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VOL. 13, NO. 154
OCTOBER
1959

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-THE COLLECTORS' DIGEST-

Vol. 13 No. 154

Price 1s. 6d.

OCTOBER, 1959

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

o r

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

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From the Editor's Chair

A VERY INTERESTING CATALOGUE. The London O.B.B.C. and Roger Jenkins in particular, are to be heartily congratulated on the publication of their Catalogue of Hamiltonian Library. Neatly printed with a green cover, it gives a list of over 800 books. Members can borrow these for a mere 2d for weeklies, 4d monthlies, plus postage both ways. The Catalogue is complete up to August, 1959, and some blank pages have been added for the insertion of additions. Yes, a grand job, Roger, which must have required an enormous amount of time to complete.

* * * * *

SOMETHING NEW. Have you heard of "The Target Book for Boys?" Well, I hadn't until Fred Sturdy of Middlesbrough told me about it. I asked him for further details and here they are:- "The Target Book for Boys" (Spring Books) Price 6/-, 11½" x 8½" - 254 pages. Stories include an eight chapter one of Rookwood, "A Bargain in Bikes" which would appear to be original. Two Felgate stories, one Carcroft story. All three probably original.

In addition "The Rio Kid Rides Again" which first appeared in a "Tom Merry Annual", Chapman drawings. Also a Ken King story "Jimmy the Shark"; also a reprint.

Finally there are several other stories, authors unknown. I have now seen a copy in Boots and there's no doubt its real value for the money.

Further, Fred says there's another Annual also in Spring Books,

"The Big Parade for Boys" which contains a Greyfriars story featuring Horace Coker.

Interesting, isn't it?

* * * * *

THINK OF A CAPTION. Enclosed you will find a copy of an amusing sketch - haven't we all had such a dream at one time or another? It's the work of that live-wire member way out in Vancouver, John P. Davis. He suggests that you send in a suitable caption. These to be judged and the one considered the best awarded a small prize. Go to it - closing date November 30th.

* * * * *

THE ANNUAL. October! My goodness how the time flies! However, the machine runs smoothly with no hitches so far. Since our last number I have received Roger Jenkins' "Decline and Fall of the Magnet, 1938 - 1940." It is Roger's usual immaculate style, and there's a touch of pathos as he leads up to that fateful day when it was realised that the Magnet was no more.

Also to hand is Harry Broster's "They Came from Over the Sea", which tells of the coming of those we used to call the "Colonials" to the various schools. More engrossing reading for the Hamilton fans.

And I can assure you that the Sexton Blake contributors are all hard at work.

Again, don't forget those adverts.

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT LECKENBY

* * * * *

GOOD NEWS FOR BLAKE FANS. It is hoped that the S.B.L's held up by the strike, will be issued at shorter intervals so that they will be up to date by the end of the year.

URGENTLY WANTED FOR NORTHERN SECTION LIBRARY. MAGNETS Nos. 1036, 1038, 1042, 1127, 1130, 1131, 1132, 1133, 1134, 1218, 1219, 1226, 1227, 1257, 1258, 1267, 1269, 1274, 1275, 1277; 7/6 each offered. Nos. 1565, 1571, 1572, 1587, 1640; 3/6 each offered.

Write: GERALD ALLISON, 3 BINGLEY ROAD, MENSTON, ILLKEY.

Advertise in the Annual - 2d. word.

Blakiana

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN

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

Since preparing last month's Blakiana I regret to say that Josie has had a major operation. She is making good progress, however, and at the moment (September 16th) is at a convalescent hospital at Margate. It will, of course, be several months before she can resume the conducting of Blakiana, so I shall be doing it for her.

As you will see, I have just managed to work in the two instalments of Walter Webb's article as Josie had hoped to do.

LEN PACKMAN.

* * * * *

CENTURY-MAKERS

(And a few other interesting statistics)

BY WALTER WEBB

INSTALMENT SIX

WAR YEARS

In 1913 G. H. Teed set up two new records. Firstly, with 18 published stories, he had a total yearly aggregate unsurpassed by any other Sexton Blake author; secondly, with 17 in the UNION JACK alone he totalled a record number of stories by any one author in the course of one particular year for that paper.

Were these records ever broken? With plans already under way for the publication of the SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY, offering yet another market for the contributors of Blake stories, the first record at least was likely to be soon placed in jeopardy. With the dawning of a new era - the first World War had just broken out - let us review the Blake field as it stood on the eve of those stupendous and momentous days.

Of the 32 names of the authors who are known to have chronicled Blake novels up to that time many had long since dropped out, the latest being Maxwell Scott. Only 13 remain, and these, in the order in which they made their appearance in the field, are as follows:-

Mark Darran, William Murray Graydon, Arthur S. Hardy, Reginald Wray, E. Alais, Cecil Hayter, Allan Blair, T. C. Bridges, Mark Osborne, Lewis Carlton, Andrew Murray, Edwy Searles Brooks - and the latest recruit, George Hamilton Teed. As will be seen, Mark Darran was the

oldest established Blake writer at that particular time, but a cruel stroke of fate was to move Murray Graydon into that exalted position before many more months had passed by.

A somewhat puzzling feature about the 1914 record of stories published during that year is the complete absence of Graydon's work. His inactivity might be explained by the fact that as the S.B.L. was in the course of being launched he was engaged in writing the much longer novels for the early numbers of that famous magazine; or, it may be that he was occupying the editorial chair in a temporary capacity.

The number of contributors dropped still further during 1915 when Lewis Carlton left. The explanation here by colleagues who wrote for him, and others in an editorial capacity who knew him, is that he left to play Blake on either the films or stage. His place was more than adequately filled by the arrival of Jack Lewis, better known to us as (33) LEWIS JACKSON.

Built on generous lines that in subsequent years were to become something of a problem, he immediately introduced that fascinating actor-criminal - the master-mummer, Leon Kestrel, into the pages of the U.J. Unlike Brooks, who, after two stories in 1912, drifted temporarily into other fields for a considerable period, Lewis became a consistent and regular member of the team, and until he departed to join the Navy in either '16 or '17 was the chief support to Teed and Murray during those dark and anxious months. In a letter I received from him some seven years ago, Mr. Lewis confessed that Kestrel was his favourite character whose creation and development in fiction gave him the most pleasure in writing. Lewis Carlton, who he knew extremely well, ran UNION JACK, PLUCK and BOY'S JOURNAL under the directorship of W. H. Back, when he was first invited to try his hand at writing for the first-named paper, and it was Back who published his very first Blake story, the excellent "Case of the Cataleptic" in August, 1915. At that time Carlton was often to be seen in Kingsbridge, a part of Devon which was his happy hunting ground for years. Subsequently, he took over the role of mine host at a Devonshire inn, probably in the neighbourhood of Kingsbridge, but since then all traces of him have been lost. A burning question, this: what did eventually become of Lewis Carlton who, in his capacity of editor and author, combined stage and film work, yet without attaining outstanding success in any role?

