

# Voices You Knew

"WHAT happened to old So-and-so?"

Recalling a well-remembered voice from a *Breakfast Session*, a character from a play, a pop singer, a pianist, people in broadcasting ask this question of one another quite as often as they're asked it by other people. Where are the voices we once heard on the New Zealand air and now hear no longer? Some, of course, went quietly into retirement—some which once caressed us with the sentimental phrases of a pop song now sing lullabies to their children. But what about the others, who chased opportunity overseas and didn't come back? The other day *The Listener* set out to discover how much it could find out about them in a day's nattering to people inside the Service and out who might have kept in touch. It soon found, what experience should have indicated from the start, that a long way from home people might keep in touch with their families and sweethearts, but they don't keep closely or constantly in touch with their colleagues or even their friends. It was more a question of hearing something that someone had picked up at second or third hand, or had read—or thought they'd read—in an overseas journal. Still, in 24 hours quite a bit of gossip had been committed to paper. And because we believe—no offence intended—our readers will be

as interested in it as we were, we pass it on on this page and the next. It's a case, of course, of all care and no responsibility—but then whoever did retail gossip with his hand on his heart?

Naturally drawn to where the lights shine brighter, actors seem to have gone overseas in considerable numbers. In his office off the Wellington Production Studios of the NZBS, the Supervisor of Productions, Bernard Beeby, turned over the pages of his casting books and pointed out names to William Austin. "Bernadette Cauty—remember her as Miranda the mermaid? She went to London and became a Windmill girl—that's the variety theatre that ran non-stop through the blitz. Then she became a production manager for a TV company and married her boss. There was Paddy Turner—she did a lot of young women parts after she returned here from Australia. I remember her Euridice in *Point of Departure*, and her Teusret in *The Firstborn*. She went on a Government bursary to the Royal Academy, and the last we heard she was doing very well in TV and BBC shows. She was in the serial *The Wake of the Long White Cloud* with Inia Te Wiata, and she had a part in the BBC production of *This Day in Fear*."

When Paddy Turner played in *Point of Departure* here John Carson-Parker

was Orpheus. He too has been in England for some years now, first playing and later producing for repertory in Sheffield. But about two years ago he went to London, and a mail from the BBC only the other day brought pictures of him in a leading part in a BBC serial *Orbiter X*. Very well known for his work with the New Zealand Players, John Carson-Parker—he now calls himself simply John Carson—was the man who played twin brothers in *Ring Around the Moon*. Now he has twin sons of his own. Michael Cotterill was another heard in many NZBS plays who later made tours with the Players. His most recent engagement in England was in repertory on the South Coast, following a thin time when he had to take a 9 to 5 job in London.

When we mentioned Frederick Farley's name it brought an immediate association with Shakespearian parts. Familiar as both a radio actor and a reader, Mr Farley was also a producer for the Community Arts, the Wellington Thespians and Repertory. He went to London as a producer at the Q Theatre, and the last time Mr Beeby heard of him he had a part in the London production of *Tiger at the Gates*, Giraudoux's play about the Trojan War.

Vivienne Martin, who was seen in the film version of *The Belles of St Trinian's*

and whose BBC experience took her into television and into a leading part in the steam-radio variety series *Mr Bentley and Mr Braden*, is well established as a comedy actress. She began in Productions as a filing clerk long before her acting ability was apparent. (Incidentally, her brother, Ross, after several years of good work in the Talks Section—remember his programme on the first ascent of Mt Cook?—took a doctorate at Canberra for his work on trade unionism and later studied in London.)

Mr Beeby admitted it wasn't easy to be up-to-date about the doings of theatre people. "They change their jobs all the time, and a struggling walk-on one month may find himself in a good part in the next. If they have a job for six months it's a long engagement."

Talking with Elsie Lloyd, Supervisor of Women's Programmes for the Commercial Division, we mentioned the name of John Gordon, once an announcer at 1YA and 1ZB, and as it happened quite recent news of him was in an airmail letter on her desk. "At the moment I am eating leeks in Wales doing an Australian character for BBC television," he wrote. This is by no means John Gordon's first part for the BBC. He has appeared in both steam-radio and television productions, and Jessie McLennan, who preceded Mrs Lloyd in charge of women's programmes, wrote from London that in a recent TV play, when he had appeared with Russell Napier, John's beard had gone—only his eyebrows remained. Both were familiar to the many who saw him in New Zealand Players productions.

Round and about we heard news of other actors and actresses. Virginia Stott, now married to a producer, Mark Brackenbury, has never been out of work since she finished her studies in London under a Government bursary. Mostly in repertory, she has also broadcast and appeared on television—once with the Russian ballet in a play about the life of Pavlova. Alan Rowe,



BBC photograph

AT LEFT: John Carson as Captain Bob Britton in the new BBC space show "Orbiter X" with Barry Gosney as Flight Engineer Hicks (left) and Andrew Crawford as Captain Douglas McClelland (right). AT RIGHT: Michael Miles tastes a sample of New Zealand butter at the Ideal Homes Exhibition in London.