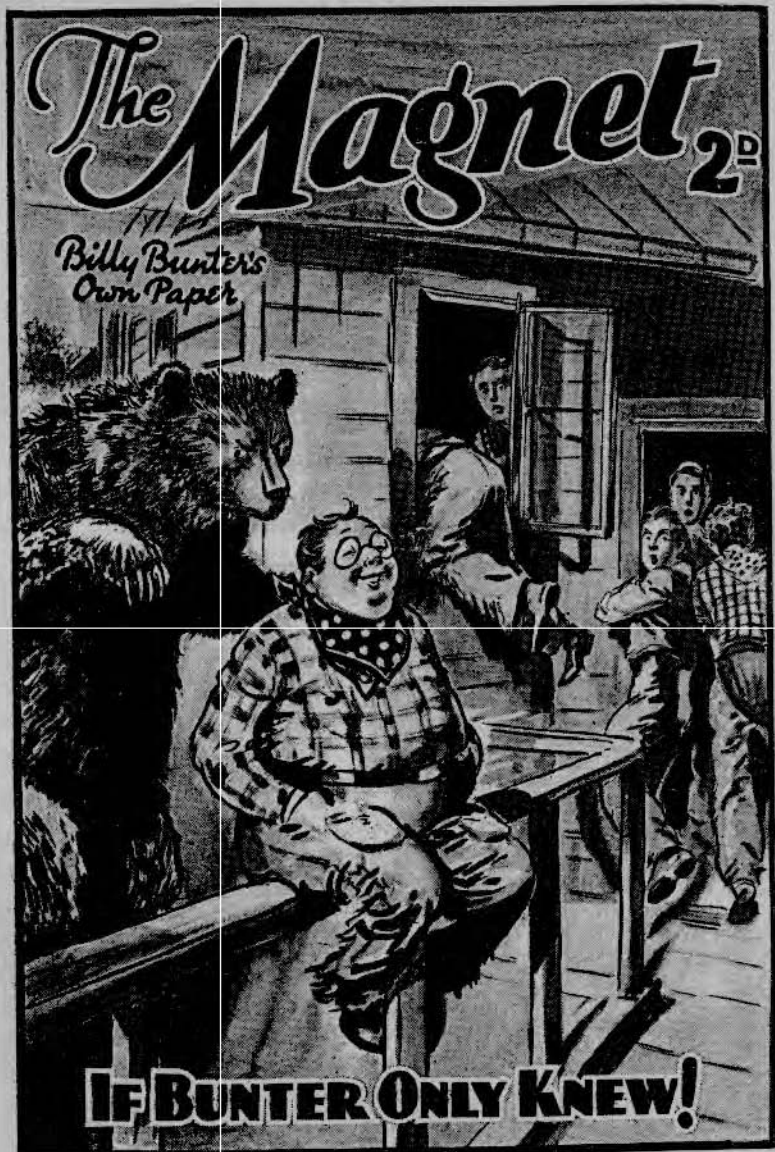


STORY PAPER
COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOL.53

No.631

JULY 1999





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STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Founded in 1941 by
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COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

S.P.C.D. Edited and Published 1959 - January 1987 by Eric Fayne

VOL. 53

No. 631

JULY 1999

PRICE £1.38



Our cover this month must be one of the more bizarre holiday pictures to grace the pages of our papers. Of

course, Bunter and the Famous Five enjoyed an immense range of holiday travels, and it is always good to be able to take one of these series to read when one goes away on holiday. My husband and I have recently been in the Lake District and are soon off to Herefordshire: the Water Lily series, which strangely I have never read before, is my present constant literary companion!

This month there is no other *Blakiana* than the interesting article by Mark Caldicott which appears under the *Nelson Lee and ESB* heading. Next month we shall probably have another 'double dose' of Blake material.

I was amused by a note from Naveed Haque, one of our Canadian subscribers, who had carried Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's colourful language a stage further than even Frank Richards did. Naveed writes: "Reading Frank Richards' Autobiography all over again I am once more struck by how 'readable' it is. Indeed I seem to have perused it in one sitting, and this was not only because of my interest in the author, but, as Inky might say, because

the *readabilityfulness* was truly terrific!" What greater compliment can be paid to an author?

Have a happy summer, with lots of deck-chair browsing.

MARY CADOGAN

REMINDERS OF FRANK RICHARDS

by Keith Atkinson

Part Three

I will just briefly mention Rudyard Kipling. Some of Kipling's characters in *Stalky and Co.* remind us of Frank Richards. The main character bears the nickname of 'Beetle' which puts us in mind of Rupert de Courcey of Highcliffe, who is nicknamed 'The Caterpillar'. Kipling also has a master called Mr. Prout, as does Frank Richards at Greyfriars.

I am sure Frank Richards must have enjoyed the works of Jerome K. Jerome, especially *Three Men in a Boat*, for not only did he pen the delightful story of *Six Boys in a Boat*, but elsewhere he gave us his own inimitable version of picture-hanging.

In Jerome K. Jerome's story there is a comical digression from the adventures on the River Thames called "Uncle Podger Hangs a Picture".

In this story Uncle Podger attempts to hang a picture on the wall, drops it, cuts his finger, drops the nails, overbalances onto the piano producing startling musical effects reminiscent of Claude Hoskins, smashes his thumb with the hammer, enlists the whole of the family to help to hold things, find things, and fetch things, knocks half the plaster off the wall, and finally succeeds about midnight in hanging the picture crookedly on the wall.

In *Magnet* 1248 of 1932 in a story called "The Terror of the Form" we have Frank Richards' version of a similar theme, in which Bob Cherry attempts to hang a picture on the wall of Study No. 13. Bob smashes his thumb, drops the picture and the nails, knocks half the plaster off the wall, and enlists the help of the rest of the Famous Five to hold things, fetch things, and find things, but, due to the interference of Horace Coker, he is dislodged from the stepladder and ends up dropping the hammer on Coker's toe and himself on top of Coker, and accidentally hanging the picture round Coker's neck.

Although the themes are very similar I would recommend that these two extracts be read in conjunction with each other in order to appreciate the different treatment and styles, and to compare the full comic value of these two hilarious episodes from two great writers which it is impossible to show in a short summary.

And now, William Morris.

The book called *The Well at the World's End* by William Morris has not much in common with Frank Richards. It is an old-fashioned tale of knights, quests and conquests. The main theme of the story is for Ralph, the youngest son of King Peter, to succeed in his quest to reach 'The Well at the World's End', which is a spring on the coast far away, the waters of which have the power to give, not eternal life, but greatly prolonged youth, health and long life in which to learn wisdom and learn to rule efficiently, wisely, and kindly. The well can only be reached by facing many difficulties and dangers, but eventually Ralph

succeeds in reaching it in company with his inamorata, Ursula. (Perhaps there is a similar well near Greyfriars as all the characters remain forever youthful!) The book is written in an Olde Englishe style and contains many old-fashioned words and expressions, and one of these which kept recurring caught my eye. One of the more evil characters is always spoken of as being accompanied by his 'Vavassor'. There seemed to be something familiar about this word, and eventually I looked it up in the dictionary and found that a vavassor or vavassour was a noble vassal of a great lord, and I realised that this was another very apt name used by Frank Richards as Vavasour is one of the chief cronies of Ponsonby of Highcliffe School.

Sometimes on reading a book we come unexpectedly on a reference to *The Magnet*, and I found a passing reference in a little book called *Child of the Red Lion*, which is the autobiography of an old lady called Molly Maidment, who spent her life from childhood to old age at the Red Lion in Salisbury in one capacity or another.

She says:-

Also on the other side of the street was a newsagent shop owned by Mr Noyce. He had two sons, both older than my brother and me, and we envied them because they appeared to enjoy much more freedom than we were allowed. Mr Noyce sold a variety of penny comics. I was a fluent reader from the age of five and soon graduated from *Chick's Own* and *Tiger Tim* to my brother's comics, *The Magnet* and so on. I found Tom Merry and Billy Bunter of Greyfriars far more entertaining than Bessie Bunter and her namby-pamby schoolfriends. Nanny's weekly reading consisted of *Peg's Paper* for its romantic love stories and the *Salisbury Times* for its hatch-match-and-despatch columns.

The last book which I wish to examine is *The Classic Slum* by Professor Robert Roberts.

The Classic Slum is a social history set in the slums of Salford in the early years of this century. It is the story of Robert Roberts' childhood and schooldays, and describes the hardships and poverty of the people who lived in Salford at that time - Robert Roberts' family being marginally better off as his mother ran a small corner shop, mostly on a system of tick. The book contains two references to the *Magnet*, the first one reads:-

Though the senior members of a household would try to uphold its prestige in every way, children in the streets had the reprehensible habit of making friends with anyone about their own age who happened to be around, in spite of the fact that parents, ever on the watch, had already announced what company they should keep. One would be warned off certain boys altogether. Several of us, for instance, had been strictly forbidden ever to be seen consorting with a lad whose mother, known elegantly as the She Nigger, was a woman of the lowest repute. Unfortunately we could find nothing 'low' in her son. A natural athlete (he modelled his conduct on Harry 'Wharton of the *Magnet*).

