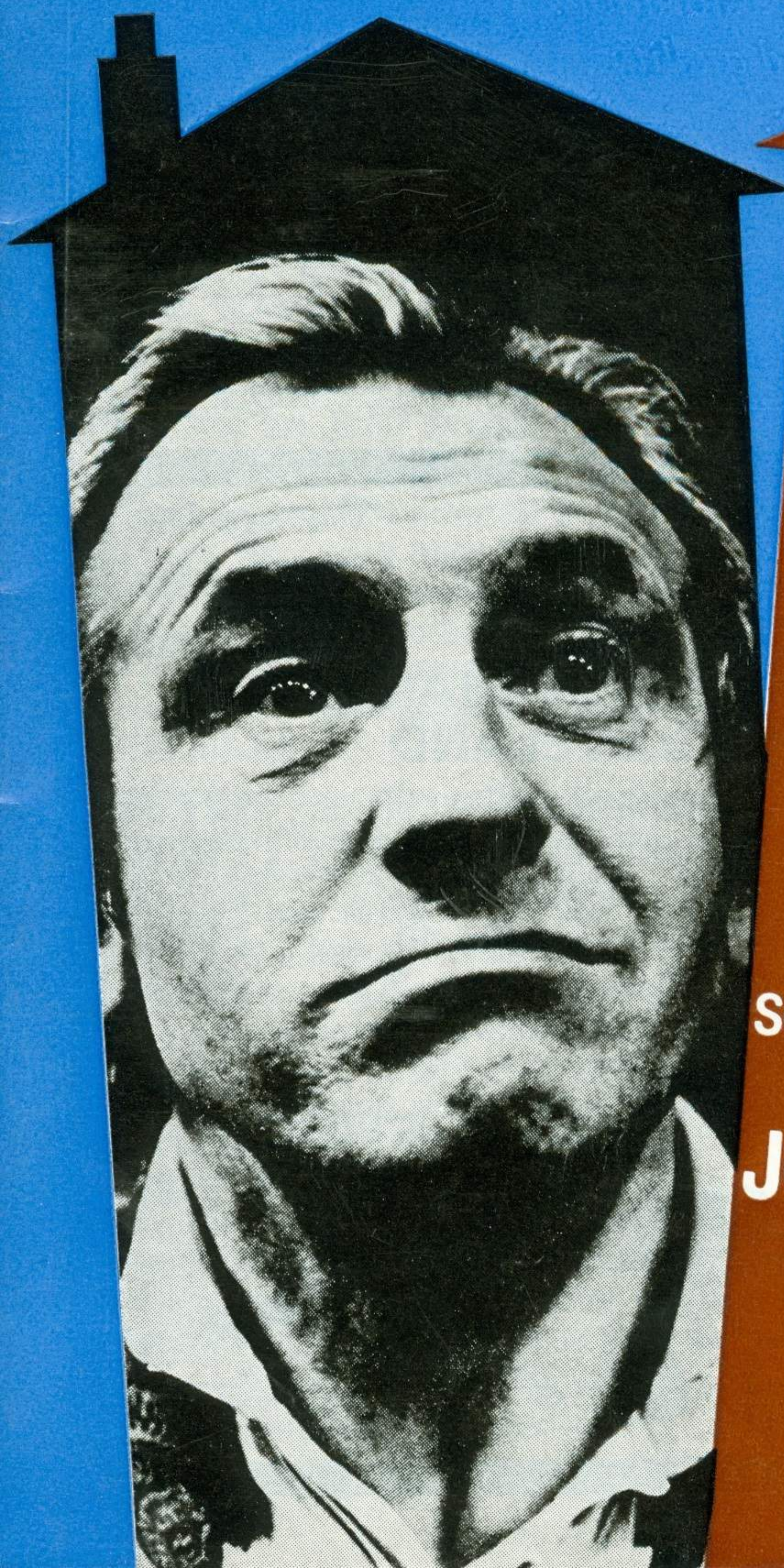


FORUM THEATRE

1979

LEONARD ROSSITER



in
The Greenwich Theatre
Production of

SEMI- DETACHED

by DAVID TURNER

with

GILLIAN RAINE

BRUCE
BOULD

ANITA
CAREY

ENN
REITEL

PETER DAVID THERESA
SCHOFIELD TIMSON WATSON

and

JOAN SANDERSON

Directed by
LEONARD ROSSITER
& ALAN STRACHAN

Designed by PETER RICE



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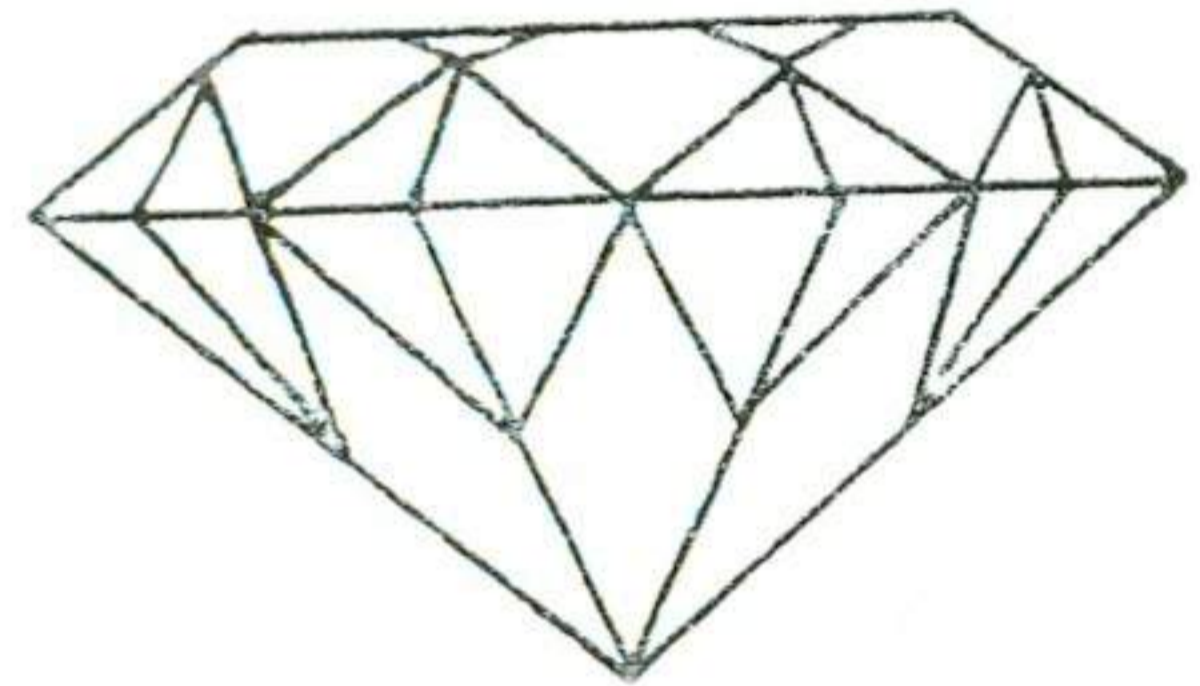
