

TheSpyBoys.com website came about in 1996 as a collaboration between myself and a good friend.

We wanted to develop high-end replica props from the various spy films and TV shows such as 'The Man from U.N.C.L.E.', 'The Wild Wild West', 'Get Smart' and, of course, the films of James Bond.

Being collectors ourselves, we strived to duplicate the props as closely as possible and felt that we should not offer anything that didn't meet our standards to want to add it to our own collection.

Prior to the formation of the website, I had worked alongside SD Studios at the time they were offering the licensed prop replicas of Bond props.

These replicas are highly prized among collectors and often fetch VERY high prices on the secondary market.

One of the MOST exciting things was that Desmond Llewelyn, "Q" himself, was contacted to participate in a 60 second commercial that was broadcast promoting the props.

You can view the commercial here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0TkrULxKlfl>



Desmond and I between the filming of the SD Studios commercial. The other photo is of us with, my then partner, David Di Pietro who assisted in the filming.

Because they were officially licensed, we had the opportunity to travel to England and meet with Michael G. Wilson at his EON office to discuss further possible props replicas to be made from the Bond franchise.



At that time, the props from the earlier Bond films were housed at Eon's office and we requested to view what was in storage for consideration of duplication.

Meg Simmonds, the EON archivist, escorted us into the lower level of the building and into a small room. Pressing a keypad on the wall made the walls slide open to reveal a warehouse of shelving units filled with the various items from the films.



That afternoon, we (Steve Dymso, Gary Giblin and myself) scheduled a meeting, at Pinewood Studios, with Albert 'Bert' Luxford who was the special effects technician / Prop-Master who was responsible for fabricating the early props from the Sean Connery era, the most famous being the tricked-out attache' case. Production designer, Syd Cain joined us to discuss the details that went into making that prop as it was going to be the next one to be duplicated.



Production Designer Syd Cain with myself.



Gary Giblin with Production Designer Syd Cain.

At the end of our meeting, Graham Rye, the publisher of "007 Magazine" joined us and took us on a guided tour of the studio lot and pointed out locations that were used as the SPECTRE Headquarters, the training camp, the hedgerows where Red Grant stalked the fake Bond, Grant's exercise area, the Gypsy camp, Fort Knox, Goldfinger's smelting plant, the alleys where the DB5 is chased and crashed, the Volcano fortress of Blofeld, the water tank, etc. While only the 'ghosts' of those were present, it was quite a thrill to have visited the areas.



The rear of the Pinewood meeting room were used as the SPECTRE Headquarters.



Part of the hedgerows where Grant stalked Bond.



Part of the area where Grant stalked the fake Bond. The area where Grant was getting massaged.



Steve Dymzo Syd Cain, Gary Giblin & Graham Rye. Graham Rye with Meg Simmonds



The Location of the Gypsy Camp in FRWL

Graham Rye walking past the water tanks



Area where the Old Lady had the guard station.



One of the alleyways used as Goldfinger's Foundry.



The wall that the DB5 crashed into.



Part of the alleyway where Bond was chased.

Just by chance, Syd Cain wanted to stop by one of the building to visit his friend, Cliff Cully. He is a visual effects matte painting specialist whose work you've seen and never noticed due to the realism in his paintings. We were privileged to be shown some of the glass paintings from various films. How they survived all these years was amazing. My favorites were the inside of the YOLT volcano and the mountainside view from OHMSS.



Syd Cain with Cliff Cully showing a matte painting. Gary Giblin alongside the original matte painting.

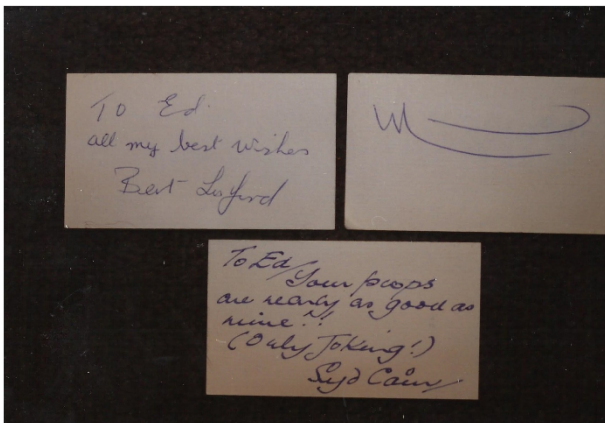


Area that used to contain the Volcano in YOLT. Office.



