

STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOL. 50

No. 596

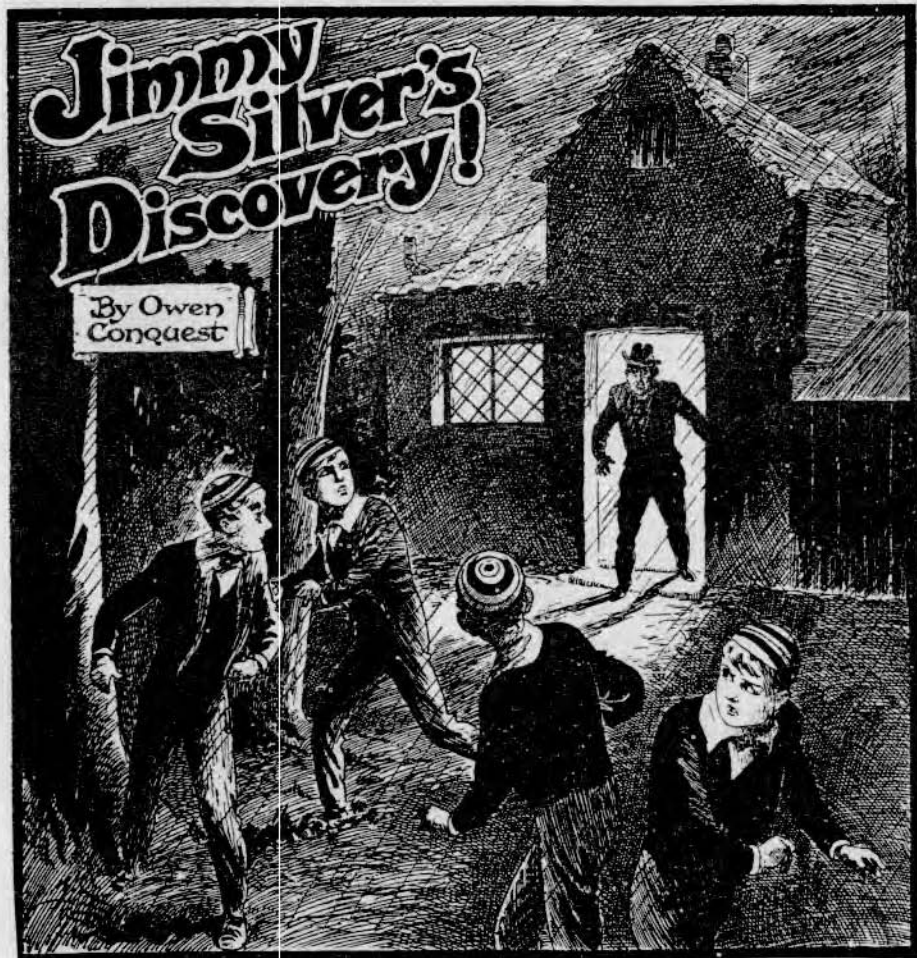
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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

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SUMMER READING - AND TRAVELLING

As I write this editorial, my husband and I are preparing for a holiday in the Bernese Oberland. In June we visited the English Lakes and, walking each day in perfect weather, were once again struck by the outstanding beauty of that region. There is something extraordinarily satisfying about being in mountainous country but, as both the Lake District and Switzerland can often provide rain as well as sunshine, one's choice of holiday reading in those areas is of particular importance. I always take both new books and old favourites, and spend as much time choosing these as in selecting which clothes and other items to pack in my case.

As you will see, in this number of the C.D. I am reviewing several books with holidays very much in mind. Mr. Holman's article, *Easy on the Ears*, reminds me too that I must sort out one or two cassette-story readings to take away with me and hear on my 'Walkman' type recorder. When I'm being read to in this way I find that old favourites are definitely best; my holiday choice this year will probably be Robert Powell's reading of THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL and Glenda Jackson's rendering of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE. I might also be tempted, for snatches of light relief, to pack Martin Jarvis's reading of BILLY BUNTER OF GREYFRIARS SCHOOL and his HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS (which is the cassette version of the fairly recently published 'new' William book, WHAT'S WRONG WITH CIVILIZASHUN). I would be interested to hear about other collectors' choices of holiday reading and listening.

GREYFRIARS IN UNUSUAL GARB.

Rummaging recently through my Frank Richards 'file' (actually a *very* large box), I came across the 1953 PUNCH article called *Greyfriars Nationalized* which is reproduced after this editorial (in fact it seems to be only half of an article, and I'd be extremely grateful if any reader could supply me with a copy of the missing part).

In a variety of pastiches, Greyfriars has frequently been used as a yardstick of changing values in our society. In the early 1950s, of course, there was great emphasis on nationalization, and apparently the author of *Greyfriars Nationalized* had some misgivings about the wisdom of contemporary policies. It is surprising to find Gussy installed at Greyfriars instead of St. Jim's, and intriguing to see that his father, Lord Eastwood, is 'a Labah peer' with a seat on the Coal Board while Vernon-Smith's tycoon father has supposedly also switched his political allegiance to the left. But perhaps 'history' is just repeating itself; I seem to recall at least one early St. Jim's story in which D'Arcy was - briefly - embracing the cause of socialism, and I believe Frank Richards used this theme occasionally at Greyfriars too.

Happy Holiday Reading to you all.

MARY CADOGAN

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.



gasped. "Weally, have none of you taken the twouble to find out that my father, Lord Eastwood, is a Labah peer?"

"Ooogh!"
"Urrghh!"

"What!" expostulated the Bounder of the Remove. "Then I suppose you thought it a rich jape to boast all these years about your father's old title and broad acres!"

"He's got a seat on the Coal Board! That isn't a bad bizney, is it, hai Jove?" retorted Gussy. "What about your storvies of your own father's sur-tax? Why is *he* standing at the next election in the Labah interest, deah boy? I see I've thwown you into quite a fluttah!"

"If anyone goes it will be Fisher T. Fish!" asserted Bob Cherry. "They won't want a bally American witch-bunting the new masters!"

"I do hope we have some fellow-twavellers!" put in Arthur Augustus. "I'll wagah the Stinks Beak will be a Party membah!"

"Waal, I guess it won't be me that's gittin' this durned consarn!" drawled the American boy. "I'm a sartin New Dealer, that's so, and my Pop's currency is cute and hard.

HARRY Wharton & Co. stood in a wrathy and worried group. The Famous Five were in the soup. They were landed and stranded, diddled, dished and done. Billy Bunter, his mouth full of cake and treacle, managed to gurgle out the news. "Have you chaps heard? Greyfriars is to be nationalized!"

"Late as usual, you thumping ass!" echoed Bob Cherry. "Only just discovered that! Why, next term even the name of the school is to change! The Grey School, it's to be called! The Grey School of Social Significance, of course! More in keeping with Modern Thought!"

"I knew we'd have a lot of bother after that giddy essay George Orwell wrote about us in Connolly's frabjous mag., saying we were what everybody wanted to be!" groaned the fat Owl of Greyfriars, lapping up a mug of cocoa and strawberryade, as he stuffed several back-numbers of *The New Statesman* into the seat of his striped trousers.

"Bunter, you fat ass, what are you doing with that merry paper?" yelled Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of the Remove, whose father was a millionaire.

"Got to see the Head about the disappearance of the soya-bean jam!" Bunter grunted, adding a copy of *Tribune*. It could only just be contained in the space available!

"But he'll twig those at once!" shouted Harry Wharton, planting a hearty kick well and truly on Bunter's ample anatomy.

"The Head is staying on, and he'll be jolly pleased at what I'm reading, and let me off!" Bunter

gasped, taking some lollypops and liquorice on board. "And if he don't notice, that stuff is so thick I shan't feel a giddy thing!"

"Oh gum!" Bob Cherry groaned: "Here's a go! We'll be losing Gussy anyway! The Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy won't do at all at Greyfriars in the Century of the Common Boy!"

Arthur Augustus adjusted his monocle and began to pummel Cherry's ribs!

"You fearful outsidah!" he



Three recent articles in the Press have paid tribute to what we in our Hobby have always believed to be important.

In the SUNDAY TIMES of 9.6.96 under the heading: CRICKET CRUSADE TO TAME MEAN STREETS OF L.A. we learn of the efforts of a campaigner for the homeless to introduce cricket to the city slum areas. The "Justiceville Crickets" seek to lead an attempt to inspire young people in Los Angeles with the best standards of cricket and so combat the mindless violence of the youth gangs. Armed with a letter from Prince Edward praising "the endeavours to introduce cricket to L.A.'s inner city" of organiser Ted Hayes, Mr. Hayes led a playing tour of England last year when he said: "The game is good not just because it's a sport but because of its ethics. It teaches you respect and dignity, on and off the field". He also backs emphatically the judgement of another surprising advocate of the sport's value, Mr. Robert Mugabe. The Marxist leader of Zimbabwe affirms: "Cricket civilises people and creates good gentlemen."

