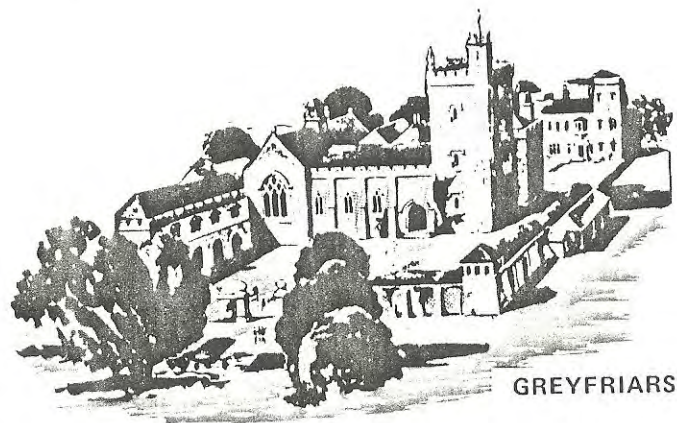


POEMS OF GREYFRIARS

VOLUME 3

KEITH ATKINSON



GREYFRIARS

Bevis
Books



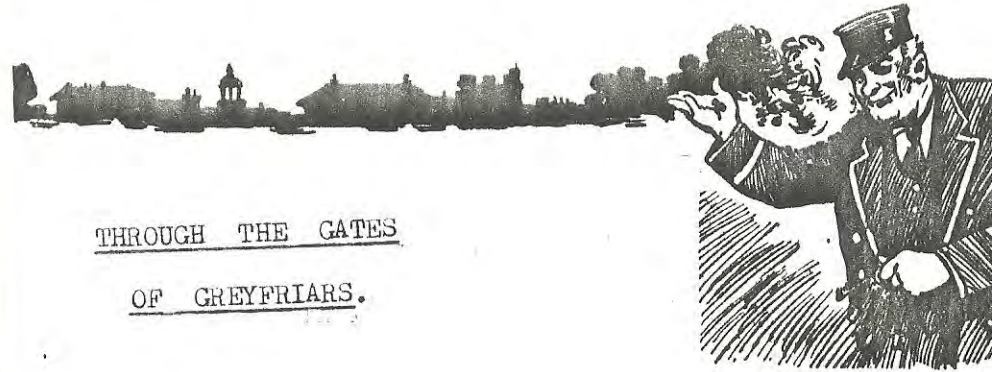
Dedicated to Frank Richards.

'The Master'

This booklet is published in a limited, signed
edition of twenty copies for private circulation,
of which this is number Four.

Keith Atkinson

July, 1992



THROUGH THE GATES
OF GREYFRIARS.

Imagination takes us through
The ancient Greyfriars gate
Where crusty Gosling, in his lodge,
Sits stolidly in state,
And many a tardy boy has dodged
On pain of being late,
And we enter on the land of our delight.

We pass the tuckshop, packed with joys
Of Mrs. Mible's make.
With jam tarts and with doughnuts
Which we can consume in break.
In the centre of the window stands
A large and creamy cake,
And Billy Bunter's mouth drools at the sight.

We cross the quad 'neath stately elms
Where cooling fountain stands,
Enter the House where British boys
And some from foreign lands
Have learned the rules of school and life,
And wisdom at the hands
Of the masters, who can teach them wrong from right.

We reach the Cloisters, quiet and cool.
And see the ruined tower,
The scene of many dramas, and
Indeed it's finest hour
Was when Bob Cherry's barring out
Completely broke the power
Of Vernon-Smith's bad underhanded fight.

Across the way is Little Side
Where matches, hard and keen,
Are played before a cheering crowd
Upon the field of green,
And last ditch goals and cricket hits
Have dramatised the scene
To snatch a win in fading evening light.

We pass Big Side and tennis courts
As back we make our way,
Past the Head's House and his garden
Where we'd dearly love to stay.
But though we pass out through the gates
At the ending of the day,
We may enter in again tomorrow night.



TRAINING COKER.

