

Cartwheel Off

GRACIE FIELDS has decided to grow old gracefully, not Graciely. "I'm through with cartwheels. I want to be my age," she said in Ottawa, after radio critics had bewailed her lack of vitality in a biscuit-advertising programme.

Biographical note: FIELDS, Gracie, C.B.E., actress and vocalist; b. Rochdale, Jan. 9, 1898; started her career as a vocalist in a Rochdale cinema, 1906.

It's been a long, long, trail, lass.



Passengers in the Mauretania leaving Southampton yesterday for New York... Gracie Fields and her niece, Gracie Wakefield, comedian Duggie Wakefield's daughter, who is travelling as her secretary - companion.

News of Gracie

My sister wrote to me from British Columbia that she went to hear Gracie Fields last winter in her little home town of Trail. As there is no hall in the town, planks were laid across the ice in the skating rink.

Gracie came on in a strapless evening gown and began her show. As time went on, she got bluer and bluer with cold, and suddenly she cried, "Ee, lads, d'ye mind if Ah wear me fur coat?" And off she went to return in her fur coat, finally ending the evening wearing coat, scarf and gloves. She even did a cartwheel in them!

The Canadians did enjoy her fun. —Miss N. O'N. (Ryton-on-Tyne).

Good old Gracie, she wouldn't let a little thing like twenty degrees of frost disappoint her audience.

Wherever she goes, we have letters from readers telling us what a good time she's given them. We think she's one of our finest British ambassadors, even if she doesn't wear a black trilby.

Gracie's Choice

IT will be interesting to hear Gracie Fields' choice of records in *Desert Island Discs* on Wednesday. The producer tells us that her favourites include Vaughan Williams' 'Greensleeves,' selections from Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*, and the intermezzo from *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Gracie recorded her part of the programme some weeks ago. The interviewer, as usual, was Roy Plomley.



Duggie Wakefield—ill, but he played on in panto.

The 'gormless' comic who wouldn't quit

MESSAGES were flashed across the Atlantic all yesterday in an effort to contact "Young Gracie"—Gracie Fields's niece. They were to tell her that her father, Duggie Wakefield, the "gormless" music-hall comedian, was dead.

Young Gracie is with her aunt in New York. "She'll fly home as soon as she hears the news," said a close friend last night.

Douglas Wakefield, 51, who married Gracie Fields's sister Edith in 1930, first appeared on the stage as a boy soprano when he was eleven.

His first London appearance in 1931 was such a success that he was immediately booked for the Royal Command performance.

Two years later he was film-making in Hollywood. Last year he completed a successful TV series.

Duggie Wakefield was a front-rank comedian in the £400- to £500-a-week class.

Few of his fans realised that for the last few years he had been working under the handicap of ill-health.

For this reason he gave up all his stage work except pantomime. He could not give up the theatre completely.

At his Brighton home yesterday his wife, Mrs. Edith Wakefield, said that her husband's dearest wish for some years had been to settle in a house on the South Coast overlooking the sea. He achieved this only a few months ago.

Duggie Wakefield was resting at his new home when he was taken to hospital with asthma on April 12. He died at home during the week-end.