

Melody Maker

3d INCORPORATING "RHYTHM"

WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 23, 1944

NAT ALLEN PLANS AMBITIOUS STAGE VENTURE

NAT ALLEN, the well-known band leader, whose name is nowadays associated almost exclusively with radio—especially just now the popular Sunday "Anne to You" Series, with Anne Shelton—starts on his biggest professional undertaking to date early in the New Year.

This venture, in short, consists of emerging from his B.B.C. shell and plunging into a lengthy Variety tour, in the course of which Nat, with his musicians, singers and artists, will play the leading music-halls up and down the country, plus various concert one-night stand and other engagements, for which he has already booked up many months ahead.

This new undertaking will not affect Nat's broadcasting programme. Although a good deal of hectic travelling will sometimes be called for, Nat will, just as usual, be conducting the "Anne to You" broadcast each Sunday.

STARTING JANUARY

This show, by the way, has become deservedly immensely popular with the fans, so that this is a good occasion to stress the fact that for his Band in this production, Nat Allen, regardless of expense, has never hesitated to obtain the services of the very finest musical and arranging talent available.

Many of the West End's best-known "corner-men" are to be found each Sunday in the show, and their efforts, coupled with Anne's superlative singing, have made the production a No. 1 favourite with fans, Forces, and public alike.

Nat Allen's new venture starts on January 8, and during the week which commences on this date Nat will be carrying out one-night stands in the vicinity of Yorkshire. He then goes to Ipswich, followed by dates at Norwich and Grimby, after which he comes back to London for a time.

The whole of Nat Allen's show will be built up round the band, and one novel feature will be "Melody Request Time," in which individuals in the audience name their favourite tune, and then come up and sing it themselves, the successful ones receiving a prize.

Managing the whole venture for Nat Allen, and also contributing his well-known "Romantic Troubadour" act to the show, is Nat's energetic sidekick, Burton Seeley.

A BIG break has just come the way of youthful Warrington (Lancs) pianist-arranger Tom Saville, who, as mentioned in these columns recently, joined forces with Les Thorpe at Nottingham.

His talent has been quickly recognised, and on Boxing Day he transfers to the piano chair at the London Astoria with Harry Leader's Band.

A youngster of outstanding ability, Tom in the past has won a number of awards in Melody Maker Contests, and has also been highly commended for the standard of his arrangements.

BRITISH NAME BANDS FOR BELGIAN SUPER "LEAVE-PALAIS"

ONE OF THE MOST CO-OPERATIVE EFFORTS TO BRING NAME BANDS TO THE FIGHTING FORCES IN THE EUROPEAN THEATRE OF WAR LIES BEHIND THE STORY THAT BELGIUM IS SOON TO PROVIDE A SERIES OF SUPER DANCE-HALLS FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT OF ALLIED TROOPS DURING THEIR 48 HOURS' RESPIRE FROM THE FRONT.

It is significant that this project, in which NAAFI and the Army Welfare Section are both concerned, should have been placed in the capable hands of Britain's peacetime King of Holiday Camps, now Director of Hotels under the Ministry of Supply, Mr. W. E. Butlin.

For "M.M." readers will remember that, before the war, Mr. Butlin was one of the first to acknowledge the paramount importance of first-class dance music, employing only the best available combinations at his Skegness and Clacton holiday camps.

PHIL GREEN LEAVING

Already the resident swing orchestra of the finest musicians has been placed under the direction of Belgian leader Ivan de Bie, and the intention of Ensa to provide British name bands to supplement this at the earliest opportunity will offer yet one more chance to the musical profession to increase its already considerable contribution to the upkeep of morale among our Fighting Forces.

At present, the details of this vast scheme are under consideration by Mr. Butlin, who is in Brussels for this purpose, and the Melody Maker hopes to let its readers have fuller particulars of the bands concerned immediately on his return to this country.

Just as we go to press news has reached us that the next ENSA name band to cross the Channel will be Phil Green and his Orchestra, who are due to go over very shortly to entertain Allied troops on the Continent.

BERT BULLIMORE LEAVES PAYNE

AFTER nearly eleven years' association with Jack Payne, trumpet-star Bert Bullimore has given up first-trumpet chair in the Payne band.

Last Tuesday (December 19) he commenced with Roland Peachey's outfit at the London May Fair Hotel, the Peachey Band being, of course, under Jack Payne's presentation.

Reason for this move is chiefly because Bert Bullimore wished to be permanently in Town, and as the Payne outfit has various touring commitments from time to time, this would not have been possible.

Jimmy Macaffer, who is nowadays a permanent and very useful member of the Payne aggregation, is sharing first trumpet with Arthur Williams.

Another and very promising new member of the brass team, who is playing third trumpet, is "Spud" Murphy, a musician who already has a fine provincial reputation behind him.



JOHNNY DENIS GOES SOLO

ONE of Britain's most successful novelty band leaders is to branch out in Variety as a solo artist. Plans are well advanced for popular Johnny Denis to launch out on his own, and a tour of London theatres is being planned for the New Year.

Johnny will be featured as a vocalist, novelty whistler and Spanish and electric Hawaiian guitarist. He will be playing his own compositions and exploiting his talents as an impressionist and light comedian.

In the meanwhile, arrangements are also being made for Johnny to appear as a guest artist in several prominent radio features, and this side of his activities is being handled by well-known Variety impresario Leonard Urry, in collaboration with Johnny's manager, Maurice I. King.

Besides these ambitious new plans for Johnny's appearance as a solo act, he is being kept very busy broadcasting, recording and undertaking concert and dance engagements throughout the country with his Novelty Swingtet.

AIRINGS AND WAXINGS

This bright bunch, who were featured in the A.E.F. Programme last Thursday (14th), can be heard broadcasting again on Saturday, December 23, in "Music While You Work" at 10.30 a.m. in the Home Service, besides playing late night dance music from 11.30 p.m. to midnight on Friday, December 29.

Big things are expected of the Swingtet's recordings in Decca's January catalogue. The numbers are "Dance with a Dolly," which exemplifies what a really brilliant arranger Johnny Denis is, and the new novelty hit, "Tico Tico."

The fact that Johnny and his boys are all employed on full-time war work prevents them from undertaking

a provincial tour, but they are solidly booked every Sunday until the end of February with concerts in all parts of the country, besides a heavy quota of one-night stands and appearances at military hospitals and Forces camps.

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JOYCE BAKER

"HUNT BALL KING" TO ENTERTAIN TROOPS IN INDIA

FAMOUS old-time bandleader Len Pilbeam, before the war one of the country's busiest gig experts, and known unofficially as the "Hunt Ball King," is shortly going to India on a Forces entertainment tour, under the auspices of E.N.S.A.

Included in his company for the Indian tour will be a new vocalist from London, Joyce Baker, for whom Len predicts a brilliant future.

Accordion H.Q. Still Flourishing

SQUEEZEBOXERS all over the world will be interested to know that the British College of Accordionists is still carrying on successfully, despite the severe flying-bomb damage to its premises some time ago, and the injuries sustained by Dr. Meyer and Conway Graves, both of whom, fortunately, have recovered completely.

Baillie's Xmas-Box

A NICE Christmas box comes the way of bandleader Ray Baillie this year in the shape of another broadcast—actually over the holidays, but on December 28, it comes from the Court Royal Hotel, Southampton, where he is resident.

PAT CUMMINS, younger brother of rumba band specialist Jimmy Cummins, arrived in this country a few weeks ago, and a week after his arrival joined up with Jimmy at the London Savoyne House Restaurant.

CALL SHEET

(Week commencing Dec. 25) Don BARRIGO and Band, Gilderdrome, Boston. Johnnie CLAES and Claepigeons, One-night Stands, South Coast. Billy COTTON and Band, Hippodrome, Birmingham. George ELRICK and Band, Neale's Ballroom, Coventry.

