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# "BILLY BUNTER" FOR FILM



*GILLY BARTON, 17-stone fat boy, of Earl's Barton, Northants, is to play the role of Billy Bunter, famous fat boy of the Greyfriars School stories, in an Elstree film. Fourteen years old, he has a 51-inch girth. Claude Dampier and Nellie Wallace will be the stars.*

## EARLS BARTON BOY'S AMBITION

THE one wish of Billie Barton, the Earl Barton boy who has figured prominently in the news by reason of his abnormal weight, has been to appear in films work.

Now Billie, who, although only 14 years of age, weighs 17 stones, is hoping to attain his ambition.

He has recently been given a screen test for the part of Billy Bunter, of Greyfriars School fame, in a film which will shortly be produced.

The stars taking part will be Nellie Wallace and Claude Dampier.

## **THE FAT BOY.**

We are glad to hear that the most remarkable schoolboy in fiction, William George Bunter of Greyfriars, will shortly be presented in a series of films (says the "Morning Post"). The school at which he and his festive companions, Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, the Rajah's son (who talks like Anstey's "Bayard from Bengal"), and the rest, make life an everlasting rag, is altogether an imaginary institution. It is as unreal, no doubt, as Narkover or Will Hay's college or the stage seminary in which Young Woodley had his melodramatic love affair with the housemaster's wife. Yet members even of the nine famous public schools for which the standard Latin Grammar was prepared laugh over the red-and-blue monthly periodicals wherein their own decorous days are so comically caricatured. Billy Bunter is the Fat Boy of Dickens, lifted into a loftier social plane and taught to talk with exhaustive eloquence, whenever he smells a hamper from afar. His only characteristic is a

from afar. His only characteristic is a love of fine confused feeding at other people's expense, for he never has any pocket-money of his own. It must be forty years since he entered Greyfriars and he is still in the Remove, wearing an Eton jacket and striped bags. Now and again, since Harry Wharton & Co. took to travelling abroad as far as China in search of virile adventures, he has unconsciously checkmated villains out of sheer stupidity. He has been the victim of a hundred practical jokes, owing to his overruling love of "tucksh," and every first Thursday in the month his yells of anguish and frenzied expostulations will again be heard. Rival journals have tried to produce as popular a boy-glutton—perhaps one Baggy Trimble is proxime accessit. Yet even he falls as far short of Billy Bunter as the pig-eyed Baron von Tott did in comparison with the inimitable Munchausen. If all this boy-Falstaff's admirers flock to see him visibly swelling on the screen, the maker of these belated Bunter pictures should reap as rich a harvest as the creator of Mickey Mouse. Only English minds can invent such whimsical types and laugh at them.

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*EARLS BARTON'S*  
*"BILLY BUNTER"*  
*IS THINNER*

**B**ILLIE BARTON, of Earls Barton, who at the age of 15 weighed over 17 stones, is losing weight. He is now 16 and weighs a little over 16 stones.

Billie, who lives in Station-road, told a "Mercury and Herald" reporter, that he has begun work at a plastics factory.

Shortly before war broke out he was hoping to take the part of Billy Bunter in a film about Greyfriars School. His film test for the part was satisfactory, but war caused work on the film to be suspended.

## The Immortal Bunter

A controversy is being conducted in a literary paper on the social significance of Billy Bunter and his associates. The theory has been propounded that a false and pernicious pattern of values has been established around this character. Bunter, it is contended, is static, not progressive: he represents the world of 1910; he is anti-intellectual; he is a snob; he is branded as socially unacceptable by the antiquated slang in which he indulges. The Bunter myth, it is implied, is infinitely detrimental to adolescent stability. Bunter, in short, must go.

Well, the anti-Bunter school are entitled to their views. But if Billy Bunter's position is ever seriously challenged, a multitude of friends from all classes of society will rise to defend him. Bunter, it is freely conceded, has his faults and shortcomings, but his very defects commend him. His antics and aphorisms have engrossed the attention of generations of boyhood and girlhood. Bunter is unique, *sui generis*, timeless, above sect and party. Serene and imperturbable, Bunter will be found complacently consuming his tuck for many years to come.

## The School Story

Someone has been asking what will happen to the school story if the public schools fade away or open their portals to all-comers. It is an undeniable fact that the very institution which has been the target for widespread criticism has proved immensely popular in fiction. Thousands of boys who have never seen a housemaster face to face or gorged in a tuck-shop have eagerly followed the fortunes of various rich youths receiving a perfunctory education at private seminaries complete with approved conventions and traditions. Billy Bunter and Harry Wharton hardly typify the progeny of the proletariat, yet their adventures command the closest attention and the highest respect in the households of the humble.

If juvenile fiction were intimately related to social ethics then the obvious school-boy hero would be the lad o' pairts glimpsed in those strenuous days of toil which were to lead to glittering proconsulship. Yet who has heard of a lad o' pairts and his early struggles in the village school figuring in the kind of epics reserved for Tom Brown?



## Children's Reading

**W**ILD West and gangster stories are having strong rivals in the reading estimation of school children. Since the war there has been a marked increase in the choice of more serious books by boys and girls.

This has been found at Plymouth Public Library where the number holding juvenile tickets has risen during the past few years. Children's taste is becoming more serious, books on engineering finding particular favour. Authorities have found difficulty in keeping young readers from drifting into the adult section and selecting books there!

Perhaps the day will come when some aspiring ten-years-old will leave the library triumphantly bearing volumes by Aldous Huxley or Tolstoy. At present Billy Bunter and his fictional contemporaries still lead the juvenile literary field.

# Christmas Annual

The Saturday Book. Edited by Leonard Russell. (Hutchinson, 15s.)

There is much to interest modern tastes in the new issue of this annual miscellany, now in its fifth year. Of its 288 pages, 128 are pictorial, including fifteen reproductions in colour of nineteenth-century French and English paintings. There are short stories by J. Maclaren-Ross, Norah Hoult and Stella Gibbons. Articles range from studies of the Empress Eugenie and Mr. and Mrs. Beeton (of the cookery book) to an essay on his work by Stephen Spender. A similar essay is contributed by "Frank Richards," the creator of "Billy Bunter" and the most prolific of all writers of boys' stories.

On the pictorial side this volume is particularly well found. One series of photographs deals with ballet, another with fine furniture, and another "reports" the 1890's in an effective panorama. Perhaps the brightest section is that occupied by "Twelve Portraits by Low."

LIFE, PEOPLE—AND BOOKS...

By GEORGE ORWELL

# BUNTER'S CREATOR

ALL lovers of the "Gem" and "Magnet"—and both papers have their followers in tens of thousands, both here and in the Dominions—will be delighted to see that Frank Richards is back on the job and has written a long autobiographical article in this year's "Saturday Book."

We may hope that the "Gem" and "Magnet" themselves, after having been "amalgamated" with other papers for the last five years owing to the paper shortage, will reappear before long.

Frank Richards—so he calls himself when he writes in the "Magnet"; in the "Gem" he is Martin Clifford—is the creator of those imaginary schools, Greyfriars and St. Jim's, and between 1909 and 1940 he was writing weekly stories about them to the tune of one and a half million words a year.

No one who made their acquaintance in his boyhood will forget Bob Cherry and the rest of the Famous Five at Greyfriars, or Tom Merry and the Honourable Arthur A. D'Arcy at St. Jim's; but without a doubt the greatest of Mr. Richards's creations is the fat boy Billy Bunter.

In Bunter—with his vast, spherical form, his spectacles, his endless search for food and his postal orders which never turn up—Mr. Richards has achieved something that is denied to most imaginative writers: he has created a character able to travel outside the bounds of the reading public.



I HAVE known a barrage balloon nicknamed Billy Bunter by its crew and I have known the same name given to a promising porker on a farm.

In neither case, probably, did the people who used the name know its origin. That is fame, and in his interesting article Mr. Richards tells how he achieved it.

However, he also uses a paragraph or two in delivering a rap over the knuckles to me, and I must answer him. Some years ago I wrote, in a monthly magazine, a long article on the "Gem" and "Magnet," and Mr. Richards

answered me vigorously the following month. I made the mistake of assuming that Frank Richards's stories were written by relays of hack-writers, and this seems to have rankled. In "The Saturday Book" he raises the point again.

What is the use of telling the public that the "Magnet" was "specially written" in a style "easily imitated"? How many wretched imitators have tried to imitate it I could not count without going into high figures—but not one ever succeeded.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The stuff sold like hot cakes—Frank Richards was incessantly dunned for twice or thrice as much copy as he could produce. "A good many tried—alternately amusing and exasperating their victim. Not one ever got away with it. George is a very good writer in his own line—but in this matter he simply did not know what he was talking about."



**I**N reprinting the essay I have corrected the original error, but, in case this should reach Mr. Richards's eyes, I should like to explain how I came to make it. The fact is that it just did not strike me as possible that any one human being could write a long complete story—let alone two or three such stories—every week for 30 years.

In that time Mr. Richards produced something like 45,000,000 words. As a journalist who works fairly hard to produce about 150,000 words a year, I find this just unimaginable. However, it is quite true, as I now know from several sources.

And, incidentally, I also know a comic strip artist who has produced his "piece" without a break six days a week for 29 years.

Mr. Richards adds that one of his ambitions is to write a book on religion. I look forward to that book. Meanwhile, good luck to him and soon may the "Gem" and "Magnet" reappear. Who would not rejoice to hear Bob Cherry's cheery "Hullo, hullo, hullo" again, or see some disaster happen to Gussy's top hat?

All the same, there has been a change in the social atmosphere

..... *Reviewed Here* .....

THE SATURDAY  
BOOK, edited by  
Leonard Russell  
(Hutchinson, 15s.).

of this country in the five years since the two papers were suspended. If I were Mr. Richards I would be inclined to introduce a little Left wing ideology into my stories and perhaps even transfer the heroes to some more "advanced" kind of school.

How about turning St. Jim's into a co-educational establishment, or sending Billy Bunter and the Famous Five to Dartington Hall?



**M**R. RICHARDS'S contribution is not of course the whole of "The Saturday Book," which is as full of unexpected things as ever.

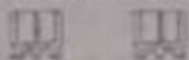
There is an article by A. L. Rowse on All Souls College; a long article by Stephen Spender, explaining the successive stages by which a poem is written; an appreciation of Lombroso, the Italian criminologist, by another criminologist; a study of the Empress Eugenie, by Miss C. V. Wedgwood; short stories by Norah Hoult and J. MacLaren-Ross; an article on the mistakes of historians, by Ernest Newman; and much else.



Two contributions which stand out by reason of their queerness are those of Julian Symons and Mr. Fred Bason. Mr. Bason is a second-hand bookseller who has had a long acquaintance with Somerset Maugham, the novelist and playwright, and here writes his reminiscences of him.

Julian Symons, the brother of the late A. J. A. Symons, provides some astonishing and hitherto unpublished information about the mysterious "Baron Corvo"—author of "Hadrian the Seventh"

—to whom A. J. A. Symons devoted so much research.



THERE are 12 caricatures by Low—of Bertrand Russell, Aneurin Bevan, T. S. Elliot, Sir William Beveridge, and others—and two large sections of the book are given over to photographs. One section, which contains several very beautiful compositions, consists of photographs of furniture and other household appliances.

The other is a panorama of the England of 50 years ago. Here you can see Keir Hardie in his deerstalker, the Prince of Wales (Edward VII) in his high-crowned bowler, Bernard Shaw with only a moderate-sized beard, young women in the first short skirts learning to ride fixed wheel bicycles, Aubrey Beardsley in a check suit, and a whole gallery of actors, politicians, scientists and what-not.

There is also a series of photographs illustrating the evolution of the ballet, and in another part of the book Miss Olive Cook demonstrates with coloured illustrations the inter-relation between English and French painting.

This book has a ragged, messy dust-jacket, but otherwise it would make an excellent Christmas present.



**BILLY BUNTER,**  
"the fattest schoolboy on  
earth . . ."

Sketch reproduced from "Knockout  
Comic," published by the Amal-  
gamated Press Ltd., London.

Two contributions which stand  
out by reason of their queerness  
are those of Julian Symons and  
Mr. Fred Bason. Mr. Bason is a  
second-hand bookseller who has  
had a long acquaintance with

## Bunter Returns

**T**HAT great literary character Billy Bunter, of Greyfriars School—as English and probably almost as well known as Sam Weller—is to reappear.

All English boys who were at any sort of school from 1907 to 1940 (when the paper shortage intervened) were brought up on the adventures of Billy Bunter, described each week by "Frank Richards" in that boys' magazine, "The Magnet."

So prolific were these works that most readers took "Frank Richards" to be a pen-name hiding a number of authors. Not a bit. There was only one author for the lot, and his real name is Charles Hamilton.

He also wrote under two other pen-names, for that other boys' magazine, "The Gem," and such friends of our boyhood as Harry Wharton, Tom Merry, Frank Nugent and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy were all of his creation. He wrote a million and a half words a year, and made an income of about £2,500.

## The Author

Charles Hamilton is an old man, now, living at Kingsgate, near Margate. He won't say how old. Just as Billy Bunter has been 14 since 1907, his author declares, "I'll be 70 for the rest of my life."

He rarely leaves his house now—this old man in dressing-gown and black skull cap, hitting away at his typewriter—for his sight is now very short.

He is no mere hack, but a widely-travelled man with a scholarly mind, speaking several languages, translating Dante, Cervantes or Goethe, or composing crossword puzzles in Latin for his amusement.

Billy Bunter, dormant during the war, reawakes, not in the old "Magnet," but in a properly bound book; at which a good many chaps will chortle with glee.

## OWL OF THE REMOVE

**T**H**ERE** can be few readers of the Thanet Advertiser who will not admit having enjoyed reading the famous schoolboy stories of Greyfriars, Cliff House and St. Jim's in the days of their youth. Billy Bunter, the tubby "owl of the Remove," became a national figure and Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent and Co. were no less familiar figures. Although the "Magnet" and other publications in which their adventures used regularly to appear are no longer with us, the creator of these legendary schools and their characters is very much alive. Admitting to "three score years and ten," Frank Richards, author of all the stories we knew so well, is still young in spirit and ideas. Mr. Charles Hamilton—to give him his real name—is now as busy as ever at Roselawn, his Kingsgate home, reviving Billy Bunter and his colleagues for the entertainment of a new generation. During the last seven years he has written numerous short stories, but his most famous character, Billy Bunter, will appear in the spring in a full-length book.

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# Three "Billy Bunters" Tuck In

A SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD "Billy Bunter" told Lambeth (London) juvenile court yesterday that he had eaten eight months' sweet rations in a week.

"Billy," said a detective, worked as a roundsman for a potato firm. When potato rationing was introduced he had to cross off the rations.

On nine occasions he cut off the sweet coupons as well.

"My only regret is that you weren't sick," commented the chairman, fining him 16/-—two weeks' pocket-money.

"Billy" has four weeks in which to pay and

—in all that time in the life of a boy—not a sweet to suck.

Two other "Bunters" older than "Billy" will have all the sweets they need—until they are caught.

Yesterday Mrs Sarah Taylor, who is eighty-one, and who for sixty years has been serving Eton schoolboys with tuck, was locked by two roughs in her back room.

They took 25/—all that was in the till—cigarettes, and stripped her shelves of sweets.

"I shall know them again," said Mrs Taylor, "and I hope the sweets make them sick."

## BILLY BUNTER'S CREATOR

**F**RANK Richards, author of schoolboy stories and man who introduced to the world his Billy Bunter character, has contributed an article to the August issue of Christ Church, Ramsgate, parish magazine. Seventy years of age, Frank Richards writes about writing, and reveals that at one time his annual output was in the region of a million and a half words. He tells the origin of his well-known schoolboys—Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Hurrqee Jamest Ram Singh, and the others—and concludes with the words "This world is a jolly place, and Frank Richards is going to remain in it as long as ever he can; but when the time comes to move on I am sure he will look on it as little more than changing trains on a long journey. And when I meet unbelieving friends in the Elysian Fields I shall enjoy saying to them 'I told you so'." Frank Richards, who for more than 30 years wrote about Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood schools, is also known as Martin Clifford and Owen Conquest. His real name is Charles Hamilton.





**BOYS** *will*  
*be* **BOYS**

the story of Sweeney Todd,  
Deadwood Dick, Sexton Blake,  
Billy Bunter, Dick Barton, et al.

by **E. S. Turner**

*foreword by*  
**CAPTAIN C. B. FRY**  
*Illustrated 10/6 net*

★ **Book Society Recommend** ★



LITERATURE.—E. S. Turner: For the amusing and malicious scholarship with which, in "Boys Will Be Boys," he has told the history of penny dreadfuls, halfpenny comics, Sexton Blake, Billy Bunter, and all the rest of the heroic figures of our childhood. *S. Stephen Potter*



STAGE.—Gracie Fields: For halting the American march at the Palladium and proving that she is still a great personality and a great artist. *Penelope Mortimer*



RADIO.—Wilfred Pickles: For the sincerity and cunning of "Have a Go!"

*Frederick Laws*



## CHOICE OF THE MONTH

Selected by "Miss Sketch's"  
Team of Experts



"BOYS WILL BE BOYS,"  
by E. S. Turner  
(Michael Joseph ;

10s. 6d.), is an admirable piece of research into the past of juvenile thriller fiction—a magic which, evidently, never loses its thrall. "In this book," C. B. Fry, who contributes the Introduction, says, "the reader is invited to take a backward plunge into the new Mythology—the mythology of Sexton Blake and Deadwood Dick, of Jack Sheppard, Jack Harkaway and Billy Bunter; of all the idols of childhood from Charley Wag down to Dick Barton."

The "penny dreadfuls" of early-Victorian days are mustered for review: quotations from them, and reproductions of woodcuts, are a riot. Alfred Harmsworth, "the cuckoo in the nest," caused dismay by his more ambitious ideas: he became the sponsor of *Answers* in 1888. From then on, sophistication kept popping up, if never finally rearing, its oiled head: cosy old tales of demon barbers and cannibal pie-makers were to be things of the past. Sexton Blake pursued his career through fifty years of changing fashion in damsels in distress. . . . Mr. Turner remarks the prophetic element in thriller-writing: the V.2 and atomic bomb were featured while they still seemed no more threateningly probable than vampires.

There is a fruitful chapter on *Magnet* and *Gem* school stories, and a not less rewarding piece on the "Wild West." . . . This is a sound, funny, un-sneering book for family reading: let the reformer note that boys *will* be boys—and that, further, the age at which they cease being boys is uncertain.

"BOYS WILL BE BOYS."—Mr. Turner invites his reader to "take a backward plunge into the new mythology—the mythology of Sexton Blake and Deadwood Dick, of Jack Sheppard, Jack Harkaway and Billy Bunter ; of all the idols of boyhood from Charley Wag down to Dick Barton." In other words, he has told the story of the Penny Dreadful

from the juvenile versions of the Gothic novel, which were popular in early Victorian times, down to the paper-backed "bloods" of our own day. He is an instructive writer, from whom one learns some very curious facts. One is told, for instance, that the adventures of Sexton Blake began in 1893 and run into more than 200,000,000 words, the work of successive authors who have come and gone while their hero enjoys his perennial young manhood. Billy Bunter and his friends and adventures at Greyfriars School, on the other hand, have entertained readers of the *Magnet* for a mere thirty years, and are almost entirely the work of one man, Mr. Charles Hamilton, who for most of that time wrote 1,000,000 words a year for an annual income of £2500. This prodigy also conceived and kept alive the Terrible Three of St. Jim's, and under one of his pen-names the Fistical Four of Rookwood. Here, too, are the literary histories of figures like Nelson Lee, Nick Carter, Falcon Swift, and other great names in a world which once bedazzled us all, and is most nostalgically recreated. A fascinating book.

# BOYS WILL BE BOYS



The story of  
Nancy Todd, Dick  
and Dick, Sam  
Blair, Billy Brown,  
Dick Brown, et al.

by

**E. S. TURNER**

with an  
introduction by

CAPTAIN

**C. R. FRY**

# 'BROADCAST BUNTER'—BRAILLE

## PLEA TO THE B.B.C.

FROM Leeds to the B.B.C. has gone a Braille plea for a "Radio Yaroo" programme.

Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Sawyer, of Tarnside, Seacroft, both almost blind and relying mainly on their wireless set for entertainment, have sent a Braille letter to the B.B.C. requesting a radio series featuring the Greyfriars boys—the Billy Bunter, Harry Wharton, Lord Mauleverer, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gang of the Gem and Magnet era.

Fifty-year-old Mr. Sawyer is still an avid "young" follower of the adventures at Greyfriars—through the medium of literature ostensibly purchased for his 14-year-old son, Wilfred.

### Trip to lost youth

Mr. Sawyer's regard for "Harry Wharton and Co." is such that he is a pen friend of Frank Richards, author of their adventures, who readily agreed two years ago to write a special series for publication in Braille at the request of Mr. Sawyer.

I think his latest idea for a broadcast series is worth backing. I'm sure that there are thousands of old fans of the Greyfriars gang who'd like a radio trip back to the days of their lost youth.

### Pianist in cargo

### Figuratively speaking



A "National Health Service" Bill for poultry is now before the Isle of Man Legislature.

The dictionary gives the spelling with one "l," and many boys attending the school chapel concluded—rather hastily, perhaps—that somebody in authority had slipped badly!

But Authority had a ready answer—the words in the inscription are from Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," and there has been strict adherence to the original spelling.

### A tip for Leeds!

IN one respect Leeds might take a lesson from Edinburgh.

At a dinner organised by the Edinburgh Press Club the chairman paid tribute to the excellent relations existing between the Edinburgh civic authorities and the Press.

In particular he emphasised that the Press have full and easy access to all members of the Council, including the Lord Provost, also to the heads of the various departments and their technical officers.

It is pleasant to record this good feeling at a time when many Councils are placing a ban on any Press statements being made by their officers

### Hats on

ACCORDING to the designers of toppers, bowlers, trilbies

## FOR BOYS UP TO 70

Frank Richards, famous writer of the Billy Bunter schoolboy stories, is at the top of his form in a full-length narrative, "Billy Bunter in Brazil" (Charles Shilton, Ltd., 7s. 6d.), just published. Harry Wharton and Co. of the Greyfriars' Remove — and, of course, Billy Bunter—have some really hair-raising adventures in the equatorial jungles of South America.



# *A ripping wheeze, chaps!*

**By Alan Dick**

**T**HE Head looked black, the Fellows of the Fifth glared "Cad!" at the retreating back of their disgraced form-mate.

Tom Merry "without a word—for he was incapable of speech at that fearful moment—turned and walked unsteadily to the door."

Tom Merry. Expelled from St. Jim's!

So run headline and caption in the inkstained *Gem*, *4d.*, Vol. 1, No. 24, on view with other tattered magazines at "The English School" exhibition at the National Book League in Albemarle-street, W., open today.

There lies the old *4d. Magnet*, with the original Harry Wharton plotting a ripping wheeze to discomfort owl-eyed Billy Bunter.

## *The fat ones*

There are the ½d. *Greyfriars Herald* proudly announcing "Our First Number!" (but without a date), the *Halfpenny Marvel*, featuring Ned Bradford's *Schooldays*, and one of the earliest of them all, No 24 of *Tom Torment, or the Lads of Laughington School*.

And remember those fat books? The bumper *Captain and Boys' Own Annual*, *The Fifth Form at St. Dominic's* ("To Dear Stanley, from Auntie Poll, Xmas, 1836"), *Eric or Little by Little* ("E. M. Webb, a birthday present from his affectionate Mamma, Harrow, Dec. 14, 1858"), and *Tom Wildrake's School Days* ("To Roger, with Love from Auntie Ivy. . .").

There they are, with their original inscriptions.

# The Great Bunter

The £67,902 left by the late Mr Leonard Shiels was a sizeable fortune for an artist who made his living by creating Billy Bunter and other celebrated characters in school fiction. His was an art, however, which gave delight to an immense public of critical readers.

Like Harry Wharton and those other young gentlemen whose studies were constantly punctuated by enlivening incidents, Billy Bunter did not age with the years nor did he grow less rotund. Constancy was the keynote to his character. We do not know when he faded from the scene, but if he were going strong to-day what joy the abolition of the sweets ration would bring to him.

