

# **The British Boy Detective: Origins, Forms, Functions, 1865-1940**

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## **The British Boy Detective: Origins, Forms, Functions, 1865-1940**

### **Summary**

This thesis explores the early development of the British boy detective in ‘penny dreadfuls’ and story papers from 1865-1940 and considers how the construction of this figure addresses contemporary social anxieties surrounding boyhood and performs an ideological function for boy readers.

Chapter 1 focuses on how the representation of the boy detective in the ‘penny-dreadful’ *The Boy Detective* (1865-6) responds to anxieties about juvenile delinquency, particularly the perceived corrupting influence of ‘penny dreadfuls’ upon boy readers.

Chapter 2 examines the first appearances of the adult professional detective’s boy assistant in the Harmsworths’ boys’ story papers of the 1890s and early twentieth century. Here, the representation of the detective’s assistant is linked to the emergence of anxieties surrounding adolescence.

Chapter 3 explores the centralisation of the professional boy detective, as either assistant or independent investigator, in story-paper narratives in the first decade of the twentieth century. These texts are considered in relation to anxieties about the impending threat of war and boys’ future role in the defence of a declining British Empire.

Chapter 4 explores the increasing restrictions placed upon the professional boy detective in the post-1910 story-paper narratives in which he is largely confined to the assistant role. I make connections between this subsidiary position and the supporting defence roles to which real-life boys were confined in preparation for and during the First World War.

Chapter 5 focuses upon the fictional boy detective’s relocation from a professional, adult arena to an amateur, child-centric environment in schoolboy

detective narratives. This transition is considered in relation to childhood's increasing distinction from adulthood in the early twentieth century.

Overall, the thesis considers the boy detective as a dual figure, acting simultaneously as a threat in need of containment and a boyhood role model and thus utilised as both an expression of and antidote to the contemporary adult anxieties about boyhood.

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## **Introduction: The British Boy Detective: Origins, Forms, Functions, 1865-1940**

### **I: Origins: Revising the history of juvenile detective fiction**

Much attention has been paid by critics to the origins and early development of the detective genre. Many studies have charted the genre's journey from the *Newgate Calendars* of the eighteenth and nineteenth century to Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes narratives in the late nineteenth century and the clue-puzzle novels of Agatha Christie in the early twentieth century and beyond. These studies identify landmark texts and authors such as William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794); the *Mémoires* (1828-9) of Eugène François Vidocq, retired head of the Parisian Sûreté; Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin stories (1841-5); the Newgate novels of Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Charles Dickens and William Thackeray; the sensation fiction of Wilkie Collins; and the *romans policiers* of Eugène Sue and Émile Gaboriau.<sup>1</sup> Other critics offer detailed accounts of less familiar early detective fiction: in *The Rise of the Detective in Early Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction*, Heather Worthington focuses upon the periodical literature of the early to mid-nineteenth century; Joseph A. Kestner's *Sherlock's Sisters* addresses the origins and early development of the female detective in British crime fiction; in *A Counter-History of Crime Fiction*, Maurizio Ascari explores the presence of the supernatural, the gothic and the sensational in early crime fiction; Stephen Knight

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<sup>1</sup> For examples of studies which trace this history, see Maurizio Ascari (ed.), *Two Centuries of Detective Fiction: A New Comparative Approach* (Bologna: COTEPRA, University of Bologna, 2000); Lawrence Frank, *Victorian Detective Fiction and the Nature of Evidence: The Scientific Investigations of Poe, Dickens, and Doyle* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Stephen Knight, *Crime Fiction since 1800: Detection, Death, Diversity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); A. E. Murch, *The Development of the Detective Novel* (London: Peter Owen, 1965 [1958]); Ian Ousby, *Bloodhounds of Heaven: The Detective in English Fiction from Godwin to Doyle* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1976); Martin Priestman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Charles J. Rzepka, *Detective Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005); Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (eds), *A Companion to Crime Fiction* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); and Julian Symons, *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel*, 3<sup>rd</sup> revised edn (New York and Tokyo: Warner Books, 1993).

focuses on nineteenth-century city mysteries set in London, Paris, Philadelphia, New York and Melbourne in *The Mysteries of the Cities* (2012).<sup>2</sup>

Juvenile detective fiction, however, remains largely unacknowledged in these numerous accounts of the origins and development of detective or, more broadly, crime fiction. Julian Symons, one of the few critics of adult crime fiction to acknowledge its juvenile equivalent, dismisses boys' story-paper detectives such as Sexton Blake, Nelson Lee, Dixon Hawke and Falcon Swift as inferior imitators of Sherlock Holmes, concluding that the 'crudity' of the texts in which these characters appear 'precludes them from consideration'.<sup>3</sup> In recent years, there have been a few attempts to address the omission of juvenile detective fiction from the wider examination of crime and detective fiction: Heather Worthington's *Key Concepts in Crime Fiction* (2011) includes a section on the development of children's crime fiction; Christopher Routledge contributes an essay on crime and detective fiction for young readers to *A Companion to Crime Fiction* (2010); Ilana Nash provides an essay on the relationship between American teen detectives and the concept of teenage delinquency for the *Cambridge Companion to American Crime Fiction* (2010).<sup>4</sup> In 2009, *Clues: A Journal of Detection* devoted a special issue to girl detectives but, otherwise, the majority of

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<sup>2</sup> See Heather Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective in Early Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Joseph A. Kestner, *Sherlock's Sisters: The British Female Detective, 1864-1913* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003); Maurizio Ascari, *A Counter-History of Crime Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); and Stephen Knight, *The Mysteries of the Cities: Urban Crime Fiction in the Nineteenth Century* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2012). See also Stephen Knight, 'A Tale of Three Cities: Megalopolitan Mysteries of the 1840s', in Lucy Andrew and Catherine Phelps (eds), *Crime Fiction in the City: Capital Crimes* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013), pp. 126-37.

<sup>3</sup> Symons, *Bloody Murder*, p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> See Heather Worthington, *Key Concepts in Crime Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 97-103; Christopher Routledge, 'Crime and Detective Literature for Young Readers', in Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (eds), *A Companion to Crime Fiction* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 321-31; and Ilana Nash, 'Teenage Detectives and Teenage Delinquents', in Catherine Ross Nickerson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to American Crime Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 72-85.

articles featured in the journal are dedicated to adult crime fiction.<sup>5</sup> Even in critical material that addresses juvenile detective fiction, therefore, its adult counterpart still commands most of the attention.

Instead, most research on juvenile detective fiction appears in books dedicated to this form, or to children's literature more generally, ensuring that detective fiction for children is frequently discussed in isolation from its adult counterpart. There are two distinctive biases in existing research into anglophone juvenile detective fiction: firstly, the girl detective has received much more attention than her male equivalent; secondly, American juvenile detective fiction is more frequently discussed than British examples of the genre.<sup>6</sup> This thesis seeks to redress this imbalance by focusing instead upon the neglected early development of the juvenile detective genre in Britain, which began in

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<sup>5</sup> Other than the themed girl detectives issue, *Clues* has only featured two articles on juvenile detective fiction, including my own on *The Boy Detective*, and two reviews, since its inception in 1980. See Lucy Andrew, "Away with Dark Shadders!" Juvenile Detection versus Juvenile Crime in *The Boy Detective; or The Crimes of London. A Romance of Modern Times*, *Clues: A Journal of Detection*, 30.1 (Spring 2012), 18-29; Laura Russell, 'A Judy Bolton Mystery – "Blacklisted Classics"', *Clues: A Journal of Detection*, 2.1 (Spring/Summer 1981), 35-44; Jason David Hall, 'Marilyn S. Greenwald, *The Secret of the Hardy Boys: Leslie McFarlane and the Stratemeyer Syndicate*', *Clues: A Journal of Detection*, 24.2 (Winter 2006), 90; and Marty S. Knepper, 'Andrew Fleming, dir. *Nancy Drew*', *Clues: A Journal of Detection*, 26.2 (Autumn 2008), 99-101.

<sup>6</sup> For examples of studies focusing on the girl detective, see Carolyn Carpan, *Sisters, Schoolgirls and Sleuths: Girls' Series Books in America* (Lanham, MD, Toronto and Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2009), pp. 49-65 and pp. 84-100; Michael G. Cornelius and Melanie E. Gregg (eds), *Nancy Drew and Her Sister Sleuths* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2010); Bobbie Ann Mason, *The Girl Sleuth* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1995 [1975]); Anne Scott MacLeod, *American Childhood: Essays on Children's Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Athens, GA and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1994), pp. 30-48; Sally E. Parry, 'The Secret of the Feminist Heroine: The Search for Values in Nancy Drew and Judy Bolton', in Sherrie A. Inness (ed.), *Nancy Drew and Company: Culture, Gender and Girls' Series* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press), pp. 145-58; Melanie Rehak, *Girl Sleuth: Nancy Drew and the Women Who Created Her* (Orlando: Harcourt Books, 2005); Deborah L. Siegel, 'Nancy Drew as New Girl Wonder: Solving It All for the 1930s', in Sherrie A. Inness (ed.), *Nancy Drew and Company: Culture, Gender and Girls' Series* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press), pp. 159-82; Leona W. Fisher (ed.), *Clues: A Journal of Detection, Theme Issue: The Girl Sleuth*, 27.1 (Spring 2009). The Stratemeyer syndicate's Nancy Drew features heavily in these publications and the focus is almost exclusively upon American girls' series fiction. By contrast, there are only three notable examples of studies based solely on the boy detective. See Mark Connelly, *The Hardy Boys Mysteries, 1927-1979: A Cultural and Literary History* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2008); Michael G. Cornelius (ed.), *The Boy Detectives: Essays on the Hardy Boys and Others* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2010); and Marilyn S. Greenwald, *The Secret of the Hardy Boys: Leslie McFarlane and the Stratemeyer Syndicate* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004). These studies have a similar focus to their girl detective equivalents: a dominant Stratemeyer series – this time *The Hardy Boys* – and American juvenile series fiction.

the 1860s with the introduction of the boy detective in the ‘penny-dreadful’ format and continued in the boys’ story papers from the 1890s. Much of the previous scholarship on anglophone juvenile detective fiction suggests that the genre originated with the popular series fiction of the Stratemeyer syndicate in America – such as Nancy Drew (1930-present) and the Hardy Boys (1927-present). The British history, when covered, generally starts later, with Enid Blyton’s Famous Five (1942-63) and her other mystery and detective series.<sup>7</sup> Routledge offers a broader account of the genre’s development, including the role played by American dime novels and comics, and Mark Twain’s adult novel *Tom Sawyer, Detective* (1896), as well as European texts such as Erich Kästner’s *Emil and the Detectives* (1929) and Hergé [Georges Remy]’s Tintin series of comics (1929-76).<sup>8</sup> Turning his attention to Britain, Routledge acknowledges the influence upon the development of juvenile detective fiction of Sherlock Holmes’s Baker Street Irregulars and Robert Baden-Powell’s *Scouting for Boys* – sources that I will focus upon in chapters 2 and 3 of the thesis. However, Routledge overlooks the ‘penny-dreadful’ and story-paper origins of the genre, instead identifying the series fiction of Richmal Crompton, W. E. Johns and, most significantly, Enid Blyton as the earliest British examples of juvenile detective fiction.<sup>9</sup>

Several critics have focused upon ‘penny-dreadful’ and story-paper fiction for boys, most notably John Springhall, Kelly Boyd, Robert J. Kirkpatrick, Kirsten Drotner

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of Enid Blyton’s mystery and detective fiction, see David Rudd, ‘Digging up the Family Plot: Secrets, Mystery, and the Blytonesque’, in Adrienne Gavin and Christopher Routledge (eds.), *Mystery in Children’s Literature: From the Rational to the Supernatural* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp.82-99 and David Rudd, *Enid Blyton and the Mystery of Children’s Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Routledge discusses *Emil and the Detectives* in more detail in Christopher Routledge, ‘Children’s Detective Fiction and the “Perfect Crime” of Adulthood’, in Adrienne Gavin and Christopher Routledge (eds.), *Mystery in Children’s Literature: From the Rational to the Supernatural* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 64-81. The essays in this collection offer a broader spectrum of material for discussion than the series and topics traditionally covered in juvenile detective fiction, but many of the essays focus on mystery rather than detective fiction.

<sup>9</sup> See Routledge, ‘Crime and Detective Literature for Young Readers’.

and E. S. Turner.<sup>10</sup> While Springhall, Boyd, Kirkpatrick and Drotner briefly acknowledge popular detective fiction for boys, however, only Turner, in *Boys Will Be Boys* (1948), explores the genre in any detail, devoting two chapters to an outline of several detective series featured in the boys' story papers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> Turner's chapters offer a useful overview of some story-paper detective series for boys, but he does not focus directly on the figure of boy detective and this character's potential social significance. By contrast, rather than just offering a survey of early British boy detective fiction, this thesis seeks to examine the constructions of British boyhood created by the adult, middle-class producers of this literature and articulated through the figure of the boy detective. In particular, I will explore how boy detective fiction, published in cheap weekly 'penny dreadfuls' and story papers, addresses contemporary social anxieties, especially those surrounding boyhood and the boy's transition to manhood. I will consider the ideological function

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<sup>10</sup> See John Springhall, "A Life Story for the People"? Edwin J. Brett and the London "Low-Life" Penny Dreadfuls of the 1860s', *Victorian Studies*, 33.2 (Winter 1990), 223-46; John Springhall, 'Disreputable Adolescent Reading: Low-Life, Women-in-Peril and School Sport "Penny Dreadfuls" from the 1860s to the 1890s', in Mike Huggins and J. A. Mangan (eds), *Disreputable Pleasures: Less Virtuous Victorians at Play* (London and New York: Frank Cass, 2004), pp. 103-23 (p. 108); John Springhall, "Disseminating Impure Literature": The "Penny Dreadful" Publishing Business Since 1860', *Economic History Review*, 47.3 (August 1994), 567-84; John Springhall, "Healthy Papers for Manly Boys": Imperialism and Race in the Harmsworths' Halfpenny Boys' Papers of the 1890s and 1900s', in Jeffrey Richards (ed.), *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), pp. 107-25; John Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics, Panics: Penny Gaffs to Gangsta-Rap, 1830-1996* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998); Kelly Boyd, 'Knowing Your Place: The Tensions of Manliness in Boys' Story Papers, 1918-39', in Michael Rope and John Tosh (eds), *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 145-67; Kelly Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper in Britain: A Cultural History, 1855-1940* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Robert J. Kirkpatrick, *From the Penny Dreadful to the Ha'penny Dreadfuller: A Bibliographic History of the Boys' Periodicals in Britain. 1762-1950* (London: The British Library; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2013); Kirsten Drotner, *English Children and Their Magazines, 1751-1945* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988); and E. S. Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys: Sexton Blake, Billy Bunter, Dick Barton, et al.* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976 [1948]).

<sup>11</sup> See Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, pp. 126-80. Similarly, Patricia Craig and Mary Cadogan discuss British story-paper incarnations of the girl detective from the 1920s onwards, both in their study of girls' series fiction and their book on female detectives. See Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig, *You're A Brick Angela!: A New Look at Girls' Fiction from 1839 to 1975* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1976), pp. 309-32 and Patricia Craig and Mary Cadogan, *The Lady Investigates: Women Detectives and Spies in Fiction* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1981), pp. 113-29.

of the texts and, primarily, the boy detective's status as a potential role model for boy readers, promoting certain values and conditioning them to behave in specific ways.

## **II: Forms: Texts, authors and publishers**

The literature explored in this thesis is detective fiction aimed primarily at boys and which features a boy detective character. Chapter 1 focuses in depth on one particular text: *The Boy Detective; or, The Crimes of London. A Romance of Modern Times* (1865-6) – a serialised novel published in weekly penny parts, known as a 'penny dreadful'. 'Penny dreadfuls' were aimed predominantly at working-class boys and frequently featured boy criminal heroes who, middle-class moralists argued, incited these impressionable boy readers to commit crimes themselves.<sup>12</sup> *The Boy Detective*, therefore, not only deserves attention as the first appearance of the boy detective hero in British children's literature, but also for its direct rebellion against the usual 'penny dreadful', which had induced a moral panic about the link between pernicious literature and juvenile delinquency. While the text appropriates the format of the 'penny dreadful', its differing content – in favouring a detective protagonist and denouncing criminal characters – ensures that it has a more positive function than its criminal-centric counterparts. The literary and social significance of *The Boy Detective*, as well as its considerable length, the prominence of its boy detective hero and the fact that it remains largely unacknowledged by critics, are sufficient justification for devoting an entire chapter to this text.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See Patrick A. Dunae, 'Penny Dreadfuls: Late Nineteenth-Century Boys' Literature and Crime', *Victorian Studies*, 22.2 (Winter 1979), 133-50 and Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, pp. 71-97.

<sup>13</sup> Jess Nevins includes an entry on Ernest Keen, hero of *The Boy Detective*, in his *Encyclopedia of Fantastic Victoriana* (Austin: MonkeyBrain Books, 2005), pp. 458-64. John Springhall lists *The Boy Detective* among the disreputable 'penny-dreadful' fare of the Newsagents' Publishing Company, but he does not provide any analysis of the text. See Springhall, 'Disreputable Adolescent Reading', p. 108 and Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p. 55. Drawing upon my archival research,

After *The Boy Detective*, there was a gap of several decades before detective fiction became firmly established in publications aimed at boys. The other literary material analysed in this thesis is taken from cheap weekly boys' story papers from the 1890s onwards, where detective fiction began to flourish in the wake of the success of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories in the *Strand Magazine* from the early 1890s. The majority of the texts that I examine in chapters 2-5 are taken from the juvenile story papers of Alfred and Harold Harmsworth's publishing company, Harmsworth Bros. Ltd, renamed the Amalgamated Press in 1902. This is where detective fiction for boys first flourished, particularly in the Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee series, which were launched in 1893 and 1894 respectively and appeared regularly in the Amalgamated Press story papers until the majority of them folded in 1939-40. The Harmsworths' story papers, starting at a halfpenny in the 1890s, were cheaper than those of most of their competitors and were targeted at working-class boy readers – the group that were at the centre of adult anxieties about boyhood in the mid- to late nineteenth century. The Harmsworths' story papers dominated the market from the 1890s to the 1920s, when they were overtaken in popularity by the offerings of D. C. Thomson of Dundee.<sup>14</sup> By then, however, the boy detective had long been established in the Amalgamated Press papers and it was here that the significant developments in the representation of the boy detective and his fiction occurred. Detective narratives appeared in papers belonging to other publishers, including those of D. C. Thomson, but these stories simply copied trends which had already been established in the Amalgamated Press papers. The Harmsworth material is, therefore, the focus of chapters 2-5.

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Heather Worthington acknowledges *The Boy Detective* in her brief history of children's crime fiction in *Key Concepts in Crime Fiction*, p. 98. The British Library published a facsimile edition of *The Boy Detective* in 2010 as part of their Historical Collection digitisation programme, but no critical notes were produced to accompany the text.

<sup>14</sup> Boyd, 'Knowing Your Place', p. 148.

The ephemeral nature of this material ensures that much of it is now rare and exists only in a few private collections and library archives. Some of the fiction that I discuss is more widely available: a facsimile edition of *The Boy Detective* was published by the British Library in 2010, while selected Sexton Blake stories and school stories featured in the *Magnet* and the *Gem* are available in various anthologies.<sup>15</sup> However, the majority of my research, and particularly in chapters 2-4, was conducted at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, examining a vast range of story-paper material that only exists in its original format. Many of the texts and series discussed, therefore, particularly in chapters 3 and 4, have not received any prior attention from critics.<sup>16</sup>

The number of detective series published in these boys' story papers and the length of some of these series ensures that it is not possible to cover them all, or to focus on the series that I do select for examination in any great detail. Instead of providing a detailed history of each series, therefore, this thesis identifies trends in story-paper detective fiction, focusing upon the representation, development and function of the

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<sup>15</sup> While I have referenced the facsimile edition of *The Boy Detective* throughout this thesis, my initial research on this text was conducted with an original bound copy held in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Sexton Blake stories can be found in the following anthologies: Edwy Searles Brooks, Gwyn Evans, Rex Hardinge and Robert Murray, *Sexton Blake: The Star of the 'Union Jack'* (London: Howard Baker, 1972); Gwyn Evans and Edwy Searles Brooks, *Crime at Christmas* (London: Howard Baker, 1974); Mike Higgs (ed.), *The Sexton Blake Detective Library* (London: Hawk Books, 1989), which contains the first four volumes of the *Sexton Blake Library*; David Stuart Davies (ed.), *The Casebook of Sexton Blake* (London: Wordsworth Editions, 2009); and George Mann (ed.), *Sexton Blake, Detective* (London: Snowbooks, 2009). Howard Baker published facsimile editions of the *Magnet* (1969-86, 100 volumes), the *Gem* (1971-85, 20 volumes) and the *Nelson Lee Library* (1972-4, 3 volumes). See 'Publications' in *The Greyfriars Index* <<http://www.greyfriarsindex.co.uk/publications.htm>> [accessed 27 January 2014]. For examples, see Martin Clifford, *Tom Merry and the Night Raiders* (London: Howard Baker, 1973); Martin Clifford, *D'Arcy Maximus* (London: Howard Baker, 1980); Martin Clifford, *Tom Merry & Co. On Strike* (London: Howard Baker, 1984); Frank Richards, *The Greyfriars Second Eleven* (London: Howard Baker, 1979); Frank Richards, *Billy Bunter's Blunder* (London: Howard Baker, 1980); Frank Richards, *The Society for Reforming Billy Bunter* (London: Howard Baker, 1986); and Edwy Searles Brooks, *The Barring-Out at St Frank's* (London: Howard Baker, 1972). Stories from the *Magnet* and the *Gem* were also collected in various Howard Baker omnibuses and annuals, most notably the *Greyfriars Holiday Annual* (1973-86). See 'Howard Baker Annual & Omnibus Volumes (1972-1986)' in *The Greyfriars Index* <[http://www.greyfriarsindex.co.uk/Post1940/HB\\_Annual.htm](http://www.greyfriarsindex.co.uk/Post1940/HB_Annual.htm)> [accessed 27 January 2014]. A range of detective school stories from the Amalgamated Press papers are collected in an online database, *Friardale* <<http://www.friardale.co.uk>>, which offers digitised versions of the stories of Charles Hamilton and other Amalgamated Press authors in their original story-paper format.

<sup>16</sup> For examples, see the stories of Stanley Dare, Harry Fairfax and Bob Dawson, 'Maxennis' and Mark Youall in chapter 3 and those of Mark Youall, Joe Dale and Dan Garland, and the 'hunchback' detective in chapter 4.



fictional boy detective. One of the key tropes that I discuss is that of the adult detective/boy assistant narratives – the earliest type to feature in the Amalgamated Press story papers. In these juvenile detective series, therefore, I select for analysis stories in which the appearance of the boy assistant is particularly significant: these include first appearances of regular assistants; the emergence of a new kind of boy assistant; or stories in which the boy assistant plays a lead, or at least prominent, role. In chapter 2, this kind of selection is not necessary, as only two clear examples of the adult detective/boy assistant series emerge: Nelson Lee’s long-term assistant, Nipper, whose sole nineteenth-century appearance in the first Nelson Lee story in 1894 gains further significance when later judged against its extended and rewritten serial version, ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’ (*Boys’ Herald*, 1903-4); and Sexton Blake’s Chinese boy assistant We-wee who, in a run of stories between 1897 and 1902, precedes Blake’s long-term assistant, Tinker, who first appeared in 1904.

By contrast, the abundance of story-paper detective narratives in the early twentieth century, in the form of the increasingly popular Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee series and a great number of imitators and variants, ensures that there is much material available for analysis in chapters 3-5. Rather than attempting a detailed survey of all of this fiction, I focus instead upon texts which contribute to the formation of new trends in detective fiction and new models of the boy detective. These include the independent professional boy detective, the boy detective partnership, the young police detective and the schoolboy detective. Some of these trends last longer than others. The professional adult detective/boy assistant pattern, established in the 1890s, was utilised frequently in the Amalgamated Press papers until they folded, while the schoolboy detective model enjoyed a period of popularity in the interwar years. Other trends, such as that of the independent professional boy detective and boy detective partnership, were short-lived,

but emerged in a significant number of texts in response to specific cultural moments and anxieties about boyhood and consequently deserve attention.

This thesis focuses upon detective series and boy detective characters rather than their authors. Unlike the British series that followed, where the author's name carried at least as much weight as his/her creations, in the Amalgamated Press story papers authors were eclipsed by the characters about whom they wrote. Notably, the 'penny dreadful' *The Boy Detective* is anonymously authored and is thus defined only by its title and its detective hero, Ernest Keen.<sup>17</sup> Long-running story-paper detective series, such as the Sexton Blake series, had multiple authors, many of them writing under series pseudonyms which ensured their anonymity and tied authorship more closely to the story papers for which they wrote. Even the most influential and successful Amalgamated Press authors, such as Charles Hamilton, who can be credited with the popularisation of the school story in the story papers and the creation of several schoolboy detective characters, remained firmly under the influence of the publisher for whom they wrote. Hamilton wrote under various pseudonyms for the Amalgamated Press – most notably as Frank Richards, Martin Clifford, Owen Conquest and Hilda Richards – with each name linked to a specific series. E. S. Turner recounts the

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<sup>17</sup> Springhall and Kirkpatrick both attribute authorship of *The Boy Detective* to Edward Ellis, pseudonym of Charles Henry Ross, but they provide no source for this information. See Springhall, "A Life Story for the People"?, p. 231 and Kirkpatrick, *From the Penny Dreadful to the Ha'penny Dreadfuller*, p. 117. John Adcock speculates that Vane Ireton Shaftesbury St. John, who wrote serial stories for the story papers of Edwin J. Brett and the Emmett Brothers from the 1860s, wrote part of *The Boy Detective*, as well as other popular 'penny dreadfuls', including *The Wild Boys of London; or, the Children of Night*, *The Wild Boys of Paris; or, the Mysteries of the Vault of Death* and *The Dance of Death; or, the Hangman's Plot*. Adcock claims that 'Vane Ireton St. John might have been the principal writer on *The Boy Detective* [*sic*] but halfway through the book there is a change of writers. At this period (1866) St. John (if it really was him) was churning out 8 pages weekly on *The Wild Boys of London* [*sic*] in addition to *The Boy Detective* [*sic*]. This was not unusual because prolific authors such as C. H. Ross and James Malcolm Rymer often worked on up to 10 different weekly serials at a time.' See John Adcock, 'The Wild Boys of London', 25 March 2008 in *Yesterday's Papers* <<http://yesterdaypapersarchive.blogspot.co.uk/2008/03/wild-boys-of-london.html>> [accessed 30 April 2014]. For further information on Vane St. John, see also Steve Holland, 'Vane St. John', 4 November 2006 in *Bear Alley* <<http://bearalley.blogspot.co.uk/2006/11/vane-st-john.html>> [accessed 30 April 2014] and Kirkpatrick, *From the Penny Dreadful to the Ha'penny Dreadfuller*, pp. 24-5.

conscious efforts made by the Amalgamated Press to keep up the illusion that these were real and distinct personalities:

The secret of the common identity of Frank Richards, Martin Clifford and Owen Conquest was artfully, and most successfully, preserved. [. . .] Occasionally there would be stories describing visits by Frank Richards and Martin Clifford to the schools of their creation. Those double Christmas numbers were the occasion for some remarkable flights of fancy. It was by no means unusual for the boys of Greyfriars, St Jim's and Rookwood to celebrate Christmas under the same aristocratic roof; one such story was boldly proclaimed as 'by OWEN CONQUEST in collaboration with those world-famous authors FRANK RICHARDS and MARTIN CLIFFORD'. There was another story about a Christmas party at which Frank Richards, Martin Clifford and Owen Conquest playing billiards, with Hilda Richards marking up the score. One editor is said to have written a piece of whimsy about meeting Richards, Clifford and Conquest together in the flesh.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, a real-life author was eclipsed by a set of 'author' characters constructed and controlled by the publisher. Moreover, Hamilton's stories were so in demand that he could not always fulfil his quota and consequently substitute authors were frequently called upon. George Orwell argues that, for this reason, the stories had 'to be written in a style that is easily imitated—an extraordinary, artificial, repetitive style'.<sup>19</sup> Hamilton, in his response to Orwell, denied this accusation, stating that '[t]he style, whatever its merits or demerits, is my own, and—if I may say it with due modesty—inimitable. Nobody has ever written like it before, and nobody will ever write like it again.'<sup>20</sup> Orwell's evaluation, however, is closer to the mark, as Hamilton's use of caricatures, stock phrases and formulaic plots ensures that his style is not difficult to replicate.

Ownership of characters and series often remained with the publisher rather than the author and the Amalgamated Press had a measure of control over these characters' representation and the messages which the series disseminated to their boy readers.<sup>21</sup> In

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<sup>18</sup> Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, pp. 230-1.

<sup>19</sup> George Orwell, 'Boys' Weeklies', *Horizon*, 1.3 (March 1940), 174-200 (p. 177).

<sup>20</sup> Frank Richards, 'Frank Richards Replies to George Orwell', *Horizon*, 1.5 (May 1940), 346-55 (p. 349).

<sup>21</sup> Dr John William Staniforth, creator of Nelson Lee, however, is an example of an author who asserted ownership over his detective character, protesting when the editor of *Pluck*, a Harmsworth paper, employed another author to write Nelson Lee stories: 'I was furious when I saw the announcement of the

addition, while authors like Hamilton may have introduced particular trends to the Amalgamated Press story papers, it was the publisher who dictated the growth or suppression of these trends. The trend initiated by Hamilton's detective school stories, for example, was more firmly established through the long-term transference of Nelson Lee and his boy assistant, Nipper, from their London office to the school environment in the St Frank's stories published in the *Nelson Lee Library* from 1917 until it merged with the *Gem* in 1933. This is not to suggest that particular authors did not make significant contributions to the genre or bring their own specific style and agenda to the series and characters that they constructed. A single author's influence and idiosyncrasies, however, were eclipsed by publisher-wide ideologies and established trends to which authors, on the whole, conformed. While minor changes in the representation of the boy detective could be attributed to particular authors, significant developments were established across multiple texts and series with different authors – pointing to publisher-wide trends which responded to particular cultural moments in the history of boyhood.

### **III: Functions: The boy detective as a cultural signifier and an ideological tool**

The popular boys' detective fiction of the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century was well placed to address adult anxieties about boyhood and to have monitory and disciplinary functions for boy readers through the dissemination of strong and consistent ideologies. In terms of genre, these narratives are well suited to this function, as

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first of the new series. I wired a protest. He [the editor] replied that he could not admit that I (the inventor of the character!) had "any vested interest in Nelson Lee". So I wrote to Alfred Harmsworth himself, repeating my protest and threatening to send the correspondence to the Press unless I received a prompt apology and an assurance that the offence should not be repeated. I received both'. J. P. Wood (ed.), 'Leaves from the Diary of Maxwell Scott: Part 4', *Collectors Digest*, 3.30 (June 1949), 155-7 (p. 155) in *Friardale* <<http://friardale.co.uk/Collectors%20Digest/CD%20030.pdf>> [accessed 4 May 2014]. Kirkpatrick states that Staniforth sold the copyright to the Nelson Lee series to the Amalgamated Press in 1920 for a sum of £50. Kirkpatrick, *From the Penny Dreadful to the Ha'penny Dreadfuller*, p. 373.

detective fiction consistently reflects and responds to contemporary social anxieties – particularly those pertaining to law and order – and it is the job of the detective to resolve and/or remove these threats and consequently to restore the social status quo.<sup>22</sup> The social and generational gap between the producers and consumers of popular boy detective narratives further assists and emphasises their ideological, disciplinary functions. The ‘penny-dreadful’ and story-paper narratives examined in this thesis were produced by middle-class men, predominantly for an impressionable, working-class, potentially delinquent boy audience who were perceived to be in need of discipline and guidance in order to suppress their undesirable characteristics and potential threat to class structures and stability. The weekly publication of ‘penny dreadfuls’ and story papers enabled these publications to respond promptly to contemporary events, attitudes and anxieties. Significantly, story papers not only contained stories, but also featured articles, advertisements and editorial pages which offered young readers an insight into real-life events. In particular, this additional material gave boy readers access to the adult world – a world in which the fictional boy detective, too, was firmly ensconced alongside adult detective protagonists. This fictional and factual connection to the adult world potentially helped the texts’ function of conditioning boy readers to admire and aspire to particular models of manhood. The story-paper detective series were often published under pseudonyms, had multiple writers and featured in several different story papers, and thus more firmly reflected the dominant ideologies of an entire story-paper empire rather than that of a particular author. Moreover, the multiplicity of authors and publications ensured the frequent appearance and so the potentially vast

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<sup>22</sup> Robin W. Winks argues that detective fiction is ‘a mirror to society. Through it we may see society’s fears made most explicit; for some, those fears are exorcised by the fiction.’ Here, the detective is ‘someone who can protect society against itself, someone who is not bound by the entrapping bureaucracy of a society too complex to do simple (and quick) justice’. Robin W. Winks, ‘Introduction’, in Robin W. Winks (ed.), *Detective Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1980), pp. 1-14 (p. 7).

influence of particular detective characters. Story-paper detective narratives were regular and immediate. They disseminated firm, publisher-wide ideologies which were centred on shaping the child's world in a way that the adult producers, contributors to and readers of these papers saw fit. The popular detective story-paper narratives that I examine in this thesis, therefore, offer a unique and immediate insight into adult attitudes towards and constructions of boyhood in relation to specific cultural contexts as Blyton's later book-length series fiction, and that of her imitators, cannot.

As this thesis is concerned with the relationship between the representation of the fictional boy detective in British children's literature and changing constructions of, and the anxieties surrounding, British boyhood, its structure is broadly chronological. Chapter 1 focuses on the emergence of the boy detective in the 'penny-dreadful' format in the 1860s and considers how *The Boy Detective* (1865-6) articulates and responds to anxieties about juvenile delinquency, particularly in relation to the perceived corrupting influence of criminal-centric 'penny-dreadful' narratives upon impressionable, working-class boy readers. Chapter 2 examines the first appearances of the boy detective as an assistant to an adult professional detective in the Harmsworths' boys' story papers of the 1890s and early twentieth century. Here, the representation of the detective's assistant is linked to the emergence of the concept of adolescence and anxieties surrounding the threat of the 'delinquent' adolescent: that is, the boy who does not conform to the middle-class ideal of adolescence, such as the 'blind-alley' labourer, who rejects his long-term duty to his country and his place as part of the collective British identity in favour of immediate personal gain and individual autonomy.<sup>23</sup>

Chapter 3 explores the centralisation of the professional boy detective in story-paper

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<sup>23</sup> 'Blind-alley' labour refers to temporary employment of boys in unspecialised occupations in contrast to the stable, long-term employment opportunities offered by skilled apprenticeships. 'Blind-alley' labour increased in the second half of the nineteenth century, when apprenticeships were rapidly declining. See James Walvin, *A Child's World: A Social History of English Childhood 1800-1914* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 86. 'Blind-alley' labour will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2.

narratives in the first decade of the twentieth century, in both the adult detective/boy assistant pattern and in series featuring independent boy detective heroes and boy detective duos. These texts are considered in relation to anxieties about the decline of the British Empire, physical deterioration and the impending threat of war in the early twentieth century, and the consequent emphasis upon the importance of training boys to become active citizens and defenders of the Empire – aims that were articulated and developed in particular through Robert Baden-Powell's Boy Scout movement, founded in 1908.

Chapter 4 explores the decline of the professional boy detective in story-paper narratives of the 1910s and beyond, as the boy detective became increasingly restricted to the assistant role, both in the police detective narratives that emerged in this decade and in the growing number of adult detective/boy assistant series that thrived in the interwar years. This chapter makes connections between the now largely subsidiary position occupied by the fictional boy detective operating in an adult profession and environment and the reality of the supporting roles to which most boys were inevitably confined in the defence of the Empire during the First World War. Chapter 5 focuses upon the fictional boy detective's relocation from a professional, adult world to an amateur, child-centric environment in the schoolboy detective narratives which flourished in the Amalgamated Press papers in the interwar period. This transition is considered in relation to the extension of the years of childhood and its increasing segregation from adulthood in the early decades of the twentieth century, particularly through the passage of significant child welfare legislation and educational reforms. In chapters 3-5, where there is large body of detective narratives to draw upon, there is inevitably some crossover between the trends identified and the periods in which they occur. The development of the boy detective, therefore, does not fit into neat historical

categories, but this study is concerned with why certain trends emerge and prosper at particular periods in the history of British boyhood.

In examining these trends, the thesis focuses on boyhood as constructed by the adult, middle-class producers of children's popular fiction rather than the reality experienced by the boy readers of this literature, nor does it explore real-life boys' responses to this fiction and record its impact upon them. While some more recent studies of juvenile reading habits focus upon children's responses to this fiction, records of boy readers' responses to 'penny-dreadful' and story-paper fiction are uncommon and usually retrospective, appearing in the form of memoirs written in adulthood.<sup>24</sup>

Since the detective fiction that I explore in this thesis was predominantly aimed at working-class boy readers, the existence of such accounts becomes even rarer, as few

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<sup>24</sup> Edward G. Salmon offers a survey of boys' and girls' reading habits in his first chapter of *Juvenile Literature As It Is* (1888), based on research conducted by Charles Welsh, which consisted of a questionnaire answered by approximately 2,000 school pupils. This study is, of course, too early to include any of the Harmsworths' story papers, but the selection of novels, poetry and periodicals recorded suggests that the study was aimed primarily at middle-class children, thus ignoring the reading habits and preferences of lower-class child readers. See Edward G. Salmon, *Juvenile Literature As It Is* (London: Henry J. Drane, 1888), pp. 11-31. Arnold Freeman records some of the reading habits of a select group of working-class boys in Birmingham as a small part of his study *Boy Life and Labour: The Manufacture of Inefficiency* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1980 [1914]), pp. 144-50. One of the first major British studies into children's reading habits was A. J. Jenkinson's *What Do Boys and Girls Read?* (London: Methuen, 1940), which covers the period in which the Amalgamated Press papers were in decline. While some Amalgamated Press papers appear in this study, such as the *Champion*, *Modern Boy*, *Gem* and *Magnet*, the papers of D. C. Thomson – the *Wizard*, *Hotspur*, *Rover*, *Skipper* and *Adventure* – far outrank them in popularity among boys of all ages included in the study (pp. 68-70). Notably, the questionnaire given to the boy participants only asks them about the type and frequency of their reading and does not prompt them for any personal responses to the literature that they have read (pp. 12-13). This study, therefore, does not offer any evidence of the impact upon boys of the literature that they read. For examples of studies of reading habits which incorporate children's responses to the literature that they read, see Frank Whitehead, A. C. Capey and Wendy Maddren, *Children's Reading Interests* (London: Evans/Methuen Educational, 1975): this is the interim report of the Schools Council research project on children's reading habits, 10-15 at the University of Sheffield Institute of Education from 1969-74; Frank Whitehead, A. C. Capey, Wendy Maddren and Alan Wellings, *Children and Their Books* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Education, 1977): this is the final report of the Schools Council research project on children's reading habits, 10-15; Donald Fry, *Children Talk About Books: Seeing Themselves As Readers* (Milton Keynes and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1985); Charles Sarland, *Young People and Reading: Culture and Response* (Milton Keynes and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1991); and Christine Hall and Martin Coles, *Children's Reading Choices* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999). For an example of a study that considers children's responses to juvenile detective fiction, see Sally Sugarman, 'The Mysterious Case of the Detective as Child Hero: Sherlock Holmes, Encyclopedia Brown and Nancy Drew as Role Models?' (Philadelphia: Popular Culture Conference, 1995) in *ERIC: Education Resources Information Center* <<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED382935.pdf>> [accessed 14 January 2008].



working-class boys would rise high enough to warrant the undertaking of such a task.<sup>25</sup> Instead, this thesis focuses upon the potential influence – either deliberately enforced by adult producers of ‘penny dreadfuls’ and story papers or as an unconscious product of its cultural moment – of the boy detective upon his boy readers through the various ideologies he disseminates to them. Rather than focusing upon boyhood and children’s literature as experienced directly by boys themselves, therefore, I am primarily concerned with adults’ roles in the construction of the fictional boy detective, ideals of boyhood and ideologies to be absorbed by boy readers of this detective fiction. The fictional boy detective, therefore, becomes an ideological tool to condition real-life boys to fulfil adult desires and expectations of what boyhood and, by extension, proper manhood, should entail.

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<sup>25</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p. 49. For an example of a working-class memoir which offers a first-hand account of boys’ reading preferences, see Frederick Willis, *101 Jubilee Road: A Book of London Yesteryears* (London: Phoenix House, 1948), pp. 108-17. V. S. Pritchett, who fluctuated between an upper-working-class and lower-middle-class experience during his boyhood, briefly mentions his love of the *Gem* and the *Magnet* – the Amalgamated Press school-story papers – in his autobiographical account of his youth, *A Cab at the Door*. See V. S. Pritchett, *A Cab at the Door*, in V. S. Pritchett, *A Cab at the Door & Midnight Oil* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1991 [1968]), pp. 9-211 (pp. 98-9 and pp. 101-2). Jeffrey Richards argues that ‘[i]t is pointless to ask for the first-hand accounts of ordinary people about how their reading or leisure has affected them. For such evidence cannot exist. The nature of popular culture and of its consumers provides no means of articulating such a conscious verbal response.’ Jeffrey Richards, *Happiest Days: The Public Schools in English Fiction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 2.

## Chapter 1: A Band of Light amongst the Shadows: The Emergence of the Boy Detective in ‘Penny-Dreadful’ Fiction in the 1860s

### 1.1: The origins and emergence of juvenile crime literature

Detective fiction for adults began to develop clearly in Britain from the early to mid-nineteenth century. While the collected *Newgate Calendars* of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, featuring accounts of real-life criminal cases, focused upon the punishment of criminals rather than the detection of their crimes, as both Stephen Knight and Heather Worthington discuss, ‘disciplinary amateurs’ such as doctors and lawyers began to take on investigative roles in ‘professional anecdote’ narratives concerned with crime in the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>1</sup> With the creation of the Metropolitan Police in 1829, and the subsequent inauguration of a police detective department in 1842, the police detective began to appear in the crime literature of the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>2</sup> The proliferation of fictional detective narratives in the 1860s, in part fostered by the rise of the sensation novel, a genre closely linked to crime fiction, ensured that it became a decade of experimentation in terms of the development of the fictional detective protagonist.<sup>3</sup> This trend is perhaps most apparent in the anachronistic emergence of the female investigator in sensation fiction. Following in the footsteps of Catherine Crowe’s *Adventures of Susan Hopley; or, Circumstantial Evidence* (1841), Wilkie Collins created female quasi-detectives Anne Rodway in ‘The Diary of Anne Rodway’ (*Household Words*, 1856), Marian Halcombe in *The Woman in White* (1859-

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Knight, *Crime Fiction since 1800: Detection, Death, Diversity*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 3-9 and pp. 32-3; Heather Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective in Early Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 2-3 and pp. 46-102.

<sup>2</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, pp. 103-69. For information on the inauguration of the police force and the police detective force, see Clive Emsley, *The English Police: A Political and Social History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London and New York: Longman, 1996); Haia Shpayer-Makov, *The Making of a Policeman: A Social History of a Labour Force in Metropolitan London, 1829-1914* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002); and Haia Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective: Police Sleuths in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Knight, *Crime Fiction*, pp. 33-48.

60), Magdalene Vanstone in *No Name* (1862), and Valeria Woodville in *The Law and the Lady* (1875), while in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's work, Eleanor Vane of *Eleanor's Victory* (1863) and Jenny Milsom in *Run to Earth* (1868) are notable examples of lady investigators.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Knight suggests Barbara Hare, a character in Mrs Henry Wood's *East Lynne* (1861), as a potential inspiration for female detectives Mrs G. in Andrew Forrester's *The Female Detective* (1864) and Mrs Paschal in *Revelations of a Lady Detective* (1864), often attributed to William Stephens Hayward.<sup>5</sup> These are texts that, to some extent, professionalise the female detective role by linking the lady investigators to the police force and ensuring that they are paid for their services.

The emergence of the fictional female detective, long before the establishment of a real-life equivalent in the British police force, demonstrates a willingness in crime literature of the 1860s to extend the investigative role beyond the realms of the contemporary reality, inviting fictional pretenders, as well as legitimate candidates, to fill the position.<sup>6</sup> It was in such an environment that the boy detective made his first tentative steps into the realm of crime fiction. Over thirty years before the creation of Sherlock Holmes's notorious Baker Street Irregulars, the boy detective appeared as an assistant to the adult investigator in Collins's short story 'The Fourth Poor Traveller' in *Household Words* (1854), later republished as 'The Lawyer's Story of a Stolen Letter'.

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<sup>4</sup> Knight, *Crime Fiction*, pp. 34-6 and pp. 40-2; Lyn Pykett, 'The Newgate Novel and Sensation Fiction, 1830-1868', in Martin Priestman (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 19-40 (p. 35); Heather Worthington, 'From *The Newgate Calendar* to Sherlock Holmes', in Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (eds), *A Companion to Crime Fiction* (Chichester and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 13-27 (p. 24).

<sup>5</sup> Knight, *Crime Fiction*, p. 43. *Revelations of a Lady Detective* is also referred to by the alternative title *Experiences of a Lady Detective*. The former title appears on the front cover of the earliest edition, while the latter appears on the inside title page of the same text.

<sup>6</sup> The first woman to be employed by the Metropolitan Police served as a visitor to female convicts on license in 1883. The Metropolitan Police appointed women as Police Matrons from 1889 to search and supervise women and children in police custody. It was not until World War I, however, that women were afforded policing powers in voluntary groups such as the Women Police Volunteers and the Voluntary Women Patrols. Women began to join the Metropolitan Police and other official forces from 1919 but were usually restricted to dealing with female and juvenile offenders. It was only with the outbreak of World War II that any significant recruitment of women to the police force began. See Emsley, *The English Police*, p. 127 and pp. 157-8.

Fourteen-year-old Tom, acting primarily as a tracker or spy for the lawyer-detective protagonist, and lauded as ‘the smallest, quickest, quietist, sharpest, stealthiest little snake of a chap that ever dogged a gentleman’s steps’, nevertheless plays a peripheral role in the narrative.<sup>7</sup> Equally fleeting is the appearance of street urchin Jack Doyle as a ‘servant’ to Mrs Paschal in *Revelations of a Lady Detective*. After saving him from a life of thievery, Mrs Paschal employs Jack to spy on a suspect, an activity that occupies no more than a few lines before the young assistant disappears from the narrative altogether.<sup>8</sup> More notable are the exploits of Collins’s Octavius Guy, better known as ‘Gooseberry’, in *The Moonstone* (1868). Gooseberry, a ‘poor little wretch’ who is, nevertheless, ‘one of the sharpest boys in London’, plays a more independent and integral part in the detective plot than either his prototype, Tom, or Mrs Paschal’s Jack.<sup>9</sup> As a child in an adult crime narrative, however, he is condemned to a secondary role and his detective input is inevitably limited.<sup>10</sup>

In order to reach his full potential as a protagonist, the juvenile detective character necessarily had to be transferred to children’s literature. In the 1860s, crime fiction written predominantly for children was just beginning to establish itself in the cheap serial instalments that later came to be known as ‘penny dreadfuls’, an initially pejorative term which was coined in the 1870s by middle-class opponents of penny

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<sup>7</sup> Wilkie Collins, ‘The Fourth Poor Traveller’, in ‘The Seven Poor Travellers’, the Extra Christmas Number of *Household Words*, 10.249 (Christmas 1854), 19-26 (p. 22).

<sup>8</sup> Anon, *Revelations of a Lady Detective* (London: Charles Henry Clarke, 1868 [1864]), pp. 101-4. Many of the adult fictional forms featuring detective characters in the early to mid-nineteenth century are pseudo-autobiographical in nature. For further examples, see Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, pp. 46-102, pp. 104-15 and pp. 140-59.

<sup>9</sup> Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone* (London: Penguin Books, 1998 [1868]), p. 433.

<sup>10</sup> The boy detective rarely features throughout the history of British detective fiction aimed at an adult audience. A notable exception occurs in Ellis Peters’s George Felse series (1951-78) in which the policeman protagonist’s son, Dominic, plays a key role, carrying out his own independent detective work, much to his father’s dismay. In three of the later books, *The Piper on the Mountain* (1966), *Mourning Raga* (1969) and *Death to Landlords!* (1972), Dominic plays the lead role but, significantly, he is now a young man rather than a boy.

fiction.<sup>11</sup> These ‘penny-dreadful’ crime narratives arose from a wider tradition of crime fiction from the 1830s onwards that dealt sympathetically with the lives and exploits of criminal protagonists, rather than following the pattern established in the *Newgate Calendars*, which performed a monitory function by dwelling on the punishment of criminal characters.<sup>12</sup> The Newgate novels of the 1830s and 1840s, written by authors such as Edward Bulwer-Lytton, William Harrison Ainsworth and Charles Dickens, and aimed at a middle-class audience, were often inspired by accounts from the *Newgate Calendars*, and focused in particular on notorious eighteenth-century highwaymen and robbers.<sup>13</sup> The most notable examples are Ainsworth’s *Rookwood* (1834), featuring highwayman Dick Turpin, and *Jack Sheppard* (1839-40), which follows the fictionalised exploits of the eponymous young burglar. Both of these texts offer a sympathetic portrayal of criminals as heroes, sensationalising their daring exploits while offering explanations for their criminal behaviour – traits which were characteristic of the Newgate novel tradition.<sup>14</sup>

Newgate novels were condemned by critics in the 1830s and 1840s for glamorising crime and romanticising criminals and, consequently, for being a ‘low’ form of literature, unworthy of middle-class readers.<sup>15</sup> F. S. Schwarzbach recognises

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<sup>11</sup> In his *Slang Dictionary* of 1874, John Camden Hotten defines ‘penny dreadful’ as ‘an expressive term for those penny publications which depend more upon sensationalism than upon merit, artistic or literary, for success’. John Camden Hotten, *The Slang Dictionary: Etymological, Historical and Anecdotal* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1913 [1874]), p. 250.

<sup>12</sup> Pykett, ‘The Newgate Novel’, p. 20.

<sup>13</sup> For further information on Newgate novels, see Lauren Gillingham, ‘The Newgate Novel and the Police Casebook’, in Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (eds), *A Companion to Crime Fiction* (Chichester and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 93-104; Keith Hollingsworth, *The Newgate Novel 1830-1847: Bulwer, Ainsworth, Dickens, & Thackeray* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963); Pykett, ‘The Newgate Novel’; and F. S. Schwarzbach, ‘Newgate Novel to Detective Fiction’, in Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (eds), *A Companion to the Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007 [2002]), pp. 227-43.

<sup>14</sup> Hollingsworth, *The Newgate Novel*, pp. 101-2 and pp. 137-8; Pykett, ‘The Newgate Novel’, pp. 20-1.

<sup>15</sup> Hollingsworth, *The Newgate Novel*, p. 14; Pykett, ‘The Newgate Novel’, pp. 29-30. Examples of Newgate-novel criticism contemporary to the novels’ first publication include: Ned Culpepper, ‘Mr Edward Lytton Bulwer’s Novels; and Remarks on Novel-Writing’, *Fraser’s Magazine*, 1.5 (June 1830), 509-32 (pp. 530-1); Anon, ‘Mr Bulwer’s Novels – *Eugene Aram*’, *Edinburgh Review*, 55.109 (April 1832), 208-19 (p. 212); Anon, ‘Recent English Romances’, *Edinburgh Review*, 65.131 (April 1837), 180-

that anxieties about the ‘lowness’ of Newgate fiction were not limited to its potential effect upon the morals and behaviour of its predominantly middle-class audience, but extended to ‘the fear of downward slippage into lower literary and cultural forms’, providing sensational, pro-criminal entertainment for an impressionable working-class audience.<sup>16</sup> This fear was realised, in particular, through the character of Jack Sheppard, as ‘penny gaffs’ – cheap theatre productions, which, according to John Springhall, were especially popular with ‘poor, out-of-work boys, young labourers, errand boys, shop boys and girls, milliners’ girls, apprentices and the ubiquitous costers’ – began to take the young housebreaker as their subject from 1839, during the period when Ainsworth’s *Jack Sheppard* was being serialised in *Bentley’s Miscellany*.<sup>17</sup> Ainsworth’s Newgate novel also prompted a host of penny-issue imitations, such as *Life of Jack Sheppard, the Housebreaker* (1840), *The Life and Adventures of Jack Sheppard* (1845) and *Jack Sheppard; or, London in the Last Century. A Romance of Reality* (1847).<sup>18</sup> By the 1840s, therefore, sensationalised and sympathetic accounts of criminal exploits were being produced specifically for a lower-class audience.

As the nineteenth century progressed, a mass of entertaining, lower-class literature expanded and thrived, helped by rapidly decreasing production costs. Technological advances in printing, such as the invention of the Hoe Rotary Press in 1847, the discovery of cheaper paper-making materials such as esparto, an African grass, and more cost-effective paper manufacturing methods, like Gilpin’s paper-making machine ‘The Fourdrinier’ in 1817, in combination with the removal of the

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204 (pp. 193-7); Anon, ‘Reviews: *Jack Sheppard: a Romance*’, *Athenaeum*, 626 (26 October 1839), 803-5; Anon, ‘William Ainsworth and Jack Sheppard’, *Fraser’s Magazine*, 21.122 (February 1840), 227-45; Anon, ‘Recent Novels’, *Monthly Chronicle*, 5 (March 1840), 219-32 (pp. 220-2).

<sup>16</sup> Schwarzbach, ‘Newgate Novel to Detective Fiction’, p. 233.

<sup>17</sup> John Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics: Penny Gaffs to Gangsta-Rap, 1830-1996* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998), p. 21.

<sup>18</sup> Michael Anglo, *Penny Dreadfuls and Other Victorian Horrors* (London: Jupiter Books, 1977), p. 44. For further information on Ainsworth’s *Jack Sheppard* and its imitations, see Hollingsworth, *The Newgate Novel*, pp. 131-48 and Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, pp. 163-8.

advertisement duty (1853) and the stamp duty on newspapers (1855) and the repeal of the paper excise duty (1861), all contributed to the proliferation of penny serial fiction.<sup>19</sup> Low production costs allowed for low retail prices and this, in addition to a significant increase in literacy throughout the nineteenth century, even before Forster's Education Act (1870), ensured a sustained mass readership for penny-part fiction.<sup>20</sup>

From the 1830s penny-issue serials, characterised by criminal protagonists and Gothic themes, were aimed primarily at a working-class adult audience. Publisher Edward Lloyd was particularly active in this field, releasing serial stories based on true crime, such as *Jonathan Bradford; or, The Murder at the Roadside Inn* (1846) and *The Lady in Black* (1847), along with a host of highwayman tales, beginning with *Lives of the Most Notorious Highwaymen, Footpads and Murderers* (1836).<sup>21</sup> Some of Lloyd's publications were more obviously fantastical, and heavily influenced by the Gothic, most notably *The String of Pearls* (1846-7), co-authored by James Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest and featuring the 'demon barber' Sweeney Todd, and Rymer's *Varney the Vampire; or, The Feast of Blood* (1845-7).<sup>22</sup> Twentieth-century anthologies and critical accounts of penny fiction often refer to these early serials, as well as the juvenile penny fiction of the 1860s, the later juvenile story papers and the serials within

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<sup>19</sup> Vicki Anderson, *The Dime Novel in Children's Literature* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2005), p. 12; John Springhall, "'Disseminating Impure Literature': The 'Penny Dreadful' Publishing Business Since 1860", *Economic History Review*, 47.3 (August 1994), 567-84 (p. 567).

<sup>20</sup> For further information on the production and circulation of cheap serial fiction in the nineteenth century, see Anderson, *The Dime Novel in Children's Literature*, pp. 53-60; Patrick A. Dunae, 'New Grub Street for Boys', in Jeffrey Richards (ed.), *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), pp. 12-33; and Springhall, "'Disseminating Impure Literature'".

<sup>21</sup> Anglo, *Penny Dreadfuls*, pp. 25-6 and p. 33. For further information on Edward Lloyd, see Anglo, *Penny Dreadfuls*, pp. 76-9; Peter Haining (ed.), *The Penny Dreadful: Or, Strange, Horrid & Sensational Tales!* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1975), pp. 30-2; and E. S. Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys: The Story of Sweeney Todd, Deadwood Dick, Sexton Blake, Billy Bunter, Dick Barton, et al.* (London: Penguin Books, 1976 [1948]), pp. 20-1, pp. 24-5 and pp. 31-7.

<sup>22</sup> For further information on *Sweeney Todd*, see Anglo, *Penny Dreadfuls*, pp. 49-67; Haining, *The Penny Dreadful*, pp. 95-7; Peter Haining, *Sweeney Todd: The Real Story of the Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (London: Robson Books, 1998 [1993]); and Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, pp. 38-50. For further information on *Varney the Vampire*, see Anglo, *Penny Dreadfuls*, pp. 14-18 and Haining, *The Penny Dreadful*, pp. 121-3.

them, as ‘penny dreadfuls’.<sup>23</sup> Springhall, in contrast, makes a distinction between the ‘earlier serials for working-class adults associated with publisher Edward Lloyd (1815-90) and author G. W. M. Reynolds’, which he refers to as ‘penny bloods’, and ‘their counterparts from the 1860s onwards, addressed specifically to a more youthful and also generally working- or lower-middle class audience’, which he defines as ‘penny dreadfuls’.<sup>24</sup>

While it is difficult to separate penny serials into these two distinct categories, Springhall’s use of the terms ‘penny blood’ and ‘penny dreadful’ are adopted throughout this chapter for the sake of clarity. My use of the term ‘penny dreadful’, however, is more specific than Springhall’s. Springhall applies the ‘penny-dreadful’ label not only to the penny serials of the 1860s discussed in this chapter, but also to their early story-paper replacements. He also acknowledges that the form extends beyond criminal narratives to other genres, including ‘historical-adventure stories, school stories, Robinsonnades, rags-to-riches stories, and pirate stories’.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, when referring to ‘penny dreadfuls’, I focus specifically upon the criminal-centric penny serials of the 1860s aimed primarily at a juvenile audience, many of which were produced by the Newsagents’ Publishing Company (NPC).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> For examples see Anglo, *Penny Dreadfuls*; Haining, *The Penny Dreadful*; and Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*.

<sup>24</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p. 42. Vicki Anderson adopts similar distinctions to Springhall when discussing the ‘penny blood’ and ‘penny dreadful’ terms. See Anderson, *The Dime Novel in Children’s Literature*, p. 53. While Springhall distinguishes Reynolds’s fiction from their ‘penny-dreadful’ antecedents, he acknowledges the influence of Reynolds’s city mysteries, *The Mysteries of London* (1845-50) and *The Mysteries of the Court of London* (1845-56) upon the ‘London low-life “dreadfuls”’ of the 1860s – a category in which Springhall places *The Boy Detective*. See Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p. 59 and John Springhall, ‘Disreputable Adolescent Reading: Low-Life, Women-in-Peril and School Sport “Penny Dreadfuls” from the 1860s to the 1890s’, in Mike Huggins and J.A. Mangan (eds), *Disreputable Pleasures: Less Virtuous Victorians at Play* (London and New York: Frank Cass, 2004), pp. 103-23 (p. 108).

<sup>25</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p. 44.

<sup>26</sup> This fits in with Springhall’s third recognised definition of ‘penny dreadfuls’ as the successors of the adult-orientated ‘penny bloods’, ‘directed towards a more juvenile market, culminating in the Newsagents’ Publishing Company (NPC) serials of the 1860s’. Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p. 42. Newsagents’ Publishing Company will be given as NPC in future.



Springhall's distinct definitions of 'bloods' and 'dreadfuls' draw attention to crucial developments in the penny-fiction industry between the 1830s and 1860s. In Springhall's 'penny bloods', the thrill for the reader derived from the horrific appearance and bloodthirsty behaviour of their anti-heroes. By contrast, the fiction of Springhall's 'penny-dreadful' category, influenced by the Newgate novels of the 1830s and 1840s, was more concerned with the exploits of notorious eighteenth-century highwaymen and robbers, such as Dick Turpin, Claude Duval and Jack Sheppard, of which probably the most popular was the long-running Dick Turpin serial *Black Bess, or, The Knight of the Road* (1863-8).<sup>27</sup> These heavily fictionalised and sensationalised 'penny-dreadful' accounts appealed to readers by glamorising and glorifying their criminal protagonists, transforming them from villains into heroes. However, this shift in characterisation from the monstrous, Gothic protagonists of the 1830s and 1840s to the more realistic criminal heroes in the 1860s does not signify a complete separation between the 'penny-blood' and 'penny-dreadful' form; highwayman and robber penny serials became popular from the 1840s, as evidenced by popularity of Jack Sheppard serials, inspired by Ainsworth's Newgate novel of 1839, referenced earlier.

Perhaps a more crucial change in the publication of penny fiction was the shift in readership in the mid-nineteenth century. While serialised penny fiction was initially aimed primarily at adult readers, it began to gain popularity amongst the younger elements of the working class and by the 1860s young readers had become the dominant audience for this type of literature. There were several reasons for the growth of a child readership for penny fiction in the mid-nineteenth century. Mass urbanisation resulted in a significant increase in the number of young people living in London and other industrial cities. Many of these youngsters, as Springhall reports, became part of 'a

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<sup>27</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p. 43.

mass of unspecialized “boy labour”, employed by a host of small-scale businesses and preferred by employers for their cheapness compared to adult workers.<sup>28</sup> This employment afforded boys an economic autonomy which enabled them regularly to purchase their own reading material, and cheap instalment fiction became an obvious candidate on which to spend their earnings. Moreover, from the early to mid-nineteenth century, there was a significant increase in the provision of education for working-class children, in dame schools, ragged schools, workhouse, industrial and reformatory schools, and Sunday schools, while the Revised Code of 1862 – a system of ‘payment by results’ based on each individual pupil’s attendance rate and examination performance – ensured a greater focus in school upon reading, writing and arithmetic.<sup>29</sup> The large proportion of young people with a small disposable income, coupled with the spread of youth literacy to the working class and the overall availability and improvement of education for the young, meant that the potential youth market for penny serials was strong. As adult readers began to reject ‘penny-blood’-style fiction in the mid-nineteenth century in favour of cheap Sunday newspapers and weekly illustrated magazines featuring serial stories, publishers and authors of the newly

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<sup>28</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p. 46. This temporary employment of boys in unspecialised occupations was often referred to as ‘blind-alley’ labour, a subject that will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2. For further information on ‘blind-alley’ labour, see Arnold Freeman, *Boy Life and Labour: The Manufacture of Inefficiency* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1980 [1914]); John R. Gillis, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770-Present* (New York: Academic Press, 1981), pp. 118-28; Harry Hendrick, *Images of Youth: Age, Class, and the Male Youth Problem, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 119-26; and John Springhall, *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain, 1860-1960* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1986), pp. 64-108.

<sup>29</sup> Pamela Horn, *The Victorian and Edwardian Schoolchild* (Gloucester and Wolfeboro, NH: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1989), pp. 2-5 and p. 11; W. B. Stephens, *Education in Britain, 1750-1914* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 1-12 and p. 39; David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 43 and pp. 87-9; John Lawson and Harold Silver, *A Social History of Education in England* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1973), pp. 288-92. Lawson and Silver argue that the Revised Code had a detrimental effect on elementary education, since it prompted ‘an increase in rote learning’, ‘[f]requent testing’ and a curtailment of subjects such as religious studies. Lawson and Silver, *A Social History of Education in England*, p. 291. Stephens, on the other hand, emphasises the positive impact of the Revised Code as ‘a “crash course in literacy” doing much (in England and Wales, at least) to raise standards in the basic subjects, curtail over-emphasis on religious instruction, improve attendance and ensure that all pupils were given proper attention’. Stephens, *Education in Britain*, pp. 7-8.

emerging ‘penny-dreadful’ tradition increasingly began to focus upon the working-class child reader.<sup>30</sup>

Narratives celebrating highwaymen and robber heroes appealed to working-class child readers by providing them with exciting, sensational stories and anti-establishment outlaw heroes – the perfect escapist antidote to their lives of monotonous obedience to the laws and commands of adult authority figures and, more broadly, their submission to the ruling classes. As working-class boys became firmly established as the prime market for ‘penny dreadfuls’ in the 1860s, juvenile characters were introduced as the protagonists of these criminal narratives. The form that had previously depicted notorious highwaymen, brigands and thieves as its adult heroes, now created equivalent boy protagonists, most of them located amongst the lowest orders of the city slums and often represented in errand-boy roles with which many of the young readers of their adventures could identify. Successful serials in this mode included *Charley Wag: The New Jack Sheppard* (1860-1), whose eponymous hero is a boy of unknown parentage who is lured into a life of crime in the London slums.<sup>31</sup> Touching as it does upon the harsh reality of the deprivation suffered by the children of the poor, *Charley Wag* has been defined by Springhall as a ‘London low-life “dreadful”’, along with other serials that feature fictionalised gangs of street urchins sometimes forced into a life of crime by their desperate circumstances, including *The Wild Boys of London; or, The Children of Night* (1864-6) and *The Poor Boys of London; or, Driven to Crime. A Life Story for the*

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<sup>30</sup> Springhall, ‘Disreputable Adolescent Reading’, p. 103-4 and Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p. 52. Although the dominant readership of ‘penny dreadfuls’ was working-class boys, this fiction was still read by some adults and also appealed to a young lower-middle-class audience. Female readers, too, were not uncommon, attracted by their strong-willed, independent, fictional counterparts in ‘penny dreadfuls’ who enjoyed more freedom than they possessed in other literary forms. See Springhall, ‘Disreputable Adolescent Reading’, p. 104 and p. 110 and Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, pp. 46-9.

<sup>31</sup> John Springhall, ‘Disreputable Adolescent Reading’, pp. 106-8; Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p. 62.

*People* (1866).<sup>32</sup> There were equivalent titles for lower-class girl readers, too, with female heroines, such as *The Work Girls of London* (1865), *Rose Mortimer, or The Ballet Girls' Revenge* (c. 1865) and *Fanny White and Her Friend Jack Rawlings: A Romance of a Young Lady Thief and a Boy Burglar* (1865), although the form was still dominated by boy heroes.<sup>33</sup> Since, for the most part, 'penny dreadfuls' featured boy protagonists and were condemned for their violent and criminal content, they were primarily aimed at and read by male readers, particularly those boys and young men in casual employment who had the economic autonomy to purchase these publications regularly and the leisure time to read them unhindered – freedoms which were not often afforded to their female counterparts.<sup>34</sup> By the 1860s, therefore, early crime fiction, albeit in a highly sensationalised, criminal-centric form, had a firmly established boy readership.

As many 'penny dreadfuls' were concerned primarily with crime and criminals, it is not surprising that they also contained police figures and that, in some instances, boy characters became involved in detective work. As Springhall notes, *The Poor Boys of London* (1866) features a precursor of Holmes's Baker Street Irregulars in the form of the shoeblack boys employed as 'watchers' by the text's police detective, Richard Grant.<sup>35</sup> In its opening 'Notice to the Reader', *The Wild Boys of Paris; or, The Mysteries of the Vault of Death* (1866) promises to record, amongst other things, the

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<sup>32</sup> Springhall, 'Disreputable Adolescent Reading', pp. 106-10 and Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, pp. 57-66. For further information on 'London low-life "dreadfuls"', see John Springhall, "'A Life Story for the People'?: Edwin J. Brett and the London "Low-Life" Penny Dreadfuls of the 1860s', *Victorian Studies*, 33.2 (Winter 1990), 223-246. Springhall asserts that these London low-life 'dreadfuls' 'were chiefly inspired by the extraordinary success of an anglicized version of Sue's exciting *feuilleton* bestseller. G. W. M. Reynolds' long-running serial *The Mysteries of London* (1845-50), the most successful penny-issue work of its time, was written in a commercial style that juxtaposed the radical with the thrilling and was soon selling nearly 40,000 weekly copies.' Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p. 59.

<sup>33</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p. 49. For further information on *Fanny White*, see Jess Nevins, *Encyclopedia of Fantastic Victoriana* (Austin: MonkeyBrain Books, 2005), pp. 939-42.

<sup>34</sup> While boys engaged with the world at large through education, work and street culture, girls were often confined to the domestic realm in nineteenth-century Britain. For further information, see chapter 2, n. 57.

<sup>35</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p. 63.

skill of Paris's 'homeless class of boys [. . .] in ferretting out concealed criminals, and the valuable service they render to the authorities'.<sup>36</sup> It was another of the NPC's 'penny dreadfuls', however, in which the first significant foray into the juvenile detective genre was made.

*The Boy Detective; or, the Crimes of London. A Romance of Modern Times* (1865-6) is the first 'penny dreadful' – and indeed the first British text aimed at children – to feature a clearly defined boy detective hero. Ernest Keen, the text's fourteen-year-old protagonist, has 'a passion for the detection of crime' and operates as a detective, both independently and alongside the police, throughout the narrative.<sup>37</sup> Unlike the lower-class boy anti-heroes of many 'penny dreadfuls', some of whom secretly have loftier origins but have grown up in ignorance of their true parentage in unsavoury slum environments,<sup>38</sup> the opening instalments of *The Boy Detective* reveal that Ernest belongs to a wealthy, middle-class family – his father is a retired banker – but has been driven out of his home by his wicked stepmother and is forced to take his chances on the streets of London. When Ernest's father is murdered and Ernest himself is arrested for the crime, he is determined to bring to justice the true culprit, Gaspard Massillon, a counterfeiter and leader of a criminal organisation called the Shadow Band. Acquitted of his father's murder, Ernest brings together a host of street urchins to form a gang, called the Band of Light, in direct opposition, as their name suggests, to the Shadow Band.<sup>39</sup> Though his primary aim is always to capture Massillon, the Boy Detective

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<sup>36</sup> Anon, *The Wild Boys of Paris; or, The Mysteries of the Vault of Death. Translated from the Records of the French Police* (London: Newsagents' Publishing Company, 1866), p. 1 in *Yesterday's Papers* <<http://www.john-adcock.blogspot.co.uk/2011/03/wild-boys-of-paris.html>> [accessed 19 May 2014].

<sup>37</sup> Anon, *The Boy Detective; or, the Crimes of London. A Romance of Modern Times* (London: British Library Historical Collection, 2010 [London: Newsagents' Publishing Company, 1866]), p. 56. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>38</sup> For an example, see Charley Wag, *Charley Wag, the New Jack Sheppard. A New and Intensely Exciting Real-Life Romance* (London: United Kingdom Press, 1860-1).

<sup>39</sup> The choice of the name 'Band of Light' may have been a deliberate ploy to give respectability to this new mode of writing by alluding to the Band of Hope, a children's temperance movement inaugurated in Leeds in 1847. See Lilian Lewis Shiman, 'The Band of Hope Movement: Respectable Recreation for

solves many other cases and detains a host of criminal figures in the process, often working alongside the police, who have great respect for his abilities.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the apparent popularity of *The Boy Detective* – the length of the serial’s run and the text’s adaptation for the stage by William Travers in 1876 are testimony to this<sup>41</sup> – the transition of the juvenile detective character to children’s literature was not smooth. *The Boy Detective* offers a solitary example of juvenile detective fiction, both in the ‘penny-dreadful’ format and, more broadly, in British children’s literature as a whole, several decades before the genre began to develop clearly in the wake of the success of Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories in the *Strand Magazine*. This chapter explores the social and literary motivations behind the construction of *The Boy Detective* and its protagonist, moving beyond general anxieties about the poor physical and moral health of the lower classes, and the consequent high level of juvenile delinquency, towards a specific moral panic about the potentially corrupting effect of the criminal-centric ‘penny dreadful’ upon impressionable child readers, particularly working-class boys. The chapter examines *The Boy Detective*’s response to this moral panic from within the very form of literature which triggered this panic and considers the text’s status as an antidote to criminal-centric ‘penny dreadfuls’ and the intended disciplinary function of the narrative’s boy detective hero upon its young readers. It then considers the difficulties consequent upon the text’s attempt to satisfy a dual

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Working-Class Children’, *Victorian Studies*, 17.1 (1973), 49-74 (p. 51). This movement produced the *Band of Hope Review* (1851-1937), edited by Thomas Bywater Smithies, a journal aimed at working-class children which expressed some of the principles advocated in *The Boy Detective*, particularly that of self-help. See Frank Murray, ‘Band of Hope Review’, in Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (eds), *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland* (London: British Library; Gent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 37.

<sup>40</sup> In this way, Ernest Keen follows the example of his female equivalents Mrs Paschal and Mrs G. The boy detective becomes one of the many variations on the detective in the nineteenth-century popular press. For further information on these variations, see Knight, *Crime Fiction*, pp. 30-55; Worthington, ‘From *The Newgate Calendar* to Sherlock Holmes’, pp. 17-26; and Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, pp. 46-102, pp. 104-15 and pp. 140-59.

<sup>41</sup> The play was performed at the Britannia Theatre, Hoxton, on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 1876. See ‘Britannia Theatre Programme, 10-15 July 1876’ in *East London Theatre Archive* <[http://www.elta-project.org/fedora-stg/get/elta:1046/JPEG\\_800\\_002.jpg](http://www.elta-project.org/fedora-stg/get/elta:1046/JPEG_800_002.jpg)> [accessed 25 May 2010]. Before this, the play had premiered at the Effingham Theatre, Stepney.

readership – both the middle-class adult critics and the working-class child readers of ‘penny dreadfuls’ – in its construction of the boy detective hero. It subsequently explores the generational and class frictions and contradictions inherent in the creation of a middle-class boy super-detective who works alongside the fictional working-class police force. The chapter concludes by addressing some of the literary and social reasons behind *The Boy Detective*’s failure to inspire the production of similar juvenile detective narratives in the 1860s and beyond.

### **1.2: Juvenile delinquency and the ‘penny-dreadful’ problem**

From the early to mid-nineteenth century, middle-class social reformers became increasingly aware of, and concerned with, the state of childhood and, in particular, the poor quality of life of working-class children.<sup>42</sup> Charles Dickens played a significant role in bringing the plight of the children of the poor into the public consciousness, charting the struggles of destitute street urchins in several of his best-known fictional works. The most notable example is *Oliver Twist; or, The Parish Boy’s Progress*, originally serialised in *Bentley’s Miscellany* from 1837-9, which follows the trials and tribulations of orphan Oliver from the workhouse, through a brief apprenticeship to a cruel master, to his descent into a life of crime as he joins a gang of boy pickpockets who are presided over and exploited by an unsavoury adult predator – the villainous Fagin. According to Peter Coveney, the novel ‘represented the feelings of an age anxious about the miserable condition of its children’.<sup>43</sup> A recognition of the terrible conditions endured by the lower classes, coupled with the growth of a nostalgic

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<sup>42</sup> Peter Coveney, *The Image of Childhood* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), pp. 92-3; Hugh Cunningham, *The Invention of Childhood* (London: BBC Books, 2006), pp. 158-69; Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, *Children in English Society Volume II: From the Eighteenth Century to the Children Act, 1948* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).

<sup>43</sup> Coveney, *The Image of Childhood*, p. 93. For further information on Dickens’s construction of childhood, see Coveney, *The Image of Childhood*, pp. 111-61 and Cunningham, *The Invention of Childhood*, pp. 149-52.

idealisation of childhood, generated in middle-class adults a sense of responsibility towards socially inferior youngsters. Part of middle-class moralists' and philanthropists' response to the deprivation and depravation of lower-class children was to introduce legislation which allowed them to remove children from the apparently evil influence of their families, placing them instead in state-run institutions such as ragged or industrial schools, group homes and reformatories. As Claudia Nelson observes, 'all these institutions were intended to redress the faults of domestic life among the lower orders by substituting a loving and responsible discipline for the chaotic and probably criminal parenthood that the children in question had presumably experienced'.<sup>44</sup> In many cases, therefore, state intervention served to impose middle-class values and behavioural codes upon potentially delinquent working-class youths.

State intervention increased, too, in the lives of children who remained within the family and who were not labelled as 'delinquent'. Restrictions on youth labour, such as the Factory Act of 1833, were implemented to protect and improve the lives of all working-class children.<sup>45</sup> This regulation of children's working hours helped to promote the spread of education and literacy amongst the lower classes, as young labourers now had more time and energy to devote to elementary studies. Thus, despite the apparent expansion of state control over working-class children, the concomitant rise in literacy afforded the lower classes a new level of freedom in their pursuit of knowledge and entertainment, as they now had access to a whole range of literary material which they had hitherto been unable to read. Middle-class moralists, therefore, became increasingly anxious about the use to which the masses were putting their new-

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<sup>44</sup> Claudia Nelson, 'Growing Up: Childhood', in Herbert F. Tucker, *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture* (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), pp. 69-81 (p. 73).

<sup>45</sup> For more information on the Factory Acts, see Pinchbeck and Hewitt, *Children in English Society Volume II*, pp. 387-413.



found literacy skills. When discussing working-class reading habits in 1858, Margaret Oliphant laments that:

It is the tale which is wanted; give but that, and the qualities of mind concerned in its production are quite a secondary consideration. The characters may be the merest puppets of wood; the springs of the machinery may betray themselves at every movement; the language may be absurd, the invention miserable; yet if it is a story, it will give a certain amount of pleasure to the dormant intelligences.<sup>46</sup>

The surge in popularity of ‘penny-dreadful’ fiction amongst lower-class children in the 1860s proved that Oliphant’s fears were not unfounded. These ‘penny dreadfuls’ fit precisely the category of absurd, unimaginative and poorly constructed literature against which she was protesting. A more direct indictment of ‘penny-dreadful’ fiction came from Scottish publisher Alexander Strahan in an article published shortly after the passage of the Education Act in 1870. While discussing well-known ‘penny-dreadful’ serials such as *The Wild Boys of London* (1864-6) and *The Skeleton Horseman: or, the Shadow of Death* (1866), Strahan asks, ‘[i]s it worth while [*sic*] to agitate for compulsory education, if, when people have learnt to read, they will content themselves with such poor innutritious stuff?’<sup>47</sup> ‘Penny-dreadful’ fiction, therefore, was increasingly criticised for its inferior quality and became identified by the middle classes as a potential hindrance to the intellectual development of working-class readers.

Of greater concern to middle-class critics than the poor literary quality of ‘penny dreadfuls’ was the immoral criminal content of these serials at a time when moralists and reformers were beginning to show an interest in the status and welfare of lower-class young offenders and in their motivations for committing crimes.<sup>48</sup> ‘Penny dreadfuls’ that celebrated crime and criminals were denounced for their pernicious

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<sup>46</sup> Margaret Oliphant, ‘The Byways of Literature: Reading for the Million’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 84.514 (August 1858), 200-16 (p. 205).

<sup>47</sup> Alexander Strahan, ‘Our Very Cheap Literature’, *Contemporary Review*, 14 (June 1870), 438-60 (pp. 458-9). For information on Strahan’s publications, see Robert J. Kirkpatrick, *From the Penny Dreadful to the Ha’penny Dreadfuller: A Bibliographic History of the Boys’ Periodicals in Britain. 1762-1950* (London: The British Library; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2013), p. 267.

<sup>48</sup> Pinchbeck and Hewitt, *Children in English Society Volume II*, pp. 431-95.

influence upon impressionable young readers who were encouraged, critics argued, through the texts' glorification of criminal life, to follow in the footsteps of their fictionalised criminal heroes. 'Penny dreadfuls', and the Newgate novels and 'penny bloods' that inspired them, were often brought forward as proof or explanation of the guilt of young offenders in court cases, and their corrupting influence was widely reported in the press. An account in the *Reformatory and Refuge Journal* in January 1864 tells an all-too-familiar story of the impact of the criminal heroes of Newgate novels and their penny-fiction derivatives upon two boy thieves, who planned to murder a cab driver and then steal his horse and cab in an attempt to evade capture: 'Upon their examination, the lads confessed that their imagination had been excited by the perusal of such works of fiction as the Life of Dick Turpin, Jack Sheppard, Paul Clifford and others.'<sup>49</sup> A satirical article in *Punch*, drawing the same link between child readership of crime literature and the 'real-life' perpetration of juvenile crime, relates more directly to the 'penny-dreadful' tradition, since the text which is here charged with inciting two boy burglars to commit their crimes takes a child equivalent of the popular criminal hero as its protagonist:

They had hitherto borne a good character, but lately they had had their minds poisoned by the reading of infamous publications, such as the "*Juvenile Highwayman*", and other things of that stamp, and he [the judge] believed that they had been the cause of their present position.<sup>50</sup>

In his analysis of 'penny dreadfuls' in *The Seven Curses of London* (1869), James Greenwood, though heavily critical of the worth of such fiction, challenged the so-called relationship between 'penny dreadfuls' and juvenile crime by suggesting that apparently penitent young offenders, pandering to the prejudices of law enforcement figures, often used 'penny dreadfuls' as a convenient scapegoat for their criminal

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<sup>49</sup> Anon, 'Youthful Adepts in Crime', *Reformatory and Refuge Journal* (January 1864), cited in Mary Carpenter, *Our Convicts and Their Treatment*, I (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts & Green, 1864), p. 75.

<sup>50</sup> Anon, 'How We Breed Our Burglars', *Punch*, 54 (6 June 1868), 248.

behaviour.<sup>51</sup> Meanwhile, an article in *The Bookseller* in 1868, though not offering an outright defence, moderates the views expressed in the widespread accounts of the corrupting influence of ‘penny dreadfuls’ upon young readers, allowing that ‘some mischief may have arisen—not so much by making young thieves, as by familiarising the juvenile mind with crimes of a certain character, and investing those crimes with a false halo of romance’.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, the dominant opinion held by middle-class moralists in the mid- to late nineteenth century was that the glorification of crime and criminals in ‘penny dreadfuls’ lured the impressionable, working-class child readers of these texts into a life of crime.<sup>53</sup>

Opinions on how to combat the pernicious influence of ‘penny dreadfuls’ varied. The article from *Punch* mentioned previously suggests, rather drastically, though with deliberate hyperbole, that:

works such as the *Boy Burglar*, or the *Infantile Assassin*, should not be suffered to go forth, without having the word ‘POISON!’ stamped upon the cover; and it might further somewhat tend to the suppression of the evil, if, after being branded, every such book should be burnt.<sup>54</sup>

Though obviously tongue-in-cheek, this comment captures the mood and opinion of the most ardent critics of the ‘penny dreadful’. More realistic and less extreme is the advice proffered in the *Reformatory and Refuge Journal* to authors of popular crime narratives:

May our popular novelists [. . .], if they deal in criminal subjects at all, state facts as they are, with the veracious accompaniments of the criminal’s habitual, trembling, apprehensive dread of discovery, his frequent subjection to poverty, hunger, cold and fatigue, ending in the privation of personal liberty and severe discipline, or still more severe monotony of prison life.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> James Greenwood, *The Seven Curses of London* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981 [1869]), pp. 112-13.

<sup>52</sup> Anon, ‘Mischievous Literature’, *Bookseller*, 126 (1 July 1868), 445-9 (p. 445).

<sup>53</sup> For further discussion on the perceived relationship between ‘penny dreadfuls’ and crime in the mid- to late nineteenth century, see Patrick A. Dunae, ‘Penny Dreadfuls: Late Nineteenth-Century Boys’ Literature and Crime’, *Victorian Studies*, 22.2 (Winter 1979), 133-50; Kirkpatrick, *From the Penny Dreadful to the Ha’penny Dreadfuller*, pp. 30-9; and Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, pp. 71-97.

<sup>54</sup> Anon, ‘How We Breed Our Burglars’, p. 248.

<sup>55</sup> Anon, ‘Youthful Adepts in Crime’, p. 75.

Crime literature for the young, the article argues, must perform a monitory function, offering to its readers a warning about the dire consequences of committing crimes. Consequently, this account suggests, it is the mode of representation of crime and criminality that is the most objectionable feature of ‘penny-dreadful’ fiction, rather than its presence in the text. The publication of *The Boy Detective* marked the emergence of a new type of ‘penny-dreadful’ narrative, in which sensational crime content is moderated by the narrative’s denunciation of crime and criminals, positioning the reader firmly on the side of the heroic upholder of the law, here, the boy detective protagonist.

### **1.3: Policing childhood: The Boy Detective as exemplar and disseminator of middle-class values**

On one level, *The Boy Detective* is a deeply conservative text, reinforcing the values of the middle-class guardians of morals and self-appointed protectors and reformers of the children of the lower orders. Despite the middle-class hostility towards ‘penny dreadfuls’, on the whole, as Springhall argues, ‘they offer little real challenge to middle-class norms’,<sup>56</sup> an opinion also held by Wilkie Collins and voiced in his discussion of the impact and readership of penny fiction: ‘There seems to be an intense in-dwelling respectability in their dulness [*sic*]. If they lead to no intellectual result, even of the humblest kind, they may have, at least, this negative advantage, that they can do no moral harm.’<sup>57</sup> *The Boy Detective* more obviously and deliberately upholds and disseminates middle-class values to its predominantly lower-class child audience. Ernest, in his role of detective, is established as a middle-class exemplar who conditions

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<sup>56</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p. 69.

<sup>57</sup> Wilkie Collins, ‘The Unknown Public’, *Household Words*, 18.439 (21 August 1858), 217-22 (p. 221).

both his fictional child acquaintances and the real-life child readers of the text to emulate his behaviour and adopt his beliefs.

Almost immediately, *The Boy Detective* disassociates itself from its more morally ambiguous ‘penny-dreadful’ counterparts with an aside in a footnote which appeals directly to child readers to give up pernicious literature in favour of this alternative moralising narrative:

Boys, I am one of yourselves, and, like yourselves, have taken great delight in reading the dashing adventures of Pirates, Highwaymen, and Robbers, and have sometimes felt satisfaction when the bold thief has beaten the thief-taker. You will, in this story, see the other side of the picture, and will learn how a noble band of lads joined together to lend a helping hand to those who were tempted by poverty and hunger to become dishonest, and to hunt down the most terrible who dared to corrupt others by their villainy. Should you find as much pleasure in startling deeds of daring, performed in the cause of honesty, as you do in the courage of great robbers; if you acknowledge how noble how great and brave an honest thief hater may be, great is the reward of your loving comrade—Ernest Keen, the Boy Detective.

(p. 21)

*The Boy Detective* openly establishes itself as a direct opponent to criminal ‘dreadfuls’ – that is, ‘penny-dreadful’ narratives that celebrate the cunning exploits of career criminals – and, in a series of speeches to his Band of Light and conversations with his closest confederates, Ernest becomes a spokesperson against the ‘penny dreadful’, consistently denouncing the creation of such texts.<sup>58</sup> His attack upon criminal

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<sup>58</sup> When Ernest’s friend Stumpy Sam rushes off to buy an instalment of a Jack Sheppard penny serial, Ernest protests, ‘Couldn’t you read these things if they were better written—if the stories were not so wild and improbable, so black and bloodthirsty?’ (p. 205). In a later conversation with Mr Goldring, who eventually becomes a patron of the Band of Light, Ernest criticises criminal ‘dreadfuls’ for arousing in boys an appetite for violence: ‘once the tiger has tasted human blood he is never satisfied unless he is tearing flesh, crunching bones and lapping gore. The boys are very tigers for a romance of crime, they will have murder and fire and fury!’ (pp. 258-9). Ernest goes on to predict here, and in a later passage (p. 279), that boys will soon reject these tales in favour of more palatable fiction which focuses upon “‘boys” and not brigands’ who ‘did not cut other’s throats, but conquered themselves’ (p. 259). *The Wild Boys of London* (1864-6) – a text that was prosecuted under Lord Campbell’s Obscene Publications Act when it was reprinted in 1877 – also features passages that warn against criminal fiction. The Wild Boys’ friend, Dick Lane, tells ‘the Dolphin’ – one of the leaders of the Wild Boys – that his mother forbids him from reading tales such as “‘The Black Phantom; or, the White Spectre of the Pink Rock”” or highwayman stories as ‘they have a bad influence’. Anon, *The Wild Boys of London; or, The Children of Night. A Story of the Present Day* (London: Newsagents’ Publishing Company, 1866), pp. 6-7. All further references are to this edition. Later in the text, the Dolphin rejects tales which feature ‘a frightful accident or a horrible murder’, claiming that he prefers ‘something as makes you laugh’. ‘Schooly

‘dreadfuls’ is supported by authorial asides which speak out against the popular heroes of this offending literature, such as Dick Turpin and Jack Sheppard, emphasising their actual status as villains and their superficial glorification in penny fiction.<sup>59</sup>

Through the figure of the middle-class Boy Detective, the text not only conditions its working-class child readers to reject low-class criminal fiction, but also to denounce the lowly criminal behaviour celebrated in criminal-‘dreadful’ narratives. *The Boy Detective* achieves this aim through its representation of the relationship between Ernest’s Band of Light and its boy criminal opponents. The young fictional thieves are constructed as enemies of the Boy Detective – villains, rather than heroes – and are represented in sharp contrast to Ernest and his companions. While Ernest and his Band of Light are ‘tidy and respectable, with clean faces and good characters’ (p. 172), their opponents are criminal caricatures, who betray their corrupt nature through their ugly appearance, sly expressions, and their brutish nicknames. The most frequent offenders amongst this group of miscreants are Slashing Tom, leader of the local gang of boy criminals, and his second-in-command, the Bull Dog:

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Bright’, another Wild Boy, concurs, rejecting pirate and highwayman tales in favour of something more educational: ‘[I]t isn’t nice to have a savage butchery every week. You like to read it at the time, but it soon sickens you of taking the book in. [. . .] I like stories about soldiers and sailors best, such as the life of Lord Nelson and the Duke of Marlborough. They’s the things to read.’ For Schooly, the best books are ‘[t]hose that teach you someting [*sic*]—all about adventures, and hunting, and battles, and histories.’ Anon, *The Wild Boys of London*, p. 84. These brief asides, however, are the text’s only attempts to moralise about boys’ reading habits. By contrast, *The Boy Detective*’s rejection of criminal-centric and violent literature is more sustained and overt. It is the subject of several passionate speeches delivered by the Boy Detective and it extends beyond Ernest’s statements of disapproval and authorial asides to a narrative-wide reaction against criminal ‘dreadfuls’ through the hero’s own good example. For further information on the prosecution of *The Wild Boys*, see Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, pp. 81-4.

<sup>59</sup> For examples of such criticisms of highwayman tales, see *The Boy Detective*, p. 149, p. 236 and pp. 298-9. The text concludes with a passage which instructs boys in what message they should take from the narrative’s criminal characters and their fate: ‘The characters of Massillon and his companions, whose courage and desperate adventures may have found favour in their eyes, are drawn for a higher purpose than to display their daring and guilt; they are intended for all a pattern, none an example [*sic*]. No happiness can really be obtained without we are free from vices, especially those we have humbly endeavoured to depict in our columns. Happiness is founded alone upon virtue, wisdom, and a right understanding of moral qualities from evil.’ (p. 566).

