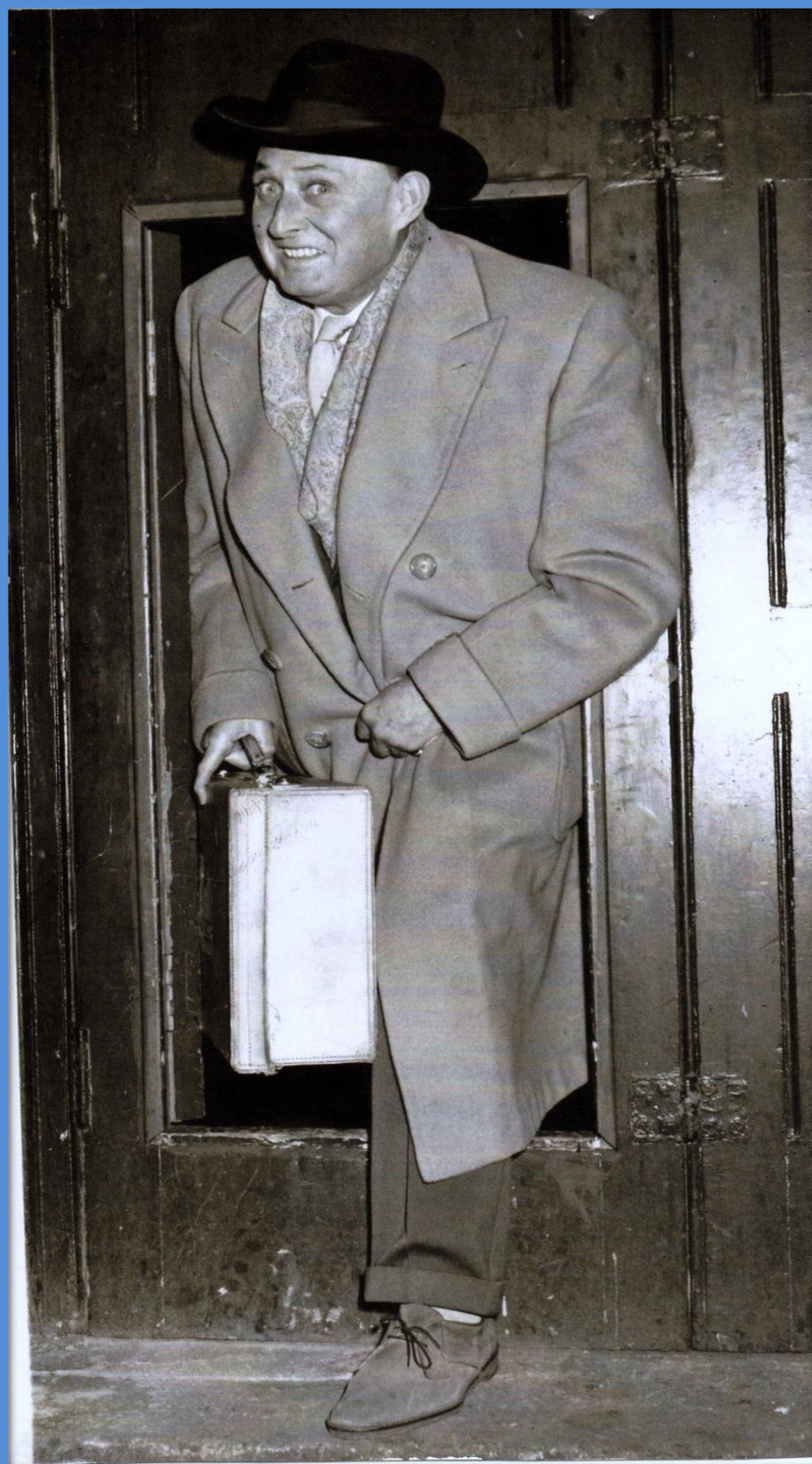


'There'll Never Be Another!!'



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Front Cover

Max emerging through a stage door but do you know where it might be? Thanks to MMAS member Keith Evans.

Centre Spread

I'm delighted to be able to reproduce another original comic strip -this one is by MMAS member Alan Bennett illustrating some of Max's 'cheeky' songs. Thanks Alan!

Back Cover

Max at the Finsbury Park Empire for w/c 24 October 1955 with Alfred Thripp whose story features in this issue. Thanks to MMAS member Alan Ashby.

Annual Subscriptions

1st Feb 2015 - 31st Jan 2016

Single Member - £20 (UK) £25 (Overseas)

Couple at same address - £25 (1 copy of TNBA)

Life Member - £150 (Couple £200)

Banker's Order facility available on request to Jack Strutt

MMAS Social Events

We've made a few changes to our schedule of Social evenings for 2015 so please check the precise dates on page 4. Please join us and bring your friends, relations and any potential new members! Everyone is very welcome and you could walk away with a super prize in our grand raffle, for which donations are always welcome.



Officers

President.....	Roy Hudd OBE
Vice-President.....	Wyn Calvin MBE OStJ.
Patrons.....	Ken Dodd OBE & Michael Aspel OBE
Chairman.....	Averil Older
Vice-Chairman & Webmaster.....	Terry Hardy
Secretary/Treasurer.....	Vic Chapman
Merchandising.....	Jo Blake
TNBA! Editor/Membership Sec.....	Jack Strutt
Committee Members ...	Gerry Oxley, Mick Toner, Walter Atherton & John Henty.

Honorary Members

Rob Ross, Christine Jones, Max Tyler, John Ripley, Mick Toner & John Henty (both past MMAS Chairmen), Irene Davies, Adam Trimmingham, Peter Webster, Frank & Darren Sargent and Brian Dazley.

Life Members

Wyn Calvin MBE, OStJ., Les Greening, David Humphries, Rosemarie Ronalde, Andrew Yates, John Pendlebury, John Culley, Allen Wade, Howard & Marielena Burrell, Peter Garrett, Dr. Robin Moffat, Lord Grade of Yarmouth C.B.E., Sir Peter Blake KBE, David Pibworth, John King, Clive Wildish, Brian & Nirmal Russell, Brian Wilson, Richard Harris, Arthur Green I.S.O. CStJ., Bill Morgan, Roy Charles, Valerie Paddock, Michael Attree, Shirley Polley, Joanne Bradshaw, Nigel Bishop, Stephen Scutt, Keith Evans, Kathleen Bennett, John & Eileen Palmer, Ray Stevens, John Lucas, Mark Cousins, Wayne Shaw, Alun George, Lee Town, Sarah Posner, Jean Wright & Cliff Lawrey.

'There'll Never Be Another!!' is exclusive copyright to MMAS and is circulated to subscribing members. Views expressed are those of the contributors. Back copies of all issues are available from the Editor at £1.00 each incl. P&P. The Editor thanks all those who have contributed to this issue. Copy date for issue 64 is 15 May 2015.

Editor: Jack Strutt, 111 Brentwood Road, Brighton BN1 7ET
(Tel - 01273 500168) e-mail jackstrutt1@aol.com

From Your Chairman's Blue Book

Welcome to issue No. 63 and I'm sure 2015 will be another very good year for MMAS.

MMAS member Brian Dazley wrote in the last issue about his visit to London's Museum of Comedy at 150 London Wall (what a great address!), which is close to the site of the Holborn Empire. Since then Brian and Terry Hardy have met the Museum curator Gilda Frost to discuss the possibility of a 'Max' display and a full report follows.



The fight to save Brighton's Hippodrome continues. The approved scheme to convert it into Cinemas/Restaurants/Retail fell through a few weeks ago, and **Our Brighton Hippodrome** is now working hard to put together a business plan to submit to Brighton & Hove City Council. Please see the website www.ourhippodrome.org.uk for further details and to make a donation towards campaign funds. There is also a programme on the back cover of this issue featuring Max at Brighton Hippodrome in 1934.

I'm pleased to report that, following discussions with the late Dora Bryan's sons, Daniel and William, we have launched a campaign to raise funds to erect a blue ceramic plaque on Dora's former home at Clarges Hotel, Marine Parade, Brighton. Our President Roy Hudd is supporting the campaign and has kindly agreed to unveil the plaque in due course. Clarges Hotel is a listed building (where the interior hotel scenes for *Carry On At Your Convenience* were filmed), so there are still a few planning technicalities to sort out.



We have already received some donations towards the estimated cost of £1200 and, if any members would like to contribute towards the blue plaque fund, cheques should be made payable to 'MMAS - DB A/C' and sent to Mrs J. Blake, 10 Orchard Close, Shoreham BN43 5UT. Please enclose a SAE if you wish to be informed of the date of the unveiling. It is hoped that a reception will also be held for those who have donated. Any surplus funds will be donated to a charity to be chosen by Daniel and William. I'll report progress in future issues of TNBA! Thank you. Finally, we've made a few changes to the MMAS events programme this year, full details of which are on page 4.

Averil Older

London Museum of Comedy

MMAS members Terry Hardy and Brian Dazley recently met Gilda Frost, the curator at the London Museum of Comedy which we have featured in recent issues of TNBA! The Museum, which is nearly a year old, is in the crypt of St George's Church and is easy to reach on a No. 38 bus from Victoria, alighting one stop after Tottenham Court Road. It comprises a large room filled with comedy memorabilia, which leads to a 100 seat theatre known as the Cooper Room.



One of Max's suits has already been on display at the Museum, courtesy of the British Music Hall Society, and the purpose of Terry & Brian's visit was to explore the possibility of other Max memorabilia being exhibited. As it happened, Terry had taken with him Max's dressing gown, which Gilda immediately agreed to take on temporary loan. So, if you are able to visit the Museum in the foreseeable future, you will see the dressing gown on display behind the box office table.

Subsequently, on 28th February, Terry and Vic Chapman met Gilda Frost in Brighton at Bardsley's Fish Restaurant, where MMAS has a permanent display of Max memorabilia, including photographs, sheet music, posters and The Cheeky Chappie Pub sign. Terry told her about the successful exhibition MMAS had curated at Brighton Museum in 2003/04, which included a video loop of Max performing in *Hoots Mon* and an audio point where visitors could listen to Max telling gags.

