

SEEKING ADVENTURE! When Jimmy Silver & Co. take the road into the country they look for adventure, and they find it before they are very long awheel!

A Holiday Hoax!



A Thrilling Long Complete Story, dealing with the holiday adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co., the Chums of Rookwood School.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Author of the famous tales of Rookwood appearing in the "Boys' Friend" every week.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Bunter's Caravan!

"I KNOW that chap!" Arthur Edward Lovell shaded his eyes with his straw hat, and stared across the green meadow. Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome followed his glance lazily. The Fistical Four of the Rookwood Fourth were taking it easy.

They were enjoying their midsummer holiday. They had had an excursion in France, which they agreed was topping. Now they were cycling in Surrey, which they agreed was topping, too.

At the present moment they were not cycling. Four bicycles were stacked against the hedge, and the four juniors sat in a row on a low wooden gate, resting, and admiring the scenery. Thus they became aware that on the other side of the field a caravan was camped, with a horse nibbling the grass near it. It was a rather roomy, handsome caravan, painted green. They had glanced at it, and noted that it seemed deserted. But presently Lovell, glancing at it again, observed a fat figure emerge from the doorway and descend the steps.

And something familiar in that fat figure struck Arthur Edward Lovell. So he shaded his eyes and looked again.

"I've seen him before," he said. Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Yes, rather. Same here!"

The fellow they were looking at did not glance towards them. He was busy. He sat on the lowest step of the van, and the Rookwood juniors saw him open a paper bag on his fat knees. From the bag he abstracted a large, juicy jam-tart. There was an expression of beatific enjoyment on his fat face as he transferred the tart to his capacious mouth. But it was brief. The tart was gone in a twinkling.

Jimmy Silver chuckled.

"I think I'd know that merchant anywhere!" he said. "It's Bunter—Billy Bunter, of Greyfriars."

"That's the kipper!" said Lovell. "I knew I knew him! I remember he came over to see us at Rookwood—"

"And we didn't enjoy the visit!" grinned Raby.

"Not the least little bit," remarked Newcome. "I wonder what he's doing here with a caravan all on his lonesome?"

"Can't be caravanning alone," said Jimmy Silver, with a shake of the head. "There must be some more fellows around somewhere."

"Let's go and see!" suggested Lovell. "If Wharton or Bob Cherry is there, I'd like to meet 'em."

"May as well!" agreed Jimmy Silver. The Fistical Four swung themselves over the gate and dropped into the meadow.

They crossed over towards the camped caravan. The fat junior sitting on the steps did not look up. He was already getting busy with his fourth jam-tart.

"Cheerio, Bunter!" shouted Lovell suddenly, when they were quite close at hand.

The Owl of Greyfriars looked up with a sudden jump.

Billy Bunter made a dive for his bag of tarts. He seemed to be fearful that the Rookwood fellows might have predatory designs on those tarts.

"Anybody about, Bunter?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"There's me."

"You're not caravanning alone, surely?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"Oh! You're Silver!" he said. "I remember you, Jimmy Silver! I came to see you at Rookwood, and you didn't give me enough to eat!"

"There was a famine after you left," said Lovell.

"Oh, really, Lovell——" Billy Bunter negotiated another tart. "I say, you fellows, what are you doing round here?"

"Cycling tour," said Jimmy.

"Oh! Not so jolly as caravanning!" said Bunter loftily. "I suppose a fellow has to be satisfied with what he can afford, though."

The Fistical Four looked at Bunter. They remembered his polished manners of old. Evidently his manners were still as polished as of yore.

"Exactly," said Jimmy Silver, with a nod. "Well, we'll be getting along, you chaps. I thought there might be some fellows we knew about——"

"You know me, don't you?" grunted Bunter.

"Only too well!" grinned Lovell. "But if you're on your own here, we won't bother you, dear boy."

"Hold on a minute," said Bunter. The fat junior was eyeing the Rookwooders through his big spectacles in a very thoughtful way.

Apparently some new and entertaining thought was working in William George Bunter's fat brain, for he burst into a sudden chuckle.

"He, he, he!"

"Hallo! Where's the joke?" asked Lovell.

"Oh, nothing!" Bunter chuckled again. "I say, you fellows, biking isn't nearly as good as caravanning. You take my word for it. How'd you like to come caravanning with me?"

"What!"

