



This Book Belongs to _____

The Editor to his Friends

In the compilation of this, the Sixth Volume of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL, the guiding principle of previous years has been followed, namely, to invite contributions only from authors and artists of proved popularity, whose work is known and appreciated by many hundreds of thousands of readers of the famous Companion Papers throughout the world. By this means the HOLIDAY ANNUAL has become recognised as a big budget of the finest obtainable stories and pictures, representing the best work of the proved favourites of a vast public. Its popularity was, therefore, assured from the first, and has increased steadily year by year.

I venture to say that the present volume need not fear comparison with any of its predecessors. The cheery chums of Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood—the most famous schools in fiction—are as much in evidence as ever, and Messrs. Frank Richards, Martin Clifford, and Owen Conquest, the celebrated trio of evergreen favourites, maintain in conclusive fashion their proud position as the world's most popular school-story writers. P. G. Wodehouse, Duncan Storm, and Michael Poole keep the ball rolling merrily, while the clever artists responsible for the Colour Plates and illustrations are recognised as being masters of their craft. The whole volume is freely spiced with humour, which reaches its climax, perhaps, in "Billy Bunter's Annual"—that original and delightfully funny feature which has this year been developed and enlarged.

Enough has been said to show that every effort has been exerted to make the present volume worthy of the long line of successful HOLIDAY ANNUALS preceding it; it only remains for my reader-chums to put the matter to the test by reading it to the last line!

THE EDITOR.

The Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street,
London, E.C.4.



The Romance of The Holiday Annual!

By The Editor

"LONDON invaded!"

That would make a startling newspaper headline, would it not? But it is precisely what happened a few months ago. London was invaded by an army of schoolboy scribes, hailing from Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood—three of the best-known public schools in the world.

Before setting to work on the stupendous task of preparing the 1925 edition of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL, I wrote to all the schoolboy journalists who have helped to make this volume famous. I requested them to call at my editorial sanctum at a fixed hour on a fixed day, and I told them to bring their best, brightest, and brainiest ideas with them.

Two heads are better than one, and fifty heads are better than two: so I thought it would be an excellent plan to summon all these schoolboys together, to a sort of round-table conference, that we might discuss in detail the launching of the present volume.

From Greyfriars I invited Harry Wharton, who, as editor of "The Greyfriars Herald," has already served a long apprenticeship in journalism. I also invited the fat and famous Billy Bunter, who, although the postman never brings him his long-expected postal-order, is none the less "a man of letters."

From the same school I invited Bob Cherry—probably the most popular schoolboy in

the world. I once heard Mr. Frank Richards, the author of the Greyfriars stories, describe Bob Cherry as "a human chunk of concentrated sunshine"—an apt and accurate description of the jovial Bob.

Other Greyfriars celebrities whom I summoned to the conference were Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, Hurree Singh, Mark Linley, Tom Brown, Vernon-Smith, Peter Todd, and Dick Penfold.

From St. Jim's I invited Tom Merry, the handsome and popular captain of the Shell Form, and the editor of the "Weekly" which bears his name. Tom's bosom chums, Harry Manners and Monty Lowther, were also included in the invitation: also Jack Blake & Co., Figgins & Co., and that elegant, blue-blooded member of the British aristocracy, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy! The invitation was extended to "Baggy" Trimble, the fat and fatuous Falstaff of St. Jim's.

From Rookwood School, way down in Hampshire, I bade Jimmy Silver & Co. travel up to town, bringing with them their great rivals, Tommy Dodd & Co., and that plump and portly personage, Tubby Muffin.

Thus was London invaded one sunny spring morning, by a laughing throng of schoolboys!

I was seated at my desk, going through the contents of my morning mail-bag, when one of my sub-editors came rushing in like a whirlwind.

"They've come, sir!" he shouted excitedly. "A whole battalion of them. They've taken Fleetway House by storm!"

"You mean the schoolboys?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where are they?"

"Overflowing the waiting-room down-

stairs. You'll have to interview them in sections, sir, I'm afraid. They couldn't possibly crowd into this room all at once. Shall I arrange for them to come up half a dozen at a time?"

"No," I replied, rising to my feet. "We will hold the conference down in the waiting-room. Instead of the mountain coming to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain."

And I promptly made my way to the spacious waiting-room on the ground floor.

Long before I got there, a babel of voices came to my ears. I could hear Billy Bunter's shrill voice above all the rest.

"I say, you fellows, I'm going up to see my old pal, the editor! I'm the only chap he really wants to see. He invited the rest of you just out of politeness."

"Dry up, Bunter!"

"Sit on him, somebody!"

Evidently somebody did, for on reaching the door of the waiting-room I heard a noise like wind rushing out of a punctured football.

And then I saw Billy Bunter lying prone on the floor, with Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull making a footstool of him.

