

# The Collectors' Digest

MARCH, 1956

Vol. 9. No. 99.

Price 1s. 6d.



I'm  
Running to Make Sure  
of My Copy of the 100<sup>TH</sup> C.D

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MARCH, 1955

Editor, HERBERT LECKENBY,  
c/o YORK DUPLICATING SERVICES,  
7, The Shambles, YORK.

## From the Editor's Chair

A BUSY WEEK END: Saturday, February 12th found me in Bradford and Leeds, the following day at noon I set off to attend my first meeting of the Merseyside O.B.B.C. British Railways did me proud: they got me to Lime Street dead on time. They must have been aware of the importance of the occasion. I found Frank Case and Norman Pragnell awaiting me. I was whisked off to Norman's home for tea, then off to Don Webster's for more tea, which would make it appear that the advice to cut down the imbibing of the cup that cheers was being ignored.

Then the members began to gather, and what a friendly crowd it was; no 'war of the roses' on this occasion.

Frank will be telling you about the programme; personally, I enjoyed every minute of it. I was greatly impressed by the way everything was arranged: and the swing with which it went from start to finish. The Leeites were in strong force: Bob Blythe, Jack Wood and the other staunch Brook's fans would have been in their element had they been there. There's also several humorists at Merseyside to add to the fun.

As for the nice comments that were made concerning myself, well, honestly, there were times when my heart was full. Going home I kept feeling at my hat; it didn't seem to fit.

British Railways didn't keep it up on the homeward journey for the train steamed into York two hours late, but what cared I. But, oh, the things I should have said if it had happened the other way round.

My heartfelt thanks to all the members of the Merseyside O.B.B.C. It was well worth eight hours of travel, and I shall remember it for many a day.

\* \* \* \* \*

AN AMAZING COINCIDENCE: Writing about the late Gwyn Evans tricks a few months ago I said what a treat it would be if only we could read one of his bizarre stories at Christmas time with a title something like "The Man Who Stole the Nelson Column", for as you know Gwyn did get some quaint ideas at Yuletide.

Well, on my last visit to the home of Harry Stables I picked up a volume of the 'Scout' and looked at the index. In the author's list I spotted Gwyn's name: he had written just one story. Said I to myself, 'Hallo' I never knew Gwyn Evans had written for 'The Scout'. I turned up the page and then I stared, rubbed my eyes in astonishment and wondered if I was seeing things. For there right across the page was the title and it read - "The Man Who Stole the Nelson Monument". Well, what do you call that, coincidence, second sight or what? For on my word of honour, I had no more idea than a new born babe that that story had ever been written by Gwyn Evans or anyone else.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE ANNUAL: Proportion of subs. still outstanding now eight per cent. Grieved as I am, that's all I am going to say about that.

\*\*\*\*\*

99, 100! I can yet hardly believe that the big event is so near. Nevertheless as soon as this issue has caught the mails, I shall be down to it in earnest. There will be extra pages for Blakiana, Hamiltoniana and the Nelson Lee Column, and I shall be giving a review of many thrilling experiences since No. 1 saw the light of day. And quite a number of those whose names appeared in that number will have something to say too.

We shall try and get it out about the usual time but if it is a day or two late there will be a good excuse.

Yours sincerely,  
HERBERT LECKENBY.

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THE "ANNUAL" BALLOT

Here are the first figures in the voting. It will be seen that the position is extremely interesting. It looks like being a very close thing this year for all the articles are receiving good support. This is all to the good. There's quite a lot of voting papers to come in yet. Don't forget to send along if you hav'n't already done so, for I would like to have as near a hundred

per cent poll as possible.

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## BLAKIANA

Conducted by Josephine Packman

27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

How time flies. No sooner have I posted 'copy' for one month to Herbert Leckenby than I am preparing the next!

That special 100th number to which we all so eagerly look forward is almost in our hands, so to speak. As I look at the 98 issues standing side by side in the bookcase, I think of all the years of love's labour put in by Herbert (not forgetting Maurice!) and I think of the vast amount of Blakiana material along - enough to fill a volume of its own. Maybe when I am on the Office Retired List I will type it all and have it made up into a complete book of Blakiana. Quite an idea, isn't it?

What do you think of this? I wrote to my Australian chum Victor Colby, and amongst other things I mentioned that, apart from a few 'good faithfuls', support in the way of material for Blakiana was rather disheartening. Just about a fortnight later I received a package (by air mail which cost 8/- to send), containing the article which appears in this issue. The covering letter said that the writer was sorry to hear of Blakiana being 'in distress' and that he had at once got down to something which he hoped would be of use. Well, all I can say is this: if a chum all those thousands of miles away can rally round without actually being asked, I feel quite sure those of you in this country to whom Blake means anything at all can do the same. At least I am hoping I shall hear from some Blake (and my) supporters in the near future.

Thanks to Walter Webb, whose special article (so a little bird tells me) will really be 'the goods', we shall have a grand

Blakiana section in the 100th C. Digest. Incidentally, speaking of Walter, Len has already typed out some of his earlier serialised work in Blakiana and made it into a little booklet. He is going to add some more shortly, so it looks as though part of my proposed volume will be done for me - if he keeps a spare copy!

With the exception of about a dozen copies, I have now added another year (1929) to my collection of Union Jacks, which run from the first coloured cover in 1920 to the end of 1928 - complete. If any of you have copies for disposal for the year 1929 and would let me know the numbers, I shall be very appreciative.

J. PACKMAN.

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E P I C S O F E S C A P E

By Victor Colby

It is inevitable that in their many brushes with desperate criminals Sexton Blake and Tinker must sometimes find the pendulum of fate has swung against them and, until its motion is reversed, they are in for a grim time.

The following situations, recorded in the Sexton Blake Library, are representative of many such experiences that have befallen the Baker Street pair.

S.B.L. 1st series No. 50.

Sexton Blake is bound hand and foot in a blazing malting tower. Tinker, becoming aware of his master's fate, climbs a tall elm tree opposite the tower. Climbing out on a limb near the top, he moves hand over hand along it and throws himself on to the tower from the swinging branch. Fighting his way through dense clouds of acrid smoke, licked by flames, choking and with smarting eyes, he cuts free the bonds of the unconscious Blake, and as the fire brigade makes its belated appearance hurls his helpless master through the window into the jumping-sheet below.

S.B.L. 1st series No. 63.

Locked in a circular steel chamber, standing on a crazy table and clinging desperately to the bars of a grid, is the weary, battered form of Sexton Blake, water already up to his shoulders. If the pump outside loses its battle against the tide, the chamber will fill. Meanwhile the table creaks and sways, threatening to collapse and leave him hanging from the bars until his numbed fingers cease to support his weight. Tinker outside, however, is

wielding a heavy steel lever and attacking a rivetted panel in the steel door. The loosened panel is suddenly wrenched from the door by the weight of the water within, the escaping mass surging out and knocking Tinker flat.