"Lots of room in the van," said Bunter. "There's two bunks, and I use only one, of course. There's a tent, too—a tiptop tent. Blankets and ground-sheets, and things for the lot of you. The—the fact is, I was going to ask some fellows to come caravanning with me, but I changed my mind. I felt that, after all, I couldn't stand Wharton, and that beast Bob Cherry is always kicking a chap——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nugent's rather a beast, too, and Johnny Bull is an awful beast!" continued Bunter. "As for Hurree Singh, he's a dashed nigger. Upon the whole, I couldn't have that crowd."

"So you're vanning it on your lonely own?" asked Jimmy Silver, rather puzzled.

"That's it. Still, I'd like some company, and if you fellows care to come along for a few days, I'd be glad. You're welcome, in fact. You can stick your bikes in the caravan—and there's lots of grub. Of course, you'll have to pay your own exes as we go."

"We should want to."

THE POPULAR.—No. 342.

"Then we should agree on that," said Bunter. "I'd really be glad to have you. I say, have some of these tarts."

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at one another.

They had started out on a cycling tour which was to last for a week, putting up at inns or camping out as the spirit moved them.

Undoubtedly it would be a pleasant change to "van it" for a few days. The caravan was big and clean and comfortable; the horse was evidently a good one; and in the van there was a good supply of all sorts of travelling tackle. How Billy Bunter could have afforded such an outfit for his holiday was rather a mystery; but that, of course, was not the business of the Rookwooders.

The chums of Rookwood were strongly tempted to accept Bunter's generous invitation.

The only objection, really, was Bunter himself. He was not a fellow towards whom the Co. felt any yearnings of friendship or admiration. They had seen little of him, it was true; but the little they had seen had not impressed them very favourably.

Still, they could not help feeling that this invitation was decent of Bunter, and that it would be rather ungracious to decline it. Indeed, the offer was so kind and spontaneous that Jimmy felt that he had not really done Bunter justice.

Bunter handed out the tarts quite generously. The four Classical juniors of Rookwood helped themselves. Undoubtedly the tarts were good.

"Do come!" urged Bunter. "I'll be jolly glad to have you. In fact, I'm getting a bit 'fed' with my own company. We'll pull together first rate. I promise you a ripping time. Do come!"

"You're awfully good!" said Jimmy, after a pause.

Bunter waved a fat hand.

"Not at all! It will be a pleasure to me. I'm just going to break camp and move on. Only stopped here for—for a midday rest. I want to get as far as I possibly can to-night. You fellows make up your minds to come along. Do!"

And Jimmy Silver & Co. made up their minds.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Caravanning!

"GEE-UP!"

The horse was harnessed, and the green caravan jerked and moved. It followed a track across the field towards the gate upon which the Fistical Four had been sitting when they first spotted the van.

Billy Bunter glanced round rather anxiously as they started.

"Buck up as fast as you can, you fellows!" he said. "Give the horse a lick, somebody. Get a move on!"

"What's the hurry?" asked Raby.

"Well, that farmer chap might come around."

"My hat! Didn't you have permission to camp here?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Ye-es; but—well, get a move on. No good wasting time."

The caravan rolled on towards the gate. Jimmy Silver threw the gate open, and the van rolled through. Then there was a pause while the Rookwood chums stacked their bicycles on board.

Bunter blinked round very impatiently during that operation.

"For goodness' sake, buck up!" he exclaimed. "You Rookwood fellows are awful slow-coaches!"

"Hallo! There's a johnny wants to speak to us," said Lovell, with a gesture

towards a big man in gaiters, evidently a farmer, who was hurrying across the field from the direction of a distant farmhouse.

Bunter turned his spectacles towards the man in gaiters.

"Who—who—who is it?" he ejaculated.

"Looks like a farmer."

"All you fellows' fault, for not hurrying!" snapped Bunter. "I shall have to pay him now."

"Pay him?" ejaculated Jimmy Silver. "I was going to pay him five bob for camping on his land," said Bunter. "I thought we could get off without being seen."

"Why, you—" began Arthur Edward Lovell hotly.

He checked himself in time, as he remembered that he was Bunter's guest.

"Lend me five bob, one of you fellows," said Bunter hastily. "I happen to have run out of ready money—change, I mean. No good asking that man to change a fiver."

Jimmy Silver fished out five shillings from his pocket, and Bunter took the coins hastily and hurried to meet the farmer. For reasons best known to himself Bunter did not seem to want the rural gentleman to come into speaking contact with the Rookwooders.

