

PARRY DISBANDS HIS SEXTET: FORMS LARGE SWING BAND

HARRY PARRY AND HIS SEXTET ARE NO MORE! AFTER NEXT WEEK'S ENGAGEMENT AT THE METROPOLITAN, EDGWARE ROAD, THIS FAMOUS PIONEER OF BRITISH SMALL-BAND SWING ENDS ITS METEORIC FOUR YEARS' CAREER, TO BE SUCCEEDED BY HARRY PARRY AND HIS RADIO BAND A LARGE ENSEMBLE ON THE BEST AMERICAN SWING BAND LINES.

THIS WILL BE SURPRISING NEWS FOR READERS OF THE "MELODY MAKER," BUT HAS BEEN EXPECTED FOR SOME TIME NOW BY THOSE IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH HARRY AND HIS GENIAL MANAGER, BILL ELLIOTT.

Harry feels that four years on the stage have just about exhausted the scope of a Swing Sextet, and he has therefore decided to change his style and to cater for the wider public that can be attracted by music of the Artie Shaw and Glenn Miller type.

The present Sextet makes its last appearance at the Metropolitan next week (commencing Monday, Jan. 22), giving two shows a day, and during this time Harry will be spending the rest of every day rehearsing his new band, with which he will open at the Empress Theatre, Brixton, on the following Monday (Jan. 29).

This date is followed by Golders Green Hippodrome for the week of Feb. 5; the Court Royal Hotel, Southampton (Feb. 12 week); followed by dates all round the country, including a season at Green's Playhouse, Ballroom, Glasgow.

The new outfit will be thirteen strong, including Harry himself leading on his immaculate clarinet. The only persons remaining in the new band from the original Sextet are pianist Ken Powell and glamorous vocaliste Gail Page.

NEW PERSONNEL

First alto is Jimmy Williams; lately released from the R.A.F., and the second altoist is Kingsley Stockwell, who joined Harry Parry as baggage-boy for the band four years ago. He was then promoted to road manager, and in the meantime took up the sax, and was taught by members of the Sextet with such good effect that he now is able to take his place in the band as an instrumentalist.

Frank Storey is the lead tenor, and a second tenor is still wanted, so anyone interested should ring the Parry office (Regent 4678) at once.

First trumpet is a Middlesbrough discovery named Richard Hunter; and the second trumpet, Frank Denning, and the trombone player, Tommy Wilson, both come from Teddy Foster's Band at Birmingham.

The pianist is still Ken Powell; and Bob Duffy (from Billy Ternent's Band) is on bass, doubling guitar; while the drummer is a 16-year-old find from Bradford, of whom Harry and Bill think most highly. His name is Irving Tidswell.

Partnering Gail Paige as vocaliste is a new girl singer from London, named Sylvia Loraine.

All arrangements for the new band are being done by Wally Reid, and fans will watch with the keenest interest for the launching of this very bold and ambitious scheme.

Melody Maker

3d INCORPORATING "RHYTHM"

WEEK ENDING JANUARY 20, 1945

EDMUNDO ROS FOR NEW YORK BIG CONTRACT SIGNED

SENSATIONAL NEWS IN DANCE BAND CIRCLES IS OF THE GREAT HONOUR ACCORDED TO FAMOUS RUMBA MAESTRO EDMUNDO ROS, WHO THIS WEEK HAS SIGNED A TERRIFIC CONTRACT TO TAKE HIS COMPLETE BAND OVER TO NEW YORK TO APPEAR AT ONE OF ITS MOST FAMOUS NIGHT SPOTS.

Venue for this exciting venture is the famous El Morocco niterie. El Morocco is owned by noted American millionaire Peyton Marshall Magruder. Over here on urgent business connected with the war effort, Peyton Magruder heard the Ros outfit at the Bagatelle Restaurant and Astor niterie in London, and was so struck by the quality of the band and its leader that he immediately decided that its music must be taken across to New York.

Accordingly, a cast-iron five years' contract (which we have seen) has been drawn up at extremely good terms, and has been duly signed and ratified, for the presentation of Edmundo and his Music at this most exclusive of New York hotels.

The question which everyone will naturally be asking is: WHEN?

This cannot immediately be answered, for obvious reasons, but there is, we are reliably informed, no reason at all to presume that the visit will not take place until hostilities have ceased.

The visit would count as a "good-will" venture, and as such would not be entirely influenced by the current war situation, so that it is more than likely that the crossing may take place considerably sooner than most people think possible.

A.F.M. ATTITUDE

Apart from the great appeal made to him personally by Edmundo's music, millionaire Magruder has been greatly influenced in his decision by the undoubted popularity of Ros with the American Forces.

His many broadcasts on the A.E.F. Programme have brought in a very large number of appreciative letters from American troops, so that Mr. Magruder is quite satisfied that Edmundo will be a terrific commercial proposition in the States.

If and when the plan becomes an accomplished fact, Ros naturally hopes to broadcast from the States, back to his many fans in Britain.

Another big question which concerns the projected American visit is that of the attitude of the American Federation of Musicians (the U.S. equivalent of our own Musicians' Union).

We are assured by Bill Elliott, who has negotiated the whole deal on behalf of Elliott Direction, Inc., that the project being on a good-will basis will ensure that there is no difficulty whatever with the A.E.M., and Bill is confident that the carrying-out of the contract will become an accomplished fact before so very long.

In the meanwhile, fans in London and the Provinces have an unusual opportunity to see and hear Edmundo in the next few weeks.

Next Wednesday (24th) a few fortunate London enthusiasts will see Edmundo at a big charity function at Grosvenor House, Park Lane, and fans up North will be flocking to see Edmundo on Sunday, January 28, at a big Sunday concert at the Odeon Cinema, Newcastle, where he is starting with his full band.

He will be at Grosvenor House again on March 8, and is, of course, continuing his nightly work as busily as ever at the Bagatelle and Astor, with his usual programme of radio work also going strongly.

GREGORY'S 'ART IS IN FORCES' ENTERTAINMENT!

HAVING spent a very large proportion of the total war period entertaining the troops half-way round the world, bandleading notably Art Gregory is shortly off again on a further extensive E.N.S.A. tour.

This time Art's venue is the Continent of Europe. He is taking a company of fourteen, including an eight-piece dance band, and will be away for about six months.

On Art's last trip abroad he was away fourteen months. How he and his company were torpedoed, and had some very exciting experiences in the course of this epic trip, has already been told.

Many will still not have realised, however, that on these journeys Art's itinerary was such a large one that he visited Egypt, Syria, Palestine, right up to Baalbek, and South to Suez, touching Haifa, etc., also, and generally spending as hectic and exciting a tour as would almost provide the material for a whole book of thrilling reminiscences.

Art and his company will first of all be visiting Belgium on the present trip, and will also doubtless be in France and Holland before their hectic itinerary is complete.

With Art himself in front, and Bryce Davis (late Harry Parry, Jay Wilbur, etc.) and Freddie Harfield vocalising, line-up is Jack Moss (drums); John Brand (piano); Eddie Hall (bass); Jimmy Cannell (guitar and trumpet); Bert Youell and Ernie Pendrous (trumpets); Bill Gibbons (trombone); and Fred Haith (tenor sax, clarinet, etc.).

Bert Youell is the honoured "old-timer" of the business who will be remembered from the early Savoy Orpheans days. Ernie Pendrous has just been discharged on health grounds from the R.A.F.

STOP PRESS

We deeply regret to learn that Johnny Healey, noted leader of the band at the Bolton Palais de Danse, died suddenly from a heart attack on Monday night (15th).

Full details in our next issue.



