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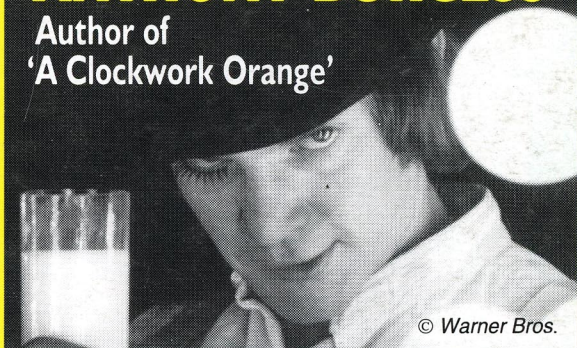


THE WEIRD TALES OF H.P. LOVECRAFT

CRIME WRITER JOHN HARVEY

ANTHONY BURGESS

Author of
'A Clockwork Orange'



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Malcolm McDowell stars in Stanley Kubrick's controversial film of 'A Clockwork Orange'.

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RICHARDS RARITIES

Few children's authors have been as prolific or as versatile as the great Frank Richards. In a career spanning some 67 years, he produced a steady stream of stories and serials, including westerns, romances and — most famously — a huge number of school stories featuring the likes of Tom Merry, Harry Wharton and Billy Bunter, the 'Fat Owl' of Greyfriars' Remove. His work appeared in some of the best-known of all boys' papers, including *The Gem*, *Magnet* and *The Schoolboys' Own Library*.

As it is such a complicated subject, we are publishing a comprehensive guide in this month's issue to all the most collectable items in Frank Richards' bibliography. These include original issues of *The Gem* and *Magnet*, as well as lesser-known papers and even a 'Billy Bunter' play. The article makes a perfect introduction to the magical, laughter-filled world of Frank Richards.

The writings of H.P. Lovecraft are certainly magical, but otherwise they could hardly be less like those of Frank Richards. Lovecraft was one of the great pioneers of modern 'horror', and he still enjoys legendary status amongst aficionados of the genre. Most of his works were initially published in privately printed magazines, and many more pieces were left unfinished at the time of his death in 1937. These have been reprinted in a bewildering number of collections, some of which are now very valuable indeed. Our feature considers all the most sought-after items, from the original magazines to recent anthologies.

Unquestionably one of the major cinematic events of this year will be the re-release of Stanley Kubrick's film of *A Clockwork Orange*. The film was withdrawn in the U.K. because of controversy over its violent content, but the ban has only increased the mystique surrounding both the movie and Anthony Burgess's original novel. The reappearance of the film gives us a chance to reassess both this work and the rest of Burgess's output, and also to look at how prices have changed since we last featured him ten years ago.

Now that spring is here, and the sun (hopefully!) will be shining a little more brightly, many of us can start to look forward to our normal outdoor pursuits, including the very English game of croquet. This month's issue includes an article on croquet books, covering everything from histories and instruction manuals to books of rules and regulations. The feature also provides a potted history of this fascinating and surprisingly subtle game.

Our other articles feature: travel writer and historian, Fitzroy Maclean; Victorian poet, Coventry Patmore; and crime author, John Harvey.

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FRANK RICHARDS RARITIES

NORMAN WRIGHT PICKS OUT
THE RAREST ITEMS FEATURING
BILLY BUNTER, TOM MERRY
AND FRANK RICHARDS'
OTHER GREAT CHARACTERS

Charles Hamilton, better known to generations of schoolboys as 'Frank Richards' and 'Martin Clifford', was one of the most prolific writers of all time. In a writing career that spanned more than six decades, from 1894 until his death on Christmas Eve 1961, he turned out an estimated 100 million words, the equivalent of 1,000 full-length novels. His output encompassed almost all areas of fiction, from out-and-out romances to westerns, but his great forte was the school story, a genre which he dominated from the late 1920s, and it is for his work in this field that he will be remembered.

His most famous creation was the anti-hero William George Bunter, the 'fat owl' of the remove form at Greyfriars School, and while aficionados may argue that some of his other schoolboy creations were better drawn, few can deny that Billy Bunter is one of a very small number of truly immortal fictional characters. In this article, I will look at Hamilton's writing career and consider some of the many Frank Richards rarities that have been published over the decades.

In his memoir, *The Autobiography of Frank Richards* (Charles Skilton, 1952), Hamilton tells us that his first story was accepted for publication when he was just seventeen years of age. He does not mention the title or the publisher of that landmark story, but does recall his great delight at receiving payment for it of five guineas. That first tale is now lost in the mists of time, and even that most diligent of researchers, Bill Lofts, was unable to track it down.



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THE GEM 2nd LIBRARY



"THE MYSTERY OF THE PAINTED ROOM!" A Magazine from Long, Clouston, Ltd., Glasgow. UK and America published in the USA.

The 1913 Christmas double number of *The Gem*, containing 'The Mystery of the Painted Room'.

After that first taste of success, Hamilton's pen remained constantly busy, churning out stories in longhand for an assortment of publications. Initially he sold his work where he could, but he soon began to find a regular market for his writing with Trapps Holmes, a firm scarcely remembered today. During the 1890s, however, they were publishers of a fairly substantial number of comics and boys' papers. A large part of Hamilton's output for this publisher has been identified, and in their book, *The World of Frank Richards* (Howard Baker, 1975), Lofts and Adley tell us that, after long investigation, they were able to confirm that Hamilton wrote several thousand stories for Trapps Holmes. "For a period of more than five years," they write, "Frank Richards swamped these [Trapps Holmes] publications with work from his pen."

