

COLLECTING 'THE BOY'S OWN PAPER'

BY NORMAN WRIGHT

During the latter half of Victoria's reign, there was a massive increase in the number of weekly and monthly periodicals published. Many factors contributed to this phenomenon. Foster's Education Act of 1870 brought a basic form of education within reach of the masses, resulting in an increasingly literate population. The continued industrialisation of the United Kingdom and the growth of factory towns resulted in large urban populations looking for cheap entertainment to fill their limited leisure time. Technological developments had resulted in cheaper printing methods, and the spread of the railways meant that, as with other manufacturing industries, publishers could speedily distribute their product to every part of the country.

The stage was set for an explosion in the publication of cheap periodicals, and in a market-place where pennies were scarce and readers expected a lot for their money, many publishers adopted the maxim that quality and sensation were far more important than quality to ensure the success of a publication. Indeed, some publishing houses revelled in publishing the exploits of such cut-throat heroes as Dick Turpin, Spring-Heeled Jack, Sweeney Todd and the like, who left a trail of murder and mayhem across countless



George Andrew Hutchison, who edited BOP from its launch in 1879 until shortly before his death in 1913.

chapters of cramped text in the pages of the many 'penny dreadfuls' that flourished during the early and mid-nineteenth century.

The 'penny dreadfuls' (see BMC 32) attracted huge audiences and it soon became apparent that boys, as well as their parents, were coming under the bad influence of such periodicals. Consequently, the church and other religious bodies began to call for more wholesome reading matter to counteract and supplant the dreadfuls. Such periodicals already existed, but to a great extent their content lacked the appeal of Turpin, Todd and the rest of the 'blood-and-gore' brigade, and they had fallen by the wayside due to poor sales. Although there was general agreement that a quality weekly paper for boys was urgently needed, it was a difficult task to find a publisher ready to risk the capital required to start such a magazine when previous attempts had resulted in failure and financial loss. Eventually, however, the Religious Tract Society had the courage to produce such a magazine, which they titled *The Boy's Own Paper* (or BOP for short).

The man responsible for the early success of *The Boy's Own Paper* was George Andrew Hutchison, who was in his mid-thirties when the magazine was launched, and already an experienced production manager. He looked at what had gone before in the way of decent periodicals for boys and considered that the best effort had been Samuel Beeton's *Boy's Own Magazine*, a small-format periodical that had run from 1856 until 1874. The Religious Tract Society bought the title and goodwill of the defunct publication, changed the name to *The Boy's Own Paper* and began to plan their new weekly.

BLAND

One of the main reasons for the failure of many of *The Boy's Own Paper's* predecessors was that, in their attempts to provide wholesome literature for boys, the over-zealous publishers had removed all the excitement and adventure that the young reader craved, leaving in its place bland and unappealing fare, usually heavy with Christian moralising. Hutchison had the tricky task of producing a paper that promoted Christian values while appealing to both young readers and parents, teachers and clergymen. His guiding principal was that the paper would only be a success if it "appealed to boys and not to their grandmothers".

