

THE STORY

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COLLECTOR

A Magazine Featuring Articles of Interest to All  
Collectors of British Boys' Periodicals of the Past

*“Young Men of Great  
Britain”: Re-Issue*

*The S.P.C. “Who’s Who”*

*Max Pemberton*

: : AN AMATEUR MAGAZINE : :

# The Story Paper Collector WHO'S WHO

## No. 2: HERBERT LECKENBY

A NATIVE of England's famous cathedral city, York, and born July 2nd, 1889, "Leck" is a most enthusiastic collector and a leading contributor to these pages. Although apprenticed to the printing trade, Herbert, at the outbreak of the first world struggle, found himself at the switchboard of an important military telephone exchange. He is still there, and this fact certainly points to consistency.

Claiming to have read story papers from the day after he had learned his alphabet, his earliest recollections are of comics, *Big Budget*, and *Nuggets* with its tales of Tim Pippin.

Anything that resembled a boys' weekly paper was heavily frowned upon in the Leckenby household but the minor soon discovered that a ha'penny *Marvel* settled neatly inside the pages of "The Pilgrim's Progress," which was considered better fare. Other story papers soon found their way into this camo-

flaged position, and *Boys' Realms*, *Plucks*, and *Union Jacks* were all perused in turn.

Managing to keep in touch with *The Boys' Friend* for about eighteen years, Herbert thus considers it to be his favourite paper. His private collection is extremely varied, and it is for this reason that he finds it difficult to suggest a value — but, typically, he places all the value in the sentimental.

"Leck" has been collecting, on and off, since 1914. His output of articles is terrific, and outgoing mail the same. Further to all this activity, he has written two lengthy volumes, "Memories of Old Boys' Papers," set down, in freehand, in that (almost) microscopic "fist."

"He of the inevitable cigarette" appreciates one prime factor in relation to our mutual hobby: "It has," he says, "put me in touch with some jolly good fellows." A simple remark, perhaps, but one carrying sincerity.



# The Story Paper Collector

Articles of Interest to Collectors of British Boys' Periodicals of the Past

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## “YOUNG MEN OF GREAT BRITAIN” : RE-ISSUE

By W. M. BURNS

WHILE I am almost wholly a collector of the old-time American novels and periodicals, I do have a few of the old-time English publications, and was greatly interested in an article that appeared in No. 23 of *The Story Paper Collector*. The article was titled “Long and Short Careers,” by Mr. Herbert Leckenby.

In this article Mr. Leckenby mentions the fact of a re-issue of *Boys of England* running for a number of years in addition to the regular issue; thus there being two distinct issues appearing each week. Mr. Leckenby states: “There does not appear to have been any other instance of this kind.”

Yet there evidently was, as I have bound Volumes 8, 10, 11, and 12 (re-issue) of *Young Men of Great Britain*. My Volume 8

starts with No. 183, dated May 8th, 1878. From that date one can figure back 183 weeks and get the approximate date of the first re-issue, a little more than three and a half years earlier.

The volumes were bound by Brett, and Volumes 8, 10, and 11 have violet-tinted cardboard covers, while Volume 12 is bound in dark red cloth, with titles stamped in gold on the front cover and on the back of the binding.

The stories probably were all, or nearly all, reprints of earlier tales in *Young Men of Great Britain*. Anyway, they were mighty fine tales, and here is a list of a few of the best:

“Pat O'Connor's Schooldays, or, The Boys of the Shannon”; “Dick Dashaway, the Young Fireman of London”; “The Phantom Hunter, a Romance of Old

Windsor Forest"; "The Brazen Mask, or, The Free Foresters of Dartmoor"; "Gilbert the Wrestler, or, The Freebooters of the Forest"; "Manning the Navy, or, The Wooden Walls of Old England"; "Madcap Tom, or, The Queen's Cadet," and its sequel, "Ashantee Tom"; "Jack-o'-Lantern, or, The Imp of the School"; "Run Away From School, or, The Diamond Diggers"; "The Boy Monte Cristo, or, Back From Death"; "Wild Roderick, or, The Boy Hero of the Mountains"; "Three True Hearts, A Tale of Prairie and Forest"; and "Wreckers and Smugglers, or, The Secret of the Red Stone."