His was not a constitution which could have easily stood up to the years of tuck rationing. Never noted for his ability to withstand temptation he would almost certainly have brought further discredit to his school by entering the Black Market. It is a pity that he cannot profit from the National Health Service. Those thick lenses through which he peered greedily at the world had a habit of getting lost. We can well imagine their possessor being supplied with weekly replacements from a Government which makes life easier for unpopular fat boys of myopic outlook.

# Billy Bunter

I WAS never an ardent devotee of Billy Bunter, the fat boy of Greyfriars whose sayings and doings have for many years been recorded, in picture and story, in the "Magnet." But from the fact that the artist who drew him—Mr. Leonard Shields, a one-time student of Sheffield University—left £67,902 in his will, published on Saturday, we may judge that the Fat Owl of the Remove had a considerable following.

I believe it has been suggested that Billy Bunter was derived from three persons—one a corpulent sub-editor on the staff of the paper, another a person who was always expecting but never receiving a postal order, and an unnamed Victorian statesman of more than ordinary fatuousness. So far as I can recall, he had few praiseworthy qualities, other than a power to incite mirth. He would borrow money with no intention of paying it back, and he would pirate another boy's tuck

without a qualm. But his most notable characteristic was, perhaps, the pattern of his trousers, and for this, I have no doubt, Mr. Shields was responsible. The stripes ran vertically as well as horizontally, a sartorial eccentricity which would never have been tolerated when I was a boy at school.

# BOOK OF SPORT FOR BOYS

Every boy will want a copy of "Raymond Glendenning's Book of Sport for Boys." This annual covers a wide field — "soccer," "rugger," boxing, cricket and speedway. The contributors are all great names in sport, such as Len Hutton, Cyril Washbrook, Alex James, Trevor Wignall, and Tom Whittaker. The excellent sports yarns are from the pen of Frank Richards, of Billy Bunter and Greyfriars fame.

Fully illustrated at 8s. 6d., it represents good value.

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## **Spiv' ple**

**W**HAM! A super-decent cake and a really spivvish ple for tea. It's electronic!

Dear me, schoolboy language has changed since the Billy Bunter of my boyhood. If you want proof that children really talk like that today, listen to "Jennings at School" in the Children's Hour, starting on October 29.

Jennings has been brought back to radio after the insistent demands of hundreds of children. I have a feeling he really does exist. The series is written by a prep. schoolmaster who uses the name of Anthony Buckeridge.

The BBC has letters from children saying Jennings is "supersonic," "atomic" and "jet-wizard special."

**Wacko, chums!**

## FOR SALE.

A full range of Biggles books, Just William, Billy Bunter (who now has a sister, Betty Bunter, in the latest book) and all the latest children's reward books, from 2/6 each, are now in stock at the Bench St., News-agent's.

**GENT'S** suit, brown hopsack, semi-drape, suit man 5ft. 11ins.-6ft.; 5 guineas.—Apply, 8, St. Andrew's Terrace. 5464 k21

**WHITE** china wash-basin for bathroom.—8, St. Andrew's Terrace. 5465 k21

**DROP-END** settee, £3; kitchen cabinet, £4; double mattress, £3.—59, Lewisham Rd., River. 5467 k21

**KITCHENER**, "Bell Portable," 30in. bargain.—4, Noah's Ark Rd. 5466 k21

**LADY'S** fur-fabric coat, nearly new, £12.—After 4 p.m., 38, Peter Street. 5461 k21

**BOY'S** fur-fabric coat, nearly new, £12.—After 4 p.m., 38, Peter Street. 5462 k21



# *'I Say You Fellows, He's Fit'*

**E**LEVEN aspirants for the title of "Mr Billy Bunter of 1949" sat down to a mammoth pie-eating contest in Glasgow University's Students' Union yesterday.

After twenty-five minutes of chewing and chortling, belt-loosening and water drinking, eighteen-and-a-half-year-old Peter Macdonald, of Norwich, a first-year medical student, carried off the title.

His score: ten pies—not sick.

To a roar of cheers, Peter was declared the winner. He stood up, five-foot-nine, of slim build, started to bow, then changed his mind.

Peter, delighted at the win which makes him the University's champion guzzler and also gives him a bottle of liqueur whisky, had only one comment: "I had a small breakfast."

The contest was a first step towards raising £500 for a medical graduation dinner in 1951.

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There is probably no character better known in schoolboy fiction than Billy Bunter, and Frank Richards, who created "The Owl of the Remove," has again made him the central figure in his latest addition to the popular series in "**Billy Bunter's Christmas Party.**" As the title suggests, the story has a strong Christmasy flavour, and can be recommended to parents who are now facing the pressing problem of Yuletide gifts. In this story the Famous Five accept Bunter's invitation to spend Christmas with his uncle at Tankerton Hall. Many amusing episodes lead to an exciting climax when they expose the Tankerton ghost and discover a miser's hidden hoard, which restores the family fortune.

Those who have enjoyed the stories of Cliff House School in magazine form will welcome Hilda Richards's new book, "**Bessie Bunter of Cliff House School.**" Humcrously written, the story brings together pupils of Cliff House and the neighbouring school of Greyfriars in their attempts to solve the mystery of a registered letter missing from the study of one of the masters.

Published by Charles Skilton Ltd., these books are priced 7s. 6d. each.

## **New Billy Bunter**

Christ Church parish magazine contains this month three short articles on subjects "Evidence," "Superstition" and "Religion and science." They are written by one man—Frank Richards, author of the famed Billy Bunter stories which were read by every schoolboy and have never lost any of their popularity. The articles are taken from the book "Faith and Hope," a new work by Mr. Richards, which is to be published shortly.

## Billy Bunter "Takes the biscuit"



*MR. Stanley Horry, as Billy Bunter, the famous fat schoolboy, and Mrs. Horry, as an old-fashioned bathing belle, were joint winners in the fancy dress competition at last week's Shegness Arts and Crafts masked ball. (Photo by Wrate's Pier Snaps).*

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## **BOOK REVIEWS**

**Billy Bunter's Benefit** (Charles Skilton, Ltd., 7s 6d) is yet another success from the pen of Frank Richards, who created Billy Bunter and the boys of Greyfriars School in the early part of the century.

The latest publication is one of the present **Bunter** series, disclosing the author and the boys of his lively imagination at their best. Imagine the fun when **Bunter** buys a bicycle and the efforts to raise the money when it is not forthcoming from his father.

It is an amusing story—a book for boys of all ages.

## Joys of yesterday

**S**IR GEORGE MARTIN, former Lord Mayor of Leeds, leaned against a showcase in Leeds Art Gallery yesterday, looked at a copy of the "Magnet," the schoolboys' paper, and said: "When I see these papers we used to consider as staple food shown as

exhibits it makes me feel like an exhibit myself."

Sir George was visiting an exhibition of schoolboys' papers and magazines arranged by the Northern Section of the Old Boys' Book Club. Memories of many heroes of school days are brought back on looking at the 400-500 copies which have been collected.

Part of John Medcraft's collection of papers, finest in the country and insured for £2,000, is on show. There are some old copies of "Chums," "Boys' Own Paper," "Dick Turpin," "Spring-heeled Jack," and "Pluck," lent by Mr. J. R. Macdonald, Hull Stipendiary Magistrate, and the first and latest samples of probably the best-loved detective hero of all time, Sexton Blake. This is that immortal detective's 72nd year of daring exploits which have been depicted by the pens of over 100 different authors.

## Billy Bunter

**T**HE showcase which will have the greatest interest for all the visitors is the one which exhibits the work of Frank Richards—Charles Hamilton in real life. There must be few who have not read of the fat boy of the Remove, Billy Bunter. Mr. Hamilton, who is 76, is still writing, and has sent a letter wishing success to the exhibition.

He has written nearly 10,000 stories in the last 45 years, and the typescript of one of his latest tales is on show. The Bunter stories have also been reproduced in braille, and three copies may be seen at the exhibition.



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## Billy Bunter in the Cooking Pot

WHEN the eyes of Mefoo, a savage cannibal leader, alight on the plump form of one, Billy Bunter; they glisten. How understandable. Billy Bunter might well make a tasty meal for the tribe. How near he comes to sitting in the pot over the fire I must not tell you, for it is all part of the new FRANK RICHARDS story, "Billy Bunter Among the Cannibals," published this month.

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Mr. Richards, who now lives in Kent, used, so I hear, to live on a barge in Essex. That was many years ago. But probably not before he created Billy Bunter in the early years of the century. Now the Bunter series has placed him among the classic authors of literature for young people.

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The savage leader of the cannibals of Kut licks his lips with unsuppressed delight when his first white captive happens to be the inimitable Billy Bunter, of Greyfriars' School fame. This is one of many adventures told by Frank Richards in his latest book, *Billy Bunter Among the Cannibals*, published by Charles Skilton Ltd, Alexandra Road, London, S.W.19, at 7s 6d.

Bunter and the Famous Five school pals of the Remove enact their latest story on a South Sea Island, where Bunter has been sent to work, his pals accompanying him for a holiday. How he avoids both death and work is described in the style which has made Frank Richards a favourite with all boys.

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# Another Billy Bunter book

**A**LL boys like adventure, and Frank Richards serves it up in good measure in his latest book, "Billy Bunter among the Cannibals" (Charles Skilton Ltd.) 7s. 6d. It all starts when Mr. Bunter decides that the time is ripe for his son to leave Greyfriars and carve a career for himself as assistant to the manager of a trading company in the South Sea Islands.

Arrangements are made for the Famous Five to accompany the Owl of the Remove to the island of Lolola, where Bunter has visions of spending a life of ease in the midst of plenty. The boys quickly run into adventure, and Bunter's dreams are shattered when on landing they find that the island has been overrun by cannibals. Bunter's rescue from the very brink of the cooking pots and fierce battles with the cannibals before they are eventually driven from the island make exciting reading.

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*Raymond  
Glendenning's*

**BOOK of SPORT**  
**for BOYS**      PRICE  
8/6

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Stories, features and articles on  
all the main sports. Contributors  
include:—

Denis and Leslie Compton

Len Hutton

Tommy Price

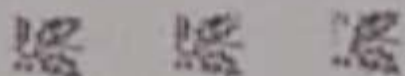
Peter Doherty

Cyril Washbrook

Patsy Hendren

Fiction by Frank Richards of  
**Billy Bunter** fame.

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WHERE d'you think Billy Bunter has been and almost gone? The latest from Frank Richards's pen about this notable and noticeable character is **Billy Bunter Among the Cannibals** (Charles Skilton, Ltd. —7/6). What a meal—er, the book or Bunter? Well, you can please yourself. He goes off to the South Sea island of Lololo, accompanied by the Famous Five. On Lololo things become rather high, and sure enough, Bunter is the picked man of the cannibal chief. But Bunter gets out of the stew—read how.

## Children's bookshelf

# *Billy Bunter again*

**W**ITH the boys of this and yester-year, Billy Bunter, the fat Owl of the Greyfriars Remove, is still a top-weight favourite. In Frank Richards's latest story, **Billy Bunter Among the Cannibals**, Billy is sent to the South Sea Island of Lololo to start a business career. The Famous Five accompany him to soften the blow of parting and they are soon in trouble with the local bad man, who lands them in the midst of a cannibal tribe where the Bunter is regarded as a plump prize.

**Billy Bunter Among the Cannibals**  
by Frank Richards (Skilton  
7s. 6d.)

MacVicar's best yarns, and packed with lively and amusing adventures.

**Stubby Sees It Through** by Angus  
MacVicar (Burke 5s.)

A selection of 21 tales by authors who are proved as favourites of young readers has been made by Leonard Gribble, with the result that **Story Trove**, which includes stories about Biggles, Worzel Gummidge, Norman and Henry Bones and many others equally well loved, represents a safe buy for any children between eight and 12.

**Story Trove** (Burke 7s. 6d.)

There is both education and entertainment in the clever

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# **BILLY BUNTER**



Ask your bookseller to show you this grand series of full-length yarns by the king of school-story writers, Frank Richards. Loved by children and adults alike!

**CHARLES SKILTON LTD.**

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## Boys' reading

Sir,—The article by Derrick Boothroyd on boys' weeklies was extremely interesting, for there is a great deal of romance and no little importance in the subject.

As an avid reader in my own youth of long ago, I certainly think the present-day jet-propelled stories are far inferior to those of yesteryear. This may be on a par with the veteran cricket followers who declare there are no Hirsts or Jessops today, but a good case can be made out in defence of it. Not only that; in the papers of a bygone day there was an intimacy, a bond between editor and reader which is completely lacking now. Especially in the early years of the century there were editors who were real live personalities, men who had often as much influence on their readers as the boys' own parents or teachers. I know I, for one, never smoked in my boyhood mainly because my favourite editor said it was a foolish habit.

I said there is romance in the history of these weeklies. For instance, in the early years of the century there was a small boy in Cape Town who idealised the editor of the paper on which he spent all his weekly wealth. He wrote to him, and got a reply. Other letters followed. Years later, the Cape Town boy arrived in Fleet Street. Soon he was given the responsibility of launching and editing a new boys' paper—one of those mentioned by Derrick Boothroyd. It was a success from the start and his greatest moment was when he was able to welcome to his office the editor who had inspired him and invite him to write stories for his paper. Their friendship lasted until the death of the elder editor just before the end of the war.

In the old days, too, the editors boosted the men who wrote the stories. They published little biographies, and the boys sought them out by various means and wrote to them. There are men now getting on in life who still treasure letters they received. There was one author of thrilling detective stories who in real life was a Sheffield-born doctor with a busy practice on the Yorkshire coast. For years a boy who had been entranced by his stories collected information about him. Long after the doctor was dead the one-time boy learned that his idol's home had been made into a private hotel. Not long

ago he spent a week there, and was given the very room in which the stories which had thrilled him had been written, thus providing another thrill for him.

There was some attempt at character drawing in the old days; there isn't now. The author has not time. And long, long before the production of "The Guinea Pig" we had dozens of stories telling of the tribulations of a working-class boy at a public school, though the only feminine interest was when the hero saved the life of the head master's daughter.

Away back in 1905, Frank Richards, now world-famous as the creator of Billy Bunter, wrote a serial called "King Cricket." It was a grand, crisp yarn in which the fictitious team played the actual first-class counties, with the real players of the day introduced. I can still remember the instalment in which Yorkshire were played, with the names of Hirst, Rhodes and David Denton adorning its pink pages. I know of a clergyman who is searching for that story today.

In my newsagent's the other day, a boy of 12 or so picked up seven two-penny comics, rejected others because he'd "had 'em," dropped a two-shilling piece nonchalantly on the counter, picked up his change, and went out. Can you picture that boy searching for those papers again in 30 or 40 years' time as some do who bought them in the days when a penny was wealth and one day in the week a red letter, eagerly looked forward to, day? I can't.—Yours, etc.,

HERBERT LECKENBY.

12, Herbert Street, Hull Road, York.

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**"YAROO!" ON TV.** At last we are to have Billy Bunter on the air—but only on TV. For five years I have tried to get the B.B.C. to put Bunter on; but everybody can't afford TV. Why can't we all hear the fat school-boy? What a grand gesture it would be to Frank Richards, Bunter's creator! He is nearly 80 and still going strong.—W. F. Sawyer (Seacroft, Leeds). (*Note: Television's Bunter programme is scheduled as a children's feature next year, says the B.B.C.*).

# More to be spent on television

*From Our Television Correspondent*

As foreshadowed in "The Yorkshire Post," the 15 per cent. cut in the B.B.C.'s revenue from licence-holders will not affect television programmes.

On the contrary, by a process of income adjustment more money is to be devoted to television programmes during the three months beginning January 1 next than in the present quarter.

I understand that to protect future standards cheaper production methods are to be adopted where they will not reduce the quality of programmes.

Frank Richards, author of the famous Greyfriars stories, has written a "Billy Bunter" serial for television, which will be presented early next year in six afternoon instalments. Other plans for early next year include a number of dramatised Bible stories for children, a new series of programmes on sports and hobbies and a visit to a circus.

# TV CHANCE FOR A MIDLAND FAT BOY

A TWELVE-STONE Birmingham schoolboy went to London yesterday to seek fame and fortune — as the tuck-eating "Billy Bunter" in a television revival of the famous fat boy of Greyfriars.

## Christmas train plans

TRAVEL arrangements during the Christmas holidays were announced by British Railways yesterday as follows:—

**December 22:** Normal week-day service with additional trains.

**December 23:** Normal Sunday service;

**Christmas Eve:** Normal week-day service modified as necessary;

**Christmas Day:** Sunday service modified as necessary.

**Boxing Day:** Normal week-day service (Sunday service in Southern Region only).

Restaurant cars, buffet cars

In London 13-year-old Brian Sabin joined 38 other would-be "Billy Bunters" at a special B.B.C. audition to find the fat boy in a million who can bring to life the Greyfriars "artful dodger" for a T.V. serial.

Pantomime work has been Brian's only stage experience, but yesterday he left his small council-house home at 97, Olton Boulevard East, Acock's Green, with all the confidence of an accomplished actor.

Slapping a waistline hiding a hearty breakfast, he gave the thumbs-up sign to his father and cried in true Bunter style: "Wow! I feel fit for anything."

Brian got the day off for the London audition from King Edward's Grammar School, Five Ways, and with him went his mother.



## *'May be too tall'*

Last night, 14 hours later, Brian was back home.

"I think I am too tall at 5ft. 9in. for the 'Billy Bunter' the B.B.C. has in mind," he confessed as he munched a bedtime snack of fruit cake. "But I have not given up hope.

"But oh, the mental cruelty! They made me pose over a plate of jam tarts for the photographers and the TV children's newsreel. Just pose, mind you.

"Luckily they let us have the tarts afterwards. Otherwise there'd have been a mutiny!"

Then Brian went up to bed. Groping among the biscuits and cake on his bedside table he at last found his library book—"Billy Bunter's Benefit"—and settled down to read.

"We would like to see Brian get the part," Mr. Sabin told the *Birmingham Gazette*, "but not if it means that he won't be able to get on with his studies.

"Being called for the audition was a surprise for him because his mother and I made the application for him while he was on holiday in Germany.

"People have always said he has what it takes to be an actor. So he has—one minute he's the toff and the next minute he's Billy Bunter with all his tricks.

"And as for eating—well, he needs twice as much as me!"



**Brian Sabin, U.S. Birmingham candidate, brushes up his "Billy Bunter," and finds time, meanwhile, for a late-night snack of fruit cake. When the cake runs out, there are always biscuits.**



**BILLY BUNTER?** — More than 30 British schoolboys, all with ample figures, went to Lime Grove television studios, London, for screen tests yesterday. They are candidates for the role of Billy Bunter, the fat boy of Greyfriars School, in a children's television series for 1952. These three aspirants, all Londoners, are Brian Dodsworth (15), Adrian Trill (12), and Arthur Gray (15).

## VOICES WITH T

**T**HE voices of his married dropped through the let his home in Ashwood Street from their home in South Af Mr McNicol, remembering that Mr Nat Farmer, circuit supervisor of Black's Cinemas



**He Wants to be  
Billy Bunter**

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## *Local Boy Takes a Television Test*

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**A**N Eastbourne boy was handed a script at the B.B.C. television studios, Shepherds Bush, on Monday afternoon. For a few minutes Kenneth James Dennis, aged 13, of 38 Hunloke-avenue, became Billy Bunter, the young hero of school fiction stories—the well-upholstered lad who, schoolboys believe, holds “the record for eating.”

Early this year Kenneth's name was forwarded in answer to a B.B.C. appeal for the ideal Billy Bunter. Kenneth, the son of Mr and Mrs Percy G. Dennis, wondered if he were well-upholstered enough, but the B.B.C. decided to give him a trial. At 3.30 p.m. on Monday, he arrived at the studios with his mother.

On his return to Eastbourne in the evening Kenneth told a “Gazette” reporter: “There were half-a-dozen of us, and we were

each given an audition on our own. After doing the Bunter script, I was given a part in a bigger script which included adults."

While the boys were thus engaged, the parents waited for an hour watching the normal television programme. For the tests the engineers used television film cameras and equipment.

### KENNETH'S IDEA

Kenneth has an idea the B.B.C. choice of a suitable "Billy" was made during the morning. Casting is not until January, and it is expected other boys may be given roles in the television series about Bunter's schooldays.

A Grammar School pupil, Kenneth is in the cast of the play which his school will be producing soon. He has taken part in the popular "Uncle Bertie's Hour" for children at the Redoubt in the summer months. A Scripture Union enthusiast and a member of the school Cadet Corps, Kenneth seems to take after his father, a popular local grocery and provision merchant, who in the first world war was frequently to be seen in troop concert parties.

# Still A Draw ?

Now Portsmouth may soon have a peculiar kind of organization, to be called the Billy Bunter Club, whose members will no doubt take their activities just as seriously as the Snail Watchers.

Mr. D. G. T. Cowd's object in trying to form the club is to hold meetings at which the old Magnet and Gem schoolboy magazines of yesteryear can be discussed and exchanged. He even hopes to secure a reprinting of some of the famous Greyfriars and St. Jim's stories.

I hope no-one who joins will be disappointed to find that Billy Bunter and Co. have changed in the years between, that the Gem has not the sparkle, and the Magnet not the attraction, they once had for younger eyes.

# Immortal ?

**M**Y references last week to the formation of a Billy Bunter Club in Portsmouth have resulted in a protest from Mr. Donald G. T. Dowd, of 27, Lonsdale Avenue, Portchester, the founder.

Billy Bunter and Co., he says,



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"are as fresh to-day as ever they were and the pen of Frank Richards has not lost its cunning, nor the present-day generation its appreciation of the immortal characters at Greyfriars School."

But I did not suggest that Billy and Co. had themselves changed. I did suggest that the boys who were once thrilled and amused by their adventures might, as grown-ups, find that their taste in reading had changed, and that Greyfriars would no longer have the same appeal.

Boys, I am sure, will delight, as they always did, in these stories, and perhaps re-reading will enable even those who are now men of the world to recapture something of the spirit of their youth.

# Bunter's role

**T**HE B.B.C. is taking a risk in extending the Billy Bunter television to adults on February 19. At first it seemed an error to show him only in children's hour. The Owl of the Remove, his postal order, his tuck-raiding, his prevarication, mean much to those who now are Forty Years On. They have a devotion to Bunter and Greyfriars that can never be shared by the children of today.

Those who pored over Bunter in the old Magnet, however, formed an indelible private picture of the great fellow. Impelled now to view him in the flesh may they not find Bunter treading heavily on their dreams? However, the B.B.C. is still choosing its Bunter from six excellent jam-tart exponents. The delay suggests B.B.C. fastidiousness. It will be needed.

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# Greyfriars Club Officers

The first meeting of Portsmouth's proposed Billy Bunter Club was held in North End, when it was decided it should be called the Greyfriars Club, after the school that the author, Frank Richards, made famous.

It was also decided that Mr. Richards should be asked to become President.

Other officers elected were: Founder-Chairman, Mr. Donald G. T. Cowd; Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Lewis E. Bambury; and Hon. Secretary, Mr. A. J. Billing.

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# B.B.C. NAMING TV BUNTER

The name of the TV Billy Bunter was being announced at a special B.B.C. conference this evening.

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# TV's Billy Bunter is married and has

## 2 children



TV's BUNTER—29-year-old Gerald Campton.

**R**EMEMBER all that yaroooh and hullabaloo about finding a SCHOOLBOY to play Billy Bunter on TV? (writes Emery Pearce).

Last night the BBC named its choice. But he's not one of the 50 schoolboys who came from many parts of the country for an audition.

He is a MARRIED MAN (with two children) and a professional actor — 29-year-old Gerald Campton, of Chelsea.

So all the prolonged publicity about choosing a schoolboy now seems to have been unnecessary.

Mr. Campton did not take part in any audition. He didn't even apply for the job.

Producer Joy Harington apparently got a telephone call from a friend during the weekend saying: "If you are still looking for Bunter, take a look at Gerald Campton."

### ONE LOOK

Said Miss Harington last night: "I took one look and realised he had Bunter's face. I looked at his record of acting and realised that here was Bunter."

