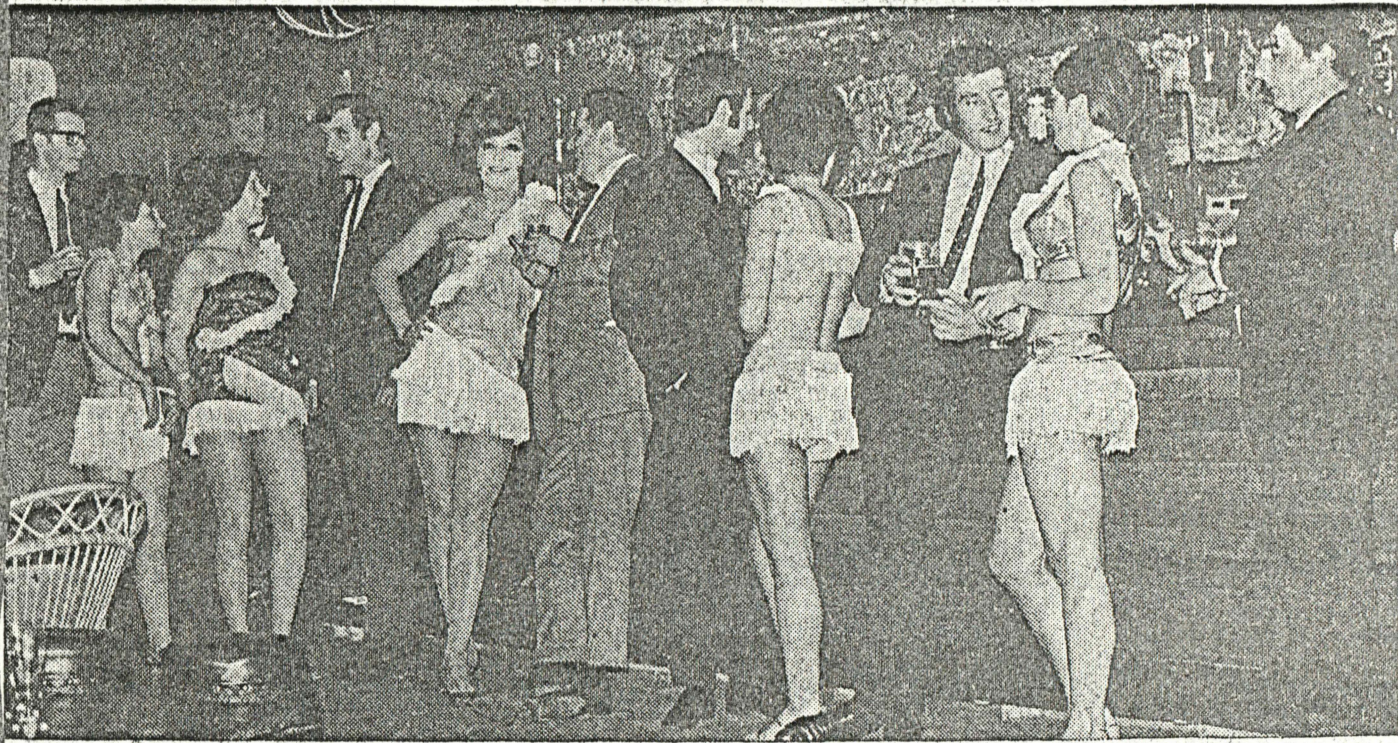


BANNED BECAUSE HE WAS 'TOO SEDUCTIVE'... CAN YOU SPOT HIM IN THIS LOT?



● Customers at a night club talk to showgirls—but one of the girls is a man. Can you tell which one? He is the third "girl" from the left.

UNDOUBTEDLY the oddest of all night spots to become entangled in the "drag"-net is Birmingham's plush Polynesian-styled "The Castaways."

For this particular club has always staked its reputation, its policy and its future on girls—60 of them in an exotic mixture of sarongs and bikinis. Each one of them a guaranteed 21-carat girl for real!

Hardly the place one would think for any man posing as a girl. Yet currently packing them in at this impeccably organised club this week is "Lana," who is really Alan Kemp, billed as "Britain's most glamorous Shemale." Truly a castaway among the girls!

