

THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

APRIL 1958
No. 66 :: Vol. 3

No. 1. Vol. 1.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

APRIL 18, 1908.

THE SCOUT

Founded by Gen. Baden-Powell.



HOW I STARTED SCOUTING.

By LIEUT.-GENERAL BADEN-POWELL.

I HATE negligent scouting as a good thing for boys because I began it myself when I was a boy, and I know that if you want to enjoy life and

bread, I picked up a lot of scouting when living in town by noticing what was in shop windows, and remembering the things and the names of shops and streets. I used to look at a map of the town and then go to a strange part of it and try and find my way to some church or other building without asking the direction, merely by remembering the map. I knew every street, not through luck, others and nonsense. I attended

to help for our saving ourselves. So I looked up and set to work to help the others. In the end we got off safe and sound. But that lesson of the book has been of the greatest use to me many a time since in tight places when things were looking very bad. I have remembered that then was the time to wade up and work extra hard and not to give in, and if people round about were looking alien and nervous, the thing was to get

Portion of Inside Front Page, *The Scout* No. 1, April 18th, 1908

Golden Jubilee of *The Scout*

DURING APRIL OF 1958 was marked the Golden Jubilee of *The Scout*, the weekly paper for Boy Scouts in Great Britain. Founded by Lord Baden-Powell, the first issue was dated April 18th, 1908, and it was started following the great

success of *Scouting For Boys*, written by Lieut.-General R. S. S. Baden-Powell, later Lord Baden-Powell. *The Scout* was equally successful and its circulation is reported to have reached a peak at 100,000 following the First World War. *The Scout* was

published by the publishing house of C. Arthur Pearson, Limited, from its beginning until 1940, when The Boy Scouts Association assumed ownership. During fifty years the paper has had only five editors. The late F. Hadyn Dimmock occupied the Editorial Chair for thirty-six years, from 1918 to 1954. This is said to have been a record for any Editor of a boys' paper. The present Editor is Rex Hazlewood, who took office in July of 1954.

The first article in *The Scout* was *How I Started Scouting*, by Lieut.-General Baden-Powell, and articles by him were a popular feature almost to the time of his death in 1941.

NOT ONLY IS *The Scout* the oldest Scout magazine, but it must surely rank as one of the oldest weekly papers for boys, if not the oldest, apart possibly from Church-sponsored papers.

Besides the weekly issue there was for many years a *Scout Annual* consisting of one year's issues of the paper in an attractive binding. The *Annual* was a worthy companion on the bookshelf alongside *Chums* and *The Boy's Own Annuals*.

Among the authors in Volume 29, 1936, of the *Annual*—the only one we have—are to be

found, in addition to Lord Baden-Powell and F. Hadyn Dimmock, Christopher Beck, T. C. Bridges, Sidney Drew, Arthur Hardy, and Michael Poole, all familiar names to readers of other boys' papers of the period.

The artists in this volume include Kenneth Brookes, well-known for his *Nelson Lee Library* illustrations, Fred Bennett, whose whimsical work was especially familiar for a great many years in papers from The Amalgamated Press, and E. R. Parker, of Sexton Blake fame. We were fairly sure the pictures were Mr. Parker's work before we sighted his initials on some of them.

The Golden Jubilee issue of *The Scout*, dated April 18th—Volume LIII, Number 42, and why it is not Volume LI, Number 1, we do not know—carries a reproduction of the front cover of Number 1, Volume I. Inside, there is a reproduction of a part of the first inside page. This we had "lifted" by the engravers to adorn our own front page. The price of *The Scout* today is sixpence a copy, as compared with one penny in 1908.

WE ARE INDEBTED to *World Scouting*, issued monthly by Boy Scouts International Bureau, Ottawa, Canada, for June, 1958, for some of the information included in this article.

The Story Paper Collector

No. 66—Vol. 3

Priceless

FROM MAGNET READER TO TOP EDITOR

By W. O. G. LOFTS

THE SMALL BOY hurried eagerly along to his newsagent's one morning in 1937, put his threepence on the counter, and walked happily out with a then salmon colored copy of *The Magnet*. (Readers in Eire were charged one penny extra for English magazines.)

