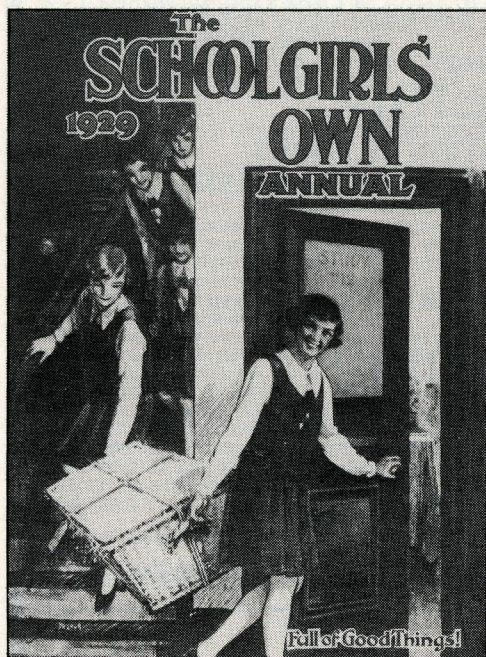


POPULAR GIRLS' AND BOYS' ANNUALS

CHILDREN'S ANNUALS DATE BACK OVER 150 YEARS,
AND THE RAREST NOW FETCH VERY HIGH PRICES

BY W.O.G. LOFTS AND DEREK ADLEY



'The Schoolgirl's Own Annual' featured the adventures of Betty Barton and her pals of Morcove School. Some early copies fetch around £10 today.

The collecting of boys' and girls' annuals has always been one of the most popular areas in the field of juvenilia. The term itself covers an extremely wide range, from books for the smallest of toddlers, such as "Chick's Own" and "Tiny Tots", right through to those that appeal to the sophisticated teenager, featuring his or her own favourite popstars.

There are several advantages to collecting annuals, rather than weekly issues of your

chosen publications. Books, for instance, are so much more easy to display and store, and the tough cardboard covers and strong bindings of most annuals give them a considerably longer lifespan than their poor relation, newspaper.

Furthermore, they are comparatively easy to come by — go to any jumble sale, Oxfam shop, or secondhand bookstall throughout the country and you will find a whole stack of discarded annuals going for a song. If you look very hard, you are quite likely to turn up some very early (and perhaps valuable) copies for a bargain price.

The range of annuals available is so vast that we could quite easily devote a complete article to each of them, as has already been done in 'Book and Magazine Collector' for annuals such as Rupert, Sexton Blake, Dr Who and Beano and Dandy; but our intention here is simply to give an idea of what is available, which annuals are most popular, and which are the most valuable.

FIRST

It has not been possible to trace with any certainty the very first annual published in this country, but "Child Companion Annual" (1824) must have been one of the earliest to include the word 'annual' in its title, followed by "Children's Prize" (later shortened to "Prize") of 1863, "Chatterbox" (also 1863), "Boys' Own Paper" and its companion, "Girls' Own Paper" (1879), "Young England" (1880) and "Chums" (1893).

In the main, early annuals of the Victorian period tended to be bound volumes of previously published weekly or monthly

parts, with the added attraction of coloured plates and possibly some additional material. At times, the reader could also choose binding that was available in three qualities. In those days the art of bookbinding was at its height, and even the cheapest quality was of a high standard; this is probably why so many of those early volumes have survived today. It was the practice in the early days to bind almost everything in hard covers, including even the lurid 'Penny Dreadfuls' and other 'Penny Bloods' that are so valuable today, and were originally issued in weekly parts.

SCHOOLBOYS

There was even an annual for public schoolboys in 1899, when George Newnes started binding volumes of six monthly parts of "The Captain". It should be stressed that this was actually issued twice a year, though it is generally classed by collectors as an annual. Although not strictly a juvenile publication, it is an interesting fact that the world famous Sherlock Holmes first appeared in "Beeton's Christmas Annual" (1887), and an original edition in Very Good condition is worth quite a large sum of money.

The change in the format of annuals probably started from about 1900, when many firms began to publish brand new material, getting away from the practice of simply binding weekly or monthly parts. "Blackie's Childrens Annual" (1904) and "Empire Book For Boys (and Girls)" (1909), "Herbert Strang's Annual For Boys"

(1912) and "Mrs Strang's Annual For Children" (1914) were all pioneers in this field. The latter titles are much collected, Herbert Strang being the pen name of two writers in collaboration: George Herbert Ely (1866-1958) and James L'Estrange (1867-1947), who produced these annuals for the Oxford University Press.