And later in the same book we come upon the following passage:-

Even before the First World War many youngsters in the working class had developed an addiction for Frank Richards' school stories. The standard of conduct observed by Harry Wharton and Co. at Greyfriars set social norms to which schoolboys and some teenagers

strove spasmodically to conform. Fights - ideally at least - took place according to Greyfriars rules: no striking an opponent when he was down, no kicking, in fact no weapon but the manly fist. Through the Old School we learned to admire guts, integrity, tradition; we derided the glutton, the American and the French. We looked with contempt upon the sneak and the thief. Greyfriars gave us one moral code, life another, and a fine muddle we made of it all. I knew boys so avid for current numbers of the *Magnet* and *Gem* that they would trek on a weekday to the city railway station to catch the bulk arrival from London and buy first copies from the bookstall. One lad among us adopted a permanent jerky gait, this in his attempt to imitate Bob Cherry's 'springy, athletic stride'. Self-consciously we incorporated weird slang into our own oath-sprinkled banter - 'Yaroooh!' 'My sainted aunt!' 'Leggo!' and a dozen others. The Famous Five stood for us as young knights, sans peur et sans reproche. Any idea that Harry Wharton could possibly have been guilty of 'certain practices' would have filled us with shame. He, like the rest, remained completely asexual, unsullied by those earthy cares of adolescence that troubled us. And that was how we wanted it.

With nothing in our own school that called for love or allegiance, Greyfriars became for some of us our true Alma Mater, to whom we felt bound by a dreamlike loyalty. The 'mouldering pile', one came to believe, had real existence: of that boys assured one another. We placed it vaguely in the southern counties - somewhere between Winchester and Harrow. It came as a curious shock to one who revered the Old School when it dawned upon him that he himself was a typical example of the 'low cads' so despised by all at Greyfriars. Class consciousness had broken through at last. Over the years these simple tales conditioned the thought of a whole generation of boys. The public school ethos, distorted into myth and sold among us weekly in penny numbers, for good or ill, set ideas and standards. This our own tutors, religious and secular, had signally failed to do. In the final estimate it may well be found that Frank Richards during the first quarter of the twentieth century had more influence on the mind and outlook of young working-class England than any other single person, not excluding Baden-Powell.

And I think that is quite a compliment to Frank Richards, coming from a social historian.

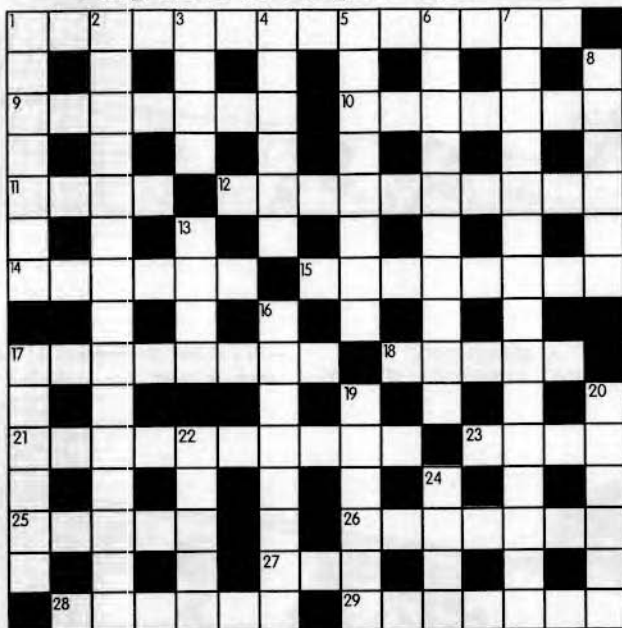
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Clues Across:

1. The aristocrat of Greyfriars? (4, 10).
9. Healthy exercise and good food helps a body do this. (5, 2).
10. Get on your bike again? Or help to reuse waste. (7).
11. You'll find at least one out in the sea beyond Pegg Bay! (4).
- 12 and 14. The world's most famous school? (10, 6).
15. The Charlie who started it all! (8).
17. Surely no Greyfriars man would allow himself to feel this! (2, 6).
18. An adjective applying only, perhaps, to

Alonzo Todd? (5).

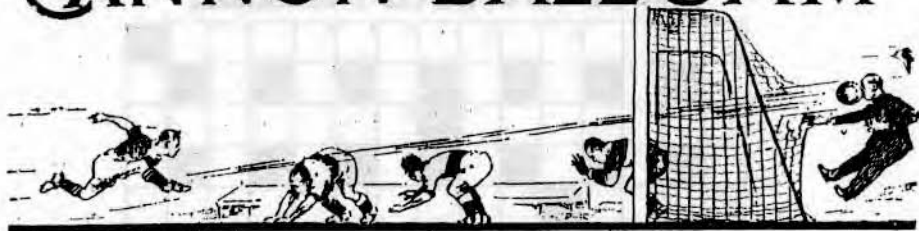
22. Bees, wasps, hornets and similar creatures would live in one! (6, 4).
23. Our favourite author had a great one when he started to write! (4).
- 25 Across and 16 Down. A favourite name for a favourite author! (5, 8).
26. Captain of the Remove! (7).
27. Expected to drop the last letter in a sword-fight. (3).
28. It is expected that this is what a boy does at Greyfriars (for much of the time)! (6).
29. If a train was so affected, you'd be late

Clues Down:

1. One does this on a ship to go abroad. (7).
2. Thieves did this when they broke into Dr Locke's study and took much cash! (6, 5, 4).
3. Fashioned. (4).
4. The very first human inhabitants of Kent! (5, 3).
6. Sight-seeing Greyfriars boys might take part in these, going by bus, coach or train. (10).
7. A much-liked and enjoyable song: perhaps with a magic touch? (10, 5).
8. All boys should be taught one at least (and girls too)!
13. Sixty seconds! (4).
16. See 25 Across.
17. Do lawyers wear these when running? (6).
19. Make a change: do wave for the dedicated!
20. So far as the Greyfriars boys are concerned, all pubs in the area are this!
22. The great Horace himself! (5).
24. You couldn't play cricket or football without one! (4).

THE LAD WITH THE HARDEST SHOT IN BRITAIN.

·CANNON-BALL SAM·



THE START OF A SMASHING,
CRASHING FOOTBALL STORY

—It's about the exploits of an 18-stone net-buster
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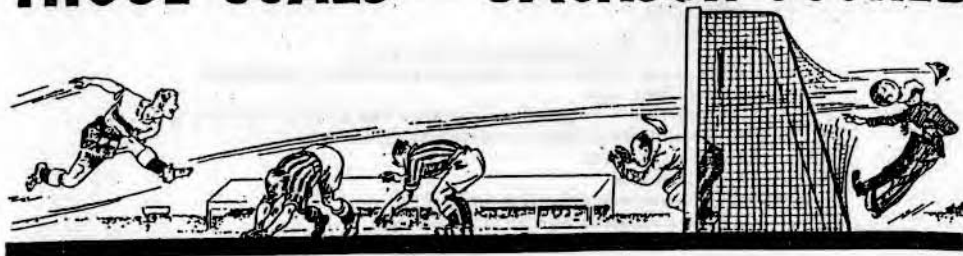


SWAPPING JIM

The Centre Who
Can't Be Stopped

What a shot! What a goal! And every one he scores costs his club two hundred pounds!

THOSE GOALS THAT JACKSON SCORED



ANOTHER FEATURE ON THE PAPERS OF D.C. THOMSON

by Colin Morgan

It is said that every picture tells a story. Well, here's a picture that tells **several** stories!

"Cannon-Ball Sam" first appeared in *The Wizard* in No. 352 (31.8.29). This series ran for 23 instalments and the picture on the opposite page made its appearance in No. 355. The drawing continued to be used up to No. 360 and the incident was described in full in 355 with the description of how the crowd made great fun of the policeman's resultant nose-bleed. The centre-forward who blasted the ball home was Sam Morrison who had spent his young life in Arizona with two 'old-timers', Joe Jiggs and Mike Mulrooney. Joe was a former professional footballer who had encouraged Sam to kick a ball around on the desert with its rocks and uneven surfaces. Naturally, his ball skills were immensely sharpened in the process. However, Mike had been equally determined that Sam would grow up to be a prize fighter as he had been. Therefore, when Sam and the two men eventually arrived in England Sam had a lot to offer the sporting world. It seemed that Joe had won the battle when Sam signed for league side Oldcastle, especially when he was such a success. Mike, however, was not one to forget his American roots and still toted a gun wherever he went in England. Often he had to be forcibly held back from using it by Joe when the pair were insulted in any way. In *Wizard* 359 Sam came up against Brickwall Bert, a goalie who had never let in a goal. Needless to say, Sam, despite some early success for Bert, won out in the end. A complete and a second series of 19 episodes appeared in *The Wizard* in 1930-31.

