

# STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

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# The Magnet <sup>2<sup>D</sup></sup>



# THE SCHOOLGIRL

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# STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

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## Between Friends



This first issue of the C.D. for 2003 will reach you in the Easter season – a time, of course, that symbolises hope and renewal. I hope that the season will be bright and golden for you, like the daffodils which are trying to burst into bloom in our garden as I write this editorial.

Despite the problems of the wider world, and the awful threat of war looming large on our horizons, our books and reading continue to uplift and entertain us, with increasing warmth and vitality. How grateful

we should be to the authors, artists and editors who have made this possible!

I have recently been re-reading many old favourites, and have discovered that the post-war Bunter books make excellent bedtime reading. With larger and clearer print than the *Magnet* and with slightly simplified shorter plots, they are immensely readable at bedtime – when more demanding fare might not seem suitable. It is intriguing to see how well Frank Richards moved from the long *Magnet* series (with frequent “cliff-hanger” endings) to these complete novels, which demand a different structure. He seems to have had no difficulty with this, judging from the result of the Bunter books. There is, of course, the rather strange business of the Macdonald Greyfriars illustrations in the earlier books of the series. He manages reasonably well with Bunter, but the other Greyfriars boys, not surprisingly, evoke echoes of the St. Jim's juniors. It is a relief when Chapman's depictions of the Greyfriars cast take over again – though sad, of course, that this marked Macdonald's demise.

## **ANOTHER SAD FAREWELL**

We have recently heard of the passing of a long-time stalwart of the London O.B.B.C., Eric Lawrence. Tributes to him from Bob Whiter and Roger Jenkins (members of the Club from its earliest days) appear in this issue of the C.D. We send our most sincere condolences to Eric's widow, Betty, who – with Eric – hosted many happy gatherings of the London Club over the years.

I shall always remember Eric's friendliness, warmth and encouragement with affection and gratitude.

MARY CADOGAN

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## **KALEIDOSCOPIC GLIMPSES** **being** **Brief Incidents from the Greyfriars Story** **by Ted Baldock**

**“Look here, upon these pictures, and on this...” (Hamlet)**

Henry Samuel Quelch, M.A. master of the Remove form at Greyfriars School was not a suspicious gentleman, far from it. A cautious gentleman, yes, to a degree. It had been said of him by his fellow students at Oxbridge long years ago that he was able to see further through a brick wall than most people. An opinion reiterated many times since by his colleagues at Greyfriars.

But one summer afternoon an array of furtively grinning faces before him in the form room signalled that something was afoot. Skinner, Snoop, Stott, Billy Bunter and several other members of the Remove appeared to be enjoying a private joke. As has been affirmed, Mr. Quelch was not suspicious, but he did enjoy the reputation, among his boys, of being a 'Wily Old Bird', a difficult – nigh impossible – man to hoodwink.

As the Remove were studying one of the more tragic aspects of the English civil war at the time, certainly not a subject for levity, the Remove master had some cause to wonder what was afoot. Partly to concentrate the wandering attention of his form he was explaining that it was possible, indeed very probable, that the Greyfriars monks of that period were preparing old books and manuscripts for concealment in the very form-room in which they were sitting so that these might escape the destruction then being perpetrated by the puritanical excesses of the Cromwellian army.

This should have stimulated interest, and in not a few cases it did. But the afternoon was warm, and there were elements in the atmosphere conducive to slumber. A stray bee had found its way into the form-room through the open window and was droning around. It was enough to distract the attention of the less studious members of the form. Billy Bunter's eyelids were drooping behind his large spectacles, Lord Mauleverer appeared to be safely reclining in the arms of Morpheus, several other fellows were nodding.

All of which was not a little discouraging to a form master doing his utmost to carry his class along with him into the realms of an exciting and epoch-making past. But, as ever, Mr. Quelch was equal to the occasion and, with a combination of acid tongue and flexible cane, he was able to arouse a remarkable degree of attention.

## SECOND GLIMPSE

It was a bright sparkling summer morning with the sun shining from a cloudless sky of the deepest blue. Such a morning, many would say, could be experienced only under an English sky. There was a freshness in the air which raised the spirits and stimulated the mind in an extraordinary way.

And – William George Bunter was on holiday. At that moment he was rolling slowly along the esplanade at Folkstone where he was spending a few days at his Uncle Carter's establishment. Billy Bunter liked holidays, he fully approved of them. There was one little imperfection, though. In his estimation they occurred far too infrequently. Holidays, by the very definition of the word, implied a cessation of and an escape from work, and Bunter had never in the remotest sense been fond of any kind of work.

He had breakfasted well – very well. In fact, the waitress attending at his table had been not only amazed, she had also been a little shocked at the amount of provender he managed to stow away. However, being well-trained, she displayed no emotion and attended to his demands in an awed silence.

Now countless other strollers on this fine morning had the pleasure of seeing his fat figure, not entirely lacking signs of his gargantuan breakfast in the shape of crumbs and a certain stickiness. With his blazer open and a fat smirk creasing his features he was rolling, smugly reflecting on the dashing figure he must be making, and upon the next worthwhile moment of the day – namely lunchtime.

Attempts had been made to involve the Owl in the domestic chores at Uncle Carter's. They had proved entirely futile. Bunter had no intention whatever of getting involved with any chores. He was on holiday. In any case – as he put it – "I am a public school 'man' and it would certainly not be the 'done thing'."

## A THIRD GLIMPSE

Gerald Loder of the sixth form glanced keenly up and down the towpath before slipping through the gateway almost hidden in the high hedgerow, into the unkempt garden of the 'Three Fishers' inn.

The glorious Spring day, the cloudless sky, the sparkling waters of the river Sark all had the effect of making the decrepit old riverside inn look more 'down at heel' than usual.

The weed-grown path led up through a tangle of bushes and trees to the back entrance. The French doors of the billiard room were open on this lovely afternoon. Seated in a sagging deckchair, very much at ease and reading a pink racing paper, was Mr. Joseph Banks, the 'official' hanger-on at the inn. Joey was enjoying the afternoon sunshine.

A glass of fiery looking liquid stood on a small table at his elbow and he was wreathed in a thick haze of cigar smoke. Joey exuded from his frowzy person a strong odour of stale beer and spirits and equally stale cigar smoke, not a pleasant combination under any circumstances.

Loder had a strong feeling of disgust for him, and, be it said, with himself also – but necessity prompted. Banks was able to sustain quite a lucrative income from Loder and other

fellows with similar tastes at Greyfriars. Thus he was careful to be at his oily best when they arrived to be 'plucked'. Obsequiousness and cunning were the order of the day, and Joey was adept at both.

He looked up as Loder approached. "Arternoon, Mr. Loder sir". To do Loder justice, he felt at that moment that he would rather have been on Bigside with the other fellows playing soccer. "Hallo Banks" he replied.

The sixth former was furtive, with good reason. Had he been detected in such surroundings, in such company, it would have been a case of the first train home and the end of his career at Greyfriars.

One of the endearing facets of the Greyfriars stories is that events very rarely reached the point of no return. Thus we hardly ever lost a character. So we came to know them well, with all their quirks and habits, and in an odd way were loyal in our admiration for the least worthy of them.

To expunge any one of them would be akin to removing one of the figures from Rembrandt's 'Night Watch': it would be quite unacceptable.

#### **A FOURTH GLIMPSE**

"I propose to take you fellows out onto the river this afternoon and give you a few simple guide lines to good punting. I hope you appreciate my interest in you."

So pronounced Horace Coker of the fifth form at Greyfriars school. Greene was standing, looking out of the window. He raised his eyebrows. "Sorry, Coker, I am due down on Bigside for 'Nets' this afternoon", he remarked. "Cancel it Greene, we are going on the river", said Coker briefly. "I promised Blundell that..." Potter got no further. "Shut up, Potter! Don't jaw so much. I am going to give you a few tips on punting this afternoon.

Potter and Greene looked at each other and were silent. If there was a less gifted 'punter' at Greyfriars they had yet to meet him. However, silence is golden, and Coker would not have listened anyway.

On this glorious summer day the river Sark presented the perfect setting for enjoyment and idling. The river was busy with punts, skiffs and canoes being propelled by energetic Greyfriars fellows. It was an ideal day for drifting along the willow-fringed banks.

The oracle had spoken. As usual, Coker's will had predominated, and here he was, shouldering his way with his straw hat on the back of his head through a ruck of fellows, with Potter and Greene trailing along in his wake. "Make way there, you fags".

Midst a great uproar of protest and scuffling Coker and his two – on this occasion – most unwilling chums, made their way to the waterside to the punt and boatkeeper awaiting them.

"Get aboard, you two", ordered Coker. "And don't rock the punt more than you can help. You are a clumsy ass Potter! Do sit down and keep quiet". Potter's expression at this juncture defied description. However, he sat down and remained quiet – for the moment.

"Is that lesson No. 1"? asked Greene, as Coker tripped over the punt pole on the landing stage.

"Get into the punt and shut up, Greene", replied Coker. "If you hadn't got in the way I would not have tripped – now shut up the pair of you, and don't rock the punt. I never saw such 'fidgets'". Potter and Greene remained ominously silent as they took their seats in the punt. Both had the feeling that an exciting afternoon lay ahead.

So they pushed off, midst much cheering, and clouds of spray caused by Coker's manipulation of the punt pole drenching a number of fellows and knocking off not a few 'boaters' in the process. With Coker balancing precariously on the punting platform they rocked out onto the broad reaches of the Sark, colliding with several other craft, and so they proceeded in an erratic course down river towards Popper's Island.

The sun was shining. The scene was set. The audience was waiting expectantly and Horace Coker did not fail to come up with the almost inevitable result. Plunging along, he stuck manfully to his task while Potter and Greene lounged and watched the passing scene, more or less at peace with the world. But not for long! Coker, thrusting his pole vigorously into the water, found it bedded rather firmly in the muddy recesses at the bottom of the river.

It was the opening stages of the 'Tragedy'. That which followed was quite inevitable. Horace Coker's fate was sealed. Nothing could prevent the catastrophe about to happen to the delight and amusement of the crowd of fellows on the bank – and on the river. All waited with great glee. The punt glided away from beneath Coker's feet. The pole remained embedded in the mud at the bottom of the river and, leaving the vital moment too late in letting go his grasp, Coker was left hanging on while the punt glided serenely away down stream. The pole, under the pressure of his weight, was slowly bending – delightfully slowly to the spectators awaiting the spectacle – or tragedy – about to happen! It was not long in coming. The pole keeled slowly and gracefully over, and with it went the great master of the art of punting.

Both pole and Coker disappeared in a large upsurge of water beneath the shimmering Sark. For a moment only, up popped the punt pole which proceeded to glide peacefully with the current towards the punt, accompanied by Coker's 'straw', bravely sporting the Greyfriars colours. Then the tousled head of the master puntsman broke the surface amidst cheers and roars of laughter from all sides. Coker had the undivided attention of the whole 'House.

In the punt, now drifting slowly away, Potter and Greene, far from attempting to rush to the aid of their chum, were both helpless and convulsed with laughter. Poor old Coker, serve the ass right, would seem to be their sentiment. They fairly rolled in the punt with mirth which was echoed far along the shady banks of the Sark.

It made the afternoon for the Greyfriars fellows, although so much could not be said for Coker. Later that evening, in Coker's study, his chums were made to pay for their levity and lack of support. Horace read the riot act in no uncertain manner. But Potter and Greene had, as it were, been there before. It made very little difference to their relationship with old Horace. Not for the first time they vowed solemnly between themselves that they would continue to help to the best of their ability with any hampers which arrived from Aunt Judy. Could there possibly be nobler sentiments than these?

## A FIFTH GLIMPSE

"The boy Bunter, Quelch, the boy Bunter of your form sir".

Mr. Prout squared up aggressively before the master of the Remove and boomed: "He was seen, sir, by Loder in the vicinity of the kitchen. I presume, sir that he is aware of the strict rules concerning the domestic quarters...?"

Mr. Quelch frowned, and sighed. If only Prout would attend to his own business and attend to his own form. Such were the wishful thoughts passing through his mind. "Really, Prout ..." he began, but Mr. Prout held up an admonitory and plump hand. "It won't do, Quelch, it won't do at all, sir!" he boomed. "Foodstuffs have been missed in the past and the



**"I say, you fellows," said Bunter, "Quelch and Prout are having a row!" The next moment the window above opened and Mr. Quelch himself looked out. "Take five hundred lines, Bunter!" he cried angrily.**

blame has been placed upon Mrs. Kebble's cat, but sir, I am not at all sure..."

Mr. Quelch was quite sure, without any shadow of doubt, that Prout was a monumental bore. But these are thoughts certainly not expressed verbally between gentlemen, fortunately perhaps for Prout, who considered himself the guardian of the rules and regulations appertaining not only to his own form but over a wide area, not excluding Mr. Quelch's own form.

"Really, Prout, this is intolerable. If you would only confine yourself to your own affairs, this continual interference..." remonstrated the master of the Remove.

Mr. Quelch was interrupted by a swelling and purpling Prout. "What, what, what did you say, Quelch? Did I hear aright - really sir I must protest..."

But it was too late. Mr. Prout had a vision of the Remove master's back as he strode away at a great pace, his gown whisking behind him like a flag in a stiff breeze. The rooks high up in the old elms above Masters' Walk were cawing in chorus as though they were applauding the two masters below.

An hour later these two keepers of youth were sitting amiably together taking afternoon tea in Masters' common room. Prout had just delivered himself for one of his 'stock' jokes (which Mr. Quelch had heard many times before) and the Remove master's face had assumed an appreciative aspect. Visible over his usually grim features could be detected the ghost of a smile.

Thus did these little storms arise and darken the horizon, and as swiftly pass. The sun would break through, and calm would be restored. Prout and Quelch were old friends tried in the arduous crucible of teaching for more years than they would willingly admit. Each in a

rather odd way had an admiration for the other. Equally certain is the fact that neither would admit to such, which perhaps goes some way in making them so popular with readers.

#### **A FINAL GLIMPSE (Of possibly the ultimate in Bravado)**

Historical traditions, ancient legends, tales of old hauntings, black-panelled passages, large, gloomy bed-chambers heavy with suggestive shadows and creaking joists were of no interest whatever to William George Bunter. They had their place and they were fearsome, but they were of secondary importance in his scheme of priorities.

Without 'tuck' the horizons were bleak, and despondency prevailed. With the supply-line secure, all the spooks and ghosts, however grisly, could be treated with contempt.

The important point, the only thing which really mattered, was the commissariat. It was the sole factor to which he gave serious thought. It had to be in a robust and healthy state, the larders and cupboards must be well stocked with seasonable festive fare.

These conditions being assured, Billy Bunter entertained no fears of monkish cowlts at midnight gliding down – or up – broad stairways. He snapped a fat finger at any chance spectre who happened to indulge in a spot of haunting in the small hours. Rattling chains and the deepest of groans passed him by much like an idle wind. It was a brave and boastful Owl ... until ...

These fragmentary glimpses giving but a brief picture of a splendid whole will sound familiar chords with all Greyfriars readers, limned as they are with an aura so well known to us – as familiar, in fact, as our own neighbourhood. We know the characters and are able to calculate just how they may respond to any situation.

We know the school and its locality, so well have they been described, and we have come over the years to revere and love them. An admission unlikely to apply to many other school sagas.

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CD readers may like to know that this year's meeting of the

### **JENNINGS SOCIETY**

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## IRON IN THE SOUL IV

### The Circle of Terror

by Mark Caldicott

Professor Cyrus Zingrave is not dead. Lee's adventure at Christmas 1916 (as described in CD Christmas Special 2002) has established this fact.

Strangely enough, when a new scourge hits Britain in the new year of 1917, Lee does not suspect that his arch enemy is again at work. When cities are flooded with cards bearing a purple circle, and with the words "The Circle of Terror", it is considered to be a publicity stunt. Rockets fired into the sky display purple circles, chalked messages on pavements read "The Circle of Terror - We Terrorise" and cards dropped from 'planes announce the fact that the terrorism will start on the first day of the new month. ("The Circle of Terror", *NLL*, OS 85, 20-Jan-17.)

Nelson Lee does not think this to be a mere publicity stunt, especially when he receives a threat from the "High Lord" of the Circle that any intervention on his part will lead to "swift and silent death". Lee, characteristically, ignores the warning and is not surprised when Inspector Lennard calls upon him to discuss a letter received by Sir Roger Hudson, chairman of the Southern Counties Railway, in which the Circle demands £20,000 in gold. Lee's surprising advice is that the gold be paid. Lennard is somewhat disappointed in Lee's attitude which he sees as submissive and admitting defeat. Lee's view, however, is that the Circle should be taken seriously and that refusal to pay will lead to greater losses. Sir Roger, however, says Lennard, is determined to stand firm and not give in. The result is that the express from the South Coast is wrecked with resulting injuries to passengers and the loss of the train. Sir Roger calls upon Lee to show him a further letter from the Circle demanding the £20,000. He asks for Lee's advice and his help. Lee's advice is to pay. Hudson admits that the cost of the lost express far exceeds £20,000 but finds Lee's suggestion "preposterous". Lee's logic is simple, however. His view is that payment would buy time to track down the Circle's leaders. "If you ignore this second letter you may be certain more trouble will result. If you pay the money, however, you avoid further destruction, and stand the chance of receiving the money back."

