

The Collector's Digest

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Vol. 5 No. 55

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JULY 1951

Editor, Miscellaneous Section
Herbert Leckenby, Telephone Exchange,
C/o Central Registry, Northern Command, York.

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

The Annual Event: We're past the longest day of the year; the longer nights are coming, so we must get down in earnest to our Fifth C.D. Annual. With this issue you will get the now familiar forms. Now I do want to appeal to you to complete the Questionnaire as quickly as possible. Last year, despite the utmost, a number of names were omitted, not always due to the fault of the unfortunate ones, but because there was such a rush at a late hour, thus adding to my problems. There's bound to be many additional names too, for we are finding quite a lot of new friends.

Now I told you some time ago that we had been able to put on one side a good proportion of the paper we shall require. Moreover, putting my cards on the table as usual, there was not quite such a steep increase in price as for that for the monthly. But there was an increase and there will be a bigger one for the rest of the paper we require, to say nothing of stencils, envelopes, etc. Therefore I am sure none of you will quibble if we make our price this year 10/6. This we

think will enable us to make it about the same substantial volume it was last year. Anyone can, if they wish, pay by instalments.

We are already assured of articles up to the high standard of previous years, but shall welcome more, so you'll get your grey matter to work, won't you?

And, of course, we must have adverts. The old rate, 2d. word.

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Scoop. The London O.B.B.C., thanks to the alert Bob Whiter, served up a delightful surprise at its meeting on June 17th, for they had as guest Mr. C. H. Chapman, the clever artist whose drawings were familiar to Magnet readers for 30 years. You will be able to read all about it in the report of the meeting. Another great score for the Londoners. Edwy Searles Brooks (twice); Kenneth Brookes; Eric R. Parker; and now C. H. Chapman. If only - well, you know what I mean, don't you?

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Boys' Weeklies Again Provide Newspaper Copy. "The Yorkshire Post", leading journal of its county, gave boys' weeklies a rare spread in its issue of May 31st. The article covered three half-columns, and had a benner heading in large type, thus:

BOYS LIKE SCIENTIFIC

ROMANCE

Tales of planets and ray machines
replace Billy Bunter.

By Derrick Boothroyd.

In the text Mr. Boothroyd, evidently, an old Hamiltonian, described a chat he had with his newsagent: "Discussing the evident craze for stories of fantastic adventure, visits to the planets and so on, the newsagent displayed one example and said:

"Look here. Even school stories have to be scientific these days."

The picture showed a peculiar object rather like a flying bomb with legs on stalking over a wall in the direction of a school. "The pupils and teachers of Hillsbury School", a caption explained, "have been kidnapped and transferred to another planet, where an exact copy of the school has been built."

This flight of fancy made Mr. Boothroyd ask, "Aren't

there any normal school stories, then? What about my old friends Herry Wharton and Bob Cherry? Isn't Billy Bunter still borrowing fivvers from people to pay for his doughnuts at the Greyfriars tuck shop?"

The newsagent shook his head. "No," he said with affectionate remembrance. "The old 'Magnet' finished years ago, and so did the 'Gem'. There isn't what I call a sensible one left." He shook his head sadly. "I don't know what kids are coming to these days."

So interested was Mr. Boothroyd that he later visited a wholesale newsagent and got the loan of a pile of present-day weeklies, including the Thomson papers, the A.P. Champion and a number of comics. After a lengthy examination he seemed to come to the conclusion that although the comics had not changed a great deal, the others could not compare with the halcyon days of the Magnet and the Gem.

And I wot if a poll was taken among all those who read these lines there would be 100 per cent agreement. One, in fact, that young enthusiast, Brian Honeysett, lost little time in saying so.

A day or so later I let myself go in a letter of some length. Needless to say I put up a case for the days when editors were real live personalities, and authors not merely a line of type - or less.

Then friends from down-under have sent me copies of the Melbourne "Age" for April 7th. Therein was an article running to the greater part of a page under the heading "Yerms of Yester Year - Magnets for the Boys". The writer had evidently been an avid reader in his youth and even though his memory had failed him somewhat (he made Tom Brown one of the Famous Five; had Trimble at Rookwood; confused Ferrers Locke with Ferrers Lord; and gave Tregellis West as the author of "The Invasion of England") it was a very interesting article.

And no sooner had I written all this than I heard of more enterprise on the part of Jack Corbett, energetic chairman of Midland Section, O.B.B.C. It included a fine publicity letter in the "Manchester Guardian", a good write-up in the Birmingham Evening Dispatch, and an interview with a columnist on the Sunday Mail. Moreover, a copy of the Gem had been sent to Dr. Edith Summerskill (a reader in her schooldays) to which a charming reply had been received. Nice work, Birmingham.

Another Collectors' Magazine! Here's a cordial welcome to "Collecting Juvenile Literature", published by Wheeler Dryden at 17 Vancouver Road, Edgware, Middlesex. No.1 is

mainly by way of introduction and it is gratis. It consists of four pages very neatly printed in green ink. It is stated to be "a Magazine for Hobbyists who Collect Boys' and Girls' Papers, Magazines and Books of To-day and Yesterday. Read by Youth - and by Grown-ups Who Stay Young!"

On the four pages Mr. Dryden gets in quite a lot about the hobby and the names of quite a number of our members are mentioned. He hopes to publish it quarterly, increase the size with an appropriate charge, and include articles of interest to all collectors. Here's wishing it a long life.

+ + +

That London Meeting. I made rather a bloomer over my own comments on that suspicious event. Not satisfied with what I had written I made another attempt and thought I had expressed myself better. Then I'll be blessed if I didn't forget to exchange them for those first written. Perhaps it didn't matter very much but I could have kicked myself for one thing. In the re-write I did what I should have done in the first place - paid tribute to Len Peckmen for handwriting some fifty copies of that long two-page Quiz. The task was about equal to doing 2000 lines for Mr. Quelch, but I guess there was more pleasure in the doing thereof, even though it must have required a lot of patience.

Sorry, Len, for being a month late.

And I am over-running my space, no more this month from

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT LECKENBY.

STOP PRESS. We deeply regret to announce the sudden death of Arthur J. Cruse, of Bristol. He died in his sleep as the result of a heart attack.

Readers of the C.D. will know that Mr. Cruse had written a book "Hobby Horse to Ride" in which our own particular hobby had a lengthy chapter. It is tragic to think he has not lived to see it published.

Mr. Cruse was well known as an authority on cigarette cards, and he was recently in the news when he received a cheque for £1000 from King Ferouk in payment of a quantity.

WANTED: Bunter and Tom Merry books - reasonable.

P. S. Checkley, 18 Tarlington Road, Coundon, Coventry.

WANTED C.D. Annuals 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950. Bill Martin, 93 Hillside, Stonebridge Park, London, N.7. 10.

