

LAUGH

THE COMEDY MAGAZINE

Volume 1 Issue 1 1991 \$4 AUS & U.S. £2 U.K.

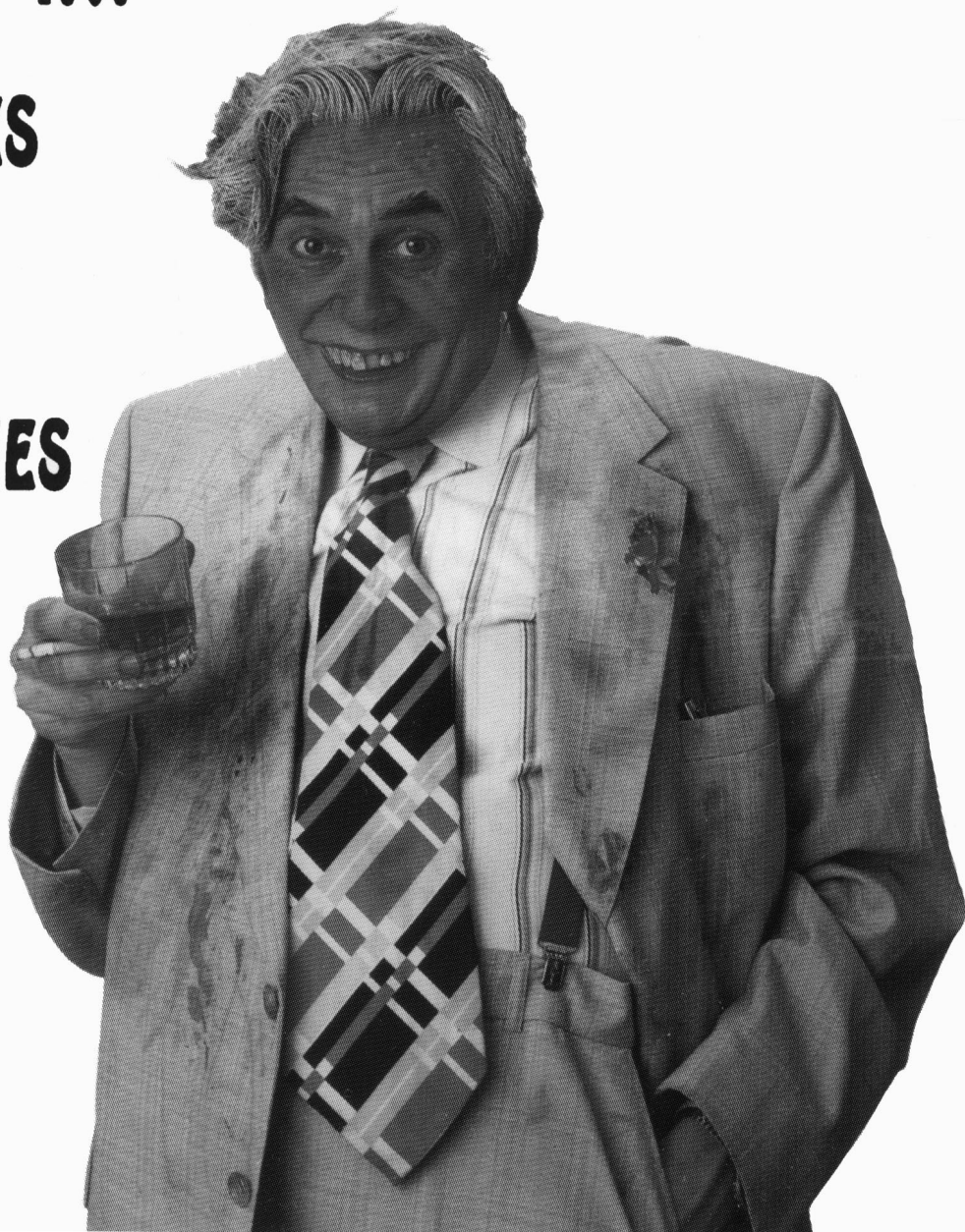
MONTY PYTHON ON RECORD

JACK BENNY ON T.V.

THE YOUNG ONES

BAND WAGGON

BARRY HUMPHRIES



LAUGH

THE COMEDY MAGAZINE

Dear Comedy Buff,

Welcome to the first issue of LAUGH magazine. Our aim is to offer a selection of articles to keep you informed about what's happening in the world of comedy today, and provide a reference source for the things you've wanted to know about the classic performances of the past.

Our researchers and correspondents will be advising us of the books, discs and videos currently available in Britain, the United States and Australia, and supplying us with feature articles, discographies and episode guides of the memorable people and shows of years gone by. It is not our intention to reprint information already accessible through the pages of such excellent fanzines as PRIMETIME, EPILOG and RERUNS or the many books published over the past decade (particularly in the U.S.) unless the item concerned is long out of print.

In order to encourage readership in all three areas mentioned above, we'll be trying to balance the articles in each issue through relevance to each (although as our "global village" comes closer together the major names and programmes are appearing in all three). We'll also be offering a mix of old and new to attract those collectors who specialise in a certain era of comedy.

While we'll be trying to produce as professional a magazine as possible, it is being compiled by amateurs who, like yourself, have a genuine interest in the subject and a curiosity to dig out the information required. In this regard, we want to encourage our readership to feel part of the exercise and not only keep us posted with what's available in your part of the world, but let us know the sort of things you'd like to see researched. We're also very interested in hearing from people wanting to compile articles to appear in future issues. Can we use that old phrase "the more the merrier"!

How often the magazine appears depends very much on the response (and sales) we get with issue #1. If you'd like to see more please resist photocopying it for friends, and get them to buy a copy for themselves! At this point of time, all correspondence should be directed to the address below, though by the end of 1991 we hope to have people acting for us in Britain and the U.S. to handle subscriptions and suchlike. (In regard to money, please do not send personal cheques made out in U.S. dollars or British pounds to our address as they cannot be cashed without a lot of time and cost. Drop us a note and we'll advise a better way to handle things until our agents are set up).

Finally, a brief word of thanks to those who supplied articles for this issue (the copyright of which remains with the person concerned. All photos used retain their original copyright information). Similar thanks to those who back the venture with their encouragement and funds.

LAUGH MAGAZINE

P.O. BOX 394, CAULFIELD EAST, VICTORIA 3145, AUSTRALIA

PROFILE: BARRY HUMPHRIES

by Peter Tatchell

He's been called the funniest man in the world. He describes himself as a "music-hall artist". But to the thousands who have flocked to his one-man shows since the 1960s he has that rare quality that separates the great entertainer from the mere performer. He's one of the few carrying on the tradition of Max Miller, Roy Rene, and the glorious Broadway era of Jolson, Cantor and the Marx Brothers. All were masters at bridging the gap to the crowd across the footlights.

Barry Humphries was born in Melbourne, Australia in 1934 and encountered the secure, uneventful upbringing not uncommon in the years leading up to World War 2. But somehow the cosiness irked him. At school he rebelled against the traditional sporting pursuits of his peers and delighted in being a loner and a bit of a 'ratbag'. Painting and literature became his main interests and it wasn't long before he was winning prizes for his prose and his artwork. He also took part in several school plays and more than one reviewer remarked on his clever characterizations.

When he reached Melbourne University (for a brief attempt at an Arts course) he decided the time was ripe to shock his fellow man (albeit briefly) out of his mundane, everyday existence. He began staging strange and provocative exhibitions featuring footwear filled with custard (titled "Pus In Boots"), he satirised his ex-school mates by displaying a well-known brand of beer bottle wearing a Melbourne Grammar tie, and a heavily-textured canvas of pastry and sauce achieved notoriety as "I Was Eating A Meat Pie And I Coughed". A theatrical venture "Call Me Madman!" at the University's Union Theatre ended in uproar.

Humphries was also experimenting with various forms of "street theatre", according to popular legend. One such story has him seated next to the door of a peak hour early-morning train with confederates positioned at each station along its journey, duly supplying him with various stages of his breakfast. Toast, cornflakes, coffee ... each would be handed through the doorway, to the amazement of his fellow-travellers. A later effort involved a stooge clad in dark glasses (and reading a pianola roll) with one leg encased in a plaster cast. This "unfortunate soul" entered another crowded train compartment where a seat was quickly made available. At the next stop, a surly, villainous Humphries lurched into the carriage (reading "Mein Kampf") and promptly tripped over the plaster cast at the earliest opportunity. "Get out of my way, you blind, crippled bastard" he cried, before making a hurried exit lest he suffer the rancour of the commuters present.

Finding himself disenchanted with his arts course, Humphries eventually decided his talents lay in the theatre and in 1954 he joined the Union Repertory Theatre company. Several of their productions involved tours throughout country Victoria and the rigours of lengthy bus travel unearthed many strange and novel characters from the minds of those gathered. In one such improvisation, Humphries lampooned the various lady Mayoresses they encountered by adopting a falsetto voice based on a couple of his favourite aunties back in Melbourne. This staid voice of suburbia was soon introduced in a production called "Return Fare" in the guise of 'Mrs. Norm Everage' of Moonee Ponds (a Melbourne suburb). The sketch was about the shortage of accommodation for visitors to the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, and was later recorded on Humphries' first disc "Wildlife In Suburbia". A megastar was in embryo.

In the 1950s, Sydney's Phillip Street Theatre was the home of the revue in Australia, and Barry Humphries ventured north to appear in a couple of productions ("Mr. And Mrs." and "Around The Loop") before returning home for the controversial "Waiting For Godot" and a children's piece he co-authored called "The Bunyip And The Satellite".

In 1958 Edna Everage appeared again in "The Rock 'n' Reel Revue" along with the latest Humphries' discovery, wizened homily-rambling 'Sandy Stone'. The public and critics as well were beginning to take notice of the strange, long-haired satirist who was finding a rich vein of amusement beneath the topsoil of normal everyday life.

Humphries was now appearing on the infant Australian television scene ... as a bunyip reading children's stories (on a weekly basis for Melbourne's channel 7 from September 1958) and in two A.B.C. revues ("Wild Life And Christmas Belles" on December 10 1958, and "Trip T's And High C's" on February 18 1959). But despite this degree of success and the promise of doors starting to open for him, Humphries had made a decision. He was off to England.

With his second wife, Rosalind (he had briefly married his first wife Brenda in 1955) he arrived in Britain in mid-1959 with confidence, a few introductions, and not a lot of money. By the end of the year he'd been cast in a small role in "The Demon Barber" at the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith, and by the following June had secured the part of the undertaker in the smash-hit musical "Oliver".



The 1960s was an exciting decade for comedy in Great Britain, but for Barry Humphries it was a time of frustration and disappointment. Being contracted to appear in a West-End success may have been comforting for the bank balance, but for a creative artist eager to exploit his ideas and characterisations, it was a stifling experience. After a lengthy run with "Oliver" he was able to gain his release and headed back to Australia to star in his first one-man show "A Nice Night's Entertainment".

Edna and Sandy were joined by several new characters in a triumphant performance, highlights of which were released on a Parlophone LP. Humphries made the first of several appearances on T.V.'s "Meet The Press" to promote the show (Channel 7, July 29 1962) and following its season in Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra and Adelaide Edna was a guest on "Startime" (Channel 7 November 24 1962) telling news of her recent trip to the 'old country' and showing some slides. (* footage of this segment survives).

Early the following year, Humphries headed for Broadway. Not with the one-man show, but to resume his Sowerberry role in the American version of "Oliver". Back in London, Edna made her debut in front of a British audience at The Establishment Club, the home of the satire wave. Unfortunately it was not a success, although its owner, Peter Cook, suggested Humphries might like to adapt one of his characters to a comic strip in his other venture, the fortnightly magazine "Private Eye".

It was not Edna, nor even Sandy Stone, who appealed to Cook, but rather the lesser known 'Buster Thompson', an Aussie lad living in London, who had appeared on the Score label LP "Sandy Agonistes" a couple of years earlier. A slightly more 'ocker' version of Buster was rechristened 'Barry McKenzie' and (with drawings by Nicholas Garland) appeared for the first time in Private Eye issue *67 (July 10 1964). The strip ran until issue *320 (March 22 1974) with an eighteen-month break from late 1971 until early 1973.

Humphries' penchant for shocking his fellow man found ample scope in McKenzie and he invented dozens of colourful colloquialisms covering just about every bodily function. The popularity of the character in Britain was not shared by a number of critics back in Australia who judged McKenzie an appalling slight on the traditional 'sun-bronzed Aussie', and the magazine (along with "The Wonderful World Of Barry McKenzie" paperback) was banned from sale down under.

In London though, Barry Humphries was busily engaged in a number of ventures. On stage he appeared in Spike Milligan's "The Bed-Sitting Room", "Merry Rooster's Panto" and "Maggie May". The association with Milligan also led to radio work in "The Omar Khayyam Show" (BBC Home Service December 27 1963 to January 24 1964 and May 5 1964) and a couple of Milligan specials "The G.P.O. Show" (BBC Home December 25 1964) and "The Army Show" (BBC Home June 16 1965). At the time Milligan called him "one of the funniest men in the world ... if you don't think so, then it's your loss". Humphries also turned up in several episodes of the first series of Peter Cook and Dudley Moore's "Not Only ... But Also" (BBC2 January to April 1965). (* footage of one of Humphries sketches, satirising the North Circular Road's cafes, may be found on the 1990 video "The Best Of What's Left Of Not Only But Also").

By the end of 1965, he had written enough new material for Edna, Sandy and a few new characters to stage a second one-man show in Melbourne and Sydney. It was titled "Excuse I" and like the earlier production, proved enormously successful. At home, Humphries could do no wrong, but it was still a battle in Britain.

Returning to London, he took part in B.B.C. television's "The Late Show" and Edna Everage was launched into the living rooms of the British viewer. Humphries also returned (for a third time) to the stage musical "Oliver" but this time in the lead role of 'Fagin'. He made his movie debut in 1967 in Peter Cook and Dudley Moore's "Bedazzled" and had a small part in "The Bliss Of Mrs. Blossom" the following year. In between he appeared at Bernard Miles' Mermaid Theatre in its Christmas offering of "Treasure Island" (as 'Long John Silver').

In mid-1968 he was back in Australia for his new presentation "Just A Show" and the response received convinced him to at last attempt a one-man show in the West End. "Just A Show" opened the following year at the Fortune Theatre to mixed reviews from the critics and a disappointing reaction from the public, who were not yet familiar with Edna, Sandy and company and not quite attuned to the Humphries' wavelength.

The B.B.C., however, offered him a television special which went out as "Strangers In The Night" (BBC2 July 12 1969) and were sufficiently pleased with the result to sign him for a series the following year. "The Barry Humphries Scandals" was a collection of sketches, some of which attracted the attention of the B.B.C. censor who was unhappy with several of the items recorded. A blackout involving hair-restorer and its effect on armpits, and a musical sendup of Ned Kelly found particular disdain with the powers-that-be, and as a result of editorial pruning the programme had only enough material to run five episodes (instead of the customary six). The series ran on BBC2 from January 12 to February 9 1970, and was not sold for screening in Australia.

books by BARRY HUMPHRIES:

- 1965 Bizarre
- 1968 The Barry Humphries Book Of Innocent Austral Verse
- 1969 The Wonderful World Of Barry McKenzie *
- 1972 Bazza Pulls It Off *
- 1973 The Adventures Of Barry McKenzie #
- 1974 Bazza Holds His Own #
- 1976 Dame Edna's Coffee Table Book
- 1978 Bazza Comes Into His Own *
- 1979 Les Patterson's Australia
- 1979 The Sound Of Edna (Songbook)
- 1980 Barry Humphries' Treasury Of Australian Kitsch
- 1981 A Nice Night's Entertainment #
- 1982 Dame Edna's Bedside Companion
- 1985 Les Patterson: The Traveller's Tool
- 1988 The Complete Barry McKenzie *
- 1989 Dame Edna Everage: My Gorgeous Life
- 1990 The Life And Death Of Sandy Stone #

(* comic strip collection, # scripts)

books about BARRY HUMPHRIES:

- 1979 Ratbags (by Keith Dunstan)
- chapter about Humphries
- 1984 Automatic Vaudeville (by John Lahr)
- chapter about Humphries
- 1984 The Humour Of Barry Humphries
- scripts selected by John Allen
- 1990 The Real Barry Humphries
(by Peter Coleman)

In the meantime, Humphries had returned to Australia and was a special guest on the big-budget Seven Network variety series "The Entertainers", prerecording items for three editions (August 10 and 17, and September 16 1969). He appeared as Edna, 'Big Sonia' (a folksinger he had introduced in "Just A Show"), and as a bearded landscape artist not entirely dissimilar to Rolf Harris.