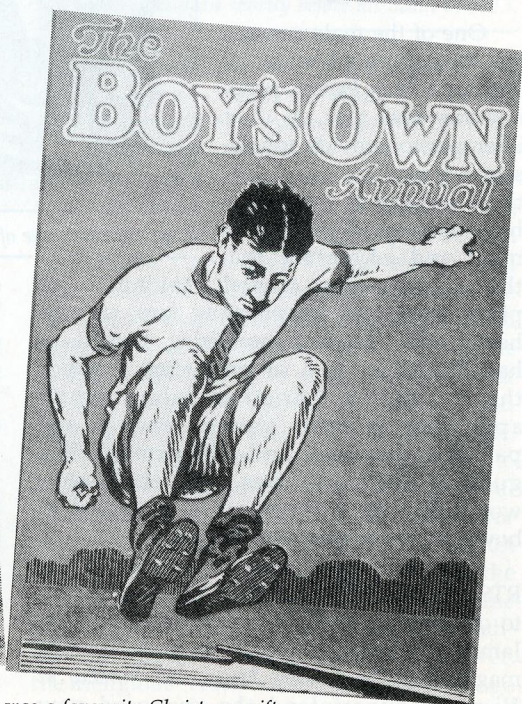
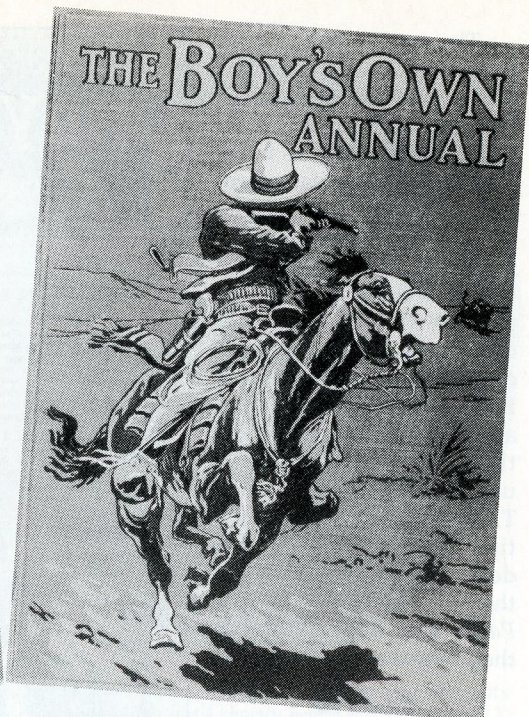
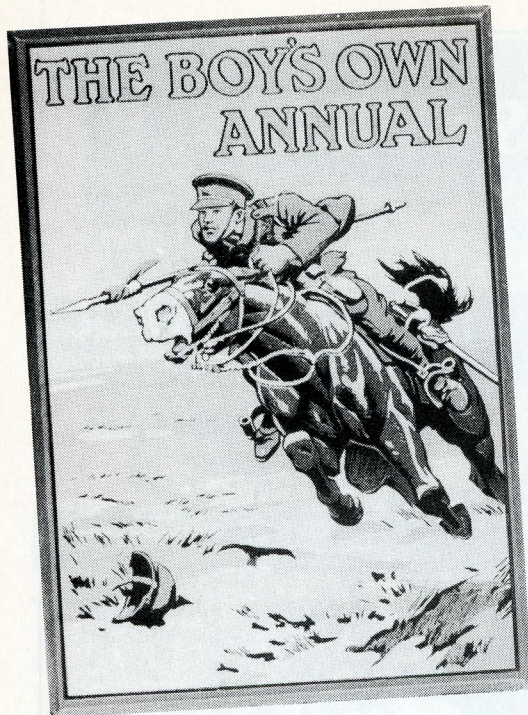
This philosophy caused concern to the RTS, and members of the committee set up to oversee the new periodical appointed Dr James Macaulay, editor of two other RTS magazines, *The Leisure Hour* and *Sunday at Home*, to superintend the proposed new magazine. While Hutchison was the great



The very first issue of The Boy's Own Paper, dated 18th January 1879.

creative force and guiding light behind *The Boy's Own Paper*, Macaulay used his experience and influence to gain the approval of the committees of clergymen who controlled the financial resources of the RTS and, consequently, those of the BOP.

The first issue of *The Boy's Own Paper*, dated 18th January 1879, offered readers an interesting mix of fact and fiction. Hutchison got the balance just right and, within the paper's sixteen pages, there was something to interest almost everybody. The lead article, 'My First Football Match', was published under the byline of 'An Old Boy' but was actually by Talbot Baines Reed, who was to become one of the most popular authors to contribute to the paper during its early years.



The Boy's Own Annual was a favourite Christmas gift for over sixty years. These four examples were sold at Phillips in May.

Another popular and long-standing contributor who made his *Boy's Own Paper* debut in the inaugural issue was the Reverend J.G. Wood (see BMC 79) with the first of his natural history columns. Wood was a great populariser of natural history — almost the David Attenborough of his day — well known for his books and articles on the subject, and his name must have added prestige to the new paper. Every 'Sherlock Holmes' aficionado knows the name of J.G. Wood, for the great detective refers to his book, *Out of Doors*, in the story, 'The Lion's Mane'.

SCOOP

Wood may have added prestige to the first number, but the scoop of the issue was undoubtedly the first part of 'How I Swam the Channel' by Captain Webb, a popular figure of the period. A modest man, Webb explained how the idea of swimming the Channel had first come to him after reading of a failed attempt by J.B. Johnson. He went on to warn against alcohol when attempting physical feats, noting: "As to spirits, they are simply poison." He concluded his article by writing of his first, failed attempt to swim to France, leaving readers eagerly awaiting issue number two to read of his subsequent successful crossing.

