

THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

JULY 1962
No. 79 :: Vol. 4

THE LOST BUNTER STORY

Referring to the passage in Frank Richards' letter, quoted in *The Lost Books of Bunter* (S.P.C. Number 78) in which it was stated that "Merrett had a Bunter story, which he never published," Tom Hopper-ton writes:

IT CERTAINLY SURPRISED ME TO learn that he sold them [Merrett's] a Bunter story. He did work Bunter in as a day visitor in one tale of the period, but he was still in dispute with the A. P. about the copyright of Greyfriars.

One day later Mr. Hopperton wrote again:

After I posted my letter yesterday, it dawned on me that when I said that it seemed surprising to me that Frank Richards should have sold a Bunter story to Merrett, I was falling into the bad and common habit of talking about *Bunter* when I meant *Greyfriars*. Let me amend it to, in view of copyright argument then proceeding, it would surprise me to

find that he sold a *Greyfriars* story to Merrett.

The full explanation, I think, is that Frank Richards was speaking with more precision than I, and he did sell a Bunter story which, whether he saw it or not, was printed as *Pluck Will Tell*, by Frank Richards, Number 6 in the *Sparshott Series*, 36 pages including a cover, 1/-, and published by William C. Merrett (Publishers) Ltd., 335 City Road, London E.C.1. It was the last of these tales to be published (as far as I could discover) and that perhaps is why Mr. Richards did not receive a copy.

The story is an agreeable trifle about the regeneration of an apparent coward at Sparshott School and covers familiar ground. Bunter enters into it as he did at St. Jim's and Rookwood by dropping in on a couple of day trips. Although a minor character he pulls his weight in the tale—there were never any loose ends in Mr. Hamilton's plotting. —T.H.

THE GROUP PICTURE

I HAD A REAL THRILL when I opened *The Story Paper Collector* Number 78. There, on the centre pages, was a picture of all the people I had worked with before the war! Some of them are a bit difficult to recognise—but thirty years have passed since then.

The war and the paper shortage broke up this group, later. Mr. Jameson, Mr. Home-Gall, Mr. Pierce, Mr. Westfield, Mr. Swainson, Mr. Dodshon—none of these returned. Mr. Dodshon died—he was over eighty. Mr. Swainson, Editor of *Schoolgirl*, left to become a full-time air-raid warden. . . I had a very soft spot for him and for Mr. Home-Gall.

As a new and very nervous illustrator, Mr. Jameson once told me kindly, "All you need is experience." It seems such a hopeless thing to want when one is young. . .

Stewart Pride, the Editor of *School Friend*, is still [at Fleetway House]. He is my favourite editor. I worked for *School Friend* for over ten years. . .

I would like to say "Thank you" to G. R. Samways for his article in vindication of J. N. Pentelow in S. P. C. Number 75. When I began collecting I found I could read some stories over

and over again. Later, I discovered who wrote which stories. All my favourites were written by Mr. Pentelow. I do think, however, that Charles Hamilton was the better writer for youngsters, he having a more simple style.


—E. B. F.

* * *

[We are informed that Stewart Pride is now Editor of the Jack and Jill/Playhour/Harold Hare's Own Paper group.]

Try as we may to avoid errors, it is again necessary to make . . .

CORRECTIONS!

SO . . . WE PUT TEETH into the nineteenth century on page 52! This we could ignore, but there is a more serious error on page 51—just over there —lines 11 and 12 of column 1 should read (in part): *there can be no arguing*, so please read them that way. Pages 51 and 52 were the first two of this issue to be printed, thus making for a very poor start, as regards errors. Our proof-reader would be very severely ticked-off—if he didn't happen to be ourself.

¶ PLEASE NOTE that we are no longer using 317 Bond Street as our mailing address.

The Story Paper Collector

No. 79—Vol. 4

Priceless

DIGGING ROUND THE ROOTS

By TOM HOPPERTON

WHEN A POLITICIAN begins a statement with "There can be no disputing that . . ." or "It is incontestable that . . ." then is the time to sharpen one's wits and ears to spot what it is that he is trying to slip across his audience. Fortunately, there could be no similar reaction to the statement that there can be arguing about what was the culminating peak of the popular school story tradition. It was indisputably the work of Charles Hamilton.

Although he was checked in full career by the malignant Hitler, his output even now and in all its familiarity still staggers the imagination. Probably not even the author himself knows just how many thousands of issues of boys' papers flourished

on his schools and characters. There was nothing before *The Gem*, *The Magnet*, and their companion papers remotely comparing with it, and certainly we shall not see its like again. But how many of the millions who now watch the Bunter television shows realize that the author's activity has covered much more than half the total life span of the school story, and how many have ever given a thought to how such an achievement became possible or on what foundation he reared so striking an edifice?