The author was prolific and versatile, churning out stories of almost every descrip-

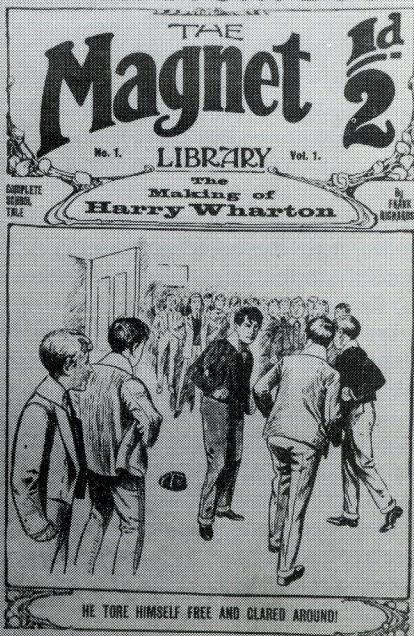
tion, although — as Lofts and Adley point out — the Trapps Holmes publications were almost totally devoid of school stories from Hamilton's pen. There was little work of quality from him during this period of his career, and, despite their scarcity, copies of the Trapps Holmes comics containing stories by Charles Hamilton are of little more than curiosity value among collectors.

FAST-PACED

Charles Hamilton's first great schoolboy character was Tom Merry, created early in 1907 for issue number three of *The Gem*, a halfpenny paper published by Harmsworth. The story, written under the byline of 'Martin Clifford' and entitled 'Tom Merry's Schooldays', was the first of what had originally been envisaged as a series of fortnightly school stories that would alternate with fast-paced adventure stories by other

The 1965 facsimile of the first issue of *Magnet*. The original now changes hands for up to £200.

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THE ARRIVAL OF BESSIE BUNTER! The master from 'The Girls of St. Mary's' greets her in the school.

The first issue of *The School Friend*, featuring Bessie Bunter and the girls of Cliff House School.

writers. However, Hamilton's creation proved so popular with readers that the decision was taken to turn *The Gem* into a weekly school story paper.

While engaged on writing for *The Gem*, Hamilton had also been contributing a series of school stories featuring Jack Blake of St Jim's College to another Harmsworth paper entitled *Pluck*. With his increased weekly workload for *The Gem*, it was decided to combine the two series. Tom Merry and the other characters from the Clavering College stories were transferred to St Jim's School, and from issue number eleven of *The Gem* the exploits of Tom Merry and co of St Jim's School by 'Martin Clifford' appeared weekly. Tom Merry proved to be extremely popular with readers, and early in 1908 the publishers decided to cash in on the character's success. They began a 'new series' of *The Gem* at double the size, double the price, and with

the numbering starting again with issue one. At the same time, they launched a new halfpenny companion paper entitled *Magnet*. At a stroke, Hamilton's weekly workload was more than doubled.

The first issue of *Magnet* (dated 15th February 1908) introduced readers to Harry Wharton, a character who, over the years, was developed by Hamilton into one of his finest creations. Harry was headstrong and wilful, and in that first story, entitled 'The Making of Harry Wharton', he got off to a bad start when he arrived at Greyfriars School. Amongst the cast of that inaugural issue was Billy Bunter, although little of his future potential was evident in that first appearance.

Copies of the first issue of *Magnet* are scarce, and to my knowledge a copy has not come on the market for some years. If a Very Good copy was offered for sale today, I would expect it to sell for at least £150. In 1965, however, Fleetway issued a facsimile edition of the first issue that was so faithful to the original that collectors must now be very cautious. There is, however, a very simple way of distinguishing between the original issue and the 1965 facsimile: the original has the date, in numerals, at the base of the outside back cover, while on the facsimile this date was omitted.

PEN-NAME

For the 'Greyfriars' stories in *Magnet*, Hamilton chose the pen-name of 'Frank Richards'. This became his best-known pseudonym, and the name by which he was invariably addressed. I have seen dozens of letters written by Hamilton to enthusiasts, and for every one signed 'Charles Hamilton', a dozen or more are signed 'Frank Richards'.

The first few *Magnet* stories, chronicling Harry Wharton's arrival and settling in at Greyfriars, were excellent tales, but it has to be said that, during the formative years of both *Magnet* and *The Gem*, the quality of the stories was variable. For every gem there was a crop of 'potboilers' that were probably acceptable to the young readers but fell far short of the superb work that Hamilton was to produce for the papers during their peak years. Few enthusiasts