S.B.L. 1st series No. 74.

Tinker is lured into an old mine tunnel, the roof of which is supported by rotten props. Some of these have been removed, leaving a key prop to be dislodged and bring down the roof. A rending, splintering sound is heard and down comes the roof, enveloping Tinker in a thick cloud of grey dust and filling his mouth and nostrils with its choking fragments. Although buried Tinker is not daunted. The only substitute he has for pick-axe and shovel is a short-hefted axe, and with this he sets to work to clear the fall. Guided by Pedro, Blake and a trooper arrive on the scene and work on the fall from the outside, finally reaching and saving the now unconscious Tinker.

S.B.L. 1st series No. 80.

A familiar scene this one. Tinker is bound hand and foot in a locked room. How to escape? Well, sometimes a bottle or a mirror can be broken, and the bonds on the wrists chafed away (plus some of the skin too!); or, if his master shares his plight, one can worry the knots of the other's bonds with his teeth. In this particular case a spade hangs from the wall. Tinker kicks it down, cuts himself free and then literally digs his way through the door.

S.B.L. 1st series No. 91.

The scene is in Afghanistan. The Afghan has Tinker bound outstretched on the back of a pony, his head resting on the pony's neck. "Out there lies a wilderness", says the Afghan. "We give you to the beast and the vulture". The pony is whipped and makes off at breakneck speed. Tinker is bruised and groaning in agony before the pony stops. Soon the sun will rise higher in the heavens and he will be exposed to scorching heat and burning thirst. Soon a vulture, poising on long wings, hovers over him with beak extended and fixes him with fierce, unwinking eye, to be put to flight only by Tinker's desperate shrill shout. None too soon did the tall, bearded stranger appear knife in hand, to remove Tinker's bonds and touch his lips with cool, life-giving moisture.

S.B.L. 1st series No. 158.

Blake has been carried to the top of a tower staircase. Guarding the stairs is a huge, mad bull, pawing the stairs and snorting with

distended nostrils. The steps are steep and narrow, and the bull can only reach to within a couple of feet of Blake. Across the chamber containing the bull and parallel to the steps upon which Blake is crouched, is a steel rod. This rod is supported by the ceiling beams and runs within six inches of the roof. In the wall at one end of the rod is a small aperture. When the bull has settled down, Blake leaps across to the rod and works his way hand over hand along it. If the bull becomes aware that Blake is hanging feet down just above him, all is lost. Heart in mouth, Blake works his way carefully along. He gains the aperture and swings into it just as the bull, with a mighty bellow, charges the wall in the wake of Blake's retreating form.

S.B.L. 2nd series No. 260.

Picture a blazing mill. Smoke, rising ever thicker and faster, is eddying around Blake in a blinding cloud, so that suffocation is imminent. Blake springs from the platform at the top of the mill, leaps boldly out into space, and more by chance than skill his outstretching hands grip the upper edge of one of the sails. Moving under his weight the sail swings slowly downward, bringing him within safe jumping distance of the ground.

S.B.L. 2nd series No. 342.

Sexton Blake and the Tube of Terror! Blake has been hit on the head and dropped into a locked wool bale breaker. He recovers consciousness and commences feverishly to dismantle the rotary spindle bristling with knives, and the heavy rollers that bar his way to freedom via the suction pipe. Before he has finished this, the crook outside boasts of what will happen to the detective when the machinery is set in motion. Wool is normally dumped into Blake's prison, in which it is ripped and tossed and drawn through the heavy rollers into the suction pipe. Blake finally frees the knives and rollers, laying them aside just as the crook switches on the current. The knives can no longer whirl, however, nor the rollers crush, but the suction buffets Blake about like a feather in a windstorm. Making his way to the suction pipe, which barely allows his shoulders to enter, he climbs inside and works his way in, aided by the fierce intake of air that almost robs him of breath. Suddenly he is wedged in a bend. The terrible suction tears at Blake's scalp and threatens to crush his body. Mercifully he is released and shoots past the bend like a shot from a gun, crashing like a living torpedo into a huge wool bin — and safety.

S.B.L. 2nd series No. 593.

Now for an Edgar Alan Poe touch! A coffin reposes on trestles in the study. Blake is asked by the spurious undertakers to sign a paper with their pen. He does so, and is enveloped in gas from the top of the pen. Regaining consciousness, he is aware of utter darkness and difficulty in breathing. His limbs refuse to respond to the commands of his brain. His fingers touch something on which he is lying - something very cold. An odour of decay pervades the place in which he is confined. Now he knows why the coffin appeared abnormally deep. He is to be buried alive. The coffin is lowered into the grave and the last rites performed. Blake can hear the patter of earth on the coffin. "Earth to Earth, Ashes to Ashes". Blake wants to shriek, but no sounds come from his parted lips. The mourners have departed, and it now remains only for the sexton to fill the grave. The heat is terrific and breathing painful. Perspiration streams from Blake until - miraculously it seems - the detective regains his powers. Using his revolver he blasts the lid off the coffin, and choking with cordite fumes he staggers back into the world of the living.

\* How about this one? (Can't recall the reference)

Blake and Tinker have been thrown into a derelict hulk and battened beneath the hatches. In the bottom of the hulk are a number of holes, so that tidal water can thus flood the hulk completely. Only one way out appears practicable. One hole is large enough to crawl through, but as the hulk is resting on a bed of mud this hole is practically shut off. If only they could float the hulk! A large deposit of clay is found on the floor of the hold, and working against time Tinker and Blake dive again and again through the rising water, grabbing handfuls of clay and packing it into all crevices from which air in the hold can escape. Will the trapped air provide sufficient buoyance to life the hulk? In grim silence the Baker Street pair tread water and wait. Suddenly with shudders and strains against the suction of the mud, the hulk lifts, making only a desperate dive necessary to reach the now uncovered hole, and so to crawl to outer safety.

\* Union Jack No. 1240. "The case of the friend of May Cubitt" by A. Skene. This is a "Zenith" story. The incidents described by Mr. Colby are all to be found in Chapter Six.

S.B.L. 3rd series No. 49.

Blake and Tinker are retreating before a blazing tommy-gun. They lock themselves in a basement room, in which is a cupboard containing paraffin. Bullets pierce the outer door and set light to the paraffin cupboard, so that death appears imminent - either from bullets outside or suffocation inside the room. Behind another cupboard, however, an iron door is discovered leading into an underground canal, waist deep with silt and water and terminating in arches probably filled to the roof. Investigation shows that a Post Office latticed duct runs through the canal near the roof and into its own tunnel beyond. Blake and Tinker drop into two half-empty mail trucks as they come past, and lying flat on their faces they travel the four miles to the G.P.O., to arrive at the mail station, where they are greeted by exclamations of surprise from the Post Office Officials at the sight of them and the sound of Tinker's cheery "All change, Guv'nor".

