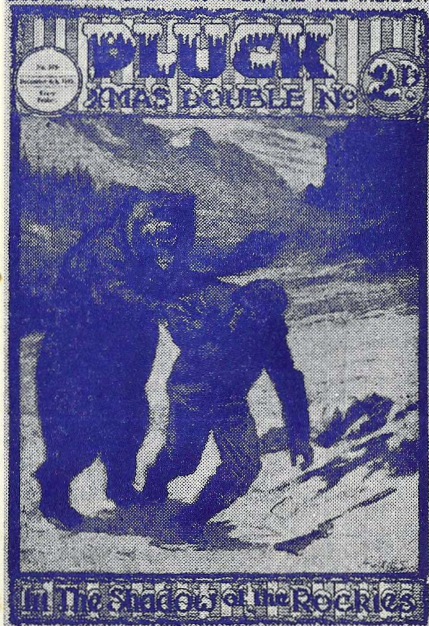


# THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

JANUARY 1955

No. 53 :: Vol. 3

CHARLIE CHAPLIN, CAPTAIN HANDYMAN, TOM MIX,  
WILL SPEARING, CAP'N TIBBS, SEXTON BLAKE,  
GEORGE MARSDEN PLUMMER, ARE ALL INSIDE!!!



The 1915 Christmas Number of *Pluck Library*. See Next Page

## The Pluck Library Christmas No., '15

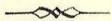
IT is likely that I did not see the 1915 Christmas Number of *The Pluck Library* (No. 579 dated December 4th, 1915) until early in January of 1916. When the "British Mail" which included copies of that number arrived in Portage la Prairie I bought two of them and mailed one to my brother in barracks at Brandon, some eighty miles away. Instead of going direct to Brandon it travelled to England and then back to Canada.

My copy was kept for several years and then vanished with the rest of my first collection. More recently I obtained another copy in near-mint condition. Looking at it, I realize more fully that we will never see the like of those fat Christmas numbers again—though the War had been in progress for sixteen months this *Pluck* double number is as thick as those of a peacetime Christmas: 56 pages plus four cover-pages. A real budget of reading-matter for two humble pennies.

There are six long complete stories, the first instalment of "The Great Cheque Fraud," a Sexton Blake serial, and two seasonable features. It is all very

Christmassy with lots of snow and holly. Two popular *Pluck* characters, Captain Handyman and Detective Will Spearing, are present, along with Cap'n Tibbs, Tom Mix, and Charlie Chaplin.

Altogether a grand, plump Christmas Number—but sad to say it was the last, for *Pluck* met its doom in the paper shortage three months later.



## St. Gerald's Herald Numbers 3, 4, 5, 6

SINCE the publication of No. 52 there have been received from Joseph Meechan copies of Nos. 3 to 6 of his *The St. Gerald's Herald* with further stories of the boys of St. Gerald's College. The titles are: No. 3, "The Outcast of St. Gerald's"; No. 4, "Barred from St. Gerald's"; No. 5, "Craig's Castle Commandoes"; and No. 6, "The Desmond Scholarship." Mr. Meechan found it necessary to take a rest from his activities during the summer but resumed publication with the arrival of autumn. Copies of *St. Gerald's Herald* may be obtained from Joseph Meechan, "The Mount," Kilsyth, nr. Glasgow, Scotland, at 7d. each.

# The Story Paper Collector

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No. 53—Vol. 3

Priceless

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## BILLY BUNTER'S TERRIBLE AFFLICTIONS

By ROGER M. JENKINS

**B**ILLY BUNTER'S career of feigning illness was certainly a long though dishonourable one. A trace of it is to be found as early as *Magnet* No. 163 in which he pretended to have an attack of amnesia similar to the genuine one from which he had suffered three weeks previously, but he succeeded in convincing only Marjorie Hazeldene and Alonzo Todd—and this success was tempered by the fact that Alonzo insisted on pursuing him with Gosling's coke-hammer under the conviction that another blow on the head would restore his memory. At the other end of the scale was the incident in *Magnet* No. 1321 in which he used red ink and a handkerchief to simulate an injury to his hand

which would provide an excuse for not doing an imposition for Mr. Lascelles. This episode was typical of the *Magnets* of the 'thirties, but strangely enough it was that neglected period of *Magnet* history, the early nineteen-twenties, which saw the heyday of Billy Bunter's terrible afflictions.