It was also suggested to Gilda that the Museum might sell the MMAS Blue Book plus other items of merchandise on behalf of MMAS. Another idea was a members' visit to the Museum with perhaps a talk or a show. At the time of writing Gilda's comments are eagerly anticipated and we will give you an update in the next issue.

For more information about the Museum, visit

www.museumofcomedy.com

From Your Secretary's Notebook



STOP! ALL CHANGE!

Everybody off the train, turn around twice and then get on again! Do I have your attention yet? Good. Now then, arrangements for MMAS meetings are changing and things will be a little different in the future. But, don't panic, the changes aren't all that great, but changes there are.

Why? Well, as foreshadowed in this column last time, your Committee felt we needed to take a good hard look at how we do things and that is just what we did. A special thanks to all of you who took the trouble to send their thoughts and ideas. We produced a discussion paper with our suggestions at the AGM in January and then – well – discussed it with the members. If anyone would like a copy of the paper please let me know. The upshot is that our proposals, slightly modified, were agreed with effect from 2016 and the main changes can be summarised as follows.

In future, the Society's Annual General Meeting will be held during the Convention Weekend in November, instead of January as at present. We are giving the Sunday Variety Show a break because of insufficient support in recent years. So, a typical year will be as follows:

February – Social evening with guest speaker.

May – Social evening with guest speaker.

August – Annual Charity Tea Party, possibly preceded by a film show on the Saturday.

November – Convention Weekend as follows:

Friday – Annual General Meeting followed by Gerry Oxley's film show.

Saturday – Annual Dinner.

The transitional arrangements for the remainder of 2015 are set out below. We also hope and expect to arrange other get-togethers for members during the year e.g. a party of MMAS members will be at the BMHS 'Day at the Seaside' in Eastbourne on 16th May.

So, there we have it. Any questions? Very well, now if you'll all take your clothes off and put them over there with mine, we'll proceed to the physical examination!

Vic Chapman

Annual General Meeting

The future shape of MMAS was the main item discussed at our AGM in January. In addition your Committee was re-elected unchanged for a further year, the 2014 Accounts published on page 23 of this issue were agreed, and subscriptions for 2015 remain unchanged. The only other main item discussed was a proposal to promote a blue plaque on the former home of the late Dora Bryan at Clarges Hotel, Marine Parade, Brighton. Full details on page 3 of this issue.

Dates for Your Diary 2015

Please note these dates in your diary. Unless otherwise stated, events take place at the Royal Albion Hotel, Brighton at 7.30pm. Please bring your friends and any potential new members!

Thursday 26th March – Brian O'Gorman makes a welcome return visit with his latest presentation on 'A First Class Pantomime'.

Thursday 28th May – Speaker to be announced.

Thursday 30th July – Dean Caston (BMHS) presents 'The History of the Royal Variety Performance'.

Annual Charity Tea Party – Sunday 2nd August

Annual Convention Weekend – 13th/14th November

Sales & Wants

Mark Gambell has the following Max LP's for sale:

You Can't Help Liking Him

In the Theatre

They Played the Empire

If you are interested please contact Mark on 07796248868 or email mgambell@btinternet.com. Mark also has other musical items for sale.

Merchandise

Just a reminder that we have a range of merchandise for sale including the following:

MMAS Blue Book - £8.70

MMAS Swingtime Clock - £10

MMAS Lapel Pin - £2.50

MMAS Porcelain Mug - £10.60

MMAS Earthenware Mug - £9.35

Statue Unveiling DVD 2005 - £12.99

Prices include P & P and cheques payable to MMAS should be sent to:

Mrs Jo Blake, 10 Orchard Close, Shoreham BN43 5UT

From Your Editor's White Book

So, the first 16 years of MMAS are behind us and here's looking forward to the next ?? While we have unravelled much of Max's life and career during that time, I'm sure there is a lot still to be discovered. His career, after all, did span nearly 40 years, so undoubtedly there is material still to be found.

An example of the above happened recently when new MMAS members Peter & Ann Martin sent me an article by David Arnold that appeared in the Sussex Express newspaper in January. On 28th March 1947 Max appeared at the annual Police Ball held at Lewes Town Hall. Apparently Max went down a storm with the local constabulary! I hope to be able to reproduce the article in a future issue.

The competition set by Gerry Oxley in the last issue turned out to be a damp squib. We asked if anyone could identify a picture of a Max look-a-like. The picture was from a 1959 comedy film 'Alive and Kicking' and we thought the 'Max' character was Sybil Thorndike, hence the clues. However, having since viewed the film, it seems that it is, in fact, Stanley Holloway doing his Max impersonation. Apologies for the confusion but we did have a correct answer from Rick Blackman because he has the film!

Finally, please don't forget that I'll be pleased to hear from you at any time.

Jack Strutt, Editor

MMAS Memorabilia

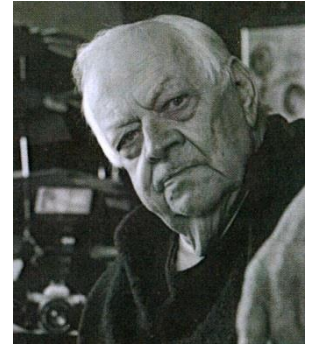
Just a couple of items to report this time. Firstly, we have acquired an autographed HMV photo of Max. In the last issue we reported that we had bought a magazine containing the music for 'She Believed In Safety First, which was written by Max and Jack Warman, although not recorded by Max (see back cover of last issue). Since then Gerry Oxley has tracked down a 78rpm recording of the song by Harry Roy's RKOLians dated May 1933. Terry Hardy will transcribe the words for publication in a future issue of *TNBA!*

MMAS Membership

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members:-

Michael Belch (Morden), Stephen Nobbs (Brighton), Hien Tang (Brighton) and Michael Locke (Brighton).

We were saddened to learn that founder member Peter Stepto died at the beginning of the year. Peter attended the very first MMAS meeting in January 1999 and volunteered to take on the role of Treasurer, which he did for a couple of years. Peter was a keen photographer, having worked for Fox Photos for many years, and took pictures at many of the Society's early events. Jack Strutt represented MMAS at his funeral in Brighton on 21st January and we send our condolences to his family.



MMAS Life Member Wayne Shaw has returned to his native New Zealand and we wish him well in his retirement.

Hon. Member Brian Dazley continues to produce celebration cards to send on behalf of MMAS and recent masterpieces include those for Roy Hudd, Vera Lynn, Thea McIntyre and Michael Leader, who recently celebrated 30 years in EastEnders.

What do Dartford Football Club and MMAS have in common? The answer? John Ripley, our very own Max impersonator. John was the Dartford centre forward from 1962-1973 and holds the Club record with 174 goals. Nice one, Maxie!

Corrections & Clarifications

My apology for some disappointing page layouts in the last issue. Maybe you didn't notice but be assured it won't happen again!

Membership Renewal 2015/16

Many thanks to all those members who have renewed their membership for a further year. There are a few members who haven't renewed at the time of writing and, if you are one of them, you will find a reminder notice enclosed with this issue. Please continue your support of MMAS for another year and send your cheque by return.

Although subscription levels were adjusted in 2014 some Standing Orders are still being paid at the old membership rates and, again, if this applies to you, you will find a note enclosed. Thank you.

Remembering Friends of MMAS

Ronnie Ronalde 1923 - 2015

Many of you will have heard the sad news that Ronnie Ronalde died on 13th January 2015 and there have been several obituaries detailing his long professional career as a siffleur, singer, yodeller and genuine all-round entertainer. Ronnie and his wife Rosemarie became MMAS Life Members in 2002 and we send our sincere condolences to Rosemarie on her sad loss.



MMAS member Annie MacMillan attended Ronnie's cremation service at Hanworth Crematorium on behalf of MMAS on 16th February. She was also there to represent "Steffanis Silver



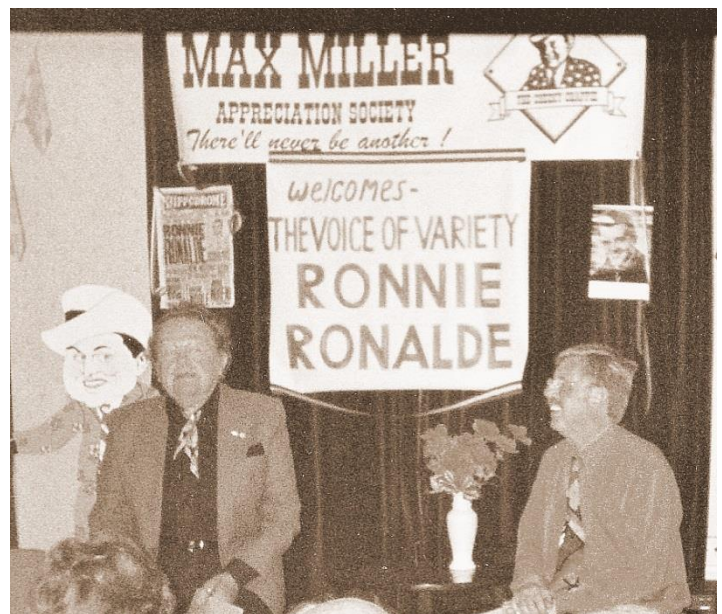
Songsters", a group of singers from the 1930s/40s who Ronnie performed with. Annie says that, until recently, Ronnie & Rosemarie visited Blackpool to spend some time with the 'boys' who are still with us.

