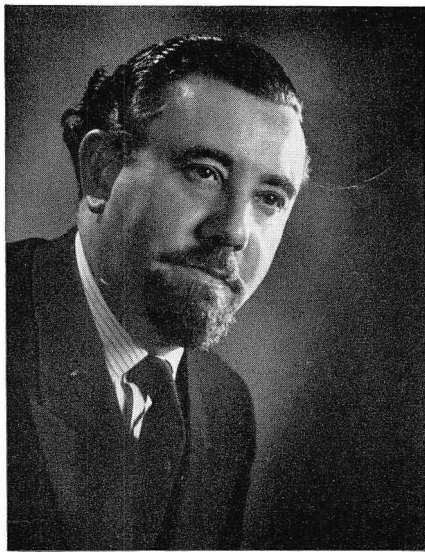


# Meet the Archers

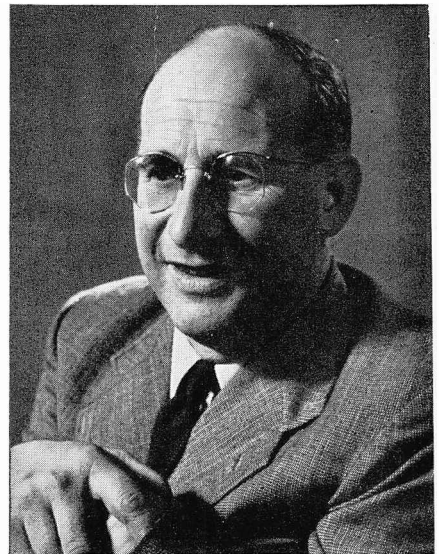
A BOOKLET FOR ALL LOVERS OF THE GREAT B.B.C.  
COUNTRY FAMILY SERIAL, WITH STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHS  
OF THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO PLAY THE PARTS



NEWNES : 2/6d. NET



AUTHORS: Edward J. Mason (*above*)  
and Geoffrey Webb (*below*)

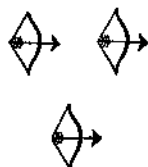


EDITOR: Godfrey Baseley

Cover illustration: SIMON, DAN and TOM FORREST (*Picture Post Library*)

# MEET THE ARCHERS

YOUR FAVOURITE PLAYERS IN PICTURE AND STORY



GEORGE NEWNES LIMITED  
TOWER HOUSE  
SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2

# YOUR FRIENDS THE ARCHERS

BY KENNETH BIRD

**T**HE Light Programme serial, **THE ARCHERS**, is one of the greatest successes in the history of sound radio. It is followed daily by more than ten million people from all walks of life. The doctor, the dustman, the engineer, the lawyer, the factory worker and the housewife are on common ground when it comes to discussing the fortunes of the people of Ambridge. One person in five knows what is happening to the 'Archer family', as well as Simon, Walter, Mrs. P. and the Fairbrothers. The romances and misfortunes, the financial worries and pleasures of this imaginary village community are the common concern of a vast audience who, because they love ordinary people, are fascinated by the everyday affairs of a little community that might exist anywhere in Britain. **THE ARCHERS** are your next-door-neighbours and mine.

It is true to say that neither Godfrey Baseley, who dreamed up the programme about five years ago and who now edits it, nor Edward J. Mason and Geoffrey Webb, who write it, suspected in those early experimental days that it would become the success it has. It was in May, 1950, that five programmes were broadcast in the Midland Home Service to see how they would impress an audience consisting largely of housewives. Yet straightaway it captured the attention of about 50,000 listeners and, as a result, it was given a place in the Light Programme at the beginning of 1951. What happened then has become a part of the history of sound broadcasting in this country. The number of listeners soared with each month until **THE ARCHERS** had become an institution, a part of the British daily round. Today its success is not confined to Britain alone; a special edition of the programme is now heard in the General Overseas Service of the B.B.C., broadcast to many parts of the world.

## THE LINK

The editor and script-writers go to great lengths to ensure that **THE ARCHERS** is true to life. Dan Archer's farming world is a real world in which what happens to him is happening to thousands of other farmers at that very moment. His problems are theirs, and because he is engaged in a struggle to wrest a livelihood from the soil, his endeavours are of interest to millions who know next to nothing about agriculture. For nearly all of us are trying to earn a living in some way and Dan Archer's problems and difficulties are a reflection of our own, but in a different sphere.

Because the background to Ambridge is real, every effort is made to ensure that the mechanics of production do not obtrude. Tony Shryane, the producer, is at pains to contrive authentic sound effects and to make sure that his cast put the maximum conviction into every line they utter. A false note anywhere in the programme would harm the illusion of reality.

## THE CAST

Enthusiasm is an essential ingredient for a serial which is to endure year after year and take a grip on the imagination of millions. There is plenty of enthusiasm to be found among those responsible for **THE ARCHERS**. Another vital ingredient is a cast of actors and actresses who, for the sheer joy of the thing, are able to sink their own personalities in those of the characters whom they are portraying. That is what happens week by week at the Studio Centre in Birmingham. Norman Painting becomes Philip not because it is a job of work but because he likes Philip, and believes in him. Chris Gittins forgets his private interest in youth movements and amateur drama and becomes that slovenly yet lovable old curmudgeon, Walter Gabriel. In fact, when they are in the studio the cast admit that they think as well as talk like Dan, Doris, Mrs. P. and the rest. The real world of Birmingham fades and its place is taken by the mythical village of Ambridge.

