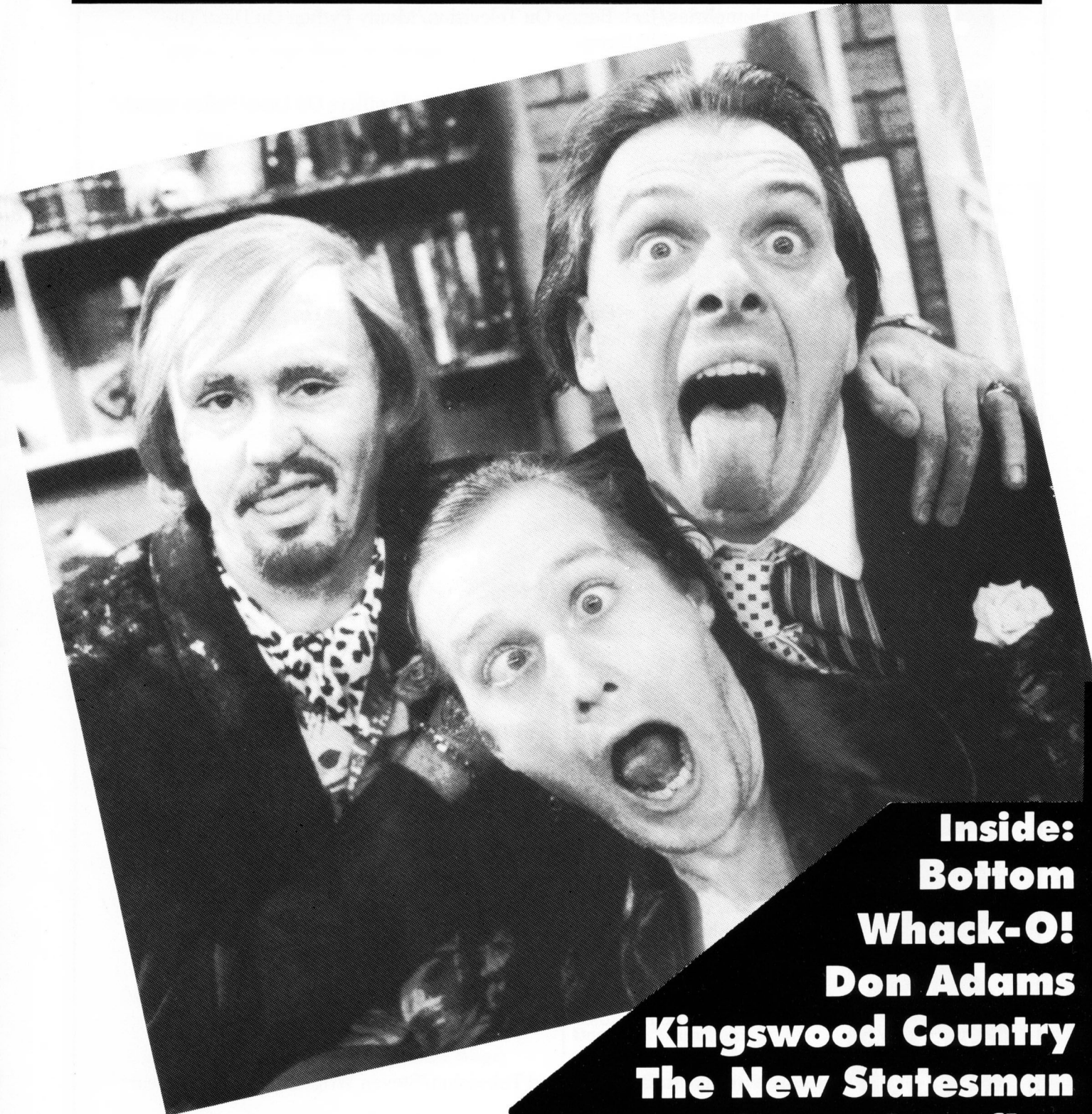


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LAUGH

The Comedy Magazine

Issue 15 1996



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Whack-O!
Don Adams
Kingswood Country
The New Statesman
Filthy Rich and Catflap
The Comic Strip Presents**

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

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George Burns/Rutland Weekend Television/Steven Wright/The Naked Vicar Show/Life With The Lyons

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RIK MAYALL and ADRIAN EDMONDSON

by John Papadatos

IN the early 1980s, a new breed of comedians emerged in Britain to become so popular that they soon overtook their traditional "club-type" and Oxbridge predecessors. They were given the label "alternative" but quickly outgrew the underground standup comic scene and eventually became mainstream successes.

As a group they were loud and irreverent. Rik Mayall, Alexei Sayle, Adrian Edmondson, Nigel Planer, Ben Elton, Jennifer Saunders and Dawn French have now become household names. They all appeared at London's new Comedy Store which opened in 1979. Not long after, the male members of that group became famous through a show that epitomised the new wave comedy movement.

The Young Ones exploded the conventions of the traditional situation comedy, and for the first time displayed to a national audience the characters that the performers had developed in their standup routines.

The series (written by Elton, Mayall and Lise Mayer) starred Mayall as the "right on" sociology student and lefty poet Rick, Planer as Neil the depressed hippy, Edmondson as the violent heavy metal medical student Vivian and Alexei Sayle in a series of cameo roles. Actor Chris Ryan joined the group to play Mike the cool person.

Initially seen as a cult favourite, **The Young Ones** has now come to be regarded a comedy classic. There were a total of twelve episodes made as two series (in 1982 and 1984) before the team decided to move on (see LAUGH #1 for an episode guide to the show).

The long term success of **The Young Ones** has in some cases obscured the other work by the programme's participants, much of it valid and funny television. Their most important project has been the continuing series (and occasional motion pictures) of The Comic Strip group, lead and strongly influenced by another graduate of The Comedy Store, Peter Richardson.

Richardson was initially teamed with Nigel Planer in the double-act *The Outer Limits* (alongside the Mayall and Edmondson team 20th Century Coyote). While trying to stage a play in association with theatrical producer Michael White, he came across the Boulevard Theatre and in October 1980 the venue reopened as The Comic Strip. With Alexei Sayle as compere, the performing team consisted of Mayall and Edmondson, Planer and Richardson, Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders and guest, Arnold Brown. The show ran until the following July before going on tour. Success at the venue resulted in Mayall, Planer, Sayle and Keith Allen appearing on two BBC2 specials titled *Boom, Boom, Out Go The Lights!* (screened on October 14 1980 and May 5 1981). In early 1982, they travelled to Australia but being relatively unknown only enjoyed limited success.

Records

The Comic Strip

Springtime LP HAHA 6001 (1981)

Introduction (Sayle)/Commercials + Lenny Flowers (The Outer Limits)/Rik's Poems - First Attempt (20th Century Coyote)/Alternative Childhood (Sayle)/Why Not? (Brown)/Page 3 Girls (The Outer Limits)/Rik's Poems - Second Attempt (20th Century Coyote)/Break (Sayle)/The Cabaret Biz (The Outer Limits)/Some Jokes (Sayle)/Psychodrama (French & Saunders)/Neil At Wembley (The Outer Limits)/Dayjob (Sayle)/I'm Evil + The Dangerous Brothers (20th Century Coyote)/Stream Of Tastelessness (Sayle)

Fundamental Frolics

B.B.C. LP REB 435 (1981)

Introduction by Alexei Sayle and a spot by 20th Century Coyote

SOON after, it was assumed Richardson would join his team members and take the role of Mike in the upcoming B.B.C. series **The Young Ones** but a disagreement with producer Paul Jackson over another venture saw the part recast.

Richardson and the Comic Strip group, however, also had plans for a series of one-off comedy programmes and approached Jeremy Isaacs, head of the new Channel Four television network. The idea was for the anthology type series to feature the various comedians taking the main roles in each production. Channel Four agreed and six 35-minute films were commissioned for C4's opening season of late 1982. As it happened, one programme, *An Evening With Eddie Monsoon*, was rejected due to the subject matter (though the character resurfaced in a later episode).

The Comic Strip Presents debuted on Channel Four's opening night (November 2 1982) with *Five Go Mad In Dorset*, an hilarious and wicked sendup of Enid Blyton's Famous Five children's books. Written by Richardson and Pete Richens, it added satirical realism to Blyton characters highlighting the elitism and racism.

The programme was so well received, it spawned a sequel a year later called *Five Go Mad On Mescaline* with the kids even more fascist and modern intrusions like 7Up (instead of ginger beer) creeping into their lives.

The other four episodes of **The Comic Strip Presents'** first season went out in January 1983 and each had a different approach and atmosphere, capturing the real flavour of their sendups. Unlike the slapstick, gag-a-minute **Young Ones**, the Channel Four offering was a character-based comedy show.

A good example was *The Beat Generation* which was made in black-and-white and parodied the trendy, washed-out people featured in early 1960s films. Also in that first season was *Bad News Tour*, tracing the filming of a very rough documentary about a very bad heavy metal group on tour. A nice touch was that Sandy Johnson, the episode's director, was seen as the director of the documentary.

The second series began in January 1984 with six programmes, highlights being a parody of spaghetti westerns called *A Fistful Of Traveller's Cheques* and *Eddie Monsoon - A Life*, a different take on the cancelled first season episode. Added to the regular group of players were Daniel Peacock, Robbie Coltrane and later Keith Allen (another alumnus of The Comedy Store).

Before the third **Comic Strip** season appeared, the team produced two theatrical motion pictures and three television specials. The first of the movies was *The Supergrass*, released in November 1985, being a blood-soaked encounter between a crime syndicate and a couple of loud-mouthed low lifes. *Eat The Rich* followed two years later, but this time the regulars took minor roles in support of lead actors Lanah Pellay, Jimmy Fagg, Ron Tarr and Noshier Powell in a storyline about a popular restaurant's unusual menu.