The service was taken by Roger Royle, Chaplain of Brinsworth House where Ronnie had recently been staying. Family tributes were read by Ronnie's grandchildren and, for those family members unable to attend, there was a video link to New Zealand. The last words came from Rosemarie - *'If you ever need me Ronnie, just whistle - you know how to do that!'*

MMAS was privileged to meet Ronnie on two occasions. The first was at the Festival of Music Hall & Variety at Weston-Super-Mare in early 2002. Terry Hardy was looking after the MMAS stall when, who should walk by but Ronnie Ronalde. Quick as a flash, Terry pulled out his pocket tape recorder for an impromptu interview, and his first question was, *'Ronnie, have you any memories of Max?'* Ronnie said he worked with Max many times and recalled a particular occasion in Reading. Max invited Ronnie to go bird watching with him in the countryside. Ronnie decided to go in his Rolls Royce but there was no sign of Max. Suddenly he saw a fellow coming up the

hill on a bike, pedalling heavily. As he got closer he realised it was Max. Max on his bike and Ronnie in his Rolls!

The other occasion we met Ronnie was in May 2002 when he & Rosemarie travelled down from the Midlands to be with us in Brighton. In conversation with Gerry Oxley, Ronnie entertained us for an hour with his reminiscences of a long and illustrious career. He said that as a lad in the East End he would take trips to Southend to listen to the bird songs who he would learn to imitate. To conclude the evening Ronnie enchanted us with a selection of those bird songs and kindly posed for photos and signed autographs. A truly memorable and fascinating evening in the company of a 'Variety' great.



Billy Moore 1926 - 2015

We were also saddened to learn of the death of Billy Moore at the age of 88 on 7th January 2015 in Eastbourne. Billy and his wife Ena joined MMAS in 2000 and, on behalf of all members, we extend our sincere condolences to Ena.



Billy was a versatile yodelling and singing accordionist with numerous TV appearances to his credit, including the Generation Game and Hughie Green's Opportunity Knocks on 13 January 1969. Away from entertaining Billy spent time in the coal mines as a Bevin Boy during the war and later worked for Ford Motors for 22 years.

We told Billy's fascinating life story in 2008 in issues 35/36 of TNBA! and, if any members still have them, it's well worth having another read.

Joan Hinde 1933 - 2015

Just a few days after hearing of Ronnie Ronalde's passing, we learned that Joan Hinde had died on 22 January at the age of 81. Joan was regarded as Britain's foremost female trumpeter and enjoyed a 60 year career in radio, theatre and cabaret. Although she never moved over to television she did make a memorable appearance in 2002 on 'An Audience With Ken Dodd' when she joined in with Ken on 'The Very Thought of You'. You can relive the moment on the YouTube website www.youtube.com which to date has had nearly 69,000 hits! Joan then spent several years touring with Ken in his 'Happiness' show.



We had great pleasure in welcoming Joan to Brighton on 30th June 2006, where she was joined by our Vice-President Wyn Calvin. Joan recalled making her debut playing the cornet at just six years of age. In later years she passed an audition to appear on Variety Bandbox but shortly before she was due to go on her cornet packed up. The only replacement that could be found at short notice was a trumpet and the rest, as they say, is history. Joan worked with many of the greats of 'Variety', including Max Miller on a few occasions. Together with Wyn, she entertained our troops in Borneo during the conflict. It was hot, humid and rat infested so cats were drafted in to eliminate them. But the rats ate the cats!! Joan also played for the troops in the Falklands, this time with another Welsh 'great', Harry Secombe. Another memorable evening in the history of MMAS ended with a recording of Joan playing 'Land of Hope and Glory'.

We were delighted to meet Joan again in 2007 when she joined Ken Dodd and other celebrities for the second unveiling of Max's statue in Brighton. For many years Joan was a member

of the Grand Order of Lady Ratlings. We send our sincere condolences to Joan's family on their sad loss.

Alan Leather 1930 - 2015

Past MMAS Chairman, John Henty reports that when Crystal Palace entertained Tottenham Hotspur* on Sky TV at the beginning of January, both sets of players wore black armbands in memory of a modest man who conscientiously served both clubs as Secretary for many years. That man was MMAS member and good friend Alan Leather who died on 2nd January at the age of 84 and this is how John chooses to remember him.



'You see - Alan was many things to many people - especially those with a love and knowledge of sport. Remarkably, he was also Club Secretary at both Brighton & Hove Albion and Coventry City, ending his professional career with Aldershot Town in 1991. In 1997 he was awarded the Football Association Long Service medal and from 1990 - 2014 was Chairman of the World Cup (1966) Association.'

Yes - Alan was special and lived for many years with his mother on Shoreham Beach from where he would journey into Brighton to attend MMAS meetings. A sociable man with a great sense of humour. Alan loved his music hall and spoke of seeing Max on several occasions in London.

Alan had recently moved to Billericay to be near to his relatives and had told Jo Blake that he was looking forward to the Society's next outing to Brick Lane Music Hall in the Spring.

I knew Alan from my early days as announcer at Selhurst Park under Terry Venables and later at Brighton's old Goldstone Ground when I was BBC Radio Brighton's sports editor in the 70s. Happily he was with Sylvia and I when we celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary last year at the Palace (Crystal not Buckingham!). A former manager said "In fond memory of a true gentleman and diplomat, real football person who did so much for the game."

MMAS member Nigel Bishop has also sent us the Winter 2014 issue of the magazine of Brighton & Hove Albion Historians' Society, with a four page tribute to Alan who spent several years at the Club. Although he was a serious professional he had a lighter side which he showed in 1970 on a trip to Spain. Alan reeled off some hilarious rude monologues about his career *'.....perhaps fitting for a man who many years later became a member of the Max Miller Appreciation Society.'*

Alfred Thripp – Part 2

Young Alfred Thripp was blinded in an accident when just three years of age but, by the time he was five, he could play the piano and went on to be a regular performer in Variety theatres during the 1940s/50s. As we learnt in part 1 of this article in the last issue of *TNBA!* Alfred first met Max Miller in 1948 when he was playing at the Bristol Hippodrome and Max was across the road at the Empire. It was the start of a long friendship that would seem them make many appearances together.



In June 1945 the Huddersfield Daily Examiner reviewed 'Mad Hatters of 1945' at the Palace Theatre when 'Alfred Thripp, the blind pianist and singer, provides us with more swing, and reveals himself to be a singer with a style that is his own, and an effectiveness that made his contribution one of the most popular of the evening'.

So, on to Alfred's first meeting with Max in 1948 at the Bristol Hippodrome when Max decided to offer him a helping hand. Since the publication of the first part of this article, further research has cast some doubt on the actual date of their first meeting. Bristol Hippodrome was closed for most of 1948 following a fire so Alfred wouldn't have appeared there. In fact the earliest date we have traced when Alfred was on the same bill as Max is for the w/c 8th December 1947 at the Empress, Brixton. Also on the bill was Freddie Sales who we have also featured earlier in *TNBA!*

ALFRED THRIPP
The Blind Boy Singer of Lambeth

<p>TWO YEARS AGO</p> <p>"South London Press" 31st May, 1932</p> <p>A Sixteen-Year-Old blind boy named Alfred Thripp... won the first prize... his singing was masterly. Towards the end of his act the whole audience had joined in his song.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">TO-DAY</p> <p>Hear him in "Mother O' Mine" with which he won a London Music Hall Competition 2 years ago when 16 years of age. He will sing you the songs favoured by Bing Crosby and others.</p>
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MAKING DUE ALLOWANCE FOR THE DIFFERENCE IN THEIR AGES,
ALFRED THRIPP'S VOICE IS EQUAL TO BING CROSBY'S

One of Alfred's earliest recorded appearances was for the week commencing 11 March 1935, when 'The Painted Veil' starring Greta

Garbo, was showing at the Forum Theatre, Kentish Town. On the stage was 'Blind Boy Vocalist & Crooner' Alfred Thripp. On 23 September 1935 Alfred was with the 'Rupert Ingalese Road Show' when it visited the Royal County Theatre, Bedford. For the week commencing 31 August 1936 he was at the New Theatre, Northampton, where he was now billed as 'London's Blind Boy Vocalist & Pianist'. The Tivoli Theatre of Varieties welcomed Alfred on 1st September 1941 as the 'Famous BBC Pianist & Vocalist'. It seems he had already made frequent radio appearances on the BBC.



Throughout 1948 - 1951 Max and Alfred were almost inseparable, appearing together for at least 66 weeks at venues including the Leicester Palladium; Nottingham Empire; Liverpool Empire; Leeds Empire; Boscombe Hippodrome; Cardiff New; Reading Palace; Dewsbury Empire; Knightstone, Weston Super Mare; Wolverhampton Hippodrome; Colchester Playhouse; Portsmouth Empire; Adelphi, Slough; Ramsgate Palace; Commodore, Ryde and Luton Alma, as well as all Max's favourite London theatres.

The Eastbourne Chronicle reported on a show at the Hippodrome for w/c 18th September 1950 when it seems Max was well on form and, with Alfred, made a perfect stage combination. 'Alfred plays popular songs, inviting the audience to join in and Max has a try at singing himself'.

On 17th June 1952 the Dorset Daily Echo reported that Max shared 'a top of the bill triumph at the Weymouth Ritz with a blind pianist whom he discovered and set on the road to fame'. When the two of them came together in "It takes all kinds to make a world", the sentiment of it swept through the theatre.

On 18th October 1952 the Limerick Weekly Echo reported that 'the young man playing the piano and singing at the Savoy is now a brilliant musician'. During September 1954 Alfred was at Candie Gardens, Guernsey with Sid James and Reg Varney, with whom he sang a duet.



Max and Alfred were back together at Christmas 1954 'at a hotel in Patcham' (near Brighton), which almost certainly would have been the Black Lion, where Max would record 'Nice One Maxie' in 1961.

We have only one other date of Max and Alfred appearing together during 1953/54, but they joined forces again towards the end of 1955, starting with an appearance at the Chiswick Empire for w/c 19th September with 'Britain's Ace Trumpeter', Nat Gonella. For w/c 24th October they moved on to the Finsbury Park Empire (see back cover)). The last time that Max

and Alfred appeared together (that we know of) was for the w/c 5th December 1955 at the Hackney Empire, with Nat Gonella and Reg Salmon.