Despite questionable but maybe understandable efforts to "jazz up the game" by changing innings every 15 overs and adding cheer-leaders while introducing a break after every 6 balls (these could all prove ideal for T.V. commercials) we can, however, surely sympathise with Hayes' concluding thoughts: "A group of homeless people are bringing the noble English game into the notorious gang-infested ghettos of L.A."

On 18.5.96 the Daily Telegraph featured the longest-running girls' comic, D.C. Thomson's BUNTY, which is still running since its first number in January 1958. The article emphasises that BUNTY has a simple ethos: try hard, don't follow the crowd, be loyal to your friends and play the game; dishonesty does not pay, nor does bullying.

★ Caroline finds a photograph of the mysterious Gloria. ★

THE SECRET OF MOORFIELD MANOR

WHEN I left Hectwell Orphanage to go to my first job, I was drawn by a strange power to the gloomy mansion, Moorfield Manor, which I passed during the journey. The owner, Grace Elliot, sick and blind, wanted that I stay with her, mistaking me for someone called Gloria, though my name is Caroline West. I discovered that Arnold Lee, Mrs. Elliot's nephew, was in league with Mrs. Ross, the housekeeper of this Manor, to get rid of me. I was determined to discover the Manor's secret and to learn the identity of Gloria, whose place I had taken. I had made a midnight search of the attic and I was examining some toys when I heard footsteps approaching.



Illustrations from BUNTY in the early 1960s.

The current editor is only the fifth incumbent in four decades. "There is no written code or policy at D.C. Thomson regarding BUNTY's content," he says, "the editor is expected to use common sense in deciding what is or is not acceptable. We do try to feature contemporary themes in our story-lines, such as divorce, boy-friends, computers and the like, but there has never been, nor ever will there ever be, any overt sexual content." Editor Davies is reassured by the letters and phone-calls he receives from "BUNTY mums", women who used to read the comic as girls and now buy it for their daughters.

One more cheerful item in the *Daily Telegraph* of 11.5.96 celebrates the benign influence of Charles Hamilton in a most interesting profile of Jack Cardiff. This great British cinematographer, cameraman on such superb films as BLACK NARCISSUS, THE RED SHOES, THE AFRICAN QUEEN and many more, could apparently become "a formidable auto-didact, especially knowledgeable in painting, ballet and music; but he charmingly attributes his wider schooling to his discovery of THE MAGNET, the tuppenny comic (sic) that introduced Greyfriars School. 'After that, I turned every school I attended into Greyfriars..... That's where I learned about self-discipline and loyalty, to tell the truth and never to sneak - all the public school code of honour,' he smiles 'I'm not sure it was the best preparation for a career in the film business.'"

Jack Cardiff also found that the Greyfriars curriculum was remarkably wide-ranging: 'There was Greek mythology in there, bits of French and Latin and literature. I started to look things up for myself and I learned something new every week.'

Greyfriars stalwarts such as Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry still crop in his conversation, as if he'd actually shared a form-room with them, but it's clear that he was destined to find some sort of niche in a métier barely invented when the MAGNET first flourished. And when he talks of past travels, Cardiff has a quotation from Cowper ready: "How much a dunce that has been sent to roam, Excels a dunce that has been left at home."

It was from Greyfriars that he learned it, of course!

In these 3 items we see that high standards and values still persist and can survive even in our 'trendy' times. I am sure Charles Hamilton would be pleased to know that his school stories still set standards in behaviour worth living up to. And he, a notable example of the powers of self-education, would be gratified by the inspiration and incentive to learning which his writings supply.

D.C. Thomson in their comics still provide boisterous and healthy entertainment for our children, and the ghetto cricketers of Los Angeles would certainly deserve a benevolent smile from Frank Richards, that great devotee of King Willow.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Roy Whiskin of Cambridge sent me a copy of the article about Jack Cardiff to which Mr. O'Leary refers. Roy mentions that Cardiff's 'many credits include THE AFRICAN QUEEN, THE RED SHOES and BLACK NARCISSUS, for which he won an Oscar'.)

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" and "Boys Friend Library" by Charles Hamilton, Edwy Searles Brooks, Murray Roberts, Murray Graydon. W.L. Bawden, 14 Highland Park, Redruth, Cornwall, TR15 2EX.



DISCOVERING ST. FRANK'S

by Martyn Neal

As a recent convert to The Nelson Lee Library and ESB, I am concerned that articles about them seem to be in short supply. I only became aware of their existence a few months ago and it seems unfortunate if this coincides with everybody else forgetting about them. My first experience of St. Frank's was in a Howard Baker Holiday Annual, the story being "The Ghost of Travis Dene" (INS188) which I found enjoyable and frustrating at the same time. It was frustrating because I could not find, and still cannot find, the concluding part of the story and still do not know how it ends. Despite this I was determined to find more stories of St. Frank's to read and this led me to original issues of NLL. Up to this point my experience of old papers had been the Bunter books as a child and, more recently, the Howard Baker reprints. As a lot of the reprints had been supplied by Colin Crewe I asked him for some NLL's and he sent over a hundred!

I was lucky in that the first story I chose to read was a superb one "Fooling the School" (OS513) which had both a cleverly worked plot and introduced a character, William Napoleon Browne, who has become one of my favourites. I have always loved the stories of P.G. Wodehouse and the similarities between Browne and Psmith are obvious. As I always felt there were too few Psmith stories, I find that this similarity adds to my enjoyment rather than detracts from it.

I then continued with the next few issues taking in "The Return of Nelson Lee and Nipper" (OS515) and then the Cricketing Series. I found the stories of rivalries and plots and counterplots both funny and intriguing. These stories convinced me that ESB, of whom I had never heard until a few weeks earlier, was an author well worth investigating and I have since set about trying to build a collection of NLL's. If anyone doubts the standing of ESB as an author of school stories then I would simply refer them to the episode where Browne is shown round the School, or the one where he takes over the captaincy of the Fifth, or where the girls rearrange Nipper's study to the disgust and alarm of Watson and Tregellis-West. I could go on with many more examples and all from a mere nine issues. The only qualification I would make is that I could have lived without the sub-plot involving mysterious Indians and underground workshops. When I come to read these stories I will probably skip over these episodes.

I am certainly going to pursue the stories of ESB and I hope they will form an appropriate part of the Digest in the future. I am only beginning to find out about St. Frank's and have little to offer at this stage other than enthusiasm, but I hope that others with more experience can add to my enjoyment through the pages of the Digest.



ON THE FASCINATION OF SOME TITLES by Derek Hinrich

From time to time I browse through the Sexton Blake Index, thinking ruefully of the gaps in my collection. In particular, I run my eye over the lists of the First and Second Series of the Sexton Blake Library.

There are always some titles which excite my imagination. For example, SBL1/52, *The Mosque of The Mahdi* - plots and conspiracies in the Sudan? Well no, it's about espionage and derring-do in Palestine during Allenby's advance (so I discovered when I at length obtained a copy).

I was a schoolboy when I first encountered Sexton Blake in 1939, and by then his very best days, I think, were over. I barely encountered any of the great adversaries of his heyday and so stories of the recurrent master criminals were amongst the first I sought out when I took up Blake collecting. In particular my interest was kindled by the concept of the Criminals' Confederation, so *The Mysterious Mr. Reece*, SBL1/41, of 1917, is one story that I have long wished to read, for this is the first appearance of the evil genius of the Confederation, two years or so before the Confederation and its possibilities apparently occurred to Robert Murray Graydon.

Then there are a pair of geographical titles that tickle my fancy for no better reason than that when I was a lad I lived in Merton, sandwiched between the sites of two pieces of criminality - SBL2/141, *The Mystery of Mitcham Common* and SBL3/113, *The Wimbledon Common Trap*. Wimbledon and Mitcham are such respectable places - what can be going on there?

There there is SBL1/335, which I see featured Gunga Dass, *The Loot of the Nana Sahib*. Now that is a title to conjure with. The Nana Sahib, the great hate-figure for Victorian Britain of the Indian Mutiny, the man responsible for the massacre of Cawnpore, who was neither caught nor killed as the Mutiny was suppressed, but who fled and disappeared: and was probably the inspiration of every villainous raja to come out of Hollywood in the days when they made adventure films about the Raj - easterns with the Bengal Lancers taking the place of the Seventh Cavalry. No doubt any loot would in reality be an illusion but a splendid McGuffin for an adventure of Sexton Blake.