POPULAR PAPERS OF THE PARTNo. 15. The Boys' Own Magazine

By Tom Hopperton.

"TAKE TWO DOZEN EGGS..."

Yes, Mrs. Beeton's "Beeton" and "Cookery Book" are as indissolubly linked in the English mind as "fish and chips" or "Weary Willy and Tired Tim". Still, if publishing his wife's books is likely to remain Samuel Orchart Beeton's chief claim to fame, he did make a pioneering contribution to a field in which, except at meal-time, collectors find more interest.

Beeton was swimming with the tide when he launched "The Boys' Own Magazine" in January, 1855. An unlettered population had been no particular handicap to "Merrie England", but the growth of the capitalist system had made a literate working class a necessity. Compulsory education was only aborted in 1843 by religious dissension, and the efforts of the private and subsidised schools had, even in the 'thirties, produced a mass of people hungry for reading matter, but unable either to appreciate or afford the wares of the ordinary bookseller. The rising publishers of the penny-part romances reaped a rich harvest - their doyen, Edward Lloyd, alone put out hundreds - but these yarns, fierce or otherwise, were not primarily aimed at juveniles. The idea that a boy could be entertained while reading was one not yet fully developed. Beeton and others helped it on.

"Everybody's Weekly" (24-3-1951) was sacrificing accuracy to effect when it said of the "B.O.M.": "Nobody ever thought of such a venture before... which was literally crammed with thrilling tales". Even I can trace a dozen previous papers, mostly containing fiction: tales occupied only a third of Beeton's space, and anyone who digs up copies expecting to see some revolutionary innovation will be disappointed. Beeton was the child of the times and the parents and publishers of the day were keener on "uplift" than a modern cossetier. A fair sample of the then popular is "The Youth's Instructor and Guardian" which reached Volume 31 in 1847 and probably persisted for several more years. It barred fiction, and its solid masses of improving information may have enlightened but certainly did not enliven the minds of its readers.

Beeton followed closely in its pattern, even down to the 9" x 6" page size. Averaging it out, 33 pages of the 92 in a monthly part were given over to fiction, 58 to articles,

and one to poetry. Samples of the three serials are: "Cressy and Poitiers" by J.C. Edgar; "The Adventures of Reuben Devidger, Seventeen Years and Four Months Captive among the Dyaks of Borneo"; "Hubert Ellis, A Story of King Richard's Days the Second" (sic) and "Ingonyama, the Caffre Chief", by that Captain Drayton who was still turning out boys' stories when he was a full-blown general. Most interesting of all is "Silas the Conjuror". Silas is also a ventriloquist, and it is quite clear that Valentine Vox deposited an ample credit in the Bank of Credulity which has been freely drawn on by a host of his successors from Silas to W. G. Bunter.

The articles covered a wide field in science, natural history and general interest, sometimes with quite advanced technical data. There were long-winded series covering historical and geographical highlights such as the "Story of the British Navy" and "Up in the Alps". (If there was a single species of Swiss bug that escaped the pen of Sir Lascelles Wrexall, it should feel slighted). But even although it was not "crammed with exciting stories" the "B.O.M." was evidently to the taste of its clients. It lasted for over thirteen years, whereas its companion ventures, "The Boys' Own Journal" and "The Boys' Penny Magazine" stayed for a mere six months and four years, respectively.

External troubles played their part, however, and Beeton was hopelessly handicapped by the failure of his bank and by illness. The paper died in 1874 and the poor editor, stricken by T.B., followed it in 1877. They were carried to success on the first great wave of literacy. If they had endured only a few years longer they could have achieved even greater triumphs on the larger wave set in motion by the 1870 Education Act, but by that time Beeton and his works were gone and the chief beneficiaries were the Harmsworths.

WANTED: Girls' magazines, School Friend, Schoolgirls' Own (weekly and monthly) Schoolgirl, Schooldays. Also Schoolgirls' Own Annuals and Cliff House Annuals. Also Holiday Annuals for 1920, 1921, 1925, 1927, and 1928. Arthur J. Southway, P.O. Box 3, Beaconsfield, Cape Province, South Africa.

WANTED: Cheer Boys Cheer, Vol.1, Nos. 1 to 12, 14, 18, 20, 21, 22. Vol.3, No.66. Boys Friend 3d Library, No.2,5,7,8, 10, 182, 196, 595. Id. Marvel, No.393.
E. Blight, Constantine Bay, St. Maryn, Padstow.

HAMILTONIA

Conducted by Herbert Leckenby

Here's more about Charles Hamilton's early writing activities. On May 5, 1907, appeared the first number of "The Vanguard" price one halfpenny. The publishers were Trapps, Holmes & Co., who had already some "comics". A few weeks earlier "The Gem" had been born and "The Vanguard" was the same size with a cover of slightly different tint. Main feature was a long complete story and that in No.1 was "The New Boy at Northcote" by Charles Hamilton. Stories of a varied kind followed until we come to No.7 which was "Plucky Jack Stanhope - The Adventures of a Board School Boy" also by C.H. who also was responsible for No.19, "The Fourth Form at Northcote". There were others later but I have no note of them.

It will be remembered that a few non-school stories appeared during the first weeks of the "Gem". Then an astute editor made it the home of St. Jim's with no other tenants. On the other hand the "Vanguard" continued with varied stories and died at an early age.

One wonders what would have happened if its editor had decided to boost Northcote.

From 3d Weekly to Television: Way back in the carefree summer days of 1908 when the golden-hued cover of a modest little paper called the Magnet was becoming a familiar sight on the bookstalls, not even a Jules Verne would have foretold: "In near 50 years time Harry Wharton and his chums, and that queer fellow Bunter, will still be at Greyfriars. Moreover, not only will you have the opportunity of reading about them but you will be able to sit back in a chair in your own home, adjust your spectacles and with your grandchildren by your side watch those eternal schoolboys come to life on a screen in the manner of the plays you see in those new "Picture Palaces". No, no prophet would have dared to say that, and if he had, you wouldn't have believed him. Yet, as I mentioned last month, unless something unforeseen occurs it's going to happen before this year of grace has run its course. Verily, another stirring page to an amazing story.

When the possibility was mentioned at the eventful Whit Sunday London meeting, a heartfelt cry went up, "It's to be hoped they make a better job of it than they did with the Greyfriars episode in the "Boys Will Be Boys" broadcast."

Well, there are hopes, for, according to the "Daily Mail" of June 6th Frank Richards himself is writing the scripts. What is more, Greyfriars is being built at Alexandra Palace. Evidently the D.B.C. mean business. The "Daily Mail" wonders where they are going to find a boy fat enough to play Dunter. Maybe they'll reverse the recent slimming business and feed up some lucky youth in the manner Dunter would appreciate. But the problem won't end there; they've got to discover someone able to portray the Dunter known to the faithful. And that's not going to be easy.

