

'RAISING THE RAMP' AMONG LONDON'S W.M. CLUBS

By Tommy Kane

"Mule train — CRASH! mule train — CRASH! WALLOP!" Yes, it could only be that whackiest of entertainers, BOB BLACKMAN: a man who makes audiences fall about with laughter as he smashes himself over the head with a beer tray, belts himself round the face, and falls flat on the floor, when singing a song. Talking to Bob some time ago, shortly after his... smash-hit on a DES O'CONNOR TV show, he confessed that his act sometimes gave him a headache. Looking at the trays battered and bent by his head, I'm not surprised. One might observe the sock-it-to-himself character a few days ago, at New Lansdowne club, when the family audience cried out for more. And one must confess it sits rather awkwardly to have to watch an act run the real risk of a permanent head injury just to make folk like myself laugh. But then, I daresay, Bob is pleased in the knowledge that very few club acts dare imitate him for long!

News from Isleworth WMC is that work has already commenced on their new premises which, it is hoped, will be completed in time to open for next Christmas. Regarded by ent sec (W. S. ANDREWS) as a "fitting climax" to club activities was the performance of young CAROLINE HALL and her backing group "The Age of 100" contest-winners at Hford Catholic club in May, I recall. "Their technique and style is unbelievably superb and without doubt will be seen and heard a great deal more in the near future," says W.S. As none of the performers is yet aged sixteen, I'll buy that!

With colleague PETER HEPPLE making speeches and opening West End nightspots (where on earth will it all end, one wonders), Kane himself entered Nightbeat territory when he popped up at the Celebrity during the toil, sweat, and tears time of rehearsals. The reason for this chicken crossing the road, one is pleased to announce, being that agent MAX MUNDY had actually promised to buy the teas if I were in the vicinity — and he did! At the time of writing, the newsworthy Max is handling the nightspot affairs of that remarkable chatter act JON McGRATH, last seen

disappearing in the direction of Portugal and his enterprises there. But tell the world that M.M. hasn't forgotten that other social club circle during his temporary brief; for that highly popular comedy artist BILLY RILEY is here in the show for a couple of weeks, while the green-eyed, red-haired, exotic dancer SHEENA MARKS, also a long-time favourite of the WMC, was another seen running through a new act which should place the Mark(s) firmly on the West End scene... a charming little piece of skulduggery with Sheena playing the evil high priestess with a knife, yes, it should go down well, methinks! Yet another — but there, fair do's, read "Nightbeat" for news of the Celebrity. In the meantime, Max is still looking for attractive young song-stresses. And aren't we all?

* * *

His knees may look a bit white... but that is about the only difference between BILLY MOORE and the genuine yodelling alpine McCoy! With his William Tell hat, shorts, and accordion, Billy is one of those solid, reliable artists you can rely on to perk things up should they slacken; thus, his is the type of act worth its weight in gold. Strange that Billy (also viewed at New Lansdowne where, I tell you, they have a new organ) has never been featured in this column before, for we are no strangers having even appeared together in a VAF show "way back in '64. Certainly I much enjoyed his singalongs, yodelling, and that old favourite, "China doll." Yknow, for the happy act, you get more with Moore.

What was it about teenaged blonde songstress ANNA O'BRIEN that was so very familiar? Certainly the voice was — no, it wasn't that. And then it dawned — Ruby Murray! Anna had the same shy appeal, the same nervous air, as the girl who sang so softly, softly, into our hearts. Anna never made it to the top three in the talent contest one helped judge recently at the Adam & Eve. Yet hers was one of the best performances remembered most vividly from that evening. Which suggests well for newcomer Miss O'Brien, methinks...

Favourite with the Filipinos



● ART is international, they say, so its not altogether unexpected to learn that a record by a 19-year-old English red-head has been steadily established at No. 5 in the Philippine Islands' top ten charts over the past eight weeks. The singer is TRACY, a gay and shapely young lady who began singing while still at school; teamed up on leaving with her brother Stephen in an act working cabaret all over England known as the Too Much, sweet solo and subsequently sang her way round much of the rest of the world, mostly to cruise passengers on liners.

The record in question is "Follow Me," a version on Columbia of the baying wolves theme which backs the Shell TV commercial, with lyrics specially written by JACKIE RAE. The record is not the only ones to know a good thing when they hear it. Audiences loved her at Blackpool last summer in the Harry Worth Show. Tomorrow (June 12) she opens again in Harry's Show, at Great Yarmouth.

SWANN'S (LOW) DOWN

THE four day conference of the British Federation of Master Printers at Bournemouth was a highly successful affair. Each evening the Committee had booked a range of first class entertainment which spread over the Pavilion, where Sid Fay provided his Big Band and Barbara Churchill; at the Palace Court where humourist Clement Freud held court; and at the Palace House, Beaulieu where Lord Montagu staged a really glittering occasion.

