

THE GOLDEN HOURS

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W.O.G. LOFTS

PRODUCED IN AUSTRALIA EVERY NOW AND THEN

EDITORIAL

The duplicating problems have at last been solved - No.4 is a home-made job and I feel sure that Golden Hours magazine will now make the number of appearances each year for which I'd initially hoped. No.5 will be started immediately and will contain some very interesting articles covering a wide range of our books.

Here in Australia I have always admired the power of Bill Lofts to come up with the answer to many an obscure question. It hasn't just happened, it meant a lot of hard work and devotion to the O.B.B. hobby. Bill has advanced our knowledge of all aspects of our books so much over the past years that I felt some sort of a small tribute was due to him. This cover is it.

It's been a sad year since the last issue appeared. Bill Stanton Hope died here in Sydney last August. He'd written to me a fortnight before asking Ernie Carter and me to visit Mrs.Hope and him, also promising me an article for G.H. on the old Amalgamated Press days. It was the first time he'd had time to think about it and it promised to be worth reading as Bill knew them all. Ernie and I had access to his papers by kind permission of Mrs.Hope and we discovered some interesting items, especially in the comic field. I will endeavour to give this information in a future G.H. or to individual inquirers who would like to know who wrote some of those series in the comics. It could well have been W.S.Stanton Hope as the bulk of his work for many years went into the comic papers. He also wrote 3 Magnet stories and the Herlock Sholmes sketches in the Greyfriars Herald.

The passing of Charles Hamilton saddened everyone. The February number of the Collectors Digest covered adequately, without a doubt, our several feelings at this unhappy time and I think it deserves high praise. An era has ended, never to return. Let us hope we can keep its records alive and growing, and the treasures it produced intact.

I had two replies to my "Forty Years On" question in G.H. No.3. Indeed, one very thoughtful friend sent me the "Harrow School Song" book for which I was most grateful. Also, Mr.G.R.Samways sent me a fine letter which contained the full words of the song. I'd have liked to have had it in this number, but it missed out. However, I will include the words of "Forty Years On" in No.5 which should be of great interest to my fellow Australians, who would not come across them as easily as perhaps our British friends.

Yours Sincerely,

SYD. SMYTH.

FORMULAS OF GENIUS

EDITORIAL STAFF MEMORIES OF THE FLEETWAY HOUSE

by EDWARD C. SNOW

The 19th century saw the creation of many wonderful inventions which people living in the middle of the 20th largely take for granted. However, before their introduction, by what could be called "nativo" genius, life was very different, and a person suddenly transported back a century would find many phases of life very uncomfortable.

This article deals with three men who had a marked effect on most people's lives, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, Lord Northcliffe and Charles Hamilton. While Mr. Brunel invented neither steamship nor steam train (both of which existed in a crude form before he was born) he did improve on them to produce the first large steamship of the present day size and the modern type of railway on which trains can travel at high speeds of up to the hundred mile an hour figure. To-day, his railway systems still compare more than favourably with the world's best.

Lord Northcliffe, previously Alfred Harmsworth, invented neither newspaper nor periodical. Both existed before he was born. However, both were awful things to contemplate; dull ponderous affairs, set up like a series of classified advertisements, and illustrated by a type of line drawing suited to the fashions of half a century earlier. After launching his first periodical, called "Answers to Readers", in the late 1880's, he displayed remarkable ability in attracting to his support men of genius who could write and draw the type of subject matter for which half the English speaking world was waiting. After abbreviating his first periodical to "Answers", it was quickly followed by a second one named "Comic Cuts". Soon afterwards he was offered a dying newspaper called "Evening News", practically as a gift, on condition he appointed a certain man its editor. Like his first two periodicals, the transaction proved highly successful and was followed after several years by the "Daily Mail". With the help of the "war news" at the turn of the century, this also became a great daily. His fifth venture "The Daily Mirror" proved a failure at the start, but succeeded later when the price was halved and photographs were used, instead of line drawings. Lord Northcliffe's successes necessitated many high speed printing inventions to produce and deliver the huge circulations to distant parts. However, he is still credited with having paved the way for modern journalism, despite the methods used. To his critics, who called both him and his paper some atrocious names he replied:

"All good publicity! There's only one bad publicity in journalism — that's none at all."

Just who was the greatest brain Northcliffe drew to his side may be an open question, but three come to mind, immediately: Arthur Mee, Charles Hamilton and Edgar Wallace. If one went through all the 14,000 on his staff and the tens of thousands of contributors and distributors, easily the largest gap would be created by the absence of Charles Hamilton. By 1920 both Hamilton and Northcliffe were at the height of their respective power and output. A dozen periodicals and annuals were in existence, dealing wholly or in part with fictitious schools, such as Greyfriars, Rookwood and St. Jim's together with half a dozen other, lesser known ones of his creation.

By 1920, Amalgamated Press was producing over a 100 magazines and periodicals, with a circulation exceeding 10 million, and Charles Hamilton was either directly or indirectly responsible for one tenth of that output. That meant roughly 1,400 men were employed as the result of his creations. Nor does that include distributing and selling agencies, both wholesale and retail, wherever the English tongue was read and spoken. In his memoirs, in the Saturday Book, he boasted he had written 60 million words without ever seeing a rejection slip, only letters from editors asking for more and more. This was an understatement, if anything, as those of his editorial staff, over half a century, still living will easily testify. This places Charles Hamilton out in front a long way, as the world's largest writer of prolific output. He was also a "native" or original genius in the bargain.

"NATIVE GENIUS."

That means creating something wholly new, which never existed before and can be copyrighted for a fixed period of years, before becoming the property of the general public. Americans call it "beating the gun", and those who can do it, either change the world or help things move faster. As any new invention usually means the demise of that which existed before it, those who can beat the gun are not always popular, even if they become rich and powerful.

"DON'T READ THIS"

"SCHEIBEN VERBOTEN!"

DOIS NIHT SCHEIBEN!"

While Charles Hamilton was busy writing Magnet and Gem yarns interspersed with adventures on the Continent and in the South of France, Northcliffe was equally busy helping the defeat of Germany, in World War I, as Minister of Propaganda in Enemy Countries.

Among his precepts was one which cannot be denied:

"It isn't what is read or heard that counts; but the time it is remembered afterwards."

In the second half of the war, Germans were surprised to find leaflets floating down on their trenches, they were forbidden to read! Like naughty schoolboys they promptly read them, as most people would do.

Again, as with his papers and periodicals, a Northcliffe psychological strategem had worked. The Germans read they were merely dupes of an iniquitous Warlord, the Kaiser, and it would pay them to abandon the war, on their individual initiative. Large numbers did so, and, after several years of it, were very glad to.

The Kaiser eventually caught up with the desertions, and admitted Northcliffe had proven the truth of Richelieu's famous words, and done more damage to his troops' morale than the allied shells.

In reply, he sent naval units to bombard "Elmwood", on the Kentish Coast, the residence at that period of the Press Lord. Fortunately, the German Naval captain hit the wrong house.

"Elmwood" was actually in the same area as Charles Hamilton's "Roselawn" residence now, though at that period he was living at Broughton Farm to the north of London.

MEMORIES OF THE MAGNET AND GEM.

While Northcliffe was lucky in having a contributor like Hamilton, Hamilton in turn was lucky in having an editor of ability and acumen, like Mr. C.M. Down, to look after his interests during and after he ran up his world record output. As is common knowledge, what the Kaiser failed to do in the first world war, Adolph Hitler accomplished in the Second one.

At least he accomplished it to an extent—the Companion Papers, Magnet and Gem ceased publication, but the characters created by Charles Hamilton did not completely die, inasmuch as when Hitler over-ran the Continent, he started "underground" or "resistance" movements. It was similar with the Magnet and Gem, in various parts of the world, magazines commenced, Canada, Australia and England, to carry on Hamilton's work, by keeping his characters alive.

This "underground" movement still exists, and will undoubtedly out-live Hamilton himself, with the aid of British T.V. which features Hamilton's most famous character Billy Bunter, on the home screens.

"MAN BITES DOG"

The meteoric increase in circulation of Northcliffe newspapers and periodicals, was all done by the magic word "formula". It coincided with the advent of compulsory education for poor as well as rich, so that, while nothing could be done with illiterate middle aged humans, when the law came in, the next generation were 100% able to read and write to a great or lesser degree.

What proved successful in Britain, soon spread to other countries, first America, then Australia, then over the entire world.

Northcliffe was aided in his formulas, by the man he had to appoint as editor of the "Evening News", in accepting the offer of the paper, a certain Kennedy Jones (described as "a dyed-in-the-wool scribe of the Old School"). His formula for weekly and evening papers was:-

"SEX-CRIME-PATRIOTISM-PLUS-POLITICS & SPORT".