At the end of 1915 the position of leading authors was as follows:-

W. Murray Graydon (116); Mark Darran (85); Andrew Murray (50); G. H. Teed (49); the latter with a yearly output of 16 stories

just failing to equal the record he set up two years previously. Another prolific year for Murray as well, who topped the half-century mark two weeks before the close of the year.

1916 introduced (34) ROBERT MURRAY, son of William Murray Graydon, though it is quite probable that he made his debut a little earlier than this. However, "The Detective's Ordeal" in September of that year was definitely by him, and, lacking concrete evidence of possible earlier appearances, this must be regarded as his first Blake story. A lively writer, with a convincing style, the younger Graydon was a decided asset to a growingly talented Blake team in which Kestrel stories were outstanding, matching in quality the splendid work of G. H. Teed with his stories of Yvonne and Huxton Rymer. A notable story in the closing days of 1916 was "In Double Harness" when Robert Murray introduced his new "Yard" character Detective-Inspector Coutts, together with Nelson Lee and Nipper working in co-operation with their famous Baker Street counterparts.

In 1917, the Sexton Blake Library began to get into its stride; hitherto its appearances had been confined to only one issue per month during the first half of the preceding year, being increased to two in the second half.

The 1914-18 conflict took heavy toll of British lives and it was inevitable that its reverberations should be felt in the Blake field; so it is sad to recall that having relinquished the pen for the sword, Blake's oldest established writer at that time, Mark Darran, died in France, in the execution of his duty to his King and Country. Other heroes by no means distantly associated with the Blake papers, who fell in the uniform of the British soldier on foreign soil, were Arnold Panting, who edited the BOYS' FRIEND for a short spell, and Stephen H. Agnew, a popular contributor to CHUMS. Darran's first and only contribution to the S.B.L. in January 1917 was his last published Sexton Blake story, and at the time of his death - believed by Mr. L.H. Pratt to have occurred in 1917 - his total contributions in the Blake field stood at 86 novels. Could he have been spared, there is no doubt that he would have become the second Blake author to pass the century mark.

With his passing, Andrew Murray moved into second place, with G.H. Teed third. Consistent appearances with yarns of Aubrey Dexter & Kathleen Maitland took Mark Osborne into fourth position. 1917 saw yet another recruit (35) SIDNEY DREW - or did he also appear earlier? and the more regular appearances of Edwy Searles Brooks. The temporary severance of his connection with the U.J. and S.B.L. by Lewis Jackson,

when he answered the call, was immediately followed by the departure of G.H. Teed whose absence was to last nigh on five years. At the time, Teed was racing neck and neck with Andrew Murray for the honour of becoming the second author to write 100 Blake stories, and, at the end of 1917, had contributed 75 novels to Murray's 76, due to a fine burst of stories totalling 17 - just short of the record he set up in 1913.

The triple loss of Darran, Jackson and Teed was acutely felt, for it resulted in a definite decline in the quality of the average Blake story, though one did reap some consolation from the younger Graydon's enthusiastic style - which, unfortunately, was to dampen very considerably in later years.

With the ending of the war and the beginning of another era - the roaring 'twenties - the curtain is again rung down temporarily, the leading positions standing thus: W. Murray Graydon (148); Andrew Murray (86); Mark Osborne (46).

* * * * *

INSTALMENT SEVEN

RECRUITS GALORE!

The ending of the war, and the unemployment crisis which developed after the cease fire, coincided with a perfect avalanche of budding authors crashing in to swell still further the ranks of Blake's chroniclers. First came an author known as (36) CEDRIC WOLFE, who was followed several months later by the famous (37) ANTHONY SKENE, well-known for his fine tales of Zenith the Albino, and other popular characters. Lewis Jackson returned after his service with the Royal Navy and continued with his Kestrel stories, both in the pages of the UNION JACK and in the SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY. In November 1919 came another young and raw recruit, (38) MICHAEL POOLE whose appearance, it was to transpire, were to be very few and far between, and then a month later, in the pages of the S.B.L. an old-time author - he wrote for the U.J. in 1896, made his appearance. He was (39) OLIVER MERLAND.

In 1919, Andrew Murray gave his contemporaries a stiff task by setting up a yearly target of 14 novels in the S.B.L. alone, following this up with a further 12 in 1920. By the end of that year he had contributed no less than 43 novels of round about 60,000 word each for the Library - a really fine achievement, since he was also writing regularly for the U.J. at that time as well. Having recently accomplished the task of writing over 100 Blake stories for the U.J. thus becoming the second author to do so, he was then well in the running to compiling a similar total in the S.B.L. But the sands of time were running out for Andrew Murray; his health was not too good at this

stage of his career, and, near the end, a ghost-writer had to take over his characters in the U.J., though his appearances in the Library continued unbroken. Well in sight of his century for the S.B.L. alone early in the 'twenties, did he ultimately achieve that honour? Time alone would tell.

Two new faces in the S.B.L. ranks in 1920 - first (40) PIERRE QUIROULE, otherwise W. W. Sayer, who conceived and introduced the King's Spy, Granite Grant, into both the pages of the S.B.L. and U.J. during a run of regular appearances lasting six years; and (41) TREVOR C. WIGNALL, well-known sports' writer, who wrote two novels for the S.B.L. and many more for the various boys' papers.

In a letter he wrote nine years ago, Trevor Wignall told me that a youngster named HOME-GALL was editor of the S.B.L. when his stories were accepted for publication in the Library in 1920, so the claim put forward on behalf of Len Pratt to the effect that he held unbroken office from 1915 to the handing over to W. Howard Baker in 1955 seems incorrect. On his own admission, Len Pratt saw service with the British Army in France, so, obviously, he could not have held the editorship unbrokenly as claimed. Home-Gall (he was the son of the veteran author of the same name) also ran the BOYS' FRIEND, and Trevor Wignall recollected that John Nix Pentelaw had charge of the BOYS' REALM at the same time, with W. Murray Graydon as his assistant. When Pentelaw relinquished the post, Thomas Burke, famous as the author of "Limehouse Nights" took over, though his stay in office was extremely brief.

Position of the leading authors and their total contributions at the end of 1920 stood as follows:- W. Murray Graydon (168); Andrew Murray (124); Mark Osborne (63); Robert Murray (48).