Jimmy Silver & Co. watched him in silence. They saw Bunter hand the five shillings to the farmer, who was frowning—evidently quite well aware that the fat junior had intended to "bilk" him. The farmer turned and walked away with a snort, and Bunter hurried to rejoin the Rookwooders.

"Now, let's get on as fast as we can!" he gasped.

"Anybody else you owe money to?" asked Arthur Edward Lovell sarcastically.

"Let's get on!" said Jimmy Silver hastily.

The caravan rolled on down the sunny lane. Billy Bunter sat in the driver's seat, though he did not drive; Jimmy was leading the horse. The Rookwood chums had done caravanning themselves before this, and they were much more experienced vanners than William George Bunter. From his seat the Owl of Greyfriars blinked uneasily towards every corner of the landscape. The chums of Rookwood could not help noticing his uneasiness.

"I—I say, you fellows, do you see anybody after us?" asked Bunter, at last. The Owl of Greyfriars seemed to feel the handicap of short sight more severely than usual just then.

"No," answered Jimmy Silver.

"Not a chap on a bike?"

"No."

Billy Bunter picked up the whip.

"I think we'll put a bit of speed on at first," he said. "You fellows can trot, I suppose?"

"Yes; but—"

"It's a bit warm for trotting," said Raby.

"Oh, don't be a slacker!" said Bunter encouragingly. "We never slack at Greyfriars, I can tell you. A trot will do you good. Gee-up!"

Bunter gave the horse a flick with the whip, and the animal broke into a trot. The caravan rumbled on more rapidly. Jimmy Silver & Co. had to break into a trot to keep pace.

The sun was blazing down on the road, and certainly it was very hot. The four Rookwooders crimsoned and perspired as they ran.

"Look here, Bunter!" gasped Lovell. "This isn't caravanning. What the thump's the good of racing like this?"

"Oh, don't slack!" said Bunter. "You Rookwood chaps seem to be awful slackers, if you don't mind my saying so."

"You silly owl, who's slacking?" roared Lovell. "You're sitting on the van, you lazy bounder!"

"Well, you can't get into the van," said Bunter. "It would be a bit too much for the horse, carrying a load like that. Caravanners are supposed to walk. Stick to it!"

"If we're going to keep up this speed, we'll get our bikes out."

"We don't want to stop for that," argued Bunter. "What's the good of wasting time? Don't be soft!"

"Soft!" gasped Lovell.

"Stick it out! Be a man, you know! Like me!"

"Oh!"

Arthur Edward Lovell went to the horse's head, and slowed him down. Then, with a grip on the rein, he led the horse. Bunter cracked the whip and yelled:

"Leggo that horse, Lovell!"

"Don't be an ass, Bunter!" said Jimmy Silver impatiently. "We're not going to race about in this sun! We'll walk or bike it."

"Let's get out the bikes and clear off!" growled Lovell.

Apparently Arthur Edward was already satisfied with the sample he had received of William George Bunter's hospitality.

Billy Bunter looked alarmed.

"I—I say, you fellows, you can't desert me now!" he exclaimed. "I—I can't camp out alone to-night!"

"You've been camping out alone, haven't you?" demanded Jimmy Silver. "Eh? Oh—ah—yes! But—but—er—those tramps, you know!" Bunter stammered. "I'll slow down, if you like. But I say, you fellows, really, you know, you shouldn't be such slackers!"

To which the Rookwood juniors made no rejoinder. Any reply they had made would certainly not have been suitable from guests to host. So they contained their feelings and were silent.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter's Little Way!

JIMMY SILVER & CO. settled down to a steady tramp with the caravan, and found that they quite liked it. It reminded them of old caravanning days in an earlier vac.

When they wanted a rest they took turns in the driver's seat, for William George Bunter abandoned that after a time. Bunter rolled into the caravan, and spread himself in a bunk to take a nap. He seemed to be relieved of his fears of pursuit when the van had covered a few miles by road and lane and woodland path.

"This isn't so bad," Lovell remarked. "It's a change from biking. Might stick it for a few days."

"We might!" agreed Jimmy Silver, fanning himself with his hat. "It's rather luck to drop on a caravan outfit like this. Blessed if I can figure it out how Bunter got hold of it!"

