

Miss **ANNIE** **ADAMS**

Hello m'dearios! How're y'doin'? My name's Annie, Annie Adams and I was a singer in the music halls from 1860 to 1881 - the very time that Wilton's was in its heyday - what a coincidence!

In what years did WILTON'S MUSIC HALL OPEN AND CLOSE?

EE It was my voice that I was famous for. That and my cheery disposition. I was always laughing and singing, singing and laughing. Well, no use being miserable is there? Oh, and not forgetting my gorgeous dresses! I was well known for wearing the most beautiful gowns you ever did see when I was on stage. Cost a fortune, they did. My husband, Henry, had to lift my hems up every time I stepped on and off the stage, to stop them getting dirty!

Anyway, like I said, it all started with my voice. I was born in my mum and dad's pub, The Green Dragon Hotel, on the Isle of Wight on 16th November 1843.

Can you find the Isle of Wight on a map?

U Then we moved to another pub in Southampton and soon I was singing away to all the customers and they loved it. Not just the popular music hall songs either - I had the voice for opera and I was belting out songs from *Il Trovatore* at the Theatre Royal Southampton by the time I was 18.

WHO COMPOSED IL TROVATORE AND WHAT IT WAS ABOUT?

I had such a pure and powerful voice that, when I hit those high notes, the glasses in the pub used to rattle on the tables!



EO Then, what every young girl dreams of, I was talent spotted by a big theatrical agent, a man by the name of Ambrose Maynard. My career took off and, over the next ten years, I played just about every single music hall in the country - including lovely Wilton's, of course. I even did well in America for a couple of years and I was earning about £40 or £50 a night.

HOW MUCH WOULD THAT BE TODAY?

I was what was known as a serio-comic, which meant I sang songs that were sad as well as ones that were funny and the audiences loved 'em all. I think the song that summed me up best of all was *The Merriest Girl That's Out*, because it's all about a girl who's always cheerful, just like me:

*If anything goes wrong with me,
I never sulk nor pout;
In fact I am, and always was,
The merriest girl that's out'*



Annie Adams was a serio-comic, singing songs both sad and funny. She had a powerful, beautiful voice and sang ballads and operatic arias, as well as music hall songs, peppered with double meanings. She was one of the first British music hall performers to achieve fame and fortune in the USA.



SHE HAD A FULL FIGURE, AN AMPLE BOSOM AND A JOLLY, LAUGHING FACE AND MANNER. SHE WAS KNOWN FOR WEARING **VERY EXPENSIVE DRESSES,** and it was said that her husband Henry used to lift the hem of her skirt as she came off stage, to stop it getting dirty.



Annie's parents, Thomas and Harriet Adams were pub owners, and Annie was born at one of their pubs, The Green Dragon Hotel on the Isle of Wight, on November 16th 1843. Annie spent her youth in Southampton and started work as a barmaid and entertainer in her father's pub. By 1861 she was a local favourite, singing a selection from Il Trovatore at the Theatre Royal Southampton, as well as appearing in smaller, local concert rooms. Around this time, she was talent-spotted by the theatrical agent Ambrose Maynard, and her career took off. In 1862 Maynard arranged her first professional engagement, away from home, at Barnard's Music Hall in Chatham. She made her London debut at Weston's Music Hall, and got married to Henry Whiting, also known as Harry Wall, the comic singer, in the same year 1862.



IN THE 1860S AND 1870S, SHE APPEARED AT ALMOST EVERY LEADING MUSIC HALL in the UK (including Wilton's), and her popularity extended overseas, taking her on a two-year tour of America between 1871 and 1873, earning £40-£50 a night, which was a high wage at that time. Annie's collection of songs grew to over 30. She was best-known for 'When the Band Begins to Play' and 'Johnny, the Engine Driver' two songs composed by G. W. Hunt. 'The Merriest Girl that's Out' sums up her stage personality. She also sang ladies' versions of George Leybourne songs.

In 1881 Annie retired from the music hall stage and her husband Harry began working as a Theatrical and Musical Agent. Annie died in 1905.

Miss

ANNIE

ADAMS



ANNIE ADAMS WAS ONE OF THE STARS OF EARLY MUSIC HALL, working between 1860 and 1881, almost exactly the same time as Wilton's was a music hall.



She sang opera and ballads, as well as jokey, **MUSIC HALL SONGS.**



She was born on November 16th 1843 on **the Isle of Wight**, the daughter of a pub and hotel owner.



She began singing in her father's pub, where **THE STRENGTH OF HER VOICE RATTLED THE GLASSES.**



In 1861 she was singing operatic arias at **THE THEATRE ROYAL, SOUTHAMPTON.**



She was 'discovered' by the theatrical agent **AMBROSE MAYNARD.**



1862 WAS A BUSY YEAR FOR ANNIE. She made her music hall debut at Barnard's Music Hall in Chatham and her London debut at Weston's Music Hall.



On the May 22nd 1862 Annie married **HENRY WHITING** otherwise known as the comic singer Harry Wall.



IN THE 1860S AND 1870S SHE APPEARED AT ALL THE LEADING **MUSIC HALLS** in the UK (including Wiltons).



SHE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST MUSIC HALL STARS TO FIND FAME AND FORTUNE IN AMERICA, where she worked from 1871-3.



ANNIE'S MOST POPULAR COMEDY SONGS WERE 'WHEN THE BAND BEGINS TO PLAY' AND 'JOHNNY, THE ENGINE DRIVER'. ANOTHER SONG **'THE MERRIEST GIRL THAT'S OUT'** seems to sum up her bubbly personality.



ANNIE RETIRED IN 1881 AND HER HUSBAND BEGAN WORKING AS A MUSICAL AND THEATRICAL AGENT.



ANNIE DIED IN 1905 ON MAY 12TH, AGED 62.

