

£2 United Kingdom/\$4 Australia & U.S.

LAUGH

The Comedy Magazine

Issue 14 1996



Inside:

George Burns

Steven Wright

Life With The Lyons

The Naked Vicar Show

Rutland Weekend Television

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

LAUGH is priced at \$4.00 per issue (plus \$1.00 postage) in Australia and the U.S. and £2.00 per issue (plus 50p postage) in Britain. Limited stock of Back Issues are also available at these prices. Subscription rates for four issues are \$20.00 (Aus and U.S.) or £10.00 (Britain) sent by air.

Subscriptions to LAUGH should be directed to the following addresses:

AUSTRALIA: c/o P.O. Box 394, Caulfield East, Victoria 3145. (Cheques payable to P. Tatchell)

GREAT BRITAIN: c/o 52 Pembury Avenue, Worcester Park, Surrey KT4 8BT (Cheques payable to P. Tatchell)

UNITED STATES: c/o P.O. Box 5566, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46896-5566 (Cheques payable to W. Honor)

CLUBS & SOCIETIES

The Goon Show Preservation Society

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

c/o P.O. Box 114, Boronia, Victoria 3155, Australia

c/o 34 Denham Way, Thornlie, Western Australia 6108, Australia

c/o 7004 Westmoreland Road, Falls Church, Virginia 22042

The Tony Hancock Appreciation Society

c/o 426 Romford Road, Forest Gate, London E7 8DF, Great Britain

The Tony Hancock Society

c/o 77 The Avenue, Acock's Green, Birmingham B27 6NL, Great Britain

The On The Buses Fan Club

c/o 108 Western Avenue, Briarsleigh Estate, Walsall WS2 0NJ, Great Britain

The Steptoe And Son Appreciation Society

c/o 47 Cornwell Crescent, Stamford Le Hope, Essex SS17 1DL, Great Britain

The Only Fools And Horses Appreciation Society

c/o 92 Whalebone Grove, Chadwell Heath, Essex RM6 6BL, Great Britain

The Spike Jones International Fan Club

c/o 129 East Colorado Boulevard, Monrovia, California 91016, U.S.A.

The Dad's Army Appreciation Society

c/o 11 Airedale View, Cross Hills near Keighley, West Yorkshire BD20 7DJ, Great Britain

The Morecambe & Wise Appreciation Society

c/o 94 Ampthill Rd, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5BB, Great Britain

The Goodies Fan Club of Australia

c/o 47 Kansas Ave, Bell Post Hill, Victoria 3215, Australia

The Goodies Rule O.K. (The Goodies Fan Club on the Internet)

Homepage: <http://www.mcs.dundee.ac.uk:8080/~nwhitehe/goodies/homepage.htm>

To join: e-mail carrot@olis.mtx.net.au (Alison Bean) with I'M A GOODY in the body.

The Official Red Dwarf Fan Club

c/o P.O. Box 29, Hitchin, Herts SG4 9TG, Great Britain

c/o P.O. Box 1044, Bundoora, Victoria 3083, Australia

We Love Lucy (The Lucille Ball Fan Club)

c/o P.O. Box 56234, Sherman Oaks, California 91413, U.S.A.

The Abbott And Costello Society

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

The Marx Brotherhood

c/o Darien 28 New Hope, Pennsylvania 18938, U.S.A.

S*T*A*R*S (Savers of TV & Radio Shows)

c/o 96 Meadvale Rd., Ealing, London W5 1NR, Great Britain

GEORGE BURNS

Part 3: SOLO CAREER

by Peter Tatchell

ON a drizzly day in March the team of Burns and Allen were at last reunited. With the passing of George Burns at the age of 100 he joined his beloved Gracie at Forest Lawn Cemetery and an era of show business came to a close.

For a quarter of a century he'd joked about giving a centenary concert but, just when the unbelievable seemed possible, ill health and the aging process finally robbed him of his quest to repay the adulation of several generations of adoring fans.

A debilitating fall (and subsequent surgery) two years earlier had curtailed his performing, and celebrations for the long-awaited January 20th birthday were subdued when it was realised he would not be well enough to leave his sick bed. Two months later the old trouper took his final curtain call.

It was an anticlimactic end to a remarkably successful career in just about every field of show business but as his long-time manager Irving Fein noted "he often said he knew entrances and exits... last Saturday he knew it was time to go".

How many would have envisaged his popularity enduring for so long after the retirement of his legendary wife almost forty years before. To be fair, the first decade or so relied heavily on earlier triumphs, but by the mid-1970s George Burns was delighting a whole new generation of fans who'd never seen him work with Gracie.

When (under doctor's orders, it's now been revealed) she was forced to abandon performing in 1958, George arranged for the team from their highly-successful television show to continue on in a spinoff series. It was not a success ... the pivotal role was missing, and within weeks the format was revamped. Instead of a traditional sitcom (with the occasional guest star) live variety shows were hastily substituted to retain viewers. By the end of the season, **The George Burns Show** was cancelled and its star was forced to retreat to live performances at Las Vegas and the occasional television special. Behind the scenes, his production company was responsible for several projects, among them the hit series **Mister Ed**.

In the early sixties he teamed with Broadway star Carol Channing in a continuation of the double act format, before eventually deciding to perform on his own, regaling audiences with fanciful anecdotes from his colourful past.

By 1964 George prepared to return to television in a weekly sitcom centred around the antics of a slightly dotty housewife. The lead role in **Wendy And Me** went to ex-**Hawaiian Eye** star Connie Stevens, with Burns appearing as the owner of the apartment block where she lived with her airline pilot husband. In the tradition of his earlier show, George would also step out of the plot and talk directly to the viewing audience.

Just weeks before the show's September premiere, tragedy struck ... Gracie Allen died. Her health had been failing but she had managed to visit the set to the delight of the production team, and had been in the audience at Las Vegas where Burns and Stevens had been trying out some repartee. George was devastated, but the old "show must go on" adage was put to the test and **Wendy And Me** appeared as scheduled.

Unfortunately (despite having a certain charm, and some likeable characters) it was all too reminiscent of the earlier programme, and indeed several scripts from the predecessor were reworked along the way. It survived just one season.

George was back to hosting roles in shows like **Hollywood Palace** and **The Kraft Music Hall**, but his television career was on a downward spiral. By the early 1970s he was working less and less, when out of the blue he was signed to return to the movies after a thirty-seven year break.

Neil Simon had written a play called **The Sunshine Boys** and it was decided Burns and best friend Jack Benny would be ideal in the lead roles of two over-the-hill vaudevillians. The pair had been buddies for over fifty years and Jack had only recently made an appearance to introduce George's stage show.

With filming about to begin, fate stepped in and Burns (by then in his late seventies) needed urgent heart surgery. Walter Matthau was signed to replace him, before the production suffered a second more devastating blow ... Jack Benny was diagnosed with inoperable cancer, and given weeks to live.

His death at the end of 1974 was a tragic loss for George personally, but the resultant delays with filming meant he was now well enough to rejoin the production (this time in Benny's role). His performance in the picture gained enormous public and critical acclaim, and eventually an Oscar for best supporting actor at the Academy Awards.

George Burns at age 80 was back in the big time. Offers for more motion pictures were negotiated, television networks quickly signed him for specials and even his vocal talents (which had been the butt of many jokes over the years) were sought after by record producers.

In 1977 he played the title role in the movie **Oh, God!** and his personification of the almighty resulted in more accolades, and two sequels. There appeared to be no slowing down of the Burns career throughout the 1980s as he continued to appear in films and tv specials.

In his 90th year he was offered another challenge ... to host a series of one-off comedy playlets for television under the title **The George Burns Comedy Week**. Despite being cancelled mid-season, it boasted an impressive line-up of talent (one episode was directed by Steve Martin).

George's tenth decade continued on with more specials and records until he suffered an unfortunate bathtub fall and was hospitalised for surgery. It was the start of his decline and though he was seen at the naming of George Burns Road and Gracie Allen Boulevard (standing at the corner of "Burns and Allen"), his performing days were over.

His last professional appearance was in late 1995 when he agreed to say one line in a television commercial to promote the centenary of Australian Rules football on the other side of the globe. Surrounded by chorus girls he remarked "A game as old as me ... I'd like to see that!". At the suggestion of his manager (who sensed George might not survive until the campaign launch six months later) he secretly filmed another take ... "A game that's lasted longer than me, I'd like to see that!".

And with one last laugh from beyond the grave, George Burns left the stage and entered the history books.

Films

The Solid Gold Cadillac (1959 Paramount)
George provides the narration for this Judy Holliday comedy

The Sunshine Boys (1975 M.G.M.)

Oh, God! (1977 Warner Bros.)

The Comedy Company (1978 M.G.M. telemovie)

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (1978 Universal)

Movie Movie (1978 Warner Bros.)
George provides the opening narration

Going In Style (1979 Warner Bros.)

Just You And Me, Kid (1979 Columbia)

Oh, God! Book 2 (1980 Warner Bros.)

Two Of A Kind (1982 telemovie)

Oh, God! You Devil (1984 Warner Bros.)

18 Again (1988 New World Pictures)

Radioland Murders (1994 Universal)

Television

The George Burns Show

NBC October 21 1958 to April 14 1959 (not Nov 4)(25 editions)

with Bea Benaderet, Larry Keating, Harry Von Zell and Ronnie Burns

1 George And The Private Eye (with Jack Benny and Robert Cummings)

2 Jack Benny Comes Over (with Jack Benny)

3 The French Revue

4 A Walk On For George (with William Goetz)

5 The 18 Year Old Novelist

6 Tony Martin Visits (with Tony Martin)

7 George's Eviction

8 Eddie Fisher Guests (live show)

9 A Wife For Christmas

10 Dale Robertson Guests (live show)

11 George Signs Carol Channing (with Carol Channing)

12 Anna Maria Alberghetti Guests (live show)

13 George On Juke Box Jury (with Peter Potter)

14 Rosemary Clooney Guests (live show)

15 Carol Channing Guests (live show)

16 Xavier Cugat And Abbe Lane Guest (live show)

17 Howard Duff Guests (live show)

18 Ronnie Takes An Apartment (with Jill Corey)

19 Jimmie Rodgers Moves In With Ronnie (with Jimmy Rodgers)

20 The Landlord's Daughter

21 The Contract To Sing

22 George's Trial

23 Breaking Up The Team

24 The Monster Trend

25 George Invests In A Record Company

General Electric Theatre: Platinum On The Rocks
CBS November 29 1959 (30m)

The George Burns Special

NBC June 7 1960 (60m) colour

with Jack Benny, Betty Grable, Polly Bergen and Bobby Darin

The Hollywood Palace

ABC March 28 1964

with Patti Page, Carl Reiner And Mel Brooks, Sergio Franchi

Wendy And Me

ABC September 14 1964 to May 17 1965 (not Jan 4 or May 3)(34 editions)

with Connie Stevens, Ron Harper, James Callahan and J. Pat O'Malley

1 pilot edition

2 Wendy's Anniversary For?

3 Swing Low, Sweet Harriet

4 Secret Wedding

5 George Burns While Rome Fiddles

6 Jeff, The Senior Citizen

7 It Takes Two To Tangle

8 Wendy's Private Eye

9 Room At The Bottom

10 Danny, The Married Bachelor

11 Wendy, The Waitress

12 Belle Of The Malt Shop

13 East Is East, And West Is Wendy

14 Four Of A Kind

15 Woman In The Gray Flannel Suit

16 Five Minutes To Show Time

17 A Bouquet For Mr. Bundy

18 The Wendy Mob

19 Who's In The Guest Room Tonight?

20 Wendy Sails In The Sunset

21 Tea Leaves For Two

22 Happiness Is A Thing Called Misery

23 Jeff Takes A Turn For The Nurse

24 How Not To Succeed In Stealing

25 Wendy Gives Uncle The Brush

26 Tacos, Enchiladas And Wendy

27 Wendy Is Stranger Than Fiction

28 Let's Go Where The Wild Geisha Goes

29 You Can Fight City Hall

30 Wendy Lends A Helping Voice

31 Wendy's Instant Intellect

32 Danny's Double Life

33 The \$5000 Chair

34 Call Me Or I'll Call You

The Hollywood Palace

ABC February 13 1965 (60m)

with Connie Stevens, Wayne Newton

The Hollywood Palace

ABC May 15 1965 (60m)

with Jack Jones, Mary Costa, Carl Reiner And Mel Brooks

The Hollywood Palace

ABC March 18 1967 (60m)

with Lainie Kazan, The King Family



George Burns In Nashville

NBC November 13 1980 (60m)

with Loretta Lynn, Minnie Pearl, Roy Acuff, Larry Gatlin
And The Gatlin Brothers Band, Ben Smathers And His Stoney
Mountain Cloggers