Sir Roger's intention is to leave the gold at the stated place, but to lie in wait and apprehend the villain who collects the gold. Lee is uneasy about the plan but agrees to be involved. The Circle's agent is duly captured, but turns out to be a mere underling whom Lee believed, the Circle had expected to be captured. As a result of Sir Roger's action the Circle destroys a Rotherdale Bridge, the biggest in the Southern Counties Railway network, completely disrupting the rail services and causing untold expense to Sir Roger's company.

A further demand arrives and Lee once again urges compliance. Only when the Circle



And as the Nelson Column was passed there was a sudden flutter of white, and this was seen to be a large number of the now familiar tilt-edged cards. They fluttered to the ground in all directions.—  
(See p. 11.)

declare that they have kidnapped Evans, the General Manager of the company, does Sir Roger agree to pay the £20,000.

At last, however, courtesy of Nipper, progress is made. Returning to Gray's Inn Road, Nipper spots a figure hand-delivering a letter to Lee's consulting room. Nipper decides to follow the fellow who, he believes, is a Circle agent. At first he is disappointed, for the fellow visits a cinema and sits through the performance. But Nipper is patient and, when the man leaves, follows him to Putney Hill, where his quarry enters an empty house standing in a secluded part of the Heath. Nipper manages to enter through a grating to discover not only

that this is a Circle hideout, but also that this is where Evans, the General Manager, is being held. Nipper reports to Lee and Lennard and the trio swoop on the deserted house to effect a rescue.

The victory, however, is soured for Lee, when he learns that, because of Evans' rescue. Sir Roger has decided not to hand over the £20,000 after all. As predicted by Lee, the next morning the London express is partially wrecked, twenty people are injured, and several carriages destroyed. At last Sir Roger gives in and pays the gold to the Circle of Terror.

As a result of his involvement. Lee himself receives a final warning from the Circle that "If you take any action in any affair in which the Circle is engaged, you will be killed as pitilessly as a fly." Of course Lee takes no notice, although he is aware this is no idle threat, and is soon involved in a further episode.

Mr Vickers Slone is chairman of the Imperial Assurance Company. After an evening with friends during which he asserts that Sir Roger Hudson was wrong to knuckle under and boasts that he would never capitulate to a demand of the Circle of Terror, the next morning Slone receives a demand for £30,000 from the Circle. Lennard and Lee fail to persuade him to pay, with the result that two great warehouses insured by the company are burned to the ground. Recognising that this has cost his company three times the original demand, Slone decides to pay.

Nipper takes it upon himself, rather recklessly, to follow the agent who collects the £30,000. He finds that the man is already being shadowed, so he shadows the shadower. Convinced this is a Yard official he considers his action to be reasonable. What Nipper did not know was that there was a third shadower behind him, and, when he is seized by this third party, he soon realises that the man he is following is also a Circle agent. He is captured and imprisoned in a disused boiler lying on a stretch of mud beside a remote stretch of the Thames. The water, of course, is slowly rising. Although bound, Nipper manages to get his torch out of his pocket and shines it through a rust-hole, flashing it on and off. He is fortunate enough for this light to be spotted by the River Police, and to be rescued.

Meanwhile Lee has been considering the coincidence in the fact that Slone received his demand the morning after boasting to three acquaintances that he would not bow to the Circle's demands. Lee believes it possible that one of his companions may be a key member of the Circle. He homes in on Mr Edmund Cross. He follows Cross to a large detached house in St. John's Wood. Cross enters and is there for three hours, during which time other men come and go. Cross emerges and disappears in a large limousine. Lee investigates the house and discovers all the windows are barred. He draws the conclusion that Cross is the High Lord of the Circle. Lee tricks Cross into a meeting where he reveals himself to be involved in the Circle. He takes Cross prisoner and, convinced he is the High Lord, Nelson Lee concludes that Vickers Slone's £30,000 is to be found in the St. John's Wood house. Lee goes to the house and knocks boldly at the front door. As he expected, he is seized, but this is part of his plan since he believes that holding the High Lord made his position safe.

He is taken to a room where:

*The detective saw before him a smallish man. He was standing in the very centre of the apartment, perfectly still, and he wore a flowing purple gown of some soft, shimmering material.*

*And his face was yellow - bright yellow!*

*Two coal-black eyes were fixed upon Nelson Lee, and the detective could scarcely resist a sudden shudder. The man was so stardingly bizarre in appearance that Lee wondered if he was human. Except for his eyes there was utterly no expression on the yellow face.*

*"Mr. Nelson Lee, I believe!" exclaimed a soft silky voice.*

*("The Yellow Mask", NLL OS 88,10-Feb-17)*

Lee sees immediately that the man is wearing a yellow silk mask, but is certainly an off-day for Lee when he does not recognise those eyes. Had he done so he would have realised Cross was not the High Lord. However, such an obvious answer did, for the moment, elude him and Lee begins to bargain for the return of the £30,000 against the arrest of Cross. A telephone call is made to the place where Cross is being held by Nipper and the yellow masked man confirms that Cross is held captive. But then the awful truth is revealed to Lee. Yellow mask reveals that Cross is merely a member of the inner circle and is expendable - the man before Lee is the High Lord, and Nelson Lee is his captive.

Lee has walked into a trap of his own making, and even now the inhuman ruthlessness of the man in the yellow mask does not signify to Lee. It is Nipper who comes to the rescue, of course, having listened in on the conversation and hearing, before the phone is disconnected, the declaration that Cross is a mere pawn and that Lee is in the hands of the High Lord. Rushing to St John's Wood he frees Lee from captivity in the now deserted house and the two escape seconds before the house is blown into the sky.

Nelson Lee vows to work like a demon to learn the identity of the man with the yellow mask who called himself the High Lord - the Dictator. Maybe if he had just sat quietly with a cup of cocoa and thought about it he would have spotted the obvious.

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## A ROUNDABOUT JOURNEY:

From Seringapatam to Croydon

By Way of Scotland and Nepal

by

Derek Hinrich

I suppose it all began with Wilkie Collins and *The Moonstone*: the theme of oriental holy men, usually with mystic and occult powers beyond Western comprehension, malignly pursuing Europeans, usually Britons, across continents for some supposed affront.

You will remember the trio of Indian priests who live in England as itinerant conjurers but whose real purpose is to recover the Moonstone, the great gem looted by John Herncastle from a temple in Seringapatam, the capital of Tipoo Sahib "the Tiger of Mysore", when the British under Wellesley stormed that city in 1799. The priests are accompanied by a boy whom they periodically hypnotise and use in divination ceremonies to determine the whereabouts of the stone they seek.

TS Eliot called *The Moonstone* "the first, longest and best of English detective stories". Be that as it may, Wilkie Collins also created a sub-division of the thriller/detective story genre with this novel. One early follower was Conan Doyle who wrote *The Mystery of Cloomber* shortly after first introducing the world to Sherlock Holmes. *The Mystery of Cloomber* is a pot-boiler about the awful fate that hangs over the head of a British officer because he shoots some mystic holy man who interferes in a skirmish on the Northwest Frontier, thus preventing said holy man from hobnobbing or contemplating on a higher plane and presumably achieving even greater holiness, which his fellow holy men resent. It is set in Scotland, in that part of Galloway and Dumfries where Richard Hannay first goes to ground in *The Thirtynine Steps*. Conan Doyle, it would seem, did not care greatly for this early work in later years as, whilst he did not actually try to suppress it, he never included it in any collected edition of his novels.

I suppose the evil Dr Fu Manchu is in part another manifestation of the theme besides being, like Prince Wu Ling, the Yellow Peril incarnate. But before the First World War the most popular version of the genre must have been the once celebrated monologue by J Milton Hayes, *The Green Eye of the Little Yellow God*. When I was young the threat to recite this was a staple beginning for the act of such then popular cross-talk comedians as Murray and Mooney. One would start, "There's a one-eyed yellow idol to the north of Khatmandu,/ there's a little marble cross below the town;/ There's a broken-hearted woman tends the grave of Mad Carew,/ And the yellow God forever gazes down." At this point the

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straight man would be interrupted, thus saving the audience from the next ten stanzas of doggerel. But the whole monologue was popular on the halls round about 1911, when, I'm told by Andrew Pitt, it formed part of the repertoire of Bransby Williams, a quick-change artist or "promethean" actor famous in his early days for impersonations of Irving and Beerbohm Tree, and later for reciting dramatic monologues and performing interpretations of Dickens' characters - Fagin in the condemned cell, and so on. I remember seeing him as a very old man on TV in the '50s and in some British films of the 'thirties and 'forties.

If you've never read or heard the full text of this epic, it concerns a subaltern who steals the gem, the green eye, from the head of an idol as a birthday present, and in response to a whim, of his colonel's daughter with whom he is enamoured; he then has his throat cut by the idol's acolytes for his pains. Since the only British officers stationed at Khatmandu would be attached to the Gurkha Depot there, and Gurkha officers, were reputedly the cream of the Indian Army, Mad Carew's behaviour really seems extraordinarily ill-disciplined. C Aubrey Smith would really have disapproved.

I know one cannot plagiarise a title and it must be difficult to write a story to plagiarise a monologue, but all in all *The Green Eye* by Edwy Searles Brookes in No 911 of *The Union Jack* of March 20th 1921 comes about as close as one could wish, as you may see from the frontispiece. Perhaps "suggested by" as used in the credit titles of some films in the days when Hollywood studios bought best sellers and then only used the title would be the best way to describe this adventure of early "Golden Age" Sexton Blake, for Bransby Williams was probably still reciting J Milton Hayes's magnum opus on the Halls, and I don't doubt it was that that suggested the story to Brookes.

Here we have a classic *Moonstone* plot unravelling before us as Sexton Blake is summoned by a distraught young lady to a village near Croydon to help her fiancé who has been arrested on the suspicion of murdering a neighbour and putative rival for her hand. Her lover has been found standing over the dead man in Crofton Spinney with the murder weapon, his own revolver, in his hand. The young man, who had an appointment to meet the victim in the spinney, swears that he had heard the shot and hastened to the scene just in time to pick up the pistol - which he had lent to the dead man some days earlier - before he is found in this state by the dead man's gamekeeper. It should be noted that this firearm has been treated in the most cavalier fashion, having been left, fully loaded, lying about on a desk in the dead man's study for days.

Sexton Blake believes the young man and sets to work investigating the circumstances. He soon finds evidence of strange footprints at the death scene, references in an anonymous letter to the dead man regarding "a green eye" and has several encounters with sundry sinister masked Chinese who appear to be bent on burgling the dead man's house despite it being guarded by the Surrey Constabulary.

Of course the green eye turns out to be a gem stolen by the dead man from a temple in Nanking and his death is not at all what it seems. Sexton Blake succeeds in proving the young man innocent and all eventually ends happily, and even reasonably happily on this occasion for the sinister Chinese, for though they came with theft and murder in their hearts they did not kill the dead man. So who did? For further details, see *The Union Jack* No 911 of March 1921.

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# THE BOY'S HERALD

by Bill Bradford

This paper was launched on Friday 8th August 1903, by Harmsworth, later the Amalgamated Press, claiming to be a healthy paper for Manly Boys. Priced 1d, it contained 16 pages, 14½ x 11", and was printed on white paper. It came from the same stable as BOYS' FRIEND AND BOYS' REALM, which had commenced on 29.1.1895 and 14.6.1902, also 14½ x 11, but on green and pink paper respectively. All three were edited by Hamilton Edwards, who was both imaginative and industrious. On 31.10.1903 the publishing day was changed from Friday to Thursday.

My motives for featuring this paper are because this is its centenary year and, over 20 years ago, in a glorified junk shop, in Malton, Yorkshire, we discovered a huge bound volume, weighing over 7lbs, containing the first 52 issues of Boys' Herald. There were a couple of torn pages, and 1 and 2 were photocopies but as the papers have not been folded in half (the fate of most large papers) I would think the issues were bound at an early stage: the binding is of that era.

I have not time or space to comment on so many issues, but just give a few salient points.

Most issues contained about 5 longish serials (or series), plus a Battle for Life, a one-page potted history of prominent celebrities, including Buffalo Bill, Jules Verne, Andrew Carnegie, Geo. M. Fenn, Joseph Chamberlain, Thomas Edison and Baden Powell. Plus 'Your Editor's Advice', which ranged far and wide, including advance notice of stories to come, in this and companion papers. Authors include Maxwell Scott, Sidney Drew, David Goodwin, Geo. M. Fenn, Capt. Wilton Blake (D.H. Parry), Norman Goddard, Murray Graydon and Henry St John (C.H. St John Cooper). Illustrators, identified by initials or familiarity, include Harry Lane, Fred Bennett, T. Holmes, Val Reading, G.M. Dodshon and R.J. Macdonald.

Two stories which impressed me most, in No. 1 there starts the first of 40 tales of St Basil's School, by Henry St John, a school he had earlier created in the Boys' Friend and which he resurrected in the Boys' Realm (2nd series).

In No.2 we meet *Nelson Lee's Pupil*, which ran for 26 weeks. The author Maxwell Scott had created Nelson Lee, a private investigator, in the Marvel 31.10.1894, but here we have his first encounter with Nipper, who was to become a permanent part of the famous duo. Like my self, you may never have read of their first meeting so may I quote the description of Nipper as given by a railway porter; "A dirty little ragamuffin that goes by the name of Tinker, who spends most of his time hanging around this station and is quite a character in his way. He's supposed to earn a living by selling matches and carrying bags, but his principal business seems to be checking the cabbies and guying the police. As a rule he talks like any other guttersnipe, but now and again, you'd be surprised to hear what beautiful long-winded words he can use and they are not all English words. He can chuck in a sentence in French, or Latin, or Greek, although it may be that is all bunkum, for he is sharp enough to know that none of us can understand them languages." Anyway, the Nipper we meet in these early stories is very different from later yarns, perhaps just as well

Reading these, a century later, it is perhaps difficult to evaluate the writing and layout,

# The Seventh House of St Basil's.

(CONTINUED) A SCHOOL STORY



He pushed open the gate as he spoke, and he and Harry entered the courtyard. "Got you!" cried a voice. And at the same moment Harry felt himself held tightly by the scruff of the neck. "Got you, you little brute! I've been waiting for you!" said Hughes triumphantly.

No detective of fiction has ever proved as attractive as NELSON LEE, and the fact that, in this tale, he adopts a poor boy and makes him his pupil will give an additional interest to this wonderful story.

—YOUR EDITOR.



## NELSON LEE'S PUPIL

A STORY OF THE FAMOUS DETECTIVE  
BY  
MAXWELL SCOTT

IN THIS THRILLING NELSON LEE STORY, THE BEST MAXWELL SCOTT HAS YET WRITTEN, EACH OF THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERS PLAYS AN IMPORTANT PART.

NELSON LEE	-	-	The Famous Criminal Investigator.
NIPPER	-	-	A street urchin with a great future. Intelligent, smart, and plucky.
MICHAEL NOVIKOFF	-	-	A Russian, whose brother Paul has been kidnapped.
THE COURT	-	-	The man who heads the conspiracy against Michael Novikoff and his brother.
JULIAN BRETT	-	-	An accomplice.
FIDDLER DICK	-	-	Nipper's father, an educated man who has come down in the world.

# THREE LEADERS.

Alongside I present to my friends copies of the headings by which they may recognise the ONLY Journals for Boys conducted by—



Printed on Green Paper.



Printed on White Paper.



Printed on Pink Paper.



YOUR EDITOR.



# NO QUARTER!

A Tale of the  
FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR

By CAPTAIN WILTON BLAKE.

IN THIS SPLENDID TALE OF THE GREAT FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR OF 1870-1871 THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS ARE:

- GERALD MONTAGUE . . . . . A Young Englishman; formerly an Art Student in Paris.
- GASTON DE GRANDCOEUR . . . . . Son of Colonel de Grandcoeur, one of the old French nobility. Gaston and Gerald are fast chums.
- FRITZ OTTO . . . . . An Art Student in Paris, where he acted as spy for the Prussian army.

being so very dated. Yet there is a certain charm to the 'big three'. I suppose Boys' Friend is the most interesting, proven by its life of over 30 years.