\*\*\*\*\*

1st series No. 50	"Whose was the Hand"?	Allan Blair.
" " " 63	"The Secret of the Hulk".	Andrew Murray.
" " " 74	"Across the Divide".	W. Murray Graydon.
" " " 80	"The Bath Chair Mystery".	Andrew Murray.
" " " 91	"The Red Crescent".	Andrew Murray.
" " " 158	"The Case of the Undischarged Bankrupt".	Andrew Murray.
2nd " " 260	"The Crime of Convict 13".	W. Murray Graydon.
" " " 342	"The Mill of Fear".	Lester Bidston.
" " " 593	"The Borough Council Ramp".	Paul Urquhart.
3rd " " 49	"The Affair of the Bronze Basilisk".	Anthony Skene.

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UNION JACK TITLES - YEAR 1921

No. 899	The Turkish Bath Mystery. (Kew)	A. Murray.
" 900	The Drington Bank Mystery.	M. Poole.
" 901	Crooked Evidence. (Crim. Con.)	R. Murray.
" 902	The Soho Cafe Mystery.	
" 903	Iron Island. (Ferrers Lord)	S. Drew.
" 904	The Raven's Prey. (Raven & Claire Delisle)	F.A. Symonds.
" 905	The Case of the Governor's Son.	
" 906	Trader and Chief	C. Hayter.

No. 907	The Menace of Rylands Manor	L.H. Brooks
" 908	The Crooks of Monte Carlo	P. Quiroule.
" 909	The Case of the Chinese Hypnotist. (Raven)	F.A. Symonds.
" 910	The Black Duchess. (Crim. Con. Isabel de Fere)	R. Murray.
" 911	The Green Eye.	L.H. Brooks.
" 912	The Terms of the Wager. (Losely & Lobangu)	C. Hayter.
" 913	The Kestrel's Prey. (Kestrel)	L. Jackson.
" 914	The Judge's Experiment.	W.M. Graydon.
" 915	Granite Grant's Mission. (G. Grant)	P. Quiroule.
" 916	The Fourth Witness. (Crim. Con.)	R. Murray.
" 917	The Wager of Death.	E.S. Brooks.
" 918	The Affair of the Exiled Princess. (Raven)	F.A. Symonds.
" 919	The Case of the Thirteenth Bowl. (Nihil)	A. Skene.
" 920	The Convict's Cipher	C. Hayter.
" 921	The Strange Case of the Edgware Recluse.	L.H. Brooks.
" 922	Kestrel's Intrigue. (Kestrel)	L. Jackson.
" 923	The Raven and the Ruby. (Raven)	F.A. Symonds.
" 924	The Radium Thieves. (G. Grant)	P. Quiroule.
" 925	The Saracen's Ring.	A. Edgar.
" 926	The Artiste of Traverne.	C. Hayter.
" 927	Mr. Reece's Million. (Crim. Con. & Yvonne)	R. Murray.
" 928	The Return of Zenith the Albino. (Zenith)	A. Skene.
" 929	Prince Pretence. (Kestrel)	L. Jackson.
" 930	Dr. Braxland's Experiment.	L.H. Brooks.
" 931	The Case of the Ampur Carpet.	
" 932	The Clue of the Missing Volume.	
" 933	The Treasure of Kao Hang.	G.H. Teed.
" 934	The Money Flood.	L. Jackson.
" 935	The Case of the Channel Swimmer.	
" 936	Lobangu's Ju-Ju. (Losely and Labangu)	C. Hayter.
" 937	The 'Corner' in Quinine. (Zenith)	A. Skene.
" 938	The Grey Parrot. (Dr. Xavier Queed)	F.A. Symonds.
" 939	The Clue of the Yellow Dust.	L.H. Brooks.
" 940	The Fatal Hour.	
" 941	Cross Trails. (Hon. J. Lawless)	A. Murray.
" 942	In the Grip of Waldo. (R. Waldo)	E.S. Brooks.
" 943	The Marsh Farm Mystery.	L.H. Brooks.
" 944	In the Midst of Famine.	L. Jackson.
" 945	Besieged in Malabar. (Cavendish Doyle)	W.M. Graydon.
" 946	Diamond Mad. (Crim. Con.)	R. Murray.
" 947	His Cousin's Decoy.	L. Jackson.

No. 948	The Wonder Man's Challenge. (Waldo)	E.S.Brooks.
" 949	The Flower of the Etbais. (Losely)	C.Hayter.
" 950	The Fur Thieves. (The Moonslayer)	S.Gordon.
" 951	The Case of the Tattooed Dagger. (G.Grant)	P.Quiroule.

# HAMILTONIAN

Compiled by HERBERT LECKENBY

ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER: As a result of Mr. J.T. Handley's letter in the "Sunday Express" recently, he had several letters from old readers of the Gem and Magnet. Among them was Mr. John L. Jukes of Bournemouth. Mr. Handley kindly put me in touch with Mr. Jukes and I am very glad he did for already I have had several most interesting letters from Mr. Jukes. Here is an extract from one of them. Without a doubt it will appeal to all Hamiltonians.

Reedley, Lindsay Road,  
Bournemouth West.  
15.1.55.

Dear Mr. Leckenby,

I am very glad you were able to send me Mr. Chapman's address. I will most certainly write to him ere long though I do not think he will remember meeting me for it was a long time ago. The circumstances were these, in 1914, June to be exact, I was on a London holiday with some of the chaps from my school in Birmingham. One afternoon we chanced to find ourselves outside the magic portals of The Amalgamated Press in Farringdon Street. Someone suggested going in and demanding, as regular readers, to see The Editor, Frank Richards and the artist who drew the pictures. Being a Prefect in charge, it automatically became my job to be spokesman so I entered the portals and tackled the commissionaire. Wearing our brand new blazers complete with posh badge thereon also equally new school cap he evidently thought we were some big college out for a do. Anyway we were ushered into a waiting room with much respect and told to wait. My six companions got cold feet and walked out leaving me to it. A few minutes later I was ushered upwards in a lift and into the Presence. I was soon put at my ease with a cup of tea and a biscuit. Hintongrinned and said

it's not quite Bunters style but you're welcome. In the room was another man with a batch of drawings in his hand. This was Mr. Chapman. We shook hands and, giving me the drawings to look at, left the office. Hinton was very friendly and waved my youthful apologies aside. He asked a lot about my school and told me he knew Birmingham very well naming two people with whom we were mutually acquainted. He showed me a further batch of drawings and rough sketches some of which were for the Gem. Later Mr. Chapman returned and handed me a square of cardboard with a specially drawn picture of Bunter thereon. For years I treasured that picture, even took it abroad with me but it is now gone. Where I know not. I was with Mr. Hinton for over an hour and the expression on my companions faces when I finally emerged into Farringdon Street is something I shall never forget. They had to wait for me because I had all the bus fares and knew my way about!

