



# The Greyfriars Gazette

NEWSLETTER No. 31.

CHRISTMAS 1979

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Greetings Friars!



Christmas is almost upon us and yet we find ourselves in the role of bearers of some bad tidings — along with the good. So let us get the bad news out of the way first.



The Institute of Cost and Management Accountants has taken a look at the Retail Cost Index since 1962 and reached a conclusion that will surprise nobody: over the last 17 years prices have risen very sharply indeed!

In fact, the greatest part of that rise has occurred in the last ten years.

Eating out is nearly five times as expensive as it was in 1969, and so are bus and rail fares, newspapers, household repairs, laundry bills, postage and entertainment.

Some items on the housewife's shopping list are six times as expensive as they were in 1969 and, in the same period, printing costs have risen by almost 500 per cent — as shown in the table drawn up by THE BRITISH PRINTING INDUSTRIES FEDERATION which is reprinted on next page. Binding charges and paper prices have, at the same time, gone up commensurately.



**STOP  
PRESS  
NEWS**



FROM



HOWARD BAKER PRESS LIMITED  
27a Arterberry Road, Wimbledon London, S.W.20  
incorporating THE GREYFRIARS PRESS publishers








## Rises in Printing Costs

The following figures are taken from the August issue of *Printing Industries*, the journal of the British Printing Industries Federation.

The effect, as at 31st July 1979, of assessments of the average increases in printing costs (excluding direct materials and outwork) issued by the Management Accounting Department of the BPIF is as follows:

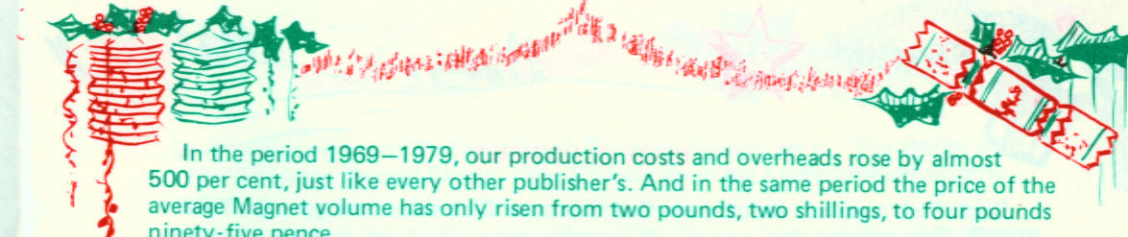


Since	Per cent increase
1st January 1962	502.9
1st July 1975	79.6
4th August 1975	73.3
3rd November 1975	64.6
31st January 1976	62.5
30th April 1976	50.2
31st July 1976	48.2
31st October 1976	46.5
31st January 1977	43.9
30th April 1977	35.1
31st July 1977	33.3
31st October 1977	32.2
31st January 1978	31.6
30th April 1978	21.3
31st July 1978	20.1
2nd October 1978	19.1
31st October 1978	17.8
31st January 1979	16.5

The Institute of Cost and Management Accountants tells us that, as a result of the above increases in basic book production costs, book prices are now five times what they were in 1969. A thirty shilling book then is a seven pounds fifty book now. And this is hardly surprising, for in addition to the grimly inexorable increases in production costs charted above, every one of every publisher's overheads has risen steeply.

Labour costs more, rent, rates, packaging materials, transport, office equipment and its repair and maintenance, insurance, warehousing, distribution charges, stationery, postage and telephone . . . we could go on, and on. The list is virtually endless. Little wonder then that, as a whole, book prices are now five times what they were ten years ago.

*But ours aren't.*



In the period 1969–1979, our production costs and overheads rose by almost 500 per cent, just like every other publisher's. And in the same period the price of the average Magnet volume has only risen from two pounds, two shillings, to four pounds ninety-five pence.

Our prices are not five times what they were ten years ago. They have, in fact, increased by 136%. Substantially less than anyone else's.

If the cost of Greyfriars Press books had been put up as much as other books have, we should today be asking you for nearly eleven pounds a volume!

In ten years, Greyfriars Press cover prices have increased by less than a third of the overall, national figure. So how has this extraordinary result been achieved? What's the secret?

It is, in fact, no secret at all. Cover prices have simply been kept down by painstaking economy. By always looking for ways of eliminating waste, and by paring profits to the bone. We have deliberately stayed small, too, and this has helped.

A searching eye can constantly be kept ranging over the whole enterprise to an extent that wouldn't be possible in a larger company. Consequently, we have kept our cover prices lower – much lower – than they would otherwise have been.

