



"Each man his own detective"

INSPECTOR HORNLEIGH TAKES CHARGE

*Sherlock Holmes Of Radio In Famous
Feature Secured By NBS*

FEATURED on the new "Guest Night" Programme to be broadcast regularly from 2YA is a radio character of international fame—none other than the famous Inspector Hornleigh.

Inspector Hornleigh is the Sherlock Holmes of the modern radio world. Bombing raids may have upset the routine a little now, but, until recently, every Monday night at seven o'clock, hundreds of thousands of Englishmen, their wives, their children, would leave their sewing, their reading of the evening paper, their well beloved game of darts and turn on the radio. Promptly at seven they have done it every week for about three years, dropping their everyday activities to listen to the word of Inspector Hornleigh.

He first made his bow to the public through the BBC in 1937—during Coronation Week—and it was a very modest bow, never originally intended to recur. He was created by Hans Priwin, a former foreign correspondent for BBC publications. He presented Hornleigh to the Variety Director for inclusion in the BBC show "Monday Night at Seven." It was an instantaneous success. Since then, it is safe to say, no radio character has so successfully rounded the earth. After England (where he is still appearing) he appeared in Holland, as "Inspector Vlijmscherp" ("Sharp-as-a-Needle"), then in Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, South Africa, France, Australia, America, and now New Zealand. The National Broadcasting Service a short time ago obtained the rights of "Inspector Hornleigh" for New Zealand and is taking the first opportunity of presenting him.

In the three years of his existence, the Inspector has joined the ranks of the immortal detectives of English criminal sagas; he has become one with Sherlock Holmes, Lord Peter Winsey and Hercule Poirot and his creator, Hans Priwin, is to-day acclaimed a true successor to Edgar Wallace.

Reason for His Success

It is generally difficult, if not almost impossible, to analyse the causes of a great literary success. But the instance of Inspector Hornleigh is comparatively simple to explain. He is, above all, the first great detective of fiction who owes his fame, his very creation, to the radio.

All the other crime authors, creators of England's most famous detective characters — Conan Doyle, Edgar Wallace, Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers—only struggled, after years of using the printed word, to a pinnacle of fame that was measured in terms of hundreds and thousands of readers.

From the very first adventure, however, Hornleigh has appealed directly to millions of listeners!

In his first year he received a fan-mail which reached the phenomenal total of 120,000 letters! After that they stopped counting. He has been one of the BBC's most successful features, he has appeared in films (in a series directed by Eugene Fort, of "Charlie Chan" fame) and there is one novel featuring him.

The Listener Takes Part

His "listener-appeal" is one reason for his great success. It is the technical foundation of his fame. The other reason, however, is this: the listener is not left merely to be a passive observer of Inspector Hornleigh's adventures and masterpieces of detection. Instead, he himself acts as a detective and actually helps to solve the weekly mystery with Inspector Hornleigh. "Each man his own detective" is Priwin's motto. The good inspector is only the guide and mentor of the listener, pointing out his way and dealing with the crime in case we amateurs should prove unable to solve its mystery.

Here, for example, is a brief specimen of Hornleigh's work:

A man was murdered. The mystery of his death was difficult enough to warrant

calling Inspector Hornleigh to take charge of the case. He questioned the dead man's neighbours and from their testimony he learned that no one was in the fatal room when the man was shot. Nobody had a motive for killing him—with the exception of one man who lived in the flat opposite to that of the deceased. But this single suspect had a cast-iron alibi—he was playing the piano when the shot was fired. Neighbours who heard the shot swore that he had not once interrupted his piano-playing; he himself maintained that the music prevented his hearing the revolver going off. In his room there was neither a gramophone nor a radio.

The alibi seemed absolutely unshakable. And yet the pianist was the only man who could possibly have done the murder! How to prove it?

The Solution

Inspector Hornleigh discovered that the music which was being played at the time of the shot was a certain prelude by Chopin.

"I arrest you for murder!" said Hornleigh immediately. The suspect was taken in charge and later confessed to his crime. How did the inspector know of his guilt for certain?

At this point of the story, the transmission is interrupted for ten minutes and listeners are asked to explain how the detective had succeeded in getting his man.

In this particular case, the solution, given later, was that the Chopin prelude played by the murderer, was a piece

specially written for the left hand! The player had, therefore, been able to carry on his playing while, with his right hand, he shot the victim in the flat opposite his window. It was a cunning alibi, but he reckoned, like so many radio villains, without the skill and quick mind of Inspector Hornleigh and his listener colleagues.

The Clue of the Name

More often than not, the Inspector's problems exhibit a minute understanding of English customs and relationships.

There was, for instance, the case of the murder of a man named Shirley Carr. Another man was strongly suspected of the crime. After a long search for him up and down the country, Inspector Hornleigh found the suspect. The detective's first words to him were: "Do you know Shirley Carr?"

"Never heard of him!" was the answer.

"I arrest you for the murder," cried Hornleigh at once.

He was, in fact, the killer. But how did the detective know? Is he omniscient, omnipresent? No, just logically minded.

"Shirley," you see, is a fairly common Christian name, but in 99 cases out of 100 it is the name of a woman! By saying "never heard of him!" the murderer automatically betrayed himself.

Fan Mail

From the very first "Monday Night at Seven" programme, Inspector Hornleigh has been a tremendous success. He has not only a character to satisfy the public's demands for excitement and sensation, but he has introduced that element of play and party fun which is deeply rooted in nearly every family. Fanatical Hornleigh "fans" overwhelmed the BBC with enthusiastic letters of admiration — almost 100,000 were received there within six months. Special officials had to be delegated to handle them.

One farmer in Kenya invited the detective to come out to South Africa to clear up a local mystery there.

A genuine Scotland Yard detective wrote in to his radio "colleague," making a piteous, tragi-comic plea for help. Inspector Hornleigh, he complained, was in the process of ruining his happy marital life. Until the radio detective's appearance, the writer's wife had always considered the Scotland Yard man to be the greatest detective of all time, certainly of his own generation. Now, it seemed, she had discovered that her great husband found himself baffled every Monday night at seven o'clock by Inspector Hornleigh's problems.

In consequence his domestic prestige had sunk to zero and, frankly, he feared
(Continued on next page)



H. W. PRIWIN is the man who invents the problems—and the solutions—of the Hornleigh series