At 31 years of age and with 12 years of drag behind him, Alan, born at Newton Abbot in the West Country, has all the expertise and professionalism that goes with his experience and 26-inch waist.

'GREAT'

And such an act has got to be pretty good to make any impression on the Castaways' own bevy of girls.

Twenty-nine-year-old Mary Phillips, who manages the restaurant and is no mean girl herself, said: "We

**By DAVID FARR
and PETER OAKES
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investigators**

all look at him. We think he has a great act." This, however, was not the view when Alan took his act to Bologna, in Italy. He was banned because of the degree "of provocation."

But, at the Castaways Alan held his audience spellbound for a full 35 minutes with a mixture of repartee, songs, story telling and off-the-cuff asides.

In an exotic diaphanous blue housecoat-cum-dress, his routine ended with as professional a strip act as could ever be imagined—with men in the audience helping to untie the ribbons and bows. And the women patrons appeared to love it.

Alan Kemp began life as a £6-a-week shop assistant. Now he often earns £250 a week.

He has spent nine years

abroad doing drag in every one of the Arab countries of the Middle East, Paris and West Berlin.

He said: "There is absolutely no doubt that there is a tremendous boom in drag in Britain.

"That was one of the reasons I came back to this country last year. Before I went abroad I couldn't get enough work. Now I am booked up until next November. In a fortnight's time I'm off to Beirut."

With two agents and a professional dressmaker in Putney to back his act, Alan looks every inch a woman on stage.

But there the masquerade ends. He said: "I don't believe in things like hor-

mones. To me they're not necessary.

"I always remove my wig at the end to prove that I'm really 'a fella.' That's part of the shock. I consider this as a job and I hope I do it well."

Unlike some drag artists, Alan always wears men's clothes when he is not on stage.

"Even if I go to the bar in the club where I am appearing I throw on a suit and wear dark glasses to cover my eye make-up," he said.

The one time he didn't change led to an unusual complication. Because he

was doing two clubs at Stockport, with very little time in between acts, he arranged for a taxi-driver to take him from one to the other in full drag.

But one night the taxi-driver who had delivered him to the one club was switched and he told his successor for a joke that he must pick up a stripper to take to the next club and she was good "for a chat up."

"It took me a quarter of an hour to convince that man that I was not a woman."

In all, he reckons he has spent between £3,000 and

£4,000 on his extensive wardrobe. Right now he gets through four pairs of tights every week. For his present two-spot show at the Castaways he has four changes of costume.

OFFENDED

Alan is a great believer in the sensitivity of audiences. He says that in the North particularly, a man can get away with the bluest of blue jokes, but an audience would be offended by the same sort of thing coming from a woman—even from a man dressed as a woman.

He said: "It's very strange, this act, but I've noticed it time after time. The illusion seems to persist when you are imperson-

Picture of a man going off to work! Getting an affectionate hug from his wife, Brenda, is another drag artist, Roy Steel, of Audenshaw, Manchester. His daughter, Joyce, carries a spare wig on its stand and son John carries more of dad's gear.

Mrs. Steel confesses to one small problem—since her husband became a drag artist she has become jealous of the men who "make passes" at her husband, believing him to be a woman!

ating a female but some things should not be said."

His parents are still his greatest admirers. He said: "My mother has seen all my shows in Paris and Berlin and even Dad thinks they're great.

"I enjoy getting into an evening gown and going out there to entertain and perhaps shock the audience. And, of course, for me it's a lucrative business."

WIGS

He has eight or nine wigs ranging from blonde to auburn. He says: "I have to avoid definite colours. They make me look too hard." As to the future he remains unworried. He said: "There has always been work for the really good female impersonator. I think I shall get by."

John Reeve, the owner of the Castaways and one of the youngest big-time club owners in show business, thought hard before bringing "Lana" to the Castaways.

He said: "What finally decided me was the reception he got at the 'Forty Thieves,' my club in Coventry,

"He has been there four times and played to packed houses so I thought we would bill him here.

"I was undecided at first, but having seen him now there is nothing objectionable at all in the act and most people, especially the women, seem to enjoy it."

Another of the Castaway girls, 24-year-old Glennis Wright enthused: "His is one of the best acts I have ever seen."

Last word to Mary Phillips, the restaurant manageress. She said: "Alan has got better legs than most of us!"