Alfred may well have had a significant recording career but the only 78 rpm release we have so far traced is 'Our Big Love Scene'/'Throw Another Log On The Fire' on Regal Zonophone MR1270. However, other songs he made popular include, 'I'll Sing a Thousand Love Songs', 'Where the Café Lights Are Gleaming' and 'When My Dreamboat Comes Home'.

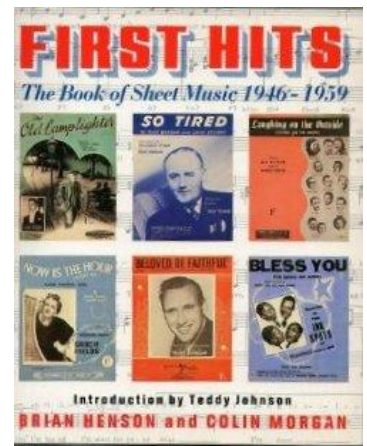
*When my dreamboat comes home,
Then my dreams no more will roam.
I will meet you, and greet you,
Hold you closely, "my own".
Moonlit waters will sing
Of the tender love you bring.
We'll be sweethearts forever,
When my dreamboat comes home.*

There is little information about Alfred's later life and career although his niece Lynne Smith recalls that he played for a blind society or club for a long time. He didn't have a television career that she knows of but she thinks he once did an interview.

Alfred was 68 when he died in November 1988, the same age as Max. If Lynne is able to unearth any further information about Max I will let you know and I will also be pleased to hear from any readers who can add to Alfred's story.

First Hits 1946 – 1959

This is the title of a 1989 Boxtree publication by Brian Henson and Colin Morgan celebrating the music of the post-war era when the charts were based on the sales of sheet music rather than records. I had never come across this book until recently but, as with buses, two came along together! Firstly, our 'sight-in-chief, David Simpson told me about the fascinating tome, only to be followed a few weeks later by MMAS member Robin Richardson producing a copy. It's a fascinating record of the 1100 songs that made up the charts during those 13 years, including the names of the composers, publishers and singers of the hits.



I know what you're thinking – is Max included? Well, of course he is. On page 140 the song 'Friends and Neighbours' is listed. It was written by Marvin Scott & Malcolm Lockyer and entered the charts on 17th April 1954, peaking at No.2. Max's recording on PB 296 was one of six made that year by the following artists:

Billy Cotton & his Band (The Bandits); Max Bygraves with The Tanner Sisters; Benny Lee/Avril Angers/Janet Brown/Peter Butterworth; Malcolm Lockyer & his Strict Tempo Music for Dancing; John Slater.

If you find a copy I recommend you add it to your collection.

Maxie 'Tit-Bits'

John Mann Entertains

International organist and MMAS member, John Mann, will again be presenting his themed Summer show this year entitled VARIETY THEATRE MEMORIES. The show includes a cameo Max Miller plus Wilson, Keppel & Betty, Charlie Kunz and many more. John will be in Eastbourne on 14 May and Worthing on 15 July for the afternoon shows and he will be delighted to see you there!

Max Has Been Framed!

Tony Wheatley's cheeky Christmas cartoon strip in the last issue of *TNBA!* seems to have proved popular, so much so, that one of Tony's fans by the name of Len Lee, framed the cartoon and has hung it next to a Roy Lichtenstein (see below). Just in case Roy L. is a new name to some members, he was a leading figure in the American Pop Art movement in the 1960s. To quote Bob Hope, Tony says "he felt very humble although he thinks he's got the strength of character to fight it".

There Never Was Another!

I'm sure many of you will have read Brian Lynch's two-page article about Max under the above title in the January 2015 issue of 'Best of British' magazine. Brian says he saw Max at the East Ham Palace:- *'His outrageous floral clothes, snappy repartee, the 'confidential' asides about the theatre manager and the blue book jokes - rude only if they took them the wrong way, which of course they always did'.*

The article traces Max's history without revealing any new information but it does include a photo of Peter Webster's statue of Max in Brighton's Pavilion Gardens. Unfortunately, MMAS didn't get a mention but that was put right with a letter from yours truly published in the March issue.

Ed - Thanks to Ray Darrell & Stuart Anderson.

Royal Mail Comedians

A series of stamps honouring comedy greats is to be issued on 1st April 2015. At the time of writing the known names include The Two Ronnies, Morecambe & Wise, French & Saunders, Peter Cook & Dudley Moore, Spike Milligan, Norman Wisdom, Victoria Wood, Billy Connolly, Lenny Henry & Monty Python but, sadly, it looks as though Max has missed out. It's probably too late to get him included but why not lobby Royal Mail anyway!

Brighton Hippodrome

We reported in the last issue (page 19) that Brighton & Hove City Council had finally approved plans to convert the Hippodrome theatre into a Cinema complex, restaurants and retail outlets. We did say that it remained to be seen whether the development went ahead and, surprise, surprise, just after Christmas it was announced that the plans had been shelved because the new landlord was not proceeding with the development. Watch this space!

Meanwhile, **Our Brighton Hippodrome** continues to campaign to get the Hippodrome restored as a theatre. On Sunday 12th April 2015 at 3pm our own Gerry Oxley is presenting a benefit gig at Brighton's Komedia Theatre bringing back memories of those who played at the theatre using vintage film clips. Please support this show - tickets £10/£8 from Jo Jameson 07815 443174.

The following Sunday 10th April there will be a special benefit at the Komedia of the only film shot in the Brighton Hippodrome - 'Be My Guest' (1965) starring David Hemmings. Ticket details as above. See you there!

Music Hall Studies

Issue 14 of Music Hall Studies is now available with vintage radio comedy as a major theme. There's a full account of Richard Murdoch's career; the story of the Western Brothers, and the first comedian on the BBC, Norman Long. There's also a look at the connection between the First World War and Music Hall and a biography of Eugene Stratton. The magazine can be bought via www.musicallstudies.co.uk



'Maxmillerization'

You won't find it in the Oxford English Dictionary (yet!) but this is the word you will need to type into the search field on the **Youtube** website www.youtube.com to find 23 videos of earlier MMAS events such as Garden Parties, Variety Shows, the Statue unveiling, Max Miller Walk official opening, Bardsleys Fish Restaurant Exhibition and many more. Brian Dazley will be adding more videos as they become available, so keep watching!

Brian also maintains and updates our **facebook** page www.facebook.com and, just as an example, the video of the 2014 MMAS Garden Party was seen by 855 people, which, to date, is a record for one of our events. Now all we need to do is persuade more of them to join MMAS!

'One Man, Two Guvnors'

Richard's Bean's award-winning National Theatre comedy play has recently been on tour and it had a three week run at Brighton's Theatre Royal over Christmas. I'm sure many of you will have seen the play which is set in 1960s Brighton but, for those who haven't, this is a simple summary of the plot.

Fired from his skiffle band, Francis Henshall becomes minder to Roscoe Crabbe. But Roscoe is really Rachel, posing as her own dead brother, who's been killed by her boyfriend, Stanley Stubbers. Francis spots the chance of an extra meal ticket and takes a job with one Stanley Stubbers - but to prevent discovery he must keep his two guvnors apart.

No, I didn't understand it either, but it's still a great evening's entertainment and well worth seeing if it ever



comes to your local theatre. One man who probably did understand it is MMAS member Renton Reeves, who was in the Brighton audience. Renton spotted an article in the show's programme by Cal McCrystal entitled 'British

Humour', accompanied by a photo of Barbara Windsor in her 'Carry on Camping' bikini, or at least the bottom half! The article seeks to unravel just what it is that gives British humour its distinctive identity, and quotes Max:

"The great Music Hall star Max Miller had two joke books that he would bring on stage, one white and one blue. The audience would be asked from which book they would like him to draw material. Invariably the blue book was chosen as it was well known this contained all the risqué material. Hence the term, a blue joke. Miller was banned twice by the BBC for getting too near the knuckle. One offending joke ended in 'I didn't know whether to block her passage or toss meself off'. The story was about a man and woman coming from opposite directions along a precarious mountain ledge."

BMHS Day at the Seaside

Just a reminder that the British Music Hall Society is having a Day at the Seaside on 16th May at Eastbourne's Royal Hippodrome Theatre. The day will be a celebration of Music, Comedy, Archive Films and discussions. Those lined up to appear include: Roy Hudd, Wyn Calvin, Steve Hewlett, Freddie 'Parrot Face' Davies, Mickie Driver, Annie Riley, David Carter, The Plummers, Mike Hope & Joan Laurie. Fiona Castle and Gaye Vaughan will be talking about their late husbands Roy and Malcolm. Elizabeth Mansfield will present her show about Marie Lloyd and there will be a round table discussion about the good old days of touring in variety. And there will be tributes to Sandy Powell and Max Miller!

Tickets are £25 for the day, which will run from 10.30 until 8pm. Please send cheques payable to BMHS to Geoff Bowden, 6 New River Crescent, Palmers Green, London N13 5RF enclosing a SAE for tickets. From 13 April tickets can be bought from the Box Office on 01323 412000.

There will be a party of MMAS members at Eastbourne so we look forward to meeting you there.

Annual MMAS Charity Tea Party 2015

This year's Tea Party will be held on **Sunday 2nd August** and once again we thank MMAS members David & Vanessa Sewell for hosting the event at their Pavilion Gardens Café in Brighton. Jo Blake will send a booking form to those for whom she has an email address. Alternatively, please send a SAE to Jo at 19 Orchard Close, Shoreham BN43 5UT and she will send you a booking form.