Early in 1921 another candidate entered the field, (42) L. H. Brooks, brother of the more widely known Edwy Searles, though his inclusion is fraught with uncertainties as to the genuineness of his claim for a place in the Blake saga. The problem of the two Brooks forms the basis of an interesting debate, and such is its importance as part of this record that it cannot be dismissed in a few brief sentences. Personally, in view of the astounding similarity in style, I find it impossible to believe that L.H. and not E.S. wrote certain stories recorded as being the former's work in both the U.J. and S.B.L. True, there was an effort, certainly on the part of the author, not the publishers, to disguise the fact that only one pair of hands had been engaged in turning out the stories - this being in the introduction of a new Scotland Yard official - but every story, either officially

recorded as being E.S. Brooks, or L.H. Brooks, simply screamed of the former's participation in it.

As is generally known, E.S.B. introduced into nearly all his Waldo stories his famous 'Yard character, Chief Detective-Inspector Lennard, whilst into most of the stories purported to have been written by L.H.B. a character known as Detective-Inspector Dickson - also of the 'Yard - was introduced, this fact alone serving to keep alive the single spark of doubt that there were indeed to separate authors relating these tales. The only other factor perhaps, was that in view of their close relationship, the gift of expression may have been equally divided between them; but, if so, why did one become famous and the other remain unknown? Relationship is neither proof of equality nor of similarity, as will be found when the respective styles of Captain Frank H. Shaw and his brother, Stanley (Gordon Shaw), which are quite marked, when compared. Then again with S. Clarke Hook and his son, H. Clarke Hook; and yet again in the case of R.S. Warren Bell and his brother, John Keble Bell ("Keble Howard"). But of them all it would be difficult to find a bigger contrast in styles than those of the Murray Graydons, William and Robert. The rhythm of the one was completely in opposition to the other, and if William, the father, can be said to have been the better writer, then Robert the son, was by far the more entertaining and enterprising.

What has set the seal of conviction on E.S. Brooks having written all the stories adjudged the work of L.H., is the fact that, according to the records of the A. Press, a story, with not Lennard as the official detective but Dickson, was presented for publication in the S.B.L. by E.S.B., so it seems pretty obvious that if the latter wrote one novel in which he introduced this particular character, he wrote the lot, for it is asking too much of one to accept the fact that two authors, brothers or not, could have the same excellent and individual way of presenting a novel. After all, no author could write like Charles Hamilton, and I venture to state that no one could write like Edwy Searles Brooks either - and remain a complete failure; so, to the Blake devotee who keeps a record of such things as titles and authors of same, the remedy is plain - assume "L.H. Brooks" to be a pen-name of Edwy Searles and leave it at that.

Five other authors, and possibly a sixth, were first heard of as Blake writers in 1921, when Blake, having reached the peak of his popularity, the number of issues of the S.B.L. from September onwards was increased to five. Introduction now for (43) F. ADDINGTON SYMONDS, soon to take over the editorship of a new paper called the CHAMPION;

(44) ALFRED EDGAR, a clever writer of boys' stories and popular with readers other than those of the NELSON LEE LIBRARY! (45) S. GORDON SHAW, brother of the famous Captain Frank H. Shaw and (46) COUNTS BRISBANE, who penned some later Blakes under the name of Reid Whitly. Towards the end of the year (46) H. GREGORY HILL arrived, and into his first story introduced the well-known Indian crook, Gunga Dass.

Faced with a story entitled "State Secrets", published in the S.B.L. in October of the same year, is to be confronted with something of a problem as well, for the author is known to have been W.B. Home-Gall. But which of the two Home-Gall's was it? The father who wrote as Reginald Wray, or the son? The latter, born William Bolingbroke Home-Gall, in 1894, joined the A. Press in 1912, and, according to Trevor Wignall, was the young editor who accepted his Sexton Blake stories in 1920. He was with the A.P. until 1939 and edited the CHUMS ANNUAL for that year.

1922 promised to be quite an eventful year, for not only was it to mark the debut of one of the most popular contributors of all time, but G.H. Teed was to stage a most impressive come-back; and so, to conclude, here are the present records of the leading authors, as near as can be ascertained. Details:

W. Murray Graydon (183); Andrew Murray (139); Mark Osborne (65); Robert Murray (53); and Cecil Hayter (52).

QUERY CORNER. In Magnet 776, there was an advert for a story by P.G. Wodehouse, to be published shortly in the Boys' Friend. Can anyone give the title and if it was subsequently published in book form? Also, were any other Wodehouse stories published in the Boy's papers? A. W. RHODES, BRITISH EMBASSY, BONN, B.F.P.O. 19.

"Can any reader help me solve the following problem. There was a Greyfriars story published about 1925-8 - a double length one - dealing with the Famous Five at Christmas spending the vacation at one of their homes. The old home was isolated by a snow-storm - and there was also a haunting. This was not the "Mystery of Wharton Lodge" No. 1038, 1928." Any clues would be welcome.
W.O.G. LOFTS, 56 SHERINGHAM HOUSE, LISSON STREET, LONDON, N.W.1.

WANTED: Spring Books, dust cover complete, Tom Merry's Triumph, Through Thick and Thin, Disappearance of Tom Merry. Write, state price.

J.S. HUGHES, 184 LEYBOURNE STREET, CHELMER, BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA.

HAMILTONIANA

Compiled by HERBERT LECKENBY

Mr. F. Addington Symonds, first editor of the Champion recently had a talk with Frank Richards. Here is a brief account of it. Everyone will be delighted to hear that he is evidently in a good state of health and as energetic as ever,

While spending a holiday recently with my good friend Frank Pettingell, I had the pleasure of meeting Frank Richards at his home in Kingsgate. It was my first personal contact with him, for we had never actually met during my Fleetway House days. Over tea and cakes, kindly provided by his charming housekeeper, we talked about cabbages and kings, not to say Billy Bunter, for some two hours or so. I found Mr. Richards engaged upon one of his many hobbies (he is a man of diverse interests) - that of translating classic and popular verse into Latin and even composing music for some of the rhymes - in fact, he sang two or three of the songs to me! He said that he is now "getting frightfully old" but I found little evidence of it. The burden of the years sits lightly upon his outwardly frail, but actually very lively, figure and his alert mind and witty conversation would put many much younger men to shame. He tells me that he still tends his garden and is an incurable addict in the matter of singing in his bath!

Of the immortal Billy Bunter he spoke with the reluctance of a natural modesty, but it is obvious that, to him, as to countless others, the fat Owl of the Remove is a very real and living person. When I came away, I got the impression that our beloved Frank Richards is good for many more years yet, and I shall long treasure the memory of what was, for me, a rare and delightful occasion.

* * * * *

LET'S BE CONTROVERSIAL

(In this series, Eric Fayne touches on certain matters of interest to students of the Hamilton papers. He gives his own superficially. If you will write to him, expressing your opinions on the topics he discusses, he will summarise readers' views in a future issue.)

No. 31. PRINTER'S PIE AND AUTHOR'S ERRORS.

Printer's errors were surprisingly few, and when one considers the amount of reading matter furnished at so low a price, and it would

seen certain that the Amalgamated Press employed "readers" - those patient gentlemen who plough through a printed work to correct any mistakes which may have been made with type-setting.