By psychological stratagems, which earned his papers and periodicals the nickname of "the stunt-press", Northcliffe duly knocked his papers into their present shape by a set of very strict rules, based on "Men bites dog" formula. He printed photographs on every page, in an era when photography itself was branded "obscene", by Mayfair and Pall Mall. He eliminated all words in excess of three syllables! He declared "news" to be:- "The largest or smallest of anything; the cheapest or dearest of anything; the best or worst of anything, and any "miracle" or "act of God" which only happened once."

As the world became literate, the circulation of newspapers rose to six and seven figures in most countries.

ARTHUR MEE.

While all the editors Lord Northcliffe gathered around him could not be called "nature's gentlemen", at least some of them deserved the term. Not the least of these in my opinion, was Mr. Arthur Mee.

His offices were on the fourth floor at the Fleetway House, and directly above those of the Magnet & Gem. He was most noted for his "Children's Newspaper", abbreviated by Gordon & Gotch employees to "Child's News". His formula for this masterpiece of journalism was a matter of five words: "Simplicity, optimism, respect for religion."

1906.

With every year an important one in some respect, two events of special importance occurred in this particular year. The I.K. Brunel steamship, Great Eastern of 18,000 odd tons, built in 1858 was succeeded for the first time by one much larger, in the 32,000 ton Lusitania, on the one hand. On the other, the first St. Jim's yarn, a half length feature appeared in The Pluck Library. The following year full length St. Jim's yarns appeared in the newly commenced Gem Library, but not in the very first number. A year later, the first Magnet appeared, with Greyfriars in the very first issue. Although not the Editor-in-Chief, Mr. C.M. Down was then on the staff, and except for absence as a commissioned officer, for the whole period of the first world war, he later became Editor and saw the Companion Papers through to their cessation in 1940, a span of thirty-two years.

Looking back impartially, one realises the staff on those boys' papers, Magnet, Gem and Sexton Blake series, both penny and fourpenny ones was after the nature of the silent movie stars, who were the actual foundations of the present business of cinemascope, cinerama, and other miracles of entertainment. Those now still alive are like the silent movie stars, very elderly and living mostly in quiet retirement.

During my period on the staff, two years and eight months, many very famous men walked the corridors of the Fleetway House, and I distinctly remember seeing Mr. William Blackwood, editor of Answers, in company with Mr. Edgar Wallace. (Both sported lengthy cigarette holders)

THE PHENOMENON!

That was Lord Northcliffe's nickname for Mr. Wallace, and also causes to arise the query, who was the greatest detective writer? Some would say Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes; others might prefer G.H. Teed, Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee writer; many well-travelled folk would choose E. Phillips Oppenheim, whose stamping ground ranged from Mayfair to the Riviera, via the Continental sleeping cars.

Mr. Wallace was famous for the speed with which he could deliver a serial, or complete book -- a week-end was all it took him, hence the appropriate nickname -- phenomenon. With fame and popularity came high-living and the inevitable criticism. Some said, had he been educated up to academic standards, he could have become an immortal like Shakespeare. Mr. Wallace, however, was exactly like Northcliffe, himself; utterly against any slow and painful perfection of his work.

FORMULA FOR THE CLASSICS.

There is a deeply hidden and difficult discipline attached to writing that will live for posterity. (1) The characters must form the plot, (2) The dramatic speech and actions of the characters must tend to make them immortal (3) Subject matter must be universally known, British, Roman, or biblical history, which is more or less the history of the world; which never dies.

MR. WALLACE'S FORMULA.

This, briefly was the "thriller-pursuit, sequence" type where the plot was thought out first, written backwards, and characters dubbed in to fit the plot. While Northcliffe himself, always insisted on speedy delivery from all contributors in general, and "ultra speedy" from Mr. Wallace, that meant "brief life, and quick death" to copy written in that fashion. Mr. Wallace perfected the style of writing crisply, superficially, for the moment and the "popular" press, while to suggestions that he should attempt "classics" he replied: "I'm writing for to-morrow's newspapers, not immortality."

REAL CRIME SOLUTIONS.

While there are no unsolved crimes in detective fiction, since no editor would publish such yarns, there is a wide difference between solving real crime, and writing a private piece of 'tec fiction.

With real crime, the solution, according to the best brains of the criminal investigation departments in all the world capitals, invariably lies IN THE DISPARITY BETWEEN THE PLANNING OF THE CRIME AND THE EXECUTION OF IT.

Unlike genuine, fair and above board, business, where the nervous tension is negligible, in crime there exists a high state of nervous tension, created by the speed of operation, and the illegality of the particular job to be done. Unknown, and often unheeded by criminals, a great variety of small clues are left behind. Provided the fingerprint experts, the photo and spectroscope experts, happened on the undisturbed scene while the trail was still hot, positive results, with, or without, the aid of bloodhounds, can often be obtained. Unfortunately in real crime, (unlike detective fiction) employees, casual members of the general public, or flat-footed police discover the crime, and either obliterate the clues, or irretrievably mix them with others. In detective fiction, this nuisance never occurs, to help the story become another "unsolved" mystery, to be filed away in the police archives. As a detective story is always written backwards, with the solution and criminals known to the author before he starts, the writers of "whodunits", always have the edge on real life police and "private eyes."

MEDIEVAL CUNNING.

While it would still be possible to choose a writer, and make a modern equivalent of Shakespeare of him, the method used in the Middle Ages to achieve the result, and handed down from early Greek and Roman days has largely died out. (Except at, perhaps, horticultural.)

Nobody, not even Shakespeare, nor Beethoven, was born a genius. The original divine spark was there, and luck and environment took them into the fortunate circumstance for recognition. Many others, equally as gifted at birth, never struck the circumstance to allow development. Genius has been defined as 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration, coupled with infinite patience, persistence, and perseverance.

Apart from the fact, that there are two different styles of writing in Shakespeare's works, proving collaboration took place with some of them, medieval publishers played a very clever part also, and that was the precise key to immortality, apart from the formula itself, of the plays and poems; since no man could achieve it, unaided!

The "Treatment", as it was called, consisted in finding and collecting every item of childhood scribble, of the one to be immortalised, and all his early works during developmental and formative period, before perfection, and complete mastery was gained over expression and language, AND UTTERLY DESTROYING IT. Such action leaves nothing between such finished works as "Merchant of Venice", or "As You Like It", to show how the standard was reached, from childhood scribble, step by step. The "Treatment" gives the reader of later years the impression the classics were written by "born" genius, who had the "master touch" at birth. Once such an illusion is created and the writer has become a celebrity, immortality is almost certain, and he and his works will live on. Many of the famous composers and "old masters" were given just the same clever "Treatment" -- only their finished masterpieces were left in existence for posterity.

When the hearts (and pockets) of the public can be touched generation after generation and century after century, genius has been "created" that will live. After he has died, and his works have become a "lost art", then its value knows no limit!

WARWICK REYNOLDS.

It was a happy day for the Amalgamated Press periodicals and magazines when Mr. C.M.Down recognised the artistic ability of Mr.Reynolds, and after the Gem illustrator became a naval officer in the first world war, Mr. Reynolds stepped into the breach "for the duration". In the Fleetway House Library are many records, often going back as far as Caxton and Chaucer, not surprising perhaps in the cradle of journalism. One day, among my more mundane duties on the staff, I checked up on Mr.Reynolds, in the British "Who's Who?". It said he was a "Royal Academy artist, who spent six years of animal and bird life study at Regent's Park Zoo." After returning from the war in 1919 most of Mr.Down's staff condemned Mr.Reynolds' work; "far too good for a periodical in the Gem class," they were unanimous. "We're giving readers a shilling magazine for a penny, half-penny!" With Hamilton's original stories, it lifted the Gem out of its previous class, and made it something of a classic.

NOEL COWARD.

Charles Hamilton's critics, and analysts of his formula, included the great and famous, as well as the very humble and unknown. Mr.Coward and George Orwell both expressed valuable opinions and the reasons for "C.H.'s" success, together with other salient features. Firstly Mr.Coward pointed out that the Gem stories lacked "sex". There was never any doubt about that. However, if a writer of schoolboy yarns could get 60 million words into print without becoming a high priest of the lowest common denominator, that was indeed a point in his favour, especially in a market where there is no shortage of the subject. Personally, I thought Mr.Coward had a point for consideration, and that a few tomboys would have brightened up some of the Gem stories to a degree. Certainly the Magnet yarns had Cliff House, a girl's school, just about the opposite of St.Trinian's in every respect. However the Gem ran its life span without a girl's school, of any sort, and the lack of it is past recall now. Mr.George Orwell, the famous writer, attributed Charles Hamilton's success to "the arrow-straight-continuity" of the yarns, without changing the ages of the characters, not allowing them to grow up, as readers did, and pair off. The series thus went from one young generation of readers to another, without interruption. The actual school on which Hamilton based his stories has never been solved, and is the subject of such conjecture.