Those who attended last year's event will know this is a very popular afternoon so early booking if advised. Full details in the Summer issue of *TNBA!*



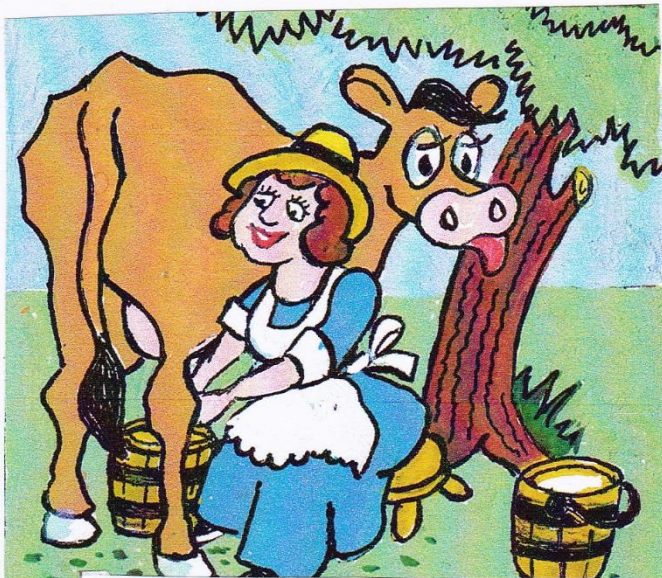
MAX MILLER

Songbook

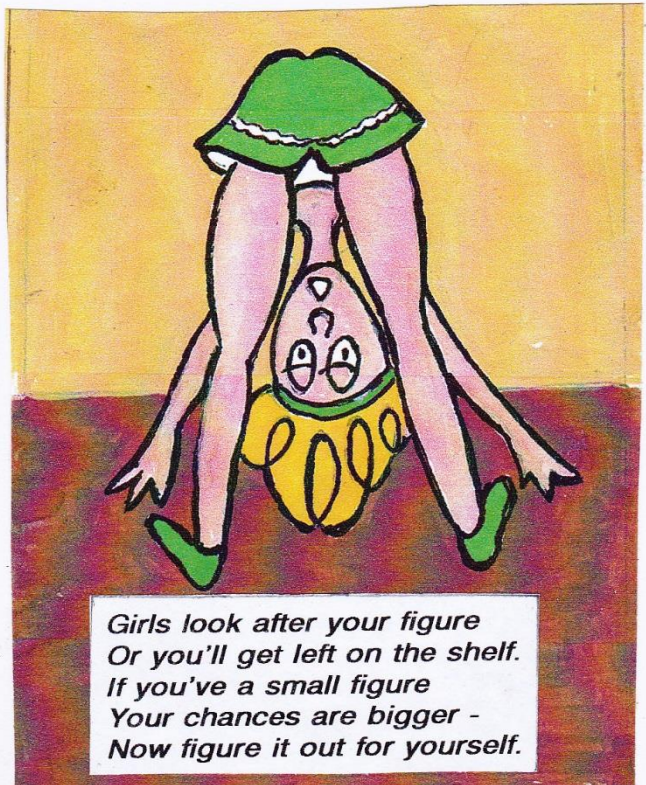
by BEN



I - fell in love with Mary from the dai - ry



"Now on our farm", said Mary from the dairy,
 "We've got the finest cows you've ever seen.
 "I don't do things by halves - I'll let you see
 my calves. And they're not the same calves
 as Nellie Dean's".



Girls look after your figure
 Or you'll get left on the shelf.
 If you've a small figure
 Your chances are bigger -
 Now figure it out for yourself.



A boy and a girl went out hiking,
 Of course, they were both wearing shorts;
 They stopped at the old Pig and Whistle,
 And there had a couple of ports.

When they got back the same evening,
 The neighbours all started to quiz.
 For he came home late wearing her shorts
 And she came home late wearing his.



An old man of ninety got married,
The bride was so young and so bold,
In his car they both went honeymooning
She married the old man for gold.

A year later he was a daddy,
At ninety he still had the knack;
He took one look at the baby -
And then gave the chauffeur the sack.



Searching the dustbins at the best hotels,
I'm living on luxuries they throw away.
While all the rich folk enjoy their sweet repose,
I'm having a picking of half of a chicken,
And nibbling the parson's nose.
Why should the dustman have it all..

I started courting a smashing fan dancer,
To marry her that was my plan.
Now it's all off with the smashing fan dancer
She fell down and damaged her fan.



She stood there like beautiful Venus,
When into the bathroom walked Blind Jack.
He said "I've just come to tell you
Today I got my eyesight back".



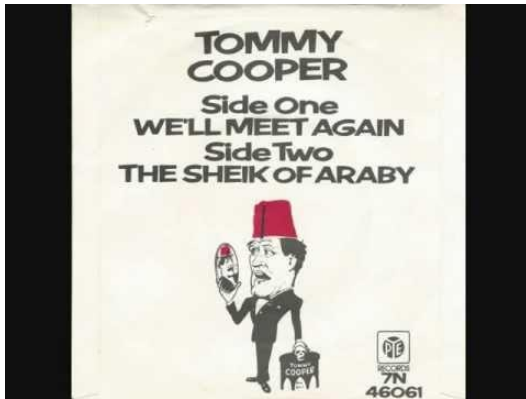
I aint 'alf proud of my old Mum,
And she aint 'alf proud of me

Max Miller and Tommy Cooper on Record - Part 3 by MMAS member John Culley

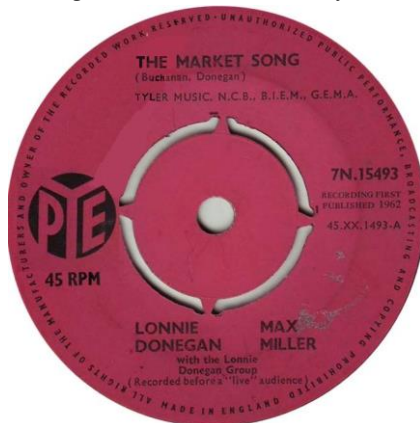
By the time Tommy Cooper records "We'll Meet Again" and "The Sheik of Araby" in 1978 (although it was six years before his death), he sounds rather old and tired. It had not been a good period for his health and career and the record reflects that. In fact he pretends to cry through most of "We'll Meet Again", and he sings "The Sheik of Araby" in the soft and unfocused tones of a slightly inebriated pub crooner.

A bit of jazz clarinet lightens the mood on this side. The song ends with

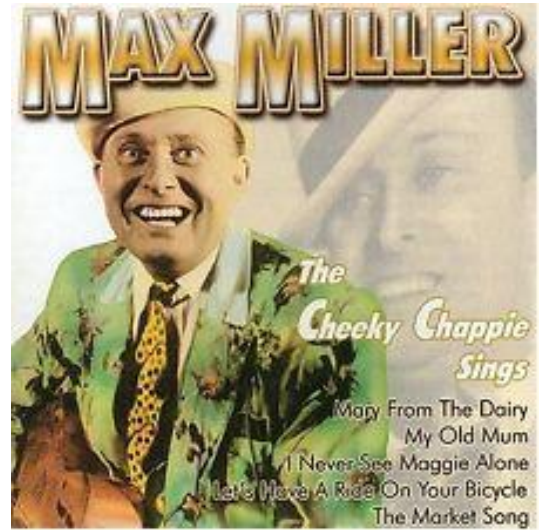
Tommy getting a broken nose from the eponymous Sheik and is thus left unable to sing properly anyway.



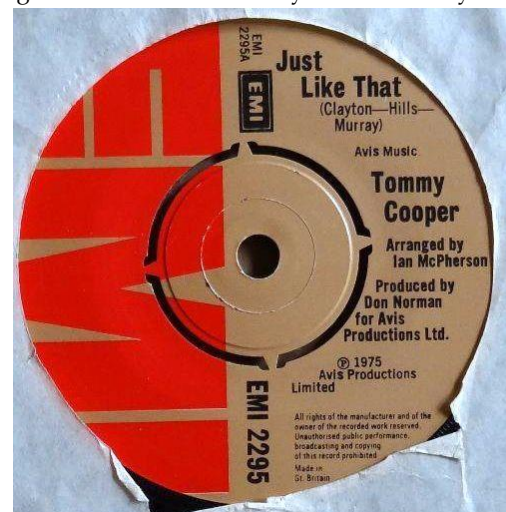
This single reminds me of George Formby's last record "Happy Go Lucky Me" and "Banjo Boy", recorded in his final year of work in May 1960. Incidentally this also peaked at number 40 in the UK charts like Tommy's first single. These final records of Tommy and George are just a sad echo of their former selves, but, in contrast Max Miller manages to sound quite upbeat in his last record with Lonnie Donegan (right) "The Market Song" and "Tit Bits" (Pye 45 7N 15493 - January 1963), cheerfully using jokes from his old "Max, the Auctioneer" Rex record of 1935! Apparently Max and Lonnie "failed to chart" with their record, although it's altogether better than Formby's final disc.



In an overall comparison of the studio recordings of Max Miller and Tommy Cooper, Max's sides come over as less dated and fresher than Tommy's, but if this was all we were to have of these two great performers we would only have a snippet of their true talents. Max was definitely the better singer, but it is regrettable that both were given so much weak material to commit to disc.



Many of Max's songs were included in his stage performances. In Tommy's case "The Sheik of Araby" was his signature tune, but he rarely actually sang it. The others weren't staples of his act as far as I know. On the Max sides there is sometimes some witty interplay between the comic and the musicians in the band, and Max cleverly describes how he might be playing the instrumental solos himself or going into a dance at certain points. Tommy didn't benefit from this kind of clever writing for recorded material in the studio. The recorded legacy of both comics gives us a valuable testimony to their skills, but we must be grateful that we have the treasury of live shows and the recollections of others who saw them perform, to have a true picture of these two greats of twentieth-century British comedy.



Maxie's Bi-Monthlies

22nd January 2015 – Chris Ellison

Following the conclusion of the Society's Annual General Meeting we took a well-earned break for refreshments in readiness for a presentation by TV favourite, Chris Ellison. He took us by surprise because, instead of talking about his career as an actor, he told us how he had slowly unravelled the career of his Grandfather J. W. Ellison, who worked the halls in the early part of the 20th century.

