



A CORNER of the broadcasting studio at Hamilton's new Station 1XH

(continued from previous page)

very picturesque ways of describing their reactions to military life during the last one. But the R.A.F., which was almost a new arm of the services when war broke out, created practically a complete private language for itself, and for anyone who wants to enjoy a few hours of amusing reading, Eric Partridge's *Dictionary of R.A.F. Slang* is, as they say, "simply wizard." In this book Partridge lists the verb to bind. He says to bind means "to bore or be a nuisance to anyone," or (if used intransitively) "to be given to excessive complaints; to be officious in the discharge of one's duty—especially a nuisance to one's subordinates."

Out of the Ooze

That doesn't seem to have much connection with a radio variety programme, but those who heard the early numbers of *Much-Binding-in-the-Marsh* will remember how they related the amusing adventures of a group of ex-R.A.F. types at an old Air-Force camp somewhere in England. What they may not have remembered, however, is that the title *Much-Binding* originated in another BBC programme, *Merry-Go-Round*, which was broadcast during the war in three different (Navy, Army, and Air Force) versions. In the Air Force edition, *Much-Binding-in-the-Marsh* was an R.A.F. station near Waterlogged Spa, Sinking-in-the-Ooze, which was inhabited by such queer customers as Lord Waterlogged, Flying Officer Kyte (a really whizzo, bang-on type), and Commander Highprice (late of the Secret Service, at your service).

When the war ended some of the original inhabitants of *Much-Binding*, now in civilian clothes and practically on the rocks financially, went down to the old place to attend an auction of the property and contents (purely out of sentimental reasons) and ended up by buying the lot. So with such a lot of worthless bog on their hands they had

to solve their money problems by turning the camp into the *Much-Binding* Country Club, where the former officers could become the new management and staff. There they have been perpetuating some of the old gags, and creating a lot of new ones, ever since.

The scripts for the weekly BBC broadcasts of *Much-Binding*—there have been over a hundred performances since the show began—are written by Murdoch and Horne themselves, and everything depends in the long run on the close personal friendship between these two. "Intellectual buffoons," as one critic described them, "they form the perfect humorous coincidence, and Murdoch's quicksilver quality blends with Horne's stolid eloquence like steak with onions."

Slightly Undignified

But to get back to the word *binding*. It apparently had, like most service slang, a slightly undignified origin, and in his introductory remarks on R.A.F. slang Eric Partridge writes, "To bind a person is to bore him stiff; probably from the ill-temper that so often results from being bound or constipated. Hence, by a not unnatural transition, we say, 'So-and-so was binding all the morning,' that is, grumbling, or complaining or finding fault, or merely being a nuisance or a bore."

The word itself became so popular during the war that several variations on the theme became stock parlance amongst flying men. Perhaps the most common of these was the airman's invariable remark after he had completed some particularly odious duty: "It was a bit of a bind." Anyone complaining about service conditions was always "doing a bind," while if he merely felt like complaining he was "thoroughly bound up," or perhaps just "out on a binder." When the war was only recently over it used to be easy to pick a former air force type by his use of the word. Lately it's fallen a little into disuse, but it's still a valuable addition to the overworked vocabulary we use to describe what is after all a very common state of mind.

As far as the radio programme goes, although there's not as much binding at *Much-Binding* as there was in the days when it was an air force camp, the name seems somehow to have stuck to the session, and we've got to hand it to the BBC that it's a pretty good one.



When style's
in the picture -

WRONG TOWN

ON page 25 of our last issue Christchurch received a credit which should have gone to Timaru. Ern Joyce's "Man About Town" session is heard at 9.0 a.m. every Saturday from 3XC, not from 3YC, as stated in the caption to his photograph.

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SWS