

Gerald Campion as Billy Bunter in the BBC television series that was launched in 1952 and ran, off and on, for ten years



Ron Moody as Hurree Singh, Barry Macregor as Johnny Bull, Michael Danvers-Walker as Frank Nugent, Gerald Campion as Billy Bunter, Harry Searle as Harry Wharton and Brian Smith as Bob Cherry in a 1954 episode of the BBC TV Bunter series



# BUNTER

## THE HYPNOTIST

A TELEVISION PLAY BY FRANK RICHARDS

*A landing.*

BUNTER *is sprawling on a settee by the bannisters, reading a book. He is deeply engrossed in it.*

CHERRY'S VOICE (*calling from below*). Bunter!

*Bunter does not heed.*

CHERRY'S VOICE. Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter!

*Bunter makes an irritated movement, but takes no other notice.*

WHARTON'S VOICE. Fetch him down, Bob.

*Footsteps on stairs. Bunter, heedless, mumbles aloud over his book.*

CLOSE UP: *Book, showing title: 'HOW TO HYPNOTIZE! One shilling.'*

BUNTER (*mumbling to himself*). Looks easy enough. You simply have to learn the passes, from these diagrams, and once you've got 'em perfect, you can put the 'fluence on.

*He puts down the book on his knees and makes a few passes in the air with his hands.*

I shall want some practise, of course. But it will come all right! And then, won't I make 'em hop.

*He picks up the book again, and reads aloud.*

A hypnotist requires a strong personality and an iron will! (*He nods.*) Well that's me all over! I fancy I shall get it all right!

CHERRY *enters.*

CHERRY. Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here you are, you fat ass.

*Bunter hastily closes the book and puts it under his arm.*

CHERRY. Deaf, old fat man? I've been calling you.

BUNTER (*irritably*). Well, don't.

CHERRY. Wharton's sent me up to fetch you.

BUNTER. Bother Wharton!

CHERRY. Can't bother your form-captain. Come on.

BUNTER. Oh, do go away.

CHERRY. You're due for games practice, fathead.

Come down and squeeze into your flannels.

BUNTER. I've no time for that. Go away.

CHERRY. What?

BUNTER. You're interrupting me.

CHERRY. That's what I've come up for, ass. Games practice . . .

BUNTER. Blow games practice.

CHERRY. Every man in the Remove has to turn up.

BUNTER. I don't need so much practice as you fellows do. I can *play* cricket! Anyhow I'm too busy now . . . I'm studying this book . . .

CHERRY. Blessed if I ever saw you swotting before. Mugging up Latin for Quelch?

BUNTER. Oh, don't be an ass! Think it's a school book?

CHERRY. Well, I suppose it wouldn't be, as you're reading it! But chuck it now, whatever it is . . .

BUNTER. Shan't!

WHARTON'S VOICE. Are you coming, Bob? Roll that fat slacker down.

CHERRY. Coming! Now, then, Bunter . . .

BUNTER. Do shut up! I tell you I've got to study this. Ow! Leggo!

CHERRY *takes him by the collar.*

BUNTER. Beast! Leggo!

BUNTER *struggles, and the book falls from under his arm.*

CHERRY *stoops to pick it up, and BUNTER dives for it at the same moment. Their heads meet with a crack.*

CHERRY (*staggering*). Oh!

BUNTER. Yaroooooh!

CHERRY. You clumsy fat ass, you've jolly nearly cracked my nut. (*He rubs his head.*)

BUNTER (*also rubbing his head*). Ow! Oh! Ow! Wow!

CHERRY *picks up book, and holds it out to Bunter.*

CHERRY. Here you are! Now . . .

BUNTER (*yelling*). Gimme my book! Don't you jolly well look at that book!

*He jumps at CHERRY, snatching the book from his hand.*

CHERRY (*staring*). You potty porpoise. Think I want to look at your book, whatever it is. Look here, come on and get changed. Here . . . hallo, hallo, hallo . . . Stop!

BUNTER. Beast!

*He crams the book into an inside pocket, dodges CHERRY, and bolts across the landing.*

CHERRY (*shouting*). Stop!

*Enter SKINNER and SNOOP, coming across landing towards stairs. BUNTER in full flight, crashes into them. SKINNER totters on one side SNOOP on the other. BUNTER sits down between them gasping for breath.*

SKINNER. Why, you mad ass . . .!

SNOOP. You dithering rhinoceros . . .!

BUNTER. Ooooooooh!

CHERRY *grasps him by the back of the collar and heaves him to his feet.*

CHERRY. Now come on, fathead.

BUNTER (*yelling*). Leggo!

CHERRY. This way!

CHERRY *propels BUNTER towards the stairs. SKINNER shakes fist after him. BUNTER resists. Enter WHARTON, NUGENT, BULL and HURREE SINGH from stairs, all in flannels. WHARTON has bat under his arm.*

WHARTON. Bring that fat slacker along.

BUNTER. I say, you fellows, I just can't go down to games practice this afternoon. I've got to bot over a swook . . .

WHARTON. What?

BUNTER. I mean swot over a book.

WHARTON. Catch you swotting, you fat slacker.

BUNTER. I . . . I mean, I've got a pain in my leg . . .

WHARTON. Not much difference between swotting over a book, and a pain in the leg!

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

BUNTER. It's an awful pain . . . like burning daggers . . .

BULL. Which leg?

BUNTER. I forget . . . I . . . I . . . I mean, the right leg. A pain like red-hot needles. I just can't go down to cricket.

