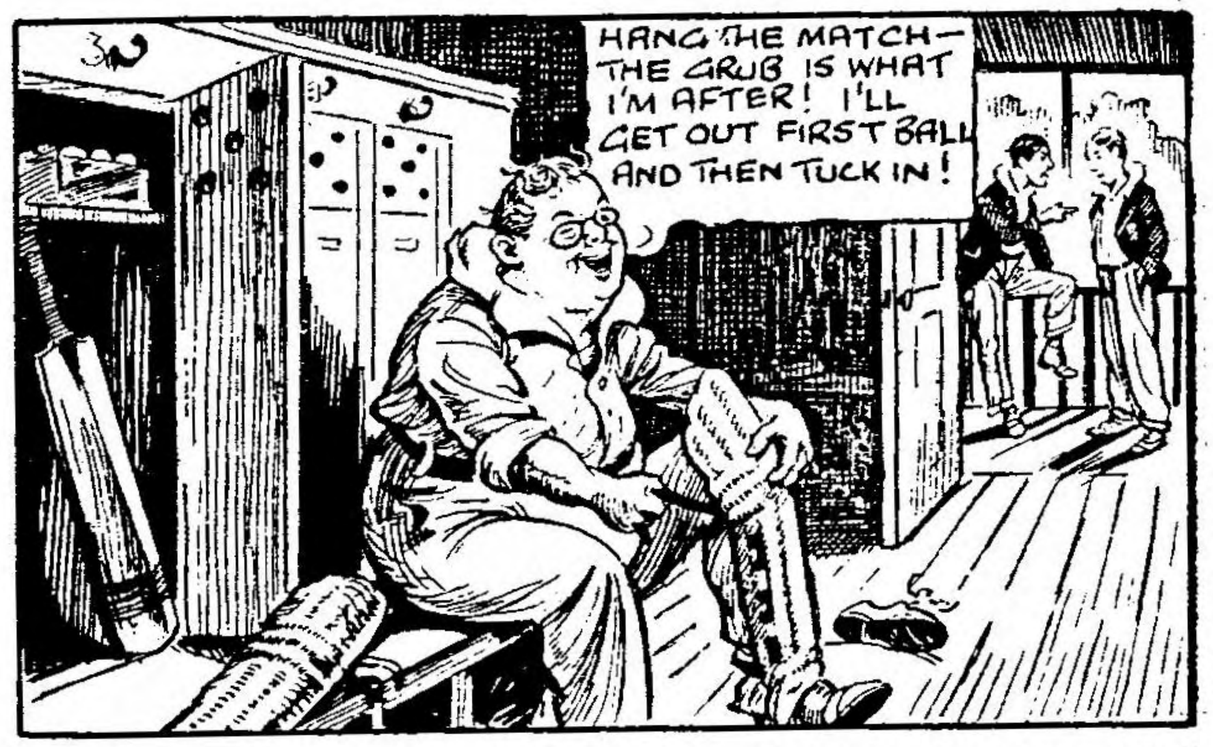
BILLY BUNTER

THE FATTEST SCHOOLBOY ON EARTH

1. To tell the truth, if it hadn't been for Johnson minor spraining his ankle, Billy Bunter would never have been asked to play in the school cricket match against Courtfield village, because Billy was an utter duffer at all sorts of games. But it just happened that the school had another team out that day for an "away" match, and so Harry Wharton, the cricket captain, was forced to ask Billy to play.

