



Bunter in Bankruptcy!

By Tom Brown

*An Amusing Story
of Greyfriars.*

NOTICE!

A meeting of the creditors of WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER will be held in the Junior Common-room at 8 o'clock. The debtor will be publicly examined as to his means, and every effort will be made to induce him to settle up.

(Signed) PETER TODD,
Official Receiver in Bankruptcy.

THAT rather grim announcement—grim so far as William George Bunter was concerned—attracted quite a crowd of fellows to the notice-board.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "This is a new stunt of Toddy's. He's going to make Bunter square up his debts."

"He'll have a job!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Bunter will plead poverty."

"But the creditors will demand their pound of flesh," said Nugent. "If they can't get it in cash, they'll take it out of Bunter's fat hide!"

"We certainly will!" growled Johnny Bull. "I happen to be one of Bunter's creditors. In a moment of weakness I lent him tuppence."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fat and ludicrous Bunter owes me a

bobful shilling," said Hurree Singh. "I advancefully lent it to him last term."

"You can say good-bye to that bob, Inky," said Bob Cherry. "It's lost and gone for ever, like the fair Clementine. Personally, I'm not a creditor of Bunter's—I've got too much sense to lend him money—but I shall toddle along to the meeting. It will be great fun, to hear Toddy cross-examine Bunter as to his means."

"Yes, rather!"

Quite a lot of fellows declared their intention of going to the meeting. Most of them were creditors of Billy Bunter. As a rule, they had hardened their hearts, like Pharaoh of old, when Bunter requested a little loan. But there had been moments of weakness, as Johnny Bull expressed it, when they had put their hands in their pockets and befriended the impecunious Bunter.

Harry Wharton had once lent Bunter a shilling, for the purpose of getting rid of Mark Linley, who had lent the fat junior six on the express understanding that it be paid back when Bunter's postal order arrived. But that postal order was far from the end of the world. Its arrival was being predicted, but it never came!

Bolsover major had lent Bunter a halfpence. Such a trifling transaction have been forgotten by most fellows, but Bolsover hadn't forgotten. He had been "broke" at the moment, and had to go to the meeting and reclaim his halfpence.

Fisher T. Fish, the cute Transatlantic junior, had lent Bunter a bad shilling. He now intended to reclaim a good one! But Fisher T. Fish—like the rest of Bunter's creditors—was likely to be unlucky.

Shortly before eight o'clock, a steady stream of fellows wended their way to the Junior Common-room.

Peter Todd was already there, seated at the big desk, and looking very officious and important.

When the first stroke of eight boomed from the clock-tower, all Bunter's creditors were present; and also a good many fellows who were not creditors, but mere "lookers-on in Vienna."

But there was one notable absentee. William George Bunter was missing.

"Where's Bunter?" inquired a score of voices.

"Skulking in some corner, I expect," said Peter Todd. "Go and find him, somebody!"

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull promptly set out on the track of the missing debtor. They went first of all to Bunter's study, but drew blank. Then they explored the tuckshop, and the gym, and the library, in turn. But there was no sign of Bunter.

"He can't have gone out of gates," said Bob Cherry. "Let's try the box-room."

At first glance, the box-room appeared to be untenanted. But a sound of quick breathing behind a large trunk caused Bob Cherry

to make a sudden dart in that direction. Bob's hand grasped the fugitive by the collar, and Billy Bunter was hauled into view.

"Got you, my fat tulip!" said Bob. "Are you coming quietly, or shall we frog-march you to the Common-room?"

"Leggo, you beast!" roared Bunter. "I'm not coming!"

Bunter pleaded and protested as he was whirled to the door.

"I say, you fellows, hold on—I mean, leggo! Don't take me in front of that mob in the Common-room. Goodness knows what they'll do to me! They make out I owe them money, but that's all rot. I don't owe anybody anything—honest Injun!"

But it was useless for Bunter to pose as the Village Blacksmith, who "looked the whole world in the face, for he owed not any man."

"You owe me tuppence!" said Johnny Bull grimly. "And

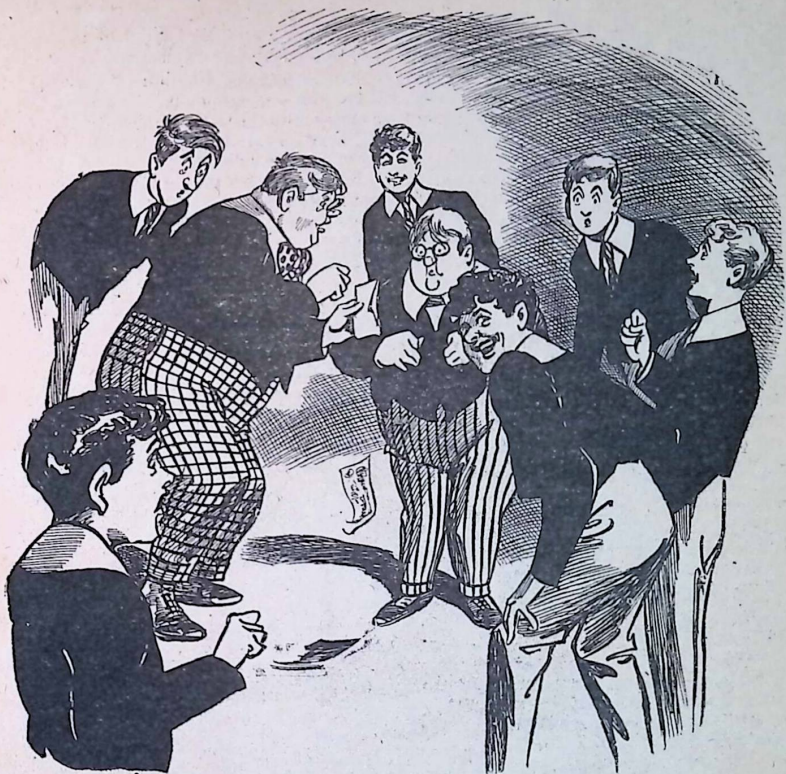
there's about two dozen creditors, besides myself. They mean to have your money or your life. Come on!"