The first sad infirmity was revealed in No. 682 in which Bunter called a meeting of the Remove for a matter of life and death, at which he dramatically announced that he was getting thinner as a result of food-rationing, and suggested that his untimely demise be postponed by a series of invitations to meals up and down the Remove passage. The Remove were unsympathetic, Mr. Quelch was

definitely scathing in his remarks on the subject, and Dr. Pillbury was even stupid enough to declare that Bunter was overweight! Bunter eventually had recourse to *Dr. Flummox's Fattening Fluid*, a patent medicine which had the strange effect of making him grow thinner than Peter Todd. After a Gargantuan feast, however, followed by a week in the sanatorium, Bunter re-appeared as broad as he was long, as Skinner remarked. The plot of *Thin Bunter* was built on a very slender basis, but it was an amusing triviality.

SEVEN WEEKS LATER saw *Thin Bunter's* successor, *Deaf Bunter*. Mr. Quelch had occasion to rebuke Walker for boxing Nugent minor's ears, and Bunter was interested in his form-master's remarks on the possibility of deafness ensuing. He contrived to get Walker to box his ears, and then pretended to be deaf. Walker was in a cleft stick, and Bunter made the most of the position, borrowing money from him and charging Removites a shilling a time to accompany him to tea in Walker's study. Walker was soon in a fiendish temper, and when the storm broke Bunter had good cause to regret his escapade.

The most amusing story in

this intermittent series was undoubtedly *Bunter's Very Latest* in No. 715. He had read a book entitled *Good Gilbert, the Blind Schoolboy*, and once more he was inspired to feign illness:

"All is dark, sir!" said Bunter, with dramatic effect. "I—I shall never gaze upon the blessed sunshine, sir——"

"What?"

"I—I shall never hear the little birds singing in the woods, sir," continued Bunter pathetically.

"Why not, Bunter? I presume that this concussion has not caused you to become deaf also?"

Bunter started. He was over-doing it, as usual.

"I mean I shall never see the little birds singing, sir," he stammered.

"You would scarcely see them singing in any case, I should imagine," said Mr. Quelch drily. "Will you be kind enough not to talk nonsense to me, Bunter?"

Although Bunter lost that round, he won the next:

Bunter put out his fat hands and began to grope. He groped over Mr. Quelch's writing table, and knocked over an inkpot. The Remove Master uttered a sharp exclamation as a stream of ink shot across the table.

"Take care, Bunter!"

"D—D—Did I touch anything, sir?"

"You have knocked over my ink-pot!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh dear! Sorry sir! I—I can't help being blind, sir," said Bunter pathetically.

Mr. Quelch suppressed his feelings. He rose to his feet, took Bunter by the shoulder, and led him to a chair.

Bunter sat down.

Mr. Quelch was busy for the next few minutes mopping up spilt ink. There was a twinkle in Bunter's eyes as he watched him. Considering that he was blind, he derived a considerable amount of entertainment from watching Mr. Quelch mop up ink.

This venture also ended disastrously, but it was undoubtedly the most entertaining and well-developed theme of all the stories which were written around the subject of Bunter's infirmities.

THERE WAS still some amusing reading to come, however, as No. 787 entitled *Bunter's Latest* was to shew. In that number Bunter saw the Famous Five bestow their liberality upon a dumb beggar, and he was immediately smitten with the idea of

losing the faculty of speech himself. Mr. Quelch was the astonished recipient of a piece of paper bearing the words *I've gone dumm*. Bunter minor also saw possibilities in the same line of business, and wrote down for Mr. Twigg the words *lme dum*. As Charles Hamilton commented in the text:

*Bunter minor's spelling varied a little from his major's, as well as from the spelling of common individuals.*

Dicky Nugent also tried it on, but Mr. Twigg cured him with a dose of the cane, and, later, when the Second-Form master compared notes with Mr. Quelch they decided it was too much of a good thing:

"Now hold out your hand, Bunter."