Of the three television specials, the most memorable was *The Bullshitters*, a parody of *The Professionals*, with Richardson and Allen as the star protagonists.

Season three finally appeared in 1988, beginning with *The Strike*, a look at what would happen if Hollywood made a blockbuster movie about the miner's strike of 1984-5 starring Al Pacino (Richardson) as Arthur Scargill. The Bad News band (from the first series) played a final concert in *More Bad News*, while Peter Cook made a memorable cameo in the title role of *Mr. Jolly Lives Next Door*. Another highlight was Alexei Sayle's *Didn't You Kill My Brother?*, a Brecht inspired film with strong political overtones.

Two years later **The Comic Strip Presents** deserted Channel Four for BBC2 and began their fourth series with a two-part story *South Atlantic Raiders* about how Britain won the Falklands War. A more surreal approach concluded the season with *Les Dogs*.

In 1992, the team created a third big-screen feature starring Robbie Coltrane, *The Pope Must Die* (retitled 'The Pope Must Diet' in the US!). On TV, another three specials appeared, one for the Red Nose Day fundraiser, a send up of English football hero Paul Gascoigne, and a Christmas offering where the turkey almost gets revenge.

The fifth (and currently last) season aired in 1993, the most notable programme being *Detectives On The Edge Of A Nervous Breakdown* which parodied not only *The Professionals*, but *The Sweeney*, *Jason King* and *Spender*.

The Comic Strip Presents has lasted over a decade, producing a body of work containing 38 television and feature films, with many memorable characters and ideas.

The Comic Strip Presents

Series 1: CH4 November 2 1982 and January 3 to 31 1983 (not Jan 10) (5 eps)

Five Go Mad In Dorset by Peter Richardson and Pete Richens with French, Saunders, Richardson, Edmondson, Peacock, Coltrane, Ronald Allen

The Famous Five are on another hair raising adventure as they try to find their Uncle Quentin and foil some criminals aided only by lashings of ginger beer.

War by Richardson and Richens with French, Peacock, Mayall, Planer, Edmondson, Richardson, Coltrane

England is under the occupation of the Soviet Union and amid the chaos a young married couple try to find each other.



The Beat Generation by Richardson and Richens with Richardson, Edmondson, French, Peacock, Planer, Mayall, Saunders, Keith Allen

A group of trendy beats spend a weekend at Desmond's house.

Bad News Tour by Adrian Edmondson with Edmondson, Planer, Richardson, Mayall, French, Saunders

A documentary crew films the Bad News group on the road.

Summer School by Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders with Planer, Mayall, Edmondson, Saunders, Coltrane, French, Richardson

A group of people sign up for an Iron-Age culture course.

Special: CH4 November 2 1983

Five Go Mad On Mescaline by Richardson and Richens with French, Saunders, Richardson, Edmondson, Peacock, Coltrane, Ronald Allen

Uncle Quentin has escaped from prison and there are strange things happening on Love Island.

Series 2: CH4 January 7 to February 11 1984 (6 episodes)

Dirty Movie by Adrian Edmondson and Rik Mayall with Mayall, Saunders, Edmondson, Richardson, Planer, Coltrane, French

The owner of the local cinema tries to show a porno film, under the pretence it's The Sound Of Muzak.

Susie by Richardson and Richens with French, Richardson, Planer, Edmondson, Coltrane, Saunders

Gary Dreadful buys a house in town and the promiscuous Susie falls for him.

A Fistful Of Traveller's Cheques by Mayall, Richardson and Richens with Mayall, Richardson, Keith Allen, Edmondson, French, Saunders, Planer

Two Englishmen dress as Mexican bandits whilst spending a holiday in a Spanish village.

Gino - Full Story And Pics by Richardson and Richens with Keith Allen, Coltrane, Saunders, Edmondson, Richardson, French, Mayall

Fugitive Gino meets Angie whilst on the run from the police.

Eddie Monsoon - A Life by Adrian Edmondson with Edmondson, Richardson, Saunders, French, Tony Bilbow A documentary about a failed South African TV host.

Slags by Jennifer Saunders

with French, Saunders, Richardson, Edmondson, Planer The Slags are out of prison and want to take back their street territory from the Hawaiians.

Special: CH4 November 3 1984

The Bullshitters by Richardson and Richens

Bonehead and Foyle try to save Jackson's abducted daughter.

Special: CH4 January 1 1986

Consuela by French and Saunders

with Saunders, Edmondson, French, Mayall, Richardson Jessica, newly married to John, goes to live in his large country estate where she meets the mysterious Consuela.

Special: CH4 January 2 1986

Private Enterprise by Adrian Edmondson

with Richardson, Mayall, Planer, Edmondson, French, Saunders

An ex-con van driver gets involved in the music industry.

Series 3: CH4 February 20 to March 26 1988 (6 episodes)

The Strike by Richardson and Richens

with Alexei Sayle, Planer, Coltrane, Keith Allen, French, Edmondson, Richardson, Saunders, Mayall Hollywood produces a blockbuster film about the 1984-5 miner's strike.

More Bad News by Adrian Edmondson

with Edmondson, Richardson, Planer, Mayall, Saunders, French

Bad News reforms for a new record, video and the chance to play at a huge heavy metal concert.

Mr. Jolly Lives Next Door by Mayall, Edmondson and Rowland Rivron

with Mayall, Edmondson, Richardson, Peter Cook, Nicholas Parsons

Two alcoholic escorts must fill in for a professional hitman and kill Nicholas Parsons.

The Yob by Keith Allen and Daniel Peacock

with Keith Allen, Edmondson, Richardson, Lia Williams, Mak Elliot, Gary Olson, Warren Clarke, Peter Wyngarde, UB40 A bizarre scientific experiment transforms a trendy music video director into a yob.

Didn't You Kill My Brother? by Alexei Sayle, Pauline Melville and David Stafford

Two gangster twins start a vicious feud over bicycles.

Funseekers by Nigel Planer and Doug Lucie

with Planer, Richardson, Mark Elliot

A 34-year-old goes on a sex-orientated 18-30s holiday.

Series 4: BBC2 February 1 to March 8 1990 (6 episodes)

South Atlantic Raiders (2 parts) by Richardson and Richens

with Saunders, Planer, French, Edmondson, Coltrane, Richardson, Lenny Henry, Derren Nesbitt

A short-wave radio love affair prevents a new invasion of the Falklands.

GLC by Richardson and Richens

with Coltrane, French, Edmondson, Saunders, Mayall, Richardson, Keith Allen, Derren Nesbitt

Hollywood films the confrontation between Ken Livingstone and Margaret Thatcher.

Oxford by Richardson and Richens

with Saunders, French, Lenny Henry, Ronald Allen, Richardson, Planer, Edmondson, Leslie Phillips

Two women studying Byron encounter a KGB assassin.

Spaghetti Hoops by Richardson and Richens

with Planer, Saunders, French, Richardson, Keith Allen, Alexei Sayle, Steve O'Donnel, Noshier Powell, Tim McInnerny The chairman of Banco Ambiguani flees to Britain after embezzling a fortune.

Les Dogs by Richardson and Richens

with Richardson, Edmondson, Keith Allen, Peacock, Alexei Sayle, Kate Bush, Miranda Richardson, Tim McInnerny Stumbling into a wedding reception, a man falls for the bride.

Special: BBC1 April 9 1992

Red Nose Of Courage by Richardson and Richens

An alternative version of how John Major came to power.

Special: BBC2 May 5 1992

The Crying Game by Keith Allen and Peter Richardson

with Keith Allen, Richardson, Planer, Antony Sher, Chris Hargreaves, Paul Moriarty

A northern England football player transfers to a London team.

Special: BBC2 December 24 1992

Wild Turkey by Richardson and Richens

with Ruby Wax, Paul Bartel, Phil Cornwell, Mike McShane, Richardson, Saunders, Gary Beadle

A large talking turkey takes a couple hostage.

Series 5: BBC2 April 22 to May 27 1993 (6 episodes)

Detectives On The Edge Of A Nervous Breakdown by Keith Allen and Peter Richardson

with Keith Allen, Richardson, Phil Cornwell, Jim Carter, Jim Broadbent

A group of 1970s sleuths are called in to solve the murder of the Gourmet Detective.

Space Virgins From Planet Sex by Richardson and Richens with Keith Allen, Richardson, Coltrane, Edmondson, French, Saunders, Miranda Richardson, Sara Stockbridge

James Blond investigates the arrival of female aliens who land on earth to breed with humans.

Queen Of The Wild Frontier by Richardson and Richens

with Juliet Wallace, Josie Lawrence, Jack Docherty, Gary Beadle, Alexei Sayle, Richardson, Lynsey Baxter

Two escaped prisoners arrive at an isolated farm.

Gregory - Diary Of A Nut Case by Richardson and Richens with Edmondson, Richardson, Planer, Keith Allen, Sara Stockbridge, Hugh Quarshie, Lucille Bromley

Silence Of The Lambs influences Gregory's video diary.

Demonella by Paul Bartel and Barry Dennen

with Coltrane, Saunders, Planer, Richardson, Edmondson, Miriam Margoyles, Sue Holland, Miranda Richardson, Paul Bartel, Keith Allen, Barry Dennen

A music publisher sells his soul to the devil to have a hit song.

Jealousy by Robbie Coltrane and Morag Fullarton

with Saunders, Coltrane, Richardson, Planer, Peter Capaldi, Miranda Richardson

John is insanely jealous of his wife Jane.

