


# The Greyfriars Gazette

NEWSLETTER No. 21

CHRISTMAS 1976



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Dear Friars,

Christmas has perforce come early this year at the Greyfriars Press. To avoid separate mailings we are sending out the entire Compton (Firefly) series in one parcel: THE SCHOOLBOY SMUGGLER and BUNTER'S CHRISTMAS PARTY. Plus our Spring 1977 catalogue and Bond.



We regret to report that the seemingly insatiable postal authorities have come back for more yet again, and our parcel contract prices have - yet again - been increased. From here on, it should be noted that the postage on parcels inside the UK (one-to-four books) is seventy pence (70p). Overseas Friars are asked to allow fifty pence (50p) per title as now.

## CLOSING THE GAPS

The time has arrived when we must face the fact that the tidy eight or nine issue collections of former days are coming to an end. Therefore, the splitting up of long series, and the occasional volume composed of singles, duos and trios will become a feature of future programmes.

However, there is still balm in Gilead, because the publication of extra-long series does - at last - give us the opportunity to begin 'filling in the gaps'. As readers who rule-off or tick-off the published stories on the pages of their new MAGNET COMPANION '77 will see, we are approaching the point where entire years 'runs' will soon be completed.

For example, it takes only the Bertie Vernon series plus 1613 and 1614 to complete the year 1939. We can close the file on 1938 with the publication of the Carter



FROM



HOWARD BAKER PRESS LIMITED

27a Arterberry Road, Wimbledon London, S.W.20

incorporating THE GREYFRIARS PRESS publishers



Christmas  
Greetings



series. The Muccolini's Circus series plus 1478 and 1492 will write finis to 1936, and observant Friars will have noted that 1935 is already complete.

So therefore under the 'ill-winds-and-some-good' department we would point out that the shortage of eight/nine part complete series is not entirely to be deplored : it will help us to close the gaps more quickly than would otherwise have been possible.

The awful alternative : producing series in one volume of maybe fourteen issues or more, which - under today's price structure - would place occasional volumes beyond the reach of some of our most faithful readers.



Of course, to accomodate the purist, we are always prepared to consider producing the occasional 'special' volume containing, say, twelve to fourteen issues - if a genuine demand is shown to exist.

#### OUT-OF-PRINT TITLES

The original edition of REBELLION OF HARRY WHARTON has gone out-of-print. So has COURTFIELD CRACKSMAN. Fortunately, some original 'flat sheets' and plates of the first title have been discovered, and we have arranged short-run binding of these to avoid disappointment to new Friars come lately to the scene. It is always regrettable when collectors join the hobby late and find themselves unable to complete collections.

We have had no such lucky find in the case of COURTFIELD CRACKSMAN, however. In order to fill this gap in Friars' collections we are having to reprint the title completely from scratch. It will appear as a 'Special' (Magnet Volume 4A) after the fashion of THE GREYFRIARS DOUBLE, Volume 18. Of course the cost of producing short-runs is high, and this compels us to price the few 'overs' of REBELLION OF HARRY WHARTON at £6.50, and the strictly limited edition of COURTFIELD CRACKSMAN at £12.00.

#### CREDIT PAYMENTS

Will all our overseas Friars please note that we cannot accept large remittances to be held as credit against future orders or requirements. Our relatively unsophisticated accounts system simply cannot cope with the book-keeping involved. Accordingly, overseas Friars, PLEASE ONLY ORDER AND PAY FOR WHAT IS IN STOCK AND READILY AVAILABLE. The sole exceptions to this otherwise invariable rule should be Bond subscriptions and Greyfriars Book Club Pro-forma payments.

#### WHITE LIES

Mr. H.F. List, South Mansions, London NW 6, writes :  
"I was somewhat surprised to come across the following answer given to a reader in the feature 'Come Into the Office, Boys and Girls' which appeared in the Magnet No. 1544 Vol. LII of 1937 -

To STANLEY BRUCE (OXFORD) -- No. Frank Richards and Martin Clifford are not one and the same man.

Is there an explanation ?"

Our A.P. Expert, W.O.G. Lofts, replies : The Editor of the Magnet, C.M. Down, told me that it was strict office policy to keep up the pretence that 'Frank Richards' and 'Martin Clifford' were two different writers. There were many reasons for this, the principal one being that there was always a strong rivalry between readers of the two papers, and in fact some readers thought that 'Martin Clifford' was a better writer than 'Frank Richards'!

Also, Charles Hamilton wanted complete privacy, and one can read in his autobiography of how proud he was that out of millions of readers only a very few ever guessed that Richards and Clifford were one and the same person.

