

NEWS OF BROADCASTERS, ON AND OFF THE RECORD.

By *Swarf*

SOMETHING TO SING ABOUT

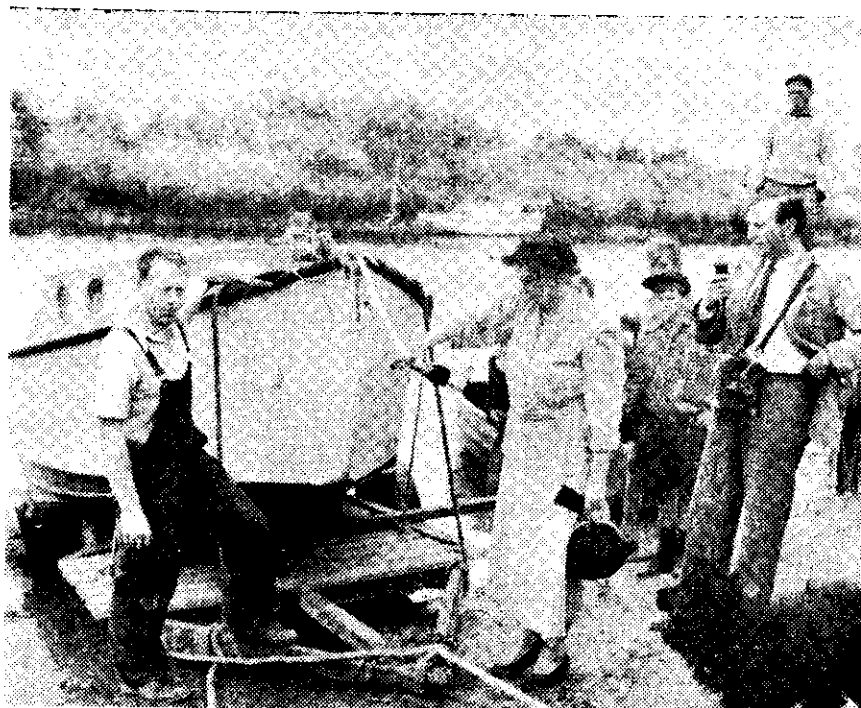
THE chorus of "John Brown's Body," which I remember young moonlight picnickers singing as a marching song on the way home, was written first, and, according to Percy Scholes, it had a circulation before the verses existed. Thomas Brigham Bishop, of Portland, Maine, hearing a pious brother-in-law exclaim, "I am bound to be a soldier in the Army of the Lord! Glory, glory, Hallelujah!" set this assertion to music and soon found it popular as a camp-meeting hymn. Bishop's own statement was, "It was really done as a joke upon my sanctimonious brother-in-law." Then in 1859, hearing of the hanging of John Brown for his raid at Harper's Ferry, Bishop wrote verses on this subject to the same music. Union soldiers adopted them as a marching song and it was they who added the verse about hanging Jeff Davis. Bishop also wrote "When Johnny Comes Marching Home."

with the United Nations Radio Division as a writer and director, and eventually executive producer of programmes that were given world-wide distribution. Three of those programmes won Peabody Awards, the radio equivalent of Hollywood's Oscar.

THE BBC show, *Educating Archie*, will start at the four YA stations on May 8. Archie Andrews is the chap who steals all the laughs from Peter Brough—the fellow who pockets all the money made by Archie Andrews.

ANOTHER "time capsule," made of aluminium and 12 feet long, containing mementos of the show business and special editions of trade papers depicting the current entertainment world, was buried at Las Vegas recently. Included in this peerless treasure for posterity are recordings of top American talent, Bing Crosby's pipe, what is purported to be the only sweater worn on the screen by Jane Russell, Sugar Ray Robinson's gloves and Ray Bolger's dancing shoes.

RECORDING of sounds at famous places, such as the stamp of feet when the Guard is being changed at Buckingham Palace, or the challenge of the sentry during the Ceremony of the Keys at the Tower of London, is one of the routine jobs carried out by the BBC's recorded programmes department. Recently BBC engineers went to the British Museum to record the silence in the reading room—the holy of holies where scholars and other people engaged in research are found in large numbers. The domed roof provides a loud echo and the silence of the celebrated place emerged on the recording as a great roaring



MORE than four years after her keel was laid this 20-foot auxiliary cruising sloop "Wee Glad" was recently completed by a 3ZB announcer, John Cumming (left), at the New Brighton Power Boat Club's slipway. The vessel, which he built himself, is equipped with a four h.p. auxiliary marine engine, and it represents a life-long ambition for Cumming, who plans to do some coastal cruising round the bays of Banks Peninsula. Mrs. Cumming broke the traditional bottle over the vessel's bow at the launching ceremony. John's expression suggests a fear that the bow might not stand the impact, and a similar thought seems to be worrying Robin Gurnsey, with 3ZB's microphone (right). It may be, of course, that both are distressed at the waste of champagne.

sound of heavy breathing, coughing and rustling of pages, punctuated by loud bangs whenever a reader dropped a book, or someone shut a door or tripped over his feet. Many places, say the engineers, are a great deal quieter than the reading room of the British Museum.

RANK MUIR and Denis Norden, the inseparable script-writing team of *TIFH*, are both ex-R.A.F. They work a five-and-a-half-day week and take the whole business very seriously. Both have also taken part in radio and TV quiz programmes.

THE cables told us the other day that the British Ministry of Works is to attend to a "bruise" on Big Ben caused by a glancing bomb during the war. Big Ben, the BBC's most famous voice, celebrated thirty years of continuous broadcasting at the end of last year. Rory St. George, writing in the *Radio Times* about the bell of the great clock at Westminster, said that no one seemed to know exactly who thought of Big Ben as a possible broadcaster. But some engineers still working at Broadcasting House took part in the first experiments in 1923. They mounted a microphone on the roof of the building across the road, linked it to the old BBC headquarters at Savoy Hill, and found that traffic noise nearly obliterated the sounds of Big Ben striking the hours. The next step was to take a microphone into the belfry itself and, working by the dim light of hurricane lamps, they carried out experiments on a closed circuit.

The result of their work was a microphone hung in a football bladder on the river side of the great bell. This worked for many years in spite of the Westminster pigeons' furious attack, carried on even though the bladder was

inedible and could not be used for nesting material. The modern equipment is heavier and both pigeon and fool proof. Big Ben is now piped to the Broadcasting House control room and put on the air by a control switch, while for television a scale model of the Westminster tower is shown to viewers as the last vision item of the day's programme, the news in sound following immediately.

IAN LUND (below) is a Timaru-born baritone, now aged 21, who has been interested in music since he was five. Last year he sang with the 3XC Christmas and Easter Choir, and also with the Clarion Octet. South Canterbury listeners to 3XC on the evening of Wednesday, April 21, will hear Ian Lund in a group of Negro Spirituals.



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