Feature Films

The Supergrass (1985) by Richardson and Richens with Edmondson, Saunders, French, Richardson, Coltrane, Planer, Peacock, Keith Allen, Ronald Allen, Alexei Sayle
When a young man tries to impress his girlfriend by pretending he's a drug smuggler, the police recruit him as an informer.

Eat The Rich (1987) by Richardson and Richens with Ronald Allen, Ron Tarr, Nosher Powell, Lanah Pellay, Fiona Richmond, Miranda Richardson, Derren Nesbitt, Coltrane, Edmondson, French, Mayall, Planer, Saunders, Peacock
When a sacked employee takes over an exclusive restaurant, they start serving the P.M. as one of the dishes.

The Pope Must Die (1990) by Richardson and Richens with Coltrane, Edmondson, Richardson, Herbert Lom
The papal mafia attempt to assassinate the newly-elected pope.

Book

The Comic Strip Presents ...

Methuen/Channel 4 (1983) paperback
series 1 scripts (plus *Back To Normal With Eddie Monsoon*)

Videos

Five Go Mad In Dorset/The Bullshitters/A Fistful Of Traveller's Cheques
Thorn/EMI

Five Go Mad In Dorset/Susie
Virgin VVD 229

Bad News Tour/A Fistful Of Traveller's Cheques
Virgin VVD 230, VVB 076

More Bad News
Virgin VVD 295

Mr. Jolly Lives Next Door
Palace PVC 4000A

Didn't You Kill My Brother?
Palace PVC 4001A

The Strike
Palace PVC 4002A

The Yob
Palace PVC 4003A

Funseekers
Palace PVC 4004A

Bad News/More Bad News
Polygram 0864183

Five Go Mad In Dorset/Five Go Mad On Mescaline
Polygram 0864203

A Fistful Of Traveller's Cheques/Gino
Polygram 0864803

The Bullshitters/The Yob
Polygram 0864823

Mr. Jolly Lives Next Door/Dirty Movie
Polygram 0864843

Susie/Consuela
Polygram 0875943

Kevin Turvey Investigates

IN 1981, B.B.C. producer Colin Gilbert was putting together **A Kick Up The Eighties**, a series somewhat akin to **The Frost Report** of the 1960s. Rik Mayall was approached to appear in a regular sketch pertaining to the subject being featured.

Mayall created the character of Kevin Turvey, a dull individual with anorak and Birmingham accent who talked directly to the camera on the particular topic under discussion (though his reports would invariably meander off on numerous tangents to include silly anecdotes). Talking about nothing was his forte, as Mayall explains ... "I wanted to do a character on the telly which would just waste television time and be incompetent".

The monologues were written by Mayall and Gilbert and appeared in a total of ten programmes (spread over two series). There was also a Kevin Turvey spoof documentary.

A Kick Up The Eighties

Series 1: BBC2 October to November 1981 (6 episodes)

1. *Death*

Kevin talks about catching a bus to visit Teresa Kelly

2. *Work*

Kevin talks about running out of milk and visiting Tesco's before finally having breakfast

3. *The Media*

Kevin talks about going to hospital after being attacked by the milkman

4. *Advice*

Kevin is given a time bomb

5. *Sex*

Kevin talks about becoming a prostitute to learn about sex

6. *Leisure*

Kevin talks about getting drunk and falling asleep in the park

Series 2: BBC2 January 3 to 24 1984 (4 episodes)

1. *Sex Again*

Kevin recreates a bank robbery and shoots a member of the audience

2. *Depression*

Kevin talks about his dead pet rat

3. *Nasty Little Sticky Things*

Kevin talks about having an ice cream

4. *The Supernatural*

Kevin pretends to be invisible

Video

Kevin Turvey Investigates

BBC Video BBC 4279 (1989) 44 minutes
features all ten segments

Disc

Kevin Turvey Investigates

B.B.C. CD ZBBC 1743

Death/Work/The Media/Leisure/Sex/Advice/Sex Again/Depression/Nasty Little Sticky Things/The Supernatural



Happy Families

FIRST shown in late 1985, **Happy Families** was Ben Elton's first proper solo writing credit, and ended up being one of his favourite works.

The six episodes followed Guy (Adrian Edmondson) in his search to find the four girls of the Fuddle family (all played by Jennifer Saunders) because their grandmother is dying (Saunders again).

The series was produced and directed by Paul Jackson for BBC Manchester and all the episodes were made on film. The four middle stories dealt with each of the Fuddle girls and were all filmed with a different style ... soap opera for Cassie, soft focus for Madeleine at her artistic community, Ealing comedy for the religious Joyce, and a documentary approach for Roxanne who is in prison.

In the final episode we discover that the grandmother is not dying but has an amazing secret to confide.

BBC1 October 17 to November 21 1985 (6 episodes)

#1 Granny Fuddle is dying and arranges for her four heirs to be located.

#2 Guy finds Cassie, a tv soap opera star in the U.S.

#3 Guy traces Madeleine to an artistic colony in France.

#4 Guy locates Joyce in a convent.

#5 Guy finds the last of the Fuddle girls, Roxanne, behind bars.

#6 The girls are reunited with Granny Fuddle, but is she really at death's door?

The Dangerous Brothers

RIK Mayall and Adrian Edmondson first met at Manchester University and have teamed up as a double act for most of their performing career. The characters of the Dangerous Brothers developed early in their partnership and progressed from their Comedy Store routines to television exposure on Channel 4's **Saturday Live**.

Mayall played Richard Dangerous, the presenter of the stunts, which Edmondson as Adrian (later Sir Adrian) Dangerous would perform. At the Comedy Store, because of the small space, the characters actually spent most of their time arguing rather than doing the feat promised. It was only when they appeared on **Saturday Live** (with the addition of camera trickery) that they actually performed the bizarre stunts.

Saturday Live was the brainchild of **Young Ones** producer Paul Jackson, who wanted a mixture of cabaret performers, music, sketches and pre-filmed items (like the Dangerous Brothers). The pilot, produced by London Weekend for Channel 4, aired on January 12th 1985 and was considered a success (despite Edmondson burning his eyebrows during the routine). The 10-part series (the first of three) went out a year later, produced by Jackson and Geoff Posner (of **Not The Nine O'Clock News** fame).

Saturday Live

Series 1: CH4 January 25 to March 29 1986 (10 episodes)

Mayall and Edmondson featured the following stunts:

Towering Inferno

Sir Adrian is set alight by Richard

Big Stunt

Sir Adrian is supposed to be fired from a cannon

Torture

Sir Adrian undergoes torture at the hands of Richard

Crocodile Snogging

Sir Adrian plays the crocodile while Richard does the snogging

Flying Zebra

Sir Adrian assumes the guise of a zebra

Exploding Politicians

Richard attempts to become the 41st President of the US

How To Get Off With A Lady

Sir Adrian tries to sleep with Clive (Jennifer Saunders)

Babysitting

The brothers destroy a house whilst minding an infant

Kinky Sex (apparently not broadcast)

Each brother tries to enjoy his fantasy without being noticed

Dangervision

The brothers ruin a Fry and Laurie sketch with an explosion

* The Dangerous Brothers were not featured in the follow-up seasons in 1987 and 1988

Video

The Dangerous Brothers Present World Of Danger

B.B.C. Video BBC 4700 (1991) 64 minutes

featuring the above ten sketches

Filthy Rich and Catflap

TOUTED as a successor to **The Young Ones**, with three cast members and a writer from the earlier show, **Filthy, Rich And Catflap** had difficulties from the beginning. Viewers felt disappointed and Ben Elton called it the most unhappy experience of his life.

The original idea was for Elton to share the writing duties with Rik Mayall but the latter considered his contribution so minimal he removed his name from the credit. The show was produced and directed by Paul Jackson, who also bore the brunt of substantial criticism for his work on the venture.

Filthy, Rich And Catflap revolved around showbiz failure Richy Rich (Mayall) and his attempts to revive his career. Helping him get a job were his minder Eddie Catflap (Adrian Edmondson) and his agent Ralph Filthy (Nigel Planer).

The programme had its good points, its funny gags and one-liners, but they just didn't gel into a successful series.

BBC2 January 7 to February 11 1987 (6 episodes)

#1 (with Barbara Windsor and Lee Cornes)

Richie kills four milkmen whilst fighting a paternity suit

#2 (with Chris Barrie, Harry Enfield, Stephen Fry, Gareth Hale and Hugh Laurie)

Richie is blackmailed by the Nolan Sisters so he turns Eddie into an artist to raise money.

#3

Richie is arrested for stealing food for a dinner party

#4 (with Mel Smith, Brian Croucher and Norman Pace)

After the B.B.C. steals Richie's new quiz concept, he wants his father dead so he can arrange sponsorship for the funeral.

#5 (with Andy de la Tour)

Richie and Eddie go on TVAM as gossip reporters.

#6 (with Midge Ure and John Bird)

Following the TVAM fracas, the court rules Richie must find a job outside the entertainment business so he decides to become an expose journalist.

Videos

Filthy, Rich And Catflap 1

B.B.C. Video BBCV 4991

Filthy, Rich And Catflap 2

B.B.C. Video BBCV 5271

The New Statesman

IN 1987, Rik Mayall became a Tory ... on television, at least. Made by Yorkshire Television, **The New Statesman** featured Rik as a selfish, lecherous, right wing M.P. who was only interested in one thing, himself. It was more cutting and cynical than **Yes Minister**, adding a dose of alternative comedy to the sophistication of the political sitcom.