'White Lies' were often resorted to in answer to readers' letters in those times, and a perusal of such answers in the readers' letters pages in the days of Editor H.A. Hinton (1911 - 1921) would probably surprise Friar List. Of course, one does not know the exact context of the letter sent to A.P. by reader Stanley Bruce of Oxford, and it is possible that he may have been enquiring about the authorship of old stories written by substitute writers - when 'Frank Richards' was certainly not the same writer as 'Martin Clifford'. The whole history of boys' papers shows that a kindly disregard for the exact truth frequently held sway, and the Magnet was no exception.

#### AN ODE

Our latter-day Greyfriars Rhymster, Friar Lister of Mansfield, has once again burst forth in verse -- in time for Christmas. It can be read aloud in suitably reverential tones or, we are told by our irreverent sub-ed, sung to the tune of Good King Wenceslas :

Of Greyfriars we can read our fill,  
Its stories and traditions,  
Presented now with loving skill  
In handsome New Editions.

Here is Quelch of gimlet eye,  
Unswerving dedication,  
Whom Vernon-Smith would scarce defy  
Without some trepidation.

Bunter's antics still hold sway,  
For tuck a lone marauder;  
Anticipating to this day  
His famous postal order.

When mighty Horace Coker glowers  
A fag's life can be hectic,  
His lack of intellectual powers  
Makes Prout near apoplectic.

The Famous Five pursue their way,  
Both strenuous and pleasant,  
Even on the darkest day  
With spirits effervescent.



Again we have these stories dear  
To captivate the nation.  
In Baker books they now appear  
For readers' delectation.

Richard Lister,  
Mansfield,  
Nottingham. 1976

### ARTISTS

Mrs Mary Cadogan, of Beckenham, Kent, writes :  
"Have devoured the new MAGNET COMPANION '77 with great interest. I was especially interested in the piece on Leonard Shields, as he is one of my favourite illustrators. I do not think, however, that Shields drew the Cliff House girls for the School Friend. Of course he drew them when they appeared in many of the Magnet stories, but the regular Cliff House artist in the 1919 to 1929 School Friend was G.M. Dodshon whose grotesque Bessie Bunter, and slightly oriental-looking Clara Trevlyn, Barbara Redfern & Co. were unmistakable. When The Schoolgirl replaced the School Friend (1929 to 1940) most of the Cliff House stories were illustrated by T.E. Laidler.

"Leonard Shields however did illustrate the stories of Morcove School in the Amalgamated Press's weekly paper The Schoolgirls' Own. This ran from 1921 to 1936, and Shields was responsible for nearly all the Morcove pictures and the extremely attractive covers. I feel that in The Schoolgirls' Own he even surpassed his work for the Magnet. The Morcove chums were without doubt the most visually attractive schoolgirls of the nineteen twenties and thirties -- thanks to Shields !

"John Wheway, the 'Hilda Richards' who wrote most of the Cliff House stories for The Schoolgirl, told me that Leonard Shields was so competent an artist that he not only worked extremely quickly but usually straight away in ink, spurning the use of pencils. Editors were amazed at his speed and accuracy."

### CORRIGENDUM

Bill Lofts writes : "Despite the painstaking efforts of the compilers to obtain 100% accuracy, it was inevitable that in a book like THE MAGNET COMPANION '77, packed with so many thousands of statistics, some errors were bound to creep in. Practically all were connected with the additional information contained in this edition. Our grateful thanks are due to those readers who have written pointing out inaccuracies or misprints.

Page 18 (Magnet 234) Should read : GHA '74

Page 50 (Magnets 1087-89) Should read : GHA '75

Page 54 (China Series) Should read : HBE 25a



Page 134 (Synopsis of Volume 14) Line 6 should read :  
'Mr Horace Hacker master of the Shell'

Page 159 (L. Shields) Lines 7 & 8 should read :  
'He had illustrated the girls of Morcove School  
in Schoolgirls' Own Weekly!''

To be continued ... ?

### CONTACTS / SALES / WANTS

Friar C.A. Everett, P.O. Box 7, Brinkworth, South Australia, would like to hear from fellow readers, both in Australia and overseas.

Another antipodean reader, John K. Bartholomew, of 77 Edington Street, North Rockhampton, Queensland 4701, Australia, reports that he has received most of the items missing from his collection through the medium of THE GREYFRIARS GAZETTE, but still seeks HB Volume 24, The Kidnapped Schoolboys.