There is, however, little evidence that revisers were used. With some expert revision, some of the substitute stories could have been made much more readable than they were.

One of the most inexplicable mistakes that was allowed to pass was in a white-cover Magnet, when a substitute writer named Rylcombe as the station for Greyfriars, and Chapman drew the cover, showing the station platform with the word "Rylcombe" screaming across the name-board.

The carelessness of the author was inexcusable, but such a glaring error could hardly have been passed if a reviser had been employed before the story was put in print.

It is easy for any writer - good, bad or indifferent - to make a slip. Some years ago I described champagne being poured from a decanter, and a reviser, with gentle sarcasm, enquired politely whether, in the part of the world of which I was writing, it was customary to decant champagne. There is little excuse for a writer to make such a very stupid mistake, but there is no excuse at all for anything of the sort getting into print.

Frank Richards, in "Bunter the Stowaway" (South Seas Series), wrote: "Even as he was about to step forth, he started back, like a rabbit into a burrow." That, like such a comment as "Tom Merry shook his curly head" is merely one of those little things that finds its way into the "Printer's Pie" columns of humorous papers. It can be but rarely that a competent writer like Frank Richards has ever produced anything suitable for Printer's Pie, but in the matter of names, we find some incongruities.

A classic instance is that Cousin Ethel was called Maynard on her first appearance, and thereafter became Cleveland. It hardly seems credible that the author can have forgotten the name he had given the young lady only a short time previously. Then why did it happen? It is one of those points which Mr. Hamilton could clear up for us.

In the 1939 Magnet, Mr. Woose became Mr. Woosey, and Bunter's home town of Reigate became Redgate. Was this due to editorial direction? (just possibly) or author's forgetfulness? (unlikely) or printer's errors? (very unlikely). There just seemed no reason at all for the changes.

In the first quarter of this century, our author had a tendency for the repetition of names, inexplicable in a way. Down the years,

when a cardsharp was required in connection with Greyfriars, St. Jim's or Rookwood, he was usually named Captain Punter. This, in fact, was a pointer that stories of the three schools were coming from the same facile pen.

At Clavering, in the Spring of 1907, readers met Mr. Quelch (form-master), Wingate (school captain), North (prefect). At Greyfriars early in 1908, readers met Mr. Quelch (form-master), Wingate (school captain), North (prefect). It is impossible to understand the author repeating names in this fashion, in such a short space of time. One wonders whether readers of that day noticed it.

Sir Hilton Popper was described as a landowner near St. Jim's, claiming ownership of an island in the River Ryll. Not much later, he was a landowner near Greyfriars, claiming possession of an island in the River Sark. Was this due to slipshod writing? (surely not), forgetfulness? (possibly), a belief of the author that he was writing for an entirely new batch of readers? (perhaps).

During the first decade of the century, Mr. Hamilton wrote some stories about two characters named Redfern and Owen Lawrence. Later, we find three characters, named Redfern, Owen and Lawrence introduced at St. Jim's.

Most puzzling of all is the name of the leading character in the School Friend stories - Barbara Redfern. Why on earth was the name Redfern used yet again?

In his "Replies in Brief" in the School Friend, one finds the Editor continually announcing "Barbara Redfern is not related to Redfern of St. Jim's."

It could be, of course, that Mr. Hamilton originally intended Barbara to be the sister of Redfern of St. Jim's. Against this is the fact that Redfern was a scholarship boy, from a London Council School - though this point was never laboured, and was lost in the mists of time - and, even in the very early School Friend tales, Barbara was obviously the daughter of well-to-do parents.

It is possible that, in those days, the author had a special affection for certain names, and found them irresistible? Is that why Hufee Singh came to Greyfriars from a defunct series, and Levison expelled from Greyfriars, re-appeared at St. Jim's? In the case of Inky, it is understandable that the author did not wish to lose so original a character. Yet Ionides, who was also extremely original, disappeared from the Magnet during its infancy.

Oddments of repetition in nomenclature, and there are many others, beyond those mentioned in this article, do not affect Mr. Hamilton's

unassailable position as the greatest Boys' writer of our time. But they are an interesting study for the odd moments.

It's just my point of view. What's yours?

* * * * *

CONTROVERSIAL ECHOES

No. 29. FRANK RICHARDS' WRITING LIFE.

ROGER JENKINS writes: "I agree with you wholeheartedly about Frank Richards' Autobiography. To the collector it seems to be only one small bite at a very large and succulent cherry, and we are all greedy for more.

Not so long ago there was a fascinating correspondence in the Times about a red Magnet story in which Harry Wharton twisted his waistcoat-button when he was perplexed. The leader writer recalled that one of Wharton's enemies cut off the vital button just before an exam, with the result that he put up a poor show. Readers of the C.D. will remember Charles Hamilton's explanation of the actual facts on which the incident was based.

Again, in a letter to me some years ago, Mr. Hamilton stated that the Ravenspur Grange series was written because the editor had asked for something in the Edgar Wallace style, but Mr. Hamilton never felt altogether happy about the result, and the experiment was not repeated.

These are the items which collectors find so fascinating. If we could have a whole series of background stories of this nature, what a feast for the Gods it would be!"

GEORGE SELLARS writes: "Frank Richards' Writing Life would be a very fascinating book for us all to read. I sincerely hope that he will be able to find time to write it, either in book form or for the C.D. Annual. I would not be at all surprised to learn, when he gives us his 'Writing Life' that he spent some of his schooldays in Canada. I believe, from what Gerry Allison wrote about this in the 1957 Annual, that he is of the same opinion as myself.

Only Frank Richards knows the answer to questions like these, and, for this reason alone, we should keenly welcome F.R.'s Writing Life."

JOHN TOMLINSON (on an earlier topic) writes: "I agree entirely with you that the Gem stage became overcrowded. I recently read a Gem of 1918, which, it appears, was a Pentelow story. It featured almost

every character in Junior School. It was called "The Black Sheep of the Shell" and although Racke and Crooke were supposed to be the central characters, the major and minor personalities just swarmed like flies in the story. Jack Blake could not speak without 'snapping' and Racke, Crooke and Grundy seemed to have swallowed dictionaries. Personally, too, I am not interested in Roylance, Durrance, Kerruish, Hammond, Wildreke, Julian, Reilly, and all the rest who meandered in and out of this wretched tale. I think it is the worst Gem I have ever read."

ERIC FAYNE adds: "Frank Richards has stated that he never visited the Americas. 'Frank Richards' Schooldays' was fiction - and really grand fiction, at that."

* * * * *

"BUNTER COMES FOR CHRISTMAS"
Frank Richards (Cassell 8/6)

A Christmas story by Frank Richards, with the scene set at Wharton Lodge, walks along the snowy Winford lanes, fun and games in Wharton's den, and the immaculate Wells being compelled to "talk severe" to one of his underlings, will bring a sigh of entire satisfaction from all of us.