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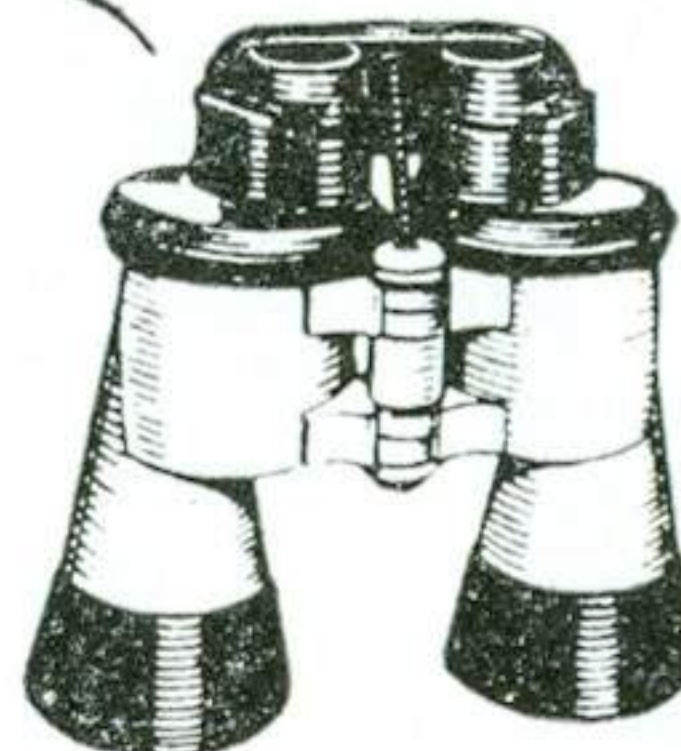
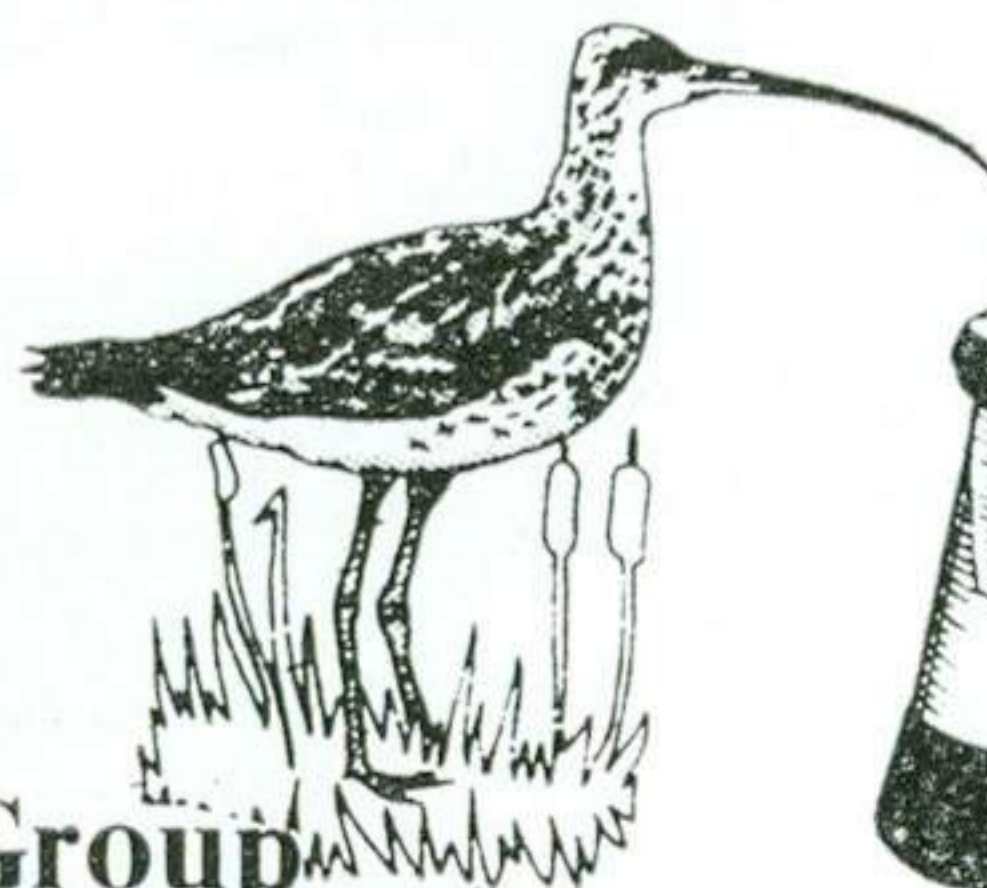
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THE HUNGRY BOX

by Eric Shorter

The Two Ronnies have, with one accord, answered the perennial question - whatever happened to revue? They are the answer. Or rather their television show is. Their acts are just the sort of thing that addicts of revue would have welcomed when revue was in its prime.

