

**Christmas Catalogues, Lester's Chemist, Nuneaton, CR2207/53-59**

With December seeing the arrival of the festive season, and typically being a time for nostalgia, the choice for Document of the Month is these Christmas catalogues for Lester's Chemist in Nuneaton.

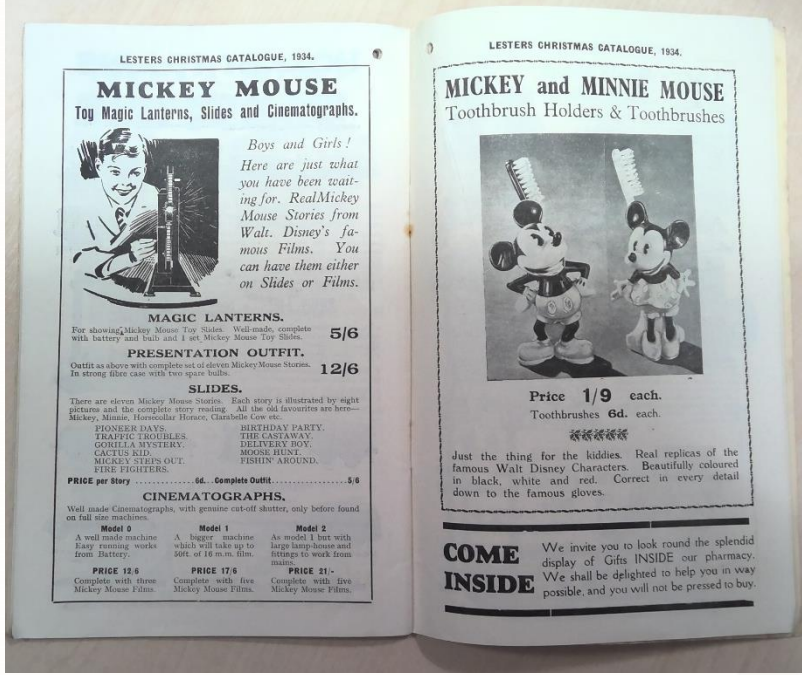
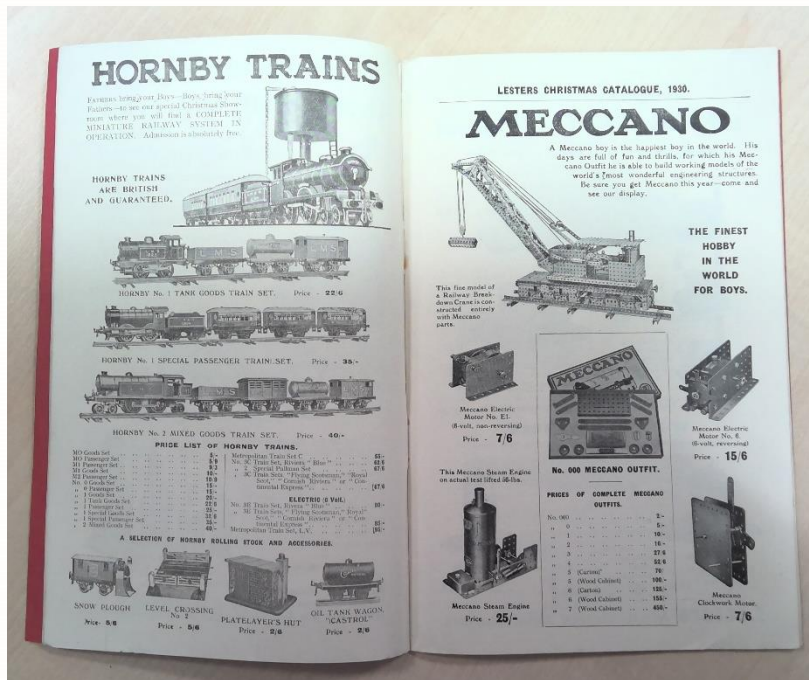


Two of the Christmas catalogues, Warwickshire County Record Office, CR2207/53-59

Dating from 1928-1935, each one of these catalogues is filled with advertisements for Christmas gift ideas for the whole family, enticing the Christmas shoppers of Nuneaton to “look round the splendid display of Gifts INSIDE our pharmacy. We shall be delighted to help you in any way possible”. They even reassure potential customers that “you will not be pressed to buy.”<sup>1</sup>

Advertisements in these catalogues include those for items we would still recognise today. There are full-page advertisements for brands such as Meccano, Hornby, and Gillette. There's even an appearance of the Disney characters Mickey and Minnie Mouse in the form of toy magic lanterns and toothbrushes in the 1934 catalogue. Advertisements for wines and spirits are also included.

<sup>1</sup> Lester's Chemist Christmas Catalogues, Warwickshire County Record Office, CR2207/53-59.



Advertisements inside the Christmas catalogues, featuring brands many of us will recognise today! Warwickshire County Record Office, CR2207/53-59

For shoppers who were unsure what to buy for their family and friends, Lester's compiled handy lists of gift ideas for him and for her in the 1932 catalogue. Men's gift ideas include safety razors and shaving brushes, whilst women's included manicure sets and powder bowls. Always useful!



Gift ideas for "Him" and "Her", Warwickshire County Record Office, CR2207/53-59

### Lester's Chemist

H. Lester & Son Chemist was established in 1872 at number 1 Bridge Street, Nuneaton in the north of the county. Just a few months later, the business moved to new premises next door, opposite the town's post office. Henry Lester was registered as a chemist and druggist in 1872, and then also registered as a dentist in 1876<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Information gathered from *The Pharmaceutical Industry: A Guide to Historical Records*, Lesley Richmond and Julia Stephenson, Routledge, 2017.

Henry Lester's son William Henry joined the business in 1897 and registered as a chemist and druggist. Henry ceased to be registered in 1933<sup>3</sup>.

By the time the majority of these Christmas catalogues had been published, the business had outgrown its home again and moved to new premises, this time adjacent to Nuneaton Post Office. A pamphlet was produced to mark the opening at the new premises; included inside is a history of the business up to that point. This history includes details such as an alteration to the interior and exterior of the shop in 1907:

*The Old Dispensing screen was removed from the back of the shop, and a new Dispensary made. An entirely new set of handsome mahogany fittings was installed, and electric light replaced gas<sup>4</sup>*

The chemist continued to trade as W. H. Lester long after William Henry Lester ceased to be registered in 1941. The business then underwent a further relocation to number 2 Market Place in 1947 and became a Limited Company, trading under the name Lesters' Chemists Limited, before being acquired by Boots Pure Drug Company Limited in 1964<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Information gathered from *The Pharmaceutical Industry: A Guide to Historical Records*, Lesley Richmond and Julia Stephenson, Routledge, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Lester's, *Over Half a Century of Service in Nuneaton*, 1930, page 13, Warwickshire County Record Office, CR2207/34.

<sup>5</sup> Information gathered from *The Pharmaceutical Industry: A Guide to Historical Records*, Lesley Richmond and Julia Stephenson, Routledge, 2017.