the door. "She doesn't live here now. It's our house."

"Yours?" Jemima's neat but sturdy case had somehow got itself into the doorway, thwarting the girl's attempt to close the door. Jemima frowned. "So sorry---I thought you were the maid of all work. Funny that my aunt forgot to tell me that she'd sold the house when she invited me here."

The girl was beginning to look slightly bewildered. Like many before her, she'd never met anyone quite like Jemima Carstairs. She said stubbornly, "Louise hasn't got another niece, only me."

"Oh, you are family!" Jemima beamed. "Which end do you belong to? The Make-and-breaks? The Let-it-all-hang-outs? Or the Has-beens? Such a bore trying to keep track of them all," Jemima burred, : "I get so----" An unearthly wail interrupted her and a sepia and cream streak shot over her feet, across the lawn and into the shrubbery. Inwardly Jemima sighed with satisfaction; that was Oscar; she was at the right house and something very strange was going on.

"Blast that stupid cat!" the girl snarled. "Look what he did this morning!" She extended one arm so that Jemima could inspect the four vicious parallel scratches gouged down her forearm. But Jemima had turned away with a sharp exclamation. "Look! There's someone creeping around the folly! We'd better...."

"What?" The girl stepped out and moved on to the lawn. "I don't see..."

Her exclamation was lost as Jemima whirled through the doorway, snatching up her case and slamming the door shut. Hastily she sought a bolt and shot it home, then moved to the window for a brief glance at the furious girl outside who was mouthing imprecations of an undoubtedly sadly profane nature.

"Sorry, old thing," Jemima waved cheerfully before she beat a sharp retreat towards what she hoped would be the kitchen area and another possible means of entry. Within minutes Jemima had raced round the ground floor and secured all doors and windows, thankful that the girl seemed to have been the only illegal occupant. For until she had proof otherwise Jemima intended to consider all invaders illegal and treat accordingly.

Jemima drew breath, made herself a much needed cup of tea, and spent the next half hour finding herself a bedroom, unpacking, and generally discovering the lay-out of the house. A sharp indignant wail summoned her to the back door, and after a cautious look through the window opened the door to admit one very indignant Siamese.

For a moment girl and cat surveyed one another warily, then Oscar gave a deep purr, leaped up on to the table and rubbed his velvety brown mask against her arm. Jemima looked into wide sapphire blue eyes, touched the sleek silky body, and fell for him. Up in her arms, Oscar rumbled his acceptance and vibrated against her shoulder while Jemima recalled the punishment he'd inflicted on the interloper and knew she had a redoubtable ally. She also suspected she was about to discover that Siamese had a way and a will of their own.



Oscar liked to be talked to. He joined in the discussion concerning what the fridge might yield up in the way of tea. He settled for some minced chicken with a little gravy over it and made it quite clear that he disliked milk. Jemima sampled the home-baked ham and a slice of cherry pie, then with her new friend took to a deep comfortable armchair and began a perusal of the telephone directory. Oscar poured himself into a soft bundle of silky fur in her lap and she found the listing of Lincliffes. As she had surmised, there were two others besides Aunt Louise. A Mr. Percival Lincliffie at Home Farm, Faraday and a Mrs. Mildred Lincliffie, but she was much further away.

Absently, Jemima chuckled Oscar under his chin as she pondered the Lincliffie relationships. Louise had gone to school with Jemima's mother so the friendship went back a lot of years. Louise had married Peter Lincliffie but he had died tragically in a car crash the previous year. So where did Percival Lincliffie fit in? And was that

unpleasant girl his daughter? Jemima experienced a tremor of unease; Home Farm suggested a proximity to the manor. Why had the girl claimed she lived here? Jemima carefully lifted the snoozing Oscar and put him in the chair while she went to clear up in the kitchen. It seemed she had problems, which were all the more difficult because she had no information from which to compute possible answers; she could only play it all by ear, she mused. If only Aunt Louise or the Guv would phone to supply a few clues. But for the moment there was only Oscar!