Bunter "came on"—unwillingly enough—until he reached the Common-room. He was bundled into a chair; and Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull stationed themselves on either side of him, and acted as warders.

Peter Todd, in his capacity of Official Receiver, promptly got to business.



"Leggo, you beasts!" roared Bunter. "I'm not coming!" But Billy Bunter protested in vain.



All eyes were on Bunter as he tore open the envelope. And then—wonder of wonders—a postal order fluttered out. A postal order for ten shillings! "Well, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Who said the age of miracles was past?"

"William George Bunter!" he said sternly. "I understand you have filed a petition in bankruptcy."

"What rot!" said Bunter. "How could I file a petition, when I don't possess a file?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" rapped out Peter Todd. "You have filed a petition in bankruptcy, and a meeting of your creditors has been duly

called. I now propose to examine you as to your means. Your total debts, I might mention, amount to nine-and-tence. You have borrowed various sums from various persons at various times, and you have never paid back a penny. Now, please understand that I want the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. What are your present means?"

"Nix!" said Bunter briefly.

"Have you any banknotes about you?"

"Wish I had!"

"Do you own any private property?"

"Well, I'm the heir to my pater's vast estates—"

"Cut it short! Have you any property, here at Greyfriars, that your creditors can distrain upon?"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Turn out your pockets!" commanded Peter.

Billy Bunter obeyed. And a surprising collection of articles was brought into view. There was a penknife, and a lawn-tennis ball, and a mouth-organ, and a packet of chewing gum, and a fountain pen, and a silver pencil.

"Gentlemen!" said Peter Todd, addressing the creditors, "you are in luck's way! The debtor has no cash, but he seems to possess quite a lot of property, which I will proceed to share amongst you."

"But it's not Bunter's!" hooted Johnny Bull. "That penknife belongs to me!"

"Faith, an' that's my mouth-organ!" yelled Micky Desmond.

"And my tennis-ball!" roared Redwing, rising up in wrath.

"I guess the fat clam has sneaked my chewing gum!" shouted Fisher T. Fish.

There were also claimants to the fountain pen and the silver pencil. Apparently, Bunter had borrowed all these articles—without their owners' permission!

Peter Todd frowned, and ordered that the borrowed property should be immediately restored to its owners. Then he turned again to Bunter.

"Have you nothing to offer your creditors, in cash or in kind?"

"You know I haven't, Toddy! But I'm expecting a postal order—"

"Tell me the old, old story!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"And when it comes," continued Bunter, "I'll square up with all my creditors. Matter of fact, I'm expecting a remittance by to-night's post, from one of my titled relations."

A storm of derisive remarks greeted Billy Bunter's statement. Nobody had any belief in his postal order, nor in his titled relations.

"Well, gentlemen," said Peter Todd, with a sigh, "it looks as if you'll have to go empty away. Debtor has no means, either in cash or in kind."

"Then we'll take it out of his hide!" roared Bolsover major. "We'll give him such a record bumping that he'll never try to borrow money again!"

"Collar him!"

Billy Bunter had passed through the stages of uneasiness and alarm to that of positive panic. He glanced wildly around him, but there was no loophole of escape.

If only something would happen now, at the eleventh hour, to rescue him from his unhappy plight! If only the Head would come in, or Mr. Quelch—

And then came the dramatic moment of deliverance!

The door of the Common-room burst open, and Sammy Bunter rolled in.

"I say, Billy!" exclaimed the fat fat, "here's a letter for you! I found it in the rack."

"Hold on a minute, you chaps," said Peter Todd, "give him a chance to read his letter."

All eyes were on Bunter as he tore open the envelope. And then—wonder of wonders—a postal order fluttered out! A postal order for ten shillings!

The stupefied silence was at last broken by Bob Cherry.

"Well, my hat!" gasped Bob. "Who said that the age of miracles was past? A postal order for ten bob! Bunter can cash this in the morning, and square up with his creditors. If he doesn't—"

Next morning, the postal order was duly cashed, and Bunter's creditors received their just due.

All that was left for Bunter was the princely sum of twopence, with which he procured one solitary jam tart.

There was weeping and gnashing of teeth on the part of the fat junior. But he had this consolation. For a short time, at least, he could look the whole world in the face, for he owed not any man—or boy, either!

THE END

A Page of Portraits



Popular Favourites at Greyfriars



- ① Harry Wharton
 ② Bob Cherry, ③ Frank Nugent,
 ④ Hurrez Singh, ⑤ Billy Bunter,
 ⑥ Johnny Bull ⑦ Lord Mauleverer,
 ⑧ Dicky Nugent. ⑨ Dick Penfold ⑩ Mark Linley