The real growth in annuals started after the first world war, when the mighty Amalgamated Press, seeing the enormous popularity of their weekly comics and boys' and girls' papers, decided that the annual had a tremendous potential, and could add extra profits to their already successful market. Some very famous titles appeared on a regular basis in the late autumn of each year, all intended for the Christmas trade, when Mums and Dads, Aunts and Uncles, bought them for children as presents. "Puck" (1921), "Tiger Tim" (1922), "Rainbow" (1924) and "Bubbles" (1924) all had long runs, with more titles added yearly to the range. Probably the most successful were those containing the famous Tiger Tim and the Bruin Boys, who were appearing weekly in the coloured comic, "Rainbow". So popular were the characters, that they appeared later in "Playbox" annuals, and their counterpart for girls, and also in "Mrs Hippo's Annual" (1926). The Bruin Boys, not to be outdone, then had their own annual in 1927.

In the Thirties, the Amalgamated Press issued a few annuals based on their best selling black and white comics. These were

Movie Mania Film Fair

at the PICCADILLY PLAZA EXHIBITION HALL, YORK ST.
(off Mosley St.), MANCHESTER CITY CENTRE

CAFE ALL DAY **SAT 7th SEPT** 8th YEAR OF THIS EVENT

10.00am to 5.30pm

Admission: adults 50p; OAP/child 25p

50 STALLS SELLING AND BUYING: Film & Theatre Books, Magazines, Film Posters, Stills, Scrapbooks, Film Star Postcards, Soundtracks, etc.

For further details, ring Philip Nevitsky on Rochdale (0706) 58266

Next MANCHESTER FRIDAY BOOKMART: 6th September, 10.30-5
Next MANCHESTER SATURDAY BOOK FAIR: 17th August, 10-5.30

Further details - please ring Philip Nevitsky on number above

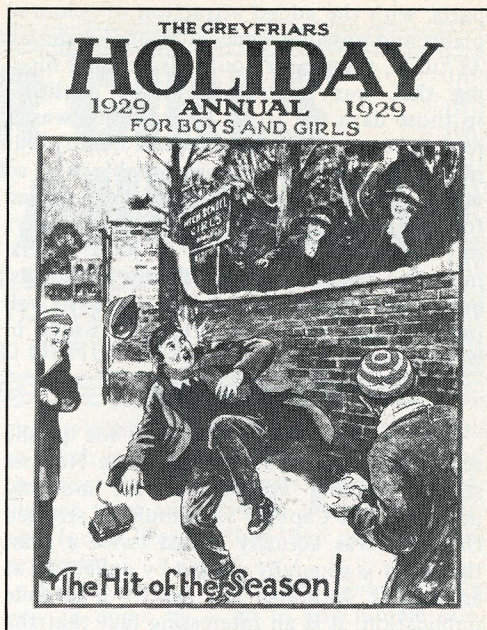
"Chips Annual" (1939), "Jester Annual" (1938) and "Funny Wonder" (1935), but curiously they simply never caught on. The editorial explanation was that the coloured comics were dominated by girl readers, usually an older age group than the boys that read the black and white comics, and therefore sales of these annuals suffered due to the higher selling price of the former. There was also the fact that readers were so used to looking at their favourite characters in black and white that seeing them in colour did not have the same impact. However, these annuals are now so scarce and sought-after that they are probably worth more than many others of the same period.

JUVENILE

D.C. Thomson, the Scottish firm, and Amalgamated Press's main rival in the juvenile fiction field, issued "Adventure-land" in 1924, named after their first weekly boys' paper that had appeared initially in 1921, following this with "Rover" (1926) "Skipper" (1932), "Hotspur" (1935) and "Wizard" (1936), though the latter had been appearing weekly since 1922.

Newspapers had been printing popular strips for children since the early Twenties, so it was probably inevitable that they would eventually produce annuals, usually containing reprinted series of daily adventures. The 'Daily Mirror' started off with its "Pip, Squeak, and Wilfred Annual" (1920), followed by the 'Daily Herald's' "Bobby Bear" (1922) and, in the same year, the 'Daily Sketch' produced "Uncle Oojah". Much later came the 'Daily Mail' with "Teddy Tail" (1934) and the 'Daily Express' with "Rupert" (1937). It must be emphasised, though, that some of the characters had appeared in various pocket books and other such publications before the yearly annuals started. Undoubtedly the most collected annual of all today is "Rupert" (as mentioned in our article in 'Book and Magazine Collector', issue 5), probably because, after seventy years, he is still appearing in the 'Daily Express'.

