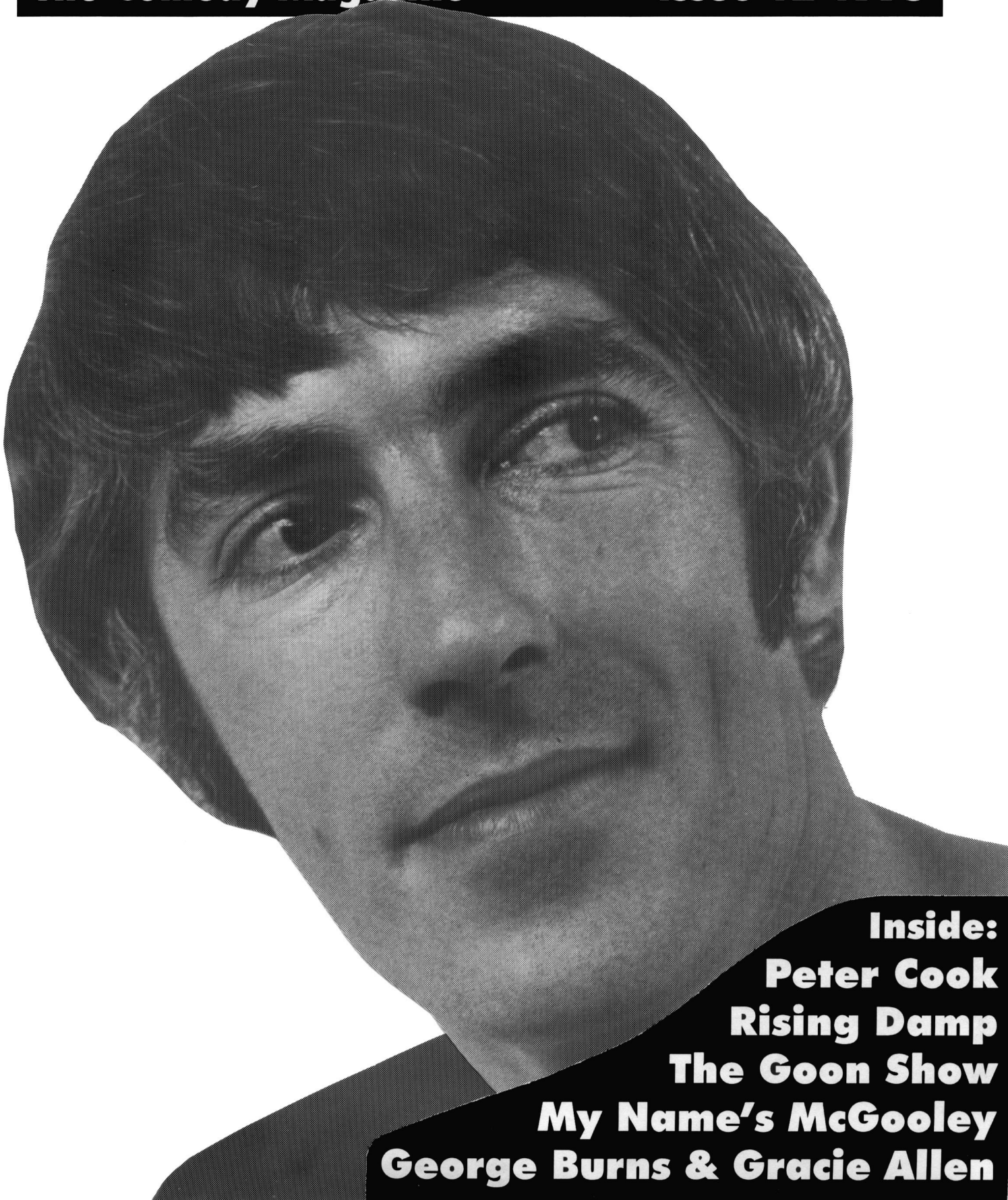


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# LAUGH

**The Comedy Magazine**

**Issue 12 1995**



**Inside:**  
**Peter Cook**  
**Rising Damp**  
**The Goon Show**  
**My Name's McGooley**  
**George Burns & Gracie Allen**

**Editor:** Peter Tatchell **Layout & Design:** Peter Tatchell & Mark McKay

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# PETER COOK

by Peter Tatchell

**W**HEN Peter Cook died in January, there was a great sense of loss ... another comedy giant had departed the stage far too soon. Like Hancock, Sellers, Feldman, Morecambe and more recently Everett, we felt cheated that a brilliant comic mind would no longer astound us with creativity and wit and we'd have to make do with treasures from the past.

Tabloids categorized his career as one of immense promise left unfulfilled, but colleagues such as Stephen Fry were quick to point out the immense achievements of his early years and the influence he'd had on the direction of British comedy since. So what, if in his latter years he preferred to live a life out of the public gaze, making only occasional talk-show and fundraising appearances and lending his acting talents to a series of less-than-memorable movies, how many times does a major talent have to prove himself?

No doubt someday an in-depth biographical study of the man will be produced, highlighting the inevitable traumas and personality failings, but for the moment let's offer a brief summary of Peter Cook's truly remarkable career and itemise his stage shows, television work, movies and recordings.

Peter was born in Torquay in 1937, the son of a diplomat. His schooling led him to Cambridge where he joined the renowned Footlights Club and took part in their 1959 and 1960 revues *The Last Laugh* and *Pop Goes Mrs Jessop* (other performers included Eleanor Bron and David Frost). He was also elected the club's president in 1960. It's also worth noting that Cook made his motion picture debut whilst at Cambridge, being seen as an unbilled extra in the comedy **Bachelor Of Hearts**, parts of which were filmed at the university (he can be seen in the car rally sequence midway through the picture).

A more professional association with show business began in late 1959 when he contributed several sketches to the Kenneth Williams revue **Pieces Of Eight** at London's Apollo Theatre and its successor **One Over The Eight** eighteen months later. By then, however, Cook was himself appearing in a West End revue **Beyond The Fringe** (with Alan Bennett, Jonathan Miller and Dudley Moore), which they had earlier performed at the Edinburgh Festival. The production changed the face of sketch comedy on the British stage and created the so-called satire wave. **Beyond The Fringe** subsequently conquered Broadway in late 1962 and toured America for eighteen months, with a new edition of the show in early 1964.

Back in London, Cook set up his own satire-based nightclub *The Establishment* which offered such diverse talents as Lenny Bruce, Frankie Howerd, Barry Humphries and a stock company of players and writers like John Bird, Eleanor Bron, John Fortune and John Wells. He also bought a controlling interest in the recently begun *Private Eye* magazine, to which he contributed material (and funds) for the rest of his life.

On the performing side, Peter transferred one of his *Beyond The Fringe* characters E.L. Wisty to A.T.V.'s weekly Saturday night television series **On The Braden Beat** in late 1964, performing a specially written monologue. Some months later the B.B.C. signed Cook and Dudley Moore for a mix of sketches and musical items called **Not Only ... But Also** and the duo produced some truly memorable television.

High spots of the programme (which eventually ran to three series) were the creation of cloth-capped idiots Pete and Dud and the dim-witted relic Sir Arthur Streeb-Greebling. In 1968, A.T.V. produced four specials **Goodbye Again** which used them in much the same format (but was made in colour and aimed particularly at the U.S. market).

Their television success led Cook and Moore to the movies, where they appeared in *The Wrong Box*, *The Bed Sitting Room* and *Monte Carlo Or Bust* and starred in their own production *Bedazzled*. Separately, Cook also starred in *The Rise And Rise Of Michael Rimmer* (a veiled sendup of David Frost).

By 1971 (after a third colour series of **Not Only ... But Also**, and two special editions filmed in Australia), Cook decided to try his hand as a talk show host and launched a BBC2 series **Where Do I Sit?** but the venture was a colossal failure and was dropped after only three editions.

Abandoning television for a time, he and Moore turned their attentions back to the stage, and wrote a revue **Behind The Fridge**, which premiered in Australia before transferring to the West End for a successful season. They then took it to Broadway, where it again enjoyed favourable response.

One night whilst appearing in New York, the pair was invited to visit a recording studio and spend a few hours adlibbing whatever they fancied round a microphone. With no thought of the recordings ever being made public and with no employer to censor their creativity, the result was an X-rated extrapolation of their Pete and Dud characters, whom they christened *Derek and Clive*. As fate would have it, copies of the session soon began making their way round the entertainment industry to such an extent that they decided to issue them commercially, with enormous response (and, in places, condemnation). *Derek and Clive* surfaced in two subsequent recording sessions (the latter of which was videotaped).

In a less controversial vein, the pair filmed an offbeat version of *The Hound Of The Baskervilles* in 1977, and Cook took part in several Amnesty International fundraisers which proved his satirical streak had not lost any of its potency.

By the late 1970s, Dudley Moore had achieved a solo breakthrough in Hollywood movies through his participation in *Foul Play*, *Ten* and *Arthur*. Cook meanwhile starred in a British television special **Cook And Company** (with John Cleese and Rowan Atkinson) and a year later was signed to star in an American TV sitcom **Two Of A Kind** which despite starting off promisingly soon sank into a mire of mediocrity.

Returning to Britain, he retreated to semi-retirement and appeared to lose any ambition to conquer any more show business mountains. As the years went by, he contented himself with attending production meetings at *Private Eye* and appearing as a performer or guest when the occasion suited him.

For his many fans, these appearances may have been disappointingly few, but remained gems in an otherwise fairly lackluster television landscape. In his final years, he reunited with Dudley Moore for a fourth Amnesty stage show which also served to relaunch the character of Sir Arthur Streeb-Greebling who appeared soon after in memorable television and radio series. A multicharactered guest-spot with Clive Anderson which aired mere weeks before his untimely death gave us one final testament to his brilliance.

# Stage Productions

Peter Cook contributed sketches to the following revues ...

## Pieces Of Eight

Starring Kenneth Williams, Fenella Fielding, Valerie Walsh, Peter Reeves and Peter Brett

Apollo Theatre, London (from September 23 1959)

Cook sketches: Balance Of Trade/In Short/Entertainment/Cocktail King/Not An Asp/The Laughing Grains/If Only/Gnomes And Gardens/Welcome To Spielheiden/Oh, Brother!/Buy British/I Spy

Cook also wrote the lyrics to Onu Beeby Frisky

*Record release:*

*Pieces Of Eight*

Decca LP LK 4337

features four Cook sketches ...

*Not An Asp* (Williams & Brett), *If Only* (Williams & Fielding), *Buy British* (Williams, Reeves & Walsh) and *The Laughing Grains* (Fielding & Reeves)

and the song ... *Onu Beeby Frisky* (The Company)

## One Over The Eight

Starring Kenneth Williams, Sheila Hancock, Lance Percival, Lynda Baron, Robin Hawdon and John Howard

Duke Of York's Theatre, London (from April 5 1961)

Cook sketches: Hand Up Your Sticks/Take Over Bid/Lost Art/Critics' Choice/Interesting Facts/Excuse Me Madam/Open Caste/One Leg Too Few/Take A Letter/Chez Malcolm/In Vogue/Bird Watching

Cook also wrote the lyrics to Peace

*Record release:*

*One Over The Eight*

Decca LP LK 4393/SKL 4133

features seven Cook sketches ...

*Hand Up Your Sticks* (Williams & Percival), *Take Over Bid* (Williams), *Lost Art* (Williams & Hawdon), *Critics Choice* (Williams & Percival), *Interesting Facts* (Williams & Howard), *One Leg Too Few* (Williams & Percival) and *Bird Watching* (Williams)

and the song ... *Peace* (Williams, Percival, Howard and Hawdon)

## Beyond The Fringe

Starring Alan Bennett, Peter Cook, Jonathan Miller and Dudley Moore

Fortune Theatre, London (from May 10 1961)

Cook sketches: Steppes In The Right Direction/Royal Box/Man Bites God\*/Bollard/Sadder And Wiser Beaver/T.V.P.M./Aftermyth Of War\*/Civil War\*/Real Class\*/Bloody Rhondda Mine/Black Equals White/Sitting On The Bench/Bread Alone\*/So That's The Way You Like It\*/The End Of The World (\* cowritten with Bennett, Miller and Moore)

*Record releases:*

*Beyond The Fringe*

Parlophone LP PMC 1145 (reissued as *One-Up LP OUM 2151*)

*Royal Box/The Heat-Death Of The Universe/Bollard/Deutscher Chansons/T.V.P.M./Aftermyth Of War/Civil War/Real Class/Little Miss Britten/Black Equals White/Take A Pew/The End Of The World*

## Beyond The Fringe

Starring Alan Bennett, Peter Cook, Jonathan Miller and Dudley Moore

John Golden Theatre, New York (from October 27 1962)

Cook's sketches as for the London production, though a couple have been retitled (T.V.P.M. is called *The Prime Minister Speaks* and *Black Equals White* forms part of *Studio 5*) and *Bloody Rhondda Mine* was omitted.

