

THE COLLECTORS'

VOL. 11, NUMBER 116.

DIGEST

AUGUST, 1956

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The Collectors' Digest

Vol. 11 No. 116

Price 1s. 6d.

AUGUST, 1956

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

From the Editor's Chair

THE FORGETFUL TRAVELLER WHO DID A GOOD TURN. In a letter recently Mr. R. Greenwood of Bushbury, Wolverhampton, told me that whilst travelling by train to Wolverhampton he had picked up a copy of the "Collectors' Digest". "It fell into good hands," he went on, "for I happen to be a great admirer of Frank Richards. I was much interested in your publication and should like to become a regular subscriber." He later told me that it was a train from Birmingham.

It struck me, therefore, that maybe one of our clan had left if in the train unintentionally. If that is so, and this catches his eye, I should like to thank him for getting us a new member. And I shall be glad to let him have another copy if he will let me know which number it was.

THE MAORI BOY WHO LOVED THE BUNTER BOOKS. And here's a delightful story from Godfrey Briggs of Rotorua, New Zealand. Whilst in his bookellers one day a Maori boy of about 12 years of age came in. Godfrey pricked up his ears when he heard the boy ask the assistant if he had any Bunter Books. The assistant said he hadn't and the lad was turning away disappointed when Godfrey pulled him up and asked him what he knew about Bunter Books. The boy replied that he had read some of them and wanted more. He was delighted when Godfrey invited him to jump into his car. Arriving home Godfrey handed him two Bunter Books and two Tom Merry's and the Maori boy went off with a heart filled with joy. Later Godfrey lent him among others school stories by Gunby Hadath and John Finnemore's Slapton School yarns. The boy was particularly interested in the stories by these two authors because he

said they contained descriptions of Rugger games.

I like that story, don't you!

WEEKEND IN LIVERPOOL. I had a most enjoyable time at the Merseyside Club meeting on July 8th. It was grand to be with such a friendly lot of fellows and it brought back memories of that other happy occasion 18 months ago.

On the Monday Frank Case took me to Chester where we had a lovely day. Thanks a lot, Frank.

COME TO YORK. I extend a hearty welcome to any of you who would like to visit my native City. I am gradually getting my collection ship-shape so that you could have a browse over it after a visit to the show places if you have not seen them before.

Yours sincerely,
HERBERT LECKENBY

I SPEND A DAY WITH AN ARTIST

By Frank Vernon Lay

The rain was pouring steadily down as I drew up in front of the Tudor-type house deep in the heart of Kent. It had not been a pleasant drive from London but I would have endured much worse for the sake of a few hours conversation with an artist long admired namely Mr. Ernest E. Briscoe.

Mr. Briscoe was ready and waiting for me and in no time at all a pot of tea was brewing and I'm not betraying any secrets when I say that EEB is very proud of his tea-making and from the samples I imbibed he has every reason to be. Since he lost his wife two years ago EEB has "done for himself" and his home is a credit to him especially as he is no longer a young man and the winter just gone was a severe trial to him. At present EEB is in very poor health indeed and on behalf of all his many admirers all over the world I expressed our wish for his quick recovery and

an early return to his normal active life.

"Know anything about Art?" he demanded as he displayed a beautiful painting of a windmill after a thunderstorm. "Let's put it here, the light's better," and he propped it on a chair in the middle of the library. It looked alright to me but EEB confessed himself dissatisfied and launched into technical details most of which I must admit were away over my head. It is an example of his meticulous attention to detail when I say that this particular painting had been taken down and out of its frame over seven times and still he was not content.

"Now - I suppose you want to see the AP stuff? Well as I've already told you the AP retained all the originals but I've got the actual printed illustrations cut from the papers," and so saying out came several enormous files and for the next few hours we were engrossed in sorting out literally hundreds of cuttings from the Boys Herald, Boys Realm, Boys Friend, Nelson Lee, Union Jack, Penny Pictorial and Champion. Other files had cuttings and proofs from the Boys Own Paper and political cartoons from various propagandist publications.

"Back thought this one was excellent," said EEB holding up a cutting from the pink Boys Realm. "He took it into H.E. the Director (Hamilton Edwards) who commented 'Jolly Good' and what's more saw there was an extra guinea added to the cheque when it came. He was a real man Hamilton Edwards and I've no cause to regret my association with him."

In reply to a question "Yes the St. Franks buildings and particularly the Clocktower were based on those of Eton. In point of fact Eton served as a model for many a later public school," and here he produced the Nelson Lee drawing of Malvern School. "You see here," he said "the central clocktower, almost identical with St. Franks. I used the basic idea and added a turret at the top. That series for the Nelson Lee was a very satisfying one to me, running as it did for so long but I did not care for the Lee. That was the sketches illustrating common expressions such as "grinding his teeth" I thought them very cheap and childish. However in those days I wasn't able to pick and choose although later I was able to refuse such commissions that I thought were vulgar or not in accord with my beliefs - for instance I several times refused any work in connection with blood sports and in time this type of thing was not offered to me."

EEB then told me of his experiences in the first world war when he was stationed in Egypt and against great odds held three exhibitions in Cairo with much benefit to himself. All his painting and drawing had to be done in his own time and under difficult conditions and those of us who have had army experience know what this means. Working till the early hours of the morning without being able to use the electric light or lanterns and endeavouring to allow for the differences in light and shade due to working by candlelight.

After demobilisation EEB placed his work through the Byron Studios then under the control of Wm. Hodgson some of whose work can be found in the Captain. (During this period he did much work for the B.O.P.) EEB is a lover of the country and this enabled him to live away from London and cities with just occasional trips to town for essential business.

As most of us know EEB is an R.A. and his paintings and water-colours have commanded a ready sale. His standard was always a high one and he set his face resolutely against what he calls the vulgar cowboy and gun type of cheap drawing. A study of his work cannot fail to disclose the love of art for art's sake inherent in even the smallest of his illustrations. In all probability if the hours spent on some of them were taken into account it would be found that his hourly rate of pay was extremely low.

Some of his illustrations that come readily to mind and which are worth preserving are a pink U.J. cover depicting the Houses of Parliament and a full-page interior illustration of Sexton Blake at the Bar of the House delivering the Budget Speech!

The hours sped by all too rapidly and when as last I rose to take my leave there still remained many topics to be discussed, books to be looked at and files to be gone through, so with a firm promise to return as soon as possible and stay overnight I finally departed bringing away with me reminiscences of Henry St. John, Leonard Shields, J. N. Pentelow, Hamilton Edwards, W. H. Back, Addington Symonds and others with whom EEB had had happy associations.

Pentelow, Wheway, Addington Symonds (a real live-wire), a young office-boy badgering on the stairs for advice on writing and drawing and gradually blossoming out into a full-blown writer on his own feet under the name of Walter Edwards!