The editorial staff, during my period there, (1919-22) all knew that his good characters had little selling value, it was the "naughty boys" and their behaviour, the readers wanted to hear about. Different editors expressed their opinion that:- the schools were a "left wing" variation of the genuine English Public School.

Others that they were based on Arnold's "Tom Brown's Schooldays." Others said, almost his entire list of characters had their names in Debrett's Peerage, and "Landed Gentry."

Hamilton's own education is still shrouded in deep mystery, except for the fact that he spent some of his early life in Canada. His father is said to have been a Cambridge man, a scholar and poet. Whatever the answer, nothing can detract from the fact that Charles Hamilton was a great man, and a genius to achieve as much as he did. He still ranks as Lord Northcliffe's greatest contributor.

GENIUS WRITING ABOUT GENIUS.

Next to Hamilton, in order of output, in first rate English, would come George Hamilton Teed, famous as the chief author of Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee. As a writer Mr. Teed left most other detective writers at the post, although the hard-working editorship of Mr. Harold Twyman must not be forgotten. It was definitely Mr. Teed's geographical knowledge, coupled with fine command of English which sold Sexton Blake to the detective reading public for up to half a century — no mean feat for any writer, though one must not forget Northcliffe whose company had to print and distribute them, or Brunel, whose trains and ships made delivery possible to distant parts. One can look back through the work of Mr. Teed, in the first hundred issues of the "Nelson Lee Library," and it's very difficult to find anything before or since actually its superior. A sample from one of Mr. Teed's yarns can be quoted:—

No. 66 Nelson Lee Library:— "THE CROOK". (It dealt with a forged painting) "For a good many minutes Oscar Bode gazed upon the genuine Corot and strangely enough, with the beauty of it all flowing in upon him, the coarseness of his features seemed for the moment to pass away, leaving a heavy, but nevertheless distinctly dreamy, appreciation of the artist. At last he looked up, and as though before his face had caught something of the gentle spirit of the picture, now the old cunning look returned."

Leaving the world famous periodicals Magnet, Gem, Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee, in 1922, I spent a couple of years free-lancing between some private study at Eton. In 1924, I sailed the seas Australia way, where: "those who cross the seas often change their skies, but not their affections".

Sooner or later, the periodicals ran their course and the famous Editorial Staff with them, also. The Fleetway House knows none of them, anymore. 1961 sees new inventions such as television, with rugby and Disneyland cartoons attracting the young fry as the Magnet and Gem used to do forty years ago. While no author or editor's work is ever fully completed, I was perhaps fortunate to get into print as much as I did, and thank all concerned for the part they played in it. In this day and age, there are no regrets.

End.

1st SERIES PENNY POPULAR SEXTON BLAKE REPRINTS

by VICTOR COLBY

The first series Penny Popular, numbers 1 to 221 inclusive, ran from 12/10/1912 to 30/12/1916, and featured a Sexton Blake story in every number. These were all reprints of Union Jack stories, the earliest of these being from Halfpenny Union Jack No.2 of 1894 (first Sexton Blake story to appear in the Union Jack), the latest from penny series Union Jack No.377 of December, 1910.

The reprinting of the Union Jack-Sexton Blake stories in the Penny Popular was carried out in a most erratic manner, hopping wildly from 1908 to 1894, then back to 1908 etc.

Identification was made difficult by such practices as dropping the prologue and sometimes the first chapters, altering the opening sentences, commencing in the middle of a chapter, and altering the titles.

Where only one Penny Popular was used to reprint a Union Jack-Sexton Blake story, the story was greatly abbreviated, various whole chapters being dropped, others cut.

However, where two Penny Populars were used, the story was reproduced virtually in two separate halves with little abridgement.

It is thus possible in many cases, to read practically the whole of an original U.J. story in the two-issue version of the Penny Popular.

One of the oddest things encountered was the discovery that the Sexton Blake story in P.P. No.70, was originally a story by A.S.Hardy in U.J. No.26 featuring not Sexton Blake, but one Detective Herbert Trackett!

The names of the story characters remained unchanged during reprinting from U.J. to P.P. with the above exception and with the exception in P.P. No.48 of Inspector Widgeon replacing Inspector Grange of the original U.J. story.

All U.J. numbers shown on the following list are of the "penny" series (1904 and on) except where prefixed by an asterisk (*), in which case they are of the "halfpenny" series (1894-1904).

Here follows the list of first series Penny Populars Nos. 1 to 221 inclusive published 12/10/1912 to 30/12/1916, and the corresponding Union Jack number, publication date and title, from which each Penny Popular Sexton Blake reprint was obtained:-

No.	TITLE	No.	YEAR	TITLE
1	The Cese of the Treasure Hunters	100	1905	The Dog Detective (1)
2	Sexton Blake - Fire Fighter	103	"	The Fireman Detective
3	The Smuggler Detective	157	1906	Guardian of the Light
4	The Four Thumb Prints	126	"	The Thumb-Print Clue
5	The Stolen Plan	122	"	Underground London
6	Sexton Blake - King's Messenger	123	"	The Lost Seal
7	The Missing Heir	179	1907	The Seamy Side
8	The Lost Laird!	172	"	The Laird of Durrisdeer
9	A Dash for Freedom!	174	"	The Doctor Detective
10	The Convict Detective	123	1906	Sexton Blake - Convict!
11	The Order of Release	114	1905	Sexton Blake's Xmas
12	The House of Mystery	163	1906	A New Year Mystery
13	The Secret of Room No. 77!	79	1905	Secrets of a Great City.
14	Sexton Blake - Man O'Warsman	102	"	The Navy Detective
15	The Redskin Detective	111	1906	The Lost Chief
16	The Showman Detective	130	"	The Circus Detective!!
17	£500 Reward!	105	1905	Sexton Blake P.C.
18	Lord Vancourt's Luck	110	"	The Jockey Detective.
19	The Newspaper Detective	117	1906	The Reporter Detective
20	The Master Hand	108	1905	Sexton Blake's Coup!
21	The Anarchist Tracker!	129	1906	The Disguise Detective.
22	The Mystery Cab!	107	1905	The Cab-Driver Detective
23	The Stolen Bloodhound!	160	1906	Lost Pedro
24	Sexton Blake, Pitman!	143	"	The Collier Detective
25	On the Halls!	147	"	Footlight Favourites
26	Brother Detectives!	144	1906	The American Detective
27	Sexton Blake's Wager	150	"	The Missing 13
28	The Rajah's Bodyguard	152	"	The Steward Detective
29	Sexton Blake's Jewel Hunt!	153	"	Sexton Blake Among the Brigands
30	In the Kaiser's Service	154	"	The German Detective
31	Sexton Blake's Mission	177	1907	Salvation Army Blake.
32	The Prodigal's Pride	185	"	The Remittance Man
33	The Secret of the Glacier!	167	1906	Lost on the Alps
34	The Man in Possession!	195	1907	The Broker's Man (2)
35	The Long Lane Mystery!	195	"	The Broker's Man (2)
36	The Missing Treaty	187	"	The Empty House
37	Sexton Blake on 'Change!	190	"	The Stock Exchange Detective
38	The Picture Stealers	191	"	The Stolen Gainsborough
39	Count Nevani's Coup!	211	"	The Cattle Mystery