In Cork the stories of Harry Wharton and Co. were read by the minority British element of the population just as avidly as by the boys in England. This boy in particular liked the stories so much that they were carefully preserved each week, to be re-read over and over again. These same copies are still to be found in his London home.

Little did he dream that in future years he would occupy the editorial chair of one of

the most popular and successful of the Amalgamated Press publications, *The Sexton Blake Library*.

William Howard Baker—for that is his name—started to show an interest in writing at about the age of ten. In his boarding school he edited the school magazine, and showed great keenness and originality. During the War he served in the armed forces and spent most of his war overseas. Many readers will have noted in *The Sexton Blake Library* his authentic writings of many places, foreign and exotic, and it is not difficult to guess that at least some of his material is drawn from his war service in foreign climes.

After his demobilization Mr. Baker travelled a lot in Australia, Asia, North Africa, Central

America, and on the Continent as a freelance writer. He contributed many articles and short stories to popular magazines and newspapers.

Later he settled in London as correspondent for some European papers. Later still he became Editor of the popular *Panther Books*. About this time he started to write stories for *The Sexton Blake Library*, which needed new authors to stop the flagging sales—which were becoming very low indeed.

WITH ITS EDITOR, L. H. Pratt, shortly earning a very well-deserved retirement—after over fifty years service with The Amalgamated Press, and Editor of *The Sexton Blake Library* from the very first issue in 1915—a new Editor was badly needed with fresh and modern ideas to save the *Library* from imminent extinction.

Mr. Baker was invited to become the new Editor. After considerable heart-searching he accepted, and straight away put his new ideas into effect. Big changes were made with the

full authority and approval of the “powers that be.” Some of the old authors went—regretfully on Mr. Baker’s part, and much to the dismay of some of the older readers who had regarded many of them as a permanent part of *The S. B. L.* New authors and artists were brought in.

Some of the older readers gave up *The Sexton Blake Library* because they did not like the New Blakian Order and modern format, but thousands of new readers were gained. Proof of Mr. Baker’s success with *The S. B. L.* lies in the fact that he has recently been given charge of two other well-known Libraries.

Always ready to listen to criticism and new ideas—more so than any past Amalgamated Press editor—and especially to hear his readers’ views, he likes to talk, if you meet him, about *The Magnet* of the late 1930’s. I think that quite often William Howard Baker recalls his boyhood days and how, starting as an avid *Magnet* reader, he became a Top Editor.

WE ARE INFORMED by Mr. D. A. Kelleher that the convivial gathering of Amalgamated Press staff-members and contributors, pictured in *The Story Paper Collector* Number 65, was held at Anderton’s Hotel.

ONE CENTURY OLD TO-DAY.

THE 100th N^o OF FUN AND FICTION 1[¢]

Vol. 4. No. 100.

Week Ending September 6th, 1918.

ONE PENNY.

A SPLENDID NEW SERIAL, "KICKED OUT!" Starts on page 489.



The Survivor whooped round and galloped off in headlong flight, followed by a storm of bullets. (See the Grand "Dick Stafford" Story on page 489.)

Number 100 of Fun and Fiction, September 6th, 1918

See overleaf]

[Facing page 224



THE 100th NUMBER OF FUN & FICTION

A STORY PAPER that arrives at its one hundredth issue is not exactly a rarity, but many have failed to score a century. Therefore *Fun and Fiction* had some cause for celebration on the occasion of its one hundredth issue. Moreover, it was something of an experiment, for it appears to have been the first effort to produce a fun and fiction story paper in its particular format—though we are prepared for correction on this score. Three months as a halfpenny paper, then being upped to one penny; a whopping double number for its second Christmas; these are indications of success. But, regrettably enough, there were no further double numbers, and the paper, at Number 100, had only 24 more weeks to run before being replaced by a new halfpenny paper, *The Firefly*. One can only conclude that the initial success was not a lasting one. In this number there is but one of the original series of stories still running, that of *The Woman With the Black Heart*. Over one of the two serials are the “by-lines” of both the author and the artist: “*Queen of the Pictures*. By W. A. Williamson. Illustrated by ‘Val.’” This was unusual in *Fun and Fiction*, in which the rule was to have both stories and pictures appear with no “by-lines.”



