

*The Story Paper*  
**Collectors'**  
**Digest**

VOL. 49  
No. 579  
MARCH 1995

£1.10



BOB WHITER '95.

Colin Morgan (of Denbigh) has sent this advertisement from ROVER 35 (Oct. 28, 1922). He wonders if any C.D. readers have come across *The Blue Bird*.

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# STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR  
Founded in 1941 by  
W.H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST  
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HERBERT LECKENBY

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## WHAT DID YOU READ IN THE WAR, DADDY (AND MUMMY TOO!)?

Answers are coming in to Mark Taha's recent query about what we read after the Second World War demise of favourite papers such as the *Magnet* and *Schoolgirl*. These recollections elsewhere in this issue make intriguing reading. It seems hardly possible that Hitler's invasion of Norway, which cut off paper supplies for so many weeklies, took place 55 years ago!

## SUNNY MEMORIES

Many of us will recall with affection the little magazine *Sunny Stories* for which the phenomenal Enid Blyton wrote over a long period. Its pages were always warm, colourful, well illustrated and overflowing with excitements and satisfactions for the younger reader. To open an issue from

the period of one's own childhood is to be instantly transported into the delights of the nursery and early schooldays.

Tony Summerfield and Norman Wright have now produced the first index of a promised 3 volumes. This covers the 1942 to 1953 years, listing *Sunny Stories'* short stories, serials and picture-strips, and giving details of most of the illustrators during that time. As well as an A to Z listing of every short story, it traces the eventual first book publication of these tales. There is also a useful character index. For Enid Blyton enthusiasts such bibliographical information will be invaluable.

I must also commend *The Hardboiled Art of D. McLoughlin* by David Ashford and Denis McCloughlin which provides a fund of information about the life and career of this resilient and distinguished illustrator. The story is told in McLoughlin's vivid and pacey style, and a detailed analysis of his Boardman book covers, pulps, comics, annuals and strips for I.P.C. and D.C.T. is also given. The lively text is well punctuated with photographs of the artist and reproductions of an assortment of his work in black and white line, and in colour. This 80 page book will be a 'must' for many collectors. (Further details of these two publications are shown on page 31.)

THE BEST CHILDREN'S WEEKLY  
**ENID BLYTON'S**  
**SUNNY STORIES**  
 THE MAGIC ONION and OTHER TALES



As always, I wish you HAPPY READING.

MARY CADOGAN

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**DO YOU REMEMBER?** by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 248 - Magnets 1126-8 Devarney Series

Charles Hamilton was adept in describing the character of a new boy who resented being sent to a particular school, thus creating individual antagonisms and general hostility. Such a boy might remain at the school, like Harry Wharton, but as often as not he would leave at the end of the series, though usually in a more agreeable and friendly atmosphere. Such a boy was Julian Devarney.

Mr. Devarney, whose ancestors had lived on the same site for over eight hundred years, had lost all his money in a Stock Exchange swindle, the

culprit being one Shem Isaacs, and Devarney Court had gone as well. Bunter, who was turned off the train at Green Hedges for travelling without a ticket, fell in with Mr. Devarney who had to walk to Greyfriars. Bunter's stub nose turned up in disdain at the sight of a man dressed in good clothes that had seen too much wear, good boots that had been soled and heeled, and gloves that had been mended.

Julian Devarney had been at Bancroft, but came to Greyfriars because his father knew one of the Governors who had arranged for reduced fees to be accepted. He was unfriendly and had a patrician aloofness, which was a perfect target for Skinner, who asked him if his name was Walker, since his father was Mr. Weary Walker. Devarney had a violent hatred for Jews, because one had swindled his father, and Monty Newland became the target for his unreasoning hatred.

Jews have had a very unfavourable roles in English Literature - one has only to think of Dorothy Sayers. Dickens atoned for Fagin in "Oliver Twist" by creating a sympathetic character in Mr. Riah for "Our Mutual Friend". Similarly, Hamilton atoned for all the Jewish moneylenders like Mr. Moses by created Julian in the Gem and Newland at Greyfriars. In this series, Newland played quite a large part: he was invited to tea in Study No. 1 (also Devarney's study), he was offered a place in the football team to play the Fourth Form, and he went on a picnic with the Famous Five.

As a general rule, Newland was only a minor character, but this series gave others a chance as well. Penfold appeared, and also Angel of the Fourth. Devarney sought out Angel as an old friend, and was cut to the quick to discover that Angel had no use for impoverished people unless they were prepared to act as toadies, like Kenney. In the end it became known that his father had been swindled by a Christian. The money was recovered, and the Devarneys returned to their ancestral home, and Julian Devarney went back to Bancroft. The series provided the perfect vehicle for displaying the patience, the generosity, and the courage of Newland, and there were even some amusing passages (including Mr. Quelch actually laughing), but the anti-semitic sentiments expressed still have the power to occasion some uneasiness to the reader.

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**FOR SALE:** VGC/Excellent. Collectors' Digest Monthly 1966-1992, £3 per year; Annuals 1970-1990, £2.50p. each. Greyfriars Book Club with slip cases, numbers 5, 7, 20,21 £10 each; 12, 13, 16,32, 37, £8 each: offers for number 1. Postage extra. No reply if sold. R.E. Andrews, 80 Greenwood Avenue, Laverstock, Salisbury, SP1 1PE.

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## THE TRIBULATIONS OF AN EDITOR

by Bill Lofts

### Part 2

H.W. Twyman had taken over the *Union Jack* in 1921 after editing the (mostly reprints) paper *The Detective Library*. He had read most of the back numbers, and liked what he saw. The character of Leon Kestrel, the Master Mummer, was certainly one attractive feature. This was also confirmed by praise in readers' letters, wanting more of these stories. Unfortunately there was a fly in the ointment. Jack Lewis was a very prolific writer, pouring out children's stories for all the coloured comics, *Rainbow*, *Tiger Tim's Weekly*, *Puck*, and so on. He also wrote for his brother, Bob Lewis, women's material in *Family Journal* and *Home Companion*. These not only paid better rates, but were far easier work than thinking up complicated plots in the detective field. Payment varied according to the circulation figures (and commission to editors) so there was no point in Twyman complaining to higher authority about lack of copy from Lewis. He was a free agent anyway, and not a member of the staff. Whilst on the subject it is also a fact that writers of women's and girls' papers were paid far better than authors of boys' literature.

I can only suggest to Derek Hinrich (Blakiana Nov. 1994) that, as there were so many long gaps in Jack Lewis's output in the Blake field of several years, he simply dropped the idea of having further episodes of further series of his character, nor did Twyman pursue it. In fact, believe it or not, whilst Lewis was also writing the odd Blake yarn with characters in the *Sexton Blake Library*, in the whole of the Second series 1925 to 1940 of 744 issues, he never penned a single original story except for one reprinted story from the First series.

Although the twenties were regarded as the golden years of the *Union Jack* by most older collectors, it is a fact that sales of the paper were slipping all the time. Twyman used to tell me of the problems he had towards the end of the paper's reign. He was hauled over the coals by the Controlling Editor many times for what was called 'sloppy' subbing. Even though this was done by a sub-editor, he had to take responsibility. By 1931 things were so bad that they were thinking of axing the *U.J.* altogether, but then someone came up with the seemingly good idea of completely modernising it, shaped in the old *Boys' Friend* size, with a buff colour. Called the *Detective Weekly* it certainly was not liked by Twyman, or indeed by the majority of the old collectors in *C.D.* circles.

From what I could gather from Twyman, he had been given the task of preparing a brand new paper for the general public, and was off the preparation of the new

*Detective Weekly* for most of this period whilst remaining officially as editor, most of the preparation being done by his sub-editor. Then the Director who had suggested the new family paper suddenly left and the new idea was axed. Rather than going back to *Detective Weekly* he decided to go free-lance, also writing true crime for the American Market. I actually helped him on this in the early sixties by covering trials at the Old Bailey, including that doctor at Eastbourne who was accused of murdering his elderly patients. He was found not guilty, which meant a loss of time to both of us!

It certainly was a surprise when Jack Lewis opened the stories in the new *Detective Weekly* when he used his now familiar pen name of 'Lewis Jackson'. Whether he, or the clever brilliant controlling Monty Haydon, thought up the theme is not known. The stories were about Sexton Blake's shady brother Nigel. Alas, he was killed off in the third story, which of course meant the discontinuation of any further series. As it happened 'Lewis Jackson' wrote only a couple more stories when the paper closed down through paper shortage in 1940, the sales then being very poor indeed. (I have a graph somewhere of its sales.)

