

The COLLECTOR'S DIGEST

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John Medcraft
64, Woodlands Road,
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N.B: The Extract on Page 116 was taken from the -
Yorkshire Evening News, of 27th March, 1950.. ..



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APRIL 1950

Next Issue May

Editor, Miscellaneous Section

Herbert Leckenby, Telephone Exchange,

C/o Central Registry, Northern Command, York.

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

It seems to me it is going to be a bigger problem than ever getting in all I want to get in this month, so I will try and say a little less myself.

First, a note of sincere regret. As will be seen from the Nelson Lee Column, Bob Blythe's usually busy pen will have to be laid aside for some months. He got over his operation successfully: nevertheless, acting under doctor's orders he must take a long rest. We shall miss him, and I am sure all readers will wish him full restoration to health at the earliest possible moment. Few have done more for the hobby than he.

Bookbinding: I have frequently been asked for the name of a good bookbinder. Hitherto I have not been able to help much, but I can now heartily recommend a really excellent one. He is J. L. Macey, 124/6 Queen's Road, Peckham, London, S.E.15. His terms are extremely moderate, and he takes a special

interest in the work, for he is by way of being an old boys' book fan himself. His workmanship now adorns the bookshelves of many of our members. So make a note of the address, those of you who have copies to bind.

Our "Annual" Ballot: To get something like a true position I have decided that the fairest way is to award six points for a 1st; five for a 2nd, and so on down to one for the sixth position. Worked out in this way the voting at present stands like this:

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Magnet Masterpieces | 173 |
| 2. Cardew of the Fourth | 153 |
| 3. How My First Collection Started | 152 |
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| 5. How They Arrived | 113 |
| 6. Comic Papers in Their Heyday | 100 |
| 7. The Gem Reprints | 97 |
| 8. Imitation Stories | 97 |

Several other articles are not far behind. "Magnet Masterpieces" holds a good lead as it gets most firsts, but some other articles appear on more voting papers.

One disappointing feature is, however, the large number of voting papers still to come in. Do send along, please, on plain paper if necessary, as time is getting on.

The "Collector's Who's Who" does not appear as practically all voters took that for granted.

Our American Cousins Get Their Publicity Too: Raymond L. Caldwell, of Lancaster, Pa, member of our clan and Sexton Blake devotee, got a fine write-up in "Colliers" leading American weekly recently. It was headed with a splendid photograph of Mr. Caldwell surrounded with stacks of Nick Carters, Tip-Tops, Pluck and Luck, and other papers which mean just as much to our American cousins as the Magnet, Gem, U.J. etc. do to us.

One interesting statement was that there are 1000 odd hobbyists that side of the herring pond. And another that Raymond Caldwell possesses 60,000 different copies. 60,000! - the John Medcraft of America!

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT LICKENBY.

POPULAR PAPERS OF THE PAST

No. 5:- The Captain.
A Magazine for Boys and Old Boys

By Herold G.Dubb

Towards the close of Queen Victoria's golden reign, when life was more leisurely and austerly confined merely to the people without means, the enterprising publishers of the famous "Strand" magazine decided to launch a new venture, something of a junior brother to the above mentioned publication, and this duly appeared on the bookstalls under the alluring title, "The Captain. A Magazine for Boys and Old Boys." In format, the new journal closely resembled that of the "Strand", with double column pages, wide margins and clear, bold, easy to read type. "The Captain" was profusely illustrated with excellent photographs and there were plenty of those advertisements that boys of all ages so thoroughly enjoy, such as those of foreign stamp dealers, sports outfitters, publishers of juvenile literature, dealers in pets, agents for Meccano sets and Hobbies fretwork outfits, etc.

"The Captain", though never a best seller, achieved wide popularity among public schoolboys and pupils of the more expensive secondary schools, owing chiefly to its splendid stories of school life and exceptionally fine articles on sport, particularly those on the subjects of Rugby and Cricket. An entirely new departure in schoolboy literature was the periodical book review appearing in the paper. Naturally, the works sent in for criticism were only juvenile publications, but, until the advent of this progressive magazine, even that branch of the critic's art, had been entirely in the hands of the more adult periodicals such as the "British Weekly", "The Atheneum", "The Sphere", and to the daily newspapers. I remember reading with great pleasure, reviews of books by G.A.Henty, George Manville Fenn, Herbert Strang, R.H.Goodyear and many, many others, equally well known. Then too, there were instructive articles on a variety of subjects; how to build a model yacht; life in other lands; produce of the British Empire; articles explaining the latest invention; a peep behind the scenes in a big factory and hundreds of other topics, equally interesting and entertaining.

One of my earliest recollections of this valuable paper is a school serial which appeared in its pages somewhere around the turn of the century. The story in question was entitled "Mike", and it came from the pen of no less a person than P.G.Wodehouse, the author of the celebrated "Jeeves" stories and later to become known as a second "Lord Haw-haw" and German broadcaster. In this particular story the immortal Psmith first made his appearance. This elegant youth, with his carefully pressed trousers, his sumptuous waistcoats, his natty ties, his monocle and his Oxford drawl may reasonably be considered the forerunner of the more universally known "Arthur Augustus D'Arcy", the beloved swell of St.Jims fame; although, whereas Gussy always ended by ruining his magnificent attire, Psmith invariably contrived to emerge from the most tremendous escapades, unperturbed and wholly unscathed. The further adventures of Psmith were recorded in the book bearing his name and its sequels, "Psmith in the City", "Psmith, Journalist", and "Psmith in New York".

Unlike Charles Hamilton, the immortal creator of Gussy and of Billy Bunter, who, when asked by a literary friend, why he did not endeavour to write something of a better and more learned nature than school stories, declared that there is nothing better than keeping children interested and amused, Wodehouse decided that there was something better, left off writing boys' stories and devoted the whole of his energies to adult literature and ultimately to hob-nobbing with Nazi war bosses.

Major Charles Gilson was another favourite "Captain" author. A widely travelled man, Major Gilson could write convincingly of many very remote parts of the globe, including Thibet, Mongolia and the interior of South America. One of his most popular serials was entitled "The Lost Island", a tale in which the reader is carried breathlessly from England to the hinterland of China and from thence, after scores of perilous adventures and miraculous escapes from death on the part of hero and villain alike, to a mysterious island in the South Pacific. The major had an easy, flowing style, his English was impeccable and he insisted on laying the scenes of all his books in lands he had personally visited. Captain Frank H. Shaw contributed a number of short stories to the "Captain" though, as far as I am aware, he never published a serial in that paper. Readers of my previous article on "Chums" will

already know a good deal of this writer, who, in addition to his life on the ocean wave and his literary labours, has recently taken to broadcasting and can often be heard in "Children's Hour", and other children's programmes relating his thrilling experiences as a sailor to audiences of young folks belonging to a nation whose very life blood is the sea and which provides the world with its finest seamen.

