

STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Vol. 58

No. 662

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No. 288. "THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. COMPLETE LIBRARY.



THE BOY WITHOUT A NAME!

A "Magnificent" New
Long Complete Tale of
the Boys of Highgate
School, introducing
their rivals, Harry
Wharton & Co. of
Greyfriars

By
FRANK RICHARDS

THE PHANTOM AFTER CAPTAIN JUSTICE ?

The answer to the question depends upon whether the reader has any *Bullseyes* in his collection of Old Boys' Papers.

When I was young - I am now 80 - and after I'd graduated from *The Rainbow* my favourite Amalgamated Press Publications were *The Modern Boy* and *The Bullseye*, and my favourite character in the one was Captain Justice and, in the other, The Phantom of Cursitor Fields.

Sixty years later I decided that I would like to reprint *all* the Captain Justice stories, and, with a lot of help from fellow C.D. subscribers, I managed it.

I hadn't had all the weekly episodes so I advertised for them and had a good response.

Now I would like - before I leave it too late - to reprint *all* the Phantom of Cursitor Fields stories.

There were 37 Justice series in 318 four or five page episodes. The total number of pages in the thirty A4 sized books I produced was 1,962, not counting the covers.

There were only 2 Phantom series, mostly in four page story parts.

- Series 1 was *The Phantom of Cursitor Fields* which had 28 instalments in *BULLSEYE* numbers 14 to 41.
- Series 2 was *The Return of the Phantom* in *BULLSEYES* 72 to 103; a run of 32 story parts.

With the help of friends I've accumulated 20 episodes of the FIRST SERIES but still need the ones in *BULLSEYE* numbers 15 20 28 33 34 38 39 40

I have 25 parts of the SECOND SERIES and need those in *BULLSEYE* numbers 72 75 85 87 89 101 and 103

Altogether I need 15 PHANTOM EPISODES and, if I can obtain them, I can print 2 volumes (between 100 and 120 pages in each) about *THE BULLSEYE'S* most celebrated character. If you can help me to do that I shall be very grateful. If you lend me your precious copies I'll photocopy the Phantom episodes in them. If you don't want to part with your *BULLSEYES* you could photocopy the instalments yourself and post them to me. And, if there's a cover illustration of the Phantom, could I have a photocopy of that as well? I will pay whatever is needed.

Between us, PLEASE, let us assemble "*THE COLLECTED PHANTOM OF CURSITOR FIELDS*"

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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

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The Editor's Chat



SUMMER JOYS

As I write this Editorial, summer seems really to have arrived. For some of us it may seem that the weather is almost too hot and sultry - just the day, in fact, to be out and about at the River Sark with Harry Wharton & Co., so long as *they* did the rowing or punting! Re-reading the *Magnet*, I am impressed by their almost boundless energy. Hopefully, though age so often depletes our own supplies of that priceless commodity, we can regain touches of it as reading transports us to younger and more energetic days.

MORE SAD GOODBYES

From Bill Bradford and Bob Whiter I have learned that Louise Blythe, the widow of Bob, co-founder of the London O.B.B.C., passed away in April. She was 79 years old and had been in hospital for a few weeks before her death. She had been for some years in sheltered accommodation, Bob Blythe was always a tremendous force in the club, and in the hobby generally. He was enthusiastic about many areas of collecting and nostalgia, and the work of E.S. Brooks was his particular passion. Louise, always supportive, hosted many London Club meetings and long after Bob had died, liked to hear from members and hobby friends.

Someone who was more tenuously linked with our hobby died in March. Hubert Gregg, broadcaster, actor and composer, is now perhaps best remembered for his nostalgic radio programme, *Thanks For the Memory*, which ran for 3 decades.

He was, briefly, the President of the Northern Old Boys Book Club, then its co-

President (with myself) but he retired from this position several years ago. He occasionally mentioned in his radio programme his love for *The Magnet* and other old boys books. Amongst his claims to distinction is the composition of the songs *Maybe It's Because I'm a Londoner* and *I'm Going to Get Lit Up When the Lights Go On in London*, and the fact that the first two of his three marriages were respectively to the actress/singers Zoë Gail and Pat Kirkwood.

MARY CADOGAN

DREAM LANDSCAPE by Ted Baldock

Or am I mad, or else this is a dream:
Let fancy still my senses in Lethe steep:
If it be thus to dream, still let me sleep.

Twelfth Night

When the grey streets shut me in again in the days that come after,
When no more I shall see the blue glittering sky,
Out of my store-house of dreams I shall take the love and the laughter,
The scents and sounds and colour I now lay by.

T. Sowell

As one grows older the mystery of time seems to take on a new dimension. It impinges ever more insistently on our thoughts. We tend to look back more frequently and recall those early years when we were young, to relive in memory once more the great adventure - for such it was - of life.

I imagine that many of us at one time or another have experienced a desire to escape from humdrum everyday existence, from doing the same things, and performing the same tasks, which contribute to the routines of life.

We would like to set aside the ordinary, everyday things and escape into another world - call it what you will. I like to refer to it as a 'Dream World' into which we may, for a brief period with the aid of memory, return to that wonderful time when we were young, to recapture some of our dreams and longings from that far off period.

Sooner or later in this shadowy world we are sure to encounter the characters and heroes with whom we became familiar in our reading of the weekly story papers. Inevitably we are entering the exciting and timeless world of Greyfriars. A world contained for ever in the rows of much used and well loved volumes, many of which are not a little battle-scarred through long years of loyal service. What pleasure they have given and, at times, what solace.

Here I find myself in very familiar country - that part of the county of Kent often referred to, with good reason, as the Garden of England. Here is to be found that paragon of Public Schools - Greyfriars, and the little hamlet of Friardale and the wild furzy vista of Courtfield common hard by the glistening waters of the tranquil flowing Sark.

Here it is that my dreams are concentrated, here the visions fleet across my mind, revealing in flashes or at greater length the memories and escapes of bygone days.

William Gosling stood beneath the grey old arch of Greyfriars gate and gazed forth into the distance, surveying the landscape. Just what he was looking for, or at, no one but the ancient keeper of the gate could tell. It could well be that he was unaware himself. He was just gazing. Gosling spent a great deal of his time in this static activity.

He was old of course. Just *how* old nobody actually knew. This was something he would never divulge. Certain juniors who were gifted - or otherwise - with rather exaggerated senses of humour would have it that he was as old as the venerable gate over which he had sole jurisdiction. This, of course was nonsense!

Gosling had over his long years of tenure seen many things, some of which he had since forgotten. But many more had been retained in his memory. Days of gladness and joy, and days of sombre gloom. Days of high drama in the great world beyond the little world of school. Wars and revolutions, and great political movements had come and gone: great victories were won and not a few defeats were suffered. Many of these had flashed briefly across the spectrum of our society and disappeared into the mists almost as though they had never occurred. Gosling had lived through them all, and he remembered. Let us give him the benefit of the doubt and assume that he is conning over the momentous times through which he has lived. Greyfriars without him would be unimaginable, almost akin to losing the old elms and grey old quadrangle. Also, to many, that little haven of comfort, the tuckshop, and the rooks who caw ceaselessly above the roofs and towers of the school. Together with Gosling they are all essential parts of the complete picture. Remove any of them and the picture becomes incomplete.

Celebrations were going forward in Masters common room. It was the end of another term. As was the custom it was being hastened into history by a traditional 'get together' of members of Dr. Locke's staff. All were there, most of them in animated conversation, others standing holding glasses in their hands.

The side-board, normally graced by a biscuit-barrel together with an array of coffee cups, today presented quite a festive appearance. A little battery of sherry and port wine glasses flanked by several decanters which were being frequently applied to.

Mr. Prout, master of the fifth form, was booming to some purpose, his plump features becoming a shade more ruddy as the 'get together' continued. The gist of his

booming was the extraordinary progress his boys had made that term. Sharp tones were heard declaiming similar heights attained by Mr. Hacker's pupils. And several other masters' voices were heard in competition, as it were, extolling equal claims for their respective forms - it was quite a Greek chorus.

The Christmas vacation was in the offing and a sense of freedom, relaxation and anticipation was already abroad. Soon Greyfriars would be deserted except for the cleaning staff - and the rooks. Masters and boys would be leaving the ancient precincts and making their ways homewards to the four corners of the kingdom. Mr. Quelch, as ever, would be *en route* to spend a few days with his old friend Colonel Wharton where he would be joined by Harry Wharton and Co. and, doubtless, by William George Bunter who seldom missed an opportunity to attach himself to his 'old pals' for the holidays.

"Come in, Twigg, my dear fellow, come in and sit down." Mr. Twigg with a somewhat worried frown on his face stepped into Mr. Quelch's study and, as invited, sat down. "Thank you, Quelch", he said. "It is extremely kind of you ... it ...". Mr. Twigg paused, and the Remove master made the pretence of arranging some papers on his desk and waited for Twigg to proceed. Something was obviously on the second form master's mind - it was very obvious indeed.

Taking the plunge as it were Mr. Twigg took a deep breath. "It is Prout, you know", he burst out, "He is an excellent fellow in so many ways, but ... but ..." Mr. Twigg paused. Mr. Quelch nodded, "Quite so", he said. It was a gem of brevity yet it spoke volumes.

Here is a recurring situation. Mr. Prout has been insinuating his opinions into the affairs of a colleague again, in attempting to dominate and arrange matters over which he has no jurisdiction whatever. Poor old 'Pompous', a gentleman with the best intentions who manages to stir up more resentment among his colleagues than he ever imagines. "My dear Quelch", a familiar boom in Masters passage could always be heard for a considerable distance around, far beyond those sacred precincts. Usually this is followed by the sharp banging of doors closing as other masters, fearing to get implicated, hastily retreat out of the danger zone.

Harry Wharton stood looking out of the landing window in the Remove passage watching the driving rain sweep over the quad. It was a gloomy scene, he could scarcely recognise the hurrying figures making their way towards the shelter of the school buildings.

He was on his way to the junior common room to join the other members of the Co., there to discuss the possible ways of spending a wet 'halfer'. A cycle run was obviously 'out', as was a ramble over Courtfield common. Courtfield itself was out of the question, even the welcoming delights of Chunkleys had to be relinquished because of the driving rain. Tea at this favourite resort followed by a visit to the local cinema had been mooted, but the weather had dictated otherwise. It was a problem...

If Billy Bunter had a favourite among the many varieties of jam it was Raspberry. However, Strawberry filled a close second place. And here, reposing on the shelf in Herbert Vernon Smith's cupboard, stood a whole jar of the succulent compound.

The Owl gazed at it in silent admiration for a brief moment. Then he instinctively gazed round the interior of the cupboard in search of a spoon, which he soon found. Bunter was extremely quick in little matters such as this. In rather less than five minutes the delicious mixture in that jar had vanished and he was left holding a sticky spoon in an equally sticky hand, with a beatific expression on his fat features. Then, thoughtfully placing the spoon in the now empty jar and closing the cupboard door, he removed his fat person in some haste from Smithy's study.

Nemesis, revenge, justice, retribution, call it what you will. It never failed to be visited - in due course - upon the fat head of Billy Bunter in adequate measure during his career as a hunter of Tuck - anyone's Tuck! The Owl made no distinctions, he was impartial to a degree. A cake or a bag of doughnuts from a Remove study, or a fifth form study, even from the sacred domains of a sixth form study. He quite failed to understand that the way of a transgressor throughout the ages has never been a bed of roses. In this particular instance and in all the other transgressions he certainly cannot be described as being fussy or a snob. A feed from any source was manna from heaven to him.

Here once more Gosling drifts across the vision of my dreams. He is still standing at the gate of Greyfriars, the same crusty old figure known to generations of school boys - and masters. He never appears to be doing anything - unless it be performing cogitations of some depth.

Standing in the doorway of his lodge beneath the arch he is enjoying the early March sunshine. He grunts. There is nothing particularly unusual in this, Gosling often grunted. There was however a slight deviation from the general rule, it was quite an emphatic grunt, a grunt expressive of strong disapproval.

Gosling was a crusty old fellow who found much in his little world of which he disapproved. Boys in particular with their insatiable - and to his way of thinking - distorted sense of humour. Their pranks and japes. "Let's pull old Gossy's leg, you fellows. I say, Gos, old chap did you know ..." 'Leg pulls' and practical jokes played upon him over many years had made him a grunter *par excellence*, and here they were approaching him once more, the young 'varmints'.

Yet, despite all his grunting and growling Gosling has been heard to state to his old friend and fellow-sufferer, Mr. Nimble that he did miss the young rascals during the vacations. Here is revealed a rather nice point - what interpretation should we apply to such a statement?

Do you recall those cosy study teas during the winter term? With the curtains drawn and the rain beating on the window. With the fire burning well and the table adequately supplied (how we hoped that Bunter would not turn up). We were obli-

ous for the moment that the world outside was vibrating and seething with rumours of war.

Within the quiet confines of our Greyfriars world we considered ourselves safe from the harsh realities outside. House rivalries were perhaps the biggest and most important issue of the day.

We were wrong, of course. Fate does not always take our little considerations into account. Looking back now those study gatherings were small, steadily burning lamps in a darkening world.

There had been a spot of bother with Smithy's waistcoat which had, however, been swiftly overcome by the resourceful Owl with the aid of a pair of scissors, some string and a few safety pins. The necessary change, when completed, looked quite satisfactory viewed from the front. Has it not been said that the good soldier never looks to his rear. So thus far all was well. Other little changes had been put in hand, these also had been managed with equal skill and ingenuity. Surely the Cliff House girls would be suitably impressed. Putting Harry Wharton and Co. in the shade, as it were, always gave Billy Bunter the comforting feeling that he, with his well developed figure, must surely command the maximum of attention and admiration.

He suffered agonies with Lord Mauleverer's shoes which were at least two sizes too small for him. But, nothing loath, he was prepared to suffer in a good cause, together with the prospect of ample and pleasant tea with the girls. That it was a vain-glorious Owl there is no doubt whatever. So, with garments 'borrowed' up and down the Remove passage did Billy Bunter adorn himself, and it must be admitted that the finished attire was not without interest or originality.

Many and various have been the visions seen proceeding from the old gateway of Greyfriars school over the centuries of its existence, both as a monastery and, later, as a school. Few perhaps as bizarre as that presented by the Owl of the Remove in the full panoply of borrowed plumes on his way to make (so he hoped) conquests at Cliff House school. The peacock in all his splendour was scarcely as eye-catching as was Bunter on this occasion.

Many fellows confronted by the vision of such dazzling magnificence clapped their hands over their eyes in mock distress. Bunter elevated his fat little nose an inch or so higher than intended by Mother Nature by way of depicting contempt for such unappreciative conduct. Unhappily, in the process, he dropped one of Lord Mauleverer's gloves. Retrieving it occasioned certain strains here and there about his person which, sadly, did not enhance the general effect!

The majority of waitresses are very discerning. They are ladies who have much time to study humanity, a study which goes along with the job. They have always eyed Billy Bunter with a certain fixed expression upon which any number of interpretations could be placed, the most common of which are disbelief, astonishment, concern and genuine alarm. Retribution will of course always have its way, never does it fail and later Bunter will be called upon to pay for his gastronomic achievements with

other fellows' tuck. But the happy, thoughtless present suffices.

The fat Owl's philosophy has ever been to enjoy the fruits of the moment and let the future with its possible, indeed most probable, consequences take heed to themselves. The 'spread' is the all, the only important thing, and here is the Owl, beaming over the well-stocked board, surrounded by his friends who, most comforting thought, will eventually foot the bill.

There is much noise and I stir uneasily in my sleep, but Morpheus holds me firmly in his bonds and soon I slip away once more into deeper slumber to the echo of strange sounds.

The serried ranks of blaring brass,
The strings and wood-wind soaring,
This is not Bruckner, this is farce,
'Tis Hoskins - Oh so boring.
The cymbals clash, the flutes confound,
Claude, hair and baton flying,
The hall with fearful noise resounds,
Draws out much fear and sighing.
The drums roll and boom,
French horns hoot and bray
Like the voices of doom,
Or wild spirits astray.

William George Bunter surveyed the pineapple which formed the centre piece of the spread on the study table. "That's a fine fruit, Harry, old chap", he said. "Not quite up to the standard we grow at Bunter Court of course, but it's a fine fruit." "It should be", remarked Harry Wharton. "It is one of Chunkleys best..." Bob Cherry closed an eye, the one out of the Owl's vision, at Frank Nugent. "We do our small best Bunty, old pippin", he said, 'but we never forget our limitations you know. The Pineries at Bunter Court must be one of the sights not to be missed when one is passing through Surbiton'.

So the night grows older and the great multitude of Greyfriars characters drift before me, so many familiar faces now slowly fading as I ascend from the depths of sleep to the awareness of another day. They are all present. It will always be so, of that I am confident - it is an *affaire d'amour*.

In the thrilling realm of boyhood dreams,
Where adventure has no bounds.
Only the young at heart see beams,
Where laughter and joy yet sounds.



GREAT OAKS... by Derek Hinrich

Union Jack No. 222, of the second series, published in the week ending January 11th 1908 introduced in the story, "The Man From Scotland Yard", a new phenomenon to the saga of Sexton Blake, the first great serial villain. George Marsden Plummer was not the first serial character introduced into Blake stories. Apart from the egregious Chinese boy, We-wee, and other pre-Tinker assistants, there was Norman Goddard's Inspector Spearing who, however, was never so endearing as Inspector Coutts, and so did not stay the course, and there was the rather more resilient Sir Richard "Spots" Loseley, Sexton Blake's school friend who carried the white man's burden in Africa, but Plummer was the first great criminal of the Golden Age.

Later authors, intent on establishing their own niche, created their own principal recurrent characters as either adversaries of Blake or as his coadjutants. But Plummer was different in that he gradually inspired such interest in Blake's audience that after his creator's, Michael Semphill's, death no less than four other authors in succession undertook the recording of his encounters with Blake (N.Goddard, J.W. Bobin, W. Shute - who tried to kill him off- and G.H. Teed) so that by the time of the demise of *The Detective Weekly* in May 1940 they had crossed swords over one hundred times.

On his first appearance, Detective Sergeant Plummer, the rising star of the CID, having discovered that he was second in line to inherit the earldom of Sevenoaks and a rent roll of £60,000 a year, proceeds to murder the earl and attempts to murder the first heir, a coastguard (surely it is curious how both heirs to this title are living in reduced circumstances). As the earl was elderly and childless, while the coastguard was a young unmarried man, surely the prudent course would have been to take the long view, kill the younger man, and sit tight, waiting for nature to take its course. Plummer, however, was not like that.

After Plummer was arrested he, "was sent to his cell, he looked round it, saw how white it was, and resolved he simply would not stay in it."

