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—THE COLLECTORS' DIGEST—

Vol. 11 No. 123

Price 1s. 6d.

MARCH, 1957

Editor: HERBERT LECKENBY,
12 Herbert Street,
Hull Road, York
or

c/o YORK DUPLICATING SERVICES,
12A The Shambles, York.

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

EAST MEETING SOUTH. Bill Hubbard who has been out in Kenya, British East Africa for several years, left for home on February 21st on a well-earned holiday. About the time you receive this the ship will have reached Port Elizabeth, South Africa and he will have met Charles Van Renen. I was asked by Bill to try and arrange the meeting, and when I wrote to Charles he declared he would be delighted to travel down to the coast from his home at Uitenhage even if it was only for a couple of hours together.

Well, that's one good outcome of the Suez business, for if it hadn't been for that, Bill would not have travelled that way.

All will wish Bill a happy holiday.

* * * * *

INDEX. VOL. 3. Yes, it's about time this was handed over to you; well here it is. With the last one you were very good in helping towards the cost and if you would each like to send a few coppers again, I should be most grateful. Then will get down to the other volumes more speedily than heretofore.

* * * * *

BILLY BUNTER'S OWN. Legions of Hamiltonians were disappointed when there was no Billy Bunter's Own last year. Well when they turn to the 'Letter Box' a little further on, they will read the good news that it will be back again this year, with new publishers.

Ben Whiter tells me that it will have 128 pages, price will be 8/6 and publishing date is September 2nd.

* * * * *

THE OTHER ANNUAL. Ah me! The month of March and there are still quite a number of subs. for the C.C. Annual still to come in. 'Tis a pity that each year I have to write pars. like this well into the spring. It is a little disheartening. Do please let me be able to say 'all in' next month.

* * * * *

THE MYSTERY OF TOM STRYPE SOLVED

When I wrote the account of my London holiday in 1953 I said that the only disappointment had been I had not seen Tom Strype (whom I had met on several earlier occasions) neither, despite several letters with a view to an appointment, had I had any news of him. This was so unlike him that I could not help having a fear that some ill had befallen him.

Well never again did I have any news until a week or two ago, then Frank Pettingell told me in a letter that Tom had been dead for nearly three years. Frank was told by Tom's sister-in-law who had seen an advert of Frank's in "Exchange and Mart"

Despite the fact that the news was so belated it saddened me as much as if it had happened the other day.

Tom was one of the most kindly, lovable fellows I ever met. On my London visits we used to meet outside Kemsley House in Grays Inn Road where he was employed as a reader for many years. Despite the fact that he suffered from chronic asthma (a complaint that killed him) he used to take me off on a tour, he insisting on playing host. After lunch on the last occasion he asked me where I would like to go and I suggested Madame Tussauds. Tom said with a smile, that despite the fact that he was a Londoner he had never been there. We set off for the Marylebone Road where we had an enjoyable afternoon.

I can see him now as he waved to me as I mounted a bus by Waterloo Station after vowing to meet again the following year. Alas! we never did.

Another old friend, Harry Dowler, will cordially endorse all I have said for he received the same kindly treatment when he met Tom in London Town.

May the earth be resting lightly on your grave, one of the best of the Brotherhood.

Yours sincerely,
HERBERT LECKENBY

Blakiana...

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN

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

First of all I must apologise for late publication of Mr. Lay's article which appears in this issue. This should have been published last month, but by an unfortunate oversight it became overlooked. I may say I was horrified when I found it quite by accident, and that same evening I got on the 'phone to Frank - as we of the O.B.B. Club and S. Blake Circle know him - to offer my sincere regrets for the slip-up.

In response to requests - and subject to space permitting - I shall continue with the half-yearly lists of U.J. titles each month from now on.

Bill Jofts doesn't waste much time! The day after receiving the February C.D. I had a letter from him giving the answer to the little problem I set him in January Blakiana. His reply is as follows

"The article was, in fact, written by Kenneth Allsop, using the pen-name of 'Peter Carson' because he also had another article on the same page. The original article was far longer than the space at the time permitted, and the Northern Edition was cut about and abridged more than the Southern one. A feature article such as this is only used as a space filler for the Daily Press; the length, of course, depending on the amount of news being used at the time."

Thank you, Bill, for such a speedy reply and solution.

Part two of Eric Copeman's article "On Our Selection" will appear next month. On this subject I have received a letter from Walter Fleming, of Chingford, who suggests that Blake enthusiasts let me know their own twelve favourite U.J. stories. This is a good idea and I shall be pleased to hear from you, giving me your selections either in the form of an article or a straight list. There I will publish, so please get your pens to work!

JOSIE PACKMAN

* * * *

SEXTON BLAKE AND LAIS DOWSON

A Postscript to Walter Webb's 'Sexton Blake - and the Problem of the Missing Authors.' (C.D. Annual 1956)

By F. Vernon Lay.

The story "Sexton Blake's First Case" in U.J. No. 69 is responsible for throwing more red herrings into the Blake Saga than any other. The story opens with Blake, described as the Secretary of the Helston Football Club, one of a crowd of athletic youths in the concert-room of a well-known restaurant in Temple Bar. They are grouped round long, narrow tables, all smoking furiously and drinking the lightest of ginger-beers or coffee. Blake is tall, and looks curiously reserved and delicate. It continues: "He was at this time distinctly shy in nature, and given more to books than to athletics. Indeed, it is doubtful if he would ever have taken to football at all if it had not been for his genuine affection for that graceless scamp Will Bastable." Furthermore, he dreams of his employer's daughter, the pretty Lais Dowson, "for he loved her with all the fervour of his young and ardent and devoted soul, and yet he was too poor to ask her to be his, although a warm friendship existed between them both." As Walter has already related in his article, Sexton Blake at Lais' request gives up the law, thanks to an inheritance of £300 from his Aunt Fannie, and tackles the problem of her father's disappearance, and, being successful in this, his first case, the lawyer promises Blake his sweet, blushing daughter Lais as a bride and also to set him up in business as Blake & Co., Private Detectives, in some vacant offices he had in St. Martin's Lane, near Trafalgar Square. Although the story is related by the author Stanhope Sprigg as being told to him by Blake many years later, there is no later reference to the fair Lais. Incidentally, I cannot trace any source for Walter's description of Lais as 'petite.' In fact the story is remarkably reticent as to her appearance, and beyond stating she is fair, pretty and blushes easily, we have no information.