Among the company assembled in the tap-room of this tavern, was a tall, savage lad, about sixteen years of age; he had a large head, heavy hanging brow, and an expression of low cunning and animality that was very repulsive. This was a boy, known as the Bull Dog.

(p. 59)

The Bull Dog's unattractive animalistic appearance accords with later nineteenth-century studies of physiognomy, for example that of Cesare Lombroso, in which facial anomalies such as 'enormous jaws, strong canines, prominent zygomae, and strong developed orbital arches' were identified as signifiers of criminality, suggesting a 'close relationship between the criminal and the savage'.<sup>60</sup> The Bull Dog's 'criminal' appearance contrasts greatly with the classically heroic depiction of Ernest Keen as 'a very handsome and intelligent youth' who is 'well dressed' (p. 109) with his 'eyes sparkling brightly, and his face shining with the light of pride and good-will' (p. 310).

It is not only their appearance but also their behaviour that distinguishes the boy criminals from the Boy Detectives. While the Band of Light resort to violence in their war against Slashing Tom's gang, they do so with a sense of honour that is notably lacking amongst their criminal opponents. For example, when the Bull Dog thrashes Tim the Tyke, a small, defenceless street urchin, Ernest's friend Stumpy Sam leaps to Tim's defence, immediately overpowering the Bull Dog, but declining to press home his advantage. The Bull Dog, on the other hand, has no such scruples: 'The treacherous sneak stumbled behind Stumpy Sam, and before he could turn gave a terrific kick on the shins, which made poor Stumpy howl with rage and anguish, and brought tears to his

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<sup>60</sup> Gina Lombroso-Ferrero, *Criminal Man: According to the Classification of Cesare Lombroso* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911), p. 7 and p. 5. This is an English-language summary of Lombroso's *Criminal Man*, produced by his daughter. For further information on the study of physiognomy in the nineteenth century, see Lucy Hartley, *Physiognomy and the Meaning of Expression in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and Sharrona Pearl, *Physiognomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2010).

eyes, despite his stout heart.’ (p. 87) Of course, such base trickery must be punished and, when he later renews his attack upon Sam, the Bull Dog falls flat on his face:

This sudden downfall of the Bull Dog when in mid-career was accounted for to the spectators, when they beheld a dark gentleman-like lad bestriding the prostrate coward, and glaring down on him with contemptuous passion. It was the Boy Detective.

(p. 87)

Similar scenes appear throughout the text as, time and time again, the honourable Boy Detective triumphs over his ignoble boy criminal foes. These repeated confrontations not only perform a monitory function, condemning the criminal characters and focusing upon their downfall, but also a disciplinary function, presenting child readers with dichotomous behavioural models and conditioning them to align themselves with Ernest, the exemplar of middle-class values, and to denounce the devious, low-class criminality of his opponents.

This disciplinary function is more effectively applied to Ernest’s interactions with his potential and successful criminal converts. The text does not simply condemn all young criminal characters to humiliation at the hands of the Boy Detective. Though some of the fictional child offenders are innately wicked and beyond his help, others, Ernest recognises, can be saved. The Boy Detective’s Band of Light is not just a tool for capturing criminals, but also a means of recuperating poor street boys who would, otherwise, turn to crime in order to survive. Ernest disciplines child characters and readers alike by drawing attention not only to the punishments that crime incurs, but also to the rewards of rejecting criminality and becoming a law-abiding member of society. *The Boy Detective*, therefore, performs a more positive function than that of solely monitory crime narratives, since the text’s role extends beyond suppressing vice to actively encouraging virtue. Ernest constantly instructs his followers in the ways of morality and honest living and urges them to find respectable work in order to support



themselves, an action that will lead to the improvement of their quality of life and their moral well-being. To assist his teachings, Ernest adopts a concept of self-help, which reflected widely held middle-class views of the mid-nineteenth century and is best expressed in Samuel Smiles's book of that name. In his preface to the 1866 edition of *Self-Help*, Smiles emphasises the key tenets of his self-help doctrine:

Although its chief object unquestionably is to stimulate youths to apply themselves diligently to the right pursuits, – sparing neither labour, pains, nor self-denial in prosecuting them – and to rely upon their own efforts in life, rather than depend upon the help or patronage of others, it will also be found, from the examples given of literary and scientific men, artists, inventors, educators, philanthropists, missionaries, and martyrs, that the duty of helping one's self in the highest sense involves the helping of one's neighbours.<sup>61</sup>

Ernest clearly champions this ideology in a speech to the new members of the Band of Light:

'Now, being honest is working for your living, not taking what belongs to others, and living together without fighting and quarrelling, like good friends, as we all are now. Won't you be honest?'  
'That we will.'  
'If suppose as we can't get no work?'  
'There's always some work to be got if you go the right way to find it; but even if we cannot all be employed let those in work help those who are not.'<sup>62</sup>

(p. 172)

This passage is replete with middle-class values. Ernest promotes bourgeois ideals by prompting his young lower-class followers to emulate the middle-class practice of earning a living through respectable employment. More crucially perhaps, Ernest's

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<sup>61</sup> Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help; with Illustrations of Character, Conduct, and Perseverance* (London: John Murray, 1866 [1859]), pp. iii-iv.

<sup>62</sup> The Wild Boys show a similar spirit: 'There's nearly fifty of us; and every morning we all go out to look for anything that may turn up. Some take a crossing, some go as shoeblacks—not in the regulars, we can't all be regulars—some of us sell things, run errands, carry parcels, or do anything in the world. Fifty boys can't all be out and earn nothing; so if one does not earn a penny, another may earn enough for two. Then luck changes, and those who made most to-day, get the least to-morrow; and so it goes on. But all we all get is put together, and each chap has a little for himself if the bank's all right, and if it ain't he goes without; we never let the bank be quite empty, in case a cove might want.' Anon, *The Wild Boys of London*, p. 10. The Wild Boys' employment, however, is more casual and less respectable than the positions that Ernest encourages his followers to adopt in *The Boy Detective*. For example, Ernest's friends Stumpy Sam and Inky Bob gain employment as a groom and an office boy respectively. See Anon, *The Boy Detective*, pp. 228-9 and pp. 235-7.

adoption of the self-help doctrine potentially neutralises threats to middle-class prosperity, as he encourages his Band of Light to become self-sufficient and to support their less fortunate working-class companions, rather than implicitly living at the expense of the middle classes and committing crimes against them. Finally, this passage reinforces the social status quo, as honest employment for Ernest's lower-class followers will probably involve serving their middle-class superiors. Thus, by inducing potentially criminal street urchins to better themselves by emulating middle-class behaviour but retaining working-class occupations, Ernest does not advocate social mobility, but instead reinforces class boundaries.

While new recruits to the Band of Light aspire to emulate Ernest, they are clearly positioned as loyal subjects of, rather than social equals to, the Boy Detective. This hierarchy is especially apparent in Ernest's relationship with his young criminal converts, who are initially resistant to his ideas and are prone to criminal behaviour. One of the Boy Detective's greatest success stories is in the case of an associate of Slashing Tom's gang, known as 'the Tiger'. He is '[a] small, but sturdy and repulsive-looking boy, who had always been noted as a desperate little ruffian' (p. 172). Initially, he offers resistance to Ernest's lecture about finding employment, responding that:

its [*sic*] all werry well for you to say as it's easy for them to get vork as vants it, but you knows as that's all gammon. Besides, a many of us isn't fit to do no vork, and don't know how to neither.

(p. 172)

By the middle of the narrative he has fully reformed and demonstrates his contempt for his former role by singing an anti-highwayman song, taught to him by the Boy

Detective:

I do not think it manly  
To be a brigand chief,  
For though he wear a dainty dress  
What is he but a thief?  
I feel 'tis truly noble

Though dressed in corduroy,  
To be, in spite of poverty,  
An honest British Boy!

(p. 245)

While the Tiger's substitution of Ernest's Standard English for his own vernacular might initially suggest a blurring of class boundaries, the Tiger's faithful repetition of Ernest's words, rather than using his own, to denounce low-class criminality, positions him as a disciple, promulgating the philosophy of his saviour, the Boy Detective: he aspires to follow Ernest's example rather than becoming equal to it. This pattern is fortified through the initiation into the Band of Light of Nobby Joe, former pickpocket and assistant to Old Death the Fence. Despairing of his criminal lifestyle, Nobby Joe throws himself upon Ernest's mercy, determined to become his most faithful convert:

'Captain Keen, I'm yer most dewoted slave. S'welph me never, I means to be honest, or die! If you hadn't come alone [*sic*], though, with your pleasant grin and hearty grip I should ha' turned to a highwayman, and have taken the road. I was just a thinking of going round Rotten Row to select a black hoss for my charger.'

'But now you belong to the Band of Light.'

(p. 420)

While claiming allegiance to Ernest, his middle-class hero, Nobby Joe's lexicon, accent and diction bolster the social distinction between the Boy Detective and his disciple at a juncture where class boundaries could, potentially, be breached. Ernest is 'Captain' to a 'dewoted slave', whom he saves from a life of crime and depravity.

The transition from criminal gang to the Band of Light not only dictates that the juvenile convert must reject lower-class criminality in favour of middle-class morality, but also, the text implies, that he should embrace his British identity. The Tiger's anti-highwayman song glorifies the 'honest British Boy', the antithesis of the morally reprehensible 'brigand chief' (p. 245), while foreignness is made synonymous with criminality throughout the text. For example, the ringleaders of the Shadow Band – Massillon, Morolt, Blasire and Burdan – are Frenchmen, 'savage' and 'black-bearded'

(p. 20), with ‘glittering black eyes’ (p. 10) and ‘beetling brows’ (p. 82), and are members of ‘a secret order that has lodges in every capital in Europe’ (p. 37).<sup>63</sup> To belong to Ernest’s Band of Light, the text posits, is to become an ‘honest British Boy’ (p. 245) as well as a follower of middle-class ideology. To adopt this role signifies the ultimate rejection of criminality and proof of morality, and the invitation to join this Band of Light implicitly extends from the young criminal wretches of the story to the child readers of the text who were, if we are to believe the complaints of Victorian middle-class moralists, equally in need of moral guidance.

In the realm of childhood, Ernest’s detective role involves policing child characters in the text and, by extension, its child readers. Ernest performs a disciplinary function since, through his own good example and his emphasis upon the rewards of lawful behaviour, he is principally responsible for the reform of his criminalised followers and the moral conditioning of his child readers. In this position he clearly reflects and upholds middle-class images of childhood and attitudes towards juvenile delinquency. He identifies and condemns the pernicious influence of criminal ‘dreadfuls’ upon impressionable child readers, offering a moral alternative through his own narrative; he employs the middle-class doctrine of self-help to reform fictional young offenders who are driven to crime through their desperate poverty; and, when

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<sup>63</sup> This focus upon the threat of the foreign, articulated through the presence of foreign villains, can be traced back to the eighteenth-century Gothic fiction of Horace Walpole and Ann Radcliffe. See Cannon Schmidt, ‘The Gothic Romance in the Victorian Period’, in Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (eds), *A Companion to the Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007 [2002]), pp. 302-17 (p. 309). It was a common trope in nineteenth-century crime and sensation literature to use foreignness to signify criminality. Count Fosco in Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White* (1859-60), who belongs to an Italian secret society, is a notable example of the villainous foreigner. Schwarzbach suggests that ‘the common practice of having foreign villains in crime novels’ was a response to anxieties about the rise in foreign immigrants in Britain and signified an attempt ‘to establish a distinct English (or at times, a more catholic British) national identity’. Schwarzbach, ‘Newgate Novel to Detective Fiction’, p. 240. In Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *The Black Band; or, The Mysteries of Midnight* (1861-2), first serialised in *The Halfpenny Journal*, her Black Band of criminals, headed by Oscar Bertrand, is very similar in composition to *The Boy Detective*’s Shadow Band. The Shadow Band’s description at one point in the narrative as a ‘black band of thieves and assassins’ is perhaps a direct reference to Braddon’s novel. *The Boy Detective*, p. 315. For further information on *The Black Band*, see Robin Barrow, ‘Braddon’s Haunting Memories: Rape, Class and the Victorian Popular Press’, *Women’s Writing*, 13.3 (2006), 348-68.

necessary, he challenges and overcomes his juvenile criminal opponents who, immune to his good example, cannot be redeemed, and hands them over to the guardianship of the official law enforcement system. Yet, perhaps most importantly, while reinforcing widely held middle-class values and becoming a moral exemplar for both his fictional child counterparts and the text's predominantly working-class child readers, the Boy Detective also preserves class boundaries and diffuses threats to middle-class prosperity. In his detective role, Ernest can be seen as a regulator of childhood and a suppressor of juvenile crime, conditioning both his fictional child acquaintances and the real-life child readers of the text to emulate his lawful, middle-class behaviour while ensuring that they remain firmly within their subservient, working-class position. Thus, it seems, the primary function of *The Boy Detective*, through the creation of its boy detective hero, is to contain the potential threat of the working-class, criminal child as perceived by adult middle-class moralists.

#### **1.4 Policing adulthood: Constructing and restricting the boy super-detective**

During a period of rising anxiety about the negative effects of criminal 'dreadfuls' upon impressionable working-class child readers, the Boy Detective provides a welcome alternative to popular boy criminal heroes. In his role of policing childhood, Ernest is a deeply conservative and comforting figure, satisfying the requirements of the adult middle-class moralists who demanded more wholesome children's literature to counteract the growing trend for criminal 'dreadfuls'. Complications arise, however, as *The Boy Detective* attempts to satisfy the conflicting desires of a dual audience, who are distinguished from one another in terms of both age and class. To ensure its success in a consumer-driven industry, *The Boy Detective* had to appeal to the predominantly lower-class child readers of these criminal 'dreadfuls', who longed for sensational crime

content and glamorised, all-powerful and often anti-establishment protagonists. Young working-class readers in particular, who were restricted by poverty and work in their own lives, desired independent fictional heroes to fulfil their desire for escapism. Criminal heroes, who operated outside the law and mocked official law enforcers, were a particularly welcome diversion since, according to Michael Anglo, '[w]orking-class readers had more than a sneaking regard for anybody who could buck the Establishment and make monkeys of the clumsy minions of the law'.<sup>64</sup> As a detective, Ernest Keen cannot win the approval of the young readers by defying the law, but must instead find new ways to satisfy their desire for an all-powerful fantasy figure with complete dominion over the events of the narrative.

The text responds to this challenge by constructing Ernest as a super-detective and, in order to fulfil the criteria of this role comprehensively, he has to enter into the domain of adult criminality. As an investigator of adult criminality, Ernest has the potential to usurp adult authority, since he is no longer dealing with petty juvenile criminals, many of whom are still capable of reform, but is instead pitted against experienced, adult career criminals, the nemeses of the official law enforcement system. However, Ernest's challenge initially appears only to be against adults who are in some way 'other' – those foreign or lower-class criminals who pose a threat to the social status quo.<sup>65</sup> Ernest's excursions into the world of adult criminality, therefore, are ostensibly acceptable as they support the text's dominant adult middle-class and nationalist ideologies. Taking to heart the self-help doctrine that he imparts to his social

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<sup>64</sup> Anglo, *Penny Dreadfuls*, p. 44.

<sup>65</sup> The Shadow Band is made up of men of different classes: 'some of them low-looking ruffians, others of very stylish appearance'. Anon, *The Boy Detective*, p. 18. However, the higher-class members of the Shadow Band, most notably, the leader, Massillon, 'dressed in the height of fashion, though with taste and neatness' (p. 13) are invariably foreigners, and are, thus, marked as 'other', making them legitimate opponents of the middle-class British boy detective. Criminal characters outside of the Shadow Band often betray their lower-class status through their names, appearances and surroundings. For example, Jem the Penman lives in 'a wretched garret in one of the alleys of the vilest part of St Giles's' in 'squalor and poverty' (p. 13), while Old Death, the fence is 'a miserable wretch in appearance, old, withered, palsied' and 'in his dress he was always dirty and slovenly' (p. 56).

and moral inferiors, he works hard to improve his own situation and the conditions of those around him by adeptly employing a host of detective skills in order to become a middle-class investigator of the lower criminal orders: he successfully dons disguises to gain entrance to the lairs of his criminal opponents; he deciphers the secret code used in correspondence by the Shadow Band; he uses his talent for ventriloquism to extricate himself from precarious situations; and he conducts scientific experiments to corroborate evidence. Moreover, by rescuing damsels in distress when they are entrapped by his criminal adversaries, Ernest reinforces contemporary gender ideologies. When he rushes into a burning building to save his friend, Fanny the flower-girl, from a violent death (p. 149) and then, soon after, dives into the water to save her cousin, Lady Lilian, from drowning (p. 170), he embodies the masculine figure of action, the saviour of the passive female victims of crime.<sup>66</sup>

But tensions between Ernest's middle-class status and his age begin to emerge when, in his role of investigator of adult criminality, Ernest begins to encroach upon the territory of official adult working-class law enforcers and, as a consequence of his success, begins to rival the police in terms of detective skill and reputation. Ernest and his band of Boy Detectives become a great source of anxiety to the criminal classes: the text's villains lament the omnipresence of Ernest's Band of Light and are wary of conducting their criminal business in public where 'a hawk may pounce on you, or you may be watched by one of those infernal young spies of Keen's gang' (p. 221). In the eyes of the criminal characters, Ernest and his followers are just as much a threat to their shady activities as are the police. More unrealistic, and, perhaps, problematic, is

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<sup>66</sup> In the 'penny-dreadful' tradition of slum children of unknown parentage who turn out to be of noble birth and heir to a fortune, it transpires that Fanny the flower-girl is the daughter of Lady Lilian's uncle, Charles Brandon, the wild elder brother of Lilian's father, Sir Reginald. Fanny and her brother, Charles, therefore, are the heirs to the Brandon estate. See Anon, *The Boy Detective*, p. 40. Following the same pattern, Charles junior turns out to be Tim the Tyke (see Anon, *The Boy Detective*, p. 120), a badly behaved street urchin whom Ernest rescues from hanging at the hands of Will Glyn's gang of boy criminals. See Anon, *The Boy Detective*, p. 250.

the consistent deference of police characters themselves towards the Boy Detective.

The police often employ Ernest in difficult cases and constantly express their faith in his matchless abilities. When Ernest arrives at the scene of an apparent robbery and meets with hostility from the victim of the crime, a policeman immediately leaps to his defence:

‘This youth is the Boy Detective. He’s employed by the police and countenanced by the magistrates, and when he gets a few years older, I don’t doubt that he’ll be a great man in the force. [. . .] If any one could help you to the finding of your money, it is the Boy Detective,’ replied the policeman.  
(p. 207)

In some instances, the police’s faith in the Boy Detective is carried so far that they trust his judgement above their own. For example, when Inspector Hawks finds himself in peril after an undercover operation against the Shadow Band backfires, the police are at a loss as to what to do and await instructions from Ernest:

‘Ah, Master Keen, is it you? For Heaven’s sake give us some plain directions,’ said the officer.  
‘Attention!’ said the Boy Detective, in a calm, but quick, thrilling tone of command, which no one could assume so well as he upon emergency, though in ordinary cases he always addressed his elders and superiors with respect and deference. ‘Two of you get into that boat. Unmoor it quick, Vincent.—The tide will drift Hawks and Jack towards the first arch from the lee shore.—Here, sir, you forget the lantern—Now, sirs, trim the boat; row out into the river, and pull down the stream in chase of Gaspard Massillon. Pull with a will. There’s a young lady in the boat we’re chasing. If we don’t overhaul the pirates in a twinkling they may throw her overboard.’  
The men needed no further prompting or instruction.  
(pp. 169-70)

On one level, the police’s deference to the Boy Detective reinforces the contemporary class boundaries: while Ernest is a firmly middle-class figure, the police are recruited from the lower classes and, in their role as public servants, they are bound to follow the directions of their middle-class superior.<sup>67</sup> Yet Ernest’s command over the police

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<sup>67</sup> Haia Shpayer-Makov offers an explanation for the working-class composition of the majority of the police force in nineteenth-century Britain: ‘Almost all recruits started at the bottom of the hierarchy in the rank of constable. Those who managed to advance had to do so rung by rung. Only during 1829-1830, when the hierarchical structure had to be manned from the bottom up at once, did recruits enter the



becomes problematic when considering his child status: by superseding the authority and surpassing the ability of the *adult* police force, Ernest, like his boy criminal equivalents in the popular criminal ‘dreadfuls’, transcends the boundaries of conventional childhood behaviour and roles.

Ernest’s ostensibly unrivalled independence in his role as investigator of adult criminality poses a challenge to the adult/child hierarchy, ensuring that the Boy Detective becomes a potentially problematic and uncomfortable figure for the middle-class moralists campaigning against the ‘penny-dreadful’ form. According to Springhall, ‘[i]t is likely that what offended pious middle-class adults about “penny dreadfuls” was, in many cases, the precocious independence and potency of their boy heroes, together with their implicit challenge to the generational status quo’.<sup>68</sup> Marjory Lang goes further, claiming in her examination of adult critics’ reactions to cheap, sensational fiction for children that:

Middle-class Victorians found in these adolescent rebels an uncomfortable contradiction to their romantic and nostalgic images of childhood purity and innocence, inseparable from a state of weakness and dependence. Literature exalting the cheeky, capable juvenile hero they felt to be especially dangerous to their own well-protected children.<sup>69</sup>

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supervisory ranks directly. Thereafter, every police recruit, with the exception of the highest ranks, experienced the physically demanding work reserved for the bottom rungs. The ranks, therefore, were mostly filled by men from the social classes traditionally willing or forced to do manual labour.’ Shpayer-Makov, *The Making of a Policeman*, p. 28. The suitability of working-class men for the police role was attested by police recruitment policies, which promoted physical strength over intellectual prowess. Shpayer-Makov asserts that ‘[w]hile the physical examinations were demanding, the educational tests were minimalist’. *The Making of a Policeman*, p. 35. The detective police force, established in 1842, was also populated predominantly by working-class men, as internal recruitment from experienced police officers was favoured over the selection of external candidates. See Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective*, p. 8. Alongside their experience on the police force, Shpayer-Makov argues that the working-class status of police recruits to the detective police was viewed as an advantage in itself, since ‘[t]he working-class population was the main target of their surveillance and investigation, and management wanted people of a similar background to police this population’. *The Ascent of the Detective*, p. 80. For further information on the working-class composition of the Victorian police force, see Emsley, *The English Police*, pp. 191-206. Police recruitment will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

<sup>68</sup> Springhall, ‘Disreputable Adolescent Reading’, p. 105.

<sup>69</sup> Marjory Lang, ‘Childhood’s Champions: Mid-Victorian Children’s Periodicals and the Critics’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 13.1 (Spring 1980), 17-31 (p. 22).

In light of this criticism it is clear that, in his role as super-detective, commanding the respect and obedience of the adult police force, Ernest still poses a threat to the middle-class Victorian ideal of childhood, regardless of his status as a law-abiding figure. In order to prevent the middle-class moralists from condemning *The Boy Detective* along with its criminal-‘dreadful’ contemporaries, therefore, the text needed to impose a layer of restraint upon Ernest’s characterisation as a super-detective and, in particular, upon his relationship with the police.

Thus, while in the passage discussed earlier, the police appear to rely upon Ernest’s superior wisdom in order to avert disaster, on closer examination the weaknesses in Ernest’s all-powerful role begin to show. There is an implicit sense of constraint in the emphasis upon the extreme circumstances in which Ernest takes control. Though he can assume a ‘quick, thrilling tone of command’ in an emergency, the text is swift to add that ‘in ordinary cases he always addressed his elders and superiors with respect and deference’ (p. 170). What seems to be an assertion of the Boy Detective’s authority also reminds the reader of his proper, normative and habitual conformity to the subservient role of childhood. While Ernest’s all-powerful status is gently subverted here, later in the text any illusion of his police detective role and implicit superiority is more comprehensively dispelled:

It must not be supposed that the Boy Detective was really a police authority; he was merely an assistant employed by Inspector Hawks; but, as captain of the Band of Light, and as hero of our marvellous romance, of course his prowess and influence were transcendental!

(p. 343)

In its use of the words ‘marvellous romance’, the text openly admits that Ernest’s super-detective status is a fictional ploy to ensure that he conforms to the child readers’ expectations of the boy hero. Ernest only enjoys unparalleled authority, independence and success as a detective because it is *his* story, the text suggests, and, outside of this

fictional construct, the Boy Detective would struggle to live up to his heroic reputation, since, in the real world, the role of juvenile detective does not and cannot exist.

Throughout the narrative, numerous examples support this disempowerment of the Boy Detective by emphasising his conformity and conventionality. In many cases, scenes that initially appear to fortify Ernest's status as a super-detective actually undermine it. For example, when gangsters Billy the Butterfly and Happy Jack hunt down and confront Ernest, he handles the situation with the utmost composure, confidently bragging of his attachment to the police and using it to gain victory over his criminal opponents:

'I hope you don't wish it to be in private?' said the Boy Detective, with a dry smile, 'for I've some friends awaiting me round the corner.'  
He drew his silver whistle from his breast, and applied it to his lips.  
'Zounds! the little beasts have the crushers at their beck and call,' cried the sharper, looking round with no slight trepidation. [. . .]  
Our hero trebled softly on his whistle.  
Like deer at the sound of the hunter's horn, the two mobsmen sprang away and quickly disappeared round the corner of the street.

(p. 179)

Yet, as Billy and Jack make a hasty exit, it is their fear of the entrance of the police rather than Ernest's power to summon them that drives the gangsters away. Despite his apparent victory, above all, this passage emphasises Ernest's ultimate reliance upon, and subservience to, adult authority figures and the official law enforcement system, and draws attention to his inability to deal with adult criminal figures independently. He may successfully threaten or trap the text's criminals, but he always looks to the police to ensure their arrest and punishment.<sup>70</sup> This deferral of power emphasises the ultimate authority and efficiency of the law, ensuring that the text performs a monitory

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<sup>70</sup> The reliance upon the police to round up the text's criminals is also a feature of later detective fiction for adults. Sherlock Holmes, for example, often hands over criminal characters to the police once he has solved the case. Yet, while in the Holmes stories the detective, for the most part, works independently of the police, who are used as a narrative device to conclude the plot neatly, in *The Boy Detective* the police play a more dominant and invasive – and hence a more realistic and disciplinary – role in the investigations of the young detective protagonist.

function, instilling in child readers a fear and respect for the official state disciplinary system which, by the mid-nineteenth century, had met with widespread middle-class approval.<sup>71</sup>

Despite the police's apparent admiration of Ernest's skill as a detective, his subservience and inferiority to the official law enforcement system is confirmed through the police's recognition of his child status and lack of authority in the force. When Sergeant Hardy and Ernest are conducting a search for the Shadow Band, Hardy reminds Ernest of his place:

'It strikes me that there are some of the coiner's gang in this place.'  
'It may be so; at all events, we will search the lower part of the house,' said Hardy.  
'All right, sir,' cried our hero, springing forward.  
'Stop, my boy; you must follow and not lead, for there may be danger.'  
Hardy gently pulled our hero aside, and passing him, descended the stairs quickly.

(p. 140)

Far from being a super-detective, Ernest is here portrayed as an eager yet vulnerable child in need of adult protection from the violent criminal world. Yet this presentation, too, creates conflict. While the generational status quo is restored, as the Boy Detective's apparent challenge to adult systems of control is undermined and, thus, overcome, Ernest's ensuing subservience to the police generates a class antagonism whereby, paradoxically, the text's middle-class protagonist submits to the command of his social inferiors, the working-class police characters. Consequently, the Boy Detective becomes the victim of a perpetual cycle of irresolvable tensions. He is a dichotomous figure, simultaneously socially superior and generationally inferior to the law enforcement system alongside which he works. As an independent middle-class child investigator, Ernest struggles to operate effectively in the detective profession which is, at this point, both in fiction and reality, predominantly the domain of the

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<sup>71</sup> See Emsley, *The English Police*, pp. 62-4 and Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, pp. 103-69.

working-class adult police force in Britain. Thus, while Ernest is, in many ways, a deeply conservative character who upholds and disseminates middle-class ideology, he becomes a problematic figure when he steps outside his childhood circle in order to exercise his detective influence in the realm of adult criminality.

### **1.5: Beyond the text: *The Boy Detective* in its wider literary and social context**

In the decades after the publication of *The Boy Detective*, the juvenile detective protagonist, and the juvenile detective genre, failed to secure a place in children's literature.<sup>72</sup> In order to explore fully the reasons for this failure it is necessary to examine *The Boy Detective* in relation to its wider literary and social context. One of the main drawbacks for *The Boy Detective* was its categorisation as a crime narrative and its inevitable connection with the criminal-‘dreadful’ tradition against which it was ostensibly protesting. Though *The Boy Detective* constantly reiterates the moral, heroic status of Ernest and his companions, while introducing crime and criminals as forces to be denounced and contained, it would be naïve to assume that the appeal of the text relied solely upon the thrill of the chase and capture of the criminal characters. With such strong crime content, it is perhaps inevitable that child readers would derive pleasure, too, from the actions of the narrative's villains: the text is replete with murder, kidnapping, forgery and fighting – activities at the centre of many of the criminal ‘dreadfuls’ that were precisely so popular with young working-class readers in the 1860s.

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<sup>72</sup> Similarly, there is a dearth of detective characters in mainstream British literature for adults between the crime and sensation fiction of the 1860s and the Sherlock Holmes stories from the late 1880s. While Stephen Knight challenges the claim that the 1870s and 1880s are ‘barren years’ for detective fiction, the most significant detective titles identified by Knight in this period are American in origin, such as: the novels of Anna Katharine Green, which featured female detectives Amelia Butterworth and, later, Violet Strange; Allan Pinkerton's semi-autobiographical accounts of his Pinkerton National Detective Agency; and a host of detective dime novels. See Knight, *Crime Fiction*, pp. 52-5.

Moreover, despite the text's emphasis upon the morality of Ernest's detective role, his representation as a paragon of virtue occasionally falters as he becomes entangled in the volatile criminal world depicted in the narrative. Just as Sherlock Holmes breaks the law in the pursuit of justice in Doyle's stories in the 1880s and beyond,<sup>73</sup> Ernest too engages in criminal behaviour in his dealings with the Shadow Band, particularly when he breaks into the apartments of the vice-president of the organisation:

He unpicked the lock of a heavy desk which stood on the side-table.  
'I fight with foxes—I must use foxish cunning. I seek justice for a father's murder, and the detection of a band of murderous villains.'  
Thus steeling his conscience—for it is painful, even in a good cause, to use deceit and subtlety, and in his own character our hero was incapable of this double dealing, but he had a passion for the detection of crime, he was as remorseless in hunting a thief as the sportsman in chasing a wolf, and he stuck at nothing to bring offenders to justice—he opened the desk very silfully. [*sic*].  
(p. 56)

Ernest's detective role is used here to excuse his criminal behaviour, as it is throughout the narrative. In particular, his alliances with criminal characters, such as thief Gregorio Burdan, and Reuben Lee, an accomplice of Massillon, are justified as tactical measures employed by the young detective to defeat more contemptible outlaws. Ernest must, the text argues, engage with criminals and criminality at times if he is to win his battle against evil. Despite the moral, anti-criminal stance taken by *The Boy Detective*, the text's status as detective fiction ensures that crime is inevitably a central force in the narrative and one that is, potentially, capable of contaminating its fictional heroes and child readers alike, however much the narrative suggests their immunity.

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<sup>73</sup> A. E. Murch discusses Holmes's criminality: 'He had his eccentricities, his habit of countering boredom with cocaine, and now and then, like some of his French predecessors, he allowed his thoughts to stray to the other side of the fence. One of his particular hobbies was the opening of safes, and in idle moments he would remark: "I have always had an idea that I could have made a highly efficient criminal," or "Burglary was always an alternative profession had I cared to adopt it." Yet his honour remained clear, and if, once or twice, he did break the letter of the law when all other means of achieving his purpose had failed, his motive was always to further the ends of justice, and he could say in all sincerity, "In over a thousand cases I am not aware that I have ever used my powers upon the wrong side.'" A. E. Murch, *The Development of the Detective Novel* (London: Peter Owen, 1968 [1958]), p. 189.

Though the cheap serial-fiction industry relied heavily upon the support of its young readers, it was the views of the middle-class moralists which triumphed from the mid-1860s onwards. The empowerment of the working class through the extension of the franchise to working-class men over twenty-one (1867) and the implementation of the Education Act (1870) ensured that middle-class moralists became increasingly concerned about the behaviour of, and influences upon, working-class children.<sup>74</sup> As the backlash against criminal ‘dreadfuls’ intensified,<sup>75</sup> publishers recognised that they must meet the growing demand for a new, moralistic and improving type of literature for children. Though *The Boy Detective* could be more accurately described as a crime ‘dreadful’ rather than a criminal ‘dreadful’, since it explores criminality without taking criminal characters as its main protagonists or obviously glorifying their unlawful behaviour, the inevitable crime content of *The Boy Detective* ensured that it was not distinct enough from the criminal-‘dreadful’ tradition to avoid being associated with its more pernicious ‘penny-dreadful’ counterparts. Springhall defines *The Boy Detective* as a ‘London low-life “dreadful”’, alongside texts such as *The Work Girls of London: Their Trials and Temptations* (1865), *The Poor Boys of London; or Driven to Crime* (1866), and *The Jolly Dogs of London; or, The Two Roads of Life* (1866).<sup>76</sup> Elsewhere, he lists *The Boy Detective* among a number of texts produced by the NPC that secured the publishers’ bad reputation amongst the opponents of immoral penny fiction for children:

[The NPC’s] chief claim to ignominy among moralizing Victorians was that it churned out at least three dozen penny-weekly novels, such as *The Boy*

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<sup>74</sup> See Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man’s World* (London: HarperCollinsAcademic, 1991), p. 19.

<sup>75</sup> Journalist and author James Greenwood was one of the most outspoken opponents of ‘penny-dreadful’ fiction in the late 1860s and early 1870s. See Greenwood, *The Seven Curses of London* (1869); James Greenwood, ‘Penny Awfuls’, *St Paul’s Magazine*, 12 (February 1873), 161-8; and James Greenwood, ‘Penny Packets of Poison’, in *The Wilds of London* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1874), reprinted in Haining (ed.) *The Penny Dreadful*, pp. 357-71. For information on Greenwood’s own literary output, see Kirkpatrick, *From the Penny Dreadful to the Ha’penny Dreadfuller*, pp. 22-3.

<sup>76</sup> Springhall, ‘Disreputable Adolescent Reading’, p. 108.

*Detective, or the Crimes of London* (1865-6?); *The Dance of Death; or, the Hangman's Plot* (1865-6); and *The Skeleton Horseman; or, the Shadow of Death* (1866).<sup>77</sup>

Meanwhile, Patrick A. Dunae identifies *The Boy Detective* alongside *The Wild Boys of London* and *The Boy Pirate* (1865) amongst those 'publications which the critics denounced as dreadfuls of the worst kind'.<sup>78</sup> In its time, too, *The Boy Detective* was grouped together with 'criminal' dreadfuls. Greenwood places *The Boy Detective* in the same category as "The Boy Thieves of London", "The Life of a Fast Boy", "The Boy Bandits", "The Wild Boys of London", [. . .] "Charley Wag", "The Lively Adventures of a Young Rascal", defining them collectively as 'weekly pen'orths of abomination'.<sup>79</sup> Greenwood does not perceive *The Boy Detective*, with its moralistic, middle-class boy detective hero, to be any different to those 'dreadfuls' which featured boy criminal protagonists and which were charged with glorifying crime and inciting juvenile delinquency.

The story papers that arose from the mid-1860s to take the place of these highly contentious crime-centric narratives were overtly marketed as moral alternatives to 'penny-dreadful' fiction, and ostensibly suppressed the crime content that had made their predecessors so popular with working-class child readers. Edwin J. Brett, the managing director of the NPC, the firm which oversaw the publication of *The Boy Detective*, was one of the frontrunners in the emergence and success of this new category of juvenile literature, launching the short-lived *Boy's Own Companion* in 1865 and the *Boy's Own Reader* the following year.<sup>80</sup> Moving away from the NPC's criminal-centric highwayman and 'London low-life' tales, Brett announced his intention to clean up his catalogue of boys' fiction in the 'Editor's Address' of the first issue of

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<sup>77</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p. 55.

<sup>78</sup> Dunae, 'New Grub Street for Boys', pp. 24-5.

<sup>79</sup> Greenwood, 'Penny Awfuls', p. 162.

<sup>80</sup> Kevin Carpenter, *Penny Dreadfuls and Comics: English Periodicals for Children from Victorian Times to the Present Day* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1983), p. 11.



his most successful story paper, *Boys of England*, in 1866, which copied the format of his earlier, less popular publications:

Our aim is to enthrall you by wild and wonderful, but healthy fiction; to amuse and instruct you by interesting papers on History and Science; to inform you on all matters belonging to your manly out-door sports and games, and your home pastimes; to enter into a hearty, free, and trusty companionship with you through the medium of the Correspondents page; to afford you a merry laugh by a droll story or jest; to charm you with a pretty verse.<sup>81</sup>

The paper combined historical tales, sea stories, adventure narratives and Gothic fiction with informative and instructive articles focusing on subjects such as sport, history and nature, as well as jokes, riddles, correspondence and competitions.<sup>82</sup>

Following the great success of the *Boys of England*, which continued to appear until 1899, there was a prolific output of juvenile story papers featuring similar content to Brett's pioneering publication. Popular titles included the Emmett brothers' *Young Briton* (1869-77) and *Sons of Britannia* (1870-7), James Henderson's *Young Folks* (1871-97) and Charles Fox's *Boys' Standard* (1875-95).<sup>83</sup> Brett himself produced several juvenile story papers similar to his *Boys of England*, though the earlier paper was more successful than its imitators.<sup>84</sup> While the fictional serials featured in these publications were notorious for their sensational content, they differed in crucial ways from their 'penny-dreadful' predecessors. Where many of the 'penny dreadfuls' of the 1860s, including *The Boy Detective*, used the slum areas of London as their location,

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<sup>81</sup> Edwin J. Brett, 'The Editor's Address', *Boys of England*, 1.1 (24 November 1866), 16.

<sup>82</sup> Notably, Greenwood, who had condemned *The Boy Detective* alongside criminal 'dreadfuls', lent his support to *Boys of England* when requested to write a story for this publication. He regards *Boys of England* as 'a creditable periodical, and the more so, that from small beginnings it has, by legitimate and wholesome means, raised itself to its present satisfactory eminence, and is still improving its claim on public goodwill'. James Greenwood, 'Special Notice!', *Boys of England*, 4.90 (7 August 1868), 191. Following the success of the *Boys of England*, Brett changed the name of the Newsagents' Publishing Company, of which he had become sole proprietor in 1867, to the "Boys of England" Office'. Carpenter, *Penny Dreadfuls and Comics*, p. 12.

<sup>83</sup> Carpenter, *Penny Dreadfuls and Comics*, pp. 11-13 and pp. 21-2; Dunae, 'New Grub Street for Boys', p. 35; Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture, and Moral Panics*, pp. 85-8.

<sup>84</sup> Brett's *Young Men of Great Britain* (1868-72), *Rovers of the Sea* (1872-3), *Boy's Comic Journal* (1883-7) and *Boys of the Empire* (1888-93) all had a much shorter publication run than the *Boys of England*, spanning just a few years compared to nearly three decades of success enjoyed by the *Boys of England*. Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, pp. 76-7.

the fictional tales featured in the *Boys of England* and its contemporary story-paper publications were often set in faraway, foreign and exotic environments, shifting the focus from the domestic concerns of Victorian England, which were of great import in crime narratives, to an engagement with imperialist values and an exploration of a host of different cultures.<sup>85</sup>

This change of setting marked a shift in emphasis from a concern with imposing social order internally to imposing it externally upon the wider British Empire. With the expansion of the Empire, the greatest threat to national security and social status quo was perceived to be the savage, untamed races that now lived under British rule and the need for a stable, unified Britain became of paramount importance. Boys' literature aimed to familiarise its readers with the territory over which they would, one day rule – at least symbolically if not literally in the case of working-class boys – and to endow them with a sense of patriotism and racial superiority through stories which emphasised the might of the British as they held sway over a vast Empire.<sup>86</sup> The emergent focus upon Britishness in *The Boy Detective* – through the triumph of the honest British boys of the Band of Light over the depraved foreign criminals of the Shadow Band – is expanded upon and amplified in the early story-paper narratives by transferring the British hero to foreign climes where he acts as a coloniser and civiliser of barbarous lands and races, implicitly bringing them under British rule.

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<sup>85</sup> See Bristow, *Empire Boys*, pp. 4-52; Louis James, 'Tom Brown's Imperialist Sons', *Victorian Studies*, 17.1 (September 1973), 89-99; and John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985). The impact of imperialism upon juvenile story-paper fiction will be explored in more detail in chapter 2.

<sup>86</sup> Dunae suggests that the 1870s was a decade 'marked by a growing interest in British overseas activities' and that this was clearly reflected in juvenile popular fiction. While he argues that 'the characters who appeared in *Boys of England* (1866-99), the *Boys' Standard* (1875-92), and the other controversial periodicals could not be regarded as conscientious empire builders', more moralistic story papers, like the Religious Tract Society's *Boy's Own Paper* (1879-1967) 'stressed the missionary aspects of Empire' – that is, the salvation of the foreign heathen by the British Christian. Patrick A. Dunae, 'Boys Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914', *Victorian Studies*, 24 (Autumn 1980), 105-21 (p. 106, p. 107 and p. 108).

In order to reinforce their firmer imperialist message, fictional story-paper narratives frequently avoided the realistic depictions of crime displayed in ‘London low-life’ tales such as *The Boy Detective*, which would undermine the unity and authority of the image of Britain that these texts were trying to project. While story-paper serials often still contained elements of crime and violence, criminality was clearly aligned with savage lands and races, elevating British heroes over their savage foreign counterparts. Criminality in the texts, therefore, was disassociated from Britishness and, thus, posed little threat to British society or identity. Furthermore, despite their crime content, story-paper narratives were not, by definition, crime fiction. Instead, these stories were more obviously placed in genres such as adventure, historical and naval fiction.<sup>87</sup> Thus, while in criminal ‘dreadfuls’ and detective stories the crime content defined the type of fiction produced, in the early story-paper fiction it lurked beneath the surface, concealed in exotic and unfamiliar environments and through the narratives’ categorisation in apparently more respectable genres. Contemporary critics, while often seeing little value in these story-paper narratives, were sometimes fooled by the suppression of crime content, arguing, in the case of the *Boys of England*, for example, that, unlike its ‘penny-dreadful’ predecessors, there was nothing ‘vicious’ or ‘flagrantly offensive’ in it.<sup>88</sup>

Since the demise of *The Boy Detective* in 1866 coincided with the birth of a new, ostensibly moralistic story-paper tradition in which Brett himself played a key role, it is not inconceivable that the text’s moralising passages were not only inserted to

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<sup>87</sup> Examples from the *Boys of England* of serials which fit this description include Charles Stevens’s ‘Alone in the Pirates’ Lair’ (1866) and ‘The Boy Chief of the Delawares’ (1867), John Cecil Stagg’s ‘Chevy Chase, or the Battle on the Border’ (1867) and Samuel Bracebridge Hemyng’s ‘Jack Harkaway After Schooldays: His Adventures Afloat and Ashore’ (1872). See Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p. 86 and Kirkpatrick, *From the Penny Dreadful to the Ha’penny Dreadfuller*, pp. 120-1.

<sup>88</sup> Arthur E. Waite, ‘By-Ways of Periodical Literature’, *Walford’s Antiquarian Magazine and Bibliographical Review*, 12 (July-November 1887), 65-74 (p. 70); Frances Hitchman, ‘Penny Fiction’, *Quarterly Review*, 171.341 (July 1890), 150-71 (pp. 155-6).

assuage the middle-class critics of ‘penny-dreadful’ fiction but, more directly, were employed to promote Brett’s new publications. This possibility becomes apparent in a passage in *The Boy Detective* where Ernest and his friends discuss the future of cheap juvenile fiction:

‘Well, now, Bob, I’ll tell ye what the boys could do: they could find the name and address of the publishers of their penny sensationals on the title page of the books, and write them a ‘round-robin’ to this tune, “Dear sir,—We are getting perfectly sick of pirates, highwaymen and the like, and we want something new. We are but boys, and as such we like tales of dashing adventure. We want no dull moral tagged on to every chapter, no long dry sermonising; we like a good slashing fight, but we don’t want rogues to be the conquerors; we like a tale of true love, but we don’t want to know anything about the indecent pranks of bad girls; we want something honest and English-like, that we need not blush to show our parents or to have bound or framed. If you can produce something rattling and amusing, and yet moral and good, we will give you our best support, and will remain your obliged subscribers, the “Boys of England!”’

‘Ah, Bob, but the “Boys of England” haven’t the pluck to do this. [. . .] if they do, they will be the gainers of what is sadly wanted, a *cheap* and thoroughly good work to suit sensation readers, who want their minds to be excited without being polluted.’<sup>89</sup>

(p. 279)

As Brett launched his popular *Boys of England* late in 1866, the same year in which the serialisation of *The Boy Detective* concluded, it seems hardly likely that the use, repetition, and capitalisation of the term ‘Boys of England’, and its appearance, in quotation marks, in *The Boy Detective* is coincidental; the passage reads like an advertisement for Brett’s forthcoming story paper. If this is the case, *The Boy Detective*, positioned somewhere between the popular criminal ‘dreadfuls’ and the newly emerging story papers, was utilised by Brett to pave the way for his new

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<sup>89</sup> This is not the text’s only mention of the ‘Boys of England’. Another reference occurs in an earlier passage in which Ernest discusses the state of British society with his benefactor, Mr Goldring. In response to Ernest’s observation that ‘I think the world improves fast’, Mr Goldring replies:

‘Yes; and shall I tell you on whom depends the glorious future, the increasing rate of progress? On the BOYS OF ENGLAND!’

‘The boys of England are beginning to feel this, I think, sir.’

‘But they’ve a great deal to learn yet.’

‘Yes, sir, and more still to unlearn.’ Anon, *The Boy Detective*, p. 258.

publications, bridging the gap between the apparently immoral ‘penny-dreadful’ fiction that glorified crime and criminals and the seemingly sanitised story papers, which were full of historical tales, adventure stories, and practical articles, that were, on the surface at least, more in keeping with Victorian ideas of what children *should* read.<sup>90</sup>

*The Boy Detective*, therefore, becomes a transitional text between the ‘penny-dreadful’ and early story-paper form and, while it contains some characteristics which are in line with the aims, patterns and ideologies of the latter form – for example, an obvious moral focus and an overt rejection of ‘penny dreadfuls’ and criminal heroes – other features, such as its obvious crime content, its ‘penny-dreadful’ status and its focus on crime and corruption in, rather than beyond Britain, offer a partial explanation for the absence of similar detective narratives in the early story-paper replacements of the ‘penny dreadfuls’. However, the juvenile detective genre’s failure to develop and flourish following the publication of *The Boy Detective* must also be traced back to advances in the adult detective genre from which it, in part, derived.

Ernest is a private detective character – almost a consulting detective, like Sherlock Holmes – a status that is confirmed through his official connection to the police force and his acceptance of payment for his work.<sup>91</sup> In his summary of the text, in the *Encyclopedia of Fantastic Victoriana*, Jess Nevins emphasises that, as a private detective character, Ernest is not only an anomaly in children’s literature but also in the wider detective genre in Britain:

In the 1860s most fictional law enforcement characters were policemen. While there were certainly private detectives in England in the mid-1860s, most

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<sup>90</sup> It may have been that Brett deliberately took advantage of the passages in *The Boy Detective* in order to promote his forthcoming story paper, either ensuring the insertion of the passages mentioning the ‘Boys of England’ himself as a direct advertisement for the *Boys of England* or adopting the ‘Boys of England’ as the name of his story paper in response to the passages from *The Boy Detective*.

<sup>91</sup> Ernest claims that he is employed by the police (p. 24, p. 90 and p. 101), an assertion confirmed by police characters, who express great faith in the Boy Detective and turn to him to help them to solve difficult cases (pp. 35-6 and p. 199), for which Ernest receives payment (p. 171 and p. 200). In a telling scene, Ernest identifies detection as a job when he is reluctant to apprehend a gang of pickpockets during a visit to the theatre in his leisure time, claiming that he is ‘not on duty’ (p. 380).

authors, whether of penny dreadfuls or sensation fiction, followed the model of Charles Dickens in *Bleak House* and made their detectives policemen. Private detectives were not socially respectable in the 1860s and did not become common in British fiction until the 1880s and 1890s. While Ernest's job as a private detective is indicative of his lowered social standing, it is surprising that he is one to begin with.<sup>92</sup>

The popularity of policemen as lead investigators in the adult detective genre in Britain could not be replicated in children's literature, since official law enforcement was, by its nature, an adult pursuit and so the role of policeman was not open to the young protagonists who dominated children's popular fiction. Instead, child characters could, and would only ever, adopt the role of a private and/or amateur detective.

Ernest's status as a private detective, rather than an amateur investigator working independently of the police, perhaps emphasises a further layer of restraint imposed upon the characterisation of the juvenile detective. In the 1860s, the amateur detective protagonist was closely associated with sensation fiction, in which the hero or heroine uncovers scandals in the middle-class domestic space, and was, perhaps, in light of this, judged to be a character wholly unsuitable for the working-class child readers of cheap juvenile fiction.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, these adult amateur detectives often

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<sup>92</sup> Nevins, *Fantastic Victoriana*, p. 459. As Nevins asserts, in reality, private detectives did operate in Britain in the nineteenth century. According to Shpayer-Makov, retired police detectives often made the switch to private detective work: 'Some, like Detective Inspector Maurice Moser, could afford to run their own agency. Others were employees of such agencies, or of private people such as solicitors and well-off individuals who wanted their valuables to be protected professionally. The practice of moving from public to private service had a long tradition, going back to the Bow Street Runners and to Charlie Field, one of Scotland Yard's early detectives, who had joined the Metropolitan Police before the detective department was formally organized. Even Inspector John Meiklejohn, who was convicted in the turf scandal of 1877, found a job as a private investigator after his release from prison. Former police detectives John Littlechild, John Sweeney, Walter Dew, Benjamin Leeson, William C. Gough (and many other police detectives after the war, including Francis Carlin, Harold Brust, Cecil Bishop, Ernest Nicholls, and Herbert Fitch) followed this path. In 1898 Abberline replaced Chief Superintendent John Shore as the European agent of the famous American Pinkerton Agency.' Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective*, p. 119. The Pinkerton National Detective Agency was established in America by Scottish-born Allan Pinkerton in 1850, the same year in which he was appointed as Chicago's first city detective. Robert P. Weiss, 'Private Detective Agencies and Labour Discipline in the United States, 1855-1946', *The Historical Journal*, 29.1 (March 1986), 87-107 (p. 88).

<sup>93</sup> Christopher Pittard argues that '[t]he sensation novel, with its emphasis on female criminality and often with its criminals portrayed sympathetically, caused controversy not only because of a potential glamorizing of crime along the lines of the penny dreadful, but also in terms of its treatment of the middle-class family as the site of destructive mystery'. Christopher Pittard, 'From Sensation to the

displayed an autonomy and authority in their investigative work that was reminiscent of the behaviour of the audaciously independent ‘penny-dreadful’ heroes and heroines to which middle-class moralists were violently opposed. As a private detective who regularly works alongside the police, Ernest’s detective work is constantly supervised both by adult characters and the official law enforcement system, ensuring that his occupation is, potentially, less threatening to middle-class ideals of childhood than the possibility of an amateur juvenile detective.

Ernest, then, barred from a police or amateur detective role, is constructed as a new kind of investigator.<sup>94</sup> As a semi-professional private detective who works alongside the police, Ernest emerges two decades before this model was firmly established in British detective fiction through the rise of Sherlock Holmes.<sup>95</sup> In the 1860s, therefore, there was a lack of suitable adult detective models in British fiction for the boy detective to follow.<sup>96</sup> Instead, *The Boy Detective* creates an innovative

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*Strand*, in Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (eds), *A Companion to Crime Fiction* (Chichester and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 105-16 (p. 107).

<sup>94</sup> Ernest has come of age by the end of *The Boy Detective* and so is able to become a member of the police force rather than an assistant to it. The final chapters are set five years after the rest of the narrative, when ‘Ernest Keen the Boy Detective has become a man’ (p. 547) and is now ‘a most illustrious member of the French Police department’ (p. 548). Ernest’s appointment to the French Police Department may have been inspired by the *Mémoires* (1828-9) of Eugène François Vidocq, a real-life criminal-turned-detective who became the head of the Parisian Sûreté. Knight emphasises the popularity of Vidocq’s *Mémoires* in England, where they were published in translation in 1829, the same year in which the text was adapted for the London stage in two different plays. See Knight, *Crime Fiction*, p. 23. Another source which may have inspired Ernest’s employment by the French Police was Émile Gaboriau’s *L’Affaire Lerouge* (1866), which features the Parisian police force, and which briefly introduces Lecoq, a police protagonist who made his name in Gaboriau’s later two-volume novel, *Monsieur Lecoq* (1868). See Knight, *Crime Fiction*, pp. 48-50.

<sup>95</sup> Knight suggests that ‘Sherlock Holmes’s professional and private status may well be the most innovative single feature of Conan Doyle’s stories’. Knight, *Crime Fiction*, p. 52.

<sup>96</sup> Although two significant lady detectives appear in the 1860s in the form of Mrs G. and Mrs Paschal, similarly to the sensation fiction which probably inspired these narratives, the investigations of these female detectives usually take place in the domestic realm – often of the middle and upper classes – an environment which is largely inaccessible to the boy detective. These female detectives’ methodologies are dependent upon their gender and, therefore, cannot be imitated by the boy detective. In *The Female Detective*, for example, Mrs G. poses as ‘a milliner and dressmaker’ in order to enter the house of a family suspected of replacing their dead baby with the child of a poor woman in order to retain their property. Here, Mrs G. emphasises that ‘[i]t is the peculiar advantage of women detectives, and one which in many cases gives them an immeasurable value beyond that of their male friends, that they can get into the houses outside which the ordinary men-detectives could barely stand without being suspected’. Andrew Forrester, *The Female Detective* (London: Ward, Lock, and Tyler, 1864), p. 35 and p. 34 respectively. Mrs Paschal uses similar methods in *Revelations of a Lady Detective*, where she

detective protagonist who stands alone both in British children's literature and British detective fiction in the 1860s. Since the private detective protagonist had not thus far consolidated his place in British adult crime fiction, it is unsurprising that he did not, at this juncture, gain a foothold in children's literature, where the detective genre had barely begun to establish itself.

*The Boy Detective* was a singular and significant text in both British children's literature and crime fiction in the 1860s. It was the first British text to feature an independent boy detective protagonist. It offered a direct and forceful response to the moral panic surrounding 'penny-dreadful' fiction, providing a more moral alternative to the criminal 'dreadful' and becoming a transitional text between the 'penny-dreadful' and the story-paper tradition. The text constructs a professional private detective character who predates Sherlock Holmes and his contemporaries. Some comparisons can be drawn between Ernest Keen and early-twentieth-century depictions of the British boy super-detective, which will be discussed in chapter 3, and, later, the schoolboy detective, addressed in chapter 5.<sup>97</sup> Ernest Keen's emergence in 1865, however, occurred decades before the firm establishment of a British social and literary environment that could fully accommodate him. He appeared in the midst of a moral panic where the influx of independent boy criminal heroes in 'penny dreadfuls' exacerbated middle-class anxieties about the excessive agency and potential criminality

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admits that 'gaining access to people's houses in the capacity of a domestic servant was a favourite plan of mine, and one I very frequently had recourse to'. Anon, *Revelations of a Lady Detective*, p. 275. In one case, entitled 'The Nun, the Will, and the Abbess', Mrs Paschal takes her deception even further, becoming a novice and entering a convent in order to investigate a threat to a young nun's life at the hands of the abbess in 'one of those cases that a man could not manage for any one whatever'. Anon, *Revelations of a Lady Detective*, p. 154. Consequently, these fictional female investigators do not offer a suitable model for boy detective fiction to follow.

<sup>97</sup> *The Boy Detective's* influence perhaps goes further still. A notable scene in Erich Kästner's *Emil and the Detectives* (1929), in which Emil and his fellow boy detectives surround the thief, Grundeis, on the street to stop him from escaping with Emil's money, is reminiscent of a street scene in *The Boy Detective* where Ernest instructs his Band of Light to form a line across the street to prevent a bunch of 'roughs' from freeing their prisoner, Gregorio Burdan, a member of the Shadow Band. See Erich Kästner, *Emil and the Detectives* (London: Red Fox, 2001 [1929]), pp. 151-4 and *The Boy Detective*, pp. 192-3.



of their predominantly working-class boy readers. This, as well as the fact that the professional private detective had not become fully established in adult detective fiction in Britain by the 1860s, ensured that Ernest Keen was too far ahead of his time to have an immediate impact upon the emergence and establishment of the boy detective hero in British children's literature. When detective fiction for boys began to appear in boys' story papers in the 1890s, it was more obviously influenced by the patterns established in the Sherlock Holmes stories and their contemporaries than by those of *The Boy Detective*. In particular, the detective/assistant pattern of Doyle's stories had a crucial impact upon the construction of the boy detective in the story papers. The boy detective characters who tentatively emerged in the 1890s were very different from the boy super-detective Ernest Keen.

## Chapter 2: From Life of Grime to Fighting Crime: The Adult Master Detective's Boy Assistant in the Harmsworths' Boys' Story Papers of the 1890s and Early Twentieth Century

### 2.1: The emergence of detective fiction in the Harmsworths' boys' story papers

As discussed in chapter 1, a key obstacle facing the formation of the juvenile detective genre in the years following the publication of *The Boy Detective* was its association, on account of its inevitable crime content, with the controversial 'penny-dreadful' tradition. When detective fiction for boys finally resurfaced in the 1890s, the moral panic surrounding 'penny dreadfuls' had subsided. The production of the Religious Tract Society's *Boy's Own Paper* (1879-1967) saw the emergence of a new type of story paper, divorced, in the eyes of both the critics and the creators of these publications, from the immoral 'penny-dreadful' tradition.<sup>1</sup> It was, however, Alfred and Harold Harmsworths' halfpenny papers of the 1890s which dealt the strongest blow to the 'penny-dreadful' tradition. While the *Boy's Own Paper*, with its penny price tag, appealed primarily to middle-class young readers and those more affluent members of the working class, the cheaper price of the Harmsworths' papers ensured that the audience extended to include many of those lower-working-class youths who, according

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<sup>1</sup> An early edition of the *Boy's Own Paper* marks the paper's progress against the decadent 'penny dreadful', a label which covers both the serialised criminal-centric novels of the 1860s and early story papers which arose to replace them from the mid-1860s and which, despite, their new format, were, in style at least, little distinguished from their controversial predecessors: 'Rev. James Hannington writes from Hurst-pierpoint:—"I cannot refrain from expressing my gratification that your excellent paper has in this parish entirely superseded the baneful literature which used to be greatly read by our village boys." The same thing is happening in other towns and villages, and already the BOY'S OWN PAPER has, to our knowledge, killed three of the worst papers of the "Penny Dreadful" class.' Anon, 'Penny Dreadfuls' *Boy's Own Paper*, 64 (3 April 1880), 422. While Frances Hitchman and Edward Salmon saw through the moral veneer of the early story-paper replacements of the 'penny dreadful', they both acknowledged the *Boy's Own Paper* as a superior offering. Hitchman identifies it as the 'best and wholesomest' of the story papers, while Salmon, comparing the *Boy's Own Paper* to those boys' papers which are 'devoid of every element of sweetness and light', suggests that the former is 'the only real antidote to the pernicious influence of these journals'. See Frances Hitchman, 'The Penny Press', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 43.257 (March 1881), 385-98 (p. 396) and Edward G. Salmon, 'What Boys Read', *Fortnightly Review*, 39 (1886), 248-59 (p. 255).

to middle-class moralists, were most susceptible to the pernicious influence of ‘penny-dreadful’ fiction.<sup>2</sup>

In *The Romance of the Amalgamated Press* (1925), which records the history of the Harmsworths’ publications for boys, George Dilnot, himself an Amalgamated Press editor, identifies the middle ground that the Harmsworths’ publications occupied between the cheap, disreputable ‘penny dreadful’ and the respectable story paper:

The young firm of Harmsworth decided that there was an enormously wide public for boys’ periodicals which, while equal to the higher-priced publications in tone and taste, should contain stories of adventure, mystery, and romance, and be produced at a cheap price.<sup>3</sup>

Best known for his newspaper empire of the early twentieth century, which included the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Mirror* and *The Times*, Alfred Harmsworth’s first contact with the juvenile publishing industry was through his editorial role with William Ingram’s *Youth*, in 1884, a boys’ paper which, according to Reginald Pound and Geoffrey Harmsworth, adopted ‘an unformulated policy of opposing the shoddy types of publication which supplied much of the reading of the young at that time’.<sup>4</sup>

Harmsworth developed a similar, if rather more overt, philosophy in his own juvenile publications, produced with the assistance of his brother Harold, beginning with the extremely successful *Comic Cuts*, which sold 118,864 copies of its first issue in May 1890, and its imitator, *Illustrated Chips*, which was launched two months later.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Jack Cox suggests that the weekly edition of the *Boy’s Own Paper* was aimed at ‘schoolboys, office boys, apprentices and cadets’, while the monthly, sixpenny issue was marketed at a middle-class family audience. See Jack Cox, *Take A Cold Tub, Sir! The Story of the ‘Boy’s Own Paper’* (Guildford: Lutterworth Press, 1982), p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> George Dilnot, *The Romance of the Amalgamated Press* (London: Amalgamated Press, 1925), p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Reginald Pound and Geoffrey Harmsworth, *Northcliffe* (London: Cassell & Company, 1959), p. 47. For further information on the life of Alfred Harmsworth, see Tom Clarke, *Northcliffe in History: An Intimate Study of Press Power* (London, New York, Melbourne, Sydney and Cape Town: Hutchinson & Co., 1950); Max Pemberton, *Lord Northcliffe: A Memoir* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1922); A. P. Ryan, *Lord Northcliffe* (London: Collins, 1953); S. J. Taylor, *The Great Outsiders: Northcliffe, Rothermere and the Daily Mail* (London: Weidenfield & Nicholson, 1996); and J. Lee Thompson, *Northcliffe: Press Baron in Politics, 1865-1922* (London: John Murray, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Thompson, *Northcliffe*, p. 14.

It was in the first of his more conventional juvenile story papers, the *Halfpenny Marvel*, that Alfred Harmsworth's so-called 'campaign' against the 'penny dreadful' fully materialised – a campaign which, like that launched in the *Boy's Own Paper*, focused both upon the serials of the 1860s and their early story-paper replacements.<sup>6</sup> As most of the original 'penny-dreadful' serials had ceased publication by the late 1860s, though their influence lingers on after this, the criticisms recorded in the Harmsworths' story papers of the 1890s are, in most cases, levelled more directly at the story-paper successors to these 'penny-dreadful' serials, which emerged from the mid-1860s. These papers were, after all, a more immediate threat to the Harmsworths' publications, being in competition with them for the patronage of boy readers, and were the obvious target for Alfred Harmsworth's attack. While Dilnot boasts that the Harmsworths never considered 'pandering to the baser passions of humanity' in their papers, despite the fact that this 'would, on occasion, have seemed a cheap and easy road to wide circulation', their motives were evidently more commercial than moral as, conversely, they overemphasised the respectability of their papers, hoping to gain parental approval and, hence, a wider audience for their publications.<sup>7</sup>

From its first issue, the *Halfpenny Marvel* placed itself in opposition to 'penny dreadfuls':

In a word, then, the 'HALFPENNY MARVEL' LIBRARY is produced to offer the public, at a small sum, good healthy literature by well-known authors, and to counteract the harm done by the 'penny dreadfuls.' If we can rid the world of even one of these vile publications, our efforts will not have been in vain.<sup>8</sup>

If initially its intention was somewhat modestly and cautiously stated, the paper soon launched a more aggressive and comprehensive attack on the 'penny-dreadful' tradition:

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<sup>6</sup> For further information on Harmsworth's campaign against 'penny dreadfuls', see E. S. Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys: The Story of Sweeney Todd, Deadwood Dick, Sexton Blake, Billy Bunter, Dick Barton, et al.* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976 [1948]), pp. 111-15.

<sup>7</sup> Dilnot, *The Romance of the Amalgamated Press*, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Anon, 'The Editor Speaks', *Halfpenny Marvel*, 1 (8 November 1893), 16.

It is true that many of the ‘penny dreadfuls’ are in a drooping and dying condition, and a few have disappeared altogether, owing to the steady advance of the ‘MARVEL,’ but until we have stamped out the whole lot, and ‘horror fiction’ ceases to exist in Great Britain, we shall not be satisfied.<sup>9</sup>

Not content with this early attack, from its second birthday edition in October 1895, the paper bore the front-cover tagline ‘This Journal was founded to counteract the pernicious influences of the Penny and Half-penny Dreadfuls’, a heading which acted as a constant reminder of its campaign against, and hence its implied distinction from, this low form of literature.<sup>10</sup> In its earliest issues, the *Halfpenny Marvel*’s editorial page featured letters of approval, purporting to be from respectable and authoritarian members of the community – though, of course, these may have been editorial devices rather than genuine correspondence – in order to reinforce the paper’s constant barrage of criticism against its cheap competitors. A Schoolmaster proclaims that “‘THE ‘HALFPENNY MARVEL’ is just what is wanted [. . .] to counteract the harm done by the ‘penny dreadfuls.’”<sup>11</sup> A Magistrate, lamenting the ‘penny dreadfuls’ power to lure impressionable young boys into a life of crime, adds approvingly:

I am glad to see that pure, healthy stories are at length being put into boys’ hands, to prevent them getting hold of worse, and I hope the advent of the ‘HALFPENNY MARVEL’ will sound the death-knell of the vile trash miscalled adventure, which is doing so much harm.<sup>12</sup>

In equally congratulatory terms, a Metropolitan Police Officer states that ‘such a paper as yours was badly wanted to supplant the “penny horrors,” which, in spite of the advance in education, still circulate in large numbers among the youths of our country’.<sup>13</sup> Alfred Harmsworth’s determination to distinguish his own apparently healthy papers from the immoral ‘penny-dreadful’ serials and their early story-paper equivalents of the preceding decades made them an ideal site for the proliferation of

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<sup>9</sup> Anon, ‘The Editor Speaks’, *Halfpenny Marvel*, 23 (10 April 1894), 16.

<sup>10</sup> Anon, ‘Birthday Number Front Cover’, *Halfpenny Marvel*, 104 (29 October 1895), 1.

<sup>11</sup> Anon, ‘The Editor Speaks’, *Halfpenny Marvel*, 5 (6 December 1893), 16.

<sup>12</sup> Anon, ‘The Editor Speaks’, *Halfpenny Marvel*, 6 (13 December 1893), 16.

<sup>13</sup> Anon, ‘The Editor Speaks’, *Halfpenny Marvel*, 9 (3 January 1894), 16.

literary genres that would have been condemned for their connection to ‘penny-dreadful’ fiction a few years earlier.

Detective fiction was one of these genres. Distanced from the apparently immoral criminal narratives of the ‘penny-dreadful’ tradition, it had become a more respectable and, thus, acceptable genre for young readers and was soon a staple of the Harmsworths’ boys’ story papers. Adult master detectives Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee made their debuts in the Harmsworths’ newly established juvenile story paper, the *Halfpenny Marvel* (1893-1922), in 1893 and 1894 respectively. While they did not become firmly established as regular characters in the Harmsworths’ papers until the beginning of the twentieth century – the *Union Jack* became known as ‘Sexton Blake’s own paper’ in 1905 and Nelson Lee stars in a number of serials in the *Boys’ Friend* from 1901 – they featured in several stories in the 1890s.<sup>14</sup> Sexton Blake was created by freelance journalist Harry Blyth, under the pen name Hal Meredith, but after Blake’s initial appearances in the *Halfpenny Marvel* in 1893-4, other authors took over.

William De Montmorency wrote a 21-part Blake serial, ‘The Lamp of Death’ (1894-5) for *Illustrated Chips*, under the pseudonym Patrick Morris, while William Shaw Rae wrote a number of Blake short stories for the *Union Jack* from 1895.<sup>15</sup> Nelson Lee was created by Dr John William Staniforth, a rural physician who, after his son was born in 1893, turned to writing to supplement his small income.<sup>16</sup> Staniforth wrote the Nelson Lee stories under his only pseudonym, Maxwell Scott, and, after initial appearances in the *Halfpenny Marvel* and the *Union Jack* in 1894, wrote a few Nelson Lee stories for

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<sup>14</sup> Mark Hodder, ‘Sexton Blake Bibliography Master List: 1905’ in *Blakiana* <<http://www.mark-hodder.com/Blakiana/year-1905/>> [accessed 4 March 2014]; Steve Holland, ‘Lee, Nelson’ in *British Juvenile Story Papers and Pocket Libraries Index* <<http://www.philsp.com/homeville/bjsp/f29.htm#A487>> [accessed 4 March 2014].

<sup>15</sup> Mark Hodder, ‘Sexton Blake Bibliography Master List’ in *Blakiana* <<http://www.markhodder.com/Blakiana/#bibliography>> [accessed 4 March 2014].

<sup>16</sup> For further information on John William Staniforth, see J. P. Wood (ed.), ‘Leaves from the Diary of Maxwell Scott: Part 1’, *Collectors Digest*, 3.27 (March 1949), 67-71 in *Friardale* <<http://friardale.co.uk/Collectors%20Digest/CD%20027.pdf>> [accessed 4 May 2014].

*Pluck* and a serial, 'The Further Adventures of Nelson Lee, Detective' (1895-6), for the *Comic Home Journal*.<sup>17</sup>

After almost three decades of silence in the wake of *The Boy Detective*, detective fiction was finally, by the 1890s, beginning to secure a place in British children's literature. The immediate trigger for the publication of the Nelson Lee and Sexton Blake stories in the Harmsworths' papers was the rising popularity of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories in George Newnes's *Strand Magazine* in the 1890s. While the first two Holmes novels, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) and *The Sign of Four* (1890), enjoyed only modest success,<sup>18</sup> the first series of Holmes short stories, beginning with 'A Scandal in Bohemia', appeared in the *Strand Magazine* from July 1891 to June 1892 to high acclaim and a second series was commissioned by Newnes for the following year.<sup>19</sup> Holmes became the archetypal fictional private detective, spawning many imitators, Nelson Lee and Sexton Blake among them.<sup>20</sup> In addition to the direct influence of the Holmesian private detective model on the development of detective fiction for boys, the Sherlock Holmes stories also helped, if only inadvertently, to make detective fiction more suitable and accessible for young readers. The emphasis in the Holmes stories upon rational and scientific investigation, rather than the sensationalism of the crime itself or the pursuit of the criminal, effected the creation of a new, respectable form of detective narrative which was elevated above the

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<sup>17</sup> J. P. Wood (ed.) 'Leaves from the Diary of Maxwell Scott: Part 3', *Collectors Digest*, 3.29 (May 1949), 127-31 (pp. 129-30) in *Friardale* <<http://friardale.co.uk/Collectors%20Digest/CD%20029.pdf>> [accessed 4 May 2014].

<sup>18</sup> *A Study in Scarlet*, was first published in *Beeton's Xmas Annual* in December 1887 and released in novel form the following year. Doyle's second Holmes novel was published in America in February 1890 under the title *The Sign of the Four* in *Lippincott's Magazine*; when it was republished in Britain later that year, it took the now more commonly used title *The Sign of Four*. See A. E. Murch, *The Development of the Detective Novel* (London: Peter Owen, 1968 [1958]), p. 170.

<sup>19</sup> Ian Ousby, *Bloodhounds of Heaven: The Detective in English Fiction from Godwin to Doyle* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 151.

<sup>20</sup> Ever-determined to capitalise on the successes of his competitors, Alfred Harmsworth modelled his first journal, *Answers to Correspondents* (1888), on the pioneering formula adopted by Newnes in *Tit-Bits* (1881). Harmsworth's commissioning of series detective stories for his juvenile papers suggests a similar determination to profit from another of Newnes's enterprising editorial schemes. See Pemberton, *Lord Northcliffe*, p. 29.

Newgate novel, sensation fiction, and the ‘penny dreadful’ and was, as Christopher Pittard states, ‘more cerebral than visceral: sensations and shocks were replaced by plot twists, making the stories suitable for family reading’.<sup>21</sup> The suitability of the Holmes model for young readers arises not only from the detective’s rationality but also from his construction as a moral exemplar. According to Ian Ousby, in the *Strand* stories Holmes possesses a ‘moral zeal and passion for justice’ that transform him into ‘the perfect gentleman hero, the embodiment of the values and aspirations of the contemporary middle-class public’.<sup>22</sup> As an upholder and protector of middle-class values and a champion of justice, Holmes becomes an inspiring and reassuring figure for the middle classes and an acceptable hero for their children.

The bridge between detective fiction and young readers was further established by the appearance of the Holmes stories in the *Strand Magazine*, a monthly, middle-class family publication established by Newnes in 1891. From its first issue, the *Strand* encouraged a youthful readership by including stories written specifically for this audience. Kate Jackson lauds the *Strand* as ‘a pioneer in the field of children’s literature and illustration’, as its juvenile literature included contributions from distinguished children’s authors such as Edith Nesbit and Rudyard Kipling, and illustrations by established artists such as H. R. Millar and W. S. Stacey.<sup>23</sup> While the Holmes stories are not aimed at a child readership and bear little relation to the *Strand Magazine*’s moral, and often cautionary, tales for children, their inclusion in a publication that caters for child as well as adult readers suggests that they were at least

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<sup>21</sup> Christopher Pittard, ‘From Sensation to the *Strand*’, in Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (eds), *A Companion to Crime Fiction* (Chichester and Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), pp. 105-16 (p. 110). Although Blake and Lee’s detection relies more upon daring feats, physical prowess, and a string of coincidences, which links their stories with the earlier sensational crime narratives, the detective heroes’ superficial link to Holmes’s cerebral methods gives their stories a veneer of respectability.

<sup>22</sup> Ousby, *Bloodhounds of Heaven*, p. 163.

<sup>23</sup> Kate Jackson, *George Newnes and the New Journalism in Britain, 1880-1910* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2001), pp. 106-11.



considered acceptable fare for a young audience. Since the detective genre, as typified by the Holmes stories and others, dominated the *Strand Magazine*, it was an obvious candidate for young readers' interest.<sup>24</sup> Stephen Knight argues that women and child readers of the *Strand* were 'kept in their place' and that material intended for them was sectionalised and that, implicitly, this segregated them from the magazine's dominant male readership.<sup>25</sup> But the placing of stories and articles obviously aimed at children next to the more adult Sherlock Holmes stories in the *Strand Magazine* suggests that there was not a definitive division between content for adult and child readers. The proximity of the Sherlock Holmes stories to material aimed at children in the *Strand's* regular format – often the two were separated by a single general interest article and, in some cases, the children's content and the Holmes stories were placed side by side – increased the likelihood of young readers' eyes straying from their own stories and articles towards the narratives of the great detective.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Other detective series appearing in the *Strand Magazine* in the early 1890s included James Edward Preston Muddock's Dick Donovan stories (1892) and Arthur Morrison's Martin Hewitt series (1894). See Dick Donovan, 'Romances from a Detective's Casebook', *Strand Magazine*: I: 'The Jewelled Skull', 4.19 (July 1892), 70-82; II: 'The Story of the Great Cat's-Eye', 4.20 (August 1892), 115-25; III: 'The Secrets of the Black Brotherhood', 4.21 (September 1892), 292-304; IV: 'The Chamber of Shadows', 4.23 (November 1892), 462-70; and Arthur Morrison, *Martin Hewitt, Investigator*: I: 'The Lenton Croft Robberies', 7.39 (March 1894), 308-21; II: 'The Loss of Sammy Crockett', 7.40 (April 1894), 361-73; III: 'The Case of Mr Foggatt', 7.41 (May 1894), 526-37; IV: 'The Case of the Dixon Torpedo', 7.42 (June 1894), 563-74; V: 'The Quinton Jewel Affair', 8.43 (July 1894), 60-72; VI: 'The Stanway Cameo Mystery', 8.44 (August 1894), 155-67; VII: 'The Affair of the Tortoise', 8.45 (September 1894), 269-78. The Dick Donovan stories first appeared in the *Dundee Weekly News* in 1888, where Donovan was originally represented as a policeman before developing into a private detective character, a role which, according to Bruce Durie, 'comes to its full flowering in the romances published in the *Strand* in 1892'. 184 Dick Donovan stories were published, compared to 60 Sherlock Holmes stories, and Durie estimates that Muddock's early Dick Donovan stories reached 250,000 readers per week, prompting him to argue that 'Donovan was no mere imitator of Holmes, unlike many fictional detectives who flourished in the pages of periodicals at the end of the nineteenth century, but was truly his predecessor at least in status'. Bruce Durie, 'Dick Donovan, the Glasgow Detective, and His Creator, James Edward (Joyce Emerson Preston) Muddock', *Clues: A Journal of Detection*, 26.2 (Autumn 2008), 23-38 (p. 30, p. 29 and p. 32).

<sup>25</sup> Stephen Knight, 'The Case of the Great Detective', in John A. Hodgson (ed.), *Sherlock Holmes: The Major Stories with Contemporary Critical Essays* (Boston and New York: Bedford Books, 1994), pp. 368-80 (p. 374). First published in *Meanjin*, 40.2 (1981), 175-85.

<sup>26</sup> For examples, see *Strand Magazine*, 2.8 (August 1891): Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Red-Headed League', 190-204, 'Up the Shot Tower' (article), 205-9, 'The Blue Cat' A Story for Children from the French of Daniel Dare, 210-16; *Strand Magazine*, 3.15 (March 1892): Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb', 276-88, 'Beauty in Nature' (article), 289-312, 'The Three Sisters and Their Glass Hearts' A Story for Children from the Russian, 313-16; *Strand Magazine*, 4.24 (December 1892): Arthur Morrison, 'Zig-Zags at the Zoo' (children's article), 635-44, Arthur Conan

Doyle's creation of a series detective in the short-story magazine format also helps to break down the boundary between detective fiction and young readers. This construction of a series of stand-alone short stories drawn together by a single protagonist, which Doyle claims to be his own invention, was preferred by the *Strand Magazine* to the popular serialised novel, which, as Doyle argued, readers could easily abandon if they missed an instalment.<sup>27</sup> The detective narrative was a perfect fit for the short-story series format, since the figure of the detective provided a sense of identity and continuity for the series, while his investigation of individual cases allowed for the creation of a series of short stories that were interconnected but sufficiently independent of each other to ensure that each one could be read in isolation. The Holmes stories were so successful that, by the end of the nineteenth century, the magazine short-story series briefly became the dominant form for British detective fiction.<sup>28</sup> In parallel to this development, the transition from 'penny-dreadful' serials to juvenile story papers ensured that children's literature was well placed to adopt the short-story series model. The popular 'penny-dreadful' serials of the 1860s spanned months or often years, while the juvenile story papers that replaced them, though still featuring serial stories, also contained stand-alone articles and short stories. Some of these juvenile story papers,

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Doyle, 'The Adventure of the Silver Blaze', 645-60, 'Zerbin the Wood-Cutter: A Story for Children from the French of E. Laboulaye', 661-70; *Strand Magazine*, 5.28 (April 1893): Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Adventure of the "Gloria Scott"', 395-406, Arthur Morrison, 'Zig-Zags at the Zoo' (children's article), 407-17, 'The Nankeen Jacket' A Story for Children from the French of Gustave Guesviller, 418-22; *Strand Magazine*, 6.33 (September 1893): Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter', 296-307, 'Sundials' (article), 308-18, 'The Slippers of Abou-Karem' A Turkish Tale for Children from the French of Xavier Marmier, 319-22.

<sup>27</sup> In *Memories and Adventures*, Doyle claims: 'it had struck me that a single character running through a series, if it only engaged the attention of the reader, would bind that reader to that particular magazine. On the other hand, it had long seemed to me that the ordinary serial might be an impediment rather than a help to a magazine, since, sooner or later, one missed one number and afterwards it had lost all interest. Clearly the ideal compromise was a character which carried through, and yet instalments which were each complete in themselves, so that the purchaser was always sure that he could relish the whole contents of the magazine. I believe that I was the first to realise this and *The Strand Magazine* the first to put it into action.' Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *Memories and Adventures* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2007 [1924]), pp. 80-1. See also Jackson, *George Newnes*, pp. 93-4 and Murch, *The Development of the Detective Novel*, pp. 171-2.

<sup>28</sup> Murch, *The Development of the Detective Novel*, p. 172; Julian Symons, *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel*, 3<sup>rd</sup> revised edn (New York and Tokyo: Warner Books, 1993), p. 65.

such as the *Boy's Own Paper* (1879-1967), were read by the same young audience as that of middle-class family magazines such as the *Strand*, and these papers faced the same challenge of maintaining a loyal readership.<sup>29</sup> The *Boy's Own Paper* was, arguably, a pioneer of the short-story series format as the paper adopted this structure in miniature in the 'Parkhurst School' stories in 1879. Although each story featured a different cast of characters, the same school setting and narrator provided continuity between the four independent stories, making a claim for series status more than a decade before Doyle's Holmes stories appeared in the *Strand*.<sup>30</sup>

Emerging shortly after Sherlock Holmes's first period of dominance in the *Strand Magazine*, the Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee series were obviously prompted and influenced by Doyle's stories. Yet, while the Holmes series was targeted at a middle-class, adult audience, the Harmsworths' detective stories, and their story papers more generally, were aimed at a significantly different readership. The first issue of the *Halfpenny Marvel* claims that '[t]he books we shall publish will be equally interesting to men and women, boys and girls'.<sup>31</sup> The prominence of adventure-type stories featuring a predominantly male cast in the Harmsworths' papers, along with the inclusion of the word 'boy' in the title of some of their most popular papers, however, suggests that these publications were more obviously aimed at young male readers.<sup>32</sup> Though there are no firm statistics for the reader demographic of the

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<sup>29</sup> For further information on the *Boy's Own Paper*, see Cox, *Take A Cold Tub, Sir!* and Philip Warner, *The Best of British Pluck: The 'Boys Own Paper'* (London: Book Club Associates, 1976).

<sup>30</sup> See Talbot Baines Reed, 'The Parkhurst Paper-Chase', 1.11, *Boy's Own Paper* (29 March 1879), 161-2; Talbot Baines Reed, 'The Parkhurst Boat-Race', *Boy's Own Paper*, 1.20 (31 May 1879), 305-7; Talbot Baines Reed, 'Parkhurst vs. Westfield', *Boy's Own Paper*, 1.22 (14 June 1879), 337-40; and Talbot Baines Reed, 'A Boating Adventure at Parkhurst', *Boy's Own Paper*, 1.30 (9 August 1879), 465-7 and 1.31 (16 August 1879), 481-4.

<sup>31</sup> Anon, 'The Editor Speaks', *Halfpenny Marvel*, 1 (8 November 1893), 16.

<sup>32</sup> This is not to suggest that girls avoided the Harmsworths' and other papers aimed at boys. In 'What Girls Read' (1886), Edward G. Salmon claimed that '*The Boys' Own Paper* is studied by thousands of girls' because 'they can get in boys' books what they cannot get in the majority of their own—a stirring plot and lively movement'. Edward G. Salmon, 'What Girls Read', *Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review*, 20.116 (October 1886), 515-29 (p. 524). In a study of boys' and girls' reading habits conducted

Harmsworths' juvenile story papers and their detective tales, as mentioned earlier, the cheaper cost of these papers at a halfpenny in the 1890s, compared to the penny price-tag of their more respectable equivalents such as the *Boy's Own Paper*, ensured their wide appeal among working-class boys.<sup>33</sup> As Frederick Willis observes in his memoir of working-class life in London, 'it was a great social step from a halfpenny to a penny. Between that section of society which had a penny to burn and that which only had a halfpenny was a very distinct barrier.'<sup>34</sup> Consequently, Willis categorises *Pluck*, the *Halfpenny Marvel* and the *Union Jack* as 'the working boys' books'.<sup>35</sup>

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in 1884, published by Edward Salmon in 1888, the *Boy's Own Paper* ranked highly in the girls' poll of their favourite magazine, second only to its female equivalent, the *Girl's Own Paper* (1880-1956). See Edward G. Salmon, *Juvenile Literature As It Is* (London: Henry J. Drane, 1888), p. 23. The scarcity of girls' story papers in the late nineteenth century may also account for girls turning to those targeted at boys. Salmon attests that 'there are two only—*The Girls' Own Paper* and *Every Girls' Magazine*—that could be placed advantageously in the hands of anybody, to say nothing of young ladies in their teens. Several girls' magazines have been started in the last few years, but they have speedily died or lapsed into the penny dreadful, composed of impossible love stories, of jealousies, murders, and suicides.' Salmon, 'What Girls Read', p. 520. Unlike their boy equivalents, girls' story papers did not flourish until the 1920s, with the launch of titles such as the *School Friend* (1919-29), the *Schoolgirls' Own* (1921-36), *Schoolgirls' Weekly* (1922-39), and the *Schoolgirl* (1929-40). See 'Books and Story Papers' in *Friardale* <<http://www.friardale.co.uk/Story%20Papers.htm>> [accessed 3 April 2011]. For further information on girls' story papers in Britain, see Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig, *You're A Brick Angela!: A New Look at Girls' Fiction from 1839 to 1975* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1976).

<sup>33</sup> John Springhall, "'Healthy Papers for Manly Boys": Imperialism and Race in the Harmsworths' Halfpenny Boys' Papers of the 1890s and 1900s', in Jeffrey Richards (ed.), *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), pp. 107-25 (p. 108).

<sup>34</sup> Willis also records how this social distinction is reflected in the papers themselves as he compares the 'How to Make' articles in the *Boy's Own Paper* and the Harmsworths' *Boys' Friend*. He states that the *Boy's Own Paper* contained 'fascinating "How to Make" articles, but as the materials required for these cost money they had little appeal for boys in a state of chronic impecuniosity. Materials for *The Boy's Friend* "How to Make" were usually confined to such things as a soap box, a bit of wire, a few nails and two pennyworth of paint, and were thus well within the bounds of possibility.' Frederick Willis, *101 Jubilee Road: A Book of London Yesteryears* (London: Phoenix House, 1948), p. 111. The popularity of the Harmsworths' papers with working-class boys is later reinforced in Arnold Freeman's *Boy Life and Labour* (1914), in which the author records the reading habits of a number of boy workers in Birmingham. Among Freeman's category of 'boys leaving the elementary school and graduating into unskilled labour' – Class IIb – are 'K. L.' who purchases the *Gem*, and 'K. W.', a reader of the *Marvel*, while 'C. W.', a boy of class III – 'those who seem destined for unemployableness' – also reads the *Gem*. Arnold Freeman, *Boy Life and Labour: The Manufacture of Inefficiency* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1980 [1914]), pp. 155-8. Freeman's account provides several instances of the popularity of detective fiction: 'H. H.', of class IIa – 'the rather better class of boy-worker' – 'loves the detective films most'; K. W., of class IIb, reads detective stories; detective stories are also listed among the favourite fiction of M. C., of class III, since '[d]etectives are his heroes in fiction'. Freeman, *Boy Life and Labour*, p. 154 and pp. 156-7. Freeman also includes a Sexton Blake story, 'The Great Turf Mystery' (1912), among his sample of typical titles read by the boys of all classes included in his study. Freeman, *Boy Life and Labour*, p. 145.

<sup>35</sup> Willis, *101 Jubilee Road*, p. 109.

Unlike the Sherlock Holmes series, therefore, the Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee stories had to introduce elements that would appeal to boy readers in their characterisation of an adult detective operating in an adult world. One way in which the Blake and Lee stories attempted to win the approval of boy readers – and particularly those working-class boys who may not have appreciated Holmes’s intellectual prowess – was to present the detective hero as ‘an active non-analytical Holmes’.<sup>36</sup> Mark Hodder considers that, while like Holmes:

Blake has an extraordinary talent for interpreting the obscurest of clues and for building a case on the merest of trifles [ . . . ] this was rarely the focus of his stories. The fact is, while Holmes was contemplatively drawing the strings over his violin, Blake was getting knocked over the head, shot at, poisoned, chained inside slowly filling water tanks, and challenged by the most bizarre villains ever to threaten the empire.<sup>37</sup>

Another way in which these texts began to address and appeal to its boy readers was to find a place for boy characters – who might perform a reader-identification function for the boy audience – in the detective narrative. In the 1890s, this was done by introducing the boy character as assistant to the adult master detective.

In the first Nelson Lee story, ‘A Dead Man’s Secret’ (*Halfpenny Marvel*, 1894), Lee acquires his young apprentice, Nipper, a disreputable street urchin, who becomes a regular in the series in 1903 when he reappears, after a nine-year absence, in ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’ (*Boys’ Friend*, 1903-4).<sup>38</sup> This later serial provides an extended and revised account of Nipper’s appointment as Nelson Lee’s assistant. Although Nipper’s age is not specified in ‘A Dead Man’s Secret’, he is, in ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’,

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<sup>36</sup> Symons, *Bloody Murder*, p. 91. Blake was notoriously known as ‘the office-boy’s Sherlock Holmes’ and in later stories moved his office to Baker Street. Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, p. 127.

<sup>37</sup> Mark Hodder, ‘A Complete History of Sexton Blake’ in *Blakiana* <<http://www.mark-hodder.com/Blakiana/history/>> [accessed 4 March 2014].

<sup>38</sup> Michael Bailey, a collector of the work of Maxwell Scott, confirms that Nipper does not make any appearances in the Nelson Lee stories between his debut in ‘A Dead Man’s Secret’ (1894) and ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’ (1903-4). Michael Bailey, ‘Nelson Lee and Nipper’, email correspondence [2 March 2014].

