

THE BOB HOPE THEATRE ELTHAM



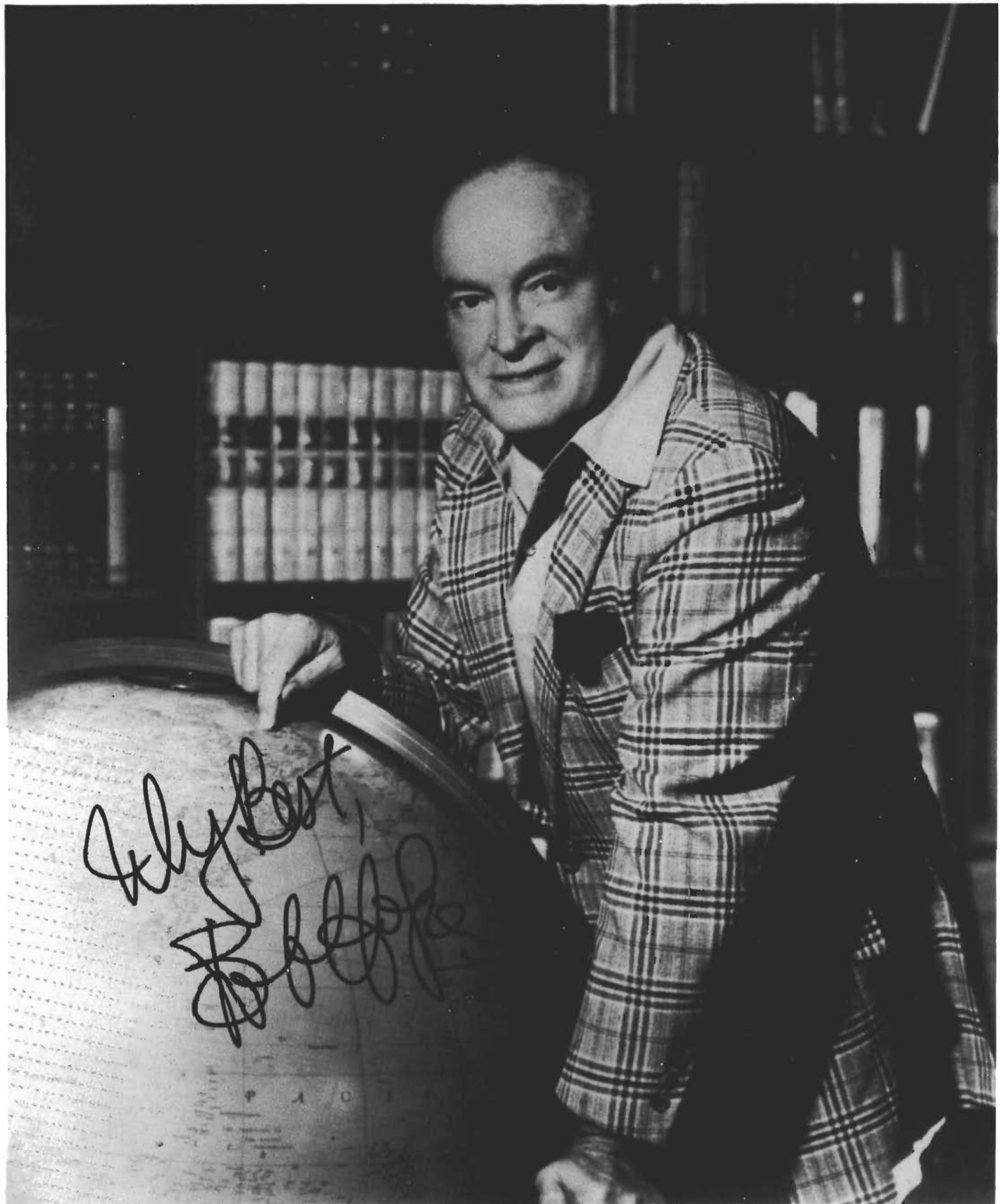
PRESENTS

*An evening with
Dickie Henderson*

Featuring the Pat Dodd Trio
Pat Dodd ★ Terry Fitzgerald ★ Tony Smith

Friday 17 September, 1982

Souvenir Programme
£1.00



BOB HOPE

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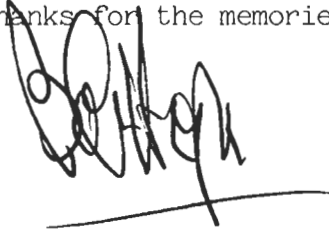
September, 1982.