PENNY POPULAR

UNION JACK

No.	TITLE	No.	YEAR	TITLE
40	The President Detective	197	1907	The Case of the Missing President
41	Counterfeit Coin!	203	"	Base Coin
42	Stars of the Opera	202	"	Sexton Blake at the Opere
43	The Ghost of Ashleigh Dene!	205	"	Sexton Blake in Amsterdam
44	Checkmated!	210	"	The Mystery of the Lightship
45	Sexton Blake, Lumber-Jack	207	"	Sexton Blake - Lumberman
46	The Master Cheat!	213	"	The Cardsharper
47	By the King's Command!	218	"	By Royal Command
48	The Wilmington Gang!	220	"	Sexton Blake - Chemist (3)
49	At Crips with the Law!	217	"	The Slate Club Scandals(4)
50	Hunter, & Hunted Too!	222	1908	The Man from Scotland Yard (5)
51	The Fighting Detective	224	"	Sexton Blake's Championship
52	The Haunted Man! *	2	1894	Sexton Blake - Detective(6)
53	The Missing Champion!	230	1908	Sexton Blake - Wrestler
54	In the Czar's Domain	228	"	Sexton Blake in Bak:
55	The Frontier Smugglers!	231	"	Pedro's Trail
56	Tricking the Turk	232	"	Sexton Blake in Turkey
57	The Kidnapped Heir!	233	"	Sexton Blake in Rome
58	A Kingdom at Stake!	234	"	Sexton Blake at Court
59	The Secret of the Dale! *	172	1897	Dead Man's Hand (6)
60	The Prince's Ordeal!	235	1908	Sexton Blake, N.S.P.C.C.
61	By Order of Chancery	236	"	A Ward in Chancery
62	His Last Card!	237	"	Sexton Blake at Monte Carlo
63	Sexton Blake's Resolve	217	1907	The Slate Club Scandals (4)
64	The Slate Club Swindler!	217	"	The Slate Club Scandals (4)
65	Gambling with Fate!	217	"	The Slate Club Scandals (4)
66	The Haunted Priory! *	250	1899	The Ghost of Strendgap Priory (6)
67	The Clansmen's Feud	243	1903	Drink!
68	The Cigarette Clue! *	245	1898	The Cigarette Clue (6)
69	Sexton Blake's Strange Quest.*	220	1898	The Dagger of Dunloe (6)
70	Proved Innocent!	26	1904	A Marked Man (7)
71	The Fenfield Conspiracy *	226	1898	The Third Man (6)
72	The Mystery Man! *	238	"	The Mystery Man (6)
73	The Fortune Stone! *	375	1901	Fortune Stone (6)
74	The Changed Eyes *	72	1895	The Clue of the Dead Eyes(6)
75	Twice Cleared! *	396	1901	Sexton Blake's Lost Clue(6)
76	The Forger! *	208	1898	The Phantom Photographer(6)

PENNY POPULAR

UNION JACK

No.	TITLE	No.	YEAR	TITLE
77	Tracked Across the World! *	43	1895	Tracked Round the World (6)
78	Sexton Blake's Ruse! *	65	"	Sexton Blake's Stratagem(6)
79	Squire Tredgar's Secret *	75	"	Tracked to the Death Valley(6)
80	The Doctor's Dupe! *	32	"	Dr. Zebra's Doom (6)
81	The Living Picture! *	88	"	The Living Picture (6)
82	In Deep Waters)	200	1907	The Case of the Coroner's Court
83	An International Affair)			
84	A Diplomatic Tangle!)	208	"	Sexton Blake Private Secretary
85	High Treason!)			
86	Transported for Life!)	214	"	Sexton Blake on Devil's Island
87	A Struggle for Liberty!)			
88	Tinker's Peril!)	226	1908	The Mystery of the Mint
89	The Plot that Failed!)			
90	A Perilous Guest!)	240	"	The Secret Society
91	Against Heavy Odds)			
92	A Forlorn Hope!)	241	"	The Black Tyrant
93	The Horror of Hayti!)			
94	Lucky Loring's Loss)	247	"	Bankrupt!
95	The Serpent Worshippers)			
96	Sexton Blake's Holiday Case)	249	"	Caravan and Canvas
97	The Circus Mystery!)			
98	At Grips with the Apaches!)	250	"	The Apaches of Paris
99	The Hostage!)			
100	The Message from the Sea! *	62	1895	A Clue from the Deep (6)
101	The Imperial Spy!)	253	1903	The Case of the Naval Manoeuvres
102	The Kaiser's Ransom)			
103	A Friend's Disgrace!)	252	"	Spearing's Disgrace
104	A Fight for Honour!)			
105	The Walking Cracksman!)	259	"	The Tramp Detective
106	Sexton Blake on Tramp!)			
107	The Black Country Mystery)	254	"	The Mystery of Moorside
108	Sexton Blake's Blunder!)			
109	Turning the Tables!)	260	"	The Motor Boat
110	No Proof!)			
111	Caught Red-Handed!)	262	"	The Mount Street Mystery
112	The Confession!)			
113	A False Friend!)	263	"	The Willow Court Mystery

PENNY POPULARUNION JACK

<u>No.</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
114	The Gipsy Detective)	265	1908	Sexton Blake, Gipsy
115	Sexton Blake's Masquerade!)			
116	The Three Avengers!)	266	"	The Stolen Bloodhound
117	Rough Justice!)			
118	Thwarting the Hypnotist!)	268	"	The Hypnotist
119	The Last Stand!)			
120	A Nation's Fate!)	271	"	The Kaiser's Mistake
121	An Imperial Blunder!)			
122	The Gambler's Ruse!)	274	1909	The Adventuress!
123	Foul Play!)			
124	Restoring a Kingdom!	276	"	Sexton Blake in Borneo
125	The Man from Winnipeg!	275	"	"f. s. d."
126	Foiled at the Finish!	278	"	The Manhunt
127	Clearing His Name!	281	"	£20,000 Bail!
128	A Fresh Start!	280	"	The Three Brothers
129	The Signal of Distress!	285	"	C.Q.D.
130	Run to Earth!	284	"	East and West
131	The Wrong Man!	289	"	The Five Towns
132	Colonel Tanford's Valour!	291	"	The Case of the Public Trustee
133	The Wonder Gun!	292	"	The Noiseless Gun
134	The Isle of Mystery!	293	"	Gregory Sanderson's Will
135	Rivals for Fortune!	294	"	The Great Peerage Romance
136	Simon Leach - Swindler!	295	"	The Emigrants
137	The Hidden Heiress!	297	"	Sexton Blake, Publican
138	An Errand of Justice!)	298	"	Sexton Blake; - Showman
139	His Own Betrayer!)			
140	Reaping the Whirlwind!	299	"	The Blue Room Mystery
141	Unveiling the Past!	303	"	The Stepney Mystery
142	The Fatal Verdict!)	300	"	Unfrocked
143	Restored to His Own!)			
144	The Penniless Playwright!)	314	"	Sexton Blake, Playwright
145	The Unfinished Drama!)			
146	The River-House Mystery!)	305	"	Sexton Blake, Lock-Keeper
147	Police-Constable Tinker!)			
148	Through Prison Bars!)	302	"	In Deadly Grip
149	A Fugitive from Justice!)			
150	The Missing Scoutmaster!)	319	"	Sexton Blake, Scout-Master
151	The Mystery of Highdown) Heath!)			

PENNY POPULARUNION JACK

No.	TITLE	No.	YEAR	TITLE
152	Partners in Peril!)	315	1909	The Swell Mobsman
153	The Doors of Dartmoor!)			
154	At Crossed Swords!)	318	"	Bridge
155	The Night Riders!)			
156	The Secretary's Ruse!)	307	"	The Mystery of Dusky Hollow
157	Tinker's Daring!)			
158	The Rescuer's Reward!)	322	"	Sexton Blake, Sandwich-Man
159	Exiled from England!)			
160	Fooling with Fate!)	308	"	Sexton Blake, Bookmaker
161	The Road to Ruin!)			
162	Rivals for the Right!)	323	"	The Third Degree
163	An Amazing Masquerade!)			
164	Birds of a Feather!)	301	"	The Great Motor Car Mystery
165	In Convicts Guise!)			
166	The Chinese Rivals!)	310	"	The Yellow Card
167	The Sacred Pardon!)			
168	The Fate of the "Mermaid"!)	325	1910	Sexton Blake in Newfoundland
169	The House of Intrigue!)			
170	Rogues of the Turf!)	326	"	Warned Off
171	Called to Account!)			
172	A Fight for Justice!)	328	"	The Slum Landlord
173	The Tyrant of the Poor!)			
174	The Man of the 4-15!)	329	"	Found Drowned
175	The Squire's Secret!)			
176	The Cards of Fate!)	330	1910	The Analyst Mystery
177	Hunted and Harried!)			
178	A Web of Intrigue!)	332	"	Sexton Blake, Jurymen
179	The Coils of Evidence!)			
180	The Missing Manager!)	333	"	A Manchester Mystery
181	Thwarting the Taskmaster!)			
182	The Dancer's Secret!)	335	"	Sexton Blake in "Vanity Fair"
183	A Vow Fulfilled!)			
184	A Desperate Resolve!)	336	"	The Embankment Mystery
185	The River Mystery!)			
186	After 3 Years!)	337	"	The Sailor's Return
187	The Sailor's Ordeal)			