And since it patently no longer is, the addicts of yore must look elsewhere. Which is how I came up against the Ronnies. What they give off on the box is an impression of waste. Not that they themselves are wasteful as artists. Nor are their writers.

On the contrary, they seem very economic indeed. No matter how lavish any item may have been in its staging they seldom overdo a thing artistically. And the men who write their sketches and direct their doings are equally careful to keep within artistic bounds.

Nevertheless they leave this impression of waste which is hard to reconcile with their talents as comedians. I mean that every show is the last performance - and the first, of course. There may be second viewings at some distant date. But to all intents and purposes once the show has been broadcast, there's an end of it. The "run" is over. And yet as you watch it (if the Ronnies and their writers are on form) you are bound to marvel at the skill, the wit, the timing and the teamwork of the popular duo, and to wonder at its ephemeral nature. Why should it vanish as soon as it has reached the screen? Granted the

possibilities of "repeats" and exports, but why can't we count on a "run", so to speak, as in the theatre?

Suppose we had another engagement that night or couldn't look in because of domestic problems or were momentarily out of the country or at the cinema or one's apparatus failed? Too bad

As everybody knows television is voracious. People want something new all the time. If I chance to watch the news twice in a single evening I cannot suppress a mild degree of impatience that "the show" hasn't basically changed in the last two or three hours.

Fleeting's the word. We are sometimes asked to pay more attention to what is to come later than or the next night than to what is scheduled for there and then. So there could be no question of seeing the Ronnies twice or even three times as there would be in the theatre.

Yet their predecessors in this line of comedy could count on beguiling us with the same old repertoire for forty years. And of course we all know why.

Before the advent of the box only a thousand or so people could watch each performance at a time, whereas today for television there are millions.

They are however watching in various circumstances, some more hazardous than others. Consider mine, for instance. Family life is the first and most prevailing influence upon my efforts to become a good gawper.

continued overleaf

THE HUNGRY BOX — *continued*

Naturally it won't just come conveniently to a full stop for the sake of something on the box. The effort to watch anything is filled with irreverent distractions and interruptions.

Now in the theatre, on the whole, once you have gained your seat there won't be very much to undermine your attention except perhaps the odd spectator snoring, a latecomer, or a child breathing heavily down your neck at Christmas or threatening your ear with pop or ice-cream. Sometimes the unwrapping of chocolates can be startling, and sometimes someone will faint.

But these are occasional and minor nuisances, and they come in a social tradition which the playgoer learns to tolerate with grace. Ladies hats used to be another obstacle to one's absorption. There were polite requests in programmes to remove them.

In my house, on the other hand by the television hearth, the obstacles to concentration are less predictable.

There are pets as well as people. They all feel free at any given or stolen moment to behave as if the TV set had not been turned on at all. That is to say, they come and go with wavering respect for The Two Ronnies or for anyone else.

My cat sometimes appears to be the most attentive of the handful of viewers on an average evening. But even she, like her mother and the basset hound, may make a sudden dash for the kitchen if they should chance to hear a sound that rings a hungry bell. And while pets may be dismissed as outside the scope of a viewing circling, people are just as subject to outside influences and off-stage needs.

Traffic or rowdy pedestrians in the streets, for example. Or a knock at the door or the ringing of the telephone, the timing and preparation of supper,

and perhaps above all the freedom to comment on the performance on the screen, knowing that the comments won't be heard by the performers, can provoke a lot of disorder. In other words, as a bunch of viewers my household is chaotic compared to a theatre audience.



Is it therefore any wonder if the disciplined kind of assembly we take for granted in the playhouse is hard to reproduce by my hearth? And does it not therefore follow that the task of attending closely to anything on the box becomes more of a challenge than it does in the theatre where everyone else is bent (in silence) on the stage and has in any case paid for his seat?

This is what I tried to do with The Two Ronnies - to behave as if we had been in a theatre. And of course it wasn't possible. Admiring their show and realising anew that the art that goes into it is the art that used to go into the best revues, I couldn't help regretting the waste of the one-off nature of the thing and the nature of television viewing, which lacks the theatre's sense of concentrated assembly.

The Ronnies would once have toured the halls for decades and been relished by generations of theatre-goers, just as (for archaic example) Wilson, Keppel and Betty roamed the world (and at one time 67 London variety halls) for over forty years with their mute shuffling on a carpet of sand in a sketch called Cleopatra's Nightmare.

I saw it as a child and as a grown up; and I don't think that I would ever have wanted to watch it on the box.

The Ronnies are doubtless glad not to have to do the same show year in, year out. But I doubt if they will achieve quite the same level of critical appreciation as W K and B did in their heyday because on the box their art is made to seem so fleeting. *Ars longa, vita brevis* or should I say *vice versa*?



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Vol. 3 No. 16

DUNCAN C. WELDON & LOUIS I. MICHAELS

for Triumph Theatre Productions Ltd

present

LEONARD ROSSITER

in

The Greenwich Theatre Production of

SEMI-DETACHED

by DAVID TURNER

with

GILLIAN RAINE

**BRUCE BOULD
PETER SCHOFIELD**

**ANITA CAREY
DAVID TIMSON**

**ENN REITEL
THERESA WATSON**

and

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FROM THE THEATRE DIRECTOR

We welcome Leonard Rossiter and the company to Billingham, and hope they have a happy and successful week here.