J.L. JUKES.

Well that was by no means Mr. Jukes' only association with Fleetway House for as will be seen by an extract from another letter in the 'Letter Box' he is an artist whose work has appeared in the A.P. comics - the real comics - for many years.

-----ooOoo-----

Some time ago Anthony Baker asked if anyone could say what the 'important announcement' announced by Mr. Down near the end of the Magnet's career referred to. Well, Roger Jenkins says it concerned the formation of a Bunter Club. The sudden demise of the Magnet evidently put an end to that idea. Nevertheless, there are Clubs today where the name of Bunter is often heard, and will be, I venture to say, for many a year yet.

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A recent "Yorkshire Evening News" placard read:

L O D E R ' S F I N E B O W L I N G  
F O R M . C . C .

For the benefit of those who do not follow cricket closely, I may explain that the bowler's name is spelt 'Loader'. Possibly the "Evening News" man responsible for the placard was an old "Magnetite" but he would find it difficult to find an occasion when

the bully of the Sixth made himself useful at cricket.

\* \* \* \* \*

Gerry Allison stuck his neck out and no error when he wrote his article about Harry Wharton. Here are two more replies from Eric Humphreys and Ron Crollie. Eric's first.

#### WHO SHALL BE CAPTAIN?

By Eric Humphreys

I was very intrigued by that really grand article by Gerry Allison in the January C.D. on Harry Wharton - Captain or Hero?

Gerry certainly did not spare Wharton, and although I knew full well of his hot-temper, pride, and sometimes easy way to take offence. It did come as something of a shock to find that Wharton could be doubted so much as to whether or not he was best equipped to be captain and leader of his Form.

Harry Wharton has always been, and still is my favourite character in schoolboy fiction; and although he is touchy, hasty-tempered, and at times wilful. He is yet more honest, truthful, cool in an emergency and more so loyal. He has proved himself to be a good Head Boy, and a first-rate captain at games, and at no time has his position as Captain really seriously been challenged.

Wharton's greatest enemy is his own stubborn nature, and the elements in the school who mostly come up against him are such fellows as Skinner & Co. (who really do not count) and this is promoted more by a feeling of jealousy and a desire to hurt him than anything else. Smithy it is true has fought him on more than one occasion for the captaincy and successfully too; but Smithy's methods of obtaining votes are well known - tea in the study and other such bribery. Wharton certainly would not stoop to this.

However, be that as it may, Gerry has set down Wharton's faults and his virtues in no mean manner and the only thing I can do is to enlarge on these, and this I am not going to do.

What I want to know is, if not Wharton as Captain of the Remove, then whom?

Lord Mauleverer is mostly portrayed as a lazy, good-natured, easy-going fellow, and most of the Remove think him not over endowed with brains. He stuck to Wharton through thick and thin in the first "Rebel Series", and was, against his will, made Captain of the Form. Perhaps that is why he did not make a very good job of it. But Mauly has shown that he can lead on more than one occasion; in the "High Oaks" series he ruled the Remove with a

rod-of-iron and showed a strength of character that really surprised them. His sterling qualities were never better shown than in the "Crum Series". Mauly is a force to be reckoned with.

What about sunny tempered Bob Cherry? Is he the man? He is good at games, everyone likes him, and he has no enemies. But he is very impulsive, acts first and thinks afterwards.

In the early Magnet stories Frank Nugent was a great fighting man and first class at games. But nowadays he is well down the list as a boxer, and cannot get a regular place in the Remove footer or cricket teams.

Forthright, dependable, Johnny Bull. Good at games, steady in class, a real fighter to the end. Johnny is a slow starter and takes a long time to see a point. But once he gets his teeth into a thing as it were, he sticks. Honest as the day is long, he has a great regard for the truth, but tact is certainly not his strong point. He often gets bumped by his exasperated pals for telling them "I told you so!"

Hurree Singhis as quick-witted and shrewd as any fellow in the Form. He is a splendid footballer, and perhaps the best bowler in the lower school. But like Wharton, is at times inclined to sulk.

A character unique in schoolboy fiction is Vernon Smith. Smithy is, without doubt, one of the greatest personalities at Greyfriars. He is very shrewd-headed and keeps cool and calm in an emergency. But he is also very arrogant and wilful, and when his temper is roused - which is often - can be implacable. He is a skilful player at both cricket and football, but too often tries to go through on his own, and would much rather score a goal himself than pass to another player. He loves nothing better than taking a risk, and having a tilt at Authority. Hard as a rock is Smithy!

What a difference to Smithy is his pal Tom Redwing. Redwing's friendship and loyalty to Smithy has saved the Bounder on countless occasions when he has been kicking over the traces.

High up in form work and good at games, he is one of the most popular fellows in the school. And there is no doubt he has few superiors in the Remove.

Peter Todd is another of the Remove's all-rounders; good at games, and certainly not backward in class. Peter has more than once tried to make Study No. 7, top-study, and with better material

might have succeeded. He is a great man with his fists, and when he first came to Greyfriars beat Bob Cherry in a fight to prove he (Toddy) was "top dog" in the Remove. A very capable chap - Peter Todd.

Samson Quincy Iffley Field is another great sportsman. Very level-headed, Squiff certainly knows his way about.

Tom Brown from New Zealand and Mark Linley are two more chaps who count for something in the Form. Mark, indeed, has acted as Head Boy on the occasions when Wharton has fallen foul of Mr. Quelch. But to me he does not quite seem to ring the bell, he has'nt got the firmness or control that Wharton has.

Tom Brown is a good chap, but we do not hear quite enough of him. His chief aspirations to fame seems to be his radio set.

Well there is an outline of a few of Quelch's best boys. I've tried to set down their virtues and their failings as best as I am able, from what I have read of Frank Richard's descriptions.

Are any of these more worthy than Wharton to be Captain of the Form? For myself - "I think not!"

What do you think? Who shall be captain of the Remove?

\*\*\*\*\*

17 Osborne Road, Hornchurch, Essex.

24.1.55.

Dear Herbert,

I read with intense interest the article on Harry Wharton by Gerry Allison in the January C.D. How typical of the world is this attitude!

Gerry's article is a fine piece of reasoning but, oh how he misses the point! Having read those early numbers of the "Magnet" can he not see that, but for Wharton, there would not have been a Remove that anyone would want to Captain.

