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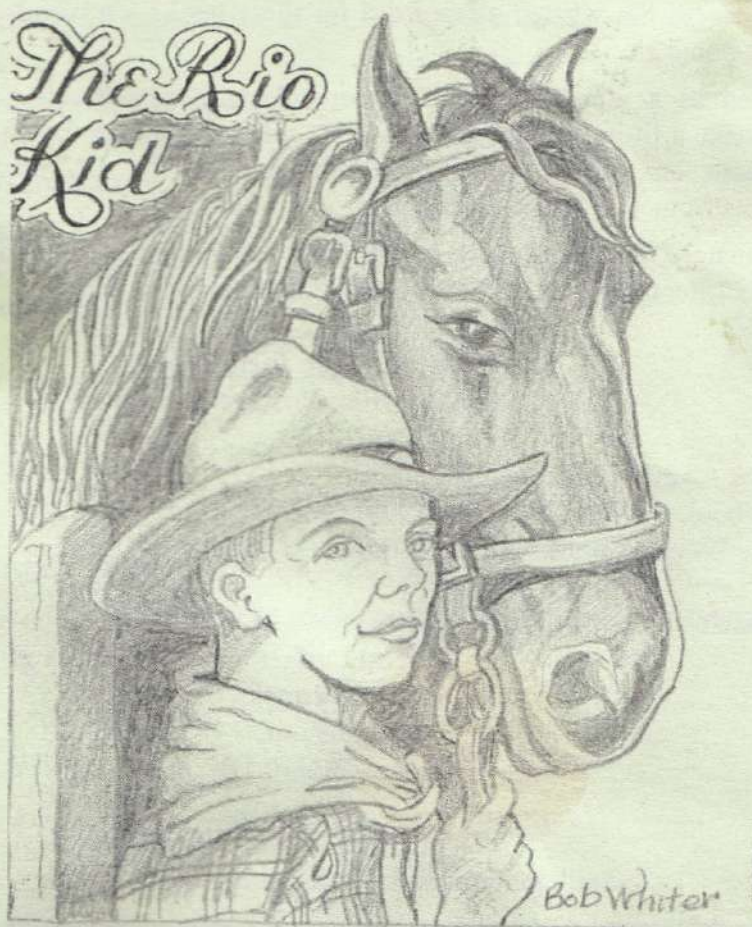
Friars'

Chronicles

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The Friars' Chronicles

Letter Rack

Dear Editor,

Some comments on the latest, if I may.

I believe that reforming Ernest Levison was Hamilton's biggest mistake. I'd rather he'd led that irritating goody-goody brother of his astray. I also found it slightly unconvincing that the kind-hearted Dr. Holmes insisted that the reformed Levison had to leave St Jim's.

Coker admitting he was wrong – sure that wasn't a sub? (joke).

Felgate – good stories which I always enjoyed and rather wish had been expanded into a book. Skip Ruggles was, a bit like Plum Tumpton of Sparshott, a different kind of fat bot – fat and fatuous but plucky, pleasant, keen on sport but no good at it. Hamilton also invented a really good senior character – Percival Perkinson of the Fifth, like Coker except that he was first-class at games.

Talbot became too honest, in my view; when down and out, he'd have surely been justified in robbing a food shop. I remember Tom Merry going to Cardew's rescue – as I said, he was generally a good chap but there was a dark side to him in my opinion.

Hamilton actually described Inky as "coloured", not "Indian." I believe that all stereotypes are founded in reality, acceptable then is acceptable now, and that the painfulness in the neck of the Politically Correct is terrific!*

Yes, rugby is more strenuous than soccer – but I did assume that Andrew meant "full-length football", so to speak. I also found schoolboy scraps lasting twelve or more rounds unconvincing, even if they were two-minute rounds. There were professional boxers of fifteen and even younger but I doubt if schoolboy amateurs could last that long. I write as a boxing history buff.

Mark Taha

* [Like most racial terms, 'coloured' is inaccurate. My skin is coloured a kind of pinky-grey (that term comes from E. M. Forster's A Passage to India) and can by no stretch of the imagination be described as white. In reality people from India are a darker shade than Europeans generally (though only just in some cases) and a lighter shade than some other races, such as Africans, who very rarely are truly black. The latest politically correct term 'people of colour' is therefore nonsensical, since it adheres to the 'white' term for Europeans with its deliberate connotations of greater purity – not quite what they would want to imply, I hope. It is covertly racist in other words, asserting that the human race

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can be divided into whites and others. Actually stereotypes tend not to stand up to much scrutiny, as I discovered when I flatted with three Chinese students whilst at university. None of them spoke anything like *Wun Lung* and all of them sounded their 'rs' without any problems. There is a lovely moment in a Biggles book between Biggles and a Chinese man he has just saved: ' "Thanks," gasped the rescued man. Biggles raised his eyebrows. "Speakee Engleesh, eh?" he inquired. "Not that sort," replied the exhausted man in a cultured voice, with a ghost of a smile. 'Ed]

Dear Editor,

A few thoughts on the books –

- 1) Howard Baker chose "The Land of the Pyramids" as the first Magnet book as that was his favourite.
- 2) Some paperback Magnet reprints were issued - extra editions of books already issued. This included the "Hikers" series.
- 3) Some ordered books were returned by customers - as they were not "school" stories. Technically this was correct - but a Surprising reaction.
- 4) The "Bunter at St. Jims" book (from about 1975) - featured issues of the Magnet and Gem - but not the "back up" stories - which was unusual for Howard Baker.
- 5) Howard Baker issued his own magazine - "The Greyfriars Gazette" to his readers.
- 6) At least two Special editions of the Magnet reprints were issued (as well as the Standard edition) one is the Courtfield Cracksman and the China series.
- 7) In about 1991 - Hawk books reprinted some of the "Bunter" books (People previously may have bought them as Cassell books). They had a deliberate "Hawk" marking. The covers were fairly glossy.

Christopher Cole

Dear Editor,

Thanks John – safely downloaded. You have certainly maintained the standard!

I don't know if you are interested in the following for the Chronicles but I recently came across a Boys Realm which seems to include an unknown Hamilton story and yet another School. I sent the following to the Billy Bunter Yahoo group and the consensus was that it was by Hamilton. It's amazing that new stories are still being found more than 100 years on! I've attached a scan FYI.

Stewart Clark