

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

JULY

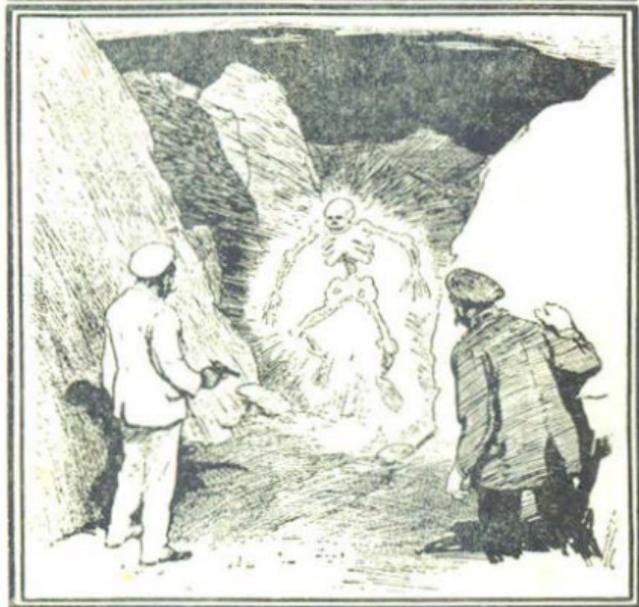
1950

Number 39

Volume 2

HENRY ST. JOHN'S SERIAL INSIDE!
THE PLUCK LIBRARY 1^D

NO 560 • EVERY FRIDAY • JULY, 24TH, 1915



CAPTAIN HANDYMAN-
MAGIC MERCHANT

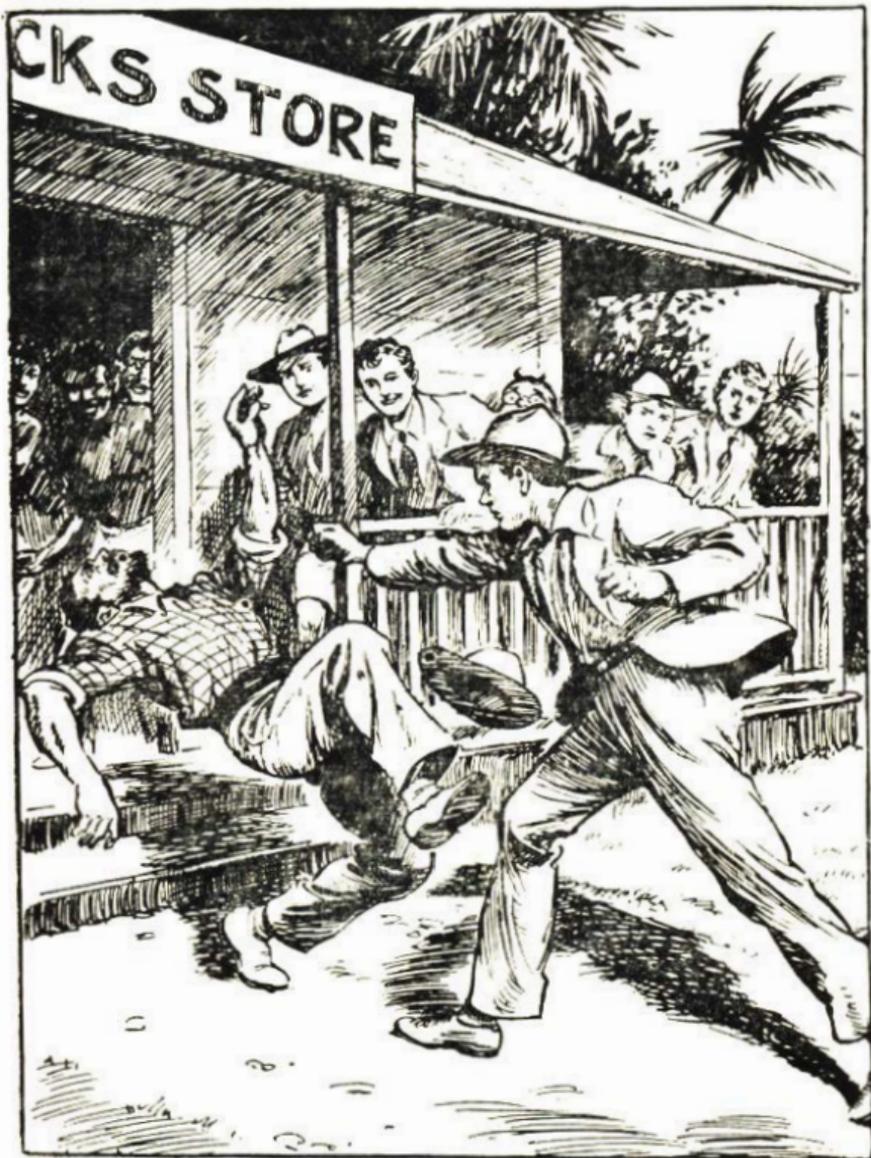


Illustration from "Billy Bunter Among the Cannibals," by Frank Richards, to be published in September by Charles Skilton Limited.