Some of the best school stories it has been my good fortune to read first saw the light in the pages of "The Captain", including the now famous Green of Greyhouse tales by R.S.Warren Bell; the Claverhouse yarns by Gunby Hadath; numerous exceptionally well written serials by Hylton Cleaver, while Captain G.A.Hope was for many years a regular contributor of excellent short stories of public school life. The majority of the serials that appeared in "The Captain" were afterwards re-issued in book form and most of them are still obtainable at all good booksellers. I would mention that "Mike", "Psmith", and "Psmith in the City", by P.G.Wodehouse are still in print and are published by the old established firm of Adam & Charles Black.

A great number of now famous names once graced the pages of "The Captain". John Buchan, afterwards to become Lord Tweedsmuir and Governor-General of Canada once contributed a mystery serial; G.D.H.Sewell, so well known today as an authority on sports of every description wrote some of his very earliest articles for this splendid magazine, while Herbert Hayens, D.H.Perry and Percy F.Westerman were always to the fore with tales of mystery and adventure. Herbert Strang, another notable contributor, wrote a serial entitled "Nameless Island" specially for "The Captain" and it appeared in the volume for 1919. It was written in his usual inimitable style and dealt with the German spy menace and how a small party of schoolboys on holiday broke up a spy ring and proved instrumental in frustrating an attempt to bring this proud, unconquerable people to their knees. Although the Great War had by this time resulted in a victory for the Allies, it does not alter the fact that Herbert Strang had foreseen the debacle that was to come, as a close study of some of his earlier works written prior to 1914, will reveal. I am aware that I am digressing, but I would like to mention in passing, that Strang gave an exceedingly good idea of the dangers of espionage in his "King of the Air", "The Cruise of the Gyro-car", and

"Lord of the Sea". Before finishing with Herbert Strang altogether, I would like to place on record that I once received a "fearful thrashing", as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy would call it, for informing my master at school that Mr. Strang was a far greater author than Shakespeare. It is needless to state that I have altered my opinion considerably since those distant days.

As a slight relief to the more serious side of life, I must inform my readers that the jester was given an entire page to himself. It was headed by a humorous drawing and consisted of jokes sent in by readers of the paper. Prizes of varying amounts were awarded for each item published and I must say in all fairness to the senders, that many of the wisecrecks were very funny indeed, worthy perhaps, to rank with the best of those to be found in papers specializing in humour.

I will close this short review by saying that it is a great pity that "The Captain" was allowed to disappear from the bookstalls after it had lived for only just over twenty years. It is an even greater tragedy that its elder brother, the world famous "Strand" magazine with its memories of Sherlock Holmes, has reached the end of its long career.

H.ROLD GUY DUBB.

Next month. No.6 - The "Bullseye (1931-34)

By Cedric H. Groombridge.

(This series seems to be creating a lot of interest. If there is any paper you would like included, we will try and get the data. - H.L.)

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Mr. G. Gordon, late of Ledbrooke Grove, W.10 has moved to "Brynteg", 203 New Road, Porthcawl, Glamorgan.

I SAY YOU FELLOWS! Don't forget I collect Fantasy Fiction. Lists exchanged. Henry J. H. Bertlett, Peas Hill, Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset.

WANTED URGENTLY: to complete sets. No.13 Collectors' Miscellany and No's 7, 9 and 10 of the Story Paper Collector. Your price paid. A. J. Southway, P.O. Box 3, Beaconsfield, Cape Province, South Africa.

COLIN DAINES, 209 Mile Cross Lane, Norwich, keen Nelson Leeite also collects post-cards and all kinds of photographs of electric trams. Can anyone help.

The Nelson Lee Column

All queries and suggestions to Robert Blythe,
46, Carleton Road, Holloway, London, N.7.

(Note.— Not only Nelson Lee devotees, but all readers of the C.D. will be sorry to hear that Bob Blythe is at present in hospital, having undergone an operation. They will be pleased to hear that about the time he was undergoing his ordeal, his first-born was coming into the world. Mother and son are doing well. Congratulations to mother and father, and may you soon be home, Bob, to nurse your offspring.

Meanwhile, Jack Wood has helped to fill the breach with an interesting article. — H.L.)

NOT SO USELESS EUSTACE!

(With apologies to the Daily Mirror)

By Jack Wood

Eustace is a name which does not always suggest the brightest of characters. The reader instinctively regards the bearer of the name as someone who is likely to be somewhat "dim" at best, or at worst someone with the outlook on life of the villain of old-time melodrama.

Over the years Edwy Seerles Brooks has given us four Eustaces, so far as I have been able to determine.

Earliest of them was Eustace Cavendish. Unfortunately, I possess no stories in which he figures, but "from information received", as the law would put it, I gather that he was a Union Jack character. He appears to have been a debonair man-about-town "type" of gentleman crook, owing some kinship to the notorious Raffles, or the equally famous Toff. He does not, however, seem to have possessed the more endearing qualities of Brooks's later creations, Rupert Weldo and Norman Conquest. Eustace made some appearances in the early Nelson Lees.

Next to appear in the pages of the Nelson Lee Library was Eustace Carey, cousin of Ralph Leslie Fullwood, the reformed Knut of the Remove. Carey was an Oxford undergraduate who fled from the police to avoid a manslaughter charge and, kidnapping Stanley Clevering, a new East House senior, came to St. Franks as

B.F. (2nd series) No.110 "The Schoolboy Republic" was later reprinted in No.455 with the same title.

B.F. (1st series) No.708 "The Kidnapped School" was reprinted in the second series, No.441 as "The Kidnapped Remove".

B.F. (2nd series) No.555. "Peril Camp" was reprinted from Nelson Lees (2nd New series) Nos.75 to 77. "St.Frank's Under Canvas," "The Open Air Heroes" and "Peril Camp".

B.F. (1st series) No.713, "The New York Mystery" was reprinted in the second series No.439 as "St.Frenk's on Broadway".

B.F. (2nd series) No.619 "The League of Bullies" has a follow-up tale in No.615, "The Imposter of the Fourth".

These (by R.W.Comrede) were rewrites of the Castleton series in the Nelson Lee and Gen during 1927. The series was condensed and turned out as one story in the Schoolboys' Pocket Library (G.G.Swenn) 4d. under the title "The New Boy at Westchester" by Edward Thornton (another E.S.B. pen-name).

B.F. (1st series) No.709 "Phantom Island" was later published in 2nd series No.447 as "The St.Frenk's Castaways".

B.F. (2nd series) No.244 "The Stuff to Give 'Em" is a racing tale by E. S. Brooks.

For the benefit of E.S.B. "fans", at Bob Blythe's request I have made a list of all Mr.Brooks' writings at present known to me in the Union Jack Library. These include featured characters such as Nelson Lee & Nipper, Eustace Cavendish and Rupert Waldo.

These will appear in Next month's "Column". Thanks to the courtesy of my friend John Shew, a list of "Gem" titles and numbers considered by him to be the work of E.S.B. (and John is some authority) will also be given.

Finally, to make up leeway, here is a two-month quota of Nelson Lee titles, (O.S.).

