

NEWS OF BROADCASTERS, ON AND OFF THE RECORD,

By *Swarf*

Then, he told me, he became a member of *The Kiwis* Concert Party. After the war he did music hall work in a variety act in England, partnered by an Australian boy and an English girl, and also entertained the Forces in the American zone in Germany. Two years ago *The Kiwis* sent for him, and he rejoined them during their tour of Australia.

"Most New Zealanders who go to England do well in all the arts, if they



have good qualities to offer, which they generally do," said the visitor. "That might be due to something they retain from their pioneering ancestors. We are a very insular people, and when we go away we 'discover' the outside world. That, in itself, gives us a certain keenness and drive. In science and adventure there are, of course, the two great examples of Rutherford and Hillary, and out of the many who have succeeded in the theatre, Alexander Grant and Rowena Jackson come immediately to mind. Then there are pianists and singers who have become pretty well world famous."

Scattered round the visitor were his tools of trade—bangles, brooches, rings, gowns, frocks, high-heeled shoes and wigs made of both yak hair and human hair. "Wigs cost about £30 a-piece today," he said. "Before the war the makers bought hair by the pound; now they pay for it by the ounce." In a prominent place on the dressing-table was an invitation from his mother and father to their golden wedding in Christchurch.

No, the photograph of the visitor (above) hasn't been accidentally transposed by the printer. It's Bill Bain, single, of the "dame" voice, appearing currently with *The Kiwis* in New Zealand.

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I HAVE been invited to speak to you about books dealing with the Pleasures of the Table or with what is sometimes called the Literature of the Subject. Why this invitation has come to me I don't know. I'm not an epicure nor a three-

bottle man; my only qualification is that like millions and millions of men and women before me I have been eating and drinking at intervals for half a century and more, and I'm not such a snob or such a prig as to deny that I have found the process one of the blessings and pleasures of life. "Man," says Mrs. Beeton, "is a dining animal," to which I would add the words of Robert Browning, "We eat and drink and see God also." And I would recall, too, the familiar words from a very sacred source, "Give us this day our daily bread."—From a NZBS *Book Shop* talk by Professor F. Sinclair.

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REGULAR listeners to radio serials sometimes become so fond of a particular character that they like to follow his fortunes behind as well as in front of the microphone. A case in point is John O'Malley, the original Jeff in *Office of Jeff* (the four ZB stations, Thursdays and Saturdays at 7.0 p.m.). Several have inquired after him since the role of "Jeff Pilgrim" was taken over by Keith Eden. Donovan Joyce, of Donovan Joyce Radio Productions, tells me in a letter that for some years before being cast as Jeff, O'Malley was heavily engaged in programmes produced in Sydney. "Shortly after production started on *Office Wife*," he says, "O'Malley dropped



JOHN O'MALLEY

all assignments in Australia and went to America. Since then, I understand, he has appeared with great success in a number of films and television features. Additionally, I understand, he is a featured player in the Hollywood film *Rats of Tobruk*, with Chips Rafferty and Michael Pate, both of whom are well-known radio identities in Australia."

INDOMITABLE MAN OF THE RADIO

MICHAEL REDGRAVE, the British film star, enters a new and exciting stage of his career because for the first time he is appearing in a regular radio series and he is playing a character he has always wanted to portray—Horatio Hornblower, in C. S. Forester's stories (the four ZB stations and 22A, Fridays at 9.0 p.m.). Redgrave began his acting career three years after he left Cambridge. The slump of the '30's had forced him away from his ambition to be a writer. He accepted a temporary post as a junior modern languages master at Cranleigh, his old school, where he revived the school's dramatic society, producing six shows: *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *The Tempest*, *Samson Agonistes* and *H.M.S. Pinafore*. But the life of a schoolmaster was not sufficient. His family had always been actors, and his mother, Margaret Scudamore, a singer. So, when he escorted a French class up to London to see a French company in two plays, he obtained an audition with Lillian Bayliss at the Old Vic and was offered a £3 a week contract. William Armstrong, of the Liverpool Repertory Company, also offered him a contract. Since two people expressed their confidence in his ability, and Armstrong's offer was for an extra £1, he decided to take a chance and become—temporarily—an actor. Within six months he was playing leads. With the outbreak of war he became an Ordinary Seaman in the aircraft carrier *Illustrious*, until he was in-

validated out in 1942, when he returned to the theatre and films and fame.

A confirmed pipe smoker, one of Redgrave's proudest possessions is an outsize meerschaum, presented to him by his Czech fans in admiration of his performance in *The Captive Heart*, in which he starred with his wife. This magnificent object measures 18 inches from stem to stem, is decorated with two chamois-fur tassels and holds nearly an ounce of tobacco. "A very satisfying smoke," he says. Redgrave brings to the radio part of Hornblower an original interpretation which C. S. Forester himself has called the very embodiment of his character—that indomitable man of the sea. The photograph below shows Michael Redgrave (right) and the director-producer, Harry Alan Towers.



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