Readers were promised in an editorial note that a further story featuring Plummer would be published in a future issue of *The Union Jack*. In the event, the readers had to wait eighteen months, until July 1909 for Plummer to reappear, in the story, "In Deadly Grip". In the meantime, however, Semphill had published five other Blake stories, including the splendid "Ghost of Rupert Forbes" which was published initially

as a Christmas double number of the *UJ*, and subsequently in The Boys' Friend Library. "In Deadly Grip" begins the very moment "The Man From Scotland Yard" finishes. Plummer achieves a sensational escape from custody, manages to destroy the evidence against him but, for other crimes, is sentenced to twenty years penal servitude. I don't somehow think he ever completed that sentence, for the next Plummer story followed in twelve weeks.

Thereafter, Semphill contributed six stories to the *UJ* published over the course of a year, three of which, however, featured Plummer (so the interest must have been growing). In addition he wrote an original Blake story. *The Mervyn Mystery*, for the Boys' Friend Library (No 96 published in September 1909) featuring as Blake's adversaries both Rupert Forbes and George Marsden Plummer.

What is interesting, though, is how soon the use of Plummer by others began, for only eight weeks after Semphill's last story - and last Plummer story - appeared, and presumably shortly after Semphill's death, the first case featuring the Scotland Yard renegade by Norman Goddard was published.

Over the period of some two and a half years in which Semphill had contributed to the Sexton Blake saga, he had eighteen stories published in *The Union Jack* and one novel published in the Boys' Friend Library. Eight of these featured George Marsden Plummer. The last was published in 1910. "The Man From Scotland Yard" was republished in an abridged version in *The Sexton Blake Annual* of 1939 and two others of his Plummer stories were also reissued in abridged form in the last weeks of *Detective Weekly*.

But in the thirty years following his last account of George Marsden Plummer other hands published another hundred stories about Plummer and he - or a character of the same name (after all, he was thirty-six in 1908) - made a brief appearance in the "New Blake" era of the fourth and fifth series of the *SBL*.

Great oaks indeed.

WANTED:

**Bound volume of the *SPHERE* magazine
for the year 1908.**

**Also *THE EYE OF SUDA*
by Major Charles Gilson.**

Please contact
JOHN HAMMOND
49 Beckingthorpe Drive,
Bottesford, Nottingham, NG13 0DN

BY TIMOTHY!!

By Bill Bradford

This was a favourite exclamation by Paul Temple, a character created by Francis (Henry) Durbridge, who was born in 1912. Having studied English at Birmingham University, he was briefly a stockbroker, then a playwright and author from 1938 until his last play, *SWEET REVENGE*, in 1993.

In 1940 he married Norah Elizabeth Lawley by whom he had two sons. He died in 1998, in London. For over 50 years his work was sold around the world, specialising in crime fiction. He first came to light in 1938 in a B.B.C. radio serial, *SEND FOR PAUL TEMPLE*, which enthralled me, then a schoolboy. The part of Temple was played by Hugh Morton, and the book was published by John Long in 1938.

Since Temple was Durbridge's most famous creation, what do we know about him? Well, initially he is 40 years of age, courtly and of dominant character. Played rugby at Oxford but his substantial build did not hinder his activity and reactions. Rarely indulged in unnecessary fisticuffs and only carried a gun when really necessary. After some years in Fleet Street, specialising in crime reporting after the failure of a play, he took up writing thrillers and achieved fame as a criminologist. In the first book he meets and marries Steve Trent, who features prominently in all the Temple stories.

Temple is a friend and adviser to Sir Graham Forbes, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, and they share many adventures together. He also works with numerous other police officers, not all above suspicion. Many final chapters involve a gathering of all suspect parties in Temple's flat, with a dramatic denouncement of the culprit. Of a total of 38 novels, at least 15 featured Temple. Durbridge also created Tim Fraser, an engineer recruited as an Intelligence Agent, who first appeared in *THE WORLD OF TIM FRASER* on TV in 1960 with Jack Hedley (remember him in *Colditz?*)



FRANCIS DURBRIDGE

first became known to millions of radio listeners as the creator of Paul Temple, whom he introduced in 1938. The Paul Temple plays and stories have been broadcast and published in numerous languages all over the world.

Francis Durbridge turned to television in 1952 and is now widely recognised, by critics and public alike, as the most popular TV writer in Europe. Besides *The Other Man*, his plays for television include *The Broken Horseshoe*, *The Teckman Biography*, *Portrait of Alison*, and *My Friend Charles*.

THE WORLD OF TIM FRAZER

The great T.V. serial
presented as a novel by

FRANCIS DURBRIDGE

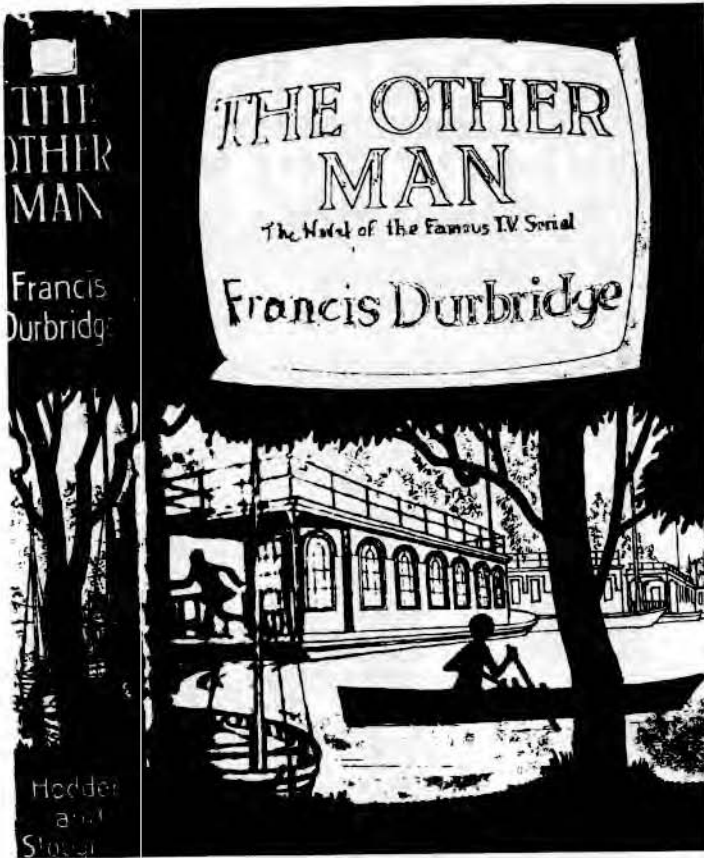


in the title role.

There were some 17 other books about sundry characters, often with the hero accused of murder. Over the years Durbridge collaborated on several occasions with Douglas Rutherford, John Thewes and Barry Thomas. Mainly his books were adapted for TV, but several plays became books. He specialised in cliffhangers and red herrings, leaving you guessing till the end. The books are hard to find and at a premium. I still seek *PAUL TEMPLE AND THE FRONT PAGE MEN* (a paperback sold last month at £30) and *PAUL TEMPLE AND THE CONRAD CASE*.

Early books were published by John Long, followed by Hodder and Stoughton, with some reprints by White Lion and Ian Hendry, with paperbacks by Coronet Books.

His first radio play "Promotion" was in 1933, being followed by at least another 30 between 1938-1968, I think all were serialised. In these, Kim Peacock played Temple at least 7 times while Peter Coke, reputed to be the best Temple, took the role 11 times. The part of Steve Temple was taken by Marjorie Westbury in almost all of



the radio plays. Other well known cast members included Carl Bernard, Barry Morse and Howard Marion Crawford. Theme music was Scherzade, and later, Coronation Scot – I think that is the right sequence. Films, that I can trace were:

- 1946 SEND FOR PAUL TEMPLE (P.T. = Anthony Hulme)
- 1948 CALLING PAUL TEMPLE (John Bentley)
- 1950 PAUL TEMPLE'S TRIUMPH (John Bentley)
- 1952 PAUL TEMPLE'S RETURN
- 1954 THE TECKMAN MYSTERY (John Justin and Margaret Leighton)
- 1957 THE VICIOUS CIRCLE (John Mills and Derek Farr)

I vaguely recall the last of these, but have not seen and don't know more of any of the others.

There were at least 9 stage plays, of which I have 6, all published by Samuel French, some details of which are worth recording

SUDDENLY AT HOME Theatre Royal Windsor. Opened 8th June 1971 -
 Penelope Keith, Rula Kenska and Gerald Harper.

THE GENTLE HOOK	Piccadilly Theatre. Opened 21 December 1974 – Raymond Francis, Dinah Sheridan and Jack Watling.
MURDER WITH LOVE	Windsor. Opened 2 nd March 1976 – Dermot Welsh and Peter Byrne.
HOUSE GUEST	Yvonne Arnaud, Guildford. Opened 10 th Feb 1981 – Susan Hampshire and Gerald Harper.
NIGHTCAP	Yvonne Arnaud, Guildford. Opened 6 th July 1983 – Nyrée Dawn Porter and Jack Hedley
A TOUCH OF DANGER	Windsor. Opened 21 st July 1987 – William Lucas and William Franklyn.

I did see a Durbridge play in Eastbourne, perhaps 10 or 12 years ago, in which Richard Todd and Peter Byrne starred but that is all I can remember.

On TV there were at least 16 serials from THE BROKEN HORSESHOE in 1952 (6 instalments) to BREAKWAY IN 1979. Leading actors over the years included Patrick Barr, Brian Wilde, Stephen Murray, Tony Britton & Jack Hedley. There was a TV PAUL TEMPLE SERIES, about 1969-1971, I think, of some 50x50 min. episodes. Temple was played by Francis Matthews and his wife, Steve, by Ross Drinkwater, who were adequate but did not conform to my vision of the characters. I cannot trace the author(s) but they did not have a Durbridge touch, at least, not for me! About the only reference in our hobby is contained in the Lofts/Adley list under LIBRARIES, "PAUL TEMPLE" – published by G.M. Smith in 1964, which seems to have run to about 8 issues 94 x 2, which I understand was a pocket-size comic, reprinting the strips from *The Evening News*, black and white with a two colour cover.

Durbridge is one of the few authors who really hold me and keep me awake longer than my usual bedtime read. Do try him.

CLUB REPORTS

Despite the fact that this is an enlarged number of the C.D., regretfully there is no room for the Club Reports. We will give them plenty of space in our next issue. Meanwhile, if anyone wants details from London, Northern, Cambridge or South Western Clubs, letters addressed to their Secretaries c/o the C.D. will be forwarded.

SOME ROGUES AND VILLAINS IN THE MAGNET

by Frances M. Blake

May I refresh memories of - or perhaps introduce - some selected adult villains from *The Magnet*. Not in strict chronological order but sub-divided into public school types gone wrong; rogues, some almost likeable, and then the evil ones who are mostly foreign and exotic.

To commence with the old boys and first with **Barnes**, who plainly has a public school background though not a Greyfriars man. Like too many junior officers from World War One he turned to crime in the bleak post-war years, having been under Colonel Wharton's command during that war. So in 1929/30 he is acting as Dr. Locke's chauffeur but with a hidden past. His real name was Arthur Poynings who after a prison sentence was using his new post at the school to carry out numerous robberies under the title of the Courtfield Cracksman. He was eventually trapped by Inspector Irons of Scotland Yard who had been posing as Remove Master Mr. Richard Steele. I must admit to being rather sorry for Barnes when he was discovered and went back to prison again. He had a certain charm and bravado and was not a violent man. It's to be hoped that he later was able to make a better life for himself.

Alas, the next two are old boys of Greyfriars and both gone to the bad. **Captain Eric Spencer** (1927) appeared a handsome young man of graceful yet athletic build who affected a limp from a supposed old war wound. But appearances were very deceptive. He was quite ruthless in pursuing his chosen career as an armed robber, and in fact he coolly robbed the bank at Lantham on his way to stay with his old Headmaster. He was finally arrested and sent away to prison, mainly due to Vernon-Smith's revelations. Somehow I feel he would land back on his feet afterwards and would learn a lesson to be more cautious in future if not more straight.

Randolph Crocker is another old boy makes bad. Crocker had been expelled from Greyfriars when in the Fifth Form and came back years later to set up shop as a pretended cobbler outside the school just to annoy Dr. Locke. There followed his impudent assaults upon masters and property until the young detective Jack Drake was called in to solve the problem. For Crocker was not there just to embarrass his old school and attack form-masters (amusing as some of these scenes are) but to continue as a clever burglar. It took time before he could be caught by Drake and, as he was also wanted for escaping from prison under a false name, he was speedily returned to jail. Not much of a future for him.



Captain Spencer

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To come now to those foreign and exotic characters who are usually very evil indeed.

In 1924, the Remove juniors, together with Marjorie and Clara from Cliff House, encountered the North African sheik **Mustapha ben Mohammed** in the Sahara. His treatment of the two girls was unique in The Magnet since he had them buried up to their shoulders in the earth of a cave and planned for a wild hyena to be loosed upon them. The sheik also had Bob Cherry tied to the back of a camel driven into the desert for days, almost dying from thirst and suffering hallucinations before rescue. In the final chapters ben Mohammed was pursued and killed by the good sheik Ali ben Yusef and the corpse left on the desert sands to be torn by jackals and hyenas in a fittingly gruesome end.

From an Arab to an Indian villain - **Baji Rao** – an elder cousin of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh who wanted the schoolboy prince's throne of Bhanipur for himself. In 1926, after several failures to kidnap Inky in England and on the high seas, he staged a coup in Bhanipur itself after taking Hurree Singh prisoner during a tiger hunt. When the coup collapsed, he fled with a Russian agent who then treacherously murdered him so that he might more easily get back to his own country. But **Lazaroff**, who was probably the worst of the two, was hunted down, cornered and killed. His head in a sack was carried back to the palace. 'Harry Wharton had a glimpse of something that made his face turn white and brought a sick feeling to his heart. A grim smile for a moment flickered on the nabob's dusky face. "The Russian will never reach Moscow," he said. "He will never plot again among the people of India."' [M.970]

In 1930 appeared the infamous Chinese Mandarin and descendant of the Ming Emperors - **Wang Tang** – who headed the Red Dragon Tong worldwide-web and had become all powerful. He even dreamed of the Chinese throne. He possessed an evil personality and was totally corrupted by his powers of life or death over anyone who fell into his disfavour. However he came to a miserable end in the penultimate chapter of the series by being assassinated by his follower who, in fear for his own life, plunged a knife into the Mandarin's heart.



Tang Wang

During the Egyptian holiday of 1932 the Greyfriars party met a Greek enemy, **Kalizelos**, an antiques dealer from Alexandria who was trying to steal the famous diamond that was "The Eye of Osiris" and used many ruthless means to do so. But he was not the worst of villains and was permitted to ride away into the desert after making a complete confession to avoid a sentence of death.

It was in the Kenyan Safari series of 1931 that certainly one of the most evil characters was discovered. This was **Ludwig Krantz**, the half-German, half-Arab slave trader of Central Africa, noted for his dark skin but pale blue eyes. Actually this series is distinguished by having some specially villainous villains - another four or five of them.

Mr. Vernon-Smith was visiting Kenya and Uganda on business as usual and took the Famous Five and Bunter on holiday with his son. Quite soon after arriving in Africa, Smithy made a deadly enemy of Krantz, the outlawed slave trader, who then first captured him, later the other six juniors in turn, to sell them all into captivity in Darkest Congo. There they were held as slaves, except for Bunter who, blissfully ignorant until the last moment, was being fattened up (even more if possible!) for a tribal feast. After great hardships they were rescued with the help of Kikolobo, their faithful Kikuyu hunter, together with Captain McCann, Big Game White Hunter, and even Mr. Vernon-Smith was included in the party, desperate to find his son.

Two earlier lesser villains in the story were **Perez** and **Joaz Vino** who imprisoned an elderly Portugese concessionaire and conspired to sell the Kenyan estate to Mr. Vernon-Smith on behalf of Perez who was found out in time, mainly thanks to Bunter.

Chunder Run, an Indian Bengali merchant of Nairobi, was another one. He kidnapped Bunter early in the series in mistake for millionaire's son Vernon-Smith and wanted a ransom of £10,000. He was wounded and taken into custody when Kikolobo came to the rescue. Chunder Run at first seems rather a comic figure, fat and ingratiating, and first met when hiding up a tree from a hungry leopard, but in reality was more sinister.

A splendidly tyrannical villain is **Tofoloko**, King of the Mateli tribe in the Upper Congo. It is he who bought the Remove white slaves from the vengeful Krantz. A savage ruler and monster of cruelty, he condemned Smithy to death by slow torture for daring to strike him. Indeed Tofoloko was lucky to earn no worse fate than being tied up while the Remove juniors were helped in their escape by the terrified "Prime Minister" Bubu who chose to escape with them rather than remain and suffer a dreadful fate from the fury of King Tofoloko.

M'Toko is the witch doctor of the tribe, most truly evil and feared even by his King. A skilful murderer who used the most hideous of methods. He was rightfully slain by a spear thrown by the loyal Kikolobo just as he was about to begin the torture of the Bounder.

As for the slave trader, Krantz, he too meets his end by the spear of the Kikuyu warrior. "'Give me good word in the land of the ghosts, O my enemy!'" said Kikolobo - the last words that the slave trader ever heard.' [M.1236] The body was left on the jungle path for jackals to clean-pick the bones.

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Now for rogues rather than villains?

In 1934 there is a rogue or villain with a similar name, **Kranz**, but a very different man and this time at Greyfriars. Franz Kranz, of indeterminate origins, is clever and sardonic, very rich and an old boy too. But he had been "asked to leave" Greyfriars many years ago. However, he returned to visit the old school. As a skilful pilot, he twice landed his private plane on the playing fields, once to give Mr. Quelch a lift, and second to kidnap Bob Cherry into the air! Mr. Kranz knew of Bob's father's pre-Second World War invention and desired to possess the secret by any foul means. Vernon-Smith, who was again under expulsion, nearly discovered that Mr. Kranz was the kidnapper

before he too was thrown into the vaults underneath Greyfriars. Redwing joined the two later. It was left to Mauleverer to find out what had happened, get Smithy excused from the sack, and land Mr. Kranz with a lot of years in a British jail. Although starting off as a rogue, it is true that Mr. Kranz could become a vicious and utterly unscrupulous enemy, as when he was ready to leave his three boy prisoners to starve to death in the dark. Perhaps this series is not sufficiently well-known nor appreciated enough for he was a formidable and interesting rogue-villain.