Edmundo Ros signs the sensational contract that will take him to the States for five years, while manager Bill Elliott benignly makes sure his signature is on the dotted line.

INTRODUCING— LITTLE STAR

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VERA LYNN
HARRY JAMES
JOE LOSS
and
FELIX MENDELSSOHN

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SEMI-PROS HELP LONDON KIDDIES' HOSPITAL

THE "Melody Maker" gratefully thanks the semi-pro. bands of this country!

The reason? Well, this paper is deeply interested in the welfare of the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, London, of which Lord Southwood is the chairman.

Recently we approached our semi-pro. friends in the hope that they might be able to run dances for this very deserving cause, and the reaction has even surprised us—who know the generosity of the musicians of this country.

Dances which have already been held include one at Leek Town Hall by Jim Newton and his Dance Band, and Les Wingrove has organised two London dates for this week—one at the Walthamstow Town Hall on Wednesday and another at the Hornsey Town Hall to-morrow (Friday).

On January 26, Don Ray and his Band, with vocalists June Robbins, Alan Hunt, and the 20th Century Sextet, are presenting a dance at the Y.M.C.A. Ballroom, Shakespeare St., Nottingham, from 7 p.m. to midnight, and on the following day those well-known pre-war "M.M." contestants Billy Gibbons and his Band are running a dance at the Oddfellows' Hall, Whitchurch, Salop, from 7.30 to 11.30 p.m.

On the same day it is also Dunstable's turn, when Fred James and his Dance Band are running a dance at the Town Hall there. This event is being organised by the Mayor's Entertainment Committee, of which Fred is a member.

Other bands all over the country have kindly volunteered to help, and details of these events will be given later; but acknowledgment must be made of the very graceful gesture of well-known Ashton-in-Makerfield outfit Ron Hall and his Band (East Lancs champions and North Britain finalists 1944), who sent a contribution of £25 to the hospital.

Once again, the "Melody Maker" very sincerely thanks all concerned.

McMEIGHAN ILL

THE MELODY MAKER is sorry to report that well-known swing fiddler Johnny McMeighan is ill in hospital with yellow jaundice. Johnny will be away for about a fortnight. His many friends will join with us in wishing him the speediest possible recovery.

For some time Johnny has been leading the Band at the Bulldog Restaurant, Bond Street, London, W. During his absence the outfit's pianist, Marion Lothian, is looking after things at the Bulldog—where, incidentally, dancing now takes place both afternoon and evening.

Band at this resort consists, at the time of writing, of Marion Lothian (piano); Micky Deans (tenor); Micky Greeves (drums); Bert Howard (bass); and Alan Hodgkins (guitar).

Southport. New club being formed. Write for particulars to Sec., 21, Grantham Rd., Southport.

CALL SHEET

(Week commencing Jan. 22)

LES ALLEN,
Tivoli, Dundee.
Nat ALLEN and Band,
Hippodrome, Norwich.
Carl BARRITEAU and Band,
Court Royal Hotel, Southampton.
Billy COTTON and Band,
Longford Theatre, Stretford,
Manchester.
Gloria CAYE and Band,
Bedford Theatre, Camden Town.
Henry HALL and Band,
Palace, Huddersfield.
Joe LOSS and Band,
Band of the Week, B.B.C.
Vera LYNN,
Empire, Nottingham.
Oscar RABIN and Band,
Green's Playhouse, Glasgow.
Felix MENDELSSOHN'S Hawaiian
Serenaders,
Hippodrome, Ipswich.
Harry PARRY and Sextette,
Metropolitan, Edgware Road.
Ronnie MUNRO and Orchestra,
Hippodrome, Chatham.
TROISE and his Mandoliers,
Tivoli, Hull.

BRITISH HITS LEAD THE PARADE

THIS is a big and historic week for British music publishers.

For the first time in many, many years the British "Hit Parade" of the songs which the people are singing and buying in this country includes, among its leading four titles, no fewer than three British numbers.

Topping the list is the Noel Gay waltz, "The Happiest New Year of All," followed by the American song "I'll Walk Alone," published by Chappell.

Third place is occupied by another British waltz, "If You Ever Go to Ireland," published by Cinephonic, and fourth comes another British opus—the Irwin Dash song, "Chocolate Soldier from the U.S.A.," despite the fact that it has been banned from the A.E.F. airwaves.

In the list of the ten best tunes there is also another British song, Campbell Connelly's "Shine On, Victory Moon," which shares sixth place with the American "Swinging on a Star."

With all the big American film and record hits that are over here now, it is a most interesting and very encouraging sign of the times that home-produced songs can be so popular and successful.

WELL-KNOWN figure of the profession, W. H. "Dot" Dash, for the past six years manager to band-leader Jack Leon, has recently taken over the post of business manager to the L.W. Hunt Drum Manufacturing Co., Ltd., and is now working from the offices of Len Hunt's modern drum factory in Archer Street, London, W. The son of famous theatrical celebrity Lottie Collins, and a cousin of José Collins, "Dot" Dash is the last of a long line of theatrical celebrities running unbroken from the 17th century.

NO ONE-NIGHTERS FOR LEW STONE

THERE will be a big disappointment for Midlands fans in the news that Lew Stone will be unable to play his week of one-night stands arranged for the week commencing February 12. The series has had to be cancelled at Lew's own request, owing entirely to his present state of health.

Lew's health nowadays necessitates rest and a regular mode of life. His doctor's instructions are that he can only accept broadcasting, or such work as will enable him to live at home and thereby follow out a prescribed line of treatment as laid down by the medico, so that, whilst he is able to appear at the B.B.C., or perhaps in some quieter kind of resident job, such work as one-night stands or theatre dates—which necessitate travel—are out of the question for him at present.

The week of dates had been arranged by that record-breaking Midlands promoter, Alfred H. Danvers. Mr. Danvers wishes to point out to all fans that the cancellation is no fault of his, or Lew Stone's.

Mickey Deans for Preager

NEWS from the Lou Preager camp this current week is of a three-fold nature.

In the first place, Lou himself is a great deal better, has been able to superintend a recording session, and at the time of writing is expecting to return to Hammersmith Palais any day now.

In the second place, noted tenor-stylist Micky Deans is scheduled to join the main Preager Band very shortly. He will be sharing first tenor with "Crack" Cracknell, and both players will be featured on future records and broadcasts.

Thirdly, Lou's latest interest, the Royalty niterie—where he presents the dance band—will be closing down next Saturday (20th) for a brief period to allow certain internal alterations to be carried out.

News of Doris Knight

THE "Melody Maker" is sorry to report that famous young femme singer from Ivy Benson's Band, Doris Knight, has recently been seriously ill, having undergone a major operation in King's College Hospital, London.

After a very anxious time, Doris is now well on the mend and is ready to receive, and answer, letters from her many special friends and well-wishers.

Her address is: Twining Ward, King's College Hospital, London. We wish her a very speedy recovery.

TENOR sax and arranging notability, Harry Gold, is busy on the airwaves these days, carrying out Overseas and other airings with some interesting combos.

On February 1, Harry comes to the mike in "Spotlight" (12.15-12.30. Forces), with a novelty combination of three violins, viola, electric guitar, tenor sax, piano, bass and drums.

He has also recently carried out a recording for transmission to the West Indies, with a very interesting band in which were included George Fierstone (drums); Lauderic. Caton (guitar); Matt Heft (pno.); Harry Benson (bass); Harry Roche (trombone); Harry Conn and Freddie Grant (saxes); Jack Coles (tpt.); etc.

FOUR famous dance bands will be playing at London's Grosvenor House next Wednesday (24th) on the occasion of a big function in aid of the London Hospital.