## ALWAYS UP TO DATE

The up-to-the-minute topicality of the scripts makes it easier for them to steep themselves in the illusion. Godfrey Baseley believed from the beginning that big events in the world should be reflected in the programme so as to make it a part of the common scene. He was resolved that Ambridge should not be remote from everyday affairs, a piece of undiluted fiction. Thus we find Dan and Doris discussing the budget or a new agricultural bill only forty-five minutes after it has been announced on the six-o'clock news. This is achieved by bringing one or two characters into the studio shortly before transmission and recording what is known as 'a topical insert'. This piece of up-to-the-minute discussion is substituted for a section of the original recording.

THE ARCHERS owes much of its success to teamwork. There are no stars among the cast. Each one is anxious to give his utmost, to obey the guiding hand of his producer, and to help his colleagues, whether old or new, to make a similar contribution. What matters is the programme; millions are loyal to them, they must be loyal to millions. It is the same spirit which sends Godfrey Baseley and the script-writers tramping over fields or attending agricultural shows in search of authenticity; it reveals itself again when Tony Shryane crouches, microphone in hand, in a chicken run or a milking shed to obtain the exact sounds he needs. If the programme is to be credible it must pulse with the stuff of life.

A week's episodes of THE ARCHERS is recorded each Sunday, Monday and Tuesday on the second floor of the B.B.C. Studio Centre in Birmingham's busy Broad Street. Members of the cast are grouped round two microphones: one is in the open studio and is used for indoor scenes; the other is enclosed by screens providing a dead acoustic effect for conversations out-of-doors. Behind a glass panel are the studio managers tending their 'banks' of gramophone turntables. On each turntable is a record of sound effects which has to be introduced as background whenever the script so demands. In a small room on the floor below, Tony Shryane sits in front of a row of knobs and dials, giving directions to cast and technicians through a microphone, fading music and sound effects in and out, and adding those deft touches which give an authentic gloss to each episode.

As soon as an episode has been thoroughly rehearsed, the actual recording begins. The red light flickers in the studio, the familiar signature tune is heard, a green light winks, and the cast begin to speak their lines. If Doris Archer is washing up, a gramophone record provides a background of rattling crockery. If Simon is milking, another record introduces a rattle of milk churns. Meanwhile, in the recording room every inflection of the voice and every sound effect is being faithfully transferred to tape. Next week this same tape recording will be played to more than ten million eager listeners.

But the heart of Dan Archer's farm is to be found at Broadcasting House—more than a mile away. There, in a large airy office, are to be found charts and filing cabinets containing a complete record of everything that has happened and is happening at Brookfield Farm. How many head of cattle has Dan Archer at that moment? The answer is at the finger-tips of Miss Valerie Hodgetts, the secretary. How many cows are in calf? What is the current price of eggs, poultry, yearling cattle? These and a hundred other questions can be answered at once. What is more, a detailed record is kept of the activities of every member of the cast. It is known exactly how many times Walter has visited Mrs. Perkins, how many girls Philip has been out with, even the precise day of the week on which Christine was born! The reasons for this scrupulous attention to detail are twofold: if the B.B.C. didn't go to those lengths the authenticity of the programme would be in constant danger, and, furthermore, there is a quite understandable desire to avoid the shoals of letters that pour in from vigilant listeners who are only too quick to notice the slightest discrepancy!

### A HUMAN STORY

But wherein lies the appeal of THE ARCHERS? Is it merely through habit that the housewife hurries her young son off to bed in order to switch on at a quarter to seven? It goes deeper than that. Some people maintain that townspeople enjoy the programme because it answers a longing in every British heart for the countryside. Yet that doesn't account for the fact that an equally high proportion of country-folk are regular listeners. Or is the answer to be found in a natural desire to 'eavesdrop' on the day-to-day activities of other people? In other words, is THE ARCHERS merely an extension of our own lives in that it enables us to share in the problems of others—problems which, after all, are not dissimilar to our own?

There may be a measure of truth in all these suggestions, but it seems likely that the real answer is much simpler. In these difficult times all of us need to escape from ourselves—at least for a few minutes. We need to forget our own cares and find refreshment in another little world. That is the need which THE ARCHERS fulfils. For fifteen minutes each evening we can enter into the joys and troubles, the love affairs and quarrels of a little community that is quite remote from our own. To make it even more inviting, that little community of Ambridge is inhabited, by and large, by nice people—people we would be happy to know personally. They are neighbourly, cheerful in adversity, full-throated in their pleasures, humorous and full of character. Over the years they have become our friends, and for all we know they may be living only a sixpenny bus ride from any of us.

It would never surprise me to stumble on the village of Ambridge at any turn in the road. And if I did, I wouldn't need introducing to anybody!

# *Tom Forrest*



*Photo: Logan*

*played by* BOB ARNOLD

# Bob Arnold

**B**OB ARNOLD was born on Boxing Day, 1910, in the Oxfordshire village of Asthall, and still lives there. He attended the village school and left school at fourteen years of age, and began working for the local butcher, earning five shilling a week and all meals found; but the very long hours interfered with entertaining, so he looked round for a job which left the evenings free.

He gained valuable experience entertaining at local functions, and eventually made his first broadcast in 1937, taking part in a Cotswold programme, telling stories in local dialect. This led to variety broadcasts, and he continued with entertaining and variety work as 'The Farmer's Boy' right up to the outbreak of war.

He played in variety with the late Dougie Wakefield in 1940 and was then called into the R.A.F., in which he served for almost six years, spending five of these stationed at Heywood in Lancashire.

Whilst in the R.A.F. he played principal comedian with the Station concert party, 'The Silver Wings', helping to raise large sums of money for the various Savings Weeks in many Lancashire towns in the Manchester district.