Pinewood meeting room used as Kananga's

Having previously made a short 60 second commercial with Desmond Llewelyn promoting the SD Studios props, we called and arranged to meet him, at his home, to examine the actual attache' case seen in 'From Russia with Love'.

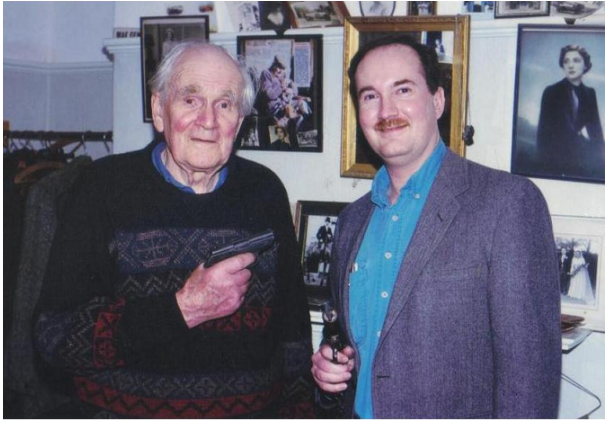


Autographs from Albert Luxford, Jack Lowenthal Bond's Of Colibri and Syd Cain.



Gary Giblin (Author of the book James London), Desmond Llewelyn and myself.

Desmond was entrusted to carry it to his various promotional tours. However, in the process, it was subjected to undue abuse and was in truly bad shape. All of the gadgets, with the exception of the ammunition tubes, were missing.



This photo of Desmond with Gary Giblin was taken in the 2nd floor bedroom at his home. Desmond is holding Roger Moore's stunt PPK used in 'For Your Eyes Only' while Gary has the Piton Gun used by Connery in 'Diamonds Are Forever.' The attache' case was kept stored by Desmond inside this cabinet in the room.



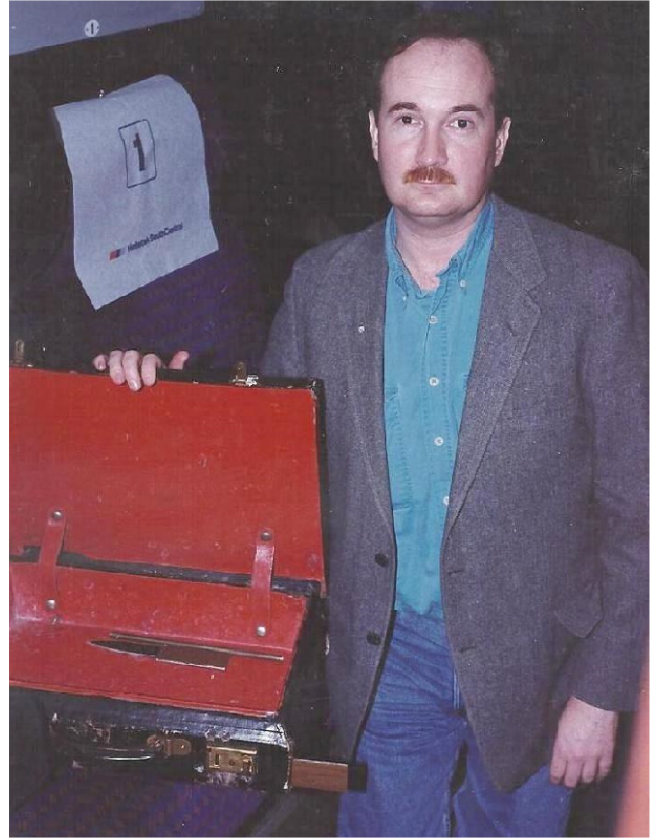
The original attache' case from the film.

My Armalite AR-7 inside the original case.

