Great Britain's **NEWS OF THE WORLD** *is a potpourri of sex, sin & sports, has been a spicy best seller for 117 years...*

World's sauciest newspaper

by James H. Winchester

Captain Was 'A Little Tiddly-Poo'

FOWL PLAY AT THE PUB

He Had The Horse Laugh On Them!

JUST HOW TIDILY DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

ALL RIGHT, MA, SAID THE MAN AT THE WINDOW

MAN WHO BARKED BACK AT A DOG

The Pupils Gasped At Their Teacher's Questions

The Girls Who Stayed For Special Singing Lessons

Seeing Them, He Drew Certain Conclusions

The Headlines are Frequently Quite Flippant & Suggestive. Nevertheless, the Paper Has Its Sermonizing side

IN GREAT BRITAIN these days, there's a joke that never fails to get a laugh in the music halls and on the airways. Sample: First Comedian—"Didn't you ever go to school?" Second ditto— "No, I was just brought up on the *News of the World*."

The *News of the World*, a conservatively-printed, standard-sized weekly newspaper which sells over 6,660,000 copies an issue, has the world's highest circulation. Sex and sports are the paper's stock in trade. Even so, it never misses an opportunity to preach a pious sermon that "crime doesn't pay."

A recent puff for itself was labeled, "We put the brake on crime." On one occasion, when Lord George Riddell, the paper's late, brilliant managing director, was twitted about the preponderance of sex and crime news published by the *News of the World*, he replied archly: "Yes, but we publish the punishment, too."

Britishers have been reading the *News of the World* for their news on murder, divorce, abortions and similar human frailties for the past 117 years and give every indication of keeping up what has become a national habit. Selling for four pence a copy, the *News of the World* is bought every Sunday morning by about every seventh person in Great Britain and is read by at least three times as many.

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A prime example of the type of story the *News of the World*—and its readers—dearly love was that of a "love club" in Sheffield, a Midlands manufacturing city. One John Swift, age 49, was haled into court for writing improper letters to a woman. "I think every woman needs love," he penned. "Life is so dull without it." Then he outlined his plans for a Clandestine Love Club.

"No trouble, no embarrassment—only love, excitement and happinote to Haigh, telling him how sorry the *News of the World* was to see him in his present plight.

Two days later, Haigh, with tears in his eyes, sent for Rae. "This is the first kind word I've received since this thing happened," he sobbed. "I am very touched."

As a result of Rae's sympathetic enterprise, the *News of the World* got the exclusive rights to Haigh's first-person life story, a terrific circulation puller in a nation where crime stories have always been popular reading. After the trial's end when Haigh was sentenced to death by hanging, Rae—who'd been seeing him regularly—asked again if there was anything the paper could do for him.

"Why, there is," Haigh replied. "I have a girl friend. I would like to give her an emerald necklace."

Rae purchased a £500 emerald necklace, sent it along by special messenger to the slayer's light-of-love. When Rae entered the cost of the necklace on his weekly expense voucher, the item was never questioned by his editors.

Back in 1935, England was shocked by the sensational case of Buck Ruxton, a Hindu doctor charged with murdering his wife and her maid. Scotland Yard was getting nowhere in breaking down the little doctor's stout denials of guilt. Then a *News of the World* reporter stepped into the picture. A day later, he had a signed confession from the doctor, a confession con-

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taining oodles of circulation-building details.

Although five to six of its 16 weekly pages are still devoted almost exclusively to crime and sex stories, there has been a long-range effort on the part of the *News of the World* in recent years to tone down this side of its coverage. Sports news and promotions—it gives away several thousand dollars in prize money to its readers weekly—are heavily played.

In an era when newspaper promotion stunts seem to have fallen to a new low, the *News of the World* stands head-and-shoulders above other journals in enterprise, initiative and imagination. Four pages are devoted exclusively to complete sports coverage of everything from greyhound racing to fishing, including expert accounts of darts games, Ping-pong matches, cycling meets and pigeon racing.

It's a dull week when two or three *News of the World* sponsored sports events aren't under way somewhere in the British Isles. Their National Darts Championship draws more than 500,000 entries each year.

Two of the paper's most popular promotions take the form of regular weekly columns. One, titled "Unclaimed Money," lists missing heirs. As of August, 1959, this popular feature had resulted in over $22,000,000 being settled on some 11,320 heirs. Naturally, all of these "missing heirs"—and probably all their relatives—are duly appreciative to the *News of the World*.

In a like vein, the paper runs a column where "missing persons" are listed. No fewer than 5,000 such missing persons have been traced through this column, free of charge.

Each week the enterprising promotion department runs a $1,400 fashion competition. The paper's weekly crossword puzzle contest offers another $2,800 in prize money. Such circulation builders have helped to make the *News of the World* solidly affluent.

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NEWS OF THE WORLD

Founded in 1843 by John Browne Bell, as a successor to his family's *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, the going hasn't always been smooth for the *News of the World*. It has had its ups and downs. Fourteen years after its start, it had the largest circulation ever reached by any paper at that time, 200,000, thanks largely to its graphic and timely reports on the Crimean War. With Bell's death in 1855, his son, a lawyer took over the paper. By 1891, when the Bell family sold their interest to Lascelles Carr, part proprietor of the prosperous *Cardiff Western Mail* in Wales, circulation was down to a low of 30,000.

Carr's nephew, Emsley Carr, became editor. He held the job for 50 years until his death in 1941. George Allardice Riddell, who began life as a clerk in a lawyer's office and ended up as a baron, became managing director. A lawyer, Charles J. Jackson, was appointed to the board of directors. Under their guidance, circulation soared skyward—shooting up from its first million in 1906 to its present 6,000,000 figure.

On nights when the paper was running late, Riddell, a superb businessman, would often go down to the press room, tossing pound notes out to the pressman to speed things along. Wherever he traveled in later years in his Rolls Royce convertible, Riddell always carried *News of the World* handbills, tossing them out of the car as he sped through villages.

Present chairman of the paper is Sir William Carr, but he leaves the editorial side strictly to Reginald Cudlipp, the incumbent editor. The paper is today middle-of-the-road politically. However, it is still a "must" that the Queen or some member of the Royal Family be mentioned in each issue.

The *News of the World* is now such an institution in Britain that a few years ago when the all-powerful Royal Commission of the Press censured a host of England's papers for

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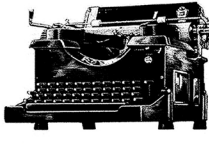
publishing too much cheesecake, crime and sex news, they didn't even mention the *News of the World*.

Along with its de-emphasis—if it can be called that—of crime and sex news in recent years, the *News of the World* has also soft-pedaled pictures of the undraped female form. It occasionally uses a "leg" shot of a British or Hollywood movie star but the picture is likely to be far less daring than others printed in more conservative sheets.

"Frankly," a Fleet Street rival said recently, "I don't know how they get along. Their writing is terrible, their make-up atrocious."

A more practical-minded friend set him straight in a single sentence.

"Sex, old boy," he told him. "That's the answer—sex!"



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