The Story Paper Collector

Articles of Interest to Collectors of British Boys' Periodicals of the Past

No. 39

JULY, 1950

Vol. 2

JIMMY SILVER IN CANADA

THE FISTICAL FOUR of Rookwood's Fourth Form did not travel so far nor so often overseas as did their counterparts of St. Jim's and Greyfriars, but when they journeyed to Canada in 1923 they stayed for a record-breaking thirty-five weeks. Just how they "wangled" this, considering that they came out for the Easter vacation, I do not know—many of the issues included in this series of stories are missing from my set of *The Boys' Friend*.

In the first story, titled "The Rancher at Rookwood" (*Boys' Friend* No. 1140, April 14th, 1923), we are told of the visit to Rookwood School of Hudson Smedley, cousin of Jimmy Silver and owner of Windy River Ranch in northwest Alberta. Jimmy Silver and his pals Lovell, Raby, and Newcome, having made a good impression on Mr. Smedley, are invited to accompany him on his trip back to the ranch. The invitation is accepted with alacrity, and their adventures in the not-so-wild West form a

grand series of yarns. This series must have run longer than any of St. Jim's in *The Gem* or of Greyfriars in *The Magnet*, though admittedly there are to be found in it sub-series and single stories.

While reading once again the stories that I have in this Canadian series I naturally (being resident in Western Canada for many years) kept a lookout for little errors in description, customs, and so on, but they are amazingly few, in fact almost non-existent. This is quite remarkable, when one considers that the author, Owen Conquest, was never in Canada.

True, the cowboys spoke in a way very reminiscent of the way Ralph Redway's Texas cowboys spoke in the Rio Kid stories in *The Popular*, but maybe that is the way Alberta cowboys speak. I don't know, never having met a cowboy. I doubt if they call a mosquito a "skitter" (perhaps a "skeeter," humorously)—we Manitobans don't! But then I doubted whether they say "crick" for "creek," until I was informed

by one who has conversed with Alberta ranch folk that they do

THE ONLY SLIP I found was in "Jimmy Silver & Co. Out West" (B. F. No. 1141), in which it is stated that the creek was low—in late April, when a creek in north-western Alberta would normally be running high—and that in winter it would probably be "a deep and roaring torrent"—when actually, in winter in that locality, it would be frozen almost solid. A very minor matter, and I should be ashamed of myself for mentioning it.

Judging by the stories I have, the Canadian series is a good one, and demonstrates once again Charles Hamilton's—and therefore Owen Conquest's—

ability to get "local color" into his stories when they are placed in countries where he has himself never been.

Perhaps a run of thirty-five weeks was long enough for, referring to the final story, "Homeward Bound" (B. F. No. 1174), the editor wrote of Jimmy Silver & Co.'s return to Rookwood: "None too soon, seemingly, for I have been deluged with letters to the effect that though the Wild West exploits of the Rookwooders were topping, yet they were wanted back at the old Hampshire establishment presided over by Dr. Chisholm."

The stories in the Canadian series were reprinted in *The Popular* in 1927.

—W. H. G.

PLUCK WINS—BUT NOT PLUCK!

By LEONARD M. ALLEN

THE original *Pluck Library*, published by the Amalgamated Press, ceased publication with No. 594 of the penny series, dated March 18th, 1916, and the title was not revived until the boom in boys' papers in the early 1920's. Both the old paper and the new had one thing in common, a prefer-

ence for the adventure type of story as against school yarns.

Popular authors contributed to both papers, the later numbers of *Pluck Library* containing excellent stories by Hamilton Teed with Dr. Huxton Rymer as the central character, a Sexton Blake serial, author not known, titled "The Great Cheque Fraud,"

with George Marsden Plummer as the criminal element, while Sidney Drew supplied stories written around comedian Billy Merson under the heading of "Sherlock Blake, Detective."