Famous publishing firms such as Blackie, Dean, Collins, Nelson, Warne and Oxford University Press began publishing their own annuals from the Twenties, with mainly original material. These books didn't



'The Greyfriars Holiday Annual' was easily the most popular of its time, and is probably the most widely collected annual today. Some of the early copies now fetch up to £35.

always have the word 'annual' in the title – for example, "Big Budget For Boys", "Nelson's Budget For Boys" and "Our Kiddies Gift Book" – but as they all had long runs and were issued yearly, they must be considered as such.

The enormous popularity of stars of the screen, stage and radio, especially in the Thirties and long before TV dominated our entertainment, opened the market for a number of annuals. The "Shirley Temple Annual", which only had one issue, is not only a rarity but considered very valuable

**Next issue
on sale
20th SEPT**

today, reaching over three figures in a recent auction. One of the most collectable annuals of this kind was devoted to the popular comedian Authur Askey in 1940. This now sells for up to £75.

"Uncle Mac's Christmas Hour" was another popular title, whilst film annuals also had large sales. "Film Pictorial Annual" and "Picture Show Annual" are certainly much in demand today, though it is debatable whether they should be classed in the juvenile category. They were entered in the trade lists as being so, though it was probably accepted that adults would also buy them. Some other very popular annuals published by the Amalgamated Press were "Film Fun", "Radio Fun" and, much later, "TV Fun" — all based on the successful weekly comics. In these, strips were intermingled with stories of the most popular comedians and radio and TV personalities of the day, illustrated by some clever black-and-white artists.

TINY TOTS

Between the two world wars, a wide range of annuals appeared, catering for the very young age groups. "Baby's Own Annual", "Tiny Tots Annual", "Chicks Own Annual" and "Mrs Strang's Annual For Baby". It is obvious that parents bought these to read to their tiny children, or gave them to the children to play with and crayon. Consequently one rarely sees them about today; they are almost impossible to find in Fine or Mint condition as they were usually thrown away, grubby and torn, after a short period of time.

Even some of the large London department stores produced their own annual, which was sold to parents and children on their yearly visit to see Father Christmas. Over the years, "Gamages" and "Selfridges" annuals have been discovered, and now they are exceedingly rare items.

In the main, boys' annuals seemed to dominate the market at this period. Easily the most popular, and perhaps the most widely collected today, is the "Greyfriars Holiday Annual", though it is fair to say that it had many girl readers as well. It contained a compilation of reprinted stories of the boys of Greyfriars, St Jim's and Rookwood, with tales featuring other

schools and some original material to make the annual complete. They are very sought after now, especially the early issues.

Two of the most popular of Amalgamated Press's boys' papers of the Thirties also had their own annuals, namely 'Triumph' and 'Champion', whilst copies of D.C. Thomson's "The Hotspur Book For Boys" (to give it its full title) which contain a 'Red Circle' school story, are also collectable items.

There were very few annuals entirely devoted to the female sex, at least in pre-war years. "Schoolfriend Annual" was probably the most popular, with its Cliff House and Bessie Bunter content, whilst "Schoolgirls Own Annual" which had Betty Barton & Co (Morcove) stories, closely followed by "Girls Crystal Annual", were other firm favourites.

The immortal Walt Disney was not to be outdone in this area, for after the initial popularity of Felix the Cat, he took over the world of cartoon films with his creations Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. Subsequently, Dean & Son published various annuals through the years featuring the Dis-

J J Rigden (Books)

17 Beverley Rd., Canterbury, Kent CT2 7EN
 Telephone (0227) 69911

Largest comprehensive stock of quality
 juvenile literature in the S.E.
 We 'mail order' anywhere.

6 catalogues
 per year —
 alternate
 months

100 Years of Childrens Books
 Est. 1969

Satisfaction from professionals.
 Private premises, callers welcome any day,
 any time **STRICTLY BY APPOINTMENT.**

ney characters and these are collectors' items these days. Even Snow White items are in demand, and the early issues fetch very high prices.

Towards the end of the Thirties, Amalgamated Press launched the first of their annuals without board covers (a large paperback, in fact), entitled "Sexton Blake Annual". There were four altogether, and none were dated. Although it could not have been a great success, it is nevertheless a difficult annual to get hold of, and much in demand due to the many Sexton Blake fans around. Not to be outdone, D.C. Thomson issued, (simultaneously with the first number in 1938), a similar type of project featuring their own detective. It was also printed in paper-back, but in a smaller size. This was published twice a year and aptly entitled "Dixon Hawke's Casebook", but it really could not be classed as an annual in the accepted sense of the word.