Written by Lawrence Marks and Maurice Gran, it told of Alan B'Stard, newly elected with the largest majority in the House and his quest to use his position to make as much money as possible and have sex with as many women as he can. Most of the time he was quite successful.

Mayall's crass character was typical of much of his earlier work ... "All my roles have been about selfishness. I think

that selfish, vain people are very, very funny ... I wanted to play someone grown up, powerful, and a complete and utter bastard".

B'Stard's plans weren't always plain sailing with two people often deliberately or accidentally getting in his way. His most dangerous nemesis was, ironically, his wife Sarah (played by Marsha Fitalan) who stayed with him out of convenience to spend as much money and have as much sex as she could. Then there was Piers Fletcher-Dervish (Michael Troughton) an upper-class wit conservative of the old school who B'Stard manipulates in his political and business machinations. In a sense, Alan B'Stard was an extreme version of what Thatcherism stood for in the 1980s.

In the first season, plotlines had B'Stard arm the police, bankrupt a successful car company and even promote an anti-sex campaign, all for the sake of money. A regular throughout that series was the scheming financial adviser Norman Borman (played by Rowena Cooper) who in a bizarre twist, eventually turns into a woman to escape arrest.

Always controversial, the B'Stard character gained added notoriety when he turned up in a short segment for the 1988 Comic Relief telethon and tried to snog off Margaret Thatcher herself. The conservative tabloid press had a field day.

The second series of seven episodes was shown in early 1989, with much the same biting humour, but in the final episode there is a cliff-hanger ending when B'Stard gets his just desserts and is shot by an unknown assailant. A year later the special *Who Shot Alan B'Stard?* resolved the mystery.

In 1991, the third season had B'Stard ending up in a prison camp in Siberia, but he somehow made it back to England for the follow-up series in late 1992. He had lost everything: his money and his seat in Parliament. He recovers both through his usual deviousness, though this time he is in the European Parliament. By the last episode he has become Lord Protector, the most powerful man in Britain.

After four series the character was thought to have run its course but in December 1994 the B.B.C. presented a mock-interview with Alan B'Stard, which served as a final swansong.

The New Statesman was a programme that added a sardonic and vicious sharpness to political sitcoms at a time when the Conservative government was on a high.

Series 1: ITV September 13 to October 25 1987 (7 episodes)
Happiness Is A Warm Gun (with Peter Sallis and John Woodvine)

As his first parliamentary act, Alan plans to arm the police, at a huge personal profit.

Passport To Freedom

Sarah has inherited a million pounds of prestige car shares and Alan has to thwart her desire to divorce him.

Sex Is Wrong

Alan joins the anti-sex campaign.

Waste Not, Want Not (with Charles Gray)

Alan wants to dump nuclear waste down a local coal mine.

Friends Of St. James

Alan and Norman see great potential in setting up an off-shore bank on the island of St. James.

Three Line Whipping

Alan finds it necessary to dispose of a troublesome taxi-driver.

Baa Baa Black Sheep

Alan will lose his endorsement unless he can become popular in his constituency.

* *Comic Relief telethon*: BBC1 February 5 1988
Mayall, Celia Imrie and Steve Nallon appeared in a 15 minute segment *Alan B'Stard Closes Down The B.B.C.* where Alan wants Mrs. Thatcher to abolish the B.B.C. to improve Channel 4's ratings.

Series 2: ITV January 15 to February 26 1989 (7 episodes)
Fatal Extraction

Alan needs the help of a left wing council leader to obtain newly discovered oil in the Hackney Marshes.

Live From Westminster (with John Nettleton, Steve Nallon and Nicholas Parsons)

Alan finds fame from the televising of Parliament.

The Wapping Conspiracy

Alan sues a newspaper for libel over a sex scandal.

The Haltemprice Bunker (with Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie)

Alan starts a crusade to unmask Nazi war criminals.

California Here I Come

Alan and Piers get arrested while visiting Hollywood.

May The Best Man Win (with Celia Imrie)

Piers is getting married and Alan wants to murder the bride.

Piers Of The Realm (with Terence Alexander)

An ever-increasing number of people want to kill Alan.

* *Who Shot Alan B'Stard?*: ITV January 14 1990 (60 minute special)

(with Steve Nallon, Terence Alexander)

Alan's miraculous recovery enables the government to reintroduce the death penalty.

Series 3: ITV January 6 to February 10 1991 (6 episodes)

Labour Of Love

Alan is worried he is being usurped as the country's most right-wing MP.

The Party's Over

With the economy headed for catastrophe, the government wants to lose the next election.

Let Them Sniff Cake (with John Sessions)

Alan is being threatened by animal rights activists.

Keeping Mum

Alan's mother makes an unwelcome appearance.

Natural Selection

Alan must find a way to ensure his pre-selection.

Profit Of Boom

Alan gets involved in a plan to assassinate Russian leader Gorbachev.

Series 4: ITV November 22 to December 20 and December 26 1992 (6 episodes)

Back From The Mort

Alan returns from the prison camp and becomes a member of the European Parliament.

Speaking In Tongues (with Christopher Ryan)

Alan goes up against the translators.

*H*A*S*H*

Alan has to debate the cannabis legislation.

Heil And Farewell

Alan wants to make a killing from some old Nazi treasures.

A Bigger Splash

Alan heads for the war-torn Balkans where Robert Maxwell is still alive.

The Irresistible Rise Of Alan B'Stard

Alan initiates the New Patriotic Front to become Lord Protector of Britain in the new elections.

A. B'Stard Exposed: BBC1 December 30 1994 (30 minute special)

Alan reveals his 21st century manifesto to interviewer Brian Walden.

Books

The New Statesman by Anna Morgan

(Javelin paperback, 1987)

novelisation of all seven episodes from the first series

The B'Stard File by Rik Mayall

(David and Charles paperback, 1988)

The New Statesman by Laurence Marks and Maurice Gran

(Andre Deutsch paperback, 1992)

scripts from nine editions:

Passport To Freedom/The Friends Of St. James/Three-Line Whipping/Live From Westminster/The Haltemprice Bunker/Piers Of The Realm/Labour Of Love/The Party's Over/Natural Selection

Videos

Exclusive Relief

B.B.C. Video BBCV 4617 (special release)

features the 1988 Comic Relief segment, retitled *The New Statesman at Number 10*

Fatal Extraction/Live From Westminster/A Wapping Conspiracy

Castlevision CVI 1051

The Haltemprice Bunker

Castle Hendring CASH 5034

May The Best Man Win/Piers Of The Realm

Castle Hendring CASH 5085

Who Shot Alan B'Stard?

Castle Hendring CASH 5114, CVS 5032 (60 minutes)

Profit Of Boom

Castlevision CVI 1227

The New Statesman - Series 1

Castlevision CVI 1374 (2 tapes)

The New Statesman - Series 3

Castlevision CVI 1297 (2 tapes)

The New Statesman

Castlevision CVI 1451 (3 tapes)

The New Statesman - Series 4

Yorkshire TV/SGS YTVE 34 (2 tapes)

Cassette

The New Statesman

The Speaking Book Company Book 4 (double-cassette)

features soundtracks of the first four programmes

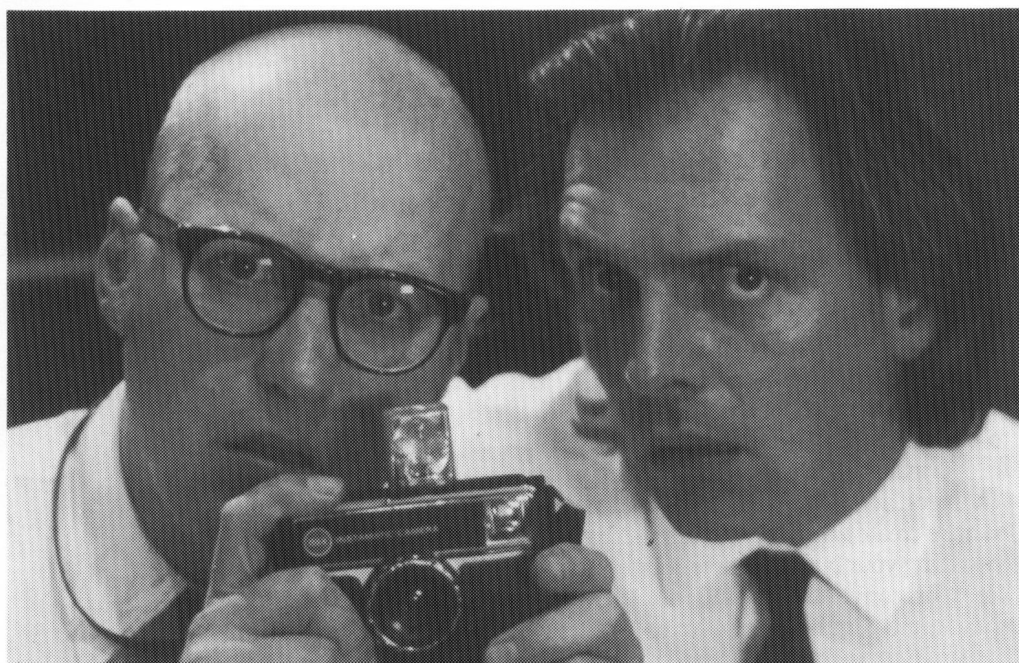
• In 1989 and 1990 Mayall starred in two series of *Grim Tales*, a collection of quarter-hour fairy stories. Acting as narrator from an outlandish animated chair, he added an anarchistic approach to the traditional children's classics.

Bottom

IN 1991, after three seasons of the somewhat mainstream *New Statesman*, Mayall returned to his anarchic comedy roots and rejoined Edmondson for a project they coscripted called **Bottom**.