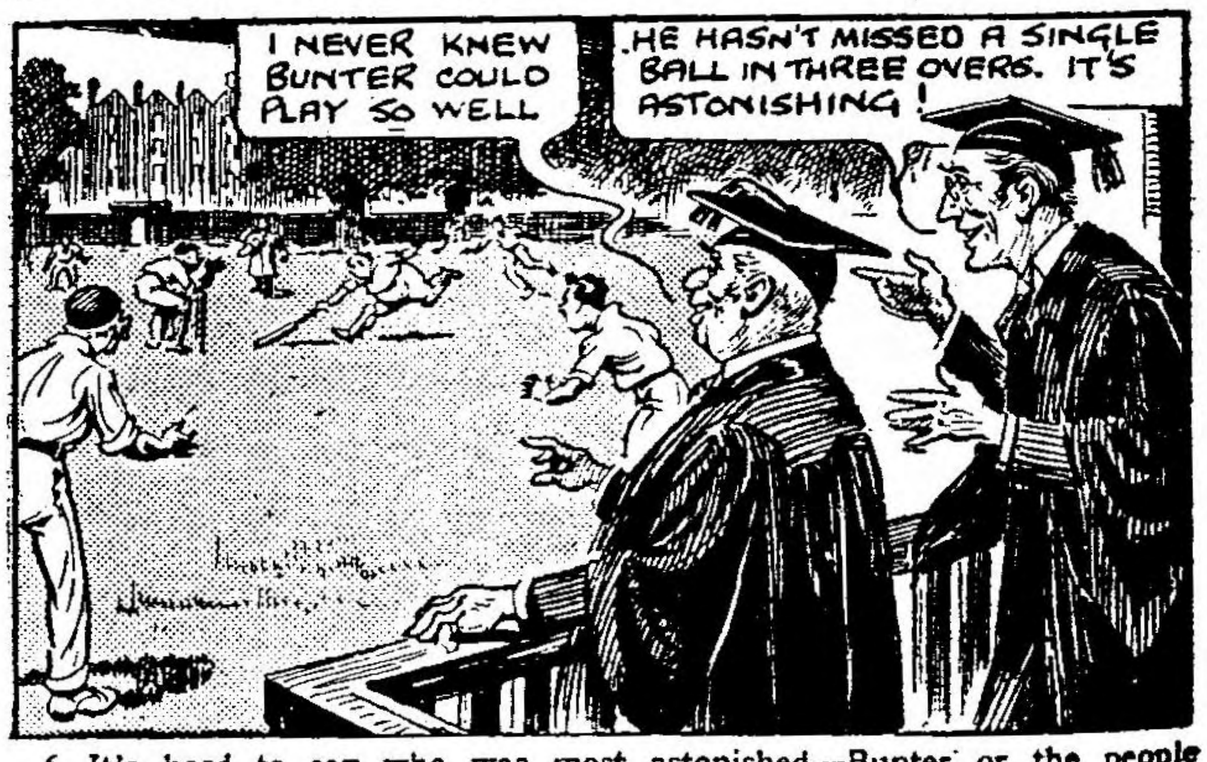


2. It was only when Harry said, "There's a big feed after the match," that our Billy even thought about saying yes, but when he heard that word feed, a light sprang up in his eye and a real brain-wave came to him. So he said he'd play, and d'you know what he was planning to do? He was going to let himself be bowled out, first ball, and then make a bee-line for the grub. And as it happened, the school won the toss and took first whack.

3. Out went Bunter to the wicket when his innings came round. "I'll have to pretend that I'm trying," he muttered to himself, "otherwise those rotters will twig that I don't really want to play in their beastly match. I know, I'll swipe at every ball, and I'll keep my eyes shut—then I'll be certain to come out very quickly. I'll collar that grub, and if those cads can find me to do any fielding they'll be lucky!"

4. Billy took his position at the wicket, looked around the field, patted down a couple of bumps just outside the crease, spent a minute or two having his glove straps adjusted, looked round the field again and then turned his head in the direction of the bowler But he had his eyes shut tight! He waggled the bat about a bit, to make it look as if he were getting ready, and then the bowler shouted "Play!"

