

patriotism was not then regarded as something queer, and dishonesty as something smart. I don't think a re-issued Magnet or Gem would succeed, for so many young people won't bother to read. For those who can and will read there are plenty of good cheap books, of a rather higher standard in some ways than the pre-war weekly. There is more money about for books, if people want to read.

We just can't explain why the Hamilton stories attracted us. I think that in his own sphere, like B.P. with the scouts, Charles Hamilton filled a need.

GEORGE SELLARS. The answer to the question is a simple one. Charles Hamilton is the best of all school story writers, and that is why we loved his charming tales so much.

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THE VICTORIA PALACE PARTY

The London Club has arranged to form a party to visit the Victoria Palace, London, on Saturday afternoon, January 7th. A large block of seats is being held for our use in the best part of the theatre. The show - BILLY BUNTER'S SWISS ROLL.

We hope that our party will be even larger than it was last year, and we ask all readers, from anywhere and everywhere, to come along and join in the fun. Seats are 12/6d each, and we understand that booking is brisk at the Victoria Palace. Come along, and bring mums and dads, aunts and uncles, the people next door, and uncle Tom Cobby and all - and the more youngsters you can bring, the merrier.

Places in the party can be booked through the Editor of this magazine. Let's make it a real meeting of Old Boys and Girls.

If any reader can display advantageously a double-crown bill or a card, advertising BILLY BUNTER'S SWISS ROLL, just let us know what you can use, and we will send it along while stocks of publicity material last.

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S.O.Ls for sale. Greyfriars Nos. 143, 159, 161, 163, 173, 191, 203, 209, 211, 221, 225, 231, 239, 241, 243, 245, 253, 255, 263, 265, 267, 277, 283, 289, 292, 301, 304, 307, 310, 313, 316, (319, 322, 325, 328) (331, 334, 337, 340), (343, 346, 349, 352), (355, 358, 362, 364, 367, 370), 373, 376, 379, 382, 388, 391, 394, 397, 400, 403, 404, 406, 407, 409, 410. Note: Numbers bracketed together are bound together. St. Jim's Nos. 66, 72, 80, 102, 116, 126, 130, 200, 224, 350, 365. Rookwood No. 317. The 76 numbers for sale complete for £20. I apologise for the price but this is more than 10% less than I paid for them. All complete and in good condition - half a dozen lack covers. D. BROYD, 10 BEAN ROAD, BEXLEYHEATH, KENT.

WANTED: S.O.Ls 42, 65, 66, 162, 257, 258, 259. Your price plus postage paid. The advertiser has some S.O.Ls, Nelson Lees, Gems and Magnets for exchange only. BRIAN HOLT, BRITISH EMBASSY, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND.

Collectors' Digest

Vol. 15
No. 169

Tony
Glynn



MEMORIES OF CHIPS

JANUARY 1961



BILLY BUNTER WORKS FOR THE KIDDIES

CITY STAGE PRODUCTIONS, the Directors of which are our old friends, Bernadette Milnes and Michael Anthony, gave the entire opening performance of "Billy Bunter's Swiss Roll" at the Victoria Palace, over to charity. They have also been helping to publicise the need and the good work done by the Barnardo Homes.

At a giant carnival parade through the streets of Ilford and Barkingside on Friday, December 16th, one of the most interesting floats consisted of a school scene with Billy Bunter, the Famous Five and Mr. Quelch.

A special newspaper, "Christmas Times," produced to aid this great charitable undertaking, gave much prominence to the Victoria Palace show. A number of free seats at the Christmas Eve matinee were given, under certain conditions, to purchasers of the paper.

A writer in the columns of the paper tried to explain Bunter to the readers. He wrote: "Billy Bunter appeared in the old Magnet and Gem comics that Grandad used to hide under his desk."

Unhappy man! No, we don't mean Grandad!



ILLINGWORTH KNOWS HIS GREYFRIARS

Did you see the cute Illingworth cartoon in the Daily Mail just before Christmas? A plump, familiar schoolboy, representing British Railways, was waving in the air a remittance for \$400 million. There was simply the caption under: "Hurrah! You fellows! My postal order's come!"

Evidently Illingworth thinks that Bunter needs no explaining to the British public. Nor do we!



LONDON WELCOMES NEW BUNTER SHOW

In these days when there are so many sleazy television plays, salacious films, and smutty stage productions it is supremely refreshing to see a packed audience of children and adults cheering and enjoying every minute of BILLY BUNTER'S SWISS ROLL at the London Victoria Palace. That was this critic's reaction on the opening day of the show.