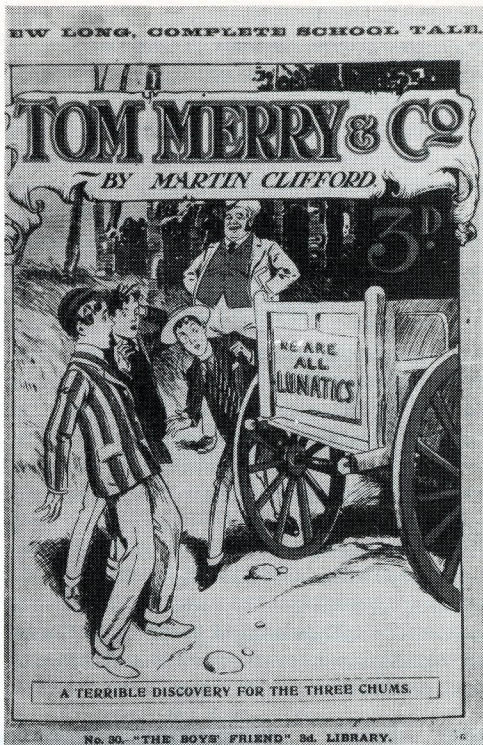
would dispute the fact that *The Gem* blossomed well before *Magnet*. The best stories of Tom Merry, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and the other juniors of St Jim's appeared during the decade spanning 1914 to 1924, while *Magnet* was at its peak from the late 1920s until well into the 1930s.

Hamilton proved to have the golden touch, and stories from his pen were invariably popular. Harmsworth (later the Amalgamated Press) made the fullest use of their star writer, and were continually pressing him to begin new series and invent new schools. If a paper had a flagging circulation, Hamilton would be called upon to write a series for it in an attempt to reverse the slide.

WORKLOAD

Hamilton's weekly output rose dramatically as the years passed, and it was inevitable that, with such a heavy workload, he would sometimes be unable to fulfil every commitment. Consequently, from time to time stories by substitute writers — although still published under the 'Martin Clifford' and

The first issue of The Schoolboys' Own Library, which reprinted stories from The Gem and Magnet.



This 1907 issue of The Boys' Friend Library was the first to feature Tom Merry. It now fetches up to £20.

'Frank Richards' bylines — would appear in *Magnet* and *The Gem*.

The Gem suffered particularly badly from substitute writers during the late 1920s and early 1930s, and in 1931, at the instigation of Eric Fayne, a life-long Hamilton enthusiast, the decision was taken to begin reprinting the 'Tom Merry' stories in *The Gem* from the beginning. This policy of reprints began in the summer of 1931 and continued until 1939, when Hamilton once again began contributing new stories to the paper. *The Gem* folded at the end of 1939, a casualty of the wartime paper shortages. Fortunately, *Magnet* never had to resort to a policy of reprints to keep it going, and from the late 1920s until well into the 1930s Hamilton was pouring some of his best work into the paper.

Probably the most sought-after issues from the very early years of *Magnet* and *The Gem*

are the splendid double numbers that appeared before the First World War. These were truly bumper issues, each containing a very long story (sometimes fifty or sixty thousand words in length) and often sporting a colour cover. The extra space gave Hamilton room to develop his plots, and some of the best of the early adventures, particularly of Tom Merry and co, appeared in double numbers.

GHOSTLY

Perhaps the most sought-after 'doubles' are number 302, 'The Mystery of the Painted Room', a ghostly Christmas tale that appeared late in 1913; and number 393, 'The Housemaster's Homecoming', a summer double number published in 1915. These now sell for £10-£15 each in Very Good condition. 'The Housemaster's Homecoming' was reprinted as a soft-covered book by the Museum Press in 1970, and copies of this edition can still be bought for £5 or £6. Sadly, no double numbers were published after the First World War.

While St Jim's and Greyfriars are Hamilton's best-known schools, they are by no means the only educational establishments he created. In their book, *The Men Behind Boy's Fiction* (Howard Baker, 1970), Lofts and Adley identify 107 fictional schools created by Hamilton, and they suggest that their list is by no means exhaustive!

His third most popular school was Rookwood, created in February 1915 for the well-established weekly, *The Boys' Friend*. The 'Rookwood' stories, all written under the byline 'Owen Conquest', featured Jimmy Silver and Co, and were far shorter than the 'Greyfriars' and 'St Jim's' stories, running to about 12,000 words each. *The Boys' Friend* number 715, containing the very first 'Rookwood' story, 'The Rivals of Rookwood', sported a splendid cover illustration depicting two horse-drawn traps, each loaded with boys, racing along neck and neck.

The Boys' Friend was a large-format publication, and copies are very prone to wear-and-tear. A copy of that first 'Rookwood' issue in Very Good condition



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'The Boy Without a Name!' is among the most sought-after editions of *The Boys' Friend Library*.

would cost around £10-£15 today. The 'Rookwood' stories ran in *The Boys' Friend* until April 1926.

During the first quarter of this century, Hamilton wrote stories and series for many Amalgamated Press publications, and to list even a fraction of the characters and series that flowed almost continually from his Remington typewriter would take up far more space than is available in this short article. One series that does deserve mention, however, is the set of stories that Hamilton contributed to an unusual publication entitled *The Greyfriars Herald*. Launched in 1915, this small-format weekly was ostensibly the Greyfriars School magazine! For *The Greyfriars Herald*, Hamilton, under the pen name of 'Peter Todd', wrote a series of highly amusing stories featuring Herlock Sholmes. These delicious parodies of Conan Doyle's great detective had such titles as 'The Freckled Hand' and 'The Bound of the Haskervilles'.