"And then, in conversation, I discovered that he was a great Bunter fan, knew all the stories, and that was that."

She added: "I auditioned at least 50 boys. Some were promising but too tall. Others too small. Others too young. None of them fitted the part."

But there was a short list of four boys a week ago. The difficulty then was arranging leave from school.

If it was obvious early on that schoolboys weren't suitable, why didn't the BBC announce it?

## MILK STRIKERS RUN FROM ANGRY WIVES

**A**NGRY mothers demonstrated outside the Co-operative milk depot at Stratford, E., yesterday when they heard that the Co-op dairy strike had prevented milk reaching some East London

of about 830 engineering workers over a pay dispute.

In many areas served by these

## TOO SLIM

Mr. Campion is 5ft. 5in. and weighs 11st. 12lb. And as he is too slim for the part he will "be padded out with cushions."

He was born in Bloomsbury, educated at prep. school, then University College School.

His hobbies are Bunter-like cooking ("I'm proud of my jam tarts!") and un-Bunter-like squash, cricket and tennis.

His children are Anthea (6) and Anthony (3). "Anyway, they won't see me," he said. "We have no TV set."

# He'll play Billy Bunter on TV

After a two-month search, the B.B.C. has found the ideal Billy Bunter for its television series, "Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School," based on Charles Hamilton's famous school stories.



He is Gerald Champion, a professional actor, aged 29, married, with two children, 5 feet 5 inches tall, and weighs 11 stone 12 pounds.

Television producer Joy Harington, who has interviewed potential Bunters of all ages and weights, said last night:—

"I chose him for his lovely round face—which fits the part perfectly. But I'm afraid he will need a little padding before he can appear on the screen."

Gerald, who is plump rather than podgy, with a frank smile and turned-up nose, admits that when he was at school he was not unlike a typical Bunter.

"I was greedy then and fatter than I am now," he confided. "They called me Fatty at school."

Champion has appeared in 12 television broadcasts and has been performing in West End plays since 1933, among them "Good-Bye, Mr Chips"—in which he played "Fatty."

Gerald was introduced to the Press at the B.B.C. yesterday—and to make his qualifications for playing "The Owl of the Remove" more convincing he produced a pair of rimless pince-nez.

He will wear these with a high collar and a school coat and tight trousers well padded when he appears in the first programme of the series.



# TV Billy Bunter has two children

*From Our London Staff*

Billy Bunter, the fat boy of Greyfriars School, will soon be seen on television, but viewers will have to forget that the Bunter they see is a married man with two children.

Gerald Campion, 29-year-old London actor, who was chosen by the B.B.C. last night for the leading part in the series "Billy Bunter at Greyfriars School," weighs 11st. 12lb. and is 5ft. 5in. tall. The younger applicants for the part either lacked a resemblance to the schoolboy who never grows up or did not possess the right sort of voice.

The first of the six weekly episodes of "Billy Bunter at Greyfriars School" will be seen in the Children's Programme at 5.40 p.m. on February 19 and will be repeated at 8 p.m. on the same day for grown-up viewers.



**"THE CAD."**—In typical style, television's Billy Bunter takes a greedy mouthful of "tuck." Billy is played by 29-year-old actor Gerald Campion, of Chelsea.



## **BILLY BUNTER**

Still writing of the adventures of the boys at Greyfriars School who have made him renowned is Frank Richards. And his latest contribution "Billy Bunter Butts In" is yet another welcome addition to any boy's library.

The book (like its predecessors) provides pleasant reading for parents who, in their younger days, followed the episodes of boys at Greyfriars.

\* Published by Charles Skilton,  
\* \* Ltd., 50 Alexandra Road, London,  
S.W. 19.



## From Greyfriars

The first episode of "Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School," based on the stories by Frank Richards, will be produced by Joy Harington for children's television on February 19 and repeated the same day in the evening programme. The series, which will consist of separate stories, each lasting half an hour, will be televised weekly until March 25.

The part of Bunter will be played by 29-year-old Gerald Champion, son of Cyril Champion, well-known script-writer for radio. Mr. Champion has played many "fat boy" parts on the stage and has been appearing in television programmes since 1946. Mr. Quelch, form master of the remove, will be played by Kynaston Reeves.

# WATCHING BRIEF

## Highlights of the Next Fortnight

THE serialisation of *Pride and Prejudice*, in six weekly instalments, continues on Saturday nights at 8 p.m. Milton Rosmer and Gillian Lind appear as Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, the parents of Jane, Elizabeth and Lydia, who are played by Ann Baskett, Daphne Slater and Prunella Scales. The formidable Darcy is Peter Cushing, and his friend, the eligible Bingley, David Markham.

For those of lower-browed persuasions there is a Crazy Show, *Trial Gallop*, presented to-night by Richard Afton, from the People's Palace, London. It features Michael Bentine, Peter Sellars, Leslie Mitchell and Leslie Randall. We rather keep our fingers crossed about this one.

More likely to be our cup of tea is Verdi's *Rigoletto*, which is to be given twice, on February 17 and 21. George R. Foa is producing and the conductor is Charles Mackerras. The principal singers are Edmund Donlevy (*Rigoletto*), Arthur Servent (Duke of Mantua), Maureen Springer (Gilda) and Anna Pollack (Maddelena). Designer Stephen Bundy will be responsible for the décor and the costumes, which he is basing on the frescoes of the Renaissance Italian painter Benozzo Gozzoli. The opera is to be introduced by Sir Steuart Wilson.

Children of all ages will be able to renew their memories of Frank Richards' famous Greyfriars School, on the 19th and weekly thereafter, until March 25. The episodes of *Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School* will be televised both in the afternoon and evening, and will be produced by Joy Harington, who, with her brother Charles, is responsible for the adaptation. The inimitable Billy Bunter will be played by Gerald Campion, and the Famous Five by John Charlesworth, Keith Faulkner, Barry Macgregor, David Spenser and Michael Danvers-Walker.

Judging by what we hear about Arthur Swinson's comedy *George and the Dragon*, the famous legendary hero will undergo a course of debunking on the 19th. Was he popular with the soldiers, courtiers and politicians? Was he really so strong and incorruptible? Ah, that's asking! The production will be by Eric Fawcett, who has lined up a very strong cast. It includes Joseph O'Connor (George), Helen Shingler, Arthur Wontner, Michael Shepley and Roddy Hughes.

Maybe some future stars will be introduced by Richard Attenborough on the 23rd, when television visits the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art with *Beginners Please*. It will be interesting to try to spot them.

# BUNTER IN TROUBLE ALREADY



"Oh corks!—it's the Head!" says a horrified Billy Bunter—played here, in a television rehearsal, by Gerald Campion, the 29-year-old actor. The first episode in a series of adventures involving the famous Greyfriars characters will be seen by viewers tonight.

# Billy Bunter sets a trap

Greyfriars School came to life at Lime Grove (London) TV studios yesterday, when "The Siege," the first episode of "Billy Bunter, of Greyfriars School," was rehearsed. Picture shows Billy Bunter making up a jam, ink, and treacle booby trap. Billy is played by 29-year-old actor, Gerald Champion, father of two children.



# Mr. Q. was star of TV's Greyfriars

**WITH** loud yarooos, hee-hees and occasional pained squeals, Billy Bunter of Greyfriars came to TV last night.

It was fine for the kids, but vaguely disappointing for the grown-ups. Too many illusions were dispelled. Could these little fellows be those giants of our

childhood reading? They were all so ordinary.

Even in this first episode, "The Siege." Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, the fat beast, the blithering idiot, turned out to be quite a nice fellow really, saving Bob Cherry from being expelled.

Bunter set a booby trap of soot, jam and bat-oil which landed on Mr. Quelch. This episode, for

some reason, was filmed beforehand. Bunter owns up as Cherry is being sacked.

Gerald Campion, aged 29 and married, was a hard-working Bunter. But the star was Mr. Quelch—gimlet-eyed, swishing his stick and handing out impots—superbly played by 56-year-old Kynaston Reeves.

EMERY PEARCE



# Billy Bunter

The much-heralded "Billy Bunter" came to TV last night—twice—once for the children. This endeavour to recreate famous school adventures, of which older viewers have unperishable memories, seems to have had a mixed reception.

There had been a lot of ballyhoo of the search for a boy to play Bunter, but in the end the B.B.C. had to fall back on a professional actor, Gerald Campion, which seemed right and sensible. Yet I feel that several of the gang gave as good performances as did the fat boy.

For me, Greyfriars School stories brought back a host of delights and youthful fun, but I wonder if they appeal to the youth of the present age? The playing was first-rate, and time will prove if Bunter still has his wide appeal. I hope he has.

"What's My Line?" team on March 3 will be all-feminine. All the challengers will be men.

## **Billy Bunter**

**T**HE appearance on television this week of Billy Bunter, that famous character of schoolboy fiction, reminds me that recently a collection of stories about the fat boy of Greyfriars has been published by a London firm, Charles Skilton Ltd.

The author is, of course, Frank Richards, who created Bunter and his schoolfellows in the pages of "The Magnet." In this book, called "Billy Bunter Butts In," those who, years ago, succumbed to the charm of hero Harry Wharton, of the Remove, can renew their acquaintance with his adventures and those of Bunter.

They need not be ashamed of being seen dipping into this schoolboy literature for Billy is now a national figure of fun, and a kind of refresher course on his activities as penned by Frank Richards is a joyous experience. The book is amply illustrated and costs 7s. 6d. It is just the thing for fathers to buy for sons and read themselves first.

# TV Billy Bunter

*By our television critic,*

**JOHN BOURNE**

**F**ULL of misgivings, the nation's four million viewers switched on the first episode of "Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School." Was yet another legendary hero of our childhood to go to the wall? Was this mountain of a boy, this monstrous death trap for jam tarts, to be deflated by television in the same way that Richmal Crompton's William and Lewis Carroll's Alice were filleted by the cinema?

Fortunately our fears were unfounded, and Joy Harington's convincing production of "The Siege of the Remove" must have been a very pleasant surprise even to the most ardent Bunter fans. Stephen Taylor's settings of the dungeon-like classrooms were some of the most realistic settings I have seen on television, and the older members of the cast gave characterisations which fitted most of our preconceptions about the dream-world of Greyfriars. Mr. Queich had a fine gimlet eye and his parched-voiced pedantries sent a disagreeable tremor down the spine. Goaling, the school porter, was not quite grumpy enough, but Wingate, the prefect, was the epitome of what every Head Boy should be.

## The Famous Five

Twenty-nine-year-old Gerald Campion looks very like the Bunter of the original drawings — ballooned, owl-eyed and magnificently fat. His performance, however, was too restrained. The Bunter bounce was lacking. The Famous Five were played nervously by schoolboy actors who must learn to say their familiar catch phrases with more assurance and play the schoolboy heroes with a more heroic air.

Charles Chester's "Pot Luck"—distressingly reminiscent of American "Jack-pot" radio programmes—is becoming, frankly, rather a bore. Many viewers, I know, have an incomprehensible desire to see the Man-in-the-Street cavorting on their screens. But to base the bulk of a 45-minute programme on the mediocre party turns and forfeit games of untrained, unselected members of the audience is carrying the search for the common touch too far.

It was interesting to compare two widely different treatments of the Young Idea. One was *Blunden's Club*, an important and interesting documentary, written and produced by Caryl Doncaster, on the problems facing Youth Clubs, in their efforts to persuade the modern teenager into the decent way of life. The other was the much heralded *Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School*. The first was brilliant, the second a trifle shaky; the reason lay in the writing. At least one boy, Keith Faulkner, was in both series. His performances showed that a young artist may be capable of a penetrating comment on the manners of his own time, but quite unable to grapple with the idiom of twenty or thirty years ago.

# THE BUNTER CLUB IS 'DISGUSTED'

*They challenge a TV producer*

**B**ECAUSE the B.B.C. have "insulted" their hero in a new television series, Birmingham's Billy Bunter Club is to challenge the show's producer to come to Birmingham and learn how to present the famous Magnet character properly.

## Labour Party policy delay

**L**EADERS of the Labour Party yesterday deferred publication of their policy statement on foreign affairs and defence.

The decision was made as a direct result of events in the House of Commons on Tuesday night when Mr. Churchill revealed that the Socialist Government had agreed to associate itself with counter-action "not confined to Korea" if Chinese bases had been used for air attacks on United Nations Forces.

It was evident from the start of yesterday's meeting of the Labour Party's National Executive Council that Mr. Churchill's disclosures would cause difficul-

The club—the oldest member is 50, the youngest 16—meet regularly to study and discuss the Billy Bunter books and feel that they know "all there is to know" about Bunter and the other characters.

They looked forward to meeting their hero on the television screen, but now that they have seen the B.B.C.'s version they feel "disgusted and insulted."

"It is obvious the producer, Miss Joy Harington, knows very little about Billy Bunter," Mr. Norman Gregory, 35-year-old Birmingham accountant and official of the club, said last night.

"We are to challenge her to come to Birmingham to one of our meetings and we shall give her all the inside knowledge that comes from a thorough study of the subject.

"Our members are disgusted and we are planning a campaign of letters to the Press to have this show produced properly."

## *'The Famous Five'*

So disturbed were the Bunter fans, that at the last meeting of the club a member brought a tape-recorder and played back the TV programme for analysis.

They found that most of the characters—"the Famous Five" as they are known to the initiated—were wrongly portrayed.

"It is a great disappointment to us," Mr. Gregory added. "Through a study of the old-type boys' books we hope to divert the interest of young people away from the American-type comic and all that it stands for.

"The TV shows were a heaven-sent opportunity to show the youngsters that there are other interesting things, but I am afraid that through this boring presentation we are worse off than ever before."

The Billy Bunter Club has branches throughout the country and overseas. Among the Birmingham members are a parson, an industrialist and several engineers.

## *Bunter's creator*

"The Autobiography of Frank Richards" (Charles Skilton, 10s. 6d.)

**H**OW frail is mortal flesh! An editor who was offered Billy Bunter years before *The Magnet* existed did not "see much" in him. He did not think readers would "care much" for him. So Frank Richards (who also was Martin Clifford of *The Gem*) dropped Bunter.

Was there a real Bunter? Yes. He was made up of three persons. Mr Richards tells of the origin of Bunter and some of the other famous boys. It is all enthralling for *Magnet* and *Gem* veterans. Tom Merry, for instance, was born with *The Gem*, but *St Jim's* was earlier, in a paper called *Pluck*. Tom Merry arrived at *St. Jim's* as a dear little chap dressed in velvet with a lace collar!

Mr Richards's actual life story is most interesting, but his famous boys are the real attraction.



# MASTER BUNTER

"The Autobiography of Frank Richards" (Charles Skilton, 10s. 6d.).

**T**HERE has been no event in our literary life-time comparable with the creation of Billy Bunter. The fact that Master Bunter is not a character in a book, but a character in all our lives—or, if not a character, at any rate a name.

Perhaps some of the Itma characters were comparable, but it is doubtful whether they will live as long.

Frank Richards tells his own life story with simple charm, although his attitude to "Frank Richards" as a different person is at first disconcerting.

But, of course, he is another person. The author's original name was Charles Hamilton.

# STORY OF THE MAN BEHIND BILLY BUNTER

**T**HE door opened, and a pair of spectacles looked in . . .  
"Thus Billy Bunter."

Over and over again have we read those magic words about the Owl and the Remove in the now defunct "Magnet."

Did we ever tire of them? Did anyone ever tire of them? How on earth, we ask ourselves to-day, do the young people of 1952 get along without "Magnet," without Billy Bunter?

The answer, of course, is that they don't.

The "Magnet" is no more. But Bunter is still with us, "as large as life and twice as natural" as Bob Cherry used to chant when the door of Study No. 1 opened and the fattest trousers at Greyfriars appeared.

Creator of the world's fattest and most famous schoolboy, author Frank Richards sees to it that we see our hero in the pages of the Billy Bunter books and on the screens of television.

But what of the man who made Bunter? Who is Frank Richards?

Thousands of us must have wondered, must have pictured the man, must have created for ourselves a Frank Richards identity.

Of course, he was a fine, upstanding chap. He knew all the fellows worth knowing, knew all the public schools of England, knew the Thames in summer, had lounged in front of big, open fireplaces in rambling country houses in the hols.

He knew school tuckshops, the Remove landing, Big Side, trains to London from the heart of Kent (for Greyfriars is in Kent).

He even knew the Stock Exchange in the days before the Bank Rate jumped (Samuel Bunter, Esq., we recall, dealt on 'Change).

Richards knew everything worth knowing in the spacious days between two wars.

And, of course, he never grew old. "Frank Richards could never be middle-aged, daddy—he writes such super school-stories."

Truth to tell, Frank Richards is nearly eighty!

He tells us so in "The Autobiography of Frank Richards."

It is a satisfying book. Written simply, coloured occasionally with the expressions which endeared him to "Magnet" readers, almost sadly nostalgic, but full of enthusiasm for his life, his past—that is Richards' book.

He tells it in the third person. Appropriate too, for, of course, his real name is not Frank Richards; nor is it Martin Clifford or Hilda Richards.



Did the celebrated postal order finally arrive, or did Bunter "borrow" that scrumptious piece of cake from Wharton's study? Anyhow, the Fat Owl or the Remove, as portrayed by TV's Gerald Compton, seems to be enjoying himself no end.

He loves to look back. Not surprising, for although he is now working hard, he was a man who had the unusual distinction of finding himself out of work at seventy. The war years were hard on Frank Richards.

His vintage years are pre-war (both 1914 and 1919). For him they were good, happy, carefree years. His book is good, happy, carefree.

Somehow, we feel, Frank Richards has never caught up with the times.

And that is something to be thankful for. Surrounded by space-ships, cowboy clubs, juke-boxes swing and clothes in the modern manner, Bunter might not have been the character he was.

Who knows, with family allowances so big, his famous postal order might have turned up!

"I say you fellows . . ."  
\* Charles Skilton, Ltd. 10/6.

# Creator of 'Billy Bunter' reflects

(O)NE of the most prolific writers of the century is Frank Richards—to use the nom-de-plume by which he is best known. He began professional writing when he was still in his teens—17 to be precise—and for 60 odd years his pen and typewriter have never been idle. At the height of his career he was writing a million and a half words a year. Now approaching his 80th year he has written **The Autobiography of Frank Richards** (Charles Skilton, 10s. 6d.).

As a writer of schoolboy fiction Frank Richards, creator of "Billy Bunter," gave "The Magnet" and "The Gem" to successive generations, and the continuity of these popular magazines was broken only by two World Wars.

There has always been a freshness about his writing—a freshness which remains just as sparkling in his latest work. A lover of travel, many of his stories were inspired and written on the continent. On these travels the author makes a delightful and exciting companion. In the Casino at Monte Carlo we share the excitement of his "kutters" at the tables breathless we ascend the crater of Vesuvius, and terror-stricken we plunge through a tunnel hanging on to the outside of a Monte Carlo express. Incidentally, Vesuvius provided colour for yet another adventure for Harry Wharton and Co., who discover a treasure clue in that very crater.

Enriched with reminiscences going back to the 'nineties, this autobiography will delight all who share a wide and real affection for the author.—H.R.

## ***Billy Bunter***

**I**n connection with your article about the man behind **Billy Bunter** I once wrote a personal letter to Mr Frank Richard and received a letter in return in which he was delighted and amused to know that when I received my newspapers from home in France in the First World War there was a bundle of old "Gems" and "Magnets."

So there we were, only a few hundred yards from the German trenches, with men sitting on the fire step or crouched up in their dug-outs reading about **Billy Bunter** while the shells screamed overhead. They enjoyed **Bunter** as much as they did their rum issue, and that is saying something.— **A Reader.**

# Book to Stir Memories

All who have happy boyhood memories of those fabulous centres of learning, Greyfriars and St. Jim's, will get a lot of pleasure from "The Autobiography of Frank Richards" (Charles Skelton, 10s. 6d.).

Frank Richards is the best-known nom-de-plume of the creator of such legendary characters as Billy Bunter, Augustus D'Arcy and Tom Merry, a schoolboy crew who, in their time, must have played havoc with the homework of many a lad who vicariously shared their adventures.

The output of this prolific writer was staggering. For years he filled two weekly magazines for boys, Gem and Magnet from his own pen.

An autobiography written in the third person has certain advantages, though at times I found the sidelong personal reminiscences just a little too personal. Keener devotees of Billy Bunter and Co. will, I am sure, forgive their author his more sentimental moments.

## " BILLY BUNTER "

The creator of Billy Bunter has been writing school stories for more than 30 years and I recall the happy days of the "Magnet" and the "Gem" in which were chronicled the adventures of Greyfriars and St. Jim's with all those lovable characters—Harry Wharton and company, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Tom Merry and chief of all, Billy Bunter.

Now there is to be bought at bookstalls and stationers' shops the Autobiography of Frank Richards, who, although approaching his 80th year, has found that so many of his readers make a pilgrimage to his home in Kent that he is unable to see any of them because he cannot see them all.

It is interesting to know that he is still writing stories but he no longer seeks inspiration in Rome, Venice, Nice, Munich, and other Continental towns as he did when he was at the height of his career.

This is a volume which will be popular with the schoolboy of yesteryear and with the schoolboy of to-day.

- \* Autobiography of Frank Richards: published by Chas. Skilton, Ltd. Price 10 s

## Life of the party

Famous Five Fan (Collingham): I disagree entirely with W. F. Sawyer, of Seacroft. If it wasn't for Harry Wharton and company, Billy Bunter would be too boring for words. The antics of Bunter are not amusing in the least, and the only conclusion I can come to is that the Famous Five are the life and soul of the party.

# BILLY BUNTER

The immortal Billy Bunter and the notable characters of Greyfriars School who have been part of the life of every schoolboy for more than 30 years figure in yet another Frank Richards book, "Billy Bunter and the Blue Mauritius."

And the reading of the adventures of The Owl do not rest at schoolboy level for many fathers cannot resist the temptation to delve into their own precious store of memories of this renowned character.

The latest antics of Billy Bunter come to life in the disappearance of a stamp from the collection of the school governor.

A most amusing book which no doubt will find its way into many "collections."

• Billy Bunter and the Blue Mauritius, published by Charles Skilton, Ltd., 50 Alexandra Rd., London. S.W.19. Price 7/6.



dear, says Midland Mayor  
**D: CUT COST OR**

**THE BUNTER  
FANS HOLD  
A PARTY**



Mr. Charles Chapman, 73-year-old former illustrator of the Bunter stories, talks over the fat boy's exploits with Mr. Maurice Down, for 20 years editor of "The Magnet." They attended the first birthday party of the Billy Bunter Club in Birmingham last night.

# A FAT BOY COMES TO LIFE AGAIN

Buns, of course, are on the menu

**FIFTY** men and women who have never grown up, and are proud of it, welcomed in Birmingham last night two men who, years ago, helped to bring to life their hero—Billy Bunter.

Young and old lovers of the bun-stuffing "Owl of the Remove" gathered for the first birthday party of the Midlands Old Boys' Book Club—or, as they are better known, the Billy Bunter Club.

To celebrate a most successful year, the club "lured out of retirement" as guests of honour 60-year-old Mr. Maurice Down, editor of "The Magnet" for 20 years, and 73-year-old Mr. Charles Chapman, Bunter illustrator for 29 years.

In a room at the Townsend Club, Church Street, Colmore Row, with old copies of "The Magnet" and "Gem" round the walls, the members fired questions at Mr. Down.

"Why were the comics 'axed' in 1940 when others continued? Were there any stories in hand at the time? Was Bunter still selling as well as ever when he disappeared from the book-stalls?"

## Girl riders win at show

**M**IDLAND competitors were prominent among winners in the juvenile competitions at the Western Counties International Jumping Show at Llanhill, Chippenham, yesterday.

Miss Ann Davis, of Woodbine Farm, Grandsborough, near Rugby, riding Woodbine II, a bay mare, gained first prize in section one of the Wings Stakes, and Miss Dawn Palethorpe, of Blakedown, near Kidderminster, on her chestnut gelding Ginger Pop, was first in section two. Dawn is the younger sister of Jill Palethorpe, twice winner of the Princess Elizabeth Cup at the International Horse Show at the White City.