Other factual articles in that first issue were on such varied subjects as 'My Monkeys and How I Manage Them', 'Outdoor Sports and Pastimes', 'Youthful Honours Bravely Won' and the first in a series entitled 'Evenings at Home', which dealt with the magic-lantern. There were also a number of very short items, and a Magic Square



Talbot Baines Reed (1852-93), the most popular of The Boy's Own Paper's many school-story writers.

number puzzle. Sport and hobby interests were well represented, and these were to remain key elements throughout the paper's life. In time, magic-lanterns gave way to articles on radio construction and photography, but hobbies and sport always remained well represented in the paper.

Fiction for the first number was provided by Ascott Hope, who contributed 'The Bogle', Mrs Eiloart ('Jack and John'), and W.H.G. Kingston, whose serial about the stirring days of the British Navy, 'From Powder Monkey to Admiral', ran until the end of the first volume in September 1879.

There were illustrations on almost every page and the quality of the paper's artwork became one of its hallmarks and a contributing factor to its success. The illustrations were nicely varied in both size and subject, with small, detailed illustrations for the natural history articles and big, bold half-pagers for the serial stories. As with the youth of today, ball games were very popular, and a striking half-page illustration of a

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A typically dramatic illustration from the 1894 summer supplement: Alfred Pearse's 'An Interrupted Bathe'.


rugby match was the cover attraction to that first issue.

The paper was an almost immediate success, achieving that almost impossible task of being popular, not only with boys, but with their parents and teachers as well. In many schools, it was the only periodical that the boys were allowed to read and some educational establishments even bought

copies in bulk to distribute to their pupils. It was popular, too, with Sunday schools, and copies were frequently used as prizes for good attendance. Headmasters wrote in to the *Boy's Own Paper* offices, offering their support for the new magazine.

According to Jack Cox in his fascinating study, *Take a Cold Tub, Sir! The Story of The Boy's Own Paper* (1982), in its first year *The Boy's Own Paper* made a profit of £2,499 16s 8d, an incredible feat for such a modestly-priced publication with limited advertising revenue. Indeed, with that inaugural issue, *The Boy's Own Paper* entered its first 'golden age', which lasted for almost a decade.

The weekly *Boy's Own Paper* cost one penny. Alternatively, for sixpence, readers could buy the monthly edition issued in a stiff wrapper in which a presentation plate, either in colour or monochrome, would be included at intervals. The first *Boy's Own Annual*, comprising all of the weekly issues



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from 18th January to 27th September, was issued in the autumn of 1879, ready for the Christmas market. That particular volume contained nine presentation plates, ranging in subject from 'Moths' and the 'Eddystone Lighthouse', to 'Good News from Ghent'. All subsequent volumes of the annual ran from October to October, and were issued in time for Christmas. Readers wishing to bind their own copies sent for the boards, presentation plates and the contents and title-pages. In 1881, these cost one penny for the title-page and index, 1/8 for the presentation plates, and two shillings for the binding case.

The Boy's Own Annual became something of an institution over the decades, but collectors need to be aware of the fact that, although *The Boy's Own Annuals* contained every serial episode, they did omit some material originally included in the weekly and monthly parts. Transversely, the annual contained some new material. Another point worth noting is that the annual did *not* include the summer and winter numbers of *The Boy's Own Paper*, as I recently found to my cost when looking at the list of contributors included in the index pages of an early volume. Amongst those listed was A. Conan Doyle, and so I bought the volume — only to discover later that Doyle's contribution had been in the winter number and was therefore not included in my volume!

At the end of last year, a run of 61 *Boy's*



This issue from July 1923 sports a characteristically eye-catching cover by regular artist, Stanley L. Wood.

Own Annuals — just two short of a complete run — was sold for a very reasonable £747 at a Leominster sale. Phillips' sale of 7th May 1999 included some 69 *Annuals* in four lots. A lot comprising the first nineteen *Annuals* ("all but three in original pictorial cloth,

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rubbed, spines bumped") sold for £540, while 23 odd volumes from twenty to 57 ("all but two in original pictorial cloth, rubbed, spines bumped") fetched £240. Another lot of fourteen annuals from two to 36 ("the majority in original pictorial cloth, rubbed, head and foot of spines bumped, a few with small nicks or tears"), including four duplicates, sold for £190.