Around this time, the Scottish firm of Dundee also published the first of what was to become the most collected 'comic' childrens' annuals of them all - "Dandy Monster Comic" (1939), "The Beano

Book" (1940) and "Magic Fun Book" (1941), based of course on their weekly comics 'Dandy', 'Beano' and 'Magic' (the latter having only a year's run before becoming a war casualty owing to the shortage of paper). The first two are still appearing today, having long outlasted many of the traditional annuals, and early issues command very high prices.

NICHE

During the Second World War years, Gerald Swan created a niche for himself in publishing history by calling most of his annuals by the name 'albums', and cashing in on the war-time shortage of newsprint. All his publications were of very poor quality, with the printing out of alignment and pages off-square. Amongst his range of titles were "Cute Fun Album", "Slick Fun Album", "Birthday Fun Album", and an exception to the rule as far as title goes, "Scramble Annual". These annuals were printed with a very high cover price (3/6d), but were usually sold at a shilling each, so the purchaser thought he had bought a bargain.

The end of hostilities and the end of paper rationing saw more titles added, and regular annuals maintained. "Holiday Annual" never returned, so Greyfriars fans had to make do with Billy Bunter in strip form in the "Knockout Annual", though later on they had some compensation with stories in "Billy Bunter's Own", whilst "Tom Merry's Own" catered for 'St Jim's' readers.

TELEVISION

With more and more of the general public able to afford television, and with the popularity of some of its features, there came a gradual shift from the traditional annuals to those named after popular television series. Some early examples were "Cheyenne Annual" (1962), "Gunlaw Annual" (1963), "Flintstones Annual" (1963), and "Daktari Annual" (1968). Pop stars had their own annuals too, but like the television series, the length of the run depended entirely on the continued popularity of the character or subject. One of the most lasting 'pop' annuals, incidentally, was "Elvis Special" (1963) - it was still running in the Eighties.

The pattern of these new-style annuals

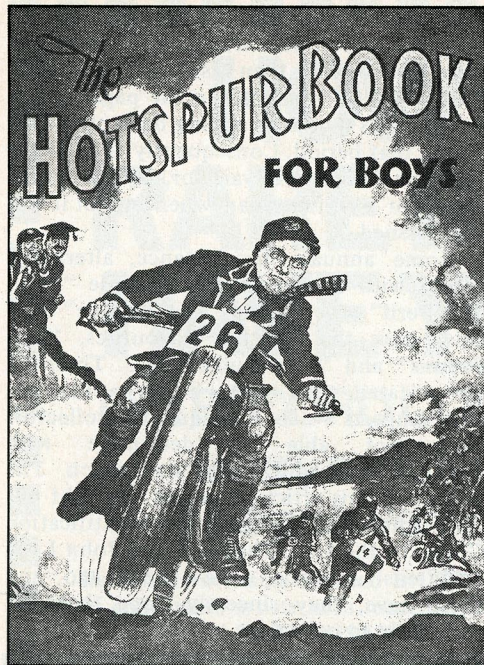
SUBSCRIPTIONS

The cost of a year's subscription to **BOOK AND MAGAZINE COLLECTOR** is £16.00 in the U.K., £20.00 (IR) in the Irish Republic, £18.50 to all other European countries, \$40.00 (U.S.) to the U.S.A., \$55.00 (Canadian) to Canada, \$62.00 (Aus) to Australia, and \$80.00 (N.Z.) to New Zealand. Please write for other rates.

Please send a cheque, Postal Order, International Money Order or bank draft payable to 'Diamond Publishing Group Limited'. Please print your name and return address in **BLOCK CAPITALS** and specify which issue you'd like your subscription to commence with. (Overseas subscribers: we can accept Eurocheques, U.S. dollar personal checks, or local cash sent by **REGISTERED MAIL**).

Send your orders to:

The Magazine Editor,
BOOK & MAGAZINE COLLECTOR,
45 St. Mary's Road, Ealing,
London W5 5RQ, England.



'The Hotspur Book For Boys' was published by D.C. Thomson, of Dundee. The appearance of 'Red Circle' stories make it particularly collectable.

continued into the late Seventies, when the range became enormous. Sport, and especially football, was given tremendous exposure. The clubs of Chelsea, West Ham and Tottenham Hotspur had their own yearly books. Show jumping had its "David Broome Annual"; then there was "Girls

Pony Annual" and "Horse and Pony Annual".

But the biggest change to come over annuals at this time was the format, and we must say that this was a change for the worse. Gone was the familiar cloth spine, making way for an all-over cover, similar to a wrap-over with a square back. The thick cardboard pages had disappeared, and were replaced by a much thinner grade. There was little distinction between one publisher's annuals and those of another, apart from the title. They were now not more than half an inch thick, and in most cases glue-backed which, with today's central heating, allows the pages to become brittle and fall out. From around ninety-six pages, the content was reduced to sixty-four, and the majority of the strips or stories were reprints.