"This way, you men!" Bob Cherry yelled, and hung precariously with one hand from the crowded train at Lantham, "Get to me! Wharton, Inky, Nugent, Bull, this way old beans!" he urged. His chums pushed through the surging crowd, and on the coach converged.

But others, nearer than the Co., were seeking seats as keen.

"Here's room!" said Coker of the Fifth, "Here Potter!

Come on Greene!"

Bob Cherry stood there like a rock. "Hard luck, all booked," he smiled.

"Don't be a young ass," Coker glared. "Now bunk, or I'll get wild!"

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry, with a grin, "Just run away and play!"

Coker spent no more time in words, and rushed into the fray. Bob, though sturdy, could not hope to stand against the three. He grabbed a heavy bag and smote, and Coker flew back free.

Coker's left fist caught Potter's nose, his right bedimmed Greene's eye.

Two howls awoke the echoes as Bob Cherry called "Bye, bye!" "Pile in you men," Bob chuckled, as the Co. came on the spot. The Famous Five were safe inside, the Fifth Formers were not.

"Young sweeps!" roared Coker, in a rage, and charged as if insane.

Potter and Greene, caressing hurts, moved farther down the train.

Coker hurled into the coach and landed halfway there. His head and shoulders were inside, his legs waved in the air.

Johnny Bull sat on his head, and Bob on shoulders stood. As Coker gurgled in the dust, and thirsted for their blood. A laughing crowd enjoyed the sight of Coker's frantic scene, And Cherry chuckled with delight, "Have you had enough, old bean?"

Coker, with a frantic wrench, had dragged himself away.
A crimson, tousled, dusty heap, in breathless disarray.
His hat, shied from the carriage, landed at the feet of
fags
Who dribbled it and kicked it till it fell apart in rags.

The carriage door was closed and held as Coker struggled
back.

He wrenched the handle, but in vain, and Coker's look
was black.

Five grinning visages looked down as Coker learned his
lesson.

The engine shrieked, the Famous Five were left in sole
possession.



Coker's left fist caught Potter's nose, his right bedimmed Greene's eye.

A MUSICAL MISERY TOUR.

The end of term was close at hand
And plans were in discussion
To celebrate with concert fine,
With drama and percussion.

Wharton would first declaim a role,
A speech from 'Julius Caesar',
And Nugent then could sing a song,
A certain audience pleaser.

Then Johnny Bull would strike a chord
Upon his concertina
With "Ilkley Moor Bah't 'At," by gum!
Or "Greensleeves" sounding greener.

Then Hoskins of the Shell came by
And begged a contribution.
In moment weak the chums agreed,
A fatal resolution!

On concert day the hall was filled
And all began quite seemly.
"Lend me your ears!" Wharton proclaimed,
And Nugent sang supremely.

Then Johnny Bull ground out an air
And Bunter threw his voice well.
He made dogs bark beneath a chair
And Coker gave a choice yell.

But now the climax was at hand
For Hoskins' composition.
The silence soon was shattered by
A sound like nuclear fission.

Volcanic octaves bulged and burst
And diatonics died.
A mass of mangled minims moaned
And committed suicide.

Crotchets were crocheted into chains
And semi-quavers quavered.
Some notes were bluer than the blues,
And some were raspberry flavoured.

Never were ears assaulted by
A noise so cacaphonic.
Cat-wails and cock-crows can't compete
With sounds so supersonic.

The audience sat in silence stunned
Until the agony ended,
And vowed no more to be assailed
By purgatory transcended.

The end of term had seemed more like
The end of all creation,
But Hoskins bowed and vowed to give
His great work to the nation.





Crack! "Whoo - hoo - hooooop!" A roar was heard.

BOWLED OUT.

In Coker's mind was fixed belief
At cricket he was master.
To keep him from the Greyfriars' team
Would be a great disaster.
He watched as Lascelles sent down balls
And vowed he could do better.
Five times had Wingate saved his stumps,
He was in finest fetter.

