

Comics and Graphic Novels

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Mark Nixon

Comics – the telling of stories by means of a sequence of pictures and, usually, words – were born in Britain in the late nineteenth century, with *Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday* (Gilbert Dalziel, 1884) and subsequent imitators. These publications were a few pages long, unbound, and cheap – and intended for working-class adult readers. During the twentieth century, bound books of picture stories developed in Europe and North America, and by the end of the century had become a significant factor in British publishing and popular culture. However, British comics scholarship has been slow to develop, at least relative to continental European and North American comics scholarship, although specialist magazines such as *The Comics Journal*, *Comics International* and *Book & Magazine Collector* have featured articles on British comics, their publishers and creators. Towards the end of the twentieth century, the work of Martin Barker and Roger Sabin began to shed new light on certain aspects of the history of British comics, a baton now being taken up by a few scholars of British popular culture¹, alongside a growing popular literature on British comics².



¹ For a recent overview, see Chapman, James *British comics: a cultural history* (London, 2011).

² Perhaps the best example of this is Gravett, Paul and Stanbury, Peter *Great British comics* (London, 2006).

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Harmsworth dominated the comics market they had entered in 1890 with *Comic Cuts* and *Illustrated Chips*. Their comics provided the template for the industry, of eight-page, tabloid-sized publications with a mixture of one-panel cartoons, picture strips and text stories, selling at 1/2d. In 1898 they had introduced strips aimed at children in *Funny Wonder*, and in 1904 launched *Puck* with a children's pull-out section, *Puck Junior*. *Playbox* (1905) cemented the move towards a children's comic market, and by the First World War the adult comics market had all but disappeared with Harmsworth's Associated Press (AP) offering picture-papers for pre-teens and story-papers for those aged ten and over. In the 1920s, DC Thomson (DCT) entered the story-paper market with *Adventure* (1921), and then challenged AP's near-monopoly in picture-papers with *Dandy* (1937) and *Beano* (1938). These two titles created a new template in both content and style, with mischievous characters in irreverent stories, the stories told by means of speech bubbles rather than captions (a style borrowed from the newspaper strips which also provided much of the creative talent for the new comics), as seen in AP's direct challenge to DCT's funnies, *Knockout* (1939). During the Second World War, paper rationing caused those titles which did survive to cut their number of pages, but the period also saw the appearance of new entrepreneurs such as Gerald Swan, whose comics including *Thrill Comics* and *Topical Funnies* (both 1940) were based on US formats which had begun to be imported into Britain. Whereas British comics were anthology comics, presenting a number of different, continuing stories, American comics relied on a standalone main story and one or two supporting short stories. Although usually more expensive than anthology comics, US-modelled comics did not require a commitment to ongoing purchase and tended to sell by way of

cheap book stalls rather than newsagents. In the late 1940s, new titles were introduced by independents, such as JB Allen's *Comet* (1946) and *Sun* (1947), and more US stories appeared either by import or reprint, such as Arnold Book Company's (ABC) reprints of EC's *Tales of the Crypt* and *The Haunt of Fear* in 1s. editions, alongside original British comics in the mould of US comics, such as Boardman's *Buffalo Bill*, *Swift Morgan* and *Roy Carson* (all 1948). The new independents often offered 'on delivery' rather than 'on publication' payment to writers and artists, attracting many creators. Most of these independent publications, however, appeared in only small print runs and did not threaten the market dominance of AP and DCT; indeed, in 1949 AP bought JB Allen's titles, relaunching both *Comet* and *Sun* under their own imprint.

In 1950, Revd Marcus Morris convinced Hulton Press, publishers of *Picture Post*, to launch *Eagle*, a mixture of adventure, true-life stories and features, and to do so on high-quality, glossy paper (rather than rough pulp) at 3d. (AP's and DCT's anthology comics typically sold for 2d.). Backed by a major marketing campaign, *Eagle* was an immediate success, with sales around 1 million. As well as creating a fashion for science fiction in response to its cover story 'Dan Dare', culminating in the first solely-SF British comic *Rocket* (Express Newspapers, 1956), the success of *Eagle* inaugurated the period of the dominance of adventure comics in Britain. AP's response to *Eagle* included the war- and adventure-dominated *Lion* (1952) and the sports-dominated *Tiger* (1954), while DCT at first sought to hold on to the story-paper format for its adventure titles until relaunching *Adventure* in 1958 as a picture-paper. In tandem with the hugely-successful relaunch in 1950 by AP of girls' story-paper *The Schoolfriend* as a picture-paper, these titles also