To me, one of the fascinations of pre-World War I papers is the history of our hobby and insight into that generation. Also the advertisements and unbelievable prices. In front of me are those for solid silver watches at 10/6 and motor cycles at 38 guineas.

Those were the days!

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## THE "GIRLS' CRYSTAL" ANNUALS

by Dennis L. Bird

Christmas morning: about 3 a.m. Wake up suddenly with a thrill of anticipation. Switch on the light - reach for the pillowcase which Father Christmas (alias Father) has surreptitiously delivered a little earlier. Inside, some of those longed-for presents: a Meccano set, or Bayko; perhaps liqueur chocolates (naughty gift to a small boy!), and always books. Usually among them would be a hefty Christmas Annual - "Playbox" or "Rainbow" in one's early years; later something a little more sophisticated.

Several of the Amalgamated Press's weekly papers produced annuals. The "Girls' Crystal" came rather late in the day. The paper itself was not launched until 1935, and it was another four years before there was an annual. It first appeared at Christmas 1939 - a fateful time, for World War II had broken out three months previously. It was dated for 1940, an even more threatening year - but there was no hint of that in its 13 cheerful stories. The artist Evelyn Flinders produced a Swiss skating scene for the cover, and contributors included such "G.C." favourite authors as Daphne Grayson (who wrote the "Cruising Merrymakers" series), Gail Western, Ida Melbourne, Renee Frazer. Hilda Richards of Cliff House fame wrote instead about her other character, Linda, on the French Riviera.

Peter Langley, who was also Renee Frazer and other "GG" stalwarts, wrote about "The Vanished Schoolgirl." Of course this featured his debonair private detective Noel Raymond and his schoolgirl niece June Gaynor. She "was something of a problem to the young detective... Her restless curiosity and cheerful disregard for risks had more than once led her into danger." So it was on this occasion - not one of Noel's best, because there was never any doubt about the identity of the villains.

That 1940 volume is extremely rare. The only copy I have ever seen is in the collection of Mary Cadogan, to whom I owe thanks for letting me see it and its successors. Each year the pattern was much the same - some 200 pages at a reasonable cost (even by 1951 the price was only six shillings and sixpence - 32½ pence in today's money). From 1945 there were some additional features - puzzles, crosswords, film quizzes.

The 1941 Annual's cover was by Valerie Gaskell, the "Cruising Merry-makers" artist; appropriately, it showed a deck shove-ha'penny game on board ship. Dorothy Page and Margery Marriott contributed to the ten stories, and the madcap schoolmistress Miss Desmond appeared in a tale by Jean Vernon (Peter Langley again, or - to give him his real name - Ronald Fleming). He also provided not one but two Noel Raymond cases: "The Schoolgirl Detective," again featuring June Gaynor and also a mistress called Miss Marple, and "Noel and that Strange Umbrella," which he solved on his own.

# GIRLS' CRYSTAL Annual 1951



Issued from The Fleetsway House, Farrington Street, London, E.C.4

("The Girl Who Outwitted the Nazis"). And as always dear old Sally Warner was there, as narrated by Daphne Grayson.

In 1945 Valerie Gaskell managed to get her signature on to her frontispiece, a snowballing scene, Noel again appeared as a reprint: "The Black Pirate's Threat," from a 1940 "G.G." Another 1940 yarn provided his case for the 1946 Annual: "Noel's Four-footed Assistant" (echoes of Valerie Drew and her faithful Alsatian Flash). This first post-war Annual also introduced some new authors, such as Enid Wilson, Jennifer Day, Barbara Tempest ("Rivals for the Skating Championship"), Iris Drayton, Doris Graham, Ruby Stevens. All, no doubt, gentlemen under pseudonyms!

In 1947 Peter Langley (Ronald Fleming) contributed an original story about Noel Raymond and his niece June Gaynor: "The Puzzle of the Yuletide Doll." This was illustrated by Evelyn Flinders, who had occasionally depicted Noel in the past but was not the usual Raymond artist. The 1948 Annual recalled the subtle draughtsman who had so memorably drawn the elegant detective since 1938, in an excellent new story called "Mystery at the Art School." In addition to the usual 13 or so stories, there was also a film quiz.

The cover of the 1949 Annual was an Evelyn Flinders drawing of girls embarking on an aeroplane with Royal Air Force fin flash. The crossword (absent last year) re-appeared, and June Gaynor was there with her uncle Noel ("Nunky") in "The Trail of the Mystery Parcel."

Fifteen stories in the 1950 Annual foreshadowed the future, in which words were to give way to pictures. One story (Carolyn Bailey's "The Ballet Shoes") was only three pages long, and June Gaynor - without her uncle - appeared only in a two-page strip cartoon. Incidentally, this was a unique instance of a puzzle-story: there was a clue in the narrative to the villain's identity which the reader had to spot.

The 1942 Annual's frontispiece showed girls on horses. Hazel Armitage now joined the nine story-writers; Noel Raymond unravelled "The Mystery of the Chocolate Biscuits" - a wartime tale of rationing.

By 1943, there were only eight tales. Evelyn Flinders drew a frontispiece of girls playing on a beach, and such familiar "G.C." authors as Elise Probyn and Anne Gilmore joined in. There was a good Noel Raymond story, "The Mystery of the Locked Belfry" - a reprint of a 1938 tale. And another Raymond re-cycling appeared in the 1944 book: "The Trail of False Clues" (from 1939). This year's book, incidentally, was a little more expensive, at seven shillings and sixpence (37½p).

That 1944 edition contained stories by the usual favourites - Hazel Armitage, Gail Western, Elise Probyn, Renee Frazer. There were also some newcomers, such as Linda Martin, Pamela Holmes, and Joan Maitland

# GIRLS' CRYSTAL *Annual*



## 1940

*Issued from the Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.*

In 1951 there were 14 stories, a crossword, and other features. T.E. Laidler, the definitive artist of the Cliff House School stories, drew the title-page picture of a girl hurdler, and as usual he insisted on putting his name to it. There was a poor Noel Raymond story ("The Mystery of the Circus Ape") with June Gaynor, and the usual contributions from Daphne Grayson (Sally), Ida Melbourne, Elizabeth Chester, Rhoda Fleming. A notable addition was Dorothy Page's story about the secret agent Peter Kirby, illustrated by the best Noel Raymond artist.

The "G.G." Annual continued for many more years, but it had become a comic-strip publication. The written word was phased out, and the splendid narratives of the 1940s were no more.

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## VIVAT BUNTER

by Ted Baldock

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

(W. Van Dyke. *Another Chance.*)



The merry click of bat on ball,  
The sharp command to run,  
What happy memories they recall  
Of long days in the sun.  
Here's the bat and here's the ball  
Here are the wickets sir,  
And here's the man to hear the call,  
He will attention fix.  
A mighty swiper in the land  
No other term will serve,  
He'll face the school's best bowlers bland,  
For he has heaps of nerve.  
We watch and hold our breath with awe,  
And note the bowler's sigh.  
And cheer aloud for more  
Oh, how the minutes fly.  
Click, there goes the ball again  
Far into the rough,  
How does the Owl his form retain  
The critics he'll rebuff.  
The hands on the pavilion clock  
Are moving round too fast,  
Just see that first class slicing shot,  
The bowlers – will they last?  
Bunter will have his just desires,  
And not an 'over' more  
As long as he more runs requires  
He'll bolster up the score.  
The Owl is really in great form,  
Real class is shining through.  
He could a greater field adorn,  
A hero – and true blue.  
So 'Vivat' Owl, long may he reign,  
Long may he lethal be,  
And may the victories which we gain  
Resound o'er hill and sea.

(The above is an account of a dream punctuated by stertorous snores and grunts akin to the rumblings of an approaching storm in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars, unfortunately – or otherwise – rudely terminated by one of Bob Cherry's boots, a fairly substantial article of footwear. Just as Wingate had narrowly missed a catch in the out field!

The wily Owl had survived to fight on – which he did, almost destroying the pavilion clock on two occasions.

Would that some dreams could become glorious realities – the happy ones at least.)

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## FRANK CAPRA'S *LOST HORIZON*

by Laurence Price

Frank Capra's 1937 film adaptation of James Hilton's 1933 novel *Lost Horizon* rates, in my view, as one of the most sympathetic and successful adaptations of all time.

From the perfect casting of the principal characters to the lavish sets and the overall retention of the spirituality and philosophy of Hilton's great novel it is hard to fault Capra's interpretation. Dimitri Tiomkin's score also perfectly complements the production.

Capra had to delay production as his ideal choice for Conway, the superb Ronald Colman, was initially unavailable - he filled the time by making *Mr Deeds Goes To Town*. The wait, was, of course, worth the delay.

His lovely co-star, Jane Wyatt, summed up Colman's appeal in an article she wrote about him many years later:

"I believe that *Lost Horizon* (1937) will be remembered long after all his other pictures because it came along at precisely the right moment for him. He had everything the part required. He was the right age and still had a lithe, athletic figure which made it seem possible for his character, Conway, to make the hazardous solo journey back to Shangri-La.

"Above all, his intelligence and his sense of the spiritual were central to the part of Conway. It was wholly understandable that the High Lama would choose him from all others in the world to be brought to Shangri-La to take his place. Ronnie stamped the part with his image and made it completely his own... Like Conway, he was thoughtful and kind, and this came across to those watching the film and to those of us on the set.

"The first day I worked on *Lost Horizon* I remember thinking that Ronnie must be underplaying Conway, and was surprised when director Frank Capra said "Cut and print." Later, at the rushes, I was amazed to see that the scene played beautifully; that Ronnie had done it with great subtlety and finesse. He had magnificent eyes, and I think fine eyes are the most important piece of equipment a *film* [her emphasis] actor can have. On film the audience must be able to see the character think - to see the wheels go round... Ronnie had the quality of being able to express every thought with his eyes."

It is that truth about Colman's acting style that Miss Wyatt so succinctly observed. At key moments in the film we, as the audience, are swept up emotionally in Colman's - in Conway's - alternate sense of wonderment and awe on his first sight of Shangri-La, and later in his "overwhelming sadness" - that *Wehmut* and *Weltschmerz* of the novel - when he must leave it: and finally when we share in his deep and silent joy when, after great trials and tribulations, he reaches Shangri-La once more.

Jane Wyatt's character, Sondra, introduced the biggest and perhaps most controversial change from Hilton's novel. Gone was the key female character, Lo-Tsen, the Chinese princess of royal Manchu descent, who, in appearance ever young, had actually arrived at Shangri-La nearly fifty years before. Initially attracted to her in the novel, Conway overcomes his baser emotions and concedes her love to the younger and impetuous Mallinson, with all the tragic consequences that will later entail.

Although a truly lovely and sympathetic character, Sondra's presence is problematical to the underlying philosophy of the book and the film, for presumably, Conway must lay aside all carnal desires - and Sondra must herself too - if he is to adopt the mantle of the High Lama.



## "Lost Horizon"

The combination of a James Hilton novel, directed by Frank Capra, and RONALD COLMAN as the star, promises great things for this picture. Tibet is the setting, and obviously Colman is continuing his policy of preferring colourful roles to the man-about-town parts he used to play. A new girl, JANE WYATT (above and below) is the heroine, and MARGO and JOHN HOWARD (bottom right) are in the cast.—Columbia.



There is an alternative, but unsatisfactory, clichéd Hollywood-style ending, in which, when Conway eventually returns to Shangri-La an ecstatic Sondra runs out to greet him.

But overall, Jane Wyatt's presence does not detract from the film version; her romantic interludes with Colman are delightful. The beauty, sensuality and humour of what I would call the "Garden of Eden" sequence when Conway pursues a willing Sondra on horseback through a waterfall and playfully rearranges her discarded clothes while she swims in a lake is beautifully filmed and only re-affirms to the viewer that this truly is the paradise of Shangri-La. Similarly the later scene with the doves; it was actually Colman's own suggestion that the birds should carry flutes from practices he had previously observed in, I believe, Bali.

Another major change, but entirely successful, is the substitution of Mallinson with George Conway, the impetuous colleague replaced by equally impetuous younger brother. Well-played by John Howard his later loss is more poignant and personal to both Conway and the audience.

Excellent performances were also garnered by H.B. Warner as Chang, for which he was Oscar nominated for Best Supporting Actor, and from Sam Jaffe in the pivotal role of the High Lama.

A supporting character who saw successful transition from the book to the screen was the American speculator, Barnard, played by Thomas Mitchell.

A new character was the palaeontologist, Lovett, played by the former stage and silent film actor, Edward Everett Horton, who provided some pithy comic relief with Barnard.

Miss Brinklow, the formidable missionary did not survive transition to the film. Her place was taken by Gloria, a histrionic peroxide blonde dying of consumption, played by Isabel Jewell. She benefits, though, from the rejuvenescent effects of Shangri-La, even to later dispensing with her make-up and peroxide hairdo.

Lo-Tsen was, in a way, twice replaced by both Sondra and a character called Maria, the latter played by a Mexican dancer called Margo. Maria, indeed, replaces Lo-Tsen as the unwilling "ageless" female resident of Shangri-La with whom George Conway will fall in love and persuade his unwilling older brother to take them away from Shangri-La and to the icy tragedy that awaits them.

These and other changes were made to the original novel, necessary for its successful adaptation to the silver screen. Hilton was quite pragmatic about the changes and had this to say about the work of the screenwriter, Robert Riskin.

"It was really amazing to see how Robert Riskin has kept the feeling, and spirit of the book," Hilton was quoted as saying. "He did a most remarkable piece of work really. Of course, he had to change several things; he asked me about them all. They were none of them important. If you wrote them all down I suppose it would sound as though they'd made a lot of changes. That wouldn't be fair. None of the changes are structural. They don't affect the theme or the central story."

But to Capra must go the eventual credit of uniting all these diverse elements into a satisfactory whole. In December 1934 Capra discovered the book while waiting for a train at Los Angeles' Union Station; he approached Columbia Pictures head, Harry Cohn, and successfully persuaded the studio to commit \$2.5 million to its production - half the then small studio's yearly budget.

So began construction of the lavish sets, including the 1000' x 500' Shangri-La lamasery; this Art Deco-style masterpiece was designed by Art Director Stephen Goosson and was based on the concepts of Frank Lloyd Wright. It was seen to impressive effect when Conway

and his companions arrive at Shangri-La. The snowbound Tibetan mountain sequence was filmed in a cold storage warehouse, where the actors performed their scenes in freezing temperatures. Production ran from 23 March 1936 and principal photography was completed on 17 July 1936.

Capra had a battle with studio executives over his choice of composer for the score - a little-known, Russian born, ex-concert pianist called Dimitri Tiomkin, who had never before scored a film. Capra also enlisted the aid of Max Steiner, the man who had literally invented film music, to conduct the score. "... a little bird told me that Tiomkin would come up with new, fresh, novel music..." Capra had blithely stated; and Capra would later write, after he first heard the score conducted by Steiner "I left with stars in my eyes... Tiomkin's music not only captured the mood, but it darned near captured the film."

The gamble seemed to have paid off until a disastrous screening before a preview audience in Santa Barbara when the opening scenes were greeted with gales of laughter where the amnesiac Conway regains his memory and relates his adventures in Shangri-La; the remedy was expeditious cutting - the three hour long *Lost Horizon* became an expertly edited 132 minute classic. For a while at least!

By 1942, with World War II running its course. *Lost Horizon* was reissued but with 24 minutes cut to tone down the film's pacifist message - there are few, if any, prospective foreign secretaries even today with Conway's views - and a new introduction that changed the enemy at the film's opening to "the invaders from Japan" where "ninety white people" are at risk of being "butchered by the Japanese hordes." The date of action in Baskul also changed from the night of March 10 1935 to that of July 7, 1937.

Further cuts took place over the years when the film was shown on television. Film preservationist, Robert Gitt, began a long and tortuous restoration in 1973 which eventually restored much of the lost footage and dialogue. Today all but seven minutes of footage has been restored and the seven minutes of dialogue are accompanied by freeze frames and stills.

Today, therefore, we can enjoy *Lost Horizon* much as Capra officially released it and even have access to deleted scenes and alternative beginnings and endings; but, above all, enjoy a film adaptation that is truly in the spirit of the great novel by James Hilton that inspired it.

In the book *Six Screenplays by Robert Riskin* (1997) edited by Pat McGilligan, the section on the making of *Lost Horizon* concludes with these words: "Visually beautiful, impeccably acted, haunting in its philosophical certitude, it has cast a subtle spell over audiences in release and revival for sixty years. Time has been generous to the film, and if one measure of greatness is risk, then *Lost Horizon*, certainly one of the most courageous Capra-Riskin films, is also one of their greatest."

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## THE BOY WHO LOST A FORTUNE

By Ray Hopkins

Valentine Mornington, heir to millions, is understandably shocked when he hears from an entirely unexpected source that he may not be in line to the huge fortune he expects when he comes of age. There may be another claimant, one whose existence he had not been aware of.