"I say, you fellows!" Bunter blinked out of the van. "I say, stop a bit in the next village, and do some shopping, will you?"

"Certainly!" said Jimmy. "It's about time for tea."

"Oh, we don't want to stop for tea!" said Bunter, with a blink back along the road. "Let's cover some ground before

nightfall. You can eat a snack as you march, you know."

"Oh, all right!"

"You can do the shopping, Silver—I'll make up a list of things to get," said Bunter.

"Right you are!"

Refreshed by his nap, the fat junior became busy in the van with a paper and a stump of pencil. He helped himself occasionally from the van larder as he pondered and scribbled. The van rolled on into a village, and drew to a halt outside the village store.

"Here you are, Silver!"

Bunter tossed out the list. Jimmy Silver glanced at it. There were about thirty items on the list, and, at a rough estimate, it came to about twelve pounds. The captain of the Rookwood Fourth stared at Bunter.

"Where's the tin for this?" he asked.

"Oh, ask 'em if they'll change a fiver!" said Bunter carelessly.

"A fiver won't cover this."

"I mean, a tenner."

"It comes to over ten quid."

"Then I'll get out my fifty-pound note," said Bunter.

"Your what?"

"Fifty-pound note. Ask them if they'll change it."

Jimmy gazed at him.

"I don't suppose they've got change for a fifty-pound note in a village shop," he said. "And I'm pretty certain they wouldn't change one for strangers if they had."

"Then I'll tell you what," said Bunter.

"You pay for that little lot, Silver, and I'll square when I get the fifty-pound note changed."

"You've got to get the fifty-pound note first!" grunted Lovell.

"Oh, really, Lovell—"

"I'll do the shopping," said Jimmy Silver. "But it won't run to anything like this, Bunter."

"If you're going to be mean, Silver I—"

Jimmy decided not to hear that remark. He went into the village shop, and expended the sum of one pound there. He came out with a variety of packages and parcels.

"Lots here for tea and supper and brekker to-morrow," he remarked.

Bunter eyed the consignment with disfavour.

"Not much there!" he said. "What did it cost?"

"A quid."

"Well, I owe you a quid, then," said Bunter. "I'm going to stand the grub, as you're my guests."

"Not at all," said Jimmy Silver.

"We'll pay our own exes, Bunter."

Bunter shook his head decidedly.

"I can't allow that!" he said.

"But, really—"

"I must insist, Silver!" said Bunter firmly. "You're my guests, and I can't allow you to pay for your grub. I shall hand you the pound. I insist upon it!"

"Oh, all right!" said Jimmy. "I'd rather pay, but I don't mind." And he held out his hand for the pound.

Bunter blinked at it.

"Not just at this minute," he said.

"I'm expecting a postal-order at the post-office, when we get to Canterbury—"

"We're not going towards Canterbury."

"I—I mean, Reading!"

"Not much difference!" remarked Raby sarcastically.

"We shall want some more stuff than this," said Bunter. "One jar of jam isn't much good. I can manage that by myself at tea, and I shall want some more at brekker. Get another quid's

worth, Silver, and I'll settle both quids at the same time."

Jimmy Silver eyed him. He remembered some of Billy Bunter's little ways, and he comprehended.

"We'll make this lot do," he said curtly.

"Oh, really, Silver—"

"Now to camp somewhere for tea," said Lovell, leading the horse on through the village street.

"I decline to halt for tea," said Bunter. "This is my caravan, ain't it? I'm not stopping till sundown. Have a snack as you go."

"Just as you like!" breathed Lovell.

The caravan rolled on out of the village, down a leafy Surrey lane. Jimmy Silver & Co. were hungry, but they managed with bread-and-cheese as they walked. Bunter did not walk. He sat in the van, stating his intention of packing the goods in the larder. It was not the larder, however, that he packed most of them into, as the chums of Rookwood were destined to discover later.

Mile after mile glided under the rolling wheels, while the sun sank lower over the Surrey downs. The glorious summer's day was drawing to a close.

Jimmy Silver was looking out for a camp as he walked with the horse. He found a suitable spot at last—a field sloping down to a little glistening brook. The van halted at a gate, and Bunter put his head out.

"What are you stopping for?" he asked.

"Time to camp."

"You fellows tired out already?" asked Bunter. "My hat! Don't the chaps ever do any walking at Rookwood?"