The new paper, named simply *Pluck* and not labelled "new series," was launched with much publicity on October 28th, 1922, as a companion to the very successful *Champion*. It had 28 pages, larger than those of the old *Pluck Library*, being 8½" by 11¼", printed on pink paper with a two-colour, blue and yellow, front page. Excellent value was given for the twopence asked, No. 1 containing a complete 8-page football adventure story by Arthur S. Hardy, a complete yarn by Wedgewood Bellfield, instalments of adventure serials by Paul Quinton, John W. Wheway, and Sidney and Francis Warwick. In addition there were four sports articles, a free entry form for the *Pluck* Physical College, and a glossy photo-card of The Arsenal football players.

In spite of these inducements the paper survived only for just under two years, ceasing publication with No. 97, August 30th, 1924. This was probably due to its similarity to *The Champion* and *Young Britain* and the limited schoolboy pocket money of that

period. In addition the more flamboyant Thomson papers offered attractions which prevail to this day.

THE PUBLISHERS spared no expense to make *Pluck* a success as far as the authors and artists were concerned. A glance through the first volume shows the glossy photo-card was given away regularly each week and the 8-page complete story maintained, these being written by such popular authors as Captain Malcolm Arnold, Reid Whitley, Andrew Murray, Donovan Mart, Gilbert Chester, J. W. Wheway, and Gwyn Evans with stories of "Splash" Page, his well-known Sexton Blake character.

The famous "Tarzan" author, Edgar Rice Burroughs, joined the ranks in No. 23 with the first instalment of his story, "At the Earth's Core." The Paul Quinton serial was concluded in No. 25 and was succeeded the following week by an original St. Frank's story, "The Kidnapped School," by Edwy Searles Brooks.

Artists who contributed to both the old paper and the new one included H. M. Lewis, E. E. Briscoe, and J. H. Valda, while *Pluck* introduced Harry Lane, Glossop, Leonard Shields, and Fred Holmes.



THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY

Reviewed by WM. H. GANDER :: Part Nine

OF THE CONJUROR of the Greyfriars Remove we read: "Kipps is quite a favourite with many readers, and they want to know why they cannot have more of him." Oliver Kipps is Number 57 in the Gallery, *Magnet* No. 521, February 2nd, 1918. The conductor of the Gallery explains that a conjuror is an interesting person while he is conjuring, but at other times he is pretty much like other people. Kipps senior, having made a "goodly pile" as a conjuror, determined that son Oliver should have a first-class education, so quite naturally he was sent Greyfriars. And at Greyfriars Kipps, a good fellow as well as a good conjuror, has played his part when called upon, though often enough it has consisted of plucking things that looked like spiders or beetles from various parts of other fellows' attire.

Number 58 of the Gallery, in *Magnet* No. 522, features one who vanished from the Greyfriars stories many years ago—Cora Quelch, niece of the Remove Form-master. Miss Quelch was a plump young lady who used to come to Greyfriars only

on brief visits. On these occasions Cora set Billy Bunter's fat heart a-fluttering—like calling to like, no doubt. She did what Bunter's study-mate, Peter Todd, never did succeed in doing—made a man of him—twice! Without an effort! "And she could do it again! Would it last? Well, that is another matter. One fancies not." One fancies correctly!

Jack Wingate, who is known as Wingate minor, has at times been a sore trial to his elder brother, George, Captain of the school. It is Wingate minor whom we meet in Gallery Number 59, *Magnet* No. 523. Cast in a somewhat similar mold to Dickie Nugent, "he blew in with far too big a notion of his own importance." From time to time Wingate major has had to rescue Jack from the results of his own foolish actions. He did, however, eventually fit himself into the scheme of things in the Third Form. "There is real good stuff in young Wingate, and he is sure to come out right in the long run."

Albert Hicks Mobbs, Number 60 in the Gallery (*Magnet* No.

524), master of the Highcliffe Fourth Form, may be touched upon lightly in passing. That is as much as he is worth, he being, we are told, "a snob, a tuft-hunter," (whatever that is!), "a petty tyrant, and dishonest." How such a person continues to hold a position at Highcliffe is puzzling, unless one assumes it to be due to the general laxness found at that scholastic establishment under the headmastership of the estimable but rather doddering Dr. Voysey. "Mobbsy" came into the limelight in "The Boy Without a Name," being very much "down" on Arthur Clare, the scholarship boy who later proved to be the highly-connected Frank Courtenay. Mr. Mobbs hasn't improved as our acquaintance with him grew.

