

BILLY BUNTER EXTRAS

ALEX KERNAGHAN CONSIDERS THE VARIOUS
ANNUALS AND PAPERBACKS WHICH HAVE FEATURED
FRANK RICHARDS' IMMORTAL SCHOOLBOY

The field of 'Bunter' collecting is as vast as the Fat Owl himself. Consider the prizes that await the enthusiast: literally hundreds of issues of the *Magnet*, the paper in which Billy Bunter made his first appearance; the spin-off *Greyfriars Holiday Annuals* and *Schoolboy's Own Library* storybooks; several *Greyfriars* 'companion' volumes, including the Howard Baker reprints of the original stories; and the 38 'Bunter' novels published by Charles Skilton and Cassell between 1947 and 1965. On their own, these present a formidable challenge to Frank Richards' many fans.

But the list doesn't end there. Three other collecting areas must be added: the 'Bunter' strips that appeared in *Knock-Out* comic, and particularly the corresponding *Fun Books*; another series of annuals, *Billy Bunter's Own*; and the many paperback editions of the 'Bunter' novels and stories. It is these 'extras'

that are considered in this article, completing our survey of the full range of 'Billy Bunter' publications.

Over seven years separated the collapse of the *Magnet* in 1940 and the launch of the highly-successful series of 'Billy Bunter' novels in 1947. For *Greyfriars* fans, these dark years contained only one source of solace: the 'Bunter' strip which ran in the popular comic, *Knock-Out*, until its demise in 1963.

CHARACTERS

The *Knock-Out Comic* was launched by *Magnet*-publisher, Amalgamated Press ('AP'), on 4th March 1939 in response to the huge success of D.C. Thomson's new title, the *Dandy*. It was packed with outstanding characters, including 'Simon, the Simple Sleuth', 'Deed-a-Day Danny', 'Our Ernie' — and one William George Bunter, Esquire. Needless to say, Bunter was a major feature of the new comic, and he had the distinction of appearing in all 22 of the *Knockout Annuals* (known as the *Knock-Out Fun Books* until 1957) published between 1941 and 1962. Although the original comics are certainly collectable, and now sell for £2-£10 each in Very Good condition, it is these annuals that are most eagerly sought-after by collectors.

The first nine 'Billy Bunter' strips in the comic were drawn by the most famous 'Greyfriars' illustrator of them all: C.H. Chapman. But Chapman was a meticulous artist, and found it impossible to incorporate his usual level of detail in the time available.

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Frank Richards photographed in the front garden of 'Rose Lawn', his Kingsbridge home.

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He was forced to give up the venture, but the editor soon found a ready substitute on his own doorstep: none other than Frank Minnitt, who — along with Hugh McNeill — was the title's main humour artist.

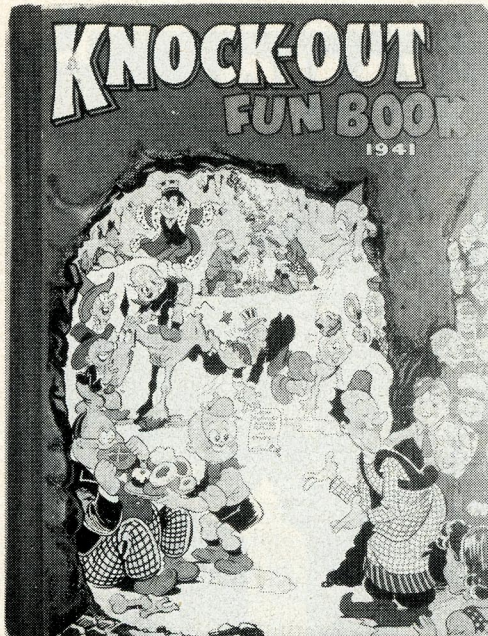
Minnitt was naturally accustomed to the sort of quick, slick drawings the *Knock-Out* required, and after a brief period of emulating Chapman, he decided to ditch most of the original Greyfriars trappings and aim for a more simplified strip.

While Minnitt's drawings cannot in themselves be faulted, it must be said that his idea of dropping several of the 'Famous Five' — Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh — and most of the Greyfriars regulars in no way endeared him to those familiar with the genuine article. His reasons for doing so can

be appreciated — it was impossible for him to cram all of Richards' characters into those small panels, and it was Billy Bunter, after all, that the readers wanted to see — but they didn't make it any more acceptable for diehard Greyfriars fans.

SUCCESS

Nevertheless, the new comic proved to be a great success. Towards the end of its life, the readership of the *Magnet* had shrunk to a mere 83,000, where once it had enjoyed a circulation of a quarter-of-a-million. However, only a year after its launch, the *Knock-Out* was recording weekly sales of no fewer than half-a-million copies! The *Knock-Out* wasn't aimed at diehard fans but at a new, younger readership, and it had certainly succeeded in capturing it. For its editor, that was enough.