Another case of Blake's in which he faces Gunga Dass has another title full of eastern menace: SBL1/317, *The Shrine of Kali*. Gunga Dass and the thugs? Now there's a devilish combination fit to threaten the very foundations of British India. Is that what it's about? Perhaps one day I shall find out.

In the same way I am intrigued by the sound of SBL2/491, *The Secret of the Armaments King*. Ah those Armaments Kings! Such a staple of thrillers of the 'twenties and 'thirties, always plotting ways to start a nice little war in the Balkans or to foment trouble somewhere for the Empire, all men of vast wealth and mysterious antecedents with names redolent of Eastern Europe - their creation all inspired by that extraordinary man, Sir Basil Zaharoff, who began his career in Constantinople and ended as head of Vickers Armstrong. SBL 2/491 is by W. W. Sayer and features Granite Grant and Mlle Julie so one may expect a rattling good tale of secret service work.

There is another case in which they figure - SBL1/363, *The Mystery of The Lost Battleship*, which I have yet to read which has the same fascination. Jolly awkward sort of thing to mislay, a battleship so does the title mean sunk or stolen? Now to steal a battleship would be an enterprise indeed and would surely involve a foe worthy of Blake's steel!



A VISIT TO BAKER STREET

by W.O.G. Lofts

I was ten years old and the year was 1933. I sat at my desk at the school in St. John's Wood, London -- a small, slim boy with unruly brown hair, wearing a red jersey and listening to my teacher telling his usual Friday afternoon story. This particular week his tale was entitled "The Blue Carbuncle", written by Arthur Conan Doyle and featuring the immortal Sherlock Holmes. I sat with my head cupped in my hands, listening open-mouthed in wonder at the sheer genius of the great detective. I had heard of him before and I knew he lived in Baker Street, only about ten minutes away.

Such was Holmes' brilliance that he could solve mysteries by means of the slenderest of clues. In the story in question, merely by looking at an old black battered hat, he had deduced all there was to know about the owner --- even the fact that his wife had ceased to love him!

"Any questions?" asked my schoolmaster, at the end of the enthralling story. "Please, sir," I said, in my then piping treble voice, "could you tell me the number in Baker Street where Sherlock Holmes lived?"

"Number 221B" he replied, with a look of amusement on his usually stern face. "Which is at the top end of Baker Street, near Regents Park."

In my childish innocence I believed that Sherlock Holmes was a real live detective and after school lessons had finished, I would go to see his house on my way home. Who knows? I might even be able to get a glimpse of the greatest detective that England ever had!.....

It was early November and it was already dusk when I went out of the school gates. In those days we always had the traditional London fogs. Fog was everywhere; dense, yellow and choking. It filled the cobbled streets, courts and alleys, and even found its way into houses. It seemed to cling with damp, cold embrace around every object, animate and inanimate; nothing was usually visible more than a few yards and to an observer beyond that radius the world was hidden in a murky pall.

Arriving at the top end of Baker Street I groped along the side in which number 221B was supposed to be. Instead of the house I found a huge grey stone building which belonged to the Abbey Building Society. Thinking I had made a mistake somewhere, I went along further to enquire at the familiar coffee stall which stood on that corner of Marylebone Circus. Despite the gloom, I could see the yellow oil lamp flickering on the side of the counter, and the usual crowd of down-and-outs and working-class labourers huddled in front to keep warm.

Approaching near enough to be heard by the proprietor, busily serving behind the high counter, I shouted out to him:

"Can you tell me where the house is where Sherlock Holmes lives?"

"Get off with you!" he shouted, brandishing a large carving knife which he had just been using on the hot pies and sandwiches. He probably thought I was cheeking him, so feeling rather crestfallen and with the guffaws of several of his customers ringing in my ears, I made my way once more towards the direction where I thought the celebrated detective lived.

The large imposing figure of a policeman suddenly loomed out of a doorway and shone his bullseye lantern (which he wore attached to his belt) into my face.

"What are you looking for, sonny?" he asked, not unkindly.

"I'm trying to find the house of Sherlock Holmes," I replied.

A twinkle came into his blue eyes. "Well, I'm afraid that Mr. Holmes is away on a case just now," he said. "And anyway, the house is very ordinary to look at from outside." He added: "And as no doubt Mr. Holmes would also tell you, a night like this is no time for a young lad to be wandering the streets, and I should get off home straight away if I were you."

So with these comforting words in my ears and still with a faint hope that I might possibly catch a glimpse of the detective arriving back from a case with Dr. Watson, I made my way homeward. Every horse-drawn cab which clopped its way through the fog-laden streets in passing may have seen a small boy trying to peer into the interior, in the hope of seeing the greatest of all sleuths - the one and only Sherlock Holmes.....

* * * * *

(This article was originally published in the October 1972 number of the ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE.)

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ALL TALES ARE FAIRY TALES

Extracts from Charles Hamilton's views on the Art of Writing

by Una Hamilton Wright

"There is no better background for a fairy tale than a school scene. It is so utterly unreal, even its realities are unreal." Charles Hamilton was writing to his brother-in-law, Percy Harrison, (my father) in December 1935. They were collaborating on the idea of a musical show based on school life, and were also contemplating a revue. When they first met, in the Edwardian period, they had collaborated on songs, uncle supplying the words and father writing the music. Later, in Italy, they had hit on the idea of writing a travel book, my uncle declaring that a good one had never been written. They were both gifted with keen powers of observation and a sharp sense of humour, as well as having extensive experience of travel. So ideas of different types of writing figured largely in their correspondence.

Continuing the fairy tale theme, "Up to ten," my uncle wrote, "man is satisfied with Jack the Giant Killer under that name. After ten, he *is* not but *feels* older, and Jack the Giant Killer is then re-christened Buffalo Bill. After fifteen, he *is* not but feels older still, and Buffalo Bill then has to be re-named Bulldog Drummond or D'Artagnan or something of the sort. But the great point is, that under whatever alias, he must remain Jack the Giant Killer! Once approach reality, and you are done for..... A certain fleeting resemblance to life must be observed - about as much as there is in Jack the Giant Killer or Puss-in-Boots. For instance, a true school story, about real dirty little swine, would make people ill. But a fairy tale about school, like the Loom of Youth or the Harrovians, is the most delightful kind of fairy tale.To be livable, life must be like a fairy tale, as near as possible."

Regarding his own method of writing he claimed to be guided by instinct rather than by thinking. In another letter to my father, in 1935, he developed the theme, "Thinking is peculiar to the individual brain: instinct is the same with all. When, therefore, one does a thing without thinking, one can depend on it that a lot of others will do precisely the same thing. So when I leap at the radio to wash out a crooner just beginning through his blasted nose," (my uncle loathed crooners) "I imagine that ten thousand others are performing the same acrobatic feat at the same moment, the movement being instinctive..... I have always noticed that in writing a story, as soon as I begin to think, it goes wrong. I do not know what the process is, but it proceeds from something deeper than thought..... I have an idea therefore of going ahead with our revue and writing straight on, as if it were a story."

Charles Hamilton frequently advised beginners to go over their work with a pen "mending and amending, then type it out again spotless.... But, after twenty years or so the right words get automatically into the right place." He produced the final copies of his own work at the first attempt with no major rewriting or alteration. His publishers, Cassells - who published the Bunter Books - said of him, "He was thoroughly business like, utterly reliable, and always on time."

"The stories just come," he once told an interviewer, "Often I do not know the second line until I have written the first, and that is how it should be. That way a story is easier to read."

Actually the stories did not always 'just come', Charles used to pace up and down, like a caged lion, sometimes with a wet towel wrapped round his head, when the ideas

would not come. He applied to his family for plots; mother was particularly good at supplying suggestions. When he was first asked to write a story in a school setting he walked up and down growling "What can happen in a school? What *could* happen in a school?" His mind was bent on adventure stories and he could not see how adventures could take place against a confined background. Mother pointed out to him that human beings were still human beings even at school, and that their characters and interactions would be basically similar whatever the backdrop.

Charles Hamilton believed that the author "goes into all his characters more or less..... every character's character being one facet of his own." His heroes are what he would have liked to have been, while his bad lads are what he would *not* like to be, but might have been but for the grace of God! Certainly some of the vices of the baddies show the temptations which Charles Hamilton had to fight. I am thinking of the gambling and of Billy Bunter's addiction to food. Charles Hamilton had a very sweet tooth. The logical conclusion is that "there is a Bunter inside Frank Richards somewhere - happily not developed!" On the subject of character weakness he told me that people never recognised unflattering portraits of themselves. He used his relatives in not necessarily admirable characters - but none of them ever knew!

