

ESSEX GIRL IS BRITAIN'S BALLROOM QUEEN

Gliding and swaying across the ballroom of London's Grosvenor House are 24 of Britain's finest amateur dancers. They are the finalists out of 10,000 competitors in the "People's" National "Ballroom Queen" Contest. Celebrities of the entertainment world are there as judges - Sally Ann Howes among them. As the year-long quest among dancers from all parts of Britain reaches its climax, the spotlight falls on Number 20, graceful Eileen Smith and her partner, George Bird.

Dancing ability is only one of the qualifications needed in a Ballroom Queen. With film star Robert Beatty putting the man's point of view, the judges test the budding Cinderellas also on beauty, grace and charm.

To 18-year-old Eileen Smith from Ilford, Essex, goes the judges' verdict. By day, a five-pound a week milliner, Eileen dances to fame, partnered by her employer, hat-shop owner George Bird. To crown her Britain's Ballroom Queen comes Iver Novello - doyen of musical comedy.

With Patricia Dainton and Iver Novello leading the last dance, there comes to an end a star-lit evening.