NOW WE COME TO Miss Phyllis Howell, of Cliff House School, Number 61 in the Gallery, *Magnet* No. 525. Phyllis Howell! What is she doing in

the Gallery? Well, she's there, so we must give her a little attention. Not a "genuine" Greyfriars character, Phyllis was introduced to us in "School and Sport," that account of a series of sports events which its writer fondly imagined was a story of school life (*Boys' Friend Library* No. 319, 1st series). She was brought into that story through a cup being presented by (or was it in memory of?) her brother, Lieut. Dalton Howell, a Greyfriars "old boy," for competition by the various schools. Lieut. Howell was supposed to be the only brother of Phyllis, but later, in *The Magnet Library*, we met, through either the same or another "substitute" writer, Archie Howell, who was also her brother. Miss Howell was "good at games, active, strong." We do not, I think, meet her after *Magnet* No. 935. When we were meeting her she was a close friend of Margorie Hazeldene and Clara Trevlyn of Cliff House.

Part 10 Will Appear in the Next Issue

Back Issues of S. P. C. Required

—by R. V. Bennett, 64 Dudley Road, Tipton, Staffs., England: No. 9.

—by Robt. Blythe, 46 Carlton Road, Holloway, London N. 7, England: No. 10.



A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR*

WE ARE INDEBTED to the publishers of the Bunter Books, Charles Skilton Limited, and also to Maurice Hall, who obtained their permission and supplied a photographic copy, for the illustration (page 180) from Frank Richards' latest Greyfriars story, "Billy Bunter Among the Cannibals."

THE DEATH OCCURRED on February 22nd, 1950, of Sir Max Pemberton, author, and first editor of *Chums*. An account of his work appeared in S.P.C. No. 28, July, 1947.

FROM AUSTRALIA we learn that on "Information Please" (3DB, Melbourne) on February 18th last, one of the queries used was "Who was Billy Bunter?" It was sent in by Leon Stone of Gordon, N.S.W., who writes: "This question was a 'sitter'; one of the panel of experts promptly answered, 'The well-known fat boy character who used to appear in *The Magnet*!'"

ANOTHER ITEM from Australia: In the *Hobby Annual* and *Who's Who* (1st year of publication) there are two contributions by Leon Stone. One is on Amateur Journalism, while the other is about "Penny Dreadfuls, 'Dead-

wood Dicks,' Boys' Bloods, and Billy Bunter." In the second article Mr. Stone refers to the three "Old Boys' Books" magazines, *The Collector's Miscellany*, *The Collectors' Digest*, and S.P.C.

WITH THE ISSUE for March, 1950, No. 711, the well-known *Strand Magazine*, published by George Newnes, Limited, London, ceased publication. In the pages of *The Strand* appeared the famous Sherlock Holmes stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling's "Puck of Pook's Hill," H. G. Wells' "The First Man in the Moon," and P. G. Wodehouse's tales of Bertie Wooster and Jeeves. *The Strand* was founded in the year 1891 by Sir George Newnes.

ARTICLES ON THE hobby of collecting "Old Boys' Books" appeared in *Leader Magazine* (London) for February 18th last and in South Africa's *The Outspan* for February 3rd. In the March 10th issue of *The Outspan* there was an account by J. L. Thomas of an interview with Frank Richards. It was accompanied a fine photograph showing Mr. Richards gazing at a copy of *Tom Merry's Annual*. — W. H. G.

*The heading of the Editor's "Chat" in *The Popular* in 1927.

OUR 21st BIRTHDAY PENNY BUMPER NUMBER
A MAGNIFICENT FREE PICTURE PLATE INSIDE!

THE BOYS' FRIEND I
1895 21st BIRTHDAY NUMBER 1916



**DAD'S FIRST NUMBER—TWENTY-ONE YEARS
AGO!**

No. 764 of *The Boys' Friend*, January 29th, 1916:
The 21st Birthday Number

[Facing page 186.]