My uncle was essentially an escapist and he said of himself as a writer: "the world of his imagination was much more real to him than the humdrum world outside.....Fiction is always an improvement on reality."

My father was somewhat highfaulting and tended to be abstruse, and to write over the reader's head. Uncle sought to bring him down to earth with the following advice: "I think that the chief object to be set before the author's eyes, is to make the meaning absolutely clear to the least observant reader, even at the cost of substituting dullness for



that light sparkle which pleases ourselves so much and which we appreciate so keenly in our own works. It is no use saying that the reader is a damned fool, when you want his penny. If you do not want his penny, it is not worth the trouble of typing at all: if you do want it, it has to be extracted from him. If he gets what he thinks he wants, it droppeth like the gentle dew from heaven: otherwise, it remains in his trousers pocket. Therefore, make thy meaning clear even unto the commonest understanding - fool-proof, in fact.

"The Egyptians used to set up a skeleton at the feast. An author would do well to set up a mental image of a cod-faced man with dull glassy eyes and sloppy mouth. This is the average reader of adult literature. His intellect cannot deal with a sentence containing more than seven words. He searches the page for allusions to sex, like a dog nosing in a dung-heap. He is a putrid animal and it is a great pity that writers cannot live without getting his penny off him....Flashing wit flashes past him unseen. You have to say it very loud and clear, in fact about in his ear. So in any work intended for the general public, I suggest going over it carefully, and washing out anything not immediately comprehensible to a boy of ten." Uncle enjoyed letting himself go, in no other context could he have dared to exaggerate so much. He believed that children started life as bright and intelligent beings and then 'went off' at the beginning of their teens, due, largely, to faults in the education system. He much preferred to write for children and I think this accounts for the fact that he did not write for the General Reader. He once stated that he would not write a novel for adults unless a publisher first commissioned him to do it and crossed his palm with silver beforehand!

His citing of the boy of ten as the limit of the reader's understanding may explain why his work was equally popular with grown-ups and children. Perhaps he hit the right mental level - the common ground for all the generations, so that, on re-reading his work as adults, we, who have put away childish things, may enjoy taking them out again and be thereby transported back to our youth to re-enjoy our own youthful feelings, when life was much more like a fairytale.

(Copyright Una Hamilton Wright)

EASY ON THE EARS

by Ernest Holman

Nowadays, when reading becomes a more difficult process because of ageing eyesight, there is great comfort to be found in the many Stories on Tape productions. They are, in fact, in abundance. Shops such as W.H. Smith have many shelves devoted to these items. Mostly, they are abridged versions of many well-known stories, usually retailing at about £8.00 for two cassettes. A few long versions of the stories appear at times in boxed sets, but at a higher price, of course.

By far the most welcome are the large coloured-cover Albums with the completely unabridged versions of many stories. These do not appear on public shelves but can be obtained from the appropriate Publishing Company. Here, we come up against the fact that such items are more than a little pricey. However, if one can raise the cash for a story that one would want to hear again at different times, they are well worth the expense.

For those who may like to listen once only to a favourite yarn, these will most likely be found in the Audio section of your Local Public Library. Here one can find

both abridged and unabridged versions of the same story. What is more, they can usually be reserved for collection at a later date.

Of the readers themselves, no praise can be less than splendid for these actors and actresses who can convey so many different changes of voice so rapidly. Robert Hardy comes over very well indeed in his Sherlock Holmes readings; Gwen Watford is equally well-versed in the Fairacre and Thrush Green stories of Miss Read; Jonathan Cecil cannot be faulted in any way for the difficult task of describing the events of many Jeeves adventures.

Even then, I hand the palm to Martin Jarvis. Here is a very versatile reader indeed, equally at home with Wodehouse, Doyle or Richmal Crompton. His excellence is shown particularly in his rendering of 'His Last Bow' and the many short stories of Just William.

We all like to regard ourselves as good readers, in a general sense. The Tape Story readers would be considered inferior if merely classed as very good. Believe me, they are positively brilliant.

IF ONLY THEY WERE TRUE..... by Donald V. Campbell

A recent reorganisation of my minuscule library caused me to review what I had on hand. The reorganisation has meant that most books and magazines are now more accessible. THE WINDSOR for February, 1914 caused some hilarity among the Campbell clan. Page xxi - one of those advertising pages that vanish when these magazines are bound into yearly volumes - gave the most precious advice for those with "flat chests". She (presumably the lady in the "before and after" pictures - photographs they are NOT) has changed out of mind. Not only can she now freely expose her bosom but she looks happier and has lost at least twenty years in the transformation.

FLAT CHESTED FOR 15 YEARS
SHE DEVELOPED HER BUST SIX INCHES IN THIRTY DAYS.



These pictures show the wonderful bust development referred to in this article.

Such incredible claims have been around for many decades and the classic legal case of THE CARBOLIC SMOKE BALL COMPANY is still referred to in spurious advertising cases at law.

On the opposite page we find yet another young lady who can "...compel others to obey her will...." Lucky she! Telepathy is what is to be mastered via the free book available from the "National Institute for Sciences". As many of our hopeful forebears will have sent off for this booklet is it surprising to find that the promised "...(revolution of) the mental status of the human race...." does not appear to have materialised.

The advert for "Saxone" shoes is quite jolly - in fact the boots would be acceptable as a fashion accessory today. Opposite the shoe advert we find "Glymiel Jelly" - used heavily by my mother in my boyhood, where has it gone now?



FOR CHAPS

Roughness of Skin, &c.
I ALWAYS USE

**"GLYMIEL
JELLY."**

IT'S DELIGHTFUL

*Sold by Chemists and
Shops & in Metallic Tubes &
Gals. 1 - and 1 1/2 - or sent
postage free by Stamp
to Sub. Proprietors.*

**OSBORNE, BAUER
& CHEESEMAN,**
19, Golden Square, Regent
Street, London, W

N.B.
Write for
free
booklet
to
proprietors.

Rather like the "flat chest" adverts there would be tremendous excitement if "Edward's Harlene Company" really had the answer to the hair problems that have been around for so long. A quick glance at the ad makes one initially wonder why pennies should be floating over the heads of the two men. The incredible "carrying power" of the newly developed hair as demonstrated by the lady with the preposterously luxuriant growth takes some believing. But if Mr. Edwards says it is so, ergo it must be so.



STYLE 42
Harwood Last, Black
Box Heel, 1 1/2" all
Over Cap, Round Sole.
A special Model for
present wear.

**New SAXONES in the
Spring-time delight the
EYE, but the FEET ask
for new SAXONES
NOW ——— for
protection against bad
weather still to come.**

The Saxone Winter model, shown above, assures foot comfort and warmth in snow, frost or downpour, and the Superb SAXONE Style and permanent shapeliness will still satisfy the eye when the bright weather comes.

Saxone Boots and
Shoes for Men, 104
Styles, 119 Fittings
in each style.

PRICES
FROM

16/6

Saxone Styles can be obtained in any of the Black or Brown leathers from Saxone Stores throughout the United Kingdom, including ten in London; also Paris, Brussels and Liège. Agents in Burma, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, South America. Send for illustrated Style Catalogue, No. 97, with instructions for self-measurement.

SAXONE SHOE CO. Ltd.,
Kilmarnock, Scotland.



THE "HARLENE HAIR-DRILL" OUTFIT COMPRISES

1. A Trial Bottle of Edwards' "Harlene" for the Hair. This delightful preparation feeds the hair and stimulates the hair-roots. It makes the hair soft and glossy, and invests it with a beautiful lustre and luxuriance.



2. A Trial Package of Edwards' "Cremex" for the Scalp. It dissolves Scurf and banishes Irritation of the Scalp.



The number of hairs on a healthy head of hair, may in the space of a few weeks, increase. The same applies to what is known as hair loss. If you lose your hair in this or falling, why not use the great "Harlene Hair-Drill" outfit?

3. A Copy of Mr. Edwards' "Hair-Drill" Manual, containing the secret rules which made his fame, the toilet rules which, practised for two minutes every day, make and keep your hair healthy and luxuriant, free from the slightest sign of Baldness, Greyness, or Hair Poverty.



A striking test which shows the difference between weak and healthy hair. The unpromised hair, will barely support a weight of 3 oz. The healthy hair easily supports an 8 oz. weight. If your hair falls in the hand, from the healthy woman, Mr. Edwards offers you a few cents that will tell you how to render it out-cregely healthy, but splendidly abundant.