They will be Joe Loss and his Band; the famous R.A.F. "Skyrockets"; Edmundo Ros and his Rumba Band; and Johnny Denis and his Novelty Sextet.

FOLLOWING their sensational success at the King's Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, last Thursday, when hundreds had to be turned away at the doors, Geraldo and his full broadcasting orchestra and array of vocalists will appear at a special dance next Tuesday (23rd) at the de Montfort Hall, Leicester.

The dance, which is being promoted by Arthur Kimbrell, is from 7 to 11 p.m.

CHAMP. CHAMBERS LEAVES RESIDENT ASHTON JOB

DISTRESSING rumours have been current around the Manchester district that the 1944 All-Britain Championship-winning band of George Chambers has broken up. We are very glad to be able to give the lie to the stories.

At the time of his success George, with his boys, was resident for a season at the Palais de Danse, Ashton-under-Lyne, but, owing to a disagreement on policy, he recently moved out, taking with him several of his corner men and leaving others behind who have formed the nucleus of the new resident band under the leadership of Hal Wood.

At the moment George is fulfilling a series of gigs whilst in the process of reorganising the band for a new resident job that he is due to open shortly.

This is very much in the "hush-hush" stage at the moment, but the details will be available in a week or so.

In the meantime a signal honour has been accorded the band.

On the occasion of the band's recent broadcast along with other All-Britain bands, it was heard by Mr. Jesse Hewitt, managing director of the Palace Theatre, Manchester (G.T.C.), who immediately booked the band for one of the most important annual gigs in Manchester—the Pantomime Ball, held each year at the Midland Hotel in aid of the Variety Artists' Benevolent Fund.

This takes place on Friday, January 26, and the usual spate of pantomime stars and stage artistes will be present.

The George Chambers Band is also shortly to embark upon a series of Sunday concerts, and it will readily be seen that far from disbanding, it is taking on a lease of life in an entirely new sphere—directly consequent upon its success in MELODY MAKER contests.

BUDDY'S NEW BEARD

CONSEQUENT upon the transfer of Charlie Short to a different station in the ordinary course of his R.A.F. duties, Buddy Featherstonhaugh's R.R.C. Sextet now has a new bass player.

He is Reggie Beard, quite an "old-timer" who bears an extremely honoured name in the profession, having been with Billy Tennant and several other of our top-line bands, including a spell some time ago with Jack Hylton.

Reggie has had a deal of broadcasting experience, and, quite apart from his proven musical ability, is also a practised mimic and comedian. He has recently been with Harry Hunt's Band in the R.A.F.

Complete line-up of the Featherstonhaugh bunch these days is Buddy himself (tenor, clarinet); Don Macaffer (trombone); Malcolm Lockyer (piano); Reggie Beard (bass); Ray Padbury (guitar); and Stanley Marshall (drums). Monty Bailey-Watson is nowadays looking after the managerial and secretarial side of the band's activities.

GUITARIST Sid Gross is making good progress with his "Swing Shop" concert, which is taking place at Wembley Town Hall on Sunday, January 28, at 3 p.m.

Many other swing artists have now signified their intention of appearing. Besides the George Shearing Quartet, from Hatchett's Restaurant, and Beryl Davis (already announced), there will be: Kenny Baker (trumpet); Aubrey Franks (tenor); Joe Deniz (guitar); Tommy Bromley (bass); Cyril Bass (drums) (Cyril will be remembered as previously on drums with the R.A.F. "Skyrockets"), and many other British stars of swing.

WELL-KNOWN London bassist Russ Allen (affectionately known to all his intimates as "Colonel Blimp") will be on nine days' leave from the R.A.F., commencing January 22, and would like some sessions, gigs, etc. May be contacted at Reliance 3455.

F.&D.'s BIGHITS!

SHINE ON HARVEST MOON
★ SOME OTHER TIME ★

AND THEN YOU KISSED ME
THE SWEETHEART WALTZ

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JACKSON v. JONES

EDGAR JACKSON takes time out from record-reviewing to discuss Jazz and Swing

ALMOST before the ink was dry on Max Jones's article last week about 1944 and the records it gave us, I was hearing comments on it.

Many were a good deal more outspoken than complimentary.

Most people seem to have no quarrel with Max's opinions of the records when considered separately in the light of the type of music each purports to represent.

But more than a few appear to be very irate at what they describe as the way Max used the article to further his attitude to the jazz and swing controversy, and the influence it could have on the recording companies.

It is these for whom I write—and with whom, incidentally, I am in complete agreement—when I say that Max is not getting himself or anyone else anywhere by trying to force on the world at large his obvious belief that nothing which does not conform compromisingly closely to the pattern of early jazz can be worth while.

A PLACE FOR GOOD SWING

There is no need for me to point out that I certainly do not belong to the opposite camp which thinks swing the only thing and all old-time jazz out of date and corny. My many outbursts against swing will have proved that conclusively enough.

But in fairness to swing and myself I would explain that these outbursts have not been provoked by any distaste for swing in general.

Rather have they been the result of the pretentiousness and exhibitionism that in so many recorded examples of swing have taken the place of the undeniable sincerity and inherent simplicity which were such laudable and enjoyable features of jazz before it evolved into swing.

But that is not to say that swing is inherently bad.

Quite apart from the fact that it has replaced jazz as the popular music of the moment, it can be at its best a very worthy successor to it, and to refuse to accept this as a fact is as ridiculous as it is futile.

It does no more than show a complete failure to move with the times—even, one might say, a most regrettable slow-wittedness.

When jazz first came upon the scene its devotees were the first to accuse those who decried it of being old-fashioned and incapable of appreciating a new departure. Yet to-day, by their refusal to acknowledge swing, they are placing themselves in that very same boat—the boat that is always about ten years behind the times.

In due course these diehards will, one hopes, come to consider swing with the same enlightened understanding as they now consider jazz, but by then swing will probably have been superseded by whatever the logical development of it may prove to be, so these jazz adherents will still be as out of date then as they are now.

Mind you, not that I am suggesting that jazz is still anything but a most fascinating music.

In addition to its historical significance as the first and most notable self-expression by the coloured people of America of their unique musical gifts, jazz—and especially that foundation of it, the Blues, in its many and varied forms—has a charm that remains irresistible.

But just as there is a place for jazz in the musical constellation, so is there a place for swing—or at any rate good swing.

The secret, if one can call it a secret, of swing appreciation is to be able to appraise it for what it is instead of attempting to compare it with jazz, or for that matter any other form of music.

Comparisons only get one anywhere when there are grounds for them.

There are no valid grounds for them between swing and jazz any more than there were between jazz and straight music.

The jazz enthusiasts were the first to realise this.

When the "straight" music luminaries decried the advent of jazz because it did not conform to the model and traditions of classical music, the then young, but none the less enthusiastic for that, jazz fraternity promptly retorted—and rightly!—that it was absurd to attempt to compare the two because they neither had, nor were supposed to have, anything much more than the bare notes of the scale in common.

REISSUES

Yet by now continually attempting to compare swing with jazz these jazz devotees are making the very same mistake that they accused their critics of making.

By all means let us have criticism, and the fiercer the better.

But let it be based on a fair outlook—the outlook which can accept something for what it is, instead of continually wincing because it is not something else that individual fads lead some people to prefer.

It is no more right or useful that the recording companies should be plagued to issue only jazz records than that they should issue only swing.

In fact, it is a highly dangerous procedure to adopt, first, because modern-played jazz in the fullest sense of the word can at the best be no more than a resurrection and consequently without the historical significance of the original article; and, secondly, because many of the still unissued genuine old-time jazz recordings have remained unissued simply because they neither were nor are worth issuing.