RHYTHM CLUBS

12—Greenford. The cttee has reluctantly accepted resignation of Sandy with thanks for his past work. Next mtg, Dec. 22. Ret by chairman Tony Harman on "Xmas Spirit," J.S. 22—Nottingham. Dec. 24, club holds Xmas Party. Dec. 31, Bill Kinnell presents "Flano Jazz" (Part 2); also Blues recd by Alan Hemmings. Club meets weekly at Roscoe's School of Dancing, Bridesmith Gate, Nottingham, 7.10.

Melody Maker

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SCOTTISH NOTES

FROM Glasgow M.U. comes an item which should be of interest to all locals at home and abroad. The recently created post of permanent part-time branch secretary has been filled by the appointment of well-known drummer Neil Aitken, who was chosen by H.Q. from a short list of four.

War or no war, the Glasgow Variety function known as "Daft Friday" rolls along every year. Things have changed since old days, when most of the local palnis bands came along after midnight with "friends," of course, the proceedings finishing up around 5 or 6 a.m.

ROUND AND ABOUT

DUNDEE.—At the moment Arthur Wallwork is forming a band for a date at the Empress Ballroom, which he will fulfil before going off to Italy on his E.N.S.A. tour. Arthur's original India date was cancelled, the Italy tour being substituted.

GREENOCK.—Still to the fore is Charlie Harkin with his Kit-Kat Band, this one-time "M.M." champ now being in his third season at Chalmers Wood's Crabburn Pavilion promotion, where there is dancing every evening, with Sunday Variety. Charlie leads a seven-piece, himself on trumpet, with Willie Justice (piano); Tony Tramontora (bass); Horace Styles (drums); John Christie and Campbell McGeachie (altos); Jack Whitford (tenor); and George Malcolm (vocalist).

Dawson Clicking At Hull

HAROLD DAWSON and his Band, winners of the South Yorkshire County "M.M." Championship at Sheffield in 1939, are now playing nightly at the new Powolny's Restaurant, Hull. The band features two pianos, and the present personnel is as follows:—Harold Dawson, leading on piano and arranger; Arthur Gibbons (pno.); Wilf Camplejohn (ist alto sax and clarinet); Stan Grey (tenor sax, alto and baritone saxes and clarinet); George Pottitt (tp.); George Mather (tp.); Cyril Sellers (drums); Frank Wignall (bass); and Fred Robson (vocalist).

TRUE JAZZ FROM BUTTERFIELD— AND THE BEST DORSEY

U.S. STARS GO TO TOWN

EDGAR JACKSON'S Record Reviews

TOMMY DORSEY AND HIS ORCHESTRA ***Symphony In Riffs (Benny Carter) (Am. Victor OAO19444).

**Hawaiian War Chant (Pa-Hu-Wa-Hu-Wai) (Johnny Noble, Loleiaka) (Am. Victor OAO30323).

1944—Dorsey (tmb.) with Fred Stulce, Johnny Mince, Herman Schertzer, Skeets Herturt, Dean Kincaid (reeds); Andrew Ferretti, Lee Gastaldo, Pee-Wee Erwin (tp.); Les Jenkins, Earl Hagen (tbs.); Howard Smith (pno.); Carmen Mastren (str.); Gene Traxler (bass); Maurice Purtill (dms.). Recorded July 25, 1938.

3023—Dorsey (tmb.) with Stulce, Mince, Schertzer, Herturt, Irving Russin (reeds); Charles Spivak, Yank Lawson, Max Kaminsky (tp.); Dave Jacobs, Moe Zudoff, Elmer Smithers (tbs.); rhythm as above. Recorded November 29, 1938.

"SYMPHONY IN RIFFS" is one of the best Tommy Dorsey sides I can recall having heard for some time. As it was made in 1938, there may be an implied suggestion in that remark that Mr. D. must have had a better band than he has had since, but I am inclined to think that the success of the record is due more to the fact that this Benny Carter opus is such a good tune.

Don't let that word "riffs" in its title mislead you. It is true that the verse (at any rate we'll call it the verse, as it comes first) is based on a phrase that comes within the meaning of the word riff.

But there are riffs and riffs, and far from being one of those trite two-bar affairs which bore one to death by their sameness, this is a four-bar lick, and quite a nice little melody in the word riff.

Moreover, one is given little chance to get tired of it, anyway. In the second movement it is developed—or more accurately, paraphrased—in a way that makes one almost forget that it ever was a riff.

But even better things follow. The third movement introduces the theme (or chorus, if you like), and if anything is more delightful than the tune it's the way it's played by the saxes. If you want to hear what a sax team should sound like, get a load of this one. The rest of the side consists

of impromptu hot improvisations on the theme. The trumpet, Tommy's trombone, Johnny Mince's clarinet, and somebody's tenor (in that order), all have a crack at it, and it's just a matter of personal taste who you think puts up the finest show.

My vote is split between the trumpet and clarinet, but that says nothing against the maestro, who for all his more-syrupy effusions, can swing out with the best of 'em when the mood is low.

In fact, all round, a grand effort, and none the less so because the unforced drive of the band shows that "Symphony In Riffs" never lacks something worth calling a melody.

Hawaiian "War Chant" fails to some extent by comparison. The tune may have something as grass-skirt music, but it's anything but in keeping with the character of jazz, and while some parts come up as good enough swing, others sound synthetic, if not actually phoney.

Howbeit the arrangement is at least a colourful and suitable enough way of dealing with the number, and if it inevitably falls between the two stools of the character of the number and the character of swing, at least no one can say that the band is lacking in instrumental technique.

ERSKINE BUTTERFIELD AND HIS BLUE BOYS ***Dreamt I Dwelt In Harlem (Smith, Ware, Gray, Wright) (V by Erskine Butterfield) (Am. Decca 69077).

***Jelly, Jelly (Hines, Eckstein) (V by Erskine Butterfield) (Am. Decca 69079).

(Brunswick 03546—5s. 4d.) Butterfield (piano, vocalist) with Jimmy Lytell (clarinet); Bill Graham (tp.); Carmen Mastren (str.); Haig Stephens (bass); Sam Weiss (dms.). Recorded April 29, 1941.

FOR the benefit of those whose jazz association may not have brought to their notice Erskine Butterfield, it may be of interest if I start off by saying that he is a coloured pianist and vocalist.

Born in 1913, in Syracuse, he took up piano when only six years old, and his tutitional period included a ten years study of the clarinet.

He was a member of the original Savoy Ballroom Sultans, during which time he probably picked up the Harlem influence so discernible in his style.

Subsequently he was featured by Noble Sissle, since leaving whom he has played at various American hotels and night clubs, and is well known to American radio listeners.

"Dreamt" illustrates Butterfield the entertainer dipping into the jive-slang lexicography.

But, for all its subdued, relaxed swing, Erskine's personable piano-playing, Bill Graham's unaffected muted trumpet, Jimmy Lytell's nice performance in his second solo, and the nice easy rhythm section, this side is eclipsed by the coupling.

"Jelly, Jelly" is not only a more righteous number, but, being so, gives the group a better chance to show its understanding.

A slowish blues song, it opens with Butterfield playing positive piano, followed by Graham's muted trumpet. Graham (he's the only other coloured member of the combo) is one of those musicians who can give the blues everything it's got without ever forcing a note or raising his volume above a whisper.

And that goes for Butterfield's singing and piano, Lytell's clarinet, and the rhythm section.

In fact, the feature of both sides of this platter is the way this little band achieves the true jazz character without ever losing its sense of complete unaffectedness or repose.

And that doesn't mean a treat for all those who are becoming a little tired of the forced exhibitionism of so much contemporary swing. I don't know who does. The disc is in the Brunswick Sepia Series, the titles for which are selected by Bill Elliott. Good for you, Bill!



