

COMET

PRICE
3⁰
EVERY
MONDAY

No. 213. August 16, 1952

SHORTY



THANKS to his motor bike, Horace Coker is in trouble. He has already broken bounds to meet his aunt in Friardale, and is in Mr. Prout's bad books. Now Billy Bunter has borrowed Horace's bike and had an accident with it. He runs for it, leaving Coker to take the blame!

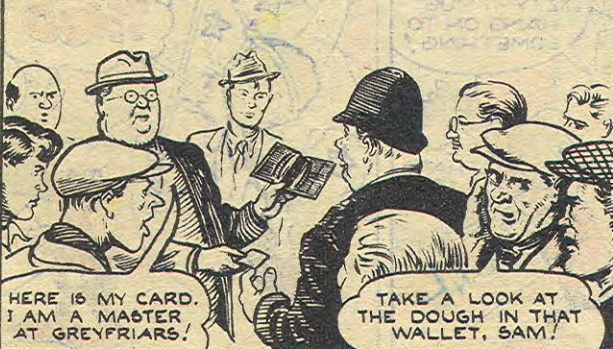
HORACE COKER'S MOTOR BIKE



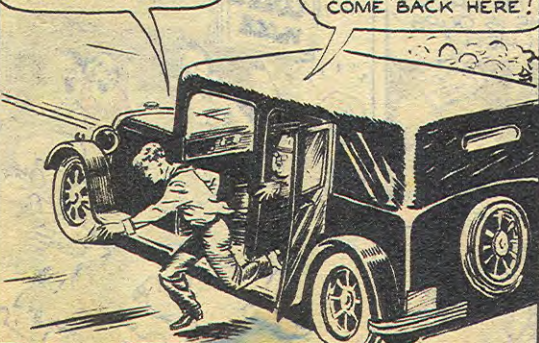
THEN A TAXI ROARED UP AND DREW TO A HALT, AND OUT CLIMBED MR. PROUT, COKER'S FORM-MASTER!



MR. PROUT TOOK A FAT WALLET FROM HIS POCKET WITH A FLOURISH...



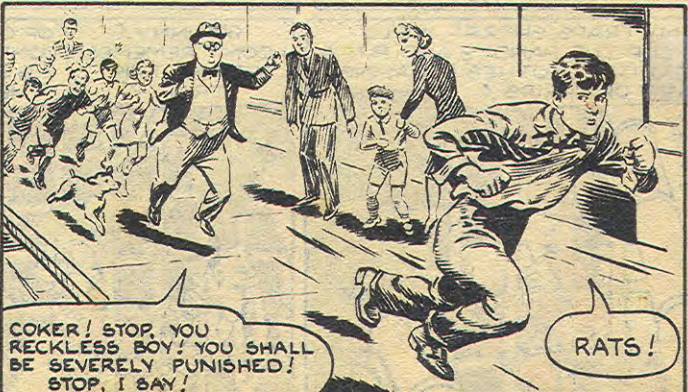
NOT IF I JOLLYWELL KNOW IT...



THESE ASSES SAY THAT I...



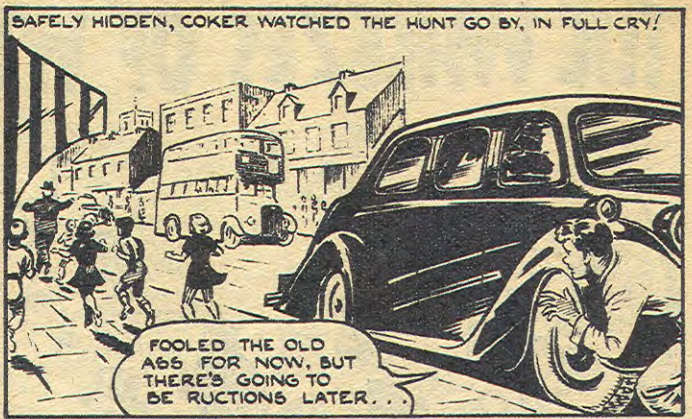
HEMMED IN BY THE CROWD, COKER IS PUSHED INTO THE TAXI...



RATS!



CRUMBS, THEY'RE RIGHT BEHIND ME! I'D BETTER HIDE HERE...



SAFELY HIDDEN, COKER WATCHED THE HUNT GO BY, IN FULL CRY!

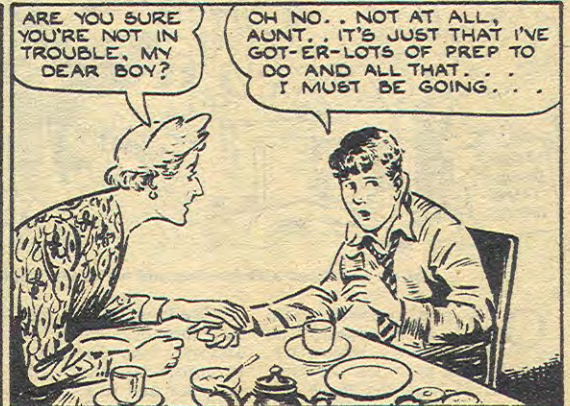
FOOLED THE OLD AGG FOR NOW, BUT THERE'S GOING TO BE RUCTIONS LATER...



DIRTY AND DISHEVELLED, COKER PANTS INTO THE CAKESHOP...

HORACE! GOOD GRACIOUS, WHAT ON EARTH HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO! YOU'RE FILTHY!

OH... SORRY, AUNT... HAD SOME TROUBLE WITH THE MOTORBIKE...



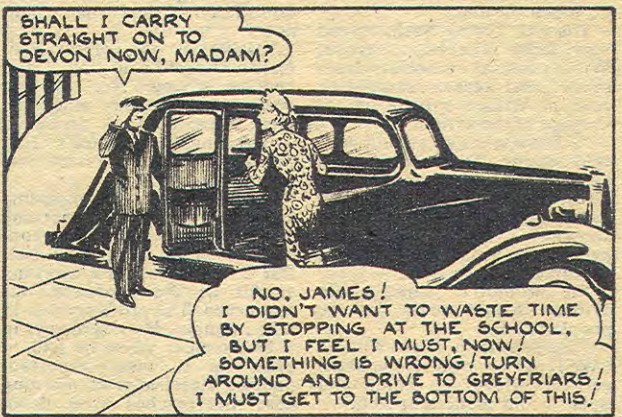
ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT IN TROUBLE, MY DEAR BOY?

OH NO... NOT AT ALL, AUNT... IT'S JUST THAT I'VE GOT-ER-LOTS OF PREP TO DO AND ALL THAT... I MUST BE GOING...



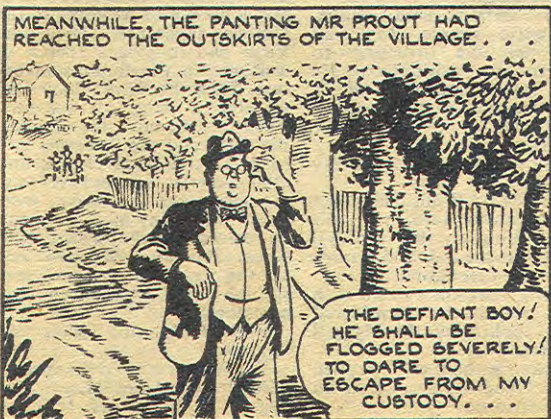
GOODBYE, AUNT! IT'S BEEN GREAT SEEING YOU...

GOODBYE, HORACE DEAR...



SHALL I CARRY STRAIGHT ON TO DEVON NOW, MADAM?

NO, JAMES! I DIDN'T WANT TO WASTE TIME BY STOPPING AT THE SCHOOL, BUT I FEEL I MUST, NOW! SOMETHING IS WRONG! TURN AROUND AND DRIVE TO GREYFRIARS! I MUST GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS!



MEANWHILE, THE PANTING MR PROUT HAD REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE VILLAGE...

THE DEFIANT BOY! HE SHALL BE FLOGGED SEVERELY! TO DARE TO ESCAPE FROM MY CUSTODY...



THEN FROM BEHIND A TREE, LEAPED TWO FIGURES...

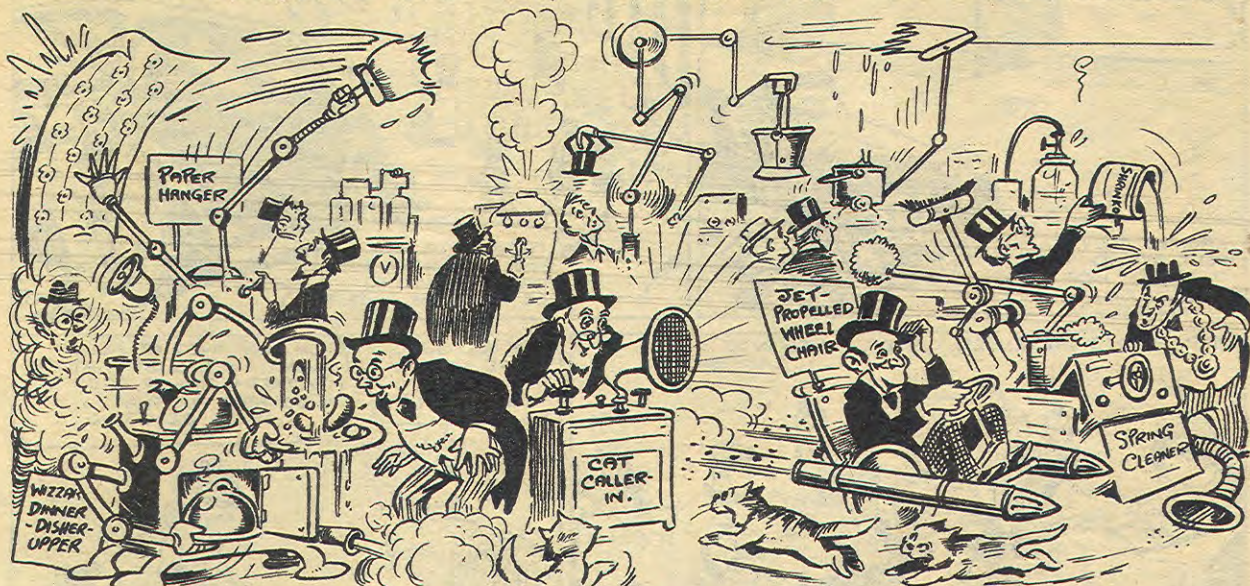
NOW'S OUR CHANCE, SAM! WHILE THERE'S NO-ONE ABOUT...

GOT HIM!

Next week Horace rescues Mr. Prout—and gets into worse trouble than ever!

COMET—August 16, 1952—3

THE WHEEZES OF WILLIE WIZZARD



The air was filled with hooting and whistling, chuffing and puffing. All of Willie's inventions were working at once!

"OUR total wealth," said Willie Wizzard, the schoolboy inventor, counting the coins on the table in front of him, "is three and twopenny halfpenny. We can't do much on that."

His pal, Jimmy Bash, agreed very sadly. The boys were at Willie's house, on holiday from school, and were counting their cash in Willie's private hut at the foot of the garden.

"I know what we should do," said Jimmy. "We should hold an exhibition of all your inventions. We could rent a hall and have all your inventions there on show. We could charge sixpence admission for the people to come and see them."

"It wouldn't work," said Willie. "You'd never get the people to come."

"We'll boost it," said Jimmy. "We'll put on a big show. We'll get the Mayor to come and open it and make a speech."

"Some hopes!" retorted Willie. "He'd never do it."

"He might," said Jimmy. "I've got a great idea. Next week a number of famous inventors are coming here to pin a medal on your dad, because Professor Wizzard is the greatest inventor of them all. Well, we'll get those famous men to visit our exhibition. When the Mayor hears they are coming he'll want to come too and make a speech. It'll be in the papers, and on the wire, and on the newsreels. Everybody will know about it and we'll have people crowding in all day. It'll be a great success."

"Wait a minute," interrupted Willie. "Where has all this to take place and who's going to arrange it?"

"Well, we could rent a hall for the occasion," suggested Jimmy. "As for getting the inventors to come, you might get your dad to ask them."

"He might," said Willie doubtfully. "And he might not."