"Swapping Jim" was the title for a ten-episode series in *The Hotspur* at the beginning of 1939. Using the same picture heading for all ten stories, the series began in No. 282 (21.1.39). The 'Jim' was Jim Gale, a village schoolmaster of mountainous proportions who also ran the local petrol pump (no, not garage!) and traded a good swap whenever he found one. Jim turned out for the village football team and so good was he that all opposing teams were allowed to field four extra players to counteract him! Eventually he came to the notice of local league side Railton Rovers and they signed him on with immediate results. In one of his first matches he too came up against an unbeaten goalie, and this one, Sam Fullwood, went the same way as Bert did when Cannon-ball Sam shot for goal.

"Those Goals That Jackson Scored" was the story of Johnny Jackson's life in the First Division in 1947. Johnny was centre-forward of lowly and hard-up Millwood Rovers where he scored nearly all the goals - at least, that is, until local rivals Millwood City signed him on for £10,000, a lot of money for the hard-up Rovers, plus £200 for each goal that Johnny scored for his new club during the rest of that season. Rovers were heartbroken at losing him and Johnny wasn't too happy either, but he realised that his old club needed the money and signed for City. The story, which ran for just five episodes, began in *The Wizard* 1147 (20.9.47). In his very first match, coincidentally against Oldcastle, Cannon-ball Sam's old club, Johnny scored five goals and the City directors, despite their joy at winning the match, were aghast that they already owed Rovers another thousand pounds. When Johnny continued to score regularly they had second thoughts and Johnny ended up back at his beloved Rovers. City had even played Johnny in goal to stop

him scoring in his last match but he still managed to find the net. The original deal to take Johnny across the city was based on, as explained in the text, a deal made in the 1920s when Charlie Buchan moved to Arsenal from Sunderland. But as far as the heading picture is concerned, it has no place in the story just as it had been absent in the "Swapping Jim" series. The Jackson saga was adapted into picture form in *The Victor* in 1962 and then, seven years later, the tale was repeated in text form in *Rover & Wizard* without the use of 'our' picture. However, there was one important difference in the 1969 repeat - the cost for each goal scored was increased to £1,000.

And still there was one more story to be told - although that story had really been told in 1935. It happened this way: *The Wizard* printed a soccer story in No. 662 (10.8.35) titled "The Lost International Comes Home" which was the story of the Armstrong family. Father Joe ran the local team under the name Henry Saunders - for years Joe had been suspected of murder and was on the run. Son Johnny played under the name of Johnny Ludd and was a highly skilled inside forward. Eventually Joe is found to be not guilty but in part 7 (668) an incident is described which mirrors that of the pictures shown earlier. However it is not illustrated, but was when the tale was repeated in *The Rover* as "The Son of the Lost Centre-Forward", beginning in No. 1330 (23.12.50). The incident is described again but in a shortened form - but what makes it especially notable is that the heading picture is once again 'our' picture in a revised form. This again appears in part 7 (1336 - 3.2.51) and is shown below . . .

The crowd howls with delight as Johnny's shot screams past the goalie, bursts the net and sends the policeman's helmet spinning!



And, if you want to take all of this a step further . . . the cover of *Wizard* 355, which contained the very first use of the picture, was repeated itself when redrawn for *The Rover* No. 1169 (14.6.47). Is it not somewhat coincidental that just three months after the use of that picture from 1929 in 1947, the title drawing inside should also reappear to illustrate Johnny Jackson's first story?



(Left): *The Wizard* No. 355
21.9.29

(Right): *The Rover* No. 1169
14.6.47



(Illustrations © D.C. Thomson & Co. Ltd.)



THE MAN WHO MET HIMSELF

by Mark Caldicott

Part Four: Eustace and Sexton Blake - the final chapters

You can't keep a good man down. The first round of Blake's battle with the racketeer 'Red-Hot' Reegan revealed, we saw last time, Eustace Cavendish at his lowest ebb. This state of affairs is not to last long, however, for in the sequel ("Sexton Blake On The Spot", *Union Jack*, 1433, 04-May-31), Eustace comes to the fore, with Blake enlisting Cavendish's help to further the fight against Reegan.

After escaping justice in the previous episode, Reegan is back, this time as - a cheese supplier! True the salesmen of Carter's Cheese have an unusual approach in that they threaten their customers with guns until they agree to take on large consignments of cheese. But the profits of such a relatively minor racket as that could not be all there was to it. What was the real purpose of the cheese business?

Eustace's task was to find out what was going on, and in this respect he was the ideal choice.

Eustace was a useful person. A wealthy, inconsequential young man about town, he had all the appearance of a brainless noodle. He was dandified to a degree; his monocle appeared to be a fixture in his eye; his habitual expression was one of mild and amiable fatuity.

But the Hon. Eustace, actually, was as keen as they make 'em. Beneath his well-fitted clothes his muscles rippled with a suppleness and elasticity which marked the owner as a trained athlete. Inside that apparently fatuous head of his, a brain of excessive keenness lay hidden. Eustace could think nearly as quickly as Blake himself; and when it came to action, Eustace was game for anything.

Nobody suspected him of being dangerous. For this very reason, he was comparatively safe in the toughest 'dive' in London.

At the request of Blake, Cavendish plays a visit to Palazzi's, a smart London restaurant owned by Reegan, and where Carter's Cheese is on the menu. Sitting a few tables away from Blake, Eustace plays his 'affable idiot' role. Blake notices that the cheese, in its individual wrapping, is being supplied to many tables. He also notes that many people in the restaurant show signs of drugs. One man in particular is in a particularly agitated state on arrival. He hardly touches his food, and seems eager to get to the end of the meal when cheese and biscuits will be served. And strangely enough, the man felt it necessary to tidy away the cheese wrappers into his pocket.

Blake selects a cigar from his case and lights it. This is the sign for Eustace to get into action. Cavendish rises unsteadily to his feet and advances on the cheese-wrapper-

pocketing victim. Pretending to mistake the man for his fictitious friend 'Bunky' Buncombe, the 'drunken' Cavendish creates a diversion during which Blake is able to switch cheeses, getting hold of one of the suspect batch. Blake is able to establish that the cheese wrapper contains cocaine. He manages through the unobtrusive use of a gun to persuade the drug taker, whose real name is Goddard, to leave the restaurant, and arrests him. Reagan realises that Goddard is a danger to him if he confesses, and takes steps to eliminate him. However, Blake proves himself to have the upper hand in the game and Reagan's carefully-engineered drug-peddling racket is destroyed. However, despite Cavendish's success in helping bring Reagan into custody, the racketeer escapes when the Squad van is bombed.

It seems distinctly possible, given 'Red-Hot' Reagan's escape from justice, that ESB intended a further round in this battle. Significantly, there is an unpublished Blake story, "Reegan's Rum Running Racket" listed by Bob Blythe's E.S. Brooks bibliography, which is likely to have been intended by Brooks to be this third episode. Why this story was not published in *Union Jack* is a mystery. It could not, of course, have appeared after Waldo returned to his crooked ways in "Once A Crook" (*Union Jack*, 1499, 09-Jul-32) but that was more than a year later. It is possible to read a later adaptation of all three stories, including a later version of what is almost certainly the unpublished story, in *Ironsides On The Spot* (1948) written as Victor Gunn. From the later story we can deduce that the unpublished work has Cavendish once again playing his rich and featherbrained aristocrat act in Reagan's latest waterside night spot, witnessing an incident concerning some strange tasting rum getting on the track of illegal rum running. Eustace (we can guess) witnesses the shooting of an unfortunate waiter, the dying man being bundled into a sack and dumped into the water, and by a heroic effort, manages to save him. Before he can give any information, however, he is shot through the head while still in the hospital. Blake is visited by a gentleman reporting some bad liquor in another drinking place. The visitor urges Blake to visit the place personally. Wary of a trap, Blake and Eustace pay a visit, and outwit the opposition's plans, ending the tale in a showdown at a fireworks factory - with predictable pyrotechnics.

Eustace's final appearance in *Union Jack*, and the first and only time he finds himself on the other side of the law from Waldo, is "Red Sand" (*Union Jack*, 1507, 03-Sep-32). Cavendish happens to be present when he witnesses Waldo safeguard a recent acquaintance from the unwelcome attentions of a Turkish gentleman by the simple expedient of hanging the said Turk by his coat from a high wall-bracket. Waldo subsequently finds his acquaintance dying from the Turk's knife attack and sets off on the seemingly legitimate trail of jewels - always Waldo's weakness. The excellent and rapidly-moving yarn pits Waldo and Blake against one another on Tower Bridge. Blake gains the jewels - but Waldo has the last word by returning a valuable emerald which he had managed to retain, but which he has decided to restore to its rightful owner once he discovered that it was stolen. As Waldo departs, Eustace expresses his regard for the Wonder Man -

"That cheery lad is one hundred per cent!", declared the Hon. Eustace.