Here is an informal shot taken at a jam session held in New York recently. The players are Georg Brunis (trombone); Bob Casey (bass); Ray McKinstry (tenor); and the one and only Mugsy Spanier (whom we were amused to hear announced on the B.B.C. the other day as "Mugsy SPANIEL") on trumpet.

BAND'S GRAND EFFORTS FOR CHARITY

LES WINGROVE, the well-known North London band-leader and member of the Hornsey British Legion, has now handed over £2,300 to the Hornsey British Legion, this money representing the profit from weekly Friday night dances he runs at the Hornsey Town Hall.

It has been suggested that the money should go to the cost of building a "Montgomery Sports Pavilion on the Legion's ground at the Crouch End Playing Fields, which at present are being used as allotments.

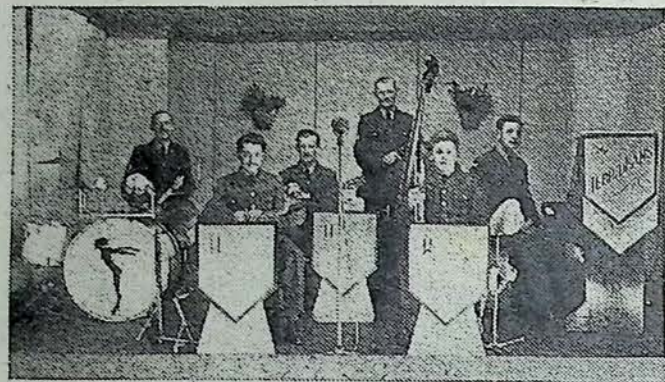
The success of these dances is in no small way due to the members of the popular Stan Davis Orchestra, the well-known contesting band, which claims to be the largest semi-pro band in the country. Here is the line-up, Stan Davis himself leading:—

Phil Ellis, Tony Martin (tenors); Eric Chambers (baritone); Les James, Bert Seelye (altos); Stan Brown, Tony Tappo, Harry Poppey (trombones); Charlie Randall, Harry Pitch, Les Wingrove, Jr. (trumpets); Freddy Byfield, Geoff Grose (pianists); Charlie Housden (drums); Johnny George (accordion); Jimmy Ward (bass); and Pat Sherwood and Ron Chamber (vocalists).

Les has also made arrangements to run two dances in answer to Lord Southwood's appeal for the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, one to take place at Waltham-stow, and one at the Hornsey Town Hall during January.

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At Christmas-time our thoughts go out to all the musicians serving in various parts of the world—those overseas, fed up and far from home, and these in isolated parts of our own isles, who are just as fed up. So here is a picture of an R.A.F. outfit which comes in the latter category, as they are stuck away at the northern tip of Britain, as their name—"The Hebrideans"—tells you. The outfit is led on bass by Charlie Winters, well remembered from his long service with Nat. Gonella's Georgian; before the war, and it is going great guns in the northern latitudes. Rest of the boys are: Reg Jones (violin, sax, clar.); Charlie Sykes (piano); Ralph Ogg (drums); and Johnnie Shakespeare (son of bandleader Lloyd Shakespeare) (trumpet). The last named has recently taken the place of Stanley Sykes, who is now in the Middle East.

LIPTON AND GONELLA IN LONDON XMAS REUNION

A BIG feature of this year's Christmas-mas in London dance band circles is the number of celebrities of the profession who are back in Town at this season, enjoying well-earned periods of leave after carrying out fine service for their country by yeoman work in many different theatres of war.

Back from the Middle East and Italy are Lieutenant Sydney Lipton and Nat Gonella, who returned at the same time as Nat Temple and the many dance musician members of a famous military band who have been on an extensive tour of the Italian battle-fronts.

Back from the Continent are Sid Millward and his "Nitwits" Band, while Joe Loss and his boys are expected back shortly.

Cheering Canadian troops fired revolvers in the air to show their appreciation of the ENSA show given by Joe Loss and his band in the Nijmegen tent one evening recently. The band was taken so far up at the special request of Joe and his boys.

This ENSA tour of N.W. Europe is, of course, a return trip for Joe Loss and his Band. They were in France for ENSA in 1940. This time they have given shows in Ostend, Dieppe, Rouen, Paris, Brussels, Tilburg and Eindhoven, as well as four hospital shows and three performances on board ships.

Until Joe can reach Green's Playhouse Ballroom, Glasgow, his regular Christmas venue, Ronnie Munro and his Ork. are holding the fort for him there.

To judge from odd reports which have trickled through, there must have been a real "gathering of the clans" among the famous British dance musicians over on Continental soil, for besides Joe Loss and the small but extremely effective party with Syd Millward and his "Nitwits," the famous R.A.F. "Squadronairs" have also been touring the Continental war-fronts.

Many well-known musicians have, of course, done even more than entertaining on the battlefronts as their contribution to the war effort. Among these, Lieut. Sydney Lipton must take a very high place, for he has been through an extremely stirring time in the fighting in Italy, and the "M.M." has solid grounds for believing that some official decoration to Syd for his gallantry in the field is on the way.

Back home at last, Syd is now enjoying his well-earned Christmas leave in the bosom of his family in London. Nat Gonella has been away for 16 months, touring the battlefronts in the capacity of speciality artist with a famous military band. In Italy he was often up close to the front line.

During his trip, Nat tells us, he has played in every hospital in N. Africa, Sicily and Italy. Is happy to be back in London, spending Christmas quietly with his "better half," Stella Moya, who is appearing in the new George Blais show, "Strike It Again," at the Prince of Wales Theatre.

Syd Millward and his boys have also been many times close to the firing line, giving impromptu shows in all kinds of uncomfortable and often dangerous places.

SID COLMAN, DON WILSON, ROSIE DOYLE and ART NOEL

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THOSE MILLER-SHORE RECORDS

Commercial Reviews by "CORN"Y

WHAT'S happened to those records which Dinah Shore made with Glenn Miller's Ork for H.M.V. over three months ago—the first ever made by these artistes in this country—which we were told would be issued on October 1 last?

If this question has been worrying you like it has me, you may care to know that the hold-up is because the sides have to be approved by America before they may be released here, so goodness knows when they will come out.

Meanwhile, you Dinah Shore fans will, I am sure, not be the only ones who will be pleased to hear that there's another American coupling by this young lady out this month. Delysia's hit from an early Cochran revue, "Mon Homme" (English title under which it is now labelled, "My Man"), and that lovely Gershwin-de-Sylva song, "Somebody Loves Me."

I often wonder whether some of you quite realise what a supreme artiste Dinah is. Swing fans often seem to think she isn't hot enough, while those who set their standards by straight music think no one can be any good who doesn't sing out like a grand opera diva.

I think both sides miss the point—Dinah's subtlety. Everything she does is so effortless that it sometimes tends to make one overlook the perfection of her style and technique. If you have overlooked it, listen carefully to these two new records, and I think you'll see what I mean.

having, and Frances Wayne adds a nice touch of fem appeal to the very polished playing of the band in the sentimental "Sara" from the film "Broadway Rhythm."

Then there are Jimmy Dorsey's "I'm In Love with Someone" and "When They Ask About You" (Brunswick CBS4).

These are both slow, sentimental foxtrots, but I think it's more or less fair to include them among the swing titles. Anyway, I think you'll like the immaculate way in which this band plays the smart arrangements and the two girl vocalists, respectively Gladys Telle and Kitty Kallow. They certainly do know how to pick their numbers over there.

Coming to the uncompromisingly "official" dance bands, it's the good old stand-bys playing the current "pops" who come out tip-top yet again.

Ambrose, with the one-and-only Anne Shelton, has the list with "It Could Happen To You" from the film "And The Angels Sing," coupled with the waltz "Love, Here Is My Heart" (Decca F8488).

Geraldo also does a nice job with the lovely "Spring Will Be A Little Late This Year" (vocal by Johnny Green), coupled with "It Could Happen" with Len Camber singing (Parlophone F2047).