We had a perfect example of this in the Eddie Condon "Oh, Baby"/"Indiana" disc.

Because of the (to use Max Jones's own words) "fabulous stories" that had been put around about these titles, a frantic outcry arose from the jazz fans for them.

And what did they get for their trouble (not to mention money)? Two performances which even they had to admit when they heard them were (to quote Max yet again) "so greatly disappointing."

Incidentally, all the while the outcry about not being able to find copies of these records to dub from was going on in both this country and America I had pressings in my library, but refused to reveal the fact because I knew just how little they were worth and had no wish to be a party to inveigling young collectors into buying something they would only regret having spent their hard-earned money on.

By all means let us have some old-time records issued currently with the newer swing discs, but let them be worthwhile ones, and don't let us have them eternally held up as examples of what modern swing ought still to be.



NOTED guitarist Howard Lucraft (who is broadcasting in the A.E.F. programme next Monday afternoon, 22nd) sends us the above unusual picture of a gig which he recently played with his outfit. He tells the story in a letter to us in which he says: "My boys (all members of the R.A.F. Central Band) were recently commissioned to play at a big A.A. (Army) headquarters officers' dance. On arriving at the officers' mess, which was a very large old house, I was greeted at the door by none other than Henry VIII brandishing the leg of a turkey, whom I soon discovered to be the General of the unit. Apparently everyone at the dance was in Tudor-period costume, and the boys and I were immediately rushed away, stripped of our R.A.F. uniforms, and dressed in the knaves' outfits shown in the above photograph. I need hardly say that these costumes were extremely draughty around the lower portions of the anatomy! The boys with me at the time and shown in the photograph were well-known old-timers Freddy Aspinall (piano) and Bill Dickman (clarinet), with Alan Lord (drums), Sam Wright (bass), and myself, of course (electric guitar)."

CONTEST FIXTURES

LONDON AREA

Thursday, February 8.—Town Hall, WATFORD (7.45 p.m. to 1 a.m.): contest to be completed in time for bands to catch last public conveyances home. The 1945 Hertfordshire County Championship.

Organisers: Messrs. Lyn Morgan and Charlie Cooper, 78, West Way, Rickmansworth, Herts. (Phone: Rickmansworth 2767.)

Wednesday, February 14.—New Town Hall, WALTHAMSTOW, E.17 (7-11 p.m.): The 1945 Essex County Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Les Wingrove, 185, Fernie Park Road, Hornsey, N.8. (Phone: Moutview 9509.)

PROVINCES

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE.—Friday, March 2, at the Palais de Danse (7-11 p.m.): The 1945 South Lancs Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Lewis Buckley 107, Broadway, Royton, Oldham, Lancs. (Phone: MAIN (Oldham) 1431.)

BIRMINGHAM.—Tuesday, March 6, at the Smethwick Baths, Smethwick (7-11 p.m.): The 1945 Birmingham District Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Arthur Kimbrell, 38, Rugby Road, Hinckley, Leicester.

Continuous dancing to the competing and "house" bands at all contests. For further details, see local announcements.

Rules and Entry Forms for all the above now available from their respective organisers.

RHYTHM CLUBS

22.—Nottingham, Jan. 21, J. R. Morton rct. including Morton's General Album, Jan. 28, Eddie Condon rct. Both given by committee. All inquiries: Bill Kinnell, 165, High Rd., Chilwell, Notts.

72.—Glasgow, Club reopened Jan. 11 with rct. by Jack Stewart on "Eddie Condon." Next mtg. Thurs., Jan. 18, rct. on "Vocal Jazz" by Marcel Freeman, recently released for internment in France, where he was in same camp as noted trumpet player Arthur Briggs. New members still welcome at 59, Elmbank St., Thursds. 7.30.

159.—Medway (Gillingham) R.C. meets every Sun. at the New Pavilion, Gillingham, 7 to 10 p.m. Guest artist for Jan. 14 was Jimmy Skidmore. Next Sun, Duncan Whyte

165.—Southall, Reopening Jan. 22, 7 p.m. Rct. "You May Like to Hear" by Buddy Cawte. J.S. by Buddy Cawte's group and club group.

CHAPPELL'S—

**COME OUT
COME OUT
WHEREVER
YOU ARE**

and

**As Long As
There's Music**

Both from the RKO Radio Picture
"STEP LIVELY"

**WHERE THE
BLUE BEGINS
AND MY WISH**

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JUNGLE JIVE

By MIFF FERRIE

3/6 Per Set

THEY'RE WRIGHT OF COURSE!

BRAND'S ESSENCE OF NEWS

FROM Canada comes the story of a most interesting swing club which for the last two years has been meeting once a week regularly, to entertain Service men and women stationed there.

The man responsible is Harold Cameron, an altruistic enthusiast if ever there was one, and he conceived the idea of his club when he noticed that Servicemen who visited his home evinced the keenest interest in swing music. This was particularly marked in British boys, and Harold says he was surprised at the knowledge of jazz matters which they showed.

So Harold opened his club, using an old gramophone and the small record collection he then possessed, since when he has bought an amplifier and added consistently to his store of discs.

The sessions are held at the Canadian Legion Hut, Moncton. Harold plays from 35 to 40 selections each night, taking two solid hours, and programmes are built from requests received at the previous meetings. His audience averages 250, 90 per cent. of whom are R.A.F. personnel, either just arrived or awaiting their return to Great Britain.

Despite the hot weather in summer, the sessions have been kept going all the year round, so great has been their popularity.

At each meeting mimeographed copies of the programme are handed out, one to each person, so that Harold has been able to check the number who have attended his sessions.

Up to the end of November last his concerts had been given to over 21,000 people, who have heard between three and four thousand records. By now Harold has presented well over ninety recitals, receiving no remuneration whatever, and doing this arduous evening job just for the love of it.

"But I have the satisfaction of knowing that I am able to give enjoyment to so many Servicemen," he writes, "and their letters and 'thank-yous' are sufficient reward. The boys have nicknamed me the Swing man, and when I pass them in the street they often thank me for including their request in a programme. I feel quite flattered as I hear them say, when I go by, 'There goes the Swing man!'"

Harold assures us that the quality of the music asked for reveals that the majority of his audience are record collectors, and that he found little support for the so-called "commercial" type of record.

To-day he has a collection of around 2,000 discs, among which repose more than 200 real collectors' items: the rest are local issues, plus a fair number of U.S. records.

A typical Friday-night programme comprised the following items: Lunceford, Goodman, Herman, James, Armstrong, Miller, Hampton, Shaw, Barnet and others—one record by each orchestra.

Then came "A Session with the late Pats Waller," "A Session with Muggsy Spanier," "A Session with the Capitol Jazzmen," "A Jam Session at Commodore," and finally "Special Jam Session Recordings."

R.A.F. boys who have left Moncton, toured the world and returned there tell Harold Cameron that they have never come across another club like his.

We don't know of one, either, and we very sincerely congratulate Mr. Cameron on his public-spirited work which is giving pleasure to so many Servicemen.

WHEN famous musician and music teacher Claude Bampton took over the important post of Director of Music to St. Dunstan's Institute for the Blind, everybody who was aware of Claude's abilities and reputation knew that he would be making things really hum, in a musical sense, before very long.

Claude took over his appointment well under a year ago. Best indication of how hard he has worked, and what a patient and suitable teacher the institution has found in him, is contained in the report of the Christmas festivities at St. Dunstan's, which has just come to hand.

This report makes it clear that the big thing about this year's festivities was the music, both vocal and instrumental, which was provided—a convincing justification for the creation,

early last year, as part of the regular St. Dunstan's curriculum, of the Music Department over which Claude has presided so brilliantly.