What resulted was a blatant over-the-top portrayal of two of society's dregs ... a couple of losers firmly rooted at the bottom end of existence. With no pretence of subtlety, Richie Richard (Mayall) and Eddie Hitler (Edmondson) engage in loud verbal encounters and cartoonlike violence to achieve their short-term objectives, whether it be cheap thrills, money, or a shallow and meaningless sexual encounter.

Three seasons of the show have so far confronted television viewers (and video buyers) and pay testament to the popularity of the idea. Despite the usual complaints about taste and decency by the people who regularly complain about such matters as taste and decency, about the only glitch the programme has encountered came at the end of the second series.



The episode's *Out* featured much of the action taking place on Wimbledon Common, and the very week of transmission a real life attack took place at the same locale. As a knee-jerk reaction, the B.B.C. made a hurried decision not to screen the edition (which, strangely, was also omitted from the subsequent repeat run). The offending story is quite easily accessible on commercial video however.

In 1993 (between the second and third series), Mayall and Edmondson decided to take their success to the masses, and put together a stage version of the show. Fans flocked to see their heroes outgassing themselves with verbal and physical antics, free from the restraints imposed by television. It enjoyed enormous response, and yielded two video releases and an audio tape as well.

Whether Richie and Eddie will somehow survive the climactic scene at the end of their final television appearance remains to be seen, though recent rumours insist the performers have moved on to a project that would see their antagonist characterisations transferred to a desert isle setting, under a working title of **Hooligan's Island!**

Series 1: BBC2 September 17 to October 29 1991 (6 episodes)
Smells (with Lee Cornes)

In order to get lucky at the pub, Richie and Eddie buy cans of Feromone, 'the sex spray for inadequate men who find it impossible to attract women.'

Gas (with Brian Glover)

When the gasman comes to read the meter, Richie and Eddie are forced to assault him to give them time to disconnect the illegal gas line they have hooked up next door.

Contest

After Eddie has his dole cancelled, he tells Richie that he has bet his last ten pounds on the Miss World contest.

Apocalypse (with Helen Lederer)

A fairground gypsy informs Richie that he only has three days to live.

's Up (with John Wells)

The landlord has to rush to his mother's funeral and he leaves Richie and Eddie in charge of his grocery shop.

Accident (with Christopher Ryan)

It's Richie's birthday but he breaks his leg putting up decorations for the party.

Series 2: BBC2 October 1 to October 29 1992 (6 episodes)
Digger (with Helen Lederer)

Following a visit to a dating agency, Richie invites a foreign aristocrat back to his flat so he can pop the question.

Culture

Having had to sell the television to pay the rent, Richie and Eddie settle down for a night of culture.

Burglary

Richie and Eddie are terrified to discover a burglar downstairs in their drawing room.

Parade (with Rory Bremner, Lee Cornes, Andy De La Tour, Chris Langham, Robert Llewellyn and Christopher Ryan)

After making eight pounds each in a police line-up, Richie and Eddie go to the pub where the drunken bookie Tight-Mouthed Larry gives them a tip on a 100-1 horse.

Holy (with Christopher Ryan)

Richie intends spending Christmas with his friends in the traditional way, but a baby left on the doorstep changes his plans.

's Out (* not transmitted)

Richie and Eddie drunkenly bet Mad Ken Stalin fifty pounds that they can live rough in the country for a week.

Series 3: BBC2 January 6 to February 10 1995 (6 episodes)

Hole

Richie and Eddie spend the night stuck at the top of a ferris wheel.

Terror (with Christopher Ryan)

When Richie and Eddie discover that it is Hallowe'en, they head out trick or treating to make enough money to throw a party.

Break

Richie and Eddie book a holiday in Doncaster and Richie tries to lose weight so he can pick up some girls.

Dough (with Christopher Ryan and Lee Cornes)

Richie, Eddie, Spudgun and Hedgehog go to the pub to spend some of Eddie's forged money but master counterfeiter Skullcrusher Henderson wants five thousand pounds or he'll crush their skulls.

Finger (with Victor Spinetti)

Richie and Eddie steal Cannonball Taffy O'Jones' honeymoon tickets and masquerade as the happy couple at the hotel.

Carnival

During the annual Hammersmith riots Richie steals a BBC camera that contains a tape of the Prime Minister in a very sticky situation.

Books

Bottom - The Scripts by Adrian Edmondson and Rik Mayall

B.B.C. Books

contains scripts from series 1

More Bottom - The Scripts by Adrian Edmondson and Rik Mayall

B.B.C. Books

B.B.C. Books

contains scripts from series 2

Cassette

Bottom Live - The Stage Show

(Polygram 526 356 4)

Soundtrack of the Bottom Live video

Bottom Live - The Stage Show Vol. 2

(Polygram 532 186 4)

Soundtrack of the Big Number 2 Tour video

Videos

Bottom Smells

BBC Video BBC 48212 (1992) 89 minutes

Smells/Gas/Contest

Bottom Apocalypse

BBC Video BBC 48452 (1991) 88 minutes

Apocalypse/Bottom's Up/Accident

Bottom 2 - Digger

BBC Video BBC 49942 (1993) 87 minutes

Digger/Culture/Burglary

Bottom 2 - Parade

BBC Video BBC 51152 (1993) 86 minutes

Parade/Holy'S Out

Bottom Live - The Stage Show

Vision Video Limited 0882143 (1993) 101 minutes

Live from the Mayflower Theatre, Southampton

Bottom Live - The Big Number 2 Tour

Vision Video Limited 6358683 (1995) 110 minutes

Filmed during the 1995 sell-out Nationwide tour

Bottom 3 - Hole

BBC Video BBC 56502 (1995) 87 minutes

Hole/Terror/Break

Bottom 3 - Dough

BBC Video BBC (1995) 87 minutes

Dough/Finger/Carnival

- Rik Mayall has also starred in two series of **Rik Mayall Presents** for ITV (May 20 to June 3 1993 & January 29 to February 12 1995). Each of the productions sees him in a different dramatic role.

If You See God, Tell Him

EDMONDSON starred alongside Richard Briers and Imelda Staunton in a four-part black comedy written by David Renwick and Andrew Marshall (creators of **The Burkiss Way**). Edmondson and Staunton played the children of widower Briers, a wheelchair-bound television addict whose powers of retention are restricted to the duration of an average-sized TV commercial.

BBC1 November 11 to December 2 1993 (4x45-min episodes)

[The author wishes to thank Paul Balsillie and Peter Tatchell for their assistance in the preparation of this article]

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KINGSWOOD COUNTRY

by Matthew K. Sharp

IN Australia, the word “sitcom” is often considered to be synonymous with the word “abysmal”. Occasionally, though, a show comes along which proves this assumption wrong. One such programme was **Kingswood Country**.

The show was a spin-off from a series of sketches on **The Naked Vicar Show**, which had featured Ross Higgins as the father, Ted, Noeline Brown as Thel, and Kev Golsby as their son Craig. The writers, Gary Reilly and Tony Sattler, thought the idea strong enough to carry a half hour show, the Seven Network agreed, and a series went into production in late 1979. Only Ross Higgins made the transition to the new programme, retaining and expanding his role as the patriarch of the Bullpitt family.

The show centred on the household of 14 Wombat Crescent, in the middle of Sydney suburbia, where men are men and as such are judged by their cars. Hence Ted is a committed Holden man, and loves his Kingswood more than any other member of the family. He constantly rejected Craig’s attempts to borrow the car (“The Kingswood? You’re not taking the Kingswood! I’ve just shampooed the mudflaps/put Gladwrap on the number plates/vacuumed the fuel pump” and so forth). When poor fuel economy, due to the car having one and a half tonnes of accessories, forced Ted to consider getting rid of the Kingswood, he tried to donate it to the Holden museum. Its replacement was another Holden, a Commodore, which was continually stolen.

This car-centricity extended to the other characters. Ted’s brother Bob was a traitor to Australian Manhood by being, of all things, a Datsun dealer. (“But Teddy — you love me! I’m your brother.” — “I hate you. Hate hate spit vomit Catholic.”) Bruno, compounding his sins of (a) being, to use Ted’s terminology, a wog, and (b) stealing his daughter, was the devil incarnate by driving a purple Valiant; a car which seemed to maliciously drop oil in the driveway.

Ted’s second love were his greyhounds, Gay Akubra and Repco Lad, who were notable for being so engorged as to be unable to perform any activities even remotely greyhoundish. Ted took them for walks in the wheelbarrow, or occasionally in a trailer behind the car.

Which brings us to Ted’s wife, Thelma. At first glance Thel would seem to be mentally negligible, prone to not quite getting the point, and coming out with some delightfully strange observations (“Isn’t the doorbell up late?” was her response to the arrival of an evening visitor). But behind this facade of daffiness lay a brain which was astute enough; it just worked differently. On one occasion, when very upset, Thel tried to get drunk by eating Christmas cake; and she always had her revenge on Ted by taking the credit card out shopping (Bankcard shopping being a pastime quite distinct from real shopping). Thel’s other outlet was entering competitions; every phone call was answered as if it were someone ringing up to

offer her a prize, and she eventually won a Women’s Weekly round the world trip. This of course coincided with Judi Farr’s departure from the show after three series, and she would be sorely missed in the future.

Son Craig was a medical student at university, which to Ted meant (usually quite rightly) that he was randy little deviant always on the lookout for girls. Eventually Craig settled down with Wendy (played by Julieanne Newbould), but still frequented Wombat Crescent with bags of dirty washing. His other companion was his skeleton, Mrs Grace Sullivan, who was named after the popular soapie character who had been killed off to great public outcry. Craig constantly displayed scepticism about Ted’s lectures on how easy everything was nowadays (“When I was a boy we had to walk 10 miles to school carrying a horse...”).