Friar C.R. Hazelhurst, of 29 Birkett Avenue, Whitby, Ellesmere Port, Wirral, Cheshire, declares :  
"Through the Contacts/Sales/Wants section of THE GREYFRIARS GAZETTE I was able to obtain the elusive HB Volume No. 18 from a lady in Northern Ireland. Not only was the volume in excellent condition but I was offered it at cost price ! I was also able to supply a fellow Friar with a copy of THE JOKER OF GREYFRIARS. Therefore I consider the section a resounding success."



Mr. B. Simmonds, of 4 Nutfield Road, London NW 2, pleads :  
"Please Help Me ! I need Magnet Volumes 22, 23 and 24, and will pay good prices."

### NELSON LEE

An interesting point is made by Friar J. Berry, of 8 Abrams Fold, Banks, Southport, Lancs :

"I am sure that most NELSON LEE readers bought the paper because of the adventure stories, some of them fantastic I'll admit. But nonetheless we really enjoyed them. It was the fabulous holiday adventures of the St. Franks chums that we liked best. Not the school stories.

"Readers of the Magnet and Gem preferred the school stories. That, to me, is the fundamental difference between the readers of Brooks and Richards."

### **GREYFRIARS BOOK CLUB**

The Greyfriars Book Club continues on steady course. To date, ten issues have been published, the latest one being THE BULLSEYE volume. Early December sees the publication of THE TREASURE HUNTERS (The First South Seas Series of 1927) a much sought-after collection. The price of this volume, as with future volumes, will be £12.00 plus postage.

We hope to produce LEVISON'S RETURN and 'extra' in the New Year, followed by the Congo series. This will complete the

first 'Baker's dozen' (the red and green Pledge). Then, onward to the next thirteen (the blue and green Pledge).

Mr John A.C. Bridgwater, of 20 Bay Crescent, Swanage, Dorset, wrote to us : "I must express my admiration and thanks for the excellent Greyfriars Book Club, still going strong despite the enormous rise in costs of production and materials. A Very Merry Christmas to you and your staff."

Mr L.G. Wormull, of Romford, Essex, writes : "Thanks for the superb Club editions. One is too inclined to take these works of art for granted. All praise."

And Mr Peter Carpenter, of 160 Wellington Road South, Hounslow, Middlesex, writes : "I must express my delight at these editions, and at your enterprise. You have brought me considerable pleasure with your excellent publications."

We wish to thank all the many other readers, too, who have written to us in similar vein.

### THE LESSON FOR THE DAY ?

## And the Lord said unto Noah . . .

AND the Lord said unto Noah, 'Where is the ark which I have commanded thee to build ?'

And Noah said unto the Lord, 'Verily, I have three carpenters off sick. The supplier hath let me down—yea, even though the girder wood hath been on order for nigh on twelve months.'

And God said unto Noah, 'I want that ark finished even after seven days and seven nights.'

And Noah said, 'Lord, it will be so.'

And it was not so.

And the Lord saith, 'What seemeth to be the trouble this time ?'

Noah saith unto the Lord, 'My sub-contractors hath gone bankrupt; the pitch which thou needest me to put on the outside and on the inside of the ark has not arrived; the builder has gone on strike, Shem, my son who helpeth me on the ark side of the business hath formed a pop group with his two brothers.'

And the Lord grew angry and saith, 'And what about the unicorns

and the fowls of the air ?'

And Noah rubbed his eyes and wept, saying, 'Lord, unicorns are a discontinued line; thou canst not get them for love nor money and it has just been said unto me that the fowls of the air are sold only in half-dozens. Lord, Thou knowst how it is.'

And the Lord, in His wisdom, said, 'Noah, my son, why else dost thou think I have caused a flood to descend upon the earth ?'

With acknowledgments and thanks to Sir Geoffrey Howe and Edward de Courcey.

When one of our titles is published late, as occasionally happens - even in our well-ordered circle - readers might bear in mind the present day problems of production. A few are quoted here. (With kind acknowledgements to the Daily Mail and the Author).

### A NEW 'CHAPTER' FOR FRIARS ?

As related in the Summer number of the GAZETTE, Friar R.F. Acraman, of 49 Kingsend, Ruislip, Middlesex, has advanced an interesting idea. Pressure of space allowed us only to mention it fleetingly in the last issue, but here it is in more detail. Friar Acraman writes :

"Speaking as the owner of hundreds of original Magnets and Gems, hundreds of Nelson Lees (which I understand are now being sold at £2.50 each in some quarters), and every single one of the twenty-two original Greyfriars Holiday Annuals, I am particularly impressed by the fact that over the last fifteen years I have tried to obtain the first dozen or so numbers of the Magnet and Gem and have only been partially successful. Yet I have now secured the

first ten Magnets and the first fifteen Gems in mint condition, beautifully bound, and as perfect as I could ever desire -- reproduced by the Howard Baker Press.