Chris grew up in the East End of London in a family on the fringes of the entertainment industry and knew such luminaries as Arthur Askey, Monsewer Eddie Gray and The Crazy Gang. But he never knew his Grandfather who died before he was born. Although he was aware his Grandfather had been on the halls, he had been unable to trace anything about him. He didn't even know when he was born or when he died, and an online search had failed to reveal any information. Chris kept hearing tales about "Joe" and developed an interest in him. Then one day he found a small suitcase over 100 years old containing a cornucopia of memorabilia of the late Victorian and early Edwardian Music Hall with much about J. W. Ellison.

One particular item was a playbill for 'The Royal' Holborn dated 24th October 1904 featuring "J. W. Ellison" as top of the bill on a Fred Karno show. Also on the bill was an act "Drum & Major" which will be of interest to anyone who has read John Major's biography of his father.

"JW" was a prolific seller of song sheets. Chris said these were the CD's of their day, bought in large numbers by families to play on their piano. One example he showed us was 'The Noise of the Children at Play'. Chris has a large collection of sheet music from the little case most of which hasn't been heard for over a hundred years. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have an evening with a pianist and singer and hear some of these old songs again?

Chris believes "JW" would have been too old to have fought in WW1, and around that time he gave up performing and moved into production. He moved to Brighton and started a Pierrot show on the beach known as 'Ellison's Entertainers', who also travelled to

Ramsgate, Folkestone etc. Given the dates, is it possible he employed a young Harry Sargent in his Pierrot show?



Ellison's Entertainers, Brighton 1914

Chris read from a 1914 interview:

"The alfresco entertainment at the seaside is one which has witnessed a great advance during the past decade. From the happy-go-lucky minstrels of the irresponsible coons of the burnt cork type has been evolved an orderly form of concert of the best quality. A good clean show to which paterfamilias can take Mama and the kiddies with a certainty of being thoroughly amused without any suspicion of vulgarity. This process of evolution has taken a decade of years to accomplish but it has certainly now arrived and a visitor to the open air theatre on the beach can be assured of witnessing an entertainment quiet equal to any indoor entertainment of a like character.

We in Brighton have the facts proved on our foreshore where Mr Joseph Ellison has a concert party opposite the bottom of Cannon Place. Joe Ellison is undoubtedly one of the best known men in this particular line of business, with which has been connected for probably more years than he cares to remember, and in the course of his experience of producing these al-fresco concerts at the seaside in all parts of the country, he has witnessed the great changes to which we have referred. Probably few of the thousands of visitors to his stand realise that in the person of the dapper little man working so assiduously in front of the house is a name to conjure with in the world of open air entertainment. Mr. Ellison has been a resident of Brighton for five years and is a great lover of the Queen of Watering Places.'

Chris said his Grandfather was offered the song 'Goodbye' for just £10, but turned it down. The rest is history! Our thanks to Chris Ellison for a unique insight into the world of Music Hall with a unique personal slant.

Vic Chapman



Max 'Sightings'

Here's the latest collection of 'sightings' of Max compiled by David Simpson and other 'eagle-eyed' MMAS members. If you spot a reference to Max please let me know.

28/8/2014 - The Birmingham Post's nostalgia page asks readers to identify photos of 'clown princes of comedy'. Max is featured along with Tony Hancock, Benny Hill, the Goons, Les Dawson, Morecambe & Wise, Tommy Cooper, Frankie Howerd & Bruce Forsyth. The Post says Max *'...was one of Britain's top comedians from the 1930's through to the 50's. He laughed in the strict censorship with jokes loaded with innuendo and saucy meanings.'*

15/12/2014 - 19/12/2014 - Paul Merton picks the 'Tracks of His Years' this week on Ken Bruce's morning show on BBC Radio 2. On Monday Paul says that when he was young he listened to old comedy records, when his mates were buying pop records. This included hearing Max, and once again Paul quoted Max's joke about the husband coming home and saying to the wife, *"I've just heard that the milkman has made love to every woman in our street except one....."* You all know the punchline about the stuck up woman at No. 32!

19/12/2014 - BBC 4 repeats 'Diamonds Are Forever', the Don Black songbook in which Don says he spent his afternoons in the cinema and his evenings at the Hackney Empire, watching Max Miller and Anne Shelton.

21/12/2014 - On BayFM Radio in Devon, MMAS member Nick Muir (below) plays Max's 1935 recording 'The Christmas Dinner'. Nick also gives MMAS a plug. We wish him well following his recent hospitalisation.

Ed - Thanks to John Palmer.



28/12/2014 - BBC 4 repeats 'Return to Betjemanland' in which narrator A. N. Wilson mentions John Betjeman's love for Music Hall artists, including Max. An excerpt from 'Max at The Met' is played with him singing 'Passing the Time Away'. *"I know what you're saying to yourself - you're wrong! I know what you're saying. Ooh, you wicked*

lot... you're the kind of people that get me a bad name. There's a funny thing, now this is a funny thing...."

Ed - Thanks also to Steve Lawrence & Ken Cook. Ken says the audience loved Max's patter.

13/1/2015 - On BBC Radio Sussex Neil Pringle provides an update on the plans for Brighton Hippodrome and mentions that Max was one of the stars that played the theatre. There is an update on the latest proposals for the Hippodrome elsewhere in this issue.

Ed - Heard by me!

21/1/2015 - The Daily Telegraph carries an article on the demise of The Sun's page 3 girl. *'Its shrill enemies saw it as coercive, exploitative, woman-hating pornography. But it is more generous to see it as part of fine British bawdy, which includes Max Miller and Barbara Windsor, as well as Bamforth's gloriously tacky picture postcards.....'*

Ed - Thanks to Brian O'Gorman & Nigel Bishop. Nigel says the dictionary definition of 'bawdy' is lewd, sexually explicit. No-one could describe Max's jokes as explicit but there was plenty of innuendo.

22/1/2015 - In his fortnightly column in 'Yours' magazine Roy Hudd discusses Christmas cards and, at the end of his piece, he includes a picture of a card he wishes had been sent to him. It's a Christmas card Max sent out to fans when he was making the 1935 film 'Get Off My Foot' and it was given to Roy by Max's widow Kathleen.

24/1/2015 - The Brighton Argus carries a letter from Sheila Sheppard about Alfred Richardson, milkman to the stars and war veteran. His customers included Laurence Olivier, Max Miller and Dora Bryan. Sheila says it would be an honour to see Alf's name on the front of one of Brighton's buses.

Ed - An Averil Older sighting.

30/1/2015 - On BBC Radio 2's Friday Night is Music Night, Ken Bruce presents a celebration of the 70th anniversary of the BBC Light Programme, entitled 'On the Wireless and Off the Box'. Roy Hudd is one of the guests and sings Max's song about 'Twin Sisters' Annie & Fanny.

Ed - Thanks also to Ken Cook.

19/2/2015 - The Brighton Argus has a feature on Bardsley's Fish Restaurant in Baker Street, Brighton, which is *'often ranked among the best chip shops in Britain and boasts a room dedicated to Brighton-born music hall icon Max Miller.'*

20/2/2015 - On Desmond Carrington's late evening programme on BBC Radio 2 he plays Max singing 'Let's Have a Ride On Your Bicycle'. Incidentally, Desmond has been an actor for 72 years, on the air for 69 and has had his weekly programme on BBC Radio 2 for 34 years. Quite a remarkable record and a great programme.

Ed - Thanks to Averil Older & Terry Hardy.

4/3/2015 - Gosport Jazz Club holds its 17th tribute evening in memory of Nat Gonella (pictured below with Max). The programme notes record that Nat 'toured with comedian Max Miller before a brief comeback in the early 60's....' The first issue of *TNBA!* in 1999 featured Max, Nat and Clive Allen on the front cover.

Ed - Thanks again to John Palmer who was there for the show.



Books, Publications CD's etc.

The Veteran is the magazine of British Cinema & TV Veterans and the Winter 2014 issue carries a 'quotes quiz' where the reader has to match 26 quotes to 26 names. This is the quote attributed to Max:

"Look, I asked my dad - I said, 'Dad, is it hard to please a woman?' He said, 'It is if it isn't!'"

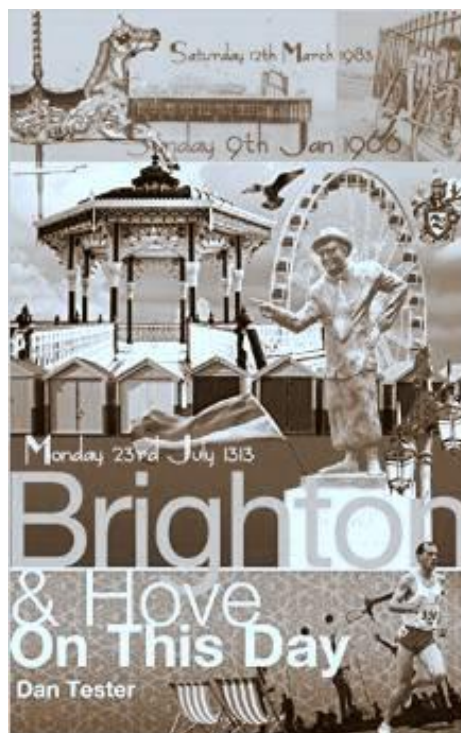
The same *Veteran* magazine has a review of Robert Kenny's book 'The Man Who Was Old Mother Riley'. That man was Arthur Lucan and it seems that at the time of his death (in 1954), he was being lined up for another film about his alter ego. *'This was long after Max Miller (and other stars) had lost their box office appeal'*.

The Daily Telegraph Third Book of Obituaries (Entertainers) 1997 gives Max three mentions in the obituaries of Harry Worth, Frankie Howerd & Benny Hill.

