

Pantomime for all people

Sixth season of 'Give a Dog a Bone' opens 11 December

'I doubt whether human beings can survive a state of faithlessness indefinitely; and if dishonesty continues to spread at its present rate, it will soon make impossible any kind of mutual trust—the basic principle on which the whole of our society is founded.'

Duff Hart-Davis in *The Sunday Telegraph*, 23 November 1969

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'If Britain is to change, people in Britain must change. The relative standards of morality that confuse and compromise our life must go. Absolute standards of character in the home, craftsmanship in industry, cleanliness and purity from top to bottom of the nation, from castle to cottage, from pub to palace must be acknowledged and pursued...'

'"The Times" goes on to say that if the state of the nation improves, "it will be because Britain has once again become a nation caring about the state of its society".'

Peter Howard, *Britain and the Beast*, 1963

TWO YOUNG MEN last Sunday said Peter Howard's pantomime *Give a Dog a Bone* had the answer to modern callousness, the 'couldn't care less' spirit in home, factory and school.

They were speaking at a meeting in the Westminster Theatre, London, attended by trade union officers, councillors and businessmen, their wives and families.

Peter Rundell, aged 15, from Kensington, said, 'At school in Westminster we have had many discussions about a sick society in Britain. We have agreed that the basic cause of sickness in society is irresponsibility. The pantomime has the answer to that in the idea of "I care". I know this works. When I was the captain of my house at prep school, we were fourth, and there were only four houses. One of the biggest causes of trouble was a boy who was perpetually getting into trouble, so I brought him along with some of his friends to the pantomime. The change in him was quite remarkable and instead of being the most irresponsible boy in the school, he voluntarily took charge

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Peter Riddell and Peter Rundell photo Blair



Miss Valerie Turney, a nursery nurse, sells 'Give A Dog A Bone' books and records at the Westminster Theatre. 'Families can then take the spirit of the pantomime home,' she says. Young women, wishing to help Miss Turney, should ring her at 01-499 3443 photo Blair

Around the world **GIVE A DOG A BONE** goes where no pantomime has been shown

NEVER BEFORE has a pantomime travelled the globe like *Give a Dog a Bone*.

Since it was first produced at the Westminster Theatre in December 1964, the musical play itself has been performed in the United States, Zambia, Holland, India, Switzerland and in schools in the British Isles.

THE FILM

In 1966 *Give a Dog a Bone* was filmed in colour. In Britain the Classic Cinema chain have shown it in 13 cities and continue screening it this Christmas season. The film has had a commercial run in Melbourne, Australia, and both the Queensland and Victoria State Education Departments have purchased 16 mm copies. In Canada during the last two seasons The Child's Own Theatre have had it as their main feature in ninety-one centres. Already this Christmas season the film is scheduled for a hundred further showings.

The Kuwait Education Ministry has bought a 16 mm copy for showing in

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of clearing up all the cloakrooms in the break. We were top house that term.

'This pantomime could be the secret for curing a sick society in industry and education in Britain today.'

From Woolwich Peter Riddell, 16, said, 'The message of the pantomime, "please, thank you and sorry", plays a continual part in our own family life and could play the same part in many other families who have not seen it yet. They change relationships in school in my own experience. I apologised to a boy and a completely different relationship has arisen out of that. Caring for other people is also a very basic message of the pantomime and should be learned and could be a cure of wider troubles than family troubles.'

their schools. Hundreds of thousands of school children have seen the film in India. It has also been shown widely to both Greeks and Turks in Cyprus. The Scottish Film Council for the third season running is sponsoring yet more extensive showings this November, December and January. Over 20,000 children have seen the film in cinemas in North Wales.

TELEVISION

On Christmas Day 1969, *Give a Dog a Bone* is being transmitted on Zambia Television. It has also been televised in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Jordan, Rhodesia and Ghana. An estimated quarter of the population of New Zealand have seen *Give a Dog a Bone* which has been transmitted on all the TV stations of that country.

TRANSLATIONS

The first sub-titles to be put on the film were Chinese. Subtitled versions now exist in Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Arabic. The film has been fully dubbed in French, and translations in Portuguese and Serbo-Croat have been prepared.