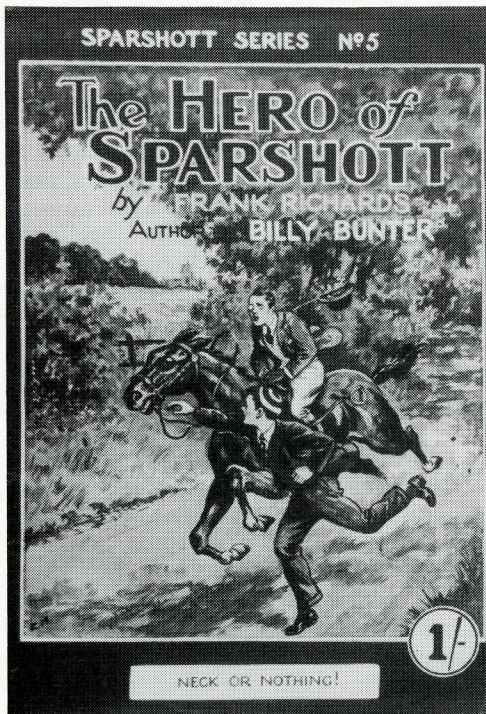
Owing to a paper shortage, the first series of *The Greyfriars Herald* ran for only eighteen issues, but when the title reappeared in 1920 Hamilton wrote a further 32 'Herlock Sholmes' adventures for it. Hamilton was obviously very fond of Sholmes, and over the years — and for a variety of publications — he wrote a grand total of 95 tales featuring the detective. The entire canon was collected and published by Hawk Books in 1989 as *The Complete Casebook of Herlock Sholmes*, with a long introduction by the present writer. A complete set of the original eighteen *Greyfriars Herald* issues would now cost in the region of £100.

BESSIE BUNTER

Having cornered the market in school story papers for boys, the Amalgamated Press decided to launch a similar publication aimed at girls. Throughout the early 'Greyfriars' stories in *Magnet*, Hamilton had often introduced Bessie Bunter and her friends of Cliff House School, and it was this group of girls who were chosen to be the lead

This issue features the boy outlaw, the Rio Kid. These stories appeared under the 'Ralph Redway' byline.





One of six 'Sparshott School' booklets published by the firm of William C. Merrett during the mid-1940s.

characters in the first issue of *The School Friend*, published in May 1919. Under the byline of 'Hilda Richards', Hamilton wrote the first six stories of Cliff House School, but with issue seven the stories were taken over by other writers.

The School Friend ran until 1929 when it merged with the Amalgamated Press's other long-running story paper for girls, *The School-girl*. The first half-a-dozen issues, with stories by the original 'Hilda Richards', are now very scarce. A collector should expect to pay around £50-£60 for the first issue in Very Good condition, and £6-£10 each for the other five issues. The only other full-length 'Cliff House' story from the pen of the genuine 'Hilda Richards' was *Bessie Bunter of Cliff House School*, published in hardback by Charles Skilton in 1949.

Such was the popularity of the 'Greyfriars', 'St Jim's' and 'Rookwood' stories that many of them were reprinted in various other

Amalgamated Press publications. For many years, *The Penny Popular* (later *The Popular*) reprinted stories of all three schools, but the publication best-known for its reprints of the Hamilton school stories is *The Schoolboys' Own Library*, an attractive pocket-sized publication that ran from April 1925 until June 1940.

MONTHLY ISSUES

The library initially consisted of two monthly issues, each comprising 64 pages, but after it had been running for almost seven years the page count was increased to 96, and for the last three and a half years of its life there were three issues each month. In all there were 411 issues, and over three-quarters of these comprised school stories from the pen of Charles Hamilton.

Greyfriars was the most frequently-featured school in the library, and — with only the very occasional exception — Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Billy Bunter and the

The company also issued three story-papers featuring the girls of Headland House. These now sell for £6-£8.



other 'Greyfriars' characters were featured every month. 'Tom Merry' stories figured almost as frequently, and there were a good number of 'Rookwood' stories, too. Over ninety per cent of all stories published in *The Schoolboys' Own Library* were reprints.

The Schoolboys' Own Library has always been a popular publication with collectors. Its small format and the clear typeface of its text make it an easy-to-read publication. In the early days of collecting, it offered readers almost their only chance to read classic 'Greyfriars', 'Rookwood' and 'St Jim's' stories, which they would otherwise have found unobtainable.

The first issue of *The Schoolboys' Own Library*, 'The Greyfriars Players', was a reprint of a 1915 *Magnet* (No 374) double number originally entitled 'The Fall of the Fifth'. It is quite a scarce issue and worth up to £30 in Very Good condition. The *Gem* double number 'The Mystery of the Painted Room', mentioned earlier, was reprinted in issue 66 of *The Schoolboys' Own Library* as 'The Eastwood House Mystery'. Probably the most sought-after issues are the 64-page editions, which sell for between £4 and £8. Editions of *The Schoolboys' Own Library* featuring Rookwood School are also quite eagerly sought-after, and are worth a similar amount. Later 'Greyfriars' and 'St Jim's' numbers are far more plentiful, and are worth £3-£5 each.