The Winter 2014 issue of *The Call Boy* magazine (BMHS) has four mentions of Max. The BMHS Day at the Seaside in Eastbourne in May 2015 will include a tribute to Max; a reader recalls seeing Max at the Reading Palace Theatre; Max's costume displayed in the London Museum of Comedy has been replaced by one of George Robey's suits, and in John Bardon's obituary there is mention of his one man show about Max.

Edition 19 of *Old Theatres* magazine also has four sightings of Max. An article on Brighton Hippodrome includes a bill featuring Max; Ken Dodd recalls seeing his first Variety show with Max at Brighton Hippodrome; an article on Alma Cogan says her first professional engagement in 1947 was at the Grand Theatre, Brighton with Max, and Reading's Palace Theatre celebrated its 50th birthday in 1957 with Max topping the bill.

Organ and Keyboard World magazine for Dec. 1999/Jan. 2000 carries an interview with veteran organist Freida Hall (below). Her shows were a great favourite at coastal resorts over the years where she used her white and gold Hammond E3 organ, which had an extra keyboard built into it, transported on a trailer pulled by her Mercedes FH 2. Max is listed as one of the many guests who appeared in her shows. The article also mentions that Freida has a poster for the Palace Theatre, Reading for the w/c 30th September 1957 when she was on the bill with Max.



Brighton & Hove On This Day by Dan Tester (Pitch Publishing 2014) provides an entry for every day of the year of quirky anecdotes and legendary characters.

Max's birth is recorded on 21st November and the book cover (left) features Max's statue in Brighton's Pavilion Gardens.

From the 'TNBA!' Postbag 'Now, 'Ere's a Funny Thing!'

Dear MMAS

I recently sorted out some papers and came across an article I had torn out of a Sussex Life magazine which mentioned your Society. I have a vivid childhood memory of Max Miller so I am a regular visitor to your website www.maxmiller.org

My parents were both Max fans, particularly my father. They kept an eye out for variety shows that were put on at theatres such as the Chelsea Palace. I'm not sure if it was as the Palace or another South London venue, but as a very, very small child, possibly pre-school, I was taken to see Max. Most of the jokes went over my head, of course, but I still enjoyed his act. The audience was in stitches. Oh, how he could work an audience with just a look and those twinkling blue eyes.

During the interval my father went to the bar for drinks and somehow got into conversation with Max. I vaguely remember my father saying afterwards that Max was looking for a support or stooge to include in his act and tried to enlist my father. My mother and I were waiting outside and were ushered in to meet the very colourful Max, who was in full stage costume. He bought us all a drink! I was given a large signed photo and Max bent down, which was quite a long way, and kissed me on my right cheek. I remember it very well as the red lipstick he wore as part of his stage make-up took a lot of rubbing to get off! I also remember clearly Max's flamboyant floral suit, like chintzy curtains and, again, his very blue twinkling eyes. He came across as a nice man.

Afterwards my father said "Who says Max Miller is mean and doesn't buy anyone a drink?" Sadly, I have lost the photo but I

can say that Max bought me an orange juice!

TNBA!

Susan Bishop-King (Epsom Downs)

Dear MMAS

For Christmas my beloved had a part family tree made which started with my grandfather, Fred E. Taylor. I remember him briefly but he died in 1970 when I was just seven years old. In the book of information provided, there are many reviews and promotional posters of his music hall days from around 1920 until the 1940s. In a poster for the The Hippodrome, Devonport for 29th June 1925, Fred is billed with Dan Rayner, and before Max Miller, in G.E. Williams' "Safe and Sound". Is your Society aware of my grandfather at all? I was surprised to see him on the same bill as Max and even more surprised when a group photograph appeared with them both in it (see below). Fred is second from left in middle row and Max third from right also in the middle row.



TNBA!

Ed Taylor (Wigan)

Ed - Terry Hardy was able to let Ed Taylor know that we have a record of Fred appearing with Max in "Crisps" at the Metropolitan on 23rd March 1925, and in "Safe & Sound" at the Palace, Plymouth in June 1925 and in Ipswich from 20-25 July.

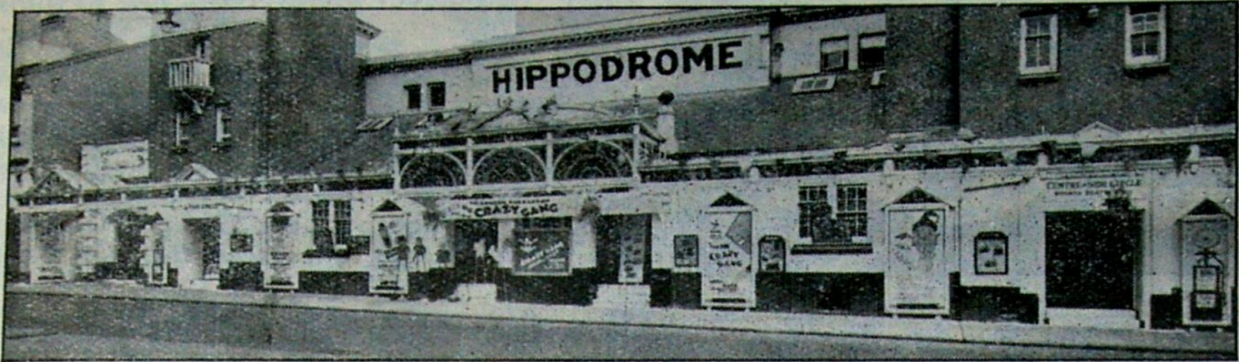


Max on the Radio at Brighton Hippodrome

This programme dates from 1934 and features one of Max's earliest appearances at Brighton Hippodrome, although not his first. Top of the bill Les Allen had recently left Henry Hall's Orchestra to try his luck in Variety. He was a Canadian alto sax player/vocalist and was building a big following among British girls. British International Pictures had released *Radio Parade* in 1935 with many BBC favourites, so perhaps this show was a spin-off from that film.

16

THE BRIGHTON ILLUSTRATED SPORTING MAIL AND WEEKLY PROGR



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General Manager: C. FOSTER-MARNER

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TOMMY HANDLEY

CLAPHAM AND DYER

THE FAYRE FOUR

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ETC.

PRICES (Tax. inc.)—Reserved Seats, 3/8, 2/5 and 1/10. Circle, 1/4, (centre) 1/- (side)
Saturdays and Holidays, Res. Seats, 4/10, 3/- and 2/5. Circle, 2/- and 1/4.

Nice One, Maxie! ~ Part 6

By Michael Burnham (MMAS Member)

KATHLEEN and Alfred Thripp have been reminiscing downstairs over old times while, upstairs, Max has been fitting castors to the bed! Kathleen also explains how she was once startled by the arrival of Mary the sheep. She also tells Alfred that Max has a soft heart.

ALFRED Goodness. People say he's mean with money.

KATHLEEN No. He's careful. With good reason.

ALFRED Yes.

KATHLEEN But if Max should take pity on you – only for a moment – feel a little sorry for you if you're down and out, a tramp, a hard luck story...

ALFRED Or - (ruefully) – a blind piano player?

KATHLEEN Don't be silly. You're not in that league at all. You're talented. You have a gift. I've often stood there in the wings and watched you, when you're on. Your touch is delicate, but firm. You lead your audience – towards the music. Which is rare. Believe me.

ALFRED (awkwardly) That's.... very kind.

KATHLEEN It's just the truth. I have background, don't forget. I'm classically trained. And Max would not have taken up the cudgels out of pity. You'd not have worked with him. All that you'd have got would be a pound note at the Stage Door, and be done with it!

ALFRED Well, I've had more than that. It's been a good few years now we've been working on the Halls.

KATHLEEN Exactly. And he had to do a lot of fighting with the Agents, with the Bookers, to include you on his Bills. You've no idea! And some of them were more than merely stubborn. Oh, there's lots of times he's come home – seething.....

CHARLIE'S OFFICE

MAX ...Charlie! There's a saying: if you want the meat, you've got to take the bones!

CHARLIE Not these bones.

MAX What's the matter with 'em?

CHARLIE The public....

MAX The public know him from the BBC. He's on the radio. I've heard him.

CHARLIE Exactly. But you didn't have to watch.

MAX What's to watch? He's perfectly turned out – white tie and tails –

CHARLIE Dark glasses?

MAX Don't be silly, Charlie. Don't make jokes.

CHARLIE I'm only thinking what the public thinks.

MAX Well, he doesn't have a tin cup, either. He just plays piano!

PAUSE

CHARLIE Look. This country – it's still reeling from the war. There's shortages. And power cuts. The shops are selling whalemeat.

MAX And I'm the biggest bit o' steak you'll see this side o' Smithfield Market!

CHARLIE Yes, yes. They'll turn out for you. You cheer 'em up. But blind piano players – dearie me. It's gruesome. Why, there's lots of people who have family like that, made sightless by the War. I can't ask them to come and sit through this.

MAX Is that your last word, Charlie?

CHARLIE Sorry, Max. I don't do freak shows.

MAX (coldly) Then you don't do Miller, either!

HE STRIDES OUT

MAX Goodbye, Charlie!

THE DOOR SLAMS SHUT

DOWNSTAIRS

MAX (grumpy) You know your trouble, Alfred?

ALFRED What?

MAX You're getting like the man who does the deckchairs down on Brighton front. Too many questions.

ALFRED I only thought –

MAX You want to know too much.

ALFRED But Kathleen said....

MAX Oh, I can guess what Kathleen said. Real song and dance she made of it.

ALFRED But why St Dunstan's?

MAX Why not? We were living up at Ovingdean when War broke out. Real big house. Big estate. Yes. Much too big for just the two of us – two people, and a parrot. So why not let someone else have some of it?

ALFRED That's not exactly what I meant. There were other Service charities, as you well know – the British Legion being one. Yet you settled on St Dunstan's – people blinded in the War. Why?

PAUSE

MAX (sighs) Alfred, you are like I said. A pain. A real pain. Do you know that?

ALFRED Yes, Max. I do know that.

MAX Well, then. This is something you don't put up in lights. You promise me.