BOOKS

The *Give a Dog a Bone* colouring book has been printed in India. A Chinese story book of the pantomime has been selling along with the film in Hong Kong and the French version is ready.

Continuing delight for children

The Story of Give a Dog a Bone

told by Marjorie Procter

beautifully illustrated with colour pictures
from the film

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7s 6d hardback

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MRA Books, 4 Hays Mews, London W1X7RS

Sixth season for 'Give a Dog a Bone' in London

'GIVE A DOG A BONE' opens for its sixth season at the Westminster Theatre, London on 11 December, 1969 and will run to 31 January, 1970.

Sally Smith, who played opposite Harry Secombe in a London Palladium pantomime and was principal girl in the last two BBC Television pantomimes, will play 'Mickey Merry'. Bernard Sharpe returns as Mickey's dog, 'Ringo', Richard Warner as the 'Rat King', and Bryan Coleman as that aristocratic pig, 'Lord Swill', Peter Gale will play 'Mr Space' from Planet 43. It will be directed by Henry Cass and Bridget Espinosa.

Boy with 'Parent-trouble' changes

AT A SCHOOL for the children of British Forces serving abroad there was a backward pupil. His parents had been posted frequently for short periods to different places and by the time he was seven he had been to a number of different schools—to some for as short a period as six weeks. He also had, as the Head of the school put it, 'parent trouble'—he was not happy at home. The result of these combined pressures on him was that he had given up talking almost completely. He had retired into himself and did not answer when spoken to.

When the school saw *Give a Dog a Bone*, he was sitting beside the Head Mistress. He watched intently, but when the other children joined in the pantomime calls, he still said nothing. Finally the point in the story was reached where Lord Swill, the aristocratic pig, says, 'Please' and 'Thank you' and regains his human head. To the Head Mistress's astonishment, the boy said out loud, 'But he's still got his tail.' After this he continued a running commentary on the film to the end.

The Head Mistress said some weeks later that from that day he had resumed talking and the Staff believed now that he could be educated. He had obviously found in the film some magic that was beginning to prove the solvent of his difficulties.

Anything To Declare? In Bombay's Bhulabhai Auditorium

The MRA musical revue, 'Anything to Declare?' opened in the Bhulabhai Auditorium on 14 November and will later visit the main cities of India.

ONE MAN CAME OUT saying, 'I wish the politicians in Delhi could see this. But while you are here I want 300 tickets for my own organisation.'

'Freebooter' in *Himmat*

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Rajmohan Gandhi, Chief Editor of *Himmat*, speaking at a reception for the cast attended by 300 people from Bombay's business and industrial life:

'A merger between Europe and Asia—that is going to help the whole world forward. The men and women of *Anything to Declare?* are interested in far more than a musical show. They believe that the world can be remade as man by man and woman by woman, a new spirit spreads across each land. They believe in India. They also believe God can speak to every man and woman. Many of us Indians feel that only if you are saintly or if you fast or sit on

nails that God can speak to you. But the truth is that any man can listen to God and change and begin to change the world.

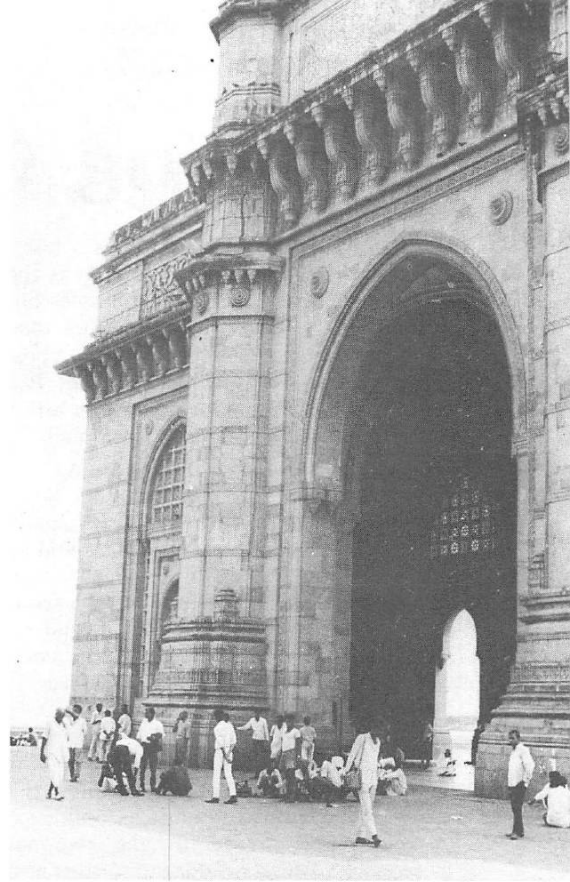
'This idea does not come from the East to the West or from the West to the East, but from man to man.'