Every effort has been made to maintain the Greyfriars tradition and Maurice McLoughlin, who has written the play, has deftly used his experience to delight the kiddies and please the adults at the same time. He knows his Greyfriars. In the opening scene Frank Nugent is examining a camera, and he remarks: "It was given to me by Manners of St. Jim's." It has nothing to do with the play - but it gives a warm feeling to folk who remember the Gem with affection. Maurice, rather wistfully, said to me: "It means nothing to most of them, but I liked to pop it in." Don't you believe it, Maurice. I'll wager that thousands of adults, visiting the Vic, gurgle with delight when St. Jim's is mentioned.

This play is splendidly acted throughout. There is no flaw anywhere. The part of Billy Bunter is played by Keith Banks, and it must be admitted that any actor, taking over the part which Gerald Campion has played so well and for so long has a thankless task. Naturally, we awaited his portrayal with some nervousness.

It is pleasant to be able to report that he gives a very fine performance. Banks' Bunter is by no means an imitation of Campion's Bunter. Banks is less agile and less lissom than Campion, which is no real drawback. He is, perhaps, a little closer to the Magnet Bunter, rolling along rather than darting about as light as a feather. In appearance, the two Bunters are remarkably alike. I hope it is not ungenerous to mention that the old Bunter's infectious fat giggle is missed, but no doubt that will come along as the show progresses. The new Bunter has plenty of action in his fat person, too. At the interval the curtain falls after he makes a wild dash and catches a joint of meat hurled

high in the air.

We congratulate Mr. Banks on a grand performance of a most difficult role.

The Famous Five are more carefully selected than ever before. They are all attractive lads, full of schoolboy high spirits. Bob Cherry is fair and a real Bob; Wharton is dark and more of a leader; Johnny Bull looks like Johnny Bull; Nugent is quieter and more reserved than the rest; Inky, apart from his turban, looks like our Inky. The boys have more to do than ever before, which is all to the good. There is a delicious and quite brilliant sequence in which one boy after the other is stunned and tipped into a window seat. This new, more youthful Famous Five are a vast asset to the production.

Mr. Quelch is played by Robert Lankesheer, and he is nearer to the Quelch of the Magnet than any we have yet seen. In both mien and appearance, he is an excellent Quelch.

Keith Marsh gives an outstanding performance as a weary waiter, and he reminds one astoundingly of Mr. Pastry.

Michael Anthony, T.V. star and C.D. supporter, is grand as an unscrupulous race-course habitue. In horsy attire and sporting a monocle, he never puts a foot wrong. A superb piece of character work.

BILLY BUNTER'S SWISS ROLL is fast-moving, and the slick pieces of contrivance are well-rehearsed and executed. The plot tends, at times, to be obscured by the pantomime-type by-play, but hilarity is maintained throughout and there is not a dull moment. Youngsters of all ages will love it. The slap-stick finale, with Bunter eating the bird from the cuckoo clock may not be quite to the taste of Magnet fans, but the kids roar the house down. And it's the kids who count at this time of the year.

Decor and lighting are excellent, and Ellen Pollock has made a fine job of the production side. Incidental music to the play is written by our own Eric Fayne.

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GEMS OF HAMILTONIANA

Munch, munch, munch! Grunt!

Munch, munch, munch! Grunt!

It shounded something like a horse at fodder, and something like a porker at the trough. But, as it proceeded from Study No. 1 in the Greyfriars Remove, clearly it could be neither.

(Sent in by Peter Hanger, Northampton.)

The wide, deep river ran on with a steady murmur, and bubbled and sang through the rushes, and down the centre of the stream lay a golden bar of sunlight.

But nearer the rich, earthy banks the overhanging trees made a tremulous shade. In the clear water, the thick foliage was mirrored with flecks of golden light filtering in and dancing on the water.

(Sent in by Tom Dobson, Australia.)

"Please, sir," gasped Bunter, "it wasn't me who ragged your study."

"What?" snapped the Remove Master. "You should say 'It was not I', Bunter."

"Oh, sir," said the Owl of the Remove, blinking. "I never thought it was you. It stands to reason you wouldn't rag your own study sir."

(Sent in by Beryl Porter, Old Hill.)

(Book souvenirs are awarded for all items found suitable for publication in this column.)

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No. 1 of a Grand School Story Paper!

Vol. 15

No. 170

THE SCHOOL FRIEND

Every $1\frac{1}{2}$ Thursday

No. 1. Vol. 1.

Three-Halfpence.

Week Ending May 17th, 1919.

COLLECTORS

DIGEST



FEBRUARY

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THE ARRIVAL OF BESSIE BUNTER! (An incident from "The Girls of Bill Bunter," Member in this issue.)

Later I began buying the Sexton Blake Library, and I became acquainted with the Digest. Thus opened up for me "a new old world."

There must be hundreds like my uncle and me who, if they knew of Collectors' Digest, would like to renew contact with the old days. But they do not know! Would this not answer Mr. Carter's question?