Despite his success in Australia, he was becoming increasingly frustrated by the lack of acceptance in Britain, and to make matters worse a number of voices at home were continually sniping at his portrayal of the Australian way of life overseas (via Edna and co.). Like many another great comedian, alcohol was playing a serious part in his life and the crunch came in mid-1970 with a drunken altercation which left him bloodied and bruised, followed by a disturbance involving the police. Humphries had the sense to realize that things could not continue unchanged, and he spent time in a hospital 'drying out'. Resolving to abandon all forms of alcohol from that point on, he launched forth with renewed ambition, and his career has never looked back.

He started by writing a series of weekly columns for the Melbourne "Age" newspaper titled "My Monday Wash" (20 weeks from August 3 1970) and was a guest on two "Not Only ... But Also" specials recorded in Australia the following year (ABC TV February 8 and 15 1971). He also set about preparing a new stage show, to be titled "A Load Of Olde Stuffe", which premiered in Sydney in April 1971 before transferring to Melbourne mid-year.

By the early 1970s, censorship restrictions had been lifted on "The Wonderful World Of Barry McKenzie" and moreover the newly set-up Film Development Corporation (funded by a government grant) decided to turn it into a movie. With actor Barry Crocker in the title role and Barry Humphries playing Edna and two other characters, cameras started rolling in 1972. The all-star cast also featured Dennis Price, Dick Bentley and old mates Peter Cook and Spike Milligan.

Despite being somewhat episodic (in following the disjointed storyline of the comic strip) the film proved a moneyspinner in both Britain and Australia, and led to a sequel "Barry McKenzie Holds His Own". The climax of the second picture contained a major character update for Mrs. Edna Everage of Moonee Ponds ... she was made a Dame by Prime Minister Gough Whitlam who had agreed to take part in the production.

Humphries returned the compliment by lampooning Mrs. Margaret Whitlam in his next theatrical venture "At Least You Can Say You've Seen It" which began a national tour in 1974. By now "Sandy Stone" had passed on, a condition which has not resulted in any lessening of his appearances since then, and Dame Edna blossomed forth with the daintiness of a volcano.

As the seventies progressed, she swept majestically on to the sets of all the major British and Australian talk shows, and the Russell Hartys and Michael Parkinsons were forced to retreat behind their clipboards under the onslaught. By the middle of the decade Humphries had developed a fourth persona to promote his 'stable' ... the intemperate and indefatigable Les Patterson.

Originally cast as a cultural attache for the R.S.L., Les was soon endowed with a knighthood and posted to the Court of St. James. In 1976 he was the opening character in Humphries' latest attempt to crack the 'big-time' in London ... a stage show called "Housewife-Superstar!". And finally, after years of preparation and promotion, Barry Humphries triumphed.

The show was the hit of the season, and after its initial engagement at the Apollo Theatre the demand for tickets was so strong it continued on at the Globe. The B.B.C. signed him for three specials (aired on BBC2 On March 3 1976 and September 26 and December 5 1977) and Dame Edna and Sir Les were "flavours of the month".

But would the flavour cross the Atlantic? In late 1977 Humphries decided to find out, opening at New York's Theater Four. In the lead up to the opening he appeared on N.B.C.'s popular "Saturday Night Live" in the guise of Dame Edna, who (as usual) proceeded to take full charge of the proceedings. Humphries' main problem was that he was largely unknown to Mr. and Mrs. middle-America, and had not laid the groundwork of television interviews and similar promotions to rectify this. As a result, the success or otherwise of his show depended on the reaction of the newspaper critics. Alas, despite favourable reviews from Rex Reed and several others, the influential New York Times was not impressed, and the battle was lost. The show closed after a scant four weeks.

Humphries retreated to Australia and the following year presented "Isn't It Pathetic At His Age", which soon after, transferred to London as "A Night With Dame Edna" and garnered him the award for "best comedy performance of the year" from the London Society of West End Managements. The B.B.C. also produced an in-depth documentary about Dame Edna titled "La Dame Aux Gladiolas" (BBC2 March 19 1979).

films featuring BARRY HUMPHRIES:

- 1967 Bedazzled
- 1968 The Bliss Of Mrs. Blossom
- 1970 The Naked Bunyip *
- 1972 The Adventures Of Barry McKenzie *
- 1974 Barry McKenzie Holds His Own *
- 1974 Percy's Progress *
- 1975 The Great MacArthy
- 1975 Side By Side
- 1976 Pleasure At Her Majesty's *
- 1977 The Getting Of Wisdom
- 1978 Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.
- 1981 Shock Treatment
- 1982 A Toast To Melbourne (short)
- 1984 Dr. Fischer Of Geneva (aka Bomb Party) (telemovie)
- 1987 Les Patterson Saves The World *
- 1987 The Marsupials (aka Howling 111)

(* as Edna Everage)



By the 1980s, Humphries had married for the third time, to artist Diane Millstead and was soon the father of two sons (his marriage to second wife Rosalind had produced two daughters). His career path had settled into a pattern of preparing a new one-man show every three years for Australia and London and making occasional forays into television. He presented the first of his "Audience With Dame Edna"s on London Weekend on Boxing Day 1980, and three more followed throughout the decade (on December 31 1984 and December 25 1988 in Britain, and "An Aussie Audience With Dame Edna" on the Seven Network on April 14 1986).

His stage offerings included "An Evening's Intercourse With Barry Humphries" (Australia 1981 and London 1982), "The Last Night Of The Poms" at London's Royal Albert Hall in late 1981 (and presented in Australia as "Song Of Australia" in 1983), and "Tears Before Bedtime" (Australia 1986/7 and London 1987/8).

In 1986 he ventured into films again with "Les Patterson Saves The World", playing not only the lead role but Dame Edna as well. Unfortunately it was not a success and hopes of breaking into the American market were once again dashed, although he did make several appearances on Joan Rivers' "Late Show" on U.S. television as Dame Edna and Sir Les.

Less than a year later Dame Edna herself was hosting her own talk show "The Dame Edna Experience" and Rivers was one of the first guests (along with Sean Connery, Larry Hagman and Charlton Heston). Joan Collins, who had crossed swords with the Dame on one of the Rivers telecasts, declined to appear. The series was yet another award-winner, and a follow-up season was commissioned for 1989.

With the start of the 1990s, Humphries had a new wife (the former Lizzie Spender) and turned his attention to one of his favourite creations, Sandy Stone. Following a 30-minute presentation on "Single Voices" (BBC1 June 3 1990), Sandy was seen in a full-length stage production "The Life And Death Of Sandy Stone" resurrecting many of the original Stone sketches performed over the previous thirty years. A four-part television adaption of the show was screened by the A.B.C. in May 1991.

As he approaches forty years of performing, Barry Humphries' future indeed looks bright. He's just signed a multi-million dollar contract with London Weekend Television, and it only needs the Americans to realize what they're missing out on for his triumph to be complete.

THE DAME EDNA EXPERIENCE:

s.1: LWT Sep 12 to Oct 17 1987 (45m)

- 1/1 Mary Whitehouse/Cliff Richard/
Sean Connery
- 1/2 Jeffrey Archer/Demis Roussos/
Joan Rivers
- 1/3 Jane Seymour/Arthur Marshall/
Larry Hagman
- 1/4 Zsa Zsa Gabor/Germaine Greer/
Nana Mouskouri
- 1/5 Charlton Heston/Jerry Hall/
Patrick Lichfield
- 1/6 Sir John Mills/Rudolf Nureyev/
Cynthia Payne

LWT Dec 26 1987 (60m)

*** Roger Moore/Lulu/Denis Healey

s.2: LWT Nov 4 to Dec 16 1989 (45m)

- 2/1 Douglas Fairbanks Jr/Jane Fonda/
Chubby Checker
- 2/2 Liza Minnelli/Magnus Magnusson/
Vivienne Westwood
- 2/3 Dusty Springfield/Dolph Lundgren/
Edward Heath
- 2/4 Jason Donovan/Glenys Kinnock/
Malcolm McDowell/David Suchet
- 2/5 Tom Jones/Lauren Bacall/
Gerald Durrell
- 2/6 Tony Curtis/Christiaan Barnard/
Grace Jones

LWT Dec 22 1989 (50m)

*** Yehudi Menuhin/Ursula Andress/
Robert Kilroy-Silk

A NIGHT ON MOUNT EDNA:

LWT Dec 15 1990

*** Gina Lollobrigida/Mel Gibson/
Charlton Heston/Julio Iglesias

DISCOGRAPHY:

- 1958: EP WILD LIFE IN SUBURBIA (Score POL 014)
The Migrant Hostess (Edna Everage)/Days Of The Week (Sandy Stone)
- 1959: EP WILD LIFE IN SUBURBIA - VOLUME 2 (Score POL 018)
Highett Fidelity (Edna Everage)/Dear Beryl (Sandy Stone)
- 1960: LP SANDY AGONISTES (Score POL 024)
Buster Thompson/Debbie Thwaite/Colin Cartwright/Sandy Agonistes (Sandy Stone)
- 1960: LP OLIVER! (Decca LK 4359/SKL 4105, reissued as SPA 30)
Barry Humphries is featured on one track: That's Your Funeral (with Sonia Fraser)
- 1962: LP A NICE NIGHT'S ENTERTAINMENT (Parlophone PMCO 7519, reissued as PMEO 9613)
Australian Vitality - Mrs. Norm Everage/Edna Everage Meets Friends Old And New/
Can You Keep A Secret With Sandy Stone?
- 1964: LP MAGGY MAY (Decca LK/SKL 4643)
Barry Humphries is featured on two tracks: The Ballad Of The "Liver" Bird and a reprise of the song
- 1964: flexidisc I SAW DADDY KISSING SANTA CLAUS (Lyntone LYN 758) (***) free with Private Eye magazine of December 18 1964)
Barry Humphries appears as Sandy Stone in a Christmas greeting
- 1965: LP PRIVATE EYE'S BLUE RECORD (Transatlantic TRA 131)
Barry Humphries appears on two tracks: The Old Pacific Sea and Earl's Court Blues
- 1965: 7" single CHUNDER DOWN UNDER (Bulletin MX 19053/4)
Snow Complications/The Old Pacific Sea
- 1967: 7" single Ulysses Rag/Love's Old Sweet Song (R.C.A. RCA 1579) (***) Barry Humphries is featured on the A-side only)
- 1967: flexidisc ABOMINABLE RADIO GNOME (Lyntone LYN ????) (***) free with Private Eye magazine of December 8 1967)
Barry Humphries sings The Little One-Eyed Trouser Snake
- 1970: EP THE NAKED BUNYIP (Big Time Records/Bunyip BUN 069)
Barry Humphries appears as Edna Everage in soundtrack extracts from the film
- 1970: LP BARRY HUMPHRIES (Parlophone PMEO 9616)
Days Of The Week (Sandy Stone)/War Savings Street Song (Edna Everage)/Debbie Thwaite (remake)/
Chunder Down Under: The Old Pacific Sea + Snow Complications (from Bulletin MX 19053/4)
- 1971: LP BARRY HUMPHRIES' SAVOURY DIP (Parlophone PMEO 9716)
Edna's Hymn (Edna Everage)/Wendy The One-Eyed Wombat/Highett Waltz (remake)(Edna Everage)/
Great Big Fish/Barry Humphries At Las Vegas/Sandy Claus (Sandy Stone)
- 1972: LP BARRY HUMPHRIES AT CARNEGIE HALL (Philips 6357 010)
First Day Covers (Edna Everage)/Sandy's Stone/
Sandy Sings Sacred Songs: The Lord's Prayer + Zip A Dee Doo Dah (Sandy Stone)
- 1972: LP THE BARRY HUMPHRIES RECORD OF INNOCENT AUSTRAL VERSE (Philips 6357 011)
Dinki Di/Turntable Of Life/Swagman's Song/Depot Races/The News Boys/Youth/Off/Instant Potato/
Nostalgia/Where The Wattle Blooms/Santa Roo/Mummer's Sick/Seaweed/The Pavements Of Pall Mall/
Melbourne/Lament For Maid Melbourne (Edna Everage)/Beautiful Bung Bong/Perth/Bagman's Gazette/
Prime Minister's Portrait/Mine's A Rum/The Road To Dandenong/Lost A Continent!/The Shunter/
Our Babies/Pig-Face/Australia
- 1972: EP A TRACK WINDING BACK (Philips 6205 019)
Along The Road To Gundagai (with Dick Bentley)/Is 'E An Aussie, Is 'E, Lizzie (with Dick Bentley)/
True British Spunk (Edna Everage)
- 1972: 7" single Is 'E An Aussie, Is 'E, Lizzie (with Dick Bentley)/True British Spunk (Edna Everage)(Philips BF 480)
- 1972: 7" single Ricky Roo/Sandy Sings Sacred Songs: The Lord's Prayer + Zip A Dee Doo Dah (Philips 6037 021)
- 1973: LP PRIVATE EYE'S GOLDEN YEARS OF SOUND (Lyntone LYN 2745/6)
includes the flexidiscs: I Saw Daddy Kissing Santa Claus and Abominable Radio Gnome
- 1976: LP HOUSEWIFE SUPERSTAR! (Charisma CAS 1123 and 9124 004)
features Les Patterson and Dame Edna Everage recorded at London's Globe Theatre on July 8 1976
- 1978: LP THE SOUND OF EDNA (Charisma CAS 1140 and 9124 027)
Life In A Goldfish Bowl/The Night We Burnt My Mother's Things/I'm Sorry/A Woman's Woman/Niceness/
Every Mother Wants A Boy Like Elton/My Bridesmaid And I/I Miss My Norm/S & M Lady
- 1979: 7" single Disco Matilda (Dame Edna Everage)/instrumental mix (Wizard/Big Time BZS 312)
- 1981: LP PRIVATE EYE PRESENTS GOLDEN SATIRICALS (Springtime/Island HAHA 6002)
includes the flexidiscs: I Saw Daddy Kissing Santa Claus and Abominable Radio Gnome
- 1981: LP THE SECRET POLICEMAN'S OTHER BALL (Springtime/Island HAHA 6003, Festival L 37739)
Barry Humphries is featured on one track: The Royal Australian Prostate Foundation (Dame Edna Everage)
- 1981: 2LP THE LAST NIGHT OF THE POMS (E.M.I. EMC 2742/3)
Peter And The Shark (Sir Les Patterson)/Song Of Australia (Dame Edna Everage)
(recorded at the Royal Albert Hall in London on September 14 and 15 1981)
- 1985: LP 12 INCHES OF LES - THE ALBUM (Liberation/Towerbell LIB 5064)
Sir Les Intro/Diplomacy And Diversification/Genuine/Lady Gwen, Former Hand Model/My Old Lady/
San Quentin Or Wormwood Scrubs?/Give Her One For Christmas/You Can't Win 'Em All/
Help Me Make It Through The Night/Political Pitfalls/Never Trust A Man Who Doesn't Drink/
Les Exposes Himself/Motel Mini-Bar/Chairing The Cheeseboard/Song Of Thanks/Sir Les Outro/
Desert Island Dilemmas/Bangkok Chirophy/13,000 Miles
- 1987: 7" single G'Day (Sir Les Patterson)/instrumental mix (Powderworks POW 0387)
- 1987: LP THE LES PATTERSON LONG PLAYER (WEA 254779.1)
Barry Humphries (as Sir Les Patterson) is featured on one vocal of the soundtrack LP of the movie
"Les Patterson Saves The World": Country Music
- 1988: LP THE DAME EDNA PARTY EXPERIENCE (C.B.S. 463235 1)
Bad + When Will I Be Famous + Layla + I Should Be So Lucky + The Locomotion + Bad 'Nice' reprise/
Waltzing Matilda + The Twist/Venus + Like A Virgin + Girls Just Want To Have Fun + Venus reprise/
Shout (Parts 1 and 2)/I Got You Babe - Who Needs You Babe (with Sir Les Patterson)/
I Wanna Dance With Somebody (Who Loves Me) + Stop In The Name Of Love + Dancing In The Street +
I Wanna Dance With Somebody (Who Loves Me) reprise/Neighbours/Leader Of The Pack + It's My Party
- 1988: 12" single Theme From Neighbours/Spooky Christmas/Shout (Parts 1 and 2)(C.B.S./Epic 654503 6)
- 1990: 2CD PARIS (WEA 9031 72072-4)
Barry Humphries makes a guest appearance on this specially recorded rock opera set

THE YOUNG ONES

by Russell Devlin

The Young Ones was the breakthrough British comedy of the 80's, being to its era what Python, Beyond The Fringe and The Goon Show were to their's. It acted as the catalyst which took 'Alternative' comedy from a minor cult to a multi-media genre, and caused a good deal of controversy along the way.