ALFRED I'll keep it to myself, Max. Whatever it might be.

MAX You have to go back forty years or more, you see. Way back. Nineteen fifteen. When we were out there, in the desert...

A DISTANT BOOMING OF BIG GUNS. ESTABLISH.

MAX I didn't mind it, see! In fact, I found it quite exotic. Until one day.....one day.....

UP BOMBARDMENT. CROSSFADE TO ARMY MEDICAL TENT, MESOPOTAMIA, 1915. THEY'RE CLEARING UP.

MO (wearily) Is this the last one, Watkins?

WATKINS Yessir. But it's nothing serious. Concussion.

MO Ah.....

WATKINS He was with the guns, up front, when a shell burst dead in front of him. It knocked him out. Stone cold.

MO What - the Concert Party boy -

HARRY (comes to):

MO (close) It's all right, son. You're in safe hands, now. Not to worry.

HARRY (teeth chattering)

MO Just face me a little - look up -

HARRY (small, sharp breathing):

MO No flesh wounds. Facially, at least.

HARRY (chokes: gags: gibbers):

MO (kindly) What's the matter? Eh?

HARRY What - what time is it?

MO (cheerful) Teatime. First class brew. You qualify, of course!

HARRY (unenthusiastically) Oh.

MO Don't you fancy any? Eh? Come on. It'll buck you up. The cup that cheers -

HARRY (urgent) Where's the sun? (Shivering) Who's turned the bloody lights out?

MAX'S BEDROOM

MAX I'd been blinded, see. Not dizzy spells, or little blackouts. Darkness...darkness, stuck all round me, thick like treacle. When I realised what had happened - I just cried. Cried. I lay down on my little cot and blubbered like a baby. All the waterworks turned on that day, I'll tell you! Oh, I did feel sorry for poor little me! But then I got to thinking: Well, I wasn't wounded. As far as the MO could fathom, all the bits were still all there. So what I had to do was just make sure they worked. The whole damn lot of 'em.....

MEDICAL TENT

MO I've looked at both your eyes, now, fairly closely - through my magnifiers -and I have to say I can't see any damage. To the retina, that is.

HARRY Oh.

MO My guess is, it's neurasthenic.

HARRY Is that good?

MO Well - I don't know, young man. I can't say, at this stage. You see - there's quite a lot of trouble on the Western Front, with things like this - resulting from explosions. No wounds visible - like yours - but damage, all the same. And quite considerable...

LATER

WATKINS Neurasthenic? Well - er - it's your nerves, I think.

HARRY I'm not nervous. Never have been.

WATKINS I don't think he means it quite like that.

HARRY Then what does he mean, eh? Tryin' to make out that I'm some screamin' conchie? Is that what he's sayin'?

WATKINS No, no! Trust the Doctor, Harry. What he means is - well - it's shock. You see, a shell exploded. Right close by. And that's a big, big bang. And all the energy in that big bang - it must go somewhere. So it bangs right into you. If you soak up all that energy in penny lumps, it wouldn't harm you. But you couldn't. You had to take the whole damn lot at once. And that's the reason.

PAUSE

MAX (appreciatively) That's clever. That is clever.

MAX'S BEDROOM

MAX I was blind for three days, Alfred - three whole days and nights. Not long, by your standards, but for me - well, it was like the end. And when it didn't seem to get much better, I thought it was the end! Good night, Harry Sargent.

Ed - The penultimate part of Michael Burnhams' play will be in issue 63 of TNBA!

**MAX MILLER APPRECIATION SOCIETY
FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 12 MONTHS 1/1/12- 31/12/12**

ITEM	EXPENSES 2014	INCOME 2014	EXPENSES 2013	INCOME 2013	
<u>INCOME</u>					
SUBSCRIPTIONS		4757.60		3743.60	
BANK INTEREST		2.49		26.64	
RAFFLES		1021.00		1006.00	
MERCHANDISE SALES		202.67		1632.54	
STATUE FUND DONATIONS		306.00		215.00	
GARDEN PARTY PROCEEDS		3223.00		2428.00	
LOSS ON ANNUAL DINNER	118.90			236.41	
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>					
PRINTING (TNBA)	1850.40		1853.64		
PRINTING & STATIONERY	205.10		472.17		
POSTAGE (TNBA)	678.50		552.00		
POSTAGE - OTHER	79.48		187.12		
MERCHANDISE - purchases	0.00		322.00		
INSURANCE	446.01		623.76		
ENTERTAINMENT	133.75		258.51		
BANK CHARGES	52.24		136.00		
MEMORABILIA	321.94		101.94		
ROOM HIRE	615.00		500.00		
SPEAKER'S EXPENSES	12.00		50.00		
MISCELLANEOUS	0.00		114.88		
WEB HOSTING	0.00		0.00		NOTE 3
CHARITABLE DONATIONS	3250.00		2500.00		
STATUE COSTS	996.00		0.00		
CAPITAL ITEMS	199.99		667.80		
LOSS ON VARIETY SHOW	150.00		697.80		
TOTALS	9109.31	9512.76	9037.62	9288.19	
OVERALL PROFIT [LOSS]		403.45		250.57	
<u>ASSETS</u>					
CO-OP CURRENT ACCOUNT		616.14		1703.13	
SCOTTISH WIDOWS		16067.61		16024.77	
MERCHANDISE ON HAND		2261.00		2681.75	
MEMORABILIA		7500.00		7000.00	NOTE 1
<u>LIABILITIES</u>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	NOTE 2

NOTES

1. Memorabilia value is estimated.
2. THE COMMITTEE BELIEVES THAT THE SOCIETY HAS NO SIGNIFICANT LIABILITIES
3. Web-Hosting paid tri-annually

Max in Verse

Following on Susie Maxwell-Stewart's poem about Max in the last issue of *TNBA!* I'm delighted to say that another of our resident poets, Deborah Tyler-Bennett, has very kindly sent two poems about Marie Lloyd and Nellie Power.

Deborah says that both of the poems are villanelles: the form originated in France and there's also a similar 'peasant song' style poem in Italy. The villanelle is a poem of repeated lines and comes originally from the troubadour tradition. The most famous twentieth-century villanelle is 'Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night' by Dylan Thomas.

"Ann Featherstone, who I perform with on music hall (she tells the audience about Victorian songs and I read stories from 'Turned Out Nice Again') told me about Nellie Power and the phrase 'wet money', meaning money at halls with bars. The villanelle seemed a good form to use for poems about singers, and their rises and falls. I have Nellie as the originator of 'The Boy I Love' for poetic clarity, but know she was 'an originator' in all probability, as Jenny Hill also had some claim to the song".

Deborah hopes that these poems will form part of a sequence on Music Hall that she's hoping to write with Andy Jackson for a proposed volume.

Ed - Although long since forgotten, Nellie Power was a top class star of the Victorian Music Hall, with a voice and style of singing far above the burlesque acts. She was the first person to perform George Ware's 'The Boy in the Gallery' and died at the age of just 33. So here's Deborah's villanelle about Nellie and we will bring you the Marie Lloyd poem in the next issue.

The Rise and Fall of Nellie Power (1853-1887)



*Count the rich days of Nellie Power,
originator of 'The Boy I Love:
petals drooping, pooter by the hour.*

*Night on night the painted back-drops tower
'wet money' round the bar begins to shove,
count the rich days of Nellie Power.*

*Once feted, now her sights aim lower,
though songs report of valentines and doves,
petals drooping, pooter by the hour.*

*Roses turn daisies, champers rendered sour,
Madame Gin begins to rove
through the rich days of Nellie Power.*

*Marie ascends as Jennie pins a flower
to hide a rip (lights her stove
flame petals drooping, pooter by the hour.*

*Masks on balconies and boxes glower,
some magician's hand in velvet glove
counts the rich days of Nellie Power,
petals drooping, pooter by the hour.*

BBC Genome Project

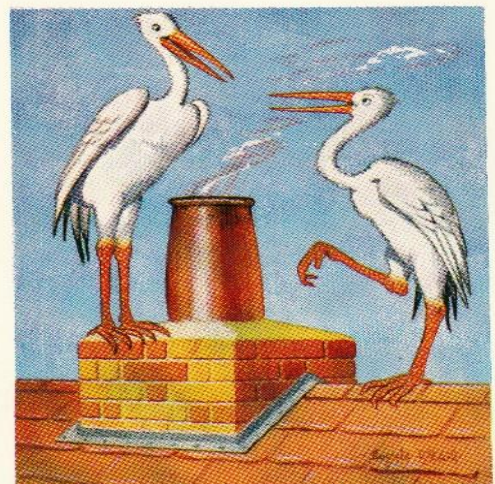
Over the years we have compiled a record of Max's radio/TV appearances and this exciting new project by the BBC will enable us to document many more. It contains all the listings in the Radio Times from 1923 - 2009, of the planned BBC output, reflecting the attitudes/standards of the time. As we know, radio/TV schedules can change from time to time, so it's possible that the planned programmes were not always broadcast as listed.

Terry Hardy has been searching the site and the very first programme to mention Max Miller was on BBC 2ZY Manchester on 16th July 1929, when excerpts from Julian Wylie's 'The Show of Shows' were broadcast from Blackpool's Winter Gardens Pavilion. Over the next few issues we will be tracing Max's scheduled appearances and there will be a few surprises along the way!

Spot the Max Gag

"Any business to-day?"

"No real business, but I put the wind up a couple of typists this afternoon!"



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THE MAX MILLER SHOW

NAT "GEORGIA ON MY MIND" * THE * BRITAIN'S NEW RECORDING STARS
GONELLA * KENTONES

EL * THE COWBOY AND HIS SENORITAS *
GRANADAS *
WITH THEIR ROPES AND WHIPS

GEORGETTE * GLAMOUR ON THE WIRE *
THE WELL KNOWN PIANIST ENTERTAINER
ALFRED THRIIPP *

NORMAN & NIKI *
GRANT *
DANCE TEAM