*Record releases:*

*Beyond The Fringe*

(U.S.) Capitol LP (S)W 1792 (reissued as Capitol CD CDP7 92055 2 and Angel CD ZDM 7 64771 2 1)

*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*

*The End Of The World/Sitting On The Bench*

Parlophone single R 4969

*Sitting On The Bench/Strictly For The Birds* (Dudley Moore Trio)/*And The Same To You*

Parlophone EP GEP 8940

## Beyond The Fringe '64

Starring Alan Bennett, Peter Cook, Dudley Moore and Paxton Whitehead

John Golden Theatre, New York (from January 8 1964)

Cook sketches: Home Thoughts From Abroad\*/Royal Box/Man Bites God\*/Bollard/The Great Train Robbery/The Aftermyth Of War\*/Civil War\*/Real Class\*/One Leg Too Few/The Scientist#/The Doctor#/The Duke#/The Miner (aka *Sitting On The Bench*)/The Restaurant\* (aka *Bread Alone*)/So That's The Way You Like It\*/The End Of The World (\* cowritten with Bennett, Miller and Moore, # cowritten with Miller)

*Record release:*

*Beyond The Fringe '64*

(U.S.) Capitol LP (S)W 2072

*Home Thoughts From Abroad/The English Way Of Death/Song/Royal Box/One Leg Too Few/Two English Songs/Lord Cobbold — The Duke/Real Class/A Piece Of My Mind/The Great Train Robbery*

\*\*\* In 1992 E.M.I. issued a double-CD (7 93962 2 1) containing all tracks from the original Parlophone *Beyond The Fringe LP*

plus highlights from the two American Capitol LPs ...

*The Sadder And Wiser Beaver/Sitting On The Bench\*/And The Same To You/Colonel Bogey/Portrait From Memory/So That's The Way You Like It/The English Way Of Death/Song/Home Thoughts From Abroad/One Leg Too Few/Two English Songs/Lord Cobbold — The Duke/A Piece Of My Mind/The Great Train Robbery*

(\* a longer version than that featured on the original LP)

(\* *Beyond The Fringe '65* (featuring a new cast performing the same *Beyond The Fringe '64* sketches) opened at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre on December 15 1964 for a brief Broadway run.)



### **Behind The Fridge**

Starring (and written by) Peter Cook and Dudley Moore  
Australian tour (of seven cities) from September 24 1971 to  
January 29 1972. Followed by a tour of New Zealand.  
Hello/Clap/Dudley Moore/On Location/An Appeal/Chanson/  
Come In/A Conservative/Moody/Peter Cook/Blow The Wind  
Southerly/Two For Tea (Pete and Dud)/Resting/Conservative/  
Not An Asp/Dudley Moore/So Much Toulouse/Boy Joy/  
Prestissimo/Sir Arthur/The Gospel Truth/Goodbye

*Record release:*

*Behind The Fridge*

(Aus) Atlantic LP SD 1005

*Hello/A Conservative/The Gospel Truth/On Location/Con-  
servative/Two For Tea*

### **Behind The Fridge**

Starring (and written by) Peter Cook and Dudley Moore  
Cambridge Theatre, London (from November 21 1972)  
Hello/On Location/Eine Kleine Brechtmusik/Come In/  
Chanson/A Conservative/Moody/Old Man River/Resting/  
Gospel Truth/Dudley Moore/Kampala/An Appeal/Mini  
Drama/Boy Joy/Tea For Two/Goodbye

*Record release:*

*Behind The Fridge*

(Brit) Atlantic LP K 40503

*Hello/On Location/Mini Drama/Gospel Truth/Tea For Two*

### **Good Evening**

Starring (and written by) Peter Cook and Dudley Moore  
Plymouth Theatre, New York (from late 1974)  
Hello/On Location/Madrigal/Six Of The Best/Die Flabbergast/  
Down The Mine (aka Sitting On The Bench)/One Leg Too  
Few/Chanson/Soap Opera/Gospel Truth/Mini Drama/The  
Kwai Sonata/The Frog And Peach/An Appeal/Tea For Two

*Record release:*

*Good Evening*

(U.S.) Island LP ILPS 9298

*Hello/Madrigal/Six Of The Best/One Leg Too Few/The Frog  
And Peach/Die Flabbergast/Gospel Truth/Mini Drama*

### **A Poke In The Eye (With A Sharp Stick)**

Her Majesty's Theatre, London on April 1, 2 and 3 1976  
Cook revived some earlier sketches for this Amnesty fundraiser:  
The Miner/So That's The Way You Like It/Asp/Court Room

*Record releases:*

*A Poke In The Eye (With A Sharp Stick)*

Transatlantic LP TRA 331

*features Asp/Court Room/So That's The Way You Like It*

*The Complete A Poke In The Eye (With A Sharp Stick)*

Castle 2CD ESDCD 153

*features the above three sketches plus The Miner*

*The Dead Parrot Society*

Rhino CD R2 71049

*features Court Room Sketch/Memoirs Of A Miner*

*The Mermaid Frolics*

Polydor LP 2384 101

*features The Miner*

*The Best Of The Balls*

Laughing Stock 2CD LAF CD 15

*features The Miner*

*Video release*

*The Secret Policeman's Early Bits*

Columbia Tristar CVR 21432

*features The Miner/Court Room Sketch/Asp/So That's The Way  
You Like It*

### **The Mermaid Frolics**

Mermaid Theatre, London on May 8 1977

Peter Cook took part in this second fundraiser for Amnesty  
International performing the newly-written sketch ...

E.L. Wisty From Beyond The Veil

*Record release*

*The Mermaid Frolics*

Polydor LP 2384 101

*features E.L. Wisty From Beyond The Veil*

### **The Secret Policeman's Ball**

Her Majesty's Theatre, London on June 27 to 30 1979

Peter Cook took part in the third Amnesty International  
fundraiser, appearing in four sketches ...

Interesting Facts (originally performed by Kenneth Williams  
in One Over The Eight), Pregnancy Test (originally performed  
by John Bird in The Establishment), The End Of The World  
(originally performed in Beyond The Fringe) and Entirely A  
Matter For You (specially written for the concert)

*Record releases*

*The Secret Policeman's Ball*

Island LP ILPS 9601

*features the above four sketches*

*The Best Of The Balls*

Laughing Stock 2CD LAF CD 15

*features Interesting Facts and Balloon (aka Pregnancy Test)*

*Video release*

*The Secret Policeman's Ball*

Columbia/Tristar

*features the above four sketches*

### **The Secret Policeman's Biggest Ball**

Cambridge Theatre, London in September 1989

Peter Cook took part in the sixth all-star fundraiser for Am-  
nesty International, appearing with Dudley Moore ...

The Frog And Peach (originally performed on Not Only ...  
But Also) and One Leg Too Few (originally performed in One  
Over The Eight and Beyond The Fringe '64)  
and the song Goodbye

*Record release*

*The Best Of The Balls*

Laughing Stock 2CD LAF CD 15

*features Tarzan (aka One Leg Too Few)*

*Video release*

*The Secret Policeman's Biggest Ball*

Central Video, Columbia Tristar

*features The Frog And Peach, One Leg Too Few and Goodbye*

# Television

## On The Braden Beat

ATV Saturday nights late 1964

*Record release:*

*Peter Cook Presents The Misty Mr. Wisty*

*Decca LP LK 4722*

*World Domination League/Royalty/The Tadpole Expert/Are You Spotty/C.P. Snow/Peace Through Nudism/O'er Hill And Dale/A Bee Life/The Man Who Invented The Wheel/The Plib/Food For Thought/Spindly Legs/Man's Best Friend/The E.L. Wisty Festival Of The Arts*

## Beyond The Fringe

BBC2 December 10 1964

### Not Only ... But Also (series #1)

BBC2 fortnightly January 9 to April 3 1965 (7x45m)

1. with John Lennon

includes Sir Arthur Streeb-Greebling - The Ravens/The Fairy Bootmaker/John Lennon Poetry/Initials (unconfirmed)

2. with Barry Humphries

includes A Painter At Work/The North Circular Road/Pete & Dud - Sex Fantasies (first version)

3. with Joe Melia, John Wells, Barry Humphries

includes Menswear Shop/Pete & Dud - Worst Things/Alan A'Dale

4. with Barry Humphries

includes Tramponuns/Uncle Arly/Pete & Dud - Art Gallery

5. includes Pete & Dud - On The Bus

6. with Peter Sellers

includes The Gourmet/Pete & Dud - Superstition

7. with Eric Sykes, John Bluthal

includes Film Studio/Pete & Dud - Religions

*Record releases:*

*Not Only Peter Cook But Also Dudley Moore*

*Decca LP LK 4703*

*The Ravens/Superstitions/Tramponuns/Art Gallery/Initials/Religions*

*The World Of Peter Cook And Dudley Moore*

*Decca LP PA 311/Laughing Stock CD LAF CD 5*

*includes Art Gallery/The Ravens*

*The Clean Tapes*

*Cube LP HIFLY 26*

*includes Tramponuns*

*Video release:*

*The Best Of ... What's Left Of ... Not Only ... But Also*

*BBC Video BBCV 4430*

*includes Sex Fantasies/Alan A'Dale/Tramponuns/The North Circular Road/The Art Gallery (plus series 2 and 3 highlights)*

\* Peter Cook and Dudley Moore appeared on **Ready, Steady, Go** (BBC1) in mid-1965 to sing (and promote) *Goodbye*

*Video Release*

*Ready Steady Go - Volume 2*

*P.M.I. Music MVP 9910022*

*includes the above segment*

\* Peter Cook and Dudley Moore appeared on **The New London Palladium Show** on September 26 1965 (ITV)



## Beyond The Fringe

BBC2 October 21 1965

a farewell performance by the original cast

\* Peter Cook and Dudley Moore appeared on **The Royal Variety Performance** in November 1965

*Record release:*

*By Appointment*

*Decca EP DFE 8644*

### Not Only ... But Also (series #2)

BBC2 January 15 to February 26 1966 (7x30m)

1. includes Pete & Dud - At The Zoo/Fights Of The Century/A Bit Of A Chat

2. with Alan Freeman

includes Pete & Dud - Disease/The Most Boring Man/Six Of The Best

3. includes Italian Restaurant/Ol' Man River/Blue Movie/Pete & Dud - Music

4. includes Pete & Dud - At The Seaside/Sir Arthur Streeb-Greebling - The Frog And Peach/Commercials/Slapstick

5. includes Psychiatrist/The Epic That Never Was/Father And Son

6. includes The Music Teacher/The Walrus And The Carpenter/Pete & Dud - Sex

7. includes Cavemen (opening)/Bo Dudley/Superthundersting-car/Pete And Dud - In Heaven

*Record releases:*

*Once Moore With Cook*

*Decca LP LK 4785*

*Dud And Pete On Sex/Father And Son/The Frog And Peach/Six Of The Best/The Music Teacher/A Bit Of A Chat/Dud And Pete At The Zoo/The Psychiatrist*

*The World Of Peter Cook And Dudley Moore*

*Decca LP PA 311/Laughing Stock CD LAF CD 5*

*includes A Bit Of A Chat/Father And Son/Six Of The Best*

*The Clean Tapes*  
Cube LP HIFLY 26  
includes *The Music Teacher/Dud And Pete On Sex/Father And Son*

Video release:

*The Best Of ... What's Left Of ... Not Only ... But Also*  
BBC Video BBCV 4430  
includes *Bo Dudley/A Bit Of A Chat/Cavemen (opening)/Pete And Dud - At The Zoo/Superthunderstingcar (plus highlights from series 1 and 3 editions)*

**Not Only ... But Also (Christmas special)**

BBC2 December 26 1966 (50m)

with John Lennon

**Goodbye Again**

#1. ATV August 18 1968 with Georgie Fame, Selena Jones, Warren Mitchell, Una Stubbs

includes ?

#2. ATV August 24 1968 with Donovan, Ike & Tina Turner  
includes ?

#3. ATV September 14 1968 with John Cleese, John Wells, Rodney Bewes

includes ?

