

ERIC FAYNE - APPRECIATIONS

FROM ROGER JENKINS, London O.B.B.C.

It must have come as a considerable shock to readers of Collectors' Digest to learn that Eric Fayne, who had so magnificently managed our cherished magazine for all these years, has now decided that the time has come to hand over the reins to his successor.

Eric has referred to the fact that the founder of the magazine, Herbert Leckenby, held on too long, but he has modestly forgotten to mention the enormous difficulties that he inherited when he first took over with No. 155 in November 1959, following the first editor's sudden death the previous month. Herbert was a real old Yorkshire character, an excellent writer and an enterprising editor, but - and it is no detraction from all his achievements to say this - he was an inadequate business man. He never removed a subscriber's name

from his mailing list, whether he paid or not, and as a consequence the early Collectors' Digests contained repeated editorial complaints about unpaid subscriptions, though many of these vital records seem never to have been committed to paper. All these financial problems had to be tackled by Eric as well as the formidable task of assuming the editorship. There were prophets of doom when Herbert founded the magazine ("You will never get enough material to last for more than a few issues") and equally there were Jeremiahs around when Eric took over ("Nobody can replace Herbert") but all were triumphantly confounded. Even the typists at the York Agency at that time told me that they enjoyed working for the Collector's Digest, as it was such a change from the church magazines that they then specialised in.

The Digest has an unparalleled record of regular publication, in view of the fact that it is only an amateur magazine, and in terms of years it has already exceeded the life-spans of the Magnet and Gem. Eric has carefully nurtured its two essential qualities: regular monthly issues and material restricted to the hobby. Of the first quality, Gerry Allison once remarked to me that the magazine at the beginning of the month and the OBBC meetings towards the middle of the month all kept interest ticking over nicely. So far as the second quality is concerned, one has only to think of magazines that attempted to widen their scope into other kinds of collecting, like stamps or match-box labels, to realise what a recipe for disaster that was.

Eric has also modestly said nothing about the chores of being a single-handed editor, of typing material, checking proofs, awaiting the parcels from York, and then addressing all the envelopes, packing them, and putting them in the post himself - too many to go into a letter-box, of course. He has said little about the personal sacrifices he has made over these twenty-seven years or more, how holidays had telescoped themselves into day-trips and how his personal life was continually being eroded by the inexorable demands of the magazine. It is probable that few subscribers realise just how much of himself Eric has given to the Collector's Digest for more than a quarter of a century.