Mention should be made of the best example of Headmaster as tyrant. This is **Mr. Meyer Brander** (Dutch) who in 1930 succeeded Dr. Locke as Headmaster of Greyfriars by the simple way of allowing his obnoxious nephew Otto Van Tromp to knock out poor Dr. Locke who was forced to retire on sick leave. The bullying nephew was then installed as Head Prefect and the two deliberately set out to over-turn all the best and ancient traditions of the school. Only when the injustices became unbearable did the Remove begin one of the most famous barrings-out. When Mr. Brander made treacherous promises to end the rebellion, it only continued successfully until uncle and nephew were at last exposed and ended up by being literally kicked out of the school gates. Certainly good riddance to bad rubbish.

An Italian villain featured in 1935 but maybe he was rather more of a rogue instead. This was **Count Zero**, as he called himself. Mr. Vernon-Smith had bought the old Devonshire house of Polpelly to search for tin over the Cornish border. The Italian Count, working for his government, not for himself, plotted to find the hidden Spanish gold in Polpelly and made use of an old legend to act the ghost. But Vernon-Smith and the Famous Five, unwittingly helped by Bunter of course, were able to defeat him and his associate after various kidnappings and ghostly happenings. The Christmas story finished on a good note when Vernon-Smith, unusually merciful, let the Count he had shot and wounded go free.



Captain Vernon

Captain Vernon and his dear nephew Bertie Vernon arrived in the series of 1939. Much more of a rogue than a villain was the Captain, a retired Indian Army officer. These were the aristocratic but impoverished side of the family and there is much motivation for antagonism between the two sides. (Although Mr. Vernon-Smith is generous towards his dead wife's family hangers-on, the son, Herbert Vernon-Smith, resents and despises his arrogant relatives.) The Captain sends his nephew to Greyfriars (he is an exact double of his cousin) and plans to substitute good Bertie for the scapegrace Bounder. Later on the Captain traps and imprisons Vernon-Smith in the turret room of Lantham Chase which he had rented for that purpose. Yet he was ultimately defeated when his own nephew would not go through with the deception after Captain Vernon

was forced to imprison Tom Redwing as well. True his plotting was criminal but his intentions were only to win a fortune for Bertie, for whom he had strong, really fatherly affection. When all was revealed and Mr. Vernon-Smith wished to avoid a family scandal, both uncle and nephew returned to India where I hope that things worked out well for them and that they even returned to England one day.

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There are three "villainous" characters remaining who deserve particular attention.

First is another Bounder relation, but this time on the Smith side of the family, in what is known as the **Smedley** series of 1934. He was actually Lucius Teggers, a sort of nephew of Mr. Vernon-Smith, a personable young man with a neat moustache and confident manner. When Mr. Vernon-Smith suddenly became the Roman parent and decided to disown and disinherit his wayward son as Smithy had not behaved, he determined to make Lucius the heir to his millions. However, when circumstances changed the father's mind for the present, Lucius Teggers took the name and background of Eustace Smedley and came to Greyfriars as the Remove's temporary Form-Master, with the sole purpose to do his best - that is his worst - to get Herbert Vernon-Smith expelled and disgraced.

"Mr. Smedley" had been at Oxford and has some experience as a school teacher so he is able to fit into his assumed role. Not only Smithy dislikes him, though never realising the true reason for his new Form-master's "down" on him, but he became unpopular with the rest of the Remove who gave him the unflattering nickname of "The Creeper and Crawler" due to his surreptitious snooping. "Mr. Smedley" needs to become more and more unscrupulous as time goes by and somehow all his efforts fail. Yet somehow one can sympathise a little bit with him until he goes too far.

When he is finally exposed by Mr. Vernon-Smith's unexpected visit to the school, he leaves unrepentant, saying: "Well, you asked for it! It was all your own doing! Did you think you could dangle a fortune of millions under a man's eyes and nothing come of it? You are an old fool, Mr. Vernon-Smith - and your son is a young rascal! He has deserved a dozen times to be expelled - and I'm sorry that I never brought it off!" [M.1373]

And so Smedley/Teggers goes - "My game's up here!" - but it might well be that he remains the junior partner in that well-known public school agency of Leggett and Teggers. In fact I would like a fortune of his own by other and better means.

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Now for another Greyfriars school-master but a professional criminal this time. It is 1939/40 and perhaps it is unfair to put **Mr. Lamb** alias Slim Jim into an evil category, though he is definitely a real rogue. He also has a nasty accomplice, the surly



Mr. Lamb

Nobby Parker, a stocky and pimple-faced man. Slim Jim is the notorious thief whose face has never been seen and whom the nation-wide police have sought unsuccessfully for years. And then most unfortunately for Mr. Quelch he happened to see what Slim Jim really looks like, so is soon kidnapped and held captive by the crook and Nobby in dire conditions for sixteen weary weeks. By now Slim Jim, with his new name of Mr. Lamb, had arrived at Greyfriars to take the place of little Mr. Woosey, the Art Master, who's been called to do war work in London. The new Mr. Lamb is soon appointed to take the place of the missing Quelch as Form-faster of the Remove.

Back at school in the new term he plays an arty little ass, with gold-rimmed (unnecessary) glasses, his hair worn a little too long, and always in a velvet coat instead of master's cap and gown. No wonder his Remove class soon nicknamed him "The Pet Lamb" and he was well capable of deceiving the whole school except for those rare occasions when the fluffy pet lamb suddenly turned into a raging tiger or a big bad wolf. He deceived everyone except for the Bounder, for Smithy had taken a fierce dislike to Mr. Lamb from the first day of term when the "harmless" Pet Lamb had brutally smacked his head. Since then Smithy always correctly believed that Lamb was "hard as iron, and keen as sharp steel". He knew from personal experience that Lamb was "hard as nails, as keen as a hawk, and cruel as a cat", all the while acting a very different part.

Ferrers Locke, the famous Baker Street detective, was asked to look for the missing Mr. Quelch and disguised himself as the Head's chauffeur for the purpose, as well as finding the master-crook who was raiding the neighbourhood. He soon became almost certain of Slim Jim's identity but it took the great detective until the finale of the series before he could capture his man in the actual crime of cracking the Head's safe for £7,000 in bonds. But surely real credit should go to the Bounder, Vernon-Smith, who after a term's bitter feuding with his hated Form-master - "Quelch is my Form-master - not that rat!" - discovered Mr. Lamb's secrets, rescued Mr. Quelch - "My dear boy!" - and aided in Slim Jim's arrest.

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So to come to the last choice, which may be easily guessed? He starred in four Magnet series, a unique achievement for a villain. But was he villain or rogue, even likeable, even admirable - at times? The first and most dramatic appearance of **James Soames** was in the South Seas adventures of 1927. His last and enigmatic in 1940 in the War at the very end of The Magnet.

The sea-lawyer - that is pirate and slave trader of the Pacific. Given the name of "Atoo", meaning The Devil, a name well-earned throughout the islands. A cold-blooded killer when it suited him. See for example how he murdered both the captain and the bosun of the 'Aloha' schooner - and both of them white men!

Tom Redwing's long dead uncle Peter Bruce had hidden a fortune of pearls on a tiny Pacific island. When Mr. Vernon-Smith sailed on business to the Far East he took his son, Redwing, the Famous Five, stowaway Bunter, and his excellent valet of several years' service and known to him as Soames. Which was quite a mistake. Once in charge of taking the Greyfriars juniors to find the treasure isle, the valet

quickly revealed his true character when in the wild days following he seized the schooner and ruled it revolver in hand - although even then he rarely lost his cloak of smooth politeness. Notable exchanges occurred between Soames and Bunter in those days, Bunter certainly receiving his comeuppance once Soames was in control. But even the worm will turn. Anyone who has read the Treasure Hunters series will remember the 'coffee' incident. Of course James Soames escapes his just desserts, just as he does in his three later series back in England.

It was Christmas 1928 when he first reappeared, still trying to obtain a part of Redwing's fortune and capturing Tom in the process. A memorable remark, made in his smooth and silky voice, occurs when he is about to take prisoner Herbert Vernon-Smith. "I remember you well, Master Herbert. You have in your character the makings of a man very like myself," [M.1088]

During the final return of Soames in 1940 he is 'The man who had been many things in many different places'. And somewhere he hints that he has a background, including no doubt a public school and probable university - that his name was not always Soames - and that certain unpleasant circumstances had compelled him in early life to flee England to travel across the world.

I would like to read more of James Soames or whatever name he chooses to call himself. There could be many stories for him to star again. Who knows about the rest of 1940 and World War Two: Dunkirk, the Gestapo again, even POW camps with the Greyfriars heroes.

The last we see of him is when he escapes from the British police with a bag of Gestapo money to set himself up somewhere for the present day. And surely we are glad that he gets away with it this time.

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Do not imagine that names like The Gentleman Pincher, or Pawson or Rawlings or Rance or Nessuno (another Italian) have been forgotten, but these are all minnows compared to some of those referred to. Of the 15 characters chiefly discussed, the three ex-public school men have all gone to prison. The five foreign villains counted as four violently dead; only the lucky Greek got away. Of the rogues, likeable or not, only one goes to prison and three are sent away with varying fortunes ahead of them. As for the last three, Smedley gets off, with perhaps an interesting future, hopefully more family association. Mr. Lamb goes to prison, no doubt sentenced to a long stretch, but somehow I don't believe he wouldn't escape and seek revenge. While Soames disappears in 1940 but not out of memory. He goes to live and fight and fascinate another day.

And so, finally, who would I like to see again - the living not the dead of course. Perhaps Mr. Franz Kranz could come back with another dastardly plan in World War Two after his release. I wouldn't mind seeing Count Zero again as he had style. I would definitely like a return of Captain Vernon and Bertie to play another role in the Vernon and Smith family saga. Likewise Mr. Teggars alias Mr. Smedley who is too good a character to lose. As Mr. Lamb was so cunning and cruel, I feel sure he would dominate another series. And the sea-lawyer, of course.

BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

by **Brian Doyle**

Part Two

Marilyn Monroe: Marilyn Monroe was still 'around' Pinewood Studios in 1957, when I began my career as a Publicist in the movie world. Although she had finished shooting her co-starring role opposite Sir Laurence Olivier in 'The Prince and the Showgirl' (based on Terence Rattigan's play 'The Sleeping Prince') she occasionally popped in to do odd bits of sound 'dubbing' and so on. One day I was walking along a corridor leading to the large and impressive 'baronial' executive restaurant when I heard someone behind me. Glancing round I saw it was Marilyn, then the world's greatest 'sex symbol'. As I reached the heavy oak door leading to the restaurant, I paused and held it open for her. She gave me a dazzling smile and murmured 'Such a gentleman - thank you so much'. I smiled back and said: 'A pleasure - the age of chivalry is not yet dead, Miss Monroe'. A few days later, the same thing happened as she entered the doors to the studios' main building. Another smile and 'Thank you - and such a gentleman again!' I saw her again, this time with Olivier. I had heard she was about to return to America. She smiled and said 'Hello!'. I returned her greeting and wished her 'Bon Voyage!'. Laughing she said: 'And a good voyage to you too, Mr. Gentleman...!' I never saw her again, except up there on the screen, of course. All this is very trivial perhaps, but I've always remembered it. It's not every day you meet, however fleetingly, a true screen icon (whose name and fame remain undiminished today - I heard recently that there have been over 400 books published about MM!). I had been told of her bad behaviour during the making of her film with Olivier (who also directed it), of being hours late on the set and so on. The stories became famous at the time. But I obviously saw a glimpse of the best side of her - sweet, smiling and friendly. And that's how I like to remember her.

Brigitte Bardot: Another screen icon. One day I went to Pinewood Studios as part of my part-time journalistic career before I actually entered the film business, in the mid-1950s. I visited the set of 'Doctor at Sea', mainly to interview Dirk Bogarde and James Robertson Justice. I was chatting with Bogarde (always nice and professional) when a very pretty young girl came up and asked him about something. Dirk introduced me, saying: 'This is the French portion of our cast - Miss Brigitte Bardot'. She shook hands and chatted for a couple of minutes in broken-English. She was almost completely unknown in Britain then, having just appeared in a few French films. When we parted, I said: 'Good luck, Brigitte - and come over and make some more pictures soon'. 'I promise', she laughed. 'I like to keep busy.' She kept busy.

Cary Grant: During my three and a half year stint as Press Officer with Columbia Pictures in London, we were due to open Cary Grant's very last film, a light romantic

comedy called 'Walk, Don't Run', in 1966. I arranged a Press reception for him at the luxurious Lancaster Room at the Savoy Hotel, where Grant was to stay. He had agreed to this in advance and when I rang at the door of his suite he opened the door with a grin and a handshake. 'Bless my soul, it's Columbia Pictures come to call - how nice!' he said in that familiar oft-impersonated voice. He invited me to join him for morning coffee and we chatted away for half-an-hour or so, partly about 'Walk, Don't Run'. 'Yes, I think this will be my last epic,' he said. 'I've had a good run - and they haven't found me out yet!' (this was also a favourite remark of David Niven's). Grant was exactly like he was on-screen in real life. The perma-tan, the blue eyes, the immaculate greying hair, the same voice, the same intonations. When I showed him around the Savoy reception room before the main event, he was enthusiastic and complimentary. 'This is marvellous, old boy, I think I can really feature here. Great stuff. You've done all this before, haven't you?' A few times, I admitted. 'Who was the last one for?' he wanted to know. 'Jerry Lewis, I think', I replied. Grant laughed shortly. 'The proverbial chalk-and-cheese, huh?' I inwardly and devoutly agreed. Lewis had been very different. But that's another story. The Press Reception went very well indeed, thanks to Grant's unflinching good humour and willingness to answer questions. I later met his then-wife, actress Dyan Cannon, who asked me to hold their baby while she attended to something. That 'baby' grew up to be a rather beautiful girl, Jennifer, and is now coming up to 40! And that picture was Grant's last 'epic' and he later became a director of Fabergé, makers of Brut aftershave for men and other fragrant productions. Six years later I did a successful film, 'A Touch of Class', which was a 'Brut Production'. With Cary Grant on the board and something of a driving force apparently, Fabergé had decided to branch out into movie-making. But despite the big success of 'A Touch of Class' (for which Glenda Jackson won her second 'Best Actress' Oscar) it didn't last. Grant popped down to the set one day for a goodwill visit. 'Hello, old boy, we've met before, I think', he greeted me and was as pleasant as ever. It turned out that 'A Touch of Class' was the first picture on which I received a screen credit; this was in 1973 and Publicists had never had credits before. I think I set something of a minor trend. I also like to think that Cary Grant may have had something to do with it. You never know.

Gene Kelly: I have always been a fanatical fan (there's tautology for you!) of both screen and stage musicals, so Gene Kelly was an idol of mine from 'Anchors Aweigh' onwards, and his 'An American in Paris' (1951) remains my favourite movie musical. In 1953 I joined the London Ballet Circle especially to attend a lecture Kelly was due to give on his work, at a London hotel. It was fascinating and Kelly was interesting, affable and answered everyone's questions (including mine!) fully and politely. He was then around 40 and didn't bother to wear his usual toupée (which he wore in all his films) and was completely bald! 'Was it true', I asked him, 'if he and his fellow-dancers had to 'dub' the sound of dancing footsteps and 'taps' on to the sound-track after the sequence had been shot?' 'You betcha!' he said. He explained that he had to dance on a special resonant 'sound-board' while watching himself on screen and

exactly synchronise his 'sound-steps' to the steps seen up there on the screen. Not easy and very time-consuming, he explained. Chatting after his talk, I asked Kelly about the end of his famous title-song 'rain sequence' in 'Singing' in the Rain', which had been released only recently and hadn't become yet the classic film it is today. Who was the old man you gave your umbrella to right at the end of that sequence? I asked. 'Funny you should ask', he grinned. He was an actor named Snub Pollard, who co-starred in scores of silent comedy pictures before and after 1920. He was nearly 70 when I bumped into him one day and asked him if he'd honour me by doing a tiny part in my picture. He said yes, right away. I think he was pleased to get some work at that time, when many of the old silent stars were being forgotten. Now that's a little secret not many people know about!' Remember Snub? A little man with a droopy moustache - he was often the hen-pecked husband or the put-upon shop assistant. I'd loved to have talked with Gene Kelly for longer, but he said he had to dash off for another appointment. And no, he didn't dance away - he just strolled off down Oxford Street...

Jean Simmons: Another of my Columbia Pictures assignments was to spend a week with enchanting Jean Simmons, whom I'd loved ever since seeing her in my favourite picture, 'Great Expectations' (1946), in which she played the young Estella. She came over from her Hollywood home, where she lived with her writer-director husband, Richard Brooks (who had starred her opposite Burt Lancaster in another of my favourites, 'Elmer Gantry'), and my job was to arrange and escort her through a series of Press, radio and TV interviews to tie in with her new film 'Life at the Top' (the sequel to the successful 'Room at the Top', from John Braine's best-selling novel) in which she played the long-suffering but highly-attractive wife of Joe Lampton, again played by Laurence Harvey. Jean and I hit it off right from the start, I'm glad to say, and we never stopped laughing, sharing the same sense of humour and being completely on the same 'wavelength' as they say. Her suite at London's Mayfair Hotel (in the mid-1960s very 'in' and fashionable) became almost a second home to me since I arranged many of her interviews there. I told Jean at one point that I had been such a 'fan' that I had written to invite her to my 16th birthday party way back in 1946! I knew she would never come, of course, but I thought it was worth a try. On the afternoon of my party, when things were in full swing, there was no Jean - but there *was* a telegram; it read: 'Sorry am unable to be with you. Happy Birthday. Have a lovely time. Jean Simmons'. (I still have that telegram to this day.) I was thrilled to bits. I told Jean the story and we both knew, of course, that her ever-thoughtful secretary had no doubt sent it. And we both had a good laugh. When I said goodbye to Jean after a delightful week, she gave me a big hug and kiss and said mysteriously: 'I've got something for you.' She disappeared into her bedroom and emerged with a huge and beautiful portrait of herself taken by her actor-friend, Roddy MacDowall, and it was signed: 'Happy Birthday, Brian Darling - we finally made it! Love, Jean, xx'. That portrait, suitably framed, still hangs in my home today.

