

STORY PAPER  
COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOL. 54

No. 646

OCTOBER 2000

THE  
**SCHOOLGIRL**

No. 464, Vol. 18  
Week Ending  
JUNE 10th, 1939.

EVERY **2<sup>D</sup>**  
SATURDAY

Incorporating  
SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN



**UNMASKING THE  
"GHOST"!**

And what a staggering surprise  
for Babs and Clara when they  
discovered it was their own  
chum *Jemima*.

(See this week's thrilling complete  
*Cliff House Story*.)

What is a cowboy's quirt? You can find out here!

# ALL ABOUT THE COWBOY'S KIT

A COWBOY SADDLE,  
STETSON HAT, LASSO  
AND WINCHESTER CARBINE



CINCHING  
THE "LARGO"  
(GIRTH) THE  
LEATHER STRAP  
WHICH KEEPS  
THE SADDLE  
IN POSITION



NOTE THE LARGE  
BUCKET  
STIRRUPS



BRONCO  
BUSTING!



NOTE THE  
LASSO OR LARIAT TIED TO THE  
SADDLE COILED READY FOR  
A THROW

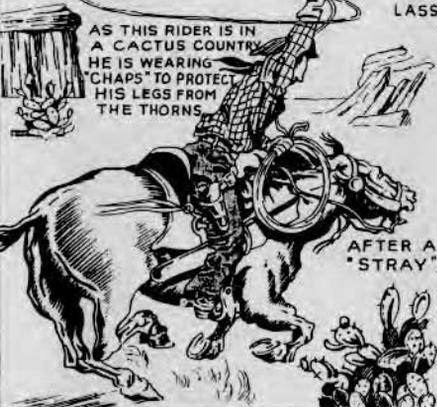


ROPING  
A STEER

AS THIS RIDER IS IN  
A CACTUS COUNTRY  
HE IS WEARING  
"CHAPS" TO PROTECT  
HIS LEGS FROM  
THE THORNS



USING THE "QUIRT"  
IN A STAMPEDE



AFTER A  
"STRAY"!



BRANDING A STEER WITH RED  
HOT BRANDING IRON

BOB  
WHITER

# STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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W.H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

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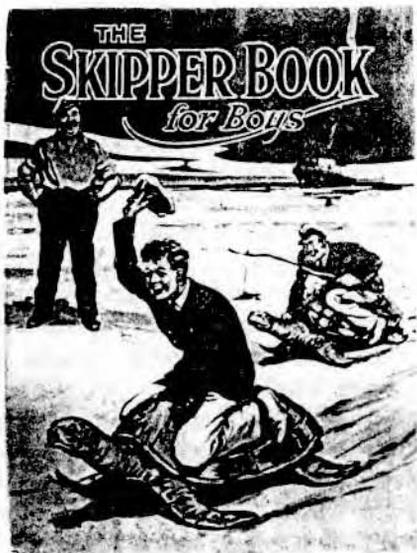
## THE EDITOR'S CHAT

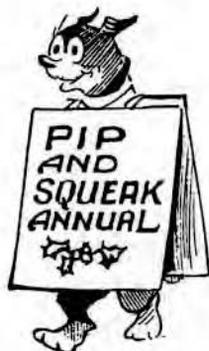
I have already received a large number of orders for this year's Annual as well as further interesting and entertaining contributions for it.

To 'trail' a few more items, Ernest



Holman takes a fascinating look at our world as it was a century ago; Norman Wright has provided a colourful and comprehensive study of that popular paper *The Modern Boy*; Dennis Bird delves into the *Girls' Crystal* to treat us to





some thrilling duels between the detective Noel Raymond and his most devilish adversary, Rosina the Baffling; Bob Whiter is working on another of his celebrated picture-puzzles and I am contributing an item on Richmal Crompton and William. And there is, of course, much more. Look out for further trailers next month!

I can honestly say that the C.D. Annual 2000 promises to live up to the reputation established by previous issues. If you have not already ordered your copy, don't forget to do so. The cost, including postage and packing, is £12.50 for U.K. readers and £13.50 for those living overseas.

Happy Reading.

MARY CADOGAN

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### COLIN MORGAN

When we think of the D.C. Thomson papers the name of one connoisseur stands out, and that is Colin Morgan. Very sadly Colin recently and rather suddenly passed away. I never met him but, through correspondence, felt him to be a helpful friend, always willing to answer queries from his vast knowledge and love of the D.C.T. papers.

His friend and collaborator, Derek Marsden, has written an obituary tribute to Colin: also Bob Whiter has sent a note from California about Colin's great helpfulness to him.

Derek's and Bob's tributes are published here.

MARY CADOGAN

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### COLIN MORGAN (1933-2000) : AN APPRECIATION by Derek Marsden

I first met Colin Morgan early in 1990 as a result of responding to an advert that he had placed in *The Comic Journal*, requesting information on the content of a couple of longish runs of THE WIZARD, as he was planning an index to that paper similar to the one he had compiled for THE ROVER in 1982. I was actually quite dismayed to learn this because I was working along the same lines myself, but the willingness to share information, which is so much a part of our hobby, won out. I was also curious to meet him as I had been impressed by his work, particularly the long article on Matt Braddock that he contributed to the 1983 issue of *Golden Fun*.

We very soon discovered that we were what Anne of Green Gables referred to as 'kindred spirits', although by no means clones of each other. As far as the DCTs were concerned we loved Cannonball Kidd, Baldy Hogan, Rob Higson, Tom Smith and many others. We both liked each other's all-time favourite serial, Colin's being *There Was Once A Game Called Football* from THE WIZARD, but where he enjoyed war stories,

detective serials and Red Circle, I preferred historical tales, science fiction and Alf Tupper.

We found common ground in old radio programmes such as *Dick Barton – Special Agent* and *Journey Into Space*, we discovered that in our younger days we had created programmes for matches between imaginary teams, a task which took far longer than the time it took to play the games with our friends, using Subbuteo in Colin's case, Shoot in mine, and then as adults we had coached amateur football teams, Colin's being in a Southern league as he was living in Tunbridge Wells at the time, mine on Merseyside, mainly at schoolboy level. The six-year difference in our ages inevitably caused a divergence in our musical tastes, with Colin looking back to the Big Band era while I looked forward to the pop explosion. The period of common ground went from Dinah Shore's *Buttons And Bows* to *The Platters*, via Eve Boswell, Lita Roza and David Whitfield.

It is impossible to recall any specific moment when we agreed to collaborate on an index to THE WIZARD, I am not sure there even was once, but I do know that Colin was delighted to share his enthusiasm for the project with me. The fact that it is not yet finished is more down to me than to Colin, although he had to work so hard over the last few years on his subscription magazine *In Tune International* just to survive and simply could not find the time to devote to his beloved DCTs which certainly meant more to him than any of his other interests, even his music and West Ham United. We had also extended the scope of the volume to encompass the whole run of the paper from 1922 and had settled on an exciting format which owes much to Colin's Braddock article mentioned above. I do intend to complete the index partly because I believe I owe it to Colin to do so. He felt that our friendship was mutually beneficial but I certainly gained significantly from knowing him. He was such an example. He was a completist, needing to know everything there was to know about every one of his areas of interest. This is why his book *First Hits* is such a collector's item. He was a perfectionist and insisted on the most thorough research. He even checked my work and always pointed out errors or careless syntax. Above all, however, he was generous of spirit. He gave his time freely to anyone he felt he could help, especially readers of *Collectors' Digest*. Countless correspondents received from him unexpected parcels of photocopies of stories, the better to illustrate his prompt reply to their often quite simple query.

We had many roads still to travel. I miss him already, but I am only one of many.