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A servant in a Bombay home said to a member of the cast staying there, 'I would like to talk with you after breakfast about MRA.' After breakfast the man said, 'Peter Howard talked to me 15 years ago and I have never forgotten what he said.' On being asked what it was, he replied, 'Peter Howard said to me two things, "Why do you call me Sir? Are we not all brothers?" and "MRA is like a net and you, Lazarus, are meant to be a fisher of men".'

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Japan's *Mainichi Daily News*' four column headline: 'MRA European musical revue group making Asia tour'. (See last week's edition for Bombay press coverage).



The Gateway of India in Bombay. This city, that links India with Africa, the Middle East and the West, was the scene of the premiere of the European revue 'Anything to Declare?' in Asia

photo Franzen

Big outdoor showings of 'Freedom' on Zambia Independence Day Thousands undeterred by rainstorm

AS THE SUN began to sink behind the grandstand the crowd was already beginning to pour into the Buchi Football Stadium in Kitwe where a big cinema screen had been set up on the pitch. This was the opening event of Kitwe City Council's Zambia Independence Anniversary Celebrations, and 3000 from the surrounding townships were coming to see the MRA films *Harambee Africa*, *Men of Brazil* and *Freedom* which had been requested by Councillor Simbotwe, chairman of the celebrations committee. The evening was introduced by David Foko, playwright and producer and Community Development Officer for the area.

Two nights later the same programme was given in the Scrivener Football Stadium on the other side of Kitwe in the centre of the mining area. As the rains had come early this year, the Philips 16 mm film projector specially adapted to feed into the stadium's public address system, was mounted in a minibus to protect it. A crowd of some

7,000 filled the stands and the area where earlier drums had throbbed and feet had stamped in an energetic and enthusiastic display of traditional dancing.

The evening was introduced by S Chiwila, the Chief Community Development Officer for the Rhokana Mine, the biggest mine owned by Anglo-American Mining Corporation in Zambia.

Lightning flashed round the dark sky as the highly attentive crowd followed the action in the films. Twice the crowd sitting on the grass of the arena were scattered by showers of rain, but as soon as it stopped they rushed back.

As the last sounds of *Freedom* died away a crowd surrounded the projector demanding that the whole three and a half hour show be given all over again, 'Now, now!' The next day the official in charge of the Stadium said that the people were greatly appreciative of the films. 'Not only is it great entertainment, but the ideas are what we need', he said.

The foreman invited the Cabinet Minister to lunch

Mr and Mrs Alan Knight, Kenya farmers, arrived back in Kenya after a visit to Europe into an atmosphere of national crisis. But their first conversation was of a much happier nature. Their farm foreman came to tell them of a visit by the Minister of Health.

The residents in the area of the Knight farm are building a small community hospital. Alan Knight is the chairman. The Minister of Health had agreed to lay the corner stone but when the Knights left for the MRA World Assembly at Caux in Switzerland, no date had been set.

During their absence, word came that the Minister would arrive for the ceremony on a certain date. The farm foreman, an African, decided that if they had been present the Knights would certainly entertain the Minister to lunch before the ceremony. Therefore

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Electing God to Leadership

MORAL RE-ARMAMENT is a fascinating form of electioneering. It is the way a people elects God to leadership through the standards and values they are prepared to support in their representatives. MRA is not political. But its standards provide the basis of a comprehensive political programme.

Absolute honesty would mean an end to corrupt and crooked practices of all kinds. It would mean that all goods reached their proper destination and at the appointed time. Money which is misappropriated in various ways, from bribery to expense accounts, would be released in the service of medicine, education, agriculture, or wherever it was needed. Jobs would go to people who were genuinely fitted for them rather than through 'influence', or a doctrinaire concept of 'equality'. Promises would be honoured. Confidence would be restored to the national economy, which would lead to trust and **confidence abroad**. 'A nation's best defence is the respect and gratitude of its neighbours.'

