

## More Light Entertainment News

# Cabaret 'risk' at new Filey venue

MOIRA PETTY reports

A MAJOR LIVE entertainment development in the small Yorkshire town of Filey marks the most important venture to date for a new local agency.

More than £20,000 is being ploughed into a former cinema at Filey to turn it into a mini version of the Wakefield Theatre Club, with a year-long policy of cabaret attractions.

When the Brig Theatre Bar opens for business on July 13 it will be under the control of lease-holder Nick Thomas, a well-known puppeteer who recently set up his own Scarborough-based agency.

The 325-seat venue was first put to use as a centre for live entertainment last summer, when the premise's owner, showman Pat Corrigan, staged a season starring Frankie Desmond.

But with a downstairs bingo hall also under his control, Corrigan was unable to market the show as effectively as he would have wished.

Nick Thomas Entertainments has been drafted in to set the venture on course, with an initial one year lease, and an option to renew for 1982 "if we like it".

Corrigan is footing the bill for structural improvements including the addition of a large dance

floor and the integration of the dining and entertainment areas.

He has begun his marketing campaign, with a presence on a Filey Tourism Council exhibition stand which visited Glasgow, Bradford, Doncaster, Leicester, and Nottingham. He has distributed 20,000 leaflets but is not relying entirely upon Filey holidaymakers to supply his trade. A large proportion of his business is likely to be culled from the coach trade.

But he admits: "It is a bit of a risk. This kind of a cabaret venture has never been done in Filey before".

His "Cabaret Night Out" show, opening on July 13 for eight weeks, stars Ronnie Hilton and the Amazing Zazada, working a split week basis. Supporting artists include Thomas' own Tommer Puppets and impressionist/comper Kay Kennedy with music provided by the Geoff Laycock Sounds.

Currently, he is negotiating with a well-known Lancashire comic with a view to a series of Sunday production shows at the Brig Theatre Bar. The stage, he says, is big enough to accommodate a full-scale show, with dancers.



• JOAN COLLINS, who will be prominent in various film plans under the Entertainment Investments banner, with her husband RON KASS (right), who is in charge of the company's music division, and GEOFFREY ROSE, Entertainment Investments chairman. (Photo by Richard Young).

Our annual  
**FOCUS ON WALES**  
Supplement  
will be published in next week's issue:-  
Thursday March 5th

## The battle of the banners in Blackpool

## J.R. takes up the challenge

ONLY WEEKS after Blackpool's Norbreck Nite Spot closed its doors to live music another town centre venue has taken up the challenge.

The two-floor JR's Club, in Victoria Street — formerly the Stage Club — will continue to stage cabaret on its first floor but is carrying out further alterations of its top floor to accommodate bigger and better rock groups.

Its trials with local line-ups have been successful, and now owner Brian Finn claims the market is right for developing the venue.

"The Norbreck proved there was a demand for this sort of venue and I am sure we can take over from where they left off," he says.

## Sons of the Desert meet

THE LAUREL and Hardy Appreciation Society, Sons of the Desert, are to hold their four-day annual convention in the Barrfields Pavilion, Largs, Ayrshire, in May.

The Society was founded 16 years ago in America and is now a worldwide movement. Guests flying from California will include Oliver Hardy's widow Lucille and Stan Laurel's daughter Lois.

JESS CONRAD's most loyal fan clocked up her 100th visit to "Joseph" last Monday. Fran Clair from Swiss Cottage has pursued Bill Kenwright's production around the provinces to its current West End home. And she was back at the Vaudeville Theatre last Tuesday to present Conrad with a surprise birthday cake.

THE BATTLE of the Bands nearly became the Battle of the Contests when one of the rival talent-spotters took a "calculated risk."

Blackpool's *West Lancashire Evening Gazette* dubbed its first ever rock music competition "Battle of the Bands 1981" in full knowledge that another London-based contest was in progress under the same banner.

By the time the directors of the original Battle of the Bands blew the whistle on the Blackpool operation, all its publicity material had been printed, and its 2,000 tickets were ready.

One of the organisers of the northern event, *Evening Gazette* enter-

tainments editor Robin Duke, said: "I'd heard of the other contest and I suggested to my editor that we should find another name."

"But he decided to take a calculated risk to see whether the other contest organisers had registered the name or not."

The Blackpool contest has now been renamed Rock Battle 1981 and despite the "hiccup" caused by the alterations to the publicity material Duke said that the response had been "tremendous".

There had been no shortage of contenders, despite the ruling that at least one member from each band must come from the Blackpool and Fylde area, and at least one featured member must be an original work.

A total of 43 bands had entered the contest by the time the closing date had expired, and this was reduced to a shortlist of 28. The final is set for March 6 at the Norbreck Nite Spot.

Meanwhile the original Battle of the Bands which attracted 700 entrants nationally and was then cut to 72 competitors, is gearing up for its final, to be held this Sunday (March 1) at the Hammersmith Odeon.

A compilation album featuring bands picked up through the contest will be released through RCA Records on March 13.

## No room for gloom on West Coast

IT MAY BE doom and gloom elsewhere but, says Cleveleys' New Showboat night spot manager Mark Jordan, his venue has never known it so good.

Having trimmed operations back to two nights a week, the former Queens Theatre building is now recording its best ever attendance figures and may be reopening for a third night.

A recent double bill featuring Wayne Fontana together with comic Jimmy Cricket broke the box office record.

The third night could be for specialist sports fans and with the 1981 season approaching Jordan says the venue has several other plans up its sleeve.

This includes a special trial "Festival of Country Music" in the venues 400-capacity Dolphin Bar, featuring Marvin Rainwater, Jeannie Denver, the White Rose Band and Jon Derek on March 19. Jordan claims the reason for their increased share of the shrinking market is because of the "value for money we provide."

"Our admission prices have been virtually static for almost a year and food prices are still the same," he says. "At the same time the calibre of the acts we have been booking has improved and people know they will have a consistently good night out at a price they can afford."

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