

LIGHT
ENTERTAINMENTLINES from
LANCS.

by JAMES HARTLEY

A SHEIKH OF ARABY at large in Soho — or Moss Side for that matter — is not an incredible possibility these days, but an old-time music-hall chairman, dutifully and ceremoniously in the Desert calls for a mighty stretch of the imagination.

Nevertheless, as I write, it is true that Duggie Clark in company with Joe Brown and his Bruvvers, is ably sporting top hat and tails and spreading the good word of the Gay Nineties (most likely with a smattering of the Permissive Seventies) among the natives of the Persian Gulf, and British Servicemen camped thereabouts.

Escapologist Paul Denver is currently playing the Black Wizard (an evil spirit) in the Philip Bernard Productions' "Goldilocks" — or is he overplaying the part? Some youthful patrons who have seen his performance incline to think that he is and have been trying to "persuade" him to alter his ideas — and the script.

We know it's the baddies of the all-in-game, with spectacular violence to inspire an adequate flow of boos and hisses, who really draw the crowds; but they're well qualified to deal with intrusive elements too — and it behoves Paul to take a tip or two from them if he is to emerge unscathed from his present season at Salford Vic.

He gets his boos — and is genuinely hissed. His method of "stirring it up" takes the form of derisive remarks directed against the most hallowed of local football "outfits".

"I hate Manchester City — and I like Manchester United just about as much. As for George Best, I may even ask the FA to prolong his suspension," he threatens.

All his friends well know that off-stage Paul is a loyal supporter of both teams — as well as one of the most ardent fans George Best ever had. Be that as it may, the kiddies at a matinee performance last week were not amused. An indignant youngster in the stalls yelled, "Let's get him laid."

After the show they waited for Paul outside the stage-door. As he was leaving the theatre half a dozen of them leapt upon him. Shocked and bruised, Denver fled them off, and retreated to back-stage safety.

For demonic reasons Paul has declined to change his script but his personal invitation to George Best to come along and vet the show is a part of the repatriation terms accepted by Salford school-leavers.

We regret the mistake made in the advertisement for Colin Bean on this page in last week's issue. The name given as Mr. Syd Letterby should have read Mr. Syd Lotterby.

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CLUB CORNER

WITH HIS February debut at Batley Variety Club, the distinguished career of Reginald Dixon of "Beside the Seaside" fame, has come full circle. It was in the pubs and clubs of Yorkshire in the 'twenties that he served his apprenticeship. One might conclude — erroneously — from the flood of publicity that has surrounded him over the past six months that this Wurlitzer wizard has reached the end of the road. His retirement from the Blackpool Tower where he had been lionised by millions of holidaymakers since 1930, is scheduled for next Easter. But, of course, no artist — and particularly a musician of Mr. Blackpool's stature — can ever deny Nature's truest gift of expression, not long as he's breath in his body.

When I talked with Mr. Dixon last fall he frankly confessed to be looking forward to a fuller life in the years ahead than ever he has known. He was preparing for it — even to the extent of curbing his passion for smoking. "Nowadays when I fish for my lighter I come up with a packet of the mints with the hole!"

Reg's reputation is international. In foreign parts especially there is an increasing demand for his records, and now that he is soon to be officially freed, he may well consider taking up offers of concert, club, and cabaret tours of faraway places where, through decades of radio broadcasting he has built up an inestimable following.

Year after year his fans from overseas journey to Blackpool to meet him — like the Dutch couple who called to tell him they were expecting a blessed event and that if it were a boy he'd be christened Reginald. And another from the States, not content to tell Reginald for a front name, brought his surname also into line and changed it by deed poll to Dixon.

Such is fame, Time's ripe for Reginald Dixon to catch up with a heavy back-log of unfinished business.

FROM 'SWEDEN' — "Mitch" Mitchell, starring for Eve Colling (Bailey Circuit) at a leading Gothenburg swankspot, has had his month's contract doubled. He's learning skiing and other exciting Swedish sports too. Due back home to open March 1 week at Bradford Lyeum.

FROM EIRE — date-line Dublin, Harry Bailey reporting: "I tried out my new act in a local talent contest. I came in first and second. Prizes — (1) a week in South Vietnam (2) a week at Bogside, Derry."

FROM MALTA G.C. — Zareada and Johnny St. George are having a beard at the Hotel Madeleins, St. Andrews. They have had to decline offers to prolong their six-week season on account of their forthcoming February date at Batley V.C.

LEGITIMATE theatre holds no terrors for clubland vocal star Alan Martin. Catch him touring as principal boy alongside Charles Hawtrey in "Jack and the Beanstalk" currently at Salford. Some of the loveliest hit songs the principals use in the show are Alan's original work — all of them unpublished.

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THE "BRUMMAGEN BOYS"



Artists from radio and television as well as stars from the stage attended the annual "Pantomime Party" at the exclusive Club Chambord in Birmingham. Radio 1 deejay MALCOLM JAY (extreme right) is seen with three personalities appearing in local pantomimes—(l. to r.) KEN ROBERTS (Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton), WYN CALVIN (Birmingham Theatre) and DONALD PEERS (Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham).

HOT FROM
SCOTLAND
By Gordon Irving

DAVID KINNAIRD, the Scottish singer and compere, who has just signed on again for a long holiday-camp season show in Barry, South Wales, speaks a lot of sense when he says: "It's high time the town councils in Scotland's holiday spots looked on entertainment as an amenity, and were prepared to subsidise it."

