

# Will Catlin - The later years

The 1st mention of Catlin performing in North Wales is in 1907. By 1908, Catlin was publicising his troupe as the 'Royal Pierrots', following royal command performances. They became so successful that in 1909, 'The North Wales Weekly News' commented on how "A visit to North Wales would not be complete without a visit to Catlin's..." That year, he opened an 'Arcadia' venue in Colwyn Bay and another in Llandudno in 1915.

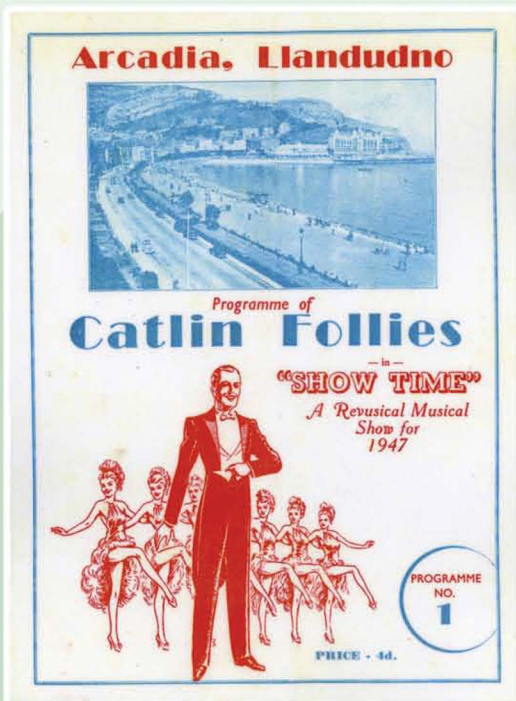


Catlin's 'Royal Pierrots', Colwyn Bay, 1907



But the 1st World War put a stop to the seaside excursion trains and barbed wire barricades prevented families from enjoying the beaches. As a result, Catlin's pierrots ceased until after the Armistice. In 1920, Will retired from performance, yet continued to supervise Catlin pierrot shows all over the country.

Between the wars, Catlin's shows (like many others) evolved away from the pierrot shows, towards spectacular concert party productions. In 1932, Catlin introduced the 'Evening Follies' who were regarded as "the champagne of modern entertainment".



In 1940, Will Catlin moved from his 'retirement' home in Reading, to take up residence in Llandudno, where he continued to greet his audiences at the front of his Arcadia Theatre in a smart suit, hat and cigar in hand. In 1949, he married his second wife - Doris Anderson, with whom he had 2 daughters.

On 15th January, 1953, Will Catlin collapsed and died in his car outside Llandudno Arcadia, aged 85. He is buried at Llandrillo cemetery (off Dinerth Road) and on his coffin was placed a pierrot hat made from white flowers and a card reading "King of the Pierrots' final curtain..."