Following our rather hectic spell of eleven presentations in ten weeks, the theatre is closed to the public for two weeks, during which time we will be in preparation for our new production of *The Boy Friend*. Forgive us if we go on a bit about this show, but we believe we have a winner. As you may know, *The Boy Friend* was first staged in 1953 as an after-theatre entertainment. It was later expanded into its present form and, after opening sensationally in January, 1954, at Wyndham's Theatre, ran for five years. It played Broadway with Julie Andrews as Polly, and in 1968 ran another year at the Comedy Theatre, London. Ken Russell's film of the same title was a play within a play, as it was the story of a rep company staging a production of *The Boy Friend*, and so different from the stage version. However, all had the catchy music in common, and songs like 'Won't You Charleston With Me?', 'I Could Be Happy With You', 'A Room in Bloomsbury' and 'The Boy Friend' will take you right back to the 20's. With new sets built in our workshops, new costumes and a talented cast and production team, you have all the guarantees you need for a highly delightful night out at the Forum Theatre.

Following the musical we have four more plays and two ballets before the summer break. The plays range over tragedy with *The Duchess of Malfi*, comedy with *Misalliance*, verse drama with *The Elder Statesman* and 18th century romp with *She Would If She Could*. The ballets couldn't be more popular — Delibes' wonderful *Coppelia*, and the tragic story of *Giselle* with a beautiful score by Adolphe Adam. For classical ballet lovers we also have a Gala Ballet Evening coming in November.

During June we hope to be announcing some of the major attractions now being arranged for the Autumn and Winter when more great shows and more famous artistes will be presented here at Billingham. We hope you continue to give us your full support.

LES JOBSON

LEONARD ROSSITER (Co-Director/Fred Midway)

Leonard Rossiter began his acting career in 1954, and through his many stage and television appearances has become recognised as one of the best leading character actors today.

He has played in repertory theatre in many parts of Britain including Edinburgh, where he appeared in *Arturo Ui* at the Festival, later transferring to the Saville Theatre, and for which he received three major awards. He has played at the Mermaid Theatre on three occasions — two were *The Caretaker* and *Red Roses For Me*. Other London stage appearances include *Ghosts* (Theatre Royal, Stratford East), *The Strange Case of Martin Richter* and *The Loonies* (Hampstead Theatre Club), *The Heretic* (Duke of York's Theatre) and, most recently, *Tartuffe* (Greenwich Theatre), *Frontiers of Farce* (Old Vic and Criterion Theatres) and *The Immortal Haydon* (Mermaid and Greenwich Theatres). He has appeared on many television programmes: *Celebration*, *The Fanatics*, *The Faure* (BBC), *The Double Agent* (Anglia) and *Between the Two of Us* (ATV), to name but a few, but it is for his appearances in Yorkshire Television's *Rising Damp* and BBC's *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin* that he is best known. Films include *A Kind of Loving*, *Billy Liar*, *King Rat*, *The Wrong Box*, *2001 — A Space Odyssey*, *Oliver*, *Barry Lyndon*, *The Voyage* and *The Pink Panther Strikes Again*.

Leonard is married to actress Gillian Raine and has a daughter, Camilla.

JOAN SANDERSON (Garnet Hadfield)

Joan Sanderson began her career at Stratford-upon-Avon in Shakespearean roles including Queen Margaret in *Richard III* and Goneril in *King Lear*. Later she did a season with the Old Vic Company in classical roles — yet her first West End appearance was in the popular farce *See How They Run*. Since then, in theatre, radio and television, she has played a wide variety of roles including *Popkiss* (a musical version of *Rookery Nook*). Her last two very successful performances in the West End were in *Habeas Corpus* and *Banana Ridge*. Other West End performances include *A Lady Mislaid*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *The Bad Seed* and *Let's Get a Divorce*. She is well-remembered for creating the part of Miss Ewell in the TV series and the film of *Please Sir*. She was also in the *All Gas and Gaiters* and *Well, Anyway . . .* television series. Recently, in television, she has been having great success in the London Weekend Television series *Mixed Blessings* playing the part of Aunt Dorothy.

GILLIAN RAINE (Hilda Midway)

Gillian Raine's theatre appearances include *Candida* (Wyndhams), *Hedda Gabler* (St. Martins), *An Ideal Husband* (Strand), *Happy Family* (St. Martins), *Moliere* triple bill (Oxford Playhouse), *The Apple Cart* and *On the Rocks* (Mermaid) and *Heartbreak House* (British Council European Tour). On television she has appeared in *Born and Bred*, *A Picture of Dorian Gray*, *The Trial of Eliza Armstrong* and series such as *The Crezz*, *Within These Walls*, *Wicked Women* and the lead in *Home and Away*.

BRUCE BOULD (Robert Freeman)

Bruce's theatre work includes Birmingham Rep and in repertory at Colchester and Liverpool; his most recent stage appearances were in *Clever Soldiers* (Hampstead Theatre Club), *A Family and a Fortune* (Apollo), *Otherwise Engaged* (Queens and Comedy Theatres), *The Old Country* (Queens) and *The Cure for Love* (Churchill, Bromley). Television appearances include episodes of *The Good Life*, *The New Avengers*, *Coronation Street*, *Hadleigh*, *Rings on Their Fingers*, *General Hospital*, *Play for Today* and *Thirty Minute Theatre*. He has also appeared as David Harris-Jones in three series of *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin*.

ANITA CAREY (Avril Hadfield)

Anita Carey has appeared in repertory at Crewe, Worthing, Coventry and Sheffield, and a national tour of *Butley* with James Bolam. With the Cambridge Theatre Company she has appeared in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Birthday Party*, *The Rivals* and *Present Laughter*. Other work includes *Doubletalk* (Square One Theatre), the premiere of Albee's *Listening* (Belgrade, Coventry) and *Sisters* (Royal Exchange, Manchester). On television she has been seen in *Whatever Happened to The Likely Lads*, *Fred Freud is Dead*, *Mutinies*, *Beryl's Lot*, *Joey*, *I Didn't Know You Cared*, *Mr. and Mrs. Beaurocrat*, *Some Enchanted Evening* and *Something's Wrong*. She has just finished recording *Ladies*, a BBC Play for Today.

