

COMET

THE BACK PAGE
IS A FRONT PAGE
TOO!

3^D EVERY
MONDAY

No. 233, January 3, 1953

THE SKY EXPLORERS

THE SKY EXPLORERS ARE HIDING IN THE JUNGLE.
BUT CAMBUSTA IS DETERMINED THEY SHALL
NOT ESCAPE.

SET FIRE TO
THE JUNGLE!
THE STRANGERS
MUST NOT
ESCAPE!

PROFESSOR JOLLY, ANN, PETER, AND THEIR FRIEND, KOSMO, HAVE REACHED THE PLANET ROMA IN THEIR SPACE-SHIP, THE RED ROCKET. THEY WERE CAPTURED BY THE EMPEROR CAMBUSTA, BUT ESCAPED WITH THE AID OF FIDDYCAT, A QUAIN OLD INVENTOR. WHILE TRYING TO SALVAGE THEIR RED ROCKET, WHICH CAMBUSTA HAS CRASHED INTO THE SEA WHILE TRYING TO FIND OUT HOW IT WORKED, OUR FRIENDS WERE SPOTTED BY HIS SOLDIERS, BUT MANAGED TO ESCAPE. THEY DECIDED THAT THE ONLY WAY TO GET THE RED ROCKET BACK WAS TO FIND, AND HELP, THE GOOD EMPEROR NESCIOR, THE RIGHTFUL RULER OF ROMA. BUT, IN THE JUNGLE, A STRANGE GIANT FLOWER SEIZES HOLD OF ANN----

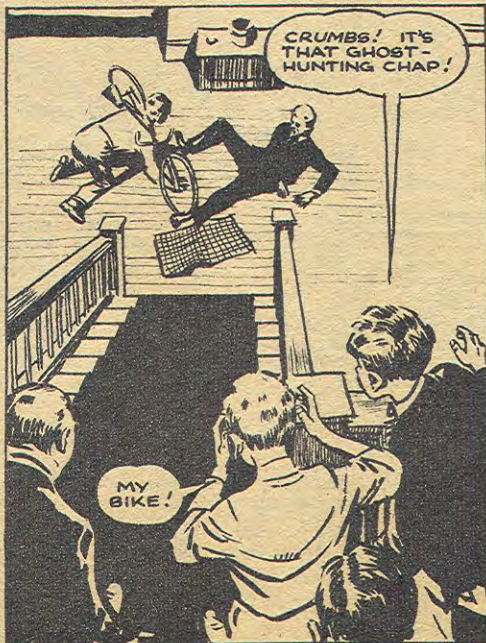
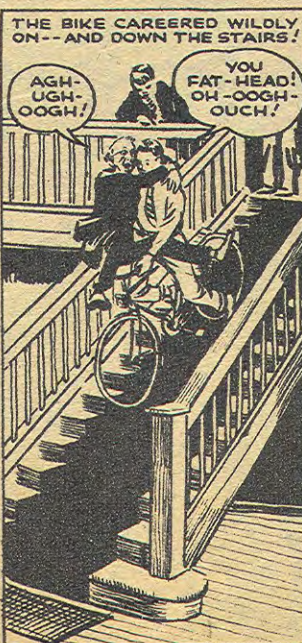
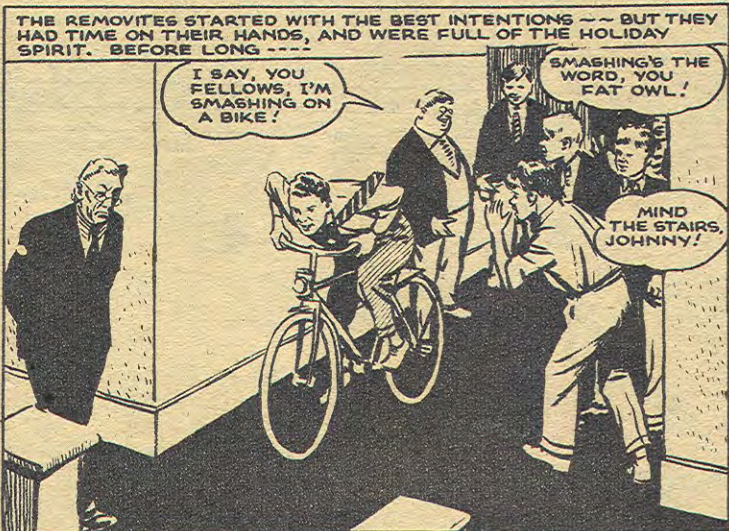
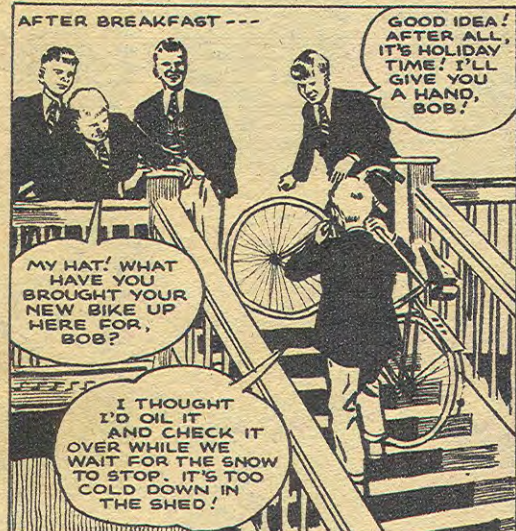
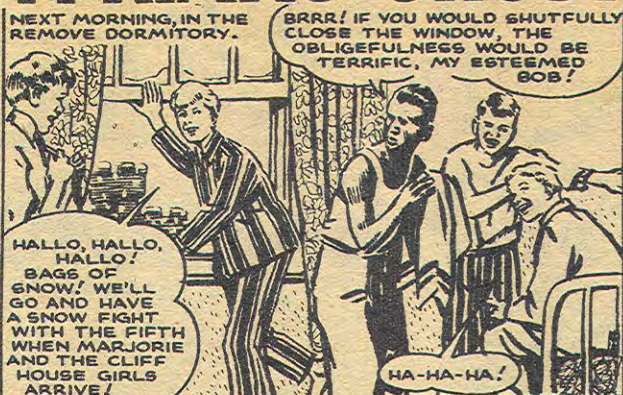
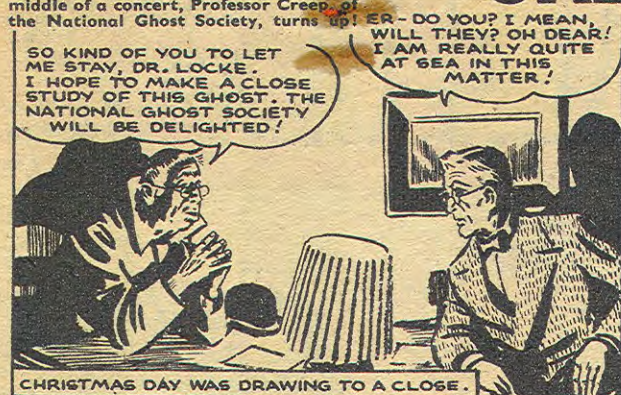
WHILE KOSMO TRIES TO FREE ANN, ONE OF CAMBUSTA'S FLAMING ARROWS LANDS DANGEROUSLY NEAR.

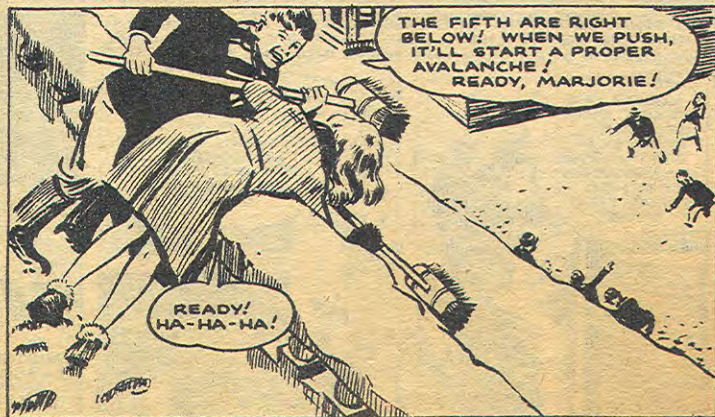
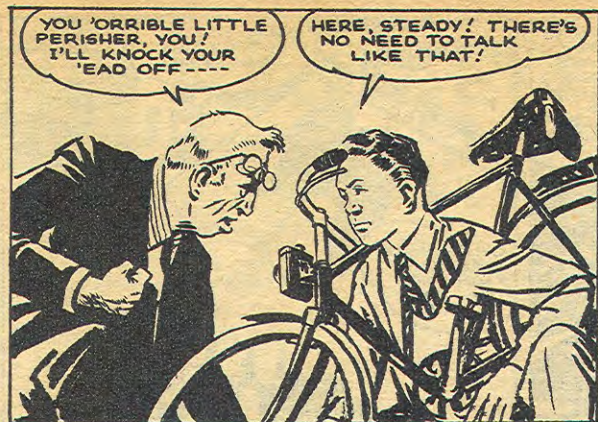
QUICK,
HOLD MY
HAND!
I'LL SAVE
YOU!