#4. ATV August 3 1969 with Anne Bancroft  
includes *The Great Plunger-Jarvis/Accident Prevention/Insurance Salesmen/Pete & Dud - Sex Fantasies (second version)*

Record releases:

*Goodbye Again*

Decca LP LK 4981

*The Trial/Long Distance/Mrs. Woolley's Curse/Aversion Therapy/Workout/War Correspondent*

*The Clean Tapes*

Cube LP HIFLY 26

includes *Aversion Therapy*

**Not Only ... But Also (series #3)**

BBC2 fortnightly February 18 to May 13 1970 (7x45m)

1. with Spike Milligan

includes *Bargo/Pete & Dud - Dud Dreams/The Piano Tuner*

2. with Will Rushton

includes *Too Many Tits And Bums/The Glidd Of Glood/Pete & Dud - OODud*

3. with Barry Humphries

includes *Sir Arthur Streeb-Greebling - Worms/Train Conductor/Pete & Dud - Racial Prejudice*

4. with Frank Muir

includes *In The Club/Pete & Dud - Futility Of Life/Psycho*

5. with Ronnie Barker

includes *Permission To Wed/Sir Arthur Streeb-Greebling - Flowers/Undercover Doctor/Pete & Dud - Writing A Bestseller*

6. with Denis Norden

includes *Ex-Con/Lengths/Pete & Dud - As Nature Intended*

7. with Alan Bennett

includes *Cyclist On Ark Royal (opening and closing)/Jumbo And Teddy/Pete & Dud - Sex Manual/The Making Of A Movie*

Record releases:

*Not Only ... But Also*

Decca LP LK 5080

*Dud Dreams/In The Club/Lengths/This Is Ludwig Van Beethoven/The Making Of A Movie/OODud*

*The World Of Peter Cook And Dudley Moore*  
Decca LP PA 311/Laughing Stock CD LAF CD 5  
includes *Lengths/Dud Dreams*

*The Clean Tapes*

Cube LP HIFLY 26

includes *Lengths*

Video release:

*The Best Of ... What's Left Of ... Not Only ... But Also*  
BBC Video BBCV 4430

includes *Cyclist On Ark Royal (opening)/The Making Of A Movie/The Glidd Of Glood/Bargo/Tower Bridge (opening)/This Is Ludwig Van Beethoven (plus series 1 and 2 highlights)*

**Not Only ... But Also (Australian editions)**

A.B.C. February 8 and 15 1971 (2x30m)

(screened on BBC1 June 18 and 25 1971)

1. with Barry Humphries

includes *Pete & Dud - Customs check - On The Beach - At The Cricket/Sir Arthur Streeb-Greebling - Teaching Funnel Web Spiders To Swim/The Shirt Shop*

2. with Barry Humphries

includes *Colonel Bogey/One Leg Too Few/Bollard/Job Interview/Pete & Dud - Homeward Bound*

**Where Do I Sit?**

BBC2 February 19 to March 5 1971 (3x30m)

\* Peter Cook and Dudley Moore appeared on **The Dave Allen Tonight Show** special on September 18 1971 (Nine Network Australia)

**Behind The Fridge**

Nine Network (Australia) 4 November 1971 and ?

two 50-minute specials of highlights from the stage show, recorded in the studios of Channel 9, Melbourne ...

#1: *Hello/An Appeal/Blow The Wind Southerly/Prestissimo/So Much Toulouse/Come In/South Africa/Moody/The Gospel Truth/Goodbye*

#2: *Pete And Dud - Two For Tea/A Conservative/And The Same To You/Resting/Chinese Riddle/Song For Suzy/On Location*

**The Best Of Not Only ... But Also**

BBC2 December 24 1974 (40m)

includes series 3 footage of the *Cyclist on the Ark Royal*, *Bargo* and the *Glidd Of Glood*, plus new footage of a *Good vs. Evil Cricket Match*, *Hallucinations* and *Pete and Dud at sea*, on the *Isle of Wight* and at *Southend*

\* Peter Cook and Dudley Moore appeared on **Saturday Night Live** on January 24 1976 (NBC)

**Pleasure At Her Majesty's**

BBC1 December 29 1976

100-minute Omnibus special presenting highlights from *A Poke In The Eye (With A Sharp Stick)* concerts

**The Mermaid Frolics**

ITV September 10 1977

an hour of highlights from the second Amnesty fundraiser

**The Secret Policeman's Ball**

ITV December 22 1979

an hour of highlights from the third Amnesty fundraiser



### **Peter Cook And Company**

London Weekend September 14 1980 (50m)

with Rowan Atkinson, John Cleese, Terry Jones, Robert Longden, Beryl Reid, Paula Wilcox

### **The Two Of Us**

Series #1: CBS April 6 to April 27 1981 (4x25m)

1. TV talk show host Nan Gallagher hires an English butler, Robert Brentwood (Cook)

2. Gabby's slumber party is threatened by faulty plumbing

3. Brentwood's elderly friend expires in Nan's home just as her interview guest is due to arrive

4. Thinking the house will be empty for the weekend, both Nan and Brentwood make plans

Series #2: CBS October 12 1981 to February 24 1982 (16x25m)

1. Nan is miserable at not getting any fan mail but suddenly finds she has a secret admirer

2. While minding Cubby's dog, Brentwood inadvertently puts it out with the garbage

3. Brentwood's guest is the cad who stole Reggie's girlfriend

4. Brentwood is delighted to be asked to fill in as butler to a Duke until he learns his charge is a child of eight

5. Brentwood gambles away the grocery money

6. Nan invites Brentwood to be a guest on her TV show

7. Gabby is troubled by nightmares

8. Brentwood volunteers to teach Gabby German

9. A visit by Brentwood's shady friend aggravates his back

10. Brentwood thinks he's sure to be the chief suspect when the house is burgled

11. Brentwood offers to help Gabby's school basketball team

12. Brentwood wants to be named "Butler Of The Year"

13. Brentwood is left to organise Gabby's birthday party

14. Brentwood is shattered when his parents plan to divorce

15. An old school mate is still carrying the torch for Nan

16. When Brentwood is told to give up his day off he decides to take industrial action

### **The Comic Strip Presents: Mr. Jolly Lives Next Door**

CH4 March 5 1988 (50m)

*Video release*

*The Comic Strip Presents Mr. Jolly Lives Next Door*

*Palace/Virgin PVC 4000A/Polygram 0864843*

### **The Secret Policeman's Biggest Ball**

ITV October 28 1989

an hour of highlights from the sixth Amnesty fundraiser

### **A Life In Pieces**

BBC2 daily December 26 1990 to January 6 1991 (12x5m)

with Ludovic Kennedy

### **Gone To Seed**

London Weekend November 13 to December 18 1992 (6x50m)

*Video release:*

*Central Video VC 6292*

### **One Foot In The Algarve**

BBC1 December 26 1993 (90m)

*Video release:*

*BBC 5183*

### **Room 101**

BBC2 July 25 1994 (30m)



## **Recordings**

### **Bridge On The River Wye**

Parlophone LP PMC 1190/PCS 3036 (November 1962)

Cook joined Peter Sellers, Spike Milligan and Jonathan Miller in a reworking of the 1957 Goon Show *African Incident*

### **His Master's Vass**

Lyntone flexidisc

attached to Private Eye of October 2 1964

### **I Saw Daddy Kissing Santa Claus**

Lyntone flexidisc LYN 758

attached to Private Eye of December 18 1964

### **The Rites Of Spring**

Lyntone flexidisc

attached to Private Eye of April 1 1965

### **Georgia/There And Bach Again**

Pye single 7N 15847 (April 1965)

### **Goodbye (with Dudley Moore)/Not Only But Also (inst.)**

Decca single F 12158 (May 1965)

\*\*\* *Goodbye also featured on The Clean Tapes (Cube LP HIFLY 26)*

### **The Ballad Of Spotty Muldoon/Lovely Lady Of The Roses**

Decca single F 12182 (July 1965)

\*\*\* *Lovely Lady Of The Roses also featured on The Clean Tapes (Cube LP HIFLY 26)*

### **Isn't She A Sweetie/Bo Dudley (both with Dudley Moore)**

Decca single F 12380 (April 1966)

\*\*\* *Isn't She A Sweetie also featured on The Clean Tapes (Cube LP HIFLY 26)*

### **The B.B.C. Gnome Service**

Lyntone flexidisc LYN 1138

attached to Private Eye of December 23 1966

### **L.S. Bumble Bee/The Bee Side (both with Dudley Moore)**

Decca single F 12551 (January 1967)

### **The Abominable Radio Gnome**

Lyntone flexidisc

attached to Private Eye of December 8 1967

### **Peter Cook And Dudley Moore Cordially Invite You To Go To Hell!**

20th Century Fox single-sided LP (no number)

30 minutes of ad-libbed promotional material, for use in the marketing of the movie *Bedazzled*. Only 600 copies pressed.

### **Private Eye's Blue Record**

Transatlantic LP TRA 131

untitled tracks by Peter Cook, Dudley Moore, Barry Humphries, William Rushton, Richard Ingrams and John Wells

### **The Loneliness Of The Long Playing Record**

Lyntone flexidisc LYN 1677

attached to Private Eye of February 14 1969

### **Dear Sir, Is This A Record?**

Lyntone flexidisc

attached to Private Eye of December 5 1969

### **Just For The Record**

Lyntone flexidisc LYN 2140

attached to Private Eye of December 4 1970

### **1964 - 1970 Private Eye's Golden Years Of Sound**

Lyntone LP Lyn 2745/6 (1973)

a collection of all eight flexidiscs ...

His Master's Vass/I Saw Daddy Kissing Santa Claus/The Rites Of Spring/B.B.C. Gnome Service/Abominable Radio Gnome/The Loneliness Of The Long Playing Record/Dear Sir, Is This A Record?/Just For The Record

### **Hullo Sailor**

Lyntone flexidisc

attached to Private Eye of December 1 1972

### **Farginson**

Lyntone flexidisc LYN 3034

attached to Private Eye of March 21 1975

### **Derek And Clive (Live) (with Dudley Moore)**

Island LP ILPS 9434, Krass KLP 68, CD IMCD 7

The Worst Job I Ever Had/This Bloke Came Up To Me/The Worst Job He Ever Had/Squatter And The Ant/In The Lav/Little Flo/Just One Of Those Songs/Winky Wanky Woo/Bo Duddley/Blind/Top Rank/Cancer/Jump

### **Derek And Clive Come Again (with Dudley Moore)**

Virgin LP V 2094, Krass KLP 69,

Virgin CD CDOVD 110 (with extra tracks \*)

You Stupid Cunt \*/Coughing Contest/Cancer/Non-Stop Dancer/My Mum Song/Joan Crawford/Norman The Carpet/How's Your Mother/Back Of The Cab/Alfie Noakes/Nurse/In The Cubicles/Ross McPharther/Hello Colin/Having A Wank/I Saw This Bloke/Parking Offence/Members Only/Valerie's Hymen \*/Mother \*/Films \*/Young Dudley Moore Performs "Jump" \*

### **Derek And Clive Ad Nauseam (with Dudley Moore)**

Virgin LP V 2112, Krass KLP 70,

Virgin CD CDOVD 162 (with extra tracks \*)

Endangered Species/Horse Racing/T.V./Bruce Forsyth/Records/Soul Time/Russia/Sir/Celebrity Suicide/Politics/Labels/Street Music/The Horn/Mona/The Critics/Intergalactic Sex \*/Rape, Death And Paralysis \*/Lady Vera Fart Teller \*/I Can't Shit \*/Sex Manual \*/Stupid \*

Highlights from these three LPs were reissued as:

**Six Fabulous Filthy Favourites** (Krass KS 12578)

**Derek And Clive's Greatest Shits** (Krass 2LPs KLP 71)

**Derek And Clive's Greatest Shits Volume 2** (Krass KLP 72)

### **Here Comes The Judge Live In Concert**

Virgin LP VR 4

Entirely A Matter For You\*/Well-Hung Jury/Thanksgiving/Rad Job

(\* from the *Secret Policeman's Ball* concert)

### **Private Eye Presents Golden Satiricals**

Springtime/Island LP HABA 6002

a collection of all ten flexidiscs ...

His Master's Vass/I Saw Daddy Kissing Santa Claus/The Rites Of Spring/The B.B.C. Gnome Service/The Abominable Radio Gnome/The Loneliness Of The Long Playing Record/Dear Sir, Is This A Record?/Just For The Record/Hullo Sailor/Farginson

### **The Sound Of Talbot**

Lyntone flexidisc LYN 8925

attached to Private Eye of December 5 1980

### **Record Damages**

Lyntone flexidisc LYN 19463/4

attached to Private Eye of December 11 1987

### **Skeye Flexi-Dish**

Lyntone flexidisc

attached to Private Eye of April 1 1989

### **There Ain't No Morning/Himazas (Spike Milligan track)**

Paramount single PARA 101

## **Films**

1958: **Bachelor of Hearts** (unbilled student extra)

1966: **The Wrong Box**

1967: **Bedazzled**

**Think 20th** (short)

1968: **A Dandy in Aspic**

1969: **Monte Carlo or Bust!** (GB) aka **Those Daring Young Men in Their Jaunty Jalopies** (US)

**The Bed Sitting Room**

1970: **The Rise and Rise of Michael Rimmer**

1972: **The Adventures of Barry McKenzie**

1976: **Pleasure at Her Majesty's**

**Find the Lady**

1978: **The Hound of the Baskervilles**

1983: **Yellowbeard**

**Scandalous!**

1984: **Supergirl**

1986: **Whoops Apocalypse**

1987: **The Princess Bride**

1988: **Without a Clue**

1989: **Getting it Right**

**Great Balls of Fire!**

1994: **Black Beauty**

## **Video**

### **Derek And Clive Get The Horn**

Polygram 086 466 3 (89 min)

### **Peter Cook Talks Golf Balls**

Polygram 6330323

# GEORGE BURNS

## Part 1: BURNS AND ALLEN — MOVIES AND RADIO

by Peter Tatchell

**A**S George Burns nears his 100th birthday, we look at the various stages of his extraordinary career... or several careers, to be more precise. Laugh will itemise his movies, radio shows, television series and specials, recordings and books over three issues, leading up to his centenary on January 20 1996.

