

ERNEST THOMSON WRITES ABOUT RADIO AND TELEVISION PERSONALITIES AND PROGRAMMES

Treasure Hunt in the Welsh mountains **MAKING YOU AT HOME IN THE AIR**

THE Red Dragon six-part serial starting on ITV next Tuesday should seem more real than most, for producer John Rhodes filmed his location shots on the actual mountains in North Wales where the story is set. What is more, he is also the author of the story, using his pen-name John Brunton.

It is an up-to-date tale, founded

Present for the producer

DENNIS MAIN WILSON recently produced Six-Five Special from Douglas, Isle of Man, and he invited the Douglas Jive Club to be the audience on the spot. The members were so grateful that they made him a present of a Manx cat.

"I got a cable the other morning," Dennis told me, "saying the cat had left Douglas and was flying by Pionair to London Airport. As a BBC van happened to be going to the airport, we didn't have to keep the pussy without a tail waiting. Now 'Speshul'—that's his name—has settled down happily at our home in Blackheath."

Sergeant and the Beachcomber

POPEYE THE SAILORMAN on Ben the Beachcomber are played by one and the same person—31-year-old actor Gordon Rollings.

Granada Children's TV on Mondays and Thursdays always leaves me gasping. So I am not surprised that even Ben the Beachcomber, who tells yarns between reels, has to take time off occasionally for a breather.

When this happens his place is then taken by the stalwart Police Sergeant Copem, who is company for Mr. Jones the Parrot. (We see them together in our picture.)

Between you and me, though, Police Sergeant Copem and



on an ancient legend, about a brother and sister spending their holidays in the mountains with an elderly couple who are threatened with the loss of their cottage. The youngsters find an old document containing clues to hidden treasure. The search for it leads to Merlin's Fortress and a battle of wits with two Americans bent on getting possession of the cottage.

Sixteen-year-old Ann Castaldini is playing the part of the sister, and 17-year-old Scot Finch has the brother's part. Scot, by the way, has just won a University scholarship.

John Rhodes filmed his backgrounds on the hill called Nantgwynant (Vale of the Waters) in Caernarvonshire, reputed to be Merlin's stronghold, where the British king Vortigern took refuge.

John Rhodes, incidentally, told me he started a real treasure hunt in the mountains. While there he hid some money, passing on the news to three nieces and a nephew who he knew would be holiday-making there soon afterwards. Sure enough, a postcard reached him the other morning reporting the discovery of the treasure.

THAT extra BBC Children's TV visit to London Airport I told you about recently takes place next Tuesday.

Producer Douglas Fleming found there was such a great deal to show viewers on the training of air crews in the August 12 programme that he simply could not fit in the cabin crews.

So they have their turn on Tuesday, with the TV cameras at London Airport to show how stewardesses and others learn to make air trips comfortable and enjoyable for the passengers.

In our picture stewardesses are seen at the Cabin Services Instruction Unit at Heston, Middlesex, during training in the serving of meals.



Connecting the dots

SOMEBODY always seems to be inventing a new TV quiz game. The latest is Dotto, which begins in ATV on Sunday.

The game is based on the familiar children's puzzle of completing a picture by joining up a number of dots. Two competitors are shown a board on which are 50 dots; when connected, these will form a well-known face. Each competitor can decide whether to answer a five-point question, an eight-point question, or an even more difficult one—ten points. If the correct answer is given the appropriate number of lines are flashed on the board, connecting some of the dots and helping towards the completed picture.

The winner is the one who first guesses the identity of the face. There is a £5 prize for every dot filled in, and as it is possible (though not very likely) to identify the face from the dots alone, a competitor could win £250 straight away.

The chairman will be Robert Gladwell, well known to viewers of BBC Children's TV.

Most curious

HAVE you ever heard of a more remarkable coincidence than in the case of 14-year-old Sandra Alfred? She can be heard in Charles Dickens' The Old Curiosity Shop, the Home Service serial, now running on Sunday nights at 8.30. Sandra plays the poor little half-starved servant girl, nicknamed the Marchioness, who works at the inn in Bevis Marks, in the City of London.

The amazing thing is that Sandra actually lives there, her father being the landlord of the inn mentioned in the novel.

Charles Lefeaux, the BBC producer, had no idea of the connection.

"Sandra was beside herself with excitement when she rushed home to tell me she had been picked at the audition," Mrs. Alfred told me. "She started reading The Old Curiosity Shop all over again, and so did I! For years we have had a big portrait of Charles Dickens outside the old inn."

Morning lessons in Schools TV

THE first morning television for schools is being started by the BBC in the Schools TV term which opens on Monday, September 22. These morning sessions will be telerecorded repeats of programmes already shown in the afternoon.

The mathematics programmes will be experimental; the idea is that they can be used in classroom by teachers who are not specialists in maths. The Monday afternoon maths lessons will be repeated on the following Friday at 11.20 a.m.

A new series on Tuesday afternoons, First Years at Work, will be for children of about 14. It is meant to help them to discover

through working life is like, mainly through the experience of workers a little older than themselves.

Wednesday afternoons will be given up to Science and Life, and each of these programmes will be repeated on the following Tuesday morning at 11.20. Spotlight will continue on Thursday afternoons. Using Our Eyes, on Friday afternoons, will be aimed at helping children to find extra pleasure in looking around and spotting interesting things that might have escaped their notice.

Schools programmes in Associated-Rediffusion are beginning a week later—on September 29. I hope to bring you details next week.

LITTLE WOMEN BECOME GOOD WIVES

WHAT happened to those four girls—Jo, Meg, Amy, and Beth—after the story of Little Women came to an end? Young viewers who watched Joy Harington's serial version of the famous Louisa M. Alcott novel in BBC Children's TV last spring must often have wondered.

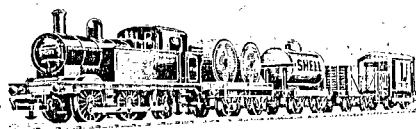
We can see the answers in the story's sequel, Good Wives, which begins as a five-part serial in

BBC Children's TV on Sunday.

Phyllis Calvert again plays Mrs. March (Marmie), the busy, cheerful mother. Kate Cameron and Diana Day will again be seen as Meg and Beth, but Amy will now be played by Jill Dixon, and the tomboy Jo by Annabelle Lee. Noel Howlett will be back as the terrifying Mr. Lawrence next door, and David Cole reappears as his grandson Laurie.

Crackerjack gets cracking again

EAMONN ANDREWS, back from his American tour, will be on our screens again for the start of another Crackerjack series in BBC Children's TV this Wednesday evening. This time the resident artistes will be Pearl Carr and Teddy Johnson, who are seen in our picture. Guest star of the opening programme will be Mr. Pastry—I don't need to tell you that is Richard Hearn—and the first-night visitors will include comedians Ronnie Corbett and Eddie Leslie, the Continental foot juggler Will Carr, and Bert Hayes and his Sextet.



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