Pin-Up, a six-year-old chestnut mare, owned by Mr. D. R.

## *'Fewer sales'*

Mr. Down, who travelled from his home in Hertfordshire for the party, answered each in turn.

"Boys' papers never carried many advertisements and it was that which decided that Bunter should go when newsprint became very short," he said.

"Stories? We lived practically from week to week—we had to—and only about two episodes were in hand when the blow fell.

"Bunter was certainly not selling at his best when we stopped publication, but he was still selling."

Later Mr. Down told the *Birmingham Gazette*: "I think Bunter and 'The Magnet' will never come back. They've had their day. Youngsters nowadays seem to want jet propulsion, not those rather quiet, habit-forming school stories.

"It is, perhaps, a pity, but after all, the fat lad had a good run."

**Footnote:** Refreshments were served at the party. Included, inevitably, were—buns.

# Around the studios

**G**ERALD CAMPION, "fat boy" of stage and screen, and recently TV's Billy Bunter, is fighting a losing battle against slimming.

For every succeeding film he has to swathe himself in wads of padding.

"The more I put on, the more I perspire, and the thinner I become," he says. "For my part as a schoolboy in 'Top of the Form,' I thought I had escaped being fattened up, but producer Paul Soskin insisted on padding me out. So while I appear fatter than ever, I am actually rapidly losing weight through the heat!"

Son of scriptwriter Cyril Campion (B.B.C.'s "Taxi"), Gerald is probably one of the oldest "schoolboys" in films. He is 30, and married, with two children.



It must be a difficult feat to find new adventures for Billy Bunter but his creator succeeds again with "Billy Bunter's Beanfeast." Bunter and the Famous Five, together with some rivals find themselves in the casino at Boulogne-sur-Mer. The fun is as usual, furious and knockabout with a great deal of scope of the "Ne shovez vous pas, see? Keepez-vous paws to yourself, see?" order.

*A new Bunter for Christmas*



# BILLY BUNTER'S BEANFEAST

This grand new story by FRANK RICHARDS brings the total number of Billy Bunter books now available up to twelve. *All 7/6 net.* The others are:—

BILLY BUNTER OF GREYFRIARS SCHOOL

BILLY BUNTER'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

BILLY BUNTER'S BARRING-OUT

BILLY BUNTER'S POSTAL ORDER

BILLY BUNTER AMONG THE CANNIBALS

BESSIE BUNTER OF CLIFF HOUSE SCHOOL

BILLY BUNTER AND THE BLUE MAURITTUS

BILLY BUNTER'S BENEFIT : BILLY BUNTER BUTTS IN

BILLY BUNTER IN BRAZIL : BILLY BUNTER'S BANKNOTE

## UNDER THE MOUNTAIN

by Katherine Oldmeadow

This delightful story tells the adventures of eleven-year-old Tim, thirteen-year-old Sarah, and little Gay who is six, while they are on holiday in Switzerland. It is filled with the gaiety and colour of the country and the little intimate details of the many charming customs in its day-to-day life. *7/6 net.*

## THE CHILDREN'S SUMMER

by Sheila Kaye-Smith

LUCIEN LOWEN has illustrated this new edition of Sheila Kaye-Smith's well-written story of two little girls' holiday on a Sussex farm. It shows a real understanding of the child-mind and an artist's power to use words. Studies of childhood as honest and full of charm as this are rare indeed. *9/6 net.*

CASSELL



**A**FTER an absence of more than a year, Billy Bunter will be seen in a new series of adventures beginning on July 6. Author Frank Richards, who created the character of the fat boy of Greyfriars, has been asked by producer Joy Herrington to write a special story for the Children's Hour to mark Bunter's return to television. Gerald Campion, who appeared in the first Bunter series will take the lead again.



**I**n response to demand from grown-ups as well as children, Frank Richards, creator of the famous schoolboy character, Billy Bunter, has written a new adventure about the boys of Greyfriars School. It will be presented on Tuesday in children's TV and repeated on July 19.



# Holiday reading for children

**S**UMMER holidays, particularly in this sort of "summer," create a demand among the children for "something to read." The idea that Christmas and only Christmas is the time to give a youngster the present of a book is no longer tenable.

The publishers recognise the demand, and there are some interesting and attractive new books just published for young readers.

There is another Billy Bunter story from the evergreen Frank Richards. **Billy Bunter's Brain-wave** (Cassell 7s. 6d.) begins with the Fat Owl of the Remove finding a secret hoard of cigarettes in Loder's study. Bunter becomes more than usually insufferable, but his uncovering of a plot and the thwarting of it is all good clean fun in the best Greyfriars style.

\* \* \*

lent **Kazan, the Wolf Dog** (Cassell, 6s.). Kazan, part-husky and part-wolf, is a bold adventurer among the forests of the Canadian North, where he fights, makes friends and hunts. It is a well-told yarn.

\* \* \*

**Betsy's Napoleon** (Cassell, 8s. 6d.) is a story by Jeanette Eaton of a small girl who lived on St. Helena and made friends with the famous captive. Between the child and the great soldier developed an affectionate understanding. The story has a basis of historical fact.

\* \* \*

Another story out of history and one that has never failed to thrill is that of the Black Prince. George Baker in **Leopard's Cub** (Lutterworth Press, 8s. 6d.) tells anew this gripping tale of knighthood, chivalry and courtesy in dark days of fighting.

\* \* \*

For younger readers there are four attractive books.

**Fairy Tales from Sweden** (Frederick Muller, 10s. 6d.) com-

# As large as ever

**L**ODER'S eyes glinted at him . . . It was —, that nosing, pilfering young rascal —, who was the cause of his disaster.

“But for that fat young scoundrel, his name would be in the football list for St. Jim's. . . . Loder was down on his luck: but there was still balm in Gilead, as it were.

“He could ‘take it out’ of —. He had, in fact, been keeping an eye open for —.”

Can you supply the missing name? It is, of course, the “fat Owl,” Billy Bunter, as largely alive as ever after all these years.

His new adventure,\* ending naturally with the downfall of Loder, is well up to Frank Richards's standard as the best of the schoolboy story writers.

\* “*Billy Bunter's Brainwave*,” by Frank Richards (Cassell, 7s. 6d.).

# Bucks Herald

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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1953

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## THESE HORROR COMICS MUST BE BOYCOTTED

**V**ARIOUS people in Aylesbury are concerned about the rubbishy types of children's comics which are on sale to the youngsters. We feel that this concern is more than justified, and it is our contention that much of this sheer "tripe" which is on sale to children should be banned from the bookstalls. We refer in particular to the gangster type of stuff which makes heroes out of gunmen and killers and, in so doing, can do much to lead a child's mind into erring ways. Some of these so-called comics are, in fact, the exact opposite of what any child should be given to read.

This is a subject which warrants an immediate investigation. There are any number of good, wholesome comics which do children a deal of good. There can be no possible criticism of such publications; what must be guarded against are those which are likely to poison young minds. We have all seen the sort of thing to which objection is taken — alleged comics which feature lurid pictures of murder and horror. So vivid are some of these pictures that any child who looks at them is tough indeed if he or she sleeps that night.

Equally appalling are the captions which appear under some of these pictures. These contain as little of the Queen's English as is possible — some of them are worse than slang — and cannot do other than have harmful results to the sensitive mind of any child. Many such publications have their origin in America. We suggest they should be kept in America. Their whole style is out of keeping with the day-to-day life of young British children, so much so that some of these publications must be regarded as being anything but "comic" — menace might be a better word.

The unfortunate part is that this rubbish is being read on a wide scale by many of our young people. Lads that should be chuckling over the adventures of the famous Owl of the Remove, Billy Bunter, are being held spell-bound while the villain tries his wicked tricks on the innocent blonde. The Famous Five — remember Harry Wharton and Co? — seem to have given way to the Infamous Six, and the change is not for the better. Doped race-horses, killing, robbery and even sex form the theme of some of these comics in the pages of which there is little innocent fun and a lot of serious crime. There can be no possible doubt that those who go over the borderline — and many of them do — should be swept off the bookstalls and out of the shops. This newspaper supports any action which will bring this about.

## Adult boys' club

**A**RE schoolboys stories what they used to be?

There is a small club in London for adults who think they are not. The club, which is open to all lovers of boys stories, has its headquarters at the home of two founder members, Messrs. Benjamin and Robert Whiter, of Lordship Lane, Wood Green.

There members meet once a month. Each has a private collection of magazines popular in the 1920's and 1930's. Copies are brought along to meetings, stories are read aloud, and discussions held on the subject matter.

The majority of members are ardent fans of Billy Bunter, Bob Cherry, Harry Wharton and company at Greyfriars. And the general taste in stories is summed up by the club's heraldic shield. The four quarters contain a school cap, inkpot and cane; pipe and cap in the Sexton Blake tradition; a highwayman's hat, flintlock pistol and mask; and a cowboy's hat, six-shooter and cartridge belt.

# Gift books for boys

**G**LOSSY-BACKED annuals calculated to delight young people's hearts are now appearing in readiness for Christmas.

Contributors to Raymond Glendenning's *Book of Sport for Boys* (Sportsguide Publications, 10s. 6d.) include many well-known writers and stars of sport. School stories by Frank Richards (of Billy Bunter fame), hints, quizzes and dozens of action pictures add to the attractiveness of this well-produced book.

From Preview Publications come three annuals, with illustrations in colour and black and white, about the doings of popular radio figures. Alan Stranks and illustrator John Worsley combine to present "On the Beat with P.C. 49" (7s. 6d.) and "P.C. 49" (6s. 6d.); the latter consisting entirely of strip cartoons.

The third Preview publication is the Archie Andrews Annual (7s. 6d.), which follows up the success achieved by Archie and his creator Peter Brough in book form last year.

Any of these books would make a most welcome gift for a boy.

## **ON THE TRAIL WITH BILLY BUNTER**

**Billy Bunter's First Case,**  
by **Frank Richards** (Cas-  
sells, 7s. 6d.),

Well, here is another Greyfriars book in Frank Richards' inimitable style, and both young and old, particularly those of us who revelled in the adventures of the famous five more years ago than we care to remember will thoroughly enjoy his latest exploit of the Fat Boy of the Remove.

It was entirely coincidental, of course, that two £5 notes had disappeared from Coker's pocket the same afternoon Bunter was trespassing in the room in search of jam and entirely coincidental, too, that he had been reading about the latest exploits of Sherlock Holmes. But off he went on the trail and you will enjoy the adventure to the end.



# NOW BILLY BUNTER IS A SLEUTH

**BILLY BUNTER** has turned detective! In Frank Richards' new story, "Billy Bunter's First Case" (Cassell, 7s. 6d.), the famous fat boy sets out to discover the cad who stole a tenner from old Corker's study.

Those old fashioned school-boy epithets—"Beast" and "Old fellow"—are still there. In other words, Bunter has not changed at all—"Oh corkers, there's the head!"

include last year's recommended book, "The Borrowers," by Mary Norton (9s. 6d.), a clever fantasy.

The others are "Sea Change," by Richard Armstrong (8s. 6d.), the story of a young apprentice on a merchant ship; "Visitors from London," by Kitty Barnes (8s. 6d.), a family story; and "The Circus is Coming," by Noel Streatfield (8s. 6d.).

Ward Lock's series of "Wonder Books" are popular gifts, and the titles include animals, Bible stories, fighting services, science, nature, and drama.

Here is something with a touch of nostalgia for boys of all ages. The Magnet and the Gem may be defunct, but our sons can have Billy Bunter in book form. The famous Owl of the Remove is solving the mystery of Coker's missing tenner, or holding eight tickets for a steamer excursion to Boulogne on Founders' Day. This makes him the temporary object of affection of such noteworthy Greyfriars characters as Skinner, Stott and Snoop, and America's gift to the school, the miserly Fisher T. Fish. No second invitation will be needed to join in Billy Bunter's Beanfeast or Billy Bunter's First Case, by Frank Richards, both from Cassell at 7s. 6d. each.

# BILLY BUNTER IS IN TROUBLE AGAIN

Billy Bunter the Bold, by Frank Richards (Cassell & Co., Ltd. 7s. 6d.)

**H**ERE is another Greyfriars yarn in the inimitable Frank Richards style, with the fat, owlish Bunter in trouble again.

It all begins when the gourmand spies oodles of tuck laid out in the study of the Famous Five for a tea party for Wingate, the School Captain. Throwing caution to the winds, he falls to with a vengeance. Of course, the wrath of the Remove falls upon him and he stands a Form trial and is sent to Coventry.

You'd be surprised what tricks Bunter gets up to in order to win himself back into favour. Why, he even blacks his eye with soot and tries to spoof the Remove that it was a battle honour achieved in defending the good name of the school! To no avail. The soot falls off.

## HIS LUCKY DAY

Then comes a day when Bunter really does achieve something. Then, of course, nobody believes him at first. In the end, however, he gets his due reward.

An excellent book which should fascinate present-day youngsters as much as the adventures of these fellows interested their fathers years ago.

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★ TV AND RADIO ★

# *Billy Bunter is back again*

**L**OOK out chaps — Billy Bunter will be back in television again on July 1.

His last appearance was a year ago, but he will turn up again in the robust form of Gerald Campion and the scene will be set at Greyfriars School. This episode, called **Bunter Won't Go**, has been specially written for TV by Frank Richards who is now over 80 and has written more than 10,000 stories for schoolboys and schoolgirls in the last 30 years.

Weather permitting, the second Test match at Trent Bridge, Nottingham, will be covered extensively by the TV cameras. Brian Johnston and E. W. Swanton will be commentators.

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FAT OWL WOULD NEVER  
SAY 'FLUONOMIST'

# 'Vicar is all wrong about Bunter'

by JACK LUCAS

**O**H corkers, that's torn it!  
The Billy Bunter fans  
are "yarooing" with indig-  
nation at what the Vicar of  
Brockmoor, Staffordshire,  
(the Rev. Denys Aston) said  
about their hero this week.

The vicar attacked the use of  
long-winded phrases for simple  
things, like *fluonomist* for chim-  
ney sweep and *rodent operatives*  
for rat catchers.

And he invented a phrase of  
his own—he called them *Billy  
Bunterisms*

But the fans say that, like old Quelch, the Vicar has picked on Bunter unfairly. They say he was never long-winded, although some of his pals might have been.

Forty-two-year-old Mr. Frank Griffiths, who has a shelf of Bunter epics at Hagley Road, Birmingham, protested: "Whatever the weaknesses of the Fat Owl, inventing words was not one of them. Of course, he may have invented weird ways of spelling the old ones."

The Vicar may have been thinking of Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, one

of the Famous Five, said Mr. Griffiths. He said things like "The roughfulness is terrific."



On the warpath.

Or, said Mr. Griffiths, it might have been Alonzo Todd, another member of the Greyfriars Remove, who once said something like:

"Allow me to give public disapprobation of the utilisation of such terminology, and to couple with that act the indicative asseveration that for a dictionary, which is merely an inorganic lexicographical object

And so on. It sounds as though it might very well have been that boulder Alonzo.

## Verbose? Never

Another fan of Billy Bunter and "The Magnet" said last night: "I have heard nothing so unjust as the phrase 'Billy Bunterism' since Mr. Quelch threatened to expel Bob Cherry."

He may have tried to keep his hampers to himself. He may have been a little optimistic about those postal orders which never came.

But Billy Bunter, say his fans, was never verbose. He himself would have summed up his disapproval of the phrase Billy Bunterism with one word of pain.

Yaroo!

# TV spelt trouble for the Scotts

**TV BROUGHT** nothing but trouble to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Scott, it was stated in the Divorce Court yesterday.

Mr. Scott, an engineer, of Lodge-lane, Redhill, Surrey, alleged cruelty by his wife, Jean. Two of their rows, said Mr. Justice Wallington, were over their television set.

**ROW No. 1** began when the husband wanted to watch a boxing match. According to Mr. Scott, his wife turned the set off and threatened to put an axe through it and through him.

**ROW No. 2** started when he wanted to watch a "Billy Bunter" programme.

The wife put her feet on the mantelpiece and obscured his view. When he complained she removed her feet but first held a paper and then some knitting in front of the screen. They came to blows.

The judge said he accepted the husband's evidence.

## 'HAGGARD'

On another occasion, the judge went on, the wife had rushed at the husband, punching and kicking him. His condition had been described as "utterly exhausted . . . haggard and drawn."

Mr. Scott was granted a decree nisi.

Mrs. Scott, of Lee-street, Horley, Surrey, denied her husband's allegations. She cross-petitioned, accusing him of cruelty. Her petition was rejected.

## CHAPLIN TO PLAY ATOMIC AGE KING

**CHARLIE CHAPLIN** is working on a new film, part of which will be made in London. And its theme is—atomic.

It deals with the problems of a king—played by himself—who wants to use atomic energy to improve the everyday lives of his people. To provide free heating, a better climate, good fresh food all the year round.

But his ministers are too pre-occupied with the international importance of atomic energy and rid themselves of the idealist.

## ROYAL ADVICE

He is exiled to Switzerland and there he meets a girl who shows him that it is better to be a free citizen than a king in chains.

No date has been fixed for the start of the shooting, but Chaplin has been working on the script and the music for some time.



*How many of the*  
***Billy Bunter***  
*series has he read?*

There are now fifteen of these stories by FRANK RICHARDS about the fattest and most popular schoolboy in literature. Each book is illustrated, 7/6 net. The titles are:

BUNTER DOES HIS BEST; BILLY BUNTER THE BOLD; BILLY BUNTER'S BRAIN-WAVE; BILLY BUNTER'S BEANFEAST; BILLY BUNTER AND THE BLUE MAURITIUS; BILLY BUNTER BUTTS IN; BILLY BUNTER'S POSTAL ORDER; BILLY BUNTER'S BENEFIT; BILLY BUNTER AMONG THE CANNIBALS; BILLY BUNTER'S BARRING OUT; BILLY BUNTER'S BANKNOTE; BILLY BUNTER OF GREYFRIARS SCHOOL; BILLY BUNTER'S CHRISTMAS PARTY; BILLY BUNTER IN BRAZIL; BILLY BUNTER'S FIRST CASE.

**CASSELL**

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Saturday week (July 9th) brings two famous fictional heroes back to life on our screens, one of them, indeed, quite literally exhumed, as it were. In the afternoon Billy Bunter (impersonated once again by Gerald Champion) returns to Children's Television in a new Greyfriars School series, specially written as before by that Old Master of schoolboy fiction, Frank Richards, now in his middle eighties.

That same evening sees P.C. Dixon (*alias* Jack Warner) miraculously restored to life, after being murdered on his beat in the film of "The Blue Lamp," in order that viewers may wish him better luck in the weekly fight against crime which script-writer Ted Willis has lined up for him in "Dixon of Dock Green," the new series designed to keep us on edge every Saturday night for some time to come. Let us hope that Mr. Willis' script will match Mr. Warner's flair for portraying down-to-earth but true-to-life characters.



**BUNTER IS BACK:** July 9 brings Billy Bunter of Greyfriars back to Children's Television. Gerald Campion will appear as Bunter.

TALK OF THE MIDLANDS

# The Billy Bunter fans are ready with 'boiling oil'

**YAROO!** What a lark, you cads! The Old Boys of Greyfriars are getting ready to "boil somebody in oil" if the new TV series featuring their hero Billy Bunter isn't more to their liking.

The B.B.C. first put Billy Bunter on children's television three years ago. He was fat. He was owlish. And, yes, he was stuffing buns, as ever.

But, so far as the members of the Midland Billy Bunter Club were concerned, there the resemblance to the immortal schoolboy stories ended.

The names were the same. It really looked like Greyfriars. But the television stories just hadn't got the true spirit of the beloved "Famous Five" whom they remember.

So when the new series begins on July 9 members of the club will get together and tune in to see if there has been an improvement.

"We shall be watching with the gimlet eye of Mr. Quelch," says Mr. Jack Corbett, the 44-year-old Birmingham businessman who is the club's chairman.

## FAR TOO MUCH

The club is about 25 strong. Among the members are school-teachers, shop managers, an auditor, housewives, and one 18-year-old. Once a week they meet to swop copies of the "Gem" and the "Magnet" and talk of Greyfriars and St. Jim's.

Never did they dream the day would come when they would get too much of Billy Bunter.

"Yet in that first television series Bunter dominated everything and there was far too much jam-tart throwing," complains Mr. Corbett. "The real atmosphere of Greyfriars and the subtleties of the magazine stories were lost."

If they feel that the new series still does not do justice to the Boys of the Remove, they will record their displeasure in letters to the producer, Miss Joy Herington, and the author of the stories, Mr. Frank Richards.



**MR. JACK CORBETT**  
**"With a gimlet eye . . ."**

**BILLY BUNTER**, the "Owl of the Remove," is going to Russia. Stories about him are included among a large selection of children's books that will be sent from Birmingham next week to Sverdlovsk. The books have been sent by hundreds of children in response to a suggestion by the Town Clerk (Mr. J. F. Gregg) after a Russian boy had asked the civic delegation while in Sverdlovsk what the English children read.

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## **'I SAY, YOU FELLOWS!'**

**THE** City Fathers who, in an excess of otherwise highly commendable Yuletide solicitude, have decided to include the stories of Billy Bunter in the books they are sending to the children of Sverdlovsk, have only too obviously not even considered the possible results of so rash an act. Do they really want the youth of Soviet Russia—for, to be sure, it will not stop at Sverdlovsk—to know that our educational system tolerates a school (and Greyfriars is certain to be located in Birmingham), where the boys are so brainless that they remain perpetually in the Remove; that those pupils who have wealthy parents are allowed to send them hampers of food (clear cases of class distinction), which are eaten surreptitiously in dormitories, obviously because the school meals are grossly inadequate; that the school harbours a Lord and a Nabob (more class privilege) as well as one, Fisher T. Fish, the son of a hated American capitalist, who indulges in "big business" deals with his fellow pupils?

As for Billy Bunter himself, what more horrible example of lazy ignorance, gluttony, deceitfulness, prevarication and parasitism could be revealed to the little Ivans and Olgas of Sverdlovsk? Even that arch-bounder of Greyfriars, Vernon-Smith, would think twice before doing anything so heinous as Birmingham is contemplating. One could

go on reciting the shortcomings of this school, which have been notorious for many years, but there is surely no excuse for blazoning them to the world—and the Soviet world at that. Has the Minister of Education been consulted about this—to say nothing of the city's Chief Education Officer, the National Union of Teachers and the National Association of Schoolmasters? (Well indeed might Mr. Quelch murmur "Upon my word," if not "Bless my soul.") The authorities really must think again, or the "consequencefulness" of their action, as Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh would say, "may be terrific."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

# BILLY BUNTER RETURNS

## FROM HIS "HOLIDAYS"

**B**ILLY BUNTER is back! The "Fat Owl" of Greyfriars School, beloved of generations of schoolboys, comes once more to B.B.C. screens.

A new series of adventures at Greyfriars has been specially written for Children's TV by the creator of Billy Bunter, Frank Richards, and will be seen each Sunday for six weeks starting on September 9.

Once again Gerald Champion will play Billy Bunter, and Kynaston Reeves the irascible Mr. Quelch

The author, Frank Richards

is now in his 80's and has written nearly 10,000 stories since he sent off his first story at the age of 17.

He started writing school stories some years after the death of Queen Victoria and has worked through five reigns and two world wars.

Under his baptismal name of Charles Hamilton, and his various noms-de-plume of Martin Clifford, Owen Conquest, and for the female readers Hilda Richards, the creator of Bessie Bunter, he is perhaps as immortal as his own characters.

# Victor Thompson

## PERSONAL PIECE

**I** WATCHED the clamorous kids around Dan Dare at the Boys' and Girls' Exhibition.

"It used to be Dan the Sanitary Man, not Planetary," said a voice that has launched a thousand quips, and there behind me was my old *Herald* confederate, that great artist Gilbert Wilkin-

son. "It used to be Billy Bunter and the Famous Five of Greyfriars," I corrected. At which a father alongside me gave the immortal Bunter cry of "Yaroo!" and his friend intoned the correct response, "Cave, Quelchie!"

There is, you see, a more or less secret society perhaps a million strong in this country—the vast balding brotherhood of old Greyfriars boys.