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## COLIN MORGAN

by Bob Whiter

Our mutual friend Eric Fayne (of happy memory) once wrote – "The nicest people in the world read the *Collectors' Digest*." Dear Eric, you never spoke a truer word! Some months ago readers of our magazine may remember an article and illustration of mine entitled *Riders of the World*. Each horseman I recalled reminded me of different series in the Thomson Big Five story papers:- these included – Solo Solomon, Abdul the Cruel, Frigg M'Fee and several others. These were all recalled from memory and I hadn't read about them in years. Imagine my great joy and gratitude, when from out of the blue (actually in the post) came a generous bundle of reproductions of the characters I'd named, together with a repro of the first set of illustrations by me which were accepted by

and published in the *Hotspur*. These were entitled *All about the Cowboy's Kit* and appeared in 1959. In moving to the U.S.A. soon afterwards, I'd lost my copy, so was very glad to have another eventually. I naturally wrote and thanked my generous donor, who, although unknown to me at the time, soon through the all too few letters was looked upon by me as a good friend. Always cheerful, he never mentioned that he was suffering from a terminal illness – now I hear the very sad news that he has been taken from us.

I can only bid a fond farewell to a very kind friend and fellow collector. Goodbye Colin old chap, my only regret is that I never had the pleasure of meeting you in person.

(Editor's note: The pictures mentioned by Bob are published on the inside front cover of the CD this month. They appeared originally in *Hotspur* 1187, 8<sup>th</sup> August 1959).

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## JOHN BUCHAN – AND AFTER

by J.E.M.

Recent references in the Digest to John Buchan and his work have surely evoked some warm memories, since most of us have been staunch Buchaneers at some period in our lives. The twentieth century thriller – or “shocker” as he himself called it – was largely Buchan's creation and his famous stories, including *Greenmantle*, *Huntingtower* and *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, left an indelible stamp on popular fiction.

Colonel T.E. Lawrence, or Lawrence of Arabia as he was better known, said a long time ago that Buchan's stories were “like athletes racing: so clean-lined, speedy, breathless. For our age they mean nothing; they are sport only; but will a century hence disinter them and proclaim him the great romancer of our blind and undeserving generation?” (As one critic has remarked, this was pitched a bit strong, even for a fellow romantic like Lawrence!) Well, time is almost up and it is worth asking: what *do* more recent generations make of Buchan? Undeniably, things have moved on a bit, as they always do. Today's readers of thrillers and spy stories are as likely to turn to the novels of Len Deighton, John Le Carré (of Smiley fame) or to some of the striking works in the same genre by the late Graham Greene.

These last three authors long ago admitted the great debt they owed to a man who, between 1936 and 1940, wrote six thrillers that changed the nature of such fiction for ever. If, sadly, you have not so far met him, let me introduce you to the man Graham Greene called his “master”. His name is Eric Ambler and he brought two new elements to the thriller. First, in place of the exotic heroes of the old type (what one might call the Richard Hannay – Bulldog Drummond school), he introduced Everyman – people much like you and me. If Ambler's central characters are ever heroic at all, it is only by accident. They are usually peaceful-minded members of the professional middle classes who are pitch-forked into a world of international skulduggery where they meet the murderous agents of faceless but ruthless powers. (To be fair, Buchan did get an innocent bystander involved in a saga of murder and espionage in his story *The Thirty-Nine Steps* but the archetypal heroes for which he is best remembered were centre-stage figures like Sir Richard Hannay and other high-powered agents of government.)

Ambler's second innovation was the really believable villain. He dispenses with mad masterminds of the Dr. Fu-Manchu kind and grotesque figures like Buchan's “little white-faced Jew in a bath chair with an eye like a rattlesnake” (*The Thirty-Nine Steps*).

The baddies in Ambler's stories are the "gentlemanly", "civilised" proprietors of vast industrial enterprises like oilfields or armament factories and are prepared to risk – or even start – international war in pursuit of money and power. If all this is much closer to the real world than the earlier fantasies of thrillerdom, it does not lower the level of excitement; far from it. Mysterious corpses, characters who are not what they seem, mayhem and sudden death – in fact menace in all its forms, fills these fast-paced novels.

Ambler's first, *The Dark Frontier*, concerns a scientist who, totally by chance, becomes involved in a bid to prevent a dangerous arms transaction which includes an atomic weapon (note the date of this tale, 1936). From a quiet beginning in a West Country hotel, the story moves to a Balkan country where the action hots up against an unforgettable background of dark streets and their sinister inhabitants, with a marvellous pay-off in a very high-voltage laboratory. The scientist, Barstow, has a doppelganger by the name of Conway Carruthers, clearly a gentle satire on the Richard Hannay type of character, and this all adds to the fun. The hardback edition of *The Dark Frontier*, long out of print, is now gold dust but a paper-back version was published in the late 1980's and can still be picked up second-hand.

*Uncommon Danger*, which followed in 1937, anticipates the coming of World War Two and its theme is the vital importance of oil to the modern war-machine. A near-penniless freelance journalist named Kenton is offered money to take some apparently harmless documents across the frontier of a European state. Whereafter, he becomes embroiled in a nightmare struggle between the cut-throat minions of the powerful. Again the action is breathtaking but all ends well – or at least as well as things could be expected to end just two years before the outbreak of war in the real world...

In 1938 came *Epitaph for a Spy* and *Cause for Alarm*, both also concerned with the impending conflict. *The Mask of Demetrios* (1939) and *Journey into Fear* (1940) completed this remarkable half dozen which were so far ahead of their time. Praised not only by the leading authors already quoted but, without exception, by the Press, these stories are still worth hunting for.

Ambler, of course, went on to write many more novels; he was working almost to the day he died, at the age of 88, a couple of years or so ago. He had also written for the screen, his script for that great movie, *The Cruel Sea* being nominated for an Oscar. He saw distinguished service in the War which, more clearly than many people of that time, he had anticipated in his writing.

Whatever posterity makes of either John Buchan or Eric Ambler, it is pretty certain they will both earn a chapter or two in the annals of pop lit. In the case of Ambler I have no doubt he will be especially remembered for the six titles I have discussed.

(Footnote: As mentioned, *The Dark Frontier* (1936) is (was?) available in paperback (Fontana), while *Epitaph for a Spy*, *Cause for Alarm*, *Mask of Demetrios* and *Journey into Fear* have all been fairly recently reissued in softback by Pan. I have no record of a cheap reprint of *Uncommon Danger* but I am lucky enough to possess a second edition in hardback from 1939. Incidentally, at least two of the above titles were filmed.)

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## FROM DES O'LEARY:

I think readers would be amused by the *Daily Telegraph's* continued interest in WILSON!

I wrote in as well but it wasn't published, and I think that, with the end of the Olympic Games, their interest will vanish – at least for the moment. I believe Michael Parkinson was really surprised at the interest his articles about Wilson last year produced...

At least I got my article in to you at C.D. and it made me appreciate this outlet for us enthusiasts to dig a little deeper into the fascinating world of boys' and children's fiction.

As Jeffrey Richards wrote in his preface to *Collectors' Digest – The First 50 Years* '...this material is invaluable. It is a superb archive of information, recollection and analysis, a rich, deep, warming, ever-flowing stream in which the cultural historian can immerse himself regularly with pleasure and profit.'

While agreeing with Professor Richards, naturally! the main feeling I get is exactly what I felt as a teacher. You want to share knowledge and, particularly, *delight* in knowledge. I have learned so much, and with so much pleasure, from *C.D.*, the magazine and Annual, that whenever I see an item that interests me, I want to pass it on to "the nicest people in the world (who) sit back in their armchairs and turn over the page of the *Digest*" (as you and John Wernham quoted from Eric Fayne).

## Olympic body suit's illustrious ancestor

SIR — It is interesting to see that many athletes at the Olympics are wearing body suits of the kind favoured by the sports superstar Wilson, whose comic book exploits were celebrated 50 years ago.

According to *The Wizard* in 1951, Wilson (shown below) was born in 1795 and ran away from home at 14, determined to improve his physique beyond the normal. For a time he lived wild on Ambleside Moor, where he met a hermit who passed on to him the secret of a long life. By 1939, Wilson's feats in all sports had astonished the world.

After serving in the RAF during the Second World War — during which he scored 25 kills as a Battle of Britain pilot — Wilson worked with disabled men in an Army convalescent home, then helped to train men for the 1948 Olympics.

