

Your Efforts Last Month



THE VARIETY CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN TENT 36

NOVEMBER, 1959

Several months back we donated £300 to help the Girls' Nautical Training Corps to repair and re-decorate their training ship, Daring, at Raven Wharf, Kingston. In appreciation they have dedicated a plaque on Daring to Variety and this was unveiled by Mrs. Norah Butlin, wife of the Chief Barker, on October 31st. Accompanying Bill and Mrs. Butlin were International Property Master Jim and Mrs. Carreras and other Tent representatives, who were met by Lady Pamela Mountbatten, the Corps Commander, who originally directed her appeal for Variety help to Jim Carreras, and Rear-Admiral J.W.A. Waller, the Corps Chairman. We have assured the Training Corps that any further request for assistance will meet with the most sympathetic consideration. The Corps caters for 1400 girls from all parts of Britain.

Last Christmas we learned that the children in some of the homes and institutions serviced by our free mobile film units had never received toys in all their lives and we campaigned on their behalf to such effect that we raised nearly 5,000 gifts for them. We have already formed a Toy Committee for this coming Christmas and have set a target of 8,000 gifts for youngsters most in need of them. We are arranging also to send Christmas trees and other seasonal presents to the homes. Members will personally hand over the gifts to the children, as was the case last year.

A free scholarship is being offered by the Phillips Exeter Academy, New Hampshire, U.S.A. where Variety's two scholarship boys, Michael Coward and David Parry, scored such splendid successes. If, as we hope, the scholarship is granted to a Variety Club nominee, we shall send two boys and a girl for a year's scholarship in America in 1960.

The midnight film premiere of "The Five Pennies" sponsored by Variety at Swansea on October 23rd., raised over £2,000 for the Swansea Boys' Club.

The Billy Smart Circus star gala opening performance at Clapham Common on October 26th., realised £3,171, which is being put to immediate use for individual children's charities.

Sister R.A. Laslett, who runs the Pixie Hollow and Annexo, a home in Ramsgate for unmarried mothers and their babies, sent us a heart-breaking letter, in which she stated that unless she received immediate aid the home was in danger of being closed. Personal investigation by a Club member revealed that the home was indeed in very desperate straits. It was in debt with local tradesmen, some of whom had stopped food supplies and others had served writs for monies owing them, its electricity had been cut off because of unpaid bills, and in general was in acute financial distress. On receiving the report, we immediately cleared its debts, amounting to £378, and have taken steps to ensure a happier condition for the babies, their mothers and the staff. The home is completely unsubsidised.

On the recommendation of the London Federation of Boys' Clubs, we have made a donation of £100 to the Devas Institute Boys' Club, Battersea, to help pay the cost of badly-needed repairs to their building.

We also donated £100 to the Ilford Jewish Youth Club, for the installation of shower baths. The gift followed an appeal from the centre, backed by a recommendation from a Barker with a personal knowledge of the club.

Crow members have personally volunteered to supply two portable radio sets and a set of children's encyclopaedias to the St. Vincent Open Air School, St. Leonard's-on-Sea. The radio sets are for bed-ridden children and the books for educational purposes. The gifts were appealed for.

We made a donation of £250 to the Langford Cross Children's Home, to pay their outstanding debts and to cover running costs. Here again a personal on-the-spot investigation by a member revealed serious need which was affecting the happy running of the home.

Many orphanages and homes find themselves unable to afford the cost of blankets and sheets needed to provide adequate warmth and comfort for children during the winter months. To counter-balance this, Variety has formed a special 'Operation Blanket' Committee, which will operate to supply hardship cases and has already become active. Chief Barker Bill Butlin has given 100 blankets to the scheme.

A Barker has sent us parcels of new winter underwear and clothing for children. Our free mobile film unit crew have started delivering the clothing at centres where the need is most urgent.

Variety Club has pledged itself to subscribe £10,000 to the Cinematograph Trade Benevolent Fund, for the exclusive use of its subsidiary, the Sir Arthur Jarratt Memorial Fund for Children. The money, which is to be paid out over a period of two years, will be devoted to the care, maintenance and education of children of employees of the film industry.

We have replaced one of our mobile film units and the new vehicle is in action. Plans for covering an entirely new area in the Midlands with a third unit are well advanced and 90 possible locations -- orphanages, homes, institutions, schools, and hospitals -- have been listed for free shows. Plans are also progressing for other new units to be operative in other parts of Britain, so that ultimately we shall be servicing the whole of the country.

Eva Mary, Mother Superior of our 'Ward' Orphanage, the St. Agnes Home, Thames Ditton, has sent us the following letter: "Thank you, and all our dear friends of Variety Club, for the wonderful financial help you so constantly give to the home. You have all so often lifted the heavy financial strain I sometimes have. I cannot thank you enough for all you do for us. The children are a great joy to me".

Here are extracts of other letters from beneficiaries:-

"Thank you and all concerned for your great kindness to us and our delicate children. We do appreciate your film show each month and the children count the days as the time approaches for the next. Many of these children cannot go out very much because of their disabilities." -- St. Vincent's Open Air School, St. Leonard's-on-Sea.

"I was very happy indeed to receive your cheque, which has paid the outstanding bills as suggested. I am deeply grateful for your help and look forward to showing you the home and the work we are trying to do for the children". -- Horseshow Lodge Children's Home, Warsash, Hants.

The 73 guineas paid to Chief Barker Bill Butlin and International European Representative C.J. Latta for their appearance in the B.B.C. programme, "This Is Your Life", last September, has been donated by the Officers to Variety's Heart Fund. The programme featured the life story of Bill Butlin.

The National Children's Home, Harpenden, appealed to us for help in building a water-therapy pool for seriously handicapped children. £500 was needed. We, in turn, referred the appeal to Barker Dickie Hearn, who, on behalf of the fund which he heads for helping spastic children, immediately promised to provide the £500. Dickie today is to receive a cheque for £3,000 from Variety for the construction of a pool for spastic children in Croydon.