On demobilisation, he returned to the Cotswolds and resumed radio work, but this time in drama. Has taken part in Saturday night theatre, and Sunday night serial from the Bristol studios, in 'Children's Hour' serials from Birmingham including *The Spider's Web* and *Operation Catapult*, and in plays and feature programmes from Birmingham and London.

He has been playing Tom Forrest, the Squire's gamekeeper in *THE ARCHERS*, since early 1951 and has also introduced the omnibus edition of *THE ARCHERS* since it began in January, 1952.

His hobbies include collecting folk songs and Roman coins. He has sung folk songs in many programmes for radio, and has recently recorded four sides of Cotswold folk songs for H.M.V. He began collecting Roman coins while at school, being able to walk through local fields and pick them up; he now has an extensive collection and has recently been elected a Fellow of the Royal Numismatic Society.

When not engaged in radio work, he likes pottering about in the garden, and growing his own vegetables. Bob is married, and has a ten-year-old daughter.



# *Doris Archer*



*Photo: Logan*

*played by* GWEN BERRYMAN



# Gwen Berryman

**G**WENDOLINE MARGARET BERRYMAN was born in Wolverhampton and educated at the Girls' High School where she proved a most undistinguished scholar, leaving at the age of sixteen having just managed to pass the school certificate, and to sing an odd solo or two with the school choir.

She studied piano, 'cello, and singing from the age of fourteen at the Birmingham School of Music, and at the age of eighteen, she sang leading roles in the opera class. She broadcast the part of Margarita in *Faust*, last act, and Susannah in *Marriage of Figaro*, Act II, in 1927 and 1928.

The year 1928 saw her begin her singing studies at the Royal Academy of Music, where she won the Westmorland Scholarship, Isabel Jay Gold Medal, and the Acton Bond Diction Prize. She also gained her L.R.A.M. and the Certificate of Merit with Distinction.

Meanwhile she was playing in the Academy's yearly opera at the Scala Theatre. Her first appearance was in *Samson and Delilah*. When the other members of the chorus of Flower Maidens did not appear she sang that chorus as a solo, strewing flowers, and hoping against hope that she really did know the words.

She attended an audition at the Lyric, Hammersmith, for *Derby Day*, jokingly saying that fat girls were never wanted for chorus, and was surprised to be offered a small part and understudy to Mrs Bones, played by Mabel Constanduros.

After playing the part when *Derby Day* moved to the Comedy Theatre, she played in a Gracie Fields film, *Looking on the Bright Side*. She toured in a musical play *Prudence* by Frederick Austin and then joined the Thomas-Salberg Repertory Company in Wolverhampton, where for many years she played in a great variety of plays, mainly in comedy roles.

She has broadcast in *The Old Wives' Tale*, *The Card*, *My Brother Jonathan*, amongst a number of feature programmes and 'Children's Hour' plays.

Also she has played the title role in *Mom*, by Leslie Halward, which seemed to be the forerunner of her part as DORIS in THE ARCHERS.



# *Mr. Fairbrother*



*Photo: Logan*

*played by* LESLIE BOWMAR

# Leslie Bowmar

LESLIE BOWMAR was born on September 21st, 1900, and educated at Stoneygate School, Leicester and Eastbourne College.

He first appeared with Fred Clements when he opened *Arcadia* at Skegness, in 1913, after having won numerous watches as prizes on the sands in children's competitions. Fred billed him as 'The Pocket George Grossmith' and paid him 10s. for the performance.

He entered his grandfather's business on leaving school and played as an amateur for many years until the business closed down in 1930, when he was engaged by the Little Theatre, Leicester, as manager and leading man. He played in weekly rep. and with visiting companies who came to the Theatre from time to time. He played leads during this period in all the Shakesperean Birthday productions at the Theatre, including *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Henry IV—Pt. I*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth* and *Othello*.

He first broadcast under Charles Brewer in 1935, but did not leave the Theatre until 1936, when he was given an audition by Martyn C. Webster, and received a contract by next morning's post.

Has broadcast in many musicals for Martyn, including *Princess Charming* (in which he played The King) in a cast which included Ann Zeigler, Webster Booth, Yvette Darnac. Has taken part in many 'Children's Hour' plays, story readings and feature programmes for Robin Whitworth, and has also read poems by Rupert Brooke in a birthday programme. He read *My Brother Jonathan* by Francis Brett Young in serial form. In the original 'Paul Temple' series he broadcast with Hugh Morton and Bernadette Hodgson.

When war broke out and all contracts were cancelled by the B.B.C. he worked on a farm as tractor driver, having had previous experience in agriculture, and then started an agricultural contractor's business which he worked with a partner till 1947.

When he returned to the B.B.C. as a free-lance artist he took part in many 'Microphone at Large' series with Godfrey Baseley and has been in THE ARCHERS from the initial broadcast.

His main hobbies have been tennis, golf and sailing, but he has won many first prizes at tractor plough matches since the war.



# *Grace Fairbrother*



*Photo : Logan*

*played by* YSANNE CHURCHMAN

# Ysanne Churchman

**Y**SANNE CHURCHMAN, Sutton Coldfield born, daughter of stage and radio actor Andrew Churchman, always wanted to be an actress. Her first professional stage engagement was in *Bluebell in Fairyland* when she was twelve, and she first broadcast the next year.

She trained in all branches of dancing at the Cone-Ripman College, and passed the Advanced R.A.D. Ballet Examination. She has worked in repertory, on tour and on the London stage (including a long run in *The Man from the Ministry* at the Comedy Theatre).

Filmgoers have seen her in several pictures—*I Believe in You*, T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, etc., and heard her dubbing leading parts into English in *Let's go to Paris* and *The Wolf of Sila*.