There would be very few indeed who would not automatically reply "*Tom Brown's School-days*" if asked what was the first school story and, ignoring the muttered protest of the anonymous author of *The Adventures*

of a *Schoolboy* (1826), we can agree that for all practical purposes Tom Brown was the pioneer. The book went through three editions in 1857 and is unique among boys' stories in not having been out of print since.

Hard on its heels came the most derided work in English, *Eric; or, Little by Little*. Whatever the twentieth century may think of Dean Farrar's tale, it was very much a tract for the times, and the nineteenth revelled in it. It reached 28 editions, from which it may be argued variously that *Eric* was not as bad as some of his detractors suggest or that the century's taste was worse. W. H. G. Kingston was on the scene by 1860 with *Ernest Bracebridge; or, Schooldays*, rivalled by a heavy crop of books, sometimes from unlikely places and unlikelier authors, such as the Edinburgh *Schooldays at Saxonhurst*. By *One of the Boys* (Percy H. Fitzgerald) and Mrs. Henry (*East Lynne*) Wood's *Orville College*.

THE CONTRIBUTORS to the boys' journals of that day—as of every other day—were imitative and piratical, and such authors as Mayne Reid and Jules Verne suffered immediately at their hands. Nevertheless, they were singularly slow in turning

to school stories. It must not be forgotten that the only alternative to the scanty handful of boys' papers was the penny dreadful and that most of the authors such as Charles Stevens, the Emmetts, the two St. Johns, and even Kingston himself either served their time in penny number fiction or had to turn to it on occasion to eke out a living. They would be the last to grasp that boys might prefer the classroom to Borneo or the Spanish Main, or that Binks Minor could overshadow Sixteen String Jack, Captain Kydd, and Hawkeye.

Who, then, made the break? Well, for a quarter of a century Hogarth House advertised: *This story claims to be the first school story that ever appeared in a periodical solely devoted to boys*. The story is *The Boys of Bircham School*, serialised from Number 8 of *The Young Englishman's Journal* (8/6/1867), and written by George Emmett, who had the further distinction that his *Tom Wildrake's Schooldays* was the first school tale to appear in penny numbers, and whose last serial has a most familiar ring, as it is *Tom Merry's Schooldays* (*British Boys' Journal*, 1888).

Hard experience makes us cynical of claims in and about boys' papers and this one—alas!—is no more well-founded than

hundreds of others. We can disqualify Brett's candidate, *Who Shall Be Leader?*; or, *The Schooldays of Frank and Hal*, by Vane St. John and starting in Number 1 of *Boys of England* (27/11/1866), as only eight of the 23 instalments deal with school and the rest range over the Napoleonic Wars. The actual first, as far as I can discover, was the anonymous *Recollections of Schooldays* which ran for 19 months in *The Boys' Journal* from November, 1863.

The *Recollections* are most difficult to epitomise. There is a minimum of action heavily interlarded with religious homilies and moral dissertations as crude as anything in *The Fairchild Family*. Adult Victorians delighted in such morbidity as Felicia Hemans' moping over tombstones and the blatant vulgarity of Little Nell's death throes. Their juniors, whether they enjoyed them or not, were subjected to a profusion of such scenes in parentally-approved literature, and even Bracebridge Hemyngham was not above a little gratuitous tear-jerking, as when he tossed a completely unnecessary death bed into the middle of *Jack Harkaway's Schooldays*. The Recollector, however, was positively ghoulish. Considering that the editor-proprietor of *The Boys' Journal*, Charles Perry

Brown, fed his readers on a staple diet of W. S. Haywood, Mayne Reid, and Percy B. St. John, and went on to found and run the Aldine Publishing Company, one can only ask about the *Recollections* the same question as did the comic sailor in *Sweeney Todd* when he found a button in his pie: "Now, how on earth did that get in there?"

Cutting the story as briefly as possible: Tom Mortimer, aged twelve, is sent in 1800 to St. Clothilde (no apostrophe s), arriving just as his elder brother Reggie, the Head Boy, has met with a serious accident. Dr. Bumpus, the Headmaster, selects as Tom's particular friend one Horace Temple, eighteen, a Sixth-former and an embryo local preacher, but Tom finds more attraction in the company of Charley Lister, alias Wildfire, a fifteen-year old so fond of booze and harmony that I began to suspect that it was he who grew up to become *The Volunteer Organist*.

THE SHADOW of Reggie's impending death hangs like a pall over the first half of the story—his death scene spreads over three instalments—and Temple cheers Tom up in the interim by harping on about an "angelic" younger brother who had handed in his bucket

and spade shortly before. Charley's companion on a midnight pub crawl to *The Blue Monkey* falls into a torrent and his body is not recovered, whereon Charley adds to the festivities by poisoning himself and lingering at death's door for a few weeks.