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## ESB IN THE MAGNET

by Mark Caldicott

### Part One - 1913 - Settling In

One seemingly neglected aspect of ESB's work is his contribution to the Greyfriars saga. Bob Blythe identified 18 of these stories written over a period of four and a half years between January 1913 and August 1917. Magnet collectors appear to be united in their coldness towards sub stories, whether by ESB or anyone else. However, as a devotee of ESB's work in all its forms, I had been looking forward to reading this body of his work. The opportunity arose through the characteristically generous help of Father Geoffrey Good, who allowed me access to his treasured Magnet collection. With Geoffrey's assistance I have been able to read my way through all of these stories.

Although these are early ESB stories in the sense that they are pre-Waldo and pre-St. Franks, nevertheless by 1913, when the first stories were published, ESB's output was already quite considerable. By 1917, when the last of the stories appeared, his output of stories had become phenomenal. The Magnet sub stories were never, even at the beginning, the work of an immature Brooks. Nevertheless, I think he found the Greyfriars stories difficult to do, and there is some evidence from the seven stories contributed in the year 1913 that ESB took some time to settle in.

Let us be honest, ESB's debut in the Magnet is one of the poorest ESB tales I can remember. Entitled "The Greyfriars Pantomime" (Magnet 256, 4/1/13, GBC 91) it is a fairly crude affair.

One of ESB's strengths, perhaps his greatest gift, is to be able to conceive of a totally incredible storyline, and yet relate his yarn in such a way that the plot seems quite plausible. He has the ability to paper over the weaknesses of a storyline so successfully that we are presented with an almost flawless surface.

It is disappointing, then, that "The Greyfriars Pantomime" fails to be other than a silly plot. The Remove plan a pantomime, but their costumes are hidden. A travelling company happens to be doing the same pantomime, "Cinderella", and agree to put on a performance at Greyfriars. The Remove's scenery happens to fit the travelling panto's production. Gosling is enticed to get drunk and play the part of the leading comic. While inebriated he manages to learn the necessary lines. The manager of the show accepts Gosling without question as late replacement for the regular comic.

This, of course, is a quite ridiculous storyline; but on other occasions ESB has turned equally unconvincing plots into very enjoyable yarns. He usually does this by building up through the events of the story a plausible reason for every coincidence or strange event his plot demands, a tour de force which sweeps us on to a conclusion which does not offend our suspension of disbelief. In contrast, here the story is poorly done; in reaching the comic climax of Gosling's appearance on stage ESB pays less than usual attention to underpinning the foundations of the plot and does not perform the usual magic of making an unlikely situation entirely believable. The result is so unlike ESB's normal polished workmanship that one wonders if the story has suffered editorially.

The second story, "Fish's Fag Agency" (Magnet 257, 11/1/13, GBC 86), is better. It revolves around the idea of juniors being paid to fag for Lord Mauleverer. ESB here has conceived of a situation, and is developing its comic potential. He does it well enough, but he is not yet at home in this format. Brooks' natural strength is in inventing and developing a storyline; he is more at home in relating a series of events than in developing the ironical and comical aspects of a particular situation. The problem is, of course, that it is the latter which is the trademark of the classic Greyfriars story.

The same can be said of "Left In The Lurch" (Magnet 259, 25/1/13, GBC 86). Bunter has found a secret passage to the school's larder and steals food. Trotter is thought to be guilty, is sacked, and is threatened with poverty. Bunter knows of Trotter's plight but does not own up. Bunter's secret is discovered and Trotter is reinstated and Bunter escapes with a flogging because "to a boy who has such a fondness for food as you have the offence is not so serious", according to Doctor Locke. the unforgivable inequity between the treatment of Trotter and the treatment of Bunter for the same offence (made worse in Bunter's case by his lack of consideration for the innocent) annoyed me, but then perhaps this is not a weakness in the story but a pointer to the unacceptable face of the class system in operation in our public schools at that time.

The first three stories were, to be honest, not a rewarding read. However, my disappointment was not to last, for "Harry Wharton's & Co's Rescue" (Magnet 260, 1/2/13, GBC 86) was a pleasant surprise. Harry Wharton plans to rent a shooting-box in Friardale Wood to use as a base for scouting activities. Vernon-Smith beats him to it and rents the shooting-box for more questionable activities. Bill, a tramp, known as the Bermondsey Babe, plays a key role in this yarn, in which the shooting-box eventually is burned down during an altercation between the scouts and the bounders.

The reason for the success of this story is probably that the action takes place away from Greyfriars, and consists of a sequence of events rather than the development of a situation. Here he has adapted a Greyfriars tale to the typical E.S. Brooks approach, the result being an effort well worth reading.

"Friars V. Saints" (Magnet 273, 3/5/13, GBC 88) continues ESB's success in adapting Magnet stories to his own style. Again the action is taken out of Greyfriars, and concerns the visit of the Greyfriars cricket team to St. Jim's. The idea of mixing the characters of two different Amalgamated Press publications into a single story is, of course, another typical ESB ploy. Furthermore it should be noted that ESB contributed substitute stories to the Gem long before he turned his hand to the Magnet, and would already be quite familiar with the characters of St. Jim's.

The story concerns the efforts of Bunter and Vernon-Smith to reduce the number of Greyfriars team members during the journey to St. Jim's in order that they, Bunter and the Bounder, should gain a place in the team. The second phase of the story concerns the match itself, and Bunter's amazing success as a fielder. Like "Harry Wharton & Co's Rescue", this story is much more typical of ESB, and worth a read.

The turning point in ESB's "settling in" period is "Self Denial Week At Greyfriars" Magnet 287, 9/8/13, GBC 64). ESB shows us here that he is craftsman with the skills to adapt to the alien environment of the Magnet story. The story is a breakthrough in ESB's Magnet writing, for after a typical Brooks-type action opening, culminating in a car accident which injures Thompson, the chauffeur of Mauly's uncle Sir Reginald Brooke, ESB presents a very creditable "situation" story. Sir Reginald



In less than ten seconds the eight juniors were struggling round the room in a fierce hand-to-hand fight. Harry Wharton hit out fiercely at Vernon-Smith, and the Bounder tottered and collided with the table. For a second the lamp swayed, and then, with a splintering crash, it fell clattering to the floor. "Look out!" yelled Hazeldene in alarm.—(See Chapter 13.)

decides Friardale should have a hospital and Harry Wharton decides that Study 1 will raise money for a bed through a Salvation Army-type self-denial week. Peter Todd decides that Study 7, including Bunter, will join in. There is an excellent comic scene when Bunter elbows in on Sir Reginald's conducted tour of Greyfriars, and further adventures when Bunter's postal-order actually arrives! In this enjoyable story, Brooks is beginning to handle the classic Greyfriars format more comfortably.

Proof that he is more at home now with the Greyfriars story can be seen in "Up Against It" (Magnet 291, 8/9/13, GBC 65). The high jinks of the Remove corridor are to be curbed by the installation of a sixth former in a refurbished study. This does not go down at all well with the Harry Wharton & Co, who intend to prevent Wilson taking up occupancy. Their first plan fails, for Mr. Prout's response to their "redecorating" of the sixth former's new study is to evict Wharton and chums from Study 1 and install Wilson there. However the Removites are not defeated, and after several rounds of battle they are victorious. This story, set entirely in the Remove corridor, shows that ESB has learned to entertain whilst remaining within the bounds of Greyfriars.

1913 was the year of ESB's "apprenticeship" at Greyfriar's. It seems to have taken him a few months to get to grips with the format of the stories, but by the end of his first he seems to have mastered the Magnet. The stories have become more assured, better crafted, and much more readable.

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## ABOUT TURN

by Geoff Lardner

The following sentences each contain a name (Greyfriars, St. Jim's or Rookwood) written backwards. Each sentence is also appropriate to the character it includes.

Example: His constant cry is: "You must HELP ME to beat the Remove." (Temple)

1. His cooking's good but you'll get no pudding.
2. Count the spoons after he's visited you.
3. Attends too many forbidden race meetings.
4. Given to making derogatory remarks.
5. Will go to great lengths if he thinks there's a profit to be made.
6. Makes short work of sixpennyworth of doughnuts.
7. Often called dotty but in reality gentle and studios.
8. A great support to his friend, a reformed evil character.
9. Has been known to wander over towards the black sheep.
10. Definitely bars Moderns.