The story is an abbreviated re-hash of the famous "Attic" series of the early thirties - and why not? The Attic series was probably the best Christmas fare that the Magnet ever presented, and in this new version there are original sequences, like Bunter replacing a cake which he purloined, to give it additional charm.

In the opening chapters, it is mentioned several times that Courtfield is only a mile from Greyfriars. It seems likely that the author really meant Friardale. If Courtfield is only a mile from the school, there would seem no point in a traveller catching a local train hence to Friardale. It is a minor detail, however.

"Bunter Comes for Christmas" is a delicious, seasonable frolic, with delightful atmosphere, and I shall be surprised if it is not the most popular post-war Bunter book. Truly the first substantial ingredient for a very merry Christmas.

* * * * *

RESULT OF QUIZZLE No. 10. Solution to Clue Down: "The Classical Side."
 Hidden words: "Fun and Games at Courtfield Station." First correct solution was received from Gerald Allison, 3 Bingley Road, Manston Ilkley, Yorkshire, to whom 5/- has been sent.
 Northern 50 points; London 30 points; Merseyside 20 points.

QUIZZLE No. 11

A			1	2					
B		3	4						
C				5					
D	6								
E			7	8					
F			9			10			
G				11	12				
H	13		14						
I	15					16			
J		17	18						
K		19	20						
L					21	22			
M				23					
N				24	25				
O	26								
P			27					28	

The letters in the numbered squares, if placed in sequence in the lower grid, will spell out a shocking comment by Mr. Prout.

CLUE DOWN: It took Harry Wharton and Co. to crack them. (4, 2, 10)

CLUES ACROSS:

- A. Descriptive of Smithy's favourite jaunts.
 B. The kind of Fourth that Temple graces.
 C. A boatman of Pegg.
 D. St. James's.
 E. Skinner never did this up if he could help it.
 F. Mons. Charpentier is, to us.
 G. The Rio Kid carries more than one.
 H. Lovell seldom has a good one.
 I. What Mr. Quelch did with his teeth, according to Bunter.
 J. They need hares to make game.
 K. Cain spat for Kildare and Bulkeley.
 L. Blagg surely carries one. (6,3)
 M. The Bounder's demeanour is fishy at heart.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		

N. Fishy, but not musical.

O. Near Wharton Lodge, they fall at Christmas time.

P. Turfed out!

* * * * *

Write on a postcard the words in the lower grid and the answer to the Clue down. 5/- to the sender of the first correct solution received by the editor.

* * * * *

2 Schoolgirl's Own Annuals (1925) sale or exchange similar of other years.

PALMER, 489 LEEDS ROAD, THACKLEY, BRADFORD, YORKSHIRE.

Foreword:

My next few instalments in this article will be in the form of that well known T.V. programme "I WANT AN ANSWER." The celebrity this time is of course, Mr. Samways, and since I first met him I must have asked him hundreds of different questions - all in connection with the Magnet and Gem. He has answered all of them quite willingly and frankly, and it is my hope that most of them will be the same type that the majority of readers would have asked. In case there are any controversial questions or otherwise, that I may have overlooked, I hereby extend an invitation to any reader who cares to write to me, when I promise that the query in question will be forwarded on to Mr. Samways.

Q. Can you tell me exactly the years in which you were actually on the staff of the "Magnet" and "Gem"?

A. "I can speak with authority and first-hand knowledge of the years 1914 (latter half) 1915, 1916, 1919, 1920, and the first half of 1921. After this date I took up free-lancing, but still continued to write stories for the "Magnet" "Gem" "Penny Popular" "Greyfriars Herald" "Holiday Annual" and other Companion papers until 1928, when I ceased to write boys fiction."

Q. You certainly have cleared up the mystery of why Arthur Courtney was killed off in the "Magnet" - but as this subject has been the most controversial in our circle for years - could you tell me whether you yourself agreed with the decision - being a great lover of all the characters.

A. "I have no wish to become involved in a controversy regarding the fate of Courtney of the Sixth. His untimely fate seems to have caused a great deal of heartburning, and Pentelow in particular has been castigated for it - rather unjustly, I think. Arthur Courtney, was not regarded as a prominent and popular character like George Wingate - indeed, he may be said to have been Wingate's shadow. Frank Courtenay on the other hand, was a colourful, likely personality, and to have killed him off would have been less pardonable. Whilst I have every sympathy with those who mourn the fate of Courtney, I do feel satisfied in my own mind that what was done was in the best interests of the "Magnet."

Q. One of the most popular features ever to appear in the "Magnet" was the "Greyfriars Gallery." This has always been credited to John

Nix Pentelow, but I have heard it suggested that you had some hand in its production - could you enlighten me about this?

A. "Whilst working in the "Magnet" Office, I compiled a full list of Greyfriars characters with their correct Christian names, in order to obtain consistency. I also devised a map of Kent, showing the exact location of Greyfriars, the village of Friardale, and the market town of Courtfield. I have no doubt that Pentelow used all this information as a basis for the Gallery he compiled later. The original idea was to provide a guide for substitute writers of "Magnet" stories, and to ensure correct nomenclature of names and places. I certainly don't wish to take any of the credit away from Mr. Pentelow - who certainly knew the Greyfriars characters as well as anyone."

Q. Which paper had the largest circulation - the "Magnet" or "Gem"?

A. The "Magnet's" circulation was always considerably higher than the "Gem" - at least during the whole time I was connected with the paper. Occasionally, the gap would be reduced somewhat, but I can never remember the "Gem" gaining ascendancy at any time."

Q. Can you tell me anything interesting of how you came to create the school of St. Sam's - a very popular "Magnet" feature.

A. "What can I really tell you about the above school and Dr. Birchmall? except that the name of the school was taken from the first part of my surname - and that the idea in the first place just came to me in a flash. I pictured myself as Dickie Nugent, attempting to write school yarns in his weird and wonderful spelling. I very much enjoyed writing the stories, and am glad that they gave delight to others - particularly the Rev. Pound you mention."

Q. What was the most popular character ever to appear in the "Magnet" judging by readers letters - also the most disliked.

A. "From memories of readers letters on the subject - I would affirm most emphatically that Bob Cherry was the most popular character at Greyfriars. I cannot state with authority who was the most disliked - but it was very probable Fisher Tarlton Fish.

Q. Knowing your great love of the Hamilton schools - would you say that Charles Hamilton was the greatest school story writer ever?

A. No, I would not say that Charles Hamilton was the best writer of school stories ever. I would say that he was the writer of the best loved school stories ever; and that, I think, is a finer tribute. Hamilton's stories certainly made an impact on my life, morally and spiritually. They "did something to me," in my impressionable school-

boy days, that I find difficult to put into words. My favourite school story is "The Hill" by Horace Annesley Vachell. I also greatly enjoyed "David Blaize" by E. F. Benson and "Jeremy at Crale" by Hugh Walpole. But at heart I am a true Hamiltonian!"