She moved restlessly round the house, wondering if that girl had a key. Jemima would have to leave the house sooner or later, if only for fresh air and fresh bread, and if she returned to find that girl in possession again she knew the same ruse would not work a second time. Jemima paused before a magnificent old chippendale cabinet. She loved antiques but this did not seem to be the right time to enjoy the array of Meissen and enamelled silver snuff boxes displayed within. Suddenly Jemima froze. Someone was trying the front door, rattling a key in the lock. Oscar skidded into the hall, darted round Jemima's feet and dabbed at her dress, then rushed to the door and scratched frantically at the panels, uttering loud wails.

Expecting the very worst, Jemima ran to the side window and drew the net covering, then gasped with relief and surprise. A small boy was trying to open the door against the bolt, calling to Oscar, and looking frightened to the point of tears.

Jemima wrestled with the stiff bolt and threw open the door. "Is it Toby?" she cried, and the boy stumbled over the threshold and exclaimed: "Is it Aunty Jemima--- Mum didn't know if you'd be here ---she had to go to York so she put me on the six-thirty train and it broke down and---"

"Whoa, whoa!" Jemima drew him in and closed the door, carefully bolting it. "Now say hallo to Oscar and get your breath back. I bet your jolly old tum's rumbling, I'll make some tea then you can tell me all about your adventures."

But he followed her into the kitchen. "You don't understand," he cried. "We've got to do something. We've got to stop them."

His small thin face was taut with the effort of trying to keep back the tears. He clutched desperately at Jemima's hands. "They're going to take our home --- this one! We can't live here any more. What are we going to do?"

(To be continued)

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## "CLANG, CLANG, CLANG, WENT THE TROLLEY"

by Donald V. Campbell

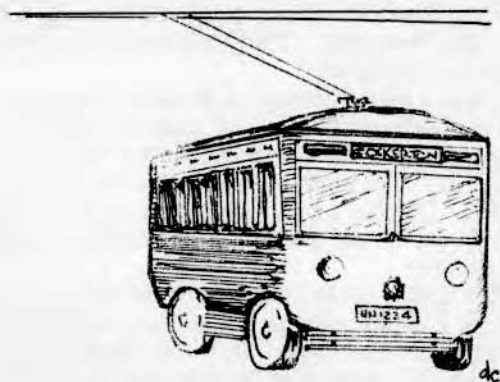
Judy Garland it was who sang "The Trolley Song" in a film musical. The scene I remember was not of what we call "trolleys" but of electric trams. This thought and that song will lead me to be nostalgic for a long and sadly gone mode of transport.

We so often remember our fictional favourites that sometimes the actualities slip by. Here is an innocuous but well remembered piece of long gone social history.

Is it indulgent? To indulge in nostalgia, I mean. A firm "No" has to be the answer. At its worst it gives harmless pleasure. At its best it re-opens worlds of people, events, times and readings that were lost and are now found. The nicest thing about nostalgia is that it can be like a line of gunpowder that fizzes merrily away running from side - to side and in many directions until it explodes in a glorious host of ideas.

Silly things can come to mind: The Trolley Song and trolley-buses. The trolley-buses that took me, as a lad, from home to the town centre, and elsewhere, for instance.

I am no expert on transport but I well remember the range of styles of these "transports of delight". They rolled us silently along with only a whir as the motor speeded us up at an incredibly quick rate. The oldest of them had a dark and dingy navy blue livery, possibly relieved by a single cream or gold line. Quite squared-off they looked rather like a large brick trundling along. They also felt rather brick-like because the seats were wooden slats.



Then the "light blues". These still had the centred and open entrance that typified the trolleys of Darlington. Three large steps went up to an open well with a seat for three in it. The "light blues" had rounded fronts and a kind of pitched windscreen with a slight overhang to the roof that reminded me of some of the trawlers down the coast.

The later "tracklesses" as some people called them were, either modern and interesting or modern and dreadfully dull. The first of these - the interesting ones - were smoothly contoured and in another variant of light blue. They were what I thought of as "streamlined". I was convinced that they went faster than all the others. Of course they didn't - why should they? Inside, the upholstery was slicker, more comfortable, modern. *These were the trolleys to travel on.* They had real style. To emphasize the modernity the bell pushes ran - in a kind of licorice strip - the length of the carriage - one each side of the roof. On the other trolleys it was more usual to have a doorbell kind of thing placed at strategic points. In those days though the conductor it was who rang the bells. The age of "Do it Yourself" had not arrived to dominate a cheaper, cost conscious, society.