Anyway, to those lucky ones within range I can see some dates with a television screen this winter.

MIDDLE AGE SPREAD

By P. A. Walker

It seems fairly safe to assume that the majority of the readers of the "Collectors' Digest" are approaching middle age, or have reached it! In other words, their memories of the golden days of the Magnet, Gem, Boys' Friend, Nelson Lee, Union Jack and the others are somewhere around the end of the 1914-1918 war.

This being so, I propose to devote a little time and space examining this "purple period".

The fields of Flanders filled our minds during those days. Errand boys whistled "Tipperary", "Pack up your troubles", and "If you were the only girl in the World". Charlie Chaplin was the screen's idol, and appeared on the front page of "The Funny Wonder" each week. Military processions were frequent diversions. The curious looking mule was greatly in evidence.

The Magnet and Gem discarded their red and green covers. They were now printed in bronze blue on white, and were shortly to be laid. I remember, very distinctly, that the tales varied in quality. One week they were good, another simply putrid. Like many others at that time I was considerably puzzled, but as all collectors now know, only Frank Richards was responsible for the good ones.

It was around this time that the Gem contained stories dealing with Levison Minor, and Levison major's subsequent reformation. Cardew of the Fourth was catching the eye, and the Chums of Study No.9 were vying with the Terrible Three for publicity. "Moneybags Minor" was a new pet for Crocke. The one and only Gussy became a racehorse owner in "D'Arcy's Deal" and "Donny Lad's Race". The Gem carried a weekly panel

exhorting us "To Eat Less Food", and the "back numbers required" column shewed that the boys in the trenches still wanted their Magnet and Gem. Manners had a lot of trouble with his minor during this period, and the curious St.Jim's Parliament was formed with headquarters in Peppers Barn. We heard quite a deal about Grundy, Wilkins and Gunn, St.Jim's counterparts of Coker, Potter and Greene of Greyfriars. The Gem dwindled in size, and became a very slim thing of 16 pages, with consequent reduction in the size of the illustrations, which were by the redoubtable Warwick Reynolds. Herries had an orchestre, and the Sussex countryside abounded in spies. Jack Blake captured a Hun sirmen all by himself, and Zeppelins droned over St.Jims.

The distasteful Baggie Trimble was prominently featured, and the editor went to a lot of trouble to tell us that Frank Richards, Martin Clifford and Owen Conquest were three entirely different people in a serial entitled "Personal Recollections".

A list of Gem titles appeared week by week in the Editor's Chat, whetting our appetites with "Figgins' Fig Pudding", "The Mystery of the Painted Room", and "The Housemaster's Homecoming".

A prolonged series dealing with a succession of sporting battles between Shell and Fourth started its marathon run. Besides cricket, football, boxing, cross-country running, and the like, we were regaled by long-winded accounts of chess battles, and Koumi Rao had the wind up very badly when the German raiders were overhead. Presumably this series was by J. N. Pentelow. Wally D'Arcy ran away from St.Jims and took up boxing, and the redoubtable Clive of the Fourth used a heavy hand in dealing with the roulette players.

These were good days for the Gem despite the effects of the war and paper shortage, and it is interesting to reflect that even in 1917 the Gem introduced a double Christmas number with a grand yarn "The Shadow of the Past".

And the Magnet followed in similar strain. "A Very Gallant Gentleman" comes vividly to mind, in which Courtney of the Sixth lays down his life for a friend. "Parted Pals" and "Linley Minor" are two early memories. A strange Christmas number appeared with a coloured cover depicting "Four from the East", and dealing with an unusual Christmas party which included one Piet Delerey, who later seemed to vanish from the Greyfriars scene. "The House on the Heath", a tale of vast snowstorms and escaping Germans, was another Christmas issue of pleasant memory. And a very vivid memory too, as similar

weather conditions were prevailing at the time of reading. Alonzo Todd was regularly featured. The Chinese, Wan Lung, an unfortunate travesty, I always felt, and a diminutive minor, Hop Hi made frequently appearances.

Curiously enough, the war seemed farther away in those Magnets than in the Gem, but in 1918 it came to an end, and the Companion Papers continued, and in 1920 a new girls' weekly, "The School Friend" appeared. It was a Miss Hilda Richards this time who entertained us week by week with her chronicles of school life at Cliff House. Barbara Redfern, Marjorie Hazledene, Bessie Dunter and Co. were our new girl friends.

In September of that year a great new thrill arrived in the shape of the Holiday Annual, later, for some obscure reason, to become the Greyfriars Holiday Annual. The editor of the Companion Papers kept us on edge for weeks, prior to the great day of publication. It took months to save up 6/- in order to buy this mammoth production. However, we did it, and the first Holiday Annual was ours. Maps and plans of Greyfriars and St. Jims and Rookwood were pored over, and we studied the lists of the occupants of the three famous schools.

I remember the "Mystery of Limehouse Reach" in the Nelson Lee. "Nipper at St. Franks" followed some time later, and Ipper began to chronicle his own adventures. Arthur Jones was drawing his curious illustrations, and the great Handforth burst upon the scene. Reggie Pitt arrived as the Serpent, Tom Burton waded in, and Jack Grey was kidnapped. Great days for the Nelson Lee.

Mondays have generally been reckoned, at any rate since I can remember, the black day of the week. In my boyhood, Monday was the bright day, as the Magnet and Boys' Friend came out together. The Boys Friend, at this period of its long career, had, of course, Owen Conquest on the front page, with grand yarns of Rookwood. We revelled in the adventures of Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd, Mornington and Erroll and young 'Erbert. Adolphus Smythe, Peele and Gower, Townsend and Topham were the "knuts", with Lettrey, the villain of the piece.

Frank Richards waded in with his own account of thrilling schooldays in the backwoods of Canada, where Bob Lawless, Vere Beauclerc, Chunky Todgers and Frank himself tackled hungry wolves, grizzly bears, and sharp-shooting ruffians with complete nonchalance. The Editor's Chat was a full paged affair, and often furnished football forecasts for the coming Saturday's matches, and the Hombay Castle sailed serenely over the oceans.

The pink-covered Union Jack saw to it that we had our weekly dose of thrills, and gave us Mr. Reece and the Criminals' Confederation, Dirk Dolland, Zenith, and Waldo, George Marsden Plummer was at grips with Sexton Blake, and Baker Street appeared to be permanently enveloped in fog.