A group of stories that can certainly be classed as Frank Richards rarities are the early issues of *The Boys' Friend Library* containing his work. *The Boys' Friend Library* was a long-running publication which began in 1906 and, like *The Schoolboys' Own Library*, was

mainly a vehicle for reprinting serials and series of stories drawn from the wealth of material that had previously appeared in one or other of the many weekly and monthly boys' papers published by the Amalgamated Press.

Early on in its run, Hamilton wrote two original, full-length 'Tom Merry' stories for the publication: 'Tom Merry & Co' in number 30 (first series, November 1907) and 'Tom Merry's Conquest' in number 38 (first series, January 1908). Each story ran to 120 pages, and the extra length gave Hamilton scope to develop his characters in a way not possible in the weekly *Gem*, which at that time was still in its halfpenny format. Both issues are extremely scarce, and Very Good copies, complete with their two-colour covers, are now worth £15-£20 each. The two titles were reprinted together as a card-covered volume by the Museum Press in the early 1980s (no date).

MYTHICAL

Another early issue of the *Boys' Friend Library*, and one of almost mythical status, is number 237 (first series), containing 'King Cricket', which was published in August 1913 under Hamilton's proper name. This cricketing adventure, while not an original story (it began life as a serial in *Boys' Realm*), is nevertheless extremely scarce. I have never seen a copy offered for sale, and I know of only one copy in a private collection.

Probably the most famous pair of *Boys' Friend Library* issues written by Charles Hamilton are 'The Boy Without a Name' (number 288, first series) and 'Rivals and



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Chums' (number 328, first series), published in January 1915 and March 1916 respectively. Although both stories appeared under the 'Frank Richards' byline, Greyfriars School features in only a minor role. The main characters are Frank Courtenay and 'The Catterpillar' of Highcliffe School. The writing is excellent, and the two long tales were amongst Hamilton's own personal favourites. Copies are scarce, and in Very Good condition are worth up to £20 each. The two stories were reprinted together by the Museum Press as a softback book in 1969.

Other early editions of *The Boys' Friend Library* by Hamilton that are particularly scarce are 'Through Thick and Thin' (number 276, first series; October 1915), 'Cousin Ethel's Schooldays' (number 367, first series; February 1917) and 'After Lights Out' (number 383, first series; June 1917).

Almost as sought-after are the *Boys' Friend Library* issues containing stories of Frank Richards' schooldays written under the 'Martin Clifford' pen-name. These originally appeared in *The Boy's Friend* from August

1917, and a number of them were collected and reprinted in *The Boys' Friend Library*. The popularity of the stories can be assessed by the fact that the first *Boys' Friend Library* collection of the tales, 'Frank Richards' Schooldays', was published as issue number 417 (first series) in March 1918, only six months after the very first tale had appeared in *The Boys' Friend*.

Half-a-dozen issues of *The Boys' Friend Library* contained 'Cedar Creek' adventures, while three further collections appeared in *The Schoolboys' Own Library*. These tales of Frank Richards' schooldays in the backwoods were entirely fictional but led many readers to believe that the author had enjoyed a boyhood in Canada! 'Cedar Creek' issues of *The Boys' Friend Library* sell for £8-£10 each.

WILD WEST

Two other characters created by Hamilton who quickly found their way into *The Boys' Friend Library* were the Rio Kid and Ken King of the Islands. Adventures of the Rio Kid, the boy outlaw of the wild west, originally appeared under the byline of 'Ralph Redway' in *The Popular*, *The Ranger* and *Modern Boy*. They were immensely popular at the time, although they have dated badly now, and many were reprinted in *The Boys' Friend Library*, starting with 'The Rio Kid' in number 266 (new series) in December 1930.

Ken King, boy trader of the South Seas, originally featured in a series of stories published in *The Modern Boy*, a weekly now best remembered for serialising many early 'Biggles' stories. The first 'Ken King' series appeared under the byline of 'Sir Alan Cobham', but all further adventures were published under Hamilton's real name. The first *Boy's Friend Library* to reprint one of these South Seas adventures was number 331, 'King of the Islands', published in April 1932. Issues of the library reprinting 'Rio Kid' and 'Ken King' stories now fetch between £6 and £8 each in Very Good condition.

The 1920s and '30s were the golden years of Charles Hamilton's output. It would not be an exaggeration to say that his work for the Amalgamated Press during those two decades was a contributing factor in the firm's success.

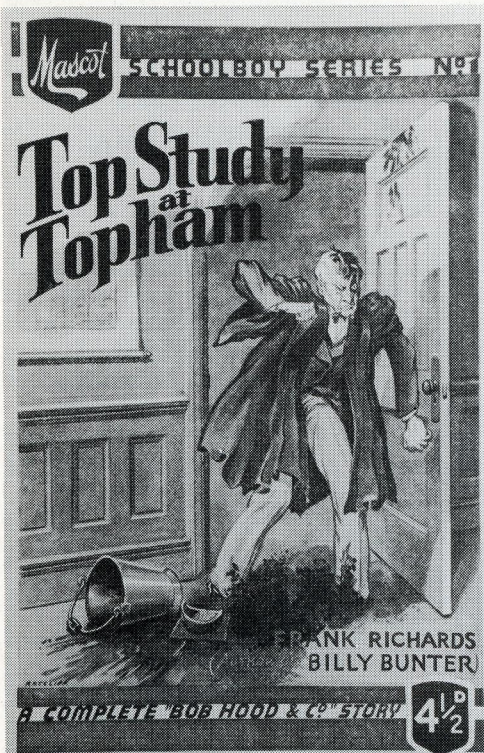
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The first issue of the 'Mascot Schoolboy' series, featuring Richards' story, 'Top Study at Topham'.