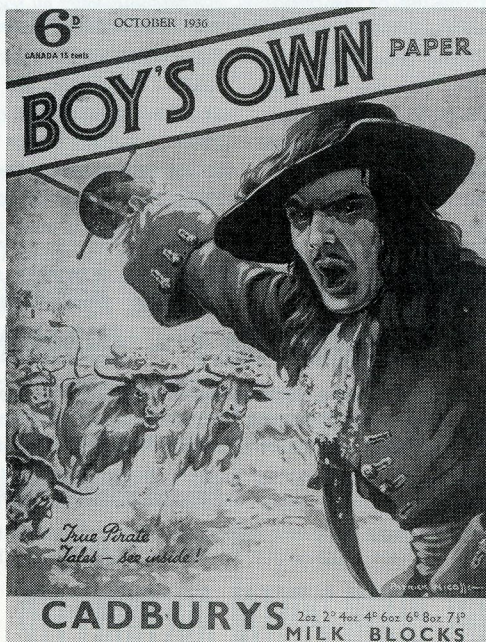
The second volume of *The Boy's Own Paper* contained a serial by Jules Verne entitled 'The Boy Captain' (later published in book form as *Dick Sands*). Verne became a regular contributor to the paper, which eventually published sixteen of his serials.

There is little doubt that the most popular author to contribute serials to *The Boy's Own Paper* during its formative years was Talbot Baines Reed. Reed had written a number of features and a short school story for the paper before his first serial, 'The Adventures of a Three-Guinea Watch', was serialised in BOP during 1880 and 1881. It was a great success and was published in book form by The Religious Tract Society in 1883.

Reed's second full-length story, 'Fifth Form at St Dominic's', was serialised in *The Boy's Own Paper* during 1881 and 1882,



A wartime illustration by another regular artist, Raymond Sheppard.



Another great BOP cover, this time from October 1936. Note the advert for Cadbury's Milk Blocks.

and appeared between hard covers five years later in 1887. This is arguably his best novel and is certainly his most popular and well-known work, remaining almost constantly in print for more than half a century and being turned into a silent film starring Ralph Forbes and Maurice Thompson in 1921, and a television serial in the early 1960s.

Reed went on to write a series of memorable novels, all of which were serialised in *The Boy's Own Paper* and subsequently published in hardback. Reed's most popular novels were all public school adventures, and their influence helped to shape

the genre. In his study of the paper, 'Through the Years with the BOP' (*Collector's Digest Annual*, 1962), Brian Doyle writes: "It was undoubtedly Reed who shaped the traditional school story as readers later came to know and love it. Even the great Charles Hamilton (Frank Richards) would probably have admitted to getting one or two ideas from him!" Reed's final serial was 'Tom, Dick & Harry', published in the paper between 1892 and 1893. He died in 1893 at the early age of 42.

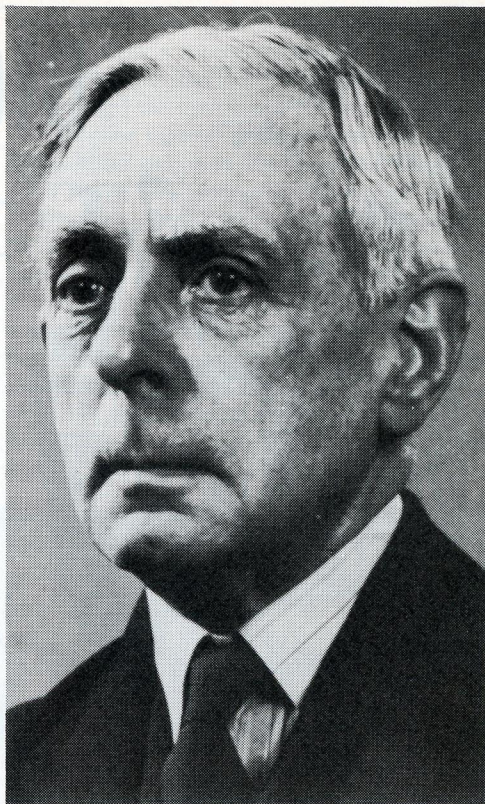
One early contributor whose work for *The Boy's Own Paper* is now keenly sought