For the solution of the Lais Mystery we must turn to U.J. No. 73 entitled "From Clue to Clue, or, Sexton Blake's Hardest Case." This, we read, was by the author of "The Mystery of Hilton Royal" who was given as Arnold Davis and whom we put down as W. Murray Graydon. Lais makes a brief, very brief, reappearance on page 16. Blake has been bound hand and foot and left supposedly helpless in a blazing house. He frees himself from his bonds but can only reach the top

floor but has not the strength to haul himself further, and was on the point of letting go from exhaustion and falling to his death when "A misty face appeared above, looking down at him through the reek of smoke. 'Courage!' a voice cried. 'I will save you! Can you draw yourself higher?' 'No, I am helpless!' panted the detective. 'Then trust to me! I am strong!' A pair of slim, white hands gripped Sexton Blake by the wrist. Up he went, a steady tug pulling inch by inch until, with a last effort, he toppled forward on the flat surface of the roof. He rose to his feet, breathing hard, and glanced at his rescuer, saw before him a beautiful young woman in a dressing-gown and slippers. 'Lais!' he gasped incredulously. 'Is it you?' 'Who are you?' the young woman exclaimed. 'That is my name, but how can you know me?' 'Could I ever forget your face? And you - but I am disguised, of course! You have no idea who I am? 'I think not! And yet I seem to recall -' 'Lais, I am Sexton Blake!' 'Sexton Blake? Ah, yes, I recognise your voice! So we meet again!' For a few seconds the two were silent, standing together on the house-top, while the lurid gloom of the fire played upon them, and the roar of London alarmed, the din of wheels, and yelling voices, and crackling flames, struck unheard upon their ears. Ten years before, the detective had known Lais Dowson, and learned to regard her with feelings of more than friendship, and had thought of her as a wife. Since then, circumstances had forced them apart, and the spell of the past was now strong upon them. But only for a moment. It was no time for sentimental reveries." Lais then explains her presence next door and furnishes Blake with vital information, after which they shake hands and part, and Lais is heard of no more.

It is evident that this is a deliberate interpolation probably inserted at the request of the editor to dispose of the threat of Blake's marriage. It is a general tradition for the hero to remain unmarried, as readers soon lose interest in married heroes, and it prevents the introduction of further feminine charmers.

This story was published in 1905, while Percival Cooke's reference to Blake's wife was way back in 1901. I think it reasonable to presume that if there was any further reference to Mrs. Blake it would be prior to 1901. As at that date there was no attempt at a Blake Saga and the stories had very little in common, and in any event Percival Cooke has to his credit, in my records, only this one story of Sexton Blake in the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Union Jack, I think it reasonable to assume that the reference slipped in without any real thought being given to the matter. It just happened to suit the story at that

moment, and was just as soon forgotten; and pending further evidence that is, I think, the proper course for students of the Blake Saga also.

* * * * *

HOW'S YOUR MEMORY? (No. 3) by E. V. COPEMAN

Talking about tight corners (which was the way this series began) can you imagine a tighter corner than for Sexton Blake and Tinker to reach a stage in a case where they violently disagree?

The Baker Street pair have had more than one argument in their time. They wouldn't be human if they didn't at times fail to see eye to eye. We like them that way because it gives added reality.

But can you remember this classic example of a "battle royal" between the two detectives? In what story did it appear and who wrote it?

TEASER NO. 3

Tinker scowled. He was not naturally a hot-headed person, but to have the theory that he knew was correct contemptuously brushed aside made his temper rise.

"And I say, gov'nor, that I still believe I'm on the right track! Hang it all, you're not infallible!"

Sexton Blake smiled indulgently.

"Of course not. I have never claimed to be infallible, but I do claim to have had a little more experience in the science of criminology than you have."

"Yes, but hang it all, gov'nor, you won't give a chap a chance! I was telling Hal this morning"

"How many times have I told you not to make unguarded statements to Press reporters?" snapped Sexton Blake. "I have a very good mind to forbid you to associate with Hal until after this case is complete, if you continue to discuss it with him."

"I say, gov'nor, this is a bit too thick!" exclaimed Tinker, bitterly. "What you mean is that you can't trust me to hold my tongue."

Sexton Blake's face darkened. "Don't be impudent, Tinker! I've already told you I disagree entirely with your theory."

Tinker's face flushed hotly with resentment, and his temper rose at the seeming injustice of Blake's remark. Very stiffly he climbed to his feet.

"This morning, gov'nor, you hinted that I could follow my own line of enquiry," he said. "Very well. I shall prove that for once in your life you've been wrong."

"More likely you'll make a bigger ass of yourself than you have already done," retorted Blake acidly.

Tinker clenched his fists. His mouth tightened as he strove to keep back the retort of rage that almost burst from him. He tried to keep a curb on his temper, but hot resentment at Blake's prejudice surged up in him.

"Right, gov'nor!" he snapped, and his voice trembled a little. "If that's the case, I'm certainly not going to stay under this roof any longer. When I've proved to you that I'm right, maybe we can get together again."

A dull spot of colour mounted into Blake's sallow cheeks. "Tinker" he said quietly, "I tolerate insolence or insubordination from no one. You have made your choice. Far be it for me to stand between you and your desire for freedom. You have your own banking account, and I shall watch your future career with interest. Good-morning and good luck!"

Without another word Sexton Blake swung on his heel and strode into the laboratory, closing the door behind him.

Well, there it is. Remember it?

Now who was the writer who told us about it, and what was the yarn?

CLUE: The writer of this story is unfortunately no longer living. He was the creator of a whole gallery of popular characters in the "old days" and also responsible usually for a rather special type of Blake story on a stated occasion. His own story has been told more than once in the pages of the C.D.

ANSWER TO BE PUBLISHED NEXT MONTH.

* * * * *

Answer to Teaser No. 2 (Feb. 1957 C.D.)

The writer of the story was ANTHONY PARSONS, and the title of the yarn was THE CASE OF THE DANGRA MILLIONS which appeared in SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY No. 189 in 1949. James W. Cook's special article on Anthony Parsons was published in C.D. No. 93.