John Denver And George Burns

ABC March 30 1981 (60m)

with John Denver

George Burns Early, Early, Early Christmas Show

NBC November 16 1981 (60m)

with Bob Hope, Ann-Margret, Hans Conreid, The Hawkins
Family, The Playboy Playmates

George Burns And Other Sex Symbols

NBC November 8 1982 (60m)

with John Schneider, Linda Evans, Bernadette Peters

George Burns Celebrates 80 Years In Show Business

NBC September 19 1983 (90m)

with Ann-Margret, Milton Berle, Johnny Carson, Carol
Channing, Phyllis Diller, John Forsythe, Billy Graham, Buddy
Hackett, Bob Hope, Don Rickles

George Burns In Concert

HBO January 22 1984 (60m)

How To Live To Be 100

NBC September 17 1984 (60m)

with Bob Hope, Catherine Bach, Diahann Carroll, Arte Johnson

George Burns Comedy Week

CBS September 18 to December 25 1985 (not Nov 20 or
Dec 18)(13 editions)

- 1 The Dynamite Girl (with Catherine O'Hara and Tim
Matheson)
- 2 Home For Dinner (with Eugene Levy and Greg Morris)
- 3 Death Benefit (with Robert Klein and Joe Piscopo)
- 4 The Smiths (with Martin Mull and Tess Harper)
- 5 The Couch (with Harvey Korman, Valerie Perrine, Carrie
Fisher and Bronson Pinchot) *directed by Steve Martin
- 6 Disaster At Buzz Creek (with Don Rickles and Don Knotts)
- 7 The Assignment (with Elliot Gould and Telly Savalas)
- 8 Dream, Dream, Dream (with Patrick Duffy and Geena Davis)
- 9 title unknown (with Bronson Pinchot, Candy Clark and Dave
Thomas)
- 10 The Honeybunnies (with Howard Hesseman and Laraine
Newman)
- 11 The Funniest Guy In The World (with Paul Reiser, Jack
Gilford and Victoria Tennant)
- 12 Christmas Carol II: The Sequel (with James Whitmore,
Paul Benedict and Roddy McDowell)
- 13 The Borrowing (with Peter Bonerz and Michael McKean)

George Burns 90th Birthday

CBS January 17 1986 (60m)

with Diahann Carroll, Billy Crystal, Walter Matthau, John
Denver, John Forsyth, Ann-Margret and 20 cameo greetings

George Burns 95th Birthday Party

CBS February 1 1991 (60m)

The Kraft Music Hall

NBC October 11 1967 (60m)

Tin Pan Alley Today with Dick Cavett, Nancy Ames

The George Burns Special

CBS December 1 1976 (60m)

with Madeline Kahn, Walter Matthau, Johnny Carson, Chita
Rivera

George Burns One Man Show

CBS November 23 1977 (60m)

with Bob Hope, Johnny Carson, Ann-Margret, The Captain
And Tennile, Gladys Knight And The Pips

George Burns' 100th Birthday

CBS January 22 1979 (60m)

with Goldie Hawn, Andy Gibb, James Stewart, Milton Berle,
George Jessel, Bob Hope, Johnny Carson, Don Rickles

Records

George Burns Sings

Colpix EP 129 (1959), Nixa EP nep 44000
Don't Take Me Home/La Vie En Rose/Red Rose Rag/Some
Of These Days

George Burns Sings

Buddah LP BDS 5025 (1972), BDS 5127 (titled A Musical
Trip With ...)
In The Beginning/With A Little Help From My Friends/Mr.
Bojangles/King Of The Road + 59th Street Bridge Song + I
Kissed Her On The Back Porch + Satisfaction/Ain't
Misbehavin'/Your Mother Should Know + I'll Buy The Ring/
It All Depends On You + You Made Me Love You/1941/
Grizzly Bear/Old Folks/The Sunshine's On My Street

An Evening With George Burns

Pride 2LP 00011 (1974), D.J.M. LP DJLMD 8004, Dove
CD (edited version)
with an introduction by Jack Benny
Red Rose Rag/(When The Evening Sun Is Sinking) To Make
Sweet Georgia Mine/Pack Up Your Sins/My Gal Is A High
Born Lady/Grizzly Bear/I'm Going To Take The Train Back
Home/Sweetheart Number One, Two .../(Johnny Warner)
Where Did You Get That Girl/Yankee Doodle Blues/Monkey
Rag/It All Depends On You/You Made Me Love You/Don't
Take Me Home
*** album also features vocals by The Sylvers Family and
The Mike Curb Congregation

I Wish I Was Eighteen Again

Mercury LP SRM1-5025 (1980)
The Arizona Whiz/Old Bones/The Baby Song/The Only Way
To Go/Forgive Her A Little (And Love Her A Lot)/I Wish I
Was Eighteen Again/Old Dogs, Children And Watermelon
Wine/A Real Good Cigar/One Of The Mysteries Of Life/Nick-
els And Dimes

George Burns In Nashville

Mercury LP SRM1-6001 (1980)
Here's To The Man In The Moon/Just Send Me One/It's Good
To See You Smiling Again/Inflatable Dream/Jody And The
Kid/Using Things And Loving People/Willie, Won't You Sing
A Song With Me/Ain't Misbehavin'/The Good Old, Bad Old
Days/Here's To My Friends

Young At Heart

Mercury LP SRM1-4061 (1982)
Young At Heart/Kids/Frog Kissin'/The Old Fashioned Way/
You're Nobody 'Til Somebody Loves You/As Time Goes By/
Hearts (Are For When You Want To Love Someone)/What-
ever Happened To Randolph Scott/Everybody Needs A
Rainbow/Waitin' For The Sun To Shine

As Time Goes By

Curb CD D2-77544 (1992)
I Know What It Is To Be Young (But You Don't Know What
It Is To Be Old)(duet with Bobby Vinton)/As Time Goes By
(duet with Vinton)/Young At Heart (duet with Vinton)/Gracie/
The Good Old, Bad Old Days/The Only Way To Go
*** disc also features four solo vocals by Bobby Vinton

George also narrated a series of discs featuring performances
by comedy greats ...

The Golden Age Of Comedy

Longines 5LP set LS 210A (SYS 5277 - 5281)

The Kings Of Comedy

Longines LP SYS 5282



Books

I Love Her, That's Why by George Burns and Cynthia Ho-
bart Lindsay
(published by Simmon And Schuster, New York, 1955 and
W.H. Allen, London, 1956)

Living It Up by George Burns
(published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1976 and W.H.
Allen, London 1977)

Third Time Around by George Burns
(published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1980)

How To Live To Be 100 - Or More by George Burns
(published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1983)

Dr. Burns' Prescription For Happiness by George Burns
(published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1984)

Dear George by George Burns
(published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1985)

Gracie - A Love Story by George Burns
(published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1988)

All My Best Friends by George Burns (and David Fisher)
(published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1989)

Wisdom Of The 90s by George Burns (and Hal Goldman)
(published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1991)

Magazine

George Burns - The First 100 Years
(published by Biograph Communications, New York, 1996)

RUTLAND WEEKEND TELEVISION

by Matthew K. Sharp

WHEN Monty Python finished in 1974, the various members of that team went on to solo projects. John Cleese made the classic **Fawlty Towers**, whilst Michael Palin and Terry Jones collaborated on **Ripping Yarns**. While both of those shows have been freely available on video, in script form and with repeats on television, Eric Idle's effort, **Rutland Weekend Television**, has remained relatively obscure.

Rutland Weekend Television purported to be the smallest television station in Britain, and its programming certainly reflected that achievement. The feel of the programme was helped by it being produced by the BBC's Presentation Department, usually responsible for the trailers for upcoming episodes and the like. As a result, the shows were shot in a very small studio indeed, without an audience. An upshot of this was that jokes could also be included in the "hand-over" from BBC-2 to RWT, and indeed in the second show RWT handed back to the ITV station ATV, complete with ATV's logo.

Along with Eric Idle, who also wrote the scripts, the shows featured ex-Bonzo Dog (Doo-Dah) Band member Neil Innes and his songs, plus David Battley and Henry Woolf. The end of the third show was notable for including Idle's mother, who bore a close resemblance to Mary Whitehouse, the clean up TV campaigner, being interviewed while sitting in a bath. George Harrison guested in the 1975 Christmas special, appearing from time to time and complaining that Idle won't let him do a sketch as a pirate. Finally his time comes, but as the introduction to *My Sweet Lord* plays, Harrison bursts into *The Pirate Song* ("I like to be a pirate / A pirate's life for me / All my friends are pirates / And they sail the BB Sea.")

The shows in the first series (which, logically enough, were screened on Mondays) were each linked by an on screen continuity announcer. In the first programme this was Eric Idle as a gushing announcer almost taking part in a noisy, off-screen party. In later shows, Henry Woolf slowly turned into a woman whilst giving completely irrelevant links ("Well, Nude Religion brings to a close our programmes for today"), and Neil Innes complained about the lack of budget as his clothing was repossessed. In the second series, the sketches were linked by such groups as The Razor Blade Four (a barbershop quartet), and the Ricochett Brothers (spelt rick-o-shaw, but pronounced rick-o-chett).

The sketches were mainly, but not always, in the style of television programmes. Thus viewers were treated to documentaries about soldiers still fighting World War II on the Isle Of Wight; the making of Bathtime Theatre, where all the plays are set in baths; private prisons which were run by suburban housewives; and a safari car park which had the animals in the cars. There was the interview conducted entirely in gibberish ("Tonight, sampan Bombay Bermuda in diphtheria, rustic McAlpine splendour, rabbit and phut-phut phoey jugs

rapidly big biro rule liners musk greengages micturate, with nipples and tiptoe rustling machinery, rustically inclined. Good evening and welcome."), and a poem about wifeswapping in the style of Stanley Holloway.

Rutland Weekend Television expanded on the earlier Python practice of having sketches blend into one another and mutate as they went along. A sketch which starts in a condemned cell transforms when the prisoner escapes through a priest and the warders chase him. This leads to a discussion on hobbies such as sitting under clerics, saving fish from drowning, and people who push sailors into shops. In another instance, the characters in a sketch with poor continuity consult a film doctor about the problem, which leads to a case of recursive flashbacks.

There are many other wonderful ideas, such as Uri Geller bending, a beauty queen farm, giving women as Christmas presents, angels going on strike and demonstrating in front of the Pearly Gates, and a man who has the bad habit of killing people. But the idea most important in terms of future developments appeared in the first show of the second series when, in a sketch about finding a cure for love, a group called The Rutles were shown performing *I Must Be In Love*. This clip was shown on the American TV programme **Saturday Night Live** when Idle was hosting (2 Oct 1976), and viewer response led to a 70 minute special being made about the Rutles.

All You Need Is Cash tells the Rutles' story, which parallels that of the Beatles, but has the advantage of being funnier. The cast included Idle as Dirk McQuickly, Neil Innes as Ron Nasty, Rikki Fataar as Stig O'Hara and John Halsey as Barry Wom; these were the Rutles, the Pre-Fab Four: the group that made the sixties what they are today — gone. Also appearing were Dan Aykroyd, John Belushi and Gilda Radner from the SNL team (as the show was a British/American co-production), Michael Palin and George Harrison. Innes also wrote a number of pastiches of Beatles songs; fourteen of these were released on record in 1978, complete with a lavish booklet full of photos from the special. The record was reissued on CD in 1990 with six extra tracks. The special itself is also available on video.

But whilst **The Rutles** has been freely available, material from **Rutland Weekend Television** has been hard to come by. A record, since deleted, was issued in 1976, and contains studio remakes of a few sketches and some of Innes' songs. The **Rutland Dirty Weekend Book**, published in 1975, also reworks the TV material, and the tome is notable for having pages of different textures suitable to the material it is satirizing. But as to the TV series itself; it seems that it was never repeated in the UK, and was not shown anywhere else. A video release was planned but later shelved. The only public exposure in recent years has been a compilation edition for Christmas 1993. Hopefully, however, someone will see the wisdom of making this neglected series available, and we can once again tune in to **Rutland Weekend Television**.