The pièce de resistance of the magazine is on page xxv. Here we have another advert from J. Foot & Son (elsewhere we can find Foot's Thermal Bath Cabinet). The benefits available with The "Burlington" (PATENTED) chair-cum-lounger-cum-table-cum-light-cum-desk are legion. Add to the foregoing the leg-rest that can be used as a footstool and even slides away when not in use, and our day must be complete. They don't make any of 'em like wot they used to!

By the way, the magazine proper contained stories by: E.F. Benson, Dornford Yates, H. Rider Haggard, and Eden Phillpotts. What a line-up!

A NEST FOR REST

By simply pressing a button the back declines or automatically rises to any position desired by the occupant. Release the button and the back is instantly and securely locked. No other chair does this. The sides open outwards, affording easy access and exit. The Front Table, Electric Light attachment, Reading Desk and Side Tray are adjustable and removable. The Leg Rest is adjustable to various inclinations, and can also be used as a footstool. When not in use it slides under the seat.

The Upholstery is exceptionally soft and deep, with strong elastic edges, and supports the entire body in the highest degree of luxurious comfort. Would not you like these chairs and considerably to the enjoyment of your relaxation and rest?

Catalogue C5 of Adjustable Chairs Free.

J. FOOT & SON LTD.
(Dept. C5),
171, NEW BOND STREET,
LONDON, W.

Automatic adjustable back.

The "BURLINGTON" (PATENTED)

(Editor's Note: I often wonder whether and how the adverts in *The Magnet* to cure blushing and red noses worked!)

DEAR PATER.....

by Ted Baldock

He does me double wrong
That wounds me with the flatteries of his tongue.
Shakespeare. King Richard II.

(Being extracts from a letter written by William George Bunter to his father. Found by the latter while giving his desk at Bunter Villa a long overdue 'spring clean'.)

* * * * *

.....Would you believe it Pater, the other day in class following my 'construe' Mr. Quelch was moved to exclaim. "Splendid Bunter, that will do my boy, would that certain other boys" - here he swept a meaningful glance over the form - "could follow your example and apply themselves as diligently as you so obviously have done in preparing their lessons. You are a credit to the form, my boy. I would, however, feel easier in my mind if you would devote a little more time to leisure pursuits, and not over-tax yourself. I have great hopes of you, Bunter, and I am sure you will not fall short of my anticipations."

Those, so far as I can recall, were his very words, Pater. Perhaps I do read and study rather more than is necessary; you know your son sir, and I know that you will approve.

* * * * *

Last week Mr. Quelch was high in his praise of you. "Bunter, my boy," he said, "Always endeavour to emulate your father whom I know to be a worthy and diligent gentleman. The city has need of such skilled and resourceful business-men, where rewards of a pecuniary nature may be high."

I walked over to Cliff House the other day to see Bessie, I like to keep a brotherly eye on her. She invited me to stay to tea, and borrowed my last ninepence to pay for the buns. Consequently I am completely without funds now. I wonder, Pater, if you would send a postal order when you write next time? A small amount to tide me over until the end of term.

* * * * *

Dear Pater,

Sammy is forever pestering me for small sums. He has no idea whatever of 'laying out' his pocket money. I have spoken to him sharply on several occasions concerning his excessive eating habits. If only he would try to model himself on his elder brother who has discovered and long practised the art of abstinence!

* * * * *

Mr. Quelch remarked to me the other day that you were far too indulgent in the bestowal of 'tips', Pater. But I know you would not have me unable to pay my 'whack' with the other fellows.

My best 'Pal' Harry Wharton desires me to send his best regards.

He often enquires after you. He once remarked that he wished Colonel Wharton was half as generous as you.....

* * * * *

George Wingate says that if I keep up my present form a place in the first eleven is absolutely certain. He has been watching me closely at the 'nets' for some time. Do you recall, Pater saying that if I should get my 'Colours' you would 'spring' a fiver? Wharton and Bob Cherry are rather sick about my success, but of course they are hardly in my class on the cricket field.....

* * * * *

Love to the Mater. Tell her I am looking forward no end to one of her special plum pies when I come home. Bessie and Sammy are well, but are always complaining of a lack of cash. I tell them to try and be a little more like their brother.

Your affectionate son
William

(Note: Extensive spelling and grammatical corrections have been made to facilitate the perusal of this letter which must surely be something of a classic in Bunterish naivety.)

A PRIDE OF BUNTERS

Just one more tart before I go,
A slice of cake maybe,
I eat but little as you know
I'm here to slim you see.
We Bunters are a Spartan breed
Hard, fit, and trimly taut,
Unhealthy eating we'll not heed
We set such things at naught.
My sister Bessie leads the field
At hockey, netball, gym.
Her prowess she will never yield,
She'll lead the field - and win.
My brother Sammy though he's young
Bids fair to be a man,
To gather laurels he's begun
To boost the Bunter clan.
Let Loder hoot, and Coker roar,
Let Quelch reach for his cane,
We've heard the cry so oft before
Yet we remain the same.
For we are Bunters true and bold,
With roots steeped in the past
Much as the courtly knights of old,
A truly noble caste.

Ted Baldock

* * * * *



OUR BOOKSHELVES

REVIEWS BY

MARY CADOGAN

(Picture by Terry Wakefield)

With holiday and garden-deck-chair reading in mind, I am glad to have received the volumes mentioned here. An obvious choice for packing in holiday cases and luggage is Macmillan's latest paperback collection (from existing books) of some of Richmal Crompton's ever-exuberant William tales. **JUST WILLIAM ON HOLIDAY**, (£3.99) comprises ten short stories, all drawn from books published during the heyday of the series. Even if you know them well already, you will find that re-reading is still enjoyable. As the back-cover 'blurb' suggests, whether William is 'rescuing a damsel in distress, sailing the high seas to discover an uncharted island, or capturing a dangerous smuggler on the beach', our hero always manages to turn his, and his family's, holidays into unforgettable and often chaotic adventures. The original Thomas Henry pictures have been retained to add to the book's sparkle, and there is the added bonus of a happy Mag picture in full colour on the cover.

RICHMAL CROMPTON

JUST WILLIAM ON HOLIDAY

Ten Classic Stories



THE OXFORD BOOK OF TRAVEL STORIES, Edited by Patricia Craig (O.U.P. £17.99) is a bumper book of stories and what are described as fragments of reminiscence 'imbued with the shimmer of fiction'. These range in time from the middle of the nineteenth century to virtually the end of the twentieth: there are contributions from Dickens and Trollope, from Elizabeth von Arnim, Elizabeth Bowen and Rebecca West, from Jack Kerouac and William Trevor, and many more eminent

writers. As Patricia comments in her introduction, each of the thirty-plus items 'illustrates, in its own way, how travel has to do with stimulus, enrichment, a sense of achievement that is everlasting. "We shall certainly cease to be here", observes the protagonist of a Henry James story, referring to Venice, "but we shall never cease to have been here." This is indeed an enriching anthology, offering both recapitulatory pleasures and many new discoveries. Buy, beg or borrow it; then sit back and savour the atmosphere of the French Riviera or California during the 1920s, of nineteenth-century Palestine, of a trip to Greece that is touched by the surreal, of contemporary India's challenges and culture-contrasts.....

We can travel in quieter mood through the pages of *THE COMPLETE LONE PINE* by Mark O'Hanlon, which is the author's perceptive exploration of Malcolm Saville's twenty books about the group of children who formed the Lone Pine Club. I was asked to contribute an introduction to this. I wrote that Mark O'Hanlon's book: 'As well as providing a meticulously detailed "Who's Who", "What's What" and "Where's Where" of..... Malcolm's most celebrated series..... provides an interesting account of his literary life and achievements, and of his long-lasting influence on several generations of readers.' *THE COMPLETE LONE PINE* includes a synopsis of every Lone Pine story, plus an A to Z of all the characters and places that are featured. Most of all, there is a detailed examination of the geographical settings of the Lone Pine books. Malcolm Saville so vividly described areas of countryside in Devon, London, Shropshire, Suffolk, Sussex and Yorkshire, in which the adventures take place, that many child and adult readers have set out to visit these. With the help of Mark O'Hanlon's detailed settings, and the use of the book's sketch maps, it is now possible for such visits and explorations to be considerably more detailed and appealing. *THE COMPLETE LONE PINE* is both a warmly affectionate companion to Malcolm Saville's books and a most useful work of bibliographic scholarship. It is obtainable from the author, Mark O'Hanlon, at 10 Bilford Road, Worcester, WR3 8QA, and costs £9.99.