* * * * *

UNION JACK TITLES - YEAR 1919 (January - June)

No. 795	The Moon of the East (Losely)	C. Hayter
" 796	Hoodwinked (Lee and Nipper)	E. S. Brooks
" 797	The Clue of the Cuff Link (The Rat)	R. Murray
" 798	The Clue of the Five Hairs (Waldo)	E. S. Brooks

No. 799	The Clue of the Frozen Knife (Lee)	E. S. Brooks
" 800	The Affair of the Bronze Monkey	E. S. Brooks
" 801	The Shanghaied Detective (Waldo)	E. S. Brooks
" 802	The Case of the Black Feather (The Bat)	R. Murray
" 803	The Man with Two Lives (Cora Twyford)	C. Wolfe
" 804	The sacred Sapphire	A. Blair
" 805	The Case of the Stacey Rubies (Waldo)	E. S. Brooks
" 806	The Missing Crooks (Crim. Con.)	R. Murray
" 807	Tracked by Wireless (Crim. Con.)	R. Murray
" 808	Held as a Hostage (Crim. Con.)	R. Murray
" 809	The Castle Warden	A. Murray
" 810	The Clue of the Second Bullet (Lee)	E. S. Brooks
" 811	The Hand in the Shadow	W. M. Graydon
" 812	The White Liner (Crim. Con.)	R. Murray
" 813	The Riddle of Quinton Grange	E. S. Brooks
" 814	Behind the Curtain (Nantucket)	A. Murray
" 815	The Strange Case of the Naval Lieutenant (Kestrel)	L. Jackson
" 816	The Case of the Stolen Yacht (Crim. Con.)	R. Murray
" 817	The Great Spiritualism Case (Waldo)	E. S. Brooks
" 818	The Hidden Three	C. Hayter
" 819	The Case of the Vanished Guardsman	W. M. Graydon
" 820	Dirk Dolland's Ordeal (Crim. Con.)	R. Murray

(Number 795 is dated 4th January, 1919, and
Number 820 is dated 28th June, 1919)

URGENTLY WANTED: Union Jack Nos. 589, 726, 849, 862, 1023, 1028, 1122, 1149, 1150, 1157, 1161, 1199, 1202, 1203, 1210, 1226, 1236 to 1253, 1262, 1283, 1300, 1348, 1396, 1398, 1410, 1417, 1476, 1478, 1495.

S.B.Ls. 1st Series Nos. 11, 37, 41, 42, 85, 91, 92, 102, 106, 111, 134, 147, 153, 168, 182, 189, 198, 207, 219, 221, 223, 227, 229, 245, 248, 253, 254, 255, 262, 325.

S.B.Ls. 2nd Series Nos. 8, 21, 25, 77, 89, 94, 102, 129, 132, 213, 236, 272, 297, 335, 489, 663, 667, 687, 693, 723, 740.

MRS. J. PACIGIAN, 27 ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON S.E. 22

FOR SALE: Magnets Nos. 3, 8, 9. Offers before April 10th to
G. ALLISON, 7 SUMMERFIELD GARDENS, BRANLEY, LEEDS. 13.

LETTER BOXGreat News from Frank Richards

Rose Lawn,
Kingsgate,
Broadstairs,
Kent.

February 16th 1957

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Mary thanks for the C.D. and for your letter. Just a spot of news: Billy Bunter's Own Annual will be coming out again this year, now published by the Guildford Press. I have lately completed writing it, and Chapman is getting busy on the pictures. It looks like being an improvement on earlier issues ... if there is room for improvement! It will give me - and I hope others - a lot of pleasure to see it again, after missing last year. A new Bunter book "Billy Bunter's Bolt", will appear in the spring, about Easter, for which also Chapman is now doing the pictures, and in the Autumn a boating story of a holiday on the Thames, a subject that makes me feel a teen-ager when I write of it, bringing back to mind lovely old days when the water rippled under the willows - as no doubt it still does! Who wouldn't like to be sixteen again, just for a day in a boat!

Kindest regards,

Always yours sincerely,

FRANK RICHARDS

* * *

From the Publishers of Billy Bunter's Own

Guildford Press Ltd.,
27 Craven Street,
London W.C.2.

18th February, 1957

Dear Mr. Leckenby,

Mr. Chapman has given me your name as I asked him how I might obtain a list of Old Boys' Clubs. I am publishing in the Autumn Billy Bunter's Own Annual and would have liked to circularise the Clubs and tell them about it. It might be that they have a magazine of their own and would be willing to mention my publication. I

would be most grateful for any information you could give me, and hope you will forgive me for putting you to this trouble.

Yours sincerely,

E. H. Bayne-Powell

* * *

MORE NEWS ABOUT "BOYS WILL BE BOYS"

16th February, 1957.

Dear Mr. Leckenby,

Very many thanks for sending me a copy of the current Collector's Digest, and for including that friendly paragraph.

I have sent off the revised copy to the publisher. In all, I must have written in about 15,000 words, but I have cut almost as much.

I had a note from Mr. Norman Pragnell, who wants me to overhaul the material about St. Frank's (a subject on which he obviously knows more than I do.) I hope to do something about it in proof.

Again, very many thanks,

Yours sincerely,

E. S. TURNER.

FOR SALE: Captain Volumes 20, 21, 22, 24, 25. 2/- each and postage.
 Autobiography of Frank Richards 2/6d. Also Aldine Turpins, odd Union
 Jacks, Lot-o-funs, Diamond Lib, Nugget Libs, and Boys Friend 3d.
 S.A.E. W. H. CLOUGH, 3 FORTHILL GROVE, SALE, MANCHESTER.

WANTED: to complete set of S.O.Ls. Nos. 9, 16, 40, 58, 157 and 264
 also Boys' Friend Green 'un - Nos. 756 and 758.
 BERYL RUSSELL, 4 ASH GROVE ROAD, OFF SHILLY LANE, GREAT BARR, BIRMINGHAM
 22A.

WANTED: Amalgamated Press pre-war Comics, particularly Film Fun,
 Kinema Komic, Comic Cuts, Chips, Butterfly and Puck, especially those
 of the 1920s. Also other A.P. publications from 1920 - 1940.
 Details and price to:
 ARNOLD KEENA, 11 PEARL AVENUE, EPPING, N.S.W. AUSTRALIA.