When Wharton came to Greyfriars, Bulstrode was cock of the walk over a collection of unruly juniors that had no standing in the school at all. It was Wharton who founded the Remove Cricket and Football Clubs, the Remove Dramatic Society, and who led the revolt that resulted in the Form's exemption from fagging. Having got things nicely organised, so to speak, Wharton was continually challenged by those who thought they could do the job better, from Bulstrode to Vernon Smith.

I agree with Gerry Allison that Squiff would have made a good captain, BUT only if Wharton had been continually at hand to advise

and INSPIRE in times of crisis, as he did during that long period when Bulstrode regained the captaincy.

The gypsy Nadesha was right, Wharton was a born leader despite sensitive pride, and never was this more apparent than when things were going wrong.

-----  
 RON CROLLIE.  
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POTTED PERSONALITIES: No. 9 (New Series):

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH

In the Bounder of Greyfriars we have one of the finest pieces of character painting in the whole of schoolboy literature. The Bounder's nature was cleverly developed with the passing of the years. Even in the early days when he first appeared, though many of the pen pictures about him were over-drawn, he was, to a large extent, believable as the spoiled, motherless son of the hard millionaire.

Well-remembered is the early series, about 1912, when he successfully conspired to bring about the removal from Greyfriars of Harry Wharton and his chums, one after the other, a wholesale exodus which was only halted by "BOB CHERRY'S BARRING OUT". Very far-fetched though the theme was, the series rang the bell, even if the pardoning of Smithy, after his wickedness, took some swallowing. Even in those days, as through a glass darkly, we saw something of a better Bounder. In "UNCLE FISH" he redeemed the bracelet which Hazeldene had pawned, and returned it anonymously to Marjorie, while in the clumsily titled "THE SCHOOLBOY TRIPFERS" he showed a wonderful patience towards the erring Hazeldene who had stolen £20 from him and had then struck Smithy senseless with a rock.

But it was with the coming of Redwing in 1918 that the real character of the Bounder began to be revealed, and we commented upon the fine friendship between these two in the Potted Personality on Redwing, a few months ago.

It is my opinion that the best series about Vernon-Smith are to be found in the years 1925 - 1934. The Dallas Series, which resulted in the departure of Redwing from Greyfriars, began to bring the Bounder really into his own as one of the truly great characters, and this was followed by many yarns showing us the best and the worst of Vernon-Smith. Then came the South Seas series, our first introduction to Scames, the Kenya series, and

the memorable Smedley series. Personally, I was less happy over the Bertie Vernon series of 1939, masterfully-written though this series was, for the harsh and obstinate folly of the Bounder was not relieved in any way by that sterling side of his character which we have seen so often.

Smithy's father, too, was subtly developed from the repulsive money-lender of red-cover days into the hard-headed financier of later years, one of the really outstanding adult characters of the Magnet.

In conclusion, it would be interesting to know just how many times the Bounder has been expelled. Quite a few dozen, methinks. His luck is phenomenal.

\* \* \* \* \*

MAGNET TITLES (Cont'd): 1388. Ructions in Rome; 1389. Peril in the Air; 1390. A Tyrant Rules Greyfriars; 1391. The High Hand; 1392. The Greyfriars Storm-Troopers; 1393. The Secret of the Vaults; 1394. The Secret Seven; 1395. Fooled in the Fifth; 1396. The Dictator of Greyfriars; 1397. The Brotherhood of Justice; 1398. A Traitor in the Camp; 1399. The Schoolboy Sleuth; 1400. Putting Paid to Prout; 1401. Christmas at Hilton Hall; 1402. Hunted Down; 1403. The Fugitive of the Moor; 1404. Coker's Cousin comes to Greyfriars; 1405. The Mischief-Maker of the Remove; 1406. Down on His Luck; 1407. Fool's Luck; 1408. The Schemer of the Remove.

WANTED: Collectors' Miscellany (5th series) 1, 2, 4. S.P.C. 28-32. GEORGE MELL, 49 GRACEFIELD GARDENS, STREATHAM, LONDON, S.W.16.

WANTED: S.O.L.'s complete, reasonable condition. No's 322, 325, 352, 367, 370, 374, 379, 385, 391, 394, 395, 397, 400, 403, 407. Also 1939 Holiday Annual. Your valuations asked. D.HARRISON, 51 MERTON MANSIONS, LONDON, S.W.20.

WANTED: Nelson Lee 1st New Series, 1926-30, No's 1, 6, 16, 33, 35 and 50. Also Monster Libraries. R.W. PAYNE, 5 BUGBROOKE ROAD, GAYTON, NORTHANTS.

Early Magnets, Gems, Nelson Lees, Holiday Annuals, and similar OR Cash given for 1954 Tom Merry and Bunter Annuals. Two Bunter Books; other exchanges invited. DAVIDSON, 25 CATHEDRAL STREET, GLASGOW.

For Sale: Magnets and Gems 1934-39. Write for details. A.S. MATHESON, 11 ACKERGILL STREET, WICK, CAITHNESS, SCOTLAND.

# Gossip ABOUT ST. FRANK'S



By Jack Wood, NOSTAW, 328 Stockton Lane, York.

Well, as the clowns in all the circuses, and especially those circuses so popular with our erstwhile authors, used to say, "Here we are again", and this month I want to resume our tour of the St. Frank's district by telling the story of -

## ST. FRANK'S v THE GRAMMARIANS

It is a long story. How long I did not fully appreciate how long until I began to look through my files for material for this article. It may well be, in fact, that our worthy editor-in-chief will have to cut us off in mid-article, so if that is so I apologise in advance; the story will then be continued in April.

The story of the rivalry between the boys of St. Frank's and those of Bannington Grammar School has been well documented by Edwy Searles Brooks from the earliest days of the Nelson Lee Library. The first reference I find is in Small Series 125, The Mystery of the Blue Volume, where we begin with Nipper, who is by now settling down to his new sphere as Ancient House junior captain, accepting a sarcastic challenge from Bob Christine, junior captain and College House leader.

Nipper, snorting at the lack of Ancient House representation in the junior football XI, decides to beard Bob in Study Q. He finds him in the Common Room and in the course of an argument as to the merits of Ancient House football, Bob rashly says that if the

Ancient House win a House game the following day, they can have the Bannington fixture "as a present".

Oh, rash youth! Bob, of course, expected to win by about ten goals to nil. There hadn't been a junior House match for years, and the challenge was generally regarded as a farce. The teams lined up:- Ancient House: Handforth; Hubbard, Church; Armstrong, McClure, Watson; Tregellis-West, Owen, Nipper (Bennett), Griffith and Farman. College House: Nation; Turner, Page; Freeman, Steele, Yorke; Oldfield, Talmadge, Christine, Clapson and Harron.