Continued next month.

ARE YOU SELLING Gems before 1920; Magnets before 1297; S.O.Ls before 262; Nelson Lees before 296? Please write: J. S. HUGHES, 184 LEYBOURNE STREET, CHELSEA, S.W.3, BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA. Best prices offered.

WANTED THE POPULAR 109, 110, 114, 117-135, 137-139, 141-145, 147-163, 165, 166, 169-171, 174-184, 186-188, 190, 191, 193-201, 203-205, 207-213, 217-229, 231, 310, 311, 313, 314, 317, 318, 320-322, 325-334, 336-343, 345-350, 352-361, 380, 381, 388-398, 404, 406, 411-416, 418, 419, 424-431, 439, 449, 451, 452, 454-456, 459-488, 499, 518, 530, 538, 541-545, 547-551, 556-558, 560-566, 568, 571, 572, 577, 578, 581, 591, 596-599. S.O.Ls 60, 68. GEMS 16, 37, 359, 364, 433.
 DR. ROBERT WILSON, 100 BRONFIELD ROAD, GLASGOW, N.

WANTED Sexton Blake Library - 1st series: 11, 17, 37, 41, 105, 109, 111, 198, 201, 219; 2nd series: 293, 296, 305, 422, 474, 495, 520, 667; Boy's Friend Library - 1st series: 10, 63, 102, 105, 107, 165, 229, 246, 669; 2nd series: 395. Union Jack 689, 690, 691, 693, 695, 702, 703, 704, 711, 717, 721, 725, 727, 732, 733, 736, 740, 743, 745, 746, 749, 751, 752, 1041, 1064, 1098, 1388, 1390.
 MRS. J. PACKMAN, 27 ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.22.

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 ERIC FAYNE, "EXCELSIOR HOUSE" GROVE ROAD, SURBITON, SURREY.

WANTED MAGNETS Nos. 28, 32, 33, 34, 35, 39, 44, 48, 50, 51, 52, 55, 517, 648, 742, 768, 771, 773, 920, 921, 933, 952, 1037, 1191. Your Price Paid. Also wanted Gems - all periods. Will exchange late Magnets for same period "Gems". Write LOFTS, 56 SHERINGHAM HOUSE, LONDON, N.W.1.

NELSON LEE COLUMN

by JACK WOOD, Nostaw, Stockton Lane, York.

Phone: 25795

Concluded from last month:

Factor returned with Parkin's things and the Sixth Former was awaiting him on the Ancient House steps. Parkin invited him to Kenmore's study and the pair went along.

From that moment I can get no other details. The next day Reggie Pitt was summoned to the headmaster's study and poor Reggie nearly fell through the floor when he heard the charges made against him. He maintained his ignorance of the affair but when old Sharpe and Mr. Binks who were there both declared that this was the boy Dr. Stafford could do nothing less than accuse Pitt. Afterwards Pitt was sent to the punishment room which is always the preliminary to being expelled. For a great amount of damage had been wrought by the new boy. I learnt also that some of the other proprietors who had been visited by Factor had informed the Police. At this point in Nipper's narrative I couldn't for the life of me see where all this was leading to. What had Pitt done to the new boy for him to do these things?

Pitt wasn't expelled, although at the time the boys could see no other course the Head could take. That Pitt was at Helmford playing cricket at the time of the disturbance was allowed for, but as the times of Factor's voyage of destruction covered the time after the match and that several of the shopkeeper's differed in their views of the time they were visited, Dr. Stafford sent for Nelson Lee for guidance. Accordingly Pitt was sent to prepare to leave the school, and restitution was promised to the irate shopkeepers.

Of course, Reggie Pitt's conduct when he first came to the school was the main influence affecting the Head's decision, but Nelson Lee thought otherwise. And although he let the school go to bed that night thinking Pitt was to be expelled on the morrow, he was determined to get to the bottom of this strange behaviour of Pitt's.

Nipper supplied the clue that was going to help him. Nipper, in his defence of Pitt, spoke of the time Reggie rescued Tommy Watson from a burning house. It was an extremely plucky action and the risk was tremendous.

Nelson Lee looked up at the Form Captain's reference to a burning house.

"I've got it, Nipper" he exclaimed, "I thought that new boy reminded me of somebody!"

"What do you mean sir? He can only remind you of Pitt!"

Nelson Lee shook his head.

"No, my boy. Just think. If Factor's nose were a little broader and his hair inclined to curl who would you see?"

But the puzzled Nipper was at a loss.

"Surely you remember Titus Alexis?"

Nipper jumped up, "Of course, what an idiot I am! With those alterations he would be Alexis. But I say, guv'nor, that Greek kid... where does he fit in here? You're telling me....."

Lee walked over to a large desk and pulled out a ledger from a drawer.

"When Alexis was expelled for setting fire to the old College House a description was issued. I have it here. And except for a slight difference to his nose and hair this boy Factor is the Greek to life. But apart from that I noticed at the time of Factor's interview with Dr. Stratton that a plastic surgeon had given the new boy some attention. "Of course," Lee added, "that was immaterial to me then. But I noticed it."

Well it turned out that it was Titus Alexis, and that, like Bernard Forrest, he had managed to get back to St. Frank's by a trick. But whereas Forrest stayed on, the Greek did not. He was duly expelled.

I was puzzled how this violent, sadistic junior had managed to fool the school even with a new name, but Nipper tells me that his father married again and it was in the name of Factor that the new boy was entered.

The affair of the Greek boy's amazing short stay at St. Frank's has been chronicled elsewhere, but from what the juniors have told me about Alexis he must have been the original angry young man! St. Frank's is well rid of him.

An enormous spread was given in honour of Reggie Pitt's special pardon which the Head announced in Big Hall. But I'm afraid Fatty Little had most of my share!!

Vanity Fair, 1st Vol. with plates 20/- each and post; Vols. of Listener (pre-war) other items on early wireless, Old Victorian Books, Gems, 5, 1935-7, Magnets, 2, 1936-7, 4 B.F.Lib; 2 1920 N. Lee; 2 Book for the Bairns, 7 Boys Realms; 2 Sexton Blake Libs; Old Music, True Crime. BOX 12, c/o. H. LECKENBY, 12 HERBERT STREET, HULL ROAD, YORK.