The outcome of the experiment has already been the establishment of a St. Dunstan's Band, the formation of choirs, and the selection of vocalists and instrumentalists, who, as a result of the organisation of the department, have often given entertainment and enjoyment to the trainees as a whole in the form of concerts and displays, etc., whilst the band often steps in to provide the music for the dances which are held at the Central Hall. The *pièce de résistance* of the Christmas programme was undoubtedly the concert given by the trainees in the Central Hall of the institution at Church Stretton.

The music, of all kinds, was given a great reception, and Claude Bampton himself was warmly cheered at the end of the proceedings for his unremitting patience and sympathetic methods of training.

Miss Beryl Sleight and Mrs. Gwen Oborn sustained the solos for the women, whilst Jimmy White, Albert Vout, Anne Hooper and Sidney Kitson were among the male vocalists.

The Accordion Band, with Mrs. Violet Formstone as leader, and the St. Dunstan's Dance Band gave excellent accounts of themselves.

Not only are many of these performers whom Claude has trained with such care totally blind, but some had never handled an instrument at all before going to St. Dunstan's, yet they had attained a degree of efficiency as to be able not only to become members of teams of instrumentalists, but often to undertake solo work as well.

All this is undoubtedly a great feather in Claude's cap; and, since we originally suggested Claude for the post, after our opinion had been asked by Henry Hall—who is honorary musical adviser to St. Dunstan's—we suppose a very modest quota of praise must accrue to the MELODY MAKER as well.

Bang in the limelight as leader of the famous Blind Band that created such a sensation in 1937, Claude, during his career, has discovered several blind or partly blind musicians whose fame is now country-wide, including George Shearing, Peter Gray, Phyllis Frost, Carlo Krahmer, etc.

He is undoubtedly the only man who can couple musical knowledge of a high order (plus a good grasp of dance style) with a real ability to understand and overcome the problems of the blind. Claude has a unique National Service job in which we wish him the very greatest success in 1945.

ALTHOUGH he has been in the profession for a good many years, that famous "perennial" among dance band stars, Percival Mackey, is nothing approaching sufficiently old to start making the rounds of the film studios, music publishers, etc., in a bath chair.

This, however, is what may very likely happen (temporarily, let us hasten to add) in the near future. For during the recent spell of cold weather "Mac" encountered his own particular Waterloo. He described on a very hard pavement a series of evolutions which may have been highly amusing to any onlookers there may have been around, but which were undoubtedly rotten. Luck on Percy, since he crashed down on his hip, completely flattening a heavy metal torch that was in his pocket, and finished up so bruised and battered that, although he carried out a rehearsal and broadcast at the B.B.C. immediately afterwards, by the following day he was confined to his home, unable to move.

The services of an osteopath were secured, and a little progress towards easier conditions made by manipulation, although, at the time of writing, we hear that an X-ray will be necessary before the treatment which will restore Percy to completely normal equilibrium can be decided upon.

In the meanwhile, the problem of getting around, for such a desperately busy man as P. M., is a serious one, and although we were only joking about the bath chair idea (gee, wouldn't it look odd parked in Archer street?), there is no doubt that locomotion definitely is going to be Percy's biggest headache for a few days. Here's joining with all his friends to wish him a very speedy recovery.

NEWS of the famous dance band personalities of the liberated countries—Belgium, Holland and France—still presents rather a tangled web, but each week we get a few more details through regarding those who represented the Continent's dance band idols before the war, and also of a few of the stars who have leaped into the limelight since 1939.

One of our chief sources of "gen" regarding the dance band world of liberated Belgium has been well-known peace-time bassist, now R.A.F. photographer, Ken Lyon.

Last week Ken Lyon arrived in England on a well-earned spot of leave, and visiting the "M.M." offices—where we gave him a big welcome—was able to hand us more "close-up" news of some of the Belgian swing stars.

Most interesting and controversial of the matters which we discussed with Ken concerned the famous tenor man "Fud" Candrix. It appears that "Fud" was arrested recently, it being alleged that he was a collaborator with the Germans. He is now languishing in jail, presumably awaiting trial.

It is a remarkable thing, says Ken Lyon, how the ordinary people of Belgium are "swing star conscious"—to coin a slightly new phrase.

Travelling in a train, for instance, says Ken, everyone seems ready to praise trumpet star Robert de Kers as soon as his name is mentioned, whereas to discuss Candrix is to generate frowns and all-round looks of disapproval.

(Yes, matters appertaining to swing definitely are of interest to a very large section of the public over there.)

It is apparently alleged, says Ken Lyon, that Candrix seems to have gone out of his way to play for the German oppressors. De Kers, it is admitted, also played for the Germans, but did so under extreme compulsion only. Also, by agreeing to the German terms, he undoubtedly saved all the men in his outfit from being conscripted into forced labour in conditions so bad as to be almost unthinkable.

De Kers has told Ken Lyon all about his life under Nazi rule, his enforced tour of Germany with his entire band, and his eventual imprisonment for the terrible crime of playing "Tiger Rag" for the "Ken Lyon Big Band" about musical life out there continues as follows:

"Another swiny group worthy of mention is playing at the 'Heure Bleue' under the direction of Renst Van T'Hoff, while at the famous 'Bocuf sur le Toit' there is Harry Pohl, featuring a band in the Lunceford style, arrangements for which are made in a masterly manner by saxist Francois L'Esglise, who is obviously a star of the future."

I could go on writing about the swing spots in Brussels for pages, but I want to leave a little space for the equally jazz-minded town of Antwerp, where, on several occasions, I was given the opportunity to play with some really fine bands.

Foremost amongst these is the one led by Albert De Cock, pianist and ace arranger, who holds down the best job in town at the Folies Club. De Cock features four saxes, trumpet, and three rhythm, and his arrangements of modern numbers, the melodies of which he takes down from the radio, would not disgrace any of our foremost arrangers for originality of ideas and perfection of orchestration. He has also written some commercial stumps which would go down well with the fans at home.

With me in Antwerp was an old friend from my O.H. musician days, Joe Henderson, one-time pianist with Teddy Joyce. Joe and I had some amusing club-crawls, during which we sat in with several good bands, including those of John Wittes at Maxims, Gus Clark at the Paris Club, Peter Delsing at the Winter Gardens, and Gerd Zonnenberg at the 'Capri'.

Of Zonnenberg let it be said that he is a trumpet player well above the average, and the band he leads is a delight to hear and a pleasure to play with.

But best of all Joe and I enjoyed the terrific sessions we had with Willy Auwerkerken's six-piece jive band at the swanky Imperator Restaurant. Willy plays some wonderful tenor and clarinet, aided and abetted by Marcel Bossu and Van Eyen (guitars), Mischa Ahvartzman (bass), Kay Bay (piano), and Al Warlin (drums).

"Try to imagine the old Hot Club Quintet with tenor in place of fiddle,



SRGT. JOHNNY KERR
Popular A.E.F. "Duffle Bag"
announcer

and you'll get some idea of the terrific lift these boys put into their every number.

At all these places we have distributed back numbers of the MELODY MAKER, gratefully received by the Belgian musicians—always hungry for news of British and American jazz.

"During my past few weeks out there I was moved into Holland, where, up to the time of getting my leave, I had not been able to find any real jazz."

A READER in Eire sends me the following cutting from the advertisement columns of one of the Dublin newspapers ("The Irish Independent"). It is so unbelievably rich that I reproduce it here entirely without comment.

"Wanted, first-class Trumpeter for dance band. West. Young. Able to do boot repairs also.—Box . . ."