Might not was correct. Professor Wizzard said "No," and kept on saying "No." On the morning of the day when the great men were to arrive to award him the Inventor's Gold Medal, Professor Wizzard was still saying "No."

It was a dreadful morning, anyway. It was a lovely morning as far as the weather was concerned: bright sun, blue sky. But it was a dreadful morning as far as the professor was concerned. The professor was in a bad temper. He was always in a bad temper when he had to dress up to meet important people. Starched shirt, morning coat that reached away down to his knees, pin-striped trousers, tall hat, shiny leather shoes—the professor hated them all.

He was busy struggling into his shiny leather shoes and getting them on the wrong feet when Willie burst into the room. "Good morning, Pop!" called Willie cheerily, hoping to put his father in a good mood.

The professor jumped to his feet and groaned as the tight shoes nipped his corns.

"Willie!" he cried, "please don't address me as though I was a bottle of ginger beer."

"Sorry, Dad," said Willie. "I was wondering if you could arrange for the inventors to see my inventions."

"No," said his dad. "These inventors are busy men. They've

no time for nonsense. Besides, I want to tell them of my inventions. After all I'm the one they're giving the medal. And remember, they're coming here to dinner, along with the Mayor, so don't be getting up to any tricks."

Willie found his pal Jimmy in the shed at the foot of the garden.

"It's no good," he said. "Dad won't agree."

Jimmy sighed his disappointment and sat down on a box with his chin on his hands. "It was a great idea," he said. "It's a shame your dad won't allow it."

But Willie Wizzard didn't hear. The mighty brain behind his bulging forehead was going into action. For ten minutes he stood wrapped in thought, then his dreamy eyes brightened.

"Come on," he said, "we've work to do."

"Yes, but—" began the bewildered Jimmy.

"No 'buts,'" said Willie. "It's quite simple. My dad won't ask the inventors to come to my exhibition. He didn't say I mustn't hold an exhibition and he can't object to the inventors coming of their own free will."

"Yes—but," said Jimmy again.

"Here," said Willie, shoving a roll of canvas into his pal's hands. "You do this job. I'll go and rent the hall and a lorry to take the inventions."

"B-but what am I to do with this?" asked the bewildered Jimmy, looking at the big roll of canvas.

"Make a banner," replied Willie. "And hurry, we've an awful lot to do."

QUITE a crowd had gathered at the railway station to meet the train bringing the great inventors who were to pin a gold medal on Professor Wizzard's chest.

The Mayor was there in tall hat, frock coat and spats, and a big gold chain round his neck to show that he was the Mayor. The Vicar was there with the Boys' Choir. The Police Chief was there with six bobbies. The Boy Scouts were there and the Girl Guides were there, and the Wolf Cubs and the Brownies.

But what surprised everybody was the presence of Bill Bailey's Big Brass Band from the circus. What were they doing there with their flaming red coats and shining instruments? And who were the two dirty-faced boys carrying the banner?

When the train stopped a carriage door opened and out came the famous inventors.

What was supposed to happen was this. The Mayor had to give a speech of welcome to the famous inventors. Then the Vicar had to give a speech of welcome to the famous inventors. Then the Boys' Choir had to give a song of welcome. Then the Scouts, the Guides, the Cubs and the Brownies had to give three loud cheers, and after that the famous inventors, the Vicar, and the Mayor were to get into shiny black cars and be driven to the Town Hall where Professor Wizzard and all the town's Aldermen were waiting for the medal-pinning ceremony.

But that's not what did happen.

The Mayor started his speech. "Gentlemen, I am Mayor Bigwig of Baldymarshes. It is my

duty, my honour, and my privilege to welcome such famous inventors to our lovely town—"

That was as far as he got. Willie Wizzard, who was one of the dirty-faced boys with the banner, sneezed, and that sneeze was the signal for Bill Bailey's Big Brass Band to burst into music. They marched down the platform towards the famous inventors, their red tunics flaring, their shiny trumpets blaring. At their head strutted a pretty young lady, all dressed in red and gold, who whirled a silver-headed staff with amazing skill sometimes hurling it into the air with one hand and catching it deftly with the other as it came down again.

Willie Wizzard and Jimmy Bash fell in behind the band with their banner on which had been painted in big letters with yellow paint: WELCOME TO BALDYMARSHES, and on the other side: VISIT THE WIZZARD INVENTOR'S SHOW. ADMISSION 6d. CHILDREN 3d.

The young lady led them right into the group of famous inventors, Mayor, Vicar, Boys' Choir, Scouts, Guides, Cubs and Brownies. The Mayor's speech was drowned by the band. The young lady's whirling staff nearly knocked his head off. His spectacles fell off and were rescued by Willie. The poor Mayor was in a dreadful state. He kept waving his arms and calling the band to stop and demanding to know "who did this?" The policemen were ordering everybody to "move along, please." The Vicar kept saying over and over again: "Oh, dear me! Oh, dear me! Good gracious! Bless my soul!"

In the middle of all this uproar the Station Master arrived with a big book which he shook in the Mayor's face. "The regulations," he shouted, thumping the book. "It says in the regulations: 'No brass bands allowed to play on the platform, because then the engine driver won't hear the guard's whistle. Penalty forty bob. I'm going to have you arrested.'"

The Scouts, the Guides, the Cubs and the Brownies were all delighted with the uproar. They fell in behind the band, which they thought would lead them to a free circus show. It wasn't long before everybody did the same, including the famous inventors.

Mayor Bigwig was so angry that he took out his false teeth in case he should swallow them. But he decided to make the best of it and hurried to the head of the procession. He took his place behind the lady with the whirling staff, wondering where on earth they were going.

The famous inventors thought this was part of Mayor Bigwig's idea of a reception and they said unkind things about him under their breath, for they were all old men with poor old feet that throbbed terribly

as they walked.

The band played a lively tune that made all the people in the streets want to take part in the procession, and soon it seemed as though everybody in Baldymarshes was marching behind Willie's banner.

When they reached the hall where Willie's exhibition was to be held the crowd was dense. Mayor Bigwig didn't know what it was all about, but he had opened enough exhibitions in his day to know that this was another exhibition to be opened. He pushed to the front of the crowd, fixed his Mayor's gold chain neatly round his neck, held up his hand for silence, cleared his throat, and started his speech.

It was the speech he had intended to deliver at the station, but at the end of it he added: "—and I now declare this Exhibition open." With a flourish he threw open the doors and started to enter. Willie jumped in front of him.

"Sixpence, please," he said. "What?" gasped the Mayor. "Grown-ups sixpence. Children threepence," explained Willie.

The Mayor's face grew red, and about twenty newspapermen with cameras dashed forward to photograph him fumbling in his pocket for the money. Everybody laughed, including the famous scientists. But they stopped laughing when Willie demanded sixpence from them as well.

After that the people just poured in, and so did the sixpences. The famous inventors had a great time. They pressed buttons and pulled levers on Willie's inventions and had enormous fun. There was Willie Wizzard's wonder

White-washer, his Paper-hanger, his Spring-cleaner, his Dinner-disher-upper, his jet-propelled Wheel-chair, his Cat-caller-in, his Talking Clocks, and more than a dozen other queer contraptions, as well as a row of bottles and jars containing mixtures that did wonderful things—and, of course, a big tray of Everlasting Toffee. There were enough things there to keep them playing for hours. It was a wonder there weren't any accidents. As it was, the only thing that happened was when Professor Bluntedge, the famous inventor of a rubber-headed hatchet, upset a jar of Shrinko over the Mayor's hat.

It was soon time to go. Everybody was sorry, except the Mayor. The band lined up. The Mayor took his place in front, and the famous inventors formed ranks behind. This time Willie, Jimmy and their banner

didn't join the parade. Jimmy stayed behind to collect more sixpences and Willie nipped quickly through the side streets to see how his father was taking the delay.

There he was, pacing and up down in front of the Town Hall—where the ceremony had to take place—his tight shoes, which were still on the wrong feet, squeezing his corns at every step. Around him stood the Aldermen, and on a platform stood the town's band. They were getting hungry and were tired of standing and were saying terrible things about the Mayor for having got himself lost on the way from the station.

At last they heard the sound of rousing music and their mouths fell open in wonder as Bill Bailey's Big Brass Band came swinging round the corner—with Mayor Bigwig in the lead!

The town's band were furious. They had been engaged to play and they meant to play. And play they did. As the other band drew nearer they played

louder. Bill Bailey's Big Band wasn't going to stand for that. The lady with the swinging staff made straight for the platform, and with a few swings of her silver-headed staff sent the town's band scattering in all directions. Bill Bailey's Big Brass Band then took over the platform for itself.

When order had been restored the Mayor made another speech. "It is my honour, privilege and duty," he said, "to award this gold medal to Professor Wizzard, the world-famous inventor, and the best-loved citizen of Baldymarshes."

The crowd cheered. The Mayor leaned forward to pin the medal on the professor's chest. As he did so he muttered under his breath: "What's the big idea making me open your beastly rotten Exhibition, you skinny little monkey?"

The crowd stopped cheering. The Mayor turned and smiled sweetly on them. They started cheering again.

"Listen — you — big fat-face," muttered the professor. "What do you mean by keeping me waiting here for an hour? Think I've nothing else to do but listen to your silly speeches? Besides, my feet are killing me."

The crowd stopped cheering. Professor Wizzard turned and smiled sweetly on them and they started cheering again.

"Aw, does your poor feet hurt?" asked the Mayor. "May-be this'll help." He raised one of his size twelve boots and

brought it down full force on the professor's pet corn. The professor gave such a yell that the town's band thought it their cue to start playing "For he's a Jolly Good Fellow." Bill Bailey's Big Brass Band, not to be outdone, burst into "Auld Lang Syne."

Then they went on to a march tune and, led by the lady with the swinging staff, away they went—in the direction of Willie Wizzard's house. Behind them hobbled the poor old famous inventors, holding their stiff joints, and in front marched the furious mad Mayor with the furious mad professor at his side. They looked rather funny, the skinny little professor and the big fat Mayor, marching side by side. But what made them funnier was the Mayor's tall hat. The Shrinko that had been spilled on it was beginning to operate. The hat had grown smaller and smaller till it looked like a little monkey's comic hat perched over the big Mayor's left eye. It would have fallen off if it hadn't been that the Mayor's hair had also shrunk. Now it stood out like little stiff wires and held the hat on. The people standing along the pavement to watch the parade couldn't help but laugh; and the Mayor grew angrier and angrier.

When Willie saw how things were, he dashed through the side streets and reached his house well ahead of the procession. Safely inside his shed he started to mix up a whole lot of stuff out of different bottles. "I hope this works," he said to himself as he poured the mixture into a little bottle. "It's 'Wizzard Laughter Lotion.' It'll cheer them up, I hope."

He went into the kitchen and found his mother very busy. "Oh, Mum, is this the soup?" he asked, lifting the lid of the soup pot. "Oh, it smells nice." Quickly he pulled the cork out of the bottle of newly-invented laughter-lotion and emptied it into the pot. "I think I'd better go and get my face washed," he said.

Willie was spick and span when the procession reached the house and the poor old foot-sore, famous inventors tottered in. Everyone tried to pretend they didn't notice the Mayor's funny little hat and he pretended himself that he didn't see that it was any different from an ordinary hat. He took it off carefully and placed it on the hall table. Then he went in to dinner.

When he saw Willie he gasped. "Why, that's the boy who was at the Exhibition today."