PENNY POPULARUNION JACK

No.	TITLE	No.	YEAR	TITLE
188	The Village Tyrant!)	338	1910	The Case of the "Small Holding"
189	Foiled at the Finish!)			
190	The Silent Avenger!)	341	"	Sexton Blake in Hatton Garden
191	The Wrath of Kama!)			
192	Birds of Prey!)	342	"	The Mystery of Room 11
193	The City Conspiracy!)			
194	To Redeem the Past!)	349	"	The Great Rubber Syndicate
195	The Swindler's Downfall!)			
196	The Great Society Scandal!)	350	"	Sexton Blake's Country Cottage
197	An Affair of Court!)			
198	For His Dad's Sake!)	354	"	The Rival Mills
199	The Traitor's Fate!)			
200	The Seaside Mystery!)	355	"	Sexton Blake, Bath-Chair Man
201	The Silent Accuser!)			
202	A Fortune at Stake!)	362	"	The Gold Mountain
203	The Redskin's Loyalty!)			
204	The Duped Detective!)	367	"	The Millionaire Baby
205	The Unwritten Law!)			
206	The Mystery of the Mysterpicce!)	368	"	Sexton Blake, Author
207	The Scheming Secretary!)			
208	Wanted for Wealth!)	369	"	Sexton Blake, Taxi-Cab Driver
209	The Avaricious Aristocrat!)			
210	The Poacher's Flight!)	366	"	Sexton Blake's Shooting Party
211	His Cousin's Crime!)			
212	Traced by Treachery!)	371	"	The Great Stores Mystery
213	Fleeced of a Fortune!)			
214	Shielded from Shame!)	374	"	Accessory After the Fact
215	The Detective's Deceit!)			
216	The Financier's Failure!)	375	"	The Great Bank Smash
217	Rescued from Ruin!)			
218	Sexton Blake, Editor!)	377	"	Contempt of Court
219	Convicted for Conspiracy!)			
220	The Partner's Plot!)	376	"	Sexton Blake - Santa Claus
221	Sexton Blake-Cashier!)			

NOTES.

* Halfpenny Union Jack Series.

1. First appearance ever of Pedro the Bloodhound.

NOTES. (Cont.)

2. Penny Popular No.34 was taken from chapters 1, 2, 9, 10 & 11 of 1d Union Jack No.195, whilst Penny Popular No.35 was taken from chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 of the same Union Jack.
3. Inspector Widgeon in Penny Popular 48 was originally Inspector Grange in 1d. U.J.220.
4. Scattered chapters of 1d U.J. 217 were used in the Penny Popular as follows:-

Penny Popular 49:-	chapters 9 to 13 of 1d U.J. 217
" " 63:-	" 1,2,14,15,16,23 " "
" " 64:-	" 17 to 22 " "
" " 65:-	" 3 to 8 " "

5. First appearance ever of George Marsden Plummer.
6. Halfpenny Union Jack Series.
7. This story in 1d U.J. 26 was by A.S. Hardy, and featured Detective Herbert Trackett, not Sexton Flake. Sexton Flake was substituted for Herbert Trackett in the Penny Popular 70 version.

V.E. COLBY.

COMMENTS FROM READERS ON PREVIOUS ISSUES.

A.J.SOUTHWAYS. Many thanks for No.2 of GOLDEN HOURS received yesterday. I simply had to read it from cover to cover in bed last evening, and all I can say is 'more power to your elbow'. I think G.R.Samways' article is one of the most interesting I've ever read. I do hope he can enlarge on it in the future and tell us what stories he DID write of Greyfriars, St.Jim's etc.

ERIC FAYNE. I very much enjoyed your latest Golden Hours Magazine. Some of the items provided great food for thought and certainly gave me a happy golden hour.

ARTHUR HOLLAND. I was agreeably surprised at such a splendid production considering the troubles you have had. Subscribers would be disappointed at the deletion of two articles and a thinner volume, but anticipating the joys of a Christmas No. will brighten them up. Most O.F.E.Collectors are partial to Christmas Nos.

(cont. on Page 29)

Facts AND Figures

by
W. O. G. LOFTS

REGISTRATION DISTRICT <i>Harrogate</i>										
1926. BIRTH in the Sub-district of <i>Harrogate</i> in the County of York (W.A.)										
No.	When and where born	Name, if any	Sex	Name, and surname of father	Name, maiden, and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description, and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of register	Name and address of registrar
	<i>First September 1926 63 West Terrace Harrogate, W.A.</i>	<i>William Sexton</i>	<i>By</i>	<i>William Blake</i>	<i>Blanche Blake formerly Johnson</i>	<i>Tales (Gross Total)</i>	<i>William Blake, Master 65 East Parade Harrogate</i>	<i>First October 1926</i>	<i>May a Shaw Registrar</i>	

In "Inside Information and facts and Figures" in the first issue of the "Golden Hours Magazine" I made the statement "that I have often wondered whether there was a real live person with the name of "Sexton Blake".

The reproduction of the actual birth certificate above proves beyond all doubt that there is! Though "Sexton" is only the second Christian name.

Sexton Blake, most unfortunately, only gained prominence in the National Press in England - because he had been arrested and charged with stealing or receiving some electric welding cable in his van. He was found not guilty, though fined £10 with ten shilling costs for minor offences.

Sexton Blake was interviewed by Jack Cock of Newcastle (where both live) and a report was published in the M.I. "Collectors Digest". Personally I found the report most disappointing, though Jack tells me he found Mr. Blake very cagey - and elusive in his statements.

I MEET GEORGE REES.

I have met many enthusiasts of the Greyfriars stories in the "Magnet" and I'm sure that their intimate knowledge of them would even astonish the great "Frank Richards". But I have as yet to meet one, who could equal the feat of George Rees - Sexton Blake author; who could almost recite the first chapter of the "Magnet" by heart! Especially more so, when I tell the reader that he had not seen a copy for over 40 years!

But starting from the beginning; the actual circumstances of how I met George Rees were a little unusual, and to elucidate they were briefly as follows. In December 1953 whilst reading the current issue of the "Sexton Blake Library" No.302 entitled "The Secret of the Jungle" I was struck by the strong resemblance by the style of writing to that of the late Gwyn Evans - to many one of the most popular of all pre-war Blake authors. Myself apart, many other readers had noticed this also, by their comments in letters to me.

The story was very good, and the name of "George Rees" on the cover, was a new one to the ever growing list of writers who had penned stories featuring Sexton Blake. The big query then, was not only to myself but many others - "Was, this the authors real name, or was it perhaps an old Gwyn Evans tale reprinted? Maybe the author in question had based his style on the popular author", but the outcome was that once again I wrote to the editor of the S.B.L. and within a few days I not only had an answer, but the reply was from Mr. George Rees himself!

Expressing gratification at the interest shown in his story, George Rees (that was his real name) was greatly astonished at my mention to him of Gwyn Evans - as he had been a personal friend of his for over 20 years, until his (Gwyn's) most sudden death in 1939, when still a youngish man. Explaining further, Mr. Rees was not really surprised to learn that readers had compared his style to that of his late friend - as he had in his time, helped Gwyn a great deal in writing several of his stories - one especially which stood out in his mind "The Mistletoe Milk Mystery" published in the old "Union Jack". I expect that this will come as a great surprise to my old friend Mr. H.W. Twyman editor of the paper to learn of this.

As George Rees lived in London, and only a short distance from my home, a meeting was soon arranged, and one evening I was seated in a large armchair in his basement flat, talking about the early life of Gwyn Evans, and Old Boys Books in general. Strangely enough, although I have a very good memory for faces, I can remember very little about his features. He was a very stoutish man - and faintly I have the impression that maybe he was somehow similar in features to Sir Winston Churchill. Conversing in a very clear and musical voice he was a most excellent speaker, a typical trait of the Welsh race to which he belonged.

I don't think much of George Rees' work in other fields would interest the majority of "Golden Hours" readers. He first met Gwyn Evans whilst they were both serving in the Royal Navy out in Egypt just after the first world war. According to Mr. Rees - it was he who actually created the character of Splash Page, so popular a character in many of the Gwyn Evans' stories, and, as already related earlier, he helped Gwyn a great deal with his yarns. Mr. Rees' revelations to me about much of Gwyn Evans' life enabled me to make a great scoop in the English "Collectors Digest" shortly afterwards.

As a boy, George Rees was a very avid reader of the "Magnet", and kept for many years the first 50 issues, which he read and re-read over and over again, until the yarns became almost imprinted into his mind!

Personally, I doubt very much if the name of "George Rees" will go down to posterity as a successful Sexton Blake writer, as after "The Secret of the Jungle" he succeeded in only having one story published. But, at least to myself, I shall probably always remember him reciting those famous first words of Colonel James Wharton -

"Send Master Harry to me".

FORTY YEARS ON!

I should think that every old Harrovian will be after our editor's blood - in suggesting that the above song belongs to Eton! But in a serious vein; I have to thank my friend the editor of the "Sexton Blake Library", Mr. W. Howard Baker, for confirming that "Forty Years On" is the National song of Harrow.