(Answers Next Month)

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Much of what I can remember of my reading as a child falls into the period which is of interest to Mark Taha. I would have joined the Darlington library in 1939 and it saw me a regular weekly visitor into adulthood. My move from the children's to the adults' library was an event that occurred in 1943 or 1944.

In the early years I can remember searching and better searching for William and for Biggles. The W.E. Johns books were much harder to come by. Friends swore by the Westerman's but their adventures never appealed - I was happier with Arthur Ransome's Lakeland stories, "The Big Six", "Peter Duck" and "Swallows and Amazons" the best remembered. I used to spend a lot of time in the library with Arthur Mee's detailed and interesting Encyclopaedias, eschewing the wild life items for the details of "the way things worked".

Perhaps the strongest influence on me were Herbert Strang's historical adventures. Three stand out. "The Adventures of Dick Trevanion", "Young Jack" and - best of all - "True as Steel" which was a set of linked stories illustrated by one of the Brocks. It was the Brock illustrations, together with the line drawings in Radio Times, that sent me constantly looking for new and different illustrators. The interest in line drawings stays with me all these years later.

By the end of the war it was the "big" library that I frequented on a regular basis. My historical predilections were now satisfied by the likes of Jean Plaidy. The delight in adventure now satisfied by detective and two-fisted hero tales - Berkeley Gray's Norman Conquest for one. The detecting was initially satisfied by Victor Gunn. Little did I know that they were the same writer - spilling out, as it were - from schoolboy stories. The switch to the American "hardboiled" school was quickly effected (via Bulldog Drummond and Denis Wheatley and Peter Cheyney's droll Lemmy Caution). Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler were top of my lists.

What I find interesting now is the quality and the quantity of the reading materials sucked up by one so tender and young. No adaptations, no novelisations, no books of the filmisations here. Just books - written without compromise.

Switching to earlier influences. "The Dandy" and "The Beano" - it almost goes without saying! I must also have taken Thomson's "The Magic" comic because I distinctly remember the joy of reading (and seeing) Peter Piper and his statue enlivening pan pipes. The pictures were by the great Dudley D. Watkins.

Later it was "The Wizard" and "The Hotspur" (just about the time of the switch to the main library). "The Rover" and "The Adventure" were less regularly consumed. From the Thomson papers was built up a further interest in line drawings and I was particularly fascinated by the sporting drawings of Fred Sturrock.

When I started taking "The Wizard" I think that the only "Amalgamated/Fleetway" comics available were "The Champion" and "The Girl's Crystal".

The boys' paper did not appeal somehow. On the other hand "The Girls' Crystal" hit the spot. Perhaps it was the alien worlds of "The Hooded Four", or Five, or Six that did appeal. Maybe it was "The Secret Societies" that seemed to populate schools for girls that gave me a frisson of excitement not to be found elsewhere. Who knows?

From whither or where I actually got the "Girls' Crystal" I know not - but get it I did on an irregular basis.

Going further back I can remember (even more vividly) the joy I got from The Daily Express Books for Boys and Girls. 1936 was the only year that I did not have this

annual. Too young? Then - a little later - probably 1941 - I was introduced to "The Favourite Wonder Book" from Odhams. What a treasure, still kept by my side even into old age! It was this book that most informed and formed me, both then and later. Thank you Auntie Mim - for it was she who bought it for me.

### From Leslie Laskey:

In the January C.D. Mark Taha raised the question of what "MAGNET" readers took to reading when the paper closed down in May 1940. I found no real substitute for the "MAGNET". I took the "HOTSPUR" for, perhaps, eighteen months. Even at that time I did not find the stories of Red Circle School even approaching the standard of Frank Richards' stories. While they were entertaining, they were not memorable. The Greyfriars stories were both entertaining and memorable. I occasionally bought the "CHAMPION" or one of the other D.C. Thomson papers - depending on current cash resources! When I eventually stopped the "HOTSPUR" I switched my attentions to Penguin books which then cost six (old) pence per volume.

I also read most of my "MAGNETS" and "GEMS" for the second time.

### From Clarice Harding:

I was interested in the question "What did we read after our storypapers ceased to exist?" Surprisingly, I took a great interest in the classics! Dickens mainly and Sir Walter Scott, and then needing lighter reading, Jeffrey Farnol and then back to any of the main Schoolgirl writers: Angela Brazil, Ethel Talbot, Elsie J. Oxenham, etc. As a magazine I liked *Weldon's Home Journal*. What an assortment, but nothing really took the place of our weekly papers until the wonderful Collectors' Digest opened it all up again, thereby earning our eternal thanks.

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## YESTERYEAR

by Ted Baldock

Memory, the warder of the brain.

*Macbeth*

When Charles Hamilton laid down his pen - or rather - when he ceased to tap the keys of his Remington, something occurred in the world of the school story. It was the ending of an era, the termination of a way of life for countless readers and admirers.

For those of us who cared about such things it was little short of catastrophic. It was our carefully constructed world which was passing and we saw, with dismay, the possibility of many ideals being shattered. Such sentiments were, I imagine, reflected in several far corners of the world.

For the greater part of half a century his writings had become established as a way of life depicting for us a world in which we could, and did, happily participate week by week. Greyfriars, St. Jim's and, to a lesser degree, Rookwood were very real educational establishments in the minds of countless young people in the pre-war era.

Time, that elusive element which wreaks such havoc with mankind is not applicable to the mythical world of Greyfriars, the occupants of which are oblivious to the rumblings and upheavals in the outer world. Their particular forte to exist in limbo would, it seems, be no unhappy destiny. Eternal youth, the dream of the sages throughout the centuries is theirs and we are able to share this happy fate.

Our world was a quiet and tranquil place. In reality crises *did* occur frequently. Regimes and governments *did* fall, in fact they appeared to be toppling at an alarming

rate in all directions in those latter days of the 'thirties. To us it signified little in our secure and sunlit world of Greyfriars - until the unbelievable happened.

It has been said that we do not truly value a treasure until it is taken from us. This sober fact was borne upon us very poignantly when the source of our world of Greyfriars 'folded' in 1940. We were about to enter a dark age, and it was obvious that we should need all the courage and illumination we could muster. The portents were not auspicious.

Then came a brief afterglow of glory as Frank Richards rose from the chaos, and in traditional Greyfriars style 'played on'. The result was a wonderful series of book length stories of the Greyfriars fellows to whom, we thought, we had bidden farewell. Could we have glimpsed the future in those dark days and seen the glorious renaissance of the old paper through the sterling work of Howard Baker, life would have taken on a distinctly brighter hue.

Gibbon has told us that - "History .....is indeed, little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind." With the greatest respect I would humbly suggest that it is also the record of jolly and prosperous times, of laughter, adventure and great achievement, and studded with the works of enduring literature, it also records that typically British phenomenon - the Public School and its story, of which Charles Hamilton was so able an exponent.

Other days, other ways,  
Other dawns than these,  
Time confuses, memory sways  
    Like a psalm in the breeze.  
Sure, it was but yesterday  
    How fresh the memory seems,  
When Greyfriars fellows held the stage,  
    When Sark in summer gleamed.  
But I'm told t'was long ago  
    How dim in misty time  
Yet the aura holds a glow  
    Of that dear morning clime.

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**FOR SALE:** H.BAKER MAGNET Vols., GBC. Vols. single unbound magnets - plus many other books related to the Hobby. List too large to detail here. S.A.E. will bring full details. John Geal, 11 Cotswold Road, Hampton, Middx. TW12 3JQ.

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**WANTED:** ENID BLYTON, W.E. JOHNS, CROMPTON. First editions in wrappers and ALL ephemera related to these authors. ANY original artwork related to Bunter, Blyton, Biggles, Eagle or other British comics and boys papers. ALL Boys Friend Libraries by W.E. Johns and Rochester. Many "Thriller" issues and first editions in wrappers by Charteris required. NORMAN WRIGHT, 60 Eastbury Road, Watford, WD1 4JL. Tel. 0923 232383.

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## Part 9      The Red Triangles and the Black Diamonds

The saga of these two geometric groups does not really qualify for inclusion in a criminal category and only scrapes in because a letter belonging to Miss Bullivant containing £250 was taken, principally to discredit Barbara Redfern, therefore technically a theft took place. Otherwise this long series differed a lot from the other two major series featuring secret societies in that the Triangles and Diamonds stories were inspired simply by schoolgirl spite and the teenage desire for a power which it is not always able to handle once it is achieved, whereas the other two series dealt with strong motives of justice in the face of tyranny and adult greed.