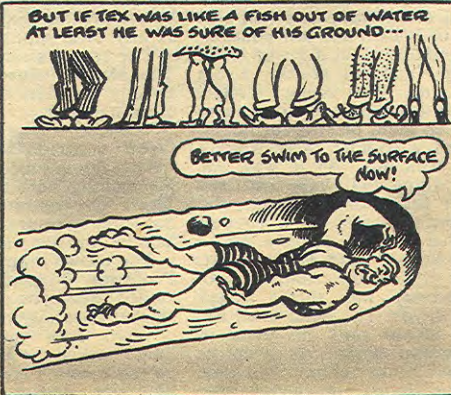
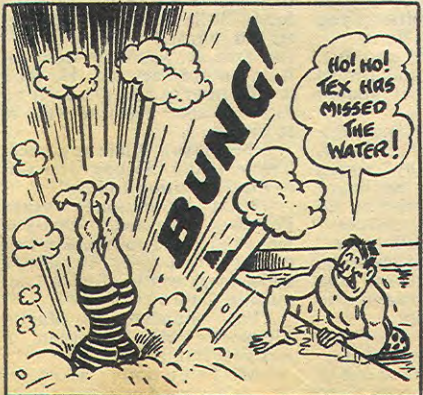
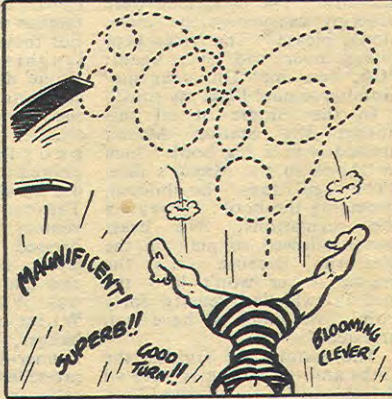
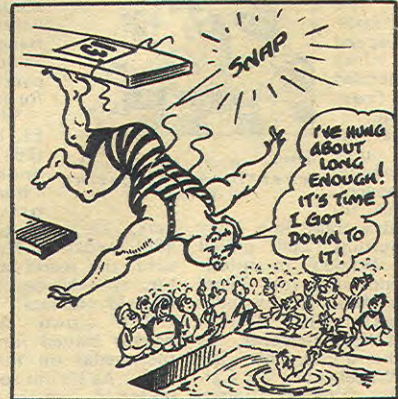
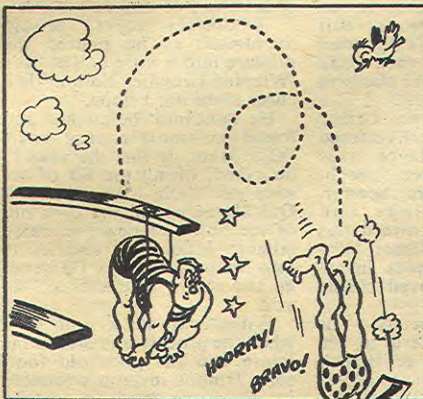
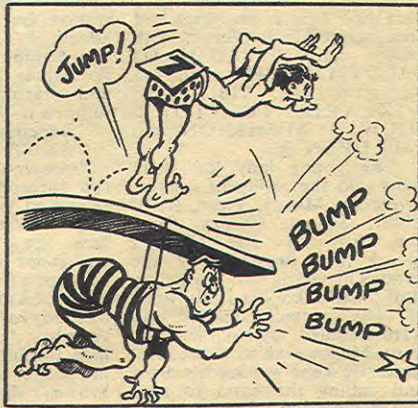
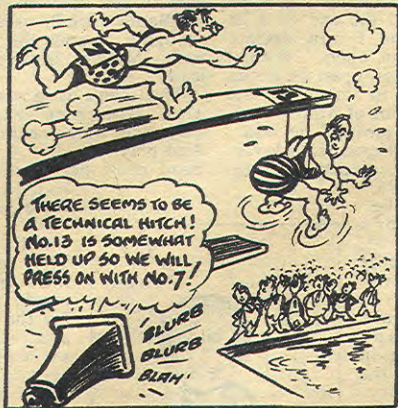
"What Exhibition?" asked Professor Wizzard. "Do you mean to tell me you were nosing around some silly Exhibition while I was waiting for an hour outside the Town Hall?"

"Yes," thundered the Mayor. "It was a silly Exhibition. It was your Exhibition."

"My Exhibition?" asked the (Continued on page 9)



Willie tastes his favourite invention—Everlasting Toffee!



The Mystery of the Ivory Mandarin

Wan Chen was a cunning old Chinese master-crook and he had hidden away a huge treasure—all stolen property, the loot from all his robberies.

The secret of his treasure-hoard was well hidden. He had made a little ivory figure—a Chinese mandarin—which danced when you wound him up. If you counted the steps of his dance in the right way, you could tell the exact spot on the map to look for the treasure.

Now Bob Harley and his dad, with Lotus Chen, had found that very spot. It was in the middle of Ulonduland, in Central Africa. It was a swampy jungle lake called the Lake of the Alligators.

But just as they were about to haul the treasure up from its watery hiding place, a great alligator came lumbering out from the undergrowth.

And that alligator spoke with a human voice!

"DESTROY the white people—they shall not have my treasure!" cried the voice which came from between the great snapping jaws of the alligator. "Destroy them!"

Gozig, the witch-doctor, waved his arms in triumphant excitement.

"Behold!" he cried to the chief of the black men. "Behold—did I not prophesy that the Great Spirit of the Alligators would be angry at this thing? Have not my words come true?"

What he did not tell his chief, the Ondu, was that he had plotted that this whole thing should happen with Sidi Ben Fazool, the Arab driver who had brought the white people to seek the treasure. Sidi Ben Fazool had promised that he would make an alligator speak, and he had been as good as his word.

What Gozig did not know was that Sidi Ben Fazool was really a white man himself—a crook known as the Professor—who was also after that huge treasure hoard. Bob Harley and his dad, Inspector Harley of Scotland Yard, thought that the Professor was dead and had not seen through his clever disguise as an Arab.

The inspector snapped a fresh cartridge into the breech of his gun.

"This looks like trouble!" he said grimly. "I don't know what that 'gator said—or how the trick was worked—but from the way those natives are looking it wasn't anything good for us. I wish Sidi Ben Fazool was here to translate!"

"How's it been done?" wondered Bob, taking his place at his dad's side. "It's a trick of some sort—but how was it done?"

"I don't know—but from the pleased look on his ugly face,



There before them was Wan Chen's treasure—found at last!

that witch-doctor chap knows something about it. You know—the funny thing is, I'm sure I know that voice—the voice that came from the alligator!"

"I know whose voice it was," said Lotus quietly. "It was the Professor's voice!"

"By gosh—you're right!" snapped the inspector. "Then he's still alive—and in that case we can look out for trouble!"

Urged on by the voice from the alligator, the black men had picked up spears and knives and were crouched ready to hurl themselves at the white folk. All they wanted was one word from their chief, the Ondu.

"Let your warriors hurl their spears—you have but to tell them! Destroy the white folk!" hissed Gozig, the witch-doctor.

The Ondu looked troubled. He had been schooled at a white man's mission in the jungle and he did not like this thing. True, the alligator had spoken, as Gozig had prophesied. But the French missionary had told him that such things could not be. There was trickery here, and the Ondu was troubled.

"I will speak with the white men in the tongue I learned at school," he told Gozig. Then he raised one hand and began to speak to Bob's dad in very slow and halting French.

"Ondu—not—like—hurt white people. But my people—hear voice—of water—

monster. They—believe—monster. Please—you leave—my kingdom—now. That way—no—bloodshed!"

"He speaks French!"

"Thank goodness for that—perhaps we can make him see sense!" said Bob's dad, and then answered the Ondu.

"The Ondu is wise. Tell your people the talking monster is a trick—the trick of an evil man who would kill us!"

"But how trick—done?" the Ondu asked. "My people believe—unless—you show—how!"

"He's got us there!" said Bob. Gozig, the witch-doctor, whirled forward.

"Do not listen to his words—he is false!" he screamed to the Ondu. "Kill! Tell your warriors to kill!"

And again the voice came from the alligator:

"Hurl your spears, O warriors of the Ondu! Let the white folk perish!"

Bob cocked his rifle, for the black warriors looked very threatening.

"Don't shoot unless I give the word," warned Bob's dad. "Once we start shooting at 'em we're finished!"

With Lotus between them, Bob and his dad backed away from the hostile blacks, their two rifles levelled. They took up their stand with their backs to the trunk of a huge jungle tree. Here all their camping gear and

other supplies were stacked.

"As long as the Ondu is prepared to talk we can hold out," said Bob's dad. "Once he's against us, we're finished. . . ."

"Couldn't we radio for help?" asked Lotus. "You brought radio with us, surely?"

"That's right—but our radios are only short-distance sets—little walky-talky sets for us to use in case we had to separate," said Bob. "We could shout for help into those sets as loud as we liked and nobody would pick us up more than a few miles away!"

"The walky-talkies!" snapped Bob's dad. "That's it! Where are they, Bob—find 'em—quick!"

Wondering what was in his dad's mind, Bob stooped down amid the camping gear.

"Here's one—he said 'There should be three—one each. Hey—Dad—two of 'em are missing!'"

"And one of those two is inside that alligator—picking up whatever the Professor is saying into the mike of the other one!" said Bob's dad grimly. "That's how the trick's being worked—it'd be easy to switch a set on and then make a 'gator swallow it. It's only about the size of a brick. If you wrapped it in meat the 'gator would do the rest! Here—give me that third set!"

Bob switched on the little radio which could either send

(Continued on next page)

or pick up messages, and handed it to his dad.

"Here is your trick, Ondu!" said the inspector, and his voice came from the alligator as well as from his own mouth, for the little built-in microphone was picking up his words and the loud-speaker of the set inside the gator was repeating them. "See—someone is using the white man's talking machine to trick you into doing terrible wrong!"

He held out the little walky-talky towards the Ondu.

"Speak your own words into this box and they will come from the monster!" he said in French.

The Ondu turned towards Gozig and his face was angry.

"What do you know of this trickery, O Gozig?"

The witch-doctor was trembling with fright. "Lord!" he cried, "I did but do what Fazool the Arab told me—"

There came the sudden bark of a rifle from up among the trees and the witch-doctor pitched forward, clutching at his chest. Then there came another crack and a bullet glanced off the tree behind Bob and went screaming away into the jungle. Bob, Lotus and the inspector dived round the massive trunk and took cover.

"Fazool—that's what that witch-doctor chap said!" panted Bob. "Do you think he could be the Professor?"

"He must be," snapped Bob's dad, and then he spoke again into the microphone.

"The game's up, Professor. Surrender, and I'll promise you a fair trial under English law!"

"You'll never take me!" the Professor's voice screamed out of the alligator's jaws and another bullet knocked chips out of the tree trunk just by the inspector's head.

The natives had all dived for cover by now. Bob's dad put down the small radio.

"He must be somewhere up in those trees further along the bank of the lake," he said. "Keep him busy, Bob, with a few shots from here. I'm going to try to work round the other side of him."

Bob's dad darted away through the undergrowth, sprinting from tree to tree. Bob poked his gun around to one

side and loosed off a couple of shots.

But the Professor's keen eyes had picked out Bob's dad and the next shot that he fired whined in among the trees a dozen yards or more to Bob's left.

Then Bob felt a hand on his arm. It was Lotus.

"Bob—look!" she whispered.

Bob followed the direction of her pointing finger.

Gozig, the witch-doctor, had raised himself up painfully from the ground. With one hand he was supporting his weight. In the other hand he held what looked like a long, slender rod.

Slowly he raised the rod to his mouth and then Bob guessed what it must be.

"A blowpipe!" he breathed.

They heard the sharp "phut" as the witch-doctor blew through the tube, aiming it up at the trees by the lake.

The tiny dart from the blowgun winged up into the foliage, aimed with deadly care, for Gozig knew just where Fazool the Arab was hidden, and his keen eyes had picked out the movement of his gun up among the branches.

There came a sharp cry from the man in the tree, but no more than would have been caused by a pin sticking into him.

Bob peered keenly up into the foliage, straining to see where their arch-enemy was hidden. Still he could see nothing, until there came a sudden flurry of movement. Then a rifle dropped from the foliage and splashed into the water below.

Two choking cries followed and then the man they had known as Sidi Ben Fazool dropped from the branches and into the lake without another sound.

The great alligator on the bank lumbered off and slid into the water with hardly a splash. Ripples on the surface told where other monsters were swimming towards the doomed man.

The inspector reappeared beside Bob and Lotus.

"He was gone before he hit the water," he said quietly. "That native dart poison works very fast..."

IN slow French, the inspector had told the Ondu the whole tale of the Professor's quest for the stolen treasure in the lake, and the Ondu had told it in turn to his listening tribe. The telling of the story lasted far into the night.

But as dawn broke on the following day, all was ready for the raising of the treasure.