George Beal has now revised and published *THE COMPLETE MAGNET COMPANION* 1996. This makes an attractive complement to his 1994 *MAGNET AND GEM FACSIMILE EDITIONS* which concentrated on the Howard Baker editions. The present volume which, like its predecessor, is attractively illustrated, lists all the Greyfriars Magnet stories, first chronologically and then alphabetically; it provides information about which stories were reprinted by Howard Baker and, in a separate Schoolboys' Own Library Greyfriars list, which Magnet tales were republished in the S.O.L. In another list the Holiday Annual tales are also linked to their Magnet originals. *THE COMPLETE MAGNET COMPANION'S* other features include a plan of the Remove studies and list of the occupants of each, and articles on the Editors, the Illustrators and the Substitute Stories. There are also interesting Greyfriars School Floor Plans (showing the various form-rooms in relation to each other and to Big Hall, Chapel, the Head's Study etc.), and six pages on *Who's Who at Greyfriars*. This extremely useful addition to the Greyfriars saga can be obtained by post from Quartermain Publications, 48 Kings Drive, Berrylands, Surbiton, Surrey, KT5 8NQ at £8.50.

Further bibliographical detail for collectors is provided in *THE WIZARD INDEX: 1944- 1963*, which, compiled by Martin and Hazel Trowse, is available from them at 32 Leyfield, Worcester Park, Surrey at £7.99 plus £1.00 for postage and packing. The first 21 years of the paper are not covered by this index, mainly because the authors' complete run only began in 1944, but, in their opinion, 'the best stories ever

published in the Wizard' appeared in the years now indexed. One-off stories have not been included but serials, which represented the main body of the Wizard's fiction, are listed with starting and finishing numbers and a short resumé of each plot. Repeats are noted too, and Wilson the Wonder Athlete has a list of his own. D.C. Thomson enthusiasts will find this Index helpful, and will relish its attractive, full size and full colour cover.

THE WIZARD INDEX

1944 - 1963



© D.C. Thomson & Co. Ltd

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 Trender, 4 Ashdene Road, Bayford, Herts SG13 8PX.

FORUM

J.E.M. (Brighton): I have much enjoyed the occasional pieces you have used on the 'Penny Blacks' (Larks, Chips, Funny Wonder, etc.) and wonder if more of these might be popular. The Thomsons too (Wizard, Rover et al) might also be worth a more frequent look. I realize that perhaps most readers are traditionalists - Hamiltonians, Blakians, Lee-ites - but, as you've rightly said, the magazine must develop and we all need to be stimulated by the introduction of less familiar topics from time to time.

DES O'LEARY (Loughborough): It is very difficult to find the right *tone* in which to write about the stories we loved when young. Audrey, who types much of my writings, says she thinks, I am very often too solemn. Margery Woods, while treating her stories and characters with respect, treats them lightly and amusingly. Not an easy achievement.

C.D. 595 is another thought - and nostalgia-evoking issue. Articles like Una Hamilton Wright's on Charles Hamilton's views on education make one think. Regarding these, on the radio NEWS AT ONE today was an item about West Indies families sending their youngsters to the West Indies schools to get a proper disciplined education! I remember the East African Asians, expelled from Kenya, arriving in my school. Excellent youngsters, keen and conscientious, with superb family backing. By the time I retired, 'problem' Asians had appeared. They had seen the bad example given by British youngsters around them and some of them had copied it..... Maybe it's as well that Charles Hamilton isn't around today to see the result.

Bob Whiter's contribution on Cuneo really interested me. I immediately dashed to my C.D. file to look at his 1986 article on Cuneo again..... I would only add to his excellent accounts that there are two books on Cuneo's railway painting published since the 1980s and, of course, his own charming auto-biography, THE MOUSE AND HIS MASTER.

I enjoyed Donald Campbell's tribute to the trolleys. Why ever did they disappear?

E.P.H. CLUTTERBUCK (Addlestone): The following SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARIES were published under the name of Owen Conquest but in fact were written by substitute authors. Does anyone have knowledge of the names of the substitute writers?

1) S.O.L. 100: HIS OWN ENEMY 2) S.O.L. 112: FOR THE HONOUR OF ROOKWOOD. 3) S.O.L. 198: THE ROOKWOOD SECRET SOCIETY.

I'd be grateful for any information.

CLARICE HARDING (Sidmouth): At the beginning of May I had selected one of the SCHOOLGIRL numbers to read, 'The Secret of the Island', and was very much enjoying it. Within an hour the post arrived, bringing the C.D. which contained, amongst other treats, an excellent Cliff House article by Margery Woods concerning 'The Secret of the Island'. Wasn't that a co-incidence? I was so pleased to find another of her articles in the June C.D., this time about the castaway Grace Kelwyn. The C.D. cover and wonderful illustrations brought back many memories.

GEORGE BEAL (Surbiton): I daresay you have seen *The Daily Telegraph* article mentioning the Thomson paper *Bunt*y. It was never my childhood reading, but I think it

still has a wide following. It's better than today's offerings, anyway. I am one of those old men who say sorrowfully, "It was better in my day". I wonder if that's just an illusion? Was it *really* better? People were poorer, and less well provided for, but my memory is of a gentler landscape, despite the every-present shadow of grim horrors like Hitler, and so on.

I think, in general, though, it always *was* better. The old men who said it to me were right after all!

Someone rang me the other day: said he'd heard about me on the Internet, which I find extremely unlikely. However, he said had some Magnets, which might interest me. It turned out that they were those coloured things that people stick on the outside of the fridge!

JEMIMA'S VITAL HOLIDAY MISSION by Margery Woods
PART TWO

Chapter 2

Jemima looked down into Toby's worried face and said confidently:

"Nobody is going to take your home away from you. Now do calm down, old spartan --- you're frightening Oscar!"

A shaky grin trembled on Toby's mouth. He scooped the bit cat up into his arms. "Oscar isn't frightened of anybody or anything in the world. Are you, Oscar?" Oscar gave a prompt Siamese response and Jemima grinned, recalling Oscar's handiwork earlier that day.

She recounted the incident to Toby while she opened a tin of baked beans---Jemima being the first to admit that she still had a few minor details to master in the art of cooking---and slipped bread into the toaster. Toby informed her that the girl was his cousin Millie, as Jemima had surmised and that she lived at the Home Farm with her parents.

"They're my Uncle Perc and Aunty Gloria but he's really horrid, you'd never think he was my Dad's brother if you didn't know. And he says this is his house now because the year is up." Toby nearly choked on indignation and too big a mouthful of toast and baked beans.

Jemima broke in quickly. "Carefully, Toby, give those beans space to breathe on the way down, then explain what you mean about the year being up."

"The year since Dad died," Toby said impatiently. "It's the entail, Uncle Perc says, and the lease title, and Mum got a horrible letter yesterday warning her. That's why she had to go up to London. But Dad said he'd broken the entail, just before he died, to make sure everything would be all right for our future. As if he knew, Mum said, that the accident would happen." Toby's face went taut again, and not even Oscar's appearance on the kitchen table to nuzzle the boy's hand and demand attention could stop the desperately controlled tremble of Toby's mouth.



Gradually Jemima drew from him as much as he knew of the facts behind that urgent summons---was it only this morning?--- that had brought her post-haste from Cliff House.

It seemed that the late Peter Lincliffe, husband of Louise and father of young Toby, was the oldest of the last two male Lincliffes and heir to the manor and its estate. The Lincliffe line stretched back nearly five hundred years, during which span it had acquired a strange entail which passed the property down to the oldest male only if he were twenty-one years of age or over. A minor could not inherit. There was a reason for this, the details of which Toby was vague about, that seemed to have concerned two young brothers and an unsolved murder of one of them, much of which story had become garbled through the misting effects of time. But that had been why, Toby told her, and the other thing was the lease of the land, all nine hundred and ninety-nine years of it, the title deeds of the estate and the title to the lease having to be presented exactly one year and one day after the death of the holder by the new claimant to the heirloom, who must bear the name of Lincliffe and have attained the age of twenty-one.

"Perhaps it was something like the dreadful business of the Princes in the Tower," surmised Jemima thoughtfully. "So that no child would be murdered because it stood in the way of some relative who coveted the estate."

"Maybe," Toby mopped up the last of the bean sauce and offered the morsel of soggy toast to Oscar, who declined with obvious distaste, "but Mum never dreamed that Uncle Perc could claim it because Dad said he'd managed to get it broken so that it would come to me. It took him ages and cost a fortune in legal fees and---" The imperious summons of the telephone silenced him. He raced Jemima to the phone and won by a fingertip. Then the expectancy drained from his face. "It's for you, Aunt Jimmy." He passed the phone to her.