Although I make no comment, the reader who so kindly sent in this "enormity," Mr. Eric F. Keatland, who is hon. sec. of the South Dublin Rhythm Club, makes his own comment—and a very witty one, too.

Says Eric: "Presumably, if the band can find the man they are looking for, they will then be able to feature the Harry James number, 'Young Man with a (Shoe) Horn.'"

JERRY DAWSON'S NORTHERN NEWS NOTES

RECENTLY posted abroad, noted Manchester trumpeter Arnold Briggs—now L.A.C. Briggs, R.A.F.—writes to tell me that he has landed safely in India.

He is with the R.A.F. Central Band (Indian Section), a sixteen-piece double-handed outfit which can deal equally well with "heavy" straight stuff and modern dance and concert numbers.

At the time Arnold wrote, the band had only been ashore a day or two, and were at a transit camp awaiting immediate posting to the interior.

They had played several concerts aboard ship during the journey from this country, and a couple at the camp, all of which had been received very well indeed.

He promises to write again, with more details and possibly a picture immediately they get settled at their headquarters.

In the meantime Arnold's many friends around the Manchester district will wish him the best of luck and a safe and speedy return.

* * *
In the Christmas number I gave readers the line-up of the Billy Collis

GLAMOUR BOYS OF THE AIR

"DETECTOR" reports your views on Comperes

THE majority of you think that for dance music (including, of course, jazz and swing) broadcasts, American male comperes, with their way of announcing the programmes, are far better than ours.

This fact is revealed in the entries received in response to my offer in the "M.M." of January 6 last of ten shillings for the best post card saying who you thought was the best male dance band comperer, and why.

Easily topping the list in the first two places, and separated by a negligible quantity of votes, are Cpl. George Monaghan, the A.E.F. "Record Man," and Johnny Kerr, of the A.E.F. programme's "Duffie Bag."

Next come our own Ronnie Waldman, Leslie Mitchell, David Miller, Spike Hughes, Harry Davis (of Oscar Rabin's Band), and Joe Linnane (who compered a few of Phil Green's "Lower Basin Street" airings), in that order, but with rather a big gap between David Miller and Spike Hughes.

Others who received a good few votes were Billy Cotton, Harry Roy and Roy Rich.

Mentioned also were Edmundo Ros and Phil Brown, but the few who voted for them admitted that they did not know who most of the comperes of the programmes to which they listened were, and this lack of interest rather rules out any weight their opinion might otherwise have had.

CLAES "TORSO DIVINE"

Oh, and I nearly forgot! There was, of course, Johnnie Claes's irrepressible admirer—the lady who never fails to put forward Johnnie whenever one asks who is the best at anything, from crumming a railway to dish-washing.

She took ten pages of close writing in red-ink in an endeavour to prove that her idol is not only the best, but the only comperer worth considering.

Here's a short extract from her letter:

"With each word that falls from his provocative lips, with each glance from those seductive blue orbs, with that angelic fairness of skin and hair, with each charming little smile (or sinister, bold little frown), and with each graceful movement of that debonair torso divine . . ."

Well, she may be right. Johnnie may have all that and more from a girl's point of view.

But I can't quite see what value there can be in provocative lips, seductive blue orbs, angelic fairness of skin, or even debonair torsos divine, when it's radio comperes (who can't be seen through loudspeakers) we were supposed to be discussing.

The letter only goes to show the screwy hysteria so many harmless

bandleaders have to put up with—a hysteria which prevents the hysterical ones from forming any fair or useful judgment on the things which really matter.

To Johnnie I apologise sincerely for publishing the letter.

It was certainly not of his seeking. In fact, I don't suppose he knows the writer from Adam, or at any rate Eve, and before any of you boys or girls take it into your mischievous heads to rag him about it, just remember that if you do so you will be descending to a level not much above that of the over-exuberant girl (who, incidentally, at least had the misplaced pluck to give her address and sign the letter with her proper name) who forced me to spend valuable time reading her outburst.

But to get back to more important aspects of the matter.

NECESSARY QUALITIES

The qualities in dance-band compering which most entrants to the competition placed highest were:—

(a) The possession of, and ability to convey to the listener, a sincere belief in and enjoyment of the music.

(b) A comprehensive understanding of the music and a sufficient knowledge of those responsible for it (i.e., the musicians, composers and arrangers) to enable interesting facts to be given and "technical" bloomers avoided.

(c) Wit.

(d) Brevity and intimacy. Rather surprisingly, not very many seem to place much importance on good elocution or what many describe as "microphone manner." Or perhaps after all it is not so surprising when one remembers how little the admittedly fine elocution and microphone technique of the B.B.C.'s staff announcers has ever been able to contribute to the compering of any dance-music programme.

THE WINNER
A cheque for ten shillings has been sent to Cpl. Mary R. Hooklet, of the W.A.A.F., for the following:—

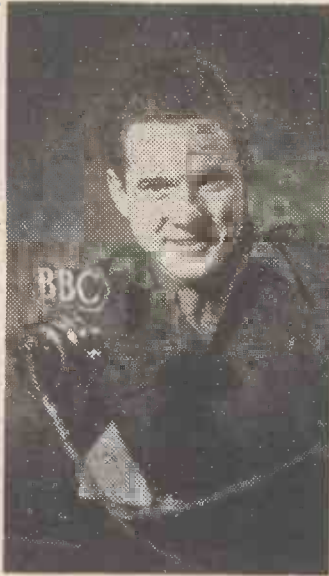
Best dance music comperes heard over B.B.C. are Johnny Kerr (A.E.F. "Duffie Bag") and George Monaghan (A.E.F. "Record Man").

Both not only understand and enjoy dance music, but convey this understanding and enjoyment to the listeners.

They are neatly witty without being verbose or pretentious, and have the gift of cheery intimacy which gives the right atmosphere to the programmes.

Even the duller records become interesting as put over by them.

I would place Ronnie Waldman among our best comperes, but he lacks the inside knowledge of dance music and its star players which makes Kerr and Monaghan so supreme.



CPL. GEORGE MONAGHAN
"Your A.E.F. Record Man."

YOUR A.E.F. PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

(See "M.M." for January 13, 1945.)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21
As for Sunday, January 14, except: 10.30 a.m., A.E.F. Radio Weekly. Noon, News (British). 8.15 p.m., Dorothy Carless programme.

MONDAY, JANUARY 22
As for Monday, January 15, except: 12.15 p.m., Starlight. 12.30, Strike A Home Note. 2.15, A.E.F. Extra. 2.30, Village Store.* 5.15-6, Stoil Theatre Orch. 6.15, B.B.C. Revue Orch.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23
As for Tuesday, January 16, except: 12.15 p.m., Music For All.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24
As for Wednesday, January 17, except: 12.15 p.m., Spotlight. 12.30, Serenade For Strings. 5.45, A.E.F. Extra. 10.7, Soliloquy.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25
As for Thursday, January 18, except: 8.30 a.m., Southern Serenade. 12.15 p.m., Guess Who. 1.1, Merry-Go-Round (repeat). 6.15, Light Music. 6.30, Mother Goose Pantomime. 8.15, Starlight. 9.30, A.E.F.P. Contrasts.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26
As for Friday, January 19, except: 4.30 p.m., B.B.C. Theatre Orch. 5, News (American). 5.15, From the Continent.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27
As for Saturday, January 20, except: 11 a.m., News Headlines. 11.2, American Home News. 12.15 p.m., Pat Burke.

* From the A.F. Network.

tained a number of the lads with a sing-song and the usual seasonal fun and games.

Amongst the guests was Cpl. Eric George, who, after a long spell with the Welfare people who look after the affairs of the band, has recently been posted to another job, and who "came home" for the "do."