However, you might ask, why – when we do announce one of our infrequent price increases – we apply it to all titles: Greyfriars Press stock volumes as well as to future releases.

The answer is that we do it to spread increases as widely, and therefore as thinly, as possible. Without this policy, price increases would have to be more frequent, and they would undoubtedly be much more severe.

From all of which you will no doubt have gathered that we have to announce another price increase now, which we do with regret. As from January 1st 1980, the price of most Greyfriars Press titles will have to be increased to £5.95.

As always, we will do all that we can, in an inflationary world, *to hold our new price structure steady throughout the coming year*. We are confident that we have given ample evidence of our desire to do that.

Meantime, Greyfriars Press volumes remain remarkable value at £4.95 – if you buy before December 31st; and even at £5.95 thereafter.

(And there's one way our casual purchasers can avoid paying that extra six pounds for the six January to June titles. Join the Bond system and save £6 that way! Let us pay the £6-plus carriage charge).

#### OVERSEAS PAYMENTS

All of our book prices are calculated at the lowest possible level – in U.K. currency. And all of our catalogue prices are quoted, and customers invoiced, in pounds sterling.

For overseas customers this usually presents no difficulty. Most International Banks have London offices on which sterling cheques can be drawn, and many of our far-flung Friars pay us this way. Others pay by International Money Order (obtainable through local post offices) *expressed in sterling*. So, if you can, please pay us in the currency – sterling – in which our books are listed on invoices or in our catalogue.

This is not to say that we will not accept payment in other currencies, but clearances and conversions take time, could delay delivery of your order, and certainly cost money. *If you are paying us in any currency other than sterling, please add £2.00 to the sterling total cost before conversion*. This averagely is what it costs here to convert and collect remittances in overseas currencies.



## BOOK CLUB NEWS

Book Club members should note that two more Club titles have gone OUT OF PRINT. They are:

Vol. No. 5: Tom Merry's Schooldays

Vol. No. 6: Paul Dallas at Greyfriars

The first Club volume in the New Year will be THE GREYFRIARS PLOTTERS, of 1910. For details see page 5 of your Club Catalogue.

There is still no increase in the price of these de luxe volumes, but some increase, we fear, cannot be far away. Are you aware, readers, that there has been no increase whatsoever in Book Club prices over the past three years?!

### GILT-EDGED INVESTMENT

We have noted, with amazement, the price being asked for our Third Club Volume, THE MAKING OF HARRY WHARTON in a recent issue of *Exchange and Mart*.

BRITISH COMICS, LTD. 37'S, 38'S, 39'S, 40'S, 41'S, 42'S, 43'S, 44'S, 45'S, 46'S, 47'S, 48'S, 49'S, 50'S, 51'S, 52'S, 53'S, 54'S, 55'S, 56'S, 57'S, 58'S, 59'S, 60'S, 61'S, 62'S, 63'S, 64'S, 65'S, 66'S, 67'S, 68'S, 69'S, 70'S, 71'S, 72'S, 73'S, 74'S, 75'S, 76'S, 77'S, 78'S, 79'S, 80'S, 81'S, 82'S, 83'S, 84'S, 85'S, 86'S, 87'S, 88'S, 89'S, 90'S, 91'S, 92'S, 93'S, 94'S, 95'S, 96'S, 97'S, 98'S, 99'S, 00'S  
Green Street, Middleton, Manchester, M20 9BA  
For sale, toward Baker Club, volume three  
The Making of Harry Wharton price £100 ono  
Box No. (Wales) 0290.  
Sales January 1960 - 1966 inclusive

£100, no less, for a volume we sold at £10 a few years ago!

Undoubtedly, membership of the Greyfriars Book Club is a valuable investment.


### IN PRAISE OF THE SUBS

Our first volume of stories by *Magnet* staffers and freelances has been received with considerable enthusiasm. To quote from a few of the many letters received:

"I, for one, would welcome further volumes of substitute stories," writes Mr Charles Fox, of P.O. Box 6, 40 The Esplanade, Weymouth, Dorset. "The recent collection was fascinating."

Miss Anne Clarke, of 105 Geraldine Road, Wandsworth, London S.W.18, declares: "Just a few lines to say how much I liked the latest books, especially The Greyfriars Second Eleven. I hope there will be some more of these. Also when substitute stories come in the middle of a run why not just include them, as you did with Nix Pentelow's 'A Very Gallant Gentleman' in the Redwing series? Anyway, I hope there will be plenty more 'sub' stories in 1980."





