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THE
SCHOOLGIRL

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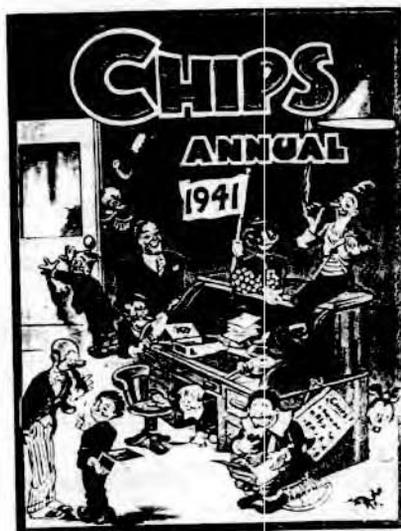
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LOOKING FORWARD TO OUR ANNUAL . . .

When we were children this was the time of year when we hopefully anticipated receiving for Christmas one or more of the Annuals that were so glowingly described in our weekly story-papers and comics.

True to tradition I am trailing further contents of this year's C.D. Annual to whet your appetites for what is shaping up to be a volume rich in delights. Hamiltonian contents include *Champagne Charley* by Una Hamilton Wright which gives insights into her uncle's life as an Edwardian 'man about town'; also we are publishing another of the fairy stories which Frank Richards made up and told to Una when she was a small girl. Ted Baldock has provided more of his Greyfriars vignettes including *The Birth of a Legend*, an atmospheric item which is particularly appropriate as we hover on the brink of the new millennium, while Johnny Burslem contributes a rollicking seasonable





feature in verse. Roy Hopkins flies Rookwood's flag in the great open spaces in *The End Study in Alberta*.

Mark Caldicott and E. Grant McPherson have sent two extremely interesting E.S. Brooks items which convey the broad range of his stories both in, and outside of, St. Frank's, while in prose and pictures Derek Hinrich explores Blakiana in some Christmas numbers of *The Union Jack*. Nostalgia at its most warm and potent is evident in Ernest Holman's *A Year of Our Time* (about films) and in an article by Donald V. Campbell (about 'wireless' memories). The feminine side of our hobby

is not neglected. Dennis Bird examines several mystery tales from the *Girls' Crystal* and *Schoolgirls' Weekly*, and I take an affectionate look at aspects of the ever intriguing *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and its sequels.

Next month's C.D. will carry more trailers. If you have not yet ordered your copy of the Annual you can do so by sending me £12, if you live in the U.K., and £13 if the Annual is to be sent abroad (postage and packing are included in both these charges).

ANOTHER BUMPER BOOK . . .

Norman Wright and I have compiled an anthology which is as chunky and colourful as the Annuals we used to read so avidly in childhood. This is **THE ENID BLYTON ADVENTURE TREASURY**, which Brian Doyle reviews in this month's issue. Norman and I hope that readers - both children and adult - will enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed putting it together. Though designed for young readers, we hope that it will find a place in many households as a family book, and truly a treasury!

A PRE-CHRISTMAS THOUGHT . . .

When posting Christmas cards and letters, particularly for overseas destinations, readers might like to bear in mind the importance of using full addresses and postcodes. 'Our man in Los Angeles' (Bob Whiter) particularly urges us to remember this. It saves delays, of course, and the disappointments of cards, letters or gifts arriving **after** the Christmas celebrations have ended.

Happy Browsing.

MARY CADOGAN

(Our *Forum* feature and Part 2 of Peter Mahony's study of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh have had to be held over until next month.)

NO LAUGHING MATTER
The Omissions in Frank Richards' Autobiography -
Are They Informative?
by Una Hamilton Wright

When a publisher - Skilton's - asked Frank Richards to write his autobiography he was dumbfounded. He could not imagine anyone wanting to know about him. He was naturally shy and by the time of this request, just after the end of the Second World War, he had become a recluse. He immediately wrote to sister Dolly - as always, when in trouble. "What shall I say?" he enquired, "What **can** I say?" He begged her to think about it and he appealed to all three of us - Dolly, Percy, my father, and me for help. What could my parents remember? What could **I** remember about incidents they had recounted to me?

He knew that his readers would search eagerly for facts like pigs nosing for truffles. But he was not a purveyor of facts. Facts were his raw materials to be turned into fiction.

This is how he introduced the subject to me: "About the book, it is very much in the air at present; but I have been asked to draw up a sort of sketch or synopsis, on the subject quite an entrancing one, really of my own autobiography! 'The Wild Adventures of Frank Richards on the Machine d'Ecrire', or something of that sort. Of course, my dear, you only remember your uncle as far back as the period of Silverwings and the fairies - if you remember that - but he had adorned this fortunate planet for quite a long time before that: during which time, he rather resembled an earlier Charles, who never said a foolish thing and never did a wise one! Fleet Street will be mixed up with the Alps, Red Lion Court with the Apennines, Clifford's Inn with Venetian lagoons, Neapolitan lazzaroni, and the last days of Pompeii: the Café de l'Europe with Monte Carlo and Munich, and the old Carmelite House with Oberammergau and Nurnberg and goodness knows what else. I am not at all sure that the book will come to be written: it beginneth to look a hefty task. However, the demand - at the moment - is so pressing that I have got so far as to say that I will think it out and collect some data. It is not very easy to call back all these things in their proper order. I suppose you don't remember where I was, in Munich or Landshut or Naples or Capri, in 1899? I thought not!"

To his sister he wrote, "I have already written some sample chapters: but I still find it difficult to believe that anyone will want to read them. I don't seem to have the self-confidence, or cheek perhaps, that I used to have. Anyhow I am going on with it, and shall do the best I can. Of course all real happenings will have to be taken in a Pickwickian sense. The book has to be a cheerful one - that is an emphasised point - and everything will be seen through rosy spectacles. Of course a lot of things have happened to me. It is not everybody who has played at Monte Carlo, who has hung on the outside of an express between Nice and Monte, who has gone down into the crater of Vesuvius, who has been caught in Austria by the outbreak of war, who has sat typing in Paris during the Battle of the Marne, and crossed the Channel in a boat packed like a sardine tin, who has been lost in the middle of Lake Maggiore at midnight with two swarthy wops in the boat. Dozens of other such things. But the trouble is that in real life these happenings are merely disconnected occurrences, without cause or effect. In a story one has a reason for relating an incident. In real life incidents have no reason. In a story, our hero hangs on the outside of the express because the spy is in the train, or because Don Juan is bunking with his best

girl: in actual life one does such a thing because one is a silly fool. Nothing causes it, and nothing comes of it. Trimmings will have to be put in somehow."

At the risk of being repetitive I have quoted both these extracts in full because they begin to reveal the mental processes that were to shape the work. The book had to be cheerful - such an objective would make the revelation of certain truths difficult, to say the least. Most human lives are an amalgam of happy and unhappy events. To concentrate only on the happy side of things will inevitably cause omissions - the very weakness that his readers complained of. Of course, he much preferred to dwell on the happy occasions, these accorded with his attitude to life. As he wrote to his novelist friend, George Foster, in 1958, "The fact is that there is a humorous side to everything, life itself being little other than a comic strip." One begins to think that his main aim was entertainment, after all that was what he specialised in.

"Of course all readable autobiographies are mainly lies - real life is a dull business." He continued his letter to sister Dolly, "Cellini and Casanova were both frightful liars, and their memoirs are readable. Buchan was truthful: and his memoirs make you yawn your head off. But perhaps the only good author now in existence may be able to make even the truth interesting, with a spot or two of imagination to help it along. If you like, I will send you a sample chapter, and you can tell me what you think of it."

As well as the need to entertain he had other difficulties which he had created for himself. Charles was naturally very shy, only on the Continent did he acquire self-confidence. He had lost this long before he was asked to write his autobiography. He had re-invented himself as 'Frank Richards', but Frank Richards only began when the author was seventeen, not even then because it was a nom de plume created for the Greyfriars stories in the *Magnet*. But his writing self was a separate self right from the beginning. On the Continent it flourished. But how was he to invent the childhood years of Frank Richards? Significantly the autobiography begins when the author is seventeen. His readers had a right to know what had led up to that. If he had given a truthful account of his origins including his drunken father and his frequent changes of school, that would not have fitted in with the character he had built round the name of Frank Richards. People commented that he scarcely mentioned his family - but Frank Richards had no family, all those relatives belonged to Charles Hamilton. He had really dropped himself in it.

