

## Happy Days In The Sun

At Easter and Whitsuntide organised rambles were arranged by Sunday-schools and Hiking Clubs to places like Holingsworth Lake, Studley Pike, Hurst Wood and Thievley Farm. At the latter in a valley behind the farm were swings and donkey rides and plenty of room to play games. There was a peculiar toilet with three tubs and 3 seats, a large one, a smaller one, and another smaller. The owners, the Little family, ran a kind of refreshment room at the farm where one could obtain jugs of tea and sandwiches, but the members of the Salvation Army, with whom I used to go, usually took their own refreshments.

After tea the adult members of the party made their way down the steep hill to Holme village where they held an open air sing-song and took a collection to help the funds. Its a weary youngster who arrived home after this Whit Friday trip, after having walked all the way. I wasn't ten years of age at the time. I remember the celebrations after the first World War when a huge bonfire was lit on Deerplay Hill (more convenient than the original beacon site about one mile to the rear) and crowds of people walked from Bacup to the event.

### **NIGHT SIGHT**

I remember hearing an aeroplane flying about that night and people were puzzled as to how the pilot could see in the dark, and wherever had he come from and where was he going? We were round about Northern School at the time walking home. I would be only be about 6 at the time. Other celebrations were held. The effigy of Kaiser Bill, the German leader, was burned on a bonfire on the Market ground in front of the police station, and after a torchlight procession from Bacup an effigy of the Kaiser's son, Little Willie, was burned on Stacksteads' recreation ground. This was the venue for visiting circuses and fairs, and could tell many a tale of these happy events.

A whirlwind type of roundabout just fit into the space in Union Street where it joined Union Square and Irwell Street, and there were amusement stalls as well. On the market ground were other roundabouts and sideshows and Bates' Roller Coaster was always on the Boston (where the Cenotaph now stands) along with coconut shies and other sideshows.

Another earlier form of entertainment was the Co-op Hall where variety shows were held six nights each week, and one night each week a "Go as you Please" competition was held -- a type of New Faces or Opportunity Knocks competition where the audience clapped their appreciation or booed their disapproval of the talents displayed. I may say that the talents of many of the competitors would put some of today's stars to shame.

### **SILENT PICTURES**

Similar competitions were also held at the Empire Theatre. It was the custom in my young days for the Empire Theatre and Kozy Cinema (where the Regal now stands) to show silent pictures, changing the programme each Thursday and Monday, admission being 3d to 9d(01d money). Matinees were held Tuesday and Saturday at 2pm admission being 1d, 3d and 5d. The pictures were shown with breaks in between for the supposed spoken word to be shown and it was a successful type of entertainment," and --- knowing nothing else --- we were highly satisfied.

### **INTERVAL SONGS**

Sometimes at the Kozy when films were shown with a musical background, as a special attraction local artists such as John Wille Thompson (Bass,) A Cooper (Tenor), Sarah Beswick (Soprano) were engaged to sing songs (that appeared in the picture) during the

special interval, from the stage in front of the screen. This was indeed a special feature when the film was not changed, as was usual, but was on for six nights running. The Kozy and King's cinema at Waterfoot were under the same management so used to join at films and this was done by showing a film at one cinema and then a lad on a bike would strap the cannister containing the film on his back and take it from one cinema to the other and vice versa. On occasions there would be a delay and people would be kept waiting for the next film. Films broke regularly passing through the projector and the lights used to go on until a repair was made. Hughie Howorth, a tall man with a slight stoop and who sported a moustache, was the manager of the Kozy and a chap called Boucher at the Empire. The projectionists were Sammy Lord and Len Wilkinson, who later married an usherette at the same cinema called Gwillam.

The pictures were accompanied by a pianist and a violinist, and a drummer, playing in a corner below the screen. John Bill was the pianist at the Kozy, George Whittaker, the violinist, and at one time Wilf Hurst was the drummer. At the King's, Waterfoot, was Billy Baldwin the drummer, and Ruth Pickup the violinist, who were later to marry and live at Rookery Nook at Broadclough. At the matinees at the Kozy on Saturday it was the habit of the rough nippers to pay the lowest admission, 1d, which entitled one to a seat on the first three rows, but when the lights were put out they would sneak back into the 3d and 5d seats. It was a full-time job for Lyon Petit, the attendant, to get them back into their proper seats.

Sometimes where there was a scene such as soldiers marching, all the lads would stamp their feet in time with the pictures. As there were shops underneath this was most undesirable, as customers in Mad Dick's Coffee Tavern didn't like plaster falling on their heads. Likewise in Oliver Ormerod's barbers.

### **CALLS OF NATURE**

Worse still, some of the lads instead of going to the gents to answer the call of nature and so missing perhaps an exciting part of the picture, did it on the floor, as to be expected, it percolated through into the premises below. The first one knew of this was a light being shone along the rows by Lyon Petit, to discover the offender but all he found at the scene of the crime was an empty seat, the culprit having moved to a safe haven.