Floating upon the surface of the water was a hollow steel buoy—the sort of thing sailors use to mark sunken wrecks. It was easy enough to loop a rope around this and then a team of black men heaved from the shore.

A strong steel chain was fixed to the buoy and at the end of this was something heavy.

It took all the strength of forty strong black men to haul the first of the treasure chests ashore.

"Look—dad!" cried Bob, as the green water and slime drained itself from the carvings of the great iron coffer. "Look—there's another chain fixed to the chest—and there's something else fixed to that, to judge from the way it's dragging!"

For a few minutes' only the panting of the natives broke the stillness and then another chest was hauled into sight.

"Another chain!" Bob's dad pointed to the far side of the chest, for there were more green, weed-covered links dropping down into the slimy depths.

More tugging and yet another chest came into view.

"Gosh, Dad—can we open one of them up?" cried Bob, his eyes dancing. Inspector Harley smiled. He would have been less than human if he hadn't been feeling nearly as excited as his son. For here was the thrill of thrills that men dream of, but which seldom comes true—the thrill of finding hidden treasure!

"Give me that crow-bar we brought," he said. Bob put the crow-bar in his dad's hand almost before he finished speaking. To tell the truth, he had been holding it ever since the Ulondu men began their treasure tug-of-war.

Bob's dad drove the chisel end of the powerful bar between the lid and the box, just beside the lock. When it was far

enough in for a firm purchase, he bore downwards upon the end. There was a wrenching sound and a sharp crack and the massive lid flew upward.

Even the coating of mud and weed from the lake water could not dull the gleam of the treasure that lay revealed. There was jewellery of every kind, and everywhere between the bright sparkle of the precious stones was the yellow gleam of gold.

This was Wan Chen's treasure—this was his share of the loot from scores of clever robberies that he had planned in his years as a master-crook.

This was the secret of the ivory mandarin. This was the treasure that the Professor had done desperate deeds to win and that in the end had cost him his own life.

There were six great boxes in all and each one, when it was opened, was packed to the lid with a precious hoard.

When the last chest had been lifted on to the backs of stalwart bearers and was being carried through the jungle to the lorry which had brought them there, Bob's dad turned to Lotus.

"For twenty years at Scotland Yard we tracked your father, Wan Chen," he said. "But he was always too clever for us. I got to know him very well. And though it was my job to hunt him down, he trusted me as a man. He once gave me the ivory mandarin to take care of for him and said it was to be yours after he had gone. That was because he wanted you to find the treasure and to have the rewards for finding it. You never knew that he had been a crook and he knew that you would give the treasure back to its rightful owners. I suppose it was his own way of making amends for his own misspent life."

And that was really the end of the adventure. They carried the treasure by lorry to Mombasa and there it was taken aboard a destroyer of the Royal Navy and convoyed back to England.

As for the ivory mandarin, it now stands upon Inspector Harley's desk. And if you look at its mysterious little carved face you'd think that it still had a secret to keep.

THE END

STARTING NEXT WEEK—ANOTHER GRAND BOB HARLEY YARN!

OUR ENGINE-SPOTTERS CLUB

COME on, you Engine Spotters! Get out your Club Albums and quickly look below to see if any of the numbers below is the same as your membership number, because if it is there's a grand Club present waiting for you—free!

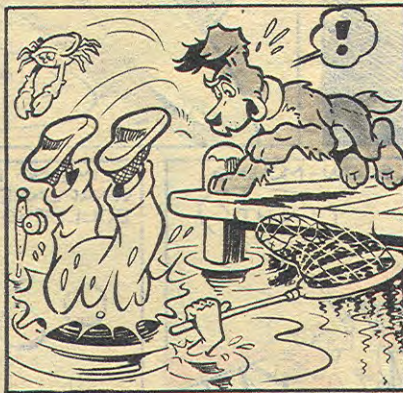
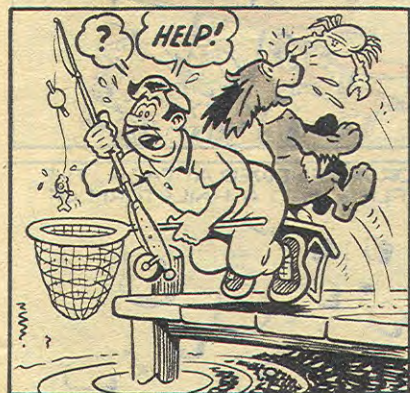
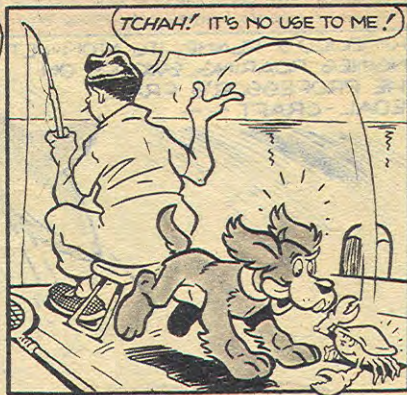
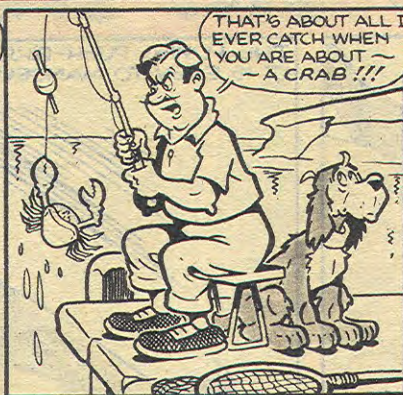
137,443	77,236	175,171	203,871	40,310
148,399	174,391	207,597	136,357	92,397
206,146	202,187	30,218	18,112	211,698
4,503	2,490	102,086	199,691	148,672
61,742	150,124	179,680	133,852	36,810
117,985	58,799	10,312	88,317	66,681
201,115	210,151	186,622	14,289	212,572
92,562	40,837	129,494	157,926	150,361
11,401	176,391	62,771	2,691	72,782
120,825	11,898	5,473	203,358	200,653

Well, was it there? Then choose a present from these: A Cowboy Belt and Holster, Ball-point Pen, Water Pistol, Wrist Compass, Jack-knife, Charm Bracelet, a Box Game, or an Autograph Album. Write the name of the present you would like in the space in your Album marked "For Official Use" and then, on a piece of paper, write the name of the story or character you like best in COMET and, in a few words, why. Then put your Album and the piece of paper in an envelope addressed to:

COMET E.S. Club, 3 Pilgrim Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

Stick on a 2½d. stamp, seal the envelope and post at once to arrive by Tuesday, August 26th, the Closing Date. Presents are dispatched about one week after the Closing Date and Albums are returned at the same time.

SCAMP OUR HAPPY HOUND



THE WHEEZES OF WILLIE WIZZARD (Continued from page 5)

professor in astonishment.

"Yes, it had your name all over it, and your name was plastered on a large banner carried by that boy and another boy. And—and that boy took sixpence from me for admission."

"Oh, stop complaining," said Professor Bluntedge, who had taken a spoonful of the soup containing Willie's good-temper mixture. "It was a wonderful Exhibition. You should have seen me on the Wizzard Jet-propelled Invalid Chair. Boy! Did I go!"

"That's nothing. You should have seen me work the Wizzard Dinner-disher-upper," said Professor Rodent, the inventor of a world-famous mouse-trap. He also had taken some soup and was beginning to feel quite cheery. He began to laugh at the fun he'd had at the Exhibition.

The soup had the same effect on the others. The more they supped the happier they became and soon the dining-room was in a hubbub of cheery voices and laughter. Even Mayor Bigwig became good-tempered. They were all talking about the Exhibition, the wonderful inventions they had seen there and

the fun they'd had trying them out. They talked and laughed so much that the bewildered Professor Wizzard couldn't get a word in edgewise.

"What I thought very funny," said Professor Bluntedge, tears of merriment streaming down his face, "was when the bottle of Shrinko fell on the Mayor's hat. Ho! Ho! Ho!"

"Ho! Ho! Ho!" roared everybody, including Mayor Bigwig.

"You looked so funny in that little tall hat—like Stan Laurel in the pictures," went on Professor Bluntedge. "Ha! Ha! Ha!"

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" roared the Mayor. Then suddenly he stopped laughing. The effect of the

laughter lotion was wearing off.

"Who looked funny?" he demanded thrusting his face under Professor Bluntedge's nose. "You'd look funny if I lifted that custard pie off the table and plunked it right over your head. Wouldn't you?"

"You don't need a custard pie over your head to make you look funny," retorted Professor Bluntedge. "You look funny enough without it."

Professor Wizzard rose to his feet. "Now, now," he said. "No fighting. It seems to me we've all been victims of a hoax—and I think I know who is responsible. That wasn't my Exhibition and those weren't my inventions.

They were all the work of my son, Willie."

The famous inventors were amazed. They all began talking at once, praising Willie. The rest of the meal was taken up in praising Willie. Even the Mayor joined in, and before he left he shook Professor Wizzard by the hand. "You really are a great man," he said. "The town of Baldymarshes is proud of you. Perhaps, after all, I was wrong. You're not really a skinny monkey."

"And perhaps I was wrong too," returned the professor. "Maybe your hat wasn't too small—maybe your head's just too big. Good night."

When they had all departed Professor Wizzard sank down on a chair.

"What a day," he sighed. "What a day." He pulled off his tight shoes and rubbed his throbbing corns. "Oh, my poor feet," he groaned. "And that reminds me of something I want to do. Willie! Fetch my slippers. Not the soft ones. The ones with the nice thick soles—and Willie—"

"Yes, Dad?" said Willie. "You may call me 'Pop' if you like," said the professor, gripping one of his slippers firmly in his hand and rolling up his sleeve, "because I'm just about to explode."

Next week: The Wizzard Wonder Walking Kit-bag!

THRILLS, ADVENTURE, MYSTERY! SECRET SERVICE—AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA!

There's a new Bob Harley story starting next week—a story of his adventures as a Special Agent of the mysterious "X" branch of Scotland Yard. He is sent to join the crew of the Sea Fort—Britain's most secret weapon! The Sea Fort is a forty-thousand-ton steel monster with an engine of two million horsepower to drive it as it crawls over the bed of the ocean!

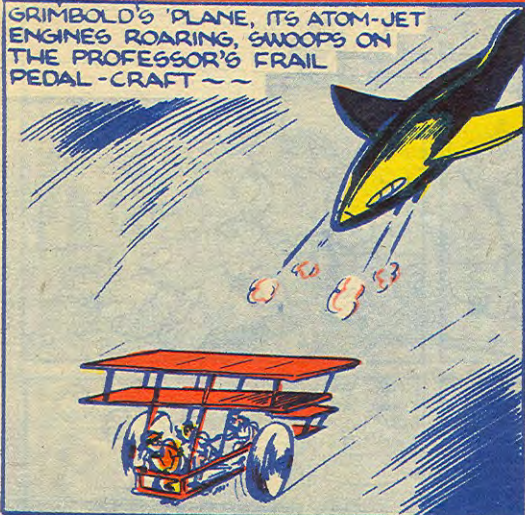


Don't miss this fine yarn starting in next week's COMET

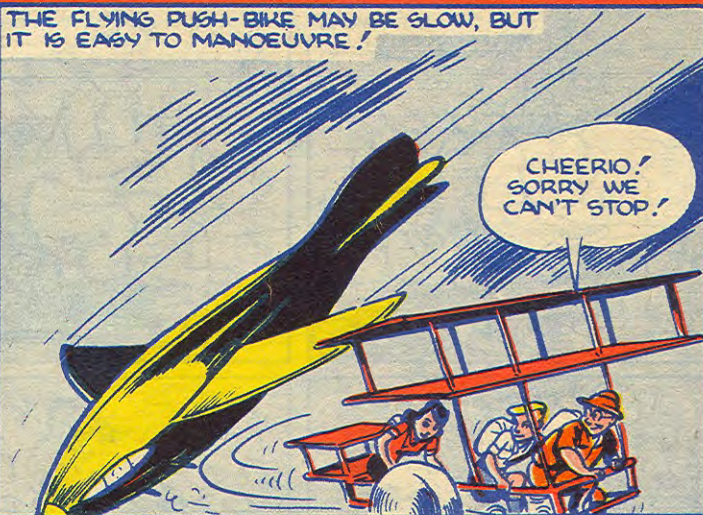
On the Milky Way—the Empire of the Million Worlds—Ann, Peter, and their uncle, Professor Jolly, are leading the loyal subjects of Queen Alva against her rebel cousin, Prince Grimbold, who has captured Dynamo World. The professor's fleet consists of home-made craft, for Grimbold now controls the supply of atomic energy on the Milky Way.