‘apparently about fourteen years of age’.<sup>39</sup> The Sexton Blake stories in the *Union Jack* featured Chinese boy assistant We-wee – which translates as ‘The Little Beagle’<sup>40</sup> – from 1897, beginning with ‘Chased through China’. We-wee, who is ‘apparently about eight or nine years old’<sup>41</sup> on his first appearance but seems to mature as the series continues, features in several Blake stories between 1897 and 1902.<sup>42</sup>

If Lee and Blake are representative of Holmes, albeit, as Julian Symons suggests, ‘an active non-analytical Holmes’,<sup>43</sup> then their young assistants are confined, it seems, to the Watson role, acting as foils to the intellectually superior master detectives. A. E. Murch argues of Doyle’s narratives that Watson:

plays an active, if secondary, role in almost every story, serving not only as a foil to his brilliant friend but also as a figure with whom the reader feels a comforting comradeship when he, too, ‘sees but does not observe,’ and needs to have the implications of a clue explained.<sup>44</sup>

Watson’s function as focaliser of the narrative clearly links him with Blake and Lee’s juvenile assistants, who are constructed as figures with whom young male readers, and particularly working-class boys, can identify, creating an entry point for this audience into the fictional but, nevertheless, adult world of detection. Yet the apparent connection of the detective’s juvenile assistant with Watson, a figure who is defined by his intellectual inferiority to the master detective, also imposes a restriction upon the juvenile detective character, as boyhood becomes implicitly linked with naivety and limited knowledge. Nipper and We-wee are not only positioned as Lee and Blake’s generational and intellectual inferiors, but also as socially, morally and, in We-wee’s case, racially inferior to the adult detective masters.

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<sup>39</sup> Maxwell Scott, ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’, *Boys’ Herald*, 1.2 (8 August 1903), 17-20 (p. 19).

<sup>40</sup> Mark Hodder, ‘Sexton Blake Bibliography Master List: 1897’ in *Blakiana* <[http://www.sextonblake.co.uk/blakebibliography\\_1897.html](http://www.sextonblake.co.uk/blakebibliography_1897.html)> [accessed 24 August 2011].

<sup>41</sup> William Shaw Rae, ‘Chased through China’, *Union Jack*, 6.147 (13 February 1897), 1-14 (p. 7). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>42</sup> Mark Hodder, ‘Sexton Blake Bibliography Master List’ in *Blakiana* <[http://www.sextonblake.co.uk/blakebibliography\\_1897.html](http://www.sextonblake.co.uk/blakebibliography_1897.html)> [accessed 28 March 2011].

<sup>43</sup> Symons, *Bloody Murder*, p. 91.

<sup>44</sup> Murch, *The Development of the Detective Novel*, p. 179.

This chapter focuses on the tentative emergence of the detective's boy assistant in the Nelson Lee and Sexton Blake stories from 1893-1902, during a period of early experimentation, as these detective series attempt to find a space for the boy – both fictional and real – in the adult world of the text. It concentrates in particular upon the hierarchical relationship between the adult master detective and the boy assistant, in which the boy is not only inferior to the adult detective but also representative of particular threats to British society which need to be overcome. The chapter explores how the adult master detective's civilisation of the boy assistant expresses and addresses these internal and external threats to the Empire. Firstly, the chapter considers internal threats to the Empire surrounding the growth of the concept of adolescence and the rise of 'blind-alley' labour amongst working-class male adolescents, and subsequently explores how Nipper's induction into the role of detective's assistant in 'A Dead Man's Secret' becomes representative of the civilisation of the 'delinquent' adolescent and, specifically, of the 'blind-alley' boy labourer. Secondly, the chapter addresses how the external threat of the foreigner – here that of the Chinese – is articulated and thwarted through the changing representation of We-wee in his role as detective's assistant during his short run in the Sexton Blake series. Overall, this chapter explores how the representation of the detective's boy assistant at this time disseminates ideologies of conformity – to the law, to social and economic structures and to imperialist values – to its boy readers during a period of increasing anxieties about adolescent boys and the Empire that they would inherit. It will conclude by considering why these early boy assistant models disappeared – in We-wee's case permanently and in Nipper's case for a period of nine years – after their early appearances in the Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee series.

## 2.2: Boyhood threats: The ‘delinquent’ adolescent and the increase in ‘blind-alley’ labour

When *The Boy Detective* was published in the 1860s, the predominant anxiety relating to childhood was the fear of the possible and actual criminality of the vulnerable and impressionable lower-class child, particularly in connection with his perusal of ‘penny-dreadful’ fiction. By the 1890s, the reign of the ‘penny dreadful’ was over and society’s attitudes towards young people had also changed. Replacing the perceived threat of the impressionable working-class criminalised child was an emerging anxiety about the concept of adolescence.<sup>45</sup> John Springhall defines adolescence as ‘the life stage extending from childhood to what is generally recognised as adulthood or social maturity’.<sup>46</sup> Though G. Stanley Hall is generally credited with the creation of this modern concept of adolescence, with the publication of his two-volume study on the subject in 1904, he was not the first commentator to acknowledge a stage of life distinct from both childhood and adulthood and crucial to human development. In *The Seven Curses of London* (1869), in a chapter entitled ‘Working Boys’, James Greenwood interrogates the restrictive dividing line between childhood and adulthood implemented in the mid-nineteenth century legal system: ‘The law takes into account but two phases of human existence,—the child irresponsible, and the adult responsible, and overlooks as beneath its dignity the important and well-marked steps that lead from the former state to the latter.’<sup>47</sup> By recognising ‘how critical and all-important a period in the career of the male human creature, is “boyhood”’, Greenwood anticipates the focus later in the century upon the crucial role of adolescence as a distinct stage of development.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> See John R. Gillis, ‘The Evolution of Juvenile Delinquency in England, 1890-1914’, *Past and Present*, 67 (1975), 96-126.

<sup>46</sup> John Springhall, *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain, 1860-1960* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1986), p. 10.

<sup>47</sup> James Greenwood, *The Seven Curses of London* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981 [1869]), p. 39.

<sup>48</sup> Greenwood, *The Seven Curses of London*, p. 39.



Early studies on adolescence emphasised the turbulent nature of the adolescent period, which is, according to T. S. Clouston, ‘full of danger to the mental health of both sexes’.<sup>49</sup> In ‘Puberty and Adolescence Medico-Psychologically Considered’ (*Edinburgh Medical Journal*, 1880), Clouston uses the term adolescence ‘to denote the whole period of twelve years from the first evolution up to the full perfection of the reproductive energy’ and emphasises the ‘mental disturbance characteristic of this period’, particularly, ‘between the ages of 18 and 25, notably between 20 and 25, when the function of reproduction is attaining its full development and the body is arriving at its full growth’.<sup>50</sup> Henry Maudsley, too, focuses upon the psychological turmoil of adolescence through the inclusion of a new chapter on ‘Pubescent or Adolescent Insanities’ in *The Pathology of the Mind* (1895), an extended version of his 1867 study on the subject.<sup>51</sup> G. Stanley Hall’s *Adolescence* (1904), which links adolescence more distinctly with puberty than with the later stage prioritised by Clouston,<sup>52</sup> builds on these ideas of the turbulence surrounding adolescence, particularly in terms of its relationship with delinquency: ‘Adolescence is the best key to the nature of crime. It is essentially antisocial, selfishness [*sic*], refusing to submit to the laws of altruism.’<sup>53</sup> Though Hall suggests that adolescence is a stage of ‘storm and stress’ and potential delinquency, it also marks, he argues, ‘the bud of promise for the race’ and ‘a new birth, for the higher and more completely human traits are now born’.<sup>54</sup> Adolescence, for Hall, is the period of growth which, as Arnold Freeman states, ‘recapitulates the

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<sup>49</sup> T. S. Clouston, ‘Puberty and Adolescence Medico-Psychologically Considered’, *Edinburgh Medical Journal*, 26.1 (1880), 5-17 (p. 7).

<sup>50</sup> Clouston, ‘Puberty and Adolescence’, p. 12.

<sup>51</sup> See Sally Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science, and Medicine, 1840-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 202.

<sup>52</sup> In an earlier article, Hall accepts Clouston’s broader range from about 12 to 24 or 25 years old as the age of adolescence. See G. Stanley Hall, ‘The Moral and Religious Training of Children’, *Princeton Review*, 1 (1882), 26-48 (pp. 43-4).

<sup>53</sup> G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Anthropology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education*, I (New York and London: D. Appleton and Company, 1931 [1904]), p. 405.

<sup>54</sup> Hall, *Adolescence*, I, p. xiii and p. 50.

initiation of the indefinitely remote savage-man into the mysteries of civilisation. [. . .] The youth during this period [. . .] is a kind of apprentice to civilisation.<sup>55</sup> It is the challenge of assimilation into a higher civilised state which the adolescent must face that accounts for the turbulent and potentially threatening nature of this life-stage.

Yet, while these studies on adolescence identify it as a difficult period for both sexes, it was the threat posed to the dominant social order by the male adolescent, and the possible methods by which this threat could be contained, that occupied many social reformers by the end of the nineteenth century. Identifying the distinctions drawn between male and female adolescents reveals some possible reasons for the focus on male adolescence. In his chapter in *Adolescence* on ‘Juvenile Faults, Immoralities and Crimes’, Hall cites a number of studies that recorded crime among male adolescents as being much higher than among their female equivalents, which suggests that adolescent males posed a greater threat to law and order and were more in need of discipline and containment than girls at the same stage of development.<sup>56</sup> Adolescent boys also engaged more actively with the world at large, through education, work, and street culture, allowing them greater opportunity than girls to challenge dominant moral and social codes.<sup>57</sup> Their duties, too, extended beyond those of their female equivalents to

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<sup>55</sup> Freeman, *Boy Life and Labour*, pp. 100-1.

<sup>56</sup> Hall, *Adolescence*, I, pp. 326-7 and pp. 332-4. In addition to behavioural differences, another clear distinction was drawn between the physiological and psychological development of the two sexes. Clouston argued that while, among females, ‘[a]t twenty-one the great majority of that sex have attained perfect physiological development’, among males, ‘[t]he growth of the beard and the form of the body do not reach full development in that sex on average till the age of twenty-five’. In terms of psychological differences, Clouston added, ‘[t]he subtle but profound mental influences of adolescence have usually reached their full maturity in women three or four years before men’. T. S. Clouston, *Clinical Lectures on Mental Diseases* (Philadelphia: Henry C. Lea’s Son & Co, 1884), p. 376. This swifter development in girls suggested a smoother transition to adulthood than that of their male counterparts, who faced a prolonged struggle to escape from the turbulent adolescent life-stage as the onset of adulthood was postponed. This extended period of instability in boys, compared to girls, suggests another reason for the greater attention paid by reformers and moralists, from the late nineteenth century, to the threat posed by the male adolescent.

<sup>57</sup> The female adolescent was still largely confined to the domestic sphere in the late nineteenth century. Hall stated that, for adolescent girls, ‘[h]ousehold duties, if moderate, are a good regulator. Girls must be taught to endure disappointment, to relish the common homely joys of life, to be content and hopeful as they now rarely are, to avoid fatigue, excitement or exposure, high diet, etc.’ Hall, *Adolescence*, I, pp.

include ‘their future functions in the family, and [ . . . ] the development of physical and moral “character” suitable for defenders of the empire, “adaptable” wage-earners, and democratic citizens’.<sup>58</sup> The freedom afforded to the late-nineteenth-century adolescent boy, compared to that of the adolescent girl, meant that he was more likely to transgress, while the duties and expectations placed upon him suggested that discipline and containment were necessary measures employed to ensure his compliance with the male adolescent ideal.

That the anxieties surrounding adolescence predominantly focused upon adolescent boys is unsurprising when considering the origins of the adolescent life-stage. While the contribution of psychological studies which focused upon both male and female adolescence – particularly Hall’s *Adolescence* (1904) and the later, more accessible text, *The Adolescent* (1910), by J. W. Slaughter, Hall’s student in England – to the development of the popular concept of adolescence should not be underestimated, Harry Hendrick perhaps goes a little too far when he suggests that, as a direct result of such studies, ‘a nineteenth-century “idea” evolved into a twentieth-century “social fact”’.<sup>59</sup> Though the term ‘adolescent’ itself was more frequently and authoritatively used in the wake of Hall’s and Slaughter’s publications, the concept of adolescence existed as a social phenomenon, although not in a clearly articulated form, at the end of the nineteenth century. As Springhall observes, ““adolescence” is more than just a psycho-biological experience relative to the individual, it is also a cultural definition and role for an age category and product of a particular set of historical

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243-4. While education played a crucial role in civilising the male adolescent, it was seen as unnecessary or even undesirable for the female adolescent who was instead regulated by her domestic role, which imposed strict limitations upon her freedom. As Harry Hendrick observes, for girls, ‘the dominant and organizing concept around which apprehension revolved was the notion of domesticity, as exemplified by marriage and motherhood’. Harry Hendrick, *Images of Youth: Age, Class, and the Male Youth Problem, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 5.

<sup>58</sup> Hendrick, *Images of Youth*, p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> Hendrick, *Images of Youth*, p. 85.

circumstances',<sup>60</sup> and these were split across class boundaries. Notably, these circumstances revolved around education and work, areas which, though girls were involved in both to some extent, were seen as predominantly male spheres.

In terms of education, the reform and expansion of public boarding schools in the late nineteenth century ensured that middle-class boys were beginning to experience a distinct phase of supervised training for adulthood which extended 'until sixteen, seventeen or eighteen years'.<sup>61</sup> While James Walvin suggests that the rise of the school leaving age from ten to eleven in 1893 and to twelve in 1899 'effectively postponed the onset of adult economic life and removed children from the labour market',<sup>62</sup> the period of supervision for working-class boys was much shorter than that of middle-class boys, particularly considering the high level of truancy amongst the former which was, in many cases, encouraged by parents.<sup>63</sup> The greatest impact upon the development of working-class adolescents occurred in the world of work, where the decline of skilled apprenticeships and the growth of the casual boy labour market at the end of the nineteenth century allowed the working-class adolescent boy a level of freedom denied to his middle-class counterparts. Working-class school leavers took on well-paid but temporary, unskilled, errand-boy roles which, when these boys reached adulthood and thus expected adult wages, were inherited by a new influx of adolescent male school leavers.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Springhall, *Coming of Age*, p. 8.

<sup>61</sup> Springhall, *Coming of Age*, p. 47. See also John R. Gillis, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1870-Present* (New York: Academic Press, 1981), p. 105.

<sup>62</sup> James Walvin, *A Child's World: A Social History of English Childhood 1800-1914* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 186.

<sup>63</sup> Michael J. Childs observes that '[t]he poorer sections of the working class were often unconvinced of the benefits of education or were more cognizant of the immediate need of income derived from their children. In 1886, fourteen years after compulsory education had been established in London, 272,000 children were away from school every day. This was equivalent to a rate of absenteeism of 28.8 per cent'. Michael J. Childs, *Labour's Apprentices: Working-Class Lads in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1992), p. 31.

<sup>64</sup> Walvin, *A Child's World*, p. 86.

Thus, while adolescence was, in psychological terms, at least, defined as a universal concept – a period of physical and mental upheaval which affected all youngsters – it was experienced differently by working-class and middle-class boys. Middle-class adolescent boys, often cloistered in boarding schools, were provided with the restrictive environment and adult supervision that were seen as necessary to this life-stage, provision which, as Greenwood notes, was not extended to their working-class counterparts in the nineteenth century:

It is a lamentable fact that at that period of his existence when he needs closest watching, when he stands in need of healthful guidance, of counsel against temptation, a boy, the son of labouring parents, is left to himself, almost free to follow the dictates of his inclinations, be they good or bad.<sup>65</sup>

At the end of the nineteenth century, anxieties about the freedom afforded to the working-class adolescent increased with the growth of ‘blind-alley’ labour, that is:

an unskilled or semi-skilled occupation [. . .] such as the errand boy of some kind or an untrained factory worker or general and casual labourer [. . .] providing no industrial training and leaving adolescents stranded a few years after entry, when the employer recruited another wave of school-leavers to replace those made redundant.<sup>66</sup>

These positions developed partly in response to technological advancements which,

Geoffrey Pearson argues:

produced a sharp, and apparently increasing demand in the job market for boys to do all sorts of simple work in the sphere of communications and transport: van boys, errand boys, messenger boys, boys to answer telephones, boys to hold horses’ heads and other kinds of trivial but essential work.<sup>67</sup>

Even in skilled trades, many apprenticeships, too, were reduced to semi-skilled positions, with apprentices being taught only part of a manufacturing process rather than

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<sup>65</sup> Greenwood, *The Seven Curses of London*, p. 39.

<sup>66</sup> Springhall, *Coming of Age*, p. 84.

<sup>67</sup> Geoffrey Pearson, *Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1983), p. 59. For further information on ‘blind-alley’ labour, see Freeman, *Boy Life and Labour*; Gillis, *Youth and History*, pp. 118-28; Hendrick, *Images of Youth*, pp. 119-26; and Springhall, *Coming of Age*, pp. 64-108. Childs emphasises that the transfer of confectionery industries, along with those that produced candles, soap and glue, for example, ‘from home-based and incidental manufacture to factory production considerably widened the field for youthful employment’. Childs, *Labour’s Apprentices*, p. 57.

learning how to become masters of their trade.<sup>68</sup> As skilled apprenticeships became few and far between and demanded hard work for low wages, working-class adolescents were, unsurprisingly, attracted to the higher wages and comparative freedom of ‘blind-alley’ labour, which ensured that they became a cause of anxiety for middle-class social reformers.<sup>69</sup> Springhall claims that:

The young man with money to spend from a highly paid unskilled job, free of all adult restraint, was often presented as a potential threat to the older generation. [. . .] The unstructured freedom of errand boy life, youthful irregularity of employment and the high wages offered by unskilled work, were also accused of incitement to juvenile delinquency.<sup>70</sup>

The threat posed by the adolescent ‘blind-alley’ labourer through his social freedom, economic autonomy, lack of purpose, and his potential delinquency needed, in the eyes of middle-class moralists and reformers, to be contained.<sup>71</sup>

Attempts to contain and regulate working-class male adolescents were made through the creation of cadet corps and clubs established by the university settlement houses and public school missions which provided training and leadership for working-class boys.<sup>72</sup> Religious youth organisations such as William Smith’s Boys’ Brigade (1883) and Walter Gee’s Church Lads’ Brigade (1891) also aimed to regulate the leisure

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<sup>68</sup> Childs, *Labour’s Apprentices*, p. 58. For further information on the changing structure of apprenticeships, see also pp. 53-9.

<sup>69</sup> Of course, despite the attractions of ‘blind-alley’ labour for the young, it was not necessarily to fulfil their own desires that adolescent boys entered into this type of employment. Childs observes that ‘[i]n poorer families, the parents usually insisted on a maximisation of immediate income’ so that ‘[i]n some cases, a boy’s stated ambition was frustrated by parents who refused him the chance of establishing a career at initially lower wages’. Childs, *Labour’s Apprentices*, p. 17 and p. 18.

<sup>70</sup> Springhall, *Coming of Age*, p. 104.

<sup>71</sup> The adolescent boy labourer’s economic autonomy increased when he reached the age of about sixteen when, rather than handing over his full wages to his family and gaining a small amount of pocket money in return, he would now pay for his bed and board and keep the rest of his wages for his own pleasure. Childs, *Labour’s Apprentices*, p. 23.

<sup>72</sup> See Hendrick, *Images of Youth*, pp. 159-72 and Springhall, *Coming of Age*, pp. 147-56. Springhall asserts that ‘a major target of the organisers of boys’ clubs and their related cadet corps became the elimination of working-class street culture and the provision of adult-led, morally healthy alternatives to commercial forms of leisure provision. It is also no coincidence that youth organisations and clubs should have emerged at a time in British history when adolescence was coming to be seen as a distinct social category, with its own peculiar problems of physical and social adjustment which both the established authorities and the churches wished to regulate and control.’ Springhall, *Coming of Age*, p. 155.

time of working-class adolescent boys by providing them with adult-supervised training and activities that quashed social deviance, reaffirmed middle-class ideals of militarism and patriotism, and prepared male adolescents for their impending adulthood.<sup>73</sup>

Inevitably, however, those who joined these groups were usually the more respectable, socially aspiring members of the working class, while those adolescents at the lower end of the working-class spectrum were resistant to the agencies that attempted to contain them.<sup>74</sup> As adult-supervised activities were used as a way to regulate adolescence and to reduce its perceived threat, a new binary opposition emerged to replace that of the idealised middle-class child and the criminalised working-class child.<sup>75</sup>

John R. Gillis identifies this new binary opposition, emerging in the 1890s, as existing between the ‘conforming adolescent’ – the ‘organized youth, dependent but secure from temptation’ – and the ‘unorganized and therefore maladjusted youth’ – ‘independent and precocious’ and, consequently, ‘stigmatized as delinquent’.<sup>76</sup> Though these terms were not used by social reformers at the end of the nineteenth century, they provide a useful shorthand for the attitudes of such reformers towards adolescence. While these diametrically opposed models are not directly constructed across class lines, the failure of a large number of working-class adolescents to conform to the movements created to restrain them, along with their entrenchment in a system of ‘blind-alley’ labour which afforded them freedom from adult supervision and control, ensured that they were frequently associated with delinquency. The working-class

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<sup>73</sup> See Hugh Cunningham, *The Invention of Childhood* (London: BBC Books, 2006), p. 208; C. C. Eldridge, *The Imperial Experience: From Carlyle to Forster* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1996), p. 92; and John Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements, 1883-1940* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), pp. 15-16, p. 24 and p. 77.

<sup>74</sup> Freeman, *Boy Life and Labour*, p. 129.

<sup>75</sup> Springhall argues that, ‘[a] stage of life, adolescence, had replaced the poverty of the working class, as the perceived cause of delinquent behaviour by the 1900s’. Springhall, *Coming of Age*, p. 27.

<sup>76</sup> Gillis, ‘The Evolution of Juvenile Delinquency in England’, p. 97.

adolescent figure emerging at the end of the nineteenth century, therefore, began to be recognised by middle-class moralists as what Gillis terms the ‘delinquent adolescent’, in need of adult supervision and containment in order to become the civilised, ‘conforming adolescent’. This process of civilisation became increasingly important during a period of growing uncertainty in late-nineteenth-century British society, as the ‘delinquent adolescent’ and especially the ‘blind-alley’ boy labourer – who rejected his long-term duty to his country and his place as part of the collective British identity in favour of immediate personal gain and individual autonomy – offered an internal threat to the future security and stability of the British Empire. In light of these developments, the dynamic of the middle-class adult detective hero and his lower-class juvenile detective assistant in the detective series for boys emerging in the 1890s, in story papers which appealed to a working-class adolescent male readership, takes on a new and stronger social significance. Through a process of mentoring and supervision, the adult detective hero acts as a moral exemplar to his young, potentially delinquent assistant who, by adopting the role of detective’s assistant, is both contained and civilised.

### **2.3: Civilising the ‘delinquent’ adolescent ‘blind-alley’ boy labourer: Nelson Lee’s Nipper**

While Nipper, on his introduction in ‘A Dead Man’s Secret’, is representative of the ‘blind-alley’ boy labourer, he is not the first figure of this kind in British detective fiction. The juvenile proto-detective’s assistants of Wilkie Collins’s ‘The Fourth Poor Traveller’ (*Household Words*, 1854) and *The Moonstone* (1868), and William Stephens Hayward’s *Revelations of a Lady Detective* (1864), discussed in chapter 1, are entrenched in the system of ‘blind-alley’ labour,<sup>77</sup> as are their more famous descendants,

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<sup>77</sup> In ‘The Fourth Poor Traveller’, fourteen-year-old Tom acts as a spy for the lawyer-detective protagonist. Similarly, street urchin Jack Doyle acts as a ‘servant’ and spy to Mrs Paschal in *Revelations of a Lady Detective*, while in *The Moonstone*, Octavius Guy, better known as Gooseberry, is employed by



the Baker Street Irregulars.<sup>78</sup> Despite their fame, Holmes's 'unofficial force' of 'dirty and ragged little street Arabs', appear in just three Sherlock Holmes stories, and then in cameo roles.<sup>79</sup> The Irregulars make their debut in the first Holmes novel, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), where they are paid by the great detective to find a cab driver who has committed a murder.<sup>80</sup> They appear again in *The Sign of Four* (1890) in a chapter that bears their name, but even here they play a minor role, only present for a brief scene in the chapter as they are ordered to locate the criminal's steam launch (p. 6). Their final fleeting appearance features one of their number, the previously undistinguished Simpson, keeping watch over the criminal culprit in 'The Crooked Man' (*Strand Magazine*, 1893).<sup>81</sup>

The apparent insignificance of the Baker Street Irregulars is not only dictated by their minimal presence in the Holmes stories but also in their representation when they do appear. They are characterised as ragged street urchins, 'dirty scoundrels' (*A Study in Scarlet*, p. 52) whose leader, Wiggins, is described by Watson as 'insignificant and unsavoury' (p. 66). They are comic cockney figures – cheeky, confident, and full of their own self-importance – and hence mocked by the adult Watson – particularly Wiggins, who 'stood forward with an air of lounging superiority which was very funny

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Mr Bruff, the lawyer-detective, and also briefly assists Sergeant Cuff with his investigation. These characters play a peripheral role in their respective narratives. For further information, see chapter 1, pp. 26-7.

<sup>78</sup> Sally Sugarman draws attention to the influence of the Baker Street Irregulars upon later juvenile detective fiction, both indirectly, providing a model for the juvenile detective ensemble in texts such as Erich Kästner's *Emil and the Detectives* (1929) and Enid Blyton's *Famous Five* series (1942-63) and, more directly, in series that take the Baker Street Irregulars as their main protagonists, including Terrance Dicks's *Baker Street Irregulars* (1978-87), Jake and Luke Thoene's *Baker Street Mysteries* (1995-8) and, more recently, Tracy Mack and Michael Citrin's *Sherlock Holmes and the Baker Street Irregulars* (2006-10). See Sally Sugarman, 'Sherlock Holmes and the Children', *Baker Street Journal*, 58.2 (2008), 44-9 (pp. 45-9). Other recent additions to the Baker Street Irregulars phenomenon include Anthony Read's *Baker Street Boys* (2005-9) and Tim Pigott-Smith's *Baker Street Mysteries* (2008-9).

<sup>79</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Sign of Four* (London: Penguin Books, 2001 [1890]), p. 67. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>80</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* (London: Penguin Books, 2001[1887]), pp. 51-2, p. 66 and p. 126. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>81</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Adventure of the Crooked Man', *Strand Magazine*, 6.31 (July 1893), 22-32 (p. 29).

in such a disreputable little scarecrow' (*The Sign of Four*, p. 67). There is a sense that, though they effectively complete the tasks that Holmes sets them, they are playing at being detectives, temporarily appropriating a role in which they cannot hope to progress or excel. They are not skilled apprentices – long-term, loyal assistants to the great detective – but 'blind-alley' labourers, like the real-life van boys, messengers and horse holders. They are casual errand boys who are paid 'a shilling each' by Holmes (*The Sign of Four*, p. 67) to conduct the time-consuming groundwork that is necessary for the successful resolution of the case but is too mundane to be carried out by the detective or to be reported directly in the narrative. For example, in *A Study in Scarlet* Holmes is able to reveal the identity of the murderer and hand him over to the police in the comfort of his own home, as the culprit arrives on his doorstep courtesy of the Baker Street Irregulars after the detective 'sent them systematically to every cab proprietor in London until they ferreted out the man that I wanted' (p. 126). Both Holmes and the reader are spared the *ennui* of this tedious search, allowing the case to move directly from Holmes's cerebral solution to its actual resolution with the capture and arrest of the criminal. The Baker Street Irregulars, therefore, are used primarily as a device to circumvent the inclusion of 'humdrum investigation'<sup>82</sup> in the narrative, as they become responsible, in their predominantly off-stage role, for physically tracking and capturing the criminals whom Holmes has, through predominantly intellectual processes, identified.

In Sexton Blake's first case, 'The Missing Millionaire' (*Halfpenny Marvel*, 1893), a newsboy performs a similar role to the Baker Street Irregulars when, in his fleeting appearance, his information sets Blake on the track of the kidnapers of his client. Like the Irregulars, the newsboy is a ragged street urchin whose 'tattered

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<sup>82</sup> Symons, *Bloody Murder*, p. 80.

trousers barely touched his knees [. . .] strips of time-eaten cloth fluttered round his thin, discoloured arm'.<sup>83</sup> He, too, is an errand boy, looking for his next shilling, as he approaches Blake with some information:

'Wait till you 'ear wot I've got to tell yer, and then I think you'll be good for a "bob." It's like this 'ere. Tommy Roundhead says as 'ow you want to find out about a "toff" as was taken out of a house in Arundel Street, late Thursday night. Well, I can tell you all about that 'ere. 'Cos, why? I helped in the job myself.' 'If you can help me to find that gentleman,' said Blake, with sudden energy, 'I'll make a man of you! We won't trouble about shillings. Pounds and pounds shall be spent on you.'

(p. 6)

The fact that the newsboy's knowledge comes from his own involvement in the kidnapping, as he is paid half a sovereign by one of the kidnappers to hold his horse and then subsequently jumps up onto the back of the carriage in the hope of earning an additional fee at the journey's end, emphasises the casualness of his involvement with detective work. Like the Baker Street Irregulars, he is representative of the 'blind-alley' labourer, as he works for Blake in the capacity of an errand boy, experiencing a fleeting and accidental flirtation with the detective profession when he shares his knowledge with Blake in a bid to earn one of those overly generous rewards characteristic of casual boy labour. The newsboy's role as a plot device to circumvent 'humdrum investigation' and expedite the narrative's detective process is corroborated through his anonymity and, in particular, his unacknowledged disappearance from the narrative after he has led Blake to the kidnappers' lair.<sup>84</sup> This fleeting appearance is not developed further in the early Blake stories.

It is in the Nelson Lee series that the threat of the 'blind-alley' boy labourer is fully addressed in British detective fiction, through the creation of the first long-term boy assistant to the adult master detective. The first appearance of Nipper, in 'A Dead

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<sup>83</sup> Hal Meredith, 'The Missing Millionaire', *Halfpenny Marvel*, 1.6 (13 December 1893), 1-15 (p. 5). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>84</sup> See Meredith, 'The Missing Millionaire', p. 5.

Man's Secret' (*Halfpenny Marvel*, 1894), shows some distinct similarities to that of the newsboy in the Sexton Blake story 'The Missing Millionaire'. Like the newsboy, Nipper is 'a dirty young ragamuffin [. . .] who hangs about the station selling matches and evening papers'.<sup>85</sup> The circumstances of his introduction also bear a close resemblance to those of the newsboy. Nipper similarly jumps up behind a carriage which happens to belong to the criminals sought by the detective and so possesses information that will help set Lee on the trail of his prey. Moreover, like the newsboy, Nipper's initial motive for assisting the adult master detective is financial, a priority which is identified by the railway porter who introduces Nipper to Lee, as he warns the detective that Nipper 'won't answer any questions unless he's paid for doing so' (p. 8), and which is corroborated by Nipper himself in his first words to Lee: 'Are you the gent who's offering 'arf-a-sov for an address?' (p. 11). Like Blake's newsboy and Holmes's Baker Street Irregulars, Nipper is, on his first appearance, a young 'blind-alley' labourer, lured to detective work by the promise of an immediate financial reward, and characterised by those traits that so worried middle-class moralists: social freedom, economic autonomy, lack of purpose and potential delinquency.

Where the newsboy in Blake's 'The Missing Millionaire' plays a bit-part role, only appearing for half a page of the fifteen-page narrative before inexplicably disappearing, Nipper's presence in 'A Dead Man's Secret' is far stronger. Nipper features in five of the story's twelve chapters and is mentioned by name in two of the chapter headings. He first appears indirectly through the railway porter's reported encounter with him, where his potential importance as a key witness is outlined. Consequently, his actual arrival in the story, as he is summoned by Lee, is eagerly anticipated, ensuring that, by the time he finally makes a direct appearance in the text in

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<sup>85</sup> Maxwell Scott, 'A Dead Man's Secret', *Halfpenny Marvel*, 46 (18 September 1894), 1-15 (p. 7). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

chapter nine, his status as a crucial player in the narrative has been firmly established. Nipper's prolonged occupation of the detective role – a position which requires adult authority and agency, and contact with criminality – is potentially dangerous as it appears to exacerbate the pre-existing 'delinquent' characteristics of the adolescent 'blind-alley' labourer. Foremost among these tendencies are Nipper's precocious independence, his economic autonomy and his criminal expertise.

As the only witness to the flight of the murderers that the detective seeks and, thus, the sole owner of the independently gained knowledge that is integral to the resolution of the case, Nipper becomes an indispensable figure in Lee's investigation. Recognising his hold over the great detective as an opportunity to gain an immediate and substantial reward, Nipper begins to negotiate with Lee:

'Tip up that 'arf-sov, guv' nor!  
'I'm afraid you haven't earned it yet,' said Nelson Lee. 'I must know the name of that street off Holborn. Can you remember it?'  
'Never knew it, guv' nor,' said Nipper. 'But I'll take you to the very spot for an extra bob.'

(p. 11)

When Lee withholds the promised payment, Nipper, knowing the worth of his information, is able to renegotiate his fee, demanding greater remuneration for his services. In the same scene, Nipper again demonstrates his apparent superiority to Lee in his response to the detective's assertion that one of them must change their appearance to ensure that they can work together to locate the criminals:

'But it would never do for us to go out together in our present clothes. The difference in our appearance would attract everyone's attention, which is just what I want to avoid. Either you must put on better clothes or I must put on shabbier. Which shall it be?'  
'I should be happy to oblige you,' said Nipper, with sublime cheek, 'but unfortunately my evening dress is at my huncles. But I don't mind being seen with you, for once in a way, in your working clothes.'

(p. 11)

Since he refuses to elevate himself to Lee's social sphere by dressing in more respectable clothing, Nipper not only forces the detective to lower himself to the level and attire of a tramp but, more crucially, inverts the adult/child hierarchy by insisting that the adult detective complies with a juvenile's demands. This inversion of the adult/child hierarchy is intensified through Nipper's subsequent rescue of the unconscious Lee from a burning building (p. 14), as the adult detective is now indebted to his young companion. While in *The Boy Detective* Ernest's agency is subtly expressed and his challenge to adult law enforcers implicitly undermined, Nipper's disruption of the adult/child hierarchy in the juvenile detective role, and, hence, his potential threat to normative adult authority, is more obviously stated.

The threat of the working-class male adolescent in the juvenile detective role extends from his economic autonomy and quasi-adult agency to his relationship with criminality. While in *The Boy Detective* Ernest's occasional foray into quasi-criminality is represented as a necessary evil, Nipper demonstrates a stubborn aversion to the official law enforcement system. As the railway porter warns Lee with reference to Nipper, 'if he gets it into his dirty head that you are connected with the police, he won't open his mouth' (p. 8). For the struggling 'blind-alley' boy labourer, occasional criminality is a means of survival and Nipper reveals the extent of his criminal skills when Lee asks him to pick the pocket of the coachman who holds the key to the criminals' lair:<sup>86</sup>

'Can you pick a pocket, Nipper?' he asked, as they turned into Holborn again. 'I 'ave done it when times was bad,' replied Nipper unblushingly. 'Well, you see that man who has just been into the office. In his ticket-pocket is a door-key. I'll give you five shillings if you get it for me without attracting attention.'

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<sup>86</sup> According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'nipper' was used as a slang term for 'a stealer of purses' from the sixteenth century and was later used to refer more generally to a thief or a swindler. See 'nipper', *Oxford English Dictionary* <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/127240?rskey=DrMqlx&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>> [accessed 4 May 2014].

Without a word, Nipper took from his pocket a couple of boxes of matches, and, hurrying forward, begged the man to buy a box.

The coachman refused with an angry gesture, and Nipper, with a crestfallen air, dropped back and rejoined his companion.

‘Can’t you manage it?’ asked Nelson Lee, for though he had narrowly watched Nipper’s every movement, he had seen nothing to arouse the slightest suspicion. For answer, the young rascal coolly slipped the key into his hand!

‘You’re a perfect young terror!’ gasped Nelson Lee, in amazement. ‘Where on earth did you learn to pick pockets like that? In future I shall look well after my pockets when you’re about!’ And, taking out his purse, he tendered a sovereign to Nipper for his services, at the same time intimating to him that he required him no longer.

(p. 12)

This passage establishes two anxieties relating to the role of the juvenile detective:

firstly, that by its nature, the profession requires and encourages criminal activity and expertise as Nipper receives praise and financial rewards for his successful pick-pocketing operation; secondly, and perhaps more crucially, it is this criminality which provides the juvenile detective with the agency and authority to challenge his adult counterparts. There is, in this criminalisation of the juvenile detective character, a subtle suggestion that his challenge to the adult/child hierarchy and to his adult detective master is wrong, as it can only be effected through breaking the law.

Nipper’s criminal expertise as he steals the key on Lee’s command allows him to hoodwink not only the criminal coachman but also the adult master detective who, despite his keen powers of observation, cannot detect the crime that he has employed Nipper to commit. It is not only Nipper’s criminal actions that Lee is unable to detect. Nipper’s elusiveness extends to his detective role, and his tracking skills are showcased in the scene where he successfully shadows Lee, hidden from view from both the detective hero and the readers of the text:

[Lee] had not proceeded far before he was haunted by the consciousness that someone was dogging his footsteps. It was a strange, uncomfortable feeling, all the more disquieting because, though he turned round sharply several times, he was unable to detect or identify the shadower, or even to make certain that he was being shadowed.

(p. 12)

Here the text emphasises one of the great advantages of the lower-class juvenile detective figure: Nipper's street-urchin status allows him to blend into the background to become effectively an invisible figure – unsuspected and, therefore, undetected by his adult quarry. Like the Baker Street Irregulars, Nipper 'can go everywhere, see everything, overhear everyone' (*The Sign of Four*, p. 67), affording him a covert social mobility which allows him to spy upon suspects of all classes. Nipper's inconspicuousness gives him an edge over his adult counterpart and positions him as a potentially threatening and invasive figure to the adult realm, challenging both class boundaries and the adult/child hierarchy.

In 'A Dead Man's Secret', therefore, detection initially appears to be a dangerous influence upon the working-class adolescent character. Just as it becomes a potentially corrupting force for the middle-class juvenile protagonist, Ernest Keen, in *The Boy Detective*, whose investigative role dictates that he must sink to the level of the lower-class criminal masses in order to operate successfully, so it seems that detection is an unsuitable role for the errand-boy Nipper, as it serves to exacerbate his 'delinquent' tendencies. The relationship between the working-class adolescent and the detective role is, however, drastically altered at the end of the text as Nipper's status in relation to detective work extends beyond running casual errands on a short-term basis for a temporary employer. Though Lee dismisses Nipper after the youngster has led him to the criminals' lair and procured the key, Nipper defies the detective's orders, follows him, undetected, and comes to Lee's aid when he is captured by the very criminals he is pursuing. Nipper's curiosity and his loyalty to the master detective, which will become defining traits of the detective's juvenile assistant, are stronger than his financial motivation as he takes on a role beyond that for which he is paid. Lee



evidently recognises these qualities in Nipper and promotes him from the role of casual errand-runner to that of his official assistant at the close of the narrative (p. 15).

At a time when ‘the temporary gratifications of high wages and the manly excitements of street life were more highly regarded among adolescents than the longer hours and lower wages of skilled apprenticeships’,<sup>87</sup> which were, by the 1890s, rapidly declining, the role of detective’s assistant provides the boy readers of the Harmsworths’ papers – many of whom were likely to be involved in ‘blind-alley’ labour – with the ultimate fantasy apprenticeship. The role of detective’s assistant still allows Nipper to indulge in ‘the manly excitements of street life’, and his willingness to continue to serve Lee after the ‘temporary gratification of high wages’ has been fulfilled secures his transition from ‘blind-alley’ labour to a skilled apprenticeship. Unlike his errand-boy counterparts – Blake’s newsboy and Holmes’s Baker Street Irregulars – he does not sink back into the obscurity of the irregular, ‘blind-alley’ labour market. Instead, under the supervision of the adult master detective, he submits to a process of training which keeps in check his ‘delinquent’ tendencies and prepares him for a skilled trade. The relationship between the working-class adolescent assistant and the middle-class adult detective can be likened to the bonds forged between middle-class adult leaders and lower-class adolescent members of those boys’ clubs founded with the purpose of regulating working-class adolescence, bonds which, according to Hendrick, through their ‘contact,—friendship,—influence,—were the means by which not only could youth be rescued and disciplined, but also civilized’.<sup>88</sup>

Nipper’s civilisation through the ‘contact,—friendship,—influence’ of his new master becomes immediately apparent on his reappearance at the end of the story. Though initially refusing to cast off his street-urchin identity and to raise himself to

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<sup>87</sup> Springhall, *Coming of Age*, p. 106.

<sup>88</sup> Hendrick, *Images of Youth*, p. 176.

Lee's level by putting on 'better clothes' (p. 11), when he reappears as Lee's official assistant Nipper is 'clad in a brand-new suit of clothes' (p. 14). Nipper here trades the independent assertion of his own identity for an implicitly submissive imitation of the identity of the master detective. Along with his agency, Nipper's criminality is also contained by his role as Lee's assistant since, to secure this position, Nipper has to promise the detective 'that he will never pick pockets again – except in the cause of justice!' (p. 15). Lee acts as a controlling force upon Nipper and the detective's superiority to his young assistant is affirmed in the final lines of the text as Lee's client refutes the detective's assertion that Nipper deserves most of the credit for solving the case:

It is characteristic of your modesty that you should endeavour to give others all the credit. I know that I owe much to Nipper [. . .] But it is to you, my friend, that the lion's share of the credit belongs.

(p. 15)

In the assistant role, Nipper's 'delinquent' tendencies – his personal authority and agency, and his criminality – are necessarily reduced as he now operates under the influence and in the shadow of the adult master detective.

Under the supervision of a respectable middle-class professional and in training to become a master of that profession, the relationship between the working-class adolescent and detection is redefined. It is no longer a potentially corrupting force but a civilising influence upon its young subject, serving to contain his threatening 'delinquent' tendencies and transforming him from the 'maladjusted' to the 'conforming' adolescent. Nipper begins the text with all the hallmarks of Gillis's 'delinquent' adolescent – the 'unorganized, and therefore maladjusted, youth' who is 'independent and precocious' and, consequently, 'stigmatized as delinquent':<sup>89</sup> he is an independent 'blind-alley' labourer, earning his living as a street seller; his precocious

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<sup>89</sup> Gillis, 'The Evolution of Juvenile Delinquency', p. 97.

nature is evident in his shrewd financial negotiations with Lee; in addition, he is, at the beginning of text, ‘unorganized’, since he does not participate in any adult-supervised activities or training. Through his adoption of the role of detective’s assistant, Nipper is transformed into the ‘conforming adolescent’, ‘the organized youth, dependent but secure from temptation’:<sup>90</sup> he becomes ‘organized’ as he submits to the adult-supervised training that his detective role requires, ‘dependent’ on Lee, and ‘secure from temptation’ as, with Lee to support him, he promises to abandon his criminal ways.

At a time when social reformers were attempting to suppress the threat of the ‘delinquent’ working-class adolescent through the creation of youth clubs that, in effect, tried to force them into submission and which failed to reach those boys who were apparently most in need of their influence, the inauguration of the detective’s juvenile assistant in the Harmsworths’ boys’ story papers could be recognised as a more subtle attempt to coax working-class boy readers to conform to the middle-class ideal of adolescence – that is, of young people who are law-abiding, civilised, respectful of their elders and class superiors, submitting to the supervision of middle-class adult role models. By providing adolescent boys, in their own literature, with a character with whom they could identify and who offered them an attractive image of the ‘conforming’ adolescent, the story of the initiation of the detective’s juvenile assistant arguably performed a subtle social conditioning function upon the working-class adolescent reader: by using the glamorous detective profession as a means of civilising the ‘delinquent’ adolescent character, the text surreptitiously encouraged boy readers to view the process of conformity as a rewarding and even heroic experience.

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<sup>90</sup> Gillis, ‘The Evolution of Juvenile Delinquency’, p. 97.

#### 2.4: Civilising the foreigner: Sexton Blake's We-wee and the dissemination of imperialist ideology

Like Nipper, Sexton Blake's Chinese boy assistant, We-wee, who is 'apparently eight or nine years old' ('Chased through China', p. 14) when he first appears in the *Union Jack* in 1897, three years after Nipper's first appearance in the Nelson Lee stories, is also civilised through his role as assistant to the adult master detective.<sup>91</sup> My research suggests that We-wee appears in fifteen of twenty-two Sexton Blake stories published between 1897 and 1899, and in one story each year between 1900 and 1902 – that is, three out of eighty-five stories.<sup>92</sup> In his origins story, 'Chased through China', We-wee, like Nipper, is constructed as a criminalised and potentially threatening figure. In a scene similar to Nipper's pocket-picking venture at Lee's behest in 'A Dead Man's Secret' (p. 12), We-wee successfully steals some documents for Blake and switches them for a dummy packet without attracting attention, least of all from the master detective:

Boldly, yet cunningly, We-wee pressed forward, carrying with him the eager spectators round about. A priest attempted to force them back; there was a slight scuffle, and, amid the confusion, the boy nimbly slipped under the hanging pall that fell from the sides of the bier.

[. . .]

If the change was made and the real documents abstracted, it was done so deftly that even Sexton Blake, keenly on the alert, failed to notice it.

[. . .]

'All right, mastel; I got papels hele quite safee; but no showee them hele; too many eyes about,' said a well-known voice close by. And, turning hastily, Sexton Blake found his brave little hero at his side.

( 'Chased through China', p. 14)

We-wee's criminality provides him with the agency and authority to challenge his adult counterparts, including the adult master detective.

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<sup>91</sup> More recently We-wee's role – that of a Chinese boy assistant to an adult detective figure – has been reprised in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, by Jones's eleven-year-old Chinese boy sidekick, Short Round. See *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, dir. by Steven Spielberg. Harrison Ford, Kate Capshaw, Ke Huy Quan (Lucasfilm, 1984).

<sup>92</sup> See Mark Hodder, 'Sexton Blake Bibliography Master List' in *Blakiana* <<http://www.mark-hodder.com/Blakiana/#bibliography>> [accessed 6 May 2014].

Similarly to Nipper's rescue of Lee from a burning building in 'A Dead Man's Secret' (p. 14), We-wee, too, inverts the adult/child hierarchy by helping Captain Saltman to release Blake from the pillory in which the detective has been imprisoned by his Chinese foes:

At this moment a key was thrust into the hand of the rescuer; and, looking down, Sexton Blake observed that the donor was the little Chinese boy who, alone in all that callous crowd, had seemed to pity the sufferer; but as if afraid of his friendly action, the gamin darted swiftly away.

(p. 7)

Despite the initial power inversion signalled through We-wee's role in Blake's rescue – an action that We-wee repeats later in the text when he shoots Blake's would-be assassin (p. 11) – it is ultimately Blake who saves We-wee as he takes him on as his assistant. However, We-wee's civilisation, and so his salvation through the detective role, cannot be interpreted directly as the civilisation of the British 'delinquent adolescent' since We-wee, Chinese and pre-pubescent, is distanced from British anxieties surrounding youth and is too young to fit into the adolescent category. Instead of the internal threat of the British 'delinquent' adolescent, We-wee poses an external threat to the Empire: that of the foreigner.

The first time that Blake encounters him after the pillory episode, We-wee is represented as the victim of a barbarous Chinese regime, exploited by a cruel master and in need of saving from a life of slavery:

In an open yard, attached to one of the shanties, a wooden erection, T shaped, was fixed upright in the earth, and to this a child was attached. The poor little thing was strung up by the wrists to the cross part, his feet some distance from the ground. And that was not all. A burly Chinaman, wielding a heavy whip, was lashing the bare back of the poor little mite.

(p. 7)

It is now Blake's turn to rescue We-wee, securing his release from a cruel torture mechanism and an equally cruel master as he purchases the young boy's freedom and, in doing so, becomes 'temporarily, a slave-proprietor' (p. 8). We-wee is as keen to

serve his new master as he is to escape his old one and the story concludes with Blake 'bringing the boy with him to England, where We-wee attends to his "mastel" as a scout and attendant sprite' (p. 14). Thus, We-wee trades his role as slave to a barbarous Chinese master for that of 'scout' to a civilised, Western master. He enters willingly and enthusiastically into the role of detective's assistant and his representation as foreign or 'other' is redressed through his Anglicisation, later in the series, as his status as Blake's first regular assistant becomes clear.

We-wee's Anglicisation is first apparent in his eighth appearance in the series, 'The Phantom Photographer' (*Union Jack*, 1898), as he reports on his shadowing the 'phantom photographer' of the title:

'You clever little rascal! How did you find out all that?' cried Blake, when his scout had completed his report.

'Oh, quite simple; ready enough,' replied the little Chinaman, who by dint of hard practice had at length overcome his difficulties with the English pronunciation of the letter R. 'I go in clothes of one London street boy—what you call "guttersnipe!" I inspect the house, see gall minding door, so I say, "you my mark."'

[. . .]

'That will do for the present, We-wee,' said Blake, laughing over the cuteness of the little Celestial. 'You have done admirably, my boy; here is some cash to replenish your exchequer.'<sup>93</sup>

The most obvious sign of We-wee's Anglicisation here is his use of standard English in place of his pidgin English of earlier stories, which was characterised in particular by the substitution of the letter 'l' for 'r', the addition of 'ee' to the end of words, especially verbs, and by We-wee's references to himself in the third person: 'Oh, no, silee! No want fleedom. No takee monee. Only wants mastel. I goes with you. We-wee good boy.' ('Chased through China', p. 14).<sup>94</sup> As well as having 'overcome his

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<sup>93</sup> William Shaw Rae, 'The Phantom Photographer; Or, The Luck of Sexton Blake', *Union Jack*, 8.208 (16 April 1898), 5-15 (p. 6). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>94</sup> Shih-Wen Chen identifies these two characteristics as typical of 'historical Chinese Pidgin English, used mostly by Cantonese-speaking Chinese to communicate with foreign merchants during the

difficulties with the English pronunciation of the letter R', he also adopts British idioms, such as 'guttersnipe'. In addition, where We-wee refuses to take Blake's money in 'Chased through China', instead choosing to perpetuate the 'domestic slavery [. . .] still a recognised institution throughout the Chinese Empire' (p. 8), in the later story he accepts payment from Blake for his services – a sign of his assimilation into the British capitalist employment system.

To complete his Anglicisation in this scene, We-wee adopts the disguise of a London 'guttersnipe'. In an earlier story, set in Carthage, We-wee had 'altered his appearance yet adopted no disguise' when conducting undercover work, 'his Chinese costume attracting but little attention midst that motley throng, garbed in all the fashions of the universe'.<sup>95</sup> In England, We-wee is less conspicuous in the street-urchin guise that made his predecessors, the Baker Street Irregulars and Nipper, invisible in their role as trackers of criminals. The Chinese boy plays the part so convincingly that 'none, save the practised eye of his master could have recognised We-wee' ('The Phantom Photographer', p. 10). By the beginning of 'The Brand of Sin' (1900), We-wee's sixteenth story and his penultimate appearance in the *Union Jack*, he has become Anglicised to such an extent that he can pass not only for a London guttersnipe but also for a 'regular yokel',<sup>96</sup> a persona which he adopts so successfully that the official who questions him about an escaped convict ironically demonstrates, in his judgement of We-wee, his ignorance of the young detective's true identity:

'Keep a sharp look-out for him, and should you see any trace of the fellow, let me know on your return and I'll make it worth your while.'

'Zure, zur, I'll do that; I'll keep a sharp look-out vor 'im. Master telled me about him, an' 'e says—'

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nineteenth century'. Shih-Wen Chen, *Representations of China in British Children's Fiction, 1851-1911* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), p. 64.

<sup>95</sup> William Shaw Rae, 'Sexton Blake among the Moors', *Union Jack*, 7.168 (7 July 1897), 1-14 (p. 4). This is We-wee's fourth appearance in the series.

<sup>96</sup> William Shaw Rae, 'The Brand of Sin', *Union Jack*, 12.229 (13 January 1900), 1-12 (p. 4). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

‘Get on, you stupid little beggar!’ cried the officer, losing patience. ‘I don’t believe you would know a convict if you met him face to face, you young fool!’  
(‘The Brand of Sin’, p. 5)

We-wee has not only abandoned his pidgin English for a more standardised and less comic form, but he has also mastered the art of speaking in regional dialect, to the extent that his foreignness goes unnoticed and his English identity is uncontested by those in official positions of authority.<sup>97</sup> We-wee’s ability to fool the official by his adoption of the ‘yokel’ persona suggests not only a change in his accent, but also in his appearance, as he is now able to mask his Chinese features effectively enough to pass as an English boy – a difficult feat, even for the apprentice to Sexton Blake, who is an indisputable master of disguise.<sup>98</sup> By 1900, therefore, it seems that We-wee’s Anglicisation is complete.

Though this Anglicisation is seemingly superficial, as it relates in particular to We-wee’s external appearance and speech patterns, the series’ representation of the threat of the foreigner and his subsequent civilisation runs deeper than these changes initially suggest. At the time of We-wee’s first appearance in 1897, three years before the culmination of the Boxer Rebellion against the foreign presence in China, the Chinese were already being depicted as a dangerous threat to the Western world in British juvenile and adult literature. In school history textbooks, the Chinese were characterised by their insularity, intolerance of foreigners, and resistance to Westernisation. *The Heroic Reader* (1897), for example, claimed that ‘the Chinese hate

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<sup>97</sup> Another sign of We-wee’s Anglicisation is his employment as a jockey in his tenth story, ‘The Third Man’ (1898). In earlier stories his affinity to animals marks his ‘otherness’, as it allows him to ride an ostrich in his fourth story, ‘Sexton Blake among the Moors’ (1897), and eagles in his sixth story, ‘Under the Smuggler’s Flag’ (1897). By using his skills to ride a horse in a competitive race, he again demonstrates his assimilation to an English identity. See William Shaw Rae, ‘The Third Man’, *Union Jack*, 9.228 (3 September 1898), 1-13 (p. 12); William Shaw Rae, ‘Sexton Blake among the Moors’, pp. 12-13; and William Shaw Rae, ‘Under the Smuggler’s Flag; Or, Sexton Blake, in a New Role’, *Union Jack*, 8.186 (13 November 1897), 1-14 (p. 13).

<sup>98</sup> Blake’s talent for disguise is emphasised in his initial description at the beginning of the series, which informs readers that Blake’s ‘refined, clean-shaven face readily lent itself to any disguise, and his mobile features assisted to clinch any facial illusion he desired to produce’. Meredith, ‘The Missing Millionaire’, p. 1.



the English as they hate all foreigners'.<sup>99</sup> This representation abounded in juvenile fiction, too, where, according to John M. MacKenzie, '[e]ven before the rising, the Chinese had been depicted as brutal and benighted, or as buffoons who perpetrated ludicrous social customs like feet-binding'.<sup>100</sup>

The Chinese are characterised by all of these faults in their representation in 'Chased through China'. Their brutality and primitivism is emphasised in their use of the pillory in punishing Blake: 'his position was similar to that of a person in the stocks in the olden days in England' (p. 7). Their indulgence in 'ludicrous social customs' is shown in their enthusiasm for the 'puerile, frivolous amusement' of cricket-fighting, itself a brutal activity, in which '[t]he poor little insects are carefully bred, secured till the day of the battle in tiny bamboo cages, trained to the hour, then set free to fight for their lives' (p. 12). Chinese brutality is represented in the punishment of the criminal, Kerkoff, executed for desecrating a Chinese temple:

The condemned man was dead. He had been bound to a cross, and then executed by a number of separate sword-cuts, the striker at first carefully avoiding vital parts, but gradually, grimly slicing nearer and nearer, till at last, to the fainting victim, he delivered the coup de grâce.

(p. 14)

This passage is particularly violent considering the text's status as children's literature. While We-wee's rescue of Blake from the pillory suggests a rejection of the primitive and brutal customs of his race, We-wee is not yet free of their influence. In 'Chased through China', he pronounces that cricket-fighting is 'groat fun' (p. 11) as he excitedly drags Blake off to watch the spectacle; more significant, is his acceptance of Kerkoff's brutal punishment. While 'Sexton Blake did what he could do to save him', since 'he could not thus see, unmoved, a European brutally butchered' (p. 13), 'We-wee pleaded

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<sup>99</sup> *The Heroic Reader*, Book 2 (London, 1897), p. 43, cited in Kathryn Castle, *Britannia's Children: Reading Colonialism Through Children's Books and Magazines* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 125.

<sup>100</sup> John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), p. 212.

hard with his master for restraint, assuring him that to persevere was but to share the doom of the criminal' (pp. 13-14). On his introduction, therefore, We-wee is represented not only as the victim but also as the product of a barbarous foreign regime which is ignorant of and/or resistant to civilised Western practices. Consequently, We-wee's Anglicisation does not simply signify his willingness to adopt superficial British features but also his rejection of regressive Chinese customs and behavioural codes in favour of progressive Western equivalents. In a different way, but similarly to Nipper, We-wee initially poses a threat to the middle-class social order and ideology of late-Victorian Britain – a threat which is contained and overcome through his repositioning as the detective's assistant, helping to uphold law and order in a civilised Western society under the supervision and influence of the white, Western, adult, middle-class detective hero.<sup>101</sup>

Rather than just becoming a metaphor for the civilisation of the 'delinquent' adolescent, the civilisation of the foreigner as articulated through We-wee reinforces the imperialist ideology increasingly utilised by middle-class adults at the end of the nineteenth century in their attempts to transform the 'delinquent' adolescent into the

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<sup>101</sup> Notably, We-wee was not the first criminalised Chinese character to be civilised by the detective role in the boys' story papers. Chinese trickster Ching Ching, who is twenty-four on his introduction, first appeared as a supporting character, providing comic relief, in Edwin Harcourt Burrage's 'Handsome Harry of the Fighting Belvedere' (1876), serialised in Charles Fox's *Boys' Standard* (1875-92), but became the eponymous hero of later serials in the *Boys' Standard* and then starred in his own story paper, *Ching Ching's Own: A Journal that Will Please the Boys* (1888-93), published by Thomas Harrison Roberts. See Chen, *Representations of China in British Children's Fiction*, p. 65, p. 66 and p. 70. Chen observes that, in his early appearances in the *Boys' Standard*, 'Ching Ching is characterized as a kleptomaniac, gambler, drunk, liar, and practical joker who can get away with anything by his flattery and many tricks and stunts' (p. 66). However, in *Ching Ching's Own*, Ching Ching is gradually transformed into a detective – no doubt influenced by Sherlock Holmes, with whom he shares some traits (see pp. 81-4) – finally becoming firmly positioned in this role in 'Ching Ching On the Trail: A New Style of Detective Story' (1892). Just as We-wee's detective role neutralises his foreign and criminal threat, so Ching Ching is similarly civilised. Chen argues that, '[b]y transforming Ching-Ching into a detective, Burrage has "sanitized" and tamed the former gambler and drinker, suggesting that Chinese people can maintain and restore order instead of causing disruptions to order' (p. 84). Furthermore, similarly to We-wee, who is Anglicised through contact with his British master, Sexton Blake, Chen notes that Ching Ching 'more or less assimilated to British culture after marrying Annette', an English maid (p. 90). *Ching Ching's Own* ceased publication in 1893, the year in which Sexton Blake made his debut in the *Halfpenny Marvel*.

‘conforming’ adolescent. By the 1890s Britain’s key concern was no longer with the expansion of the Empire but with its defence, as other countries, particularly America, Germany and the rapidly modernising Japan, were beginning to challenge Britain’s status as a dominant world power.<sup>102</sup> Anxieties about the future of the British Empire were inevitably linked with those about adolescence, as it was potentially delinquent British adolescents – both working-class boys as future soldiers and their social superiors as potential officers and leaders – who would later, when they reached adulthood, become instrumental to the preservation and defence of this Empire. In order to become a responsible member of British society, the ‘delinquent’ adolescent had to be conditioned to accept the beliefs of this society, foremost of which was that of British superiority to other races. This led to the proliferation of an aggressive imperialist propaganda characterised by intense patriotism and casual xenophobia in the dominant ‘civilising’ spheres of influence over the young: education, youth movements, and juvenile literature.

MacKenzie identifies the 1890s as the decade in which the school textbook became a site for imperialist indoctrination of the young:

School texts do in fact undergo a drastic shift in both method and tone in the 1890s. Before that decade, the main concern seems to have been with the organisation of knowledge, the production of large compendia of facts, often lacking any real interpretative thrust. It was against this approach that so many imperial propagandists and writers of textbooks of teaching method railed at the end of the century. It is at this time that a single ideological slant is introduced in all such texts.<sup>103</sup>

Several youth movements, too, adopted an imperialist agenda and there was a growing sense of militarism and patriotism, particularly in William Smith’s Boys’ Brigade (1883) and Walter Gee’s Anglican Church Lads’ Brigade (1891).<sup>104</sup> It was arguably in juvenile fiction, however, that the new imperialist ideology was most successfully

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<sup>102</sup> Eldridge, *The Imperial Experience*, p. 1.

<sup>103</sup> MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, p. 176.

<sup>104</sup> Eldridge, *The Imperial Experience*, p. 92.

disseminated to its young male readership, particularly in the context of the vast audience and sheer volume of this material. Patrick Dunae states that:

Every Christmas hundreds of juvenile adventure novels appeared, novels that romanticized and glorified the exploits of British empire builders. Between times the ardor of young patriots was fanned by dozens of illustrated periodicals which provided readers of all social classes with an enticing array of imperialistic articles and tales. The adventure novels sold in their thousands; the penny weeklies in their millions.<sup>105</sup>

The penny and halfpenny weeklies keenly reinforced imperialist ideology by chronicling the impressive feats of real-life imperial leaders – supermen in an expanding culture of hero worship – who were held up as examples of adult perfection whom boy readers could admire but not, as juveniles, successfully emulate.<sup>106</sup> Fictional master detectives Lee and Blake fitted neatly into this culture of hero worship as they were, in their own way, imperial champions suppressing criminal threats to the British Empire. We-wee’s adulation of a British imperialist hero and his rejection of foreignness in exchange for a British identity reinforces the dominant belief in Britain’s superiority and disseminates the civilising imperialist ideology to potentially ‘delinquent’ working-class boy readers. Consequently, the inauguration of the detective’s assistant in the story papers of the 1890s not only offers a symbolic representation of the civilisation of the ‘delinquent’ adolescent but also, in We-wee’s case, plays a more direct role in this civilisation.

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<sup>105</sup> Patrick A. Dunae, ‘Boys’ Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914’, *Victorian Studies*, 24 (Autumn 1980), 105-21 (pp. 105-6).

<sup>106</sup> Examples included biographies of imperial explorers such as Commander V. L. Cameron and H. M. Stanley and first-person accounts of careers serving the British Empire. See W. J. Gordon, ‘Great African Explorers’, *Boy’s Own Paper*, 312 (3 January 1885), 219-20; W. J. Gordon, ‘Stanley the Explorer: His Boyhood and Manhood’, *Boy’s Own Paper*, 573 (4 January 1890), 214-15; 574 (11 January 1890), 235; 575 (18 January 1890), 248-51; 576 (25 January 1890), 264-5; and G. A. Henty, ‘The Life of a Special Correspondent’, *Boy’s Own Paper*, 908 (6 June 1896), 570; 910 (20 June 1896), 599; 912 (4 July 1896), 632. MacKenzie states that, outside the juvenile story papers, too, ‘hero-publishing’ had, by the end of the nineteenth century, ‘become a considerable industry. There were several popular series of biographies of military, imperial, and missionary figures, highly condensed lives, some of them suitable for juvenile consumption.’ MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, p. 213.

## 2.5: The disappearance of Nipper and We-wee

In the 1890s and early 1900s, the detective's boy assistant is characterised by his passivity and conformity and a great gulf exists between the adult detective hero and his dedicated juvenile assistant. Detection is identified as a predominantly adult, middle-class ideological force and the juvenile assistant is constructed as the passive recipient of its civilising effect. As Charles Ferrall and Anna Jackson observe, the detective/assistant stories in the boys' story papers 'are about boys' hero worship of men, not the kind of heroism that boys must display to become men'.<sup>107</sup> At a time when anxieties about the 'delinquent' adolescent were widespread, the detective's assistant necessarily belonged to the 'conforming adolescent' category, supervised and restrained by an adult master. The assistant's initial status as uncivilised and hence 'other' establishes a middle-class adult detective/lower-class young assistant hierarchy. Yet, while the threats posed by both Nipper and We-wee are contained through their conformity to the ideologies of their middle-class adult detective masters as they take on the role of assistant, both characters disappear after their initial introduction.

In We-wee's case, this disappearance is prefaced by his reversion to his Chinese stereotype in 'Fortune Stone!' (*Union Jack*, 1901), his penultimate appearance in the series. Without any explanation, We-wee reverts to his pidgin English in his opening lines of the story: "'Velly well," replied the Chinaman. "I'm willing, Mistel Blake. But if you go back to London We-wee wants to be in the next bit of fun."<sup>108</sup> This regression can be read as a response to events occurring in China at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1898 the Chinese Emperor Kuang Hsu introduced a set of reforms to Westernise China, only to be usurped by the Empress Dowager, who swiftly

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<sup>107</sup> Charles Ferrall and Anna Jackson, *Juvenile Literature and British Society, 1850-1950: The Age of Adolescence* (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), p. 140.

<sup>108</sup> William Shaw Rae, 'Fortune Stone!', *Union Jack*, 15.375 (29 June 1901), 1-12 (p. 1). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

suppressed these reforms.<sup>109</sup> Beginning with, in 1898, attacks against foreign missionaries, including Britons, the Boxer Rebellion culminated in 1900 with attacks by the Chinese Boxers on the foreign Legations in China.<sup>110</sup> Though the Chinese government initially publicly condemned the Boxers, by June 1900 they openly supported the Rebellion.<sup>111</sup> Two relief expeditions consisting of troops from America, Austria, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Russia reached China in the summer of 1900 to defend the foreign Legations. While the first expedition failed, the second successfully stormed Peking in August 1900 and the Western Powers quickly defeated the Chinese and began to draw up conditions for China's punishment.<sup>112</sup> The Peace Protocol between China and the Western Powers was finalised on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 1901.<sup>113</sup>

British relations with China deteriorated rapidly in the wake of the Boxer Rebellion as, for the British, this attack not only confirmed China's hatred of foreigners and rebellion against Western civilisation but also cultivated an image of the Chinese as a 'yellow peril' threatening to invade and contaminate Britain.<sup>114</sup> In the early twentieth century, fears of Chinese invasion abounded in British story papers. An early example appears in the *Marvel* in November 1900 in a story entitled 'London in Danger', which tells of the invasion of the capital city by Chinese war balloons and the efforts of three brave British boys to thwart a germ-warfare attack. The story concludes with the

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<sup>109</sup> Paul H. Clements, *The Boxer Rebellion: A Political and Diplomatic Review* (New York: AMS Press, 1967), pp. 49-54. For further information on the Boxer Rebellion, see Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Jane E. Elliott, *Some Did It for Civilisation Some Did It for Their Country: A Revised View of the Boxer War* (Sha Tin: The Chinese University Press, 2002); and Joseph W. Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1987).

<sup>110</sup> Clements, *The Boxer Rebellion*, p. 89.

<sup>111</sup> Clements, *The Boxer Rebellion*, p. 111.

<sup>112</sup> Clements, *The Boxer Rebellion*, pp. 131-6.

<sup>113</sup> Clements, *The Boxer Rebellion*, p. 173.

<sup>114</sup> Castle, *Britannia's Children*, pp. 136-7. Chen argues that '[t]he Boxer Uprising was a pivotal event that marked the beginning of "yellow peril" fever and the trend of distinctly vindictive diatribes against the "evil, fanatical" Chinese who were characterized by unconscionable cruelty'. Chen, *Representations of China in British Children's Fiction*, p. 157. For a discussion of Boxer Rebellion texts, see also pp. 129-58.

reinstatement of the reform Emperor, Kuang Hsu, who is ‘able, thanks to British support, to establish a peaceful and undisputed sway’, while the Empress Dowager, hostile to the Western Powers, is ‘placed in lifelong confinement in a fortress on a Chinese island, vigilantly guarded by British cruisers’.<sup>115</sup>

Greater even than the threat of Chinese invasion, according to the story papers, was the threat posed by the Chinese already living in Britain.<sup>116</sup> In detective stories, Kathryn Castle observes, ‘British heroes met the imaginative extremes of a generalised fear of Chinese emigrants. Masters of secrecy and deceit, these aliens seemed able to adopt, chameleon like [*sic*], the surface characteristics of “civilised” individuals.’<sup>117</sup> Thus, the process of Anglicisation – which, in We-wee’s case, signalled the civilisation of the threat of the foreigner – came by 1901 to represent the threat of the wily and deceptive foreign immigrant. The Boxer Rebellion became a symbol of Chinese defiance of Westernisation and, in its wake, juvenile literature began to acknowledge the futility of attempts to civilise the Chinese. In the story papers of the early twentieth century, the threat of the Chinese is not contained as before through the Anglicisation and hence the civilisation of Chinese characters, but through their clear demarcation as foreign or ‘other’ which, in detective stories, meant casting them as master-criminals, ‘a source of evil genii against whom Anglo-Saxon supermen could pit their wits in the

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<sup>115</sup> Anon, ‘London in Danger’, *Marvel*, 15.365 (3 November 1900), 1-13 (p. 13).

<sup>116</sup> In reality, the Chinese population in Britain was still very small in the early twentieth century. In London, this population was largely confined to ‘a few narrow and dingy streets in Limehouse, Pennyfields, and Poplar – not far from the Limehouse Causeway and the East and West India Docks, and near the redeveloped area of Canary Wharf’. Ross G. Forman, *China and the Victorian Imagination: Empires Entwined* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 195. London’s 1901 census recorded the permanent Chinese population as 237, ‘60 per cent of whom were seamen’. Forman, *China and the Victorian Imagination*, p. 201. The Chinese population in Britain did increase from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, but the overall numbers were still relatively low. Chen records the total Chinese population in Britain as 665 in 1881, a number which rose to 1,319 by 1911. Chen, *Representations of China in British Children’s Fiction*, p. 60.

<sup>117</sup> Castle, *Britannia’s Children*, p. 146.

succeeding decades'.<sup>118</sup> After the Boxer Rebellion, therefore, We-wee's Anglicisation poses a threat, as he potentially becomes the 'chameleon like' villainous Chinese immigrant, infiltrating British society at the highest level.<sup>119</sup> As We-wee becomes linked with a threat that cannot be contained, his representation reverts to the Chinese stereotype that ensures the swift identification and confinement of his dangerous foreignness/'otherness'.

At the end of 'Fortune Stone!', this marked 'otherness', which inevitably reconfigures the detective's assistant as a 'delinquent' figure who needs to become civilised once more, hints at We-wee's impending dismissal from the series, as he is scorned by the text's villain as Blake's 'precious assistant, with the idiotic name of We-wee' (p. 11). We-wee departs from the series in 1902 in an instalment of 'The Real Adventures of Sexton Blake' (*Marvel*, 1902), a serial which features the adult Wallace Lorrimer as Blake's primary assistant and Raffles the office boy – sometimes called Raggles or Praggles – as a regular supporting character.<sup>120</sup> We-wee's demarcation as

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<sup>118</sup> MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, p. 212. The archetypal fictional Chinese master-criminal, Fu Manchu, was the protagonist of a series of adult novels written by Sax Rohmer between 1913 and 1959. For further information, see Peter Christensen, 'The Political Appeal of Dr. Fu Manchu', in Stacy Gillis and Philippa Gates (eds), *The Devil Himself: Villainy in Detective Fiction and Film* (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 2002), pp. 81-9.

<sup>119</sup> Castle, *Britannia's Children*, p. 146.

<sup>120</sup> Wallace Lorrimer also features as Blake's assistant in the subsequent serial, 'King of Detectives; Or, Sexton Blake Out West' (*Marvel*, 1902-3) in which he disguises himself as a nineteen-year-old pupil at Drearville College when Blake is called in by the headmaster to investigate a string of thefts. Hodder, 'Sexton Blake Bibliography Master List' in *Blakiana* [accessed 28/3/11]. Another serialised story, 'Griff the Man-Tracker; Or, The Exploits of Sexton Blake, Detective, and Griff, His Mysterious Assistant' (*Union Jack*, 1901) introduces the ape-like Griff as yet another substitute for We-wee as an assistant to Blake. Mark Hodder identifies Griff as a 'mangani ape', a fictional species used in Edgar Rice Burroughs's Tarzan novels. Mark Hodder, 'Sexton Blake Timeline' in *Blakiana* <<http://www.sextonblake.co.uk/index.html>> [accessed 28 March 2011]. Before this, a boy assistant called Nipperty Chris, perhaps influenced by Nelson Lee's Nipper, appears in a solitary Sexton Blake story in the *Union Jack* in 1898. Here, We-wee is not mentioned but Nipperty Chris is introduced as 'the great detective's latest juvenile assistant, who, like some of his predecessors, had been rescued from gutter-life for his shrewdness'. Harold Blyth, 'Twixt Gallows and Gold', *Union Jack*, 8.194 (8 January 1898), 6-15 (p. 6). While We-wee could be counted among these predecessors, no other urchin assistants appear in the series before this story to warrant this description. Nipperty Chris's appearance in this story is much less significant than that of Nipper's in 'A Dead Man's Secret', partially because Chris never appears in the Sexton Blake series again, but also because he plays a much less crucial role in the narrative than Nipper does in his origins story. In the earlier part of the story Chris acts more in the role of page boy to Blake, showing in clients, and while Chris later rescues Blake from being run over by a



‘other’ through his reversion to the Chinese stereotype is even more explicitly rendered in this final, fleeting appearance:

‘Ah, there is We-wee!’ he cried jubilantly. ‘The very man—or, rather, the very boy! It is high time that pigtailed and almond-eyed son of the East bestirred himself again. I declare he’s had nearly six months’ holiday! Raffles,’ he called out to the bright fifteen-year-old youth in his outer office, ‘send for We-wee!’ ‘Yes, sir.’ And in less than half an hour the diminutive Chinaman who has figured in so many of the stories of Sexton Blake’s detective exploits slithered into the investigator’s private sanctum.  
‘Good morning, We-wee! What d’you think I have sent for you?’  
‘Me no sabbee, Mistel Blake.’  
‘Wait, I’ll tell you; then you will sabbee.’<sup>121</sup>

We-wee’s foreignness here is at least as evident as it was on his introduction in ‘Chased through China’, before he took on the civilising role of detective’s assistant. His Chinese ‘otherness’ is underlined in Blake’s description of him as ‘that pigtailed and almond-eyed son of the East’, physical features which, in his earlier disguise as a yokel in ‘The Brand of Sin’ (*Union Jack*, 1900), were completely obscured but now serve as prominent signifiers of his Chinese identity. The threat of We-wee’s ‘otherness’ is implied in the way ‘the diminutive Chinaman [. . .] slithered into the investigator’s private sanctum’, an entrance which suggests a stealthy invasion of the detective’s fortress, while the use of the term ‘Chinaman’ [my emphasis] rather than boy, links We-wee to his more dangerous Chinese adult counterparts. We-wee adopts pidgin English again and there is a suggestion of xenophobia in Blake’s mimicry of We-wee in his repetition of the Chinese boy’s word, ‘sabbee’. While, in ‘Fortune Stone!’ it is the villain who attacks We-wee’s Chinese identity by deriding his ‘idiotic name’ (‘Fortune Stone!’, p. 11), here the detective hero mocks and, thus, rejects his Chinese assistant as ‘other’.

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steam-roller (p. 11), he is then sent home by Blake and subsequently disappears from the story and the series. Nipperty Chris’s biggest claim to fame, perhaps, is as a prototype for Blake’s regular boy assistant, Tinker, who first appeared in 1904. Tinker’s role in the Sexton Blake series will be discussed in detail in chapter 3.

<sup>121</sup> Percy C. Bishop, ‘The Real Adventures of Sexton Blake’, *Marvel*, 432 (16 February 1902), 13-16 (p. 15).

As We-wee disappears from the series, sent by Blake to track down a kidnapped young woman who returns of her own accord in the next instalment, he is referred to as ‘Blake’s quaint assistant’ an ambiguous description which hints not only at his exotic ‘otherness’ but also, perhaps, acknowledges that he is an outdated figure, no longer suitable or desirable in the role of detective’s assistant.<sup>122</sup> At a time when the Chinese, and particularly Chinese immigrants in Britain, were identified as a clear threat to the stability of the Empire, We-wee becomes an unsuitable assistant to the British imperialist detective hero and is quietly removed from the series.<sup>123</sup> The boy assistant is rejected as the threat that he poses to the Empire cannot be overcome through his assimilation into British society and adoption of the dominant ideologies of this society.

By contrast, the disappearance of Nipper for nearly a decade after his debut in ‘A Dead Man’s Secret’ (1894) is not so obviously explained. It could be, as Michael Bailey speculates, that Nipper’s creator, Maxwell Scott, had simply forgotten about the boy assistant during a period in which he began to write for one of the Harmsworths’ rival publishers, Arthur C. Pearson, in the *Big Budget*.<sup>124</sup> However, the absence of the working-class, adolescent boy assistant, Nipper, from further Nelson Lee stories between 1894 and 1903 is perhaps, in part, an unconscious response to the uncertainty

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<sup>122</sup> Bishop, ‘The Real Adventures of Sexton Blake’, 432, p. 15.

<sup>123</sup> By this time, Chinese adult detective Ching Ching had also disappeared from the boys’ story papers. Chen asserts that Ching Ching ‘was a distinct product of the 1870s to 1890s because the yellow peril (“Gelbe Gefahr”), a phrase coined by the German Kaiser in 1895, was not “perceived as a realistic threat” in Britain until the last years of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century’. Chen, *Representations of China in British Children’s Fiction*, p. 62. As hostilities between Britain and China increased dramatically in the wake of the Boxer Rebellion, Ching Ching – as the benevolent and powerful Chinaman living in Britain – was no longer a suitable hero for British boys.

<sup>124</sup> Bailey, ‘Nelson Lee and Nipper’, email correspondence [2 March 2014]. Staniforth records that he was invited by the editor of the *Big Budget* to ‘invent another detective character on the lines of the popular Nelson Lee and that all my detective stories in “The Big Budget” should have this new detective for their central figure’. This new character was Kenyon Ford, ‘the up-to-date detective’, who appeared in several stories in the *Big Budget* from 1897. After a disagreement with the editor of *Pluck*, which resulted in the editor engaging a new author to write Nelson Lee stories, Scott continued to produce Lee stories for the Harmsworths after appealing to Alfred Harmsworth himself, who, according to Staniforth, offered him an apology and a pay rise. J. P. Wood (ed.), ‘Leaves from the Diary of Maxwell Scott: Part 4’, *Collectors Digest*, 3.30 (June 1949), 155-7 (p. 155) in *Friardale* <<http://friardale.co.uk/Collectors%20Digest/CD%20030.pdf>> [accessed 4 May 2014].

surrounding the definition of adolescence at this time, the potential threat that the adolescent boy – particularly the ‘delinquent’ adolescent ‘blind-alley’ labourer – posed to the stability of British society and to the Empire as a whole, and his lack of a defined role in this Empire. Just as the adult imperialists, moralists and psychologists struggled to define and direct the adolescent boy in an increasingly unstable Empire, so the adult creators and publishers of the Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee series struggled to construct an acceptable boy assistant and, by extension, to integrate the adolescent boy into the fictional world of the heroic defender of Empire – the adult master detective. In the early twentieth century this began to change. As adolescence, and the role of the adolescent boy in the Empire, became more clearly defined and more positively constructed as both internal and external threats to the security of the Empire increased, so too did the adolescent boy find a distinct place in detective fiction in the boys’ story papers. Nipper’s re-emergence in the Nelson Lee series in 1903 signalled the beginning of a new era of detective fiction for boys, an era in which the boy detective began to take centre stage.

### Chapter 3: From Zero to Hero: The Centralisation of the Boy Detective in the Amalgamated Press Story Papers of the First Decade of the Twentieth Century

#### 3.1: The proliferation and centralisation of the boy detective

If the final decade of the nineteenth century was notable for bringing detective fiction to a young male readership and creating a boy assistant – albeit a passive, restricted one – with whom these readers could identify, the period from 1900 to 1909 – referred to variously as the 1900s and the first decade of the twentieth century throughout this chapter – was just as significant in the establishment of boy detective fiction.<sup>1</sup> Finding its feet in the 1890s, detective fiction became a dominant genre for boys in the story papers of the 1900s. Unsurprisingly, it was in Alfred Harmsworth’s expanding story-paper empire, which published the Nelson Lee and Sexton Blake stories in the 1890s, that detective narratives thrived. In the early twentieth century, the newly named Amalgamated Press – the publishing firm was known as Harmsworth Bros. Ltd from 1896-1902 and before this as Answers Publications Ltd – dominated the cheaper end of the story-paper market with halfpenny publications such as the *Halfpenny Marvel* (1893-1922), *Union Jack* (1894-1933), *Pluck* (1894-1924) and the *Boys’ Friend* (1895-1927).<sup>2</sup> Harmsworth increased the price of these papers to one penny in the early 1900s and soon added to his collection of penny papers with the *Boys’ Realm* (1902-26), the *Boys’ Herald* (1903-12), the *Boys’ Friend Library* (1906-40), the *Gem* (1907-39) and, later, the *Dreadnought* (1912-15) and the *Penny Popular* (1912-31).<sup>3</sup> A notable

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<sup>1</sup> Since I use the term ‘1900s’ throughout this chapter to refer to the years 1900-1909, I then use the term ‘early 1900s’ to refer roughly to the years 1900-1904 and the term ‘late 1900s’ to cover the years 1907-1909.

<sup>2</sup> George Dilnot, *The Romance of the Amalgamated Press* (London: Amalgamated Press, 1925), p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> See E. S. Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys: The Story of Sweeney Todd, Deadwood Dick, Sexton Blake, Billy Bunter, Dick Barton, et al.* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976 [1948]), pp. 120-1. Kelly Boyd claims that one of the Amalgamated Press’s ‘great successes was in the field of boys’ story papers and it dominated this market from the publication of *The Marvel* (1893) and the *Union Jack* (1894). In the next half century it offered several dozen titles which dominated the market until the emergence of the Thomson papers in the 1920s.’ Kelly Boyd, ‘Knowing Your Place: The Tensions of Manliness in Boys’

exception to his pricing strategy was the *Magnet* (1908-40), which began as a halfpenny paper and did not increase its price to a penny until 1910 when it expanded from 20 to 32 pages.<sup>4</sup> E. S. Turner observes that, by doubling the price of his papers, Harmsworth ‘achieved a higher standard of production’;<sup>5</sup> this, in turn, may have made them more attractive to upwardly aspiring working-class and lower-middle-class boys. The penny price tag may have deterred the poorest of boys from purchasing the Amalgamated Press papers, but these publications were still positioned at the cheap end of the market. Apart from special editions, such as the Christmas double numbers which cost 1½ or 2d., prices remained static until 1918 when they reached a ‘war time price’ of 1½d. which increased to 2d. in the early 1920s, a price which most of the papers maintained until they folded.<sup>6</sup> In *The Romance of the Amalgamated Press* (1925), George Dilnot, an Amalgamated Press editor, claims that, in the hundred papers produced by the company, ‘an appeal is made to every taste and every age’, and that the boys’ story papers were created as an affordable but no less respectable alternative to those boys’ ‘publications excellently written and illustrated and edited, but beyond the reach of the limited pocket-money of the average boy’.<sup>7</sup> The mention of pocket money rather than wages here implies a slightly higher class of readers than the papers perhaps intended to attract, but the papers’ low price and their selection of ‘popular’ over ‘literary’ content inevitably made them available and appealing to a much broader population of boys than their more respectable competitors such as the *Boy’s Own Paper* (1879-1967).<sup>8</sup>

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Story Papers, 1918-39’, in Michael Rope and John Tosh (eds), *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 145-67 (p. 148).

<sup>4</sup> See ‘*The Magnet*, 1910’ in *Friardale* <<http://friardale.co.uk/Magnet/1910/1910.htm>> [accessed 24 March 2014].

<sup>5</sup> Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, p. 116.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Books and Story Papers’ in *Friardale* <<http://www.friardale.co.uk/Story%20Papers.htm>> [accessed 27 May 2013].

<sup>7</sup> Dilnot, *The Romance of the Amalgamated Press*, p. 2 and p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> The *Boy’s Own Paper*, although initially double the price of the Harmsworths’ halfpenny papers, maintained its penny price tag until 1913 in its weekly edition aimed at ‘schoolboys, office boys, apprentices and cadets’, while the monthly, sixpenny issue was marketed at a more affluent audience.

Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee, who emerged in the 1890s, appeared regularly in several Amalgamated Press papers in the early twentieth century. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the *Boys' Friend*, *Boys' Herald*, *Answers Weekly* and the *Dreadnought* each featured in excess of 100 Blake stories, while the *Penny Popular* and *Penny Pictorial* both published more than 250 titles focusing on the great detective. It was in *Union Jack*, however, that Blake dominated, appearing in every issue from number 95 (1905) to the end of the series (1933) – in all, over 1,500 titles. Blake also featured in 1,315 issues of the *Sexton Blake Library* (1915-68).<sup>9</sup> Jess Nevins claims that the overall output of Blake stories from 1893 to 1968 was as high as '3900 individual stories, in novels and in over twenty magazines and story papers, which ranks him at least in the top five most published characters ever'.<sup>10</sup> Nelson Lee, Nevins estimates, featured in more than 2,500 stories making him 'Sexton Blake's biggest rival in the story papers' for over a generation.<sup>11</sup> Lee appeared most regularly in the *Boys' Friend*, the *Boys' Realm* and the *Boys' Herald*, until he, too, acquired his own magazine series, the *Nelson Lee Library* (1915-33), of which there were 948 issues.<sup>12</sup> The constant stream of Blake and Lee stories in the Amalgamated Press papers ensured that detective fiction swiftly secured its place, alongside imperial adventure narratives, school stories,

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See Jack Cox, *Take A Cold Tub, Sir! The Story of the 'Boy's Own Paper'* (Guildford: Lutterworth Press, 1982), p. 22. While the *Boy's Own Paper's* competitive price made it affordable for many working-class boy readers, its respectable ethos, as it aimed 'to draw in established authors whose work would impress parents and teachers', no doubt made it less appealing to those lower-class youngsters who craved sensational and exciting stories over high-quality literature. Cox, *Take A Cold Tub, Sir!*, p. 13. In 1913, the weekly issue was discontinued and, during the war, the price of the monthly rose by a penny in November 1916 and then to eightpence, ninepence and, finally to one shilling in 1918. Cox, *Take a Cold Tub, Sir!*, p. 89. At this high price, Jack Cox observes, 'many boys simply could not afford to subscribe regularly'. Cox, *Take A Cold Tub, Sir!*, p. 96.

<sup>9</sup> Mark Hodder, 'Sexton Blake Bibliography Master List' in *Blakiana* <<http://www.sextonblake.co.uk/blakebibliography.html>> [accessed 24 August 2011].

<sup>10</sup> Jess Nevins, *The Encyclopedia of Fantastic Victoriana* (Austin: MonkeyBrain Books, 2009), p. 76.

<sup>11</sup> Nevins, *Fantastic Victoriana*, p. 504.

<sup>12</sup> Mark Caldicott, 'The Nelson Lee Library Index' in *The Greyfriars Index* <[www.greyfriarsindex.co.uk/pdf/NLL\\_Index.pdf](http://www.greyfriarsindex.co.uk/pdf/NLL_Index.pdf)> [accessed 23 August 2011].

and spy and invasion fiction, as one of the most popular story-paper genres of the early twentieth century.<sup>13</sup>

A significant development in these series in the early twentieth century was the introduction of permanent boy assistants to the adult master detective. Nelson Lee's creator, Dr John Staniforth, who wrote under the pseudonym of Maxwell Scott, introduced Lee's boy assistant, Nipper, in the first Nelson Lee story, 'A Dead Man's Secret', in 1894. Despite continuing to write Nelson Lee stories throughout the 1890s and beyond, however, Staniforth did not reintroduce Nipper to the series until 1903. Here, Nipper became the focal point of 'Nelson Lee's Pupil' (*Boys' Herald*, 1903-4), a serial which extended and altered the story of Nipper's engagement as Lee's assistant from the earlier origins story. From 1903 onwards, Nipper became a permanent fixture in the Nelson Lee series. Just over a year after Nipper reappeared in the Nelson Lee series, Sexton Blake acquired his long-term assistant, Tinker, a street urchin whom Blake had rescued from obscurity.<sup>14</sup> Tinker first appeared in 'Cunning Against Skill' (*Union Jack*, 1904), written by schoolmaster William Joseph Lomax as 'Herbert Maxwell'. Unlike Nipper, however, on his debut Tinker is firmly ensconced within the

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<sup>13</sup> The imperial adventure story, popularised in respectable papers like the *Boy's Own Paper* and the *Captain* by authors such as G. A. Henty, W. H. G. Kingston and Gordon Stables, continued to fill the pages of the Amalgamated Press papers, most notably in S. Clarke Hook's Jack, Sam and Pete stories in the *Marvel* and the *Boys' Friend Library*. See Kate Agnew and Geoff Fox, *Children at War* (London and New York: Continuum, 2001), pp. 5-6 and Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, pp. 117-19. School stories became the staple of the *Gem* and *Magnet*, which were devoted to the famous fictional schools St Jim's and Greyfriars respectively, while the later Thomson papers created a number of fictional state schools to rival the public school stories. See Boyd, 'Knowing Your Place', pp. 150-1. Invasion stories, too, took a prominent place in the Amalgamated Press papers as Alfred Harmsworth tried to inculcate in the child readers of his papers his own 'obsessive fear of invasion' during the Edwardian period. See Patrick A. Dunae, 'Boys' Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914', *Victorian Studies*, 24 (Autumn 1980), 105-31 (p. 118).