351 "The Island Camp", 352 "The Coming of Archie", 353 "The Trials of Archie", 354 "The Amazing Inheritance", 355 "The Lost Schoolboys", 356 "The New Page-Boy", 357 "The Fooling of Archie", 358 "The Mystery of Hendforth's Pater", 359 "The Fun of the Fair", 360 "Yung Ching the Chinese", 361 "The Yellow Grip", 362 "Archie in Chinatown", 363 "The Friends of Foo Chow", 364 "The Horror of Belton Wood", 365 "The Dragon's Fangs", 366 "The Schoolboy Crusces", 367 "Lagoon Island", 368 "The Lord of the Island", 369 "The Enemy Unknown", 370 "The Cannibal Horde", 371 "The Black Invaders", 372 "The Terror from the Sky", 373 "The Secret of the Pirate's Cove", 374 "The Winged Deliverer",

375 "The Golden Rover" 376 "The Kingdom of Wonder", 377 "The Lost People", 378 "The Rival Kings", 379 "The Invasion of New Anglie", 380 "The Storming of the Capital". 381 "Fullwood's Fortune", 382 "The Price of Folly". 383 "The Clue of the Bent Spike", 384 "The Mystery of the 6.10 Local", 385 "The Remove to the Rescue", 386 "Handforth's Minor", 387 "The Mystery of the Edgemoor Hermit", 388 "The Riddle of Demon's Gap".

APRIL FOOLS

A Topical Review of St. Frank's Stories

By J. P. Wood

Topicality was always a keynote of the old boys' stories, and Edwy Searles Brooks generally saw to it that April 1st was celebrated in due comedy style. Many and varied, in fact, were the adventures of the St. Franks lads on this memorable day of the year, and, needless to add, the juniors, and Edward Oswald Handforth in particular, were well to the fore in any japing which was perpetrated.

One of the earliest of these seasonable yarns was April Fools, or The School Without Servents (O.S. 252). At this time St. Franks, with other public schools, was feeling the draught of the rise in the cost of living after the first world war, and the servents had gone on strike rather than accept the governors' meagre concessions. The chairman, Sir Roger Stone, tried "to pull a fast one" by recruiting a new staff from London, but the juniors were too alert and made April Fools of the newcomers by meeting them in coaches at Bennington and then stranding them for the night at the South View Hotel, Cristowe. Then the juniors, disguised as the new servents, motored to St. Franks and were solemnly welcomed by Sir Roger, who was not at all pleased when he realised his mistake.

Next we had the holiday yarn in which Nipper turned the tables on Christine & Co. and sent the College House Juniors off on a wild goose chase instead, when the full party was due at Lord Dorrimore's home. Dorrie, too, entered into the spirit of the thing and took the lads first to an old workhouse instead of to his home. All turned out all right in the end, of course. (O.S. 304).

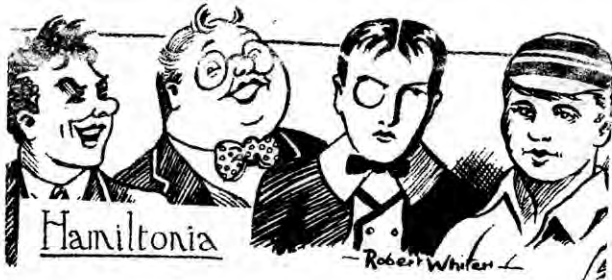
Then came the fooling of Archie (O.S. 357) in which the languid new Removite had "trouble" with the Monks and the

"gipsies", and the College House "rag" was turned against the Monks by Nipper and the Fossils. The following year, (O.S.408) Handforth was the principal figure in the April First happenings. On holiday in London, he was "apparently" mistaken for Nelson Lee and found himself investigating what seemed to be a murder.

Fooling the School (O.S.513) was in my opinion the best of all the April Fool series. It opened with young Willy Handforth setting the whole school by the ears by putting every clock in the place on one hour. This audacious feat was followed by the arrival of William Napoleon Browne, The future Fifth form captain, and stalwart of the first elevens, assumed the identity of a foreign potentate during his journey to the school - getting rid of the prince by telling him a fanciful tale of infectious illness at the school. Then Browne proceeded to "inspect" St.Frank's, giving all the juniors a half holiday, generally upsetting the curriculum and nearly giving his old school chum, Horace Stevens, heart failure. Even when confronted with the truth, Browne brought Dr.Stefford round to enjoying the joke by the exercise of that forceful personality and charm of manner which were to place him well among the most popular characters at St.Frank's in the years which followed.

April the First secured a brief mention in The Stolen Play (O.S.565) in which Ted Handforth was bluffed into believing he had been left a legacy and as a result he tried to lease a London theatre. But it was left to the Moor View girls to provide the second best jape of all. Returning from the School Ship tour the Removites fell readily into the girls' trap and were well and truly japed before they realised after all that St.Frank's had not become a girls' school and the boys removed to a nearby institution (1st N.S. 152).

A joke which nearly had a tragic ending was when the St.Frank's Scouts sent the rancher Earl of Edgemore and "Skeets" Bullton searching for "Wolves" on Bennington Moor. Owing to the machinations of the Earl's rivals for the earldom, the pair nearly met their deaths in the treacherous bogs in the neighbourhood (2nd N.S.63). Needless to say, the Removites effected a timely rescue and all ended well. And here, too, must end my reminiscences of japes and scrapes on April Fools' Day.



Conducted by Herbert Leckenby

Some of you know the story of A.E. Clarke, fine artist of the Magnet in its early days, how he died whilst actually at work on a Greyfriars picture, and how C.H. Chapman was instructed to take over and imitate Clarke as closely as possible. Anyone familiar with the old red covers know how well he succeeded.

Now I wonder if anyone can tell me in which number appeared the best of A.E. Clarke's work. I feel certain No. 276 was his, but No. 325 seems to me to be Chapman's, so it would appear to be between those two.

And that's all I've got to say this month.

THE STORY OF "THE TOFF" (Part 2)

By Josephine Packman

My first instalment of the "Story of the Toff" ended on a somewhat happier note from that with which it had started. Telbot was once more back at St. Jim's, this time as a scholarship boy, with a chance to lead a new life, keep on the straight path, and live down the past.

The next story in this series was No. 353 entitled "Serving Telbot", a tale of Levison and the "Blades of the Fifth", Cutts & Co.

Through a very generous action towards Levison who had been a spiteful enemy, the Toff gained a new friend, and when Levison finds he is able to help Telbot he is not found lacking. Tresham, one of the cronies of Cutts & Co. and treasurer

of the Football Club, attempts, by means of a false tale of robbery, to cover up his own theft of the Club's funds and throw the blame on to the Toff.

The first intimation of there being a thief in the School House was the loss of a 10/- note from Gore's study, and the very fact of Talbot sharing the same study he was naturally the first to be suspected. When Tresham reported the loss of £12 from his desk it was a foregone conclusion that the Toff would be blamed. But Levison, who had had shady dealings with the Fifth Formers, had a very shrewd idea as to where the money had gone and who had been the real culprit, and he saw his chance now to repay the Toff for his kindly action which had saved him from "the sack".

Levison discovers where Tresham had planted Gore's note amongst Talbot's belongings and, by means of his own peculiar methods, re-plants the evidence on Tresham. Thus, when a search is ordered, the real culprit is discovered.