I was delighted to compete for the following acts, Don Reeve and Sounds A-Go-Go, Elaine Gaye, Roma Linter, Maureen Gardner, Phil Perry, plus the solid backing of Ted Hiscock and a ten piece orchestra. Some five hundred were at the latter show, which went on from midnight into the small hours.

Next evening I was at Eastleigh for the new Social Club of the Ford Motor Company, the opening show being staged by Sharn Entertainment. Brian Martell and his lively trio provided the musical backing for Joy Lorraine, Squire Hayward compered. This is a pleasure to work with and we'll find his Oxford chatter keeping us well amused shortly at Bognor Esplanade and Pavilion Sandown. Last Sunday found me back for the sixth time in two years at Margate Winter Gardens, a date I love to play, since management and staff fall over backwards to help an artist. Bless you indeed, Mr. Jack Green.

First time I worked with Terri Martin she greatly impressed and I've been interested to see her progress on the road to success. She is touring the Continent with her Cavaliers backing group. To agents enquiring about her abilities I can certainly recommend this talented girl.

Chatted to George Scott, drummer at the Collegiate Club, who was enthusiastic over the rapid progress his wife, Sheila Maste, is making on the Southern scene. She is resident at the Stage Door Night Spot, and as from Monday will be doubling for the next fourteen weeks at the Ocean Room. Wimborne's favourite yokel, Billy Burden, was also at the Collegiate all week and as big a draw as always.

An invitation to Portsmouth for a children's charity fund-raising event was the welcome opportunity to watch Gordon Mitchell, who has a delightful one man show for the kiddies that is slick and up to date. Resident in Southsea, Gordon is appearing mainly at holiday camps this season.

EDDIE SWANN

THE STAGE

1970 SUMMER SHOWS NUMBER

WILL BE PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, 13th AUGUST

CONTAINING REVIEWS OF ALL THE 1970 SUMMER SHOWS

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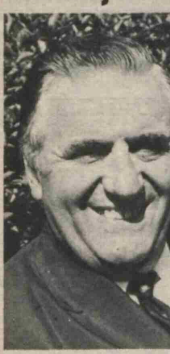
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Warner's man in Majorca



● General entertainment's manager BOB CUMMINS has been appointed as the Ambassador in Majorca by Warner Holidays Limited. Having pioneered many of the developments in U.K. holiday centres, the company enters the packaged overseas holiday business this summer with the opening of a new 220 bedroomed hotel at Arenal Beach, Majorca. Mr. Cummins will be the man on the spot to ensure that all goes well. He joined Warner Holidays Limited in 1953 and was entertainment manager at their Puckpool, Isle of Wight centre for 11 years before moving to his present head office job at Havant. In his 11 years at Puckpool, he reckons he had the job of keeping 120,000 people happy.

Luxury for Leeds

AFTER three years of planning and preparation Teddy Joyce, owner of the Leeds, has opened Lawrence House, Woodlesford, Nr. Leeds, as a luxury restaurant. No expense has been spared in converting the former home of a liquorice millionaire, and later a brewery director, into one of the north's most exclusive eating places. Teddy and Carol Joyce hosted a pre-opening party which, in brilliant sun, was held in the grounds where there is a putting green and a driving range. Among those present was singing star P. J. Proby and prominent northern industrialist Fred Evans.

IT'S MAGIC by Peter Warlock

THE FINAL line-up for the British Ring Picnic that took place at the Chase Hotel, Ross-on-Wye last Sunday showed that the customers had plenty for their money. The artists taking part were Robert Knight, John Love, Van Buren, Mike Rich, Don Lee, Professor Woodley, the Singing Vagabond and Iris and Eric Williams as comperes.

Prior to the lunch there was a presentation of the immortal drama of Punch and Judy by Guy Higgins and also a short non-denominational service conducted by the Reverend Michael Seacome.

PARIS

At the Casino in Paris, Norm Nelson from the States is making a big impact with his floating violin. This delightful conception based on the "Zombie" theme is wonderful visual magic, this is an item that has made among other things the famous Ed Sullivan show.

MISSOURI

Hoping to be in this country soon, is Daemon Steiger from Missouri. Daemon, a fantastic card manipulator and a product of the famous Chavez school, is a unique magical performer inasmuch that he is partially blind. Despite this terrible handicap, his skill lacks nothing and we shall look forward to seeing him and later seeing him perform when he reaches these shores.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The Czech magicians, when they have visited and been seen in this country have always shown their strong leaning to the colourful, and above all things, visual magic. One calls to mind the Mazakians, Trnka, Ventrack and others. In 1968, Pavel. The last named, when still in his twenties, full of ingenious ideas, was both in this country and the United States. His multi-lingual ability allowed him to lecture wherever he pleased. In Switzerland a few years back was published a book entitled "Some forty years of his original effects," and I am sure that readers will be pleased to know that this English translation of "The Magic of Pavel" is being read by the Supreme Magic Company.

Pop for the playground

PORTSMOUTH Junior Chamber of Commerce has arranged a series of Wednesday evening pop concerts at the Southern Roller Skating Rink from July to September to raise funds for their Adventure Playground project.