The match with Rookwood was at hand
And practise now proceeded,
But Coker felt his services
Were desperately needed.
So Coker strode onto the pitch
And begged the final volley,
Though fifty voices roared dismay
And pointed out his folly.

If sportsmaster and County Cap
Could not touch Wingate's wicket,
Could Coker, duffer, chump and clown
Excel the best at cricket?
Larry stared, and then he smiled
But being of good nature
He tossed the ball to Coker's hand
Without undue debature.

Yells of laughter rent the air
But Coker did not heed it.
With one fast ball he'd wreck the stumps
And Greyfriars must concede it.
"He's going to bowl!" Bob Cherry cried,
"You'd better mind your nappers!"
And Wingate grinned as Coker charged,
Arms whirling like the clappers.

Then Coker bowled a cricket ball
Like bullet from a rifle,
Though where it went to none could tell,
Not even with an eyeful.
How even Coker could despatch
In opposite direction
Remains a mystery, but he did,
A fantastic deflection.

Crack! "Whoo - hoo - hoooop!" A roar was heard,
But not a roar of cheering,
As Larry Lascelles rubbed his head
And said things unendearing.
A giant bump rose on his pate,
His face wore dazed expression,
And Coker blinked, his wide, wide cast
Had stopped the cricket session.

He was not given time to think
Before he was surrounded.
How many hands he never knew
And feet upon him pounded,
And hurled him from the cricket field
In wild and whirling fashion,
A gurgling, guggling, gasping heap
Devoid of any passion.



Coker struggled desperately to get his bike to go,
With tousled hair and frowning face he cursed it
high and low.
Bedaubed with oil and grease and dirt, he wrestled
manfully
To raise a spark, a buzz, a roar, but no success
had he.
"Having trouble?" Bunter smirked, and watched with
grimacing face.
Coker glared and raised his fist, and flourished it
in space.
"Get out!" he snarled, at boiling point, as back his
foot he drew,
"I'll boot you three times round the quad," he bawled
and Bunter flew.

Then, more by luck than management, there came a
sudden roar.
The stink-bike rocked, the engine fired, and Coker
smiled once more.
He jumped into the saddle, swerved, and whizzed out
through the gate.
He shot down lanes to Friardale, quite oblivious
of the fate
Of hens and geese, which squawked and fled, shed
feathers in a cloud,
As dust and stones flew from his tyres, and exhaust
rattled loud.
The miles sped by beneath his wheels, and still the
pace it grew,
Defying death and gravity, as onwards Coker flew.

But retribution was at hand. As Coker took a curve
At sixty miles an hour, and was straining every nerve
A flock of sheep blocked up the lane as tightly as
a wedge,
And Coker wrenched the handlebars and soared high
o'er the hedge.

A herd of startled pigs looked on as Coker landed by
And was plastered thick from head to foot with muck
from out the sty.
As he tottered back to Greyfriars all the locals gasped
out "Phew!!!"
And the masters, boys and servants held their noses
as they flew.



BILLY BUNTER'S SNORE.

When night falls over Greyfriars
And the owls hoot in the trees
And the silver stars are twinkling in the sky,
A constant rumble fills the air
Reverberating round
The ancient towers rising up on high.
The distant surf that pounds the shore
Competes with Billy Bunter's snore.

As peace reigns over Greyfriars
In the silence of the night
And the arms of Morpheus hold the world in thrall,
A creeping mouse is startled by
A strange loud grunting sound
As it scuttles round the dark and silent hall.
No mighty lion's jungle roar
Compares with Billy Bunter's snore.

When a storm breaks over Greyfriars
And the lightening rends the sky
And the ancient elms are lashed by wind and rain,
As the tempest and the fury
And the winds which swirl around
Disturb young fags beneath the counterpane,
The crashing thunder pales before
The sound of Billy Bunter's snore.

As dawn breaks over Greyfriars
And the chorus of the birds
Is heard to start without the old grey walls,
Old Gosling tolls the rising bell
And Cherry, with a bound,
Leaps out of bed. In Bunter's ear he bawls,
And dormitory walls no more
Resound to Billy Bunter's snore.