The first *Knock-Out Fun Book*, which now sells for up to £150. It included Frank Minnitt's 'Bunter' strip.

However, despite Minnitt's 'streamlining', when the *Magnet* finally went under on 18th May 1940, AP had no qualms about claiming on the next issue of *Knock-Out*, "This is the *Magnet* too!", and a fortnight later changing its title to *Knock-Out and Magnet* (it became *Billy Bunter's Knockout* in 1961). This despite the fact that Richards had nothing to do with the comic itself, only writing those stories which appeared in the annuals!

Still, he at least received a £5 honorarium (more than Minnitt was being paid at the time)

for the use of the character, and continued to do so right up until his death in 1961. Minnitt himself continued to draw the character until his own death in the summer of 1958, his illustrations appearing in all but the last two *Knockout Annuals*.

Whatever your views on the *Knock-Out* strip, there's no denying that largely thanks to Bunter these splendid annuals are now highly sought-after. The later examples sell for only £6-£10 in Very Good condition, but those from the early 1940s now fetch up to £80, and the very first annual can sell for as much as £150. Note, however, that, as with all children's annuals, condition is absolutely crucial. The laminated boards must have no major marks, the cloth spine must be intact, and the corners free of 'bumping', and the original endpapers must also be in place. Be particularly careful with the 1945 annual, which has a special 'painting page'. If this is untouched, the book is worth £40-£60 in Very Good condition, but copies in which this page is filled in sell for no more than £30.

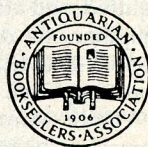
But these were not the only annuals to feature the Fat Owl of the Remove. Much more in keeping with the true Greyfriars tradition were the eight *Billy Bunter's Own* annuals which appeared between 1953 and 1961 (none was published in 1958). Numbers one to three were issued by Mandeville Publications and were traditional cloth-bound volumes with attractive dustjackets and black-and-white frontispieces, but from number four onwards the books were published by the Oxenhoath Press and featured beautiful laminated hard-covers with full-colour interior plates. All the books were illustrated by C.H.

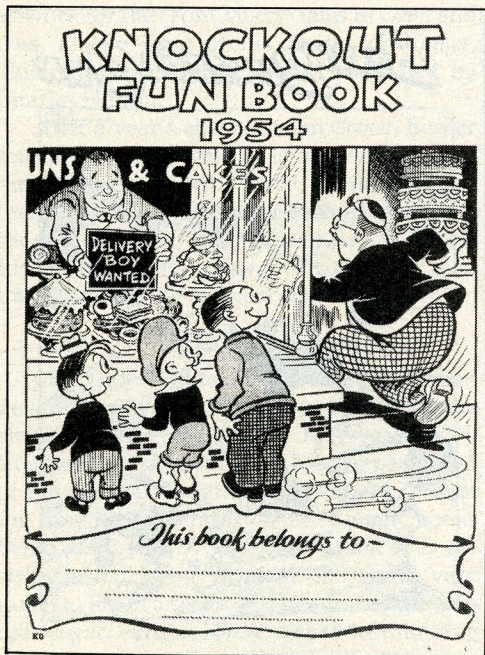


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The title-page of the 1954 annual, also illustrated by Minnitt. Very Good copies fetch up to £12 today.

Chapman, and they remain today the most attractive 'Billy Bunter' books ever issued.

Unlike the *Knock-Out* books, the *Billy Bunter's Own* annuals contained stories rather than comic-strips. Their entire contents were written by Richards himself, either under his real name (Charles Hamilton) or one of his famous pseudonyms ('Hilda Richards', 'Owen Conquest', 'Martin Clifford', 'Ralph Redway'), and 75% of the material revolved around the antics of Bunter and the other Greyfriars favourites.

SURPRISE

However, in contrast to his policy with *Tom Merry's Annual* (also issued by Mandeville; see BMC 53), Richards utilised *Billy Bunter's Own* as a vehicle for some of his lesser-known creations, slipping one or two 'surprise' tales into each of the eight volumes. So we had Ken King the boy trader, plying the blue Pacific aboard his ketch, 'Dawn', and encountering characters like Tokoloo and Lompom Lufu with their somewhat shaky command of English ("Spousee him comee

along Tovuku, big Chief Kameeka makee much kaikai along that feller Parsons").