There is a gruesomely detailed flashback of a small boy being roasted to death by bullies, and Sweeney Recollector also polishes off "jolly little Leslie, the pet and plaything of St. Clothilde." The supposedly drowned pub crawler turns up intact, having been washed to sea and held prisoner during several cruises of a smuggling vessel, from which he escapes to bring evidence that hangs the landlord of *The Blue Monkey* as a thief and murderer. A barring out by the bad element is starved into surrender, followed by a jump of three years to close with the murder of a junior by a vicious Sixth-former and another protracted and harrowing death scene.

At least one reader reached the end with a gasp of relief. Almost one-third of the bulk is taken up with "pi-jaw" from Dr. Bumpus, Master Temple, and the author himself, while there is not a breath of humour to blow away the reek of the charnel house. Victorian youths still had much to suffer from stories in

similar vein, including the thousands who were gulled into buying the deceptively attractive titles of A. (for Anne) Bowman such as *Pirate Island*, but for those who confined their reading to the cheaper weeklies the moment of deliverance was at hand.

Recollections was a beginning: it was also—thank goodness!—an end.

GEORGE EMMETT came next, and Emmett was the real foundingfather of the popular school story. He came to them fresh from writing penny bloods for the Temple Publishing Company, and the livelier, more sensational style he introduced drove out the overt moralizing of the pseudo-Eric stuff. From this time on there was a marked divergence in the paths of the weekly serialists and the hard-cover writers—and with these last I lump the contributors to the so-called better-class magazines such as *Routledge's* and *The Captain*. It was failure to recognise this cleavage that led George Orwell hopelessly astray. He said:

All literature of this kind is partly plagiarism. . . . The Gem and Magnet probably owe something to the school-story writers who were flourishing when they began, Gunby Hadath, Desmond Coke and the

rest, but they owe more to nineteenth-century models. In so far as Greyfriars and St. Jim's are like real schools at all, they are much more like Tom Brown's Rugby than a modern public school. . . . But without doubt [see my first paragraph—T.H.] the main origin of these papers is Stalky & Co.

Now this, to put it bluntly, was sheer ignorance on Orwell's part. Charles Hamilton and his contemporaries probably picked up hints from the more authoritative authors, for example, bits of Harrovian slang and school routine from Vachell, but they owed absolutely nothing to the Coke/Hadath/Bird brigade, and might not even have been aware of their existence. They certainly derived from Victorian forbears, who, however, were not Hughes and Kipling but the writers for the Emmett, Brett, and Fox weeklies.

Anyone who is even moderately well versed in any of the popular Amalgamated Press schools, be it Greyfriars, Calcroft, St. Basil's, Wycliffe, St. Frank's, or what you will, can put this to a simple test without having to bother making a detailed analysis of a story. He simply has to read any hard cover story from the most famous to the cheaper efforts put out from 1900 to about 1925 by such firms as

Blackie and Nelson and then ask himself the question: "Would Hamilton Edwards or H. A. Hinton or C. M. Down have published this?" The answer in more than nine cases out of ten will be an immediate and uncompromising "No!"

There is a completely different atmosphere in each of the two classes. The hard-cover men concentrate on what might legitimately be found within the school walls: they are reluctant or unable to stray into the borderlands of credibility.

SERIALISTS with the fantastic output of Henry St. John, Clarke Hook, Sidney Drew, J. N. Pentelow, and, above all, E. S. Brooks and Charles Hamilton would have been crippled by such limitation. To meet the editors' demands for the equivalent of twenty to fifty full-length novels a year, and helped by a rather less demanding audience, they tended to treat the school more as a device for concentrating a larger cast than would be possible in any other locale, to draw characters larger than life and older than their nominal years, to create a private world with its own peculiar manners and customs, and to use sensational and melodramatic plots. They were quite right in doing so—not that they had much

option!—for they were following and developing a long and successful tradition.

The only precedent Emmett had was one he preferred to ignore and, starting from scratch, he succeeded so well that his tales remained in print for close on forty years. Among the readers he impressed it appears we must number Charles Hamilton. The two men had a good deal in common in their early styles, including a keen sense of fun. It is surprising when reading *Tom Wildrake's Schooldays* to find that not only could large chunks of the story have been engrafted bodily in the early *Gem* without anyone being much the wiser, but in effect they *were*, while the parade of such names as Wildrake, Penfold, Skinner, Talbot, Linton, Crump, Doyle, French, Leigh, Devereux, and Wilmott add to the feeling of familiarity.