(More pictures on the centre pages)

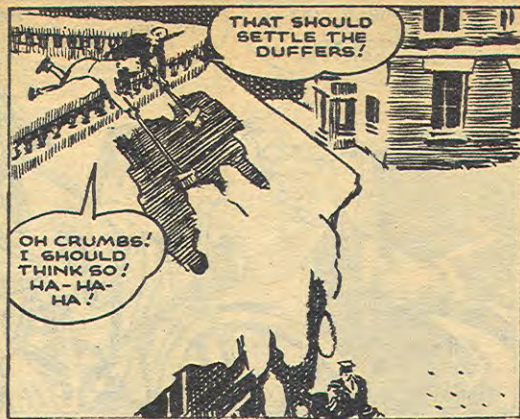
The boys of Greyfriars are spending their Christmas holiday at the school because of an epidemic in Friardale. Mysterious things happen. Mr. Quelch and some of the boys see a ghost! A hole appears in the football pitch! And then, in the middle of a concert, Professor Creep, of the National Ghost Society, turns up!

The GREYFRIARS GHOST





DOWN BELOW--



AS PROUT STUMPED OFF AMID STIFLED CHUCKLES FROM THE REMOVITES, HARRY WHARTON AND MARJORIE HAZELDENE WERE CLIMBING DOWN INTO THE STORE-ROOM.



THE WHEEZES OF WILLIE WIZZARD

WILLIE'S WONDER SHOE POLISHER

"GOSH!" exclaimed Jimmy Bash, pointing at a poster outside the local police station. "Look at that!" Willie Wizzard peered through his glasses at the notice. It read:

WANTED DARKIE DOENUT FOR BURGLARY £5 REWARD

"Hm, I wish we could catch him," said Willie, the schoolboy inventor, thinking of all the cake and buns they could buy with the reward.

The two boys from Gandybar School were spending their half-day in the local village. It had taken Jimmy quite a time to get Willie to come out from his workshop, where he had been deep in a new invention for turning water into ginger-beer.

"Not much chance of that," said Jimmy. "I don't suppose he's anywhere near here at the moment!"

"Come on," said Willie impatiently. "Let's get back to school. I want to get on with my new invention."

"Oh, all right!" moaned Jimmy, who had been hoping to see a Western film at the cinema. "It's always a waste of time dragging you out of that workshop of yours."

BACK at school, Dr. Gandybar was pacing up and down in his study. He was very worried over the loss of the odd-job boy, who had been called up for the Army. He had put a notice in the local paper, but had received no reply. The main trouble was that the odd-job boy cleaned the masters' shoes, and now he was gone Dr. Gandybar was faced with a grave crisis. Who was to clean the shoes?

Suddenly Dr. Gandybar's face broke into a smile.

"Of course! Wizzard!" he exclaimed to himself. "He should be able to do something about it!"

So Dr. Gandybar hunted Willie out of his workshop later that day and explained the situation to him.

"I was wondering if you could think of a solution to this problem, Wizzard?" queried the Head.

"Er, yes, sir!" replied Willie, deep in thought. "I think I've got a wheeze—I mean idea, sir!"

"Good! Then get to work on it right away!" commanded the Head, relieved for the moment of the thought of going about in dirty shoes.

As was Willie's habit when working on an invention, he locked himself in his workshop at the back of the school. Except for going to the dormitory to sleep, Willie wasn't seen

until noon the following day.

When he came out of the workshop he was pushing a trolley with a large object on it covered with a sheet. He wheeled this up to the Head's study, knocked politely on the door and waited.

"Come in!" came the voice of Dr. Gandybar from inside.

Willie opened the door and pushed his trolley inside. He stood in front of the Head.

"I've finished it, sir!" said Willie proudly.

"What have you finished, boy?" asked Dr. Gandybar, rising from behind his desk.

"My Wonder Shoe Polisher, sir!" said Willie, and with a tug at the sheet he disclosed what was underneath.

The most amazing sight met Dr. Gandybar's eyes. The object was long and shaped like a cylinder, but from the sides protruded twelve arms, six on each side which gave it the look of a giant centipede.

"My goodness!" exclaimed Dr. Gandybar. "What did you say it was?"

"It's a shoe polisher," explained Willie with pride. "It polishes three pairs at once."

"My word, Wizzard!" gasped the Head, staring at the contraption. "I certainly hope it works. In fact, I'd like to see it work!"

Willie asked the Head for one of his shoes, which Dr. Gandybar gave grudgingly. Then Willie put the shoe in one of the six pairs of clips that ran down the side of the cylinder. This held the shoe in place. Then he pressed a button on a small panel fitted at one end.

"This starts it working," explained Willie. "It runs on a small electric engine."

As he pressed a second button the pair of arms next to the shoe began to move backwards and forwards over the shoe. First one arm and then the other. One put polish on, very black polish, and the other, which was fitted with a type of duster affair, began to polish the shoe until it had a glassy



"Come out at once, Wizzard!" snapped Dr. Gandybar, glaring at Willie's head which was sticking out of the books!

look about it. Dr. Gandybar looked closer at the machine. As he did so, one of the brushes seemed to take a playful swipe at him.

"Oooop!" gasped the Head, dodging just in time. "Really, Wizzard, haven't you got proper control of the machine?"

"Er—of course, sir," said Willie, wondering if he really had.

"Very well, then," nodded the Head. "Give it to Mr. Halfspun to take down to the kitchen. I don't trust you in there after the spotted dog episode!"

"Yes, sir!" said Willie, backing towards the door. But it was the wrong door. Willie pushed the trolley through it and slammed the door behind him.

CRASH!

An avalanche of books descended upon Willie's unfortunate head.

"Wow! Help! Gerroff!"

"Wizzard! Boy!" thundered Dr. Gandybar. "How dare you enter my stationery cupboard?"

Striding across the room, he flung open the door.

"Come out at once, Wizzard!" he snapped.

Only Willie's head could be seen sticking out of a huge heap of books!

"Wow!" gasped Willie, as he staggered out. "That was the most unstationary cupboard I've ever been in!"

Willie pulled his Shoe Polisher out from under the pile of books and made a hasty exit from the Head's study.

Knocking on Mr. Halfspun's study door, Willie entered with his contraption, carefully explained its working, and then left.

Mr. Halfspun surveyed the Shoe Polisher with interest. Heaving himself out from behind his desk, he advanced upon it with extreme caution.

"Hm!" he said to himself. "Very interesting. I wonder if it would clean up that old pair of shoes."

With that, he nipped over to a cupboard and took down a pair of shoes off a shelf. He then fixed them on the Shoe Polisher and pressed the first and second buttons. All went very well. The blacking was applied and then polished off. When both shoes had been done they were looking like a new pair.

"Wonderful!" said Mr. Halfspun admiringly. "Wonderful! I must take this down to the kitchen at once."

(Continued on next page)

But Mr. Halfspun was doomed never to reach the kitchen with the Wizzard Shoe Polisher. As he pushed it out of the door his foot trod upon the tail of the school cat.

"Miiiiiooooouw! Spppiittt!" "Wow!" yelled Mr. Halfspun, jumping backwards out of the way. As he did so he knocked the Shoe Polisher over on its side. As it fell one of the brushes was crushed underneath it and on to the control buttons. It pressed the lot! Suddenly the whole contraption came to life. Instead of being upright it was now standing on the brushes and polishers, looking for all the world like a giant centipede. Mr. Halfspun backed away in terror. But not quickly enough. For, with a sudden jolt, the Shoe Polisher moved forward. Straight at Mr. Halfspun!

"Help!" yelled the master as it bore down on him. "Keep it off!"

Turning, he pelted off as fast as his legs would carry him. Down the passage went master and polisher, through the dining-room and into the big school hall. Across this both travelled with Mr. Halfspun only inches in front. Reaching a door, the frantic master wrenched it open and dashed out into the quadrangle. But still the polisher was at his heels.

Mr. Halfspun glanced anxiously around for help, but the quadrangle was empty except for a very startled dog which, when it saw the Shoe Polisher, gave a yelp of terror, put its tail between its legs and rushed away howling.

By this time Mr. Halfspun was about exhausted, but he was so terrified of what was behind him that he didn't let up. Putting on a desperate spurt, he rounded a corner so fast that he nearly burnt the rubber soles off his shoes. He glanced behind him in dismay, for he was at a dead end. He was caught at the back of the school, with no way out.

Suddenly he spotted Willie's workshop. Dashing to it, he tried to fling the door open, but it held fast. The polisher hit against his ankles and a howl of terror escaped him.