If we who used to devour the *Magnet* magazine stories in our boyhood ever united for any political purpose, we could take over the country tomorrow.

And run it, for we have all the talents. Men as different as Noel Coward, Herbert Morrison, Stanley Matthews and Gilbert Harding have declared their membership to me.

under bedclothes by the light of a failing electric torch that made a funny S-shadow on the tiny print.

It was seventh heaven to be simultaneously a Decent Chap and a lawbreaker. . . .

Now it wasn't so long ago (*I told my envious hearers*) that I talked about these things with the creator of Greyfriars School himself—now a little, old man in a skull-cap living in a quiet road, at Kingsgate-on-Sea, Kent.

**A**T 84, spry Frank Richards (real name, Charles Hamilton) still works every day, adding to the awful total of 75million words he has poured out in his lifetime.

He works, he said frankly, because he still must if he wants to eat. He earned handsome money when he was the Pied Piper of the Board Schools, but he spent it as it came—sometimes (but don't tell Harry Wharton) at the Monte Carlo gaming tables.

What puzzled and faintly

grieved him was that over the years Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, the greedy, cowardly, deceitful scrounger he had planned to be despised, had gradually become the most enduring and successful of all the Greyfriars tribe.

There's a new Frank Richards book due shortly (*Collins, 8s. 6d.*) and, bowing to this strange trend, it makes Fatty the central figure, while the Famous Five play only supporting roles.

Around the Trans-Antarctic stand at the Exhibition, some boys were shoving one another, and one was thumped and said a distinct "Yaroo!"

Not "Eeek!" or "Glurp!" or any other transatlantic comic strip term, but a good old Greyfriars "Yaroo!"

The little old skull-capped Merlin in Kent will be glad to know that some of his influence on English schoolboy language is still alive.



# BILLY BUNTER'S BACK

**BILLY BUNTER**, beloved of generations of schoolboys, comes once more to BBC screens. A new series of adventures at Greyfriars has been specially written for BBC Children's Television by the creator of Billy Bunter, Frank Richards, and will be seen each Sunday for six weeks, starting on September 9.

*Once again Gerald Campion will play Billy Bunter, and Kynaston Reeves the irascible Mr. Quelch: Gerald Campion has starred in all the previous Bunter plays and serials on BBC-TV.*

Brian Roper, returning to the series, plays Bob Cherry. Harry Wharton will be played by Anthony Valentine, Frank Nugent by Laurence Harrington, Johnny Bull by William Symons, and Hurree Singh by Barry Barnett.

The author, Frank Richards, is now in his eighties and has written nearly 10,000 stories since he sent off his first story at the age of 17. He started writing school stories some years after the death of Queen Victoria and has worked through five reigns and two world wars.

Producer of the series is Shaun Sutton.

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A new series of adventures at Greyfriars has been specially written for B.B.C. television by Frank Richards, and will be seen each Sunday for the next six weeks. Once again Gerald Campion will play Billy Bunter, and Kynaston Reeves the irascible Mr. Quelch. The author, Frank Richards, is now in his 80's and has written nearly 10,000 stories since he sent off his first story at the age of 17. He began writing school stories some years after the death of Queen Victoria.

## Bunter's creator

**A** MAN of eighty-six is the author of one of the most popular features for children's television. His name is Frank Richards and his chief subject is that immortal schoolboy character — Billy Bunter.

Mr. Richards, whose latest adventures of Billy Bunter have just begun on Children's Hour Television, has written about 10,000 stories since the age of 17. He started writing school stories a few years after the death of Queen Victoria.

His real name is Charles Hamilton, but he is always known as Frank Richards. Other pen names he has used include Martin Clifford, Owen Conquest and Hilda Richards (for the adventures of Bessie Bunter).

Mr. Richards, who lives near Broadstairs in Kent, continues to turn out such youthful phrases as "Yaroooh" and "Leggo, you beast."

He has no plans to stop writing about Billy Bunter, who should really be over 60 years old by now, for his stories are in tremendous demand — by young and old.

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## "Billy Bunter" in Disgrace!

Newest theatre club is Gerry's, kept by Gerald Champion, better known as the fat schoolboy, Billy Bunter, on Television. Condition for membership; you must have something to do with the entertainment world. Your escort takes you to an underclothing shop in Shaftesbury Avenue, where you dive into the dark arcade; then he opens a dark, narrow door with a key and leads you down a narrow staircase into a sort of gay Alladin's Cave of pink and cream walls etched with amusing caricatures, hung with blue curtains and lit with pink and white lanterns.

Supping were Harold Scott and Linsdale Landen (both in *A Dead Secret*), Richard Goolden, Jill Melford, the red-head daughter of Jack Melford, Miriam Karlin, Chin Yu, in white with a bright red coat, Roy Rich, Brenda Bruce, Stanley Baker, Donald Houston, Denholm Elliott and many others.

When Gerry hasn't got a cook he does the job himself, and there he was cooking away. During a lull he came to our table for a brief chat. A waitress whispered something in his ear. Gerry's expression changed instantly. "Excuse me," he gasped, "I've forgotten all about a steak!" And he rushed off looking far more like Billy Bunter in disgrace than Gerald Champion.

# New Bunter series for television

**B**ILLY BUNTER is back: a new series of five adventures about the Greyfriars character has been written for B.B.C. Children's Television by Frank Richards, and will be seen each Saturday starting on July 20.

Once again Gerald Campion will play Billy Bunter, and Kynaston Reeves Mr. Quelch. Gerald Campion has starred in all the previous Bunter plays and serials in B.B.C. Television.

Keith Faulkner plays Bob Cherry. Anthony Valentine and Lawrence Harrington as before play Harry Walton and Frank Nugent. Johnny Bull is played by David Coote, and Hurree Singh by James Doran. Glyn Dearman plays Lord Mauleverer.

The author Frank Richards is now in his eighties and has written nearly 10,000 stories since he sent off his first story at the age of 17.

He started writing school stories some years after the death of Queen Victoria and has worked through five reigns and two world wars.

Under his baptismal name of Charles Hamilton, and his various noms-de-plume of Martin Clifford, Owen Conquest and for his female readers, Hilda Richards, the creator of Bessie Bunter, he is perhaps as immortal as his own characters from the Magnet and the Gem.



## **Billy Bunter**

Michael Anthony and Bernadette Milnes, a new husband and wife team, are presenting their first play in the West End this Christmas. Under their newly-formed company, City Stage Productions, they will stage "Billy Bunter's Mystery Christmas" for three weeks at the Palace, opening on December 27 for matinées only. In addition to Billy Bunter, there will be other Greyfriars characters. Bunter will be played by Gerald Champion, who has played the character more than eighty times on children's television.

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## ' Billy Bunter '

"Billy Bunter's Mystery Christmas" opens at the Palace on December 27 for a three-week season of matinées only. Gerald Champion will play the famous fat boy and others in the cast are John Downing, Alistair Speed, Roy Brown, Anthony Rea, Anthony Toller, Peter Bartlett, Ronald Adam, Edward Evans, Toke Townley and Michael Anthony. Jordan Lawrence is responsible for the direction and Vic Friendly for the setting. Press representative: Sylvia Milsom.

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# PALACE

## 'BILLY BUNTER'S MYSTERY CHRISTMAS'

HERE is a show to which all children should take their fathers for a Christmas treat. Children themselves will enjoy it, but to old readers of the Greyfriars stories it

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### 'BILLY BUNTER'S MYSTERY CHRISTMAS'

Play by Maurice McLoughlin. Presented by City Stage Productions at the Palace on December 27. Décor by Victor Friendly.

Harry Wharton . . . . John Downing  
Bob Cherry . . . . . Alistair Speed  
Frank Nugent . . . . . Anthony Rea  
Hurree Janset Ram Singh

Roy Brown  
Johnny Bull . . . . . Anthony Toller  
William George Bunter

Gerald Champion  
Mr. Quelch . . . . . Ronald Adam  
Lord Mauleverer . . . . Peter Bartlett  
Portwell . . . . . Edward Evans  
Dr. Schmidt . . . . . Michael Anthony  
Alfie Crump . . . . . Toke Townley

Directed by Jordan Lawrence

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will be a tonic to restore lost youth.

The author has retained the characters and re-created the atmosphere so well that it is difficult to realise that the play did not come from the pen of Frank Richards himself; and Jordan Lawrence (a self-confessed Greyfriars old boy) has en-


sured that every sequence and every tableau bears the stamp of that particular old school tic.

Gerald Champion's ability to impersonate Bunter is known to all TV owners. On the stage, he is even better, and is ably aided and discomfited by an equally well-cast gang.

Ronald Adam, Edward Evans and Toke Townley are admirable adults in this schoolboy adventure.

L.G.S.

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## 'Billy Bunter Flies East'

Gerald Campion is to appear in "Billy Bunter Flies East" by Maurice McLoughlin at the Victoria Palace on December 22, for a four-week matinées-only season. City Stage Productions are to present this production, by arrangement with Jack Hylton and Leslie Macdonnell. The script has been prepared by arrangement with Fleetway Productions Ltd. and Frank Richards, creator of Billy Bunter.

## **CASSELL BOOKS**

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### **SIR VIVIAN FUCHS**

#### **ANTARCTIC ADVENTURE**

Sir Vivian's tremendously exciting story of the crossing of Antarctica, specially written for young people. Superbly illustrated in full colour. 12/6 net.

### **PAT SMYTHE**

#### **HORSES AND PLACES**

An exciting record in words and many pictures of Pat Smythe's travels from Europe to Peru and of life at Miserden with Tosca's three foals. 10" x 7½", 10/6 net.

### **MIKE**

### **HAWTHORN**

#### **CARLOTTI**

#### **TAKES THE WHEEL**

The second thrilling motor racing story for young enthusiasts completed by Mike Hawthorn just before his death. *Illus.*, 10/6 net.

### **GLADYS**

### **DAVIDSON**

#### **BALLET STORIES**

#### **FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

The stories of the twenty-seven best known ballets to be seen in this country, specially told for children. 12/6 net.

### **BILLY BUNTER**

#### **BUNTER**

**COMES FOR CHRISTMAS**  
**FRANK RICHARDS'** new story of the famous 'fat owl' and his companions at Greyfriars. 8/6 net.





A SCENE FROM " BILLY BUNTER FLIES EAST " AT THE VICTORIA PALACE: THOSE WATCHING BUNTER'S (GERALD CAMPION) SUFFERINGS ARE (L. TO R.) MR. QUELCH (HUGH CROSS), BOB CHERRY (ALASTAIR SPEED), JOHNNY BULL (IAN KEEL), FRANK NUGGENT (ANTHONY REA) AND INKY (PETER BARTLETT).



Jennings and Billy Bunter are still at it. The hero of **Jennings As Usual**, by Anthony Buckeridge (Collins, 7s. 6d.), is in trouble this time with a Home-made High Fidelity Telephone, roller skates and a Father Christmas costume. This is the tenth successful book about him, but I have lost count of the number of Bunters. Greyfriars is at once timeless and a period piece. "Don't he talk awful rot?" asks Coker, who has a big part this time in Frank Richards's **Bunter the Bad Lad** (Cassell, 9s. 6d.), of his form master, Mr. Prout. Prout has accused him of "skewing in con" and Coker's effort to get his own back lands him in Bunter's power.

Harry Wharton and Co. are the youthful *dei ex machina*—as I'm sure Mr. Richards would say — who rescue him. The postal order that never arrives, the exclamations ("Yaroooh"), the fellows perpetually coming up from nets, are all there for devotees, with a joke about a Sputnik to reassure us this is 1960 and not 1910. M. C.

# SEARCH FOR A NEW BILLY BUNTER

A NEW Billy Bunter production, "Billy Bunter's Swiss Roll", written by Maurice McLoughlin, by arrangement with Fleetway Productions Ltd., and Frank Richards, creator of Billy Bunter, is to be presented at the Victoria Palace, on December 23, for a matinéés-only season.

Auditions are being held for a new Billy Bunter at the Victoria Palace on Monday next at 11 a.m. Applicants should be about 25, about 5ft. 2in. in height, with a girth of about 50 inches.

The show is to be presented by City Stage Productions, by arrangement with Jack Hylton and Leslie A. Macdonnell. Press representative John Bretton.

A BILLY BUNTER WANTED. MUST BE ABLE TO ACT. GIRTH NOT LESS THAN 50 INCHES. — VICTORIA PALACE, STAGE DOOR, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 5th, 11 a.m. C

EXOTIC Dancer, young, good figure, for famous dance act. Costello. 2 p.m. Friday. —Max Rivers. C

TOP Club and Cabaret Acts supplied and wanted. Beautiful girls always in demand for T.U. and film work. — Shaftesbury Productions, 85 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.1. REG 0983 or FRE 3782. C



"Emergency Mission" in the B.B.C. TV "Men into Space" film series, on Saturday, September 17, tells how when a new spaceship goes out of orbit, and the crew given up for lost, the only chance of a rescue bid is provided by an experimental ship just off the drawing board.



Billy Bunter poses a problem to his Greyfriars schoolmates, in "Bunter Won't Go," to be shown by B.B.C. TV, on Saturday, September 17.



George Sanders, Dana Wynter and Robert Stack star in the B.B.C.-TV film drama "A Portrait of a Murderer" on Saturday, September 17.





### Melachrino Burgled

George Melachrino had his Chelsea home burgled for the second time in six weeks over the weekend. The place was ransacked, but one item the thieves missed, however, was his golden disc, "The Immortal Ladies", which was on the wall.

★ ★ ★  
Slater Pantomimes

Receiving a ragging from the "Crazy Gang" is Keith Banks, who plays Billy Bunter, at the Victoria Palace. Peacefully rehearsing for "Billy Bunter's Swiss Roll," a matinee-only show opening December 23, Keith Banks had a rude shock as the Crazy Gang marched in and calmly proceeded to give him the full treatment. Completing this, they disappeared as mysteriously as they materialised.

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## Billy Bunter

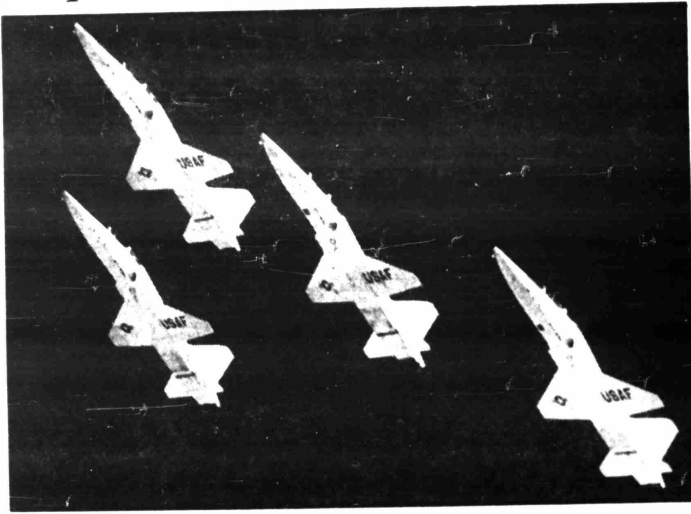
CITY STAGE PRODUCTIONS, by arrangement with Jack Hylton and Leslie A. MacDonnell, present "Billy Bunter's Swiss Roll", at the Victoria Palace, for matinées only. The script is by Maurice McLopghlin, by arrangement with Ficetway Productions and Frank Richards. The cast includes Keith Banks, Machiel Anthony, Derek Sydney, Robert Lankesheer, Keith

Marsh, Peter Greenspan, François Landry, Michael Tennent, Pearson Dodd and Brian Tipping. The director is Ellen Pollock and décor is by Alan Pikford. Press Representative: John Bretton.

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## Supersonic Plane for Trainee Pilots



The first official formation photograph of the United States Air Force's new supersonic plane, the Northrop F-5A. It is the first U.S. Air Force supersonic plane designed specifically for pilot training and will be used by students to have completed their primary flight instruction.

## Forecast of 'Electric Cars' Soon

MR J. Cataldo, a senior vice-president of a U.S. electrical company, predicted in Detroit that more than 500,000 motorists will be using electric cars within the next six years.

Small, efficient refiners, converting alternating current into direct current, make it possible for electric cars to have a self-contained device to regenerate their batteries.

That meant, Mr. Cataldo said, that parking meter-like devices could be installed along the streets, and for a nominal charge, electric car owners could recharge their batteries at any time of the day.

Electric ignition systems used in an electric car would reduce the amount of erosion in the cylinder. The new system also had the advantage of better starting in cold weather.

Because the cost per unit for refitters was steadily coming down, an all-electric car could be made to operate more efficiently, said Mr. Cataldo.

## WHITE HOUSE WARDROBE FOR CAROLINE

CAROLINE KENNEDY, the three-year-old daughter of Senator Kennedy, is getting a new wardrobe to wear in the White House.

Mrs. Kennedy has ordered several hand-made pinafores and dresses that she can "grow into" from Estelle Parker, the woman who designed her trousseau.

Most of the dresses Mrs. Kennedy has bought for Caroline cost about £7, but one pink knit dress cost about £14.

By Miss Parker's standards, Mrs. Kennedy is "conservative" in the price she pays for Caroline's clothes. She said that Mrs. Kennedy had returned dresses sent to her on approval that cost about £28.

Miss Parker said that Mrs. Kennedy was "about the most conservative rich girl I know."

Mrs. Robert Kennedy, who has seven children, never looks at the price, she said. She is the wife of Robert Kennedy, who is to be Attorney-General in his brother's administration.

## A-bomb Protest Sailor Cleared

The Court of Appeals in San Francisco has reversed the conviction of Dr. Earle Reynolds (50), an anthropologist and pacifist, who as a protest, sailed his 30-ton ketch Phoenix into an area of the Pacific closed to shipping during the 1958 Eniwetok nuclear tests. He said the tests endangered the human race.

He was given a prison sentence in Honolulu last year but remained free pending appeal. Yesterday the court ruled that he was convicted wrongly of a felony. He had committed no more than a "trespass."

## £4m. HARBOUR IN FAR SOUTH OF NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND has a new £4,000,000 port at Bluff, on the southernmost extremity of South Island, capable of handling the largest liners which visit the country.

There has always been a port at Bluff, but it has been subject to the rough seas, winds and tides. Now the people of Southland, the rich hinterland feeding the port, have an 84-acre island harbour through which the produce of the district will be shipped.

### By French Firm

At the official inauguration of the new port recently, the Governor-General, Lord Cobham, said that coupled with his love for New Zealand was a most sincere admiration for the Dominion's "do-it-yourself" attitude to life.

"While we British people are doubtless counting the pennies left by the tax-gatherer to see if we can afford a boat, the New Zealanders are building one," he said.

The New Zealand farmer, Lord Cobham said, must be a first-class mechanic, builder and even an architect. He built his own roads and poured his own concrete. So it was perhaps hardly to be wondered at that New Zealand did not flinch at a little matter of £4,000,000 for a harbour.

The main work in building the 84-acre island harbour was done by a French firm. In three or four years the inhospitable port of Bluff has been transformed into an all-weather harbour.

### Aluminium Plants

It was announced recently that a huge aluminium plant is to be established at Manapouri, one of Southland's beautiful mountain lakes, in the future.

The smelter plant at Manapouri, run by Australian Consolidated Zinc, will use bauxite from Queensland and alumina from the new Bluff port, while the outgoing finished product will also be shipped from there.

It is estimated that the new plant will bring £160,000,000 of new capital into Southland in addition to port and shipping charges, and other sources of steady revenue.

## Lady Beaumont Allowed Bail on Car Charges

Lady (Barbara) Beaumont, who was arrested on a warrant because she twice failed to answer summonses, was remanded until January 4 at Marylebone yesterday.

Lady Beaumont (34), of Draycott Place, Chelsea, was accused of careless driving, driving without reasonable consideration and failing to produce her insurance certificate.

The magistrate, Mr. Walter Frampton, said that Lady Beaumont could find a surety in a similar sum. Later yesterday she was released from custody when Miss Catherine Bernadette Nicholas of Queen's Gate Terrace, South Kensington, stood surety.

After Inspector Cluett Page had asked for a "considerable surety" if bail was allowed, Lady Beaumont said: "I am terribly sorry. I did go to Chelsea Police Station and asked them to get in touch with the court."

## BILLY BUNTER 50, BUT STILL GOING STRONG THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS FAT BOY

To the "dead letter" office of the General Post Office in London, there came recently an "insufficiently addressed" letter bearing an Australian postmark. All it said was: "To the Greatest writer of Boys' School Stories in the World, England."

The men whose job it is to handle such posers didn't hesitate for one second. They sent it to Mr. Charles Hamilton at an address in a small Kent village. And with it went (quite unofficially, of course) a note saying that they hoped that a school called Greyfriars was thriving and that Billy Bunter would get his postal order some day soon.

The recipient though he is well beyond the 80 mark, and known to the world as Frank Richards, Martin Clifton or, even on occasion as 'Hilda Richards,' was as usual overjoyed to receive it.

### Back to Work

Then, putting it aside carefully among thousands of other such "fan letters" acquired in the last 70 years, he adjusted the skull cap he wears to keep off the draughts, drew his dressing gown more closely around him and turned to the battered typewriter to turn out yet another story about the character he likes so much that he writes about schoolboy immortals that his fertile brain has brought to life.

And that, of course, is William George Bunter, the Fat Boy with the owl eyes, in the skin-tight trousers, an obsession with cream buns, and a penchant for telling in a moment of stress such phrases as "Yarroo, Leggo, You Beast!"

Of course his fellow schoolmates like Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Hurrie Janset Ram Singh, to whom the "frightfulness is terrific," all have their own niche in the affections of three generations of boys who will never grow up.

But it is William George Bunter who, despite his failings, is loved by most of all not only by his better but also by everybody in all walks of life.

### A 'Clot'

How do I know? In the middle of the Second World War, by a foolish slip in an article for Service newspapers about Greyfriars and St. Jim's, its sister school, I referred to him as George William Bunter.

Judging by the vituperative mail I received, the war must have come to a stop all over the Middle East while brigadiers and lance-corporals, wine-commanders, and W.A.A.C.s reached for their pens as to tell me I was a "clot," this was the mildest epithet for making such a mistake.

And, as I remember, one of my school-mate acquaintances, a tough regular with 22 years' service, wrote: "If you know of the lump that came to my throat just to read the name Bunter and

By CHARLES MURRAY

to think over all those wonderful stories, you would think me a 'clot', too."

### On the Stage

Now "Bunter" officially for story-telling's sake still is, but in "reality" 50, looks like outliving all the rest of the merry crew. His B.B.C. television adventures attract millions of viewers, and will go on indefinitely because the B.B.C. dare not "kill" them.

The "Magnet" and the "Gem" (Noel Coward's favourite boyhood reading incidentally are unhappy now no more, but Bunter still waits for that postal order in comic strips all over the world.

At Christmas time each year there is a special season at a London theatre of Billy Bunter Adventures for which offers are always pouring in to take it on tour to Commonwealth countries where, it seems, there are as many Bunter fans as there are at home. Nobody, apparently, will ever let Bunter die.

This, naturally, is a matter of great satisfaction to the rosy-checked, quietly-spoken author as he works in that typewriter at a steady fifty words a minute; rarely revising his stories, never hard-up for a plot, just going steadily ahead adding to his wordage which, since he sold his first school story at the age of 17 for £5.5s., now totals 60,000,000; or to make visualisation of this easier, enough words to fill about 1,000 full-length books.

### Four Prototypes

"Where, exactly, does Bunter come from?" I asked him as we sat in his book-lined study, surrounded by bound volumes of stories going back over half a century. Lying alongside his beloved classics (he does cross-words in Latin for relaxation) and his piles of tidy typescripts.

### 'Clean' Coal

The West German coal industry announced at Bonn that it will sell coal in one kilogram cover two pounds) packets with 25 making a bag which can be put on to a fire without being opened to prevent dirty hands.

### Free Film Show at Sibree Hall

Preview your Perfect Holiday TUESDAY and WEDNESDAY JANUARY 3rd and 4th, at 7.30 p.m.