*"You stand to inherit twenty thousand pounds a year when you're twenty-one. Your father's brother had a son. That son was lost when he was a baby, and never found. Sir Rupert Stacpoole, your guardian, is still paying the enquiry agents who are searching for him. If he's alive, he will be about twelve years old now. If he's found you're left a beggar. Your father was a beggar, dependent on his elder brother for an allowance. You'll be dependent on old Stacpoole for the bread you eat, if your cousin turns up, and he will!"*

Thus, Lattrey of the Rookwood Classical Fourth, to Mornington, when the latter tells him he wants no more to do with him upon finding out that Lattrey has ordered young 'Erbert Murphy to pass to him any note that Mornington gives him regarding bets to the shady group who frequent the bird-in-Hand pub. This, according to Lattrey, so that these low-lives won't be able to blackmail Mornington by holding something in his handwriting.

'Erbert, a homeless waif whom Mornington has taken under his wing and persuaded his guardian/uncle to install as a pupil at Rookwood, "does not even know what his real name is, Murphy merely being the name of the kind hearted soldier who had taken charge of him, and who had since given his life for his country in an Indian frontier fight."

But 'Erbert knows the Lattreys of this world. He tells Lattrey he's more likely to blackmail Mornington than Joey Hook and Co. at the disreputable pub in Coombe. 'Erbert also tells Mornington what Lattrey had ordered him to do.

Mornington confronts Lattrey. "You," he tells him, "are worse than Townsend and Topham, a pair of vicious duffers, and Peele and Gower, a pair of vicious rascals. It doesn't hurt me to lose a few quids at banker and bridge and I dare say you're hard up and want the money. But I didn't realise you were a dangerous scoundrel."

Lattrey knows he has lost Mornington forever as an easy way of shifting someone else's money into his own pocket. He then makes the remarkable statement as recounted above. Asked how he knows all these private details, Lattrey tells Mornington that his father's firm is Lattrey and Co., the enquiry agents that Sir Rupert Stacpoole has asked to try to find the missing heir to the family millions.

It bothers Mornington that if Lattrey's prophecy comes true he will be unable to continue to give 'Erbert the backup and support that making him his protégé has led to. This possibly gave Mornington more pleasure than the thought that he would be "rolling in it" for all his future. Which sentiment would doubtless surprise the Rookwood Classical Fourth if they knew of it.

Mornington informs his uncle of that which Lattrey has given him and Sir Rupert hastens to Rookwood, infuriated that his secret dealings with Lattrey's father have been leaked by the enquiry agent's unscrupulous son. Sir Rupert tells his nephew/ward that he had been

only five when his cousin Cecil was lost through the carelessness of his nurse and believed to have fallen into the hands of gypsies, and the tragedy was deliberately kept from him. Sir Rupert tells him that Cecil Mornington's death has been presumed but it was by the wish of his dead father that the search still proceeds apace. Mornington bitterly reflects that if Cecil is found he will have "a choice of beggary. I can sponge on you or on my cousin Cecil!"

Mornington wants to know how the missing Cecil, if found, would be able to prove his identity. "Like yourself and all the Morningtons." Sir Rupert tells him, "he bears a birthmark on his shoulder, like a wolf's head. That would identify him beyond all doubt." Mornington, still struggling against the idea of being beholden to anyone for his bread says. "It's no loss to him, when he doesn't know it. He can't be educated; he can't be decent. What's the good of dragging such a wretch out of poverty and making him master of the Mornington estates?"

If Cecil is ever found Sir Rupert will always be a friend and protector to his displaced ward.

Mornington storms out of the school, infuriated with Lattrey, his uncle and with himself for his own disturbing thoughts involving hatred for the innocent baby cousin whose life, if it yet continued, could not have been one of ease and plenty as his own had been. He tramps along the old towpath for about a mile, his chaotic thoughts continuing to make him hot and angry. But a sudden cry for help in a high-pitched boyish voice causes him to race to the source farther along the river. He finds Murphy's two closest friends wringing their hands in anguish. A white face appearing momentarily from beneath the surface shows that it is 'Erbert who needs rescuing from a watery death in at least twenty feet of water. Mornington dives in without removing any of his clothes except his coat and finds it hard going against the current to get himself and the small boy back to the bank. Almost within reach of the hands of the two fags at the river's edge, the current sweeps him and his heavy burden further out. His arms are paining him. He is having trouble with his breathing and it is only through the efforts of the fags clutching at his hair and that of the drowning 'Erbert that Mornington finds himself collapsing on the towpath.

Mornington opens his eyes and smiles up at 'Erbert who recovers first and is bending over him, fearful that he has become unconscious. He assures the concerned boy that he's all right and then frightens 'Erbert by suddenly turning white and sinking back. "On 'Erbert's shoulder, just above the arm, was a dark, strange mark, a deep dull crimson in hue, and in shape strangely like a wolf's head!" Mornington struggles to his feet and roughly pulls his protégé towards him, in such a savage grip that 'Erbert cries out in pain. Mornington rubs his finger over the birthmark, swearing loudly in words 'Erbert has never heard him use before, then flings the boy from him so that he falls to the ground. 'Erbert cannot understand what has happened and watches, tears streaming down his face, as his benefactor and friend races away from the scene of the rescue, still cursing. He, and not Lattrey's father, has found his missing cousin Cecil!

In the fraught days that followed, it becomes increasingly obvious to the Mornington watchers that something of great importance has taken place at the rescue of the small boy; Mornington made it quite plain that he wanted no more to do with 'Erbert and avoided all contact with him. This turned out to be not as easy as he supposed for he would suddenly turn and find 'Erbert's agonised eyes staring at him, his lips quivering and obviously hoping that the older boy had regained his temper and all would be as before. Mornington, for his part, was a prey to wicked thoughts in which he had let 'Erbert drown, but realised that human

nature which dictates that we must all help others in peril, would not have let him do this.

As chief Mornington watcher, Lattrey is fortunate to overhear a conversation between Mornington and 'Erbert from which he deduces that the bad feeling on the part of Mornington is caused by the sight of a mark on the younger boy's shoulder. Lattrey's vaunting look of triumph observed by 'Erbert sends a cold shaft of fear through the waif's inside. Having read his father's private business papers Lattrey knows all about the Mornington birthmark.

Lattrey confronts Mornington in his study and tells him he knows who 'Erbert really is. He intends to tell his father that the heir to the Mornington millions can be found at Rookwood. However, he will keep silent if Mornington will give up Erroll and Jimmy Silver and Co. as friends and return to the fold and enjoy banker and bridge with the rest of the bad hats, and he will also show his gratitude to Lattrey by slipping him the occasional banknote. Mornington agrees, not knowing how long he will be able to keep up the pretence of appearing to prefer the company of Lattrey and his unsavoury cronies. "I've stood a good deal of swank from you," Lattrey says, "and this is where you eat humble pie, and look as if you liked it!"

But Lattrey's blackmailing tactics finally become too much for Mornington to stand and, on the way to the Bird-in-Hand one day, he knocks Lattrey to the ground, knowing that this may mean his quick departure from Rookwood for, despite his uncle's assurances that he will never want, whether heir or not, he has determined to leave and make his own way. The ingrained pride of the Morningtons will allow him to act in no other way.

He returns to Rookwood and explains to Erroll the change in his fortunes which will mean he will have to leave the school. He says the only way to keep the status quo will be for him to remain silent. His long-lost cousin has been found and others will have to reveal who he is. He intends to remain silent on the subject. Erroll stares in some dismay at his friend, unwilling to believe that he is not only a thief but a swindler as well. He urges him to tell Sir Rupert what he has found out. Mornington argues that Lattrey will remain silent with the aid of banknotes passing into his wallet from Mornington's, so he is temporarily safe from exposure.

But passionate outbreaks of bad temper drive Mornington to wonder about his own sanity, usually culminating with hurtful remarks shouted at his protégé. These frightening changes in personality drive 'Erbert to keep out of Mornington's way, and he begins to wonder if perhaps it is himself who is at the root of the matter. Erroll, standing by on more than one occasion and observing the deterioration in his chum's attitude towards 'Erbert, causes him to suspect that the little waif must be the missing cousin Cecil. He urges Mornington to reveal all to Sir Rupert and not to wait until the demands of Lattrey drive him clean out of his head.

Lattrey pushes Mornington farther along the road to madness by telling him he has written to his father and is negotiating with him an amount of money that he will receive by revealing the name of the missing heir. When he does, Mornington will be finished, he will be "a beggar, dependent on his cousin's bounty - dependent on the ragamuffin he had saved from want. It would be a strange reversal of the position." Erroll consoles his worried chum by telling him, "You saved him from starvation. You risked your life to pull him out of the river. He's devoted to you. He's bound to treat you generously." Erroll is frightened by the look on Mornington's face. He would have been even more alarmed if he could have guessed "the dark and terrible thoughts that thronged the fevered brain of the dandy of the fourth."

Joey Hook, playing billiards at the Bird-in-Hand, is startled by the ashen appearance of Mornington when he calls him out into the garden of the pub. Mornington, knowing that



Hook is one of the "most unscrupulous rascals outside prison walls", has a proposition for him that succeeds in turning Joey's red, greasy face as ashen as Mornington's own. The junior informs Hook that he will give him one hundred pounds to perform a service for him and a further one hundred after the job is successfully completed. There's a chap at Rookwood he wants removed. "And never return," he concludes. Hook, feeling that he is in the presence of a madman shakes his head in horror at the junior and returns to the pub. "The ruffian had refused. Money could not tempt Joey Hook to such a crime as Mornington had hinted at."

On the way back to Rookwood, Mornington, crossing the heath, comes to the verge of one of the dangerous old quarries, now unused, and stares into the dark depths and listens to the sound of the wind making swishing noises across the small lakes formed by heavy rain in the cuplike base of the quarry.

Erroll urges his chum to be nicer to the waif who is too upset to do anything more than regard his patron from a distance. Mornington surprises Erroll by saying he intends to take

'Erbert for a walk over the heath on the following day. That should blow away the cobwebs. Erroll frowns at Mornington, observing the unnaturally high colour on his cheeks that have been so pale of late and his breath which is being expelled in short gasps.

'Erbert dresses himself in his best for the promised treat with his patron. Peele and Gower, standing at the gates as they leave, whisper that Mornington looks cracked. "He's got a queer look in his eye." 'Erbert is not aware of the strange remarks. He's too thrilled that all appears to be well once again between him and his benefactor. He glances several times at Mornington but the older boy remains silent and it was only looking more closely at him that 'Erbert wonders if perhaps he is not well. "This was not the happy walk he had been looking forward to."

The smaller boy backs away from Mornington as he draws him closer to the edge of the quarry. He is suddenly aware of an unnatural wild light in the older boy's eyes, and screams in terror as he realises what is about to happen to him. "In that fearful moment the icy hand of death seemed to lay its clutch on his very heart."

The small boy's eyes almost closed as trees, sky and the sheer drop before him whirled around. He resigned himself to spinning like a tailing leaf over the edge of the quarry and wondered what terrible thing he had done to Mornington to deserve this heart-breaking end to what had been a joy and comfort to the penniless waif from London.

But life's end wasn't to be just yet. He felt himself pulled back and flung to the ground several feet from the verge. He opened his eyes and locked up to see Mornington leaning over him, his voice thick with emotion. "You'll never be in danger again. Forgive me." The small boy gripped Mornington around his shoulders, feeling ashamed that he had momentarily suspected Mornington of wishing to harm him. Still shaking from the fear that had gripped him he followed Mornington as he moved further back from the verge and sank down on a rock.

Mornington reveals the birthmark on his own shoulder that corresponds exactly to the one on 'Erbert's. The small boy is amazed to hear that he is related to someone so far above him and assures Mornington that he will keep quiet about it so that the older boy will not feel ashamed of him. Mornington, with a catch in his throat, tells 'Erbert that he is the one to be covered in shame. 'Erbert cannot understand how he can be the heir to the Mornington fortunes when he is the younger of the two. Mornington tells him that it is due to the fact that 'Erbert's father was older than his. 'Erbert again reiterates that he won't touch a penny of the fortune. Nobody will know and they can stay on the same footing. Mornington tells him that Lattrey and his father the detective both know and will see that the fortune will go to the rightful heir.

When they re-enter the gates of Rookwood, Erroll is pleased to see that his chum has become reconciled with his protégé and even more pleased when Mornington introduces 'Erbert as his long-lost cousin Cecil. Mornington tells the scowling Lattrey that neither he nor his spyin' father will get a penny of the reward for finding his missing cousin.

The results of the foregoing are easy enough to forecast. Lattrey and Co. promptly dump Mornington and begin to make honeyed overtures to 'Erbert. The waif of Rookwood wasn't brought up on the rough streets of London for nothing, however, and scornfully turns down offers of tea with the "Nuts" with banker and nap to follow at which time 'Erbert will be relieved of some of the fivers the cunning ones believe to line his pockets.

But, once again, Lattrey and Co. are forced to change tactics. Tubby Muffin overhears

a conversation between Mornington and his protégé. Mornington was scowling and the younger boy was looking pleased. "Morny ain't hard up and 'Erbert ain't his cousin at ail. It's all a mistake," Tubby reports.

Once more looking forward to card parties and expensive driving outings lavishly provided by the reinstated wealthy Mornington, the nuts apologise to him and urge Mornington to accept the benefits of their friendship. Mornington accepts with gratitude and invites them to attend a meeting in the Common-room that evening at which time he will explain to them all what precisely had happened to cause the odd change in his fortunes.

Mornington opens the proceedings by announcing what a great pleasure it is to find himself on good terms with his old chums. Not true that they are rallying round him because they've heard he has regained control of the Mornington fortune. The fact is, Mornington goes on, what Tubby Muffin saw and overheard was an act, precisely to reveal the true extent of the nuts' regard for Mornington. The nuts howl with rage, the rest of the Classical Fourth cackle with glee and Mornington comments sadly, but with a smile, "It's heart-breakin'. Here I'm losin' all my devoted pals again, only an hour after a handsome apology and a happy reconciliation!"

(This series first appeared in the weekly BOYS' FRIEND, second series, 844 to 848, August-September 1917. It was reprinted in SOL 32, July 1926, "A Schoolboy's Temptation," and SOL 108, September 1929, "Facing the Music.")

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## WANTED:

copies of  
**THE SCHOOLGIRL, 1930-40**  
if possible.

Also any books of CLIFF HOUSE SCHOOL stories.

MARY McLAUGHLIN  
2 Margaret Crescent, Wigston, Leicester, LE18 2EH

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**WANTED:** *The Schoolgirls' Own* weekly, from first issue, 1921. Also SGOL no. 611 'When Pam Came to Morcove' and no. 627 'Called Back to Morcove. Also 'Rivals of Morcove', serialised in *Girls' Favourite* in 1922. SYLVIA REED, 8 Goline Court, Hillman 6168, Western Australia. Email: diamond2@iinet.net.au

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## **ERIC LAWRENCE**

### **A Tribute from Roger Jenkins**

My memories of Eric Lawrence go back to the 1950s. He worked for the Road Research Laboratory, and at one time he had hopes of becoming a professional singer: certainly he remained a member of a barber's shop quartet. The London OBBC had regular summer meetings at his house in Hollybush Ride and later at his bungalow at Wokingham. He had an enormous and valuable collection of crime novels, and in the same room was a piano on which he used to play pieces of light music and get the members to name the titles. To the very end Eric Fayne always used to get me to drive him to the Wokingham meetings, and these continued, despite Eric Lawrence's ill-health, and only ended when he and his wife moved to East Anglia. It is sad to realise that Eric is longer with us, but these vivid memories will always remain in our minds.

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### **IN MEMORIAM by Bob Whiter**

Amid the fun and joys of story paper collecting  
Sometimes gloom has to prevail,  
If we lose a valued friend or colleague  
Who has gone on that last and lonely trail.

Our thoughts go out in commiseration  
To their loved ones and next of kin.  
May they gain solace and consolation  
In spite of the unhappiness within.

Our dear friend Eric has gone from us  
But his memory will stay ever green.  
His deeds and generosity to our movement,  
His devotion remains serene.

May the Great Architect of the universe  
Look kindly on you, dear friend,  
Until we meet again on the Elysian fields  
And our troubles are all at an end.

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## COKER VERSUS BROWNE

by Arthur F.G. Edwards

It is a matter of some regret that Plutarch never heard of Horace James Coker and William Napoleon Browne. If he had there is just a chance that he would have seen them as subjects for Parallel Lives and I could have cribbed from his work.

It follows that I have to resort to the realm of fantasy. In a wild dream I imagine that our pre-WWII Examination Board for one year ditched two of the basic works, i.e. Paradise Lost, a Shakespeare play, the Golden Treasury and The World Encompassed, from the list of set books for the English Literature Examination, and substituted a Magnet series and another of the Nelson Lee.

If that were so, inevitably one of the questions set would have been:

'Compare and contrast Horace James Coker, and William Napoleon Browne'.

Those works I would have read avidly and, on the day, made that question the first I answered. Today I am far from confident, although I read every Magnet from number 1091 and have everything relevant that Howard Baker published, that I have refreshed my now imperfect memory. My addiction to the Nelson Lee is a recent acquisition, and there are many and large gaps in my collection. Today I would leave the question to last and resort to a device advised to us re the last one to be answered, with time running out. Viz 'List key points briefly, this may earn you enough marks to pass'.

Comparisons would be few, both were about the same age, both fifth formers. They have money behind them, one from an aunt, the other from parents. Both could be generous, Coker to a very few. Browne to all and sundry, both are honest and straightforward, Coker possibly because he was too stupid to be otherwise, Browne because that was his nature.

The contrasts are startling. Physically Coker is described as 'burly', big for his age, Brown is well built but not noticeably large, Coker being stupid beyond belief, Browne having a great intellect. The former a dunce who gained fifth form status because of undue pressure on the Headmaster, latter earned his on merit. Coker saw himself as a great scholar and sportsman, Browne excelled both in studies and games. Coker boasted of his imagined prowess, Brown was modest and did not boast of his achievements. Coker 'had a short way with fags', which category embraced the whole junior school, Browne went out of his way to advise and help younger boys. The net result was that juniors, especially the Remove, had a short way with Coker; Browne gained the respect of both juniors and seniors. Coker, via the generosity of Aunt Judy, bought the friendship of Potter and Greene, even so he sometimes has to bully them, although not a bully by nature. Browne is "hail fellow well met" to young and old alike in St. Franks. Coker's stupidity is not confined to school work and games, as reference to his antics on motor-cycles, and the black eye he gave Prout, show. Browne had brain-waves of his own but also recognised and embellished those of others, without claiming credit. Overall, one does not know whether to pity, despise or ignore Coker, whereas if one had problems, or was in trouble, Browne could be relied on to give help or sound advice. Browne was a credit to St. Frank's, Coker jeopardised the very existence of Greyfriars.

I would just expand a little on the last point because I see the continued presence of Coker in Greyfriars nullifying the claim by some, but not by the school in its prospectus, that Greyfriars was/is 'a leading Public School'. I accept that it is possible that

by family influence, or wealth, admission can be gained for a son or daughter to some such schools. Parents may wish to do the best for their children, and expect expert teaching in small classes to produce favourable results but, however wealthy, would expect value for money. The dubious promotion of Coker to the fifth form may have masked for a while his stupidity, but teachers would have complained about their wasted efforts and the retarding effect this had on the progress of the remainder of the class. Parents would soon become aware of this, and demand action: 'either get rid of Coker, or we will remove our boys'. I cannot say that I know of cases where boys have been expelled for lack of progress, but there were/are ways and means of achieving the same end.

The small Independent Grammar School I attended was by no means a Public School but we had among us a large number of 'fee payers'. Generally, parents were satisfied with the results hard work and good teaching in small classes produced, but some pupils fell by the wayside. As it happens, I have a list of boys admitted in the same year as me, with the date on which we left. During our years there one boy died, another moved with his family but within the first two or three years, another six or seven left. There is no record of why they left prematurely, but there are clues. I confess they are not conclusive. All left from the B form (we were a two-form entry school), all but one were fee payers and some I can still remember as being far from bright! This suggests the fee-paying parents were not willing to accept lack of value for money, and the parents of the 'scholarship boy' were unwilling, or unable, to maintain him beyond the school leaving age and sent him out to work.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**"BY THE SWORD" by Richard Cohen. ISBN 0 375 50417 6 Price £20.00  
Published by Macmillan. 519 pages fully illustrated. Reviewed by Norman Wright**

Those of us who in our youth were brought up on a diet of swashbuckling adventure strips, TV series, films and adventure stories never seem to tire of the 'clash of steel', whether on the printed page or the screen and Richard Cohen's new book is a thorough and absorbing study of all aspects of the subject. The subtitle of the book: 'A History of Gladiators, Musketeers, Samurai, Swashbucklers and Olympic Champions' says it all. For in a thoroughly absorbing way Cohen guides his reader through every aspect of the art of fencing. It is refreshing to find a scholarly work written with such enthusiasm. All too often these days books that are deemed to be 'academic' are as dry as dust - I often feel that the authors of such works go out of their way not to enthuse over their subject for fear of seeming to be 'populairists' - that is certainly not the case with "By The Sword" which educates, informs and entertains. I opened the book for a brief perusal and found myself absorbed for an hour! I learned of the history of tournaments, discovered that D' Artagnan (of "The Three Musketeers" fame) was a real historical character and was fascinated by the chapter on swashbuckling films - and still have plenty left to keep me fully occupied for several weeks.

As you would expect from such a thorough study the author refers to many sources throughout his text and these are very comprehensively listed in the twenty pages of notes at the back of the book. There are also copious footnotes and a comprehensive index. The text is complemented with a good selection of illustrations. All in all this is an excellent study of a

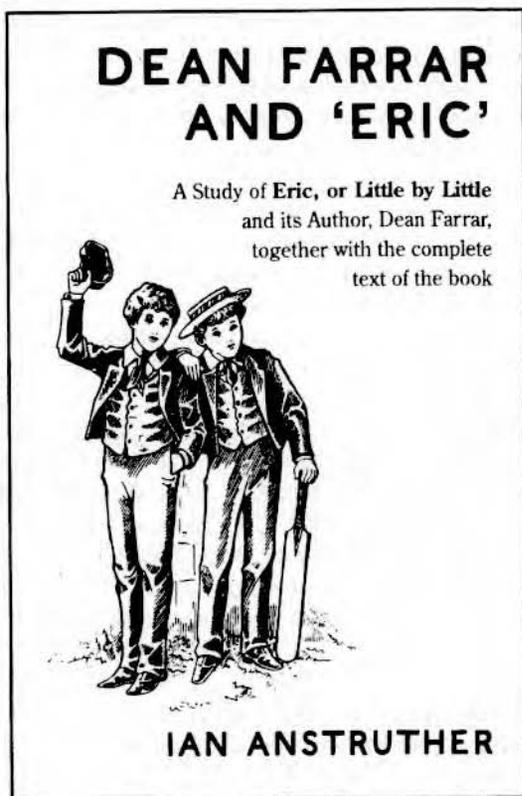
subject that will be dear to the hearts of many readers who enjoy swashbuckling adventure stories. It is accessible and erudite and well worth a place on the bookshelf.

**DEAN FARRAR AND "ERIC", Ian Anstruther (Haggerston Press, £19.95).  
Reviewed by Mark Taha.**

"Eric, or Little by Little", not so much a book as a legend, or should I say a legendary joke? This Victorian bestseller and school story classic became a school and Sunday school prize, a gift from fond old aunts, and the butt of other writers' humour. For instance, its merciless guying in "Stalky and Co.", which led to Farrar's complaining to Kipling, and Frank Richards' allusions to it in the "Magnet" – e.g. sneers about a "grateful little Eric" (Vernon-Smith, 1912) and "Mr. Quelch, of course, had heard of that celebrated and eminent work. Indeed, he had had a copy presented to him in his far-off boyhood, which he had, like Smithy, omitted to read" (Magnet 1459, during the Wilmot series). Indeed, when Frederick (Dean was his title, not his name!) Farrar became headmaster of Marlborough in 1871, an "Eric Society" was formed to ridicule it!

This book reprints, for the first time in decades, what Quelch and Smithy missed, along with a study of the book and its author. That its author sent me a signed copy and mentioned me in the acknowledgements naturally prejudices me in its favour - leaving this aside, it's still worth reading. Farrar had an interesting life which paralleled his hero's in many ways, although he didn't go off the rails! He was a star pupil and brilliant all-rounder, head of school, left for London University at sixteen, and a brilliant student both there and at Cambridge. He was then a successful schoolmaster, a gifted, patient and popular master at Marlborough and Harrow (where he wrote his school stories, and taught the Remove!) and later headmaster of Marlborough for all too few years before becoming Rector of St Margaret's, Westminster and later Dean of Canterbury; unfortunately, he was "too clever for his own good". While one of the best preachers in the country, he was too outspoken to be made a Bishop.

He was also a surprisingly enlightened thinker, both educationally and theologically: he ruled his pupils by persuasion, making lessons interesting, and force of character and held progressive views on the curriculum rather than being one of the "classics and caning" brigade,



the reason I say that he should have remained a headmaster. In addition, while an evangelical Christian, he believed in Darwin rather than being a Bible fundamentalist and brought friends like Ruskin and Huxley to speak at Harrow. Reviews of "Eric" were generally good, although Farrar's old school, King William's College on the Isle of Man, did not share that opinion! The book's characters and incidents were drawn from real life; in fact, they had to be understated to spare readers' tender sensibilities. For instance, while smoking, drinking, and gambling are fearlessly described, masturbation is discussed but not named and homosexuality only hinted at. Ironically, the year after Farrar's book came out his headmaster at Harrow had to resign after being caught with a pupil! Fellow-King William's Old Boy James Wilson wrote that the book was "a caricature of the boys, but not a libel on the school"; he remembered its "neglect... dirt...bullying... indecencies."

The book was an enormous success, going through many reprints and bringing Farrar much fan mail; a selection is reproduced here. The text of the book, the 1902 edition, is preceded by four appendices- selections from a hilarious Victorian sermon on the evils of masturbation, a long review of the Dutch edition of "Eric", a list of foreign editions (in French, Dutch and German), and a profile of Farrar from "Vanity Fair" in 1891.

I don't propose to go into too much detail about the book itself; suffice it to say that it tells the tragic story of Eric Williams, a schoolboy with all the advantages (good looks, high intelligence, courageous, a gifted athlete) but also "proud to a fault", sensitive, weak-willed, easily led, and too concerned about being popular rather than doing right. He's not the traditional Henty/Tom Brown/Amyas Leigh-type hero -for one thing, his being bullied is ended by his father rather than Eric himself thrashing the bully; for another, when he runs away to sea under threat of disgrace, rather than becoming a hero his brutal treatment leads to his death. In between, the book isn't that bad. The characters and incidents are believable, even if the dialogue isn't, although the religious parts irritate, and the mawkish sentimentality is overdone. I must confess the ending did bring tears to my eyes!

If one's looking for Hamiltonian parallels, think of Eric as a cross between Wharton and Hazeldene, his friend Duncan as a bit like Bob Cherry, his friend Russell a bit like Frank Nugent, Upton, who takes him up, a senior Vernon-Smith, bully Barker like Bolsover or Bulstrode, pub landlord Billy like Joe Banks or Bill Lodgey, young Wildney (whom Eric takes up) a prototype Dicky Nugent. Kindly schoolmaster Walter Rose, I suspect Farrar modelled on himself! And there's one thing that makes Eric stand out among school stories, it's mentioned that the school had lavatories!

(This book can be ordered from Ian Anstruther, Barlavington Estate, Petworth, Sussex, GU28 0LG).

### **'TECS ON TAPE Reviewed by MARY CADOGAN**

**(All available from CSA Telltapes), 6a Archway Mews, London SW15 2PE.**

I don't know quite why it is that crime and detective books make soothing reading (particularly bedtime reading) but I find that to be so. Even more seductive are good audio-cassette readings of whodunits, and no-one produces better examples of these than CSA Telltapes.

From their recent offerings I have particularly enjoyed a boxed four-cassette set, which comprises readings of two classic crime novels: *Trent's Last Case* by E.C. Bentley (read by Martin Jarvis) and *The Beast Must Die* by Nicholas Blake - really C. Day Lewis, of course

(read by Nathaniel Parker). I must confess to not previously having read *Trent's Last Case* and found the story, as unfolded compellingly by Martin Jarvis, fascinating. Apparently its author intended this story as a parody of crime fiction but it works well today, several decades after its first appearance, and includes some nifty surprise twists and turns in the text.

*The Beast Must Die* is strong stuff, and constructed, unusually for a detective story, with much of the narrative being given by the person who is planning the crime, though the second part of the book follows more closely the classic formula. Nicholas Blake, as always, writes powerfully and Nathaniel Parker gives full force to his tough and sometimes stark descriptive style.

In more conventional mood, but just as satisfying, comes another of the readings of Sherlock Holmes's adventures by Edward Hardwicke - who was, of course, Dr. Watson to Jeremy Brett's Holmes on T.V. a few years ago. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* Episode 6 consists of *The Adventure of The Priory School*, *The Red-Headed League* and *The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle*.

Having now listened to Holmes readings by several different actors (including the great Basil Rathbone) I feel I can honestly say that I like Hardwicke's best of all. He has such a flexible voice that, as well as being the absolutely definitive Watson, he is able almost equally well to portray Holmes, and the wide variety of characters from different walks of life that crop up in the stories.

(The address from which these tapes can be ordered is given above. Details can also be obtained from Victoria Williams on 020 8871 0220 by telephone, or from the website [csatelltapes.demon.co.uk](http://csatelltapes.demon.co.uk). The cost of the four-cassette set is £13.99, and of the Sherlock Holmes double cassette set £9.99)

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## THEY DID HAVE A LOT IN COMMON

By R. Hibbert

Once I asked a dealer whether he had any **Bullseyes**. And he said, as most dealers do, most of the time, "No". "But", he went on, "I've just sold a batch of *Fun and Fiction*" and explained that in appearance, and, to some extent, in content, the two magazines have a lot in common. So, when, recently I found out that another dealer had a run of about twenty copies of **Fun and Fiction** I bought them.

The papers do resemble one another. Both have sugar-bag-blue covers and very melodramatic contents. **Fun and Fiction** - "Every Wednesday, Price 1d" - ran from 14/10/1911 to 22/2/1914 (124 issues). My copies are from 1913. **Bullseye** - "Every Friday - Price 2d" - 24/1/1931 to 27/7/1934 (183 issues). And, in 1931, aged seven and three quarters, I bought and read several copies. At that time, I enjoyed, and have never forgotten **The Phantom of Cursitor Fields** and **The Sign of the Crimson Dagger**.

The **Bullseye** is thought of as being a paper for boys; seven year olds to adolescents, but once the paper was in the house anyone in the family might very well read it. The same could be said for **Fun and Fiction**, which Lofts and Adley list under Boys' Papers in their **Old Boys' Books - a Complete Catalogue (1969)**. But at first glance it's a paper for girls and young women, although many of the short stories are detective stories of a sort. Dora

Courage, Typist acting as a "temp", manages to solve a crime, or right a wrong, every week, as does The Invisible Doctor. Doctor Dick Studleigh "possesses a drug which gives him the power to make himself invisible at will". And there's The Woman with the Black Heart a.k.a. "The Lady of Mystery". Her black heart is a dark, heart shaped birthmark on her forehead. She flaunts it; she has a centre parting. But she shares Dick and Dora's resolve to be always on the side of Right and Justice. There is also Adam Daunt - the Millionaire Detective. According to the Editor, A. Donnelly Aitkin, who wrote some of the stories, "His adventures are admired wherever the English language is spoken". "Our Prize Short Stories" have such titles as It's the Poor that Help the Poor and Only a Laundress.

The serials are about wicked women and helpless, hapless women, very often being preyed upon by wicked women, as well as bold, bad baronets, scoundrelly will forging solicitors and false friends. Forced - often bigamous - marriages abound, as do murders, cases of arson, false identities, and kidnappings or illegal adoptions of heroines' children. And there are always tales about heroes and heroines who have been wrongfully imprisoned. **The Bullseye**, although it started to specialise more and more in the supernatural, also has serials about the wrongly convicted. My run of **Fun and Fiction** has serials with these titles: The Girl who Trusted Him; nobody else did so he's in gaol on trumped up charges. She Sent her Mother to Prison; and the woman who did that burned down someone else's mansion in the first instalment and Judith Hate; who throws a rightful heiress - whose father is blind, and hasn't met his daughter for years - out of a railway carriage in Part One and takes her place.

Mary Elizabeth (Lady Audley's Secret) Braddon had not lived in vain. In fact she was still alive and writing in 1913. She had contributed hair-raising serials to **The Halfpenny Journal** in her day. And by writing her sensation novels she'd set a lasting example to younger authors, much to the disapproval of another author, Mrs Oliphant, who attributed sensation fiction to "the violent stimulation of serial publication".

Nowadays you could say that about the piled-up improbabilities found in plot powered TV soap operas.

**Fun and Fiction** also contains Football Chat by J.M. Dick, who is a football expert. Famous Trials by a "Famous Crime Expert" and Chats with Footlight Favourites by an anonymous reporter. He/she interviews George Formby in number 73, 1/3/1913; George Formby Senior, father of the "Turned out Nice Again" Star of Stage and Screen in the Twenties and Thirties. And there are a couple of pages of well drawn comic strips, an occasional humourless "humorous" short story, and a page of unfunny jokes provided by Clarence and Claude. Our Guest Star Entertainers who meet every Wednesday and exchange pathetic Joe Millerisms.

All in all, **Fun and Fiction** has something for every one in the family.

And the same can be said for **The Bullseye**. This was edited by Frederick Cordwell who had been Managing Editor of **Fun and Fiction** and other magazines and comics twenty years before. Perhaps that's why the two magazines resemble one another, and why **The Bullseye**, with its blue cover (blue is the colour of melodrama) has such an old fashioned look. F.G. Cordwell had an Assistant Editor called Philip Davis. And, by not keeping up with the times, the two of them turned out a very good paper; for the likes of me who like that sort of paper.

I learned to read early, but in 1931, although I still read odd copies of **The Rainbow** and **Tiger Tim's Weekly**, I'd graduated to boys' papers, mostly those put out by D.C.

Thomson; their coloured covers could have had something to do with that. But, because there was a free gift with it, I bought **The Bullseye**. That *might* have been Issue Number 12 (Week ending 11/4/1931), which contained the first instalment of **The Phantom of Cursitor Fields**, well worth the cover price of 2d. Until recently I thought that serial ended in Issue Number 28, but as the serial carried on until Issue 41 - that's 30 parts ! - (Week ending 31/10/1931) it's possible I might have started reading the story later than Issue 12. But, certainly, there was a free gift and both the Phantom stories and those about The Sign of the Red Dagger were in **The Bullseyes** I read seventy one years ago. "The Great Free Gift" was useless. It was a shiny, silver disc, ringed like an archery target, with a rubber sucker on the back. I was told to wet the sucker, stick it on the pavement, wait for some long-sighted idiot to come along and watch him struggle to pick up this florin (might have been halfcrown) sized object. That sucker had no resistance at all. Smiler, supposedly our Editor's bright Office Boy, should have been given the job of road testing it.

But the stories were good and suited my taste. My copy of **Grimm's Fairy Tales** had all the unpleasant hair-raising bits left in and the unsophisticated anything can happen stories of **The Bullseye** weren't much different. Everything was black or white, the good won through, the bad were defeated. The Sign of the Crimson Dagger wasn't far removed from the Folk Tales I'd read. It was about "A mysterious and powerful secret society, known throughout the British Empire". The reader never found out who the Crimson Daggerers were. Unlike Edgar Wallace's Four Just Men he wasn't told their names and never sat in on their business meetings. The black robed mystery men came and went like wizards in a fairy tale and we were never told how they found out who was being unpleasant to whom so that they could see that justice was done. Seemingly the Crimson Daggerers righted wrongs by magic.

Although Alfred Edgar gave us weird tales from the first issue with his House of Thrills series, most early issues' stories concerned crimes committed by unlikely criminals. One gang leader "was a one-eyed deaf and dumb barber by day and a suave sophisticated doctor by night". Some crooks had such genteel pretensions they wore full evening dress - and masks - for their committee meetings.

The Night Patrol was about another sort of gang, a Chinese tong which gave the River Police a lot of trouble. It was a long running series and didn't end until Issue No. 38 (2/10/1931) with Wung-Fu's Last Fight.

And **The Bullseye** had, and always would have, Righters of Wrongs, just like **Fun and Fiction**. Harry Dangerfield, of Danger & Co. modelled himself on Bulldog Drummond, even to the extent of advertising his services in **The Times**; "Ex-officer, utterly bored with peace-time existence, will undertake dangerous missions. Payment according to means, to go to fund for children of ex-Service men".

Mortimer Hood, Millionaire Detective neither advertised for clients nor charged for his services. Anyone wishing to obtain an interview with him need only put a notice in the Personal column of any morning paper. Very soon there would be an invitation to meet Hood in his "Hall of a Hundred Columns", just one part of Hood House, Mayfair, where he lived in considerable style. Hood would ask the supplicant to tell his story quickly and briefly. Then a few questions from the detective would be answered and he would start his investigations at once. Hood was ahead of his time as far as apparatus was concerned, having two way and world wide television links with his agents, and a radio device in his car which enabled his headquarters' staff to know his exact location. He didn't need these gimmicks for the first



adventure The Three Loaves. It's a variation of the 1904 Sherlock Holmes' story The Six Napoleons.

Characters who had the power to change their features at will were to be found in a good many juvenile publications and were always popular. A passing of the hands over the face, a few pats here and there, and the man with the power looked completely different; could even look like the person he was talking to. If those advertisers who peddled seebackscopes, whoopee cushions and other practical jokes had been able to market face changing - they were always willing to sell us the secrets of ventriloquism - the ad would include , "NO MAKE-UP NEEDED" . And because somebody would be sure to ask, "FOLLICLE CONTROL INCLUDED".

**The Bullseye's** instant disguise man "with long practice in controlling his facial muscles" was Phil Flash, The Man with a Thousand Faces. A penniless circus performer at the start of the first story, by the end he's inherited his Uncle Charlie's fortune. "The capital of which," says the solicitor, "will give you an income of £50 a week." But the solicitor is a solicitor by day and a master criminal, known as The Hawk, by night, so Phil has to fight for his income. Then he retires from the circus, lives in London's Clubland and helps anyone who needs his aid. He has a generous nature and would help people anyway, but now he's rich enough to be a fulltime Righter of Wrongs. £50 in 1931 had the same purchasing power as £2,660 in 2001.

Most of the stories in **The Bullseye** are in series. They have the same central character, but he's in a different adventure each week; they are complete short stories. They are not serials with a "cliffhanger" at the end of each episode. The serials in the 39 **Bullseyes** which, so far, make up my collection are Branded for Life and Fetters of Fate. The latter is by Herbert J. Allingham, father of Margery Allingham, and it ran for 50 numbers and I suspect that Branded for Life is his too. In 1911 he was the Amalgamated Press' highest paid author (2 guineas a 1000 words), and wrote for many of the firm's papers, including **Fun and Fiction**.

Usually, in Amalgamated Press publications, Christmas was the time for ghost stories. And there was a stock-plot: a snowbound, secret-corridorred country mansion and a villain *pretending* to be a ghost and intent on scaring away the occupants. He was looking for hidden treasure, or a lost will or some such. Why he picked a time when the house was full of guests was never explained.

Things were different in **The Bullseye** and once the Phantom of Cursitor Fields had drifted into the pages he was soon followed by other *genuine* ghosts. The spectres in the series Uncanny Stories and Phantom Tales were real wraiths, out and about at any season of the year and not tied to oak panelled halls. There were ghostly helmsmen steering modern freighters away from rocks, phantom racing drivers in phantom racing cars, long dead railway engineers making sure that the points were jammed so that the express didn't take the track to the fallen bridge and there was even a story with an ingenious twist to The Man who was Wrongfully Imprisoned plot. In Red Moonlight (Bullseye number 58 - 27/2/1932) wealthy farmer Jacob Cade is shot dead by his rascally bailiff Frederick Marner, but poor but honest farmer Tom Denning, who's been out rabbiting, is arrested for the crime. And tried, and found guilty and sentenced to death. Meanwhile it has been discovered that Marner had been robbing his employer by false accounting and is sentenced to five years penal servitude. But, being of an angry impatient nature, he rushes down one of the jail's iron stairways, slips and is killed by the fall. After death, only then stricken by conscience, and "Only a few short days before the dread time when Tom Denning must take that last short walk out of the condemned cell"

Marner's ghost, dressed in convict clothes, shows Tom's sweetheart where he hid the murder weapon and papers giving further proof that he was robbing his employer. Tom is freed the next morning. One uncanny tale was called The Phantom Foot.

There was another series about the supernatural. The Withered Hand "which came across the dusty centuries from the whispering depths of a painted tomb in Ancient Egypt to give to those who dared to clutch it one wish. A wish that was swiftly granted, but never as expected". Secrets of the "Erietania", a mystery liner which had never known a voyage not marked by drama, wasn't a ghost ship, but there were sinister happenings on board. She was even, when things were tense, shrouded in her very own fog belt. And there was something strange about her purser, Simon Light, the only crew member who'd served in her since the day she was commissioned.

**Fun and Fiction** had devoted a whole page to Clarence and Claude's would be wisecracks and **The Bullseye** did the same for Willie and Wally - The Bullseye Backchat Boys and it's hard to see why. Unless it was thought that the reader, having spent a lonely evening in his gas lit, coal fired living room working his way through sensational tales, would be too afraid to make the pre-bedtime journey across a dark backyard to an outdoor privy without a bit of cheering up by Willie or Wally. A witticism to do with railways might help. "A sleeper is one who sleeps. A sleeper is that in which a sleeper sleeps. A sleeper is that on which the sleeper which carries the sleeper while he sleeps runs. Therefore, while the sleeper sleeps in the sleeper, the sleeper carries the sleeper over the sleeper under the sleeper". Wally said that in **Bullseye** number 4, but it's the sort of thing Willie comes out with, as do Clarence and Claude. Start to ponder it and anything else goes out of your mind.

But it's **The Phantom** - the jeering gibbering wraith who materialises from the Thames side mists - most people associate with **The Bullseye**. The instalments in The Phantom of Cursitor Fields (Nos. 12 to 41) and The Return of the Phantom (Nos. 78? To 100?) are complete in themselves. Some weeks the Phantom comes out best, sometimes the hero. Bob Bryan and his fellow policemen are successful. The phantom, although non-corporeal - bullets and other missiles go through him - can grapple with people and always overcome them. The shade of a former highwayman, he steals gold, silver, jewels and objects of value and takes them with him to his lair. And he's forever collecting ancient documents for his own peculiar reasons.

He has a very ambivalent attitude towards Bob Bryan, sometimes beating him severely - he never kills anyone - and sometimes helping him. He can be kind to sick old women and small children. I've only read the end of the story in a much condensed version, which might contain extracts from both series, that was printed in **Supernatural Stories for Boys** published by Hamlyn in 1968. There the Phantom turns out to be that that well known figure in melodrama. The Missing Heir. Until just before his death - by hanging at Four Ways, in the heart of the Fields - he had thought that he'd been humbly born. He was however the son of a rich baronet. This disclosure came as a shock to him: "A shock so great I was unable to die a complete death, and have lived hundreds of years as a ghost - hovering between life and death."

His habit of stealing gold and jewels is probably a hangover from his life as a highwayman, but his passion for ancient documents is so that he can prove his rightful ancestry. And to tell the world that he has heirs as well. So, at the end of the series, the high and mighty are humbled and the good and lowly are elevated. That's a proper ending for a melodrama suitable for the pages of **The Bullseye** or **Fun and Fiction**.

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## THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

### The history of the picture strip in D C Thomson's 'Big Five'

#### Part 8 : *Adventure 1952*

By Ray Moore

The first picture strip to kick-off in 'Adventure' in 1952 was the black and white two pager 'The Electric Shadow' (1413-1424) drawn by **Jock McCail**. This was the story of a hi-tech sky pirate who, with his crew of like minded felons, terrorised the airways of England in his flying saucer shaped craft. The eponymous villain of the piece playing hide-and-seek with test pilot 'Big Bill' Rodgers and his mechanic Joe Snooks from behind his artificial cloud screen and zapping his hapless victims into unconsciousness with his paralyzing Z Ray, the strip having been fairly faithfully derived from a text tale with the same title that had been published in 'New Adventure' in 1931/32 (517-532). The only really major differences between the two was firstly a limiting of the Shadow's 'manor' in the picture strip which saw him travel no further than the environs of English airspace and excluding several European sorties outlined in the original, and secondly the design of the Shadow's ship itself. In the original text tale, it had been nothing more than a sort of modified aeroplane, whereas in the picture strip it had been transformed into a sleek, seemingly go anywhere, flying saucer, a sop no doubt to the science-fiction friendly obsessions of the typical 1950s schoolboy.

With that particular schoolboy reader in mind the next 'Adventure' cover strip was 'Nick Swift of the Planet Patrol' (1419-1434) a wholly new character travelling on the cosmic coat-tails of Dan Dare and drawn by **James Malcolm**.

Lieutenant Nick Swift was part of Planet Patrol 41 of the Inter-Stellar Police whose beat gave him ten million miles of the spaceways to pound, and his crew consisted of Sgt Bill Logan, negro wireless operator Inky Johnson, and "green-skinned Venusian patrolman, Triton.

Their first case saw them travelling to the planet Draco to rescue remote weather station operative Joe Lyons who had fallen foul of a group of the planet's indigenous apemen stirred up into a rebellious mob by their ring-leader Sygno. This encounter was the merest appetiser to the strip's central story in which Nick and his crew trail the notorious space pirate Vaska the Venusian across the galaxy to his lair on the planet of the Trogs where, as well as Vaska, they have to deal with the megalomaniac Ralfi, self styled Lord of All. Ralfi was the master of the Petrifying Death, a device capable of turning men, including Nick Swift, into mindless zombies made of stone.

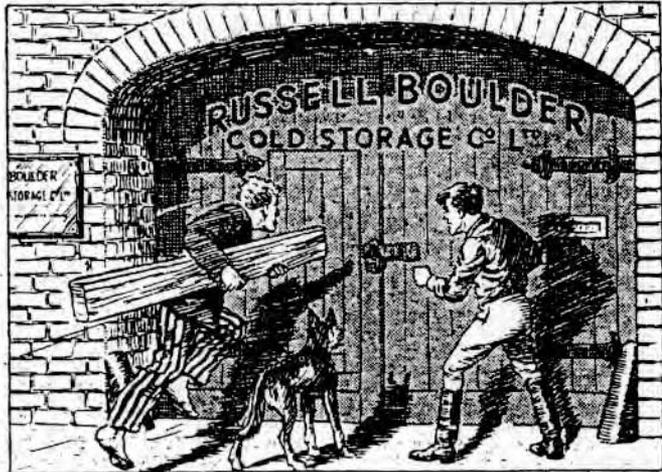
At the denouement of the original Electric Shadow text tale in 1932, even though no body was found, it was presumed that the master criminal had succumbed in the conflagration that had destroyed his flying machine. But this was in fact an ambiguity that allowed for the virtual immediate resurrection of the character in 'Dixon Hawke and the Electric Shadow' in which he takes on the denizen of Dover Street and indeed several other escapades in quick succession after that culminating with 'The Electric Shadow's Last Swoop' where he is again pitted against Hawke, still in 1932. As far as the picture strip version was concerned, although it remained true to the original in that it kept the same ambiguous ending, there was to be no rising, Pheonix-like, from the ashes for this most ultimate of highwayman this time around.

Instead, once the smoke had cleared 'Adventure' readers were introduced to 'The City that Forgot' (1425-1437) drawn by **George 'Dod' Anderson**, the tale of mad scientist Dr

Bob Powell opens a door with a four-wheeled key—



WHEN his private plane force-landed in remote Russell Boulder, Bob Powell, a young rancher, found a strange state of affairs. A landslide had isolated this modern city from the rest of the world and Dr Michael Wayne, a crazed scientist, took advantage of this to carry out a fiendish experiment. Blotting out the citizens' memories, he turned them into cave-men. Now the only normal person in the city, Bob was worried to see the starving citizens searching the rubbish dump for scraps of food.



2—Bob realised he would have to do something right away to feed the hungry citizens or they would turn cannibals! A short time later, as he hurried down a side-street with his only two friends, ex-Police Commissioner Red Rhodes and Caesar, the Alsatian dog, the rancher suddenly saw the answer to his problem. Soon he and Red were trying to break their way into the city's cold-storage-depot. Bob knew that the food stored inside would be sufficient to keep the inhabitants going for a while longer.

Michael Wayne who, aided by his half-caste servant Sibber, transmits mind-altering electrical impulses via radio masts which wipe the memories of all his fellow scientists in the self contained 'atom town' of Russell Boulder situated in a remote part of the Rockie Mountains in Montana. A devilish plot that sees all of the science faculty reduced to nothing more than mindless primitives with no knowledge of civilisation and ripe for enslavement by Wayne, had it not been for the unexpected but nonetheless timely intervention of cattleman Bob Powell who serendipitously crash-lands his small private plane in the vicinity of the remote town. A text version of this strip had appeared in 'Adventure' in 1943/44 (1088-1099) with possibly the only major difference between the two being the introduction, in the picture strip version, of the secluded, scientist populated 'atom town' in Montana whereas, in the original, Russell Boulder had been a city of ordinary inhabitants in an averagely accessible location in Colorado.

