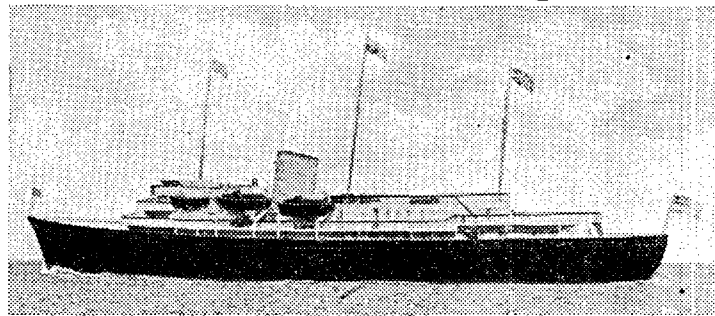


SHIP FIT FOR A QUEEN



This picture shows a model of the new Royal Yacht which the Queen is to launch on Clydeside next April.

The 4000-ton vessel has been designed so that in time of war she could be rapidly converted into a hospital ship, with wards, operating theatres, and a deck on which helicopter ambulances could land.

She is also equipped with radar. We all hope, of course, that the ship will retain her peacetime arrangements, with State apartments for the Royal Family, and sun and shelter decks.

The Royal Yacht is expected to be completed towards the end of 1953. She will be 413 feet long, with a beam of 55 feet.

POSTAL-ORDER TIME

As Christmas approaches the sale of postal orders increases. They are often the last refuge of people who "just can't think what to give so-and-so," and most of us who receive them readily forgive the donor's lack of imagination.

Most fathers can recall that Billy Bunter spent a long boyhood in confident anticipation of a postal order; but we doubt whether many of them can recall the name of the man who first devised them.

The man responsible was George Chetwynd, Receiver and Accountant General. He suggested postal orders in 1874, but a bill to estab-

lish them was for six years opposed in Parliament; it was the golden era of sovereigns and half-sovereigns, and the idea was denounced as "an attempt to start a paper currency system."

But at last, on New Year's Day, 1881, Britain got its postal orders. The first one, numbered 000,001, was sold to a Mr. James Wight, who kept it as a souvenir.

In the first three months of 1881 650,000 postal orders were sold; now over 480 million are sold every year, and machines to print them while you wait have been installed in some post offices.



by Ernest Thomson, our Radio and Television Correspondent

Coronation music

WESTMINSTER ABBEY on Coronation Day will be brilliant with the pageantry of our country's greatest and most solemn ceremonial. But the Abbey has a very different aspect just now, especially after dark, when the last public visitor has gone.

I was a privileged late guest there the other evening while Dr. W. N. McKie, the Abbey organist, played Coronation music which was being recorded by the B B C for use next summer.

My impressions were unforgettable—the vast empty minster, a twinkle of light over the organ loft, engineers on tiptoe adjusting microphones in the nave, and, above all, the echoing glory of a Handel Concerto and that Trumpet voluntary attributed to Purcell.

One of the vestries has been converted into a temporary control room. From here the music was "piped" by wire to studios at Maida Vale, where it was recorded on 16-inch discs which will eventually be packed and despatched to broadcasting stations in the Commonwealth and elsewhere.

Zoo babies on TV

IN Looking at Animals, on Saturday evening, Mr. George Cansdale, Superintendent of the London Zoo and Zoo Man of television, will introduce us to what he calls "the Night Shift"—creatures like owls, voles, field mice, and other nocturnal prowlers.

On December 27, he tells me, he is bringing to the studio all the Zoo babies old enough to leave their mothers for a few hours. It will include lambs and lion cubs.

Beating "blind spots"

ENGINEERS trying to bring good reception to the so-called "blind spots," both in sound broadcasting and television, have the loneliest jobs in the B B C.

Two caravans, each fitted with a 4-kilowatt transmitter, are roaming the country relaying the Home Service in districts where there have been complaints about reception. Each is operated by only two men—almost as lonely as lighthouse keepers.

If their labours produce the desired result, a permanent transmitter is installed and the caravan moves on. This has just happened at Barnstaple and Folkestone.

One man TV stations

FOR real solitude, however, we must turn to the engineers manning the two mobile television units which are to relay Coronation programmes over Tyneside and Belfast.

Both on Pontop Pike, in north-east England, and on the Sperrin Mountains overlooking Belfast, one lonely engineer will control the knobs "feeding" the pictures into the aerial.

After each night's programme he will lock up the van and wend his way back to civilisation.

C N Astronomer considers the chances of the space-travellers

GLORIES OF VENUS, JUPITER, AND MARS

THE evening sky is at present singularly beautiful, with the added adornment of Venus, Jupiter, and Mars.

The peregrinations of these planets are of particular interest just now. Venus has become a very fine object in the south-west sky, far outshining all stars and even Jupiter, which is high in the south-east in the early evening.

Venus is now approaching the Earth, and so will become still more brilliant. She is at present about 97 million miles away, and, seen telescopically, appears gibbous like the Moon when about eleven days old.