Alone, he penetrated the Congo, where he discovered an ancient

Greek civilisation in a secret city. Since he knew Greek well, Wilson had no difficulty persuading them to let him compete against them. His skill in pole vaulting against black athletes also enabled him to save Africa from war. As a supreme test of his mental and physical powers, he set out, two years ahead of the Hunt expedition, to conquer Everest.

The success of Cathy Freeman, the Aborigine runner shown wearing the same kind of attire in yesterday's sports section, surely reveals that the secret of Wilson's success was the body suit, though he seems to have favoured a black woollen one. My only concern is that, if he were to win an event in Sydney, the International Olympic Committee might ask questions about any substances the hermit may have given him 195 years ago.

**Gerard Brown**  
Manchester

## Wilson's big Test

SIR — If the Great Wilson should turn up in Sydney (letter, Sept. 27), it will not be his first visit. In the early 1950s he was in Australia when the entire English Test team was wiped out in an air crash before they had the chance to win back the Ashes.

Wilson scoured the country and found 10 other English cricketers who just happened to be Down Under. Under his leadership, England finally won the Ashes, but not without mishap. Before one Test, an umpire travelling to the match on a train overheard two men talking about Wilson's fast bowling, and pronouncing him to be a "chucker".

The poor man couldn't get this out of his mind, and proceeded to call a no-ball every time Wilson bowled.

Things were in the balance until, in the Australian second innings when the umpire called "no ball" again, Wilson rolled up his sleeve to show the splint he had fixed to keep his arm perfectly straight.

Justice was done, and the umpire had a nervous breakdown.

Those were the days.

**John Bowness**  
Exington, Leics

28.9.2000

## Double record

SIR — Quite the most fascinating thing about the Great Wilson in the *Wizard* was that he broke one record twice. On the first occasion, he ran the mile in three minutes in 1943. I seem to recall that this was in Manchester (where one of my Lancashire class of 10-year-olds swore blind he had seen him do it).

Ten years or so later, now an undergraduate assiduously cultivating a blasé stance, I saw an issue of the *Wizard* on a news-stand in which, I was amused to see, Wilson took three minutes 48 seconds to "repeat" the feat.

We wartime kids, well aware of the larger realities, were very willing to suspend any disbelief we had, taking in our stride that Rockfist Rogan was one week fighting the "Huns" as an RFC pilot in the First War and just one issue later was an RAF fighter pilot in the Second. Happy days!

**D. T. Whiteside**  
Cambridge

29.9.2000

*(Editor's Note:* Perhaps the above can be C.D.'s tribute to the achievements of Britain's athletes at the Olympics this year.)

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**It helps the C.D. if you advertise your "For Sales" and Wants in it.** The rates are: 4p per word, £5 for a quarter page, £10 for a half page and £20 for a whole page.

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**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.

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*(Editor's Note: We are "jumping the gun" a little by using this fireworks story in October – but that is because we have another St. Jim's Fifth of November feature for next month!)*

## POOR OLD GLYN!

by Ray Hopkins

Bernard Glyn of the Shell Form at St. Jim's is a pariah in his own study. Harry Noble (Kangaroo) and Clifton Dane who share the End Study refuse to put up with the unpleasant smell any longer! Not Glyn's personal odour of course, but that emanating from the chemicals with which he has covered the study table in order to produce some really smashing and noisy fireworks to entertain the whole school on the glorious Fifth of November. Glyn is aware of no bad smells whatever and besides, as he explains to the irate Kangaroo and Dane, this new invention of his will cause world-wide repercussions: it's a new explosive and he knows the War Office will welcome it with open arms!

Glyn shows them what looks like small pieces of coke in a jar labelled Raspberry Jam and says if he dropped it the whole of St. Jim's would go up in a vast explosion and disappear in a mushroom of smoke. A further dreadful smell billows toward the door where Kangaroo and Dane are holding handkerchiefs to their noses as a concoction boiling away merrily on a small spirit stove on the study table boils over. Glyn turns toward it hurriedly and the Raspberry Jamjar slips from his fingers. The study doorway suddenly empties as Glyn's studymates bolt, though they'll never get downstairs before the school disintegrates around them. But they halt as they merely hear the crash of breaking glass. No explosion! Glyn's marvellous world-shattering invention has, like so many of his other revelations, not worked when crunch time arrived!

Kangaroo and Dane with the help of Tom Merry and other interested Shell parties who have turned up to listen to the studymates altercation, eject Glyn from the End Study and cram his firework materials into a large suitcase, together with all the smelly chemicals, with the intention of dumping them in the River Rhyl. Glyn himself is anointed with his newly invented liquid glue and spends a long time in the bathroom. His new liquid glue does work and he has the dickens of a job to remove it from his hair and face.

Gyn, thinking that the New House might be pleased to bask in the glory of backing up a soon-to-be- world-famous inventor invites himself to the study of Figgins and Co. and, telling them he needs a new lab to produce his fireworks, shows



"If you want the glue," said Kangaroo, "you shall have it!" And the Dorn-stalk tilted the pot over Bernard Glyn's face. The schoolboy inventor spluttered wildly as glue flowed over his cheeks, into his mouth, round his ears, and into his hair. "Ow, ow! Grough!"

them "one he made earlier" (as we would now say), a marvellous jumping cracker which "explodes twelve times in succession and at the same time sends off showers of different coloured sparks. What do you think of that?" Glynn asks the bemused New House Co. Not much, as it turns out. Glyn inadvertently drops the cracker in the fire and it animates itself before they have a chance to get out of the way. The gunpowder smell is appalling and nearby studies are sure a conflagration is about to erupt. Glyn, the unappreciated genius, is flung through the New House doorway and spread-eagled in the Quad.



There was a sudden detonation in the woodshed, followed by more and more. Bang, bang, bang! Crack, crack, crack! Squibs, crackers, and rockets fizzed, banged and cracked, jumping about as they exploded. The juniors coughed and gasped in the lurch, staggered back. It was the finish of all Glyn's home-made fireworks!

So poor old Glyn winds up in the woodshed. His father, the well-known millionaire from Liverpool, is very proud of his son's inventive capabilities and provides him with plenty of money to egg him on. So he had no difficulty in replacing all the chemicals, jars and other contraptions which lay at the bottom of the Rhyll. However, use of the woodshed, being one of the provinces over which reigned Taggles the St. Jim's porter, had to be paid for and here again. Glyn's father's millions provide a generous tip. So Glyn sets to work, free from the annoying complains of lesser mortals and is gloriously happy "surrounded by bottles, jars, tubes and smells." He is working on some large display pieces which will lighten up the sky on the night of the Fifth. He has already finished a pile of smaller fireworks. Kangaroo and Dane, together with Tom Merry and Co., also D'Arcy and his studymates of the Fourth, are pleased to be friendly with Glyn now that his smells are confined to the great outdoors and visit Taggles woodshed to see how the great man is coming along with the entertainment artefacts which will give them pleasure on the Fifth. Gussy kindly offers a helping hand. "I'm

wathah a dab hand at helpin' fellows, you know," he remarks, and idly picks up a fuse and begins waving it about wondering what is the peculiar object to which it is connected. Glyn makes D'Arcy jump by shouting at him to drop it which the helpful soul does. The fuse is connected to a large cracker and D'Arcy's nervous jump causes the fuse to fall into the lighted spirit stove. A magnificent display promptly follows as the large cracker and D'Arcy's nervous jump cause the fuse to fall into the lighted spirit stove. A magnificent display promptly follows as the large cracker detonates and immediately jumps into the pile of finished fireworks. The juniors crowd out of the gunpowder-filled woodshed and Glyn, in total exasperation, ejects D'Arcy with the aid of a broom.

But, come the night of the Fifth and the exhausted genius has been able to replace the smaller fireworks destroyed by the large cracker. He has also produced two display pieces which he thinks will please the School House and Dr. Holmes. The Head has promised to look kindly upon the display from the safe vantage of the school steps where he can dodge quickly indoors should anything disturbing occur. For him Glyn has produced a display piece reading "The Head is a Brick!" and for the School House "The New House is requested to Go and Eat Coke!"

