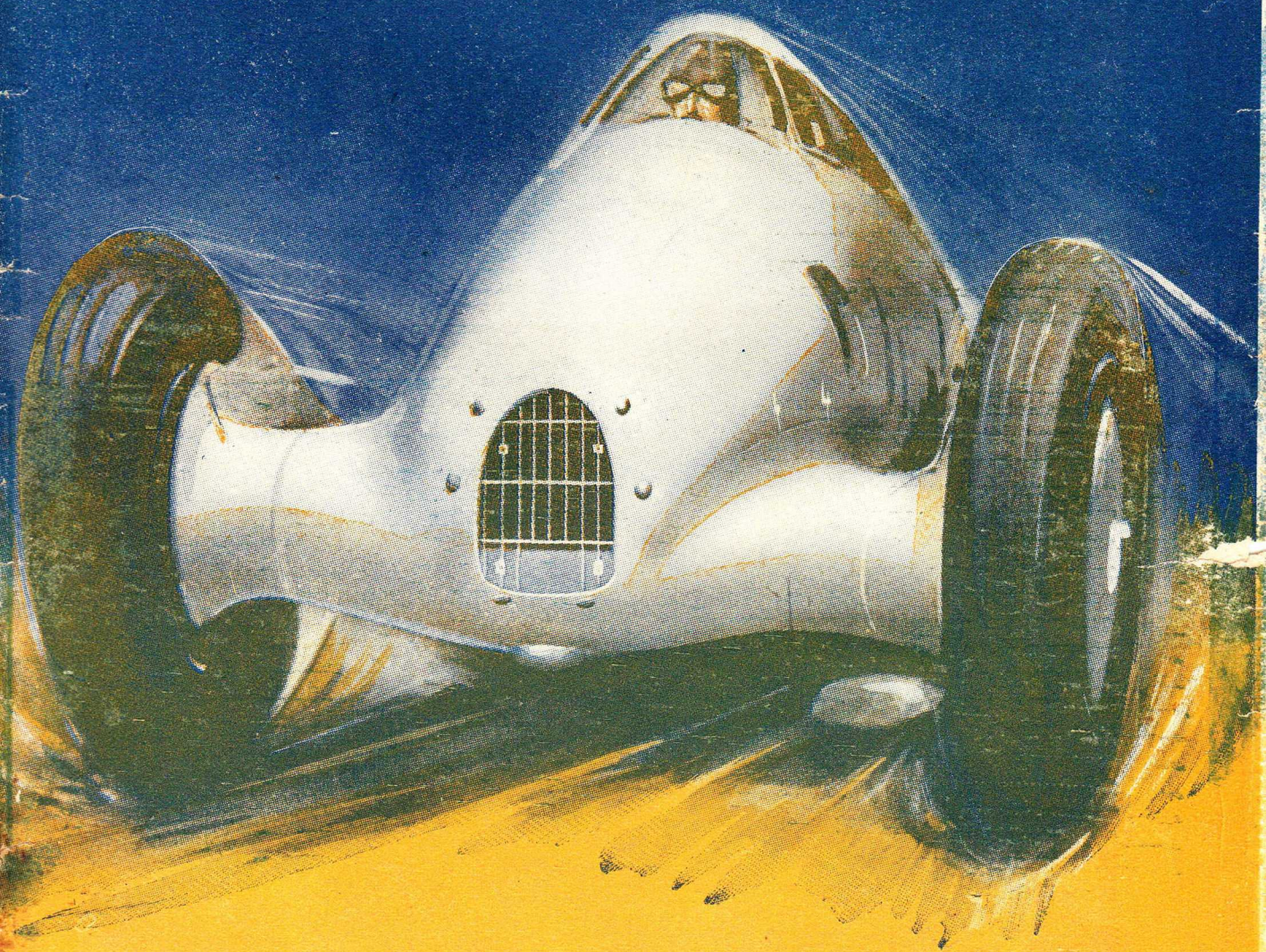


The MODERN BOY

EVERY SATURDAY *Week* Ending JUNE 15TH 1935
N° 384 VOL 15

2^D



200 MILES AN HOUR *on the Road!*

THE DANDY PAINTER!

*The Dandy of the SCHOOL FOR SLACKERS is on the War-path again
against his old enemy the Live-Wire Head!*

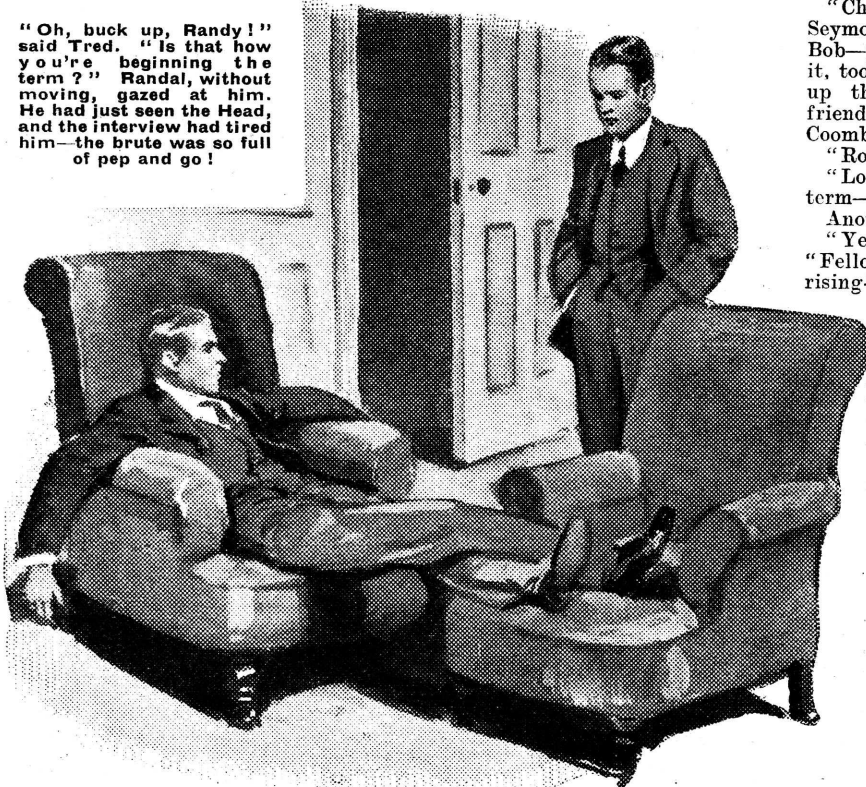
"I'm Backing McCann!"