Schooldays were over, and I went into the wide world and all its dangers, and was pleasantly informed by my elders that the youth of 1924 were not comparable to the youth of 1914. I made a mental note that when I reached a mature age I would not pass the same remark about the youth of 1950. But...! Disastrously, I slipped into the late teens, and the Magnet and Gem fed into the background. Harry Wharton and Tom Merry, Nelson Lee and Sexton Blake ceased to be of interest. But the years slipped by, and one day in the 1930's I again exchanged 2d for a copy of the Magnet, its cover now in blue and orange, and rather unfamiliar. Inside, however, were the old Greyfriars chuns, with Bob Cherry still booming his "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" and Smithy was still nipping over the fence around the "Three Fishers".

Old memories were revived, and great days re-lived, but, of course, our time was 1918, wasn't it?

FOR SALE: Bow Bells, Jack Herkeways, Boys' Comic Journal, London Apprentice, Bretts and other publications 1840 onwards, 2d and 1d Gems, B.O.P., Captain and others. Offers or requirements to Ingham, 47 Norborough Road, Doncaster.

TURF CIGARETTE CARDS: Can any reader supply (sale or exchange) No. 36 of "Turf Cricketers" issued about a year ago? Only one required to complete the series. Write to Peter Webster, (Jun) Waterloo House, 7 Crosby Road South, Liverpool 22.

YOUR PRICE PAID for No's 26 to 35 inclusive Story Paper Collector. T. Hopperton, Courtlands, Fulford Rd., Scarborough.

WANTED: Nelson Lee Libraries 1st New Series 137-139 inclusive, in good condition. C.F. Auckland, 67 Hemsworth Rd., Sheffield 8.

WANTED: Aldine "Buffalo Bills", "Robin Hoods", "Dick Turpins", and any early Boys' Friend 3d Libraries with historical stories. Bill Martin, 93 Hillside, Stonebridge Park, London, N.W.10. 'Phone Willesden 4474.

WANTED URGENTLY: Western 7d Library, No's 13 and 15. 2/- each and postage paid. Traynor, BCM/Adventures, London, W.C.1.

OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB
London Section

Meeting at Cherry Place, 706 Lordship Lane,
Wood Green, London, N.22. - June 17, 1951.

With an outstanding personality like C. H. Chapman gracing the company by his presence a very fine meeting was expected, and needless to say members were not disappointed. Already in attendance the great artist greeted member after member with a firm handshake and a kind word. Soon after four o'clock the chairman announced the meeting open and welcomed Mr. Chapman with a fine speech, Bob Whiter, acting as secretary owing to Ben Whiter's vacation, then read out the minutes. These being duly signed were followed by the correspondence and likewise the treasurer's report, the latter being adopted. Among the former was a letter from Miss E. Flinders expressing her regret at not being present owing to pressure of work, Miss Flinders being an artist of repute herself. While this was going on, Mr. Chapman was deep in Len Packman's famous scrapbook on the hobby. The treasurer then received members' subscriptions, and as Mr. Chapman wished to leave soon after 6 o'clock, he invited the company to ask him various questions on the Magnet, the A.P. etc.etc. Numerous interesting facts then came to light, many heretofore unknown. It was very nice to know that Mr. Chapman has a complete collection of Magnets and Holiday Annuals and actually loves the stories stating emphatically what the youngsters of today were missing. It was also nice to hear his admiration of Mr. Richards both as a man and a writer. Many members then had autograph albums etc. signed by the man whose name will always be associated with Greyfriars, some more fortunate ones, myself included even had quick sketches executed as permanent souvenirs, mine being drawn on the fly-leaf of 1929 Holiday Annual.

The first quiz, devised by Ben Whiter, was won by Bob Blythe, with Ian Whitmore and Roger Jenkins despatched for second place. The Magnet quiz was won by John Geal, with Ian Whitmore again coming second. Suitable prizes were awarded. Previous to this, after having his photograph taken by our old friend Robby, Mr. Chapman left, expressing his delight at the keenness of members and the welcome he had received. It is of interest that Mr. Chapman took with him Bill Gander's first volume of the S.P.C. thus reading Cedric Rickards' article on himself. I wonder if Cedric ever thought that some day the celebrated artist was destined to

read his article.

Time was drawing on and after discussing various topics and activities to be held at future meetings - the company gradually broke up and departed to their various destinations, taking with them, I am sure, happy memories of both the meeting and of the man whose fine draughtsmanship has delighted us since the day when the A.P. commissioned him to take Arthur Clarke's place.

The next meeting was fixed for July 15th when the venue will be Blake Chambers, in other words Charlie Wright's famous abode. Attendance was as follows: Mr. C. H. Chapman, Len Peckman with Josie and Eleanor, Charlie and Olive Wright, Mr. Lawson, John Robyns (Robby), Ian Whitmore, Roger Southwood, Roger Jenkins, Ron Crollie, John Geal, Cliff Wellis, Mr. Cox and Mr. Flight, Bob Blythe, Allan Bishop, E. Reynolds, Mr. Godseve, Mr. Godfrey, Allan Stewart, Mr. Hurrell, Jim Perrott, and Bob Whiter.

ROBERT H. WHITER, Treasurer.
Acting Sec.

OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB
Northern Section.

There was a shadow over our monthly meeting held on June 16th, for our so popular leader instead of being in his usual chair was occupying a bed in Leeds Infirmary as a result of a severe heart attack.

Bill Williamson, worthily taking Reg's place, had the unhappy duty of breaking the news to those who had not heard it. It was obvious it came as a great shock.

Reg. had been visited earlier in the afternoon when he was found to be quite cheerful. He had said the attacks were becoming less frequent, and less severe. He was confident he would be in his old place at the next meeting. It was the fervent hope of all present that it would be so. Reg had also said he would be with us in spirit that afternoon and asked that we proceed in the usual happy way.

Acting chairman Bill then extended a hearty welcome to Henry Stables of Bradford, present for the first time, also to Phil Warren, Manchester whom we had not seen since the dinner.

Secretary Norman read the minutes of the last meeting together with some interesting letters.

Norman also said it was hoped to arrange an excursion to the seaside, preferably the second Sunday in August. More details later Gerry Allison had more to say about the popularity of the Library, announcing with a beaming smile that the income from it in May had exceeded that received in Club subscriptions. A meeting wouldn't be a meeting without some happy idea from Gerry. On this occasion it was that a letter should be sent to Reg signed by every member present in round robin fashion.

I then had a word to say about the great London event. I gave as a typical example of the comradeship shown by the London Club to the Northern the massive volume of story titles in Len Peckman's familiar handwriting which had been presented to us, and would prove of immense value as a work of reference.

I also told how on the day after the meeting Reg had expressed a wish to Charlie Wright to see a part of London far away from the West End scene. Charlie, who knows almost every foot of his native London, obliged with a tour of Limehouse Reach, Wapping Old Stairs and many other places down East made so familiar in the exciting stories of our youth.