Unfortunately the two display pieces, when lit, contradict that which Glyn intended and he has to hurry to the Head to apologise for his having read "The Head is requested to Go and Eat Coke!" Dr. Holmes is graciously pleased to accept the apology and the New House is chuffed to be hailed as a Brick. Another of his inventions gone wrong or meddling by the kindly intentioned Gussy? Glyn believes the latter and goes off in hot pursuit determined to "strew the hungry churchyard" with D'Arcy's bones.

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(The shenanigans recounted above originally appeared in GEM 299, 2 Nov 1913 and are reprinted in GEM 1499, 7 Nov 1936. The illustrations by R.J. Macdonald are from the 1936 reprint.)

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

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WIZARD OF OZ. Single cassette issued some years ago containing abridged version of film. Sale or loan appreciated. Price please to ERNEST HOLMAN, 10 Glenbervie Drive, Leigh-on-Sea, Sussex, SS9 3JU.

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## LIBRARY CHAT

by Derek Ford

I suppose you would only find a complete run of the *Detective Library* in the British Library. Amalgamated Press archives have long since been dispersed. Only eight of them have come my way in many years of collecting 'Blakiana', so that is all I have to base this chat on.

Number one was dated 14<sup>th</sup> June, 1919, although a Limerick reader, in number 31, tells the editor that he has been a regular reader every week for the last three years, and Arthur Gomersal, Leeds, offers the price and postage for number one, which I too am prepared to pay – plus inflation.

By my first number, 11, we seem to have settled to a weekly 14,000 word story of Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee with "Your Editor's Page". The editor has news of a forthcoming story by Sidney Drew about his millionaire 'tec Graydon Garth. There are colour illustrations to back and front and, unusually, a centre colour spread of some dramatic incident in one of the stories: in this issue Blake's aeroplane crashing into a fugitive at the wheel of a red car. These watercolour paintings could be won by writing to the editor telling him what you were doing to spread the fame of the D.L.

In number 28 we have a Derek Clyde mystery. A complete 10,000 word story about Clyde appears every week in the Glasgow Weekly Record, we are told.

In number 29 appeared the first of a series Nelson Lee v. Jim the Penman, alias Douglas James Sutcliffe, in "The Sealed room". Number 31 finds Sexton Blake and Tinker in Manchester. In the fog they come across the bound body of Dr. Mayo outside the "Haunted Grange", a few miles from Openshaw, where he has been imprisoned. The doctor has been kidnapped so that an impostor – Dr. Mayo's "bad lot" brother – could take away young Lord Salford from his Eccles home. From there to Naples, where there is a dramatic rescue of Lord Salford from the brink of the volcano and a fight in which Dr. Mayo's brother falls into the seething inferno.

Number 32 sees Blake at Kingsmere College as Fifth-Form master Mr. Gresham, and Tinker as the Head's new secretary, James Hargreaves. They are there for the protection of John Bagley's two sons, their father threatened by the Grand American Natural Products Trust to do a deal with them or face the consequences.

By 41 the serial "Nipper at St. Ninian's" was established and Nelson Lee was battling with "The Brotherhood of the Five Fingers".

The last number I have of the *D.L.* is 48, Blake and Tinker are still at Kingsmere, and Nelson Lee is investigating "The Ape's Paw". And there is an ominous note of change in "The Editor's Weekly Letter". He has had a pile of letters endorsing a reader's letter suggesting that stories of Buffalo Bill and Robin Hood be added to its "present attractive

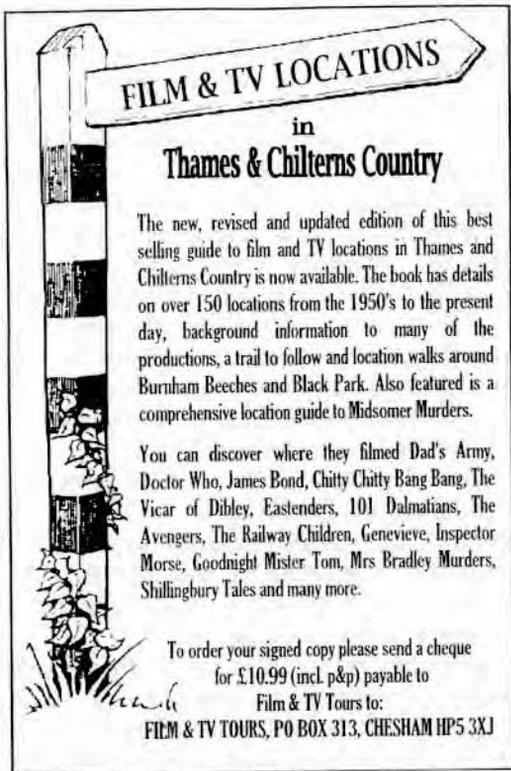
features", a verdict on the proposal awaited from the majority of readers. Number 50, dated July 10, 1920, was the last issue when it became *Nugget Weekly*, and finally disappeared into *The Marvel* a few months later.

It is a puzzle why the *D.L.* was ever launched. There was little if any slack from its mentors, *Union Jack*, *Nelson Lee Library*, and *SBL* to attract the pocket money away from them. At 1½d it must have divided into a ½d for the publisher, ½d for the retailer and ½d for the newsagent – and no returns! A policy applied to the *SBL* fifty years later when you saw fading copies in newsagent's windows up and down the country months after issue.

There was a splendid pair of iron 'Pedros' at a September auction of Sotheby's. They would have made wonderful guardians for your front door. But at £32,000 they needed guarding. By Alfred Jacquemart (1824-96), they were each 3'3½" in height. A similar pair of bloodhounds may be seen at the private entrance to Woburn Abbey.

Bloodhounds were in the news recently when some were sent for trials by the police, and Sherlock Holmes was quoted. Holmes never had a bloodhound, I remember. It was, of course, Sexton Blake they should have credited, Pedro making his first appearance in the hundredth number of *Union Jack*. I do not know when Nelson Lee took charge of Rajah, but it is no doubt recorded somewhere in the C.D.

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## IRON IN THE SOUTH

by Mark Caldicott

### PART THREE – ENTER THE PROFESSOR

Frank Kingston is travelling across London aboard an omnibus. He is on the upper deck and, because this is 1911, it is in an open-topped bus. This has a bearing on what happens next. When he sees an elderly gentleman fall down in that path of another, oncoming omnibus Kingston able therefore to leap straight from the upper deck into the road “as if the distance had been a mere foot or two”. He sweeps the old man into his arms, and dashes to safety. This courageous and selfless act has consequences which add a new dimension to Kingston’s battle against the Brotherhood of Iron.

He sees the old man safely to his home whereupon, overwhelmed by Kingston’s act of bravery, this white-bearded gentleman invites him into his home. He introduces himself as Professor Graham Polgrave, a name which, Kingston confesses, means nothing to him. Polgrave surprises Kingston with his next remarks:

“I am interested in you,” he went on, “because I can see that you are no ordinary man. Ah, I surprise you. Ha, ha, my young friend, you do not know me yet! You are a man with a greatly developed brain, a man with remarkably keen eyesight, a man with almost super-human strength. I can see it all, in spite of your outer appearance of foppery. Why do you dress like that? It is not normal for you to do so...” (*Gem* 160, 04-Mar-11)

Because he can see Kingston’s true nature, he expresses the desire to share with him his secret. Kingston has been puzzled that the Professor’s name has not appeared in any publication or lecture. Polgrave explains that he works for pleasure and, because he does not wish to be interrupted, works entirely in seclusion, shunning publicity. His inventions, he says, are for discovery and use after his death.

Kingston is taken to Polgrave’s secret laboratory where, among the professor’s many notable inventions, he is shown a remarkable range of drugs which, Polgrave declares, will be of great use to detectives since they have the effect of altering facial appearance in a controlled way which allows the appearance of others to be mimicked – a chemical alternative to make-up.