<sup>14</sup> Tinker replaced We-wee – who made his last appearance in the Sexton Blake series in 1902 – as Blake's boy assistant. In 1901-3, Blake is assisted in two serials by Wallace Lorrimer, who is a young man rather than a boy. Blake also has an office boy called Raffles in these serials, but does not possess a boy detective assistant in-between We-wee's departure from the series in 1902 and Tinker's introduction in 1904. For further information on Blake's assistants from 1901-3, see chapter 2, pp. 119-20.

role of detective's assistant.<sup>15</sup> After his initial appearance, Tinker appears regularly in the series, which was now being penned by several authors, including Lomax, Ernest Adolphus Treeton, Ernest William Wolfe Alais and William Murray Graydon.<sup>16</sup> As the detective/assistant pattern became increasingly popular in adult detective fiction, courtesy of Holmes and Watson<sup>17</sup> and their imitators, who included Martin Hewitt and Brett, Hanaud and Mr Ricardo, Poirot and Captain Hastings, and Philo Vance and Van Dine,<sup>18</sup> it is unsurprising that a similar model thrived in the juvenile story papers. The boy assistants played a crucial role in attracting young male readers as they offered them a point of identification and entry into the narratives. While Blake's earlier assistant, We-wee, was a Chinese caricature to whom British boy readers could not relate directly, Tinker, Norman Wright asserts, 'was a character they could emulate. Blake might be hero worshipped but Tinker could be imitated.'<sup>19</sup>

On the back of Tinker and Nipper's success, other adult detective/boy assistant partnerships emerged in the Amalgamated Press papers in the first decade of the twentieth century. Brother and sister detectives Kit and Cora Twyford, who appeared in *Pluck* in 1905/6 and later in the *Boys' Friend*, had two young helpers who offered

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<sup>15</sup> For further information on the history of Tinker, see Walter Webb, 'The Story of Tinker', *Collectors Digest Annual* (Christmas 1955) in *Blakiana* <<http://www.mark-hodder.com/Blakiana/tinkers-story/>> [accessed 21 March 2014].

<sup>16</sup> Sexton Blake's creator, Harry Blyth, who wrote seven Blake stories as Hal Meredith, died of typhoid in 1899. Norman Wright, 'The Adventures of Sexton Blake, Detective', in *The Sexton Blake Detective Library* (London: Hawk Books, 1989), pp. 7-17 (p. 7).

<sup>17</sup> Sherlock Holmes's cases continued to be chronicled in the *Strand Magazine* in the early twentieth century with the serialisation of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1901-2) and *The Valley of Fear* (1914-15), which were published in novel form in 1902 and 1915 respectively, and the publication of another thirty-three short stories from 1903-27, which were later published in the following collections: *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (1905), *His Last Bow* (1917) and *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* (1927). For further information on these texts, see Joseph A. Kestner, *The Edwardian Detective, 1901-1915* (Aldershot, Brookfield, WI, Singapore, Sydney: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 34-45, pp. 83-99, pp. 211-21 and pp. 345-53.

<sup>18</sup> Dorothy L. Sayers, 'The Omnibus of Crime' (1928-9), in Howard Haycraft (ed.), *The Art of the Mystery Story: A Collection of Critical Essays* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 1992), pp. 71-109 (p. 77). Originally published as Dorothy Sayers, 'Introduction', in *Great Short Stories of Detection, Mystery, and Horror* (London: Gollancz, 1928) and *Omnibus of Crime* (New York: Payson & Clarke, 1929).

<sup>19</sup> Wright, 'The Adventures of Sexton Blake, Detective', p. 8.



variants on the traditional boy assistant.<sup>20</sup> The first is Miffles, a ‘New York street-boy’, assistant to American detective Dick Dane, but after being sent to England by Dane to pass on a message to Kit and Cora in ‘The Captured Cunarder’ (*Pluck*, 1905/6), he soon enters their service.<sup>21</sup> Miffles is ‘an odd one to look at [. . .] He might have been anywhere between fifteen and eighteen years of age; but he was very small and lean and hard’ (p. 2). Despite his diminutive appearance, Miffles is ‘a perfect genius in his way; sharp, shrewd and plucky’ and takes the lead over his fellow assistant, Freddie Figgins, ‘a fat boy with a big, round, red face’ who is an ‘errand-boy to a large drapery establishment’ and an amateur fighter (p. 2). Another variant occurred briefly in the stories of detective Ferrers Locke who, when visiting the famous fictional school St Jim’s in stories in the *Gem* in 1907, allows popular, middle-class schoolboy protagonist Tom Merry to act as his assistant in an unofficial capacity for a short period.<sup>22</sup>

Although they often possessed little idiosyncrasies, detective’s assistants, on the whole, followed the pattern established by Tinker and Nipper. They were usually uncultured but extraordinarily sharp street urchins, often orphans, rescued from poverty and obscurity by a famous London private detective – though sometimes it transpires that the boy assistant has loftier origins and is heir to a fortune, as will prove to be the case with Nipper<sup>23</sup> – and to an extent, civilised in the prosperous but perilous middle-

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<sup>20</sup> While this series features a young woman as detective, the girl detective – both as an assistant to an adult detective and as an independent investigator – did not appear in British story papers until the 1920s. For further information, see chapter 4, n. 117.

<sup>21</sup> Cedric Wolfe, ‘The Captured Cunarder’, *Pluck*, 3.63 (1905/6), 1-17 (p. 3). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>22</sup> See Martin Clifford, ‘On the Trail’, *Gem*, 1.16 (first series) (29 June 1907), 1-15; Martin Clifford, ‘Honours Divided’, *Gem*, 1.19 (first series) (20 July 1907), 1-15; Martin Clifford, ‘The Nine Detectives’, *Gem*, 2.31 (first series) (12 October 1907), 3-17; Martin Clifford, ‘Skimpole, Detective’, *Gem*, 1.7 (28 March 1908), 3-27; and Martin Clifford, ‘The Detective’s Pupils’, *Gem*, 16 (1908), 1-13. The detective school story genre will be discussed in detail in chapter 5.

<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Ernest Keen, hero of *The Boy Detective*, comes from a respectable middle-class background, but finds himself in reduced circumstances on the streets of London, among lower-class urchins and criminals. There is a parallel, too, with Newgate novels such as Edward Bulwer Lytton’s *Paul Clifford* (1830), in which the criminal protagonist grows up in unsavoury conditions, is corrupted by bad company and becomes a highwayman but later falls in love, repents and is captured and sentenced to death. It is discovered, however, that Clifford comes from genteel stock and his sentence is commuted to

class environment of the adult master detective. This stereotype was perpetuated by a number of other boy assistants in the Amalgamated Press papers. Detective George Sleath and his ‘eccentric street-boy’ assistant, Kippers, featured in stories in the *Marvel* in 1905/6.<sup>24</sup> Martin Stern’s first assistant, Jim Goldshot, known as ‘Boy Bludd’, a ‘ragged boy’ with ‘a bright face, although it lacked all traces of refinement’, made his debut in *Pluck* in 1905/6.<sup>25</sup> Stern’s second assistant, Whistler, ‘uncultured’ but with ‘an intellect [. . .] well above the average’, first appeared in *Pluck* in 1906/7.<sup>26</sup> Wendell Vance, his senior assistant Bob Moffat – possibly a man rather than a boy – and newly appointed country-boy assistant Jimmy Sindon also featured in this volume of *Pluck*,<sup>27</sup> along with Luke Latimer and Dinky.<sup>28</sup>

The boy assistant was not only notable for his regular presence within boys’ detective fiction in the first decade of the twentieth century, but also for his growing prominence, abilities and authority as a detective within the narrative. The boy assistant – epitomised by Nipper and Tinker – was starting to become a detective in his own right, operating independently of his adult master, sometimes even outperforming him, and often taking the lead role in the story. Moreover, some Amalgamated Press series removed the adult master detective altogether, bestowing the lead detective role instead

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transportation. Years later, Clifford ends the novel as a leading citizen, having escaped from the Australian penal colony to which he has been sent. See Juliet John, ‘Introduction’, in Edward Bulwer Lytton, *Paul Clifford* (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1998 [1830]), pp. v-lxxi (p. xviii) and Keith Hollingsworth, *The Newgate Novel 1830-1847: Bulwer, Ainsworth, Dickens, & Thackeray* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963), pp. 66-8. Charles Dickens’s *Oliver Twist* follows a similar pattern, as the orphaned Oliver falls into bad company with Fagin and his band of boy pickpockets and is later rescued from a life of depravity and discovers that his father is a rich man who has left him an inheritance. Oliver’s true class status is perhaps foreshadowed through ‘the improbable language and deportment of a little gentleman’ which Dickens bestows upon him. Hollingsworth, *The Newgate Novel*, p. 121.

<sup>24</sup> Cedric Wolfe, ‘The Yellow Spider’, *Marvel*, 4.82 (1905/6), 101-8 (p. 102).

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Hales, ‘The Mid-Sea Mystery’, *Pluck*, 3.7 (1905/6), 1-17 (p. 9).

<sup>26</sup> Anon, ‘The New Partner’, *Pluck*, 6.182 (1906-7), 16-27 (p. 16).

<sup>27</sup> Although he appears in stories in volume 6 of *Pluck* (1906/7), Jimmy Sindon’s origins story appears in volume 7 (1907). See Phil Granby, ‘The Scarlet Scarf’, *Marvel*, 7.178 (1907), 605-15.

<sup>28</sup> For a list of adult detective/boy assistant stories consulted for this thesis at the Bodleian Library, Oxford – excluding stories of Sexton Blake and Tinker, Nelson Lee and Nipper, and any detective school stories – see Appendix 2.

upon more youthful protagonists. Holmesian ‘boy’ super-detective Stanley Dare, thought to have been created by early Sexton Blake author Alec G. Pearson, first appeared in *Pluck* in 1903 and later in the *Marvel* in 1906-7, followed by a serial for the *Magnet* in 1910-11.<sup>29</sup> Dare’s boy status, however, is dubious, as he soon progresses beyond his initial age of seventeen or eighteen. Other independent boy detectives followed, most notably detective duos Harry Fairfax and Bob Dawson and ‘Maxennis’ – the collective name of Robert Lomax and Frank Dennis. The Harry and Bob stories, published under the title ‘Detective-Inspector Coles’, a character in the series, were reportedly written by Ernest Sempill (a.k.a. Michael Storm), the Sexton Blake author who created two of Blake’s most notorious nemeses, Marston Hume and George Marsdon Plummer.<sup>30</sup> The stories appeared in the *Marvel* from 1908 and *Pluck* from 1909 and took a somewhat different approach to the boy detective than did the Stanley Dare series. Lewis Hockley’s serial ‘Maxennis, Detective’ (*Magnet*, 1908) introduced a boy detective partnership even further removed from the image of the ‘boy’ super-detective embodied by Dare. Another independent young male detective protagonist, railway detective Mark Youall, created by sports and health writer Percy William Longhurst, using the pseudonym Brian Kingston, featured in a series of stories in the *Marvel* from 1907.<sup>31</sup> Mark’s ‘boy’ status, like that of Stanley Dare, becomes dubious as

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<sup>29</sup> See ‘Stan Dare: Boy Detective’ in *British Comics Miscellany* <<http://blog.crystal-knights.co.uk/category/pluck/>> [accessed 26 May 2013].

<sup>30</sup> W. O. G. Lofts and Derek Adley’s *Crime Fighters* index and Steve Holland’s *British Juvenile Story Papers and Pocket Libraries Index* both identify Ernest Sempill as the author of the Bob and Harry stories. See W. O. G. Lofts, ‘Bob and Harry’ in *The Crime Fighters* <<http://www.philsp.com/homeville/CrFi/i0002.htm>> [accessed 26 May 2013] and Steve Holland, ‘Sempill, Ernest’ in *British Juvenile Story Papers and Pocket Libraries Index* <<http://www.philsp.com/homeville/bjsp/s301.htm#A6102>> [accessed 26 May 2013]. For a discussion about the identity of ‘Michael Storm’, see Steve Holland, ‘Michael Storm’ in *Bear Alley*, 6 July 2007 <<http://bearalley.blogspot.co.uk/2007/07/Michael-Storm.html>> [accessed 26 May 2013]. For information on Michael Storm/Ernest’s Sempill’s creations for the Sexton Blake series, see Michael Moorcock, ‘Introduction’, in George Mann (ed.) *Sexton Blake, Detective* (London: Snowbooks Ltd, 2009), pp. 12-17 (p. 13, p. 14) and Wright, ‘The Adventures of Sexton Blake, Detective’, p. 12.

<sup>31</sup> For a list of articles by Percy Longhurst, see Steve Holland, ‘Longhurst, Percy William’ in *British Juvenile Story Papers and Pocket Libraries Index* <<http://www.philsp.com/homeville/bjsp/s230.htm#A4272>> [accessed 30 May 2013].

he ages throughout the series but, as both characters are referred to and recognised as boys within the stories, they are worth examining alongside those detectives more obviously situated in boyhood. These four series – significant in their placement of boy detectives at the centre of the narrative as independent heroes – will be discussed in detail later in the chapter.

As the genre became more popular, it was inevitable that variation would occur in an attempt to capitalise on boy readers' appetite for detective fiction. The independent professional boy detective was one such variation – a step up from the newly empowered boy assistant – and, as the series explored in this chapter will demonstrate, further variation occurred in this new detective role itself. Yet what remained constant in these different incarnations of the boy detective – assistants and master detectives alike – was the centralisation and growing independence of the professional boy, or in some cases young man referred to as boy, detective. This was, no doubt, in part, a deliberate attempt to attract and secure the loyalty of boy readers through constructing heroes with whom they could identify directly. In addition, the centralisation of the boy detective ensured an alignment of the detective genre with contemporary literary trends, such as that of the school story, which proliferated in a new, popular form in papers such as the *Gem* and the *Magnet*. These school-story narratives privileged child over adult characters, who constantly fell prey to schoolboy pranks and often remained oblivious to the boys' many indiscretions.<sup>32</sup> Since such child protagonists became the dominant figures of much popular children's literature, it made good marketing sense for the detective series to follow suit.

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<sup>32</sup> For further information on the development of the boys' school-story genre in the early-twentieth-century story papers, see Declan Kiberd, 'School Stories', in Celia Keenan and Mary Shine (eds), *Studies in Children's Literature 1500-2000* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), pp. 54-69 (pp. 58-61); P. W. Musgrave, *From Brown to Bunter: The Life and Death of the School Story* (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), pp. 223-31; Isabel Quigly, *The Heirs of Tom Brown: The English School Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 249-59; and Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, pp. 217-41

At a deeper, less conscious level, however, the centralisation of the boy detective can be read as a response to dramatic changes in the status of the British Empire, the introduction of a new set of social anxieties in Britain and, consequently, significant advancements in constructions of and attitudes towards adolescent boys and their role in the Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century. This chapter explores the development of the fictional boy detective in various formats alongside that of real-life constructions of and attitudes towards the British adolescent male in the first decade of the twentieth century – a crucial period in the history of British boyhood. It considers how these boy detective narratives address social anxieties about boyhood, citizenship and the Empire, the texts’ relationship with, response to and/or reflection upon developments and difficulties in the construction of the ideal British boy for the new century, and the potential impact of these fictional boy detectives and their narratives upon their young male readers.

### **3.2: A new role for Britain’s boys**

As discussed in chapter 2, the concept of adolescence began to concretise in the final decades of the nineteenth century, generating a binary opposition between the ‘conforming’ and the ‘delinquent’ adolescent.<sup>33</sup> The newness and the consequent uncertainty surrounding this concept in the late nineteenth century contributed to the growing perception of the threat of the ‘delinquent’ adolescent in the eyes of middle-class social reformers and the general public. The institutionalisation of adolescence, evident in the publication of G. Stanley Hall’s *Adolescence* (1904) and J. W. Slaughter’s *The Adolescent* (1910), may have, in part, alleviated public anxieties about young people. Hall and Slaughter’s works demystified adolescence, providing

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<sup>33</sup> See John R. Gillis, ‘The Evolution of Juvenile Delinquency in England, 1890-1914’, *Past and Present*, 67 (1975), 96-126 (p. 97).

physiological and psychological explanations for the potentially disturbing behaviour of this age group. According to John R. Gillis:

A reinforcing cycle of organization and resistance continued for almost two decades until the model of organized adolescence became more widely accepted. By 1910 the dialectic had abated considerably and anxiety about delinquency diminished correspondingly, but not before an entire age group was perceived as prone to delinquency and the 'maladjusted adolescent' enshrined as a major social stereotype.<sup>34</sup>

Despite this institutionalisation of adolescence, anxieties still existed in the early 1900s. There were, however, much greater threats to the British Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century than that of the 'delinquent' adolescent, as Britain's struggle to victory in the second Boer War and the simultaneous rise of other world powers destabilised the image of the supremacy of the British Empire. These external dangers ensured that internal problems had to be deferred in the interests of national harmony and the defence of the Empire.

The shift from the expansion of the British Empire to its defence can be traced to Britain's eventual victory in the Boer War in May 1902.<sup>35</sup> Britain's difficulty in overcoming a relatively minor enemy inevitably called into question her ability to protect her Empire from other world powers, such as Germany, America and Russia, who were beginning to challenge British dominance.<sup>36</sup> Germany was soon identified as the primary threat to Britain, on account of its geographical location<sup>37</sup> and the increasingly volatile relationship between Kaiser Wilhelm II and Edward VII, which

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<sup>34</sup> Gillis, 'The Evolution of Juvenile Delinquency', pp. 97-8.

<sup>35</sup> Anon, 'England After War', *Fortnightly Review*, 77.427 (July 1902), 1-20 (p. 1). This article evaluated Britain's performance in the Boer War as follows: 'On the whole, the Army has simply not failed where failure would have been indelibly disgraceful. We have done in three years what, with sufficient intelligence and determination, we should have done in three months.' (p. 8)

<sup>36</sup> Calchas, 'Will England Last the Century?', *Fortnightly Review*, 69.409 (January 1901), 20-34 (p. 22 and p. 25). For further information on the decline of the British Empire and the rise of Germany and America as world powers in the early twentieth century, see Bernard Porter, 'The Edwardians and Their Empire', in Donald Read (ed.), *Edwardian England* (London and Canberra: Croom Helm, 1982), pp. 128-44 and G. R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency: A Study of British Politics and Political Thought, 1899-1914* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971).

<sup>37</sup> Joseph A. Kestner, *Sherlock's Men: Masculinity, Conan Doyle and Cultural History* (Aldershot, Brookfield WI, Singapore, Sydney: Ashgate Publishing, 1997), p. 10.

ruled out an Anglo-German alliance.<sup>38</sup> Conspiracies of the German invasion of Britain proliferated in ‘invasion-scare’ literature such as Erskine Childers’s *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903), William Le Queux’s *The Invasion of 1910* (1906) and *Spies of the Kaiser* (1909) and E. P. Oppenheim’s *The Secret* (1907).<sup>39</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle’s post-1900 Sherlock Holmes stories, too, articulated Britain’s invasion anxieties through their cast of foreign, often European villains, such as Beppo, the Italian thief and murderer in ‘The Adventure of the Six Napoleons’ (1904), the Russian Nihilists – ‘Professor Coram’ and his wife Anna – in ‘The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez’ (1904), and the German agent, Hugh Oberstein, in ‘The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans’ (1908).<sup>40</sup> Sometimes the allusions are subtle, such as the references to a German waiter in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, which, Joseph Kestner argues, ‘seem incidental but in fact raise the spectre of German waiters acting as German agents in the capital’.<sup>41</sup> There was nothing subtle, however, about the invasion stories which proliferated in the Amalgamated Press juvenile story papers, which contributed significantly to the ‘inflammatory anti-German tone’ of these publications.<sup>42</sup> A wealth of Sexton Blake stories dealt with the capture of foreign spies and the detection of plots to invade

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<sup>38</sup> The Triple Alliance between Germany, Italy and Austria was renewed for six years in 1902 and the Entente Cordiale between France and Britain was signed in 1904, followed by an Anglo-Russian agreement in 1907. See Kestner, *The Edwardian Detective*, p. 12, p. 32 and p. 69 and Robert Giddings, ‘Case Notes’, in Erskine Childers, *The Riddle of the Sands* (London: Atlantic Books, 2009 [1903]), pp. 325-39 (p. 326).

<sup>39</sup> See Kestner, *Sherlock’s Men*, p. 10 and p. 122; Kestner, *Edwardian Detective*, p. 12 and pp. 68-79; Maurizio Ascari, *A Counter-History of Crime Fiction: Supernatural, Gothic, Sensational* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 162-5; and Dennis Butts, ‘The Hunter and the Hunted: The Suspense Novels of John Buchan’, in Clive Bloom (ed.), *Spy Thrillers: From Buchan to le Carré* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 44-58 (pp. 45-6).

<sup>40</sup> For further information on German villains in the Sherlock Holmes stories, see Kestner, *Sherlock’s Men*, pp. 10-11. Michael Allen Gillespie and John Samuel Harpham observe that, throughout the Sherlock Holmes stories, ‘foreign influences are behind a striking number of crimes. Almost half the criminals are non-British, and several of the most dangerous criminals are cosmopolitan polyglots.’ They also note that ‘[w]hereas about half of the British criminals in the stories are allowed to go free, all but a couple of the those who are natives of other countries, or who have been criminalized abroad, are killed, arrested, or effectively exiled’. Michael Allen Gillespie and John Samuel Harpham, ‘Sherlock Holmes, Crime, and the Anxieties of Globalization’, *Critical Review: A Journal of Politics and Society*, 23.4 (2011), 449-74 (p. 465).

<sup>41</sup> Kestner, *The Edwardian Detective*, p. 10.

<sup>42</sup> Dunae, ‘Boys’ Literature and the Idea of Empire’, p. 119. For further information on invasion-scare literature in the Amalgamated Press story papers, see Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, pp. 191-202.

Britain, often orchestrated by German enemies, and some texts featured the Kaiser himself.<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile, stories such as Gordon Stables's *The Meteor Flag of England; or, The Story of a Coming Conflict*, first serialised in the *Captain* in 1905, emphasised the vulnerability of Britain to foreign invaders.<sup>44</sup> In the 1900s, then, the fear of invasion pervaded British popular fiction and, consequently, haunted the public consciousness. Britain, it was widely believed, was in an exposed position and needed to take drastic measures in order to defend herself from foreign attackers. Alfred Harmsworth was a strong believer in the threat to Britain and, in a tribute to Harmsworth following his death in 1922, Sir George A. Sutton, then chairman of the Amalgamated Press, hyperbolically states that 'the War itself we should not have had if his warnings had been heeded by the statesmen of the day. No one saw more surely than he did the inevitable issue of German aggressiveness.'<sup>45</sup> Harmsworth used his newspapers, such as the *Daily Mail* and *The Times*, and boys' story papers alike to voice his fears about Britain's security and to warn the general public of the need to prepare themselves to defend their country.<sup>46</sup>

Anxieties about the future security of Britain and her Empire were exacerbated by the perception of the physical deterioration of the British populace at the beginning of the twentieth century. When, in response to army recruitment figures which showed a high rejection rate of potential soldiers on medical grounds, the *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration* was published in 1904, it identified

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<sup>43</sup> For examples of spy and invasion themes in Sexton Blake stories, see Alec G. Pearson, 'Enemies of the King; or, The Peril of the Fleet', *Union Jack*, 426 (21 June 1902); Anon, 'The German Detective', *Union Jack*, 154 (22 September 1906); Anon, 'Sexton Blake in Gibraltar', *Union Jack*, 158 (20 October 1906); Anon, 'The Spy', *Penny Pictorial*, 437 (5 October 1907); Anon, 'Sexton Blake's Understudy', *Penny Pictorial*, 486 (19 September 1908); Anon, 'The East Coast Mystery', *Penny Pictorial*, 525 (19 June 1909); and Anon, 'The Secret Trial', *Penny Pictorial*, 534 (21 August 1909). For synopses of these stories see Mark Hodder, 'Sexton Blake Bibliography Master List' in *Blakiana* <<http://www.sextonblake.co.uk/blakebibliography.html>> [accessed 11 September 2011].

<sup>44</sup> Dunae, 'Boys' Literature and the Idea of Empire', p. 118.

<sup>45</sup> Sir George A. Sutton, 'The Late Viscount Northcliffe: A Tribute', in Dilnot, *The Romance of the Amalgamated Press* (London: Amalgamated Press, 1925), pp. i-iv (p. iii).

<sup>46</sup> Sutton, 'The Late Viscount Northcliffe', p. iii.



a number of social causes.<sup>47</sup> These included overcrowding, pollution, poor employment conditions, alcoholism and a number of economic considerations.<sup>48</sup> Significantly, the report was particularly concerned with factors adversely affecting the nation's youth, many of whom were perceived to be victims of both parental and state neglect. The report attributed the high rate of infant mortality to parents' long employment hours and their ignorance of nutrition and nursing.<sup>49</sup> The state was charged with contributing to the poor upbringing of the young by allowing unhealthy working conditions in schools and failing to provide pupils with sufficient food and opportunities for physical exercise.<sup>50</sup>

The full significance of this neglect of the nation's youth is elucidated in the report's representation of adolescence as the crucial period in determining the development or deterioration of the individual citizen:

The plasticity of the physical organization, the power it possesses of yielding rapidly towards degenerative or recuperative influences, appears to terminate at eighteen, and the records of the years preceding that age are in the great majority of cases decisive for self-improvement or the reverse. Unfortunately, it is a period of which too little account is taken.<sup>51</sup>

Implicit in the notion of the 'plasticity of youth' was the suggestion that, while the deterioration of the current adult generation could not be altogether reversed, steps could be taken to ensure that the next adult generation – still in their early stages of

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<sup>47</sup> Sir William Taylor, Director-General of the Army Medical Service commissioned the report after examining the recruitment statistics for 1893-1902 in the Army Medical Department Records and identifying a 34.6 per cent rejection rate of men examined by the recruiting medical officer. William Taylor, 'Original Memorandum Prepared by Surgeon General Sir William Taylor, K.G.B., Director-General, Army Medical Service' (2 April 1903), in *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration*, I (London: HMSO, 1904), pp. 95-7 (p. 96). Taylor goes on to suggest that the percentage of rejected potential recruits could be significantly higher than this if the number of men rejected before the stage of medical examination was taken into account.

<sup>48</sup> See *Report on Physical Deterioration*, I, pp. 16-44.

<sup>49</sup> *Report on Physical Deterioration*, I, p. 47 and pp. 56-7.

<sup>50</sup> *Report on Physical Deterioration*, I, p. 60 and p. 69. In 1906, Frances Evelyn Greville, Countess of Warwick, took this criticism further, arguing that 'hundreds of thousands of children are passing through our elementary schools with little other result from their education than ophthalmia, spine curvature, nervous irritability, and the seeds of consumption'. See The Countess of Warwick, *A Nation's Youth. Physical Deterioration: Its Causes and Some Remedies* (London, Paris, New York and Melbourne: Cassell & Co, 1906), p. 13.

<sup>51</sup> *Report on Physical Deterioration*, I, pp. 72-3.

development – did not inherit the weaknesses of their predecessors. As adolescence began to be recognised as the life-stage upon which the future moral and physical wellbeing of the nation rested, the fate of this age group became a key focus of social commentators and reformers.<sup>52</sup> Frances Evelyn Greville, Countess of Warwick, argued that the nation’s children were ‘the seed-plot of our race’ and, consequently, that their welfare was of paramount importance to Britain’s future prosperity:

Is the future of the race in doubt? Then let the children be our first care. Let us lavish on their nurture and upbringing all the wealth that the richest country in the world can provide. There is no way in which we could get a greater return for such outlay, and no task which could more ennoble a nation in the doing.<sup>53</sup>

She identified education and work as important areas in which the welfare of the young could be improved – particularly by raising the minimum school leaving age to sixteen ‘in the interests of the development of the mind and character’ and by ensuring that work in environments such as in mills, factories and mines should not be undertaken too early in life.<sup>54</sup> The *Report on Physical Deterioration* added to this a proposal for the medical inspection of school children and recognised the necessity for the state to supply young people with the equipment and facilities required for the provision of physical education.<sup>55</sup>

Improving the welfare of the nation’s youth, however, was not sufficient to ensure the long-term security of the British Empire. In a letter to *The Times* in 1903,

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<sup>52</sup> Brad Beaven argues that ‘the “poor quality” of young recruits for the Boer War had forced the “youth and city” question onto the national agenda, ensuring that research on adolescent boys became enmeshed with studies on the condition and future of the British Empire’. These studies included E. J. Urwick’s *Studies of Boy Life in Our Cities* (1904), R. A. Bray’s *The Town Child* (1907), Frank John Leslie’s *Wasted Lives: The Problem of Child Labour* (1910) and Arnold Freeman’s *Boy Life and Labour: The Manufacture of Inefficiency* (1914). See Brad Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men in Britain, 1850-1945* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. 91.

<sup>53</sup> Warwick, *A Nation’s Youth*, p. 2 and p. 32. Priscilla E. Moulder articulated a similar view of the importance of the nation’s youth to the future of the Empire in an alarmist account which lamented the moral depravity of the young: ‘The boys who are now growing up around us, will be the future men of the Empire, and who will be bold enough to prophesy the fate of this country if the evils here depicted are not checked?’ Priscilla E. Moulder, ‘The Coming Race and Moral Depravity’, *Westminster Review*, 163.6 (June 1905), 677-82 (p. 682).

<sup>54</sup> Warwick, *A Nation’s Youth*, p. 25.

<sup>55</sup> *Report on Physical Deterioration*, I, pp. 90-1.

Lord Meath, founder of the Lads' Drill Association, emphasised the need to train the young to become valuable assets to the nation:

I foresee dangers not only in regard to the military defence of the country, but also to its social and moral condition, unless serious steps are taken in the nursery, in the schools, in society, and in the State to inculcate on the rising generation the virtues of self-sacrifice, a greater respect for authority, and a deeper sense of personal duty and responsibility towards society and the State.<sup>56</sup>

The best way to cultivate these virtues, he maintained, was by some form of compulsory military training in drill, physical exercise and handling a rifle, which would set apart the trained, active boy citizen from his passive, degenerate counterpart:

[A]n untrained lad is aware of his helplessness in the field, and dreads the preliminary drill; moreover, it has never struck him that, if the Empire be in danger, personal service is the duty of each true and loyal Briton. He has been brought up to consider that the payment of taxes can take the place of personal service without incurring the reproach of dishonour or of failure in civic duty; but when once a lad has been thoroughly trained to arms he would have imbibed a different and more lofty spirit, which would impel him to place the duties of citizenship on a higher moral plane, and consequently the call of his Motherland to arms would appeal to his patriotism in a far different and more imperative tone than it does at present.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Lord Meath, 'Citizenship and National Defence', *The Times*, 14 December 1903, p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> Lord Meath, 'The Defence of the Empire: III—Universal Military Training for Lads', *Nineteenth Century and After*, 57.339 (May 1905), 734-44 (p. 743). The potential benefits of youth military training were widely emphasised by social commentators and reformers. F. M. Roberts declared that 'such a training would be of the greatest benefit to the nation, inculcating as it would a spirit of sober self-reliance in the individual, and raising the standard of physical efficiency'. See F. M. Roberts, 'The Army—As It Was and As It Is', *Nineteenth Century and After*, 57.335 (January 1905), 1-26 (p. 25). John Campbell, the Duke of Argyll, saw youth military training as a means of providing boys with 'the preparation necessary to make them fit when grown up to be thorough soldiers at short notice'. Argyll, 'National Defence: A Civilian's Impression', *Nineteenth Century and After*, 58.341 (July 1905), 62-6 (p. 66). F. Treffry hoped that 'such a system might act as a spur to recruiting for both the army and the militia, and bring home to the nation at large the paramount and primary duty of national defence'. F. Treffry, 'National Defence: Part II', *Westminster Review*, 166.2 (August 1906), 183-94 (p. 194). Henry Birchenough suggested that 'by accustoming boys to martial exercises and military discipline it would make the Army a more popular career for the many adventurous spirits our race will always produce, and would thereby set a limit to the chronic difficulty of recruiting for the Regular Forces'. Henry Birchenough, 'Compulsory Education and Compulsory Military Training', *Nineteenth Century and After*, 56.329 (July 1904), 20-7 (p. 27). Moreover, proponents of compulsory military training maintained that 'the least onerous form in which it could be applied might be amongst the young', since, adolescent labour 'is of no great practical value, as they would not be likely to be in permanent situations'. Treffry, 'National Defence', p. 191 and p. 194. Meath also emphasised that the freedom of adolescent males was already restricted by the education system and that the boys would enjoy the training and would 'look upon it as sport'. Meath, 'The Defence of the Empire', p. 738. In undergoing military training, the British adolescent boy would be following the example of the young citizens of Britain's Continental neighbours, who were accustomed to 'look upon military service as one of the duties of life, which is performed quietly, and without heroics'. Birchenough, 'Compulsory Education', p. 22. Britain's colonies, too, were ahead of them in youth military training, as Canada, Australia and New Zealand already had a thriving cadet system. Meath, 'The Defence of the Empire', p. 742.

In this scenario, the trained youth fulfils a very different role to that of his untrained counterpart, emphasising a dramatic change in attitudes towards and expectations of the male adolescent at the beginning of the twentieth century. The image of the ‘delinquent’ adolescent boy in need of civilisation, which was prominent in the 1890s, gave way to that of the male youth as a possible asset to the Empire. The British boy was no longer seen as a threat that needed to be contained but potentially an active participant in the defence and fortification of the Empire. While compulsory military training, if adopted, would act as a form of discipline and so combat delinquency, the driving force behind the proposed movement was the recognition that the solution to sustaining a crumbling Empire lay with the nation’s youth, who were now seen as essential to Britain’s future as a world power.

### **3.3: The detective’s boy assistant as saviour of the degenerate adult: Nipper and Tinker**

At a time when the containment and civilisation of the ‘delinquent adolescent’ became outweighed by the need to train boys to become effective citizens and future protectors and directors of the Empire, the detective’s boy assistant in the story papers began to take on a more proactive and liberated role, which emphasised the positive development rather than the necessary restraint of the adolescent boy, in stories that focused on the protection of the Empire from criminal, and, increasingly, foreign, threats. The centralisation of the detective’s juvenile assistant began as early as 1903, with the serialisation of ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’ (*Boys’ Herald*, 1903-4). This serial, which reintroduced Nipper for the first time since his initial appearance in ‘A Dead Man’s Secret’ (*Halfpenny Marvel*, 1894), provided an extended account of Nipper’s origins,

based on and adapted from the earlier story.<sup>58</sup> There are some obvious differences between the two origins stories which emphasise Nipper's centrality in the later tale. Nipper features in the serial's title – he is 'Nelson Lee's Pupil' – and his origins story is expanded, from four chapters of a twelve-chapter, fifteen-page story, to a twenty-five part serial published over six months. While Nipper appears or is mentioned on only seven pages of 'A Dead Man's Secret', he features on every page of 'Nelson Lee's Pupil' after his initial appearance in chapter three – on forty-six pages in all. The serial also contains several illustrations of Nipper, in contrast to 'A Dead Man's Secret', where he is not pictured at all. Nipper is, therefore, literally much more visible in 'Nelson Lee's Pupil' and, as the serial progresses, his status increases from '[a] street urchin with a great future' who is 'intelligent, smart, and plucky' to '[t]he boy detective' who 'makes a first-class assistant'.<sup>59</sup>

While some of the text of 'Nelson Lee's Pupil' is lifted directly from 'A Dead Man's Secret', there are significant changes to Nipper's characterisation in this new serial. He is still described as a 'dirty little ragamuffin', but his class status is higher than that of the street urchin in the earlier story.<sup>60</sup> Where Nipper only achieves a semblance of middle-class respectability in 'A Dead Man's Secret' when 'clad in a brand-new suit of clothes' and appointed as Lee's assistant at the end of the text,<sup>61</sup> in 'Nelson Lee's Pupil' he shows signs of a middle-class upbringing on his initial meeting with Lee:

'You're a bright specimen of a British youth,' he said. 'What's your name?'  
'My name is Norval, On the Grampian Hills—' began Nipper.

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<sup>58</sup> For a detailed discussion of Nipper's first appearance in the Nelson Lee series in 'A Dead Man's Secret', see chapter 2.

<sup>59</sup> Maxwell Scott, 'Nelson Lee's Pupil', *Boys' Herald*, 1.4 (21 August 1903), 63-4 (p. 63); Maxwell Scott, 'Nelson Lee's Pupil', *Boys' Herald*, 1.12 (16 October 1903), 191-2 (p. 191).

<sup>60</sup> Maxwell Scott, 'Nelson Lee's Pupil', *Boys' Herald*, 1.2 (8 August 1903), 17-20 (p. 19).

<sup>61</sup> Maxwell Scott, 'A Dead Man's Secret', *Halfpenny Marvel*, 46 (18 September 1894), 1-15 (pp. 14-15).

Then he suddenly ‘turned himself upside down’ as the porter had described it, and began to walk round the room on his hands, whilst, at the same time, he gravely intoned those well-known lines of the Roman poet:

‘Facilis descensus Averno;

Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis;

Sed revocare gradum superasque evadere ad auras.

Hoc opus, hic labor est.’

The detective stared at him aghast. Here was a ragged, barefooted urchin from the London slums quoting—and quoting quite correctly—one of the finest gems of classic poetry.

‘Nipper!’ he gasped, seizing him by the tail of his coat and jerking him on to his feet, ‘who in thunder are you, and where did you learn those lines?’

Nipper drew himself up, and thrust one grimy hand into the opening of his ragged waistcoat.

‘Sir,’ he said, with a comical air of offended dignity. ‘I must beg you to beware of trespassing too far on my forbearance. You are now endeavouring to pry into my private affairs, which is a liberty I tolerate from no man, not even from the famous Nelson Lee.’<sup>62</sup>

While Nipper’s allusion to a popular broadside ballad<sup>63</sup> befits his lower-class street urchin persona, his recitation of a passage from Virgil’s *Aeneid*, his ‘air of offended dignity’ and his high-flown speech to Lee all point to his middle-class roots, as does his ability to speak a number of European languages.<sup>64</sup> Nipper inherits his ‘smattering of learning’ from his father, ‘Fiddler Dick’, a slum violinist who had “‘seen better days” [. . .] spoke the most polished English, and had an extensive acquaintance with several modern and ancient languages’.<sup>65</sup> Fiddler Dick’s former prosperity is confirmed when Lee discovers that he used to be ‘a member of the Diplomatic service’ who ‘lived in a handsome house in one of the most fashionable quarters of the Russian capital’.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Scott, ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’, 1.2, p. 19.

<sup>63</sup> ‘Norval on the Grampian Hills’, taken from John Home’s play *Douglas: A Tragedy* (1756), was published as a broadside ballad in the late nineteenth century. See ‘Broadside Ballad entitled “Norval on the Grampian Hills”’ in *The Word on the Street* <<http://digital.nls.uk/broadsides/broadside.cfm/id/16332/transcript/1>> [accessed 15 September 2011]. Interestingly, a Christmas theatre review in the *Athenaeum* in 1854 records the performance at the Marylebone Theatre of ‘a pantomime by Mr Nelson Lee, which combined the interest of the story of “Young Norval on the Grampian Hills” with that of “Lord Ullins’ Daughter”’. Anon, ‘Christmas Pieces’, *Athenaeum*, 1418 (30 December 1854), 1596.

<sup>64</sup> When Lee tests Nipper’s claim that Russian is ‘about the only civilised langwidge of Europe wot I’m not acquainted with’, sure that he is ‘boasting, and determined to teach him a lesson’, Nipper proves himself as a competent linguist, much to Lee’s surprise. See Maxwell Scott, ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’, *Boys’ Herald*, 1.7 (11 September 1903), 111-12 (p. 112).

<sup>65</sup> Maxwell Scott, ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’, *Boys’ Herald*, 1.3 (14 August 1903), 41-2 (p. 42).

<sup>66</sup> Maxwell Scott, ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’, *Boys’ Herald*, 1.11 (9 October 1903), 175-6 (p. 175).

Moreover, although Nipper has been brought up in the London slums, Lee recognises his nobility of spirit when the boy is willing to give up his inheritance – the hidden treasure which Lee is seeking – for the sake of his master’s safety: ““You’re a good little chap, Nipper,” said the detective huskily. “You may not have had a gentleman’s education, but you’re a gentleman, every inch of you!””<sup>67</sup> Nipper’s gentlemanly status is secured at the close of the serial as, with Lee’s help, he retrieves the treasure that will make him a semi-millionaire.<sup>68</sup>

Nipper’s elevated class status in ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’ ensures that he is no longer representative of the ‘delinquent’ adolescent – a model predominantly associated with working-class boys, particularly ‘blind-alley’ labourers – whose threat must be contained through the civilising detective role. Though his street urchin appearance links him closely to his counterpart in ‘A Dead Man’s Secret’, on closer inspection, his nobility shines through:

Despite his ragged clothes, however, and despite the dirt which encrusted his hands and face, there was something in his appearance which marked him out as different from the ordinary gamin of the London slums. His features, like his hands, were perfectly modelled, and not without a certain amount of refinement. His eyes, bright as diamonds, were eloquent of quick intelligence, of frankness, honesty, and candour, of fearless and indomitable pluck.<sup>69</sup>

He is, in Lee’s words, ‘a bright specimen of a British youth’, already in possession of qualities which will enable a new generation of boys to begin to counteract the damage done to the nation by their deteriorating elders.<sup>70</sup> Nipper becomes a symbol of hope for the future of the nation, a role which he fulfils through his growing independence and agency in his position as detective’s assistant.

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<sup>67</sup> Maxwell Scott, ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’, *Boys’ Herald*, 1.16 (13 November 1903), 255-6 (p. 255).

<sup>68</sup> Maxwell Scott, ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’, *Boys’ Herald*, 1.26 (22 January 1904), 423.

<sup>69</sup> Scott, ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’, 1.2, p. 19.

<sup>70</sup> This link between Britishness and the detective role is similarly present in *The Boy Detective*, discussed in chapter 1, where to reject criminality in favour of becoming a member of Ernest’s band of boy detectives is to embrace the identity of ‘[a]n honest British Boy’. Anon, *The Boy Detective; or, the Crimes of London. A Romance of Modern Times* (London: British Library Historical Collection, 2010 [London: Newsagents’ Publishing Company, 1866]), p. 245. For further discussion of this idea, see chapter 1, pp. 50-1

While in ‘A Dead Man’s Secret’ Nipper’s independent detective work only extends as far as shadowing Lee and the criminals that the detective is pursuing, and is reported after the event rather than being narrated directly,<sup>71</sup> his investigations in ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’ take on a much more important role. Like Ernest Keen in *The Boy Detective*, Nipper’s initial independent investigations are personally motivated, prompted by the murder of his father. When he finds his father dead, seemingly of natural causes, Nipper uncovers a clue which suggests that his father has been murdered and, while the police ridicule his theory, Nipper, like Ernest, is determined to hunt down his father’s murderer: ‘wherever he happened to be, night or day, his eyes were ever on the look-out for a tall broad-shouldered man, with a slit in his upper lip’.<sup>72</sup> His vigilance is rewarded as he finally encounters the culprit – Count Figorski – and shadows him, learning of the Count’s search for a plan that had been in Fiddler Dick’s possession. Nipper retrieves this plan, which turns out to be one half of a treasure map, and plays an instrumental role in recovering his rightful inheritance, arriving with reinforcements just in time to thwart Figorski’s last-ditch effort to snatch the treasure.<sup>73</sup> If Fiddler Dick’s decline into a slum existence is representative of the deterioration of the adult stock of the British nation, then Nipper’s restoration of his family’s respectability by ensuring the capture of his father’s murderer – who is, notably, a foreigner who threatens both the lives and property of the British middle classes – and securing his own inheritance metaphorically marks him out as a youthful saviour of the degenerate British race.

Nipper’s ‘saviour’ status is enhanced as he deputises for the adult master detective at various points in the narrative. When Lee is incapacitated with a sprained ankle, he looks to Nipper to adopt the lead detective role:

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<sup>71</sup> See Scott, ‘A Dead Man’s Secret’, p. 14.

<sup>72</sup> Scott, ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’, 1.4, p. 64.

<sup>73</sup> Scott, ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’, 1.26, p. 423.



You and I are partners now, you know, and now that I'm disabled you'll have to take my place. That is to say, you'll have to take charge of the case for the present, and do the work which I should have done if I hadn't been laid up.<sup>74</sup>

This pattern is repeated throughout the serial, allowing Nipper to make several crucial contributions to the case to ensure its resolution. After a 'negro' in the service of Lee and Nipper's opponents knocks Lee unconscious and steals the pocket-book which contains the information of the whereabouts of the treasure, it is left to Nipper to pursue the miscreant, retrieve the pocket-book and nurse the detective back to health.<sup>75</sup> This inversion of the adult detective/juvenile assistant hierarchy is repeated when Lee surrenders to Count Figorski and hands over the pocket-book. Nipper, who has been shamming unconsciousness, 'suddenly leaped to his feet, snatched the plan out of Count Figorski's hand, and bolted through the open door!'<sup>76</sup> Nipper saves the day yet again when, defying Lee's orders to shadow the villainous Zagarovna, who is in league with the Count, he abandons his task to call for reinforcements and arrives just in time to prevent the theft of the treasure that Lee has just recovered.<sup>77</sup>

While in 'A Dead Man's Secret' the inversion of the adult/child hierarchy signified the threat of the 'delinquent' adolescent to adult control, in 'Nelson Lee's Pupil', Nipper's ability to play the part of lead detective when his master is incapacitated is, potentially, symbolic of the growing expectation of the British nation that its youngest members could succeed, where the adult generation was failing, in solving the problems of the besieged Empire. Moreover, Nipper's triumph over foreign villains – Count Figorski and Zagarovna are both Russian – firmly positions him as a defender of the Empire against external threats and imbues the juvenile detective with the patriotic spirit fostered by the Amalgamated Press story papers in the early twentieth

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<sup>74</sup> Maxwell Scott, 'Nelson Lee's Pupil', *Boys' Herald*, 1.8 (18 September 1903), 127-8 (p. 127).

<sup>75</sup> Maxwell Scott, 'Nelson Lee's Pupil', *Boys' Herald*, 1.15 (6 November 1903), 239-40 (p. 239).

<sup>76</sup> Maxwell Scott, 'Nelson Lee's Pupil', *Boys' Herald*, 1.22 (25 December 1903), 359-60 (p. 360).

<sup>77</sup> Scott, 'Nelson Lee's Pupil', 1.26, p. 423.

century.<sup>78</sup> The growing agency, centrality and nobility of the detective's juvenile assistant in this serial points to the changing construction of the male adolescent at the beginning of the twentieth century from a delinquent figure in need of containment to a potential asset to the nation, who could become instrumental to its future prosperity.

The boy assistant's symbolic saviour status is more extreme in 'Cunning Against Skill' (*Union Jack*, 1904), the story which introduces Sexton Blake's long-term assistant, Tinker.<sup>79</sup> In 'Nelson Lee's Pupil' the boy's rescue of the deteriorating adult generation appears in the form of a boy with middle-class origins taking the place and restoring the honour of his dead, socially disgraced father and standing in for the adult master detective – Nipper's generational but not social superior – when Lee is, temporarily, physically incapacitated. By contrast, in 'Cunning Against Skill', Tinker, a boy with firm lower-class origins, steps up to rescue his middle-class detective master from moral degeneration as Blake rejects his professional and societal obligations and, consequently, becomes criminalised himself. Here the adult detective/juvenile assistant hierarchy is inverted to a certain extent, not as a result of any legitimate incapacitation – through absence, illness or injury – on Blake's part, but through Tinker's appearance at a time when Blake's future in the detective profession is in doubt. The adult detective's degeneration and the introduction of the boy assistant as his saviour in this story is particularly socially significant, given that 'Cunning Against Skill' was published in the same year as the *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration* (1904), which focused upon the declining physical and moral worth of British men and

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<sup>78</sup> For further information on this patriotic spirit, see John Springhall, "'Healthy Papers for Manly Boys': Imperialism and Race in the Harmsworths' Halfpenny Boys' Papers of the 1890s and 1900s', in Jeffrey Richards (ed.), *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), pp. 107-25.

<sup>79</sup> While Mark Hodder identifies Tinker's year of birth as 1889, which would mean that he was fourteen or fifteen on his debut, a story later the same year records his age as seventeen, making him older than Nipper, who is fourteen at the beginning of 'Nelson Lee's Pupil' and has reached fifteen by the end of the serial. See Arnold Davis, 'The Mystery of the Hilton Royal', *Union Jack*, 11.62 (17 December 1904), 1-29 (p. 6).

emphasised the significance of the contemporary generation of boys to the future security and prosperity of the Empire. Throughout the story, Tinker is shown to be superior to the floundering adult detective who constantly needs Tinker's advice and assistance to extricate himself from difficult situations of his own making.

At the beginning of the story, Blake is considering retiring and has already moved to the country under the alter ego of Henry Park, a bumbling antiquarian, and has left Tinker in charge of his London office. Annoyed by the relentless requests of those still seeking to become his clients, the Blake who appears here is not his usual self: 'Here was none of that calm repose, that imperturbability of demeanour, that aloof tranquillity, that one associates with the name of a great detective. It was all fret, fume, and fury'.<sup>80</sup> Against Blake's childish tirade, Tinker becomes the voice of reason, displaying his wisdom and maturity by encouraging Blake to make a decision about his future:

'Well, sir, what I'd like to ask is, are you retired from the business, or aren't you? Because, if you are, it don't seem any sense keeping on these offices; and if you are not, it don't seem any sense me shoving off all these callers. See what I mean, sir?'

[. . .]

'Tinker, you are quite right; you are a genius—you are my good genius. I must think this thing out and decide one way or the other. Thank you, Tinker.'

(p. 4)

Tinker here takes the role of the level-headed adult, dealing with clients and offering advice to his floundering master in the midst of his career crisis.

Tinker's status on his debut is enhanced because, unlike Nipper's entrance in the Nelson Lee series, Tinker's first appearance in the Sexton Blake series does not function as an origins story. Instead, he is already firmly established as Blake's assistant, despite the fact that he has not been mentioned in any earlier Blake stories:

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<sup>80</sup> Herbert Maxwell, 'Cunning Against Skill', *Union Jack*, 3.53 (15 October 1904), 1-27 (p. 4). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

When Sexton Blake had reduced his staff, Tinker remained. Tinker always would remain. They were part and parcel of each other's lives, these two; and had become so since the day when Sexton Blake had found the youngster, an orphaned waif and stray, and adopted him.

(p. 4)

Tinker's familial bond with Blake, which ensures that he has, in E. S. Turner's words, 'survived the great purge of 1904' – that is, Tinker has been kept on at a time when Blake has dismissed the rest of his household staff on his move to the country – is proof enough of his key status within Blake's household and the detective business.<sup>81</sup> Unlike Lee's Nipper, or Blake's previous assistant, We-wee, Tinker does not have to prove himself to the great detective or to the readers of his stories. On his first appearance in the series, he has already begun his detective training and has acclimatised to his master's middle-class environment and therefore becomes better qualified than We-wee or the socially superior but, as yet, under-educated and untrained Nipper.<sup>82</sup>

When news reaches Blake that his rural alter ego, Henry Park, is accused of the theft of a priceless Indian enamel, his crisis appears to be over as he immediately decides to take the case, delighted by the prospect of investigating his own supposed crime: 'The twinkle grew into a smile, the smile into a laugh, and the laugh into a shout of merriment.' (p. 4) Yet Blake's reason for taking the case – in order to amuse himself – relegates him to the role of the naughty schoolboy, enjoying a good prank, while Tinker remains the omniscient 'adult', warning Blake of the dangers involved in taking the case:

'But don't you see, things have got a nasty look against you? You were the last person to see the enamel, and you were living at Brampton Stoke under an assumed name. If I were you, sir, the moment I saw Sir George I'd tell him who I was. You'd divert suspicion from yourself that way.'  
[. . .]

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<sup>81</sup> Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, p. 135.

<sup>82</sup> Throughout the series, Tinker keeps his slang to a minimum, only occasionally 'dropping into his old cockney lingo'. See E. A. Treeton, 'Twice Around the World', *Union Jack*, 4.104 (7 October 1905), 1-28 (p. 8).

‘Well, Tinker, I’m obliged to you for the hint; you’ve impressed me. I’ll promise to be careful.’

(p. 5)

Despite his promise, Blake fails to heed Tinker’s warning, ‘deciding to enjoy himself a little longer’ (p. 5), to the point where it is too late for him to disclose his identity without serious repercussions.

As the police are summoned to search for Park, Blake’s revelation would now lead to ‘shame and ridicule’ (p. 6), while his discovery of the stolen enamel in the house which he himself rented as Park leaves him in a desperate situation. Tinker, it seems, was justified in his caution. Blake’s investigation is littered with a catalogue of uncharacteristic blunders. He leaps to the wrong conclusion when he finds the enamel, thinking that an enemy has planted it there to frame him when, in fact, its appearance in his house is entirely coincidental. He relaxes his vigilance by falling asleep while waiting for the thief to return to the house and is thrown into a state of panic when the intruder finally makes an appearance:

A sense of suffocation came over Sexton Blake. He wanted to shout; he wanted light; he wanted to snatch his revolver from his pocket and fire blindly into the darkness; and it required his utmost effort of self-control to refrain from doing one of these things.

(p. 10)

In the subsequent struggle with the intruder, Blake accidentally kills his opponent – the very man who could ‘help him to clear up the mystery’ (p. 10). To make matters worse, he is then arrested as Henry Park and, though he escapes, his carelessness has allowed his client’s servant, Thompson, to discover his dual identity. Tinker’s superiority to the blundering detective is confirmed as Blake, now out of his depth, quickly summons his young assistant: ‘Tinker deserved to come for having so accurately prognosticated what would happen. And Tinker’s sharp wits would be eminently useful in this emergency.’ (p. 9) Blake’s faith in Tinker is not misplaced as, when Blake is confronted by

Thompson, who demands ten thousand pounds in return for his silence over Blake's dual identity, Tinker arrives to deal with the blackmailer in a business-like fashion. With an efficiency reminiscent of Blake in earlier stories, Tinker extracts a confession of the theft from Thompson, which sets the detective duo on the trail of Sir George, Blake's missing client, and, as they mount a rescue mission to London, Tinker – who is now in the driving seat both metaphorically and literally – skilfully outmanoeuvres the pursuing police (p. 23).

As 'Cunning Against Skill' was written during a period of rising anxiety about racial degeneration, Blake – through his initial rejection of the detective role and the subsequent ineptitude of his investigations – could be considered, like Nipper's degenerate father, Fiddler Dick, and the incapacitated Nelson Lee in 'Nelson Lee's Pupil', to be representative of the degenerate adult, unwilling or unable to undertake his duty to protect his nation. Blake's criminalisation as Henry Park takes his apparent failure as an adult defender of Empire a step further than that of Fiddler Dick or Nelson Lee, however, as it implies that he is unworthy of this position of responsibility. In this scenario, Blake's reliance upon Tinker to resolve the case and to extricate him from a precarious situation becomes symbolic of the deteriorating adult generation's dependence upon the nation's youth to rescue the Empire from its imminent demise. Tinker's efficiency in 'rescuing' Blake ensures that he becomes the ideal British youth, ready and able to step into the breach to secure Britain's future prosperity.

At a time of growing anxiety about the physical and moral condition of British citizens – particularly boys and men – as Britain increasingly perceived itself to be vulnerable to external attacks, both 'Nelson Lee's Pupil' and 'Cunning Against Skill' articulate the notion that boys are central to the process of fortifying the nation and must necessarily step up to take the place of the deteriorating adult generation. However,

while Nipper and Tinker rise to the challenge, achieving symbolic saviour status over their adult counterparts, there is no real emphasis in these stories upon how the boy assistants reach this position.<sup>83</sup> This is not surprising, given that there were not yet any training schemes in place to support the anticipated prominent role that boys were to play in determining the fate of the Empire. Tinker and Nipper's early texts do not offer strong role models for boys to emulate: they do not identify or inculcate a set of values or qualities which are integral to the construction of the boy saviour of the Empire, nor do they condition boy readers to respond in particular ways to the boy heroes and their narratives. By 1904, the idea of the boy defender of Empire was still in its earliest stages of development and consequently its fictional counterpart had not yet moved beyond the status of a signifier of the desire or necessity for the boy 'hero', unable at this point to articulate the means by which he could be constructed or what essential qualities and characteristics he should possess.

By contrast to the larger-than-life heroic saviour status of the boy assistants in the stories discussed above, in some of the stories that followed, Nipper and Tinker's authority within the detective role is destabilised. Though still playing a lead role in several stories – Nipper was the central protagonist of serials 'Nipper's Schooldays' (*Boys' Herald*, 1904-5) and 'The Black House' (*Boys' Friend*, 1905), while Tinker

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<sup>83</sup> The child as saviour of the adult has been a common trope in children's literature from the nineteenth century onwards. Ann Alston notes the increasing presence of this theme in nineteenth-century family stories. See Ann Alston, *The Family in English Children's Literature* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), p. 28. Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1886) offers a good example of this trope, as the idealised child hero, Cedric Erroll, becomes heir to an estate and moves from America to England to live with his grandfather, the Earl of Dorincourt. Cedric is kind-hearted, polite, democratic and selfless and wins over his cruel, ill-mannered, snobbish, selfish grandfather. The latter begins to mend his ways as 'the strongest power to influence the Earl was his grandson's perfect confidence in him – the fact that Cedric always believed that his grandfather was going to do what was right and generous. [. . .] He actually had learned to be fond enough of that small boy with the mop of yellow love-locks, to feel that he himself would prefer to be guilty of an amiable action now and then.' Frances Hodgson Burnett, *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (London: Puffin Books, 1994 [1886]), pp. 162-3.

starred in short stories ‘Tinker Limited’ (1906) and ‘Tinker’s Triumph’ (1907) in the *Union Jack* – the boy assistants’ independent detective status is frequently undermined, often with comic effects. Nipper is portrayed as a schoolboy prankster who is rarely called upon by Lee to assist his investigations, and by the conclusion of ‘The Black House’, he has still failed to become Lee’s official assistant and is sent back to St Ninian’s school, while Lee ‘was hard at work on one of the longest, most difficult, and most sensational cases he had ever tackled!’<sup>84</sup> After a promising start, Nipper is excluded from his adult master’s investigations. Tinker, perhaps, fares better than Nipper, but his first attempt to establish himself as an independent detective in ‘Tinker Limited’ (1906) is doomed to failure. During his brief solo career, Tinker is duped by a series of adult con artists, including a man who cheats him out of fifty pounds, a woman who has faked a robbery in order to conceal her gambling debts from her husband, and even Blake himself, who ‘interested to see how much Tinker would be able to accomplish alone, [. . .] set the boy the task of finding himself’.<sup>85</sup> As his lone investigative attempts become more and more farcical, Tinker recognises that he is not yet qualified for the role of lead detective, ‘that independent work had its drawbacks, and also that he had not learnt quite as much as his master yet, after all’ (p. 23). After rejecting the role of lead detective in favour of that of detective’s assistant, Tinker is much more successful in his next eponymous story, ‘Tinker’s Triumph’ (1907), where Blake concludes the case with the declaration that ‘I played but little part in this. I call it Tinker’s Triumph!’<sup>86</sup> Tinker’s triumph, however, is not as emphatic as Blake suggests. Tinker spends a crucial part of the story held captive by the criminals and, apart from some fortuitous eavesdropping and tracking work in which he is really a

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<sup>84</sup> Maxwell Scott, ‘The Black House’, *Boys’ Friend*, 5.236 (16 December 1905), 443.

<sup>85</sup> Norman Goddard, ‘Tinker Limited’, *Union Jack*, 5.125 (3 March 1906), 1-28 (p. 10). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>86</sup> E. W. Alais, ‘Tinker’s Triumph’, *Union Jack*, 7.180 (23 March 1907), 1-31 (p. 31). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.



passive spectator to the efforts of Pedro, Blake's bloodhound, Tinker demonstrates little detective work of his own and expresses relief when Blake arrives to resolve the case (p. 28).<sup>87</sup> The tension in these stories between locating the detective's boy assistant in a prominent role and the failure to represent him as an independent detective hero resonates with the real-life early-twentieth-century friction between the desire to place responsibility for the nation's future prosperity on the shoulders of its male adolescent population and the absence of a training scheme to support this proposed new role for Britain's boys. The uncertainty surrounding the construction of the boy detective at this juncture maps onto the uncertainty surrounding the construction of a new model of British boyhood at the beginning of the twentieth century.

### **3.4: The Holmesian boy super-detective: Stanley Dare**

Parallel to the increasingly independent and useful boy assistant to the adult master detective, another model appeared in the early 1900s: that of the professional boy detective who worked independently of an adult master. Drawing upon the archetype created in Ernest Keen, the protagonist of *The Boy Detective; or, The Crimes of London* (1865-6), Stanley Dare was the first of a number of new independent boy detective heroes, making his debut in *Pluck* in 1903. Here the boy is promoted to the heroic lead detective role, no longer bound by an adult master but free to make his own way in the world. Dare's origins, and the circumstances surrounding his adoption of the detective role, are significantly different to those of the typical boy assistant like Tinker or Nipper.<sup>88</sup> Dare is not a lower-working-class street urchin rescued from the London slums by a middle-class adult master detective. He is, instead, a white-collar worker,

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<sup>87</sup> The tagline of this story refers to Blake's 'assistants', a title which presumably refers to Pedro the bloodhound as well as Tinker, placing boy and dog on an equal footing.

<sup>88</sup> While I use first names to refer to the majority of boy detectives discussed in this thesis and surnames for adult detectives, I refer to Stanley Dare by his surname, partly to emphasise his adult status and partly because he is more commonly referred to as Dare than Stanley throughout the series.

aspiring to rise socially. On his introduction in ‘The Shadow of Guilt’ (*Pluck*, 1903), Dare has a respectable job as a bank clerk, which allows him to provide ‘many little comforts and luxuries’ for his mother in their ‘quiet home at Norwood’.<sup>89</sup> Before he enters the detective profession Dare is not a destitute street boy of fourteen or fifteen years old – the ragged ‘blind-alley’ labourer discussed in chapter 2 – but a ‘good-looking, keen-eyed lad, between seventeen and eighteen years of age’ (p. 1) who, on the brink of adulthood, has a modest income and prospects for the future.

Dare’s class status and detective origins are reminiscent of those of earlier boy super-detective Ernest Keen who, in *The Boy Detective*, is cast out of the home of his respectable, middle-class father by his wicked, criminal step-mother. Keen is later accused of murdering his father and sets out to prove his own innocence and to bring to justice the real culprit.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, it is the threat to his comfortable lifestyle and respectable reputation that prompts Dare to adopt the detective role, as he is falsely accused of the theft of two thousand pounds from the bank where he works and recognises that ‘[i]f I cannot clear myself of this terrible charge I shall be ruined for life’ (p. 2). As this is a personal case taken up by necessity, rather than a professional case for which he has willingly prepared himself, Dare, like Keen before him, has to rely upon his natural abilities to solve the case rather than undertaking a prolonged and extensive course of training courtesy of an adult professional investigator. In the first

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<sup>89</sup> Anon, ‘The Adventures of Stanley Dare: His First Case: The Shadow of Guilt’, *Pluck*, 17.431 (23 February 1903), 1-11 (p. 2). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text. Arthur Conan Doyle moved to South Norwood – ‘a comfortable, middle-class suburb’ of London – in 1891 and lived there for three years. Daniel Stashower, *Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle* (London: Penguin Books, 2000 [1999]), p. 127. In one of Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes short stories, ‘The Adventure of the Norwood Builder’ (1903), Holmes’s client is accused of ‘murdering Mr Jonas Oldacre, of Lower Norwood’, while in *The Sign of Four* (1890), Major Sholto is murdered in his home, Pondicherry Lodge, in Upper Norwood. See Arthur Conan Doyle, ‘The Adventure of the Norwood Builder’, *Strand Magazine*, 26.155 (November 1903), 482-96 (p. 484) and Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Sign of Four* (London: Penguin Books, 2001 [1890]), p. 39.

<sup>90</sup> For a detailed discussion of *The Boy Detective*, see chapter 1 and Lucy Andrew, “‘Away with Dark Shadders!’ Juvenile Detection Versus Juvenile Crime in *The Boy Detective; or The Crimes of London. A Romance of Modern Times*”, *Clues: A Journal of Detection*, 30.1 (Spring 2012), 18-29.

few pages of 'The Shadow of Guilt', Dare is described as a 'born detective' who 'possessed intuitive powers in a marvellous degree, and he had the faculty of noticing and appreciating minute detail, besides being gifted with a retentive memory and a habit of rapid thought' (p. 3). From the outset, Dare proves himself worthy of the super-detective title, displaying innate characteristics and specialist skills which make him well suited to the detective role.

As discussed in chapter 1, in the 1860s there were problems inherent in the construction of a boy super-detective protagonist in children's literature. Appearing within the disreputable 'penny-dreadful' tradition, Keen, despite speaking out against such fiction and the criminal characters that it celebrated, is, through his own independence, authority and inversion of the adult/child hierarchy, inevitably associated with the boy criminal protagonists of the 'penny-dreadful' counterparts of *The Boy Detective*. Since there was such an outcry against the 'penny dreadful' at this period, the boy super-detective, with his precocious independence and his constant forays into the shady criminal underworld, was perhaps considered an unsuitable hero for impressionable boy readers. Moreover, since detective fiction had not yet developed far enough to create a professional private detective by the 1860s, there was not an established model for the boy super-detective to draw upon. By the 1900s, however, both of these problems had been overcome. Anxieties about 'penny dreadfuls' had gradually subsided with the production of new, ostensibly respectable story papers to take their place.<sup>91</sup> More significantly, perhaps, the professional private detective had now gained a foothold in the British detective genre through the appearance and popularity of Sherlock Holmes, the ultimate super-detective.<sup>92</sup> While Ernest Keen, ahead of his time in terms of detective fiction trends, somewhat resembles the boy

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<sup>91</sup> See chapters 1 and 2 for a discussion of this topic.

<sup>92</sup> See chapter 2 for a discussion of the rise of Sherlock Holmes and his impact upon the establishment of detective fiction for boys.

criminal protagonists of disreputable ‘penny dreadfuls’, Stanley Dare draws directly upon Sherlock Holmes.

Dare becomes Sherlock Holmes in juvenile form, a direct copy who shares the great detective’s defining attributes. Along with his Holmesian skills of observation and deduction, Dare also possesses the same specialist knowledge as Holmes. Dare has a ‘good practical knowledge of geology’ and can ‘tell almost at a glance different soils from each other’ (‘The Shadow of Guilt’, p. 4).<sup>93</sup> Equally impressive is Dare’s knowledge of tobacco ash, which he can identify by ‘the kind of cigar or cigarette which had been smoked’ or by ‘the scent of the tobacco’.<sup>94</sup> Dare also shares Holmes’s scientific knowledge.<sup>95</sup> Like Holmes, he is an expert on various drugs, such as the East Indian narcotic Hashiyada, which he recognises by its ‘faint odour in one spot’ of the room from which a boy has been abducted, and Yarahipa – which has ‘the peculiar effect of destroying human hair’ – which he detects by a circular spot of brown hairs in the victim’s moustache.<sup>96</sup> Dare also conducts scientific experiments to detect crime, as in his use of a ‘portable laboratory’ to test wine which he suspects has been poisoned.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> In a strikingly similar passage from Doyle’s *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), published sixteen years earlier, Watson assesses Holmes’s knowledge of geology as: ‘Practical, but limited. Tells at a glance different soils from each other. After walks has shown me splashes upon his trousers, and told me by their colour and consistence in what part of London he had received them.’ Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* (London: Penguin Books, 2001 [1887]), p. 18. In ‘The Five Orange Pips’ (1891), Watson remarks that Holmes’s knowledge of geology is ‘profound as regards the mud-stains from any region within fifty miles of town’. See Arthur Conan Doyle, ‘The Five Orange Pips’, *Strand Magazine*, 2.11 (November 1891), 481-91 (p. 488).

<sup>94</sup> Anon, ‘The Clue of the Cigarette’, *Marvel*, 5.127 (1906), 631-44 (p. 641). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text. This is reminiscent of Holmes’s declaration to Watson in *A Study in Scarlet* that ‘I have made a special study of cigar ashes – in fact, I have written a monograph upon the subject. I flatter myself that I can distinguish at a glance the ash of any known brand either of cigar or of tobacco.’ Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*, p. 37.

<sup>95</sup> Watson records that Holmes is ‘[w]ell up in belladonna, opium, and poisons generally’. Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*, p. 18. For further information on the medical and scientific knowledge of Sherlock Holmes, see Harold Billings, ‘The *Materia Medica* of Sherlock Holmes’, *Baker Street Journal*, 56.3 (2006), 37-46, in *Baker Street Journal* <[http://www.bakerstreetjournal.com/images/Billings\\_MateriaMedia.pdf](http://www.bakerstreetjournal.com/images/Billings_MateriaMedia.pdf)> [25 March 2014].

<sup>96</sup> See Anon, ‘Stanley Dare, Detective’, *Marvel*, 4.104 (1905/6), 769-81 (p. 770) and Anon, ‘Stanley Dare, Detective’, *Marvel*, 7.169 (1907), 352-64 (pp. 353-4) respectively.

<sup>97</sup> Incidentally, his test reveals ‘traces of curarine, a deadly poison obtained from a South American plant’. Anon, ‘Stanley Dare’s Master-Stroke’, *Marvel*, 5.114 (1906), 257-68 (p. 261). Holmes frequently conducts scientific experiments to assist his detective work. On his introduction in *A Study in Scarlet*, for

Like Holmes, too, he is a master of disguise, an accomplished linguist and a skilled master of the martial arts.<sup>98</sup> The image of the boy detective created in the Stanley Dare series, therefore, is deliberately that of a young Sherlock Holmes, with all the skills and expertise of Doyle's great detective.

Dare's construction as a Holmesian super-detective, like Tinker and Nipper's representation as boy saviours of the adult detective, implicitly responds to the contemporary recognition of the need for boys to play a more active and prominent role in the Empire. While on the surface, however, Dare's super-detective construction articulates the fantasy of the boy defender of Empire, his Holmesian characteristics transform him from a boy into a man and so his stories emphasise the real-life desire or necessity for boys to become men, rather than mapping the process by which they can make this transition. As well as his brilliant powers of observation and deduction and his vast knowledge, as Dare progresses in the detective role, he develops economic autonomy, global fame and superiority over his adult clients.<sup>99</sup> Dare's adult status,

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example, Holmes has just finished devising 'an infallible test for blood stains', which, he boasts, is 'the most practical medico-legal discovery for years'. See Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*, p. 11. Another example occurs in 'The Adventure of the Naval Treaty' (1893), where Watson finds Holmes 'working hard over a chemical investigation. [. . .] He dipped into this bottle or that, drawing out a few drops of each with his glass pipette, and finally brought a test-tube containing a solution over to the table. In his right hand he held a slip of litmus-paper.

"You come at a crisis, Watson," said he. "If this paper remains blue, all is well. If it turns red, it means a man's life."

He dipped it into the test-tube and it flushed at once into a dull, dirty crimson.' Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Adventure of the Naval Treaty', *Strand Magazine*, 6.34 (October 1893), 392-403 (p. 393). The story concludes in *Strand Magazine*, 6.35 (November 1893), 459-68.

<sup>98</sup> Dare is so adept at disguise that, during a case in India, he is able to appear as a native 'without anyone suspecting that I am white'. Anon, 'Stanley Dare, Detective' (1907), p. 356. He speaks Arabic ('Stanley Dare's Master-Stroke', p. 262), 'high Dutch' (Anon, 'A Great Temptation', *Marvel*, 6.141 (1906), 296-307 (p. 297)) and the 'Basuto tongue' of a witch doctor (Anon, 'The Clue of the Broken Lance', *Pluck*, 6.156 (1906/7), 15-26 (p. 20)). He is a 'a skilful boxer' (Anon, 'Across the Border', *Marvel*, 6.151 (1906), 576-88 (p. 580)) and has taught himself 'a system which is a combination of the best points' of jiu-jitsu and British wrestling (Anon, 'Stanley Dare, Detective' (1905/6), p. 774).

<sup>99</sup> In 'Stanley Dare's Master-Stroke', Dare is able to 'rouse up the bank manager [. . .] and get some money from him' (p. 267) and in 'The Clue of the Cigarette' he orders a special train and charters a small steamer in pursuit of his criminal prey (p. 640 and p. 643). Dare's fame has reached as far as India – where one of the Rajah's advisers recommends Dare as 'a young Englishman, who is beyond all others skilled in the elucidation of mysteries' (Anon, 'Stanley Dare, Detective' (1907), p. 352) – and Australia, where 'The Sydney Illustrated papers had, much to Dare's annoyance, published sketches of him at the conclusion of the famous case which had brought him to that city'. Anon, 'The Golden Bullet', *Pluck*,

however, is not just symbolic. Despite being referred to as a boy detective throughout the series, Dare, who begins the series as an adolescent of about seventeen, has reached the age of nineteen by ‘Stanley Dare, Detective’ (1905/6) where, to go undercover as a schoolboy, he has to rely upon ‘the aid of a little skilful make-up, to so alter his appearance that he looked no more than seventeen’.<sup>100</sup>

Although Dare is not much older than some of his schoolboy companions, his relationship with them exposes his adult identity. When Harold Nugent, a boy who is being targeted by kidnappers, goes missing during a picnic, Dare immediately takes charge of the situation:

‘Get the launch under way!’ cried Dare. ‘Quick, boys, or we may be too late!’ He had suddenly assumed a different personality. There was a ring in his voice as of one who was accustomed to give orders, and have them obeyed. Instinctively the boys allowed him to take command now without question and obeyed him with alacrity. There was no time for wondering then at the change in his manner, but afterwards they remembered it; calling to mind the stern look on his face, which seemed to have become suddenly the face of a man, and the commanding ring in his clear-toned voice.<sup>101</sup>

This passage is reminiscent of a similar incident in *The Boy Detective*, in which Ernest Keen shouts instructions to the clueless police officers who witness Inspector Hawks plunging into the River Thames.<sup>102</sup> Yet, where Keen’s assertion of authority is problematic as he is a boy adopting an adult role, Dare’s authority here shatters the

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6.170 (1906/7), 15-26 (p. 22). For examples of Dare’s superiority to his adult clients, see his exchanges with headmaster Dr Wybrow in Anon, ‘Stanley Dare, Detective’ (1905/6), pp. 769-70.

<sup>100</sup> Anon, ‘Stanley Dare, Detective’ (1905/6), pp. 770-1. In a later story, ‘The Golden Bullet’, Stanley’s description suggests that he might have aged slightly further still as ‘[i]n age he could not have been more than one-and-twenty; in general appearance he was active, hard, and sinewy’. Anon, ‘The Golden Bullet’, p. 16.

<sup>101</sup> Anon, ‘Stanley Dare, Detective’ (1905/6), p. 775.

<sup>102</sup> “‘Attention!’ said the Boy Detective, in a calm, but quick, thrilling tone of command, which no one could assume so well as he upon emergency, though in ordinary cases, he always addressed his elders and superiors with respect and deference. “Two of you get into that boat. Unmoor it quick, Vincent. The tide will drift Hawks and Jack towards the first arch from the lee shore. Here, sir, you forget the lantern. Now, sirs, trim the boat; row out into the river, and pull down the stream in search of Gaspard Massillon. Pull with a will. There’s a young lady in the boat we’re chasing. If we don’t overhaul the pirates in a twinkling they may throw her overboard.”

The men needed no further prompting or instruction.’ Anon, *The Boy Detective*, pp. 169-70. For a discussion of this passage, see chapter 1, pp. 55-7.

illusion of his boyhood as, conversely, he is a man pretending to be a boy.<sup>103</sup> In the later serial, ‘Stanley Dare, The Boy Detective’ (*Magnet*, 1910-11), which is, at least in part, a reprint of earlier stories, Dare is ‘still referred to as the boy detective, although he was just turned nineteen’.<sup>104</sup> One of Dare’s clients addresses this tension: ‘The boy detective, I have heard you called; but you are a young man now.’<sup>105</sup> As his client observes, although Dare is very close to the boundary between adolescence and adulthood, his ‘boy’ status is nominal rather than actual.

As a copy of Holmes – a middle-class, adult genius – Dare fails both as a *boy* detective and as a potential role model for the boy readers of the Amalgamated Press papers. Just as Holmes is an awe-inspiring figure who has little in common with the working-class juvenile audience of the Amalgamated Press papers, so too is Dare a natural genius with whom the average boy reader of his stories will be unlikely and, in many cases unable, to identify strongly. This gap between the fictional boy detective and the real-life boy reader is, perhaps, exacerbated by Dare’s Holmesian habit of withholding his observations and theories from both his fictional acquaintances and the readers of his stories.<sup>106</sup> While in Tinker and Nipper’s narratives the young reader is often given direct access to the thoughts of the boy assistant, including his investigative theories, here the reader is isolated from Dare who, like the great Sherlock Holmes, becomes an unreadable and enigmatic character. In the Sherlock Holmes stories, it is Dr Watson who performs the reader-identification function, and a similar figure emerges to assist Dare in his cases. Professor MacAndrew, Dare’s ‘old friend and

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<sup>103</sup> In a later case, ‘The Clue of the Broken Lance’ (1906/7), Dare reinforces this adult status – and particularly that as an adult master detective – by hiring a native boy, Springbok, in South Africa, to act as his assistant. Springbok takes on the traditional tracking and shadowing duties of the detective’s boy assistant.

<sup>104</sup> Anon, ‘Stanley Dare, The Boy Detective’, *Magnet*, 4.125 (1910), 27-8 (p. 28). Issues 4.129-5.135 contain a reprint of ‘The Clue of the Cigarette’, first published in the *Marvel* in 1906 and material in issues 5.135-5.138 originally appeared as ‘Stanley Dare’s Master-Stroke’, also published in the *Marvel* in 1906.

<sup>105</sup> Anon, ‘Stanley Dare, The Boy Detective’, *Magnet*, 5.149 (1910), 26-8 (p. 27).

<sup>106</sup> For an example, see Anon, ‘The Wandering Minstrel’, *Marvel*, 6.156 (1906), 749-56 (p. 750).

adviser in many a case' (*The Clue of the Cigarette*, p. 635) is, like Watson, a doctor who plays a secondary role and who is clearly intellectually inferior to the 'boy' super-detective. But the middle-aged and middle-class MacAndrew, whose primary function is often to comfort hysterical girls who are caught up in Dare's investigations,<sup>107</sup> is equally not a figure with whom adolescent boy readers can easily identify, and this ensures that their access to the world of the Holmesian 'boy' super-detective is further restricted.

Dare perhaps offers a fantasy of the man that boy readers might eventually become, but he does not function successfully as a figure who will inspire boys to adopt, during their boyhood, the new, more active role that the Empire requires of them. Instead, distanced from boy readers by his adult status and Holmesian genius, Dare, like Blake and Lee, invites hero worship. Ironically, this hero worship might have served to perpetuate in boy readers the very model of boyhood, and, more broadly, of citizenship, that reformers were trying to counteract at the beginning of the twentieth century: that of the idle, passive spectator who admired without aspiring to follow the example of the heroes of the Empire – real and fictional alike. As a finished product, with no real account of or emphasis on the path that he has taken to achieve perfection, Dare might

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<sup>107</sup> For examples, see Anon, 'The Wandering Minstrel', pp. 754-5 and Anon, 'The Secret of the Quicksand', *Marvel*, 7.174 (1907), 493-502 (p. 494). Watson plays a similar role in relation to women in the Sherlock Holmes series. In *The Sign of Four* (1890), for example, Watson offers his 'sympathies' and 'love' to Mary Morstan when she 'turned faint and then burst into a passion of weeping – so sorely had she been tried by the adventures of the night' and later, once the prospect of her large inheritance has been removed, he proposes to her. See Doyle, *The Sign of Four*, p. 50 and p. 94 respectively. Watson's medical training, like that of MacAndrew, ensures that he is well suited to the role of comforter and protector of women. In 'The Man with the Twisted Lip', Watson and his wife offer comfort to Kate Whitney when she despairs about the disappearance of her opium-addicted husband, and Watson, as 'Isa Whitney's medical adviser', resolves to seek him out at his regular opium den and send him home to his wife. See Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Man with the Twisted Lip', *Strand Magazine*, 2.12 (December 1891), 623-37 (p. 623). In 'The Final Problem' (1893), Watson is lured away from Holmes by a hoax letter which asks Watson to attend a dying Englishwoman. While Watson is reluctant to leave Holmes, he finds it 'impossible to refuse the request of a fellow-countrywoman dying in a strange land'. Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Adventure of the Final Problem', *Strand Magazine*, 6.36 (December 1893), 558-70 (p. 569). In 'The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist', it is Watson who lends his arm to Miss Violet Smith after she is rescued from her abductor by Holmes, and Holmes later suggests to Watson that 'in your medical capacity, you might wait upon Miss Smith'. Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist', *Strand Magazine*, 27.157 (January 1904), 2-14 (p. 12 and p. 14).



be admired by boy readers, but they cannot really emulate him. At a time when the construction of the boy defender of Empire and his role had not yet moved beyond a vague idea, however, it is unsurprising that potential fictional role models such as the boy detective skipped impatiently into manhood: social commentators and concerned patriots were beginning to identify the kind of man that they wanted British boys to become, but had not, in the early 1900s, determined the methods by which boys would attain this ideal of proactive and patriotic manhood. This was soon to change, however, with the emergence of a new model of the male adolescent and a training scheme to support his formation. With it, the construction of the independent boy detective hero underwent some significant changes.

### **3.5: The rise of the Boy Scouts and the boy detective partnership: Harry Fairfax and Bob Dawson**

In the early 1900s, many of those with influence saw youth military training as the answer to the dilemma of how to place responsibility for the nation's future prosperity on the shoulders of its male adolescent population and several proposals were made for the implementation of such a scheme. John Campbell, the Duke of Argyll, suggested that this training could take place within the existing school curriculum by reserving an hour a day for the teaching of '[c]amping, cooking, marching, shooting, and the practice of drill'.<sup>108</sup> Public servant Henry Birchenough's proposition was more ambitious, as he saw military or naval training as an 'additional branch' of 'ordinary education', to be undertaken between the ages of fifteen and nineteen.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, Lord Meath's Lads' Drill Association campaigned for the adoption in schools of 'an official course of

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<sup>108</sup> Argyll, 'National Defence', p. 66.

<sup>109</sup> Birchenough, 'Compulsory Education', pp. 26-7.

physical training called the “Model Course”<sup>110</sup>. By contrast, the *Report on Physical Deterioration* encouraged military training in youth organisations by recommending that ‘some grant should be made from the National Exchequer in aid of all clubs and cadet corps in which physical or quasi-military training, on an approved scheme, is conducted, subject to public inspection’.<sup>111</sup> Though steps were taken to develop these schemes none of them were fully implemented and compulsory military training for boys was never adopted.

The movement that finally emerged to fulfil the duty of preparing British boys for their new responsibility to the nation was not a military training scheme, although it had Army origins. The Boy Scout movement drew upon Baden-Powell’s *Aids to Scouting for N.C.Os. & Men* (1899), in which he describes war scouts as ‘the detectives who seize upon and follow up the slightest clue till they have tracked down the hostile gang’.<sup>112</sup> Although, as its title suggests, the manual was aimed at adults, it soon gained popularity with a younger audience, no doubt helped by its serialisation as ‘The Boy Scout’ in *Boys of the Empire* from November 1900.<sup>113</sup> When Baden-Powell adapted this manual for younger readers in the form of *Scouting for Boys*, which was published in six fortnightly parts, priced at 4d. each, from 15<sup>th</sup> January 1908,<sup>114</sup> he did not envisage Scouting as a separate scheme, but as an extension of existing youth

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<sup>110</sup> Lord Methuen, ‘Training the Youth of England’, *Nineteenth Century and After*, 57.336 (February 1905), 238-43 (pp. 238-9).

<sup>111</sup> *Report on Physical Deterioration*, I, p. 91.

<sup>112</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, *Aids to Scouting for N.C.Os. & Men* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1915 [1899]), pp. 12-13.

<sup>113</sup> E. E. Reynolds, *The Scout Movement* (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 5. In an account in *The Parents’ Review*, Baden-Powell recalls the story of a governess from Miss Charlotte Mason’s Training College at Ambleside who used *Aids to Scouting* to educate her pupil, and credits this account with inspiring him to adapt his manual for boys. See Robert Baden-Powell, ‘Origins of Scouts and Guides’, *The Parents’ Review* (April 1923), in Mario Sica (ed.), *Playing the Game: A Baden-Powell Compendium* (Basingstoke and Oxford: Macmillan, 2007), p. 253. It was William Smith, leader of the Boys’ Brigade, however, who, after inviting Baden-Powell to inspect the Boys’ Brigade Corps in Glasgow in 1904, suggested that he ‘should write a book for boys on the lines of *Aids to Scouting*’. Baden-Powell, *Lessons from the ’Varsity*, pp. 274-6, in Sica (ed.), *Playing the Game*, p. 254.

<sup>114</sup> Robert H. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement, 1890-1918* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 7.

movements. In the ‘Notes to Instructors’ in the first edition of *Scouting for Boys*, he claimed that:

we want amalgamation rather than rivalry, and scouting is only intended to be used as an additional attraction by those in charge of boys’ organisations of any kind. If scouting is taken up by several it may prove a bond between all. Where such organisations do not already exist it can supply a particularly simple and effective one for catching a number of boys who would otherwise have no hand to guide them.<sup>115</sup>

The boys whom Baden-Powell was most intent upon ‘catching’ were, according to Joseph Bristow, those ‘from the much maligned East End and comparably degenerate working-class areas of the larger British cities’.<sup>116</sup> It was these areas that were, perhaps, most at risk of producing those ‘wishy-washy slackers without any go or patriotism in them’ whom Baden-Powell identified as the main threat to the future of the British Empire, and he wished to disseminate the firmly middle-class ideal of the active, patriotic boy to those who, in his view, would benefit most from its influence.<sup>117</sup> However, the introduction of uniform, paraphernalia and weekly subscription fee, or ‘subs’, deterred or prevented many lower working-class boys from joining the movement.<sup>118</sup> These boys also lacked the leisure time required for Scouting and often rejected the movement’s middle-class ideology as restrictive and patronising.<sup>119</sup> In its early years, therefore, the movement’s major demographic was the upwardly aspiring – the children of upper working- and lower middle-class households.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship. The Original 1908 Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005 [1908]), p. 302.

<sup>116</sup> Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man’s World* (London: HarperCollinsAcademic, 1991), p. 175.

<sup>117</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 278.

<sup>118</sup> In an article in *The Scouter* in 1913, Baden-Powell states that ‘each Patrol Leader should send a weekly report to his Scoutmaster to show to what extent each of his Scouts has carried out Scouting exercises, has attended parades, and has paid up his subscription during the week’. Robert Baden-Powell, ‘Patrol Reports’, *The Scouter* (November 1913), in E. E. Reynolds (ed.), *B.-P.’s Outlook: Selections from Lord Baden-Powell’s Contributions to “The Scouter”* (London: C. Arthur Pearson Ltd, 1941), p. 41. For further information on various Scout expenses, particularly in relation to uniform and paraphernalia, see Tammy M. Proctor, ‘(Uni)forming Youth: Girl Guides and Boy Scouts in Britain, 1908-39’, *History Workshop Journal*, 45 (Spring 1998), 103-34.

<sup>119</sup> See MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire*, p. 11 and pp. 155-6 and Bristow, *Empire Boys*, p. 183.

<sup>120</sup> Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men*, p. 99.

By 1910, there were over 100,000 Boy Scouts in Britain<sup>121</sup> and Scouting could no longer be seen as an ‘additional attraction’ to pre-existing youth movements, but was instead firmly established as an organisation within its own right. The primary aim of Scouting was to mould boys into active citizens, in order to:

**improve the standard of our future citizenship**, especially in **Character** and **Health**; [*sic*] to replace Self with Service, to make the lads individually efficient, morally and physically, with the object of using that efficiency for service for their fellow-men.<sup>122</sup>

The method adopted by the Scout movement to encourage its members to strive towards this ideal of active citizenship was the promotion of a system of self-education whereby the boy was expected to take responsibility for his own development. In an article in *The Scouter*, Baden-Powell dictated that ‘[t]he Scoutmaster initiates the ambition in the boy, leaving him free to gain his objective in his own way – he does not instruct, he leads the boy on to learn for himself’.<sup>123</sup> The Patrol system encouraged this programme of self-learning by ‘putting responsibility on young shoulders’,<sup>124</sup> particularly those of the Patrol Leader, who was to be treated ‘as a responsible being, just as if he were a grown-up’.<sup>125</sup> Through Scouting it was anticipated that boys would become those independent, responsible, active citizens who were necessary for the future success and preservation of the British Empire. *Scouting for Boys* gave instruction in various skills that would contribute to this transformation, such as self-sufficiency through camping

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<sup>121</sup> Reynolds, *The Scout Movement*, p. 74.

<sup>122</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, *Aids to Scoutmastership* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1949 [1920]), pp. 33-4.

<sup>123</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, ‘Calm and Cheery’, *The Scouter* (August 1914), in Reynolds (ed.), *B.-P.’s Outlook*, p. 52. This method of self-education follows Rousseau’s philosophy of allowing the child the freedom to learn for himself. In *Emile; Or On Education*, Rousseau argues that: ‘Our didactic and pedantic craze is always to teach children what they would learn much better by themselves’. Rousseau’s hypothetical pupil, ‘Emile’, by contrast, ‘gets his lessons from nature and not from men. He instructs himself so much the better because he sees nowhere the intention to instruct him.’ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile: Or On Education*, trans. by Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1979 [1762]), p. 78 and p. 119.

<sup>124</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, ‘Patrol Leaders’, *The Scouter* (April 1910), in Reynolds (ed.), *B.-P.’s Outlook*, p. 10.

<sup>125</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, ‘Patrol Leaders’, *The Scouter* (April 1910), in Reynolds (ed.), *B.-P.’s Outlook*, p. 10.

and cooking, military proficiency through marksmanship, and service to the community through lifesaving and first aid.

One of the main differences between the Scout movement and previous ideas or methodologies for training adolescent boys was the shift in focus from men acting as role models for boys, to boys acting as positive influences upon each other. This approach was adopted through use of the Patrol system which, as E. E. Reynolds notes, ‘was so contrary to traditional ways of training and instruction’.<sup>126</sup> While Baden-Powell emphasises the necessity of the Scoutmaster leading by example, as ‘[b]oys are imitative, and what the Scoutmaster gives off, that they pick up and reflect’,<sup>127</sup> it is the Patrol Leader, he suggests, upon whom the bulk of the responsibility should lie. He warns Scoutmasters that ‘to get first-class results from the system you have to give the leaders a real free-handed responsibility [. . .] since this is the very best of all means of developing character’.<sup>128</sup> The Patrol system, however, did not cultivate a one-way relationship between the quasi-adult Patrol Leader and his inferior Patrol members, but instead encouraged ‘a real co-operative effort’ in which each boy was led ‘to see that he has some individual responsibility for the good of his Patrol’.<sup>129</sup>

Where boy assistants Tinker and Nipper follow the example of their adult detective masters and Stanley Dare has to become an adult in order to excel in the detective role, in 1908, coinciding with the inauguration of the Scout movement, a new detective model emerged in the Amalgamated Press boys’ story papers, one which

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<sup>126</sup> Reynolds, *The Scout Movement*, p. 91.