SALE: School Girl Own Libs. 45 Nos. (1930-9) all types, Morcove, Cliff House, etc. offers; School Girl 20 Nos. (1929-39) offers; School Girl Own Weekly 7 Nos. (1922-3) Morcove, offers; 2 Tom Merry Books 2/6 each and postage; 1 Rookwood 2/6 and post; 5 Billy Bunter 3/6 each and post; 1 Billy Bunter Annual 5/6 each and post; School-girls Weekly 74 Nos. 1937-9 offers; Girls Crystal 40 Nos. 1938-9 offers; School Cap 8 Nos. 1/- each and post; School Girl Annual Circa 1930 offer; Schoolgirls Own Annual 1929-33, 4 vols. 1 with outside board, 3 without boards, reading matter complete, offer; Girls Realm Annual 1903, 8/6 and post; Bluebird Nos. 1-52 (bound 1922-3) Comics in first books scarce 30/0 and post; B.O. Paper, many vols. 1903-35 7/6 to 10/- each and post; (pre-war) U.S.A. Mechanic Mag, various types 8d each and post; Chums 1921-2 12/6 and post; Our Girls Annual Circa 1930, Vol. 2 580 pages 5/- and post; Chatterbox Annuals 20 Vols. 1880-1930 5/- and 7/6 each and post; Young England 10 Vols. 1897-40 5/- each and post; Boys 1891, Pub Boards 7/6 each and post; Prize, many Vols. over 60 years 2/6 each and post; C.D.'s 30 Nos. at 6d each and post; C.D. Annual 1958 price 10/- and post; School Friend Annuals 1938, 1939 Cliff House 10/- each and post; Victorian Scrap Book 20/- each and post; Modern Boys Annual, 1935 8/6 and post; Champion 1942, 5/- and post; Adventure, 6 Rover 1922-4 1/6 each and post; Wizards, Triumphs, pre-war 1/3 each and post; Vol. 1 and 4 of Theatre 1878-81 many plates of Actors, scarce, offer; Book of Cricket, Circa 1900, many plates 15/- and post; other types, Happy Mags, 1920s 1/- each and post; Aldine Robin Hood 1902 2/- each and post; Aldine Dick Turpin No. 95 2/6 and post; Puck Annual 1940, cover loose 5/- and post; Black and White 7/6 and post; Strand Mag, 2 Vols. with Conan Doyle stories 7/6 each and post; British Boys Annuals 3, (1910-25) 5/- each and post; Boys Best Annual 1924, 3/6 and post; 1 Vol. of Grand Magazine, 1 Vol. of Heartsease Library, 50 Horner's Weekly, a complete book of Aviation, 1935, 15/- each and post, many plates. H. Strang's Annual 1923 5/- each and post; H.S. Orange Book for Boys 1919 3/6 and post; Poor Jack 1st ed. 7/6 and post; Bentley's Miscellany 1840, 7/6 and post; Captain, several vols. 7/6 and post; Large vol of Pictorial Times 1847 15/- each and post; T. Lawton Football book 7/6 and post; 4 Wilfred Annuals, pre-war 7/6 each and post; 3 Teddy Tail Annuals, pre-war 7/6 each and post; Ornithology, many fine books, pre-war Film Mags and Annuals, Aero, Stage, Railway, Tit-Bits, 1888, well bound, lettered in gold on spine, 10/- and post; 3 vols. of Wide World 10/- each and post; Lot-o-Fun 2 Nos. 1920, Comic Cuts 1 No. 1916, 2/- each and post; The Daltons 600 pages (1871) 5/- and post;

S.B.L. REVIEWSJULY, 1959. (Published September)CATCH A TIGER! (No. 433)MARTIN THOMAS

No prizes offered for guessing who caught this particular one. Stalking balefully from the foetid jungles of his native land with the same evil purpose as the beast from which he took his name, Tora San comes to England to extract retribution on those in whom he had entrusted the task of moving the proceeds of a bank robbery in Tokyo, but who had double-crossed him in the process. Had not Tora San possessed an attractive daughter over whom he kept strict surveillance, it would not have happened. But Setso San was beautiful and she was desirable in the eyes of one not unconnected with the bullion thieves.

Not for the first time has Blake matched Oriental cunning and ruthlessness with his own brand of Western skill and resource. For him it was the beginning of things on Platform One on Paddington Station. For Tora San it was the beginning of the end. Another winner by Thomas.

Rating.....Very Good

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SHOWDOWN IN SYDNEY (No. 434)DESMOND REID

Sexton Blake, with his closest allies, Tinker and Paula Dane, intervene and successfully combat a colossal plot calculated to bring the United States to its knees financially, and at the same time enrich certain denizens of the Sydney underworld beyond the dreams of avarice. It's a many cornered fight for possession of a set of photolithographic negatives with which millions of dollar bills of varying denominations could be produced quite undetectable from the genuine article. In dishonest endeavour several men and one woman die suddenly, prematurely. The fuse is lit for Blake when he finds the body of one of the victims down a mine shaft in Ballarat.

It had to come of course - a story which failed to measure up to the high standards of its predecessors. This one supplied the break in continuity, and in the words of a football commentator criticizing one of the teams, may be summed up to read - "The approach work was good, but the finishing weak."

Rating.....Moderate

* * * * *

WALTER WEBB

OLD BOYS BOOK CLUB

LONDON SECTION. The 'Long Vacation' over, quite a good number of undergraduates assembled for the first meeting of the Michaelmas term in the 'Rag' at Cherry Place. Amongst the excellent lectures was Laurie Sutton's selection of Desert Island Books and a couple of rounds of "Concentration" by Eric Payne. Roger Jenkins reported that all students of Hamiltonia should have received a copy of the library catalogue which John Wernham and Roger had so painstakingly compiled. Thus all members and students can look forward to an excellent term's reading. Exams were held by Don Webster and Breezy Ben and an Eliminator one brought some good answers. Truly a good start to the term, which included a foed by Eileen and Kathleen. Finally, an excellent projection of coloured holiday slides was given and with the distribution of "Bunter Comes for Christmas" - a very happy throng dispersed homeward bound with happy memories, amongst these being our Herbert, who once again was visiting London.

Next meeting at Neasden, 2 Oxford Place, Press Road, London, N.W. 10 on Sunday, October 18th. Kindly let Bob Blyth know if you are intending to be present.

UNCLE BENJAMIN

NORTHERN SECTION MEETING, SEPTEMBER 12th, 1989. For once the holidays had some effect on the attendance. Ron Hodgson and wife Doreen were away, also Harry Barlow and Harold Busby. However, all the other regulars were present and a good time was had by all.

The London Club was congratulated on its Library Catalogue, and we had a discussion on the Cup Contest. Don't leave it just to one or two, Northerners, we are not going to be satisfied by being runners up this time.

It was Jack Wood's evening. In his talk "Round the World in Eighty Minutes" with his journalistic training he deftly blended his own round the world air trip with the various places the St. Frank's boys visited in their many adventures abroad. He finished up by reading a chapter from a Maxwell Scott, Nelson Lee story, describing a Test Match at Headingley many years ago. Jack's talk was thoroughly enjoyed. Later Jack put in a mixed Quiz. To my astonishment I came out first, but let me whisper it, he allowed one mark for every artist who had drawn Sexton Blake. Money for jam.

