



The Eastbourne Convention

By KEN DE COURCY

If one can judge by remarks passed, and if it is possible to call a really successful Convention somebody's personal triumph, then it was Sydini's. His lecture and Gala Show appearance confirmed that he is a truly great artist. Max Jaffa thought so too; he had Sydini make six short films for his fortnightly TV Show.

Television and the news-rooms came into things even earlier when Timothy Dill-Russell successfully escaped from a coffin of ice, closed by four steel bars. Each year Robert Johnson arranges a Publicity Stunt to eclipse all others, and each year it does just that.

But these were only two of the talking-points in a fast-moving, packed programme where you nodded to a friend and missed two others.

An innovation amongst many this year was the "Inventors Parade", in which well-known "Back Room Boys" showed their brains, children and received some of the credit they richly deserve.

Francis Haston and Fred Lowe, were given not only a free hand where Micro Magic was concerned, they also had "Close-Up Casino" and a Contest Trophy, presented by Zina Bennett.

The Official Opening took place in the Floral Hall of the Winter Gardens and, by the time the Overseas Visitors had been introduced, ten countries were represented and everyone was in the right mood to watch "Happy to Meet", the first show of the convention.

"The Dealers", always an integral part of the conclave, had superb conditions in which to display their wares, and made the most of them. "The Dealers' Demonstration" pulled its usual full house and it was pleasant to hear a tape-recording of the voice of Max Andrews. Delton, with exceeding topicality, walked on with an umbrella and "I'm one of the Better Cheaper Dealers!"

Another scotch on the educational side was the lecture by Eddie Joseph, probably the world's greatest exponent of "natural magic". Whilst Eddie had a large audience, Richard Blaire of Leuchners had a much smaller one, yet his lecture on the Art of Make-Up was of great importance.

Over one hundred Ladies of the Ring studied Floral Arrangements under Mrs. Best, of the Constance Spry School, while some of their husbands visited local hospitals to entertain children and ex-servicemen.

The Civic Reception, presided over by the Mayor and Mayoress of Eastbourne, glittered as it always does and, in the cabaret that followed, one of the brightest facets was the act of Chung Chin Foo.

At the Annual General Meeting it was found that Peter Warlock, that indefatigable worker, had topped the ballot for the Committee for the ensuing year, and Wilfred Tyler was voted President-Elect.

Marjorie Waddell won the Competition from Michael Seacombe and Claude Perry talked his way swiftly into third place, the Judges' decisions were not only final, the delegates agreed with them.

This year's Banquet was notable for its brief and witty speeches, one of which, by Edward Love, had the guests rocking with laughter. It was a rich prelude to the "Witches and Wizards" show that opened at midnight.

Saturday brought "Children's Playtime", Sydini's lecture and the highlight of the Convention, Bill Stickland's Gala Show. Those who thought Ireland was a cold and serious country were able to see the act of Diabolo and Deb. Jeff Atkins gave the show a fitting finale by presenting "Illusions of the Masters", illusions seen by many for the first time.

One event missed by everyone at Scarborough was "The New Era Company". This year they were back in even fuller force to take the pose out of all and sundry.

Sunday came very soon and many Conventioneers attended the simple service conducted by the Rev. Michael Seacombe.

Later at the Farewell Cocktail Party Les Levante closed his memorable year of office by placing the president's chain on the steady shoulders of Archie Tear.

And briefly that's it. So much has been left out, the record takings of George Smallwood's Tombola, Joe Turner's helpful Stewards, Dick Armour's Museum, Craig's Filians' Welfare Stand with its gifts and willing crew, Randi on his wind-swept roof.

All were essential parts of this magical holiday organised by the committee throughout the preceding year. Already they have started on 1959.

Everyone has his own personal highlight, something that stands out above the other wonderful memories. For me, it was meeting Jay Marshall for the first time.

See you at Buxton!



LES LEVANTE, President.



ARCHIE TEAR, President 1958-59



WILFRED TYLER, President-Elect.