In the autobiography Frank Richards wrote "While he wrote, the world of his imagination was much more real to him than the humdrum world outside," and "It is Frank's considered opinion that facts are a bore: worth little till they have been transmuted into the pure gold of fiction." Actually facts were a **chore** when he was writing his life story: we all had to stretch our memories to help his recall them accurately. "Adventures in real life are not worth relating," thus he summed it up.

His family, almost absent from the autobiography, nevertheless flourished in the pages of his fiction. Fortunately none of them sued him. He always maintained that people never recognised themselves in the pages of fiction because they saw themselves from a different point of view from that of the author.

His narrative was like a trawl-net - full of holes! Like a trawl-net the big items are retained and the little ones get away. 'Big' and 'little' by the author's own standards.

The gaps in the narrative tell the reader as much about Frank Richards as does the text. But they tell one less about Charles Hamilton. What was included, **Frank Richards** saw

as significant - the writing life beginning at seventeen, meetings with editors, changing publishers, foreign travel, in these Frank Richards really lived. The facts omitted, the hard and often sad childhood, the relations who divided themselves into cliques, the frequent house and school moves - these didn't matter to Frank Richards, they were unimportant.

Just before the autobiography was published my uncle wrote to me to say he had just revised his book, "You will learn a lot of things about your Uncle that you wouldn't remember, as they happened so many years before you came along. It is quite an odd experience writing an auto. It was written in three weeks: yet the first part reads as if written by a young man, the middle by a middle-aged man, and the close by an old man! So much is one the slave of one's imagination when writing."

(Copyright Una Hamilton Wright)



HANDY'S FIREWORK FIASCO

by Mark Caldicott

The days leading up to Guy Fawkes Night at St Frank's were always fraught with danger. Fireworks were banned, of course, but squibs tied to coat tails and firecrackers being tossed under one's feet were part of the fun of this celebration. Edward Oswald Handforth, being intellectually challenged at the best of times, was always a leading light in this dangerous activity.

A problem arises, therefore, when Handforth's father, instead of sending Edward Oswald the requested five pound note for the purchase of an especially large quantity of fireworks, sends a letter forbidding the purchase of any fireworks at all ("Handy's Firework Fiasco", *Nelson Lee Library*, 2nd New Series 42, 08-Nov-30). Sir Edward had obviously realised that St Frank's School had up to that point led a charmed existence - none of the charred limbs, missing fingers, disfigurement or blindness that messing about with fireworks causes in the world outside.

This ban was a bad move on Sir Edward's part, for he should have realised that the behaviour of his eldest son bordered on the psychotic. Edward Oswald's reasoning is that although he has been forbidden to purchase fireworks, he has not been forbidden to make his own. Having created his home-made squibs in the school laboratory, Handforth demonstrates them to Church and McClure, giving a classic example of the kind of behaviour targeted by firework safety campaigns.

He coolly picked up a brown paper cylinder which was tied at one end, and screwed up at the other. He struck a match, and lit the screwed up end, grinning amusedly at his chums' alarm.

"Nothing to be scared of, you chumps," he said. "These are only parlour fireworks. Watch! I can hold it in my hand all the time."



The home-made squib suddenly burst into activity, and Church and McClure - who knew exactly how much reliance to place upon Handforth's word - made a dive for the door.

Bang-sizzzz - zurrtrrh!

The squib was not so harmless as Handforth imagined. It suddenly leapt out of his hand, exploded in mid-air, whizzed towards the ceiling, exploded again, and sent a shower of red fire over its manufacturer.

"Hi, I'm burnt!" howled Handforth, leaping about wildly.

Irrespective of the fact that Handforth here has just had a miraculous escape from serious injury he announced his intention of lighting another to see if that one behaves any better. This is too much for Church and McClure, who flee.

In an effort to distract Handforth from his reckless activity his chums take him to view the study of Potts and Travers. The latter have just had their study redecorated at great expense and the other fellows are visiting to see this last word in luxury. Having an audience, Handforth chooses Potts' and Travis' study in which to perpetrate his next act of lunacy. He decides to demonstrate to the others his home-made squibs, and lights one. Again the squib flies into the air and explodes, but this time falls into an open box of fireworks recently purchased by Potts. The end result of the ensuing impromptu firework display and accompanying conflagration is that the study is utterly wrecked.

When housemaster Mr Alington Wilkes arrives Handforth owns up to his activities. In these days of debate over the success or otherwise of excluding pupils, St Frank's school may be seen to be on the enlightened side, for the punishment meted out for this delinquent behaviour is 2000 lines. Perhaps the real mitigating factor, besides Handforth's honesty

and contrition, is the fact that without his acts of imbecility Brooks would, during this period when comedy rather than detection was the editorial line, never have had a plot.

Though Handforth has escaped comparatively lightly, however, there is the small matter of paying for the destroyed furnishings. The school's insurance covers accidents; but not those which are the result of wilfully irresponsible behaviour. The sum required is between sixty and seventy pounds (say £600 - £700 today). Handforth is liable and this sum must be requested from Handforth Snr. But, of course, it can be predicted that when Sir Edward discovers that at the root of the disaster is Handforth's experiments with the forbidden fireworks, Handforth will be, as we say today, dead meat. Handforth goes into the over-contrition mode which accompanies his psychosis. As a result his friends rally round and, deciding (contrary to empirical evidence) that "Handy is a good sort really", put their minds to bailing him out of his difficulty.

Handforth Snr. is due to visit St Frank's on the following day. Old Wilkey locks the devastated room so that Sir Edward can be given the opportunity to see the damage for himself. Nipper conceives the idea of a secret visit to the furnishing store to see if replacement furniture can be bought and installed by the time of the visit. Well, would you believe it? It's Nipper's lucky day. There just happens to be duplicates of all the furnishings in stock. The store manager agrees to give Nipper and his chums two days to pay the bill. Moreover (and just try this one at your nearest Ikea) agrees to arrange to have the furnishings delivered to St Frank's at five a.m. the next morning.

Nipper and Co. rise at one o'clock in the morning and, unlocking the room with a neighbouring key, set about cleaning up the room and removing the wrecked furniture. By the time the furniture delivery van arrives Study H, the abode of Potts and Travers, is cleaned up. With the furnishings replaced it is returned to its former luxurious state.

Sir Edward arrives. Handforth, unaware of the work of his chums, finds himself unable to explain the problem to his father. He takes him to Old Wilkey's study where the awful truth is revealed. Sir Edward follows the Handforth family trait of stubborn resistance to reason. "You expect me to be responsible . . . certainly not! I won't agree to it for a moment! When I was at the school the furniture in my study wasn't worth a fiver!" Wilkes manages to persuade Sir Edward that payment should be made, and he agrees, but only by stopping Handforth's pocket money. For Edward Oswald this would mean three or four terms without cash - a disaster. Mr Arlington Wilkes then takes Sir Edward to inspect the damage. But when the door to Study H is unlocked there is only a pristine and beautifully-furnished room to behold. All those not in on the secret - Wilkes, Handforth, Travers and Potts - are utterly flabbergasted. Sir Edward is puzzled, until he realises that Handforth Jnr.'s friends have rallied round. "You're a lucky young beggar," he declares. "You should be very proud to have such splendid friends."

The problem is over for Handforth, and he is suitably grateful. There remains, however, the problem that on the next day the furniture store manager was expecting a payment the source of which had not yet been identified. Certainly a whip-round is not going to produce the seventy-six pounds ten shillings needed. It is Kirby Keeble Parkington who hits upon an entirely original scheme. This is 1930 - before the days of floodlit football. K-K hits upon his own solution for playing football in the darkness of the November evening. This consists of painting the players with skeleton designs in luminous paint of different colours. The goalposts, ball and referee are also painted. Mr Ulysses

Piecombe, the manager of the famous Blue Crusaders, is prevailed upon to allow the use of the Stronghold, their ground, for the match.

Now if organising the total replacement of a room of furniture was an unusual accomplishment, the organising of a football ground and the printing and distribution of advertising posters during the course of the same day in which the evening match is to take place is miraculous. Perhaps even more miraculous is that despite the fact that this is Guy Fawkes Night itself, no less than five thousand people change their plans for the evening and attend the match. Things are going well, and the crowd are enjoying the unusual spectacle, when disaster strikes. The luminous paint is not waterproof and a burst of rain washes off the paint and plunges the match into darkness. The match is abandoned and the entrance fees refunded.