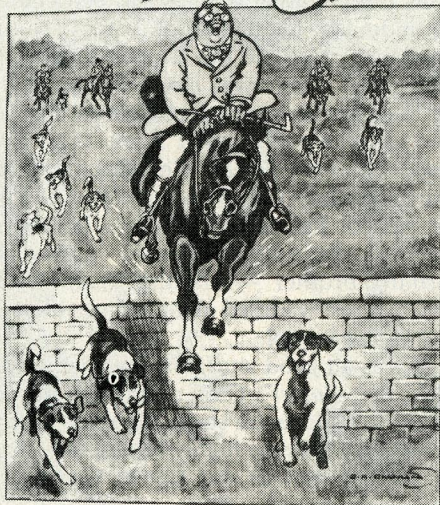
Less garrulous and more readily understandable was the Rio Kid, who rode the lonely Texas trail, righting wrongs and befriending the underdog, his reputation with a six-gun "stretching from the Rio Grande to the Old Panhandle". There was also Lyn Strong the boy hunter of Masumpe; Jack Nobody the pedlar's lad; Jimmy Silver of Rookwood; Skip Ruggles and the Felgate men; Bundle of the Fourth; Audrey Compton of High Coombe, the "school for slackers"; Billy's fat junior, Sammy; and the fatuous Bessie — so like her burbling brother — hooting "Yah! Minx! CAT!" as she waddled along the corridors of Cliff House School.

It was all good stuff, but the annual was called *Billy Bunter's Own*, and it was the Fat Owl who took centre stage. Needless to say, these books are now highly sought-after, and sell for between £8 and £20 in Very Good



As you can see, Minnitt's artwork was a great deal less evocative than the original *Magnet* illustrations.

BILLY BUNTER'S OWN



BILLY BUNTER GOES HUNTING

The *Billy Bunter's Own* annuals were amongst the most handsome 'Greyfriars' volumes ever published.

BILLY BUNTER'S OWN



BILLY BUNTER CATCHES A CRAB

Most of the annuals were undated, and so you have to identify them by the cover design. This one is from 1959.

condition. The problem for collectors (as with *Tom Merry's Annual*) is that — with the exception of the third — none of the eight volumes was numbered or dated, which means that the only sure way to identify them is to check the cover illustration against the descriptions given in our price guide. It's also worth noting that a different Bunter motif appears on the spine of each volume.

Another comic to feature Bunter regularly throughout the 1950s was *Comet*. This title had

been bought by Amalgamated Press from J.B. Allen in 1946, and quickly became one of their foremost weeklies. Early in March 1950, a series of short 'Billy Bunter' serials began in the comic, all of them abridged from pre-war stories. By May of that year, Frank Richards was writing new stories every week, and these continued until 17th February 1951. An added attraction was that each short story was illustrated by R.J. McDonald, the artist who, before the war, had provided the



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artwork for the 'Tom Merry' tales in *Gem*, and was, at the time of his work for *Comet*, illustrating the 'Bunter' books published by Charles Skilton.

After a year's absence from *Comet*, Bunter returned to the comic in February 1952, this time in a picture-strip format. While the strips themes and drawings were both lighthearted, they did remain more faithful to Frank Richards' original concept of Greyfriars than the Minnitt strips in *Knock-Out*.

DELIGHTED

Old readers of the *Magnet* must have been delighted when, in September 1956, after the strip had been running for four years, C.H. Chapman — probably the best remembered of the pre-war Greyfriars illustrators (and at the time the illustrator of the 'Bunter' books being published by Cassell) — took over the strip, bringing the original characters very much to life in a series of adventures based on old *Magnet* serials. His style had lost nothing of its old magic, and each double-page episode was beautifully drawn.

Chapman's tenure of the strip lasted until January 1958, when he was replaced by artists less sympathetic to the original 'Bunter' stories. The 'Billy Bunter' strips in *Comet* came to an end five months later, in June 1958.

COMPANION

It may be worth mentioning at this point that *Comet* had a companion comic entitled *Sun*, and that this is of interest to Hamilton collectors as it contained both stories and strips featuring Tom Merry. These began in October 1952 with the first of a series of 'Tom Merry' stories illustrated by McDonald, which ran until June 1953. Three years later, in September 1956, the comic launched a series of adventure strips based on pre-war 'Tom Merry' stories and entitled 'The Terrible Three'. These continued until June 1958.