Alternative comedy as a distinct form had begun to appear in the late 1970s, the first performers appearing at fringe theatre and rock gigs. For the most part they were highly educated, but socially below the Oxbridge clique of the previous generation, and their comedy had a more cynical and savage edge to it. Their style was influenced by Python et al., but also by an awareness of negative social changes, a need to react against the racist/sexist jokes of the old style standups and a very real need to survive on stage in the face of potentially nasty crowds.

In 1979, Peter Rosengard opened the Comedy Store in a tatty ex-strip club in Soho. Anyone with the courage could try out their act there, a large gong being sounded when the audience could take no more. This provided the focal point for the early alt's and was where the Young Ones team first met and honed their skills. Alexei Sayle acted as host and soon made a mark with his hostile approach, tangential humour dotted with references to pop culture icons and assorted philosophers, and almost balletic swearing.

Several other comics and groups also began to attract attention. Rik Mayall and Ade Edmonson were "20th Century Coyote", their main routines being 'Rick, the people's poet' and 'the Dangerous Brothers', a noisy and violent slapstick act in which Mayall tried to force Ade into performing fatal stunts. These characters were later developed into Rick and Vyvyan for The Young Ones. 'Rick, the people's poet' became the Marxist side of the TV Rick. Another double act was Nigel Planer and Peter Richardson's "Outer Limits" who did pisstakes of various teleseries, the police and assorted character monologues. Planer developed a talentless hippie folksinger named 'Neil', who was also adapted for the television series.

By 1980 the alts were attracting the attention of various TV producers from the BBC and ITV. Paul Jackson was the first to appreciate the television potential of this type of comedy and produced two "Boom Boom Out Go The Lights" specials (BBC2 October 14 1980 and May 5 1981), which were basically the stage acts of Sayle, Mayall, Edmonson, Planer and others shot in a pseudo-club set. Peter Richardson's act was omitted from the televised version, and the resultant ill-feeling between him and Jackson led to his non-participation in the Young Ones team. Reaction to the specials wasn't all that encouraging, and the concept didn't really work on TV until the "Saturday Live" series of early 1986.

Following a couple of other one-off efforts, Mayall and his old university friends Lise Mayer and Ben Elton came up with a sitcom concept involving Dangerous Brothers style characters and Planer's 'Neil' living in the same house. They approached Paul Jackson, who was already considering a similar project, but along more conventional lines. He was impressed by the scripts totally askance treatment of the student household idea and took it to the BBC Light Entertainment department. The BBC was eager to get involved with the alternative comedy scene and expanded the format to include Alexei Sayle (as the landlord) and actor Christopher Ryan (in lieu of Peter Richardson). The Young Ones premiered on BBC2 in November 1982.

The opening episode "Demolition" establishes the characters and sets the tone of the series, though appearing quite tame when compared to later shows. It begins with Rick dancing along to the title music, which is an energetic cover version of the old Cliff Richard hit (later used as the title of one of his films). Along with Lenin and Trotsky, Cliff is one of Rick's idols and is virtually a running gag throughout the series. Rick is a new wave student anarchist whose plans for world revolution are frustrated by total cowardice, selfishness, and acne.

In the TV version Neil is a tedious, stupid, new-age whinger who wears flared trousers. Forced to do all the domestic duties, his pot of lentils winds up on the floor in the first of many gross scenes that punctuate the series. The black humour and alleged 'poor taste' led to much criticism in some quarters, not only for offending the more gentle souls viewing, but more importantly for the charge that it was merely covering up weak comedy. The Young Ones always had a ragged edged look to it and invariably took a kitchen-sink approach, but overall it used shock effect to give structure and punch to the show, and not just to get cheap laughs. Like most good alternative comedy it pushed the boundary of what was acceptable, and was always bound to offend someone. Like the Goons and Python before it, the team had plenty of censorship strife but ultimately got away with what they wanted.

Meanwhile, back in the first episode, Mike (the cool person) appears and asks if there have been any calls for him. Mike's character was the least defined of the series, possibly because of Ryan's substitution for Richardson, who is a writer as well as a performer. Mike evolved into a Bilko-style conman, dominating the others and frequently teaming up with Vyvyan against Rick and/or Neil, but to the viewer he was often overshadowed by the noisy screen presence of the others. (Ryan has appeared in guest roles since the series, but has not enjoyed the post-Young Ones success of the rest of the team).

The arrival of Vyvyan (the punk) was somewhat dramatic as he burst through the wall and landed on the table as the others were eating their lentils. A medical student who brings home severed limbs as homework, he is the most violent of the group but also the most sensible (in his own way). Bedecked with metal studs through his forehead and a battered jacket with "Very Mental" on it, he has become a symbol of the age. His sensitive side was shown by his pet Glaswegian hamster, which has been starved for weeks so it won't become spoilt. (It ultimately escapes and eats most of the lentils).

Finally we meet Alexei Sayle as Chertsey Balowski (and indeed the entire Balowski family in subsequent episodes). He is the jolly Russian emigre landlord who, in an aside, confesses he only acts foreign to appear sophisticated. During the first season his appearance generally resulted in an abbreviated version of one of his stage monologues, but by series two he was more integrated into the plot and played definite characters, ranging from medieval game show hosts to Mussolini.

The storyline was also interrupted by a music break (by the group "Nine Below Zero" in this first episode), talking rats and subliminal inserts (in the second season). It was obviously no ordinary sitcom and soon became a cult show with students all over Britain and, despite being ignored or derided by mainstream critics, quickly found favour with the general youth subculture. More than a few of their parents were watching as well.



On initial viewings, the show's raw energy and constant inventiveness carries it along, its flaws only becoming obvious on repeated screenings. Plotting was not high on the writers' list of priorities, and sometimes the overacting wore a bit thin. But there is no denying the overall talent of the writers and performers involved, whose later work shaped such hits as Blackadder, The Comic Strip Presents, Red Dwarf and Alexei Sayle's Stuff among others. Many of the stars of these shows made guest appearances and walk-ons in The Young Ones.

By the time of the show's second season (in May 1984) everyone had heard of The Young Ones and the books, T-shirts and other memorabilia were in the shops. Series two continued the style of the first batch but had a tighter, slicker feel about it. This time there were send-ups of other teleseries and the costly puppet vignettes had gone. The final edition ends with a tribute to the Cliff Richard film "Summer Holiday". The boys, having failed their exams and been thrown out of the house, rob a bank and escape in a stolen double-decker bus. Their hopes of an idyllic holiday with Una Stubbs are cut short when the bus drives off a cliff and bursts into flames.

The group did resurface in April 1986 for a series of "Comic Relief" concerts at London's Shaftesbury Theatre when they sang "Living Doll" live with their idol Cliff Richard. A single recording was soon selling as well as Cliff's original. The vocal can also be seen on the Comic Relief video (though Richard, who was apparently worried about his image, has been replaced by Bob Geldof).

"THE YOUNG ONES" EPISODE GUIDE

Ade Edmonson Vyvyan
Rik Mayall Rick
Nigel Planer Neil
Christopher Ryan ... Mike
Alexei Sayle The Balowski Family

All scripts by Ben Elton, Rik Mayall and Lise Mayer

Produced by Paul Jackson

- 1/1 DEMOLITION (BBC2 November 9 1982)
When their student residence is threatened with demolition, Neil attempts suicide and Rik tries crucifixion. British Airways makes a guest spot.
Band: Nine Below Zero
(Ben Elton and Andy De La Tour also appear)
- 1/2 OIL (BBC2 November 16 1982)
The boys move into their new house, where Mike finds Buddy Holly stuck in the ceiling and Vyvyan discovers oil. Neil and Rick are conscripted as forced labour so a revolution is planned. A benefit concert with Balowski singing "Doctor Marten's Boots" will incite the masses. (By the way, it was a complete lie about the oil).
Band: Radical Posture
(Robbie Coltrane and Patrick Newell also appear)
- 1/3 BORING (BBC2 November 23 1982)
Even a terrorist attack can't liven up a boring day at the house, so the boys decide on a boring time at the pub where Vyvyan's mother meets Mike. A demon from hell meets a man from Kellogg's, and the three bears just miss meeting a flying saucer on an otherwise boring day.
Band: Madness
(Patrick Newell, Ken Parry and David Rappaport also appear)
- 1/4 BOMB (BBC2 November 30 1982)
The arrival of a nuclear device affects different people in different ways. Neil consults the "Protect And Survive" handbook, Mike tries to sell it, Vyvyan tries to kick start it, and Rick sees it as a terrorist's best friend. Meanwhile the best way to thwart the TV licence man is to eat the telly.
Band: Dexy's Midnight Runners
- 1/5 INTERESTING (BBC2 December 7 1982)
The boys' student party has everything ... singing vegetables, an evangelist, and the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. All it needs is the arrival of Vyvyan's violent friends. Still, it was all a dream, or was it?
Band: Rip, Rig And Panic
(Keith Allen, Tony Allen, Nicholas Ball, Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders also appear)
- 1/6 FLOOD (BBC2 December 14 1982)
Indoors because of the rain, Rick imagines himself the super-hero "People's Poet" but a game of hide-and-seek is called off on account of flood. Meanwhile Mr. Balowski drinks Vyvyan's concoction and turns into a crazed maniac. Luckily there are lions in the spare room.
no band
(Arnold Brown, Ben Elton, Gareth Hale, Norman Pace and David Rappaport also appear)
- 2/1 BAMBI (BBC2 May 8 1984)
The boys are chosen as the Scumbag College team to go on University Challenge, but after an eventful train trip arrive several days late. A spot of cheating and the odd grenade nearly gain them victory, but fate intervenes.
Band: Motor Head
(Robbie Coltrane, Ben Elton, Stephen Fry, Tony Robinson, Emma Thompson, Griff Rhys Jones and Mel Smith appear)
- 2/2 CASH (BBC2 May 15 1984)
Short of money, the boys are forced to burn Neil and Rick's possessions and decide someone must get a job. As Vyvyan claims he's pregnant, Neil joins the police and busts a hippy party. Meanwhile a furniture van has crashed into the house, and Vyvyan realizes it was only wind.
Band: Ken Bishop's Nice Twelve
(Andy De La Tour and Alan Freeman also appear)
- 2/3 NASTY (BBC2 May 29 1984)
Harry the bastard rents the boys a video nasty but their viewing is interrupted by a vampire from South Africa who craves virgin blood.
Band: The Damned
(Arnold Brown, Dawn French, Gareth Hale and Terry Jones also appear)
- 2/4 SICK (BBC2 June 5 1984)
The boys are all ill in bed and held hostage by an escaped convict. Just then Neil's parents arrive and aren't at all pleased he isn't in a nice show like "The Good Life". Or is he?
Band: Madness
(Ben Elton, Brian Oulton and Peggy Thorpe-Bates appear)
- 2/5 TIME (BBC2 June 12 1984)
Rick finds himself in bed with a lady who turns out to be an escaped maniac. Realizing the immense oneupmanship potential this affords, he is soon at odds with Vyvyan. However, they are interrupted when Neil is carried off by a medieval knight, a torture game show appears on the telly, and the house is surrounded by a mob of peasants.
Band: Amazulu
(Robbie Coltrane, Dawn French, Jennifer Saunders, Helen Lederer, Gareth Hale and Norman Pace also appear)
- 2/6 SUMMER HOLIDAY (BBC2 June 19 1984)
After a short spell as the Incredible Hulk, Neil invites everyone to his incredibly dull birthday party, except for Mr. Balowski, who crashes it anyway. Soon the boys are evicted and then find they've failed their exams. The only thing for it, is to pull a bank job and escape on a double-decker bus to a summer holiday.
Band:
(Ben Elton, Alan Freeman, Lenny Henry, Helen Lederer and Norman Lovett also appear)

RECORDS: Nigel Planer (as Neil) released two singles and an album ...
1984: Hole In My Shoe/Hurdy Gurdy Mushroom Man (WEA YZ 10) *** exists as a 7" single, 7" picture disc, 12" single
My White Bicycle/Cosmic Jam (WEA YZ 30) *** exists as a 7" single and a 12" single
Neil's Heavy Concept Album (WEA WX 12)
Hello Vegetables/Hole In My Shoe/Heavy Potato Encounter/My White Bicycle/Neil The Barbarian/
Lentil Nightmare/Computer Alarm/Wayne/The Gnome/Cosmic Jam/Golf Girl/Bad Karma In The UK/Our Tune/Ken/
The End Of The World Cabaret/No Future (God Save The Queen)/Floating/Hurdy Gurdy Man/Paranoia Remix/
The Amoeba Song
Edmonson, Mayall, Planer and Ryan appeared for "Comic Relief" on a single and an album ...
1986: Living Doll (also featuring Cliff Richard)/(All The Little Flowers Are) Happy (WEA 7.248764)
Comic Relief Presents - Utterly Utterly Live (WEA WX 51)
includes The Young Ones+Living Doll (also featuring Cliff Richard, Raw Sex, Howard Goodall and Midge Ure)
A Bit Of A Downer (Planer only as Neil)

BOOKS: "Bachelor Boys - The Young Ones Book" by Ben Elton, Rik Mayall and Lise Mayer (Sphere Books paperback, 1984)
"Neil's Book Of The Dead" by Nigel Planer and Terence Blacker (Pavilion Books paperback, 1984)

VIDEOS: B.B.C. Video has released three volumes of original television episodes from the series ...
BBCV 4166 Oil/Boring/Flood
BBCV 4426 Bambi/Nasty/Time
BBCV 4476 Demolition/Bomb/Sick

Virgin Video has released a video of highlights from the April 1986 "Comic Relief" concerts ...

VVD 169 Comic Relief - Live And Uncensored

includes Do You Love Me (Mayall vocal), Living Doll (all four, plus Bob Geldof)

WHAT'S OUT ON VIDEO

Before the 1980s comedy collectors who wished to build up a library of old movies (or to a much lesser degree television programmes) had to invest in a movie projector of the 16mm or 8mm variety, and hope they could somehow obtain a copy of the item they sought. Nearly everything was protected by the laws of copyright, and often the only way of acquiring the desired footage was to purchase an illegal (and often poor-quality) print. Whilst many a film buff still requires his target on celluloid, the vast majority of collectors can now indulge in their hobby quite legitimately thanks to the development of the video cassette. (Of course it is still possible to breach copyright by pirating material from television or commercial release, but that's another story!).

The major point the budding video collector should realize is that different countries use different systems of television, and therefore the resultant videos are incompatible (in most cases). This applies to off-air recordings as well as own-your-own releases purchased in shops. The actual video cassette may be exactly the same in different parts of the globe, but the recording on it will be going at a different speed and use a different picture resolution. In all, there are three basic systems in operation: N.T.S.C. (used in most of the Americas and Japan)

P.A.L. (used in Britain, Australia and most of Europe)

SECAM (use in France and the U.S.S.R.)

Trading or buying tapes within the same system is fine, but from one to another just won't work (this applies equally to VHS or the remaining BETA equipment). It is possible to purchase special NTSC-playable PAL machines and vice versa, but these are only a very small per cent of the market and must be sought out by the collector intent on being able to play items from another part of the globe.

In this first article on what is commercially available, let's give a brief summary of the situation in Britain, the U.S. and Australia ...

