

The Friars' Chronicles

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The Friars' Chronicles

Letter Rack

Dear Editor,

To John Hunt's list of *Adult School Fiction* (number 136, Spring 2014), I'd also add *Taylor Takes Charge* by Charles Utley, which is both a heart-warming tale and a gentle and very funny parody of the traditional prep school story by Buckeridge and others.

Michael Ward

Dear Editor,

Thanks for printing my letter and article. More to come – starting with this on the latest issue!

Page:

7. Was this in the early fifties or early eighties? Made me laugh out loud - seemed like something out of a comic!

21. Dotheboys Hall, not school [*quite right. Ed.*]. Was later a cruel master named Carker at Rookwood temporarily [*and a villainous one at St. Jim's in The Disappearance of Tom Merry. Ed.*].

24. So Inky originally a rugby player. Did Hamilton have any other rugby-playing schools? There was a story in which Inky arranged a football match not realising that his friend's school played rugby football and "The Remove Rugger Team", which I believe to have been a substitute story.

34. I'll say it aloud – I'm Politically Incorrect and I'm Proud! All stereotypes are founded in reality. Acceptable then is acceptable now and vice versa and there should be no bowdlerising – Penny Tweedie was right. [*The point Peter made was that the words 'wop' and 'dago' were used so often in two pages that it affected the quality of the writing. Such terms were coined to suggest British superiority over foreigners. Whether 'pongo' appears often in European or Colonial literature to refer to the British I don't know but the word was certainly used in New Zealand and I'm not sure how acceptable we would find it if it appeared in books on a regular basis. Ed.*]

33. Hamilton seemed vaguely approving of Mussolini during the Billionaire series of 1934.

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35. The Armada paperbacks saw "niggers" replaced by "rascals" and "natives" in the Egypt reprints and "slave" in the Brazil one. Hamilton had called "nigger" objectionable back in 1908 on Inky's first appearance at Greyfriars; only the cads used the word, as I recall – a flaw in Hamilton; he made the good guys too good and the bad guys too bad. *[And the bad guys too ignorant as well, since Inky does not come of African descent, to which the word 'Negro' from which the objectionable word derives – also now deemed unacceptable because of negative connotations, though not meaning – refers. Actually 'rascals' is more abusive still since it suggests a bad character, not a race. Ed.]*

36. Surely Mr. Bunter was simply a stockbroker who was both tight-fisted and financially troubled at various times. Hamilton's view of Samuel Vernon-Smith seemed to mellow with the years – although he satirically referred to him in the Thirties as "a stout gentleman whose fortune only amounted to a few million pounds" and who was irritated by possibly missing out on some shares.

38. The Squire's musings were before his words to Tom. Wonder what Flashman's father said to him?

39. "Eric" – unintentionally hilarious but did have an emotional effect.

40. Did FR want us to heed Dr. Johnson or avoid his example? *[I assumed the latter. Ed.]*

41. Enid Blyton – found her intensely irritating at times. Suggestion for sub writer – what if the two Famous Fives had met? I just took the character quiz and found that I most resembled Angela Favorleigh of St Clare's – since she was a rich, blonde, beautiful aristocrat, I fail to see it! *[I resembled Bets, the youngest of 'The Five Finder-Outers'. At least Mark's character is over ten! Ed.]*

41. James McCann – Barney was the gang leader who tried to kidnap Fishy in 1931. Didn't like James due to an aversion to dictatorial Heads bringing in petty rules!

47. Who wrote "Christmas at Greyfriars"?

Mark Taha