This was the last meeting of Waldo and Eustace, and also Eustace's last bow in *Union Jack*. There was, however, one more episode in the Blake/Cavendish partnership. This occurs in "The Pool of Escape" (*Detective Weekly* 33, 07-Oct-33). As with "Red Sand", this is an excellent yarn, commencing with a characteristically intriguing and attention-grabbing episode. Eustace is taking a rest from his aristocratic lifestyle and is wandering the countryside of the Isle of Wight as a tramp. Walking along the road he sees a silver salver on which is freshly-cooked liver and bacon. A little further on he discovers another. As if this were not puzzling enough, he then spots a beautiful girl clad only in a bathing suit dive into a pool. She disappears below the surface, and fails to come up again. Eustace is alarmed, believing she may have injured herself in the dive, and jumps in after her. He searches until he is near exhaustion, but cannot find her.

While still recovering from the shock of the girl's drowning, he is seized by the local constable, found to be in possession of the silver salvers, and put into a police cell. However, he has at least been given the opportunity to telephone Sexton Blake who, with Tinker, makes haste for the Isle of Wight. Meanwhile the constable discovers an injured terrier dog near the place where Eustace was arrested. At the police station the dog seems to recognise the liver and bacon as his own.

Blake arrives, Eustace is released, and over breakfast Cavendish admits that he had dressed as a tramp to investigate the mystery of Black Rock House and its mysterious inhabitant Swinnerton Rath. Blake hears the whole story and is intrigued, especially when the 'drowned' girl is then observed by Cavendish emerging from a village shop obviously alive and well. Blake, Tinker and Eustace go to see Black Rock House, "a picturesque manor house, with steep roofs, twisted chimneys, and many gables," but with the most remarkable feature that it has been built without windows or doors. The house can be entered only through a lodge, and a subway passage.

The story is that Rath's bride was stricken and died from sunstroke on the way back from the wedding, and that Rath was so distraught that he vowed never to allow sunshine to enter his life again. Eustace is a bit suspicious of the account. "It sounds a plausible story, but I've been a bit suspicious from the first. I have an idea that Swinnerton Rath is something more than he pretends to be . . . call it a hunch if you like."

Eustace's hunch seems to be sound, for when Blake visits Rath on pretext of returning the injured terrier he is certain that the Rath he meets is an impostor. Blake decides to investigate more thoroughly and, that night, dives into the pool just in the way the girl had done. He finds an underwater entrance and investigates the house, discovering the real Rath in a locked room at the top of the house. The girl then arrives via the underwater passage and Blake is discovered and is stunned when she hurls a lamp at him. Meanwhile Eustace and Tinker, having witnessed the girl's entrance, decide to take a dip themselves, arriving in time to find Blake with the girl and the false Rath on the point of explaining the mystery. They are Doris and her father, Floyd Trenton, the notorious Bayswater murderer, who, claiming his innocence, is hiding out in the home of the man he believes to have framed him, awaiting the day when Rath would write a confession.

Blake accepts Trenton's story, and expresses his belief in his innocence, but springs a final surprise on his audience by claiming that Rath too is innocent, and bringing the true culprit to justice.

This inventive story marks the end of the most fruitful partnership between Blake and Cavendish. But it is by no means the end of Eustace, for a new role is waiting just around the corner . . .

THE TRAVELLING MERRYMAKERS

by Dawn Marler

Part 2 (Conclusion)

It is then back to "The Merry-makers Afloat" (3), (G/C 1948 - 1949); then there is another of "The Flying Merry-makers" (G/C 1949), when Sally & Co. become prisoners on a flying boat; they end up in Australia before their fellow students, caught up in an adventure, of course. Then comes "The Merry-makers in Australia" (G/C 1949); this was the start of their long stay in that country; first adventure and mystery on the mainland; then, in "The Merry-makers Island College" (G/C 1950), they are at the International College with the rest of the students from the *Ocean Star*; the college was set on an island off the coast of Australia. This series ran in the *Girls' Crystal* during the 1950s. At the end of the series, the end of 1950, the Merry-makers move on, restarting their own nomad life.

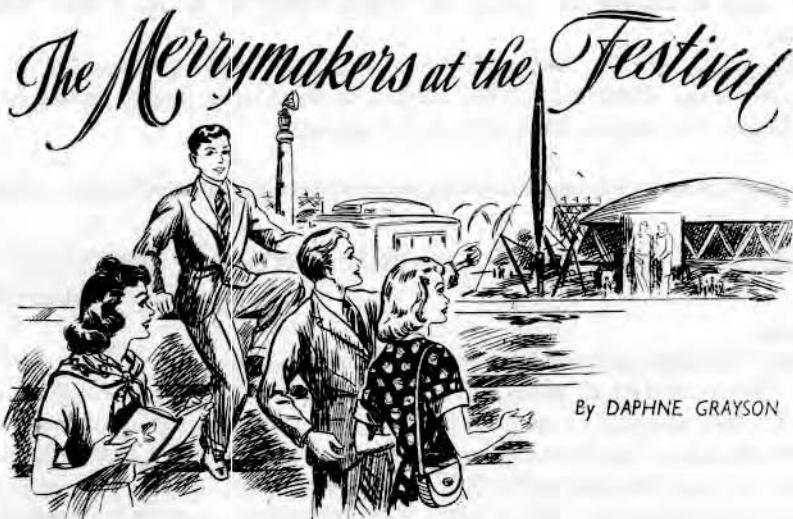
In the *Girls' Crystal* 1951, the Merry-makers began their tour of Britain, with Sally's uncle Steve Carson. In this series we have "The Merry-makers and the Cuckoo Clock" (G/C 1951); "The Merry-makers on the Chicken Farm" (G/C 1951), both are set in Devon. "The Merry-makers at the Exhibition" (G/C April 1951), "The Merry-makers at the Cornish Carnival" (G/C May 1951), and "The Merry-makers Picnic Adventure" (G/C 1951) are all set in Cornwall.



"The Merry-makers at the Cornish Carnival" is a story set in Helston: "all this dancing through the streets" would be the Helston Floral Dance, which is held each year on May 8th. The first dance of the day is done by the schools; the girls are dressed in white

dresses, shoes and socks, partnered by the boys dressed in white trousers, shirts, socks and shoes; they dance in a long procession through the decorated streets, headed by the Helston band; the later dancing is done by adults, dressed in cheerful summer wear, they dance through the streets, in and out of the houses and shops. It is a real carnival atmosphere, and this comes out in the story. There is, of course, amidst these Cornish festivities, the element of mystery for the Merrymakers to solve.

"The Merrymakers Picnic Adventure" is set on the Helford River in Cornwall; it is also the setting of Daphne Du Maurier's lovely story "Frenchman's Creek"; in fact several of her stories are set in Cornwall: "Rebecca", "Jamaica Inn", a thrilling story of smuggling days in Cornwall, and "The House on the Strand".



During their tour of Britain, the Merrymakers visited London which, in 1951, was celebrating one hundred years since the Great Exhibition of 1851. The Festival of Britain was a symbol of harmony and confidence in the industrial development of Britain; exhibited were the works of industry of all nations; so 1951 was an important year for London and Britain in general. In their sightseeing in London, the Merrymakers visited many places of interest, learning and gathering information as they went, a valuable asset to their education. They would have seen such places as the Royal Festival Hall, Hyde Park, the site of the Great Exhibition, and the Prince Albert Memorial, which was formally unveiled in 1872. This wonderful memorial was designed by Gilbert Scott. Seated in the centre of the memorial is the figure of Prince Albert; a book is held in his right hand; the cover shows the symbol of the Great Exhibition in which he was a great believer. He sits dressed in the robes of a Knight of the Garter. Other places of interest would include art galleries and museums, the Great Parks, Windsor Castle, Buckingham Palace and the famous Mall to Horseguards Parade.

How much the Merrymakers actually knew of British history is difficult to say. They were probably bewildered by it all. Their visit to London was not without its mystery and suspense, which seemed to follow them everywhere they went.



“The Merrymakers Island Adventure” (SGOL 60) does not appear in the *Girls’ Crystal*; it was a one-off story and another adventure packed into their tight schedule. This time they were on a pleasure cruise on a boat called the *Southern Queen*, with a Mr. Hartley, another of Sally’s uncles. They were bound for Hawaii. En route they came to a South Tropical island. It was the first land the Merrymakers had seen for some time. Sally & Co. were

naturally eager to explore the island; the island turned out to be a real “Island of Adventure”.

Finally, Sally & Co. have a Swiss Christmas holiday to remember in “The Merrymakers Swiss Christmas” (SGPL 106), after receiving a mystery invitation to an Alpine chateau. This began a thrilling Christmas adventure.

