

THE NEW Greyfriars Herald

EXTRA
GOOD
EDITION

No. 69 (New Series).

EDITED BY HAERY WHARTON.

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Dear Friars,

This Christmas Newsletter heralds the approach of another festive season and with it the end of the current Greyfriars Press programme, culminating in THE MYSTERY OF THE MOAT HOUSE (due for release in early December).

This collection, the last-ever Christmas at Wharton Lodge, is one of the best Yuletide series penned by Frank Richards. Note the glorious and hilarious exchange between WGB and the minions at Chunkley's Stores anent a Christmas Pudding ... (the opening chapters of 'Phantom of the Moat House' no. 1661) followed by the Bunter/Ferrers Locke interview--truly Frank Richards at his most brilliant and humorous! We do wonder why some veterans declare that Frank Richards had passed his prime by the early thirties! Au contraire, it is the belief of Greyfriars Press that far from the old Master losing his skills, his creative powers continued to burgeon to the end of the Magnet run on that historic date in May, 1940. We are sure that the majority of Friars concur and certainly general sales figures bear out this contention.

Post-Christmas, this volume takes the reader forward into the New Year with the well-remembered traditional scenes at Lantham and Courtfield stations on first day of term, and beyond ... A volume somewhat reminiscent of the Courtfield Cracksman series (Vol 5) though, regrettably, not of such jumbo-size proportions.

NEW CATALOGUE



The Spring Catalogue shows what is in store for the first half of 1975. As you will see, this is virtually an all-Magnet programme: the sole exception being that rare collector's item THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL FOR 1920. Inflation forces us to concentrate on the best selling line, and by that token the Magnet is the winner--every time. GEM sales come a poor second, while the demand for NELSON LEE is minimal. To date we have included these latter categories purely as a service to Gem and Nelson Lee fans, but in the teeth of ever-rising costs more realistic--and less altruistic--counsels must perforce prevail.



THE BIOGRAPHY OF CHARLES HAMILTON

Production of THE WORLD OF FRANK RICHARDS proceeds apace and we hope to publish before Easter. A firm date announcement will be made early in the New Year. The price will be approximately £2.95. This long-awaited work will incorporate a great deal of 'inside' information, never before revealed, garnered from the official files of the Amalgamated Press and also from the Magnet editor, the late C M Down: information which he

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incorporating THE GREYFRIARS PRESS publishers

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requested be not revealed in his lifetime. Compilation is by two dedicated researchers, W O Lofts and D J Adley. The book will include illustrations and an Index.



FLORIAT GREYFRIARS

Richard Lister, our latter-day Greyfriars Rhymster, has sent us another poem of praise:

Return to Greyfriars

Remembering evenings long ago
When chilly winter winds did blow,
Whilst snug and glowing in my den,
I read of Greyfriars once again.

What drama, humour, courage, cheer,
Beneath those orange covers dear,
Enhanced by Richards' magic blend,
With truth triumphant in the end.

Appealingly he set the scene,
In quad or cloistered paths serene,
With ripping wheezes, robust fun,
And fat Owl blinking in the sun.

What situations he'd contrive
For Coker, or the Famous Five,

Unwitting Gosling causing mirth
('Boys should be drowned at
their birth')

With boisterous pluck, the
Greyfriars lads,
Would vanquish cheeky Highcliffe
cads,
So heartily they did deplore
Sly shady Pon, and Vavasour.

In present tense frenetic days,
When pressures build, and spirit
frays,
How comforting, just now and then,
To read of Greyfriars once again.

MORE LETTERS

Apropos our latest GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY ANNUAL 1975, Friar Brunwin of Camberley, Surrey writes:

'The latest GHA comprises the greatest collection of Hamilton lore ever assembled through any media. A masterpiece. I am sure that Greyfriars enthusiasts, worldwide, will echo my delight'.



How do we follow that !

Friar John Vela of London SE25 writes:

'Congratulations on the GHA 1975--what a feast !

'Every month is brightened by the arrival of the latest Greyfriars Press offering... All the worries, pressures and concerns of everyday life are dispelled for a few joyous hours'.

THE GEM

Friar Singleton of Liverpool inquires why we do not produce a Gem Companion after the fashion of the Magnet Companion.

We have essayed several attempts on this work but have been forced to abandon the project on each occasion due to the fact that the Gem issues do not follow the smooth course of the 1908-1940 Magnet life-line. For many years the Gem stories were the work of substitute writers, and in the early thirties the

Amalgamated Press decided to reprint genuine Hamilton (Martin Clifford) stories stretching back in origin to pre-1914. Then followed more substitute stories and the real Martin Clifford did not recommence writing for the Gem until 1939.

So, one can see what a confusing record it all is. Something like half of such a projected volume would be a chronicle of reprinted, repeated or substitute material.



MUTUAL AID

We hope that all of you will continue to take advantage of our special Bond offer. To spell out the mutual advantages:

- 1) You will still be buying your books at a reduced price--and also post free.
- 2) You will be insuring the receipt of your books in advance of publication--straight from source, and avoiding long frustrating delays through retailers &c.
- 3) By supporting Greyfriars Press in this way you will be providing us with sure, calculable sales, thus taking some of the speculation out of our endeavour and, in consequence, helping substantially in the continuation of the Greyfriars Press programme.

CONVENTION?

Friar Harlow of New Milton, Hampshire declares that the suggestion of a Greyfriars Press London Convention appeals very much--but wonders how serious is our intent. We have assured her that we are indeed considering the idea most seriously and that further details will be announced in the columns of the Newsletter if plans reach a happy state of coalescence.

DIMINISHING STOCKS

All readers should note that the following titles are, at least temporarily, out-of-print:

BILLY BUNTER'S CHRISTMAS
GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY ANNUAL 1974
THE JOKER OF GREYFRIARS



In the past we have reprinted out-of-stock titles as required but today with paper and production costs so high it is not practicable. Consequently, we ask readers to order as soon after publication date as possible to avoid disappointment later.

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

We wonder how many of our readers are aware of the existence of the COLLECTORS' DIGEST. This smart little amateur magazine is published monthly by Eric Payne of Excelsior House, 113 Crookham Road, Crookham, nr Aldershot, Hants. Price 17p. It contains articles on Hamilton lore, letters, opinions, reviews, features, covering all subjects of interest to keen Friars. If you wish to know more, write for details to Mr Payne.

COLLECTOR'S EXTRA

Many times we have been requested to produce a volume comprising the first WHARTON THE REBEL series in its entirety (nos 879-888) period 1924-5. Research indicates that a normal Greyfriars Press issue is not feasible. On the other hand a limited edition (such as the Greyfriars Double of June 1973) is practicable. The price of this de luxe, numbered edition, strictly limited to 400 printing, would be £10 per copy. If sufficient readers are interested we are prepared to publish such a volume. In order that we can gauge the demand we ask all potential customers to write to us now indicating their intent. If a sufficient number of Friars render an affirmative response we will put the project in hand immediately. In such event, publication date would be approx February/March 1975.



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

It only remains, in signing off, to wish all our readers everywhere a very Happy Christmas, and good fortune in the New Year. At the moment, prospects look a mite bleak for us all, but perhaps better times are around the corner. At least we will have the Greyfriars Press to help make things 'calm bright', and to remind you of happy days.

Sincerely,

The Publisher