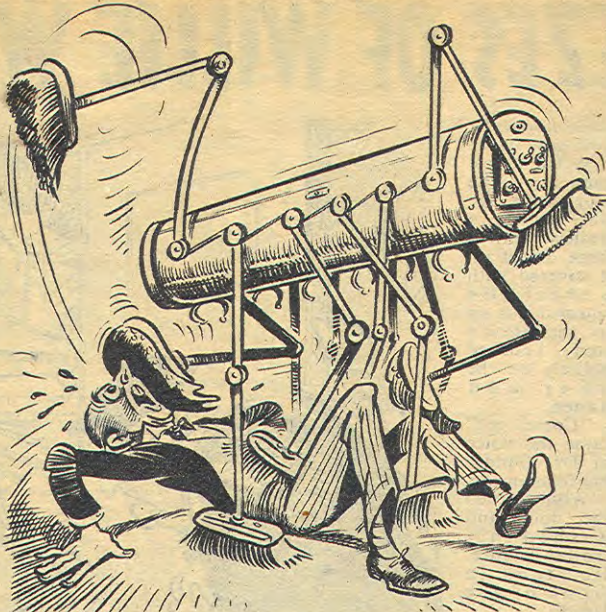
"Help, Wizzard! Help!" he screamed. "My—my ankles are being bitten!"

The door gave then, and Mr. Halfspun collapsed inside with the polisher on top of him.

"Wow! Help! Get it off!" he yelled, but his voice ended in a gurgle as a bowl of Willie's ginger-beer slid off a shelf and landed on his head. Then the polisher, which had pinned Mr. Halfspun to the floor, began to polish his face as though it was an old boot.

Frantically Mr. Halfspun tried to push the Shoe Polisher away. But finding it was too heavy, he gave up.

Mr. Halfspun opened his mouth for another shout, but all that came out was a gurgle as a generous quantity of shoe polish was thrust in.



"Wow! Help! Get it off!" yelled Mr. Halfspun as the Shoe Polisher pinned him to the floor.

"Ooogh! Grooogh!" gurgled the unfortunate master.

Suddenly Mr. Halfspun's eyes fell upon a large iron bar leaning against the wall. Grabbing this, he battered away at the Shoe Polisher for all he was worth. But this seemed to make the Shoe Polisher polish faster than ever.

"Wow!" yelled the master, as he got an earful of blacking. "Stop it! Help, Wizzard!"

Mr. Halfspun took a last despairing swipe at the contraption and managed to knock all the switches on the side to pieces.

The Shoe Polisher gave a couple of quick dusts at Mr. Halfspun's face, coughed and stopped working.

Suddenly a boy's face appeared at the window of the workshop.

"Boy!" thundered Mr. Halfspun. "Come in here at once!"

But the boy gave a startled yelp and belted off in the direction of the main school.

MEANWHILE, Willie and Jimmy Bash were in their study reading. Suddenly there was an interruption. One of the boys from a lower Form poked his head round the door.

"Hey, Wizzard," he announced. "Somebody's broken into your workshop. There's an awful noise coming from it. Sounds as though they're trying to break it up!"

"What!" yelled Willie, jumping out of his seat. "Somebody in my workshop. Come on, let's scrag them!"

Willie and Jimmy dashed out of their study and made for the workshop. As they approached it they heard loud thumps and swishing noises coming from it. "Be careful," warned Jimmy.

"He may be a tough character."

"All right," replied Willie. "We'll tackle him together!"

Willie gripped the door knob and then, with a dramatic flourish, flung open the door. They charged into the workshop and both of them went flying over a heap on the ground and ended up against the opposite wall.

"Gosh! Look!" pointed Willie. "It must be a negro!"

Mr. Halfspun had certainly had a time with the Shoe Polisher, for he was really black in the face with blacking and rage. In fact, so much so that he couldn't speak. The Shoe Polisher hadn't spared the blacking.

"I know who it is!" cried Jimmy excitedly. "It's Darkie Doenut, the chap who was on that wanted notice. Grab him!"

The two boys pounced on the unfortunate Mr. Halfspun. While Willie held him down Jimmy pushed a dirty piece of

rag in his mouth to gag him. Then they tied him up with odd bits of cloth.

"Grooogh—gurgle!" went Mr. Halfspun, his eyes nearly bulging out of his head.

Willie looked round the shattered workshop.

"Look! My Wonder Shoe Polisher!" he exclaimed. "It's been smashed to pieces. I wonder how he got hold of that!"

"Don't worry about that now," said Jimmy. "Let's take this burglar up to old Gandybar so that he can phone the police!"

The two boys put the gasping Halfspun into a wheelbarrow and pushed him round the school towards the masters' quarters.

On their way they met some of the other boys, who thought Willie was a bit late in making another guy for fireworks night.

When they arrived at the Head's study they pushed him in without knocking.

"What's all this, Wizzard!" roared the Head as the two burst in on him as he was about to take his afternoon nap.

"We caught him in my workshop, sir!" explained Willie proudly. "He's wanted by the police for robbery. We saw the notice in the village!"

At that moment Mr. Halfspun got the gag out of his mouth.

"Grough! How dare you!" he spluttered. "This is an outrage. I—I was savagely attacked and then these two boys pounced on me!"

"Oh, crumbs!" moaned Jimmy. "It's Halfspun!"

Willie gave a loud groan of dismay and wished he hadn't destroyed the formula for the trouser seat protector.

"Kindly leave the room, sir!" said Dr. Gandybar to Mr. Halfspun. "I will deal with these two boys immediately!"

We shall not dwell on the very painful scene that followed. Or upon the fact that for the next few half-holidays Willie and Jimmy were expected to do better than the Wonder Shoe Polisher when they cleaned all the masters' boots.

Next week: Willie Wizzard's Aerial Gutter Cleaner!

ENGINE-SPOTTERS CLUB

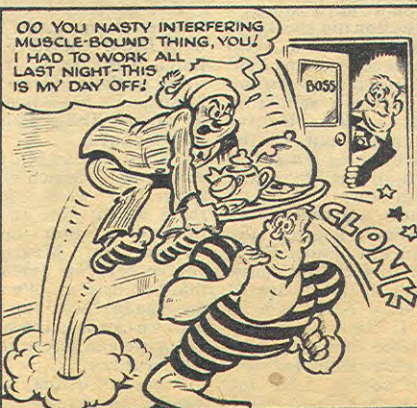
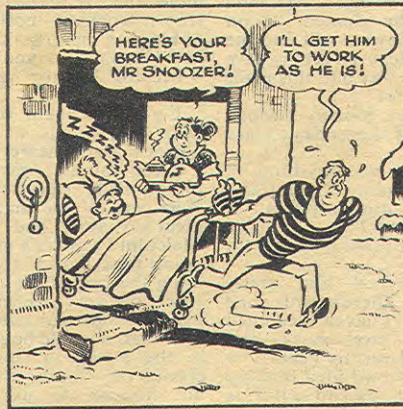
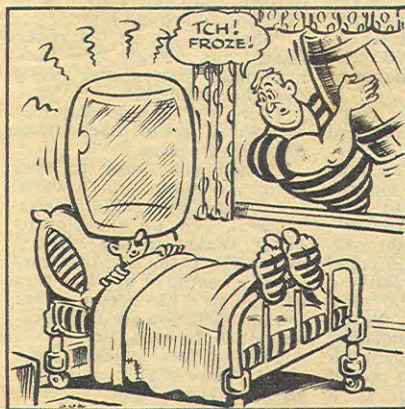
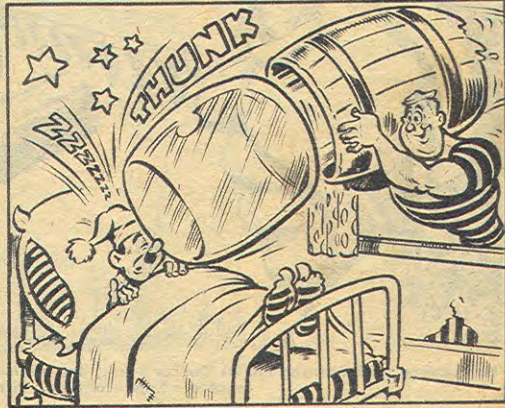
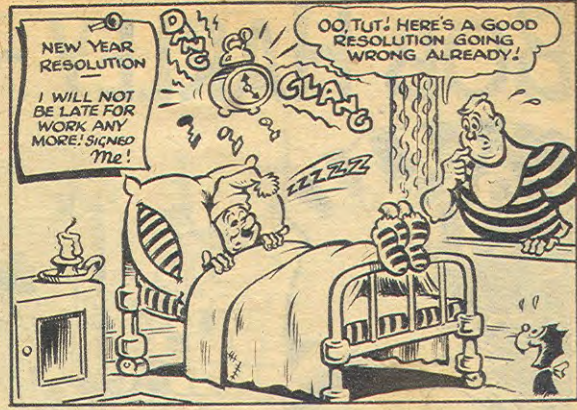
HAPPY New Year, Spotters! Look at these exciting presents! A Cowboy Belt and Holster, Box Game, Charm Bracelet, Wrist Compass, Jack-knife, Autograph Album, Ball-point Pen, and a Water Pistol. One of them is waiting for you—if your Album number is one of the following:

Between 26,000 and 26,500 inclusive and between 58,000 and 58,500 inclusive.

