



**MR HAROLD SALMON INTERVIEWED
BY LESLEY JACKSON, 27 FEBRUARY 1984**

Mr. Salmon, you've been involved with C.E.M.A. for a long time?

Yes. I was involved in C.E.M.A. from 1946 until, oh, some, perhaps ten years ago. My first actions with C.E.M.A. were the Drama Group and later with the Music Group. I can remember Mrs. Elsa McLeod came to me in 1946 and she persuaded me[...] to take an active part in the Drama Group. We have a programme that is dated August the 20th, 1946; a programme of a concert of music and drama that was held in the Free Library Hall and it lists, among other items, a play, and my name is there, so that's how I know. I can't really remember the details, but they are here and it's quite interesting. There was an orchestra, C.E.M.A. had an orchestra in those days. I read in the programme that the conductor was John Harris, who I believe was the first President. The pianist was E.Hogan and the choir conductress was also E.Hogan. The pianist (accompanying the choir) in this case was Nancy Edwards.

Had you had any experience acting before this?

No, no, I was interested in drama, of course, in school activities, but...Mrs. McLeod seemed to think that I would enjoy myself and she proved this was quite right. I did enjoy my activities with the Drama (Group) and we had some very happy occasions.

You were just back from the air force?

That's right. Yes, that [...] I was demobilized in April in '46 and this programme, of course being August, I[...] was roped in at a very early stage in my civilian life.

**Were there many people like yourself in the same position, straight out of...
Back from the war?**

Yes, I would think so. Names that I recall are Bob Stuchbery, who would have been in a similar situation, Don Crowther...That's all for the moment, I think.

You used to take part in the readings on Sunday evenings that people have told me about.

Yes. We used to look forward to the Sunday night play-readings, 'cos they would generally start, oh, probably at eight o'clock, I think because some of us were involved in evening church services. A number of used to be associated with church choir, so it would have been a practice to commence, the night of the play reading, after the church service. I think probably there would have been as many as fifteen, perhaps even as many as twenty people would meet with the Moodys. They had a large drawing room in the Naylor buildings, which are on the corner of Henty and Percy Street. The girls would take, perhaps, a plate of cakes. The Moodys would always supply the drinks and we'd have play readings which would last, perhaps, until half- past ten or eleven o'clock. We may read two or three different sketches, or we might read a three-act play. These readings would continue for several weeks until a suitable play was decided on and the producers would either decide, or it could be, perhaps by popular choice. Mrs. Elsa McLeod was frequently assisting Mrs. Moody- they were joint producers in those days. They would decide a play and then, of course, there would be rehearsals would take place during the week, when



**MR HAROLD SALMON INTERVIEWED
BY LESLEY JACKSON, 27 FEBRUARY 1984**

the casting was undertaken. Various members then would have their copies of the play and rehearsals would start-n private rehearsals to start with, in the form of readings. I'd be occupied for, perhaps, two or three weeks by four to [...] six weeks before the play would be ready for public viewing.

Did you rehearse these at private homes?

Yes, private homes, where two or three were involved, but then the group rehearsals would take place, generally, in the Moody's flat. The public hall where the play was to be produced could only be used perhaps in the last week or rehearsals. And, of course, you would have your final full-dress rehearsal, which always seem to occur on a Sunday night, because the Saturday and Sunday would be used for prop building and stage dressing. Sunday night was then the final dress rehearsal with make-up- the works. Plays would run for, perhaps, tow night, sometimes three nights. The Library Hall always was full on the last night, perhaps not so well on the first night, but there'd be, perhaps, up to three-quarters of the house on the first night of a three night run. They were quite exciting days.

We are talking about the late 1940s now...

That's right

So the Moodys left Portland in, you think, 1949?

Yes, we think '49. After that I think plays...Play reading in Doris Hollamby's flat, which was on the top floor of a stone building in Julia Street, which was owned by Elsie Sharp. I think Mr. Eichler, at the present moment, now owns that building. (70 *Julia St*)

And Mrs. Salmon was also involved in the Drama Group. She joined when?

Yes, I think my wife, Marjory, Joined in...Late in the '40s. We were in plays together and later our interests were shared with both the Music Group and Drama Group. We were both keen on the musical side, both sang. We were associated with the choir under Eve Hogan. We used to rehearse at Rita Naismith's and also at Miss Hogan's home. Rita Naismith's, of course, her home was on the corner of Hurd ad Julia. The choir was quite strong. We had, perhaps, fifteen or twenty members. They were general rehearsed during the week. The accompanist was, in those days, always Nance Edwards, who is now Nance Malseed.

Would you like to tell me a bit about... You were telling me before about carol service in Casterton. Can you remember that?

Yes. The choir was invited to contribute to a carol festival that was held in Casterton. The choir journeyed to Casterton. I remember we performed in an arena on the back of a bullock dray. I remember the arena was floodlit and there were a lot of amusing incidents, getting everyone squeezed into this bullock dray. After the show we returned to a doctor's home for supper. I think the doctor's name was...Doctor Millikan. He was a relative on Mrs. Lin Ward, I think.



**MR HAROLD SALMON INTERVIEWED
BY LESLEY JACKSON, 27 FEBRUARY 1984**

And I believe that's how you happened to go to Casterton, or be invited there.

Yes, through the connection. But, of course, there was always great enjoyment with that...With our activities with the choir, because it was the custom to sing...Have boisterous choruses, in particular I remember the annual chorus. There was *Land of Hope and Glory*, and *Come to the Fair*. All required much, much noise and plenty of vigor. In particular the *Anvil Chorus*. At one stage there was a rest and we were required to come in with "Ho there, the hammer." Frequently of course, the hammer was thrown in at the wrong time. Many of our members were not readers of music and we had to rely on the beat of the conductress. If we didn't pay particular attention to our beat; we came in at the wrong time.