WHOSE PAL? FRIENDSHIP AND ISOLATION AT GREYFRIARS

by Andrew Miles

Part Three

Study 8 is traditionally credited with four members - Newland, Penfold, Trevor and Treluce. Trevor and Treluce are cronies of Bulstrode and Co. in the early days, but never really cads. They do not, for example, participate in the proposed ragging of Linley and his sister (69) and quickly fade from the scene. One must wonder whether they might have left Greyfriars, as Lacey and other earlier Removites obviously did. Penfold and Newland, on the other hand, feature from time to time. Their friendship is not well documented, but seems to be based on their respective isolation. Penfold, a scholarship boy and son of the Friardale cobbler, is a quiet unassuming fellow who concentrates on his studies. The Remove are happy to welcome him in the soccer and cricket XI, but have little else to do with him; he is another character isolated by swotting and poverty. As a local of Friardale, he might even be a day-boy; at a boarding Public School, this alone would isolate him significantly. I remember well from my own school days the contempt with which the boarders looked down on us “day-bugs”! Newland, one of the wealthiest fellows in the school, is clearly isolated by his Jewish background. Frank Richards’ yarns feature ugly Jewish caricatures several times - most commonly as money-lenders or unscrupulous second-hand dealers. Newland is portrayed as a thoroughly decent and unostentatious chap to break the stereotype. He endures Bunter’s scorn and taunts of “sheeney” with dignity and restraint, but gets little support from the Form. Even the Famous Five, although civil, have little to do with him.

In Study 10 we see two more isolated boys - Bolsover and Dupont. Bolsover the bully is always quick to give his opinion and to lead opposition to Wharton in the same way as Bulstrode did in the early days. Yet he has no real friends among his supporters, only flatterers, toadies and manipulators. He is usually the catspaw of the wily Skinner.

Dupont, diminutive, eccentric and French, is greatly attached to Bolsover for his protection; no one would dare rag Bolsover's study-mate and even Bunter seldom raids his study. Bolsover basks in the admiration of Dupont and enjoys his fine cooking. Dupont does, however, act independently of Bolsover. He does not usually support him against Wharton and Bolsover is not involved at all in the affair of Walker's cigarette packet (1318). Dupont's language, temperament and mannerisms earn him no other friends, although he is not unpopular. The Co. are prepared to invite him to tea or picnics but, because they are not pally with Bolsover, cannot regularly do so. In the "Strong Alonzo" series (*Magnet* 1344 - 1348) a tealess Co. is looking for an invitation; they would happily call on Dupont but for the fact that Study 10 is also Bolsover's. An invitation from Toddy to join in Bunter's hamper (stolen from Coker) shows the generally stony Toddy glad, for once, to be able to repay hospitality.

Bolsover sometimes chums with Skinner and Co. In the "Bunter Court" series (910 ff) he is seen on a cycling tour with them during the summer hols. This is an interesting if ill-assorted group. A beefy fellow like Bolsover must have been desperate for company to have joined the expedition with such sneering, weedy slackers as Skinner and Snoop. Bolsover is not wealthy enough to interest Skinner, except as a tool for arousing dissent. Bolsover is not averse to an occasional fag or game of nap, but is generally not mean-spirited. When Bunter - on the run and on his uppers - stumbles upon them in a barn, it is interesting to see Bolsover treat him hospitably and give him a whack in a meagre supper; Skinner and Co. would have kicked him out into the rain. The next morning, despite Bunter's snobbish outburst the night before, Bolsover lends him half a crown. Bolsover's generosity and sense of fair play are further shown when he pursues Bunter who has stolen Skinner's bike. He not only catches him but also makes him repair a puncture, then takes the bike back to Skinner. Skinner's own chum Snoop was indifferent to Skinner's dilemma throughout this incident.

In Study 11 Skinner, Snoop and Stott form a close-knit trio. Skinner is the leader, by virtue of his intellect, manipulative personality and solid commitment to underhand acts. Snoop is too funky even to be a committed rotter and is generally a snivelling object of derision. His brief foray into the behaviour of a decent chap occurs during WWI, when his loyalty to his convict father alienates him from Skinner and others and raises him in the estimation of the Famous Five. He even has a memorable scrap with Skinner. His popularity later peaks briefly when he commits an act of courage (*Magnet* 1135) and meets his Canadian uncle. It is disappointing that he sinks back into the mire and never re-emerges. One must assume that he could not find any close chums (during this period he chums briefly with Wally Bunter posing as Billy - *Magnet* 582 ff) and soon drifted back under Skinner's influence. Stott, generally under Skinner's thumb, occasionally defies him. He plays Soccer for the Remove when Hazel refuses (Wharton the Rebel - *Magnet* 1285-1296) and single-handedly attacks Strong Alonzo who has burst into the box room to break up a smoking party. He also encourages Skinner and Snoop to stand by the Form in the Cassell Barring Out story. All three - as well as smoking and gambling - enjoy arousing discord among "Wharton and his lot". That they are allies rather than friends is best shown whenever they have to face the music - there is never any loyalty, only a determination on the part of each to save his own skin. This is well shown in the "Waring - Convict" series (*Magnet* 1039 ff) when Skinner and Snoop, while smoking and gambling in the Cloisters,

encounter Waring and assume that he is Gilmore. It is Wharton who acts like a pal and gives advice to Skinner. He, in a state of blue funk, has lost all his usual cunning.

Study 12 is said to be inhabited by Mauly, Vivian and Delarey. Delarey was a Pentelow creation who was not embraced by Charles Hamilton and I omit him from this article. Vivian crops up often enough in yarns to confirm that he never left Greyfriars, but he is often absent from the action. His manners and customs grate on Mauly who - ever the perfect gentleman - never lets that fact show. Apart from the patronage and tolerance of Mauly, his cousin, Vivian has no friends. The snobbish set shun him, despising his poverty as much as his common upbringing and cockney accent; his title of baronet would doubtless impress them if he were wealthy. The decent chaps will occasionally entertain him through good nature. The Famous Five even spend one holiday with him at Pengarth (806 ff). His lazy Lordship lacks the physical energy to commit himself to a friendship on a regular basis. He is kind and generous and only able to see good in anyone, but would happily snooze away his life on the study sofa. He twice exerts himself impressively as Form leader (High Oakes and the Tuckshop Rebellion) and ignores the scorn of the Form more than once to chum vigorously with outcasts (e.g. he bowls for the outcast Wharton in "Bunter Butts In" [Cassell]). He is his own man.

In Study 13 are four of the most interesting figures at Greyfriars - Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, Wun Lung and Inky. Cherry and Inky, as members of the Co. are central figures. They are, however, somewhat lonely. Cherry is the exuberant, effervescent extrovert who is always friendly to new "kids" and never harbours a malicious thought. He is universally popular - with his peers, other Forms, the prefects (except Loder) and Quelch, who avoids showing any favouritism. He is even Frank Richards' favourite character.

Cherry often encourages or leads in some boisterous activity - such as passage soccer on a wet half-holiday - and is always to the fore in Form affairs. A mighty man at games and in a scrap, he has only one weakness - his academic performance. This leads to his father's dissatisfaction with him and to his only significant downfall - the "Swot" series. His hard-won victory over Bull in a scrap and his rapprochement with his father because of his fistical prowess - "three to one" - show his toughness. He is forgiven for failing his exam and all is well. He sulks briefly at Wharton Lodge in *Bunter Comes for Christmas* (Cassell) after Bunter ships Wharton's bed. He resents his friends' attitude - that only he is thoughtless enough for such conduct but they forgive him anyway! Yet, despite his popularity and centrality, Bob is a lonely character. He is always prominent in the group, but never chums with any single character; he is just one of the Five. Within the Co. there is a special bond between Wharton and Nugent, but Bob has no special chum. He would dearly love to chum with Marjorie Hazeldene, but she invariably favours Wharton.

Linley, the Lancashire lad, despite general popularity, is severely isolated; a scholarship boy who must regularly prize-hunt, he also faces scorn and snobbery from the cads. He is well accepted by the decent chaps because of his prowess at games, but his determination not to accept charity from them means that he can seldom tea with them. With the exception of the "Cunliffe" Easter (114/115), he never accepts holiday invitations. He suffers further isolation in the 2nd Wharton Downfall series (1255 ff) when he replaces Wharton as Head Boy. Quiet and withdrawn by nature, he never seems to participate in rags in class with M. Charpentier or in the quad or Remove passage. He pulls well with his studymates but, apart from when involved in games, is usually alone.

Inky stands apart from the rest in many ways; he is a prince, has dark skin and speaks quaint English. A good all-rounder, his is well-liked, only Bunter - or rotters like Loder - uttering the opprobrious epithet "nigger". He is always prepared to forget his royal status and to pitch in. At some stage he loses his WWI predilection for a diet comprising only bananas and joins the others in more traditional schoolboy fare. In the India series (960 ff), he is shown to good effect. The Co. learn just how different their coloured chum and his destiny are. There is always a gulf and it is occasionally and subtly shown. As the Hindu prince, he must behave in Baniphur in a way which sets him apart from his friends. His ruthlessness as he tracks down his enemies startles his friends. Inky enjoys some individual chumming with Wharton. He must stay in England for his hols and vacations are always spent with Wharton. The Co. are inseparable for most of each holiday, but Inky always stays at Wharton Lodge when the rest of the Co. are spending the rest of the vac with their own families. In the "Mystery of Wharton Lodge" (1349 ff), Bunter's ventriloquism causes an estrangement between Wharton and Inky. Inky displays a steely resolve and sense of offended dignity and rapprochement does not come easily. Although the two have spent much time alone together, the pride of each nearly causes a breaking of their friendship.