Judy Garland: I'd been a Judy fan ever since 'The Wizard of Oz' (who hadn't?) and all those Garland-Mickey Rooney teenage musicals, and one of my 'Top Ten' movie favourites was (and is) 'A Star is Born' starring Judy and James Mason. So I was there in the audience at London's Dominion Theatre in 1957, when she took up the second half of the bill. She was as terrific on stage as she had been on the screen and the show was great. Sitting a few seats away by chance was an old acquaintance, Peter Evans, then show business editor of the 'Daily Express'. We chatted at the end of the show and he said: 'Would you like to come back and meet Judy?' He had, he said, interviewed her several times. Would I! She sat in her dressing-room in a white bathrobe and ultra-heavy stage make-up. She looked tired but perked up when we entered. She also stood up but it wasn't something you'd particularly notice. She was tiny, like a child, about 4' 11" I later learned. She normally wore high heels, which made her look a bit taller. But that night she was in her bare feet. I gazed down at this tiny, waif-like figure, one of the great stars of modern times, feeling, from my 6ft., like Goliath. Peter greeted her and she gave him a big showbiz hug and kiss. He introduced me - and I received the same treatment! 'My God, Peter, I was just kissed by Judy Garland!' I joked. 'You ain't seen nothing yet, brother', she giggled. I had a glass of white wine thrust into my hand (you're always given white wine in stars' dressing-rooms, for some reason - it's a sort of tradition). The three of us chatted, then more people arrived and it all became noisy and over-crowded. 'It's time we went', said Peter and we waved our goodbyes to Judy Garland, who was now surrounded by people. She didn't look tired any more. 'She loves people', whispered Peter. 'They buck her up, you know.' We exited through the stage-door, where a hundred or more fans were waiting for autographs. 'How long will Judy be' shouted one of them, grabbing my arm none too gently. 'A long time, I think...' I replied. It had been nice to meet a legend and I felt over the moon - or should it have been over the rainbow...

Lennon and McCartney: My mother popped up to see me one day when I was working as Press Officer with Columbia Pictures in 1964. I took her for a coffee into a fashionable little café called 'Act One, Scene One' in Old Compton Street, Soho, down the road from my offices. It was quite full and we took our coffees to a table right at the back, already occupied by a couple of people. 'Phew, it's nice to sit down', I gasped, glancing up into the faces of John Lennon and Paul McCartney, only recently come to fame with The Beatles, who both grinned and nodded at us. 'Hello', I said. 'Hi to you', came back two breezy Liverpudlian voices in a friendly way. Lennon was reading 'The Beano' while McCartney was deep in 'The Dandy'. 'Catching up with your reading?' I smiled. 'Oh yeah, never miss Lord Snooty', chuckled Lennon. 'No, give me old Desperate Dan every time', countered McCartney, adding 'How about you?' 'I like good old Korky the Cat', I said, feeling a bit foolish. Then we began chatting about comics in general. I got the impression that they both loved comics. I mentioned 'The Magnet' but they had never heard of it, though they did know about Billy Bunter. 'Like old so-and-so back home' laughed Lennon. (I forget the name he mentioned.) I introduced myself and my mum and we all shook hands rather formally. I think they

were watching their manners because my mother was there! My mother (as was her little habit) produced her small silver box of cachous (tiny, coloured scented 'sweets' popular for sweetening the breath and fashionable during the 1920s and 1930s - my mother always carried a supply!) and offered them around. Lennon and McCartney gingerly took one each. 'Here, I hope you're not trying to get us innocent young boys hooked on something or other, dear', said Lennon to my mum; she explained what they were and they both pretended to heave big sighs of relief. After a few more minutes, the dynamic duo excused themselves and shook hands again all round. One of them, Lennon, I think it was, actually kissed my mother's hand and said, with a mock French accent: 'Merci, Madame, it has been magnificent...!' 'Good luck' I said, as they left. 'Thanks, we may need it - I don't know how long we can keep it up', grinned McCartney. Then they were off. I sometimes wonder what happened to them...

John Braine: One of Britain's most famous and best-selling young authors of the 1950s and 1960s who made his name with his novel 'Room at the Top' in 1957; it dealt with the rise of the ambitious and unscrupulous Joe Lampton and his 'rise' to the top from humble beginnings as a local town hall clerk in the North of England. It was successfully filmed two years later and a sequel 'Life at the Top' about the further adventures of Lampton appeared in 1962 and that too was filmed in 1965, with the hero (or rather 'anti-hero') played in both pictures by Laurence Harvey. It was while I was working as Press Officer to Columbia Pictures in London that I met John Braine. 'Life at the Top' was one of our pictures and, as part of our opening campaign I arrange for Braine to give interviews to various leading journalists. I came to know Braine fairly well over the two weeks or so before the film's opening. Braine had been working as a assistant librarian at Bingley Public Library in his native Yorkshire when he wrote 'Room at the Top' and when I mentioned that I, too, had had an identical job at Woolwich Library in South London when I entered the film industry the same year as his first novel was published, this seemed to tickle him greatly and from then on he called me 'fellow-librarian' in letters, telephone calls and in person. I, in my turn, called him 'the angry young man' for, indeed, he was one of that original band of young writers and playwrights who made their name in the mid-1950s, including such people as John Osborne, Kingsley Amis, John Wain, John Fowles and others. Braine was friendly, affable and nice - a plump, bespectacled figure with a quizzical smile and a good sense of humour, he would have made a fine 'Toad of Toad Hall' - he was enthusiastic about the new film and gave good interviews to the journalists I lined up for him, often over good lunches at my favourite 'Braganza Restaurant' around the corner from my offices at Columbia in Soho. Braine took his novel writing very seriously and told me he rented a permanent room over a car hire firm's premises in Woking, Surrey, so that he could ensure a quiet, restful atmosphere in which to work, and away from his family during the day! Sadly, his later novels, though respectfully reviewed, never quite achieved the fame and best-sellerdom of his two Joe Lampton books, and included such titles as 'The Vodi' and 'The Crying Game'. His last novel was 'The Two of Us', published in 1984, two years before his death. Unfortunately, I

never met him again personally after our convivial lunches at the 'Braganza', though we did exchange Christmas cards for years, his invariably signed 'From JB, the fellow-librarian' and containing some such message as 'Hope you're still enjoying "life at the top" - this angry young (?) man is certainly *trying* to...!'

Patrick Hillary: Who? I'm coming to that. When I was in Dublin for four months in the summer of 1968, working as Publicist on the Paramount picture 'Where's Jack?' (Tommy Steele and Stanley Baker), I was informed that a prominent Irish politician would be visiting the studios (at Bray, a few miles outside the city) that afternoon and would I please look after him and his family. This was something that often fell to the Publicist's lot, looking after the occasional visitors and I didn't really mind, since I like meeting people. My wife happened to be visiting me for a few days so she accompanied me when I met Patrick Hillary, his wife and children, when they arrived. Hillary had been the Irish Minister of Education until recently and my wife, Jo, was a school-teacher in London, so when we all sat down to tea they had a particularly engrossing discussion about education and so on. I took Hillary around the movie sets and introduced him around and a pleasant time was had by all. Eight years later Patrick Hillary became the President of Ireland (i.e. Eire) and remained so for several years. I sent him a congratulatory letter and he wrote back saying he well remembered our meeting and his trip around the studios and sent his 'warm affection' to my school-teacher wife. President of Ireland, eh! You never know, do you...?

John Osborne: The small-time actor and ex-journalist who made his name immortal - and changed the history of the British theatre into the bargain - when he wrote his famous play 'Look Back in Anger' in 1956. After its controversial landmark production at London's Royal Court Theatre (I and my wife happened to be present at the 2nd night, as it turned out!) 'polite' English plays with 'correct' accents and manners went, by and large out of the French windows and most new plays became rougher, tougher, and, well, more proletarian. And Osborne became the original 'angry young man' of the period. He went on to write many more plays, including 'The Entertainer', 'Luther' and 'Inadmissible Evidence'. I encountered Osborne when I worked as Publicist on a film that is now considered a classic British gangster movie, 'Get Carter', shot on around 70 different locations in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1970 and starring Michael Caine. I include him here since he did only three days work on the film and was really a 'guest star'. He played the suave master-crook, 'the boss of all local crime' in the area and was seen in only two or three scenes. I found Osborne to be elegant, articulate, friendly - and 'one of us' nostalgia-wise. When we chatted in his 'dressing-room' - an adapted bedroom in an old house we were shooting in - he sprawled comfortably across the bed, incessantly filing his fingernails and fiddling with a silver-nail-file. After I had finished my usual 'interview' with him I switched off my tape-recorder and, for some reason, we got talking about the old English music-hall, which he (and I) loved. 'Was Archie Rice, your stage comedian in 'The Entertainer' really based on Max Miller?' I asked him. 'Oh yes, there was a lot of Max in Archie, said

Osborne. I said I was a great Max Miller fan but had seen him only once, at the Metropolitan Theatre in London's Edgware Road. 'I was a big fan too', said Osborne, smiling, 'and I was lucky enough to see him several times. 'Tell me, do you know what his real name was?' 'Something Sargent, I think', I replied. 'Right, old boy, it was Thomas Henry Sargent and the family lived in Brighton.' 'How did Sandy Powell's famous catchphrase "Can you hear me, mother?" originate?' I asked. 'That's an easy one - he dropped the pages of his script during a BBC radio broadcast and said it off the top of his head as he bent down to pick them up', answered Osborne. 'Right', I said. And we were away! On a radio, TV, theatre, film and literary quiz that lasted for the duration of his stay in Newcastle. We caught each other out about three times each and I found him a delightful companion. One of our co-stars, Ian Hendry would sometimes join in our quizzes too and he was quite good (he was one of those mythical but, in his case, real-life youngsters who had actually run away from home to join a circus and worked as a junior clown! But that's another story...!). The last time I saw him was when he had just completed his work on the film and was about to leave the location. He walked over and put his arm around my shoulder. 'What was Violet-Elizabeth's surname, Brian?' he asked. 'Bott, of course - of Bott's Famous Sauces!' I replied. 'Know-all', he grinned and gave me a conspiratorial wink as he shook hands and said 'Let's meet back in London'. 'Absolutely', I agreed. But we never did. The film business is like that. Away on a location, or even at the studios, you can become firm friends with someone and swear to meet up soon after the picture is finished. But it rarely happens. I liked John Osborne and we seemed to get along - but that wasn't the case with everyone I gathered. He tended to be a touch arrogant, with a bit of a temper, I gathered. But he *was* Britain's most famous contemporary playwright at the time (along with Sir Terence Rattigan). By the way, Osborne played Wingate, Captain of Greyfriars School, in the first episode of the long-running BBC TV series 'Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School' in February, 1952. The billing cast-list in that week's 'Radio Times' listed the character as 'Wingate, a prefect'! 'A prefect'? What a cheek. When I mentioned this piece of epic casting to Osborne, he said: 'No hang on - I think I played Frank Nugent'. But he didn't - he was the great and good George Wingate. And he should have remembered *that*, shouldn't he?

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The Shape of Things to Come

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

Part 11: Adventure 1957-1958

by Ray Moore

The first new picture strip to appear in the pages of 'Adventure' in 1957 was 'The Red Rocket' (1673-1689) drawn by **Ron Smith**. Continuing the run of picture stories printed in red and black in the paper's centre pages this motorcycling yarn owed its origins and the plotting of its initial episodes at least to 'Rusty Norton - The Red Rocketeer' a text tale that had appeared in the paper some eight years earlier (1263-1280).

In both versions the hero is famed motorcyclist Rusty Norton who takes a break from the racing circuit to help develop a new superbike with the designers and mechanics of the small Burnett motor works. In short order however the picture strip adaptation begins to deviate wildly from the original as both bike and rider head off on a promotional world tour where they encounter considerably more action off the track than on it in the shape of crooks, crooked policemen and the unscrupulous owner of a rival motor cycle company.

Six weeks after the Red Rocket was wheeled out on the track for the first time a murderous horde of Nordic pirates came ashore in 'Adventure's first new cover strip of the year 'Eric the Viking' (1679-1688) the one and only strip drawn for the paper by **Ted Rawlings**, an artist whose distinctive artwork would otherwise be used to telling affect in the Thomson boys' picture papers for the next thirty years.

Set in the year 1103 this questing story of retribution and the search for a lost symbol of kingship was unusual in that it was derived from a number of earlier story sources that in themselves had already been used to flesh out another 'Adventure' picture strip 'The Quest of the Golden Hammer' in 1947 (1191-1202) (see SPCD No654) with this effort a decade later being a somewhat free adaptation of all previous versions.

The buccaneering theme of sorts was then maintained at the conclusion of the young Viking's quest when he was superseded on the cover by Solo Solomon in what would be his last picture strip appearance (1689-1704). Illustrated by **Ron Smith** and seemingly based on nothing specific from his pre picture strip oeuvre here Solo and his regular companions Windy Waters and Doc Milligan encounter a gang of riverboat pirates when our western hero becomes a U.S. Marshal and sets out to investigate the disappearance of two gold ore shipments from a mining town.

Next up and replacing 'The Red Rocket' in the paper's centre spread came yet another **Ron Smith** penned effort titled 'Railway Mad' (1690-1709). Another strip without any story precedent this told of how fifteen year old Bill Bradley starts work on the railways and then strives to fill his greatest ambition, to ride on the footplate of a crack express. An ambition he achieves by the rather unlikely means of capturing a gang of escaped convicts and saving the life of a foreign prince.

The arrival of the autumn saw the start of a second, season long, Lanky Hutton football strip drawn, as had been the first, by **Ron Smith** titled 'The Guinea Pig

Goalie' (1705-1737) in which the young doctor/goalkeeper is drafted into the R.A.F. While he had been qualifying as a medic Lanky had had his National Service deferred but now he can evade the military authorities no longer as he becomes a medical officer at a R.A.F station. One concession he is grudgingly allowed by his commanding officer is that he can still play for his team, Redstoke Rovers, when his other duties allow, although his spare time soon comes at a premium when he enrolls as the station guinea-pig testing out new pressure suits and the like and as a consequence finds he has to resort to various forms of subterfuge to get out of camp and help the Rovers continue their F.A Cup run.

Another branch of the military, this time the Royal Navy, provided the heroes for the next centre page 'Adventure' strip 'Frazer of the Frogmen' (1710-1722). In this wholly new strip drawn by **Ian Kennedy** two of Britain's underwater warriors of World War II Lieutenant Sam Frazer and Chief Petty Officer 'Dusty' Miller furthered the Allied war effort by not only destroying a vital rail bridge and a German radio location station but also by clearing a beach prior to a Commando landing.

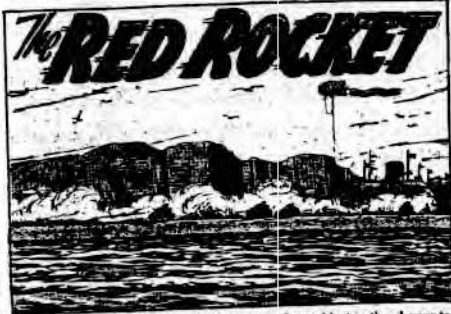
In January 1958 the fearless frogmen gave way to the penultimate 'Adventure' centre spread picture strip titled 'Rocket Island' (1723-1743) the first of five picture strips published in the paper that year and the first of four drawn by **Ron Smith**. In this strip, which had no textual precedent, the island of the title was the remote Scottish isle of Achranish where Steve Grant, a brilliant young aircraft designer, is employed by the Rocket Research Establishment to help develop a rocket that can withstand the thrust of a revolutionary new atomic power unit, that is as long as a foreign agent posing as the local laird doesn't sabotage the plant first.

Two years before, in the summer of 1956, 'Adventure' had published a cover strip titled 'Young Eagle' drawn by **Ron Smith** itself based on a story that had appeared in the paper as long ago as 1930 (see SPCD No.660) now both artist and strip were reunited for a sequel (1738-1758).

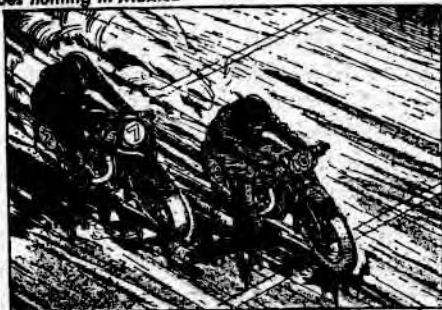
As the ending of the first picture strip series was markedly different from that of the original text story and this second series begins where the first picture series left off it is obvious that apart from the names of the central characters nothing in this second picture series owes anything to the original text stories. Here Roy Drummond has been back in civilization for a year when news of the disappearance of his uncle in the dense Brazilian jungle while searching for uranium deposits sees the lad reunited with Swooper, the giant eagle companion of his formative years, to help track his lost relative down. A conflict with a hostile tribe descended from the Incas then ensues before all comes right in the end when the tribe decides, rather rashly I believe, to give up its tribal lands to Roy's uncle and his mining concern in return for life in a custom built village complete with all mod cons.

The final centre spread strip to appear in 'Adventure' was 'Tinker Cobb' (1744-1764) a bare knuckle boxing yarn set in the 19th century that was based on the earlier 'Adventure' text tale 'Tinker Cobb - The Bare-Fist Battler' that had been published in 1947/48 (1209-1223). The openings of both are similar but there are also crucial differences, Padder Jones remains Tinker's manager throughout in the text story

The Red Rocket team goes hunting in Mexico—



THE All-American Speed Trial had given Rusty Norton the chance to prove that his Red Rocket could lick any motor-cycle in the world—but now that chance had been knocked for six! Leading comfortably in a five-lap race on the lones Salt Flats, the Britisher had been forced off the track at 130 m.p.h. by his only serious rival. He had successfully brought his runaway machine under control, but it had cost him many precious seconds—and his large lead!



2—With Algy Ellis, a publicity agent, Rusty had come to America to boost the Rocket's sales, and a win in the speed event would have been a great round-off to their tour. But despite Rusty's neck-or-nothing efforts, he could not cut down in the remaining two laps the lead which Slat's Curran, on the American-built Eagle, had gained by his dirty tactics. Lapping the tail-enders in its final spurt, the Rocket took second place—by only two seconds!



3—Back at the pits, Algy Ellis came dashing up as Rusty killed his engine and drew to a halt. "Tough luck, Rusty!" called the publicity agent. "Too—" "Tough luck, nothing!" growled Rusty. "By rights I should be over there where Curran is—the rot sideswiped me out on the course!" "Well, what are we waiting for?" demanded Algy. "Let's go and report it to the stewards." "Not on your life!" grunted the rider. "That would do us more harm than good!"



4—"How come?" the publicity agent wanted to know. "The newspaper boys would be sure to accuse us of whining—of making excuses for being licked," answered Rusty. "No, we'll just forget about the whole thing and get—" "Just then the rider's words were cut short by a loud hail from one of the temporary grandstands put up for the racing meeting. "Hold it, you lineys! I'd like to have a paw-waw with you afore you hightail it outa here!"



5—Rusty went to meet the tall, well-built Westerner who came striding towards them. "The handle's Rowley—Col Rowley," the stranger drawled, clasping Rusty's hand in a bone-cracking grip. "an' I come from Texas." "My name's Norton," grinned back Rusty, "an' I come from—" "Yeah, yeah!" cut in Rowley. "I know all about you an' 'dat bike o' yours. I've been readin' 'bout you in the newspapers—an' I liked what I read! I got a proposition to put to you!"



