

A.D. 1999!

By
**BERNARD
GLYN**

*(The inventor of the St. Jim's
Shell Form.)*

Bernard Glyn's inventive brain has in no wise failed him in this unusual yarn of St. Jim's sixty-eight years hence!



THE FIRST CHAPTER Rip Van Skimpole!

SKIMPOLE woke up!

It was dizzy, unnatural awakening, unlike anything he had ever experienced before. He had quite a job to recall who he was for a moment. Then he wondered where he was, and after that, how long he had been asleep.

Suddenly it all came back.

He was in one of the secret underground passages underneath St. Jim's. He had found it whilst exploring on his own, and recollected ruminating on the history of the School and the amazing variety of scenes that the old buildings had witnessed in the past. Then a strange tiredness had come over him, and he had lost consciousness.

Skimpole blinked up dizzily.

Then he jumped.

Someone was bending over him—someone with penetrating eyes and an expressionless

face, who wore a metallic skull-cap and strange, unfamiliar clothes.

"Awake?" asked the stranger.

"Yes, my good fellow. But—but who are you?"

"Well, who are you?" retorted the stranger. "You look as if you belong to nineteen-thirty-one, or thereabouts!"

"Eh? Of course I belong to nineteen-thirty-one. This is nineteen-thirty-one, isn't it?" asked Skimpole.

The stranger stared.

"Nineteen-thirty-one?" he repeated. "But surely you know that this is nineteen-nine?"

"What?" shrieked Skimpole.

The stranger eyed Skimpole attentively for a minute. Then a low whistle escaped him.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"I am Herbert Skimpole!"

"Heavens! Then you must be the same Skimpole—the one that belonged to the School sixty-eight years ago! I have read of you in old books."

"But—but my good fellow, it is only a couple of hours since I left the quadrangle—"

"There is no quadrangle at this school

now, Skimpole. It was built on fifty years ago! Don't you realise what has happened? You have been in a trance for two-thirds of a century!"

Skimpole gasped.

"You are mad—you are deceiving me——"

"Come!" said the stranger. "You will see for yourself. I will show you St. Jim's as it is to-day!"

"But who are you?" demanded the bewildered genius of the 1931 Shell of St. Jim's.

"I am Pupil 8906 in the School! Come!"

Skimpole came. He was too flabbergasted to do anything else.

He followed Pupil 8906 through the concealed door he remembered finding before he had fallen asleep, and along innumerable dark passages and chambers till they reached a flight of steps leading to a dim kind of daylight.

Skimpole came out into the open air and looked round him and gasped.

Gone were the grey walls and latticed windows of the St. Jim's he had known. In their place were glittering white buildings that towered up to the sky. At least, Skimpole supposed it was the sky, though very little could be seen of it on account of the flocks of silent aeroplanes that whizzed by in unending procession overhead, turning day almost into night.

"Still think you are in nineteen-thirty-one?" asked Pupil 8906.

"Nunno. But I am staggered—overwhelmed!" gasped Skimpole. "I must accept the fact that I have been in a trance for sixty-eight years, but really——"

"Let me show you

over the School, and you'll see if you notice any difference——"

"I already notice a thousand differences, my dear fellow!" cried Skimpole, staring round him with fascinated eyes. "Dear me! The walls of these buildings are all covered with moving electric signs! And—and they are actually talking! Listen!"

"BUY SMITH'S ELECTRIC BRAIN ADAPTER AND LEARN GREEK IN AN HOUR!" thundered out one large electric sign representing a boy with an enormous head smiling cheerfully as twinkling streams of light marked "KNOWLEDGE" poured into him.

"TAKE TROTTER'S HALF-DAY TRIPS TO THE EQUATOR!" roared out another brilliant sign depicting a moving aeroplane crowded with excursionists gazing down on a land of lakes and palm-trees.

There were scores of these animated talking advertisements, and Skimpole could have stayed there for hours watching them. But Pupil 8906 was anxious to show him the interior of the new and amazing St. Jim's.

"You'll see more interesting things than these if you follow me, Friend Skimpole,"

he said. And he quickly redeemed his promise.

THE SECOND CHAPTER Back to 1931!