The first story in the Triangles series coincides with the early weeks at Cliff House of the Hon. Beatrice Beverley, who soon collected her coterie of fawning snobs, who considered that the Hon. Beatrice was far better suited to be Lower School Captain than Barbara Redfern. The expected visit of an old girl who is now a famous actress sets in motion the formation of the Red Triangles Secret Society and their vendetta against Babs. Any reader looking forward to dark and dire mystery in the old crypt, cloaked and hooded figures dissolving into secret panels and inspiring delightful shudders was doomed to disappointment. The Triangles' imagination does not progress much beyond not very cryptic messages on cards and a programme of destruction.

Babs is chosen to present a bouquet to the actress at a welcoming ceremony, for which she buys a new dress, white, as stipulated by Miss Primrose, which is slashed to ribbons by the Triangles. Fortunately for Babs the actress is charmed by a letter of welcome Babs has written to her and sends Babs a dress which arrives providently at the last moment. Thwarted, the Triangles send another card telling Babs she must resign her captaincy, or else. Babs, of course is undaunted by this somewhat inept society of plotters and they turn their attention to Clara Trevlyn, who is no more likely to be scared off than Babs. But she is Junior Games Captain, and has been picked to play in the Senior Eleven, a great honour, all of which should belong to the Hon. Beatrice Beverley, or so the Triangles consider.

This second story tends to depend on rather more coincidences than usual. Bessie Bunter has taken up photography, and just happens to be in the vicinity of the ranger's hut in Friardale Woods at the time Sarah Harrigan is passing. This is precisely when Clara is on her way to play in the senior match, having broken detention to do so, and to complete the unlikely gathering of a quartet the fourth player, one of the Triangles is also passing in time to witness this and padlock Sarah in the hut, thereby gaining the advantage of being able to blackmail Clara into resigning her games captaincy, or else. But that wizard of the camera shutter, probably aiming to snap something quite different, catches the culprit in the act of locking the hut door, a culprit who is identifiable to the Chums, if not at that point to the reader, and enables the Chums to turn the tables once more.

By this time the girls are becoming suspicious of Beatrice and sure that she and probably her main cronies, Lydia Crossendale and Freda Ferrier, could be the girls masquerading as the Red Triangles. However, by the third story there is still doubt, and the girl in the white mack on Bessie's snapshot seems to have been forgotten when Celeste Margesson of the yacht *Gloriana* decides to throw a party before she and her grandfather set sail again, and she invites the entire Fourth aboard. Miss Primrose is understandably reluctant to give her consent. The Fourth have amassed so many black

marks, lines and detentions of late that they really do not deserve such a treat. She promises to relent provided they can survive for a week without a single reprimand. A tall order, indeed, with the Triangles playing havoc. And now Miss Charmant is called away for a few days. For the Fourth it couldn't been at a worse time, though for the readers it couldn't have been at a better, story conflict-wise, for Miss Bullivant is to take over the Fourth.

*The* **SECRET SOCIETY**  
*Against* **BABS & CO** *by Hilda Richards*



**4<sup>D</sup>**  
7-9-39

A FINE STORY  
of the  
early  
**ADVENTURES**  
of the **FAMOUS**  
**CHUMS of CLIFF**  
**HOUSE SCHOOL**

*The* **SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY N°696**

This lady is a terror at the best of times, and at the moment she is desperately worried about her young brother Grant, who is probably the one person in the world who has found the soft spot in the formidable mistress's armour. He is ill, and she is desperately awaiting payment of a legacy so that she can send him abroad to get well. When the letter with the money arrives it finds its way into the possession of the Triangles who are having another assault on Babs. However, Bessie's greed saves the day when she is feeding her face on a purloined fruitcake and overhears a meeting in the museum of the

Triangles. With this knowledge Babs succeeds in infiltrating the next meeting and regaining Miss Bullivant's lost letter.

The Bull has a soft spot for Babs (though she rarely shows it!) and has not forgotten how Babs had helped her when Grant had been unjustly imprisoned and Nancy Bell had betrayed him. So once again Babs is in the rare situation of providing a sympathetic ear for Miss Bullivant's troubles, her joy at the restoration of her letter and money, and forgiveness for the misdeeds of which Babs had been accused. Miss Bullivant is no fool and is suspicious that something in the nature of an illicit secret society is at work in the school, and she also suspects that Babs knows more than she is prepared to admit. So again the Triangles are thwarted.

The fourth story concerns the Cliff House magazine. This provides an ideal peg on which to hang trouble and found the basis for the success of the Triangles at long last.

Doris Redfern, Barbara's young sister, apparently pens an article which is not exactly flattering to the august Miss Primrose. As a result, Doris will certainly face expulsion unless every single copy of the magazine can be traced and got back before authority spots it. A great paper chase ensues while Doris vehemently denies writing the article in the format in which it has been printed. But one copy eludes the search. It is, naturally, in the hands of the Triangles. At last they have triumphed. After battling against them for so long Babs has to yield to the Society's demands and resign her captaincy, otherwise her sister will be expelled.

An election is held and Beatrice wins, and now the power behind the Triangles is identified as Marcia Loftus.

Almost immediately she clashes with Beatrice, who is now known to be innocent of the havoc caused by the Triangles. She had met the cronies at a Christmas party and had not taken seriously their suggestions of forming a secret society at school. But now Marcia wants her reward for effecting Beatrice's election to the captaincy. By this time Beatrice has realised what snobs and toadies her hangers-on are and refuses to have anything to do with them. Meanwhile, Babs and the Chums have decided that enough is enough and formed their own secret society, The Black Diamonds, to fight the Triangles.

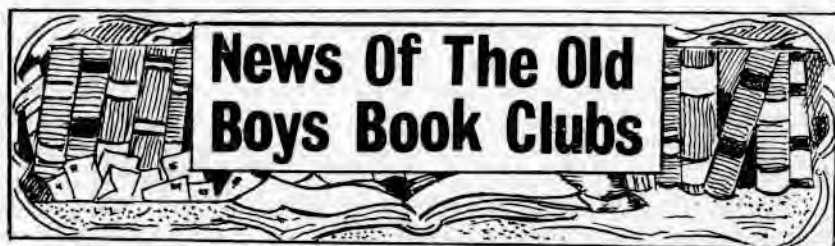
Believing that Beatrice is the leader of the Triangles, they force her to stand trial, while Beatrice herself leaps to the conclusion that Marcia has begun the Black Diamonds. This final story of the series is the most skilfully plotted as friend suspects friend and foes fall out during the confusion. Beatrice gets caught in the crossfire--- and a bucket of whitewash ---even as she discovers that being captain is not nearly as much fun and more hard work than she had imagined. But she is delighted when Babs, having realised that Beatrice is innocent of complicity, is prepared to help her, and Beatrice discovers that she genuinely wants to be friends with Babs & Co. The grand finale of the series starts with the Bull finding an insulting Black Diamond card on her desk, sent of course by the Triangles. Beatrice, as form captain, is hauled up to account for this and expected to cooperate with authority. This she refuses to do and later that night follows Marcia, who is bound on a mission of further destruction, intended to wreak revenge on Beatrice. It misfires, and in a dramatic climax Babs forces Marcia to confess and also challenges her cronies, unaware that there is an unseen listener, none other than the Bull.

This final vindictive prank is Marcia's swan song. She is expelled, Lydia goes into solitary confinement, a great deal of lines, gratings and detentions are issued, and the two secret societies are abolished. Beatrice has proved herself true blue and she will remain captain until the end of the term, with Babs' full blessing.

Although this series ends with Beatrice accepted as a sterling character in a later series she does not emerge as a girl with quite such a shining halo. It is also interesting to note the construction of this longer series, in that each story is genuinely complete, as claimed, yet the main theme developed from week to week and maintained the suspense. Sadly the story featuring Clara Trevlyn was lifted out completely for the edited version which was reprinted in the SCHOOLGIRLS OWN LIBRARY of September 1939.

THE SCHOOLGIRL 288-292 Feb 2nd - March 2nd 1935  
THE SCHOOLGIRLS OWN LIBRARY 7.9.1939 THE SECRET SOCIETY AGAINST  
BABS & CO by HILDA RICHARDS No. 696.