Hear, hear! Tourists and younger folk can be encouraged to spend a fortnight or more in a resort very much on the strength of the entertainment offered.

So it would be useful if the Scottish Tourist Board could forget its hotel aspects, and think in terms of persuading councils to fork out money for summer shows, bringing from TV and pop-land some of the names that can still be a draw today.

Also, artists with a "name" should quit asking for high salaries or percentages, and realise it's to the long-time good of show-business to travel out of the metropolitan or clubland area on reasonable terms.

Summer for David Kinnaird means South Wales this May to September; last year it meant Clacton. Between times (like this week at the Caledonian Hotel, Inverness) he does cabaret and clubs.

Still, as David says, "it's a pity someone like me has to go south to make a living. The opportunities should be in the Scottish holiday towns once more."

LAWRIE ADAM, the kilted accordionist from Lochgar, Fife, and now a Blackpool resident, finds business great. He's booked for cabaret dates, the top kind, all over Britain and Ireland — and "from Edinburgh to Cornwall," as he put it. In May he visits Edinburgh for a "Knights of the Round Table" International Convention show, at which the Duke of Edinburgh could be present.

Then, come June, Lawrie does a summer season at Weston-super-Mare. Recently he appeared at the plushy Tito's Club in Cardiff, with Matt Monro, and Rob Robertson (from Inverness) as compere.

REMEMBER Sheena Houston, the girl singer from Stenhousemuir, who came to fame on "Opportunity Knocks"? I hear she's booked for one of the second colour series for STV of Alasdair Gillies, having appeared for the same company in their networked Hogmanay spectacular. Sheena keeps busy with cabaret.

She's one of a growing number of new acts on the agency books of the Grace Logan Theatrical Agency, of Glasgow. Another is The Grants, a singing husband-wife duo, who did a cruise entertainment stint with Frankie Howard on the Andes. They go to Malta for a month, and are also to guest on the new Alasdair Gillies TV series.

Grace Logan also looks after the Harbour Folk, the four lasses from Glasgow, who were with Brendan O'Dowd in summer show at Weston-super-Mare, and also a flamenco guitarist, Kamilly Kaledy, an Arabian. Saria Ballantyne, the young Principal Girl at Glasgow Pavilion, is also in her books.

In Marie Lloyd's centenary week, it's surely appropriate to recall that some of her most successful work was seen in Glasgow when she starred at the Pavilion Theatre. She was a great favourite with music-hall devotees (and they were countless in her day) north of the Border.

KENT
COBS

Jimmy Hodge Jr.

The enthusiasm with which Equity organiser ALAN DAVIS made his points to me over the 'phone was infectious and before our conversation had concluded I had promised wholehearted support for any moves he might make in Kent.

At the recent London meeting Alan was appointed full time organiser for the Variety and Clubs Section for London and the Home Counties and I rather think that very soon Equity will be able to regard Alan as one of its Big Guns.

Alan is coming down to Chatham on February 20 to act as a judge in the KENT EVENING POST talent show finals at the Town Hall Theatre and we both intend to have a long chat about what can be done to give Kent an Equity injection.

Pianist KAY ROYSTON has been busy of late — a variety bill at the Balfour Centre, Chatham, with ALAN DAVY, JIMMY KNIGHT, JAN. TALMAYNE, JOAN ROBERTS, and EUNICE BUTLER, cabaret at the Bowers Social Club with the BRETT SISTERS... the Strand social club's annual "do" at Gillingham, with JEANETTE LACEY and LES SKINNER... and more cabaret at Greenways, West Malling with LYN REYNOLDS, STAN CRAWFORD and RALPH THOMSON.

North Kent agents SID and MEL RAYFIELD are now doing quite a lot of booking for the Lantern Restaurant, at Charing. On February 13 that hilarious comic TED DURANTE, with HILDA, will be appearing. If ever there was a man who can bring tears to your eyes it is the rubber jointed Ted!

At the same venue on February 18 will be comedian PHIL RAY, a real cockney ray of sunshine, and THE MAXIMS. The high standard of entertainment continues two days later with RON DART and JEANNE who have the amazing ability to fire darts at a target by blowing them from the mouth! Also on the bill will be JOY LEONARD, with her impressions of top male vocalists and RON HUGHES who can make any orchestra feel inadequate by playing organ and trumpet AT THE SAME TIME!

Derbyshire Diary: Johnie Singleton

A GOOD time was had by all at the recent Derby Press Ball, held at the spacious Pennine Hotel. Doing the cabaret in great style were the Morgan James Duo, boys who get better and better; giving support were Arrival, the Radio one favourites, and chart climbing with their new release "Friends." On these occasions the house outfit is often overlooked so let's mention the Alan Key Music who always lay down a tip top musical carpet.

"Mr Entertainment" is oft referred to, but in my opinion, it

certainly fits popular Scot Benny Garcia, recently in the parish. He won himself many fans with his well executed act, immaculate tailoring, and the genuine desire to please. At the moment Benny is up to his neck in extensive rehearsals for the next series of the "Black and White Minstrels" show. After which he'll be seen again on the top cabaret circuit.

ONE ACT to remember for quite a while is four young men from Mansfield known as the "Lime-lights." A great show group.

JOHN ABREY



who is a Member of the British Music Hall Society, is to portray the Chairman in Southwark Entertainments' most lavish Music Hall ever at the North Peckham Civic Centre on Tuesday, February 17th, when Mr. Sandy Powell will be topping a really colourful bill.

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