created a gendered comics market; AP's and DCT's story-papers had been aimed at either boys or girls, but their picture-papers had always been seen as being for both. In 1951, Hulton launched a sister paper for *Eagle* aimed at girls, called simply *Girl*, again offering better paper and print quality at a higher price (4 1/2d. compared to *Schoolfriend*'s 3d.). The girls' comic market in the early 1950s is one of the great success stories of British comics; *Schoolfriend* out-sold *Eagle*, and a 1953 study demonstrated that 94% of girls aged 14-15 read one or more of the three leading titles³. As a result, the 1950s saw many new girls' titles, most notably in the new romance comics such as AP's *Marilyn* (1955), *Valentine* (1957), Pearson's *Mirabelle* (1956) and DCT's *Romeo* (1957), as well as the launch in 1958 of DCT's *Bunty*, the first girls' comics explicitly marketed to working-class readers, which quickly established itself as the market leader. Further markets were developed with the 1950 launch of AP's version of the American single- or main-story format, the 'picture library' with *Cowboy Comics Library*, leading to the series *War Picture Library* (1958), *Air Ace Picture Library* (1960) and *Battle Picture Library* (1961), each marketed at an older audience than their anthology titles; DCT belatedly entered this market with *Commando* in 1961.

The late 1950s saw two further significant developments in British comics. The impetus behind *Eagle* had been Morris's worries about the corrupting influence of US horror, crime and western comics on Britain's children. While he had sought to counter these



³ cited in Chapman *British Comics* p.108.

comics with his own title, others actively campaigned against the importation or reprinting of American comics. In 1953 the Comics Campaign Council was founded, and in 1955, following the publication that year of a British edition of Fredric Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent*, the Children and Young Person's Harmful Publications Act effectively banned the importation or printing of US comics⁴. British independents who has specialised in this material, such as Len Miller, suddenly had to find original (or reprint old) British stories to fill their publications and many went to the wall, a development exacerbated once American comics resumed official importation in 1959, now under the jurisdiction of the Comics Code Authority. Principally with original material such as *Marvelman* (1954), Miller survived until becoming subject, in 1970, to the first prosecution under the 1955 Act. These effects contributed to the other significant development of the late 1950s, the consolidation of the AP-DCT duopoly, the former dominating the adventure comics market, the latter the 'funnies' (by this time *Topper* and *Beezer* had joined their stable), with the two sharing much of the girls' comic market. Only Hulton, with the declining *Eagle* stable, offered significant resistance to the duopoly. By 1961, further major consolidation and rationalisation had taken place. In 1959, Mirror Group purchased AP, renaming the company Fleetway, and two years later purchased Odhams (which had itself acquired Hulton in 1959) to form IPC, a major periodicals publisher with over 200 children's and adult titles on the newstands.

⁴ This period and its events are covered in detail in Barker, Martin *A haunt of fears: the strange history of the British horrors comics campaign* (London, 1984)

As the 1960s began, then, two publishers – DCT and IPC – dominated the British comics market, although the reintroduction of American comics brought new competition for sales from superhero comics, in particular those of Marvel Comics. Both Fleetway/IPC, with *Princess* (1960), *June* (1961) and *Sally* (1969), and DCT with *Judy* (1960), *Diana* (1963) and *Mandy* (1967), continued to launch new girls' comics⁵. The most significant new title was *Jackie* (DCT, 1964), with its development of magazine-style features alongside the more traditional picture-stories of the romance comics; during the mid-1970s, *Jackie* sold in excess of 500,000 copies a week⁶. Boys' comics also saw new titles: in addition to new adventure comics from IPC, such as *Valiant* (1962) and *Hurricane* (1964), DCT aimed to catch up in the field it had finally entered with the relaunched *Adventure* with new titles including *Victor* (1961) and *Hornet* (1963). Continuing to operate the Odhams imprint, IPC sought to compete with DCT in the funnies market, principally through *Wham!* (1964) and *Smash!* (1966), later using those titles and their sister papers in the Power Comics line as the carriers of the Marvel reprints it had licensed⁷. IPC's comics usually appeared in slightly larger formats on higher-quality paper and thus tended to have higher cover prices (eg *Valiant's* 7d. compared to *Hotspur's* 5d. in 1967), suggesting a degree of market differentiation, but the duopoly was sound and the market appeared, in many respects, strong. However, the



⁵ Brewer, Susan *The History of Girls' Comics* (Barnsley, 2010) is the only available general text covering this extremely important aspect of British comics history.

