



Southern Television is broadcast to Ventnor

It is 8 o'clock on the evening of Saturday August 30th 1958. It is Southern Television's opening night. You switch your tv set to channel 11 and you can access the South of England's own television station, though you may have needed to check with your tv dealer beforehand that your set could receive the signal. For several weeks, the *Mercury*, the town's own newspaper had included huge advertisements with previews of the kinds of programmes that were coming. August 30th would be a night to remember, packed with star performers, providing entertainment and laughter. The list would include the incomparable Gracie Fields, Lionel and Joyce Blair, Tommy Steele and Frankie Vaughan, along with a 'bevy of bathing beauties' and, not least, the Bournemouth Girls Choir.



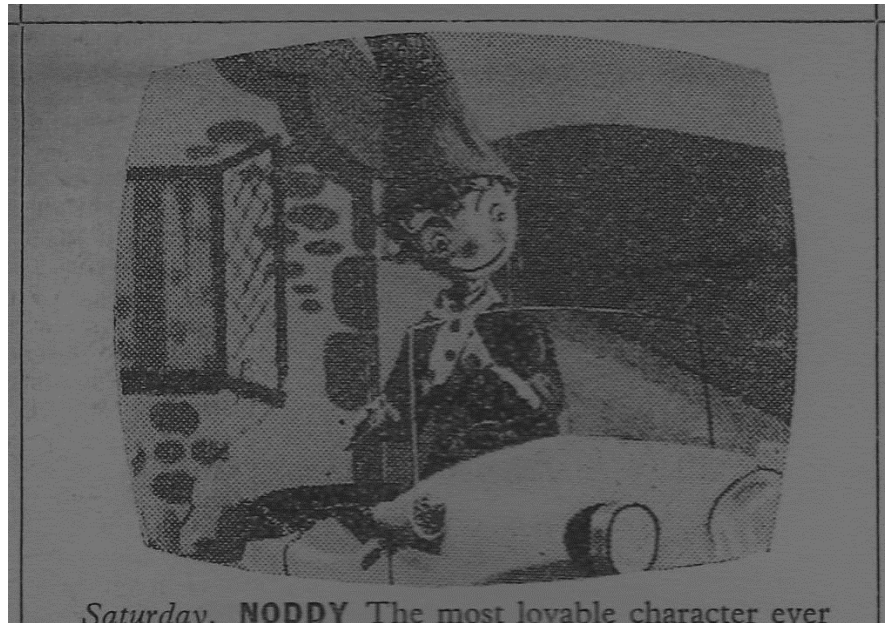
Friday. **THE ARMY GAME** It's mad. It's crazy.

Initially, broadcasting was limited to Friday and Saturday nights. On a Friday, you could 'split-your-sides-with-laughter' by watching *The Army Game*, starring Bill Fraser and Sgt. Claud Smudge. It was a comic take on national service where a regular army officer tries to bring some sort of military order and discipline to a group of desperate 'villain' raw conscripts. In a way, it formed a kind of precursor to Captain Mainwaring's Home Guard unit as immortalised in the tv comedy *Dad's Army*.

For the children, Saturdays saw the start of the adventures of *Noddy*, author Enid Blyton's lovable cartoon character, along with his friend *Big Ears*.

Other programmes that older readers of the *Chronicle* may recall are *Cheyenne*, a rugged North American Western series, with Clint Walker in the star role. *Cheyenne* was the hero fighting the men who sought to shoot their way to wealth, opposed by only a few honest citizens. Another offering was the quiz show conducted by Michael Miles and known as *Take Your Pick*.

All this is 65 years ago, but for some it may seem like yesterday. Of course, the number of households that had televisions was then quite low, but relatives and neighbours who did have sets soon found their front rooms turned into mini cinemas, especially in the case of the kids.



Saturday. **NODDY** The most lovable character ever

Ventnor & District Local History Society: Michael Freeman, from files in Ventnor Heritage Centre



Ventnor & District Local History Society is a registered charity, working to preserve and record the history of our area and make it available to the public in the Ventnor Heritage Centre.

The Society and Heritage Centre are run and managed by volunteers.

www.ventnorheritage.org.uk / telephone 855407