"THE cricket matches—" Bob Darrell paused. There was silence and a sort of chill in the atmosphere. It was not encouraging.

Bob Darrell was the keenest cricketer at High Coombe—or, to be more exact, he was the only senior man at that school who was keen on cricket or any other game. During the holidays, Bob had thought a good deal about the coming term, about the new headmaster McCann—known as the Blighter—and the great summer game, nourishing a hope, if only a faint one, that under Jimmy McCann's invigorating influence the School for Slackers might pull itself together and do something to wash out its long and lamentable record of defeats on the playing fields. Bob, at least, was ready to go all out in backing up the new Head to bring about a change of that kind.

Fellows going back to school might have been expected to take some interest in the subject. Instead of which, the other five fellows with Bob in the carriage of the train booming on to Okelham registered boredom and disapprobation.

"Oh, buck up, Randy!" said Tred. "Is that how you're beginning the term?" Randal, without moving, gazed at him. He had just seen the Head, and the interview had tired him—the brute was so full of pep and go!



Aubrey Compton, in the corner, was smoking a cigarette and talking in low tones to Teddy Seymour, who was nodding and grinning. Peverill was half-asleep, indicating now and then by a deep yawn that he was not quite asleep. Carter was silent and thoughtful. Warren was pulling up the knees of his trousers. He had, somehow, forgotten them when he sat down in the train, and now he regarded them with a slightly anxious eye, dreading that they might bag. With a matter of such import on his mind, Warren was hardly likely to think about cricket.

They were all Fifth Form men in the carriage and friends of Bob. Aubrey and Teddy were his bosom pals. But between his ways and their ways there was a great gulf fixed. Bob hoped that it might be bridged, and that Jimmy McCann might help to bridge it. The prospect was doubtful. But everybody knew, at least, that there was going to be liveliness in the School for Slackers that term. The struggle between the school, bent on following the old ways, and the new Head, determined on gingering up High Coombe, had not ended—it had only been interrupted by the

holidays. Now it was going to recommence in full force.

Peverill opened his eyes. "Did Darrell say cricket?" asked Pev, in a plaintive tone.

"I did!" grunted Bob.

"Well," said Peverill, "don't!" He closed his eyes again.

"My belief is," said Bob, "that McCann means to give an eye to games this term. Our record's enough to make anybody weep. If McCann wants to push us on, why not meet him half-way?"

Peverill reopened his eyes. "Is Darrell still talkin' cricket?" he asked. "Kick him, somebody."

"If McCann makes up his mind, he will have his way," said Bob. "He's that sort of man. And—"

"And you'll back him?" asked Aubrey Compton.

"All along the line!" answered Bob unhesitatingly. "I'll back him in lugging High Coombe out of the rut, if I'm the only man in the school, that does!"

"You'll be the only man in the school that does, all right," said Aubrey. "And you'll be barred by the school for it."

Bob snorted.

"Chuck it, Aubrey!" said Teddy Seymour. "Nobody's goin' to bar old Bob—you least of all! And you chuck it, too, Bob—you're not goin' to back up the Blighter against all your friends. The man's ruinin' High Coombe—"

"Rot!"

"Look at the changes he made last term—"

Another snort from Bob Darrell.

"Yes, look at them!" he said. "Fellows actually turned out at rising-bell before the end of the term; they came into class on time; and they actually did some prep, instead of loafing about. And even the prefects gave up playing bridge in their studies!"

Teddy chuckled.

"You're an old ass, Bob!" he said. "Chuck it! We're goin' back this term to make the McCann man sorry he ever blew in at High Coombe, and make him glad to blow out again. Old Aubrey's been thinkin' out a scheme already for makin' him sit up first day of term—"

"It's the big idea!" said Compton, with a nod.

"Cough it up, Aubrey!" said Peverill, opening his eyes once more and this time keeping them open.

By
Charles Hamilton

There was a general movement of interest in the carriage. The boredom and disapprobation which had greeted Bob's introduction of the obnoxious subject of cricket had quite vanished. This was a subject that interested the High Coomers. The Fifth were the slackest Form in the School for Slackers, but they could display keenness when it was a question of hitting back at Jimmy McCann. Only Bob's face expressed disapprobation now.

"Keep it to yourself!" growled Bob. "Whatever it is, I'm against it. Leave me out of it!"

Aubrey Compton smiled.

"Then you're goin' to know nothing about it," he remarked. "You're my pal, Bob, and I like you no end, but you're not standin' between me and McCann. We came to punchin' noses on that subject last term. We're not comin' to that again. But I'm goin' to make you tired of standin' up for McCann. This term we've got to down him, and we've got to stand in together, and you're goin' to line up with the rest."

"Rot!" said Bob.