In response to the compliment Polgrave has paid him, for Kingston is the only person with whom Polgrave has shared his secret, Kingston reveals his own true identity, recounting the whole of his adventures, and of his fight against the Brotherhood of Iron. The professor is enthralled and, finding Kingston’s cause a worthy one, declares his willingness to allow his inventions to be used in the battle.

Kingston’s present concern is the for safety of his ally, the detective Carson Gray, whom the Brotherhood believe to have knowledge of their organisation and whose life is therefore in peril. He asks Polgrave if he can use the disguising drug to impersonate the Brotherhood’s Chief Agent for Canada, James Casell, who is to arrive that night to attend



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the Brotherhood meeting where Gray's fate is to be decided. Kingston meets Cassell at the station and takes him to Polgrave's house where the professor brings about a miraculous change in Kingston's appearance, transforming his skin, features and shape of his face to be exactly like that of Cassell. Brooks readers will know that disguise is often a central feature of Brook's stories, but on every other occasion I can think of this has been through theatrical props. The idea of disguise through drugs was not used again as far as I am aware. I think this is rather a pity, because once the unlikelihood of such an invention is forgiven, the reason for the undetectability of the disguises used is far more credible than some of the ridiculous examples of the success of theatrical make up in later stories.

Kingston successfully enters the Brotherhood's meeting. Haverfield lies to his fellow members, saying that Gray has confessed to knowing of the Brotherhood. The Brotherhood's plan, therefore, is to plant an agent acting as a butler in Gray's house. The agent is to arrange for Gray's telephone to be wired so that it will kill him through electrocution. Having gained this vital information, Kingston returns to the Professor's house in order to have the reversing drugs administered. He learns from the Professor that the prisoner Cassell's heart is in a very poor state as a result of his dissipation. It is this one factor which then saves Kingston and the professor from total exposure, for Cassell overhears their conversation and manages to make his escape. He rushes directly to the Brotherhood and is on the point of revealing Kingston's imposture and putting Gray's life at risk by preventing Kingston's intervention. His exertion in reaching the Council Chambers is too much, for he is on the point of revealing Kingston's identity ("His name is - aagh!") when he is struck down by a fatal heart attack.

There is a further setback for the Brotherhood when Mr. Joseph Reynolds of the Brotherhood, sent to pay a call on Gray so that he can witness the foul deed, asks if he can use the telephone. This is intended to be a ploy to ensure that Gray does not suspect there to be any problem with the telephone, but disaster strikes for at that very moment the Brotherhood's telephone mechanic, let into the house by the rogue butler, tests the power input into the telephone and Reynolds is killed.

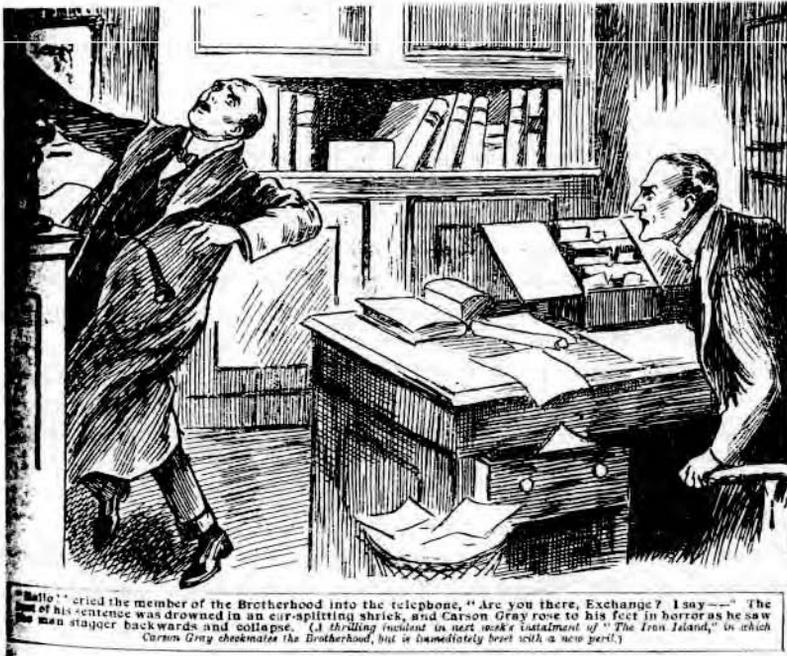
In desperation, Milverton, another Inner Council member effects the backup plan, which is to poison Gray. But these plans had also been discussed at the meeting where Kingston was present, so Polgrave is able to exchange the poison for a drug of his own which gives Gray the appearance of death. While Gray lies apparently dead, Kingston manages to inject Haverfield with another of the professor's preparations, a truth drug. When Haverfield meets the Brotherhood's leader Lord Mount-Fannell, the scene is most entertaining. Haverfield immediately reveals that he lied about Gray's knowledge of the Brotherhood and admits that he wanted him killed for no reason other than revenge for Gray having tracked him down. Mount-Fannell recognises that Haverfield has put the Brotherhood at risk in taking an action which was to satisfy only his own personal vendetta. Mount-Fannell decides to rid himself of Haverfield by giving evidence of his crime to the police, thus delivering him to the hangman. With Gray's "innocence" established, the detective is able to make a full recovery from his premature death.

With the conclusion of the Haverfield episode and the re-establishing of safety for Carson Gray, the *Iron Island* serial ended. It was immediately followed by a continuation

under the heading *The Brotherhood of Iron*. Other than the change of name, there is no apparent differing, and Kingston carries on his campaign as before.

His next target is Dr. Julius Zeetman, who is in charge of the Grange Private Lunatic Asylum. All is not as it seems at the Grange, however, for Zeetman is also a member of the Inner Council and uses his asylum to hide away victims of the Brotherhood who are not insane. Kingston learns this from Crawford, his man on the inside. With Dolores posing as a nurse Kingston gets admitted to the asylum as a patient. They manage to free two of the victims, and make plans to release the other six. Then Kingston overhears Zeetman telling Stevenson, his head keeper, that ten men are to be drafted in from London to act as extra guards to hide in the grounds and prevent further escapes.

Once again Carson Gray proves his value, for receiving a message from Kingston, he manages to delay the reinforcements. This allows Tim Curtis and Frazer to pretend to be the extra guards, fooling Zeetman. Knocking out Stevenson with a poison dart, and then repeating the exercise on the other keepers, Kingston is able to free the remaining victims and dispatch them to London in his car.



Zeetman discovers the awful truth and flees to London to tell Mount-Fannell. In his haste he forgets that there are papers at the Grange related to the dealings of the Brotherhood. On his return to get them he meets Kingston. Zeetman pulls out his revolver to shoot him but Kingston mesmerises him so that he cannot shoot, and then tricks him into taking a drug which turns him into a madman. Kingston is then able to use Zeetman's keys to open his safe and gain the documents. Mount-Fannell, having accompanied Zeetman on his train journey to the Grange, is waiting in disguise for

Zeetman at the station. Kingston arrives at the station with Dolores and Mount Fannell hears Kingston mention "wiring Mount-Fannell in London". Mount-Fannell immediately concludes that Kingston and Dolores are at the root of the trouble at the Grange. Mount-Fannell seeks to trap Kingston, but Kingston has penetrated his disguise and turns the table on him, leaving him tied up in a subway.

By this stage of the saga, into the twenty-sixth episode, Brooks has developed a gallery of characters which allow him to sustain the variety of his plots. With Kingston's own array of superhuman powers, with Dolores providing the "undercover female" role, with Crawford providing inside information which allows Kingston to line up his targets, with Carson Gray providing support, detective work and police liaison and with Professor Polgrave supplying disguises, drugs and inventions, Brooks has provided the means of developing endless possibilities for waging a battle against an unending series of villains. For a young writer this is a remarkably mature approach to his craft.