NUGENT. Gammon!

SINGH. The gammonfulness is terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter.

CHERRY. Come on!

BUNTER. I . . . I . . . kik-kik-can't! I couldn't hold a bat with this awful pain in my back . . .

BULL. In your back?

BUNTER. I . . . I mean in my arm . . . that is my leg. I . . . I mean in my back as well. I . . . I've got a pain all over.

CHERRY. Nothing to worry about, if it's all over.

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

BUNTER. Oh really, Cherry! I didn't mean it's all over . . . I mean it's all over . . .

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

BUNTER. Blessed if I see anything to cackle at, in a fellow having a fearful pain in his neck . . . I mean his back . . . that is, his leg . . . I just can't walk!

WHARTON. Sure you can't walk?

*He slips his bat down from under his arm into his hand.*

BUNTER. Quite sure, old chap.

WHARTON. Think you could run?

BUNTER. Of course I couldn't.

WHARTON. Well I'm going to prod you with this bat till you get a move on. I fancy you will be able to run.

*He prods BUNTER.*

BUNTER. Yaroooh! Keep off! Keep that bat away! I'm coming, aren't I? Wow!

*Exit BUNTER, running for the stairs, followed by HARRY WHARTON and Co. laughing.*

*Remove Study.*

BUNTER *alone. His is standing before a looking glass, waving his hands at his reflection. He takes a book from his pocket, and scans it anxiously, his brows wrinkled over his spectacles.*

BUNTER. It's coming! It's coming all right! I've only got to practise the passes, and it will be O.K. And I won't jolly well make those fellows hop when I can put the 'fluence on! He, he, he!

*He puts the book back into his pocket and resumes passes before glass.*

BUNTER. I get better every time! Once I get it right, catch old Quelch ragging me in the form-room any more! Why, I could make him cane himself with his own cane, once I get going as a hypnotist.

Hypnotism is a wonderful thing . . . puts tremendous power in a fellow's hands. Lucky I've got a strong personality and an iron will, that's what's wanted!

*He continues to make weird passes before the glass.*  
CHERRY looks in at door and stares blankly at BUNTER.

CHERRY. Bunter! What the dickens . . .

BUNTER turns round angrily.

BUNTER. Oh, get out!

CHERRY. But what . . . ?

BUNTER. I said get out!

CHERRY. That a new thing in physical jerks?

BUNTER. Buzz off!

*He slams the door angrily and resumes passes before glass.*

I can do it! Why, it's easy! When I've had a bit more practice, I'll put the 'fluence on the lot of them! I'll make them sack Wharton and elect me form captain! I'll make Mauly ask me home for the holidays at Mauleverer Towers. I'll make Nugent write my lines for me. I'll make Quelch kow-tow to me in the form-room, by gum! He, he, he! I've got the power!

*More passes. Door opens and MR QUELCH looks in.*  
BUNTER spins round angrily

BUNTER. Is that you again, you silly idiot? Keep your ugly mug out of this study . . . Oh! I . . . I . . . I . . .  
I didn't know it was you, sir!

*He blinks in dismay at MR QUELCH.*

QUELCH. What did you say, Bunter.

BUNTER. I . . . I thought it was Cherry, sir! I . . . I didn't mean to call you a silly idiot, sir! I . . . I didn't know it was you. I . . . I thought it was another silly idiot, sir . . .

QUELCH. Bunter, what were you doing when I looked in? Why were you standing and waving your hands about in that extraordinary manner? What is the meaning of these absurd antics, Bunter?

BUNTER. Oh! Nothing, sir, I . . . I . . . I wasn't practising anything . . .

QUELCH. Practising!

BUNTER. Oh! No, sir! Nothing of the kind. I . . . I . . . I was just exercising my muscles, sir. I . . . I'm a bit stiff after the cricket, sir. My . . . my elbow's very stiff, sir. I . . . I think it may be a touch of pneumonia . . .

QUELCH. Pneumonia . . . in your elbow, Bunter?

BUNTER. Ye-e-es, sir! It . . . it runs in the family, sir!

My . . . my grandfather was lame with it.

QUELCH. You utterly absurd boy . . .

BUNTER. Oh, really, sir . . .

QUELCH. Have you written your lines, Bunter? You have not brought them to me.

BUNTER. Oh! Yes, sir! I . . . I mean no sir! I mean, I was going to. I had to go down to the cricket, sir . . .

I'm awfully keen on games, sir . . . I couldn't cut the cricket . . .

QUELCH. You have had ample time to write your lines, Bunter.

BUNTER. Yes, sir, but I was practising . . .

QUELCH. Practising what?

BUNTER. Oh! Nothing, sir! I . . . I . . . I . . .

QUELCH. I will hear no excuses, Bunter. You have not written your lines, and your imposition is doubled.

BUNTER. Oh, lor'.

QUELCH. (*sternly*). You will write two hundred lines of Virgil, Bunter, instead of one hundred . . . two hundred lines from the Second Book of the *Aeneid*, from "*conticuere omnes*" to "*improvida pectora turbat*".

BUNTER. Oh, crikey!

QUELCH. You will bring me the completed imposition in the form-room tomorrow morning. If you fail to do so, Bunter, I shall cane you.

BUNTER. Oh scissors!

QUELCH. That is all. You are an incorrigibly idle boy, Bunter, and you will be caned if your lines are not handed to me tomorrow morning.