Extensive, detailed photographs and measurements were taken so as to faithfully duplicate the prop.

At one point, Desmond suggested we take the case with us back to the states. We gratefully did and returned it directly to EON afterwards.

As a 10 year old boy, sitting in a darkened theatre watching the initial release of the film, never would I have suspected that I would one day not only meet "Q" but have at my home, even if only for a short time, that fabulous Q-Branch gadget laden case given to Bond on his mission.



Here I am with Gary Giblin and the original case on the train coming back from Desmond's home.

While in England, we also met with Mr. H. Jack Lowenthal, the former chairman and managing director and son of the founder of Colibri of London. Colibri was initially contacted during the development of the original Golden gun, used by Francisco Scaramanga. The Colibri Molectric 88 lighter was used as the main body of the gun.

At the end of the meeting, he was presented with the replica to place in their company showroom.



SD Studios plaque presented to Mr. Lowenthal. Pictured is Gary Giblin with Mr. Lowenthal.

After SD Studios, I ventured forward looking to continue producing replica props from other spy-related films for my personal collection but mostly concentrating on the props from the Bond films.

Over these past 22 years, I have done extensive research into locating, and sometime converting, real-life products into the props seen in the film.

Some have referred to me as the “Guru” and “Wizard” at fabricating these props but I need to admit that my knowledge also comes from all the other dedicated Bond prop fans whose personal research they have shared with me.

Throughout the past few years I was also lucky enough to have assisted Doug Redenius, of the Ian Fleming Foundation in providing accurate spearguns for one of the only two existing SPECTRE Tow sleds from the film “Thunderball” in their collection.

Additionally, another set of the spearguns was provided to Jordon Klein Sr. who was the assistant Director of underwater photography as well as the builder of the tow sleds for the film. That Tow sled is currently in the collection of a well-known Bond prop collector in the UK.

The full story can be read here:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=351538161999118&set=a.345609469258654>



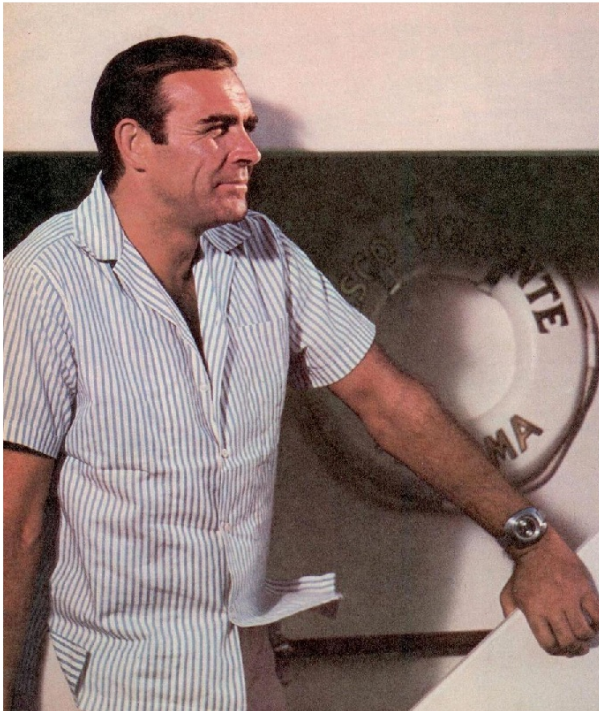
One of the two existing SPECTRE Tow sleds, owned by the Ian Fleming Foundation, with my twin-mounted replica spearguns on exhibit at the ‘Bond in Motion’ exhibit.



My replicas on the only other existing SPECTRE Tow sled sold from the collection of Jordon Klein, Sr. sold in 2014 by the Prop Store auction house to a well-known Bond prop collector for £24,000.

Another interesting 'find' I was associated with was the discovery of the original Geiger counter watch worn by Sean Connery in the film "Thunderball". I was contacted by a good friend, Brian Venciguerra, who initially found the person claiming to own the watch. I was able to get it authenticated by Peter Lamont who is the Art Director and Production Designer for the Bond films.