Episode Guide

Series One

BBC2, May 12 to June 16 1975 (6x30mins)

1. Gibberish/Song: Star Of The Naughty Movies/Hanging + Chase Through A Priest + Sitting Under Clerics + Saving Fish From Drowning + A Miscellany Of Clubs/Song by Stoop Solo/WW2 Still Going On The Isle Of Wight + Major Who Doesn't Understand Anything + Anniversary Of The Birth of Churchill's Cat + Other RWT Churchill Programmes

2. Goodafternoon From The Goodevening/Song: Say Sorry Again/Philosophy Corner/Bodies Left to Department Stores/Intelligence Test Result + Cretin Club/Talking About: Great Wit + Origami + Impersonations Of Medical Equipment/Communist Cooking/Kung Sooeey/The Kung And I/Expose On Normality + Blaming The Little Man At The Off-Licence/Song: Lie Down And Be Counted/Kung Dancing/Handover to ATV

3. Warnings On Programme Content/Schizophrenia: Paranoia + Lateness + Film From Bognor/Song: The Children Of Rock And Roll/The Poet, Mungo Wright/Football Song/Searching For Religious Identity/God Of The British Army/Thrust, with Splig Utherism/The Making Of Bathtime Theatre/Song: Boring/The House With No Sherry + Buying People + Telegram Delivery/Television Report/Final Word with Tony Billow

4. Whistle Test + Toad The Wet Sprocket In Performance + Splint, with Bandwagon + Dead Singers/Rutland Weekend

Theatre: Amnesia In Esher/Beauty Queen Farm + Yorkshire Showbiz Butchers/A Penny For Your Warts/Song: Once We Had A Donkey (by the Fabulous Bingo Brothers)/Protest Song by Ray Onassis

5. Announcers' Tryst/Solihull Wifeswapping Club/Weatherflash/Not Enough TV Shows For MPs/Song: Urban Spaceman/Your Questions Answered/Another Weatherflash/Holiday '75/Song: Wash With Mother (Front End Loader)/More Wifeswapping/Politicians On The Rain In Hendon/Selling A Soul To The Man In The Electrical Shop

6. Announcer Complaining About The Lack of Money/Religion Today Hijacked/Song: If You Were A Song/Rutland Weekend Cinema: Incident At Bromsgrove + Carrot: Friend Or Foe + Nelson/Execution Of Charles I/Man Alive: Private Prisons Run By Suburban Housewives + Johnny Cash Live At Mrs Fletchers/Song O' The Continuity Announcers

Special

Christmas With Rutland Weekend Television. 26 Dec 1975, BBC-2, 30 mins.

The Alberto Rewrite Five/George Harrison Wants To Be A Pirate/Christmas Night With The Scars/Song: Testing One Two/How To Ski In Your Own Home/Giving Women As Christmas Presents/Song: I Don't Believe In Santa Any More/Overfed & Ill Vicar/Rutland Weekend Film Night: Bit Of Scratchy Film + Linda Lovelace in Sore Throat + Pommy The Rock Opera + Song: Concrete Jungle Boy + Interview With Ann Melbourne + Roundup Of The Year's Films/Film Of HM Queen Of Rutland's Year/Mr George Harrison Sings... The Pirate Song

Series Two

BBC2, November 12 to December 24 1976 (7x30mins)

1. Continuity Announcer Auditions/Lawyer Who Arranged His Client's Crime/Cure For Love/Song: I Must Be In Love/The Rutles/The History Of The Entire World, Episode 3: The Creation Backroom Boys/Song: The Age Of Desperation/Next Week On RWT/The Effects Of Inflation/Introducing Not-Necessarily-Tobacco To Civilization/That's My Mum!

2. The Razor Blade Four/Quite Interesting People: Sheep Worrying + Madame Butterfly Collecting/Song: Shoeshine Boy/Expose On Carswapping/Song: Godfrey Daniels/Rutland Five-O/Coming Up On RWT

3. Lance Corporal Collier Steps In/Prisoner Requests Leave/Science Lecture With A Saucer Of Rancid Milk + What Makes James Burke Tick + Uri Geller Bending + Perpetual Motion Machine + Lecture + Caretaker + Recursive Documentaries/Song: I Give Myself To You/Husband And Wife/Collier Rides Again/Song: Crystal Balls/Restaurant With Strange Dress Code + Bad Habit Of Killing People

4. The Ricochett Brothers/Ill Health Food Store/Song: The Hard To Get/Srimpo (From Scunthorpe Television)/Bad Continuity + Film Doctor + Recursive Flashbacks/Classic Bad American Films: Fiddle-Dee-Dee/24 Hours In Tunbridge Wells/Expose: The Massed Flashers Of Reigate + Police Running Shops + Police Being Evicted By Squatters/Rant About Critics + Smarm To Critics + The Cast Revolts

5. Boring Intro To Tony Bilbow Theatre/Extremely Method Actor/Flag Flog Day/Sex Problem Clinic/Song O' The Insurance Men/Song: Accountancy Shanty/Song: I Don't Want to Fall In Love Again (by the Singing Gynaecologist)/Escape From A Travel Agency

6. Highwayman + Lone Accountant + Judge Jeffries/Song: Bella The Beauty Queen/Safari Park With Animals In Cars + Safari Car Park/Sexist Sketch + The Power Of The Writer/Wife Swapping Poem/Coming Soon: Nixon Is Innocent

7. Repressing Women For 2000 Years/Censorship/Showtime/Song: The Smoke Of Autumn Bonfires/Song: Playing On The Penthouse Floor/An Affair Is Announced/Tomorrow Night On RWT: Autocue + David Frost Show Again + Return Of The Pink Panzer/Joining The AA/Australian Love Song/Song: The Slaves Of Freedom/Angel Demonstration/William Plastic-Bidet And The Postman/Most Boring Man In The World Competition/Song: It's Hard To Make It When You're Straight

Specials

The Rutles in All You Need Is Cash (70mins)

UK: BBC2, March 27 1978

USA: NBC, March 22 1978

The Best Of Rutland Weekend Television

December 27 1993

Christmas Titles/Continuity Announcer Auditions/Rutland

Weekend Cinema: Incident At Bromsgrove + Carrot: Friend Or Foe + Nelson/The House With No Sherry + Buying People + Telegram Delivery/The Razor Blade Four/Song: Urban Spaceman/Whistle Test: Dead Singers/Man Alive: Private Prisons Run By Suburban Housewives + Johnny Cash Live At Mrs Fletchers/Rutland Five-O/Mr George Harrison Sings... The Pirate Song/Handover to ATV

Book

The Rutland Dirty Weekend Book

Eyre Methuen, 1976.

The Vatican Sex Manual/A History Of Rutland Weekend Television/RWT Duty Log/RTV Times/Who's Who In Rutland/Who's Having Who In Television/Accountancy And Sex (by Michael Palin)/Rutland Stone/The Wonderful World Of Sex/Rutland University Press Publications

Records

The Rutland Weekend Songbook

BBC Records REB 233/Passport Records PPSD-98018

L'Amour Perdu/Gibberish/Wash With Mother (Front Loader)/Say Sorry Again/The Rutles in "Rutles For Sale" (I Must Be In Love)/Twenty-four Hours In Tunbridge Wells/The Fabulous Bingo Brothers/In Concrete (Concrete Jungle Boy)/The Children Of Rock and Roll/Startime (Stoop Solo)/The Song O' The Insurance Men/Closedown/Testing/I Give Myself To You/Communist Cooking/Johnny Cash Live At Mrs Fletchers/The Old Gay Whistle Test (Protest Song)/Accountancy Shanty/Football/Boring/Goodafternoon (L'Amour Perdue Cha Cha Cha)/Disco (The Hard To Get)/Closedown (The Song O' The Continuity Announcers)

The Rutles

Warner Bros K 56459 (UK), HS 3151 (USA).

Hold My Hand/Number One/With A Girl Like You/I Must Be In Love/OUCH!/Living In Hope/Love Life/Nevertheless/Good Times Roll/Doubleback Alley/Cheese And Onions/Another Day/Piggy In The Middle/Let's Be Natural

I Must Be In Love/Doubleback Alley

Warner Bros WBS 8560 (Single)

The Rutles

Warner Bros Pro E723 (Promotional EP)

I Must Be In Love/Doubleback Alley/With A Girl Like You/Another Day/Let's Be Natural

Ging Gang Goolie/Mr Sheene

EMI 2852 (Single by "Dirk And Stig")

The Rutles

Rhino Records R2 75760 (CD Reissue *with extra tracks*)

Goose-Step Mama/Number One/Baby Let Me Be/Hold My Hand/Blue Suede Schubert/I Must Be In Love/With A Girl Like You/Between Us/Living In Hope/OUCH!/It's Looking Good/Doubleback Alley/Good Times Roll/Nevertheless/Love Life/Piggy In The Middle/Another Day/Cheese And Onions/Get Up And Go/Let's Be Natural

Video

The Rutles

Broadway Video PAVR 540/Roadshow Home Video

THE NAKED VICAR SHOW

by Peter Tatchell



BY the mid-1970s, Australian sketch comedy had all but disappeared from television. The glory days of Mavis (and her various clones) were gone and there was nothing to prick the sacred cows of politics and the local entertainment scene. On radio, humour had long been relegated to one-liners in the breakfast session, but things were set to change.

The catalyst was the introduction (on January 19th 1975) of the A.B.C.'s progressive new rock station 2JJ, aimed primarily at the under-25s. In amongst the jocks and muzos, management decided to add a sprinkling of humour and signed such names as Graham Bond, Rory O'Donohue and Gary McDonald (from *Aunty Jack*), Mavis alumna Noeline Brown and a stable of lesser-known performers and writers to produce a series of bogus commercials and segments.

One of the station's early successes was the breakfast show serial called *Chuck Chunder* (starring Brown, Roger Newcombe, Alan McGirvan and voiceover veteran Ross Higgins). Somewhat akin to Kenny Everett's *Kremmen Of The Star Corps*, it ran for over 200 three-minute episodes with scripts by advertising copywriters Gary Reilly and Tony Sattler. The pair also wrote the serial *Doctors And Nurses* for JJ (again, with Noeline Brown).

By the year's end, Reilly and Sattler had decided to expand their comedy talents to writing and producing a series of half-hour broadcasts to be called *The Naked Vicar Show*, which would feature Brown and Higgins and another well-known commercial voice Kev Golsby. Inspiration for the title apparently came from a brief news item about a naked bishop who had been found on the steps of a Parisian brothel coupled with the popularity of a book titled *The Naked Stranger*.

The first two editions were recorded in front of an invited audience five days before Christmas 1975 and RS Productions were on their way to a decade of multi-media success.

The programme's format was a mixture of over-the-top sketches and satirical digs at popular television shows, commercials and political figures, interspersed with guest pop vocalists. It wasn't long before newly-elected prime-minister Malcolm Fraser and controversial Queensland premier Jo Bjelke-Petersen became regular targets.

An A.B.C. technician agreed to remove his clothing and be photographed for publicity shots as the "naked vicar", although Ross Higgins took the role of the recalcitrant reverend in the opening segment of each broadcast. The vicar was just one of a gallery of colourful characters who inhabited the series throughout its twenty-six episode run on A.B.C. radio.

Audience favourites included the dentally-impaired gardening experts Ces and Cyril, kiddie-host Princess Joyce (ever eager to partake of her medicinal "pick-me-up") and the shy-but-questing customer-from-hell Bruce who aspires to be everything from a mountie in the Yukon to a private dick. Pythonesque pepperpots Lois and Narelle recounted the tragic misadventures of their unfortunate husbands and arts guru Peter Mascara showered us with segments from his *Glitter Time*.

For no apparent reason, the first seven editions also included a brief opening message from *Aunty Jack*, Bill Peach or Buffy Saint Marie before the device was abandoned. From episode eight, the show switched from being an RS/JJ to an RS/ABC production, although all the early editions were also played on regular A.B.C. stations throughout the country when the series was premiered in March 1976 (double-J had to become triple-J FM some years later before being available to listeners outside Sydney).

By the end of its initial 13-episode series *The Naked Vicar Show* had become an Australia-wide success, and the A.B.C. commissioned a follow-up season. To capitalise on the programme's success, EMI Records released an LP of highlights.

In August Reilly and Sattler received a parcel of sketches from an accountant with the N.S.W. Education Department, Doug Edwards and within a week he'd joined the scriptwriting team for the new series.