I halted in astonishment on the threshold. Never had I seen such a multitude assembled in the waiting-room. The place resembled a human beehive.

My appearance was the signal for a rousing cheer, which Tom Merry started. I smiled in acknowledgment, and Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull jumped up with crimson faces.

"Hope you didn't mind us sitting on Bunter, sir," said Bob. "He has to be sat on several times daily, or there would be no suppressing him."

"Oh, really, Cherry!" came a plaintive squeak from Billy Bunter. "You've flattened my chest, and squashed two of my ribs! If there was room to fight here, I'd wipe up the floor with you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Simmer down, Bunter," I said, squeezing myself into the room and closing the door. "This is a peace conference, not a council

of war. We have met together to discuss the launching of the next edition of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL."

"Hear, hear!"

"Make way for the Editor, you fellows!"

"Don't take that chair, sir!" said Tom Brown warningly. "Bunter sat on it just now, and the seat's stove in!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton placed a more solid chair in position, and I sat down. My visitors did likewise—at any rate, those who were able to do so, for there were not nearly enough chairs to go round.



"They've come, sir!" said my sub-editor excitedly. "A whole battalion of them! They've taken Fleetway House by storm!"



Billy Bunter broke off with a muffled yell as Johnny Bull, true to his promise, gagged the fat junior with a handkerchief. "Now we are getting along famously, boys!" I said

However, there were a couple of luxurious settees, and these were instantly commandeered.

When something approximating to silence had been obtained, I plunged into my preliminary speech.

"Gentlemen of Greyfriars, Rookwood, and St. Jim's!" I began. "I am glad to see you have answered my summons with such alacrity. All the old familiar faces are here, and right pleased am I to see them. Now, with regard to the HOLIDAY ANNUAL——"

"One moment, sir!"

It was the piping voice of Tubby Muffin which broke in upon my discourse.

"What is it, Muffin?" I asked, a trifle impatiently.

"Before we get to business, sir, what about having a feed? Speaking for myself, I'm simply famished. We had to leave Rookwood so early this morning that I didn't have time to do justice to my brekker. I don't know about the other chaps, but I can't talk business on an empty stomach."

"Possess your soul in patience, my plump

friend," I said, with a smile. "As soon as the discussion is over, I propose to take you all out to lunch at a big restaurant."

A hearty cheer greeted this statement; and the faces of Tubby Muffin, Billy Bunter, Baggy Trimble, and Fatty Wynn beamed like full moons.

"That's awfully sporting of you, sir!" exclaimed Tubby Muffin. "I'll try and hold out for half an hour."

"Same here," said Billy Bunter. "Now, what about the ANNUAL, Mr. Editor? I suppose you'd like me to write the lion's share of it?"

"Not at all, Bunter. I shall require only one contribution from you—a special edition of "Billy Bunter's Annual"; and mind it's a good one!"

"Is that all?" gasped Billy in dismay.

"Yes. It will give a sort of comic relief to the rest of the contributions."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked at me very reproachfully through his big spectacles.

"But—but I had counted on writing at least nine-tenths of the ANNUAL, sir!" he said. "The British public expects it. They can never have too much Bunter. Won't you let me write three long stories—one of Greyfriars, one of Rookwood, and one of St. Jim's?"

"But you don't know anything about Rookwood!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

"And you know even less about St. Jim's!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"And Mr. Frank Richards is going to write the long story of Greyfriars, so you can keep off the grass, Bunty!" said Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter turned to me appealingly.

"Well, if I can't write the long stories, sir, p'raps you wouldn't object to my writing a dozen short school yarns, and a pirate story and a Special Tuck Supplement, and a play in verse, and a hundred or so odd poems?"

"I should object very strongly!" I replied. "Now, I must ask you to refrain from further interruptions, Bunter."

"I'll gag him with his handkerchief if he interrupts again, sir!" said Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter having been effectively silenced, I asked my audience if they had any suggestions to make.

Suggestions? Why, their brain-boxes were simply bubbling over with them! Brilliant brain-waves were simply showered upon me from all parts of the room. The babel of voices was so terrific that I was obliged to stop my ears.

"One at a time, please!" I implored. "Now, Wharton. I can see you are bursting to say something."

"I simply want to suggest, sir, that stories of Greyfriars, Rookwood, and St. Jim's, should be written by Messrs. Frank Richards, Owen Conquest, and Martin Clifford, as in previous years."

"Hear, hear!"

"Stick to the old firm!"

"You can't beat that brainy trio of writers, sir."

"No, indeed I cannot," was my reply.

And the wishes of the audience were promptly jotted down in my memorandum-book.

"Three long school stories will form the backbone of our next volume," I said. "Now, what about the other features?"

"I'll write you a short story about Billy Bunter, sir," said Peter Todd.

"Very well, Todd."

"And I'll write you a short story about Baggy Trimble, sir," chimed in Monty Lowther.