The furnishing store manager is not impressed when K-K visits him to request an extension of payment time. He dispatches his lorry driver to go to St Frank's to reclaim the furniture. Travers and Potts are entertaining Moor View girls Doris Berkeley and Iris Manners. Conversation turns to the question of whether the furnishing has been bought through hire purchase. Jimmy Potts quickly assures the girls that the furnishing was paid for in cash. The girls are impressed. Unfortunately just at that moment the van driver and his assistant arrive and remove the furniture under the noses of Potts, Travers, Doris and Marjorie. The latter are scornful, believing that Potts has been boasting untruthfully about the status of the payments.

The furniture is being loaded into the van. Sir Edward Handforth is watching the proceedings. Handforth makes a plea to his father to pay the outstanding bill, but Sir Edward stubbornly refuses. "Let this be a lesson to you - all of you, in fact!" Sir

THE 'FIFTH' AT ST. FRANK'S!

Explosive School Yarn Inside!



New Series No. 42

OUT ON WEDNESDAY

November 8th, 1939.

Edward exclaims.

Nipper launches his last desperate attempt to reverse the disaster. He addresses the crowd.

“Handy accidentally burnt that furniture, and his pater is the one who should replace it . . . But as he refuses to accept his responsibilities it’s up to us to take them on our own shoulders,” shouted Nipper, waxing eloquent. “The honour of the Remove is at stake! Are we willing to allow poor old Handy to suffer this indignity?”

In front of the shocked Sir Edward, Nipper begins a whip-round. Pocket books emerge and everyone is eager to thrust bank notes into Nipper’s hands. Soon he announces that the required amount has been collected. Sir Edward is embarrassed into action. He demands that the money be returned and states that he himself will write a cheque for the full amount. Nipper even elicits a promise that this would not be deducted from Handforth’s pocket money.

So, how come a whip round suddenly becomes possible? Appearances are deceptive. The bank notes are really just the coupons given “free with every packet of Burton’s Bonny Biscuits” which at a distance look remarkably like pound notes, and which the girls had with them and which they had quickly circulated to the others.

This story, produced at the time when Nelson Lee was struggling to maintain its audience, is still an entertaining piece of writing. One feels some sympathy that Brooks was being pressured in his St Frank’s yarns to concentrate on comedy rather than the detective adventures in which he was more at home. Nevertheless he is still coming up with original ideas even for stories such as this one, the traditional Guy Fawkes Night yarn where some variation on the Fifth of November theme was required. Here, we note, he manages to ring the changes, producing a story which has no guy, no bonfire and no official firework display.

One question posed by this story is this: Was Burton’s Bonny Chocolate a genuine product and, if so, did they give away green coupons? Could it be that, as well as the other editorial demands, Brooks was also required to think of a story that advertised chocolate?

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.

UNBOUND MAGNETS WANTED: 64 91 95 110 204 207 215 217
219 220 221 223 227 229 230 231 253
G Good, Greyfriars, 147 Thornes Road, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF2 8QN.
Tel: 01924-378273.



SEXTON BLAKE - SHERLOCK HOLMES (AND THE REST)

by William Lister

Some time ago in the C.D. I suggested that of the two greatest fictional detectives, Sherlock Holmes had the advantage over Sexton Blake because of having an author well-known in the world of literature, plus the amazing build-up of films and TV coverage. In other words, Sherlock Holmes has had the full advantage of the media.

It had not occurred to me (at the time) that we had reached the centenary of the birth of Sherlock. Once again it **had** occurred to the media; as the *Radio Times* for December 5th to 11th 1987 revealed. My copy had a complete front-page spread announcing the fact, with an illustration of the detective prominently displayed. Inside, a full report of Holmes including all the actors who had taken the part on stage, films, wireless and TV.

Once again Sherlock Holmes has had a boost not enjoyed by Sexton Blake.

However, undeterred, Sexton Blake will soldier on, with his name often coupled in our



minds with that of Sherlock Holmes. There are, of course, other detectives. I refer mainly to the fictional kind, those who had made their names **before** the advent of all the razz-ma-tazz of the modern media.

Left to the printed page alone Holmes and Blake would still forge ahead. I like to see Agatha Christie's detectives or Peter Falk as 'Columbo' on the screen, and many others brought by TV; but it is those two who captured my mind through the printed page in days gone by whom I admire the most. Now! who hit the printed page more than Sexton Blake? Sherlock Holmes? One must bear in mind that **his wordage** is built up of reprints. To my way of thinking Sexton Blake leads the way on the printed page. Week by week, month by month, year by year, for more years than I can remember. Take the matter of travel. I would assume that Blake



Picture by Bob Whiter

was the biggest globe-trotter detective of all time. Why, he even did a stint in the Foreign Legion. Then take the outstanding number of Master Criminals he met and defeated. Compared with them, Moriarty was about as dangerous as a fairy on a Christmas tree.

To all Sherlock Holmes fans, sorry to mention that, but it has been said that "truth will out"! And, by the way, I can't resist this, our Sherlock liked a little of a certain drug to help him out. Unless I am mistaken, Sexton Blake seemed to manage without; if so, good for him!

However, I wouldn't like to say that Sexton Blake and Sherlock Holmes were rival detectives. Rather, each to his own method and style; all that concerns us is the interest and the thrills that they provide for us on their many adventures.