* * * * *

MEMORY OF A FAMOUS ARTIST

JOHN JUKES wrote to us as follows: "I came across the enclosed letter today. It is from artist Briscoe. I think it is one of the most poignant letters I have ever possessed, for the poor chap was dead within a few short months after writing me. I think he was genuinely pleased that he was remembered after all the years."

The following, dated July 1956, and written from Hever, Kent, are the words of E. E. Briscoe, the artist, who so many of us remember;

"I am taking this, my first opportunity to express my warm thanks and gratitude to you for sending me this charming and cheering letter of very kind appreciation. It is very gratifying to a conscientious artist to receive some assurance that, after the passing of many years, there are still enthusiastic 'old boys' who have not forgotten him and still remember appreciatively his early efforts with his pen and brush to thrill and amuse them when they were young.

You have delighted me more than you can really know, and helped me to plod with patience and persistence the rough road to 'journey's end' that now lies before me.

I feel that I must thank you again, from my heart, for your perceptive sympathy and kindness. May 'goodness and mercy' follow you.

Yours sincerely, E. E. BRISCOE."

* * * * *

O D D S A N D E N D S

By GERRY ALLISON

ACID RETORT BY HENRY SAMUEL! "Billy Bunter's Swiss Roll," at the Victoria Palace got quite a good report in The Guardian, but the critic, Edward Greenfield allowed himself one bit of sarcasm which evoked some well known thunder! He said: "Like the Frank Richards stories from which the characters come, this play is hopelessly dated - Mr. Quelch in Norfolk jacket and tweed breeches, if you please." The next issue of The Guardian had the following letter in its correspondence column, under the heading GREYFRIARS:

Sir, In his critical comment in your journal on the vacation in Switzerland currently being enjoyed by certain of the Remove scholars of Greyfriars and myself, Mr. Edward Greenfield sees fit to suggest that

the clothing I elect to wear for the occasion is demode. I can only assume that he is unaware of the sporting attire affected by the Prime Minister of this country earlier this very year; indeed, it was from that august and conservative source that the inspiration for my own costume was acquired.

Yours &c., MR. QUELCH - Greyfriars School.

As the Bounder would say "Man down!"

BLACK MARK, B.B.C! A recent item in Woman's Hour, as announced in the Radio Times, gave me the greatest thrill for months. It read, TALES OUT OF SCHOOL, by Frank Richards.

At 2 p.m. on The Day, I was sitting with my ear glued to the wireless, gleefully chuckling over the opportunity afforded me by my convalescence to hear our beloved President on such a topic!

And then came the overwhelming disappointment. The speaker may have been a Frank Richards, but he was not the Frank Richards. Surely, after writing school stories for over fifty years and creating the most famous schoolboy of all time, the one and only Frank Richards should be allowed the copyright of his name, especially for such a subject as Tales Out of School. Urrrgh!!!

WANTED: Magnets, 648, 768, 771, 773, 933 and 1066. 15/- each offered or else Red Magnets in exchange. Write: LOFTS, SHERINGHAM HOUSE, ST. MARYLEBONE, LONDON, N.W.1.

The London Club Library offers 10/- each for the following books: Magnet 751, Gems 713, 714, 715, 755, 758. Schoolsboys' Owns 215, 217, 219, 221, 269, 275. Also required "Boy Without a Name" in Boys' Friend 3d Library.

ROGER JENKINS, "THE FIRS," EASTERN ROAD, HAVANT, HANTS.

PLEASE NOTE that BRIAN DOYLE'S new address is GARDEN FLAT, 13 NORTHBOURNE ROAD, LONDON, S.W.4. Tel. No. MACauley 7946.

WANTED: Boys Magazine Nos. 332 to 350 and 358 to 377. Will buy or exchange S.O.L's (Rookwood and St. Frank's). W. DARWIN, 76 WESTERN ROAD, EAST DENE, ROTHERHAM, YORKS.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS. DON WEBSTER'S new address is 143 GLOUCESTER COURT, KEW GARDENS, SURREY.

WANTED: S.O.L's 169, 245, 247. Good condition only. £2 0 0 each copy. B. ADAM, 28 DERWENT STREET, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, 5.

WANTED: Populars, etc. Collectors' Digest 52 to 82, 139, 141. Boys' Friend Lib. 38 ST. THOMAS ROAD, PRESTON.

FOR SALE: Sexton Blake Libs. Present series 179, 189, 198, 90 copies between 200 - 300. 41 between 301 - 349. 7/6 each offered for S.O.Ls 169, 170, 198, 206, 226, 228, 230, 234, 258, 268, 272, 317. THOMPSON, 53 WALLASEY PARK, BELFAST, 14.

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WANTED: S.O.Ls 42, 65, 66, 162, 257, 258, 259. Your price plus postage paid. The advertiser has some S.O.Ls, Nelson Lees, Gems and Magnets for exchange only. BRIAN HOLT, BRITISH EMBASSY, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND.