

Memorable "Mike" Moments

(3) George Vryer

You'd think the Fates would be too busy—or at least have more dignity than to conspire to upset the arrangements of us poor helpless human beings as they sometimes do. Maybe they do it from a perverted sense of humour and desire to tease. Anything for a laugh!

It was George Vryer of 12B who inspired the foregoing remarks by his account of his most memorable mike moment. Here it is:

"One unforgettable occasion happened some years ago on a night when an urgent message had to be broadcast to a Public Works Camp in the country, calling one of the men to the Auckland Hospital at once, as he was urgently needed — a type of announcement you will realise all announcers hate putting over.

On this occasion no sooner had I finished sending the call, when I looked down at the other turntable to check that I was not repeating the record already played. You can imagine my feelings when I read the title of the record to be broadcast — "Ain't it Grand to be Blooming Well Dead."

I hurriedly substituted the next record the Programme Department had lined up on the evening's schedule, and nearly had a fit when the next showed the extraordinarily inappropriate title of — "Everything is Hunky Dory." I grabbed another, and was foiled again with "Down Among the Dead Men." I nearly started yelping, particularly when the following record had the appalling title of "Pushing Up the Daisies." Control Room must have thought I had suddenly gone in for physical exercises, or something, but thank heaven, I finally found a record called "Buffoon." It looked innocent, but believe it or not, it actually commenced with three enormous hearty laughs!

(4) Doug. Laurenson

"One hot summer afternoon," Doug. told us, "I sought to relieve the atmosphere in the studio by opening the outside window. All was fine and dandy, and, quite pleased with myself — I opened the mike and settled down to read a long commercial announcement. But Fate lurked just outside the open window. Outside it was a long fire escape, and up it crept a friendly cat — of the large tom variety — right into the studio and on to the announcer's desk. I went steadily on reading the commercial, trying not to notice puss. But puss wouldn't take no. First he purred and rubbed his head on my arm, then he scratched at the paper I was holding — I beat him off. Finally he put both paws up to the mike and let out a resounding "Me-ow!" that went over the air and was heard by thousands. And then — I came to the end of the commercial, turned off the mike — and pussy out of the studio."

SING AS WE GO ZB Stations To Broadcast Community Singing Films

IN a recent statement, the Archbishop of Canterbury said that "at a time of anxiety, music can lift us above troubles that beset us."

This might explain the value of Community Singing which seems to have originated during the Great War of 1914-18. There is undoubtedly a great fascination to be found in singing the old and the new songs en masse. For one thing, the deficiencies of the individual voices become lost in the heartiness of the combined vocal efforts, and for another, community songs are generally selected for their lilt, their sentiment and their humour rather than for their musical quality.

The large audiences which Community Sings generally attract are proof of their

consistent popularity, and it is this obvious natural desire to "sing as we go" that has led the Commercial Broadcasting Service, in association with Columbia Pictures, Pty., Ltd., to give to ZB listeners a novel series of community singing films. Some of these have already been screened at local theatres, but the new ones will be heard in the broadcast series which will begin at all ZB Stations on Saturday, November 4, at 6.30 p.m. Thereafter, they will play every Saturday at this time. Each of these films has a separate character; for example, one comprises the popular Strauss songs, another the well-known Hill-Billy melodies; still another has a Hawaiian flavour.

"What About a Cup-er-Tea, Maggo?"



EVERYBODY knows "Barney" — "Barney," with his constant demands for a "cup-er-tea, Maggo."

It's a well-known fact that in radio, as in stage and screen, productions, subsidiary characters often achieve a popularity almost equal to that of the stars. "Barney" is a good example; and undoubtedly "Fred" and "Maggie" themselves would be glad to acknowledge "Barney's" contribution to the success of the feature.

Of special interest to ZB listeners is the fact that "Barney" once made a film in New Zealand! It was called "Fun On the Avon," in which "Barney" supplied the fun by submitting to a canoe being upset, throwing him and another occupant into the river!

"Barney," whose real name is Les Wharton, is probably just as well known for his screen work as for his broad-

casting. His most recent film appearance was with Cecil Kellaway in "Mr. Chedworth Steps Out!"

Shortly after his appearance in this film, "Barney" became ill, and that accounts for his non-appearance in recent episodes of "Fred and Maggie Everybody." But his recovery from severe appendicitis is proceeding satisfactorily, and he will soon be back at his radio work again.

It was a great disappointment to Sydney "Fred and Maggie" fans that because of his illness "Barney" wasn't able to take part in the celebration of Fred and Maggie's 750th performance, an occasion when many well-known people in the feature stepped out of character to say cheerio to their friends and well-wishers.

"Fred and Maggie" are on the air on Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays at 7 p.m.

Meet the LADIES



"GRAN" of 12B—in private life Mrs. Donne—is a Scot. Nobody could possibly mistake it. She still talks with a faint Celtic burr that is fascinating, and she's got a certain feyness of mind that is quick, penetrating, that tackles any problem of the mind or heart and irons it out smoothly.

She's got a dry Scots sense of humour, the same that made Sir Harry Lauder one of the funniest comedians on earth, and the same sense of underlying kindness in her wit, a feeling of unobtrusiveness that gave the puckish humour of Sir James Barrie the inevitable label of "whimsical." Gran is whimsical.

She's also rather shy, and shuns publicity. But if publicity and the type of "lionising" which usually follows a radio personality brings her into the public eye, she accepts it quietly and without fuss, and there's an end.

"Gran" spent her first New Zealand years in Southland and Central Otago, and her first introduction to radio was over Station 12S in Auckland, after which she went to 12M, Manurewa. There, as "Gran" of 12B, she became known to thousands of Scots, who formed a Scottish Radio Club with a membership of over four thousand.

In 1937 she joined the Commercial Broadcasting Service at 22B, later transferring to 4ZB, where she started the first women's commercial session from that Station. Now she is up at 12B and conducts the Home Service Session at 2.30 daily. Always her sessions are characterised by her gentle whimsical sense of humour, her unobtrusive kindness, her good Scots common sense.

"Gran" has published a book, "Bits and Pieces," and has written numerous radio sketches, which are far too heady, far too slick as radio scripts for us to be hoodwinked by "Gran's" modesty. And there's another thing — "Gran" shares with her sister the distinction of being the only women to have spent a night on Campbell Island, three hundred miles south of New Zealand. The island is now deserted except for a few sheep, and was reached only by a very small boat over very stormy seas. Yes, there are many things about "Gran" for which we can admire her.