The love of his life was Gracie Allen, but it could be argued that he has also had an equally strong and enduring infatuation for the world of show business. From his early days trying to make it as a vaudeville headliner he's been witness to the many phases of the entertainment medium watching the progression from live theatre to the motion picture, from radio to television, the 78rpm gramophone recording to cassette and CD, and the introduction of video and the laser disc. He's performed on all of them and by all accounts enjoyed every minute of it.

For his first sixty years he was content to be straight man to his charmingly crazy wife Gracie, and his clever business acumen guided them through four decades of success, culminating in one of the best-loved television sitcoms of all time.

Out of the public eye he was well known to his show business colleagues as a gifted storyteller who would entertain them at parties and roasts. It was only when Gracie decided to retire in 1958 that this side of his talent came to the fore, and he's been delighting audiences with his jokes and anecdotes ever since.

George grew up in the famed melting pot of New York's lower east side where he was born Nathan Birnbaum, the ninth of twelve children. His father died when Nate was seven and he formed a singing act with three other youngsters to earn a few pennies by passing the hat after each performance.

As the years rolled by, he tried his hand at all manner of entertaining ... singing, dancing, telling jokes, appearing with animals, as a single or part of a double act. Anything to stay in front of an audience.

In 1922 he decided to work up a boy-girl act and by an amazing stroke of good fortune met a pretty Irish-American called Gracie Allen. After years of ups and downs George was soon headed for the big time. The original idea had Gracie as the feed with George delivering the jokes, but it didn't take long to notice who the audience were laughing at, and Burns quickly reversed the roles. He also decided that he wanted Burns and Allen to be partners in private life as well as on stage, and the couple were married soon after.

The 1920s was a high water mark in the history of show business, and George and Gracie were conquering the vaudeville circuits across America with routines like *Dizzy* and *Lambchops* and amassing an impressive collection of plaudits. Eventually they made it to the Palace Theatre on Broadway (for the first of several engagements) and crossed the Atlantic to appear in London with similar success.

Audiences everywhere warmed to Gracie's inspired zany-ness and with the coming of the talkies the duo went before



the movie cameras to recreate their best routines in a series of shorts. A year later (in 1930) they issued their first 78rpm record, recorded during one of their visits to the British Isles.

As the Roaring Twenties dissipated into the Great Depression, radio became a major entertainment medium. Burns and Allen were supporting Eddie Cantor and George Jessel in a record-breaking show at the Palace when Eddie suggested Gracie appear on one of his weekly broadcasts, with Cantor taking over George's role of delivering the straight lines. The programme (on November 15 1931) was a great success and three months later Burns and Allen were signed to star in a weekly spot on the Guy Lombardo series. They appeared for nearly two and a half years without a break, before coming back with their own series (which commenced with another unbroken thirty month run). A clever promotional stunt at the time had Gracie searching for a supposedly lost brother, and she made a number of unbilled walk-ons interrupting numerous other network broadcasts before the joke was ended.

George and Gracie were also proving popular on the big screen. Following their series of one-reelers, Paramount used Burns and Allen as comic relief in many of their full-length features throughout the 1930s, and they became part of a stock company of players that included Bing Crosby, W.C.Fields, Jack Benny, Martha Raye and Bob Hope. In 1937, they supported Fred Astaire at R.K.O. and even performed a creditable dance routine with the legendary performer. Just before the war, Gracie also made a couple of solo film appearances.

Despite being happily married in real life (with two adopted children), on radio and in the movies Burns and Allen continued to play a guy and his dotty girlfriend. By the early 1940s though, George thought the time had come to update things, and with the start of their new radio series in October 1941 the pair suddenly became husband and wife and settled down to a more domestic situation.

As the decade progressed, the programme built up a stable of supporting players with whom Gracie could interact ... the befuddled postman, the egotistical announcer and the perplexed next-door neighbours, Blanche and Harry Morton.

It was also a format that would later transfer brilliantly to television.





## Radio

### The Guy Lombardo Show

Series #1: CBS Mondays February 15 to May 16 1932 and Wednesdays May 25 1932 to May 17 1933 (sponsored by Robert Burns Panatelas)

Series #2: CBS Wednesdays May 24 1933 to June 13 1934 (not Oct 4) (sponsored by White Owl Cigars)

### The George Burns And Gracie Allen Show

Series #1 (titled *The Adventures Of Gracie*): CBS Wednesdays September 19 1934 to September 25 1935 (sponsored by White Owl Cigars) with Ferde Grofe's Orchestra

Series #2 (titled *The Adventures Of Gracie*): CBS Wednesdays October 2 1935 to September 23 1936 (sponsored by Campbell Soup) with Milton Watson's Orchestra (later replaced by Jacques Renard, Eddie Duchin and finally Henry King)

Series #3: CBS Wednesdays September 30 1936 to March 24 1937 (26 editions) (sponsored by Campbell Soup) with Tony Martin (from Nov 25), Ken Niles and Henry King's Orchestra

Series #4: CBS Mondays April 12 1937 to August 1 1938 (69 editions) (sponsored by Grape Nuts) with Dick Foran (replaced mid-season by Tony Martin and Frank Parker), Ronald Drake (replace mid-season by John Conte) and Ray Noble's Orchestra (later Jan Garber and finally Glen Gray)

\* George and Gracie had a break for four weeks in October 1937 and stars such as Al Jolson and Eddie Cantor filled in.

Series #5: CBS Fridays September 30 1938 to June 23 1939 (39 editions) (sponsored by Chesterfield Cigarettes) with Frank Parker, Paul Douglas and Ray Noble's Orchestra

Series #6: CBS Wednesdays October 4 1939 to June 26 1940 (39 editions) (sponsored by Hind's Honey And Almond Cream) with Frank Parker, Truman Bradley & Ray Noble's Orchestra

Series #7: NBC Mondays July 1 1940 to March 24 1941 (39 editions) (sponsored by Spam) with Senor Lee, John Hiestand (replaced mid-season by Jimmy Wallington) and Artie Shaw's Orchestra

Series #8: NBC Tuesdays October 7 1941 to June 30 1942 (39 editions) (sponsored by Swan Soap) with Jimmy Cash, Bill Goodwin & Paul Whiteman Orchestra

Series #9: NBC Tuesdays October 6 1942 to June 29 1943 (39 editions) (sponsored by Swan Soap) with Jimmy Cash, Elvia Allman, Lawrence Nash, Bill Goodwin and Paul Whiteman's Orchestra

Series #10: NBC Tuesdays August 31 1943 to June 13 1944 (not Jan 11)(41 editions) (sponsored by Swan Soap) with Jimmy Cash, Elvia Allman, Lawrence Nash, Mel Blanc, Hans Conreid, Bill Goodwin and Felix Mills' Orchestra

Series #11: CBS Tuesdays August 15 to December 26 1944 (not Nov 7) and Mondays January 1 to June 25 1945 (not Apr 16)(44 editions) (sponsored by Swan Soap) with Jimmy Cash, Sara Allgood, Bill Goodwin (replaced mid-season by Harry Von Zell) and Felix Mills' Orchestra

Series #12 (titled *Maxwell House Coffee Time*): NBC Thursdays September 20 1945 to May 30 1946 (37 editions) (sponsored by Maxwell House Coffee) with Bill Goodwin and Meredith Willson's Orchestra

Series #13 (titled *Maxwell House Coffee Time*): NBC Thursdays September 5 1946 to May 29 1947 (39 editions) (sponsored by Maxwell House Coffee) with Mel Blanc, Bill Goodwin and Meredith Willson's Orchestra

Series #14 (titled *Maxwell House Coffee Time*): NBC Thursdays September 4 1947 to June 10 1948 (41 editions) (sponsored by Maxwell House Coffee) with Mel Blanc, Bea Benaderet, Hans Conreid, Gale Gordon, Bill Goodwin, Toby Reed and Meredith Willson's Orchestra

Series #15 (titled *Maxwell House Coffee Time*): NBC Thursdays September 30 1948 to June 23 1949 (39 editions) (sponsored by Maxwell House Coffee) with Bill Goodwin, Toby Reed and Henry Lubin's Orchestra

Series #16: CBS Wednesdays September 21 1949 to May 17 1950 (35 editions) (sponsored by Amident Toothpaste) with Horace McNear, Hal March, Bea Benaderet, Bill Goodwin and Henry Lubin's Orchestra

## Records

George and Gracie recorded two studio releases ...

**Dizzy** (parts 1 and 2)  
(British) Columbia 78rpm DB 286 (October 3 1930)

**George Burns And Gracie Allen** (parts 1 and 2)  
(U.S.) Columbia 78rpm 2780-D (June 9 1933)

In 1947, Top Ten label issued a 78rpm 4-disc set ...

**George Burns And Gracie Allen**  
featuring the following eight sides ...  
What Every Young Bride Should Know (parts 1 and 2)  
What Every Old Husband Should Know (parts 1 and 2)  
The French Long Underwear Maker (parts 1 and 2)  
Sugar Throat Sings Again  
Gracie Discovers A Movie Star

In the 1970s and 1980s, a number of LPs were issued featuring recordings of Burns and Allen radio broadcasts ...

**George Burns And Gracie Allen**  
Mark 56 label #614  
shows of February 24 and January 20 1949 (with Cesar Romero)

**George Burns And Gracie Allen 1937**  
Mark 56 label #735  
shows of October 7 1938 and December 23 1936

**George Burns And Gracie Allen 1940s**  
Memorabilia MLP-722  
show of December 4 1947 (with Bing Crosby)

**Burns And Allen - Greatest Original Radio Broadcasts** (3LP)  
M.F. Distribution MF 215  
shows of February 15 1944, March 21 1944, April 4 1946, May 8 1947, May 6 1948 and May 20 1948

**Burns And Allen - Their Greatest Radio Shows** (3-LP Set)  
Murray Hill #898047  
shows of December 4 1947 (with Bing Crosby), October 10 1944, November 18 1941 and January 20 1949, plus TV show soundtrack of June 8 1953 and the final two Top Ten 78s

**The Great Radio Comedians** (5-LP Set)  
Murray Hill #931699  
includes the show of November 8 1945 (with George Jessel)

**Burns And Allen**  
Nostalgia Lane NLR-1002  
shows of November 1 and 8 1945 (with George Jessel)

**The George Burns And Gracie Allen Show**  
Radiola MR-1028  
show of November 18 1941, plus a selection of "afterpiece" vaudeville routines taken from their 1950s TV series

**The New Burns And Allen Show**  
Radiola MR-1142  
shows of October 21 1941 and December 16 1941

## Films

George and Gracie first starred in a series of 1-reel shorts ...

**Burns And Allen In Lambchops** (1929 Warner Bros.)

**Fit To Be Tied** (1930 Paramount)

**Pulling A Bone** (1930 Paramount)

**The Antique Shop** (1931 Paramount)

**Once Over, Light** (1931 Paramount)

**One Hundred Per Cent Service** (1931 Paramount)

**Oh My Operation** (1932 Paramount)

**The Babbling Brook** (1932 Paramount)

**Patents Pending** (1932 Paramount)

**Your Hat** (1932 Paramount)

**Let's Dance** (1933 Paramount)

**Walking The Baby** (1933 Paramount)

George and Gracie later appeared in a number of 1930s Hollywood features ...

**The Big Broadcast** (1932 Paramount) 80 minutes

**International House** (1933 Paramount) 70 minutes

**College Humor** (1933 Paramount) 80 minutes

**Six Of A Kind** (1934 Paramount) 65 minutes

**We're Not Dressing** (1934 Paramount) 74 minutes

**Many Happy Returns** (1934 Paramount) 66 minutes

**Love In Bloom** (1935 Paramount) 77 minutes

**Here Comes Cookie** (1935 Paramount) 65 minutes

**The Big Broadcast Of 1936** (1935 Paramount) 97 minutes

**The Big Broadcast Of 1937** (1936 Paramount) 102 minutes

**College Holiday** (1936 Paramount) 87 minutes

**A Damsel In Distress** (1937 R.K.O.) 101 minutes

**College Swing** (1938 Paramount) 86 minutes

**Honolulu** (1939 M.G.M.) 83 minutes

George and Gracie appeared in several personality shorts ...