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## FORUM

### From TONY COOK:

I am delighted with the interest shown by our readers in John Buchan. I would however clarify the matter of *The Island of Sheep* which was commented upon by Colin Partis. This particular novel is not generally accepted as a Richard Hannay novel for as Denis Bird points out he is only a peripheral character in this. The credits go to his son Peter John Hannay. I must make an apology regarding the error pointed out by Mr. Bird. Indeed it is Mr. Standfast and not Steadfast although if I do not blame a typing or printing error I feel sure that I shall have to resign from the John Buchan Society!!

Fred Rich wrote regarding *The Reasdale School Mystery*. He might be interested to know that I have a copy of this book published round about the early 40s. Having looking through it again I suggest that there is no Scottish connection. I too have tried to find out more information regarding the author but without success.

### From JOHN LEWIS:

I was rather surprised to note Andrew Miles was unaware of the fact that Mr. Benjamin Legge was the Headmaster of the Courtfield County Council School, ride *Magnet* 146 (p.7, col. 2).

### From GEORGE BEAL:

I came across this silly bit I wrote on a flyleaf in a book many years ago.

"Kiam mi estis juna knabo, mi estis tre feliĉa kiam alvenis la sekvantan eldonajo de la knabeca semajnaĵo MAGNET. Tie, oni povus legi pri la vivoj de Billy Bunter kaj la aliaj knaboj de la fama lernejo 'Greyfriars'!"

Which, being translated from the Esperanto reads: When I was a young boy, I was very happy when the weekly publication of the boys' paper MAGNET arrived. There,

one was able to read about the lives of Billy Bunter and other boys of the famous school Greyfriars!

I learned the language while serving in the army during the last war. It helped me from going mad with boredom!

**From TERRY BEENHAM:**

I was in my newsagents this morning and noticed and perused the current publication of *Essex Countryside* magazine. I have not taken it for very many years but I was interested to see that they had focused on the Essex town of Halstead. I looked through the mag. but there was no mention at all of Edwy Searles Brooks. I felt fairly sure that I had heard Club members mention that ESB had lived in Halstead at some time.

I feel that it was in the thirties.

I decided to drop a quick line to the Tourist Information Centre in Halstead...

I am just wondering if you know the Halstead address of ESB or perhaps, if you think it of sufficient interest, to put a line out in a future issue of *Collectors' Digest* asking if any read does know it?

I certainly would be interested. I would pass it on to the Tourist Information Centre. Halstead is not too far from where I live in Chelmsford and I could pay a visit and hopefully take a photo or two. I then would be very happy to send you a copy of the photo for future publication.

**From ERNEST HOLMAN:**

As a result of reading the articles in recent CDs by Andrew Miles, I found my thoughts going back quite a few years.

After reading *Yaroo* by Giles Brandreth, I wrote to Eric Fayne with an article, pointing out that I could not believe that the excerpt from a so-called lost *Magnet* manuscript could have been the work of THE Frank Richards. I quoted several snippets from the excerpt, pointing out that this did not sound like Hamilton's work at all.

Eric replied that he felt F.R. by 1940 was not always writing at his old brilliance. He felt that the excerpt I mentioned was part of the *Battle of the Beaks*. What do C.D. readers think? For myself, I feel that the excerpt was phrased as though much had happened since *Shadow of the Sack* and therefore could not have been in *Battle of the Beaks*.

What do other C.D. readers think?

**From ROY WHISKIN:**

I am enjoying Brill Bradford's *I Remember* articles very much.

I was interested to read the features on *Rocket* in September's C.D. Howard Corn who has a complete collection of the comic gave a talk about it to the Cambridge Club on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1995.

The talk also formed the basis of an article by Howard in the winter 1997 edition of *Eagle Times* as part of the *Rivals of Eagle* series. I believe an article on Captain Falcon is also in the pipeline.

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## NEWS OF THE OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUBS

### CAMBRIDGE CLUB

For our September meeting we gathered at the Duston (Northampton) village home of Howard Corn.

After our usual short business section Howard presented an item on the *Knockout* comic. Launched in March 1939 by Amalgamated Press at 2d, it closed 1251 issues later in February 1963.

Using many examples of the comic and its Annuals taken from over the four decades of its publication Howard demonstrated just how this 'funny', initially edited by Montague Heydon, had come by some delightful characters. The comic usually had just one page of full colour [the AP version] with the remaining strips being printed in red (or blue) black and white.

Many of its characters were inherited: stripwise these included Sexton Blake and Billy Bunter and, in text, an American Cowboy/Soldier story featuring such people as Hoalong Cassidy, Kit Carson or Davy Crockett. Home-grown characters included Deed-a-Danny, Our Ernie and Sporty. In the 1950s their token Sci-Fi strip was entitled Swiss Family Rollinson. It also presented some classics in picture strip format. The publication appears to have possessed a 'holding capacity' element for some of the great names of the genre when their original print vehicle collapsed.

*Knockout's* cartoonists included some famous 'names' such as Eric Parker, Pat Nichole and Hugh McNeill.

Later, Paul Wilkins quizzed us with Twenty Questions on the cinematic legends from the Western.

ADRIAN PERKINS

### LONDON O.B.B.C.

No fewer than 39 members and guests sat down to enjoy a sumptuous meal at the Brentham Sports Club, Perivale, on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September.

The London O.B.B.C. Annual Luncheon is always a special occasion and this year was no exception to the rule. Guests included our President, John Wernham, his able assistant Gail Root, our old friend from North of Watford, Darrell Swift, Jonathan Cooper, well known Jennings aficionado, and Eileen Buckeridge, wife of Anthony who was, sadly, just too unwell to be with us.

Eileen spoke knowledgably and with great enthusiasm about her husband's works, giving a number of insights into where certain storylines originated. A real treat for the many Jennings fans present.

Following the meal, many members and guests made the short journey back to Bill Bradford's house to continue chatting and enjoy a cup of tea and a cake.

A thoroughly enjoyable day which even the fuel crisis could do nothing to dampen.

Sincere wishes for a speedy recovery are extended to Anthony Buckeridge. We sincerely hope that he will be able to join us at a club gathering in the not too distant future.

ALAN PRATT

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# BUNTER the SKATER!

By DICK PENFOLD.

AT Greyfriars, when the fields were white,  
Ice-skating gave us keen delight;  
And weird and wondrous was the sight  
Of Bunter, rolling rapidly.

His "borrowed" pair of skates were odd.  
Belonging each to Bull and Todd,  
Who, rushing breathless through the quad,  
Were bawling "BUNTER!" rabidly.

But Bunter, as he sped along,  
With all the merry Greyfriars throng,  
Burst into loud and tuneless song,  
His fat face beaming happily!

"The champion skater I shall prove,  
The shining star of the Remove.  
You clumsy asses must improve!"  
Said Billy Bunter snappily.

With breathless snort and gasping wheeze,  
His muffler streaming in the breeze;  
Like a stout ship in heavy seas  
Went Bunter, rolling rapidly.

But thin ice can't accommodate  
A human bulk of Bunter's weight;  
And so, beneath each borrowed skate  
The ice was cracking rapidly!

Then Bunter's gladness turned to gloom,  
The ice rent like the crack of doom,  
Exposing a wide, watery tomb  
Where Bunter sank unhappily!

"Help! Save me!" came the bubbling  
cry.  
"I dud—dud-don't yet want to die!  
I've not begun to live, that's why!"  
Gasped Bunter, sinking rapidly.

We laid a ladder on the ice,  
And saved the porpoise in a trice;  
And now, in blankets warm and nice,  
We're rolling Bunter rapidly!

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## MISGUIDING MORPHEUS

by Ted Baldock

My dreams were always beautiful, my thoughts  
were high and fine; no life was ever lived on  
earth to match those dreams of mine.

H. Van Dyke. *Another Chance*

Dhrames always go by contrairies, my dear.

S. Lover. *Rory O'More*

A warm summer afternoon in mid-term. That particular time when eyelids tend – almost naturally – to droop a little. When the drowsy hum of bees adds an irresistible incentive to idleness. A half holiday to boot.