It was Babs, with anxious enquiries as to the journey, and was everything okay because Primmy wanted to know that Jemima had reached her destination safely. Jemima gave assurances and a brief summary of cause and event, to be reassured in turn that assistance would be forthcoming if needed and Primmy would also help and advise if necessary. Big guns were lining up! Jemima beamed at Toby, then giggled as Babs had to cut short the conversation: it was ten minutes past bedtime at Cliff House and Connie Walker was on the warpath. But for once Connie would be unlucky; Babs had the Head on her side.

Jemima turned back to Toby. "Is there a locksmith in the village?" she asked.

Toby looked vague. "Don't think so. But there'll be one in Kindlesford."

"Not to worry!" said Jemima briskly. "I'll insult---ahem--- consult the Yellow Pages first thing tomorrow. Now, time for bed, young man."

Toby was instantly distraught. "I can't----not till Mum phones. I've got to stay up till she does."

A typical argument ensued between youth and authority, one not entirely successful owing to the authority not being sufficient in years despite being more than sufficient in logic and intelligence. Fortunately, Aunt Louise ended the argument. She was speaking from York Station and anxious for an update, giving a sigh of relief to hear that Jemima was in charge and Toby safe. At this point Toby seized the phone, agog with questions, only to have the phone revert to dialling tones almost immediately. "Her phone card ran out," Toby wailed, "and the London Solicitors were horrible to her, saying they'd never got the documents from the branch here, and telling her that as they were acting for Uncle Perc she should seek advice from another firm. That's why she's in York to see her own family's solicitors, because Dad had said something about going to see them

just before he died, because he'd found something out that worried him. But she'll be back the day after tomorrow and we have to hold the fort till then."

After Jemima finally succeeded in packing Toby off to bed and seeing to Oscar's demands, she retired to bed herself, to review the day and plan the next one. First job must be a locksmith, to make sure the Manor was made inaccessible to intruders, no matter what they possessed in the way of keys. Next must be some shopping, and then, Jemima's face grew more thoughtful, perhaps a visit to Great Aunt Millicent was indicated. Just to sound out which way her sympathies lay. And if Great Aunt Millicent was like many other elderly ladies, she could prove to be a fund of information on the family, its past history, and in particular its secrets, scandalous or otherwise. Yes, that was the plan, and then.....

"Jemima!----sorry----Aunty Jimmy----!" Toby burst into the bedroom. "There's a light in the old Folly! Look!" He was pulling the curtains open. "There's somebody in there. Come on! Let's go and see!" He was out of the room in another whirl of movement.

"Put some clothes on!" Jemima cried, snatching up a sweater and a pair of elegantly tailored grey trousers, donning them as she peered out of the window. The moon was riding high, silvering the lawn and the shrubbery. The old Folly was clearly visible, its tower dark in silhouette against the silvery night. And yes! there was a glow in the narrow upper window. But was it a light? Or was it a reflection? It was difficult to tell. Then suddenly it flickered twice, and went out.

"Come on!" urged Toby from the doorway. "They'll get away!" Without waiting to see if Jemima was following he raced downstairs and wrestled the bolts and lock open of the back door. He vanished into the garden by the time Jemima reached the open door, only the flying cream streak across the lawn showed that Oscar was on the trail, determined not to miss anything. Jemima hesitated. What if it proved to be a ruse? What if they returned to find Uncle Perc and family in residence?

Jemima looked round for a torch or lantern before deciding to take a chance and stepped outside, locking the door behind her. Instantly she felt enfolded by the utter silence that can descend on the countryside at night. But once in the denseness of the shrubbery small disturbed sounds could be heard, rustlings and stirrings as the small unseen inhabitants went about their nocturnal business. Of Toby there was now neither sight nor sound. He was probably hiding, or teasing Oscar, Jemima assured herself, even as she knew that Toby was too worried a small boy to be in a teasing mood. Suddenly she was in a clearing and the grim stone bulk of the Folly loomed up in front of her. There was no sound.

"Toby!" she called sharply, "where are you?"

No reply. Jemima pushed at the ancient door. It gave to her touch, creaking eerily. Cautiously she looked in, shining her torch. The big gaunt square room that formed the base was deathly silent. Not even a mouse scuttered, and she knew that Toby was not here. "Come on, old spartan, British bulldog spirit and all that," she adjured herself, looking at the dark stairs that climbed the wall to her right. Torch held like a weapon, she ascended until the stairs ended at a square landing, from which two doors opened. The first gave onto what looked like a storeroom for all the unwanted lumber deposited there by generations of Lincliffes. The second opened into a room that showed signs of recent use. There were a table and chair, shelving, a couple of cabinets and quite a number of books, some of which had been thrown on the floor. Two drawers in one of the cabinets were open. Obviously someone had been here.

Jemima rushed down the stairs and into the night, alarmed now for Toby's safety. Suddenly she thought she heard a muffled cry, and shouted Toby's name. Still no response. She hurried in the direction of the sound then froze as she heard a car engine throb into life some distance away. Jemima ran, but by time she reached the road the unnerving silence had closed in again--- except for one unearthly wail she was beginning to recognise. Oscar emerged from the shrubbery, wailing piteously and trying desperately in his own language to implore her to do something. She gathered him up in her arms and returned to the house, knowing that no Toby awaited her. There was only the imperative ring of the phone and the harsh voice at the other end that demanded to know if she was the trouble-making chit who had assaulted his daughter.

"I am," Jemima responded. "Are you the trouble-making old apology for a spartan who has been hounding Aunt Louise for possession of this estate?"

"Got it in one," the rasping voice sneered. "And we've got Toby. You'll get him back when you clear out and stop interfering. Understand?"

"Your purpose is clearer than ever," she retorted, "and so is your crime. Kidnapping is illegal. It carries serious penalties. Bring Toby back immediately or I shall have to call the police."

There was a snigger across the line. "A long way that'll get you, my girl. Go on, try it." The line clicked and silenced.

Jemima had a wry suspicion that the enemy might be right. Despite this she dialled the number of the local police station and met a flat, somewhat humouring response. Was she sure that Toby hadn't just run off on some lark? Boys did. Kidnapping? Had she seen any assailants? Received a demand for money? But the constable dutifully took down details, promised to put out a call and keep her informed. A few minutes later the same voice kept the promise.

She needn't worry. Toby was quite safe. He'd played a bit late with his cousin Lennie and his aunty and uncle at Home Farm said he could stay the night. They'd tried to ring her to let her know but her line was engaged. Didn't she know he often stayed with his relations? Okay, Miss Carstairs? No trouble. Goodnight.

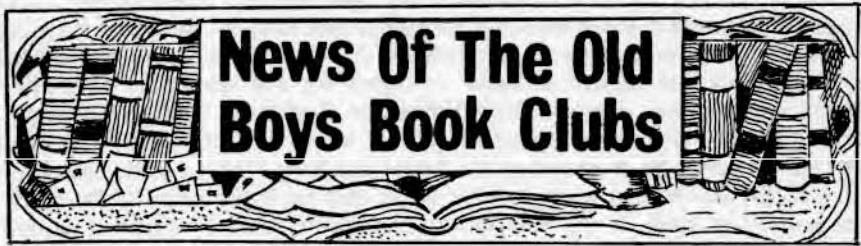
If only it was so simple!

Jemima polished her monocle and retired back to bed, accompanied by the doleful Oscar who took up residence on her feet. She did not doubt that Toby was safe enough, for the time being. It was doubtful if Uncle Perc would risk any police investigation while his own nefarious plans were at the crux of their execution. All the same, she had no intention of letting him get away with kidnapping. Tomorrow was fully mapped out. Get the locksmith. Get Toby back. See Great Aunt Mildred. Make some more phone calls. Jolly useful, the old blower, Jemima mused, saved a lot of time, too. Jemima shifted the foot that was going into cramp under the weight of a large and powerful Siamese cat. Oscar protested vehemently and Jemima apologised.

One other thing remained for tomorrow: dealing with Uncle Perc. Of course she could call on all the heavy artillery that was standing by on call. She had only to pick up the phone. But Jemima was a great believer in self-reliance. It would give her the greatest of satisfactions to bring about the downfall of the obnoxious Uncle Perc.

And she had every intention of doing so.

(To be continued.)



NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

A small group met for informal lunch in Wakefield along with our guest Bill Lofts from London. Our evening meeting had 17 present with Drs. Nandu and Lisa Thalange (with their baby son) from Norwich. Other members travelling from afar included those from Chester-le-Street, Liverpool and Thailand.

Congratulations were extended to Harry Blowers on his recent 84th birthday.