Ted and Thel’s other offspring, Greta, had managed to escape the Bullpitt house by marrying Bruno. This move did, however, condemn them both to an endless succession of family dinners — grave events that would end in disaster as soon as the Monopoly or Scrabble board hit the table and Ted’s ignorance was displayed.

As evidenced above, **Kingswood Country** was a show that thrived on catchphrases, many of them Ted’s. Some other memorable ones include Ted’s generous offer of a beer (“Money on the fridge!”), Ted’s discovery of someone sitting in his chair: “Go-on go-on go-on. That’s my chair. I love my chair” (accompanied by a loving embrace of the aforementioned piece of furniture), and, most of all, the repartee when Ted got home from work. Thel would start with “How was your day dear?”. Ted’s eternal response being “Bloody shambles of course. Someone should blow (insert item here) up.” This would lead to a tale of the indignities heaped upon him during the day, usually involving the Kingswood and the kids from the Catholic school across the road from where the car was parked each morning. More than anyone or anything else, Ted’s nemesis was the band of “Mick midgets” and their leader, Sister Maria, whom he referred to with simplistic horror as The Nun.

Other fondly remembered icons from the series included Neville, the concrete aboriginal on the front lawn, which Ted can be seen washing in the titles of every episode; and of course the surname Bullpitt itself. The following dialogue usually ensued as Ted introduced himself: “Ted.... er...” “Bullpitt.” — “Oh, I thought you said Bull...” — “Yeah yeah, everyone says that.”

As the series progressed, slight changes were made to the cast. As mentioned, Judi Farr left, and was replaced by Sheila Kennelly who played Bruno’s mother Rosa, who moved in with Ted to look after him whilst Thel was away. Ted, as can be imagined, was less than impressed. More emphasis was placed on Bob and Merle Bullpitt, that unhappily married couple whose occasional appearance in earlier series had always been highlights. “Hi everybody, it’s me, Bobby Bullpitt, don’t swoon, I’m human” — “If you’re human then why do your



knuckles drag across the ground”, and so forth until fisticuffs are about to begin. Not sparkling dialogue exactly, but the beautiful snarling performances of Colin McEwan and Maggie Dence lifted it beyond the mere words. But whilst this worked as a cameo, their increased appearance in nearly every episode, and the subsequent lack of focus on Ted meant that the show began to degenerate, and ratings slid downward. Indeed, HSV7 Melbourne took only the first half of the last series, and the rest remained unseen until the show was strip-repeated later on.

Despite the lessening of quality in the later episodes, the series stands up well in repeats, and contains many wonderful moments, including the edition when Thel wins a cookery competition with her meatloaf. The prize is having Graham Kennedy (“The King” of early Australian TV) over for a meal. But what with one thing and another, Ted ends up substituting the meatloaf with dog food. Kennedy’s facial expressions are wondrous to behold as he tastes this less than appetising morsel, and legend has it that real dog food was used to ensure authenticity.

As early as 1980, when the first series of **Kingswood Country** was screening, Reilly and Sattler were pitching other ideas to the network. Two of these, **Daily At Dawn** and **Brass Monkeys** actually saw the light of day as series, whilst other ideas never made it past the pilot stage.

Daily At Dawn, which aired in early 1981, was set in the offices of a morning tabloid newspaper, and detailed the goings-on of the journalists therein. This time the format relied more on an ensemble cast, which seems to have spelt doom for the show. With a large number of players and no particular focus, none of the characters quickly endeared themselves to the public, and the programme was dropped halfway through the run, with the remainder left over until the non-ratings period over summer 1982/83. The entire series has been repeated several times in a mid-morning timeslot.

Brass Monkeys fared even worse than its predecessor. A number of pilots were made (one with the title **A Dozen Below Zero**), along with several changes of cast. A series was finally made in mid 1984, but it was not screened in Sydney. This is the reason many books either do not mention the programme, or incorrectly state that it never made it past the pilot stage. Melbourne screened half the episodes out of ratings in late 1984 before giving up on it. It was not until 1995 when the entire series was finally screened, albeit around midnight.

The setting was an Australian base in Antarctica, the title being a slang term for extreme cold. Again, the show had an ensemble cast, a format which proved troublesome. In addition the scripts were weak, with almost every joke repeated at least twice during the 13 episodes. Strong performances from Kev Golsby as the senile OIC, and Doug Scroope as the base cook who was constantly suspected of cooking penguins were not enough to save the show, and it has since (quite unfairly) acquired a reputation as being the nadir of Australian sitcoms. It may be poor, but not that poor.

A final pilot, **The Cop Show**, set in a police station, was recorded in mid 1985, but did not go to a series. This show marked the end of the partnership between Gary Reilly and Tony Sattler and of RS Productions. Reilly set up Gary Reilly Productions, which went on to produce the phenomenally long-running **Hey Dad..!**, as well as several other shows, whilst Sattler returned to advertising.

Like many other Australian sitcoms, **Kingswood Country** and its successors have been relegated to late-night or mid-morning repeat runs; timeslots seemingly chosen just to make sure that no-one can actually watch them. However, with the recent announcement that Ted Bullpitt is to be resurrected in the pilot episode of **Bullpitt** (which finds Ted living alone in a retirement village), and the possibility of a series in 1997, one of Australian TV’s most popular characters may be in for a long-awaited and well-deserved revival.

Kingswood Country

Ross Higgins (Ted Bullpitt); Judi Farr (Thelma Bullpitt) (*Series 1-3*); Peter Fisher (Craig Bullpitt); Laurel McGowan (Greta Bertolucci); Lex Marinos (Bruno Bertolucci); Sheila Kennelly (Rosa Bertolucci) (*Series 4-5*); Colin McEwan (Bob Bullpitt); Maggie Dence (Merle Bullpitt)

NB. Dates are given for both Melbourne (HSV7) and Sydney (ATN7), as these differ appreciably. The running order is the correct order, which neither city followed on the original run.

Series One: HSV7 January 20 to April 24 1980 (13 episodes)
ATN7 January 30 to April 2 and May 28 to June 11 1980

1. *The Thirty Year Itch*

Thel buys the book "The Joy Of Sex" to try and spice up the marriage after Ted forgets their anniversary.

2. *Guess Who's Coming For Dinner*

When Thel & Greta go to Melbourne for a wedding, Bruno moves in to look after Ted.

3. *Willow Talk*

The willow tree next door is cracking Ted's driveway and dropping leaves on the Kingswood, but it's Bob who provides a solution.

4. *My Son The Fairy*

Ted is worried when Craig begins to act strangely after landing a role in a student revue.

5. *Lest We Forget The Rissoles*

Ted's plans for an Anzac Day reunion are spoilt with the arrival of "Donger" Jackson.

6. *The Shares Of The Fisherman*

Thel has saved \$5000 to buy a Datsun, but Ted won't let her, and insists she invest it in something safe — like a mining company.

7. *Aerial Warfare*

When the Kingswood's aerial is broken off, Ted blames the kids at the Catholic School.

8. *Cold Finger*

Ted would rather buy an anti-theft device for the Kingswood than pay to get a tap fixed.

9. *Sprung Fever*

Craig invites his girlfriend over to stay the night when Ted and Thel go away for the weekend.

10. *The Importance Of Being Jim*

Ted and Bob go out for a night on the town when Bob & Merle break up and Thel is away in Brisbane.

11. *His Bach Is Worse Than His Bite*

Ted and Bruno argue over a piano bequeathed to them by Aunty Pearl.

12. *Just A Gigolo*

Ted suspects Thel of having an affair after overhearing her talking to a strange man.

13. *Car Wars*

After Thel has an accident in her Datsun, Bruno and Greta move in to look after Ted.

Series Two: ATN7 June 18 to September 24 1980

HSV7 August 7 to October 30 1980 (13 episodes)

14. *The Royal Visit*

Disaster strikes when Graham Kennedy comes to dinner to taste Thel's prize-winning meatloaf.

15. *Bye-Bye, Budgie*

Ted's anniversary gift to Greta and Bruno makes him a condemned man.

16. *The Big Sleeper*

Ted sets a trap after the house is ransacked during the night.

17. *Police Release Me*

Craig is arrested after a student demonstration, but Ted's attempt to clear the family name lands him in jail.

18. *Divorce Bullpitt Style*

Ted and Thel's marriage is jeopardised by their plan to save Bob and Merle's union.

19. *There's No Place Like Rome*

Ted initially refuses to go with Thel to Rome, but soon wishes he'd agreed.

20. *Boom Boom Bullpitt*

To pass the time while the house is quarantined, Ted rehearses an act for his Army reunion.

21. *The Miracle Of Wombat Crescent*

The detergent Ted is selling in a get-rich-quick scheme turns out to be stronger than anyone thought.

22. *Guess Who's Burning The Dinner?*

Ted makes a bet with Bob, with the winner taking the Kingswood.

23. *The Bard Of Wombat Crescent*

Ted enters a play-writing contest, with an epic telling the "true" story of his role in the fall of Adolf Hitler.

24. *Bury My Heart In Wombat Crescent*

Ted applies for a managerial position at head office in Melbourne, and considers swapping the Kingswood for a Ford Fairlane.

25. *Illegal Eagle*

Ted defends himself in court to fight a parking ticket.

26. *Till Yodelling Do Us Part*

Ted takes up marathon yodelling in his attempt to get into the Guinness Book of Records.

Series Three: ATN7 May 28 to October 22 1981

HSV7 June 30 to November 10 1981 (20 episodes)

27. *The Roots Of Bullpitt*

Thel discovers a dark secret while tracing the family tree.