In conclusion it may be mentioned that Ernest Edward Briscoe was not content merely to be an artist. He also on occasion turned his hand to writing and those interested can find a short school yarn of his in the Boys Realm for July 7, 1920 - a story that was quite well received. He wrote and illustrated quite a number of stories for those old friends the Pip, Squeak and Wilfred Annuals and also some comic strips and as he chuckles over them to-day it is easy to see that he loved the work and I came away with the knowledge that I had met a man to whom the work was more important than the reward and to whom honest, integrity and right-thinking were not just words but ideals to be lived up to always.

LATE NEWS: We deeply regret to announce the death of Mr. H. J. Garrish, who was with the Amalgamated Press for 62 years. He was 78. Tributes will appear next month.

SCHOOL FRIEND WEEKLY. Wanted any issues for 1919, 1920 and 1921 only. Oddments or runs welcomed. L. PACKMAN, 27, ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON S.E.22.

URGENT. Many Sexton Blake Libs. wanted (1st and 2nd series) complete with covers. Serial numbers, series and price please. Also any Union Jacks in good condition for the years 1917, 1918. JOSIE PACKMAN, 27 ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON S.E.22.

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BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN

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

The 'spot-light' is now on the S.B. Library - and with a vengeance!

I have received quite a number of letters on the subject of the new 'set-up', almost all deploring the new saga. Seeing that Tinker has been cut out altogether in the July issues I anticipate still more correspondence about that.

There is no room this month to go fully into the matter but I will deal with it at some length in September. I may say that Len and myself have written jointly to the Editor of the Library, and it will be interesting to see what reply is forthcoming.

Josie Packman.

IN DEFENCE OF THE "MODERNS"

By E. V. Copeman

I have just received the news from a member of the Sexton Blake Circle that my article, WELCOME PETER SAXON, which appeared in the June "Collectors' Digest", has already "stirred up a hornet's nest."

Frankly, I must admit that at the time of writing I did rather anticipate that it would provoke some criticism from the old "die-hards", but it definitely was not written with that object in view. It was written for a very simple reason: I enjoyed the story, DANGER AHEAD, and I honestly felt, after 27 years of Blake reading, that Peter Saxon's initial story was really excellent. (No howls of frantic disapproval will ever make me retract that statement!)

From the way my correspondent writes, I am given to understand that a certain gentleman whose name I have no intention of revealing was not only furious about my article but declared in righteous indignation "that history was being made in printing in Blakiana the most rubbishy article ever printed."

Thanks a lot. There's nothing like being outspoken, is there? After all, we're a free people. Or are we?

While I am prepared to accept an honest opinion as a man's right, no matter how heartily I might disagree with it in principle, I am like many other folk in that rudeness doesn't amuse me. Therefore I would point out that just because I (and many others, if he but knew it) don't happen to share our irate friend's views, that fact alone gives him no right to classify us all in a group labelled "RUBBISH"!!! Possibly he bases his outspokenness on the presumption that "all that is good is past" — a popular fallacy in many walks of life, but a fallacy nevertheless.

I can add this to my original article. In a few years time my father will be 70. He has been a follower of Blake all his life. Not only did he read and enjoy Peter Saxon's DANGER AHEAD but at the present moment he is halfway through Saxon's second story, DECOY FOR MURDER, and declares the action is so brisk he doesn't want to put it down!

Back to my offending article, in case it and its predecessor (A HOLIDAY WITH SEXTON BLAKE, May C.D.) should have left the impression that I only appreciate modern Blakes, I would refer any angry enthusiasts to other articles of mine (as yet unpublished) such as TURN BACK THE CLOCK (a review of one of G.H. Teed's stories), WALDO LIVES AGAIN (an analysis of some of E. S. Brooks' Blake work), ON OUR SELECTION (which recommends many of the older school of writers) and I REMEMBER THESE (which lists a group of my "old favourites"). Perhaps it is rather unfortunate that my first two printed articles in the pages of C.D. should have extolled the new writers and made such little reference to the men who put in the very valuable groundwork in the years gone by.

What I would emphasise, however, is that we can get a distorted view if we live only in the past and refuse to see any good in the present.

I can see good in both. I like the old writers for reasons given in other articles. I like the new ones because of their crispness and speed. When I read a Blake story I want to enjoy it. I want to enjoy it as a story which will compare with any novel from the "mystery" shelves at the local library. I don't want to have to

force myself to wade through a lot of outdated cliches in order to provide myself with a dose of nostalgia. (Save your howls of wrath. I did say I can see good in old as well as new, didn't I?)

But above all, we must be fair about this thing. We must take the broad outlook and have the wider vision. Blake isn't restricted to just a few favourite writers long-since deceased. It is our job as enthusiastic followers to back up and help the men of our present time who continue to chronicle his adventures. It always puzzles me when I find readers who can see no good at all in the present-day stories. In fiction, Blake has been a man for each succeeding generation. Refusal to admit that, in order to be this, change is essential, is a sure sign of age. Besides, if the present tales are a retrograde step, how come they are still selling? Do all the old "diehards" presume to condemn all those who enjoy the new yarns? Wouldn't it be far better to welcome them into the fold of Blake's admirers?

All progress has taken its share of criticism. Men without vision would have clung to the good things of the past and blinded themselves to the better things of the future.

Each generation has its share of goodness and badness. Blake yarns over many many years have not all been good. Those who claim any period was all perfection and literarily short-sighted.

But there is one thing that scares me. While constructive criticism is helpful, the same cannot be said for intolerance and prejudice.

When you throw stones some find their mark. Too many stones can ultimately kill. Don't throw too much at Blake. He isn't entirely indestructible.

Don't mourn all the time for "that which is lost". Rather, seek to keep Sexton Blake alive.

A kind word helps a lot.

SIDELIGHTS ON A PRESENT DAY AUTHOR

by W. O. G. Lofts

One of the most popular writers in the current series of the

Sexton Blake Library is WALTER TYRER.

Commencing with No. 53 "The Mystery of Squadron X" this author continues to write for the Library - with Blake at his best.

It was my good fortune recently to contact Mr. Tyrer, who gave me some interesting details about himself, and knowing that Blake enthusiasts are always keen to know something about the men who write of his adventures, it is therefore with much pleasure that I received Mr. Tyrer's permission to give out this information.

Walter Tyrer was born in the year 1900, at St. Helens, Lancs. In his youth he revelled in the works of Charles Hamilton, especially the stories written in his Dickensian humorous vein. Strangely enough Mr. Tyrer did not care a lot for stories about Sexton Blake; nor did he find much interest in those of Jack, Sam and Pete, the creation of S. Clarke Hook and possibly the most popular fictional characters of that time. His favourite author was Sidney Drew (Edgar Joyce Murray).

