

P. Sgt. Bill Berry pounds the music beat as well

ASCOT has its own disc jockey, but you may not know this if you have never been a patient at Heatherwood Hospital. On the other hand, you may have seen his burly figure in his navy blue uniform, because he is a sergeant with the Thames Valley Constabulary Special police based at Bracknell, but mostly covering the Ascot area.

He has been seven years with the force, and, for a mild mannered man, he seems mildly regretful that he has never been involved in anything as dramatic as a murder hunt. At 43, married with three children and living in North Ascot, and on the hospital's engineering staff, Bill Berry sometimes wishes he joined the police in his younger days.

Enthusiast

But there is no doubting his enthusiasm for his unpaid job as a disc jockey, and of his special weekly two-hour request programme which goes out over closed circuit radio to all the wards in Heatherwood Hospital every Tuesday evening.

"It was last summer that I heard that a similar idea was proving very popular at Wexham Park Hospital, and I thought I'd like to try it out here. I talked about it to the League of Friends, who were very sympathetic and agreed to supply me with two turntables and all the other equipment I needed."

Today Bill Berry, by dint of unashamed scrounging, has managed to build up a record library of 600 45's, a couple of hundred 78's and "a few LP's."

"People have been marvellous about donating records. Even the old ones are usually in good condition, and we need the old ones as much as the new to meet all the requests we get. The funny thing is, I am often asked for a record I haven't got and then suddenly I am given two of them. Former patients and hospital staff are

very helpful in keeping the records rolling."

Bill Berry's problem, as can easily be guessed, is keeping up with the current Top Twenty and since the "station" is run on a shoe string, he sometimes fails and this leaves him almost as disappointed as the customer.

He manages, in his two-hour Tuesday evening stint, to play 40 records, meeting requests from patients, ex-patients, and friends of patients from all over Britain. His aim is always a balanced programme, and he begins his script and running-order of requests over the weekend.

"I usually script the first eight records, which is usually enough to get the show off the ground, if I am having technical problems. From then on I ad-lib."

He is not particularly worried about live broadcasting, and he puts this down to his experience over the years as MC at parties and dances. His weekly show at Heatherwood Hospital is now something he looks forward to with pleasure.

Cheery news

"I really enjoy it, mostly I think, because I know the patients enjoy having their own request programme, and I think they like the little bits of hospital news and gossip — one of the patients has been allowed up for the first time, or a long-term patient has been discharged."

It's things like that which cheers patients in any hospital.

With the show a success, there is in the offering a twice-weekly show, to replace the Tuesday-night-only affair. "Perhaps one night pop, and one night a little more serious."

It's all very serious, of course, and if anyone reading this has any records which are still playable and which he is prepared to donate to

*This is
Joan
Clark's
Page*

Heatherwood Hospital, Bill Berry and the patients will be most grateful. Just drop them in at the Administration block. The donor can be sure they will be put to the best possible use.