*Exit QUELCH. BUNTER shakes his fist at the door after it is closed.*

BUNTER. Beast! You wait! You just wait till I get going with hypnotism and then won't I jolly well make you cringe. You just wait till I get the 'fluence on you! Yah!

*Turns back to the glass and resumes practising hypnotic passes.*

LORD MAULEVERER stretched lazily in an armchair at the fireside: alone in the room. He glances round as the door opens and BILLY BUNTER enters.

BUNTER (*coming across*). Oh here you are, Mauly.

MAULY. Yaas.

BUNTER. I've been looking for you, Mauly.

MAULY. Now be a good chap, Bunter, and go and look for somebody else.

BUNTER. Oh, really, Mauleverer . . .

MAULY (*making a motion to rise*). I think I'll be pushing off . . .

BUNTER (*sharply*). Sit where you are!

LORD MAULEVERER *stares at him in astonishment*.  
BUNTER *stands in front of him, waving fat hands in the air*. MAULY *squeezes further back into the armchair, in surprise and alarm*.

MAULY. What on earth's that game, Bunter?

BUNTER. That's telling.

MAULY. Gone crackers?

BUNTER. (*sternly*). Don't you be cheeky, Mauleverer.

You may be asking for what you don't want. It isn't safe to cheek a fellow with tremendous and irresistible power in his hands.

MAULY. Wha-a-a-t?

BUNTER. How would you like me to make you put the coal-scuttle on your head, and walk out into the quad with it?

MAULY. Eh?

BUNTER. I could if I liked.

MAULY (*faintly*). Oh gad! Could you?

BUNTER. Easily, now I've had some practice. Easy enough to a fellow with a strong personality and an iron will. The book says . . .

MAULY. The book? What book?

BUNTER. That's telling! I'm not going to tell you anything about the book, Mauly. But it says that weak-minded people are the easiest subjects.

That's why I'm trying it on you first, Mauly.

MAULY. Trying it on? What are you trying on?

BUNTER. Never mind that! I'm not giving away the secret of my tremendous powers, Mauly.

MAULY. Your what?

BUNTER. My tremendous powers. Now, look at this!

BUNTER *picks up the poker from the fender. He holds it up, and MAULY in alarm pushes the armchair back on its castors*. BUNTER *closes in following the armchair as it backs away*.

MAULY. Bunter! Put down that poker, for goodness sake.

BUNTER. It isn't a poker, Mauly.

MAULY. What?

BUNTER. It's a stick of toffee!

MAULY. Oh, help!

BUNTER. What I mean is, that now you're completely under the influence of my iron will, I can make you believe it's a stick of toffee, see?

MAULY. If you've gone crackers, Bunter, for goodness sake put down that poker.

BUNTER (*commandingly*). It's a stick of toffee, Mauly!

I order you to believe it's a stick of toffee. Now, what is it?

MAULY. Have it your own way, Bunter! It's a stick of toffee, if you like. Keep it away from me.

BUNTER (*chuckling*). I knew it would work! I've got it all right now! Quelch is going to get a surprise before long, I can tell you. But never mind Quelch now! Don't try to resist my iron will, Mauly. I've got you just where I want you. You're the slave of my will.

MAULY. Oh, scissors! Am I?

BUNTER. Exactly! You have to do just what I order you. Why, I could make you chew that poker, if I liked, thinking it was toffee.

MAULY. Oh dear! I wish somebody would come in!

BUNTER. But I won't, old fellow. We're pals, ain't we?

We're going to fix up the hols together, old chap.

MAULY. Are we?

BUNTER. That's it, Mauly. That's really what I want to talk to you about. Let's talk it over.

MAULY. Will you put down that poker?

BUNTER. Oh, all right! Now, about the holidays at Mauleverer Towers . . . here . . . I say . . . where are you going, Mauly?

*As BUNTER turns to replace the poker in the fender, LORD MAULEVERER bounds out of the armchair and bolts for the door. BILLY BUNTER stares after him blankly.*

BUNTER (*shouting*). I say, Mauly! Come back old chap!

*The door bangs shut after LORD MAULEVERER.*

BUNTER (*perplexed*). What on earth's the matter with him? I had him right under the 'fluence—and then he suddenly bolts like that? I . . . I wonder if I got the passes quite right! (*Takes out book from his pocket*). Perhaps I need a bit more practice. Maybe Mauly wasn't quite under the 'fluence after all. But it only needs practice . . . the book says so!

*A Remove Study.*

FRANK NUGENT *sitting at the table pen in hand. The door opens and BILLY BUNTER enters.*

NUGENT. Buzz off, bunter.

BUNTER. Oh really, Nugent . . .

NUGENT. Shut the door after you. I'm busy.

BUNTER. I've come here . . .

NUGENT. I can see that! I'm waiting for you to go away again.

BUNTER (*darkly*). Better be civil, Nugent! I'm not going to bully fellows, or anything like that, now that I've got tremendous power in my hands. But you'd better be civil all the same.

NUGENT (*staring*). What does that mean, if it means anything?

BUNTER. Never mind that. Sit still.

*He stands facing NUGENT across the table, making hypnotic passes at him.*

What are you busy about, Nugent?

NUGENT. I've got a translation to do for Monsieur Charpentier. No time to waste. Go away.

BUNTER. I've got two hundred lines to do for Quelch. He says that they're to be handed in tomorrow morning, or it will be whops.

NUGENT. Better cut off and write them, then.

BUNTER. I've no time for it. I've got more important things to think about, I can tell you. You'd be surprised, if you knew.