Is yours one of this week's thousand lucky numbers? If it is, this is what you do. First, see that your name and address are filled in on your Album Membership page. Then write the name of your choice of present in the space marked "For Official Use." Now take a piece of paper or a postcard and write down the name of your favourite character or story in COMET—and in a few words tell us why you like it. Post Album and piece of paper in a 2d. stamped envelope addressed to:

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

And hurry—it must arrive by Tuesday, January 13, 1953! We will be sending out presents about a week after this date and Albums will be returned at the same time.



BOB HARLEY - SPECIAL AGENT



Bob gasped with amazement as Doctor Nero, dressed as the Shark, let out a blood-curdling scream and pushed a huge stone slab into the alligator pool.

Hiding inside one of the great pyramids of the Secret City were Malcolm Franklin, Bob Harley, Amanda Prando and her friend Chilka, chief of the Ochoonee Indians, and their prisoner, the Shark.

Trying to rescue the Shark came Dr. Nero aboard "The Prowler", that marvellous craft invented by Malcolm Franklin, and stolen from him.

THE inside of the huge stone pyramid was like a great tent.

In the middle of that great tent stood a small temple, or shrine. Even the faint light that filtered down from narrow slits in the stonework, far above their heads, was sufficient to make one thing very plain.

That little temple was wrought of solid gold.

But there was no time to stand and wonder over such a treasure now. Their freedom—their very lives—were in danger.

They stood there, a little tense group, listening. And from the streets of the ancient city outside their hiding-place came the sounds of pursuit—booted feet ringing on the age-old paving slabs—voices shouting.

Their prisoner, the Shark, voiced a low chuckle. The laugh rang out, mocking and sinister, from under the strange mask of steel that he always wore upon his head. Nobody had ever seen the Shark without that mask of steel. Nobody knew what his face looked like.

"The end is near, Malcolm Franklin!" he gloated. "Soon my loyal followers will find me and rescue me, even if they have to blast their way into this place with dynamite!"

Bob Harley looked through the gloom of the ancient place at his chief.

"Can't we do anything to stop them finding him? Can't we put his radio gadget out of action somehow?"

Malcolm Franklin shook his head.

"I've searched him pretty thoroughly. There's only one place left that I haven't searched—inside his steel mask—and that's locked on his head. I've got a very shrewd idea that his 'radio gadget', as you call it, is tucked away inside there. If only we could have stopped him from swallowing the key."

The "gadget" was a radio tell-tale, a tiny set of some kind which sent out a faint signal, just as if it was a miniature broadcasting station. It was this signal, going out all the while, which had enabled Doctor Nero, in the "Prowler", to track them down.

"Your guess is excellent, my dear Franklin!" sneered the Shark. "You are almost right. As a matter of fact, this mask of mine itself is the device in question. Doctor Nero made it. He called it Low-Frequency Radio-Activated. It enables him to find me, wherever my enemies take me. Of course, I do not understand such things. All I

understand is that nothing can stop it working—nothing short of blowing me to smithereens—and I don't think you'll do that—because I'm too valuable to you alive. . . ."

Up above them they could hear the sounds of feet and voices drawing nearer.

"Any minute now we'll be pin-pointed!" said Bob bitterly. Here was a fine end to their great adventure. The "Prowler", Malcolm Franklin's mighty sea-going tank, which could crawl upon the bed of the ocean and reach the very deepest depths, would be lost for ever. Worse than that, it would be completely in the power of this ruthless crook, the Shark, who would not hesitate to use it as a weapon of war.

Bob realised that their hopes of ever winning the "Prowler" back had dwindled to vanishing point. They were cornered like foxes in their burrow when the huntsman's hounds are yelping up above. There seemed to be no way out.

"Low-Frequency Radio-Activated!" Malcolm Franklin spoke the words softly, but there was a note in his voice that gave Bob new hope. "Thank you, Mister Shark—you've told me the one thing that can help us. We can't stop your gadget working any more than we can stop the sun shining—but we can screen it off if it's low frequency!"

A gasp of dismay came from the Shark as he saw how he had

blundered.

"Bob!" cried Franklin, "get across to that temple thing—see if you can open the doors!" He prodded his pistol into the Shark's rib. "And you—over there, too—quickly!"

Bob quickly found a stout pivoted bar of carved hardwood that dropped into slotted sockets on the outside of the doors and held them fast. He swung it aside and then tugged the doors open.

Despite the peril of the moment, they could not hold back their gasps at the sight which met their eyes.

Within the little shrine was a square room, about twelve feet each way. The whole of the floor space in this room was piled high with treasure—gold, jewels, priceless ornaments—wealth beyond the dreams of avarice!

This was the treasure house of the ancient kings of the secret city!

But there was no time to admire—no time to count the wealth that lay piled there in a tangled heap.

"Get inside!" Franklin pushed the Shark, and the crook dictator went staggering, to stumble and land half sitting upon a higgledy-piggledy heap of golden urns and vases, which toppled and came clattering to the floor all around him.

"Shut the doors!" Franklin tugged the nearest one back into place himself and swung over the bolting bar.

There was now no way that the Shark could open those doors from inside.

"When you want to stop radio waves you put a metal box around 'em," said Franklin. "It soaks 'em up like blotting paper soaks up ink. But I expect this is the first time that about a couple of hundred tons of solid gold has been used for the job. Did you see the thickness of those walls, Bob?"

"Yes—a foot at least. Solid gold! Phew—that's some dungeon!" Then Bob sobered. "They can't get a radio fix on him now, can they?"

Franklin shook his head. "No—but we're not out of the wood yet. There's still the chance that they may manage to hunt us down without radio. And even if they don't—we've still got to find some way of getting the 'Prowler' back."

Bob nodded, and for a moment or so they stood listening in silence. Then Amanda spoke.

"The search is not getting any nearer, señors. Perhaps they will not find us as long as we stay hidden in this place."

"Let's hope not, anyway. But as long as we stay here we can't do much ourselves. If we could see what they are up to out there perhaps we'd see

some chance of getting at the 'Prowler'."

"Perhaps Chilka can help, señor," said the girl. "He is wise in the hidden places of this city. From somewhere, perhaps, we can watch in secret."

The girl turned to the old Indian, and spoke to him in his own tongue. Chilka listened to her, and then nodded his head eagerly. He waved his arms towards the far side of the pyramid, and then strode towards it. They followed him.

Before them a blank wall loomed up in the shadows. A wall made of solid blocks of stone twice the size of an ordinary door, that fitted closely together, so that they could only just make out the joint lines where one stone met the next.

Chilka placed his cheek against the stonework, and then began to move slowly along the wall. He muttered a few words in his own tongue.

"He says that he seeks a crack where the air blows through," translated Amanda, "There is a secret passage . . ."

Just then, the old Indian gave a grunt of triumph, and pressed with both his hands flat upon a certain block of stone. It turned upon a central pivot, revealing a black opening beyond. Chilka squeezed through, and the others followed.

Malcolm Franklin produced a small electric torch from his pocket, and shone it around. They were in a narrow stone passage.

Chilka led the way at a trot. The passage went on, straight as a die, for about a couple of hundred yards. Then it ended in a circular stone chamber.

Ancient steps spiralled upwards from the chamber, and a dim light filtered down from somewhere far above their heads.

Up the stairs they went. Up and up, until Bob judged that they must be fifty feet above ground level.

Then they reached a little, odd shaped room, that was lighted by two oval windows, or slits, which were placed side by side in one curved wall.

Chilka pointed to these slits, and they looked out.

Firstly, it was clear that they were high up inside an oblong building, overlooking what looked at first sight like a large swimming bath. Around this building, at about the level of themselves, ran a gallery, from which people could look down, as they were doing, at the oblong pool of water down below.

Long, greenish shapes stirred sluggishly in the pool below.

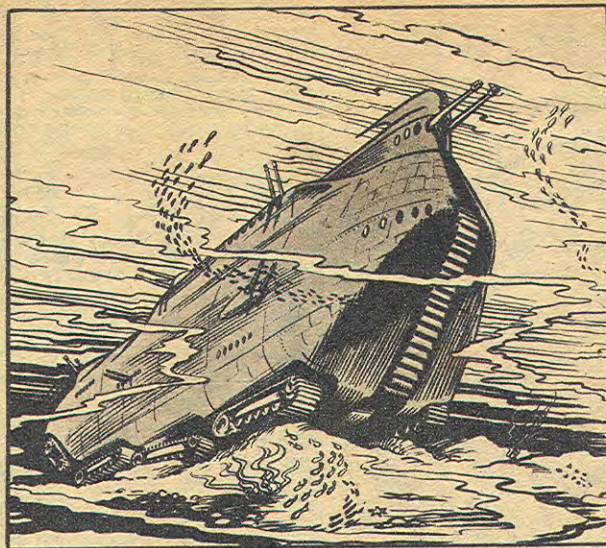
Giant alligators!