⁶ McRobbie, Angela *Feminism and youth culture: from 'Jackie' to 'Just Seventeen'* (Basingstoke, 1991), p.81.

⁷ *Wham!* and *Smash!* were rebranded as part of the Power Comics line in 1967; they were joined by in the new line by *Pow!*, *Fantastic* and *Terrific* (all 1967).

1960s saw the first serious problems for British comics publishers. A number of the new titles, including *Hurricane*, lasted only a short while despite high-profile launches and large marketing budgets, and the decade saw the beginnings of what was to become termed the 'hatch, match & dispatch' method of publication, with the mergers of unsuccessful new titles or failing old titles. The first major example was the merger of *Princess* with *Girl* in 1964, although perhaps the most noteworthy was the merger of *Eagle* with its former rival *Lion*, in 1969. The only major new growth area of comics publishing in the 1960s was the TV comic. Modelled on AP's *Film Fun* (1920) and *Radio Fun* (1938), as early as 1951 the first television-inspired title, *TV Comic* (News of the World), had been published, followed by *TV Fun* (AP, 1953). However, the field did not seriously develop until TV ownership became more widespread: *TV Express*, an off-shoot of the *Daily Express* newspaper, appeared in 1962, followed by *TV Century 21* (City, 1965), based on the characters of Gerry Anderson. The genre proved popular, although the 1970s saw the end of this brief boom with the collapse of the re-titled *TV21* in 1971 following on from the failed launch of *Joe 90* (City, 1969) and the failure of new titles *Countdown* (Polystyle, 1971) and *Target* (Polystyle, 1978). Only *Look-In* (IPC, 1971), a children's sister paper to *TV Times* achieved any degree of longevity.

Alongside the growth of the periodical comics market, the 1950s and 1960s also saw the early stages of the development of comics in book form in Britain. As comics in this period were intended for children, so too were the early British comic books. In the late 1940s, DC Thomson had launched its 'Famous Books in Pictures' series, comprising adaptations of British classic novels with four panels per page accompanied by abridged

versions of the original texts. Each ran to around 120 pages and were published in the shape and style of hardback children's books. Although not comics in any sense accepted by most scholars or indeed fans of comics – for instance lacking the by-now almost ubiquitous speech bubbles – they can lay claim to part of the evolution of what have come to be known as 'graphic novels', as can the 'A Classic in Pictures' series (Amex, 1949-) which were more clearly comic strips (and were bound in stiff laminated boards) but shorter, at 48 pages. In the 1950s, the first English translations of the *Tintin* stories were published in collected albums – as books – and the 1960s and 1970s saw the appearance of other continental European comics in this format, including *Asterix* from 1969 and *Lucky Luke* from 1972, both by Brockhampton Press. A few British comic books had appeared as early as these European translations, such as Clifford Makins and Frank Bellamy's *The Happy Warrior* (Hulton, 1958), their biography of Winston Churchill which had first appeared in serialised form in *Eagle*. Bound in picture boards, running to a little over sixty pages, and selling at 6d., *The Happy Warrior* is an extended comics narrative published in a book format – a 'graphic novel' by most contemporary definitions of the form. Nevertheless, the books of this period represent only a beginning, with no significant growth in market or form; further development, particularly in books for adults, only followed the growing sophistication of comics in the 1970s and 1980s, and crucially the (re)appearance of comics for adults.