Absolute purity answers the wrong level of population explosion. It would deal with illegitimacy and disease. Sex education would consist not in how

man can handle (and exploit) sex through mechanical and medical means, but in how God can direct it. New levels of personal cleanliness would affect health. Purity would also produce clean motives in people. Inflamed passions over any issue are often linked with unbridled passion in the realm of sex. One kind of unbridled passion is not basically different from another. A former Mau Mau fighter once said, 'If I had known the answer to lust, I should not have turned to killing.' Absolute purity would cut at the roots of crime and violence, and start to build a stable society.

Absolute unselfishness would mean people putting the interest of the country before their own, and before those of family, party, or sectional interest. It would answer famine and poverty, and cure laziness, callousness and apathy. It would change men's attitude from, 'What can I get out of this?' to 'What can I put into it?' It would shift the national emphasis from 'What can the world do for us?' to 'What can we do for the world?' It would give a new motive to industry—that of feeding, clothing and housing the millions. Management and labour

would combine to serve the nation and the world. New motives would settle disputes much more speedily, because neither side would have as its main aim how much they would get for themselves.

Absolute love would create the atmosphere in which this programme could be carried out. Absolute love would end the irrationality of promoting hate—whether between classes, creeds, colours or countries—as an instrument of policy towards attaining peace. It would, however, also end appeasement, because love answers fear. It would mean that death would no longer be regarded as the final disaster, and that people would again be willing to die for what they believe in, as well as living for it. It would mean a fearless proclaiming of God as the only Ruler able to answer tyranny. It is the height of unrealism to think that without standing openly for Him and His standards in the lives of candidates for election, any of the above measures can be achieved. Anything less than that is compromise. We shall have to stand four-square in our profound conviction that we need the countries of the world to be governed by men governed by God.

MARY WILSON

at a glance

'Both radio and Press are ready to highlight the failings of MRA and do so with maximum distortion. Note also the positive aspects. A world vision. A passionate conviction. An ideal. A line to God. A realisation that men can be changed. If they talk too much about sin, perhaps we talk too little. And, in 1969, they believe in miracles, that the Cross of Christ shall transform the world.'

Extract from the main feature in last week's 'Church Times' by Edward England, an editor of Hodder and Stoughton, publishers of 'Peter Howard: Life and Letters.'

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Happy Deathday 'shakes and grips your innermost heart,' wrote the Swiss newspaper *Vaterland*. The socialist paper *Freie Innerschweiz* said that the film 'deals with the question of Almighty Man or Almighty God, with faith and atheism—questions we all have to decide about whether we like it or not.'

They were reporting the first public presentation of *Happy Deathday* in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, in the city of Luzern.

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Officials in the Swiss canton of Vaud were at the launching of Philippe Mottu's new book *Caux—de la Belle Epoque au Rearmement moral** at an occasion in the Casino de Montreux.

The Mayor of Montreux, speaking in the name of the local authorities, referred to the visits of Dr Konrad Adenauer of Germany and Robert Schuman of France to the MRA assemblies at Caux and the effect they had had on Franco-German relations. The Mayor said he hoped that Caux's effective work would be continued ever more strongly through the world.

* Published by La Bacconière

CORRECTION to page 3 article in edition of 15 November: Lord Geddes is a director, not chairman, of the P and O Line.

Minister comes to lunch

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he ought to do so on their behalf.

He opened the house, got out the best china and silver, killed three sheep, arranged the menu with the cook who baked four pies for dessert. A sit down dinner took place for the Minister and a party of ten. Thirty were catered for outside at a barbecue.

During the meal inside one of the guests asked for beer. The foreman said they did not serve liquor in the house. The man rose to go and get some from outside the farm. The foreman said, 'Excuse me. On your territory you are the boss. Today in this house I am the boss. We will not have liquor in the house. Would you kindly sit down.'

All this the foreman related. Nothing was broken, he said, and he would like to pay for the sheep. Knight said, 'The farmer would like to make that contribution.'

The function was voted a big success, and when the Minister was entertained in another part of the district, the organisers came to the Knight farm to buy three more sheep.