Free Tickets from the Poly Travel Office at OWEN OWEN LTD. or at the door, if available

## Jane's (Coventry) Ltd.

NEWSAGENT . STATIONER . CONFECTIONER Mr. and Mrs. Smith and Staff wish all their customers a Very Happy and Prosperous New Year.

## "JACK'S"

Mr. & Mrs. J. R. BOND Branch Managers and Staff, Wish all their Customers Old and New, Good Health, Happiness and Prosperity During 1961

## 40 YEARS OF THE BRITISH LEGION

THE British Legion celebrates its 40th anniversary next year which also marks the centenary of the birth of its first president, the late Field Marshal Earl Haig.

Plans are being made to make the Legion's annual conference at Whitson a special anniversary occasion and branches throughout the country are being urged to hold anniversary events.

Coupled with this will be an all-out drive for new members among those who have served in the forces since 1919. First World War veterans now comprise 33 per cent of the membership which at present totals about 950,000 men and women.

### Lady Beaumont

Pogo, the pet white poodle of Dolores Hart, the actress, gets a festive touch, a bow of scarlet ribbon, for the Hollywood New Year parties. Miss Hart has a role in the film "Where the Boys Are."



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## Billy Bunter Again

**E**LLEN POLLOCK has been invited to direct next year's Billy Bunter Show in London, as a result of having directed "Billy Bunter's Swiss Roll", which ended its Christmas run at the Victoria Palace on Saturday last.

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# Billy Bunter Goes in Search of Treasure

**W**HILE the adventures of Billy Bunter now reach more young people through television, his creator, Frank Richards, continues to add to his long list of Bunter books. The latest, "**Billy Bunter's Treasure Hunt**" (Cassell, 9s. 6d.) exploits a theme already used on TV.

I would recommend any boy to read rather than merely to watch, for though Bunter's impersonator has largely captured the spirit of the fat boy, Mr. Richards brings him to life much more amusingly in print.

In the new adventure, Bunter is found, incredibly, studying Latin with all the power of his fat brain. Even Quelch is surprised, but he does not know that Bunter has found an ancient Latin parchment which, he hopes, holds the key to the lost treasure of Greyfriars.

How he persuades the Famous Five to help him in his quest for gold, despite the efforts of a disagreeable senior who discovers his secret, makes a story in the happy vein schoolboys of several generations have come to love.

make lively reading for young teenagers.

"**Farm on the Fjord**" by Irene Byers (Hutchinson, 12s. 6d.)—the story of a small English boy, convalescing from measles, who goes to stay with his cousin on a Norwegian farm. There is enough narrative to keep the young reader interested and the book is full of facts about life in Norway.



"**Romano the Peasant**" by Hugh Pitt (Hutchinson, 10s. 6d.)—the tale of an Italian peasant boy and his family in a fishing village. The story, already told as a television serial, creates a good atmosphere and the work involved in producing the television play is explained in "behind-the-scenes" chapters of the story.

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## BBC Bunter duly returns

**A** NEW Billy Bunter series returns to BBC-tv for the children's programme on May 20 for nine weeks.

Gerald Champion will as usual be Billy Bunter with last series Mr. Quelch, Jack Melford.

Billy's five school friends will be played by newcomers to the series, Julian Yardley, Jeremy Bullock, Michael Tennant, Gregory Warwick, and Hugh Ward.

Production is by Clive Parkhurst.

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**T**O the delight of the young-in-heart, Billy Bunter and Greyfriars School will bring more lower-fourth japes to BBC TV from May 20. This time, most of the escapades will happen on holiday in Venice, Malta, Nice, and Cairo.

Once again the episodes will be written by Frank Richards, who is eighty-six.

**ALAN MORRIS**

### Fun for the kids

BOTTLES can be decorated in various ways. With small bottles, use oil paints. Use large bottles, use acrylic paint. Or paint a grid of squares on a bottle and use the squares as a base for a collage.



While still wet, sprinkle all over the bottle with fine white powder. Fully press them on in a daisy pattern.

## Your Amusements Guide

**HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE**  
THIS WEEK: NIGHTLY at 7.30, SAT. 8.0 and 10.15 P.M.  
THE NEW MUSICAL COMEDY BY THE AUTHORS OF "SALAD DAYS"  
"WILDEST DREAMS"  
With Dorothy Reynolds, Angus Mackay, Anna Dawson, John Hadesley and Full Company  
JULIAN SLADE at the PULAN

**6.25 — TIVOLI THEATRE — 8.40**  
BOX OFFICE 15 to 6.15 P.M. PHONE 36455  
LAST WEEK  
**LEX MCLEAN**  
AND HIS  
**HAPPY GANG**  
PRESENTING  
"TEENAGERS ON PARADE"  
ABERDEEN'S TALENTED TEENAGERS

**CAPITOL**  
CONTINUOUS FROM 1.30  
RICHARD TOOT, LAURENCE HARVEY  
"THE LONG AND THE SHORT AND THE TALL"  
Sonia White... James Francom  
"I PASSED FOR WHITE"  
10 AM RESTAURANT 10.55 PM FULLY LICENSED

**GRAVITY**  
CONTINUOUS FROM 1.30  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"

**MAJESTIC**  
CONTINUOUS FROM 1.30  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"

**PLAYHOUSE Continental**  
"JAZZ ON A SUMMER DAY"  
"JAZZ ON A SUMMER DAY"  
"JAZZ ON A SUMMER DAY"  
"JAZZ ON A SUMMER DAY"  
"JAZZ ON A SUMMER DAY"

**KINGSDOWN**  
CONTINUOUS FROM 2.30  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"

**Country Dancing**  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"

**TOP RANK ENTERTAINMENT**  
ODEON  
GAIUMONT  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"

**Swiss Family Robinson**  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"  
"THE GREEN MARE"

## Teaching puppies house manners

"My seven-month-old spaniel puppy was clean in his habits when I first got him," writes a woman reader, "but in the last fortnight he has started being dirty in the house at night."

### PETS' CORNER

One dog starts thinking... The dog who starts thinking... The dog who starts thinking... The dog who starts thinking...

By Con Gordon... A dog of seven months... One dog starts thinking...

## THE PAINT, GLASS AND WALLPAPER PEOPLE SINCE 1820

Painting the **KITCHEN?**  
2-4 HOUR LACQUER for brilliant gloss  
OR JEGGSHELL LUSTRE for satin finish  
Both steam resistant and washable  
Ask your stockist - call him you need  
**VALSPAR**  
The easiest, simplest and quickest way to paint  
MIRRORS - Paint or Revolved - Mirrors Remodelled and  
Refrigerator - Glass Shelves - Tabletops - Splash Boards  
EVERYTHING for the HOME DECORATOR  
PRACTICAL ADVICE GIVEN  
**George Donald & Sons Ltd**  
16-18 NETHERKIRK GATE, ABERDEEN

## ON RADIO AND TV TO-NIGHT

- 6.55 On TV: Newsletters
- 7.00 - The General Assembly, 9.30
- 7.00 - The General Assembly, 9.30
- 7.00 - The General Assembly, 9.30
- 7.00 - The General Assembly, 9.30
- 7.00 - The General Assembly, 9.30

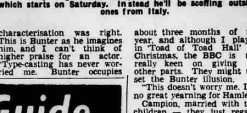
## ONLY 30/- FOR AN AVERAGE WINDOW

There's an air of distinction about the house with **BALOSTORE** windows...  
BALOSTORE Blinds on hand in minimum stock for immediate or future orders.  
A comprehensive range of BALOSTORE Blinds in stock to suit every window.  
The BALOSTORE for that distinctive, long-lasting finish...  
The BALOSTORE for that distinctive, long-lasting finish...  
The BALOSTORE for that distinctive, long-lasting finish...

IT WAS A **Nort** **SELL OUT...**  
By John R. North  
The story of the North...

"MAKE HIRE-DRIVING YOUR CAREER"  
Before making this important decision, GALLOWAY'S invite you to inspect their school, and satisfy yourself what their 18 years' experience has taught them, in enabling you to become a hire-driver in 3 MONTHS.  
TEACHING EXPERIENCE MEANS SOMETHING!  
Write, Call or Phone for illustrated Brochure  
**GALLOWAY'S School of Hire-Driving Ltd**  
105 AROYLE STREET, GLASGOW, G.1  
Telephone DEN 1288 NO EVENING CLASSES

## No ordinary doughnuts for Billy Bunter in his new series which starts on Saturday. Instead he'll be scotting out of our Italy.



No ordinary doughnuts for Billy Bunter in his new series which starts on Saturday. Instead he'll be scotting out of our Italy.

Characterisation was right. This is Bunter as he imagines himself, and I can't think of higher praise for an actor. Type-casting has never worked me. Bunter occupies about three months of my year, and although I played in the "Road to Nowhere" Christmas, the BBO is not really about giving me other parts. They might get the Bunter character. This doesn't mean that I'm not a great character actor. I'm not. I'm just a really good actor. Bunter is a "jam on your bread" character. He's a member of the drawn mail from the theatre and "Feed Street".

**LAST NIGHT ON TV**  
SIO JAMES (LATE NIGHT)  
TELEVISION  
"THE TONY MARTIN SHOW"  
"THE TONY MARTIN SHOW"  
"THE TONY MARTIN SHOW"

## Aberdeen's Foremost Fashion Shop

Another Wonderful Offer of the Famous **HEBE SUITS**  
In a wide range of LOVELY SUMMER COLOURS  
Materials are Cashmere, Worsted and Courtele in plain colours. Also many attractively-checked tweeds  
Mostly straight skirts - a few have blouse to match  
ALSO  
**DRESSES with JACKET**  
IN CRASHLAINE - IDEAL FOR SUMMER  
Colours are Aque, Nantone, Carmel, Lavender, Ash, Mint or Navy  
Sizes 36in. to 42in. Misses  
**ABERDEEN'S TOP TEN**  
Newcomer to also fash and single but you won't forget. Clarence Frangman's heavy flannel has the top ten with you.  
1. "Don't Let Me Be a Child" - Helen Stephens.  
2. "Wooden Heart" - Betty Wales.  
3. "See What It's Like" - Betty Wales.  
4. "On the Rumba" - Betty Wales.  
5. "Frangman's Frangman" - Betty Wales.  
6. "Frangman's Frangman" - Betty Wales.  
7. "Frangman's Frangman" - Betty Wales.  
8. "Frangman's Frangman" - Betty Wales.  
9. "Frangman's Frangman" - Betty Wales.  
10. "Frangman's Frangman" - Betty Wales.

**Nature Notes**  
It is 5 a.m. and the birds' dawn chorus begins. It is impossible to pick out the feathered voice, indeed the beautiful world of songs together with occasional hissing, whistling, and cooing, are at times composed of a series of short, staccato notes which are reminiscent of a child's play.  
It is 6 a.m. and the birds' dawn chorus begins. It is impossible to pick out the feathered voice, indeed the beautiful world of songs together with occasional hissing, whistling, and cooing, are at times composed of a series of short, staccato notes which are reminiscent of a child's play.

**Dancing**  
"TO-NIGHT... OLD-TIME AND SEQUENCE DANCING"  
"TO-NIGHT... OLD-TIME AND SEQUENCE DANCING"  
"TO-NIGHT... OLD-TIME AND SEQUENCE DANCING"

**Walter Grant**  
"Walter Grant"  
"Walter Grant"  
"Walter Grant"

**GO**  
SEE THE BRILLIANT R  
CALL AT YOUR GAS SHOWROOM

● **Billy Bunter at Butlins**  
(Cassell: 9/6). By Frank  
Richards. There's no end to  
this aged author's ingenuity  
in discovering new situations  
for his famous fat boy. The  
title indicates the latest  
Mecca for Billy Bunter,  
though how he gets there and  
how he gorges himself make  
quite a story in the Richards  
vein, of course.

# And Bunter

**T**H**ERE** is nothing educational about the Billy Bunter stories—except, perhaps, for the fragments of Latin that the cheerful chaps of the Remove at Greyfriars are always having to construe under the watchful eye of Mr. Quelch.

In "**Billy Bunter at Butlins**" (Cassell, 9s. 6d.) the fat boy and the Famous Five are offered a free stay at a Skegness holiday camp. On the way there Bunter finds that in some strange manner he has come into the possession of a wallet holding a fortune in notes and bearing the monogram "W.B."

To the Owl this means William Bunter. He does not realise it could also mean William Butlin, and he has a great deal of adventure before the truth dawns.

Bunter cannot be considered in the same class as Biggles. For one thing he has not stayed young with the times. Even though Mr. Richards sets him in a modern holiday camp, he is an anachronism. For a reviewer this provides a charm of its own, but I wonder at times just what modern boys make of the Greyfriars stories. I would like to think that they are unsophisticated enough to enjoy them.



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## Bunter for Christmas

CITY Stage Productions Ltd. are presenting a new Billy Bunter Christmas production, at the Victoria Palace, "Billy Bunter Shipwrecked", for matinées only, from December 23 for a limited season. The author again this year is Maurice McLoughlin, who has a fringe production at this year's Edinburgh Festival, called "A Letter From The General". Press Representative: John Bretton.

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**'STAND FIRM ON  
BERLIN' CALL  
BY LORD AVON**

Billy Hunter is very much out of character here. He is giving away buns to children at a day nursery in Balham, London. Bunter—in real life 25 years old Peter Bridgmont, actor-son of Leslie Bridgmont, the B.B.C. producer—will star in "Billy Bunter Shipwrecked," the Christmas entertainment at the Victoria Palace Theatre, London.

# BILLY BUNTER

PETER BRIDGMONT, son of the B.B.C. producer, Leslie Bridgmont, is to play Billy Bunter in "Billy Bunter Shipwrecked", which City Stage Production Ltd. are presenting for a matinées-only season at the Victoria Palace, opening on December 23. Press Representative: John Bretton.

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## COTTAGE KEEPS ITS SECRET

**T**HE mystery of the skeleton found under the floor of a fireman's cottage stayed a mystery after the inquest last night.

## STARDOM? IT'S DONKEY-WORK

**S**HOW business may seem glamorous, but Neddy the donkey is already finding it just downright donkey-work. Neddy, owned by Mr. Walter Lucken, of Twyford, near Reading, won an audition yesterday to appear in the London pantomime "Billy Bunter Shipwrecked."

# Billy Bunter

## author dead

**F**RANK RICHARDS, author of the Greyfriars School stories, whose real name was Charles Hamilton, died at his home at Kingsgate, near Broadstairs, Kent, on Christmas Eve. He was eighty-six.

He finished his last book and posted it to the publishers at the beginning of November. Since then, he had not been well.

So prolific was the creator of the immortal Billy Bunter that many people thought his pseudonym, Frank Richards, concealed a team of writers. The Bunter stories, which for more than half a century delighted generations of real schoolboys, were, however, all the work of one man.

Hamilton, in fact, used over twenty pen-names, including Martin Clifford, Owen Conquest, and Ralph Redway.

### HIS CHILDREN

His prolific output began when he wrote stories in the now defunct "Magnet" and its contemporary, "Gem," between-the-wars comics that took the Greyfriars adventures into millions of schools and homes.

To Hamilton—a bachelor—Bunter and the other Greyfriars boys became his children.

"They are more real to me than real people," Hamilton would say . . . "I work for hours every day recording their adventures."

A BBC spokesman said there were no immediate plans for a Bunter series in the coming quarter but it was hoped there would be another in the future.



Frank Richards' creation of Billy Bunter as portrayed by Gerald Camplon.

# JEALOUS HIT HI IN A

**E**NRAGED by something told him a jealous Aber face and hit her repeatedly Smith was told at Aberdeen

## *Burned to death in her bed*

**M**R MARGARET NEILSON (76), Gallowgate, Glasgow, died in a fire in her bed in the am

# Death of Frank Richards the Creator of Billy Bunter

Frank Richards, author of the Greyfriars School stories, whose real name was Charles Hamilton, died at his home at Kingsgate, near Broadstairs, Kent, on Christmas Eve. He was 86.

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So prolific was the creator of the immortal Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, that many people thought his pseudonym, Frank Richards, concealed a team of writers.

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To Hamilton, a bachelor, Bunter and the other Greyfriars boys became his children.

"They are more real to me than real people," Hamilton would say. "I work for hours every day recording their adventures."

From the age of 17, when he had his first story published—he began writing at the age of seven—his output increased until between the two world wars it reached a peak of 25,000 words a week, making a steady £2,500 a year for their author.

Though he wrote for many comic papers before the turn of the century—*Margel*, *Pluck*, *Union Jack* and *Boys' Friend*, all long since extinct—Hamilton's first attempt with the adventures of William George Bunter was rejected by the first publisher to whom it was offered. The man later went out of business.



Frank Richards

From 1907 to 1940, when the paper shortage intervened, schoolboys were brought up on the adventures of Tom Merry, Harry Wharton, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and the invincible impudence of the immortal Bunter of the outside spectacles and draughts-board trousers, whose one thought was for "tuck" and the post order that never came.

Hamilton was scholarly, widely travelled, a good linguist, and would translate Danté, Cervantes, and Goethe, or compose crossword puzzles in Latin for his own amusement.

It was in his autobiography, published in 1952, that Hamilton told the real truth about Bunter—that he was not, as many claimed, an invention.

His extensive circumference, the author said, came from an editorial gentleman of the nineties, his big spectacles were borrowed from a relative of Hamilton's, and the celebrated post order "was a reincarnation of a cheque which a certain person constantly expected but which did not often materialise, and on the strength of which

that person was generally anxious to borrow a pound or two."

A Staff Reporter of the *Birmingham Post* writes: I count among my happiest experiences having tea with Frank Richards at his home at Kingsgate-on-Sea in the summer of 1959. It was not like any other interview: it tended to get out of hand in the pleasantest way.

One of the relaxations of his old age was turning familiar old songs into Latin, and I remember that we sang together his translation of *Waltzing Matilda* and, of all things, *Won't You Come Home Bill Bailey?*

Old readers of *Magnet* will recall that Frank Richards usually introduced a few words of Latin into his stories (I remember Mr. Quelch's wrath when Billy Bunter rendered *arma virumque sano* as "The armed man and his dog").

In his old age, Frank Richards was able to live in modest style on the activities of his most famous characters. The fabulous Fat Boy continued to the last to be a best-seller.

In London last week I was delighted to find that *Billy Bunter at Sea* was showing at the Victoria Palace. Regularly, each Christmas, one of his Bunter books would appear in the bookshops.

The war put *Magnet* and others of Richards's magazines off the market, but his old typewriter continued to turn out Bunter stories: If occasionally you got the impression that you had read something like it before, what did it matter? Bunter himself contrived to be ageless.

I remember Richards, a frail figure in a smoking cap, like some pocket-sized mandarin, speaking of Bunter as though he were a real person—this lying, obese, cadging but lovable fat boy. J.M.S.



# MAN WHO CREATED BILLY BUNTER..

CHARLES HAMILTON, creator of Billy Bunter, "the fat and fatuous owl of Greyfriars School," has died aged 86. He had been ill since November—when his last book reached the publishers.

## THEATRE

### GREYFRIARS LIVES ON

*Billy Bunter Shipwrecked*  
Victoria Palace

GREYFRIARS is the arch-temple of the British public school myth, writes *Leslie Mallory*.

After 50 years it still rests solidly on the two pillars described by George Orwell as *Nothing Ever Changes*, and *Foreigners Are Funny*.

In this year's addition to the Bunter cycle, Peter Bridgmont replaces Gerald Campion in the title rôle.

The Famous Five, marooned with the long-suffering Mr. Quelch on a haunted island, wage their customary clean-limbed battle against a pair of Arabs (sinister) and an "agent from an iron curtain country" (odious).

On the whole, the slapstick is well up to what is accepted in Norman Wisdom's films as popular farce.

Mr. Hamilton used over 20 pen names, but he was best known as Frank Richards, his pseudonym for the Billy Bunter stories.

Comics like *Marvel*, *Pluck*, *Union Jack*, *Boys' Friend* and *Magnet* made Hamilton's characters household names for several generations of children.

But the first publisher to be offered a Billy Bunter book turned it down. The publisher later went out of business.

Millions more people became Bunter fans when Greyfriars School went on TV. The last series, with Gerald Campion in the title rôle, ended last July.

Hamilton, a bachelor, lived at Kingsgate, near Broadstairs, Kent. He died there in his sleep on Christmas Eve.

His sight failed in old age, but he still potted round the



garden—a small, sprightly figure in a black skullcap. His corduroy trousers were fastened with cycle clips to "exclude the draught."

Mr. Michael Anthony, who is producing "Billy Bunter Shipwrecked" at the Victoria Palace, said last night: "He was a wonderful old gentleman. We tried to get him up to see the Bunter shows, but he said he didn't feel able to get farther than his garden gate."

Hamilton stayed at home and carried on writing his school stories.

"My characters are more real to me than real people," he once said. "I work for hours every day recording their adventures."

Bunter's yells will go on—  
Page 6.

## TO YOUTH

seives by indifference, or by revulsion against what they regard as an out-of-date order of things.

"The world desperately needs their vigour, their determination and their service to their fellow-men. The opportunities are there, and the reward is the satisfaction of truly unselfish work."

The Queen spoke of her visits to many countries during the year. In all she was shown a "genuine kindness and affection."



**PETER PAN:** In the production of Barrie's play at the Scala, Captain Hook (John Gregson) is foiled in his attempt to attack Peter Pan (Anne Heywood)



**BILLY BUNTER SHIP-WRECKED:** A typical fate for Billy Bunter (Peter Bridgmont). He is bumped by his friends in a scene from the Christmas production to be seen, matinees only, at the Victoria Palace Theatre

## **Uncle Charlie**

**T**WO women in Sutton Coldfield—his aunt and his niece—have some "vivid memories" of Frank Richards, creator of Billy Bunter and his school-fellows, who died on Christmas Eve.

Mr. Richards—whose real name was Charles Hamilton—was Uncle Charlie to them.

His niece, Mrs. Una Wright, recently moved to Richmond Road, Sutton Coldfield, where her mother, the author's sister, is staying over the holiday.

Mrs. Wright said: "If he ever wanted anything for background to one of his stories, he just went out and bought it. I remember just after the first World War he decided to have an aircraft in one of the Bunter stories, so he went out and bought one. After he had finished exploring the machine he just left it in a field and there it rotted."



**"W**E used to wonder how he managed to stay alive, he ate so little. He would hardly touch anything at meal times but loved a dish of cold suet pudding about half past eleven at night just before he went to bed."

The author's sister, Mrs. Una Harrison, who is 79, spoke of her brother's schooldays. "Charlie had a passion for Latin at school and I am sure his Latin master later became Quelch in the Bunter stories," she said.

"He received £12 for his first story when he was 17. I remember it was about the Wild West and he nailed the cheque over his bed because he could not believe it was true.

"Once Bunter became established, Charlie became wealthy. He had no idea about saving money and almost threw it away buying presents for anyone who came to mind.

"He never owned a car and used to ride an ancient bicycle."

# BILLY BUNTER SHIPWRECKED

ALTHOUGH the title "Billy Bunter Shipwrecked" has little to do with the content of this brand-new adventure of the "fat robber" which opened at the Victoria Palace on December 23, this is neither the time of year nor the type of play to which such quibbles need apply. The only important words in the title are the enticing first two, and new or old Greyfriars pupils who are lured in by them will not be disappointed.

The plot, which is so involved that the adult eye can scarcely follow its ramifications, is a particularly good one, being according to formula only more so. The Greyfriars boys are cheerful if not intellectual heroes, arabs are suspect. Mr. Quelch is a figure of fun, sliding doors abound and quantities of food are purloined, and presumably consumed, by Bunter, who, in the process of purloining it, learns the foul plots of the enemies and finally vanquishes them at the expense of a whole custard pie, traditionally applied. A heroic deed by a starving chap who hasn't eaten for twenty whole minutes, and he is rightly carried shoulder-high for it.

Peter Bridgmont, the new Bunter, is a good actor who does the  
Continued at foot of next column

Cinderella	Sydney Platt
Pages	Wendy McClure
	Delia Corrie
The Fairy Queen	Margaret Ashton
Harebell	Wendy Barker
Honeydew	Mary Coulson
Foxglove	Anne Asprey
Eglantine	Robin Haig
	The Harlequinade
Harlequin	Barrie Wilkinson
Columbine	Robin Haig
Her Confidantes	Anne Asprey
	Wendy Barker
	Mary Coulson
Pantaloon	Tony Simpson
Clown	John Rutland
Toff	Bill Duthie

Directed by Don Gemmell

part the honour of taking it seriously and applying as much thought and ability to it as though it were a clown of Shakespeare's. The result is splendid, and makes Bunter as funny, and as wholly credible, as he was in our schooldays.