after is Arthur Conan Doyle. His first contribution was 'An Exciting Christmas Eve; or, My Lecture on Dynamite', which appeared in the Christmas number for 1883. According to Gibson and Green in their introduction to Doyle's *Uncollected Stories* (1982): "[His] attitude towards *Boy's Own Paper* was generally dismissive . . . He felt the standards were lower than elsewhere through he was grateful that the paper accepted the stories when others had returned them." Other short contributions he made to *The Boy's Own Paper* were 'Crabbe's Practice', 'Cyprian Overbeck Wells', 'The Fate of the Evangeline' (Christmas Number 1885), 'Corporal Dick's Promotion' (Christmas Number 1886) and 'The Stone of Boxman's Drift' (Christmas Number 1887).

SERIALISED

One longer story from Doyle, 'Uncle Jeremy's Household', was serialised in *The Boy's Own Paper* between 8th January and 19th February 1887. All issues of the paper with contributions by Doyle are sought after, but the volume containing 'Uncle Jeremy's Household', with its 'detective' elements, is highly prized by collectors and is well worth looking out for. Until recently, a number of Doyle's contributions to the BOP remained uncollected, but in 1982 they were gathered together and published in *The Unknown Conan Doyle: Uncollected Stories*, edited and introduced by John Michael Gibson and Richard Lancelyn Green.

Despite its popularity, the paper operated on very narrow margins, and every means of increasing circulation had to be explored.



Arthur Lincoln Haydon, who edited the paper from 1912 until 1924. He discontinued the weekly edition.

In the first year of its publication, the RTS arranged with W.H. Smith for 400 of its station bookstalls to display a list of the contents of each issue of *The Boy's Own Paper*. This arrangement cost the publisher one pound per station per year for a five-year period. Jack Cox tells us that, in the RTS minutes for June 1884, it is recorded that the circulation figures were 57,000 weekly copies and 90,000 monthly parts. The actual readership figures were much higher as each copy tended to be read by a number of boys, and some schools had *Boy's Own Paper* clubs where a single copy could be circulated amongst as many as 100 readers!

Profits rose for the first few years, but in 1897 the paper made a net loss of almost £1,500 and it was decided to provide the weekly issue with an external wrapper, on

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BIGGLES *follows on*

Biggles is loved by all boys from 5 to 90+. Here is the first instalment of a brand-new adventure serial by CAPTAIN W. E. JOHNS. The story appears in B.O.P. in advance of book publication.

All characters in this story are fictitious.



*The young Guard man stood rigid
his face a pale*

'Biggles Follows On' ran for six issues in the spring of 1952. Biggles was very popular with BOP readers.

paper was not raised. One measure taken to keep the finances under control was to insist that the editor kept tight reins on the amount of artwork bought for the magazine. The 1890s saw a long uphill struggle to gain readers and it was only after the turn of the century that the sales figures began to improve.

In 1912, Arthur Haydon took over as editor of the paper while George Hutchison, who had guided the paper through its first 33 years, stayed on as consulting editor. (He died the following year, while working on the paper.) One change which Haydon made early in his editorship was to discontinue the weekly edition of the paper and to concentrate instead on the monthly issue. The price was held at sixpence until late in 1916, when it was increased by one penny. Wartime shortages, however, forced further increases, and by the end of the First World War the price of the monthly had risen to one shilling.

As the new century progressed, the mix remained very much the same as before, but with a new set of authors providing the

which advertisements could be printed. Despite this drive to increase advertising, *The Boy's Own Paper* was always very aware of its responsibilities to its readers and ensured that only adverts for worthwhile products such as cricket bats, fishing rods and bicycles were included within its pages. It never compromised its integrity by following the path of some of its rivals and introducing tobacco advertising. Likewise, despite the 1887 crisis, the cover price of the

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exciting school and adventure serials. Verne's last serial for the paper, 'Kongre the Wrecker', appeared posthumously in the early years of the Great War. Gordon Stables, a great stalwart of the early days, had died in 1910, and several other contributors had been killed during the war.

It was left to others to fill the gap, and new and exciting contributors were soon forthcoming. When it came to writing adventure stories set in the far-flung corners of the globe, none was more capable than Charles Gilson, whose adventure stories seemed to dominate the paper during the years following the war. School stories remained popular during this period and were provided by (Gertrude) Kent Carr, and, during the 1920s, by Richard Bird, Frank Elias and Michael Poole, amongst others.