The Greyfriars Herald: It Could Have Been Better

ROGER JENKINS' article on *The Greyfriars Herald*, and the story of Jack Drake, in *The Story Paper Collector* Number 63, was excellent reading. I never knew the first series of 1915-16, but I was well aware of the new series in 1919, a well-remembered year which gave us so many good things: the new series of *The Penny Popular* and *The Boys' Realm*, and that important milestone—the first *Holiday Annual*. Thanks were also due to 1919 for the return of *The Boys' Friend* to twelve large pages on June 21st.

I remember, however, a certain amount of disappointment when the new series of *The Greyfriars Herald* appeared. The stories of the boys of *The Benbow* were, to my mind, the only-worthwhile reason for buying it each week. As each of these tales occupied only five out of the twenty pages, this says much for the excellence of Owen Conquest's work.

There seemed to be too much padding and space wasting to interest boys who were fond of, and used to, the 30,000-word

"epics." For instance, page 2 was given over to photographs of "items of interest" (usually of an inanimate character) which, to my mind, were more suitable for *The Children's Newspaper*, and were pretty dull to one whose main interests at that period (November, 1919) were the trials and tribulations of Arthur Edward Lovell's minor Teddy, as recounted in *The Boys' Friend*.

The Editorial Page was a flop, insofar that it wasted a whole page on a few inches of words, and very little to say. Here was a golden chance for a really chatty Editor to draw his readers into his sanctum while preparing them for the good things and feast of reading in store for them, to which could have been added some pars on personalities; even a few snide "letters from correspondents" would have been something!

Three pages each week were given over to a serial, *The Red Man's Trail*, by "Paul Pontifex Prout." To those interested in the customs and beliefs of the North American Indian, and the scouting abilities of the white man, this was a worthwhile "Western."

One whole page was allotted to a competition, with "Tuck Hampers" as prizes, another page to photographs of readers (and what a sorry lot they looked, too!), still another page was devoted to jokes, and the rest was

pped out with *The Greyfriars Police Court*, a weekly "interview" by a "special representative," and one or two short stories contributed by the "boys" of St. Jim's and Greyfriars, of a standard set by the "substitute" writers of *The Gem* and *The Magnet*.

IT WAS altogether too "bitty" to hold one's interest for long, and in no way to be compared with those long stories appearing weekly in *The Union Jack*, *The Nelson Lee*, *The Magnet*, and *The Gem*.

Charles Hamilton was a busy man (and still is, thank goodness!) and couldn't possibly have coped with it, but had he been able to write a cover-to-cover story each week of *The Benbow* or St. Winifred's, *The Greyfriars Herald* would have attained much greater importance in the history of The Amalgamated Press. Roger Jenkins' article does shew that the characters and material were there, and merely needed a little more retouching by that great artist, Owen Conquest.

Perhaps there were, even in 1919, two types of readers, those who liked bits and pieces that could be quickly glossed over, and those who liked to get their teeth into a good long tale. The A. P., when launching *The Grey-*

friars Herald upon a waiting and expectant world, apparently chose to please the former.

* * *

Those "Sub. Writers"

THE SUBJECT of the "sub. writers" was well dealt with by W. O. G. Lofts in *The Story Paper Collector* Number 64. I was much impressed by that list of writers "who, it appears, couldn't write a Harry Wharton and Co. or a Tom Merry and Co. yarn for toffee." The more familiar names on that list were, as Mr. Lofts says, those of writers of repute.

Good in their own particular sphere, with basic journalistic training, they could probably write well on a wide variety of subjects. Men of such ability in the field of juvenilia should not be charged with the sin of omission for not being able to copy another's work and not being as good as Charles Hamilton in his own chosen field..