"I—I—If you please, sir," gasped Bunter, "I—I—I've recovered now, sir."

*Lame Bunter* in No. 806 was the last of the quintet. In that number Bunter was rooted out for cricket practice, and was out for leg before wicket. He immediately pronounced himself to be severely

If you'd like a Volume Two Index—ask for one!



injured, and later rubbed on marking ink to heighten the effect. Dr. Pillbury was, once again, not to be deceived, and this episode, like all the others, ended disastrously. With this story Bunter seemed to have run the gamut of the infirmities, for we heard no more of his sad ailments.

These stories are typical of the *Magnets* of the early nineteen-twenties, amusing and in-

teresting but built round a very slender theme. In later times Bunter's antics of this nature would form only a secondary part of the plot, and would not have a whole *Magnet* tale written around them. But slight though these stories are when compared to the later ones, it must be a very jaded and dispirited person indeed who can fail to be entertained and diverted by the recital of Billy Bunter's terrible afflictions.



## THE EARLY YEARS OF COMIC CUTS

THE FIRST of the Harmsworth comic papers, *Comic Cuts*, commenced publication on May 17th, 1890, and broke new ground in being the first illustrated paper ever to be issued for a halfpenny. It was the beginning of a new era for comic papers. By the time No. 4 appeared, however, it was announced that some newsagents were boycotting the paper, declaring that at a halfpenny it was injuring their trade. But the editor stated that *Comic Cuts* was an extraordinary success; nevertheless it was some time

before the boycott eventually died down. With No. 11 on July 26th came the announcement that

Mr. Gladstone [the Prime Minister] is already one of our most ardent supporters and can often be seen about the grounds at Hawarden, a smile on his lips and a *Comic Cuts* in his hand.

Serial stories did not commence until the arrival of No. 40, February 14th, 1891, when "The Legend of Ivy Towers," by James Woods, started. The serials were short at first, longer

ones following as time passed.

The first settled front page characters appeared in 1897; they were Chokee Bill and the Area Sneaker. Then there were Crusoe and the Fat Bo'sun occupying that position for quite a while in 1901-02. In 1904 Lucky Lucas and Neglected Jim became the front page stars, but only for a little while, though they continued with a long run on the back page, Crusoe & Co. returning for another long run, this time accompanied by a black man called Friday.

**D**URING this period there was a long serial, "The Mystery of Number 13," with no author's name given. Other serials later were "The Hawks of London," "The Mystery of the Red Room," "The Scarlet Butterfly," "The Road to Fortune," "The Book with the

Silver Clasp," "Down the Well," "King of the Waves," "Shadows of London," "The Village Blacksmith," "The House of the Blue Flame," "The Diamond Express," "Slaves of the Red Rock," "99999," "The Work Girl," "The Red Rovers," "Nick o' Midnight," and "Queer Street."

Mulberry Flats commenced as a picture feature in 1906 and had a long run, soon superceding Crusoe & Co. for the front page honours, Crusoe & Co. fading out in 1907. Lucky Lucas and Neglected Jim finished their careers, too, this same year and their place on the back page was taken by Sammy Salt, the Submariner. In 1911 The Ticket-of-Leave Man became the front page star and ran into 1914, with Mulberry Flats moving to the back page along with a new feature, The Comic Cuts Colony.

—ARTHUR HARRIS

## I WISH...

... whatever gods there be  
Would of their mercy offer me  
A Magnet series (three, no  
fewer)

About The Phantom of Loch-  
muir—

Numbers 828-29-30—

I offer fifteen shilling-o!