During the late 1960s, weaknesses had become apparent in the children's comics market, with falling sales and failing titles. During the 1970s, these trends became more apparent. In 1977, the Royal Commission on the Press reported that weekly sales of *Bunty* had

gone from 466,000 to 199,000 and *Victor* from 340,000 to 195,000 in the five years from 1971⁸. However, the decade did see crucial developments in non-mainstream comics which were to shape the future of British comics. At the beginning of the decade, the alternative magazine press gave birth to alternative comics, reprinting some US ‘comix’ alongside original British material, starting with *Cyclops* (1970) and *Nasty Tales* (1971), both deriving from *IT*, and *Cozmic Comics* (1972), part of the *Oz* stable. In 1975, *Brainstorm Comix* was launched, the first all-British alternative comic. Although aided by the introduction of cheaper offset lithography printing, which ended reliance on large printing presses for production, these comics were relatively expensive, reflecting both the intended market and smaller print runs: the first issue of *Cyclops* sold for 3s. at a time when the more expensive children’s comics were selling for around 7d., and issue 4 of *Street Comix* sold for 60p in the same year, 1977, that *2000AD* launched at 8p. As well as introducing new creators, these comics created new patterns of working (such as co-operative production), new markets, and new distribution methods (including record shops and head shops).

During the 1970s, weekly anthology comics were launched, merged or discontinued with bewildering rapidity. Two new trends are apparent. On the one hand, thematic comics, particularly in the boys’ market, dominated the new launches. IPC began with *Scorcher* (1970), a football comic and in 1974, DCT followed with its first themed comic,



⁸ Chapman *British Comics* p.125

Warlord. The latter was immediately successful, selling well in excess of 200,000 copies by 1977; IPC responded with *Battle* (1975)⁹. Many of these comics also displayed the other notable trend of the 1970s, a growing social realism and/or psychological sophistication, albeit often within bizarre storylines, which had first become an important feature in girls' comics. In 1971, IPC had launched *Tammy*, a title replete with stories of terror and suffering, often within a class-conscious setting. Although stories of girls struggling against insurmountable odds (often disability), cruel families and bullies had long been a staple of more conservative titles such as *Judy*, the new stories were of a different order, and for many British comics followers *Tammy* heralded the classic period of girls' comics, with *Jinty* (IPC, 1974), *Spellbound* (DCT, 1976) and *Misty* (IPC, 1978) following, and even the more traditional *Mandy* (DCT, 1967) shifting its style to fit the new concerns. In boys' comics, the more explicit violence of *Warlord* was reflected in the even grittier *Battle* as well as adventure comics including *Bullet* (DCT, 1976) and *The Crunch* (DCT, 1979). This trend reached its zenith with *Action* (IPC, 1976), launched by much the same freelance editorial team as had been responsible for *Tammy*. Among man-eating sharks and violent futuristic sports inspired by Hollywood cinema, the stories of *Action* featured teenage gangs in an anarchic near-future Britain and a World War Two Panzer commander as (anti-)hero, and soon drew tabloid backlash and a reported boycott threat from the largest newsagents chains. It was pulled from the listings and relaunched later in the year in a significantly toned-down form which failed to attract the size, and

⁹ Although generally known to scholars and readers by the shorter title *Battle*, this title launched as *Battle Picture Library*, before becoming *Battle*, *Battle Action* and then *Battle Action Force*.

older profile, of the original's readership. From the ashes, however, came *2000AD* (IPC, 1977), with editorial and creative staff drawn from the offices of *Action* alongside some of the new creators who began to cross over to the mainstream from alternative comics. These editors and writers, who had worked with comics for adults and were immersed in the culture of international, especially US, comics, brought an approach to *2000AD* which delivered a readership to the comic which was older, broader, and more sophisticated than the ostensible target audience of boys aged 11-14; by 1982, it was selling around 120,000 copies a week, the one great success of the period¹⁰.

The creation of new distribution networks by alternative comics had taken place at the same time as a change which was to have perhaps a more important role for the long-term development of comics in Britain. In 1969 Dark They Were and Golden Eyed, the UK's first specialist comics shop opened in London¹¹, inaugurating a small but growing retail market not focussed on the wider sectoral interests of general bookshops or newsagents. It was subsequently joined by Forever People (Bristol, 1973), Nostalgia and Comics (Birmingham, 1977), Forbidden Planet (London, 1978) and others. In the USA, where there was a much larger number of specialist shops, direct sales marketing came to comics in the late 1970s. Bypassing traditional distribution through newsstands, direct sales techniques utilised the market knowledge of the comics shops while also relying on

¹⁰ *2000AD*, its creators and related SF comics are discussed in detail in Newsinger, John *The Dredd phenomenon: comics and contemporary society* (Bristol, 1999).

