

A COMMUNITY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Small boroughs such as Matamata, Otaki, Picton, Temuka, are familiar to us in our everyday life. Not so familiar are other communities comparable in size, similarly self-contained in their services, and with their own social life. These replicas of little towns are in several parts of New Zealand; some within city boundaries and others in the country. Each has its social population and its workers to service it. There are the services we see in a small town: the bakehouse, the butcher's shop, the vegetable gardens, farm, workshops, laundry, etc.

These communities are New Zealand's Mental Hospitals, each of which is remarkably self-sufficient. A Mental Hospital is set in a tract of land which may vary from three hundred to fifteen hundred acres in area, and therefore differs widely from the normal concept of an institution. The modern approach to the designing of such hospitals is to place many buildings throughout the extensive grounds so that the hospital becomes a therapeutic community rather than the institutional unit. Living quarters for patients are 50 bed villas each with all the functions of a large house. Patients live, sleep, dine and organise their own entertainment within the villa.

To service these hospitals many workers from some 50 occupational groups are required. Most of the trades are represented and each Supervisor-Works Overseer, Engineer, Farm Manager, Head Gardener and Chief Clerk—has his team of workers, all of whose efforts have to be co-ordinated into the smooth functioning of the whole hospital. Not to be overlooked, of course, is the large team of men and women nurses whose task is the underlying one—leading the patients back to mental health.

Though many of the past misunderstandings attaching to Mental Hospitals have faded there is still a need for better understanding of the purpose and functions of these hospitals. The community as a whole should develop a greater interest in these small communities within themselves—which are an integral part of our established social order, and must be accepted as such. Because the behaviour of the mentally ill person is strange to us we are still inclined to treat it as ridiculous and shameful and make it the butt of so-called humour. When it becomes universally accepted that these are hospitals in the true sense—that their aim is to cure—the remaining difficulties will disappear. Patients will find it easier to rehabilitate themselves in the community when cured and more and more girls will realise what a worthwhile service can be given in the field of modern Psychiatric Nursing.

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MANY listeners who heard the H. G. Wells serial *The First Men in the Moon* when it was broadcast from 2YA recently—it is to start this month from 2YD—may not know that Cecil Trouncer, who made such a convincing job of the leading part of Wells's fictional scientist Cavor, died suddenly last

December, a few months after the serial began from the BBC. When it was suggested to him, while the serial was running, that he might have been chosen for the part because one of his most successful stage roles had been as another scientist, Sir Isaac Newton, Trouncer chuckled and said he might equally well have been chosen because a couple of years before he had played in a radio serial called *The Other Side of the Sun*. The real reason for the choice was given by David Godfrey, who produced the Wells serial. The part called for a professional manner, vague but obviously enlightened, he said, and Trouncer had the perfect voice for suggesting a highly intelligent man.

Cecil Trouncer's voice was much heard even on this side of the world, for though he was trained for the London stage, where he first appeared in 1920 after coming out of the army as a young

Open Microphone

man, he also had a long connection with broadcasting. One of his best remembered parts was as Geoffrey Chaucer in the BBC production of *The Canterbury Tales*, a series in which he was also the Merchant. Another was as Gilbert in the BBC transcription *Gilbert and Sullivan*. In a tribute after his death the *Radio Times* described him as a skilled and versatile actor who never gave a bad performance, adding that "he articulated every syllable with meticulous care . . . yet his voice was capable of emotional warmth when the part called for it." In the early days of the war Trouncer was a mainstay of the BBC Drama Repertory Company, where he played a wide variety of parts but was particularly successful in the characters of crusty old men. One of his last microphone parts was that of Hieronimo, Marshal of Spain, in the BBC *World Theatre* version of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*—a production not yet heard from NZBS stations.

"TRAPEZE artist of the Metropolitan Opera," are the words used by *Opera News* to describe Lily Pons, the tiny coloratura soprano "who can trill on a sixteenth note and take a scale from middle C to the F sharp above high C." But the seemingly effortless manner in which she meets difficult vocal requirements is in reality the result of strenuous training and a disciplined programme of living. Lily Pons, who plays the leading part of Melanie opposite Noel Coward in Coward's *Conversation Piece* (a musical play in three acts which will be broadcast in the ZB *Sunday Showcase* at 9.35 p.m. on Sunday, November 14—see page 17) was born near Cannes 50 years ago. Her mother was Italian and her father French. Her first ambition was to be a concert pianist, but after she won a prize at the Paris Conservatoire an illness interrupted her study for two years. She began a new career as a singer, then deserted the stage to marry August Mesritz, a wealthy, middle-aged Dutchman.

CINDERELLA GIRL

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Nevertheless, she continued to study with Alberti di Gorostiaga, and in 1928 made her operatic debut in *Lakme*.

In 1931 her American debut at the Metropolitan was described in the newspapers as "sensational." Thereafter she became one of the most popular singers of her time. In Rio de Janeiro, frantic



LILY PONS
"Doors were torn off"

admirers twice tore the doors from her car; in Europe she received medals and honours; in America two locomotives and a town in Maryland were named after her. She made films and won radio polls, but she has remained immune to the lure of easy success. The petite soprano is now married to André Kostelanetz, the noted conductor. She is five feet one tall, weighs 104 pounds and wears a size two shoe. She exercises for an hour and a half every day, neither drinks nor smokes, and Cinderella-like, retires from the gayest gatherings before midnight.

NEVILLE FRIEDLANDER, author of the NZBS-produced feature *Antarctica: The Unconquered Continent*,

A Long Line of Improvisation

THE jazz world suddenly became aware of Louis Bellson after he joined Duke Ellington's Band. But Louis had already had over a decade of experience with Tommy Dorsey and Harry James, and many years before that of playing with various small jazz combinations. So when the opportunity came he was ready. Louis's record of "Skin Deep," broadcast recently by "Turntable" in *Rhythm on Record*, has prompted Terry McLeod, of Stratford, to ask for more information about him. Louis has been drumming since he was six, and he played the xylophone before that. At High School he won the Gene Krupa national drumming contest, and then joined Ted Fio Rita. After that he played with Benny Goodman until he was called up for military service in 1943. After his discharge he rejoined Goodman, and then played with Dorsey and James until 1950, when he joined Duke Ellington. The first record he made with Ellington's band, a version of his own composition "The Hawk Talks," was a big hit.

With Ellington, Louis Bellson emerged as a drummer and percussion soloist of rare power, as well as a composer and orchestrator. "Ting-a-Ling" and "Skin Deep" are two of the most successful pieces that Louis wrote for the Duke's band. In 1952 he left Ellington and has since led bands of his own and appeared with his wife, Pearl Bailey. One of his latest pieces is "Percussionistically Speaking." For an enthusiastic opinion of Louis Bellson's ability, we can't do better than quote Norman Granz, his recording supervisor: "There are many good drummers, a few great ones, but Bellson is in a class by himself," Granz says. "It isn't a question of how many rim shots he can fit into two bars, nor that he can play an umpteenth-stroke roll with his left hand alone. It's a question of the manner in which he does it. A Bellson drum solo is more than a mathematical building of rudiment upon rudiment, reversing, turning inside out and rebuilding. It is a long line of improvisation built in terms of tones and sounds."



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