"You've been slacking in the van all the time," said Lovell, breathing hard. "We've done a good ten miles."

"What's that?" sniffed Bunter. "I'm good for twenty. But never mind. If you're fagged out you're fagged out, I suppose. Cut off to the farmhouse, one of you, and get permission to camp. Pay 'em anything they want; no good haggling about money when we're on a holiday."

Bunter's lofty view was evidently founded upon the fact that the money concerned was not his own. But the chums of Rookwood made no rejoinder to his remark.

"Get some milk and eggs at the farm, if you can, and cheese," said Bunter.

"Anything you can, in fact."

"We've got the grub for supper and brekker," said Jimmy.

"Eh? Where?"

"It's in the van, isn't it?" said Jimmy, with a stare. "The lot I bought in the village."

"Oh, really, Silver! I've had my tea since then. There's some bread left," said Bunter, "nearly a whole loaf—"

"Wha-a-at!"

"It's rather a pity you didn't get another pot of jam," said Bunter, blinking at him. "It was nice!"

"Oh!"

"You may be able to get some home-



A SURPRISE ATTACK! From the darkness came a sudden rush. Five shadowy forms crashed into Jimmy Silver & Co., and the next moment there was a whirling battle in progress. "Give 'em jip!" came a yell, and Jimmy Silver jumped as he recognised it. "Harry Wharton!" he exclaimed. (See Chapter 5.)

made jam at the farm," added Bunter. "Pay what they ask for it, and I'll settle up later. Keep a strict account, of course."

Jimmy Silver seemed to swallow something hard. He started off towards the farmhouse. When he returned he brought permission to camp and a jug of milk.

"Other things coming?" asked Bunter.

"There's no other things," said Jimmy Silver. "We're not millionaires, Bunter!"

"Blessed if I like this!" the fat junior growled. "Wharton, and his crowd would be better than this. We'd better keep on, I think, till we come to a village again, and get some more grub."

"They wouldn't be able to change your fifty-pound note," said Lovell sardonically, "and we're camping here, anyhow."

"Look here, Lovell, whose is this caravan?" roared Bunter. "I'm jolly well not going to camp here!"

"Well, we are," said Lovell. "Please yourself, Bunter. Drive on your giddy caravan till you come to the Severn, for all I care. I'm fed-up with walking!"

Bunter glowered through his big spectacles. Jimmy Silver had opened the gate, and Raby led the horse into the meadow.

"I—I say, you fellows, I'll camp here if you like," said Bunter. "I—I don't want to camp by myself. But I think—"

"Oh, never mind what you think!" grunted Lovell. "Give us a rest, old scout."

"If that's your thanks to a chap who takes you out caravanning, Lovell—"

"Br-r-r-r!" said Arthur Edward.

And the caravan rolled into the meadow, and William George Bunter rolled after it, grunting discontentedly.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Sudden Surprise!

JIMMY SILVER & CO. halted the caravan near a brook and took out the horse. Bunter did not lend a hand in making the camp. He sat on a knoll and gave directions. But as his directions were not heeded by the Rookwood fellows that did not matter.

While Lovell was looking after the horse, and Raby gathering firewood, and Newcome going upstream for water, Jimmy Silver looked into the van, to see what supplies there might be for supper. Of his late purchases in the village very little remained. The Owl of Greyfriars had accounted for most of them already. Jimmy Silver & Co. were hungry after their march, and they wanted supper, and wanted it badly. There was the best part of a loaf, and there were some rashers of bacon in the larder, and a tin of sardines, and plenty of tea, coffee, and cocoa. Jimmy decided that there was enough to make up a supper of sorts, and breakfast was a problem that could be left till the morning.

Jimmy, while he was in the van, gave his attention only to the food supplies, but he could not help noticing one or two little circumstances that rather perplexed him. There were several travelling bags in the van, and one of them had the initials "H. W." and another "R. C." He wondered whether Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry had lent those bags to Bunter for his trip. It was rather singular.

Raby soon had a camp-fire going, and a kettle was swung over it to boil. Pro-

visions were rather short, but cocoa was very filling, and there was going to be plenty of cocoa. Billy Bunter extracted a frying-pan from somewhere to cook the bacon. The scent of frying bacon was very grateful and comforting to the hungry Rookwood juniors. And there were five stout rashers, very pleasing for hungry eyes to look upon.