HAMILTONIANA

Compiled by Herbert Leckenby

The Names the Same. On the night of our meeting I read in our evening paper - "For being drunk and disorderly James McCann was fined £3 with 15/- costs by Walsall Magistrates to-day. He admitted both offences."

Surely this couldn't be Jimmy McCann the Head of High Coombe. "The School for Slackers?" (Extract from a letter from Tom Porter, Cradley Heath.)

* * * * *

Dr. George Bulstrode spoke on changes in the Kremlin in the "Radio Newsreel" on February 15th.

* * * * *

Now here's something from Roger on a school somewhat neglected up to now:-

The Cedar Creek Schoolboys' Owns by Roger M. Jenkins

Of all the various legends so carefully fostered by the Amalgamated Press concerning the different pen-names of Charles Hamilton, none was quite so bizarre as the tale of Frank Richards' schooldays, supposedly related by his old chum Martin Clifford. These stories originally appeared in the Boys' Friend between 1917 and 1921 but, like their stable-mates, the Rookwood stories, they continually re-appeared in reprints in various papers and at various dates long after the original series had passed into limbo. The reprints were mainly in the Holiday Annual, the Popular, and the Gem, but there were also three Schoolboys' Owns devoted to Cedar Creek in 1930-31, and it is these which will form the subject for consideration in this article.

It is a measure of the growing popularity of the Magnet in 1917 vis-a-vis the Gem that it was Frank Richards' schooldays which formed the subject of the series: a few years earlier it would have been Martin Clifford who would have been chosen as the hero. According to the first number in the series, Frank Richards' father had lost his money, and had had to leave England to take up a job on a plantation in India. Frank was forced to leave St. Kit's and go to live with

his uncle rancher Lawless in British Columbia. Together with his cousin Bob Lawless he went to the National School at Cedar Creek which was ably run by Miss Meadows with the assistance of Mr. Slimmy. The third member of the trio of boys was Vere Beauclerc, the Cherub.

Whether the background of the stories was an accurate representation of the life of the period is a question which only a middle-aged Canadian can answer for us, but the stories themselves were very entertaining, and Charles Hamilton's happy knack of appearing to have first class knowledge of every background he used could not but leave the reader fully satisfied. Added to this, there is the feeling that Charles Hamilton was getting a little tired of the Magnet and the Gem in the late war years. At any rate it seems certain that the Rookwood and Cedar Creek stories opened up new vistas for him, and the tales of these two schools come like a breath of freshness to the reader even now.

The first Cedar Creek Schoolboys' Own was No. 142 entitled "Chums of the Backwoods." It contained no less than three separate series, which produced rather a scrappy effect in one volume, but the diverse topics touched upon, go far to illustrate the wide scope of the stories. The first series related how Frank Richards was called out of his class-room by a stranger, to interpret a French Canadian, only to find himself mixed up with a pair of scoundrels. The second series dealt with a mysterious disappearance of gold from the claims, suspicion for which fell upon Frank: in the end, Kern Gunten a Swiss boy was found to be the culprit, and he had to leave the school. The third series was in an entirely different vein, and dealt with the inauguration of a new school called Hillcrest, which was being run by Mr. Peckover for the sons of gentlemen. The attempts of Frank Richards & Co. to take Mr. Peckover down a peg or two were understandable, and could be sympathized with, but in typically Hamiltonian manner, the young heroes were completely unsuccessful (a conclusion which no substitute writer would ever have dreamed of employing.) There was something for everyone in this Schoolboys' Own.

"The Outcast of Cedar Creek" in No. 178 of the Library was by far and away the best of the three, being an exceptionally fine and well-integrated story. Frank Richards was suspected of theft, and a stolen ten-dollar bill was found upon him. His Uncle's faith in him was shattered, and Mr. Lawless stated that he intended to send Frank to a private reformatory ("The master is known to me personally. He has had a great deal of success with the sons of emigrants of a low character - people who have not learned to live up to Anglo-Saxon

standards - Poles and Slovaks and so forth.") Rather than submit to this indignity Frank ran away from the Lawless ranch the same night, and the rest of the story related in an enthralling manner how he fared during his exile: the atmosphere was finely contrived, and was recaptured again in the Rookwood Canadian series and the Rio Kid tales of later years. Eventually the wheel of fortune brought him back to Cedar Creek, and his name was cleared.

The final number of the trio was No. 184 entitled "On the Western Trail" and was composed of two distinct sets of stories, although it appeared to be a continuous sequence of reprints. The first half was a description of an adventurous holiday spent partly in a lumber hotel by the Pacific and partly aboard a brig which went by the name of the Ocean Queen, whilst the second half of the issue dealt with the surprise that awaited Vere Beauclerc on his return from the holiday: his father was no longer a despised remittance man existing on the charity of his brother, Lord St. Austells. Lascelles Beauclerc had now made good, and the old shack was replaced by a well built timber cabin. In addition, Vere's elegant cousin Algernon was on his way to spend a few months with his relatives in the Canadian backwoods. Old readers of the Gem probably saw a number of points of resemblance between Algernon and his more renowned prototype Arther Augustus D'Arcy in his early days.

In a way it was the glory of the Magnet which shed a little of its own brilliant lustre upon the Cedar Creek stories. The fact that the hero of the stories was intended to be the author of the Greyfriars saga considerably heightens the interest of the Cedar Creek tales. To the schoolboys of 1917-21 it must have been fascinating to know how adventurously Frank Richards had spent his own schooldays. To the readers of 1957 there is still more than a little wry poignancy in reading how Charles Hamilton would have liked himself to have been when young.

Continued head of next page.

FOR SALE: Magnets - series 1249 - 1389. 2s. 3d. each, post free
S.O.L. same price.

WANTED: Any Magnets previous to 1222 - your price.
Bessie Bunter of Cliff House School.

H.V. ROBERTS, 12 CLAIRVIEW ROAD, STREATHAM, LONDON S.W. 16

WANTED TO COMPLETE SETS: Holiday Annual 1920. S.O.L. No. 334
Condition important. Can anyone please help?

REV. A. G. POUND, 68 FINNEMORE ROAD, BIRMINGHAM 9.