Then the second thing became clear—where it was that they themselves were standing.

"Chief!" said Bob "We're inside the head of a huge idol—looking out through his eyes!"

Franklin nodded, and as he did so, Chilka the Indian spoke swiftly to Amanda.

"This is the god of the great swamp!" translated the girl, "In



"THE PROWLER."

the old days human sacrifices were thrown to the alligators from the platform there . . ."

She broke off, as Franklin held up a hand for silence.

From somewhere below, they could hear the sound of a voice, speaking harshly in the Incaraguan language.

"It is Doctor Nero!" whispered Amanda, "Let us listen, and I will tell you what he says!"

IN the cunning mind of Doctor Nero, many schemes were hatching, and not all of them had to do with rescuing his lord and master, The Shark.

When he saw the temple of the swamp-god, he knew that here was an ideal spot for the schemes he had in mind. It was lofty, for one thing. From it all parts of the secret city could be seen. That would be a good enough excuse for making this place his headquarters.

Close beside him, as he walked with a squad of men from the captured "Prowler" was one man who carried portable radio gear.

"Is there still no signal?" he asked.

The man shook his head.

"The rescue signal from our great leader, the Shark, faded out even as we began to search this place," he said.

Doctor Nero appeared to think deeply for a moment, although he had already made up his mind what he would do.

"Then we ourselves must search this place, since radio has failed us," he said, "I myself will

take up my headquarters in this lofty temple—" he pointed to the nearby temple of the swamp-god. "From its top I shall be able to see the search parties working through all parts of the city. You may give the men their orders at once."

"At once, Doctor Nero." The man switched off his radio gear, before he spoke again, "Shall I myself remain with you? There may be messages, things you wish to be done . . ."

"You will search with the others. Every man must do his utmost to find our great leader. I can manage alone—I must do without aid. Now go."

Leaving his men rapidly organizing themselves into a number of search parties, Doctor Nero stepped into the ruined portico of the temple. In front of him, through a tunnel of broken columns, he could see the water of a pool.

A pool! Excellent! Thought the Doctor . . . and there were alligators—or some creatures of that sort—swimming in the pool. Better still!

He looked around, and saw a broad stairway, green with centuries' growth of lichen, which curved upward. He hurried up the stairs, his black cloak clutched tightly about him.

It wound upward for a couple of storeys, and then he came out into a sort of oblong gallery, from which he could look down into the pool. Before him was a sort of platform of stone, which jutted out over the pool.

Seeming to watch him, from the far side of the pool, was a great squatting stone idol, with deep cut, slanting black caverns of eyes, that stared unblinking towards where he stood.

But Doctor Nero was not troubled by their glare. He looked swiftly around, and chuckled. Nobody could see him here, he thought. Excellent!

Then he brought something out from under his long cloak of black.

It was a steel mask, exactly the same as the Shark himself always wore!

Swiftly he raised it up, and snapped fast the two flaps of steel that fitted across the back of his head.

Then he shook off his cloak of black, revealing underneath it a uniform of the sort which the Shark always wore.

True, he was a little shorter than the Shark, but false heels in the jackboots he was wearing took care of that.

Now, to all intents and purposes, he was the Shark!

Little did he think that his every move was being watched from the unblinking eyes of the stone idol on the other side of the pool!

"**W**HAT'S he up to, Chief?" whispered Bob Harley, as they watched the strange actions of the man on the other side of the temple.

"Search me," said Franklin, "If I was to make a guess, I'd say that he was making ready to throw his beloved leader overboard, and to take his place. That mask of the Shark's makes him very easy to impersonate—and Nero would be the best man to do it. He must know most of the Shark's secrets. Now what's he up to?"

"He's making heavy going of it," answered Bob.

The masked figure of Doctor Nero was now tussling with a slab of broken stone, that must have weighed a couple of hundredweight. They watched him heave it to the very edge of the stone platform where he stood, and then . . .

Doctor Nero let out a blood-curdling scream, and at the same time pushed the stone over the edge so that it hurtled down to land with a mighty splash in the pool below.

The great alligators thrashed and lashed angrily, as the slab tore a black hole in the scum of weeds that covered their pool.

Franklin and the others were bewildered.

That scream, which had sounded so full of terror, had been just make-believe—of that they felt sure.

Then from below came the sound of running feet, as the search-parties, attracted by the scream, hurried to the temple.

Doctor Nero chuckled hollowly under his mask.

The feet pounded up the stairs, and as the searchers came into sight, Nero was leaning, as if he was weak and exhausted,

(Continued on page 18)

THE EDITOR WISHES ALL
HIS READERS
A HAPPY NEW YEAR

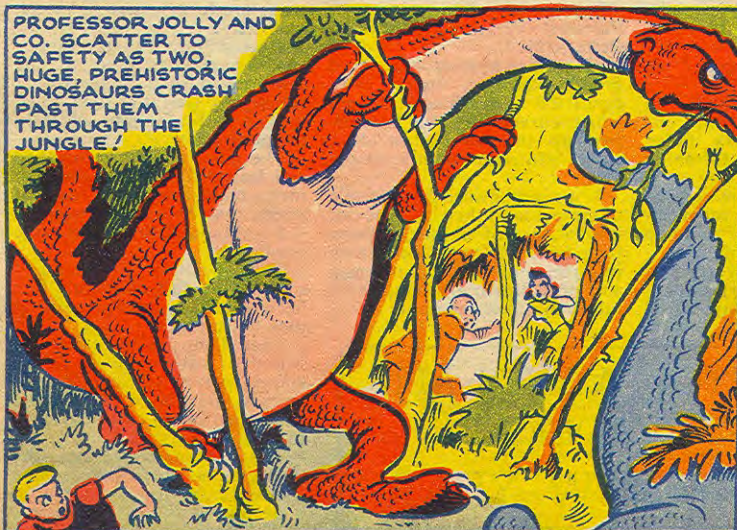
THE BURNING ARROW SAVES ANN, FOR THE SUN-
FLOWER BURNS AND RELAXES ITS GRIP.



NOW THAT ANN IS SAFE, THE GALLANT
PARTY PRESS ON THROUGH A RUINED
CITY TO FIND THE EMPEROR NESCIOR.



DEEP IN THE JUNGLE PROFESSOR
JOLLY AND CO. FOLLOWING THE
SIGN TO THE TEMPLE OF FIRE
SUDDENLY STOP IN ALARM.



AS THE BRAVE PARTY COME TOGETHER
AGAIN, THEY SEE AN OPENING IN THE
JUNGLE MADE BY THE TWO GIANT
DINOSAURS.



PROFESSOR JOLLY AND CO., HURRYING THROUGH THE OPENING IN THE JUNGLE, STOP SUDDENLY, FOR IN FRONT OF THEM IS A DROP OF OVER A THOUSAND FEET.

QUICK, ACROSS THE BRIDGE! IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE!

THEY HURRY ACROSS THE NARROW SWINGING BRIDGE BUT CAMBUSTA'S MEN ARE CLOSE BEHIND.

KOSMO HAS SEEN CAMBUSTA'S SOLDIERS AND IN A FLASH CUTS THE ROPE BRIDGE, BUT THEY ARE NOT SAFE YET!

LOOK! IN THE SKY! THEY'RE STILL AFTER US!

PETER'S WARNING CAME JUST IN TIME!

FOLLOW ME! QUICK, INTO THE CAVE!



OUTSIDE THE CAVE CAMBUSTA'S SOLDIERS! INSIDE THE CAVE A GIGANTIC WATERFALL! THE GALLANT PARTY ARE TRAPPED.



MICK, WITH THE HELP OF A PIPE AND TOBACCO, TEACHES A KNOW-ALL A LESSON!

MICK THE MOON BOY



Mrs. Bounce watched in goggle-eyed fright and amazement as the invisible hands filled the pipe and then applied a match!

THE GHOST IN THE TOWER

AND this," said the guide, "is the room in which the little princes were murdered."

"I don't believe it," said the stout lady very snappishly. "It wasn't this room at all. It was in another room that it happened."

The guide sighed and looked at her wearily.

"Madam, I know my job," he said. "If I didn't, I wouldn't be allowed to conduct visitors round the Tower of London like I do. This was the room in which the two little princes were murdered."

"And I say it wasn't!" snapped the stout lady. "My Cousin James says it isn't, and he knows."

"How does he know?" asked the guide very patiently, and trying very hard indeed to keep his temper and to speak politely.

"Because he does know!" retorted the stout lady, whose name was Mrs. Bounce. "He's a very well-read man, is my Cousin James, and he knows as much about the Tower of London as you do. More, in fact!"

The guide sighed deeply, and it was easy to see that the group of sightseers whom he was escorting round the Tower of London were very sorry for him indeed.