BRITAIN: Most tapes are priced at £9-99 and contain around ninety minutes of programme (usually three half-hour episodes). The range of old television shows available is very large, with the B.B.C. releasing numerous titles (although it should be pointed out that a number of these have deleted the opening and closing credits from the original telecasts).

Currently available: Black Adder (8 volumes covering all 24 episodes)
Monty Python's Flying Circus (4 volumes covering series 2 only)
Yes, Prime Minister (4 volumes covering 12 episodes)
Ripping Yarns (3 volumes covering all 9 episodes)
Up Pompeii (2 volumes covering 6 episodes)
Porridge (2 volumes covering 5 episodes and a Christmas show)
Hancock's Half Hour (6 volumes covering 18 episodes)
The Fall And Rise Of Reginald Perrin (2 volumes of highlights)
Citizen Smith (2 volumes covering 6 episodes)
Fawlty Towers (4 volumes covering all 12 episodes)
Dad's Army (4 volumes covering 12 episodes)
Steptoe And Son (6 volumes covering 12 colour and 6 b/w episodes)
Jeeves And Wooster (3 volumes with a 50m episode on each)
The Last Goon Show Of All (40m of highlights from the 1972 show)
I Love Lucy (3 volumes covering 9 episodes)
Bewitched (1 volume covering 4 episodes)

AUSTRALIA: Most tapes are priced at \$29-95 and like Britain run around ninety minutes. Indeed about a third of tapes featuring British television shows (particularly BBC product) are released in Australia. Of the local series, only a handful have been released on video.

Currently available: The Comedy Company
The Big Gig
Mother And Son
Acropolis Now
The Norman Gunston Show
The Gillies Report
Monty Python's Flying Circus (8 volumes covering series 2 and 3)

UNITED STATES: Tapes vary between \$14-95 and \$29-95 (although a number of unlicensed public-domain releases may be bought for under \$10). Because NTSC runs faster than PAL most television product only runs an hour, and some of the cheaper variety is recorded at the long-play speed. The sell-through market is not nearly as big as in Britain (or even Australia).

Currently available: I Love Lucy (8 volumes with 2 episodes on each)
The (Lost) Honeymooners (22 volumes with 2 episodes on each)
Monty Python's Flying Circus (17 volumes with 2 episodes on each, including programmes from series 1, 2 and 3 in jumbled order)

The above listings are a brief summation of what's currently on the shelves. But bear in mind, like records and books, titles are often deleted from the catalogues.

It is hoped future editions of LAUGH will be able to provide a more in-depth itemisation of the comedy product released in the above three centres. The support of our readers in keeping us posted on what's about would be greatly appreciated.

JACK BENNY ON TELEVISION

by Peter Tatchell

The year 1950 was a pivotal one for American television. It was no longer the poor relation of network radio, and could afford to attract such major talents as Bob Hope, Eddie Cantor, Jimmy Durante, George Burns and Gracie Allen, Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, and Jack Benny. The medium's "golden age" had begun.

By the late 1940s, Benny's radio show was one of the most popular on the air with a solid cast of ensemble players built up since the 1930s ... Mary Livingstone (the real-life Mrs. Benny), rotund announcer Don Wilson, manservant Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, boozey orchestra leader Phil Harris, and scatterbrained vocalist Dennis Day. Cartoon voice Mel Blanc and a half a dozen others also appeared regularly in character roles.

Benny first appeared on the small screen on March 8 1949 at the launching of Los Angeles local station KTTV (11), but his network debut required much thought and preparation. It took place in New York City on October 28 the following year, and went out live to CBS stations east of the Mississippi (the others getting a recording the following month). The 45-minute telecast also featured radio regulars Wilson, Anderson and Blanc and featured guests Ken Murray and Dinah Shore.

In those early days none of the big names appeared on a weekly basis, and in Jack's case he did only three other shows that first season (each running 30-minutes, and all out of New York). By the end of 1951 technical advances allowed production to move to Hollywood, but the Benny team resisted the temptation of airing a weekly programme and throughout the 1950s he appeared every six weeks (1951/2), every four (1952/3), every three (1953/4) then on a fortnightly basis for the rest of the decade. It wasn't until his eleventh season (1960/1) that "The Jack Benny Program" could be seen every week.

With the transfer to television all the radio cast appeared at one time or another, with Wilson, Anderson and Livingstone semi-regulars in the early years, and Day seen more often in the 1960s. Mary had never enjoyed performing in front of an audience and by the late 1940s (with the advent of recording tape) had pre-recorded her part for the radio show. By 1958, the retirement of Gracie Allen prompted her to make a similar decision (although she did take part in a subsequent Benny 1-hour special some years later).

As with the radio version, the Benny programme was noted for its ability to attract the most famous celebrities as guest stars. Ex-president Harry Truman, movie stars Humphrey Bogart, Marilyn Monroe, Gary Cooper and Barbara Stanwyck appeared, as did musical greats such as Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Liberace, Maurice Chevalier and Johnny Ray. Not to mention old comedy sparring partners like Fred Allen, Bob Hope, George Burns, Groucho Marx and Red Skelton. Ronald Colman and his wife transferred their radio "feud" with Benny to television, and later on Mr. and Mrs. James Stewart continued the routine. Like "Laugh-In" in the 1960s, and "The Muppet Show" in the 1970s, it was the show to be on.

By 1965, "The Jack Benny Program" was no longer in the top ten and its star (then in his seventies) decided to restrict himself to the occasional special, all of which were shown on N.B.C. (as was his final weekly season of 1964/5). When he died (on Boxing Day, 1974) he had become an American institution, and his radio and television shows were regarded as classics.

THE JACK BENNY PROGRAM - EPISODE GUIDE

Most of the 1950s editions were performed live and where copies survive they exist only on kinescope. Certain episodes were filmed from late 1953 onwards, with a view to network repeats or overseas sales and it is these programmes that form the basis of the current syndication package (of 105 shows). Back in the 1950s, three editions of "General Electric Theatre" featuring Jack Benny as guest star were also included in the package offered for screening outside the U.S.A.:

November 21 1954 The Face Is Familiar
February 19 1956 The Honest Man
March 3 1957 The Fenton Touch

***	October 28 1950	Ken Murray and Dinah Shore (Zeke Benny and his Ozark Mountain Daredevils) (45m)
1/1	January 28 1951	Frank Sinatra, Fay Emerson and Frank Fontaine (Jack's sex appeal)
1/2	April 1 1951	Claudette Colbert, Robert Montgomery and Basil Rathbone (Jack wants to act on TV Playhouse)
1/3	May 20 1951	Ben Hogan (Jack goes golfing)
2/1	November 4 1951	Dorothy Shay (Zeke Benny and his Mad Mountain Boys)
2/2	December 16 1951	Helene Françoise, Linette Brynart and Leon Salvatore
2/3	January 27 1952	Barbara Stanwyck and Ray Noble (send-up of "Gaslight") * redone on January 11 1959
2/4	March 9 1952	George Burns and Gracie Allen (Jack impersonates Gracie) * redone on April 11 1954
2/5	April 20 1952	Isaac Stern (Jack and Isaac duet "The Flight Of The Bumblebee")
2/6	June 1 1952	(Jack prepares for his trip to London to play the Palladium)

3/1 October 5 1952 Mrs. Bob Crosby (Jack is having trouble with Bob's contract)

3/2 November 2 1952 Dinah Shore (Buck Benny rides again)

3/3 November 30 1952 (Jack is robbed - "Your money or your life?")

3/4 December 28 1952 Mr. and Mrs. James Stewart (Jack and the Stewarts go to a nightclub)

3/5 January 25 1953 Ann Sothern (Jack makes his concert debut with a 60-piece orchestra)

3/6 February 22 1953 details unknown

3/7 March 22 1953 Jeanne Cagney (send-up of "Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde")

3/8 April 19 1953 Fred Allen (Fred tries to get Jack dropped by his sponsor)

3/9 May 17 1953 Gisele MacKenzie (Jack visits his vault)

4/1 September 13 1953 Marilyn Monroe (Jack goes on a trip to Honolulu) * redone with Jayne Mansfield on November 26 1963

4/2 October 4 1953 (Jack reminisces about his childhood musicals) * redone February 19 1961

4/3 October 25 1953 Humphrey Bogart (Jack plays a cop who arrests mobster Bogart)

4/4 November 15 1953 Johnny Ray

4/5 December 6 1953 f Irene Dunne, Vincent Price and Gregory Ratoff IRENE DUNNE FILM (Jack wants to be Irene's co-star)

4/6 December 27 1953 (Jack reminisces about last New Year's Eve)

4/7 January 17 1954 Liberace

4/8 February 7 1954 f Joan Benny JACK DREAMS HE IS MARRIED TO MARY

4/9 February 28 1954 Helen Hayes (Helen gives Jack acting lessons)

4/10 March 21 1954 f Bing Crosby, George Burns and Bob Hope (Jack recalls the vaudeville team "Goldie, Fields And Glide")

4/11 April 11 1954 f George Burns and Gracie Allen THE BURNS AND ALLEN SHOW (Gracie is late so Jack impersonates her)

4/12 May 2 1954 David Niven and Margaret Hayes (Jack appears in a very British drama) * redone on April 16 1961

4/13 May 23 1954 Bob Hope, Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis (send-up of the "Road" pictures: "The Road To Nairobi")

5/1 October 3 1954 (Jack worries about the new season)

5/2 October 17 1954 Dan Dailey, Kirk Douglas, Fred MacMurray, Tony Martin and Dick Powell (Jack has a "jam" session)

5/3 October 31 1954 f HOW JACK FOUND MARY (Jack recalls how he first met Mary Livingstone working at the May Company)

5/4 November 14 1954 Leo Durocher, Chuck Dressen, Fred Haney, Bob Lemmon and Beans Reardon (sendup called "The Giant Mutiny")

5/5 November 28 1954 (Jack is writing his life story)

5/6 December 12 1954 (Jack does some cleaning then goes Christmas shopping)

5/7 December 26 1954 Leigh Snowden (Jack visits the San Diego Naval Training Centre)

5/8 January 9 1955 f THE BEDROOM BURGLAR SHOW (Jack tries to contact the Beverly Hills police who have an unlisted number)

5/9 January 23 1955 Gisele MacKenzie (Mel Blanc helps Jack finish a violin duet)

5/10 February 6 1955 f FOUR O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING SHOW (Jack is phoned by an all-night disc jockey with a contest question)

5/11 February 20 1955 George Raft and Lorraine Day (Jack plays a lunch room owner visited by gangsters) * redone Dec 4 1960

5/12 March 6 1955 f CARNIVAL STORY (Jack takes the Beavers to an amusement park) * originally transmitted in colour

5/13 March 20 1955 Gary Crosby (Jack visits the Crosby home)

5/14 April 3 1955 Groucho Marx (Jack is to appear on "You Bet Your Life")

5/15 April 17 1955 (Jack prepares to travel to New York)

5/16 May 1 1955 Jackie Gleason

6/1 September 25 1955 (Jack goes to Dennis' house)

6/2 October 9 1955 f MESSAGE AND A DATE WITH GERTRUDE (Jack takes Gertrude to a restaurant)

6/3 October 23 1955 Art Linkletter and Peggy King (Art interviews Jack)

6/4 November 6 1955 f Isaac Stern THE ISAAC STERN SHOW (Jack is depressed with his violin playing)

6/5 November 20 1955 Johnny Carson (Jack gives advice on comedy)

6/6 December 4 1955 f JACK HUNTS FOR URANIUM (Jack, Don and Mary search for uranium)

6/7 December 18 1955 Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Bergen (Jack visits the Bergens)

6/8 January 1 1956 Duffy Daugherty and Red Sanders (Jack meets the Rose Bowl coaches)

6/9 January 15 1956 f DON'S HOUSE FOR DINNER (Don invites the gang over for dinner)

6/10 January 29 1956 Sarah Churchill (Jack tells how he met Rochester) * redone on January 28 1962

6/11 February 12 1956 William Holden and Frances Bergen (Jack wants to do a love scene with Frances)

6/12 February 26 1956 f ROCHESTER FALLS ASLEEP (Rochester sleeps through Jack's television broadcast)

6/13 March 11 1956 f JACK DIVES INTO EMPTY SWIMMING POOL IN PALM SPRINGS (Jack is forced to stay in bed for a week)

6/14 March 25 1956 Dore Schary (Jack opens a Beverly Hills office)

6/15 April 8 1956 Gisele MacKenzie

6/16 April 22 1956 (Jack goes to the passport office) * redone on January 21 1962

7/1 September 23 1956 Alfred Wallenstein (Jack prepares for Carnegie Hall)

7/2 October 7 1956 Spike Jones and George Burns

7/3 October 21 1956 George Gobel and Red Skelton (Jack and George compete for President of the Beavers)

7/4 November 4 1956 f Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Colman JACK IS INVITED TO THE COLMAN'S

7/5 November 18 1956 (Jack goes to the Beverly Hills police station when his Maxwell is stolen) * redone on February 4 1962

7/6 December 2 1956 f JACK LOCKED IN THE TOWER OF LONDON (Jack is on a sightseeing tour of London)

7/7 December 16 1956 (Jack sends-up "The Mikado") * redone on March 26 1963

7/8 December 30 1956 Jayne Mansfield (Jack presents an amateur contest)

7/9 January 13 1957 f JACK HIRES AN OPERA SINGER IN ROME (Jack is impressed by an opera singer's popularity)

7/10 January 27 1957 Harry von Zell (send-up of mystery stories "The Fiddler") * redone on April 21 1964

7/11 February 10 1957 George Jessel and Governor Goodwin Knight (Jack is honoured by the Friar's Club)

7/12 February 24 1957 Bob Hope (Jack recalls the days when he partnered Bob in Vaudeville)

7/13 March 10 1957 f JACK FALLS INTO A CANAL IN VENICE (Jack has trouble going for a ride in a gondola)

7/14 March 24 1957 f Maurice Chevalier JACK IN PARIS (Jack and Mary meet Maurice Chevalier in the French capital)

7/15 April 7 1957 f MARY HAS MAY COMPANY REUNION (Jack is trying to avoid meeting Mary's old workmates)

7/16 April 21 1957 Dorothy Kirsten (Jack is visited by the I.R.S.)

