

78

On Her Majesty's Service

WASC 478

You Write...

Politics and Television

CROSSMAN may be against some of television, but oh for more discussion programmes like the one he was involved in.—(Mrs.) D. Gallagher, Ruislip Manor.

THIS country there are lots of politically-minded people who would welcome more political broadcasts, in which the speaker would not be hampered by clever interviewers, but would be allowed to voice his own opinions.

Please give us more good political broadcasts on television so that ordinary people may feel they are taking part in the successes or difficulties in the government of this country.—(Mrs.) V. E. MacFarlane, Isle of Wight.

MR. Crossman must realise that the majority of the public watch TV for entertainment, and listening to long speeches is certainly not part of this.—(Mrs.) Jorjie Colling, Workington.

Apply Cheaply...

INCIDENT during the showing of *Softly, Softly* programme 'Five o' Hands', on October 24, injured me. A man at a first-class hotel bought a box of fifty fine pens, two double whiskies, and a set of gin. He gave the waiter five pounds and then told him to keep change.

Wish I knew a hotel where I could get such value for my money. A. Blake, London, W.12.

Next Week

ROYAL VARIETY PERFORMANCE

Meet the stars who will be appearing in the greatest showbusiness night of the year

HIDDEN TREASURE

Arthur Negus of *Going for a Song* tells you how to spot a fortune in your attic. A special two-page four feature

HARLOTTE INGHAM

The best-selling novelist writes about *One Pair of Eyes* on BBC-2

FULL DETAILS OF ALL PROGRAMMES ON BBC-TV AND RADIO FOR THE WEEK IN

Radio Times

ON SALE NOVEMBER 21 8^p

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THE BOOK THAT STARTED WITH A LETTER ON THIS PAGE

RADIO TIMES readers have written the biggest part of a book of reminiscences of Scapa Flow to be published on November 21.* The book grew out of a letter in RADIO TIMES on September 1, 1966.

In this TV producer Malcolm Brown asked readers who had served in the armed forces in Scapa Flow or the Orkneys in either of the world wars to send reminiscences for possible use in a BBC-1 documentary that he and assistant producer Patricia Meehan were working on.

'We received not the expected handful of letters but more than 700,' says Malcolm Brown. 'Extracts from about twenty-five were used in the programme, shown in Christmas week 1966, but it was unthinkable that we should destroy what all the others had so vividly, movingly, and beautifully recorded. So Patricia Meehan and I have put the best from these letters into a book, for which we have supplied the framework.'

* Allen Lane The Penguin Press

Match of the Day

ON looking through RADIO TIMES (October 31) I see that *Match of the Day* has been switched to BBC-2. I hope this is not going to be a regular occurrence.—Graham Whitehead, Bingley, Yorkshire.

Next year *Match of the Day* will be in colour on BBC-1, and colour techniques are being tried out at three or four association football matches this season

It is not possible to transmit *MoTD* on both networks at the same time. But a point worth remembering is that *MoTD* did start on BBC-2.

Incidentally, it will be seen from the programme page that this week *MoTD* is on BBC-1.—Editor.

An Explosive Finish

CAN any viewer explain why our television set went up in flames at the end of *Oh Brother!*—P. Wilson-Sharp, Colchester.

Compulsive Listening

SUCCINCT and witty in style, inimitable in delivery, the autobiography of René Cutforth is gradually being unfolded to us.

The four sketches recently given in the mornings on Radio 4 made compulsive listening.

Let us have many repeats please and as soon as possible. This man is an absolute jewel to broadcasting. Lots of my friends join me in this.—(Miss) Alison Field, Aylesbury.

Out of Step

WHAT have you done to the programme *Come Dancing!*?

Several of my friends and I used to rush home in time to be there for the programme but after last week's sample, oh dear, you have ruined it, it was all bits and pieces.

Why must you always change something that is already 'the tops'?—(Mrs.) H. C. Woolcock, Camborne.

PHILIP LEWIS the producer writes: I appreciate that any change to a programme which has been running for fifteen years is bound to upset some people. But I feel sure that viewers will grow to like the new format when they get used to it. I will be interested to hear what people think in a month or so.

