

★ STARS ★ in the ★ ★ STAND



"Sun" photograph

MIKE (but not Bernie!) WINTERS

"WHO... Chelsea Football Club? Lovely of you to ring," said Mike Winters as he answered the mid-morning telephone call in his room at the Piccadilly Hotel, Manchester. "That's one up to me... because Arsenal never phone Bernie!" Just how a Chelsea and an Arsenal fan succeed in partnership as they have done might be considered among the phenomena of show-business, but Mike (that's him on the right, as if you didn't know) says supporting rival clubs doesn't affect their comedy double-act in the slightest. But theirs is a special understanding.

"You see, I was an Arsenal fan, too, when we were kids. We were born at Highbury, and an uncle used to take us. It's just that Bernie has never grown out of Arsenal! Seriously, it's natural that he should stick with them because he still lives in North London whereas I've lived on the 'Chelsea side' for eleven years, first at Putney and now Kingston Hill."

Since Christmas the Winters brothers have been in pantomime at the Davenport Theatre, Stockport—as robbers in "Babes in the Wood." Says Mike: "It was heart-breaking for me last Saturday, being so near to Old Trafford but unable to see Chelsea there because we had a matinee. But I'll be all right for the League Cup Final—the pantomime ends next week."

Wherever their work takes them around

the country, Mike and Bernie see as much football as they can. They are fans of the game itself, not only of Chelsea and Arsenal. "We go for the entertainment... the skills. More people appreciate the opposition nowadays, fewer go just to see their team win," says Mike.

Rugby was his first football love. He played it as a boy for Tottenham Grammar School, also for the City of Oxford School and then for Esher. An injury received in Sunday football in 1964 led to Mike becoming a Chelsea follower. "We were playing the Palladium at the time. Tommy Docherty was with Chelsea. I'd got to know him well, playing Show-biz football, and when I got hurt he said 'Come along to Stamford Bridge for some treatment.' Trainer Harry Medhurst put me right in no time. I've been a Chelsea man ever since."

Mike and Bernie began their act 20 years ago. They've toured the world—they were in Australia when the radio told Bernie Arsenal had done the double last season, and in Rome when Mike tuned in and heard Chelsea had squared the brotherly account by winning the Cup-Winners' Cup.

After the current pantomime, it's back to cabaret... a month's break in April ("to fit in with the kids' school holidays")... two more TV shows and then a summer concert tour.

Next to business and family life, football is never far from their thoughts. What really makes Mike's Saturday is when Chelsea win and Arsenal lose. "Sometimes it goes the other way in Bernie's favour. But whatever happens, a lot of chipping goes on between us."