<sup>127</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, *The Scouter* (July 1910), in Reynolds (ed.), *B.-P. 's Outlook*, p. 15.

<sup>128</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, *The Scouter* (May 1914), in Reynolds (ed.), *B.-P. 's Outlook*, p. 51.

<sup>129</sup> Baden-Powell, *Aids To Scoutmastership*, p. 20. This system of organisation is reminiscent of that which exists between Ernest Keen and his Band of Light in *The Boy Detective*. While Ernest is socially and intellectually superior to his followers, he encourages each individual to act for the good of the group rather than simply for personal gain. For Ernest, the smooth operation of the community of boys over which he presides involves ‘working for your living, not taking what belongs to others, and living together without fighting or quarrelling, like good friends’. More crucially, perhaps, he encourages ‘those in work [to] help those who are not’. Anon, *The Boy Detective*, p. 172. For a discussion of this passage, see chapter 1, pp. 48-9.

focused upon boyhood co-operation: the boy detective partnership. Drawing on the pattern established by the Scout Patrol system, boy detective duo Bob Dawson and Harry Fairfax become successful detectives and active citizens through working together, pooling their talents and learning from each other's example. They make their debut in 'The Boy Detectives' First Case' (*Marvel*, 1908), which, with all except one of the stories in the series, is narrated by their friend and contact on the police force, Detective-Inspector Coles, who frequently admires their work.<sup>130</sup> Significantly, however, Harry and Bob are not afforded equal status at the beginning of the series. Despite being foster brothers, who were 'born within a few hours of each other' (p. 5), Harry Fairfax begins the series as superior to Bob Dawson, both in terms of class and detective ability. Harry is the son of a colonel and, when his parents die after being swindled out of their fortune, he is adopted by Bob Dawson's mother – the wife of Colonel Fairfax's lodge keeper.<sup>131</sup> Since the death of Harry's father occurs when he is fourteen, and his mother dies 'within a year' (p. 5) Harry and Bob, who have just been reunited after a year apart, must be at least sixteen when they tackle their first case together. They do, however, appear to be boys rather than adults, particularly as they continue to live with Bob's mother as they pursue their detective role. Like Stanley Dare, Harry is a 'born detective'<sup>132</sup> – a boy super-sleuth, reminiscent of Sherlock

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<sup>130</sup> Despite his authority in the position of narrator, Coles is, like Inspector Lestrade in the Sherlock Holmes narratives and some of the police characters in *The Boy Detective*, inferior to the boy detective protagonists in terms of detective abilities and, in all likelihood, class status. From the very first case Coles acknowledges his own inferiority to Harry Fairfax, admitting that 'Harry is a stronger man than I am, though he is but a boy' and declaring that 'I would obey that boy implicitly any day'. Detective-Inspector Coles, 'The Boy Detectives' First Case', *Marvel*, 9.254 (1908), 1-14 (p. 13). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>131</sup> See 'The Boy Detectives' First Case', p. 1.

<sup>132</sup> Detective-Inspector Coles, 'The Mystery of the Taxi-Cab', *Marvel*, 9.255 (1908), 1-11 (p. 1). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

Holmes – and he investigates many cases in his role as ‘special expert reporter in metropolitan crime’ for a London newspaper, ‘the “Trumpeter”’ [sic].<sup>133</sup>

In contrast to Harry who, as the son of a colonel, is a firmly middle-class figure, Bob is a working-class boy, a ‘son of the people’ (‘Bob and Harry’s Trap’, p. 21), who has graduated from the village Board School and, on his move to London after the death of his father, is apprenticed to a shipping firm.<sup>134</sup> While Harry possesses ‘positive genius’,<sup>135</sup> Bob’s ‘more slow-working mind’<sup>136</sup> ensures that he is intellectually as well as socially inferior to Harry. Harry’s superior intellect allows him to stay several steps ahead of Bob who, recognising this pattern, plays his role accordingly, claiming that Harry ‘does the headwork, and I do as he tells me, and I’m kind of a second pair of arms and shoulders and feet’ (‘The Mystery of the Taxi-Cab’, p. 6). Bob’s reduction of himself to a collection of body parts is apt, as it reflects his role as the brawn to Harry’s brain in their detective partnership.<sup>137</sup> Bob, therefore, initially acts as a Watsonian

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<sup>133</sup> Detective-Inspector Coles, ‘The Strange Case of Lieutenant Forester’, *Marvel*, 9.258 (1908), 1-15 (p. 6). Like Dare, Harry has many Holmesian traits, such as: his specialist knowledge of different types of mud as he is able to distinguish ‘[y]ellow country mud, and not town grease’ on a clothes brush that has been used to clean a murdered man’s trousers (Coles, ‘The Boy Detectives’ First Case’, p. 3); his scientific approach to his work through his ‘cold, dispassionate way of treating the tortured emotions of criminals’ (Detective-Inspector Coles, ‘The Crimson Crocus’, *Marvel*, 10.269 (1909), 1-16 (p. 2)); and his modus operandi ‘to divine the criminal from the known facts, to get into his skin, as it were, and think with his brain, to spot the one act that he would inevitably do, then collar him in doing it’ (Detective-Inspector Coles, ‘Bob and Harry’s Trap’, *Pluck*, 9.247 (1909), 18-28 (p. 18). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text).

<sup>134</sup> See Coles, ‘The Boy Detectives’ First Case’, p. 21.

<sup>135</sup> Detective-Inspector Coles, ‘The Disappearance of Dr Glyn’, *Marvel*, 9.257 (1908), 1-15 (p. 3).

<sup>136</sup> Detective-Inspector Coles, ‘The Company Promoter’, *Marvel*, 10.268 (1909), 1-15 (p. 8).

<sup>137</sup> Bob spends his spare moments ‘doing Sandow exercises, very slowly and gently, in order that his muscles might be fit to take on anything they were likely to be called upon for’. Coles, ‘The Boy Detectives’ First Case’, p. 10. Eugen Sandow was a Prussian bodybuilder, the embodiment of the muscular ideal that proliferated from the late nineteenth century, under whose inspiration ‘thousands of ordinary people sought to improve their bodies’. See David L. Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent: Eugen Sandow and the Beginnings of Body Building* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994), p. 4. Adverts for the Sandow’s exercise regimes frequently appeared in the Amalgamated Press papers in the pre-war period, encouraging boy readers to purchase books and equipment to help them to benefit from his system. One prominent example appeared in a half-page advertisement in the *Boys’ Friend* in 1912 for a free trial of ‘Sandow’s Spring Grip Dumb-Bells’, in which strongman Luis Hardt emphasises the benefits of such a scheme of training. Anon, ‘Sandow’s Spring Grip Dumb-Bells’, *Boys’ Friend*, 593 (19 October 1912), 304. Similar adverts appeared in *The Scout*, such as that for ‘a NEW BOOK, showing how Sandow won Health and Fame, beautifully illustrated, and explaining how every reader of THE SCOUT may not only obtain the Stamina and Physique which are so necessary to the successful Tracker, but also gain the Physical perfection which is so universally admired and sought after’. Anon, ‘Sandow’s

figure, offering a point of identification for the working-class boy readers of these stories and granting them access to the middle-class, Holmesian genius, Harry Fairfax.

Originally, Harry and Bob's relationship is divided along class lines and runs parallel to that of the adult master-detective/boy assistant or, more directly, with the relationship between middle-class boy detective, Ernest Keen, and his lower-class boy followers in the Band of Light. However, while Ernest Keen disseminates his own middle-class ideologies to his working-class followers in order to improve them only as far as their class status allows – Keen remains firmly superior to his disciples throughout his serial – the relationship between Harry and Bob is mutually beneficial and the gap between them diminishes to such an extent that it is almost negligible later in the series. As Bob begins to work alongside his social and intellectual superior, his own skills – like those of the lesser Scout Patrol member under the guidance of his Patrol Leader – improve to the extent that he is able to offer a significant contribution to the detective team.<sup>138</sup> The reduction of the gap between Bob and Harry begins in 'The Strange Case of Lieutenant Forester' (*Marvel*, 1908) where the narrator, Detective-Inspector Coles, points out that:

Harry, with all his brilliant reasoning, was ever accustomed to rely on Bob's sound common sense and practical blunt way of dealing with things, much as a skilful and daring navigator to unknown and dangerous waters relies on his anchor and cable.

(p. 6)

Although Bob still plays a supporting role, it is characterised as a vital one. The emphasis here on the value of common sense to detective work is more strongly

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Free Book', *The Scout*, 4.97 (19 February 1910), 461. Thus, Bob's implementation of Sandow exercises perhaps provides a point of identification between Bob and the boy readers of the Amalgamated Press papers, along with those belonging to the Scout movement.

<sup>138</sup> The Scout Patrol, as defined in the 1908 edition of *Scouting for Boys*, followed a hierarchical system based on merit and experience. The Patrol Leader was in overall command of his Patrol, supported by a corporal. The rest of the Patrol was made up of first- or second-class Scouts, their rank depending on the tests that they had passed. At the bottom of the pile was the tenderfoot – the new recruit who had not yet passed the test to become a second-class Scout. See Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 33.



emphasised in the story that follows. ‘The Football Conspiracy’ (*Marvel*, 1908), which is not, like earlier stories, narrated by Coles, constructs a binary opposition between Harry – ‘one of those imaginative fellows gifted with intuition’ – and Bob, ‘who can see the end and reason of a mystery [. . .] by deduction – that is to say logical reasoning’.<sup>139</sup> It is the combination of these two apparently mutually exclusive qualities, the story suggests, that makes the ideal detective and the boys argue that, by working together, ‘we do a lot better than any single individual in the same line of business’ (p. 3). The boys’ representation here is not quite consistent with that in the rest of the series. Elsewhere Bob is not so much renowned for ‘the heavy reasoning’, nor is Harry’s skill confined to ‘blessed intuitions’ (p. 2). This, along with other inconsistencies, such as Bob’s uncharacteristic lead role in the story, the emphasis upon the negotiation of the boys’ detective fees, and the absence of Coles as both a character within and a narrator of the story suggests that this narrative was not penned by the series’ regular author. Later stories revert to the patterns dominant in preceding stories, with Coles identified as the author and narrator once more. Nevertheless, the gap between Bob and Harry continues to diminish in the stories that follow.

In ‘The Cat’s-Eye’ (*Marvel*, 1909), Coles emphasises the value of Bob’s ‘native shrewdness’, which ‘has been sharpened wonderfully of late by the whetstone of experience’.<sup>140</sup> This sharpening of Bob’s ‘native shrewdness’ is clearly apparent in his swift discovery in ‘The Crimson Crocus’ (*Marvel*, 1909) of the whereabouts of the hidden treasure as an astonished Harry laments, ‘[i]t took me two hours’ exhaustive analysis to get to that conclusion, and you’ve jumped straight on it’ (p. 14). While Bob’s conclusion only affirms what Harry already knows, the rapidity with which he forms his theory, compared to Harry’s ‘two hours’ exhaustive analysis’ suggests his

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<sup>139</sup> Anon, ‘The Football Conspiracy’, *Marvel*, 9.259 (1908), 1-14 (p. 2). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>140</sup> Detective-Inspector Coles, ‘The Cat’s-Eye’, *Marvel*, 10.271 (1909), 1-14 (p. 3).

potential to supersede Harry in the role of lead detective. In ‘The Company Promoter’ (Marvel, 1909), Bob’s potential as lead investigator is more fully realised as he provides a plausible theory for the presence of gun cartridges that do not belong to the murder suspect, Andover English, but to the father of one of his supposed victims, while Harry ‘missed the target altogether’ (p. 9). Although Bob himself admits the rarity of his intellectual contributions to their cases, claiming ‘[i]t’s not often I give you the lead, is it?’ (p. 9), his ability to do so here suggests a further closure of the gap between the junior partner and the boy super-detective, ensuring that, for the lower-class boy reader who identifies with Bob over Harry, the ideal of boyhood which initially appears to be embodied by Harry is now within his grasp. The erosion of class hierarchy here cultivates an atmosphere of inclusivity and equality, endowing working-class boy readers with a notion of self-worth by suggesting that they too can become heroes.

While individual development is important, however, the ideal of boyhood and of good citizenship which emerges both in the Scout movement and in Bob and Harry’s stories is not constructed through the boy’s individual exploits, but through his achievements as part of a team. The emphasis on the boys’ strength as a team is reinforced in ‘The King’s Messenger’ (Marvel, 1909), where master-criminal ‘The Mask’ considers recruiting the boys as his accomplices as he is:

impressed, I think, especially by the wonderful harmony which existed in the work together of two characters so widely different. They were, together, just the kind of arm he wanted – subtlety combined with staunchness, energy with strength, tenacity with obedience, suppleness with stubbornness.<sup>141</sup>

This emphasis on the mutual benefit of the boys pooling their individual talents echoes the ethos of the Scout movement where the Patrol system is used as a means of

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<sup>141</sup> Detective-Inspector Coles, ‘The King’s Messenger; Or The Mystery of the Anagram’, *Marvel*, 9.60 (1909), 1-12 (p. 7). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

developing the character and abilities of an individual,<sup>142</sup> and where boys are encouraged ‘to stand shoulder to shoulder’, regardless of class or circumstances, in order ‘to keep England up against outside enemies’.<sup>143</sup>

Bob and Harry, with their vastly different class backgrounds, temperaments, characteristics and skills, offer a perfect example of boys pulling together for the good of the nation. ‘The Mask’, the criminal who has recognised the value of the harmony between the two boy detectives, is unable to recruit them to his criminal network because of ‘the solid British stuff that was at the root of all of the good qualities in those two lads’ (‘The King’s Messenger’, p. 7). After preventing a crucial dispatch from reaching the hands of Britain’s enemies, the boys’ status as assets to Britain, playing a key role in the defence of the Empire, is corroborated by Kaiser Wilhelm himself in response to D. I. Coles’s claim that Harry and Bob are:

‘Good bits of old Britain, sire!’  
And I was glad of the wintry, covetous glint in the Emperor’s grey eyes when he returned:  
‘Would to Heaven I had a thousand such!’  
I even made so bold as to remark, in my bald way:  
‘These two would beat any thousand Germans, sir.’  
He stared at me, then—  
‘I believe you,’ he said; and slung on his heel and walked away.  
(‘The King’s Messenger’, p. 12)

Coles’s hyperbolic praise of Harry and Bob as staunch defenders of Empire runs throughout the series. The boys are held up as shining examples of patriotism and Britishness, to which the Amalgamated Press’s boy readers should aspire. Harry is, according to Coles:

built of the stuff that walks up to the cannon’s mouth when duty commands or patriotism calls; and I am sure that if he had one passion in his life that absorbed or discredited his schemes of service, it was the love of country.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> See Mario Sica, ‘Introduction’, in Mario Sica (ed.), *Playing the Game: A Baden-Powell Compendium* (Basingstoke and Oxford: Macmillan, 2007), pp. 5-10 (p. 7-8) and Baden-Powell, *Aids to Scoutmastership*, p. 52.

<sup>143</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, pp. 281-2.

<sup>144</sup> Detective-Inspector Coles, ‘The Man of the Mask’, *Pluck*, 9.250 (1909), 16-27 (p. 26).

While Harry is the perfect patriot and officer, Bob is the model of British pluck and tenacity, the ideal private with ‘the capacity of a thoroughbred British bulldog’ (‘The Boy Detectives’ First Case’, p. 10). The series celebrates the boy detectives’ individual qualities and characteristics while emphasising that it is their interaction with each other that makes them truly great. Bob and Harry themselves conclude that:

‘no one man can be a really great detective.’  
‘Not so great as two—say, you and I—working together, each specially gifted.’  
(‘The Football Conspiracy’, p. 2)

Thus, the super-detective is replaced by a model within which a boy reader of any class or ability can find a place: the super-team.

This series not only provides boy readers with a more realistic, accessible model of the boy detective through a partnership which emphasises that teamwork is the key to success, but also directly addresses the issue of boy readers’ own contribution as British citizens, spurring them on to become active participants in the Empire that they will soon inherit. Although Harry and Bob are lauded as perfect specimens of British boyhood, one story in the series, at least, expresses anxieties that the rest of the youthful generation are lagging behind. In ‘Defending his Home!’ (*Marvel*, 1909), the German villain, Stein, delivers a damning indictment of the condition of the youth of Britain:

If this Britain of yours had more youths like you we should cease to build ships. But, save for very few, you are a nation of lazy louts and loafers, who want other people to get ready to fight their battles. That is why, one day, we shall come and rule you with a rod of iron, and make your lazy ones learn how to fight!<sup>145</sup>

While this critique, in the mouth of a German criminal, could easily be dismissed as the bitterness or ignorance of a foreign rival, Bob’s reaction to Stein’s words emphasises the seriousness of this message to boy readers:

Bob lay gnashing his teeth [. . .] over the sting of venomous, appalling truth that lay beneath the German’s sneering words.  
‘A nation of lazy louts and loafers, who want other people to fight their battles!’

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<sup>145</sup> Detective-Inspector Coles, ‘Defending his Home!’, *Marvel*, 10.272 (1909), 1-18 (p. 10). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

The words rankled in Bob's heart, and he wondered bitterly which order was the cheapest and meanest—the people who sneered at the Territorials or the people who vociferously cheered the new recruits to cover their own lack of courage in coming forward themselves?

(p. 10)

As Bob acknowledges the 'appalling truth' of Stein's assessment of the state of Britain's boyhood, so the boy reader – who is likely to identify with Bob above any other character in the series – is encouraged to question his behaviour and attitude towards the British nation and to reflect upon his own contribution to the defence of the Empire. While the story's conclusion leaves no doubt as to the capability of Harry and Bob as defenders of Empire, after they save Britain from a German attack by retrieving the British airship plans that the German Aeronaut Corps are trying to destroy (p. 18), the reputation of Britain's real-life boys is less secure; the intention here, no doubt, is to prompt boy readers to reconsider and, if necessary, to redress their own national role and identity.

This anxiety about the idleness of Britain's boys during a period of national instability and vulnerability to outside attacks was deeply embedded in the Scout movement, which emerged contemporaneously with the Harry and Bob stories. In *Scouting for Boys* (1908), Robert Baden-Powell warns his potential recruits not to be 'disgraced like the young Romans, who lost the Empire of their forefathers by being wishy-washy slackers without any go or patriotism in them'.<sup>146</sup> This anxiety about and disapproval of 'slackers' and 'wasters' was prominent in early Scout literature. In E. le Breton Martin's 'The Boys of the Otter Patrol' (1908), a Scout story serialised in the organisation's weekly magazine, *The Scout*, a 'waster' appears in the form of Percy Judkins, the Otter Patrol's cigarette-smoking, whisky-drinking arch-enemy, who spends

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<sup>146</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 12.

his time sneering at the Scouts and sabotaging their plans.<sup>147</sup> Percy's main failing, however, is his inactivity since, while he knows the theory of Scouting, he has 'no practical experience in such matters' and, the text informs its readers, '[i]t is deeds that count, not words'.<sup>148</sup> The 'waster' figure was addressed variously as the 'slacker', the 'hooligan' and the 'ninny' in Scout literature, but the primary criticism remained the same. Accounts of such figures focused on what they could not do:

He can't run or play any game well, but he can call out silly remarks after you—when he is sure you won't catch him.  
He couldn't cook his own grub, or find his way, or track another chap, or hit a haystack with a rifle, and he wouldn't go out alone in the dark if he were paid to!<sup>149</sup>

Wasters are, according to *The Scout*, so reprehensible because they are 'bent on doing nothing'.<sup>150</sup> The Scout movement reacted against the waster by encouraging its members to be physically active and 'to play the game whatever it may be, and not be merely onlookers and loafers'.<sup>151</sup>

This emphasis upon activity was not limited to the pastimes which boys undertook in their private life, but also pertained to their public role as patriots and defenders of Empire. An article in the *Boys' Friend* in 1910, which formed part of a series entitled 'The Trials and Troubles of a Boy Scout', advised boys on the importance of active patriotism:

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<sup>147</sup> See E. le Breton Martin, 'The Boys of the Otter Patrol', *The Scout*, 1.13 (11 July 1908), 297-300 (p. 300) and E. le Breton Martin, 'The Boys of the Otter Patrol', *The Scout*, 1.19 (22 August 1908), 443-6 (p. 445). In *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell advises boys of the dangers of smoking and drinking. He warns that 'when a lad smokes before he is fully grown up it is almost sure to make his heart feeble' and that it 'spoils his eyesight, and also his sense of smell, which is of greatest importance to him for scouting on active service'. Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 197. Baden-Powell suggests that drinking alcohol is responsible for 'a great deal of crime, and also of illness, and even madness' and informs boys that it is 'simply impossible for a man who drinks to be a scout'. Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 199. The 1904 *Report on Physical Deterioration* stated that 'the question of "drink" occupies a prominent place among the causes of degeneration', drawing a link between alcoholism and lunacy and an increased infant mortality rate among the children of alcoholic parents. See *Report on Physical Deterioration*, I, p. 30 and p. 32. The report also contains a section on the dangers of juvenile smoking. See *Report on Physical Deterioration*, I, p. 76.

<sup>148</sup> E. le Breton Martin, 'The Boys of the Otter Patrol', *The Scout*, 1.16 (1 August 1908), 371-4 (p. 374).

<sup>149</sup> Anon, 'A Ninny', *The Scout*, 6.141 (24 December 1910), 250.

<sup>150</sup> Anon, 'Hooligan Taming', *The Scout*, 1.12 (4 July 1908), 262.

<sup>151</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 297.

What is being loyal? It isn't just waving Union Jacks and singing 'God Save the King' on State occasions. Not by a long chalk.

No, I should think that the best way to show loyalty is by playing up—by doing our level best to be all that our King would like us to be.

What would the King like the boys of his country to be? Well, truthful, honourable, brave, strong, useful and helpful to others, courteous, kind to animals, obedient to orders, cheerful, thrifty—everything that a scout is supposed to be, and that every scout does his best to be.<sup>152</sup>

Bob and Harry are perfect examples of the active patriot – the opposite of the flag-waving loafers who prefer to cheer on their heroes rather than becoming heroes themselves:

There was no flourish about them, mind you—none of your big drum, and your trumpeter, and your 'Watch me 'it 'im, guv'nor!' The two lads shrank from brag and bombast and blare like a fish shrinks from dry land. Their way was to learn what they had to do, then to set out and do it—quick and quiet.<sup>153</sup>

They are, thus, ideal role models for boy readers encouraging them to become true patriots and active citizens during a period in which training and development in boyhood was seen as crucial to Britain's future security and prosperity.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Anon, 'The Trials and Troubles of a Boy Scout: The King and the Scouts', *Boys' Friend*, 10.481 (27 August 1910), 206.

<sup>153</sup> Detective-Inspector Coles, 'John Stark's Sacrifice', *Pluck*, 9.249 (1909), 15-27 (p. 18). The Scout movement is critical of ostentatious shows of patriotism taking the place of useful action. A wartime article in *The Scout* criticises those 'boys and lads going about the streets waving flags and shouting Hurrah! on account of the war' and claims that war is 'nothing to shout about', praising Scouts for 'doing actual work for their country instead of shouting out what they would do if—they had the pluck'. See Robert Baden-Powell, 'Scout Yarns: Scouts and the War', *The Scout*, 9.332 (22 August 1914), 1202.

<sup>154</sup> Stephanie Olsen identifies similar ideologies in boys' story papers as a whole during this period, suggesting that '[t]he Edwardian juvenile periodical press, although varied in its methods and motivations, provided a unified message for boys of various classes. It facilitated the transmission of common values and of expected behaviours, in order to educate boys on their future roles as men, husbands, fathers and Britons. It also promoted improvements in their physical health and work-related skills. This education was informal, not too heavy-handed or didactic, and often catered to boys' desire for fun and play. It created a space for boys to be morally instructed outside of the stricter confines of church, chapel, school or even home.' Stephanie Olsen, 'Towards the Modern Man: Edwardian Boyhood in the Juvenile Periodical Press', in Adrienne E. Gavin and Andrew F. Humphries (eds), *Childhood in Edwardian Fiction: Worlds Enough and Time* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 159-74 (p. 172). This new boy detective model, therefore, was one strand of a wider movement to mould boys into model citizens and, in the long term, model men.

### 3.6: The boy reader as detective and the rejection of the Holmesian super-detective: Mark Youall, ‘Maxennis’ and Harry Fairfax and Bob Dawson

Around the time of the inauguration of the Scout movement, there was a shift of emphasis in detective fiction for boy readers, away from the Holmesian genius whom the boy readers could passively admire to more credible, practical boy detectives whom they could actively emulate. While in the 1890s and early 1900s the detective role, both in fiction and reality, was reserved for the adult specialist, through the Scout movement detection was broken down into a set of useful skills which would benefit the real boy in both his personal life and in his role as defender of Empire. *Scouting for Boys* emphasised the importance of training in vital detective skills such as tracking, stalking, observation and deduction, devoting its second instalment to these subjects.

Observation was recognised as ‘a habit to which a boy has to be trained’,<sup>155</sup> and the handbook provided a number of games to encourage the development of this skill.<sup>156</sup> More important than observation, however, was the process of deduction, ‘the art of subsequently reasoning out and extracting the points observed’.<sup>157</sup> It was not enough for the Scout to have a pair of sharp eyes. Baden-Powell’s scheme demanded that ‘[w]hen a scout has learned to notice “sign” [*sic*], he must then learn to “put this and that together”, and so read a *meaning* from what he has seen’.<sup>158</sup> *Scouting for Boys* identified the value of physiognomy – the process of reading character through physical appearance – instructing boys on the significance of facial shape and attire.<sup>159</sup> While

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<sup>155</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 63.

<sup>156</sup> These games included thimble finding, following a trail and observing and memorising items in shop windows. See Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 75.

<sup>157</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 63.

<sup>158</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 89.

<sup>159</sup> Baden-Powell states that ‘[t]he shape of the face gives a good guide to a man’s character’ and he invites readers to compare the image of a smiling, healthy looking boy, with those of the unintelligent, lower-class, potentially disabled ‘other’ and the untrustworthy, racial ‘other’. He offers his readers some further pointers on reading character through appearance, claiming that waxed moustaches signify ‘vanity and sometimes drink’, while the ‘quiff is a sure sign of silliness’. Baden-Powell also instructs Boy Scouts on how to tell character through the way a man wears his hat: ‘If slightly on one side, the wearer is good-natured: if it is worn very much on one side, he is a swaggerer: if on the back of his head, he is bad at



Baden-Powell suggested that reading character ‘is of immense value in trade and commerce, especially for a shop-assistant or salesman in persuading people to buy goods, or in detecting would-be swindlers,’<sup>160</sup> there is also a notion that Scouts were being trained to identify enemies to the Empire, both internal – criminals, wastrels and the physically deteriorated – and external – those foreign spies who were becoming increasingly prominent in fiction and in the public consciousness, if not in reality. Detective skills, therefore, had a practical value for boys both in peacetime and in the widely anticipated coming war.

As boys themselves were encouraged to hone their detective skills, the Holmesian super-detective model – which, by the late 1900s was no longer innovative, had many imitators and was already starting to be parodied – was rejected in favour of a more realistic and accessible model, which demystified the detective role.<sup>161</sup> For example, eighteen-year-old Mark Youall, who appeared in stories in the *Marvel* from

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paying his debts: if worn straight on the top, he is probably honest but very dull.’ Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, pp. 68-9.

<sup>160</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 68.

<sup>161</sup> Stephen Knight emphasises the decline in standard of the Holmes stories after his resurrection in the early-twentieth-century *Strand* short stories: ‘They are still witty, dense with detail, and full of interesting ideas, but lack the street-level anxiety of the early stories. They often reuse the master criminal as an enemy and, as Ousby has noted, they tend to take on “a grossly macabre tone” (1976: 171) [. . .] These excesses show how Doyle was squeezing his imagination, and none of the future stories, nor the last novella, *The Valley of Fear* (1914), which returns in rather mechanical mode to American material, were to match the impact of the work that made Holmes, as entertainment, object of admiration and fantasy protection, a household name.’ Stephen Knight, *Crime Fiction since 1800: Detection, Death, Diversity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 62. Raymond Chandler was deeply critical of the Holmes stories, observing that ‘Conan Doyle made mistakes which completely invalidated some of his stories [. . .] and Sherlock Holmes after all is mostly an attitude and a few dozen lines of unforgettable dialogue’. Raymond Chandler, ‘The Simple Art of Murder’ (1944), in Howard Haycraft (ed.), *The Art of the Mystery Story* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc, 1992), pp. 222-37 (p. 226). Doyle himself acknowledged that readers were beginning to challenge Holmes’s detective genius in particular stories. He recalls that ‘[i]n “The Adventure of the Priory School” Holmes remarks in an offhand way that by looking at a bicycle track on a damp moor one can say which way it was heading. I had so many remonstrances upon this point, varying from pity to anger, that I took out my bicycle and tried. [. . .] I found that my correspondents were right and I was wrong’. Arthur Conan Doyle, *Memories and Adventures* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2007 [1924]), p. 91. Parodies of Sherlock Holmes appeared as early as 1892 with stories of Sherwood Hoakes and Chasemore in the *Ludgate Weekly*, Sherlaw Kombs and Dr Watson in *The Idler* and Shylock Oams and Wilkins in *Tit-Bits*. Peter Ridgway Watt and Joseph Green, *The Alternative Sherlock Holmes: Pastiches, Parodies and Copies* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 190-2. Watt and Green identify thirteen different Holmesian parodies in stories in the 1890s. This number increases significantly in the 1900s as another twenty new characters emerge. See Watt and Green, *The Alternative Sherlock Holmes*, pp. 190-204.

1907-9 is identified as ‘obviously a born detective’, but the skills with which he is credited are not beyond boy readers who are prepared to undertake a course of self-training and improvement.<sup>162</sup> Mark’s ‘wonderfully retentive memory, allied with eyes that missed nothing over which they passed, and a clear and well-reasoning mind’,<sup>163</sup> which make him well suited to detective work, are skills which the Scout movement aims to develop in its members. Scout games and exercises in observation and deduction, and tests in memory such as ‘Kim’s game’, described in *Scouting for Boys*,<sup>164</sup> demonstrate an expectation that such qualities can be acquired by boys with a degree of practice. What are, for Mark, innate detective skills, therefore, are not unattainable for the readers of his stories. The accessibility of Mark’s detective methods is emphasised more clearly in ‘The Detective’s Strategy’ (*Marvel*, 1907/8):

There are not many geniuses, either in crime or any other branch of human endeavour, and, given certain circumstances, a man of trained intelligence, great powers of observation, a clear brain, and some imagination, may tell to within a little how the great majority of his fellows will act.<sup>165</sup>

A man, or even a boy, of ‘trained intelligence’ can apparently read the signs at least almost as well as the natural genius. Furthermore, Holmesian genius is here rejected in favour of the more easily identifiable and hence accessible detective processes of ‘knowledge, observation [. . .] detection of motive, and insight into the human mind’ (p. 16).

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<sup>162</sup> Brian Kingston, ‘The Tracking of Mark Youall’, *Marvel*, 8.197 (9 November 1907), 12-24 (p. 12).

<sup>163</sup> Brian Kingston, ‘Mark Youall’s Profession’, *Marvel*, 8.191 (28 September 1907), 12-23 (p. 14). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text. While Mark Youall is technically an adult detective, I use his first name as he is commonly referred to as Mark throughout the series. This is emphasised in his introduction in ‘Mark Youall’s Profession’: ‘Everyone called the lad Mark within ten minutes of making his acquaintance. Mark Youall was his full and proper nomenclature, but, somehow or other, everybody forgot the surname. Mark he was to all and sundry’ (p. 13).

<sup>164</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, pp. 48-9. ‘Kim’s game’ is a memory test inspired by the one undertaken by the boy protagonist of Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* (1900-1) as part of his training for Government intelligence work. For further details see chapter 3, n. 185.

<sup>165</sup> Brian Kingston, ‘The Detective’s Strategy’, *Marvel* (1907/8), 14-26 (p. 16). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

Mark reads detective fiction in the same way that he reads the world around him – with an eye for detail as, following a theft at his workplace, he applies a simple trick used in a story in ‘a popular weekly penny paper’ in order to discover the identity of the man who has stolen a knife from a fellow worker (‘Mark Youall’s Profession’, p. 14). While in reality Mark’s success derives from his keen observation, retentive memory and practical application of his knowledge, Mark’s companions ‘looked upon the lad’s cleverness in discovering the thief—in jest or earnest—as little short of miraculous’ (‘Mark Youall’s Profession’, p. 14). Mark himself, however, firmly rejects the miraculous and strives to disassociate himself from the fictional super-detective. When a client prompts Mark for theories in ‘Mark Youall’s Peril’ (*Marvel*, 1909), shortly after his arrival at the crime scene, Mark mockingly replies:

You thought that five minutes after I entered this room I should be able to give you a complete explanation as to the why and wherefore of this unhappy business, a complete description of the culprit or culprits, and probably an accurate description of his or their appearance and present whereabouts. I’m sorry to disappoint you, Sir Charles, but, at present, I cannot. If you want someone who is able to fulfil your expectations you will have to find the living counterpart of one of those heroes of detective fiction. I don’t claim to be such a one.<sup>166</sup>

Mark rejects the Holmesian ‘detective flourishes’<sup>167</sup> which allow the fictional investigator to draw immediate conclusions without a discernable methodology, and instead provides boy readers with an example that they can follow.

A story which more clearly challenges the Holmesian super-detective model is ‘Maxennis, Detective’, serialised in the *Magnet* in 1908. Like Harry Fairfax and Bob Dawson, the boy detective heroes of this serial, collectively called ‘Maxennis’, differ in their detective methods and characteristics: Frank advocates the value of imagination, intuition and even luck in investigative work, while Robert is the embodiment of

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<sup>166</sup> Brian Kingston, ‘Mark Youall’s Peril’, *Marvel*, 9.225 (1909), 16-25 (p. 16).

<sup>167</sup> Knight, *Crime Fiction*, p. 57.

common sense, practicality and tedious groundwork.<sup>168</sup> Despite the emphasis on teamwork and the value of both boys' contribution,<sup>169</sup> however, the serial appears to champion Robert's methodology over that of Frank. It rejects the model of the Holmesian genius in favour of that of the practical investigator – the latter being a figure whose success is based on common sense and hard work, something potentially achievable for the boy reader. For Robert, Holmesian detective stories are 'a precious sight too romantic; there's a good deal of cold, hard realism in actual fact, as we'll see; it's not the fairy tale business that writers represent it!'<sup>170</sup> He posits that, in real life, 'any ordinary intelligent chap, if he gave his mind to it, could do as well as ever these marvellous fellows in books do'.<sup>171</sup> Robert favours a more realistic and accessible model of the detective, such as the humble policeman, over the Holmesian super-detective.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> In this partnership, however, there is not the same level of social and intellectual disparity as that which exists between Harry and Bob at the beginning of their series. In 'Maxennis, Detective' it is a case of profession – Frank Dennis is the son of a doctor – versus property – Robert Lomax's father 'was a farmer of some consideration'. Lewis Hockley, 'Maxennis, Detective', *Magnet*, 1.2 (22 February 1908), 15-16 (p. 15). The two boys enjoy equal status in their joint role of solicitor's clerk, and this equality translates to their detective role when they are dismissed from their previous occupation.

<sup>169</sup> The models of the Holmesian genius and the hardworking, practical investigator both have their part to play in the serial and it is, the text suggests, a combination of the two which gains results: 'it is work, sheer hard work, plus some intelligence, plus some luck, that helps a man to solve mysteries'. Lewis Hockley, 'Maxennis, Detective', *Magnet*, 1.7 (28 March 1908), 14-16 (p. 16).

<sup>170</sup> Lewis Hockley, 'Maxennis, Detective', *Magnet*, 1.4 (7 March 1908), 15-16 (p. 15).

<sup>171</sup> Hockley, 'Maxennis, Detective', 1.1, p. 15.

<sup>172</sup> Robert and Frank discuss the role of the police in fiction and reality. Robert contends: "My idea is that the working out of these mysteries only wants a fair amount of common-sense thinking. Don't the police do some wonderful bits of work? Yet no one puts them into books."

"But the police," objected Frank, "are always such fools; they can't see things which a Sherlock Holmes does; or, if they do see 'em, they don't know what to make of 'em."

"Of course in books," Lomax said impatiently, "it's got to be like that, or the detective wouldn't be made to appear so clever." Hockley, 'Maxennis, Detective', 1.2, p. 15. In *The Ascent of the Detective*, Haia Shpayer-Makov identifies the trend in detective fiction of the nineteenth and early twentieth century of favouring the private detective over the police detective – both in terms of his role in the narrative and his level of detective skill, which ensured that 'the literary image of the police detective did not replicate his prevalent position and image in newspapers and periodicals'. She observes, in particular, that '[e]specially when private detectives worked alongside police detectives, they are more likely to be painted as more rational, skilful and effective than the official detectives'. The police in the Holmes stories, she argues, '[e]ven when successful in their investigations, [. . .] are represented as conventional, distrustful of theory, and above all unimaginative and devoid of the mental acuity that characterizes Sherlock Holmes. [. . .] Holmes is always ahead of the police, anticipating events and seeing the details as well as the overall picture.' See Haia Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective*:

Thus, while the imaginative Frank Dennis looks upon Holmes's detective genius and flair with 'admiring wonder',<sup>173</sup> the practical Robert Lomax finds nothing of value in Holmes's example that the boys can apply to their own detective work. When the boys find a purse in the street, belonging to a George E. Percival, Robert emphasises the uselessness of Holmes as a model for real-life detection:

Well, Sherlock Holmes, Esquire—so I judge from what you've told me—would just look at these bits of things out of the corner of one eye, put his finger-tips together, and tell us off-hand, George E. Percival's age, weight, appearance, condition of health, what is the colour of his hair and eyes, whether he's knock-kneed, narrow chested, or squints; whether he's a millionaire, and, if so, if he made his money out of oil, pork, coal, or railways, and a bookful of other bits of information, in addition to his present whereabouts in London. [. . .] He'd tell us all we wanted to know and more,' went on Lomax, heedlessly. 'And now I want to know what you'd suggest we should do as we haven't got him here.'<sup>174</sup>

While Frank, caught up in the romance of the Holmes stories, is unable to devise a viable plan for locating the purse's owner, Robert, with Holmesian panache reveals the man's whereabouts. Robert soon shatters the illusion of his Holmesian greatness, however, as he reveals the source of his information, which he has obtained through '[c]ommon sense, observation, and good memory', by recalling the details of a newspaper report:

I read the case this morning, and while we were walking back home from our walk the name on the card was running in my head. It seemed familiar; and five minutes after we sat down here I recollected where I'd seen it before. [. . .] And it just proves what I've said, that the detective business isn't what such chaps as Conan Doyle and the rest of 'em make it out.'<sup>175</sup>

Robert thus emphasises the value of common sense and straightforward reasoning over the drama and mystique of what Stephen Knight identifies as Holmes's 'arias of

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*Police Sleuths in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 226, p. 246 and p. 249 respectively. In police memoirs, which became popular from the late nineteenth century, authors frequently sought to differentiate themselves from the fictional detective models of the bumbling policeman and the private detective genius, denouncing the investigative methods of the latter. See Haia Shpayer-Makov, 'Explaining the Rise and Success of Detective Memoirs in Britain', in Clive Emsley and Haia Shpayer-Makov (eds), *Police Detectives in History, 1750-1950* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 103-33 (pp. 119-22).

<sup>173</sup> Hockley, 'Maxennis, Detective', 1.1, p. 15.

<sup>174</sup> Hockley, 'Maxennis, Detective', 1.2, p. 15.

<sup>175</sup> Hockley, 'Maxennis, Detective', 1.2, p. 16.

interpretation and mind-reading’, the ‘interpretative magic as Holmes decodes a hat, a watch, a stick, even just the appearance or clothing of a visitor’.<sup>176</sup>

Yet, while Robert identifies ‘interpretative magic’ as Holmes’s dominant methodology, Knight argues that this technique plays only a peripheral and superficial role in Holmes’s investigations:

These sequences create a famous brand-image, but it is striking that, as with Dupin, they never in fact reveal the mystery of the story: they are only detective flourishes, used for characterisation and aura alone. Holmes’s actual methods of discovery are a good deal more ordinary – and so with some relief the reader can actually understand the crucial manoeuvre in the exposing of the criminal and imaginatively participate in it.<sup>177</sup>

Frank draws upon Holmes’s more banal methods in his own investigations, as his recollection of Holmes’s detective process in ‘The Adventure of Black Peter’ (1904) prompts him to probe his client’s background in order to discover the identity of the culprit who is sending her threatening letters:

‘That’s the theory on which Sherlock Holmes worked pretty considerably!’ exclaimed Dennis.

‘Oh, Sherlock Holmes!’

‘Don’t you recollect that story in which he found out who it was that had murdered an old sea captain by sticking a harpoon clear through him?’

‘Never read it.’

‘Well, it was,’ Dennis went on, overlooking the scorn of the great detective hero which his chum was at no pains to hide. ‘He raked up the dead man’s history, found out what enemies he’d made when he was skipper of a whaling-boat, and was able, by that means, to prove that the suspected man was quite innocent, and that an altogether different chap was the murderer.’

‘H’m! Glad to hear it! Glad to know he was so sensible.’<sup>178</sup>

Robert, who has already approved Frank’s scheme as ‘logical’,<sup>179</sup> begrudgingly allows Holmes the credit here. Notably, Robert has not read the story in question and this, coupled with his earlier prefacing of his assessment of Holmes’s methods with the

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<sup>176</sup> Knight, *Crime Fiction*, p. 56.

<sup>177</sup> Knight, *Crime Fiction*, pp. 56-7. Doyle himself draws attention to these ‘detective flourishes’, stating that Holmes ‘shows his powers by what the South Americans now call *Sherlockholmitos*, which means clever little deductions, which often have nothing to do with the matter in hand, but impress the reader with a general sense of power’. Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, p. 91.

<sup>178</sup> Hockley, ‘Maxennis, Detective’, 1.7, p. 15.

<sup>179</sup> Hockley, ‘Maxennis, Detective’, 1.7, p. 14.

caveat ‘so I judge from what you’ve told me’,<sup>180</sup> suggests that, rather than reading the Holmes stories with a critical eye he has, perhaps, not read them at all, relying instead upon second-hand information and a common perception of Holmes held by the general public.

The serial, therefore, does not offer an outright condemnation or rejection of the Holmesian model but instead recognises the drawbacks of the fantastical veneer of such a detective for less discerning readers, who are attracted to and distracted by Holmes’s super-detective characteristics and fail to look beyond his ‘detective flourishes’.<sup>181</sup> Robert Lomax may be sharp enough to resist Holmes’s ‘interpretative magic’,<sup>182</sup> and Frank Dennis astute enough to identify and emulate some of Holmes’s more banal methodologies, but some of the boy readers of the Amalgamated Press papers were probably more easily seduced by Holmes’s almost mythic reputation. This serial, by contrast, demystifies the detective role, breaking it down into a group of skills which are attainable for boy readers and implicitly encouraging boys to hone these skills as part of their training for manhood. By posing an alternative to the Holmesian super-detective, both the ‘Maxennis, Detective’ serial and the Mark Youall series perform a stronger ideological function than earlier boy detective models with regard to their emphasis on preparing boys for their role in the Empire, not only suggesting that ordinary boys can become detectives – and, by extension useful and heroic members of society – but also showing them how to fulfil this role. These stories encourage boy readers to engage in more depth with the detective narrative. Where boy readers of the Amalgamated Press papers probably read the Stanley Dare series as passive admirers – unable to emulate the fantastic Holmesian ideal – the readers of the ‘Maxennis, Detective’ serial and the Mark

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<sup>180</sup> Hockley, ‘Maxennis, Detective’, 1.2, p. 15.

<sup>181</sup> Knight, *Crime Fiction*, p. 57.

<sup>182</sup> Knight, *Crime Fiction*, p. 56.

Youall series are encouraged to recognise and cultivate a set of skills, including good observation and memory, and values, such as common sense and a strong work ethic.

It is perhaps in the Harry and Bob series, discussed earlier in this chapter, however, that the connection between boy detective and boy reader is at its strongest. Here, boy readers are invited to interact more directly with the detective narrative through the creation of competitions which encourage readers to engage in detective work themselves, testing their skills as they are challenged to solve parts of the mysteries which Harry and Bob encounter. The first example occurs in ‘The King’s Messenger’ (*Marvel*, 1909):

Every Boy should know how to be a Detective.

2/6 FOR THE FIRST CORRECT ANSWER RECEIVED

Where was Harry Fairfax, the Boy detective when Kola entered the room and stole the jappanned box containing the dummy documents. (*For this incident see Chapters 5 and 6 of “The King’s Messenger.”*)<sup>183</sup>

(p. 12)

Here the boy reader is afforded the opportunity to adopt the role of detective himself, engaging with the very mystery that confronts his heroic fictional counterparts. This intellectual interaction recurs in several of the stories that follow, as readers are asked to locate hidden objects and, in some cases, to mark this location on an accompanying diagram of the vicinity in which such objects are concealed.<sup>184</sup>

Harry and Bob’s series parallels the interactive approach towards detective fiction promoted in *Scouting for Boys*, which offered suggestions for games and

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<sup>183</sup> These competitions are an early precursor to the do-it-yourself detective stories of the late twentieth century, such as the Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys Be A Detective Mystery Stories (1984-5), in which the reader can select a course to follow from a number of narrative options, or computer games such as the Nancy Drew games produced by Her Interactive from 1998 onwards. As technology becomes more advanced, further interactive formats are being utilised. For example, Karen King’s Amy Carter Mysteries – produced by Top That! Publishing, with the first title released in 2008 – combine books with a series of podcasts which contain additional audio evidence to be downloaded at specific points in the narrative.

<sup>184</sup> For examples, see Coles, ‘The Crimson Crocus’, p. 11; Detective-Inspector Coles, ‘The Treasure of Drayton Manor’, *Marvel*, 10.270 (1909), 1-15 (p. 11); Coles, ‘The Cat’s-Eye’, p. 11; and Coles, ‘Defending his Home!’, p. 14.



activities inspired by famous detective stories. Notable amongst these is ‘Kim’s Game’ – a memory test derived from one undertaken in Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* (1900-1) by the eponymous boy hero as he is trained for Government intelligence work.<sup>185</sup> Closer to the competitions featured in Bob and Harry’s stories, however, were Scout activities based on Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories. Baden-Powell recommends the *Memoirs or Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* as examples of good stories for Scoutmasters to read to Scouts to teach them about deduction; he instructs Scoutmasters to ‘question the boys afterwards as to which details suggested certain solutions, to see that they really have grasped the method’.<sup>186</sup> A more interactive example involves replicating the crime scene of ‘The Resident Patient’ (1893) and then to ‘*let each Scout (or patrol) come in separately and have three minutes in which to investigate*’ [sic].<sup>187</sup> In devising such exercises from the Holmes stories, the Scout movement adapted texts aimed predominantly at an adult, middle-class male audience of the late nineteenth century to the perceived needs of working- and middle-class boys in the early twentieth century. The ideologies and examples that were disseminated to Boy Scouts through their interaction with the Holmes stories were mediated firstly through Baden-Powell and then by the Scoutmaster who organised these recommended activities for his Scouts. The Harry and Bob stories, by contrast, specifically addressed early-twentieth-century boy readers, inculcating in them more directly the values and practices of the

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<sup>185</sup> The instructions for Kim’s Game are as follows: ‘Place about twenty or thirty small articles on a tray, or on the table or floor, such as two or three different kinds of buttons, pencils, corks, rags, nuts, stones, knives, string, photos—anything you can find—and cover them over with a cloth or coat.

Make a list of these, and make a column opposite for each boy’s replies. [. . .] Then uncover the articles for one minute by your watch, or while you count to sixty at the rate of “quick march”. Then cover them over again.

Take each boy separately and let him whisper to you each of the articles that he can remember, and mark it off on your scoring sheet.

The boy who remembers the greatest numbers wins the game.’ Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, pp. 48-9.

<sup>186</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 94.

<sup>187</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 96.

series' boy protagonists and encouraging them to participate in the action as equals with their detective heroes without adult intervention from beyond the fictional realm.

From the early twentieth century, boy characters played a more proactive and central role in Amalgamated Press detective fiction aimed at boy readers. Before the emergence of the Scout movement, however, these boy detectives acted merely as signifiers of the desire or need to mobilise boys as defenders of the Empire. Despite their symbolic 'saviour' or super-detective status on their emergence in 1903-4, Nipper, Tinker and Stanley Dare do not promote particular methodologies or ideologies by which the boy reader can adopt this role. Moreover, the boyhood power of these detective characters is short-lived. Nipper and Tinker are repositioned as inferior to Lee and Blake in the stories that followed 'Nelson Lee's Pupil' (1903) and 'Cunning Against Skill' (1904) – a hierarchy which was also maintained in the host of adult detective/boy assistant series which sprang up in imitation of the successful Lee/Nipper and Blake/Tinker partnerships. Meanwhile, Stanley Dare quickly loses his boy detective status to become an adult Holmesian genius to whom boy readers cannot directly relate. By contrast, the Mark Youall stories, the 'Maxennis, Detective' serial and Harry and Bob's series provide boy readers of all classes and abilities with a more accessible model of the boy detective which discourages hero worship invited by adult super-detectives like Blake, Lee and Dare and instead encourages boy readers to become heroes themselves: the skills and characteristics that this new type of boy detective possesses, the texts suggests, are within the grasp of every real-life boy who is willing to work to attain them.

This was a significant development at a time when the Scout movement was attempting to mould Britain's boys into active citizens and loyal defenders of the Empire to counteract the physical and moral degeneration which had apparently gripped

the nation in the early 1900s. As the demands on boys as active citizens of the Empire grew at the beginning of the twentieth century, so too their fictional heroes evolved to provide them with role models in whose footsteps they could more realistically follow in boyhood. In the first decade of the twentieth century, social commentators and reformers recognised that boys of all classes and abilities would have to pull together in order to defend the Empire when they attained manhood. In the context of the emergence of the Scout movement, the boy detective hero of the Amalgamated Press papers began to offer a fictional model of active citizenship which was accessible to all and which cultivated the spirit of participation deemed necessary to fortify Britain against the increasing threat of external foes. With war fast approaching, Britain's boys needed, as Baden-Powell constantly reminded them, to 'Be Prepared'.<sup>188</sup> In the late 1900s, the fictional boy detective began to respond to this necessity.

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<sup>188</sup> This was the Scout motto, which shared its initials with Baden-Powell himself. In the 1908 edition of *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell instructs boys to: 'be prepared for war. Don't be cowards, and be content by merely paying soldiers to do your fighting and dying for you. Do something in your own self-defence. [. . .] Every boy should prepare himself, by learning how to shoot and to drill, to take his share in defence of the Empire, if it should ever be attacked.' Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 277.

## Chapter 4: The Illusion Exposed? The Decline of the Professional Boy Detective in Boys' Story Papers After 1910

### 4.1: Restricting the role of the professional boy detective

While the first decade of the twentieth century marked the ascent of the professional boy detective to a position of prominence in story-paper fiction with the appearance of boy private detective protagonists such as Harry Fairfax and Bob Dawson and 'Maxennis', who made the detective role more accessible for boy readers, as war approached in the 1910s a new barrier emerged between boyhood and detection. The Amalgamated Press story papers began to acknowledge detection as a real-life profession which boys might, one day, enter, but only after achieving adulthood, years of hard work, and usually through joining the police force. Articles about the police force, one-off fictional stories of boys working with the police, and stories such as those of railway detective Mark Youall (*Marvel*, 1907-8) and the 'hunchback detective', Jim Dane (*Boys' Friend*, 1912) about boys who, precluded from police service, seek alternative routes into detective work, emphasised the strictness of police recruitment policies and hence the unlikelihood of boys' induction into the detective profession in an official capacity.<sup>1</sup> The route to becoming a professional private detective, the story papers suggested, was even more challenging and the majority of series which featured boy characters in private detective roles from the 1910s onwards ensured that, regardless of their prominence in the narrative, these figures reverted to featuring as assistants to adult master detectives rather than following in the footsteps of their independent investigator predecessors.

There is, therefore, a sense of regression in the representation of the fictional boy detective as the adult detective/juvenile assistant pattern, present in the

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<sup>1</sup> All three types of material will be discussed in 4.2.

Harmsworths' story papers from their inauguration in the 1890s and widespread throughout the first decade of the twentieth century, was the dominant form of professional boy detective narrative from the 1910s.<sup>2</sup> A host of detective duos arose in imitation of the popular Blake/Tinker and Lee/Nipper partnerships – in both the Amalgamated Press papers and those of their competitors – though none of them achieved the long-term fame of the originals. Better known examples included the Aldine Company's Dixon Brett and Pat Malone, D. C. Thomson's Dixon Hawke and Tommy Burke, the Amalgamated Press's Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake, and the Allied Newspapers' Falcon Swift and Chick Conway.<sup>3</sup> American detective Nick Carter, who first appeared in the *New York Weekly* in 1886, entered the British market in the early twentieth century with his various young assistants, most notably, his adopted son Chickering Valentine, later known as Chick Carter.<sup>4</sup>

Despite variations in these models, on the whole the representation of the detective's assistant in the partnerships mentioned above followed the pattern

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<sup>2</sup> In the early twentieth century, and particularly in the inter-war period, a new amateur form of boy detective emerged to challenge his professional counterpart who flourished in the boy assistant role. This amateur investigator took the form of a schoolboy detective in the newly emerging detective school-story hybrid genre. The schoolboy detective and the detective school story are the focus of chapter 5.

<sup>3</sup> For further information on these partnerships, see E. S. Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys: The Story of Sweeney Todd, Deadwood Dick, Sexton Blake, Billy Bunter, Dick Barton, et al.* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976 [1948]), pp. 165-80. For a list of adult detective/boy assistant stories consulted for this chapter at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, see Appendix 2.

<sup>4</sup> Other assistants to Carter included Chick's cousin, Cora Chickering, schoolgirl Ida Jones, a street waif called Pop-eye, and Ten-Ichi, son of the Mikado. Ten Ichi is enrolled in Nick Carter's short-lived fictional 'detective school for boys', which first appears in stories in the *Nick Carter Weekly* in October 1897. Jess Nevins, *Encyclopedia of Fantastic Victoriana* (Austin: MonkeyBrain Books, 2005), pp. 142-3. According to Turner, it was around the turn of the century when "'Remainders" of the Nick Carter Publishing House in New York were put on the British market at a low price, and enjoyed considerable success'. In 1911, the *New Nick Carter Weekly* was published in Britain and, in 1915, C. A. Pearson published the *Further Exploits of Nick Carter, Detective*, in which Carter relocated to Manchester. Turner claims that George Newnes, another notable English publisher, also published Carter stories 'against a sometimes ambiguous background, which could have been either Britain or America'. See Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, p. 169, p. 170 and p. 173 respectively. For further information on the publication history of Nick Carter, see also J. Randolph Cox, 'The Nick Carter Stories', in Robin W. Winks and Maureen Corrigan, *Mystery and Suspense Writers: The Literature of Crime, Detection and Espionage* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1998), pp. 131-42; Gary Hoppenstand (ed.), *The Dime Novel Detective* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1982), p. 182; Nevins, *Fantastic Victoriana*, pp. 141-5; and Jess Nevins in *The Nick Carter Page* <<http://www.oocities.org/jessnevins/carter.html>> [accessed 25 August 2011].

established by Tinker and Nipper in terms of their characterisation and circumstances, their function in the narrative as a point of reader identification, their prominent role in the series – with the action often focalised through the eyes of the boy assistant – and their relationship with, and particularly their inferiority to, the adult master detective. These variants are, in essence, pastiches of the Nipper and Tinker stories and so offer no new patterns but instead reinforce what is already evident in the two earlier boy assistants. Consequently, this chapter's examination of the story papers' representation of the detective's boy assistant is still largely focused on Nipper and Tinker who – as popular, trend-setting characters featuring regularly in a range of Amalgamated Press story papers – are well qualified to act as representatives for the boy assistant in general. In the lead-up to World War I, Nipper and Tinker star in eponymous serials such as 'Detective Nipper' (*Boys' Realm*, 1911-12), 'Nipper's First Case' (*Cheer Boys Cheer*, 1912), 'Tinker's Boyhood' (*Boys' Friend*, 1913) and 'Tinker Abroad' (*Boys' Friend*, 1913). Despite their leading role in these serials, and the absence and/or ineffectiveness of their adult masters for the majority of the narrative, the boys fail to become permanently promoted to the role of lead detective in these or any later stories and their agency and authority is undermined at various points. While in the Blake and Lee series and many of their imitators the narrative increasingly began to be focalised through the boy assistant and focused on his exploits, he nevertheless continued to remain inferior to and operate in the shadow of his adult master.

This chapter responds to a climate of increasing realism in juvenile detective fiction and focuses upon the growing emphasis in the boys' story papers from the 1910s – both in fiction and in informational articles – on the adult nature and status of the detective profession. Both police and private detective roles are represented as positions from which the fictional boy detective and the boy reader alike should be, to a

certain extent, excluded. The tension between the focus upon the boy detective and his inevitable restriction in the professional detective role in story-paper detective fiction paralleled the real-life tension between the necessity of training boys for a role in defence of the Empire as men and the recognition of the limitations of what these boys could, in boyhood, contribute to national defence and, once war arrived, what the state could officially permit boys to do. The chapter explores how such a tension was articulated in boys' literature and propaganda, comparing the majority of real-life boys' subsidiary and limited roles in war to the restricted, supporting role that the fictional boy detective played in the story papers. It makes comparisons between the official defender of Empire – namely, the soldier – and the professional detective, private and police, as roles for which only men were qualified and for which boys were not yet mentally or physically prepared and considers the implications this has for fictional representations of the professional boy detective and, consequently, for the survival of the boy detective genre beyond World War I.

#### **4.2: Police procedures: The fictional boy detective and the real-life detective profession**

As discussed in chapter 3, after the inauguration of the Scout movement in 1908, detective fiction in the story papers became tempered by realism. In some ways, this move towards a more realistic model of the boy detective, one which relied on common sense and hard work rather than Holmesian genius, made the detective role more accessible to boy readers, allowing them to emulate the skills and practices of their fictional detective heroes. On another level, the transition from regarding detection as the domain of a middle-class Holmesian fantasy figure to a real-life profession which could feasibly be adopted by working-class men with the right aptitude and training, constructed a further barrier between boyhood and detection. In the early 1910s,

articles appeared in the Amalgamated Press papers which focused on the real-life detective profession and the means by which it could be entered. A clear message emerged in these articles: that the path to becoming a detective was, in reality, a long and onerous one, taking many years and, crucially, could not be embarked upon until the boy had reached adulthood.

The access to the detective role for boys provided by the detective stories in the Amalgamated Press story papers and the Scout detective games, which acted as part of boys' training for manhood, perhaps turned boys' thoughts towards the possibility of entering the detective profession in reality. Certainly, an article entitled 'Detectives. A Profession Few Boys Can Enter' (*Boys' Friend*, 1910), suggests that the topic had been prompted by the appearance of a new Sexton Blake serial, which 'is sure to bring from our boys a host of inquiries as to how they can become detectives'.<sup>5</sup> The article is quick to dash their hopes, identifying two paths to detective work – entering the police force or becoming a private detective – and stressing the toil involved in both options. The police detective 'begins his career as a lowly police-constable' and even a promotion to sergeant does not guarantee success, since '[n]umbers of men become sergeants who do not reach the rank of detectives'.<sup>6</sup> The profession of private detective – that most commonly portrayed in the story papers – was even more difficult for a boy to enter. Another article in the *Boys' Friend* in 1910 on 'How Private Detectives Work' suggests that while 'there are a few private detectives who have set up in their profession because they have been born with the true detective instinct [. . .] the vast majority of our private detectives are **time-expired detective inspectors** from the Police Force' [*sic*].<sup>7</sup> This is not, in reality, the role for a boy and 'it is not often that a lad has the chance of entering

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<sup>5</sup> Anon, 'Detectives. A Profession Few Boys Can Enter', *Boys' Friend*, 10.484 (17 September 1910), 254.

<sup>6</sup> Anon, 'Detectives. A Profession Few Boys Can Enter', p. 254.

<sup>7</sup> Anon, 'How Private Detectives Work', *Boys' Friend*, 10.497 (17 December 1910), 474.



the service of a private detective, except as an office-boy'.<sup>8</sup> Another article in the *Boys' Friend*, 'The Amateur Detective' (1912), warns readers that 'detective work is only learnt by many long years of arduous experience and bitter disappointment' and advises the boy not to:

entertain the idea of becoming a detective unless he is prepared to go through the process of all our great criminal-hunters.  
It is absolutely essential to join the Police Force as an ordinary constable before a lad can hope to become a detective.<sup>9</sup>

Recruitment to the police force – which, except at the highest levels, consisted of working- and lower-middle-class men – therefore, is marked as the most likely path by which the predominantly lower-class boy readers of the Amalgamated Press papers can, in reality, enter the detective profession.

While the police were initially treated with suspicion in Britain, their reputation had, according to Clive Emsley, improved significantly by the 1850s when 'the English "Bobby" was becoming, in the perception of the propertied and respectable classes of Victorian society, a pillar of the constitutional and legal structure of that society'.<sup>10</sup> Although Emsley acknowledges the friction between the police and certain sectors of the working class whose activities were restricted by police attention, he argues that, since:

[m]any members of the working class also sought respectability and desired orderliness and decorum [. . .] the appearance of the police on the streets increasingly led members of the working class to believe that they too had a right to freedom from the annoyance of crime and public disorder.<sup>11</sup>

Recruitment policies ensured that policing was a suitable and desirable profession for working-class men, as it 'demanded no unusual talents', requiring only 'a basic knowledge of reading and writing rather than intellectual ability', with an emphasis

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<sup>8</sup> Anon, 'Detectives. A Profession Few Boys Can Enter', p. 254.

<sup>9</sup> Anon, 'The Amateur Detective', *Boys' Friend*, 596 (9 November 1912), 341.

<sup>10</sup> Clive Emsley, *The English Police: A Political and Social History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London and New York: Longman, 1996), p. 64.

<sup>11</sup> Emsley, *The English Police*, p. 80.

instead on stringent physical examinations.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the majority of recruits – with the exception of those appointed to the highest ranks – were expected to join the force as lowly constables and work their way up. On the whole, therefore, police recruits, up to the rank of commissioner, ‘were to be respectable young men from the working class’.<sup>13</sup> This equality of selection and opportunity for internal promotion ensured that police work became attractive to the lower echelons of the working class, as it not only offered them steady employment, but also the prospect of social mobility. Police detectives, too, were recruited internally from the uniformed ranks, offering working-class men a legitimate path to detective work.<sup>14</sup>

While initially the police recruitment age was between eighteen and thirty-five, by the end of the nineteenth century, the minimum age of recruitment had risen to twenty, an age at which ‘men were recognised members of the adult workforce, adult in the physical as well as the mental sense’.<sup>15</sup> Simultaneously, the maximum recruitment age had been reduced from thirty-five to twenty-seven, ensuring that the young men who joined were at the peak of their physical development.<sup>16</sup> The policeman’s physical stature was a crucial component of his identity, as it ensured his conspicuousness both for the general public who sought his help and his superior officers who monitored his behaviour. The policeman’s impressive physique also ‘served as a deterrent to prospective law-breakers, and helped to regulate public behaviour’.<sup>17</sup> This emphasis on the physicality and visibility of the policeman ensured that it was an unsuitable role for the physically immature and, therefore, inconspicuous boy. The adult status of the

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<sup>12</sup> Haia Shpayer-Makov, *The Making of a Policeman: A Social History of a Labour Force in Metropolitan London, 1829-1914* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), p. 33 and p. 35.

<sup>13</sup> Emsley, *The English Police*, p. 191.

<sup>14</sup> Haia Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective: Police Sleuths in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 64 and pp. 77-8.

<sup>15</sup> Shpayer-Makov, *The Making of a Policeman*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>16</sup> Shpayer-Makov asserts that this upper age restriction ensured that recruits ‘were young enough to remain strong for a long time, were relatively quick to learn, and were easy to mould’. Shpayer-Makov, *The Making of a Policeman*, p. 40.

<sup>17</sup> Shpayer-Makov, *The Making of a Policeman*, p. 37.

police profession was further emphasised through the period of training and development which the young recruit had to endure at the rank of constable before he could hope for promotion. Five years was the minimum period which the constable had to serve before being considered for promotion to sergeant but, in reality, it often took much longer – the average being nine years.<sup>18</sup> The transition from the uniformed to the detective police was also slow, since life as a uniformed officer ‘was not designed to be a temporary stage on the path to detective work, but a substantial element in the making of a detective’.<sup>19</sup> Even when a man passed his detective exams and secured a place in the Criminal Investigation Department, his training was not complete. In his police memoir, Chief-Inspector John George Littlechild emphasises the unromantic toil of ‘the apprenticeship days, when much of a man’s time is taken up in tedious and laborious watching, frequently during many hours at a stretch, for days and weeks together – much of it fruitless, and nearly all of it irksome’.<sup>20</sup> Police work, therefore, though a suitable and often desirable occupation for the working-class boy to enter when he reached adulthood – and certainly a more realistic profession for the young working-class readers of the Amalgamated Press papers than that of the private detective – did not offer the boy an outlet for his detective fantasies, cultivated by his story-paper detective heroes, or for any detective skills that he might have learnt from these heroes and/or from training received in the Scout movement.

In the late 1900s and early 1910s, stories appeared in the Amalgamated Press papers in which boys assisted, and occasionally joined, the police force, but these were usually stand-alone stories and they generally upheld the barrier between the boy and the police profession. In ‘The Mystery of the White Mice’ (*Boys’ Friend*, 1910), for

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<sup>18</sup> Shpayer-Makov, *The Making of a Policeman*, p. 208.

<sup>19</sup> Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective*, p. 84.

<sup>20</sup> John George Littlechild, *The Reminiscences of Chief-Inspector Littlechild* (General Books, 2009 [1894]), p. 2.

example, a boy called Mark helps a Sergeant Graydon to track down the perpetrators of a spate of river robberies, causing the policeman to conclude: ‘He’s plenty of brains in his head, and knows how to use them, too. He’ll get on in the world, you’ll see.’<sup>21</sup> The text concludes by stating that ‘Sergeant Graydon proved to be right’ (p. 317), but no details of Mark’s future life or career are provided and this appears to be a one-off story rather than the beginning of a series. In a similar story, ‘The Sergeant’s Boy’ (*Boys’ Friend*, 1910), Tim Baines, a ‘boy of about fourteen [. . .] dressed in rags’,<sup>22</sup> helps the struggling Sergeant Lannard to rescue the kidnapped Chief-Inspector Marsh, earning Lannard a promotion to inspector and prompting Tim to profess that ‘some day I’m going to be a detective, too’ (p. 205). Here the vagueness of the term ‘some day’, emphasises that Tim is still quite a way from reaching this goal since, at fourteen, he is too young to join the force, let alone become a police detective.

In a rare example of a series of short stories for boys where a policeman takes the lead role, young constable Joe Dale meets street urchin Dan Garland, ‘a lad of some sixteen or seventeen years of age’, who assists Joe in his police work.<sup>23</sup> After their initial encounter in ‘Only A Policeman’ (*Pluck*, 1908/9), Dan successfully shadows a suspect at Joe’s request and Joe is so impressed by Dan’s work that he suggests, ‘When you grow older you ought to join the Force’.<sup>24</sup> Since Dan is not yet old enough to secure an official police role, he has to settle for life as a newsboy and as Joe’s unofficial assistant. Yet Dan’s ambition to become a police detective is soon revealed:

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<sup>21</sup> Anon, ‘The Mystery of the White Mice’, *Boys’ Friend*, 10.448 (15 October 1910), 315-17 (p. 317). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>22</sup> Mark Darran, ‘The Sergeant’s Boy’, *Boys’ Friend*, 10.481 (27 August 1910), 203-5 (p. 203). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>23</sup> Anon, ‘Dan Garland’s “Cellar Flap”’, *Pluck*, 9.125 (1908/9), 1-15 (p. 2). Detective-Inspector Coles appears as both narrator and character throughout Bob and Harry’s detective series, which is discussed in chapter 3, but Bob and Harry are always the lead characters and Coles, when he features as a character in the narrative, remains inferior to the boy detectives. While the stories discussed in this paragraph are published before the main period under consideration in this chapter, they are significant here as they signal the beginning of an interest in police detection as a profession in the Amalgamated Press story papers.

<sup>24</sup> Ambrose Earle, ‘Only A Policeman’, *Pluck*, 7.202 (1907/8), 1-12 (p. 11).

‘He preferred to keep on selling papers ostensibly, while, in reality he was rapidly fitting himself to become a smart police detective, like his friend, Joe Dale.’<sup>25</sup> Despite his continued success in the detective role, Dan is still precluded by his age from joining the police force. As Joe Dale is promoted to the New Scotland Yard detective service,<sup>26</sup> and later to the rank of detective sergeant,<sup>27</sup> Dan continues to earn a living as a newsboy and still only assists Dale in an unofficial capacity. Thus, he resembles the private detective’s assistant: like Nipper and Tinker, his detective skill and role increases as the series progresses but he is permanently restricted to a supporting role and, significantly, one which necessarily remains outside of police ranks. A less notable example of an unofficial partnership between a policeman and a boy assistant occurs in the *Marvel*, in 1906, where Steel, the Scotland Yard detective, is sometimes assisted by boy reporter Dick Hope, who has himself ‘started an agency of newsboy detectives’.<sup>28</sup> Like Dan Garland, however, Dick has a profession of his own and never helps the police in an official capacity. By barring the boy pseudo-detective from official police work, these texts reinforce the idea that detection is an adult profession which the boy reader may aspire towards, but cannot yet enter.

There are other stories in which assisting the police offers the young protagonist the opportunity of joining the force. Jack Moran, a ‘fine specimen of British pluck’ who appears in ‘A Chinatown Mystery’ (*Boys’ Friend*, 1911), is the son of a river policeman and longs to follow the same path as his father.<sup>29</sup> Jack, whose age is not

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<sup>25</sup> Ambrose Earle, ‘The Tobacco King’, *Pluck*, 9.211 (1908/9), 27-41 (p. 41).

<sup>26</sup> See Earle, ‘The Tobacco King’, p. 41.

<sup>27</sup> See Anon, ‘On Special Service’, *Pluck*, 9.243 (1908/9), 16-27 (p. 16).

<sup>28</sup> Paul Herring, ‘In the Service of Scotland Yard’, *Marvel*, 5.130 (1906), 714-24 (p. 717).

<sup>29</sup> Jack Armstrong, ‘A Chinatown Mystery’, *Boys’ Friend*, 11.541 (21 October 1911), 331-4 (p. 331). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text. Shpayer-Makov states that ‘[a]lthough occasionally policeman’s sons did follow in their father’s footsteps [. . .] relatively few children of the lower ranks of the Metropolitan Police joined the force. Those who did tended to be the sons of inspectors or higher ranks’. Shpayer-Makov, *The Making of a Policeman*, p. 223 and p. 225. Jack, therefore, whose father is a constable at the beginning of the story, provides a notable fictional exception.

mentioned, is 'too young to become a member of the force' (p. 332) and works instead at a Chinese laundry, where he stumbles across the notorious Yellow Rose gang and helps to bring them to justice. His involvement ensures that his father is promoted to the rank of sergeant, while Jack himself gets his wish as the chief constable reveals that:

the authorities have decided to enrol the lad under a special bylaw to make him a member of the Force. He will have a thorough training, and in six months' time it is hoped that he will be able to take ordinary duty.

(p. 334)

Although Jack is enrolled in the police force, it is clear that his is a special case rather than an example for the average boy reader to follow. Police work, on the whole, is still reserved for adults and there are no further stories to explore Mark's initiation into and progress in the police force. This formula of the young civilian becoming involved in a criminal investigation and subsequently being rewarded by joining the police force recurs in 'A Night with the River Police' (*Boys' Friend*, 1911), where Sydney Warren, 'a good-looking young fellow' of unspecified age, hears a pistol shot and decides to investigate.<sup>30</sup> He identifies the guilty party where a police constable fails, leading police detective Lester Lane – a name which resonates with that of Inspector Lestrade from the Sherlock Holmes stories – to comment, "You'd have made a blessed sight better policeman than this loony here"—jerking his finger towards the crestfallen constable' (p. 444). Sydney helps to capture the criminals and is rewarded with a job in the police force. He is soon 'known as a rising young officer, with the promise of a brilliant future before him' (p. 446). Despite his successful initiation into the police force, his career is not explored in further stories and, presumably, since his age is not mentioned, Sydney is a young man rather than a boy and is therefore able to join the police force without impediment.

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<sup>30</sup> Fenton Ash, 'A Night with the River Police', *Boys' Friend*, 11.548 (9 December 1911), 443-6 (p. 443). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

A later narrative in *Chums*, a story paper owned by Cassell and Company, offers a rare fictional exploration of a young recruit's life in the police force. 'In the Nick of Time: A Young Detective's Christmas' (1915) follows the struggle of a young uniformed police officer to become a police detective as he vies for a position in the Criminal Investigation Department. Jim Bray is the 'youngest, brightest, and most eager' of the potential recruits, but he is warned by the superintendent that '[y]ou won't get a permanent berth'.<sup>31</sup> Assigned an apparently hopeless case, Jim is determined to succeed, and he soon detects the murderer, whose identity has long eluded the detective force. Against the odds, Jim earns his appointment and the superintendent goes as far as to proclaim, '[w]hy, if you go on like this there's nothing can stop you from being chief of the C.I.D. before you're thirty' (p. 268) – an impossible feat in reality where, as Shpayer-Makov states, 'officers were unlikely to be promoted for the *first* time before the age of thirty' [my emphasis].<sup>32</sup> Despite the superintendent's hyperbolic claims, this story remains in the realms of possibility. As Jim's age is not specified and he is already a member of the police force at the beginning of the story, he is again presumably a young man rather than a boy. The police force, in fiction as well as in reality, therefore, fails to admit the boy recruit. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that the police narrative did not feature as more than a one-off story or short series in the boys' story papers and not in any great number. Just as there is no clear place for the boy detective in the police narrative, so there is no real space for the boy reader.

Some stories of private detectives, too, began to acknowledge the difficulty of the boy protagonist adopting the detective role. The tales of young railway detective

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<sup>31</sup> Herbert Maxwell, 'In the Nick of Time: A Young Detective's Christmas', *Chums*, 24.1215 (25 December 1915), 266-8 (p. 266). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text. Shpayer-Makov identifies the probationary period – lasting between three and twelve months – which the police candidate had to serve before he was either accepted into the detective force or demoted to uniformed police once more. See Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective*, p. 94.

<sup>32</sup> Shpayer-Makov, *The Making of a Policeman*, p. 208.

Mark Youall, published in the *Marvel* from 1907-9 and discussed briefly in chapter 3, emphasise the difficulty incurred in entering the detective profession.<sup>33</sup> While the police force did not accept recruits under twenty, the railway companies were less stringent in their employment of detectives to police the railways. Shpayer-Makov gives a real-life example of a detective inspector who joined the railway police as he was initially too young to enter the police force.<sup>34</sup> At the age of eighteen, Mark can enter the ranks of railway police while he is still barred from the police force on account of his youth. Eventually, Mark becomes a private detective but he is distinguished from the Holmesian boy super-detective, embodied by Stanley Dare, through the slowness of his progress in the detective role in relation to the relative ease with which super-detective Dare reaches the height of his profession. Unlike Dare, Mark:

did not at once bound into the very front rank of criminal investigators. Nor did he expect to do so. Such might be the correct outcome of fiction, but Mark had not lived so long without discovering that there exists a very wide difference between fiction and cold, hard fact.<sup>35</sup>

Rather than following the unrealistic path of stories such as those of Stanley Dare, in which the young detective swiftly establishes himself as a private investigator – or of adult detective heroes like Sherlock Holmes, Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee whose reputations have been established long before their stories begin – Mark Youall's stories aim instead to be more authentic in their emphasis upon the long duration and difficulty of his route to becoming a professional private detective. After the initial story in which, having lost his job as a railway worker, eighteen-year-old Mark, like many other

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<sup>33</sup> While the Mark Youall stories were published before the main period under consideration in this chapter, they are discussed here as an early example of story-paper material which acknowledges the difficulty of entering the detective profession – a message more firmly and directly reinforced in the Amalgamated Press papers in the 1910s in the articles about entering the detective profession discussed earlier in the chapter. The significance of Mark Youall's stories is that they offer the young protagonist an alternative, but nevertheless onerous, route into the detective profession.

<sup>34</sup> See Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective*, p. 91.

<sup>35</sup> Brian Kingston, 'Mark Youall's Fresh Start', *Marvel*, 8.194 (1907), 12-24 (p. 12). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.



boy detectives, stumbles across a case with which he is in some way connected, he does not immediately become a private detective.

Notably, in his second story, 'Mark Youall's Fresh Start' (1907), the police inspector whom Mark has befriended laments the fact that Mark is too young to join the police force:

'It's a pity you aren't a bit older, my lad,' the officer was saying, continuing his conversation. 'If you were, you could enter the force; and I'll guarantee it wouldn't be long before they'd make you a plain-clothes officer or 'tec.' [. . .] 'Well then,' Mark interrupted, 'as I'm not old enough, it's no go; so what d'you say to me trying this?'

(p. 12)

The alternative role to which Mark refers in his conversation with the inspector, and which he soon adopts, is that of a railway detective where, as previously mentioned, his age is not so much of an obstacle as it would be in the police force. Yet, despite his instant success in this role as he saves the King of England from an anarchist threat, Mark's progress is still impeded by his youth. While praising him for his role in thwarting the anarchist plot, his employers inform him that:

'though we appreciate you, we can't dismiss your chief, Anderson, and give you his place, even though you have deserved it. He's an elderly man, he has been with us a number of years, and—'  
'And I'm little more than a boy,' Mark answered smiling, for the secretary hesitated.

(p. 24)

Mark's position has improved marginally by the beginning of the next story:

His work was not the same as he had been doing, although nominally his position was little different, except—and to Mark this was an important exception—that he was drawing an increased salary. He was still subordinate to Mr Anderson, though no longer one of the staff whose duties were confined to the inside of the station. He worked more on his own than had been the case before.<sup>36</sup>

His progress here is gradual but, following another successful case and the opportune retirement of Mr Anderson, Mark is finally promoted.

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<sup>36</sup> Brian Kingston, 'The Tracking of Mark Youall', *Marvel*, 8.197 (9 November 1907), 12-24 (p. 12).

In his next story, 'Lying in Wait' (1907/8), Mark has made the transition from railway detective to private investigator, which is accounted for by a four-year gap between the setting of this and the previous story. Mark explains to Frank Baxter, who assisted him in a former case, the reason for his change in role:

They made me superintendent of the station detective force—a good enough berth, well paid—and I was very grateful. I stuck to it for four years. But it was, as I say, too slow. Nearly all supervising work; not much room for initiative, and all cut and dried.<sup>37</sup>

Although, in the space of four stories, Mark has moved from amateur detective, through the ranks of the railway detective force, to the role of private investigator, the four-year gap between the setting of the third and fourth story emphasises that such a transition takes time. The focus upon the stages of Mark's detective development and the impediments to it, points towards a more realistic portrayal of the young detective hero and supports the notion that hard work is the key to success.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps more significantly, Mark's transition from railway detective to private investigator also marks his transition from boy to man. At twenty-two, Mark can no longer be identified as a boy detective. Inherent in this more realistic model of the young detective, therefore, is a tension between the accessibility of Mark's detective methods for boy readers and the inaccessibility of the detective profession to the fictional and real-life boy alike. The boy can learn how to become a detective, it seems, but cannot, officially at least, take on the role, just as, more broadly, he can train for his adult role in the Empire but is precluded from adopting it until he enters adulthood.

While such restrictions are accepted in the Mark Youall series, not all boy detective stories in the period leading up to the war submit quietly to real-life police selection procedures – and, by extension, to the exclusion of those who may be capable

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<sup>37</sup> Brian Kingston, 'Lying in Wait', *Marvel*, 8.199 (1907/8), 14-24 (p. 15).

<sup>38</sup> Brian Kingston, 'Mark Youall's Triumph', *Marvel*, 9.209 (1908), 17-26 (p. 25).

of playing direct, official roles in defence of the Empire – on the grounds of physical and/or age criteria. Two stories published in the *Boys' Friend* in 1912 follow the detective exploits of fifteen-year-old Jim Dane after his ex-police detective father is mortally wounded in an accident. At fifteen, of course, Jim cannot yet join the police force, but he faces a further physical impediment. Although Jim has 'a general air of intelligence that could not be mistaken' and 'knew a great deal of the ways of criminals and of the brave men whose duty it was to track them down', he cannot hope to follow in his father's footsteps on reaching adulthood since he will be prevented from joining the police force by 'a slight hump that raised his left shoulder above the normal'.<sup>39</sup> Unable to meet the strict specifications of the police force, Jim fulfils his father's dying wish for him to become assistant to private detective William Jaggs, another ex-Scotland Yard man.<sup>40</sup> Jaggs is vocal in his criticism of police recruitment policies when Jim acknowledges that his hump:

'means that I couldn't go into the force'.  
'And more fools the chiefs of the Force,' William Jaggs growled. 'What's the good of being six feet two, and weighing fifteen stone, if there's not the brains on top of it?'  
(p. 808)

Jaggs here suggests that, in recruiting men to the force, police officials are prioritising the wrong qualities. It is intellectual ability, he argues, rather than physical prowess that is the mark of a successful detective – an opinion reinforced in both stories through the implementation of Jim's cerebral powers to solve cases while Jaggs lags behind. In recognition of Jim's superior detective skills, Jaggs promotes him from the role of assistant to that of partner at the end of 'The Hunchback' (p. 809). Jim's intellectual

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<sup>39</sup> Mark Darran, 'The Hunchback', *Boys' Friend*, 570 (11 May 1912), 807-9 (p. 807). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>40</sup> Stanley Savill records some of the physical defects which barred men from applying to the police force. These included: 'Rupture, Flat-foot, Varicose Veins, Tumours, Skin Diseases, Stiffness of Joints, Narrow Chest, Weak Sight, and Deformities of the Face'. See Stanley Savill, *The Police Service of England and Wales* (London: John Kempster, Police Review Office, 1901), p. 273.

and occupational superiority to the ex-police detective is further emphasised in ‘A Riverbank Mystery’ (1912) as Jaggs ‘seemed to drop under the boy’s lead quite naturally, and even with a sense of relief—like one who trusts to a set of wits he knows to be clearer than his own’.<sup>41</sup>

There is a further criticism of the selection process of future police recruits implicit in the representation of Jim’s deformity, as Jim’s hunchback does not prevent him from successfully engaging in the physical aspects of detective work. In ‘The Hunchback’, Jim tackles the criminal, Daniel Terence, when he threatens Jaggs with a revolver.<sup>42</sup> In ‘A Riverbank Mystery’, Jim intervenes in an attack on his client and later, after he and Jaggs are captured by thieves, Jim manages to squeeze through a small window and escape to find reinforcements.<sup>43</sup> Jim’s deformity, therefore, does not prove to be the impediment that the police expect it to be. There is a sense in which Jim’s hunchback could also be read as a metaphor for his youth – another factor which prevents him from joining the police force – the implication here being that, like disability, youth in itself does not preclude the boy from being an efficient detective. In ‘A Riverbank Mystery’, the ‘tenacious courage of the bull-dog’, a common characteristic of the inferior boy assistant, is instead attributed to Jaggs, the adult ex-police detective, while fifteen-year-old Jim Dane possesses the ‘sagacity and sharpness

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<sup>41</sup> Anon, ‘A Riverbank Mystery’, *Boys’ Friend*, 592 (12 October 1912), 283-6 (p. 283). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text. This inversion of the adult master detective/juvenile assistant hierarchy has achieved success in some much later series – which play up the comic nature of this inversion – such as John Ryan’s comic strips featuring Harris Tweed, Extra Special Agent, a bumbling idiot of an adult detective, and his assistant ‘boy’, who is the real detective mastermind. Despite this inversion, Tweed is clearly the star of the series, which ran in the *Eagle* from 1950-3, with ‘the boy’ mainly present to facilitate Tweed’s comic role. David Ashford emphasises the scarcity of this type of series, observing that ‘[t]he idea of the humorous thriller strip was not new to British comics but it was very seldom seen, probably because it was so difficult to pull off’. See David Ashford, ‘Introduction’, in John Ryan, *Harris Tweed: Extra Special Agent* (London: Hawk Books, 1990), n. p. This pattern is repeated to great comic effect in Anthony Horowitz’s *Diamond Brothers* series (1986-2007) where thirty-year-old private detective Herbert Timothy Simple, a.k.a Tim Diamond, is constantly outshone by his thirteen-year-old brother Nick, the real detective of the series. In this case, however, the juvenile detective narrates the stories and is more obviously the star of the series.

<sup>42</sup> See Darran, ‘The Hunchback’, p. 809.

<sup>43</sup> See Anon, ‘A Riverbank Mystery’, p. 284 and p. 285 respectively.

of the terrier' (p. 283) usually associated with the adult master detective such as Sherlock Holmes, Sexton Blake or Nelson Lee. Though youth often denotes inexperience, it does not necessarily follow that all boys lack the prerequisite qualities and skills for certain adult roles. The 'hunchback' stories appear to support the notion that the individual should be judged on his intrinsic merits rather than by more superficial signifiers such as physical appearance and age.

In essence, the 'hunchback detective' stories celebrate triumph over adversity as Jim is 'determined to rise above the disadvantage' of his deformity and, implicitly, of his youth ('The Hunchback', p. 807). A similar ethos is disseminated in the Scout movement, which posits that all British boys, 'whether rich or poor, from castle or from slum', have a duty to play their part in the defence of the Empire, and this apparently includes those with disabilities.<sup>44</sup> In response to a reader's question 'Can I be a scout if I am lame and have to go on crutches?', an article in *The Scout* lists the feats that a disabled Scout can still accomplish, concluding that 'some of the greatest scouts that ever lived were sickly boys to begin with'.<sup>45</sup> There is simultaneously, however, a focus in Scout training and literature on eradicating physical defects and, consequently, an implicit rejection of those who fail to measure up to the robust body image of the ideal Boy Scout, thus contradicting the Scouts' inclusivity policy.<sup>46</sup> Boys are encouraged to

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<sup>44</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship: The Original 1908 Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005 [1908]), p. 281.

<sup>45</sup> Anon, 'Crippled Scouts', *The Scout*, 6.141 (24 December 1910), 250.

<sup>46</sup> *Scouting for Boys*, for example, emphasises the importance of posture to the development of the boy's body. 'A slouching position', Baden-Powell suggests, 'depresses all the other organs and prevents them doing their work properly, so that a man in that position is generally weak and often ill.' Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 208. In *The Scout* magazine, some more challenging defects are addressed. An advert for the 'Cleave-Extensor', with the tagline 'Are you short? Or too fat?', offers a method for increasing height by '1 to 2 ½ inches' and decreasing 'weight, abdomen and hips' to offer 'health, strength, and symmetrical proportion'. 'Are You Short? Or Too Fat?', *The Scout*, 1.1 (18 April 1908), 17. Another advert on the same page offers training to cure stammering. See 'Stammering', *The Scout*, 1.1 (18 April 1908), 17. On the letters pages, Scouts write in to ask for advice on how to correct defects such as knock knees – the editor suggests 'placing a flannel-covered block of wood between the knees when you go to bed' or sitting 'astride a barrel for a period daily', before suggesting that the sufferer consults a doctor. 'Knock Knees', *The Scout*, 1.21 (5 September 1908), 486. *The Scout* magazine also issued a health advice sheet where readers could ask for help to treat certain conditions by answering a

do their best to participate in national defence, but only if or when they measure up to certain standards. Similarly, the ‘hunchback’ stories – despite their ostensibly empowering moral – offer a mixed message to boy readers. Despite his success in the detective role, Jim is still barred from entering an official law enforcement role and, though obviously intellectually superior to Jaggs, is still forced to submit, nominally at least, to the supervision of an adult detective ‘partner’. The ‘hunchback’ narratives interrogate, though cannot fully resolve, the real-life tension between the role the adolescent boy is potentially capable of occupying and the role that he is permitted to occupy.

As the Amalgamated Press boys’ story papers began to acknowledge detective work – in both police and private forms – as a real-life profession, they also emphasised its adult status and, thus, its inaccessibility to the boy reader, who was presumed to be too physically and mentally immature to be employed in an official detective capacity. There is a tension in these boy detective narratives between encouraging boy readers to follow the example of the youthful protagonists of these stories – emulating the boy detective’s skills and qualities and aspiring to his role – and the acknowledgement that, in real life, boys were barred from taking up detection as a profession until they reached manhood. This tension directly paralleled that which existed in literature and propaganda aimed at adolescent boys as war approached. In the period leading up to the First World War, the state attempted to foster national unity through a can-do spirit which encouraged all citizens to play an active role in the Empire while simultaneously suppressing the weak and the vulnerable, excluding them from official, and hence the most crucial, roles in the defence of the Empire – such as those of the army and the

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series of medical questions such as: ‘What baths do you take. [. . .] Do you keep your window open at night. [. . .] Are you Constipated. Are you nervous or depressed.’ ‘Our Health’, *The Scout*, 1.1 (18 April 1908), 19.

police. While women and the disabled were permanently discounted from such roles, the status of adolescent boys was more complex. These boys were being trained to undertake, in the future, the very official positions and front-line duties from which they were, in youth, carefully protected and excluded. There was, therefore, a tension between the movement in literature and propaganda aimed at adolescent boys to prepare them to become official defenders of Empire, imbuing them with a strong faith in their own abilities to fulfil these adult duties, and the recognition that, in reality, these boys would have to wait until they reached manhood for the opportunity to serve their country.

#### **4.3: A man's world: The limitations of the real-life boy citizen in wartime**

The increasing representation of the limitations placed on the boy detective in fiction has its parallels with those placed on boys in wartime, made apparent in the role of the Boy Scouts. When war broke out in 1914, the minimum age of enlistment was eighteen, while those under nineteen were not permitted to serve overseas.<sup>47</sup> Yet, unsurprisingly perhaps, given that Britain's army recruitment policy, unlike that of the other European Powers, relied upon volunteers until 1916, much of the literature aimed at future soldiers took a romantic rather than a realistic approach to war and the boy's role in it.<sup>48</sup> War-based fiction frequently ignored the real-life restrictions imposed upon boys and instead engaged in fantasies of the heroic and triumphant contributions of fictional boy protagonists to the war, in an attempt to imbue boy readers with a patriotic fervour that would spur them on to join the army as soon as they reached the minimum

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<sup>47</sup> Richard Van Emden, *Boy Soldiers of the Great War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012 [2005]), p. xix. A boy could join the Territorials, a volunteer force for home defence, at seventeen and when war broke out many of these boys were sent abroad after a brief period of training, still underage. On 11<sup>th</sup> February 1915 the War Office set the minimum age at which the Territorials could send recruits overseas at nineteen, as it was in the Regular army. Van Emden, *Boy Soldiers*, p. 125.