On leaving school Mr. Tyrer started work as a clerk in a glass-works, where, by a strange coincidence, he occupied the same office stool S. Clarke Hook had once used (Clarke Hook lived at St. Helens for many years). Mr. Tyrer's father was a glass bottle-blower, but he died when Walter was only two years of age. This no doubt accounts for the eroneous report once circulated that Walter Tyrer was at one time a glass-blower.

In the latter part of the first World War Mr. Tyrer served in the Royal Naval Air Service. His first story was written for the Detective Magazine (A. Press) for which he received £5. It was a story written in the first person, the narrator committing the crime. Mr. Tyrer tells me that later on he could have kicked himself for wasting it - when he saw what Agatha Christie did with a similar idea (although he takes his hat off to that lady).

Actually he was a little uncertain at first as to whether he wanted to be an author or an artist, for he used to do imitation Tom Webster cartoons for a local paper. (Charles Hamilton has a similar ability, and the same applies to Edward Home-Gall.) However, in 1924 Mr. Tyrer started writing for the firm of D. C. Thomson, the majority of his stories being for their women's publications but occasionally for the boys papers. As, of course, Thomson's do not publish authors' names, it is impossible to trace Mr. Tyrer's works in this field, but some such stories in serial form were "Roddy of the Regiment" and "Rover Plus-Four Peter", which appeared in the "Rover".

About the year 1935 he went over to the A. Press, who started the "Miracle" - built round him and his rather Thomsonian ideas. He also wrote for their boys publications, although most of his work was for the women's papers.

With regard to present day writings, Mr. Tyrer feels that people do not give themselves to reading as did the generations of his youth. For this reason the stories are constructed in a simpler manner and with a more direct approach.

Mr. Tyrer was amazed at the knowledge I had of the minor writers of today (and yesterday) and at the extensive general interest taken in their personalities and work - although he feels they do not merit such recognition. He was surprised that his own work should be so appreciated, for Mr. Tyrer regards himself as a purveyor of mass entertainment, and his work as ephemeral as the average radio script.

As we collectors know, Sexton Blake has changed considerably in the sixty years of his literary life, and Mr. Tyrer - who enjoys writing Blake stories - is of the opinion that Blake is now passing through another metamorphosis.

The original Editor of the Sexton Blake Library, who, as recently stated in Blakiana, has now retired, used to be the centre of an informal group comprising Anthony Parsons, Rex Hardinge, John Hunter and Walter Tyrer. They would meet for a chat and a glass or two of beer in one of the bars at the lower end of Fleet Street.

Mr. Tyrer hopes to continue writing Sexton Blake stories from time to time, although at present he is busy in the field of women's publications. Incidentally, some readers think that Mr. Tyrer introduces too much of the love element into his Blake stories, but it must be remembered that the Sexton Blake Library of today is primarily intended for the adult public, and you cannot leave women and love out of adult stories - who would want to? (As Mr. Tyrer was brought up by a family of seven ladies, this may account for a bias toward the feminine element.)

The bulk of Mr. Tyrer's work today is written for four publishers, and he is never sure of the names under which his women's stories will appear. The firm of Pearson uses the pen-name of RAVENHEAD, and at one time he called himself REX KINGSTON. Neither is Mr. Tyrer ever sure in which periodical his work will be published, but it is always up-to-date.

One of Mr. Tyrer's 'purple patch' stories had the lurid title of "She Sent her Mother to the Scaffold". This was published in

"Poppy's Library" (No. 180). He also wrote the first story for the "Miracle Library" (1949).

The following bound books have been written by Mr. Tyrer: Ellen Morgan; The Hangman's Daughter; Jane the Ripper; Trunk Crime No. 3 (all published by Columbine Publishing Co.) and Such Friends are Dangerous (Staples Press 1954).

At the present moment Mr. Tyrer has written thirty-seven S.B.L.'s - all excellent yarns - the details of which appear below. Meanwhile, it is to be hoped that it will not be long before more stories from Mr. Tyrer's pen will appear in the Sexton Blake Library.

- No. 53. The Mystery of Squadron X.
- " 61. The Curse of the Carringtons.
- " 81. The Case of the Conscript Miner.
- " 109. The Secret of the Sands.
- " 120. The Mystery of the Three Demobbed Men.
- " 131. The Crime on the Moors.
- " 150. The Holiday Camp Mystery.
- " 162. The Case Against Dr. Ripon.
- " 173. The Motor Coach Mystery.
- " 183. The Mystery of the Woman Overboard.
- " 188. The Affair of the Hollywood Contract.
- " 198. The Mystery of the Missing Angler.
- " 202. One of Eleven.
- " 212. The Cottage Crime.
- " 216. The Evil Spell.
- " 219. The Case of the Naval Defaulter.
- " 226. The Affair of Danny the Dip.
- " 229. The Mystery of the Rio Star.
- " 236. The Case of Two Crooked Baronets.
- " 243. The Crimes at Fenton Towers.
- " 258. The Dilemma of Dr. Hiley.
- " 264. The Hire Purchase Fraud.
- " 272. The Scrap Metal Mystery.
- " 276. The Case of the Bogus Baron.
- " 282. The Secret of the Snows.
- " 287. The Case of the Naval Stores Racket.
- " 293. The Case of the Missing Nazi.
- " 299. The Mystery of the Swindler's Stodge.
- " 303. The Riddle of the French Alibi.

- No. 309. The Case of the Swindled Guarantor.
 " 318. The Case of the Council Swindle.
 " 321. The Crime in Room 37.
 " 328. The Case of the Forbidden Island.
 " 336. The Case of the Returned Soldier.
 " 339. The Strange Affair of the Shot-Gun Sniper.
 " 343. The Mystery of the Mad Millionaires.
 " 351. The Clue of the Pin-Up Girl.

THE MAN FROM WIMBORNE - A STARTLING DEVELOPMENT

By Herbert Leckenby

There has been a remarkable sequel to the sad story told by Jack Murtagh last month of his unsatisfactory deal with P. E. Kingsley of Wimborne.

When I first got the story from Jack I sent it on to Len Packman with the remark, "This all rings a bell. It reminds me forcibly of the methods of R. E. Poynter, about whom we had something to say more than once some years ago." Len cordially agreed for he remembered Poynter but we thought it best to say nothing until we were more sure of our ground.

Well the C.D. went out and you can imagine with what interest I read a letter from one of our members who said he had had some dealing with the dealer mentioned but he knew him as Kingsley-Poynter. In passing it is only fair to say that my informant said that so far as he was concerned he had no cause for complaint.