For ever since the tour had started Mrs. Bounce had been arguing with him and contradicting him and making him look a perfect fool.

Amongst the group being piloted around the Tower was Hank Luckner, the twelve-year-old American boy, and his pal, Mick the Moon Boy. The pair of them were on holiday in England and were starting off by seeing the sights of London.

"And here," said the guide, when he had taken the sightseers to another room, "is where Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned."

"Wrong again!" snapped fat Mrs. Bounce. "It was the room next to this one that she was imprisoned in. My Cousin James says so, and he knows."

"If your Cousin James knows such a powerful lot, ma'am," said Hank mildly, "why don't he get himself a job as a guide?"

Next instant the sound of Mrs. Bounce's ears being well boxed

rang through the stone-walled room.

"There!" cried Mrs. Bounce, glowering at him. "Let that be a lesson to you to keep your cheeky remarks to yourself, you impertinent little brat. My Cousin James a guide indeed? He wouldn't lower himself to be anything so common!"

A fat man with a bowler hat, a red face and a drooping moustache fairly glowered at her.

"That's a bloomin' nice thing to say, I must say!" he cried indignantly. "Wot's common about being a guide? These 'ere guides 'ave got to be proper eddicated men and I bet one of 'em earns more in a week than your perishin' Cousin James does in a month o' Sundays!"

"Oh!" gasped Mrs. Bounce, trembling with passion. "How—how dare you, you impudent ruffian!"

"Ladies and gentlemen, please don't let's have any arguments or trouble," pleaded the guide. He led the way to another stone-walled and stone-floored room. "This is the room in which Sir Walter Raleigh was imprisoned," he said with a defiant look at stout Mrs. Bounce.

"Lies!" trumpeted that lady. "More lies. My Cousin James says—"

"We don't want to 'ear wot your bloomin' Cousin James says!" roared the fat man in the bowler hat. "Why the heck don't he mind his own business? You hold your tongue. The guide knows, and us folks want to listen to 'im, not to you!" He turned to the patient guide. "Fire right ahead, mate!" he encouraged. "You was saying that Sir Walter Raleigh was imprisoned in this room. Ain't he the bloke wot discovered tobacco?"

"He was the first to bring tobacco over to this country from America," agreed the guide.

"Rubbish!" snorted Mrs. Bounce. "Absolute rubbish. It was Drake or Hawkins or one of those men who introduced filthy, beastly tobacco into this country. My Cousin James says so and—"

"Your Cousin James, madam, ought to be strung up from the yard-arm," put in a loud clear voice. "He sounds the biggest blockhead I have ever heard of!"

Everybody, including the guide, gave quite a jump and stared wildly about them.

"Who—who said that?" gasped fat Mrs. Bounce.

"I did, madam," cried the mysterious voice. "Sir Walter Raleigh at your service. You cannot see me, for I am but a ghost, having been dead these few hundred years and more."

"Cor, stone the crows!" gasped the fat man.

"You have, sir, I perceive, a pipe and tobacco tin in your pocket," went on the mysterious voice. "It was indeed I who first introduced the precious weed to this fair land, but it is long, long since I have partaken of it. Permit me, sir, once again to savour the fragrance of the weed."

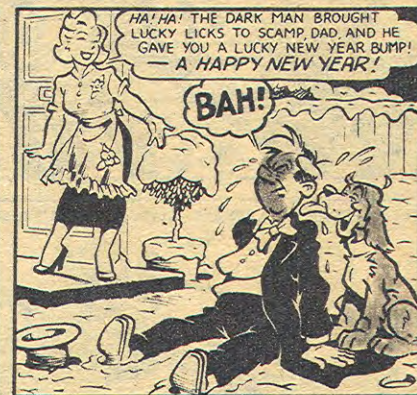
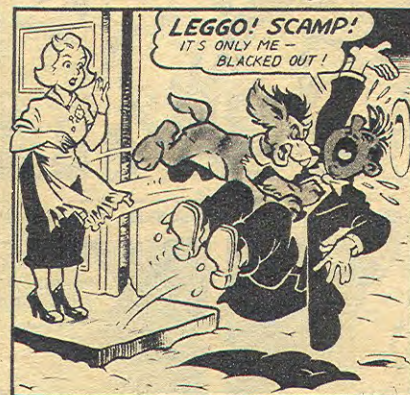
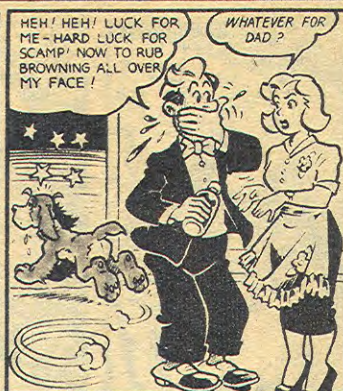
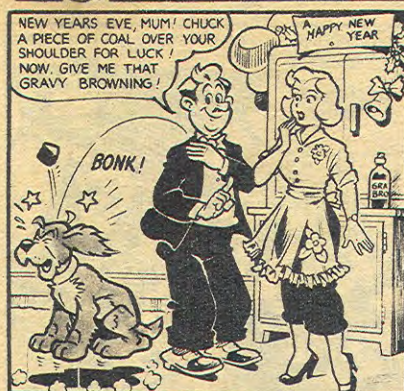
With that, invisible hands dipped gently into the fat man's pockets and took out a hefty curved briar pipe, a tin of tobacco and a box of matches.

Watched in goggle-eyed fright and amazement by the petrified group of sightseers, the invisible hands filled the pipe, then stuck it into an invisible mouth and applied a match. The invisible mouth then started to puff clouds of smoke and, between puffs the mysterious voice cried:

"Hah, what bliss! I never thought to taste the fragrant weed again. And now I shall conduct that stout lady there on a personal tour of the Tower. She will then be able to inform her odious Cousin James just how wrong he is and how right my good friend the guide is. Come, madam!"

The invisible hand closed gently on Mrs. Bounce's fat (Continued opposite)

SCAMP OUR HAPPY HOUND



MICK THE MOON BOY (Contd. from previous page)

arm. She let out an ear-splitting screech like that of a powerful railway engine and tore her arm away.

"Help! Keep him off! Don't let him touch me!" she screamed.

She turned, bolted madly from the room and fairly flew down the stone staircase. And after her sped the pipe, still held in the invisible mouth and trailing great clouds of smoke behind it; and you never saw a stranger sight than that. And the mysterious voice cried beseechingly:

"Fie, madam, why do you flee? Permit me, I beg of you, to personally conduct you over the Tower. I know every nook and cranny and can prove to you how wrong is your unspeakable Cousin James!"

But Mrs. Bounce didn't wait to have it proved to her. Her eyes bulging, she hurtled out of the main entrance like a charging elephant and crashed full tilt into a couple of the beefeaters who were just coming in.

They were quite beefy beefeaters, but she floored the pair of them as though they were just a couple of wooden skittles, and she went sprawling down on top of them.

"What the—who the—what d'you think you're playing at?" gasped one of the beefeaters, trying to shove Mrs. Bounce off.

"Are you crazy?" "No, I'm not!" screamed Mrs. Bounce. "I'm being chased by the ghost of Sir Walter Raleigh!"

Well, then, of course, the beefeaters thought she really was crazy, because when they'd got to their feet they could see no sign of a ghost at all. All they could see was the guide and the fat man in the bowler hat and Hank and the rest of the group of sightseers, who had come running downstairs.

There was one person missing from the group. It was Mick the Moon Boy. He suddenly appeared right at the back of the group and said to the fat man:

"Excuse me, sir, but is this your pipe?"

"It suttin' is!" cried the fat man, grabbing it. "Where did you find it? Lying on the flagstones, eh? Ar, I'll always treasure this pipe. It's been smoked by the ghost o' Sir Walter Raleigh. Strewth, it must be the most valuable pipe in the world now, bar none!"

Only Hank knew that the "ghost" had been none other than Mick the Moon Boy, who had used his marvellous scientific powers to make himself

invisible in order to teach the rude and gabby Mrs. Bounce a lesson.

But Mick had done more than that. He had made the fat man happy for the rest of his life with his treasured pipe. As for Mrs. Bounce, when she got home that evening she had a most violent row with Cousin Know-all James.

For when she told that gentleman what had happened at the Tower he laughed very heartily indeed and told her she must just have imagined it. In fact, he laughed so heartily that the tears ran down his face. But they very quickly turned from tears of mirth to tears of pain as the raging Mrs. Bounce caught him a crack across the noggin which made his head ring.

"You think you know a lot!" she told him furiously. "But you don't know a thing. You're a bigger fool than you look, and that's saying something!"

She never went back to the Tower. This pleased all the guides very much indeed. For until that fateful day she had been a frequent visitor, and she had nearly driven them crackers with she always argued with them and flatly contradicted them right in front of everybody.

Next week: A man gets taken for a ride by a rabbit!