The following week's story, No.356, is called "Captured by Cypher" and also has Levison well to the fore.

It is a rather ingenious tale of a secret cypher being chalked on the front door of the School House, by Hookey Walker, a member of the old Angel Alley gang who had escaped from prison. He used this method of communication to threaten the Toff with death if the boy did not help him to hide from the police.

All the fellows are intrigued by this mysterious cypher, but Levison is the only one to find out its true meaning and, on discovering the secret of the cypher and what it means to Talbot, he again pits his own peculiar wits against the enemy, resulting in the capture of Hookey Walker.

Truly the Toff had found a friend in Levison! After a gap of a few weeks another of the old gang descends upon the school bent on theft, none other than John Rivers, the real leader of them all; and in Gem No.358, "Talbot's Triumph", a really excellent story is written of the Toff's struggle between loyalty to his old comrades and loyalty to the new.

Rivers, or the "Professor" as he is called, comes to the school as "Mr. Peckington", the new science master, but in such disguise that Talbot is not sure if his suspicions regarding the new master are correct.

Mr. Peckington proceeds to make friends with Glyn, one of the wealthiest boys at the school, and eventually goes on a

visit to Glyn's house for the week-end.

Talbot does not know what to expect but fears the worst, and when Glyn reports that a burglary has occurred at his home, he confronts the Professor and demands that the stolen property should be returned and the Professor to leave the school.

By a trick, Rivers entices Talbot down to the old vaults where the unfortunate boy is stunned and left tied up, while the Professor prepared to make an onslaught on the Head's safe and then depart from the school.

Now, Skimpole had been using the vault for a workshop and he arrives that night in time to release Talbot and enable him to return to the school to denounce the Professor who is captured. Rivers, however, threatens the Toff for "giving away an old pal" and says "that no lock had been made which could hold him", a remark which proved to be only too true, and was to cause the Toff much misery in the near future.

Gem No.359 contained quite a happy little story entitled "Talbot's Christmas". The usual crowd of friends are invited to Tom Merry's home, Laurel Villa, for the Christmas Holiday, and Talbot is taken along with them.

The two fags, Wally D'Arcy and Joe Frayne are annoyed at being left out of the party and decide to "camp out" near at hand in a ruined tower.

Being the first war-time Christmas tale, the inevitable spy is tracked down and caught by the St.Jim's boys, and a good time is had by all. This yarn, no doubt owing to its spy element and mention of concentration camps, was omitted from the reprints.

We come now to the set of three stories, which I think are considered to be the best of a very good period, wherein the Toff has his final struggle to remain straight and to break with the black past once and for all.

The first story is in Gem No.361 entitled "The Call of the Past" and relates in a very dramatic manner how John Rivers returns to the vicinity of the school in a last attempt to reason with the Toff and entice him back to the old gang.

To help him in his purpose he instals his daughter Marie in the school as a nurse during an influenza epidemic, thus ensuring that Talbot would not betray him as it would mean betraying Marie as well.

Marie's task is to use her training as a pickpocket, and also to renew her old friendship with the Toff in order to tempt him back to the old game! but alas for the Professor's

schemes, the new surroundings and the Toff's influence work a change in Marie's outlook and she refuses to help her father any longer. But the Professor has no intention of giving up his plans so easily, and in the second story of this trio, Gem No. 362, it is shown how the crooksman's wily schemes to get the Toff once more into his power work out. Talbot is kidnapped whilst on his way to a football match, taken to London and kept a prisoner. Meanwhile, the Professor breaks into the school, burgles the Head's safe, and leaves behind evidence which he knows will cause the Toff to be unsuspected, especially when the unfortunate boy fails to return to the school. After being kept a prisoner for some days, Talbot is allowed to escape, but alas, on reaching St. Jim's, tired and exhausted through lack of food and without money, he is greeted with scorn and condemnation from all and is "Cast Out from the School" as a hardened thief with the police already in pursuit.

Only one junior remains faithful to the Toff, and he is Tom Merry who has always believed strongly in the Toff.

Tom leaves the school during the night to seek out Talbot, knowing full well that the boy could not have gone far, and, finding him, assures the Toff that he will find out the truth.

The last of this series is written in truly dramatic style, showing how Tom keeps his word and, by waiting up each night, a vigil which is shared by his two friends Menners and Lowther, is eventually able to effect the capture of John Rivers who had by no means finished plundering the school.

The Professor refuses to confess to the earlier robbery, and is locked in the punishment room, but Tom means to force the truth out of him; but while the three chums are making their way to the prisoner, they interrupt another intruder, who this time turns out to be Marie Rivers.

She had known her father intended making another attempt to enter the school and wanted to prevent him doing this.

The juniors were astounded when they knew the truth about Marie, but they knew that Talbot was innocent, and that Marie must induce her father to tell the truth.

In the end the Professor was forced to reveal the whole story, but for Marie's sake, after signing a confession, he was allowed to escape.

The important thing now for Dr. Holmes was to find Talbot and restore him to his old place in the school with honour, but many days passed and the Toff was not found. It was so

easy for one person to disappear among the teeming millions in London where it was known the Toff had gone.

I think most of our readers know the end of this story, how Tom Merry and his two chums went to London and searched for their old friend; how they found him starving and freezing and brought him back to St Jim's; and how, after a grim struggle with death very near, the Toff pulled through and faced a bright and happy future, - for who could doubt that he was anything but true blue after suffering to keep his honour unstained, helped by his friend Tom who remained "Loyal to the Lest".

The next yarn in which the Toff is well to the fore, is once more a war-time tale, as are quite a few of the more interesting ones about the affairs of Telbot.

In "The St. Jim's Recruit", Gem No. 364, Mr. Reilton joins up as Private Reilton and he has no less a person as a fellow private than John Rivers, the restwhile crackman. The Toff, ever willing to help even his worst enemy, believes the Professor when he says that he has kept his promise made to Dr. Holmes when allowed to escape, that he would reform, and the boy feels that his old enemy should be given his chance to redeem the past, and, in those war-time days of long ago it was easier for a man to change his name and enlist, than it is now.

There are, of course, many other incidents in this story, as Tom Merry & Co. feel that it is only another trick of the Professor's, but in the end, they too are convinced, and the Professor, as Private John Brown, departs with Mr. Reilton to the seat of war.

After this yarn there is quite a long time before another real Telbot story is presented, other than the Toff being mentioned as a subsidiary character. Some readers had others for their favourites, so of course had to be catered for.

I have a copy of the Spring Double Number of 1915, No. 375 called "Winning His Spurs". This number has very seldom been mentioned, in fact only once have I come across any mention of it at all, and that only quite recently.

It is an excellent story, written on a very sombre - one might almost say melancholy note - but ends happily, as of course all these stories do. It is far too long for me to even try to summarise. I can only say that it deals with the Toff's efforts on behalf of another member of the old gang, this time Hookey Walker who has decided at last that "crime does not pay" and wants to emigrate to Canada.