Well I replied post haste asking for more details. Back came a reply with a letter signed clearly enough - P. E. Kingsley Poynter

Here's the signature:-

P. E. Kingsley Poynter

It couldn't possibly be a coincidence so it seemed certain my suspicion had been correct.

Now who was R. E. Poynter? His story broke some years ago and as hundreds have joined us since, I shall have to go into it in detail as you'll agree as you read on.

"COLLECTOR'S DIGEST" POINTERS. No. 3.

V	R	N	S	U	P
E	D	A	O	O	G
A	L	M	N	H	M
Y	E	S	N	O	T
B	O	R	I	R	N
N	D	N	G	T	O

The object of the game is to score as many points as possible. Start with any letter and moving from that square to any adjacent square horizontally, vertically or diagonally, spell out the longest word you can find.

Make a note of the word, and in the square cross out the letters you have used. Now look for another word and continue until there are no more words to be found. It is not necessary to use all the letters.

For a two-letter word count 1 point; for a three-letter word, 3 points; for 4 letters, 5 points; five letters, 7 points. And so on, adding 2 points for each additional letter. NAMES ASSOCIATED WITH THE HOBBY COUNT DOUBLE POINTS.

Write your words, with the score you claim, on a postcard, and post it to the Editor. Five Shillings will be forwarded to the sender of the best effort first received by the Editor.

RESULT OF POINTERS NO. 2.

The best possible score was probably HANDFORTH (30) TINKER (18) SKINNER (22) LOWTHER (22) WHARTON (22). Total 114 points.

A postal order for 5/- has been sent to LAURIE SUTTON, 112 REPTON ROAD, ORPINGTON, KENT, for his entry in this contest.

(continued from page 232)

upon as a blessing of Providence.

With kindest regards,

Very sincerely,

FRANK RICHARDS.

P.S. I am thinking over the anniversary mentioned in your letter and will write later about it. (Note: The postscript refers to the St. Jims 50th anniversary. I have since received a nice little piece of nostalgia. H.L.)

OLD BOY'S BOOK CLUB

LONDON SECTION

Invasion meeting at Wood Green on Sunday, July 15th, as Ray Bennett from Tipton, Staffs, Cliff Lettey, Frank and Norah Rutherford of Bristol, and Tom Porter, Jack Bellfield and Beryl Russell of Birmingham all attended a very jolly and happy gathering. Highlight once again was Frank Vernon-Lay's further talk on E. E. Briscoe and the showing round of drawings and water colours that this famous artist had given him. Furthermore Frank gave a very good talk on "The Captain", this we hope, will appear in our Herbert's "C.D." or the "C.D. Annual". Time once again the enemy and our visitors had to wend their divers ways home after an enjoyable time. The Bristol trio were the most fortunate as they took Bob Blythe home in their car and naturally found time to inspect the famous complete collection of "Nelson Lee Libraries" that Bob possesses.

Next meeting of club will be at either Woodingdene, Brighton or at Neasden, London N.W. on Sunday, September, 16th.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

NORTHERN SECTION MEETING, JULY 14th, 1956

Dawn saw Gerry Allison, Jack Wood and myself in the queue outside the ground at Headingley waiting hopefully for a day in the sun at the Test Match. However it proved to be the Test Day that Never Was. Thanks to Gerry and Mrs. Allison Jack and I spent a most enjoyable day at their home and in the evening we all set off for the Club Meeting. Unlike the Test Match that was on and a real winner it proved to be.

First chairman Breeze Bentley heartily welcomed the wanderers Gerry and Mrs. A. back to the fold after the unique occasion which made them absentees last month.

It was our first 'Ladies' Night' and right worthily did another member of the Allison family, Mollie, fill the bill. First she gave a talk on the favourite girls' papers of her girlhood, the 'School Friend' etc., but admitted she liked even better the 'Magnet' bought by brother Gerry. Later she conducted a quiz "Missing Letters" which went down well. Yes an excellent debut Mollie.

Brother Gerry gave her a rest whilst he put on a cute game

We often hear of Fives bats, used (particularly by Peter Todd) for summary punishment, but we never hear of Fives itself, a very worthwhile game. There are plenty of Removeites with speed and a quick eye who would enjoy this. Incidentally, what version of Fives is played with a bat? A padded glove is usual.

In the summer, surely there should be Tennis and Swimming as well. No School swimming bath is a sad deficiency, and tennis might well cater for some of those less expert at cricket. Harry Wharton would, in general, have to be prepared to give up his sole right to organising Junior games - certainly to choosing the Junior School XI's - which should be in the hands of a games master. Anyway, inter-school games would be organized by the House Captain of Games, though no doubt Wharton would be consulted as Captain of the Junior XI. No wonder he has let himself in for a lot of trouble and charges of favouritism by picking the Junior XI's himself - all from his own form too!

It is not easy to change a School suddenly, but Dr. Lock will appreciate that changes must come. Perhaps, next Founder's Day, he will invite to the School Mr. Frank Richards - regarded by many as "second founder" of the 16th century School - who will be able to declare open the new Science buildings. Later, in Hall, he will be able to present the Vith Form Physics Prize to George Wingate (Captain of the School and Head of Quelch's House), and the Junior Classical Prizes to Mark Linley and Harry Wharton - both of the Classical Fourth.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

By Roger M. Jenkins

No. 19 - Magnets 994 & 995

Amongst Mr. Quelch's relations may be numbered not only his plump niece Cora, but also his nephew Roger. Cora was not heard of again after the days of the Blue and White cover, but Roger was referred to on a number of occasions after his initial debut, which took place in Magnet No. 994.

Roger Quelch was in the Fourth Form at High Coombe, in Devon, although he does not seem to have appeared in any of the stories that Charles Hamilton wrote about the School for Slackers. Mr. Quelch's brother considered (not surprisingly) that his son was not making enough progress at High Coombe, and Roger was accordingly transferred to Greyfriars for a fortnight with the possibility of making the transfer permanent. Mr. Quelch was kindly prepared to give him extra tuition

daily, and to coach him for a number of prize examinations and scholarships. To quote: "Mr. Quelch knew what was good for a boy, better than the boy himself could possibly know. He was sure of that. Any disagreement on that point savoured of disrespect and frivolity of mind. Disrespect and frivolity were quite intolerable to Mr. Quelch."

Roger appreciated his uncle's kindness, but did not intend to avail himself of it. His one ambition was to return to High Coombe as rapidly as possible, and to achieve this object he set about playing a number of tricks on his uncle. A bell rang very mysteriously several times in the form-room, and another bell rang just as mysteriously and just as often in Mr. Quelch's study when he was giving a tea-party. Later on, the Remove master became locked in his room, and when help was eventually obtained it turned out that the door had somehow become unlocked again, and Mr. Quelch need never have called for help at all. The crowning jest, however, was to stack fireworks behind the coal in the grate in Mr. Quelch's study. The Head happened to be there when they began to explode, and he had quite an exciting time dodging jumping crackers.