So great was the Billy Bunter 'revival' of the late Forties/early Fifties, that it was only a matter of time before his adventures appeared in the book format of the post-war years: the paperback. Nevertheless, it wasn't until the early Sixties that the first 'Bunter' paperbacks hit the bookshelves (excluding probably the

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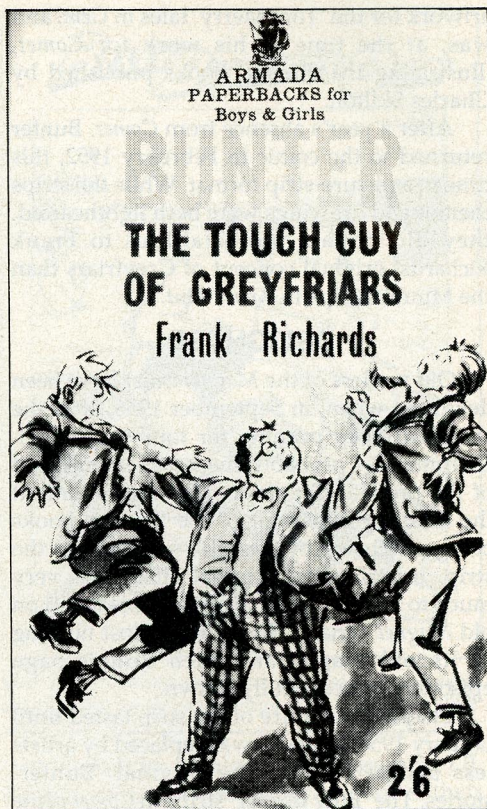
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rarest of all the 'Bunter' 'paperbacks': *Billy Bunter's Mystery Christmas* by Maurice McLoughlin, based on the 1958 stage play and published by Samuel French Ltd in 1960). These were *Billy Bunter's Beanfeast* (May 1963) and *Billy Bunter Butts In* (July 1963), both issued by Four Square Books of Barnard's Inn, London. These were straight reprints of two of the superb series of post-war, yellow-jacketed novels, originally published in 1952 (Cassell) and 1951 (Skilton) respectively. However, this experiment proved a disaster and no more titles were issued, although what more the publishers expected with the release of only two books is hard to imagine. As Richards himself might have said, a pair of paperbacks do not a series make, and there was little time for interest to be generated before the plug was pulled.

MARVELLOUS

Two years later, Armada Books, a Williams Collins imprint, dipped their toes into the water with the launch of four titles in May 1965. This was the start of a marvellous series of books featuring splendid cover artwork by Mary Gernat (spelled 'Gernatt' in some volumes) which brilliantly captured the character of the fat, bespectacled Owl and his Greyfriars chums. All four books were culled from original *Magnet* stories and contained a selection of superb black-and-white illustrations from the paper.

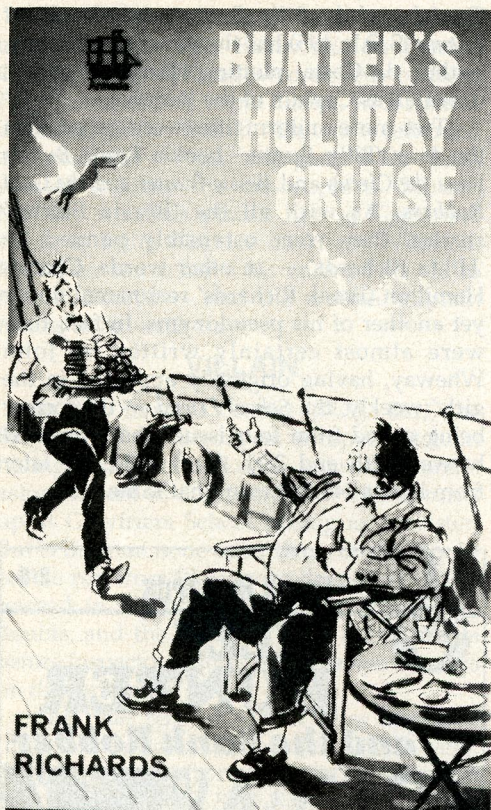
The title of the first, *Bunter the Tough Guy of Greyfriars*, proved to be something of a misnomer. In fact, it is the gentle, long-winded Alonzo Todd who is the recipient of Professor Sparkinson's incredible strength-inducing elixir, so acquiring new reserves of muscle-power. Not until page 132 — a mere 27 pages from the end — does the wily Owl actually lay hands on the secreted phial to become 'Strong Bunter', and to wreak vengeance on all those who have kicked, bumped and smacked him over the years. The book is a condensed version of a serial which originally appeared in *Magnet* Nos. 1344-1348, and there is the occasional and inevitable lapse in continuity in what is otherwise a successful attempt to compress the story.



Bunter the Tough Guy of Greyfriars was the first of fourteen 'Bunter' paperbacks published by Armada.

Bunter and the Phantom of the Towers (Magnets 1244-1246) is vintage Richards. Bunter, as ever, forces himself on the Famous Five for Christmas, on this occasion at Mauleverer Towers, home of the indolent Lord Mauleverer ('Maully'). Amid the Yuletide celebrations, strange notes turn up promising a dire fate for the young toff if a ransom of £1,000 is not paid. With his customary aplomb, the schoolboy earl dismisses the notes as a prank of the egregious Owl — only Bunter knows that they're not!