The next 'Adventure' cover strip was 'Brand of the Hammer' (1435-1446) illustrated by **James 'Peem' Walker**. The title of this strip referred to the tattoo on the chest of a white boy who has been raised since he was a small child by a tribe of Shawnee Indians. Having been carried off by a tribal raiding party years before, the teenager, named Young Hammer because of the mark on his chest, has no knowledge of his past life and no notion that he is anything but a member of the tribe. No notion that is until, one day, because of some subconscious empathy he feels toward them, he foils a raid on some white settlers which in turn sees him sentenced to death by the tribal witch-doctor, Nygani. This fate for the boy was only avoided when his Shawnee foster-mother, an old squaw named Mawkani, sets him free with fatal consequences to herself. She then with her dying breath tells the lad of his true origins which, in turn, leads him to the discovery that his real name is Jamie and that he is the son of Lachlan MacDonald, the blacksmith at Fort Pitt. A discovery that not only allows him to be reunited with his father but also helps him to foil an attempt to besiege the fort by a French force.

Once the residents of 'the city that forgot' had been cured of their enforced amnesia the centre pages were then given over to 'The Boy who Licked Napoleon' (1438-1451), a remarkably faithful retelling of a text tale with the same curious title that had appeared in 'Adventure' in 1946 (1155-1168). This was the first 'Adventure' strip to be drawn by freelance artist **Ron Smith** but would be far from the last and, set in 1817, it told of an French attempt to use a prototype submarine to rescue Napoleon from his exile on St Helena. The heroes of this strip were Lt.Clive Eden of the Royal Navy and sixteen year old Jack Onslow, who track down the whereabouts of the craft to the flooded cellar of a school in Paris where the fluent French speaking teenager enrolls incognito as a pupil.

It was then two cover strips on the trot for **James 'Peem' Walker** who, after completing the art for 'Brand of the Hammer', illustrated another strip which like 'Hammer' had no firm textual precedent, 'Strang the King's Champion' (1447-1465). In this tale Strang, as had been his wont more than once over the years, set about completing a series of seemingly impossible tasks in order, in this case, that Wassulu, the kindly chief of the Koroko tribe in West Africa, should not lose his throne to Burgoo, the leader of the much feared High Priests of Goz.

The tasks, six in number, included such stinkers as capturing Kro, father of all the crocodiles and bringing him back alive from his lair in the Black Swamp, finding the fabled elephants' graveyard and returning with the Black Stone that they are all meant to touch before they die, and last but not least preventing the west wind from blowing on the walls of the Temple of Goz.

The next black and white strip to appear within the paper, after Jack Onslow had helped

Meet the boy who hasn't got a friend—



THE rays of the rising sun flooded into the barrel lying on its side on a bank of the Mississippi, and awakened the boy sleeping inside it. He sat up, and the movement aroused the white bull terrier curled up at his feet. "Mornin', Chips," yawned the youngster. "Sure looks as if it's gonna be a good day." Out of the barrel he crawled and stood up, to be greeted by a blast on a passing steamer's whistle. All the river folk knew Andy, the Mississippi waif.



2—After washing in the river, Andy put dry sticks on the embers of his fire, and fanned them into a blaze on which he cooked his breakfast. "Well, Chips," he said when the meal was finished, "we've gotta be mighty busy this mornin'. A lot o' my buddies are comin' to have grub with us, an' I'm gonna give them a swell spread." Four hours later, while Andy tended the fire under a pot of rabbit stew, a line tied to his toes caught several fish, which he added to his menu.

sink the French frigate *Lazaire* carrying the submarine cargo vital to Napoleon's escape plans, was the **Mark Twain** inspired 'Happy Andy – the Mississippi Waif' (1452-1467) (the subtitle changing to 'the Mississippi Outcast' with No 1457).

Like the Greek philosopher **Diogenes** and at least one or two other Thomson characters before him, Happy Andy, along with his white bull-terrier Chips, lived in a barrel. His cooper created dwelling was situated on the banks of the Mississippi and the youngster made ends meet by doing odd-jobs for the storekeeper of the nearby town of Roseburg.

His happy-go-lucky existence of course doesn't last, as in quick succession he falls foul of both Mr Ackerman, the Mayor of Roseburg, and the local schoolmaster, Joshua Hickey, who both feel his attendance at the local school should be mandatory. A fate he is only saved from when he is shunned by the inhabitants of the town altogether after he is wrongly blamed for an incident in which a local boy nearly drowns on a raft. Andy only has his outcast status rescinded after he wins back the good graces of the townsfolk in general by warning them of an impending flood, and of Mayor Ackerman in particular by rescuing him from the clutches of an escaped convict.

Drawn by **Calder Jamieson** 'Happy Andy' was quite faithfully based on a story with the same title that had appeared in 'Adventure' in 1943/44 (1089-1103) with one particular difference being that, at the end of the text tale, Andy earns himself a thousand dollar reward for capturing the convict while, in the picture strip, he is built a suitably barrel-shaped 'des res' by the grateful people of Roseburg.

Once again, thanks to the ever helpful Derek Marsden for the background notes he provided for this article and goodbye till next time when we shall return with more Nick Swift, a couple of Menaces and a possible blood relation of the Electric Shadow.

*(Illustrations © D.C. Thomson)*

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## **WHEN EVEN MR QUELCH GOT AN EASTER EGG:**

**by Margery Woods**

Much as we love school stories and those delightful school friends of our youth they all needed the occasional break from school routine, to say nothing of their long-suffering school mistresses and school masters. So they cheerfully departed on at least three holidays per year, even if we the readers didn't. And what holidays they had.

Of course there was one outright runaway holiday winner in the school year—Christmas! And the long summer break was always eagerly looked forward to. Also the third, utterly essential to break the long winter term and the spring lead-up to summer. Yet for some reason the obvious break, Easter, often seemed to be passed over, particularly at Cliff House. Sometimes they had an Easter break but Easter was only a mention, in a way this was understandable; the sorrow which Easter brings and the great religious joy that concludes the festival did not lend itself to school stories and, perhaps wisely authors and editors avoided any attempt to bring in its atmosphere.

Instead they concentrated on major series with the accent on spring, as when Greyfriars enjoy the Easter break at Wharton Lodge. Coker is staying nearby with his faithful (sometimes)

henchmen, and Coker, as usual, is throwing his weight about. Bunter is firmly on the scene, doing his favourite impersonation of a starving limpet clinging to an unwelcoming but very nourishing rock. While there, they encounter Dick Lancaster, the schoolboy safe-cracker who is to join them at Greyfriars under the aegis of Sir Hilton popper. The two Easter stories set the scene for Dick Lancaster's dual life at Greyfriars and his fight to make good. One of the most dramatic of a multitude of the master's long dramatic series, it leads to the kidnapping of Harry Wharton and the attempted murder of Ferrers Locke. Both are saved by the schoolboy cracksman who was himself almost fatally shot by the real villain and dark controlling scoundrel who had blighted the boy's life. But at last all came well for him, though only Harry Wharton ever knew the true, moving story of Dick Lancaster.

Easter concludes another major series of Greyfriars drama, this time featuring the Bounder, who has gone his own wilful way once too often and faces expulsion and disinheritance by his father. This is the Smedley/Teggars series with Smithy hanging by a knife-edge in his efforts to fight a new enemy, the replacement master for Mr Quelch, who is away. Smithy is unaware that Smedley is really an impoverished relative who is determined to get his hands on the Vernon-Smith fortune, the removal of Smithy being his first obstacle.

The Bounder is faced more than once by variations on this plot but it never fails to hold the reader in thrall. And once again Frank Richards works his magic with his most brilliant character creation, engaging the reader's suspense and sympathy for Vernon-Smith even while despairing of his behaviour when he is at his worst. A top of the top ten Smithy tales.

Bunter's famous cruise marked another Easter vacation. Only Bunter could inveigle the Famous Five and Coker and Co into believing he was actually inviting them to join him on a luxury cruise aboard his Uncle George's yacht. Coker, who has no intention of being beholden to Bunter, agrees on condition that he pays for the privilege, greatly to Bunter's relief, while the Famous Five fail to understand why Skinner dissolves into mirth every time Bunter's cruise is mentioned, for Bunter is soliciting clients for his uncle and is terrified in case the truth leaks out before his victims are all safely ensconced aboard. This is one of the lightest and funniest of the Easter holiday stories, with much of the hilarity supplied by Coker's antics in the cork forest with the bandits, and attempts to disguise himself to enter the casino, as does Bunter, even more hilariously. Each has the same idea, to break the bank, but Coker's motive is quite different. Coker disapproves so strongly of gambling that he wants to teach them the error of their ways by breaking the bank in the hope that the casino will go bust. Sadly, it is Coker who suffers for his efforts, while Bunter's mercenary attempts fail, sadly for Bunter.

One of Cliff House's earlier series to touch on Easter was the story of the little French stowaway girl, Suzanne, who arrived on England's shore when the French steamer, *La Hironnelle*, foundered in a violent storm off Pegg. Barbara Redfern and Co, with their anxious French mistress, Mademoiselle Lupin, were quickly on scene to try to aid in rescuing the passengers and crew but it was not until later that they found the little stowaway and heard her tale of the rascally Pierre Volde and his swarthy wife who claimed to "spik no English" but soon betrayed herself in that untruth.

There are valuable jewels at stake which were entrusted to Suzanne's care and which Volde is determined to have at all cost. But, like many villains before and after, he and his unpleasant wife were no match for Babs and Co when Cliff House took Suzanne into its care.

A more traditional Cliff House Easter took place at Delma Castle with Jemima Carstairs. The series consisted of three stories in which Captain Carstairs, his unpleasant sister Aspia, a

# QUELCH'S EASTER EGG!



—BILLY BUNTER, the PAUL PRY of the REMOVE, in the LIMELIGHT

down-strodden ladies maid, a red-haired stranger, and a burglary in which fifteen thousand pounds worth of diamonds were taken from the Captain's safe made yet another mystery for the chums to solve. Aunt Aspia had decided the poor down-trodden maid must be the guilty person, while someone has given Wuffles the Pekingese doped meat. Not to be outdone in canine trouble, Carl, the big Alsatian, gets tangled up in the trap of cords and blanket which Jemima has set up to catch the thief, believed to be up on the roof. There is much hilarity during the search and pursuit of the thief in the night, upstairs, downstairs, on the roof, in the cellar, round and round the castle, until Captain Carstairs, possibly echoing the thoughts of some of the readers, claps his hand to his brow and exclaims: "I can't make head or tail of all this!"

For a change it is Mabs, as well as Jemima, who does the best detective work, and recovers the diamonds.

Incidentally, the butler did it!

A rather unusual Easter holiday for the Greyfriars chums found them—and Bunter of course—as castaways on a rocky island off the North Devon coast. The Famous Five had had trouble with the Bounder at the end of that term, and so had Bunter, when Smithy had fallen back into his bad ways again, and fallen out with his father. The Famous Five had taken exception to this and administered a spot of punishment. However, by break-up time, when the chums' holiday plans suddenly fell through, Smithy had apparently forgotten his animosity, and, through Bunter, issued them a careless invitation to spend the hols as his guests on Blackrock Island. His father had bought this and restored the old ruined castle on it. But Smithy was hatching crafty plans. Bunter had been indulging in a spot of blackmail—a dangerous measure with Smithy—and the Bounder was after revenge. If the Famous Five got caught in it, well, two birds, one stone... He was off on the rampage with Pon and Co, then joining his

father in Devon, where Mr Vernon-Smith hoped to increase his collection of millions by investing in large properties going cheap because of the threat of war looming on the horizon.

So, after a call to the garage where the car to take them to Devon had been booked by the Bounder, Harry's vague doubts vanished and they set off for Blackrock Island where the Bounder was supposed to be joining them.

Smithy's father had made his headquarters at the office of a local estate agent whom he'd put in charge of the property transfer business. However, he was not pleased with his son, and Smithy, after three days partying with Pon, was beginning to be troubled by that under par conscience of his. Mr Vernon-Smith had discovered Smithy's trickery in getting three days off school to meet Ponsoy and Co, and had not forgiven him. Meanwhile the Famous Five and Bunter had discovered that Blackrock Island had no restored ruins, in fact no accommodation at all; the sole inhabitant of the island was an ancient mariner called Dave who lived in a rough one roomed shack. But Dave had received his instructions regarding Bunter, and tough instructions they were. No bed for Bunter, a blanket of sailcloth on the floor, and the grub was basic, to say the least. And there was no way off the island, save one fortnightly boat from the mainland.

After they'd all agreed on how they were going to punch Smithy's head when they saw him the chums made the best of it. They built a rough lean-to for themselves, explored, found the mysterious old smugglers' cave, fished, swam, and began to enjoy life. Then a boat arrived with the unpleasant estate agent and helpers to remove the boys from the island, by force if necessary. The boys had already seen the same boat earlier when it refused to acknowledge their beckoning signals now they decided they did not want to be removed from the island, especially as they were there at the invitation of the owner's son. They could not know that Rance, the agent, was having a great deal of trouble with Smithy as Mr Vernon-Smith had apparently gone off to view property and left instructions that his son was not to be informed of his whereabouts.

Smithy's conscience, always a painful bedfellow, was really kicking in now, and after he discovered that his father's car was still garaged locally he kicked up so much trouble in Rance's office and threatened to go to the police that Rance agreed to take the Bounder to meet his father. Of course that was a ruse. Rance had already embezzled four thousand pounds of Mr Vernon-Smith's money and had to silence Smithy somehow.

Back on the island the boys discovered one of the agent's men was now guarding the cave. Very suspicious. But so far their efforts to discover the secret of the cave were unsuccessful. Then fate—and Bunter—took a hand. Bunter managed to get himself trapped in the cave by the rising tide and had to spend the night there. When the visitors arrived at night by boat the valiant Bunter managed to keep his presence secret and so heard the gagged Bounder brought in and hoisted up by means of a rope ladder onto the high ledge leading into a tunnel. While they were so engaged the Fat Owl had a brilliant idea. He sneaked down the cave to the boat, managed to cut it adrift and just evaded the furious effort of the men to reach him. Sadly Bunter's rowing efforts were no match for the Atlantic.

Fortunately the cavalry were at hand, in the shape of Tom Redwing and his father aboard their lugger. Bunter was rescued, and the rambling tale was drawn from him—once he'd cleaned them out of their supplies of grub aboard—and Tom refused to land Bunter in civilisation but insisted they make for Blackrock island.

Of course the Famous Five had discovered the secret of the cave, where Smithy and his

father were imprisoned. Rance wanted a large sum of money from his hostage or he would block the entrance to the tunnel. This he had done before the boys could free the prisoners and escape. Then Tom arrived with his father and found the rock barrier. At last the prisoners were free.

The rascally estate agent was back in the office, sure he was safe—when the police arrived...

And brotherly love was established once more between Smithy and the Famous Five—even Bunter!

But while these tales all happened at Easter only one other was really relevant to the Easter tradition for the young. Eggs! Quelch's Easter Egg also demonstrated in a most entertaining fashion the law of cause and effect, or, as Bob Cherry, the victim of this tale described it, the sad factor of "if only...."

Bunter, having failed to persuade anyone to repair his bike and anxious to catch up with the Famous Five who were bound for tea at Highcliffe with Courtney and The Caterpillar, decided to borrow a jigger belonging to the most dangerous man in the Remove. The Bounder reacted to this liberty-taking in true Bounder fashion and set off in pursuit. Along the way Wharton and Co had encountered Ponsonby, mounted in lordly style upon a charger. The encounter knocked all five and bikes askew while Ponsonby rode on, highly amused. Bunter was next, which proved disastrous to both riders. Viciously, Ponsonby set about Bunter with his riding whip, and in turn was punished by a furious Bob Cherry. Pon, smarting in fury, remounted, walloped the poor horse which promptly bolted. Cue for Smithy to arrive and stop the runaway. Pon was not grateful at being saved from probable injury and limped back to Highcliffe plotting revenge.

By a ruse he managed to get Bob Cherry lured into the grip of his cronies, the idea being that they'd hold him down on the table while Pon administered vengeance. But none of them knew that Bunter was under the table scoffing a very large cake he'd purloined, which had actually been purloined by the cronies previously from Courtney's study! Bunter decided to make a bolt for it and brought rescue for Bob. Unfortunately, during the scrimmage, a letter had fallen out of Bob's pocket and proved the tool Ponsonby was looking for as he schemed revenge on Bob Cherry.

Meanwhile, back at Greyfriars, Bunter was trying to avoid the Bounder. But the Bounder was being affable. Bunter should have known that the Bounder being affable could be even more dangerous than the Bounder being furious. Smithy let it be known he was going to stand a feed at the Bun Shop and maybe Skinner would pop over to Courtfield and book a table before it got packed out. He and the Famous Five would be along immediately. Naturally Bunter instantly offered his assistance and rolled off to Courtfield, where he sat down to await the party. Eventually he realised that there wasn't going to be any party with that beastly Smithy and thought he'd better leave, but not before he'd seen Ponsonby enter and buy a large, gaudy blue cardboard Easter egg in a gift box.