"I say, you fellows, I'm sorry you'll get rather short commons," said Bunter, as he turned the rashers into a plate. "Still, I warned you, didn't I? If you'd only done that shopping, Silver—"

"Oh, we'll make shift!" said Jimmy, slicing the loaf. "There's enough to go round."

"Glad you think so," said Bunter. "Plenty of sugar in my cocoa, please."

"I don't seem to see any sugar," said Jimmy. "I bought a pound in the village."

"Dear me! I must have finished it," said Bunter. "When I start on lump sugar it goes, you know."

"I see it does."

"Well, I can manage cocoa without sugar," said Bunter heroically. "I'm the fellow to rough it, you know. Put in plenty of milk, and make it thick. You fellows can have all the sardines," he added generously.

"Eh?"

"I'll make the bacon do," said Bunter. The Rookwood juniors watched him with fascinated eyes as he took the plate of rashers on his knees, and started with knife and fork.

As there were five rashers, Jimmy Silver & Co. had supposed that there would be one each all round. Evidently Bunter hadn't supposed so. He blinked up at the surprised juniors with his mouth full.

"Don't spare the sardines," he said liberally. "Pile in!"

There was one tin of sardines, and it was not a large one. Arthur Edward Lovell gazed at the fat junior, and gazed and gazed, as if he were mesmerised.

"My hat!" he said at last, as if waking out of a dream. "M-m-my hat!"

He made no further remark.

Jimmy Silver & Co. supped lightly on bread and sardines—not too much bread and very few sardines. They washed down that frugal repast with cocoa and milk. Fortunately, there was plenty of both. Conversation was sparse round the caravanners' camp-fire. Bunter's jaws were too busy for talking, and silence seemed to have fallen upon the Rookwood juniors. When Billy Bunter had finished the bacon he blinked affably at his guests.

"I feel better now," he remarked.

"I'm awfully glad to hear that!" said Lovell.

"I could do with some more, of course," said Bunter. "If you'd got that cake I put on my list, Silver, and another pot or two of jam! Still, I'm not the fellow to grumble. But, I say, you fellows, what about brekker?"

"What indeed?" said Jimmy. "That farmer yonder looked a pretty prosperous Johnny; he may be able to change your fifty-pound note for you."

Bunter coughed. He did not pursue the subject, but he blinked several times, in a suspicious sort of way, at Jimmy Silver & Co.

"I think I'll turn in," he remarked at last. "I'm going to sleep in the van. You fellows can put up the tent. Wake me up about ten. I dare say you can get something at the farmhouse for brekker, Silver."

"I dare say," assented Jimmy.

Bunter rolled into the caravan. In the ruddy glimmer of the camp-fire the

chums of Rookwood looked at one another.

"Serves us right!" said Lovell. "We knew Bunter, or ought to have known him. Ought we to wait till he's up in the morning, before we take our bikes and clear?"

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"We'll say good-bye," he said. "My hat! No wonder he's caravanning on his own! A chap who went vanning with him would have to be prepared to be a member of the noble army of martyrs, I think."

There was a sound in the distance towards the lane. Jimmy Silver glanced carelessly round. Then there came a rustle in the willows near the camp. And then a powerful voice suddenly shouted:

"That's the van! Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here they are!"

"What the thump—" began Jimmy Silver, jumping up.

From the darkness came a sudden rush. Five shadowy forms crashed into the Pastoral Four of Rookwood.

"Collar 'em!"

"Smash 'em up!"

"Pile in, you fellows!"

"My only hat!" gasped Jimmy.

"Line up, you chaps! Oh crikey!"

Before he had fairly uttered the words, a wild and whirling fight was in progress.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Light at Last!

CRASH!

Bump!

"Yoooop!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Give 'em jip!"

Jimmy Silver rolled in the grass in a powerful grasp. Somebody was sitting on Lovell, who was on his back, roaring. Raby and Newcome were engaged in a desperate conflict. From the doorway of the caravan the startled face of Billy Bunter stared out, the firelight glimmering on his big spectacles. Jimmy rolled his adversary over, and bumped his head on the ground, and there was a yell.

"Rescue, my esteemed chums!"

"Harree Singh!" yelled Jimmy Silver, in amazement.

"Bob Cherry!" roared Lovell, recognising the fellow who was sitting on his chest at the same moment.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Jimmy Silver!"

"Harry Wharton!"

"Great Scott!"