The No. 1 Balloon Centre Dance Orchestra ("Skyrockets") show what a musically outfit they are in "Do You Believe In Dreams?" from the film "Pardon My Rhythm," and "I'll Try" (both with vocals by Leslie Douglas) (Parlophone F2049), but I cannot help feeling that the first-rate band would have a much better chance to do itself justice if Parlophone gave it better tunes.

Much the same may be said of Lou Preager's Orchestra, who, although well treated with "Chocolate Soldier" from the U.S.A., have to struggle with the doubtful merits of "I've Got A Heart Filled With Love" (Regal-Zono. MR3744).

In wishing you all a very happy Christmas, may I, however, remind those of you who wish to be fortunate enough to be spending the holidays at home with your families that, while you may be a modernist in your musical tastes, some of the older folk will be reviving old-fashioned memories of less sophisticated days.

You will add to their enjoyment if you include in the festivities some of the kinds of music they enjoyed when they were young, and to enable this the gramophone companies have once again not forgotten to include some new recordings of old-time music for your Christmas parties.

On 12-in. Columbia's DX1172 and 3 Harry Davidson and His Orchestra, whose "Those Were the Days" broadcasts have gone so well with those who like old-time dancing, give us a new set of Lancers based on such immortal British folk-songs as "Comin' Through the Rye," "Annie Laurie," "Charlie Is My Darling," "The British Grenadiers," etc.

On 12-in. M.V. 03415 there is a new Paul Jones by the New Mayfair Orchestra. Except for the link-tune, which is the apparently never-to-be-forgotten "Nuts and May," this consists entirely of current song and dance hits but, like the Lancers, makes good party dance music.

For between the dances I suggest "The Cockney Rhyming Song—Stairs Is 'Apples and Pears" by Billy Cotton and His Band (Rex 10,217), and George Formby's "Our Fanny's Gone All Yankee" and "Unconditional Surrender" (Regal-Zono. ME3745).

For the kiddies you might do much worse than try Ronald Gourley's "Songs for the Kiddies" (Columbia F83068), Anne Stephens' "French Nursery Rhymes" (H.M.V. BD1093), and Derek "Uncle Mac" McCulloch's "Bedtime Story—Rumpelstiltskin" (H.M.V. BD1095).

CHRISTMAS CORNER

CHRISTMAS again, and the two halves tugging feverishly at their communal beard in order to produce something very special for all their readers to digest with their Christmas dinner.

We sincerely hope that many will be replete with turkey, Christmas pudding, brandy sauce, and all the usual concomitants of that day, but even if you happen to have dined off "Spam à la mode" and "Rice Pudding au naturel," we send you our hopes of a better time on December 25, 1945, and good wishes to everyone.

"Now—what can we offer you?" said they, sipping their delicious home-made egg-dip (recipe, 2 parts methylated spirit to one part dehydrated egg). Perhaps suggestions for suitable Christmas presents would be topical. Ideal gifts for people in the jazz world. Here goes—

For LEONARD FEATHER: One copy of "What Did I Do to Be So Black and Blue" by Muggsy Spanier's Ragtime Band. This disc packs a solid punch, and should prove a knockout.

For EDGAR JACKSON: Any copy of "Stardust" to enable him to continue besprinkling those asterisks over his record reviews. Hiya, Edgar. Happy Christmas to you, and we're not being rude!

For RALPH VENABLES: One consignment of foolscap paper and one hundred typewriter ribbons (not to the tip that bonny brown hair, but to enable him to keep up his normal letter-writing quota for 1945).

A white man, old Ralph! For BRIAN RUSSELL: A parcel of assorted matrix numbers, log tables, and a calculus. These to be mixed well, served hot or cold, and garnished with disc labels and enthusiasm.

For KEN BROWN: One jellyroll decorated with red-hot pepper.

For ALBERT MCCARTHY: One of the Red Heads, Actuelley.

For ANY BIG SWING-BAND LEADER: Another fill.

For "DOWN BEAT": Extra space for more of the "Hot Box." This to be provided by devoting less space to leg and neck exhibitions. (Yes, we know neck is a euphemism, but the Editor is a very choosy guy.)

For LESLIE PEROWNE: Radio Rhythm Club of Berlin (when we get there).

For PEROY PRING: A copy of "Ring Dem Bells," by the Duke of Pringford, a fine feller. Good luck, Wotherspoon, and to the bride!

For RAY SONIN: A fine spirit of Christmas forgiveness after he has read this "Corner."

And now, sipping the last of the egg-flip dregs, we must mention something more serious for a moment.

MUD AND STUFF

Just recently Rex went on one of his E.N.S.A. week-end tours with Ralph Hill to gun sites on the hush coast, where the good old train of Bix and Louis floated (and believe us we mean floated) out from mar-

"K.P." 30th STAR PARCEL

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COLLECTORS' CORNER

by REX HARRIS and MAX JONES

quees, odd tents, huts and what-have-yous where the chaps were working 24 hours a day in mud, rain, wind and more mud.

Sometimes it took them an hour or more to grind sodden road-track from one site to another, and they used to let people know how much is owed to these guys.

Every time you don't have a warning, or a flying bomb land near you, it is due to these chaps who have practically no breaks and no entertainments.

Now—here's a plea: One of the sites is in desperate need of a gramophone motor and pickup.

If you have a radio set, but if you can afford to give a gramophone, do so; if not, please send details and price to Lieut. and Mrs. P. J. GARDNER, c/o "Collectors' Corner," the MELODY MAKER, and we will see that letters are forwarded immediately.

The other request is a little peculiar, but we know that it will meet

In case you think this is a picture of Rex Harris without his beard, or of Max Jones when he was younger—sorry to disappoint you, but it isn't! We've put this photo on this page in order to add a little quirkitude to the personnel, distinction to the discographies and sex-appeal to the "Swap and Buy." Who is it? Why, flamorous vocalist, Frances Langford, as she appears in RKO-Radio's latest musical comedy, "The Girl Rush."

with a big response. After one of the lectures, Rex was approached by a jazz enthusiast who asked for any old metal needles he may have used during the evening.

This seemed a pretty modest sort of requirement, and the gunner said that they were used for making small models of various sorts, and he wanted every one he could get.

So readers, you see those "used" cups in your gramophones and post them to 923345, Grn. Randell, c/o "Collectors' Corner," the MELODY MAKER, and we will send them straight to you. Do not let this minute and do it straight away.

It's a small request after all, and how would you like to be hundreds of miles from your jazz discs, squealing about in feet of mud with rain dripping on you from every conceivable point? If you have any discs to spare, pack those up, too.

FAIRY-TALES being seasonable, this story may well be doubted but for the fact that we give our united word on its authenticity; you see, we've inspected the swag and collared as many rare items as possible under the festive circumstances.

A tale is about to be unfolded which states that, these well-known years of the American collector's discovery of a hoard of unplayed Claxtonolas, and the other fellow's locating of the remains of the Gennett stock.

Our storyteller is a noted collector from Kent, now in the King's Navy. For sundry official reasons he declines the obvious publicity, preferring to remain anonymous.

We think he fears the descent of twenty-four robbers (of Lunceford fame) on the old homestead in his absence. Anyway, here is the tale, to stir the hearts of every true disc bigot and label fiend—

"The vicissitudes of junking are well known to me, and I've waded through my share of old furniture and bangles to unearth and possess myself of a deal of heartrending corn.



shops, visiting native wine bars in African villages, I struck gold in one of the bigger African towns. (It will, of course, remain nameless.) The find was a huge pile of records, predominantly Paramounts, but in nearly every case a race disc of antiquity and some value.

"Emitting weird noises, I returned to base, drew my last remnants from the Post Office, and went to work, eventually leaving at closing time with a bulging case and no visible means of support.