<sup>48</sup> Michael Paris, *Over the Top: The Great War and Juvenile Literature in Britain* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2004), p. xii.

age of enlistment. Michael Paris identifies the growth, by the early twentieth century, of ‘the pleasure culture of war’, which ‘imbued Britain’s youth with a romantic view of war and blind, unquestioning patriotism, and [. . .] convinced them that battle would be little more dangerous than a hard-fought game on the pitch’.<sup>49</sup> In particular, as the war advanced, and it became clear that it would not be resolved in a few months, recruitment propaganda – both official and unofficial, obvious and subtle – had to plan ahead, targeting ‘not just those approaching 18 but also younger boys who might be needed later’.<sup>50</sup> The war stories produced by authors such as Escott Lynn and Rowland Walker, not only supported the notion that war would be a great adventure, but also enticed young readers with numerous fictional examples of underage boys joining the army, performing great feats and, invariably, winning the Victoria Cross.<sup>51</sup> Since this fiction served largely as recruitment propaganda, it is hardly surprising that it indulged in exaggerated and unrealistic portrayals of the boy defender of Empire, ignoring the real-life limitations placed on boyhood by the state.

Other, less militaristic literature aimed at adolescent boys in the lead-up to war had more subtle methods of addressing the tension between the potential and actual role that boys could play in the coming conflict. Baden-Powell’s Scout movement anticipated that ultimately its young members would play a supporting role in war, only taking up arms when they reached adulthood, or in the event of such dire circumstances as the invasion of Britain or a crippling depletion of adult soldiers. In order to increase the movement’s appeal to boys and to fuel their patriotic fervour, their supporting status was concealed beneath a layer of clever rhetoric in *Scouting for Boys*, which played up the Scouts’ role as defenders of Empire and the extent and significance of their

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<sup>49</sup> Paris, *Over the Top*, p. xix.

<sup>50</sup> Paris, *Over the Top*, p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> Paris, *Over the Top*, pp. xx-xxi and p. 29. For examples, see Escott Lynn, *In Khaki for the King: A Tale of the Great War* (1915) and Rowland Walker, *Oscar Danby, V. C.: A Tale of the Great European War* (1916).



involvement in the anticipated war through the misleading juxtaposition of the message of the importance of training of Scouts in marksmanship with proposals for the Scouts' role in the coming conflict. An account of the Mafeking Boy Scouts' duties in the Boer War in the opening pages of *Scouting for Boys*, claims that '[e]very boy ought to learn how to shoot and to obey orders, else he is no more good when war breaks out than an old woman'.<sup>52</sup> While it is then revealed that the extent of the Mafeking boys' roles was limited to 'carrying orders and messages and keeping look-out, and acting as orderlies' so that 'men were released to go and strengthen the firing line', the association between soldiering and the Boy Scouts' role in war has already been planted in the mind of the Scout so that he, perhaps, overlooks the ancillary nature of the Mafeking Boy Scouts' contribution in the Boer War in favour of the fantasy of fighting on the front line.<sup>53</sup> A similar juxtaposition occurs later in the handbook in the outline of the Boy Scout's 'DUTIES AS CITIZEN-SOLDIER' [*sic*].<sup>54</sup> Referring again to the role of the Mafeking Scouts, who 'made themselves into a Cadet Corps, and did very useful work in the defence', Baden-Powell urges boys that, in the likely event that England is attacked 'just as Mafeking was, unexpectedly, and by a large number of enemies [. . .] every boy should be prepared to take his place and help in defence like those Mafeking boys did'.<sup>55</sup> The 'help in defence' to which Baden-Powell refers is, of course, support work undertaken by the Mafeking Scouts in order to release their more useful adult counterparts for combat. Yet, the omission of details of this ancillary role here and the subsequent emphasis on the value of boys who can '*shoot, and can drill and scout*' [*sic*]

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<sup>52</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>53</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 12.

<sup>54</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 282.

<sup>55</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 283.

in the case of an attack against Britain, again implies an active, soldierly role for boys in wartime – a position that, in reality, they would be unlikely to hold.<sup>56</sup>

This masking of the Scouts' anticipated subsidiary role in war behind a layer of militaristic rhetoric led to a number of comic assaults upon Scouting ideology and propaganda. As Robert H. MacDonald observes, Boy Scouts 'were not, of course real soldiers, and their link to the army was often put in humorous or ironical context' in sources which exposed the quasi-adult independence and impact of the Scout as an illusion.<sup>57</sup> One such source is P. G. Wodehouse's invasion-fiction satire, *The Swoop! Or How Clarence Saved England: A Tale of Great Invasion* (1909), in which the 'hero', Clarence Chugwater, the pride of the Boy Scouts, rescues Britain from a host of invaders with the help of his fellow Scouts. The Scouts prepare for invasion by 'acting out a Scout play [. . .] doing Cone Exercises [. . .] practising deep breathing; and [. . .] dancing an Old English Morris Dance'.<sup>58</sup> As well as emphasising the childishness of the Boy Scouts' activities and their irrelevance or lack of value to the protection of Britain from external threats, the text emphasises the preposterous nature of the idea that Boy Scouts, and adolescent boys in general, have the autonomy, authority and capability to play a key part in the defence of the Empire. At the end of the text Clarence informs the villainous Prince Otto of Saxe-Pfennig that:

Resistance is useless. [. . .] Your troops, worn out with fighting, mere shadows of themselves, have fallen an easy prey. An hour ago your camp was silently surrounded by Patrols of Boy Scouts, armed with catapults and hockey-sticks. One rush and the battle was over. Your entire army, like yourself, are prisoners.  
(p. 37)

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<sup>56</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 283.

<sup>57</sup> Robert H. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement, 1890-1918* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 189.

<sup>58</sup> P. G. Wodehouse, *The Swoop! Or How Clarence Saved England: A Tale of Great Invasion* (London: Alston Rivers Ltd, 1909), p. 19. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

As this ludicrous image reveals, the idea of the Boy Scout playing an active or lead role in the fight against Britain's enemies – a role that was, in reality, reserved for adults – is exposed as false propaganda, a farce and an impossible fantasy. The Boy Scout could play at being a soldier but could not in reality, officially at least, become one.<sup>59</sup>

Another ironic example appeared in the form of a cartoon in *Punch* in 1909 entitled 'Our Youngest Line of Defence'. It depicts a frail looking 'Mrs Britannia' gratefully clutching the arm of a small Boy Scout brandishing a staff with the caption: 'FEAR NOT, GRAN'MA; NO DANGER CAN BEFALL YOU NOW: REMEMBER, I AM WITH YOU!' [sic].<sup>60</sup> Significantly, this cartoon was later reproduced as the front cover of *The Scout*, the official magazine of the Scout movement, just after the outbreak of war in 1914.<sup>61</sup> While the illustration served an ironic purpose in *Punch*, in *The Scout* it was re-appropriated to emphasise the crucial role of Scouts in the protection of the Empire during this period of crisis. Early war issues of *The Scout* emphasised the many crucial ways in which Scouts could help the war effort directly. The first edition after the announcement that Britain was at war contained detailed instructions of numerous war duties which Scouts could fulfil, such as guarding railway bridges and telegraph lines against attacks from foreign spies, collecting information about army provisions, watching the coastline for hostile warships and aeroplanes, acting as signallers and dispatch riders and, in the event of an invasion of Britain, providing first aid for the injured and performing fire brigade duties.<sup>62</sup> A week later, *The Scout* announced that '[t]he uniform of the Boy Scouts ("B.-P." hat or Sea Scout cap and

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<sup>59</sup> In E. le Breton Martin's Scout serial, 'The Boys of the Otter Patrol' (1908), the Scouts play at being soldiers on several occasions, imagining that they are 'passing through a hostile country' when tracking poacher Foxy Cleave, or negotiating 'a belt of country infested with relentless foes' when partaking in a competition against a rival Scout Patrol. See E. le Breton Martin, 'The Boys of the Otter Patrol', *The Scout*, 1.12 (4 July 1908), 263-6 (p. 264) and 1.13 (11 July 1908), 297-300 (p. 299) respectively.

<sup>60</sup> Bernard Partridge (illus.), 'Our Youngest Line of Defence', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 137 (1 September 1909), 147.

<sup>61</sup> Bernard Partridge (illus.), 'Our Youngest Line of Defence', *The Scout*, 9.333 (29 August 1914).

<sup>62</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, 'Scout Yarns: The Great War: How the Boy Scouts Can Help', *The Scout*, 9.331 (15 August 1914), 1186.

official *fleur de lys badge essential*) is recognised by His Majesty's Government as the uniform of a public service, non-military body'.<sup>63</sup> According to Baden-Powell, this meant that Scouts were now 'regarded as servants of the State like soldiers, sailors, or policemen'.<sup>64</sup>

Scouts were soon given the opportunity to come closer to an official role in war through the creation of the Scouts' Defence Corps, which proposed to train boys between the age of fifteen and seventeen in '[r]ifle shooting, judging distance, signalling, pioneering, intrenching, drilling in accordance with the Army, "infantry training," scouting, first aid, camp cooking', in readiness to fight in the event of an invasion of Britain.<sup>65</sup> By March 1915 Baden-Powell recorded over two thousand registered members of the Scouts' Defence Corps, a figure which had apparently risen to over four thousand less than a month later.<sup>66</sup> Baden-Powell answers a pronouncement, which he attributes to his unnamed critics, that 'it is all very well for boys to carry out men's work behind the scenes, but they could not be any good for fighting' with the claim that '[a] boy has just as good an eye as a man, he can hold a rifle just as straight, and can pull the trigger equally well'.<sup>67</sup> While Baden-Powell offers several real-life examples of boys' successful involvement in former conflicts to support his assertion, he is unable to provide evidence of British boys' capabilities, since they 'have not yet had much chance of getting into action'.<sup>68</sup> As there was neither a German invasion of Britain nor a reduction in the minimum age of army enlistment below eighteen, the opportunity never arose, except illicitly as underage soldiers, for Scouts to

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<sup>63</sup> Anon, 'Government Recognition', *The Scout*, 9.332 (22 August 1914), 1216.

<sup>64</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, 'Scout Yarns: Scouts on Active Service: Coastguards', *The Scout*, 9.333 (29 August 1914), 1218.

<sup>65</sup> Anon, 'Scout News: Headquarters Notice: Scouts' Defence Corps', *The Scout*, 10.345 (21 November 1914), 192.

<sup>66</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, 'Scout Yarns: Boys in Battle', *The Scout*, 10.362 (20 March 1915), 514; Robert Baden-Powell, 'Scout Yarns: The Scouts' Defence Corps', *The Scout*, 10.365 (10 April 1915), 574.

<sup>67</sup> Baden-Powell, 'Scout Yarns: Boys in Battle', 10.362, p. 514.

<sup>68</sup> Baden-Powell, 'Scout Yarns: Boys in Battle', 10.362, p. 514. See also Robert Baden-Powell, 'Scout Yarns: Boys in Battle', *The Scout*, 11.404 (8 January 1916), 370.

prove themselves in military combat.<sup>69</sup> Instead, Baden-Powell had to be content with celebrating the success of those detachments of the Scouts' Defence Corps who, after finishing their training and reaching recruitment age, had joined the army and, 'as they were already efficient instead of being raw recruits on joining, they have nearly all been promoted'.<sup>70</sup> While former Boy Scouts might have excelled in the army, the contribution of current Boy Scouts' role to army recruitment was confined to distributing recruitment notices to those old enough to join up.<sup>71</sup>

While boys were officially barred from joining the army, however, many enlisted and fought underage during the war. Richard Van Emden reveals that '[t]here are cases of boys as young as thirteen, or even twelve, serving in France' and, while such instances were far from common, the number of fourteen to eighteen year olds who fought in the war was much higher.<sup>72</sup> Among the boys who attempted to enlist, a division occurred between those obviously younger boys who were quickly dismissed by recruitment officers and those adolescents who were, physically at least, closer to adulthood. Van Emden stresses that '[t]he emphasis in sorting out who should or should not enlist was on physical condition rather than age', and doctors conducting the physical examinations for recruitment were 'asked for a medical opinion as to the *apparent* age, in other words, whether the boy's physical development was such that he would make an efficient soldier'.<sup>73</sup> While the army turned a blind eye to underage recruitment of boys who were considered to be physically, mentally and emotionally

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<sup>69</sup> In March 1918, the age at which British soldiers could serve at the front was reduced from nineteen to eighteen and seven months and then to eighteen and six months until the end of August 1918, when the lower age limit for foreign service was raised to nineteen again. Van Emden, *Boy Soldiers*, p. 295 and p. 333.

<sup>70</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, 'Scout Yarns: Scouts' Defence Corps', *The Scout*, 11.430 (8 July 1916), 894.

<sup>71</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, 'Scout Yarns: Scouts on Active Service: The New Army', *The Scout*, 9.333 (29 August 1914), 1218. Van Emden states that '10,000 ex-Scouts and Scoutmasters [. . .] enlisted in the first four months of war'. Van Emden, *Boy Soldiers*, p. 23.

<sup>72</sup> Van Emden, *Boy Soldiers*, p. xvii. Van Emden dismisses his original estimate of 250,000 underage recruits as 'conservative'. Van Emden, *Boy Soldiers*, p. 361.

<sup>73</sup> Van Emden, *Boy Soldiers*, pp. 41-2 and p. 44. The emphasis on physical development in army recruitment was similar to that of the police recruitment process.

mature enough to deal with the horrors of war, those who were not sufficiently robust became a hindrance, costing the army money to train and giving little in return. As a soldier serving in France, eighteen-year-old Ernest Steele – who had joined the army underage at seventeen and, at eighteen, had not yet reached the minimum age at which he could officially serve abroad – emphasises as much in a letter to his younger brother, warning him that, at fifteen, he is too young to join up:

Well, do you think it would be your duty to join the army, and spend England's money in training you now, and then when you got out here, you would crumple up immediately? It would be merely wasted on you. [. . .] I have seen several kiddies out here; they have a pretty rotten time and don't survive it long, although they cost as much as anybody to train.<sup>74</sup>

In January 1916, the implementation of conscription ensured that underage recruitment was curtailed significantly, as potential recruits had to produce their registration card, on which their date of birth was recorded.<sup>75</sup> From this period onwards, many underage soldiers were also discharged from the army at the request of their parents.<sup>76</sup> While many boy soldiers distinguished themselves in warfare, it seems that by the middle years of war the separation of boys from men was becoming more clearly demarcated and enforced.

More suitable positions for boys during the war – and ones with which many boys had to be content – were those less glamorous, safer, subsidiary roles which helped the Empire at home and were, significantly, far removed from the battleground. Even the Boy Scouts – at the heart of domestic defence schemes and, according to Baden-Powell, performing crucial roles to protect Britain from foreign invaders – were

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<sup>74</sup> Ernest Steele, 'Belgium. Monday September 1915' cited in Van Emden, *Boy Soldiers*, pp. 99-100. As voluntary enlistment declined, boys with three months' training or less could be sent to fight at the front, boys who 'had not built up the stamina and the fat to withstand the bitter cold' and who were 'ill-equipped mentally to cope with the rigours of active service in the army'. Van Emden, *Boys Soldiers*, p. 105.

<sup>75</sup> Van Emden, *Boy Soldiers*, pp. 24-5 and p. 198.

<sup>76</sup> Van Emden states that '[i]n the summer and autumn of 1916, thousands of boys were shipped back to Britain'. Van Emden, *Boy Soldiers*, p. 277.

somewhat restricted. In *B.P.'s Scouts*, Henry Collis, Fred Hurl and Rex Hazlewood suggest that some of the Scouts' war work 'may have been of little real value: the spy menace was largely imaginary and small boys guarding railway lines and telegraph poles were surely but a symbolic defence'.<sup>77</sup> Thus the Scouts can perhaps be viewed as a juvenile equivalent of the Home Guard of World War II, a voluntary force of men too old to enlist, who focused on domestic defence.<sup>78</sup> *The Scout* made much of Boy Scouts' guarding and lookout duties, chronicling rare success stories: one article, for example, credits a Patrol of Scouts guarding telegraph lines with the arrest of three spies; another article reports that Scouts at a coast-watching station have 'found a drifting mine', while, at another station, Scouts apparently 'had sighted and reported a German submarine'.<sup>79</sup> Yet, even where a threat might exist, Scouts were not expected to play a direct role in combatting it. In an article on 'Guarding the Bridges' in *The Scout*, Marcus Woodward reveals that when he asked two Scouts 'what action they would take if a spy should come, they answered: "We should give him a good fright, sir. We shall raise the alarm, depend on't."'<sup>80</sup> Such a response implies Scouts' own recognition of their subsidiary role in war. They are not expected to tackle foreign enemies directly, but to bring them to the attention of their adult supervisors, who are better equipped to deal with such threats.

In most cases, therefore, Boy Scouts, like other boys, had to be content with playing what Martin Dedman identifies as 'a useful, though ancillary – even peripheral – role during the Great War' in work that 'was similar to that of women, designed to

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<sup>77</sup> Henry Collis, Fred Hurl and Rex Hazlewood, *B.P.'s Scouts: An Official History of the Boy Scouts Association* (London: Collins, 1961), p. 75.

<sup>78</sup> For further information on the Home Guard, see Penny Summerfield and Corinna Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence: Men, Women and the Home Guard in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

<sup>79</sup> Baden-Powell, 'Scout Yarns: Scouts on Active Service: Coastguards', 9.333, p. 1218 and Robert Baden-Powell, 'Scout Yarns: Scouts on Duty', *The Scout*, 10.372 (29 May 1915), 714.

<sup>80</sup> Marcus Woodward, 'Guarding the Bridges', *The Scout*, 9.331 (15 August 1914), 1193.

release men for service in the forces'.<sup>81</sup> *The Scout* records a number of these less glamorous duties:

Wolverhampton Scouts are carrying out a novel idea, suggested by Sir Richard Paget, District Commissioner for Wolverhampton. Each Scout is undertaking to rear six chickens to help the food supply.

[. . .]

Other country Scouts have planted all the waste land in their neighbourhood with turnips.

In many parts the Scouts are busy making splints and bandages and helping the Red Cross Society.<sup>82</sup>

On the whole, Scouts performed domestic roles, acting as general dogsbodies and errand runners, at the beck and call of anyone who wanted their services. The article quoted above goes on to record that 'A South London Troop has been invited into the country to help a farmer with his harvesting', while 'an efficient "Clerk" Scout was at once dispatched' to a lady looking for 'a boy to help her with some clerical work at her home'.<sup>83</sup> Anyone with work to be done, it seems, could benefit from the Scouts' generosity during wartime. *The Scout* suggested a host of other ways in which a Scout could make himself useful. He could visit the family homes of absent soldiers 'once or twice a week to scrub floors, clean windows, fetch coal, turn the mangle, look after the garden, or take the children out while "mother" rested'.<sup>84</sup> He could also offer his services as a letter writer to the illiterate or sick parents of soldiers at the Front.<sup>85</sup> He could '[c]ollect newspapers and periodicals for our sailors and for the wounded in hospitals'.<sup>86</sup> Young Scouts were encouraged to prepare 'their club-rooms to be used as dressing or first-aid stations for people who may get wounded if war comes into this

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<sup>81</sup> Martin Dedman, 'Baden-Powell, Militarism, and the "Invisible Contributors" to the Boy Scout Scheme, 1904-1920', *Twentieth Century British History*, 4.3 (1993), 201-23 (p. 218).

<sup>82</sup> Anon, 'All in the Day's Work', *The Scout*, 9.332 (22 August 1914), 1202.

<sup>83</sup> Anon, 'All in the Day's Work', *The Scout*, 9.332 (22 August 1914), 1216.

<sup>84</sup> Anon, 'What Are You Doing To Help?', *The Scout*, 9.332 (22 August 1914), 1207.

<sup>85</sup> Anon, 'Editorial Chat: More Useful Work', *The Scout*, 10.334 (5 September 1914), 21.

<sup>86</sup> Anon, 'Editorial Chat: More Useful Work', 10.334, p. 21.



country'.<sup>87</sup> Notably, these are feminine, domestic duties, no doubt holding little appeal for boys in comparison to the exciting and heroic masculine role of soldier.

As boys were increasingly confined to these supporting and, sometimes, hypothetical roles in the war, *The Scout* emphasised the importance of their subsidiary duties and encouraged Scouts to accept gracefully their position on the side-lines. Three months after the outbreak of war, *The Scout* warns boys that 'you can't all expect to be actors in the limelight, and while our men are fighting at the Front the boys can be mighty useful behind the scenes'.<sup>88</sup> The article goes on to reproduce part of Lord Roberts's address to the Eton Boys' Club:

The very youngest boy amongst you can make his influence felt, and although these fights and struggles must go on unseen and unrecorded, those who take part in them will find their reward in the knowledge that they too have done their share towards upholding the standard of British courage, endurance, and honour in the hour when Britain most had need of them.<sup>89</sup>

The 'unseen and unrecorded' work of boys in war is thus inducted into the cult of heroism. Another article in *The Scout* reassures boys that:

It may be as noble and heroic to perform a dull duty well as to lead a charge in battle.

There are many heroes of this war left behind in this country; heroes who will never fire a shot, or go within a hundred miles of the Front.<sup>90</sup>

In the context of war, and the boy's place in it, the definition of heroism in boys' story papers necessarily changes. The heroic role is no longer confined to the brave soldier in the lead role, fighting on the front line, but extends to include the supporting cast, those further away from the action whose contributions to the war effort strike a blow against the enemy in an indirect, less obvious, understated manner.

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<sup>87</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, 'Scout Yarns: Scouts on Active Service: Helping Other People', *The Scout*, 9.333 (29 August 1914), 1218.

<sup>88</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, 'Scout Yarns: 'Lord Roberts' Advice', *The Scout*, 10.341 (24 October 1914), 114.

<sup>89</sup> Baden-Powell, 'Scout Yarns: Lord Roberts' Advice', 10.341, p. 114.

<sup>90</sup> Anon, 'Guarding the Coast', *The Scout*, 10.344 (14 November 1914), 166.

In this context, perhaps the abundance of adult detective/boy assistant series in the 1910s and beyond responds to this redefinition of heroism, making supporting roles more attractive to boy readers, who are themselves condemned to playing subsidiary parts in World War I. Against the backdrop of war, the male adolescent occupied a liminal space between boyhood and manhood, inaction and action, regular citizen and official soldier, encouraged to devote himself to the defence of the British Empire but often prevented from playing a direct role. The fictional boy assistant to the adult detective master in the boys' story papers inhabits a similarly frustrating middle-ground, eager to step into the role of lead investigator but inevitably falling short of the standards set by the adult master detective or hindered in other ways by his youth. The detective's assistant no doubt appealed to boys because he played a more active, exciting and glamorous role in defence of the Empire than the real-life boy could hope to adopt while simultaneously suffering restrictions parallel to those placed upon boy readers as he, like them, was prevented from playing the lead role in an adult profession. Consciously or otherwise, the fictional detective's boy assistant – as a youthful figure struggling to adopt a professional, adult role in defence of the Empire – begins to encapsulate and respond to the predicament facing the real-life boy citizen as he trains for a role which his age precludes him from occupying fully or independently.

#### **4.4: A man's work: Fictional boy assistants and their professional detective masters**

In response to the real-life restrictions placed upon boys in the approach to and during World War I – which were clearly in evidence in the wartime propaganda aimed at Boy Scouts and in the reality of their subsidiary roles in the conflict – in the lead-up to war, stories featuring boy assistants to adult master detectives began to emphasise the youthful limitations of and restrictions upon these boy characters – be they physical,

mental, emotional or social. This is perhaps most apparent in the ongoing stories of Nipper and Tinker. By the 1910s, these assistants had been appearing regularly in the Nelson Lee and Sexton Blake series respectively for several years and had featured as the lead character in several short stories and serials.<sup>91</sup> However, while in the early 1900s they had been positioned as symbolic saviours of the adult master detective and, by extension, the declining adult generation – Nipper in his rewritten origins serial ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’ (*Boys’ Herald*, 1903-4) and Tinker in his debut story ‘Cunning Against Skill’ (*Union Jack*, 1904) – in eponymous serials in the early 1910s, the boy assistants are, significantly, less authoritative.<sup>92</sup>

In ‘Detective Nipper’ (*Boys’ Realm*, 1911-12), Nipper initially seems to succeed in adopting the role of his adult detective master after Nelson Lee’s mysterious disappearance at the beginning of the serial. After dreaming that his master is being held captive in a dark tower, ‘tightly bound with ropes, and with a smear of blood on his face’, Nipper is determined to find Lee and rescue him if necessary.<sup>93</sup> Lee is absent for the majority of the serial, and his appearance in the penultimate instalment signals Nipper’s success in solving the case. Left to his own devices, Nipper adopts the role of lead detective, and his companion throughout the serial, a boy called Harry Wilson, whom Lee, before his own disappearance, was trying to track down, becomes Nipper’s assistant. Yet, while Nipper successfully solves the case, rescuing Lee and capturing the criminal, his youth acts as an impediment throughout the serial. Nipper’s pursuit of adult criminals without the help of an adult detective causes difficulties when he turns to the police for support. When Nipper first approaches the local police inspector in Blackham with his claim that John Sorby – an ostensibly respectable adult citizen – has

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<sup>91</sup> For examples, see ‘Nipper’s Schooldays’ (*Boys’ Herald*, 1904-5), ‘The Black House’ (*Boys’ Friend*, 1905), ‘Tinker Limited’ (*Union Jack*, 1906) and ‘Tinker’s Triumph’ (*Union Jack*, 1907). For a brief discussion of these texts, see chapter 3, pp. 150-2.

<sup>92</sup> For a detailed discussion of ‘Nelson Lee’s Pupil’ and ‘Cunning Against Skill’, see chapter 3.

<sup>93</sup> Maxwell Scott, ‘Detective Nipper’, *Boys’ Realm*, 10.488 (7 October 1911), 312-14 (p. 312).

made multiple attempts to kill him, the inspector ‘attached no importance to Nipper’s theories’ since ‘he did not for a moment believe that the attempts had been made by Sorby’.<sup>94</sup> This pattern recurs throughout the serial as the same inspector becomes increasingly derisive of Nipper’s accusations against Sorby.<sup>95</sup> When Nipper tries to inform the police that Lee has now been smuggled out of Sorby’s house and onto a boat, the inspector taunts: ‘Well, what is it now, Nipper? Another cock-and-bull yarn, I’ll bet, about Mr Sorby having kidnapped Nelson Lee and tried to murder you!’<sup>96</sup> Without clear evidence, and without the backing of the adult detective, the inspector is unwilling to credit Nipper’s story over that of Sorby and subsequently spreads the word to his colleagues, so that when Nipper approaches the chief constable in a neighbouring town for assistance, he is dismayed to learn that ‘the inspector had been there before me and prejudiced the chief against me’.<sup>97</sup> As a lone boy detective, Nipper does not have the authority to command the police or their respect. Situated in an adult investigative environment, the juvenile assistant struggles to gain the credibility required to operate independently of his adult master.

It is not only the police, but also the detective’s clients, who show a lack of faith in the boy assistant. When Lee returns at the end of the case and meets with Harry Wilson’s aunt who, as a result of Nipper’s victory against Sorby, has gained a substantial inheritance, he is quick to give all credit to Nipper. Despite Lee’s assertion of Nipper’s role as lead detective, Harry’s aunt still insists upon thanking Lee and automatically identifies the adult detective as the superior figure in the partnership: ‘I

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<sup>94</sup> Maxwell Scott, ‘Detective Nipper’, *Boys’ Realm*, 10.490 (21 October 1911), 341-2 (p. 342).

<sup>95</sup> This contrasts with the relationship between the police and the independent detective heroes of earlier texts. Ernest Keen of *The Boy Detective* (1865-6), for example, frequently works alongside the local police force and the stories of Harry Fairfax and Bob Dawson, which appear in the *Marvel* and *Pluck* from 1908-9, are narrated by their friend Detective-Inspector Coles, who admires them greatly. For further information on these characters, see chapter 1 and chapter 3 respectively.

<sup>96</sup> Maxwell Scott, ‘Detective Nipper’, *Boys’ Realm*, 10.497 (9 December 1911), 467-8 (p. 468).

<sup>97</sup> Scott, ‘Detective Nipper’, 10.497, p. 468.

am grateful to both of you, and no names will ever hold a more honoured place in my thoughts than those of Nelson Lee and Nipper.’<sup>98</sup> Although Lee is quick to inform her that it is ‘not Nelson Lee & Nipper—but Nipper & Nelson Lee!’ and that he himself ‘shall have to take a back seat now!’ – Lee’s continued dominance in subsequent stories suggests that this is a false promotion for Nipper and that his superiority to Lee is only a temporary measure and a long-term impossibility.<sup>99</sup> In ‘Nipper’s First Case’ (*Cheer Boys Cheer*, 1912), Nipper once again takes lead role in the investigation as Lee is incapacitated with a broken leg.<sup>100</sup> After a number of errors and setbacks, Nipper finally prevails, but the case ends with a recovered Nelson Lee arriving in time to kill Monsieur Julien, the villain of the piece, and providing an assessment of Nipper’s performance:

‘You started on a false scent, it is true; but you soon got on the right track, and you finished the case in a way that makes me proud of you.’  
‘And so now you’ll let me tackle another case, won’t you?’ said Nipper eagerly.  
‘Humph!’ said the detective, thoughtfully rubbing his chin. ‘We’ll have to think about that!’<sup>101</sup>

It is the adult detective here who remains firmly in charge and determines the fate of his young protégé. While this story is presumably set before ‘Detective Nipper’, as it refers to this investigation as ‘Nipper’s First Case’, the regression of Nipper from an apparent partner to a clear subordinate to Lee in this story emphasises that the boy assistant, hindered by adult-imposed restrictions, cannot progress beyond a certain point in the adult-orientated detective profession. At a time when the prospect of war was becoming more and more likely, these texts reinforce the generational hierarchy between the adult detective and his boy assistant, man and boy. Consequently, the stories perhaps have a disciplinary effect upon the boy reader, encouraging him to internalise the message that

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<sup>98</sup> Maxwell Scott, ‘Detective Nipper’, *Boys’ Realm*, 10.502 (13 January 1911), 554.

<sup>99</sup> Scott, ‘Detective Nipper’, 10.502, p. 554.

<sup>100</sup> Maxwell Scott, ‘Nipper’s First Case’, *Cheer Boys Cheer*, 1.1 (25 May 1912), 34, 36 (p. 34).

<sup>101</sup> Maxwell Scott, ‘Nipper’s First Case’, *Cheer Boys Cheer*, 1.12 (10 August 1912), 32-5 (p. 35).

adults are in control and that he must accept his own inferiority and recognise the limitations that his boyhood status imposes upon him.

Similarly, in the lead-up to war, serials in which Tinker apparently takes centre stage also emphasise his boyhood limitations, not just through the restrictions placed upon him by adult characters but also in terms of his own youthful inadequacies. In 'Tinker's Boyhood' (*Boys' Friend*, 1913), for example, in which Tinker, at a time before he has met Sexton Blake and become his assistant, is embroiled in a dangerous mystery, a friction develops between Tinker's adolescent status and the apparently adult nature of the detective role which he adopts. Despite his detective skills – most notably his 'powers of observation [which] were very sharp' – and status, as he is a private detective to a millionaire client, there are suggestions that Tinker is unprepared for the detective role.<sup>102</sup> At fourteen, he is still a 'child' in a dangerous, adult-orientated criminal environment. When Tinker spies on a suspicious-looking man – whom he soon discovers to be 'the Baron', leader of a criminal gang – the boy detective, 'feeling half scared out of his wits' after witnessing the Baron torture a man, 'bolted down the passage-way for his life, with a horrible fear in his heart that the Baron was behind him'.<sup>103</sup> As an adolescent boy, it seems, Tinker is not emotionally equipped to deal with the violence inherent in the adult criminal world. This notion is reinforced in the scene where Tinker discovers his first dead body:

Tinker, feeling faint and sick with horror, reeled back against the door behind him, and half fell. He had a sort of unnerving, cold sensation in the pit of his stomach, and an overwhelming desire to get away from the presence of the thing that lay so still on the flagstone floor.

He had seen many strange sights in his short and eventful career, but he had never seen death or a dead man before. The sight filled him with tears, mixed with loathing.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Anon, 'Tinker's Boyhood', *Boys' Friend*, 12.607 (25 January 1913), 525-8 (p. 528); Anon, 'Tinker's Boyhood', *Boys' Friend* 12.611 (22 February 1913), 590-2 (p. 590).

<sup>103</sup> Anon, 'Tinker's Boyhood', 12.607, p. 528.

<sup>104</sup> Anon, 'Tinker's Boyhood', *Boys' Friend*, 12.608 (1 February 1913), 542-3 (p. 542).

Tinker's horror at discovering the body and his instinct to flee from it points to a vulnerability and lack of worldly experience which suggests that he needs to be shielded from the violent criminal realm in which the adult detective operates.

For five consecutive episodes of the serial this is what happens, as Tinker is removed from the criminal environment and from the detective role.<sup>105</sup> After Tinker falls into the clutches of the Baron, he is rescued by Richard Allandale, a Blake-like detective who, having infiltrated the Baron's gang, protects Tinker by staging the boy's murder and sending him into hiding disguised as a girl, pronouncing that 'Poor Tinker's a deader by now! [. . .] Your name is Fanny Trevor. You're my niece and I'm your lovin' uncle.'<sup>106</sup> Tinker blows this cover almost immediately – becoming a liability to the adult detective's investigation – and is redirected by Allandale to 'a one-horse place called Marlinton' where he is employed to boost the circulation of the failing local newspaper, the Marlinton Mail.<sup>107</sup> Here, in a number of filler episodes, Tinker is side-tracked from his detective role until the appearance of the Toff – the Baron's right-hand man – in Marlinton ends his exile. While Tinker is initially given the freedom to investigate independently of Allandale and appears to be on an almost equal footing with the adult detective, as the serial progresses – and the case against the Baron becomes more dangerous and complex – Tinker's role in the investigation becomes more passive and, despite Allandale's assertion that 'but for you, they [the Baron and

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<sup>105</sup> This occurs between issue 618 and 622 of the *Boys' Friend*.

<sup>106</sup> Anon, 'Tinker's Boyhood', *Boys' Friend*, 12.618 (12 April 1913), 712-13 (p. 713). Mark Hodder suggests that Richard Allandale – who is reminiscent of Blake in his appearance, circumstances and his detective role – is, in fact, Sexton Blake. See Mark Hodder, 'Sexton Blake Bibliography Master List: 1923' in *Blakiana* <[http://www.sextonblake.co.uk/blakebibliography\\_1923.html](http://www.sextonblake.co.uk/blakebibliography_1923.html)> [accessed 21 April 2012]. While there is some evidence to corroborate this view – both men are recognised by Tinker by a scar on their hand, for example – the series never declares directly that they are the same person. In fact, 'Tinker Abroad' – the story which mentions Blake's scar – also refers to Tinker and Blake's 'first meeting, when Blake was still at Oxford', which seems to contradict the theory that Allandale is Blake. See Anon, 'Tinker Abroad; Or, The Boy Detective: A Story of Tinker's First Mystery Case', *Boys' Friend*, 13.628 (21 June 1913), 40-3, 46 (p. 42). Allandale's identification as Blake is debatable and the serial gives no indication that Allandale's detective work extends beyond his personal vendetta against the Baron, nor does Allandale employ Tinker as his official assistant.

<sup>107</sup> Anon, 'Tinker's Boyhood', *Boys' Friend*, 12.619 (19 April 1913), 721-2 (p. 721).

his gang] would have still been in existence',<sup>108</sup> it is Allandale who is at the centre of the final confrontation with the Baron and who must take credit for the majority of the detective work in the latter part of the serial. Tinker cannot yet sustain the role of lead detective. Given that this serial was published the year before the outbreak of war, it is not difficult to make a connection between the fictional criminal realm and the real-life domain of warfare: both are adult environments in which violence and death is prevalent. Just as the serial represents the dangerous criminal world of the Baron and his gang as an unsuitable environment for the boy detective, from which he must be excluded and protected, so the text perhaps implies that the potential boy soldier must be held back from the arena of combat in the anticipated war. By stripping the boy detective hero of his former authority and agency and instead emphasising his immaturity and vulnerability, the text implicitly conditions the boy reader to acknowledge and accept his own limitations, not only barring him from adult roles but also offering explanation and justification for this restriction and, consequently, reinforcing the distinction between boyhood and manhood.

While in 'Tinker's Boyhood', Tinker, at the age of fourteen, has yet to meet Blake – at least in his own persona – or receive any formal detective training, 'Tinker Abroad' (*Boys' Friend*, 1913), by contrast, depicts an older, more experienced Tinker who has long been established as Blake's assistant and who is called upon to avenge Blake's apparent murder. However, although Blake – who has actually faked his own death – is absent for the majority of the serial, he still oversees and overshadows the boy detective. Before his disappearance, Blake excludes his assistant from the unsavoury repercussions of his detective work – the wrath of his dangerous criminal enemies – and, when he anticipates an attack from a deadly foe, he sends Tinker on a wild goose

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<sup>108</sup> Anon, 'Tinker's Boyhood', *Boys' Friend*, 13.628 (21 June 1913), 46.



chase in order to remove him from the confrontation.<sup>109</sup> The letter that Blake leaves for Tinker after his disappearance appears to enlighten the boy detective, outlining the details of his conflict with his nemesis, German criminal mastermind Noah Rand, and, ostensibly, empowering Tinker to adopt the role of lead detective in order to bring Rand to justice. Yet the letter also points to Tinker's inferiority to his adult master, as Blake uses a chess metaphor to articulate Tinker's actual role in the investigation:

London was our chessboard, Martlet, or rather Rand, the king on one side, surrounded by knights, bishops and all kinds of pieces. I king of the other, with you, my dear boy as a solitary pawn—my one remaining piece with which to fight out an unequal battle.<sup>110</sup>

As a pawn in Blake's game with Rand, Tinker is clearly outranked by the two kings – the master detective and the master criminal – and his status as Blake's 'one remaining piece' reinforces the adult detective's control of his boy assistant. The extent of his manipulation of Tinker becomes clear at the end of the serial, when Blake reappears. Tinker's detective mission is undermined as the death that he has been attempting to avenge has not actually occurred. In addition, just as Blake withheld vital information from Tinker at the beginning of the serial, it becomes clear that he has continued to do so throughout the story by deliberately concealing his survival from his assistant.

If this duplicity is not enough to undermine Tinker's role as lead detective, the scene of Blake's return firmly re-establishes the adult detective/juvenile assistant hierarchy:

'Sexton Blake!' said Tinker, with a choke in his throat, and, still holding the hand, he broke down and felt the hot tears trickling down his cheeks. He wasn't even ashamed of them; they were a tribute to the greatest man he had ever known or was likely to know, and whom for many weary months he had believed to be dead.

'But how—how?' he asked piteously.

'Buck up, young 'un!' said Blake, patting him on the head. 'It's all right, and I'm very much me.'<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Anon, 'Tinker Abroad', 13.628, p. 40.

<sup>110</sup> Anon, 'Tinker Abroad', 13.628, p. 43.

<sup>111</sup> Anon, 'Tinker Abroad', *Boys' Friend*, 13.643 (4 October 1913), 297.

Tinker is here reduced from an able detective to a weeping child and, as the serial concludes, it is Blake who confronts Rand, and Tinker returns home ‘with his good friend and master’, clearly subservient to the adult detective once more.<sup>112</sup> Where the stories of independent boy detective heroes which appeared a few years earlier, coinciding with the development of the Scout movement, focused on what boys could do for the Empire and encouraged boy readers to become active citizens working in defence of the Empire, by contrast, these detective/assistant stories focus on what boys cannot do. Consciously or not, these stories can be read as anticipating boys’ desire to adopt adult, soldierly roles in the coming war and as an attempt to restrain the fictional boy detective and real-life boy reader alike from operating independently in a dangerous adult world. As Nipper and Tinker are confined to supporting roles to their adult detectives masters, so boy readers are encouraged to accept their own subsidiary roles in defence of the Empire.

Tinker and Nipper fail to maintain their lead detective role as they are represented as lacking the required physical, mental and emotional maturity – or, at least, they do not match their adult counterparts in terms of maturity and development of the requisite skills and qualities for the position. They are further restricted by adult characters who undermine or undervalue their detective capabilities. Just as, on the outbreak of war, the boy was, officially at least, barred from becoming a soldier on account of his immaturity as perceived by adult decision-makers, so the detective’s boy assistant is denied full access to the adult, professional role which he attempts to adopt. This link between the fictional boy assistant’s protection and exclusion from the dangerous adult detective profession and real-life boys’ exclusion from the role of soldier during the war is more clearly articulated in ‘Private Tinker A. S. C.’ (*Union*

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<sup>112</sup> Anon, ‘Tinker Abroad’, 13.643, p. 297.

*Jack*, 1915), a story in which Tinker briefly becomes an underage soldier. After declaring that ‘I’ve had enough of skulking at home while others are fighting. It’s the front for me’, Tinker, who is too young to enlist, impersonates his older friend who is obliged to defer his enlistment to care for his dying wife.<sup>113</sup>

Tinker makes an exemplary soldier, risking his life to save his superior, Lieutenant Drake, helping him to hijack a German motorbus full of supplies and forming a plan to destroy a German supply train, which Tinker executes swiftly and successfully with Drake.<sup>114</sup> While Tinker does not appear to struggle with his adult, soldierly duties – after shooting at German opponents, Tinker casually remarks ‘[i]t’s funny how one gets used to killing men, isn’t it?’ (p. 9) – there is an implicit criticism in Tinker’s reckless act of underage enlistment. His decision to enlist is not solely motivated by a sudden burst of patriotic fervour but also by a childish desire to ‘come home covered in glory’ (p. 3). More directly, Tinker’s enlistment is prompted in part by his failure to deliver a dispatch safely to the Admiralty at Blake’s request and by his fear of admitting to Blake that the dispatch has been stolen.<sup>115</sup> Tinker demonstrates his immaturity through his rash decision to enrol fraudulently in the army and go to war rather than to accept responsibility for his mistake, particularly as it is later revealed that Blake ‘would not have been angry with him in regard to the despatch [*sic*]’ since the information that it contained ‘could not have been of the slightest value to the Germans’ (p. 4). Instead, when reunited with Tinker, Blake reproaches his boy assistant for recklessly abandoning him in order to fight, protesting that ‘you treated me very cruelly’ (p. 13). Thus, rather than suggesting that Tinker is incapable of fulfilling the role of soldier, the text instead reproaches the boy assistant for his irresponsibility in

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<sup>113</sup> William Murray Graydon, ‘Private Tinker A. S. C.’, *Union Jack*, 589 (23 January 1915), 1-22 (p. 4). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>114</sup> See Graydon, ‘Private Tinker’, pp. 9-10 and p. 15.

<sup>115</sup> See Graydon, ‘Private Tinker’, p. 2.

enlisting underage, encouraging boy readers to consider their own motivations for joining the army and the impact that their decision to enlist will have upon themselves, their families and their country.

Tinker's military career comes to a necessary end when his deception is discovered by Colonel Chumleigh, who orders Blake – whose own detective work has brought him to the front line – to take Tinker home as '[h]e is too young and too reckless, to throw his life away out here on the front' (p. 22). Just as Tinker is unable to adopt the role of lead detective on a long-term basis, so too he fails to serve in the army for any length of time. Tinker lives out the fantasy of the boy soldier but, even in fiction, this role can only be adopted temporarily and illicitly. Still a boy, at least in age, he is, despite his capabilities both as a detective and a soldier, denied by adults the opportunity to play a more direct role in defence of the Empire. Kelly Boyd notes the text's emphasis upon the necessary subservience of boys to their elders, suggesting that 'Tinker is taught that a crude manliness is not attained simply by wearing the king's colours, but by making the best decision for everybody and by following the advice of his elders'.<sup>116</sup> Boys, the text implies, must remain in boyhood roles until they have reached full physical, intellectual and emotional maturity. In the role of detective's assistant, both Tinker and Nipper, consciously or otherwise, anticipate and embody the frustration felt by the impatient boy reader who, buoyed by recruitment propaganda, is desperate for a chance to prove himself and to join the adventure of war. Simultaneously, the detective's assistant model potentially conditions boy readers to accept as inevitable the restrictions placed upon enthusiastic recruits of the future, as even the fictional boy heroes have to submit to adult-imposed rules and accept that they are not yet ready or permitted to play a lead role in a dangerous, adult profession.

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<sup>116</sup> Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper*, p. 94.

After the war, the adult detective/boy assistant model continued to flourish in the Amalgamated Press story papers and their rivals. As previously mentioned, several popular detective/assistant combinations began to appear regularly by the 1920s in imitation of the famous partnerships of Nelson Lee and Nipper and Sexton Blake and Tinker, including Dixon Brett and Pat Malone, Dixon Hawke and Tommy Burke, Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake, and Falcon Swift and Chick Conway. Other, less known partnerships began to emerge in the 1920s, particularly in the Amalgamated Press's *Champion* (1922-55).<sup>117</sup> New partnerships in this paper included Curtiss Carr, the flying detective, and Ben 'Hunky' Dorey; Gordon 'Panther' Grayle and his previously criminal assistant Dusty;<sup>118</sup> Martin Quest – known as 'Q' – and his assistant Hairpin, 'so-named on account of his extreme thinness';<sup>119</sup> Kingston Carew, 'the tired 'tec' and 'Chum' Clinker, a bootblack who becomes Carew's assistant after saving him from a poison dart attack;<sup>120</sup> Norton Keen and Billy Bent, the latter appearing in his own serial in the *Champion* in 1928;<sup>121</sup> Daniel Sage and Vic Osborne, who, under his true identity

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<sup>117</sup> Another variant on the assistant model was that of the girl assistant to the adult male private detective. Sexton Hyde and his four girl detectives appeared in *Merry and Bright* in 1922. Paul Daring and his niece, Daisy, debuted in *My Favourite* in 1928. Another uncle/niece pairing occurred in the form of Noel Raymond and June Gaynor, who featured in the *Girls' Crystal* from the 1930s. June became an important fixture in the series from 1937 and the stories from 1945-51 become more focused on June than her uncle. See Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig, *You're A Brick Angela!: A New Look at Girls' Fiction from 1839 to 1975* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1976), p. 323. Young female protagonists started to feature as independent detectives in girls' story papers from the 1920s, most notably John W. Bobin's creations: fifteen-year-old Sylvia Silence, who debuted in the Amalgamated Press paper *Schoolgirls' Weekly* in 1922, schoolgirl sleuth Lila Lisle, who featured in a short serial in the *Schoolgirls' Own* in 1930 and, most notably, eighteen-year-old Valerie Drew, who appeared regularly in *Schoolgirls' Weekly* from 1933 to 1937. For further information on the emergence of girl detectives in the story papers, see Patricia Craig and Mary Cadogan, *The Lady Investigates: Women Detectives and Spies in Fiction* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1981), pp. 113-29; Cadogan and Craig, *You're A Brick Angela!*, pp. 309-23; and Kirsten Drotner, 'Schoolgirls, Madcaps, and Air Aces: English Girls and Their Magazine Reading Between the Wars', *Feminist Studies*, 9 (1983), 33-52.

<sup>118</sup> Dusty was previously 'the leading light of a shady criminal section on the East end of London, but who, having drifted under Grayle's keen eye, had been rescued from his life of evil and had since been trained by the detective as his assistant'. Howard Steele, 'The Yellow Finger', *Champion*, 1.22 (24 June 1922), 599-606, 614-15 (p. 599).

<sup>119</sup> Earle Danesford, 'Zara of the Earth Men: The Secret of the Extinct Volcano', *Champion*, 1.23 (1 July 1922), 619-21 (p. 619).

<sup>120</sup> George Mansfield, 'The Crimson Triangle', *Champion*, 3.66 (28 April 1923), 375-82, 390 (p. 376).

<sup>121</sup> See Duncan Sterne, 'The Clue of the Seven-Clawed Dragon!', *Champion*, 9.229 (19 June 1926) – 10.242 (18 September 1926).

of Pat Crawley, inherits an estate but refuses to give up detective work;<sup>122</sup> and Derek Fox and former theatre call-boy Chick Carew. Chick makes his debut in ‘The Call-Boy Clue Hunter’ in the *Champion* in 1926 as the title character.<sup>123</sup> The serial maps his entrance into and progress in Fox’s service. While the series focuses predominantly upon Chick and his impressive detective work, he remains inferior in skill to Derek Fox and remains firmly in the assistant role in this and later stories.

Several boy detectives in the *Champion* in the 1920s begin their career as lead protagonists in serials or series, though notably they are all still assistants to famous adult detectives. Kit Crane, star of the serial ‘The Amazing Mission of Kit Crane’ (1924-5) is assistant to Rex Eagle, apparently, ‘the most famous detective in London’, and, as often happens in boy assistants’ solo stories, Kit takes on and successfully solves a case in his master’s absence.<sup>124</sup> Jim Tunstall, known as ‘Boatboy Jim’ appears in a series of short stories in the *Champion* (1925) in which his wish to become a private detective is granted as he saves Rodney Manderson, ‘the best-known private detective in London’ from drowning after Manderson is thrown into the river by his criminal opponents.<sup>125</sup> Jim becomes Manderson’s assistant and, after impressing him during their first case together, Jim is offered a permanent position at the end of the story. In ‘The Case of the Ten Clues’ (1927), Danny Green turns to private detective Raymond Dexter for help when his police constable father disappears. Dexter takes on Danny as his assistant and Danny captures his father’s kidnapper, Dr Fang, and his accomplices and earns a ten-thousand-pound reward.<sup>126</sup> Also in the *Champion*, Tim Brown, a

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<sup>122</sup> Donald Dane, ‘The Mystery of the Tattooed ’Tec!’, *Champion*, 11.278 (28 May 1927), 427-8 (p. 428).

<sup>123</sup> See John Ascott, ‘The Call-Boy Clue Hunter’, *Champion*, 10.243 (25 September 1926) – 10.253 (4 December 1926).

<sup>124</sup> Lewis Essex, ‘The Amazing Mission of Kit Crane, Boy Detective’, *Champion*, 6.148 (22 November 1924), 431-6 (p. 431).

<sup>125</sup> Cecil Fanshaw, ‘Boatboy Jim, The Thames-Side ’Tec’, *Champion*, 8.192 (26 September 1925), 263-71 (p. 264). Jim also features in a serial story: Cecil Fanshaw, ‘The Fighting Shadow or, Detective Jim’s Biggest Case’, *Champion*, 8.206 (2 January 1926) – 9.215 (6 March 1926).

<sup>126</sup> Donald Dane, ‘The Case of the Ten Clues!’, *Champion*, 12.309 (31 December 1927), 535-8 (p. 538).

London errand-boy, stars in ‘The Circle of 6’ serial (1927), in which he becomes assistant to detective Hilton Burke.<sup>127</sup> The *Champion*’s most prominent boy detective was Slick Chester who, in ‘Detective Slick’s First Scoop!’ (1928) becomes assistant to detective Colwyn Dane after saving his life and impressing Dane with his observational skills.<sup>128</sup> Slick continues to act as lead protagonist in the series of short stories that follow in the *Champion* from 1928-9, defeating several key villains, including ‘The Lone Hand’, ‘The Hawk’ and ‘The Double Seven’.<sup>129</sup> Although Slick Chester is represented as the nemesis of these master criminals, he nevertheless, like the other boy detective protagonists mentioned here, remains in the assistant role.

Nipper and Tinker, too, continue to play key roles in the Lee and Blake stories, sometimes as title characters, for example, in ‘Nipper’s Note-Book’ series, which began in the *Nelson Lee Library* in 1917, and where Nipper adopts the role of narrator, as well as ‘Tinker’s Lone Hand’ and ‘Tinker’s Big Case’, both published in the *Union Jack* in 1920 and ‘Tinker’s Secret’ (*Union Jack*, 1925). Despite their continued prominence in the Blake and Lee stories, however, the adult master detective/juvenile assistant hierarchy persists both in these eponymous stories and in the series as a whole and Tinker and Nipper are ultimately confined to a supporting role. By the end of the war, therefore, when the restrictions and limitations of boyhood – or of adult expectations and allowances of boyhood – had become clear, the fictional boy detective appeared to have reached his limit in the adult professional environment. Realistically, the violent criminal domain of the professional investigator and law enforcer was too dangerous for the boy detective to operate within independently, nor was he granted, either by the fictional adult master detective or by his real-life adult creators, the credibility, authority

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<sup>127</sup> See John W. Wheway, ‘The Circle of 6’, *Champion*, 11.279 (4 June 1927) – 12.287 (30 July 1927).

<sup>128</sup> Rupert Hall, ‘Detective Slick’s First Scoop!’, *Champion*, 12.310 (7 January 1928), 565-8 (p. 565).

<sup>129</sup> See Rupert Hall, ‘The Case of the Tiger’s Eye!’, *Champion*, 12.311 (14 January 1928), 579-83; Rupert Hall, Detective Slick “Cages” the Hawk!, *Champion*, 3.313 (28 January 1928), 3-6; and Rupert Hall, ‘Detective Slick Gets His Man’, *Champion*, 15.372 (16 March 1929), 181-4.

and responsibility that these official positions entailed. Just as the battlefield was, in reality, an adult environment from which boys, it was judged, should be protected, so the world of the professional detective was considered to be no place for a child.

In addition to exposing the limitations of boys in terms of what they could do to help the war effort directly, reflection upon World War I perhaps triggered a change in attitude towards boyhood. In the aftermath of war, boys were no longer solely viewed as men in the making or future soldiers of the Empire, but as precious, vulnerable children who needed to be nurtured and protected in order to replace the generation of young men that had been wiped out in battle. The boy assistant continued to feature prominently in the professional, adult detective environment in the Amalgamated Press story papers until the majority of these folded in 1939-40 during the wartime paper shortages,<sup>130</sup> and beyond this in the more adult-orientated publications, such as the *Sexton Blake Library* (1915-1963) and a series of Sexton Blake paperback novels for Mayflower Books (1965-8).<sup>131</sup> The boy assistant also found success in American comics from the 1940s, most notably in the form of Robin, teenage sidekick to Batman, ‘the world’s greatest detective’.<sup>132</sup> In the assistant role, and in the dangerous world of the adult professional detective, however, the boy detective had, it seemed, developed as far as he could in British children’s literature. In order to enjoy permanent and unrivalled agency in the detective role and to ensure the survival of the genre, the boy

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<sup>130</sup> Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, p. 285.

<sup>131</sup> Norman Wright, ‘The Adventures of Sexton Blake, Detective’, in *The Sexton Blake Detective Library* (London: Hawk Books Limited, 1989), pp. 7-17 (pp. 15-16).

<sup>132</sup> Robin, in his first incarnation, Dick Grayson, made his debut in issue 38 of *Detective Comics* in April 1940. For information on the history of Robin, see Robert Greenberger and Matthew K. Manning, *The Batman Vault* (Philadelphia and London: Running Press, 2009), pp. 93-107. Ryan Indy Rhodes and David Kyle Johnson emphasise Batman’s almost superhuman detective abilities: ‘Batman is “the world’s greatest detective,” solving mysteries that leave Commissioner Gordon and the rest of the Gotham police baffled. [...] Though not technically superhuman, Batman’s peak mental and physical abilities far surpass those of most mortal men.’ Ryan Indy Rhodes and David Kyle Johnson, ‘What Would Batman Do? Bruce Wayne As Moral Exemplar’, in Mark D. White and Robert Arp (eds), *Batman and Philosophy: The Dark Knight of the Soul* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008), pp. 114-25 (p. 116).



detective needed to abandon his subservient situation in a professional, adult environment in favour of a more empowered position in an amateur, child-centric domain.

## Chapter 5: The Schoolboy Detective and the Detective School Story in the Amalgamated Press Papers, 1900-1940

### 5.1: The emergence of the school story, the detective school story and the schoolboy detective

As discussed in chapter 4, the aftermath of World War I saw the boy detective's role in professional detective narratives set in an adult, violent, criminal world become increasingly, and perhaps inevitably, restricted – reflecting the real-life passivity of boys in wartime and a shift in attitude towards boyhood in post-war society. However, a new detective tradition had already begun to emerge before the war, which relocated the boy detective to a child-centric, enclosed environment, a move that was essential to the genre's long-term, post-war survival. From the first decade of the twentieth century, a fusion of detective fiction with the school story, a genre which was rapidly growing in popularity and output, created a new type of sleuthing hero in the boys' story papers: this was the schoolboy detective.

The origins of the traditional boys' school story can be traced to Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857) which, published anonymously, ran to five editions in 1857 alone.<sup>1</sup> While it was not the first novel to address schoolboy life, Kelly Boyd identifies Hughes's book as 'the first to be set almost wholly within the life of the school'.<sup>2</sup> *Tom Brown's Schooldays* was soon followed by other successful school-based narratives, such as F. W. Farrar's *Eric, or Little by Little* (1858); Talbot Baines Reed's stories for the *Boy's Own Paper*, beginning with those of Parkhurst School in 1879, and

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World* (London: HarperCollinsAcademic, 1991), p. 53. For further information on the origins of the school-story genre, see P. W. Musgrave, *From Brown to Bunter: The Life and Death of the School Story* (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985) and Isabel Quigly, *The Heirs of Tom Brown: The English School Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

<sup>2</sup> Kelly Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper in Britain: A Cultural History, 1855-1940* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 74. Early texts which feature school life include Maria Edgeworth's *The Parents' Assistant; Or, Stories for Children* (1796), which contains two school-set stories, 'Eton Montem' and 'The Barring Out', and Harriet Martineau's *The Crofton Boys; A Tale* (1841). See Musgrave, *From Brown to Bunter*, pp. 26-8.

later by his most famous school-story serial, 'The Fifth Form at St Dominic's' (1881-2); Rudyard Kipling's *Stalky & Co* (1899); and Alec Waugh's controversial *The Loom of Youth* (1917).<sup>3</sup> Isabel Quigly identifies a split which quickly emerged in the school-story genre, a division between:

the popular, which began with Hughes and flourished after Talbot Baines Reed developed it twenty-five years later, a story aimed specifically at boys and dealing with a recognisable, reassuring pattern of school life and behaviour; and the more adult, more individual novel in which school provided a setting for the clash of character in intensely concentrated conditions, or the background for a documentary portrayal of school life.<sup>4</sup>

It was in the first of these forms that the detective school story developed, initially in the papers of the Amalgamated Press, which drew upon the school-story series and serial formats and the emphasis upon athleticism which Reed had established in the *Boy's Own Paper*.<sup>5</sup>

The *Gem* and the *Magnet*, launched in 1907 and 1908 respectively, were the Amalgamated Press's dedicated school-story papers. According to P. W. Musgrave they produced '[t]he worst examples of standardisation' in the school-story genre, with the formulaic stories of St Jim's school in the *Gem* and Greyfriars in the *Magnet*.<sup>6</sup>

These, and other fictional public schools in the *Gem* and *Magnet*, opened up a fantasy scholastic world to a class of readers who would never attend the schools' real-life

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<sup>3</sup> *The Loom of Youth*, based on Waugh's own experiences at Sherbourne School, criticised the public schools' focus upon athleticism which, Waugh suggested, devalued intellectual achievements and encouraged a cult of hero-worship which fuelled homosexual interactions between older, anti-intellectual boys and their younger, impressionable admirers. See Musgrave, *From Brown to Bunter*, p. 188. As the new school term began after the novel's summer publication, it was decried by parents and teachers for its hints at 'physical manifestations of homosexuality' and its suggestion that this was a habitual and inevitable feature of public-school life. Quigly, *The Heirs of Tom Brown*, p. 126.

<sup>4</sup> Quigly, *The Heirs of Tom Brown*, p. 43.

<sup>5</sup> For examples, see Talbot Baines Reed, 'The Parkhurst Paper-Chase', *Boy's Own Paper*, 1.11 (29 March 1879), 161-2; Talbot Baines Reed, 'The Parkhurst Boat-Race', *Boy's Own Paper*, 1.20 (31 May 1879), 305-7; Talbot Baines Reed, 'Parkhurst vs. Westfield', *Boy's Own Paper*, 1.22 (14 June 1879), 337-40; Talbot Baines Reed, 'A Boating Adventure at Parkhurst', 1.30 (9 August 1879), 465-7 and 1.31 (16 August 1879), 481-4; and Talbot-Baines Reed, 'The Fifth Form at St Dominic's', *Boy's Own Paper*, 4.142 (1 October 1881) – 4.180 (24 June 1882).

<sup>6</sup> Musgrave, *From Brown to Bunter*, p. 223.

equivalents. In his famous essay 'Boys' Weeklies' (1940), George Orwell emphasises the broad readership of the school stories of these papers:

Boys who are likely to go to public schools themselves generally read the *Gem* and *Magnet*, but they nearly always stop reading them when they are about twelve; [. . .] On the other hand, the boys at very cheap private schools, the schools that are designed for people who can't afford a public school but consider the Council schools 'common', continue reading the *Gem* and *Magnet* for several years longer. [. . .] But they are certainly read by working-class boys as well. They are generally on sale in the poorest quarters of big towns, and I have known them to be read by boys whom one might expect to be completely immune from public-school 'glamour'. I have seen a young coal miner, for instance, a lad who had already worked a year or two underground, eagerly reading the *Gem*.<sup>7</sup>

The widespread appeal of such papers, Orwell suggests, stems from the fictional schools' vast array of character types, which are 'so carefully graded as to give almost every type of reader a character he can identify himself with'.<sup>8</sup>

The author behind many of these characters and the schools in which they appeared was Charles Hamilton. Born in 1876 to a middle-class family, he began to earn a living through writing at the age of seventeen. Hamilton's long relationship with the Amalgamated Press commenced in 1906 when he created St Jim's school for *Pluck*. In 1907, Hamilton was asked to write a new series of school stories for the

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<sup>7</sup> George Orwell, 'Boys' Weeklies', *Horizon*, 1.3 (March 1940), 174-200 (p. 182). In *A Cab at the Door* (1968), V. S. Pritchett, who attended a large, mixed school where the pupils 'were a mixture of working class and lower middles with a few foreigners and colonials', recalls his love of the school stories in the *Gem* and the *Magnet*: 'One page and I was entranced. I gobbled these stories as if I were eating pie or stuffing. To hell with poor self-pitying fellows like *Oliver Twist*; here were the cheerful rich. I craved for Greyfriars, that absurd Public School, as I craved for pudding. There the boys wore top-hats and tail-coats – Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the toff, wore a monocle – they had feasts in their "studies"; they sent a pie containing a boot to the boulder of the Remove; they rioted; they never did a stroke of work. They "strolled" round "the Quad" and rich uncles tipped them a "fivah" which they spent on more food. Sometimes a shady foreign-language master was seen to be in touch with a German spy. Very rarely did a girl appear in these tales.' V. S. Pritchett, *A Cab at the Door*, in V. S. Pritchett, *A Cab at the Door & Midnight Oil* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1991 [1968]), pp. 9-211 (p. 92 and pp. 98-9 respectively).

<sup>8</sup> Orwell, 'Boys' Weeklies', p. 184. E. S. Turner concurs, claiming that '[t]here can have been few readers of the *Magnet* and the *Gem* – in the humblest or the highest schools of London or Glasgow, Calcutta or Singapore – who could not find one character with whom to identify themselves, or their playmates'. E. S. Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys: The Story of Sweeney Todd, Deadwood Dick, Sexton Blake, Billy Bunter, Dick Barton et al.* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1976 [1948]), p. 225. Kirsten Drotner, too, emphasises the wide appeal of the school stories in the *Gem* and the *Magnet*, suggesting that '[c]ompared to stories with a single, and perhaps even adult, protagonist, the fourteen- to fifteen-year-old boys offer a variety of easy identification possibilities: from the good-natured duffer and the athletic rebel to the studious thinker and the suave aristocrat'. Kirsten Drotner, *English Children and Their Magazines, 1751-1945* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 167.

Amalgamated Press's *Gem*. Under the pseudonym 'Martin Clifford', Hamilton produced stories about schoolboy Tom Merry's experiences at Claverling College. These stories were soon merged with the St Jim's stories in *Pluck*, and Tom Merry and his companions moved to St Jim's, which subsequently became the lead school of the *Gem*. Hamilton's greatest success lay in his stories of Greyfriars School – home to his most famous character, Billy Bunter – in the *Magnet*. He wrote these stories under the pen-name by which he is best known: Frank Richards.<sup>9</sup> As well as his regular output of Greyfriars and St Jim's stories, Hamilton, as 'Owen Conquest', also wrote stories about an educational institution called Rookwood – modelled on his own school at Thorn House – for the *Boys' Friend*;<sup>10</sup> as 'Hilda Richards' he wrote the Cliff House school stories of Bessie Bunter, sister of Billy, for the *School Friend*,<sup>11</sup> and as 'Martin Clifford', the Cedar Creek stories, set in Canada, which offered a fictionalised account of the schooldays of 'Frank Richards'.<sup>12</sup> It is estimated that Hamilton wrote at a rate of one and a half million words per year<sup>13</sup> and Musgrave states that '[b]y his death in 1961

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<sup>9</sup> See W. O. Lofts and D. J. Adley, *The World of Frank Richards* (1975), p. 33 and Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, pp. 218-21. Despite writing under several of pseudonyms, Hamilton associated himself most closely with that of Frank Richards. In his autobiography, which is, notably, entitled *The Autobiography of Frank Richards*, Hamilton claims that 'Charles was never so much Owen Conquest as he was Martin Clifford, and never so much Martin Clifford as he was – and is – Frank Richards.' Charles Hamilton, *The Autobiography of Frank Richards* (London: Charles Skilton, 1952), p. 154. Richards's prominence is reflected in the titles of other works on the author, such as Lofts and Adley's *The World of Frank Richards*. Hamilton's entry in *Who's Who* in the name of Frank Richards again emphasises the dominance of Richards's personality in the author's life. See Quigly, *The Heirs of Tom Brown*, p. 257. During the period of publication of the *Gem* and the *Magnet*, the Amalgamated Press kept up the illusion that Frank Richards, Martin Clifford and Hamilton's various other pseudonyms were, in fact, genuine and separate identities, although the reality of Hamilton's multiple personae became known when these papers folded. See Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, pp. 230-1.

<sup>10</sup> Lofts and Adley, *The World of Frank Richards*, p. 54. The name of Hamilton's fictional school is perhaps taken from William Harrison Ainsworth's 'Newgate' novel *Rookwood* (1834) about highwayman Dick Turpin. For further information on *Rookwood*, see Keith Hollingsworth, *The Newgate Novel, 1830-1847: Bulwer, Ainsworth, Dickens, & Thackeray* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963), pp. 98-109.

<sup>11</sup> Hamilton, *The Autobiography of Frank Richards*, p. 162. Hamilton was soon forbidden from continuing the series by the new editor of the *Gem* and the *Magnet*, who was concerned that the author's increased workload would result in failure to fulfil his commitments to his pre-existing school series. See Lofts and Adley, *The World of Frank Richards*, p. 63.

<sup>12</sup> Hamilton, *The Autobiography of Frank Richards*, p. 163.

<sup>13</sup> Declan Kiberd, 'School Stories', in Celia Keenan and Mary Shine Thompson (eds), *Studies in Children's Literature 1500-2000* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), pp. 54-68 (p. 59).

at the age of eighty-four he had written over 7,000 stories under twenty-eight pen names'.<sup>14</sup>

The Amalgamated Press, for which Hamilton wrote so prolifically, was largely responsible for the popularisation of the detective genre for boys through the publication of hugely successful series such as Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee from the 1890s and in providing several variations on the detective hero in the 1900s. This publisher also could be credited, to a large extent, with the widespread success of the school story through the tales of Greyfriars and St Jim's. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that the detective school-story hybrid was developed in the Amalgamated Press papers, nor is it remarkable that Hamilton played a key role in the fusion of the two genres. Although predominantly a school-story writer, Hamilton was a great fan of Sherlock Holmes and created several detective characters which, he openly admitted, were indebted to Holmes. In a letter to a correspondent, Jimmy Iraldi, Hamilton reveals that Ferrers Locke, the most famous of these characters, was 'undoubtedly borrowed from Sherlock Holmes, like every other detective character that has appeared since Conan Doyle wrote'.<sup>15</sup> Locke, cousin of Dr Herbert Locke, headmaster at Greyfriars school, makes his first appearance in 'On the Trail' (*Gem*, 1907), in which he is called

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<sup>14</sup> Musgrave, *From Brown to Bunter*, p. 223. Orwell, challenging Hamilton's apparent writing output, argues that 'it is difficult to believe that a series running for thirty years could be written by the same person every week'. Orwell, 'Boys' Weeklies', p. 176. Orwell, of course, was correct, and Hamilton begrudgingly admitted in his autobiography that he was forced to allow substitute authors to step in 'when Frank, and inevitably Martin also, caught a cold'. Hamilton, *The Autobiography of Frank Richards*, p. 44. Hamilton was highly critical of the work of these authors. In his reply to Orwell's article on 'Boys' Weeklies', Hamilton confidently declares, 'I could hardly count the number of authors who have striven to imitate Frank Richards, not one of whom has been successful. The style, whatever its merits or demerits, is my own, and—if I may say it with due modesty—inimitable. Nobody has ever written like it before, and nobody will ever write like it again.' Frank Richards, 'Frank Richards Replies to George Orwell', *Horizon*, 1.5 (May 1940), 346-55 (p. 349). Lofts and Adley claim that Hamilton wrote two thirds of the St Jim's stories in the *Gem* and '1380 of a total 1683 Greyfriars stories' in the *Magnet*. Lofts and Adley, *The World of Frank Richards*, pp. 71-2. Hamilton's vast output and popularity, in particular through his Greyfriars and St Jim's stories, earned him recognition as 'the world's most prolific author for boys' in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Lofts and Adley, *The World of Frank Richards*, p. 13.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Hamilton, 'Letter to Jimmy Iraldi, 24 November 1949', in *The Letters of Frank Richards*, compiled by Eric Fayne (1961), p. 25 in *Friardale* <[http://www.friardale.co.uk/Hamilton/Letters\\_FR.pdf](http://www.friardale.co.uk/Hamilton/Letters_FR.pdf)> [accessed 5 April 2014].

in to investigate a burglary at St Jim's and, in the course of the investigation, enlists the help of schoolboy Tom Merry. As a result of his work for Locke, Merry is offered the opportunity to become the detective's assistant, should he wish to pursue a detective career on leaving school.<sup>16</sup> It is Jack Drake, another clever schoolboy who has spent time at Greyfriars, who much later, in 1921, meets Locke there and, after leaving the school as a consequence of his father's financial ruin from a failed investment, seeks employment with the great detective.<sup>17</sup> While the resulting Locke/Drake series, written by 'Owen Conquest', takes place outside the school environment, both characters visit Greyfriars, and sometimes St Jim's, as they undertake various cases throughout the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>18</sup>

Hamilton's other famous detective, Herlock Sholmes, first appeared under another of Hamilton's pseudonyms, 'Peter Todd', in 1915 in the *Greyfriars Herald*, which 'purported to be the school magazine of Greyfriars School' under the editorship of Harry Wharton, a popular schoolboy character from Greyfriars.<sup>19</sup> The Sholmes stories later reappeared in the *Magnet* and the *Gem* from 1916-19 and in the re-launched *Greyfriars Herald* from 1921.<sup>20</sup> Despite appearing in school-story papers, the Sholmes stories were not detective school stories but, as their name suggests, parodies of the Sherlock Holmes narratives, with 'a dry delivery to the dialogue and a biting edge to the humour that must have gone over the heads of the original eleven- to fourteen-year-old

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<sup>16</sup> Martin Clifford, 'On the Trail', *Gem*, 1.16 (first series) (29 June 1907), 1-15 (p. 15). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text. In accordance with public-school tradition, and with the naming process adopted in the stories discussed in this chapter, the schoolboys and schoolboy detectives discussed here are referred to by their surname throughout. This contrasts with the rest of the thesis where boy detectives, excepting Stanley Dare, are referred to by their first name.

<sup>17</sup> Anon, 'Drake Wins Through!', *Boys' Herald*, 90 (16 July 1921), 17-20, 23 (p. 18). Locke puts Drake through a series of tests to establish his worthiness for the position of detective's assistant. Anon, 'Drake Wins Through!', pp. 18-20.

<sup>18</sup> For further details of the Ferrers Locke series, see Norman Wright, 'Herlock Sholmes and Other Detectives created by Charles Hamilton', *Books and Magazine Collector*, 304 (February 2009), 81-91 (pp. 82-3) in *Friardale* <<http://www.friardale.co.uk/Ephemera/Book%20and%20Magazine%20Collector/304-Herlock%20Sholmes.pdf>> [accessed 25 March 2014].

<sup>19</sup> Wright, 'Herlock Sholmes and Other Detectives', pp. 84-5.

<sup>20</sup> Wright, 'Herlock Sholmes and Other Detectives', p. 88.

readers of *The Greyfriars Herald* but which the adult audience can savour'.<sup>21</sup> Similar instances of detective parody are found in many of Hamilton's school stories, where comically inept or otherwise inappropriate schoolboy characters – most notably, perhaps, the hapless Bunter – adopt the detective role, often spurred on by the feats of their fictional detective heroes such as Holmes, with disastrous and usually hilarious results.<sup>22</sup> Hamilton also produced some successful schoolboy detectives who, for the most part, operate independently of adult detective counterparts. Foremost of these is Len Lex in the *Modern Boy* in 1936-7 who, as the orphaned nephew of a Scotland Yard detective inspector, works as an undercover detective at Oakshott School in an attempt to capture the 'Sussex Man', a notorious burglar whom Lex suspects is operating from within the school.<sup>23</sup>

A significant number of the stories addressed in this chapter were written by Hamilton, but several series and serials also appeared which recounted the school life of popular detective's assistants Nipper and Tinker. Here, established authors of the Nelson Lee and Sexton Blake series took advantage of the new detective school-story formula to give existing characters a new lease of life. In 1905, before Hamilton created Greyfriars and St Jim's, popular Nelson Lee author 'Maxwell Scott' – a pseudonym of Dr John William Staniforth – had produced 'Nipper's Schooldays' for the *Boys' Herald*, a serial which charted Nipper's early school life at St Ninian's, before he became Nelson Lee's official assistant. This was later followed by 'Nipper of St Ninian's' (1912-13), serialised in the *Boys' Friend*. Also published in the *Boys' Friend* were stories of Tinker's escapades at Telford's College, where the boy assistant is sent

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<sup>21</sup> Wright, 'Herlock Sholmes and Other Detectives', p. 86.

<sup>22</sup> For an example see Frank Richards, 'Bunter the Detective', *Magnet*, 4.92 (1909), 1-14. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>23</sup> Lofts and Adley, *The World of Frank Richards*, p. 120 and Wright, 'Herlock Sholmes and Other Detectives', pp. 83-4. The name 'Sussex Man' is perhaps inspired by Doyle's Sherlock Holmes story, 'The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire' (*Strand Magazine*, 1924).



by Sexton Blake, at an unspecified point in Tinker's career, to gain an education. Two serials of Tinker's school life here – 'Tinker's Schooldays' (1911-12) and 'The Four Musketeers' (1912) – were published anonymously in the *Boys' Friend*, followed by a series of short stories between 1912 and 1914 in the same paper. These stories of the detectives' boy assistants at school sometimes involve instances of mystery and detection, but are largely concerned with schoolboy japes and rivalries. On the whole, Tinker and Nipper are identified here as schoolboys rather than detectives, although they sometimes strive to right injustices and stand up for the weak and vulnerable. For the most part, then, Nipper and Tinker do not operate as schoolboy detectives here and thus these narratives are not fully evolved detective school-story hybrids, but they signal the beginnings of a merger between the detective and school-story genres.

Perhaps because of its hybrid nature and the newness of the form in the early twentieth century, several variants of the detective school story emerged after 1910, and there is considerable crossover between the types of stories that will be addressed in this chapter, many of which are written by Hamilton and all of which are situated more firmly with the detective school-story genre than are the narratives of Tinker and Nipper mentioned above. A recurring version of the form includes a professional adult detective who is called in to investigate a school-based crime and he, in turn, calls upon one or more of the school's pupils for assistance. Ferrers Locke is the detective at the heart of the best-known examples of this kind of story, inviting schoolboys Tom Merry and Jack Drake, among others, to help him in his investigations. However, the most common type of detective school story in the Amalgamated Press papers, often appearing in serial or extended series form rather than stand-alone short stories, and the one in which the schoolboy detective is most clearly constructed, is the undercover schoolboy detective narrative. Here, a boy detective is hired by the school, or takes it

upon himself, to investigate, incognito, among the boys and masters. While the former scenario might appear to position the schoolboy detective as a professional – and in some cases, indeed, he is assistant to an adult professional detective – payment is refused, not made or not mentioned in these stories and so the boy detective appears to operate for the honour of the school rather than for personal financial gain. In these cases, the schoolboy detective could be considered as an amateur detective, despite his professional training. The detective's schoolboy appearance allows him to pursue his enquiries discreetly, so that he neither alerts the culprits nor embarrasses the school by making the investigation public. Usually, he solves the case with minimal interference from the police, ensuring that the school's honour remains intact. Some of these undercover schoolboy detectives are independent investigators, such as Stewart Young's Fielding Torrence and 'Connie' Cambridge at Drayborne College (*Boys' Herald*, 1910-11), and Hamilton's creations, Dalton Hawke at Greyfriars (*Magnet*, 1912) and Len Lex at Oakshott School (*Modern Boy*, 1936-7).

Other undercover schoolboy detectives are the well-known assistants of famous adult detectives, who enter the school – alone or with their master – in disguise in order to investigate. Thus, authors of established detective series could take advantage of this new form to maintain the popularity of their detective characters and to add some variety to their escapades. The longest-running series of this kind is that of Nelson Lee and Nipper and their adventures at St Frank's, written by Edwy Searles Brooks, which began in the *Nelson Lee Library* in 1917 and continued until the paper merged with the *Gem* in 1933. Slightly different in format to other undercover stories, in this series Lee and Nipper join St Francis College as master and pupil not to investigate a crime at the school, but to hide out from a Chinese gang, the Fu-Chang-Tong, who are trying to kill them. If the gang have not succeeded in their task by the end of six months, Lee and

Nipper will be pardoned.<sup>24</sup> During their lengthy sojourn at St Frank's, Lee and Nipper are inevitably drawn into various investigations at the school, with Nipper taking centre stage and Lee, when present, usually a peripheral figure. Originally, the St Frank's stories alternated with those that take place outside the school in Lee and Nipper's usual urban environment, but by the end of 1917 the latter were dropped. E. S. Turner records that the editor of the *Nelson Lee Library*:

had to admit that separate stories of Lee and Nipper, divorced from St Frank's, were 'about as popular as fog at a football match'. 'You want the detective element but you want it intermixed with a school yarn. All right, you shall have it.'<sup>25</sup>

Blake and Tinker also become undercover detectives in a school in the 'Boys of Kingsmere College' series, published anonymously in the *Detective Library* (n.d.). They arrive at Kingsmere College with the express purpose of protecting the Bagley boys – pupils at the school and sons of Blake's client – from 'The Trust', a sinister and corrupt organisation who hold a grudge against the Bagley boys' father. Blake, like Lee in the St Frank's stories, becomes a master at the school, while Tinker, rather than becoming a schoolboy, takes on the role of headmaster's clerk – perhaps a sign of his working-class roots compared to Nipper's loftier origins.<sup>26</sup>

Probably the most significant example of the detective's assistant as undercover schoolboy investigator is the assistant to Ferrers Locke, Frank Richards's Jack Drake, who returns to his old school, Greyfriars, disguised as dim schoolboy James Duck in

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<sup>24</sup> Edwy Searles Brooks, 'Nipper at St Frank's', *Nelson Lee Library*, 112 (28 July 1917), 1-28 (p. 2). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>25</sup> Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, p. 165.

<sup>26</sup> Although Tinker does become a schoolboy in the aforementioned Telford's College stories in the *Boys' Friend* (1912-14), where he acts simply as a pupil rather than a detective, Tinker's working-class service role during his undercover investigations at Kingsmere College befits his gutter origins while Nipper, who in his rewritten origins story 'Nelson Lee's Pupil' (*Boys' Herald*, 1903-4) is given an upper-middle-class background and receives a substantial inheritance from his murdered father, can more comfortably adopt the role of public schoolboy as he undertakes his own undercover detective work in the St Frank's stories.

order to catch the Greyfriars prowler (*Magnet*, 1939).<sup>27</sup> While Nipper and Tinker are joined by their adult detective masters at school, Drake operates independently of Locke, whose only appearance in the series is in the form of a brief telephone conversation, which he mistakenly holds with Billy Bunter instead of the boy assistant.<sup>28</sup> Drake also appears under his own identity in another type of detective school story, the school-holiday mystery, in which, having met up with his old school pals from Greyfriars, he takes the role of lead investigator in the mystery that the boys inevitably stumble upon while on holiday – out camping or visiting one of their various ancestral homes.<sup>29</sup> Yet it does not always take a professional detective/detective’s assistant to solve mysteries set in the school environment, and sometimes amateur schoolboy detectives – in groups or individually – successfully bring a case to its conclusion.<sup>30</sup> A notable example occurs in the *Magnet* in 1940, as ex-pupil Herbert Vernon-Smith, who has been expelled from Greyfriars, finds and rescues the kidnapped schoolmaster Mr Quelch where Ferrers Locke has failed.<sup>31</sup> More often, there are instances of inept schoolboy detectives – parodies of their fictional heroes – who frequently act as foils to the narrative’s successful detective characters, but who sometimes have complete stories dedicated to their comic failures. Frank Richards’s

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<sup>27</sup> Jack Drake’s first appearance was in the *Greyfriars Herald* in 1919 where he attended Benbow School. See Owen Conquest, ‘Jack Drake’s Resolve’, *Greyfriars Herald*, 1 (1 November 1919), 5-9. Jack Drake transferred to Greyfriars in 1921. See Owen Conquest, ‘How Jack Drake Came To Greyfriars’, *Greyfriars Boys’ Herald*, 62 (1 January 1921), 3-6. Drake first meets Ferrers Locke in Anon, ‘Jack Drake, Detective’, *Boys’ Herald*, 89 (9 July 1921), 17-20 and becomes his assistant in the following story. See Anon, ‘Drake Wins Through!’

<sup>28</sup> Frank Richards, ‘Drake Gets His Man!’, *Magnet*, 55.1625 (8 April 1939), 3-28 (pp. 6-7). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>29</sup> For examples see Frank Richards, ‘The Caravan Detective!’, *Magnet*, 20.707 (27 August 1921), 3-18; Frank Richards, ‘The Mystery of the Christmas Candles!’, *Magnet*, 20.723 (17 December 1921), 3-10, 15-21; Frank Richards, ‘The Boy From Baker Street!’, *Magnet*, 56.1663 (30 December 1939), 2-24; and Frank Richards, ‘The Hooded Man!’, *Magnet*, 57.1664 (6 January 1940), 2-24.

<sup>30</sup> For an example of a schoolboy detective ensemble working on a case, see Clifford, ‘On the Trail’.

<sup>31</sup> See Frank Richards, ‘The Bounder’s Triumph!’, *Magnet*, 57.1674 (23 March 1940), 3-24 (pp. 22-4).

stories of the attempts of Greyfriars fools Billy Bunter and Horace Coker to play detective are characteristic of this type of narrative.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the numerous distinctions between the various types of detective school story, generally, they had three key factors in common: the school setting; the creation of a schoolboy detective protagonist; and the hybridisation of the detective genre by merging it with the school story. Exploring each of these areas in turn, this chapter will first consider the literary and social significance of transferring the detective action from a dangerous, urban, adult environment to a relatively safe, enclosed, rural, child-centric domain, with particular emphasis upon the development of the cult of childhood from the Edwardian period onwards, where there was a growing interest in child welfare and an increasing protective segregation of childhood and adolescence from adulthood. Secondly, the chapter will address how the texts, by imbuing the boy detective hero with schoolboy qualities and values, begin to offer a new construction of boyhood to its young readers which, rather than rushing boys towards adulthood, emphasises the importance of the development that occurs during youth, particularly moral growth and the forging of loyal relationships in the boyhood community. Finally, this chapter will consider the extent to which the detective and school-story genres are compatible and the contribution this hybrid form makes to the survival of the boy detective genre after the end of the Amalgamated Press story-paper empire during World War II and into the series-novel format which flourished in post-war Britain.

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<sup>32</sup> For examples, see Richards, 'Bunter the Detective' and Frank Richards, 'Sexton Blake Minor!', *Magnet*, 55.1618 (25 February 1939), 3-28. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

## 5.2: Designating and defending childhood in the early twentieth century: The school as a safe haven in fiction and reality

As discussed in chapters 3 and 4, the impending threat of war at the beginning of the twentieth century ensured a focus on boys as future men and so the importance of training them for the role that they would play as soldiers and leaders of the Empire. However, while the ultimate aim was for the boy to reach manhood, British society's acknowledgement of children, and especially boys, as crucial to the future survival of the Empire prompted a new interest in and recognition of childhood as an important life-stage, distinct from adulthood. This view was consolidated by a 'flurry of child welfare legislation' at the beginning of the twentieth century, which 'accorded children increased rights and protections, recognizing them as distinct from adults and having different needs and entitlements'.<sup>33</sup> As Andrew F. Humphries observes, legislation such as the Children Act (1908) marked a 'significant shift of emphasis which for the first time acknowledged the economic and welfare rights of children as being the remit not solely of parents but also of the state'.<sup>34</sup> Part two of the Children's Act (1908) built upon the work of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act (1889) and the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Amendment Act (1904), covering areas such as:

assault, ill-treatment, neglect, abandonment, suffocation of infants, allowing children to beg, exposing children to risk of burning, allowing children or young people to be in brothels, causing or encouraging or favouring the seduction or prostitution of a young girl'.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Adrienne E. Gavin, 'The Child in British Literature: An Introduction', in Adrienne E. Gavin (ed.), *The Child in British Literature: Literary Constructions of Childhood, Medieval to Contemporary* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 1-18 (p. 12).

<sup>34</sup> Andrew F. Humphries, "'From the Enchanted Garden to the Steps of My Father's House": The Dissident Child in Early Twentieth-Century British Fiction', in Adrienne E. Gavin (ed.), *The Child in British Literature: Literary Constructions of Childhood, Medieval to Contemporary* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 182-95 (p. 186). Adrienne E. Gavin and Andrew F. Humphries further observe that, '[d]uring the Edwardian period parental and domestic powers over children diminished as the state increasingly assumed control over children's lives, according them rights independent of their parents'. Adrienne E. Gavin and Andrew F. Humphries, 'Worlds Enough and Time: The Cult of Childhood in Edwardian Fiction', in Adrienne E. Gavin and Andrew F. Humphries (eds), *Childhood in Edwardian Fiction: Worlds Enough and Time* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 1-20 (p. 8).

<sup>35</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England 1872-1989* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004 [1994]), p. 55.

The Act broadened and more clearly defined the spectrum of abuse for which adults could be punished, ensured that these punishments were more severe, and also increased state powers of intervention to remove the child from an abusive environment. The Act created separate juvenile courts and a distinct juvenile justice system in which both child victims and offenders were distinguished from their adult counterparts and afforded independent legal rights.<sup>36</sup> The Children and Young Person's Act (1933) developed further measures to improve child welfare and extend child rights in the judicial system.<sup>37</sup>

While the creation of a separate juvenile justice system undoubtedly had a crucial impact upon the extension and protection of childhood and adolescence, perhaps the most significant reforms occurred in an institution in which all young people were compelled to spend time during their formative years. Harry Hendrick claims that:

In the history of children few institutions can equal the school for its impact on their lives and on shaping the perceptions of them throughout society, and in its influence on the development of child welfare policy. The school stands like a colossus whose gaze extends far beyond the horizon.<sup>38</sup>

From the early twentieth century, there was an increasing demand among working-class parents 'for more open opportunities for their children to gain secondary, or least more extended, schooling', and the 1902 Education Act prompted the creation of many grant-aided secondary schools, with attendance figures that more than quadrupled between

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<sup>36</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English Society 1880-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 49; Adrienne E. Gavin, 'Unadulterated Childhood: The Child in Edwardian Fiction', in Adrienne E. Gavin (ed.), *The Child in British Literature: Literary Constructions of Childhood, Medieval to Contemporary* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 165-81 (p. 165).

<sup>37</sup> Hendrick identifies the following changes that were made to legislation through the 'Protection of Children and Young Persons in Relation to Criminal and Summary Proceedings' branch of the Children and Young Person's Act (1933): '(i) the age limit was raised from 16 to 17; (ii) the definition of the need for care and protection was widened to include a child or young person who, either through having no parents or guardians, or those failing to exercise proper care, was (a) being exposed to moral danger; (b) falling into bad company; (c) beyond control; (d) being neglected or ill treated in a manner likely to result in unnecessary suffering or injury to health. In other words, the courts dealt with all young people, regardless of whether they were offenders or only in need of care, protection and guidance.' Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, p. 184.

<sup>38</sup> Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, p. 103.

1904 and 1938.<sup>39</sup> The Education Act of 1918 raised the minimum school leaving age to fourteen and required adolescents aged between fourteen and eighteen to undertake eight hours of continuation school classes per week.<sup>40</sup> As Hendrick observes, extended ‘schooling lengthened the years of “childhood”’, delaying the onset of adult employment, but the influence of school went beyond this.<sup>41</sup> In response to growing anxieties about physical deterioration prompted by the *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration* (1904), discussed in chapter 3, several provisions were made for monitoring the health of children while at school. The Education (Provision of Meals) Act (1906) gave local education authorities the power to provide free school meals to elementary school children where necessary.<sup>42</sup> The Education (Administrative Provisions) Act (1907) established the School Medical Service, which was responsible for the medical inspection of elementary school children, by a School Medical Officer, on their entrance to the school environment.<sup>43</sup> The Education Act of

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<sup>39</sup> Musgrave, *From Brown to Bunter*, p. 153. Musgrave states that ‘In 1904/5 94,698 pupils attended grant-aided secondary schools; in 1937/8 the number was 484,076, of whom 8.3 per cent were in the sixth form’. Musgrave, *From Brown to Bunter*, p. 238.