NUGENT. If I knew what?

BUNTER. Oh nothing, I'm not going to tell you, or anybody else. I'm simply going to do what I jolly well like, in the future, and all the fellows will have to toe the line, like it or lump it. You see, I've got the power.

NUGENT. Wandering in your mind, old fat man?

BUNTER. You're going to do my lines, Nugent.

NUGENT (*laughing*). Am I?

BUNTER. You could make your writing like mine, near enough for Quelch.

NUGENT. Easily! I should only have to make it look as if a spider had swum in the inkpot and crawled over the paper. Nothing doing, all the same. Now go away and let me get on with my translation for Mossou. What on earth are you up to, Bunter?

BUNTER, *without replying, speeds up his hypnotic passes.*

NUGENT *stares at him across the table.*

BUNTER. Now, do you feel it coming on?

NUGENT. Feel what coming on?

BUNTER. Sort of drowsy feeling. That's how it comes on. Feel drowsy?

NUGENT. No, I don't.

BUNTER. Oh, you're a rotten subject. You ought to be drowsy by this time. You go all drowsy and dreamy, and become the slave of my iron will.

NUGENT. Oh, crikey!

BUNTER *continues making passes*: NUGENT *in astonishment and alarm sits staring at him across the table.*

BUNTER. That's better! I can see you're getting it now! Now, Nugent, you've got to write my lines! I order you!

NUGENT. Oh crumbs!

BUNTER. Two hundred from the second book of Virgil, beginning with What-do-you-call it and ending at Thingummy-bob. Mind you make your writing like mine, so that Quelch won't smell a rat. Not that I care a lot for Quelch, you know. I shall soon be giving him orders.

NUGENT (*gasping*). Giving Quelch orders!

BUNTER. Certainly. It may not be quite so easy with Quelch as with a weak-minded fellow like you for instance . . .

NUGENT. Eh!

BUNTER. But I shall manage it all right! I fancy later I'll jolly well make Quelch walk round the form room with the waste-paper basket on his head!

NUGENT. Wha-a-a-t?

BUNTER. I could do it, I can tell you. How would you like to see Quelch caning himself with his own cane?

NUGENT. Oh, jiminy!

BUNTER. He couldn't resist me. Still, I'm leaving Quelch till later. Must be a bit careful with Quelch! Now, you're going to do my lines, Nugent. I command you!

BUNTER *leans over the table, making hypnotic passes right in NUGENT's face.*

NUGENT (*in a yell of alarm*). Keep off!

*He jumps up, grasping the edge of the table and up-ends it towards BUNTER. Books, papers, inkpot, land on BUNTER as he staggers back. He sits down, and the table rests on his legs.*

BUNTER. Yaroooooh!

NUGENT *dodges out of the study.*

Oh crikey! Ow! Wow! Beast! Oh crumbs! I'm all inky! Ow! Oooooooh!

*He is left scrambling up.*

*Remove passage, outside study door.*

HARRY WHARTON, NUGENT, CHERRY, BULL, HURREE SINGH, LORD MAULEVERER, SKINNER AND SNOOP.

WHARTON. Poor old Bunter!

SINGH. The poorfulness of old Bunter is terrific.

CHERRY. He will have to be looked after.

BULL. Better take him to Quelch. Quelch will know what to do.

NUGENT. He's quite crackers! He said he could make Quelch cane himself with his own cane.

MAULY. Yaas. And he got hold of a poker. I can tell you fellows it gave me a scare.

SINGH. The scarefulness must have been preposterous.

CHERRY. It certainly looks as if he's gone off his rocker.

SKINNER. He hadn't far to go.

WHARTON. He's seemed rather queer lately . . . always with his nose in a book! He never was a fellow for reading!

CHERRY. And he won't let anybody see the book, whatever it is.

BULL. He's got to be taken care of before he gets worse.

MAULY. Yaas. Getting hold of a poker, you know . . .

CHERRY. Give him a look in, anyway.

WHARTON. Yes, but keep quiet! Mustn't excite the poor chap. It would be bad for him, in that state.

CHERRY *opens the study door softly. They all look in.*

*Interior of study*

BUNTER *at the looking glass making passes at his reflection. Doorway crowded with staring faces.*

BUNTER (*grinning into the glass*). All right at last, I fancy. But I've got to make absolutely sure before I try it on Quelch, or it would be too risky. He, he, he! Fancy making the old bean walk round the form room with the waste-paper basket on his head! He, he, he!

WHARTON (*whispering*). That does it! Mad as a hatter.

*He steps into the study.*

Here, Bunter old chap.

BUNTER *blinks round, and waves an impatient hand at the boys.*

BUNTER. Go away! I'm busy! Bunk.

WHARTON. We've come here to look after you, Bunter.

BUNTER. Eh? Who wants looking after?

NUGENT. You jolly well do.

CHERRY. Come down with us, Bunter, and see Quelch.

BUNTER (*staring*). I don't want to see Quelch. What do you fancy I want to see Quelch for?

BULL. You'll have to see a doctor. Quelch will ring up the school doctor for you.

BUNTER. Wharrer you mean! I'm not ill, am I?

WHARTON. Yes, you are, old fellow, though you don't know it. You've got to come down to Quelch. He will know what to do.

BUNTER. Look here, you get out, when a fellow's busy. I've got to be ready for Quelch in the form room tomorrow morning. He said he'd cane me if I didn't take in my lines.

SKINNER. You're not doing your lines.