—Bernard Thorne, 20 Romar

Crescent, Toronto 10, Ontario,  
Canada.

—to purchase copies of *The Thriller* at a reasonable price.—  
Roger Dard, 232 James Street,  
Perth, W. A., Australia.

—to obtain *The Story Paper Collector* Nos. 1 to 21, 25, 28 to 31.—  
D. B. Webster, Waterloo House,  
7 Crosby Road South, Liver-  
pool 22, Lancs., England.

## JOSEPH PARKS

ONCE AGAIN I have to record in these pages the passing of a member of our collecting circle. Word was received late in September from his daughter, Miss P. Parks, of the death in August last of her father, Joseph Parks, of Saltburn-by-the-Sea, Yorkshire.

This was sad news indeed, for I had been in touch with Joe since around 1918, when he was publishing his amateur magazine *Vanity Fair*, which later became *The Collector's Miscellany*, and was active in amateur journalism. At that time he helped to found The Amateur Press Club to fill the void left by the dormant condition, due to the War, of The British Amateur Press Association. In 1919 it was merged with the B.A.P.A.

Joe issued 108 numbers of *Vanity Fair/Collector's Digest* be-

tween 1917 and 1953. Earlier, he produced several numbers of other small amateur magazines. Illness in the earlier months of 1954 convinced him that he would be doing no more printing. Now he is gone, a modest, largely self-taught printer who must have loved the "leaden slivers." He will be sadly missed.

Much of Joe's collection of old boys' papers and books had been disposed of in recent years but I am informed that there are some left that will be available to collectors.

I have one of what must be the very few complete sets of V.F./C.M. in existence—and the fact that it is complete is due to Joe's kindness in the depth of the Hitler war, when he sent me a bound set of Nos. 1 to 12 of *Vanity Fair*, which were all I lacked. —w.h.c.

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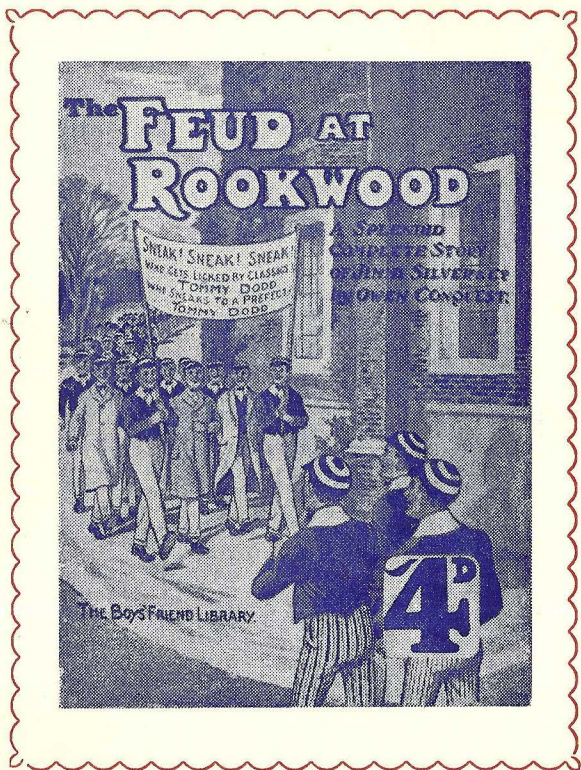
## THE BIG BUDGET

IN the brief account of *The Big Budget* given on the reverse side of the picture in *The Story Paper Collector* No. 50 the number and date of the

final issue are given wrongly. Word has come from Arthur Harris, who knows whereof he speaks, that the last issue was No. 614, dated March 20th, 1909.