Now in those days it was quite easy for a man to go by steage to Canada for quite a small sum of money, but Talbot has rather a struggle to find sufficient even for that purpose. Unfortunately his efforts to help Hookey Walker result in a break with Tom Merry who feels that Talbot is doing wrong, but Levison comes to his aid and repays some money which Talbot had loaned him some time before. The result of taking this money to Hookey during the night is that Talbot meets a man who is acting somewhat suspiciously on the moors.

For several nights Talbot leaves the school in an effort to find out what this man is really doing, but Tom Merry imagines he has gone to meet some of the old gang, and at last, even though the two juniors have ceased to be friends, one night he follows Talbot and learns the truth. The inevitable reconciliation follows and they set out together to effect the capture of yet another German spy.

The three following stories in Nos. 376, 377 and 378 deal with the further adventures of Talbot and introduce yet another of the Angel Alley gang, one Ticky Tapp who had been seen around the school before.

Gore gets himself into trouble through this man and Talbot comes to the rescue.

I am afraid I cannot feel very enthusiastic about this particular episode as I think it is rather a little too far-fetched looked at from an adult angle, but of course the whole series was well up to the Hamilton Standard.

(continued)

MAGNET TITLES (Contd.)

179 Bob Cherry in Search of his Father, 180 A Schoolboy's Cross-Roads, 181 Saved from Disgrace, 182 The Cock of the Walk, 183 Inky Minor, 184 The Schoolboy Millionaire, 185 The Slacker, 186 The Only Way, 187 Driven to the Wall, 188 Ashamed of his Father, 189 Sent to Coventry, 190 The Outlaws of the School, 191 An Ungrateful Son, 192 Football Foes!, 193 A Schoolboy's Sacrifice, 194 By Shoe Grit!. 195 The Bully's Chence, 196, For the Honour of his Chum, 197 His Last Match, 198 The Stolen Cup, 199 The Downfall of the Fifth. 200 Wingete's Folly, 201 The Duffer's Return, 202 Against his Father's Wish, 203 "By Order of the Form", 204 The Perting of the Ways, 205 The Duffer's Double, 206 Bolsover's Brother, 207 The Schoolboy Moneylender, 208 Tempted, but True!, 209 The Schoolboy Minstrels, 210 Bolsover's Minor's Last Sacrifice.

Old Boys Book Club

Greenwich Meeting, March 19th, 1950

A grand muster of twenty members assembled at the home of Charlie Wright on the occasion of the March Monthly Meeting. Telegrams from Harry Homer and R. E. Brown, letters from F. Keeling and Hylton Flatman, and a post-card from Ethel Lee announced unavoidable non-attendance.

The chairman opened the meeting in his usual good style. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and signed. Then followed a very lengthy correspondence read first by the secretary and then by the chairman. Most of this resulting from the recent "Leader" magazine article. There were several highlights in this mail of the month and amongst these were two letters from Senor Victor J. Gonzalez of Las Palmas, Canary Islands and which were written in perfect English. This gentleman is a very keen devotee of Frank Richards and it is to be hoped that he becomes a member of the club. Not such a good letter was the one the chairman read from Bob Blythe, and the good wishes of all the members present go out to Bob for a speedy recovery and the resumption of his good articles in the Nelson Lee column. The chairman then proposed a vote of thanks to the secretary on his good work of the past month in dealing with the vast amount of correspondence.

The treasurer's report came next and a sound financial position was given in a clear concise way. He too was thanked for his endeavours on the proposal of the chairman.

The popularity of the club's crested stationery has without the woodcut end, in view of even greater demands for the attractive notepaper, especially now that our northern colleagues are getting together, it was decided to obtain two quotations for a metal block. This was left in J. Geal's and R. Whiter's capable hands. The size of the new block to be thirds that of the old one. Postal provincial members are asked for their kind indulgence in the delay of their share of stationery. These will be forwarded on as soon as the block comes to hand.

be stated that our chairman, Len Peckman, holds pride of place as he has won most of the popular competitions and shows that he is a great authority on the hobby.

In view of the recent controversy about Thomson House, Dundee, boys' story papers, a couple of letters from Helman D. Frost, who has written anonymously most of the stories in their periodicals, provoked great interest. This gentleman intends to become a member of the club and it will be very interesting to hear and learn his views.

The sale and exchange plus the social get-together followed and subjects of interest for future meetings were discussed. The excellent catering arrangements were in the capable hands of Olive Wright and her willing band of lady assistants.

New members of the club are C. Vennimore, R.C.Long, R.Jones, R.J. Godsave, R.E.Brown, and E.Blight.

The next meeting will be held on Sunday April 16th at Hume House, Lordship Lane, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

Forthcoming attraction, the vice-president, Herbert Leckenby, will be with us in September.

Attendance: A.Blunden, I.Whitmore, E.Reynolds, C.Vennimore, R. and A. Deacon, Len, Josie and Eleanor Peckman, R.Southwood, P.Podro, C.Wallis, A.Young, W.Lewson, R.Godseve, J. and Mrs. Geel, R. and B. Whiter, C. and O. Wright.

BENJAMIN G. WRITER.

Old Boys' Book Club

Northern Branch

Steady progress is being made towards forming a Northern Branch. An advertisement was inserted in the Yorkshire Evening Post, which brought several enquiries. A room has been found which would be available on either the second or fourth Saturday in each month, and it is hoped to arrange the first meeting shortly. Would anyone who has not already done so, but is interested, please get in touch with W. F. Sawyer, 172 Tarnside Drive, Seacroft, Leeds, at once?

INVITATION TO DEALERS AND COLLECTORS: Wanted, parcels of Magnets, old and new, on approval. Deposit forwarded in advance if required, (to C.D. subscribers). Unretained copies, remittance and postage returned promptly. J.Walsh, 345 Stanley Road, Kirkdale, Liverpool, 20.

QUESTION AND ANSWER CORNER

Here's the Answer.

In his query snent "The Socialist Girl", Mr. H.W.Fennell voices one of the mysteries of the Victorian Penny Dreadful.

At the conclusion of "The Merry Wives of London" a sequel dealing with the further iniquitous adventures of Laura Bell under the title of "The Socialist Girl" was announced, but there is no record that it was proceeded with.

As numerous copies of "The Merry Wives of London" have survived, it is logical to assume that the sequel, had it been published, would have survived also, but no copy or even a solitary penny number is known to exist and, what is even more significant, no adverts offering the book for sale can be traced in the Sale and Exchange columns of other Victorian papers. It is barely possible that a few numbers did appear, but I am morally certain that the story was never completed.

JOHN MEDCRAFT, Ilford.

Can Anyone Tell?

I am of the opinion that Cherlton Lee, the talented author of many Aldine Dick Turpin, Claude Duval, Spring Heeled Jack and other stories, when a young author on the staff of Charles Fox around 1880-90, wrote the rehashed versions of "Sweeney Todd" and "Spring Heeled Jack". Can anyone produce more definite information in support or disproof of this contention?

J. MEDCRAFT.

Should be grateful for details of any stories of St.Uduelph School in the Diamond Library.

F. STURDY, Middlesbrough.

WANTED: All beck numbers of Collectors' Digest. Also Annuals. Bill Martin, 93 Hillside, Stonebridge Park, London, N.W.10.

