

The show that time forgot
Presented by Mike Wallbank
Tune Into The Show the Time Forgot on Tameside Radio 103.6FM every Sunday at 1pm.
Spotlighting 1978

Pop honours for Matchstalk Men

A coveted music industry award was the icing on the cake for 'Matchstalk Men' duo Brian and Michael.

After three weeks as the nation's top of the pops with sales of more than 500,000, the sing-along tribute to the late artist LS Lowry had already earned them a gold disc.

Back in Tameside for a homecoming show following a frantic round of TV appearances and interviews, the pair proudly celebrated their latest accolade after receiving the Ivor Novello statuette for the year's best lyric.

For Woodley man Mick Coleman (Michael) who had originally written the words of Matchstalk Men and Matchstalk Cats and Dogs as a poem, success was even sweeter when it narrowly pipped song-writing giants Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Evita* to win the title.

Kevin Parrott, originally from Dukinfield who now lived in Tintwistle, had stepped into the spotlight as 'Brian' after Brian Burke, Mick's long-time 'Burke



COMING HOME: Mick and Kevin outside The Elms, the former home of LS Lowry on Stalybridge Road, Mottram.

and Jerk' music and comedy partner decided to quit for family reasons.

The previous year Kevin had been quick to recognise the song's hit potential and 'put almost every penny' he had into producing the recording at Stockport's Pluto Studios.

He recruited Tintwistle Brass Band and members of St Win-

ifred's School Choir, Heaton Mersey.

The single was a 'slow burner' taking several months to break through into the Top 10 before finally claiming the No1 spot.

By then Brian had settled into a much less hectic lifestyle, living in Hattersley and working as an ice cream seller.

Making the final line-up in competition

Fewer than 70 people turned up for the Miss Tameside contest selection heat and disco at Hyde Town Hall.

Fortunately, there was no shortage of entries with 24 contenders chasing the nine remaining places in the final due to take place at the Concord Suite, Droylsden in September. Former Miss Great Britain Sue Cuffe and her husband, BBC North West Tonight presenter David Davies, would be among the judges.



FINALISTS: Going through from the Hyde Town Hall heat above, were, back row: Julia Stenton (Hyde), Karen Harrison (Godley), Susan Kirby (Mottram), Vicky Cooper (Mottram). Front: Anita Green (Stalybridge), Gaynor Foster (Audenshaw), Ashley Barrowcliffe (Hyde), Sylvia Allen (Denton) and Anne Fletcher (Gee Cross).

Lights, cameras, action...

When Stalybridge cinema-goers eventually settled down to watch 'Yanks', many would be reminded of the rather chilly April morning in 1978 when it seemed as though the entire town was about to embark on an exciting big screen adventure.

Respected film director John Schlesinger arrived with an army of contractors, production crew and 'extras', turning the town hall into a canteen, banishing modern lamp standards, street signs and anything else that stood out like the proverbial sore thumb in the 1940s' setting.

Locals would also recall the fleet of dark green US Army vehicles on the streets where orange and white GMT buses usually ruled supreme. The cameras were whirring as the military convoy made its way along Trinity Street.

Sandbags had been positioned outside

the town's head post office. A static water tank was sited near the bus station and a property store became a casualty station.

Among the extras appearing as servicemen was Stalybridge Drama Group stalwart Tony Stallard, 28, of Moorgate Drive, Carrbrook. Town hall attendant Alf Entwistle became an air raid patrol warden, complete with tin helmet and gas mask case, while Roy Hutchcroft, 48, of Huddersfield Road played the first English policeman encountered by the Yanks.

LEFT: "You are safe here": Alf Entwistle, as an air raid patrol warden in Yanks doing his best to reassure two-and-a-half year-old Alison Harten of Thirlmere Close, Ridge Hill. The 'warden's post' was sited in a corner of Market Street.

From our news files...

■ After years of neglect, the century-old Clarence Arcade, Ashton, was about to spring back into life as a traffic-free shopping haven with 'a dash of old world charm'. New Mayor of Tameside, Cllr Peter Greenhough, officially reopened the arcade, off Stamford Street, following an extensive facelift.

■ A former army camp at Littlemoss would be cleared as part of the regeneration of the Hollinwood branch canal and surrounding area. Dredging the partly filled-in canal was linked to a wider plan for a country park at Daisy Nook with tree planting, new footpaths and bridleways.

■ Stalybridge Congregational Church was facing an uncertain future. Dry rot was rife in the prominent town centre building which leaders said would cost 'many thousands of pounds to put right'. The Sunday school next door could potentially become a dual purpose centre for worship and social activities.

■ The statue of 19th century mill owner, social reformer and MP Hugh Mason, which stood outside Ashton Old Baths, was likely to be moved as part of a major redesign of Henry Square. The baths, which had closed three years earlier, would be preserved providing two floors of office space.

■ A merger of two Mossley schools St John's CE and Milton County Primary was given the green light following a heated debate by Tameside education committee. The 'new' school in the Milton buildings, with agreement from the church authorities, would open in September as Milton St John's Primary.

■ An 11-mile stretch of motorway linking Tameside to the national network would cost £57m with work due to start in three to five years. Running from Denton to Middleton, the 'missing link' in the Manchester outer ring road would slice across Ashton Moss. The exact route would be decided after a public consultation.

■ Ballroom belles, led by Irene Molloy of Fields Farm Road, Hattersley, were fighting plans to turn Belle Vue's famous Elizabethan ballroom into a sports and leisure complex. Avid dancer Irene, a regular visitor to Belle Vue for more than 40 years, had sent a petition of nearly 3,000 names to Trust House Forte, the company behind the venture. The ballroom was renowned as the biggest in the north, but bosses said in recent years it had rarely come close to reaching its 1,500 capacity. Irene insisted it was becoming more popular. "Sometimes you can't move in there," she said.

■ With the strains of a police band playing familiar railway tunes, Tameside's outgoing Mayor, Cllr Percy Travis, officially opened the new £400,000 Hattersley station. It meant residents on the estate could catch a peak hour train to Manchester every 15 minutes. Leaflets dropping through letterboxes included a voucher to make their first journey to Piccadilly for 1p.

■ One of Tameside's most historic churches was under attack from vandals and thieves. Old Hall Chapel, near Globe Square, Dukinfield, which had its origins in the 15th Century, was looking derelict after lead was stripped from the roof, copper pipes taken from the organ and seats broken. Intruders also stole the christening font and communion table.



CONFIDENT: William Mossford.

Flying into leading role

It was first time on stage and straight into a demanding lead role for 13-year-old William Mossford, of Meadow Close, Hey Farm Estate, Mossley.

Playing Billy Casper, the boy with the kestrel in Kes, Mossley Hollins High School's latest production would be a challenge for any young actor, but William appeared to be taking it all in his stride.

Having put in an hour's practice every night for a month, he was confident he would not forget any of his lines. Nor was he fazed by the prospect of being on stage for almost the entire play in front of an audience of 100.

"Perhaps the most difficult parts are Billy's moods. The scene where he finds his pet has died means I have to cry and change the mood completely."