The combatants separated breathlessly, and glared and stared at one another. The surprise was mutual. Jimmy Silver threw a fresh armful of brushwood on the fire, and it blazed up, and threw a radius of light upon the scene.

Harry Wharton & Co. of the Greyfriars Remove, stared blankly at the Rookwood juniors. They were astounded. And so were Jimmy Silver & Co.

"You!" stammered Wharton. "Silver—Lovell—you! When did you take to stealing caravans?"

"Stealing caravans!" yelled Jimmy Silver.

"Well, you've bagged our van—"

"Your van!" gasped Jimmy.

"Our van," said Bob Cherry warmly. "We came back to camp and found it missing, and Bunter missing, too; and we've tracked you a good ten miles. What do you mean by it, I'd like to know?"

"Just explain that!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"And tell us what you've done with Bunter," added Frank Nugent. Jimmy Silver gasped. "You—you mean to say that's your van?" he babbled. "Whose thumping van did you think it was?" demanded Harry Wharton. "Did you come on it and fancy it was growing in the field like a potato?" "You bagged it, whether you knew it was ours or not!" roared Johnny Bull. "And I'd like to know what you mean by bagging our caravan, and giving us a ten-mile tramp to find you? And where's Bunter?" "Oh dear! I—I say, you fellows, what—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's Bunter and—"

"What does this mean, Silver?" demanded Harry Wharton. Jimmy Silver panted for breath. The true inwardness of the situation, as it were, was dawning upon him at last. "Bunter—that fat villain Bunter—" he stuttered. "Bunter—"

"He told us he was caravanning alone, and invited us to join him!" roared Lovell. "Now do you understand, you silly owls?"

Wharton jumped. "T-t-told you he was c-c-caravanning alone!" he stuttered. "Why, the fat villain! We'd only gone into town with the bikes to get a tyre mended. We left him in charge of the camp—"

"Oh, my hat!" said Raby.

"He told us it was his van!" shrieked Newcome. "And we—"

"We believed him!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "Certainly, we ought to have known Bunter better than to believe him."

"Oh, really, Silver—"

Harry Wharton burst into a laugh. "All serene!" he exclaimed. "The fat villain took you in, of course. Sorry we rushed you like that. You see, we found our van missing, and we've had a terrific tramp tracking it here; and—and we didn't recognise you; we supposed you'd bagged our van, and—and—"

"All right, no harm done," said Jimmy Silver, rubbing his nose. "We were clearing off in the morning, anyhow; we're fed-up with your precious Bunter."

"Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry. "You fat boulder—"

"I—I say, you fellows, 'tain't true!"

The Greyfriars juniors rushed towards the caravan. Bunter, in the powerful grasp of Bob Cherry, was jerked out, and he landed in the grass with a terrific roar.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Now, what do you mean by it?" roared Bob.

"I—I say, you fellows, 'tain't true; I—I've been kidnapped. Those Rookwood bouncers kidnapped me—yah! Leggo my ear, you beasts! I mean, I—I wandered away in my sleep—yoop! If you don't leave off kicking me, Wharton— Yow-ow! The—the fact is—"

"Well, what's the fact, before we slaughter you?"

"The—the fact is, you fellows haven't treated me properly, and—and I felt quite justified in dropping you off," said Bunter. "As for paying for the van, that's a trifling matter. I'm expecting several postal-orders by—"

"Bump him!"

The next few minutes were like a nightmare to William George Bunter. The Greyfriars caravanners were wrathful—which was not to be wondered at in the peculiar circumstances. And Billy Bunter was put through a ragging that was certainly not more than he deserved, but much more than he wanted. When the indignant juniors had finished with him, the Owl of Greyfriars lay in the grass, and gasped, and gasped like a newly-landed fish.

Jimmy Silver & Co. remained with the caravan a few days, after all, and enjoyed themselves with the Greyfriars juniors, though Billy Bunter eyed them very morosely all the time. But nobody minded Bunter, and when the time came to part, Jimmy Silver & Co. mounted their bicycles and rode away, very well pleased with their caravanning—though not with Bunter!

(There will be another splendid long complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co., the chums of Rookwood, on holiday, entitled "A Black Business!" next week.)



This week our Wireless Expert shows you how to work a loud speaker on a Crystal Set!

A Crystal Loud Speaker.