6—"Well, get it off your chest," grinned the rider, liking the tall Texan on sight. "We're listening." "How about doin' your listenin' back in my hotel?" suggested Rowley. "Get changed an' I'll drive you up." Ten minutes later, on their way in the American's gleaming convertible, the Britishers were learning a bit more about their companion. Col was a gold-miner, and a fairly rich one at that, but now, down in Mexico, he had come on something big—uranium!

Tinker fights for the world championship—



TINKER COBB, bare-knuckle boxing champion of Britain in 1853, was ready for the most important fight of his life. Along with a few supporters, and his two backers, the boxer had just arrived at a lonely part of the Welsh coast by coach. But Tinker's big fight—against Mauler Murphy, the world champion—was to be held that evening in Ireland! The boxer had been puzzled by the delay in travelling. "How can we possibly reach Ireland in time?" he asked Lord Bowers, one of

his backers, as they left their coach. "There's your answer," declared Bowers, pointing to two balloons on the edge of the cliffs. "We'll go by air!" At that time, boxing was against the law in England, and the Peelers, as policemen were then called, would be watching the docks for Tinker and his party. Bowers' clever move had made sure that Tinker would have no trouble from the law! The lawmen would never guess Tinker could fly to Ireland!



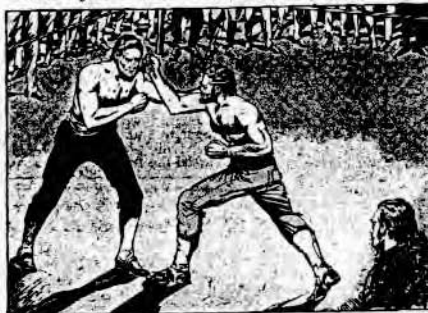
2—Soon, the large balloons were carrying Tinker and his friends over St George's Channel, helped by a fresh breeze. The passengers in the baskets, slung beneath the balloons, were well wrapped up against the cold air. Finally, after a trip of over sixty miles, the coast of Ireland came into view. Minutes later, the balloons' navigators were preparing to land, guided by a huge 'L' of boulders which had been laid on the ground.



3—By releasing the gas through a special valve, the balloons were made to descend gently. Not far from the landing place, two heavy carts were waiting for the English party. "It's good to be back on solid ground again," grinned Tinker, as he walked towards the vehicles. "This flying business isn't for me." A group of Irishmen met the balloonists beside the carts. "Jump in," Tinker was told. "We've a good few miles to cover before it gets dark!"



4—Dusk had already fallen when the carts reached the shores of a broad lake. The fight was to be held on an island in the lake, and the British boxer and his friends were rowed out to this island. News of the world title bout had spread, and fight fans had been craning to the island all evening. Mauler Murphy would win, they thought, but perhaps this Englishman would put up a fair fight before he was knocked out.



5—It was dark when Tinker finally entered the ring with Mauler Murphy. Flickering torches lit up the open air arena, where a large crowd was gathered to see the fight. Murphy was, indeed, a tough opponent. Heavily built, with muscles made steel-hard by constant training, the Irishman scowled over his beard at Tinker Cobb. He did not mean to lose his hard-won title to this young upstart. Calmly, Tinker squared up to the world champion.

while the bare knuckle fighter's crippled brother Jem appears only in the picture strip. Similarly Tinker's two mentors in the text tale Sir John Fortescue and Gentleman John Jackson are telescoped together to form the character Lord Bowers in the picture strip. Also Tinker's nemesis for all of the text tale Fighting Buck Rawson has his name changed to Sir Jack Hargreaves in the picture strip and their differences are set aside halfway through the picture story after Tinker rescues him from jail leaving a new protagonist to be found in the form of the early police force, the Peelers. While the picture strip lasts longer than the original text tale, as is often the case, it still doesn't manage to cover the broader canvas that the text version does and is certainly nowhere near as evocative of the period in that it was set.

The only strip to appear in 'Adventure' in 1958 not drawn by **Ron Smith** was 'The Last White Boy in Singapore' (1759-1769) drawn by **Calder Jamieson** based on an 'Adventure' text tale with the same title that had appeared in the paper in 1943/44(1095-1109).

The time here is 1942 and in the picture strip version Inspector David Shand of the Singapore Police along with some members of his police force and a few stragglers from the British and Australian armies head into the island's swamp region to evade capture by the Japanese invaders and, once established there, use it as a base to conduct guerrilla warfare against the enemy, helped in this enterprise by the inspector's fourteen year old son Alan who has been brought up on the island and can hide in plain sight by passing himself off as a young Malay native.

As a rule it takes more episodes for a picture strip to cover the same round as a text story so, as the original text story here ran for fifteen episodes compared to the eleven covered by the picture strip, it stands to reason that there was a good deal in the former that did not make it into the latter. In some areas the picture trip is remarkably faithful to the original, particularly at the beginning, but then some incidents are also truncated together in the picture version, notably two separate torture sequences in the text tale involving both Alan Shand and his friend Yung that re condensed to only one, involving Yung, in the picture strip. Also the endings of both are markedly different even though they do both involve escape from the island on board a captured Japanese vessel.

Once Inspector Shand and his makeshift army had escaped from Singapore on a captured Japanese destroyer it was time for a last picture strip appearance from 'Ryan of the Redcoats' (1770-1782). In this last case, created as had been the rest for the picture strip format, Bob Ryan leads a troop of eight Mounties as they investigate the massacre of every man at a backwoods lumber camp by a rebel band of Chewaka Indians.

And so we come to the end of 1958. Next time in our final instalment we will meet heroes of the Zulu Wars and both World Wars as the story of not only the 'Adventure' picture strip but of the paper itself draws to a close.

As always in conclusion may I just thank Derek Marsden for his continued help with this project. Without him it would certainly have been no more than a job half done. (Illustrations copyright D.C. Thomson)

SKINNER'S SHADY SCHEME –

Part 2

by David Ball

Chapter 10

Skinner Lays His Plans

Skinner joined Stott and Snoop in study 11. There was a gleam in his eye.

“Hallo, what’s up”, said snoop. Skinner carefully closed the door. “I’ve just heard something Wharton and his gang were discussing with Mauly in the cloisters. They never saw me.”

He related to Snoop and Stott the gist of what he had overheard.

“Gosh this will shake Penfold when we tell the follows”, said Snoop. “We aren’t going to tell anyone, at least for the present”, said Skinner firmly. And mind you keep your mouths shut.” “But why?”, enquired Stott.

“Because I’ve a scheme which will shake the Penfolds more”, said Skinner.

“Well let’s hear it” demanded Snoop impatiently.

“All in due course”, said Skinner. “I want one of you to take your shoes to Carding’s for repair.”

“But mine don’t need repairing”, said Snoop. “Or mine”, added Stott hastily.

“Well, take a pair of mine”, said Skinner sulkily. “But what for?”, said Stott, still mystified. Skinner, ignoring Stott’s remark, went on, “While you’re there, engage the assistant in conversation and tactfully say you’ve heard Carding is having repairs carried out by Penfold and find out when footwear is taken and when collected”.

“Why don’t you go yourself?”, asked Snoop sulkily. “It’s better for me to keep a low profile”, replied Skinner calmly.

“We will toss up who goes”, said Snoop. A coin was tossed, and Stott won. Snoop frowned and accepted the chore with an ill grace.

Chapter 11

Carding’s Assistant is Talkative

“Hallo, hallo, hallo”. Bob Cherry’s cheerful voice rang along Courtfield High Street.

“Whither bound?” he inquired of Snoop who was in the act of untying Skinner’s shoes from his cycle.

“You’re quick off the mark aren’t you Sidney”, said Bob.

“What if I am, some people can’t mind their own business”, answered Snoop angrily.

“All right, keep your hair on,” said Bob mildly. “But you seem to me like a guilty man who fleeth when no man pursueth. It comes of having a guilty conscience”. And with that Bob walked away.

Snoop entered Carding’s shop and handed Skinner’s shoes to the assistant.

“They will be ready a week today sir”, said the man.

Snoop indicated the notice which read there would be a 50% price reduction.

"Rather a large reduction isn't it?" asked Snoop.

"Mr. Carding has joined a firm, travelling. I don't expect we shall be seeing much of him", said the assistant.

"I've heard Old Penfold of Friardale is in dire straits", suggested Snoop.

"Well, as a matter of fact, Mr. Carding has agreed a contract with Penfold" was the reply. "Has he really?" said Snoop.

"One of your schoolfellows was here last week discussing business with Mr. Carding, Lord Mauleverer, do you know him, sir?"

"Oh yes, he's in the Remove with me."

"By the way I don't expect Old Penfold will be able to cope with many pairs of shoes a week?" said Snoop.

"Well as a matter of fact he is contracted to accept a van load on the basis of delivery of footwear on a Wednesday for repair, and its return, repaired on the following Wednesday."

"In that case, as it's Saturday today, and those I've brought in will be ready a week today I take it you will repair them here."

"That's correct, sir."

"By the way", said Snoop casually, "Just for future reference what time must footwear be brought here to be repaired by Penfold?" "Three o'clock sir as the van is booked to take the footwear to Friardale at 3.30 p.m." "And collected?" prompted Snoop... "Four p.m. sir", replied the assistant.

"Well thanks for the info", and, with a nod, Snoop left the shop.

Chapter 12

Skinner Fails to Get Backing

Arriving at Greyfriars he met Skinner and Stott in the quod. "Let's go up to the study", he said.

"Well, how did you get on?", asked Skinner eagerly. "A piece of cake", said Snoop. "Carding's man told me all I wished to know." He told his two precious confederates what he had learnt.

"Well I don't think we should deny Old Penfold honest labour do you?"

"What are you driving at?" said Stott who wasn't too quick on the uptake.

"The plan is to allow Penfold to repair the footwear and then unfortunately something could happen to it on the road from Friardale to Courtfield", answered Skinner.

"But what could happen to it?", persisted Stott.

"One never can tell", said Skinner enigmatically.

"I should imagine that if a number of people took their footwear to a repairer and, when they arrived at the shop, they were told their shoes were missing, they wouldn't be very pleased. Would you Snoop", asked Skinner, with a grin.

"And I shouldn't think Carding would be over the moon with Old Penfold", Snoop said with a snigger.

"I don't think I want to be involved with anything like that", said Stott. "Nor I", said Snoop, who was well known to be a funk.

"You cowards", fumed Skinner. "If you won't help, at least keep your mouths shut."

The three left the study and made their way to Big Hall for call over.

Chapter 13

Pon Agrees to Help

The following Wednesday was a half holiday, and Skinner wheeled his cycle out of the bike-shed. As he left, Bunter rolled up.

"I say, Skinner, as you're going out, I'll come."

"You won't, you fat frog", growled Skinner.

"I say, if you're going to Courtfield I'll come and we'll have tea in the bun shop" suggested Bunter. "I'm not going to Courtfield", said Skinner. Bunter felt he had to know.

"I say, Skinner, then if you're going to Highcliffe I'll come. I'm very pally with Old Courtney." Skinner declined to answer. Bunter hated not knowing about others' affairs and yelled after Skinner.

"I know where you're going, you smokey cad, you're off to see Joe Banks."

The short sighed Owl failed to notice Wingate, the Captain of Greyfriars, approaching.

"I heard what you said Bunter." "Did you Wingate? I only asked Skinner if he was going to Highcliffe and the cad didn't answer." "You young ass, cut off" growled Wingate.

Skinner rode his cycle at a leisurely pace, too many cigarettes weren't conducive to fitness, but he eventually arrived at Highcliffe and left his cycle at the Porter's Lodge. He made his way to Ponsonby's study. Skinner found Pon and his nutty pals at home. Pon greeted Skinner in his usual supercilious manner.

"I'd like a word with you fellows", said Skinner. "Come to borrow some tin?" asked Gadsby.

"No, something quite different", replied Skinner. "You know Penfold of the Remove?" "You mean the cobbler's son of Friardale?" "Yes", said Skinner. "You know I don't like him and don't think he should be at Greyfriars."

"Speech taken as read", said Merton. "Absolutely", said Vavasour. "Old Penfold is up against it, but Mauleverer has stepped in." Skinner went on to explain the situation to Pon and Co. "So my plan is to highjack the footwear somewhere between Friardale and Courtfield next Wednesday" he said. "Snoop and Stott have funk'd it, so I've come along to see you Pon."

"You say Wharton and his gang are in this with Mauleverer" asked Pon. "Yes, and I would like to have one up on them", said Skinner. "So would I", said Pon.

"It's Halloween next Wednesday, and if it's a dull day the light will be failing at about 3.30 p.m. What if we stopped the van in a convenient place and we all wore

masks? We shall need all of us for this job as we shall have to capture and tie up the driver and then leave him for a while somewhere. I suggest the old wooden hut in Friardale Wood, and we can dump the footwear in the vaults", said Pon.

"I can't see why it will be necessary to take the driver to the hut" responded Skinner. "We can blindfold him and take him with us to the vaults. I agree that the footwear will be safer in the vaults."

"We have a week, and I suggest we meet next Saturday to select the place where we'll stop the van, and also to go to the vaults to see the best place to dump the boots and shoes", said Pon.

Skinner then had tea with Pon and Co, and arranged to meet them on the following Saturday.

Chapter 14

The Dark Deed is Planned and Executed

The following Saturday afternoon Skinner was the first to arrive at the pre-arranged spot. Pon and Co arrived soon afterwards. The Highcliffe gang consisted of Ponsonby, Monson, Gadsby and Vavasour. Merton had cried off and one or two of the others would like to have done so but Pon could be very fierce in his leadership if he once set his mind on a certain course of action. The action was usually of a mean nature. Pon was not by any means a virtuous youth.

They numbered five, including Skinner, and made their way to the vaults which led to the foundation of Greyfriars. "I see a snag", said Gadsby. "What snag?", cried Skinner. "Bad access here if it's wet", answered Gadsby. "Let's not waste time but see where we can park the footwear", insisted Pon shortly. "This will do, not far to carry it, it's off the main tunnel and no one's likely to find it here" said Skinner.

The five young rascals then made their way out to the open air.

"Let's go to see the old hut in Friardale Wood, if it's wet between now and next Wednesday we may have to dump it", said Pon.

Arriving there, Skinner dragged open the ill-fitting door on its ill-fitted hinges. "Gosh, I wouldn't like to spend long in this frightful place" said the supercilious Pon, and he quitted the hut in disgust. "Now for choosing the right spot to stop Carding's van", said Skinner with a grin. "I think I know the best place, there's a bend in Friardale Lane and there are trees overhanging the road there. Also, the driver will have to slow down" said Skinner.

And so they parted, Pon reminding Skinner not to forget to bring masks and rope.

There was heavy rain the following Tuesday night so when Pon and Co and Skinner met on the Wednesday afternoon at the prearranged time Pon said, "Well, it will have to be the hut". "I suppose so", grunted Skinner. It was a cloudy afternoon with no sun.

The time waiting for the van seemed to the five to drag on leaden feet but at last there was a signal from Vavasour who was on watch for the van up the lane at last. It

was being driven at a leisurely speed which decreased on approaching the bend. Suddenly the driver saw four masked figures leap out from the overhanging trees right into the road. He was so startled that he jammed on the brakes, and the van screeched to a halt.

"The rope, quick you fool!" said Pon to Skinner in a deep disguised voice. "What's the game?" quavered the driver nervously. After all, it would have been a shock for anyone.

"No-one is going to hurt you if you do what you're told", growled Skinner, also in a deep voice.

The driver tried to explain he was not carrying anything more valuable than repaired footwear but Pon quickly cut him short and the five blindfolded him. Pon took the wheel and Vavasour took the passenger seat. The rest clambered into the rear with the man.

In a few minutes they arrived at the hut and it only took about ten minutes to unload the footwear.

"And now to get rid of the van! It will mean driving through Courtfield in order to dump it on the Common."

This had been rehearsed by the five young rascals in order to mislead the driver and make him think his load had been dumped the other side of Courtfield from Friardale.

It didn't take them long to reach Courtfield Common. The juniors alighted from the van, and, once again as prearranged, Pon said, "By gosh, it's five o'clock".

In fact it was 4.30 p.m. and the light was failing. This deception about the time had been contrived to make the driver think he had been driven a greater distance than was actually so.

The five never said a word to the driver, but just walked away.

"I say we can't leave him like that", said Gadsby uneasily. "Absolutely not", said Vavasour.

"Oh, someone will come along soon! It's dog eats dog in this world, we had best get off the scene", said Pon. And so they parted, Skinner to return to Greyfriars and the others to Highcliffe.

Chapter 15

Smithy Guesses the Truth

That evening in the Rag after Call Over Smithy said "You men heard?" "Which and what", said Bob Cherry. "Carding's van was held up this afternoon in Friardale Lane by five masked men. The driver was tied up and blindfolded and the van hijacked." Harry Wharton asked, "What was it carrying?"

"Nothing more valuable than repaired footwear which had been collected from Old Penfold's shop only this afternoon," replied Smithy.

How do you know all this?" queried Skinner.

"Coker! Apparently Coker, Potter and Greene were walking back from Courtfield. When they reached the Common they saw a van, heard cries coming from it and

found the driver tied up and blindfolded" said Smithy. "He said the gang which held him up drove the van somewhere and dumped the footwear, and sometime later the van was driven to where he was found."

"Could the driver give a description of the gang?", asked Skinner casually.

"Not much apparently." Smithy paused, and looked at Skinner curiously. "Except..."

"Except what?", demanded Skinner impatiently. "Oh nothing", said Smithy.

"I say", broke in Bolsover Major in a loud voice, "I hope my boots aren't lost. I took them for repair and they were due back today." "And mine", chimed in Trevor.

Smithy looked across at Penfold. "Do you know anything about this Penfold?", he asked.

"No", said Dick, but he was seen to be worried, and left the Rag. He knocked on Mr. Quelch's door and was bidden to enter. "Well, Penfold?" asked the Remove master.

"Excuse me sir, I've heard some disquieting news. Could I use your telephone?" Dick related to Quelch what Smithy had said.

"Certainly Penfold, and I hope if the footwear has been misappropriated that it will soon be recovered." And with that Quelch left the study.

Getting through to his father Dick learned that Carding's van had collected the boots and shoes as arranged, but, when the van had not turned up after the normal period of time, Carding's men had 'phoned but Penfold's father was unable to say other than that the driver had collected the consignment around 3.20 that afternoon.

Much perplexed, Dick rang off and returned to the Rag to learn that the main topic of conversation was the missing van-load.