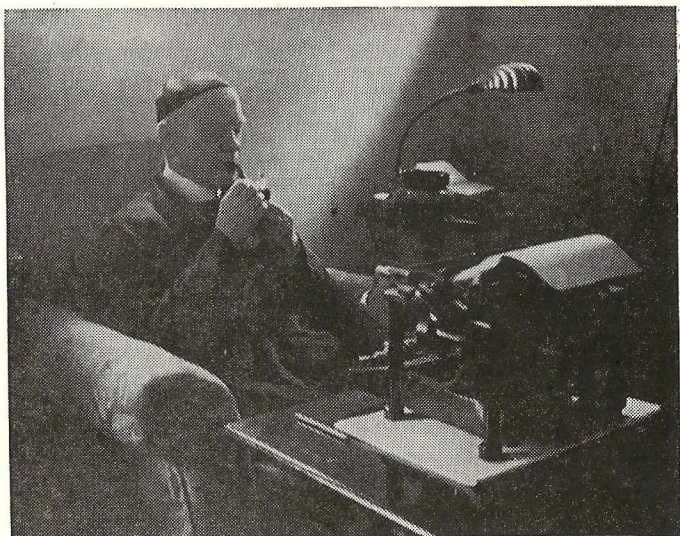
Emmett's initial effort, *The Boys of Bircham School*, which was at least the first school story in a boys' *weekly*, made far-reaching and lasting innovations. He brought in the birch as the sign-manual of this type of story, and it remained such for thirty years through a wondrous array of

Thrashleys, Burchenuffs, Hackems, Lashems, Hackchilds, Ticklehams, Flayhams, and Stingboys almost without end. St. Clothilde, like Rugby, was a public school of some 400 boys. Emmett shifted the scene into the private boarding-school with 30 to 80 pupils and, with the exception of Brett's *Schooldays of Jack at Eton*, there it stayed in the Victorian weeklies, until Talbot Baines Reed's example initiated a reluctant return.

This loss of status in the schools was highly advantageous to the authors. It concentrated the cast into an intimate body and gave the boys opportunities for pranks far beyond those in the more disciplined public school. It permitted the exploitation of pupils and masters who would have had the dogs set on them if they had shown their noses at the gates of Harrow or Winchester. Headmasters ceased to be remote and awe-inspiring Christian scholars modelled on Thomas Hughes' somewhat distorted picture of Dr. Arnold and, more often than not, became flogging brutes or butts for the practical jokes of the irresponsible heroes—or both!

Part Two Will Appear In Number 80





CHARLES HAMILTON

Memories Of a Visit To The Home Of Greyfriars

SOME TEN YEARS AGO I was lucky enough to be invited to meet the writer of the best school stories, Charles Hamilton. It happened in this way: I was on friendly terms with the book publisher, Charles Skilton, who lived within two

miles of my home. Mr. Skilton had been so kind as to lend me some original drawings of illustrations for forthcoming Bunter books, which I photographed, sending some of the prints to Bill Gander for use in *The Story Paper Collector*.

It was about that time that I asked if I might see Charles Hamilton at his home, something which seemed to me only just possible. But Mr. Skilton arranged for me to go one Saturday and visit for a half hour or so, taking my camera with me.

Mavin Haswell, an Old Boys' Book Club member, and I set out on a bright day on my motor cycle, bound for the coast of Kent and the most interesting day of my life. The invitation covered only myself, so I left Mavin at Margate and headed for Kingsgate.

Arriving at Mr. Hamilton's bungalow, which was in an ordinary road of ordinary houses, it seemed strange to think of him living there and turning out his seemingly endless tales. I entered through the double gates, painted green at that time, to the porch-style door and rang the bell. The door was opened by the housekeeper who welcomed me and took me into the lounge. Charles Hamilton rose to greet me, very small and neat in his dark-coloured dressing gown and skull cap.

He asked me if I had a good trip and what I did for a living, and immediately made me feel at ease. As I warmed to his manner I asked about the Greyfriars stories and he, sitting in an armchair, lit his pipe and mused

over his life's work. He said that he only felt his age—then over 70—when he was on his feet, but became seventeen years old when seated at the typewriter. Turning in his chair, he pointed to an old heavy typewriter fitted with the unusual purple ribbon, which anyone who has written to him will know made his envelopes easy to recognise.

I had during a spell of illness a year or two before, created a school, Shafton College, based upon Greyfriars, which was a copy, as close as I could make it, of the real thing. Mr. Hamilton looked at my effort, somewhat amused and perhaps flattered, then with old world politeness nodded approval, letting me down lightly!

IT WAS AT THIS STAGE that I remembered what Mr. Skilton had said: "Don't stay more than half an hour—he gets tired after that." I looked at my watch and finding that about forty minutes had passed, I prepared to excuse myself. My host, however, commented that tea would be served and offered me a cup, which I gladly accepted.