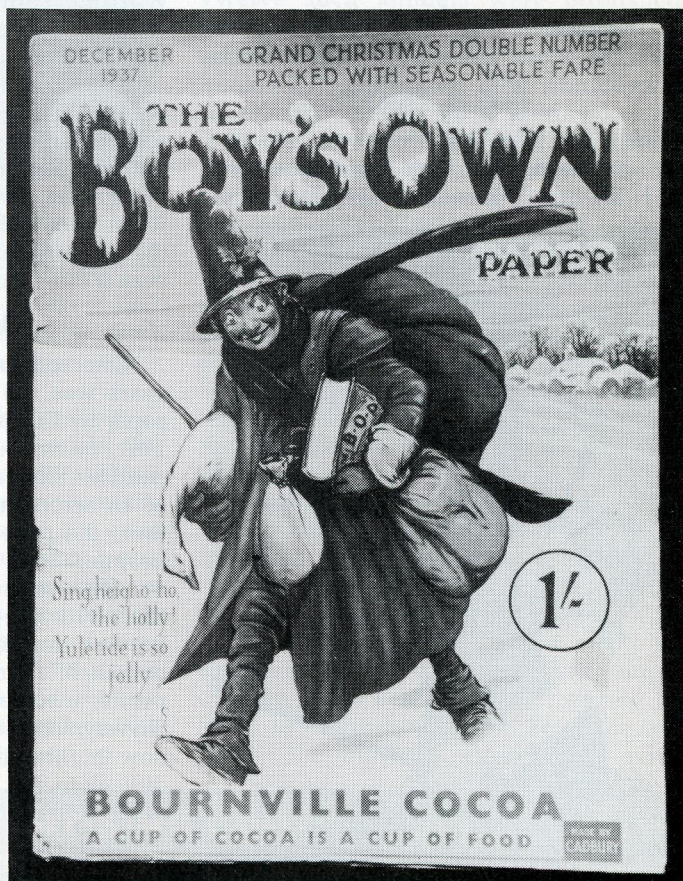
NEW POLICY

The paper continued to look for ways to increase its circulation. In 1925, research showed that new readers were often put off from buying further copies of the paper if they bought an issue and discovered that the majority of the fiction content consisted of half-finished serials. A new policy was adopted, limiting serials to two or, at most, three long instalments, with the second and third instalments always beginning with a full résumé of what had gone before. The new policy further dictated that there should be no more than one serial story running in the paper at any one time.

Another way of attracting a loyal following was the introduction of the BOP Club in 1927. Members could obtain an attractive metal badge depicting the

Boy's Own Paper logo of a globe surrounded by the paper's motto, "*Quicquid agunt pueri nostri farrago libelli*" ("Whatever boys do [makes up] the mixture of our little book").

Another very popular author who made his writing debut in the pages of *The Boy's Own Paper* was George E. Rochester, whose short story, 'Funk', published in the paper in 1926, set him on the road to a prolific writing career. His first serial for the paper was 'The Flying Beetle', an exciting flying adventure included in the volume for 1926/27, and this was followed by four further serials in the paper and countless others in a wide range of other story papers and periodicals. A large percentage of Rochester's stories were flying adventures, and during the 1930s his



The 'Grand Christmas Double Number' of BOP from December 1937.

work was every bit as popular as that of W.E. Johns. Although he has been out of vogue for some decades, the last few years have seen something of a revival of interest in Rochester's writing.

The second golden age of the *Boy's Own Paper* was undoubtedly the mid-1920s and 1930s. During the latter part of this period, the title was under the editorship of Robert Harding, who took the helm in 1935 and whose first action as editor was to cut the cost of the monthly issue from one shilling to sixpence. It was a bold move but it proved to be a great success in encouraging new readers, and the paper went from strength to strength.

ARTWORK

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, *The Boy's Own Paper* was a joy to behold on the news-stands, with its striking full-colour covers by artists of the calibre of Stanley L. Wood. The internal artwork was also of a high standard, with such noted illustrators as H.M. Brock, Raymond Sheppard, Fred

Bennett and Kenneth Brookes all contributing excellent illustrations to the paper. A collection of the annual volumes from this period, resplendent in their bright and colourful bindings, would look well in any bookcase. But the dark days of the Second World War were looming and there were soon to be changes to the paper.