In late 1919, the Press published the first *Holiday Annual*, a bumper book packed with stories and features related to Hamilton's three main schools. In the following year, the title was changed to *The Greyfriars Holiday Annual*, and it continued (with minor title changes) until the final issue, dated '1941'.

IMPORTANT

For collectors, the most important issues — and certainly the best-produced — are those dated between 1920 and 1928. During this period, the book was printed on quality paper and filled with good stories, the bulk of which were by Hamilton under his various pen-names. The later issues, from 1929 until the end of its run, were printed on poor-quality paper that resembled card, and, while this made the book comparatively thick, it concealed the fact that the page count was, in

fact, reduced. All editions of *The Holiday Annual* are collectable in Very Good condition, but copies retaining their original printed tissue 'jackets' are very scarce, and these command a premium of 25%-35%.

As mentioned earlier, *Magnet* was at its peak during the latter years of the 1920s and on into the early 1930s, and copies from this period (1928 until 1932) are both scarce and sought-after. Indeed, until the late 1960s, when Howard Baker began to issue facsimile editions of *Magnet*, the most famous series of stories from these years were practically unobtainable. The Howard Baker reprints caused a fall in the price of original copies of *Magnet*, but are themselves now very collectable.

When so many storypapers folded in 1940 due to the wartime paper shortages, Charles Hamilton found his income virtually wiped

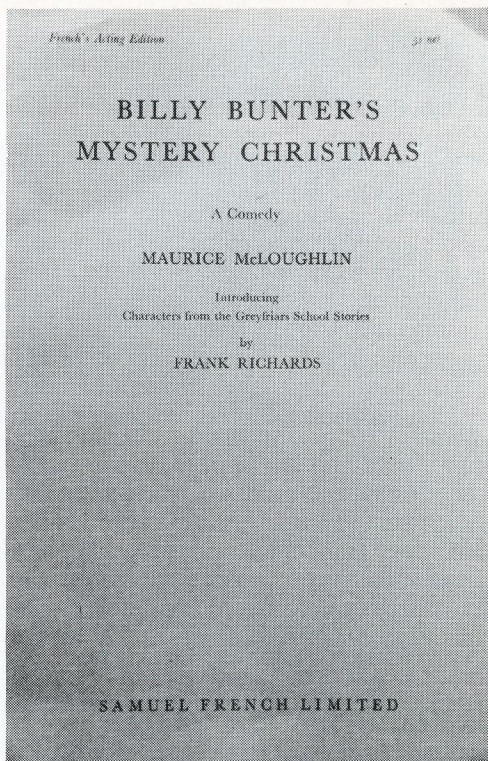
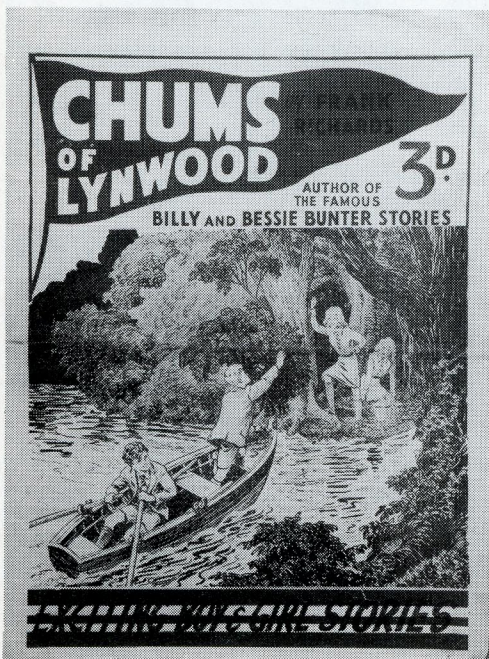
The stories in the companion 'Mascot Schoolgirl' series appeared under the 'Hilda Richards' pen-name.



out overnight. For over forty years, he had written for a ready weekly market, and that market had now all but disappeared. The early 1940s were bleak, wilderness years for the author, and his work became fragmentary as he tried to re-establish himself with new, unfamiliar characters.

In 1945, he contributed 'Carcroft Chronicles' to the Hutchinson magazine, *Pie*, but Turkey Tuck and the boys of Carcroft did not catch on in the way that he had hoped. A little more successful were the various series of school story booklets produced by several small firms during the 1940s. Among the first of these was the 'Sparshott' series, issued by William C. Merrett during 1945-46. The series consisted of six 36-page booklets with full-colour covers, each costing one shilling. The stories of Harry Vernon and Co of the Sparshott fourth were written under the 'Frank Richards' byline and had appealing cover illustrations painted by R.J. Macdonald, the artist responsible for much of the artwork

Chums of Lynwood is the scarcest of the mid-1940s booklets, with Very Good copies selling for up to £10.