The second season saw the return of the Vicar, Bruce and the gardeners Ces and Cyril (all of whom could be found in almost every edition), with Chuckle Corner and Glitter Time making an occasional reappearance. Added to the roster were the trendy trio Craig, Val and Geoffrey (who endeavoured to keep up with all that was fashionable and chic) and a couple of irritatingly dotty pensioners who delighted in doing battle with the Social Security, the Police and even P.M. Malcolm Fraser (in a strangely similar fashion to the grotesque creations of Marty Feldman and Tim Brooke-Taylor on Feldman's 1960s B.B.C. series).

With the conclusion of a second 13-episode run, Reilly and Sattler produced **Naked Vicar** revues for theatre restaurants in Sydney and Melbourne, and EMI released another LP of sketch highlights. Next on the agenda was a transfer to television, but overtures from Reg Grundy Productions were rejected in favour of RS retaining control of the enterprise.

Eventually the Seven Network won out over the A.B.C. to screen a series of hour long programmes (which they chose to schedule on an irregular basis over an eighteen month period). The original cast of Brown, Higgins and Golsby was augmented by the addition of radio voice Col McEwan and actress Julie McGregor.

The television format was much the same as the radio version with more lampoons of commercials and series and a Bramston-like news bulletin at the beginning and end of each programme (replacing Higgins' sermon as the Vicar, who was no longer featured). Regulars Bruce, the arty-crafties Craig, Val and Geoffrey and gardeners Ces and Cyril all made the transition and many classic sketches were simply redone in vision.

The Seven editions also saw the introduction of car-worshipper Ted Bullpitt and his wife Thel, who quickly became favourites and eventually spawned their own sitcom **Kingswood Country** (see LAUGH #15 for an in-depth feature on the series). Another popular segment updated the radio duo of Lois and Narelle, though apart from a brief reworking of the Oath K'Noath routine in their first appearance, the pair were now almost totally different characters. Instead of gossipy housewives, they became a man-hungry typist who relates her romantic misadventures to the office tealady. Taking over the Narelle Hudson role from Ross Higgins, Julie McGregor created one of Australian television's most enduring characterisations and scored a personal triumph.

It was unfortunate that McGregor left the series at the end of the first season following a dispute with the production team (though she subsequently achieved enormous success in writer Reilly's longrunning **Hey Dad** sitcom several years later). She was replaced by Laurel McGowan.

By the end of 1978 (and some twenty-one editions) the writers were eager to devote their talents to production of sitcoms and it was decided to end the series.

The Vicar did have one final hurrah, however, when the A.B.C. celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1982. A special one-hour edition was broadcast from the Sydney Opera House with Brown, Golsby and Higgins joined by special guest Graham Kennedy (who had recently starred in the Reilly-Sattler radio series **Graham Kennedy's RS Playhouse**). The Vicar's

Fiftieth Birthday Party concentrated more on satirising politics and the A.B.C. itself than reviving favourite segments, with the only regular characters to reappear being the Craig/Val/Geoffrey trio.

And so **The Naked Vicar Show** retreated into video history to act as a link between **Mavis Bramston** in the sixties and **Fast Forward** in the eighties. And like its predecessor, a commercial video of the better moments is long overdue.

Radio

Series 1

3LO March 21 to June 13 1976 (13x30m)

starring Noeline Brown, Kev Golsby and Ross Higgins

1/1 (with *Aunty Jack, Allison McCallum and Terry Cadd*)

Sermon: Spiritual Refreshment/Getting Rooted: Sapsucker/Lois And Narelle: Whale Wrestling/Logies/Shop!: Holiday

1/2 (with *Aunty Jack, Allison McCallum and Terry Cadd*)

Sermon: Newspaper Expose/Chuckle Corner: Turtle and Goldfish/Getting Rooted: Fertilizers/Suicidal Vox Pop/Glitter Time: Moviemaker Graham Darling/Wham-O advert/Joylene and Carlene: TV Soaps/El Wunderfullo

1/3 (with *Aunty Jack and Ricky May*)

Sermon: X-rated Adam And Eve/Cleavage advert/Joylene and Carlene: World Tour/Police Report On Gambling/Shop!: Cigarettes/The Funnel Web/Blue Hills/Jesus/Chook Smuggling/Censorship Bleeps/It's Elementary

1/4 (with *Bill Peach, Mickey Layton and Brenda Kristen*)

Sermon: Funeral/The Melbourne Club/Getting Rooted: Climbing Cabbage/Women's Libbers/Glitter Time: Ballet Star Rafe Bullpitt/Ben Hall Tour/Shop!: Fizzy Drink/Financial Sex And Violence/How To Talk Like A TV Star/Malignant Cigarettes advert

1/5 (with *Bill Peach, Doug Parkinson and Christy Lane*)

Sermon: Burning Bush/Bob and Dolly Breakfast/Getting Rooted: Motoring Query/Malignant Cigarettes advert (2)/Hospital Mechanic/Joylene and Carlene: Duck/Ladies Drinkies/Glitter Time: Movie Producer Daryl F. Flashback/This Is Your Life - Beryl Hump

1/6 (with *Bill Peach, Brenda Kristen and Mickey Layton*)

Sermon: Melbourne Cup/Bumbling IRA Bombers/Women's Libbers/Pole Sitter/A Hiccough To Romance/Lois and Narelle: Superheroes/One-Eyed Cricket Commentary/The Prune/The Black Helmet

1/7 (with *Buffy Saint Marie, Doug Parkinson and Christy Lane*)

Sermon: Fallen Parishioner/Lois and Narelle: Mafia/Chuckle Corner: Political Jokes and Funnelwebs/The Church Of Daryl/Sudsy advert/Hair By Yellow Pages/Outback Festival/Blue Hills

1/8 (with *Kerrie Biddell*)

Sermon: Youth Service/Getting Rooted: Wrinkled Bulbs/John Flaws/Lois and Narelle: The \$75 Man/Vice Regal Report/The Fergies

1/9 (with *Kerrie Biddell and Paul Baker*)

Sermon: Vice Squad Raid/Shop!: Job Wanted/Did You Know?/Chuckle Corner: Pinched By Mr. Plod/The Inventors/Glitter Time: Ballet Patron Kenneth J. McIntyre/The P76 Brothers (Mike and Mal)

1/10 (with Heather Mae Redding and Ricky May)
Sermon: Bubbles and L'Amour/Chum advert/Lois and Narelle:
Oath K'Noath/Joan Sutherland Critiques/Peter Ferret/Police
Frog Brian/Election Roundup/Last To Leave/Shop!: Lonely
Heart/Confession

1/11 (with Heather Mae Redding and Paul Baker)
Sermon: Book Of Numbers/Chuckle Corner: Mr. Plod's Wife/
Glomo advert/Glitter Time: Paranormalist Vernon Lyle/Rent-
A-Celebrity/Getting Rooted: Swingin' Ces/Phoning Home/
Nervous First Timer

1/12 (with Fay Lewis and Barry Leef)
Sermon: A Change Is Needed/Lois and Narelle: Escapolo-
gist/Church Of Daryl: Oriental Mysticism/Shop!: Biekie Bruce/
Getting Rooted: Dead Plant/Man Or Rabbit?/A.M. Phones
Peking

1/13 (with Fay Lewis and Barry Leef)
Sermon: Covering Overheads/Chuckle Corner: Minding
Rover/The One Day Of The Year/A Date With Doreen/
Timbercutter/Glitter Time: Admaker John Simpleton/Ciggy
advert/Beauty Quest

Series 2

3LO November 7 1976 to March 20 1977 (13x30m)
starring Noeline Brown, Kev Golsby and Ross Higgins

2/1 (with Alison McCallum and Barry Leef)
Sermon: Sports Day/Condensed Hamlet/Cricket/Search For
The Nile/Getting Rooted: Musical Stimulation/Craig, Val and
Geoffrey: Afgan-TV-Fiji/Just About Anything Goes

2/2 (with Barry Leef and Alison McCallum)
Sermon: Gambling/Shop!: Casino/Dog-upmanship/Ballet
Dancers/Parcel Bomb/Chat Up/Word Power/Queensland Cane
Toads/Pensioners: Social Security

2/3 (with Fay Lewis and Mickey Layton)
Sermon: Fire Insurance/Sox/Shop!: Private Dick/Lois and
Narelle: Guard Dog/Chuckle Corner: Buck's Night/Pension-
ers: Police Station/Vet

2/4 (with Mickey Layton and Faye Lewis)
Sermon: Tidings Of Joy And Sorrow/The Newk advert/Peach's
Australia/Passwords/Church Of Daryl: Pagan Temple/Derek
Roving: Police Academy/Dentist/Shop!: Bruce Of The Night
Beat

2/5 (with Kerrie Biddell and Leo De Castro)
Sermon: Parish Horse/This Day Tonight/Getting Rooted: Slide
Show/Four Corners - Political Image-Makers/Shop!: Bruce
Of Botswana/Two Left Feet

2/6 (with Leo De Castro and Kerrie Biddell)
Sermon: Covet Not The Organ/Shop!: Bruce Of Arabia/Grand
Final (incl. Lippo and Den-Hair adverts)/Pensioners:
Medibank/Yak Fat/Pun Break Time/International Family Fa-
vourites

2/7 (with Brenda Kristen and Doug Parkinson)
Sermon: Aggro With Salvos/Avon Calling/Shop!: Bruce The
Actor/Getting Rooted: Ces's Birthday/Trusty The Kelpie/Seek-
ers/Job Interview/Ask The Leylands: Sepic River Native

2/8 (with Doug Parkinson and Brenda Kristen)
Sermon: Confessions Of A Deacon/Shop!: Bruce The Vam-
pire Killer/Pensioners: Tax Office/Sex Shop/DEF advert/
Glitter Time: Action Artist Jean-Paul Braithwaite Mont-
morency/At The Third Stroke/This Is Your Life - George Smith
(incl. Den-Nash advert)

2/9 (with Ron Barry and Kerrie Biddell)
Sermon: Penfriend's Club/Big Mac/Shop!: Bruce Of Bathurst/
Kung Fu Doctor/Getting Rooted: Eclipse and Spuds/Craig,
Val and Geoffrey: Antique Furniture

2/10 (with Kerrie Biddell and Ron Barry)
Sermon: David vs. Goliath/Shop!: Bruce The Jungle Cobber/
Nude Bathing/Racing Family/Pensioners: Prime Minister's
Office/The Were-Carrot

2/11 (with Leo De Castro and Renee Geyer)
Sermon: New Organ And Other Goodies/Mrs. Sparkle/Con-
densed Bible/Shop!: Bruce The Cool Trendy/Rip-off Doctor/
Getting Rooted: Tips and Historical Gardening/Ballet On The
Telly

2/12 (with Renee Geyer and Barry Leef)
Sermon: Police Line-Up/Psychiatrist/Shop: Bruce Of The
Brigade/Craig, Val and Geoffrey: Dinner and a Norman
Lindsey/Luggage Inspection/Computer Dating/Don Dunstan
Disc

2/13 (with Leo De Castro and Barry Leef)
Sermon: Good Samaritan In The Belfry/Go On, Gloria/Shop!:
Bruce Of The Yukon/Getting Rooted: Mouldy Punnets/Craig,
Val and Geoffrey: Job Refusal and Movies/Monday Confer-
ence Investigates Women's Lib

Special

The Vicar's Birthday Party

3LO July 11 1982 (60m)
starring Noeline Brown, Kev Golsby, Ross Higgins and guests
Graham Kennedy, Doug Parkinson and Renee Geyer.
The A.B.C.'s First Day/Brisbane vs. Aborigines/Bill Collins
- New Australian Movie/The Queen's Anniversary Message/
The Frasers At Nareen/A.B.C. Budget Cuts - In The Bed-
room With Harry Butler/Therapeutic A.B.C./Competition
Phone-In/A.B.C. Facts And Figures/Craig, Val and Geoffrey
(and Roger): Bears and Mineral Water Tasting/60 Minutes/
Film Processing/Mike and Mal Meet Ron and Val

Discs

The Naked Vicar Show

E.M.I. LP EMC 2545 (1975)
a selection of sketches from the first season ...
Vicar's Sermon (Fallen Parishioner)/Gardening Show
(Sapsucker)/Cleavage Commercial/Shop! (Cigarettes)/Blue
Hills/Chook Smuggling/TV Awards/Lois And Narelle (Whale
Wrestling)/Vicar's Sermon (Newspaper Expose)/Chuckle
Corner (Turtle and Goldfish)/Gardening Show (Fertilizers)/
Glitter Time (Moviemaker Graham Darling)/Shop!: Holiday/
Lois And Narelle (Superheroes)/El Wunderfullo/It's Elemen-
tary