Sad to relate, no one believes the fat frowster, and when an attempt is made on Mauleverer's life, it's Bunter who stumbles upon the truth — almost at the cost of his own fat neck!



The Armada books featured splendid cover artwork by Mary Gernat, as well as original *Magnet* illustrations.

Bunter's Holiday Cruise (Magnets 1312-1316) and *Bunter the Racketeer* (Magnets 1478-79) completed the quartet for May '65, at which point Armada paused for rather a lengthy breather — three years, in fact. But before they resumed the series, Merlin Books — a Hamlyn imprint — pitched in with four paperbacks of their own in September 1967.

The Merlin books were produced to the high standards which readers had come to expect from the Hamlyn Publishing Group, featuring beautiful, almost luminescent, full-colour covers. However, there was an unmistakable 'modernising' of Bunter and the Greyfriars chums, and the interior black-and-white illustrations are reminiscent of Minnitt's comic-strip, falling far short of the *Magnet* originals. But then the publishers were

aiming at a new generation, and it was perhaps inevitable that old trappings would be cast aside. On the plus side, the books were printed on high-quality paper as opposed to standard pulp, thereby eliminating the yellowing common with even Fine copies of many old paperbacks.

All of the Merlin 'Billy Bunters' were reprints of the early *Schoolboy's Own Library* volumes, which were in turn culled from *Magnets* from 1925-40. The *Schoolboy's Own Library* was a wheeze dreamed up by Magnet editor, C.M. Down, one that proved extremely popular with both readers and Amalgamated Press. As the rights to the stories and illustrations had already been paid for, production costs were minimised, although authors were paid a five-guinea honorarium for each issue. So for the princely sum of 4d a month, readers could enjoy edited versions of bygone *Magnets* in a pocket-sized digest. The Merlin reprints fulfilled the same function in their own time, offering youngsters vintage 'Bunter' tales at an affordable price.

UNINSPIRED

Billy Bunter's Big Top (S.O.L. 201) was an uninspired story with which to open the series, stretching even juvenile credulity a mite too far. Having broken detention, and with 'Quelchy' hard on his heels, Bunter happens upon the clothing, wig, waxed moustache and false pointed beard of Montgomery St Leger Whiffles, proprietor of 'Whiffles World Famous Circus'. Donning the same, the Owl masquerades as the rotund ringmaster, till a roughneck with a grudge against Whiffles

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Frank Richards

2/6

BILLY BUNTER'S Big Top



In 1967, Merlin launched their own series of 'Greyfriars' paperbacks with *Billy Bunter's Big Top*.

comes searching for Bunter, believing him to be the real McCoy.

Billy Bunter and the Man from South America (S.O.L. 73) proved to be far superior, with Bunter forcing himself on Hazeldene and the other boys from the Remove for the Easter holiday. On their train journey to Devon, where Hazeldene's uncle, Captain Cunliffe awaits, it becomes apparent to all that a swarthy stranger is shadowing them. Despite earnest attempts to shake him off, the stranger persists, and it is not until the last pages that we discover the secret of the South American and his nefarious designs on Captain Cunliffe.

Billy Bunter and the School Rebellion (S.O.L. 191) takes us back to the Greyfriars environs and sees the boys protesting strenuously against the dismissal of their form-master, Mr

Quelch; while *Billy Bunter and the Secret Enemy* (S.O.L. 195) has the new Eurasian boy, Arthur da Costa, plotting Harry Wharton's downfall as Captain of the Remove.

Two more uniform titles were issued with the four 'Billy Bunter' books: *Bessie Bunter Joins the Circus* and *Bessie Bunter and the Gold Robbers*. As with all the 'Bessie Bunter' stories, they were ostensibly penned by 'Hilda Richards' — in other words, Charles Hamilton (Frank Richards' real name) under yet another of his pseudonyms. In fact, they were almost certainly written by John Wheway, having originally appeared in the girls' weekly, the *School Friend* — the former being culled from four issues that appeared between 7th and 28th April 1934, the later from issues 245-248 from that same year.



Frank Richards

2/6

BILLY BUNTER and the Bank Robber



All of the Merlin 'Billy Bunters' were reprints of AP's pocket-sized *Schoolboy's Own Library* volumes.

The next pair of Merlin titles were issued in March 1968. *Billy Bunter and the Crooked Captain* (S.O.L. 197) followed directly on from *Billy Bunter and the Secret Enemy*, with Arthur da Costa, the boy from the East, now reformed and resolved to "play the game". Da Costa refuses to obey the unscrupulous Captain Marker, who has placed him at Greyfriars solely to bring disgrace on Harry Wharton. If Marker can achieve his ends he stands to inherit £50,000 — and the crooked captain means to have his way!

