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LISTENERS to 1YA's *Country Journal* will now be familiar with the voice of Basil Sands (above), who has been doing rural broadcasts at Auckland since Bruce Broadhead left on the first stage of a world tour last June. Mr. Sands knows his rural Auckland well, for he was brought up on a dairy farm near Waiuku. There he was school teaching for a time, and for three years he studied at Auckland University College. But in 1954 he

Open Microphone

joined the NZBS and until recently was a programme officer at 3YZ Greymouth.

Since he has been compiling *Country Journal* Mr. Sands has toured farming districts in Northland and visited Matamata and Te Awamutu. In June he attended the Ruakura Farmers' Conference and inspected the Animal Research Station there. His programmes include interviews with farmers, talks by officers of the Department of Agriculture, reports from Young Farmers' Clubs, the dairy farmers' discussion panel, and rural newsletters from Canterbury and the Waikato.

IF you know the story of the pioneer Atlantic flight of Alcock and Brown in 1919 you'll be as surprised as we were to hear that they took a passenger with them. Actually they would have been surprised, too, for the passenger was Dick Bentley, and he was riveted into the fuselage. That, at least, is the story Dick tells along with a lot of others just as original in his new



DICK BENTLEY
Across the Gobi underwater

BBC show *I Flew for Bismarck*. One of his other claims is that he crossed the Gobi Desert underwater with only a "frail craft" for company. Teamed with Dick in his improbable adventures is another Australian, Kitty ("Hawk") Bluett, who is his "faithful bearer." Kitty played with Ted Ray so long in Ray's *Laugh* that she has found it hard to get her fans out of the habit of thinking of her as Mrs. Ted Ray. But the new show is helping. Apart from *I Flew for Bismarck*, and (of course) *Take It From Here*, Dick is seen in the popular television panel game *I've Got a Secret*, in which the panel guesses the secrets of people who appear before it.

WHEN we talked with Frederick Page recently about the programme to mark the 84th birthday of Ralph Vaughan Williams, he suggested it would be "rather a good idea" if the composer could be invited to visit New Zealand. "It shouldn't be a difficult thing to arrange," he said. "The long sea voyage would give him time to work, and there would be plenty of things for him to do when he got here." Vaughan Williams was still a great traveller, Mr. Page said. "In 1954 he set off for Cornell University in the United States. He gave a series of lectures, which have now been reprinted

NEWS OF BROADCASTERS ON AND OFF THE RECORD

as a book, conducted the university orchestra, and toured around the West. Before he left London he had told some of his friends that at last he would be able to see the Grand Canyon."

WHEN Doreen Bracey set out from her native Australia for Europe five years ago, her aim was to learn the languages of the countries she visited. As she travelled about she heard and saw many folk songs sung and danced in their natural settings—Spain, France, Norway, the Hebrides.

FOLK SINGER Central Europe—and, becoming interested, put her own pleasant mezzo-soprano voice and ballet training to use in learning them. Soon this by-product of her travels became a full-time interest. On holiday with her Swiss diplomat husband in New Zealand not long ago, Miss Bracey recorded programmes of Norwegian, Italian, Danish and Swiss songs, which are being heard from 1YA stations, 3YZ and 4YZ on Sunday afternoons. She sings all her songs in their native languages, and takes a great deal of trouble over pronunciation and intonation. Where necessary she accompanies herself on the tambourine or with castanets.

On her European journey Miss Bracey also collected about 20 examples of authentic folk costume design and costume jewellery. She insists that it's necessary to learn the songs from the traditional singers who can teach nuances and tricks of production which could never be accurately transcribed. Talking to us about her travels, she said that one of her happiest memories was of a journey on a small cargo ship up the coast of Norway.

Since she came home from Europe Miss Bracey has given many recitals for music clubs and the Australian counterpart of the Community Arts Service. She has also taken part in television programmes, and a number of sound radio broadcasts have included a rather unusual one—in the ABC New Australian series.

WEALTHY WAL

"I USED to like that Wallas Eaton," one girl said to another, after seeing him in a musical. "But I've gone right off him now—he's so old." Listeners who seem to have been Eaton fans for as long as they can remember might have some excuse for thinking Wallas old, but to do him justice (and to bring up to date a note we printed a few years ago) he's really only in his middle thirties—in fact, a tall, fair man in the very prime of life. Of course, if it's Wealthy Wal you want, here he is, gold-plated microphone and all, as Arthur Horner drew him for the BBC, about to take his cue for one of the "Take It From Here" series being heard from 2YZ on Fridays, and other 1YA and 4YZ stations on Saturdays.



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