BUNTER. I'm jolly well not going to. I know how to handle Quelch, I can tell you, now I've had some practice. You fellows may get a surprise in the form room tomorrow. Like to see Quelch stand on his head?

SNOOP. Oh, crikey!

BUNTER. I could make him do it.

SKINNER. Quite crackers!

SINGH. The crackerfulness is terrific.

WHARTON. That does it! He's simply got to be taken care of. Now, be a good chap, Bunter, and come quietly.

BUNTER. Shan't!

WHARTON. I'll take one of his arms, and you take the other, Bob, and we'll walk him down.

*They advance on BUNTER, who jumps back.*

BUNTER. I say, you fellows, stop larking. Just clear off. I keep on telling you I'm busy.

MAULY (*anxiously*). Mind he doesn't get hold of a poker.

WHARTON *takes BUNTER by one arm, CHERRY by the other. BUNTER struggles.*

BUNTER (*yelling*). Beasts! Leggo! I'm not going to Quelch. Wharrer you want me to go to Quelch for? SNOOP. Hold him! He's not safe!

CHERRY. Shut up. The poor chap can't help it. Now Bunter old fellow, you're not going to be hurt . . . you're only going to be looked after for your own good.

BUNTER (*yelling*). Leggo.

WHARTON. Walk him along!

BUNTER (*struggling*). Beasts! If you don't jolly well let go, I'll put the 'fluence on the lot of you and make you punch your own heads!

SKINNER. He's getting dangerous.

SNOOP. For goodness sake, keep tight hold of him.

MAULY. Keep hold of his fins. Don't let him near the poker.

*Right*

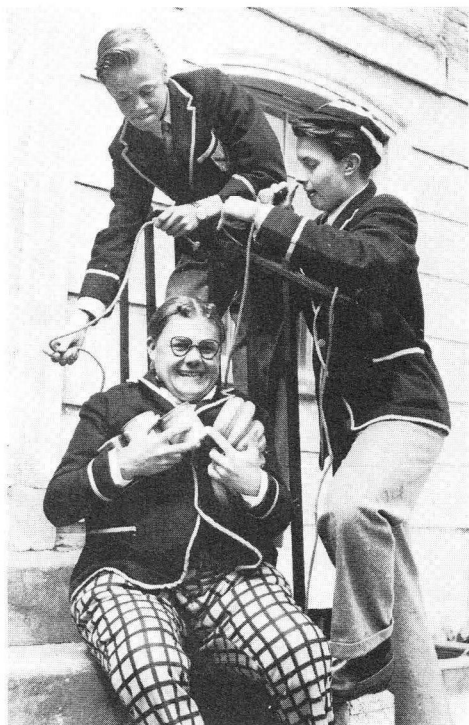
Gerald Campion as Billy Bunter on BBC TV in 1961

*Below right*

Kynaston Reeves as Mr Quelch and Gerald Campion as Bunter on BBC TV in 1954

*Below left*

Cavan Kendall as Bob Cherry, Richard Palmer as Harry Wharton and Gerald Campion as Bunter on BBC TV in 1959





CHERRY. Come on quietly, Bunter, old boy.  
BUNTER (*frantically*). Shan't! Leggo! Beasts!

BUNTER *wrenches loose and makes a rush for the door.*  
SKINNER *grabs at him and BUNTER hits out.* SKINNER  
*staggers, claspng his nose with both hands.*

SKINNER. Ow! Oh! Wow!

CHERRY. Collar him!

BULL. Get hold of him!

SKINNER. Ow! Ow! Ow! I'll smash him! I'll . . .

WHARTON *and CHERRY grasp BUNTER's arms again.*  
SKINNER, *claspng his nose with his left hand, brandishes*  
*his right fist.*

CHERRY. Don't you touch him, Skinner! The poor  
chap can't help being in this state.

BULL. Keep off, Skinner.

SKINNER *is hustled back.*

MAULY. Go easy with the poor chap, but for goodness  
sake don't let him loose again. If he got hold of a  
poker . . .

CHERRY. We've got him all right!

BUNTER (*yelling*). Will you leggo? Wharrer you  
collaring a chap like this for?

SKINNER. Because you're crackers, you fat lunatic!  
Ow! My nose! Ow!

BUNTER (*raving*). I'm not crackers! What have I  
done?

CHERRY. Well, when a chap waves his hands about in  
the air, and makes faces at himself in the glass . . .

BUNTER. Oh, you chump! Oh, you ass! Oh, you  
cuckoo! I was just practising . . .

BULL. Practising what?

BUNTER. I'm not going to tell you. I'm not going to  
tell anybody how I got my wonderful power.

WHARTON. Wandering in his mind, poor fellow. Walk  
him along to Quelch.

CHERRY. Come on, Bunter.

*They walk him to the door.*

BUNTER (*yelling*). Leggo! Look here, you leggo, and  
I'll tell you! There!

WHARTON. You'll tell us what?

BUNTER. I was practising hypnotism. Now you know!

CHERRY. Hypnotism!

NUGENT. What on earth do you mean?

BUNTER. Don't you know what hypnotism is? You  
put the influence on a fellow, and make him do  
anything you like. He hasn't any will of his own!  
I'm really a born hypnotist, having a strong  
personality and an iron will!

WHARTON. My hat!

CHERRY. Whow!

NUGENT. Holy smoke!

BUNTER. Now you know, you silly asses! Mind you  
keep it dark! I don't want Quelch to know, or I  
mightn't be able to hypnotize him. I might not pull  
it off.