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### NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

We had all been sad to hear at our previous meeting of the death of Peter Plowman: Peter had been one of our members a few years ago until ill health prevented his visiting us. Our club was well represented at the funeral, our own secretary Rev. Geoffrey Good leading the service and Chairman Joan reading the lesson. Peter had generously left to the club his collection of books on various topics.

Our guest speaker was Russell Dever, paying a return visit to talk about modern day children's book publishing. Russell explained how it all started in 1477 when there was a "revolution", for Caxton introduced his printing process. For the first time, books could be printed in bulk. Generally speaking this remained the same in principle with regard to publishing and printing right up to 1971 when the "floppy disc", albeit large, came into being. Russell indicated that the printed word is going through another revolution, with the advent of computers and the ability to produce 'multi-media' compact discs. It was almost a fearful prospect, but members felt that books would not be extinct completely: there would always be a demand for facsimiles for a start giving a glimpse into the past. Interesting to note was that SPCK was the third oldest publisher in the country and of course, we meet on their premises each month. An excellent presentation from our guest speaker.

Chris Scholey then read us a very topical and atmospheric piece from an Alison Uttley anthology concerning the delights of sledging, playing in the snow and building snowmen.

Our next meeting will be on 11th March with our Club Dinner on the evening of 18th March, The April meeting will be on the 8th.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

### CAMBRIDGE CLUB

For our February Meeting we met at the Cherry Hinton, Cambridge house of Adrian Perkins.

After a short business meeting, the afternoon's programme began with a quiz from Paul Wilkins. This consisted of 25 questions concerning the American West in fact and fiction. Paul cleverly incorporated several film stills amongst this otherwise verbally-delivered "identification" brain-teaser.

Later Keith Hodgkinson continued his annual look at Science Fiction in the Cinema. Part 9 of this fascinating theme collection from the SF cult film genre included excerpts from "This Island Earth" (1955), "2010" (1984), "Supergirl" (a female version of "Superman" made in 1984) and the 1956 Japanese effort "Rodan". A splendid range of flying monsters, flying saucers and humanoid aliens were paraded before us.

ADRIAN PERKINS

### LONDON OLD BOYS BOOK CLUB

Cliff Maddock was the guest meeting at the February meeting at the Chingford Horticultural Society Hall. He based his talk on the literature associated with meccano and Hornby trains, bringing along a large number of catalogues, booklets and shop advertisements for members to peruse.

Ray Hopkins talked about his "Desert Island Books", these being; - David and Destiny by Ian Hay, The Good Companions by J.B. Priestley and a series from The Gem of 1914, A False Tom Merry.

Les Rowley read another instalment of his amusing Greyfriars story.

The March meeting will be on Sunday, 12th March at the home of Peter and Dorothy Mahony, 12 Riefield Road, Eltham, 081-850 9316. Jenny Schofield will be speaking about W.E. John's. The April meeting will be on Sunday, 9th April at the Secretary's home in Loughton. Graham Bruton will be talking about Max Miller and Mary Cadogan will be speaking about working at the BBC. Visitors are most welcome to attend.

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**Part 2.**

Another Indian made his first appearance in the Gem (No. 297, October, 1913). This was Koumi Rao, the Jam of Bundelpore. He was as unlike 'Inky' as chalk from cheese. Proud, vain, autocratic - Rao harboured a burning resentment towards Tom Merry. General Merry, Tom's father, had suppressed the excesses of Koumi's father in Bundelpore. Though the General was now dead, Rao concentrated his family's animosity on Tom. On being introduced he refused to shake Tom's hand and was excessively rude to him. Later, they were to come to blows.

Fortunately for the peace and quiet of St. Jim's, Rao was placed in the New House. George Figgins took on the task of 'civilising' the Jam's wilder traits - without much initial success. Gore, ever-ready for trouble, took up Tom Merry's cause - he disapproved of Tom's tolerant attitude to the foreigner's rude behaviour! Being Gore, he addressed Rao as 'the nigger' (he presumably hadn't learned from his experiences with Harry Noble) and Koumi slapped his face. A fight was the natural outcome. Despite disdaining to fight with 'a dog below his rank'. Rao was persuaded to don the gloves. Though considerably outweighed, the Indian proved too fast for the lumbering bully. His swift punching overwhelmed the unhappy Gore - to the great surprise of the onlookers.

With his appetite whetted, Rao challenged Tom Merry, throwing in some gratuitous insults for bad measure. The scrap took place in the Old Barn. Rao tried to avoid using gloves: Figgins had to insist. Early on, Rao got lucky and knocked Tom down; then had to be restrained from hitting his fallen opponent. Tom recovered and drew blood from Koumi's nose: the Tom promptly lost his temper. From then on, it was one-way traffic: Tom gave him a thorough hiding. Eventually, Rao discarded the gloves and flew at Tom, clawing and scratching. He had to be restrained and his stock with the juniors fell to Zero.

Burning with resentment, Rao later attacked Tom with a knife. Tom flattened him and took the knife away, but made it clear that the murderous assault would have to be reported. On his way back to St. Jim's, Tom spotted a stealthy Hindu in the woods. He retraced his steps and was in time to save Koumi Rao from an assassination attempt. Even then, he had difficulty in dissuading the Jam from slitting the would-be assassin's throat. The villain escaped, but Rao, grateful for Tom's intervention, completely changed his attitude. From then onwards Tom was 'his friend for life or death!'

The extremes of passion in Koumi Rao were brilliantly portrayed in this fine story. Another interesting feature was the Jam's fluent English. No 'Inky English' from him! The "Never the twain shall meet" theme was starkly conveyed - an apparently anglicised Indian, harbouring resentment and jealousy towards the 'Raj'. Meaty stuff, and the Gem was all the better for it - particularly as Tom Merry's returning of good for evil had a reforming effect on Rao.

The reform was not total, however. On Guy Fawkes day, Rao's temper broke out again. Crooke proposed making an effigy of the Jam: Koumi believed him and lost his rag. Once again, there was wild talk of 'killing'; Figgins & Co. pretended him with a 'dummy' knife. Rao made a fool of himself and aroused the resentment of the 'Smart Set'. Gore and Levison were caned for ragging him. At Levison's instigation, Gore laid wait for Mr. Ratcliff in the dark. He flung a stone and hit Crooke by mistake: Rao was blamed and no one believed his protests of innocence. He was placed in the

punishment-room, but escaped (with Fatty Wynn's help); then he blundered into the fireworks celebrations and was pressed into service as 'Guy'. Another display of frenzied range led to further ragging. Eventually, Gore owned up and Rao was relieved - much chastened.

After that, he faded into the background. There was a brief episode when he bought his way into the Junior XI. Funds were needed for charity; a place in the team was auctioned to the highest bidder. Rao acquitted himself well. He probably could have had a permanent cricket place, but his lordly views made him an unwilling subordinate. Tom Merry was never one to pick players who would not 'play for the team'.

The only other 'Jam' yarn was "Loyal and True" (a World War I curiosity; Gem 373, 1915). Rao and his diplomatic retinue treated with the Germans to arrange for the expulsion of the British from Bundelapore. As the story unwound, Rao became uneasy in conscience and eventually rejected the deal at great risk to himself. His acceptance of British values was gradual and far from complete: there were probably several more good yarns in him if Hamilton had cared to develop the character. Even so, as a vivid contrast to 'Inky', the Jam occupies a unique place in the Hamilton collection.

About a year later (Magnet 343, September 1914), Sampson Quincy Iffley Field, from Australia came to Greyfriars. Squiff was 'a cool card'. He was reading 'Cricket for Beginners' on the train when the Famous Five encountered him. Bob Cherry, who could be boisterously irritating at times, promptly decided that Field must be a duffer at the game. (Cherry probably never read the Laws of Cricket in his life; yet he would have been very piqued if anyone suggested that he could not 'play'.) Squiff, needled by their unfounded assumptions, played up to the Famous Five's misapprehensions and gave an appallingly incompetent display at cricket practice. Rejected by the Remove, he calmly toddled off to Courtfield and teamed up with Trumper & Co. When Courtfield played Greyfriars. Squiff scored runs and took wickets galore. The Remove were well beaten - and serve them right! (Dick Redfern had pulled the same stunt at St. Jim's two years earlier - Gem 218, 1912 - but had wangled his way into the Saints' XI, thus avoiding lowering his own school's colours.) The redoubtable Field was welcomed into the Remove side thereafter, and proved to be a tower of strength.