Mr E. Austyn-Prys, of 21 Fields Road, Tredegar, Gwent, says: "The stories written by 'The Greyfriars Second Eleven' (No. 71) have given me a very pleasant surprise indeed.

" 'The Bounder's Way' fully substantiates C.M. Downs' high opinion of Stanley Austin. In plot construction, general style of narrative and accuracy of portrayal of the characters and speech styles of the Greyfriars personalities who appear in the story, he shows a remarkable close approximation to Charles Hamilton's own writings.

"Next to this story, and hardly inferior to it in fidelity of style, I would place 'Facing the World' and 'From Greyfriars to Borstal' by S. Rossiter Shepherd.

"Certainly, judging by this (for me) first introduction to some of the other 'Frank Richards', I should be very happy to purchase more such volumes. Congratulations on yet another successful venture!"



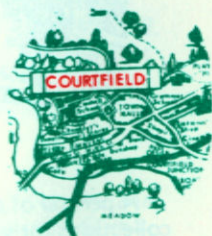
## DESERT ISLAND BOOK



Friars in search of ideas for suitable Christmas presents could hardly do better than consider a delightful new book by Greyfriars enthusiast Roy Plomley. His evocative compilation of 'desert island' literature covers the widest field, from Robinson Crusoe, Treasure Island, and other childhood favourites, to the grimmer world of Lord of the Flies. And large sections are occupied by the adventures of Billy Bunter, Harry Wharton & Co — and Sexton Blake. A truly satisfying read for all the family. Look out for it in the shops: ROY PLOMLEY'S DESERT ISLAND BOOK, published by David and Charles at £4.95.



## AUTUMN ACTIVITIES AT COURTFIELD



Meetings of the Courtfield Friars Club have continued unabated over September, October and November, ably organised by Friar Robert Acraman (Tel: Ruislip 31025).

The Christmas Meeting will take place on Sunday, 16th December at 3pm. This date will also mark the official opening of the FRANK RICHARDS MUSEUM AND LIBRARY at Courtfield. Bob Acraman reports that on display will be Frank Richards' original No 1 and 2 typewriters and two working desks, also his entire reference library and favourite bookcase, cine camera and projector — even his camp bed! And these are just a few of the exciting relics that will be on show. Friars who wish to attend should notify Friar Robert Acraman, 'Courtfield', 40 Kingsend, Ruislip, Middlesex (Tel: Ruislip 31025) as soon as possible.

## MAGNET COMPANION SUPPLEMENT

Keen record keepers and researchers will be pleased to know that a Supplement to MAGNET COMPANION '77 is in the process of preparation. It will up-date all information on to mid-1980, and correct any inaccuracies or misprints that crept into the 1977 edition. It is being prepared and edited by Friar Neil Beck, professional librarian and expert on Greyfriars lore. The price will be an extremely modest one: in fact, purely nominal. We hope for publication in the Spring.

## SINGLES LIST

A new, revised and enlarged Catalogue of single issues of The Magnet, Gem, Nelson Lee, Schoolfriend, Schoolgirl, &c, has just been published. We hope to include a copy in our Christmas parcels to all Bond subscribers — and to airmail copies to all Overseas members.



## INTO THE EIGHTIES

A perusal of our new Spring Catalogue shows an array of mouth-watering collections for your delectation and delight in the first half of 1980.

The UNDER BUNTER'S THUMB volume is a beaut, if you will pardon the 'Strine'. The 'PRIZE' collection for February includes stories by George Samways, chief sub-editor of The Magnet and creator of the St. Sam's stories, William Catchpole, chief feature-writer on C.H. Downs' staff for the Greyfriars Herald — and not forgetting the redoubtable Stanley Austin and Hedley O'Mant!

After that, St. Jim's expert Bill Smith, of Winchmore Hill, contributes a well-balanced selection of St. Jim's yarns but — that's not all — seven Rookwood School stories are included in the volume. Quite a feast!



The remainder of the Spring to Summer programme consists mainly of Greyfriars selections, Magnet and S.O.L. *But* — our *piece-de-resistance* is Friar Laurie Sutton's mammoth compilation, GREYFRIARS FOR GROWN-UPS' with accompanying contributions from Mary Cadogan, Patricia Craig, Hubert Gregg, Peter Cushing, Arthur Askey, Charlie Chester, Nicholas Parsons, Bob Monkhouse, Roy Plomley . . . all Greyfriars 'old boys'.

The way in which so many Greyfriars stalwarts have stood up to be counted and have declared their undying regard for the dear old Magnet and Gem is really most gratifying. Truly a wonderful climax to a remarkable decade!