The Samuel French edition of Maurice McLoughlin's 1959 stageplay, *Billy Bunter's Mystery Christmas*.

in *The Gem*. For female readers, the same firm brought out the 'Headland House' series under the 'Hilda Richards' pen-name, but these were less popular and only three titles appeared. The 'Sparshott' and 'Headland House' booklets now sell for up to £8 each.

MODEST

Along similar lines were the 'Mascot Schoolboy' and 'Schoolgirl' series from 1949, each comprising four twenty-page booklets. These sold for the more modest price of fourpence halfpenny, but now sell for the same as the Sparshott publications.

Probably the scarcest of the booklet series from the 1940s is the pair featuring Lynwood School. The first, entitled *Chums of Lynwood*, is a sixteen-page *Beano*-size publication. The publisher was David Shields & Co of Manchester. Second in the series was *Fourth*

Form at Lynwood, a 52-page, pocket-size publication costing fourpence halfpenny and published by J.B. Publications Ltd of Stretford. Despite coming from a different publisher, the latter carried a full-page advert for the former!

In 1947, Charles Hamilton's fortunes changed when Charles Skilton published *Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School*, the first of 38 yellow-jacketed 'Bunter Books' (see BMC 114). These were followed by the 'Tom Merry' books (see BMC 53) and three 'Jack of All Trades' books, all from fairly main-line publishers and none of which can be categorised as true Frank Richards rarities.

One rarity from this period, however, is the little-known card-covered play, *Billy Bunter's Mystery Christmas* by Maurice

McLoughlin, published by French in 1959 at five shillings. This was the script of the first of the 'Billy Bunter Christmas Shows', a series of stage plays produced annually between 1958 and 1963. None of the other plays was ever published, and *Billy Bunter's Mystery Christmas* is a rarity that few Bunter enthusiasts have in their collections.

Charles Hamilton died on Christmas Eve 1961, leaving a rich legacy of stories that are still read, savoured and collected. The Howard Baker reprints, and the paperback editions and audio tapes of the 'Bunter' books, have served to keep his work in the public eye. The quality of many of the stories he wrote will ensure that the best of his output will continue to be collected for decades to come.

PRICE GUIDE TO FRANK RICHARDS RARITIES

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

'HALFPENNY GEM'

Number 3 (first 'Tom Merry' Story)	£20-£30
Numbers 5, 7, 9, 11-48	£10-£15

'THE GEM': NEW SERIES

Number 1	£15-£20
Issues published between 1908 and 1914 (excluding double numbers)	each £4-£6
Double numbers published between 1908 and 1914	each £10-£15
Issues published between 1915 and 1925	each £4-£6
Issues published between 1925 and 1931	each £3-£4
Issues published between 1931 and 1939	each £2-£3

(other than issues with W.E. Johns serial instalments)

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Number 1	£150-£200
Number 1 (facsimile)	£2-£3
Number 2	£35-£50
Number 3	£25-£30
Issues published between 1908 and 1915 (in red covers; excluding double numbers)	each £4-£6
Double numbers published between 1908 and 1915	each £10-£15
Issues published between 1915 and 1922 (in blue and white covers)	each £3-£5
Issues published between 1922 and 1926 (in blue and orange covers)	each £3-£5
Issues published between 1927 and 1933 (in blue and orange covers)	each £4-£6
Issues published between 1934 and 1937 (in blue and orange covers)	each £3-£5
Issues published between 1937 and 1940 (in salmon-coloured covers)	each £3-£4
Final number (1683)	£6-£8

'BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY': FIRST SERIES

Number 30: 'Tom Merry and Co'	£15-£20
Number 38: 'Tom Merry's Conquest'	£15-£20
Number 237: 'King Cricket'	£20-£25
Number 276: 'Through Thick and Thin'	£10-£15
Number 288: 'The Boy Without a Name'	£15-£20
Number 328: 'Rivals and Chums'	£15-£20
Number 367: 'Cousin Ethel's Schooldays'	£10-£15

