

Press clippings - Bob Hope Visit - September 1982



In September 1980 Bob Hope first revisited his birthplace, Eltham, and he suggested then that part of the funds raised by the Bob Hope British Golf Classic Tournament should go towards a Bob Hope Theatre of Arts in Eltham. The Eltham Little Theatre was an ideal place and situation for this project. Since 1980 The Bob Hope British Golf Classic has raised £58,500 for the direct benefit of the Eltham Little Theatre, with more to come from this year's tournament of course!

Bob Hope visited Eltham again last Friday, 24th September for the unveiling ceremony of the theatre now to be known as 'The Bob Hope Theatre, Eltham'.

Our Bob makes it a great day of hope for theatre



● Hope in person and in effigy. Photo: Rob Hope

WISECRACKING comedian Bob Hope came home to Eltham last week to open officially a theatre named after him.

The veteran star of scores of comedy classics joked his way through the ceremony at the theatre in Wythfield Road.

Bob was born 79 years ago about half a mile away in Craighton Road.

His family left for America when he was four years old.

Last Friday scores of well-wishers cheered Bob as he unveiled a nameplate over the theatre door and a commemorative plaque inside.

More than £58,000 from the Bob Hope pro-am golf tournament was donated to the former Eltham Little Theatre to refurbish the building.

The theatre was to close in 1978 when the land it is on was to be sold.

The comedian suggested several years ago a theatre should be built in his home town to help develop local talent.

When he visited the Eltham

Little Theatre in 1980 he announced his desire to get the project started.

Last week he told a packed theatre why the idea meant so much to him.

"I know the theatre was to be torn down but now the young people will have a chance to act."

"I just hope this theatre brings a lot of happiness and satisfaction to a lot of young people."

Bob also signed a watercolour portrait of him painted by the theatre's eldest acting member, Llew-Hodges, 76, of Sidcup Road, New Eltham.

The picture will be hung in the theatre.

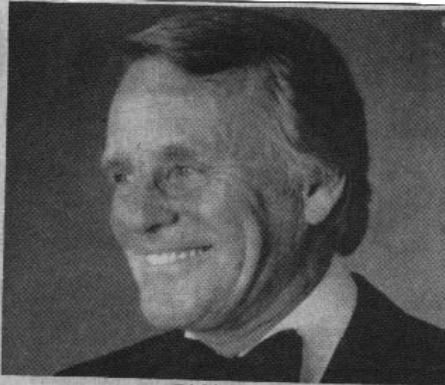
Bob was also presented with a certificate of life membership to the theatre and given the title of honorary co-president with former American president Gerald Ford.

Mr Ford plans to visit the theatre at a later date.

Bob Hope was met by the Mayor of Greenwich Ann Stroud, and the Pearly King and Queen of Woolwich, Arthur and Emily Hayes.

KT 19.8.82

Bob and Dickie on the road to Eltham



Dickie Henderson

BOB Hope will be back on the road to Eltham next month and "Kentish Times" readers are being offered an exclusive chance to join in with his home-town visit.

The veteran comedian, who was born in Craighton Road in 1903, will be arriving on September 21 to christen the new Bob Hope Theatre, formerly Eltham Little Theatre, in Wythfield Road.

He has generously donated £58,500 from the proceeds of two of his classic golf tournaments to turn the theatre into a living and working monument.

The cash raised so far should be enough for the ELT Club to buy the land and building from the present owners, the Church Commissioners, and to make a start on refurbishment.

But more money could come from this year's golf tournament to be staged at Moor Park, Rickmansworth, from September 23-26.

On September 17 Dickie Henderson will be presenting his one-man show at the theatre to an expected star-studded audience. Proceeds will go to the theatre.

"Kentish Times" readers who apply for the 25 tickets for the Dickie Henderson show can also apply for a free ticket for the Bob Hope appearance on a strictly one-for-one, first-come-first-served basis.

Bob Hope will perform the name plaque unveiling ceremony at about 12 noon and will be at the theatre for about an hour. The organisers stress it is merely a visit and not a show.

But hurry if you want a ticket to these events. The deadline for application is next Friday, August 27. Send a cheque for £5 per ticket, plus your Bob Hope ticket request and a stamped addressed envelope, to Eltham Little Theatre Box Office, Markfield Road, Eltham. Mark your envelope "Kentish Times Offer."

Hope and charity save Bob's theatre



Back to his birthplace... Hope freely distributes jokes and autographs

COMEDIAN Bob Hope was back in his English birthplace yesterday—79 years after he first appeared there.

Hope, whose family left Eltham, South London, when he was four to emigrate to the United States returned to name its 280-seat theatre after himself.

He and entertainer Dickie Henderson, whose idea it was, have saved the amateur theatre from being knocked down by raising £58,500 for it through the Bob Hope British Golf Classic.