Glyn Dearman, Rowland Davies, David Griffin, Brian Tipping and Louis Aquilina race around effectively as the Famous Five Schoolboys, Robert Lankesheer is good as always as Mr. Quelch, and various lines in comically suspect behaviour are depicted by Michael Anthony, Geoffrey Rose, Paddy Ward and Odina Kavoy.

Owen Holden's direction, swift, apt and competent, brings back the old school atmosphere to perfection and John Barr's settings are satisfactory.  
L.G.S.

## **'Magnet' and 'Gem'**

Sir.—I was interested in Mr. J. H. G. Allison's letter concerning the late Charles Hamilton and the evergreen stories of Greyfriars and St. Jim's.

Your correspondent has a fairly accurate memory on the names of the characters and their settings, but I would like to point out that the Cedar Creek (not Pine Creek) stories were written by Charles Hamilton under his most famous pen name of Frank Richards. The stories were supposed to be the author's own school days in the backwoods of Canada, but were really just an inspiration, and Mr. Richards relied on travellers' information for accurate data concerning this part of the world.

Readers may be interested to know that the famous postal order of Billy Bunter which failed to arrive over a period of fifty years was an idea given to the author by a near relative who was always expecting a cheque which never turned up. Mr. Hamilton told me this in a long and intimate correspondence I had with him for many years.

I have in my possession many of the famous Magnets and Gems, and also the complete set (22 vols.), in mint condition, of the Greyfriars' *Holiday Annuals*, which have complete stories of the three schools—Greyfriars, Rookwood, and St. Jim's. Good as the stories of the last two schools are, Greyfriars was undoubtedly the most vivid creation of Hamilton's master mind.

JACK CORBETT.

1. St. Peter's Road,  
Harborne,  
Birmingham 17.

## Bunter Carries On

ALTHOUGH Frank Richards, the creator of Billy Bunter, is dead, his character will live on. City Stage Productions Ltd. have the stage rights, and intend to carry on with Christmas productions. They are responsible for the matinée season of "Billy Bunter Shipwrecked", at the Victoria Palace. This was adapted by Maurice McLoughlin.

# REMEMBER 'THE GEM'?

WITH the death last Christmas Eve of Frank Richards there also died some of the most famous schoolboys in the world, the most notable of them, without doubt, the fat and fatuous Billy Bunter.

By way of an "In Memoriam" comes a re-issue of the author's autobiography (Charles Skilton: 25/-), published originally ten years ago.

Frank Richards' output of schoolboy stories was phenomenal. It was estimated at 60,000,000 words, the equivalent of 1000 average-length novels.

## Weeklies

For years on end he wrote the two school weeklies, "The Magnet" and "The Gem," both of which were killed by the paper shortage soon after the start of World War II.

He used numerous pseudonyms, his output apparently inexhaustible.

For seven years Billy Bunter disappeared. Was he forgotten? Far from it. The war behind, paper restrictions



Gerald Camplon played Billy Bunter in the recent TV series.

## BOOK OF THE WEEK

easing. Frank Richards brought Greyfriars School and its characters to life again, and from his pen came a prolific flow of stories in book form, introduced in 1947 by "Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School."

They were an immediate success and the author, who had been deprived of an income almost overnight when the war started, prospered again.

The war years had been tough for him. Although for forty years previously he had enjoyed a comfortable income, he had never given a thought to the future. He spent as he earned.

Although in his stories he deplored gambling in any form and made it clear that betting was a mug's game, Frank Richards did not practise what he preached.

He took a philosophic view of life. He wrote for the love of it and for years sent his "copy" back to London from whatever part of the Continent he had taken up residence. He drew readily on his travelling experiences for the themes of his stories and the character about whom they revolved.

Young folk he admired and befriended. Many of them were regular visitors to his home in Kent.

Frank Richards, the classical scholar, was asked by a friend, looking at "The Magnet":

"Don't you ever think of doing something better than this?"

Came the reply: "You see, there isn't anything better."

J. S. D.

# Creator of Billy Bunter Leaves £11,317

Frank Richards, creator of Billy Bunter—who died last December, aged 86—left £11,462 (£11,317 net), on which duty of £683 was paid. Mr. Richards (Charles Harold St. John Hamilton), of Rose Lawn, Percy Avenue, Kingsgate, Broadstairs, left his premium savings bonds and the use of his house for life to his housekeeper, Edith E. Hood, stating: "I desire to place on record my gratitude to my housekeeper, whose unflinching care has preserved my life up to the present time."

He left his book royalties to his sister, Mrs. Una J. G. Harrison, of Park Drive, London, N.W., and, subject to bequests to his niece, Mrs. Una M. B. H. Simpson-Wright, of Richmond Road, Sutton Coldfield, the remainder of his property to his sister.

Other wills:—

Bayliss, Mrs. Margaret Muriel, of Littlefield House, Wall, Lichfield, formerly of Hammerwich, formerly a committee member of Lichfield branch of the Diocesan Laymen's Fund and treasurer of the Women's Advisory Committee of Lichfield Conservative Association, wife of Col. George S. Bayliss—£16,795 (£16,605 net). Duty of £3,129 has been paid.

Harper, Victor Edward, of Stafford Road, Cannock, one of four brothers who founded the Cannock Chase bus and coach company of Harper Bros. (Heath Hayes) Ltd.—£15,635 (£15,589 net). Duty of £1,549 has been paid.

Felix, David, of Southbourne Bournemouth—£46,607 (£46,397 net). Duty of £14,482 has been paid. He left £100 to the Welsh Presbyterian Church, Suffolk Street, Birmingham, and £50 to the Welsh Presbyterian Church, Hockley Hill, Birmingham.

Muller, Otto, of Melville Hall, Holly Road, Edgbaston, founder and director of the Albion Jewellery Co., who came to



# Stars galore booked for H.M. Theatre

**T**HE new winter programme at His Majesty's Theatre will give Aberdeen theatregoers everything from opera with the Sadler's Wells company to variety with the Fol de Rols and a new idea for the Christmas Show with TV star Gerald Campion playing Billy Bunter in the afternoons for the children, and Charlie in "Charley's Aunt" for the family in the evenings.

A thriller by Derek Bond, the TV and film star, "Akin to Death," starts the programme next Monday with **Griffith Jones** and **Noelle Middleton** in the leading roles. The play will be directed by the author.

Throughout the season there will be the odd week of films but on October 1 the Moral Re-armament company return to the city from the Westminster Theatre, London, with "Music at Midnight," by Peter Howard.

**Norah Swinburn** and **Norman Wooland** star in this drama of Iron Curtain problems.

New ground will be broken for opera lovers when The Sadler's Wells Opera Company come on October 8. They will be giving two performances of the Gilbert and Sullivan's "Iolanthe." This production by Frank Hauser is original, the Dovic Carte copyright on productions having lapsed last year.

"The Spider's Web," with husband and wife team **Cicely Courtneidge** and **Jack Hulbert** playing the leads.

After the Aberdeen Lyric Company's musical "Night in Venice" on November 19, those old variety favourites "The Fol de Rols" take over the theatre for three weeks with star billing for **Denny Willis**, son of Dave.

More variety follows with **Andy Stewart** on December 17.

Then on Christmas Eve "Billy Bunter's Mystery Christmas," with pillow-stuffed **Gerald Campion**, starts its matinee run.

In the evenings "Charley's Aunt" will take the stage.

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Love leaps  
over that

# HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE

MONDAY to FRIDAY at 7.30; SATURDAY 5.0 and 8.0 p.m.

The Great London and New York Success

PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF

**MICHAEL  
FLANDERS**

**DONALD  
SWANN**

**"AT THE DROP OF A HAT"**

Prices—Private Boxes £2 10/- and £1 10/-; D.C. 9/6; O.S. 8/6;  
P.S. 7/6; U.C. 5/-; B.S. 3/6; Bal. 2/6.

BOX OFFICE OPEN 9.30 to 9.30 — PHONE 28080.

Week Comm. Monday, 29th Oct.—Special Picture Programme—  
One Performance Nightly at 7 p.m.; Matinee Saturday at 2 p.m.—  
"DER ROSENKAVALIER" by Richard Strauss (in colour).

Advance Booking Now Open for the Dress Circle Only, 5/-.

**SPECIAL WEDNESDAY MATINEE PERFORMANCE (2 P.M.)  
HAS NOW BEEN ARRANGED TO ACCOMMODATE SCHOOL  
PARTIES**

Week Comm. Monday, 5th Nov.—Nightly at 7.30; Saturday 5 and  
8. CICELY COURTHEDGE, JACK HULBERT, ROBERTSON  
HARE and Full Company in the Comedy Thriller "SPIDER'S  
WEB" by AGATHA CHRISTIE. Prices—O.S. 9/6; D.C. 8/6; P.S.  
7/6; U.C. 5/-; B.S. 3/6; Bal. 2/6. BOOK NOW.

## GRAND CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR ATTRACTION AFTERNOONS ONLY (2.30 p.m.)

Comm. Monday, 24th Dec.—For Two Weeks—with no perform-  
ances 3rd and 4th Jan.—GERALD CAMPION (TV's own Billy  
Bunter) in "BILLY BUNTER'S MYSTERIOUS CHRISTMAS."

**EVENINGS ONLY (7.30 p.m.)**

Comm. Tuesday, 25th Dec.—For Two Weeks—GERALD CAMPION  
in the Hilarious Comedy, "CHARLEY'S AUNT."

Prices for Both Shows

Adults—D.C. 9/6; O.S. 8/6; P.S. 7/6; U.C. 5/6; B.S. 3/6; Bal. 2/6.

Children—D.C. 7/6; O.S. 6/6; P.S. 5/6; U.C. 4/-; B.S. 3/-; Bal. 2/-.

**BOOKING OPENS FOR BOTH SHOWS ON**

Monday First ..... Dress Circle, Orchestra Stalls  
Tuesday (30th Oct.) ... Parterre Stalls, Upper Circle  
Wednesday (31st Oct.) .. Back Stalls and Balcony

# FOUND

## Master RUXTON HAYWARD

The Only Bearded Schoolboy Comic in the World, alias:  
"Little Willy" Hayward, Brother Cedric, Cousin Ruxton  
(ABC), Father Xmas, Professor Hirsute and Bearded  
Billy Bunter of TV (BBC and other), Radio (BBC and  
other), Films, Press (Local and International), Stage,  
C.P., Cabaret, Clubs, etc., fame.

Further details:—

**MASTER RUXTON, 24, ROWAN ROAD, W.6.**

'Phone: RIV 7410



# *Billy Bunter as King of the Cannibals*

**T**HE prolific output of Frank Richards during his life becomes more incredible as, with each new title, one sees how many manuscripts he left at his death. The latest to be published is "**Big Chief Bunter**" (Cassell, 10s. 6d.).

Bunter, finding that the Famous Five of his form are to enjoy a holiday in New Zealand with a Greyfriars colonial, thinks he must have been erroneously omitted from the invitation.

A neat if culpable double-play enables him to join the expedition on which he meets his customary troubles but also the rare distinction of becoming king of a cannibal island.

A dangerous ascent of the Matterhorn inspired James Ramsey Ullman's classic story "**Banner in the Sky**" (4s. 6d.).

## *For the Very Young*

For younger readers Inez Hogan has written another simple and charming animal story with pictures, "**Twin Otters and the Indians**" (Phoenix, 6s. 6d.), while Ruth Ainsworth should interest

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## In 'Billy'

**D**AVID NIXON is to join "Billy Bunter Meets Magic", which City Stage Productions are to present at the Shaftesbury, for matinées only, from December 23. He will appear throughout the show. The opening performance has been sold out for a performance in aid of the Save The Children Fund. Press Representative: John Bretton.

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## ' BILLY BUNTER '

**T**OM DE VILLE plays Bunter in Ian Curteis's production of "Billy Bunter's Swiss Roll" at the Flora Robson Playhouse, Newcastle, for a two-week season of matinées this Christmas, the second play in which Mr. de Ville, a former concert and cabaret artist, has appeared and played a leading part. Also in the cast are Roderick Horn, Roy Herrick, Carl Oatley, Christopher Gilmore, Alan Corsen, Ian Cunningham, Christopher Greatorex, Charles Mylne and Arthur Kenyon. The décor is by Iain Kidd.

# THE SHAFTESBURY

## "BILLY BUNTER MEETS MAGIC"

IT would seem to be a wonderful idea to incorporate a popular magician like David Nixon into the Bunter story, but in "Billy Bunter Meets Magic", at the Shaftesbury, it has led to a general under-usage of the available facilities.

By no means all the possibilities of Mr. Nixon's talent have been in-

corporated into the tale, even with the promising start of making him an unconscious assistant to a smuggler; but to get another character in at all, some of the traditional gimmicks had to be cut. Therefore, Bunter's greed, Hurree Singh's climatic problems,

assistant, and Henry Moxon raises many a laugh as an enthusiastic coastguard.

Robin Stewart, Peter Sanders, David Griffin, Robert Dodson and Christopher Arghyrou as the Famous Five, do as well as Maurice McLoughlin's script allows. John Barry is responsible for the very effective settings.

L.G.S.



David Nixon and Peter Bridgemont in "Billy Bunter Meets Magic" at the Shaftesbury for matinees only.

corporated into the tale, even with the promising start of making him an unconscious assistant to a smuggler; but to get another character in at all, some of the traditional gimmicks had to be cut. Therefore, Bunter's greed, Hurree Singh's climatic problems,

Mr. Quelch's discomfiture and the scurrings of the Famous Five have had to be shortened. This would matter less if they had not, to a large extent, been thrown away as well, and the direction, by Richard Dale, was by no means as slick as the story and situations required.

Peter Bridgemont once again successfully personifies Bunter, Clement McCallin is an amusingly pompous Quelch, Michael Anthony behaves very suspiciously indeed as Bostock, with David Nixon as his unhelpful

### CAST

#### "BILLY BUNTER MEETS MAGIC"

Play by Maurice McLoughlin, by arrangement with Fleetway Publications Ltd. Presented by City Stage Productions Ltd., by arrangement with Arthur Lewis, at the Shaftesbury on December 21. Settings by John Barry, stage manager: Tommy Hayes.

Harry Wharton .... Robin Stewart  
Bob Cherry ..... Peter Sanders  
Johnny Bull ..... David Griffin  
Frank Nugent ..... Robert Dodson  
Hurree Singh (Gokyl) Christopher Arghyrou

William George Bunter Peter Bridgemont  
Mr. Quelch .... Clement McCallin  
Captain Hattley-Wright David Nixon  
Dick Pawlyn ..... Henry Moxon  
Major-General Bostock Michael Anthony

Directed by Richard Dale

**Above right:** In *Billy Bunter Meets Magic*,  
matinees at the Shaftesbury, Billy Bunter  
(Peter Bridgmount) gets a custard pie from  
David Nixon







"OUCH! LEGGO! OH I SAY, YOU ROTTER!" BUT DAVID NIXON DOESN'T SEEM TO CARE AS HE APPLIES A WELL-AIMED PIE AT THE FACE OF BILLY BUNTER.

Peter Bridgmont seems to get the worst of it in *Billy Bunter Meets Magic*. The Fat Owl of the Remove is back in town for a matinee-only season at the Shaftesbury Theatre. David Nixon plays a well-meaning crook whose tricks always go wrong.

# CRAZY COMICS CONCERT

**P**OP DRURY'S Crazy People, that crazy comic concert party from S.W. London, W. London and all points West, featuring Master Ruxton Hayward, "Bearded Billy Bunter", entertained an audience of handicapped children last Saturday afternoon, in the presence of their Worships, The Mayors of Hammer-smith and Fulham.

It is a year now since "Pop's" last entertained in West London and in that time they have performed at over 200 homes, hospitals and similar institutes in the home counties area, whilst Ruxton Hayward is also entertainment secretary of the Chin-Up Club—both groups being only too pleased to hear from any deserving causes desiring entertaining.

The Chin-Up Club is an association of show-biz personnel, their "fans" and followers, and of hospital patients, their "friends" and relations, plus any other interested parties or neighbourly persons, who pledge themselves to bring cheer into the lives of "shut-ins, unwell, less-fortunates and underprivileged." This they do with concerts, visits, talks and like social activities.

The hon. entertainment secretary of "Chin-Up" Club is contactable at: 24 Rowan Road, W.6. (phone: RIV 7410) and welcomes every opportunity of bringing artists to the right places for "funds"-raising or fun-raising promotions.

## Evergreen

**F**RANK RICHARDS, creator of Billy Bunter, the Owl of Greyfriars, died two years ago, but a 47-year-old Blackheath man intends that his memory and those of his schoolboy heroes shall be kept alive.

Mr. Ivan Webster, an insurance agent, of Highmoor Road, Blackheath, collects old copies of *Magnet*, *Gem*, *Nelson Lee* and *Schoolboys' Own*, which all ceased publication a quarter of a century ago.

He has between 500 and 600 of the weeklies that were so beloved by schoolboys of the 1920s and the 1930s and is having many of them bound.

Mr. Webster is a member of the Midland branch of the O B B C—Old Boys' Book Club—the chairman of which is Coun. Tom Porter, a schoolmaster and a member of Rowley Regis Borough Council.

The 20 or so members meet in Birmingham on the last Tuesday of the month.

"We have discussions and quizzes and general talks," Mr. Webster says. "I should be glad to hear of anybody who has a hoard of these old magazines stowed away in their attics, to sell or exchange."

Mr. Webster tells me that even Australia has its O B B C—called the "Golden Hours."

# The immortal fat boy

**W**HAT joy—another Billy Bunter book! The unchanging Greyfriars, the dated schoolboy slang, ("fat-head, wizard, oh crumbs, chuck it, don't jaw" — did they ever talk like this?) the execrable fat Bunter, Hurree Janset Singh and Lord Mauleverer.

This time, in "Thanks to Bunter," by Frank Richards, (Cassell 11s. 6d.) the Juniors witness a daring bank raid on a sleepy country afternoon by a man on Bunter's bicycle, and find a suspicious, brutal new master awaiting them at the school on their return. Of course, the two link up, after the usual misunderstanding, whacks and romps.

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# First' Magnet to be souvenir issue

The first issue of the "Magnet," which was launched in February, 1908, is to be re-issued by its publishers in a special souvenir wrapper in August. "Magnet," with its stories about Billy Bunter, was probably the greatest boy's paper ever published.

This souvenir issue will be a genuine re-print of the first "Magnet."

# Billy Bunter has eaten his last bun

By R. J. WILLIAMSON

**F**OR more than half a century the adventures of Billy Bunter, the world's most famous schoolboy, have been followed with an enthusiasm which has never waned.

Generation after generation has formed an affectionate regard for the lad with the insatiable appetite who has managed to get himself into—and out of—every conceivable situation.

No more, however, will the corridors of Greyfriars School echo to the cry of "Yarock." And the school tuck-shop will have to get along without its most valued customer.

For, recently, with the publication of "Bunter's Last Fling" (Cassell, 11/6), William George Bunter sets his last bun. When Frank Richards died in

In his final adventure, Bunter is again triumphant and saves Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of the Remove, from a terrible plot.

It is perhaps superfluous to say that in this tale in which the Owl is incarcerated, bound and gagged in an empty parking case—well, it would have to be empty, wouldn't it—the genius of Frank



Gerald Gampson—the man who played the part of Billy Bunter in the television series "Greyfriars."

The author who created this likeable rascal died in 1961 and now fans can read the final chapter on William George Bunter, one of the world's best-loved legends.

Richards succeeded in painting a vivid picture of Greyfriars School which will not readily pass from the minds of all who are boys at heart. Intimate pen portraits of masters, staff and boys have been collated from the notes of Frank Richards and presented in a handsome publication which at 35s. is available at a ready market. Billy Bunter may have had his last great tuck-in but the legend of him and that ancient pie in the county of Kent lives on. "Yarock."

## For your bookshelf

1961, he left behind him 37 Bunter books — "Bunter's Last Fling" is the 38th. The story was originally entitled "Bunter to the Rescue" but as the last of the series and, with the consent of the author's family, it was given the more appropriate title.

And so today, Bunter fans can read the final chapter on one of the world's best-loved legends—that of Billy Bunter and Greyfriars School.

It is indeed a sad occasion, for Frank Richards made the fat Owl such a real character that countless men who have long since left their school's behind are not ashamed to admit that they derive pleasure from reading about the hapless lad.

Richards shines as brightly as in any of the previous 37 books.

No Bunter devotee, be he nine or 90—will be able to lay this book down without feeling a real pang of sadness at the thought that a mighty pen has been stilled.

There will, however, be widespread pleasure at the fact that Cassell have marked the sad occasion of the publication of the last Bunter story by publishing "Greyfriars School: A Prospect" by J. R. Balfour.

This tribute and memorial to the great author, which Frank Richards, founded in 1891, covers every aspect of the school, and is proof that such were needed—that

## THE WORD GAME

The key word is—  
**SUCKNORS**

Can you find 25 or more dictionary words in the above word? The list will be published tomorrow.

Average mark—61 words  
Time limit—30 minutes.

### RULES OF THE GAME

Words must be of four or more letters. No plurals and singular of the same word allowed; no proper nouns. In each word you must find a letter that is used only the number of times it appears in the key word.

Yesterday's solution—  
**IRACUND**

Incur rain rind rind ruin runc and word adunc and suric cad card calve cald curd curd uric uranic nadir nard duru doric gliar grain durs duriun

# Billy Bunter must at last 'pack it in'

**T**HE end of the Billy Bunter books, with the publication of the final adventure, "**Bunter's Last Fling**" (Cassell, 11s. 6d.) will be, for many people, like the death of an old friend.

Since the death of their author, Frank Richards, all the remaining manuscripts, found among his papers, have been published. I am glad nobody thought of getting another man to carry on the job.

Billy Bunter, whose adventures began to appear in early comics like "Boys Own Paper," "The Magnet," "The Gem" more than half a century ago, is no more. He has consumed his final bun, uttered his final 'Oh, crikey,' received his final six of the best.

But boys will be able to read the other 37 stories—by the time anybody has read all 37, they have outgrown Bunter—and although as each generation arises, the demand will lessen, just a little, Billy Bunter will remain a schoolboy's favourite until he becomes a historical curiosity and a collector's item, as the papers in which he first appeared, have become.

## Variations

"Bunter's Last Fling" is very much like the other 37 books, and to anyone who uses this fact as a target for complaint, let me say now that the whole point and pleasure of the books is that they are all the same.

Apart from the variations—and these are strictly governed by a set of rules—in plot, the ingredients are identical every time. It is the same, of course, with every other literary form—and the pleasure boys derive from Billy Bunter lies in the familiarity the repetition, and the discovery of a new way in which the number

of counters allowed can be arranged.

The same characters—Queich, the Famous Five of the Remove, Coker of the fifth, Mr. Prout, Wingate School Captain, are always present.

They use the same phrases—Bunter's 'Oh, Lor' and 'Pack it in,' the mixed-up English proverbs of Hurree Jamset Singh, the 'I say old boy' of Lord Mauleverer—they get into the same rows, scrapes and jams. Doubtless they think the same thoughts. They are ageless and dateless.

It is to boys (and perhaps a few girls) that "Bunter's Last Fling" will appeal, but I have a squeaking feeling that "**Greyfriars School: A Prospectus**," by J. S. Butcher, (Cassell, 30s.) has been compiled for, and will be secretly enjoyed by, men—fathers and probably grand-fathers who remember the vintage days of Bunter. There are some adults, however, who openly confess to being students of William George Bunter, and who will treat this remarkable document with great seriousness.

If this had been compiled by way of a joke, it would not have been so superfluous, but I am sure that the somebody, somewhere, takes it all in deadly earnest. Greyfriars School is a carefully charted place not so much of the imagination, as of escape—by adults, back into the world of boyhood (or rather, of boyhood as they would like it to have been—I doubt if it ever was like this). Clearly, in the minds and hearts of many, William George Bunter marches on.



