

ST. COLUMBA'S ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Varied and Jolly Evening

ST. COLUMBA'S CLUB celebrated its 10th anniversary in grand style. An hour's fun and games set the right mood from the start and all were obviously out to enjoy themselves without any compulsion from the organisers, Marina and Jimmie Hamilton, who managed their extra large audience extremely well.

Part two of the celebrations consisted of a "Miniature Members' Night." The first item was a sketch written and produced by Les. Thurston and this was followed by community singing, led by Mrs. Dorothy Male and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Woodford. A monologue by the Chairman (the Rev. A. S. Cooper) was one of the highlights of the evening. The show ended with the "Stink Pots" (Les. Thurston, Jimmie Hamilton and Ian Male) in a couple of songs.

Refreshments were delightfully prepared by ladies of the club and a special birthday cake, complete with candles and symbols of club activities in icing, had been made by Mrs. Jean Cosgrove.

A presentation was made to Mr. Cooper by the Vice-Chairman on behalf of past and present members. In her tribute to Mr. Cooper's chairmanship, Mrs. Male struck a happy note by saying that although the club had not chosen its chairman (the Constitution stated that the club chairman must be the Minister of St. Columba's Church), she thought that the club had "moulded Mr. Cooper into a first class chairman! The club was very fortunate in having so conscientious and popular a person as its leader.

Mr. Cooper thanked the club most sincerely for what was "a complete surprise," and for all the nice things had had been said about him. He then recalled the origin of the club and its future purpose.

Mr. Harold Dockrill presented a cyclamen plant to the Vice-Chairman on behalf of the club as a token of the esteem in which she had been held during her ten years in office. Mrs. Male thanked the club warmly for the kind gesture.

Next on the programme was a one act play, "Cream of Tartar," presented by the Drama Group. Their contribution was in just the right vein, and players were Grace and Harold Dockrill, Dorothy Male and Marina Hamilton. The producer was Harold Dockrill.

Varied dancing brought the evening to a close.

'Jibes of March' at St. Columba's Club

"THE JIBES OF MARCH" took its place in St. Columba's Club's list of historical events, two days prior to the more famous "Ides" so as not to create confusion! The Club's Chairman (the Rev. A. S. Cooper) must be held responsible for the theme of the evening's entertainment which followed, vaguely, the pattern of the more celebrated version.

The production was in five scenes and centred around the efforts of two American visitors to depose the rather sedate Chairman of a very Victorian St. Columba's Club which, in their opinion, needed a lot of things doing to it to wake it up. A miniature "Members' Night" in the first scene convinces them (and the audience) of this, although the Victorian ballads of Dorothy Male and Edgar Roe—suitably attired in the costumes of that era—provided much amusement. Some successful conjuring by Jim Ritchie and a recitation by Marjorie Koglin are ruthlessly heckled by the Americans in the audience who announce to all and sundry that "sumpn's gotta be done about it!"

Geoff Gillvray and Ian Male as Brutus Path Ettick and Cassius A. Check make their plans for the arrest of the Chairman, Julius C. Zhar, at the annual meeting on charges of forging members' signatures (copied from the Club's register) and stealing tins of potato crisps, among other accusations. Jean Male as Nausea M. Ettick, however, has her doubts and writes to Auntie MacAsser, of a well-known womens' journal, for advice on the situation.

The Chairman, played by Harold Dockrill, is warned by his wife and by a soothsayer (selling Old Moore's Almanac in the market place!) not to attend the Club on the evening of the "Jibes of March" but he pays no heed to them and sets off to face his accusers. Brutus and Cassius make their accusations and call in two C.I.D. men, D. Tain and A. Rest (Jimmy Hamilton and Hugh Arnott) to arrest Julius. The situation is taut with suspense, the Club members not knowing what to do, when one of them, Annie Lorrie (Anne Syme), reveals herself as "Auntie MacAsser" and, after reading Nausea's letter, makes an impassioned speech referring to the fact that "... Brutus is a horrible man" and being far from complimentary to Cassius.

The climax is reached with the C.I.D. men transferring their attention to the conspirators and with the loyal members of the Club all joining in a special version of "Annie Laurie" led by their vindicated Chairman.

All who took part, including "effects-man" Michael Cosgrove and accompanist Mrs. Roe, were thanked by Rev. A. S. Cooper, who commented on the standard reached despite the difficulty of arranging rehearsals.

AMERICAN AID IN ST. COLUMBA'S DUAL SHOW

ST. Columba's Club members recently enjoyed two variety shows, the 27th edition of the regular club favourite, "Members' Night," and an innovation entitled "Stars and Stripes." The former was produced in its normal style of separate "turns" whereas the latter can perhaps be best described as a non-stop travelogue-revue!