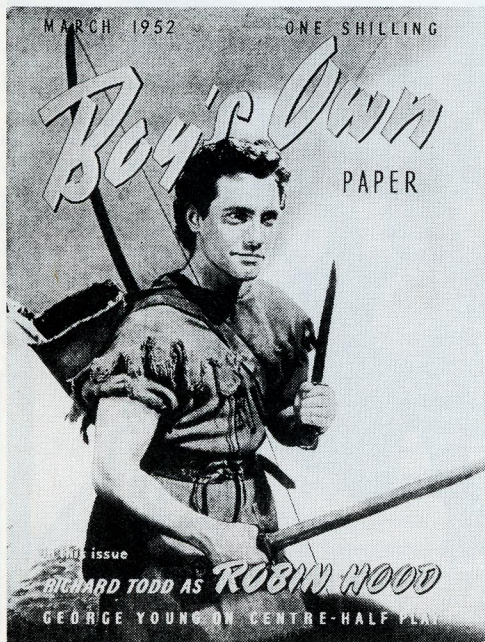
The first volume of *The Boy's Own Annual* had run from January to September 1879, but all subsequent volumes comprised the issues from October to September. So, for example, Volume 61, published for Christmas 1939, contained the monthly issues from October 1938 to September 1939. The annual volumes were published every autumn until 1941, when the 63rd and final volume appeared. Wartime shortages of staff and paper, coupled with postage and transport problems, made it impossible for the annual to continue.

The monthly issue survived, but the paper shortage meant that it had to be reduced in size. First, the page count was reduced, and then, as the shortages became more acute, the actual format was reduced, which would have made it impossible for the monthly parts to be issued as an annual, even if other factors had been favourable.

W.E. JOHNS

One redeeming feature of these lean years was the contributions made to the paper by Captain W.E. Johns. In September 1941, he wrote the first of a short series entitled 'Skyways', which comprised items of an aeronautical interest. At around this time, the paper launched the 'BOP Flying League,' with the aim of "inspiring air-mindedness and an enthusiasm for flying that will keep Britain and the British Empire definitely in the front of every branch of flying". For one shilling and a penny, members could receive a splendid Skywaymen metal badge. These badges are now highly collectable and are far more difficult to find than those issued to members of the BOP Club.

In October 1941, W.E. Johns contributed a 'Biggles' story, 'The Enchanted Island', to *The Boy's Own Paper*. Further 'Biggles' stories followed and, in May 1942, at a time when



The cover of the March 1952 issue featured popular actor, Richard Todd, in the character of Robin Hood.



George Best was the cover star of the very last issue. "He drinks only occasionally," according to BOP.

the paper's format had been reduced in size, Biggles featured on the cover. These short 'Biggles' adventures were collected as *Biggles Charter Pilot* in 1943.

Biggles was again on the cover of *The Boy's Own Paper* in February 1946, when the first instalment of 'Biggles' Second Case' was published. Issues of the paper from the 1940s containing 'Biggles' stories are quite scarce and are very collectable, while issues with Biggles on the cover are now worth up to £10 each in Very Good condition. Biggles continued to appear in the paper in short stories and serials throughout the 1950s, and Jack Cox, the paper's final editor, recalled that, whenever Biggles featured in the paper, the circulation invariably went up.

As the paper situation improved during the late 1940s, the BOP began to increase in size, initially to between 48 and 56 pages, and eventually to 72 pages. The price was raised to one shilling, and it remained at that level throughout the 1950s and early 1960s.

The papers flourished under the editorship of Jack Cox, who took over in 1946, but it never again attained the prominence of its halcyon days. *The Boy's Own Annual* was never revived in its original form, but 1959 saw the publication of the first of five *Boy's Own Companions*. In 1964, a new *Boy's Own Annual* was published (dated 1965), but this was a mere shadow of its predecessors, identical to countless other annuals found piled on newsagents' counters every autumn. Twelve such annuals were published between 1964 and 1975, each dated for the following year.

FINAL ISSUE

In the spring of 1964, *The Boy's Own Paper* was bought by Purnell, and from that moment the writing was on the wall. The final issue, costing two shillings and containing 52 pages, went on sale in February 1967. The cover bore a photograph of George Best (who, according to the BOP, "doesn't smoke, drinks only occasionally, and restricts his card playing to sessions which ease the boredom of travelling"), and the contents were the usual mix of stories and articles. As Jack Cox later commented, the BOP had survived many problems but it could not beat inflation.