28. *Sale Of The Century*

Escalating fuel costs force Ted to think about selling the Kingswood — if he can find a buyer.

29. *We're No Angels*

The bikies who live next door spoil Bruno's birthday party.

30. *The Love God Of Wombat Crescent*

Merle wants to have an affair with Ted to make Bob jealous.

31. *Not Tonight, Tweetie Pie*

Ted is tricked into seeing a marriage guidance councillor, and going to a fancy dress party as Julius Caesar's canary.

32. *Meet Sister Alibi*

The only thing that can save Ted from a tax audit is the dreaded nun from the local Catholic school.

33. *The Hair Of The Cat That Bit You*

Bruno and Ted have a moustache growing competition, and Thel finds a kitten.

34. *Uncle Jack Gets His Own Back*

Ted tries to con Bob into giving up his share of their late Uncle Jack's bequest, a mysterious box.

35. *That Old Back Magic*

Ted has a bad back, and Craig has a new girlfriend who just happens to be a physiotherapist.

36. *Lodger Protest*

Thel is in trouble with Ted and the police when she rents Craig's old room to an Asian student.

37. *Room For Rent*

Illness hits the Bullpitt family, and there's another guest in the home.

38. *An Affair To Remember*

Greta thinks Bruno is having an affair, so Ted employs Thel's cousin Reg to follow him.

39. *Wagers Of Fear*

Bob wants to be an actor after making a TV commercial, so Ted bets him he can't successfully impersonate someone else.

40. *Plaster Of Paris*

Thel wins a skateboard, which Ted promptly falls over and breaks his leg.

41. *Strike Me Catholic*

Ted gets desperate for money while on strike, so Bruno gets him a job selling hot dogs.

42. *Three Into Fur Won't Go*

When Bob leaves his girlfriend's fur coat lying around, both Thel and Merle think it belongs to them.

43. *Tree's Company*

Ted find the family is against him when he tries to get the council to remove a tree outside the house.

44. *Sweet And Sour Charity*

Ted tries not to get involved when Thel organises a school charity concert.

45. *Smoke Out At Wombat Crescent*

Bob's attempts to catch a possum ruin the annual family barbecue.

46. *Every Dog Has Its Pay*

Ted is in big trouble when he mislays the company bully's pay packet.

Series Four: ATN7 May 27 to November 11 1982

HSV7 August 8 to 14 November 1982 and February 10 to March 31 1983 (23 episodes)

47. *A Lode Of Old Bullpitt*

Ted is training to go prospecting for gold.

48. *Briefcase Encounter*

Ted applies for an executive position after attending a Dynamic Personality Course.

49. *Partying Is Such Sweet Sorrow*

Merle persuades Thel to leave Ted, so Bob throws a party to cheer him up.

50. *Whodunnit?*

(Synopsis unavailable)

51. *A Very Green Grocer*

Ted's involvement in a campaign against illegal immigration backfires on him.

52. *A Matter Of Will Power*

Ted is taught a lesson after he schemes to get some of rich Auntie Vi's money.

53. *Divorce Australian Style*

Bob finds everything is in Merle's name just after his divorce comes through, so he tries to marry her again.

54. *Hair Of The Blue Dog*

Ted's battle with a poodle has terrible consequences at the dentist.

55. *Wombat Madness*

Ted applies to join The Brotherhood Of Wombats to impress his boss and get a promotion.

56. *It's A Bird, It's A Plane, It's A Tile*

Ted tries to sue the American government after he is hit on the head by a falling Space Shuttle tile.

57. *The One That Didn't Get Away*

Bruno is worried that he may be forced to take Ted on his fishing trip.

58. *Licence To Thrill*

Ted finds his driver's licence expired over two years ago.

59. *With A Little Bitter Luck*

Ted and Bruno compete to get the starring role in a beer commercial.

60. *Bob And Merle And Ted And Neville*

Ted finds the bachelor life less enjoyable than he thought after Thel leaves on her trip to Europe.

61. *Presenting The Ted And Sparky Show*

The mad actor bloke from down the road gives Ted a ventriloquist's dummy.

62. *A Dog Called Horse*

Ted wins a boxer in a bet, but his plans for breeding it are ruined when he finds it's a human one.

63. *Teapot Of Gold*

Ted resorts to dirty tricks when the gambling bug hits the household.

64. *Sons And Datsuns*

When a stranger turns up claiming to be Ted's long lost son, he has the right family but the wrong brother.

65. *Man Of The Match*

Ted comes out of retirement to play for Craig's team in the Doctors and Nurses cricket match.

66. *Bagpipe Dreams*

The prospect of a huge inheritance from a Scottish relative gives Ted a turn for the Celtic.

67. *A Spelling Lesson*

Ted thinks he's going to die after being cursed by a gypsy.

68. *No Bed Of Rosa's*

Cousin Reg is looking for a wife and Ted thinks Rosa might be just right.

69. *Medium Rare*

A seance results in Ted thinking he has a clue to the location of Black Jack Cannon's treasure.

Series Five: ATN7 May 3 to September 13 1984 (20 episodes); HSV7 March 18 to May 13 and August 26 to September 2 1984 (11 episodes only).

70. *Episode Seventy*

Ted and Bob are involved in a holdup when they go to the bank to get a loan to start a doughnut business.

71. *Better Dead Than Red*

Ted drops red paint on his favourite chair and wins a free funeral.

72. *A Whole New Ball Game*

Ted is astoundingly competent when he takes over coaching the local basketball team.

73. *Birth Of A Salesman*

Ted wants to borrow \$500 from Bob, but in return has to make a TV commercial for Datsuns.

74. *Two And Two Is Fun*

When Ted is retrenched, Sister Maria gets him a job teaching at the Catholic school.

75. *The Night They Raided Bruno's*

Bruno isn't convinced he needs to buy a burglar alarm from Ted, so Ted and Reg try to break into Bruno's flat.

76. *Caught In The Act*

Ted is a last-minute replacement for Merle's new play.

77. *Ted Bullpitt, The Human Eel*

Ted discovers his skills have deserted him when he tries to demonstrate his old escapology act.

78. *Postman's Knock*

Is Rosa having an affair with the postman — or with Ted?

79. *First Lady Of Fashion*

A forged letter tricks Merle into designing clothes she thinks are for the Prime Minister's wife.

80. *Snow Way To Treat A Lady*

When Bob's plans for a snow weekend with his secretary are discovered, he has to take Merle, Ted and Rosa as well.

81. *Red Faced Brigade*

Ted and Bruno are kidnapped by international terrorists.

82. *Title unknown*

When Auntie Nola dies, Ted is left the incredibly stupid Enderby twins, Heathcliffe and Radcliffe.

83. *Title unknown*

Bob persuades Ted to look after a mad scientist who claims to have invented radar absorbing paint.

84. *Title unknown*

Ted sells his old stamp album to Bruno for \$50 before realising that one of the stamps may be valuable.

85. *Title unknown*

(Synopsis unavailable)

86. *Title unknown*

Bob offers Ted a job delivering pornographic videos, dressed as "Captain Video" and riding a motorbike.

87. *Title unknown*

Ted is training to go to the South Pole by sleeping in a tent in the back yard during winter.

88. *Title unknown*

Ted decides to sell the house so he can go on a solo round-the-world yacht race.

89. *Title unknown*

Bob is trying to sell his Datsun business, and to impress the buyer makes Ted and Greta pose as his butler and maid.

Daily At Dawn

Noelene Brown, Henri Szeps, Terry Bader, Paul Chubb, Robert Hughes, Julianne Newbould, Theo Stephens.

HSV7 February 5 to March 19 1981 and November 18 1982 to January 6 1983 (13 episodes)

1. *Whatever Happened To Gladys Dredgly?*

The staff of The Sun are held hostage by an escaped convict.

2. *The Russians Are Here! The Russians Are Here!*

Danny accidentally tells the KGB that Gil is hiding a defecting Russian dancer.

3. *Where There's Smoke There's Ducke*

Russell tries to give up smoking to win a bet with Lesley.

4. *Robert Mitchum Meets The Queen*

Kate is selected to meet the Queen, so Lesley tries to teach her some Royal etiquette.

5. *My Favourite Nightmares*

Insomnia disrupts Lesley's famed ability to dream the Melbourne Cup winner.

6. *Up The Famous Creek Without A Cyclone*

Phil interviews a country singer who loves his horse more than his wife.

7. *Days Of Wine And Tuckerbox*

The position of editor is hotly contested by Joe and Phil.

8. *Never Look A Gift Snake In The Mouth*

A snake is accidentally let loose in the office.

9. *Tax Free Prophet*

(Synopsis unavailable)

10. *It's My Party And I'll Flake If I Want To*

A large amount of alcohol flowing at Phil's birthday party spells trouble for everyone.

11. *The Spy Who Came Into The Sun*

Someone has been selling stories to the opposition, and Joe hires a detective to find out who the traitor is.

12. *A Grave Mistake*

A conman tricks Danny into buying a burial plot on Bondi Beach.

13. *Guess Who's Son's In A Whirlpool?*

Joe's son gets trapped inside a washing machine.

Brass Monkeys

Graeme Blundell (Noddy), Paul Chubb (Big-Eye), Kev Golsby (OIC Hugo Wintergreen), Ross Hohnen (Rex "The Ferret"), Margie McCrae (Dr Sally Newman), Colin McEwan (Nik), Doug Scroope (Cookie), Bill Young (Martin Litefoot).