Almost all the fellows, those whose eyelids were more active, were abroad engaged in various activities. A subdued tapping from the direction of masters' studies suggested that a Remington was in action, that the Remove master was engaged in his endless and favourite task. Historical facts were in process of being pinned down for posterity at a rapid rate.

The Remove passage was, for once, abnormally quiet. The studies were all deserted on this jolly and free half holiday. With the exception of No. I. Herein I was sampling the comfortable delights of Harry Wharton's old basket armchair drawn up by the open window.

The accumulation of gentle sounds from without, the murmur from the playing fields, a shout or two mellowed by distance from the direction of the river were all conducive to slumber. A cushion at my head, my feet resting comfortably on the window ledge, and my mind winging its way into the delectable land of dreams!

Dreams can be jolly, especially those from which one wakes somewhat reluctantly. Some may be sad, some disturbing, many thought-provoking. Just what escapes from that 'other world' in our minds when we slumber is known to no man.

It was not long before my own slumbers began to formulate rather strange, not to say unbelievable visions.

The curtain rises. Billy Bunter is rolling down the Remove passage towards Herbert Vernon Smith who is advancing from the landing.

"I say, Smithy old fellow, the post has just arrived and I have been disappointed about a postal order. It should have arrived today. I'm jolly well going to ask the Pater to write to the post master general about it... I wonder if..."

"Say no more Bunter old man," said Vernon Smith, reaching into the inside pocket of his jacket and producing a bulky wallet. "What shall it be, old fellow, will a fiver meet the case?"

Oh... I say" gasped Bunter.

"Don't say anything my dear chap, it's a pleasure to see you through, there is no hurry re-funding you know."

Smithy clapped Bunter on the back and passed on, calling to Redwing in cheery tones (small wonder that I stirred a little uneasily in my slumbers). Richer gems were to follow however.

“Bunter, old fellow.” Thus Wingate, captain of Greyfriars to the Owl who was ensconced in the only armchair in the Rag. “Can I have a moment, old fellow. Sorry to disturb you, I was wondering, would you care to join us in the first eleven against Rookwood next Wednesday? If you have anything else lined up do not hesitate to call off, I shall quite understand. All the fellows would appreciate it no end if you would join us. You would, of course, open the batting with me. That should make Rookwood sit up and take notice.” (It certainly would!) Bunter paused before replying. “May I think about it Wingate? As you know, I have so many calls upon my time, it is difficult not to offend the fellows, one of the penalties, I suppose, of being so popular.”

My dream drifts and fades into other shades. The tuck shop looms into view, wherein a jostling crowd of fellows are all demanding immediate attention. Elbowing through the ruck to the counter and there pushing aside two indignant second formers and taking possession of a stool is the Owl of the Remove.

“If you please Mrs. Mimble I – I am a little short of ready cash at the moment ... it is most distressing, the post you know, I was expecting a postal order but...”

Mrs. Mimble, ignoring the many shrill demands being made upon her from all sides raised her hands in deprecation. “Please sir, please Master Bunter, say no more, your word is as good as your bond, we all know. It is a pleasure to serve you. Of course you may have extended credit. Why, only last evening I was saying to Mr. Mimble, if only all the boys were half as gentlemanly as Master Bunter, and as thoughtful, life would be a great deal easier. Another half dozen raspberry tarts, of course, and do try some of my special jam slices sir – I would value your opinion on them ... MIMBLE, look alive there, another glass of lemon squash for Master Bunter ... do hurry there and don’t keep the gentleman waiting...”

The dream clouds over and the mysteries of sleep reveal another set of characters. Surely that is the portly figure of Mr. Prout, the master of the fifth form, hob-nobbing with little Mr. Twigg, master of the second form. They are actually arm in arm strolling beneath the elms. There is a distant booming. “Nonsense, my dear Twigg, you are quite right. I have observed with approval the discipline you maintain in your form – it does you credit sir, I rather envy your force of character my dear fellow.”

As is the custom with dreams the scene fades and merges into fresh fantasies. I may be in error, my memory could be blurred, yet I thought I observed in the shadowy periphery of my dream the ancient figure of William Gosling, cornerstone and guardian of the old Greyfriars gate. He is tugging a scant and grisly forelock to Billy Bunter as that youth passes bye. I caught the unusually mild tones: they were strangely muted and softened. “Afternoon, Master Bunter sir...”

Once more the scene changes. Surely I must be mistaken. Equally unsure am I that through the mists of sleep the unlikely figure of Joseph Banks – or was it Jerry Hawke – of the ‘Three Fishers’ infamy, arm in arm with none other than benign old Dr. Locke, strolling in the sylvan shades of the Head’s garden, having a tête-à-tête and apparently enjoying the best of relations. Banks (or Hawke) is actually taking the Head’s arm as they progress along the rose-fringed path. Did I see a slip of paper change hands somewhat furtively on the Head’s part? Surely Dr. Locke was not placing a bet on ‘Slippery Sam’ in the two-thirty at Wapshot. Perhaps they were merely admiring the rhododendrons and exchanging horticultural notes. Who knows? Of such stuff are dreams composed.

Events were suddenly returning rapidly to a state of normality. Reality was breaking through from every direction shattering, the idyll of my dreams. Alas for Arcadia! Alas for mellow smiles and honeyed phrases, for a truthful Bunter, a 'civilized' Gosling, a congratulatory Prout, an acid-free Remove master – not to mention a suspect Dr. Locke. All were fading at an alarming rate, rather like spectres at Cockrow.

The sun is westering, shadows are lengthening, fellows are returning in twos and threes from the playing fields and the river. A perfect Greyfriars day is drawing to a close. Crowds of boys are study bound in search of tea. A smaller crowd is making for big hall where the fare is somewhat more Spartan and traditionally, if inaccurately, termed 'Doorsteps and Dishwater'. A pecuniary necessity.

"I say you fellows, don't shove, you know. Beast! I say old chap, I'll tea with you and repay the compliment tomorrow – Yaroooooh! I say, Wharton you beast." Bunter is himself again. Once more the world has returned to normality.

And I, with some reluctance, remove my phantom feet from the window ledge and drift back to my own domain – a vague area somewhere between reality and the world of youthful adventure.

When in the fullness of time I sit  
And dream of youthful days,  
Fond memories through my mind will flit  
Of schooldays happy ways.  
Where now are Quelch and dear old Prout?  
And Bunter with his fears,  
Coker with stentorian shout,  
The roars and distant cheers.  
Where now the skin-tight loud checked 'Bags'?'  
Where now the fatuous smirk?  
Where now the everlasting 'rags'  
Which in the memory lurk.  
Gone, all along the broad highway  
That leads to yesteryear,  
Would they have paused and ever stayed,  
T'was not to be, I fear.

\*\*\*\*\*

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## REMEMBERING THE 'B's'

*In the old days of picture going in the 1930s and 1940s, you had the big picture, the news, the cartoon, the travelogues ('And so we say farewell...'), the trailers – and the second feature (or 'B' picture). These were sometimes almost as entertaining as the main attraction – Boston Blackie, The Saint, The Falcon, Charlie Chan, Bulldog Drummond, The Bowery Boys (or 'East Side Kids' or whatever they were calling themselves that month), Blondie, Maisie, The Lone Wolf, Roy Rogers, Hopalong Cassidy, Gene Autry, The Lone Ranger, and many others... remember them? In this occasional series of brief cinematic reminders, BRIAN DOYLE starts off with...*

### Remember 'The Jones Family'?

They were a typical, middle-class American family of the 1930s and lived in a nice, comfortable suburb, in a nice, white-painted, wooden-slatted house, with a front verandah, white picket-fences and front lawns and everything was safe and sound and friendly and all was right with the world, and there were lots of small adventures and relationships and a few misunderstandings and rows (but everything came right in the end) and plenty of laughter and humour. Especially humour. For these were family comedies and families (in both America and Britain) liked to see themselves and their own families reflected in these kind of cosy pictures.