<sup>40</sup> G. E. Sherington, ‘The 1918 Education Act: Origins, Aims and Development’, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 24.1 (February 1976), 66-85 (p. 75). For further information on the 1918 Education Act, see D. W. Dean, ‘H. A. L. Fisher, Reconstruction and the Development of the 1918 Education Act’, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 18.3 (October 1970), 259-76. The day continuation school scheme was not successful. When the Act was passed, it was decided that sixteen to eighteen year olds would be excluded from the continuation class clause for the first seven years. Of the few day continuation schools that were established all, except Rugby, closed within four years of the Act’s passage. See Harry Hendrick, *Images of Youth: Age, Class, and the Male Youth Problem, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 220.

<sup>41</sup> Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English Society*, p. 64.

<sup>42</sup> Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, p. 104.

<sup>43</sup> The various intended functions of the School Medical Officer were: to ‘examine all children on entry into school; reinspect at regular intervals; periodically visit schools to inquire into children’s surroundings; visit schools during periods of outbreak of infectious disease; and be a “pervading influence” in the school’. Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, p. 115. Elementary schools were state-funded schools established by the Elementary Education Act (1870), which ‘compelled local authorities to establish rate-aided elementary schools in areas where there were not enough voluntary schools’. See J. M. Goldstrom, *Education: Elementary Education 1780-1900* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1972), p. 148. Robert Smith observes that ‘[e]lementary schools were perceived as the vital instruments in the effort to inculcate a reasonable level of literacy and numeracy in the population at large, quite apart from providing the essential foundation from which pupils might proceed, possibly in some number, to more advanced institutions of learning’. See Robert Smith, *Schools, Politics and Society: Elementary Education in Wales, 1870-1902* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999), p. 2. Harry Hendrick identifies the growing importance of the latter function in the early twentieth century: ‘In 1900 the meaning of elementary education was straightforward: it was for working-class children, the great



1918 extended the scope of medical inspections to secondary schools and wage-earning children.<sup>44</sup> Concerns about the impact of employment upon the health of young people were growing and, while the Employment of Children Act (1903) gave local authorities the power to restrict children's working hours and type of employment, it was school-based services that perhaps had the greatest influence upon the welfare of working children.<sup>45</sup> In his 1912 annual report, the Chief Medical Officer at the Board of Education, George Newman, proposed that all employed children and adolescents, including school leavers, should receive regular medical examinations by the School Medical Officer.<sup>46</sup> The 1918 Education Act introduced a clause ruling that adolescents entering certain institutions and particular jobs should obtain a medical certificate from the School Medical Officer.<sup>47</sup> The protective role of the school, therefore, extended beyond school life and educational matters to encompass the wider welfare of youths throughout their extended period of adolescence.

From the Edwardian period onwards, children's literature began to respond to this increased focus on the welfare of children, the extension of childhood and adolescence, and its separation from adulthood. Adrienne E. Gavin asserts that children's fiction of the Edwardian period began to represent childhood as 'its own

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majority of whom left school at the age of 12. By 1914, however, there was a very slight movement towards the education of working-class adolescents. The Free Place Regulations of 1907, which opened the way for 25 per cent of places at secondary schools to be allocated on the basis of an examination to elementary-school pupils, meant that examinations for these places were added to those existing for scholarships and bursaries provided from charitable funds. It was beginning to look as if the end of the strict partition between elementary and secondary schooling as two separate forms of education was in sight.' Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, p. 156.

<sup>44</sup> See Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, p. 121 and Harry Hendrick, 'Child Labour, Medical Capital, and the School Medical Service, c. 1890-1918', in Roger Cooter (ed.), *In the Name of the Child: Health and Welfare, 1880-1940* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 45-71 (p. 58). Linda Bryder asserts that '[b]y 1935 SMOs were performing two million routine inspections and more than one million special inspections each year'. Linda Bryder, 'Wonderlands of Buttercup, Clover and Daisies: Tuberculosis and the Open-Air School Movement in Britain, 1907-39', in Roger Cooter (ed.), *In the Name of the Child: Health and Welfare, 1880-1940* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 72-95 (p. 75).

<sup>45</sup> Hendrick, 'Child Labour', p. 51.

<sup>46</sup> Hendrick, 'Child Labour', p. 57.

<sup>47</sup> Hendrick, 'Child Labour', p. 58.

distinct realm, an Arcadian world apart, unreachable by adults who often desperately long for it'.<sup>48</sup> She observes that, by contrast to its Victorian counterpart:

Edwardian fiction now favoured groups of children, particularly siblings, living pleasant childhoods and remaining as children. Portrayed as separate from, superior to, and unadulterated by both adults and modern civilization, children in Edwardian fiction exist in an idealized world of play and adventure, neo-Romantic connection to nature, imaginative vision, and timelessness. Having no need for adults, they are rarely shown becoming adults themselves, but are captured in various ways, like their most famous representative, Peter Pan, in permanent childhood.<sup>49</sup>

While Gavin is referring to stories published in periodicals and stand-alone novels aimed at middle- and upper-class children – the work of authors such as J. M. Barrie, Edith Nesbit, Rudyard Kipling and Frances Hodgson Burnett – this description could be similarly applied to Hamilton's newly emerging popular school stories in the cheaper, less respectable Amalgamated Press papers. Hamilton's stories, like those discussed by Gavin, represent 'groups of children [. . .] living pleasant childhoods and remaining as children', often 'separate from' and 'superior to' adults. Just as real-life school became a symbol of safety and stability for its pupils – a child-centric realm, cut off from the dangers and difficulties of the adult world – so too was the fictional school a sheltered environment, offering a sense of security to child characters and readers alike.

Responding to Orwell's criticism of the sheltered nature of his school stories, Hamilton, as 'Frank Richards', defends his position:

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<sup>48</sup> Gavin, 'The Child in British Literature: An Introduction', p. 12.

<sup>49</sup> Gavin, 'Unadulterated Childhood', p. 166. Gavin and Humphries identify a clear reconfiguration of adult/child hierarchies between Victorian and Edwardian fiction: 'In Romantic and Victorian writing, too, parents, teachers, employers, and religious figures have enormous control over children. Edwardian fiction sees this control dissipate. While Victorian literature depicted the power balance being weighted heavily in adults' favour, Edwardian fiction reveals the scales swinging triumphantly towards a child power base. There is a clear sense that it is not Father, but children, who know best. Fictional children are presented as independent, imaginative, troubling, mischievous, at one with nature and the supernatural, and, above all, as "better" and more self-assured than adults.' Gavin and Humphries, 'Worlds Enough and Time', p. 11. This is particularly evident in the Amalgamated Press school stories, where pupils constantly get the better of teachers and other adult staff members, playing practical jokes and rebelling against those who attempt to oppress them. The schoolboy detective takes this power inversion a step further as he exposes and captures adult criminals and frequently violates adult-imposed rules in order to do so.

It is true that we live in an insecure world: but why should not youth feel as secure as possible? It is true that burglars break into houses: but what parent in his senses would tell a child that a masked face may look in at the nursery window! A boy of fifteen or sixteen is on the threshold of life: and life is a tough proposition; but will he be better prepared for it by telling him how tough it may possibly be? I am sure that the reverse is the case.<sup>50</sup>

Both the child-centric school environment and the formulaic nature of school stories – the endless repetition of the same conventions and the predictable behaviour of the stock characters – helps to create this sense of security for child readers. These stories extended the middle-class construction of the protected child to working-class boy readers, inviting them into the sheltered environment of the public school, though of course offering an idealised, fantasy version of public-school life.

The use of this fictional school setting for detective narratives marked the beginning of a shift in the boy detective genre in the early twentieth century, not only from a professional, adult-focused space to an amateur, child-centric environment but also from an adult- to a child-orientated genre. While in many of the detective stories for boys discussed in chapters 3 and 4, there is an increased focus upon child protagonists, the boy detectives still operate in a dangerous and violent adult world, often alongside or in the shadow of adult detective characters, and frequently display characteristics more often associated with a grown man than an adolescent boy. For the most part, these stories are still closely linked to the adult detective tradition from which they evolved, despite their youthful protagonists, and concentrate upon the boy detective's journey towards and arrival at – or, at least, his desire to reach – adulthood rather than his experience of childhood. As he enters the school environment, the boy detective is situated firmly in and both becomes a regulator of and benefits from an enclosed, childhood world. The role of the school as a safe haven is stressed in several

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<sup>50</sup> Richards, 'Frank Richards Replies to George Orwell', p. 352.

detective school stories, particularly in cases where the boy detective is a professional investigator with connections to the outside, adult world. The stories of Nipper and Nelson Lee at St Frank's school are notable in this respect. As previously mentioned, Nipper and Lee do not visit St Frank's as part of an investigation but in order to hide out from a vicious Chinese gang, the Fu-Chang-Tong, who are trying to kill them. On several occasions Nipper, who narrates the series, emphasises the distinction between the safe school environment and the dangerous criminal world that he has left behind. On his arrival at the school in 'Nipper at St Frank's' (*Nelson Lee Library*, 1917), Nipper states that '[a]fter the exciting times in London, all this seemed singularly peaceful. The Fu-Chang-Tong and all its works seemed millions of miles away.' (p. 6) By the third St Frank's story, Nipper professes that '[a]fter the strenuous strain of detective work, our days at St Frank's were just one continuous holiday'.<sup>51</sup> School life offers Nipper an escape from the violent criminal world in which he usually operates alongside the adult professional detective.

Inevitably, this respite is only temporary, as the detective school story necessarily deals with criminal threats. Often these threats come from within the school, from adult criminals who need to be vanquished in order to restore the school's reputation as a safe and nurturing environment for boys. Untrustworthy porters commit opportunistic thefts. For example, Cleeke, the stand-in porter at Greyfriars, steals twenty-five pounds from a pupil and frames another pupil for the theft.<sup>52</sup> While Cleeke is a firmly working-class character, other criminals are educated men who can pose as schoolmasters. At Greyfriars, Mr Lamb, who is standing in for the missing Mr Quelch, is actually responsible for Quelch's disappearance, as Quelch can identify Lamb as

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<sup>51</sup> Edwy Searles Brooks, 'Fullwood's Victory!', *Nelson Lee Library*, 116 (25 August 1917), 1-29 (p. 1).

<sup>52</sup> See Frank Richards, 'The Schoolboy Detective', *Magnet*, 6.230 (6 July 1912), 1-22 (p. 21).

‘Slim Jim’ the cracksman.<sup>53</sup> Fifteen-year-old boy detective Len Lex enrolls at Oakshott School in order to capture another troublesome cracksman, the ‘Sussex Man’, whom Len is convinced is one of the teachers at the school. Len eventually settles upon the fifth-form master, Mr Silverson, as the culprit, but the boy detective leaves his uncle, Detective-Inspector Nixon, to make the arrest.<sup>54</sup> At other times, the criminal threats come from outsiders, as in the Greyfriars prowler series in the *Magnet* (1939-40), where Jack Drake, boy assistant to famous detective Ferrers Locke, is hired by the school to work undercover to catch the prowler who has been stealing from the school and attacking masters and pupils. The culprit here is Randolph Crocker who, as an ex-Greyfriars boy, is more firmly imbued with respectable middle-class status than are the bogus schoolmaster criminals. Class, it seems, is no barrier to criminality, as Crocker, who had been expelled from the school for theft many years earlier, is now a master-criminal, the Courtfield Cracksman, under the new name Rupert Crook. Crocker, as an escaped convict, returns to the vicinity of Greyfriars, using his old identity in order to evade capture. Like the other adult criminals who invade the school environment, Crocker is eventually handed over to the police.<sup>55</sup> His removal from the school is even more necessary than that of those corrupt staff members who are in a position of authority over the boys. As a disgraced ex-pupil who has descended into a life of crime, Crocker is evidence of the school’s failure to protect and civilise all of its members. Moreover, Crocker not only poses a threat to the boys by committing crimes against them and their school, but also has a potentially corrupting influence on less disciplined

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<sup>53</sup> See Richards, ‘The Bounder’s Triumph!’, p. 20.

<sup>54</sup> See Charles Hamilton, ‘The Schoolboy ’Tec’, *Schoolboys’ Own Library*, 353 (1937), 1-95 (p. 92). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text. Reprint of Charles Hamilton, ‘The Schoolboy Detective’ *Modern Boy*, 1.452 (3 October 1936) – 1.456 (31 October 1936).

<sup>55</sup> See Richards, ‘Drake Gets His Man!’, p. 26.

boys, luring them into immoral practices, particularly gambling, and criminal activities such as theft.<sup>56</sup>

Although the removal of adult criminal threats from the school environment is, ultimately, a job for the police, the identification of these threats is a task better suited to the schoolboy detective. The school is a private community in public view and, as such, resents the intrusion of the police and the disgrace which their presence might bring upon the school.<sup>57</sup> In ‘Sexton Blake Minor’ (*Magnet*, 1939), the notion of calling in the police to deal with the Greyfriars prowler is met with resistance from the boys, who find ‘[t]he bare thought of policemen in the school rooting among Greyfriars men in such circumstances [. . .] horrifying’ (p. 7). Dr Locke, the headmaster, similarly rejects the idea of calling in the police as ‘too repugnant’ (p. 9). Jack Drake, as an undercover schoolboy detective, offers the perfect solution. As ‘[a] detective in the school, whose presence was entirely unsuspected’, Drake can investigate without arousing the suspicions of the culprit and potential accomplices or causing any public scandal, as his presence circumvents the need to call in any official forces, ensuring that ‘not a word need be said outside the school’ (p. 9). In this respect, the schoolboy detective bears some resemblance to the detective protagonist of the ‘Golden Age’ clue-puzzle form, particularly in those country-house mysteries by authors such as Agatha Christie,

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<sup>56</sup> For example, in ‘Guilty Gold!’, Loder, a sixth-former at Greyfriars, steals some gold sovereigns from Mr Hacker, one of the masters, in order to pay off his gambling debts to Crocker. See Frank Richards, ‘Guilty Gold!’, *Magnet*, 55.1623 (25 March 1939), 3-28 (p. 13). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>57</sup> In this way, the detective school story is similar to nineteenth-century sensation fiction, where police detectives such as Sergeant Cuff in Wilkie Collins’s *The Moonstone* (1868) are unwelcome figures within the middle-class domestic setting. Heather Milton observes that ‘[w]hile the middle classes feel relief that the police control the working-class criminal element, that feeling is combined with dread of the intrusion of the police into the middle-class home and anxiety about their status as something in between a paid employee and an external authority’. This ‘class anxiety prompted by the intrusion of the police detective into the middle- and upper-class home is alleviated when he is replaced by other characters, usually, though not necessarily always or exclusively, a gentleman detective’. Heather Milton, ‘Sensation and Detection’, in Pamela K. Gilbert (ed.), *A Companion to Sensation Fiction* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 516-27 (p. 519 and p. 520).

popular in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>58</sup> These are stories in which a private, often amateur, investigator, gains access to and solves a crime in an enclosed, private community – often in a rural environment – where the police, if present, usually only play a minor role.<sup>59</sup> In the country-house mystery, the private detective sometimes allows the perpetrator of the crime to evade the law in order to spare the community a scandal.<sup>60</sup> By contrast, in Crocker’s case, Drake warns the headmaster not to give in to Crocker’s pleas to spare him:

‘This man must be handed over to the police, sir!’ said Jack Drake, quietly and distinctly.

‘Drake!’

‘Not only for pilfering in the school, sir,’ said Drake. ‘For that alone he must pay the penalty like any other rascal caught breaking the law. But that is not all.’

(‘Drake Gets His Man’, p. 26)

Drake, at this point, suspects that Crocker is also the Courtfield Cracksman, but the fact that Crocker has broken the law at all is enough for Drake. The case is successfully

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<sup>58</sup> For further information on the Golden Age clue-puzzle form, see Lee Horsley, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 37-52; Stephen Knight, *Crime Fiction since 1800: Detection, Death, Diversity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 80-108; Stephen Knight, ‘The Golden Age’, in Martin Priestman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 77-9; Peter Messent, *The Crime Fiction Handbook* (Malden, MA, Oxford and Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp. 27-34; Charles J. Rzepka, *Detective Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), pp. 137-60; Julian Symons, *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (New York, Tokyo: Mysterious Press, 1993), pp. 104-42; and Heather Worthington, *Key Concepts in Crime Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 115-21.

<sup>59</sup> The tradition of an amateur investigator in a private, domestic environment where the police are unwelcome dates back to the sensation novels of the 1860s, such as Wilkie Collins’s *The Moonstone* (1868). For further discussion of the sensation novel, see chapter 1, pp. 25-6 and p. 69. While Heather Worthington stresses that the country house was not the only setting for Golden-Age detective fiction, she acknowledges that this fiction is characteristically ‘located in small or enclosed communities: little villages or suburban streets, islands, hotels’. Worthington, *Key Concepts in Crime Fiction*, p. 117. Even when Golden-Age stories were set in an urban environment, Stephen Knight observes that ‘it would still be a sequestered area, an apartment or at most a few streets’. Knight, ‘The Golden Age’, p. 77.

<sup>60</sup> A well-known example occurs in Christie’s *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, where the detective, Poirot, allows the murderer to commit suicide rather than face the law and a public scandal: ‘Remember what I said—the truth goes to Inspector Raglan in the morning. But, for the sake of your good sister, I am willing to give you the chance of another way out. There might be, for instance, an overdose of a sleeping draught.’ Agatha Christie, *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993 [1926]), p. 232. Lee Horsley refers to this suicide as ‘the standard way out’. Horsley, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction*, p. 46. Knight acknowledges that, in the clue-puzzle form, ‘[t]he identification of the criminal is usually the end of the story. It is very rare for execution to be included, though suicide or an appropriate accident can intervene.’ Knight, ‘The Golden Age’, p. 79. What provides closure, Knight suggests, is not the apprehension and punishment of the criminal, but ‘[t]he knowledge that explains the puzzle’. Knight, *Crime Fiction*, p. 87.

resolved, as the police remove the adult criminal from the school without interfering with the school itself. Thus, while the schoolboy detective, like his counterpart in the adult detective/boy assistant or professional boy detective narratives, deals with adult criminals, he only does so in the school environment and the surrounding area. Therefore, rather than engaging with adult criminals on their own ‘turf’ – in the dangerous criminal underworld traversed by the professional investigator – the schoolboy detective encounters them in and expels them from the realm of boyhood, handing them over to adult law enforcers for containment and punishment. The schoolboy detective, therefore, becomes a guardian of the childhood community, expelling the dangerous adult criminals that threaten its security.

### **5.3: Policing childhood: Child criminals, rehabilitation and moral development**

While identifying and removing adult criminal threats is a relatively straightforward task for the schoolboy detective, which reinforces the safety and stability of the schoolboy community, his relationship with juvenile crime is more complex. As both schoolboy and detective, he has to negotiate his way through the three disciplinary systems which operate in the school environment: the law; school rules; and schoolboy codes. The last of these systems is the most problematic in relation to the schoolboy detective’s investigation of crimes committed by his fellow pupils. According to Musgrave, the schoolboy code:

was fundamentally that of the upper middle class and was marked by two qualities above all else, deference to authority within a hierarchy and an abhorrence of lying. In addition, a sense of duty towards one’s family, one’s group, one’s friends and the school was encouraged.<sup>61</sup>

In particular, ‘sneaking’ is abhorred by the boys, who value their loyalty to each other above that due to the masters, preferring to mete out their own punishments to

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<sup>61</sup> Musgrave, *From Brown to Bunter*, p. 244.



wrongdoers where necessary rather than turning them in to face the wrath of the teaching staff.<sup>62</sup> Those accused of wrongdoing are made to stand trial by their fellow pupils or are challenged to a fight. Punishments for the guilty range from social exclusion – being ‘sent to Coventry’ – to corporal punishment, such as ‘running the gauntlet’.<sup>63</sup> While much of this self-regulatory punishment is for immoral behaviour such as bullying, schoolboy crime poses a bigger problem. Following a theft at Greyfriars, the headmaster, Dr Locke, reminds the boys that: ‘Ordinary rules do not apply in such a case as this—a case of theft. No honourable boy could dream of helping a thief to escape detection.’ (‘Sexton Blake Minor’, p. 7) Here, it later transpires that the theft has been committed by an adult criminal, so the tension between schoolboys’ obligations to the school and their loyalty to each other is resolved. Yet, when schoolboys themselves are responsible for crimes, the role of the schoolboy detective becomes more problematic.

In ‘Under Suspicion’ (*Magnet*, 1912), for example, when a valuable stamp is stolen from Mr Capper, a master at Greyfriars, boy detective Dalton Hawke – ‘son of detective Hawke of Scotland Yard’ – is called in to ascertain which of three schoolboy suspects is guilty.<sup>64</sup> Hawke, in disguise as a new pupil, is assigned to the study of Banthorpe, the prime suspect, and soon passes him over as the culprit in favour of Gadsby, a boy with extravagant spending habits. Taking into account the schoolboy code, Hawke’s methods of investigation could perhaps be considered underhand, as he

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<sup>62</sup> At St Frank’s, Nipper states that ‘[s]neaking in the Form-room was regarded as a crime’. Brooks, ‘Fullwood’s Victory!’, p. 3.

<sup>63</sup> For example, when Nipper, in the guise of Dick Bennett, is falsely accused of attacking a fellow pupil, he is ‘sent to Coventry’ for a month – to be ignored by the whole schoolboy population – as he is found guilty at his ‘trial’. See Brooks, ‘Fullwood’s Victory!’, pp. 20-7. In ‘Tinker’s Schooldays’, Parton, the school bully, and his cronies are made to run the gauntlet as their lower-school victims hit them with rulers. See Anon, ‘Tinker’s Schooldays’, *Boys’ Friend*, 11.546 (25 November 1911), 402-3 (p. 403). Notably, in this case, when Mr Rose attempts to intervene, he is informed by one of the prefects that ‘it is against all precedent for a master to interfere in matters of this sort. You are exceeding your powers.’ (p. 403)

<sup>64</sup> Frank Richards, ‘Under Suspicion’, *Magnet*, 6.233 (27 July 1912), 1-22 (p. 21). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

not only pretends to be a philatelist to get close to his suspects but, when he settles upon Gadsby as the thief, confirms his suspicions by disguising himself as Gadsby and visiting the shady Jewish stamp dealer, Mr Isaacs, in order to negotiate a deal for the stolen stamp.<sup>65</sup> When Hawke finds the stolen stamp in Gadsby's study, he has no qualms about revealing the identity of the thief to the headmaster. Not wishing to involve the police, Dr Locke decides that 'Gadsby will be expelled from Greyfriars, but there I think his punishment may stop' (p. 22). In the end, Dr Locke does not need to enforce this punishment as Gadsby, 'overcome with fear and remorse, did not return to the school. In Courtfield he wrote and despatched a miserable letter to the Head, begging for forgiveness and confessing his misdeed, then he fled to his home.' (p. 22) Meanwhile, Hawke leaves the school without revealing his true identity to the boys. The tension surrounding Hawke's undercover surveillance role and his betrayal of the schoolboy code in giving up Gadsby to the school authorities is partially resolved as the culprit confesses and removes himself from the school environment and Hawke quietly slips away without taking credit for the case.

The tension between the schoolboy code of honour and the actions of the schoolboy detective is more directly addressed in cases where an amateur investigator appears in the form of an established schoolboy character – usually one who is, for the most part, ill-suited to the detective role. In 'Bunter the Detective' (*Magnet*, 1909), Billy Bunter, the notorious fool of Greyfriars and 'the laziest fellow in the Remove' (p. 1), decides that he 'was born to be a detective' (p. 6) and settles upon new boy Tom Brown – clearly named after the eponymous hero of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857) – as the source of his first investigation. After Tom Brown receives a letter and subsequently borrows money from his friends, Bunter is determined to read the letter

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<sup>65</sup> See Richards, 'Under Suspicion', p. 16.

and then spies upon the new boy as he keeps an appointment with the letter writer, hands over money to a mysterious man and receives a note in return. When Harry Wharton catches Bunter rifling through Tom Brown's pockets in the middle of the night in search of the note and demands an explanation, Bunter defends himself by arguing that:

‘I was acting as a detective. [. . .] Detectives do a lot of things ordinary chaps don't do. [. . .] Now, it's pretty clear to me that Tom Brown is mixed up in a shady case. Perhaps he's being blackmailed by somebody – and in that case he has a guilty secret and ought to be expelled from Greyfriars. I shall be doing my duty in showing him up.’

(p. 6)

Wharton is not convinced and condemns Bunter as a ‘prying little bounder’ (p. 6) and a ‘spying cad’ (p. 7). Bunter, however, is not deterred and, even after Brown saves him from Bullstrode the bully, Bunter is still determined to pursue his case:

After the way Tom Brown had stood up for him, and rescued him from the bully of the Remove, any sort of decency ought to have kept the fat junior from following him. But Bunter forgot that. He only remembered that he was an amateur detective and on the track.

(p. 11)

Bunter lacks honour and breaks the schoolboy code by failing to reciprocate the goodwill that Brown shows him and instead continues to spy on the new boy and, finally, accuses him of being blackmailed by a bookmaker.

Mr Quelch, who overhears this accusation, dismisses Bunter as ‘the stupidest boy in my form’ who has been adversely influenced by ‘reading foolish detective romances’ (p. 14). Bunter's accusation, based on sensationalist guesswork rather than any clear evidence, is completely erroneous as Brown reveals that he was lending the money to an acquaintance with a gambling problem. As Brown's actions are innocent and thus not requiring punishment, no harm is done, but Mr Quelch condemns Bunter for his dishonourable behaviour: ‘As for you, Bunter, nothing can exceed the contempt I feel for your baseness in spying upon your form-fellow, and your petty meanness in

placing the worst possible construction upon everything you discovered.’ (p. 14)

Bunter’s attempted investigation points towards the moral and social problems inherent in the schoolboy detective role, but his story, like those of many other foolish schoolboy investigators, is a detective parody in which the boy sleuth – working for his own glory and incorrectly imitating fictional adult detectives like Sherlock Holmes – is comically inept. Either, as in Bunter’s case, there is no real crime to investigate, or the aspiring detective reaches a false conclusion while a more competent detective character solves the case.<sup>66</sup> Thus, the inept schoolboy detective is harmless – completely out of his depth as he attempts to follow in the footsteps of fictional detective heroes with names like ‘Timon the Trail-Sniffer’ and ‘Bandog Blockhead’ – and has no actual influence on the resolution of the case, if, indeed, there is a case to begin with.<sup>67</sup>

The moral and social complications of schoolboy detection are addressed more seriously in cases where the boy investigator is successful in identifying the culprits of juvenile crime. In ‘The Schoolboy Detective’ (*Magnet*, 1929), Herbert Vernon-Smith, whose bad habits, such as smoking and gambling, and his unpleasant behaviour towards his schoolfellows, earn him the title ‘the Bounder’, adopts the detective role to expose an impostor who is posing as new schoolboy Arthur Durance, a boy with whom Vernon-Smith is vaguely acquainted. When Vernon-Smith reveals his suspicions and

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<sup>66</sup> For examples, see Skimpole in Martin Clifford, ‘Skimpole, Detective’, *Gem*, 2.7 (28 March 1908), 1-25, Martin Clifford, ‘The Bogus Detective’, *Gem*, 2.9 (11 April 1908), 1-25 and Martin Clifford, ‘The Detective’s Pupils’, *Gem*, 2.16 (30 May 1908), 1-13; Percy Shelley Tingle in Stewart Young, ‘The Schoolmaster Detective’, *Boys’ Herald*, 8.412 (10 June 1911), 770-1; Horace Coker in Frank Richards, ‘The Herlock Sholmes of Greyfriars’, *Magnet*, 11.473 (3 March 1917) and Richards, ‘Sexton Blake Minor!’; Porringe in Charles Hamilton, ‘The Ghost Hunters’, *Modern Boy*, 1.463 (19 December 1936), 8-12, 30; and Belton in ‘The Boys of Kingsmere College’ series: Anon, ‘The Trust-Breaker’, *Detective Library*, 32 (n.d.), 18-32, Anon, ‘The Madness of Bagley Minor’, *Detective Library* (n.d.), 16-32, Anon, ‘The “Morse” Code’, *Detective Library*, 35 (n.d.), 8-17 and Anon, ‘Saved By His Fag’, *Detective Library*, 37 (n.d.), 7-21.

<sup>67</sup> In ‘The Schoolmaster Detective’, the enthusiastic Percy Shelley Tingle discovers his desire for detective work by reading sensational stories like ‘Timon the Trail-Sniffer, or the Man with the Missing Knee’. Young, ‘The Schoolmaster Detective’, 8.412, p. 770. At Greyfriars, Horace Coker’s similarly disastrous attempts at detective work are prompted by the tales of Bandog Blockhead who, unlike Coker, ‘always got his man’. Richards, ‘Sexton Blake Minor!’, p. 12. The detective parody signals a rejection of the fictional super-detective epitomised by Holmes and often imitated in the boys’ story papers.

his intention to track the impostor's movements, his friend Tom Redwing protests: 'You can't follow a chap and watch him, and spy on him, like Bunter.'<sup>68</sup> Vernon-Smith, however, is a much more competent detective than Bunter and, remaining unmoved by Redwing's protests about the 'distasteful' nature of his actions (p. 12), he succeeds in rescuing the real Arthur Durance, who has been kidnapped by the impostor's father in an attempt to gain access to Durance's inheritance. Since Vernon-Smith's investigation has a positive outcome and his suspicions concerning the impostor prove to be correct, his dubious 'spying' activities are justified and, thus, legitimised. Moreover, Vernon-Smith avoids the label of 'sneak' when revealing the impostor's actions to Dr Locke, as he has necessarily to divulge this information to the headmaster in order to explain the appearance of the real Durance at Greyfriars.

Where Vernon-Smith's detective work violates the schoolboy code is in his willingness to hand over Ulick Stone – the impostor – to the headmaster and, subsequently, to the police for punishment. Vernon-Smith is ready to detain Stone until Inspector Grimes arrives, when Redwing intervenes once more, pleading Stone's case:

'You—you see,' said Redwing hesitatingly, 'the fellow's a young scoundrel, but he's only a kid, after all—and it seems to me that he was put up to it by his father [. . .] His game's up here—he can't do any more harm—and I thought he ought to have a chance to cut.'

(p. 23)

Vernon-Smith dismisses Redwing's view as 'rot', but agrees to let Stone escape all the same, admitting, 'we're not policemen, and it's up to Grimes to lay him by the heels. I hope he'll get him, so far as I'm concerned' (p. 23). Against his own judgement, but according to schoolboy codes, Vernon-Smith makes the honourable decision. He is confronted with a similar ethical dilemma in 'The Schoolboy Sleuth!' (*Magnet*, 1934), where he identifies sixth-form prefect Loder – a gambler and a bully – as the thief who

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<sup>68</sup> Frank Richards, 'The Schoolboy Detective!', *Magnet*, 36.1131 (19 October 1929), 3-23 (p. 6). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

has taken another boy's confiscated money from the headmaster's office. While Vernon-Smith is, apparently, 'the last fellow at Greyfriars to "sneak"', he justifies his decision to explain to Dr Locke the means by which the culprit can be caught by claiming '[y]ou know jolly well that I wouldn't give a ragger away. A thief's a different thing.'<sup>69</sup> Vernon-Smith's chief reason for giving up Loder, however, is in revenge for 'the savage thrashing the bully of the Sixth has given him', and Loder's subsequent impending expulsion is, for Vernon-Smith, 'a cheery anticipation' (p. 25). Yet Vernon-Smith's fellow pupils step in once more to challenge his decision, giving Loder the opportunity to explain and offering him a second chance, moved by his plea: 'for mercy's sake don't disgrace me for life because I've been a fool—' (p. 28). While Vernon-Smith is an effective boy investigator, he lacks the moral judgement required in order to identify the right course of action for dealing with the juvenile delinquent and it is only with the intervention of his better-principled schoolboy companions that the boy criminal is offered a lifeline.

By contrast, when Jack Drake – Ferrers Locke's assistant, who is called into Greyfriars to deal with the prowler – is confronted with another theft committed by Loder in a later text, the boy detective obeys the schoolboy code without any prompting from the schoolboy community. When Loder is lured into gambling by Randolph Crocker, the Greyfriars prowler, in 'Guilty Gold!' (*Magnet*, 1939) and steals some of Mr Hacker's gold sovereigns to pay off his gambling debts, Drake decides to shield Loder from punishment by the school authorities. Should the headmaster become involved, Loder's punishment would no doubt be expulsion – the usual school policy which enables the removal of the criminal threat while maintaining the school's good reputation. This had been Randolph Crocker's own fate when he had been caught

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<sup>69</sup> Frank Richards, 'The Schoolboy Sleuth!', *Magnet*, 46.1399 (9 December 1934), 2-28 (p. 22). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

stealing from Greyfriars as a boy, an act which initiated his criminal career and prompted his later attack against the school on his escape from prison. Expulsion, the text therefore implies, is not always the best course of action either for the individual boy criminal or the community to which he belongs. Acting for the good of both Loder and the schoolboy community, Drake decides to return Hacker's sovereigns without handing Loder over to the masters for punishment:

If he could handle this [. . .] without giving Loder up, he was going to do it. Loder might well be left to his conscience and to the terrible lesson he had had—if his act of dishonesty could be undone.

('Guilty Gold!', p. 25)

By undoing Loder's crime and concealing his guilt, Drake is not simply protecting the school's reputation, but, more crucially, is affording the boy criminal the opportunity to repent and correct his behaviour within the schoolboy community. By remaining in the protective school environment and being allowed yet another chance, Loder may still escape his bad habits and criminal proclivities through the influence of and interaction with his more morally advanced schoolboy peers.

The detective school story's focus on child crime and the genre's distinction between the treatment of child and adult criminals arose during a period of crucial developments in attitudes towards and the management of real-life young offenders. The establishment of separate juvenile courts through the 1908 Children's Act not only benefitted child victims but also child perpetrators of crime. The juvenile courts dealt with offenders aged between seven and sixteen. The intention of this system, Hendrick observes, 'was that juveniles would be kept separate from adult criminals both before and after their trial, and ostensibly were to be treated according to their needs rather than punished according to the crime'.<sup>70</sup> In the early twentieth century, childhood

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<sup>70</sup> Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, p. 124. The Child and Young Person's Act (1933) included further measures which prioritised the rehabilitation of delinquent youths, such as the separation of the trial to establish the

increasingly became recognised as a period in which moral development and the formation of character was not yet complete and so, far from being a lost cause, the juvenile delinquent could be reformed, given the correct treatment.<sup>71</sup> The focus on rehabilitation of immoral and criminal youths was heightened by the growing interest in their psychological make-up and motivations. In *The Young Delinquent* (1925), Cyril Burt stresses that:

The court [. . .] and whatever authority has to grapple with such cases, must at all times regard not the offence, but the offender. The aim must not be punishment, but treatment; and the target not isolated actions, but their causes.<sup>72</sup>

He also advocates the need for prevention of as well cure for criminality, recognising that ‘moral perfection is no innate gift, but a hard and difficult acquirement’.<sup>73</sup> This prevention and correction of immoral and criminal behaviour in youths, he suggests, is not solely the responsibility of the juvenile justice system, but ‘touches every side of social work’.<sup>74</sup> Burt acknowledges that his argument ‘is addressed not so much to the lawyer, the psychologist or the medical man as to teachers and social workers’.<sup>75</sup> In fact, the book had its origins in a series of lectures given to London teachers and Burt stresses the crucial role of the school in the endeavour to eradicate juvenile delinquency: ‘In the school itself,’ he argues, ‘the training of character, as well as the instruction of the intellect, should form an integral part of education’.<sup>76</sup>

The schoolboy detective hero – a figure like Jack Drake as opposed to the morally underdeveloped Vernon-Smith and the foolish Bunter – implicitly supports this real-life change in social policy surrounding the juvenile delinquent and reinforces the

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defendant’s innocence or guilt from the session considering the treatment that the young person required, should he/she be found guilty. See Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, p. 178.

<sup>71</sup> Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, p. 125.

<sup>72</sup> Cyril Burt, *The Young Delinquent*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn (London: University of London Press, 1955 [1925]), p. 611.

<sup>73</sup> Burt, *The Young Delinquent*, p. 612.

<sup>74</sup> Burt, *The Young Delinquent*, p. 610.

<sup>75</sup> Burt, *The Young Delinquent*, p. ix.

<sup>76</sup> Burt, *The Young Delinquent*, p. 610.



school's role in the moral development of its pupils. Thus, where characters like Bunter and Vernon-Smith adopt the detective role for their own ends – for example, to satisfy their curiosity, to exact revenge upon enemies, or for the fame that solving a case will bring – Drake and his ilk are implicitly driven instead by a concern for the positive moral development of the individual schoolboy and the wider schoolboy community. Characters such as Bunter, with their questionable motives for detection and numerous vices, serve as a clear contrast to the model schoolboy detective, reassuring readers, through a distinction in characteristics, of the legitimacy of the latter's investigative role. Bunter, Declan Kiberd argues:

was the supreme caricature who, by his extremity and grossness, allowed the normal to define itself as such, but who also allowed the normal to become heroic: he became a walking or rolling advertisement of the virtues of self-discipline, English restraint, modesty, honesty and sheer pluck.<sup>77</sup>

The schoolboy detective hero is perhaps not exactly 'normal', but he is characterised in much the same way as the popular schoolboy heroes of the school-story genre, such as Harry Wharton at Greyfriars and Tom Merry at St Jim's. The model schoolboy detective is also an ideal schoolboy who possesses positive qualities not present in the lazy, greedy, nosy Bunter or the selfish, rule-breaking Vernon-Smith, ensuring that he is well-qualified for the role of policing the schoolboy community.

These characteristics not only emphasise the schoolboy detective's morality – enabling him to become a positive role model for boy characters and readers alike – but they also position him as an active member of the fictional schoolboy community. Both of these factors ensure that his detective work is not deemed invasive, threatening or underhand, as it is in the case of figures such as Bunter and Vernon-Smith. The model schoolboy detective is a champion of the weak and a fighter against injustice in the school and the surrounding environment. Perhaps the clearest example occurs in the

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<sup>77</sup> Kiberd, 'School Stories', p. 60.

opening pages of 'Fielding Torrence, Detective' (*Boys' Herald*, 1910-11). Here, Torrence confronts Colonel Fox-Powell, a governor at the boys' school, Middleford College, as the colonel is about to beat Torrence's young companion, Connie Cambridge, who himself has stepped in to prevent Fox-Powell from thrashing a dog. Torrence warns Fox-Powell that 'if you touch that boy again I'll knock your head off!' and is also determined to stand up for Cambridge when Fox-Powell threatens to report the incident to the headmaster of Middleford College.<sup>78</sup> For Torrence, this desire to fight injustice and protect the weak is the main incentive for becoming a detective, as he informs Cambridge:

When I leave here I've got the world before me and very little in it I can't buy, and plenty of down-trodden people to fight for. There's crime and injustice and sweated labour going on all around you, kiddie. When you're comfortable, d'you never dream you hear the helpless and oppressed crying out for someone to help them? I'm going to be a sort of detective, my boy, and when they pop me underground I'm going to leave the world a bit better than I entered it.<sup>79</sup>

While Torrence sets himself up in an office, like a professional detective, as the inheritor of a large fortune he does not need to accept fees and consequently is able to help those most in need, selecting his clients on a moral rather than a financial basis. For the middle-class schoolboy investigator, detection becomes a vocation rather than a profession, and even those boys who work as assistants to professional detectives do not appear to accept fees in the school environment and instead simply work for the good of the school and the schoolboy community. In the professional adult detective/boy assistant narratives discussed in chapters 2-4, the working-class boy assistant is driven initially by the need for money and later by a sense of loyalty to the adult master detective who has provided him with financial security. By contrast, in the middle-class public school environment, the boy detective – whether a habitual member of the school

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<sup>78</sup> Stewart Young, 'Fielding Torrence, Detective', 8.385 (3 December 1910), 337-9 (p. 337).

<sup>79</sup> Young, 'Fielding Torrence, Detective', 8.385, p. 338.

community, a professional detective's assistant, or an independent investigator – is motivated by a moral obligation and loyalty to the school rather than by the promise of financial security.

The schoolboy detective hero works not only for the schoolboy community, but also from within that community, where he is careful to obey its internal code of honour. The schoolboy detective's investigations often bring him into contact with schoolboy transgressions but, regardless of his personal feelings towards the rule-breakers, he refuses to 'sneak' on them. During Nipper's time at St Frank's, for example, he is frequently privy to the bad behaviour of his rival, Fullwood, and his gang – particularly their night-time visits to the local pub – but the schoolboy code prompts him to keep their secrets, even from his master, Nelson Lee:

I could have told the gov'nor all about these goings on, of course; but I didn't. As a Housemaster, he would have been bound to take action, and I loathed an informer. The gov'nor would have to find out things for himself. I shouldn't even give him a hint. It wouldn't have been playing the game.<sup>80</sup>

Jack Drake takes a similar view during his investigations at Greyfriars, where his role is 'to discover the secret of the night-prowler, not to sneak about Greyfriars fellows'.<sup>81</sup> To this end, Drake destroys evidence of a jape which would get the culprit expelled<sup>82</sup> and, in a conversation with the headmaster, emphasises his own moral obligation, through his position in the schoolboy community, to obey and uphold the schoolboy code:

'I am here, sir, as a detective, but I am also here as a schoolboy. I am bound to report to you any discovery I make with regard to the prowler, whether he is a Greyfriars man or not, but I am bound not to report to you any breach of discipline that may come to my knowledge in the course of my investigations!' said Drake.

(*'Who Sacked Hacker?'*, p. 26)

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<sup>80</sup> Edwy Searles Brooks, 'The Boy from California', *Nelson Lee Library*, 114 (11 August 1917), 1-29 (p. 21).

<sup>81</sup> Frank Richards, 'Who Sacked Hacker?', *Magnet*, 55.1621 (11 March 1939), 3-28 (p. 10). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>82</sup> See Richards, 'Who Sacked Hacker?', p. 23.

There is a clear division between the adult and the child in these stories and this, in combination with the adult writers' attempts to represent a childhood experience to which young readers can relate, perhaps makes the detective school stories more attractive to a child audience than the earlier adult-dominated detective/assistant narratives. Here, the model schoolboy detective is obviously on the side of the boys whom he is policing. Consequently, he assuages anxieties about the potentially invasive and unsporting nature of the investigative role as, in the same way that he often takes responsibility for the fate of schoolboy criminals, he also shields schoolboy miscreants from punishment at the hands of the masters and instead deals personally with their misdeeds.

The schoolboy detective hero, therefore, not only deals with criminality but, more broadly, immorality in the schoolboy community. In 'The Schoolboy 'Tec' (*Schoolboys' Own Library*, 1937), for example, Len Lex, while pursuing the 'Sussex Man', a cracksman operating out of Oakshott School in the local area, takes time out of his investigation to tackle schoolboy corruption. When Rance, a sixth-former with a gambling habit, sends his fag out of the school with a message for his bookmaker, Lex quickly intervenes: "And you send a kid of the Fourth to see him! You won't, Rance! You never will again!" Len tossed the note into the study fire. "Don't do it any more, Rance. I shall hurt you if you do!" (p. 33) When Rance resists, Lex, good as his word, engages in a fight which leaves Rance 'on his back on the rug, with his head in the fender' (p. 33). Lex later has to repeat this lesson when Rance sends out another fourth-former, Porringe, with a letter for a racing man (p. 87). Thus, Lex protects the younger, more innocent boys from being exposed to bad influences while also attempting to correct the immoral practices of their corrupter, Rance, through corporal punishment.

While this moral policing is not the main focus of the plot in ‘The Schoolboy ’Tec’, in other series, it has a more pronounced role. In ‘Fielding Torrence, Detective’ (*Boys’ Herald*, 1910-11), Sir Ernest, a governor at Drayborne College, calls in the eponymous young detective to investigate a serious case of bullying of the scholarship boys, known as ‘the Exhibitioners’, by other pupils at the school. Sir Ernest believes ‘that there is a society in the school sworn to keep the hatred against the Exhibitioners alive. I want to know of whom that society is composed, and what their real object is.’<sup>83</sup> Torrence sets to work immediately, fighting two prefects – boys in a position of responsibility and influence – for bullying and beating a scholarship boy.<sup>84</sup> Rather than simply tackling individual instances of bullying and identifying the ringleaders, Torrence determines to get to the root of the problem and heal the rift between the Exhibitioners and the rest of the school. He makes a proposal to Sir Ernest, suggesting that they use football to unite the two sets of boys:

Now, sir, suppose you and the other governors invent some yarn about wishing to encourage sport in the school, get a very strong team to visit the place, and promise all the fellows an extra week’s holiday if the school team licks ’em. What would be the result? Arlingham, the captain, would have to ask some of these Exhibitioners to play. They, in their turn, would refuse to do so unless they received better treatment in future. The whole school would be practically in their hands.<sup>85</sup>

Torrence’s plan is a triumph, as the Oakshott boys beat the opposing team with the help of the Exhibitioners, ensuring that ‘the feud against the Exhibitioners was at an end’.<sup>86</sup> Torrence’s case is over as he modifies the immoral behaviour and attitude of the majority of the school towards the oppressed minority.

A more prolonged example of the schoolboy detective’s moral policing of his fellow pupils occurs in the stories of Nipper and Nelson Lee at St Frank’s school in the

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<sup>83</sup> Stewart Young, ‘Fielding Torrence, Detective’, *Boys’ Herald*, 8.391 (14 January 1911), 433-4 (p. 433).

<sup>84</sup> Young, ‘Fielding Torrence, Detective’, 8.391, p. 434.

<sup>85</sup> Stewart Young, ‘Fielding Torrence, Detective’, *Boys’ Herald*, 8.395 (11 February 1911), 494-5 (p. 494).

<sup>86</sup> Young, ‘Fielding Torrence, Detective’, 8.395, p. 494.

*Nelson Lee Library*. Nipper and Lee investigate several cases at the school but the plotline which unites the stories – particularly at the beginning of the series – is the boy detective’s attempt to improve the reputation of the declining Ancient House and its members – nicknamed the ‘Fossils’. When Nipper arrives at St Frank’s in ‘Nipper at St Frank’s’ (*Nelson Lee Library*, 1917), he swiftly recognises that: ‘the Fossils need a tremendous amount of bucking up,’ [. . .] ‘Fullwood & Co need taking down a peg or two. It’s up to me to do the bucking.’ (p. 8) Nipper’s nemesis, Fullwood, is a ‘lounging’, ‘dandified fellow’ (p. 8), the son of a baronet, who relies on his social position rather than any intellectual and physical prowess or moral worth to keep his place as the self-appointed junior leader of the Ancient House. With the introduction of the socially mobile Nipper, the series emphasises the importance of character over class, a notion that was particularly significant during the wartime period when the need for physically fit, patriotic, efficient young men was at its greatest.<sup>87</sup> Fullwood and his gang are smokers, drinkers and gamblers – vices condemned, in particular, by the Scout movement – and Nipper immediately attempts to correct their behaviour by confiscating their cards, cigarettes and champagne, explaining that ‘[c]igarettes and champagne aren’t good for little boys. I thought you’d be healthier without them.’ (p. 20)<sup>88</sup> By the end of ‘Nipper at St Frank’s’, the tyrannous Fullwood has been overthrown as junior

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<sup>87</sup> Nipper thus becomes a new version of ‘[t]he mid-Victorian manly schoolboy hero, who is physically strong and morally incorruptible’, reinforcing a public-school ideology – first introduced in the mid-nineteenth century – which was ‘connected with war, honour, and, above all, doing well on the playing field’. Bristow, *Empire Boys*, p. 55 and p. 57.

<sup>88</sup> In *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell observes that ‘[a] man who is in the habit of drinking wine or spirits in strong doses every day is not in the slightest use for scouting, and very little use for anything else’. Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship: The Original 1908 Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005 [1908]), p. 26. He also suggests that ‘[a] great deal of crime, and also of illness, and even madness is due to the [. . .] habit of drinking too much’ (p. 199). Baden-Powell is equally critical of smoking, which ‘weakens [boys’] eyesight’, ‘makes them shaky and nervous’, ‘spoils their noses for smelling’ and ‘generally makes [the boy] look like a little ass’ (p. 26). ‘The Boys of the Otter Patrol’, a Scout story serialised in *The Scout*, is similarly outspoken in its warning against the vices of drinking and gambling: ‘Drink, betting and cards—are there three worse enemies to our race than these? There is no need for me here to lay stress on the utter folly of self-indulgence in such vices, of all the misery that comes from them.’ E. Le Breton Martin, ‘The Boys of the Otter Patrol’, *The Scout*, 1.24 (26 September 1908), 553-6 (p. 554). See chapter 3, pp. 172-3 for a brief discussion of this serial and the vices condemned by the Scout movement.

leader and Nipper is elected in his place (p. 28). This is only the beginning of Nipper's drive to make the Ancient House respectable once more. He determines to bring his house up to the standards of their rivals, the College House, and starts by turning his attention to the boys' athletic abilities: 'Look at cricket! Look at everything! We're miles behind the College House in sports, and I don't know what else. It's not going to be stood!' ('The Boy from California, p. 1) In a later story, Nipper succeeds in setting up a House football match against the College House, which the Ancient House wins under Nipper's guidance.<sup>89</sup>

It is significant that sport is used by the detective as a means of moral policing in the schoolboy community. Boyd observes that 'the cult of the athlete had become entrenched and anti-intellectualism triumphed in the real-life public schools by the late nineteenth century'.<sup>90</sup> The growing emphasis on games, and particularly team sports, in schools, she argues, 'worked to elevate the successful athlete to a position of power and respect within the school'.<sup>91</sup> This is the case, too, in the fictional school. At Drayborne College, for example, the Exhibitioners' prowess on the football field elevates them in the school hierarchy while, similarly, at St Frank's, the Ancient House cast off their bad reputation by winning a football match. Quigly observes how the school story continually emphasises 'the almost mystical meaning attached to games – certainly to their moral worth and purpose'.<sup>92</sup> The schoolboy detective himself – the moral arbiter of the schoolboy community – is endowed with athletic abilities, which he uses to his advantage in policing the behaviour of his fellow students. As previously mentioned, Fielding Torrence, 'the strongest boy in the school and the finest athlete',<sup>93</sup> is able to

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<sup>89</sup> Edwy Searles Brooks, 'The Mystery of the Blue Volume', *Nelson Lee Library*, (27 October 1917), 1-30 (p. 8).

<sup>90</sup> Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper*, p. 15.

<sup>91</sup> Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper*, p. 76.

<sup>92</sup> Quigly, *The Heirs of Tom Brown*, p. 89.

<sup>93</sup> Young, 'Fielding Torrence, Detective', 8.385, p. 337.

discipline bullies by challenging them to fight, while Len Lex uses the same method to deal with the bully, Rance, at Oakshott School.<sup>94</sup> Both of these detectives are equally skilled at team sports, ensuring their popularity through scoring crucial goals in school football matches, and thus confirming their membership of and influence in the schoolboy community.<sup>95</sup>

In his role of policing boyhood criminality and immorality, the schoolboy detective resembles Ernest Keen, the protagonist of *The Boy Detective* (1865-6), whose methods of detection are discussed in detail in chapter 1. There are, however, some crucial differences between Ernest Keen and the schoolboy detective which point towards differences in attitudes to adolescent boys and juvenile crime between the 1860s and the early twentieth century. Ernest Keen and the schoolboy detective are both respectable, middle-class figures who disseminate real-life contemporary middle-class ideologies to a wider boy community, but there is a crucial difference in their relationship with that community. Ernest, cast out of his home and living in the London slums, operates as a middle-class exemplar to a group of impressionable, potentially corrupt lower-class boys in an environment where juvenile crime is rife. He encourages the Band of Light, his honest disciples who sometimes assist him in his detective work, and a selection of converts from their rival gang of boy criminals, to adopt middle-class values such as Samuel Smiles's self-help doctrine, in order to eradicate or, at least, contain their potential criminal threat and thus preserve class boundaries. In *The Boy Detective*, therefore, a hierarchy exists between the middle-class moral enforcer, Ernest Keen, and the lower-class criminalised boys whom he polices. This hierarchy extends to the text's working-class boy readers, who were the target audience for 'penny dreadfuls' and hence for this serial which warns boys against the dangers of reading

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<sup>94</sup> See Hamilton, 'The Schoolboy 'Tec', p. 33.

<sup>95</sup> See Stewart Young, 'Fielding Torrence, Detective', 8.393 (28 January 1911), 462-4 (p. 462) and Hamilton, 'The Schoolboy 'Tec', p. 80.



such sensational, criminal-centric fiction. The boy readers, like the lower-class boy characters in the text, are disciplined and contained by Ernest's moral example. This is hardly surprising, considering that *The Boy Detective* responds directly and explicitly to the moral panic surrounding juvenile delinquency in the 1860s – specifically to the perceived criminal proclivities of lower-class boys, seduced by the glamorous boy criminal heroes of the popular 'penny-dreadful' format and the adult highwayman and robber protagonists of the earlier 'penny bloods' and Newgate novels.<sup>96</sup>

By contrast, the middle-class schoolboy detective of the Amalgamated Press detective school stories, which flourished in the early twentieth century, operates within the boy community rather than presiding over it. The schoolboy detective's role is not to reinforce class boundaries, nor to ensure the containment of criminality threatening to engulf a particular sector of juvenile society, but to encourage the positive moral development of the whole boyhood community. Here, lower-class readers are elevated to identify with the middle-class schoolboy characters – including the schoolboy detective – and thus they too become part of a boyhood community where morality and group loyalty transcends class barriers. Boyd expresses the crucial difference between 'the individualism of Victorian heroes' and the 'ideal of community spirit' endorsed in story papers of the early twentieth century.<sup>97</sup> In boy detective fiction, this change is signified by a move from Ernest Keen, the unmatched boy super-detective, to the schoolboy detective who acts as part of the boy community rather than as its isolated, socially and intellectually superior leader.

It is true that the schoolboy experience represented in the Amalgamated Press papers was distanced from both the reality of public-school life and that of working-class schoolboys. As Quigly notes, Richards's fictional schools were 'the apotheosis of

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<sup>96</sup> For further discussion of these forms, see chapter 1.

<sup>97</sup> Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper*, p. 7.

the public school: a cloud cuckoo land, an all-purpose repository of dreams for those who had never been there'.<sup>98</sup> However, this fantasy had a touch of reality, or at least familiarity, for working-class boy readers, as many of them attended schools which aspired to the public school ideals conveyed – somewhat hyperbolically – in these stories. Musgrave asserts that:

Both the elementary schools and the new secondary schools were deeply affected by public schools. The values of the public schools and the methods that they had established to impart those values were seen by most of those with power in Britain, and especially by those administering the new schools at both levels, as appropriate and acceptable.<sup>99</sup>

Despite the disparity between public and state schools in terms of wealth and facilities, rituals and traditions, and overall organisation, working-class boys were exposed to the same moral and social ideologies as their public school counterparts. The fictional schoolboy detective, therefore, and the community over which he presided, offered a somewhat more realistic and accessible fantasy to the working-class boy reader than the professional detective's assistant of earlier story-paper narratives.

Attracted by this figure's popular schoolboy characteristics, such as athleticism and schoolboy honour, the working-class boy reader begins, unconsciously, to internalise the schoolboy detective's middle-class moral ideology. More crucially, while it is still the case that a middle-class detective protagonist disseminates a middle-class ideology to working-class readers, it is not intended specifically to contain any

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<sup>98</sup> Quigly, *The Heirs of Tom Brown*, pp. 249-50. In the 1920s the school stories of the rising D. C. Thomson papers, such as the *Rover*, *Wizard*, *Skipper*, *Hotspur* and *Adventure*, began to cater more directly for working-class schoolboys with their focus on 'boarding establishments without the aristocratic pretensions of Greyfriars', but the stories were more sensational and improbable than their Amalgamated Press equivalents, depicting a school life which was much less representative of working-class boys' real-life educational experiences than that portrayed in the romantic image of the public school provided by Greyfriars and its companion schools. Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, p. 248. Turner emphasises the willingness of the Thomson papers to combine several types of stories, making for surreal narratives in which '[t]here was no attempt to explain or justify improbable situations' (pp. 252-3). There were school stories in which 'not merely one master, but every master, was a wanted man' and others where 'both masters and boys were starved'. Some Thomson school stories were set in strange locations in schools which had unconventional curricula (pp. 248-9).

<sup>99</sup> Musgrave, *From Brown to Bunter*, pp. 163-4.

perceived moral or criminal threat posed by the working-class boy. Furthermore, where in *The Boy Detective* Ernest's moral teachings are targeted at combating juvenile delinquency, the moral ideology of the detective school story is not always directly linked to criminality. Unlike *The Boy Detective*, the detective school-story genre is not responding to a moral panic about juvenile delinquency in a specific social group. Instead it is reacting to the growth of a cult of childhood in the early twentieth century, which emphasised the importance of the positive moral development of all children and adolescents and the crucial role of the state, and particularly the school, in this development. 'The patterns of public-school life,' Quigly suggests, 'were formed by, and became part of, the life of all kinds of other institutions and places – army, empire, politics, social life', and so the school-story author had an important moral responsibility towards his readers, as 'he was dealing not just with childhood but with an institution that stretched into later life'.<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, the detective school story, unlike the adult detective/boy assistant narrative, remains clearly focused on the boy rather than the image of the man he will become. The schoolboy detective succeeds in his appointed tasks whilst remaining in the realm of boyhood. Still in his youth, he becomes an influential figure as he enables the moral development of both the fictional schoolboy community and the boy readers of his stories.

The detective school story does not, as in *The Boy Detective*, simply teach the boy reader right from wrong, but acknowledges the moral complexity of life and encourages him to consider the motivations of immoral and criminal behaviour and how such behaviour should be dealt with. Where in *The Boy Detective* boy characters are compartmentalised into one of two groups – Ernest's Band of Light or the opposing gang of boy criminals – such distinctions are not made in the schoolboy community.

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<sup>100</sup> Quigly, *The Heirs of Tom Brown*, pp. 46-7.

There are schoolboy characters who are obviously bad or good, but they are never exclusively so. Bad characters sometimes do good, and vice versa, and even the worst of boys – the bully, the gambler, the thief – is, at times, the victim of extenuating circumstances and/or expresses guilt for committing criminal or immoral acts. In the detective school story, the schoolboy detective reinforces the notion that the schoolboy community is responsible for the moral development of all its members – an ethos shared by the Scout movement, which encouraged boys’ self-regulation through the Patrol system.<sup>101</sup> The schoolboy detective and the detective school story, therefore, more than any boy detective and detective’s boy assistant model that came before it, contributed to the moral education of the boy reader, addressing the moral complexity of both criminality and the process of detection and demonstrating to the boy reader that his behaviour and actions can affect not only his own moral development, but also that of his wider boyhood community.

#### **5.4: The detective school-story hybrid and the future of juvenile detective fiction**

When many of the Amalgamated Press story papers folded in 1939-40, partly as a consequence of wartime paper shortages, the professional boy detective and adult detective/boy assistant narratives set in an adult world, if they survived at all, did so in a more adult format.<sup>102</sup> The most famous of these fictional professional detectives,

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<sup>101</sup> Orwell observes this connection with the Amalgamated Press school-story papers, stating that ‘[i]n their moral atmosphere the *Gem* and *Magnet* have a great deal in common with the Boy Scout movement, which started at about the same time’. Orwell, ‘Boys’ Weeklies’, p. 180. For further discussion of the Scout movement/Patrol system, see chapter 3, pp. 161-4.

<sup>102</sup> See Wright, ‘The Adventures of Sexton Blake, Detective’, pp. 15-16. E. S. Turner emphasises the impact of wartime paper shortages upon the boys’ story paper industry: ‘World War Two killed off a score of legendary heroes who had survived the Kaiser’s war, and one at least who had come through the Boer War. When the publishers, faced with crippling paper cuts, issued their first casualty lists, the names of boys’ thrillers were high up on the page. It was the old problem of throwing the least essential passengers from the raft; sentiment did not determine the order of sacrifice.’ Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, p. 285. Among the Amalgamated Press boys’ story papers to fold during the paper shortages were the *Gem* and the *Modern Boy* in 1939 and the *Boys’ Friend Library*, the *Magnet*, the *Schoolboys’ Own*

Sexton Blake, and his boy assistant, Tinker, appeared in increasingly adult-orientated publications. *Detective Weekly* (1933-40), which replaced Sexton Blake's paper, the *Union Jack*, in 1933 was more adult in style than its predecessor, while Charles Ferrall and Anna Jackson observe that post-World War II editions of the *Sexton Blake Library* (1915-1963) became interested in the 'romantic dalliances' of both Blake and Tinker and that many of the covers in the 1950s depicted 'leggy' women with 'heaving breasts'.<sup>103</sup> The series of Sexton Blake paperback novels produced by Mayflower Books (1965-8) was also obviously aimed at an adult rather than child audience.<sup>104</sup> Ferrall and Jackson observe the distinct split between the 'adult' Sexton Blake series and the more child-friendly offerings of the Amalgamated Press school stories:

Reading the Greyfriars stories alongside the Sexton Blakes suggests that the juvenile market was pulled in two directions. On the one hand, those such as the Greyfriars stories have made the world of adolescents not just more innocent but also more childish. On the other, the Sexton Blake stories provide virtually adult reading matter for adolescents.<sup>105</sup>

The professional detective/assistant story, which had always been much more mature in content than its detective school-story counterpart, had, by the 1940s, become a firmly adult mode, now marketed at an older audience than it had been in its original boys' story-paper format.

Although the Amalgamated Press papers were a victim of the wartime paper shortages in 1940, it was not this alone that ended their long reign in the boys' publishing market. The Amalgamated Press papers were already waning in popularity before World War II and Turner suggests that the paper shortages afforded them the opportunity 'to jettison a few old friends who probably would not have lasted much

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*Library* and the more adult-orientated *Detective Weekly* in 1940. See 'Books and Story Papers', *Friardale* <<http://friardale.co.uk/Story%20Papers.htm>> [accessed 5 April 2014].

<sup>103</sup> Charles Ferrall and Anna Jackson, *Juvenile Literature and British Society, 1850-1950, The Age of Adolescence* (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), p. 133.

<sup>104</sup> See Wright, 'The Adventures of Sexton Blake, Detective', pp. 15-16.

<sup>105</sup> Ferrall and Jackson, *Juvenile Literature and British Society*, p. 133.

longer anyway'.<sup>106</sup> While the Amalgamated Press story papers had catered for a broad age range, including adolescents, young men and, even, parents, as well as pre-pubescent boys, the D. C. Thomson publications that usurped them in the 1920s and 30s – most notably the *Adventure* (1921), *Rover* (1922), *Wizard* (1922), *Skipper* (1930), and *Hotspur* (1933), known collectively as the 'Big Five'<sup>107</sup> – were aimed at a younger audience, leaving older adolescent boys to entertain themselves with more adult-orientated material. Turner suggests that:

Whereas journals of the Amalgamated Press were frequently produced with an eye not merely on boys, but on old boys, the Thomson 'Big Five' appeared to be aimed exclusively at boys – and rather younger ones at that, if such lures as 'A hundred biff balls free' are any guide. To judge by the illustrations, the schoolboy heroes of the Dundee magazines were a year or so younger than the boys of Greyfriars and St Jim's, and the general get-up and presentation of the stories was just that shade nearer to the 'comics' which the readers had begun to outgrow.<sup>108</sup>

There were other differences between the two publishers' stories. The Thomson papers contained more working-class heroes than their Amalgamated Press equivalents, particularly in their school stories, and while '[t]he Amalgamated Press had tended on the whole to respect the laws of Nature [. . .] plausibility and probability never worried the writers from beyond the Tweed'.<sup>109</sup> There was not much scope here, then, for the expansion of the model of the schoolboy detective of the Amalgamated Press papers,

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<sup>106</sup> Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, p. 285. Robert J. Kirkpatrick emphasises the impact of changes in children's reading habits upon the decline of the story papers from the time of the Second World War onwards: 'Children's reading habits were rapidly changing – strip-based comics were coming into prominence, comics and pulps imported from America before and during the war continued to increase in popularity, there was a growing use of public libraries to borrow books, and there were new distractions and demands on children's leisure-time and pocket money, such as television and the cinema.' Robert J. Kirkpatrick, *From the Penny Dreadful to the Ha'penny Dreadfuller: A Bibliographic History of the Boys' Periodicals in Britain. 1762-1950* (London: The British Library; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2013), p. 12. Kirsten Drotner observes that '[w]hile Harmsworth's nineteen prewar weeklies for boys lasted more than fifteen years on average, his interwar boys' magazines only had about half of that life span. Increased competition from film and radio as well as from the Scottish paper entrepreneur certainly had an affect [*sic*] on the London giant, despite the attempts at innovation.' Drotner, *English Children and Their Magazines*, p. 190.

<sup>107</sup> Kelly Boyd, 'Knowing Your Place: The Tensions of Manliness in Boys' Story Papers, 1918-39', in Michael Rope and John Tosh (eds), *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 145-67 (p. 148).

<sup>108</sup> Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, pp. 243-4.

<sup>109</sup> Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, p. 245.

which was firmly middle-class and set in the realist tradition. The Thomson papers produced one notable detective – Dixon Hawke – but he, with his assistant Tommy Burke, followed the adult detective/boy assistant pattern established in the Amalgamated Press papers rather than breaking new ground.

The comics, too, which replaced their story-paper predecessors from the 1940s as the dominant form of cheap, weekly popular fiction for young readers, offered an unsuitable format for the new boy detective model. Successful British comics such as the *Dandy* (1937) and the *Beano* (1938), published by D. C. Thomson, were largely concerned with humour, focusing on caricatures which lacked the realism and rectitude of the schoolboy detective hero.<sup>110</sup> As the story papers died out and the comics that arose to replace them did not provide a suitable outlet for the recently established middle-class, amateur boy detective hero, he had to relocate to a new medium: one which was child-centric, with a middle-class bias, and which allowed for some degree of moralising and a modicum of realism. The children's series novel – the format in which the Amalgamated Press's most famous schoolboy character, Billy Bunter, thrived after the *Magnet* folded in 1940 – fulfilled these new criteria.<sup>111</sup> The Amalgamated Press schoolboy detectives, however, were not, like Bunter, transferred directly to the series novel.

The detective school-story hybrid introduced several crucial new characteristics to boy detective fiction which became staples of the juvenile detective series fiction that

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<sup>110</sup> The Amalgamated Press started publishing children's comics before this, launching titles such as *My Favourite* (1928), *Crackers* (1929), *Jingles* (1934), *Jolly* (1935) and *Happy Days* (1938), but it was D. C. Thomson who dominated the British children's comic market from the late 1930s. See Roger Sabin, *Comics, Comix and Graphic Novels: A History of Comic Art* (London and New York: Phaidon Press Limited, 2002 [1996]), p. 28. In contrast, detectives thrived in the American comics from the 1930s, though these often focused on adult detectives, sometimes with boy sidekicks, not unlike the earlier British adult detective/boy assistant model. See Sabin, *Comics, Comix and Graphic Novels*, p. 54 and p. 66.

<sup>111</sup> Billy Bunter first appeared in the series-novel format in 1947 in a shilling series published by William Merritt, followed by Charles Skilton's seven-and-sixpenny volumes, which were taken over by Cassell in 1952. Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, p. 234.

followed. Although the schoolboy detective often comes from a professional detective environment, in the school setting detection becomes a vocation rather than a job and thus the boy detective becomes more closely associated with the amateur investigator. The school setting also ensures a transition from an adult to a child-centric environment and, by extension, from an adult to a child genre. The schoolboy detective acts as part of a wider boy community and, as a schoolboy himself, becomes a more accessible character for the boy reader. The schoolboy detective is a clearly moral, yet still popular, figure and the process of detection is bound up with morality rather than financial motivation and an emphasis upon investigative methods. The detective school-story genre also signals a transformation from pure detection to a hybrid mode. However, while these characteristics, including the hybridisation of the detective genre, were carried forward into the children's series novel, the defining traits of the detective school story – the use of the school setting and the merging of the detective narrative with the school-story genre – did not survive the transition.

One of the principal reasons for this rejection of the school setting and school-story genre was the inevitable tension between the schoolboy and the detective role in the detective school story. While it is the detective's schoolboy role that enables him to operate successfully in the school environment and ensures that he is a suitable figure to police morally both fictional schoolboy characters and real-life boy readers, his schoolboy status frequently hinders his detective work. While Nipper is allowed 'special privileges on the quiet' at St Frank's since he is 'no ordinary schoolboy', he can only enjoy these privileges by casting off his schoolboy identity ('Nipper at St Frank's' p. 21). When he visits the housemaster's study after lights out – Nelson Lee is, of course, the housemaster in question – Nipper asserts that '[f]or some hours, at least, I should cease being a schoolboy, and should become Nelson Lee's assistant once more'



(p. 21). Thus, a distinction is drawn between Nipper's detective and schoolboy identities as the detective is granted freedoms that are not afforded to the 'ordinary schoolboy'. Similarly, while investigating the prowler case at Greyfriars, Jack Drake adopts a dual detective/schoolboy identity, and one which is more clearly demarcated than that of Nipper, since Drake plays the role of the foolish schoolboy James Duck to conceal his true mission. He explains this distinction to Mr Quelch, the master who recommended Drake's services to the headmaster:

I have not come here as a detective with all his wits about him, but as a new boy with all his troubles before him. The more easily the fellows pull my leg, the less likely they are to guess that they are entertaining Mr Locke's professional assistant unawares.<sup>112</sup>

This dual identity becomes problematic since, as an undercover operative, Drake fools not only his fellow pupils, but also the majority of the masters, who have not been informed of Drake's true role at the school. Consequently, it is difficult for Drake to conduct his investigations, in which he frequently has to break school rules, under the watchful eyes of the Greyfriars masters.

In 'Who Sacked Hacker?' (*Magnet*, 1939), for example, Drake, in the guise of Duck, clashes with Mr Hacker, who catches him breaking bounds to investigate Crocker's hut (p. 4). Hacker subsequently reports Drake to his form master, Mr Quelch, and while Quelch is aware of Drake's true identity, he too places restrictions upon Drake by emphasising the importance of abiding by school rules:

As Ferrers Locke's assistant, acting here as a detective, you have an absolutely free hand; but it was understood, or at least, should have been understood, that this freedom was within certain limits—the limits of good conduct.

(p. 10)

When Drake refuses to offer Quelch an explanation for his misconduct, Quelch informs him that 'you must expect the treatment of any other boy who disobeys the

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<sup>112</sup> Frank Richards, 'Duffer or Detective?', *Magnet*, 1619 (25 February 1939), 3-28 (p. 12).

headmaster's injunctions. I shall give you an imposition of five hundred lines, Drake, and you will be detained on Wednesday afternoon' (p. 11). The schoolboy detective, therefore, is not only hindered by school rules, but also by the punishment incurred by breaking them, as Drake's detention deprives him of an opportunity to search Crocker's hut while he is away at the races (p. 16). Even when not facing punishment for his misdeeds, the detective's investigations are restricted by his schoolboy obligations. Since Drake 'had to keep up the appearance of being an ordinary Remove boy, and could not cut classes or meals without drawing unwanted attention to himself,' he has difficulty finding time to hunt for the Greyfriars prowler ('Guilty Gold!', p. 21). He is successful in catching the prowler only after faking an illness to enable him to sleep during the day so that he can keep watch for the prowler at night.<sup>113</sup> School rules and the obligations of school life frequently act as an impediment to detective work and it is the adult enforcers of these rules that pose the biggest problem for the schoolboy detective. The boy investigator's agency increases in the detective school story from that of the professional detective narratives as he moves from the role of assistant to lead detective, but his sleuthing activities are still restricted by adult supervisors of the child-centric school environment.

There is not only a clash between the detective and schoolboy roles in the detective school story, but also between the conventions of the school-story genre and those of detective fiction. In Orwell's view, the popular school stories of the Amalgamated Press papers 'are the clean-fun, knock-about type of story, with interest centering round horseplay, practical jokes, ragging masters, fights, canings, cricket, football and food'.<sup>114</sup> Boyd concurs, observing that such stories were 'increasingly

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<sup>113</sup> See Richards, 'Drake Gets His Man', p. 21.

<sup>114</sup> Orwell, 'Boys' Weeklies', pp. 178-9.

cloaked in house matches and schoolboy japes'.<sup>115</sup> These conventions are prominent in the detective school story, distracting the reader and, sometimes, the detective protagonist from the investigative strand of the narrative. At Oakshott School, for example, Len Lex is diverted from his quest to find the 'Sussex Man' by his appointment to the school football team:

Len Lex did not want to think about the Sussex Man just then. He wanted to think about Soccer, and his good luck in getting into the team. It was not a detective, but a schoolboy pure and simple, who went to the changing-room early in the afternoon to get ready for the Parsley match.  
(*'The Schoolboy 'Tec'*, p. 78)

Alongside sport, schoolboy rivalries and pranks are rife and provide a frequent distraction from the detective story. In 'Nipper of St Ninian's' (*Boys' Friend*, 1912-13), Nipper and his companions' rivalry with the Grammarians, the boys of a neighbouring school, dominates the plot of the serial and Nipper's investigations against Nutt – a mysterious new boy who is behaving suspiciously and has shady connections – are constantly interrupted by the Grammarians' pranks against him. For example, after Nipper witnesses Nutt stealing some papers from Mr Rant's study, he is detained by the Grammarians, who cover him in treacle and feathers and refuse to listen to his pleas for release so that he can report the theft to Rant.<sup>116</sup>

Sometimes, the hindrance to schoolboy detective work is more deliberate. In 'On the Trail' (*Gem*, 1907), the rivalry between Tom Merry's gang and Figgins and his compatriots prompts Figgins to plant false clues for Merry to follow to ensure that he fails at the detective task set for him by the famous Ferrers Locke. Locke dismisses this prank with the good-humoured acknowledgement that 'boys will be boys' (p. 11). It is by being 'boys' – that is, by adhering to the schoolboy role of sportsman, prankster and rival prescribed by the popular school-story genre – that schoolboy detectives are less

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<sup>115</sup> Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper*, p. 81.

<sup>116</sup> Maxwell Scott, 'Nipper of St Ninian's', *Boys' Friend*, 12.589 (21 September 1912), 226-7 (p. 226).

effectual and it is perhaps in the detective parody stories of the inept Bunter and his ilk that the school-story and detective elements merge most successfully. The school story and the detective genre – well suited in some respects and enabling developments in boy detective fiction that were not possible in detective narratives set in the adult, professional environment – did not seamlessly coalesce in the detective school-story hybrid. Instead, both genres constantly vied for attention. Since the stories were frequently published in school-story papers like the *Gem* and the *Magnet* and in fictional schools that frequently produced unadulterated school stories, the school-story elements often dominated the detective school-story hybrid and, at times, suppressed the detective plot.

As well as the potential friction between the detective and the school-story genre, there was another key reason why the school setting did not survive the transition to series fiction: the rise of holiday-adventure fiction. From the 1930s onwards, the focus in children's literature began to shift from school life to children's school-holiday experiences, particularly in 'camping and tramping novels [. . .] devoted to the excitement of hiking, exploring, boating, map-reading and the practicalities of camping'.<sup>117</sup> Arthur Ransome was the main exponent of this early holiday-adventure form, with his *Swallows and Amazons* series (1930-47) and Peter Hunt argues that the first book in the series, *Swallows and Amazons* (1930), 'set a fashion for books centred on the holidays, on families, on outdoor activities'.<sup>118</sup> In Ransome's series, Peter Hunt notes, '[t]here are only rare references to school, and apart from *Swallows and Amazons*, none of the books ends with any indication that a return to school is a threatening fact

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<sup>117</sup> Victor Watson, *Reading Series Fiction: From Arthur Ransome to Gene Kemp* (London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2000), p. 77.

<sup>118</sup> Peter Hunt, 'Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons*: Escape to A Lost Paradise', in *Touchstones: Reflections on the Best in Children's Literature*, I (West Lafayette, IN: Children's Literature Association, 1985), pp. 221-32 (p. 221).

on the immediate horizon'.<sup>119</sup> Enid Blyton, in a number of popular series published between the 1940s and the early 1960s, took holiday-adventure fiction in a new direction, foregrounding mystery and sometimes crime, and eradicating the practical instruction on issues such as sailing and camping which was an essential part of Ransome's Swallows and Amazons series.

It was by merging with this holiday-adventure form that the juvenile detective genre thrived in children's series fiction. A new hybrid was created – holiday-adventure detective fiction – which saw its beginnings in the school-story fiction of the Amalgamated Press papers before developing more clearly in the children's series novel. The story-paper holiday-adventure detective narratives reduce some of the friction between the school story and the detective genre. These stories still contain schoolboy characters and a schoolboy detective figure, but are set outside the school environment during the Christmas or summer holidays. This holiday-adventure detective fiction often takes place in the ancestral home of one of the schoolboy characters and, inevitably, some criminal activity occurs in the vicinity during the boys' stay, frequently in the guise of a haunting connected with an old family legend.<sup>120</sup> For example, in a short series of stories in the *Modern Boy* (1936-7), schoolboy detective Len Lex and his study mates Harvey, Banks and Porringe have made plans to stay with Harvey's uncle, Sir Lucian Jeringham, for the Christmas holidays. The boys are confronted with an old family legend of a haunted moat house, where an earlier Sir Lucian Jeringham had apparently been murdered by his nephew heir in order to gain his

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<sup>119</sup> Peter Hunt, *Arthur Ransome* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), p. 143.

<sup>120</sup> This trait was more famously adopted in Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (*Strand Magazine*, 1901-2) in which a spectral hound, which appears to reawaken the Baskerville family curse of legend, is exposed as a flesh and blood creature set upon its victims by a wicked relative who is attempting to gain possession of the Baskerville inheritance.

inheritance early.<sup>121</sup> When the boys discover that the current Sir Lucian is missing, and after several encounters with a ghostly figure, they are determined to investigate. While Porryng provides some familiar comic relief as an inept detective – when he watches for the man masquerading as the ghost, he captures Lex instead<sup>122</sup> – and a prankster – he is particularly fond of throwing snowballs – the focus in this series is much more firmly on investigation than in those stories set in the school environment.

Removing the boys from the school eliminates some of the school-story elements that impede the detective narrative. Since the school-holiday detective stories involve a small group of friends, the petty rivalries and elaborate pranks and revenge plots are avoided, there are no clashes with teachers and, while sports are still an option, the all-consuming football matches, common in the school environment, are not possible. The school-holiday detective story provides a suitable environment for the boys' detective work. The boys have copious amounts of free time to investigate and no school rules to follow or adult authority figures to enforce such rules. The boys are not restricted by curfews or out-of-bounds locations – unless they trespass on private property – and although adult figures are present, they do not hold a great deal of authority over the boys, nor do they provide the hawk-like supervision of the schoolmasters unless, of course, they happen to be the criminal whom the boys are seeking. While there is usually still a lead detective – Len Lex often investigates independently of his friends in the series discussed above and Jack Drake takes the lead in some of the Greyfriars holiday stories<sup>123</sup> – sometimes the detective's schoolboy companions take a more active role in the case.

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<sup>121</sup> See Charles Hamilton, 'The Mystery of the Moat House', *Modern Boy*, 18.462 (12 December 1936), 2-7 (p. 2).

<sup>122</sup> See Charles Hamilton, 'The Vanished Host', *Modern Boy*, 18.464 (26 December 1936), 20-5 (p. 20).

<sup>123</sup> For examples of the latter, see Richards, 'The Caravan Detective!' and Richards, 'The Mystery of the Christmas Candles!'.

It was this holiday-adventure detective format, an offshoot of the detective school story, which, through Blyton's series, became the dominant mode of detective fiction in the children's series novel from the 1940s onwards. It is not so much the specific detective school-story formula, but the wider characteristics of this form that became most significant to the development of juvenile detective fiction beyond the story papers. The detective school story transferred the boy detective to a child-centric environment and a child-orientated mode of fiction in which he could operate fairly independently of adult characters and where he could address and influence the moral development of his fictional schoolboy peers and real-life young readers. It also firmly established the boy detective as a middle-class, amateur investigator, in contrast to the earlier working-class professional boy assistant. Most notably, perhaps, the detective school story made clear the possibilities and opportunities presented by hybridisation and experimentation in the juvenile detective form. This process was utilised by Blyton and her imitators in their holiday-adventure detective stories and has been increasingly adopted in the twenty-first century as British children's authors have started to blend the detective genre with elements of science fiction, fantasy, the supernatural and historical fiction to produce innovative new hybrids. The schoolboy detective stories of the Amalgamated Press marked the true beginning of the juvenile detective genre – finally producing detective stories which were predominantly both for and about boys – and provided a set of characteristics which formed the foundations of this genre in Britain. But while these foundations remained firm throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, the boy detective's future was less certain.

## **Conclusion: Doomed to Disappear? The Demise of the British Boy Detective**

From his introduction in juvenile literature in the 1860s, the fictional boy detective was a dualistic figure, acting as both an antidote to and a source of anxieties surrounding boyhood. On the one hand, he was a positive role model for his young readers: he was an honest, loyal, moral figure, with a strong work ethic, a sense of duty to the community and a strong desire to fight crime; furthermore, he was often physically and mentally superior to the average boy reader. On the other hand, as a crime fighter, the boy detective had to mix with the criminal masses, sometimes engaging in criminal acts himself, frequently becoming involved in violent altercations, and perhaps viewing himself as above the law. He also adopted an adult role in an adult environment and enjoyed an autonomy and agency beyond his years. Throughout his early history, therefore, the boy detective was simultaneously represented as a boyhood role model and a threat in need of containment. Consequently, his representation was well placed to explore, consciously or otherwise, real-life anxieties surrounding boyhood. In particular, the boy detective, as a youthful figure placed firmly in an adult world and role, was able to address the hopes and fears of middle-class adults – the producers of and contributors to the popular juvenile publications explored in this thesis – about the kind of men that the contemporary generation of boys would become.

The boy detective's function as a container of boyhood threats and a disseminator of a middle-class ideal of boyhood which his predominantly working-class young readers are encouraged to emulate is most apparent in the earliest British boy detective narrative, *The Boy Detective; or, The Crimes of London* (1865-6). This text utilises its boy detective protagonist, middle-class, philanthropic Ernest Keen, as a spokesperson against the controversial 'penny-dreadful' form to which the serial ostensibly belongs, directly addressing contemporary anxieties about juvenile



delinquency, which was apparently prompted by the glorified criminal heroes of the cheap serialised ‘penny-dreadful’ publications read by impressionable, working-class boys. Ernest acts as a moral arbiter, punishing or reforming criminal characters and disseminating a middle-class ideology to lower-class boy characters and readers alike, encouraging them to reject criminality in favour of earning an honest living. He performs a disciplinary and monitory function, encouraging virtue, warning against vice and reinforcing the social status quo. However, Ernest, too, becomes a subject of adult anxieties about boyhood – notably about the quasi-adult autonomy and agency enjoyed by the boy heroes of ‘penny dreadfuls’ and the real-life, working-class boy readers of these stories. Part of the text’s function is also to reduce and/or undermine this agency, prescribing limits to Ernest’s detective authority.

The fictional boy detective’s role and representation changed as anxieties about and expectations of boyhood altered from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, the boy detective’s function as an expression of and antidote to these anxieties remained constant. By the time the boy detective reappeared in juvenile literature in the 1890s, the moral panic surrounding the ‘penny dreadful’ had subsided as this format had been replaced by the ostensibly more respectable story-paper form. In the popular Amalgamated Press halfpenny papers, the boy detective is still used to express and contain fears about juvenile delinquency and excessive agency and authority, particularly among young working-class, ‘blind-alley’ boy labourers. Here the boy detective – now a working-class figure himself – conditions boy readers to conform to middle-class adult ideals of boyhood through his own submission to an adult middle-class exemplar – the Holmesian adult master-detective – as opposed to acting as the exemplar himself on his introduction to the series. Rather than the boy detective’s innate qualities, therefore, it is his transformation through the influence of the middle-

class detective role that perhaps acts as a civilising force upon the potentially delinquent boy reader.

There were two significant shifts in the representation of the boy detective and boyhood from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Firstly, where in nineteenth-century texts the boy detective had been utilised to impose a layer of restraint upon fictional and real-life boys and to contain and suppress boyhood vices, twentieth-century texts focused instead upon the development of positive traits in boyhood. As the likelihood of war increased in the early twentieth century, the fictional boy detective began to take a more central and proactive role in the story papers as, in real life, the boy was now viewed as a potential asset to the nation requiring training, rather than a threat that needed to be contained. As boyhood came to be seen as a period of preparation for the role of defender of Empire in manhood, many representations of the fictional boy detective began to reinforce the ideology of the newly emerging Scout movement to 'be prepared', both for manhood and war. Boy detectives became exemplars of physical fitness, practical skills and, most significantly, of teamwork, patriotism and active citizenship – values which they attempted to instil in boy readers who were encouraged not simply to admire but, more crucially, to emulate their youthful detective heroes.

As war approached in the 1910s, a second crucial change occurred in attitudes towards boyhood, which led to a significant development in boy detective fiction. A shift in focus from a concern with the men that boys would become to an emphasis upon boys as boys, more firmly protected and segregated from the adult world, filtered through to the detective fiction in the boys' story papers. In the professional detective narratives, boy detectives were increasingly confined to the supporting role of assistant, a restriction which conditioned boys to accept their own youthful limitations and the

inevitably subsidiary role that they would play in World War I. After the war, when childhood was extended and increasingly distinguished from adulthood through educational reforms and child welfare legislation, the boy detective was relocated to the child-centric environment of the school story. It was here that fiction featuring boy detectives firmly became a genre for, about and of boyhood.

The focus on the childhood world, segregated from adulthood, continued in the holiday-adventure detective hybrid that supplanted the detective school story in the series fiction that arose to replace the story papers from the 1940s. It is in the series fiction of Arthur Ransome and, to a greater extent, of Enid Blyton, that the holiday-adventure detective hybrid becomes firmly established and in which new and enduring conventions are introduced to the juvenile detective genre. Blyton and Ransome's series avoid school life as much as possible, focusing on a different kind of child group: the family.<sup>1</sup> Significantly, the boy detective becomes part of a wider group which extends beyond the boyhood community. Girl detectives had started to become popular in the Amalgamated Press's newly emerging girls' story papers from the 1920s, most notably in John W. Bobin's creations: fifteen-year-old Sylvia Silence, who debuted in the Amalgamated Press paper *Schoolgirls' Weekly* in 1922, schoolgirl sleuth Lila Lisle,

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<sup>1</sup> David Rudd notes that, in the Famous Five series, school only features in one book, *Five on a Hike Together* (1951), and that '[g]enerally, any mention of school is forbidden'. David Rudd, *Enid Blyton and the Mystery of Children's Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), p. 106. A great many changes occurred in the composition and operation of the family and its members in the twentieth century, such as the decreasing size of the family, the rising divorce rate and the increasing status of women outside of the family unit – both as voters and workers. See Ann Alston, *The Family in English Children's Literature* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 21-5. World War I provided one of the biggest upheavals for the family in the early twentieth century, as many fathers and sons were lost, but, as Ann Alston observes, this reality was not reflected in much of the popular children's literature of the 1920s and 1930s. Instead, this literature frequently represented 'complete nuclear families in which, for the first time since the days of the Fairchild and Wallace families, children enjoy the company of both parents. This reasserts notions of a certain type of idealised family emphasised in children's fiction that almost forms a paradox with the reality of more diverse families who may well be struggling to come to terms with loss and separation.' Alston, *The Family in English Children's Literature*, p. 48. While, in reality, twentieth-century developments have prompted the fragmentation and modification of the idealised nuclear family, this ideal still persists throughout twentieth-century children's literature. As Alston suggests, '[w]e are left, then, with an age-old paradox: the family has both changed beyond recognition over the last 200 years and yet in many ways our approach and attitude towards the family has hardly changed at all'. Alston, *The Family in English Children's Literature*, p. 25.

who featured in a short serial in *Schoolgirls' Own* in 1930 and eighteen-year-old Valerie Drew, who appeared regularly in *Schoolgirls' Weekly* from 1933 to 1937.<sup>2</sup> Focus on the family unit in holiday-adventure series fiction defied the segregation of male and female characters and girls' and boys' fiction which was common in the story papers. In Ransome and Blyton's novels, age, gender and, sometimes, the class of the children is varied, representing a much broader spectrum of childhood experience than that of the public schoolboy but still, on the whole, representing a middle-class ideal of childhood and promoting a middle-class ideology.

Isabel Quigly suggests that, in post-war society, the public-school ethos represented in the popular school story had become irrelevant:

The Second World War killed off the world they [public schools] were made for, a world in which there was not just a ruling class but a sense that this was a ruling country where everyone, not just the ruling members of it, could share a little sense of regality and empire.<sup>3</sup>

With the Empire crumbling, in the inter- and post-war years there was in children's literature, as Ann Alston argues, 'a tendency to retreat into known worlds of nostalgia' where there was some sense of domestic security and family stability, despite the fact that '[i]n reality many families had lost husbands, fathers and sons' in the two world wars.<sup>4</sup> Parental figures are present in holiday-adventure fiction, providing some kind of supervision and protection for their children, but are, on the whole, peripheral.

Particularly in Blyton's series, the child groups frequently act independently of their adult guardians.<sup>5</sup> Cedric Cullingford notes that '[i]t is the children who are free to make

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<sup>2</sup> For further information on the emergence of girl detectives in the story papers, see Patricia Craig and Mary Cadogan, *The Lady Investigates: Women Detectives and Spies in Fiction* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1981), pp. 113-29; Cadogan and Craig, *You're A Brick Angela!*, pp. 309-23; and Kirsten Drotner, 'Schoolgirls, Madcaps, and Air Aces: English Girls and Their Magazine Reading Between the Wars', *Feminist Studies*, 9 (1983), 33-52.

<sup>3</sup> Isabel Quigly, *The Heirs of Tom Brown: The English School Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Alston, *The Family in English Children's Literature*, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> Christine Hall and Martin Coles suggest that 'Blyton offers children an enticing invitation. She offers them the chance to behave with independence in the world she creates, to be members of a special small

decisions. Only occasionally do adults seriously interfere, although they always have the authority and the potential to do so.<sup>6</sup> This is a significant change from the school story, where schoolmasters and other adult authority figures loom large over the child groups, constantly imposing rules and punishments upon them. As well as having greater independence than the schoolboy groups in the Amalgamated Press detective school stories, the family groups in holiday-adventure fiction constantly operate as an ensemble, making them better suited to and safer in the detective role. While the schoolboy detective usually operates independently of his schoolfellows, in holiday-adventure fiction ‘there is always back-up. Even if one of them is caught or discovered, there is another one keeping a watchful eye.’<sup>7</sup> The independence and cohesiveness of the child groups and the low level of interference from adult authority figures ensured that holiday-adventure fiction became a suitable genre in which to incorporate detective elements.