Hi,

To all my friends in Eltham which, as you know by now, was my birthplace, and to some of my relatives who are always so happy to see me but just as happy getting it by mail. I left England when I was 4 when I knew I couldn't make King. But it always keeps tugging at my sleeve.

Wishing you a successful evening and look forward to seeing you at the official opening and the Golf Classic.

Thanks for the memories.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Hope', with a horizontal line underneath it.



DICKIE HENDERSON

DICKIE HENDERSON

An entertainer of international status, Dickie actually began his career as a 10 year-old film star, and not surprisingly he came from a showbiz orientated family. In fact his father, the late Dick Henderson, was one of the all-time music hall 'greats', who was still turning cartwheels as the age of 70!

Young Dickie was in America with his father when he landed his film part in Noel Coward's 'Cavalcade'. It was a lavish Hollywood production, but he's still waiting to make his comeback! 'It was a daunting experience at the time,' he says, "and I had no aspirations to become a movie star—it was just a giggle. The stage was the big attraction. I watched my father working and he gave me encouragement and advice. I'll never forget him saying: 'Show business is 90 per cent luck and 10 per cent talent. But don't bother trying if you haven't got that 10 per cent talent'. And it goes without saying that Dickie has the talent. He began in music halls when he returned to England and had to wait until he was 28 before he first trod the boards of the famous London Palladium. However, he's now made that theatre almost a second home with variety appearances and his inclusion in seven Royal Variety Shows.

Dickie's first big West End hit was in the musical 'Wish You Were Here', and was quickly followed by 'Teahouse of the August Moon'. He played Sakini, the Okinawan interpreter, his favourite role to date. Dickie's first appearance on television was in 1953 in Henry Hall's programme 'Face The Music'. And since those days television has become one of his most successful medias, for not only has he served a stint as compere on 'Sunday Night At The London Palladium', but he developed a popular domestic-comedy format in 'The Dickie Henderson Show'. He did 120 shows in 12 years before it finally ended its run.

In recent years, his work schedule has included summer season, pantomines, TV series, cabaret and the occasional straight play. His overseas engagements include over 50 visits to the U.S., to star in such TV highspots as 'The Jack Parr Show' (26 times) and the 'Ed Sullivan Show'; he also appeared in cabaret in America, Canada, Africa, Hong Kong, Australia and television in Holland.

Dickie enjoys life to the full. He is a golf fanatic and usually manages a game every single day—no matter what weather conditions may be. In fact, Dickie's golf career spans some 30 years and as with show business he devotes a great deal of time to perfecting his game. With the result that he now has a handicap of only 8 and has played with some of the world's top professionals. Dickie's regular golfing partner, however, is his wife, who shares his love for the game. He also enjoys an occasional game with other showbiz golfers, including Max Bygraves, Jimmy Tarbuck and Harry Secombe.

Dickie Henderson's other time-absorbing occupation is charity work. His main concern is for handicapped children, and he is a former chairman of the Stars' Organisation for Spastic Children (S.O.S.) He has been known to travel several thousand miles in the cause of charity. And he was awarded the O.B.E. in Her Majesty The Queen's Silver Jubilee honours list of 1977 for his services to charity.

THE BACKGROUND TO TONIGHT'S EVENT

On the 16th November 1977 the Board of Management of Eltham Little Theatre was advised that the Parochial Church Council of St. John the Baptist, Eltham, had taken the unanimous decision to dispose of the site and building in Wythfield Road on an annual licence.

The theatre's activities would have to cease by July 1978, and it was suggested that the theatre's membership might wish to purchase the property for an undisclosed figure. The letter was accompanied by a copy of a press release informing E.L.T. of the 'reasons for this serious decision'.

The next edition of the Eltham Times carried banner headlines—'Dry Rot Means Theatre Crisis'—with an article that explained the decision and some of its ramifications.