THE COLLECTOR'S DIGEST PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 4

Set by ERIC FAYNE



We hope that this puzzle may give you five minutes' amusement. But, to add to the interest, a postal-order for 5/- will be sent to the sender of the first correct solution received by the Editor. If you do not wish to cut your copy of the C.D. make a careful copy of the square.

* * *

CLUES

ACROSS. 1. A bloomer at Cliff House? (2 words: 4,8).
10. Mauly will do this very quickly. 11. Round Eros, we find Dr. Locke's daughter.

12. The Famous Five often toured around and did this to Temple & Co.
14. Only Fish. 15. See, in the Latin Lesson. 16. Where Harry Wharton is very well-known. 19. See 29 across. 20. Tom Merry & Co. saw this kind of sail in the Mediterranean. 23. Julian's accommodating uncle? 24. Is Bunter a human one? 25. Presumably 39 would wear this badge. 26. Wally's mongrel. 27. As well.
29. (with 19 across) Gen No. 232 (two words: 3, 5) 30. Between the School House and the New House? 32. There was sometimes a desperate one in the old titles. 35. Singles at cricket. 36. Not an extravagance of Bunter's. 38. A series of years are backwards.
39. Tom Merry led it, and Wildrake was the best scout.

DOWN. 1. This old paper sounds like a wonder. 2. Duty nest of Tom Merry? (2 words: 5,3) 3. Place for sore eyes? 4. Short prefect.
5. Did the Bounder have a new grid with him? Sort of! 6. Sweet lady. (2 words: 3,6) 7. O, post for a spot where Mr. Quelch was rescued from death. 8. Did Gussy sing a solo about the European capital.
9. Prophet. 13. Call from Flanagan and Allen in the midst of toil.
17. How Joe Frayne might refer to him. 18. A scattering, at break-up. 19. The famous chairman of the London Branch needs nothing to make him a great music-hall artist. 21. Is Wharton Lodge just a

- sailor's poem? 22. Next door to Bunter, Todd, and Dutton.
 27. The Heroines of the old serials seemed often to fall in one.
 28. Sir Hilton Popper claimed to be, of the island in the river.
 29. Trust it ends in a row. 31. Bunter's favourite chocolate?
 32. Mr. Railton. 33. Neither precedes it, as a rule. 34. Habit
 38. The father of Paget.

* * * * *

C.D. Treasures No. 2. The correct word was Magnet, and the first solution was received from - J. K. Morgan, Great Crosby, Liverpool - to whom a postal order for 5/- has been sent.

* * * * *

THE SONG OF BUNTER-WATHA

(With apologies to Longfellow)

by Anthony Baker

Hidden in the hawthorne bushes,
 There he waited till the boat came:
 Till he heard the oars a-splashing,
 Heard the cheery voices lifted
 As the boat came up the river,
 As the Famous Five approached:
 Saw them from the boat alighting,
 Marjorie helped by willing Cherry,
 Harry bringing picnic basket,
 For a feast upon the Island.
 Bunter's heart within him fluttered,
 Like the birch-leaf palpitated,
 As the heroes came so near him.
 But he had a ruse in waiting:
 A little cough there came forth from him;
 Scarce a twig moved with his motion,
 But a well-known voice was raised
 'Twas a voice like Annemeekee,
 'Twas the voice of old man Popper:
 "Trespassers! By gad! I'll shoot 'em!"
 And the Famous Five all started,
 Food forgotten in their basket,
 Rose up swiftly and fled boatwards,
 Tumbled in and pushed out quickly,

To the Sark's swift-moving current,
 Hoping Popper's only glimpsed them.
 In their hurry left a hamper,
 Left it for a hungry Bunter.
 "He! He! He!" then cackled Bunter,
 And the heart of Billy Bunter
 Throbbled and shouted and exulted
 As he bore the doughnuts inward,
 Washed them downward with sweet liquid;
 Then there followed cakes so creamy,
 Not to mention tarts so jammy.
 And a happy, sticky Bunter
 Paddled home in skiff of Nauly's
 (If his Lordship had but known it)
 Breathing hard and puffing greatly,
 Rolled he in for Calling-over.
 But the Famous Five had guessed it,
 Guessed the Fat Owl's scheming plotting,
 And resolved to bust and burst him,
 And to scatter all the pieces.
 From the Fat Owl's hide out Wharton
 Raise the dust and raise it skywards.
 Then they soused him in the fountain -
 Left him there, a spec(k)less Bunter.
 As the bubbles yet were rising,
 Came there from a soaking Bunter,
 Came there from a sorry hunter:
 "A'right! No more ventriloquising."
 Then departed Billy Bunter,
 Billy Bunter the remorseful,
 Billy Bunter wet and saddened,
 Trailing water from the fountain.
 In the purple mists of evening,
 Rolled he from the Quad a-Housewards,
 To the regions of his study -
 Sympathy was nil from Toddy -
 And forgetful of all feasts -
 "Currough!" he mumbled, "Wow! The beasts!"

* * *

Annemeekee = the thunder.

POTTED PERSONALITIES. 3rd SERIES. No. 2by Eric PayneCEDRIC HILTON

Here we have the finest character painting of any senior at Greyfriars. True to life in his latent viciousness; weak; unstable; easily led. We have here another case of the duplication of characters in the stories - Hilton with his evil genius Price being facsimiles of St. Leger of St. Jim's with his evil genius Cutts. Of the two pairs of characters there is little to choose - it is one of the rare instances of the Gem not losing by the duplication, possibly because Cutts and St. Leger were first in the field. Hilton and St. Leger are almost identical; Cutts is stronger and more dangerous than Price who is spiteful, weak and vicious but with a strange influence over his easy-going friend. Both pairs have featured in some of the finest stories in their respective papers.

Hilton appeared in three outstanding series in the Magnet; he played the part in the Dury series which St. Leger played in the far superior Oliver Lynn series in the Gem; there was a magnificent character sketch of him during the series of Harry Wharton versus Mr. Quelch in the early thirties; and, later on, his home was the setting for the Christmas at Hilton Hall series which concerned the convict brother of the Hilton Butler.

Hilton must take his place as one of the Magnet's most outstanding examples of superb character painting.