FOR SALE: Complete works of Gunby Hadeth (also as John Mowbray up to 1948. About 60 books, 4/6 each, including postage. Titles on request. Good condition, many autographed. A.J.Southway, P.O. Box 3, Beaconsfield, Cape Province, South Africa.

WANTED: Magnets 1169 to 1174; 1175 to 1185; 1191 to 1194; 1050 to 1052. John Robyns, 41 Friar Road, Brighton, 6.

WANTED URGENTLY: Your price paid. Gems 819 and 946. Leonard Packman, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

LETTER



BOX

Jack of All Trades Comes with the Spring

February 28th, 1950.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Many thanks for the C.D. I had quite a jump when I saw the picture on the cover, - which I remember from ever so many years ago. I could not make out the date on it; but surely, like Waverley, 'tis sixty years since! Or more than that. I recall reading the story at the time, and remember a wild midnight ride, and an ostler who pushed into the fray with a pitchfork, and other such thrilling incidents. I wonder how many of the original readers of that old number are still going strong!

This one, at all events, is going full steam ahead. "Lynwood" has materialised at last: I sent you a copy the other day, as I thought you might like to see it. "High Lynne" comes out at the same time. However, my chief interest at the present time is in my new character, "Jack of All Trades", who will be with us, like the flowers, in the spring. I like Jack so much myself, that I should be tremendously elated if the verdict should be, as in the old song, "They all love Jack"!

I liked Eric Payne's article on "Bessie" very much indeed. I am glad that you added your note that C.H. was not responsible for the inconsistencies. It was news to me that Miss Bellew was married, and I had never heard of Mr. Hartley: so really I couldn't be expected to leave it at that.

With kind regards, always yours sincerely,

FRANK RICHARDS.

Talbot to the Fore!

Merch 11th, 1950.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Thanks for the C.D. to hand, - as good as ever. I was specially interested in the article on the "Toff" by Josephine Peckmen, and shall look forward to what is to follow in later C.D.'s. It is curious that I have had a great many letters on the subject of Talbot, asking for him to be given a show in the Tom Merry books: and so I am featuring this character in the book which will be published in September. At the moment it is in a sketchy state.

I liked the article in the Leader very much indeed. One or two trifling errors don't amount to much, in a piece of very fine writing. I was interested too in your reproduction on the cover of "British Boys". I well remember the first number coming out, though it doesn't seem so long ago as 1896. I was quite a young author in those days, - in fact only five or six years old auctorially!

With kind regards, Always yours sincerely,
FRANK RICHARDS.

Who'll Collect "Hotspurs" in 1990?

Seacroft, Leeds.
19/3/50.

Dear Editor,

Present day papers like the Hotspur cannot compare with the Magnet, Nelson Lee, Union Jack and others of yesteryear. They have no intimacy, no character drawing, and the authors are hidden behind an "Iron curtain".

My son of 15 takes a mild interest in them, but he simply devours a Bunter book and is as happy as a sandboy if he gets hold of a Magnet.

I cannot for the life of me picture him or anyone else scouring the earth for back numbers of the Hotspur forty years on.

Yours sincerely,

V. F. SAWYER.

(That's to the point, anyway. - H.L.)

WANTED: Schoolboys' Own Libraries featuring Greyfriars, 1/6 to 3/- each offered according to age. Bill Martin, 93 Hillside, Stonebridge Park, London, N.W.10.

WANTED Films, Photographs, of PEARL WHITE. Robyns, 41 Friar Rd., Brighton, 6.

Famous Five kept us straight

I WAS delighted to hear of the projected Billy Hunter Club in Leeds.

What a lot we boys of yesterday owe to those healthy stories of Harry Wharton and company whose strict code of conduct we strove so hard to emulate!

We never contemplated smoking in those days. That was something just not done by our

heroes. Only sneaks like Skinner of the Remove descended to such depths.

Maybe these schoolboy heroes of yesterday will be scoffed at by the more sophisticated youth of to-day.

But I can't help feeling that the Famous Five were worthier in every way than the modern hard-boiled heroes. They entertained us and helped to keep us straight.—Greyfriars For Ever, Leeds 6.

MAX PEMBERTON

To the older generation of collectors the announcement in the National Press and also on the B.B.C. programmes of the death of Max Pemberton another link with the past has been severed.

September 11th 1892 saw the old established house of Cassell, of the Belle Sauvage, publish No.1 of a new boys' paper which was called "Chums". A young London journalist by the name of Max Pemberton was installed as first editor. After six months Max Pemberton gave to the boys a feast of good fiction in his "The Iron Pirate" which was written in serial form. But poor circulation was the cause of Max resigning the editorship. However, the paper took on a good lease of life and later we find another story by the first editor. "The Sea Wolves" which was written in 1894. One year later he had "The Impregnable City" printed. In 1902 "Pro Patria" (For Fatherland) appeared and this brought him fame as it dealt with the Channel Tunnel scheme and the various controversies associated with it. Other outlets for his prolific pen were stories for the Strand Magazine, although strictly speaking not an old boys paper but published by the "Captain" publishers, viz. George Newnes. Strangely enough, coinciding with Max Pemberton's demise, the "Strand" magazine announced its own swan song, a victim no doubt to the changing times, as several old boys' papers know to their cost.

And so we older boys say farewell to a brilliant writer.

BENJAMIN G. WHITTEK.



All letters, manuscripts, etc to be addressed to the
Editor of Blakiana Section:- H.M. Bond, 10 Erw Wen,
Rhiwbina, Cardiff.

THE ROUND TABLE. APRIL 1950.

During the last few weeks I have received some very interesting letters from readers, some of them new and a few old friends who have followed our popular sleith since their boyhood days. Up until now most of my chat has been taken up with other matters but I think that it is about time that I made the feature more fitting to it's title, and so, for this issue I propose to print some of the more interesting items which my correspondents have mentioned in their letters, I hope that this will foster closer links between readers. The original U.J. "Round Table" was famous for it's presentation of "letters from readers" and I think that a revival of this will be more than welcome to those who take the hobby seriously.

Mr. Leonard Allen of 3, Montgomery Drive, Sheffield 7. has sent along a very fine little article entitled "The Case Of Sexton Blake and the Title" which you will all be reading shortly. In his accompanying letter he mentions that his favourite author is Robert Murray with Lidvy Searles Brooks following closely. He goes on to say:-

"The Confederation yarns, first read from 1918 onwards left a marked impression and I was able to obtain the

The Round Table (continued).

reprints a couple of years ago, deriving just as much pleasure from them, except the final yarn which cleared matters so quickly. Remember, too, seeing a silent film, around 1920, in which Mr. Reece was pitted against Blake and Tinker, title was "The ?????? Liner Mystery". It was shown at, what is now, the oldest picture house in the city. I will probably surprise you with my favourite artist Fred Bennett. His careless style still intrigues me, although I must admit that Eric R. Parker's present work is excellent despite the fact that very often the S.B.L. 7d Library cover illustrations do not fit any particular incidents in the stories. I have one in mind ... No. 161 (3rd series), "The Income Tax Conspiracy" by Anthony Parsons. During his long career Blake was connected with almost everything, films, stage, radio, international intrigue and so on...I noticed that, with the outbreak of World War II and the prospect of long hours in Air-Raid Shelters the A.P. introduced a new card game on the 'cops and robbers' theme called SEXTON BLAKE. Never saw one myself, but wonder if any fellow collector still has a pack and plays the game. Do you think a description of the game with the characters, would form an interesting article for Blakiana?"