After this, it was quite certain that Roger must leave. To quote again: " 'As you will not, and do not, belong to this school, it is doubtful whether I am entitled to punish you as form-master.' Roger brightened up. 'But as an uncle it is my duty to punish you with the utmost severity!'" As Roger said, "My uncle's fond of me, and I'm fond of him - and the less we see of one another the more fond we are!"

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I remembered some of it but by no means all as I realised when I turned up the necessary numbers. In fact I had forgotten the most surprising part of it. More of that later.

Mr. Poynter was first mentioned in our famous No. 3A. It concerned an unfortunate experience Frank Snell of Bideford, had with him. Frank sent Mr. Poynter 250 Gems and 36 S.O.L's and was to get 322 Magnets in return. Frank never got them although Mr. P. swore he had sent them in two parcels. After some not very pleasant correspondence Poynter added insult to injury by offering to pay 1d. each for the Gems and 2d. for the S.O.L's 11/4d. in all less fares of 1/6d. which he said he had incurred when posting the parcels! After that Frank gave up in disgust. Mr. Poynter by the way mentioned that he was very much interested in Nelson Lees.

Now we turn to C.D. No. 27, March, 1949. Here was told the unsatisfactory transaction Bill Colcombe had with R. E. Poynter of Box Hill Road, Tadworth, Surrey, I daresay Bill has laughed over it since as it had an amusing side - to an onlooker at any rate.

Anyway Bill was offered 57 Sexton Blake Libraries 345-401 (2nd Series) in exchange for double the quantity of Magnets, Gems, Plucks, U.P. etc. Bill thought the offer fair enough so sent off 115 papers. I'll now quote what we said at the time.

"What do you think he got in exchange? You'll never guess in a month of Sundays! Not the S.B. he so clearly specified or any S.B.L's at all, instead - a load of Women's World's and John Bulls!!

Thinking he had received someone else's parcel in error for not even a blind man could confuse the two papers mentioned with Sexton Blake Libraries - Bill naturally asked for an explanation. Judge his surprise, dismay and indignation when Mr. Poynter told him he had got the same face value for those he had sent and if he didn't like it he could go to blazes." Well, I ask you! Naive sort of bloke, Mr. Poynter, or is he?

However, Bill not being satisfied naturally threatened legal action and managed to get £4 15s. out of Mr. Poynter.

On to C.D. No. 38, February, 1950. This is the affair I had forgotten about until I started searching and it's rather surprising as it concerned Jack Murtagh, very much so. Anyway it all came back as soon as I read it.

It told how about the same time as the Bill Colcombe business was on Jack was in correspondence with a Mr. R. Parker, of Box Hill Road, Tadworth, Surrey, the same address as Mr. Poynter's mark you,

and as later revealed, the same handwriting. Now recall what Jack told you last month then read this quoted from that No. 38.

"Mr. Porter offered Jack a number of Nelson Lee's, old series, numbers given in detail. He asked for three copies in exchange for one of his. The numbers offered were some Jack was anxious to obtain to help complete his collection so he accepted the offer by air-mail and added he was sending off 30 Nelson Lees straight away, others to follow.

About a month later Jack received another letter from "Mr. Porter" saying that as he had not heard earlier from Jack he had sold the Nelson Lees, a fortnight before. So he offered in their place some John Bulls, Local Government Chronicles, Melody Makers, women's books etc!!!"

Jack sent a curt demand for the return of his Nelson Lees, but his letter was returned "Gone Away", and we added "From that day to this Jack has never had another word from Mr. Porter - Poynter." Well he has now it seems. I sent him an air-letter as soon as I heard of the Kingsley-Poynter signature and no doubt the previous experience came back to him in a flash. At the moment of writing I haven't had his reply. I wonder if I dare publish it when I do!

Bill Martin by the way revealed some time after Jack's first experience that Mr. Poynter had moved on to Southampton.

Well Jack asked last month "What Do You Think?" I'll add What Do You Think Now?

In conclusion if any of you have had any cause for complaint I urge you to send details to Len Packman or myself. If you would rather your names were not made public we would abide by your request.

After thought, I wonder what made the Wimborne dealer sign his letters Kingsley-Poynter in some instances. Maybe he thought it sounded more impressive. Impressive maybe, but my word, what a mistake!

Later, I have had a letter from Mr. Kingsley laying a complaint against Jack Murtagh!! Needless to say my reply wouldn't give him much consolation.

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NELSON LEE COLUMN

by JACK WOOD
NOSTAW, 328, Stockton Lane,
YORK.

(Continued from last month)

This staggering information is received with disbelief but Nelson Lee is able to state that some weeks ago an obscure paragraph in the Press had reported Prince Paul having fallen into the hands of revolutionaries and held a prisoner in the hills. Grave trouble had broken out in the tiny kingdom of Mordania.

And evidently the Prince was placed on the ship to be blown to atoms with the schooner itself. By chance the disaster was averted. Then came the storm, the storm which was to throw them all on the wild coast of Mordania and make possible a very fine series. Brooks has taken the St. Franks crowd into many places on the map but mostly he preferred to write about Georgious Hotel surroundings and tropical splendour. Even the South Pole can claim a white, vast attractive aspect. But Mordania was rugged, wild and ugly.

Having no recognised roads or highways, nor did it possess a railway. Fortunately, although the ship was wrecked the boys were able to raid the schooner stores and obtain food which they made into parcels. These they all strapped to their backs and so commenced their journey into the interior. They were cut off from civilisation. The schooner did not possess a wireless, and not a sign of any other ship could be seen. The crowd were well armed. They had brought the revolvers and rifles from the schooner.

By that strange gift of his Edwy Searles Brooks always managed to transplant his readers from their armchairs and place them into whatever situation or scenery he wrote about.

But when he put me in Mordania he excelled even himself "It was a scene of desolation. Of life there was no sign. Not a human being, not an animal and not the trace of any roadway or human habitation." The St. Frank's crowd, Lord Dorrimore, Capt. Mason and Prince Paul were alone in the mountainous region of the Balkans!

A wild rocky area with no shelter and a grim promise of rain in the air. In every direction rose the mountain peaks with valleys and gullies, black and inky in the dim evening light, but no sign of town or village - nothing.

And so they walked on. But by the end of the day they were exhausted - well and truly whacked.

The nearest approach to meeting strangers came when they found a white object among the rocks.

It was a skull!

The hours crept by and the day drew to a close. They had reached a point where a tall peak could be seen. Actually it was a building. One of those we see in a volume of fairy stories, with towers and turrets and tiny slit-like windows.