However, he declined to divulge what his father had told him on the 'phone. Shortly before dorm, Smithy asked Skinner to come up to his study. Skinner followed him there. Smithy said, "I didn't blab it out before the others but the driver said the five who attacked him were on the small size. You weren't with Snoop and Stott this afternoon. The other day, you saw Pon at Highcliffe; it doesn't need a Sherlock Holmes to deduce that you and Pon and his gang are involved. Oh, don't worry, I shan't say anything as I'm pally with Pon and Co, but it's risky Skinner because you would be for the high jump if the Head learned the facts."

"I can't see how it can be proved that I had anything to do with it", said Skinner in an injured tone. "It must be in the hands of the police by now", said Smithy. Then he mused, "It's the motive which is going to puzzle them. If it's left in Old Tozer's hands you may be safe". And, with that, the two left the study.

Chapter 16 Bolsover is a Hero

The following Saturday afternoon Bolsover, Trevor, and Desmond walked to Courtfield to find out about their footwear. Alas, their worst fears were realised. Their things were among the missing van-load.

Nothing further had been learnt and Carding's assistant was of the opinion that

nothing would be. The police were baffled.

The three Removites left the shop and made their way to the bun-shop where they had tea, and then began to walk back to Greyfriars. Sited on Courtfield Common was a wooden seat thoughtfully provided by the local council.

As the three approached it, they saw that it was occupied by a shabby looking tramp. He was of average build, and wore a short stubby beard. His clothes had certainly seen better days. Bolsover stared at him, from his battered, greasy trilby to his feet.

He gave a jump. "Great pip!" he said. "My boots." "Holy Moses!" exclaimed Desmond.

Bolsover strode forward. "Well my man!" he roared, "how did you come by my boots?"

"Your boots sir, how can they be your boots?" said the tramp with an injured air. "Of course they're my boots", cried Bolsover excitedly. "Where did you find them?"

The tramp jumped up and made a run for it, but the three youths were too agile for him. Headed off by Desmond and Trevor, the tramp veered towards Bolsover. He attempted to rush by, but Bolsover put out his leg and the tramp went a purler.

"Oh no, you don't! You're going to tell me where you found my boots", said Bolsover.

Seeing that he was beaten, the tramp changed his tactics.

"I'll tell you, sir, if you let me go", he whined.

"I don't know about that. If you found my boots, there must have been a lot more with them", said Bolsover.

"There was sir, I had to search through a lot of pairs as they were boys' boots."

"I always said you had big feet Bolsy", said Trevor. "You leave my feet alone", growled Bolsover. "For the last time, where did you find them?" he demanded of the tramp. "In a hut in Friardale Wood sir", came the reply. "Very well! You're going to take us there now", said Bolsover.

"It's a long way" answered the tramp, complainingly. "I don't care about that. It will be one up for the Remove", said Bolsover.

With many grunts and grumbles the tramp walked with the three Removites.

"At last", said Trevor as the hut came into view.

Bolsover dragged open the door, and there revealed was the missing footwear. While the three were busily reading the labels attached to each pair, the tramp saw his chance and ran off.

"Look out!" shouted Trevor, "The tramp's escaping".

"Oh, let him rip. Perhaps he needs a strong pair of boots more than I do", replied Bolsover. "I wonder what Wharton and his gang will say when we tell them we've recovered the missing stuff" he laughed.

"Yes, you're right, by gum", said Desmond. "Let's get back to Greyfriars", said Trevor.

Arriving at the school gates they found them locked. Bolsover rang the bell, and Gosling appeared, carrying the keys. "As you're to report to Mr. Quelch and I hope

he lathers you, you young rips", said the Porter.

"It's alright Gossy, we've been doing good deeds." "A likely story, Master Bolsover." "By the way, did you send any footwear to Carding's recently, Gossy?" "Well, yes, I did, and I would like to know who stole them", growled Gosling. "You'll be pleased to know we've found it all Gossy." "Where, Master Bolsover?"

"Well I'm blown", was all that the Porter could say.
Bolsover knocked on Mr. Quelch's door.

"Come in" said a sombre voice. "Oh, it's you Bolsover, Trevor, Desmond, you were absent from call-over. Why?"

Bolsover related their experiences upon meeting the tramp, and finished by saying, "I didn't worry about the tramp taking my boots as I thought he had greater need of them than I, sir".

"Quite right Bolsover, I'm pleased you have some thought for others more unfortunate than yourself".

"And now you must go, as I have to ring the police and acquaint them of the facts in order that the missing consignment be recovered the first thing in the morning."

Later that evening Bolsover and Co were the heroes of the hour. Smithy gave Skinner a cynical smile, but said nothing. The miscreants who had hijacked the footwear were never discovered.

Maully was most pleased, and held a celebration in Rag to which all and sundry were invited. Even Coker, Potter and Greene turned up and for once Coker left the Rag on his own two feet.

Trevor and Micky Desmond arranged for the old boots the tramp had abandoned in the hut to be returned to Bolsover. After the tuck-in he was presented with the tramp's boots and they were taken up to the dorm. From time to time maids would take them out to the dust-bin but someone would always return them to the dorm.

The only one not happy was Skinner, who considered there was no justice, but fortunately his view was jaundiced, twisted and very much in the minority.

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MORE WALKS IN THE WONDERFUL GARDENS

by Laurence Price

Apart from his famous books and novels, such as *The Time Machine* (1895), *The War of the Worlds* (1898), *Kipps* (1905) and *The History of Mr Polly* (1910) H.G. Wells was a great short story writer. His short stories were as diverse, if not more so, than his countless books – from Winslow the struggling small shop keeper in ‘A Catastrophe’, Mr Cave’s ‘contact’ with Martians in ‘The Crystal Egg’, the shocking revenge of Horrocks in ‘The Cone’, the metaphysical ponderings of ‘The Apple’ that came from Eden, and the hauntings of ‘The Red Room’. These and many other of Wells’s short stories bear many repeated readings. Wells was a master short story teller.

But for me nothing can compare with his 1906 masterpiece ‘The Door in the Wall’ which gives access to what Wells himself describes as ‘*that garden, that wonderful garden*’. Perhaps, in the mind of Wells, a personal vision of his own Garden of Eden. I naturally write these last words with some reservation as Wells was, for most of his adult life, a militant atheist but paradoxically he did, for a short period, write a few books that had a spiritual quasi-Christian tone, although stamped with his own very personal imprint. Perhaps the most well-known was *God, The Invisible King* (1917) although he later repudiated all the arguments he had put forward in this book in his *Experiment in Autobiography* (1934) and went so far as to apologise to his readers for what he considered ‘*confused and misled many of them and introduced a barren detour in my research for an effective direction for human affairs*’. He was more satisfied with *The Undying Fire* (1919), a re-working of the Book of Job but stated, again in his autobiography, ‘*it crowns and ends my theology. It is the sunset of my divinity.*’

The wonderful gardens of his imagination might then, more accurately be called humanist Utopias, or, at least they start out that way, because, although everything in the garden may seem to be lovely in the *Time Machine* when the Time Traveller comes in contact with the gentle Eloi, we are soon in the dystopian nightmare world of the Morlocks. Before the discovery of the Morlocks, the Time Traveller observes that ‘*the whole earth had become a garden*’ and that in this apparent earthly paradise of the year Eight Hundred and Two Thousand Seven Hundred and One A.D. ‘*the air was free from gnats, the earth from weeds or fungi; everywhere were fruits and sweet and delightful flowers, brilliant butterflies flew hither and thither.*’

Eleven years later Wells would write of his most beautiful garden of all in ‘The Door in the Wall’; one ponders what effect that reading this story might have had on some commuters, as they turned to it, perhaps on an otherwise mundane day travelling to or from work in a crowded train or in a horse-drawn omnibus, in their copy of the *Daily Chronicle* of Saturday, 14 July 1906.

'One confidential evening, not three months ago, Lionel Wallace told me the story of the Door in the Wall...' begins the narrator, Redmond, as he takes the reader into his confidence, although he adds, with reservation, 'so far as (Wallace) was concerned it was a true story'. Redmond tells the story of the Door in the Wall in retrospect for it is soon made apparent that Wallace has recently died. Redmond recalls how Wallace had been a successful politician, nearing forty, but deeply dissatisfied with his worldly life, which had become all tedium and vanity to him. The Door in the Wall had come into the life of Wallace quite early, when he was between five and six, in the form of a green door in a white wall with a crimson Virginia creeper in it and new fallen horse-chestnut leaves upon the pavement.

Then he had told Redmond that he had hesitated to go through the door, had even walked past it, and he had come to 'a number of mean dirty shops'. So far, Wells has brilliantly set up a sense of anticipation - he has taken us right up to that green door in the wall, and then moved us on again to the mundane world of the small shop keeper; something Wells himself had been very familiar with when he had been an unwilling draper's assistant over twenty years before. But Wallace overcomes his qualms and we move from Anticipation to Arrival.

'Then, he said, he had a gust of emotion. He made a run for it... through the green door and let it slam behind him. And so, in a trice, he came into the garden that has haunted all his life—And everything was beautiful there...' and yet this is only the beginning.

Wallace, in wonderment, continued:

'You see—there were two great panthers there—and these two huge velvety beasts were playing with a ball. It was, I tell you, an enchanted garden—And the size? Oh! it stretches far and wide, this way and that. I believe there were hills far away. Heaven knows where West Kensington had suddenly got to—presently a tall, fair girl appeared in the pathway and came to meet me, smiling, and said "Well?" to me, and lifted and kissed me, and put me down and led me by the hand—'

All of this description of the beautiful garden and the wondrous things within it have the elusive quality of a dream and all its illogical unearthliness. And Wells has caught this ethereal quality to perfection. Wallace continues, 'Playmates I found there. That was very much to me, because I was a lonely little boy—And as one played one loved—'

Then the mood suddenly changes. 'Then presently came a sombre, dark woman, wearing a soft long robe of pale purple, who carried a book, and beckoned and took me aside with her into a gallery above a hall—'

But the book the woman carries is a book of realities, each page of which shows episodes in the then brief life of the small boy, Wallace, until there is a page showing him hovering outside the green door in the long white wall. And the next? 'It showed a long grey street in West Kensington—and I was there, a wretched little figure, weeping aloud—because I could not return to my dear playfellows ... brought back to this grey world again!'

It is as if Wallace had been evicted from the garden, the woman and the book representing worldly responsibility and the dull call of everyday duty; the sublimation of dreams and ideals. And when he later tells his father of his vision of the garden he receives his first thrashing and he is also punished by other elders that he confides in.

And as he grows towards adulthood there are other times when he sees the door but he always makes what he later considers the lifelong mistake of never re-entering it; either he is too busy with everyday, worldly things or if he goes back later he cannot find it. And to confide about it is also a mistake as ridicule or bullying soon follows. So Wallace has become nagged by regret at all those lost opportunities to return to the garden behind the Door in the Wall, having, in his view, always placed the things of the world first. *'I saw another door opening - the door of my career'*.

And then Wallace confides to Redmond that he has seen, and passed, the door three times within the last year and failed to enter, choosing, on each occasion, to obey the pressing call of worldly duty. And he tells Redmond that he fears he has now lost his final opportunity to enter the door, into the garden, and that *'This loss is destroying me—I go out—wandering alone - grieving - sometimes near audibly lamenting - for a door, for a garden!'*

We move to the present as Redmond ponders on all this. A newspaper lies on his sofa containing the notice of Wallace's death. His body had been found early the previous morning in a deep excavation near East Kensington Station, the site protected by a hoarding, in which a small doorway had been cut.

... You may think me superstitious—but—I am more than half-convinced that—(the) door offered him an—escape into another and altogether more beautiful world. At any rate, you will say, it betrayed him in the end. But did it betray him?... We see —the hoarding and the pit. By our daylight standard he walked out of security into darkness, danger and death.

But did he see it like that?

Wallace, I believe, surely did not see it like that and walked once more in that wonderful garden with the leopards and the tall, fair girl and his playmates: a poetical and secular parable by Wells that teaches there is much more to life than worldly wealth or fame. So rather like the world-weary Conway of James Hilton's *Lost Horizon* (1933), Wallace found his Shangri-La, his Earthly Paradise, his Wellsian model of the Garden of Eden.

WANTED: C.D.s for the following years: 1959, 1960, 1961, 1971-1976, 1977, 1978, 1981.
J. HOUGHTON, 43 Marsh Green, Wigan, WN5 0PY.

JACK DRAKE OF ST. WINIFRED'S

By Ray Hopkins

The cultured reader (that lets me out!) will gasp, "Aha! A reprise!" (that's where the culture emerges) upon reading the opening sequence of the St. Winifred's/Benbow Saga. Here is a stern(ish) old gentleman (why are Dads so old in our beloved story papers? Mine wasn't) addressing his son. Where, in the famous original, Colonel Wharton says "Send Master Harry to me," in this wealthy family the Master Harry character is already in the room gazing anxiously out of the window expecting a high old time with his racketsy chums. This, our first view of Jack Drake. No Harry Wharton he!

Mr. Drake, who has some disturbing news to impart to his son, reacts sympathetically to Jack's eagerness to leave with his school friends. "Let him enjoy today, tonight will be soon enough for him to learn that his father is a ruined man."

Jack returns home much later than planned to find his father still sitting up for him. Mr. Drake tells him he reeks of tobacco and alcohol but his son assures him it was the company he had been in: his own nerves are not shot with nicotine and he never touched the liquor. His companions had been coerced into playing "gay dogs" by Ponsonby of Highcliffe, an evil character we know from elsewhere, who is cousin to Vernon Daubeny (he and his Co. are known as the "Bucks"), Jack's best friend at St. Winifred's. Regrettably, when Jack hears he must henceforth regard himself as a "poor boy", his first wailing remark is, "I shan't be able to look Daub in the face." Winning the Foundation Scholarship, his father tells him, will enable him to stay at St. Winifred's for three further years. Jack cries, "It's not fair to me." But the sight of his mother sobbing alone in the sitting room brings him up with a jerk to the realisation that he is acting like a selfish pig. He climbs into the train feeling a mature resolve. "There would be temptations but he would win through."

His empty carriage is invaded by a new boy for St. Winifred's and a sympathetic rapport is struck up between them as they talk. Drake tells the new boy his father has lost his money. Jack's new friend is Dick Rodney who is "taken up at St. Winifred's at half fee as the son of a naval officer who was killed during an air raid in China for which his mother was granted a pension." Jack says he started in the Second Form at St. Winifred's and is now in the Fourth. Dick is headed there as well. He asks how come the school is now aboard ship. Unsafe foundations caused the move from the old building beside the River Chadway (think "Medway").

The Benbow is "an old wooden warship" more than a hundred years old but as sound as a bell. It went through a lot of sea-fights in Nelson's time. It was used once as a training ship. She was a noble vessel, the great masts still stood with most of the spars, though the canvas was no longer there. Where the guns had looked out in former days were now the windows of schoolboy studies tier over tier. Wooden bulkheads divided the rooms. The masters' studies were the old ship's cabins. A big gangway gave admittance to the Benbow. There was a gate at the entrance and a timber cottage where lived Old Coote, the porter of St. Winifred's. The tuckshop on

the Benbow is known as the Canteen.

The new friends agree that, as they have both got to work hard to continue their schooling, they should share the same study and help one another to keep on top of the daily workload. But the first set back occurs almost immediately at the junction where they have to change trains to get to Chade, the local station. Daubeny and his two friends Egan and Torrence, Drake's companions of the night before, turn up with the offer of a car ride to the school ship. Jack introduces his new friend expecting them to invite Rodney too, but Daubeny gives him one curt glance through his eyeglass, observes the new boy's shabby Etons and says there's only room for four in the car. Daubeny and Co. march off with Drake who throws an apologetic glance back at Rodney, knowing he should have stayed with the new boy. They reach the Benbow before the other juniors arrive and go to the home of the "Bucks", Study 3, after being greeted by Mr. Parke, the Fourth Form master, who calls Drake back to offer him extra tuition to help him with the Foundation Scholarship.

In Study 3, Drake expresses concern over Rodney, explains he had intended to accompany him aboard and arrange for him to share study 8 with him. Daubeny tells Drake to stay in Study 2 with Torrence. He will go and hunt Rodney down with Egan and bring him back. He has no intention of doing this. They waylay Rodney in the Fourth Form room passage, aft on the main deck. Daubeny tells him that Drake is "ashamed of having made friends with a sneakin", shabby cad and doesn't want Rodney to dig in the same study." Rodney tells Daubeny he's lying. Daubeny and Egan attack Rodney who knocks them both down and walks off. Drake is amazed to see Daubeny and Egan return to Study 3 with battered noses and damaged eyes and to hear it was done by the new boy whose aspect had been quiet and friendly in the train.

Rodney, looking for Drake, locates Study 8. Drake's other study mate is there. He promptly accuses Rodney of sucking up to Drake because he's rich. This is Rupert De Vere Toodles, known as Tuckey, yet another of our favourite author's none too perfect fat boys. Rodney is in the act of giving Tuckey a vigorous shake when Drake walks in. He wonders at Rodney's out-of-character acts of violence to his new form fellows, but threatens to cricket-stump Toodles himself when he hears that Rodney had been insulted by saying he was dressed in second-hand hand-me-down Etons.

Left alone, Rodney says he had come to Study 8 because of the invitation Drake had given him in the train. "I shan't stay here unless you ask me to." Drake doesn't stop him leaving saying Rodney appears to have a bad temper, fighting with two of his best friends and bullying Toodles. Becoming angry, he adds that he hopes Rodney has kept mum about the secret of his family's financial losses he had imparted on the train. Rodney's feelings for Drake quickly fade and he tells him he has been insulted by the inference that he might have blabbed. "I never repeat anything that is not my business" says Rodney and decides against sharing the study with Drake and Tuckey Toodles.

The Fourth Form, led by Pierce Raik, Vane and Newson, intent on keeping up the tradition of the first night party after call-over are astounded when they come to

Study 8 to root out Drake to find him with books open and scratching away on impot paper, studying Virgil. Drake tells them he's going in for the Foundation Scholarship and to leave him in peace. When they continue to chivvy him he attacks them with a cricket bat. But they return with kettles and saucepan lids making more noise than ever. Drake loses his temper and damages a few more noses. Raik and Co, revenge overcoming their previous fun-loving efforts, rip down the study curtains, tie Drake to a chair and leave to continue their sing-song in the Common Room. Daubeny, Egan and Torrence come looking for Drake to indulge in a spot of Banker in Study 3 and Drake, already sick of his new role as a swot (or "sap" as it is called at this school) goes with them when they untie him. He promises himself that he'll begin to work in earnest the following day. He loses ten pounds to Daubeny! So much for good resolutions.