Son Of Naked Vicar

E.M.I. LP EMC 2572 (1976)
a selection of sketches from the second season ...
Mack/Cricket/Search For The Nile/Val, Craig And Geoff
(Afgan etc)/Ballet Dancers/Word Power/Shop! (Yukon)/Vet/
Dentist/Job Interview/Trusty The Kelpie/As The Leylands/
Shop! Arabia/Yak Fat/Racing Family/Psychiatrist/Derek Rov-
ing (Police Academy)

Television

Series 1

7 Network (Sydney) May to November 1977 (13x50m)
starring Noeline Brown, Kev Golsby, Ross Higgins, Colin
McEwan and Julie McGregor

1/1 May 26 1977 (with *Alison McCallum and Barry Leef*)
The Newk/Ted and Thel: Mow The Lawn/Honest Wayne/
Yak Fat/Lois and Narelle: Tia Maria And Chop Tasting (incl.
Oath K'Noath)/Wombat Christening/Ita Buttrose/A.B.C.
Apology (Funnel Webs)/Cocky/Hawkspeak/Did You Know

1/2 June 9 1977 (with *Mickey Layton and Cheryl Black*)
Strong Tea/Derek Roving Meets The Lodgers/Date With
Doreen/Search For The Nile/Psychiatrist/Cricket/No Mess
Charlie/Shop!: Bruce The Bikie/Medigame/Bad Breath

1/3 June 23 1977 (with *Colleen Hewitt and Ron Barry*)
Solo Man/Job Interview/Nunnery/Train Robbery/Word Power/
Weekend Magazine - Pioneer Settlement/You Know News/
Craig, Val and Geoffrey (and Roz and Troy)/Getting Rooted/
The Fergies

1/4 July 7 1977 (with *Doug Parkinson and Brenda Kristen*)
Scotch Drinker/Junkie/Trusty The Kelpie/The Long Distance
Call/Bricklayer's Picnic/Confession/Uneventful Day/Rough
Dry Elbows/Kamahl/Have The Rump

1/5 July 21 1977 (with *Leo De Castro and Diane Horder*)
Ask The Leyland Brothers/Bill Collins etc.

1/6 August 2 1977 (with *Trevor White and Julie Amler*)
Bad Breath/Cleo/Shop!: Bruce Of Arabia/Phone Home/Nun
Tattoo/Parental Interruptus/Grigor and Doris - Love/Wild
Kingdom/Ballet On The Telly

1/7 August 16 1977 (with *Renee Geyer and Barry Leef*)
Holden advert/Vet/Joylene and Carlene: TV Soaps/Shop!:
Bruce Of The Yukon/Marital Breakup/Drive advert/Four Corners -
Mallee Root Bush Academy/The Logies & Miss Australia
Quest

1/8 August 30 1977 (with *Sue Walker, Trevor White and Renee
Geyer*)

Girdle/Lois and Narelle: Social Club Function/Dummy Bank
Robbery/Chocka On The Couch/The Inventors/Shop!: Bruce
Of Botswana/Mum advert/Lift/Phone Home (2)/Ted and Thel:
Nudist Colony

1/9 September 13 1977 (with *John Farnham and Alison
McCallum*)

details unknown

1/10 September 27 1977 (with *Mickey Layton and Penny Par-
sons*)

details unknown

1/11 October 11 1977 (with *Fay Lewis and Jon English*)

Lois and Narelle: Date With Adam Blake/New Apprentice/
Shop!: Bruce The Jungle Cobber/The Sullivans

1/12 October 25 1977 (with *Doug Parkinson and Terri McRae*)
Kay Trucks/Car advert/Ted and Thel: Craig's Melbourne Bint/
Lois and Narelle: Diet & Romantic Dinner/Michael and Sandy/
Chook Raffle/Shop!: Bruce Of Bathurst/Cockroach Anyone?/
Police Report/Butcher's Dog Minding/British Paints advert

1/13 November 1 1977 (with *Stuart Wagstaff, Linda George
and Barry Leef*)
R-R-Rosella/Ted and Thel: Car Crash/Lois and Narelle: 25th
Anniversary And Date With Stuart Wagstaff/The Lodgers/
Drive advert/Grigor and Doris: Death



Series 2

7 Network (Sydney) February to October 1978 (8x50m)
starring Noeline Brown, Kev Golsby, Ross Higgins, Col
McEwan and Laurel McGowan

2/1 February 14 1978 (with *Jon English and Brenda Kristen*)
details unknown

2/2 April 5 1978 (with *Doug Ashdown and Diane Horder*)
Ted and Thel: Second Honeymoon/Shop!: Bruce The Private
Dick

2/3 May 3 1978 (with *Doug Parkinson and Mousetrap*)
details unknown

2/4 June 7 1978 (with *John Farnham and Linda George*)
Shop!: Super Bruce/Pot Black/Bill Collins Golden Years Of
Hollywood/Starsky And Hutch/This Is Your Life

2/5 July 12 1978 (with *Barry Leef and Margaret Roadknight*)
Shop!: Bruce Of The Jungle/The Blind Date

2/6 August 2 1978 (with *Renee Geyer and Mickey Layton*)
Ted and Thel: Fancy Dress Ball/Shop!: Bruce The Vampire

2/7 September 13 1978 (with *Brenda Kristen and John
Farnham*)

details unknown

2/8 October 25 1978 (with *Linda George and Doug Parkinson*)
details unknown

Disc

**The Naked Vicar Show - Live From The Madge Burrows
Room!**

E.M.I. LP EMC 2671 (1978)

a selection of sketches from the first season ...

Newk/Ted & Thel (Mow The Lawn)/The News ... You Know?/
Mrs. Marsh/What Are You?/Divorce/Lois & Narelle (Social
Club Function)/Chocka!/Checkout/Ted & Thel (Nudist
Colony)/War Hero/Telephone Call/Doris & Grigor (Death)/
Swan Lake/Introducing Whatsisname (Ted Roberts)

LIFE WITH THE LYONS

by Mark McKay

THROUGHOUT the 1950s, habitual British radio listeners must have felt strangely disoriented. Twice a week Auntie BBC seemed to hand over the reins to Uncle Sam, as a slick, fast-paced American real-life family sitcom took the air. The stars, Ben Lyon and Bebe Daniels had been leading lights in the early days of Hollywood, appearing separately in many silent and talking feature films.

Bebe, born in Texas in 1901 but living in Los Angeles since childhood, made a more significant contribution to the celluloid art than her husband. Her credits include the musicals *Rio Rita* and *42nd Street*, a series of comedy one-reelers with Harold Lloyd and performances alongside legendary screen lovers Rudolph Valentino and Douglas Fairbanks. Ben was born three weeks after Bebe in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1916 his parents moved to New York, where Ben started in plays and films, the latter taking him to Hollywood. His most famous (or should that be infamous?) rôle was in Howard Hughes' high-budget aviation epic, *Hell's Angels*; later Ben's unrestrained pride in this film was worked into a running joke.

Bebe and Ben were married in 1930. Three years later they paid their first visit to Britain, regularly returning during the 1930s, and this is where they found themselves upon the outbreak of war in 1939. Although as American citizens free to leave, they decided to stay on in blitz-torn London throughout the duration, a decision which endeared them to the British people. They broadcast regularly with Viennese-born Vic Oliver in *Hi, Gang!* until Ben joined the U.S. Army Air Force and Bebe went to Normandy as a front-line war correspondent. Meanwhile, their daughter Barbara and adopted son Richard were in the care of Bebe's mother, back in California.

After the war the family was reunited, the Lyon children joining their parents in England. Barbara began studies at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, and since young Richard had already made many films in America, Bebe and Ben thought their next radio venture could involve both generations of Lyons. A real-life domestic comedy with the performers presenting comic exaggerations of their own personae was a novelty to the Brits, but had already become a staple part of the American radio diet.

The programme's verisimilitude extended further; action revolved around the Lyons' home in Southwick Street, Marble Arch, their pets Skippy (a siamese cat) and Skeeter (a brown poodle) were brought to life, and authentic incidents provided the writers with ready-written plots. The private and public lives of the Lyons seemed inseparable. The rule still held when the family was extended; both Barbara's first husband and Richard's fiancée were prevailed upon to perform alongside their spouses and in-laws, introducing themselves to the listening millions.

The other regular cast members had more fictional rôles. Bebe decided they should have a Scottish cook — a status symbol amongst movie stars back home — and Molly Weir,



who had been in Tommy Handley's *ITMA* shows, was recruited to play Aggie MacDonald. Fiercely nationalistic, Aggie considered it her duty to put the Sassenachs in their place: "Why don't you eat civilised food like haggis?" — "What does haggis eat?"

Molly found herself in familiar company; also from *ITMA* were Horace Percival as Mr. Wimple, their henpecked neighbour with thirteen-odd children, and Hugh Morton, who appeared occasionally as Ben's boss. Doris Rogers played Florrie Wainwright, the amply-proportioned widowed neighbour, friendly with Bebe but Ben's *bête noire*. Florrie's entrance was invariably a sign that the dialogue was about to degenerate into a two-way slanging-match.

On top of her acting duties, Bebe also provided the main inspiration behind each script. She would retire to the home's basement room, nicknamed 'The Salt Mines', where she and her two co-writers (Bob Block and Bill Harding, later replaced by Ronnie Hanbury) would furiously draft and re-draft for hours on end. Bebe preferred to work late at night when the house was quieter, and sometimes would not emerge until the following morning.

This perfectionist attitude could be sensed in all areas of production. *Life With The Lyons* was probably BBC Light Entertainment's most rehearsed show. First the writers tested their work on a select gathering of friends and relations. After further polishing, the entire cast would meet at the house to go through their parts together. Another two sessions in the studio and they were ready to face the audience for the episode's ninth run-through! After the broadcast the family could reassess their performances by listening to a tape recording Ben made of every episode.

The fruit of their labours was a warm, cosy and innocent entertainment with wide-reaching appeal, substantiated by their high listening figures. By no stretch of the imagination an example of wit and sophistication, the humour was by and large trite and obvious. Yet one quality they could boast was consistency; an episode from 1951 is practically indistinguishable from one first broadcast a decade later. This in spite of the fact that Richard and Barbara, when first heard teenagers of 15 and 19 respectively, were by 1961 well into adulthood.

Ben was portrayed as a weak and conceited but lovable goofball, ridiculed like George Burns for being supported by a more talented and successful wife. He is also a lily-livered coward, unable to own up to kicking a football through the mayor's attic window. Aggie and the family spare no opportunity to portray him as older than Methusela and tubbier than Falstaff: "Och, treacle pudding isn't good for your stomach, Mr. Lyon. It's thick and fat and bulky" — "Now, don't talk that way about my stomach!"



Bebe was convincingly cast as a Gracie Allen-type dizzy scatterbrain, zealously maintaining an age of thirty-two. A conversation with Bebe is guaranteed to turn anyone into a quivering wreck, even a thug trying to buy her silence after she had witnessed a gangster fight. On the odd occasion she demonstrates an underlying shrewdness, once feigning amnesia to avoid a confrontation with Ben over that greatest of marital crimes, overspending.

For the first six series, the lovely Barbara played a fickle man-crazy romantic, often with a new boyfriend each week. Sensitive to embarrassment from her parents, she was forever warning "If you say that, I'll die — I'll just die!" Barbara also had a successful singing career and her own TV programme, *Dreamtime With Barbara*. This was produced by Russell Turner, who shortly afterwards became her husband, their marriage becoming the subject of the first show of the seventh season. Now the new Mrs. Turner was living in her own home and filling it with plants, much to Russell's disgust ("We ought to call this place 'The Hanging Gardens of Barbara Lyon'"). Regular visits back to Southwick Street to borrow flour, sugar or furniture ensured that Barbara was still involved in the central storylines.

Genial Richard was able to get away with gentle jibes at his mother ('ma'), father ('pop') and particularly his sister, without lapsing into the nastiness of Jimmy Clitheroe in *The Clitheroe Kid*. In turn, he was on the receiving end of jokes concerning his Jack Benny-like stinginess. On radio he was frequently unlucky in love, losing girlfriends through misunderstandings, jealousy and competition from rivals. In the last series however, we learnt of his engagement to Angela Ferguson, who subsequently joined the cast for several editions including the very last, *Roaming Scandals*.

Mid-1952 a stage production of *Life With The Lyons* was presented at the Hippodrome Theatre, Blackpool, directed by showbiz veteran Jack Hulbert. Molly Weir, in the fifth volume of her memoirs, *Walking Into The Lyons' Den*, recounts the horrors which plagued this disastrous enterprise, which also featured sexpot Diana Dors as Richard's girlfriend.