"Wait an' see!" smiled Aubrey. "I've got it all cut an' dried, old bean. If you weren't a pal of mine, I'd just bar you and send you to Coventry—and you know best whether High Coombe would follow my lead."

"Let them—and do as you dashed well choose!" roared Bob.

"Now you're getting shirty!" said Teddy. "Look here, Bob, chuck up this rot of backin' the Blighter and line up with your friends."

"I'm backing McCann!"

"You're an obstinate old ass, Bob, and you're asking for it!" said Teddy.

"For what?" snorted Bob.

"For what's comin' to you," said Aubrey Compton lightly. "We're not goin' to lose you, Bob! But you're for it if you stick to that rot about backin' up McCann!"

"I'm sticking to it!" growled Bob.

Compton laughed and said no more. The train boomed into Okeham and the carriage disgorged its passengers, to mingle with the swarm of other High Coombe fellows bound for the school.

Bob, in a ruffled mood, stalked away to the school bus by himself.

He did not care to admit it, but he was rather worried and troubled by Aubrey's words on the train. Compton, it was clear, had come back to High Coombe as fiercely on the war-path against James McCann as ever, and had thought out a new move against the Blighter even before reaching the school. Whatever it was, he would have the hearty support of all the Fifth, excepting Bob—Darrell knew that.

But if it was a jape of some sort, how was it going to make Darrell fed-up with backing McCann? That, according to Aubrey, was to be the



Aubrey got in a tremendous lot of decoration in the Head's study in a very short time. Paint dripped everywhere—glaring red on all sides!

result. It was rather a puzzle, and a worrying puzzle, and Bob's face was a little glum as he rolled on to High Coombe.

He missed his two friends on the school bus. Compton and Seymour had stayed behind in Okeham, to come on later. Why? Bob wondered whether it had anything to do with that new move against McCann. On reflection, he had no doubt that it had. But he was quite in the dark, and it was not in a happy mood that he arrived at High Coombe. He had hoped for better things this term, but it was plain that that hope was ill-founded. The interval of the holidays had not damped down the feud against McCann—it burned as fiercely as ever, and the term at the School for Slackers was going to be a fighting term!

An Obstinate Ass!

JIMMY McCANN was a busy man that day. An endless stream poured in and out of his study, and for every fellow Jimmy had a word or two—generally a kind word. The stocky young man who was now headmaster of High Coombe in the place of Dr. Chetwode, the Venerable Beak, had come back for the new term fresh and cheery, fit as a fiddle, with a bright eye and a bright smile. Jimmy had had only a few weeks at the School for Slackers last term, but he knew every fellow and remembered everyone's name—and, more than that, he knew most of their characters and dispositions, and what he had to expect from them.

Many who liked him least were rather disarmed by his cheery greeting. Corkran of the Sixth, who had been head prefect, and had been pushed out of that high position for good reasons, came in stiff and formal. But he melted under Jimmy's smile and Jimmy's remark that they were going to try again, with Corky in his old proud position for the summer term. Corky could not help feeling elated as he left the Head's study, and he told Randal and Tredegar of his Form that the Blighter wasn't really such an absolute blighter as he made himself out to be.

Tredegar, too, had five minutes with the Head which melted him considerably. The captain of High Coombe was not wholly indifferent to the school's appalling record in games, though in the general atmosphere of slackness at the school, effort had never seemed worth while.

Tred had always had a sort of surreptitious sympathy with Bob Darrell's views, though his easy nature made him go with the majority. He did not, at least, feel disposed to sigh or groan at the mere mention of cricket matches, like the hardened slackers in the Fifth.

A few words on the subject from McCann—a hint that High Coombe were going to beat Okeham in that fixture when it came along—really interested old Tred, and he looked very thoughtful when he left Jimmy. Coming into Big Study, and finding Randal there in his usual happy attitude, with his back in the seat of

The Dandy Painter!

an armchair and his long legs across another, Tred frowned at Randy.

"Oh, buck up, Randy!" he said. "Is that how you're beginning the term?"

Randal, without moving, gazed at him. The journey down, it seemed, had tired Randy. Later, he was going to find sufficient energy to unpack. For the moment he needed rest, and lots of it. Randy, indeed, was glad to find himself back in the calm repose of Big Study after the exertions of the holidays! He thanked goodness that that energetic blighter McCann couldn't worry Sixth Form prefects as he did Fifth Form men and juniors! He had seen the Head, and the interview, even more than the journey, had tired him—the brute was so full of pep and go.

"Seen the Blighter?" he asked.

"I've seen McCann," said Tredegar, rather curtly. His talk with the Head, and the vision of beating Okeham at cricket, had indisposed him for the moment to talk of Jimmy as a blighter.

"The brute's as full of pep as ever!" said Randal. "What a change from the old Beak!" Randal of the Sixth sighed for the happy days that were gone!

"It was about time we had a bit of a change," said Tredegar.

Randal sat up at that.

"Seen Darrell in the hols?" he asked.

"Darrell? No."

"Oh! I thought he might have been talking to you. I say, I hear that Compton's come back on the war-path! Some lad, old Aubrey—what? I don't know the details, but there's some big stunt on—something 'that's goin' to make the Blighter cringe!"

"You're a prefect!" said Tredegar.

"Yes; the chopper hasn't come down on me yet, as it did on poor old Corky! What about it?"

"You ought to stop Compton."

Randal could only stare. He almost forgot that he was tired in his amazement. This from old Tred!

When Corkran came into Big Study a little later Tredegar was gone, and Randal told him. He had another surprise.

"That man Compton's an ass!" said Corkran. "If I hear anythin' about it I shall jolly well stop it."

Randal gazed at him.

"Mad?" he asked.

"Well, head prefect, you know!" said Corky, rather apologetically.