# BILLY BUNTER LIVES ON



The name Charles Hamilton appears on nobody's short list of great writers of the 20th

century, partly because he was an execrable stylist, partly because people tend to be sheepish about confessing a taste for the execrable. But if bulk of output counts for anything, then Hamilton was a titan, *writes Benny Green*, maintaining an annual output of one and half million words for 50 years. And if vigour of characterization comes into it, then he takes his undisputed place alongside Conan Doyle and Rice Burroughs in the pantheon of modern popular art. Hamilton's reputation stands or falls on a single creation, the archetype of the podgy schoolboy, that corpulent pipsqueak of the Greyfriars Remove, William George Bunter.

Hamilton died four years ago at the age of 85, and the only man likely to dispute these facts would have been Hamilton himself. His attachment to the pen-name of Frank Richards became so ingrained that in his own mind Hamilton was one of the obscure casualties of the Edwardian era. In his 86th year Bunter's creator tape-recorded memories and impressions of an astonishing career, and when the recording engineers asked him whether he preferred to be addressed as Hamilton or Richards, the reply was, "Richards if you please. Charles Hamilton died 50 years ago".

In fact, the Hamilton-Richards syndrome represents one of the most alluring cases of split personality in the whole range of popular art. Even the autobiography, significantly of Richards, not Hamilton, was written in the third person.

Today nobody is sure what kind of early background Hamilton had. Though it seems likely that he was the son of a schoolmaster and at least possible that he was educated at some kind of private school. *Floreat Greyfriars!* the long-playing album of his reminiscences which appears on 3 December, may therefore seem to have an irresistible appeal as the answer to a thousand questions. In fact, Hamilton remained tight-lipped to the last. Though the album is compulsive listening from start to finish, there are no revelations about the early years. So far as Hamilton was concerned, life apparently began at 14.

*Floreat Greyfriars!* justifies its existence as a literary oddity because of its information about the genesis of Bunter, Harry Wharton, Hurree Singh, Vernon-Smith and the rest.

The secret of their sustain-

ed appeal to men of all ages is probably contained in the fact that to their creator they were real people, as large as life and twice as vital. Denis Preston, the recording executive who taped Hamilton's conversation, discovered this weird fact within moments of stepping inside Hamilton's Rams-gate semi-detached four years ago.

"He began to talk about Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of the Remove. He talked of him in the present tense, and I had the feeling that Hamilton knew Vernon-Smith was in the next room and likely to walk in at any moment. Even the meal we ate that afternoon was not a meal so much as a study blow-out. Muffins, jam tarts, cakes and two sorts of jam. Authentic Greyfriars."

In *Floreat Greyfriars!* Hamilton reveals himself as a simple old man with dogmatic opinions about other writers, virtual total recall about the early days of *The Magnet* and *The Gem*, and a kind of gentle amazement that anybody in the 1960s should bother about him at all.

"Truth imitates Art", says Hamilton, echoing Wilde perhaps without realizing it. "Fiction has to be more appropriate than real life", he goes on, and gives examples of how he heard an Anglo-Indian on a train say once, "Top of a beautiful morning" and suddenly had a mental picture of Hurree Singh complete in his head, how he read an advertisement for a quack medicine called Bunter's Nerve, grafted on to it the paunch of one relative, the spectacles of another, the ever-expected postal order of a third, and found himself with the hottest property in fiction since Sherlock Holmes and Tarzan.



Sometimes, says Hamilton, "I can hardly believe that Bunter doesn't really exist".

The truth is that Bunter *does* exist, more certainly than Charles Hamilton ever did. The renaissance began in 1947 with a Bunter hardback, blossomed into a TV series and by 1958 had broken into pantomime. By 1961, the last year of Hamilton's life, hardback sales were into the hundreds of thousands. Typically, his parting shot was a Bunter story in *The Times Educational Supplement* - in Latin. The piece had one blemish. "There was one little difficulty. 'Yaroooh' cannot be translated into any language but English".

Floreat Greyfriars! will be issued by Columbia Records on Friday, 3 December at 32s.

# Homely humour from Bunter's creator

ONE of the most unusual L.P.s of recent months is Columbia 33SX1784, on which the late Frank Richards, creator of Greyfriars School and its heroes and villains, reminisces and

## RECORD REVIEW



by Arthur Reeves



philosophizes in a warm-hearted, homely way on all sorts of topics.

He talks about life, school, habits, Berlin, writing, tulip-growing, with extracts from some of his Billy Bunter stories to illustrate the characters, read and enacted by Nigel Anthony.

"I live in a world of young people," he remarks. No wonder he could reach 85 and still sound happy. No chip on his shoulder here.

Frank Richards . . . lived "in a world of young people."

record, this is hardly one to be played repeatedly.

A new LP that is in that category is H.M.V. CLP1928 (stereo CSD1640), offering "The Words and Music of Noel Coward" sung by June Bronhill, Joyce Grenfell, Kenneth Williams (sounding remarkably like the master) Dickie Henderson (not very happy about the pitch and Cleo Laine (rather too chi-chi in "Mad About the Boy" and "Matelot").

Jazz field

**T**HERE was an air of innocent middle-aged glee about **The Myth of Greyfriars** broadcast on the Third on Thursday.

The programme was aptly billed as a "celebration" of the school stories of Frank Richards, creator of Billy Bunter. Though it attempted a disinterested look at the whole Greyfriars set-up, there were also generous readings from the Magnet for the nostalgic to wallow in. Mythical the school may have been but this was a genuine old boys reunion.

When George Orwell in 1940 dismissed the Greyfriars sagas as falsifying life and being sodden in the worst illusions of 1910, Richards ditched the criticism with the retort "Let youth be happy."

Why did the stories make

youth happy? John Chandos thought they met a need of the adolescents of the 20s and 30s. Professor Dennis Brogan saw in Bunter, the antithesis of all the clean-limbed characters, the first anti-hero. Bunter, he observed crisply, was the natural hero of the English young and if we accepted this, less nonsense would be talked by bishops, magistrates, and others.

A psychoanalyst produced a number of reasons why Harry Wharton and the famous five were better than Batman for growing boys. He added that when men of erudition were paid by a corporation to come to the studio and talk about a minor piece of writing it was obvious that they were all heirs of a highly-charged emotional experience.

This was a splendid programme.

# LONDON LIFE

**Nicholas Monsarrat** is coming from Canada for the publication of his autobiography, *Life is a Four Letter Word*. **Sir Alec Guinness** has a part in the film of Graham Greene's *The Comedians*. **King Gustav of Sweden** is in London on private business. **Lord Kinross** brings out his book *A Portrait of Egypt* on 10 November. **Lady Hulton**, director of Hulton's, is in America on business. **Leslie O'Brien**, Governor of the Bank of England, flew to Paris for lunch at the Banque de France. **Una Wright** is writing the life of her uncle Frank Richards, creator of Billy Bunter. **Dudley Moore** hates doing cabaret—"it scares me stiff." French composer **Pierre Boulez** has left London to conduct *Wozzek* in Frankfurt. **Nancy Sinatra** and **Eddie Albert** are together on a London TV show in November. Artist **David Koster** exhibits his lithographs at the Everyman Cinema, Hampstead, this month. **Clive** the couturier showed a dress at the British Week at Lyons made from French silk. **Dame Marie Rambert** is keeping secret the name of one of her guest stars for the new season—the other is **Maryon Lane** from the Royal Ballet. **Shri Rajmohan Gandhi**, a grandson of Mahatma, will open the Westminster Arts Centre. **Hugh "Binkie" Beaumont** plans a winter revival of T S Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*.

# Billy Bunter brothers re-united

**THREE** British brothers, who were the original models for illustrations of characters such as Billy Bunter in popular boys' books early in the century, have been re-united after 46 years.

Alan and Bruce Mitchell are now prominent in the Montreal art world. The third brother, Alexander, lives in Brisbane, Australia.

Alexander had no trouble recognising his brothers when he arrived at Montreal's Central Station recently.

The two Montreal-based brothers said they were convinced they would never see their Australian brother again until Alexander won a small fortune on a sweepstake ticket which enabled him to come to Montreal.

The three were brought up in Sussex, where they played golf with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes and one of their neighbours.

Their father, novelist and artist Hutton Mitchell, illustrated Billy Bunter and other popular boys' stories of the period, using his three sons as models.

The three recall stuffing pillows into their trousers to portray Bunter.

# A treat for dad, too

**T**HIS is the time of the year when holidays are in most people's minds, and one of the problems is how to keep young children interested during long train journeys or in rain storms at holiday resorts.

It is now that paperbacks come into their own—paperbacks being cheaper editions of books because they have a soft cover and cannot be kept as long as those with hard covers.

There is an added attraction for fathers and mothers, too, because many of the books that were popular in their childhood days are now being revived.

Father can thus re-enjoy the adventures of Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School, Just William, while mother has Bessie Bunter to recall. Billy and Bessie were invented by Frank and Hilda Richards.

Billy was a fat little boy with little round eyes almost popping through big, round spectacles and a plump jaw, usually seen behind a pot of jam.

His enemy was Mr. Quelch, who tried to teach the boys of Greyfriars. Harry Wharton, Huree Singh, Bob Cherry, Coker of the Fifth could all understand Mr. Quelch, but not Billy.

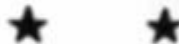
Armada have brought out a series at 2s. 6d each while Paul Hamlyn look after the adventures of Bessie Bunter, who is always out trying to save people from trouble.

*Uncle Tony*

one of the books William is even trying to get to the moon.

The same publishers have the series about Kemlo, the space man, who wanders around outer space in all kinds of wonderful vehicles. A real feast for space fiction lovers.

Enid Blyton's "Circus Days" and Pat Smyth's "Horses and Tales" in the Three Jays series are other paper backs brought out by Hamlyns, all 2s. 6d.



Armada have a paper back of Louisa M. Alcott's "Good Wives" and Elinor M. Brent-Dyer's famous "Chalet" stories based on a school in Switzerland. The adventures of Emil and his friends as detectives come from Puffin Books.

There must be hundreds and hundreds of these books at your booksellers for use over the next three months.



Oh, what was I thinking about last week when I said that the Princess Elizabeth mentioned by Margaret Miller in her book "Gunpowder Treason" (Macdonald) was the one who became Queen Elizabeth.

It was, in fact, the other Princess Elizabeth whom the

# *Library bans Billy Bunter*

Oh, crumbs! Billy Bunter, the fat Owl of the Remove, has scooped his last jam tart in Ipswich.

Yesterday the myopic glutton of Greyfriars—bloated anti-hero of pre-second World War generations—went under the counter at the town's municipal public library.

Big Billy's books were banned—to be issued to children only by special request.

The reason, Miss Dorothy White, chief librarian, said last night, is that Bunter, friend of every Id-a-week-reader of *Magnet* for more than 30 years is obese.

## **Not over eating**

"In my opinion, the Bunter stories could cause distress to fat boys," she said.

"Nowadays we know that excessive fat is often due to glandular disturbance or some other medical reason — not to over eating as in the Billy Bunter tales."

Miss Doreen Ellis, head of the Ipswich Library children's department, supported the ban.

Just one last line from Billy's creator, Frank Richards, who died in 1961. It might sum up the Owl's reaction to the Ipswich ban:

"Squash! Hardly knowing what he did in his alarm and terror, the Owl of the Remove slammed the jam tart in Loder's face."

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# Billy Bunter back with a bang

Three Billy Bunter books taken from Ipswich Public Library's open shelves because they might be hurtful to fat boys were soon in demand yesterday.

They were made available "only by request," and shortly after the library opened all three were borrowed—by an adult.

The books were removed from the shelves by Miss Dorothy White, chief librarian, but Mr. Brian Cooke, chairman of the town council's Libraries and Museums Committee, said yesterday: "I feel they are innocent enough and have no objections to them being on display on the open shelves."

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# Billy Bunter is not to be expelled

**BILLY BUNTER** fans in Warwickshire can breathe a sigh of relief — the Fat Owl of the Remove will not be removed from the shelves of local libraries.

Miss Dorothy White, 62-year-old chief librarian of Ipswich, immediately qualified as a "rotter" — as Bunter would have put it — when she banned Frank Richards' famous books from the public shelves.

"I feel the Bunter stories are unfair to fat children," she explained.

You could almost hear the fat Boy, blinking through his spectacles, gasp "Oh, crikey . . . Oh, crumbs . . . Oh, suffering cats!"

And Hurree Jamsset Ram Sing: "The shockfulness is terrific."

And Mr. Quelch, the headmaster, reassuring him: "Never mind, boy. They still want you in Warwickshire."

## A new set

County librarians have said, in effect, "Yaroo!" and "Shucks!" to Miss White. As far as they are concerned the Owl of Greyfriars School stays, and is in no danger of being expelled to the dusty shelves of books which are only produced on demand.

At Nuneaton, Bunter books are so popular that a new set has just gone on the shelves to satisfy the still-hearty appetites of young readers who tuck into the famous stories with relish.

Mr. Sidney Barlow, Borough Librarian, said: "If people want to read them they will do so, but any complaint — which I consider highly unlikely — will be considered."

Mr. John Haiste, Chief Librarian of Rugby Borough Council, was quick to come to the defence of Bunter.

"Miss White is giving the public a terrible image of do-gooders and pussy-footers to librarians. Some people would even like to ban Enid Blyton from the shelves."

# Television series

Rugby has only one Bunter title in children's libraries at the moment. That was "The Schooldays of Bob Cherry," one of the early books about Bunter's form-mate.

"There is no question of the book being banned from our shelves," he said.

"Interest in Bunter was revived after the television series, in the same way as there was a Galworthy revival after 'The Forsyte Saga.'"

Mr. H. S. Tallamy, Leamington's Chief Librarian, said the 10 Bunter titles in his library were so well used that many had to be re-bound.

"In fact, at the present time, seven of them are out," he said. "We wouldn't dream of banning them."

"As to the question that they might upset fat children, I think nowadays most children react sensibly to this sort of thing," he added.

The official viewpoint of Coventry Corporation libraries was given by Mr. Alexander Wilson, the Director.

"We feel that democratically, we should have a representative range of children's books, and therefore, we have a fair selection of Bunter books."

"In many ways, they are period pieces, although the age of Greyfriars never really existed."

No ban existed on any children's books in the city, and none would be imposed on Bunter.

# A plea to put *Bunter* back on the shelf

Sir, — As an old reader of the famous Greyfriars stories featuring those famous schoolboys Harry Wharton and company with, of course, the more famous Billy Bunter, I was amazed to read in the Press of the ruling of Ipswich Public Library not to have Bunter books on the shelves.

Many *Post* readers must have happy memories of these world-famous stories by Frank Richards. Never was there such a fine code of honour and clean reading material put before boys and girls from 1908 until now. Bunter was the fat boy and must be the most famous tuck raider of all times. How famous was his celebrated postal order that always failed to arrive. How many "bobs" he borrowed on the strength of it will never be known!

In spite of his fatness, Bunter was generally well treated by his schoolfellows and always managed to get taken home for Christmas to Mauleverer Towers or Wharton Lodge. His bottom was kicked and his head smacked but he was never

## LETTERS to the EDITOR

really hurt, and if in trouble, the fat boy always had the sympathy and care of his schoolfellows.

Now, Ipswich Library says the books are unkind to fat children in schools and can only be asked for on demand. Can anything be more stupid than this decision when far more harmful books are available and on show?

Sex or horrible crimes never happened in the Greyfriars world. The transgressor always found the way hard and repented at last. Evil overcame right for a time but in the end

right took full control and youth could learn much from the high code of honour, and respect for parents was shown among the lads whether a son of a millionaire or the local cobbler.

Probably, books of frightening stories of hideous space fiends are under the noses of children in this particular library but what a sad thing it is for the first time on record for our lovable fat Owl of *The Greyfriars Remove* to be kept out of sight from a new generation who up till now, found them refreshing and healthy reading.

I am the Founder of The Birmingham Billy Bunter Club, which has members of all ages, housewives, accountants, schoolmasters and insurance brokers, so well remembered are the stories. All were grateful for the fine article in your pages on the passing of Frank Richards, Bunter's creator, some years ago.

JOHN CORBETT.

St. Peter's Road,

Harborne,

Birmingham 17.

# Bunter's back

Ipswich Council's Libraries Committee reversed last month's decision of chief librarian Miss Dorothy White to ban Billy Bunter from the open shelves. They decided that the Fat Owl of the Remove was just too good to be removed.

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# Billy Bunter's 'playmates vetted'

Billy Bunter and Tiger Tim have been banned from keeping company with naked women at an exhibition of comics in London.

Vintage volumes of their stories have been removed by the International Publishing Corporation's Juvenile Magazines Group.

Mr. John Sanders, publisher of the group, said yesterday: "The material on exhibition is the kind produced for sick teenagers. It is as far removed from the British children's comic as a pin-up magazine.

"There are an awful lot of pictures of naked women which are unsuitable for a children's comics exhibition."

The IPC comics were on show at the Institute of Contemporary Art's *Acroph!* which opened on December 30.

The display was organised by Michael Kustow, until recently the institute's artistic controller.

Mr. Sanders was abroad on holiday when the exhibition opened. When he returned he visited the exhibition and

found "American and European - originated teenage material which are, unfortunately, also comics but are very different from the thing we know.

"Mr. Kustow and I came to an agreement that we should be allowed to withdraw our material.

"We have been publishing comics in IPC for 80 years and what we mean by comics are Tiger Tim and Comic Cuts and things like that."

Mr. Kustow said that he had already exercised "editorial control" over some items submitted for exhibition. He said he thought the exhibition was fit for children.

The exhibition, which is drawing audiences ranging from eight-year-olds to 80-year-olds, has broken all records for the ICA since it opened, he said.

# Extende



# *Bunter bounces back*

AN unmistakable old friend (above) is having trouble in Frank Richards's **Billy Bunter on the Nile** (Armada, 20p).

He is one of the hundreds of old favourites being revived for another generation to cultivate. In this latest one, William George feels it his duty to protect Greyfriars Remove in Egypt and defies daggers and tearaway camels to solve his school's mysteries — and his own ever-present need for food.

Elinor M. Brent Dyers's **Chalet School** adventures (Armada 20p) provide adventures from an earlier generation and remain in favour. Enid Blyton, like Billy Bunter, may not be in favour with some librarians but she, too, soldiers on in the paperback boom.

the Spanish Civil War who dreams of becoming a doctor.

Ivan Southall in **Let the Balloon Go** (Puffin, 20p) gives a convincing account of a special day in the life of an Australian handicapped boy. It will bring hope to all similarly handicapped children and their parents.

An imaginative tale of intrigue is **Mistress Masham's Repose** (Puffin, 25p) in which T. H. White takes up the tale of the Lilliputians created in **Gulliver's Travels**.

A group is captured for exhibition in England but they escape to an island on an estate in



# MR RICHARDS'S FAVOURITE SON

**MARTIN CLIFFORD**, Owen Conquest, Frank Richards . . . three names instantly recognisable to old boys of early 20th century school stories. Clifford for his tales of Tom Merry and Co. of St Jim's in "The Gem"; Conquest for Jimmy Silver and Co. of Rookwood in "Boys' Friend"; and the most famous, Richards, for Harry Wharton and Co. and, of course, Billy Bunter of Greyfriars in "The Magnet."

All were created by one man, Charles Harold St John Hamilton. The enigmatic Mr Hamilton, in a career that lasted longer than the reign of Queen Victoria, wrote more than 72,000,000 words under 28 different pen-names before his death, aged 85, in 1961.

The illustration (right) by the best-known of Bunter illustrators, C. H. Chapman, finds William George first at the post! A postal-order at last? It is taken from "Yarrah! A Feast of Frank Richards" (Eyre Methuen, £4-50) in which Gyles Brandreth endearingly reminisces about the immortal characters which came from the prolific imagination of Charles Hamilton. Oh, Happy Days.



THE Coventry site shown in last week's Archive, with St Mary's Hall at the rear and the Cathedral tower, was that on which the Council House, Earl Street, was built.

One of those who identified it was Charles Melbourne, of 14, Linley Road, Southam, who says that the property on the site was demolished about 1902. The site lay vacant until 1912, when building started. The foundation stone was laid on June 12, 1913.

Mr Melbourne remembers it as he often visited his uncle who had a sign-writer's business at 43, Earl Street, opposite, under the name of R. L. Hamilton. "The picture was taken sometime around 1910-1912," he says. "I would make a guess that it was taken from the upstairs room of the 'Coventry Herald' office."

Mr Melbourne mentions that Mr R. L. Hamilton was the brother of Charles Hamilton, who under the name of Frank Richards wrote the Billy Bunter, Gem and Magnet stories.

# LIVE ENTERTAINMENT POLICY AT BUNTER'S RESTAURANT

By JEREMY MYERSON

BUNTER'S, a new central London "fast food" restaurant with a "Fat Owl of Greyfriars" Billy Bunter theme and decor decked out with memorabilia from Bunter stories in the Gem and Magnet comics, is offering live music and entertainment on a regular basis.

Gordon Maclachlan, director of the Head Theatre Club, Putney, has been brought in to organise this entertainment.

The restaurant, which can hold around 85 people, launched its live act policy on December 7 with a bill featuring comedian Mike McCabe, feminist group Clapper claw and folk artists New England.

On Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, a full programme of live acts is being offered but other nights also feature a certain amount of entertainment. This week singer Colin Hamilton has been at Bunter's and

New England will return this weekend.

Commenting on how audiences are reacting to entertainment in a fairly casual, fast turnaround restaurant, Maclachlan told THE STAGE that, although the venue has not really taken off as yet, word-and-mouth feedback is bringing in more and more people who have come specifically for the show on stage.

Proprietor of Bunter's, Ludwig Levi, has gone to a lot of trouble to collect blazers, caps, illustrations, advertisement posters and other nostalgic items from the Billy Bunter era and the place has a very pleasant period atmosphere about it.

Food runs along similarly enterprising lines with choices on the menu including pure beef "Bunter Burgers" and "Billy's Demise" (a chocolate mint ice cream dessert).

Bunter's is situated at 109 Kingsway, London WC2 and artists interested in playing the venue are invited to send a letter to Gordon Maclachlan, Head Theatre Club, White Lion, 15 Putney High Street, London SW15.



**NORTH LONDON'S** newest nightspot has just been opened by Wyn Davies and disc jockey-singer Emma Leigh, and they believe that they've hit on a unique entertainment formula — disco music and comedy.

It was therefore appropriate that when they opened Emma's Laffin comedy room and discotheque at Wyn's pub, the Willesden Junction Hotel, London NW10, that the guests should include top stars from the comedy and music worlds.

They included DJ Ed "Stewpot" Stewart, comedian Tommy Trinder and songwriter Barry Mason.

Wyn only recently took over the pub after a 15-year career in show business and he has invested £60,000 in the project.

He has booked top comedians to appear in cabaret, and Emma will soon be supervising the provision of restaurant meals in addition to acting as the resident disco DJ.

Pictured at the opening of Emma's Laffin are (left to right): Wyn Davies, Emma Leigh and Tommy Trinder.

Grand Music Circus



**Caddish Billy Bunter tries to entice two of the girls of Cliff House School to come within range of his mistletoe. From a 1920s edition of *The Magnet*.**

# **BUNTER!**

**Open Audition**

FRIDAY, March 4th

**10.00 a.m. - HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH**

(Asian Actors - minimum age 17)

Bring song and tap shoes.

**2.30 p.m. - BILLY BUNTER**

(minimum age 17)

Bring song.

**At: London Welsh Trust Ltd.,  
157 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1**



## **1988! WHAT A YEAR!**

**'BILLY BUNTER'** in  
**'LUCKY SUNIL'** BBC TV  
*thanks to ANN BISHOP*  
**'FATTY ARBUCKLE'**  
Golden Oldie Picture Show –  
BBC TV and  
Third great season for  
**KEN HOPSON, HAVEN**  
**LEISURE**

*Congratulations to*  
**BILLY FORRESTER**  
and best wishes.

Ian Sandy 021 706 6700  
0836 732758 (vocaphone)