THE pair stepped on to the drive leading to the main building. Skimpole found, to his surprise, that it was a moving drive running on concealed rollers, and that they were carried along to the building without having the trouble of walking.

Up the moving steps into the school they went.

"Like to see the football?" asked Skimpole's guide.



In the Form-room the boys wore steel skull-caps, all wired to a gadget in the ceiling. A strange phosphorescent figure was lecturing them.

"Most decidedly. But we shall have to go out again—"

Pupil 8906 laughed.

"I have heard before that you used to play football in the open-air in your day. Nowadays, of course, every inch of land has been built on, so we play indoors under artificial sunlight. Come."

He led the way into a big hall, and Skimpole jumped. Instead of the spectacle of twenty-two players which he had anticipated, what actually confronted him was a vision of some hundreds of boys all connected up by wires to huge electrical dials, kicking away for all they were worth—at nothing!

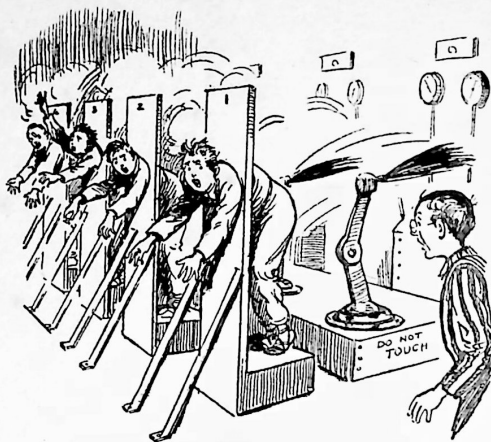
"But—but where is the ball?" asked the astonished Skimpole.

"Ball? Oh, of course! I forgot to tell you that the ball was abolished years ago. Nowadays the players are all wired up to electrical recorders, and the strength and number of their kicks are shown on the dials. More economical in space, you see—five hundred at a time play in this hall. But follow me; there is lots more to see. I will show you a Form-room."

The wondering visitor from the past left the football-room and followed his host into a lift, and they were whirled dizzily through a dozen floors. Emerging, they were carried by an express floor through several passages to a door marked "Form-room No. 436."

They stepped off into the Form-room.

A score of boys were seated at desks, their steel skull-caps being wired like the footballers' had been. In front of the Form stood



A depressing sight met Skimpole in the Birching-room. A number of fellows were fixed in pillories, and were yelling with pain as the electric birches smote them.

a strange phosphorescent figure lecturing apparently on the History of the War with Mars.

Skimpole clutched his guide's arm.

"Surely, my good chap," he whispered, "that master is not real?"

Pupil 8906 shook his head.

"No, Skimpole. He is a television figure, transmitted from a Central Teaching Department. The

same figure lectures in hundreds of Form-rooms at the same time."

Skimpole glanced at the silent Form in surprise.

"It's a wonder the Form is so attentive without a real master—"

The 1999 schoolboy chuckled.

"It would go hard with them if they were not. You see those wires leading from their heads? They record each boy's thoughts, which are transmitted to the Central Discipline Signal Boxes. As soon as anyone is seen to be inattentive the Discipline foreman communicates by wireless with his desk and orders him to the Electric Birching-room. Perhaps you would like to see it?"

Skimpole signed agreement, and they went back to the lift and were whirled up another twenty storeys.

On the way Pupil 8906 pointed out the tuckshop—a room like a chemical laboratory where food was supplied in the form of compressed tablets—and the dormitories, which consisted of halls where pupils were given five minutes of concentrated sleep every day.

These wonders interested Skimpole deeply.



The First Bicycle at St. Jim's!

THE old quad. at St. Jim's has looked on at some wild scenes during its history, but for sheer, break-neck excitement it would be hard to beat the day when the first bicycle made its appearance at the school.

Front wheel every inch of five feet in height, back one little bigger than a football; tires of solid rubber that were about as soft as cast iron, and a tiny saddle that jolted the spine at every bump—these were the main "attractions" of the brand-new bike that arrived one bright morning at St. Jim's, addressed to Dickinson minor of the Fourth.

No boy could have been more delighted than young "Dicky" was when he unpacked his "bone-shaker," a surprise present from an indulgent uncle; and he resolved to try it at once.