8/1 September 22 1957 (The first show of the season)

8/2 October 6 1957 (Jack goes to the airport en route to New York)

8/3 October 30 1957 Hal March (Jack appears on the \$64,000 Question)

8/4 November 3 1957 f Ginger Rogers THE GINGER ROGERS SHOW (Jack wants Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire for his show)

8/5 November 17 1957 John Forsythe, Mary Costa, Jon Provost and Lassie (Jack plays violin with a gypsy trio)

8/6 December 1 1957 f Van Johnson and Buddy Adler JACK'S LIFE STORY (Jack wants a movie made of his career)

8/7 December 15 1957 (Jack goes Christmas shopping)

8/8 December 29 1957 (Jack goes to the Rose Bowl)

8/9 January 12 1958 f JACK TAKES BEAVERS TO DENTIST (Jack gets a tooth pulled by mistake)

8/10 January 26 1958 Audrey Meadows (send-up of "The Honeymooners")

8/11 February 9 1958 f JACK GOES TO THE RACES (Dennis and Jack bet on the horses)

8/12 February 23 1958 Gisele MacKenzie

8/13 March 9 1958 James Stewart, George Seaton and Jerry Wald (Jack wants to host the Academy Awards)

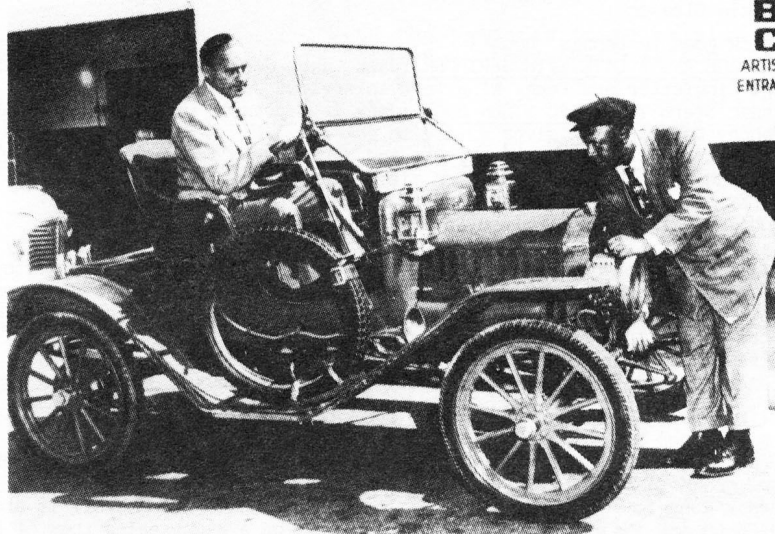
8/14 March 23 1958 f RAILROAD STATION PROGRAM (Jack has trouble getting a train ticket)

8/15 April 6 1958 Ronnie Burns (Easter show)

8/16 April 20 1958 f HILLBILLY ACT (Jack relives his youth by acting like a hillbilly)

('f' indicates the show was filmed and has been repeated on television in the U.S. or overseas)

9/1 September 21 1958 Gary Cooper (Jack tries to get Gary as a guest)
 9/2 October 5 1958 Phil Harris (Phil wants to sing "That's What I Like About The South")
 9/3 October 19 1958 Marvin Miller and Jan and Arnie (Dennis gets a million dollars)
 9/4 November 2 1958 The wives of Bob Hope, Dean Martin, Ray Milland and David Niven, plus Bob Hope and David Niven
 9/5 November 16 1958 George Burns (Jack and George compare "bachelor" TV lives)
 9/6 November 30 1958 f Oscar Levant JACK GOES TO DOCTOR (Oscar recommends Jack visit his doctor)
 9/7 December 14 1958 Red Skelton and Gisele MacKenzie
 9/8 December 28 1958 Barbara Nichols (Jack tries to exchange some Christmas gifts)
 9/9 January 11 1959 f Barbara Stanwyck and Bob Crosby GASLIGHT (send-up of the movie, titled "Auto Lite")
 9/10 January 25 1959 Ernie Kovacs (sketch about a "model" prison of the future) * redone on April 15 1962
 9/11 February 8 1959 f Danny Thomas JACK GOES TO NIGHTCLUB (Jack takes his sponsor and wife to a nightclub)
 9/12 February 22 1959 (Jack is involved in a drama on board a plane)
 9/13 March 8 1959 Vincent Price, Pamela Mason and Mrs. Oscar Levant (Jack goes on a panel discussion)
 *** March 18 1959 JACK BENNY SPECIAL with Bob Hope, Mitzi Gaynor, The Marquis Chimps and Senor Wences (60m)
 9/14 March 22 1959 f Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Bergen THE BERGENS (Jack meets Charlie McCarthy and Mortimer Snerd)
 9/15 April 5 1959 Ed Sullivan, Genevieve and Frank Fontaine (Jack is in court)
 *** May 23 1959 JACK BENNY SPECIAL with Julie Andrews and Phil Silvers (60m)
 10/1 October 4 1959 (Jack imagines what his show will be like in thirty years time)
 10/2 October 18 1959 Harry Truman (Jack visits the former President at his home)
 10/3 November 1 1959 Jack Webb (sketch "Dragon-net" or "Charlie Chan Strikes Back")
 *** November 7 1959 JACK BENNY SPECIAL with Raymond Burr, Danny Thomas, The McGuire Sisters and The Marquis Chimps (60m)
 10/4 November 15 1959 f Mr. and Mrs. James Stewart and Barbara Nichols THE JIMMY STEWART SHOW (the Stewart's anniversary)
 10/5 November 29 1959 Jack Paar (Jack imagines hosting "The Tonight Show")
 10/6 December 13 1959 f PASADENA FAN CLUB (Jack visits a fan club of little old ladies)
 10/7 December 27 1959 George Burns (Jack and George go hunting)
 10/8 January 10 1960 f Ben Blue THE BEN BLUE SHOW (Jack wants Chandu on his show)
 10/9 January 24 1960 Maurice Gosfield and Howard McNear (Jack tries to get new TV talent)
 10/10 February 7 1960 George Gobel and Molly Bee (Rochester does a telephone survey on Jack's popularity)
 10/11 February 21 1960 f JACK ARRESTED FOR DISTURBING THE PEACE (Jack plays his violin in the middle of the night)
 10/12 March 10 1960 Natalie Wood and Robert Wagner (Jack wants to direct a dramatic show)
 *** March 19 1960 JACK BENNY SPECIAL with Polly Bergen and Phil Silvers (60m)
 10/13 April 3 1960 f JACK ENTERS CONTEST - SUES (Jack thinks up a slogan to win a trip to South America)
 10/14 April 17 1960 Barbara Nichols (Jack takes part in an Easter parade)
 10/15 May 1 1960 (Jack profits from a tour of Hawaii and Japan)



NBC
 ARTIST
 ENTRAM

11/1 October 16 1960 Mike Wallace, Tony Curtis, Robert Wagner and George Burns
 11/2 October 23 1960 Dick Clark and The Sabers (Jack tries to appeal to teenagers)
 11/3 October 30 1960 Milton Berle (Milton gives Jack advice on doing a weekly series)
 11/4 November 6 1960 f Gisele MacKenzie HONG KONG SUIT (Jack is having trouble getting a haircut because of his suit)
 11/5 November 20 1960 John Wayne, Jaye P. Morgan and Frank Fontaine (John Wayne offers to take over from Jack)
 11/6 November 27 1960 Joey Bishop and Diana Trask (Jack and Joey discuss forming a comedy team)
 11/7 December 4 1960 f Dan Duryea LUNCH COUNTER MURDER (Jack plays the owner of a lunch counter threatened by gangsters)
 11/8 December 11 1960 f Mr. and Mrs. James Stewart and Barbara Nichols JACK GOES TO CONCERT (Fog leads Jack to the Stewart's)
 11/9 December 18 1960 f CHRISTMAS SHOPPING (Jack buys festive gifts)
 11/10 December 25 1960 Nanette Fabray (Jack presents an amateur contest)
 11/11 January 1 1961 f Barry Gordon JACK CASTING FOR TV SPECIAL (Jack is preparing to do a TV show about his life story)
 11/12 January 8 1961 f JACK GOES TO VAULT (Jack demonstrates his security devices to a couple of Treasury men)
 11/13 January 15 1961 f John Daly DON'S ANNIVERSARY (Jack reminisces about how he found Don Wilson)
 11/14 January 22 1961 f JACK AT SUPERMARKET (Jack has to do the shopping after Rochester beats him at cards)
 11/15 January 29 1961 f JACK IS HYPNOTISED (Jack falls under a hypnotist's spell)
 11/16 February 5 1961 f JACK GOES TO GYM (Jack takes up bodybuilding to impress his girl)
 11/17 February 12 1961 f Mamie Van Doren DEATH ROW SKETCH (Jack is cast as a husband whose wife is dallying with the boarder)
 11/18 February 19 1961 f Barry Gordon MUSICALE (Jack reminisces about Sunday afternoon musicales when he was a child)
 11/19 February 26 1961 f JACK BECOMES A SURGEON (Jack plays a demented doctor)
 11/20 March 5 1961 f DETECTIVE STORY (Jack is on the trail of a murderer)
 11/21 March 12 1961 f CHILDREN'S VERSION OF BENNY PROGRAM (the Beavers present their version of Jack's show)
 11/22 March 19 1961 f The Mills Brothers JACK GOES TO LAS VEGAS (Jack hires only two of the brothers to save money)
 11/23 March 26 1961 f Al Jarvis DANCE CONTEST (Jack hopes to win first prize for his dancing)
 11/24 April 2 1961 f George Burns and Ann-Margret VARIETY SHOW (George Burns introduces his latest discovery)
 11/25 April 9 1961 f MAIN STREET SHELTER (Jack tries to retrieve a jacket in which he has hidden \$200)
 11/26 April 16 1961 f Peter Lawford and Diana Dors ENGLISH SKETCH (Jack appears as a playboy in love with Diana)

12/1 October 15 1961 Phil Silvers and Betty Johnson (Jack meets with his sponsor)
 12/2 October 22 1961 Robert Sabonjian (Jack travels to Waukegan to dedicate the Jack Benny High School)
 12/3 November 5 1961 f Raymond Burr JACK ON TRIAL FOR MURDER (Jack dreams he is on trial for murdering a chicken)
 12/4 November 12 1961 Mr. and Mrs. James Stewart (Jack invites the Stewarts to a play but they end up at an auction)
 12/5 November 19 1961 f Tennessee Ernie Ford THE TENNESSEE ERNIE FORD SHOW (Jack visits the Ford farm in northern California)
 12/6 November 26 1961 f Eric Monti GOLF SHOW (Jack can't find anyone who will play golf with him)
 12/7 December 3 1961 f Bobby Rydell JACK FOLLOWED HOME (Dennis is annoyed when Jack has Bobby as his guest)
 12/8 December 10 1961 f Jane Morgan JACK GOES TO CAFETERIA (Jack invites Jane for an inexpensive lunch)
 12/9 December 17 1961 f Dimitri Tiomkin JACK WRITES SONG (Jack wants Dimitri to do an arrangement of his song)
 12/10 December 24 1961 (Jack has a Christmas party)
 12/11 December 31 1961 f NEW YEAR'S EVE SHOW (Jack sees out the old year)
 12/12 January 7 1962 f Roberta Peters JACK DOES OPERA (Jack, Don and Roberta sing an excerpt from an opera)
 12/13 January 14 1962 f DENNIS'S SURPRISE PARTY (Jack decides to arrange a birthday party for Dennis)
 12/14 January 21 1962 f JACK GETS A PASSPORT (Jack needs a passport for his forthcoming visit to Australia)
 12/15 January 28 1962 f HOW JACK FOUND ROCHESTER (Jack recalls having Rochester fired from his job as a train porter)
 12/16 February 4 1962 Joan Benny (Jack goes to the Beverly Hills police station when his Maxwell is stolen)
 12/17 February 11 1962 f Gisele MacKenzie and Gerald Mohr GHOST TOWN WESTERN SKETCH (Jack imagines himself as a western hero)
 12/18 February 18 1962 Rock Hudson and Hugh Downs (Jack does his version of "The Tonight Show")
 12/19 March 4 1962 f Julie London THE JULIE LONDON SHOW (Jack joins Julie in singing some songs)
 12/20 March 11 1962 f THE ALEXANDER HAMILTON STORY (Jack dreams he is America's first Secretary of the Treasury)
 12/21 March 18 1962 Shari Lewis (Shari tries to get into business with Jack)
 12/22 March 25 1962 f JACK GOES TO AIRPORT (Jack buys a cheap airline ticket)
 12/23 April 1 1962 f Billy Wilder JACK GOING BACK INTO PICTURES (Jack has been offered a very small role in a movie)
 12/24 April 8 1962 f JACK IS VIOLIN TEACHER (Jack imagines what would have happened if he had been a violin teacher)
 12/25 April 15 1962 f Mickey Rooney MODERN PRISON SKETCH (Jack and Mickey demonstrate what future prisons might be like)
 12/26 April 22 1962 (Jack takes in a boarder)
 13/1 September 25 1962 Sammy Davis Jr. (Sammy gives Jack some advice on what his show needs)
 13/2 October 2 1962 Frank Sinatra Jr. (Jack fantasizes about having a son)
 13/3 October 9 1962 f Phil Silvers THE PHIL SILVERS SHOW (Phil swipes Jack's pants to stop him appearing)
 13/4 October 16 1962 f Raymond Burr AIR FORCE SKETCH (Jack is asked to turn a World War 2 battle scene into comedy)
 13/5 October 23 1962 f Lawrence Welk THE LAWRENCE WELK SHOW (Jack wants Lawrence to perform his torch song)
 13/6 October 30 1962 f Darla Hood THE STORY OF MY GANG COMEDY (Jack does a sketch with "Our Gang" members)
 13/7 November 13 1962 f Carol Burnett JACK PLAYS TARZAN (Jack irritates three gorillas with his violin playing)
 13/8 November 20 1962 f Mr. and Mrs. James Stewart JACK GIVES A DINNER
 13/9 November 27 1962 f Jack Soo and Romi Yamada JACK MEETS JAPANESE AGENT (Jack has trouble with a singer's agent)
 13/10 December 4 1962 f Bob Hope THE BOB HOPE SHOW (Jack and Bob reminisce about the Weber Theatrical Agency)
 13/11 December 11 1962 f wives of Milton Berle, Kirk Douglas, Groucho Marx and Phil Silvers JACK REFEREEING WRESTLING MATCH
 13/12 December 18 1962 f Louis Nye JACK AND THE CAB DRIVER (Jack is plagued by an emotional cab driver)
 13/13 December 25 1962 f THE STORY OF THE NEW TALENT SHOW (Mel Blanc appears as a strange impersonator of animals)
 13/14 January 1 1963 f JACK GOES TO ROSE BOWL GAME (Jack takes Zelda to the football game)
 13/15 January 8 1963 f Max Bygraves JACK MEETS MAX BYGRAVES (Jack encounters the famous British performer)
 13/16 January 15 1963 f Rod Serling THE TWILIGHT ZONE SKETCH (Jack wants Rod to join his writing team)
 13/17 January 22 1963 f Peter Loore and Joanie Sommers THE PETER LORRE - JOANIE SOMMERS SHOW (An escaped criminal causes havoc)
 13/18 January 29 1963 Dick Van Dyke (Jack and Dick perform in "The Murder Of Clinton Worthing")
 13/19 February 5 1963 (Jack rents his house)
 13/20 February 12 1963 f Rita Moreno THE SPANISH SKETCH (Jack and Rita act out a movie scene in a Spanish cafe)
 13/21 February 19 1963 f Connie Francis THE CONNIE FRANCIS SHOW (Jack and Connie do a sketch about Stephen Foster)
 13/22 February 26 1963 f Martha Tilton JACK DOES THE U.S.O. SHOW (Two Japanese soldiers can't stand Jack's violin playing)
 13/23 March 5 1963 f Frankie Avalon THE FRANKIE AVALON SHOW (Frankie tells how he became a guest on Jack's show)
 13/24 March 12 1963 f JACK IS KIDNAPPED
 13/25 March 19 1963 f JACK FIRES DON (Jack and Don quarrel over an old saying)
 13/26 March 26 1963 f JACK DOES MIKADO (send-up of the famous Gilbert and Sullivan musical)
 13/27 April 2 1963 f DUMMY REPLACES JACK
 13/28 April 9 1963 f JACK ANSWERS REQUEST LETTERS (Don and Dennis imitate Laurel and Hardy)
 14/1 September 24 1963 Billy Graham and Sonny Liston
 14/2 October 1 1963 f Robert Goulet THE ROBERT GOULET SHOW (Jack and Robert are both chasing the same girl)
 14/3 October 8 1963 f Carol Burnett RIVERBOAT SKETCH (Jack plays a gambler and Carol a Southern belle)
 14/4 October 15 1963 f Clint Walker THE TALL COWBOY SKETCH (Clint makes his singing debut)
 14/5 October 22 1963 f Johnny Carson JOHNNY CARSON GUESTS (Johnny sings, dances and plays the drums)
 14/6 October 29 1963 f Mr. and Mrs. James Stewart JACK DIRECTS FILM (Jack acts as a back-seat director on Jimmy's film set)
 14/7 November 5 1963 f Ed Sullivan THE ED SULLIVAN SHOW (Ed and Jack play attorneys in a Parisian murder trial)
 14/8 November 19 1963 f ROBINSON CRUSOE (Jack does a send-up of the classic adventure story)
 14/9 November 26 1963 f Jayne Mansfield JACK TAKES BOAT TO HAWAII (Jack meets Jayne and Schlemperman)
 14/10 December 3 1963 f DENNIS DRIVES JACK TO HOSPITAL
 14/11 December 10 1963 f THE THREE MUSKETEERS (Jack does a send-up of the famous French story)
 14/12 December 24 1963 f George Jessel AMATEUR SHOW (Jack's regular amateur show ends in uproar)
 14/13 December 31 1963 (Jack celebrates the New Year)
 14/14 January 7 1964 f George Burns HOW JACK MET GEORGE BURNS (Jack and George demonstrate what killed vaudeville)
 14/15 January 14 1964 f Peter, Paul and Mary PETER, PAUL AND MARY (Jack gets the folk group to record his song)
 14/16 January 21 1964 f Nat King Cole NAT KING COLE GUESTS (Jack plays violin to Nat King Cole's singing)
 14/17 January 28 1964 f Bobby Darin BOBBY DARIN GUESTS (Jack wants Bobby to play him in a movie biography)
 14/18 February 4 1964 f DON BREAKS LEG (Don fakes a broken leg so his son Harlow can replace him)
 14/19 February 11 1964 f HOW JACK FOUND DENNIS (Jack recalls how he originally hired Dennis Day)
 14/20 February 18 1964 f JACK TAKES A VIOLIN LESSON (Jack continues to infuriate Professor Le Blanc)
 14/21 February 25 1964 f JACK AND DENNIS DO IMPRESSIONS
 14/22 March 3 1964 f JACK REDECORATES HIS HOUSE
 14/23 March 17 1964 (Jack is a fight manager)
 14/24 March 24 1964 f JACK RENEWS HIS DRIVER'S LICENSE
 14/25 March 31 1964 f The Lettermen THE LETTERMEN GUEST (Jack plays a college student rooming with the Lettermen)
 14/26 April 7 1964 f JACK GOES TO ALLERGY DOCTOR (Jack gets various treatments when his arm itches)
 14/27 April 14 1964 f HARLOW GETS A DATE (Don's son Harlow is to escort the sponsor's daughter on a sightseeing tour)
 14/28 April 21 1964 f I AM THE FIDDLER (Jack performs his classic mystery story)