The unbelievable thing is that there were maybe two or three hundred gems on the spot, most of them clean copies, of which around a third entered my possession. The tragedy is that I could never return to the treasure, as we called almost at once.

"Struggling to the ship I encountered a Customs official moved by inflexible determination to see that none of my finds were transferred on board, and how I contrived to load them shall remain unvoiced. But load them I did, into a fairly safe spot, to await the proud day when I would present them to my fellow-collectors.

"They travelled roughly 70,000 miles, withstanding the pitching of our small craft and the intense African heat. Shifting from ship to ship, home-going, I watched the cargo, lowered into holds. . . I had made the mistake of marking the cases 'Fragile.' (Bill! Catch this, it's fragile!) The outcome I cannot relate.

If this Corner seems to be a little out of joint, please forgive us. Max is suffering from a hefty cold, and Rex is balanced on one side of his chair, due to upsetting a kettle of boiling water on his matrix number. Moral: Don't make tea in bed with an electric kettle. Get someone else to do it for you!

LAST-BUT-ONE CRACK: Life's no picnic at the moment.

LAST CRACK: A merry Discmas to all readers!

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Brand's Essence of Xmas

Seasonable Gossip on Dance Band Matters



Every reader who is a rumba music fan will recognise here well-known London percussionist Billy Duff, from Roberto Inglez's popular outfit at the Millroy Club. Charming lady is Mrs. Billy D., but just a hour or so before this picture was taken she was plain Miss Sylvia Marsh, for this is a wedding-day snap that shows the happy couple at home in their new flat, where Billy is explaining the intricacies of getting on friendly terms with birds, for cage-birds are, apart from rumba music, his biggest hobby.

WELL, friends, for the sixth time, and as sincerely as always, we wish you a very merry war-time Christmas, and fervently hope that the next time we make this little but well-meant comment victory will be ours and there'll be peace again (writes Rau Sonin).

Frankly, we find it a little difficult to whip up our usual Christmas enthusiasm this year. Every time we've put a Christmas issue to press in the past we've hoped that next year we'd have enough paper to make something like a splash and give you guys plenty of cheery reading-matter about your favourite subjects.

But, alas! there is a Scrooge-like character called the Paper Controller who keeps us rationed down to this postage-stamp size, and we can only apologise to our readers and tell 'em that we'd willingly give 'em a bumper issue—if we had the paper.

However, now to brighter thoughts. There's been plenty of excitement since last Christmas, hasn't there? What with D-Day and progress on the Continent, and flying-bombs and what-have-you.

Talking of flying-bombs, may we send particular Christmas greetings to those friends of the "M.M." who have proved their unswerving loyalty by coming up to see us in our new premises?

I'd better explain the gag by pointing out that since we were bombed out of our offices by a doodle-bug we have been given accommodation in a temporary building approached by no less than 80 steps! And the lift doesn't work!

So you see, to visit us at the "M.M." offices these days is quite an adventure—yet loads of people do it. Wonderful stamina this profession has!

I'd also like to send special Christmas greetings to our readers in the Forces all over the world.

Not only do they encourage us and help us in our work by their letters of appreciation, but if there's any news in their district they route it out and send it to us—so that we really have a pretty good round-the-world coverage, thanks to them.

Particularly is this the case on the Continent, where readers fighting in France, Belgium and Holland have used their spare moments to learn the dance band news in the district and send it to us.

Thank you, fellows! We appreciate your interest and co-operation. Keep up the good work.

And, last but not least, Christmas greetings to you, YOU and YOU!

We on the MELODY MAKER regard all you readers as our personal friends, and there is a matinee and warmth about your letters (even when you write in to criticise!) that we appreciate.

To the dance band profession here, to musicians in the Forces wherever they may be, to fans and friends everywhere—here's all the best and a very happy—to coin a phrase!—Christmas!

By the way, just to show you the sort of thing that makes our job so much easier, may I quote this verse sent to us by airgraph from Trooper S. Roberts, out in Italy?

He has drawn a Christmas card showing him reading a copy of the MELODY MAKER on which the front-page headline is the one word, "ARMISTICE," and he writes:—

Thanks a million, you friends at home,
For news you've sent across the foam.
Spare moments we devote to swing,
The rest we give to Kesseling.
Homeward bound next year we'll be,
To celebrate the victory,
And then we're off on a trip to Long Acre.

To thank in person the MELODY MAKER.

And thanks to you, Trooper Roberts, too—and all the hundreds of other lads who have sent us much-appreciated cards and greetings.

Official reason given by S.H.A.E.F. for the ban is that the coloured troops don't like the song; yet Irwin's own observations of coloured G.I.s who buy copies of his song and dance to it at various dance halls are quite contrary to this. In any case, the song is most complimentary to coloured troops, so why on earth they should complain—if they do—beats me.

Strength is lent to this aspect of the matter by the fact that Adelaide Hall features the song in her act and on her Home broadcasts, and, like all other coloured performers, really gets a thrill out of a number that boosts her own race!

By the way, despite the fact that bandleaders and B.B.C. officials have paid it the compliment of thinking it's an American song, it isn't. It's British, and was written by Box, Cox, and Lewis Iida.

What Irwin is complaining about is the repercussions of the ban on the Home Service and General Forces Programme.

Any Home or G.F. programme that is recorded for subsequent A.E.F. broadcasting must not include the song.

Worse still was when Irwin had the song cut out of a G.F.P. feature because there was a slight possibility that the programme might be re-broadcast on the A.E.F. in a couple of months' time.

Just a possibility, mark you, but Irwin lost a plug.

This means that a number not banned on our own B.B.C. wave-lengths still comes under the ban if anybody thinks there is the faintest chance of the programme containing it ever going on the A.E.F. Hard luck, Irwin!



PHOTOGRAPHERS are reputed to be ill-mannered in the execution of their duties, even in this land of traditional politeness. In the U.S.A., of course, their exploits are positively breath-taking, ranging from the concealed camera in divorce courts to the swift parachute descent in pursuit of sensational but elusive "shots."

The dance-band business has its share of intrepid lens-men, our own Jack Marshall being, perhaps, second to none.

Which of the "Riverboat Shufflers" can forget the time Jack—who had evidently slept far too late to get aboard in the normal way—boarded the pleasure craft at some lonely weir and at once clamoured over an already perched atop of the awning in order to draw a bead on Cyril Blake, lost among throngs of jostling trippers?

All went well until a redistribution of Jack's hefty bulk sent the inevitable pool of rain-water collected by the canopy cascading over an already overburdened skipper, doing his overwrought best to steer the hell-ship from an unsighted position aft.

From amid clouds of steam the enraged sailor emerged to order Jack down from his vantage point, now sagging beneath that formidable avoirdupois.

Deciding that a maritime life was not for him, our camera wizard, after a few more shots, quite soon made for dry land, regretting the last total lack of plates which prevented him getting a picture of bearded "Jive-Captain" Rex Harris, who, as soon as the vessel moored, had slipped silently into the water, and, splashing and struggling and looking like some weird underwater animal at bay, presented a perfect subject for the photographer specialising in the snaphotting of peculiarities.

Again, there springs to mind the "Jazz Jambores" at which Jack, his precious "box" at the ready, crept down the aisle wrapped in his task of focussing a sensational piece of stage-craft, when all at once his serenity was shattered by the spotlight of universal attention. The show had stopped; every eye was on our Jack; into the awful silence boomed these querulous words of Tommy Trinder: "Is your JOURNEY REALLY NECESSARY, OLD MAN?"

Camera-men in the States exceed even Jack Marshall's efforts in their constant and recurring efforts to get incredibly "dumb" groups of people to smile, has had to extend the simple art of taking a photograph into a kind of comedy performance, which some enterprising agent may (I hope) one day book for the halls.