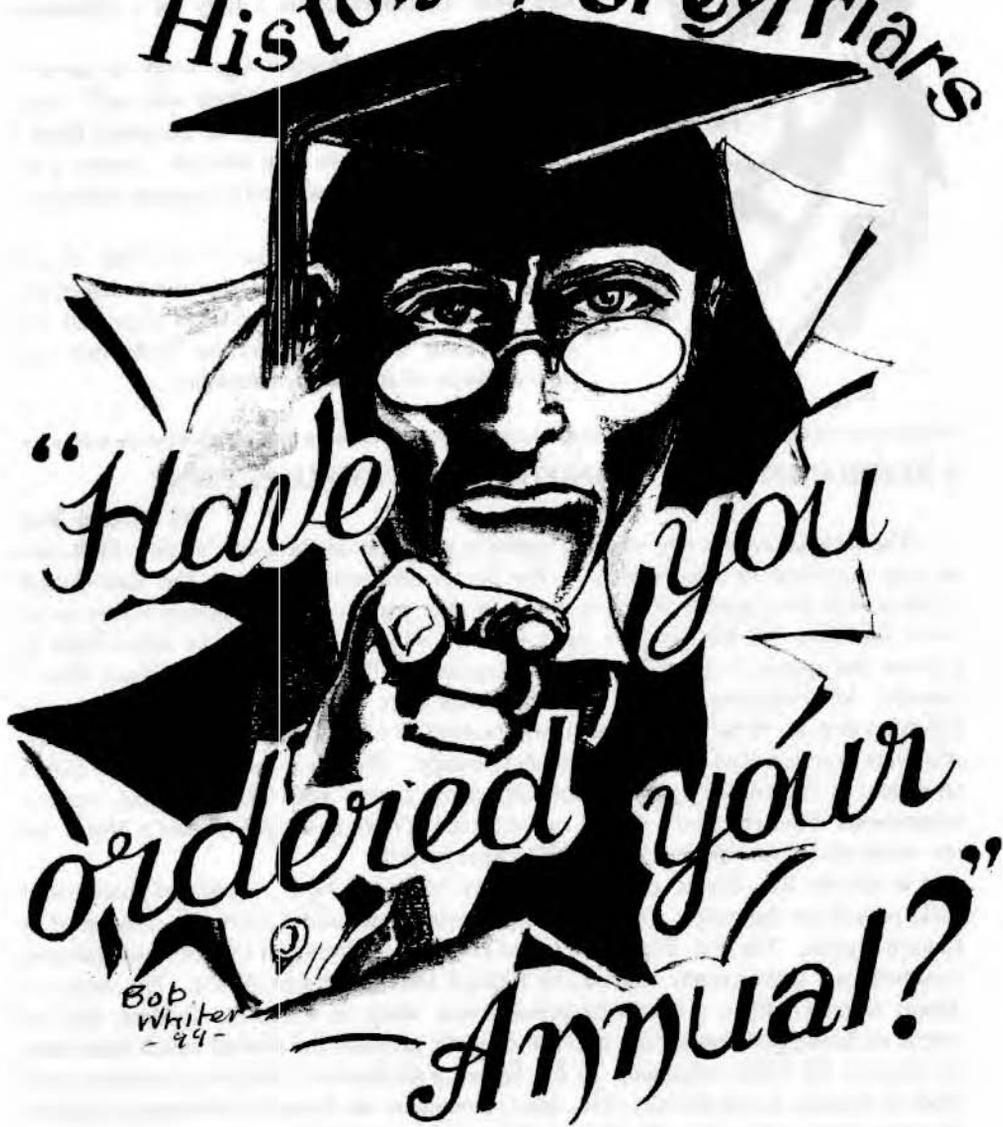
A BLIGHT ON THE SUN: ANOTHER FICTIONAL ECLIPSE

by Sheila Ray

The fictional eclipse that was very much in my mind on the 11th August, 1999, was the one described by Enid Blyton in *The Secret Mountain* (1941). The four Arnold children, who have gone to Africa in search of their parents who disappeared after an air crash, find them but are then in a nasty situation when a mountain tribe takes them all prisoner and appears to be about to make a human sacrifice of their friend, Prince Paul of Baronia. Mike happens to notice in his diary that there will be an eclipse of the sun the following day, his father realises that it will be total in Africa and plans how they can use this event to rescue Paul and allow them all to escape. There is a clear explanation of how an eclipse is caused and a good description of the event. Enid Blyton almost certainly remembered Rider Haggard's similar use of a total eclipse in *King Solomon's Mines*, but she would also have experienced the 1927 eclipse herself.

In fact the five 'Secret' books about Peggy, Mike and Nora Arnold and their friend, Jack, provide an impressive array of books, showing how Enid Blyton was influenced by English classics. The first, *The Secret Island* (1938) is a 'Robinson Crusoe' survival story modified, as I have recently realised, by Richard Jefferies' *Bevis* (1885). *The Secret of Spiggy Holes* (1940) is a Ruritanian prince rescue story, in which the children find and rescue the kidnapped Prince Paul, who subsequently provides the aircraft which takes them to Africa in *The Secret Mountain*. In *The Secret of Killimooin* (1943) the adventure takes place in Baronia, a land of rocky cliffs, lakes, mountains and forests in Ruritanian tradition. The final book in the series, *The Secret of Moon Castle* (1953) has echoes of Jules Verne or H.G. Wells; the priceless metal that is being secretly mined in the grounds of Moon Castle is almost as convincing as Wells' favorite.

History of Greyfriars



Bob
Whiter
-29-

THE "BASIC" GREYFRIARS QUIZ

by Leslie S. Laskey

One mark awarded for each correct answer.

- 1) Does Billy Bunter hope to spend next Christmas:-
 - a) at Wharton Lodge?
 - b) at Greyfriars School, for the purpose of keeping Fisher T. Fish company?or c) at Bunter Villa?
- 2) Blundell of the Fifth was selecting his football team for a form match with the Shell. Coker demanded to know what his position would be on the field. Did Blundell tell him that he would be:-
 - a) centre-forward?
 - b) outside-left?or c) left-outside?
- 3) Bob Cherry was involved in a boxing-match in the gym the other evening. He won the contest, rather narrowly, on points. Was his opponent:-
 - a) Bolsover Major?
 - b) Fisher T. Fish?or c) Snoop?
- 4) Temple of the Fourth went out on a recent half-holiday. Did he visit:-
 - a) Wapshot Races?
 - b) The Three Fishers?or c) his tailor at Courtfield?
- 5) Mr Quelch was seated at his study desk. His face wore a very pleased and contented expression. Was he in the act of:-
 - a) lighting a cigarette?
 - b) reading, with growing admiration, Billy Bunter's latest Latin translation?or c) typing out the final chapter of his "History of Greyfriars"?
- 6) Gosling's favourite beverage is:-
 - a) gin?
 - b) orange-squash?or c) cocoa?
- 7) When Sir Hilton Popper discovers Greyfriars boys on Popper's Island, does he:-
 - a) pat them kindly on their heads?
 - b) invite them to visit his island as often as they like?or c) take their names and report them to Dr Locke?
- 8) When Billy Bunter goes to the school letter-rack during morning break, is his greatest expectation:-
 - a) a letter from Mr W S Bunter enclosing a generous remittance?
 - b) that somebody else has had a generous remittance?or c) an affectionate letter from his sister Bessie?
- 9) On a cold winter half-holiday Lord Mauleverer finds that the greatest attraction for him is:-
 - a) football practice?
 - b) a cross-country run?or c) the sofa in Study No. 12?

- 10) Billy Bunter sold an old atlas to Fisher T Fish. Did Fishy give him:-
a) just about as much as he had expected for it?
b) less than he had expected?
or c) more than he had expected?
- 11) When Claude Hoskins of the Shell gave the première performance of his recently composed Piano Sonata No. 7, in the Music Room, last week, he invited all the members of the Shell and Fifth to attend. When the recital ended did the audience:-
a) applaud with rapturous enthusiasm?
b) applaud with some enthusiasm?
or c) not applaud at all because he had crept out of the Music Room five minutes earlier?
- 12) During the last Fifth Form cricket practice-game did the first ball of Coker's (only) over hit:-
a) the batsman's middle stump?
b) the batsman's front pad?
or c) the square-leg umpire?

Possible maximum of 12 marks. Any reader who has less than 12 marks is advised to search for his or her *Magnets* and start reading them again.
The answers are on page 21.



BOOK REVIEW: by Brian Doyle.

Enid Blyton's Adventure Treasury. Compiled by Mary Cadogan and Norman Wright. (Hodder Children's Books, London, £25.00, 1999.)

"I think it's perfectly and absolutely lovely!" said Anne. She was talking about an old ruined castle in *Five on a Treasure Island*, as it happened. But she might well have been describing this sumptuous, magnificent and definitive new book.

Mary Cadogan and Norman Wright - names familiar to readers of the *SPCD* - have chosen chapters, excerpts, stories and illustrations from the whole range of Enid Blyton's adventure stories, spanning almost the entire period of her writing life, and the material appears in the order in which it was written, from *The Secret Cave* in 1929 to a *Five Find-Outers* story in 1962.

There are 27 extracts and 100 illustrations from the original stories, all - and note this! - specially coloured (by Wendy Purdie). The 15 artists include Eileen Soper (who illustrated no fewer than 35 Blyton books, including the 21 *Famous Five* titles, published between 1942-63), Gilbert Dunlop (who illustrated all six *Mystery* novels, starting with *The Rockingdown Mystery* in 1949), the incomparable and prolific H M Brock, and Stuart Tresilian who, apart from his distinguished work on many other children's books (including a brilliant version of Kipling's *Mowgli* tales), so superbly pictured Blyton's *Adventure* series. Bruno Kay, E H Davie and George Brook are also well represented.

In addition, there are two glossy 'centrefolds' illustrating dust-jackets, card games and jigsaw puzzles, which leap out at you as though in 3D!

As you browse through this impressive, large-format, 'annual-sized' book of 374 pages (plus a useful material-made built-in bookmark!), your eye is drawn again and again to striking pictures and characters - all plus the magical words, of course.

I think my own favourite illustrations are: Brock's picture of three children rowing a boat across the sea towards looming cliffs ('Thunder Rock') with swooping seagulls overhead; Soper's trail of horse-drawn wagons of 'strolling players', with fields stretching away into the distance; and Tresilian's drawing of Philip and Jack, with Kiki the parrot, exploring a dark cave passage and discovering a flight of stone steps by flickering candlelight (from *The Island of Adventure*).

All the familiar adventure and mystery stories are represented in this fine 'Treasury': *The Famous Five*, *The Secret Seven*, the *Adventure* series, the *Barney* books, *The Adventurous Four*, and the *Secret, Mystery* and *Five Find-Outers* series. There are also out-of-print tales from the fondly-remembered magazines *Sunny Stories* (which I grew up on!) and *Enid Blyton's Magazine*.