Only Charles Hamilton could compose, for instance, a conversation between Herbert Vernon-Smith and Marjorie Hazeldene convincingly enough to form their respective characters and satisfy a well-versed "Hamiltonian."

I have always felt a strong doubt, to say the least, that young readers were capable of distinguishing between the real Hamilton and the "sub. writer." One story was better than another, and that was all! If the real tragedy of many "sub. stories" was bad writing, I feel certain it was hardly noticed by the youngsters.

Avoiding obvious mistakes, as Mr. Loftis points out, should have been the sub-editor's, or even the editor's, responsibility. Excuses can be found for poor plots, but the editorial staff were to be blamed for mistakes in place-names, getting characters mixed, and not always keeping true to type, and particularly in some glaring examples of rank, bad writing.

The mystery remains, who wrote these badly-written stories in *The Magnet* and *The Gem*? Surely not men of the calibre of John Nix Pentelow, Michael Poole, Edwy Searles Brooks, and H. Clarke Hook! I can suspect them of not caring two hoots for the Hamilton sagas, but not for illiteracy!

By the way, I confess to being one of those lost souls who enjoy reading Mr. Pentelow's "sub. stories" in *The Magnet* and *The Gem*.

* * *

Paul Pontifex Prout

ROGER JENKINS' article on Paul Pontifex Prout in Number 64 was excellent. I was once as deeply moved as was Mr. Prout on a certain occasion. It occurred at the end of the series (*Magnet* Numbers 1510-1515) in which Mr. Hacker becomes Headmaster during the temporary absence of Dr. Locke, proves himself unsuitable for the post, causes a barring-out, and expels numerous personnel who refuse to be expelled, including Coker and Mr. Prout himself.

On his return Dr. Locke sits in judgment; Mr. Prout leaves the matter, and his fate, in his hands with every confidence. "You may do so without hesitation," said Dr. Locke. "Nothing would induce me to part with so trusted and honoured a member of my staff!" Mr. Prout's fruity voice trembles with emotion while the Head soothes and soft-soaps him.

When Mr. Prout brings up the question of Coker, the Head butters the bread on both sides with: "If it is your opinion, as his Form-master, that Coker should remain, Mr. Prout, the sentence will certainly be cancelled." And Mr. Prout left the interview beaming like a full moon, elevated in dignity, a

trusted, honoured member of Dr. Locke's staff.

One can almost imagine one of Dr. Locke's eyelids giving an almost imperceptible flicker as the door closed behind the master of the Fifth.

* * *

50 Years Since 1st Magnet Library

THE SHORT ARTICLE in Number 65 on *The Magnet's* fifty years took me back, perhaps not as far as 1908, but to those days between 1915 and 1921. A different world then! Looking back helps to keep our

minds, if not our bodies, young.

Some old school-fellows of mine, now keen business men, seem only to live in the immediate future, planning, scheming, and amassing. Mention of events and characters of our schooldays proves their memories to be pretty dim on the subject. They have forgotten most of what is probably one of the happiest, most carefree periods of our lives.

If looking back fifty, or forty, years can be done with the utmost ease, let us never refrain from doing something which costs nothing, is apparently so easy, and gives so much pleasure. —MAURICE KUTNER

Meet Sexton Blake On TV

BACK IN 1944 or 1945 David Farrar and John Varley, as Sexton Blake and Tinker, starred in the Anglo-American movie, *Meet Sexton Blake*. As happens eventually to many old movies, *Meet Sexton Blake* was featured on Winnipeg's television station, CBWT, as the "late movie," evening of March 24th. We saw and enjoyed it.

A few weeks later another

Blake movie was shown, but we missed the programme listing and knew nothing of it until it was already running, around 12.30 a.m. Then a Blakian in Winnipeg 'phoned us—when it was too late. We are hoping to have the opportunity to see other Sexton Blake movies, if there are others that are old but of sufficiently recent vintage to be used on TV.

I Wish to Obtain . . .

—S. P. C. Numbers 3, 8, 10, 23.—
V. E. Colby, 8 Beresford Avenue,
Beverly Hills, N.S.W., Australia.