A sideline to this main theme involved a clash with Bolsover major. In a repeat of the Noble versus Gore fracas, Squiff gave the burly Bolsover a drubbing. This, plus his cool self-possession - and his nationality! - should have warned Wharton & Co. that he was unlikely to be a poor cricketer. Not for the first time, smug self-complacency had embarrassed Greyfriars' leading lights.

With a new-found respect for the Australian, the Famous Five took him into their Co. Squiff's identity was unknown at Highcliffe and an audacious 'rag' on Ponsonby & Co. was the outcome. The Australian presented himself at Highcliffe as a 'new boy' (an expected arrival had been delayed and Squiff calmly took his place!). Ponsonby & Co. had a terrible time, with Squiff encouraging Smithson and other lesser specimens to revolt against the overbearing 'Knuts'. He gave Monson major (a Fifth Former) a thrashing and even laid into Mr. Mobbs with a cane! Having made Highcliffe too hot to hold him, he vanished from the scene. Of course, Nemesis overtook him later and Dr. Locke gave him a flogging. Nevertheless, it was a great score over Highcliffe.

Shortly afterwards, Johnny Bull left Greyfriars - ostensibly on a trip to Australia. I suspect that Hamilton may have tired of the rather lack-lustre Bull and wanted to discard him in favour of the more flamboyant field. Anyway, Squiff became a regular

member of the Co. - and the stories took on an extra zip. Bull returned, however, and the Australian dropped into a supporting role, rather like Noble of St. Jim's .

There was one further burst of 'stardom' for Squiff. During Harry Wharton's second downfall (Magnets 1285-96. 1932), Field was elected Remove Skipper. He did an effective job, but was quickly replaced when Wharton came back into favour. A theme that could have been developed (with plenty of fireworks) would have been rivalry between Squiff and Wharton. The Australian's energy, decency and sporting prowess would have made him a more dangerous rival than Smithy. A rift could have occurred over Wharton's occasional preference for Hazeldene as goal-keeper for the Remove XI. It's surprising that such a plot didn't occur to Hamilton. As a result, an entertaining character faded into the background.

In Magnet 432 (May 1916) Piet Delarey was introduced by John Nix Pentelow (a substitute story). Hamilton never adopted the character, but he seized the idea. On the principle of anything Pentelow could do Hamilton could do better, he introduced not one but two South Africans to his collection. In August 1916 (Gem 446) Sidney Clive joined St. Jim's: a month later (Boys' Friend 798) Dick Van Ryn appeared - the first of Rookwood's colonials.

Clive, quiet and serious, made his mark quickly. On his first day he foiled a rag by the Grammarians. Later, he was manhandled in a House row and dotted the great Figgins on the nose. A challenge was issued by Figgins and Clive licked the New House skipper in a stand-up fight. Then he helped to expose a plot by Sefton, the New House prefect, to disgrace Kildare. Sefton was expelled.

After this action-packed beginning Clive became involved with Ernest Levison. This was Levison's 'reform' period - a saga of 'new leaves' and much back-sliding. Eventually, Levison made good and Clive gave him loyal, but not indulgent, support. They were established as a duo just in time for the advent of Ralph Reckness Cardew. The duo became a trio, with Levison, like many reformed characters, rather overdoing the serious-minded approach to life and Cardew kicking over the traces - the old Levison role.

Clive tended to be less patient with Cardew than Levison was. This attitude came to a head when Cardew 'cut loose' at Tickey Topp's roulette club (Gem 562). Clive and Levison visited the club - with a chopper! The South African's high-handed demolition of the roulette wheel effectively ended Cardew's temptation. The three remained friends, but Clive never seemed entirely satisfied with the volatile Cardew. However, it was this association which kept Clive in the forefront of St. Jim's stories for quite a long period. Without his two fascinating study mates, Clive would have become a nonentity.

(To be Continued)

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**Wanted: Dictionary of "British Illustrators"  
/Peppin and Micklethwaite.**

**"This was Toscanini"/Antek & Hupka**

**Donald Campbell,  
Woodlawn Cottage, Apperley Lane,  
Apperley Bridge, BD10 0PH  
0532.505941**



**From John Geal, Hampton:** Further to Mark Taha, in Jan. C.D., wondering whether C. Hamilton had a grudge against solicitors, in most of his stories, solicitors were depicted as seedy, shifty individuals. The same prejudice was woven into stories. I quote - From Magnet No. 958:-

'Bunter was prattling on, whilst P. Todd was trying to study his Legal Books.

"Dry up and let me get to work."

"Oh, chuck that rot!" said Bunter contemptuously. "I don't believe the Head would let you, if he knew. Learning how to make out that black's white, and white's black. Yah!"

Peter Todd glared. Peter, as the son of a solicitor, intended to follow some day in the parental footsteps. But Bunter's description of legal practice was not Peter's idea of it at all. Peter was young yet.<sup>1</sup>

**From Donald Campbell, Apperley Bridge, Yorks:** Loved Brian Doyle's Paul Temple piece in CD Annual - it put all kinds of things into a fresh perspective for me. Perhaps the most rewarding item was the confirmation that my memory of Rimsky-Korsakov as Paul and Steve's signature tune was not false - even though I must have been listening to the episodes at age 5 to 6! Solved the problem of Marjorie Westbury NOT being Steve to the Carl Bernard Paul - even though she personally claimed continuity of playing the character from 1938 onwards. Thank you Brian.

**From Bill Lofts, London:** In answer to Derek Hinrich, Dr. Fu Manchu, first appeared in a series in Story Teller in October 1912, and in 1913 in book form. As Wu Ling did not appear in U.J. till 1913 the former must be the first. I would venture to suggest that the greatest detective of disguise was Hamilton Cleek in 1910 in a series of books by Thomas W. Hanshew with such titles as 'The Man with 40 faces' etc. I hope to deal with this in the other detective series.

## NEWS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL BIGGLES ASSOCIATION

**From Mrs. Marvel M. Wagenaar-Wilm, vice president.** Johan Wagenaarstraat 61, 1443 LR Pumerend, The Netherlands.

British Biggles enthusiasts will be familiar with the 1993 Picture-Strip Novel "Spitfire Parade" by Random House Children's Books, London. It was originally published in Brussels by Claude Lefrancq Emissions in Dutch as well as in French. The picture-strips by Lefrancq, six up to now, are very beautifully drawn by Francis Bergèse (1-4, 6) and Eric Loutte (5). They are in Dutch and French:

1 De gele zwann/Le cygne jaune - 1990

GB: based on the book Sgt. Bigglesworth CID

2 Piraten van de Zuidpool/Les pirates du Pôle Sud - 1991

GB: based on the book Biggles' second case

- 3 Het bal van de Spitfire/Le bal des Spitfire - 1992  
GB: based on part of the book Spitfire Parade
- 4 De slag om Engeland /La bataille d'Angleterre - 1993  
GB: (new) historical scenario by Bernard Asso about the Battle of Britain
- 5 De vlucht van de Wallenstein/Le vol du Wallenstein - 1994  
GB: (new) historical scenario by Michel Oleffe
- 6 Squadron Biggles (Het bal van de Spitfire II)/ Squadron Biggles - 1994  
GB: based on the rest of the book Spitfire Parade

In Germany three Lefrancq picture-strip books were published by Comic Plus, Hamburg as:

- Der gelbe Schwan 1992
- Piraten im Eismeer 1992
- Der Tanz der Spitfires 1993

Further information about these books or about the I.B.A. is available from the I.B.A. (address on page 22)

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**(Editor's Note:** George Beal and Brian Doyle have sent detailed replies to Ernest Holman's Blue Danube query.)

**From George Beal:**

#### SONG OF THE DANUBE

May I attempt to answer Ernest Holman's query in your February issue? Something called *Blue Danube Dream* was sung in the 1940 Universal musical film *Spring Parade* by - I think - Deanna Durbin. The music was that of the original by Johann Strauss the Younger, with words added by the well-known lyricist Gus Kahn, of *Yes Sir, That's My Baby* fame. I haven't a copy of the lyric, but I am fairly sure that this is the version which Ernest Holman remembers.

However, there are other contenders. One is *Blame It On the Danube*, by Harry Akst and Frank Loesser, from the 1937 RKO film (not a musical) *Fight for Your Lady*, and another is *Blue Danube Blues*, with words by Anne Caldwell and music by Jerome Kern, from the 1921 stage musical *Good Morning Dearie*. Both are less likely, I think.

