

ERNEST THOMSON WRITES ABOUT RADIO AND TELEVISION PERSONALITIES AND PROGRAMMES

BEHIND THE SCENES OF **LONG PART FOR BOY ACTOR**

CRISS CROSS QUIZ

WATCHING Granada's Junior Criss Cross Quiz on the ITV network on Wednesdays, you might never guess how much work is involved behind the scenes. It looks so simple, with only Jeremy Hawk and the two contestants, and the Noughts and Crosses panel. Perhaps, like me, you could almost imagine a bearded little gnome at the back, turning the rollers when a new set of questions comes up.

Now I know better, having been let into the back-stage secrets. The pictures, on the right, specially photographed in Granada's Manchester studios for CN, tell better than words about the feverish activity in the back-ground.

There are about 45 categories of questions to be fitted on to the rollers. They range from engineering and explorers, words and spelling, to pets and poetry, games and science. Before each programme the questions have to be inserted in the racks and locked.

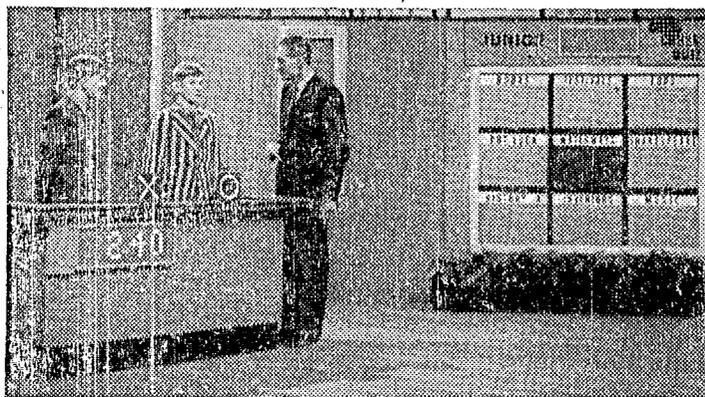
DUMMY QUESTIONS

The X's and O's are put in the appropriate squares by pressing a button, and the same operator also flashes the lights in the question box and registers the points scored. Another technician controls the rollers and yet another the sound track of snatches of interlude music. Remember that, besides the panel crew, the studio is packed with lighting experts, cameramen, and other technicians.

Before the show, Jeremy Hawk spends an hour or more with the contestants, putting them at ease and plying them with dummy questions.

Since Junior Criss Cross Quiz started on November 13, 1957, thousands of boys and girls have written asking to take part, and there is a long waiting list. And no wonder! Prizes include aquaria, budgerigars, pedigree dogs, microscopes, dressing-table sets, electric sewing machines, cycles, riding or ballet lessons, camping outfits, portable typewriters, and tennis sets.

Top prize—for 850 points—was

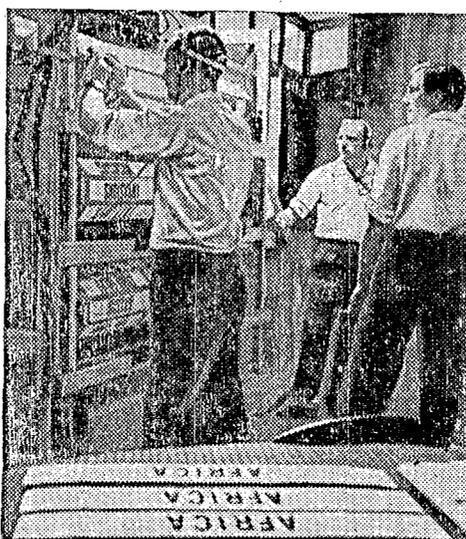


Jeremy Hawk with two young contestants in Junior Criss Cross Quiz

originally to be a weekend in Paris for two, but this was impracticable.

At Granada's headquarters I was told that children show more imagination in their quiz answers than in choosing prizes. Mainly they go for cameras and tennis sets. More girls than boys choose cycles.

Criss Cross Quiz has come to stay, partly because it is such a favourite, partly because Granada want to get as much fun as possible out of that expensive O's and X's panel.