During tea, Mr. Hamilton showed interest in my camera, which was a Mk I Rolliflex of vintage years, and said he would not mind if I took his picture. He sat back in his chair and mused

posed while I took a series of photographs in rather poor lighting conditions. After sitting patiently he asked me if he could look at my camera. He examined it closely, telling me that he used only an old box camera.

I then asked him if he would use the last exposure by taking a photograph of me, which he did quite ably. Regretfully, I had to tear myself away, although Mr. Hamilton was prepared to keep on talking about his books. Mavin and I had a journey of

eighty miles to reach our homes.

That day in my life is a treasured memory which I shall relate to my children with pride.

The photographs, when developed, came out rather thin, but with a negative intensifier I was able to get a print which I enclose with this article in case it can be reproduced.

—MAURICE HALL

[The print proved to be suitable for reproduction and appears on page 57, printed by The Transcona News from a Scan-a-graver plate.]

GREYFRIARS STORIES IN THE BOYS' HERALD

By W. O. G. LOFTS

IF ANY READER were to ask me the most amusing Greyfriars story that I had ever read, it is probable that I would say *Bunter's Cheque*. The knowledgeable Hamiltonian may exclaim, "I don't recall that story in *The Magnet*," and he would be correct. The story I refer to appeared in 1921 in *The Boys' Herald*, which paper was a continuation of the new series of *The Greyfriars Herald*.

That competent Hamiltonian writer, Roger Jenkins, several

years ago wrote for *The Story Paper Collector* Number 63, July, 1957, a very informative article entitled *Jack Drake's Schooldays*, starting with Drake's early days at St. Winifred's aboard the anchored ship *The Benbow*, his later adventures when *The Benbow* put to sea as a school ship, and finally his short career at Greyfriars until he left to become assistant to Ferrers Locke, the detective. It is not my intention to cover the same ground again, but to spotlight

for the first time those short Greyfriars stories that appeared in *The Boys' Herald*, all of which with one exception were written by Charles Hamilton.

Jack Drake and his chum Dick Rodney were met by Harry Wharton on their arrival back in England. They were to spend Christmas with him at Wharton Lodge. This was related in the Christmas number of *The Magnet* for 1920, *Harry Wharton's Trust*. For some reason, many Hamiltonians have thought that this was a substitute story; it is admittedly a rather run-of-the-mill type of yarn.

Drake and Rodney arrived at Greyfriars in *The Boys' Herald* Number 62, dated January 1st, 1921, and the next two yarns concerned their search for a study. The main theme of the following stories seemed to be a series of feuds between Drake and prominent members of the Remove: Bolsover, Wharton, Vernon-Smith, and Nugent—the latter, of course, in connection with the misdeeds of his young brother Dicky. There were some excellent short amusing stories between the others. The only story not written by Charles Hamilton was *Wun Lung's Pie* in Number 87. This, according to information received, was by Arthur Aldcroft, one of the sub-editors on the paper.

JACK DRAKE DEPARTED from Greyfriars in Number 90 after 28 stories, leaving Dick Rodney behind him. The mystery is, why Rodney after this time—with one or two exceptions by substitute writers—was never mentioned again in the stories. On this point I fully agree with Roger Jenkins, that it was wrong to drop the character without a word of explanation. Mr. Hamilton replied to my inquiry on this question and for the interest of readers it is given here:

Dick Rodney had, in my opinion, outlived his usefulness, and there seemed no point at all in adding one more to the already numerous inhabitants of Greyfriars.

Although what Mr. Hamilton said is true, I still think that if he had just mentioned in a few lines that Rodney had left Greyfriars, perhaps that he had gone back to St. Winifred's, a great deal of mystery and readers' queries to the *Magnet* office would have been avoided.

In 1939 when original stories of St. Jim's were again being written for *The Gem* by Charles Hamilton under his "Martin Clifford" pen-name, many of the Jack Drake Greyfriars tales were reprinted in that paper. Collectors who may be unable to obtain copies of the rare *Boys' Heralds* could not do better than

get the last year of *The Gem*—though the really classical series about Jack Drake's feud with Vernon-Smith has never been reprinted.

It is probable that R.C.Hewitt and Arthur Aldcroft, Editors of *The Gem* and *The Magnet* under C. M. Down, thought the same

as I do about the excellence of *Bunter's Cheque*: it was the only one of these *Boys' Herald* Greyfriars stories to be reprinted in a later *Holiday Annual*.

The following complete list of stories and reprints will, I hope, be of assistance to Greyfriars collectors.