On Television in 1951, and again in 1953, she played Bridget O'Hara in *The Course of Justice*, and her other Television appearances have been in *Spring 1600*, *Craven House*, *The Poltergeist* and *Children's Hour* and *Variety*.

In radio, she has played everything from a crying baby to an old-age pensioner, and amongst her hundreds of broadcasts, apart from THE ARCHERS, are listed two 'Woman's Hour' serials, poetry reading and many 'Children's Hour', drama, features, variety and overseas programmes.

In commercial radio she has played opposite Orson Welles, and Marius Goring.

Her husband is A. J. Pilgrim, a senior B.B.C. Engineer.

Description—Hair, brown; eyes, blue-grey; height, 5 feet 5 inches; weight, 8 stone 6 pounds.

Favourite part—Cathy in *Wuthering Heights*.

Favourite author—Rosamond Lehmann.

Likes—Sea (and bathing), sun, sand, cats and iced coffee.

Dislikes—People without consciences.

Admires—Bette Davies, Edwige Feuillere, Margot Fonteyn, Alec Guinness and Emlyn Williams.

Hobbies—Being a wife and an actress doesn't leave time for many hobbies, but she likes playing tennis and table tennis, walking and swimming when she gets the chance, and, of course, looking and listening-in, and attending fashion shows.



# *Carol Grey*



*Photo : Logan*

*played by ANNE CULLEN*

# Anne Cullen

ANNE CULLEN was born in the village of Langford, Essex on January 24th, 1926. Her father was a farmer and seed grower. This probably accounts for Anne's love of the country and gardening. She was educated at Chelmsford County High School and later at The Royal Academy of Music (Speech and Drama Section) where she gained the L.R.A.M. both as Teacher and Performer. Anne left the R.A.M. after winning the Howard de Walden Gold Medal for the best actress of the year, which was awarded by Val Gielgud who at once offered Anne a position in the B.B.C. repertory company. After two and a half years, Anne decided to gain experience on the stage and acted in a variety of leading parts in repertory theatres for a year or two. Returning to London, she once again broadcast regularly and made the film of *Murder in the Cathedral* and took part in a television serial. The part of Carol Grey was offered to Anne in March 1954. Apart from her busy life as an actress, Anne finds time for her duties as Professor at the Royal Academy of Music; and she was recently awarded the honorary degree of A.R.A.M. She is also an examiner for L.R.A.M. and The Associated Board of The Royal Schools of Music. In 1947 Anne met the radio writer and producer, Neil Tuson, when he cast her for a part in the famous 'Dick Barton' serial. They were married in March, 1949, and they now have a house in Essex, where they share the mutual hobbies of gardening, reading, interior decorating and—experimental cooking! Both Anne and her husband are good cooks and, as Anne says herself, 'I'm very glad Neil can cook. I don't have to worry about him when I am recording THE ARCHERS in Birmingham!'



# *Mrs. Fairbrother*



*Photo : Logan*

*played by JOY DAVIES*



# Joy Davies

**J**OY DAVIES was born in Edgbaston, educated at Edgbaston High School, and then, having firmly decided from the age of five that she was going to be an actress, went through a course of several years' training for stage and radio. She acted in every type of play, and at the same time studied the more academic side of the profession, becoming L.R.A.M. and L.G.S.M. for speech, and drama.

Just before the war, while still training, she first broadcast in radio plays, and also produced plays in a Convent High School near her home in Northamptonshire. In September, 1939, after war had broken out, she accepted the Convent's invitation, which she had previously refused, to join their staff, and for seven years was their Senior English Mistress. Teaching all branches of English was extremely interesting but very hard work, and she found the first year's coaching of School Certificate and Higher Certificate formed a far more unnerving responsibility than did the girls themselves! In spite of having become strongly attached to the Convent, soon after the war ended she returned to stage and radio work, continuing play-readings and productions, particularly of Shakespeare, at two schools for a year or so longer. In 1950 she came to live in Moseley, and since then her work has been chiefly in *THE ARCHERS*, which she enjoys immensely. Other radio parts make a most pleasant change, and the contrast to Helen Fairbrother that she particularly enjoyed was the comedy character part of Emily Scattergood in the 1952 adventure serial, *The Devil to Pay*.

She is still convinced that acting is far more interesting than doing anything else, and that acting in Shakespeare is the greatest fun of all. But she also loves seeing plays, reading, and writing, and hopes one day to have a chance to do some professional criticism of books, plays and films—as well as the vigorous unprofessional criticism which she has inflicted on her long-suffering family and friends for many years.

On the more active side, she is an enthusiastic games player, particularly golf (handicap 8), tennis (Northamptonshire), and squash. She also enjoys walking, swimming and bridge.



# *Jack Archer*



*Photo: Studio Peters*

*played by* DENIS FOLWELL

# *Denis Folwell*

**D**ENIS FOLWELL was born in Leicester and educated at Roborough School, Eastbourne. He began his theatrical career the hard way in provincial rep. After amateur experience with the Leicester Drama Society he graduated to tour, West End and films including Stage and Theatre Management and as a producer.

He first broadcast in 1934 and has since been on the air over three thousand times, having worked for nearly every department of the B.B.C. He was well known for some time prior to the Second World War as 'Larry the Lamb' when the Toytown series was produced from the Midland studios, and as the original Worzel Gummidge. Has, of course, played Jack Archer since the beginning of the serial, except for a break of some months owing to a serious illness when the authors sent him to Cornwall!