"Who's head prefect?"

"The Blighter—I mean McCann's reinstated me."

"Gratters, old bean!" said Randal amiably. "But, I say, you're not goin' to row with the Fifth, are you? Don't let the Blighter pull your leg to that extent."

Corky was silent. He was not, if he could help it, going to row with the Fifth. At the same time, McCann's trust that he might do better this term had awakened something like a sense of duty in Corky. He decided that at least he would carefully know nothing about the intended rag; certainly he was not going to approve.

But if some of the Sixth were beginning to get new ideas about McCann, there was nothing of that kind in the Fifth Form. In the Fifth, Aubrey Compton was undisputed leader. Not only was the superb Aubrey the glass of fashion and the mould of form, but he had personality and character. Indeed, Darrell suspected that his slackness was rather a pose than anything else. Certainly in his campaign against McCann there was no sign of slacking.

So far as the Blighter was concerned, at least, Aubrey had come back full of beans.

BOB was in Study No. 3, unpacking books, when Compton and Seymour came in. Compton slammed a parcel on the table.

"Seen the Head?" asked Bob. After the argument in the train, Bob made it a point to speak cheerfully and cordially, as if there had been no dispute. The chums of Study No. 3 were almost inseparable, but all of them had to exercise tact at times to keep the friendship in repair.

"I've seen the Blighter," answered Aubrey. "He's burstin' with pep! Sickenin' to see him!"

Teddy Seymour held up a warning finger.

"Don't you two begin again!" he said. "Peace, my children, peace!"

"What have you got there, Aubrey?" asked Bob, indicating the parcel, to change the thorny subject.

"Red paint."

Bob stared at him blankly.

"What on earth for?" he demanded.

"What is paint usually for?" asked Compton. "Decorative purposes, of course."

"But what's the idea?" exclaimed the astonished Darrell. Fellows at High Coombe decorated their studies according to their own tastes—but a line was drawn at painting them! And the idea of painting ancient oak with red paint was rather startling.

"The idea," explained Aubrey, "is to please McCann! That red-headed blighter will naturally be pleased at seeing paint the same colour as his mop! Naturally, we want to please him! Don't we all love him?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Teddy.

Bob grasped it.

"That's the rag you were talking about in the train?"

"What a brain!" said Aubrey admiringly. "The holidays have bucked you, Bob—you're gettin' fearfully bright!"

"But what—" asked Bob, puzzled. He could guess that the red paint had something to do with the planned rag on McCann. Still, it was not easy to spot the connection.

"You'll know later, old boy," assured Aubrey. He unfastened the parcel. Two cans of red paint were revealed—a large one and a small one. Bob stared at them.

Some more of the Fifth came into Study No. 3—Carter, Burke, Peverill, Raymond, Durance, Warren. All of them grinned gleefully at the cans of paint. All of them evidently knew the secret, whatever it was, and rejoiced in the prospect—whatever that was!

Bob had an uncomfortable feeling of being left out of it. Certainly he did not want to be in it if it was a rag on McCann. But he had always been liked and trusted in the Fifth, and this was a rather unpleasant change; they made him feel like a stranger in his own study.

He left his unpacking to be finished later and went out of Study No. 3. He heard a loud laugh as he went down the steps to the Fifth Form passage. Then Teddy's voice:

"I wish old Bob would join up! What an obstinate ass the man is!"

"He will join up later," said Aubrey. "McCann will see to that!"

And there was another laugh.

Bob shoved his hands deep into his pockets and tramped away, ruffled and worried. He did not know what to make of it, and it troubled him—and certainly he was not likely to guess the ramifications of that deep scheme evolved in Aubrey's active brain!

"I've Got to Stop Him!"

FERGUSON of the Fourth was honoured and rather pleased—but at the same time a little dubious and even alarmed. Anything in the nature of a lark appealed to Ferg—especially a jape on the Blighter. And, as Compton pointed out, there was no risk in it for Ferg. That was rather an important point, for Ferguson knew, from painful experience, that McCann had a heavy hand with a cane.

Ferguson had been Compton's fag till the new Head abolished fagging for the Fifth. Compton had been fearfully enraged by that ordinance. Ferg, on the other hand, found it grateful and comforting. This difference of opinion between Ferg and his late fag master had led to certain kickings and cuffings which had not endeared the dandy of the Fifth to his former fag.

But schoolboy memories are short, and undoubtedly Ferg was rather bucked when so great a man as Compton of the Fifth called him out of the Burrow for a "jaw" in the most friendly way. Ferg left his friends, Fatty Pye and Loom and Bunn and Donkin and the rest, staring. Compton seemed quite to have forgotten the ill-feeling of last term. He was appealing to Ferg as a kindred spirit—as a High Coombe man who was, of course, up against the Blighter and all his works.

"You're a clever kid!" Compton explained. "That's why I've picked you out. And the Blighter will never dream that it was a junior who pulled his leg. That makes it quite safe. You've got to take care that he doesn't spot your voice on the telephone; but that's easy enough."

"But what's the game?" asked Ferguson. "Just to give the Blighter a trot down to Okeham?"

"Somethin' may happen while he's gone," said Compton. "But the less you know about that before it happens, the better for you!"

Ferguson chuckled.

"I'm game!" he said.

Ferg was game—game as pie!

Moreover, as Aubrey pointed out, the Blighter would never dream that it was a Fourth Form junior who had pulled his leg. Most likely he would suspect Compton of the Fifth—for which reason it was judicious for Compton to seek the company of his Form master, Mr. Chard, while Ferg was getting to work. An alibi would be useful, for in dealing with James McCann a fellow couldn't be too careful.