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**Greyfriars Stories in *The Boys' Herald*,
January 1st to July 16th, 1921**

<i>Original appearance in B.H.:</i>	<i>Reprinted in The Gem:</i>
62—How Jack Drake Came to Greyfriars. <i>Single story.</i>	1650—Jack Drake at Greyfriars.
63—The Fight for the Study.	1651—The Study-Jumpers.
64—The Greyfriars Lunatic. <i>Two stories: Drake and Rodney in search of a study.</i>	1652—The Greyfriars Lunatic.
65—The Biter Bit.	1653—Coker's Catch.
66—Dupont, the Peacemaker. <i>Two stories: Drake's feud with Bolsover.</i>	1654—Foes of the Remove.
67—Wharton's Sandringham Hat.	1655—Jack Drake's Hat-Trick.
68—Shoulder to Shoulder. <i>Two stories: Drake's feud with Wharton.</i>	1656—From Foes to Friends.
69—Fishy's Football Syndicate. <i>Single story; not reprinted.</i>	
70—Pulling Bunter's Leg. <i>Single story.</i>	1657—Pulling Bunter's Leg.
71—Skinner's Scheme Squashed. <i>Single story.</i>	1658—Skinner's Revenge.

Original appearance in B. H.:

Reprinted in The Gem :

72—Dragging in Drake.

73—The Bounder Out-classed.

74—The Rival Ragers.

75—Drake Under a Cloud.

76—False Accusation.

77—The Finger of Scorn.

78—The Price of Silence.

79—The Bounder's Confession.

80—The Bounder's Atonement.

81—A Greyfriars Mystery.

82—Solving the Mystery.

11-story series: Drake's feud with Vernon-Smith; not reprinted.

83—Boy Wanted.

Single story; not reprinted.

84—Looking for Trouble.

1661—His Black Sheep Brother.

85—The Coward's Blow.

1662—The Boy Who Wouldn't
Fight.

86—Nugent Minor's Luck.

1663—The Fag's Fear.

Three stories: Drake's feud with Frank Nugent.

87—Wun Lung's Pie.

Substitute story by Arthur Aldcroft; not reprinted.

88—Bunter's Cheque.

Reprinted in 1929 Holiday Annual as Chequemate.

89—Jack Drake, Detective.

90—Drake Wins Through.

Two stories: how Jack Drake left Greyfriars; not reprinted.

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Later Boys' Herald stories:

122—Who Was the Man?

123—From the Shadow of Death.

Two stories: Drake returns to Greyfriars; not reprinted.



COMMENT ON SOME VERY EARLY MAGNETS

By GEORGE C. FOSTER

RECENTLY I CAME into possession of about 80 copies of *The Magnet* published between 1910 and 1913. It is a notable collection. Many of them I had read before, although a very long time ago, and it was interesting to compare them to the more recent writings of Frank Richards.

The first at which I looked, Number 144, published November, 1910, brought Sammy Bunter to Greyfriars. He went into the Second Form, the master of which was Mr. Kelly, who never seemed in subsquent Greyfriars history.

The next issue I read was largely devoted to Alonzo Todd, a character I liked but who disappeared in later years. Readers will doubtless remember Alonzo and his Uncle Benjamin, whose precept to his nephew, always to make himself useful, caused such havoc on many occasions.

In July of 1911 came the story *Bob Cherry in Search of His Father*. Major Cherry was on his way back to his regiment in India when his ship was wrecked in

the Red Sea. The ship's boat in which he got away had not been reported anywhere, so Bob Cherry and his friends, with Mark Linley and Fisher T. Fish, went to the Red Sea to search for him. There they were attacked by Arabs, and later rescued from savages on the African coast. The boys, of course, found Major Cherry.

Number 181, *Saved From Disgrace*, published under the date of July 29th, 1911, is a great story. It relates how the Head, Dr. Locke, was in debt to Mr. Vernon-Smith, father of the Bounder, to the extent of £3000. He could not pay and, if he did not, he and his family would be ruined. (The Head's family also seemed to disappear in later years.)

The Head had expelled Vernon-Smith, after he had been brought back to the school by P. C. Tozer, having been found in Courtfield the worse for drink. Mr. Vernon-Smith said that he would ruin the Head if his son was not given another chance, and Dr. Locke refused. Bob Cherry was instrumental in

saving the millionaire and his son from being killed on the railway and Mr. Vernon-Smith, in gratitude, offered him any reward, in reason, he cared to ask. Bob refused any reward, but was told that the offer still stood, Mr. Vernon-Smith being "a man of his word."

A little later Bob Cherry met Solly Lazarus and told him what had happened. Solly suggested that as a reward Bob should ask the millionaire to give up his hold on Dr. Locke.