Wun Lung's appearance, language and unusual manners and customs (including his culinary tastes and strange sense of humour) keep him isolated. The Remove would turn a blind eye to his quaint speech (as they do to Inky's) and exotic dress, but pick-pocketing for a lark and dog or rat pies stretch their tolerance too far. In the early days he relies on Wharton's protection from Bulstrode. Later, he relies more on Cherry to protect him from the likes of Bolsover. He seems content to spend much of his time smiling blandly, planning the occasional mischief, avoiding consequences by saying "no savvy" and sitting curled up in the study armchair. His only pal is Hop Hi, his Minor; their language, as they chat in the quad together, is likened to cracking nuts. The epithet of "heathen" is applied to him by nearly all the Form; only the maturity of Wharton and the Chesterfield-like courtesy of Mauleverer stop that practice becoming universal. Even the Co. will sometimes, in exasperation, exclaim "the potty little heather doesn't know the difference!" Wun Lung savvies only too well, but relies on his bland visage and child-like smile to avoid consequences.

(To Be Concluded)

It helps the C.D. if you advertise your "For Sales" and Wants in it. The rates are: 4p per word, £5 for a quarter page, £10 for a half page and £20 for a whole page.

I graduated to *Dixon Hawke's Case Book* after following the exploits of Inspector Stanley, who appeared in *Radio Fun* in the 1940s. Week after week an Inspector Stanley adventure appeared, always accompanied by his photograph, complete with pipe and bowler hat. His stories always had intriguing titles: "The Mystery of the Missing Words", "The Crime Around the Corner", "The House on the Dunes", "The Lodger at Number Twelve", "The Crime at Boltscarrow Head", "The House of Ling Foo". The crimes were invariably solved in a thoughtful, Holmes-like manner, and Stanley was usually assisted by his plodding colleague Detective Constable Horace Bloom.

The bowler-hatted, pipe-smoking Inspector Stanley, "The Man with a Thousand Secrets", in an illustration from the 1957 *Radio Fun Annual*



"Can you remember anything about the person who sold you the monkey?" Inspector Stanley asks the pet shop proprietor. "Only that it was a woman," replies the man.

After Inspector Stanley it did not take me long to discover *Dixon Hawke's Case Book*. This appeared at regular intervals from 1938 to 1953 and was usually priced at two shillings (though copies have become so scarce they nowadays change hands for £30 or more!). These paperback volumes invariably featured a photograph of Hawke on the front cover: for example, watching forgers at work, looking at a revolver through a magnifying glass, in a dressing gown in his study, or examining a map.

A typical *Case Book*, always captioned "Thrilling Detective Stories", would include twenty cases of the famous detective, all with titles designed to arouse the reader's curiosity: "The Case of the Hollow Spoon", "The Case of the Three Crooked Crosses", "The Case of the Long-Distant Call", "The Case of the Railway Tunnel", "The Ghost of Pit 13". Ably assisted by his faithful assistant Tommy Burke, Hawke always succeeded in

'getting his man' and solved his problems through a process of skill and deduction. Published by the well-known firm of DC Thomson, publishers of the *Dandy* and the *Beano*, *Dixon Hawke's Case Book* was a well produced and popular series which is now much sought after by collectors. Though I enjoy watching the exploits of Hercule Poirot, Sherlock Holmes and Miss Marple, I will always have fond memories of Inspector Stanley and Dixon Hawke. Their adventures always depended on skill in following clues and held the reader's attention until the last sentence. We knew they would inevitably solve the mystery in the end, but unravelling the riddle was always great fun.



by Margery Woods

JULY - THE END OF AN ENGLISH WINTER?

The arrival of June rarely fails to spark the optimism of the long-suffering inhabitants of Britain. If it's June, it's supposed to flame, isn't it? Alas, it rarely threatens a mild blush of sunburn let alone incineration. But optimism refuses to be quelled; July is coming, it must bring a joyous burst of heat and sun and holidays. Sadly, it usually follows the example of June and leaves the hardy Britisher packing umbrellas and macks and wellies and waiting hopefully for August . . . unless you happen to belong to Cliff House school.

On this July day of 1932 the sun was blazing forth "in a sky as blue as the eyes of Barbara Redfern" while the sea shimmered and sparkled and the chums enjoyed a beach picnic.

Of course an idyllic start to a half hol always proved a deceptive prelude to adventure and danger for the Cliff House girls. And this one was no exception.

Clara Trevlyn, the Tomboy of the Fourth, began it all by spilling the picnic bottle of milk. If she hadn't done that she wouldn't have had to set off to the nearest cottage in search of milk, and she wouldn't have passed the ruined old Monk's Folly and seen the face of a girl full of distress at the window at the top of the turret. There was no way Clara was going to ignore that distress and she plunged headlong into the ancient building, but instead of finding the girl she finds only a tin containing some papers. The next moment

she is suddenly captured and bound and gagged by Skipper Jake and his confederate, then pushed into a launch bound for Belwin Island.

While they wait for Clara to return the chums watch the launch reach the island and the men aboard drag a large bundle ashore, never dreaming it is the chum they are beginning to feel concern about. It is Bessie who has the next encounter with mystery at the Folly when she hears a child's voice call "Hello, Fat Girl", then a weird moaning sound and a voice telling her to beware. Bessie forgets her exhaustion and rushes after the chums who are seeking Clara. Like the Tomboy, Bessie is unaware that the girl, the little boy, and their grandmother are hiding in the top turret room, terrified of discovery by the gang who have captured Clara. For the girl, Amy, has some precious papers she found among her late father's belongings in their cottage. The papers relate to money he has hidden on Belwin Island before his last voyage, the voyage from which he was fated never to return. But Skipper Jake had learned of this and so Amy had made fake papers to try to mislead him. These were the papers Clara had found.

The story threads now laid, there came a certain amount of signalling by mirror. Clara trying to catch the attention of her chums, Jake stopping her, and Babs signalling back, which betrays the girls' presence. Meanwhile, Amy exiting from the turret room via a secret door discovers the maze of caves below and gets lost in them, then young Ronnie

Clara in Captivity



By **JILDA
RICHARDS**

KIDNAPPED by a daring gang of plotters and made a prisoner in the lonely ruins of Monk's Folly, on rock-bound Belwin Island! That was the adventure which befell Tomboy Clara Trevlyn—an adventure which affected not only the Tomboy herself, but her chums of the Fourth Form as well!

follows while Grandma is dozing. Ronnie's imagination is fantasizing about a brave prince who walks into the black cave where the dragon has his lair and slays it. Sadly, Ronnie's dragon comes in the shape of Jake and his co-villain as they arrive in the launch. In his five-year-old innocence Ronnie gives away his identity. Jake promptly carries the child away to join Clara.

But it doesn't take the Tomboy long to outwit her captors and escape into the dusk with Ronnie and a large lantern for more signalling. On shore the chums are on the lookout, and the signal also attracts the notice of Amy, who has been found earlier by the chums while they searched the caves in the hope of finding Clara. But Amy had refused to talk and had rushed back up the cliff path. But now the awaited link-up comes and the separate elements of Amy, Ronnie, Clara and the chums tie up the ends. Clara and Ronnie are brought back and a plan is formulated to trap the plotters, find the money and have a grand celebratory party later that evening.

This was a single story with quite a lot of action and twists within it to keep the pages turning. The following week's issue was also a single, this time featuring the vivacious little French girl, Marcelle Biquet. The form is shocked when she begins to behave completely out of character and becomes very unpopular. Of course Marcelle has a very good reason for this and will not be deflected from her purpose, even though it means much sad conflict with her chum, Leila Carroll, the American junior. Marcelle's brother has arrived in England under an assumed name as a French master. Alphonse has been estranged from his family for several years after a false accusation against him. But the more perceptive Babs suspects that there is a reason for Marcelle's strange behaviour and searches out the truth when she discovers the unpleasant practical joker - a boy known to Leila - who is responsible. Then news comes from Paris that Alphonse's good name has been cleared at last and all ends happily for Marcelle and her brother. Alphonse made several more appearances in later stories, notably in the Shaw Dennis series when he played an important part in bringing Valerie Charmant's scheming foster cousin to justice.

