

# Lord Haw Haw

Norman Cox



William Joyce at the outbreak of the war

September 11, 1939. In the early evening millions of listeners in Great Britain are turning on their radios and tuning in to Radio Germany where they often pick up important war bulletins that will not be heard on the BBC Home News until 9:00 that evening. Tonight they hear a new voice from Joseph Goebbels' stable of propagandists. There is not much special to bring him to anyone's attention. His newscasts are at first mostly unremarkable.

Soon he develops an audience by rehashing old grievances between labor and the country's leaders. As the war runs more in the favor of the Nazis his voice becomes more confident. It is arrogant and sarcastic and he delivers his news in a penetrating baritone. He now has adopted a pseudo Mayfair accent and he offers short skits, off color music hall style jokes and commentaries against the English gentry. His opening words "Germany Calling" and "To some I may seem to be a traitor but hear me out." become his trade marks.

Night after night he is heard and during the long hours of the blitz, the British, huddled in their bomb shelters, come to hate his voice as no other voice has been hated in history. "Scurry into your cellars like rats you snobs of Kensington. The glorious Luftwaffe is on its way to blow you to bits." Because of his fumbling attempts at humor and his imitation accent *The Daily Express* starts calling him Lord Haw Haw. The nickname sticks. His opening "Germany Calling" is repeated phonetically in the press as "Jairmany Calling". BBC comics attack him in rhyme; he is impersonated at Mayfair events and he becomes a scornful character in a musical revue. He becomes a popular listening habit and it is estimated, now, at the peak of his popularity, that over half of the 9,000,000 licensed British radios are tuned in to him nightly.

Trying to figure out who he is becomes a national pastime. Some say he is: 1) a German professor who once taught in Scotland, 2) an ex Highlander, Norman Baillie-Stewart, who had been jailed in London for betraying military secrets or 3) Henry William Wicks, a onetime London insurance man now living in Germany with his Nazi-minded wife.

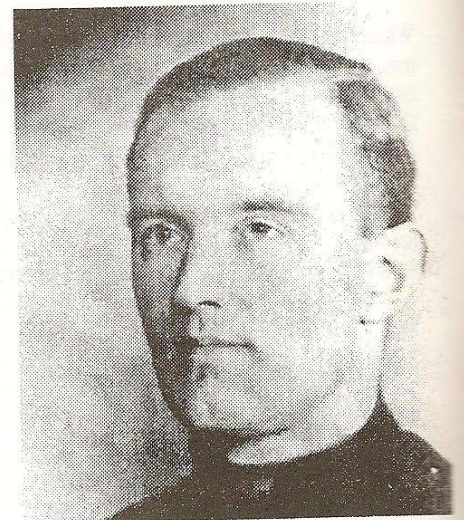
The British, who always want to place people in their proper social level by identifying their accent, have many learned discussions in the press trying to nail down his background which is variously described as aristo-