- 15/1 September 25 1964 The Marquis Chimps
- 15/2 October 2 1964 f Lucille Ball THE LUCILLE BALL SHOW (send-up of Paul Revere's ride)
- 15/3 October 9 1964 f Andy Williams ANDY WILLIAMS GUESTS (Jack and Andy perform at a meat market)
- 15/4 October 16 1964 f Mr. and Mrs. James Stewart THE INCOME TAX SHOW (The I.R.S. query one of Jack's deductions)
- 15/5 October 23 1964 f Bob Hope JACK MAKES COMEDY RECORD (Jack and Bob record a comedy disc)
- 15/6 October 30 1964 f Connie Francis HILLBILLY SKETCH (Jack and Connie play hillbillies worried about their son)
- 15/7 November 6 1964 f Abby Lane JUNGLE SKETCH
- 15/8 November 13 1964 f wives of Steve McQueen, Andy Williams and David Janssen JACK LOSES A RAFFLE
- 15/9 November 20 1964 f Joey Bishop THE CAT BURGLAR
- 15/10 November 27 1964 (Jack hires a cook)
- 15/11 December 4 1964 f Wayne Newton and Louis Nye THE WAYNE NEWTON SHOW (a benefit has been organised for needy children)
- 15/12 December 11 1964 f Paul Lynde JACK HAS A SICK ALLIGATOR (An alligator in the vault moat is ill)
- 15/13 December 18 1964 f AMATEUR SHOW 1964 (Jack presents his annual new talent show)
- 15/14 December 25 1964 Gisele MacKenzie (Jack presents his Christmas show)
- 15/15 January 8 1965 f Jack Jones THE JACK JONES SHOW (send-up of the teaching profession)
- 15/16 January 22 1965 f Milton Berle JACK ADOPTS A SON (Jack plays a man who tries to adopt a lad named Marvin)
- 15/17 January 29 1965 f The Kingston Trio THE KINGSTON TRIO GUESTS (Jack is jailed in Tijuana for double parking)
- 15/18 February 5 1965 f The Marquis Chimps and Lorrae Desmond JACK TO THE MONKEY HOUSE (Jack visits the chimps' home)
- 15/19 February 12 1965 f Stuart Canin THE STRADIVARIUS STORY
- 15/20 February 19 1965 f JACK JOINS ACROBATS
- 15/21 February 26 1965 (Rochester tells how Jack fired Dennis)
- 15/22 March 5 1965 f JACK BRINGS UP ED FROM THE VAULT (Jack decides to let Ed have a look at the outside world)
- 15/23 March 12 1965 f JACK FINDS A DOUBLE (Jack hires a double to lessen his workload)
- 15/24 March 19 1965 f JACK'S NAVY BUDDY RETURNS (An old navy buddy wants to reteam with Jack as a double act)
- 15/25 March 26 1965 f DENNIS OPENS A BANK ACCOUNT (Jack can't believe Dennis has never had a bank account)
- 15/26 April 2 1965 f Dr. Joyce Brothers, Angie Dickinson and Vincent Price JACK APPEARS ON A PANEL SHOW
- 15/27 April 9 1965 f JACK HAS DOG TROUBLE (The sponsor's dog is creating problems for Jack)
- 15/28 April 16 1965 f The Smothers Brothers THE SMOTHERS BROTHERS SHOW (Jack recalls performing during a London air raid)
- *** November 3 1965 JACK BENNY SPECIAL with Bob Hope, Elke Sommer, Walt Disney and The Beach Boys (60m)
- *** December 1 1966 JACK BENNY SPECIAL with Phyllis Diller, Trini Lopez and The Smothers Brothers (60m)
- *** March 20 1968 CARNIVAL NIGHTS with Lucille Ball, Johnny Carson, Ben Blue and Bob Hope (60m)
- *** November 16 1968 JACK BENNY'S BAG with Phyllis Diller, Eddie Fisher, Dick Clark and Lou Rawls (60m)
- *** February 17 1969 JACK BENNY'S BIRTHDAY SPECIAL with Lucille Ball, Dan Blocker, Lawrence Welk and Rouvain (60m)
- *** December 3 1969 JACK BENNY'S NEW LOOK with George Burns, Gregory Peck, Nancy Sinatra and Gary Puckett (60m)
- *** November 16 1970 JACK BENNY'S TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY with Frank Sinatra, Bob Hope and Dinah Shore (90m)
- *** March 10 1971 EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT JACK BENNY BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK
with Dr. David Reuben, Lucille Ball, John Wayne, Bob Hope, George Burns and Dionne Warwick (60m)
- *** January 18 1973 JACK BENNY'S FIRST FAREWELL SPECIAL with Ronald Reagan, Johnny Carson, Bob Hope and George Burns (60m)
- *** January 24 1974 JACK BENNY'S SECOND FAREWELL SPECIAL with George Burns, Johnny Carson, Redd Foxx and Dinah Shore (60m)

N.B.C. also screened the following tribute special:

- February 5 1981 A LOVE LETTER TO JACK BENNY hosted by George Burns, Bob Hope and Johnny Carson (2hr)
featuring extracts from the above ten specials and a montage of "flashes" from the earlier half-hour shows from the 1950s and 1960s.

(this listing was compiled through reference to the collection of Jack Benny scripts donated to the U.C.L.A. Research Library in Los Angeles, and assistance from Ray Faiola and John Behrens at C.B.S. in New York and Laura Lee of the International Jack Benny Fan Club)

WHAT'S NEW ON COMPACT DISC

For forty years the LP record provided the optimum way to listen to a comedy performance. But as the 1990s begin, it has been replaced by the arrival of the compact disc, to such an extent that long play vinyl discs are virtually extinct in the major record stores of the U.S., Britain and Australia.

Happily, the thousands of hours of classic releases may still be found in collector's and out-of-print shops, and a major function of this magazine will be to provide complete discographies of the notable performers and routines of the LP era. Obviously the handling and storage of these "treasures" must become an important consideration in the years to come as supplies dwindle.

That's not to say comedy too has disappeared from the shelves of the prime stockists, but the range of material available falls into two basic categories ... newly recorded releases (which, since the mid-1980s, have appeared simultaneously on LP, CD and cassette) and reissues of items generally regarded as "evergreen" or classic status. In this latter group comes an increasing range of newly compiled collections of 1930s to 1960s single tracks, which in some instances were never made available on the LP format.

Let's make mention of a number of compact discs currently available (or in one instance, already deleted) in the area of this earlier material:

UNITED STATES:

Stan Freberg STAN FREBERG (Capitol CDP 7 91627 2)
John And Marsha/I've Got You Under My Skin/That's My Boy/
Try/The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise/
St. George And The Dragonet/Little Blue Riding Hood/
Christmas Dagnet (Yulenet)/C'est Si Bon/
A Dear John And Marsha Letter/Sh-Boom/
The Yellow Rose Of Texas/The Great Pretender/
Heartbreak Hotel/Rock Island Line/Banana Boat/
Tele-Vee-Shun/Wun'erful, Wun'erful/Green Christmas

original cast BEYOND THE FRINGE (Capitol C21Y 92055) deleted
(Alan Bennett-Peter Cook-Jonathan Miller-Dudley Moore)
Bollard/The Sadder And Wiser Beaver/Deutscher Chansons/
Take A Pew/Aftermyth Of War/Sitting On The Bench/
And The Same To You/Portrait From Memory/
So That's The Way You Like It/The End Of The World
(reissue of Capitol SW 1792)

Tom Lehrer TOM LEHRER REVISITED (Reprise 26203 2)
Introduction/I Wanna Go Back To Dixie/
The Wild West Is Where I Wanna Be/The Old Dope Peddler/
Fight Fiercely, Harvard/Lobachevsky/The Irish Ballad/
The Hunting Song/My Home Town/When You Are Old And Grey/
The Wiener Schnitzel Waltz/I Hold Your Hand In Mine/
Be Prepared/LY/Silent E
(expanded reissue of Lehrer Records TL 201,
the last two vocals from Electric Company discs)

Tom Lehrer AN EVENING WASTED WITH TOM LEHRER (Reprise 6199 2)
Poisoning Pigeons In The Park/Bright College Days/
A Christmas Carol/The Elements/Oedipus Rex/In Old Mexico/
Clementine/It Makes A Fellow Proud To Be A Soldier/
She's My Girl/The Masochism Tango/
We Will All Go Together When We Go

Tom Lehrer THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS (Reprise 6179 2)
National Brotherhood Week/MLF Lullaby/George Murphy/
The Folk Song Army/Smut/Send The Marines/Pollution/
So Long, Mom/Whatever Became Of Hubert/New Math/Alma/
Who's Next?/Werrher Von Braun/The Vatican Rag

Allan Sherman MY SON, THE GREATEST (Rhino R21S 75771)
Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah/Crazy Downtown/
A Waste Of Money/Harvey And Sheila/Good Advice/
Sarah Jackman/You Went The Wrong Way, Old King Louie/
One Hippopotami/Shake Hands With Your Uncle Max/
You're Getting To Be A Rabbit With Me/
Shticks Of One, Half A Dozen Of The Other/Al 'n' Yetta/
The Rebel/Pop Hates The Beatles/The 12 Gifts Of Christmas/
Chim, Chim, Cheree/Lotsa Luck/The Streets Of Miami/
Hail To Thee, Fat Person

Also available are CD versions of Victor Borge's COMEDY IN MUSIC and CAUGHT IN THE ACT, Robert Klein's MIND OVER MATTER and CHILD OF THE 50s and the Lenny Bruce BERKELEY CONCERT.

BRITAIN:

Stan Freberg THE CAPITOL YEARS (Capitol CDP 91929 2)
Yellow Rose Of Texas/St. George And The Dragonet/Sh-Boom/
C'est Si Bon/Rock Island Line/Tele-Vee-Shun/
Rock Around Stephen Foster/Wun'erful, Wun'erful/
Banana Boat/Little Blue Riding Hood/
I've Got You Under My Skin/Heartbreak Hotel/
The Quest For Bridey Hammerschlaugen/The Great Pretender/
The Old Payola Roll Blues/Green Christmas

Peter Sellers THE PETER SELLERS COLLECTION (E.M.I. CDP7 94689 2)
Any Old Iron/A Hard Day's Night/Auntie Rotter/
Bangers And Mash/She Loves You/All The Things You Are/
In A Free State/Peter Sellers Sings Rudolph Friml/
Goodness Gracious Me/A Right Bird*/Unchained Melody*/
Suddenly It's Folk Song/Peter Sellers Sings George Gershwin/
Dance With Me, Henry*/So Little Time/Never Never Land/
Party Political Speech/The Trumpet Volunteer/Dipso Calypso/
Balham - Gateway To The South (* previously unreleased)

Benny Hill BENNY HILL SINGS (Sequel NEM CD 602)
Ernie/Pepys Diary/Transistor Radio/Gypsy Rock/Piccolo Song/
Lonely Boy/Gather In The Mushrooms/The Harvest Of Love/
Bamba 3688/Moving On Again/The Andalucian Gypsies/
The Egg Marketing Board Tango/In The Papers/Golden Days/
Flying South/My Garden Of Love/I'll Never Know/Wild Women/
Jose's Cantina/Rose/Those Days/The Old Fiddler/
What A World/Broken Hearted Lover's Stew/
The Beach At San Tropez

Bob Newhart THE BEST OF BOB NEWHART (Pickwick PWKS 548)
The Driving Instructor/Introducing Tobacco To Civilization/
The Grace L. Ferguson Airline/
The Cruise Of The U.S.S. Codfish/The Retirement Party/
Returning A Gift/Ledge Psychology

Max Miller THE CHEEKY CHAPPIE (Pearl PAST CD 9714)
Max Miller In The Theatre (Holborn Empire: First House)/
Max Miller In The Theatre (Holborn Empire: Second House)/
Max Miller In The Theatre (Finsbury Park Empire)

Max Miller THE PURE GOLD OF THE MUSIC HALL (Pearl PAST CD 9736)
Julietta/The Love Bug Will Bite You/
Max Miller With The Forces/Confessions Of A Cheeky Chappie/
The Woman Improver/Weeping Willow/
You Can't Blame Me For That/Backscratcher/Impshe/
Max The Auctioneer/The Girl Next Door/
How The So-And-So Can I Be Happy/Doh-Re-Me/
Everything Happens To Me/At The Bathing Parade/No, No, No

Arthur Askey BAND WAGGON (Pearl PAST CD 9729)
Adolf/Band Waggon (with Richard Murdoch and Syd Walker)/
Tommy Trinder's Stage Show (Tommy Trinder track)/
The Washing On The Siegfried Line/
Big And Stinker's Moment Musical (with Richard Murdoch)/
The Worm/Big And Stinker's Party Games (w Richard Murdoch)/
Chirrup/The Seagull Song/The Proposal (w Richard Murdoch)/
Kiss Me Goodnight, Sergeant Major/How Ashamed I Was/
The Bee Song

Sandy Powell CAN YOU HEAR ME, MOTHER? (Pearl PAST CD 9731)
The Lost Policeman/Sandy The Shopwalker/
Sandy The Window-Cleaner/Sandy Joins The Nudists/
Gracie's And Sandy's Party/Sandy Plays In The Test Match/
Sandy's Own Labour Exchange/Sandy The Dirt-Track Rider/
A Night On The Embankment/Sandy The Barber/
Sandy's Irish Sweepstake Song/
The Return Of The Lost Policeman

compilation GREAT RADIO STARS - volume 1 (Pearl PAST CD 9721)
featuring tracks by Tommy Handley, Cyril Fletcher,
Leslie Sarony & Leslie Holmes, Mrs. Feather, Vic Oliver,
Elsie & Doris Waters, The Western Brothers, Robb Wilton,
Elsie Carlisle, Stainless Stephen,
Mabel Constanduros & Michael Hogan, Ronald Frankau,
Gracie Fields, Norman Evans, Ronald Gourlay,
Oliver Wakefield and Max Miller

compilation GREAT RADIO STARS - volume 2 (Pearl PAST CD 9728)
featuring tracks by Arthur Askey, Jack Warner,
Charles Penrose, Reginald Gardiner, Leslie Henson,
Cecil Johnson, Ronald Frankau, Stanelli, Oliver Wakefield,
Richard Murdoch, Flotsam & Jetsam, Flanagan & Allen,
Bobbie Comber, Ted Ray, Leonard Henry, Stanley Holloway,
Leslie Sarony and Gillie Potter

Also available are CD versions of nearly all the Monty Python LPs (now released by Virgin), The Rutles, Bad News, and the Derek And Clive series by Peter Cook and Dudley Moore (with additional tracks on COME AGAIN and AD NAUSEUM).

