

Guide to John Buchan's writing – issue no. 2

In descriptions of John Buchan's books you will often find reference to 'Blanchard'. It occurs to me that perhaps it is not everyone who understands the significance of the reference and indeed not everyone will know the details of all of John Buchan's writing. In view of this I have decided to produce an ongoing email guide to Buchan's work with details of copies available for sale.

'Blanchard' refers to the standard bibliography of Buchan's writing; its full title is *The First Editions of John Buchan: A Collector's Bibliography*. Published in 1981, it aimed to set out details of all of Buchan's writing and gives the publication details, collation and binding of all the books. There are also details of JB's contributions to a wide range of periodicals. A small supplement with corrections and additions was published a few years later and in 2008 an illustrated version was published covering the first two sections (see below).

The three main sections of Blanchard's bibliography were A, dealing with books written by JB; B, dealing with books edited by JB (and often with contributions from him); and C, which detailed the books to which JB had made a contribution of some sort, e.g. prefaces and forewords. In each edition of this guide I will deal with books from all of these sections and also with books about JB and his works and books by other members of his family.

The guide will indicate those titles that appeared in the Hodder Yellow Jacket series, the Nelson Uniform edition, the Nelson 1/6 novels edition, the Nelson 1/6 novels edition and the Nelson 2/- novels edition. With 2 exceptions, which will be noted at the appropriate point, none of JB's non-fiction works were included in any of these series.

The guide will also give brief details of copies of each title I have for sale (if any) at the time each note was written. Please contact me for more details of any of these books.

Section A

A6 The Pilgrim Fathers (1898)

The Newdigate Prize is one of the major Oxford University literary awards. JB entered in 1897 but failed to win the prize but did so in 1898 with this poem. Previous winners included Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin and Oscar Wilde. Simply, but attractively, bound in blue-grey card with deckled edges. It was not reprinted during JB's lifetime. Very rare.

Copies available (10.06.19)

- First edition – 1 copy £350.

A7 John Burnet of Barns (1898)

JB's first 'full-length' novel. A more substantial work than *Sir Quixote* with a more complex and well-developed plot. Much of the novel is set in his beloved Tweeddale (Barns is a short distance from Kirkton Manor on the south bank of the tweed, a short way upstream from Neidpath Castle) but the story also moves to Edinburgh and to Holland. The core of the story is a feud between John Burnet and his cousin. The binding, also used by John Lane for A9 and A10 is rather attractive but the green cloth is very prone to sun damage so that most first editions have a spine which has turned brown. Reprinted by Lane a number of times it was also published in the Nelson Uniform edition but did not appear in the 1/6 novels, 2/- novels or Yellow Jacket series.

It was first published, in serial form, in Chambers's Magazine between December 1897 and July 1898.

Copies available (10.06.19)

- First edition – 2 copies £160/£180
- Bound volume of Chambers's Magazine including the whole of the novel - £60
- Second edition (as first) – 1 copy £90
- Later John Lane editions – 5 copies £10 to £20
- Nelson Uniform edition (red cloth & green leather) – 6 copies £13 to £17.50
- Canongate 1978 reprint – 3 copies £10 to £12

A8 A History of Brasenose College (1898)

FE Robinson published a series of histories of Oxford and Cambridge colleges in the late 19th century. All were written by fellows or graduates of the colleges on question with the exception of this one, written when JB was still an undergraduate; clearly he was already acquiring some repute as a writer. The book is a straightforward history of the college with a number of illustrations. Very rare.

No copies available (10.06.19)

A9 Grey Weather (1899)

A collection of 14 stories and a poem sub-titled *Moorland Tales of My Own People*. 7 of the stories had been published over the previous 3 years in a variety of magazines. Most are set in either Tweeddale or Galloway. Bound as A7. In my view an enjoyable collection of tales. The book was not republished in JB's lifetime. Rare.

Copies available (10.06.19)

- First edition – 1 copy in private binding £150

A10 A Lost Lady of Old Years (1899)

A novel of the '45 rebellion which follows the fortunes of a young man, Francis Birkenshaw, who gets caught up in some of the events of the rebellion. The action moves from Edinburgh to the Highlands and to Broughton in Tweeddale. Margaret Murray, the wife of 'Evidence' Murray is a major character. Bound as A7. It was published in the Nelson Uniform edition but not in any other series. It was, however, republished by John Lane in an undated cheap edition, possibly during or soon after WWI. Rare in the first edition.

Copies available (10.06.19)

- No first editions available.
- Cheap, or Popular, edition – 3 copies £30 to £65.

Section B

B2 Musa Piscatrix (1896)

An anthology of fishermen's verse compiled by and with a lengthy introduction by JB. The binding is in blue cloth which fades readily and as a result have a spine which has faded to a muddy brown shade. Never republished until recent print on demand offerings. Scarce. JB's introduction demonstrates his love of angling and of poetry.

Copies available (10.06.19)

- First edition – 4 copies £140 to £180

Section C

C5 A Beggar's Wallet (1905)

Buchan's first foray into the world of fund-raising books. These were a widely used fund-raising tool in the first quarter of the 20th century, particularly for medical charities. This title, a weighty tome, was published to raise funds for the Royal Victoria Hospital for Consumption, Edinburgh and JB contributed his lengthy poem *The Song of the Sea Captain*, subsequently included in *Poems Scots and English*. The book includes a variety of poetry and prose and is nicely bound, if a little bulky.

Copies available (10.06.19)

- First edition – 4 copies £12 to £15

C6 The Empire and the Century (1905)

Edited by Charles Sydney Goldman. In the early years of the 20th century imperialism was a 'hot topic' for discussion and in this book the views of various writers on the principles of empire and on the constituent parts of the British Empire. JB's contribution is a piece entitled *The Law and the Constitution* and such luminaries of the day as J St Loe Strachey, RB Haldane and LS Amery contribute as well as many others experienced in colonial administration. Bound in blue cloth with a splendid front cover full of imperial symbolism. Scarce.

Copies available (10.06.19)

- First edition – 1 copy £40

C7 Am Bolg Solair (1905)

Another fund-raiser, this time for the Highland Association Bazaar, devoted to raising funds for the Gaelic cause. The English title is *The Pedlar's Pack*. It is a collection of prose and poetry, some in English, some in Gaelic with illustrations pasted onto blue pages. JB's contribution is a long poem in Scots dialect, *The Herd of Farawa'*, subsequently included in *Poems Scots and English*. Neil Munro, the Duchess of Sutherland and the Duke of Argyll are amongst other contributors so some 'heavyweights' lent their support. The pieces in English are quaint and some of them are quite interesting; sadly, I am unable to comment on the Gaelic pieces. Rare.

Copies available (10.06.19)

- First edition – 1 copy £75

C8 Selected essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1909)

As the title conveys. Includes a 6-page introduction by JB. Published in the Nelson Classics series; Nelson's habit of omitting the publication date makes it difficult to identify first editions, especially as the number of reprints appears to be unknown. A careful check against the entry in Blanchard is needed. Surprisingly scarce.

Copies available (10.06.19)

- First edition – 1 copy £6