



Michael Haynes, alias Alternative Miss World 1981.

## Queen for a night

LIZ JOBEY at the Alternative Miss World show

AT ABOUT four in the morning, on 3 October, in the great hall of London's Olympia, Miss Aldershot, one of the town's best endowed daughters (well, sons actually, but who cares, dahling?) was crowned 'Alternative Miss World 1981.'

There to attempt—in vain—to balance the coveted crown atop her lime green candy-floss coiffure, was the founder of this bizarre event, Andrew Logan, artist and entrepreneur extraordinary, the man whose sculptures made from broken mirrors disproved once and for all the myth about seven years' bad luck.

The contest is the fifth Alternative Miss World he has organised. It is open to any 'beauty,' male or female, who desires to dress with extreme eccentricity and flaunt his or her concoctions before a crowd of equally stylish judges. Miss Aldershot is latest in a line which began with Miss Yorkshire, 1972, a cheeky looking strumpet with hairy legs, followed by Miss Holland Walk, a dusky complexioned local gel, Miss Crêpe Suzette, 1975, and in 1978, Miss Linda Carriage. The 1978 contest was made into a film which Logan and Co. took to the 1980 Cannes film festival. It didn't win any prizes, but 'we all had such a wonderful time!'

Why Andrew Logan does it is something I can't answer. Nor can I fully explain why I, along with almost 2,000 others, paid the princely sum of £14 for the privilege of watching 31 travesties and transvestites compete for a totally unrecognised title—except that it was a joke, and a really rather well-put-together joke; and good jokes are few and far between these days.

Previous shows have been held in more intimate surroundings; Olympia is the size of an aircraft hangar, and for the occasion Mr Logan had moved in half a fairground: big wheel, old-fashioned merry-go-round with painted horses and coconut shies.

The sound system was terrible: hostess Fenella Fielding's husky tones reverberated around the back of the audience 5 seconds after she had uttered, and when it came to the all important

'Interview,' the alternative ambitions of the contestants were lost in the crackle of microphone static.

The audience, however, wasn't only here for the show. They were here for one another. If Olympia was too high for the acoustics, it was wonderfully long to allow the non-contestants to parade in full peacock fashion before the tourists and the tawdry.

In one of the 45-minute intervals between 'Daywear' and 'Swimwear' (show me anyone who could tell the difference), I took a trip to the Ladies. Peering intently in the mirror was a nubile redhead in wide green crinoline skirt and a black bodice so tight it had split down one side and was tenuously held together with a Kirby grip; a tiny male all-black danced attendance on the fiery locks. 'More 'eight, it's got to 'ave more 'eight,' pleaded the latter-day Marie Antoinette—'backcomb it some more, Ronnie.' Another tall bony-chested *femme* whiskered up his long black skirts and legged past me, gazing down in disdain as I eyed his five o'clock shadow.

Meanwhile, the strange array of alternative hopefuls minced, tottered and strode up the catwalk, but from the first, Miss Aldershot was an obvious favourite. Not alone did she march, but attended by a full military band who rooted and tooted back and forth. Her second appearance, to much applause, introduced a non-too-harmonious choir.

By 2.30 a.m. everyone was starting to wish they'd get on with it. Someone had turned off the heating, and judge Marie Helvin, in glorious white *décoletté* evening dress, had goose pimples and husband David Bailey looked as if he wished he hadn't bothered coming with her.

But the end, when it came, was truly emotional. The march of usherettes was followed by the coronation: orb, sceptre and the glittering crown—though someone had stolen the ring from its velvet cushion. And Andrew, all delicious ambiguity in a costume half white military dress uniform, half Zandra Rhoads pleated ball gown and purple streaked wig, prepared to

announce the winner.

In lowly pomp, 'Land of Hope and Glory' echoing in the gods, the winners were announced in reverse order: Miss Camille, Miss Potato (Miss Silicon Chip) and finally—all outrageous pink and lime green net—Miss Aldershot. Tearfully she blinked at the audience; coyly she lowered herself to accept the crown; her ample cheeks, coloured already, showed a true blush beneath. Oh the glory, oh the honour, the auto-flashes popped. Orb and sceptre successfully clutched, she moved gingerly along to her final elevation. A small crane raised Miss Aldershot, in a shower of gold glitter, above all mortals, high into the chilly dawn air of Olympia.

Backstage, the unlucky runners-up made their way wearily out. The floor was littered with lurid stained wads of cotton wool, empty aerosols of hair colour, an odd shoe and several of Miss Potato's potatoes.

On Monday morning, Miss Aldershot, alias Michael Haynes, 40, father of two, returned to his design business in Wandsworth. But will his life ever be the same? Immortalised in that roll of honour which hangs amid the rococo trappings in the studio of Andrew Logan, the man whose peculiarly anachronistic taste for 'Grand Entertainment' had once more given London its very own absurd answer to Miss Guam.