"Altoist Jimmy Staples is currently in hospital, and Jack Croft has been carrying on in his absence. Jack is to retain the second-alto chair as Jimmy is to move over to baritone upon his return, thus giving the band five saxes.

I could still kick myself for missing the only airing, a few months ago, that these boys have had via the B.B.C. here at home.

From ex-Johnny Rosen and Jack Jackson stalwart, trumpet man Sgt. Bob Brown, now of the Royal Corps of Signals, comes the news of the wedding of his band's drummer, Ronnie Almer, who hails from Dundee.

The lucky lady is Miss Mary Knowlson, of Thirsk, Yorks, whom Ronnie met whilst stationed in the district. Bob speaks very highly of this boy's

drumming ability, and predicts a great future for him.

The band has recently suffered considerably from the loss of three of its corner men in Ken Staverdale (tenor), recently discharged and now domiciled at Prestatyn, plus altoist Ken Griffin and Harry Noble (violin), both of whom have been posted to field units.

Whilst on leave a few weeks ago, Bob had the unique experience of being present at both a rehearsal and a broadcast of the Glenn Miller outfit.

"Phew," says Bob, "Do they work!" Which to my mind just about sums up the huge difference between the American bands and ours. It all seems to be a matter of application—plus a lot of keenness and enthusiasm for the job in hand as distinct from the prospective remuneration.

68.—Edinburgh. Club running satisfactorily. good turn-outs at mtgs every Mon. at Methuen Simpson's 7, Dance on Jan. 19. Tickets 4s. from committee or sec. at Methuen Simpson's, or from sec. at 23, Forbes Rd. Thanks to D. Bruce, Bob Fairley, Dave Marshall, Sec. Wm. McGregor.

MELODY MAKER

Incorporating RHYTHM
WEEK ENDING JANUARY 20, 1945

Editorial, Advertising and Business Offices:

93, LONG ACRE, W.C.2

Editor: RAY SONIN Telephone: TEMple Bar 2468

Advertisement Manager: F. S. PALMER

U.S. JIVE JOTTINGS

FEMALE bandleaders and musicians have been in demand lately as a result of the man-power shortage, and many are the names that have flashed across the publicity sheets as sensational new fem' bandleaders.

Most of them have a brief innings, but one, Billie Rogers, for two years featured soloist and singer with Woody Herman's Band, maintains her position at the top of the trade.

Billie is said to be a really talented trumpeter who played the section work as well as the solos with the Herd. To-day her playing is being compared with that of Sonny Dunham and even Harry James.

Since leaving Herman, Billie has organised an all-male crew in New York which currently holds a job at the New Pelham Heath Inn. Billie fronts the band, sings and sings, and she is at present the one and only fem leader in town.

Trumpet man Charlie Shavers, who made his name with John Kirby's Onyx-Club group, was always one of the busiest of the "recording angels" in New York, both in the playing and arranging departments.

To-day he is more active than ever, currently doing the scoring for Cliff Leeman's new band, holding a steady job at Kelly's Stables, and recording for dozens of scratch outfits.

These include bands led by Ed Hall, Joe Marsala, Sid Catlett, Coleman Hawkins, the Don Byas Quintet, and even Raymond Scott's Orchestra.

The joke that's going the round of U.S. musical circles concerns a 'phone call between one of the Big Name Leaders and his manager. Says the latter: "I've discovered the end in saxmen. Boy, he's really something."

"No, he don't play clarinet—only sax, but he's terrific! . . . No, only tenor sax; he don't double anything, but he's terrific! . . . No, no dancing or singing, only tenor; but, man, is he TERRIFIC? What? Much tenor? Well, no, he don't play very good . . . but he's 4F!

From Chicago comes news of a new trumpet star currently appearing with Gene Krupa's Ork at the Hotel Sherman's "College Inn." Name is Tommy Allison. TD's Orchestra follows Krupa into the Inn. . . . At the Silver Palms on the North Side, pianist Jack Gardner holds sway with his trio, also sitting in quite often with the Darnell Howard bunch during the early hours at the Airliner Club. . . . When Baby Dodds returned from a recent visit to New Orleans he played a week in cabaret with trumpeter Natty Dominique, who is an old, old buddy.

Baby and Kid "Punch" Miller, another N.O. old-time trumpet man, were booked for the Downbeat Room of the Garrick Lounge, but the job fell through when Baby's doctor voted against it. . . . Others in town are Laura Rucker at the Three Deuces (Laura was singing blues twenty years ago); Ben Allen-Higay and the band at the Downbeat Room; Red Webster at the Garrick Bar; Bud Jacobson with band at Rio Cabana; Tut Soper, fine barhouse exponent, at the Brass Rail; and T-Bone Walker singing his blues at Charlie Glenn's Rlumboogie. . . . Highspot of the Sherman Hotel's floor show is said to be Mead Lux Lewis, playing three numbers nightly—"Yancey Special," "Bear Trap Stamp," and the inevitable "Honky Tonk Train," but taken at its fastest tempo ever. Critics say Lux is a better showman than his fellow B.W. men, Ammons and Johnson, who played in the Windy City recently.

Latè last year "Jivester" reported that Louis Armstrong was growing thinner, due to the strict observance of a special diet.

Just the reverse of Louis is Duke Ellington, who not only appears to gain weight steadily, but is well known for his ability as an eater de luxe.

So much so that one of his fans recently sent a full-course lobster dinner (one of Duke's favourite repasts) to his hotel immediately upon the conclusion of the band's last theatre show of the week.

The only drawback to the whole thing was that Duke was packed and ready to go for his train to the next town. However, he tackled the meal gamely, wading into the seafood with only minutes to starting time, while one by one the band departed for the station until Duke and the shellfish were alone.

With seconds to go, Ellington left the hotel and sped to the station by cab—grabbing the carriage as it rolled out of the depot. Seated in comfort, as urbane as ever, the Duke casually extracted the remains of the meal from his coat-pocket and finished it in appreciative silence!

When the MELODY MAKER runs a dance band poll there is one thing it never does: that is, publish full interim reports of the poll's progress.

The "M.M." believes that such reports may influence results in a way which the sponsors would not consider desirable. In the U.S. "Down Beat" Band Poll, however, such preliminary counts are fully and freely given.

At the first count of "Down Beat's" 1944 poll it was revealed that Duke Ellington had assumed an early and pretty convincing lead over Woody Herman—the nearest rival—and Benny Goodman, who was last year's winner. Duke won the crown in 1942, but was well beaten by Benny in '43, when the latter received the swing king laurels for the fifth time in seven years.

COLLECTORS' CORNER

by REX HARRIS and MAX JONES

J.D.P.D.C.—2ND BOOKLET.
MAGNUS DRURY, secretary of the Jazz Discography Postal Discussion Club, which we have mentioned before, has sent us the second booklet from the club.

This comprises the comments of various members on a set question—in this case, "What are your views on the 'Golden Age'—a myth, or reality?"

Magnus informs us that booklet one got lost somewhere on the rounds, and suggests that any member who has not yet received it should drop him a card, so that he may be able to trace the missing folio. Any Cornerites interested in the scheme are advised to contact Magnus at 13, Alexander Avenue, Halton, Leeds.

RADIO QUERY.

Re Len Allen's radio query printed here two weeks ago: Reader Al Stewart writes that he has been listening to the station (345 m.) nightly for several months, and can confirm that good stuff comes over regularly.

He feels sure it is a Swedish station, that the language spoken is, at any rate, Scandinavian.

