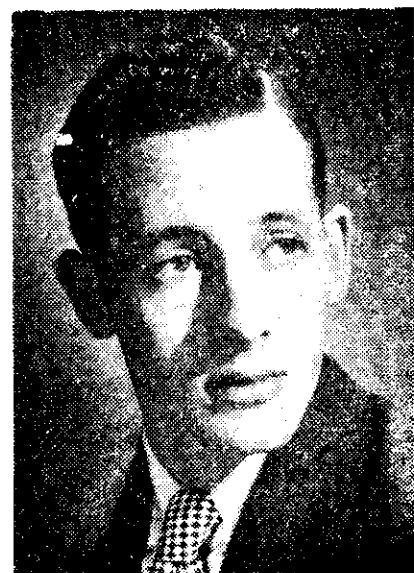


THE MELBOURNE CUP

THE jockeys' colours gleam in the sun as the horses parade in the bird-cage. Then they tail out on to the field, some skittish as dancers, others stately as royalty, for royal they are, these kings of the Australasian turf lining up at the barrier for the great race of the year—the Melbourne Cup.

They're off! All over New Zealand at five o'clock work will cease and traffic will halt as the commentary from Flemington racecourse begins. The huge field must run two miles at a cracking pace, but this year nobody expects the course record of 3 minutes 19½ seconds, set by Comic Court in 1950, to be broken. Instead, interest for New Zealanders will centre on the performances of three New Zealand horses, Rising Fast, Master Proven and Surprise Ending. In the innumerable office sweepstakes which are held on Cup Day, the lucky drawer of Rising Fast will (if all goes well) be looked upon with envy. His win in the Caulfield Cup boosted his favouritism immensely, but anything might happen, since he will now have to race at 3lb. over weight-for-age.

Back in the days of bustle (bendable)—in 1861 to be exact—the Victorian Turf Club held its first Cup. Time galloped on to 1864, when the governing body became the Victorian Racing Club. Even in those days Tuesday was the great day, and up to the present there have been few postponements or alterations. Wet weather kept the punters' money in their pockets a few days longer in 1870 and 1916. During the war years 1942-1944 the Cup was held on a Saturday, so as to stem the tide of grandmothers' funerals and minor ail-



BILL COLLINS

"From an old racing family"

ments which sweeps over New South Wales and Victoria on "Cup Tuesday."

In the 93 years since the Cup began, some pretty funny things have happened (and we don't mean the bookmaker's laugh up his sleeve or the bettor on the "sure thing's" laugh on the other side of his face). Archer won the first two Melbourne Cups, and so far has been the only horse to win the race twice. In 1865 a horse called Toryboy had his only win that season—in the Cup. In 1867 two Tim Whiffles started. The winner was Sydney Tim. Melbourne Tim was unplaced. A gelding called Ritalli won in his first start of the season, and an amazing number of horses have won the Cup after doing poorly in the big races usually regarded as leading up to it.

New Zealand horses have always been prominent in the winning list and many memories will stir at the names of Carbine, Sasanof, Nightmarch, Phar Lap, Wotan, Catalogue, Foxzami and Dalray.

Listeners will hear the ABC's commentator Joe Brown in action from the YA stations. Commercial stations will have a new voice—that of 3DB's Bill Collins, a brilliant twenty-five-year-old race broadcaster. He comes from a well-known racing family and is a cousin of Scobie Breasley's. As a child he would perch on the roof with a pair of old binoculars and call suitably-marked matches hurtling down a water-filled gutter. Filling in as stop-gap commentator when still only a youth got him further course contracts, and these led to race broadcasting commitments and a regular radio announcer's job. News commentating is a sideline, too, and Bill has also been featured in 3DB's popular variety programme *The Happy Gang*.

On the night before the Melbourne Cup, that is on Monday, November 1, at 9.30 p.m., Bill Collins will give his Preview from linked ZB stations. On Tuesday, November 2, his commentary will be broadcast at 5.0 p.m. from linked ZB and YZ stations. Other stations will broadcast the result as soon as it is known, and Joe Brown's race commentary will be heard in a delayed broadcast from YA and YZ stations at 7.0 p.m.

★ Can Rising Fast (top left) rise fast enough on November 2 (if 9.5 doesn't anchor him completely), or will the Melbourne Cup give us a Surprise Ending (lower left)? ★

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says, "When people are entertained their interest is caught."

You can also catch their interest by startling them. I think that Mary Field rather delights in doing this, by making the provocative statement, by shattering the preconceived notions of parents, teachers and theatre-managers about what children enjoy and what is "good" for them. These are some typical Fieldisms: "Children do not necessarily like Westerns—they have only been given Westerns"; "They do not particularly care for animal films—adults just think they ought to like them"; "On the whole, little boys are more sensitive picturegoers than little girls."

At first hearing you may disagree with some of her theories. But if you do it is hard to make your arguments stick when Mary Field can produce overwhelming evidence in support of hers. Quite early she realised the need not only for clear guidance on what actually entertains children, but also for proof that would convince the doubters and silence the protesters. She has found what she sought, first in a series of recordings of the noises children make when seeing films, and later, even more convincingly, in a large set of infra-red photographs showing the reactions of various audiences of unsuspecting children in darkened theatres to identical

situations in a number of films. A study of this type (hers was sponsored, and the results have just been published, by the Carnegie Corporation in Britain) is infinitely superior to any attempt to test children's reactions by means of a questionnaire. The infra-red technique is capable of great developments; but Mary Field is fond of telling the story about the Mayor of an Australian town who warned her against extending its use to adults in the back rows of cinemas on Saturday nights.

MARY FIELD BROADCASTS

BOTH Mary Field and Gordon Mirams, who writes about her on this page, will be heard from 2YA at 8.0 p.m. on Friday, November 5, in a 45-minute discussion on Films and Children. Also taking part will be W. J. Scott, chairman of the working committee of the New Zealand Film Institute and Vice-Principal of the Wellington Teachers' Training College, and Walter Harris, a senior officer of the Department of Education and the Supervisor of the National Film Library, who will be chairman of the discussion panel. The discussion covers such questions as the effect of films on children, positive action to bring films specially suitable for children to the notice of parents and exhibitors, and the possibility of having films specially made for children shown in New Zealand. This discussion will be heard later from other stations.