BAND WAGGON

by Mark McKay



By 1936 BBC Listener Research determined that dance band programmes and broadcasts from variety theatres were not as popular as had been believed. Overseas radio stations were also drawing a large audience away from the BBC, so the director of variety, John Watt, planned a new radio show with a resident compere and a comedian, which would be broadcast in a regular timeslot. Harry S. Pepper and Gordon Crier were to be the producers and they set about looking for a cast. In the role of comedian they considered two possibilities: Tommy Trinder and Arthur Askey, and from a coin toss decided on the former. However, he was unavailable and thus Askey got the big break of his career.

The first show was broadcast on the 5th of January 1938, but the scripts of these early shows were very poor and John Watt decided to cancel the programme after six episodes. For the fourth edition Arthur, Vernon Harris, Gordon Crier and a newly recruited straight man, Richard Murdoch, made a combined effort on the script and Band Waggon really began to pick up. The series ended up running for 18 episodes.

Band Waggon followed a set format: Murdoch and Askey performed in three spots together. Since he was billed as the 'resident comedian', Arthur had the idea that he should live in a top floor flat at Broadcasting House. Into this situation other characters were written, including charwoman Mrs. Bagwash and her daughter Nausea, whom Arthur was courting. Hence the classic sketch "The Proposal" in which Dickie Murdoch demonstrates to Arthur how to propose to his beloved (originally broadcast on November 23, 1938, a later performance to troops in France in early 1940 was issued as a gramophone record). Neither Nausea nor Mrs. Bagwash ever spoke, although Nausea was apt to faint in front of the microphone with a thud and her mother could be prompted to give the occasional grunt.

The flat soon became an aural menagerie: Lewis the goat was introduced so they could use the joke: 'A goat in the flat - what about the smell? Oh he'll get used to it!' (This was 1938, don't forget). Lewis was joined by Hector the camel and the pigeons, Basil and Lucy. The stories would often feature the 'Band Waggon crash', an elaborate sound effect indicating Arthur had taken a tumble, and created by setting up a pile of chairs, metal trays, wastepaper baskets ... in a roped-off area of the recording stage which was pushed at the appropriate moment by the FX man. This soon became very popular with the studio audience, so the FX

man would dress up for the part and take a bow afterwards until Askey remarked: 'I'm the comedian - I get the laughs'.

The cobwebs were dusted off tired old gags and they were paraded in the 'Chestnut Corner' (or Don't stop us even if you've heard them) segment, accompanied by funny noises. The 'Dear Old Pals' sig tune would launch quick cross-patter such as: 'Didn't I meet you in Cape Town three years ago? - No, I've never been to Cape Town. - Neither have I, it must have been two other fellas.' or 'Excuse me sir but can you spare a shilling for a cup of coffee? - A shilling ... that's a lot for a cup of coffee, isn't it? - Listen, are you trying to tell me how to run my business?'.

Arthur had a solo spot which began with his song 'Big Hearted Arthur, they call me', and during which he would read letters and give advice: 'I had a letter from a lady last week, signing herself "mother of six". She wanted to know where she could get a record of my voice to help her to get her children to sleep at nights (nice of her, wasn't it?). But I wrote and told her to try persuasive methods before resorting to violence'. Sometimes the letters came from the management: 'Dear Mr. Askey, we understand that when you were a child your uncle Aubrey offered you £100 if you would give up your idea of becoming a comedian. We should be glad if you will advise us as to how you spent the money. Yours regretfully, the BBC'. Listeners were also treated to short parodies of popular songs ('Stay on my arm, umbrella' for 'Stay in my arms, Cinderella') and Arthur's silly little songs such as 'The Bee', 'The Seagull' and 'The Worm'.

Syd Walker played a cockney rag and bone man in another regular feature. He would enter singing his sig tune 'Any rags, bottles or bones' and then recount an open-ended story which could produce different outcomes, such as the tale of two lady patients of a doctor who have opposite reactions to the fate of the heroine of a newspaper serial. In this case the dilemma presented to the listeners was: should the heroine die or be allowed to live? Syd would ask 'What would you do, chums?' and invite everyone to write in, and they obliged, sending in thousands of replies on postcards.

Guest stars were used in the earlier shows. These included blind American pianist Art Tatum, Harry Richman and Cary Grant (who was totally puzzled by the lines he was given). Catchphrases were thrown about and many caught on: Arthur's

'Aythangyow' (I thank you) picked up from London's bus conductors, 'Proper humdrum', 'Don't be filthy', 'Doesn't it make you want to spit' and 'Light the blue touchpaper and retire immediately' and Dickie's rebuke: 'You silly little man'. They christened each other 'Big Hearted' Arthur and 'Stinker' Murdoch and even in the middle of situation sketches they would make references to the fact that they were simply reading scripts in a recording theatre and making use of aural illusions, a practice continued in 'The Goon Show' more than a decade later. Together with the ad libs and in-jokes, this helped to give the show a very informal feel.

Christmas 1938 saw a stage version of Band Waggon at the Princes Theatre in London, during which Ernie Wise appeared in a 'New Voices' segment (a talent quest which was another regular feature of the radio version). The Band Waggon broadcast of March 15th 1939 was intended to be the last, and 20 minutes of highlights were issued on a set of three 78rpm records by H.M.V. In the programme 'Big' and 'Stinker' looked back over their forty-two shows remembering early days when the ad libbing wasn't as prevalent: 'We were so nervous in those days we used to write everything down, didn't we?'

On July 3 that year the stage version opened for a summer season at the London Palladium with Tommy Trinder as an added attraction, and Arthur and Dickie began filming a movie version the following month. When war broke out, the BBC approached them about doing another series and despite initial reluctance, they gave in. There is a record in Hansard of the announcement made by an M.P.: 'We are getting back to normality - Band Waggon will be back on the air next week'.

The new series had many references to the European situation - jokes were made about 'Old Nasty' (Arthur and Dickie's name for Hitler), they 'blacked out' the flat in the first edition, and Syd Walker discussed the dangers of fictitious war rumours in programme three. However, Arthur's other commitments were becoming more time-consuming and the eleventh show of the series was destined to be their last. He went off to make more films (three of which also featured Dickie: The Ghost Train, Charley's Big-Hearted Aunt and I Thank You) while Murdoch went into the air force before taking part in the very popular Much-Binding-In-The-Marsh.

On November 13 1947 the BBC presented a special revival edition to mark its silver jubilee. Arthur and Dickie were introduced and after an exchange of cutting remarks, reperformed old scenes together. Fred Yule took over the late Syd Walker's role.

In the late 1950s the idea was transferred to television as Living It Up with Askey and Murdoch apparently residing at the top of the Associated-Rediffusion building in Kingsway. The show was scripted by Sid Colin and Talbot Rothwell and ran for six weeks from October 27 to December 1 1958.

Then, to celebrate the BBC's golden jubilee, the duo came back to radio in 'Ah! Happy Days!' on December 28th 1971. In the programme, which also featured Wallas Eaton and Arthur's daughter Anthea, they revisited the flat and discover the BBC have been broadcasting all their shows since 1939 using their electricity. It was the final hurrah for the BBC's very first comedy series. Arthur Askey died in 1982 and Richard Murdoch eight years later.

EPISODE GUIDE:

- Series 1: 18 episodes broadcast on either the National or Regional Network of the B.B.C. from January 5 to May 4 1938 (initially 45-minutes, then 60-minutes from show 6)
- Series 2: 24 episodes broadcast on either the National or Regional Network from October 5 1938 to March 15 1939 (all 60-minutes)
- Series 3: 11 episodes broadcast on the National Network from September 16 to December 2 1939 (not on November 11)(all 45-minutes)
- Revivals: BBC Jubilee Edition (45-minutes) broadcast in the Light Programme on November 13 1947
Ah! Happy Days! (30-minutes) broadcast on Radio 2 on December 28 1971

DISCOGRAPHY:

78rpm:	March 15 1939	Band Waggon (parts 1 to 6) * broadcast extracts	HMV BD 693/5
	November 9 1939	Blacking Out The Flat (parts 1 and 2)	HMV BD 764
	November 13 1939	Big And Stinker's Parlour Games (parts 1 and 2)	HMV BD 784
	April 14 1940	Big And Stinker Minding The Baby (parts 1 and 2)	HMV BD 841
	April 25 1940	The Proposal)	HMV C 3173
	April 25 1940	The Seagull Song (Askey vocal)) troop concert	HMV BD 855
	April 25 1940	More Chestnut Corner) in France	HMV BD 855
	July 21 1940	Big And Stinker's Moment Musical	HMV BD 870
	July 21 1940	Talking Shop	HMV BD 870
LP:	1972	<u>Fifty Years Of Radio Comedy</u> features an extract from the 1947 revival	BBC REC 138M
	1980	<u>Memories Of Band Waggon, Happidrome And Other Great Wireless Comedy Shows</u> features the 3x78rpm set of the March 15 1939 broadcast	EMI SH 388
	1986	<u>The Golden Age Of Arthur Askey</u> features The Proposal and Talking Shop 78s	EMI GX 2548
CD:	1990	<u>Band Waggon</u> features the 3x78rpm set of the March 15 1939 broadcast Big And Stinker's Moment Musical Big And Stinker's Parlour Games The Seagull Song The Proposal	PEARL/FLAPPER PAST CD 9279

MATERIAL AVAILABLE:

- Apart from the above recordings, only five broadcasts exist:
- 1/10 March 9 1938 15 minutes of extracts only
- 2/16 January 18 1939 complete 60-minute programme
- 3/3 September 30 1939 complete 45-minute programme
- *** November 13 1947 complete 45-minute BBC Jubilee revival edition
- *** December 28 1971 complete 30-minute "Ah! Happy Days!" revival edition

On film, the 1939 feature "Band Waggon" exists, as well as brief newsreel footage of Arthur and Dickie performing to troops in France on April 25 1940 (part of this performance is included in "More Chestnut Corner", "The Proposal" and "The Seagull Song" 78rpm discs).

MONTY PYTHON ON RECORD

by Warwick Holt

Of all comedy groups, perhaps the one which most inspires collecting is Monty Python. With an extensive range of records, books, videos and other memorabilia to accompany their forty-seven television programs and five films, there is a wealth of collectibles to occupy the time of a complete Pythonophile.

This article attempts a listing of all available records released by Monty Python. Only those released under the group name of "Monty Python" are included here; other releases featuring one or more of the Python members (the late Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones and Michael Palin) are excluded.

(1970) MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS ... B.B.C. REB 73M (UK), Pye 12116 (US)

Flying Sheep/Television Interviews/Trade Description Act/Nudge Nudge/The Mouse Problem/Buying A Bed/Interesting People/The Barber/Interviews/More Television Interviews/Children's Stories/The Visitors/The Cinema/The North Minehead Bye-Election/Me, Doctor/Pet Shop/Self Defence

This LP has sometimes appeared under the title "The Worst Of Monty Python's Flying Circus". Despite the mono sound and studio audience, this is not a soundtrack of the television shows; all the sketches have been specifically re-recorded for the album. The Python team had expected a stereo release without an audience (like the later discs) and this was said to be the reason they signed with Charisma.

FLYING SHEEP/MAN WITH TWO BUTTOCKS ... (release details unknown)

A single taken from the first album which is extremely rare (possibly unreleased).

(1971) ANOTHER MONTY PYTHON RECORD ... Charisma CAS 1049 (UK), Buddah CAS 1049 (US)

Apologies/Spanish Inquisition/World Forum/Gumby Theatre/The Architect/Piranha Brothers/Death Of Mary Queen Of Scots/Penguin On The TV/Comfy Chair/Scound Quiz/Be A Great Actor/Theatre Critic/Royal Festival Hall Concert/Spam/The Judges/Stake Your Claim/Still No Sight Of Land/The Undertaker

The above itemisation does not appear on the British release. In addition, the American issue contains extra material not on the Charisma LP, including "Penguin On The TV" and "World Forum", and longer versions of "Spanish Inquisition" and "Gumby Theatre". Some of the linking dialogue is different as well. Early pressings came with a "Be A Great Actor" kit, containing scripts and cut-out props.

SPAM SONG/THE CONCERT ... Charisma CB 192 (UK)

A single featuring an edited version of the song from the "Spam" sketch, coupled with the "Royal Festival Hall Concert" skit.

(1972) ERIC THE HALF-A-BEE/ZAMBESI SONG ... Charisma CB 200 (UK)

Another single, the B side of which does not appear on any of the Python LPs.

MONTY PYTHON'S PREVIOUS RECORD ... Charisma CAS 1063 (UK), Buddah CAS 1063 (US)

Embarrassment/A Bed Time Book/England 1747 - Dennis Moore/Money Programme/Dennis Moore Continues/Australian Table Wines/Argument Clinic/Putting Down Budgies And So Forth/Eric The Half-A-Bee/Travel Agency/Radio Quiz Game/A Massage/City Noises Quiz/Miss Anne Elk/We Love The Yangtze/How-To-Do-It Lessons/A Minute Passed/Eclipse Of The Sun/Alastair Cook/Wonderful World Of Sounds/A Fairy Tale

Again, the track itemisation only appears on the American version, and has presumably been compiled by someone at Buddah (e.g. "City Noises Quiz" is in reality "Silly Noises").

TEACH YOURSELF HEATH

A flexi-disc included with the December 1972 issue of "Zigzag" satirising the then-Prime Minister Edward Heath, with voiceclips interspersed in the instructions by Eric Idle. Michael Palin introduces the recording.

(1973) THE MONTY PYTHON MATCHING TIE AND HANDKERCHIEF ... Charisma CAS 1080 (UK), Arista AL 4039 (US)

Dead Bishop On The Landing/The Church Police/Who Cares/The Surgeon And The Elephant Mr. Humphries/Thomas Hardy/Novel Writing/Word Association/Bruces/Philosophers' Song/Nothing Happened/Eating Dog/Cheese Shop/Thomas Hardy/Tiger Club/Great Actors/Infant Minister For Overseas Development/Oscar Wilde's Party/Pet Shop Conversions/Phone-In/Background To History/Medieval Open Field Farming Songs/World War 1 Soldier/Stuck Record/Boxing Tonight With Kenneth Clark

The above itemisation does not appear on the LPs in either Britain or America.

All early pressings, and some later U.S. pressings contained a pull-out inner sleeve, with notes and a picture of the hanky and tie (choking a man on the gallows) which were viewed through a cut-out hole in the cover. In addition, the B-side consisted of two grooves, each containing approximately ten minutes of material. Access to each depended on where the needle landed.

Later pressings had a normal flat cover of the tie and handkerchief, and the tracks on the B-side were now consecutive instead of interwoven.

LUMBERJACK SONG/SPAM SONG ... Charisma CB 268 (UK)

A single featuring a new version of "The Lumberjack Song" produced by George Harrison, wherein Michael Palin begins as a weather forecaster before launching into the vocal. It did not appear on LP until the 1989 release "MONTY PYTHON SINGS".