* * * *

ODD ITEMS OF INTEREST

by

E. V. CopemanROUNDTHE MEAT:

Used as an outside wrapping for our meat the other day was portion of one of our Sydney daily newspapers, the SUN. Its date was December 22nd, 1954, and it included Page 24 which was devoted to a feature, the "London Dairy" and reported what promised to be a particularly good Christmas for Britain. In order to clearly explain the extent of the spending on gifts, decorations, etc., a big sub-heading in black block capitals read, "BRITAIN'S BILLY BUNTER SPREE". Personally I'd like a penny for each time Bunter has been mentioned in recent years in Australian newspapers!

VALUE OF ILLUSTRATIONS: Possibly in the early days of Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood, the publishers of the stories didn't actually

regard the work of the artists in the same light as that of the authors. But, looking back now, it is more than ever borne home that the illustrations served as much as anything to imprint on impressionable young minds the faces of fictitious characters who have long since come to be regarded not as merely the product of one man's vivid imagination but as real friends. Many men have helped over the years but it is the Bunter of the early Chapman era (before 1926), though possibly with some of the later Shields' rotundity, that comes most readily to my mind. As for the Famous Five, it was Chapman who impressed me with the subtle differences between dark-haired Wharton and Bull, and fair-haired Cherry and Nugent. But Inky was never pictured as well as when in the hands of Shields. Shields it was, too, who really shaped the final destiny of Coker, Vernon-Smith and (best of all) Quelchy. Hacker was one character who seemed to baffle the artists. Each time he was featured he took on a completely different identity, sometimes clean-shaven, sometimes with a straggly moustache, sometimes severe and angular. Was it that he was never so definitely described by the author as the other personalities?

As for St. Jim's, Macdonald's D'Arcy and Baggy Trimble and Skinpole are classics and, though there is not terrific distinction between other juniors, they are a happy-looking lot and depicted usually in unforgettable backgrounds. Macdonald was a pastmaster at the art of drawing a study scene with either a book flying for its mark, a table overturning or a booby-trap being sprung.

Both Chapman and Macdonald were experts at river scenes which were always tranquil and restful, but for overseas or sinister backgrounds, holiday adventures and Christmas snow scenes, give me Shields. I can still recall readily Shields' illustrations to the Greyfriars South Seas series with its shipboard battles, the Indian series in which he was first introduced to the Magnet, the China series and many other places those lucky Greyfriars fellows visited in years gone by. Chapman's "home" work is superb but Shields was by far the best for a holiday yarn.

And, going over to Rookwood, Wakefield's pixie-like characters are as lasting as the others. I found Wakefield's work really fascinating but I deeply resented it when Kenneth Brooks and other artists attempted rather unsuccessfully to imitate his style. There was only one Wakefield; his work was clear, compact and very distinctive. Particularly memorable are his impressions of Tubby Muffin, Clarence Cuffy, and Dicky Dalton, Doctor Chisholm and Mr. Manders.

Wakefield's early work in the green BOY'S FRIEND was excellent and it was unfortunate that the size of many of the illustrations had of necessity to be reduced when the stories were reprinted in the POPULAR. Most of the imitators, too, were in the POPULAR - maybe because it wasn't always practical to reproduce from old blocks? - but none could ever capture that bright impish vitality which was so much a part of all the Rookwood yarns he illustrated. I noticed recently in browsing through a borrowed collection of BULLSEYES that Wakefield was as adaptable to drama as to School stories. In the BULLSEYES he did some first-class dramatic stuff with good linework and shading. In this publication, too, Shields and Valda did some excellent work.

How much would posterity have lost if there had been no artists to record on paper their impressions of Charles Hamilton's beloved brain-children?

* * * * *

MAGNET TITLES (cont'd from 117)

1589. South Sea Adventurers; 1590. The Outcast of Kalva; 1591. The Schoolboy Crusoes; 1592. The Beachcomber's Secret; 1593. The Scuttled Schooner; 1594. Adrift on the Pacific; 1595. Big Chief Bunter; 1596. The Castaways of Cannibal Island; 1597. The Man Behind the Scenes; 1598. Saved by a Foe; 1599. The Boy Who Wouldn't Be Caned; 1600. The Rat of the Remove; 1601. The Runaway; 1602. Tricky Tracy; 1603. The Mystery of Mr. Quelch; 1604. He Let the Side Down; 1605. Saved by His Enemy; 1606. Tracy Takes the Blame; 1607. The Mysterious Night Raider; 1608. Tracking Down Tracy; 1609. Harry Wharton's Christmas Guest; 1610. The Mystery of Wharton Lodge; 1611. A Baffling Quest; 1612. Spotting the Secret; 1613. The Sportsmen of the Fourth; 1614. Saving Bunter's Bacon; 1615. Loder Looks for Trouble; 1616. The Mystery Man of Greyfriars; 1617. The Hoaxing of Hacker; 1618. Sexton Blake Minor; 1619. Duffer or Detective; 1610. An Old Boy's Vengeance; 1621. Who Socked Hacker?; 1622. Harry Wharton's Secret; 1623. Guilty Gold; 1624. The Clue of the purple Footprints; 1625. Drake Gets his Man.

WANTED: Magnets and Gems. Will exchange or buy. Hundreds of duplicates.

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* * * * *

The controversy over the St. Frank's stories and their authorship continues to give rise to more than a little friendly heat. I was interested to read Bill Lofts' most welcome article last month, for I gathered from it that in spite of Fred Cook's claims in an earlier article, the problem of who wrote some of the St. Frank's stories remains obscure.

Mr. Cook, I understood, had claimed that he wrote St. Frank's stories in the Nelson Lee Library about the year 1921. Indignant Leeites refuted this on the ground that all the library stories that year bore Edwy Searles Brooks name and that Mr. Brooks had stated that he wrote every story which carried his name as author.

Mr. Lofts now agrees that after so long a period Mr. Cook cannot be expected to remember all the stories he wrote, he also quoted Jack Murtagh in an Annual article about St. Frank's stories in the Nugget Library, and Len Packman in an article in the C.D. seven years or so ago.