I'm sure that everyone reading this Review will have read their own share of Enid Blyton's entertaining and exciting adventure stories during their childhood. Stories in



which young heroes and heroines (well, they're fairly ordinary nice kids, really) come up against spies, smugglers, thieves, kidnappers and general purpose crooks of one kind or another. But they're all beaten before they start. After all, what chance does a bunch of nasty, tough and dangerous men have when they're up against four children and a dog (or four children and a parrot, come to that)?

The stories are really 'variations on a theme' and none the worse for that. Blyton fans were - and are - content to read virtually the same stories time and time again (a case of familiarity breeding content) - a group of nice, happy, energetic and enterprising children, plus a pet or two, set off on a holiday or outing or picnic or whatever (with plentiful supplies of ginger pop, cucumber and jam (not together!) sandwiches, cakes, biscuits and fruit) and encounter mysterious people and criminal goings-on (or vice versa) and decide to investigate, having lots of adventures and 'narrow scrapes' along the way. At the end everything turns out all right, the crooks are marched (or driven) away by the grateful police, and the children are safe and well and cheerful - there is always a satisfactory and happy ending. The exploits are exciting, daring and often hazardous, the boys are brave, resourceful and clever, the girls are ditto, as well as being sympathetic, helpful and understanding. Georgina - 'George' - the virtual leader of 'The Famous Five', wishes she was a boy, behaves like one - and was apparently based on Enid Blyton herself . . . !

'The Famous Five' (the most successful series in Blyton's vast output of over 600 books) and the rest of the youthful groups, always seem to attract adventures wherever they go; but, as Blyton comments in one of the stories: "Adventures always come to the adventurous." Or, as Anne comments (quite wisely for her) in *Five Have Plenty of Fun*: "An adventure comes up all of a sudden, like a wind blowing up in the sky - and we're all in it, whether we like it or not . . ." She prefers adventures "when they're all over." To me, Anne is rather reminiscent of young Phyllis in Nesbit's *The Railway Children*.

There is often a pet involved in the children's adventures. 'Timmy' the dog is actually one of 'The Famous Five', of course, and his barks and yelps are practically human and always understood by the others, while in other groups there is another dog, Scamper, a talking parrot, Kiki (based on a real-life bird that belonged to one of Blyton's aunts!), and Miranda, Barney's monkey . . .

Well-known children's author Helen Crosswell contributes a Foreword to the book (in which she recalls enjoying *Sunny Stories* every week, along with *Beano*, *Dandy*, *Hotspur* and *Wizard*)! And there is a brief 'Memoir' of Enid Blyton by one of her daughters, Gillian Baverstock.

Enid Blyton's Adventure Treasury is a book to delight, amuse and excite readers of all ages - the young will enjoy its contents at face value and at once fall under Blyton's story-telling spell, and the not-so-young will have a wonderful nostalgic wallow among some of their favourite tales of yesteryear. The colour pictures make a marvellous bonus . . .

Mary Cadogan and Norman Wright, the compilers - and Blyton authorities both - have chosen the contents widely and well. It must have been an adventure in itself for both of them - setting off on the prolific seas of Enid Blyton's myriad tales and choosing the best of the best for this book.

Mary Cadogan has written more than a dozen books about children's literature and its authors (including the definitive biographical studies of Frank Richards and Richmal Crompton) and is the editor of the monthly *Story Paper Collectors' Digest*, as we all know.



Norman Wright has written prolifically on children's books, popular genre fiction and comic-papers, and is also co-founder of the 'Enid Blyton Society' and co-editor of its Journal.

Personally, I was slightly disappointed to find nothing from Blyton's *Galliano's Circus* series, which I enjoyed so much as a child. Blyton had a passion for circuses (the word appears in a dozen of her book-titles and she also used circus backgrounds in several books and stories). It all started, she once said, when, as a child of 9, she went 'behind the scenes' at a 'Big Top' and never forgot the experience. Young hero Jimmy Brown, of the *Galliano's Circus* books, had many adventures, so surely there should be at least one excerpt here?

In pedantic mood, maybe I should point out that, in the two chapters from *Five on a Treasure Island* (pages 65 and 70) the chapter heading 'VI' is duplicated in error. There are

no illustrator credits for the three stories *Number 62*, *The Case of the Five Dogs* and *Just a Spot of Bother*.

After the great success this wonderful book is sure to have, I hope publishers Hodder Children's Books will encourage Cadogan and Wright to prepare a similar 'Treasury' on Blyton's 'magic' books and stories. As a child, I loved her stories about *The Magic Faraway Tree*, *The Adventures of the Wishing Chair* and all those enchanted tales of goblins, elves, witches, gnomes, pixies, toys that came to life, and amazing spells (that so often went wrong!). "Let Magic follow the Adventures," ordered the Reviewer, waving his magic pen . . .

The 'Treasury' ends with a lovely Enid Blyton poem called *Afterword*, which includes the apt lines:

'There isn't room to write of all
The fine adventures, big and small . . .'

and

' . . . you find treasure lying all around . . .'

Just so.

Pictures by Eileen Soper.

WANTED: Any copy of the American magazine, *FLYING ACES*, between 1933 and 1940 (except the April 1938 issue). ALEX CADOGAN, 46 OVERBURY AVENUE, BECKENHAM, KENT BR3 6PY. TEL: 0181 650 1458.

Mr Mimble, husband of the excellent and popular lady who presides over the tuckshop at Greyfriars School, is the head gardener of the establishment. A weather-beaten, grizzled old fellow with, among other characteristics, a marked addiction for good ale and strong shag tobacco.

He is a gardener *par excellence*, being steeped in horticultural lore acquired over many years, and his marrows and cabbages are a byword in the district around Friardale and as far afield as Courtfield, where he has won numerous accolades for prize specimens. Although not strongly represented in the Greyfriars stories he is a force to be reckoned with.

The vegetable garden, which covers a considerable area, is divided from that of the Headmaster by a thick yew hedge - which is popularly supposed to have been planted by the early Grey Friars in the dim and distant past when the old buildings housed that order.

This garden becomes the cynosure of much attention when Mimble's strawberries are approaching their prime. It becomes an almost irresistible attraction to Billy Bunter who, at this time of year, generates a great interest in cultivation. He may be seen lurking in the vicinity of the strawberry beds which are strictly private and forbidden territory.

Mr Mimble has, over the years, accumulated a wide experience of boys, and their specific tastes in fruit keep him very much on the *qui vive* during this season of fruition.

In addition to the yew hedge there exists another relic of monastic days in the shape of an old and mellow South-facing wall along which is trained an equally ancient, many branched peach tree, the fruit of which is rightly famous. The choicest specimens were reserved for the Head's table, while not a few found their way to Masters' common room as one of Mimble's 'treats', as he is pleased to describe them. Be it said here that the produce of this veteran tree - if we are to believe Billy Bunter - is much inferior to the fruit which matures in the orangery at Bunter Court. And as to the strawberries, they bear no comparison to those produced in the spacious gardens of that establishment.

It is a pleasant experience - and quite an education - to listen to Mimble and his long-time colleague, Gosling, discussing crop prospects over ale and reeking pipes of an evening. This occurs whenever Mimble is able and fortunate enough to effect a brief escape from his 'behind the scenes' tuckshop duties and Mrs Mimble's sharp surveillance. Rustic epithets fly back and forth in fine style through dense and noxious clouds of smoke. The discussion becomes ever more technical - and less articulate - as the ale begins to assert its mellowing influence.

At such times any fellow a few minutes late for 'lock-up' stands a very small chance of being admitted without his name being taken by Gosling. Such is the reward for interrupting the learned debate of these old friends!

It is a well recorded fact that Horace Coker has a 'short way with fags'. Rather less known is the knowledge that Mrs Mimble has an equally short way of terminating the long-winded horticultural discussions between her spouse and Gosling should they exceed - as they often do - reasonable time limits. She has been known on several occasions unceremoniously to break up their deliberations and send Mimble packing to their residence in the corner of the quad; all in the briefest - and sharpest - manner imaginable. That she likes and admires his strawberries and the experience he brings to bear upon their

cultivation may be taken as read. Quite obviously she agrees with the sagacious Izaak Walton who thus expressed his thoughts on the berry: “. . . as Dr Boteler said of strawberries - doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did.” What she will not brook is endless smoke-befogged and ale-fumed discussion on the subject. Poor Mimble!