As a member of the T.A. he was called up in August, 1939, and served with the Royal Artillery, obtaining his commission in 1941. He was subsequently posted overseas as an Entertainments Officer and served in the Middle East, Sudan, India and Ceylon Command. Released VE Day, 1945.

Keenly interested in horticulture, he is considered to have an expert knowledge of sweet peas and chrysanthemums. He follows most forms of sport, particularly cricket, and both codes of football, in which games he used to indulge. He is especially enthusiastic when Leicester or Leicestershire are concerned.



# *Walter Gabriel*



*Photo: Logan*

*played by* CHRIS GITTINS

# Chris Gittins

**A**NATIVE of Stourbridge in Worcestershire, in which pleasant town he still resides, he spent much of his early childhood in and around the local theatre as the constant companion of the stage manager's son. From the stage of this theatre, 'The Alhambra', one of the last wooden theatres in England, both Bransby Williams and Sir Cedric Hardwicke—another local boy—made their stage debut.

Although he had made a number of brief appearances as a child in various forms of entertainment, he says his first professional engagement here was at the age of fifteen. For one shilling a night he stood guard as a soldier, hidden for the most part behind a wall, and standing on an empty beer case for added height, with only head and helmet showing over the top; the rest of the uniform was a trifle too large!

After trying various forms of employment later in life, he completed training for a stage career, but after a few weeks in the theatre was caught up in the advent of the 'talkies' which closed practically every 'live' theatre in the country.

After a year or two of disappointment he was lucky enough to catch the attention of Martyn C. Webster who had just been appointed Drama Producer at the B.B.C. Midland Studios, and who was gathering together a promising band of local artists, many of whom are now well-known names in the radio world.

Since 1935 Chris Gittins has been a regular performer in Midland Regional programmes, and apart from many types of character parts he has specialised in the Black Country dialect. In shows reflecting the Midland way of life, he has broadcast from practically all the B.B.C. studios whenever a Midland voice has been needed. Before taking over the part of Walter Gabriel he had played a number of the small characters that flit across the Ambridge scene. Although he has tried faithfully to follow the character created by his predecessor, the late Robert Mawdesley, he says his own impression of Walter is that of an old local poacher who was his mentor in country lore as a child.

Favourite diet—Broken glass and old razor blades, seasoned with rusty tin-tacks.

Favourite occupation—Sucking various brands of throat sweets after the week's recording.



# *John Tregorran*



*Photo : Logan*

*played by* BASIL JONES

# Basil Jones

**B**ASIL JONES was born in 1919 in Burry Port, Carmarthenshire, the second son of a Welsh Nonconformist minister.

After a visit to a circus at the age of four, he announced his intention of becoming a clown, but until he was fifteen he had never been to a 'live theatre'.

Educated at Caterham School, where he showed considerable aptitude for all those activities which were considered unlikely to earn him a living.

Like his brother Geraint—the well-known organist—he was regarded as a musical prodigy. As it was considered that he would find life 'precarious', he was instructed to find himself a safe job and he spent a number of unhappy years in insurance where, thanks to his usefulness to the Musical and Dramatic Society, he successfully avoided all technical examinations.

After a few months in the R.A.S.C. at the beginning of the war he was discharged as unfit and found himself in Cardiff. Here he was offered his first broadcast by the B.B.C.'s Welsh Region and introduced to Mr Emlyn Williams, who persuaded him to forsake insurance for the theatre. However, finding himself the possessor of considerable vocal dexterity he decided to concentrate on radio, and in October 1943 he was invited to join the B.B.C. Repertory Company.

During six years of 'learning the job' he appeared in practically every kind of radio programme from revue to reading the Welsh news, and on one occasion he played Lady Macbeth in an all-male cast.

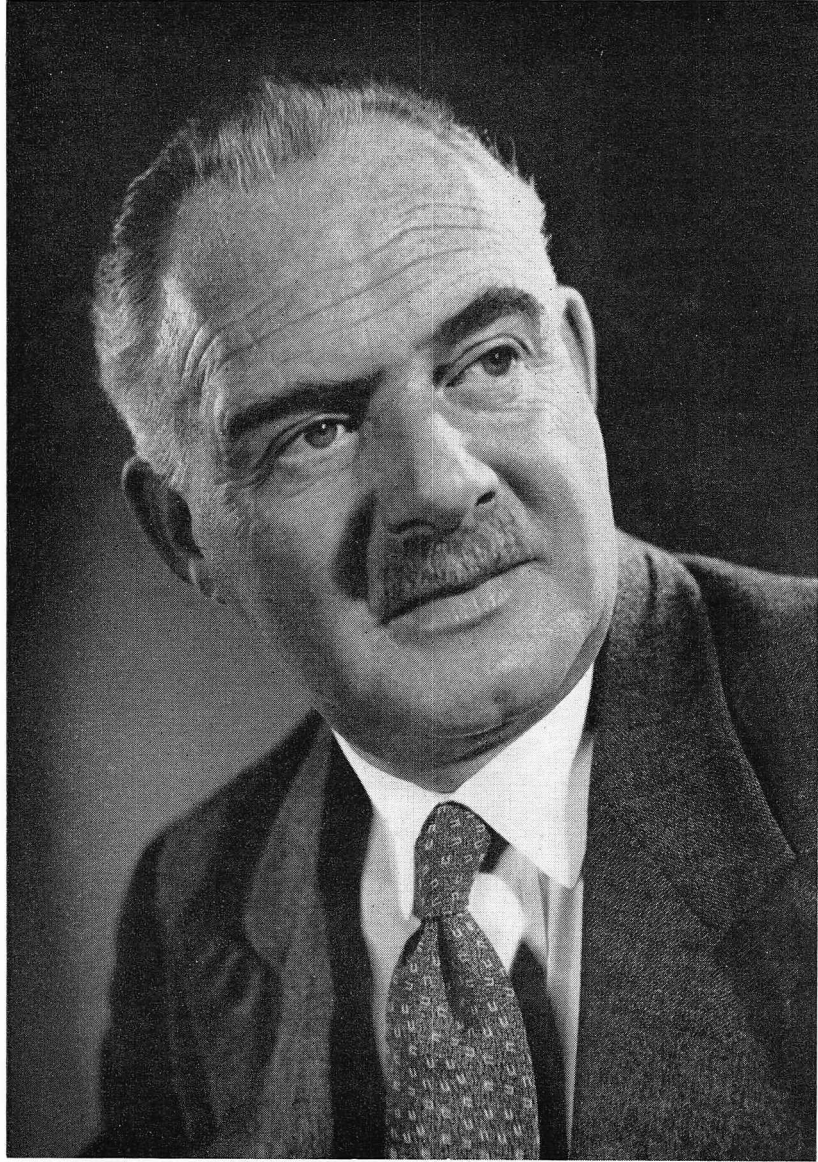
From well over two thousand broadcasts he remembers with particular pleasure playing Morgan Evans in *The Corn is Green* and Flight Lieutenant Graham in *Flarepath*—also reading Richard Llewellyn's *How Green was my Valley* and *Moulded in Earth*, by Richard Vaughan, for 'Woman's Hour' and 'Book at Bedtime'.

