

WORLD SYMPATHY FOR GRACIE

Monty Banks's Death

Gracie Fields, whose husband, film-director Monty Banks, died in Piedmont on Saturday after being taken ill with a heart attack on the Orient Express, today received telegrams of sympathy from many parts of the world.

Tomorrow, Miss Fields will take her husband's body to his native Cesena, to be buried beside his parents in the little seaside town below the 15th century Maltesta Castle, reports Reuter.

GRACIE AT MONTY'S FUNERAL

Requiem Mass At Cesena

GRACIE FIELDS knelt in the little Roman Catholic Church of Cesena, Northern Italy, today, while black-robed priests sang a solemn Requiem Mass for her film-director husband Monty Banks, says Reuter.

She arrived last night in the town, her husband's birthplace, from Arona, on the shores of Lake Maggiore, where Monty Banks died suddenly on Saturday. He had a heart attack while on board the Orient Express.

Gracie today knelt in Cesena Church beside her husband's sister Signora Maria Bianchi Battistini, and friends of the Bianchi family, into which Monty Banks was born 52 years ago.

Later this afternoon Mr. Banks was buried in the family plot in the local cemetery.

Gracie Fields is staying at her sister-in-law's villa. Friends said today that she still had no plans for the immediate future.

"She seems completely broken by her husband's death," they said. "She does not want to make any decisions for the moment."

WHY GRACIE WORKS

GRACIE FIELDS is coming home. She arrives back in England on March 10 from New York. But not to rest. She will work harder than ever. She is to record a big commercial radio series for Harry Alan Towers. Then on to Capri, to open the restaurant that she and Monty Banks were planning at the time of his tragic death. After that back to America and Canada for a coast-to-coast tour in May.

Why doesn't Gracie rest, or even retire? She is NOT at all a rich woman not even with the £71,400 she inherits under Monty's will. She needs the money. Not for herself—for her orphans at Peacehaven for the members of her family and Monty's family that she supports.

No one will ever know how many thousands of pounds Gracie has given away. She has been a one-woman welfare state for so long to so many that she can never enjoy a fraction of the fortune she has earned.



GRACIE: Still she must work.

Gracie stops train, then Monty dies

By Daily Graphic Reporter

GRACIE FIELDS, British singing star, stopped the Orient Express at the Italian tourist resort of Arona Piedmont, on Lake Maggiore, yesterday in a vain attempt to save the life of her husband, film director Monty Banks.

Monty was taken ill on the train. He was rushed to hospital, but died soon afterwards.

He and Gracie were on their way to holiday on Italy's east coast.

The news was cabled to Mr. Bert Aza, Gracie's manager. Mrs. Mary Davey, her old companion and friend, immediately left London to be with her.

So ends a ten-year love match which braved the storms of public opinion and a world war. The partner who made all else unimportant, and who was to have shared Gracie's retirement in Capri, is no more.

Whispering campaign

Monty Banks—his real name was Mario Bianchi—was Italian.

That, and the fact that he and Gracie left for the United States at the beginning of the war, taking thousands of pounds and jewels with them, led to the whispering campaign which could have wrecked their marriage—but never did.

Gracie would not let it. As she said to her critics once: "I love Monty Banks and I will always love Monty Banks, whatever his nationality."

Stardom in 10 years

He was her second husband—the first was Archie Pitt. Monty, who was 53, a year older than Gracie, had also been married before—to Gladys Frazin, a U.S. actress.

He started his career as a struggling actor in New York in 1915. But within ten years he had risen to stardom and become head of a film company.

He wrote and directed the famous Mack Sennett comedies, later acted in them too.

After he gave up directing and became Gracie's manager the couple earned more than £250,000 for Britain in war tours which took them 30,000 miles and confronted Gracie with thousands of troops.

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Monty Banks and Gracie Fields
—After their Hollywood wedding in 1940.

Gracie is ^{9-3-50.}back

Gracie Fields landed at Southampton from the Queen Mary yesterday. She will stay four weeks to record commercial radio programmes. She did not think she would have time for stage appearances or BBC broadcasts.

GRACIE FLIES IN

Sings to Flood Town

Winnipeg, Tuesday. — Gracie Fields has arrived in Winnipeg "to sing all those unhappy flood memories away." Gracie visited Winnipeg a short time ago when the Red River was in full flood and immediately wrote out a cheque for £340 towards the flood relief fund.—A.P.