THE radio set of the future will be such a simple affair—just a small piece of apparatus connected to a loud speaker. Running costs will be nil, and the set will be one that looks entirely after itself.

So far, however, we must be content with bulky apparatus, and to work a loud speaker most people have at least a two-valve amplifier. For those who do not wish to experiment, this is really the only thing that it is possible for them to use. But for radio "fans" who like to experiment a little, there is the microphone amplifier, which, when properly adjusted and attached to a crystal set, will give ample volume from the loud speaker to fill a small room.

The microphone amplifier is not new. It was in use before the valve was introduced. The writer is of the opinion that it does not receive the amount of attention it deserves. Whilst admitting that its adjustments are slightly more critical than those of a valve amplifier, I would emphasise the fact that

valves are costly things and liable to break. The microphone amplifier is delicate in adjustment, but there are no frail parts.

Let us deal with the theory of its working. Fig. 1 shows you a typical microphone amplifier circuit. On the left we have the telephone terminals of an ordinary crystal set. To these terminals an ordinary single high-resistance earpiece is attached. To the diaphragm of this earpiece (the diaphragm, of course, is the circular disc that vibrates under the influence of the magnets inside) is soldered a small nut—right in the dead centre—and affixed to this nut is the projecting bolt of a Skinderviken microphone button (which is procurable at any electrical shop), and this, in series with a battery of four or six volts, is connected to the primary of a transformer. In the secondary of the transformer we have the loud speaker.

Signals—loud signals—are received in the crystal circuit, and cause the diaphragm of the single headphone to vibrate. As the diaphragm is connected to the microphone button, these vibrations are sufficient to set the microphone into operation, and signals are passed through the transformer to the loud speaker.

A word about the microphone button. This is the invention of Mr. J. Skinderviken, who has been experimenting for years with microphones. His latest microphone button is a wonderful little thing, scarcely larger than a sixpence, and yet capable of as much work as the hefty microphones on the ordinary Post Office telephone system. If you are at all interested in this subject, a little booklet, entitled "Marvels of the Microphone," sold at 6d. in most electrical shops, will give you heaps of valuable information.

To return to our loud speaker circuit. I have so far made no mention of the transformer. This is included in the circuit because most people possess loud speakers of high resistance, making a transformer necessary.

There are one or two courses open to you here.

One is to buy a transformer specially made for this circuit, which will cost you about ten shillings. Another is to buy a second-hand transformer at an ex-Government electrical store. Yet another is to wind the transformer yourself, and, lastly, you can rewind your loud speaker (or earphone that you are using as a loud speaker to a very low resistance.

If you have money, by all means get the new transformer. If you want something cheaper, scout round the ex-Government stores for a high-ratio transformer. Don't get one that is unmarked in any way.

If you want to wind your own transformer, write to me, c/o the Editor of this paper, and I will give you complete instructions. Restriction of space prevents me from doing so here, although if I find that many of you want to do this, I will devote an article to the subject later.

The system whereby the loud speaker or phone is rewound to a low resistance I have

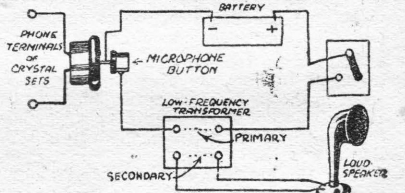
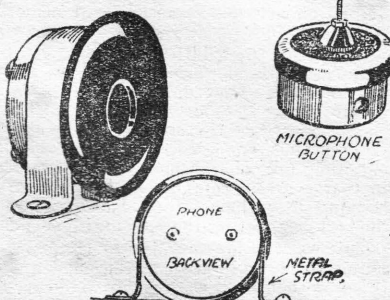


Fig. 1. Showing a typical microphone amplifier circuit.

not personally tried. The American "Experimenter" suggests removing the bobbins from inside the phone, taking off the fine wire that is wound on them, and rewinding them with No. 26 enamelled wire. This will give you a very low resistance, and instead of connecting up to the secondary of the transformer, the loud speaker is put straight into circuit where primary connections are shown in the diagram.

The small switch in the battery circuit is to enable you to switch off the battery when the loud speaker is not required.

I would emphasise in closing that this circuit is by no means perfect, but it is immensely interesting. You may be troubled by vibration, which will cause jarring noises in the loud speaker. This can be overcome by mounting your apparatus on a layer of thick felt or other shock-absorbing material.



A method of fixing down the earphone to the base of the set.