The Boys' Friend

No. 764, New Series: The 21st Birthday Number

AN OUTSTANDING WEEK for *The Boys' Friend* was that which ended on Saturday, January 29th, 1916, for it marked the completion of twenty-one years of publication. The occasion was celebrated with an enlarged issue, 20 pages instead 16, plus four cover pages, with an added attraction in the form of a "plate" titled "His Deed for the Day," which depicted a Boy Scout stopping a runaway horse. The color-printed cover was by R. J. Macdonald. The extra pages were given over to a complete story, "The Scoutmaster's Honour," by Captain Patrick Carruthers. This might have been a reprint, for the illustrations were by the early *Magnet* artist, Arthur Clarke. The Editor, in his "Den" page, told of his paper's "wonderful history" and named many of the men who had contributed to its success, and there was a message from Hamilton Edwards, the B. F.'s founder and first Editor. Regular contributors to the paper's literary fare at this time were Owen Conquest, Duncan Storm, Maurice Everard, and S. Clarke Hook. Among the artists were R. J. Macdonald, J. Abney Cummings, and E. E. Briscoe.



NOTES BY A READER: 7

I AM REMINDED by the reproduction of *The Boys' Friend* No. 1 (S. P. C. No. 36) that I can find no record in my *vade-mecum* of having subscribed to this publication in my youth. It is true that it started only a year before I ceased my boys' journal activities, for it was in 1896 that I bought my last boys' paper, a copy of *The Boys of England*. After that music became my all-absorbing passion, and "Jack o' Clubs," "The Link Boy," and others lapsed into temporary obscurity.

There must have been something about the old journals which prevented me from destroying them or disposing of them. They remained in a cupboard for many years in brown paper covers, some with no covers, and consequently the first number generally suffered.

I NOTE THAT in No. 1 of *The Boys' Friend* there was an article in which the "penny dreadful" was heartily condemned. In *The Family Herald* of September 17th, 1904, appeared an article on the same subject. The following is an extract:

"There is a wide, wide world of cheap serial stuff which finds its way into the hands and poc-

kets of innumerable boys and girls, and apparently suits many youthful tastes—yet even here some advance on former provision for unripe intelligence is discernible. The rude forefathers of our matchsellers and newsboys revelled in the crimes of 'Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street,' 'Claude Duval, the Dashing Highwayman,' 'Sixteen String Jack,' and such heroes. . . . No doubt from the prim and puritanic standpoint these humble ministers of youthful pleasures are an unmixed curse; perhaps it is truer to fact to regard them as time-killing reading for most and as precursors of the novel, especially the novel of adventure which is so much in demand nowadays. . . . Mr. Augustine Birrell says: 'Literature should be taken seriously, but not too seriously. "Robinson Crusoe" may have sent some boys to sea, Franklyn's "Poor Richard" may have made some boys thrifty, but this is not the usual process of manufacture. Many a gallant soldier has a poor taste in letters. Some of our greatest judges have been partial to the trashiest of literature.'"

FOR A DIFFERENT opinion here is an extract from "The Seven

Curses of London," by "The Amateur Casual," James Greenwood:

"At the present writing I have before me half a dozen of these penny weekly numbers of 'thrilling romance.' . . . They include 'The Skeleton Band,' 'Tyburn Dick,' 'The Black Knight of the Road,' 'Dick Turpin,' 'The Boy Burglar,' and 'Starlight Sal.' . . . The daring lengths these open encouragers of boy highwaymen and Tyburn Dicks will go to serve their villainous ends is amazing. . . . A prosperous member of the gang advertised that buyers of certain numbers would be entitled to a chance of a prize in a grand distribution of daggers (similar to those used by 'Flash Jack' when he pinned a police officer in the small of the back). . . . The poison publishers' first and foremost reliance is on lewdness. Everything is subservient to this."

HERE ARE TWO examples of the prejudice which existed years

ago towards the so-called "penny dreadful." They differ in their sentiments, that from *The Family Herald* at least giving both sides of the question without wholeheartedly condemning them. But James Greenwood apparently could not say anything bad enough about them. He said they relied first and foremost on lewdness. Generally I have found them clean enough, though I have come across one or two examples of lewdness—one of them being "Tyburn Tree."

I wonder what these writers would say if they could read some of the modern novels in which there is not the least pretence of disguising the unclean details. I have heard it argued that writers only put in what is true to life. That may be so, but one would think it totally unnecessary to devote several pages to describing some lewd incident. I fear that the writers' object is to try to make their books "best-sellers" and to be talked about. — HENRY STEELE.

The Story Paper Collector is edited, printed, and published by Wm. H. Gander, P. O. Box 60, Transcona, Manitoba, Canada.

Member: National A.P.A., The Fossils, United A.P.A., U.A.P.A. Alumni, B.A.P.A.

This is an Amateur Magazine and it is mailed gratis to all who request it and who show continued interest by acknowledging receipt occasionally. This issue 236 copies.