Next meeting, October 10th. It's Gerry Allison's night.

HERBERT LECKENBY - Northern Section Correspondent.

MIDLAND O.B.B.C. MEETING HELD 31st AUGUST, 1959. There was a happy note to this meeting as in addition to the very interesting programme, the wedding present from the club in general was handed to Tom Porter and Beryl Russell, with the sincere good wishes for their future happiness from all of us, those present and those absent. This took the form of a cut glass bowl and had been carefully chosen by our Lady Chairman. Tom and Beryl responded appropriately and then we sat back to hear Beryl's choice of eight books she would take with her to her Desert Island Paradise (latitude and longitude a close secret at the moment.) 1. A Modern S.B.L. by Peter Saxon "Last Days of Berlin" 2. Another of the same authors S.B.L. "The Sea Tigers" 3. An old S.B.L. by Rex Hardinge entitled "The Mystery of the Forbidden Territory" 4. S.B.L. old series "The Case of the Burmese Daggers" by Andrew Murray. 5. Magnet No. 160 "When Billy Bunter Forgot" 6. Monster Library No. 7 "Neath African Skies" by Edwy Searles Brooks. 7. "Billy Bunter among the Cannibals." 8. "Billy Bunter and the Blue Mauritius".

The Quiz by the way, set by myself, was won yet again by John Tomlinson with 24 items right from 27. HARRY BROSTER - Secretary.

Addenda: At 1.30 Saturday, 5th September at Great Barr Methodist Church, Birmingham, Beryl Russell and Tom Porter were married. Amongst the large assembly of guests who attended the Reception at the Co-op Hall, Kingstanding, were Madge and Jack Corbett, Norman and Mrs. Gregory, Harry and Mrs. Broster, and George Chatham. Jack Bellfield acted as best-man and during the reception read a telegram of good wishes from the Northern Club. George Chatham was on hand with his cine-camera so we can look forward to seeing some interesting shots at a later date.

THE GOLDEN HOURS CLUB. It was very pleasant to welcome back those members, who through illness, had missed out on several meetings and by the look on Bill Hall and Arthur Croser's faces they were just as pleased to be back in the cheery circle again. So with a really good attendance the September meeting, held on Friday, 11th, at Cahills Restaurant, Sydney, got away to a grand start. The letters from overseas were passed around - must admit we were pleased to hear from our London friends via Bill Whiter (and were very much impressed by their most artistic official club newspaper). Then an old favourite was passed around, the always interesting "Newsletter" from our friends in the Midlands. Thanks also to Frank Unwin, we are now receiving "The Nersey Foghorn" which was of particular interest this month as mention

is made of the eagerly awaited tape-recording enroute to us from our Merseyside friends.

After dinner we settled down to debate various controversial articles in the current C.D. Congratulations were extended to our most ardent collector, Ernie Carter, who has just completed his collection of "Chums".

Next Meeting - October 16th. BETTE PATE - Secretary.

MERSEYSIDE SECTION MEETING, SEPTEMBER 6th. The attendance was again somewhat disappointing and it is a very good thing that we can rely on the "old faithfuls" who turn up regularly and punctually each month - otherwise where would we be? There was a very varied programme; a very fine quiz by Don Webster being the highlight, although the debate again proved very enjoyable. The excellent programmes undoubtedly deserve a far better attendance. Do try to attend the next meeting, which is the A.G.M., on Sunday, 4th October, 6.30p.m. and which will be held at Don's new address - 7 Gwenwylla Road, Waterloo. FRANK UNWIN

FOR SALE - Bound volumes of Magnets, 1934 Nos. 1351 to 1376 (including the Smedley series and Popper's Island Rebellion (part). 1934 Nos. 1377 to 1402 (including Popper's Island Rebellion conclusion) Secret Seven series etc.) 1935 Nos. 1403 to 1428 (including Caffyn series and Stacey series (part)); 1935 Nos. 1429 to 1454 (including Stacey series (conclusion) Porter Cliffe Hall series and Warren series) bound in maroon with gilt lettering. Magnificent condition. These are exceptional Collectors' items. Price £10 10 0 volume. Populars (new series) Nos. 1 to 16 inclusive. Beautiful condition £6 10 0. BOX 10, COLLECTORS' DIGEST, c/o H. LECKENBY, 12 HERBERT STREET, YORK.

MORE HAMILTONIANA

And now we welcome Roger Jenkins back to our columns with one of his ever popular articles.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

By ROGER M. JENKINS

No. 33 - Union Jack No. 106 - "The Fifth Form at Fernley"

The stories which Charles Hamilton wrote in the pre - St. Jim's era were noticeable for their serious attitude to life. Humour played very little part in them, and this was hardly surprising for many of

them revolved around the senior forms. "The Fifth Form at Fernley" was no exception to this rule: indeed, it seems to have been the only story Charles Hamilton ever wrote in which one schoolboy plotted the murder of another.

Fernley was a school planned on familiar lines. It had a School House and a New House. Harry Talbot, the hero, was in the School House, and his cousin, Hubert Langley, was in the New House. They were rivals for their uncle's fortune, for the friendship of the Head's daughter, and also for a place in the school football team. The rivalry led Langley from one desperate plot to another until finally he attempted to encompass the murder of his cousin.

In these early stories (and it must be remembered that this was written in 1905) the absence of humorous episodes allowed the author to spread himself in descriptive passages, and there was a lengthy account of a football match and a fight between the cousins. In later stories such an account might have been deemed tedious, but in this early story it fitted quite naturally into the flow of the narrative.

Charles Hamilton had a fondness for certain names, which he used over and over again until they became well-known in one of his famous schools. So it is no surprise to the collector to see that Talbot's best friend was Dick Russell, that Langley's evil genius was Knowles, that other boys were called Greene and Towle, that the cousin's uncle was Squire Lowther, that his doctor was Dr. Darrel, and that the Head was Dr. Desmond. When this story was written, of course, these names did not have the significance that they bear for us today.

As a story, "The Fifth Form at Fernley" was unpretentious but not unsuccessful. It was perhaps hardly surprising that a single story of 13 chapters could not adequately deal with a plot of this nature. To the reader this represents one of the odd by-ways of Hamiltoniana, pleasant enough to have trodden once but hardly attractive enough to warrant a second visit.

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NOTES: In this issue you will have seen two adverts under box numbers. I can vouch for the advertisers, who would rather their names were not mentioned.

In replying to either of them please keep separate to anything for myself. Whilst I am always willing to oblige, I hope advertisers won't make a habit of it. H.L.

The October S.B.L's arrived too late to be reviewed in this issue, but they will be dealt with next month. H.L.

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