**Hollywood On Parade #2** (1932 Paramount)

**Hollywood On Parade #12** (1933 Paramount)

**Hollywood Grows Up** (1954 Columbia)

**Hollywood Fathers** (1954 Columbia)

Gracie appeared (without George) in three other features ...

**The Gracie Allen Murder Case** (1939 Paramount) 74 min

**Mr. And Mrs. North** (1941 M.G.M.) 67 minutes

**Two Girls And A Sailor** (1944 M.G.M.) 124 minutes

\* George Burns solo movie career will be itemised in the third part of this article (scheduled to appear in LAUGH #14)

# RISING DAMP

by David C. Taylor

**R**ISING Damp was the brainchild of Eric Chappell, a former travelling auditor for the East Midlands Electricity Board, who was born at Grantham, Lincolnshire in 1934, and whose other situation comedy shows have included **The Squirrels**, **Only When I Laugh**, **The Bounder**, **Duty Free**, **Home To Roost**, **Singles**, **Haggard** and **Fiddlers Three**. His first professional script was for the stage play **The Banana Box** which made its debut in 1970 before transferring to the West End in mid-1973.

The play starred Leonard Rossiter as Rooksby, the miserly landlord of a decaying Leeds boarding house, with Frances de la Tour, Don Warrington and Paul Jones (of pop group Manfred Mann) as his hapless tenants. Elizabeth Adare also appeared as Warrington's girlfriend, Lucy. The play's potential for a television series was recognized by Duncan Wood (ex-BBC producer, then with Yorkshire).

On the whole, **The Banana Box** was not a lighthearted Affair — being more the stuff of tragedy — and the rather abrasive characters had to be toned down for TV. Whilst Warrington's character, Philip Smith, had been exposed as a fraud in the play, in the television series he would be portrayed as a bona fide African prince, which made him much more interesting.

Paul Jones was either unable or unwilling to appear in the series, and his character of Noel Parker was replaced by the youthful, long-haired medical student Alan Moore. Chosen to play the part was Richard Beckinsale, fresh from his award-winning performance in **The Lovers** (with Paula Wilcox), and soon to achieve further acclaim for his Lennie Godber role in the Ronnie Barker sitcom **Porridge**. Throughout his appearance in *Rising Damp*, Richard wore either of two wigs, with the sole exception of one short scene at the end of the third season episode *Stage Struck*.

Frances de la Tour, though descended from the pre-revolution French aristocracy, holds a passionate commitment to radical left-wing politics and maintains a strong link with fringe and Socialist theatre groups.

Don Warrington was born in Trinidad but moved to Newcastle as a child. A three-year course at the Drama Centre in London ironed out the Geordie/West Indian accent and taught him to use the voice which so attracted female viewers.

It had originally been intended to entitle the series Rooksby, but so many real life Rooksbys had complained about their nefarious, fictitious namesake that it was decided to change the title to **Rising Damp** and to rename the landlord Rigsby. Thankfully, no real life Rigsbys objected!

Eric Chappell wrote his scripts for the series in a converted garage at his Grantham home, normally taking a month to complete each episode — working mainly in the mornings and smoking four or five small cigars. His superbly-pitched comedy style won him a Pye Award, and it was typical of his nature that he commented that he wasn't sure if it was for most promising script-writer or the best newcomer (he was too embarrassed to ask)!

During the first season, rehearsals took place at St. Paul's



Church Hall, Sussex Place, Hammersmith, but for the remaining three seasons the venue was moved to the Sulgrave Boys Club, 287 Goldhawk Road. Each episode was recorded before a live audience in Studio 4 of the Yorkshire Television Centre in Leeds. The show's warm-up man was invariably actor/comedian Felix Bowness, who is best remembered for his role as Fred Quilly in the BBC comedy series **Hi De Hi!**

Producer for the pilot episode *The New Tenant* was Duncan Wood, whilst the director was Monty Python's Ian McNaughton. Ronnie Baxter then took over to produce and direct the first three seasons (excepting *All Our Yesterdays* and *Things That Go Bump In The Night*, which were under the direction of Len Lurcuck). The final season was produced and directed by Vernon Lawrence. The designer was Colin Pigott (replaced by Peter Caldwell for the final season) and the series was complemented by a very catchy theme tune composed by Dennis Wilson.

The first season was a tremendous success and received favourable press reviews, but it was not entirely free of production problems. The final episode, *Stand Up And Be Counted*, took a satirical poke at politics and featured an effeminate Labour candidate named Pendry (who was referred to as a middle-class poof). Unfortunately the character shared the surname with a real M.P. who threatened Yorkshire Television with litigation should the edition ever be repeated. The tape was promptly wiped and remained a lost gem for seventeen years. Then, when Channel Four was preparing its momentous revival of the series in 1991, a copy of the episode was traced to Canada and returned to London for screening. The offending passage should have been edited out before it was rebroadcast, but was left in (with the result that it will undoubtedly be banned yet again)!

Eric Chappell was nonetheless commissioned to write a further eight scripts for a second season, but due to illness on



his part production was delayed. The new schedule clashed with Frances de la Tour's stage commitments, which resulted in her being temporarily written out mid-run (the character Ruth leaving to marry her librarian fiancé Desmond).

In her place, **Rising Damp** gained a new female tenant — chirpy Cockney artist's model Brenda — who would create some love interest for Alan and lead to rivalry between himself and Rigsby. Surprisingly, the part was played by a Canadian, Gay Rose, who though appearing in only four episodes made such a tremendous impact that she is still fondly remembered by fans of the series.

The final episode of the season *For The Man Who Has Everything* featured a guest appearance by actress Elizabeth Adare as Lucy, the same character she had played in **The Banana Box**.

The T.V. Times of November 1 - 7 1975 confirmed that Rupert Rigsby had become almost a cult figure, but Leonard Rossiter (who the magazine had recently voted the funniest man on television) suggested production of a third series depended particularly on scriptwriter Chappell, and if he was able to come up with enough material. Rossiter was said to be impressed by the viewing figures and noted that in addition to being watched by a lot of professionals, it was also a winner with the public.

The go-ahead was indeed given for a third season of seven episodes, but almost a year and a half were to pass before they reached the television screen in the spring of 1977. In the interim fans had to be content with re-runs.

When the new shows did eventually arrive, the series had undergone a perceptible change in direction. It was decided that the central characters (and their relationship to each other) had been explored as far as was feasibly possible, although it has to be said that the Philip Smith part wasn't exploited to its full potential.

In short, the series began to suffer (to a certain degree) from the 'Irwin Allen syndrome', relying on a new short-term tenant or tenants joining the Rigsby household practically each week to provide story lines. This ploy worked just fine when it involved an interesting character, but when the newcomer proved to be downright dull the whole episode suffered as a consequence. This isn't to say that the production values took a nosedive, but the series did become rather variable in content. But even the poorest episodes were still head and shoulders above many of its contemporaries, and the four lead players could always be relied on to turn in their consistently finely-polished performances. Indeed, some episodes — such as *Pink Carnations* — managed to break free from this rigid formula altogether, with spectacular results.

There were other less devastating changes this season. For the first time the title was superimposed over the opening scene of each show. Brenda had already departed, never to be heard from again, and the opening episode *That's My Boy* saw Miss Jones return to the fold, her engagement to Desmond having fallen through once she realised that she was still emotionally attached to Philip. Also during this season, Alan was to be given a new love interest in the shapely form of Caroline Armitage (daughter of a wealthy property developer) to whom he was to become briefly engaged. The part was played by 24-year-old Judy Buxton, who latterly found fame as Dennis Waterman's bitchy walk-out wife in the BBC sitcom **On The Up**.

One episode of particular interest was *Clunk Click*, from

which a sequence had to be cut due to the show being over-length — this was a confrontation between Rigsby and an angry motorist played by actor James Bree. Keen-eyed viewers can still spot Bree's name in the closing credits.

The third season was to be Richard Beckinsale's last as he was forced to leave due to other commitments.

The fourth (and final) series of **Rising Damp** was heralded by a superb cover and Leonard Rossiter interview in the T.V. Times of May 4 to 10 1978. The six-part run saw the relationship between Philip and Ruth regress to a platonic friendship, and Rigsby no longer saw the handsome African as a rival for her affections, his attitude towards him had mellowed. The antagonism between them — which still raised its head on occasions — was more of a game (or ritual) than a serious conflict.

Rigsby's boarding house seemed a little forlorn without Alan, but on the whole the scripts maintained the same high standard of excellence which had distinguished the first two seasons, and fans were provided with a more than welcome opportunity to meet Rigsby's estranged wife Veronica and his roguish brother Ronald (portrayed by Avis Bunnage and Brian Peck).

The cat which had featured as Rigsby's feline companion Vienna during the previous twenty-two episodes was (for some inexplicable reason) replaced by another puss, which was strikingly different in appearance. Or perhaps it wasn't that inexplicable ... Eric Chappell has gone on record as saying that while Leonard Rossiter was fond of cats in Vienna's case the fur got up his nose and smelled. The animal wasn't all that co-operative during filming and most of its closeups and mews had to be dubbed in later. When a script dictated that a depressed Rigsby should aim kicks at the cat, it was testament to Rossiter's self-control that not one ever made contact (though it was always done with great feeling)! Vienna #2 would later reappear in **Rising Damp** (the movie).

One curious aspect of Rigsby's boarding house is that during the first season its number is shown to be 917, but by the second series it appears to have moved to 34, whilst on a later occasion the building appears to lack a number at all. Perhaps the dwelling possessed some mysterious teleporting force akin to **Doctor Who's** Tardis?

No in-depth article on the series could be considered complete without at least a passing reference to the **Rising Damp** regular who only made it to two episodes during the first season — namely the former Red Devil turned all-in wrestler, Spooner, who was brilliantly played by actor Derek Newark. The character had been intended to appear in at least two other editions but Newark's other commitments prevented this.

One's enjoyment of those last six episodes was tinged with sadness at the realisation that there would be no further visits to the house of Rigsby — a fact which had been made patently clear by certain newspaper articles. When the end titles of the final programme faded from the television screen on that distant May evening, it was like bidding a tearful farewell to an old friend. One might argue that the demise of **Rising Damp** was somewhat premature, and that it had sufficient potential to continue for at least another season. Indeed by the end of the run it was reported to have been the most popular programme on television.

Sadly, both Leonard Rossiter and Richard Beckinsale have since died, but their timeless legacy remains to entertain us still.

# Episode Guide

Pilot edition: ITV September 2 1974

*The New Tenant*

Nosy landlord Rigsby isn't enthusiastic about his new African lodger

Series #1: ITV December 13 1974 to January 17 1975 (6x25m)

1. *Black Magic*

Alan and Philip use native superstition to get even with Rigsby

2. *A Night Out*

Rigsby wears a wrestler's suit to attend a birthday party

3. *Charisma*

Rigsby's amorous pursuit of Ruth isn't helped by suggestions by the lodgers in the top floor room

4. *All Our Yesterdays*

Wrestler Spooner is confined to the boarding house with a broken leg caused by Rigsby's cat

5. *The Prowler*

Rigsby is the prime suspect when police investigate a prowler

6. *Stand Up And Be Counted*

With the local election in full swing, Rigsby and his tenants have different views on who should be the worthy candidate

Series #2: ITV November 7 to December 26 1975 (8x25m)

1. *The Permissive Society*

Rigsby unwisely follows some of Alan's advice

2. *Food Glorious Food*

Alan challenges Rigsby to go without eating for 48 hours

3. *A Body Like Mine*

Rigsby takes up body building to impress Ruth

4. *Moonlight And Roses*

Rigsby's ardour for Miss Jones is foiled by the arrival of another suitor

5. *The Perfect Gentleman*

Rigsby believes the new tenant will bring a touch of class to the boarding house but he is not quite all he seems

6. *Last Of The Big Spenders*

Arguments develop over Rigsby's new furniture

7. *Things That Go Bump In The Night*

Rigsby tries to goad Alan with stories of the supernatural, but things have a habit of backfiring

8. *For The Man Who Has Everything*

Rigsby has a talent for dampening the Christmas celebrations.