Bibliography continued overleaf

Number 383: 'After Lights Out'	£10-£15
Number 417: 'Frank Richards' Schooldays'	£8-£10
'BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY': NEW SERIES	
'Rio Kid' issues (all under the 'Ralph Redway' byline)	each £6-£8
'Ken King' issues (all under the 'Charles Hamilton' byline)	each £6-£8
'THE GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY ANNUAL'	
(note: issues retaining their tissue wrappers sell for 25%-35% more)	
1920 issue (published September 1919)	£25-£35
1921-1928 issues	each £20-£30
1929-1940 issues	each £15-£25
1941 (final issue)	£20-£30
'BOYS' FRIEND WEEKLY' (issues with 'Rookwood' stories by Owen Conquest)	
Number 715 (first 'Rookwood' issue)	£10-£15
Numbers 716-1298	each £3-£5
'GREYFRIARS HERALD': FIRST SERIES (1915)	
Number 1	£25-£35
Numbers 2-18	each £3-£5
'SCHOOL FRIEND': FIRST SERIES (1919 issues written by Charles Hamilton as 'Hilda Richards')	
Number 1	£50-£60
Numbers 2-6	each £6-£10
'SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY'	
Number 1: 'The Greyfriars Players'	£20-£30
Numbers 2-166 (64-page issues featuring Greyfriars, St Jim's and Rookwood)	each £6-£8
Numbers 167-411 (96-page issues featuring Rookwood and Cedar Creek)	each £6-£8
Numbers 167-411 (96-page issues featuring Greyfriars and St Jim's)	each £3-£5
'SPARSHOTT' SERIES	
Numbers 1-6 (Merrett, 1945-46)	each £6-£8
'HEADLAND HOUSE' SERIES	
Numbers 1-3 (Merrett, 1946)	each £6-£8
'MASCOT SCHOOLBOYS' SERIES	
Numbers 1-4 (Matthews, 1949)	each £6-£8
'MASCOT SCHOOLGIRLS' SERIES	
Numbers 1-4 (Matthews, 1949)	each £6-£8
MISCELLANEOUS	
CHUMS OF LYNWOOD (Shields, [1940s])	£8-£10
FOURTH FORM AT LYNWOOD (J.B. Publications, [1940s])	£8-£10
McLouchlin, Maurice (adapter): BILLY BUNTER'S MYSTERY CHRISTMAS (play) (Samuel French, 1959)	£15-£20
ESSENTIAL READING	
Richards, Frank: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF FRANK RICHARDS (Charles Skilton, 1952) ...	£6-£8 (£10-£15)
ditto. Skilton Memorial Edition (with extra section by Eric Fayne; simultaneous hard- and paperback editions) (Charles Skilton, 1962)	£10-£15 (£15-£20)/£8-£10
Lofts, W.O.G.; and Adley, Derek: THE WORLD OF FRANK RICHARDS (Howard Baker, 1975)	£10-£15 (£15-£20)
Cadogan, Mary: FRANK RICHARDS: THE CHAP BEHIND THE CHUMS (Viking, 1988)	£8-£10 (£10-£15)



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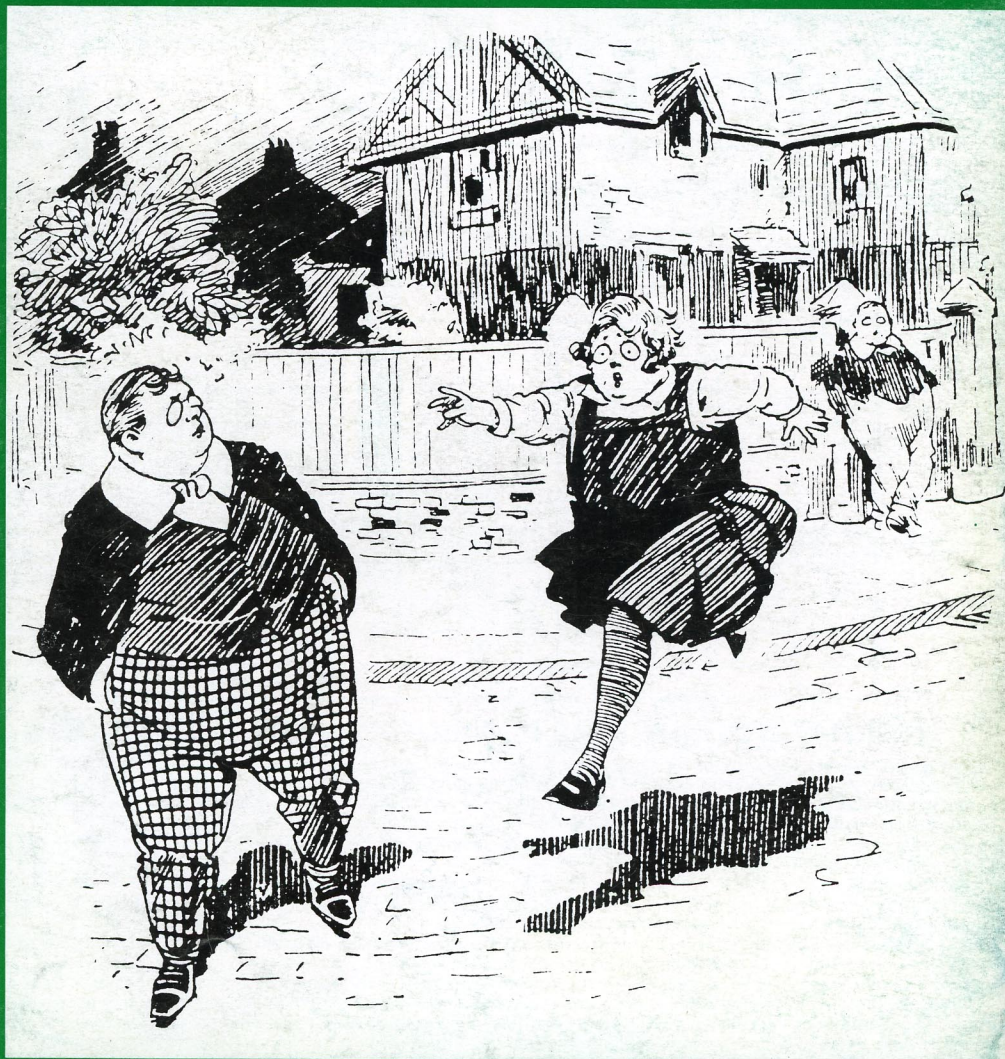
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Running in the family: Billy Bunter is collared by his formidable sister, Bessie. In a writing career that spanned nearly seven decades, the great Frank Richards created many immortal characters like these.