During the following week Drake's determination to study faded from his mind as he had fallen back into his old desultory ways with Daubeny and Co. A letter from his mother urging him to keep the promise he had made to his parents makes him briefly regret his procrastination but he cannot turn down an invite to accompany the Study 3 trio to the "Lobster Pot", a local Pub. This in order to meet Gentleman Smith, a bookie and cardsharp who will give him 10 to one against Brown Boy. The horse is a certain winner and Drake will be able to pay the £10 he owes to Daubeny. This will be his final flutter and he will then get down to serious study.

The Fourth Form slept in hammocks slung under the main deck. Drake, Daubeny and Co. plan to leave Study 3 by the window and descend to a boat waiting below by means of a rope tied to the table. Torrence and Egan climb down first. Drake is about to follow when Rodney comes into the study and urges him not to break bounds. Earlier that day Drake had told Rodney about the Lobster Pot excursion. Daubeny threatens to smash Rodney but the latter reminds him what happened the last time he tried. In the boat, Daubeny and Drake quarrel over the interference of Rodney. "He was giving me jolly good advice," Drake says, "and I was a fool not to take it".

A veranda runs round three sides of the Lobster Pot and here they are greeted by Gentleman Smith. Bookmaking, a little billiard sharpening and card sharpening "made life easier for him and helped to save him from the unpleasant necessity of doing any work". He seemed to think that Brown Boy "might turn out to be a dark 'orse and romp 'ome". He also seemed quite oblivious of the fact that he would have to pay out large sums of money when the horse won on Saturday. Drake tells him he cannot lay a fiver for the bet as he is stony. Gentleman Smith says he'll accept his IOU. Daubeny presses £2 on to Drake so he can join in the poker game with which they finish up the evening. Drake wins seven or eight pounds but his winning streak doesn't last long - Gentleman Smith sees to that! "Give you your revenge anytime, gentlemen. Must you go? Well, goodnight", he says as he collects his extensive winnings from the pot. The juniors return to the Benbow with empty pockets.

On the Saturday morning, Drake is detained by Mr. Packe for inattention and not having done his prep the previous evening. Drake asks Rodney to bike down to Kingsford to pick up the early evening newspaper published as soon as the races are

over. Rodney is appalled at Drake's foolishness in laying bets when he hasn't the money to finance them but Drake's miserable face arouses his sympathy. A nice little "in joke" occurs when Toodles visits Drake while in detention. Mr. Packe catches him, of course. Tuckey tells the form master he'd come to get his Virgil. He's "very fond of reading him on a half holiday. I like him better than Frank Richards as an author. I revel in him, sir!". Mr. Packe tells him he may stay and read Virgil in the detention room. "I will return in an hour, and you shall explain what you have read. I trust you will enjoy yourself." When Rodney returns with the newspaper Drake reads Brown Boy was listed under "also ran!". "The study seemed to swim round the hapless boy as he sat staring at the bulkhead."

Drake, hearing Daubeny's voice on deck runs out of his study, pushing past Pierce Raik who is about to enter. The latter is puzzled at Drake's evident concern over losing a few quids on a horse but a letter from Drake's father, carelessly left visible on the study table reveals all. "I need not tell you that upon the result of the exam depends whether you remain at St. Winifred's. It will be quite impossible for me to meet the expense of your school fees next term." Raik is appalled but he smiles and he rejoices in that he can now take his revenge for past insults from the once-rich junior. "Rodney had kept the secret; but it was not to remain a secret much longer."

Raik tells Rodney he'd heard some of the fellows speaking about Drake's people being hard up and unable to pay his school fees. Rodney wonders whether Drake will immediately jump to the conclusion that he had given his secret away. Daubeny and Co. are the next jubilant hearers of Raik's astounding news. Daubeny says it must be true because it explains the puzzling changes in Drake this term: the scholarship, his friendship with the poverty-stricken Rodney, his swotting and his collapse at the loss of a measly fiver on Brown Boy. The Study 3 trio decide to cut Jack Drake in future. "Evidently the hapless junior who had fallen from fortune had little sympathy to look for from his old comrades, the noble Bucks of St. Winifred's."

Rodney refuses to fight Drake when the latter accuses him of revealing his penury but Drake forces the issue by striking him heavily across his face, calling him a liar and coward in front of the whole Common Room. Raik looks forward to the coming battle which he has cleverly engineered.

The fight between Drake and Rodney has to be conducted ashore to keep it hidden from the masters' knowledge. So, after school, the Fourth Form troop down the gangway in twos and threes to the appointed place: "the wood that lay thick and green along the bank of the Chadway out of sight of the school ship". Frank Escourt is Rodney's second. Sawyer Major volunteers to be Drake's backup. Before they begin, Rodney whispers to his opponent that he had kept his word. Drake's revealed secret did not emanate from him. Drake pushes him away and the fight begins. Drake's fury lends him energy and though Rodney tries to avoid hitting him, his defence suffers and Drake knocks him furiously to the ground. By the sixth round both combatants are angry and slogging each other with equal venom. Blood is spilled and eyes blackened. It will now be impossible to hide the obvious signs of strife when they return aboard ship.

Drake is knocked out in the ninth round and is counted out. As he bathes his face in the Chadway, Rodney begs him to believe that he never revealed his secret. Drake curtly refuses. Drake waits in the wood until it gets dark hoping to get back aboard unobserved, so he is in a perfect position to be spotted by someone he has no wish to see: Gentleman Smith of the Lobster Pot and holder of an incriminating piece of paper containing Drake's IOU. "If you ain't got it 'andy, the five pun you owe me, I'll give you to Wensdy, or else take it further."

The combatants are kept behind after call-cover and given an hour's detention by Mr. Parke for disgracing the school. It is an embarrassment for both and they quickly weary of declining Latin verbs. Drake is given Rodney's word of honour that he never spoke of the other's private affairs. As Rodney won the fight there is no need for him to play the part of the supplicant. Drake gives him a long, silent look and this time believes him. He also remembers leaving his father's letter in full view on the study stable and passing Raik in the doorway from whence he undoubtedly saw it and then read it. He recalled finding the letter on the floor beneath the table when he returned. The culprit is found! Drake brings up the plan that they had conceived on the train the first day of term to work hard and get along as study mates again. Would Rodney agree? "Like a shot. I'd like to no end." They shake hands on the spot. The Common Room observes the cheerful reconciliation after Mr. Parke releases them from detention. Rodney moves into Study 8 on Drake's invitation but Tuckey Toodles is not keen on the idea.

Vernon Daubeny is Junior Captain of St. Winifred's and jumps at the chance to put down Rodney when Toodles complains to him about the half-fee interloper. Toodles doesn't want the new boy as a studymate because Rodney is poor, quite forgetting that he is poor himself. Toodles pretends to be affluent though "he well knows his pockets are empty, too". Daubeny, as Captain, agrees to get Lovelace, school captain, to eject Rodney from Study 8. By the time Daubeny returns with Lovelace, Rodney has loaned Toodles a pound note received in the post and the fat boys tells Daubeny he's changed his mind and not to interfere with the harmonious relations now obtaining in Study 8.

Gentleman Smith embarrasses Drake by asking to speak to him on Dr. Goring's phone. With the Head standing beside Drake, the bookie threatens to come to the school. Dr. Goring realises that Drake has somehow fallen into the clutches of someone disreputable while ashore and, so that Smith will be sure to come to the Benbow, he gates the whole school. This makes it impossible for anyone to go ashore and pay the cardsharp with five pounds. When Gentleman Smith arrives at the gangway, Old Coote, the Porter, lets him come aboard but Toodles, pretending it's an accident, saves Drake by crashing into the bookie, causing him to fall backwards and disappear over the side of the Benbow into the Chadway. Gentleman Smith drags himself to the shore through two feet of water and mud, shakes a fist at the grinning Toodles and vanishes into the wood beside the river.

Tuckey's assault on Gentleman Smith has only postponed the hour of reckoning, for the bookie phones Dr. Goring and says he will bring proof that one of his pupils



The Fourth Formers crowded out of the study, leaving Drake helpless. Jank glared after them, wriggling in his bonds. "You rotten!" he howled. "Let me loose!" "Not till bed-time!" shouted Raik.



Drake swung himself down the rope from the window and Daubeny followed him. Below, the boatman was waiting with the boat, to convey the breakers of bounds to the Lobster Pot.



The study seemed to swim round the hapless junior as he sat staring stupidly at the bulk-head. What was he going to do now?



Pierce Raik had no scruples about reading another fellow's letter, and as he looked over Drake's, his eyes opened wide and he whistled.

has been gambling with him. This, after the Head threatens him with "legal action to punish you for uttering slanders concerning a boy belonging to this school". At midnight, from the Head's study, Daubeny, threatened with exposure by Drake, phones Gentleman Smith. If he does NOT come to the Benbow in response to Dr. Goring's threat, he will pay the five pounds owed to him. "If you come here, you'll never see me at the Lobster Pot again."

The next day, Dr. Goring is phoned by the bookies to say he won't be coming. His appearance on the Benbow the previous day was a lark. "P'raps I'd had a little to drink, Sir." Dr. Goring squashes him verbally and replaces the phone sharply. "Mr. Smith, at the Lobster Pot, stood himself another little drink by way of comfort." And all, as that celebrated author, Frank Richards, would say, was calm and bright for Jack Drake and Dick Rodney in Study 8 aboard the Benbow.

This reconciliation was observed with fury by Vernon Daubeny who had hoped to get Drake back into his clutches again. His first gesture against him, acting as Junior Football Skipper, was to leave Drake out of St. Winifred's next football match which was against Highcliffe. Attempting to talk Daubeny into playing him, Drake and Rodney are insulted to the point of extreme anger and they end up wrecking Study 8 and its occupants. It's two against six as Daubeny and Co. are augmented by Chilcot, Seeley and Upham, members of Daubeny's "Bucks" who are also three duds on the regular football team.

The game against Highcliffe is lost six-nil. Daubeny and his team of incompetents are mobbed by the Juniors and only the intervention of Dr. Goring saves them from a severe beating. Drake determines to oust the Junior Captaincy from Daubeny. This ambition was considerably helped by the losing of the Highcliffe match for which many of the juniors feel the blame was Daubeny's for not playing Drake, a far better footballer than the Captain.

Another athletic event would appear to give Drake a further chance to raise him in the estimation of the juniors. Dr. Goring will present the winner of the five-mile junior cross-country run with a silver cup. His course was a circular one leading across fields and over streams and hedges which began and finished at the Benbow. Drake and Rodney sign up for the run as do Daubeny and Co. and some of the other Bucks. Daubeny, intent on the fact that Drake shall not beat him, slips Gentleman Smith a five pound note and a whispered instruction. Despite all the cigarettes he smokes, Daubeny puts up a good pace. Three hundred yards from the finishing post and going through a small wooded area, Drake passes him only to "stumble and crash full length on the ground". Rodney, just behind the two juniors sees his friend fall and determines to beat the junior captain if he can. Fifty yards from the tape he is neck and neck with Daubeny. The latter's legs and lungs give out and Rodney races ahead and wins. Later, alone in Study 8, Drake tells Rodney he had stumbled over "a small branch thrown from the wood". He's telling nobody as he doesn't know who the thrower was, but —. The two chums nod knowingly at each other.

“From one of the most thoughtless and idle fellows on the Benbow, Drake had become one of the steadiest and most industrious, and the change was as much due to Rodney’s influence as to anything else.” Daubeny hates Drake for the fact that he has so cheerfully renounced the seedy pleasures of the Bucks’ company. He also fears the fact that Drake is liable to win the Foundation Scholarship and thus stay on at St. Winifred’s and oust the Junior Captaincy from him.

Daubeny bribes Toodles with a ten shilling note to buy grub for a feed in Study 3. This will get the greedy fat boy out of the way while Daubeny and Egan totally vandalise Study 8. They throw all of Drake’s books out of the window and into the Chadway; tear off the table legs and smash every chair to pieces. Daubeny is able to get Toodles to confirm that they were both in Study 3 when Drake confronts him. Both Estcourt and Sawyer Major had stopped by Study 8 just prior to 9 p.m. and the destruction had not taken place then. Drake leaves Study 3 puzzled and disturbed. He is sure Daubeny must have been the instigator of the damage. Who else on the Benbow would want to do it? As the door closes behind Drake, Daubeny smiles sardonically. He had set back the Study 3 clock by fifteen minutes. After the fat boy returned from the canteen, when he wasn’t looking, Daubeny had put it back to the correct time, making sure Tuckey noted the correct time and would be able to create the alibi when Drake made his inevitable accusation.

Daubeny offers Drake a place in the next football match against Redclyffe. Drake and Rodney suspect an ulterior motive and of course, there is. Daubeny hopes that footer practice for Drake for the next month will take him away from the studying that he still has to do for the Foundation Scholarship. Seeley of the Shell, one of Daubeny’s set, left out of the team, attempts to force Drake to fight him so he’ll be in no condition to play the following day but Rodney pushes Drake away and fights the heavily built Seeley himself, finally knocking him down and giving him a black eye.

The final score is Redclyffe 5, St. Winifred’s 3, of which Drake scored 2 goals. That evening Rodney plans to help Drake with scholarship work but Drake begs off saying he’s too tired. Daubeny invites Drake to a supper for the team in Study 3. Cards and cigarettes are brought out after the supper but Drake says, “Thanks, but no thanks” and goes back to Rodney in Study 8. Daubeny grits his teeth, swears, and knows he’s lost that round.

Drake is put in the junior footer team for the following game with Rookwood but is dismayed to receive a letter from his Dad saying he will be visiting the Benbow on the same day. Drake asks Daubeny to play Rodney instead. Daubeny, secretly delight but pretending fury, says his name remains in the team and if he doesn’t turn up, St. Winifred’s will play a man short! Daubeny, in great glee, tells his Co. “I hate the cad! Even if he wasn’t a dangerous rival I’d be glad to see the back of him. I shouldn’t wonder if it’s already too late for him to pull up the time he’s lost.”

Drake decides to play in the Rookwood match and asks Rodney to meet his father and accompany him to the Benbow. In the first half, Rookwood scores two goals. Daubeny tells Drake to pull himself together. Drake answers him back and Daubeny, realising Drake will refuse to leave his studying after his father’s visit,

decides he doesn't need to be pleasant to the penniless junior and orders him off the field. Drake tells him that he will never play for him again.

Drake's father is dismayed to hear from Mr. Packe that he had offered him extra tuition but the boy had not taken the same advantage after being placed permanently on the junior football team. After Mr. Drake leaves, Jack tells Rodney that his father was disappointed in him. "I'm going to show him that I've got the right stuff in me. I'm going to bag that school. Or burst something!"

Daubeny's next overt move to stop Drake studying is to lend Toodles ten shillings to purchase a concertina the fat boy had seen in a Chade shop window, the condition being that he must constantly play it in Study 8. Drake and Rodney retreat to the Form-room to study but fifteen minutes later, Pierce Raik and Chetwynd come in to do some fencing practice. Their foils are made of wood. Loud crashing, clashing and trampling noises disturb the juniors trying to study. Rodney stops Drake from going for them and they again retreat. The fencing ceases immediately they are out of earshot.

A window seat near the entrance to the canteen seems quiet enough, but Daubeny and three of the Bucks go into the canteen, emerge with four glasses of ginger beer and a plate of tarts and sit down in the window seat. The Bucks talk loudly and make it impossible for the Study 8 duo to get any work done. Drake tells Daubeny to get out and hauls him up by his shoulder. A fight ensues as the studious two close with the four Bucks. They are interrupted by Lovelace, the School Captain. When he hears that Drake had ordered Daubeny and Co. to leave what is a public area, he gives Drake and Rodney fifty lines each and orders them back to their study. Tuckey has locked the study door to keep out other complaining Fourth Formers who have threatened him, but he lets Drake and Rodney into the study. They toss the concertina into the passage where it enjoys a short, busy life as a football until it is jumped upon and squashed by one of the chuckling Fourth Formers.

Still hoping to make him fail the scholarship, Daubeny's latest plan to frustrate Drake is to force him to have a fight on his hands every day. Every time he criticizes someone he should be asked to step into the gym. The major difficulty is that Drake is considerably more hefty and a mightier fighting man than those he criticises. Egan, whose football prowess Drake has laughed at, is the first victim. He is knocked down in the first three minutes and the boxing match is over. Torrence, as the second in the chain, challenges Drake (he had called him a tailor's dummy). In the third round, Torrence gives up, having copped a black eye. Cowardice forces Daubeny to wait for the following day for his bout with Drake. But having second thoughts, he decides to cancel his turn. Egan and Torrence take their revenge on their leader by beating him to the deck and emptying a bottle of ink over his head.

Frank Escourt, a good student and Drake's main rival to win the Foundation Scholarship is also a genuine "poor boy", and needs to win the scholarship in order to stay on at St. Winifred's just as much as Drake does. They day before the exam, Escourt, pale and nervous, begs Drake to drop out. "I can't afford to lose. If you knew my circumstances at home, you'd understand. The money that goes with it.

It's wanted – to send my young brother to school.” Escourt's thoughts are black and bitter when Drake, though feeling keenly for his problems, turns down his plea.

Their conversation on the darkened deck has been overheard by Daubeny who suggests a solution to Escourt's problem. Drake could be got out of the way. A small dose – harmless and tasteless – in his breakfast tea. It would make him sleepy and unable to concentrate during the exam and he'd be as right as rain by the evening.” Escourt questions him about the drug. Daubeny tells him he has some in his study and smiles in the dusk believing he's talked the tortured poor boy into performing this base act. But Escourt's reaction is to smash his fist into Daubeny's face and knock him to the deck.

The day of the exam, after a sleepless night, Escourt takes the small black phial when it is offered to him by Daubeny. It's harmless, it's harmless, runs like a refrain through his brain as he slips it into his pocket. Those who are taking the exam are free until ten o'clock when Mr. Packe will usher them into the examination room. Escourt invites Drake to join him in the canteen for a cup of coffee. Mr. Caps serves them but neglects to bring the sugar to their table. Drake steps to the counter for the bowl. Escourt removes the stopper from the black phial and holds it upright over Drake's cup. “No”, he whispers and pulls the phial back against his chest and, head whirling, staggers to the open window and leans his head on the iron frame as the phial drops from his hand and splashes into the Chadway. Drake has observed Escourt's uncertain steps to the window and thinks his studying so hard has made him ill, little knowing that his rival for the scholarship has just thrown away his last chance of winning it. Escourt smiles shakily at Drake as he puts out his hand to help him. “But at least he could work without a crime on his conscience.” Inevitably, Jack Drake wins the scholarship and is guaranteed three more years at St. Winifred's. Escourt, brilliant scholar as he is, and despite all his hard work, comes second and will be seen no more on the floating school.