Series #3: ITV April 12 to May 24 1977 (7x25m)

1. *That's My Boy*

Miss Jones is back and in company with a baby

2. *Stage Struck*

Rigsby joins an acting group to get closer to Miss Jones

3. *Clunk Click*

Ruth is an unwilling passenger in Rigsby's new sports car

4. *The Good Samaritans*

Rigsby finds himself up on the roof to assist a wayward tenant

5. *Fawcett's Python*

The boarding house plays host to an exotic temptress

6. *The Cocktail Hour*

Rigsby wants to join the elite when Alan is invited to a cocktail party

7. *Suddenly At Home*

When Ruth takes up first aid, Rigsby hopes to benefit from her bedside manner

Series #4: ITV April 4 to May 9 1978 (6x25m)

1. *Hello Young Lovers*

A young couple have moved into one of Rigsby's flats but are not all that mesmerised by his advice

2. *Fire And Brimstone*

Rigsby falls under the influence of a bible-bashing student

3. *Great Expectations*

A death in the Rigsby family could mean a step up in the world for the seedy landlord

4. *Pink Carnations*

Rigsby puts an advert in the personal column of a local paper

5. *Under The Influence*

Rigsby thinks hypnotism may help his pursuit of Miss Jones

6. *Come On In The Water's Lovely*

With Rigsby's divorce finalised, he decides he is free to pop the question to Miss Jones

## Movie

*Rising Damp* (Jack Gill/Black Lion Films/Cinema Arts Productions/ITC) 96 minutes

released February 17 1980

starring Leonard Rossiter, Frances de la Tour, Don Warrington, Christopher Strauli, Denholm Elliot, Carrie Jones, Glynn Edwards, John Cater, Derek Griffiths, Ronnie Brody, Alan Clare

## Books

**The Banana Box** — the script of the Eric Chappell play  
Published by Samuel French, 1974 (ppk)

**Rising Damp** by Tony Warren

Published by Sphere Books, 1977 (ppk)

novelisations of ten TV episodes: pilot, 1/1, 1/2, 1/4, 1/6, 2/1, 2/2, 2/5, 2/6, 2/8

**Rising Damp** by Eric Chappell

Published by Coronet Books, 1980 (ppk)

novelisation of the feature film

## Videos

Castle/Hendring CASH 5020/EUKV 6038

*The Prowler/Things That Go Bump In The Night*

Castle/Hendring CASH 5075/CVS 5028

*Stage Struck/Fawcett's Python*

Castle Hendring CASH 5128/EUKV 6015

*Clunk Click/Under The Influence*

Castle/Hendring CASH 5035/CVS 5029

*The Permissive Society/Moonlight And Roses*

Castle/Hendring CASH 5101/CVS 5030

*Food Glorious Food/Suddenly At Home*

Channel 5 CFV 02832/SPC 00322  
feature film

# MY NAME'S McGOOLEY — WHAT'S YOURS?

by Peter Blight

**E**ARLY in the 1960s Ralph Peterson — a former child star of Australian radio's *Yes, What?* and, in his adult years, a writer and producer for film and television — had an idea suggested to him. The idea was for a TV series based around the activities of an old man. Peterson, who was then residing in England, liked the idea, did some research, and approached actor Leo McKern to play the main character. When McKern declined, the idea was put aside.

In 1966, Australian actor John Meillon was living some 12000 kilometres apart from his then wife, June Salter, for work reasons. She had been brought back to Australia from England to appear in ATN7's *The Mavis Bramston Show*, and Meillon made his desire to return to Australia known to ATN boss Rupert Henderson, who was keen to have Meillon on the payroll. When Meillon approached Ralph Peterson — who had known Meillon when the latter was a schoolboy — and asked if he had any ideas for a suitable television vehicle, Peterson remembered the “old man” idea. He also remembered the success with which Gordon Chater regularly portrayed an old man on a park bench in *Mavis Bramston*, and knew that such a part would be ideal for him. (Chater's work with *Bramston* had concluded at the end of 1965, and the network was still searching for a show for him.)

Peterson was aware that ATN7 executive Jim Oswin, one of the main forces that got *Bramston* off the ground, enjoyed receiving Australian material and sent him a script based on the “old man” character. Oswin liked it and asked for another. Peterson was eventually asked for a total of six scripts, until Rupert Henderson gave the show the green light and a pilot was made — by all accounts not a successful one.

Although he was never contracted to the Seven Network, Peterson became involved with the show as both its producer and sole writer. Its title *My Name's McGooley — What's Yours?* was intended by Peterson to put across the impression of the old man's belligerence and defiance, as if he were rudely answering an authority figure. The name ‘McGooley’ was Peterson's own invention. Upon investigation he discovered no McGooleys resident in Australia, thus obviating any possible legal action. The length of the title was a deliberate move to both take up extra space in TV guides and to get away from titles that Peterson considered unnecessarily short or too direct and literal in their representation of what the show was about. And, of course, Peterson was well aware it would be contracted by most people to simply *McGooley*.

As both producer and writer, Peterson was in the enviable position of being able to cast the actors he wanted, including guest artists, and then to custom-make the scripts for those actors. He was also able to carefully tune the look of the show, so that it became what he termed “reaction”, rather than “action”, comedy. *McGooley's* humour often came about through situations rather than jokes, and by a character's reaction to a

line rather than the line itself. As a result, reading a *McGooley* script reveals little about the finished show — the almost intuitive direction by Ron Way, together with the cast's ensemble playing, add up to create a visual whole far greater than the written word. It was also one of the few Australian comedies to be recorded without an audience — a laugh track was dubbed in later — thus enabling even higher production values. All of this was uncharted territory in Australian television, exemplifying the producers' determination to break with convention in as many areas as possible.

The premise of *McGooley* surrounds three main characters, Rita and Wally Stiller (Judi Farr and John Meillon) along with Rita's elderly father Dominic McGooley — a Catholic freemason! — who live in a house in Balmain, considered then to be one of Sydney's poorer suburbs. The dishevelled *McGooley* (Gordon Chater), along with his equally scruffy public school-educated cohorts Nancarrow (Stewart Ginn), and later Vile (Frank Taylor) — brought in after Ginn left the show following a heart attack — become involved in a multitude of situations not usually considered fare of the elderly, from which *McGooley* inevitably emerges triumphant over his bullying son-in-law.

Although the first successful episode to be taped — *The Vacation* — was also the first to be aired, its premiere broadcast occurred some time before the commencement of the series proper. The head of Ampol, looking for a new show to sponsor, could not get to the ATN studios to view an episode of the show, so it was put to air, solely to be viewed by him, at around 7 o'clock on a Sunday morning some two weeks before its official air date.

When the series officially commenced amid a blaze of publicity, acclaim for the show registered loud and clear in the ratings. The first episode attained a rating of 58 in Sydney, and *McGooley* was hailed as Australia's first successful situation comedy, both in terms of viewership and creativity.

In early episodes of the show, Rita has a baby (Judi Farr was in fact pregnant in real life), and this caused some headaches for Peterson. The baby is rarely seen or referred to in the series because of child welfare regulations relating to the perceived dangers of television lights to young children.

Later in the series' run, Peterson was asked by Jim Oswin to include Noeline Brown in the cast, a request to which Peterson enthusiastically agreed. In any case, it was high time that Wally received some verbal opposition to his relentless bombast, so this was introduced in the form of Wally's sister Rosemary (nicknamed “Possum”), who, as Noeline Brown says, was put there “to be a turd back to John, which I did every week!”.

*McGooley* scored for its creators two Logie awards for the Best Australian Comedy of 1966 and 1967. By 1968 the focus of the show had shifted away from the old man and towards the other characters, making the title something of a misnomer. After 87 episodes Gordon Chater left to star in his own





self-titled show, and **My Name's McGooley — What's Yours?** became **Rita and Wally**. (His character departs the show when McGooley's former girlfriend, in America having married an oil baron, is widowed, and she pays for McGooley's flight there with a fraction of the inheritance money.)

In the new series Rita, Wally and Possum move from Balmain to the more upmarket North Shore, and Wally enters politics. Both of these developments came about through suggestions made to Peterson by Rupert Henderson, and Peterson says he would do neither if he had his time over. Despite suffering creatively, **Rita and Wally** boasts an appearance by one of comedy's biggest names. In the episode *The Family That Sprays Together Stays Together* Spike Milligan appears, Goonishly ad-libbing through his role as a pest exterminator whose equipment consists of a stethoscope and a baseball bat.

**Rita and Wally** ceased production after 23 episodes by consensus — neither Peterson nor the cast wished to continue any further, and the final episode closes with a tearful reunion. McGooley, Nancarrow and Vile all return to the Stiller residence, the premise being that McGooley, fresh from the oilfields, has returned and agrees to move the family back to Balmain. Life for the Stillers goes back to normal.

Were it not for technical considerations **My Name's McGooley — What's Yours?** and **Rita and Wally** could still be rerun on television today ad infinitum. All the episodes — with the exception of one filmed in colour using the E-Cam system — were recorded in black-and-white on two-inch videotape for transmission, then transferred to film, for preservation rather than future broadcast. As a result all 110 episodes survive, every bit of their charm and humour still intact, though for shows of their timelessness, stature and cultural significance, not to the quality standard that might be hoped.

## Episode Guide

### My Name's McGooley, What's Yours?

\*\*\* the following episode guide is for Sydney screenings, which predate those of other centres (all of which seem to have their own running order).

Series #1: ATN7 August 24 to December 14 1966 (17 episodes)

1. *The Vacation*

With nowhere to leave him, Rita and Wally are forced to take McGooley on holiday with them

2. *The Girlfriend*

McGooley meets an old flame and when Wally finds out she's wealthy he tries to get the two to the altar

3. *The Primitive*

When McGooley joins an art class, he is recognised as a genius

4. *A Place Of His Own*

McGooley gets a job as a caretaker to make him independent of Wally

5. *The Army Man*

Rejected by the regular army, McGooley joins the Salvos instead

6. *It Couldn't Have Happened To A Nicer Couple*

Rita announces that she is about to become a mother

7. *Well, That's Show Business For You*

details unknown

8. *The New House*

Thinking he's about to get a pay rise, Wally decides to sell the old house and buy a new one

9. *An Affair With A Bird*

Rita prepares to walk out after seeing Wally with a strange woman

10. *The Youth Leader*

Juvenile delinquents run amok at the Corrigan Street senior citizen's centre

11. *Showdown At Corrigan Street*

McGooley prepares to do battle with an old rival from his younger days

12. *Dogs*

McGooley gets a job as the council dog-catcher

13. *An Uncle's Story*

Wally tries to ingratiate himself with a rich uncle

14. *Round And Round The Wheel Goes, Where It Will Stop Nobody Knows*

Wally decides the baby should have godparents and McGooley thinks Nancarrow would be ideal

15. *One Night Of The Year*

It seems the baby will arrive the very night of Wally's annual army reunion

16. *There's No Place Like It*

While Rita is in hospital having the baby, Wally and McGooley are at loggerheads keeping the house running

17. *Yes Sir, That's My Baby*

McGooley throws out Wally's misplaced letter from the office

Series #2: ATN7 January 25 to December 27 1967 (49 episodes)

1. *The Homecoming*

Wally decides to give up booze and take up health drinks

2. *McGooley's Little Holiday*

Wally can't get any sleep so he plans to get McGooley out of the house so his room can be turned into a nursery

3. *Confessions Of A Sporting Man*

Wally gets work as a copyboy at a racing paper

4. *One Long, Wet Sunday Afternoon*

Kept indoors by the rain, the Stiller household plays Monopoly

5. *Friends, Romans, Etc.*

McGooley offers to help Wally write his big R.S.L. speech

6. *Food For Thought*

Everyone has agreed to go on a diet, but McGooley keeps a watchful eye in case Wally gets on the booze

7. *They Do It In India*

The Stiller household is in the midst of an economy drive

8. *What You Can Catch With Five Cents Worth Of Raw Prawns*

McGooley uses Wally's new phone to set up his new boat-hiring service

9. *An Apple A Day*

When McGooley is poorly, Wally takes it upon himself to find a cure

10. *The New Image*

To emphasise his maturity, Wally grows a moustache and tries to ingratiate himself with the boss by inviting him home for dinner

11. *Striking A Happy Medium*

Taking part in a seance so impresses the Stillers that they decide to hold an evening of spiritualism at their home

12. *Rosemary's For Remembrance*

Wally isn't keen on a divorcee moving in ... even if it is his sister

13. *Now Is The Time For All Good Men*

To celebrate his birthday, Rita takes Wally out for an expensive meal

14. *And Zen ... Or Lend Me Your Body For Seven Days*

Spurred on by Wally's remarks, McGooley takes up bodybuilding

15. *Love's Lost Labours*

Wally and McGooley decide to help Possum find a man

16. *The End Of The Line*

McGooley thinks Wally is neglecting Rita and sets out to stir things up by inviting an old boyfriend over

17. *The Man With The Power*

McGooley uses the electricity money to buy a greyhound

18. *The Answer's In The Negative*

details unknown

19. *The Importance Of Being Ernest Plunkett*

details unknown

20. *That's The Story Of My Life*

details unknown

21. *A Little Bit Of What You Fancy*

Wally thinks he can improve his image by becoming a Mason but Rita spoils things by attending a hen's party

22. *The Plot's The Thing*

McGooley is intent on reserving a grave for his departure but Wally wants the money for a night school course