The last of the trolleys were frightful "utility" versions of the single-deck design that Darlington Corporation had espoused for so long. These modern monstrosities of design arrived, I suppose, in the late forties. They were a nasty grey-blue colour. There was no livery to speak of and this version was sort of squarish, sort of dull, sort of odd. Each of them sported a thing that looked like a refrigerator box. The box was on the top just behind the driver's cab, or it might have been at the back - it was nasty wherever, it was. Where these came from, who designed them, no one knew. They were smooth enough in operation but I hated riding on them. They offended my sensibilities.

What picked out the Darlington trolley-bus from so many other forms of local transport was the centre entrance. The passengers got on and off through the same

single centre-hole in the side of the trolley. It would be, perhaps, be pretentious to call this hole an entrance. Too grand. There were no doors to this hole in the wall and if you sat in the "door-well" it could be very cold and draughty.

The entrance-well separated the front and back compartments. I seem to remember that the front compartment was non-smoking. The back one was smoking. The one in the middle was anybody's choice. The men seemed to go to the back and the women to the front. The seats ran round all four sides of the buses - facing inwards. This was most unusual and not like the long distance "United" and "Northern" diesel/petrol buses that ran out of the market place to Richmond and Durham and even to places far, far away - like Newcastle. (Thirty miles or so in those days appeared to be halfway round the globe to a young lad).

There may have been a painted notice on the side of the trolleys about "standing" and "sitting" room but the Darlington "rush hour" made no obeisance to such rules. The aisles and even the entrance-well were generally stuffed full of bodies at peak times. The conductresses (not many male conductors) struggled to get money from both those sitting and those standing. One day I saw the amazing sight of a female driver and the shock of this almost drove me to take another bus. Nostalgia is certainly not politically correct - and why should it be?

After the war when double-decked trolleys arrived (at least two) they still retained the Darlington feature of a centre entrance. But, they were closely followed by the death knell of the trolley-bus. The funeral rites were heralded by the arrival of diesel double deckers. Then came the removal of the wires that ran the trolleys - no pomp, no circumstance, they just vanished.

These wires were the most joyous aspect of the town's transport system. They often defeated the two spring-loaded pantographs that sucked the electricity into the motors. Where the motors were I never properly understood. They were - underneath I suppose. Going round a bend too fast the pantographs would, singly or doubly, fly off and up into the air at an acute angle. The fun then started. More often than not the first on the scene was the conductress. The drivers would keep a sensible distance from the embarrassment that might occur in this situation. By definition, in those days, most conductresses lacked height if not strength. Underneath the trolley-bus, and as long as the bus itself, was hidden an enormous bamboo pole. On the end of the pole was a hook. At the top end of the pantograph was a ring. The conductress first removed the bamboo pole from its hideaway. Then, looking like an inadequate pole vaulter, would attempt to connect the hook to the ring. The pole was no mean weight. The ring was swaying in the air twenty feet or so above the ground. Connection was not easy. The passengers were not averse to giving jocular directions - but no help. The conductress would (eventually) get the hook into the ring with the pleasing result of her being lifted *off* the ground. Looking like a baby in a bouncy-harness she would shout for the driver. Where was the driver? Waiting, one supposes, until Miss-Mrs. Conductress had signally failed in her task. What is of course true is that the drivers were often no more skilled or useful at the pole/hook/ring job than their female co-workers.

What physical or scientific forces were involved in these goings on I know not but they gave some pleasure in an otherwise dreary life.

The youngster that *was* me could see no reason for the passing of the trolley-bus; in truth the oldster that *is* me can see no reason for the passing of the trolleys. They were quick, clean, efficient and quiet. Apart from the special electricity generating station that fed the lines they were non-polluting. I loved them. I miss them.

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Editor: Mary Cadogan, 46 Overbury Avenue, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 6PY.  
Printed by Quacks Printers, 7 Grape Lane, Petergate, York, YO1 2HU. Tel. 635967.