Within five minutes Nipper had scored! Talmadge equalised just before half time, and late in the second half Sir Montie got the winning goal to give the Fossils the match - and the Grammarian fixture.

But even then it was not all plain sailing. Fullwood and the Nuts tried to queer Nipper's pitch with a false 'phone message of influenza at the Grammar School, but Nipper was to "fly" to fall for that!

"The Grammar School proved to be an imposing establishment. But it was modern compared to St. Frank's, and not half so good really." Arthur Gray, Fourth Form skipper, and his men were on Little Side waiting for the St. Frank's team, and, of course, confident. St. Frank's took the lead through Farman, but the Grammarians were good footballers and were one up at the interval in a first class game.

Nipper equalised for a "more scientific" St. Frank's and Owen and Farman added other goals. A four-two win gave the Ancient House great delight - they had fought for their rights of fair representation in the junior XI, and had got them.

The adventure of the Blue Volume and the finding of hidden loot and the capturing of the thief began on the journey home when Nipper bought the book for sixpence from "Old Spragg's" second hand bookshop behind the High Street. Brooks always had this capacity for linking up a vividly described football match with his main plot.

Three issues later in 128, The Mystery of the Pink Package, in which Nipper & Co. turned the tables on some crooks who involved Sir Montie in the theft of the package from the safe while the juniors were attending a party at Sir James Massington's Bannington Hall. It followed the basic plot of 125 in that the party was, in addition to being Sir James's daughter's 17th birthday, a celebration of the finding of the Massington gold plate in 125.

This second game was also on the Grammarian's ground, and the St. Frank's team, now fully representative, had the redoubtable Handy in goal for the first time. Talmadge, Nipper and Farman scored for the visitors and Gray and his men could only muster a couple. Sir Montie mysteriously disappeared for some time at the end of the game in connection with the main plot.

In 209, The Duffer of St. Frank's, we turn to cricket. Nipper, expelled through the machinations of prefect Walter Starke, has returned in the guise of Algernon Clarence D'Albert and has failed to secure a chance from junior captain De Valerie to play cricket.

Wandering round on his own searching for clues to Starke's real attacker, Nipper finds solace in some net practice with Elliott and Barlowe, the Bannington and Helmford junior skippers, at the Grammar School ground.

As a result, it will be recalled, Nipper, as D'Albert, was given a chance as a substitute in the Helmford team and more or less beat St. Frank's off his own bat!

In 276, The Lancashire Lad, football at the Grammar School - St. Frank's don't seem to play at home very often, do they? - is tied up with the adventures surrounding newcomer Dick Goodwin. It was the first game of the season, and Nipper's experimental team was: Handforth; Talmadge, Hart; Pitt, Watson, Yorke; De Valerie, Tregellis-West, Nipper, Somerton and Christine.

Even Gulliver enjoyed a fast game, though he, Fullwood and Bell were only waiting to go on to the Foaming Bowl Inn to conspire with Colmore and Naggs, Goodwin's enemies. St. Frank's scored through De Valerie, Sir Montie, Somerton and De Valerie again, with the Grammarians replying with only two.

In 314, The Demon Cricketer, we had a reflection of the D'Albert episode. This time it was Jerry Dodd, a newcomer forbidden by his father to play cricket, who was the central figure. Disguised as Tomothy Tucker he and Nipper battered the Grammarians' bowling to give St. Frank's a thrilling victory. This was revenge for a defeat the previous week at St. Frank's.

The Grammar School ground was surrounded by shady trees, with pavilions for juniors and seniors. Arthur Grey was still captain and the Grammarian team included, too, Gordon, Davis, Collins and Gregg, who with Grey, were all "not" batsmen, Howell, Bates, Fell-bury, Benson (a Grammarian "Handy" with a forcing style), Green and Browne. Bates and Davis were the main bowlers.

In 329, The Mystery Footballer, we are in the famous series when Reggie Pitt, to save his family fortunes, becomes a professional footballer as Abdulla, the Arab outside right of Bannington Town, a League team for the first time. It is Pitt's superb play which enables St. Frank's to gain a home victory over the Grammarians in the opening game of the season.

Arthur Grey, it is said, is now a senior and their team is: Bates; Hayford, Gregg; Collins, Howell, Freeman; Browne, Davis, Gordon, Benson and Greene. St. Frank's turned out: Handforth; Yorke, Burton; Church, Talmadge, Somerton; Christine, Grey, Nipper, Tregellis-west and Pitt. (I know; like other authors, Brooke always named his teams left to right - or was that correct in 1921?). Pit, Nipper, Pitt and Pitt again scored to give the Franconians a 4 - 3 win in a great game.

Coming now to an important number, 436, A Rod of Iron, which introduces the Moor View girls and is in the Buster Boots series. Street, the new captain, and the Grammarians find Boots and his team of personal friends easy meat and had rammed home 19 goals without reply at half-time. In the second half, Buster and his pals tried rough-house tactics, resulting in the Grammarians walking off.

Nipper & Co. then took over the match with a House Team. Grey and Nipper had given St. Frank's a one goal lead when Boots & Co. started a riot which ended the game and disgraced the school with the girls. It was the beginning of the break in Boots' rule of iron!

De Valerie was to the fore in 448, The School Museum Mystery, the opening story in one of Brooks's best series. This was the Dr. Karnak series in which De Valerie came under the doctor's hypnotic spell. Fortunately he had recovered sufficiently to play against the Grammarians, the opening game of the term at St. Frank's. In a breathless tussle Nipper headed in the first goal but the Grammarians equalised before the interval. In the second half Nipper had a penalty saved and De Valerie, seeing Dr. Karnak, missed a "sitter". Afterwards he was a listless "passenger" and the Grammarians got the winning goal. Yes, E.S.B. certainly knew how to mix sport and mystery!

In 483, Trying Times at St. Frank's, however, we turned to boxing for a complete change. This was during the terrible aftermath of the scandal caused by the death of Fifth-Former

wallace at a champagne party. St. Frank's in general was in disgrace, and Frederick Talbot, a Grammarian who described himself as "the Terror of the Fifth", wrote an insulting letter to Archie Glenthorne, who had earlier been badly ragged by other Grammarians, and another to "Darling Feather Brained Fluffy Irene" (Manners) at Moor View.

The St. Frank's boys took up the matter of "satisfaction" and it was left in the capable hands of Ernest Lawrence to deal with "the clumsy, towled-haired, caddish, hulking bully" Talbot, who was a famous firebrand, was a good boxer, and had the advantage of great weight.