"Steve" Stacey and Marina Hamilton succeeded in getting a good variety of acts into their "Members' Night," including a duologue of their own in which they took the roles of two women having a gossip in a bus queue. The accent on comedy was continued in Les Thurston's "magician" sketch in which he was assisted by his wife, Joyce. Brian Ellis made two contributions to the show, one gay and the other grave, and a "mannequin parade" of men also proved popular with the audience.

"Volunteers" from the latter took part in a Spelling Bee and a novel finale was presented by the "Arnott Brothers." This brought the mystic East right into the club with an Indian rope trick in which the Fakir was Robert Arnott, with Hugh providing the necessary Oriental music. The novelty consisted of the fact that the instrument used was the bagpipes and Hugh Arnott obliged with a selection of tunes when the act was over.

"Stars and Stripes" was presented by Sam Hill, of Westminster College (and Kentucky) with the able assistance of some fellow Americans at the College and their friends.

It was indeed a memorable evening's entertainment with a selection of songs, comedy turns and interesting facts about the U.S.A. all joined together by an imaginary tour of the States conducted for the benefit of an Englishman (Terence Girling) by Andy Blane, the group's star entertainer.

His comedy acts had the audience in fits of laughter and his "operation" turn without any "props" was a masterpiece. The harmonising in the singing was very good, especially in the Negro spirituals, and Jane van Auken from Texas deserves special commendation for her contributions here.

Two cowboy songs were sung by Laurence Ingram, who accompanied himself on the guitar. Laurel Keitel read some baseball verses and her husband, Glenn, told the audience about his native California.

Sam Hill himself tested the club on its knowledge of the States and received some interesting answers—some of which were correct! Bill Wertz made a very good job of "an English gentleman" and Terry Girling reversed his role to that of "a typical American"!

The Rev. A. S. Cooper (Chairman) thanked all concerned in both shows for the entertainment they had provided and wished the Americans every success in their imminent exams.

ST. COLUMBA'S DRAMA GROUP

Comedy Thriller to End Session.

THE first half of the winter session of the St. Columba's Club came to an end last week with the presentation by the Club Drama Group of Wilfred Massey's comedy thriller, "Such Things Happen."

The players had been well cast by the producer, Harold Dockrill, and brought out the full possibilities of the parts allotted to them.

Ian Male, as David Carter, was both the brilliant young inventor and the understanding lover, as occasion demanded, and was well balanced by Jean Male as Valerie Merton, the spoilt young woman whose rebelliousness under the benevolent tyranny of her rich aunt made her at odds with herself and difficult in her relations with others.

The quieter romance which grew up between Barbara Meadows (Margaret Allen) and "Fishy" Fynn (Bill Steen) was restful by comparison, in spite of the contretemps which occurred when the latter's passion for sleuthing made him forget a dance "date."

Grace Dockrill was effectively formidable as Ursula Mannering, and Robert Arnott was persuasiveness itself as the neighbour, Philip Manders.

No small part of the comedy element derived from the acting of Pam Arnott as Bertha, the girl from the servants' agency, whose inability to understand what was going on and whose consequent fear that the worst would undoubtedly happen took her through a whole series of panics and collapses.

Ken Allen introduced a sinister note as Herbert Scatters, the hired gardener, who clearly knew more than he chose to tell and who showed a curiosity concerning the tenants of the cottage hard to explain in one whose responsibility should have been limited to the garden.

Hazel Layton made the most of the part of Miss Featherstone, an elderly spinster, and Geoff Gillvray brought all the efficiency and authority of New Scotland Yard into his playing the role of Detective Inspector Farleigh.

The Chairman (the Rev. A. S. Cooper) thanked the players for providing one of the most enjoyable Drama Evenings the Club had known. Thanks were also expressed to Michael Cosgrove, stage manager and technician, and to Kathleen MacWilliams, Mary Gilbert and Pamela Warrington, for their assistance in the production.

The following evening the Group performed the play for the benefit of the staff and patients of Fulbourn Hospital, by whom also it was enthusiastically received.

St. Columba Players in Three Act Comedy

THE St. Columba's Players presented their second winter production before a good audience at St. Columba's Club recently. They chose for their play a three-act comedy-mystery, "The Advancement of Mr. Simpkin," by Jack Last and, with the accent on comedy, it proved to be a good choice.