SINGH. The mightfulness is terrific.

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

BUNTER. Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. I'm  
learning it from this book. Look! (*Takes book from*  
*pocket*). Look at that! *How to Hypnotize!* Now you  
know! I wasn't going to tell you, but it's all right, if  
Quelch doesn't know! Now you leggo!

*They release BUNTER.*

CHERRY. You fat, footling, frowsy fathead . . .

BUNTER. Oh really, Cherry . . .

CHERRY. You fancy you can hypnotize! Oh, my only  
hat! Ha, ha, ha!

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

MAULY. Oh gad! He fancies . . . ha, ha!

BUNTER. I can jolly well do it, too. You fellows look  
out! But old Quelch is my game. I'm going to put  
the 'fluence on him when he asks for my lines  
tomorrow.

CHERRY. Oh help!

BUNTER. I've got to be careful with Quelch, of course.  
He won't be so easy as Mauly was, when I made  
him believe that the poker was a stick of toffee . . .

MAULY. Oh gad!

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

BUNTER. I'm getting on all right! I'm a pretty good  
hypnotist already! But I may need some more  
practise before I start on Quelch.

WHARTON (*laughing*). I fancy you may.

NUGENT. Quite a lot, in fact.

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

BUNTER. And I may need one of you chaps to practice  
on. Just to make quite sure the 'fluence is working  
you know. I don't want to risk it until I'm sure.  
Quelch has such a beastly temper you know, and he  
might think I was trying to make an ass of him.

CHERRY. He might!

BUNTER. Well, who's going to be the subject. How  
about you Cherry?

CHERRY. Nothing doing old fat man.

BUNTER. Beast! Wharton, you'd make a good subject.

WHARTON. No thanks! Come on you men. Bunter is  
no more crackers than usual. Only learning to be a  
hypnotist! Ha, ha!

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

BUNTER. Beasts!

*They crowd out of the study laughing, SKINNER rubbing his nose. BUNTER frowns after them, kicks the door shut and resumes practising passes.*

*Passage.*

SKINNER and SNOOP stop as the others go off. SKINNER winks at SNOOP.

SKINNER. That blithering ass really thinks he can work it. If he got away with it just once, he would try it on Quelch.

SNOOP. But he couldn't get away with it once. He can't hypnotize.

SKINNER. I know that! But it's easy enough to pull his silly leg.

SNOOP. What?

SKINNER. I'll let him hypnotize me.

SNOOP. But he can't . . .

SKINNER. He'll think he can! I've got a pain in my nose where he punched it. Bunter will have a pain or two if he tries hypnotizing Quelch.

*He winks at SNOOP again and opens the study door.*

*Study.*

BUNTER is still doing hypnotic practice. SKINNER enters.

BUNTER. Oh get out, Skinner.

SKINNER. How are you getting on with the hypnotism Bunter? I'm awfully interested. It's so jolly clever of you, you know.

BUNTER. Oh! The fact is, Skinner, I'm rather a clever chap! I don't brag of it, you know. It just happens. Some fellows have brains, and some haven't. I have, that's all there is to it.

SKINNER. Oh! Ah! Yes! Quite!

BUNTER. I'm getting on fine. I fancy I've got it all right now!

SKINNER. I wonder if you could hypnotize me.

BUNTER. I've no doubt I could. The book says that weak-minded chaps are the easiest subjects.

SKINNER. Thanks!

BUNTER. You see, when I fix my eyes on you, and make the hypnotic passes, my powerful will overcomes your weak will, and you go right under the 'fluence. I give you orders, and you jump to them, without even knowing what you are doing! You become the slave of my will. That's how it works. It's quite simple, really! I shall have Quelch

in the hollow of my hand, once I get the 'fluence on him! But I shan't try it on till I've hypnotized a Remove man first. So come on Skinner, old chap, I'll try on you.

SKINNER. Will it hurt?

BUNTER. Not in the least! I simply put you into the hypnotic trance. You get sort of dreamy and drowsy, and then go under the 'fluence. I wake you up again as soon as I like. It's perfectly simple.

SKINNER. All right, then.

SKINNER sits down.

BUNTER. Now fix your eyes on mine. Look me right in the eye, Skinner! That's right! Now I'm going to make the passes and send you to sleep . . . just as I shall with Quelch tomorrow if this works all right! What are you grinning at Skinner?

SKINNER. Oh! Nothing! Carry on.

BUNTER. Here goes, then.

*He makes hypnotic passes at SKINNER who assumes a dreamy look.*

BUNTER. How do you feel now, Skinner?

SKINNER. Just the same.

BUNTER (*anxiously*). Don't you feel a sort of drowsy, dreamy feeling coming on?

SKINNER. Oh yes! Now you mention it, I feel sort of . . . of drowsy and dreamy . . .

BUNTER (*delighted*). That's right! That's how it works! I've got it all right now! Sort of floating away feeling . . . is that it, Skinner?

SKINNER. It's just that!

BUNTER. I knew I could do it! I hadn't had enough practice when I tried it on Mauly and Nugent, that's all. It's all right now. You're entirely under the influence of my iron will now, Skinner. Got that?

SKINNER (*dreamily*). Yes Bunter.

BUNTER. Now you're the slave of my will, you have to do everything I tell you. Close your eyes.

SKINNER closes his eyes

Now open them again.

SKINNER reopens his eyes.

That's right! Now stand up.

SKINNER stands up.

Take that waste-paper basket out from under the table.