23. *Tot Spelled Backwards Is Tot*

McGooley sets up a childminding centre while Wally is at the football

24. *Of, By And For The People*

details unknown

25. *The Bounty That Follows The Wake*

Wally accompanies McGooley to Melbourne where he must claim an inheritance

26. *Will Success Spoil Wally Stiller*

A promotion at work has gone to Wally's head and he starts acting like a high-powered executive

27. *Last Night I Stole A Hedge*

Wally has to organise the firm's staff ball

28. *A Fur Fur Better Thing*

Wally is annoyed at Rita and Possum's punting

29. *Eleven Angry Men And Wally*

Wally turns out to be a less than ideal candidate for jury duty

30. *And Who Will Ever Forget Miss What's Her Name?*

details unknown

31. *It's Not The Principal Of The Thing, It's The Interest*

Wally and McGooley have a bitter argument and the Stillers look like moving out

32. *Back To One*

Wally has singleminded views on Possum's remarriage and the defence of Australia

33. *Son Of Barnleigh Returns Again*

McGooley has to take charge when the household falls victim to illness

34. *As Ye Sow, So Shall Ye Reap*

Wally starts a campaign to help the community's needy

35. *McGooley And The Thing*

McGooley helps Wally to evade some income tax

36. *One Out, All Out*

While Wally is on strike, the rest of the household have to start earning some money

37. *I Love You Still*

The Stillers help Molly Rogers with her stall at the Church fete

38. *Policy Of Good Neighbourness*

The Stillers invite a U.S. serviceman to dinner

39. *A Boy's Best Friend*

The arrival of Wally's mother from Brisbane creates turmoil

40. *Be Prepared Or One Good Turn And You Could Fall Over*

Everyone is roped in for bob-a-job week by the scoutmaster living next door

41. *From Aardvark To Zymurgy*

Wally and his sparring mate Dick Rogers get involved in another battle of tactics

42. *Birds Of A Feather ... All Flocking Together*

Wally accuses the new next door neighbours of stealing his prize chicken

43. *A Little Knowledge*

Wally wants to plan early for Allison's higher education

44. *One Gentleman From Verona*

Wally decides to learn Italian to help further his career

45. *At Cross Purposes*

Allison's christening is causing trouble for the Stillers

46. *Something To Do With Turning Over A New Leaf*

Wally isn't too sure about Possum's marriage plans

47. *A Matter Of Trust*

details unknown

48. *How To Stop Bombing And Learn To Love*

details unknown

49. *A High Yuletide*

details unknown



Series #3: ATN7 March 6 to July 10 1968 (21 episodes)

1. *Slightly Out Of Focus*

details unknown

2. *A Wake My Love*

Wally isn't pleased when a newcomer is being pushed towards a management job

3. *The Price Of Liberty*

Wally sets up his own version of the home guard to help defend Australia against communism

4. *King Of Sports*

Nancarrow's uncle has left him a strange collection of items in his will

5. *Confessions Of A Public Eye*

Wally is being investigated by Nancarrow's brother, the private detective

6. *The One About The Little Boy Crying Down The Lane*

Wally hears the property is about to be turned into home units

7. *The Balmain Family Stiller*

Hoping to win a world trip, Wally enters a newspaper competition wanting to find the average Australian family

8. *Would You Believe A Gypsy? Well, Would You?*

The Stillers have their futures predicted by a teacup reader

9. *A Very Nasty Case Of ... Er ...*

Nancarrow and his brother decide to help McGooley in his pursuit of love

10. *Go For Broke Or Instant Zot*

Wally appears as a contestant on a TV quiz show

11. *A Restoration Piece*

McGooley offers to help Wally with his receding hairline

12. *For Queen And Company*

Wally has to choose which of his workmates will be Queen Of The Company but the idea doesn't please Rita one bit

13. *A Hitch In Line Saves Time*

Wally isn't happy with his pay rise and works to rules

14. *Almost Down The Primrose Path*

Possum is thinking of becoming engaged to an upmarket doctor from Melbourne

15. *The Mystery Of Karang Road*

McGooley disappears after a heated argument with Wally

16. *Rumours Are Flying, Or The Bomb In The Boarding House*

details unknown

17. *This Old Man, He Had Fun, He Played Knick Knack*

details unknown

18. *Change Of Gear*

details unknown

19. *A Charming Day For The Ants*

details unknown

20. *You'll Come A Waltzing Matilda With Me - Mate*

details unknown

21. *Not Since The Last Decade*

McGooley moves to Queensland with his new wife and the Stillers move to a new home

## Rita And Wally

ATN7 July 17 to December 19 1968 (23 episodes)

1. *Wally's Little Half Acre - Or A Man Of Limited Property*

Wally has become fanatical about cleanliness in the new house

2. *Sale Ahoy*

details unknown

3. *That Woman Next Door*

details unknown

4. *I Can't Get Over That Girl Of Mine, So She'll Have To Get Out And Turn Off The Electric Blanket*

Wally isn't impressed by Rita's new electric blanket

5. *High Society*

details unknown

6. *Wherefore Art Thou?*

details unknown

7. *A Man Of The People, Or That Grey Face In The Crowd*

details unknown

8. *That Grey Face In The Crowd Strikes Again*

details unknown

9. *From Log Cabin To ... ?*

details unknown

10. *And Who Pays For The Daily Piper?*

details unknown

11. *Ill Met By Lamplight*

Rita tries matchmaking Possum with a young man she met at the shipping department

12. *The Green War*

Wally tries to impress an American client with his golfing prowess

13. *The Silvered Tongue*

Rita and neighbour Margaret are captivated by an Irish poet

14. *I Love You Darling And What's Your Second Name Again?*

Wally has forgotten it's their twentieth wedding anniversary

15. *The Family That Sprays Together Stays Together*

Rita hires a pest exterminator to rid the house of white ants

16. *Another Name For It Is ... Plastered*

details unknown

17. *Share And Share Alike*

Rita invests in Wally's company just when his pay is cut

18. *Birth Of A Salesman*

details unknown

19. *The Father The Better*

Wally hopes the arrival of his parents will demonstrate to Possum how happy a marriage can be

20. *And A Little Child Shall Lead Them*

details unknown

21. *The Saveloy Faire*

details unknown

22. *Regina Versus Wally*

details unknown

23. *Wally Stiller's Little Revolt - Or The End Of An Era*

Wally misses out on preselection and loses his job but a newly-divorced and wealthy McGooley returns to save the situation



# THE GOON SHOW ON RECORD

by Matthew K. Sharp

**T**HE *Goon Show* has far and away been the most popular classic BBC radio show issued to the public, with over 50 shows currently available on record, tape or CD. In addition, Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe and Spike Milligan made a number of studio recordings using their *Goon Show* characterisations, which were released back in the 1950s when the radio programme was still in production.

When Parlophone began releasing the original broadcasts in 1959, the shows were in some way incomplete — a trend which unfortunately continued (to a lesser degree) when the BBC themselves began issuing the material on their own label.

The Parlophone issues have all had the Max Geldray and Ray Ellington musical items removed. Otherwise, the first two records are more or less complete; but later releases also had musical links, songs and other material edited out.

In 1972, when the BBC began releasing *Goon Shows* on their own recently formed label, BBC Records, they advertised these LPs as containing complete shows, including the musical interludes. However, many of the recordings originated from BBC Transcription Services, who had edited the shows in the 1950s to 29 minutes for overseas broadcast (removing topical material), and again in the mid 1960s down to 27 minutes (to allow for commercials). These slightly shortened versions are indicated in the list below. Once again small musical links were deleted to save paying for the use of them.

With the formation of the BBC Radio Collection in 1988, which released a great deal of classic BBC comedy in double cassette packs, the entire back catalogue of 11 BBC LPs was rereleased, and, when finished with those, more *Goon Shows* were made available, this time from BBC Sound Archives, which meant that the majority of programmes were full transmission versions running to 30 minutes. However, BBC Sound Archives do not hold complete recordings of every show, and some of these later releases are taken from Transcription Services versions.

Luckily, nearly every show from the fifth series onwards exists in some form or another, in varying degrees of fidelity and completeness. In addition, two shows from the second series (the 1st and 3rd), and seven shows from the fourth series (the 2nd, 3rd, 15th, 18th, 23rd, 24th and 25th, and also an extract from the 13th) have also survived the years. However, as most of these early shows, and a handful of the later ones, exist only as home-made recordings, it is unlikely we shall see them made commercially available. Nonetheless, with around 60 unreleased *Goon Shows* in BBC Sound Archives and BBC Transcription Services, we can look forward to many more releases in the future.

(For a complete episode guide to *The Goon Show*, refer to Roger Wilmut's book, "*The Goon Show Companion*".)



The following releases feature actual recordings of the original B.B.C. broadcasts ...

## **The Best of the Goon Shows**

Parlophone LP PMC 1108 (1959)  
Tales of Old Dartmoor (6-21, 7 Feb 1956)  
Dishonoured - Again (9-13, 26 Jan 1959)  
(Both shows have musical spots and theme deleted)

## **The Best of the Goon Shows No.2**

Parlophone LP PMC 1129 (1960)  
Tales of Men's Shirts (10-2, 31 Dec 1959)  
The Scarlet Capsule (9-14, 2 Feb 1959)  
(Both shows have musical spots and theme deleted)

## **The Bridge on the River Wye**

Parlophone LP PMC 1190 (1962)  
A greatly re-written and expanded version of "African Incident" (8-14, 30 Dec 1957), featuring Milligan, Sellers, Jonathan Miller and Peter Cook. One of the supporting players sounds suspiciously like an unbilled Dudley Moore!

## **Goon But Not Forgotten**

Parlophone LP PMC 7037 (1967)  
Six Charlies in Search of an Author (7-13, 26 Dec 1956)  
Insurance, the White Man's Burden (7-21, 28 Feb 1957)  
(Both shows have musical spots deleted, along with several other short musical cues. "Insurance..." is also missing Wallace Greenslade's rendition of "See You Later Alligator". "Six Charlies..." is missing the first 30 seconds or so)

## **Goon Again**

Parlophone LP PMC 7062 (1968)  
China Story (5-17, 18 Jan 1955)  
The MacReekie Rising of '74 (7-4, 25 Oct 1956)  
(Both shows have musical spots deleted, along with several other short musical cues, and one or two chunks of dialogue)

### **The First Men on the Goon**

Parlophone LP PMC 7132 (1971)  
Foiled By President Fred (6-7, 1 Nov 1955)  
Robin Hood (recorded 2 Dec 1956)  
(Both shows have musical spots and various musical cues deleted. *Foiled By President Fred* is also missing Bluebottle singing *The Harry Lime Theme*)

### **The Very Best of the Goons - 1**

EMI LP EMC 3062 (1974)  
The Missing Ten Downing Street (recorded 3 Nov 1957)  
The Red Fort (8-7, 11 Nov 1957)  
(Both shows have musical spots deleted, but are otherwise complete. They have, however, been processed to give a pseudo-stereo effect (ie ruined) which sounds more like your speaker is at the far end of a drain pipe)

### **Goon Show Greats**

Parlophone / EMI LP PMC 7179 (1979)  
Tales Of Old Dartmoor/Dishonoured, Part 1  
Dishonoured, Part 2/Six Charlies In Search Of An Author  
(Re-issue of three shows from earlier Parlophone releases)

### **The Goon Show**

Music For Pleasure / EMI LP MFP 415650-1 (1981)  
Insurance, The White Man's Burden  
China Story  
(Re-issues of two earlier Parlophone releases)

The following are part of the EMI Comedy Classics series...