PROFITABLE

The Seventies and Eighties saw the publication of annuals soar to enormous proportions, with I.P.C. Magazines, D.C. Thomson, World Distributors and Stafford Pemberton probably the main producers. Annuals certainly are very profitable, even with the sale of remainders at a greatly reduced price after Christmas, because the reprinting of so much of the contents from weekly publications cuts down the contribution costs to almost nothing (except for payments for the cover art work).

Children's cartoons, as shown on TV, are catered for in "Bugs Bunny", "Tom and Jerry" and "The Pink Panther" annuals —

In Next Month's Issue

VIRGINIA WOOLF

H.G. WELLS (part 2) — 1914 to 1946

COLLECTING 'GIRLS' CRYSTAL', THE POPULAR STORY PAPER

THE TRAVEL BOOKS OF ARMINIUS VAMBERY

THE DETECTIVE NOVELS OF NICHOLAS BLAKE

BOXING BOOKS



'Radio Fun' was one of the many annuals featuring famous personalities of radio, stage or screen. The 1940 edition is now worth £45.

plus, of course, the ever popular "Mickey Mouse", "Goofy" and "Donald Duck" annuals, the latter character now being far more popular than Walt Disney's first creation.

TEENAGE

Another change is that teenage girls are now well catered for, with "My Guy" and "Oh Boy" type of annuals, after they have outgrown the "June", "Judy" and "Diana" stage. Characters from the puppet world of Gerry Anderson and his contemporaries have also appeared, and have become very much collectors' items — "Captain Scarlet", "Countdown", "Fireball XL5" "Joe 90", "Lady Penelope" and "TV 21" annuals, and the famous "Dr Who" annual, which has been running now for over twenty years.

When the present writers finally published their catalogue of 'Boys and Girls Annuals' in 1982, it had taken them, on and off, nearly thirty years to compile, due to the many problems involved. Apart from the fact that many annuals are missing from the British Library, one of the main references, the English Catalogue, has been proved to

have countless omissions. There is also the fact that some publishers dropped an annual for a year or two, then resumed publication, though it still remained in the pages of the yearly press guides as having been published during that period. Consequently, a collector could be searching in vain for, say, an annual dated for a certain year, when in fact it was never issued.

Some annuals, for instance, alternated yearly with another — for example "Beryl The Peril" and "Dennis The Menace" annuals, plus the Scottish favourites, "The Broons" and "Oor Wullie". D.C. Thomson never dated their early books — like the first Ruperts — so consequently collectors were not able to determine with any certainty which year was which. The writers of this article, however, brought out 'The Rupert Index' and 'An Identification Guide to the D.C. Thomson and John Leng Childrens' Annuals' a few years ago, and these have, they sincerely hope, been of some help to collectors.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF COLLECTABLE GIRLS' AND BOYS' ANNUALS

All prices refer to annuals in Very Good condition, complete and with no defacing.

CHATTERBOX 1863	£30
BOYS' OWN ANNUAL 1879	£30
CHUMS 1893	£25
HOLIDAY ANNUAL FOR BOYS AND GIRLS (Greyfriars) 1920.	£35
TIGER TIM'S ANNUAL.	£30
SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN ANNUAL 1923	£10
ADVENTURELAND 1924	£20
RAINBOW ANNUAL 1924	£30
MRS HIPPO'S ANNUAL 1926	£25
ROVER BOOK FOR BOYS 1926	£15
SCHOOLFRIEND ANNUAL 1927.	£15
THE BRUIN BOYS ANNUAL 1927	£25
MICKEY MOUSE ANNUAL 1931	£75
SKIPPER BOOK FOR BOYS 1932.	£15
BOYS' CINEMA ANNUAL 1932.	£60
HOTSPUR BOOK FOR BOYS 1935.	£20
WIZARD BOOK FOR BOYS 1936.	£20
RUPERT ANNUAL 1937	£100
SHIRLEY TEMPLE ANNUAL 1937.	£150+
FILM FUN ANNUAL 1938	£50
SEXTON BLAKE ANNUAL 1938	£20
DANDY MONSTER COMIC 1939	£75
THE BEANO BOOK 1940.	£75
RADIO FUN ANNUAL 1940.	£45
ARTHUR ASKEY ANNUAL 1940.	£75
KNOCKOUT FUN BOOK 1941.	£40
MAGIC FUN BOOK 1941.	£100