¹¹ Actually a comics and SF novel bookshop, but widely recognised as the birth of specialist comics bookselling in the UK.

the willingness of such shops to hold back issues for subsequent sale; formerly, unsold issues were pulped when the new issue came out, a practice also seen in British weeklies. In 1977, Titan Distributors was founded, bringing direct sales techniques to Britain, and in the late 1970s Marvel UK sought to use this specialist-sales basis to British markets. In the US, direct sales saw the birth of new independent publishers which did not require or seek wholesale distribution through the big retail chains, a pattern which came to Britain in the 1980s with Harrier, Trident, Quality and other independents, while DCT and IPC continued to distribute through newsagents.

At the end of the 1970s, self-published, often xeroxed comics began to appear in Britain, not coincidentally alongside the advent of punk and fanzine culture. At first sold almost exclusively at comics marts and through small ads, these cheaply-produced comics, often produced by only one or two individuals rather than the co-operatives of the alternative comics scene, reflected the social realism of mainstream comics while drawing upon the adult audiences of alternative comics. In 1980, Paul Gravett started the 'Fast Fiction' stall at the Westminster Comics Mart, later developing a mail order service and an anthology comic with the same name, which also became the name by which these kinds of comics became known. Independent British comics creators of this period were at least as likely to draw on European influences as they were North American influences. In 1982, the short-lived *Pssst!* was launched, clearly modelled on the French anthology comic *Métal Hurlant*, and in 1983 Gravett joined with Peter Stanbury in launching *Escape*, with a first editorial calling for a 'UKBD', that is a British *Bande Desinée*. Many of these titles and their publishers also supported the publications of 'one-shots', standalone stories which

wedded higher production values to the narratives and formats favoured by the Fast Fiction writers, as in Eddie Campbell's 'Alec' trilogy (Escape, 1984-6). Less seriously, perhaps, but also based on adult markets, the xerox revolution also saw the birth of *Viz* (1979), a deeply irreverent and scatological comic that drew upon certain stylistic elements of the classic British funnies and grew during the 1980s into one of the biggest titles in British periodical publishing.

Very few mainstream titles first published in the 1980s lasted to the end of the decade, and none lasted to the end of the century, falling at the wayside along with long-established titles such as *Tiger* (last issue 1985), *Look-In* (1994) and *Victor* (1994); after nearly forty years of publication, the last issue of AP/IPC/Fleetway's leading funny paper, *Buster*, ended with the dateline 4 January 2000, and *Bunty*, the most successful of all the girls' comics, ceased publication in 2001. By 2010, the only weekly British comics still in print were *Beano*, *Dandy* and *2000AD*. Leaving aside these three titles, two things marked both the more commercially-successful and the most critically-lauded titles of the 1980s: adult readerships and a shift to irregular or monthly publication. With longer lead-in times for publication, and prices reflecting adult purchasing power, print quality could be much higher than with the weeklies, and often featured full-colour painted 'splash' pages. A key title was *Warrior* (Quality, 1982), which featured many of the notable creators to be found in mainstream comics, especially *2000AD*, attracted by the offer of ownership rights and royalties; although IPC and DCT had introduced creator by-lines during the 1970s, with almost all stories fully credited by the 1980s, the retention of ownership and the denial of royalties to creators by the big publishers had caused

resentment. Nevertheless, monthly anthology publications also ran aground during the early 1990s, despite the entry of some major, heavily-trailed titles such as *Crisis* (Fleetway, 1988), *Deadline* (Cardrest/Deadline, 1989), *Revolver* (Fleetway, 1990) and *Toxic!* (Apocalypse, 1991).

The monthly periodicals had been inspired by the enormous amount of attention heaped upon comics in the wake of the publication of three books during 1986 and 1987: Frank Miller's *Batman: the Dark Knight returns*, Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons's *Watchmen* (both Titan) and Art Spiegelman's *Maus: a survivor's tale* (Penguin). For a time, the British press was full of stories of comics having 'grown up', of a renaissance that was taking the publishing world by storm. A major shift in the cultural position of comics was posited, with first bookshops and then public libraries starting to feature 'Graphic Novel' shelves. There was a flurry of new publications, including the reprinting of US comics (particularly through Titan Books) and both European and Asian comics. The decision of Penguin Books to become involved in the burgeoning field was a crucial factor, making available traditional book marketing resources and outlets to *Maus* and Keiji Nakazawa's *Barefoot Gen* (1987); Penguin also bought the rights to the US avant garde anthology comic *Raw*, relaunching it in the format of a standard paperback book. Another early entrant in the market from the ranks of traditional book publishers was Gollancz, who published Alan Moore and Oscar Zarate's *A small killing* (1987). The British origins of some of this material and the prehistory of comic books in the UK helped cement the apparent importance of these new comic books in the British press. For example, Alan Moore, a graduate of the alternative comics scene (via Northampton Arts Lab) and then