OLD FRIENDS

Then to the spicy nut-brown ale.

Milton. L'Allegro.

Our Gosling and old Mimble both
Are toppers highly skilled,
At quaffing ale they're nothing loth
So keep their tankards filled.
Seated snugly by the fire
Bottles standing ready,
Whatever more could they desire
Pray keep their old heads steady.
See the black briar pipes are burning
Belching clouds of smoke,
Are those ancient hearts still yearning
Fortunes at a stroke.
Fat 'tips' flowing from all sides,
The horny palms are itching,
At end of term what'ere betide
They find that time bewitching.
"What I says, I'll say again"
Our Gossy's tones are slurred,
"Young Bunter's 'tips' are much the same"
In fact they are deferred.
"When my postal order comes"
Is the perennial cry,
"I shall be in copious funds,
Your 'tip' I'll not deny."
But with a snort of sheer disgust
Gos reaches for his ale,
His aged features all distrust
He knows his hopes will fail.

Ted Baldock

ANSWERS TO GREYFRIARS QUIZ.

1a 2c 3a 4c 5c 6a 7c 8b 9c 10b 11c 12c

Round The Year With Cliff House

By Margery Woods



... November, November; who could forget ... ?

The Cliff House girls could and did, apart from Bessie's famous Fireworks Fund in November 1937, when Bessie was in the full flow of philanthropic goodwill trying to put on a grand firework celebration for the poor children in the area but finding her efforts thwarted and her name besmirched by Sarah Harrigan and the two-faced Agatha Cresshampton. But the kiddies got their firework fun while Agatha got her just come-uppance and Sarah escaped with a ticking-off from Miss Charmant. Not that Sarah would be bothered for long by that!

In November 1935 the chums had much more serious problems to think about than getting involved with old Guy Fawkes. They were still grappling with arch-enemy Dimitry on Belwin Island as they tried to rescue their charming new friend Princess Zenia who had come to visit Cliff House and then mysteriously suffered a dreadful accident when her chauffeur-driven car was found wrecked at the foot of the cliffs. But the chums knew that Zenia and her aunt were being held captive by Mark Dimitry who had bought Belwin Island and obviously intended to make sure no visitors should set foot on it.

During her visit to the school Princess Zenia of Sylvania, a vaguely mid-European land of distinctive Ruritanian flavour, had taken a great liking to Barbara Redfern and given her a ring, the twin of one she herself was wearing. After an unpleasant incident with a strange woman and overhearing a snatch of conversation between two of the arrogant Dimitry's servants Babs is very suspicious of the new owner's activities on the island. When she finds a ring in a crack at the bottom of a boat and realises it is the same as the one the Princess Zenia was wearing and identical to one Zenia had given her Babs is positive that this is proof of Zenia's presence on Belwin Island.

It doesn't take the chums long to discover that Dimitry has them imprisoned in the old dungeons beneath the ruins of the castle on the island. But Dimitry catches them and spins them a plausible tale about keeping Zenia safe from revolutionaries who are trying to take over Sylvania. He even brings on a double, a girl who so closely resembles Zenia that Mabs and Clara, who have been taken in by Dimitry's tale and his sudden onslaught of charm, are convinced by her, but the impostor fails to remember Babs - and the vital ring that the real

Zenia had given her. Dimitry bows them away to his launch and they return to Cliff House. At this point technology takes over.

The girl impostor sneaks herself into the school, in order to keep an eye on Babs and Co. She takes up residence in one of the attics after concealing a microphone in Study 4 and wiring it up to a receiver in the attic. This must have been quite an accomplishment, as anyone who has ever run wire under carpets, unseen up walls, through ceilings and into an attic at the top of a very large building, and all unseen in a building teeming with girls, prefects and mistresses, will surely realise. But, unseen, she has succeeded and thus every suspicion Babs has voiced and every theory, suggestion and plan uttered by the chums is carried unerringly to the ears of the enemy. So Dimitry is able to remain one step ahead of the chums' attempts to rescue the princess. Clara makes a valiant solo effort to release the princess but meets disaster and is captured to join the two prisoners, only to be followed soon afterwards by Babs and Mabs. By this time Dimitry's luxurious yacht has arrived in the bay and to this he transfers his prisoners. The chums are in despair; however will anyone know where to seek them now?

Back at Cliff House Bessie's shoelace somehow comes untied right outside Miss Primrose's study. Bessie listens in shamelessly as the headmistress speaks to the police to report three missing schoolgirls. A search is organised and when the girls' bicycles are reported being left all night at the local garage and a boat has been found washed up in Sarmouth Bay a sea search is started. Meanwhile, perhaps the fates are relenting a little for the captives. The S.Y. *Anstria* has engine trouble to delay the immediate sailing planned by Dimitry, who, it emerges, is a Baron and is plotting to have the King deposed by the revolutionaries and with the princess out of the way there'll be no barrier to his usurping the throne.

But Dimitry remains unaware of the many talents possessed by the chums of Cliff House, only schoolgirls though they may be to him, and that one of those talents is signalling. Morse, semaphore, mirrors or a trail of cryptic clues, the girls will find a way of getting word of their whereabouts to the nearest cavalry. Babs gets a mirror message going first, then Clara makes a valiant escape from the cabin where they are held on the yacht and reaches the wireless operator's room, hotly pursued by the furious Baron. Clara slams the door on him and starts to tap out an S.O.S. for help, thanking her lucky stars that her brother Jack had once taught her the art of wireless transmission and that Guiding had taught her Morse.

By the time Baron Dimitry had smashed down the door and seized the Tomboy it was too late. Babs' earlier message had been picked up and now a naval vessel was on the way in response to Clara's desperate message. A furious pursuit begins during which the yacht's hastily repaired engine start to protest and the naval vessel fires a warning shot across her bows. Very soon it is all over. The captives are rescued, the Baron and his henchmen are taken in charge, to face trial in Sylvania as traitors. Soon there were rewards for the chums, in the form of gold watches engraved with the crest of Sylvania and gold and ruby rings like the one Babs already possessed for Clara and Mabs from the princess. Not for the first time, the chums had saved a country!

In another November they had another encounter with royalty. This time an Indian princess called Rosana. They met her in somewhat plebeian circumstances - for royalty, that is - in a café in Courtfield where, despite her outward trappings of wealth, the veiled



DISASTER has overtaken the Cliff House chums' daring dash to the aid of the kidnapped Princess Zenia. Babs and Mabs are marooned on Belwin Island, and Clara is in the hands of the Princess' captors. But the intrepid trio know that right is on their side—and they are resolved that right shall triumph in the end!

Hightowers School was actually the princess. Now the mother is on her way to reclaim her daughter.

The two Indian men have leased Courtfield Manor for Princess Ayesha and they wish for girls of her age to be her guest companions until her mother, the Maharanee, arrives. Miss Primrose decides that Babs and the chums are a suitable choice for the situation and so they set off for the manor, taking little notice of Bessie's important news about the discovery of a treasure chart in an old cookery book she has bought for twopence from a market stall. It is supposed to relate to hidden treasure at the manor.

The chums expect to see the usual old panelling, great hall, and minstrels' gallery when they enter the manor but find an oriental transformation has taken place - plainly at great speed if the Indians had so recently leased the place. Before their astonished eyes are shimmering silk canopies, mother-of-pearl inlay, incense burners, glowing oriental lamps, hookah pipes and two coal black Hindus wafting palm fans over the sumptuously clad girl reclining on a golden throne amid all this eastern splendour. (This scene instantly conjured up memories of a much loved book owned by my father entitled 'Alf's Button'; all that was missing was the genie.)

But the girl there does not seem to remember the chums, although she closely resembles Rosana, whom they'd met in the café and brought back to Cliff House, from whence she had vanished without a word. Ayesha is petulant and claims her memory is confused and that she is bewildered by all this unexpected wealth. However, she thaws and wants to know all about Cliff House.

After a magnificent banquet the chums return to school, where Bessie suffers in the night from gastronomic over-indulgence. She ventures down to the study in search of a fizzy drink cure and encounters a ghost that throws a cushion at her.

Bessie's screams bring Miss Charmant on the scene and waken the dorm as Bessie is escorted there, by which time her 'ghost' has become 'three burglars', all of which brings the kind of teasing with which Bessie is all too familiar.