THIS IS KIT CARSON SPEAKING

Hullo there, folks.

Over the page you'll find some grand pictures telling my story of the "White Redman's Secret", and in case you've missed the beginning of it, I'll tell you what's happened up until now.

This is the tale of two brothers who grew up without knowing each other. Their parents were killed in an Indian raid. One grew up with white folks and was called Dan Butler. The other grew up as Deerfoot, Chief of the Teton Sioux tribe.

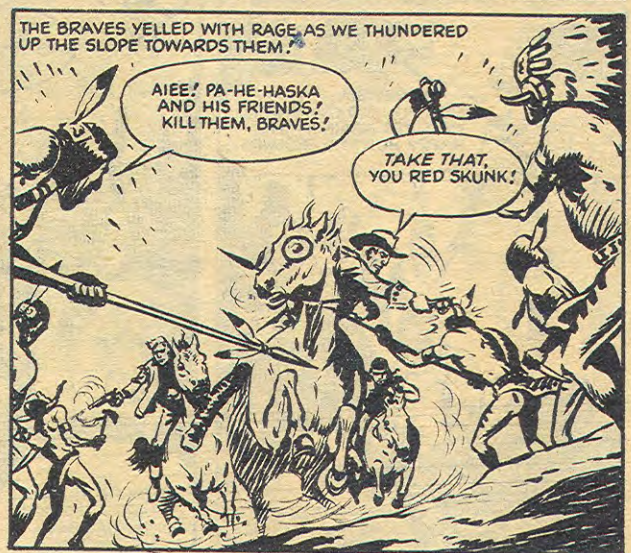
Attempts to kill Dan were made by Mark Raven, an Englishman who knew a valuable secret about him, and by Cinnamon Bill and Tom Stack, a couple of outlaws who were in league with Raven. Also, after Dan, was a cavalry officer, Lieutenant Kenrick was his name, who had an old score to settle with Dan.

Well, folks, after a number of narrow escapes, Deerfoot, who had been cast out from his tribe, myself and Dan take cover in a cave after we had been chased by Indians. But we had jumped out of the frying pan into the fire. For as we went deeper into the cave we were confronted by three huge grizzly bears!

THE SECRET OF THE WHITE REDMAN







DR. GRUNTER'S ZOO SCHOOL

DR. DOZEY'S DOPE

"I'm not going to stand this much longer!" cried Dr. Grunter, the polar bear, fairly gnashing his great long yellow fangs with rage as he paced the floor of the wooden hut where he lived.

"What aren't you going to stand much longer?" inquired Mr. Drripp, the turtle, who shared the hut with Dr. Grunter.

"Being a confounded polar bear!" roared Dr. Grunter. "It's perfectly ridiculous that a respectable middle-aged gentleman like myself should be going around as a beastly polar bear!"

"Well, it's just as bad for me, being a turtle," complained Mr. Drripp. "But I can't see that there's anything we can do about it."

"Isn't there?" roared Dr. Grunter furiously. "Then that's just where you're wrong, Drripp. There is something we can do about it, and we're jolly well going to do it!"

Dr. Grunter hadn't always been a polar bear, nor had Mr. Drripp always been a turtle. As a matter of fact, not so very long ago the pair of them had been schoolmasters in charge of a party of boys who had come to Meadowsweet Farm to help Farmer Whipstraw with the harvest.

One morning 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 had got his bottles mixed up and instead of giving them a dose of medicine he gave them all a dose of a wonderful liquid he had invented for changing people into birds and animals.

The result was that, in a flash, they had been turned into the strangest collection of birds and animals that you could ever see. And they were doomed to remain like this until Dr. Dozey could find the liquid to change them back again.

"Dozey's been looking for that liquid that will change us all back again to our proper selves ever since he changed us into birds and animals," roared Dr. Grunter, glaring at Mr. Drripp as though it was that gentleman's fault. "At least, he's supposed to have been looking for it, but he's got so absent-minded that he's very likely forgotten all about it."

"That is quite true, I'm afraid," sighed Mr. Drripp. "But you said just now that we can do something about it. What can we do about it?"

"Find the liquid ourselves!" bellowed Dr. Grunter.

"How—how'd you mean, find the liquid ourselves?" stammered Mr. Drripp.

"By looking for it, of course, fathead!" roared Dr. Grunter,



"It's not lemonade at all!" roared Dr. Grunter, hardly able to believe his eyes. "It's the missing liquid!"

whose manners had become simply awful ever since he had been changed into a polar bear. "If we wait until Dr. Dozey finds the missing liquid we'll still be waiting this time next year. So what I intend to do is to take some of the more intelligent animals—I mean, boys—with me, and search Dr. Dozey's house from top to bottom."

"When are you going to start the search?" cried Mr. Drripp, his voice trembling with excitement.

"Tonight, as soon as it's dark," replied Dr. Grunter. "Very few people know that we have been changed into birds and animals, and we'll keep our secret until the end. That's why the boys and I will call on Dr. Dozey when it's dark and when no one will see us. Now go and summon the boys and I will select those whom I wish to take with me."

Mr. Drripp shuffled obediently away on his hind flippers and within a very short time all the boys—or, rather, all the birds and animals as they now were—were assembled in two lines outside Dr. Grunter's hut.

Walking out of the hut on his hind legs, Dr. Grunter told them exactly what he intended to do. As the boys listened they fairly quivered with excitement.

"We're almost bound to find the liquid," cried Dr. Grunter. "Now, these are the boys that I intend to take with me."

He started calling out a list of the names of the smartest and cleverest boys. There was Percy Peeke, who had been changed into a parrot, Algy Brown, the monkey, Freddy Fenton, the fox, Sammy Small, the squirrel, Dicky Dawson, the dormouse, the three Baxter brothers, who had been changed into three brown bears, and several other boys.

THAT same night, as soon as it was dark, Dr. Grunter and his party set off for the village. They were speeded on their way by a rousing cheer from the boys who were left behind.

Dr. Grunter and his party made for the village not by the road, but across the darkened fields. Thus they arrived at the back door of Dr. Dozey's house without having met a single soul. It was little old Dr. Dozey himself who answered the door in response to Dr. Grunter's knock—the knock being a terrific bang with his paw which nearly broke the door.

"Good—good evening, Dr. Grunter!" stammered Dr. Dozey, peering in surprise at Dr. Grunter and the rest of the party. "Is anything wrong?"

"Wrong!" roared Dr. Grunter in a terrible voice. "I should jolly well think something is wrong! We're still birds and animals, that's what's wrong. Have you found that liquid which will change us all back again to our proper selves?"

"Well, n-no, I'm afraid I haven't," began little Dr. Dozey.

"Then you can have no objection to our coming in and looking for it ourselves, I suppose?" cried Dr. Grunter. "We mean to find it, sir, even if we have to take your house to pieces. Come, boys!"

With that he pushed Dr. Dozey aside with his paw and stalked into the house, followed by the rest of the search party.

"Now, boys, get busy," he roared. "We will search every nook and cranny of the house."

They did. They searched everywhere. They searched in rooms, cupboards, boxes and drawers. They looked under beds and under tables. They even took the carpets up and looked under them. But nowhere could they find a sign of the missing liquid.

"Well, that settles it," moaned Dr. Grunter at length, when they were all assembled in Dr.

Dozey's kitchen. "The stuff's not in the house at all!"

He glared at Dr. Dozey and snarled:

"Are you sure there is such a liquid? Are you sure you ever made any?"

"Oh, yes—yes—yes, I did," stammered Dr. Dozey. "But for the life of me I can't think where I put it."

"Well, we'll just have to go back to the farm," groaned Dr. Grunter. "Come, boys."

"Wait!" cried little Dr. Dozey, producing a big bottle marked "lemonade" from the pantry. "The boys look terribly hot and dusty after their search, so perhaps they would like a little lemonade to refresh themselves with."

"Not half!" cried Percy Peeke and company. "Thank you very much, sir!"

Dr. Dozey poured the lemonade out into some glasses. But as the boys drank it a most amazing thing happened. For in a flash they were changed back from birds and animals into their proper selves.

"That's the missing liquid!" roared Dr. Grunter, hardly able to believe his eyes. "It's not lemonade at all! It's the missing liquid! Here, give me some!"

He snatched a glass, gulped down some of the liquid, and in a flash he, too, was changed into his proper self again.

"Why, bless my soul!" gasped Dr. Dozey. "I remember now. I didn't have a bottle handy so I put the liquid into an empty lemonade bottle. Oh, I'm so glad you've found it!"

"So are we!" yelled the boys, capering with joy. "Come on, let's get back to the farm and give our pals some."

Within an hour Mr. Drripp and the rest of the boys had all been changed back into their proper selves again. As you can imagine, everyone was overjoyed.

The next few hours were the busiest and happiest they had spent for weeks.

They all rushed off to the local post office and sent telegrams saying they'd be home the next day. Then they raced back to the farm and started to pack their belongings.