THE SKY EXPLORERS

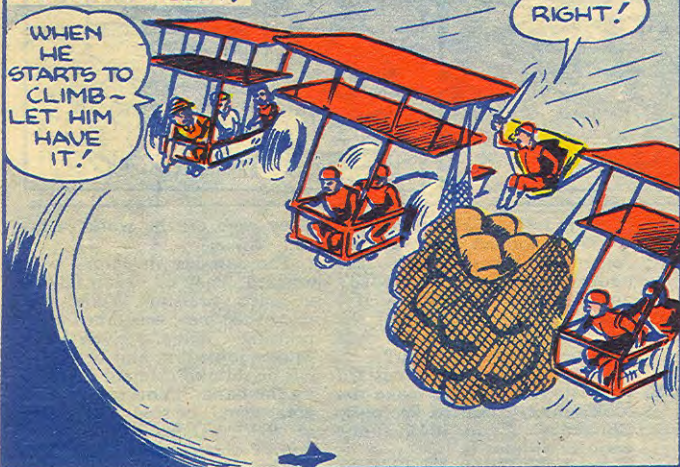
GRIMBOLD'S 'PLANE, ITS ATOM-JET ENGINES ROARING, SWOOPS ON THE PROFESSOR'S FRAIL PEDAL-CRAFT ~ ~



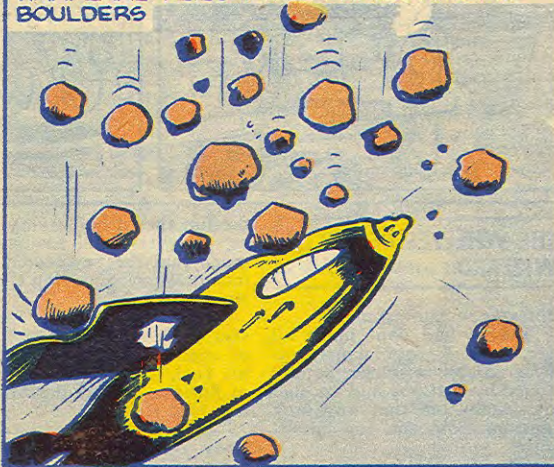
THE FLYING PUSH-BIKE MAY BE SLOW, BUT IT IS EASY TO MANOEUVRE!



THE WARPLANE OVERSHOOTS THE SLOW-MOVING INVASION FLEET!



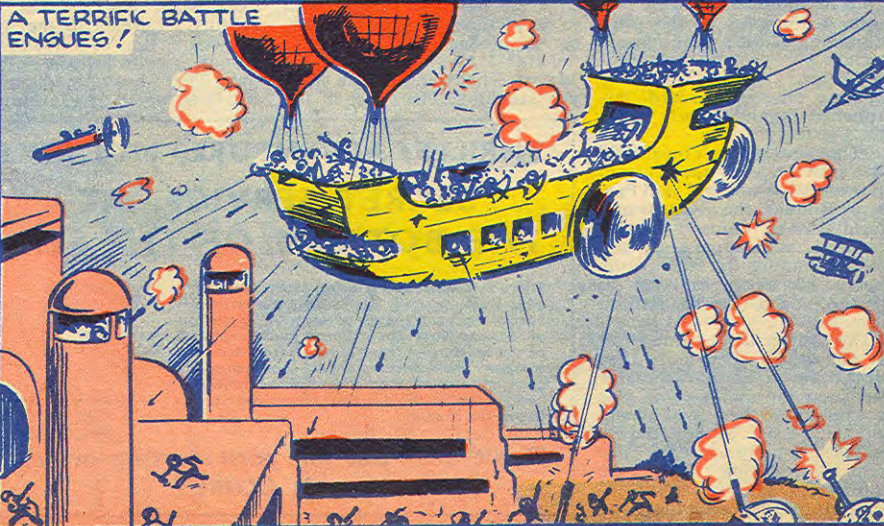
CLIMBING FOR A RENEWED ATTACK, THE WARPLANE FLIES INTO A HAILSTORM OF BOULDERS

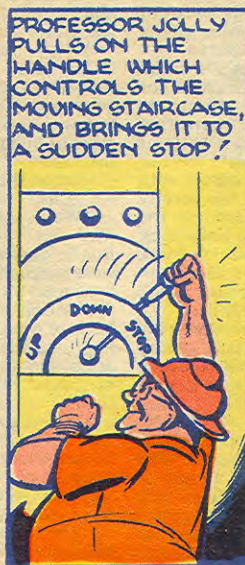
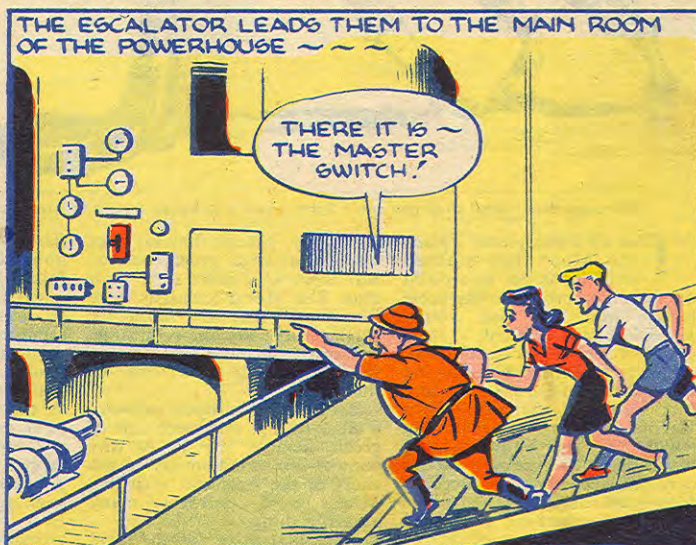
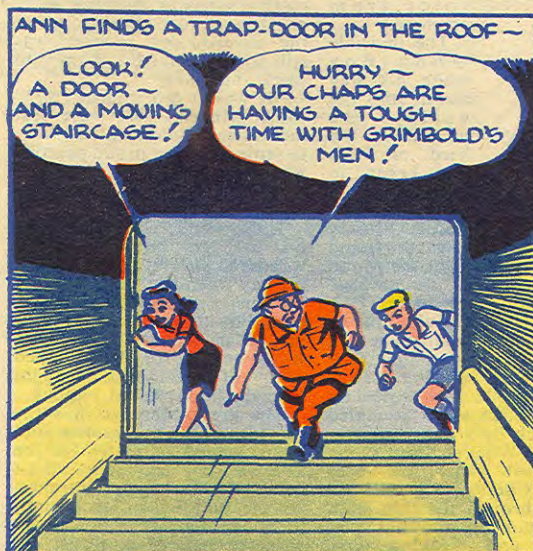
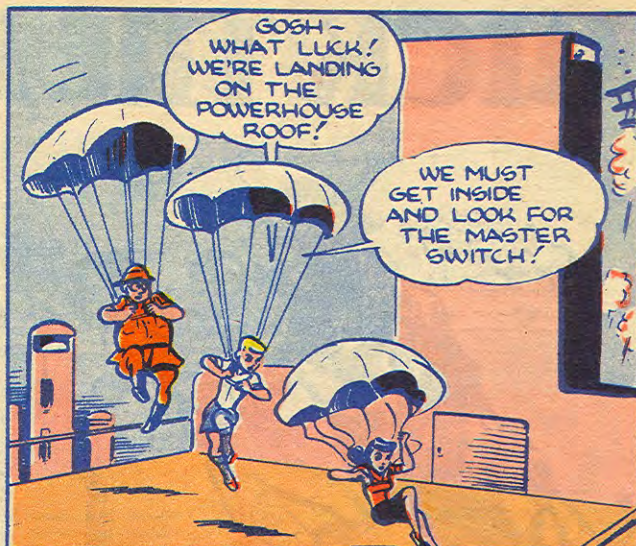


PRINCE GRIMBOLD GIVES HIS ORDERS ~ ~

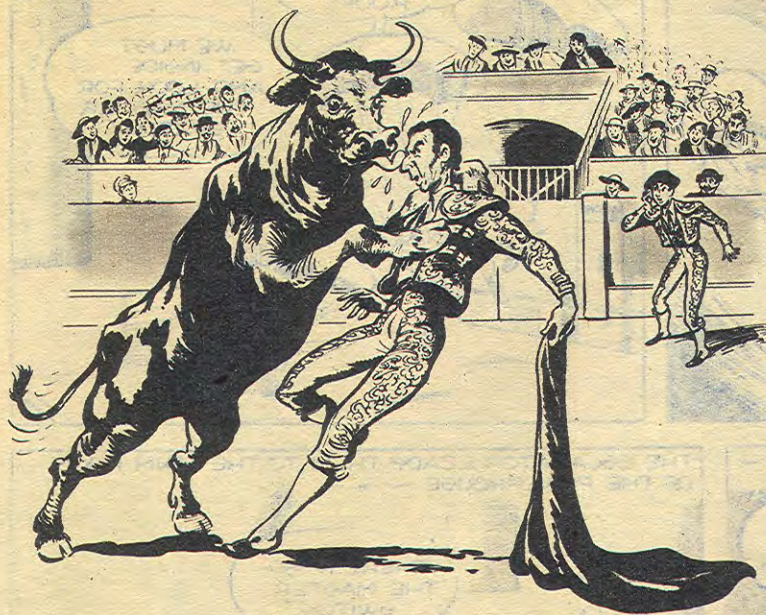


A TERRIFIC BATTLE ENGUES!





MICK THE MOON BOY



Marengo discovered that you can't fight a bull if it keeps trying to kiss you!

"THAT'S the place!" Mick the Moon Boy stabbed with his finger at a point on the map spread on the table before him. His pal, young Hank Luckner, nodded.

"Now what?" he demanded. The two of them were staying at the ranch of Don Revola and his daughter, Juanita. Don Revola had a small ranch on which he bred bulls—fighting bulls. But for weeks past his herd had been slowly reduced by a gang of rustlers.

Unless something happened soon Don Revola would be forced to sell out his ranch at a very low price to Marengo, the vain and sneering toreador.

"You remember when Marengo was here yesterday, Hank?" said Mick.

"I do," Hank answered grimly. "A nasty piece of work if ever I saw one! He intends to get his hands on this ranch all right!"

"Well, I read his thoughts quite easily while he was talking," went on Mick, "and I know that *he* is the chap who has put this gang on the job of rustling Don Revola's stock! I also know where they've hidden the stolen bulls—it's in this little valley!" He tapped the map again.

Hank Luckner was not a bit surprised when his chum spoke of reading somebody's thoughts, for Hank was the only person on earth who knew that Mick came from the Moon! He had crashed in a flying saucer in Arkansas, and the two had chummed up.

Mick was just like an ordinary

earth boy, except that his eyes were a strange green colour. But there was more to it than that. The Moon scientists were far in advance of those on earth. Mick had many strange powers, and the power of thought-reading was one of them.

Beneath his clothes he wore a close-fitting, one-piece suit of green flexible metal. A tiny control box fitted snugly to the chest of the suit, and with this Mick could perform many amazing things.

"The first thing we do," said the Moon Boy, "is to get Don Revola's herd of bulls back for him. That will save him selling out. And then," he added with a twinkle in his eyes, "I think we'll all ride in to Cruzello for the great bullfight tomorrow. We can't let that strutting toreador get away without teaching him a lesson!"

Mick and Hank dined with Don Revola and his pretty daughter. In the afternoon, the two chums set off on horseback for the secret valley which Mick had pointed out on the map. It lay some fifteen miles away, hidden in a range of hills.

Two hours later they lay hidden in a fold of rock, gazing down into a tiny valley where Don Revola's prize bulls grazed peacefully. There was a shack built at one end of the valley.