Sounds Unusual

I AM very grateful indeed for the wealth of chamber music which the BBC gives every day, and in particular for the late evening recitals on Radio 4, because I am (like most people) generally at home by then and so able to hear them. A Haydn Quartet is good company before going to bed. But may I plead for some of the lesser known of Haydn's Quartets, particularly for the splendid work No. 32, Opus 20, No. 2?

The Aeolian Quartet would play it as if it had been written for them alone—but here I know I am asking too much.—(Rev.) C. A. Atherley, York.

The Gunpowder Plot

In *Tom Tom* (BBC-1, October 29) it was suggested that Guy Fawkes brought gunpowder in barrels in barges downstream from Waltham Mill to London.

Hugh Ross Williamson, in his brilliant book, *The Gunpowder Plot*, shows the falsity of this idea and demonstrates that the conspirators must have obtained their barrels from the Tower of London, where stores for London and the South-East were held. In this connection, it is significant that pages which record issues of gunpowder for 1604 and the year of the Plot, 1605, are missing, apparently torn out. Gunpowder was then a government monopoly and the plotters could have obtained theirs only from the Tower of London.

It is clear that, as in the burning of the Reichstag, the government were 'behind' the Plot in order to discredit influential Catholics as the Nazis similarly accused and brought to trial the German Communists. Coke was Cecil's 'Propaganda Minister' and the use of gunpowder was subtly calculated to drive James I to repressive measures, since his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, was implicated in the gunpowder explosion at Kirk o'Fields, Edinburgh.—Alan Smithies, Nun-eaton.

The Bare Facts

TWENTY years ago I spent a day with the nudists at Spielplatz, near St. Albans. I was a reporter on a Hertfordshire newspaper and I must say my nudists of 1947 were a jollier lot than those we saw on BBC-2 in *Man Alive*.

Perhaps this was because, unlike the television interviewer, I thought it polite to remove my clothes, relax and enjoy the scenery!—Ronald Riggs, Wheathampstead.

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Late-Night Classics?

I HEARTILY agree with ten-year-old Simon P. Beard (RADIO TIMES, Oct. 17) about the lateness of the classical music programmes. Although not so young myself (but not old) I find it hard to concentrate on a programme of music which starts late and does not finish until perhaps 11.0 or later.—(Mrs.) June Clarke, Leigh-on-Sea.

JOHN CULSHAW, BBC-TV's Head of Music Programmes, writes: The trouble is that everyone wants his or her favourite kind of programme on at his or her favourite hour. Anyway, it simply isn't true that all music programmes are late. This year we have had several Sunday afternoon concerts on BBC-1 (including three Leonard Bernstein concerts for children), and relays from the Royal Albert Hall and Covent Garden at around 9.0. Every Sunday there is a full-length music programme on BBC-2 beginning just before or just after 9.0. And even when we are late on BBC-1 (because we are preceded on Sundays by a feature film), our audience does not desert us: the programme about Kathleen Ferrier drew an audience of over six-million people at 10.20 on October 6.

Val's Charm

JUST a line to say how much we enjoy *The Val Doonican Show*. Each time he walks towards the rocking-chair my mother (who is eighty-three) says, 'Oh! It isn't the end yet, is it?'

I would like to see Val Doonican voted the most charming personality of the year.—(Mrs.) M. W. Macintosh, York.

Val Doonican has recently been voted TV Personality of the Year by the Water Rats.—Editor.

John Drinkwater

IN the programme *Super-City* on BBC-1 on October 29, I find that I carelessly attributed the lines

Knowledge we lack not—knowledge
Thou hast lent,
But, Lord, the will—there lies our
bitter need.
Help us to build, above the deep
intent,
The deed, the deed

to John Masefield. I must apologise for having mentioned the wrong John: the lines are, of course, from *A Prayer* by John Drinkwater.

I hope my mistake, and this apology, may serve a good purpose in reminding people of a very fine poet, especially his beautiful and haunting *X=O: A Night of the Trojan War*, which will have a message for us as long as men make war.—The Rev. Chad Varah, London, E.C.4.