It was the monastery of St. Peter! And after great difficulty they gained admittance and were given food and rest.

But the biggest surprise came when they met King Boris of Mordania who had taken refuge in the same building.

It is when Prince Paul meets his father that his memory returns and they are at once in each other's arms.

But the enemies of King Boris track him to the monastery and a swift, sudden attack was made on the building. It was soon over. The revolutionaries had captured them all with the exception of Nipper, Tregellis-West and Tommy Watson. They had hidden in a pile of blankets and the brigands had overlooked them! Now I will draw a veil over the rest of the story since my article concerns only the sequel to these adventures. But I would add in passing that for sheer desolation and vacuity that is Mordania, well, I was glad to get out of the country.

Brooks has scraped the barrel of despair to describe this wild and inhospitable region and the artist A. Jones has gone one better and given us a pictorial poverty which must surely be unique in the annals of the art of delineation. He has faithfully depicted the forlorn and dismal scenes that follow the party as they trudge and climb the rocky way. That it is to the inability of Mr. Jones to be a good artist is perhaps his loss and our gain but one must agree that a certain amount of intuition was needed to illustrate these series.

And these sketches are pen and ink echoes. The author must have put everything he knew into the yarn - and until the last issue of the Nelson Lee he never repeated such similar dreary series of fastnesses. Such a lonely, forbidding, incredulous and inimical an influence drifts through these stories that I must once again express my amazement at the boldness of the publisher.

I sometimes think that whatever has been or will be written already it has appeared in the Nelson Lee Library!

And now I come to the point where after the party flee from the dreaded Tagossa, after they raise an army in support of the King, the journey to LUDARI, the Mordanian capital, the occupation of the Citadel and the subsequent onslaught made against it by the Tagossa, they return home victorious, all safe and sound.

Only to be threatened once again, right in the heart of London!

The vendetta, the deadly blood feud, had been brought to England by two Mordanians who had sworn an oath to destroy every member of the party who had helped King Boris to destroy the Tagossa. Soon after their arrival in England the boys had gone to St. Franks. And they had all received mysterious cards bearing a flaming torch, which as they all knew meant death was to follow. At first they had not taken these warnings seriously but on the very same day a high explosive bomb had been flung at a coach containing not only the sixteen fellows who went to Mordania but many others as well. By a miracle they had escaped disaster and Dr. Stafford, acting on Mr. Lee's advice had sent all the juniors off home without delay. The fifteen juniors were kept within closed doors by their people. Nipper stayed with Lee in Grays Inn Road. And each house was closely protected by police and Scotland Yard detectives. The next move the Mordanian murderers make is to take a pot shot at Lord Dorrimore as he strolls along Grays Inn Road on his way to Lee.

But it is only a graze, and under the skilful care of Nelson Lee, Dorrie is made to rest in Lee's study.

Then a period of quiet sets in. All that day and throughout the night the Tagossa made no sign. Mortie and Handforth and one or two others had telephoned but there was nothing doing.

A parcel among Lee's mail seems innocuous enough but Lee is suspicious and places it in a large bowl of water. Stripped of its wrappings a cigar box is revealed which amuses Nipper since Lee has spoiled an expensive box of Havanas. However on further examination an infernal machine is exposed which would have blown them to atoms the very instant the lid was lifted.

And then the awful thought that perhaps the others had received similar parcels filled them with horror.

Nipper phoned Handforth who had Church and McClure staying with him, but owing to a fire in the West End during the night the number was disconnected. Nipper is frantic and urges Nelson Lee to visit Handforth while he is out. Next, Montie is phoned, and Nipper learns a parcel which has come has not been opened. After listening to

Nipper Montie decides he wouldn't touch the parcel with a barge-pole!

A parcel has also come for Ernest Lawrence but he was not up and Lawrence Senior promises he will put it in water.

Then Talmadge and Yorke. Both these juniors had received parcels but as they had not risen from their beds Nipper was able to stop them opening the packages. In the meantime Handforth was expressing his delight at receiving a box of chocolates by post and shares them with Church and McClure. Sir Edward Handforth appears and takes them away expressing his disgust at eating chocolates before breakfast. This saves the lives of the three boys since Nelson Lee turns up and is able to announce the chocolates are poison! But the boys had sampled them and Lee found the juniors all stretched out on three separate beds, all of them fully dressed and looking extremely bad. However, he injects an antidote and saves their lives.

Patty Little was the next victim. Some kind but unknown friend had sent him a hamper. And Fatty had a weakness for hampers! It wasn't a large one for it had come through the post, but any kind of hamper was acceptable to Fatty.

But when Nelson Lee informs him the contents are probably poisoned he is aghast.

The detective doesn't waste a minute. He hurries in his racer to the home of Reggie Pitt in Kensington. With Pitt, there are also Cecil de Valerie and Justin B. Farman.

Lee is greatly relieved to find that the three boys were not down yet. As he expected a parcel was waiting. It was becoming clear that no-one was being missed. It was again chocolates in this case which upon examination were found by Lee to be poisonous.

On arriving at Bob Christine's place the leader of the College House answered the door himself. No, it wasn't sweets or bombs he'd got in his parcel, it was a pair of boxing-gloves. Lee is puzzled, but decides to examine them. Christine is horrified to see him rip the gloves open and tear them to pieces. A moment later the truth was revealed. Inside each glove there was a tiny, almost invisible metal spike, cunningly fixed to the lining. And the spikes were coated with a deadly poison.

Watson and Turner had not received any parcels, but Nelson Lee put this down to a delay in the post and warned them of what to do when they did come.

Nipper had rung up the remainder and gave instructions.

Captain Mason's parcel had a queer hissing sound and he had

thrown it through the window of his house. The next second there was an explosion which demolished the house. Mason was scorched and stunned and the servants sustained broken legs and fractured skulls. But Mason was not fatally hurt.

The rest of the crew, Morgan, Leighton and some others were warned by Mr. Lee in time and so escaped injury.

The final attempt on the lives of Lee and Nipper, is I think, one of the most thrilling episodes that has appeared in the N.L.L. And this is how it was carried out:-

Mrs. Jones, Lee's housekeeper, had opened the door in response to a short ring. She found herself confronted by a foreign-looking individual, with a small basket slung over his shoulder. This was now in front of him, with the lid held up, displaying for Mrs. Jones's dazzled vision a choice variety of buttons, reels of cotton and so forth.

"Not today, thanks!" said Mrs. Jones curtly. "I don't hold with you men - I was cheated the very last time! You can go away!"

But the man pushed his way into the hall before Mrs. Jones could prevent him. Trams and buses were passing in the street and the traffic generally was thick. Yet nobody had noticed the entry of the man. This is not surprising since Grays Inn Road is a very busy thoroughfare.