Now, it is proven that Brooks did not write every St. Frank's story; I will give what I consider the clinching statement on this matter later. Meanwhile, I am grateful to Norman Pragnell who recalls that in Between Ourselves in Nelson Lee Library and New Series No. 66, Brooks wrote - "Every St. Frank's story that has appeared under my name has come from my pen." That was in April, 1931, much nearer Mr. Cook's period under discussion!

I feel the words "under my name" are the operative phrase to which the researcher must pay much attention, and emphasise my own belief that the St. Frank's stories in the Boys' Realm, reprinted in the Nugget Library, provide a solution satisfactory to everyone.

Let us examine them in more detail, therefore, and for the benefit of Bill Lofts and others, I have the originals in front of me as I write. My first copy is No. 4 of Volume I of the New Series of the "Realm", dated April 26th, 1919. It contains a single story in a series "Tales of St. Frank's" by the author of "Nipper at St. Frank's"

stories appearing weekly in the Nelson Lee Library."

Two or three numbers later we are in the midst of an involved sports series between St. Frank's and the River House, and not long after that we are reading of the arrival of Augustus Hart. There follows the series about Mr. Woodhouse, the strange form master-cum-actor who brightens life at the old school; the stories about the arrival of the celebrated Timothy Ticker; the series dealing with the adventures of Langley Mostyn in his feud with Nipper & Co. (described by the editor as "the most mirth-producing, thrilling, exciting and japest of yarns that the talented author is capable of producing"). All were headed by the notation, "by the author of the stories of Nipper & Co., in the Nelson Lee Library", until the middle of the Mostyn series when they, and later stories, were stated to be by the author of certain named yarns "and other fine stories of Nipper & Co". This was towards the middle of 1920 and lasted until the circus series in early 1921. From then until June, 1925, we have a variety of St. Frank's stories. Rivals at the Regatta, The Dartnell Mystery, The Boys from the East, (Dick Desmond and Dinghra Das), The Mystery of the Porter's Lodge, The News Games Master (Robert Thornton), Septimus Little the Knight Errant, The Motor Scooterist, Nipper's Pantomime, Fenton the Rake (a "double" story), The St. Frank's Brass Band, The Monty's Minor Series, Timothy Tucker's Triumph, Timothy Tucker Playwright and A False Pal (this is dated January, 1924 and my last copy until June, 1925).

In No. 323, dated 6/6/25, the Editor, introducing The Crusoe Scouts, "a great new story" by Edwy Searles Brooks, writes - "I am quite sure that you will join me this week in giving a hearty welcome to the boys of St. Frank's on their return to the Realm after such a long absence. More particularly, perhaps, will you be pleased to welcome the work of Edwy Searles Brooks, who has not written for us for years."

"True it is not so very long since we heard about these St. Frank's boys, but it is a considerable time since we heard about them from Mr. Brooks. And that, let me tell you, makes all the difference."

"Edwy Searles Brooks, in other words, is THE author of St. Frank's stories, he it is who tells about them as no-one else can. That is why I am tremendously pleased to have secured his services again for the Realm. And this has only been managed, let me whisper, by the courtesy of the Editor of that wonderful little paper, "The Nelson Lee Library."

The Crusoe Scouts was followed by a "short", Handy's Holiday Hoax, and then another series, The Schoolboy Republic, which ended in

September, 1925, and was, I believe, the last st. Frank's story to appear in the Realm.

It will thus be seen that for some four or five years some other author or authors contributed St. Frank's stories to the Boys' Realm. Some which did not acknowledge Brooks as author - in view of the editor's later comment, I think they would have done if it had been true - were nearer to his style than others; some were just sheer bilge and completely out of character, and what Nelson Lee Library readers thought of them I shudder to think.

Now which I wonder, DID Fred Cook write?

* * * * *

THOSE ST. FRANK'S STORIES

Dear Editor,

I understand from Brother Lofts that he has received quite a lot of letters on the subject of "Those St. Frank's Stories" (C.D. February, 1957).

As I am quoted in the matter, perhaps I may be allowed to state the position as I see it.

At the O.B.B. Club Meeting held at East Dulwich on 1st May, 1949, Mr. E. S. Brooks was our Guest of Honour. One of the questions asked of him was: 'Did Mr. Brooks write all the stories in the Nelson Lee Library?' The answer was 'yes'!

Now, seeing that Mr. Brooks was paid for every story he wrote, he would naturally be entitled to consider he wrote every published story.

Mr. Cook undoubtedly wrote some St. Frank's stories and, for all that Mr. Brooks, or anyone else knows, they may have appeared in the N. Lee Library. I do not suppose for one moment that E. S. Brooks ever gave a thought to the possibility of others writing St. Frank's yarns - why should he, if he was paid for all that he wrote?

I think that the stories written by Mr. Cook were quite possibility commissioned for the N.L.L. but appeared in the Boys' Realm. On the other hand they could have appeared in the N.L.L. unbeknown to E. S. Brooks. In any case, he never worried, so why - at this late time - should we?

May I add that I see no good in protracting a matter which, after all, is of less importance than the actual stories themselves which we enjoyed in our youth (and still do!)

Yours sincerely,

LEONARD PACKMAN

OLD BOYS BOOK CLUB

LONDON SECTION

Highlights of the February Kensington Meeting were two good readings by Miss Millicent Lyle, these being one about Talbot Baines Reed and the other being "If the Famous Five grew up". These two readings were greatly enjoyed by the company present. Co-host Roger Jenkins gave us one of his Rhyming Synonym Puzzles and it was very pleasing to see two new names amongst the winners. Roger Stacey was first and Hylton Flatman and Len Packman were in second place, well done Roger and Hylton.

Central Christian names of pupils at Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood got all of us guessing thanks to this excellent compilation of Len Packman and it was Roger who had the most correct. Another tie for second place as Miss Lyle had the same number of correct answers as Bob Whiter. Arising out of the two afore-mentioned competitions were several good conversations and discussions, thus helping to make the meeting a happy one and very successful.

Hosts Roger Jenkins and David Harrison mashed an excellent cup of tea plus good tuck to help it go down.

Finally I gave them a Rookwood Quiz of which Charles Wright gave most correct answers. Next two were Len Packman and Roger Jenkins. The last named shewed one and all his superb bound "Schoolboys' Own Libraries", each school bound in a different cover.