I told too of how Reg in hospital had recalled, with a little catch in his voice, of another happy evening spent at the home of Bob Blythe.

I concluded by saying that it made me happy, too, to tell of all this for it proved up to the hilt all I had said about the hospitality and good fellowship we of the north (and members of the clan anywhere else for that matter) would always find at London Town.

Next came a real do, what I can best describe as an examination paper set by Stanley Knight. For thirty minutes almost complete silence reigned in the room. 'Twas like the Remove at work under the eagle eye of Mr. Quelch. Now and again a Bunter-like sigh was heard as someone grappled with a problem like "Name as many schoolboys as you can of Greyfriars, St. Jims and Rookwood whose surname begins with the letter 'L', or "Who was the Australian schoolboy who played for England in a test match against his own country? (Oh yes, I know Bob Blythe would have no trouble with that one.)

Anyway it was all really good fun, and the successful candidates were Breeze Bentley, 37 points; Gerald Allison 30; Norman Smith. Norman who had a copy of the prize offered kindly gave way for Horace Twinham close up with 22.

The rest of the evening was spent in the usual torrent of words.

In view of the call of the great outdoors in Fleming June

there was a gratifying attendance as follows:

W. T. Williamson (chairman), Gerald Allison and Mrs. Allison, Norman Smith, Horace Twinham, Stanley, Mrs. and Keith Knight, H. Stables, W. Harrison, Harry Berlow, C. Topham, Miss Vera Coates, Phil Warren, J. Breeze Bentley, Mrs. C. Banks and Christine, A. Thomas, D. Killingbeck, D. Pullen, Tom and Mrs. Sinclair (just) and Herbert Leckenby, Northern Section correspondent.

(I say Tom and Mrs. Sinclair were "just" present, 'cause they dashed in like a passenger catching a train as it was leaving the platform. However, as they have now found Hyde Park Road, we hope the cares of business will allow them to make a longer stay next time.)

OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

Midland Section

The Inaugural Dinner

The Old Boys' Book Club Dinner took place on Saturday, 19th May, 1951, at the International Centre, Suffolk Street, where a very enjoyable evening was spent by twenty-eight of the regular members.

With rare and old copies of "Magnets" and "Gems" etc., decorating the reception room a real atmosphere of those famous schools of fiction, Greyfriars and St. Jim's, pervaded over all those present and old and new members were soon animatedly discussing the famous schoolboy characters from the ever hungry Billy Bunter to elegant Augustus D'Arcy with his celebrated eye-glass.

After a very excellent dinner a toast to the health and well-being of Mr. Frank Richards, author of the "Gem" and "Magnet" stories, who is nearing his eightieth birthday, was proposed by Mr. Jack Corbett, Chairman and Founder of the Club; the welfare of the Club was proposed by Mr. Peter Mellor, Secretary, after which the health of the Ladies was proposed by the Treasurer, and Mr. E. H. Davey, one of the Club's first members, thanked the Chairmen for the work entailed in founding the Club.

The evening was concluded with a very excellent and enjoyable entertainment given by Mr. George Smallwood, well-known Magician, who is also a Club member, and his partner, Miss D. Woolley.

The Old Boys' Book Club or "Billy Bunter" Club began

through a "Mail" article which interested numerous people throughout the Midlands and commencing with about twenty "Magnet" and "Gem" enthusiasts the Club register now contains the names of forty-five people, with postal enquiries for membership still being received. Anyone interested is invited to contact the Secretary, Mr. Peter Mellow, 19 Collingwood Drive, Grest Barr, Birmingham.

PETER MELLOW,
Secretary.

Report of Meeting held May 28th, 1951

Hallo, hallo! No, it's not Bob Cherry of Greyfriars waking the echoes with his stentorian roar; no, it's only Peter Mellow, the Midlands Section Secretary, shouting from the roof-tops to all readers of the C.D. that there has just been another tip-top meeting of the O.B.B.C. in Birmingham. Boy, oh Boy, what a gathering. Thirty-four grand people in room seven of Birmingham International Centre proving to the whole world that as long as there's a single jam tart left around, Billy Bunter and his companions will never say die. This was only our fourth meeting and we are already an established success. When we arrived at the Centre we found some other people had settled themselves in our room, and were "Sporting their Osk" to us. However, with typical Greyfriars spirit we overcame this amusing if startling difficulty and settled ourselves in the newly vacated premises like study-mates at beginning of the new term. The Minutes and Correspondence were followed by a Greyfriars quiz, and "Old Quelch" almost lived again as Chairman Jack Corbett imitated that famous gentleman, reading out the quiz questions; if only he did have a mortar-board and gown, what a picture! The quiz was won this time by young Master Davey who scored nine and three-quarter points out of a possible ten. He received the prize of a set of Magnets. His father incidentally was the runner-up with nine and a quarter points.

Mr. Smith of Ballsall Heath also scored very well again and it's obvious that as some members are miles ahead of others we may have to introduce a handicap system. Mr. Davey and Mr. Moulton then entertained us by taking off the parts of Billy Bunter and Vernon Smith. The conversation can well be imagined. The general get-together was the signal for tea, cakes and biscuits to be served. The last item on the agenda was of course the ever-popular sales table, and Jack Corbett had undoubtedly again gone to considerable

trouble to obtain more of the old favourites for the members' convenience and pleasure. Those who were desirous of doing so were this time able to buy quantities of the Club Heading Paper and envelopes to match at an economical cost. Here again I must give thanks to our Chairman who spared no effort to arrange these facilities for our members.

Apologies for not attending were received from Mr. Bird, Mr. Trevor, and the Treasurer Mr. Pound who did manage to come along for the last half hour.

Present were:

Chairman, Jack Corbett; Secretary, Peter Mellor; Mrs. Corbett, Mr. Bourne, Mrs. Brown, Mr. Clack, Mr. Carroll, Joyce Carroll, Mr. and Mrs. Davey and Master Davey, Mr. Dale, Mr. Farrington, Messrs. F.A. and A.J. Fletcher, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Green, Mr. Hubbell and son, Mrs. Hill and two sons, Mr. Herding, Mr. Jones, Mrs. Moulton, Mr. Persons, Mrs. Price, Mr. Peers, Miss Scott, Miss Scott, Mr. Smallwood, Mr. Smith, Mr. Willison, Miss Woolley, and the Rev. A. Pound.

Next meeting June 25th.

P. L. Mellor,
Secretary.

WANTED: Magnets (600-900); Gems (pre-1000); Populars; Holiday Annuals; Pre-war Triumphs; Hotspurs; Wizards; Skippers; Adventures; Rovers; Boys' Friends; Pilots; Boys' Magazines; and Modern Boys. Also Hotspur, Wizard and other Annuals. All with school stories. Good prices paid.
P. Willett, 67 Ford Bridge Road, Ashford, Middlesex.