The scene was set in a Civil Service office, the Commission for the Prevention of Preventable Diseases to be precise, and the plot revolved around the disposal of one executive officer after another, while the senior male member of the staff, Mr. Simpkin, gradually advanced in status. The "petticoat government," as Montgomery, the porter, contemptuously referred to the rather numerous female officers, was headed by the very efficient Sybil Fanshawe-Smith, whose career was ended by an equally efficient stabbing. Miss Henrietta Phipps, who preceded her, was a very different character, as her name would suggest, but her career was also ended prematurely—by way of variation with a poisoned cup of coffee.

The parts of these two unfortunate people were played effectively by Dorothy Graham and Jean Male, while the somewhat bewildered Mr. Simpkin was given an interesting characterisation by John Chatham, whose relief at the arrival of another young man in the office was understandable. This was Hugh Mac-Hugh, played by Robert Arnott, and he successfully escaped the feminine wiles of the office glamour girl, one Betty Petersen, only to succumb to the more natural charms of Marjorie Crayston, another "replacement" of the diminishing staff. Pamela Warrington and Pam Arnott took these roles and made the most of their opportunities.

As an ageing member of the staff, Rosa Midgley, who is determined not to be "pensioned off," Margaret Allen made a considerable impression. The police were represented by Chief Inspector Robson and Sergeant Bradford, and, as the efficient Inspector, Geoff Gillvray gave a good performance. Ian Male was the sergeant with a roving—and a black—eye, whose ideas of his duties were not always those of his superior. As the cynical porter, Montgomery, Ken Allen had the audience with him from the start and thoroughly relished his lines.

Production was by Harold Dockrill, and lighting and effects by Michael Cosgrove. Make-up was in the hands of Kathleen MacWilliams and Mary Gilbert, and continuity was by Hazel Layton.

The play was staged again at the Fulbourn Hospital, where it was well received, on the following evening.

RADIO AS BASIS FOR SHOW

St. Columba's "Take It From Us"

"TAKE It From Us," an evening of radio revelry, took the stage at St. Columba's Club on Wednesday. The show, which was presented by Jean and Ian Male, provided the audience with a number of satirical sketches, all of which were connected with radio programmes. The opening chorus, "Wonderful, Wonderful St. Columba's" was followed by "Mrs. Male's Diary," in which Mrs. Dorothy Male was assisted by the Rev. A. S. Cooper, Gwen Green, Stella Carr, Harold Dockerill and the producers.

A selection of "commentaries" came next on the bill—football Geoff. Gillvray) boxing (Les Thurston), a love story (Jean Rogers) and a cookery lecture (Jean Male). Extracts from the different commentators' programmes followed one another in rapid succession, and made sense grammatically, the humour being in the finished product. Les and Joyce Thurston, with Ian Male, then presented an excerpt from the love life of "Ron and Eth Dumb."

"Guest artistes in the programme were the "Eno's Sisters," paying a return visit to the club after an absence of three years. Les Joyce and Ian again combined in close harmony to "sing" "Have I told you lately that I love you?" and "Quicksilver," and on this occasion they had brought with them an old friend from Hollywood, "Ping Crosby," mimed by Jean Male. This item was enjoyed by everyone, and the various disguises of those taking part were effective if not convincing.

A panel of "experts" did their utmost to confuse the audience and themselves in answering "Any Questions." The Chairman, Freddie Prize-pud," played by Les Thurston, strove valiantly to find answers to the questions in the ramblings of "Commander Trambell" and "Sir Hugo Hearnawt," M.P. (Geoff. Gillvray and the Rev. A. S. Cooper respectively), and at the same time had to pacify the somewhat vehement outbursts of "Miss Jessie Haddock, M.P." and "Mr. Hilbert Garding" (Jean Rogers and Ian Male). The outcome provided considerable amusement especially "Sir Hugo's" contributions which remained on the subject of laundering shirts throughout the whole session!

The programme concluded with a chorus by the whole cast, with Joy Harris at the piano. Mr. J. Ritchie thanked the organisers and all who had taken part for the entertainment they had given.

TWO ONE-ACT COMEDIES

Presented by St.
Columba's Players

TWO one-act plays were presented at St. Columba's Club and at Sturton Street Methodist Hall on Wednesday and Thursday nights respectively by the St. Columba's Players. The plays, both of which were comedies, were seen by a large and appreciative audience on each occasion and the Club's Drama Group seemed to have justified the experiment of taking its productions outside its own doors, so to speak.

The first play "Everyone Comes To Mabel," by T. B. Morris, had an "all-female" cast, the husbands, who had such a bearing on the plot, never making an appearance. Grace Dockrill, in the title role provided much amusement with her dithering attempts to solve the love-life problems of two young wives, one of whom had fallen for the other's husband.