VILLAIN

In *Billy Bunter's Convict* (S.O.L. 211), the Fat Owl comes across an escaped felon in hiding near Wharton Lodge. Later, to Bunter's astonishment and dismay, the villain turns up at Greyfriars School posing as a master. But is the man none other than convict No. 19 on the run from Blackmoor Prison? With £50 reward in the offing, Bunter entertains no doubts, and the reader is led a merry dance before Inspector Grimes finally snaps the cuffs on the right man.

The final pair of Merlin titles appeared three months later in June 1968. These were: *Billy Bunter — Sportsman* (S.O.L. 83) and *Billy Bunter and the Bank Robber* (S.O.L. 175). Two further 'Bessie Bunter' titles were issued at the same time: *Bessie Bunter and the School Informer* (SF 216-218) and *Bessie Bunter and the Missing Fortune* (SF 201-203) — the

latter, incidentally, almost invariably listed in dealers' catalogues as 'Hidden Fortune'.

While the quality of the stories in the Merlin series was variable, it was, on the whole, a worthy effort, and the books are certainly deserving of attention. With Hamlyn now finished with Bunter, Armada returned to the fray the following month, after a lapse of more than three years. In July 1968, they issued *Billy Bunter the Bold* (Cassell, 1954), happily reverting to Four Square's short-lived policy of reprinting the Skilton/Cassell volumes — by far the most satisfactory 'book-length' tales. Mary Gernat's lovely covers were as delightful as ever, as were the original R.J. McDonald and C.H. Chapman interior line drawings.

WELCOME

In August, Armada offered *Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School* (Skilton, 1947) and *Billy Bunter's Postal Order* (Skilton, 1951), the former being doubly welcome as it was the first 'full-length' book that Richards ever wrote, and because the original hardback was already becoming difficult to find. Seven months passed before *Billy Bunter's Benefit* (Skilton, 1950) appeared in March 1969, and then there was a gap of more than a year before *Billy Bunter in Brazil* (Skilton, 1949) and *Bunter the Ventriloquist* (Cassell, 1961) were issued in June 1970.

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Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School

FRANK RICHARDS



'Greyfriars' fans were delighted when Armada began reissuing the excellent Skilton/Cassell novels in 1968.

Why the publication dates were so sporadic is uncertain. Perhaps Armada simply had their hands full, coping as they were with such prolific authors as W.E. Johns, Anthony Buckridge, Enid Blyton, Angela Brazil, P.G. Wodehouse and a score of others. At any rate, their eleventh Richards volume, *Billy Bunter's Bad Luck*, published in February 1971, saw them abandon the Skilton/Cassell volumes and return to the original Magnet stories.

Billy Bunter's Bad Luck (Magnet 1277) launched the superb Egyptian series, that was to run throughout the final four Armada books. Posing as Lord Mauleverer for his own surreptitious reasons, Bunter is kidnapped from Greyfriars by the Greek antiques dealer, Kalizelos. This villain is after the Golden Scarab of A-Menah, a jewelled beetle that holds

the secret of the long-lost treasure of Rameses, and which was brought home from Egypt many years before by Mauleverer's late father.

On making his perilous escape from Kalizelos's yacht, Bunter alerts Mauly and the Remove to their Lordship's imminent danger, thereby (in Bunter's opinion, at least) placing Mauly under "a fearful obligation" — one which he is magnanimously prepared to waive provided that he accompanies Mauly and the Famous Five on their planned holiday to Egypt!

WILY

Billy Bunter's Bargain (Magnets 1278-1281) sees the party in that hot and arid land, where the chums are enjoying the sights and sounds of Cairo. With a keen eye for a good buy, Bunter purchases a splendid donkey, 'Queen Victoria', for the paltry sum of fifty piastres — only to have the animal bolt as soon as he pays the wily street trader!

Between repeatedly losing and retrieving that troublesome donkey (known variously as 'Prince of Wales', 'King Edward', 'George Washington' and 'Abraham Lincoln', amongst other names), the party also mislay dear old Mauly, who is captured by Kalizelos and his cohorts. For a moment it looks as if the Golden Scarabeus will fall into the hands of the dastardly villain — until, that is, Harry Wharton and the rest of the Greyfriars Remove rush to the rescue. *Billy Bunter on the Nile* (Magnet 1282) appeared in early 1972, the Egyptian saga concluding in August of that same year with the publication of *Bunter and the Secret of the Scarab* (Magnet 1283). It was a sad day for 'Greyfriars' fans when this excellent series came to an end.

Another decade passed before Bunter's name once again appeared on the cover of a paperback. In September 1982, Quiller Press published four revamped 'Bunter' titles in hardback: *Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School* (Skilton, 1947), *Billy Bunter Does His Best* (Cassell, 1954), *Billy Bunter's Double* (Cassell, 1955) and *Billy Bunter Comes for Christmas* (Cassell, 1959). The following year, Granada issued all four in paperback, with the same covers and interior



Needless to say, Kay King's 'sanitised' 'Bunter' stories for Granada have never found favour with collectors!

illustrations. The latter were the work of Victor Ambrus and were unlike anything that had appeared before. Either you love them or you loathe them!