SKINNER *takes out basket*

Now put it on your head!

SKINNER *puts it on his head.*

He, he, he! Now, that isn't a wastepaper basket, Skinner. It's a top-hat. Now, what's that on your head, Skinner.

SKINNER. It's a top-hat!

BUNTER. Fine! Now, your name's not Skinner, Skinner. Your name's John James Joseph Brown.

Now, what's your name, Skinner?

SKINNER. John James Joseph Brown.

BUNTER. He, he, he! I've got you under the 'fluence all right! I could make you believe that you were Julius Caesar or Winston Churchill, if I liked! He, he, he! I could make you walk down to Quelch's study with that waste-paper basket on your head! By gum, that's what I'm going to do to Quelch tomorrow, now that I know it's all right! He, he, he!

SKINNER *gives an explosive chuckle.*

Now I'm going to wake you up. I have to make backward passes to wake you up. Stand still!

BUNTER *waves his hands about.*

Now, wake up, Skinner!

SKINNER *gives a dramatic start.*

SKINNER. Where am I? What has happened? Have I been asleep!

BUNTER. He, he, he! You've been under the 'fluence, old chap! You won't remember a thing of it.

SKINNER. What's this on my head? Why, it's a waste-paper basket! How did it get there?

BUNTER. I made you believe it was a top-hat!

SKINNER. Oh! Did you?

BUNTER. I jolly well did! You were the slave of my will, Skinner, while you were under the 'fluence. I made you believe that your name was John James Joseph Brown.

SKINNER. It's wonderful! You've got tremendous power in your hands, Bunter.

BUNTER. I have . . . I have . . . Just wait till I get going on Quelch. When he asks me for my lines tomorrow, I shall simply put the 'fluence on him! It won't be whops for me. I shall make Quelch whop himself!

SKINNER. Oh, holy smoke!

BUNTER. He, he, he! It will be funny, what?

SKINNER. Funniest thing ever! Ha, ha, ha!

SKINNER *leaves the study.* BUNTER *takes "How to Hypnotize" from his pocket and throws it carelessly on the table.*

BUNTER. I shan't want that any more! I've got it perfect now! Won't I jolly well make Quelch sit up tomorrow! He, he, he!

*Form room.*

*Crowd of juniors, but BUNTER not present.*

WHARTON. Bunter will be late.

CHERRY. Quelch will be here in a minute. The fat ass must have heard the bell.

BULL. Perhaps he's busy practising hypnotic passes.

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

CHERRY. Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he comes.

BUNTER *strolls in, in a leisurely way, hands in pockets.*

BUNTER. I say, you fellows, isn't Quelch here yet?

WHARTON. Here any minute now. The bell's stopped.

Have you got your lines for him?

BUNTER (*contemptuously*). No fear!

NUGENT. Then you'll be whopped.

BUNTER. Forget it! Quelch won't whop me! I'd like to see him do it!

CHERRY. You fat ass! Didn't he tell you . . .

BUNTER. What do I care what he told me? Think I care a button for Quelch? Pah! Quelch will soon find out who's master here!

ALL. What?

SKINNER. Bunter's master here, now that he can hypnotize fellows. Aren't you, Bunter?

BUNTER. Just that!

CHERRY. You fat ass, you couldn't hypnotize a dead donkey.

WHARTON. Look here, you fat chump . . .

BUNTER. You'll jolly well see! I'll jolly well let Quelch know where he gets off!

MAULY. For goodness sake, Bunter, don't try anything with Quelch.

BUNTER. Yah! I'll soon have him feeding from my hand.

CHERRY. Hallo, hallo, hallo, here's Quelch.

MR QUELCH *comes in to the form-room.* BUNTER *with a careless air lingers behind as the Remove go to their places.*

QUELCH. Bunter!  
BUNTER (*casually*). Hallo!  
QUELCH *gives a little jump*.

QUELCH. What? What did you say, Bunter?  
BUNTER. I said hallo!  
QUELCH. Is that the way to answer your form-master,  
Bunter?  
BUNTER. Why not?  
QUELCH. Upon my word! I shall deal with you for this  
impertinence, Bunter. Go to your place im-  
mediately.  
BUNTER. What's the hurry?  
QUELCH. Bless my soul! Do I hear aright?

*He stares blankly at BUNTER, who strolls carelessly past  
him, hands in pockets. QUELCH looks at him, frowning.*

*QUELCH goes to his desk and picks up a cane.*

Bunter! Stand out before the form.  
BUNTER (*drawling*). Any old thing.

*He strolls out before the form. THE REMOVE exchanges  
glances and whispers. QUELCH gazes at BUNTER,  
dumbfounded.*

WHARTON (*whispering*). Is he really crackers after all?  
NUGENT. Must be, to carry on like that.

CHERRY. He's asking for it!

BULL. Quelch will skin him!

SKINNER (*chuckling*). Oh, he's going to put the 'fluence  
on Quelch!

SNOOP. Ha, ha!

QUELCH (*finding his voice*). Silence in the form!

Silence, I say! Now Bunter . . .

BUNTER (*carelessly*). Carry on!

QUELCH. Bless my soul! First of all Bunter, have you  
written your lines!

BUNTER (*in the same careless tone*). Oh, no. Haven't  
had time!

QUELCH. I warned you, Bunter, that you would be  
caned if your lines were not handed in this  
morning. I shall cane you, Bunter.

BUNTER. Sez you!

QUELCH. What? What? Is this boy in his senses?  
What do you mean by this unparalleled impertin-  
ence?