Bob Cherry claimed the reward and when Mr. Vernon-Smith hesitated, reminded him that he had said he was a man of his word. Then the millionaire took the documents which bound the Head and asked for a match. His son protested and was told to be quiet. The father burned the papers, told the Head that he now had no hold over him, and called his son to leave with him.

Dr. Locke called to Mr. Vernon-Smith to stop and told him that, after what he had done, he could not expel his son from Greyfriars: "*I trust that there may be lurking in his nature some trace of the good qualities that I have observed in his father!*"

In Number 184, *The Schoolboy Millionaire*, Lord Mauleverer arrived at Greyfriars. He was disturbed that his coach and four

was not at Friardale Station as ordered, to take him to the school—a nice period touch, followed by another when he tipped the porter a sovereign! A little later he hired a car to take out Harry Wharton & Co., planning a tour. It could, he observed lightly, "*be done for about fifty pounds!*"

Number 190, *The Outlaws of the School*, contains the historic story of how the Remove fought successfully to establish their right of not being fagged.

NUMBER 200, *Wingate's Folly*—the Christmas Double Number of 1911 at the price of twopence—relates how Wingate fell in love with Paula Bell, who was playing Little Red Riding Hood in the Courtfield pantomime, and how, like most men in love, he tended to neglect everything else, such as his duties as head boy and prefect, and his football, while the infatuation lasted.

In Number 205, *The Duffer's Double*, in January of 1912, we first meet Peter Todd, who was destined to outlive his cousin, Alonzo, in the stories.

Number 241, dated September 21st, 1912, brought in Coker Minor who, to his elder brother's horror, was, despite his age, placed in the Sixth Form because of his superior knowledge.

The next issue, Number 242, *The Greyfriars Insurance Company*, related Fisher T. Fish's scheme to insure his school-fellows, by punishment policies, against canings, lines, detentions, etc. This, incidentally, was the subject of some correspondence in the London *Daily Telegraph* a few months ago, when there was a report of such happenings in a real English school, and older readers immediately referred to Fishy's idea.

The following story, Number 247, *Top Dog*, begins a series relating a contest in which Vernon-Smith waged war against Harry Wharton & Co. It was followed by Number 248, *The Bounder's Triumph*, Number 249, *The Greyfriars Crusaders*, and then by Number 250, *Sacked from the School*.

In this story Vernon-Smith first tried to sow dissention amongst Harry Wharton and his friends by suggesting to Hurree Singh that he was being ousted from the Famous Four by Johnny Bull. Hurree Singh was not taken in and after consultations with his friends the Famous Four became the Famous Five by adding Johnny Bull to their number.

Then Vernon-Smith turned his attention to Frank Nugent. He contrived to make him believe that his minor had gone to

The Cross Keys and Nugent followed to take him away. His brother was not there, of course, and on coming out Vernon-Smith further contrived that he should be seen by Mr. Quelch and Wingate. He could not explain that he had gone after his brother, and was expelled.

IN NUMBER 251, *A Schoolboy Renegade*, Johnny Bull was the victim. The Bounder arranged that Bull should be found in a fight with Bulstrode and he was warned by Mr. Quelch that he must cease such conduct. Vernon-Smith egged Bull on to attack him, then pretended to be unwell and to faint, and was found by Mr. Quelch. In view of his disregard of Mr. Quelch's warning, Bull was expelled.

Mark Linley, a friend of the Famous Five, was next victim in Number 252, *Mark Linley's Last Fight*. There was an examination Linley had to pass if he was to be given enough funds to enable him to remain at Greyfriars. Vernon-Smith had a false telegram sent to him on the eve of the exam, reading that his (Linley's) father was ill, and would he come home at once. Linley went home and missed the examination. At home, he found his father well, but there was now no money for him to stay at Greyfriars.

Then comes Number 253, *Drummed Out of Greyfriars*, the Christmas Double Number for 1912. A South American named Diaz had been tricked out of his shares in a mine by Mr. Vernon-Smith's taking advantage of the man's lack of English to get him to sign documents he did not comprehend. He came to the son and asked him to use his influence to get a hearing with the father, but with no success. We are told: *Vernon-Smith was a chip of the old block, if anything, more unfeeling and unscrupulous than his father.* It is odd how, in later years, the characters of both of them altered so much for the better.

On this occasion Vernon-Smith had a quarrel with Wharton outside the school. Wharton knocked him down and left him. The Bounder then encountered Diaz who, maddened by his wrongs, hit him with a stick and knocked him unconscious. He was found and taken to the school, where he placed all the blame for his condition on Wharton, who was expelled.

Finally we come to Number 254, *Bob Cherry's Barring-Out*, a story which is well-known and copies of which are much in demand. It was Bob Cherry's turn to fall victim and he was

expelled, but refused to go. With Hurree Singh he barricaded himself in the old tower by the school, sending messages to Bull and Wharton who joined him, holding out against all comers.