URGENTLY REQUIRED: Number 1-30 of Collectors' Digest, Bullseyes, Surprise, Fun and Fiction (1911-1914), Firefly, and Dreadnoughts.

Will buy or exchange for Union Jacks, Detective Weeklys, Magnets (1d, 1d and 2d), Rangers, Holiday Annual 1931, Bound Nelson Lees 1931. P. J. Checkley, 18 Terlington Road, Coundon, Coventry.

WANTED: Nelson Lees Nos. (First Series) 229, 232, 239, 264, 273, 308 to 311 and 328 to 337, also various earlier ones than 229. Details to C. H. Churchill, 123 Pinnoe Road, Exeter.

PLEASE HELP: Wanted Boys' Friend Libraries, Sexton Blake Libraries. Honeysett, 65, Orchard Road, St. Annes, Lencs

THE NELSON LEE COLUMN

All communications to Robert Blythe
46, Carleton Road, London, N.7.

Some time ago Ben Whiter asked me a question concerning the meaning of the St. Frenks motto, thereby causing me to burn the midnight oil in great quantity, apart from giving me a headache! Blow me down if he hasn't dug up another beauty! However, as Ron Burrow, of Leeds, asks the same question I therefore get me some more oil (midnight variety) and a box of aspirins, and get down to it.

The query was, "What do the various articles represent on the St. Frenks crest?" Here is the best I can do after wading through an enormous tome on Heraldry.

The Chevron: A purely artistic device with a narrow band on either side following the contour of the Chevron (known as "cotises"). The Chevron here has no specific significance and was probably adopted because of the school's association with some notable personage who bore this device in his own coat of arms.

The Bishop's Mitres: These are derived from the fact that the college was once a monastery dedicated to St. Francis.

The Open Book: This, of course, signifies knowledge - usually a quality inseparable from the attributes of an institution of learning! (Crumbs! Hark at me!)

The Chief: The broad band across the top of the shield is an heraldic device on which to display other charges (objects, to you and me).

The Keys: These are probably the keys generally associated with a bishopric and often used in that connection in heraldry.

The Rose and the Crossed Swords: These are included in the crest as a mark of respect to the Welbeck family who, as you know, did so much towards the founding of the college. They were part of his personal coat of arms and were granted by the King for the part played by the family during the Wars of the Roses, (the swords), and the heroic conduct of Sir Hugh Welbeck in one of the deciding battles, (the Tudor Rose).

So there you have it. The next time you get any of the St. Frenks notepaper just reflect how much history went into the make-up of the crest!

And now, in case you're thinking you're reading the wrong column by mistake, let's get back to the Nelson Lee.

Len Allan has written an article (which, may I venture to hope, may be the first of many to appear in this column by N.L. enthusiasts?) concerning a rather neglected aspect of the Nelson Lee, namely, the Detective Supplement of the '20's. Right! It's all yours, Len.

Our Detective Story Section

By Leonard M. Allen.

The price of the "Nelson Lee" was raised to 2d. on November 26th, 1921, but to maintain the sales the number of pages was increased by eight, to forty-four, and a supplement "Nipper's Magazine" introduced. This feature was gradually reduced to two pages, the remaining six consisting of reprints of Nelson Lee detective stories. The issue for December 9th 1922 saw the last of "Nipper's Magazine", the whole eight pages being devoted to two detective yarns under the title of "Our Detective Story Section". All were reprints but the illustrations throughout the run of this supplement appear to be originals by E. E. Briscoe.

Another detective, Carfax Beines, replaced Nelson Lee with a weekly adventure, but the other series had no central character and, in my opinion, were originally written for an adult paper, possibly "The Penny Pictorial". They described Scotland Yard methods in dealing with various types of criminals. Other, but little known sleuths, replaced Carfax Beines, in turn the exploits of Mervyn Hume, Abel Link, Gordon Fox and Derek Clyde were offered. The stories were very similar to those appearing in the comic papers between 1910 and 1916, possibly some reader could trace their antecedents; for instance, Abel Link is very reminiscent of a former "Firefly" character, Abel Deunt, who was later resurrected in the "Bullseye".

Positive proof of reprinting, however, was evident when, in No. 410 of the "Lee", the first instalment of "The League of the Iron Hand" was published. Very rarely was the author's name given throughout the forty-nine numbers of the "Detective Story Section", and this was no exception, but it can be traced as a reprint of the Maxwell Scott yarn, slightly rewritten and condensed, entitled "The Iron Hand". This story first appeared in "The Boys' Herald" on July 6th 1907, illustrated by Val Reading. Another Maxwell Scott serial succeeded this in the section. "The Silver Dwarf" followed by the sequel, "The Missing Heir". The Amalgamated Press paid the author what

considered a very large fee in those early days for the two stories, £175.10.0., which was about £5 an instalment. They, however, certainly reimbursed themselves, for both were reprinted at least three times. Originally published in the green "Boys' Friend", the story and sequel ran for thirty-six weeks, concluding August 6th 1902. Both were reprinted under the original titles in the "Boys' Field" 3d Library, No's 16 and 17. Then in the "Lee" supplement and later as three weekly numbers of the "Nelson Lee Library" 2nd N.S.

The last instalment of "The Missing Heir" saw the end of the "Detective Story Section" which was replaced by "The St. Franks Magazine", a reversion to the old policy on the "Nipper's Magazine" principle.

It will be of interest to readers to know that our worthy editor, after reading the above article, gave me the following facts.

Carfax Baines originally appeared in the "Budget Story Book" in the '90's and Gordon Fox stories were in the Boys' Herald" round about 1905. Both were originated by Murray Graydon.

Abel Link appeared in the 1/2d. "Boys' Friend" about 1898 and Derek Clyde was featured in the "Detective Library (1920) as well as "Thompson's Weekly News" and "Glasgow Weekly Record". Can anyone trace the originals, I wonder?

By a coincidence, our serials list this month incorporates the whole of the "Detective Story Section".

O.S. Nos. 274-294. Kit and Core, by C. Wolfe.

(Reprinted in Boys' Friend Lib. 1st Series, No. 554)

O.S. Nos. 295-314. Beyond the Desert, by Reid Whitley.

(Rep. B.F.L., 1st Series, No. 584)

O.S. Nos. 320-335. The Ghosts of Marsh Manor.

(Story of Nelson Lee and Nipper. Not by E.S.B.)

" " 338-366. Tom Tarter at School, by Hercourt Burrage.

(An old favourite this, and reprinted many times)

" " 367-383. The New Usher, by Hercourt Burrage.