BUNTER. Oh come off it, Quelch.

QUELCH. My ears must be deceiving me.

CHERRY (*in a loud whisper*). Bunter, you awful ass,  
shut up.

BUNTER. Yah!

QUELCH *gazes at BUNTER, who whips round to face him  
and makes hypnotic passes at him. QUELCH backs away  
a pace. THE REMOVE look on breathlessly.*

QUELCH (*faintly*). Bunter! What is the matter with  
you? What is the meaning of these extraordinary  
antics? Bless my soul, is the boy wandering in his  
mind?

BUNTER. That will do! Keep quiet!

QUELCH. Wha-a-t?

BUNTER. Don't jaw, Quelch.

QUELCH. I am dreaming this!

*He stands rooted, gazing at BUNTER.*

BUNTER (*still making passes*). That does it! Keep  
quiet, Quelch, when I tell you! I've got you under  
the 'fluence now! I'm giving orders here.

QUELCH (*faintly*). Wha-a-a-t?

BUNTER. You're the slave of my will. I've got you  
where I want you now. Put down that cane!

QUELCH (*dazed*). Put down this cane?

BUNTER. Yes, and sharp! Sharp's the word, or I'll  
make you cane yourself with it.

QUELCH. The boy must be insane.

BUNTER. No cheek now! Pick up that waste-paper  
basket!

QUELCH. Eh?

BUNTER. And put it on your head!

QUELCH. On—on—on my head?

BUNTER. Yes, and walk round the form-room with it  
on your silly old nut! I say you fellows, you watch  
Quelch, he, he, he!

QUELCH. Either this boy is out of his senses, or this is  
the most amazing, the most unheard of impertin-  
ence! Bunter! I . . .

BUNTER. That will do! I'm master here, Quelch, and  
when I say jump, you jolly well jump! You're  
under the 'fluence now . . . right under.

QUELCH. The 'fluence! What do you mean, Bunter?

BUNTER. You're hypnotized!

QUELCH. Hypnotized!

BUNTER. Just that! I've put the 'fluence on, and you're  
the slave of my will. Put that waste-paper basket on  
your head! At once! Do you hear?

QUELCH. Bless my soul!

BUNTER. Jump to it, I tell you.

QUELCH. Bunter! Are you in your senses? Do you  
imagine, for one moment, that you are able to  
hypnotize . . . and have you the impertinence, the  
unheard of audacity, to dream of hypnotizing your  
form-master? Bless my soul! I shall cane you with

the utmost severity for this, Bunter. I shall make an example of you! Bend over and touch your toes, Bunter!

*He makes a stride at BUNTER, flourishing the cane. BUNTER starts back in alarm.*

BUNTER. Oh, crikey! I . . . I say, ain't you under the 'fluence after all? Oh jiminy! It worked all right with Skinner! Oh crumbs!

QUELCH (*thundering*). Bend over, Bunter!

BUNTER. Oh, lor! I . . . I . . . I say, sir . . .

QUELCH. *Bend over!*

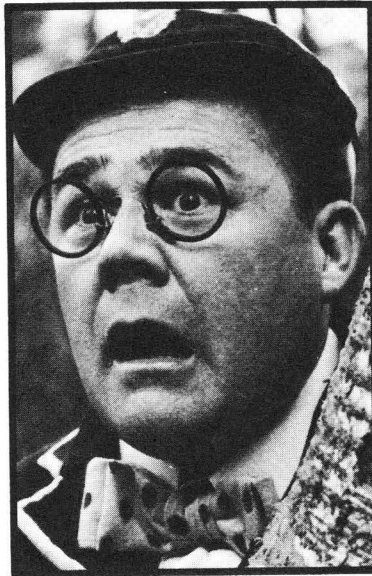
*BUNTER still backs away. QUELCH grasps him by the collar, and bends him over. The cane descends.*

BUNTER. Yaroooooh!

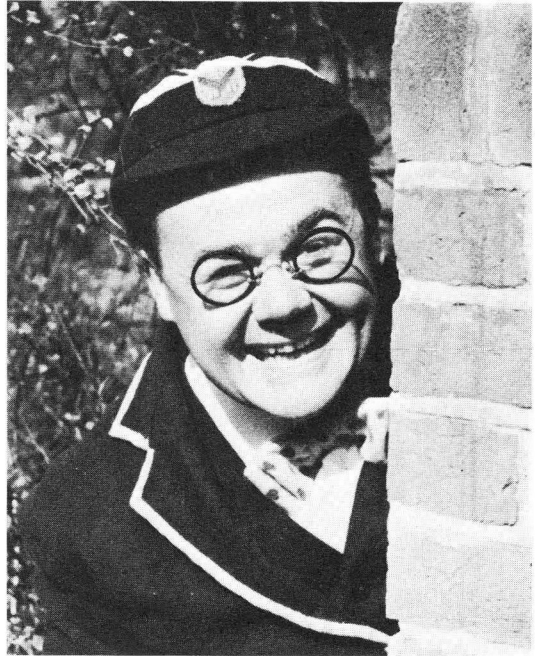
ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

BUNTER. Whoop! Oh, crikey! Ow! Stoppit! I never . . . I didn't . . . I wasn't . . . yow-ow-ow-ow!

THE END



Gerald Campion as Billy Bunter in 1961



The first appearance of Billy Bunter on television. Gerald Campion as Bunter and Kynaston Reeves as Mr Quelch on BBC TV in February 1952