The following year, to celebrate the coronation, the family played second spot on *A Gala Programme of Radio Variety*

in the presence of the new Queen and Prince Philip. Then in November, for the first time, selected shows were issued for overseas broadcast by BBC Transcription Services.

During the fifth series a new arrival resulted in a little brother for Barbara and Richard, giving the show an added appeal for younger listeners. Robin Lyon, played by 12 year old Richard Bellaers, made his first appearance in the episode titled *A Crooner In The House*, in which Barbara falls in love with singer Ronnie Harris. Suddenly, without explanation, Mr. and Mrs. Lyon now have three children, their youngest a lively wise-cracking lad with a fondness for unusual pets. Bellaers quickly became a hit, until the seventh series, when his voice broke! Consequently, his part was pared to the bone and he left after the 24th episode;

the following week, in way of explanation for his absence, Ben revealed that Robin was just settling down to life at boarding school.

By this time the entire cast had made several successful forays into the visual media. This began in 1953 with a fast-paced film adaptation of the radio series, reworking items from several episodes including *Rocks In Your Garden*. The Lyons must convince the landlord of their new house (Hugh Morton) that they are suitable tenants so he will agree to sign the lease. This begins to look less and less likely as Ben rewires the landlord's beloved chandelier to the telephone, floods the basement and Richard upsets his horsy daughter, Violet (Belinda Lee). Meanwhile Barbara falls for a cowboy called Slim Cassidy, who arrives for a dinner party on his horse, and accompanied by a fire-breathing Red Indian chief! A sequel commemorating Bebe and Ben's silver wedding anniversary saw the Lyons in unfamiliar surroundings — motoring around Paris. Ben is suspected of having an affair with a French girl and winds up fighting a duel!

Riding on the back of their big-screen success, *Life With The Lyons* transferred to television during the summer of 1955 (the family had first appeared together on the small screen the previous year). The short run of four fortnightly programmes began with *Ben's Birthday*. After a second series, again for BBC-TV, the team deserted to ITV, making a series of ten episodes for Associated Rediffusion. Even the title was carried over. Amazingly the BBC did not seem particularly upset and continued to produce their radio shows. Another two commercial series followed the family's move from Southwick Street to a new house in Abbotsbury Rd., Holland Park.

Life With The Lyons radio repeats continued throughout the 1960s and picked up some unlikely fans. John Lennon voted it his favourite radio show in 1968 and even named an album in its honour! Meanwhile, the family suffered various setbacks — Barbara and Russell's marriage broke up (Barbara married again in 1968), and Bebe collapsed from a cerebral haemorrhage in 1963. Eight years later she died in London. Ben remarried and in 1979 succumbed to a fatal heart attack on board the QE2 luxury liner, where he was entertaining the passengers with tales from his most remarkable career.

Episode Guide

Radio

Starring Bebe Daniels, Ben Lyon, Barbara Lyon, Richard Lyon, Horace Percival, Doris Rogers, Molly Weir.

Occasionals: Hugh Morton, Gwen Lewis, David Enders, Richard Bellaers, Russell Turner, Angela Ferguson

Scripts by Bebe Daniels, Bob Block, Bill Harding (series 1 to 3), Ronnie Hanbury (series 4 to 9) unless otherwise specified

All episodes 30mins and broadcast in the Light Programme

• Some official titles vary from those listed in *Radio Times*. Where the difference is significant, a footnote is provided.

Series 1

Sundays 3.00pm

1/1	5-11-50	Thirteen For Dinner
1/2	12-11-50	Fairy Cakes
1/3	19-11-50	Is There A Doctor In The House?
1/4	26-11-50	It's In The Air
1/5	3-12-50	The Dented Wing
1/6	10-12-50	Let Ben Do It
1/7	17-12-50	Pardon My Glove
1/8	24-12-50	Under The Tree
1/9	31-12-50	Under The Table
1/10	7-1-51	It's A Man's World
1/11	14-1-51	Bebe Buys A Bargain
1/12	21-1-51	Ben Bluebeard
1/13	28-1-51	Ben Does It Again
1/14	4-2-51	That Old Friend
1/15	11-2-51	Tally Ho!
1/16	18-2-51	Three Little Pigs Stayed At Home
1/17	25-2-51	Time Marches Back
1/18	4-3-51	Ben Holds The Baby
1/19	11-3-51	The Green-Eyed Monster
1/20	18-3-51	Ben Builds A Garage
1/21	25-3-51	It Could Happen To You
1/22	1-4-51	The Private Life Of Ben
1/23	8-4-51	Spring Is Here
1/24	15-4-51	The Other Green-Eyed Monster
1/25	22-4-51	Family Affair
1/26	29-4-51	Back In October

Series 2

Thursdays 9.30pm

2/1	27-9-51	Home Again
2/2	4-10-51	Life Of The Party
2/3	11-10-51	Sorry, Right Number
2/4	18-10-51	The Female Of The Speeches
2/5	25-10-51	Accidents Will Happen
2/6	1-11-51	Let The Women Do It
2/7	8-11-51	Keep Up With The Kids
2/8	15-11-51	Let Them Eat Cake
2/9	22-11-51	It's A Wise Father...
2/10	29-11-51	Stranger Things Have Happened
2/11	6-12-51	I Don't Know What To Get Her
2/12	13-12-51	It Happens In Every Family
2/13	20-12-51	I Dream Of Santa
2/14	27-12-51	Let's Go To The Party
2/15	3-1-52	A Fine Romance
2/16	10-1-52	The Wife's Birthday
2/17	17-1-52	Family Trouble
2/18	24-1-52	The Tree Of Knowledge
2/19		Too Young ¹

2/20	17-2-52	There Goes That Song Again ²
2/21	21-2-52	Family Secrets
2/22	28-2-52	The Dangerous Age
2/23	6-3-52	Rocks In Your Garden
2/24	13-3-52	Home Sweet Home
2/25	20-3-52	The Upper Set
2/26	27-3-52	There's Always Room At My House
2/27	3-4-52	The Play's The Thing
2/28	10-4-52	Back In November

With the death of King George VI, programme schedules were rearranged. *Radio Times* lists the following episodes, none of which made it to air: Trouble In The Waxworks (31-1-52), A Tough Break (7-2-52), This Won't Hurt (14-2-52).

¹ scheduled for transmission 31-1-52, but cancelled. It was later recorded on 7-4-54 for Transcription Services.

² repeat timeslot (5.00pm)

Series 3

Fridays (except 3/30 broadcast Wednesday) 8.45pm

3/1	14-11-52	Home Again
3/2	21-11-52	The Hole In The Road
3/3	28-11-52	Mr. Jones Is Missing
3/4	5-12-52	A Duel And The Son
3/5	12-12-52	The New Maid
3/6	19-12-52	Sauce For The Gander
3/7	26-12-52	Christmas Story
3/8	2-1-53	Ben's Handicap
3/9	9-1-53	A House On The Route
3/10	16-1-53	Muscles
3/11	23-1-53	The Barbecue
3/12	30-1-53	Stupid Cupid
3/13	6-2-53	Ben's Birthday
3/14	13-2-53	Cousin From America
3/15	20-2-53	It's Never Too Young
3/16	27-2-53	For Art's Sake
3/17	6-3-53	Let Sleeping Dogs Lie
3/18	13-3-53	How To Be A Good Father
3/19	20-3-53	The Ten Gallon Hat
3/20	27-3-53	It's An Ill Wind
3/21	3-4-53	Easter Parade
3/22	10-4-53	You Can't Get Blood Out Of A Stone
3/23	17-4-53	Cross My Palm With Silver
3/24	24-4-53	Ne'er Cast A Clout
3/25	1-5-53	A Place In The Country
3/26	8-5-53	Wedding Bells
3/27	15-5-53	And How Are All Your Kids? ¹
3/28	22-5-53	El Gaucho
3/29	29-5-53	The Great Day
3/30	3-6-53	Lovely To Look At
3/31	12-6-53	The Anniversary
3/32	19-6-53	Once A Ham...
3/33	26-6-53	Back In The Autumn

¹ replaced by Trouble In The Waxworks? (script missing)

Series 4

Thursdays 9.30pm, changed to 9.00pm from 4/4

Scripts for 4/1 to 4/3 by Bebe Daniels, Bob Block & Ray Sonin

4/1	12-11-53	Coming Home
4/2	19-11-53	Nature Boy
4/3	26-11-53	Let The Men Do It
4/4	3-12-53	Come To The Fair
4/5	10-12-53	No Rest For Ben
4/6	17-12-53	Christmas Shopping
4/7	24-12-53	'Twas The Night Before
4/8	31-12-53	Who Gave Me That?
4/9	7-1-54	Once Upon A Mime

4/10	14-1-54	Love Sneaks Up On Richard
4/11	21-1-54	Father's Day
4/12	28-1-54	Let The Kids Do It
4/13	4-2-54	The New Neighbours
4/14	11-2-54	Be My Valentine
4/15	18-2-54	I Hear You Calling Me
4/16	25-2-54	The Unlucky Winner
4/17	4-3-54	An Oliver Twist
4/18	11-3-54	I Did It With My Little Hatchet
4/19	18-3-54	Go To Your Corner
4/20	25-3-54	Left Bank
4/21	1-4-54	April Fool
4/22	8-4-54	Say It With Music
4/23	15-4-54	A Ghost In The House
4/24	22-4-54	You Can Keep Your Blinking Lawnmower
4/25	29-4-54	The Kick Off
4/26	6-5-54	Back In The Autumn

Series 5

Thursdays 9.00pm

5/1	9-12-54	The Lyons In Hollywood ¹
5/2	16-12-54	Danger — Richard At Work
5/3	23-12-54	A Christmas Story
5/4	30-12-54	The New Job
5/5	6-1-55	Just Call Me Curly
5/6	13-1-55	Bebe's Birthday
5/7	20-1-55	A Crooner In The House
5/8	27-1-55	My Hat
5/9	3-2-55	The Poet
5/10	10-2-55	Your Presence Is Requested
5/11	17-2-55	Neighbour Trouble
5/12	24-2-55	The Family Heirloom
5/13	3-3-55	The Bonny Bonny Heather (from Glasgow)
5/14	10-3-55	I've Got You Covered
5/15	17-3-55	The Other Generation
5/16	24-3-55	The New Wallpaper
5/17	31-3-55	Second Honeymoon
5/18	7-4-55	Home Stretch
5/19	14-4-55	I Can Do It Myself
5/20	21-4-55	Afternoon On The Thames
5/21	28-4-55	Ben v. Scotland Yard
5/22	12-5-55	Three Blind Dates
5/23	19-5-55	The Bottom Of Our Garden
5/24	26-5-55	Children Should Be Seen And Heard
5/25	2-6-55	We'll Send You A Post Card

¹ originally scheduled, and listed in *Radio Times*, for 2-12-54. *Radio Times* also lists Holiday For Strings (9-12-54) and The Garden Wall (5-5-55).