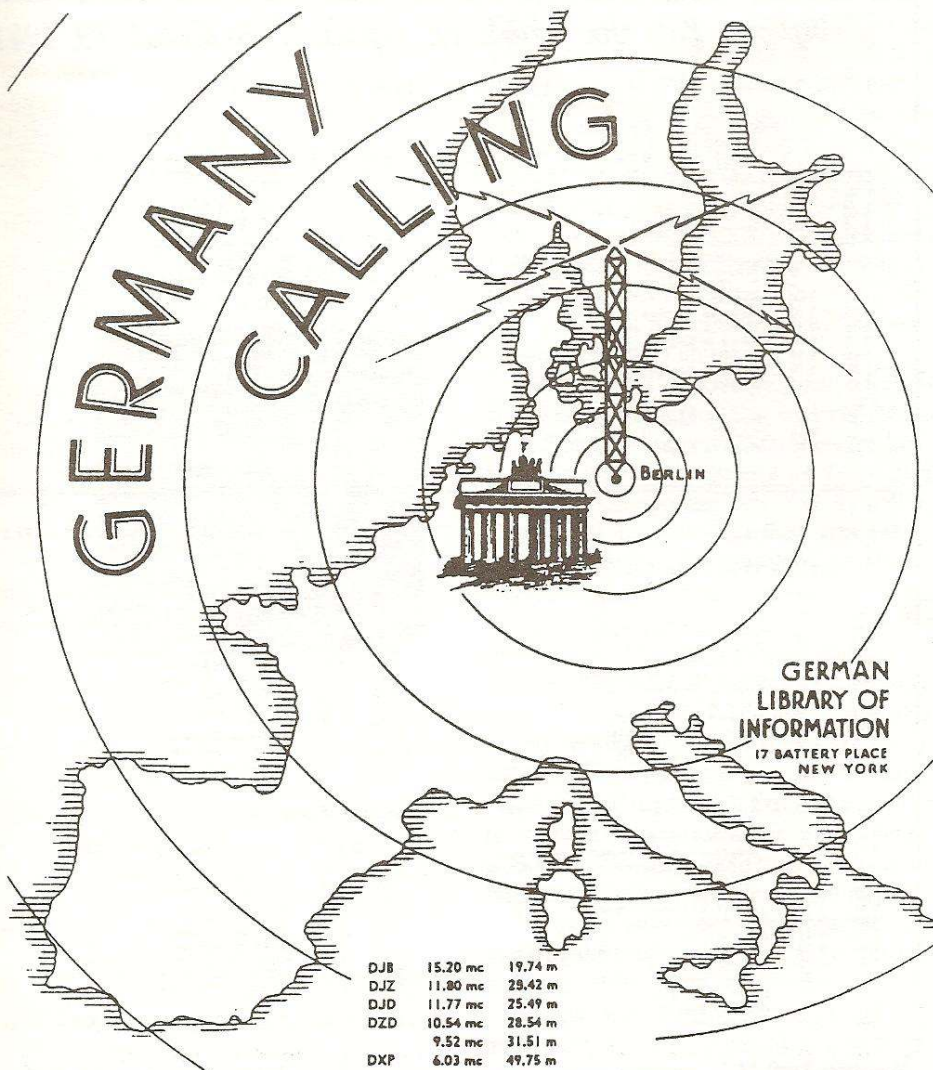
cratic, public school or phony.

In March 1940 the riddle is solved. He is not British. He is an American. A woman in the village of Waldron, Sussex, interviewed by *The Sunday Pictorial*, says that she is sure Lord Haw Haw is her ex-husband, William Joyce. The British *Catholic Herald* states flatly that "Lord Haw Haw is William Joyce". British officials, after their own investigations, confirm to the press that they have their man: William Joyce. On April 2, 1941 he identifies himself in a broadcast monitored by CBS's short wave listening station.

Joyce was born 1906 in New York of Irish parents and grew up in Ireland and the London slums. He went to London University as a language student, tutored for awhile and then in 1933 joined Sir Oswald Mosley's British Fascist party. Street brawls between different political factions were not unusual at the time and during an argument with a group of Communists Joyce had his right cheek cut from mouth to ear with a razor. He became one of Sir Oswald's leaders. Wearing his scar as a badge of dedication, he regularly took his turn on the Fascist speaker's stepladder at the Marble Arch corner of Hyde Park. Soon he developed what he thought was a "cultured" speaking accent from hanging around the University of London. In 1937, when he was kicked out of Mosley's group, he formed Britain's National Socialist League.

Just before World War II started, Joyce abandoned England and headed for Germany because he did not want to fight against the Fuehrer and National Socialism. In September





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1939 he signed on with the Nazis as an editor and announcer of English language news and propaganda. With all of the new found publicity in the British press he soon became one Goebbels' favorites. Adolf Hitler thought so much of his efforts that he awarded him the Crown of War Merit medal, First Class.

When the war started turning against Germany the English tuned in to the hated Lord Haw Haw not for news, but for laughs. Now his arrogant voice would describe retreats of the previously invincible Wehrmacht as "disengaging movements". During the blackouts Cockney office boys could be heard competing

with each other by yelling out into the night their impersonations of his trademark "Jair-many Calling".

When British planes were on their way to bomb Germany the Hamburg radio station would shut down so that its signal could not be used as a homing beacon. The BBC gleefully giped: "He shouts with rage and screams with fear but pipes down when our planes are near."