Apart from the "Little Sir Echo" pianist whom he describes as "hardly a fine jazz pianist," there is better stuff—a small band which plays from 12.15-12.45 p.m. (the "Echo" man performs from 11.30-11.45 usually). Between times records are played and news given; the records are mostly hot.

CORNER COUNTER-BLAST.

Al then moves on to other subjects such as the "M.M." Poll, saying: "They've issued such trite things as 'Ghost of a Chance,' but what of 'Magnolia Blues,' the Yancey, the Pine Top? Why issue the worst instead of the best? I seem to recall 'Magnolia' topping the list!"

He recommends the issue here of Goodman's "Shirt Tail Stomp"/"Blue" and "Room 1411," and laments the fact that the Signature label has no tie-up here, as he thinks Yank Lawson's Jazz Band sides would make a swell start to a Rod Cless Memorial Album. His letter concludes:

"I guess you've noticed the movement afoot to-day in favour of Lionel Hampton, Teddy Wilson and others, who carry the slops between the jazz and swing camps, chief propagandist undoubtedly being Len Feather. Well, open war on them in the Corner! 'More Bunk Johnson and Keppard' should be the cry. 'More Tesch and Bessie and Yancey, more jazz.'"

If by opening war Al means countering their propaganda by a Corner barrage in support of the real stuff, then we think war was long ago declared. The question of discs voted up in the Poll has been raised ("M. J.'s" record retrospect in last week's issue) and the goodly records of Louls, Bessie and the rest are constantly being brought to the attention of the companies.

As for the Signatures and other private labels: we can now unfold a sad tale. The output of three of these companies, including two superb New Orleans sessions, was offered to a trio of local collectors—namely Albert McCarthy, Clifford Jones and Max Jones.

Armed with rights to nearly fifty first-class discs the trio approached the two record concerns to see if something could be done.

What they had in mind was the inauguration of a British Hot Record Society label, sales assured, limited editions and all the rest of it, but, alas! nothing resulted from their efforts.

Nor could any promise be obtained for the post-war period. But if the deal with the U.S. companies can be postponed that long, another attempt to bring about local issue of these records will be made in peace time.

REX'S SOLO OF THE WEEK

Honouring our own prophets this week, the palm goes to Dave Wilkins for that splendid legato trumpet solo with Una Mae Carlisle in "Hangover Blues" on Vocalion S.198. Pity this hasn't been reissued as a fine example of British jazz.

Ralph Venables contributes **SOME NOTES ON WILD BILL DAVISON.**

BEING nearly a year now since Milt Gabler released the first products of his wonderful Wild Bill session for Commodore, it seems reasonable to hope that a fair proportion of readers will have contrived to hear some of the eight titles which were recorded.

To those who have had the good fortune to hear Davison's cornet on these eight Commodore sides, words of praise are strictly superfluous, for Wild Bill has a shatteringly forceful style which permits of no half-hearted reception on the part of his listeners.

Indeed, to hear that "unsuitable, almost vaudeville cornet" (as George Avakian describes it), is inevitably to regain complete faith in 1944 jazz.

There seems, among those who have heard him, to exist a consensus of opinion that Bill Davison knows no equal at the present time. Quoting Baltimore writer Thurman Grove, just back from an "ear witness" inspection of Wild Bill early this year:

"Our Wild William friend is now in the Army, but his marvellous records on Commodore are released—that is, 'Panama' and 'That's A Plenty' on 1511, and 'Ugly Child'/'That Da-Da Strain' on 546, with 'Clarinet Marmalade' and 'Original Dixieland One-Step' (549) coming along a bit later. Assume you've already heard them, and will agree that they are completely thrilling and, indeed, bound to convince anyone that Wild Bill is easily one of the very top-ranking trumpet players alive to-day."

*The remaining sides, "Royal Garden Blues"/"Tin Roof Blues," are not released yet, either, but are planned for February, I believe.
—R. G. V.

But—Bill Davison is no newcomer, no overnight sensation in the fickle jazz arena, and his prowess dates back some twenty years. Many are the outlandish rumours surrounding Davison's early career, and until his recent come-back he was regarded by most enthusiasts as an almost fabulous figure whose chief claims to fame lay in the fact that by his own computation he has consumed over five thousand quarts of whisky—and that it was he who was driving the car in which Frank Teschemacher met his death in 1932.

But Wild Bill has done plenty of hard work in the music business, much of it in highly uncongenial surroundings, and, despite his significant nickname and his legendary pranks (such as setting a Chicago milk float on fire at dawn), this hard-working cornet player is a fine, sincere fellow—a man who, when Uncle Sam gives the word, intends to stick at nothing until he has got right to the top.

Musically speaking, he has been there for quite some time.

Bill was born in Defiance, Ohio, in 1905, the same year which witnessed the arrival of Bix Beiderbecke. Davison grew up somewhat under the shadow of Bix, and tried constantly to emulate the prowess of the Davenport boy.

At the time Bix was making history with the Wolverines on Gennett records, Bill was recording for the same company under the baton of Chubby Steinberg.

Thence to the Seattle Harmony Kings for a short spell, and next to Charlie Straight—where Davison had the honour to replace Bix (his work on the Brunswick records, such as "Too Busy," "Hi-Diddle-Dee-Dee," "Deep Henderson" and "Hobo's Prayer," not infrequently being mistaken for that of Bix).

There followed a slightly fantastic job at the infamous Sportsman's Club in Chicago, where, according to Davison, "the customers, who were mostly gangsters, would come in just to see the musicians get drunk and fall off the stand. And we never disappointed them!"

(To be continued.)

SWAP AND BUY

J. M. Quigley, "White Hayes," Wergs Rd., Tettenhall, nr. Wolverhampton, has number of discs for sale or exchange, incl. Allen's "Patrol Wagon," N.O.R.K.'s "London Blues," Delta Four's "Farewell," etc.

For sale, "2 fine" swing discs of Dorsey, Armstrong, James and Nichols, etc. Send s.a.e. for list to T. Evans, 17, Westgate St., Bath, Somerset.

A. S. Humphrey, c/o Paterson, 1, Regent Pk. Sq., Glasgow, S.1, wants Herman's "Indian, B.W.," Ammons' "Chicago In Mind" (B.N.4), and 1940 "Hot Disco."

John Clark, "Wayside," Kimpton, Andover, Hants, has collection to dispose of. Detailed list on receipt of s.a.e.

John Geddes, 57, Mill St., Perth, Scotland, will pay published price for copy of Peter Noble's "Kings Of Rhythm."

Sailor A. H. Lilley, c/o 27, 6d St., Grimsby, Lincs, will pay 10s. 6d. for Noone's "Sweet Lorraine" on Vocalion.

Lionel H. Brown, one of the Bevin boys, at 77, Dumfries St., Treherbert, Rhondda, Glam., wants to get in touch with other local lads who appreciate the righteous stuff.

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154.—Bournemouth. Club running again at new premises with new officers. Thanks to Charles Fox, Bill Langston-White, and Ron Weldon for retilts; C. Fox for loan of records; and F. Godley Woolf and Ron Thatcher for work in restarting club. New members welcome on Thurs. evenings and Sun. afterns, near of 178, Old Christchurch Rd., Bournemouth (entrance in Furzeleg Rd.).

Plymouth. General meeting and J.S. next Sun. (21st), Embassy Ballroom. Thanks to Jack Woodman and W. Macavoy for help with recent retilts.

Falconwood (Welling, Kent) meets every Fri. 7.30 to 10.30, Falconwood Ave., Welling. Many thanks to Tony Newton (clar.), Gus Arnold (vibra.), Joss Fogart (bass), Jack Diamond (pno.), and Frank Covatt (dms.), for giving club good send-off.

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