With all these efforts to produce artificial laughter, the only occasion I remember in which the "victims" burst into really spontaneous mirth was at Sergeant Jimmy Miller's wedding, when I was taking a photograph perched upon a pair of steps—and suddenly the steps broke, precipitating me violently into a flower border!

This technique of making people smile at the right moment really is incredibly difficult. In fact, I usually keep a few little jokes up my sleeve—some for use in mixed groups of sitters, some for "men only" parties.

A simple little one-line "gag" is usually enough, and here is one I sometimes use in mixed groups (you'll have to see me in Archer Street, or at the Feldman Club, to hear any of the "men only" gags, I'm afraid).

Anyway, the one I was going to tell you is about the very ignorant girl who thought that "tuba" was an Italian underground railway!

"Most of the photographers we know are friendly, decent folk, fanatic in their devotion to lens and film, but otherwise quite normal. Comes a jazz concert, however, and every ounce of their frenzied zeal rises to the surface. They climb on the stage at the Met., or Carnegie, or Town Hall, and poke their cameras in the faces of pianists, drummers, saxophonists, get almost as close to trumpet mouthpieces as the lips of the trumpeters."

"It would be unthinkable for a photographer to poke his camera in the face of a Heifetz or a Toscanini, a Melchior or a Pons, while one of those redoubtable was playing or conducting or singing. It should be equally out of place in the face of a Tatum or a Hawkins or an Ellington or a Condon."

So we're talking about photographers, are we? (writes Jack Marshall, who has just found the above notes in proof form on the Editor's desk, and is fair busting to chip in on his favourite subject).

Well, the following dissertation constitutes some experience straight from the horse's nosebag, as it were, and the title of the following little article should be "People I Have Shot."

Yes, when you want to know anything about photographing dance bands and dance band celebrities in future, why not ask the bloke who

Reading through the Editor's notes above, it strikes me that they are very eulogistic, giving the impression that I never fail to arrive back at the office with the most marvellous photograph under the sun, etc.

How heartily I wish this were true! However, as an honest man I should like now to tell you about one or two occasions when the picture emphatically didn't "come off."

Going back many years now, the first picture I was ever asked to take on the "M.M." was one of Maestro Harry Roy—just a portrait affair, in his dressing room at Finsbury Park Empire. Those, by the way, were the days of flash powder that didn't flash, and slow cameras and plates (the modern lightning-like "Leica" and "Contax" technique was unheard of then).

Anyway, the flash went off all right, the camera didn't fall down, and I didn't lose the plates on the way back, so these three most common causes of failure having been eliminated, I developed my plate with beating heart, all agog to see what my very first picture of a dance band celebrity looked like.

After much diligent searching I could faintly discern Harry Roy's head way down at the bottom of the plate—but what on earth was this, this terrifying, Frankenstein creation towering menacingly over Harry Roy's unprotected form, with smoke and

from time to time strange fizzing noises were heard and then, in about a quarter of an hour, he re-emerged with a phial of fearsome-looking black powder, for which he charged me a couple of bob.

"I don't like flash powder. It makes such a mess," demurred Senator Murphy, as I got ready for the shot (Joe Loss didn't say anything; he looked very unhappy).

"This is smokeless powder, though," I insisted—and a few seconds later was cursing that scientific chemist chap, for as I pulled the trigger there was a tiny little flash, succeeded by a blinding volume of dense black smoke that filled the room and made it, in a mere ten seconds, uninhabitable. I sent Senator Murphy, his clothes smothered, staggering along the passage in a helluva state; and that brought firemen, with apparatus to fight the supposed flames, racing to the spot.

My final recollection of the incident is being very firmly escorted from the theatre by the (at normal times) genial stage-doorman called Bert, who may still be there, for all I know.

I must digress for a moment from this article, because blokes are waiting in and out of the office, full of Christmas cheer, and someone has just opened a bottle; and there are lots of good stories going round. Mostly they are too risqué to tell you, but, reinforced by a Few Drops of the Right Stuff, everybody has just been laughing very loudly at that old rag of Arthur Askey's, who, when asked who is the composer of "Kitten on the Keys," answers, "De Pussy, of course!"

One more photographic incident brings us bang up to date. It was at the reception given to famous American singer Dinah Shore, this summer, at the May Fair Hotel. I had taken my photographs, but lots of the agency boys were still cracking away.

One venerable gentleman intrigued me by the way he balanced his camera on the flat palm of his hand, firing his flash by some system of remote control, which seemed to necessitate about a mile of flex.

Dinah also watched him with growing amazement; getting more and more intrigued at his antics, she asked his name. Of course, it was a double-barrelled one, of incredible length and difficult of pronunciation.

"How do you pronounce it?" demanded the Dinah.

"Oh, you don't pronounce it—you sneeze it," said the elderly cameraman, rising to the occasion—and in the roar of laughter that followed I seemed to hear vindication and justice to all the funny tricks which we picture-snatchers everywhere are sometimes forced into to get unusual pictures to supply the constant demands of that voracious monster, the Press.

My last memory of some exciting picture was when I took my camera to the Windmill Theatre, and of all the girls I photographed there, not one...

[Sorry, boys, this is the Editor; and I'm afraid the rest of Jack's story won't pass the censorship, so that's all for now.]

On a later occasion I was sent to the London Palladium to photograph Joe Loss, and as there was a famous American artist called Senator Murphy on the bill, I decided to put him in the photo as well. Neither were available for the moment, which was just as well, because I discovered I'd arrived without any of the deadly flash powder.

Rushing into a chemist's, I was greeted by a young assistant who, with his big glasses and scientific demeanour, immediately reminded me of a "Billy Bunter" character from the books of our school days.

He hadn't got any flash powder, he said—but he could soon mix me some. Guaranteed to work, and it would be entirely smokeless.

He disappeared behind a screen;



"He would call when Bing Crosby is on!"



My, how Joe Venuti has changed! If these cuties were only available for gigs and one-night stands, we'd be around booking 'em—but, alas, you'd have to journey across the Atlantic to hear them play.

"What's that, sir? Who the blazes wants to hear them play? Quite, quite!"

To be serious, the picture shows part of an all-girl band, with singing Marcy McGuire as leader, who appears in RKO Radio's film musical, "Seven Days Ashore."

one team, and a side of female songsters composed of Beryl Davis, Diane and Terry Devon. First clash will be on the golf course, with the girls receiving a stroke each at the long holes; then comes a cycling race, a darts match and, finally, a row between greyhounds owned by the six competitors.

Rabin's greyhound "farm" at Long Buckby, Northampton. Losers will make a donation to charity.

This exciting new series Editor Ray Sonin has so thrilled me that I propose immediately to go and do likewise.

I have instituted a battle in sport between myself and my secretary. First clash will be on the typewriters, with myself receiving a handicap of two consonants and a vowel at each long word; then comes a pub-crawling contest (gin-and-lime and a pint of bitter to be regarded as equal); finally, a train-catching contest. I and my secretary will leave the office together, and the train will leave us both standing.

The loser will make a donation to a fund we are inaugurating for providing Oscar Rabin's publicity manager with aspirin tablets.

Other musicians have other ideas. For instance, Meade Lux Lewis believes Louis Armstrong to be the greatest single figure in jazz to-day; he's not the only one to long for such a view, and Joe "King" Oliver is his favourite musician of yesterday.

And it is reported that Harry James himself, who ran into Bunk Johnson somewhere or other, said to the veteran trumpeter, "Pops, I don't have to tell you Louie is the best of them all." To which Bunk replied: "You're damn right, I know that. There ain't no man ever been who could outplay Louie."

From New York come reports of exotic Billie Holiday scoring heavily at the Down Beat on 52nd Street. . . . Café Society Uptown has just enticed Mildred Bailey from her summer retirement. She takes the place of folk-singer Burt Ives, who has an album of his pieces on Asch. . . . Hoppy Jones' place in the Ink Spots combo has not been filled yet, and they may cancel bookings until the right man is found. . . . As if Tom Dorsey hadn't enough on his mind, a songwriter now claims infringement in the case of a tune called "Come Out, Wherever You Are." Dorsey and Sinatra are among the defendants in the suit, which is filed for \$250,000 damages. . . . It is reported that ace cornettist Muggsy Spanier lately poked Len Feather in the face, and that Len went down and stayed.