(Also an old story. A reprint, as was the last)

Here we come to the Detective Story Section.

O.S. Nos. 410-419. The League of the Iron Hand, by Maxwell Scott (see article)

" " 420-431. The Silver Dwarf, by Maxwell Scott.

" " 431-441. The Missing Heir, " " "

Appearing at the same time as the last three were stories of Carfax Baines from No. 392-403, Mervyn Hume by S. Rossiter - Shepherd from Nos. 403-408, Abel Link No. 409, Gordon Fox

from 410-422, and Derek Clyde from 423-436.

And now, as there doesn't seem to be enough room for the titles this month, I must leave you.

Cheerio! See you in the tuckshop.

LETTER BOX

Mr. C. H. Chapman returns Thanks. (Letter to Bob Whiter)

44 Highmoor Road,
Caversham.

Dear Mr. Whiter,

19. 6. 51.

Now I am back to normal, having arrived home safely on Sunday evening. I would like to thank you all for the fine reception and feed, hospitality and friendliness you gave me at your jolly meeting - which I thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed. I would like to keep your book a few days longer and will take great care of it.

Yours sincerely, C. H. CHAPMAN.

Frank Richards Promises Further News about Greyfriars on T.V.

June 7th, 1951.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Many thanks for the C.D. A good number! I was glad to see your extracts from George Orwell's article in the Manchester Evening News. I remember reading this at the time, and thinking that it was very honest and decent of him to own up to an error. He made the same amende in his volume of essays, in which the Horizon article was reprinted. Although I couldn't agree less with any man's views, on most subjects, I believe that he was a very good fellow, and was very sorry indeed to hear of his early death.

I see by your note on page 159 that you have seen the allusions in the Press to Bunter on TV. This seems now to be taking definite shape, and I hope to have some news for you on the subject before long. There are many details to be worked out. But it does seem settled now that ere long a familiar fat face, adorned by a big pair of spectacles, will be peering from the TV screen, - to the satisfaction, I shall hope, of viewers old and young.

No doubt you have seen the references in the Daily Mail, in which our friend Jack Corbett of Birmingham was the prime mover, many thanks to him for that same!

With kind regards, Always yours sincerely,

FRANK RICHARDS

"B L A K I A N A"

JULY.

1951.

.....
 Editor:- H.H. Bond - 10, Erw Wen, Rhiwbina, Cardiff, Wales.

THE ROUND TABLE.

Since my last chat I have had the great pleasure of personally meeting yet another really student of Sexton Blake lore. While on holiday in Blackpool I paid a visit to St. Annes-on-Sea and met Brian Honeysett. Once again I marvelled at the manner in which our hobby destroys all vestige of awkwardness between perfect strangers. Within a minute of my ringing his doorbell, Brian and I were chatting like old friends and believe me we covered a lot of ground in the two hours I spent at his house. Brian has a nice little collection of 1st series S.B.L. and also a pile of "Magnets" all in mint condition. Although not yet out of his teens Brian evinced great interest in the older issues of the Blake stories and is determined to get a big collection if he can. I would like to add here that if Brian can bind together all the S.B.Ls he manages to get, in the manner he has bound other magazines in his possession, he will have a Blake collection to be really proud of. Yes, I really enjoyed my brief stay in St. Annes and hope to pay another visit one day. And while on the subject I hope that I may find it possible to meet other members of the circle from time to time. Don't forget if any of you are Cardiff way I shall be delighted to receive you at the home of Blakiana.

I feel sure that you will all agree with me in saying that Ben Whitton has contributed a really clever little item for this issue. I shall be very pleased to hear what you think of it, so please write and let me know. Of course we all revere Sherlock Holmes but he will never take the place of Sexton Blake and it is nice that at least one member of our clan has had the foresight to place our own hero in the shoes of someone else's hero. Thanka a lot Ben.

Gorry Allison who ably reviews the new S.B.Ls draws my attention to the references to Tinker's childhood on Page 14 of "The Headmaster's Secret" (No.242 -3rd series). It seems as Gorry says, that Blake has brought Tinker up from a baby. Yet another problem for the Blake historian!!

H.H.B.

BENJAMIN WHITER has just submitted the following article for which we cannot find a suitable title. We feel sure, however, that if any of you follow in his footsteps and visit No. 221b Baker Street you will be seeing the ghost of Blake rather than the Ghost of Holmes treading the sacred rooms.

-.-.-.-.-

Sexton Blake and the Festival of Britain.

Nostalgic memories have been aroused in the minds of the many admirers of the famous sleuth as a result of the book exhibition at the South Kensington Museum held in connection with the Festival of Britain. So it was with the greatest of pleasure that I wended my way to the museum to view the book exhibits that are on show there about the Baker Street detective. My appetite whetted I turned my thoughts to the London thoroughfare where the great sleuth was supposed to have his rooms. I reached the junction of Marylebone Road and Baker Street and lo! and behold I saw what I thought was a figure of the famous 'doc, but no, it was the direction sign placed on the lamp standard of the Sherlock Holmes exhibition organised by the St. Marylebone Borough Council in connection with the Festival of Britain. Supporters of Holmes will forgive me when the idea came to me that I would visit the Holmes exhibition and picture it through the eyes of a Sexton Blake enthusiast. I crossed over to Abbey House, 221b, Baker Street and prepared to enter. But stay a moment, the large car outside, could it be the Grey Panther? And the two old ladies with the huge dog tugging at its leash, could they be Martha Bardell and her sister Mary Ann Cluppins out with Pedro? No doubt taking the hound for a run in the nearby Regents Park. If the dog had got loose I was fully prepared for Mrs. Bardell to ejaculate her "The cats after me" which, as all Blake lovers will remember was her way of saying the word "catastrophe". However, to enter the exhibition I nearly knocked over a Welsh newspaper reporter who was covering it for his local rag, he reminded me of the late Gwyn Evans of Xmas stories fame, shades of "Splash" Page and "The Daily Radio". Well, into the first room. Here all the exhibits, very varied, concern the detection of crime. All the anomalies of society passed through my mind as here were some of the tools of their nefarious trade. The Criminals Confederation, Plummer, Waldo, Kestrel, Dr. Satira, Huxton Rynner, The Three Musketeers

and all the rest of the motley throng of arch criminals came to the mind as the various exhibits were inspected.

After a time I entered the second room and here the Holmes experts have done a wonderful job. But to me it could have been Blake's room as well. The Victorian atmosphere reminded me of the old original Blake stories ere we reached the more modern ones of the present day. After a very good perusal I reluctantly left, my mind full of nostalgic memories of not only Sherlock Holmes but of Sexton Blake and Tinker and all the other characters that we have grown to love, criminals included. I wended my way down the busy thoroughfare full of thoughts, and eventually reached Victoria where I was pulled up with a start, for there were some of the last of London's trams, reminding me of the famous "Tram" series about Blake that appeared some years ago in the "Union Jack". Truly the Festiva; of Britain has something to interest us old boys' book lovers.