Dorothy Graham and Steve Stacey played the parts well and in a tempestuous scene Lorna Vickstaff made a considerable impression as an Italian prima donna who was after someone's husband but had apparently come to the wrong address. Mabel's "serenity" of mind after her departure was again, and finally shattered by Faith, her companion, played by Doreen Hall. Hardy a word had come from her throughout, except when she dropped a stitch or was spoken to (both occasions were rare) but her announcement that she was going off with Mabel's husband more than made up for her previous silence. The parts of the maid and the daughter of this mad household were played by Marina Hamilton and Christine Blackburn respectively.

A MIDNIGHT ADVENTURE.

"Burglar Alarm," a midnight adventure by Ian Hay, concerned the activities of Thomas and Angela, two young people who had to bungle a flat in order to win a bet with George and Irene, a couple of whom their opinion was not very high. After the two "burglars" had been caught red-handed by the occupants of the flat, Felix (who was writing a "thriller") and his wife Betty, the escapade was continued in order to provide Felix with a good plot for his book. George and Irene turned up in the guise of police officers to "arrest" the culprits—and, of course, to make sure they did not lose their bet. After Thomas and George had resorted to a primitive means of solving the problem, Betty invented two more policemen who "are downstairs and have come to investigate the two who arrived earlier." That, naturally, put George and Irene out of action and with them safely "hidden" (locked in the bedroom) Thomas and Angela made their getaway and at the same time provided Felix with his "happy-ending." Helen Goodall and Ian Male played Angela and Thomas, Jean Male and Les Thurston were Irene and George and Joyce Thurston and Geoff Gillvray took the roles of Betty and Felix. It was obvious that each was very happy in their part.

Mr. Jim Ritchie thanked the casts at St. Columba's Club and the chairman at Sturton Street was Mr. H. C. Finbow. The producer of both plays was Harold Dockrill and the lighting and effects were by Michael Cosgrove.

ST. COLUMBA'S CLUB DRAMA NIGHT

"Candied Peel" for Silver Jubilee

THE twenty-fifth Drama Night presented by the St. Columba's Players took place before a large audience of Club members and friends.

To celebrate the event the group departed from its normal practice of staging two single act plays and chose for their Silver Jubilee production a three-act comedy-drama, "Candied Peel," by Falkland L. Cary.

The success of the evening was due to many factors but perhaps the main ones were the good casting which helped to accentuate the contrasting personalities of the characters, the humorous dialogue which found its way into all but the tensest situations and the intriguing plot which succeeded in keeping the audience from guessing "who done it." "It" in this case, was the attempted poisoning of James Oundersley, a wealthy businessman who decided, for reasons of his own, to solve the mystery with only the aid of a bogus Scotland Yard detective, a friend and his own faked demise—the result of an apparently more successful poisoning attempt. The week-end party he has arranged, consisting of all the suspects, react in various ways to the news of his death and, as a result of the "detective's" investigations, various unexpected developments occur such as Oundersley's blackmailing activities. His "return to life" is naturally the cue for a certain amount of apprehension in the party and the tension increases as one suspect after another is rejected until the play reaches its climax with the trapping of the would-be murderer.

The Cast: As James Oundersley, Geoff Gilbray gave assurance and dignity to the part while Brian Ellis, as his reputedly jealous partner, blustered and expostulated convincingly. Claire Brisby, the partner's wife and old friend of Oundersley's, was played with feeling by Jean Male while "Steve" Stacey, as the victim of Oundersley's "well-intended" blackmailing, succeeded in convincing the audience that any sympathy they might feel for her was quite misplaced.

Joyce Thurston took the role of Oundersley's efficient secretary, Miss French and was provided with a male admirer in the person of an extremely flippant inventor, Oswald Monk, who refused to take, life—or death—very seriously, a part into which Bill Steen entered with obvious enjoyment. As Grace, Oundersley's ward, and Blair, the secretary of his Scottish office, Dorothy Graham and Ian Male acted naturally, their ill-fated friendship providing the key to the whole situation.

Gwen Green as Miss Pennington and John Chatham as Dr. Wadd, added colour to the play for both, in their entirely different ways were good character studies. Grace Dockrill and Marina Hamilton took the roles of the housekeeper and the maid with an obtrusiveness and competence. Credit must also be given to the producer, Harold Dockrill lighting and effects-man, Michael Cosgrove and prompter Hazel Layton.

In thanking all who took part on or off stage, the chairman (Rev. A. S. Cooper), congratulated the group on their production and on their successful entering of a new realm of drama.