Visitor to The Rookwood Press: Number 5

ISOLATED as we are, hobby-wise, we have through the years had the pleasure of visits from four "old boys' books" collectors. Three of them came from the United States of America—one, Ray Hopkins, being English in origin; the fourth, Arthur D. Gorfain, travelled from Australia.

Still being a little—indeed, more than a little—behind in our publishing schedule, we are able, in this April of 1958 issue, to take note of the fifth visitor. He was C. F. F. ("Tex") Rickard, who was in Transcona from October 24th to the 30th.

A resident of North Vancouver, B. C., but formerly of England, Tex gave the impression that he had a remarkably good time talking with us, browsing through our collection—with special emphasis on *The Boys' Friend* and *The Magnet Library*—and watching us do a little typesetting and printing for this issue.

We hope to persuade him to dash off, later, his thoughts on this momentous occasion, the first meeting of kindred souls after 17 years of correspondence,

for inclusion in our pages at some future date.

For the amazement of his friends and acquaintances and of posterity, we wish to make it known that Tex set the type for this par. with his own 'prentice hands.
—W. H. G.



Pluck in Room 1, Carmelite House

WE CAME BACK from a visit to a secondhand book shop in Winnipeg recently with a copy of *My Northcliffe Diary*, by a former *Daily Mail* editor, Tom Clarke, and published by Victor Gollancz Limited in 1931. We found this book of considerable interest, though there is little in it about The Amalgamated Press and its boys' papers.

There is one passage which, because it has to do with some of the A. P. weeklies, will not be out of place in these pages. Condensed a little, it reads:

Tuesday, January 27, 1920: The Daily conferences are now being held in the spacious and ornate Room One, which used to be Northcliffe's—and still is on the rare occasions when he now visits Carmelite House. . . This Room One is worth describing. It is a vast hall

rather than a room. . . The southern wall is hidden behind bookcases containing expensively bound volumes, for Northcliffe's own use, of his earlier publications, such as the Sunday Companion, Pluck, The Girls' Friend, and even Comic Cuts. They appear to be rather incongruous ornaments to this editorial sanctum of the modern Daily Mail, although offset by the morocco-bound Hundred Best Books reposing in an adjacent case.

It is pleasing to know that Lord Northcliffe had sufficient regard for papers which helped establish his fortune to keep bound volumes of them in his Room One at Carmelite House.

—W. H. G.

Human Nature: The Bunter Sort

"I CAN jolly well tell you it's worth while to get in with a beak," said Bunter. "And nothing pleases a man so much as gratitude; it's so jolly rare, you know. Of course, if a fellow helps you out of a fix, you don't really feel grateful; you only feel waxy for needing his help. That's human nature."

"The Bunter sort!" agreed Bob. — *The Magnet*, No. 1143.

I Wish to Obtain . . .

—S.P.C. Nos. 1 to 36 incl. and 38.—T. Large, 42 Blandford Rd., Reading, Berks, England.

—S.P.C. Nos. 28 to 32.—G. Mell, 49 Gracefield Gdns, Streatham, London S.W.16, England.

—S.P.C. Nos. 1, 7, 8, 10, 32.—A. S. Fick, Box 58. Fort Johnson, N.Y., U.S.A.

—S.P.C. Nos. 1 to 48.—Stuart Whitehead, 12 Wells Rd., Fakenham, Norfolk, England.

—*The Magnet Library* Nos. 1 to 6x, 90, 100x, 110x, 163, 207, 217, 263, 273, 283x, 288x, 312, 334, 668x, 942, 948, 973, 992. "x" indicates I have a copy in poor condition.—EDITOR.

* * *

I wish to purchase any old "bloods" published by Lloyd, Paine, Dipple, Hextall, Cleave, and similar printers, preferably pre-1865, in complete state. Fair prices paid. Full details, especially as to condition, to: R. A. Brimmell, A.B.A., The Garden House, "Saxonbury," St. Mary's Rd., Long Ditton, Surrey, Engl'd.

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