YES, MR. ALLEN, I am sure everyone would like to have fuller details of that intriguing Blake card game. I wonder if any other readers recall it? I must confess that I have never had a pack, but would very much like to. And what do you others think of Fred Bennett as a favourite author. I would like to have letters about favourite artists.

Newly published bound volumes by favourite Blake writers are mentioned by John Gocher in his latest letter. He first of all mentions "The Tilted Moon" by Barry Perovne who will be remembered for his Blake versus Raffles stories in the 1930's. He thought it was "sheer unadulterated tripe". If any other reader has read this new book I shall be pleased to have his views, although this, of course, is not strictly Blake material. John also considers the new Rex Hardinge book "very poor stuff indeed". Hardinge, writing under his non-de-plume "Capstan" gives us a story called "Feud". I have a feeling that it may be a rehashed Blake story, but cannot trace it as yet.

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 * B L A K E ' S F I R S T C A S E .
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by WALTER WEBB.

THERE have been several stories describing Sexton Blake's first case. As these were all different narratives one is left in some confusion of mind as to which version the correct one.

FIRST there was the case of "The Mystery Millionaire" by Hal Meredith, acknowledged to be the first Blake story ever. This was published in "The Halfpenny Marvel" in 1898. Then, in 1905, there appeared between the covers of "The Union Jack" the story entitled "Sexton Blake's First Case" written by ex-editor Stanhope Sprigg. Two or three years later Cecil Hayter began a serial in "The Boy's Herald" featuring "Sexton Blake at School" in which narrative he described the youthful Blake's activities in helping the round up of foreign criminals. In view of Blake's tender years, one is compelled to accept Hayter's version as the likely one.

HOMELSS, and without even a name, the lad who was to become famous under the name of Sexton Blake, lived his boyhood the hard way. Alone and friendless he had to depend upon his sharp wits and dauntless courage to avert starvation until there entered his young life the mysterious Dr. Lancaster who befriended him. What education the homeless waif received before entering St. Anne's College was given him by his old friend and tutor, the doctor, and fitted him the better for his new and happier life within the school walls. When Dr. Lancaster was killed by certain men whose identity he had discovered he left behind him sufficient funds to pay his young pupil's fees at St. Anne's, at which institution the latter entered as Sexton Blake.

HERE he met for the first time "Spots" Losely, his friend in many later adventures, chiefly in Africa. The boy's unusual Christian name prompted "Spots" to call him

Blake's First Case (continued).

or thought he did, one would not retaliate to his bullying tactics. Blake was described as tall for his age and slightly built. Certainly he would not look a very formidable proposition. But young Blake DID retaliate, and a fight resulted. Hard as nails, tough as whipcord, the new boy made short work of Wightman, who was left to face the ridicule of his school fellows.

WHEN told it was the custom for all new juniors to fag for the Fifth and Sixth, young Blake was too good a sportsman to refuse, so that when "Spots" Losely selected him for his fag he made no demur. It may seem curious that one possessed of such strength of character and qualities of leadership should submit to being ordered about in such fashion, but Blake took an immense liking to Losely, and was pleased to seek his company even in this capacity. In turn Losely grew to respect Blake's sterling qualities and eventually refused to allow the latter fag for him any longer. So tightly had the bonds of friendship become drawn.

YOUNG Blake soon proved himself good at sports, but it was on the running track that he shone particularly well. It was at St. Anne's that he developed the long, gliding stride which sent him covering the ground at an amazing pace - the same stride which subsequently made him famous as Untwana, the fastest runner in all Africa. There was one person who had very good reasons to be thankful for young Blake's arrival at the school. He was Dr. Wilson, the Headmaster. The Head was in the power of a gang of French criminals who were remorselessly blackmailing him. St. Anne's, a rather gloomy place, was situated by the sea, facing the French coast, and the crooks gained admission to the building by means of underground passages leading from a cave to the school chapel. From there other passages led to the Head's study. When, on coming in contact with one of the blackmailers, young Blake recognised in him one of the murderers of his friend Dr. Lancaster he was spurred on to determined efforts to save his unfortunate Headmaster, and bring the criminals to justice. In their persecution of the Head, the crooks began to roam the school at will, until Blake took a hand.

Apparently in his earlier days, the Head had become mixed up in the activities of the gang who were in possession of certain information, which, if divulged, would cost him his

Blake's First Case (Continued).

his present honourable position. In order to avert this, harrassed Dr. Wilson handed over the school funds, but in retreat from the school the crooks were pursued by Blake and "Spots" along the secret passages which were honeycombed in the school buildings.

SOETHING went wrong however; the crooks discovered their pursuers were only boys and they turned at bay, and Blake and Lesely were made prisoners instead of vice versa with the result that they found themselves being taken across the channel. They escaped by jumping overboard, were picked up by a passing steamer, and subsequently landed on the French Coast at a small place called Dunquerque. Their next step was a visit to the Consulate, where Blake handed over to the British Consul, the school funds which he had managed to get from the grasp of the Frenchmen, before he and "Spots" jumped overboard. Through the good offices of a Frenchman, one friend of Dr. Lancaster, who arranged their passage home, Blake and Lesely were soon back at St. Anne's again.

VERY soon the gang struck again, and this time things looked decidedly sticky for the much persecuted and unhappy Head. Their means of entry into the school discovered, they had obviously given up any further hope of being able to get more money from the man they had been blackmailing so ruthlessly, and so had decided on revenge.

WHEN a dead man was found in his study Dr. Wilson discovered himself in the position of being unable to account for his movements at the time of the crime. The Head's assertion that he was outside the school grounds alone was disbelieved in view of the hall porter's statement to the effect that he saw the Doctor and the dead man in the study together. The scene in the study was a dramatic one, with the Head's fate in the balance. But the youthful Blake's extraordinary upbringing under Dr. Lancaster had made him self reliant and obedient to a degree which would have been surprising in one three times his age, and although in ignorance of Dr. Wilson's actual whereabouts at the time, he was able to prove beyond doubt that the Headmaster could not possibly have committed the crime.

Blake's First Case. (concluded).

stirring within him, the urge to get out into the world, to place himself on the side of the law and order, and devote himself to the task of assisting those who were in sore need of such aid as he, by reason of the unique talents bestowed upon him by nature and which, like his physical strength he would develop to an even greater degree through the years, was empowered to give.

OF his subsequent cases - those he undertook whilst still a teen ager - those must be the subject of another article.

THE END.

NEXT MONTH:-

"THE CASE OF SEXTON BLAKE AND THE TITLE"

by Leonard M. Allen.

U.J. TITLES for 1926 and 1927***
THE ROUND TABLE - with more items from letters.