I nodded my approval.

"And I'll weigh in with a short story about Tubby Muffin, sir," exclaimed Teddy Grace of Rookwood.

"Splendid!" I said. "Make your stories brief, bright, and breezy. The amusing antics of the three fat boys ought to make excellent reading. Now, is the Poet Laureate of Greyfriars present?"

Dick Penfold rose blushing to his feet.

"At your service, sir," he murmured.

"Well, Penfold, will you give us another of your capital plays, written in verse?"

"Delighted, sir!"

"And a budget of humorous poems, written in your best style?"

"With pleasure, sir!"

There was a snort of wrath from Billy Bunter.

"Yah! Penfold can't write poetry for toffee! He can make 'cat' rhyme with 'bat,' and that's about all. You want a real brainy hard for the job, sir, and you needn't look farther than me. I'm a descendant of the greatest poet who ever pushed a pen—William Shakespeare! If you care to come down to Bunter Court, sir, I'll show you my family tree—"

"He means the plum-tree in the garden, sir!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bob Cherry, you're a beast—ow! Gug-gug-gug!"

Billy Bunter broke off with a muffled gurgle as Johnny Bull, true to his promise, gagged the fat junior with a handkerchief.

"Now, we are getting along famously, boys!" I said. "We have already arranged for the long school stories, the short ditto, and the poetry. The adventure stories you may leave to me. I am in touch with some of the finest adventure-story writers of the

day, and I feel sure they will rally round, and rise to the occasion. Any more suggestions?"

Vernon-Smith, the sports editor of "The Greyfriars Herald," jumped to his feet.

"I shall be pleased to contribute a page of chatty sports paragraphs, sir," he said. "'Sporting Records of Greyfriars' would make a good title."

"What about a similar page dealing with St. Jim's sport, sir?" suggested Tom Merry. "We'll ask Kildare of the Sixth to write it, if you're willing."

"Agreed!" I said promptly.

And it was also decided that big George Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, should be asked to contribute a page of Rookwood sporting chat.

Other special features were promised by Tom Merry, Bob Cherry, and Jimmy Silver. And, at the urgent bidding of my guests, I consented to write an article myself for the 1925 ANNUAL.

The discussion proceeded at a merry pace, and all sorts of brain-waves were suggested and sifted, accepted or rejected, until—thanks to my willing army of schoolboy helpers—this edition of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL was mapped out in detail.

"Gentlemen all," I said, rising to my feet, "I must thank you all very cordially for your good offices—"

"But these offices aren't ours, sir!" protested Tubby Muffin. "They belong to the Amalgamated Press."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"These are not the sort of 'offices' I mean, Muffin," I said smiling. "I was referring to your kind services."

"Oh!"

"I have no doubt, my dear boys, that the HOLIDAY ANNUAL for 1925 will surpass all its predecessors, and that it will be unanimously voted the best and brightest boys' book on the market!"

"Hear, hear!"

"We will now adjourn for lunch," I added.

The words had a magical effect upon the four famous feeders, Bunter, Trimble, Wynn, and Muffin.

Johnny Bull removed the gag from Billy Bunter's mouth; and the Fat Boy of Greyfriars was the first to follow me from the waiting-room.

A willing junior ran up to my room to fetch my hat, and then we trooped out into the bright sunshine.

How shall I describe the bumper celebration that followed, in Fleet Street's famous restaurant? Truth to tell, it almost beggars description!

My schoolboy army took the restaurant by storm. Never have I seen such a merry, boisterous throng! Their cheeriness was in harmony with the radiant spring morning. It was infectious, too, for even the busy waiters, rushed off their feet though they were, found time to smile.

I told the boys they could order what they liked. I also expressed the hope that they would like what they ordered.

Of course, Billy Bunter & Co. were in their element. They feasted to their hearts' content, and they kept the waiters on the run.

It was the merriest meal I have ever attended, and I felt downright sorry when the time came to bid au revoir to my schoolboy guests. Gladly would I have devoted the



The Fat Boy of Greyfriars led the way, and we trooped out into the bright sunshine



I told the boys they could order what they liked, and I hoped they would like what they ordered!
Anyhow, it was the merriest meal I have ever attended

afternoon to showing them the sights of London; but there was work to be done. The HOLIDAY ANNUAL had been carefully planned, and it was for me to put those plans into execution.

For many weeks afterwards, an army of authors and artists was hard at work, preparing the bumper volume which is now in your hands. I also worked hard, and my labours frequently extended far into the night.

But I always regard the compilation of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL as the most congenial task which falls to my lot.

It is with the keenest pleasure that I place this volume, with its packed programme of stories, before my readers. It is for them to pass judgment upon it; and I feel confident that the verdict will be:

"Guilty — of making us split our sides with merriment, and giving us once again a heritage of happy laughter!"
THE END