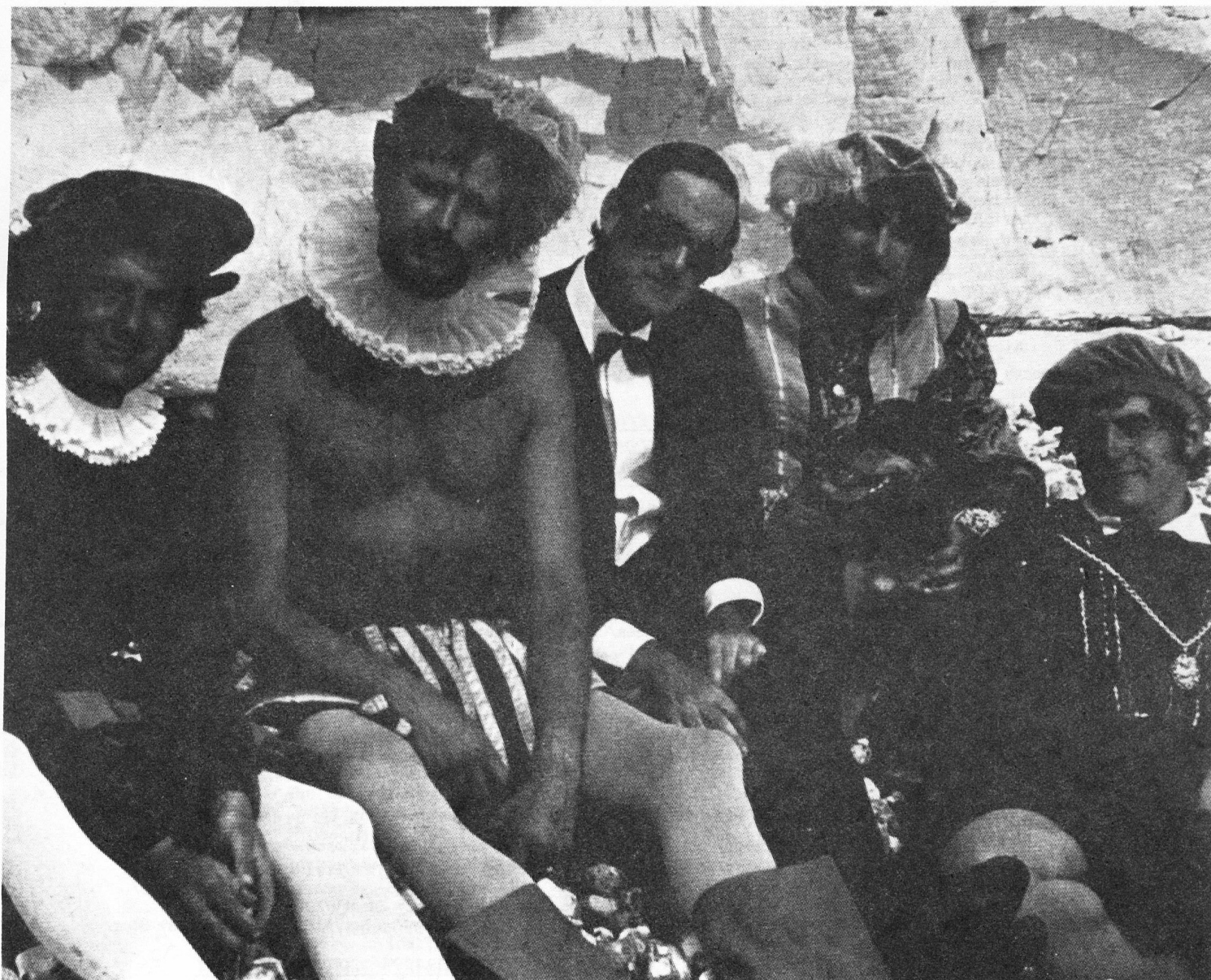
(1974) MONTY PYTHON LIVE AT DRURY LANE ... Charisma CLASS 4 (UK)

Introduction/Llamas/Gumby - Flower Arranging/Secret Service/Wrestling/Communist Quiz/Idiot Song/Albatross/Colonel/Nudge, Nudge/Cocktail Bar/Travel Agent/Spot The Brain Cell/Bruces/Argument/Four Yorkshiremen/Election Special/Lumberjack Song/Parrot Sketch

An original cast album of the London stage show which began in February 1974. Several sketches originally appeared in "Cambridge Circus" and "At Last The 1948 Show" ("Secret Service", "Wrestling", "Spot The Brain Cell" and "Four Yorkshiremen").

MONTY PYTHON'S TINY BLACK ROUND THING ... Charisma SO 1259 (UK)

Included with "New Musical Express" (in May 1974), this flexi-disc contains Drury Lane stage show versions of "Election Night Special" and "Lumberjack Song" (the former, slightly longer than on the LP). Side A featured an introduction by Michael Palin, partly as a Gumby head of New Musical Express, with outro comments as well. Side B included "What The Press Said About Monty Python's Tiny Black Round Thing".



(1975) THE SINGLE ... Arista AS 0130 (US)

An American promotional single for "THE MONTY PYTHON MATCHING TIE AND HANDKERCHIEF" containing edited versions of "Who Cares", "Infant Minister For Overseas Development" and "Pet Shop Conversions".

THE ALBUM OF THE SOUNDTRACK OF THE TRAILER OF THE FILM OF MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL ... Charisma CAS 1103 (UK), Arista AL 4050 (US)

Congratulations/Welcome To The Cinema/Opening/Coconuts/Bring Out Your Dead/King Arthur Meets Dennis/Class Struggle/Witch Test/Professional Logician/Camelot/The Quest/The Silbury Hill Car Park/Frenchmen Of The Castle/Bomb Threat/Executive Announcement/Story Of The Film So Far/The Tale Of Sir Robin/The Knights Of Ni/Interview/Director Carl French/Swamp Castle/The Guards/Tim The Enchanter/Great Performances/Angry Crowd/Holy Hand Grenade/Announcement - Sir Kenneth Clark/French Castle Again/Close

While it purports to be a soundtrack album, almost half of this LP was recorded especially for the disc, which includes no track itemisation on either the British or American versions.

(1976) MONTY PYTHON ON SONG ... Charisma MP 001 (UK)

A doublepack single featuring "Lumberjack Song" (Harrison-produced version), "Spam Song", "Bruces' Song" (Drury Lane version) and "Eric The Half-A-Bee".

THE WORST BEST OF ... MONTY PYTHON ... Kama Sutra KSBS 2611-2, Buddah BDS 5656-2 (both US)

A double-album release of the American versions of "ANOTHER MONTY PYTHON RECORD" and "MONTY PYTHON'S PREVIOUS RECORD".

THE LEAST BIZARRE ... Buddah CMP-EP (US)

A promotional EP.

MONTY PYTHON LIVE AT CITY CENTER ... Arista AL 4073 (US)

Introduction/Llama/Gumby Flower Arranging/Short Blues (Neil Innes)/Wrestling/World Forum/Albatross/Colonel Stopping It/Nudge, Nudge/Crunchy Frog/Bruces' Song/Travel Agent/Camp Judges/Blackmail/Protest Song (Neil Innes)/Pet Shop/Four Yorkshiremen/Argument Clinic/Death Of Mary, Queen Of Scots/Salvation Fuzz/Church Police/Lumberjack Song

No track itemisation appears on this original cast LP of the Python's New York stage show which began on April 14 1976. The contents are quite different to those of the Drury Lane disc, and feature two Neil Innes songs and several links not heard elsewhere.

- (1977) THE MONTY PYTHON INSTANT RECORD COLLECTION ... Charisma CAS 1134 (UK)
 Introductions/Alastair Cook/Nudge, Nudge/Mrs. Nigger-Baiter/Constitutional Peasants/Fish Licence/
 Eric The Half-A-Bee/Australian Table Wines/Silly Noises/Novel Writing/Elephantoplasty/How To Do It/
 Gumby Cherry Orchard/Oscar Wilde/Introduction/Argument/French Taunter/Summarized Proust Competition/
 Cheese Emporium/Funerals At Prestatyn/Camelot/Word Association/Bruces/Parrot/Monty Python Theme
 A compilation LP of tracks from the first five Charisma albums, with the exception of "Summarized Proust
 Competition" which appears for the first time. In addition, some of the links have been altered and many
 of the sketches have been edited (in some cases, single lines disappearing).
 The album was originally packaged to fold out into a box with the spines of an entire record collection
 (including some wonderful titles). Various re-releases have featured either a single sleeve or a gatefold
 with a picture of the spines stacked up.
- (1979) MONTY PYTHON'S LIFE OF BRIAN ... Warner Bros. K 56751 (UK), Warner Bros. BSK 3396 (US)
 Introduction/Three Wise Men/Brian Song/Big Nose/The Stoning/Ex-Leper/Bloody Romans/Link/
 People's Front Of Judea/Short Link/Latin Lesson/Missing Link/Revolutionary Meeting/Very Good Link/
 Ben/Audience With Pilate/Meanwhile/The Prophets/Haggling/Lobster/Sermon On The Wall/Lobster Link/
 Simon The Holy Man/Sex Link/The Morning After/Lighter Link/Pilate And Biggus/Welease Bwian/
 Nisus Wettus/Crucifixion/Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life/Close
 Tracks not itemised on the LP. It contains excerpts from the film soundtrack with linking material by
 Graham Chapman and Eric Idle.
ALWAYS LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE OF LIFE/BRIAN ... Warner Bros. K 17495, W 7653 (UK)
 A single containing the two songs from the soundtrack.
THE WARNER BROTHERS MUSIC SHOW: MONTY PYTHON EXAMINES "THE LIFE OF BRIAN" ... WBMS 110 (US)
 This promotional LP was released to radio stations, consisting of an hour-long interview of the Pythons
 by Dave Herman, interspersed with extracts from the soundtrack.
- (1980) MONTY PYTHON'S CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION ALBUM ... Charisma CAS 1152 (UK), Arista AL 9536 (US)
 Sit On My Face/Announcement/Henry Kissinger/String/Never Be Rude To An Arab/I Like Chinese/Bishop/
 Medical Love Song/Farewell To John Denver/Finland/I'm So Worried/
 I Bet You They Won't Play This Song On The Radio/Martyrdom Of St. Victor/Here Comes Another One
 Bookshop/Do What John/Rock Notes/Muddy Knees/Crocodile/Decomposing Composers/Bells/Traffic Lights/
 All Things Dull And Ugly/A Scottish Farewell
 The original pressings of this album contained "Farewell To John Denver" (a parody of "Annie's Song")
 followed by the singer being strangled. However, following a law suit by Mr. Denver the track was replaced
 by "A Legal Apology To John Denver" on subsequent issues. Recycled scripts included "String" (from "The
 Frost Report") and "Bookshop" (from "At Last The 1948 Show").
I LIKE CHINESE/I BET YOU THEY WON'T PLAY THIS SONG ON THE RADIO/FINLAND ... Charisma CB 374 (UK)
MONTY PYTHON'S CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION ALBUM SAMPLER ... Arista SP 101 (US)
 A 12" promotional sampler of material from the album was issued for broadcast.
- (1983) MONTY PYTHON'S "THE MEANING OF LIFE" ... C.B.S. SBP 237921 (UK), M.C.A. MCA 6121 (US)
 Introduction/Fish Introduction/The Meaning Of Life Theme/Birth/Birth Link/Frying Eggs/
 Every Sperm Is Sacred/Protestant Couple/Adventures Of Martin Luther/Sex Education/Trench Warfare/
 The Great Tea Of 1914-18/Fish Link/Terry Gilliam's Intro/Accountancy Shanty/Zulu Wars/Link/
 The Dungeon Restaurant/Link/Live Organ Transplants/The Galaxy Song/The Not Noel Coward (Penis) Song/
 Mr. Creosote/The Grim Reaper/Christmas In Heaven/Dedication (To Fish)
 Tracks not itemised on the LP. Soundtrack excerpts with some new linking material.
GALAXY SONG/EVERY SPERM IS SACRED ... C.B.S. A 3495, WA 3495 (UK)
 The version of "Every Sperm Is Sacred" has a longer instrumental break to that in the film or on the LP.
 (The WA prefix refers to a picture disc release in the shape of a fishbowl).
- (1987) THE FINAL RIP OFF ... Virgin MPD 1 (UK), Virgin 7 90865-1 (US)
 Introduction/Constitutional Peasant/Fish Licence/Eric The Half-A-Bee Song/Finland Song/Travel Agent/
 Are You Embarrassed Easily?/Australian Table Wines/Argument/Henry Kissinger Song/Parrot/Sit On My Face/
 Undertaker/Novel Writing (Live From Wessex)/String/Bells/Traffic Lights/Cocktail Bar/Four Yorkshiremen/
 Election Special/Lumberjack Song/I Like Chinese/Spanish Inquisition Part 1/Cheese Shop/Cherry Orchard/
 Architects Sketch/Spanish Inquisition Part 2/Spam/Spanish Inquisition Part 3/Comfy Chair/
 Famous Person Quiz/You Be The Actor/Nudge Nudge/Cannibalism/Spanish Inquisition Revisited/
 I Bet You They Won't Play This Song On The Radio/Bruces/Bookshop/Do Wot John/Rock Notes/I'm So Worried/
 Crocodile/French Taunter/Marilyn Monroe/Swamp Castle/French Taunter Part 2/Last Word
 A compilation double-LP taken from the Charisma releases, issued when Virgin took over their catalogue.
 The "Introduction" is the only new track, although their are several new links. In addition, the set
 contains a longer version of the "Henry Kissinger Song" to that on the "CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION" album.
- (1989) MONTY PYTHON SINGS ... Virgin MONT 1 (UK)
 Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life/Sit On My Face/Lumberjack Song/Not The Noel Coward (Penis) Song/
 Oliver Cromwell/Money Song/Accountancy Shanty/Finland/Medical Love Song/I'm So Worried/
 Every Sperm Is Sacred/Never Be Rude To An Arab/I Like Chinese/Eric The Half-A-Bee/Brian Song/
 Bruces' Philosophers Song/Meaning Of Life/Knights Of The Round Table/All Things Dull And Ugly/
 Decomposing Composers/Henry Kissinger/I've Got Two Legs/Christmas In Heaven/Galaxy Song/Spam Song
 A compilation LP of most of the better known Python songs, plus a few rarities. Included are the
 George Harrison-produced version of the "Lumberjack Song", the long version of "Henry Kissinger", a version
 of "Medical Love Song" with an extra verse and chorus to that previously issued (on "CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION")
 and a studio recording of Terry Gilliam's silly short song "I've Got Two Legs". The only totally new track
 is "Oliver Cromwell" sung by John Cleese to a Chopin melody. A song-book of lyrics to the 25 tracks is also
 included.



The GOON SHOW

Preservation Society

The
ABBOTT & COSTELLO
Fan Club

Jack
Benny

FAN CLUB



It's not only long-haired rock stars who inspire fan clubs. The following groups encourage your support and membership ...

THE ABBOTT & COSTELLO FAN CLUB:

C/o. P.O. Box 2084, Toluca Lake, California 91610 0084, U.S.A.

Having nearly a thousand members worldwide, the club helps keep alive the memory of Bud and Lou, and their children are active participants. They produce a quarterly magazine and offer a wealth of memorabilia for the budding A & C enthusiast (a video, baseball caps, note pads with letterhead, and even a reproduction of the famous "Who's On First" burlesque routine).

Membership is \$8 in the U.S., \$9 in Canada, \$10 everywhere else.

THE GOON SHOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY:

C/o. 27 Kew Drive, Davyhulme, Urmston, Manchester M31 2WW, Great Britain.

Formed in 1972 (at the time of the show's final broadcast), it celebrates the famous B.B.C. radio series of the 1950s, and endeavours to promote idiocy in all quarters (and halves). The society produces a newsletter four times a year with information about records, tapes, books and anything pertaining to their heroes.

Membership is £5 in Britain (£3 students), £6 everywhere else.

(U.S. enthusiasts may deal with Dick Baker, 7004 Westmoreland Road, Falls Church, Virginia 22042, U.S.A.)

There are also two Australian Goon groups at:
34 Denham Way, Thornlie, Western Australia 6108, and
P.O. Box 114, Boronia, Victoria 3155

THE TONY HANCOCK APPRECIATION SOCIETY:

C/o. 261 Brownfield Road, Sharp End, Birmingham B34 7EA, Great Britain.

A thousand or so members pay homage to "the lad himself" with regular get-togethers, a quarterly newsletter and lots of memorabilia to collect. Their annual reunion in Bournemouth has regular celebrity guests joining in the fun.

Membership is £5 in Britain

THE INTERNATIONAL JACK BENNY FAN CLUB:

C/o. 15430 Lost Valley Drive, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46845, U.S.A.

Launched in 1980, the club produces a bi-monthly newsletter with information about Jack and his colleagues. A "Jack Benny Log" has also been compiled with an itemisation of the Benny radio and television shows and his films. There is also a tape library.

no membership fee, but the newsletter is \$6-39 per year.

THE KENNETH WILLIAMS AND SID JAMES SOCIETY:

C/o. 27 Brookmead Way, Orpington, Kent BR5 2BQ, Great Britain.

Since April 1988, the group has been producing a bi-monthly magazine "Stop Messin' About" devoted to the CARRY ON films and British comedy in general. In addition to the magazine, they offer T-shirts, badges and other memorabilia, and hold get-togethers.

no membership fee, but the magazine is £8 in Britain, £17 to Australia (airmail)

When corresponding with the above organizations, please send a stamped self-addressed envelope (or a couple of International Reply Coupons if writing from another country). When sending fees or subscriptions do not send personal cheques overseas (as they cannot be cashed outside the country of origin). Instead send an International Bank Draft made out in the currency of the country receiving the funds.