Behind the scenes

Visit to the airport

SKYPORT STORY, scheduled for Tuesday this week, is only the first of five monthly visits by BBC Children's TV to London Airport this summer. How aircraft take-off and touch-down, theme of the first programme, is already familiar to most of us, but Raymond Baxter, who will be introducing the programmes, has even more informative items to deal with in the future.

On June 3, for instance, we shall see in Live Freights how

animals of all shapes and sizes are transported to the ends of the earth. In Servicing the Giants, in July, viewers will be taken into the hangars to see how big long-distance airliners such as the Britannias are kept in trim inside and-out. In August we shall meet the air crews, including stewards and air hostesses, and learn how they are trained and briefed.

The September visit will be to the Control Tower, nerve centre of the whole of London Airport.

GINGER WOODS, in the Light Programme's Sunday afternoon serial, *Children of the Archbishop*, by Norman Collins, is played by 16-year-old Michael Crawford. The BBC believe this to be one of the longest parts taken by such a young actor.

Michael, who lives at Herne Hill, London, considers himself lucky that his voice shows no signs of breaking. "It just gets deeper and deeper," he told me. "I reckon it has dropped half an octave in six months. But that won't prevent me from singing on ITV on June 23 in Benjamin Britten's new opera, *Noye's Flood*, at the Aldeburgh Festival."

It was as a soprano that Michael started his drama career. While at Oakfield School, West Dulwich, he took part in a school production of Britten's *Let's Make an Opera*; this helped when he answered an advertisement for a boy soprano for the English Opera

Group's version of the same work. He got the leading role of the *Little Sweep*. One thing leads to another: he has since been in two films, *The Soap Box Derby* and *Blow Your Own Trumpet*, both made by the Children's Film Foundation.



Quiz for all the family

MANY children are better on general knowledge—especially modern subjects like aircraft, radio, skiffle, and screen stars—than the grown-ups. At least, that is the view of ATV producer John Irwin, and he thinks it may well be proved in *Keep It In The Family*, a new TV quiz game he has invented which will be tried out soon.

The idea is that families shall compete against each other before

the cameras in a series of general knowledge questions. Each family unit would consist of five people—from grandparents down through parents to children aged 12 and over. If a great-grandparent can be included, so much the better!

Families all over the country are invited to apply to John Irwin, Television House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

I hear that *Keep It In The Family* may start in midsummer.

Get ready

THE Lime Grove studios are almost within earshot of the White City Stadium, where the BBC's Junior Sportsview takes the cameras this Thursday for *On Your Marks*. School teams of boys and girls from Kent, Essex, Middlesex, and Surrey will be coached by Geoff Dyson in sprint, long and high jump, and hurdles, and will also be seen in competitions. Max Robertson is the commentator.

There is to be another *On Your Marks* programme on June 5.

In the electricity industry

ALASTAIR DUNNETT roamed a big power station recently with a tape recorder for next Saturday's *I Want To Be ... In The Electricity Industry* in BBC Children's Hour.

Amid the din of dynamos he talked to men and women on the spot, and they managed to make themselves heard. Then in quiet offices he recorded chats with electricity chiefs, who told of the many apprentice schemes open to young people and the scope for learning responsible jobs.

Grown-ups enjoy Schools TV

YOU would be surprised at the number of grown-ups who are going to school again as a result of *Schools TV*. As you know, there is nothing to stop ordinary viewers from picking up the transmissions to schools. ITV's *The Farming Year*, broadcast to schools on Mondays, is so popular outside the classroom that Associated-Rediffusion have decided to repeat some of the episodes late at night, from 11.0 to 11.30, beginning next Monday.

The *Lambing Season* at Waydale Farm comes first, followed by *Springtime Planting*, and *More About Milk*.

She sings the blues

GOSPEL singers come mainly from America. One of the greatest today is 28-year-old Marie Knight, who will be seen on British television for the first time in the BBC's *Six-Five Special* on Saturday.

Marie Knight was a little girl of nine when she began singing spirituals at her local Baptist church in Orange, New Jersey. Now she is famous all over the United States. She travels round with a preacher, spreading the Bible story to the rhythm of jazz and the blues.

In Saturday's programme she will be accompanied by the Humphrey Lyttelton Band.



Marie Knight

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