Interviewed last month in Chicago by Allen Grossman, of "The Jazz Session," Benny Goodman came across with the names of his favourite musicians. For rhythm he chose Cozy Cole, Teddy Wilson, Sid Weiss and Allan Reuss; trumpets were Ziggy Elman, Harry James, Cozy Williams and Tony Crozo; Bill Harris would fill the trombone chair; while sax were Johnny Hodges and Coleman Hawkins. For the vocals he'd have Ella Fitzgerald and Bing Crosby. His favourite band to-day is the Harry James outfit.

It is noticeable that Benny made no mention of a clarinetist—perhaps modestly restrained him from choosing

Huletide U.S. Five Jottings

AFTER the "shelling" of Frank Sinatra on Columbus Day last, fans rallied round to an even greater than usual extent, with the result that the Paramount did capacity business and turned away thousands. Oddly enough, the hysterical enthusiasm of swooning youngsters rebounded sadly, reason being that they habitually sit through several shows with obvious financial repercussions.

But, following the Paramount date, Frankie has been lined up by Century Artists' Bureau at \$100,000 for a five-day week!

A Metronome review of the act went like this: "Oa Frank's first number. . . the girl next to me squealed so I couldn't hear too well. Then he went into 'I'll Walk Alone' and 'I Don't Know Why,' but the girl in back of me squealed so that I couldn't hear too well. There were a few more songs, but I'm not too sure just what they were, because the girl on either side of me and the one in back and the one in front of me squealed so much that I couldn't hear too well."

Barney Bigard, clarinetist so long with Ellington, now leading his own group, was asked to name his favourite recording among those on which he featured. The reply was, "Man, I never listen to any record I make, once I've made them!"

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NORTHERN NEWS NOTES
 by Jerry Dawson

 USUALLY, the last few lines of my column in the Christmas Number have been devoted to seasonal greetings. This time I am reversing the process, because, in fact, I want to make a little more of it; to make it a little more individual and certainly more personal.
 Greetings to my many personal friends—most of whom have been made solely through the agency of a common interest—the profession which the MELODY MAKER does try faithfully to represent in all its vicissitudes, and whose members these days are spread far and wide in all corners of the globe.
 Greetings also to my many friends—I cannot call you anything but "friends"—whom I have never met, but who, again via a common interest, write me with amazing regularity, telling me of musical happenings of which I would otherwise remain in complete ignorance; to all those members of the profession who—still clinging on in Olvy Street—assist me to keep readers informed of current affairs at home; and last, but by no means least, to you, dear reader, who, with your helpful criticisms and suggestions, have assisted in this long, weary war in keeping the Northern flag well and truly flying in the columns of the "M.M."
 We Northerners are—we pride ourselves—very warm-hearted to a stranger and not the least, bit "uppish," but we do like our spot of publicity, and, without being accused of "self-praise," I think I can safely say that Northern News Notes have filled that want—thanks to all of you. May I simply say: "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all—and may 1945 bring peace."
 In spite of necessary war-time restrictions, Christmas is still, well, to the point of holiday fare, Blackpool still manages to put on a brave face for the festive season.
 The "Big Three" in ballrooms—the Palace, the Winter Gardens, and the famous Tower—will afford visiting dancing fans ample room in which to disport themselves, and at the Tower in particular the seasonal atmosphere will be well preserved by the presentation of the Christmas Ballet, the talent for which, as its parent the summer edition, is drawn exclusively from local children.
 The exacting musical accompaniment for this will be supplied by Ena Baga at the Wurlitzer organ, and the Tower Band, directed as urbanely as ever by maestro Joe Kirkham.
 Vocalist Joan Miller has recently left the band, and her place has been taken by a little lady who is well known to holiday-makers—Vi Bailey, who was with the Tower Band in 1940-41 under Norman Newmait, and prior to this was with Joe around 1938, and so a happy partnership is resumed.
 Incidentally, Joe recently had the pleasure of playing for the Blackpool Co-operative Society's Children's Ball, when more than 6,000 kiddies of all ages filled the Tower Ballroom and thoroughly enjoyed themselves right up to the time of lustily singing "The King." I'll bet Joe worked that afternoon!
 At Southport, Billy Bevan and his Band, at the Cambridge Hall, have a very full programme over the holidays, as have Harry Thorley and his Band at the Winter Gardens, Morecambe.
 At Llandudno, Billy Collis and his Band, who celebrated their first birthday last month, will be the feature at Payne's Majestic Ballroom, and Billy faces a heavy programme with the following line-up:—
 Playing drums himself, he has: Harold Williams (piano), Bill Roberts (bass and vocals), Hughie Granville (trumpet), Glynn Douglas and Tom Eastwood (saxes), and vocaliste Doreen.
 By the way, if any young and keen sax players also and tenor—would like to break in the profession, they should contact Billy; he may possibly be able to place them in a comfortable berth.
 Yuletide revellers in Chesterfield will find themselves well catered for
 at the Victoria Hall, where Stan Cox and his Band are featured.
 The majority of Stan's old boys whom he used to feature in the summer at the Aberfeldy Hotel, St. Heller—happy days!—and at Walsh's Restaurant, Sheffield, in the winter time, are in the Forces these days, but he still retains two of them in his drummer, Eric Blakey (N.F.S.), and saxist, Len James, who is on munitions work.
 The rest of the boys are: Reg Atkinson and Bill Webb (saxes); Stan Clayton (trumpet); Syd Milner (trombone); Dorothy Heaton (piano); and Colin James (bass).
 Dorothy Heaton at one time featured her own unit at the Royal Hotel, Yarmouth; Colin James is of course the excellent vocal star; whilst Stan Clayton is a brother of Gerald's recent trumpet acquisition, Freddy Clayton.
 Stan Cox is often helped out also by Service boys who happen to be stationed in the area, and he has thus recently featured an ex-George Elrick drummer, Al Young, and noted accordion wizard Eddie Mendoza.
 Mention of George Elrick reminds me of a recent spot of ill-luck that befell the "wee Scots laddie."
 Due to play the week at Belle Vue, George arrived in Manchester late one Sunday evening, and, unable to find a garage in which to house his car, he was obliged to leave it for the night on an open car park in the heart of the city.
 Imagine his utter dismay to find, the following morning, that his luggage-boot had been forced open and his spare wheel removed, plus a fitted suitcase containing amongst other personal effects, two bottles of Scotch.
 Did someone once say that Northerners were warm-hearted? Perhaps the thief or thieves wanted their hearts warming...
 Christmas greetings from overseas have already begun to adorn my side-board, and amongst the first to arrive were one from saxist Stan Masters, now on a tour of the Italian battle-fronts with the band of the Cheshire Regt., and from bassist Don Artingstall, leader of the famous "Dots and Dashes" Forces outfit, which claims to be the longest-lived band in the Middle East.
 It is over four years now since the band was formed, and during this time they have brought fun and relaxation into the lives of many thousands of Service boys and girls, and to liberated civilians in North Africa.
 Now that the war has moved on somewhat, there is not the same call upon their services; but they are still working fairly regularly with an eight-piece line-up which is augmented for special occasions.
 Don has high hopes of returning home around the middle of next year, as his 4½ years' term of service expires in April next.
 Amongst the Christmas entertainment for the boys of the B.L.A. will be that offered by the "Red Dragons" of the 53rd Welsh Division, which is a concert-party unit featuring a nine-piece band which accompanies the show in addition to its own featured spot.
 Amongst these boys are: Fred Randall and Joe Pearce (trumpets); Ernest Tishshaw and Barney Williamson (altos); Brian David (tenor); George Eggar (drums); Bob Hughes (bass); Harold Sims (piano); and violinist-leader James Todd.
 Drummer George Eggar, who hails from Bury, Lancs., claims to have known me in the dim and distant past, when I once played drums—along with Stanley Black's pianist local-born Reg Warburton—at Rafferty's Dance Studio in that town.
 And he still writes to me...
 Well, folks, that's all for this Christmas. With it go my very best wishes to all who have helped to make it possible, and to all those boys—some of whom will never return—who have made, and are still making, any sort of Christmas possible here in England.