He has been seen on Television telling the Saturday night Story and listeners to Radio Luxembourg may remember him in *The Glyndale Star*.

In private life he is happily married, with three children, and lives in a Tudor cottage in Berkshire. His hobbies are gardening, collecting antiques and sampling wine.



# *Dan Archer*



*Photo : Logan*

*played by HARRY OAKES*



# Harry Oakes

HAVING been born on October 15th, 1896, still seems to Harry Oakes to be the most important thing that has ever happened to him. The scene surrounding and crowding his early memories was the bottle-shaped ovens and kilns of Burslem in the Potteries, with all the smoke and dirt which went with the manufacture of some of the loveliest pottery in the world.

He went to several schools in his early years; his mother was a school-mistress and had an urge for fresh woods and pastures new, so he naturally followed. As far as he can remember he wasn't much good at anything except perhaps the arts; he wanted to be a portrait painter but the family purse decided that he must become a pottery designer. It was an enjoyable occupation but poorly rewarded.

Then came the First World War. He served with the R.E. Signals in France, three and a half dim and dirty years, the headlights of which were good companionship, the excitement of new experiences and sheer horror. He was glad, in 1919, to get back to the peaceful haven of bottle-shaped ovens and the equally peaceful occupation of decorating countless thousands of plates, cups and saucers. It was here that he became interested in the theatre and took part in his first production, *Merrie England*. Having smelt grease-paint, his fate was sealed. He studied singing under the same excellent teacher as Marjorie Westbury and from 1919 and for the next thirty years played in many shows both musical and straight, largely in an amateur capacity.

His first broadcast was from Birmingham studio in 1938. It was a feature programme called *The Smug and Silver Trent*.

Soon after this came the Second World War, and he became a junior officer in a Production Ministry. After the war he took part in radio productions from Midland, Welsh and London Regions, mostly in character parts. In 1950 THE ARCHERS had a trial run in the Midland Home Service only and he was chosen for the part of Dan Archer. When the show graduated to the Light Programme he continued in the part and his voice is now known to millions.

He lives in a quiet suburb in Birmingham and is never happier than when he is fishing or tending the roses in his garden. Urged on by his wife, he occasionally decorates some pottery 'for the sheer fun of it.'



# *Philip Archer*



*Photo : Logan*

*played by* NORMAN PAINTING

# Norman Painting

**N**ORMAN PAINTING came into broadcasting from the University. At Birmingham he acted in, and produced, a number of undergraduate shows during his four years there. Graduating with First Class Honours in English Language and Literature, together with two prizes, one for Literature and one for Archæology, he went up to Christ Church, Oxford on a research scholarship. At Oxford he not only did research in early nineteenth-century poetic drama, but also acted as tutor in Anglo-Saxon for Exeter College. He also indulged his interest in Archæology, holding several offices in the Oxford University Archæological Society, becoming its President. He also swam for his college, but was mainly occupied in acting for the O.U.D.S. and, among other things, in producing Jean Cocteau's *The Infernal Machine* for the University Experimental Theatre Club.

By this time he had done a number of broadcasts and written several successful scripts (and many unsuccessful ones!) and early in 1949, whilst still at Oxford, he was offered a contract as B.B.C. Staff Scriptwriter—which he accepted. He later worked for some time in Recorded Programmes and has read poetry, given news-talks and reports in 'Radio Newsreel' as well as acting in features, drama, revue and 'Children's Hour'. He has been heard in several Third Programme productions.

As a writer he is known for his series of 'Children's Hour' plays, *Stories of the Saints*, but a number of his features and plays have been broadcast in recent years, including full-length plays and a 'Children's Hour' adventure serial about the Seven Wonders of the World. In fact, during his nine years of broadcasting, he has successfully turned his hand to most departments.

He is one of the liveliest (and noisiest) members of the cast, equally likely to burst into laughter or to begin singing. He is fond of music but rarely has time to attend concerts, so he contents himself with playing records or listening to the radio in his cottage in Warwickshire. One of the few things he has in common with Phil Archer is his addiction to playing the piano. He also sings to his own accompaniment but confesses that, although his nearest neighbour lives some distance away, he always closes the window beforehand!