Putting that resolve into operation, however, was by no means simple. But with the help of other juniors Dicky at last found himself perched precariously on his mount and ready to start. Pedalling was out of the question; the Fourth-Former's feet were at least six inches away from the pedals. Still, his grinning chums were only too willing to push him round, and off they went, a whooping, yelling crowd that brought wondering fellows from all directions.

Clinging on like a leech, legs swinging wildly in the air, Dickinson and his bike shot across the quad. at a pace that simply asked for trouble. And it wasn't long in coming. A stern figure in cap and gown suddenly appeared on the scene, and Dicky's helpers let go the bike as if it had become red hot. Careering on at full-tilt, its rider helpless, the bone-shaker crashed head-on into the first obstruction in its path—the wall of the Head's garden!

Crash! Feet first through the glass of a cucumber frame on the other side went Dicky, while the bike dropped back with a final clang.

On that memorable day the fiat went forth that, under pain of direful penalties, no more bicycles were to be ridden in the quadrangle of St. Jim's.

But he was more moved than interested when he came to the Electric Birch-ing-room. Here were hundreds of pillories into which culprits were placed to receive castigation from the electric birch. Yells of pain were echoing all round the room, mixed with the steady rhythmical swishing of hundreds of electrically controlled birches operated by one overalled mechanic.

Rather glad to get away from such a distressing scene, Skimpole followed his guide to the Concentrated Knowledge Hall, where scores of pupils were sitting in electric chairs in a state of coma, having knowledge injected into their brains from huge electric motors.

Then Pupil 8906 suggested that they paid a visit to the Head.

One more journey in an express lift to the eightieth floor and they were in his sanctum. And Skimpole got the greatest shock of all.

For instead of the venerable gowned and capped figure he had expected to meet, all Skimpole could see was a glittering piece of machinery which hummed and roared and revolved in a great state of animation.

"W-w-where is the Head, then?" stuttered Skimpole.

Pupil 8906 pointed to the machine.

"There he is, of course. It's a machine-controlled school now, you see. Barring one or two lecturers and a few mechanics there are no men in the school. Now, look here; about your joining St. Jim's again——"

"I don't want to join St. Jim's again!" shouted Skimpole. "Bother 1999! Give me back 1931!"

With that he rushed to the lift and was immediately shot down eighty floors, then down still farther till he was back again in the old secret passage from which he had started.

There, strangely enough, he immediately felt that peculiar tiredness come over him again.

And when he awoke for the second time it was to find, to his great relief, that he had returned to 1931. Rushing back to the open air, he saw the old ivy-covered buildings and green fields just as they had been originally.

It had only been a dream, after all.

THE END

The Tuckshop Dame!

by Dick Penfold.



UNDER the elm-tree's leafy shade
 "Ye Olde School Tuck shoppe" stands,
 Where many a tempting tart is made
 By good Dame Mimble's hands.
 In happy pride she doth preside
 To deal with our demands.

Her hair is long and silver-grey,
 Not bobbed in modern style;
 And on her pleasant face doth play
 An ever-pleasant smile,
 Till Bunter starts to beg free tarts,
 And then it drops a mile!

Week in, week out, from morn till night,
 She's cooking at her range;
 Dispensing tarts for our delight,
 Or counting out our change.
 Without her pies to charm our eyes,
 Life would be sad and strange.

And schoolboys, coming out of class,
 Flock in at the open door;
 They love to quaff the foaming glass
 And gobble buns galore,
 Or eat ice cream as in a dream,
 Then clamour loud for more!

She goes each Thursday to the town,
 Her weekly spell of leisure;
 And spends a well-earned half a crown
 On simple, harmless pleasure.
 And when we see "SHOP CLOSED
 TILL TEA!"

Our sadness who can measure?

Toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing,
 Onward through life she goes;
 But draws the line at borrowing,
 As Billy Bunter knows!
 With a sullen scowl the thwarted Owl
 Goes forth to air his woes!

Thanks—thanks to thee, my worthy dame,
 For the lesson thou dost teach.
 With merry hearts to play life's game,
 And a sunny smile for each.
 May your happy reign o'er the tuck domain
 Far into the future reach!