Number 413 of *The Boys' Friend Library*, First Series  
See overleaf]

[Facing page 38



## The Boys' Friend Library

No. 413, 1st Series, Published February 1st, 1918

**P**ICTURED overleaf is the only one of how many hundreds?—many of them, anyway—of issues of *The Boys' Friend Library* that contained a Rookwood story. The story, "The Feud at Rookwood," runs to 72 pages plus one cover page, in a type-size that made economical use of the space without threatening the reader with premature blindness. As indicated by the title, the story tells of ructions between the two Houses at Rookwood, winding up with the Classical Fourth team playing, and defeating, the Modern Fourth, with the Classics impersonating a touring Italian football team. On the last cover page is an advertisement reminding us that Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood School appear in *The Boys' Friend* and *The Penny Popular* every week. One wishes they still did.



## THE END PAGES

WITH a more plentiful supply of paper there has come in Britain some activity in the launching of new papers for boys. Hulton's *Eagle* is too successful to warrant mention here, and doubtless The Amalgamated Press's *Lion* and the more recently established *Tiger* are both doing well. None of them is of a type to interest old time readers of such papers as *The Gem* and *The Magnet*. But *School Cap*, issued by Charles Buchan Publications Ltd., should have proved more attractive to them. What can be said of it? The printing, after the first number, was quite good; much better than the stories, which were school stories, and the illustrations. Either the stories were not good enough to gain and hold readers, or those who feel that the day of school stories for boys in periodical form is past are right. For *School Cap* competed for honours as the outstanding failure of 1953, lasting for only ten issues.

A ray of light came from Australia in October of 1953. It took the form of a 36-page magazine, *The Silver Jacket*, edited by A. D. Gorfain and published monthly at one shilling by Beaconsfield Productions Pty. Ltd.,

149 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, New South Wales. A very attractive *Silver Jacket* it is, with its color-printed cover in a silver frame. There are, it is true, picture-features in the mid-20th Century manner; but there are also a serial by Capt. W. E. Johns and stories of Carcroft School by Frank Richards, plus readable and informative articles. *The Silver Jacket* is a grand magazine which I recommend to anyone who would like to re-live, in a measure, boyhood days again.

FROM Llandudno, in Wales, there came some time ago No. 700 of *Interesting Items*, a monthly amateur magazine which Arthur Harris started in 1904 as *Llandudno's Weekly*. It is quite a special issue, as befitted the occasion, though somewhat late. The lag in publishing is due to delays which accumulated during the war and which have not yet been overcome. A run of more than 700 issues, which Mr. Harris has now achieved, over a period of fifty years, is a record of which he may well be proud. Congratulations to the editors, Irene and Arthur Harris, who have more recently published their Golden Anniversary Number, from that comparative newcomer to the a. j.

scene, *The Story Paper Collector*. May there be many more issues of *Interesting Items*.

A CORRECTION—In his article "The St. Jim's Stories in *The Schoolboys' Own Library*" (S. P. C. No. 47) Roger Jenkins lists the numbers of the *Library* that are St. Jim's stories not written by Charles Hamilton. Among them is No. 395, which is incorrect. No. 395 was written by Charles Hamilton. The number should have read 359; the St. Jim's story in No. 359 was not written by Mr. Hamilton. One can only be as accurate as one's sources, and in this instance Roger's source was inaccurate—due no doubt to an inadvertent transposition of figures.

THROUGH the kindness of Bernard Thorne of Toronto I have had the privilege of looking through two copies of *The Magnet Library*, Nos. 297 and 298, which had apparently been used as "copy" in setting the type for an issue of *The Schoolboys' Own Library*. Changes are penned-in throughout both copies—from sovereigns to pound notes, from German master to French, for instance, with whole paragraphs deleted to cut the length to fit the space. Quite interesting, and something rather special in the way of "collectors' items."

FOOTNOTE to p.38: Mr. Parks actually printed exactly 100 nos. of V.F./C.M.; J. A. Birkbeck produced 8 during World War 2.

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### GEMS WANTED

The London O.B.B.C. Library urgently requires the following *Gems* to complete a series: Nos. 742, 747. Please write to the Librarian, Roger Jenkins, "The Firs," Eastern Road, Havant, Hants, England (who would also be glad to obtain Nos. 582 and 586 for his own collection).



### THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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