### **The Goon Shows Vol 1**

EMI Double cassette ECC 4/Double CD 7 90796 2 (1990)  
(Re-issue of *The Best Of The Goon Shows* (PMC 1108) and *The Best Of The Goon Shows No.2* (PMC 1129))

### **The Goon Shows Vol 2**

EMI Double cassette ECC 6/Double CD (1990)  
(Re-issue of *Goon But Not Forgotten* (PMC 7037) and *Goon Again* (PMC 7062))

### **The Goon Shows Vol 3**

EMI Double cassette ECC 9/Double CD (1990)  
(Re-issue of *First Men On The Goon* (PMC 7132) and *The Very Best Of The Goons - 1* (EMC 3062))

### **The Bridge on the River Wye / It's A Square World**

EMI Double cassette ECC 25 (1991)  
(Re-issue of PMC 1190, coupled with a reissue of a Michael Bentine LP based on his 1960s TV series)

### **The Last Goon Show of All**

BBC Records LP REB 142S (1972)  
The Warmup; The Show, Parts 1 & 2 (Recorded 30 Apr 1972)  
(This is the BBC Transcription Services version issued to overseas countries which is slightly longer than the BBC Radio 4 transmission of 5 Oct 1972)

### **Michael Parkinson Meets The Goons**

BBC Records LPs REB 165 (1973)/REC 259 (1976)  
(Abridged soundtrack of the Parkinson show, broadcast on BBC-1 TV on 28 Oct 1972)

### **Goon Show Classics**

BBC Records LP REB 177 (1974)/Limited issue CD (1995)  
The Dreaded Batter Pudding Hurler (5-4, 12 Oct 1954)  
(Complete original transmission version)  
The Histories Of Pliny The Elder (7-25, 28 Mar 1957)  
(Complete original transmission version, except for one line by Wallace Greenslade just before the Ray Ellington number)

### **Goon Show Classics Volume 2**

BBC Records LP REB 213 (1975)/Limited issue CD (1995)  
The Jet-Propelled Guided NAAFI (6-19, 24 Jan 1956)  
(29 minute Transcription Service version)  
The Evils of Bushey Spon (8-25, 17 Mar 1958)  
(Complete original transmission, but for one topical joke)

### **Goon Show Classics Volume 3**

BBC Records LP REB 246 (1976)  
Lurgi Strikes Britain (5-7, 9 Nov 1954)  
(29 minute Transcription Service version)  
The International Christmas Pudding (6-9, 15 Nov 1955)  
(27 minute Transcription Service re-issue version, with some cut sections re-instated from the 29 min version)

### **Goon Show Classics Volume 4**

BBC Records REB 291 (1977)  
Napoleon's Piano (6-4, 11 Oct 1955)  
(27 minute Transcription Service re-issue version; two pieces of music and the "happy ending" scene have been deleted)  
The Flea (7-12, 20 Dec 1956)  
(27 minute Transcription Service re-issue version; a scene set in a flea circus about half-way in has been deleted)

### **Goon Show Classics Volume 5**

BBC Records LP REB 339 (1978)  
The Treasure of Loch Lomond (6-24, 28 Feb 1956)  
(27 minute Transcription Service reissue less Cafe Fred scene)  
The Greenslade Story (6-14, 20 Dec 1955)  
(Complete original transmission version)

### **Goon Show Classics Volume 6**

BBC Records LP REB 366 (1979)  
Wings Over Dagenham (7-15, 10 Jan 1957)  
(27 minute Transcription Service re-issue version; sound effect of the plane disintegrating has been slightly shortened)  
The Rent Collectors (7-16, 17 Jan 1957)  
(27 minute Transcription Service re-issue version)

### **Goon Show Classics Volume 7**

BBC Records LP REB 392 (1980)  
The Man Who Never Was (8-21, 17 Feb 1958)  
(Complete original transmission version)  
The Case of the Missing CD Plates (6-5, 18 Oct 1955)  
(27 minute Transcription Service re-issue version; the first 20 seconds and a few topical jokes have been deleted)

### **Goon Show Classics Volume 8**

BBC Records LP REB 422 (1981)  
World War I (8-22, 24 Feb 1958)  
(27 minute Transcription Service re-issue version; the first half of the labour exchange scene has been deleted)  
The Nasty Affair At The Burami Oasis (7-1, 4 Oct 1956)  
(27 minute Transcription Service re-issue minus Arab music)



### **Goon Show Classics Volume 9**

BBC Records LP REB 444 (1982)  
 The Call of the West (9-12, 20 Jan 1959)  
 (27 minute Transcription Service re-issue version; two snippets of *The Texas Ranger Song* from *Rio Rita* have been cut)  
 The Last Smoking Seagoon (10-6, 28 Jan 1960)  
 (27 minute Transcription Service re-issue version)

### **Goon Show Classics Volume 10**

BBC Records LP REB 481 (1983)  
 The Whistling Spy Enigma (5-1, 28 Sep 1954)  
 (Original transmission version; but deleting the Dick Barton theme *Devil's Gallop* following the Ray Ellington number)  
 I Was Monty's Treble (9-2, 10 Nov 1958)  
 (27 minute Transcription Service re-issue version)

### **Goon Show Classics Volume 11**

BBC Records LP REB 565 (1985)  
 1985 (5-15, 4 Jan 1955)  
 (Complete original transmission version, except for the removal of the first (intelligible) half of the *Ray's A Laugh* theme tune right at the very end; the second half is still there, just before the sig tune comes in)  
 Shifting Sands (7-17, 24 Jan 1957)  
 (Complete original transmission version, except for the removal of a poetry sequence at the beginning)

### **The Best Of The Goons**

Hammar 3LP set HAM 084 (1983)  
 (Re-issues of *Goon Show Classics* Vols 1, 3 and 5 (REB 177, 246, 339). Also available as a double cassette, in which case 2 shows are split half-way through)

### **Goon Show Classics**

(7 LP box set comprising volumes 1-6 of the *Goon Show Classics* LPs and *The Last Goon Show Of All*)

### **More Goon Show Classics**

(? LP box set comprising volumes 7-10 of the *Goon Show Classics* LPs and ????)

The following are all double cassette packs in the BBC Radio Collection series; they are also available as double CDs in Australia and New Zealand through PolyGram ...

### **Goon Show Classics**

BBC Double cassette ZBBC1007 (1988)/  
 Double CD BBCCD1007 (1993)  
 (Re-issue of LPs *Goon Show Classics* (REB 177) and *Goon Show Classics Volume 2* (REB 213))

### **Goon Show Classics 2**

BBC Double cassette ZBBC1016 (1988)/  
 Double CD BBCCD1016 (1993)  
 (Re-issue of LPs *Goon Show Classics Volume 3* (REB 246) and *Goon Show Classics Volume 4* (REB 291))

### **Goon Show Classics 3**

BBC Double cassette ZBBC1047 (1989)/  
 Double CD BBCCD1047 (1993)  
 (Re-issue of LPs *Goon Show Classics Volume 5* (REB 339) and *Goon Show Classics Volume 6* (REB 366))

### **Goon Show Classics 4**

BBC Double cassette ZBBC1048 (1989)/  
 Double CD BBCCD1048 (1993)  
 (Re-issue of LPs *Goon Show Classics Volume 7* (REB 392) and *Goon Show Classics Volume 8* (REB 422))

### **Goon Show Classics 5**

BBC Double cassette ZBBC1133 (1990)/  
 Double CD BBCCD1133 (1993)  
 (Re-issue of LPs *Goon Show Classics Volume 9* (REB 444) and *Goon Show Classics Volume 11* (REB 565))

### **Goon Show Classics 6**

BBC Double cassette ZBBC1149 (1991)/  
 Double CD BBCCD1149 (1994)  
 Rommel's Treasure (6-6, 25 Oct 1955)  
 (29 minute Transcription Service version)  
 Ill Met By Goonlight (7-23, 14 Mar 1957)  
 (29 minute Transcription Service version)  
 I Was Monty's Treble (9-2, 10 Nov 1958)  
 (29 minute Transcription Service version; it should be noted that the previously issued 27 minute LP version features several segments not included in this longer version)  
 The Seagoon Memoirs (9-7, 15 Dec 1958)  
 (29 minute Transcription Service version)

### **Goon Show Classics 7**

BBC Double cassette ZBBC1236 (1991)/  
 Double CD BBCCD1236 (1994)  
 The Whistling Spy Enigma (5-1, 28 Sep 1954)  
 (Complete original transmitted version, with previously cut material re-instated)  
 The Affair of the Lone Banana (5-5, 26 Oct 1955)  
 (27 minute Transcription Service re-issue version)  
 The Great Tuscan Salami Scandal (6-23, 21 Feb 1956)  
 (Complete original transmission version; slight sound distortion due to being transferred from LP disc incorrectly)  
 Scradje (6-26, 13 Mar 1956)  
 (27 minute Transcription Service re-issue version)



### **Goon Show Classics 8**

BBC Double cassette ZBBC1334 (1992)/

Double CD BBCCD1334 (1994)

The Greatest Mountain in the World (4-23, 1 Mar 1954)  
(Complete original transmission version; slight sound distortion as this show has been transferred from an acetate record)

The Mystery of the Marie Celeste (5-8, 11 Nov 1954)

(Complete original transmission version)

The Last Tram (from Clapham) (5-9, 23 Nov 1954)

(Complete original transmission version)

The Spanish Suitcase (5-11, 7 Dec 1954)

(Complete original transmission version)

### **Goon Show Classics 9 - "What Time Is It, Eccles?"**

BBC Double cassette ZBBC1406 (1992)/

Double CD BBCCD1406 (1994)

Under Two Floorboards (5-18, 25 Jan 1955)

(Complete original transmission version; sound quality poor as this show has been transferred from a 16 inch transcription disc, as opposed to tape)

The Sinking of Westminster Pier (5-21, 15 Feb 1955)

(Complete original transmission version)

The Yehti (5-24, 8 Mar 1955)

(Complete original transmission version)

The Mysterious Punch-Up-The-Conker (7-19, 7 Feb 1957)

(27 minute Transcription Service re-issue version)

### **Goon Show Classics 10 - "You Can't Get The Wood, You Know"**

BBC Double cassette ZBBC1513 (1993)/

Double CD BBCCD1513 (1994)

The White Box Of Bardfield (5-25, 15 Mar 1955)

(Complete original transmission version)

Tales Of Montmartre (6-18, 17 Jan 1956)

(27 minute Transcription Service re-issue version)

The Great Bank Robbery (7-7, 15 Nov 1956)

(Complete original transmission version)

The Mystery Of The Fake Neddie Seagoons (7-9, 29 Nov 1956)

(Original transmission version with a few cuts in the first half)

\*\*\* the above ten volumes of **Goon Show Classics** have also been released as two boxed sets on cassette and CD...

GOONMC1 & 2 (cassette)/GOONCD1 & 2 (CD) (1994)

### **Goon Show Classics 11 - "He's Fallen In The Water!"**

BBC Double cassette ZBBC1602 (1994)

The String Robberies (8-16, 13 Jan 1958)

(29 minute Transcription Service version; this show was transferred from an LP record and has excessive surface noise)

The White Neddie Trade (8-19, 3 Feb 1958)

(Complete original transmission version)

The Spon Plague (8-23, 3 Mar 1958)

(29 minute Transcription Service version; slight surface noise)

The Mountain Eaters (9-5, 1 Dec 1958)

(29 minute Transcription Service version; some surface noise)

### **Goon Show Classics**

BBC Double cassette ZBBC1630 (1994)/

Double CD BBCCD1630 (1994)

(Re-issue of *The Last Goon Show Of All* (REB 142S) and *Michael Parkinson Meets The Goons* (REB 165))

In addition to actual broadcasts, Sellers, Secombe and Milligan made studio recordings of the following vocals ...

### **The Bluebottle Blues/I'm Walking Backwards For Christmas**

Decca 78rpm and 45rpm single F.10756 (1956)

### **Bloodnok's Rock 'n' Roll Call/The Ying Tong Song**

Decca 78rpm and 45rpm single F.10780 (1956)

### **My September Love/You Gotta Go OWW!**

Parlophone 78rpm and 45rpm single R.4521 (1956)

(\*\*\* in reality only Milligan appears, with Eric Sykes)

### **Eeh! Ah! Oh! Ooh!/I Love You**

Decca 78rpm and 45rpm single F.10885 (1957)

### **Whistle Your Cares Away/A Russian Love Song**

Decca 78rpm and 45rpm single F.10945 (1957)

### **The Goons**

Decca EP DFE.6396 (1957)

The Bluebottle Blues/I'm Walking Backwards For Christmas/  
Bloodnok's Rock 'n' Roll Call/The Ying Tong Song

### **Unchained Melodies**

Decca 10" LP LF 1332 (1964)

Ying Tong Song/I Love You/Eeh! Ah! Oh! Ooh!/Bloodnok's  
Rock 'n' Roll Call/Bluebottle Blues/Whistle Your Cares Away/  
A Russian Love Song/I'm Walking Backwards For Christmas

### **The Ying Tong Song/I'm Walking Backwards For Christmas**

Decca single F.13414 (1973)

### **Bloodnok's Rock 'n' Roll Call/I Love You**

Decca single F.13609 (1975)

### **The Raspberry Song/Rhymes**

Decca single F.13769 (1978)

### **The World Of The Goons**

Decca LP SPA 569 (1978)

The Ying Tong Song/I Love You/Eeh! Ah! Oh! Ooh!/Bloodnok's  
Rock 'n' Roll Call/Whistle Your Cares Away/The Raspberry Song/  
Bluebottle Blues/A Russian Love Song/Rhymes/I'm Walking  
Backwards For Christmas

### **The World Of The Goons**

Decca/Eclipse compact disc 820 646-2 (1990)

Re-issue of above, with four Ellington and two Geldray tracks.

### **The Goons**

Parlophone CD EP EM146 (1990) (\* previously unissued)

Unchained Melody\*/ Dance With Me, Henry\*/The Trumpet  
Volunteer (solo Sellers track)/You Gotta Go OWW!

In addition, the following video has also been released ...

### **The Last Goon Show of All**

BBC Video BBCV4429 (1990)

(The 39 minute BBC-1 TV version of 26 Dec 1972)