Next meeting on Sunday March 17th, at Wood Green when some of the items on the agenda will be a playing of the Sherlock Holmes Long Playing Record, a quiz by both Roger Stacey and Roger Jenkins and two readings by Len Packman and Charlie Wright.

UNCLE BENJAMIN

* * *

NORTHERN SECTION MEETING - FEB. 9th. 1957

One familiar face was missing, that of Ernest Whitehead. It was the first time he had been absent from a meeting since he joined the Club. We missed you Ernie, so please don't let it occur again unless it's for something absolutely unavoidable.

In being absent Ernie also missed something, for it was the night of Breeze Bentley's annual talk and that's always worth hearing. On this occasion he chose that popular Greyfriars character Lord

Mauleverer. As he proceeded the chuckles from his listeners were loud and frequent. Other members of our fraternity will have the opportunity of being amused in due course for it will appear as an article in the next C. D. Annual.

Afterwards we had one of Gerry Allison's brain-waves - a paragraph in which each word started with the letters of the alphabet in proper order - "As Bob Cherry dashed", and so on. We were graciously permitted to have concessions with the letter "x". Some of the completed efforts were clever, some weird.

A 24 Question Quiz compiled by the same chap ended the evening.

Next meeting March 9th. 'Tis Roger Jenkins' Annual visit. His subject - Jack Drake. All told Roger will travel about 400 miles for this. So Northern Members its up to you to help make a big attendance. You won't have to travel as far as Roger.

HERBERT LECKENEY

Northern Section Correspondent.

* * *

O.B.B.C. MIDLAND SECTION

Report of meeting held on 28th Jan. 1957

The "New Look" was very much in evidence at this first meeting of the New Year. A new Chairman, a pre-arranged programme, a good attendance as we only had one absentee and everything going over very smoothly. Formal business was fairly lengthy as apart from welcoming Jack Ingram, back after a long absence, as chairman we also took the opportunity of expressing one and all, the thanks and appreciation due to Jack Corbett for his invaluable service to the Club since its inception. The "new look" was most apparent in the main item when the writer took the Club over to St. Jim's for a change from the usual Greyfriars. As the February programme has St. Jim's thereon in particular as the main item, a short history of the St Jim Saga as it appeared first in the Pluck and then mainly in the "Gem" and then on to a descriptive account of the geography and main personnel of St. Jim's, finishing with an introduction to that most intriguing character Ernest Levison, paved the way to a better appreciation of the programmes to come. This was followed by another item by the writer which running in conjunction with the main feature of the night embraced the personnel of St. Jim's compared with that of Greyfriars in the form of a Quiz which with 26 items was won by Mr. Ingram, George Chatham conducted this quiz very efficiently by the way.

Then came another great item in the shape of the now famous

C.D.A. article "Was Harry Wharton the Ideal Captain" This, read in her usual competent way by Madge Corbett was warmly received and no need to comment much on the discussion which followed and which wound up the night's proceedings in excellent style.

A good omen for 1957. We will keep on with the good work.

W. H. BROSTER
Hon. Sec.

* * *

MERSEYSIDE BRANCH O.B.B.C. SUNDAY, 10th FEBRUARY

A large gathering of members was present at this last meeting of the Merseyside branch to be held at Waterloo House. The Chairman expressed the feeling of us all when he reviewed the many happy gatherings we have had here in the past and the varied personalities connected with our hobby who have paid us visits from time to time. Details of our new address were then given. As from the 10th March, they will be held at No. 11 Neville Road, which is only a few minutes walk from Waterloo House. Directions to get there were given and explained to all. The February Quiz was presented by the writer who announced that it would be in similar style to those he has previously given, - straight forward questions concerning every aspect of our hobby. These ranged from a question asking the address of the publishers of the C. D., (few could remember this - shame on them) to a question asking for names of some of our overseas collectors. This Quiz was won by Don Webster who was presented with a new Dennis Wheatley novel as a prize.

Extensive Library business was carried on after tea and a number of less popular books with little movement were sold off. As a result of this sale every member should have a better knowledge of boys books such as the Modern Boy, The Scout and the Boys' Magazine. Some of the older Bunter and Tom Merry books were disposed of, all of them being sold within our circle at a very low price, this being consistent with the branch's policy.

Three discussions will form the basis of next month's meeting. First, the authorship of the St. Frank's stories, second, Schools outside the Hamilton and Brooks range. Third, a talk on Charles Hamilton's knowledge of his characters' hobbies.

Next Meeting - 10th March at 11 Neville Road, 7 p.m. Sharp.

NORMAN PRAGNELL
Secretary, Merseyside Branch.

A PAGE FROM THE PAST

NOTE: Thanks to Miss Gwen Parry and Frank Pettingell, I am able to publish the following letter which was written in the long ago by Hamilton Edwards, famous editor of boys' weeklies. It was in his own hand writing and underlined in red ink. The author to whom it was written was the late D. H. Parry, also known, of course, as Morton Pike whose historical yarns are still fondly remembered by the older generation. Some of it reads amusingly at this time of day, nevertheless it would seem to prove that he was being unfairly treated when at times he was accused of publishing "harmful literature for boys."
(H.L.)

The Amalgamated Press Ltd.,
2, Carmelite House,
Carmelite Street,
London E. C.
October 1st, 1902.

Dear Mr. Parry,

I am desirous as much as possible of improving the tone of the serial and complete stories in the 'Boys' Friend', 'Boys' Realm' and the 'Jester,' without, however, in anyway minimising their melodramatic character.

As a consequence I want you when introducing incidents into your stories to avoid the use of the knife and revolver as much as possible.

Another feature which I will ask you to refrain from using is that of creating fun out of a drunken man, also to leave religious or controversial topics alone.

I do not want the objectionable side of any particular incident to be written up, and the gruesome should not be touched upon in any of the stories intended for my acceptance. There is plenty of scope for thrilling and attractive stories without having recourse to the writing up of any particular crime or the dragging in of drunken men or would be suicides, or the setting by the ears of my Jewish or Catholic readers.

This letter I wish to ask you to consider strictly private and confidential and it is intended solely for your guidance in the work which you may from time to time send in to me. Its object is also to point out to you that interesting and fascinating stories can be written without enlarging upon the horrible.

Yours faithfully,
HAMILTON EDWARDS
Editor.