MODERNISED

The books also had the disadvantage of being 'modernised' by Kay King, her adaptations winning a glowing review from the *Yorkshire Post*: "These new versions have a pace and slickness that are likely to appeal to young readers of the 1980s," their critic enthused. "They have their own wit, style and sparkle." No doubt they are perfectly acceptable to the newcomer who has never read Richards before, but personally I can see no real reason for changing "You fat, foozling frump!" to "You twit!", or "Oh, crikey!" to "Oh, pancakes!"

This attempt to update the Greyfriars yarns failed abysmally, the books swiftly

disappearing from bookshops, only to reappear in dealers' catalogues at half their published price. There have been no 'Billy Bunter' paperbacks since.

However, this piece would not be complete without at least a mention of eleven other paperbacks published between February 1952 and February 1953. These were the Goldhawk 'Tom Merry' books written for that company by Richards under his usual 'Merry' nom-de-plume, Martin Clifford. Goldhawk were a small firm operating from a block of flats on the Goldhawk Road in Shepherds Bush. All of the stories they published, from *Tom Merry's Secret* to *D'Arcy the Reformer*, were original, and fully matched the excellent Skilton/Cassell series. Unfortunately, they were poorly distributed and soon disappeared without trace, although they now fetch up to £6 each in Very Good condition.

Other early paperbacks for the avid Bunter enthusiast to look out for include the four Frank Richards 'Mascot Schoolboy Series' featuring Bob Hood and Co, published in 1949 by John Matthews Ltd; the four 'Hilda

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Richards' 'Mascot Schoolgirl Series' titles, featuring Pam Duncan and Co, from the same publishers (both £7-£8 each in Very Good condition); the six 'Sparshott School' adventures by Frank Richards, and the three 'Headland House School' stories by 'Hilda Richards', all published by Merrett in the late 1940s as 36-page softcover booklets (£7-£8 each). If you are very lucky you may even manage to find *Chums of Lynwood*, a very scarce sixteen-page, large-format publication by Frank Richards, published by Shields in the late 1940s, and now worth up to £10 in Very Good condition.

It's always difficult to value paperbacks as dealers' prices differ so dramatically. I recall more than a decade ago coming across

two of the Armada 'Bunters' advertised at £6 apiece, and only a few days later purchasing Mint copies of the same titles from another bookseller for 75p each! Such discrepancies still occur, and stem less from dishonesty on the part of the various dealers, as from a genuine confusion as to how much these books are worth. The price guide that follows is based on our enquiries with a number of specialist dealers and is the most up-to-date to be found anywhere. However, I must end with a note of warning. The 'Billy Bunter' books have more than trebled in value over the last ten years, and there can be no guarantee that the annuals and paperbacks will not continue that trend. For the moment, though: Good hunting!

BILLY BUNTER ANNUALS AND PAPERBACKS

UK BIBLIOGRAPHY

A guide to current values of books and annuals in Very Good condition.

ANNUALS

'KNOCK-OUT FUN BOOK'/'KNOCKOUT ANNUAL'

KNOCK-OUT FUN BOOK 1941 (Amalgamated Press, 1941)	£100-£150
KNOCK-OUT FUN BOOK 1942 (Amalgamated Press, 1942)	£60-£80
KNOCK-OUT FUN BOOK 1943 (Amalgamated Press, 1943)	£60-£80
KNOCK-OUT FUN BOOK 1944 (Amalgamated Press, 1944)	£40-£60
KNOCK-OUT FUN BOOK 1945 (Amalgamated Press, 1945)	£40-£60
KNOCK-OUT FUN BOOK 1946 & 1947 (Amalgamated Press, 1946 & 1947)	each £30-£40
KNOCK-OUT FUN BOOK 1948 & 1949 (Amalgamated Press, 1947 & 1948)	each £20-£30
KNOCK-OUT FUN BOOK 1950-56 (Amalgamated Press, 1950-56)	each £8-£12
KNOCKOUT ANNUAL 1957-61 (Amalgamated Press, 1957-61)	each £6-£10

'BILLY BUNTER'S OWN'