"What are we up against, Mick?" Hank whispered. The Moon Boy drew out a pair of goggles and fitted them on. These were his zonic goggles, and gave him X-ray vision so that he could see right through

solid objects.

"There are four men in the shack," he muttered. "That's plenty to guard the mouth of the valley—so they think!"

Next moment Mick was slipping out of his check shirt and pants. He stood for a moment in his one-piece suit of flexible green metal and then vanished.

"Keep your eyes open, Hank," said a voice from nowhere.

The invisible Moon Boy made his way down into the valley. He paused by the herd of bulls and began to whisper in a soft, crooning voice. Slowly

the bulls began to gather round him. Like the rest of the Moon folk, Mick had a complete understanding and control of all animals. He could talk to them in their own language!

Inside the hut, the four rustlers were playing cards. Suddenly one of them looked up as the wooden shack trembled as if struck by a heavy weight.

"Hey! What's that?" he rapped out. Then his eyes popped as he saw a great horn sticking through the thin wall. Every plank in the hut was groaning and creaking now. The men rushed to the window, and cries of astonishment and fear burst from them.

"The bulls!" cried one. "They're all round us! They're smashing the hut down! They've gone loco!" Sure enough, the hut was surrounded by a dense mass of bulls, relentlessly closing in!

One of the rustlers jerked out his guns.

"We'll have to shoot our way out!" he cried hoarsely. But before he could fire, the guns were wrenched from his hands by some powerful force. Mick the Moon Boy, sitting on the back of a bull some yards away, had stretched out his invisible arms and projected a powerful magnetic ray from his fingertips!

The two guns whipped through the air into Mick's hands, hovered in the air and reversed themselves, then fired two warning shots just over the window.

"Throw your guns out of the window!" ordered a voice from

nowhere. "And hurry! These bulls are mighty impatient critturs!"

Almost gibbering with fright the rustlers obeyed. . . .

It was three hours later when Don Revola and Juanita saw a herd of fine bulls plodding towards the empty corral near their ranch-house. Ahead of the bulls stumbled four weary, foot-sore men with empty holsters. And behind the herd rode Mick and Hank.

Don Revola clutched his daughter and stared in blank amazement. Then a look of joy crept over his face.

"Our bulls! It is our herd!" he cried. "Our friends have brought them back to us, Juanita! We are saved!"

Five minutes later with the rustlers safely in charge of some of Don Revola's husky peons, the silver-haired rancher was still faltering out his thanks to Mick and Hank.

"It wasn't too difficult, sir!" Mick grinned. "We were just lucky. But there's still a score to settle with that proud peacock Marengo! We'll all ride into Cruzello tomorrow for the bullfight!"

Hank wondered exactly what his pal was up to—and he wondered still more the following day when they rode through the bustle of excited people in Cruzello, all streaming towards the arena where the bullfight was to be held, for Mick stopped at one of the shops and bought a small, floppy-eared puppy!

The great Marengo was the star turn of the programme, and Hank waited patiently for the flourish of trumpets which heralded Marengo's entrance. As the bull-fighter strode into the ring, flourishing his three-cornered hat, Mick thrust the puppy into Hank's hands and whispered certain instructions. Then he slipped away to find a deserted spot.

With great dignity Marengo bowed to the president, then turned as the gates of the arena were flung open and a great bull came thundering into the sawdust ring, snorting and hooking viciously with its horns.

Mick the Moon Boy had shed his clothes and was quite invisible now. He was also within a few yards of the enraged bull! Calmly Mick walked towards the bull, murmuring in a low voice.

Marengo made ready with his red cape, then flapped it furiously to provoke the bull into a charge. The great animal pounded forward . . . then stopped short within three yards of the toreador, squatted back on its hind legs—and sat up and begged like a dog!

For a few seconds there was utter silence, then a great roar of laughter arose from the

(Continued opposite)

YOUR FAVOURITE DOGS.

No. 2. THE COLLIE SHEEP-DOG

Here is the second of our grand new series of specially drawn pictures of dogs of all breeds!

The Collie is first and foremost a sheep-dog. There are many different types of Collie and the best-known ones are the Scottish, Welsh and Border breeds. As sheep-dogs they must be very strong and, at the same time, very gentle.

The colouring of the Collie is varied. They can be black with dark brown markings on face and legs, tricolours, that is, black, dark brown and white and are also just black and white and many other different markings.

The Scottish Bearded Collie tells by its name what it looks like. This type of Collie is a breed by itself, as is the small but quick Shetland sheep-dog.



The actual dog drawn here is a black and white Fell Collie.

MICK THE MOON BOY (Continued)

crowded stands. It grew in a swelling roar as the Mexicans gazed at the amazing sight.

"Good old Mick!" Hank chuckled delightedly. "He's certainly got that bull well under control!"

That was true! Never had a bull looked so gentle and mild! Marengo was fairly dancing with rage and injured pride. He darted forward and flapped his cape right in the bull's face, but the great animal merely blinked placidly and almost seemed to smile.

Marengo finally stepped right up in front of the animal, and fairly slapped his red cloak into its face. By this time he had forgotten about the elegant manner in which all good bull-fighters are supposed to act in the bull-ring, and he was just doing anything he could think of to make the bull angry.

But the bull didn't budge. You see, Mick the Moon Boy had spoken to him in his own animal language, and he had told the bull that he had nothing to fear as long as he didn't lose his temper. He had also spoken of green pastures and cool sparkling streams that would be the bull's reward for his good behaviour. And such was Mick's power over the creature that it had no intention of getting angry.

The thought of green pastures must have been very much in the bull's mind as Marengo went into a positive frenzy of cloak flapping, for all of a

sudden he curled out the end of his big rough tongue and pulled the end of Marengo's red cloak into his mouth.

And there he stood, chewing the red silk just as though it was a particularly choice morsel of greenery.

"Pah! Pig of a bull!" screamed Marengo, leaping in the air and tearing at his black hair. "Give me my cloak! Fight, you cloddy monster—fight, I say!"

And he snatched at the end of the cloak. It tore out of the bull's mouth, leaving quite a large piece, which the bull continued to chew.

Marengo forgot all he had ever learned about bull-fighting in his rage. He raised his fist and smote the bull on the nose.

But the bull didn't seem to mind. In fact, he thought Marengo wanted to play.

The bull rolled over on to his back and wagged his hooves in the air, just like a playful puppy.

Marengo wept with rage. The bull looked at him for an instant, then it got up and trotted across to him.

Suddenly its forelegs shot out to rest on the toreador's shoulders. Caught off his balance Marengo was jerked backwards and the next moment his face was being licked by the bull's long rough tongue.

"Ha, ha, ha!" The crowd was fairly rolling with laughter at the comic figure Marengo cut. "See!" they cried, pointing and gasping. "See! The great Marengo is kissed by a bull!"

Tears of rage were streaming down Marengo's face as he jerked himself free. Never had

the bullfight fans laughed at the great Marengo before! Never had he known such bitter shame! His vanity was pricked like a bubble.

"Bring my sword!" he screamed, and one of his assistants ran out with the gleaming sword. But while Marengo's back was turned, the bull trotted quietly away through the open gates . . . and a little flop-eared puppy went scampering out into the ring. Hank had released the puppy at just the right moment!

The crowd nearly went into hysterics when they saw the great Marengo facing a puppy, sword in hand! As for Marengo, he flung his arms to the sky in utter despair.

The invisible Mick reached out one hand and caught the end of Marengo's sword. Then he touched a control which sent a powerful electric current through the metal sword and into Marengo!

"Aaagh!" To the crowd, it seemed that Marengo was convulsed with fear! Actually he was convulsed with the electric shock, and could not let go of the sword! Mick began to run round the ring, towing the toreador after him.

The puppy scampered along at Marengo's heels, snapping and snarling playfully.

"Ho! Ho! The toreador is afraid of a puppy!" roared the crowd. Such a sight had never been seen before! The great Marengo was fleeing round the ring, pursued by a dog and howling with fear! At least—that is what the onlookers thought!

At last Mick let go of the sword, and Marengo dropped to the ground in an exhausted, quivering heap. But by now the laughter had given way to scorn, and jeers were being flung at the miserable Marengo. Dragging himself to his feet, the toreador tottered between the barrier posts and disappeared from sight.

Up in the stands Don Revola and Juanita were wiping tears of laughter from their eyes.

"Poof!" gasped Juanita at last. "That is the finish of Marengo! He will never fight again! I do not understand how it happened, but there is no need now for your friend Mick to seek a way of settling Marengo's score!" She gazed round, and spotted Mick pushing through the crowd towards them.

"Why, here he comes!" she cried. "What a pity he missed all the fun!"

Hank blinked for a moment, then grinned. Neither Juanita nor her father realised that Mick had been the cause of all the "fun"!

"Yes—it is a pity!" Hank agreed solemnly, but there was a twinkle in his eye. "You must tell him all about it, Juanita!"

The girl shook her head helplessly and gestured with her hands.

"He will hardly believe it!" she said in mock despair.

"Somehow I've got a feeling that he will!" Hank answered, and grinned contentedly.

Next week: The adventure of the talking ice-cream cone!

COMET—August 16, 1952—13

Widow Wilson and her son Jack are seeking the treasure of Black Bellamy. Kit Carson is with them, which is just as well, because Pat Murphy, whom they trust, is a rogue! Jack even goes for Kit, when Kit mistrusts Pat!

KIT CARSON AND THE PRAIRIE TREASURE

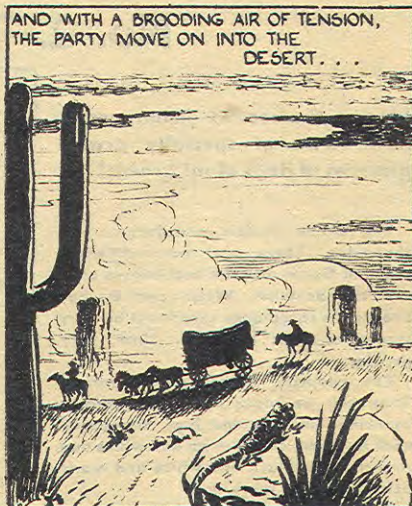


FOR PETE'S SAKE, HAS EVERYONE GONE CRAZY? JACKIE! YOU HEAR ME, SON! LAY OFF BEFORE I LAY THIS WHIP ABOUT YOU! GET BACK UP ON THE WAGON, AND FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE LET'S GET GOING!



THE LADY'S RIGHT! NO NEED FOR EVERYONE TO GET ALL HOT AND BOTHERED! I GUESS KIT WAS JUST A BIT HASTY-TEMPERED. THAT'S ALL... SUPPOSE WE FORGET ALL ABOUT IT...

ALTHOUGH MURPHY HAS LOST THIS ROUND HE IS NOT BEATEN -- HE IS ALREADY FORMING A PLAN IN HIS MIND --



AND WITH A BROODING AIR OF TENSION, THE PARTY MOVE ON INTO THE DESERT...



THEN, AS DUSK FALLS, A HALT IS MADE, AND SOON THE CRACKLING FLAMES OF A CAMPFIRE SEND SPARKS HIGH INTO THE NIGHT AIR...



JACKIE AND ME WILL KIP DOWN IN THE WAGON, KIT. I GUESS YOU TWO BOYS CAN MANAGE AROUND THE FIRE -- BUT NO MORE ARGUMENTS, MIND!

I GUESS IT'S TIME WE ALL HAD SOME SHUTEYE! WE'VE A HARD DAY AHEAD OF US TOMORROW...



MIDNIGHT FALLS, AND THE CAMP SLEEPS... BUT KIT SLEEPS WITH ONE EYE OPEN...

GUESS THERE'S NO SHUTEYE FOR ME TONIGHT! NOT WITH THIS TREASURE-MAP BURNING A HOLE IN MY POCKET!



CARSON'S ASLEEP, SURE ENOUGH! BUT I'M TAKING NO CHANCES WITH THAT SLIPPERY SNAKE! ANYONE WHO WANTS TO TACKLE HIM ALONE IS WELCOME TO, BEDAD! I'M GOING TO CALL IN THE BOYS BEFORE I CHANCE IT!



