

FRED AND MAGGIE INTERVIEWED

MEET Fred and Maggie Everybody, famous Australian radio stars, who are also two very charming people! Thousands of Aucklanders have met them already—on the wharf when they arrived, at the Majestic Theatre where they made a personal appearance, and at the Ellerslie racecourse where they spent Boxing Day. I met them myself, in the lounge of their hotel on Boxing Day morning—Maggie was in a house coat looking cool and fresh, Fred was in white flannels, and we all fell into conversation just as easily and as naturally as if they had just stepped out of one of their radio plays. Of course, Barney wasn't there, nor Mrs. Crackenthorpe, but Daisy Sproggins was, busily signing thousands of autograph books, and so was Fred, so was Maggie for that matter. Daisy is Fred and Maggie's daughter. Her real name is Madeleine Sybal Howell, she's nearly twelve, she goes to school at Kincoppal Convent, Elizabeth Bay, Sydney, she's passing into secondary school next term, and on Boxing Day she was very excited about going to see "The Wizard of Oz," or Deanna Durbin's new film in the afternoon. Actually she spent the morning signing the autograph books, going for rides in the hotel lift, and being excited about being in Auckland.

Fred Was Born in Kent

In private life, that is when they do get some time off from their very busy radio life in Sydney, Fred and Maggie are Mr. and Mrs. Edward Howell; their present New Zealand tour is their annual leave, a point which Fred says happens just like that to everybody—else. Fred is an Englishman, he was born in Kent, and off the radio speaks with just the faintest clipped English accent, not BBC, but very easy and natural. He writes the script, produces and acts in "Fred and Maggie Everybody," and has been doing so for the last five years, a record for any quarter hour radio show in Australia. He loves doing it, which might be the reason why the show is so popular here as well as in Australia.

Besides his work in "Fred and Maggie Everybody," he is actor-producer to the Amalgamated Wireless (Australia) Company, which produces such well-known recorded features as "Coronets of England" as "Coronets of England."

Those who have heard this series will be interested to know, although they probably didn't recognise it, that "Fred Everybody," that is Edward Howell, was Henry VIII. in the series on "Henry VIII.," as he also played Charles II. in the series "Charles II."

Began at Ten

A far cry from "Fred and Maggie Everybody," you say? But then Edward Howell is one of the most experienced radio actors in Australia, and has been on the legitimate stage since he was ten! Maggie, his wife, is also one of the leading Australian radio players in her own right, she is a fine singer, who, incidentally, was the first singer ever to broadcast over Australian radio, which was over Station 2FC in 1925. With her husband, she is also actor-producer in the A.W.A. Company and took the leading role of Queen Elizabeth in the "Coronets of England" series, and was Mary Seton in the production of "Mary, Queen of Scots."

Daisy Sproggins, Fred and Maggie's daughter, has also been branching out on her own part, other than in the "Fred and Maggie" series. She has recently recorded the part of "Amy Foster," the little girl, in a new radio play called "Those We Love," which Fred says is very like "One Man's Family." The Howell family seem to have acting in the blood, a point which Fred happily admitted on Boxing Day morning, and brought further light on the subject by telling us that "Mrs. Crackenthorpe" in "Fred and Maggie" is also his mother in real life!

Impressed by CBS Organisation

Talking about what Fred said, he did say that he had met Peter Bathurst, former 1ZB announcer now in Australia, and had been producer in several A.W.A. shows that Peter had taken part in. He also gave the encouraging news that Peter had learnt to be an excellent radio



"FRED AND MAGGIE," and "Daisy Sproggins," photographed as they arrived to make a personal appearance at the Majestic Theatre, Auckland, on December 26

commentator over 1ZB and had done all the narrative parts in a radio series round C. J. Dennis's "Sentimental Bloke" which would probably be coming to New Zealand.

Fred was impressed by the organisation of the Commercial network in New Zealand which, he said, reminded him of the same simple handling of intricate radio networks in America, only on a smaller scale. Last but not least, Fred said that he was dying to get to Rotorua

and soak in one of those hot pools he had heard about, and that he really must go and collect Maggie, take off his white flannels and get into something suitable for the Ellerslie races. A very natural, simple fellow, you say? Well, of course he is, you'd find that out for yourself if you met him, even if you haven't got to know him and his little ways well enough, when you hear him in "Fred and Maggie Everybody."

—M.L.C.

Revised Itinerary Of "Fred And Maggie's" Tour

WHEN this issue of *The Listener* is in readers' hands, the visit of "Fred and Maggie Everybody" to New Zealand will be half accomplished. (Due to holiday arrangements, this is being written not long after their arrival in Auckland.) Provided the itinerary remains unchanged, they will have visited Auckland, Rotorua, Waitomo Caves, Chateau Tongariro, Wanganui, Palmerston North and Wellington—including, of course, the Centennial Exhibition.

Station 1ZB launched the first network broadcast of "Fred and Maggie" on Christmas night, and it was certainly a happy inauguration of their Radio Tour. It was handled with delightful informality by John Gordon, and opened with "Fred's" familiar "Hullo, hullo, hullo, what's going on here?" "Maggie" confessed to seasickness, but "Daisy Sproggins," whose natural voice sounded particularly pleasant, was eagerly anticipating the rest of the tour.

January 4 should find the trio in Christchurch where, after a broadcast from 3ZB, they will appear on the stage of St. James' Theatre. Next day they will travel to Dunedin by train, arriving at 4.18 p.m. Timaru and Oamaru listeners are invited to greet them at the train as they pass through.

In Dunedin they will broadcast from 4ZB and appear at St. James' Theatre.

Leaving next morning (Saturday), they will make a personal appearance at the Majestic Theatre, Timaru, on their way through to Lyttelton.

By Sunday, January 7, they are due back in Wellington for their public farewell, which will be held at the Majestic Theatre at 8.15 on the same evening. This function bids fair to be a memorable one. Should there be any reserved seats left when this issue of *The Listener* appears, it is suggested that early application be made for them at the D.I.C.

Among those taking part in the farewell will be Uncle Scrim, "Jill," Connie Morgan, Reg. Morgan, Barend Harris, the band of the Royal N.Z. Air Force, and, of course, "Fred," "Maggie" and "Daisy Sproggins" themselves.

At 6.45 p.m. on the same evening (January 7), "Fred and Maggie" will broadcast over the 2B network their impressions of New Zealand. Commencing at 9.30 p.m., portion of the public farewell will be relayed to all 2B stations. 2ZB will also broadcast the function between 8.15 and 8.45 p.m.

In view of the fact that it became necessary to make considerable alterations to the itinerary as published in "The Listener" of December 22, listeners should keep tuned in to their local 2B station for details of "Fred and Maggie's" tour.

CALLING WELLINGTON LISTENERS!

Book Your Seats For The FAREWELL CONCERT

To Be Tendered To

"FRED and MAGGIE EVERYBODY" AND "DAISY SPROGGINS"

**Majestic Theatre, Wellington
Sunday, January 7, at 8.15 p.m.**

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**PROCEEDS IN AID OF THE AIR FORCE RELATIONS COMMITTEE
BOX PLAN AT D.I.C. (at 2ZB after noon, on Saturday, January 6)**