The paper has remained popular with collectors, and a complete set of *Boy's Own Annuals* not only looks impressive on the bookshelf, but also contains a wealth of first-class reading matter. A set of the 63 annuals also offers a representative sample of some of the best illustrative work to be found in a British magazine. From the late 1920s, the annuals were issued with

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dustjackets, but these are now almost impossible to find and, if a collector manages to obtain one or two volumes in their dustjackets, then he or she will be fortunate indeed. Single issues from the 1920s and 1930s are very attractive in their full-colour covers, and most aficionados will want to add a representative selection of these to

their collection. Later single issues, with the exception of those containing 'Biggles' stories and serial episodes, are rarely collected and can be picked up for £1 or less.

My grateful thanks to Bill Bradford for his assistance with this feature and for access to his complete set of 'The Boy's Own Annual'.

PRICE GUIDE TO 'THE BOY'S OWN PAPER' AND RELATED PUBLICATIONS

A guide to current values of magazines and annuals in Very Good condition in the original wrappers/bindings with all of their plates intact and without/with dustjackets.

INDIVIDUAL MAGAZINES

SINGLE WEEKLY ISSUES (1879-1913)

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Number One (18th January 1879) | £8-£10 |
| Issues from 8th January to 19th February 1887 (seven issues, containing the Conan Doyle series, 'Uncle Jeremy's Household') | each £15-£20 |
| All other issues containing a Conan Doyle contribution | each £10-£15 |
| All other weekly issues (1879-1913) | each £1-£2 |

SINGLE MONTHLY ISSUES (1897-1967)

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Issues from 1897 to 1941 without contributions by either Conan Doyle or W.E. Johns | each £3-£4 |
| Issues from January and February 1887 (containing the Conan Doyle serial, 'Uncle Jeremy's Household') | each £15-£20 |
| Single issues containing a Conan Doyle contribution | each £15-£20 |
| Single issues from 1942 to 1967 without contributions by W.E. Johns | each £1-£3 |
| Single issues from the 1940s with W.E. Johns' 'Biggles' stories | each £6-£8 |
| Single issues from the 1940s with 'Biggles' on front cover | each £8-£10 |
| Single issues from the 1940s with W.E. Johns' 'Skyways' articles | each £4-£5 |
| Single issues from the 1950s with 'Biggles' stories and serial episodes | £3-£4 |

CHRISTMAS NUMBERS

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Christmas Numbers for 1883, 1885, 1886 and 1887 (all with items by Conan Doyle) | each £40-£60 |
| All other Christmas and summer numbers | £8-£10 |

ANNUALS

'THE BOY'S OWN ANNUAL': Old Style

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| VOLUME 1 (January-September 1879) | £50-£75 |
| VOLUMES 2-8 (October 1879 to September 1886) | each £25-£35 |
| VOLUME 9 (with Conan Doyle series 'Uncle Jeremy's Household'; October 1886-September 1887) | £40-£60 |
| VOLUMES 10-36 (October 1887 to September 1915) | each £25-£35 |
| VOLUMES 37-58 (October 1915 to September 1936) | each £30-£40 (£60-£80) |
| VOLUMES 59-63 (October 1936 to September 1941) | each £25-£35 (£50-£75) |

'THE BOY'S OWN ANNUAL': New Style

| | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| 1965-1976 (Purnell) | each £3-£5 |
|---------------------------|------------|

OTHERS

'BOY'S OWN COMPANION'

| | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 1959-63 | each £2-£3 (£4-£6) |
|---------------|--------------------|

FURTHER READING

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Cox, Jack: TAKE A COLD TUB, SIR! THE STORY OF THE BOY'S OWN PAPER (Lutterworth Press, 1982) | £6-£8 (£10-£15) |
| Doyle, Brian: 'Through the Years with the BOP' (seventeen-page feature, including a listing of the major serials in the first 62 volumes) (in COLLECTOR'S DIGEST ANNUAL, 1962) | £10-£12 |

BOOK AND MAGAZINE COLLECTOR

DEC. '99
No. 189



The cover of the V.E. issue of *The Boy's Own Paper*. The paper was a favourite with British youngsters for more than eighty years.