THESE are only a few of the fine serials in the four volumes that I have. There were also short complete stories of adventure in all parts of the world, and short stories in series, such as "Legends of the Danube, or, The Robber Lords of Old"; "Legends of the Castles of France and Belgium"; "Old London, Its Legends and Mysteries." Nearly all of these series were tales of the occult and the supernatural, and of black magic and dealings with the devil, and so on.

Other series of short tales were "Stories Told Around the Winter Fireside" and "Stories

Told at the Old Toll Gate Inn," which were very good.

Then there were long fact articles each week under general headings such as "The Kings of England, Their Lives, Exploits, and Deaths"; "Scenes from Indian History"; and "The Princes of the World."

In no case was the name of the author of the long serial tales given, which is regrettable, as most of them were written by men of real ability. I recently learned that J. J. G. Bradley wrote "Pat O'Connor's Schooldays," but I know the names of none of the other authors.

Truly the youth of Great Britain of that bygone era were very fortunate to have two issues weekly of such really fine journals as *Boys of England* and *Young Men of Great Britain*.

And up to the start of World War 2 the youth of Britain were much more fortunate than their American brothers in having so many of their favorite journals and novels available each week. Here in the U.S.A. it has been many years since the last of the old novels and journals folded up and went out of business. But they still live in the hearts and the private collections of quite a number of the old time readers of them.

# MAX PEMBERTON

A Writer of By-gone Days :: By Henry A. Puckrin

“BRIGHT is the ring of words” said Robert Louis Stevenson. Bright indeed is that galaxy of talent which was such a feature of the closing years of the Nineteenth Century and the first two decades of the Twentieth.

The spirit of romance and adventure, mingled with that element of love interest and surprise, found full expression in the great mass of fiction which appeared in the pages of the many monthly magazines that came into existence during this period. The art of the illustrator was also pressed into service and helped to perpetuate the memories of the many interesting stories which had as an inevitable background the ever-changing panorama of national controversies that were such a feature of the gay 'nineties.

Naturally, events, many of which lead up to the two World Wars, were placed before an ever-growing reading public by keen publishing houses such as Cassell's, which was piloted on its way by the gentleman whose name appears as the title of this article.

Max Pemberton was fully alive

to the leading questions of the day and formed most of them into the themes of an excellent series of stories which have been temporarily eclipsed by the mass-produced stuff of the present time, but which will in due course come again to notice. This is as it should be for they are too good to be sent into limbo, and this short article may help to revive interest in them.

Like other famous writers both past and present, Mr. Pemberton found his first outlet for fiction writing in stories for boys. Being the first editor of *Chums* gave him an opportunity to show what he could do. The result of this was "The Iron Pirate," a rousing tale of modern (1893) pirates on the high seas whose deeds could hardly be excelled by more recent pirates too well known to be referred to.

Like other really good stories it was followed some twenty years later by an equally exciting sequel, "Captain Black," wherein the further adventures of the mentally distorted inventor-captain and his crew of utterly abandoned and conscienceless villains were recounted.

These two tales seem to be all

that he wrote for juveniles, and the remainder of this article will deal briefly with his other writings that appeared chiefly in the pages of *Cassell's Magazine*, of which he was also the editor.

HIS next two efforts, "The Sea Wolves" (1894) and "The Impregnable City" (1895), could be described as more mature editions of his first stories, with a stronger adult appeal. Nevertheless they could have been published in any boys' paper at any time and will well repay any reader of this article who happens to peruse them.

Then followed "Pro Patria" ("For Fatherland") in 1902, and this was the story which brought him, as much as any, into public notice. The background of this story was the scheme for the "Channel Tunnel" and the political and military controversies which it aroused.

To make the story more interesting references to Fashoda and "le Affair Dreyfus" were included, and to round it off the "eternal element" of the love theme was touched upon.

The story was well worked out to a triumphant conclusion. No one who has read it will forget the description of the grim scene in the lonely house,

when the narrator's sleep was disturbed by the vision of an invading army.

Mr. Pemberton's next story, "The Giant's Gate," was of a more everyday love and adventure theme, in which travels in a submarine were dealt with in a somewhat sketchy fashion.

Mention should be made here of the excellent black and white illustrations which adorned these tales. They were by A. Forestier, M. Greiffenhagen, George Soper, and Ernest Prats, all of whose work appeared in magazines and periodicals until well after the first World War.