ENN REITEL (Tom Midway)

Enn Reitel's theatre appearances include *The Rivals*, *Prince of Homburg*, *Zack*, *Dick Whittington*, *Skin of Our Teeth*, *Huckleberry Finn* and *Twelfth Night* (Royal Exchange, Manchester). On television he has appeared in *General Hospital*, *Coronation Street*, *Ghosts of Motley Hall* and *The Last Romantic*.

PETER SCHOFIELD (Arnold Makepiece)

Peter Schofield has appeared on stage in *Sherlock Holmes* (RSC, Aldwych), *The Changing Room* (Royal Court and Globe) and, most recently, *Equus* (Old Vic and Albery). His television appearances include Joe Dawson in *Coronation Street*, *The Lost Boys*, *The Devil's Crown*, *The Eddystone Lights*, *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin* and *Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em*.

DAVID TIMSON (Nigel Hadfield)

David Timson won a scholarship to the BBC Drama Repertory Company and has made over 200 broadcasts, playing roles including the title role in *Nicholas Nickleby*, Sandy Tyrrel in *Hay Fever* and Winston Churchill in four different plays. Theatre work includes wide repertory experience at Perth, Plymouth, Coventry and Leicester, a season in the Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, and a season of plays at the Mermaid including *On The Rocks*, *Farjeon Reviewed* and *Treasure Island*. Films include *Rosie Dixon — Night Nurse*.

THERESA WATSON (Eileen Midway)

Theresa Watson has played numerous roles in repertory theatres throughout the country including Chester, Birmingham, Stoke and Colchester, Dusa in *Dusa*, *Stas*, *Fish and Vi* and Jane in *Absurd Person Singular* (Bristol Old Vic). Her television credits include *Girl on the M1*, *In Love*, *New Scotland Yard*, *After Loch Lomond*, *Love Girl and the Innocent*, *The Stretch*, *Clayhanger*, *Plays for Britain*, *Within These Walls*, *Crossroads*, *The Dick Emery Show* and Prue Harris-Jones in *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin*. Films include *The Raging Moon*.

SEMI-DETACHED

by DAVID TURNER

Cast in order of appearance :

Hilda Midway	GILLIAN RAINE
Fred Midway	LEONARD ROSSITER
Tom Midway	ENN REITEL
Eileen Midway	THERESA WATSON
Robert Freeman	BRUCE BOULD
Avril Hadfield	ANITA CAREY
Nigel Hadfield	DAVID TIMSON
Garnet Hadfield	JOAN SANDERSON
Arnold Makepiece	PETER SCHOFIELD

The action of this play is continuous and takes place in the sitting-room of Fred Midway's semi-detached house one Sunday morning in Spring

THERE WILL BE TWO INTERVALS

Directed by	LEONARD ROSSITER & ALAN STRACHAN
Designed by	PETER RICE
Lighting Designed by	NICK CHELTON

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Railway Trolley by Bill Bundy of the National Theatre
Wigs by Simon (Wigs) Studios*

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First Stage Dayman	BOB BASFORD
Stage Dayman	COLIN DAVIES
Chief Electrician	ERIC DUNNING
Electrician	DAVE ASHTON

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Administrative Consultant	GILBERT HARRISON
Production Manager	BILLY JAY
Technical Manager	ROBIN CARR
Production Assistants	GINA BARLOW SUE NESBITT AMANDA JOHNSTON
Accounts Administrator	JOHN WHITE

FOR 'SEMI-DETACHED' COMPANY

Company Manager	ANTHONY J. HARDMAN
Stage Manager	JOHN BENJAMIN
Deputy Stage Manager	DANIEL LAWTON
Assistant Stage Managers	MARELLA OPPENHEIM YVONNE SADLER

DAVID TURNER (Author)

Born in Birmingham in 1927, David taught for nine years, writing plays for radio during the school holidays. He won the Cheltenham Festival Television Award in 1960 and just after began writing full-time. His stage plays *The Bedmakers*, *The Antique Shop*, *Bottomley* and *Semi-Detached* were all first performed at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, and *Semi-Detached* subsequently transferred to the West End and to Broadway. It was filmed under the title *All the Way Up* with Warren Mitchell. He has since written *The Prodigal Daughter* which starred Wilfred Hyde White, dramatised Moliere's *The Miser* and Goldoni's *Servant of Two Masters*, and Coventry performed his *The Only True Story of Lady Godiva*. His early television plays include *The Train Set*, *Choirboys Unite*, *Trevor*, *Initiation*, *On the Boundary*, *Summer*, *Autumn*, *Winter*, *Spring*, *Way Off Beat* (since made into a musical) and *Prometheus — The Life of Balzac*. He has contributed to outstanding series such as *The Edwardians*, *Helen — A Woman of Today*, *Fall of Eagles* and *Shoulder to Shoulder*, and his much-praised classic serials include *North and South*, *Angel Pavement*, *Pere Goriot*, *Cold Comfort Farm*, *Treasure Island* and *The Roads to Freedom*.

ALAN STRACHAN (Co-Director)

Alan Strachan's productions include *John Bull's Other Island*, *The Old Boys*, *Children*, *Misalliance*, the musical revues *Cowardy Custard* (co-deviser) and *Cole* (also co-deviser) — all at the Mermaid Theatre — *The Immortal Haydon* with Leonard Rossiter (Mermaid and Greenwich Theatres), *A Family and a Fortune*, *Confusions*, *Just Between Ourselves* and *Yahoo* (also co-author) — all in the West End. He is the present Artistic Director of Greenwich Theatre where his most recent production was *An Audience Called Edouard*.