If I may digress, many people are unaware that there were original words to the piece - in German, of course. Johann Strauss (the Younger, and more famous) wrote the music in 1865, but gave it no name. Words were written to this by the Austrian poet, Josef Weyl, and the item was performed almost exactly 128 years ago, on 15th February, 1867. The title itself, An der Schönen, Blauen Donau, is a quotation from a poem by Karl Isidor Beck, and was added afterwards. In other words, Strauss himself never called his work *The Blue Danube!* From this one can see that the full title in English should be *By the Beautiful Blue Danube*.

**From Brian Doyle:** Ernest Holman (C.D. February) queries the words he recalls from the 'song version' of "The Blue Danube" and requests further information about it.

Johann Strauss the Younger wrote this famous waltz - the most popular of all his 400 waltzes - in 1867. It was first played in February of that year in Vienna, with a choir singing words to it written by one Josef Weyl, the local Commissioner of Police - words which were of a political nature and which were controversial, much-criticised

and rather bad. New words were later written by Franz von Gerneth. The piece had its British premiere at Covent Garden, London, conducted by the composer in 1867.

There have apparently been several English versions of the lyrics, and the one quoted by Mr. Holman is by Charles Dunn. He has remembered the words perfectly and in full, apart from a tiny variation in the penultimate line, which actually reads: 'Love softly grows, like a rose' and not 'For my love grows like a rose' (but it hardly matters, does it? A rose by any other name, etc.....)

The complete story behind 'The Blue Danube' may be found in a massive 2,000-page work titled "The World of Music", compiled and edited by K.B. Sandved, published by the Waverley Book Company, London, in 1954, and which covers everything from Bach to Boogie (and is the best general guide to music I have ever come across).

Incidentally, I spent several weeks in Vienna on a film location some years ago, and can vouch for the fact that the River Danube is certainly *not* blue, but a sort of yellowy muddy brown hue!

Re. Ian Godden's piece about Edgar Wallace's 'The Sooper' (Supt. Minter), he implies that there were just four short stories about this splendid character. In fact, he appeared in two other books, apart from "The Lone House Mystery": "Big Foot" and "The Black". For further details, see Jack Adrian's excellent anthology "The Sooper, and Others" (Dent, London, 1984).

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### **Leslie Laskey Sends Us Some Jokes from the Old Papers.**

Tommy was just going back to his college after the holidays.

"Now my lad", said his father, "when you have occasion to write to me, please do not send me pages and pages of stuff describing all the new boys who have arrived, and what they look like, and what Forms they are in, because I shall not have time to read it. Don't forget, now, my lad".

The boy apparently did not forget.

The first letter his father received was worded thus:

"Dear Father, - SOS £ s. d. R.S.V.P. - Tommy," -

(From the "BOYS' HERALD" - 16 Jul. 1921)

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Bloggs (at wireless, feeling sudden pain) "I think I've got sciatica".

Mrs. Bloggs - "Don't bother with those foreign stations. You can't understand them, anyway."

(From ADVENTURE - 2 Sep. 1933)

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"You look like a fool", thundered the disgusted man to his swell son just returned from college.

"More and more like a conceited, hare-brained, helpless fool every year."

Just then an old gentleman friend entered the office and saw the youth.

"Hallo, Charlie! Back, eh?" exclaimed the visitor, "You are looking more and more like your father every year."

"Yes," said Charlie. "That's what the governor's just been telling me."

(From the ROCKET - 31 Mar. 1923)

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Business gentleman (at farm gate) - "Will I be able to catch the 9.20 train if I take a short cut across your field, Farmer Jones?"

Farmer Jones - "Why, zurr, you'll be catching the 8.20 if my bull zees 'ee!"

(From the PILOT - 30 May 1936)

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Milkman: "Good morning, Mrs. Brown! It looks like rain today."

Mrs. Brown: "Yes, but you're charging threepence a pint for it, all the same!"

(From the GEM - 17 Nov. 1934)

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## **THE ELEMENTARY IMMORTAL** by Ernest Holman

Sometimes in the Nineteen thirties the exploits of a Big Game Explorer, one Frank Buck, were gathered together in a film entitled 'Bring 'em Back Alive'. This title, then, is my starting point for performing such an operation. One will, of course, remember one 'return' when Jack Warner's George Dixon, having been murdered in the film 'The Blue Lamp', turned up weekly on television without a word of explanation. Just 'Good Evening all' and here I am again! Harry Lime came back, also - this time in the shape of Michael Rennie, the screen revealing his heavy clumping across the cobbles of Vienna and then sidling very quietly round a building, in the hope of escaping notice!

Sherlock Homes, however, did not return 'just like that'. After he tumbled in the arms of Moriarty down to the depths of the Reichenback Falls, Watson's account made it only too clear that there was 'no hope'. Holmes, however, soon explained several errors in Watson's account - this, only after appearing suddenly before the Doctor, who promptly fainted! It has since been remarked that he was never the same man again - but with this I disagree. If anything, once re-established in practice, I found him even more the 'Sherlock' than previously.

Actually, at the time of this writing, Holmes has been back with us for one hundred years. For probably the only time in Watson's many accounts,



SHERLOCK HOLMES WAS STANDING SMILING AT ME ACROSS MY STUDY TABLE.

there appears to be some attempt - at first, anyway - at chronology. the early stories in 'The return' give ample scope for dating the events. In 1894 Holmes arrived back to start his second life by solving the affair of Colonel Moran. ("Good to see you back, sir!" remarked Lestrade).

Later in the same year, Watson sells up his practice and, now a widower, moves back in to the old apartments at 221b Baker Street. (Brother Mycroft had kept his rooms 'going' during the intervening years- presumably Mrs. Hudson was also in the picture!) Only later did it transpire that Holmes himself had provided the finances for the sale of the practice.

So the two of them were now back ready for the 'next' - which was the incident of the Norwood Builder. When 1895 is looked at, Holmes had quite a load 'on his plate' - this included the investigation, at the request of the Vatican, into the sudden death of a Cardinal who went by the name of Tosca. The same year, he removed a plague spot from London's East End when he caused the arrest of a certain Wilson - stated to have been a notorious canary-trainer. (Pity this story was never related - it held out such a vast picture of intrigue and mystery.) Holmes was really back in business, however, when Inspector Hopkins, at the end of the case of Black Peter, said "I do not know how to express my gratitude".

From then on, the cases poured in over the years. However, Holmes had applied sanctions to Watson putting pen to paper about his later adventures. At the turn of the century, the detective began to think of retirement and granted Watson permission to recount the happenings at

Baskerville Hall. This story ran as a serial in The Strand magazine from August 1901 until April 1902. Only when Holmes finally settled down to Bee-Keeping in Sussex, did Watson receive the 'go ahead' to start his latest chronicles. In 1903, the first story told of The Return, and, monthly at first, then at irregular intervals, the chronicles appeared for a demanding public.

Now - a word about that 'retirement'. Come off it, Watson - Holmes never retired! We have been told that, in 1912, at the especial request of the Prime Minister, Holmes became an Irish-American, working through in the apparent service of Von Bork until the day when the German was finally brought to book - on 2nd August, 1914.

Of course, between 1903 and 1912, Holmes had been working secretly in the interests of the Country. Perhaps (?) after the end of the 14-18 War, Holmes did 'ease up'. Even the account of 'His Last Bow' was not allowed to be published until 1917.

Looking back now over those one hundred years that have passed since Holmes was 'brought back alive', it is probably that only S.H. himself would regard many of his exploits as 'elementary'. They were not so to Watson - or to Scotland Yard or to his many readers - well, until the eventual explanations. Immortal, however, yes, of course Sherlock Holmes was immortal. All his many adventures live on to this day, as witness bookshelves in private and public places - and, nowadays, on cassette readings. I exclude films - far too much travesty has been created. Even Basil Rathbone, a splendid Holmes, dabbled in unlikely stories (excepting his Hound) - in fact, my own memory of an ideal performer and for presentation of stories takes me back to the silent films of the twenties. Then, Eille Norwood *was* Holmes - and what a let down, I felt, when the Final Problem came along. This was my first knowledge of the 'death' - and I probably had feelings similar to those of the readers when the story was originally published. All, however, was well - Sherlock Holmes DID come back.

The present day tendency for book titles to be long and involved is, I am sure, not desired by so many of us. Perhaps, however, such an attempt might be made if I say that, one hundred years after returning, 'Sherlock Holmes is Alive and Well and Living in Baker Street!'