Hope arrived with his wife Dolores in a Daimler from this year's tournament which finishes

By PAUL DONOVAN

tomorrow at Moor Park, Rickmansworth.

After signing autographs for the waiting crowd and opening a curtain to reveal the words: The Bob Hope Theatre, the comedian went on stage to wisecrack with the audience.

He joked: 'Coming back to England gives me a chance to use my bus pass. At my age I should have the whole bus.'

And there was the inevitable joke about the English climate.

'They ignore the weather,' he said. 'That's a fine thing. I noticed it on the golf course. And I tell you something. The weather in this country needs ignoring.'

And when his patter was interrupted at one stage by a baby's cry in the back stalls, he leaned forward and asked: 'Was that my echo?'

Then after posing by a bust and picture of himself he was off again, 25 minutes after arriving.

He had been presented with a signed certificate of honorary co-presidency on stage, but it fell to his feet in the crowd outside and he would probably have driven off without it had not a reporter bent down and retrieved it.

NEW ERA AND HIGH HOPES FOR OLD LITTLE

Bob Hope Theatre unveiled tomorrow

STAR Dickie Henderson heralded a new era at Eltham's community theatre on Friday night. In a one-man two-hour show this veteran performer gave his jokes and gags generously — in aid of the Bob Hope Theatre.

He had stepped forward immediately when he heard the theatre was to benefit from the Bob Hope Golf Classic.

It was just five years ago that the local Parochial Church Council of St. John the Baptist, Eltham, had taken the unanimous decision to dispose of the site and building in Wythfield Road.

They gave the theatre a year. But with no forthcoming buyers the lease was extended.

Then Bob Hope, who was born in Craigton Road, Eltham, announced that he was to run a charitable program golf tournament in Britain.

Because of the connections with the town he decided to come to the rescue of Eltham Little Theatre.



Entertainer Dickie Henderson with staff at the Bob Hope Theatre, Eltham, on Friday. KJ8493/4

Since then the Bob Hope Classic has raised £58,500 for the benefit of Eltham Little Theatre.

And when the change of name — to the Bob Hope Theatre — was announced many people came forward to help.

One was Dickie Henderson.

On Friday night the local people appreciated the gesture and gave Henderson a rousing welcome.

For two hours he

recounted stories, told jokes and sang in a marvellous cabaret-style show.

Amongst those who enjoyed the night were actress Nerys Hughes and comedian Max Wall.

Now after such a performance the people of Eltham are eagerly awaiting tomorrow's (Friday) big event.

Bob Hope is to make a personal appearance and will officially unveil this new theatre as the

Bob Hope Theatre, Eltham.

And Hope, along with ex-president of the U.S.A. Gerald Ford, a close friend of the comedian, is to be honorary co-president.

...And a boost from the BBC

THE new theatre, may be given an extra boost...from the BBC.

A producer who turned up

to Friday's Dickie Henderson show expressed his interest in using the theatre to record programmes.

Now officials are keeping their fingers crossed, hoping something will come of the idea.

Secretary Mr. Paul Howard said: "It sounds a great idea. The producer said the theatre would be ideal to record programmes."

"Of course this would give a great boost to the theatre."

He added: "Let's hope the bosses at the BBC like the idea."

International comedian, Dickie Henderson, was Bob's UK golfing friend, and Chairman of the committee which organised the Bob Hope British Golf Classics. He accompanied Bob on his visits to the Theatre. In an act of generosity, he offered to stage his one-man show as a Benefit Performance for the new Bob Hope Theatre.

Dickie Henderson at Bob Hope Theatre

International comedian Dickie Henderson will be giving a gala performance of his one-man show at The Bob Hope Theatre (formerly Eltham Little Theatre) on Friday, September 17 at 8pm.

The show is in aid of the theatre's funds, and is part of the celebrations for the change of name following Bob Hope's donation to the theatre of part of the profits from the Bob Hope British Classic golf tournament.

Dickie Henderson is vice-chairman of the committee that organises the tournament. Bob Hope himself will be visiting the theatre in Wythfield Road for the official opening on Friday, September 24 at noon.

Tickets for 'An Evening with Dickie Henderson' cost £5 and are on sale from the theatre's office, which is open from 10am to 1pm, Tuesday to Saturday (phone 850-3702).

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— ADMIT THE BEARER —

to

'AN EVENING WITH DICKIE HENDERSON'

at the

BOB HOPE THEATRE
WYTHFIELD ROAD, ELTHAM

on

FRIDAY, 17th SEPTEMBER, 1982

Doors open 7.30 p.m. Curtain up 8 p.m.

— ADMISSION £5.00 —

*All proceeds to go to the development fund for the Bob Hope Theatre
Mr. Henderson is giving his services free of charge
as a benefit performance*