Behold, therefore, Ferguson slipping out over an ivied wall in strictest secrecy; leaving his pals in the Burrow to wonder what had become of him. It was yet far from lock-up, and fellows were coming in or going out, but Ferg was taking no risks of old Judd spotting the fact that he had been out. Ferg, with all the caution of a conspirator, dropped from the school wall and scudded.

Compton walked across to Chard's rooms under the clock tower, taking Teddy Seymour with him, for a chat with his Form master. Chard liked men of his Form to come into his rooms and chat.

Chard took a pessimistic view of the prospects of High Coombe under McCann, and he talked on that subject far more freely than a Form master should have done, especially to boys of his Form. And while he trumpeted to Compton and Teddy, Chard had no suspicion that he was being made use of to prove an alibi, if required, for those respectful and attentive youths.

Listening to Chard, Aubrey had one eye on the window, from which he had a view of the House. He was watching to see the Head emerge. Other Fifth Form men sauntering in the quad also had an eye open for McCann. Bob Darrell, in fact, was the only man in the Fifth who was not in the secret. Carter lounged near enough to McCann's study window to catch the buzz of the telephone bell when it rang.

Mr. McCann, in happy ignorance of the deep interest that the Fifth Form took in his proceedings, lifted the receiver. The rush of returning High Coombers had slackened now, and the Head was a little at leisure. They were not all back yet; fellows from distances often came by late trains. But the bulk of them had joined up.

Aubrey dabbed the paint on Bob's clothes—a dab here and a dab there. It was impossible for Bob to resist—he was too astounded to stir.

"Hallo!" said Mr. McCann into the telephone.

A husky voice, which sounded as if the speaker had a bad cold, came through. James McCann was keen and wary, but he was no wizard, and he did not know that that husky voice was the skillfully disguised voice of a junior in his own Fourth Form. He had not the remotest suspicion of that fact.

"Is that High Coombe—Mr. McCann?"

"Speaking!" said Jimmy briefly.

"Stationmaster at Okeham speaking. A boy named Babbie—fallen in a faint—seems to be ill—in the waiting-room now."

Jimmy knew that Babbie of the Shell had not yet come. He came a long way, and was not expected till later than most.

"If you could come, sir—I hardly know what to do!"

"Immediately," said Jimmy, and rang off.

Aubrey, watching from Chard's rooms, saw the Head step into his car and shoot away to the gates.

The car had hardly vanished with McCann in it when Compton excused himself to Mr. Chard, leaving Teddy to carry on. Aubrey went back to the House with a crowd of the Fifth at his heels. They followed him up to Study No. 3, where Bob Darrell was getting on again with his unpacking. Bob glanced at them as they crowded in.

"What's up?" he asked. "I've just seen McCann buzz off in his car." Aubrey, laughing, picked up the larger can of paint and the brush.

"Buck up, old man!" said Carter. "The Blighter isn't letting the grass grow under his feet!"

"Ten minutes will be enough!"

drawed Aubrey. "You coming to lend a hand, Bob?"

"At what?"

"Painting the Blighter's study!"

Bob jumped.

"You ass!" he roared. "You fat-head! Is that it? Give me that can of paint, you howling ass!"

He jumped at Compton. Five pairs of hands were laid on him at the same moment, and he bumped down on the carpet. Aubrey grinned down at him as he struggled.

"Hold the silly ass!" he said.

Carter, Peverill, Raymond, Burke, and Warren held him. Bob struggled frantically.

"Aubrey!" he panted. "You silly ass! For goodness' sake, chuck it! You're mad to think of it! Painting the Head's study—you awful idiot! Why, a man might be sacked for it!"

"Hardly!" smiled Aubrey. "The Blighter isn't keen on sackin' men!"

"It's a flogging, at least!"

"I know!"

"You'll be found out!" panted Bob. He was intensely anxious for his chum. "Aubrey, he'll know who did it! He may come back any minute—he may catch you in the very act."

"He could hardly be back from Okeham under the half-hour."

"How do you know he's gone to Okeham?"

"I think he had a phone call."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the fellows who were pinning Bob on the carpet.

"You—you've wangled it!" gasped Bob. "Aubrey, I tell you he will know who mucked-up his study! I tell you—"

"I'm seein' to that!" said Aubrey, amid another yell of laughter from his friends.

"You're seein' to it!" stammered Bob.



The Dandy Painter!

"Exactly!"

Aubrey Compton walked out of the study, with the can of paint under his arm, the brush in his pocket. Bob made a terrific effort, and the five fellows rocked—but they held on! They grinned down at him quite good-naturedly, but there was no escape for the Fifth Form man who had declared his intention of backing-up the Blighter.

Decorations by Aubrey!

AUBREY COMPTON was perhaps the last fellow at High Coombe who might have been expected to handle willingly such sticky and smelly stuff as paint. Aubrey painted a little, but it was elegantly, in water colours. Probably it was the first time in his life that he had handled such stuff as house painters use. Neither did he relish handling it. And he was very careful how he did it. Spots of paint on his elegant clothes would have pained him deeply, likewise they might have led to his detection as the culprit.

It was fairly certain that any High Coombe man who was found in a painty state, when McCann began to investigate, would be booked for grim reprisals unless he could give a very good explanation. But Aubrey had already borrowed a big apron belonging to Liggins—without mentioning it to the house porter. He donned a pair of rubber gloves, and was perfectly cool as he set to work in his headmaster's study.

McCann was safe off the scene. Three or four of the Fifth were keeping cave in the passages, ready to whistle a warning if required. But there was really no danger. Everybody knew that the Head had gone out, so no one was likely to come to his study to see him. Sixth Form prefects, some of them having an inkling that something was "on," sedulously avoided knowing anything about it.