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**TERRY JONES**, in response to Brian Doyle's speculation about the favourite characters of C.D. readers, has sent us his 'Top Twenty' (see below). He comments: "As you stated, Mr. Quelch would probably be high on most lists these days. Imagine Greyfriars without Quelch! Impossible! I never did like Wharton even when a kid way back in 1933. A sullen, moody fellow. I'd like to think I've been like Tom Merry."

My Top Twenty popular characters in the old Boys magazines.

1. Mr. Henry Samuel Quelch
2. Horace Coker
3. Tom Merry
4. Bob Cherry
5. Fisher T. Fish
6. Mr. Paul Pontifex Prout
7. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy
8. Jack Blake
9. William Gosling
10. William George Bunter
11. Ralph R. Cardew
12. Marjorie Hazeldene
13. Clara Trevlyn
14. Wells
15. Sexton Blake
16. Dr. Herbert Henry Locke
17. Reginald Talbot
18. Herbert Plantagenet Mauleverer
19. Herbert Vernon-Smith
20. Harry Wharton

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**GEMS OF HAMILTONIA No. 12 From JOHN GEAL.**

**Horace James Coker**

**(MAGNET No. 1084)**

"Coker turned on the cheeky fags. Potter and Green saw the storm about to break, and vanished from the scene like ghosts at cock-crow! Fortunately, Coker did not need assistance in dealing with cheeky fags. At least, he thought he didn't. As a matter of fact, Coker was in error, He did!

Making a stride at the Famous Five, Coker smote, with promptness and despatch, intending to strew the earth with five howling juniors, as they deserved. Five pairs of hands grasped Coker almost in the twinkling of an eye. What happened next was a horrible dream.

The whole scheme of the universe became unfixed for the moment. Earth and sky changed places. At least, it seemed so to Coker as he was swept off the ground and whirled into the air.

Coker was a bulky fellow. He was heavy, especially at one end. There was perhaps, not much in his head, but there was an enormous amount of him in his boots. Heavy as he was, five sturdy juniors handled him easily enough. Coker had been standing firmly on his extensive feet. Now he was completely reversed. His feet flew skywards, the top of his head tapped on the quadrangle.

Harry Wharton and Co. then released him. For the millionth part of a second Horace Coker stood on his head, his long legs stretching skyward. The Co. departed and left him to it.

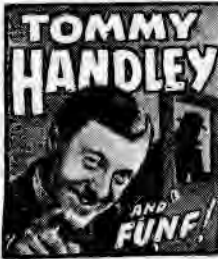
Bump! Coker assumed a horizontal attitude. He sat up dizzily. His brain, such as it was, was in a whirl. He sat and stared dizzily and spluttered. It was just Coker's ill-luck that Mr. Prout came out of the House at that moment to take his usual trot in the Quad during break. He stared at Coker dumbfounded. To all sorts of obtuseness and crass density of intellect on Coker's part Mr. Prout was accustomed in the form room. But it seemed to Mr. Prout that this was the limit, even for Coker. A fag of the second might play such tricks, but a Fifth-Form man and a senior, standing on his head in the open quad in sight of half Greyfriars, was incredible, if Mr. Prout had not seen it with his own eyes.

"Coker!" gasped Mr. Prout. "Wow!" "Coker!" thundered Mr. Prout. "Coker, get up! Stand up! Upon my word! Are you out of your senses, Coker? How dare you play these childish tricks in the quadrangle?

Goodness gracious me! A senior - a Fifth-Form boy - playing such antics! Are you not ashamed of yourself?" boomed Mr. Prout. Coker blinked at him and stuttered.

"Not a word! Go into the House!" Coker scrambled up. "Go!" thundered Mr. Prout. Coker went."

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**THE GREYFRIARS CLUB.** THE NEW YEAR & SPRING 1995 EDITION of the Courtfield Newsletter, uniquely containing many historic, full colour photographs - including Fleetway House, inside and out; Club meetings; Frank Richards Museum; etc, and letters and articles - will be ready for distribution in March. Limited number only (in view of colour reproduction) available to Club members @ 75p incl p. & p. from Bob Acraman, Club Chairman/Sec., 35 Park View, Stevenage, Herts. SG2 8PS.

# The GREYFRIARS GUIDE



## THE DAILY ROUND. 5.30 p.m. TIME for TEA.

(1)  
Where shall Bunter go for tea?  
That is most important!  
He is pretty sure to be  
Somewhere where he oughtn't.  
Though the tuckshop, opened wide,  
Flows with milk and honey,  
He can never go inside,  
Since he has no money.

(2)  
Wharston's lot have gone to pay  
Highcliffe School a visit;  
Mauly's also gone away—  
That's not pally, is it?  
From the feed in Study 4  
Bunter seen departed;  
Smithy hoofed him through the door  
Just before it started.

(3)  
Squiff has gone to Chunkley's lounge,  
So, alas, has Toddy!  
Bunter doubts if he can scrounge  
Tea from anybody!  
Fellows kick him out and all,  
Never was such slaughter,  
Till he goes to tea in Hall—  
Doorsteps and dishwater!



## AFTER SCHOOL HOURS The Laws of Cricket as played in the Second Form

1. **THE GAME** shall be between two sides  
Of six—or less—or more.  
You don't count no-balls, byes, or wickets,  
And each man keeps his score.
2. **THE UMPIRE**—best man in, of course—  
Must be prepared to shout,  
And always takes the bat by force  
If batsmen won't go out.
3. **THE OVER** is as short or long  
As it may be required,  
The bowler often going strong  
Until his arm is tired.
4. **THE BATSMAN** starts when he succeeds  
In collaring the bat;  
To get him out one only needs  
A voice to shout "How sat?"
5. **THE BOWLER** may refuse to bowl  
If "cads" don't play the game!  
And if he keeps his self-control  
He seldom gets the blame.
6. **THE FIELDSMEN** gather in a crowd  
To have a private fight,  
In which some kicking is allowed,  
But fieldsmen shouldn't bite!
7. **THE INNINGS** ends when all the men  
Have joined the fight and said:  
"Yah! Cads! Cheats! Rotten brutes!"—and then  
Play something else instead!

## THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET

**Mr. PAUL PONTIFEX  
PROUT.**

Master of the Fifth.

P is for PROUT—Paul Pontifex,  
To whom you pay our best respects!  
His stately stroll is full of swank  
Just like a galleon—or a tank!  
They call him "Pompous" on the sly,  
But not when he is passing by.



He's often fussy, and no doubt  
He likes to throw his weight about.  
But still we think, upon the whole,  
He's really not a bad old soul.  
High in the Rockies, years ago,  
He slaughtered bears, or tells us so,  
And his beloved rifle still  
He keeps and treasures with a will;  
Though time has touched his form and face  
Alas, to somewhat riper grace!

### ANSWER to PUZZLE

Sight travels quicker than sound.  
Rake would be first, then Kipps, then  
Redwing.

## A WEEKLY BUDGET OF FACT AND FUN

By  
**THE GREYFRIARS  
RHYMESTER**

### GREYFRIARS GRINS

We are hoping to hold a Six-Day Bicycle Race at Greyfriars. Mr. Quelch will bike behind the class during lessons on the track. Fortunately the scholars will be all bending over conveniently.

A runaway horse knocked Carnie into a duck-pond last Friday. And yet they say animals have no intelligence.

When Fisher T. Fish is a prefect (if ever), he will sentence fags to a fine of two shillings or six on the bags.

Dicky Nugent is taking up kite-flying. We hope the kite won't take up Dicky Nugent.

### PUZZLE PAR

Redwing took Rake and Vivian for a sail in his boat. They watched Reddyliff Fort firing big guns at a distant target. At each shot Redwing heard the report, Rake saw the flash, and Kipps saw the shell hit the water. Who first knew the gun had fired?

Answer at foot of column 2.

Mr. Mumble wants to know how to get rid of snails in his garden. Has he ever tried Wan Lung?

Don Ogily, training for the school sports, put up a splendid trial performance. He did the 100 yards in 7 seconds, and cleared a high jump of 22 feet. Unfortunately, he won't have Farmer Cobb's bull to help him at the sports.

In Chunkley's Stores the eggs are put into various boxes labelled with the day on which they were laid. At Mr. Mumble's the labels show the year, of course.

Mauly was awake in class this morning. He said he was too tired to go to sleep.

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Editor: Mary Cadogan, 46 Overbury Avenue, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 2PY.  
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