The fight took place in a meadow near the Grammar School and bordering the London road. It was a great scrap, described in Brooks's most vigorous style, and, of course, Talbot was deservedly thoroughly thrashed. But it led to greater things, for Smiling Bill Gordon, the famous boxing promoter, saw the fight and from that encounter Lawrence went on to great things in the ring, devoting all his winning purses to helping St. Frank's in its financial hour of need.

In 543, The Mystery of Study 20, we are well into the famous Ezra Quirke series, with Vic Mason arriving to take up his new job as football coach. Anxious to do well, Handy, who puts all the blame on Quirke's influence, fails badly to impress the ex-Villa international centre half, and loses his place in the junior team.

By this time the junior XI is bearing a more familiar look, and is: Handforth; Doyle, Burton; Kahn, De Valerie, Nick Trotwood; Grey, Boots, Nipper, Fullwood and Pitt. On this occasion, at home, St. Frank's were beaten, Nipper, Fulwood and Pitt scoring their three goals. Thanks to his lack of concentration, however, Handy let in four and was dropped for the Redcliffe game.

The last Grammarian incident of the Old Series was in 555, The Schoolboy Despot, where Guy Sinclair, blackmailing his way into the captaincy of the West House, goads the juniors to the bounds of endurance. After detaining them he releases them "on bail" to play at Bannington and after some sharp practice "estreats" the "bail" when the juniors are late back. Ward was now the Grammarian junior skipper, his predecessor having left, but despite his great leadership Nipper (2) and Pitt gave St. Frank's a 3 - 2 win.

The old rivalry was maintained in the three New Series issues. In First N.S. 31 St. Frank's was under the Honour System and

Fullwood had been trapped by Forrest into believing ill of his friend Clive Russell. The juniors, unknown to him, had helped Fulwood, but in N.S. 31 All the Fund of the Fair, he learned the truth, with the result that his play against the Grammarians at Bannington suffered and a newcomer, Jenkins, beat Handy in the first few minutes. Conscious that the juniors knew of his troubles, Fullwood was "a passenger" and missed an open goal.

In the second half, however, he pulled himself together and was the architect of an unexpected victory, scoring twice himself and making a third goal for Nipper. Fullwood's second was the odd goal in five which won the game.

And there, for the moment, we'll leave our theme to be continued in April.

## OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

LONDON SECTION: Although the weather was inclement, snow and ice, a baker's dozen assembled at the home of Len and Josie Packman for the February Meeting. Chief surprise was the attendance of Haydyn Salmon who came from Ipswich to be at his first meeting. Judging by his remarks when he left they meeting, he had had a thoroughly enjoyable time.

Chairman Roger Jenkins presided at his first meeting and made a very successful effort of it. Winning the very fine quiz that the worthy hosts had compiled, he also won the School Lotto game, which Bob Blythe so successful runs at the various meetings. Roger also gave a very good account of his stewardship re the Hamiltonian section of the club library and was voted more funds to extend in the matter of more books. Bob Blythe also gave a good account of the Nelson Lee section.

Postal member, Percy North, of Basingstoke, Hants, had very kindly drawn a map of the surrounding countryside of St. Ninians and also had written a treatise on the school and its composer, Maxwell Scott. This was read out and spoken about by myself and judging by the applause at the conclusion, Nelson Lee and Nipper's first school adventures went down very well.

A very find impromptu talk by Maurice Kutner followed, how we enjoyed this account of how he started to collect. The only matter for regret is that these impromptu talks on how collections

were started will soon be coming to an end as nearly all the regular attendance members have given theirs. So what about our vast number of postal members writing out an account of how they started and sending it to me for reading out at one of the meetings, go to it.

Next meeting at Wood Green on Sunday, March 20th, 4 p.m. sharp. Homeward through the snow with treasured memories of another good gathering.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

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NORTHERN SECTION MEETING, FEBRUARY 12th, 1955: J. Breeze Bentley in the chair extended a warm welcome to Roger Jenkins who was with us for his third annual visit. We were also pleased to have with us again Stanley Smith up from Usk, Mon.

Business disposed of we settled down to listen to Roger give his talk "In the Remove Form Room". Everyone was entertained; so will more of you when it appears as an article in No. 100. A lively discussion followed. We could do with more of these for they give an opportunity for all to "come in".

After refreshments we had a Bunter Drive. Didn't I say last month that it wouldn't be long before the fatuous one would be mentioned in that room again. Roger gained first prize, Stanley second; a happy result,

An enjoyable evening; wintry outside, but cordiality within.

Next Meeting, March 12th.

H. LECKENBY - Northern  
Section Correspondent.

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MIDLAND SECTION - JANUARY MEETING: This our first meeting for 1955 proved a crowded and enjoyable evening thus giving the New Year an excellent start, even if we did not meet until the very last day of January in accordance with the new plan of meeting on the last Monday of each month.

After the minutes and matters arising, we began by welcoming two new friends Mr. J.L. Handley and his son John. Mr. Handley Senior had written to the "Sunday Express" suggesting that Frank Richards should appear in the Honours List; a proposal with which we are most heartily in agreement.

During the evening Mr. Handley read to us some very interesting correspondence exchanged between Frank Richards and himself, after his letter had appeared.

Before this we had had two or three very enjoyable normal programme items. These included a Greyfriars Quiz and reading from the "Holiday Annual" for 1931, and a raffle. The reading was very interesting and topical as it described how Skimpole had a vision of St. Jims in 1999 - a soulless robotised and regimented community which had reminded our Chairman very much of that recent and much discussed horrific play "1984".

This provoked quite an interesting discussion but one which was as nothing compared with the battle royal which developed after refreshment time and which was really started by our Treasurer Norman speaking very highly of Talbot Baines Reed.

His famous stories of the "nineties" are still remembered but it was interesting to notice the deep cleavage of opinion on the position of the "Hamilton" Schools as compared with such writers as Reed, Hadath, and Wodehouse.

Of course it is only natural to have ones own tastes and preferences, but certainly such a discussion as ours helps to clarify ideas and I for one quite enjoyed it.

EDWARD DAVEY.

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MERSEYSIDE SECTION MEETING - FEBRUARY, 1955: On January 16th we held our New Year Party, and what a party it was! Talk about fun and games, and loads of grub - it had everything. Easily the best ever! Thank you Mrs. Webster and Don for a wonderful evening. Waterloo House is certainly a "home from home" in the truest sense of the phrase.

Our usual monthly meeting was made unusual because Herbert Leckenby honoured us with his presence. Many of us has not met him before and it was a real pleasure to see him and chat with him for the first time. We tried to give him a real homely Merseyside welcome, and we hope that Herbert thinks we succeeded. I'm quite sure he went home with the impression that the Merseyside O.B.B.C. is one of the liveliest of his "children".