Quelch was somewhat baffled when it arrived with the post next morning. And he was more than baffled when he discovered it was filled with old torn up newspapers with a letter apparently among the stuffing, a letter which surely identified the sender of the most insulting message to Mr Quelch. Pon had been at his most evil.

Bob was sent for and taken to the Head. Mr Quelch demanded expulsion. The Head hesitated, and when the Remove assembled for class the Egg was on the master's desk.

hidden under a cloth. The Head made a shocked statement, then dramatically whipped the cloth off the Egg and asked if any boy had seen this Egg before. Silence. Then Bunter squeaked with recognition. And the tale of Ponsonby's perfidy came to light.

Of course Ponsonby didn't get expelled. The really bad ones never did, and the moral fibre of Highcliffe never matched that of Greyfriars.

Entertaining as were all the stories of Easter hols they were more than rivalled by the coloured twopenny comics. There was little to compete with the sheer joyous Easter Monday fun depicted in those Easter Holiday issues of PLAYBOX, PUCK, SUNBEAM and BUBBLES. Who could resist the wonderful front pages of RAINBOW and TIGER TIM'S WEEKLY as anyone who has collected these (or remembers them) will now. Tiger Tim and the Bruin Boys rolling their eggs, waving them triumphantly, pestering the long suffering Mrs Bruin for Hot X Buns and bringing the child's joy in the celebration after the sadness of the Easter festival to many a child in those far-gone days. Would they be deemed politically incorrect today...?

Easter blessings to all readers.

**(Funny lines between The Caterpillar and Bunter:**

The Caterpillar, gravely: "Thank you for fetching our tuck back, Bunter."

"Eh—I haven't."

"I think you have;" insisted the Caterpillar. "I'm sure the tuck's back in this study this very minute I You only packed it inside for safe carriage—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



# FORUM

## From EDITH CARINS (Reading):

As always, I enjoyed the article about Cliff House by Margery Woods in the December number of the S.P.C.D., but I was sorry she omitted Miss Steel from her list of fourth-form mistresses. Miss Steel was their form mistress when I first read the *School Friend* in 1925. She was a much more forceful, if less pleasant, personality than Miss Matthews, who followed her.

The girls at that time were not as glamorous as the later ones Margery Woods writes of, but they had equally exciting adventures. I remember when Barbara had her long hair cut off and had a Dutch crop, whatever that was. Her hair was black then, and Mabel Lynn had "fluffy fair hair". Some girls, such as Dolly Jobling and the two villains, Marcia Loftus and Nancy Bell, are missing from the later stories, but they were quite important at the time.

What a joy those schoolgirl papers were! I am grateful to you for keeping Cliff House alive, and to Margery Woods for writing about it in such an interesting way.

## From BOB MARSH (Kelso):

I just wanted to include a few lines of appreciation for the magazine and all your hard work and dedication. I am only a lone subscriber and not a member of any O.B. clubs but I feel a part of the collecting community and look forward to each edition of the S.P.C.D. Keep up the good work, and long may you continue to publish. I look forward to my Christmas Special and perhaps a Christmas bonus of your and Norman Wright's new *Enid Blyton Treasury*. Thanks again and all the best to you and yours for the future.

## From ARTHUR F.G. EDWARDS (London):

I would thank Ray Moore and Derek Marsden for the information given me about the Stormy Orphans (SPCD 656). My memory is far from perfect but I can say that my 'Vegetarian' and 'Old Tyres' memories owe nothing to the Rover in 1945, or any other time. I did not read a *Rover* after 1928, and I did not take a 2d magazine after the *Magnet* ceased publication in 1940. The only other magazine in which the stories appeared could have been the *Champion* although the *Champion* in the days I remember, seemed to concentrate on speedway and cricket stories. I did have the *Hotspur* for a number of years but I am sure my memory of the episodes in question pre-date the *Hotspur*. As over seventy years have elapsed, I can easily believe that I got a Housemaster confused with a Headmaster, but not that I imagined two stories. It seems to me that the possibilities which exist are, in descending order of probability:

1. They were Stormy Orphan adventures which my helpers have not read. Most probably in *Wizard* series, 3,4,5 or 6.
2. The stories appeared in the *Wizard* but were of a different school, with different heroes.
3. They were in the *Champion* between 1927 and 1930, obviously with different heroes.
4. They were in a 2d magazine other than the *Wizard* or the *Champion*, possibly not both in the same magazine, also during the 1927 to 1930 era.

It seems I will never know the answer to my memory problem.

**From TED BALDOCK (Cambridge):**

I am very proud to be associated with the *C.D.* as it reflects so much of my, now sadly, long vanished youth, yet I feel still that I have much in common with the grand old world of Greyfriars. Specially I enjoy the illustrations depicting the timeless W.G.B. in all his old fatuousness. I can still recall that old magic - for such it was - of opening the first page of the current *Magnet* and standing upon the threshold of glorious hours of reading, and in imagination participating in the adventures of the Famous Five and that fearful enigma, Billy Bunter.

There is much I have forgotten, or at least never think about. Yet there are some events and incidents which retain all their original freshness and never seem to fade.

The *C.D.* Christmas Special provided Nostalgia with a capital 'N'. A lovely article by Bill Bradford extolling the virtues of dear old 'Chums'. Many things slip from the mind with the passing of the years. The vision of 'Chums' however remains firm and crystal clear. Mr. Bradford mentions, among others, the illustrations of Fred Bennett, who was always a favourite of mine. He seemed able to capture to a nicety the atmosphere of the story he was illustrating. Also remembered with gratitude is the work of Paul Hardy with his fine illustrations to Samuel Walkey's tales of the French revolution, the tense mood being finely caught. And of course there was the great Stanley L. Wood who did much fine work for 'Chums' and the B.O.P.

Thank you, Mr. Bradford for the evocation of a great boys' paper of yesteryear. One wonders, are there successors today?

(Editor's Note: I received many warm letters of appreciation for the Christmas Special.)

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## WITH FULL SUPPORTING CAST

by Terry Jones

The international success of the famous Greyfriars saga is due, in no small measure, to the fact that there were so many characters introduced by the talented author.

Frank Richards knew better than to stick to just Billy Bunter and the Famous Five for every tale. There would be Vernon-Smith, or Coker, or Fisher T. Fish in leading roles, or masters Quelch, Prout and Hacker.

Then there would be numerous new boys and new masters with secret lives and hidden talent, all of them giving us marvellous series of fun and adventure.

But let us not forget characters who never took the limelight but, because of the skill of Frank Richards, made the stories rich with background and humour so that we always thought we were in the middle of a large community where something was always going on.

Indeed our *Magnet* stories could well have been subtitled "WITH FULL SUPPORTING CAST". Let's look in at some of them.

Without doubt, Greyfriars wouldn't be so complete without the presence of one William Gosling, the school porter and keeper of the gates, no less. He is of certain age although one really cannot accept that he took up residence in the porter's lodge when Greyfriars first opened as a school, as various young rascals of the lower school would have us believe!

Gosling has a love – hatred with all pupils of Greyfriars and has never been known to smile at any of them except when they are departing for the "hols". Tips are usually forthcoming on that day especially from Lord Mauleverer, Herbert Vernon-Smith and Horace Coker.

Another time when Gosling is actually happy is when he sees a perspiring junior charging up the lane almost in time for calling-over, and he (Gosling) locks the gates just as the unfortunate one arrives. A smile has actually been seen on his crusty countenance as he greets the young man with "which as 'our I'll 'ave to report yer", as he re-opens the gates slowly and carefully and admits him.

He is also happy when he settles in his old armchair in the lodge with his newspaper and his bottle of gin of which he regularly partakes, strictly for medical reasons.

Next we move over to Mr. Alfred Mimble who shares a liking for the "hard stuff", with Gosling, Mr. Mimble is the school gardener and, like the school gatekeeper, has no room in his life for boys. He visits Mr. Gosling on numerous occasions when a new bottle of gin is on the shelf. Mr. Mimble is a good gardener, providing the school with most of its dinner vegetables, and he also keeps the headmaster's garden in excellent condition as a showpiece for his lawn, flowers and bushes.

Mr. Mimble lives with his wife, another "supporting cast" member. Indeed it must be said, as far as the pupils of Greyfriars are concerned, that Mrs. Jessie Mimble is a leading lady. Is she not the manageress of the most important building of the whole school? The Tuckshop. Once the Prior's house, when Greyfriars was a monastery, it is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Mimble and their son, Herbert.

Mrs. Mimble makes cakes and pies which are very popular with all, from the inky fags of the second form to the mighty men of the sixth. There is one very pleasant pastime on a Summer's day for all, and that is to sit under the shady elms by the shop and devour Mrs. Mimble's cakes and pies washed down by Mr. Mimble's ginger-beer.

The good lady is often willing to allow credit when cash is in short supply. There is one

notable exception. A fat member of the Remove always receives a flat refusal, because of the fact that his cash supply can be very limited, and giving credit to this young gentleman would soon put Mrs. Mimble in a very unhappy position when it came to balancing her books!

Usually of a very sunny disposition, there was one occasion, sad to relate, when Mrs. Mimble "lost her cool" and Mr. Mimble suffered the result. This unhappy state of affairs is recorded in the 1928 *Magnet*, 1041. The tuckshop had been plundered overnight, an easy task for some villain because the lock of the tuckshop door was faulty.

"For some years Mr. Mimble had intended to put it right but had had never got round to it. The ancient lock had yielded to the shove of a chisel with ease. The culprit being as yet undiscovered, there was no one else upon whom the vials of wrath could be poured. Mr. Mimble was not to blame; but he was at hand! Mrs. Mimble, in the present disturbed state of her nerves and temper, simply had to snap at somebody. It was one of those occasions when, as the song says, it happens that a victim must be found. So Mr. Mimble was getting the "benefit" of it. Like a good husband, he bore it patiently, only looking a little as if he wondered, rather late in life, whether marriage was, after all, a mistake".

If we walk over to the main building and take a step or two downstairs we shall arrive at the territory of Mrs. Kebble, a widow for many years. She is housekeeper and house matron, taking very seriously the welfare of the whole school. It is Mrs. Kebble who decides whether a pupil is ill enough for a spell in the school sanatorium under the direction of Dr. Pillbury. All new boys have to report to Mrs. Kebble. She has a lot of authority in the school, a case of "she who must be obeyed".

We cannot leave the domain of Mrs. Kebble without mention of Trotter. He is supposed to help Mrs. Kebble in the kitchen but usually can dodge her so that he can settle down to open of his many magazines reporting on the adventures of gangsters, detectives and the "shoot-outs" at the O.K. ranch. But he is hardworking otherwise - at everybody's beck and call. He always announces visitors, and does very well from tips from the Greyfriars men in general. Away from the school, a character who turns up now and then is Joyce the woodcutter. He's married with two sons and lives in a cottage in Lantham Woods. He is usually available with his horse-and-cart to give some weary junior, who has had a spill on his jigger, a lift back to Greyfriars, cheerfully loading the damaged machine on to his cart. Often his home is an oasis for fellows caught in a sudden storm who seek shelter. Always hospitable, Mr. and Mrs. Joyce bring out cups of tea and home-made cakes. Also, if necessary, wet clobber is dried in front of the welcome wood fire. He is well liked and respected by pupils and masters of the school.

At times, a visitor to Greyfriars is Inspector Grimes, head of Courtfield police station. Burglars have been successful and Dr. Locke has found it necessary to call in the arm of the law. Inspector Grimes is a plodder. No quick dramatic arrests, but he always gets his man as a result of patient observation and the building up of numerous small clues until he gets all the proof he needs.

Another, though less important, defender of the law, often mentioned in Greyfriars stories is P.C. Tozer. It must be admitted that, with a very low crime rate in Friardale, where his police station is located, P.C. Tozer spends more time in his garden than on his beat. But, on the other hand, he's always keen to follow the comings and goings of suspicious characters, and anything not quite as it should be does not escape his eagle eye.

At this point I wish to invite all who can to read chapter three in the 1934 *Magnet*, 1360.

It is one of the most brilliant, hilarious episodes Frank Richards ever wrote and brings together several of our "full supporting cast".

First there is P.C. Tozer, then Joyce the woodcutter, closely followed by Mr. Cobb, the proprietor of the Cross Keys Inn, together with Joe Banks, the bookmaker who takes bets from "smokey blades" of Greyfriars, Vernon-Smith being his best customer, and finally Mr. Lambe, the vicar of Friardale.

Vernon-Smith had poured red ink underneath the lining of the Head's topper, which he had retrieved after it had been blown off the respected head by a strong wind. It took some time for the ink to soak through the lining, and Dr. Locke was well on the way to visit his old



WILLIAM GOSLING



P.C. TOZER

friend, Mr. Lambe, when it started to trickle down his face. "Dr. Locke was rather surprised to find his brow damp. He put it down to perspiration but it was a cold day."

Then he met the Police Force of Friardale, P.C. Tozer "My eye", said Mr. Tozer, wondering he was dreaming. Dr. Locke, as he came along, gave the village constable a kindly nod. Tozer only stared. He seemed petrified. The Head's usual kindly expression changed to a frown. It came into his mind that Mr. Tozer must have been sampling the ale at the Cross Keys, not wisely but two well. Otherwise why was he standing like a graven image in the middle of the lane staring at the Headmaster of Greyfriars as if he had been some strange animal escaped from the Zoo.

"Good morning, Mr. Tozer!" said the Head stiffly."

"Oh!" gasped, Mr. Tozer, "g-g-good morning, sir!"

As the Head went on his way, we have one last glimpse of the Friardale Police Force standing in utter amazement "My eye!" said Mr. Tozer again, "Mad! Balmy! Hink on his face - streaks of Hink! My eye! Orf his blooming onion, if you ask me!"

The next one to pass was Mr. Joyce on his cart. He touched his hat but then he gave such a jump that he unintentionally jerked on the horse's reins causing the animal to leap about in quite an alarming manner. Dr. Locke was beginning to feel offended by now.

Next he passed the Cross Keys inn where Messrs Banks and Cobb, together with the postman, guffawed away in a most raucous manner making very rude remarks at the same time. By now, Dr. Locke's cheeks were quite red.

A small urchin asking him why he didn't wash his face didn't help matters, and the vicar's gardener leaning on his hoe, staring blankly at him was the limit. Gladly he reached the door of the vicarage and knocked.

"It was opened by a trim parlour-maid. As her eyes fell on Dr. Locke she started back and gave a little shriek! Dr. Locke gazed at her. The trim maid had admitted him to the vicarage times without number and knew him perfectly well. Now she shrieked and backed away."

Then Mr. Lambe appeared. "Dr. Locke Good morning, sir! I have been expecting you" said Mr. Lambe in his usual honeyed and unctuous, tones. Then he sees Dr. Locke's face. 'Mr. Lambe gazed at the zebra-like face. The maid had supposed that the headmaster of Greyfriars had gone mad. Mr. Lambe feared it as he gazed at the streaky countenance.'

So the comedy continues. As I previously noted, a more hilarious chapter in any *Magnet* would be hard to find. The added bonus was that it included so many of the "full supporting cast".

We cannot leave Friardale without dropping into the shop of Uncle Clegg. Often visited by Greyfriars men for refreshments and tea, George Clegg is a lonely old man, always glad to have the custom and company of the jolly young folk to liven up the place.

Uncle Clegg played a starring role when he got all in a panic with some income-tax forms "some villainous covey" had sent him. Mark Linley sorted it all out for him, as recorded in the 1929 *Magnet*, 1116.

Of course, there are many more I have probably missed. Dare I include Sir Hilton Popper and Coker's Aunty Judy? I think not. To be classed as "full supporting cast" would bring the stick of Sir Hilton across my shoulders and Aunty Judy's umbrella jammed in my ribs.

But I must give space to just one more. A cat. A most remarkable cat! The pet of Mrs. Kebble. This animal has been known to devour a good pound of sausages, a large fruit cake, a cold chicken, a plate of jam tarts, a large steak-and-kidney pie and various other items of food purloined from the kitchen pantry on several occasions.

Anybody who thinks this is quite impossible should visit Greyfriars and take a trip to the Remove passage. Knock on the door of Study number seven. Someone is usually at home, if it is not lesson time, and will bid you enter. Ask to see a William George Bunter. He will most likely be there, flopped in an ancient armchair. Master Bunter will assure you that Mrs. Kebble's remarkable cat is certainly the one who purloins and devours such huge amounts of tuck.

So there's the "full supporting cast". Without them the Greyfriars saga would be like a meal with no seasoning, cornflakes without milk.

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