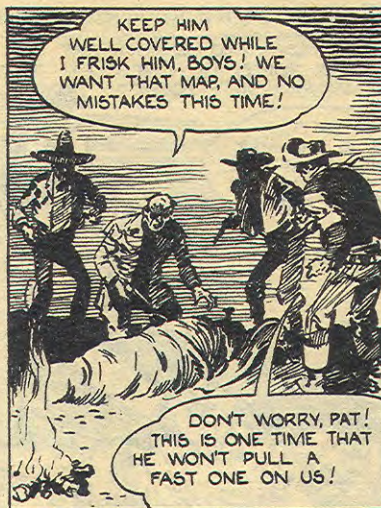
CREEPING TO THE EDGE OF THE DESERT DARKNESS, PAT MURPHY SENDS A SOFT WHISTLE INTO THE SILENCE OF THE NIGHT...

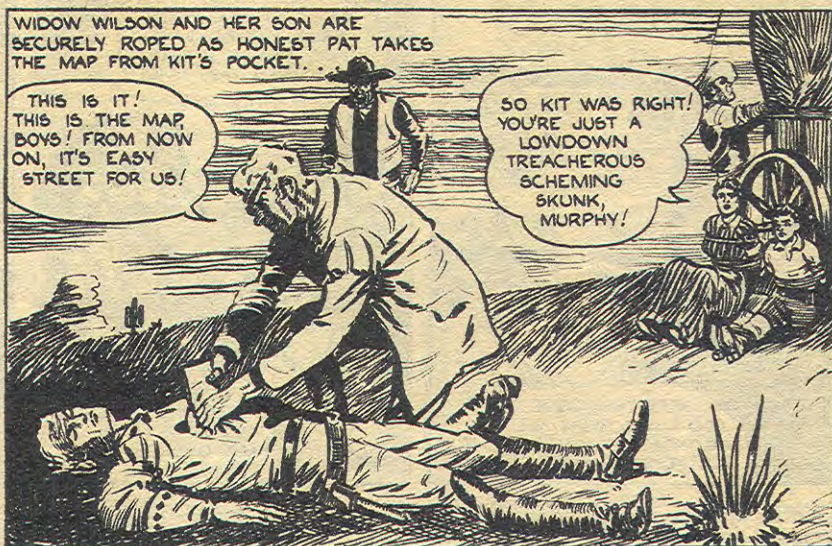
PHWEEEEP! ... COME ON, BOYS ... WHERE ARE YE, FOR PETE'S SAKE?



QUICKLY SLIDING FROM HIS BLANKET, KIT CARSON WRAPS IT AROUND HIS BACK TO FORM A DUMMY FIGURE...

THIS TIME I'M GOING TO CATCH THAT TREACHEROUS SKUNK RED-HANDED!





DR GRUNTER'S ZOO SCHOOL

HAREING TO THE RESCUE

"SCRAMPTIOUS!" said Cyril Potts, the hare.

He was sitting nibbling at some nice juicy grass in the hedge-side. Cyril hadn't always been a hare. Not so very long ago he had been just an ordinary schoolboy—one of a party of boys who had come to Meadow-sweet Farm to help Farmer Whipstraw with the harvest.

One morning, however, the whole lot of them had felt ill. So, Dr. Dozey, the village doctor, had come out to the farm to give them all a dose of medicine. But Dr. Dozey was the most absent-minded little old gentleman you could meet anywhere. He had got his bottles mixed up, and instead of giving the boys a dose of medicine he had given them a dose of a wonderful liquid which he had invented for changing people into birds and animals.

The result was that, in a flash, the whole bunch of them had been changed into the strangest collection of birds and animals that you ever saw.

"Still it's got us off school, that's one thing," chuckled Cyril to himself, as he sat nibbling at the juicy grass in the hedge-side. "I don't mind staying at the farm until that silly little Dozey finds the stuff to change us all back to our proper selves again—Hallo, somebody's coming!"

Being a hare, he could hear as clearly as a hare can, and his long, pricked ears had heard the sound of someone coming quickly along the road. Next instant he had vanished from view in the bottom of the hedge with only his nose and his bright brown eyes sticking out.

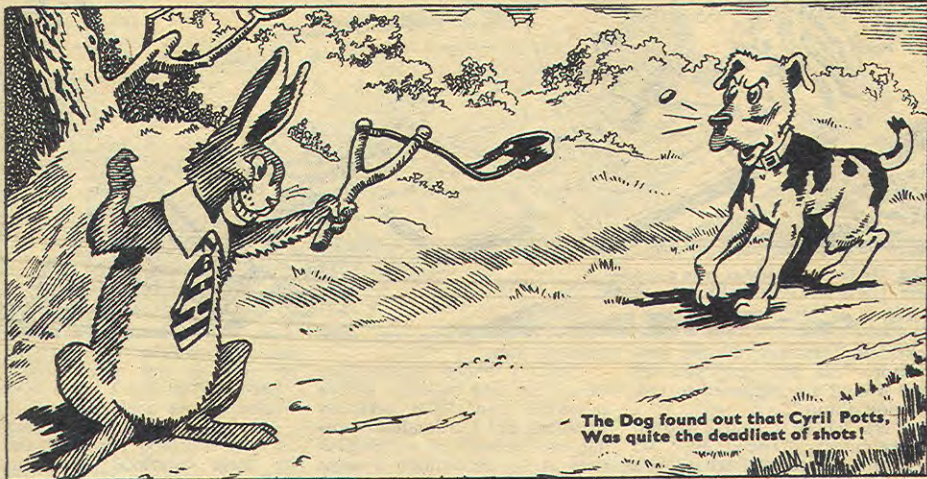
"Why, it's old Mrs. Tweddle," he told himself, as an old lady came into view round a bend in the road. "She's not half hurrying, either. Poor old thing, fancy an old lady like her having to hurry like that on a hot day like this. I wonder what's wrong."

Mrs. Tweddle was a nice old lady who lived in a little cottage along the road. Neither she nor anyone else knew about the boys at the farm having been changed into animals, of course, because it had all been kept a very close secret.

As she came puffing and panting along, Cyril, the hare, saw that she was carrying what looked like a notebook.

"Oh, dearie me," she was saying out loud. "I'll never get there in time—I know I won't—and he'll be no good without his book—he's so very absent-minded!"

Cyril, who was a very good-hearted sort of a boy—or hare, rather—decided to see if he could help her.



The Dog found out that Cyril Potts, Was quite the deadliest of shots!

"Good afternoon, ma'am!" he said, suddenly sitting bolt upright in the hedge-side.

Old Mrs. Tweddle stopped and stared in the direction of the voice. At the sight of Cyril she nearly jumped out of her skin.

"It—it couldn't be that hare that spoke!" she gasped.

"Oh, yes, it was," said Cyril, who, although he had been turned into a hare, could still talk in his human voice. "Don't be alarmed. I'm rather a special sort of a hare!"

"You—you must be," gasped Mrs. Tweddle, staring as though she couldn't believe her eyes. "I—I didn't know that hares could talk."

"Well, as a matter of fact, very few can," chuckled Cyril. "But I was watching you come along the road, ma'am, and as you seem to be in a very great hurry I was wondering if I could help you."

"I am in a hurry," cried Mrs. Tweddle. "Professor Pootle's forgotten his notebook. This is it here!"

She held up the notebook she had in her hand.

"And who's Professor Pootle, ma'am," asked Cyril politely.

"He's a very clever gentleman from London," cried Mrs. Tweddle. "But he's so absent-minded. He's lodging with me for a few days, and this afternoon he's giving a lecture at the village hall to the school-children and to some of the boys from St. Anselm's School. But he's gone and forgotten his notes and I know he'll be quite useless without them. He won't be able to speak a single word, poor gentleman. He's so absent-minded that he'll probably even forget what it is he's going to lecture about."

"And what is he going to lecture about?"

"Creatures of the Woods and Fields," is the title of the lecture," cried Mrs. Tweddle.

"It's all written down here in his notebook. He knows an awful lot about the habits and things of animals like yourself. But he won't remember a single word without his notebook, and I'm sure those St. Anselm's boys'll make fun of him and try to take the rise out of him, poor gentleman. They're horrid creatures, some of them, so swanky and cocky."

"I know," nodded Cyril. "I've seen 'em. Well, now, I'll tell you what, ma'am. I know where the village hall is, and I can shift very fast—all hares can, you know—so I'll take his notebook to him. I'll get there long before you could."

"Well, I'm sure I don't know," stammered Mrs. Tweddle. "It's—it's very kind of you, but I've never heard of a hare running errands before."

"Well, now's the time to start," chuckled Cyril. "Come on, give me the notebook and I'll get cracking. When's the lecture start?"

"It should have started by now," cried Mrs. Tweddle, then, as she thought of the poor professor helpless without his notes, she bent down and gave the book to Cyril, who took it in his mouth. "There you are, then," she said. "Now you're sure you'll give it to him safely?"

Cyril nodded, for he found it very difficult to speak with the notebook in his mouth. Next instant he had turned and was bounding swiftly along the road, moving as fast as only hares can move. But as he neared the village a dog suddenly shot out of the hedge and started to race in pursuit of him with an excited Woof! Woof! Woof!

"Confound that beastly dog!" thought Cyril angrily. "I'm not frightened of him. It'd take a smarter dog than him to catch me, but if he keeps on barking like that he'll have every dog in the village after me!"

Suddenly he got another

shock. A small boy was coming along the road towards him, a catapult in his hand. And at sight of Cyril the boy was excitedly fitting a pebble into the catty in order to have a shot at him.

"Don't you dare!" yelled Cyril, bounding straight at him.

At the sound of the hare speaking in a human voice, the small boy got such a fright that he dropped the catapult and turning, bolted back the way he had come, howling at the very top of his voice.

"Hurrah!" cried Cyril, dropping the notebook and snatching up the catapult in his front paws.

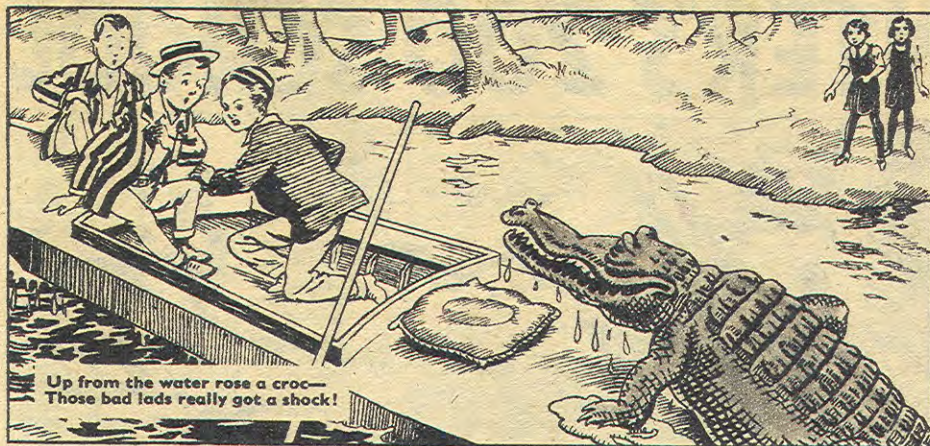
Turning, he squatted on the road, fitted a pebble to the catapult, and let fly at the dog which was now charging furiously at him. The pebble took the dog fair and square on the nose. And if ever a dog got the shock of its life, that dog did. With a howl of pain and fright, it turned a complete backward somersault. Then, picking itself up, it turned tail and bolted back the way it had come as fast as ever it could lay its legs to the ground.

It had chased hares before, but never a hare that let fly with a catapult.

With a triumphant chuckle, Cyril picked up the notebook and bounded on towards the village hall. It was a warm day and the window was open. From inside the hall Cyril could hear the restless stamping of feet and the rising murmur of voices.

As a matter of fact, poor old Professor Pootle was in no end of a jam. A few minutes before this he had made the horrifying discovery that he had forgotten his notes. And now he was standing on the platform facing his restless audience of boys and girls without the slightest notion of what he had come there to talk about.