"DETECTOR" PLANS YOUR XMAS-DAY RADIO LISTENING

(A—A.E.F. Programme (514 m.); F—General Forces; H—Home Service)

- | | |
|---|---|
| FIRST CHOICE | ALTERNATIVE CHOICE |
| A.M.
10.0—Stay in bed. | "Christmas Party" (F)—If you're in the mood for a party so early. |
| 10.30—Ditto. | "Alice in Wonderland" (H).
Try a nice walk. |
| 11.0—"Duffie Bag" (A).
11.40—Keep walking (hope it keeps fine for you). | Entr'acte Players (F).
B.B.C. Scottish Orch. (H). |
| Noon—See if "they" are open. | If previously unsuccessful, try "them" again. |
| P.M.
12.30—R.A.F. "Skyrockets," with Anne Shelton (H).
1.0—Christmas dinner.
2.0—Dinner (cont.).
3.15—Afternoon nap (you'll probably need it by now).
3.45—"On the Record" (A).
4.15—Tea.
5.15—You'll have to make your own fun and games.
5.35—Still up to you.
6.10—Ditto.
6.30—British Band of A.E.F. (A).
7.0—A.E.F. "Christmas Show" (H).
8.0—"Christmas Night at Eight" (H.F.).
8.15—"Fred Waring Christmas Show" (A).
9.6—See if there's any beer left.
9.35—"Sunny" (H).
10.7—"Christmas Command Performance" (A).
10.30—Try to make the beer last out.
11.5—"Christmas Cabaret" (H).
Good night—and we hope you | "Palace of Varieties" (F).
"The Journey Home" (H.F.).
"Navy Mixture" (F)
Nap (cont.).
Repeat of yesterday's "The Big Show" (F).
"Christmas at Bart's" (F).
B.B.C. Symphony Orch. (F).
As above (cont.).
American Band of A.E.F. (A).
Finish the turkey (if any).
Finish the pudding (if any).
"Top Ten Tunes" (A).
"Duffy's Tavern" (A, at 9.30).
"Command Performance" (F, at 10.0).
Wally Chapman's Band (F).
Bed (if you can get upstairs).
had a jolly Christmas. |

CONGRATULATIONS to our old friend Carroll Gibbons, who proved himself to be an excellent radio actor in "Music For Miss Rogers" in the "Saturday Night Theatre" feature a couple of weeks ago.
 Carroll was the hero—an American songwriter living in London and meeting the other residents of his block of flats—and his easy, lazy and very natural way of talking—without a single trace of a stutter—was a real treat.
 It was a good little play intended to show that one's impressions of people's character, when you meet them, are often wrong, when you get to know them, and Carroll held everything together very well indeed, in between doing his usual pleasant piano-playing.
 Congratulations, Carroll—or, now that you're a radio actor, should it be Mr. Gibbons?
 It doesn't read as well as it did when acted, of course, but this is what happened:
 Will Hay asked if he had done his homework. He tearfully answered that he had done his best but he "kept falling off." Further questioning produced the incredible information that some boys could do it with one hand, but he couldn't. This went on until finally Will Hay asked: "Well, what did I set you to do for homework?" Billy Nicholls made the quite classic rejoinder: "Please, sir, you told me to write an essay on 'A Bicycle.'"
 Keep up the good work, Billy!
 There was one male B.B.C. announcer I heard compare one of Harry's programmes who drooled fatuous flippancies in a would-be intimate manner, and went on and on until I could have screamed! And the girls who did the rest of the announcing were only better because they had less to say.
 When is the B.B.C. going to learn that it's the bandleaders' voices that help to give the dance band sessions some individuality?
 Having got THAT off my chest, let's turn to the music—which was pretty classy, well varied, and played with the zip that Harry always manages to impart into any proceedings.
 I particularly noticed some excellent alto-playing by Harry Hayes—oh, and there was a harp that tinkled pleasantly enough on every fitting occasion.
 Dorothy Carless sang her numbers with her usual tuneful, cool efficiency, and the other vocalist was Harry himself. Well, Harry will be the first to agree that he is no Sinatra, but he can put a number over with that slight touch of burlesque that most popular songs of to-day can do with.
 And I must congratulate him on

being the first vocalist to realise the yodelling possibilities of the "late" and "date" phrases in the verse of "Is Your Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?"
 Incidentally, it's about time more credit was given to Harry as a composer. He turns out some most interesting numbers which he featured on his airings—particularly "Nine o'Clock Bounce," "Atlantic Jive," and a very tuneful ballad, "The Same Old Love."



"I worry about things like that..." Have you ever wondered what Dennis Day—who makes this crack and many others in the popular Jack Benny Radio Show—looks like? Well, here is a picture of him as he appears in R.K.O. Radio's new musical film, "Music in Manhattan."

A.E.F. PROGRAMME SCHEDULE
 (See "M.M." for December 9)
SUNDAY (December 24).—As for Sunday, 10th, except: 2.10 p.m., Carols. 5.15, Jack Payne, 6.45, "Raymond Scott Orch. 7.1, "Jack Benny. 9.5-10, "Special Christmas Command Performance (Part 1).
CHRISTMAS DAY (December 25).—As for Monday, 11th, except: 6.1-7, Rise and Shine. 7.30, Canada Show Dance Orch. 8.15, "Dinah Shore's Christmas Card. 12.15 p.m., Theatre Orch. 1.1, California Melodies. 6.5, Canadian Band of A.E.F. 6.30, British Band of A.E.F. 7.1, Glenn Miller's Orch. 7.30, Three Band Round Up. 8.30, To be announced. 9.5, Top Ten Tunes. 10.7, Special Christmas Command Performance (Part II).
TUESDAY (December 26).—As for Tuesday, 12th, except: 10.1 a.m., Three Band Round Up. 11.45, Piano Parade. 12.15 p.m., B.B.C. Northern Orch. 3.45, Band Wagon. 6.10-7, Round the Shows. 8.15-9, A.E.F.F. Pantomime. "All Sack and the Forty Quarter-masters."
WEDNESDAY (December 27).—As for Wednesday, 13th, except: 10.1 a.m., Charlie McCarthy. 5.15 p.m., "Amos and Andy. 7.1, R.C.A.F. Show. 8.15, "Johnny Mercer's Music Shop. 9.5, Eddie Condon's Jazz Session. 9.30, "Bob Hope Show.
THURSDAY (December 28).—As for Thursday, 14th, except: 7.30 a.m., Top Ten Tunes. 11.45, Piano Parade. 10.7 p.m., Rudy Vallee programme.
FRIDAY (December 29).—As for Friday, 15th, except: 7.30 a.m., American Dance Band. 11.45, Carroll Gibbons (piano). 7.30 p.m., "Kate Smith programme. 9.5, Canada Sing Show.
SATURDAY (December 30).—As for Saturday, 16th, except: 6.30 p.m., Will Hay programme.
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LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.—Offers invited from amateur and prof. bands, orchestras and dance bands to give perform. at the Council's parks and open spaces during 1945. Offers must be made on the official form obtainable from the Chief Officer of the Parks Dept., County Hall, S.E.1. Offers must reach the Chief Officer by 4 p.m. on Fri., Jan. 12, endorsed "Parks Entertainments."

BANDS WANTED

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