Benjamin G. Whiter.

 MY VERY GOOD FRIEND and Co-Editor, Herbert Leckenby, has been browsing through the Blake stories that used to appear in "The Penny Pictorial" during the first decade of this century. He has discovered a romantic scene that happened years before Yvonne and Roxane came on the scene. Listen!

"I promised you a reward if you were good, didn't I?"

Blake nodded,

"Come here then" He went and stood close to her. She was smiling and her eyes sparkling with mischief. Before he realised what she was doing she raised herself on tiptoe & deliberately kissed him, then pointing ceilingwards and darted away laughing. Blake looked up and saw that she had lured him all unsuspecting under a big bunch of mistletoe. "Tinx" he said and chuckled to himself. "But I'm glad I earned my reward".

Reprinted from the story "Lady Molly's First Case" a splendid complete story of Sexton Blake in which a woman shines as detective. 10/12/08.

And of course the young lady who kissed him WAS Lady Molly.
 Who was Lady Molly anyway?

(SEXTON BLAKE IN THE EDWARDIAN ERA)

by Walter Webb.

Chapter One.

In his interesting book of the old boys' papers of the past, the author of "Boys Will Be Boys" mentioned the fact that in a companion paper of THE UNION JACK there were disconcerting references made of a Mrs. Blake - a claim which had set researchers hunting through the 200,000,000 odd words which have, so far, been written of the famous detective. This claim was made by a crony of Mr. Reginald Cox and NOT by the author, who suggested that the report should be treated with reserve in view of the fact that there was no concrete evidence forthcoming to show that Blake ever did marry.

But the claimant is quite right in his assertion, for there was one story at least in which Sexton Blake referred to his wife. This historic story is to be found in THE UNION JACK Double Christmas Number for 1901, the title being, "Sexton Blake's Lost Clue". The author was Percival Cooke, otherwise editor Percy Bishop, who also brought into the story Wallace Lorrimore, the character he created as assistant to Blake.

The scene is Blake's rooms in Norfolk Street, Strand. The detective is trying to induce a young man named Ralph Henderson, who is one of the central characters in the affair, to go with him to Brussels to help bring to justice one George Dingle, suspected by the police for theft. Henderson announces his willingness, but is concerned for the welfare of Rose Denton, his fiancee.

"If Miss Denton agrees" says Blake with a smile, "She shall go forthwith to my wife's house, and remain there as our guest, as our honoured and welcome guest, until you return to claim her as your wife!"

This, however, was the only reference made by Blake of his wife, for the author neither brought her into the case, nor vouchsafed any description of her,

Most of the authors who wrote for the UNION JACK in the Victorian era continued to do so in the Edwardian period, amongst the most prolific (hitherto not mentioned by me) being Lieutenant A. Hanson, O. Herland, J. Trounwell Mugford, Edwin Wooton, Julian Jackson, Franklyn Wright, Alexis Graham,

Dudley Brand, John Stanton and Singleton Pound. A notable exception was Harry Blyth, for his work ceased to appear in THE UNION JACK after 1899 by which time it must be presumed he had ceased to write, having passed on long before his time.

In my previous article* I mentioned the name of Molton Whyte as being a probable chronicler of Blake's exploits in the Victorian Era. I have since discovered at least one Blake adventure to be found in U.J. No. 172 under the title of "Dead Man's Hand". The date of publication being 5th August 1897. Also although I rated Paul Herring amongst the "probables" he too must now be classified as one of Blake's Victorian authors, for he was responsible for the story which appeared in U.J. No. 336, dated 29th September 1900, under the title of "The Parachute King".

Some of the stories by the aforementioned authors were, admittedly, quite good, but none attained the standard of Franklyn Wright's work. For sheer brilliance in mystery and detective story writing, the latter towered head and shoulders above the rest, and, in my opinion, not even W. Shaw Rae, good as he was, could be said to have been in the same street. An example of this (though by no means the best) is to be found in issue No. 323 dated 30th June 1900, published in the dying days of the Victorian era, under the title of "Murder Will Out". Franklyn Wright was not, so far as I know, one of Blake's early chroniclers, which was a most decided loss both to Blake and to his fans. A Blake story by Franklyn Wright in those very early days when really good detective stories and writers were very few and far between would have been something of an event.

It may not be generally known that Wright was the pen name of Henry Farmer, who created the character of Felix Lorimore, Detective, but this is a fact. So good a writer was he that he was appointed Literary Editor on the "Daily Express" in that paper's early years and wrote also in the "Evening News" the novel "Wolves of London", one of the most popular newspaper serials ever written.

Another interesting fact about Henry Farmer is that, like Arthur S. Hardy and Arthur Applin, he had stage experience and was the original Charley in "Charley's Aunt" and it has been said that he did not miss a show during the whole of its run. Many fine authors wrote of Blake, and it seems that Ernest Goddard, the editor of U.J. missed an opportunity

here of adding yet another to the list. The editor of the MARVEL seeing in Henry Ramer a most promising recruit, promptly commissioned him to write some detective stories for him and thus Felix Lorimore, Detective came to be born.

Chapter Two will appear next month.

NEW ISSUES OF THE SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY reviewed by Gerry Allison.

- No. 239. IT HAPPENED IN BELGROVE SQUARE. JOHN HUNTER.
The H. H. mixture as before. Verb. sap.
- No. 240. HATFIELD ALL. JOHN DRUMMOND.
Including your reviewer.
- No. 241. THE CASE OF THE INDIAN DANCER. ANTHONY PARSONS.
A blackmail murder in which Blake and Tinker chase off to India once again. Readable, but the set-up is phoney. Aziz Mohamed would never have submitted to all that complicated extortion, for sowing one little wild oat.
- No. 242. THE HEADMASTERS SECRET. REX MAR DING.
A Victorian lady, after seeing Antony and Cleopatra, remarked, "How different from the home-life of our own dear queen".
In the same way, when reading this school/murder tale, I thought "How different from dear old Greyfriars".
Can you imagine Doctor Locke, a widower, and marrying a night club ~~daughter~~ floozie? Or, when she is found murdered, he and Rosalie, his daughter, sinking the body in the Sark?

FOR SALE: 109 Thrillers (Nos.2-115): Nelson Lees, 1st New Series, 101 copies: The complete 2nd New Series (161 copies): The complete 3rd New Series (25 copies). Offers invited, part or whole, cash or complete or partial exchanges for Magnets, Gems, S.O.L. Tom Hopperton, Courtlands, Fulford Road, Scarborough.