"I would not now bother with the originals. My search for tatty old copies of desired series has ended. I prefer to wait for new, mint, handsomely bound reproductions from the same source to complete my collection.

"Without doubt there must be hundreds of Howard Baker Bond and Book Club connoisseurs who feel as I do and who would like to do all they can to support these excellent series of books. Would it not be possible therefore for those most interested to meet occasionally to discuss possible future publications, to make suggestions, and to see which series or individual copies could be made available for reproduction ?

"Reports of such meetings could be included in THE GREYFRIARS GAZETTE for the benefit of those Friars unable to attend. Other items of interest to connoisseurs could also be discussed at the meetings, addresses exchanged, and publishing difficulties reported. Perhaps the Publisher himself could attend from time to time. I am sure he has many fascinating stories to tell of his long association with the Magnet and Gem, and of his experiences as Editor of the Sexton Blake Library.

"I am equally certain that the many hundreds of collectors who invest in these magnificent series of books from the Howard Baker Press would enjoy such consultative meetings if they could be arranged through the auspices of THE GREYFRIARS GAZETTE."

Well, Friars ? Who is going to form the first Chapter ?

### FLOREAT GREYFRIARS

Friars will be interested to learn that EMI Records Ltd are bringing out a new Centenary Edition of their Long-playing record FLOREAT GREYFRIARS in time for Christmas.

Side One acts out various scenes from Magnet stories, opening and closing with the school song, written by Frank Richards.

Side Two features personal reminiscences and reflections, spoken by Frank Richards himself. No doubt many Friars have never heard the voice of F.R., so here is the opportunity to do so, as he talks about his early days and literary influences, and expresses his opinions on drink, gambling, sex, politics, etc.

Being produced by such a large organization as EMI, the record should be readily available from all good record shops. If, however, Friars should find it is unobtainable locally we will endeavour to supply it from here.

The price of FLOREAT GREYFRIARS is £2.25 plus 30p post and packing to addresses within the UK. Overseas postage and packing is 50p.



Along with Christmas Carols, the usual seasonal fare, and the reading -- or re-reading -- of a favourite Magnet or Gem Christmas story, a playing of FLOREAT GREYFRIARS should make all Friars' Christmases complete to overflowing.

And that is what we Sincerely Wish for Every Friar, and Sister, wherever he or she may be - - -

A Very Happy Christmas and a Brighter New Year

From your venerable abbot, editor and publisher

*Howard Baker*

Coming  
seasons'  
Attractions  
will  
include :



## BILLY BUNTER'S EASTER TRIP

by Frank Richards

Containing the sequel to the Crocker series, followed by Billy Bunter's Easter Trip, featuring the Famous Five, Vernon Smith, and the strange case of the Kidnapped Millionaire. Concludes with *Fool's Luck*, starring Horace Coker, champion chump of the Fifth.

The titles of individual stories contained in this volume include: *Guilty Gold*, *The Clue of the Purple Footprints*, *Drake Gets His Man*, *Billy Bunter's Easter Trip*, *The Mystery of Black Rock Island*, *The Kidnapped Millionaire*, *The Secret of the Sea Cave*, *Fool's Luck*.

Magnet issue numbers 1623 to 1630

February, 1977  
£4.50 in U.K. only

10½" x 7"  
232 pages  
ISBN: 0 7030 0112 4


## THE HOWARD BAKER SUMMER OMNIBUS

A careful selection of vintage school stories with the emphasis on the summer seasons of days gone by featuring the four best-known schools in fiction: Greyfriars, St. Jim's, Rookwood, and St. Frank's.

Titles should include:

The St. Jim's Caravanners by Martin Clifford (*Gem No. 1538*) Plus The Greyfriars Chinese by Frank Richards. The Famous Five-Loder-Ponsonby Feud by Frank Richards (*Magnet Nos. 1585 - 1587*) St. Frank's at the Fair by Edwy Searles Brooks (*Nelson Lee No. 101*) Jimmy Silver Does the Trick by Owen Conquest (*GHA. 1941*) Goodbye to Etons by Martin Clifford (*Gem No. 1155*) Down with the Tyrant by Frank Richards. (*Magnet No. 1343*)

May, 1977  
£4.50 in U.K. only



10½" x 7"  
approx. 250 pages  
ISBN: 0 7030 0115 9

NOT  
TO  
BE  
MISSED!