PETER RICE (Designer)

Peter Rice's productions include *The Vortex*, *Tartuffe*, *Miss Julie*, *The Admirable Crichton*, *Heaven and Hell*, *Pinch Me Not*, *Don Juan*, *Arms and the Man*, *An Audience Called Edouard* and *See How They Run* (Greenwich). Other recent productions include *See How They Run* (Royal Exchange, Manchester) and *Shut Your Eyes and Think of England* (Apollo).

DUNCAN C. WELDON & LOUIS I. MICHAELS

To date some thirty-six productions have been presented in the West End by Duncan C. Weldon and Louis I. Michaels. Their circuit of theatres consists of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, the Richmond Theatre, Surrey, the Theatre Royal, Brighton, the Theatre Royal, Bath, the Devonshire Park Theatre, Eastbourne, and the Playhouse Theatre, Bournemouth. Their latest West End productions have included John Clements in Ronald Millar's *The Case in Question*, Arthur Lowe, John Le Mesurier and Clive Dunn in *Dad's Army*, Glynis Johns and Louis Jourdan in *13 Rue De L'Amour*, Glenda Jackson in The Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Hedda Gabler*, Janet Suzman in Jonathan Miller's acclaimed production of *Three Sisters*, Alan Bates in Chekov's *The Seagull*, John Mills and Jill Bennett in Terence Rattigan's *Separate Tables*, Janet Suzman in Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, Kenneth More in Frederick Lonsdale's *On Approval*, Glenda Jackson in Hugh Whitmore's *Stevie*, Googie Withers and John McCallum in Somerset Maugham's *The Circle*, Janet Suzman in Brecht's *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, Ibsen's *Rosmersholm* with Claire Bloom, Bernard Shaw's *The Apple Cart* with Keith Michell and Penelope Keith, Ingrid Bergman and Wendy Hiller in N. C. Hunter's *Waters of the Moon*, Paul Scofield and Harry Andrews in Ronald Harwood's *A Family*, Geraldine McEwan and Clive Francis in Noel Coward's *Look After Lulu* and Penelope Keith in Bernard Shaw's *The Millionairess*. They have also presented many distinguished productions in Canada, the United States of America, South Africa and Australia including Ralph Richardson in *Lloyd George Knew My Father* by William Douglas Home, John Gielgud in *Half Life* by Julian Mitchell, Michael Redgrave in *A Voyage Round My Father* by John Mortimer, Douglas Fairbanks Jr. in William Douglas Home's *The Secretary Bird* and Samuel Taylor's *The Pleasure of His Company*, Robert Morley in his own play *A Picture of Innocence*, Hayley Mills in Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* and Trevor Howard in Jean Anouilh's *The Scenario*. Currently at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, Keith Michell and Susan Hampshire in Paul Giovanni's *The Crucifer of Blood*, a new Sherlock Holmes mystery. Triumph are also responsible for most of Britain's major touring productions ; these range from farce to the classics.

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The Management reserves the right to refuse admission to the theatre and to change, vary or omit, without previous notice, any item of the programme.

Coffee is available during the interval in the restaurant area.

Drinks for the interval may be ordered before the show commences.

For quick and convenient exit after the performance theatre patrons are advised to leave by the emergency exits.

CAR PARKING

There is ample free car parking space near to this theatre. Patrons approaching from the A19 down Roseberry Road can turn left, or right, at the roundabout to these car parks although the road sign for FORUM indicates left only. Our advice is that if you approach from this direction after 7.15 p.m. (for a 7.30 p.m. show start) it is better to turn right as the car parks to the left may well be filled at that time.

Approaching from the east, from Marsh House Avenue and the Causeway, turn left immediately after passing the ten storey Kennedy Gardens flats and this road leads to parking on the south side of the Forum.

We trust these brief notes will be helpful to you.

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Any United Bus Office.

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Tourist Information Centre,
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Tel. No. 3720.

Darlington Civic Theatre,
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Teesdale Travel Bureau Ltd.,
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FREE MAILING LIST

If you are interested in the Theatre's future programmes please hand in your name and address to the Box Office.

PARTY BOOKINGS

Price reductions of 5p off per seat for parties of twenty or more are allowed for most shows.

The Forum Theatre, Billingham, gratefully acknowledges financial support from the Stockton Borough Council and Northern Arts.

