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A FEW years ago David Kohn was officially declared dead; but the report, like that about Mark Twain, was greatly exaggerated, for today he is a member of 2YA's announcing staff. He was a prisoner of war in a Japanese camp for over four years, and spent most of the time working in a coal mine. So sure were the authorities that he had been killed that they put his wife on widow's pay. He joined the NZBS five years ago and as well as being an announcer he conducts some of the outside broadcasts and prepares



Spencer Digby photograph

DAVID KOHN

documentary programmes. Listeners may remember his commentaries during the combined exercises of the Australian Fleet and the New Zealand Squadron off Akaroa in March, 1950, and some of his interviews, notably one last year with Yehudi and Hephzibah Menuhin. In England he married Ethel Riding, and the family lives at Pukerua Bay. He told me a day or two ago that the first time he saw his son the boy was five years old. "Now he's growing into a real Kiwi with an interest in almost every sport." Once David Kohn was a pretty useful boxer and swimmer, but now he gets his exercise from gardening. He has become very fond of New Zealand, whose climate, he says, has done great things for his health.

ON display in the Auckland Museum are about 20 little sketches of scenes on the Western Front during World War I.

SUNDAY PAINTER — the work of

W. A. G. Penlington, of Havelock North. Since those days he has exhibited with the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts (Wellington) and the Auckland and Hawke's Bay Art Societies. Listeners to 1YA have heard his talks on art, notably *Painting Without Tears*, a light-hearted but practical outline of what confronts the tyro painting in oils. After the war he was appointed Principal of the newly-established High School at Hastings and, to use his own words, "for 27 years I lived the orderly life of a headmaster, painting in week-ends and holidays." Coming from a family of



Open Microphone

amateur artists, he calls himself a "Sunday painter who has painted ever since his perambulator days." Mr. Penlington (now retired) believes that for a mind accustomed to active problems of education and administration, just painting is not enough; so he took up the study of art history and criticism. He likes radio work. "It's stimulating," he told me, "to have to be on one's toes."

WHILE on the subject of 1YA talks I quote Mr. Penlington who has just recorded five, including two in which he discusses origins and histories of British examples of people's names: "There apparently once lived a child called Agnes Spurnewater, but whether it was drinking water that she spurned or bath water is not indicated." In ancient documents, he says, one finds a great variety of curious names, many of which have died out. "For instance, 200 years ago there were people called Drinkmilk, Braskettle and Whalebelly, and in even older manuscripts are references to such wights as Doggetail, Evilchild, Lickfinger and Nettlebed."

LISTENERS to 2YD the other evening heard Billy Daniels, an American entertainer, who, after being up and down in the show business for several

BLACK MAGIC

years, has at last reached success. He now has a place among the singing stars of the night clubs of New York, Chicago, Florida and Hollywood. Performing somewhat in the Jolson vein, but with a skill that takes him from a delicate whisper to a full-throated top note in a breath, Daniels really excited the American public in the summer of 1950, and has been doing it ever since. With Benny Payne at the piano he gives emotional interpretations of such songs as "Old Black Magic" and "September Song." For those who want to hear him again, or for the first time, 1YA will provide an opportunity about the middle of this month.

THE man who plays Henry VIII in the BBC adaptation of Shakespeare's historical drama, shortly to be heard in New Zealand, Bruce Belfrage, was the central figure in a war-time episode that is still remembered in Britain. He was broadcasting the

IMPERTURBABLE ACTOR

news when a German bomb, which had lodged in one of the upper floors of Broadcasting House, exploded. Listeners heard the sound of the explosion; there was no more than a momentary pause and Belfrage went on reading. He has written an autobiography, shortly to be reviewed in our book pages.

LATEST news from the BBC is that the shock-headed thirty-year-old comedian Frankie Howerd has set out

"THE men in suburban London — it may be different for the women — seem to live on a straight line between home and the office. In the morning the gates open, and out they all shoot like greyhounds out of their traps. At night they all come back to the traps and the gates close. Fraternisation between trap and trap seems to be quite unusual." — Jack White, journalist, talking about his impressions of London in a BBC programme.

NEWS OF BROADCASTERS, ON AND OFF THE RECORD.

By *Swarf*

on a flying tour of Mediterranean Service bases; and with him have gone the young singer Marcia Owen, Blanche Moore, accompanist and stooge to

HOWARD GOES EAST

Frankie, pianist Eric James, script-writer Eric Sykes, recording engineer Stanley Unwin and producer Roy Speer. Troop-entertaining is nothing new to ex-Gunner Howerd, R.A., or to most of his company. On demobilisation, one night he talked his way into the *Stage Door Canteen* and made a hit. It was, he recalls, just in time: "Faith, hope, charity and my gratuity had gone." He started at the bottom of the bills in music hall in 1936, as a result of his first BBC audition he was booked as resident comedian in *Variety Bandbox*, and within a few years had become a national figure on radio and music hall.

A SPIRITED young woman named Norma Cooper left New Zealand in 1937 to see a bit of the world. She took a passage on a tramp steamer (the only woman on board) and eventually landed in Dublin. "Those were among

WOMEN'S SESSIONS

the happiest days of my life," she told me, "especially when, in the tropics, I was allowed to help painting and varnishing the ship." In London she got a position as private secretary to Sydney Carroll, film and dramatic critic and director of the Open



A.P.S. photograph

NORMA VAN'T WOUT

Air Theatre in Regent's Park. Before war broke out she visited Holland, France and Switzerland, and then joined the WAAF, serving on fighter stations, at the Air Ministry, and acting as Intelligence Officer on bomber stations, briefing and interrogating bomber crews. The war over, she came back to New Zealand and in 1948 married Bessel van't Woudt, a Dutchman. For the last three years Norma van't Woudt has

(continued on next page)

N.Z. LISTENER, MAY 2, 1952.