Inside Germany the government was having trouble with its own radio listeners. On January 24, 1941 the Nazi controlled radio reported that six Germans had been sentenced from 4 to 7 years for listening to foreign broadcasts.

On May 18, 1941 the New York Times noted that the German press reported: "A traitor, Johann Wild, 49, was executed for regularly listening to foreign newscasts." These strict actions, hard to understand today, were in response to the real and feared power of radio to mold public opinion.

As the war wound down so did the once mighty Nazi radio propaganda machine. Berlin's signal became weaker and weaker. Now broadcasting in shorter and shorter spasms it finally shut down without a sign off. Next Bremen faded away. Hamburg was now the sole source of the German High Command's daily communiqués.

In Hamburg, on April 30, 1945, a week before Germany surrendered, Joyce made his last broadcast. Sounding drunk, in a stuttering and choking voice he admitted that Germany might be beaten. When Hamburg radio announced the fall of the city, *Deutschland uber Alles* filled the air. Wilhelmshaven tried to carry on but finally, blaming poor atmospheric conditions, it too shut down. Berliners, who still had working radios, heard their own Wagnerian *Gotterdammerung* funeral played out just for them from somewhere inside Germany. "Vapors and smoke trail upward... Underneath is a sea of flame, a volcano of millions of fires and twitching shadows." When Berlin was next heard it was speaking Russian. Hamburg found its voice again but it was broadcasting a General Eisenhower speech in English. "The Allied forces serving under my command have now entered Germany. We come as conquerors."

Dr. Goebbels had realized that Joyce would be harshly treated if he fell into the hands of his former countrymen and he issued special orders that he was to be given all means of assistance to help him escape. He fled Hamburg with a new identity and various travel documents. He settled anonymously in the town of Flensburg. In the chaotic times of occupation he was unceremoniously kicked out of his hotel room by the British who needed it for their own use.

Now on his own he started walking toward the Danish frontier carrying a German passport made out in the name of Hansen. On the main highway to Denmark he stopped to talk to two British officers gathering firewood. Probably to avoid suspicion he casually spoke to them first in German, then in French without

response. Then in what had to be the dumbest move on his part, he spoke to them in English. "I used to gather firewood myself." As any Englishman would, they recognized his voice immediately. When they pressed him he admitted that yes he was Lord Haw Haw. He had his hand in his pocket and according to the officers while he was talking he moved his hand in a threatening manner and one of the soldiers shot him in the thigh. He was quickly taken to Brixton Prison in England where he was to be cared for until he could be tried for treason.

The trial, which was to become the peoples version of the Nuremberg trials, took place in the historic Old Bailey and lasted only three days. Joyce's defense was based mainly on the fact that he was born in the United States and that in 1940 he became a naturalized German citizen. The prosecution argued that at the time Joyce was issued a British passport in 1939 he declared that he was a British subject and was therefore now subject to its laws. The court agreed.

It was ruled that he gave help to the King's enemies by broadcasting propa- ganda while still owing allegiance to the British Crown. The jury returned a verdict of guilty and the first person to be described as a radio traitor was sentenced to death for treason.

His appeals and a request to the United States to declare him as a US citizen were denied. On January 3, 1946, seven months after his capture, William Joyce was hanged at Wandsworth Prison in South London. Defiant and unrepentant to the end he issued a statement through his brother warning the British people against "the crushing Imperialism of the Soviet Union".

It is ironic that on the same day his execution was being reported in The New York Times that an adjacent column in the newspaper was noting that high English government officials were meeting together to come up with some legal means to curb the resurgence of Sir Oswald Mosley's fascist movement. This was the same group that William Joyce served so vocally in Hyde Park before the war.

References:

Time, March 11, 1940, May 14, 1945

Newsweek, June 11, 1945

The New York Times, June 19, 26, 1945

September 18, 19, 20, 1945, Jan 4, 1946

### Program for the Week of April 13 to April 19, 1941

**EVERY DAY**

6:00 A. M. — 4:50 P. M.