Today the trams are no longer there. They have been replaced by extra bus services. But there is a continuous movement of vehicles. Grays Inn Road! How the memories jump out of the past as I walk down it. I never want to leave Grays Inn Road - just linger, and foolishly expect to see Nelson Lee and Nipper emerge from a house that I have earmarked as the home of the detectives. But they never do - yet I console myself by thinking they were here once and this is where they lived. But to continue.

The man who had forced his way into Lee's home requests Mrs. Jones to smell a bottle of scent of which he demands only threepence. The next moment the housekeeper falls back, overcome by the fumes and she is dragged away. He enters the consulting room and points a gun at Nipper. "If you move or make the slightest sound I will shoot!" he exclaims.

He then attempts to knock Nipper out with the butt of his revolver. But Nipper dodges the blow and a struggle ensues.

Eventually, Nelson Lee's assistant is bound and gagged and

trussed up like a chicken. And the Mordanian drags him across the room and ties him to the handle of a small safe which has been let into the wall. During the fight Nipper had tripped over a chair and caught his head against something. This had stunned him and put him out for a while. When he had come to he found himself trussed up and tied to the safe. The Mordanian had taken an object from his basket and connected it to the door by wires and two pieces of metal. At once Nipper realizes it is an infernal machine - a bomb!

And it was fixed in such a way that when the door opened the two pieces of metal would make contact and set off the bomb!

Both Lee and Nipper would be blown up with the house. When Nelson Lee came through that door he would kill Nipper - and himself. It was possible that Lennard of the Yard or Mrs. Jones might recover and come into the room, but the result would be the same. Whoever entered the room would cause the bomb to explode.

The murderer leaves the consulting room by way of the laboratory and Nipper is left to his fate.

If he can work his gag loose and shout a warning there was no guarantee that Lee would understand. It was a terrible predicament and somehow one doesn't connect the scene with old time melodrama in these days of trouble out in Cyprus.

There is an urgency of reality that grips the reader. Nipper manages to get the revolver from his pocket but although it is in his grasp the position was not altered. If he starts loosening off a few shots it would only bring disaster; for somebody would be attracted and come blundering in. If he fired at the wires and tried to sever them the bomb may go off at the same time. And then, with a sudden feeling of horror he hears the front door bang.

Footsteps sounded on the stairs - firm, hurried footsteps which Nipper instantly recognises. Nelson Lee was coming up the stairs!

Nipper gazes at that door in a fascinated kind of horror. Within a few moments it will be open, the two pieces of metal will come into contact and then - just a few seconds left - then Nipper is staring at the key in the door. The key is a large one - old fashioned, with a big flat end. He knew it worked easily. He could not shoud - he could scarcely move. But he was determined to take one chance - a chance which would probably fail, but which might succeed. In any case there was no time for hesitation.

He pulls the trigger. Crack!

The bullet struck the woodwork of the door an inch beyond. He had failed!

But now he could hear Nelson Lee on the landing, striding quickly towards the door.

At the most Nipper has two seconds. Crack!

A sharp "ping" and the key was in a different position. He saw the handle turn and poor old Nipper's heart sank into his mouth. But the door didn't budge! Nipper's bullet had struck the key and had caused it to give a sharp turn, shooting the bolt home. Thus he had locked the door, making it impossible for Nelson Lee to enter. The bomb is dismantled and made harmless, and now there is little more to tell about these remarkable and thrilling yarns.

With the aid of Sexton Blake and Tinker plus Pedro, they succeed in tracking down the assassins.

Yes, even Sexton Blake comes into the picture at this juncture!

And after a scene which is very reminiscent of the famous Sidney Street siege they capture the two Mordanians. And it is the end. The end of a great story. A story that did not boast of great exploits amid tropical splendour and sunny climes.

Rather did it detract one by its picture of ugly valleys and dark mountains. Of desolation and uncivilised regions. But it was worth it.

And do you know how much it cost to buy the series when they were published? I'll tell you. Tenpence halfpenny!!

THE END

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HAMILTONIANA

Compiled by Herbert Leckenby

I am sure all concerned will take in good part this amusing banter from the pen of a staunch Hamiltonian who is a member of the younger generation.

GREYFRIARS MUST BE MODERNIZED

By Anthony Baker

Has it ever occurred to you that Greyfriars has dropped behind the times? Great institution though it is, with high moral standing, and, to say the least, resourceful scholars, it will have to undergo some radical changes if it is to keep amongst England's leading Public Schools. With fees which, no doubt, are now between £300 and £400 a year, what has it to offer to parents seeking a school for their sons? What attractions can the School authorities set forth in the prospectus? Picturesque buildings...beautiful setting...highest tone...sound classical education (if that is an attraction).

But what else? It has not even a House system; surely, in these days, it must be unique as such. The school should be divided into five or six houses of fifty or sixty boys, with a House Master over each, who can watch over a boy's progress throughout his whole School career. Then they might be able to do something with the Skinners, Snoops and Stotts. There are enough School Prefects for one to be Captain of each House, though Dr. Locke would be well advised to keep Loder, Walker and Carne from such positions; and the appointments of House Prefects should greatly facilitate the running of the School. Whoever heard of a School of 300 with only six or seven Prefects. Excellent training for the boys, too, to hold such positions of responsibility. Potter and Greene and their colleagues - though hardly Coker - would, we imagine, make excellent House Prefects.

Think of the spirit of inter-house competition that could be fostered, and of the spirit of unity that would grow up within the Houses. Mr. Frank Richards would be able to give us grand descriptions of, for example, inter-House Junior Football Competitions. First round...second round...semi-final...and the Final, between the two crack Houses, maybe with Harry Wharton captaining one team, and Mark Linley or Tom Brown the other.

And if there were more than two Houses, as there certainly should be, then one would not have all the slightly irritating inter-house squabbles that one finds when the School is just divided into two, as at those other Southern institutions, St. James's College and Rookwood School. How much more satisfactory for a boy to belong to a House for his whole School career, instead of attaching all his interest to his own form, where the limited age-range and annual "move-up" so limit activities. Greyfriars should realise that forms now exist for work purposes only, and all games and other School activities are now carried on through Houses.

But of course, the forms themselves are desperately antiquated. By the time a boy reaches a Fourth Form, he should be allowed a considerable amount of specialization in subjects. But not so Harry Wharton & Co., who are condemned to a stiff History-cum-Latin training for the rest of their schooldays, regardless of whether they want to be doctors, engineers, mathematicians, physicists, or anything else. Admittedly, Larry Lascelles and M. Charpentier do their best to teach some Mathematics and French to the whole School - but these are only regarded as minor subjects.