Bill Lofts spoke about his meetings over the years with various editors and authors, especially those of the detective papers. His main item was on Leslie Charteris and The Saint. Bill and Derek Adley had met this author on a number of occasions and their book concerning the Saint had proved very popular. A highlight was the presentation of a silver dagger made to Leslie Charteris at the House of Lords some years ago.

Dr. Nandu Thalange then gave his diagnosis of Ponsonby the Psychopath - tongue in cheek of course, but still based on medical knowledge. Firstly, we had definitions of various psychotic disorders. He then commenced to "analyse" Ponsonby, detailing his cruel, vindictive attitudes and his belief that nothing was his fault - all signs of Ponsonby's psychological problems. With lots of questions asked by members, it was obvious that this was yet another superb presentation from our doctor member which was much appreciated by all.

Our August meeting is free and easy, with members presenting their own items. Our informal September gathering in Wakefield at the home of our secretary for lunch will welcome our guests for the day, Clarissa Cridland and Anne Macki-Hunter, organisers of "Friends of the Chalet School". All welcome - please come along.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

LONDON O.B.B.C.

Sunday, 14th July saw a gathering of 26 members at our Ealing meeting. We were delighted to welcome Jean and Arthur Brunning, from Norwich, their first appearance for some 5 years, because of an unfortunate accident which has left Arthur with limited mobility. Nevertheless, his sense of humour and knowledge of the hobby are unimpaired. It was also the first appearance of a new member, John Cunningham of Alperton, who will obviously be a welcome addition to our ranks.

The theme of the meeting was Edwy Searles Brooks. We began with a discourse by Norman Wright, concentrating on the period between the cessation of the NELSON LEE and publication of the author's first hardback novels (1933-1936).

Next on the agenda was a Quiz, from Arthur, ranging over a wide variety of books, characters and authors. Roger Jenkins and Peter Mahoney tied for first place, with Roy Parsons hot on their heels. This was followed by tea and the usual chit-chat.

Roger then read an article in THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR for January 1960. This was 'Babbling on Brooks' by Bernice Thorne, who, we are told, was only about 18 at the time. She wrote a really absorbing assessment of our author. This was followed by a reading by Roy of a chapter from the famous Ezra Quirke series in the Nelson Lee (O/S Nos. 542-549), probably one of the best known of all his serials.

Next meeting at Eltham on 11th August. Please let Dorothy and Peter know, well in advance, if attending (0181 850 9316). It looks as if our November meeting at Chingford will include a Buffet Lunch.

BILL BRADFORD

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

GOING BACKWARDS IN TIME: Sharp-eyed readers will have noticed errors on the cover and on page 3 of last month's C.D. The mast-heads gave incorrect information, regrettably not noticed by me at the time. The volume number was shown as 49 instead of 50 and the year as 1995 instead of 1996! Also the old price of £1.10 instead of the current one of £1.20 was printed on page 3. You may wish to correct these errors, especially if at any time you are sending your C.D.s away for binding.

M.C.

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. JOHN TRENDLER, 4 ASHENDENE ROAD, BAYFORD, HERTS, SG13 8PX. Tel: 01992 511588.

CLEAROUT SALE! Magnets 1656-58, Coker Expelled Series £10, Nos. 1150, 1490, 1518 £3 each. Gems 1181, 1499 £2.50, 1417 £1.50 (sellotaped). All in good condition. JOHN CONNOLLY, 2 CRISPIN CLOSE, ASHTEAD, SURREY, KT21 1LG. Tel. 01372 278-251

WANTED: "THE PLAYTIME ANNUAL" 1928 (6/-) issued by Amalgamated Press (front cover shows animals in motor boat). SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY, No. 451, 2nd series Oct 1934 "The Living Shadow" by Pierre Quiroule. BOYS FRIEND LIBRARY No. 465, 2nd series, Feb 1935 "The Earthquake Maker" by Murray Roberts. Please contact: E.P.H. CLUTTERBUCK, 18 OLD ROAD, ROWTOWN, ADDLESTONE, WEYBRIDGE, SURREY, KT15 1EW. Tel: 01932 846302.

MEET THE MERRY
MAX MILLER
The Cheeky Chappie



1. Poor old Max was in a spot of trouble. You see, he hadn't paid his last week's rent, so Mrs. Parkitt, the landlady, told him he couldn't sleep in the premis till he'd parted up. But our cheeky chap had got to sleep somewhere, hadn't he? So, when he spotted those nice spotty curtains, he yanked them outside, tied them together at the bottom, and made a cosy hammock, like-so. Then, when darkness drew on, he made himself comfy and enjoyed a nap. Next morn, up breezed Mrs. Parkitt to water her delphidoddilums in the window-box.



2. Of course, Max received some of the liquid in his features, and didn't the cop treat himself to a laugh. "Ha, ha! Mr. Miller's face to whiskers with an ad. for a young un try to get some money for my back rent," he worthy. "There are only five hundred!"



3. This little lot was light duty right enough, although it seemed more like hard work to our cheeky chappie. However, he'd dabbed about half-a-dozen when he spotted a burglar climbing into Mrs. Parkitt's premis. "He means to make a quick getaway," murmured Max, seeing the scooter 'neath the window-sill. "I think I'll paint the wheels black, and then I'll get well on the way to getting into my landlady's good books." Later the thiefst climbed out of the window, complete with swag. "I've been robbed," screamed Mrs. P.



4. But, of course, those wheels left black paint marks on the pavement, and Max and a brave boy in blue made tracks to follow them. "Follow me," quoth our chirpy one. "We'll soon catch him." So Max and the bluebottle cantered off on the trail, and pretty soon they came across the bad lad gloating over his swag. "I'll take the goods back," said Max. "You can take the thief to the cop-shop." So our cheeky chap collected the swag, slung it over his shoulder-blade and doubled back to Mrs. Parkitt's abode. Needless to say, she was most overjoyed to park her peepers on the property, and told Max he could stay the rest of the season rent-free. Swell!

GEMS OF HAMILTONIA

from Peter Hanger

"Cheer up, old chap!" said Bob Cherry soothingly. "It will wear off in time.
"We're fearfully sympathetic! Sit down to tea--"

"You silly chump, I shan't be able to sit down to supper!" **MAGNET 1538**

There were studious fellows in the Form, like Mark Linley and Dick Penfold, who really wanted to learn French. But this odd taste was not shared in the Lower Fourth. **MAGNET 1540**

Waiting for Prout to leave off talking was rather like waiting for a river to flow by. **MAGNET 1539**

Coker gave an angry snort.

"Blow Prout!" he said. "Making out that there's something wrong with my geography, I suppose. You heard him in the Form-room this morning, you men. He was saying that Samarkand was in Asia. Form-master, you know, and he doesn't know that Samarkand is in South America."

"I'll bet he doesn't!" agreed Potter; and indeed it seemed very probable. **MAGNET 1416**

Billy Bunter, of the Remove, was no great climber. If his remote ancestors, as is related in the fairy tales of science, had climbed trees and dwelt therein. Bunter had not inherited any of their activity. **MAGNET 1336**

...."Is it possible that any boys have taken advantage of the late occurrence to disperse?"

"I guess they had the wind up, sir--" began Putnam

"If you cannot speak to your Form-master in English, Van Duck, do not speak at all. I noticed, Van Duck, that you placed your hands above your head when that ruffian uttered that extraordinary word which I did not, at that time, comprehend. You should not have done so."

"I guess he had us with his hardware, sir--"

"I have told you to speak English, Van Duck, or to be silent. Such an absurd action could only encourage the man. Do not let it occur again?" **MAGNET 1475**

Bunter was not distinguished as a sprinter.

Certainly, there had been occasions when he had covered the ground quickly - as on the occasion when Coker of the Fifth had been pursuing Bunter and a purloined pie. On occasions like that, Bunter had been known to resemble the hare in its flight. But there was no doubt that on most occasions his motions resembled those of the tortoise - and not a common or garden tortoise, so to speak; but a very old and very tired tortoise. **MAGNET 1197**

A Form-master who made a lot of fuss if a fellow mixed up Thomas Cromwell with Oliver Cromwell, who gave a fellow lines for asserting that it was Pontius Pilate who said "Take away that bauble"; was, in Bunter's opinion, capable of anything - from cracking cribs to cannibalism. **MAGNET 1144**

How could he explain to his Form-master that he was an old donkey, whom a fellow like Coker was entitled to disregard? Coker was not bright, but he was bright enough to know that such an explanation would not improve matters. **MAGNET 1630**

.....Bunter did not miss them. He had a bag of toffees to keep him company; and better company Bunter did not desire. **MAGNET 1545**

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