"Kronstadt," a tale of Czarist Russia, "My Sword For Lafayette," with its background of the French Revolution, "The Hundred Days" and its portrayal of "Bony," all followed in due course and delighted the reading public, which always asked for more and more.

With "Wheels of Anarchy" (1908) and "War and the Woman" (1912), Mr. Pemberton's literary activities largely terminated, though he produced plays at intervals. He died a few years before the outbreak of the second World War, but no doubt his works will survive to receive the attention they deserve.

## BROWSING THROUGH "THE MAGNET"

WITH a paper that enjoyed as long a run as did *The Magnet Library* one can begin browsing almost any place and find things of interest. For the purpose of this particular browse I will deal with the years 1919 to 1922, and confine my attention to readers' notices.

In *Magnet* No. 583 Mr. C. F. F. Rickard asks for certain issues of *The Gem* and *The Magnet*. This was in April, 1919; has he succeeded in getting them yet?

Miss G. M. Higgins was asking in Nos. 585 and 594 for the issue of *The Magnet* containing the story "A Very Gallant Gentleman." It is not so long since I was fortunate enough to obtain a copy of that issue. This story, by the way, was one written by J. N. Pentelow.

Coming now to No. 595, July, 1919, we find that one William H. Gander, of Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, Canada, was wanting *Boys' Friends* before No. 725, and copies of *My Magazine*.

In No. 597 F. Bottomley, 48 Downhills Park Road, Tottenham, offers recipes for chemical and magical tricks. Still at that address, I imagine he would now be more interested in conjuring up copies of the *Companion Papers*.

Passing along to No. 646 we find in the Readers' Notices column an announcement that makes one long for a "time machine" into which one could get, manipulate levers, and emerge in the year 1920: "L. Keeble, Nottingham, has for sale *Magnets* No. 1-105 in four bound volumes, 12/-; No. 240-300 (3 vols.), 8/-; 300-400, loose, 10/-; Nos. 465-620, 10/-." I wonder if Mr. Keeble still has those copies for sale—at the same price!

Mr. Bottomley is found again in No. 676, January 22nd, 1921. At that time he was starting a magazine on hobbies and sports. In *Magnet* No. 698, June 25th, 1921, he was looking for readers for his amateur magazine, *The Boys' World*.

We meet Mr. Bottomley three more times: in *Magnet* No. 741, April 22nd, 1922, where he wants to hear from a reader willing to accompany him on a walking tour, Cornwall the proposed destination; in No. 749, with a similar request; and in No. 750, where he announces his amateur magazine, *Advertising Herald*, containing advertisements for back numbers of the *Companion Papers*.

In *Magnet* No. 738, April 1st,

1922, there is a notice from Mr. R. G. Barr, of Christchurch, New Zealand, who was starting a *Gem*, *Magnet*, and *Popular Club*. The curious thing about this is that I had received, and answered, a letter from Mr. Barr, still living at the same address, just a day or two before I came upon

his notice in a *Magnet* of more than twenty-three years before. Mr. Barr has, sad to say, long since parted with his collection of papers, and contacted me through his being a member, like myself, of the National Amateur Press Association.

— W. H. G.

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## FROM YOUR EDITOR'S CHAIR\*

WHEN we began Volume Two of *The Story Paper Collector* it was our intention to publish sufficient numbers, at the rate of four a year, to make it a worthy companion to Volume One. But Robbie Burns had something to say about the best laid plans of mice an' men that fits us. This issue is a year late; future issues will be of less pages than was usual in the past, and will be published as often as circumstances permit.

For some years S. P. C. helped to fill the gap left by the suspension in 1939 of Mr. J. Parks' *Col-*

*lectors's Miscellany*. But our falling more or less by the wayside will not now leave a vacuum, for C. M. is again being published, while Herbert Leckenby and Maurice Bond are furthering the cause of the cult of the "penny dreadful" with their *Collectors' Digest*. Our best wishes are extended to them.

The entire S. P. C. mailing list is being covered with this issue; it will then be revised to include only those we know want to be on it. If you are doubtful whether we know you want to be on it, write us—a postcard will do.

— W. H. G.

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\*Is what Mr. Hamilton Edwards called his "Chat" in "The Boys' Realm."

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