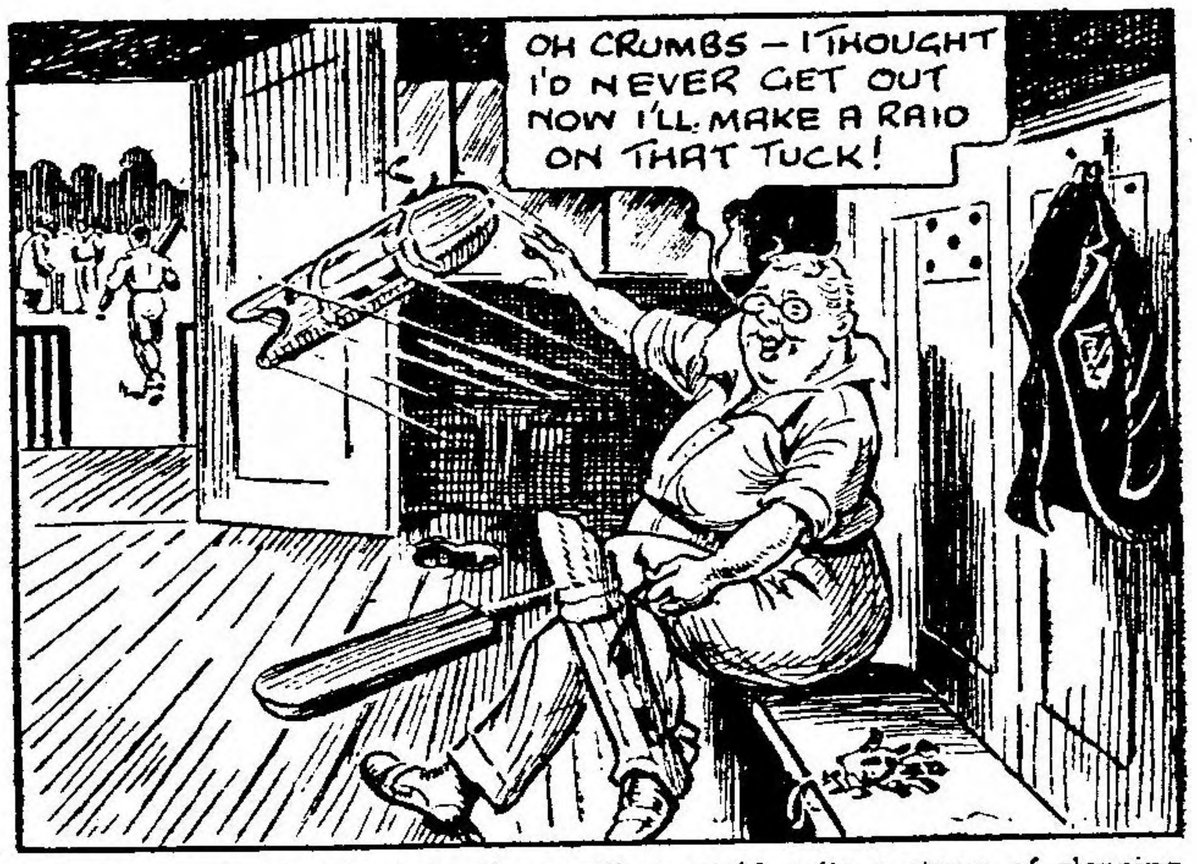
5. Billy heard the thud of the bowler's feet as he took the sprint to the bowling crease, and then raised his bat high. He took a terrific swipe at the ball, which made every daisy in the field duck its head in terror—and to his great astonishment he heard and felt a solid "Whack!" He'd hit the ball! And what's more, he'd hit it perfectly. Away it soared for the boundary—a perfect sixer!



6. It's hard to say who was most astonished—Bunter or the people watching. "Bother!" muttered Bunter to himself. "I hit it—I'll try to miss again!" So he did—and managed the most perfect cut through the slips you've ever seen. The ball whistled past the wicket-keeper and between the slips, and the long-stop only just managed to catch it by sprinting like the dickens. Meanwhile, Bunter had run two!

(You'll find more funny adventures of Billy Bunter in "THE MAGNET" every week as well.)

7. This sort of thing went on for three whole overs and, funnily enough, although the fat boy and his partner kept making runs and swapping ends, more than three-quarters of the bowling came to Bunter. And he didn't miss a single ball ! He was getting hotter and hotter, and more and more worried about that tuck. At last he had a brilliant idea. Since he couldn't get out any other way, he fell on his wicket !



8. Bunter hurried back to the pavilion, amid quite a storm of clapping. But he scarcely noticed it, for he was thinking about that tuck. Bunter was so scared that somebody else would get started on the grub before he did, that he didn't even realise that he was a hero. He'd scored no less than forty-eight runs in three overs—and all through trying to miss the ball ! But Bunter didn't even look at the score board.

9. He ripped off his pads and threw them any old how on the dressing-room floor. Then he sprinted out of the pavilion by the back way and made for the big tent where the two teams were going to have tea after the match. Round at the side he found a spot where the canvas was loose, and he crawled underneath. What a beautiful sight met his greedy eyes ! Jellies, sandwiches, sausage rolls, and all sorts of cakes were piled up on the tables.

10. Unluckily for himself, Bunter didn't even stop to think that he really had made a very big score in a very short time, and it never occurred to him that other people would be interested in what he had done. But they were, and in particular the cameraman of the Courtfield Gazette. He knew jolly well that scores like Bunter's are News, and he wanted a photo of Billy to put in his paper.

11. Now Billy had been seen crawling into the grub tent by old Jarge Bloggs, a yokel who'd turned up to watch the match. So when the cameraman asked him if he'd seen Billy, old Jarge pointed his clay pipe at the grub tent and said : " He went in there ! " The cameraman hurried in as well, and there he saw Bunter in the middle of a terrific feed. It made a perfect picture. So he kept quiet and took the photo without saying a word to Billy.

12. And Billy was so keen on his grub that he never even heard the camera click. He went on eating and eating, never thinking that he'd been photographed in the act ! And he finished up all the grub and sneaked off before tea-time. He didn't leave a crumb for anyone else, the greedy great gobbler ! So I don't suppose that you'll be sorry to hear that he got a jolly good scragging next day, when the other lads saw the photo in the Courtfield Gazette !