

# The B.B.C. Records a Redmire Saturday Night

From Our Special Correspondent

REDMIRE (Wensleydale), Sunday

The war is a much more personal affair up here than it is in the big towns.

The farmer who has just read that we have sunk seven German destroyers at Narvik, leans over his wall and says to his neighbour:—

"Ah see yar lad were busy last neet!"

In Redmire's grey stone houses "the might of the British Empire" is a phrase which stands for young Walter Lambert, who was a quarryman here; and Harold Peacock, the road man; and young Tom Park, who worked at Leyburn; and Fred McGregor, who was a gardener up at the Hall.

Young Leadbeater has gone out of West Witton, and Alan Willis from Preston-under-Scar; and Bert Outerbridge and the two Foster lads, Jim and Tom, from Carperby.

"Oh, aye; there's a nice few gone out o' t'dale, as you might say."

The long, friendly, smoky hills await their return, and the men who get their living from them still lift up their hearts on a Saturday night by singing a good old-fashioned hymn down at the village pub.

## Wensleydale Saturday Nights

"Jazz is no ewae tiv us," said a farmer who had a three-mile walk back home. "We're partial tiv a bit o' Bankey."

The fame of these Wensleydale Saturday nights reached the B.B.C. after one of their officials had found a pile of hymns one day on top of a pub piano.

So last night a recording van reduced the *Lebensraum* of the lambs in the meadow behind the King's Arms, the dining room was wired, and the farmers, the cobbler, the road men, the blacksmith, the innkeeper and the bookmaker "fair capped" themselves and sang into the microphone.

The anxiously-awaited result will be broadcast on May 4 to the Forces, which means young Walter Lambert, and Harold Peacock, and young Tom Park, and Fred McGregor, and young Leadbeater and Alan Willis, and Bert Outerbridge, and Jim and Tom Foster.

Now, unless you are of exceptionally strong character, a microphone is a terribly refining influence. It was so last night when the company launched themselves upon "Ikla Moor Baht At."

One or two of the tenors looked the microphone full in the diaphragm and sang "Ikley!"

A shadow as long as the hills of Wensleydale darkened the sandy complexion of Joe Alderson, the landlord, and he stopped in the middle of his beat.

"Na then!" he rapped. "Na then! None o' that fancy stuff. You're not up i' London, nor Manchester nawther. It's Ikla! . . . Ikla! . . . Ikla!" He looked accusingly into the tenors' corner. There was no more nonsense.

Kit Jones, who carries his 71 years with a flourish, came down from Preston-under-Scar with his two concertinas and sang "I like to hear the old cock crow early in the

morning . . . I like to hear the dickey birds so merrily sing their lay."

The entire company lifted up their voices and said they liked to hear "the dickey birds so merrily sing their lay."

Kit also sang "What are you going to do about Selina?" and executed a half-dance over the floor, while the company pressed home the inquiry.

Jim Lambert, a quarry man with a beautiful brick-red complexion, sang "Our Awd Nan"; 78-year-old Mr. Dick Brittain, President of the Wensleydale Football League, recited "Ode to the Sun," though he hadn't seen it in print to refresh his memory for over 60 years; and "Ernest"—I never caught his name—sang "Rocking the baby to sleep."

Then they all sang "The White Cockade." "Basses over here," ordered Joe Alderson. "Coom on, Bill, it's no good standing behind t' tenors."

"We want to be quiet on this, Joe," advised a choir man gravely, holding his music.

"Aye, don't get too harsh," nodded Joe. They sang a few bars, and decided they did not care for the effect.

"I'll give 'em it a bit quicker," said Joe, and off they went into the tale of the true love who "got listed" and wore a white cockade.

"Oh my very —," sang the tenors.

"Oh my very —," thundered the basses.

"Oh my very —," sang the tenors again.

"Oh my very —," thundered the basses.

"— Oh my very heart's a-breaking, all for the love of him."

## Harmonised Hymn

After that came a hymn, beautifully harmonised. . . . "When my life's work is ended, and I cross the swelling tide."

Mr. Maurice Brown, music director of the Theatre and Drama Department of the B.B.C., said afterwards:

"I think it is the best natural singing I have ever heard, except the Welsh. It is in no way typical pub. singing. They take great trouble with what they call blending."

I had a word with Bill Balderston. Bill and his brother Dick, and Bob Bushby, are a well-known trio of singers in the Dale.

"Up here we play darts and dominoes till about 9 o'clock. And then, maybe, somebody will come in and say, 'Well, we'll just have a sing,' and the job starts. It's a hobby in these parts."

The singing went on for some time after the B.B.C. had ended its recording.

Four men stood talking in a corner.

"What about it, Bill?" said one.

Bill nodded. "You Bob?" he asked.

Bob nodded.

"Jim'll strike."

Jim struck.

"We shall meet on that beautiful shore . . .," sang four voices.

J. I.

## TRACTOR TRAGEDY

Percy Sice (35) was ploughing with a tractor on Brougham Castle Farm, Penrith, on Saturday when the tractor ran into a hedge. While he was trying to get it back the tractor overturned on him, killing him instantly.

Sice was married and had five children.