This song was composed in 1872 by Ernest Edward Bowen, and is easily the most famous of all the Harrow school songs, and is in fact the National Anthem of Harrow, wherefore all are requested to stand and sing it. There are two stories of interest about its composition. The words, or one verse of them, were given to John Farmer by the author as he emerged from Chapel after the early service of Saints day as it then existed. Mr. Farmer who was music master at Harrow - enquired if anyone had a piano in his waistcoat pocket! However, failing such a convenient article the nearest instrument available was found in the rooms of Mr. F.E. Marshall in Ivy House, which stood then, on the site of the old War Memorial. The author gave his idea in the chorus "Follow Up" and in less than ten minutes the tune was evolved and fitted to the words.

The second story relates to a line of daring boldness in the last Stanza "God give us bases to guard and beleaguer". Some doubt was expressed about the introduction of a religious sentiment into a football song! The whole question was referred to Matthew Arnold the poet, then residing at Byron House. He unhesitatingly decided for the line as it stands, and his decision has been justified by the devout acceptance of the spirit of the line.

One of the most famous scholars ever to attend Harrow - was Sir Winston Churchill, and in November 1954 an extra verse was added in his honour when he attended an Old Boys Day. Harrow along with Eton is one of the most famous of all the public schools, and one usually has to put one's name down at birth to be able to gain admittance.

Whether Charles Hamilton based any of his schools on any of the two above-mentioned schools is debatable, though I must confess that as a boy I used to associate Eton with St. Jim's, maybe because of Tom Merry and especially "Gussy", wearing Toppers more so than the boys of Greyfriars. The national headwear of Eton is Toppers. Harrow on the other hand, has always been associated with the straw hat as its universal headgear.

The big question may arise by some readers whether Charles Hamilton himself is an old Harrovian - basing an assumption that if he was fond of introducing this song, he may have had connections there. But personally I very much doubt it. A perusal of the School Registers at the time he could have attended there brings to light no scholar that could be the one we know so well. Though, there is no doubt that Charles Hamilton was a very clever scholar, and undoubtedly had the intelligence and ability to attend such a famous public school.

As related in an article in the "Collectors Digest" two years ago, Charles Hamilton was a composer and writer of verse himself, before he even started to write his stories of St. Jim's and Greyfriars. His "On the Ball" football song was very, very popular and was still sung in New Zealand with much gusto even a few years ago.

The first line of the verse added to the Harrow Song in tribute to Sir Winston Churchill is;

"Sixty years on - though in time growing older".

Someone perhaps more capable than me could say with all sincerity that a verse could be written some day in tribute to probably the greatest of all school story writers - Charles Hamilton, and no-one, in the realm of Boys juvenile fiction, would deserve it more.

EDITORS-AUTHORS-AND ARTISTS I HAVE MET.

The picture of the famous "Frank Richards" is known to most of us. Not only has it appeared in his Autobiography, but his photograph has appeared from time to time in many newspapers and periodicals throughout the world.

This shows a frail, wizened, smallish-looking, elderly type of man; sometimes in the process of lighting his pipe, and normally wearing a black skull cap. Highly intellectual, and a classical scholar, Mr. Charles Hamilton, to give him his real name, is probably a very familiar figure with many.

It has never been my pleasure as yet to meet "Frank Richards" as he likes to be called, though I have had quite a lot of correspondence with him through the last few years. It has always been a source of wonder to me, however, at the way he most conscientiously always answers correspondents, nearly all readers of his delightful stories going back over 50 years in some cases. Apart from still actively writing Bunter Books and T.V. scripts in his 36th year, "Frank Richards" probably receives more fan mail than all other boys fiction authors put together.

But what of many of the other authors we knew so well by name only in the days of our youth? What were they like? What sort of men were they? Who were the actual editors of our favourite papers? Probably with due modesty, I could claim to have met personally more authors, editors and artists, than any other collector, in my quest for authentic information connected with my articles. Indeed, quite a number today, I could

count as personal friends. In the following series of articles to appear in the "Golden Hours Magazine", I do hope to bring to you an intimate glimpse of many of them, and I hope it will be to your enjoyment.

Mr. Leonard Prett, editor of the "Sexton Blake Library" almost from its commencement in 1915, until he retired in 1955, came in for a lot of criticism by Blake followers connected with the "Collectors Digest", and especially so by Maurice Bond the joint-editor. Mr. Pratt's main fault to them, was that he either failed to answer letters, or was most uncooperative to them in giving inside information. Whether their complaints were justified or not is immaterial to this article, but at least Mr. Pratt did me an extreme favour by forwarding on a letter I wrote to John Hunter. I was an avid reader of the "Sexton Blake Library" in 1953. My favourite author at that time was "John Hunter", and I just failed to agree with the reviews of his stories reported in the "Collectors Digest" at that period. In writing to Mr. Hunter, I mentioned the reviews and old boys books in general, and he showed great interest. We corresponded a great deal, and shortly afterwards, whilst staying for a short holiday on the South Coast, I was able to meet him in person. Sitting in the lounge of my hotel, my first impression of John Hunter was that he had modelled his favourite character in Blake stories, Captain Deck, on himself!

A very large man with twinkling eyes, and a good sense of humour, I found Mr. Hunter a very easy man to converse with. Readers who visit the Cinema may remember that hero of many adventures, the late Richard Dix. Think of his features and you will have a remarkable likeness. Starting to write in his teens, he first used his full real name A.J. Hunter, but after a short while, he dropped the "Alfred" as "John" sounded better.

"Chums" - "Scout" - "British Boys Paper" - "Boys Realm" - "Boys Magazine" - "Sexton Blake Library" - "Pals" - "Boys Friend Library" - "Thriller" - "Detective Weekly" - "Modern Boy" - "Boys Wonder Library" - "Thriller Library" - "Football and Sports Library" - "Western Library" - are just a few of the boys publications for which he has written that I can bring to mind.

As already mentioned John Hunter has a great sense of humour, and I recall with great amusement the stories he told me about - Ladbroke Black (a personal friend of his), Coutts Brisbane (an Australian) and Anthony (Tony) Parsons - all of whom wrote for the "Sexton Blake Library" prior to the 1940 war.

Nowadays in semi-retirement, and doing, at times, Newspaper work, I shall always remember John Hunter as the most friendliest of authors.

End

ENGLISH FRIENDS PLEASE NOTE. When paying for Golden Hours Magazine, please send a MONEY ORDER and NOT a POSTAL NOTE. It makes it much easier to cash in Australia. THANKS -- ED.

SPOTLIGHT ON W.O.G. LOFTS.

by Derek Adley

Many readers of Bill Lofts articles have from time to time expressed the desire to know a little more about him, and, as I probably know him better than most other collectors, Syd Smyth has called upon me to give a little information about him. I will therefore do my best to do him justice.

Bill was born on the 2nd September 1923 at St. Pancras, London and was one of four children, there being two younger brothers and an elder sister. His schooldays were spent at St. John's Wood L.C.C. School, where he had quite a good record at football and other games and sports; in fact he was successful in winning several prizes for running. He also had quite a good singing voice at that time for on occasions he was selected for the choir at St. Paul's Cathedral. Prior to leaving school he was for a time chosen as a prefect. (a Wingate or a Loder I wonder - sorry, Bill)

On leaving school he had several jobs of a very varied nature - from cooking to messenger work - but eventually he settled down in the engineering trade and has just recently completed 20 years service for the same firm.

In 1942 he had reached military age and was called up for the Royal Artillery. He served in the far east in Burma, in the war against the Japanese, and it was here, it is interesting to note, that his first real encounter with Sexton Blake began for this was his reading materiel during what leisure moments he had in the Burmese Jungle.

Eventually Bill was invalided home in very poor health and was strongly advised by the army doctors to take up some hobby to take his mind off things. He began to devote a great deal of his time in trying to collect all the back issues of the Sexton Blake Library, and he did this by looking round the old market places and second hand shops. In due course this led to him contacting Herbert Leckenby and quite naturally his introduction to the world of the Old Boy's Book Collectors and a hobby that was to keep him busy for many an hour in the days to come.

Bill became intrigued by the knowledge of the old papers that other collectors had and began to want to find out more inside information himself. One of his favourite Blake authors was John Hunter and Bill decided to write to him, and from then on received many interesting letters in return and eventually met John Hunter at his home.

Since that date he has met and interviewed many authors, editors, and artists, some of whom are now personal friends of his. To give a full list of those he has met would take a great deal of research in itself, but here at least is a selection of those I can think of:-

John Hunter; George E. Rochester; George Rees; W. Howard Baker; Arthur Maclean; Jack Trevor Story; H.W. Twyman; Percy Clarke; Basil Reynolds; Eric Parker; Jackie Hunt; E.L. Mackeag; G.R. Samways; Maurice Down; C.H. Chapman; Captain Aitken; Fred Gordon Cook; Rossiter Shepherd; and John W. Wheway.