It is end of term. During the walk to the station, Drake tells Rodney that when he left home it was to be sold, but his father has said nothing and he's going back to the old home for the hols. He's puzzled by this and even more surprised to be met at his home station by the chauffer with the family car, a Rolls-Royce. His mother will not answer his eager questions but sends him to see his father in the library. Mr. Drake explains that his money had indeed all gone at the beginning of term, but he had retained something of no market value at the time. It was an investment in a tin area in Nigeria. Discoveries, proving it to be one of the richest tin areas in West Africa, had been made. “Now, Jack, we are more wealthy than ever before. I intended to tell you this good news when I visited you on the day of the Rookwood match, but when I saw you and realised you had not kept your word to study hard for the scholarship, I decided to hold back and just see if you could pull through on your own. You have and I'm proud of you.”

Mr. Drake arranges with Dr. Goring that the Foundation Scholarship be passed on to the next on the list: the worthy and hard-working Escourt who will be able to join Drake and Rodney aboard the Benbow the following term. But what will the

malicious and evil Daubeny's reaction be?

THE END

The above series was first printed in GREYFRIARS HERALD (2nd series), beginning 1 Nov 1919, and reprinted in GEM 1588 to 1614 (23 July 1938 to 21 Jan 1939) the author being given as Owen Conquest. The Lofts/Adley source book on the origins of the BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY reveals that BFL 67 (1st series), Dec 1908, contained "The Secret of St. Winifred's" reprinted from PLUCK (2nd series) 163 - 201, undated, the author being shown as Martin Clifford. Does anyone know if Drake, Daubeny and Co. appear in this story and does the Benbow appear in it?

FORUM

ROBERT KIRKPATRICK writes:

In answer to Bob Marsh's piece on the Teddy Lester books in the December CD - as he correctly says all 6 books were first published by W. & R. Chambers, as follows:

Three School Chums	1907
His First Term	1909
Teddy Lester's Chums	1910
Teddy Lester's Schooldays	1914
Teddy Lester, Captain of Cricket	1916
Teddy Lester in the Fifth	1921

(John Finnemore also published one other hardback boys' school story - "The Outlaw of the Shell" - W. & R. Chambers 1915 - which was not a Teddy Lester story.)

Not much is known about John Finnemore himself. He was born in Birmingham on 8 July 1863, although he is believed to have spent most of his early years on East Anglia. In 1891 he was appointed Headmaster of a school in Wales (with his wife being appointed as the sewing mistress); 13 years later he returned to East Anglia, only to miss his old job so much that he (successfully) re-applied for it. He later became a farmer in North Wales, and he died in 1928.

His first published book was *Boys and Girls of Other Days*, which appeared in 1898. He subsequently wrote numerous stories for periodicals such as *Boy's Journal*, *Boys' Friend weekly*, *Empire Library* and the *Boy's Own Paper*. His output included fairy stories, scouting tales, topographical articles, historical and adventure stories and, of course, school stories. He also wrote several books with a Welsh background, and he edited and published a number of Anglo-Welsh Historical Readers for use in Welsh schools.

The Teddy Lester stories ran originally in the *Boys' Realm* in the early 1900s. The subsequent six hardback books were the first boys' school stories to become a self-contained series, not only retaining the same setting but tracing their characters'

lives through their school careers. While this later became a feature in girls' school stories, it was rarely repeated in books for boys.

FROM TED BALDOCK:

I enjoyed Roger Coombes's fascinating article on 'Rupert Bear'. It was a delightful and nostalgic journey into the past. Rupert was one of the first heroes in my life. Well do I remember his introduction in the *Daily Express* far longer ago than I care to dwell upon. I came to love Rupert and remember suffering agonies of anxiety when he became entangled in 'tight corners' with Witches, Giants and Dragons. I can recall those lovely illustrations with much affection. Mr. and Mrs. Bear became very real people to me while Rupert, in my infantile imagination, could do no wrong – unlike those two villains, Freddie and Ferdie Fox. What a wonderful thing it is to be blessed with a retentive memory, to be able to recall events which occurred in 'another age' so long ago.

I was amused by the illustration of the ancient typewriter at the head of 'Editor's Chat'. I once possessed an old Remington, although not nearly so venerable as that depicted. It was large and unmanageable and weighed, it seemed to me, about half a ton. It was a fearful object yet it performed sterling service over a long period. Bought for £5 (a good bargain). Curiously enough I cannot remember its eventual fate. Like so much else one accumulates along the way it just disappeared – it may have been payment for another machine.

FROM GEOFF BRADLEY:

Bill Bradford might like to know that John Hunter's DEAD MAN'S GATE was originally published by Cassell in 1932. The Cherry Tree paperback, number 177, that he mentions was published in 1943 and, at 96 pages, was almost certainly abridged, as many Cherry Tree publications were.

Other titles by John Hunter published by Cherry Tree were:

THE THREE CROWS (Cherry Tree 146, 160 pages, 1941; originally Cassell 1928)

THE MAN BEHIND (Cherry Tree 169, 96 pages, 1942; originally published by World's Work 1937 as by Anthony Dax)

WHEN THE GUNMEN CAME (Cherry Tree 189, 96 pages, 1944; originally Cassell 1930).

The information about Cherry Tree Press publications comes from BRITISH PAPERBACK CHECKLIST Number 35 compiled by Richard Williams (1996); information about the original editions comes from CRIME FICTION IV by Allen J. Hubin (2004).

From ARTHUR E.G. EDWARDS:

Laurence Price, in his article headed GOODBYE MR CHIPS, THE 1939 FILM VERSION, wrote 'no remake can match the original'. I endorse that view without hesitation. I cannot think of a remake I have enjoyed, but to be fair, if I enjoyed the original, I generally avoided remakes. Among those I have avoided, in addition to Mr

Chips, are The 39 Steps, Dracula, The Mummy, Frankenstein, Tom Brown's School Days (not that I was enthusiastic about the original), even the Basil Rathbone 'B' movie or Quota Quickie version of the Hound of the Baskervilles. If asked who was the star of Ben Hur I would say Ramon Navarro, without hesitation. My prejudice goes beyond films. I was not impressed by Gene Kelly's rendering of 'Singing in the Rain' George Jessell's version was much better while his (George Jessell) version of 'Tip Toe Through the Tulips', was infinitely more enjoyable than the comic's version which I saw on T.V.

I diverted from my general policy and went to see the revised version of 'Me and My Girl' only to find another example of 'no remake can match the original'. Lupino Lane and his leading lady (?Deny St Denis?), made the original, with the Victoria Palace the ideal venue. Lupino Lane was a clown from a long line of clowns, this ensured he starred as the leading man. Not only were his replacements not up to the job but the cast did not know how to do the Lambeth Walk! Perhaps the Adelphi? Stage was too small anyway. The outbreak of war in September 1939 ended the run of the original, yet another crime to be laid at Hitler's door.

I hope to get to see 'Anything Goes', but as I did not see the original, no comparison will be made.

The Schoolgirls' Gown



2nd

WHO HAS STOLEN THE
FOOD FOR THE BANQUET?

An original from the Grand Hotel
of Mystery & Suspense, presented in 1934.

A CENTENARY WORTH CELEBRATING

by Mary Cadogan

Tiger Tim, who was a star of my early childhood reading, is now a hundred years old. He and his animal co. (then known as the *Hippo* Boys) began in *The Illustrated (Daily) Mirror* on April 16th 1904. They could not be contained on the woman's page of this newspaper and soon branched out into their own comics - *Rainbow*, *Tiger Tim's Tales*, *Tiger Tim's Weekly* and *Playbox*. By this time their boarding school/home was being run by a bear, Mrs. Bruin, who had replaced Mrs. Hippo, and the boys had become established as the Bruin Boys, with their Bunter-like class-mate, Porky-Boy, always there to play tricks and to try to get the better of them. So popular were the Bruin Boys that a set of female counterparts, Tiger Tilly & Co, were created. In their heyday, these engaging animals starred in 5 wonderfully attractive Annuals, which are very collectable today.

Julius Stafford Baker was the first artist to depict them: there were several others, but the longest-running and most accomplished was Herbert Sydney Foxwell who brilliantly conveyed their warmth and exuberance.

When *The Rainbow* comic ended on April 28th 1956, Tiger Tim & Co. continued in *Tiny Tots*. On January 24th 1959, when *Tiny Tots* was amalgamated with *Playhour*, they ran for some time in that, and in 1964 were transferred to *Jack and Jill*, where they continued well into the 1980s. Peter Woolcock was the latter-day illustrator.

Now, alas, Tiger Tim, Tiger Tilly and their associates survive only in our memories - but we will long recall the happy moments they gave us over the years.



TIGER TIM'S TALES.

THE MAGIC MILESTONE,
AND OTHER STORIES.

STORIES
AND PICTURES
FOR
CHILDREN



NOT ONLY OLIVER ASKED FOR MORE

by Margery Woods

A certain famous old quote is attributed by some to Napoleon, by others to Frederick the Great, and doubtless contains much truth: for the empty stomachs of an army would not support a quick march loaded with gear for many miles. But substitute the first noun and verb with a couple of alternatives and a certain amusing truth may be revealed about our favourite school chums. Try “school” and “exist”!

Yes! Food, glorious food!

How they all needed and loved it. Greyfriars, Cliff House and Morcove and all, regardless of the plotting, the swotting, the traumas, the heartbreak, the sport, the ragging and the wonderful hols, food was the unrecognised top of any ten contests they might have been called to vote on.

All the schools had studies for all forms bar the very young pupils. Studies appeared to be well equipped with fires and within easy reach of fresh water. Hampers and tuck boxes turned up with regularity from parents concerned that the school fare was insufficient to keep bodies and souls of their ewe-lambs hanging together. Of course the schools’ provender was adequate, it had to be, if only for the pupils of modest means.

Apart from the hampers, tuck boxes and the school rations providing four wholesome meals per day, there were the tuck shops on the school premises with ample supplies of jam tarts, cream buns, pies, lemonade and ginger beer and other goodies with which to fill those empty corners of the tum, not forgetting the vital slate for the benefit of trusted debtors who were temporarily short of ready cash.

The wise Mrs Mumble of Greyfriars’ Tuck Shop was well aware of the constant parlous state of William George Bunter’s financial situation. Long experience of her mean lack of trust in his honesty had helped to hone Bunter’s skill at tracking down tuck in studies and well stocked hampers—notably Smithy’s and Coker’s—the moment Trotter appeared with a special delivery. One may have thought that the numerous bootings Bunter received from angry victims of his looting might have knocked some of the fat off his rear, but no, Bunter’s rotundity remained unchanged despite the school rations that were totally inadequate to keep the Bunter frame from caving in altogether.



Cliff House's tuck shop was also near to hand, by the old clock tower and was managed by Auntie Jones, who also knew her girls and her Bessie. Bessie was more fortunate than her brother and shared the available tuck of the chums, Barbara Redfern and Co., who were a great deal more indulgent towards a frail and starving Bunter than were the Removites—and Coker!—over at Greyfriars. Of course today the Bunters would be in compulsory attendance at the nearest obesity clinic.

But even the school provender, the study teas, the hampers, the tuck boxes and the Tuck Shops seemed unable to satisfy healthy young appetites. Tempting sources of yet further supplies of essential nourishment could be found conveniently near to hand. Friardale had Uncle Clegg, of the sweet and chewy variety-of comestibles, and Courtfield held




Nazner being chased by a pig.

Chunkleys, and others. River banks were kindly sources of tea rooms and local farms and cottages were at hand when youthful ramblers were in sore need of sustenance to get them back in time for call-over. And down in Devonshire, the home of ultra-delicious cream, Morcove's Fourth Form chummy in Study 12 were fortunate in having Barnscombe's famous Creamery in which to indulge, often along with their boy chums from Grangemoor. Morcove's own tuck shop did not seem to get as many mentions in the stories, nor did the owner or manageress, occasionally referred to as the Dame. The great customer of Morcove is the school's mischievous young queen, Naomer Nakara. Her appetite for cream buns could almost outdo Bessie's and a whisper of the word "Tea" will send Naomer prancing off in search of goodies for the study tea table. Everything has to be tasted first, to make sure it is all right, for Naomer, tiny scamp though she is, has a tremendous appetite and never seems to put an ounce of weight on.


Then there comes the crowning highlight of the gastronomic year: Christmas: The turkey, the plum pudding, the great cake, the mince pies, the nuts, the grapes, the marron glacé, all of the trimmings, all at once on a great festive board.

Yet, despite all the eating that seems to take place at these famous schools, enough to make our own mouths water as we make do with toast and marmalade or a humble snack mid-day, none of these young school gourmets (excepting two certain characters) seem to show any effects, such as waistline expansion. They remain slim clear-skinned and bright-eyed, attractive and full of vitality, exactly how we would wish them to be.

Long may the hampers arrive, the study tables tempt, and the tuck shop profits soar. After all, Bessie and Billy need to keep up their strength—if only for our amusement.




A BITTER PILL, OH!
 BY PEGGY PRESTON
(With apologies to "Tit-Willow")





A very fat girl is bemoaning her lot
 Of lessons, of lessons, of lessons;
 She glares at her book and her unadded tot
 Of lessons, of lessons, of lessons
 She tries to subtract much from little, until
 She feels she has had a lot more than her fill
 Of lessons, of lessons, of lessons.

A very fat girl, in a desperate state
 Of hunger, of hunger, of hunger;
 Sketching poor victims all over her slate
 Of hunger, of hunger, of hunger.
 She wishes in vain for some food for the brain—
 Jam-tarts, cakes, or sweets to cure her bad pain
 Of hunger, of hunger, of hunger.

A very fat girl in a very low state
 Of money, of money, of money,
 Is wroth that her pater's forgetful of late
 Of money, of money, of money!
 She tries hard to borrow, but, much to her
 sorrow,
 Her friends, too, expect a remittance to-morrow
 Of money, of money, of money!







BOOKS TO LISTEN TO

reviewed by Mary Cadogan

Once again I have been savouring the delights of "Being Read To". CSA WORD have now issued a further Greyfriars recording. **BILLY BUNTER'S BANKNOTE** is the fifth Bunter book recorded by Martin Jarvis and, needless to say, he presents it with his usual verve and expertise. It is no mean feat to differentiate between the voices of so many different Greyfriars Removites (especially those who have no obligatory Indian, Scots, Irish or other accents) but Martin manages to do so. His depiction of the Bounder conveys a languid recklessness; his Skinner is appropriately soapy, his Wharton comes across as the manly leader. Quelch, with his 'not loud but deep voice', works well and, of course, his Bunter is just the right amalgam of cackination, cajolery and self-satisfaction. We are in familiar territory with this story of money stolen from the Head's study, and of Vernon-Smith (and Bunter) doing some amateur sleuthing to discover the culprit (whose identity is never really in doubt to the listener - but that is part of the book's charm).

A jolly good 'listen'!

THREE MEN IN A BOAT presents us with many intriguing and amusing events and reflections - set against the always appealing riverside background. Hugh Laurie's readings prove him to be not only a skilled light comedian and actor but a very satisfying reader, with a wonderfully flexible voice. Anyone who wishes to become reacquainted with the exploits of the celebrated trio - George, Harris and J. - and their canine companion, Montmorency (or anyone who may not yet have discovered them) will love this reading.

Both these recordings are available in shops or by post from CSA WORD at 6A Archway Mews, London SW15 2PE, Tel: 020 8871 0220. The two-cassette set of **BILLY BUNTER'S BANKNOTE** costs £10.99. **THREE MEN IN A BOAT** is available on cassettes at £10.99 or on CD at £12.99. Details of Martin Jarvis's other Bunter cassettes can also be obtained from CSA WORD.

TWO WELCOME REPRINTS

reviewed by MARY CADOGAN

THE ABBEY GIRLS by Elsie Oxenham (published by **GIRLS GONE BY**) and **THE MAN WHO LOST HIS WAY** by Captain W.E. Johns (published by Norman Wright).

For delicious deckchair reading in the garden or on the beach these two titles are trumps.

Although Elsie Jeanette Oxenham is not my favourite of the girls' story hard-back writers (that honour goes to Dorita Fairlie Bruce), in my opinion **THE ABBEY GIRLS** is the perfect book in the girls' school genre. I must immediately qualify that statement

by saying that it is far from being a conventional school story, and much of the important action takes place outside of Miss Macy's School. What Elsie Oxenham does is to juggle brilliantly with the remarkably appealing ingredients of a picturesque old Abbey, the May Queen rituals, and country dancing (in an old barn by lantern light), and intense friendships and rivalries between girls from very different backgrounds.

It is basically the story of two impoverished cousins, Joan and Joy, who live together in the care of Joan's widowed mother; Joy, an orphan, has no other known relatives. Joan is the more serious of the two and she self-sacrificingly gives up her chance of a free place at Miss Macy's School so that Joy can go there. They are in their mid-teens; Joan is able to study on her own, but Joy, whose greatest pleasure is to roam uninhibitedly around the countryside, cannot, and she needs the discipline of school to enable her to fulfil her potential as a musical composer.

This card-covered reprint includes the three colour plates of the original 1920 edition. It also provides an informative illustrated history of the book's publication in various editions from its original until now.

THE ABBEY GIRLS can be ordered from GIRLS GONE BY PUBLISHERS at 4 Rock Terrace, Coleford, Bath, BA3 5NE, Somerset, at £9.99, which includes postage and packing for UK addresses. For details of overseas postage rates, and of this publisher's list, please apply to the Bath address or to the Website: <http://www.rockterrace.demon.co.uk/GGBP>.

THE MAN WHO LOST HIS WAY is very much at the other (hair-on-chest and macho) end of children's fiction. It is *not* a flying story, but it includes Johns's usual quota of chills and thrills. The hero, Captain Noel Marsden, 'six feet in his socks', is an ex-commando on a touring holiday in the Highlands of Scotland. Running out of petrol he loses his way - and finds himself plunged into conflict with middle-European communist plotters and secret-agents who will stop at pretty well nothing to achieve their ends.

There is a romantic element, as one member of the besieged group whom Marsden helps is a fetching but robust young woman. (Initially, when he breaks into her garden, she sturdily confronts him with a double-barrelled twelve-bore shot-gun pointed at his stomach.) There are several interesting if simplistic comments on the Cold War period in which the story is set; there are some (also simplistic) descriptions of 'love-making', as well as high adventure in Buchan-esque tradition.

THE MAN WHO LOST HIS WAY can be ordered from Norman Wright at 60 Eastbury Road, Watford, Herts., WD19 4JL. The price is £20.50, plus postage and packing for U.K. £1.40; for Europe £2.40, and for the rest of the world £4.35.

THE Schoolgirl

INCORPORATING "SCHOOLGIRLS OWN" N°382 VOL 15 WEEK ENDING DEC 26th 1936

EVERY SATURDAY

2^d



Christmas Dinner at Mistletoe Manor

A happy moment in this
week's fine complete Cliff
House Christmas story

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