Then Mr. Vernon-Smith came to the school with the news that Diaz had been arrested and had confessed to attacking his son. This gave everything away and Vernon-Smith admitted the whole plot. He pleaded that he should not be expelled as it was his own father who had inadvertently revealed the facts against him. Dr. Locke consented and he was flogged instead. The others returned to the school, Dr. Locke starting a special fund to reinstate Mark Linley.

THEY ARE PLEASANT STORIES, as lively as they always were and destined to continue so for many years. The boys then wore Eton suits—I think the change in attire was some time in the 'twenties. The women's costumes are those worn before the First World War; far more than those of men they changed after that conflict. Yet, despite long skirts, gold sovereigns from rich uncles, and horse-carriages, the stories, wonderfully, "date" very little, if at all.



Edna Hyde McDonald

MARCH 2, 1962

QUEEN MOTHER of Amateur Journalism, the personal friend of many of the renowned giants in the hobby, a devoted participant of amateur gatherings near and far, whether a late-hour *soiree* or a gala reunion.

Publisher of *Bellette*, she carried on an enormous correspondence with amateur journalists of all distinctions. She was especially generous with succinct notes of praise, encouragement or criticism to beginners in the hobby if she noted in their writings or printing a faint glimmer of individuality and promise.

She once wrote of Ernest A. Edkins, a publisher, critic and poet of considerable note: "We have had no one else like him in the entire history of amateur journalism. We shall not see his like again." Transposing the gender of her thought begets a perfect epitaph for our Vondy.

—MILTON GRADY

—Reprinted from *Gradylogue*, March, 1962.

David Harrison

APRIL, 1962

MEMBERS of the London Club have been shocked to learn of

the sudden death of David Harrison in tragic circumstances, which occurred when mountaineering in Northern Scotland.

David had been a winter member of the [Old Boys' Book] Club, having devoted the summer months exclusively to cricket, and had just qualified as a member of the M.C.C. He was a great admirer of Charles Hamilton's work, a discriminating collector and, in conversation, a penetrating critic. His dry sense of humour which was coupled with a steady enthusiasm will be sadly missed at future meetings. Our deep sympathy is extended to Mrs. Harrison, so untimely widowed less than a month after her marriage.

—ROGER JENKINS

—Reprinted from *The Collectors' Digest*, May, 1962.

Horace Roberts

MARCH 19, 1962

MEMBERS of the London Old Boys' Book Club learned with regret at their March meeting as guests of Horace Roberts that their host had suffered a heart attack and was too ill to attend. Grievously ill though he was, he managed to speak to a few members over the telephone. Less than two days later Mr. Roberts was dead. His passing is a great loss to the London Club,

for he was a man of keen enthusiasm and took a great interest in all the various activities. Mr. Roberts, a retired civil servant, was the Club's Nelson Lee Librarian.

—Adapted from *The Collectors' Digest*, April, 1962.

GLANCING THROUGH the 25 issues in Volume 1 of *The Story Paper Collector* we see there were three occasions to print obituary notices, and one was a flashback to an earlier year. In the first four issues of Volume 4 we have six such notices. The sad duty of printing these comes more often, largely because we are all 17 to 21 years older than we were when the numbers in Volume 1 were being printed.

Being an amateur journalist as well as an old boys' books collector, we have a wide circle of friends in each of the two groups. Just as we are setting type for this page we learn of the death of Edward F. Daas, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, long-time Secretary of the United Amateur Press Association.

—W.H.G.

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THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Edited, printed, and published by
William H. Gander, 202 Yale Ave. W.,
Transcona 25, Manitoba, Canada.

This Issue 315 Copies.

The Rylcombe Grammar School Stories

READERS OF *The Story Paper Collector* Number 78 may have been a little puzzled: in *The Lost Books of Bunter* a passage is quoted from a letter written by Charles Hamilton in which he states that he never wrote under the name "Prosper Howard," but added that some of his stories were printed under that name. In Mr. Lofts' Tribute to Mr. Hamilton it is stated that he [Mr. Hamilton] wrote the first few of the Rylcombe Grammar School stories for *The Empire Library*.

What Mr. Hamilton no doubt meant was, we imagine, that the "Prosper Howard" pen-name was not his, although, as he wrote, some of his stories were printed under it.

We are authoritatively informed that "Mr. Down clearly remembers Charles Hamilton writing the first few stories . . . and that later he [Mr. Down] and H. A. Hinton had to step in and supply the stories themselves."

Among others who wrote Rylcombe Grammar School stories later, under the "Prosper Howard" pen-name, were, we are informed, H. Clarke Hook and John Nix Pentelow.