

## "OUR WORLD WAS THE STAGE"

by Percy Corry

Published by Neil Richardson £2.00

83 pages in paperback.

Obtainable by post from Neil Richardson 375 Chorley Road, Swinton, Manchester M27 2AY.

I must confess I reserved the reviewing of this book unto myself, partly because I have met the author – and here I declare an interest, I both like and admire him – and because it treats among other diverse subjects a particular enthusiasm of mine, the Manchester of pre Great-war days. Days when that city still boasted its very own *Manchester Guardian* and the shadow of C P Scott still loomed large in Cross Street.

My own interest covers, I suppose, in theatrical terms, the period between Miss Horniman, founder of the Manchester Rep, and Neville Cardus, musicologist and cricket correspondent, and to the latter part of that period, Mr Corry's volume contributes many interesting side lights.

He actually knew one particular hero of mine, Mr Henry Elder the brilliant and original cinema architect, whose magnificent work, mainly in the Manchester area, was recently the subject of a special article in the Cinema Theatre Association's magazine. Henry Elder is the sly genius who designed his Longford cinema with a front modelled on a cash register 'as a tribute to the film industry'.

Our author proves that every individual's life story, with a few exceptions who I may name in TABS in the future, carries its own interest. When that life ranges from Blackpool Ice Shows to the religious cycle of the York Mystery Plays some idea of the diversity of his many interests become plain.

One strange frisson of surprise may affect the reader. As he peruses the first seventy five pages he forms a picture of an essentially modest man. As we follow the purely commercial aspects of a career that began as what was always in station notices described as a 'Railway Servant', through insurance and the wholesaling of confectionery, following on to scenery and lighting, there is no hint of the very acute business brain that must have been at work. Then suddenly one is amazed to read, below a picture of what in Stockport would have been considered a veritable palace, with three stories and leaded lights plus a confusion of gables, the somewhat surprising caption 'The Corry Home'.

Mr Corry is also very kind in his book about TABS – yet another reason for recommending a reading experience I greatly enjoyed. ■



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Richard,

Thank you for 'TABS'. I find the magazine informative and I enjoy reading the eulogistic reader's letters, extolling the virtues of Rank Strand. Unfortunately, this is the antithesis to most of your other letters, I wonder if you'll publish?

On March 10th I sent a cheque for £1.50 to the U.K. sales desk, to cover purchase and postage on a Chromoid swatch book. With remarkable efficiency the cheque was cleared by my bank on March 14th.

March 16th – A letter arrived, first-class post, confirming the order.

March 21st – A second letter, also first-class post, informing me that the V.A.T. on the POSTAGE was 0.05 pence.

April 10th – I had to telephone Rank to be assured that my goods were in the post.

May 10th – Local Rank dealer tells me that Rank are out of stock of Chromoid swatches, and have been for the last three months.

June 1st – Still no swatch (didn't I read 'Terms - 30 days nett' somewhere?) – write to 'TABS' and look forward to the next issue.

Yours faithfully,

Paul Owens,  
Tamworth,

*I was sorry to read the sad tale of woe related by Mr Paul Owens. It nearly matches the problems we have encountered in obtaining swatch books from our sub-contractor!*

*The simple facts are that the human beings we employ are like the curate's egg – we had to return the swatch books to manufacturers on two occasions to get the colour sequence and backing sheets correct. Even now on some books one or two swatches are missing. This has caused endless annoyance and embarrassment – we cannot tell the customers what colours we have if the swatch books are inaccurate!*

*It can take up to eight weeks to prepare swatch books from scratch – artwork, approvals, printing, assembly and delivery. If faults are found much of the work has to be repeated.*

*I hope Mr Owens will appreciate that every effort has been made to restore the situation. We carry over 5000 lines of product, when main units and spares are considered, much of which is subject to erratic demand which is impossible to forecast but which the customer may require urgently. Occasionally we fail but happily the failures are becoming fewer in number* ■

Nick Perry  
Inventory Manager

Dear Sir,

I wish to complain about the lowering of standards reflected in your latest issue of the Rank Strand magazine, TABS (Vol 41, No 1 March 1984). On page 31 you have shown one of the employees *smiling*. I realise that the editors may have realised their error and attempted to cover their embarrassment by printing Mr Andy Collier slightly out of focus, but the picture still is emphasised even to the casual observer by the fact that it is in colour. I trust your readers may soon have restored to them that seriousness of purpose displayed by the executives on the cover of TABS Vol 40, No 1, August 1983.

Occasional traces of frivolity, and in one case blatant indecency, have found their way even into the book reviews. While some people would find this made the article on Mr Reid's book entertaining, readable, eloquent and enthusiastic, I can only say that I fear for my students' moral welfare when they read such phrases as 'the underwear of a theatre'. I realise that nudity on stage has become all the rage, and that an old boy of this school encouraged such outrages in 'Oh Calcutta'; nonetheless, those involved on the technical and administrative side must still be looked to for maintaining standards of decency.

I am glad to say that the spirit of responsibility is still to be found in your columns. The warnings about Reyrolle MD10 Fuses, and about Earthing are just right.

Yours sincerely,  
SHOCKED, Giles Evans  
Birmingham.

## AN OASIS IN YORKS

THE Royal Hotel at Scarborough, one of the best known in Britain, has added a new dimension to its highly successful operation as a conference, business and holiday Hotel with the opening of a £200,000 Water Leisure Complex, THE ROYAL OASIS.

Plaxtons of Scarborough have undertaken the complete development, including the electrical installations. Seven ENVIRON 2 dimmers have been installed to control all the fluorescent and tungsten lighting, which was designed to give the complex a tropical atmosphere.

This again illustrates the many applications of the ENVIRON 2 dimmer control. This unique situ-



Royal Oasis – Pool, Spa Bath and Leisure Area.

ation of a Water Leisure Complex called for a lighting level control to create the right atmosphere. The contractors were very impressed with the equipment, as it was their first experience of the ENVIRON dimmer; also the fact that FUTURIST THEATRICAL HIRE LTD, the Rank Strand Dealers in Yorkshire, could supply from stock, with no delay while special racks were being built.

The completion of the OASIS marks the end of a £1.5m investment programme by Mr ROBERT LUFF, the London theatrical impresario,

who bought the Royal Hotel in 1975. It is now run by a charitable trust controlled by a Foundation set up by Mr Luff and his late partner, Miss Beryl Evetts, in 1966. The trust is primarily concerned with medical research. ■

### Stop Press!

As we go to press news comes that Environ Fluorescent Dimmers can now control the NEW T.8 energy efficient tubes. The secret is a new high frequency electronic unit in the light fittings.