COMING IN JUNE:- "WINNING HIS SPURS" or Sexton Blake's Test Case. This is the sequel to the fine article by Walter Webb which we have great pleasure in printing this month.

WANTED! S.B.L. 1st series (1915-1925) No's:- 3,6,7,9,10,12, 13,14,17,18,22,26,27,31,34,35,36,37,38,39,40,45,47,49,51,53, 83,99,103,104,105,106,107,108,109,110,111,112,113,114,115,116, 117,119,121,122,123,125,127,129,130,132,133,135,136,139,140, 141,143,144,145,147,148,149,150,151,153,154,156,157,158,159, 160,161,163,164,165,168,169,170,172,173,174,176,178,181,182, 183,184,185,188,189,190,191,193,196,197,198,199,200,201,202, 203,204,205,206,219,227,228,230,233,248,250,255,256,257,262, 263,265,269,270,271,287,293,297,298,310,312,352,354,357,360, 361,362,365,366,368,371,380,382.

Please state condition and price. Bond.10ERw Won.Rhiwina.
Cardiff. South Wales.

EXCHANGE: 3 Gems for 2 Magnets before 1915.

GEMS WITH COVERS: 221, 243, 231, 336, 232, 220, 284, 395, 296, 380, 422, 420, 401, 412, 411, 436, 437, 345, 331, 462, 469, 459, 468, 103, 185, 167, 168, 130, 72, 66, 441, 170, 208, 475, 484, 513, 524, 528, 543, 742, 753, 748, 795.

GEMS NO COVER: 14, 161, 170, 278, 212, 141, 142, 246, 364, 377, 378, 189, 158, 258, 194, 270, 405, 404, 406, 715, 778, 799, (33, 36 - ~~2~~.)

MAGNETS WITH COVER: 272, 275, 177, 118, 251, 249, 325, 358, 348, 380, 329, 330, 365, 459, 464, 501, 503, 595, 597, 490, 551, 542, 559, 651, 757.

MAGNETS NO COVER: 220, 326, 114, 152, 129, 130, 260, 247, 258, 248, 306, 269, 219, 318, 221, 262, 270, 371, 122, 126, 133, 336, 371, 314, 353, 298, 429, 409. Double Number.

Please send Titles and Numbers of Magnets to J. Shepherd, 1 Athelsten Close, Sheffield 9. NONE FOR SALE.

WANTED: Gem No. 334; also other numbers concerning Talbot, and S.O.L's concerning Rookwood. E.A. Hubbard, 58 South View Crescent, Sheffield, 7.

If you have only one OLD BOYS' BOOK for sale or up to 10,000, Consult Bill Martin, 93 Hillside, London, N.W.10. and be sure of a Straightforward deal. Present day market prices offered.

WANTED: Union Jack numbers 1380, 1383, 1388, 1391, 1396, 1397, 1401. W. Darwin, 76 Western Road, East Dene, Rotherham, Yorkshire.

WANTED FOR COLLECTION: Nelson Lees (Old Series) 1-102, 105-118, 120-132, 134, 135, 137, 138, 140-145, 155, 158, 164, 205, 227, 230, 234, 235, 237, 238, 240, 241, 242, 248-250, 252-255, 259, 263-273, 276, 284, 285, 302, 303, 305, 312, 314, 316, 319-322, 324-329, 332-334, 336, 337, 342, 344-348, 394, 505, 507, 511, 512, 514, 538.

First New Series 17, 33. 2nd New Series 52, 141.

A few miscellaneous books for exchange, i.e. "S.O.L's", "Bullseyes", "Thrillers", "Boys' Magazines", "Boys' Cinemas". Cedric H. Groombridge, 12 Bernwell Road, St. David's Estate, Kingsthorpe, Northampton.

WANTED: Old Sexton Blake Libraries; also Boys' Friends, Magnets, Populars and other old boys' books. William Smith, 57 Barkby Road, Syston, Nr. Leicester.

LEEDS JOINING THE BILLY BUNTER FANS

Club will revive schoolboy heroes

Y.E. News Reporter

LEEDS is forming a "Billy Bunter" club to revive the spirit of such immortal characters as Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry and the fat "Owl" of Greyfriars School.

Their adventures in the Magnet magazine fascinated countless thousands of schoolboys for nearly 50 years until 10 years ago when publication ceased owing to shortage of paper.

To-day, rare copies needed to complete collectors' sets are fetching anything from 2s. to £5 each.

Secretary of the Leeds club, Mr. W. F. Sawyer, of Faraside-drive, Seacroft, said to-day: "We are of the opinion that if these stories and papers were once again published there would be less juvenile delinquency. These yarns always pointed a moral without being gaddy-goody."

"CLASSICS"

Mr. Sawyer described them as the classics of schoolboy magazines which have created characters almost as famous as many of Dickens.

Leeds is to be the northern headquarters of what is known as the "Old Boys' Book Club" formed in London so that Billy Bunter fans can get together to talk about their school-day heroes and exchange out-of-print magazines.

One of the first Leeds members to join was Mr. Norman Smith, 44-year-old sales manager for a West Riding woollen mill, of Wainthorpe, Beeston, whose hobby is collecting Magnets. Already he has 100.

AUTHOR PRESIDENT

Mr. Charles Hamilton, author of these stories, still writing at his



Billy Bunter

home at Kitesgate 4, Sea, near Broadstairs, Kent, although turned 76, has accepted the presidency of the club.

He is better known under his pen-names—Frank Richards of the Magnet, Martin Clifford of the Gem, or Owen Conquest of Boys' Friend.

Most members of the "Billy Bunter" Club are expected to be middle-aged men who have not lost their taste for the stories that thrilled them at school.

The club's inaugural dinner is being arranged to take place in Leeds in May.

No harm

"Actually there is no harm in the boy. I know how all this started."

"He had a few comics which he wanted to swap. He saw his friends and exchanged the comics for an American Western magazine."

"In that magazine there was a story entitled 'The Chain Gang,' which dealt with these bicycle chains. My son made one—unknown to me."

"He was once the possessor of a few tame mice, and these he exchanged for the knuckleduster."

"Colin is not like the boy of our young days. We had the Magnet and the Gem to read, with tales of loyalty and schoolboy adventure with such types as Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton."

"But today, what does youth want to read except the gangster magazine, and what are his thoughts?"

"In his cupboard over the bed in his room Colin kept these instruments. Naturally the cupboard was locked—any schoolboy loves to keep a key in his pocket."

"There was nothing sinister in a locked cupboard. This is a case of the sins of the son being visited on the father. I never dreamt for one moment that things like this were going on."

During the hearing a cutting from The Daily Mail was produced in court by Mr. J. Hutchinson, defending the youth. He said:

"I have here a newspaper picture of such things that a boy can buy in a well-known shop in London. They cost 1s 6d each."

AND: On Saturday, 25.3.50 the Daily Mail published a report, "The Case History of a Cosh Boy". Interviewed the Father, spoke as in the above paragraph. This confirms what we have always contended.

AS WE GO TO PRESS: This useful "splash" appeared in the Yorkshire Evening News, Friday, 24th March.