The record number of 24 members rallied round to welcome the maestro, and it was a really enjoyable evening. Sir Frederick Bowman bade Herbert welcome with a delightful little speech, and this was followed by a competition, - "Which three characters of the O.B. Books would you like to have with you if you were marooned on a desert island?" There were some brilliant efforts, and some very original ones, but our Herbert won the competition, and deservedly so.

After refreshments we enjoyed another noval competition called "Equations". For example - "What does Mellish plus Skimpole equal?" Possible answer - "A Worm and a Bookworm", and so on. The number of wits in the Club is amazing; some of the answers nearly split our sides, such as - "What does Gosling plus Tip equal?" Answer Topsy Gosling".

Three hours passed like ten minutes, then Herbert had to catch his train. Thank you for coming, Herbert; we liked you, we enjoyed having you, and we hope you liked us. Come again soon!

To finish up on a less happy note, we hear that our most efficient Hon. Secretary, Frank Case, will not be able to attend our meetings in the future, except on rare occasions, due to pressure of business. It is absolutely unavoidable, and if it is a blow to Frank, its an even greater blow to us, his pals. We all of us here have a warmth of feeling for Frank that goes beyond our interest in the old books. He will, of course, remain a staunch member of the Club, but the thought of not having his cheerful, friendly company at our meetings is most shattering. A meeting of the O.B.B.C. without Frank Case will seem like Liverpool F.C. without Billy Liddell.

FRANK UNWIN.

WANTED: The following Gems, 1337, 1338, 1379, 1380, 1381, 1663. Will buy or exchange for Gems between 1339-1448. Also wanted S.O.L's and Monster Libraries. State Numbers and Prices required. C.L. LEMPEY, 27 HEATHER CLOSE, KINGSWOOD, BRISTOL.

WANTED: "PLUCKS" containing "Specs", "Cookey Scrubbs" and "Messenger Boy", stories. State numbers, price and condition. J. JEYES, 108 ADNITT ROAD, NORTHAMPTON.

WANTED: Any Copies of "Chips" between years 1914 and 1920 (inclusive) GOOD CONDITION ONLY. 2/6 each offered. L. PACKMAN, 27 ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.22.

WANTED: Sexton Blake Library (First and Second Series only). Your price paid for good copies. Serial Numbers and Series to:- JOSEPHINE PACKMAN, 27 ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.22.

SALE - Captains Vols. 3. 7.; Chatterbox 1922; H.A.1935: Many Others, s.a.e. list. L.M. ALLEN, 3 Montgomery Drive, Sheffield, 7.

ADVERTISE IN No. 100, THE NUMBER TO REMEMBER.  
1d. A WORD, AS USUAL.

LETTER BOX

Rose Lawn, Kingsgate, Broadstairs, Kent.  
24th February, 1955.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Many though belated thanks for the C.D. The "Punch" article was extremely amusing; and shows a knowledge of the subject much to the credit of Mr. Young, who hath a pretty wit. It was a real pleasure to read it both in the C.D. and in Punch, which is not always so bright. In fact, if I had wanted a paper for the train that week, I should certainly have been able to pack a good Punch!

No doubt you may have heard that the 2/6 editions of the Tom Merry books are now published, and these are to be followed by new Tom Merry books in similar editions, the first of which will be "Tom Merry and Co., Caravanners" in which Martin Clifford revels in roaming the English countryside: no longer, alas! in person, but very enjoyable all the same. "Jack of All Trades" is also reprinted at 2/6, and this may be followed by further "Jack" books, now under discussion. For some reason, which really no fellow can understand, the new editions are marked 7/6: but they are sold at 2/6, so that is all right, though a little perplexing. One of these days, I hope, everything I write will come out at half-a-crown: but that may be a long way ahead yet.

Kindest regards, Yours very sincerely,

FRANK RICHARDS.

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C.H. CHAPMAN'S TRIBUTE TO THE LATE R.J. MACDONALD, 25. 1. 55.

Dear Mr. Leckenby,

I have only just heard from Mrs. Macdonald.

He was in the early 70's, and has been connected with the 'A.P.' for well over 50 years to my knowledge.

As you know he illustrated the Gem after Warwick Reynolds died and continued until 1940, almost without a break from 1911. I really started illustrating the Magnet in 1912, but he (Macdonald), hardly missed, year in and year out, until we parted in 1940. Jolly, tall and hefty, he hardly looked like an artist, everybody liked him and his breezy outlook. He was a great admirer of the late 'Gordon' Browne and his work was undoubtedly influenced by his style, and what illustrator could have a finer prototype? He was known to all as "Mac", and that described him exactly. C.H. CHAPMAN.

(Here is an extract from another letter from Mr. Jukes of Bournemouth, referred to in Hamiltoniana.)

And I am delighted to be able to say that Mr. Jukes has volunteered to write an article for the next Annual. That's something to look forward to, for you all love anything written from inside. (H.L.)

"I was especially interested in Leonard Packman's article on comic characters in the Annual. Lack of time prevented me from informing you in my last letter that I have been a contributor to the AP regularly and continuously ever since 1933. My visit years before to the sanctum of HAH sowed the seed in my youthful breast and in my teens I was selling little single joke sketches to the Merry and Bright and the Favourite. 5/- a time we got for them and wonderful practice it was too. In those days a one F.C.G. Cordwell was the Editor and he was very helpful to the young beginner who scribbled away in Birmingham. Feeling my wings I then branched out to the old Jester which was under the guidance of Stanley J. Gooch who is now the Editor of Radio Fun and TV Fun. This Editor gathered a bunch of young artists together and before the war turned out Funny Wonder, Jester, Tip Top, Jingles, with Radio Fun to follow later. For some years I did the Arthur Askey front along with other artists. For various reasons it was necessary to duplicate an artists work from time to time, a chap has to have a cold sometime or an operation etc! Alfie the Air Tramp in the Joker was done by me for about four or five years and I am pleased to know the final copies of Chips carried some reprints of this hardy character. Still in this vein I originated Ben and Bert the Kid Cops who ran for quite a while in the Funny Wonder. I also did Dinkum the Dog Detective until he moved elsewhere. Incidentally if any of your comic paper enthusiasts care to examine the series Roland Butter and Hammond Deggs which ran in the Butterfly in 1922 they will see in this technique the breaking away from the old style of penmanship of Tom Browne which, in '22 was getting dated. Many of us were being influenced by Leo Cheney, Gilbert Wilkinson and George Whitelaw in the old Passing Show. They in their turn were breaking new ground in penwork and to this day a Gilbert Wilkinson drawing always commands my great respect.... the editors who encouraged them are to be praised for I know how heartening it can be to work for a man who is keen to try new features and ideas. It will be seen that the comic paper has undergone a radical change during the last year or two. The old slapstick days are over. The Biff Bang Wallop has given way to a refining process which includes yards of space ship stuff with female characters thrown in."