PERMANENT BOOKING SCHEME

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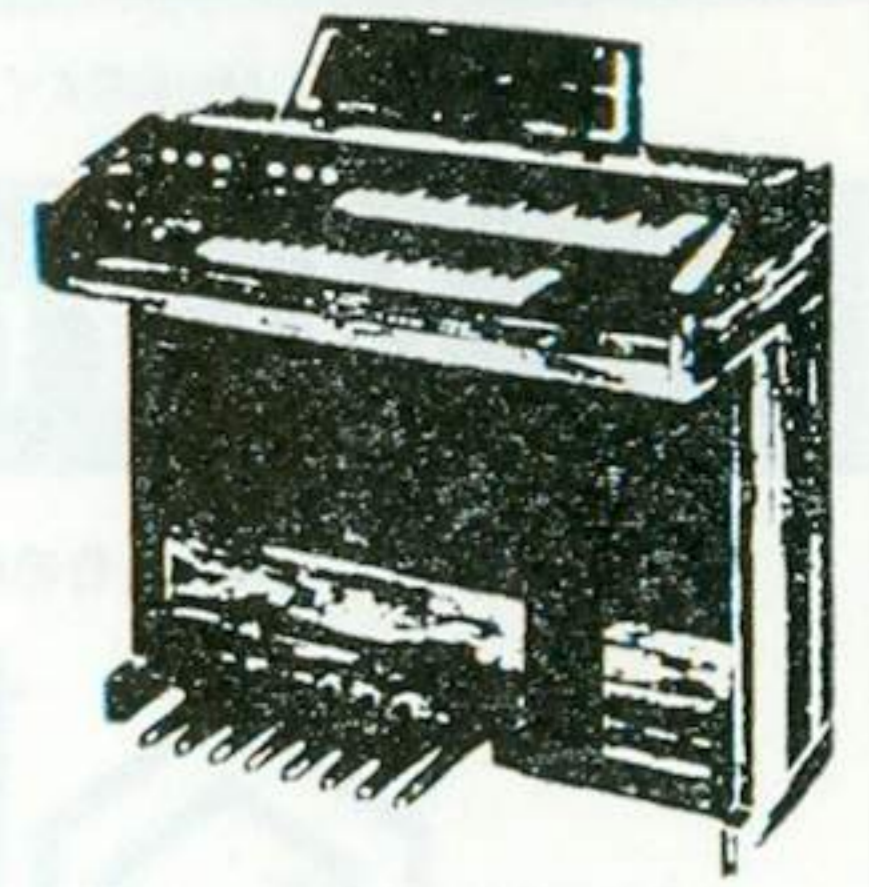
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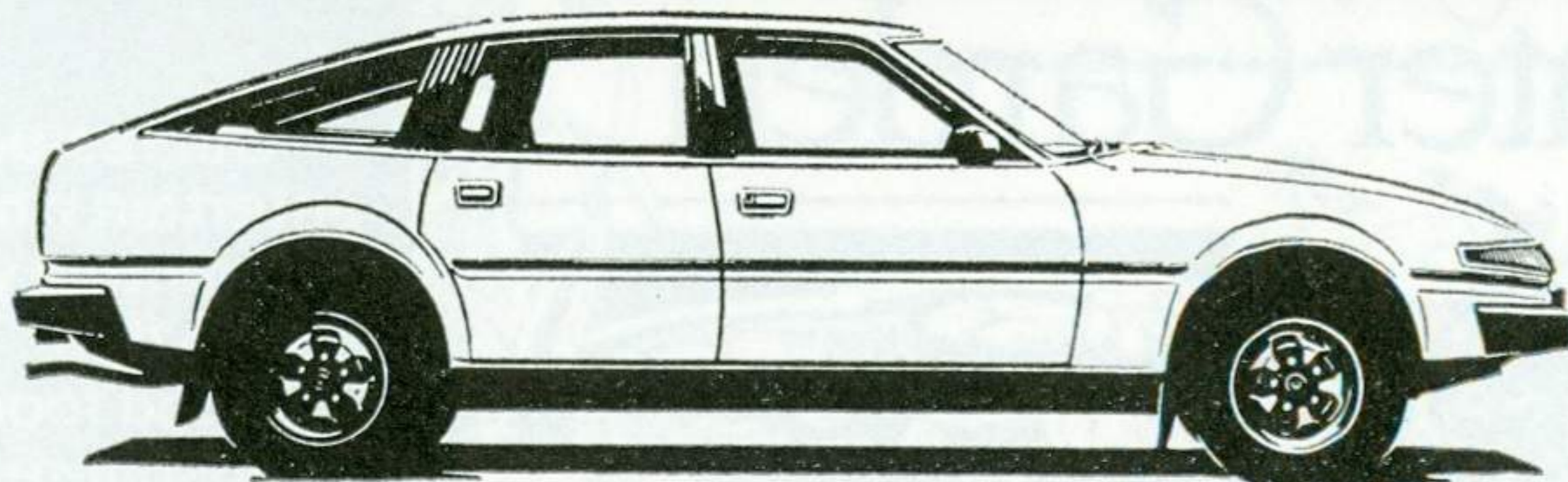
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RUNNING BOARD FRIENDSHIP

by W. A. Darlington

One of the most awkward moments that I remember in the whole long period of my professional playgoing happened in 1966, and concerned itself with Lewis Casson.

The date sticks in my mind because Lewis was ninety at the time, and was known to be losing his memory - especially (so the grapevine alleged) for people's faces.

He was still capable of getting about, but he needed surveillance, and this his devoted wife, Sybil Thorndike, five or six years his junior, took care to supply.

When they went out to a theatre together, she seemed always to be at his elbow, to help avoid any lapses.

But on the occasion I'm now describing which was some sort of students' show put on by the Central School of Drama at The Embassy in Hampstead, Sybil wasn't there. Lewis was alone when he encountered me, and the embarrassing thing was not that he didn't recognise me, but that he did, in a way.

I had arrived early and was sitting in the front row of the stalls, watching the audience (most of them theatrical people) come in, when Lewis arrived.

He had every air of knowing where his seat was, and began to cross in front of the stalls to get there.

Suddenly, I was faced with the problem, what was I to do about this? If Sybil had been there, there'd have been no problem at all. She and I would have greeted each other as usual, and

Lewis would have slipped by without having to bother his head about who I was.

Lewis and I had then been on cordial terms for well over forty years, and I found it difficult to believe, as I watched him approach, that if I greeted him as usual I might bewilder him. But I took no risks, I dropped my eyes as if in deep thought, and a moment later saw his trouser-legs go safely past. So I relaxed; but, unluckily, too soon. For when he was a yard or two beyond me Lewis stopped short. Then he turned, came back, and stood facing me, not with the alert gaze to which I was so well accustomed, but with the vague eyes of a man not quite sure of himself.

Then, to my absolute horror, he began to introduce himself to me. 'Horror' is not too strong a word for what I felt at that moment. I was in no doubt what had happened. In spite of my attempt at self-effacement, Lewis must have noticed something familiar about me as he went by, and was afraid he might have been discourteous.

So now, there he was, trying to make amends by telling the interested party (and incidentally, a good-sized section of the Embassy audience) that his name was Lewis Casson; and there was I faced with two realisations, both equally urgent and equally impossible of achievement in combination.