With a large brush and three

pounds of red paint, Aubrey got in a lot of decoration in a very short time. He painted the Head's chair, and his writing-table, and his clock in streaks and criss-cross strokes. He drew lines and circles on the walls. He passed the brush along the backs of books on the shelves. He dripped paint into the inkpot and over papers. Finally, he poured what remained on to the middle of the Head's rug.

Durance, creeping along to peer in at the door and see how he was getting on, almost fell down as he gazed into the Head's study, glaring red on all sides, reeking with the smell of paint.

"My hat!" gasped Durance.

Aubrey smiled cheerily.

"Some surprise for the Blighter when he blows in—what?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha! My hat, this room is a scent packet!" Durance retreated.

Aubrey followed him out. The can and brush, rolled in the apron, were passed out of a window to Haddon of the Fifth, who was waiting, and duly disposed of in a dustbin. Aubrey walked away to a bath-room, where a trace or two of paint was carefully removed.

Then he went back to Study No. 3, where his friends were still sitting on Bob Darrell. Teddy Seymour was there now, arguing with Bob. Teddy was in this game up to the neck, but he seemed to be suffering from scruples. Compton had convinced him, but he was rather remorseful.

"You see, Bob, old man, it's your own fault," Teddy was explaining. "You can't stand out against the Form and the whole school. You've got to line-up with us against the Blighter, and if you won't do it of your own accord we've got to make you!"

"You'll never make me, fathead!" hooted Bob. He glared at Aubrey when the latter came in. "You've done it?" he asked.

Aubrey nodded and smiled.

"Oh, you ass—you priceless ass!" groaned Bob. "This means a flog-

ging! McCann will never rest till he's got the man."

"Quite!" agreed Aubrey. "Hold him!"

He proceeded to open the second, smaller, can of paint, which had been left in the study. Taking Bob's pocket handkerchief he twisted it into a spill and dipped it into the can.

Bob watched him. Teddy looked dubious and remorseful, but the other fellows grinned as Aubrey proceeded to dab the paint on Bob's clothes—a dab here and a dab there.

It was impossible to resist—Darrell was too safely held for that. And he was too astounded to stir.

What this meant was a mystery to him.

"Are you mad, Aubrey?" gasped Bob at last, as Aubrey pushed the reeking handkerchief into his pocket. "What do you mean by this? Will you let me go, you rotters?"

"Keep him safe!" drawled Aubrey; and he sat down in the window-seat to wait and watch for Mr. McCann's return.

Bob was still a prisoner. He was, at first, merely amazed at what Aubrey had done. But slowly and surely the truth forced itself into his mind. The moment McCann discovered what had happened in his study there would be investigation. And what sort of a clue was McCann likely to look for? A fellow who had traces of red paint on his clothes!

"Aubrey! You rotter—you awful rotter!" he panted. "Oh, you unspeakable rotter!"

Aubrey smiled at him from the window-seat.

"Gettin' on to it now?" he asked agreeably. "No good gettin' excited—you're not goin' to be let loose till the McCann man begins to howl! When you've had your floggin' you mayn't be so fond of him as you are now—what?"

Bob struggled wildly.

"McCann will think I did it!" he panted.

"What else is he goin' to think?" smiled Aubrey.

"I say, it's too rough on old Bob!" Teddy was suffering from pangs of remorse. "It's too jolly rough—"

"Shut up, Seymour!"

"Bob, old man," said Teddy, almost tearfully. "Stop playing the giddy ox! Tell us you'll stand in with us, your pals, and—"

"I'll see you blowed first!" roared Bob furiously.

"That's all right, Teddy." Compton was smiling, cool, implacable. "Bob will line up all right after the Blighter's through with him! Nothin' like a floggin'—"

"Do you think I'll take the floggin'?" bawled Bob. "Can't I tell McCann exactly what you've done, you plotting rotter?"

Aubrey shook his head gently.

"No, old man," he answered, soft as a cooing dove, "you can't! If the Blighter found this out it would be the sack for Teddy and me. You wouldn't find it easy to prove, either."

"Rot!" roared Bob. "Teddy wouldn't tell lies about it, and you wouldn't, either, if it came to the pinch."

Aubrey reflected calmly.

Great News for all

MODERN BOY Readers!

Send in Your Own Autographs to win those of **FAMOUS CRICKETERS**—and at the same time give yourself a chance of Winning a



**SPLENDID CRICKET BAT
AUTOGRAPHED by ALL the SOUTH
AFRICAN TEST MATCH PLAYERS!**

You may win **SIX** Different Autographs—hand-written (not printed)!—by Famous First-Class Cricketers in Exchange for Your Own Signature!



**This Grand Offer will be fully explained
in NEXT WEEK'S MODERN BOY.
... Be Sure YOU Don't Miss It!**

"Perhaps you're right," he agreed. "I should hate to let myself down to the extent of tellin' lies to a rotter like McCann. No! Tell him anythin' you like, old bean!"

"It's your own fault, Bob, old man!" urged Teddy. "Even now, if you'll come round—"

"Let me go!" roared Bob, and he wrenched. But it was futile. He remained on the carpet, safely held.

There was the sound of a car below. Aubrey glanced out of the window and smiled.

"The Blighter!" he said. "He looks cross!" There was a chuckle in Study No. 3.

Mr. McCann's brows were knitted as he alighted and entered the House. There was no doubt that he was deeply annoyed.

He had arrived at Okeham Station to discover that his leg had been pulled. So far from Babbie of the Shell being ill in the waiting-room, Babs had not arrived at Okeham at all. On the way back to the school Jimmy thought it out grimly. Someone had spoofed him on the telephone, and his suspicions ran to Compton of the Fifth. He had gone on a fool's errand, and wasted his time. He resolved to make a very careful inquiry as to where Compton of the Fifth had been at the time the telephone bell rang in his study. He did not know yet that Chard would be able to tell him exactly!