of *2000AD* and other IPC titles, had come to the attention of the US publisher DC with *V for Vendetta* (art by David Lloyd), a story begun in *Warrior* and completed with DC¹². In 1982, Bryan Talbot had published the first volume of *The adventures of Luther Arkwright*, arguably the first British ‘graphic novel’ for adults, and Raymond Briggs had published *When the wind blows*, in which he brought his children’s book style to a story for adults. By 1992, however, there had been a crash in the market, perhaps as a result of saturation or perhaps because many of the new books attracted only an ‘art house’-style audience rather than the general readership of the key books of 1986-7. Graphic novels sections disappeared from bookshops, while a number of publishers either withdrew from publishing comics or put plans to enter the market on hold. A more positive impact of this period of excitement was an enormous growth in the number of specialist comic shops in Britain: in the mid-1980s, there had been around fifty across the UK, but by 1992 there were around 300, including chains such as Forbidden Planet. Although many failed to survive to the end of the century, a large-scale specialist retail sector was now established, and provided a supportive outlet for continuing (and growing) US imports, newly-translated volumes of European and (especially) Japanese and other Asian comics, and those companies – most notably Titan – who continued to publish comics in Britain.

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, however, comic books began to receive greater attention outside of specialist markets once more. Alongside the continued

¹² Alan Moore has been the subject of more study than any other British comics creator; the best scholarly work is Di Liddo, Annalisa *Alan Moore: comics as performance, fiction as scalpel* (Raleigh, NC, 2008).

success of established publishers (such as Titan's reprints of British and US comics) and established creators (such as Alan Moore's *From Hell*), new publishers have entered the market: North American comics and books continue to be imported, as are US-produced translations of Asian comics, and more European comics are available in translation, as well as a few south Asian and African comics. Topics continue to widen, including the growth of nonfiction comics such as journalism, memoir and travelogue. At the time of writing, 'Graphic Novel' sections in both bookshops and public libraries have become almost ubiquitous, and comic books feature regularly in the reviews sections of the mainstream press. There continues to be a small but creatively-exciting periodical comics market, although an attempt to launch a new (subscription-only) anthology title for children in the tradition of the British comics of the mid-twentieth century, *The DFC* (Random House, 2008) failed after only 43 issues. British authors such as Posy Simmonds have appeared on bestseller lists, with sales coming mainly through general, rather than comics, bookshops. Large publishers are releasing comic books, led by Random House imprint Jonathan Cape which has in recent years published new British books such as David Hughes's *Walking the Dog* (2009) and the latest works of stalwarts of British comics such as Bryan Talbot alongside UK editions of key comics books from elsewhere such as Chris Ware's *Jimmy Corrigan: the smartest kid in the world* (2001)¹³, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* (2003) and Alison Bechdel's *Fun home: a family tragicomic* (2006).

¹³ In winning the *Guardian* First Book Award, Corrigan's book became the first comic to win a major literary prize in the UK.

A notable feature of recent comics publishing from a British perspective has been the reprinting stories from the history of comics, such as Pat Mills and Joe Colquhoun's *Charley's War* (from *Battle*), and the revival of some characters in new stories, perhaps most interestingly with Paul Grist's *Jack Staff* series (Image, 2003-6) and Leah Moore and John Reppion's *Albion* (Titan, 2006), both inspired by classic British adventure comics of the 1960s and 1970s. In 2007 *Crikey!*, a magazine dedicated to British comics was launched, although it only lasted for 16 issues. It is to be hoped that this popular interest in British comics may give urgency to British comics scholarship. The entire field is under-researched, although certain areas – for example girls' comics, funnies other than *Dandy* and *Beano*, the inter-war period – are even less well-served than others. Comics have become a significant factor in British publishing, and have had major impact across popular culture: the present and perhaps also the future for comics in Britain looks healthy, and our attention to their past should reflect it.

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