# *Simon*



*Photo : Logan*

*played by* EDDIE ROBINSON

# Eddie Robinson

**E**DDIE ROBINSON, who plays the part of Simon, Dan Archer's old farm-hand, was born in Wednesbury, Staffordshire, and first 'trod the boards' at the age of fourteen years, when he entered, and won an amateur competition at the old Tivoli Theatre, Blackpool.

During army service in the First World War, he joined a well-known concert party, 'The Cyclones', which was formed from a brigade then stationed in Ireland, and in addition to entertaining the troops, played in several of Dublin's famous theatres.

His first broadcast, which was from the Birmingham studios of the B.B.C., was as a Lancashire dialect entertainer, and for many years he was heard 'on the air' from London, Belfast, Manchester and Birmingham, being known as 'The Lad fra' Lancashire'.

He is an original member of THE ARCHERS cast, and his many appearances on radio include the serial programmes, *Famous Regiments*, *My Brother Jonathan*, *The Lady craved Excitement*, and *The World of Movement*, together with many 'Children's Hour' broadcasts. He has also appeared on television from Alexandra Palace. His stage experience, in addition to his appearances on the variety stage as a single comedy act, include many humorous roles in musical comedy, and his hobby of studying dialects has stood him in good stead in creating the part of Simon, whose dialect had been described as 'containing a little of them all'.

Eddie was, for many years, a permanent civil servant, but resigned in order to devote his full time to radio acting.

He is a keen collector of coins, and has a large collection of British ones, in which he specialises.

Another of his spare time recreations is that of watching good Association Football, and he rarely misses a home match of his favourite team, Wolverhampton Wanderers.

Eddie is thought to be the oldest member of the cast, but will only admit to having been born at a very early age.



# *Peggy Archer*



*Photo: Logan*

# Thelma Rogers

**T**HELMA ROGERS first decided to go on the stage at the age of ten, when she was taken to see a repertory production of Noël Coward's *I'll Leave it to You* at the Coventry Opera House, now regrettably, since the blitz, turned into a cinema. The play was performed by the Coventry Repertory Company under the direction of Geoffrey Staines, remembered with affection by all playgoers in the city who made the Rep a habit. Certainly it became a habit with Thelma, who from then on hurried over Thursday's homework in order to be in good time to queue for the shilling stalls! Sometimes mother and father announced that the play was unsuitable for children, and then there were tears!

Several years later came the war. The logarithms and the French irregular verbs were now being studied by candlelight in an air-raided shelter, and dreams of a stage career had temporarily to be shelved. Eventually, however, after two years spent at Cambridge studying to be a schoolteacher and a little teaching experience, came the opportunity that comes to everyone once in a lifetime, whether he recognises and accepts it or not. In this case it was accepted wholeheartedly. Thelma studied dramatic art for a year and then joined the Leicester Repertory Company with which she spent a most happy four years, playing that variety of parts which makes repertory such an invaluable training ground for the young artist. Her favourite parts were Catherine Sloper in *The Heiress*, Francesca Cunningham in *The Seventh Veil* and Kathy in *Goodbye, Mr Chips*. She left Leicester, a city which took her to its heart and for which she has a tremendous admiration and affection, to play Elsie Catcher in *THE ARCHERS*. She was chosen to play the part of Peggy Archer when a vacancy arose in the cast and has now been playing the part for two years.

She is an 'incorrigible bookworm' and likes most the plays of Shakespeare and Shaw, the novels of Jane Austen and Virginia Woolf, and the poetry of the Elizabethan and Cavalier poets. The part she would most like to play on the stage is Nina in *The Seagull*, by Anton Tchekhov.

One of her proud possessions is a pedigree budgerigar named Hamlet presented to her by the Worcester Cage Bird Society last summer.



# *Christine Archer*



*Photo : Northgate Studio*

*played by* LESLEY SAWEARD



# Lesley Saweard

LESLEY SAWEARD was born on August 13th, 1934, in Grimsby, Lincolnshire.

During a very happy childhood, she attended St. Martin's Preparatory School in Grimsby. From this time she developed a great love of acting, and took many parts in school plays, including *The Mad Hatter* in *Alice in Wonderland*, and Grimes in *The Water Babies*.

At a very early age Lesley showed a passion for horses. This love, however, did not overcome a fear of riding. When she was presented with a pony of her own to feed and exercise, she soon began to enjoy her riding as she began to know her pony better. After a short time she could do anything she liked with her pony Tessa.

When Lesley was twelve years of age her family moved to the delightful market town of Louth, about fifteen miles from her birthplace. Here she continued her education at Fir Close School, Louth, but she still kept up her studies in dramatic art with her childhood teacher, Miss Lucy Mackrill. During her schooldays she took exams with the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music (and Drama) which she passed successfully. Recently she took the highest examination and passed. With one other, she gained the highest marks in the British Isles. This makes her a Gold Medallist.

At the end of her schooling she began teaching at her old school. At this time she joined the Louth Playgoers and appeared in several amateur productions.

One Whit weekend she met Denis Folwell, at a fête he was opening at Louth. He remarked then how closely her voice resembled that of Pamela Mant, his radio sister of that time. Lesley forgot but Denis did not, for sometime later, a letter arrived inviting Lesley to the auditions for the vacant part of Christine Archer. Out of twenty she was given the part and took over from Pamela Mant in November 1953—her first professional part.



# *Mrs. Perkins*



*Photo: Sproston*

*played by* **PAULINE SEVILLE**

# Pauline Seville

**I**N spite of the modern trend towards turning out everything and everybody from the same mould, it remains true that the well-trained apprentice is the one who will eventually achieve success.