I personally met Bill Lofts about four years ago and since that date we have met at least one evening a week. I think I can safely say that the topic of interest we both share is not the devotion to one section alone, but every aspect of the hobby - that is to say all old boy's books with the accent on statistics and the love of solving the long standing mysteries, and it is that which has given Bill his greatest interest.

Many collectors have reasons to be thankful to Bill for the help and information he has given them, apart from his articles through the usual channels of the C.D. and S.P.C. etc. Perhaps they do not quite realise however the tremendous amount of his spare time that he actually gives up on their behalf, such as checking information in the "time wasting" British Museum - sometimes to his own personal cost.

Perhaps the biggest disappointment Bill has had, is, after sending information to another collector that has cost him time and money to obtain, is to receive no reply or acknowledgement for many weeks, months, and in some cases never.

Several collectors too, including myself, have been helped by Bill in personal affairs and while we cannot all always agree on everything, I think it must be generally agreed that Bill Lofts deserves a place on the list of those who have done more than their best in the interest of the hobby, and when we read his articles in future let's pause for a moment and try and imagine the lengths that he has gone to, to produce something for us as authentic and accurate as is humanly possible.

End

SHARP-EYED STAN NICHOLS.

As far as we here in Australia ever knew it was only officially revealed about 1945 that Charles Hamilton and Martin Clifford were only one person. Yet this dual personality was authentically revealed by an editor of an A.P. paper as far back as 1907.

Recently I acquired in Stan Nichols bookshop, No.170 New Series of the "MARVEL" dated 27/4/07. On Page.387 is an illustration from the current Gem story "Our Captain" and, believe it or not, its Author's name is given as Charles Hamilton. On his Gem was Martin Clifford and so a keen-eyed youngster would be faced with two conclusions. A misprint or another name for his favourite author Charles Hamilton. Anyway, its a wonder the mystery was kept so complete after such a give-away. Has this been noticed before by English collectors? Perhaps my pleasant thrill has been experienced by others and perhaps many years ago?

ERNIE CARTER'S COLUMN.

From Here, There and Everywhere.

THE CASE OF THE UNKNOWN ARTIST.

For many years it has been a puzzle to collectors as to the identity of the artist who took over from Arthur Jones in the Nelson Lee Library in 1927; and now by chance this artist has been found. In the Collectors Digest annual for 1959 I gave the following names - Arthur Jones, Val Reading, E.E. Bascoe, R.G. McDonald, Kenneth Brookes, Saville Lumley and Fred Bennett. I knew at the time there was one missing but did not have the slightest idea as to who he was. Readers of the Nelson Lee on October 15th 1927 picked up their copy and knew at once there was something strange. Arthur Jones after 12 years of illustrating the St. Franks stories had gone. It may have been a coincidence but a new editor too, had just taken over.

The name of the new artist has remained a mystery since then and many a discussion I've had with collectors here in Australia. However, whilst looking through Volume 4 of the "Champion" number 83, dated August 25th 1923, I came across a story entitled "Harvester Hal" by Howard Grant. The illustrator was a C. Ambler. At once the drawings seemed familiar. I didn't have to compare them with the N.L. illustrations but I did. I found the figures almost identical and I knew the name of the unknown artist had been solved after 33 years!

Without doubt I can say his name is C. Ambler. His full Christian name I do not know.

THE RETURN OF WARWICK JARDINE.

It was most interesting to see the return of Warwick Jardine to the Sexton Blake Library.

Once again I turn to the early issues of the "Champion". In those early days he wrote under his real name, Francis Warwick, and worked with his father, Sydney, in nearly all of his stories. In No.30 of the "Champion" on page 118, a photo appears of one of them, but I presume this to be the father, Sydney. Apparently they were living on the Isle of Wight in 1922 as they were interviewed there by a member of the A.P. Staff. This is what he said -

"Well, I found Messrs. Sydney and Francis Warwick comfortably seated in deck chairs on the Sandown beach. As it happens, they were engrossed in the latest issue of the "Champion". Mr. Sydney Warwick told me he had written many novels which have been published by Cassells, Stanley Paul, etc. and he also had done serials for the "Daily Mail", "Evening News", and "Daily Mirror".

"His most successful, in the way of boys' stories, have been "Secrets of a Great City" and "Behind the Barred Door" both published in the "Jester". But his greatest enjoyment was writing in conjunction with his son (Warwick Jardine) "The Secret of the Lost River" and "Sinister Island" both of which appeared in the early issues of the "Champion". "

Sydney passed away in 1954. This is what Addington Symonds said of him at the time -

"In 1922 the first year of the "Champions" flamboyant career, Mr. Willie Back, one of the Directors of the Amalgamated Press, introduced me to an elderly gentleman of grave Victorian courtesy, with a quiet cultured voice and charming smile. His name was Sydney Warwick and he inquired diffidently if I would be interested in an adventure serial which he, in collaboration with his son, Francis, proposed to write. That serial appeared in the "Champion" under the title of "The Secret of the Lost River". It was a great success. Others followed, such as "Sinister Island" and "The Phantom Isle".

"I saw a lot of Sydney Warwick, met his family, his wife and two sons, Francis and William. I lost touch with him when I went to South Africa in 1930 and now news of his death comes, a great and grievous shock."

Now Francis has returned to the fold with his story entitled "Death Her Destination" in No.483 of the current Sexton Blake Library.

It has been a long road since he penned those fine adventure stories in the "Champion" in 1922 and 1923 with his father, and I am sure Collectors all over the world will be glad to see there are some of the old authors still going strong, although their ranks are now getting very thin.

So, Welcome back Warwick Jardine!

End

THE EDITOR

apologises for the very long delay between numbers 3 and 4 of the Golden Hours Magazine. I'm afraid it will still be very irregular in appearance but now that I am doing the duplicating myself, with help from club members, things will be much better and No.5 should appear within 3 months. So keep your subs. up and if you feel like doing an article for Golden Hours please get in touch with me. Also, original suggestions would be welcomed for our covers. Any original sketches or photographs of well-known personalities of the papers can usually be reproduced, in some cases in better state than the original. And please show your C.H. to your interested friends, and it may grow a little stronger.

A TRIBUTE TO THE CHATTERBOX.

By Arthur V. Holland.

The other day I was glancing through my treasured stack of Collectors Digest Monthlies, when in the yearly issue for 1953 I came across Gerry Allison's excellent article on the Chatterbox Annual. He considered that the Chatterbox fully deserved to be remembered with affection and respect. I agree with him wholeheartedly.

I will not go into the history of this Annual, which has been so admirably dealt with by Gerry, but will tell of the pleasure and help I have derived from this Annual of 416 pages, way back in the years of 1912 to 1916.

Charles Dickens declared that his love for good books was one of his best defences against temptation. Cicero was willing to give up all that he owned, in order that he might live and die amongst his books. After returning to Abbotsford to die, Sir Walter Scott had his servant wheel him into his library. There he burst into tears as he bade his lifelong friends on the bookshelves a sorrowful farewell.

Charles Trevelyan said, "If anybody made me the greatest king that ever lived, with palaces, and gardens, fine dinners and wine, and coaches; if I could not read books, I would not be king. I would rather be a poor man in a garret with plenty of books than a king who did not like reading."

I believe that true wealth is largely a matter of personality, and of the inner attitude towards the world in which we live. There are those who have money, but no true wealth. Others have true wealth, but no money. I have known rich folk with beautiful homes and gardens, but with no appreciation of flowers, and I have seen poor people who did not own a foot of ground, who could walk down the street and feel such a keen enjoyment of every flower, such a thrill over the beauty of a graceful tree, or a song of a bird, that they proved themselves wealthy indeed. For the real wealth is not simply what exists, but how much of it we can appreciate and use, and draw upon for inspiration.

Reading will educate us, entertain us, broaden our minds, and save us from boredom. An appreciation of what is true, and beautiful in literature is a passport to one of the purest pleasures known to mankind.

The Chatterbox Annuals in my boyhood, instilled within me a love and hunger for good literature. Each volume contained one or two serials of outstanding merit. A large number of complete stories of all kinds for boys and girls of all ages. Excellently illustrated, articles covered a wide field such as adventure, travel, discovery, art, science, history, architecture, biography, literature, nature and so on. There were articles on how to make things and a generous selection of poems and tit-bits from the world's best books.

The Chatterbox was a very well-produced volume, profusely illustrated and each issue contained twelve brightly coloured plates. The moral tone was high without being too goody-goody.

Yes, I greatly cherish these Chetterboxes of mine, they developed my taste for the very best that is in the wide field of literature.