But Babs makes a surprising discovery in the study next morning when she finds a partly written letter that begins "My dearest Sara". The lingering perfume on the letter is the same as that which Rosana and Ayesha had worn.

When they visit Ayesha that day she yet again seems bewildered and speaks of memory blackouts. Babs is puzzled by the mystery of the vanished Rosana, the strange girl called Ayesha and the unknown Sara of the unfinished letter. Bessie continues to bleat about her treasure chart.

That night Babs decides Rosana has concealed herself within the school and is badly frightened of something or someone, and is not, as the chums had begun to speculate, one and the same as Ayesha, although the girls were both Indian and very similar in appearance. While Babs puzzles over the mystery there is a cry in the night. Babs goes to investigate and sees a girl running from the school, then hears a scuffle and the sound of a car starting up. Had it been Rosana, or Ayesha - or the unknown Sara?

Next day the reception was in readiness for the arrival of the Maharanee, and Ayesha, escorted by a bodyguard of six huge Nubians, looks terrified. Concerned for her, the chums fail to notice that Bessie has sneaked away, still lured by the possibility of treasure awaiting discovery. And of course it is Bessie who finds the bound and gagged girl in a cellar, only to be caught herself by the two Indian men. But not before she has managed to let loose one of her penetrating screams.

All that is needed now is the overheard conversation between the two Indian men to set the chums on the trail. Just as the two villains are about to accept a cheque for the reward of six million rupees for the restoration of her kidnapped daughter to the Maharanee Babs makes her dramatic entrance, bringing Rosana and Bessie.

But the sting at the end of this story is bitter.

Possibly readers were wondering how the supposed Indian princess got to Hightowers School and where her babyhood years were spent. Neither Rosana nor Ayesha was the kidnapped child. The baby had died at the hands of its evil captors, who, so many years later, decided to produce an Indian schoolgirl, with supposed proof of her identity, and collect the reward from the Maharanee. Their choice fell on Rosana, who thwarted their plan when she fled and hid at Cliff House, so they made 'Ayesha', who was actually Sara, maid to Rosana, their next choice, and struck her so badly she suffered loss of memory, which was fortunate for the plotters - until the chums came on the scene. The bit of window-dressing in bringing schoolgirls on the scene as Ayesha's companions misfired badly. Rosana was a genuine orphan and the Maharanee planned to adopt both girls and

take them back to India as soon as their education was completed. So there was consolation all round - except for poor old Bess.

With the police who came to take charge of the villains was a certain Inspector Forbes. He told Bessie a secret. Years before he had written stories, of which one was entitled 'The Treasure of Captain Cuttle'. He had made a little chart of where his fictional treasure was hidden in the manor, and then slipped it into an old cookery book and forgotten about it

... So ended Bessie's dream of great treasure. Still, Christmas was coming . . .

YESTERDAY'S HEROES

Charlie Chan (Conclusion)

by Brian Doyle



Sidney Toler as Charlie Chan in *Castle in the Desert* (20th Century-Fox, 1942).

Now that Oland had gone, a new Charlie Chan had to be found - and quickly. A total of 34 actors were tested for the role, including such reliable Hollywood stalwarts as J. Edward Bromberg, Noah Beery Snr. and Leo Carrillo. But it was Sidney Toler (born 1874) who was announced for the role, in October, 1938; his first Chan film would be *Charlie Chan in Honolulu*, which boasted a somewhat spectacular opening - Chan at breakfast with his wife and their (then) 12 children! Toler (at 64 a trifle on the elderly side for a crack detective perhaps) was Scots-descended and Missouri-born and had much acting experience, especially on the stage.

Toler, it was said, also liked a drink or two, but not as many as Oland before him. Toler contented himself with two or three stiff 'belts' before starting work each morning, just to get himself 'into the mood'. As Charlie Chan might have said: "Man in good mood ready to tackle anything - including other men in good moods."

Sidney Toler was the Charlie Chan I personally grew up with during my many visits to the cinema as a lad in the 1940s (the supporting 'B picture' was often a 'Charlie Chan' or a 'Roy Rogers' or a 'Boston Blackie', a 'Jones Family' or a 'Saint', a 'Bowery Boys' or a

'Blondie'). Toler always looked to me rather sinister - much more like the villain of the piece than the good egg sleuth.

Toler chalked up no fewer than 22 Charlie Chan films, from 1938 to 1947, his last one being *The Trap*. He had been ageing rapidly and was frequently unwell; his last few 'Chans' were frankly bad and he just managed to complete *The Trap* (set in a boarding-house for showgirls) before he died in February, 1947, at the age of 73.

Roland Winters was the new Charlie Chan from 1947 and his debut film was *The Chinese Ring*. He was an ex-sailor with much minor theatre experience and even more radio work to his credit. He was born in Boston in 1904 and rejoiced in the real name of Winternitz. He looked the least Oriental of the three movie Chans and had more the appearance of a tired businessman suffering from the revels of the night before than a super-efficient Chinese-Hawaiian-American police inspector. His hooded eyes suggested lack of sleep rather than Eastern nationality. As Chan might have said: "If man not Chinese he starts one step behind others." Winters just looked permanently worried, and not very Chinese. Shakespeare's line "Now is the Winters of our discontent . . ." had nothing on Mr Winters. And, sadly, his Chan films are generally agreed to be the worst in the entire series.

Not surprisingly Winters played the role of Chan only six times, his final fling being *The Sky Dragon* in 1949; his Chan period lasted only two years, from 1947 to 1949. Winters went on to make frequent stage, film and TV appearances until his death in 1989 at the age of 85.

The Charlie Chan films ran from 1931 - 1949 (in the main and best-known series described above) and Oland, Toler and Winters starred in 44 of them. They generally took 4 weeks each to shoot, ran for just over an hour, were budgeted at around \$250,000 each and normally brought in around \$1,000,000 on release throughout the world. The great Bette Davis once told me that most of her own important pictures took only 5 or 6 weeks to complete. The Hollywood studios had things down to a fine, fast and efficient art in those days and everything went like well-oiled clockwork. As a modern comparison, the 007 James Bond picture I worked on in 1980-81 *For Your Eyes Only* took 5 months main shooting at Pinewood Studios and on locations (6 weeks in Corfu and 4 weeks in Cortina, Italy), plus simultaneous shooting by at least 4 Second Units, abroad and in the UK.

Another well-remembered character in many of the Charlie Chan pictures hasn't as yet been mentioned. The eldest of Chan's large family was Lee Chan, usually referred to by



Roland Winters and Virginia Dale in *The Docks of New Orleans* (Monogram, 1948).

his father as 'Number One Son', and he was wont to introduce him with the tolerant words: "My son without whose assistance many cases would have been solved much sooner . . ." Lee made his first appearance in *Charlie Chan in Paris* (1935) in the person of actor Keye Luke, who was born in China. He became a popular semi-regular in the Chan series, appearing in seven films with Oland, none with Toler and the final two with Winters.

I had the pleasure of working with Keye Luke in 1968, when I worked as Publicist on the Gregory Peck film *The Chairman* (aka *The Most Dangerous Man in the World*). I met him at Heathrow Airport when he flew in from the United States. "It's a great pleasure to meet Charlie Chan's Number One Son" I said when we had settled into the car taking us to Luke's London hotel, adding "But I expect you get rather tired of everyone remembering you in that part . . . !" He beamed and was charming (he was then around 64). "No, no, not at all, Brian," he chuckled. "After all, it was that Chan role - and all those Chan pictures - that helped to make my name in a small way. I'm always quite pleased to be remembered as 'Number One Son'!" As I came to know Luke during work at Pinewood Studios, I was fascinated to listen to his reminiscences about the Chan days in Hollywood. Luke appeared in several other pictures, including *Gremlins*, and in TV series such as *Kung Fu*. He died in 1991 at the age of 87.

Unable to agree on new contract terms, Luke bowed out at the start of the Toler regime and was replaced (logically) by Jimmy Chan ('Number Two Son') played by Victor Sen Yung, who made his bow in *Charlie Chan in Honolulu* (1938). Later, Tommie Chan ('Number Three Son') (played by Benson Fong) made the first of his six appearances in *Charlie Chan in the Secret Service* (1944), with Toler.

All three sons always tried to assist their famous Dad on his cases, but usually bungled the whole thing. They invariably called him 'Pop' which irked him somewhat ("Pop is small sound, not large father.") And, as Chan commented more than once: "A man without family is a man without troubles."