That evening jolly old Farmer Whipstraw laid on a scrumptious supper for them. They had lashings of freshly-cooked ham, jellies and blancmanges with heaps of whipped cream and as many cakes as they wanted.

The next morning, Alf, one of the farmhands whom they'd made good friends with, took them all to the station in the big farm wagon, and with much waving and shouting they said farewell to all at Meadowsweet Farm. But none of them will ever forget the time when they were birds and animals, and known as Dr. Grunter's Zoo School.

against a stone pillar.

The men saluted, and there was a buzz of excited talk, as they saw the masked figure, whom they all took to be the Shark himself.

Nero held up his hand for silence, and then spoke in a voice which, aided by the echo of the steel mask, could not be told from The Shark's voice.

"My friends—my followers—" he gasped, "You are just too late—too late to save my dear comrade, Doctor Nero, from a dreadful fate!" He pointed down at the pool below, and there were gasps of horror. "He gave his life for me—you heard his death scream. He was battling with Malcolm Franklin, to give me the chance of freedom!"

There were cries and shouts from the men, as they looked this way and that. The fake Shark held up his hand again.

"Franklin had left me tied—bound and gagged in a secret place beneath this temple," he went on, "but I managed to sever the ropes by rubbing them against a rough stone, and then I crept away. I did not know the way out of the vault where he had hidden me away, and I had to search for the secret doorway. I found it at last, but at the very instant when success was in my grasp Franklin himself confronted me. 'I fought with him and threw him to the ground—then I fled away through the hidden tun-

nels to find my way out to the light and air. Armed with a gun, he came after me and had me cornered in this building. Then began a deadly game of hide-and-seek, he with a gun, myself unarmed. So it went on, until Nero appeared here, on this balcony, just as Franklin was searching this way and that for my hiding-place. Poor Nero grappled with him, but before I could run to his assistance it was all over. . . ."

The fake Shark sighed deeply. "I cannot tell you where Franklin went. He vanished like a phantom, as he heard you hurrying here!"

Across inside the head of the idol, Bob gasped softly as Amanda translated what Nero was saying.

"The shocking old twister!" "Ssshh!" Franklin gestured for silence.

Across the pool, the group on the platform had grown tense.

They were listening, for they could hear the tramp of more feet ascending the stair—a single pair of feet.

And then the newcomer came into view.

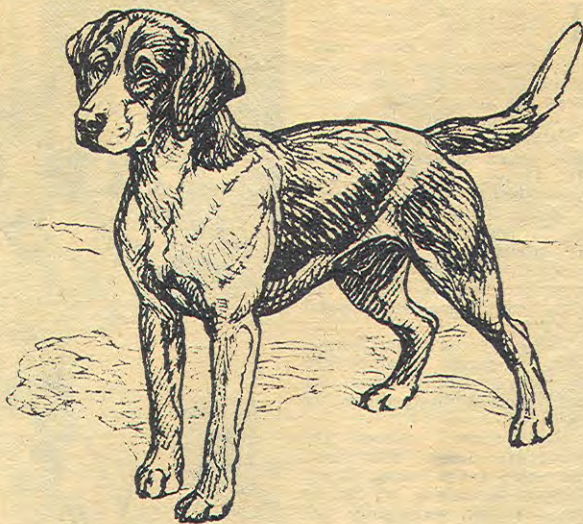
It was the Shark himself!

Somehow he had escaped from his golden dungeon

You could have heard a pin drop in the silence as the two masked men faced each other across the width of the gallery.

Next week: The princess of the Secret City!

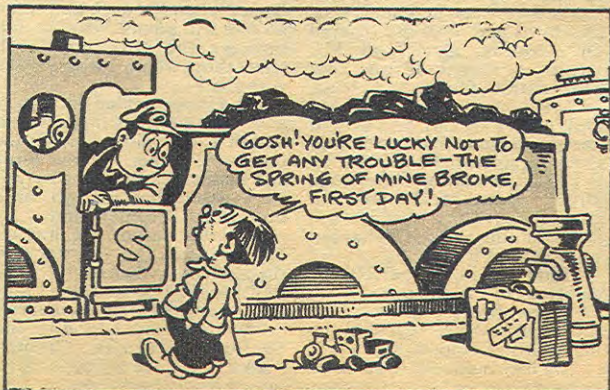
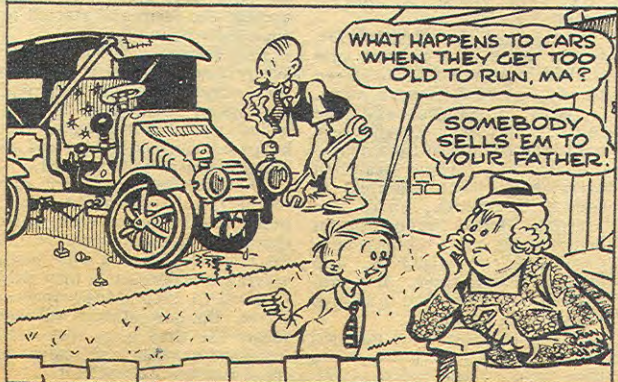
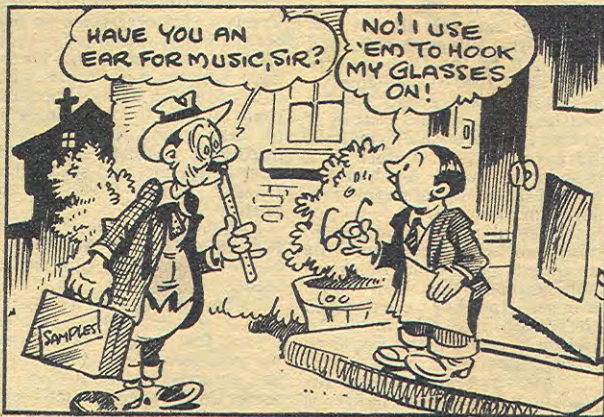
YOUR FAVOURITE DOGS



No. 22. THE BEAGLE

A good Beagle is a well-proportioned little hound, variously marked with white, black and tan, lemon and white and sometimes black and white. He can be anything from 12 to 16 inches high at the shoulder. He is bred to hunt the hare and the "field" follows on foot instead of horseback. This hound will make a really good pal if properly trained.

CHUCKLES . . .



THE ADVENTURES OF

CLAUDE
AND

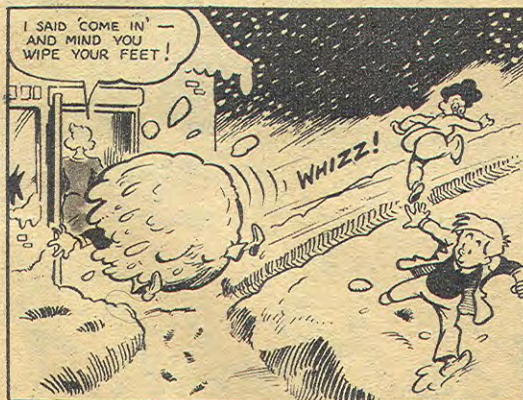
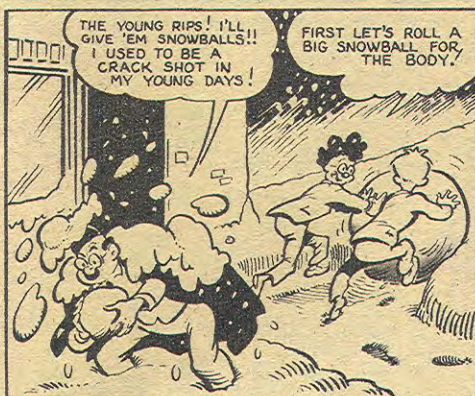
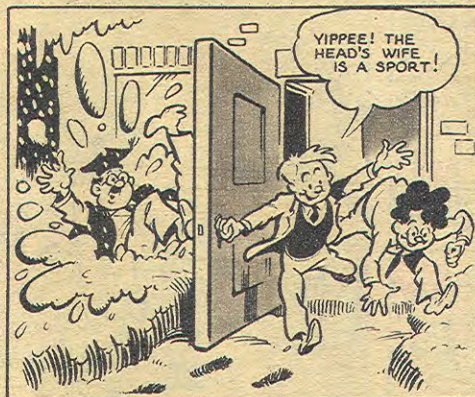
CUTHBERT
THE TWO NEW BOYS

OUR CHUMS ARE SPENDING THE XMAS HOLIDAYS WITH DR AND MRS TWIZZLE

COO-IT'S SNOWING! MAY WE GO OUT AND PLAY SNOWBALLS, MRS TWIZZLE?

YES-IF THE DOCTOR DOESN'T OBJECT, HE PROBABLY WILL, SO SLIP OUT QUICKLY BEFORE HE COMES BACK

UGH! MORE SNOW! I MUST HURRY IN AND STOP CLAUDE AND CUTHBERT FROM GOING OUT TO PLAY!



COMET

3^D
EVERY
MONDAY

SHORTY