The month continued with the end of term story in which the chums are eagerly preparing for their summer adventures, aboard a cruise ship bound for the Mediterranean and Venice. But before this longed for day arrives they have to deal with Alma Croke, who is being taken away from Cliff House and sent to work in a dull office. She is determined to get her own back on the chums and the school for imagined slights. As the story weaves on it seems that Alma is succeeding as she wreaks havoc and trouble for the girls by her many acts of spite. She floods the wing where the Fourth live and even the mistresses do not escape her last fling of treachery.

Only one girl has sympathy for Alma. This is Janet Jordan, whose uncle is a friend of Alma's father, and Janet tries to persuade her uncle to intercede on Alma's behalf and let her stay on at Cliff House.

This story takes a sad and bitter twist when Janet's uncle telephones her to say that Alma's father has agreed to let Alma stay on, provided she gets a good end of term report. Janet rushes to Alma's study with the good news but is stopped by Miss Primrose. At this pause voices are heard coming from Alma's study where she is triumphantly recounting her exploits to a friend. So Janet's good deed is in vain and Alma is expelled. All the detentions and lines the girls have suffered are cancelled and they can start looking forward to that cruise.

July 1933 was Tomboy Clara's month, and the following year, July 1934, found Clara's support badly needed by Marjorie Hazeldene on behalf of her cousin Ralph who was in trouble again. Then came a series about the art mystery at Cliff House which introduced a much needed spot of light relief when Bessie Bunter took up art.

Bessie's discussion with an art dealer on the finer points of painting is a gem, alas too long to quote here, as are her attempts to paint a masterpiece for which she will receive the magnificent sum of two thousand pounds which she plans to present to Muriel Bond, the young servant whose grandfather was an artist and whose pictures had been left concealed at the school many years previously. Bessie's heart was always in the right place - except where food was concerned - but sadly for Bessie's hopes the art dealer's idea of a masterpiece was somewhat different from that of the duffer of the Fourth. Perhaps in a later day and age Bessie herself, when thoroughly involved with paint all over her person, may well have proved a living masterpiece and had star position at the Tate.

July 35 found Clara up to her eyes in trouble again, on behalf of others of course, and becoming a day-girl while she doggedly continued to outwit yet another collection of plotters.

July 1936 brought a new Captain for the Fourth, Eleanor Stokes, and concluded with Clara taking over.

July 1937 found June Merrett in the limelight for a single story, which followed with the advent of Princess Naida, who was their hostess at Luxor Hall and the Palace of Palms during earlier adventures, and a sojourn under canvas for the chums while redecoration took place at the school rounded off the month.

Christine Wilmer opened the sporting adventures of July 1938 with the accent on a regatta, and then Amy The Unlucky saw the month out in a tale of a missing twenty pounds belonging to Miss Bullivant of all people. Amy Jones was well known as the unluckiest girl in the school, and when Frances Frost took a spiteful hand in the matter poor Amy's luck was totally out. But fortunately Babs dealt with Frances and the Bull discovered that she hadn't lost the money after all. Perhaps poor Amy's luck was turning at last.

The July of 1939 was the last July for Cliff House. It held several great stories, the pick of them featuring the all-time favourite, Jemima Carstairs, in a most intriguing tale entitled "Jemima and the Chinese Pagoda", and the month ended on a touching note when Bessie had to leave Cliff House. Fortunately for Bessie's many admirers this proved a temporary business. Aunt Annie has turned up and Bessie has been offered a wonderful future in faraway Australia, but Bessie, once the euphoria engendered by the promise of wealth has begun to evaporate, suddenly realises where home is, and her heart is definitely there with her beloved chums. So Bessie turns down the chance of a lifetime to stay at Cliff House. Did she make the right decision? The readers had no doubts.

FORUM

“Bai jove. It’s weally wippin’ of that chap Bwian Doyle to point out to you youngsters in last month’s toppin’ C.D. that the weal diffERENCE between those Gwange Hill bouncers and our good thelves is how badly they speak. As a wepwesentative of Gweyfriars, Maulewewer, don’t you agwee?”

“Oh, yaas.”

“I mean, such a total lack of articulation. Isn’t that wight, Fwy?”

“Oh, rather!”

“Dwoppin’ ‘h’s’ all over the place - scatterin’ them like confetti. I mean to say, if a foweigner can make the effort to learn to speak the Queen’s English, why can’t those wotters who are born here do so? Don’t you agwee, Huwwee Singh?”

“The agreeefulness is terrific, my esteemed chum. But the dropfulness of the absurd letters is a cracked pitcher worth two birds in a bush.”

“Pwecisely.”

(As reported by Nic Gayle.)

From John Hammond:

Can any C.D. reader possibly help me to identify the series described below? (It has been tantalising me for years.)

This was not a serial, but a complete self-contained story appeared each week. Unfortunately, I cannot remember the title. It concerned a man who lives alone but wishes to be entertained with an absorbing or gripping story. He advertises in the paper that he will pay a hundred pounds to anyone who will tell him a true story which will grip his imagination. Each story always ended in the same way - the man would thank the storyteller and hand over the hundred pounds in cash. He always carried a candelabra!

These stories must have appeared about 1945 or 1946. But what was the title of the series, and which paper was it??

From Steve Holland:

Just a quickie. Re my mention of C. Eaton Fearn in C.D. 627-8 (p35): I did some further digging and can confirm that Cecil Isaac Fearn was born in Utttoxeter in 1899 and died in Welwyn Garden City on 6 February 1963, aged 63.

From Robert Marsh:

I am seeking information about the “Teddy Lester” stories by John Finnemore. I have two books, “Teddy Lester, Captain of Cricket” and “His First Term” by ‘Latimer House’ publishers. I am sure your readers will have encountered these stories, and would appreciate any information about them.

From Ted Baldock:

I found Brian Doyle’s comments in ‘Forum’ most interesting (627 & 628), especially those dealing with the possible derivation of the term “Go and eat coke”. It was widely used among young fellows - and others - in the long ago years of school and areas beyond.

To "Go and eat coke" was, I recall, a retort, or a reproach to an opinion with which one did not agree.

On the surface it would appear to be a meaningless remark. Yet it would appear to have its origins in the works of the 'Bard of Avon', it being one of his better known exclamations, apparently a corruption of Caesar's reproach to Brutus - "Tu quoque, Brutus" - and thou too Brutus. Although now ancient history I recall this being explained to us while at school, so it is one more possible origin of this well used phrase.

It is similarly quoted in "Crowther's Encyclopaedia of Phrases and Origins". Thus one has a schoolboy exclamation with diverse and tangled roots, any of which will - and do - serve admirably.

As there must be few things more unpleasant to accomplish than 'eating coke', it may be viewed, I suggest, as the ultimate rebuff.

From Jim Lake:

Quite recently, while spending a few days' holiday at Margate, I decided to pay a visit to have a look at Frank Richards' old home "Rose Lawn". An almost straight walk brought me to the sea end of Percy Avenue. Standing outside "Rose Lawn", I reflected this was the residence where Charles Hamilton, Frank Richards, Martin Clifford, Owen Conquest, Ralph Redway etc. turned out such wonderful stories. Walking back to Margate, I started to think of Coker, Potter and Greene, almost caught by the tide in the 1933 "Sea Nymph" series. This was a visit I will always remember.

Finally I would like to say how much I enjoyed reading Peter Mahony's articles about Bob Cherry in the C.D. I wonder if Peter has read "Bessie Bunter of Cliff House School" (1949) in which Bob took up detective work to try to clear Marjorie's brother, accused of stealing, which in the end Bob managed.

GEMS OF HAMILTONIA

from Pete Hanger

"I'm tired!" said Bunter.

Billy Bunter made that remark in an accusing tone. Bunter appeared to have the impression that it was somebody's fault that he was tired after a day out. *Magnet* 1439

There was no doubt that any fellow at Greyfriars who had the remarkable desire to dig into such an author as Priscianus, was liable to be regarded as a swot, a smug, and a sap. There was only one copy of that ancient author in the school, the property of the Head, and it had certainly never been known before for a Greyfriars man to ask leave to look at it. Fellows doubted whether the Head ever did - but they did not doubt that, if he did, it gave him a headache. *Magnet* 1502

... "you can stand me a dinner at the bun-shop! If you all club together, you'll have enough ..."

Magnet 1451

The Remove master pointed to a chair with the cane.

"Bunter, bend over that chair."

"Oh, crikey."

"At once!" thundered Mr Quelch.

In the lowest possible spirits Billy Bunter bent over the chair. The cane swished and descended. Billy Bunter's tight trousers fairly rang under the swipes.

"Wow!" roared Bunter.

Whack!

"Yow!"

Whack!

"Yaroooooh!"

Billy Bunter had been whacked before, often, though not so often as he deserved.

Frank Richards, *Bunter Does His Best*.

It was all very trivial and unimportant and quite unworthy of the regrettable consequences, according to Bunter.

A fearful injustice had been committed concerning a cake - admittedly it was a largish cake with a generous roofing of marzipan, thereby making it doubly delectable, plus a few cherry tarts - a half dozen or so. The Owl had never concerned himself with high moral issues, indeed he had never been able fully to grasp the dictum of 'Meum et Tuum'.