Pauline Seville is an example of what years of training and endeavour can do. At an early age she took an interest in elocution and during her years at school was more than once successful in speech competitions.

Having a desire to go on the stage she won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London and after two years' training there, was awarded her diploma and the Arthur Talbot-Smith prize for proficiency in all subjects.

In spite of this excellent result, fame was a long way off, and now started years of hard work in repertory—with the Manchester Repertory Company and then the Drama Section of E.N.S.A., entertaining the troops in this country, Ireland and finally in Germany. Here she joined the 49th (W.R.) Infantry Division Rep. formed by actors in the services, to tour round the whole division with plays. From there to Newcastle Rep. and then to London in *Saloon Bar* and in the Irish play, *Ill met by Moonlight*, for Linnit and Dunfee.

Like so many in the profession, Pauline always thought she could play better if she kept away from the character parts she was usually cast for, and yet from the manner in which she has created that dour, but very likeable, Mrs Perkins, she has proved that character acting is her forte. So after ten years of hard work and training she has achieved success as a radio personality, and is reaping the reward which only comes to those who learn their job the hard way.

Pauline was married two years ago. Her husband is not an actor but a company director. Her hobbies?—'Well, since I got married, home decorating . . . but needlework and dressmaking are close seconds.'

Her pet hate—Ill-mannered people.

Something she will always remember—Being presented to the Queen Mother.

Her favourite part—Mabel Crum in *While the Sun Shines*.



# *Producer*



*Photo : Logan*

TONY SHRYANE

# Tony Shryane

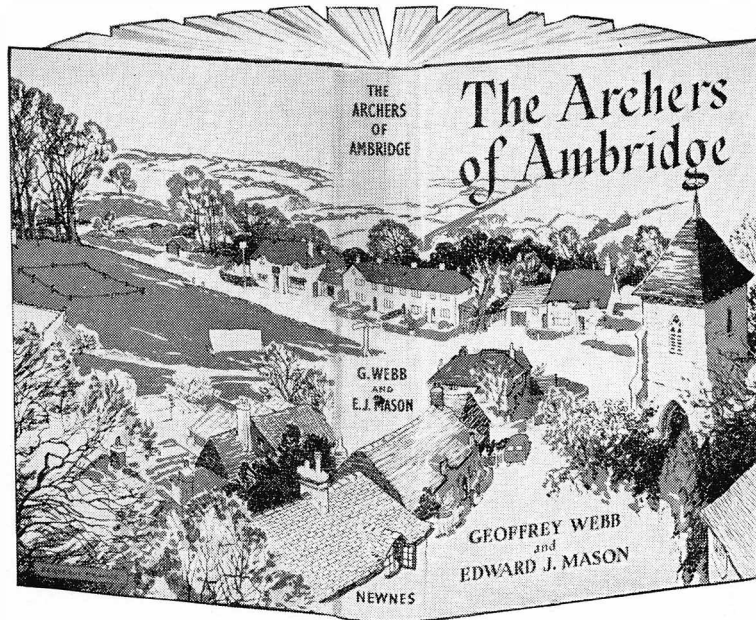
**B**ORN in Birmingham, January 20th, 1919. Married, with one son, aged six years.

Joined staff of the B.B.C. as studio manager in 1936. Worked mainly on drama and feature programmes in Birmingham and London; gained considerable experience on fifteen-minute serial programmes from working as studio manager for 'The Robinson Family', the early stages of 'Mrs Dale's Diary', and 'Dick Barton'. Became producer of *THE ARCHERS* in 1951, and since then has produced over one thousand episodes which have been heard by millions of listeners in Great Britain. He is also responsible for the production of a thirty-minute version of *THE ARCHERS* which is heard overseas in such countries as Australia, Canada, U.S.A., Japan, India, Italy, Greece, Africa, Egypt. He is a great believer in everyone connected with the programme working as a team, and considers this team spirit is one of the reasons for *THE ARCHERS* success. Shryane insists that the sound effects used in the programme are authentic and since the programme first began has supervised the making of over six hundred special effects recordings, visiting such places as children's hospitals, tractor schools, village churches, Women's Institute meetings, railway stations, skittle alleys, riding schools, and the Harper Adams Agricultural College in Shropshire (where all the farm animal noises are recorded). On one occasion when Mr and Mrs Fairbrother were married, he arranged for the entire cast to be taken to a village church in Worcestershire where the complete marriage ceremony was recorded.

Apart from *THE ARCHERS*, Tony Shryane has produced a number of plays from the B.B.C. Midland studios, and has devised and produced a new crime quiz called 'Guilty Party'; twelve of these programmes have already been broadcast in the Home Service of the B.B.C.



AND NOW A BOOK . . .

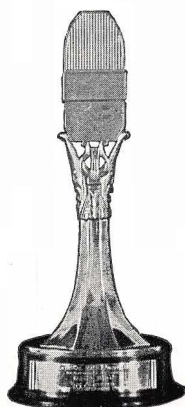


Fame has come to the Archers in many ways, but surely one of the most subtle compliments to this great B.B.C. Serial and the men and women who play in it, was the publication in the early summer of 1954 of the book about them—THE ARCHERS OF AMBRIDGE. It was written by the writers of the script—especially for book publication. The 'novel' puts the Archer characters into permanent form so that lovers of the programme can have the story on their bookshelves to dip into whenever they want. The book was an immediate success—reprinted twice in little over three months—and is still selling briskly, perhaps not least, because it is a perfect present to give an Archer's listener-fan for a birthday, at Christmas, or indeed on any other gift occasion. If they listen regularly they'll love the book!

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