A decade? Yes, indeed. Because it is now ten years since Howard Baker Publishers launched the first Magnet collection, Volume One. Little do you know with what trepidation we embarked upon that lonely sea, steering straight for *terra incognita*. But we found our customers — and the rest is publishing history.

## CLASSIFIED ADVTS

### SALES AND WANTS



**FOR SALE:** Club Vol. No 3. The Making of Harry Wharton. Offers to: Mr L. Degg, 31 Elmay Road, Sheldon, Birmingham B26 2ND.

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**FOR SALE:** Club Vol. No 3. The Making of Harry Wharton, £50 ● Club Vol. No 2. Loder for Captain, £40 ● Club Vol. No 5. Tom Merry's Schooldays, £30 ● Magnet Vol. 25. Billy Bunter in China, £20 ● Gem Vol. 6. Tom Merry's Holiday (Old Bus series) £15 ● Magnet Vol. No 7. The Greyfriars Pretender, £20. Apply to: Mrs. C.P.E. Collins, Flat 2, The Grange, Lingfield, Surrey.

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**FOR SALE:** Magnet Vol. No 21. The Tyrant of Greyfriars, £15 ● Magnet Vol. 24a, The Mysterious Mr Krantz, £12.50 ● Magnet Vol. 25a, Greyfriars Chums in China, £12.50 ● Magnet Vol. 29, The Mystery of the Moat House, £9. Apply to: Mr I.M. Cox, 193 Minard Road, Catford, London SE6 1NH.

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**WANTED:** The Greyfriars Holiday Annual 1974, £25 offered. Mr P. Brett, 124 Edgeworth Close, Church Hill South, Redditch, Worcs. (Tel: Redditch 68774).


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**WANTED:** Club Vol. No 3, The Making of Harry Wharton ● Club Vol. No 1, The Worst Boy at Greyfriars ● Magnet Vol. No 17, The Black Sheep of Greyfriars ● Magnet Vol. No 23, The Joker of Greyfriars — Offers, please, to Dr Carl Chan, 56 La Salle Road, C/F Kowloon, Hong Kong.

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# The Greyfriars Gazette



**WANTED:** Greyfriars Holiday Annual 1974; Magnet Vol. No 23, The Joker of Greyfriars. Also, any original Magnets, Gems, or Nelson Lees. Good prices paid. Offers, please, to Mr R. Whiting, Beechmont Avenue, Eagle Heights, Mt Tamborine 4271, Queensland, Australia.

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**WANTED:** To complete my run of original Magnets, Nos 10, 134, 136, 162, 167, 169, 181, 200, 215, 217. Your price paid, or exchange two for one from hundreds available. Interested in photocopies of above and Magnet covers, or complete original Magnets, Nos 21, 28, 29, 39, 40, 49, 52, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 69, 71, 239, 158. Offers, please, to Mr J. Murtagh, 509 Windsor Avenue, Hastings, New Zealand.

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**WANTED:** Club Vol. No 3. The Making of Harry Wharton. Offers, please, to Mr J.P Peck, 6 Rowan Glade, Wildwood, Stafford (Telephone : 664536).

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**WANTED:** Greyfriars Holiday Annual 1974 ● Magnet Vol. 21. Tyrant of Greyfriars ● Magnet Vol. 22. Billy Bunter's Christmas ● Magnet Vol. 23. Joker of Greyfriars ● Magnet Vol. 24. The Kidnapped Schoolboys ● Magnet Vol. 39. Ghost of Polpelly. Offers, please, to Mr E Baldwin, 55 Lancaster Road, Great Marton, Blackpool, FY3 9SR. Greyfriars Holiday Annuals 1923, 1925 and 1934 available for exchange.

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**WANTED:** Club Vol. No 1. Worst Boy at Greyfriars. Will pay £25 ● Club Vol. No 2. Loder for Captain. Will pay £25. Contact Mr Peter Nightingale, 8 High Street, Lee-on-Solent, Hants. (Telephone : Lee 552055).

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Insertion under Sales and Wants are free of charge to all Friars. Whenever possible, please write your advertisement as succinctly as possible, on a postcard.

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Once again, we extend grateful and sincere thanks to all you kind Friars who have already sent us Christmas cards and other seasonal tokens. Be assured these gestures of friendship are highly prized.

With best wishes for a Very Happy Christmas, happy holiday reading, and good fortune in the year ahead.

Sincerely,  
Your Publisher



HOWARD BAKER PRESS LIMITED

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