It later sold at auction and rumored to have been purchased by Film Director Peter Jackson who is a huge Bond fan for \$85,000.00.



Sean Connery wearing the modified Breitling Top Time and the original watch.

The full story can be read here:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=351538058665795&set=a.345609469258654>

In 2018 I stumbled across a posting in which someone was claiming to have the 'Little Nellie' flying helmet used in "You Only Live Twice."

I contacted that person and was able to authenticate, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that it was, in fact, the screen-worn helmet worn by Connery for the close-up filming of the flying scenes.

I assisted my well-known Bond prop collector friend 'Donk' with both negotiating the purchase as well as the restoration of the helmet. It was recently auctioned off this year, again by 'The Prop Store' for £93,750

The full story can be read here:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=352562298563371&set=a.345609469258654>



In October of 2021, I was lucky enough to have met Steven Poole. Through our mutual interest in bond props we grew to become good friends and I have since partnered with him to produce very many incredible prop replicas that, without his help, would not have been possible.

All-in-all, I consider myself to be extremely fortunate in having made a multitude of friends throughout the world that, without the formation of the website would never have occurred.

I hope you enjoyed the few stories of my journey and have fun navigating through the website. I can only hope that you may think enough of some of the replicas I offer as to want to add them to your collection.

ADDITIONAL CREDITS

My other notable credit is my having developed the creation of the Lightsaber wielded by the most powerful but diminutive Jedi Master – Yoda.



The full story can be read here:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=351538185332449&set=a.345609469258654>

In the past, I have contributed articles for 'Model & Toy Collector magazine', 'Amazing Figure Modeler', artwork for 'The Garage Kit That Are My Wallet' by Terry J. Webb and 'Kit Builders and Glue Sniffers' by Gordy Dutt.

Staff writer for 'Hobby F/X' and 'HFX' by Jimi Black.

Did research and provided photos for 'Steve Holland: The World's Greatest Illustration Art Model', 'Steve Holland: Cowboy' and 'Steve Holland: Action Hero' by Michael Stradford.

Provided prop replicas for 'Bond on Bond' by Sir Roger Moore.

Assisted in restoration of props for 'The 007 Armoury' by Mark Hazard'.

Provided photos of the Yoda Lightsaber for 'Star Wars: The Visual History' by David West Reynolds.

I assisted with Research and development for 'S.D. Studios' line of replica props.

Provided photos for 'James Bond's London' by Gary Giblin.

Provided reference to Bob Boyd for articles in 'Shooting Times Magazine.'

Provided reference material for 'Classic Plastic' by David Di Pietro.

Owned and operated a resin model company 'Necronomi-Concepts alongside John Dennett, Wade Willingham and Jimi Black.

Assisted with research for Ed Bartle working for the Bruce Lee Estate.

Developed a paperless environment system for Bell Atlantic (Now Verizon) Representatives through an electronic Handbook called B.A.I.R.S. (Bell Atlantic Information Retrieval System).

Appeared in an episode of 'Reelz TV" featuring the collection of Mr. George Vasquez.

View Video here:

<https://www.facebook.com/thespyboys/videos/486388151929621>

An interview with me at the 2013 AMAZICON Convention:

<https://www.facebook.com/thespyboys/videos/747360385717377>

Amazicon 2015 Q&A Panel I did with Lana Wood.

<https://www.facebook.com/thespyboys/videos/377376316281424>

I appeared in a few of David Zaritsky's Video Blog "The Bond Experience."

View Videos here:

**THESPYBOYS – THROUGH THE EYES OF A COLLECTOR PODCASTS
PART 1:**

<https://www.facebook.com/thespyboys/videos/352211762144665>

PART 2:

<https://www.facebook.com/thespyboys/videos/2466189030276867>

PART 3:

<https://www.facebook.com/thespyboys/videos/775910866159149>

PART 4:

<https://www.facebook.com/thespyboys/videos/1290359867796599>

PART 5:

The Bond Experience interviews me for an explanation of the FRWL Attaché' case replica.

<https://www.facebook.com/thespyboys/videos/433915137219352>

