



Call Him CHUMLEY

English Humorist Arrives for Tour

WHAT on earth made you pick on Cholmondeley for a stage name?" asked the "Radio Record" of Freddy of that ilk when he breezed into the office last week. "People won't know whether to call you Chumley, Cholmondeley, or Plain Freddy."

Cholmondeley grinned. "Maybe that's why I chose it. It gets 'em curious about me, anyway. I've a few other aliases—for stage purposes—which I have used from time to time in different work in Australia, particularly in different commercial sessions over the B stations."

Whether you know him, then, as Freddy Cholmondeley, Reggie "Believe-it-or-not" Ripley, one of the Boon Companions, one of the Tatlers (with Alfred Frith) or anything else, his original name was Charles Hawthorne. But it's as Freddy Cholmondeley that he is touring the New Zealand national stations at present. He was another of the sextet of artists on the Wanganella last week, and his first appearances from 2YA on Friday and Saturday nights last gave listeners an immediate introduction to this English humorist.

He proved to have a distinctive style of humour—different from those of both Vincent Ryan and Dave Howard. So it is not making a serious error of programme arrangement to have the whole three on the one session.

Freddy looks just as one would imagine he would look after hearing his wit over the air. But seeing looks don't matter much to broadcast artists—at least until television comes—one could forgive him even if he had the features of Frankenstein. The main thing is that he can make one laugh.

"By the way," broke in Freddy, "you'll have to warn your readers that if they see a Melba tiepin and look upward they might find themselves looking into the face you've got in front of you now."—He was referring to the article a couple of weeks ago in the "Radio Record" which mentioned Browning Mummery's unusual tiepin. "Melba gave me a similar pin after I had been her stage director for the Williamson-Melba Grand Opera season in 1928. As far as I know there are four of them, the possessors being Sir Thomas Beecham, Browning Mummery, John Brownlee and myself."

You see, Freddy Cholmondeley—better call him Freddy to save ink—isn't just able to entertain over the air. He has been actor, stage director and producer at least. He was over in New Zealand seven years ago, playing Shakespeare with Maurice Moscovitch. He left England for Australia nine years ago for six months' theatrical work, and has been there since. For the last five years nearly all his work has been in broadcasting.



"You'll never set the Thames on fire!"

In England his work took him on tour frequently, and on one occasion he was one of a troupe of seven playing with Leslie Henson, the famous comedian, at Blackpool Pier. There were the usual people in the pavilion—young lads and their girls, old ladies knitting, and so on. But one man in the front row was rather disconcerting to the players in that he persisted in reading his paper most ostentatiously. Henson decided that when he went on stage he would "tick the fellow off."

Halfway through his song Henson broke off and said, "There seems to be more interest for that gentleman in his newspaper than in what is going on up here."

The gentleman lowered his paper for a moment and exclaimed, "Infinite-ly!"

Freddy, too, sometimes found that his work was not altogether appreciated. In one North of England town he went home to his temporary lodgings, and the landlady soon came in with a tray of supper.

"Did you like the show-to-night?" he inquired.

"Oh, the soprano was all right," came the reply, "but you'll never set the Thames on fire with what you're doing!"

But Freddy refused to be discouraged, apparently, for here he is, still turning out his own sketches and songs for a more appreciative audience of listeners. One of his favourite turns is called "Mike Fright," purporting to give the impressions of an entertainer on the air for the first time. Here are a few verses from it:

Oh, pity one who stands alone
Before 2YA's microphone;
I think of millions whom, I fear,
May wish me anywhere but here.
This studio with four blank walls
It makes me dream of crowded halls
Where once I tried, and wasn't heard,
To raise a laugh—and got the "bird!"

Shall I curse the day I first broadcast?
Will this, my first one, be my last?
Trying to earn an honest penny,
Gagging to listeners—if any.
'Scuse me, Dunedin's on the 'phone;
What's that? "Turn off the gramophone?"
I'm willing now to make a bet
He hasn't paid his licence yet.

It's easy to smile when you're sitting in style
And overflowing with money.
But the folks worth while are the ones who can smile
When the joke that I crack isn't funny!

In Australia this poetic humorist has produced some highly successful radio shows for the Australian Broadcasting Commission. His "La Poupee," in fact, created a record, being played over national stations six times in seven months. There (Continued on next page.)



"Exactly!"