No 1 (yellow dustjacket: Bunter in football kit being carried by chums) (Mandeville, [1953])	£15-£20
No 2 (yellow dustjacket: Bunter & Co tobogganing down icy slope) (Mandeville, [1954])	£10-£15
No 3 (yellow dustjacket: Famous Five foxhunting, Bunter falling off horse) (Mandeville, 1955)	£10-£15
No 4 (red laminated cover: Bunter cooking at stove) (Mandeville, [1956])	£10-£15
No 5 (yellow laminated cover: Bunter and friends on board yacht) (Mandeville, [1957])	£10-£15
No 6 (red laminated cover: Foxhunting scene, Bunter jumping over wall) (Mandeville, [1958])	£8-£10
No 7 (red laminated cover: Bunter & Co in swimming-trunks at the seaside) (Mandeville, [1959])	£8-£10
No 8 (red laminated cover: Bunter falling off his bicycle in a farmyard) (Mandeville, [1960])	£8-£10

PAPERBACKS

FOUR SQUARE

BILLY BUNTER'S BEANFEAST (Four Square, 1963)	£4-£6
BILLY BUNTER BUTTS IN (Four Square, 1963)	£4-£6

ARMADA

BUNTER THE TOUGH GUY OF GREYFRIARS (Armada, 1965)	£2-£3
BUNTER AND THE PHANTOM OF THE TOWERS (Armada, 1965)	£2-£3
BUNTER'S HOLIDAY CRUISE (Armada, 1965)	£2-£3
BUNTER THE RACKETEER (Armada, 1965)	£2-£3
BILLY BUNTER THE BOLD (Armada, 1968)	£2-£3
BILLY BUNTER OF GREYFRIARS SCHOOL (Armada, 1968)	£2-£3
BILLY BUNTER'S POSTAL ORDER (Armada, 1968)	£2-£3

BILLY BUNTER'S BENEFIT (Armada, 1969)	£2-£3
BILLY BUNTER IN BRAZIL (Armada, 1970)	£2-£3
BUNTER THE VENTRILOQUIST (Armada, 1970)	£2-£3
BILLY BUNTER'S BAD LUCK (Armada, 1971)	£2-£3
BILLY BUNTER'S BARGAIN (Armada, 1971)	£2-£3
BILLY BUNTER ON THE NILE (Armada, 1972)	£2-£3
BUNTER AND THE SECRET OF THE SCARAB (Armada, 1972)	£2-£3
MERLIN	
BILLY BUNTER'S BIG TOP (Merlin, 1967)	£2-£3
BILLY BUNTER AND THE MAN FROM SOUTH AMERICA (Merlin, 1967)	£2-£3
BILLY BUNTER AND THE SCHOOL REBELLION (Merlin, 1967)	£2-£3
BILLY BUNTER AND THE SECRET ENEMY (Merlin, 1967)	£2-£3
BILLY BUNTER AND THE CROOKED CAPTAIN (Merlin, 1968)	£2-£3
BILLY BUNTER'S CONVICT (Merlin, 1968)	£2-£3
BILLY BUNTER — SPORTSMAN (Merlin, 1968)	£2-£3
BILLY BUNTER AND THE BANK ROBBER (Merlin, 1968)	£2-£3
GRANADA (all edited by Kay King)	
BILLY BUNTER OF GREYFRIARS SCHOOL (Granada, 1983)	£1-£2
BUNTER DOES HIS BEST (Granada, 1983)	£1-£2
BILLY BUNTER'S DOUBLE (Granada, 1983)	£1-£2
BILLY BUNTER COMES FOR CHRISTMAS (Granada, 1983)	£1-£2
'BESSIE BUNTER' PAPERBACKS (all 'by Hilda Richards' [John Wheway])	
BESSIE BUNTER JOINS THE CIRCUS (Merlin, 1967)	£2-£3
BESSIE BUNTER AND THE GOLD ROBBERS (Merlin, 1967)	£2-£3
BESSIE BUNTER AND THE SCHOOL INFORMER (Merlin, 1968)	£2-£3
BESSIE BUNTER AND THE MISSING FORTUNE (Merlin, 1968)	£2-£3
'TOM MERRY' PAPERBACKS (all 'by Martin Clifford')	
TOM MERRY'S SECRET (Goldhawk, 1952)	£4-£6
TOM MERRY'S RIVAL (Goldhawk, 1952)	£4-£6
THE MAN FROM THE PAST (Goldhawk, 1952)	£4-£6
WHO RAGGED RAILTON (Goldhawk, 1952)	£4-£6
SKIMPOLE'S SNAPSHOT (Goldhawk, 1952)	£4-£6
TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE (Goldhawk, 1952)	£4-£6
D'ARCY IN DANGER (Goldhawk, 1952)	£4-£6
D'ARCY ON THE WARPATH (Goldhawk, 1952)	£4-£6
D'ARCY'S DISAPPEARANCE (Goldhawk, 1952)	£4-£6
D'ARCY'S DAY OFF (Goldhawk, 1953)	£4-£6
D'ARCY THE REFORMER (Goldhawk, 1953)	£4-£6

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