Here were a cake and a bag of tarts unattended. This circumstance appeared to be reason enough for him to take charge, as it were. That they were reposing in Vernon-Smith's study cupboard would seem to have no bearing upon the situation. What Bunter was doing in Smithy's study was quite irrelevant, according to the Owl's tortuous reasoning, it was just one of his delightful little habits. This Smithy should have realised and taken into account. Unhappily the Bunder proved quite dense and unco-operative when he entered the study and found the masticatory drama in full swing, well into the last act as it were.

It had taken but a few minutes of champing and guzzling - two techniques highly polished and perfected by Billy Bunter. The cake shrank swiftly and grew beautifully less, the tarts were nothing more than a cherished memory except for a little sea of crumbs and stickiness on Smithy's carpet and a similar residue on Bunter's waistcoat, irrefutable evidence had such been required.

Smithy took in the scene at a glance and wasted not a moment. He needed no explanations, the evidence before his eyes was more than sufficient. He asked no questions. Thunder gathered on his brow as he closed the study door and reached for a fives bat which reclined on a shelf within comfortable reach for just such a situation as now presented itself. Shooting his cuffs and grasping the already wriggling Owl by his collar he swung him round into a suitable position. Bunter gave an anticipatory roar, which proved to be well-founded. It was like a bad dream experienced many times before. Smithy was getting his hand in with a vengeance. Clouds of dust rose from the seat of Bunter's trousers as the bat established contact with unerring accuracy and pendulum-like regularity. In similar rhythm came the roars of anguish from Bunter which awoke the echoes in the study, the Remove passage, and spaces far beyond.

Lord Mauleverer, enjoying a snooze in his study several doors away, stirred and glanced anxiously from his study window thinking a storm was brewing, and several old rooks high in the branches of the elms in the quad cawed restlessly and gazed in some alarm before taking wing.

William George Bunter was once again paying the inevitable price for his unacceptable social behaviour.

"Yaroo! Beast! I say, Smithy, it was a rotten cake anyway, and the tarts were . . ."
Diplomacy had never been in Bunter's line.

"Hold on, Smithy old chap," gasped Tom Redwing throwing up the window. "Just kick the fat cormorant out."

Whack - whack - whack.

"Yarooooh!"

WHACK.

One final swipe and Smithy was done. Not satisfied by any means but quite breathless, although it must be said not nearly so devastated as Bunter, who, it was observed, declined to sit down at tea that evening even though sardines and chocolate biscuits featured on the bill of fare.

Once again Bunter had the opportunity of learning his lesson the hard way - but here is ground we have trodden many times before, and it seems likely that it will be trodden just as frequently in the future.

THE FINAL STORY IN THE "BARRING-OUT" SERIES!

VICTORY FOR THE REBELS!



By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

.....

A REMINDER OF THE NELSON LEE (New Series 89, January 14th 1928)

DENNIS BIRD WRITES:

Dawn Marler's article: "The Travelling Merry-makers" in C.D. No. 630 revived pleasant memories.

I clearly remember the very first instalment. My sister bought the *Schoolgirls' Weekly* regularly and kindly let me read it. In May 1939 we were dismayed when it ceased publication and merged with the *Girls' Crystal*. However, we were soon won over to our new paper, which introduced us to six new stories every week. One featured the debonair male detective Noel Raymond; one was a Ruritanian serial "Princess on Probation". And one was "The Cruising Merry-makers", delightfully illustrated (as the Editor pointed out) by Valerie Gaskell. We already knew her work from *Schoolgirls' Weekly* days, for she also drew the pictures for the "Denise the Dancer" series (see *C.D. Annual 1998*).

As Dawn Marler says, there were four main Merry-makers. Sally Warner was always the principal - lively, cheerful, resourceful. Her best friend was Fay Manners - a rather pallid character, similar to Mabel Lynn in Hilda Richards' Cliff House School stories. A gentle romantic interest was injected by the two young men - Don Weston, always a faithful supporter of Sally, and the tough, somewhat thick-headed Johnny Briggs.

In the original stories on board the luxury liner S.S. *Dorian*, there were two more Merry-makers: Freddie Parker and Muriel Dean. My memories of them are rather vague. I think Freddie was the butt of some jokey incidents. Muriel made very little impression. The author, "Daphne Grayson" (Cecil Graveley) soon dropped them.

As I grew up, I ceased reading the *Girls' Crystal*, and so I had no knowledge of the Merry-makers in their late years. I am grateful to Dawn Marler for the information that they lasted until 1957. That is a span of 18 years - not bad going!

FELLOW COLLECTORS

I am hunting for the following **original Magnets** in good and complete condition. Can anyone help? Bound volumes containing any of these would be considered.

13	87	120	143	293	15	90	124	144	415	19	97	126	169
419	20	101	134	180	424	40	104	135	207	445	75	109	136
215	449	79	113	140	217	451	80	114	141	224	652	82	116
142	226	776											

Your reasonable prices paid or I have original *Magnets* and *Holiday Annuals* in good condition spare and would offer generous exchange terms if preferred.

IAN WHITMORE, 155 HILLCREST, WEYBRIDGE, SURREY KT13 8AS

WANTED URGENTLY - TO BUY OR BORROW

A copy of B.F.L. No. 46 "The Ocean Outlaw". It is the B.F.L. version of the *Modern Boy* serial of the same name, but I suspect that it also contains parts of the M.B. serial "Hunted Down" (M.B. Nos. 200 - 209) and would like to confirm this.

R. HIBBERT, 30 ALTON ROAD, ROSS ON WYE, HR9 5ND.

Telephone (01989) 564512

FROM TONY GLYNN

Of all the doggy heroes of the old AP comic papers - and there were plenty - the funniest looking was certainly Homeless Hector, of *Chips*. In fact, a case could be made for Hector being the funniest looking dog in the history of dogdom. His adventures, subtitled "The Tail of a Lost Dog", delighted me in the late thirties, when they were drawn by Arthur Martin.

He was frequently accompanied by a chum who was an unusual one for a dog to have. Moonlight Moggie was a cat!



NEWS OF THE OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUBS

London O.B.B.C.

There were a good many visitors to the home of Eric and Betty Lawrence on June 13th 1999 for the meeting in Wokingham.

It was a sunny day, as is customary on this annual visit, and members enjoyed various hobby related activities. Eric provided much of the entertainment, with a music quiz, a word puzzle and his reminiscences of his favourite school story, "The Outlaw of the Shell" by John Finnemore.

Roger Jenkins contributed an interesting paper examining Charles Hamilton's approach to sport in his school stories; Derek Hinrich introduced us to the thriller writer Kevin Fitzgerald; Bill Bradford led us down memory lane.

All in all, it was another fine meeting at a venue that has been the Club's traditional summer haunt since 1962. That's coming up for forty years, you know! How time flies.

Vic Pratt

Northern O.B.B.C.

We were delighted to have with us our guest from the London Club, Peter Mahony, and his wife, Dorothy. It was proposed that for our August meeting, we attend the evening performance of Agatha Christie's *Black Coffee* at the Leeds Grand Theatre - preceded by an "early bird" pre-theatre dinner.

Peter spoke most enthusiastically and with great knowledge on "Rookwood". Very few of our members had read anything relating to this school, yet Peter was able to enlighten us and give an excellent, well documented insight into the make-up. Stories of Rookwood ran in *The Boys' Friend* from 1915 to 1926 and then transferred to *The Penny Popular* until 1930.

Peter explained the characteristics of the boys and masters and compared them to those of Greyfriars or St. Jim's. Obviously some characters were similar, yet they did have their own particular stamp. Dr. Chisholm, the headmaster, was the catalyst for pushing along the plot in many cases and generally they could be more refined than in the *Magnet* or *Gem*. The "bad boys" were generally better characterised than others, as in the case of the other schools of Charles Hamilton.

Paula Johnson in her "perusals" spoke about the books she would wish to have with her if stranded on a desert island. Apart from the Chalet School books, she had a wide selection of titles and authors and she gave the reason why she liked them. She read excerpts to justify her decision from writers such as Richmal Crompton, Arthur Ransome, Violet Needham, Terry Pratchett, P.G. Wodehouse, Helen Cresswell, Diana Wynny Jones, Monica Dickens, M.M. Kaye, Cynthia Harnett and Jenny Ounton. Paula's item was well researched, entertaining and most enjoyed by all.

Johnny Bull Minor

THE SCHOOLGIRL

Every Saturday 2^D.

No. 261. Vol. 11.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
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Week Ending July 28th, 1934.

BESSIE BUNTER —the Great Artist!

An amusing incident from the
very thrilling story within—

"THE PUZZLE OF THE PAINTINGS"
by Hilda Richards.



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Editor: Mary Cadogan, 46 Overbury Avenue, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 6PY

Printed by Quacks Printers, 7 Grape Lane, Petergate, York, YO1 7HU. Tel. 01904-635967