The answer is to subdivide the forms. Shell, Upper Fourth and Remove have always seemed an odd concoction of forms. Does one spend a year in Remove, then a year in Upper Fourth, then a year in Shell before reaching the Fifth? If so, Harry Wharton & Co., at 15 in Remove would be 19 when they reached even their first year in the Sixth!

These three forms should be renamed Classical Fourth, Modern Fourth and Science Fourth. The Famous Five might, of course, find themselves in different forms: I would say that Inky has a scientific brain; Nugent and Bull would probably specialize in English, History and French in Modern Fourth, while Wharton and Cherry would be happiest in Classical Fourth. Their being in different forms would not hinder their united activities, for no doubt they would arrange to be placed in the same House. Fifth and Sixth forms need similar division. Even Coker, execrable at English and Classics, might find a happy haven in Chemistry or Biology!

The Masters Common Room needs radically reorganizing at the same time. It must be enlarged as a start. Far more specialized men are needed these days. Mossco, regrettably, would have to go, or, at least, a more able colleague found. Frenchmen are rarely employed these days, least of all Frenchmen who cannot keep order. What is needed is a man with a Modern Languages degree who could teach French,

German and Spanish.

Mr. Quelch might become Senior Classics Master, and take over the Sixth Form Classical teaching from the Headmaster - for Headmasters have little time for teaching these days. Prout could conceivably take over the English side, but a new History Master and a vast Science staff would have to be imported. It is incredible that Dr. Locke has for so long had no Science Master on the Staff.

A Science block of buildings is essential - the first new buildings, we would imagine, for some time. Physics, Chemistry and Biology Laboratories would be there in profusion - and, however much H.S.Q. might dislike their erection, digging for the foundations might reveal some interesting archaeological finds for mention in the "History of Greyfriars". The new buildings could be fitted on to the West side of the School, and would look out over Elm Walk and Little Side. Probably the new Buildings would have a pseudo-Gothic exterior to blend with the ancient monastical buildings. Perhaps the old School, which we always imagine to be fairly prosperous, could stand the cost quite happily, or maybe Sir Hilton Popper and Col. Wharton would have to launch an appeal fund - all too common nowadays.

I have just realised there has never been any mention of a Chapel: it is inconceivable that the School should be without one, however, and we will assume on its presence. But there are plenty of other missing amenities: a modern gymnasium for P.T. and Fencing: undoubtedly essential, and surely it would have been mentioned if there had been one. A carpentry shop, too, for woodwork, and a general and considerable development of art and music to cater for boys' interests. At the moment, music and musicians are regarded as slightly subnormal: which is not surprising when only Hoskins makes use of the music room.

One hears of a Dramatic Society, and, I believe, on occasions, of a Debating Society, but there is plenty of room for new School Societies, ranging from Historical and Classical - Linley would be in his element here - to Philatelic and Natural History: as Scouts Harry Wharton & Co., should appreciate the latter.

Even the games must not go unchanged. Soccer and cricket are, rightly, the staple diet, but the Spring Term could be usefully devoted to Hockey, increasingly popular nowadays, and to more athletics. What thrilling scenes there would be on Sports Day, as Harry Wharton and the Bounder are neck and neck in the final of the Mile - the Bounder wishing, as his breath grows short, that he had cut down on cigarettes.

'St. Jim's Portraits.' Winners Bill Williamson first, followed by J. Breeze Bentley and Ernest Whitehead.

Next Meeting August 11th. Jack Wood's turn with "There Were Other Schools."

H. LECKENBY.

Northern Section Correspondent.

MIDLAND SECTION MEETING, JUNE 28th.

Three apologies for absence were received for this meeting and included one from Jack Ingram. We were extremely sorry to hear that he had just lost a brother, and members expressed their sympathy to Jack on his bereavement. The writer was also asked to write him on their behalf. By a melancholy coincidence several members heard for the first time of the death of Mrs. Herbert Leckenby. Here again the writer was asked to write and expressed the Club's sympathy and good wishes.

The remaining formal business was of a more cheerful character; although even so it was rather a blow to have to decide not to have a meeting in July. A welcome suggestion by Tom Porter was that Harry Broster be appointed Quizmaster. A most happy and interesting idea.

We then commenced with the principal item for the evening which was a talk by Tom Porter on "Nelson Lee". In the course of an interesting and well delivered talk, Tom outlined the history and characteristics of this prominent character in Juvenilia.

Launched in 1915, Lee was an immediate success and was very popular for some ten years. E. S. Brooks wrote with tremendous gusto and enthusiasm, even if not always perfect grammatically. If the plots were extravagant they were nevertheless full of intriguing incident. Perhaps rather far fetched, but what did the youthful readers care?

Tom read various passages at random to illustrate; and furthermore made a very interesting point that Brooks was much better than Frank Richards at describing a football match, whilst Frank Richards excelled at describing Cricket ones. Compare Brooks's excellent fictional descriptions with the slap dash reports in the local papers on a Saturday night.

After refreshments various points were discussed, and in addition

Norman Gregory referred to numerous most interesting suggestions for future debates which had been sent in by Harry Broster.

EDWARD DAVEY.

MERSEYSIDE SECTION, 8th JULY, 1956.

An exceptionally large number was present at this meeting, and, on this account alone, apart from the other attractions, the "successfulness" of the occasion was assured.

The chairman in his opening remarks welcomed a most popular visitor, Herbert Leckenby, he was sure he was speaking on behalf of all present in saying there is nobody we like to see more, and he hoped such visits can be repeated regularly. Next came a most interesting quiz, submitted by Don; this was won by Jim Walsh, the runners-up being Jack Morgan and Peter Webster. The winner was presented with a book prize by Herbert.

After refreshments came the much awaited talk by our guest on the history of the "C.D."; this was enthralling, and the reminiscences recounted by the speaker were most interesting and amusing. Sir F. Bowman passed a vote of thanks, which was heartily endorsed by all.

Then followed a general discussion on the "C.D." a subject which had everybody wading in with suggestions (and criticisms) and it was only the march of time which prevented the meeting going on indefinitely.

Yes, an excellent and enjoyable evening, one to be long remembered. Here's to the next time! Next Meeting August 12th, 7 p.m.

FRANK CASE.

A KIND NOTE FROM FRANK RICHARDS

July 16th, 1956.

Rose Lawn, Kingsgate, Kent.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

I was very sorry indeed to see the sad news in the C.D. and like your many other friends, feel the sincerest sympathy. What you say in your editorial is very wise. In my own experience,—much longer than yours, my dear boy,—I have always found concentration on work the greatest help in time of trouble. In the C.D., and its ever-growing friendly circle, you have a resource which I am sure you will look

(concluded on page 229)