Series 6

Thursdays 7.30pm

6/1	3-11-55	It's Good To Be Home
6/2	10-11-55	The Hundred Pound Quiz
6/3	17-11-55	The Good Citizen
6/4	24-11-55	The Flitch
6/5	1-12-55	Who Knows?
6/6	8-12-55	The Bazaar
6/7	15-12-55	Ben Kicks Off
6/8	22-12-55	Make Me A Child Again
6/9	29-12-55	Happy New Year
6/10	5-1-56	The Alibi
6/11	12-1-56	The Stranger
6/12	19-1-56	Curtain Up
6/13	26-1-56	Robin's Birthday
6/14	2-2-56	For Men Only
6/15	9-2-56	The Comic Valentine
6/16	16-2-56	The Intruders

6/17	23-2-56	? (script missing)
6/18	1-3-56	The Law And The Lyons ¹
6/19	8-3-56	It Must Be Love ²
6/20	15-3-56	Out Of Space
6/21	22-3-56	Come Back Little Bebe
6/22	29-3-56	Where Fools Rush In
6/23	5-4-56	Double Trouble
6/24	12-4-56	Young And Foolish
6/25	19-4-56	The Garden Fête (with Robert Beatty)
6/26	26-4-56	It's Not Goodbye

¹ *Radio Times* lists this show for 23-2-56

² titled in *Radio Times*: I'm In Love Again

Series 7

Sundays 3.15pm, changed to 2.15pm from 7/8, then 1.45pm from 7/20

7/1	11-11-56	Here Comes The Bride
7/2	18-11-56	The Way To A Man's Heart
7/3	25-11-56	How Now, Brown Cow?
7/4	2-12-56	From Rhythm To Rachmaninov
7/5	9-12-56	Barbara Buys A Bargain
7/6	16-12-56	Don't Give Me That
7/7	23-12-56	And A Merry Christmas To All
7/8	30-12-56	A Star Is Born
7/9	6-1-57	Bend And Be Beautiful
7/10	13-1-57	It's A Snap
7/11	20-1-57	You Are My Lucky Star
7/12	27-1-57	A House Divided
7/13	3-2-57	Danger Is My Work
7/14	10-2-57	The Sky's The Limit
7/15	17-2-57	You're The Doctor ¹
7/16	24-2-57	The Separation
7/17	3-3-57	Get Rich Quick
7/18	10-3-57	Stop Thief!
7/19	17-3-57	The Birds And The Bees
7/20	24-3-57	Goin' Fishing
7/21	31-3-57	It's Mothering Sunday
7/22	7-4-57	A Table For Three
7/23	14-4-57	The Lyon Has Wings
7/24	21-4-57	Happy Easter
7/25	28-4-57	Richard Opens Shop
7/26	5-5-57	Back Next Winter

¹ titled in *Radio Times*: School For Scandal

Christmas Day, Wednesday 4.00pm

SP	25-12-57	Let's Drop In For Christmas
----	----------	-----------------------------

Series 8

Sundays 6.30pm, changed to 1.45pm from 8/9

8/1	2-2-58	Barbara's Dinner Party
8/2	9-2-58	The Rising Son
8/3	16-2-58	Dial Special Branch
8/4	23-2-58	Keep Moving
8/5	2-3-58	A House Divided
8/6	9-3-58	Hold That Man
8/7	16-3-58	Put A Light In The Window
8/8	23-3-58	Luck Is No Lady
8/9	30-3-58	It Shouldn't Happen To A Dog
8/10	6-4-58	Easter In The Country
8/11	13-4-58	The First Fight
8/12	20-4-58	The Man In The Box
8/13	27-4-58	For Love Or Money
8/14	4-5-58	Goodbye For Now

Christmas Day, Thursday 4.00pm

SP	25-12-58	Don't Open Before Christmas
----	----------	-----------------------------

Series 9

Fridays 7.30pm

9/1	30-1-59	Voyage Home
9/2	6-2-59	The Man From Texas
9/3	13-2-59	Lyon Cub Reporter
9/4	20-2-59	With Murder In Mind
	27-2-59	<i>Repeat of 8/7 as Bebe indisposed</i>
9/5	13-3-59	Set An Extra Place ¹ (with Richard Murdoch)
9/6	20-3-59	The Confused Cupid
9/7	27-3-59	The Scroungers
9/8	3-4-59	This Was Your Wife
9/9	10-4-59	Teddy Trouble
9/10	17-4-59	The New Address
9/11	24-4-59	The Colonel's Dilemma
9/12	1-5-59	Trouble In Camp
9/13	8-5-59	Strike It Rich
9/14	15-5-59	Saying Goodbye

¹ postponed from 6-3-59

Christmas Day, Friday 4.00pm

SP 25-12-59 Jingle Bells

Series 10

Wednesdays 7.30pm

Scripts for 10/1, 10/2, 10/5, 10/8, 10/9, 10/11, 10/16 by Bob Block, Robert Hounscome & Bebe Daniels; remainder by Bob Block, Brad Ashton & Bebe Daniels

10/1	24-2-60	The Meddler
10/2	2-3-60	The Unwelcome Guest
10/3	9-3-60	Don't Put Your Daughter On The Stage, Mr. Lyon
10/4	16-3-60	Mr. Cupid Shoots Again
10/5	23-3-60	The Little Green-Eyed God
10/6	30-3-60	The Big Joker (with Dick Bentley)
10/7	6-4-60	The Weaker Sex
10/8	13-4-60	The Stranger From Sorrento
10/9	20-4-60	Your Policemen Are Wonderful
10/10	27-4-60	Maid To Measure
10/11	4-5-60	Top Of The Pops
10/12	11-5-60	Relatively Speaking
10/13	18-5-60	Invest With Richard
10/14	25-5-60	Let's Go Fishing
10/15	1-6-60	The Big Fiddle
10/16	8-6-60	My Four-Legged Friend

Series 11

Fridays 7.31pm

11/1	20-1-61	People Who Live In Glass Houses Have Happy Neighbours
11/2	27-1-61	Sorry, The Lyon's Engaged
11/3	3-2-61	The External Triangle
11/4	10-2-61	Barbara's Birthday
11/5	17-2-61	Thanks For The Memory
11/6	24-2-61	The Lyon In Sheep's Clothing
11/7	3-3-61	Along Came Mr. Jackson (with Patrick Barr)
11/8	10-3-61	A Dog's Tale
11/9	17-3-61	What's Buzzin', Cousin?
11/10	24-3-61	No Holiday For Strings
11/11	31-3-61	Don't Be A Freud
11/12	7-4-61	I Passed By Your Widow
11/13	14-4-61	Once Upon A Dream
11/14	21-4-61	Tree For Two
11/15	28-4-61	Pardon My Bumper
11/16	5-5-61	Keeping Up With The Brownes
11/17	12-5-61	On The Wrong Side Of The Inlaw
11/18	19-5-61	Roaming Scandals

Other broadcasts featuring the Lyons:

27-2-53 A Gala Programme Of Radio Variety

13-6-55 Bebe And Ben — A Tribute For Their Silver Wedding

Television

Starring Bebe Daniels, Ben Lyon, Barbara Lyon, Richard Lyon, Molly Weir

Occasionals: Horace Percival, Doris Rogers, Richard Bellaers

Bebe Daniels and Ben Lyon (BBC)

Friday 2-4-54 10.00pm

TV debut of the Lyon family

Series 1 (BBC)

Fortnightly, Wednesdays 8.15pm

Scripts by Bebe Daniels, Bob Block, Bill Harding (1/1 to 1/3), Ronnie Hanbury (1/4)

1/1 29-6-55

1/2 13-7-55

1/3 27-7-55

1/4 10-8-55

Series 2 (BBC)

Fortnightly, Thursdays 7.30pm

Scripts by Bebe Daniels, Bob Block, Ronnie Hanbury

2/1 31-5-56

2/2 14-6-56

2/3 28-6-56

2/4 12-7-56

Series 3 (Associated-Rediffusion)

Fortnightly, Tuesdays 8.30pm, except 3/8 at 9.45pm

Scripts by Bebe Daniels, Bob Ross, Bob Block

3/1 17-9-57 The Green-Eyed Monster*
(with Jack Buchanan)

3/2 1-10-57 Family Secrets

3/3 15-10-57 I've Got You Covered

3/4 29-10-57 Cool Cat On A Hot Roof

3/5 12-11-57 Going, Going, Gone*

3/6 26-11-57 Where There's A Will

3/7 10-12-57 Unlucky Winner

3/8 24-12-57 'Twas The Night Before

3/9 7-1-58 Danger — Woman At Work*

3/10 21-1-58 Signs Of The Times

Series 4 (Associated-Rediffusion)

Fortnightly, Fridays 6.10pm

Scripts by Bebe Daniels, Bob Ross, Ronnie Hanbury, Bob Block

4/1 19-9-58 Who's Your Lady Friend?

4/2 3-10-58 The Reluctant Genius

4/3 17-10-58 Dangerous Curves Ahead

4/4 31-10-58 Boxing Gloves

4/5 14-11-58 Family Secrets (repeat of 3/2)

4/6 28-11-58 A Guest In The House (with Kent Walton)

4/7 12-12-58 Thirteen Shop-Lifting Days To Christmas*

4/8 26-12-58 The Sheriff Of Fractured Wrist*
(with Alfred Marks)

4/9 9-1-59 It's A Woman's World

4/10 23-1-59 King Richard The Last

Series 5 (Associated-Rediffusion)

Weekly, Fridays 6.30pm

Scripts by Ronnie Hanbury, Bebe Daniels, Bob Block

5/1	1-1-60	A Cowboy In Kensington
5/2	8-1-60	Home Sweet Homicide*
5/3	15-1-60	Stupid Cupid
5/4	22-1-60	Teddy Boys' Picnic
5/5	29-1-60	For Love Or Money
5/6	5-2-60	Just What The Doctor Ordered
5/7	12-2-60	Top Secret
5/8	19-2-60	Tease For Two
5/9	26-2-60	Your Presents Are Requested
5/10	4-3-60	A Chip Off The Old Blockhead
5/11	11-3-60	The Nelson Touch
5/12	18-3-60	Sauce For The Goose
5/13	25-3-60	Be My Ghost (with Leslie Randall)

* these episodes are held by the British Film Institute

Films

Life With The Lyons aka Family Affair (US)

(Hammer, released Feb 1954, 81 mins)

Starring Bebe Daniels, Ben Lyon, Barbara Lyon, Richard Lyon, Horace Percival, Molly Weir, Hugh Morton, Arthur Hill, Doris Rogers, Gwen Lewis, Belinda Lee

The family experience difficulties convincing their author landlord to sign the lease papers to their new house, especially after the children encourage Ben to take up rock gardening.

• reissued as a 6-part serial in 1957 titled *Adventures With The Lyons*

The Lyons In Paris aka Mr. and Mrs. In Patee

(Hammer, released Jan 1955, 81 mins)

Starring Bebe Daniels, Ben Lyon, Barbara Lyon, Richard Lyon, Reginald Beckwith, Martine Alexis, Pierre Dudan, Dino Galvani, Horace Percival, Molly Weir, Doris Rogers, Gwen Lewis, Hugh Morton

Ben and Richard both become involved with a French lady when the Lyons spend their holiday in Paris.

Double Cassette

Life With The Lyons

ZBBC 1319 (1992)

Contains four complete broadcasts: 14 Nov 1952, 20 Jan 1955, 13 Apr 1958 and 19 May 1961

Bibliography

Life With The Lyons by Bebe Daniels & Ben Lyon

Odhams 1953

An autobiography. Despite the title, little mention of the series.

Bebe & Ben by Jill Allgood

Hale 1975

Contains one chapter on *Life With The Lyons*.

Walking Into The Lyons' Den by Molly Weir

Hutchinson 1977

Aggie's recollections of her first six years with the show.

One Small Footprint by Molly Weir

Hutchinson 1980

Further recollections covering the final six years of the show.



STEVEN WRIGHT

by David Hirsch

AT first glance, the field of American stand-up comedians of the mid-1980s seems a haven for fast talking, primal screaming eccentrics like Bobcat Goldthwait, Howie Mandel and Robin Williams. This might be the case if one overlooked a soft spoken, monotone introvert named Steven Wright, who has attracted big audiences.

To understand Steven Wright, one should examine his routine, which is somewhat of a rarity. He stands on stage, mellow and expressionless, with his head buried close to the microphone. His style of speech is dry and deadpan. Such dullness in presentation hasn't been appreciated since the days of the Bob and Ray duo and Pat Paulsen. Unlike them, however, Wright is totally apolitical and topical gags are not to be found in his act.

His humour is cerebral, based on one-liners about many of our speech and language patterns, which most adults take for granted:

I went to a diner which said 'Breakfast Anytime' so I ordered French toast during the Renaissance.

My girlfriend asked if I slept good ... I said "No, I made a few mistakes".

Often little incidental phrases will elicit howling laughter: *Right now I'm having amnesia and deja vu at the same time.*

I lost a buttonhole.

And at times, it's not plays on words, but plays on lines that border on the surreal, if not the preposterous:

I have a map of the U.S. that's actual size.

I was once arrested for walking in someone else's sleep.

Wright (born in 1955 in Boston, Mass), played in comedy clubs after graduation from college. He made his first appearance on **The Tonight Show** in August 1982. Host Johnny Carson liked his act so much he had Steven back in less than a week, an unheard of move for such a new comic. Since then he has been a regular guest on the show, as well as with David Letterman. But it was in 1985 when things really started to take off for Wright. It wasn't his cameo role as dentist Larry Stillman in **Desperately Seeking Susan**, but sales of his comedy shows. He had his first recording **I Have A Pony** (on LP and cassette) and an H.B.O. special **On Location: A Steven Wright Special** (later released to home video).