The family consisted of Pa (or Pop or Dad) Jones (played by Jed Prouty), Ma (or Mom or Mother) Jones (played by Spring Byington) and Grannie (or Gran or Grandma) (played by Florence Roberts). Then there were the off-spring: 3 sons (played by Kenneth Howell, George Ernest and Billy Mahan) (in descending order of age), and 2 daughters: one teenager (June Carlson) and one 'grown-up' daughter (played at various times by June Lang, Shirley Deane and Joan Valerie). Russell Gleason arrived in Number 4 of the series as romantic interest for the elder girl (played at the time by Shirley Deane). These two actually fell in love during shooting on the picture (aaahhh!) and married in real life (as opposed to reel life). Occasionally guest stars would pop in now and then for one film and included Slim Summerville and Joan Davis. I think there was a dog around too, but I can't recall the breed or name.

There were 17 'Jones Family' films in 4 years (Hollywood really churned 'em out in those days!), the first being *Every Sunday Night* (adapted from a play by Katharine Cavannaught) in 1936 (they were the Evers family then). It was intended as a 'one-off' production, but was such a hit (especially in small towns in the States) that a whole series was planned (with the family name changed to 'Jones').

The films (much better in the early days than in the latter) could perhaps be described as a 'junior' or slightly 'sub-standard' version of the popular 'Andy Hardy' pictures (starring Mickey Rooney, Lewis Stone and Fay Holden), and this series of family films also began in 1936 (with 'A Family Affair'). But the Hardys were usually main or co-feature attractions, while the Jones Family were always second-features. The Jones movies were made by 20<sup>th</sup> Century-Fox and the Hardys by MGM.

Jed Prouty, who was 'Mr. Jones' throughout the series, is probably the best-remembered character by those who recall the films at all (they have never, so far as I recall, been shown on British television for some reason). Prouty (1879-1956) began

acting on the stage while still in his 'teens in the 1890s, and was a 'song-and-dance man' for the first 25 years of his career, appearing mainly in variety (or 'vaudeville' as it was known in the States); he made his first (silent) picture in 1919. Throughout the entire 1930s and 1940s, he averaged at least a dozen pictures a year!

Plump, round-faced, balding, bespectacled, harassed but cheerful, exasperated but resigned, he was the typical long-suffering, basically kind and benevolent middle-class husband and father of the everyday 'ideal' family as seen by Hollywood in the 'thirties and 'forties.

Spring Byington ('Mrs. Jones'), was, of course, the feminine equivalent – the perfect and lovable American wife and mother, who maintained her unblemished hair-do, apron and philosophical understanding of everyone's problems, through thick-and-think and everything in between. A role she had made her own since playing 'Marmee', the mother of those 'Little Woman' in the 1933 screen version of the Louisa M. Alcott classic (a performance that won her an 'Oscar' nomination).

The final picture in the long series was *The Jones Family – On Their Own* in 1940 (before World War Two could spoil the rosy and cosy picture of American family life, as depicted in this kind of movie). As a matter of interest, there were 16 'Andy Hardy' pictures 1936-58 – 15 up to 1946, then *Andy Hardy Comes Home* as a sort of final afterthought in 1958.

But The Jones Family work-schedule took some beating – 17 feature films in 4 years! You had to keep running on the same spot – and fast – to keep up with 'The Jones's' in those days...!

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## **GEMS OF HAMILTONIA from Pete Hanger**

On the occasion when a league match was being played at Courtfield, Trotter the page, had received leave of absence from Mrs. Keeble, the house-dame, to attend his grandmother's funeral. When the circus came to Friardale, Trotter asked, and obtained, leave of absence to attend the funeral of his grandfather. A new picture at Courtfield Palace coincided with the sudden demise of Trotter's uncle, and Trotter was given leave to attend the funeral. On Lantham Fair day, Trotter had required leave to give the funeral of his aunt his personal supervision. But by this time Mrs. Keeble seemed to think that there were too many sudden deaths in the Trotter family, or perhaps she considered that Trotter was displaying an unhealthy interest in funerals. Trotter did not go to Lantham Fair.

It had been quite a joke among the Remove fellows, who had heard of it. It was clear that, had not Mrs. Keeble grown suspicious, Trotter would have slain all his relations, one after another, to the thirtieth and fortieth generation – a massacre of the innocents that would have put Herod himself to the blush. *MAGNET 896*

...Billy Bunter had no idea of being crowded and cramped, if he could help it. Neither Tuppity, nor the Famous Five seemed to realise that Billy Bunter's personal comfort was the first of all considerations. Bunter realised it clearly. *MAGNET 1487*

Gosling was not a cheery character. He generally took a pessimistic view of life. Often and often Gosling wondered, as he sipped his gin and water in his lodge, what had induced him to take up a place at a school. Boys, in Gosling's opinion, were dratted imps. There was occasional satisfaction in shutting out a fellow who arrived a second too late at the gates, and reporting him; but, generally speaking, Gosling's view of the rising generation was that they all or almost all, ought to be "drowned". Thrashings and detentions were good, in their way, but "drowning" was what Gosling really would have recommended. *MAGNET 1151*

Fishy had had his tea with Mrs. Keeble, and had eaten all he could. His meals being paid for, Fishy would have regarded it as idiotic, if not actually sinful, to miss one of them. The cake was a special titbit to follow – one of Fishy's rare – very rare – treats. It had cost him two shillings and sixpence – two severe pangs and a half. Fishy was not going to eat it all at once. He was going to have a slice every day till it was gone – after which he was going to mourn sadly over the half-crown he had spent on it. *MAGNET 1491*

Tea at the Pagoda was exactly what he wanted – a good solid, substantial tea something like a couple of lunches and a dinner rolled into one, which was what Bunter considered a real, genuine tea. *MAGNET 1059*

"What about a spot of footer before tea?" asked the Bounder.

"Let's!" said Bob Cherry at once.

"I say, you fellows –"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Come on Bunter, we'll stick you in goal! Room for you in goal if you edge in sideways!" *MAGNET 1495*

Potter and Greene exchanged a hopeless glance. If Coker wasn't satisfied with two black eyes, a strawberry nose, a cauliflower ear, and a list of other damages, they could not help thinking that he was greedy. *MAGNET 1488*

Bunter's tone was sharp and haughty, as became a gentleman, a Public school man, and a scion of the noble race of Bunter, in dealing with so common a person as a circus clown.

Mr. Tip did not seem pleased, however. Perhaps he did not realise Billy Bunter's immense superiority to the common herd. Lots of people didn't. *MAGNET 1488*

## MORE MORCOVE PERSONALITIES



*Cora Grandways*

And now emerges from the "Dorm"  
 One, Cora Grandways, on "the storm."  
 The usual thing  
 She's had her fling  
 At those who work hard for the Form.  
 Just hear her shout for all to hear:  
 "I'll get my own back, never fear!"

'Gainst Betty's rule, she plots, conspires,  
 This sort of thing she never tires.  
 She vents her spite  
 To prove her right  
 To order things as *she* desires.  
 But Cora's always put to rout.  
 Unpopular—without a doubt!



*Miss Everard*

The Fourth Form hold in high regard  
 The popular Miss Everard.  
 We always find  
 Her patient, kind,  
 She's never harsh, she's never hard.  
 Although at times her poor head aches  
 Correcting our absurd mistakes.

I'm sure if you had got to teach  
 Naomer, Paula, how you'd screech,  
 And give them fines  
 And heaps of lines,  
 And hurl the books within your reach.  
 Not so Miss E.—she hides her pain  
 And gets the pair to try again.



*Pam Willoughby*

Pam Willoughby, a girl of wealth,  
 Who does us all good turns by stealth.  
 A brainy sort,  
 A thorough sport,  
 Let's raise our cups and drink her health.  
 And Helen Craig cries out, "Hear, hear!"  
 "Pam Willoughby is just a dear!"

Pam has the latest thing in clothes,  
 The latest tune she always knows.  
 Just like a queen  
 She walks serene  
 Without a hint of any pose.  
 Good-looking—yes, but never vain,  
 A girl one wants to meet again.



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