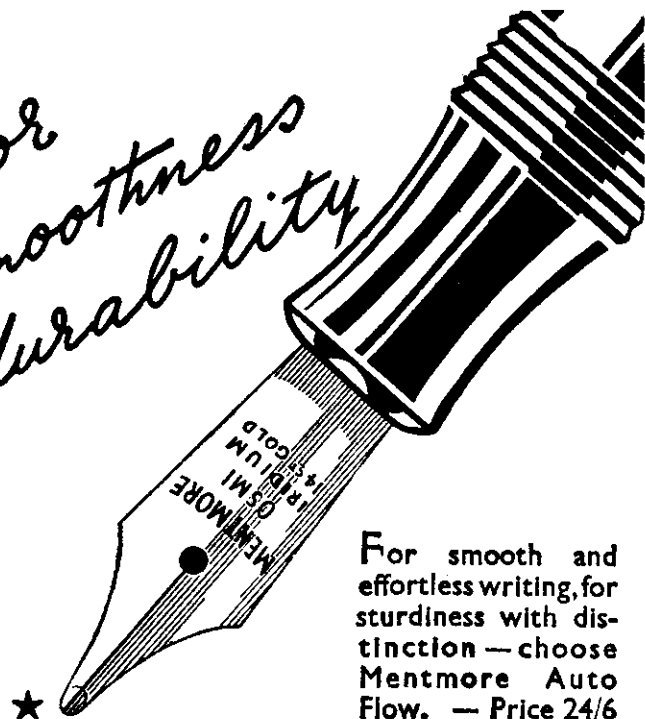


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IT'S THAT ITMA AGAIN!

New Series From 2YN

SOME listeners were reported to have become agitated, a few weeks ago when Colonel ("I don't mind if I do, suh") Chinstrap, *ITMA's* bibulous backslider, wandered away from Tomtopia into a BBC bridge four, to help learners of that temper-fraying pastime. But there was nothing to worry about; the Colonel's deviation was temporary. Now he is back in his accustomed setting with the eighth series of the Tommy Handley show.

In London *ITMA* breaks out in the early autumn and rages unchecked till the early summer, when cast, author and producer are granted time to relax and fortify themselves for the next season's outburst. People in the BBC are often asked what an *ITMA* broadcast really looks like, and whether the audience one hears is laughing to order, or actually feels that way. The answer is that the audience stops laughing to order, on a signal from Fred ("Biggabanga") Yule, so that the show can go on. But it has never yet been necessary to invite an audience to start laughing. This is largely due, we are told, to the *ITMA* atmosphere that pervades the studio—once a cinema—even before the show is put on. **Kavanagh Warms Them Up**

When the audience have settled in their seats they see before them a stage on which is the BBC Variety Orchestra, with the grey mane of Rae Jenkins waving gallantly before it. In front of the orchestra is a dais supporting two rows of chairs which in due course support the members of the cast when they are not actually needed at the microphone slung between them. To one side is a screen behind which sit the programme assistants who produce the sound effects, from the door that opens to admit the Colonel to the whistle that used to mark the departure of Naive in a hurry.

A few minutes before the red light signals "on the air" Francis Worsley, the



BBC photograph
TED KAVANAGH
He warms up the audience

producer, welcomes the audience, gives them the "gen" about light signals and so forth, and then hands them over to the script-writer, Ted Kavanagh, to introduce the cast. By the time Kavanagh has said his piece, the audience is very well warmed up indeed, for he can mingle genial insults and outrageous puns without batting an eyelid or cracking his expression of massive solemnity.

People still tell the story of the night when Basil Cameron, the eminent conductor, was in the audience. Introducing him, Kavanagh said it was a remarkable coincidence that Cameron and Rae Jenkins had both learned their music at the same correspondence school. As, however, Jenkins lived in a remote Welsh valley where the mails were erratic, he was usually five or six lessons behind Cameron, and that is why Basil Cameron now conducts the London Symphony Orchestra, while Jenkins has got no further than the BBC Variety. One of Kavanagh's neatest puns was when he introduced the brunette, Lind Joyce, who does the songs in *ITMA* as "the dark lady of the song-hits."

The eighth series of *ITMA* will start at 2YN Nelson on Monday, November 17, at 7.30 p.m.; at 2YA on Saturday, November 22, at 8.28 p.m.; and at 4YZ Invercargill on Monday, December 1, at 8.30 p.m., continuing weekly thereafter.

National Film Unit

"SCHOOL for the Deaf," the National Film Unit's Weekly Review No. 323 (released on November 7) presents a difficult subject in a most sympathetic and interesting manner. At Sumner there is a special school where patient teachers give tuition to deaf and dumb children. "Army Housing," an item from Papakura, shows old huts at the camp being pulled down and modern dwellings being erected in their place, all the work being done by army men. "Disabled Servicemen's Farm" is a new idea in rehabilitation. At Palmerston North, a large farm, with board and living accommodation for a number of disabled servicemen, is used to give the men a two years' course of farm work, which fits them for the kind of land job best suited to their physical limitations.



BBC photograph
JACK TRAIN
The colonel is back on the rails