The news of the imminent closure hit Eltham with all the impact of a bag of feathers. There were a few letters to the Editor; the comment became heated for a moment; but there was no public outcry at the prospect of the loss.

Meanwhile the officers of Eltham Little Theatre was trying to salvage something from the resounding silence of its patrons and the inevitable decline in morale amongst its members.

Over the following two years, various avenues were explored, involving the London Borough of Greenwich and other commercial interests; but while hopes were often temporarily raised, they were always dashed for one reason or another.

This state of affairs led the theatre's officers to issue a press release in February 1979, which ended: "Barring a miracle, Eltham Little Theatre will close its doors at Wythfield Road for the last time at the end of its current season. Unless its members can find a new home where it can continue in its existing style, the only publicly licenced amateur theatre in London will die, and the Borough and South Metropolitan area will lose one of its most precious assets'.

Because of difficulties the Parochial Church Council encountered in attracting a suitable buyer, the theatre was granted a monthly licence to keep it going into 1980, which was when the 'miracle' happened.

Bob Hope was launching an annual golf tournament in this country, along the lines of the Bob Hope Desert Classic held each year in Palm Springs. This was to be a pro/am golf tournament intended to raise funds for charity. The Desert Classic has raised approximately \$10 million since 1964, primarily for the benefit of the Eisenhower Memorial Hospital in Palm Springs.

Many people will know that Bob Hope was born in Craigton Road, Eltham in 1903. His family emigrated to America when he was four years old—since then, of course, his career has become familiar to just about everyone and made him one of the select few who can justifiably be referred to as a 'superstar'.

Bob Hope decided he would like to re-visit his birthplace, and suggested that part of the funds raised by the golf tournament should go towards establishing a Bob Hope Theatre of Arts in Eltham.

His representatives in this country contacted the Borough of Greenwich, who suggested that Eltham Little Theatre might be a suitable site for this project.

Bob Hope subsequently visited the theatre in September 1980 when, amid wide publicity, he announced his desire to get the project off the ground.

Since then, the Bob Hope British Golf Classic has raised £58,500 for the direct benefit of Eltham Little Theatre, and it is hoped that further funds will come from this year's tournament, which is to be held at Moor Park, Rickmansworth, between 23rd and 26th September. In addition, Bob has allowed the theatre to adopt the name 'The Bob Hope Theatre, Eltham'—and he is due to visit the theatre again on 24th September, when he will unveil this name and accept an Honourary Co-Presidency (along with ex-President of the U.S.A., Gerald R. Ford).

The project is certainly off the ground....

As soon as it was known that this event was to take place, Dickie Henderson came forward and generously offered to present his one-man show for the direct benefit of the theatre—at a time when he is already heavily involved in the final preparations for the golf tournament.

It was suggested that he might prefer to stage it in a more 'suitable' theatre such as the Churchill or the Arndale Centre, but Dickie insisted on its being presented in the building which it was to benefit. We are very grateful to him for the assistance and advice he has given us in our preparation for the show.

It is intended that over the coming months further charity shows will be presented for the benefit of the theatre, involving other leading international artistes who have either been associated with Bob Hope or just want to make their own contribution to the establishment of permanent theatre in his birthplace.

There is no reason why, with the support and assistance of the people of Eltham and professional entertainers, The Bob Hope Theatre should not become a showpiece amateur theatre—a theatre which can provide a local source of first-class entertainment as well as a training ground for the young amateurs of South-East London who aspire to bigger and better things.



THE BOB HOPE THEATRE
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The Box Office on 01-850 3702 for an appointment.



BECOME A SPONSOR!

In the near future, The Bob Hope Theatre will be rebuilding and re-equipping. This is your opportunity to become part of the theatre—literally, for your name can be permanently enshrined!

For a mere £5 you can buy a brick decorated with your name. For £100 you can sponsor a seat in the auditorium—and have your name on a plaque on its back. Permanent evidence of your interest in the performing arts in Eltham. . .

If you'd like to become part of this sponsorship scheme, please write to The Secretary, The Bob Hope Theatre, Wythfield Road, London SE9 5TG.