For the next few years he did stand-up concerts and appeared on three Comic Relief benefits, which evoked enthusiastic responses. He was also proving popular in Britain. In 1988 he starred in a 20 minute movie there called **The Appointments Of Dennis Jennings**, which he co-wrote with Michael Armstrong. It centred on a man who makes several visits to a psychiatrist (played by Rowan Atkinson) and relates a series of bizarre thoughts:

I want to find out who my real stepfather is. My parents won't tell me.

The therapist is cruel and spiteful and makes nasty comments to Jennings, who wants to kill him. The short (subsequently screened on H.B.O.) won an Oscar at the 1989 awards.



Wright continues to appear live in stand-up (he toured Australia in 1994 and 1995), on television and occasionally in movies. Along with the usual talk show appearances, he turns up as a co-worker of Paul Reiser's character on A.B.C.'s **Mad About You** and as himself in **The Larry Sanders Show** (starring Garry Shandling).

On the big screen he's played a variety of roles in a wide spectrum of movies. He's participated in the violent **Reservoir Dogs**, played a lethargic helicopter pilot in **So I Married An Axe Murderer**, made a cameo in Steve Martin's **Mixed Nuts** and supplied the voice of turtle Lorenzo Trudgealong in the animated film **The Swan Princess**:

Friends called me "Speed"

Despite his forays into television and film, stand-up continues to be his favourite medium. And wherever he appears, he maintains the same dullard persona, which continues to delight audiences on three continents.

Films

- Desperately Seeking Susan (1985)
- The Appointments Of Dennis Jennings (1988 short)
- Stars And Bars (1988)
- Men Of Respect (1991)
- Reservoir Dogs (1992)
- So I Married An Axe Murderer (1993)
- Speechless (1994)
- The Swan Princess (1994)
- Mixed Nuts (1994)

Videos

- An Evening At The Improv
(Warner Home Video 1986)
- Young Comedians All-Star Reunion
(H.B.O. Home Video 1987)
- Steven Wright Live
(Vestron Video 1987)
- Comic Relief 2
- Comic Relief 3
- Comic Relief '90
- N.B.A./Comic Relief: The Great Blooper Caper
- Hysteria 3!
(Picture Music Int.)
- Just For Laughs — Volume 1
(Telstar Video)

Television

- A Steven Wright Special
(HBO 1985)
- Alan King: Inside The Comedy Mind
(Comedy Central)
- Wicker Chairs And Gravity
(HBO 1990)

Discs

- I Have A Pony
Warners LP and cassette WB 25335 (1985) also (Aust.) CD
Introduction/Ants/Hitchhiking/Ice/Dog Stay/Rachel/7's And
Museums/Water/Jiggs Casey/Cross Country/Book Store/
Winnie/Apt./Babies And Skiing
- The Best Of Comic Relief 2
Rhino CD R2 70707 (1988)
includes Wright's monologue from the fundraising concert
(4:31m)
- The Best Of Comic Relief 3
Rhino CD R2 70893 (1989)
includes Wright's monologue from the fundraising concert
(6:05m)
- The Best Of Comic Relief '90
Rhino CD R2 71010 (1990)
includes Wright's monologue from the fundraising concert
- The Best Of Hysteria 3!
E.M.I. CD CDP 7980212 (1991)
Wright is featured on the track Why Fish Wear Socks from
the fundraising concert
- Reservoir Dogs
M.C.A. CD MCD 10541 (1992)
Wright can be heard on six tracks:
And Now Little Green Bag/Rock Flock Of Fire/Bohemiath/
Super Sounds/Keep On Truckin'/Home Of Rock

For those who like British humour...

**Why not support these two super
British Comedy fanzines?**

Laughter Lines

c/o 1a Woodbury, Castle Rd., Woking,
Surrey GU21 4ET, Great Britain

'Cor'

c/o 24 Richmond Rd., Basingstoke,
Hampshire RG21 2NX, Great Britain

WHAT'S **NEW?**

C.D.s:

Billy Connolly - Live 1995

Polydor 2CD 529 7682-1

House Of Horrors + Evangelists/Politicians \$ Media Magnates/National Anthem + Captain Cook/Australian Cities/Dancing Naked/Religion + Masturbation + Celibacy/The Friendliest Place In The World/Bad Boys Bike/A Mornington Peninsula Story/My Favourite Wally + McDonalds

Dinner Conversation/Michael Barrymore + V.J. Day/The Nobel Peace Prize + Old Mans Day/Sexual Performance/Freezin' + A Donkey Boy/Medical Cckek Ups + Prostate + Gynaecologist

Jimeoin - Crack

2CD (no label identification or number given)

stand up: Laughs/Sale/Bbq/Thongs/Crap Video/Offend People/Sign People/Bath Story/Toes/Disaster/Little Toe/Big Fellow/Dancing/False Arm/Video Player/Ireland/Hot Water Bottle/Bath Story (continued)/It Always Does That/Bargain/Red Indian/Bargain (continued)/Cups Of Tea/Car Horns/Cockatoo Story/Forgery/Snails/Dreams/Just Me (the song)

songs: Wrong Way Home/Thumpin' Head/Click Bong/Going Out Tonight/Tardis/Third Drawer Down/Crack/Built For Transmission/I Am Dead/Only One Cheek/Silently Missing You/Stand Up Comedy/Johnny Maddon/Won't Sit On Your Box

Andy Griffith - What It Is, Is Andy Griffith

Cema 2CD S22-18492

The Fishin' Hole/What It Was, Was Football/Conversation With A Mule/Love Poems: Togetherness/Romeo And Juliet/Silhouettes/The Crowdad Song/Swan Lake/The Midnight Special/Andy's Lament/North Carolina, My Home State/Police Department Blues/My Dog Underdog/Opera Carmen/Flop-Eared Mule/The Whistling Ping Pong Game/How Long, How Long Blues/The Preacher And The Bear

Andy And Cleopatra/St. James Infirmary/Once Knew A Fella/Standing On The Corner/Hamlet/Thank Heaven For Little Girls/Pick A Bale Of Cotton/The Discovery Of America/There's No Time For Sergeants/Jack The Giant Killer/Cindy/Love Poems: To The Lovely Juanita Beasley/Don't Look Back/Let's Pull Together/Pool Table/Sourwood Mountain/A Good Man Is Hard To Find/She's Bad, Bad Business/The Andy Griffith Theme

Shelley Berman - Live Again!

Chuckle CD 3373-2

Introduction + Argued With My Pants/The Department Store/Hotels (Coat Hangers/Toilet Seat/Soap/Room Service)/I'm Not Doing The Airline Material/International Conference/Neurosis/Embarrassing Moments/Fathers And Sons

Rodney Dangerfield - La Contessa

Dove CD (no number)

La Contessa - The Private Diary Of A Great Lothario/It's Lonely At The Top (When There's No One On The Bottom)

Groucho Marx - Here's Groucho

M.C.A. CD MCAD 20847

Omaha, Nebraska/Father's Day/Go West, Young Man/How D'Ye Do And Shake Hands*/Dr. Hackenbush/Hooray For Captain Spaulding/Show Me A Rose/Black Strap Molasses*/Groucho Marx Does His Thing/The Inimitable Groucho

(* with Danny Kaye, Jimmy Durante and Jane Wyman)

Foster Brooks - Los Angeles Earthquake

M.C.A. CD MCAD 20866

A Celebration/Politics And Health/Chicken/Golf/The Los Angeles Earthquake/The Mirror/My Experiences In The Navy And At The Induction Centre/My In-Laws/Prune Tang/A Poem From My Wife

(reissue of his LP The Lovable Lush, minus four tracks)

Cassettes:

The Glums

B.B.C. double-cassette ZBBC 1703

Stuck In The Bath (10/15)/Ron's New Suit (11/16)/The Glums Are Burgled (10/12)/Ron's Tattoo (11/2)

Ron The Babysitter (10/3)/Eth Is Accused Of Stealing (11/15)/Ron The Daddy's Boy (11/17)/Ron Changes His Name (12/6)

I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again

B.B.C. double-cassette ZBBC 1723

shows of May 26 1968/February 22 1970/May 3 1970/November 11 1973

Hancock's Half Hour - 7

B.B.C. double-cassette ZBBC 1729

Hancock's Happy Christmas (4/11)/The Emigrant (4/19)

Hancock's School (5/7)/Hancock's Car (5/11)

BACK ISSUES

only
\$4 or £2
a copy

LAUGH #1

Barry Humphries/Jack Benny On Television/
Monty Python On Disc/The Young Ones/Band
Waggon

LAUGH #2

Steptoe & Son/Not Only... But Also/The Marx
Brothers On Disc/Police Squad/George Wal-
lace/Craig Ferguson On Disc

LAUGH #3

The Goodies/Roy Rene, 'Mo'/Tom Lehrer/The
'Doctor' Movies/Eddie Cantor On Radio & TV

*The above three issues are now out of print, but
photocopies are available at the same price.*

LAUGH #4

Norman Gunston/The 'Doctor' TV Series/Bob
Newhart On Disc/Not The Nine O'Clock News/
Fred Allen

LAUGH #5

The Black Adder/Take It From Here/Victor
Borge/Yes, What?/Abbott & Costello

LAUGH #6

Lenny Henry/Dad's Army/Jimmy Durante/John
Clarke/Steve Martin

LAUGH #7

Ronnie Barker/Stan Freberg/Billy Connolly/
Graham Kennedy

LAUGH #8

The Amnesty Concerts/Danny Kaye/Britcoms
Down Under/Jasper Carrott/Phyllis Diller

LAUGH #9

Paul Hogan/The Honeymooners/Allan
Sherman/The Rag Trade/Beyond Our Ken

LAUGH #10

Sid James on TV/Shelley Berman/The Burkiss
Way/Flanders & Swann/1980s Aussie TV Com-
edy

LAUGH #11

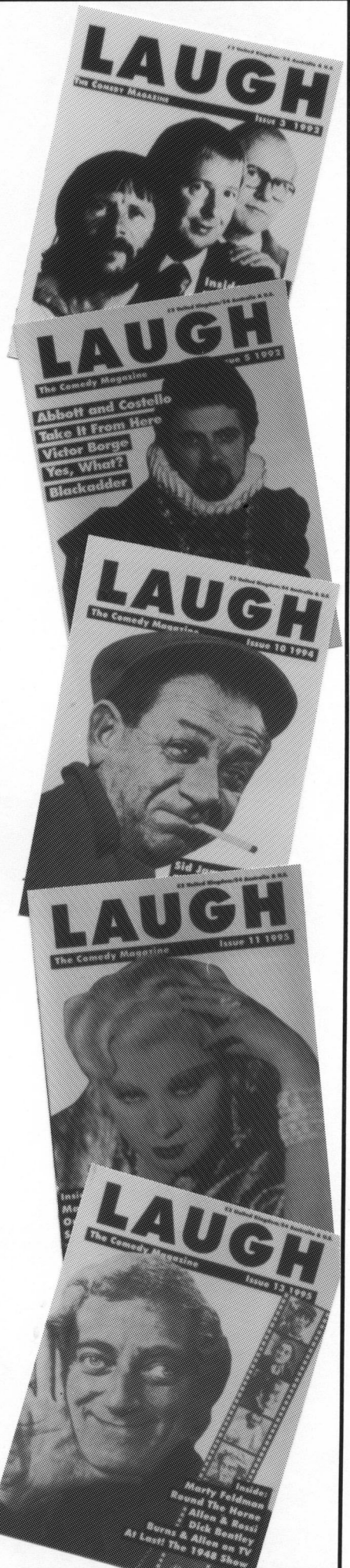
Mae West/Spike Milligan On TV/On The Buses/
The Mavis Bramston Show/"Weird Al" Yankovic/
Much-Binding-In-The-Marsh

LAUGH #12

Peter Cook/Burns & Allen/Rising Damp/My
Name's McGooley, What's Yours?/The Goon
Show On Record

LAUGH #13

Marty Feldman/Round The Horne/At Last! The
1948 Show/Burns & Allen 2/Dick Bentley/Allen
& Rossi





**"Maybe you don't believe
the six days to create the
world. Actually I thought
about it for five days and did
the whole job in one. I'm
really best under pressure."**

A
CARL
REINER
FILM

"Oh, God!"

...is it funny!



A JERRY WEINTRAUB PRODUCTION
GEORGE BURNS • JOHN DENVER • "OH, GOD"
TERI GARR • DONALD PLEASANCE
Based on the Novel by AVERY CORMAN • Screenplay by L...
Produced by JERRY WEINTRAUB • Directed by CARL REINER

PG PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED
Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 10