In apparent size Venus is much smaller than Jupiter—less than half the diameter of that golden sphere, when seen through a telescope. Her much greater brilliance is due to her being much nearer to the Sun and to us, together with the highly-reflective character of her cloud-covered surface. This makes all the difference compared with Jupiter, whose surface is also covered with dense belts of cloud; but they are of a very different colour and chemical composition.

Jupiter is now almost at his nearest to us for this year, being 392 million miles distant; he is therefore at his brightest, though he has begun to recede. Jupiter will nevertheless appear to get closer to Venus, and it will be interesting to note this gradual approach of the two planets to one another during the coming weeks.

CHANGING POSITIONS

The movements of Mars are also of interest during the next few weeks. He now appears no brighter than a first-magnitude star owing to his present distance, of nearly 150 million miles, so he is rather inconspicuous in the twilight sky.

Mars will be found some way to the left of Venus, the accompanying map showing the position of the planets on December 16 in relation to the third-magnitude star Delta-in-Capricornus. Glasses will greatly help in spotting the star. But Venus and Mars will not remain long in this position rela-

tive to the star, for they are speeding to the left and in the direction of the arrows on the map.

Venus is slowly gaining on Mars, but so slowly that she will not catch him up until March next, by which time Mars will appear still fainter. It will, however, be of interest to follow the movements of these two worlds while Jupiter draws nearer.

How different are these three planets from one another, and what difficulties they present as objectives for inter-planetary travel! Mars, a singularly similar though small replica of the Earth in appearance, has conditions so vastly different that it is doubtful whether a man could live there for an hour.

Venus, though coming nearer to us than any of the other worlds, reveals less owing to her intense

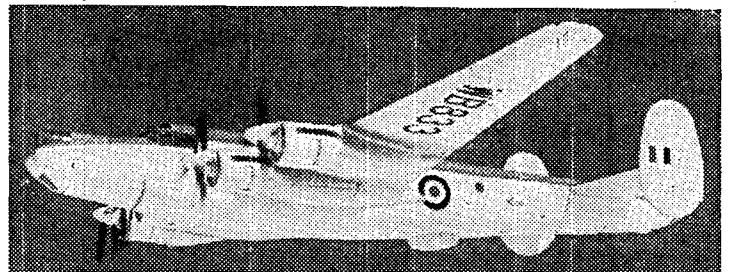


brilliance and the disadvantage of her position relative to the Earth and Sun when she is at her nearest to us. Any reliable evidence indicates conditions well suited to the support of life, but the adaptability of human beings is very doubtful.

To take but one example: is the amount of oxygen in the very dense atmosphere of Venus the same as on Earth? Unquestionably not! And if there is any appreciable difference it would be impossible to live for a day on Venus, even though the planet may be teeming with life forms of its own.

The huge Jupiter with an equatorial diameter of 88,700 miles—that is about eleven times greater than either the Earth or Venus—and with a surface 120 times greater, is beyond question inhospitable to any kind of human life. One breath of his known atmosphere would probably prove fatal. But what lies far below those poisonous enveloping clouds of Jupiter no one knows. G. F. M.

PLANES FOR THE SPOTTER'S NOTEBOOK



29. Shackleton MR Mk. 2

Long-range submarine-hunting and maritime reconnaissance are the duties of the massive Avro Shackleton MR Mk. 2, the latest version of an already well-tried Coastal Command aircraft.

It differs from its predecessor mainly in having a re-designed fuselage with a much-modified nose and tail. The fuselage ends in a long cone, with a comfortably fur-

nished observer's position in the extreme tail.

Another feature is the large radar "dustbin" aft of the bomb bay, which can be retracted telescopically. Power for the Shackleton is provided by four Rolls-Royce Griffon piston engines, each driving contra-rotating airscrews.

Span: 120 feet; length: 87 feet 4 inches. No details of performance have been released.

THE MOST WONDERFUL XMAS GIFT

Enjoy Years of Fun with MiniCine

- IT'S A MOVIE PROJECTOR
- IT'S A STILL PROJECTOR
- IT'S BOTH IN ONE!

Send for the FREE illustrated folder

MARTIN LUCAS LTD., HOLLINWOOD, LANCS.



New Torch Theatre Club (Near Hyde Park Corner)

The Field Puppet Company's famous Marionettes in

CINDERELLA

London's only Puppet Pantomime Devised especially for the Children

30th DEC. to 24th JAN.

Daily at 11 a.m. 2.30 p.m. & 7 p.m.

Book Your Seats Now! 2/6 to 7/6

(Reduced prices for organised parties)

The Box Office Manager
78 Dartmouth Park Hill, N.19
ARC. 6595



ONLY 5/-

FOR THIS WONDERFUL SOCCER ANNUAL Size 10" x 7 1/2"

OVER 200 PICTURES

plus articles by Geo. Robledo, Billy Liddell, Wally Barnes, etc., and lots of thrilling features. From newspapers, book-stalls, etc., or send P.O. 5/6.

ALSO NOW READY a grand 'FOOTBALL SCRAPBOOK'—the only one on the market—over 50 pictures to start your collection. ... 2/9

Two kinds: Soccer and Rugby Leagues. From newspapers, etc., or send P.O. 3/-. (State whether Soccer or Rugby League).

Address orders to: P.S. PUBLICATIONS, 80 HART STREET, SOUTHPORT.