Striding to his study, Mr. McCann threw open the door—and then he almost staggered at the reeking smell of wet paint that greeted him.

Jimmy did not enter the study. He stood looking into it, his face setting like iron. And the look on his face might have scared even Aubrey had he seen it.

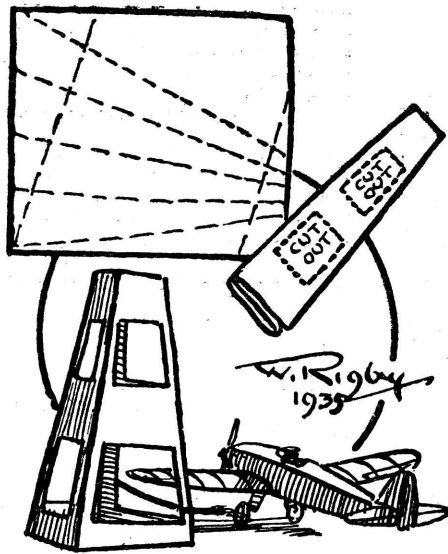
This was why he had been spoofed on the telephone—to get him out of the way while his study was daubed with red paint! It smelt—it reeked—it glared—it was hideous, offensive, uninhabitable. Much labour, in the way of cleaning, was required before the Head could use that study again. So this was how the new term was beginning! Jimmy McCann's face grew grimmer and grimmer. Three minutes later, High Coombe was summoned to Hall.

Just Like Jimmy!

PREFECTS of the Sixth, with their ashplants under their arms, stood in their places in Hall, keeping—or trying to keep—order among the juniors, who were buzzing with excitement. Everyone knew that something fearful had happened, and there were whispers that somebody was going to be sacked—on the first day of term!

Ferguson of the Fourth—safe back before the Head returned—felt a twinge of uneasiness. All this awful fuss couldn't be about that spoof phone call, Ferg told himself!

The Fifth Form were in their places to a man, one of them looking very red and worried and breathless. Only in time to walk down to Hall had Bob Darrell been released—and even then his friends had walked with him, two of them arm-in-arm with him, till the very door of Hall



MINIATURE PYLONS FOR YOUR MODEL AERODROME

By *W. Rigby*, MODERN BOY'S Own Model Plane Expert, who will answer, Free of Charge, any Model Plane Queries that any reader cares to send to the Editor. If you can, enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for reply by Post

THE finishing touch to your model 'drome—midget pylons! You can make them in next to no time of thin notepaper, or you can make models a couple of feet high of cardboard.

You fold the material as shown here, so that you get a tapering effect from bottom to top. Having folded the paper or cardboard *five* times (an extra lap for gluing), mark out two or more segments, as shown, to be cut neatly away.

Before you do the gluing, paint the segments alternately red and black or blue. For large models use cellulose colours, then varnish the whole thing, to give the model additional strength.

THESE pylons are used, of course, to indicate turning points of a race track or a permanent instructional course where regulated turns are made.

To make a REALLY good job of it, you could fill in the top of the pylon with cardboard, and through the top stick a tiny flagpole carrying a red or blue flag.

was reached. Teddy was still remorseful, but every other man in the Fifth was implacable, Compton the most implacable of all. He liked old Bob better than any other fellow at High Coombe, but Bob was not going to back up the Blighter! Bob was going to be landed in the Blighter's black books—with a flogging to start the term with. If Bob would not come round, he was going to be brought round, and this was the way.

The excited buzz died away as Mr. McCann entered by the upper door. Few knew, as yet, what had happened. But everybody knew it was something very much out of the common—some awful knock at the Blighter. And the whole school gasped when McCann, in a few brief words, told.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Ferguson. Ferg knew now why he had been put up to spoofing the Blighter on the phone. He could make a very accurate guess at the name of the painter of the Head's study. He stole a glance at Compton, in the ranks of the Fifth, and admired his nerve.

Every boy wondered whether McCann would be able to pick out the unknown painter. That, it was clear, was what they were assembled for.

"The boy who disfigured my study with paint is here present," said McCann, his quiet voice penetrating to every corner of the crowded Hall. "I command him to stand forward."

Compton winked at Teddy Seymour, who barely suppressed a giggle. James McCann did not miss either the wink or the suppressed giggle.

"I think it probable," went on Mr. McCann, "that the boy in question may have some trace of paint about his person, after what he has done in my study. I shall now ascertain."

"Beginning with the Fifth, you bet!" Ferguson whispered to Pye.

The sagacious Ferg was right. As the mysterious painter declined to stand forward—which Mr. McCann, probably, hardly expected him to do—Jimmy proceeded to ascertain, beginning with the Fifth. That he suspected Aubrey Compton he gave no sign; but all High Coombe knew it. Aubrey, spotless as ever, met his inspection with superb calm.

But a whiff of paint did not escape Mr. McCann, and he knew that his man was in the Fifth. The next moment he knew who it was.

"Darrell!"

Bob's face was burning.

"Step out!"

Bob stepped out.

In spite of the awe-inspiring presence of the Head, there was a general buzz. All eyes were on Darrell of the Fifth; all eyes could see that his clothes were smeared with red paint in several places.

"Darrell!" gasped Corkran.

"Who'd have thought it!"

"Darrell!" murmured Tredegar.

"What a priceless idiot not to change! He might have known—"

"Darrell!" gurgled Ferguson. So it wasn't Compton, after all, but his pal Darrell! Ferg stood amazed.