"Well, as a matter of fact, (Continued on next page)



Up from the water rose a croc—
Those bad lads really got a shock!

children," stammered the professor, "can you—can you tell me what I am supposed to talk to you about?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the St. Anselmites. "The silly old duffer's forgotten what he's here for—"

"No, he hasn't!" yelled a voice, and in through the window bounded Cyril, to drop the notebook on the professor's table. "He's here to tell you about us creatures of the woods and fields. So shut your silly mouths down there, or I'll come and shut them for you!"

Well, the St. Anselmites and all the other boys and girls were so startled to hear a hare speaking in a human voice that you could have knocked the whole lot of them down with a feather. They could only sit and gape as though they could believe neither their eyes nor their ears.

"Professor Pootle knows more about us creatures of the woods and fields than anyone," roared Cyril. "So just you pay attention to him. All right, professor, you carry on!"

With that, Cyril shot out through the window again.

"Well, if the old boy's lecture isn't a success after that," he chuckled, "I'll eat my whiskers!"

And it was, for his hearers thought Professor Pootle must be the most wonderful lecturer in the world to have a talking hare bringing his notes.

PUNISHING THE PUNT PINCHERS

IT was a nice warm day and Claude Corker, the crocodile, was lying basking in the sun beside a clump of bushes on the river bank.

"This is a jolly sight better than being at school, even if I have been changed into a crocodile," thought Claude, as he lay basking sleepily on the river-bank.

Suddenly he stirred and raised his head. A faint and distant shouting had broken out somewhere away up the river. As Claude listened intently he realised that it was a party of girls who were shouting. What was more, he could tell by their excited voices that they were coming along the river bank

towards him.

"This is where I fade from view," he told himself, with a crocodile grin. "I'm perfectly harmless, but a crocodile reposing on the bank of an English river is so uncommon a sight that it's apt to scare people, particularly girls. So here goes!"

With the words, Claude roused himself and crawled behind the clump of bushes near which he had been lying.

The excited voices of the girls were coming rapidly nearer and Claude could hear them crying: "Bring back that punt at once, you horrid boys!"

"We know your names, so don't think we don't!"

"You're that horrid Marmaduke Mopp and Cuthbert Cropper and that odious Ogden Platt!"

Parting the bushes with his great, long jaws, Claude, the crocodile peeped out. He could not see the girls as yet, because they were on the river bank. But sailing down the middle of the river he could see a punt with three boys from St. Anselm's School in it.

The three of them were sailing along in the punt, roaring with laughter. And as Claude peeped out through the bushes he heard them shout tauntingly to the girls:

"Didums want ums' punt, den?"

By this time the punt and its three occupants was drawing opposite the bushes where Claude was lying. So Claude withdrew his great long jaws from view and kept quiet. Not that he meant to keep quiet for very long. Oh, dear, no! Claude had already made up his mind to take a hand in this affair.

Stealing punts from girls might seem very funny and clever to the three St. Anselm's cads, but Claude thought it neither clever nor funny.

By this time the girls were passing the clump of bushes beneath which Claude was lying.

"Bring that punt back at once, do you hear?" cried one of them angrily.

"You'll get into trouble for this!" cried another.

"Will we really?" squeaked one of the cads, whose name

was Marmaduke Mopp, trying to imitate the girl's voice. "Eee-eee, you don't know how frightened we are!"

The girls passed the bushes as they followed the punt and its three hilarious occupants downstream. Squinting sideways out of the bushes, Claude saw that the party of girls numbered four. They were wearing the school blazers and hat ribbons of St. Hilda's School for Girls.

"Well, here goes!" chuckled Claude to himself.

Crawling from out of the bushes, he slid silently into the river. The girls had their backs to him, so they didn't see him. Neither did the three cads in the punt see him. They were far too busy enjoying themselves by cheeking the girls whose punt they had stolen.

Like all crocodiles, Claude was not only a powerful swimmer, but he could swim under water as well. Diving deeply, he shot out into the middle of the river, passed under the punt, then turned round and came to the surface right in front of the punt.

"Ooh, look, what's that?" cried one of the girls in alarm.

She pointed at Claude's head and his great jaws, those being the only parts of him which were visible above the water.

"It's—it's a crocodile!" gasped one of her friends.

"It can't be!" cried another. "There're no crocodiles in England!"

"But it is, I tell you—it is a crocodile!" cried the other. "I've seen them at the Zoo and in pictures and I know it's a crocodile!"

So intent were the three bullies in the punt on cheeking the girls on the bank that they hadn't noticed Claude yet.

"Yah, just listen at the little sillies talking about crocodiles!" yelled Ogden Platt.

"They must be off their nuts!"

"Oh, no, they're not!" jeered Marmaduke Mopp. "They're trying to scare us by pretending there's a crocodile in the river."

"Did you ever hear such rot?" sneered Cuthbert Cropper. "As though we'd be taken in by such a silly, fatheaded sort of a yarn as that!"

Next instant he and his two pals lost their balance and went sprawling in a heap in the bottom of the punt as it came to a sudden, unexpected stop.

"What's happened!" gasped Marmaduke Mopp.

"Ooo—er—look!" howled Cuthbert Cropper, who had scrambled to his feet.

Getting to their knees, his two pals looked in the direction of Cuthbert's pointing, trembling finger. As they did so their mouths opened in fright and astonishment and their eyes nearly stuck out of their heads.

For there at the end of the punt was a frightful-looking crocodile.

"Help—mother—lemme out of this!" howled Marmaduke Mopp, leaping to his feet and pushing so madly to the stern of the punt that he very nearly shot clean overboard.

Yelling and blubbering and nearly fainting with fright, his two pals followed hard on his heels. And there the three of them clustered, huddling close together in the stern of the punt and staring at the crocodile in trembling and terror.

"Oh, look at the great cowards!" cried the girls on the bank, clapping their hands delightedly. Then they started to sing. "Cowardy, cowardly custards!"

"Aw, please run and get some help!" roared Marmaduke Mopp. "Aw, please run and fetch somebody before this awful croc-croc-crocodile gobbles us up!"

"It'll serve you all right if it does gobble you up!" cried the biggest of the girls. Then suddenly she cried excitedly: "Oh, look, the crocodile's bringing the punt to the bank!"

There wasn't the slightest doubt about it. Holding the end of the punt in his great jaws, Claude was pushing it and its occupants towards the bank with the greatest of ease.

But as he neared the bank he gave the punt a sudden terrific tilt. The result was that, with howls of terror, the three bullies shot into the river with tremendous splashes.

Screaming with fright because they thought that at any moment the crocodile would gobble them up, they swam and waded desperately for the bank.

Reaching it, they scrambled out of the water, then set off running just as fast as ever they could pelt. Nor did they stop until they reached St. Anselm's.

Meanwhile, Claude had pushed the punt in towards the bank. Then, releasing it, he watched while the girls secured it.

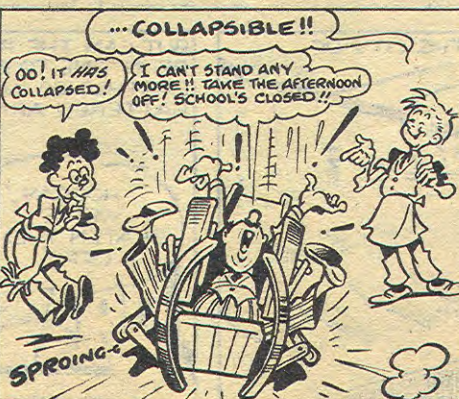
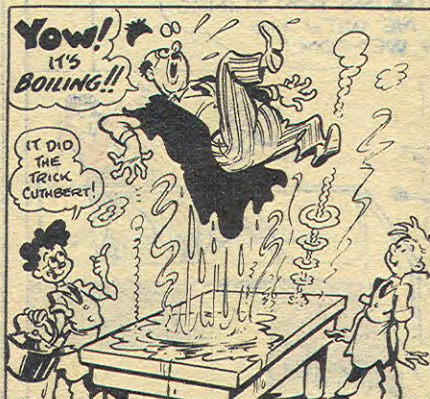
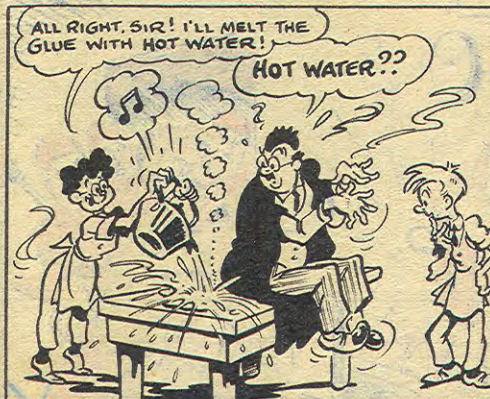
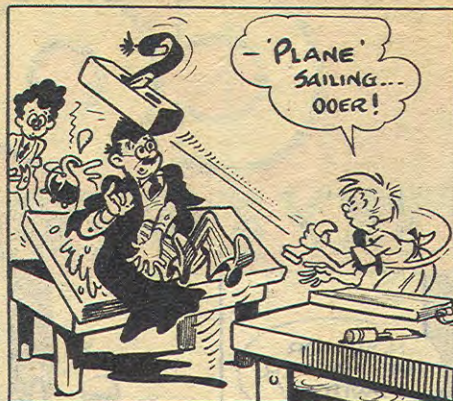
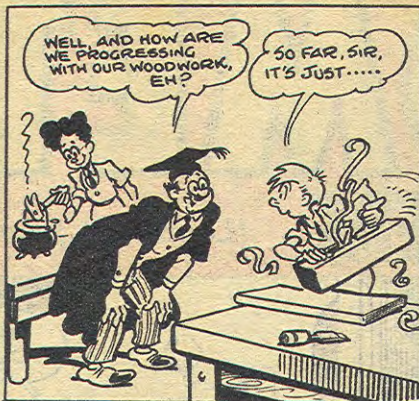
"Oh, what a nice, kind, helpful crocodile!" cried one of the girls. They could scarcely believe their eyes. And to this day their one regret is that they can't find anyone who will believe their story of the helpful crocodile.

You've heard about the Three Bears, but not about the three at Dr. Grunter's Zoo School. Read their adventures next week!

THE ADVENTURES OF

CLAUDE
AND

CUTHBERT
THE TWO NEW BOYS

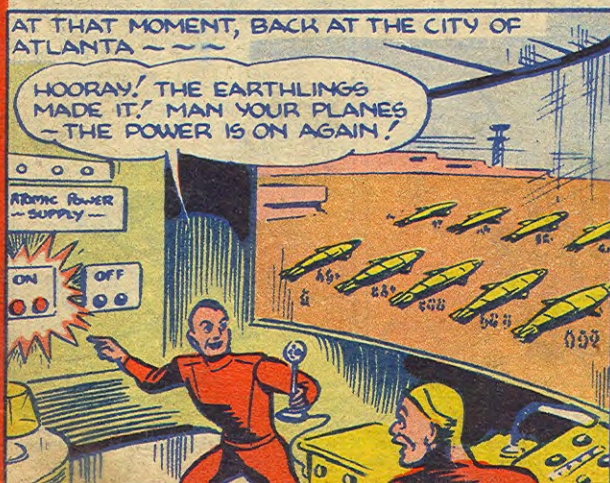
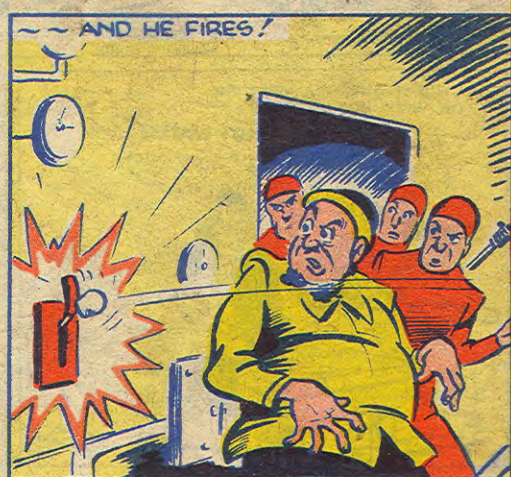


COMET

PRICE
3⁰
EVERY
MONDAY

THE SKY EXPLORERS

(Continued from page 11)



Will help arrive in time? Don't miss next week's adventures!