EST A.M.	PST A.M.	Program	EST P.M.	PST P.M.	Program
6:00	3:00	Call, Early Bird Concert	3:30	12:30	D J Z — 25 m
6:30	3:30	News in English	3:45	12:45	News in English
6:45	3:45	"Action Reports from the Front" (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)	4:00	1:00	News in French
		Rieder Talk — (Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday)			SILENT
7:00	4:00	Music			D Z D — 28 m
8:00	5:00	News in German			News in English
8:15	5:15	Music	11:05	8:05	Late Music
8:30	5:30	News in English	11:15	8:15	News in English
8:45	5:45	SILENT	11:30	8:30	Late Music Continued
11:30	8:30	News in English			
11:45	8:45	SILENT	Midnight	9:00	News in English
			12:00		
			A.M.		
12:30	9:30	News in English	12:15	9:15	Concert of Light Music by a Regional Broadcasting Orchestra
12:45	9:45	SILENT			Sign Off until 6:00 A.M. (3:00 A.M. PST)
1:30	10:30	News in English	1:00	10:00	

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**Sunday, April 13**

D J D — 25 m; 31 m; D X P — 49 m

EST P.M.	PST P.M.	Program	EST P.M.	PST P.M.	Program
4:50	1:50	Call, German Folk Songs	8:00	5:00	News in German
4:55	1:55	Program for the Day	8:15	5:15	"America Asks — Germany Answers" (Answers to Questions from American Listeners)
5:00	2:00	"The Easter Hare"	8:45	5:45	"Dear Harry", Fred Kallenbach
5:30	2:30	The Zeesen Women's Club	9:00	6:00	"O. K. SPEAKING"
5:45	2:45	News in German	9:15	6:15	Economic Review
6:00	3:00	News in English	9:20	6:20	E. D. WARD
6:15	3:15	German Folk Concert	9:30	6:30	Notions Club
7:00	4:00	"From the German Heart"	10:00	7:00	Music
7:15	4:15	(a) News Review in French	10:15	7:15	News in German
		(b) Topical Talk in German	10:30	7:30	News in English
7:30	4:30	"Today in Germany"	10:50	7:50	"Listen and Judge for Yourself"

D J D — 25 m; D Z D — 28 m; 31 m; D X P — 49 m

**Tuesday, April 15**

D J D — 25 m; 31 m; D X P — 49 m

EST P.M.	PST P.M.	Program	EST P.M.	PST P.M.	Program
4:50	1:50	Call, German Folk Songs	8:00	5:00	News in German
4:55	1:55	Program for the Day	8:15	5:15	"America Asks — Germany Answers" (Answers to Questions from American Listeners)
5:00	2:00	Light Music	8:30	5:30	"LORD HAW-HAW"
5:30	2:30	"Happy Family"	8:45	5:45	Variety Entertainment
5:45	2:45	News in German	9:00	6:00	"O. K. SPEAKING"
6:00	3:00	News in English	9:15	6:15	Economic Review
6:15	3:15	Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra	9:20	6:20	"Action Reports from the Front"
7:15	4:15	PRESS REVIEW BY HANS FRITSCHÉ	9:30	6:30	Scenes from "Aimee"
7:30	4:30	"Today in Germany"	10:15	7:15	News in German
			10:30	7:30	News in English
			10:50	7:50	Fred W. Kallenbach German Contributions to Making America

D J D — 25 m; D Z D — 28 m; 31 m; D X P — 49 m

**Monday, April 14**

D J D — 25 m; 31 m; D X P — 49 m

EST P.M.	PST P.M.	Program	EST P.M.	PST P.M.	Program
4:50	1:50	Call, German Folk Songs	8:00	5:00	News in German
4:55	1:55	Program for the Day	8:15	5:15	"America Asks — Germany Answers" (Answers to Questions from American Listeners)
5:00	2:00	Chamber Music	8:30	5:30	"LORD HAW-HAW"
5:45	2:45	News in German	8:45	5:45	Variety Entertainment
6:00	3:00	News in English	9:00	6:00	"O. K. SPEAKING"
6:15	3:15	Music of the German Countryside	9:15	6:15	Economic Review
7:15	4:15	Topical Talk in German	9:20	6:20	"Action Reports from the Front"
7:30	4:30	"Today in Germany"	9:30	6:30	Scenes from "Aimee"
			10:15	7:15	News in German
			10:30	7:30	News in English
			10:50	7:50	Fred W. Kallenbach German Contributions to Making America

U.S.A. Zone offerings