The origins of the holiday-adventure detective novel can, in part, be traced back to Erich Kästner’s *Emil and the Detectives* (1929), a German story first published in Britain in 1931. This text follows the exploits of young Emil Tischbein as he enlists the help of a gang of Berlin children to catch the thief who has stolen his money during his holiday visit to his grandmother.<sup>8</sup> While obviously influencing the detective fiction that followed, *Emil and the Detectives*, with its city setting and large gang of Berlin children, does not clearly incorporate the British holiday-adventure tradition

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club which makes its own decisions, and with that group to take part in an exciting adventure.’ Christine Hall and Martin Coles, *Children’s Reading Choices* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 52.

<sup>6</sup> Cedric Cullingford, *Children’s Literature and Its Effects: The Formative Years* (London and Washington: Cassell, 1998), p. 112.

<sup>7</sup> Cullingford, *Children’s Literature and Its Effects*, pp. 109-10.

<sup>8</sup> For further discussion on *Emil and the Detectives*, see Christopher Routledge, ‘Children’s Detective Fiction and the “Perfect Crime” of Adulthood’, in Adrienne E. Gavin and Christopher Routledge (eds.), *Mystery in Children’s Literature: From the Rational to the Supernatural* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 64-81.

popularised by Ransome.<sup>9</sup> This tradition can be seen more distinctly in what was one of the first British examples of the holiday-adventure detective novel for children, R. J. McGregor's *The Young Detectives* (1934). Here, the five children of the Mackenzie family – known as 'the Mackies' for short – become involved in detective work during the school holidays after they move to their new house in Devon.<sup>10</sup> However, here, Mrs Mackie is a dominant figure in the lives of her children and plays a crucial part in the investigation of the mystery. Arthur Ransome's more child-centric *Swallows and Amazons* series introduces detective elements in *The Big Six* (1940), where Joe, Bill and Pete, the sons of boat builders – who first appear in *Coot Club* (1934), an earlier book in the series – are accused of casting adrift boats during the night and decide to investigate in order to exonerate themselves.<sup>11</sup> They team up with other members of the Coot Club, Tom Dudgeon, who also made his debut in *Coot Club*, and Dick and Dorothea Callum, first introduced in *Winter Holiday* (1933), as they attempt to find the real culprits. The Coot Club do not become detectives until halfway through the narrative but, when they do, they are methodical: setting traps, gathering evidence – including bicycle tracks, fingerprints and photographs of the culprits in the act of casting off a boat – and collating the evidence at their headquarters, the Coot Club shed, which they now refer to as 'Scotland Yard'.<sup>12</sup>

While Ransome, perhaps, can be credited with introducing detective elements into an established holiday-adventure series, it is Enid Blyton who deserves recognition for popularising the holiday-adventure detective series, as she produced several

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<sup>9</sup> The sequel, *Emil and the Three Twins* (1933), in contrast, contains clear elements of the holiday-adventure genre, but the detective plot is much weaker than that of *Emil and the Detectives* and very little time is taken up with what could be considered as detective work.

<sup>10</sup> A sequel to *The Young Detectives* called *The Secret of Dead Man's Cove* was published in 1937.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Hunt, *Arthur Ransome* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), p. 59.

<sup>12</sup> Arthur Ransome, *The Big Six* (London: Red Fox, 2013 [1940]), p. 199. There is a brief detective episode in the first book in Ransome's series, *Swallows and Amazons* (1930), where Titty and Roger launch a search expedition to Cormorant Island to find Captain Flint's stolen property. See Arthur Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons* (London: Red Fox, 2001 [1930]), pp. 355-70. In *The Big Six*, by contrast, the detective elements are more sustained and integral to the overall plot of the novel.

substantial series in this hybrid mode.<sup>13</sup> Blyton's most famous holiday-adventure detective series is the Famous Five (1942-63, 21 titles). The books follow the school-holiday adventures of siblings Julian, Dick and Anne, their cousin George, and her dog Timmy, where adventure expeditions are often invaded by unsuspecting criminals whose shady activities are inevitably foiled by the Five. A similar, but lesser-known, series, the Barney Mysteries (1949-59, 6 titles), features a more varied group: siblings Diana and Roger, their orphaned cousin, Snubby, his dog Loony, Barney the circus boy, and his trained monkey, Miranda. Like the Famous Five books, the Barney Mysteries are often preoccupied with the characters' interaction with, and exploration of, their environment, but the detective ensemble in this series more obviously engage in investigative processes than the Five. A series that can be more strongly identified with the detective genre is the Secret Seven (1949-63, 15 titles), which features a secret society of seven children – Janet, Peter, George, Pam, Barbara, Colin and Jack – and Scamper the dog.<sup>14</sup> Written for younger children, the language is simplistic and the characters interchangeable. Yet, since the stories are set in the Seven's home environment, they are free to focus on detection rather than exploration. Moreover, the Seven impose a conscious detective identity upon themselves and their leader, Peter, distributes investigative tasks amongst the group in order to solve crimes/mysteries

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<sup>13</sup> For a list of titles in the detective series discussed in this chapter, see Appendix 3.

<sup>14</sup> This series coincided with and was, therefore, perhaps influenced by a surge in popularity of the adult spy thriller genre in the 1950s and 1960s. Julian Symons argues that 'the renaissance of the spy story clearly dates from 1953 and the publication of *Casino Royale*, the first novel by Ian Fleming'. Julian Symons, *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel*, 3<sup>rd</sup> revised edn (New York and Tokyo: Warner Books, 1993), p. 270. Michael Denning concurs, suggesting that '[w]ith Bond, the spy thriller enters its moment of greatest popularity. [. . .] Tales of spies are no longer one part of popular culture; they are at its center.' Michael Denning, *Cover Stories: Narrative and Ideology in the British Spy Thriller* (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), p. 91. For further information on the spy thriller and the work of its three most popular authors during this period – Ian Fleming, John le Carré and Len Deighton – see Denning, *Cover Stories*, pp. 91-141; Michael Woolf, 'Ian Fleming's Enigmas and Variations', in Clive Bloom (ed.), *Spy Thrillers: From Buchan to le Carré* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 86-99; Dudley Jones, 'The Great Game? The Spy Fiction of Len Deighton', in Clive Bloom (ed.), *Spy Thrillers: From Buchan to le Carré* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 100-12; and Michael J. Hayes, 'Are You Telling Me Lies David? The Work of John le Carré', in Clive Bloom (ed.), *Spy Thrillers: From Buchan to le Carré* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 113-29.

efficiently. Blyton's most sophisticated detective series is the Five Find-Outers (1943-61, 15 titles). Larry, Pip, Daisy, Bets, Fatty, and his dog Buster are the 'Five Find-Outers and Dog', solving crimes in their home village of Peterswood. The children, who are more richly characterised than the Secret Seven, are conscious of their detective role and repeatedly look for clues, interview witnesses, track suspects and successfully solve the mystery ahead of their competitor, the hapless village policeman, Mr Goon.<sup>15</sup> Although, like Blyton's other detective ensembles, the Find-Outers stop short of tackling the criminals themselves, calling on the kindly Inspector Jenks to round up the culprits, their investigative competency, independence and achievement eclipses that of their school-story predecessors, and the resolution of each case provides child readers with a sense of realistic, child-centric empowerment that is somewhat lacking in earlier juvenile detective narratives.<sup>16</sup>

Some notable changes therefore occurred in the shift from the story-paper to the series-fiction format: the individual boy detective was replaced with the detective ensemble; boy detectives joined forces with their girl detective counterparts; the detective protagonists not only operated in a child-centric environment but one, unlike the school setting, with minimal adult supervision. Some of these traits had already started to emerge in the story papers but were more firmly established in the new series-fiction format. The most significant change in juvenile detective fiction, however, was a direct product of this change in format. In the story papers, the boy detective protagonist and his narratives responded, consciously or otherwise, to cultural context – particularly engaging with contemporary adult anxieties about and expectations of

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<sup>15</sup> The children's detective methodology is similar to that of the Coot Club in Ransome's *The Big Six* (1940), but there is more comedy – particularly at the expense of the Find-Outers' youngest member, Bets – in Blyton's series.

<sup>16</sup> For further information on Blyton's holiday-adventure detective series, see David Rudd, *Enid Blyton and the Mystery of Children's Literature* and David Rudd, 'Digging up the Family Plot: Secrets, Mystery, and the Blytonesque', in Adrienne E. Gavin and Christopher Routledge (eds.), *Mystery in Children's Literature: From the Rational to the Supernatural* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 82-99.



boyhood and influencing young readers accordingly. By contrast, detective series fiction was influenced more substantially by changing literary trends and conjectured consumer preferences, with juvenile detective series often following the lead of their adult counterparts, particularly in more recent detective fiction for young readers.

While the detective hybrid popularised by Blyton – with its emphasis upon mystery and holiday adventure – remained the dominant mode in British children’s literature for the majority of the twentieth century, more recently new trends have emerged in detective series fiction for young readers, following the success of their adult counterparts. Historical detective fiction for adults has thrived since the publication of Ellis Peters’s Cadfael series (1977-94) and has, according to Ray B. Browne, ‘developed into the fastest growing type of crime fiction’.<sup>17</sup> This growth extends into the juvenile market with series such as Caroline Lawrence’s Roman Mysteries (2001-10) set in Ostia, the port of Rome, during the two-and-a-half-year reign of Emperor Titus between AD 79 and AD 81. The texts focus on self-professed girl detective Flavia Gemina, daughter of a Roman sea captain, as she solves mysteries and captures criminals, assisted by her Jewish next-door neighbour, Jonathan Mordecai, her African slave-girl Nubia – whom she later sets free – and Lupus, a Greek, mute, beggar boy.<sup>18</sup> Lawrence’s second historical detective series, the *Western Mysteries* (2011-

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<sup>17</sup> Browne further suggests that ‘[t]wo drives may be contributing to this new interest. For one thing, the reader gets the same kind of thrill at a safe distance that he or she gets from more contemporary and directly threatening true crime literature. Secondly, we are experiencing a new and revitalized general interest in history.’ Ray B. Browne, ‘Historical Crime and Detection’, in Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (eds), *A Companion to Crime Fiction* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 222-32 (p. 223).

<sup>18</sup> Lawrence’s Roman Mysteries appeared after the publication of several adult detective series set in Ancient Rome, such as Lindsey Davis’s Falco series (1989-2010), John Maddox Roberts’s SPQR series (1990-2010) and Steven Saylor’s Roma Sub Rosa series (1991-present). For information on these series, see Peter Hunt, ‘Lindsey Davis: Falco, Cynical Detective in a Corrupt Roman Empire’, in Ray B. Browne and Lawrence A. Kreiser, Jr (eds), *The Detective as Historian: History and Art in Historical Crime Fiction* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 2000), pp. 32-44 and Terrance L. Lewis, ‘John Maddox Roberts and Steven Saylor: Detecting in the Final Decades of the Roman Republic’, in Ray B. Browne and Lawrence A. Kreiser, Jr (eds), *The Detective as Historian: History and Art in Historical Crime Fiction* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 2000), pp. 22-31. Lawrence admits to reading and enjoying Saylor’s series, but only after she had written the first book in her Roman Mysteries series: ‘I was horrified to discover he has a little

present), set in 1860s Nevada, follows the exploits of young American private eye P. K. Pinkerton. In Grace Cavendish's *Lady Grace Mysteries* (2004-10), orphaned Maid of Honour, Lady Grace, solves crimes in Queen Elizabeth's court, while John Pilkington's *Elizabethan Mysteries* (2007-9), features the investigations of Ben Button, apprentice to a company of actors in Elizabethan London. There are also a number of Sherlock-Holmes inspired series, such as Anthony Read's *Baker Street Boys* (2005-9) and Tim Pigott-Smith's *Baker Street Mysteries* (2008-9), which follow the detective exploits of the Baker Street Irregulars, and Andrew Lane's *Young Sherlock Holmes* series (2010-present), which maps the teenage years of the great detective.<sup>19</sup>

The police procedural, which was established in adult crime fiction in the 1950s but reached new levels of popularity in the 1980s and beyond with offerings such as Ian Rankin's *John Rebus* series (1987-present) and a host of new television police dramas, started to emerge in juvenile form from the 1990s, in various Point Crime series, aimed at an early teenage audience.<sup>20</sup> These included David Belbin's *The Beat* series (1995-2000), featuring a police team from Nottingham and Malcolm Rose's *Lawless & Tilley* series (1997-9), which follows young police detectives Brett Lawless and Clare Tilley as they hunt down blackmailers, kidnapers and murderers. Another Point Crime series, Anne Cassidy's *East End Murders* (1995-2000) features girl detective Patsy Kelly, who works for her uncle's private detective agency rather than the police, but this series is similar in format to the police procedural. More recently, Chris Ould has

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mute boy in one of his books. I met him last September and told him I hadn't stolen his idea when I created *Lupus*.' Caroline Lawrence, 'John Appleton's Interview with Caroline Lawrence on the Secrets of Writing *Mysteries . . .*', in Caroline Lawrence, *Trimalchio's Feast and Other Mini-Mysteries* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2007), pp. 123-30 (p. 129).

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of children's series featuring the Baker Street Irregulars, see Dominic Cheetham, 'Middle-Class Victorian Street Arabs: Modern Re-creations of the Baker Street Irregulars', *International Research in Children's Literature*, 5.1 (July 2012), 36-50.

<sup>20</sup> For further information on the British police procedural, see Stephen Knight, *Crime Fiction since 1800: Detection, Death, Diversity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 155-63; Peter Messent, 'The Police Novel', in Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (eds), *A Companion to Crime Fiction* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 175-86; Charles J. Rzepka, *Detective Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), pp. 227-9; and Symons, *Bloody Murder*, pp. 231-6.

launched his *Street Duty* series (2012-present), which explores the progress of a new fictional youth branch of the police force through the eyes of sixteen-year-old Trainee Police Officer, Holly Blades, and her fellow young recruits.

Other series, again following adult crime fiction models, move away from more realistic subgenres towards hybrids which blend the detective narrative with elements of fantasy and science fiction.<sup>21</sup> Malcolm Rose's *Traces* series (2005-8) is set in a futuristic parallel universe, under an oppressive state regime, where sixteen-year-old Luke Harding has qualified as the youngest ever Forensic Investigator and works with a robot assistant called Malc. Justin Richards's *Invisible Detective* series (2003-5), as its title suggests, has strong and recognisable roots in the detective tradition, whilst also incorporating elements of science fiction, horror, time-slip and fantasy fiction. The texts focus on Arthur (Art) Drake, who exists simultaneously as a child in 1930s London and as his grandson of the same name in present-day London. In the 1930s, fourteen-year-old Art and his friends create fictional detective Brandon Lake, known as 'the Invisible Detective' – because of his apparent ability to vanish into thin air. Art, in the guise of Brandon Lake, holds a weekly consulting session and invites the general public to call upon his services to investigate suspicious goings-on in the local area. The mysteries that Art and his friends encounter in the 1930s resurface for the present-day Arthur and his granddad, who is now in a nursing home. Andrew Hammond's *CRYPT* series (2011-present) also offers a hybrid blend in which the detective tradition interacts with the horror genre and, more specifically, the ghost story. The series' main detective

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<sup>21</sup> Jim Butcher's best-selling adult crime fiction/fantasy series, *The Dresden Files* (2000-present), for example, follows the supernatural investigations of wizard private investigator Harry Dresden. Sandra West Prowell's *Phoebe Siegel Mysteries* (1993-6) similarly blend the private detective narrative with elements of the supernatural and the Gothic. See Rachel Schaffer, 'Montana Gothic: Sandra West-Prowell's *Phoebe Siegel Mysteries*', *Clues: A Journal of Detection*, 30.2 (Autumn 2012), 60-6. Several recent television series, too, offer a supernatural detective hybrid. For a discussion of two of these – *Supernatural* and *Medium* – see Ann McGuire and David Buchbinder, 'The Forensic Gothic: Knowledge, the Supernatural, and the Psychic Detective', *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 40.3 (December 2010), 289-307.

protagonist, Jamie Goode, has been convicted of his mother's murder which, he claims, was committed by ghosts. Desperate to prove his son's innocence, American billionaire Jason Goode puts his fortune and efforts into scientifically proving the existence of ghosts and, under the cover of MI5, recruits teenage agents with heightened ESP to his newly formed Covert Response Youth Paranormal Team. The agents investigate supernatural crimes, hunting down and pacifying the ghosts responsible. As a condition of his service to MI5, Goode demands that his son Jamie be released from prison to become a member of CRYPT and, under the new identity of Jud Lester, Jamie becomes the agency's most valuable asset.

More innovative than the fantastical elements of Richards's and Hammond's series are their postmodern traits.<sup>22</sup> These series defy the rational explanation to mysteries common in their modernist predecessors and instead employ an unpredictable narrative formula which denies closure and leaves elements of the unknown, ambiguous and unexplained, to tantalise readers. The detective characters themselves become products of 'enigma', a technique which Adrienne E. Gavin identifies in 'creative, innovative, and original mystery writing' as a means to 'encourage puzzling that extends beyond the bounds of the plot and which connects with deeper mysteries of life and art, involving issues of identity, reality, and fictionality'.<sup>23</sup> In both Richards's and Hammond's series, the detective protagonist's complex and indeterminate identity becomes part of the mystery which readers are invited to solve.<sup>24</sup> Similarly to their

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<sup>22</sup> For further information on postmodern crime fiction for adults, see Knight, *Crime Fiction*, pp. 205-7; Patricia Merivale, 'Postmodern and Metaphysical Detection', in Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (eds), *A Companion to Crime Fiction* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 308-20; and Rzepka, *Detective Fiction*, pp. 233-5.

<sup>23</sup> Adrienne E. Gavin, 'Enigma's Variation: The Puzzling Mysteries of Avi, Ellen Ruskin, Diana Wynne Jones and Chris Van Allsburg', in Adrienne E. Gavin and Christopher Routledge (eds.), *Mystery in Children's Literature: From the Rational to the Supernatural* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 210-18 (p. 211).

<sup>24</sup> For further discussion of the postmodern traits of Richards's and Hammond's series, see Lucy Andrew, "'Exspecta Inexspectata': The Rise of the Supernatural in Hybrid Detective Series for Young Readers', in Jean Anderson, Carolina Miranda and Barbara Pezzotti (eds), *Dying for More: Studies in Serial Crime*

adult counterparts, some postmodernist detective series for children contain metafictional aspects. For example, Anthony Horowitz's Diamond Brothers series (1986-2007), featuring hapless adult private investigator Tim Diamond and his far more competent teenage brother, Nick, parodies the American hard-boiled detective genre. Meanwhile, the undercover agent heroine of Lauren Child's Ruby Redfort series (2011-present), is the favourite literary character of the heroine of another of Child's series, Clarice Bean (1999-2006). Innovation and experimentation in British juvenile detective fiction has, in recent years, extended beyond genre and formula to format. Juvenile detectives have made their way into graphic novels, such as Tony Lee and Dan Boulton's Baker Street Irregulars series, while Caroline Lawrence's Roman Mysteries and Eoin Colfer's stand-alone detective novel, *Half Moon Investigations* (2006), have been adapted for television.<sup>25</sup> Some formats are more hybrid, such as Robin Price's post-apocalyptic text *London Deep* (2010), which is part prose, part graphic novel. More interactive, and taking advantage of technological developments, are the podcast-linked novels of Karen King's Amy Carter Mysteries in which downloadable audio clues accompany the textual evidence at particular points of the narrative.

Despite its technical advancements, expanding range of variations and, in many cases, resistance to the restrictive formula characteristic of story-paper detective narratives, however, British juvenile detective series fiction does not interact as strongly with cultural contexts or possess such a widespread social conditioning function as its

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*Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, forthcoming). For further information on the postmodernist mystery formula in children's literature, see Karen Coats, 'The Mysteries of Postmodern Epistemology: Stratemeyer, Stine, and Contemporary Mystery for Children', in Adrienne E. Gavin and Christopher Routledge (eds), *Mystery in Children's Literature: From the Rational to the Supernatural* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 184–201.

<sup>25</sup> See *The Roman Mysteries*, dir. by Paul Marcus, Jill Robertson and Marcus D. F. White. Francesca Isherwood, Eli Machover, Rebekah Brookes-Murrell, Harry Stott (CBBC, 2007-8) and *Half Moon Investigations*, dir. by Marcus D. F. White and Symon Hynd. Rory Elick, Seb Charles, Olivia Grant, Nicola Duffell (CBBC, 2009).

story-paper predecessors. There are several reasons for this distinction. Firstly, while story papers offered child readers an insight into the real world and adult life through a combination of fictional and factual material, detective series fiction, from Blyton onwards, often ensures the complete segregation of the child from the adult world and, though based in a realistic setting, does not offer its child readers access to life beyond the fictional realm. Secondly, where Amalgamated Press detective stories disseminated publisher-wide ideologies and the multiplicity of authors ensured that some detectives appeared in hundreds, or even thousands, of stories, British series fiction is usually written by a single author, ensuring that each series reflects the author's personal ideologies and experiences and that the span of the series is limited to the number of texts an author can write in their lifetime.<sup>26</sup> Thirdly, the weekly publication of the Amalgamated Press story papers enabled them to respond to contemporary events and attitudes in a way that is not possible in the series-fiction market.

The American juvenile detective market, by contrast to British series fiction, continues to operate along similar lines to the British story-paper detective narratives. The most famous juvenile detective series in America are undoubtedly Nancy Drew (1930-present) and the Hardy Boys (1927-present), products of the prolific Stratemeyer syndicate, established by former dime novel writer Edward Stratemeyer in 1905. His authors wrote under series pseudonyms and adhered to specific formulae and plot outlines which ensured a sense of continuity and an ideological consistency across the series.<sup>27</sup> Significantly, characters like Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys, in their late

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<sup>26</sup> Enid Blyton's publishing output far outweighed that of most other British series fiction writers. She produced over 600 books, with 37 titles published in 1951 alone. See Sheila G. Ray, *The Blyton Phenomenon: The Controversy Surrounding the World's Most Successful Children's Writer* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1983 [1982]), p. 3. This led to rumours in the early 1950s – vehemently denied by Blyton – that she did not write all the books that were credited to her. See Barbara Stoney, *Enid Blyton* (London, Sydney, Auckland and Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974), p. 167.

<sup>27</sup> See Melanie Rehak, *Girl Sleuth: Nancy Drew and the Women Who Created Her* (San Diego: Harcourt, 2006 [2005]), pp. 25-6 and Michael G. Cornelius, 'Introduction', in Michael G. Cornelius (ed.), *The Boy Detectives: Essays on the Hardy Boys and Others* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2010), pp. 1-

teens, operate as quasi-adults in an adult world, unlike the childish detective heroes and heroines of the series fiction of Blyton and her imitators. Closer in format and formula to the British story-paper detective narratives are those of the monthly American superhero comics, which adopt an adult hero/boy sidekick formula reminiscent of the detective/assistant pattern established in the British Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee series. The parallel is most obvious in DC's Batman comics (1939-present), which have featured Robin as a boy assistant to Batman, 'the world's greatest detective', since 1940.<sup>28</sup> These narratives, like those of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys, feature adult characters and engage with the adult world, but their monthly publication ensures that they are better placed to respond directly to contemporary cultural changes, comment on real-life issues and disseminate particular ideologies to their young readers, and across a much greater range of publications than their series-fiction counterparts. In 1993, for example, Robin featured in an A.I.D.S. awareness advertisement published throughout DC Comics.<sup>29</sup> In America, therefore, the fictional boy detective is still being utilised to address contemporary adult anxieties about real-life boyhood and to condition a vast juvenile audience to think and behave in particular ways. By contrast, the decline of the story-paper industry in Britain – and particularly the Amalgamated Press papers in

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18 (p. 8). For further information on the Nancy Drew series, see also Bobbie Ann Mason, *The Girl Sleuth* (Athens, GA and London: University of Georgia Press, 1995 [1975]), pp. 48-75 and Deborah L. Siegel, 'Nancy Drew As New Girl Wonder: Solving It All for the 1930s', in Sherrie A. Inness (ed.), *Nancy Drew and Company: Culture, Gender and Girls' Series* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1997), pp. 159-82. For further discussion of the Hardy Boys series, see Mark Connelly, *The Hardy Boys Mysteries, 1927-1979* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2012); Larry T. Shillock, 'A Hardy Boys' Identity Narrative and *The Tower Treasure*', in Michael G. Cornelius (ed.), *The Boy Detectives: Essays on the Hardy Boys and Others* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2010), pp. 19-34; and C. M. Gill, 'Hardy Camaraderie: Boy Sleuthing and Male Community in the Hardy Boys Mysteries', in Michael G. Cornelius (ed.), *The Boy Detectives: Essays on the Hardy Boys and Others* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland & Company, Inc, Publishers, 2010), pp. 35-50.

<sup>28</sup> Ryan Indy Rhodes and David Kyle Johnson, 'What Would Batman Do? Bruce Wayne As Moral Exemplar', in Mark D. White and Robert Arp (eds), *Batman and Philosophy: The Dark Knight of the Soul* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008), pp. 114-25 (p. 116).

<sup>29</sup> Robert Greenberger and Matthew K. Manning, *The Batman Vault* (Philadelphia: Running Press, 2009), p. 101.

which the boy detective flourished – brought with it a decline in the social and cultural significance and the ideological power of the British boy detective.



## Appendix 1: Chronology

- 1817: Creation of ‘The Fourdrinier’, Gilpin’s paper-making machine.**
- 1829: Metropolitan Police formed.**
- 1833: Factory Act: imposed restrictions on youth labour.**
- 1837:** Serialisation of Charles Dickens’s *Oliver Twist; or, The Parish Boy’s Progress* begins in *Bentley’s Miscellany*.
- 1842: Creation of the detective police department.**
- 1847: Invention of the Hoe Rotary Press.**
- 1853: Removal of the advertisement duty on newspapers.**
- 1854:** Wilkie Collins, ‘The Fourth Poor Traveller’ (*Household Words*): brief appearance of Tom, boy assistant to the lawyer-detective protagonist.
- 1855: Removal of stamp duty on newspapers.**
- 1857:** Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*.
- 1858:** F. W. Farrar, *Eric, or Little by Little*.
- 1859:** Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help*.
- 1860:** Serialisation of *Charley Wag: The New Jack Sheppard* begins.
- 1861: Repeal of the paper excise duty.**
- 1862: The Revised Code: a system of funding to schools based on pupil attendance and exam performance.**
- 1864:** Andrew Forrester, *The Female Detective*: early example of a fictional female investigator, employed by the police.
- 1864:** William Stephens Hayward, *Revelations of a Lady Detective*: brief appearance of Jack Doyle as a boy ‘servant’ to the lady detective, Mrs Paschal.
- 1864:** Serialisation of *The Wild Boys of London; or, The Children of Night* begins.
- 1865:** Serialisation of *The Boy Detective; or, The Crimes of London* begins.
- 1865:** Launch of the *Boy’s Own Companion* (Edwin J. Brett): marks the beginning of a new story-paper tradition to replace the ‘penny dreadful’.
- 1866:** Serialisation of *The Wild Boys of Paris; or, The Mysteries of the Vault of Death* and *The Poor Boys of London; or, Driven to Crime. A Life Story for the People*.

- 1866:** Launch of the *Boys of England* (Edwin J. Brett).
- 1867: Extension of the franchise to working-class men over twenty one.**
- 1868:** Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*: appearance of Octavius Guy, better known as ‘Gooseberry’, as a boy assistant to the lawyer-detective, Mr Bruff.
- 1869:** Launch of *Young Briton* (Emmett Brothers).
- 1869:** James Greenwood, *The Seven Curses of London*: in which he condemns ‘penny dreadfuls’.
- 1870:** Launch of *Sons of Britannia* (Emmett Brothers).
- 1870: Forster’s Education Act.**
- 1871:** Launch of *Young Folks* (James Henderson).
- 1875:** Launch of the *Boys’ Standard* (Charles Fox).
- 1876:** Chinese trickster Ching Ching makes his debut as a supporting character in ‘Handsome Harry of the Fighting Belvedere’ in the *Boys’ Standard*. He later becomes the protagonist of his own serials and, after this, his own story paper, gradually transforming into a detective character.
- 1877:** Reprint of *The Wild Boys of London* prosecuted under Lord Campbell’s Obscene Publications Act.
- 1877:** *Beadle’s Half-Dime Library* is launched in America and features several juvenile detective protagonists, particularly in the 1880s.
- 1879:** Launch of the *Boy’s Own Paper* (Religious Tract Society).
- 1879:** Talbot Baines Reed’s stories of Parkhurst School published in the *Boy’s Own Paper*: creation of the short-story series format.
- 1880:** T. S. Clouston, ‘Puberty and Adolescence Medico-Psychologically Considered’ (*Edinburgh Medical Journal*).
- 1881:** Serialisation of ‘The Fifth Form at St Dominic’s’ begins (*Boy’s Own Paper*).
- 1883: William Smith founds the Boys’ Brigade.**
- 1886:** American detective Nick Carter makes his debut in *New York Weekly*.
- 1887:** Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*: first Sherlock Holmes novel, published in *Beeton’s Xmas Annual*. The Baker Street Irregulars make their debut here.
- 1888:** Launch of *Ching Ching’s Own* (Thomas Harrison Roberts).

- 1888:** Alfred Harmsworth launches *Answers to Correspondents*.
- 1889: Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act.**
- 1889:** Answers Publications Ltd is launched by Alfred Harmsworth.
- 1890:** Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Sign of Four*: second Sherlock Holmes novel, published in *Lippincott's Magazine*. The Baker Street Irregulars make their second appearance.
- 1890:** Launch of *Comic Cuts* and *Illustrated Chips* (Answers Publications Ltd).
- 1891:** First series of Sherlock Holmes stories – The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes – begins in the *Strand Magazine*, starting with ‘A Scandal in Bohemia’.
- 1891: Walter Gee founds the Church Lads' Brigade.**
- 1892:** Ching Ching becomes firmly established as a detective character in ‘Ching Ching on the Trail: A New Style of Detective Story’ (*Ching Ching's Own*).
- 1892:** Second series of Sherlock Holmes stories – The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes – begins in the *Strand Magazine*, starting with ‘The Adventure of the Silver Blaze’.
- 1893:** Launch the *Halfpenny Marvel* (Answers Publications Ltd), a story paper which places itself in opposition to ‘penny dreadfuls’.
- 1893:** Sexton Blake makes his debut in ‘The Missing Millionaire’ (*Halfpenny Marvel*). An unnamed newsboy assists Blake for part of his case.
- 1893:** The Baker Street Irregulars make their final appearance in the Sherlock Holmes series in ‘The Adventure of the Crooked Man’ (*Strand Magazine*).
- 1893: School leaving age rises from ten to eleven.**
- 1893:** Sherlock Holmes is killed off in ‘The Final Problem’ (*Strand Magazine*).
- 1894:** Launch of the *Union Jack* (Answers Publications Ltd), which later became known as ‘Sexton Blake’s own paper’.
- 1894:** Nelson Lee and boy assistant Nipper make their debut in ‘A Dead Man’s Secret’ (*Halfpenny Marvel*).
- 1894:** Launch of *Pluck* (Answers Publications Ltd).
- 1895:** Launch of the *Boys' Friend* (Answers Publications Ltd).
- 1895:** *Halfpenny Marvel* becomes the *Marvel*.

- 1895:** Henry Maudsley includes a new chapter on ‘Pubescent or Adolescent Insanities’ in *The Pathology of the Mind*, an extended version of his 1867 study on the subject.
- 1896:** Mark Twain, *Tom Sawyer, Detective*.
- 1896:** Answers Publications Ltd becomes Harmsworth Bros. Ltd.
- 1897:** Sexton Blake’s Chinese boy assistant, We-wee, makes his debut in ‘Chased through China’ (*Halfpenny Marvel*).
- 1898:** We-wee begins his Anglicisation in ‘The Phantom Photographer’ (*Union Jack*).
- 1898: The Boxer Rebellion begins in China.**
- 1899: School leaving age rises from eleven to twelve.**
- 1899: Second Boer War begins.**
- 1899: Lord Meath founds the Lads’ Drill Association.**
- 1889:** Robert Baden-Powell, *Aids to Scouting for N.C.O.s & Men*.
- 1900: The Western Powers defeat the Chinese Boxers.**
- 1901:** We-wee reverts to his former Chinese stereotype in ‘Fortune Stone!’ (*Union Jack*).
- 1901: Peace Protocol finalised between China and the Western Powers.**
- 1901:** Blake is assisted by the adult Wallace Lorrimer in ‘The Real Adventures of Sexton Blake’, serialised in the *Marvel*. He also has an office boy called Raffles.
- 1901:** Blake is assisted by the ape-like Griff in ‘Griff the Man-Tracker’, serialised in the *Union Jack*.
- 1901:** Serialisation of the third Sherlock Holmes novel, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, begins in the *Strand Magazine*.
- 1902:** Harmsworths’ Bros. Ltd changes its name to the Amalgamated Press.
- 1902:** Launch of the *Boys’ Realm* (Amalgamated Press).
- 1902:** We-wee’s final appearance in the Sexton Blake series in ‘The Real Adventures of Sexton Blake’, serialised in the *Marvel*.
- 1902: British victory in the second Boer War.**
- 1902: The Education Act.**

- 1902: Triple Alliance between Germany, Italy and Austria renewed.**
- 1903:** Launch of the *Boys' Herald* (Amalgamated Press).
- 1903:** Serialisation of 'Nelson Lee's Pupil' begins (*Boys' Herald*), in which Nipper's origins story is extended and revised from 'A Dead Man's Secret' (1894).
- 1903:** 'Boy' detective Stanley Dare makes his debut in 'The Shadow of Guilt' (*Pluck*).
- 1903:** Erskine Childers, *The Riddle of the Sands*: marked the beginning of a spate of British invasion-scare literature.
- 1903: The Employment of Children Act: restricted children's working hours and types of employment.**
- 1903:** Sherlock Holmes is resurrected in 'The Adventure of the Empty House', which marks the beginning of the third Sherlock Holmes series – The Return of Sherlock Holmes – in the *Strand Magazine*.
- 1904:** G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence*.
- 1904:** Sexton Blake's long-term assistant, Tinker, makes his debut in 'Cunning Against Skill' (*Union Jack*).
- 1904:** *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration*.
- 1904: Entente Cordiale between Britain and France.**
- 1904: Prevention of Cruelty to Children Amendment Act.**
- 1905:** The *Union Jack* becomes known as 'Sexton Blake's own paper'.
- 1905:** Serialisation of 'Nipper's Schooldays' (*Boys' Herald*): charts Nipper's early school life at St Ninian's, before he became Nelson Lee's official assistant.
- 1906:** Launch of the *Boys' Friend Library* (Amalgamated Press).
- 1906:** 'Tinker Limited' (*Union Jack*): Tinker's first solo case.
- 1906: The Education (Provision of Meals) Act.**
- 1907: The Education (Administrative Provisions) Act: establishment of the School Medical Service.**
- 1907: Anglo-Russian Agreement.**
- 1907:** Launch of the *Gem* (Amalgamated Press): home of the St Jim's school stories.
- 1907:** Ferrers Locke makes his debut in the *Gem*, where schoolboy Tom Merry assists him at St Jim's for a brief period.

- 1907:** ‘Boy’ detective Mark Youall makes his debut in ‘Mark Youall’s Profession’ (*Marvel*).
- 1908:** Launch of the *Magnet* (Amalgamated Press): home of the Greyfriars school stories.
- 1908:** Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*: **the Scout movement begins.**
- 1908:** Launch of *The Scout* (C. Arthur Pearson).
- 1908:** Serialisation of ‘Maxennis, Detective’, featuring boy detective duo Robert Lomax and Frank Dennis (*Magnet*).
- 1908:** Boy detective duo Harry Fairfax and Bob Dawson make their debut in ‘The Boy Detectives’ First Case’ (*Marvel*).
- 1908:** Police constable Joe Dale and his boy assistant Dan Garland make their debut in ‘Only A Policeman’ (*Pluck*).
- 1908:** **The Children’s Act: increased child protection measures and created a distinct juvenile justice system.**
- 1909:** Greyfriars pupil Billy Bunter attempts to become a detective in ‘Bunter the Detective’ (*Magnet*).
- 1910:** Serialisation of ‘Fielding Torrence, Detective’ begins in the *Boys’ Herald*, featuring schoolboys Fielding Torrence and ‘Connie’ Cambridge at Drayborne College.
- 1910:** J. W. Slaughter, *The Adolescent*.
- 1911:** *New Nick Carter Weekly* published in Britain.
- 1911:** Serialisation of ‘Detective Nipper’ begins (*Boys’ Realm*).
- 1911:** Serialisation of ‘Tinker’s Schooldays’ begins (*Boys’ Friend*): charts the school life of Tinker at Telford’s College.
- 1912:** Dalton Hawke makes his debut in ‘The Schoolboy Detective’ (*Magnet*) at Greyfriars.
- 1912:** Serialisation of ‘The Four Musketeers’ (*Boys’ Friend*): the second school serial featuring Tinker at Telford’s College.
- 1912:** Series of short stories featuring Tinker at Telford’s College begins (*Boys’ Friend*).
- 1912:** Serialisation of ‘Nipper’s First Case’ (*Cheer Boys Cheer*).

- 1912:** Launch of the *Dreadnought, Cheer Boys Cheer* and *Penny Popular* (Amalgamated Press).
- 1912:** Boy detective Jim Dane makes his debut in 'The Hunchback' (*Boys' Friend*).
- 1912:** Serialisation of 'Nipper of St Ninian's' begins (*Boys' Friend*).
- 1913:** Serialisation of 'Tinker's Boyhood' (*Boys' Friend*), based on Tinker's life before meeting Sexton Blake.
- 1913:** Serialisation of 'Tinker Abroad' (*Boys' Friend*).
- 1914: World War I begins. Minimum age of army enlistment set at eighteen, while those under nineteen were not permitted to serve overseas.**
- 1914: Scouts' Defence Corps established to train boys between the ages of fifteen and seventeen for military duties.**
- 1914:** Serialisation of the final Sherlock Holmes novel, *The Valley of Fear* begins in the *Strand Magazine*.
- 1915:** Launch of the *Sexton Blake Library* (Amalgamated Press).
- 1915:** Launch of the *Nelson Lee Library* (Amalgamated Press).
- 1915:** 'Private Tinker, A.S.C.' (*Union Jack*): story in which Tinker briefly becomes an underage soldier fighting the Germans.
- 1915:** Herlock Sholmes makes his debut (*Greyfriars' Herald*).
- 1916: Army conscription begins: underage recruitment significantly curtailed.**
- 1917:** 'Nipper's Notebook' series begins in the *Nelson Lee Library*: narrated by Nipper.
- 1917:** Stories of Nipper and Nelson Lee at St Frank's begin with 'Nipper at St Frank's' (*Nelson Lee Library*).
- 1917:** Alec Waugh, *The Loom of Youth*.
- 1918: Minimum age of overseas service reduced from nineteen to eighteen and seven months in March and then eighteen and six months until August, when it was raised to nineteen again.**
- 1918: World War I ends.**
- 1918: The Education Act: minimum school leaving age increased to fourteen.**
- 1919:** Launch of the *Dixon Hawke Library*, featuring Dixon Hawke and boy assistant Tommy Burke (D. C. Thomson).

- 1919:** Launch of the *Detective Library* (Amalgamated Press).
- 1920:** Agatha Christie, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*: Christie's first published detective novel and the first appearance of Belgian detective Hercule Poirot.
- 1921:** Greyfriars schoolboy Jack Drake becomes Ferrers Locke's assistant (*Boys' Herald*).
- 1921:** Jack Drake and his Greyfriars companions appear in 'The Caravan Detective' (*Magnet*): their first school-holiday detective story.
- 1921:** Launch of the *Adventure* (D. C. Thomson).
- 1921:** Launch of *Schoolgirls' Own* (Amalgamated Press).
- 1922:** Death of Alfred Harmsworth.
- 1922:** Launch of the *Rover* and the *Wizard* (D. C. Thomson).
- 1922:** Launch of the *Champion* (Amalgamated Press).
- 1922:** Launch of the *Boys' Magazine* (Allied Newspapers).
- 1922:** Falcon Swift and boy assistant Chick Conway make their debut in 'The Exploits of Falcon Swift' (*Boys' Magazine*).
- 1922:** Launch of *Schoolgirls' Weekly* (Amalgamated Press).
- 1922:** Girl detective Sylvia Silence makes her debut in *Schoolgirls' Weekly*.
- 1923:** Launch of the *Aldine Detective Tales (2<sup>nd</sup> Series)* (Aldine Publishing Company).
- 1923:** Launch of the *Vanguard* (D. C. Thomson).
- 1925:** The Amalgamated Press is bought by Allied Newspapers.
- 1925:** Launch of the *Schoolboys' Own Library* (Amalgamated Press).
- 1926:** Launch of the *Dixon Brett Detective Library* (Aldine Publishing Company), featuring Dixon Brett and boy assistant Pat Malone.
- 1926:** Agatha Christie, *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*.
- 1927:** Franklin W. Dixon, *The Tower Treasure*: beginning of the Hardy Boys series.
- 1927:** Sherlock Holmes makes his final appearance in 'The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place' (*Strand Magazine*).
- 1928:** Boy detective Slick Chester makes his debut in 'Detective Slicks First Scoop!' (*Champion*).
- 1928:** Launch of the *Modern Boy* (Amalgamated Press).



- 1929:** Greyfriars pupil Herbert Vernon-Smith takes on the detective role in ‘The Schoolboy Detective’ (*Magnet*).
- 1929:** Erich Kästner, *Emil and the Detectives*.
- 1930:** Carolyn Keene, *The Secret of the Old Clock*: beginning of the Nancy Drew series.
- 1930:** Arthur Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*: the beginning of the Swallows and Amazons series, which popularised the holiday-adventure genre. There is a minor detective episode in the first book in the series.
- 1930:** Girl detective Lila Lisle makes her debut in the *Schoolgirls’ Own*.
- 1930:** Launch of the *Skipper* (D. C. Thomson).
- 1933:** Valerie Drew makes her debut in *Schoolgirls’ Weekly*.
- 1933:** **The Children and Young Person’s Act.**
- 1933:** The *Union Jack* becomes *Detective Weekly*, a more adult-orientated publication.
- 1933:** The *Nelson Lee Library* merges with the *Gem*: stories of Nelson Lee and Nipper at St Frank’s come to an end.
- 1933:** Launch of the *Hotspur* (D. C. Thomson).
- 1934:** ‘The Schoolboy Sleuth!’ (*Magnet*): Greyfriars pupil Herbert Vernon-Smith takes on the detective role once more.
- 1934:** R. J. McGregor, *The Young Detectives*: one of the first British examples of the holiday-adventure detective novel for children.
- 1936:** Serialisation of ‘The Schoolboy Detective’ (*Modern Boy*) in which boy detective Len Lex makes his debut at Oakshott School.
- 1936:** Len Lex and his schoolboy companions appear in a short series of school-holiday detective stories, beginning with ‘The Mystery of the Moat House’ (*Modern Boy*).
- 1936:** *Schoolgirls’ Weekly* folds.
- 1937:** Launch of the *Dandy* (D. C. Thomson).
- 1938:** Launch of the *Beano* (D. C. Thomson).
- 1939:** **World War II begins.**
- 1939:** Jack Drake returns to Greyfriars as ‘James Duck’ to solve the case of the Greyfriars prowler in the *Magnet*.

- 1939:** The *Gem*, the *Modern Boy* and the *Schoolgirls' Own* fold during the wartime paper shortages.
- 1939:** Batman makes his debut in *Detective Comics* (DC).
- 1940:** Robin makes his debut in *Detective Comics* (DC).
- 1940:** Launch of *Batman* comic (DC).
- 1940:** The *Boys' Friend Library*, the *Magnet*, *Schoolboys' Own Library* and *Detective Weekly* fold during the wartime paper shortages.
- 1940:** George Orwell, 'Boys' Weeklies' (*Horizon*): famous essay in which Orwell criticises Frank Richards's [Charles Hamilton's] school stories.
- 1940:** Charles Hamilton responds to Orwell's article in 'Frank Richards Replies to George Orwell' (*Horizon*).
- 1940:** Arthur Ransome, *The Big Six*: book in the Swallows and Amazon series which introduces detective elements to the holiday-adventure formula.
- 1942:** Enid Blyton, *Five on a Treasure Island*: beginning of the Famous Five holiday-adventure detective series.
- 1943:** Enid Blyton, *The Mystery of the Burnt Cottage*: beginning of the Five Find-Outers holiday-adventure detective series.
- 1945: World War II ends.**
- 1949:** Enid Blyton, *The Rockingdown Mystery*: beginning of the Barney Mysteries holiday-adventure detective series.
- 1949:** Enid Blyton, *The Secret Seven*: beginning of the Secret Seven holiday-adventure detective series.

## **Appendix 2: List of Adult Detectives and Their Boy Assistants**

Below is a chronological list of adult detective/boy assistant stories which I consulted at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, in relation to chapters 3 and 4. The list does not include stories of Sexton Blake and Tinker or Nelson Lee and Nipper. Nor does it include any detective/assistant stories which take place within the school environment – these are discussed in chapter 5.

### **Kit and Cora Twyford and assistants Freddie Figgins and Miffles**

Cedric Wolfe, 'The Captured Cunarder', *Pluck*, 3.63 (1905-6), 1-17

Cedric Wolfe, 'The False Clue', *Pluck*, 3.73 (1905/6), 1-18

Cedric Wolfe, 'The Secret Casket', *Pluck*, 3.77 (1905-6), 20-8

Cedric Wolfe, 'The Black Hound', *Pluck*, 4.83 (1906), 1-18

Cedric Wolfe, 'Swift and Silent', *Pluck*, 4.92 (1906), 1-17

Cedric Wolfe, 'A Waif in the Waves', *Pluck*, 4.99 (1906), 1-17

Cedric Wolfe, 'Fate's Warning', *Pluck*, 6.171 (1906/7), 16-27

Anon, 'The Silver Disc', *Boys' Friend*, 12.615 (22 March 1913), 657-8

Anon, 'The Case of the Paris Madhouse', *Boys' Friend*, 12.616 (29 March 1913), 675-6, 678

Anon, 'Black Game', *Boys' Friend*, 12.617 (5 April 1913), 689-90

Anon, 'The Doll Stealer', *Boys' Friend*, 12.619 (19 April 1913), 725-6, 730

Anon, 'On the Stroke of Midnight', *Boys' Friend*, 12.620 (26 April 1913), 747-8

Anon, 'The Mystery of the Disused Wharf', *Boys' Friend*, 12.622 (10 May 1913), 774-7

Anon, 'The Haunted Turret', *Boys' Friend*, 12.629 (28 June 1913), 55-6

### **Detective Sleath and assistant Kippers**

Cedric Wolfe, 'The Yellow Spider' *Marvel*, 4.82 (1905/6), 101-8

Cedric Wolfe, 'At the Dead of Night', *Marvel*, 4.100 (1905/6), 663-74

Cedric Wolfe, 'The Fate of Harry Deerwell', *Marvel*, 5.129 (1906), 689-700

Cedric Wolfe, 'Played Out!', *Marvel*, 6.147 (1906), 464-74

### **Martin Stern and assistant Boy Bludd**

Andrew Hales, 'The Mid-Sea Mystery', *Pluck*, 3.79 (1905-6), 1-17

Anon, 'The Mystery of the Motor Car', *Pluck*, 4.83 (1906), 18-27

Anon, 'The Tenant of Stonehenge', *Pluck*, 4.86 (1906), 1-19

Anon, 'The Curio Mystery', *Pluck*, 4.98 (1906), 16-24

Anon, 'A Marked Man', *Pluck*, 4.104 (1906), 1-17

Anon, 'Hunted Down!', *Pluck*, 5.114 (1906/7), 20-3

### **Detective Steel and assistant Dick Hope**

Paul Herring, 'In the Service of Scotland Yard', *Marvel*, 5.130 (1906), 714-24

Paul Herring, 'On Special Service', *Marvel*, 6.132 (1906), 72-84

### **Wendell Vance and assistants Bob Moffat and Jimmy Sindon**

Phil Granby, 'The Parrot's Cage', *Pluck*, 6.147 (1906/7), 15-27

Phil Granby, 'The Tartan Plaid', *Pluck*, 6.152 (1906/7), 12-26

Phil Granby, 'Found in Fleet Street', *Pluck*, 6.165 (1906/7), 15-26

Phil Granby, 'The Scarlet Scarf', *Marvel*, 7.178 (1907), 605-15

Phil Granby, 'The Third Shadow', *Marvel*, 7.180 (1907), 661-70

### **Martin Stern and assistant Whistler**

Anon, 'The New Partner', *Pluck*, 6.182 (1906/7), 16-27

**Luke Latimer and assistant Dinky:**

Cedric Wolfe, 'Longheaded Latimer' *Pluck*, 6.184 (1906/7), 14-24

Cedric Wolfe, 'The Gipsy's Vow', *Pluck*, 7.194 (1908-9), 15-24

**Joe Dale and assistant Dan Garland**

Anon, 'Old Patch', *Pluck*, 9.212 (1908/9), 15-26

Anon, 'The Great Hotel Mystery', *Pluck*, 9.213 (1908/9), 15-25

Anon, 'The X-Ray Club', *Pluck*, 9.214 (1908/9), 1-16

Anon, 'Dan Garland's "Cellar Flap"', *Pluck*, 9.215 (1908/9), 1-15

Anon, 'The Thames Mystery', *Pluck*, 9.241 (1908/9), 1-12

Anon, 'The Woolwich Arsenal Mystery', *Pluck*, 9.242 (1908/9), 1-11

Anon, 'On Special Service', *Pluck*, 9.243 (1908/9), 16-27

**Michael Hearne and assistant Flip**

Anon, 'Michael Hearne on the Stage', *Boys' Herald*, 8.365 (16 July 1910) – 8.369 (13 August 1910)

Anon, 'The Railway Detective', *Boys' Herald*, 8.370 (20 August 1910) – 8.384 (26 November 1910)

**Singleton the Searcher and assistant Noddy**

Anon, 'The Quest of the Haunted Mine', *Chums*, 19.976 (24 May 1911), 677-9

**Martin Dale and assistant Jimmy Readman**

Maxwell Scott, 'A Perilous Quest', *Chums*, 19.977 (31 May 1911) – 19.991 (6 September 1911)

Maxwell Scott, 'The Secret of the Ring', *Chums*, 20.992 (13 September 1911) – 20.1008 (6 January 1912)

Maxwell Scot, 'The Double Six', *Chums*, 20.1030 (8 June 1912) – 20.1043 (7 September 1912)

Maxwell Scott, 'A Scrap of Paper', *Chums*, 24.1201 (18 September 1915) – 24.1217 (8 January 1916)

**Clive Derring and assistant Barry**

Anon, 'A Seaside Mystery', *Cheer Boys Cheer*, 1.10 (27 July 1912), 25-7

Anon, 'The Bungalow Mystery', *Cheer Boys Cheer*, 1.11 (3 August 1912), 24-6

**Lester Griffith and assistant Jack Marsh**

Anon, 'The Disappearing Man', *Cheer Boys Cheer*, 2.36 (25 January 1913), 11-14, 21

**Harvey Keene and assistant Oliver Finch**

W. Murray Graydon, "'The Circle of 13'", *Boys' Friend*, 14.719 (20 March 1915), 687-9 and 14.720 (27 March 1915), 699-700

W. Murray Graydon, "'The Circle of 13": The Case of Lord Scarning's Plate', *Boys' Friend*, 14.721 (3 April 1915), 709-11 and 14.722 (10 April 1915), 739-40

W. Murray Graydon, "'The Circle of 13": The Curzon Street Mystery', *Boys' Friend*, 14.723 (17 April 1915), 755-6 and 14.724 (24 April 1915), 769-70

W. Murray Graydon, "'The Circle of 13": The Case of the Dummy Infant', *Boys' Friend*, 14.725 (1 May 1915), 785-6 and 14.726 (8 May 1915), 801-2

W. Murray Graydon. "'The Circle of 13": The Rajah's Rubies', *Boys' Friend*, 14.727 (15 May 1915), 817-18 and 14.728 (22 May 1915), 827-8

W. Murray Graydon, "'The Circle of 13": The Case of the Forged Banknotes', *Boys' Friend*, 15.729 (29 May 1915), 1-3 and 15.739 (5 June 1915), 29-30

**Garnett Bell and assistants Kit Hampton and Barney Martin**

Maurice Everard, 'A Tale of Twelve Cities!', *Boys' Friend*, 15.755 (28 November 1915) – 15.763 (22 January 1916)

Maurice Everard, 'A Tale of Twelve Cities!', *Boys' Friend*, 15.764 (29 January 1916) – 15.775 (15 April 1916)

### **Payneton Steele and assistant 'Don't-Worry' Johnson**

Howel Evans, 'The Black Cross', *The Scout*, 11.427 (17 June 1916) – 11.437 (26 August 1916)

### **Jimmy Readman (assistant to Martin Dale)**

Maxwell Scott, 'On His Own: No. 1: A Clean Sweep', *Chums*, 25.1253 (16 September 1916), 6-8

Maxwell Scot, 'On His Own: No. 2: The Missing Doctor', *Chums*, 25.1254 (23 September 1916), 26-8

Maxwell Scott, 'On His Own: No. 3: The Stone Bottle', *Chums*, 25.1255 (30 September 1916), 33-5

Maxwell Scott, 'On His Own: No. 4: The Cryptogram', *Chums*, 25.1256 (7 October 1916), 54-6

Maxwell Scott, 'On His Own: No. 5: The Crooked Sixpence', *Chums*, 25.1257 (14 October 1916), 58-60

Maxwell Scott, 'On His Own: No. 6: The New Slavey', *Chums*, 25.1258 (21 October 1916), 78-80

### **Nick Carter and assistant Chick Carter**

Anon, 'Nick Carter and the Master Rogue', *Nick Carter Stories*, 1 (1918), 1-22

Anon, 'Nick Carter and the Vengeance Trail', *Nick Carter Stories*, 3 (1918), 1-32

Anon, 'Nick Carter: The Secret of the Cave', *Nick Carter Stories*, 4 (1918), 1-32

Anon, 'Nick Carter and the King of Crooks', *Nick Carter Stories*, 5 (1918), 1-32

Anon, 'Nick Carter: The Crimson Flash', *Nick Carter Stories*, 7 (1918), 1-32

Anon, 'Nick Carter: The Great Diamond Mystery', *Nick Carter Stories*, 9 (1918), 1-32

Anon, 'Nick Carter: The Seven Schemers', *Nick Carter Stories*, 11 (1918), 1-32

Anon, 'Nick Carter and The Spider's Web', *Nick Carter Stories*, 16 (1918), 1-32

Anon, 'Nick Carter and The Disappearing Fortune', *Nick Carter Stories*, 18 (1918), 1-32

- Anon, 'Nick Carter in Saved from Death', *Nick Carter Stories*, 19 (1918), 1-32
- Anon, 'Nick Carter and The House of Whispers', *Nick Carter Stories*, 20 (1918), 1-32
- Anon, 'Nick Carter and The Red League', *Nick Carter Stories*, 21 (1918), 1-32
- Anon, 'Nick Carter and The Stolen Bonds', *Nick Carter Stories*, 23 (1918), 1-32
- Anon, 'Nick Carter and The Phantom Highwayman', *Nick Carter Stories*, 27 (1918), 1-24
- Anon, 'Nick Carter and The Huge Hold-Up', *Nick Carter Stories*, 28 (1918), 1-24

### **Martin Fetter and assistant Frank Storm**

- Anon, 'The Man of Dread', *Nugget Library*, 22 (1920), 1-64

### **Gripton Court and assistant Joe Sparks**

- Anon, 'The Panic Plunderers', *Nugget Library*, 24 (1920), 1-54
- Anon, 'Black Magic', *Nugget Library*, 26 (1920), 1-64
- Anon, 'The Arch Rogue', *Nugget Library*, 98 (n.d.), 1-64

### **Dixon Hawke and assistant Tommy Burke**

- Anon, 'The Secret of the Jewel', *Dixon Hawke Library*, 24 (31 May 1920), 5-100
- Anon, 'The Man who Came Back', *Dixon Hawke Library*, 26 (28 June 1920), 1-100
- Anon, 'The Man Behind the Apaches', *Dixon Hawke Library*, 56 (22 August 1921) 5-100
- Anon, 'The Outcast of the Mounted', *Dixon Hawke Library*, 85 (2 August 1922), 5-100
- Anon, 'The Glendale Lodge Mystery', *Dixon Hawke Library*, 119 (21 January 1924), 5-100
- Anon, 'The Five Watch Chains', *Dixon Hawke Library*, 121 (18 February 1924), 5-100
- Anon, 'The Scented Cheroot', *Dixon Hawke Library*, 190 (1927), 5-100
- Anon, 'Convict '40s Kite', *Dixon Hawke Library*, 217 (24 March 1928), 5-132



Anon, 'Michael Marr's Queer Job', *Dixon Hawke Library*, 219 (21 April 1928), 5-132

Anon, 'The Chinese Archer', *Dixon Hawke Library*, 312 (14 November 1931), 5-132

Anon, 'The Hunchback of Berlin', *Dixon Hawke Library*, 328 (25 June 1932), 5-132

Anon, 'The Flash of Doom', *Dixon Hawke Library*, 489 (27 August 1938), 1-64

Anon, 'The Case of the Floating Eyes', *Dixon Hawke Library*, 489 (27 August 1938), 65-160

Anon, 'Smoke of a Thousand Crimes', *Dixon Hawke Library*, 496 (3 December 1938), 1-68

Anon, 'The Riddle of the Red-Hot Rivers', *Dixon Hawke Library*, 496 (3 December 1938), 69-160

### **Ferrers Locke and assistant Jack Drake**

Anon, 'Jack Drake, Detective', *Boys' Herald*, 89 (9 July 1921), 17-21

Anon, 'Drake Wins Through!', *Boys' Herald*, 90 (16 July 1921), 17-20, 23

Anon, 'The Medway Court Mystery!', *Boys' Herald*, 91 (23 July 1921), 16-20

Anon, 'The Detective's Trap!', *Boys' Herald*, 92 (30 July 1921), 16-20

Owen Conquest, 'The Hidden Message!', *Boys' Herald*, 93 (6 August 1921), 16-21

Owen Conquest, 'The Grip of the Law!', *Boys' Herald*, 94 (13 August 1921), 16-20, 23

Owen Conquest, 'Five Hundred Pounds Reward!', *Boys' Herald*, 95 (20 August 1921), 15-19

Owen Conquest, 'The Case of the Nigerian Gold Mine!', *Boys' Herald*, 96 (27 August 1921), 15-19, 23

Owen Conquest, 'The Diamond Necklace!', *Boys' Herald*, 97 (3 September 1921), 15-19

Owen Conquest, 'The Phantom Fortune!', *Boys' Herald*, 98 (10 September 1921), 15-19

Owen Conquest, 'The Stolen Inheritance', *Boys' Herald*, 99 (17 September 1921), 13-18

Owen Conquest, 'The Missing Treaty!', *Boys' Herald*, 100 (24 September 1921), 13-17

Owen Conquest, 'By A Hidden Hand!', *Boys' Herald*, 101 (1 October 1921), 13-17

Owen Conquest, 'Ferrers Locke to the Rescue!', *Boys' Herald*, 112 (17 December 1921), 13-16

Owen Conquest, 'After Twenty Years', *Boys' Herald*, 115 (7 January 1922), 13-16

### **Curtiss Carr and assistant Hunky Dorey**

Geoffrey Rayle, 'The Flying Detective: The Case of the Armour-Plating', *Champion*, 1.2 (4 February 1922), 34-6

Geoffrey Rayle, 'The Ransom of El Toro!', *Champion*, 1.3 (11 February 1922), 78-80

Geoffrey Rayle, 'The Flash of Flame!', *Champion*, 1.4 (18 February 1922), 106-8

Geoffrey Rayle, 'The Mystery at Rugged Gap!', *Champion*, 1.5 (25 February 1922), 131-3, 140

Geoffrey Rayle, 'Poisoned Waters!', *Champion*, 1.6 (4 March 1922), 146-8, 168

Geoffrey Rayle, 'Prey of the Monkey-Men!', *Champion*, 1.7 (11 March 1922), 190-2

Geoffrey Rayle, 'The Caste-Mark!', *Champion*, 1.8 (18 March 1922), 202-4, 224

Geoffrey Rayle, 'Curtis Carr's Conquest!; Or, The Lama of Ki-Chu', *Champion*, 5.106 (2 February 1924), 33-8

### **Falcon Swift and assistant Chick Conway**

Anon, 'The Exploits of Falcon Swift', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.1 (27 February 1922), 25-33, 35

Anon, 'Iron Island', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.3 (13 March 1922), 3-8, 10-11

Anon, 'The Case of Zavarre, The Fencer', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.4 (20 March 1922), 3-10

Anon, 'The Secret of the Boat Race', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.6 (3 April 1922), 3-11

Anon, 'Swift, of the "Flying O" Ranch', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.7 (8 April 1922), 7-12, 34

Anon, 'On the Trail of Montana', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.8 (15 April 1922), 11-17

Anon, 'King of the Track', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.10 (29 April 1922), 3-10, 12

Anon, 'The Great Cup Final Mystery', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.11 (6 May 1922), 3-8

Anon, 'The Sporting Regiment', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.12 (13 May 1922), 3-12

Anon, 'The Missing Dragoon', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.13 (20 May 1922), 23-9

Anon, 'The Green House-Boat', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.14 (27 May 1922), 21-9

Anon, 'The Circus Mystery', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.15 (3 June 1922), 3-10

Anon, 'The Derby Sensation', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.16 (10 June 1922), 3-10

Anon, 'The Crook of the Team', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.17 (17 June 1922), 3-10

Anon, 'The Channel Swimmer', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.18 (24 June 1922), 11-16

Anon, 'The Nine-Fingered Dwarf', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.19 (1 July 1922), 11-16

Anon, 'The Eye of the Idol', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.20 (8 July 1922), 3-10

Anon, 'In the Hands of the Savages', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.21 (15 July 1922), 3-9

Anon, 'Chick Conway's Ordeal', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.22 (22 July 1922), 9-14, 33

Anon, 'The Danger of the Deep', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.23 (29 July 1922), 3-8, 33

Anon, 'The Great Solent Robbery', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.24 (5 August 1922), 3-10

Anon, 'Falcon Swift's Revenge', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.25 (12 August 1922), 3-8, 33

Anon, 'The Marvel Monkey', *Boys' Magazine*, 1.26 (19 August 1922), 3-9

Anon, 'The Racing Detective', *Boys' Magazine*, 2.27 (26 August 1922), 17-23

Anon, 'The Mystery Sportsman', *Boys' Magazine*, 2.28 (2 September 1922), 3-9

Anon, 'The Kidnapped International', *Boys' Magazine*, 2.29 (9 September 1922), 3-10

Anon, 'On the Track of Terrorists', *Boys' Magazine*, 2.39 (18 November 1922), 3-10

Anon, 'The Secret of the Idol', *Boys' Magazine*, 2.42 (9 December 1922), 9-14, 16

Anon, 'At the Mercy of Apaches', *Boys' Magazine*, 2.44 (23 December 1922), 11-16, 28, 35

Anon, 'Warriors on the Silent Strife', *Boys' Magazine*, 4.88 (27 October 1923), 11-21

Anon, 'The Brand of Treason', *Boys' Magazine*, 4.89 (3 November 1923), 10-22

Anon, "'Slim' Danval's Last Coup", *Boys' Magazine*, 4.90 (10 November 1923), 11-20, 32-4

- Anon, 'The League of "Red Death"', *Boys' Magazine*, 4.91 (17 November 1923), 11-20, 35
- Anon, 'The Clash of Giants', *Boys' Magazine*, 4.92 (24 November 1923), 13-22, 32
- Anon, 'The Spark of Doom', *Boys' Magazine*, 4.93 (1 December 1923), 3-12, 22, 34
- Anon, 'The Haunted Inheritance', *Boys' Magazine*, 4.94 (8 December 1923), 3-12, 32, 34
- Anon, 'Outlaws of the Open Road', *Boys' Magazine*, 4.95 (15 December 1923), 11-20, 22, 34
- Anon, 'The Quest of "the Squid"', *Boys' Magazine*, 4.103 (9 February 1924), 11-22
- Anon, 'The Secret Sea-Plane', *Boys' Magazine*, 5.106 (1 March 1924), 3-10, 34
- Anon, 'The Stolen Heritage', *Boys' Magazine*, 5.129 (9 August 1924), 3-8, 22-8
- Anon, 'The Case of the Kidnapped Wrestler', *Boys' Magazine*, 17.446 (7 February 1931), 3-10
- Anon, 'The Cup Final Crook – Smashed', *Boys' Magazine*, 18.478 (2 May 1931), 3-10, 12
- Anon, 'The Secret of the Abbot's Skull', *Boys' Magazine*, 18.479 (9 May 1931), 3-10, 12 and 18.480 (16 May 1931), 14-16
- Anon, 'Falcon Swift at St Giddy's', *Boys' Magazine*, 18.481 (23 May 1931), 3-10, 12, 36
- Anon, 'The Monocled Manhunter in Mysterious Africa', *Boys' Magazine*, 18.487 (4 July 1931), 3-10
- Anon, 'Falcon Swift – Dead or Alive', *Boys' Magazine*, 18.492 (8 August 1931), 18-24
- Anon, 'The Crook with the Wireless Brain', *Boys' Magazine*, 19.495 (29 August 1931), 3-11

### **Panther Grayle and assistant Dusty**

- Howard Steele, 'The Yellow Finger', *Champion*, 1.22 (24 June 1922), 599-606, 614-15
- Howard Steele, 'The Vanishing Bandits!', *Champion*, 2.37 (7 October 1922), 302-4
- Howard Steele, 'The Sphere of Death', *Champion*, 2.38 (14 October 1922), 317-23

Howard Steele, 'The Affair of the Sporting Heavyweights!', *Champion*, 2.40 (28 October 1922), 359-61

Howard Steele, 'The Guild of the Silver Snake', *Champion*, 2.42 (11 November 1922), 413-20

Howard Steele, 'Scoundrels Ltd!', *Champion*, 2.46 (9 December 1922) – 3.54 (3 February 1923)

Howard Steele, 'The Riddle of the Vanished Fortune!', *Champion*, 4.80 (4 August 1923), 33-9

Howard Steele, 'The Riddle of Dead Man's Drive!', *Champion*, 5.125 (14 June 1924), 489-94

Howard Steele, 'Dusty's First Case!', *Champion*, 5.129 (12 July 1924), 585-91

### **Q and assistant Hairpin**

Earle Danesford, 'Zara of the Earth Men: The Secret of the Extinct Volcano', *Champion*, 1.23 (1 July 1922), 619-21

Earle Danesford, 'The Cage of Death', *Champion*, 1.24 (8 July 1922), 651-3

Earle Danesford, 'The Riddle of the Blue Pool', *Champion*, 1.25 (15 July 1922), 683-90

Earle Danesford, 'Desert Echoes!', *Champion*, 1.26 (22 July 1922), 703-5

Earle Danesford, 'In Terror's Realm', *Champion*, 2.28 (5 August 1922), 31-3

Earle Danesford, 'The Lure of the Amber Skull', *Champion*, 2.30 (19 August 1922), 91-3

Earle Danesford, 'Lord of the Earth-Men!', *Champion*, 2.32 (2 September 1922), 147-50, 168

Earle Danesford, 'The Pit of Monsters', *Champion*, 2.34 (16 September 1922), 215-17, 220

### **Kingston Carew and assistant "Chum" Clinker**

George Mansfield, 'The Crimson Triangle', *Champion*, 3.66 (28 April 1923), 375-82, 390

George Mansfield, 'The Invisible Clue!', *Champion*, 3.76 (7 July 1923), 637-42

### **Frank Darrell and assistant Roy Martin**

Sidney Strand, 'The Man with Many Faces: The Case of the Stolen Farthings!', *The Scout*, 19.799 (4 August 1923), 5-7

Sidney Strand, 'The Case of the Kostick Pearls', *The Scout*, 19.801 (18 August 1923), 50-3

Sidney Strand, 'The Bond Street Jewel Robbery', *The Scout*, 19.803 (1 September 1923), 90-2

Sidney Strand, 'The Deserted Taxi Mystery', *The Scout*, 19.805 (15 September 1923), 130-3

Sidney Strand, 'The Clue of the Knotted Cord', *The Scout*, 19.807 (29 September 1923), 170-3

Sidney Strand, 'The Man with the Lost Memory', *The Scout*, 19.809 (13 October 1923), 210-13

Sidney Strand, 'The Clue of the Crooked Finger', *The Scout*, 19.811 (27 October 1923), 246-8

Sidney Strand, 'The Vengeance of the Red Ace', *The Scout*, 19.813 (10 November 1923), 286-9

Sidney Strand, 'The Mystery of the Stolen Barges', *The Scout*, 19.815 (24 November 1923), 328-31

Sidney Strand, 'The Phantom Raider', *The Scout*, 19.817 (8 December 1923), 382, 385-6

Sidney Strand, 'Solved in Sixty Minutes', *The Scout*, 19.819 (22 December 1923), 433-5

Sidney Strand, 'The Case of the Vanished Prince!', *The Scout*, 19.849 (19 July 1924), 1025-7

### **Harry Baynton and assistant Sidney Pratt**

V. R. Nendick, 'The King Street Mystery', *The Scout*, 19.800 (11 August 1923), 27-9

### **Kit Crane (assistant to Rex Eagle)**

Lewis Essex, 'The Amazing Mission of Kit Crane, Boy Detective', *Champion*, 6.148 (22 November 1924) – 6.156 (17 January 1925)

Lewis Essex, 'Kit Crane's Aerial Coup!', *Champion*, 8.197 (31 October 1925), 403-11

**'Boatboy' Jim (assistant to Rodney Manderson)**

Cecil Fanshaw, 'Boatboy Jim, The Thames-Side 'Tec', *Champion*, 8.192 (26 September 1925), 263-71

Cecil Fanshaw, 'The Sign of the Red Arrow', *Champion*, 8.196 (24 October 1925), 375-83

Cecil Fanshaw, 'The Mystery of the Christmas Puddings', *Champion*, 8.205 (26 December 1925), 619-22

Cecil Fanshaw, 'The Fighting Shadow or, Detective Jim's Biggest Case', *Champion*, 8.206 (2 January 1926) – 9.215 (6 March 1926)

Cecil Fanshaw, 'The Mystery of the Barber's Chair!', *Champion*, 9.220 (10 April 1926), 266-72

**Norton Keen and assistant Billy Bent**

Duncan Sterne, 'The Clue of the Seven-Clawed Dragon!', *Champion*, 9.229 (19 June 1926) – 10.242 (18 September 1926)

**Chick Carew (assistant to Derek Fox)**

John Ascott, 'The Call-Boy Clue Hunter', *Champion*, 10.243 (25 September 1926) – 10.253 (4 December 1926)

**Dixon Brett and assistant Pat Malone**

Anthony Thomas, 'The Black Eagle Mystery', *Dixon Brett Detective Library*, 1 (October 1926), 1-64

Anthony Thomas, 'Black Eagle's Return', *Dixon Brett Detective Library*, 3 (November 1926), 1-64

Anthony Thomas, 'Black Eagle's Treasure Trail', *Dixon Brett Detective Library*, 5 (November 1926), 1-64

Anthony Thomas, 'Black Eagle's Millions', *Dixon Brett Detective Library*, 7 (January 1927), 1-64

Richard Worth, 'The Murder in the Fog', *Dixon Brett Detective Library*, 8 (January 1927), 1-64

Anon, 'The Thameside Pirate', *Dixon Brett Detective Library*, 20 (July 1927), 1-64

Anon, 'The Crime King's Challenge', *Dixon Brett Detective Library*, 21 (August 1927), 1-64

Anon, 'The Case of a Hundred Clues', *Dixon Brett Detective Library*, 22 (August 1927), 1-64

Anon, 'The Secret of the Lamp', *Dixon Brett Detective Library*, 23 (September 1927), 1-64

Anon, 'The Club of Skulls: A Story of Dixon Brett, Detective', *Aldine Adventure Library*, 9 (March 1928), 1-64

Anon, 'The Tiger of Paris: A Story of Dixon Brett, Detective', *Aldine Adventure Library*, 14 (June 1928), 1-64

Anon, 'The Phantom Murderer: A Story of Dixon Brett, Detective', *Aldine Adventure Library*, 20 (December 1928), 1-64

### **Daniel Sage and assistant Vic Osborne**

Donald Dane, 'The Mystery of the Tattooed 'Tec!', *Champion*, 11.267 (12 March 1927) – 11.278 (28 May 1927)

### **Tim Brown (assistant to Hilton Burke)**

John W. Wheway, 'The Circle of 6', *Champion*, 11.279 (4 June 1927) – 12.287 (30 July 1927)

### **Derek Fox and assistant Chick Carew**

John Ascott, 'The "Wanted" Detective', *Champion*, 12.228 (6 August 1927) – 12.299 (22 October 1927)

### **Danny Green (assistant to Raymond Dexter)**

Donald Dane, 'The Case of the Ten Clues!', *Champion*, 12.300 (29 October 1927) – 12.309 (31 December 1927)



**Slick Chester (assistant to Colwyn Dane)**

Rupert Hall, 'Detective Slick's First Scoop!', *Champion*, 12.310 (7 January 1928), 565-8

Rupert Hall, 'The Case of the Tiger's Eye!', *Champion*, 12.311 (14 January 1928), 579-83

Rupert Hall, 'The Clue of the Invisible Code!', *Champion*, 12.312 (21 January 1928), 608-12

Rupert Hall, 'Detective Slick "Cages" the Hawk!', *Champion*, 13.313 (28 January 1928), 3-6

Rupert Hall, 'The Warning of the Two Spades!', *Champion*, 13.314 (4 February 1928), 33-6

Rupert Hall, 'Detective Slick Turns Shoe-Black!', *Champion*, 13.315 (11 February 1928), 53-6

Rupert Hall, 'King O' the Cat Burglars!', *Champion*, 13.316 (18 February 1928), 74-7

Rupert Hall, 'Detective Slick's Monkey Puzzle!', *Champion*, 13.317 (25 February 1928), 109-12

Rupert Hall, 'Second Best to Detective Slick!', *Champion*, 13.320 (17 March 1928), 177-80

Rupert Hall, 'Detective Slick Fools – The April Fool Cracksman!', *Champion*, 13.323 (7 April 1928), 249-52

Rupert Hall, 'The Threat of the Double 4!', *Champion*, 13.334 (23 June 1928), 511-14

Rupert Hall, 'The Clue of the Broken Pencil-Point!', *Champion*, 13.335 (30 June 1928), 537-40

Rupert Hall, 'Detective Slick's Chinese Puzzle!', *Champion*, 13.337 (14 July 1928), 578-80

Rupert Hall, 'Detective Slick Draws the Wasp's Sting!', *Champion*, 14.342 (18 August 1928), 93-6

Rupert Hall, 'The Clue of the Green Hair!', *Champion*, 14.346 (15 September 1928), 179-82

Rupert Hall, 'Wanted – Detective Slick!', *Champion*, 14.349 (6 October 1928), 261-4

Rupert Hall, 'The Case of the Spying Parrot!', *Champion*, 14.354 (10 November 1928), 373-6

- Rupert Hall, 'The Case of the Vanished Circus Clowns!', *Champion*, 14.355 (17 November 1928), 394-8
- Rupert Hall, 'The Clue of the Broken Button!', *Champion*, 14.357 (1 December 1928), 443-7
- Rupert Hall, 'The Clue of the Red Moth!', *Champion*, 14.358 (8 December 1928), 463-6
- Rupert Hall, 'The Case of the Fake Santa Claus!', *Champion*, 14.360 (22 December 1928), 515-18
- Rupert Hall, 'The Disguises that Couldn't Fool Slick!', *Champion*, 14.361 (29 December 1928), 545-8
- Rupert Hall, 'Detective Slick – Sweep's Assistant', *Champion*, 14.362 (5 January 1929), 559-61
- Rupert Hall, 'The Case of the Kidnapped Inventor!', *Champion*, 15.365 (26 January 1929), 17-20
- Rupert Hall, 'The Circle of 7', *Champion*, 15.366 (2 February 1929), 31-5
- Rupert Hall, 'The Circle of Seven's Mystery Recruit!', *Champion*, 15.367 (9 February 1929), 55-8
- Rupert Hall, 'The Case of the Bogus 'Phone Calls', *Champion*, 15.368 (16 February 1929), 85-88
- Rupert Hall, 'The Case of the Stolen Railway Coach!', *Champion*, 15.369 (23 February 1929), 109-12
- Rupert Hall, 'The Case of the Sunken Treasure Ship!', *Champion*, 15.370 (2 March 1929), 137-40
- Rupert Hall, 'Slick Accepts the Challenge!' *Champion*, 15.371 (9 March 1929), 146-50
- Rupert Hall, 'Detective Slick Gets His Man!', *Champion*, 15.372 (16 March 1929), 181-4

**Billy Bent (assistant to Norton Keen)**

- Duncan Stern, 'The Clue of the Red Viper!', *Champion*, 13.324 (14 April 1928) – 13.333 (16 June 1928)

### **Appendix 3: Series List of Juvenile Detective Fiction**

Below is a chronological list of series, and the titles within them, that are discussed in the conclusion of this thesis. As the Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys series contain hundreds of titles, I have listed the main sub-series rather than individual titles within the series. The DC comics and comic series in which Batman and Robin appear are too numerous to list here.

#### **The Hardy Boys (1927-present)**

The Hardy Boys original series (Grosset & Dunlap, 1927-79, 58 titles)

The Hardy Boys Mysteries (Simon & Schuster, 1979-2005, 132 titles)

The Hardy Boys Casefiles (Simon & Schuster, 1987-98, 127 titles)

The Hardy Boys are: The Clues Brothers (Simon & Schuster, 1997-2000, 17 titles)

The Hardy Boys: Undercover Brothers graphic novels (Papercutz, 2005-10, 20 titles)

The Hardy Boys: Undercover Brothers (Simon & Schuster, 2005-12, 39 titles)

The Hardy Boys Secret Files (Simon & Schuster, 2010-present)

The Hardy Boys Adventures (Simon & Schuster, 2013-present)

#### **Nancy Drew (1930-present)**

Nancy Drew Mystery Stories original series (Grosset & Dunlap, 1930-79, 56 titles)

Nancy Drew Mystery Stories (Simon and Schuster, 1979-2003, 119 titles)

Nancy Drew Files (Simon & Schuster, 1986-97, 124 titles)

Nancy Drew Notebooks (Simon & Schuster, 1994-2005, 69 titles)

Nancy Drew on Campus (Simon & Schuster, 1995-8, 25 titles)

Nancy Drew, Girl Detective (Simon & Schuster, 2004-12, 27 titles)

Nancy Drew, Girl Detective graphic novels (Papercutz, 2005-10, 21 titles)

Nancy Drew Diaries (Simon & Schuster, 2013-present)

### **The Famous Five (1942-63)**

- Enid Blyton, *Five on a Treasure Island* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1942)
- Enid Blyton, *Five Go Adventuring Again* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1943)
- Enid Blyton, *Five Run Away Together* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1944)
- Enid Blyton, *Five Go to Smuggler's Top* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1945)
- Enid Blyton, *Five Go Off in a Caravan* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1946)
- Enid Blyton, *Five on Kirrin Island Again* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947)
- Enid Blyton, *Five Go Off to Camp* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1948)
- Enid Blyton, *Five Get into Trouble* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949)
- Enid Blyton, *Five Fall into Adventure* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1950)
- Enid Blyton, *Five on a Hike Together* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951)
- Enid Blyton, *Five Have a Wonderful Time* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1952)
- Enid Blyton, *Five Go Down to the Sea* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953)
- Enid Blyton, *Five Go to Mystery Moor* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1954)
- Enid Blyton, *Five Have Plenty of Fun* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1955)
- Enid Blyton, *Five on a Secret Trail* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1956)
- Enid Blyton, *Five Go to Billycock Hill* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1957)
- Enid Blyton, *Five Get into a Fix* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1958)
- Enid Blyton, *Five on Finniston Farm* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960)
- Enid Blyton, *Five Go to Demon's Rocks* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1961)
- Enid Blyton, *Five Have a Mystery to Solve* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1962)
- Enid Blyton, *Five Are Together Again* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963)

### **The Five Find-Outers (1943-61)**

- Enid Blyton, *The Mystery of the Burnt Cottage* (London: Methuen, 1943)

Enid Blyton, *The Mystery of the Disappearing Cat* (London: Methuen, 1944)

Enid Blyton, *The Mystery of the Secret Room* (London: Methuen, 1945)

Enid Blyton, *The Mystery of the Spiteful Letters* (London: Methuen, 1946)

Enid Blyton, *The Mystery of the Missing Necklace* (London: Methuen, 1947)

Enid Blyton, *The Mystery of the Hidden House* (London: Methuen, 1948)

Enid Blyton, *The Mystery of the Pantomime Cat* (London: Methuen, 1949)

Enid Blyton, *The Mystery of the Invisible Thief* (London: Methuen, 1950)

Enid Blyton, *The Mystery of the Vanished Prince* (London: Methuen, 1951)

Enid Blyton, *The Mystery of the Strange Bundle* (London: Methuen, 1952)

Enid Blyton, *The Mystery of Holly Lane* (London: Methuen, 1953)

Enid Blyton, *The Mystery of Tally-Ho Cottage* (London: Methuen, 1954)

Enid Blyton, *The Mystery of the Missing Man* (London: Methuen, 1956)

Enid Blyton, *The Mystery of the Strange Messages* (London: Methuen, 1957)

Enid Blyton, *The Mystery of Banshee Towers* (London: Methuen, 1961)

### **The Barney Mysteries (1949-59)**

Enid Blyton *The Rockingdown Mystery* (London and Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1949)

Enid Blyton, *The Rilloby Fair Mystery* (London and Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1950)

Enid Blyton, *The Ring O'Bells Mystery* (London and Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1951)

Enid Blyton, *The Rubadub Mystery* (London and Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1951)

Enid Blyton, *The Rat-a-Tat Mystery* (London and Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1952)

Enid Blyton, *The Ragamuffin Mystery* (London and Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1959)

### **The Secret Seven (1949-63)**

Enid Blyton, *The Secret Seven* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949)

Enid Blyton, *Secret Seven Adventure* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1950)

Enid Blyton, *Well Done Secret Seven* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951)

Enid Blyton, *Secret Seven on the Trail* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1952)

Enid Blyton, *Go Ahead Secret Seven* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953)

Enid Blyton, *Good Work Secret Seven* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1954)

Enid Blyton, *Secret Seven Win Through* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1955)

Enid Blyton, *Three Cheers Secret Seven* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1956)

Enid Blyton, *Secret Seven Mystery* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1957)

Enid Blyton, *Puzzle for the Secret Seven* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1958)

Enid Blyton, *Secret Seven Fireworks* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1959)

Enid Blyton, *Good Old Secret Seven* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960)

Enid Blyton, *Shock for the Secret Seven* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1961)

Enid Blyton, *Look Out Secret Seven* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1962)

Enid Blyton, *Fun for the Secret Seven* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963)

### **The Diamond Brothers (1986-2007)**

Anthony Horowitz, *The Falcon's Malteser* (London: Walker Books, 1986)

Anthony Horowitz, *Public Enemy Number 2* (London: Walker Books, 1987)

Anthony Horowitz, *South by South East* (London: Walker Books, 1991)

Anthony Horowitz, *The Three of Diamonds* (London: Walker Books, 2004)

Anthony Horowitz, *The Greek Who Stole Christmas* (London: Walker Books, 2007)

**The Beat (1995-2000)**

David Belbin, *Missing Person* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1995)

David Belbin, *Black and Blue* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1995)

David Belbin, *Smokescreen* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1996)

David Belbin, *Asking for It* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1996)

David Belbin, *Dead White Male* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1996)

David Belbin, *Losers* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1997)

David Belbin, *Sudden Death* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1997)

David Belbin, *Night Shift* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1998)

David Belbin, *Victims* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1998)

David Belbin, *Suspects* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1999)

David Belbin, *Fallen Angel* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 2000)

**The East End Murders (1995-2000)**

Anne Cassidy, *A Family Affair* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1995)

Anne Cassidy, *End of the Line* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1996)

Anne Cassidy, *No Through Road* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1996)

Anne Cassidy, *Accidental Death* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1996)

Anne Cassidy, *Brotherly Love* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1997)

Anne Cassidy, *Death By Drowning* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1999)

Anne Cassidy, *Killing Time* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1999)

Anne Cassidy, *Dead Quiet* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 2000)

**Lawless & Tilley (1997-9)**

Malcolm Rose, *The Secrets of the Dead* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1997)

Malcolm Rose, *Deep Waters* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1997)

Malcolm Rose, *Magic Eye* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1998)

Malcolm Rose, *Still Life* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1998)

Malcolm Rose, *Fire and Water* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1998)

Malcolm Rose, *Lethal Harvest* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1999)

Malcolm Rose, *Flying Blind* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1999)

### **The Roman Mysteries (2001-10)**

Caroline Lawrence, *The Thieves of Ostia* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2001)

Caroline Lawrence, *The Secrets of Vesuvius* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2001)

Caroline Lawrence, *The Pirates of Pompeii* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2001)

Caroline Lawrence, *The Assassins of Rome* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2002)

Caroline Lawrence, *The Dolphins of Laurentum* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2003)

Caroline Lawrence, *The Twelve Tasks of Flavia Gemina* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2003)

Caroline Lawrence, *The Enemies of Jupiter* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2003)

Caroline Lawrence, *The Gladiators from Capua* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2004)

Caroline Lawrence, *The Colossus of Rhodes* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2005)

Caroline Lawrence, *The Fugitive from Corinth* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2005)

Caroline Lawrence, *The Sirens of Surrentum* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2006)

Caroline Lawrence, *The Charioteer of Delphi* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2006)

Caroline Lawrence, *The Slave-Girl from Jerusalem* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2007)

Caroline Lawrence, *The Code of Romulus* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2007)

Caroline Lawrence, *Trimalchio's Feast and Other Mini-Mysteries* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2007)

Caroline Lawrence, *The Beggar of Volubilis* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2008)



Caroline Lawrence, *The Scribes from Alexandria* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2008)

Caroline Lawrence, *The Prophet from Ephesus* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2009)

Caroline Lawrence, *The Man from Pomegranate Street* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2010)

Caroline Lawrence, *The Legionary from Londinium and Other Mini-Mysteries* (London: Orion Children's Books, 2010)

### **The Invisible Detective (2003-5)**

Justin Richards, *The Paranormal Puppet Show* (London: Simon & Schuster UK, 2003)

Justin Richards, *Shadow Beast* (London: Simon & Schuster UK, 2003)

Justin Richards, *Ghost Soldiers* (London: Simon & Schuster UK, 2003)

Justin Richards, *Killing Time* (London: Simon & Schuster UK, 2003)

Justin Richards, *Faces of Evil* (London: Simon & Schuster UK, 2004)

Justin Richards, *Web of Anubis* (London: Simon & Schuster UK, 2004)

Justin Richards, *Stage Fright* (London: Simon & Schuster UK, 2005)

Justin Richards, *Legion of the Dead* (London: Simon & Schuster UK, 2005)

### **The Lady Grace Mysteries (2004-10)**

Grace Cavendish, *Assassin* (London: Doubleday, 2004)

Grace Cavendish, *Betrayal* (London: Doubleday, 2004)

Grace Cavendish, *Conspiracy* (London: Doubleday, 2004)

Grace Cavendish, *Deception* (London: Doubleday, 2004)

Grace Cavendish, *Exile* (London: Doubleday, 2005)

Grace Cavendish, *Feud* (London: Doubleday, 2005)

Grace Cavendish, *Gold!* (London: Doubleday, 2006)

Grace Cavendish, *Haunted* (London: Doubleday, 2006)

Grace Cavendish, *Intrigue* (London: Red Fox, 2008)

Grace Cavendish, *Jinx* (London: Red Fox, 2008)

Grace Cavendish, *Keys* (London: Red Fox, 2009)

Grace Cavendish, *Loot* (London: Red Fox, 2010)

### **Traces (2005-8)**

Malcolm Rose, *Framed!* (London: Kingfisher, 2005)

Malcolm Rose, *Lost Bullet* (London: Kingfisher, 2005)

Malcolm Rose, *Roll Call* (London: Kingfisher, 2005)

Malcolm Rose, *Double Check* (London: Kingfisher, 2006)

Malcolm Rose, *Final Lap* (London: Kingfisher, 2007)

Malcolm Rose, *Blood Brother* (London: Kingfisher, 2008)

### **The Baker Street Boys (2005-9)**

Anthony Read, *The Case of the Disappearing Detective* (London: Walker Books, 2005)

Anthony Read, *The Case of the Captive Clairvoyant* (London: Walker Books, 2006)

Anthony Read, *The Case of the Ranjipur Ruby* (London: Walker Books, 2006)

Anthony Read, *The Case of the Limehouse Laundry* (London: Walker Books, 2007)

Anthony Read, *The Case of the Stolen Sparklers* (London: Walker Books, 2008)

Anthony Read, *The Case of the Haunted Horrors* (London: Walker Books, 2009)

### **Elizabethan Mysteries (2007-9)**

John Pilkington, *Rogue's Gold* (London: Usborne, 2007)

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- Pulp and Adventure Heroes of the Pre-War Years* <<http://www.oocities.org/jjnevins/pulpsh.html>>
- Yesterday's Papers* <<http://john-adcock.blogspot.co.uk>>



## **Email Correspondence**

Bailey, Michael, 'Nelson Lee and Nipper', email correspondence [2 March 2014]

## **Film and Television**

*Half Moon Investigations*, dir. by Marcus D. F. White and Symon Hynd. Rory Elick, Seb Charles, Olivia Grant, Nicola Duffell (CBBC, 2009)

*Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, dir. by Steven Spielberg. Harrison Ford, Kate Capshaw, Ke Huy Quan (Lucasfilm, 1984)

*The Roman Mysteries*, dir. by Paul Marcus, Jill Robertson and Marcus D. F. White. Francesca Isherwood, Eli Machover, Rebekah Brookes-Murrell, Harry Stott (CBBC, 2007-8)