"Silence!" Mr. McCann had only to speak once. Then a pin might have been heard to drop in Hall.

The Dandy Painter!

"There is paint on your clothes, Darrell—the same paint that has been used in disfiguring my study," said Mr. McCann quietly. "What have you to say, Darrell?"

The hapless Bob's face was crimson, and his eyes fell before McCann's. But he did not speak. What had he to say?

To accuse his friends—to get Aubrey sacked, Teddy flogged, and the rest of the Fifth down on him with undying hatred and loathing! That was what McCann was asking him to do, though he did not know it. Bob was conscious of anger, too. The very evidence that McCann was searching for was against him, and condemned him, and yet—and yet—McCann might have known that he hadn't done this!

"Have you anything to say, Darrell?"

Bob's burning face set doggedly.

"No, sir!"

"I find on you," said Mr. McCann, "unmistakable evidence that you

CAR BADGES

Owing to lack of space, I have had to leave out this feature this week.

were the boy who disfigured my study with paint—an outrage for which I am bound to administer a most severe flogging to the culprit. And you have nothing to say?"

"Nothing, sir!" answered Bob.

High Coombe hardly breathed.

The next item on the programme, of course, was the flogging. Why did not the Head send for the birch?

It was only a moment, but it seemed an age, before the Blighter spoke again.

"You may go back to your place, Darrell."

Bob blinked at him.

High Coombe hung on McCann's next words.

"This matter," said Mr. McCann, "will be investigated with the greatest thoroughness, and I have every hope that the inquiry will lead to the discovery of the culprit, of whose identity I have, at present, no knowledge. Dismiss!"

Gasping, they went.

"THE rotter!" Aubrey Compton walked about Study No. 3, unable to keep still, pale with rage. "The rotter! The Blighter! The—the—the dashed usher! How did he know—how could he know? Oh, the rotter!"

"Well, it was jolly thick," said Teddy. "I'm rather glad—"

"Oh, don't be a fool!"

Teddy had a flash of spirit.

"I'm not the fool here! I don't know how McCann knew it wasn't Bob—but he did know! You can't fool McCann!"

Bob Darrell, sitting in the window-seat, laughed. His faith in Jimmy had been justified. He had said to himself that the man might have known—and the man did know! Wasn't it just like Jimmy?

"Teddy's right, Aubrey!" chuckled Bob. "You can't fool McCann! I've a jolly good mind to punch your head—"

"Get on with it!" snarled Aubrey.

"No fear!" laughed Bob. "You've got enough coming to you when McCann finds out who painted his study. Take it from me, he will!"

The new term at High Coombe did not begin with a Blighter's flogging for Bob Darrell. But it looked very probable that it would begin with one for Aubrey Compton!

There's ructions at High Coombe in Next Week's story, "Too Tired for Cricket!" The Head starts in to liven up the school's sport, and the fellows jib!

Just My Foolin'

By THE OLD BOY

THE best way to spend this Whitsun holiday is in trying to say this—quickly:

Which west wind went with which wet Whitsun?

Which wet weather was in which Whit week?

Whether wet weather was with west wind Whitsun,

Or the wind was weak in the wet weather Whitsun,

Which Whit week was which, oh, speak!

LAST Whitsun some of you may have noticed a motor-car going backwards at about 40 m.p.h. The car was my uncle's. When the engine went on the blink, I put it right for him, but unfortunately the car would go only in reverse.

My uncle had to kneel on the driving seat, his hands on the steering wheel behind him, staring out through the back window. My aunt, of course, had seven fits before the car finally fell to pieces just outside Crawley.

Since this mishap my uncle has bought a new £2 Stinkobus Saloon. I think I'll pop round and tune up the engine for him this Whitsun, what?

HOW will hikers be dressed this Whitsun? Here is the reply from a leading hike-class fashion expert.

Take a pair of diving boots

And a curly-brimmed top-hat,

And a pair of socks with crimson clocks

And a single spotted spat

(Be particular of that).

Take an Eton jacket, too,

Of a pattern rather striking,

Plus-fours of buff and a single cuff,

And you're all dressed up for hiking!

AND now I want to give you a bit of advice about camping out. I am admitted (by me) to be an expert on the subject. It is frequently complained that camp life has only



one drawback—it sometimes tends to become a trifle dull. To avoid this, I recommend the following hints.

FIRST of all, choose your camping site with care. The field should be bordered by high hedges, and should contain a large bull with a temper like burnt sulphur. This is almost bound to add to the excitement of the holiday.

AGAIN, it is often possible—in fact usually possible—to find a farmer who behaves like a Prussian Hun on the slightest provocation. Two or three large fires kindled on the turf will frequently add merriment to the occasion.

IF a field of this description is not available, it may be that there is a handy swamp on which to pitch your camp. The advantage of this is that the camp usually sinks into the bosom of the earth about midnight, and much fun may be had in trying to pull it out again. Water is also plentiful in this situation.

TAKE air-guns or catapults with you. The bumping off of a few pheasants or rabbits in a neighbouring game preserve will often give you an enjoyable romp with game-keepers and policemen. And if you succeed in getting away, what is nicer than game or rabbit pie?

Carry out these hints, and I'm sure you will not have to complain of your holiday being dull!

WHAT is it that has two wings and ten legs?
The forward line of a football team.

WHAT happened when the pirate ran out of eggs for his breakfast?
He commanded his vessel to "lay to."

WHAT should you have when the week-end is hot?
An ice sundae. (A nice Sunday, see? Ha, ha!)

WHEN is a millionaire like a trombone?
When he "blows" hundreds of notes.

WHAT is it that even Carnara can't lick?
The back of his neck.