Charlie Chan's films took him all around the world and included trips to London, Cairo, Shanghai, Monte Carlo, Honolulu, Panama, Mexico, Reno, New York, Berlin, Rio and the South Seas. But only, so far as the cast and crew were concerned, in their dreams! Studio back projection and sets supplied most of Chan's travel backgrounds (the small budgets did not allow for expensive location trips), except when an existing back-lot happened to be still standing and available. For the Chan movie *Castle in the Desert* (1942), the imposing building of the title turned out to be 'Baskerville Hall' as seen in the Basil Rathbone Sherlock Holmes picture *The Hound of the Baskervilles* three years earlier!

Back-lot jungles were usually around in abundance in those days, as were Western towns - but I don't believe Chan ever became involved in an actual Western, though he did visit an Arizona 'dude' ranch in *The Golden Eye* (1948). (You can somehow hear Chan murmuring to himself "Man quick on draw is sometimes slow on up-take.")

In the murder-spoof film *Murder By Death*, written by Neil Simon and released in 1976, all the characters were parodies of famous fiction detectives. Peter Sellers in the role of 'Sidney Wang' was obviously inspired by Charlie Chan . . . ! A very funny film, especially if you know your detective stories of the past.

In 1981 another feature film 'spoof' was made - *Charlie Chan and the Curse of the Dragon Queen*, with no less a star than Peter Ustinov as Chan. Allegedly a comedy it was dire and unfunny and a complete flop. 'The Dragon Queen' was Angie Dickinson and the

lovely Michelle Pfeiffer, at 23, made one of her earliest screen appearances in the picture, but you probably won't find it in her official list of credits. It is said in show business circles that Ustinov would have received his Knighthood much earlier if he **hadn't** made this movie . . .

The only stage production of a Chan story was *The Keeper of the Keys* in New York in 1933. Chan was played by William Harrigan. And this story, for some inscrutable reason, was the only original Chan story written by Biggers never to have been filmed.

There were long-running Chan radio series in America in the 1930s and 1940s, when Chan was played by, first Walter Connolly, and later by Santos Ortega and Ed Begley.

In 1971 there was a feature-length TV 'pilot' movie *Charlie Chan: Happiness is a Warm Clue*, with Ross Martin as Chan. It was evidently a flop, being shown once in Britain in 1973, and not until 1979 in America and then under the title *The Return of Charlie Chan*.

The New Adventures of Charlie Chan was a major TV series comprising 39 black-and-white episodes of 30 minutes each, made mainly in Britain in 1956. It starred J. Carroll Naish as Chan, with James Hong as his Number One Son, Rupert Davies (later to win fame as TV's 'Inspector Maigret' himself) as Inspector Duff (a Scotland Yard officer) and Hugh Williams as Inspector Marlow (another Scotland Yard officer). It had Chan based in



J. Carroll Naish as TV's Chan

London, was made by Lew Grade's ITC production company and was shown in America from 1957 and in Britain between 1957-61. Naish was mis-cast and wore over-thick make-up to appear in the least bit Oriental; he was, in fact, a New York Irishman - a fine actor with two Academy Award Nominations to his credit - but Charlie Chan was not for him and not many people even remember the series today.

In 1972-74 there was a series of animated cartoons *The Amazing Chan and the Chan Clan*, 16 30-minute episodes featuring Chan and his family solving crimes. Who supplied Chan's voice on the sound-track? None other than our old friend Keye Luke! And young Jodie Foster (today a major Oscar-winning star) did the voice of daughter Anne Chan . . .

Chan also featured in American newspaper comic-strips between 1938-42 and in various comic-books. There was also a short-lived *Charlie Chan's Mystery Magazine* in the 1970s in America.

There was a major revival of interest in the Charlie Chan saga in 1968 when a 'Charlie Chan Festival' opened at the New York Museum of Modern Art (no less), backed up with an hour-long TV documentary, plus the publication of 'Quotations from Charlie Chan',

comprising 50 pages of the great man's aphorisms. Many Chan movies were also shown on TV at the time. One of the promotional campaigns used the line: 'Say Si Si to C.C.' ...

Here, to end with, are a few of my own favourite Chan aphorisms - many of them are wise and true and give you food for thought:

"A man who chases two rabbits catches neither."

"No use to hurry unless sure of catching right train."

"Mind like parachute - only function when open."

"Advice after mistake is like medicine after dead man's funeral."

"Bad alibi like dead fish - can't stand test of time."

"Door of opportunity swings both ways."

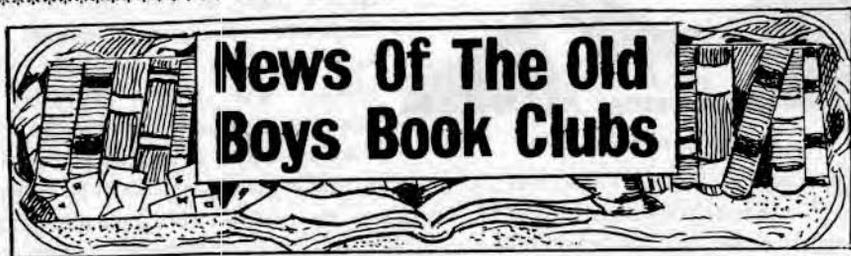
"Theories like fingerprints - everyone has them."

"If strength were all, tiger would not fear scorpion."

Charlie Chan is probably the only fictional detective to have been paraphrased in a speech by an American President. "Long journey always start with one short step," said Chan in 1935. "A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step" said President John F Kennedy in 1963. And we mustn't forget Neil Armstrong's famous words when he landed on the moon in 1969: "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

Chan once remarked (in Biggers' book 'The Chinese Parrot'): "Life would be dreary waste if there were no thing called loyalty." Readers, filmgoers and radio listeners were loyal in their millions to the very likeable, even loveable, Charlie Chan over many years, and maybe still are. He has truly been 'a Chan for all seasons . . .'. Chan was, as we've said, a very modest and self-effacing man. But how about this 'Chanogram' for you, Charlie? "Man who is too humble can sometimes become invisible."

Charlie Chan invisible? No chance. No Chan . . . !



Northern OBBC

The highlight of our yearly programme is the October visit of our President, Mary Cadogan. 14, including Gillian Baverstock, attended an enjoyable lunch and in the afternoon we had an informal gathering at the home of Darrell Swift. In the evening 18 people were present in Leeds for our main meeting.

Mary talked about Baroness Orczy who created the famous fictional character 'The Scarlet Pimpernel'. She had a privileged upbringing in Europe but only learned the English language at the age of 15. When she moved to England she soon began writing and her most famous character, the Scarlet Pimpernel, has spanned the century, spawning numerous books, films, radio and TV adaptations, the latest incarnation starring Richard E Grant.

Changing the mood Mary then played tapes of one of her broadcasts with Martin Jarvis on William, and one in which she and Arthur Marshall discussed girls going on the stage, with quotations from various books and story-papers.

After the break we had 'Mark Meanders Again', a talk on Harry Potter and Hogwarts School. Mark Caldicott examined various aspects of the popular series by J K Rowling. The stories are written in the tradition of the old papers, containing a strong adventure element but also have a modern fantasy storyline which is popular with many of today's readers. The books are influenced by Tolkien's 'Lord of the Rings', C S Lewis and Terry Pratchett, but still have more than enough originality to satisfy millions of readers.

Next month's meeting is the AGM.

Paul Galvin

London OBBC

Mark Taha's flat in Ealing was the venue for the October meeting of the London OBBC.

Our host confounded us with a 'nice easy quiz' about film and television characters; Ray Hopkins entertained us with a reading from a classic *Magnet*; Derek Hinrich brought everyone up to date with his latest report on the new Sherlock Holmes statue outside Baker Street station; finally, Bill Bradford read a passage from Gerald Verner's 1940 novel, 'The Huntsman'. Questions were asked afterwards to make sure we had been paying attention!

Vic Pratt

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Editors letter replaced with photocopy. Only G+ but a scarce book. waf £75.00.

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Marvelman Annual 1954 Millar.

1st issue with card wraps. A poor copy. Very worn with numbers at bottom margin of most pages, small cover chips, some biro marks on covers & fore-edge. waf £25.00.

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