I feel sorry for the youth of to-day. They have no Chums Annual, Boys Own Annual, Greyfriar's Holiday Annual, the Captain and such-like.

I recently read in a Sydney newspaper where someone stated that sixty per cent of periodicals on sale at the average newsagent are morally unfit for young minds.

Oh! for the clean wholesome reading of the young people's Classics of yesterday.

End

COMMENTS FROM READERS ON PREVIOUS ISSUES. (Cont.)

BILL GANDER. Yesterday I received my copy of Number 2 GOLDEN HOURS MAGAZINE --- to be correct, it came this morning. Thanks a lot. I think it's a very fine effort.

In particular I liked MEMORIES OF THE MAGNET OFFICE and AFTER THE LORD MAYOR'S SHOW.

C.F.F. RICKARD. Copies of No.1 and 2 arrived today. A feast of excellent reading! Congratulations on your fine issues. I'm not much of a Sexton Blake reader, but "Sexton Blake in Australia" was a delightful piece of writing.

RON HODGSON. The C.H.M. arrived and, as usual, was chock full of good things. Cover of No.3 is alone worth the money. Although the original was published before my time, what happy memories a Gem Christmas No. brings back. Hope you haven't offended any Holmes and Blake fans with the leading article which was wonderful. Bette's article on Christmas at Baker Street was jolly good and caught the real Xmas atmosphere. The only trouble was that it was too short. Vic Colby's review of S.B.L.465 prompted me to search round for a copy, but St. Gerlicks is a bit too improbable. One can hardly imagine the Greyfriars juniors acting that way and I much prefer Marie Rivers to M'lle Colette. By the way, Harold Griffiths article in No.2 tempted me to get hold of some CHUMS containing S.Walkeys yarns and also to re-read Geoff. Hockleys article in one of the previous C.D. Annuals.

That, I think, is the prime purpose of our magazine articles - to send people back to old friends or to help them find new ones - ED.

Well, I must say, after compiling these, that if I'd ever thought of giving up the Mag. (which I haven't) these comments on only 3 issues would spur me on. Everyone has been very kind, with a bad comment hard to find. I wish there had been one. I'd have loved to have printed it. - ED.

VIC. COLBY'S COMMENTS

S.B.L. 467 "The Devil to Pay" by Rex Dolphin.

Reminiscent of some of the fine John Drummond (John Newton Chance) descriptive passages of the S.B.L. in the 1940's are the three following examples of Rex Dolphin's "theme on leaves":-

"Outside a sudden wind brushed the tops of the trees and dying leaves scudded dancing downward".

"The trees dripped the remnants of the evening's rain on to him; dying leaves whispered past, his shoes slipped on the rain-matted dead leaves lying on the half-seen track."

"The tree-tops moved reluctantly under the November gusts, and the drifting leaves danced brightly in the Bentley's headlights, ending their short spell of freedom on the wet road, to be pulped by the weather and the infrequent traffic."

No serious novel contains finer descriptive passages than this one. Examples of picturesque phrasing abound:-

"dark, tree-tunnelled, winding roads", "curving, oak-flanked track", "stained, lichen rusted stone flags", "stone figures covered with fungus and eaten with age."

All this, and a story eerie with black magic, and loaded with suspense and excitement. For evidence of the really compelling power of Rex Dolphin's narrative, read chapter two of this story. The sinister background, revolting murder, grim primeval battle for survival, breath-snatching pursuit by car and its horrifying termination, brought me to my feet in agitation and admiration.

On page 22, Blake and Paula had been examining the scene of the crime, and decided help would have to be summoned. "You don't think one of us should stay here?" asked Paula. "Which one?" asked Blake "I don't think I'd care for you to stay nor would I like you to run the gauntlet of what may be outside. Better for us both to go." You didn't have that trouble when you used to take Tinker with you, did you, Blake old pal?

S.B.L. 468 "Thief of Clubs" by Gilbert Johns.

Compare the opening words of this story "They hanged Mark Scanlon at 8 o'clock on the morning of a day in mid-winter in Pentonville Prison." with those of S.B.L. 2nd series 481 (6/6/35) "The Cottage of Terror" by Donald Stuart:- "They hanged the man called Conner on a raw November morning, when the fog was so thick that the crowd of morbid sightseers who had waited outside the prison gates to watch the notice go up could scarcely see the board."

Strange is it not, that two S.B.L.'s 25 years apart should commence with exactly the same words! I wonder if Gilbert Johns was a Blake reader in those days, and that perhaps those opening words had remained lodged in his mind. They certainly had in mine, for I remembered with ease where I had seen this rather striking story-opening before.

Gilbert John's story was extremely readable and enjoyable. The pace was brisk, the characters most interesting and the situations eminently satisfying.

S.B.L. 469 "Shot from the Derk" by Philip Chambers.

When I started to read this story, I thought that it dealt with a future invasion of Britain. Instead, it referred to the Saxon invasion of the 5th century. A unique, and excellent opening.

A Romano-British helmet of that period, bearing an inscription in cypher, had been dug up near Florence in 1960. The inscription referred to the hiding place of Roman Army pay in gold coin which had been left behind when the army was obliged to quit Britain. As the gold exceeded half a million in value, some fierce competition for it took place.

A particularly revolting character was introduced in this story:- a ferret-faced, mean-eyed youth with dark red hair, carefully permed and curled falling on to the collar of his forty-guinea Italian suit. His laughter was a loud, raucous, hissing sound, loaded with obscenity. He drooled with eager anticipation at the prospect of savagely mutilating poor Marion Lang with the cut-throat razor trembling in his hand, licking his lips, piggy, beady eyes burning exultantly. "Gimme the word to cut her up!" he howled, as he jerked, leaped and twitched in front of his cowering victim. "You promised I could cut her up". It was the anguished cry of an addict, the cry of a man who had to sate his desire or suffer unendurable frustration. As this creature was merely incarcerated at the end of the story, whereas the other 8 members of the gang, including the leader, were wiped out to a man, it is possible the author is saving the razor boy for re-use later on.

S.B.L. 470 "Pursuit to Algeria" by Arthur Maclean.

I have nothing but praise for this great story. Commencing on the channel coast of Occupied France in 1943, this story moved in time and space to Algeria, North Africa in 1961.

Then unfolded an epic of the French Foreign Legion with Sexton Blake as an enlisted soldier on an assignment for Craille of the Secret Service, that in my opinion surpassed Beau Geste, and every other Legion tale that I can recall.

What a sterling set of characters! Sergeant Sven Petersen the tough giant Swede; Colonel Henri Broussac the thin, grey-haired officer haggard by fear, knowing his weakness as a soldier, and in every situation afraid of disastrous public exposure of his self-convinced impotence; Major Rodin who had become insane due to the barbaric treatment he had suffered at the hands of the Algerian Terrorists, and whose madness led to the death by the score of fellow Legionnaires. Then there was the weak and windy American, Casey, who was branded by his comrades as "all gab and no guts." Last of all was the violent German, Zimmermann. A great bull of a man, a devil incarnate when drunk and angry, he was never out of trouble. Through the coward Casey, Zimmermann was flogged till his back was raw, yet when Casey collapsed in the sand, it was Zimmermann who shouldered the unconscious burden, and marched erect, his lacerated back bleeding through his uniform tunic.

In the battle of the Oasis, Blake and Zimmermann were notable in a smashing, lunging, killing partnership. It was, however, Zimmermann's effort to return to the Fort alone for help that stamped him as indomitable. Caught by terrorists, tortured, mutilated beyond recognition, and left for dead, he nevertheless worked his way towards the Fort through sand and dust leaving a trail of blood, his last dying action fulfilling his desperate mission.

Later it was the gallantry of Sexton Blake that saved the day. He charged across open ground and up a cliff-face to get above the enemy and to remove the pressure from his pinned-down comrades.

Blake successfully accomplished Craille's mission, and for exceptional valour in battle, gained the Legion d' Honneur, and Croix de Guerre with palm. Arthur Maclean himself should have been awarded a medal for this stirring, outstanding story.

S.B.L. 472 "Assault and Pepper" by Jack Trevor Story.

Mr. Story built Miss Johns into a nice, sympathetic character, so I felt rather sick in both heart and stomach when I was treated to a detailed and gory description of the cutting, stabbing, bleed'ing and dismemberment of this poor lass at the hands of the pernicious Mr. Pepper. It was all too pathetic, and in horrible taste. Even the finding of six blonde and bloodied heads in polythene bags later in the tale seemed tame in comparison.

The most appealing feature of this tale was the warm comradeship of Miss Winnipeg, the redhead, and Tinker. They made a delightful couple, and it is a pity that Tinker was destined to lose her.

End