One was that I must instantly find some way of stopping Lewis saying anything more, the other, that I couldn't think of any words that would have that effect.

continued overleaf

RUNNING BOARD FRIENDSHIP — *continued*

Sometimes even now I get a slight reminiscent shudder when I think what might have come of that incident if I had had to cope with it single-handed. But happily, help was on the way. Sybil, entering the auditorium after whatever had kept her in the foyer, saw at once that she was needed. She sped to her usual place at Lewis's elbow, grasped it, and took charge in the very nick of time.

"Come along, Lewis", she said, in brisk and bell-like tones. "It's no good telling *him* who you are. He's one of your oldest friends". And she swept him away.

As for me, I relaxed in my seat, conscious of a sudden upsurge of happiness, caused in part, no doubt, by sheer relief. Much more, though, it was a reaction of delight to Sybil's last sentence. It was no news, naturally, that I had grown with the years to be accepted as an old friend not only by Lewis but, more demonstratively by Sybil herself. But to hear her acclaim the fact so freely and with so little care who might overhear, was a special pleasure.

It chanced that I came to know him personally some time before I met her offstage, and the circumstances in which our very old friendship began had a curiously accidental quality. In 1926 or thereabouts the garage in the King's Road, Chelsea, where I kept my cheap Morris car closed down, and I moved to a more imposing establishment in Flood Street.

One day, having promised my wife to take her out shopping (which was possible in those spacious days) I called in for my car; and there was Lewis, bent on a similar errand. We were on nodding terms, so we nodded.

Then, finding our cars side by side (his much larger than mine), we shook hands and fell into desultory talk, and

after a bit, sat down on the running-board of one of the cars.

About an hour later one of us - I forget which - remembered that he had a wife waiting for him, and perhaps beginning to worry. Our meeting broke up hastily. But a beginning had been made; and from then on, when either of us fetched his car, he would look to see if the other was about. Quite often the other was and a running-board session would ensue.

So the friendship that I so valued with Lewis Casson was not only born but spent its infancy in the Flood Street garage.

APOLOGY

The article "Anyone for Superstition" which appeared week commencing April 9th was wrongly attributed. The author was David Kirk to whom we apologise.

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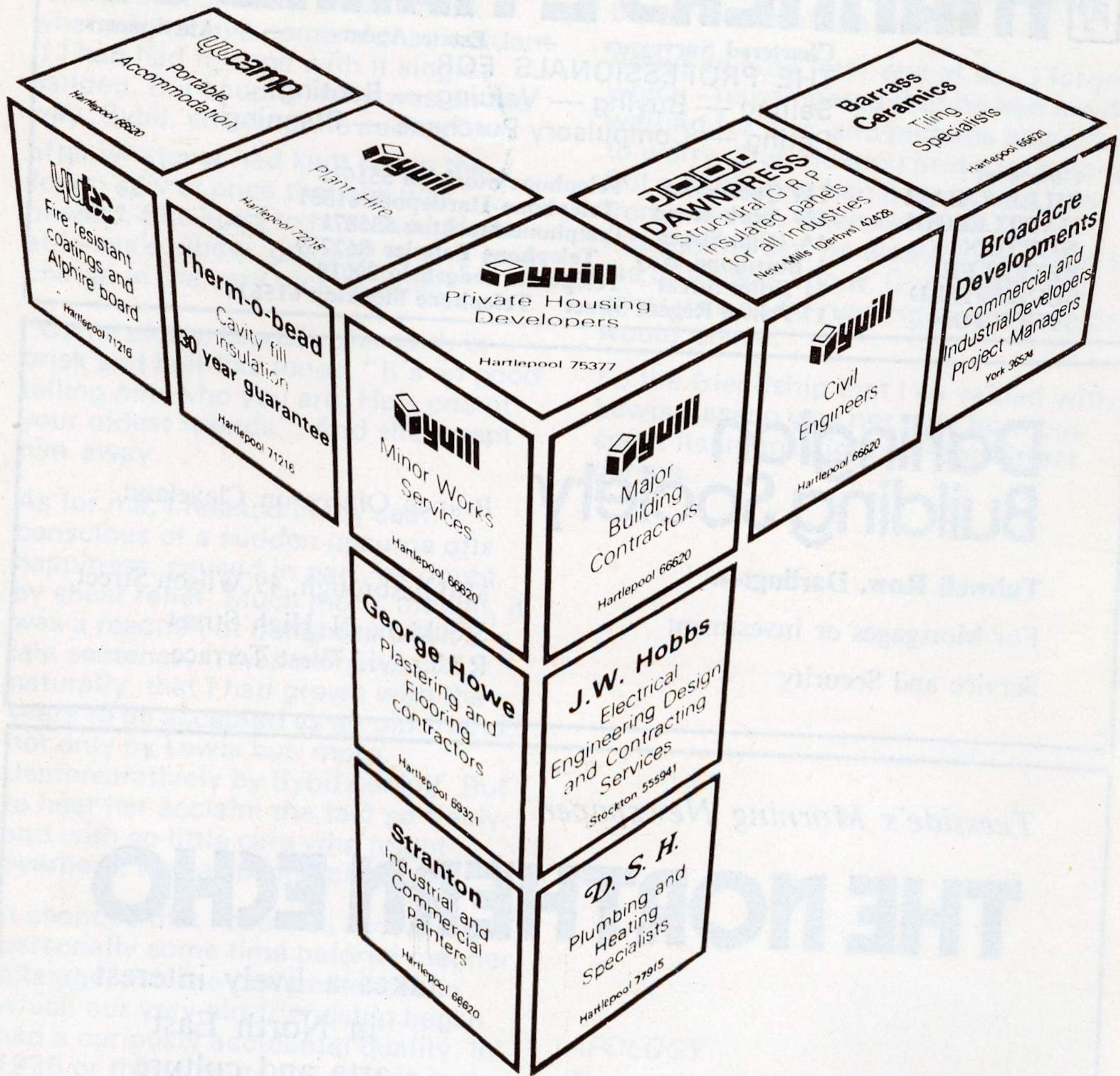
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