HSV7 November 29 1984 to January 10 1985 (episodes 1-7); October 6 to 20 1994 (episodes 11-13); June 10 to 21 1995 (episodes 8-10) (13 episodes)

1. *Just What The Doctor Ordered*

The arrival of a female doctor at the base creates a horde of potential suitors.

2. *The Ring Of Confidence Trick*

Noddy & Big Eye steal all the toothpaste to trade with Nik for caviar.

3. *Pawn Night Down Under*

The French have challenged the Australians to a chess match.

4. *Krill Of My Dreams*

Martin thinks he's discovered a new species of giant krill.

5. *My Cut Runneth Over*

Noddy has appendicitis, the doctor's broken her arm and someone has to be found to operate.

6. *The Spy Who Stayed Down In The Cold*

Rex finds a Russian satellite outside the base and is convinced Nik is a spy.

7. *Do You Cookie, Take Whatsername?*

Cookie decides to marry a girl he thinks he may have got pregnant.

8. *Whose Turn On The Hot Seat?*

(Synopsis unavailable)

9. *Title unknown*

The lack of fresh vegetables is making the men so desperate that they consider eating Rex's putting green.

10. *Title unknown*

Rex uses hypnotism to make Nik impersonate Johnny Cash.

11. *Title unknown*

Rex plots to get rid of the OIC by having him declared mad.

12. *Title unknown*

Martin is charged with negligence after Noddy gets lost in a blizzard.

13. *The Cold Gold Rush*

Everyone is trying to act sick so they'll be sent home on a Russian ship.

DON ADAMS ON DISC

by Peter Tatchell



NEW Yorker Donald Yarmy first achieved fame in the 1950s as a standup comic doing material co-written by Bill Dana (progressing from a disastrous opening act for a touring Mae West production to fame on television tonight shows).

One of his routines parodied the suave William Powell screen detectives, and the distinctive voice characterisation proved so successful it would soon dominate his act and ultimately lead to worldwide mimicry.

By the end of the decade he'd transferred his best monologues to vinyl, and several years later recorded a followup disc playing a variety of colourful characters being quizzed by a probing reporter. The LP features Adams and an un-named offsider alternating in the straight man/comic roles, and the material holds up well over thirty years later. Unfortunately one of the tracks (poking fun at President John F. Kennedy's wartime exploits) had to be edited out following his assassination just a couple of months after the record's release.

Late 1963 also saw Bill Dana given his own tv sitcom (as bellhop Jose Jimenez) and he made sure his friend Don Adams was cast as bumbling hotel detective Byron Glick. The series only just survived into a second season, but for Adams it would prove a stepping stone to video immortality.

With the Bond-inspired spy boom infesting television by the mid-1960s, Mel Brooks decided the genre was ripe for lampooning, and signed Adams to star in his sitcom sendup **Get Smart**. Almost overnight, secret agent Maxwell Smart became a sensation and people everywhere were quoting his catchphrases and imitating his voice.

To capitalise on the programme's success, United Artists released an album of soundtrack extracts, linked by an ongoing commentary by Smart himself. They followed it up with a recording of one of Don Adams live performances at Las Vegas (which includes a couple of anecdotes about how the character's fame has affected his life).

Get Smart ran five seasons and spawned two movies (and an unsuccessful series revival two decades later), and for Adams proved the ultimate in type-casting. Despite appearing in two other sitcoms (**Partners** and **Check It Out**) and a game show (**Don Adams Screen Test**), Don Adams will forever be identified as Control agent #86.

Happily, in his peak years Don made wise investments and is content with his place as one of television's perennial favourites.

Don Adams

Signature LP SM 1010

Introduction + Russian Story + Discussion Of Sick Humor + TV Ideas/The Detective/Bengal Lancers/Mr. Football

Don Adams Meets The Roving Reporter

GNP Crescendo LP GNP 91/ST 90539, Vocalion VA 7009
Bank Robber/Movie Star/Hitler/News Roundup/Big Mouth-piece/Airline/P.T. Boat*/Mount Everest/Killer/Finkston Trio/Columbus/Football/Prison Break
(* deleted from later pressings)

The Movie Star/The News Round-Up/The Bank Robber
GNP Crescendo EP GNP 303X

The Detective

Roulette LP (S)R 25317

reissue of the Signature LP

Get Smart

United Artists LP UAL 3533, Raven LP RVLP 1005
Washington 4 - Indians 3/School Days/Satan Place/Cone Of Silence/Too Many Chiefs - Countersign/The Latest Devices/All In The Mind/The Incredible Harry Hoo/I'm Only Human/Kisses For KAOS/Plane Sequence/Too Many Chiefs - Hotel Sequence/Weekend Vampire/Sorry 'Bout That

Don Adams Live?

United Artists LP UAL 3604/UAS 6604 (1967)
Don Adams Live At The Sands (2 parts)

Non-Scheduled Airline/Golfers Are All Crazy
United Artists single UA 50197

Kill Me With Kindness/Heartaches Deep In Sorrow
Musicor single MU 1078

WHACK-O!

by Mark McKay

ON the face of it, it had all been done before. The memory stretches back to pioneer broadcaster and film star, Will Hay, who made an enormous impact as the seedy and disreputable principal of St. Michael's School for Boys. A decade or two later and we saw Alastair Sim go one further, appearing as both Headmaster and Headmistress on the screen (the latter, of course, of that infamous den of delinquents, St. Trinian's School for Girls).

Yet, in spite of all that had gone before, a 1950s television series presenting life behind the ivy-covered walls of Chiselbury public school, can rightly be regarded as unique. A delicate blend of subtlety and slapstick, the classroom had never been funnier.

The **Whack-O!** story begins in 1956 with writers Frank Muir and Denis Norden. Having written almost exclusively for radio for the past ten years (most significantly with **Take It From Here** and **Bedtime With Braden**), they were now eager to work for the new, burgeoning medium.

This led to a meeting between Head of Light Entertainment (or 'HOLE') for BBC-TV, Ronnie Waldman and **TIFH** star, Jimmy Edwards, during the course of which an offer of employment was put forward. Edwards accepted and threw in some of his own ideas. Essentially, he wanted to develop his music hall schoolmaster turn, which saw him, kitted in academic gown and mortarboard hat, addressing the audience as though they were his students.

As Professor James Edwards, conniving Headmaster of that most ignominious of boys' schools, Jim was in his element.

Indeed, he even brought some practical experience to the rôle. Before going up to Cambridge, where he was to pick up a Master of Arts for his troubles, Edwards joined the staff of a junior school in Kent for a term. Incredibly, he maintained that he was unable to command any discipline from the boys. Certainly the cane-wielding Head of Chiselbury gave no evidence of any shortcoming in this area. Pupils and teachers alike trembled upon entering Jim's study, appropriately nicknamed "the house of the swinging bamboo".

More terrified than most was the assistant Headmaster, Mr. Oliver Pettigrew, as portrayed by talented character actor, Arthur Howard. Muir and Norden decided the situation called for someone upon whom Jim could vent his spleen ("All comedians need somebody to bully!" as Edwards explained). When it came to casting, Frank remembered his old RAF entertainments officer during the war.



Arthur, brother of *Gone With The Wind* star, Leslie Howard, is a delight to watch, as his expressive face shows the constant turmoil in his soul. Torn between loyalty for his Headmaster and unwillingness to compromise his sense of decency and justice, he comes across as a dithering buffoon. "I may look a fool, but..." he would protest to his superior, before being cut short with "No buts about it, Pettigrew!"

Other regulars to the common room included senile octogenarian, Mr. Dinwiddie ("He's past it — we shall have to get another PT instructor"), incompetent geography master, Mr. Halliforth, and a succession of sexy cockney matrons, more occupied with tending to the needs of their employer than those of the boys in their care.

The plots frequently represented microcosms of military strategy. One could only admire the methods by which Edwards avoided attack on three flanks, often playing one off against

the others. His chief antagonists were the school governors, appalled by his scholastic record and wise to his tricks, parents, unimpressed by their sons' progress, dissident masters, disgruntled with their poverty-line salaries, and (perhaps the most intimidating of them all) the young terrors of the Lower Third, crafty beyond belief.

Yet "lucky Jim" usually came out on top, unhindered as he was by moral considerations or pangs of conscience. Any means to an end for the Professor: bribery, deceit, blackmail, abuse, flattery, violence or even pleading on bended knee were merely the weapons in his armoury, ready for use whenever his enemies threatened.

But what of Chiselbury itself? A visitor to this venerable seat of learning (so called because it has no standing) will first notice the surrounding high stone wall, designed to keep the undesirable elements in. A sign on the gate proclaims "Chiselbury School, for the sons of gentlefolk". With good reason too — at 110 guineas a term, not including extras (such as food, bedding and use of the bathroom), it seems only the nobility can afford to send their sons here. Naturally, doors open instantly to school leavers — specifically those of the labour exchange and Pentonville.

The curriculum covers gambling, forgery, and the three 'r's — rumpus, riots and rebellion. But rest assured, the more conventional subjects are not neglected. The mathematics teacher is pleased to report that his class has come to grips with the metric system: "The boys have been putting feet into metres, Headmaster" — "Dear dear, as if I haven't got enough trouble with the gas company."

Most of the shows went out live, with stills of the school clock inserted to cover any scene or costume changes. Jim remembers Liz Fraser, playing matron, once entering the Headmaster's study four pages too early: "In a brilliant improvisation I said to her, 'Matron, you're far too early — get out!'" Supposedly, the audience were none the wiser.

Between the fourth and fifth seasons, production began on a feature-length film treatment, directed by Mario Zampi. Michael Pertwee penned an original screenplay, but a few familiar scenes from episodes *Top School*, *Exposure!* and *The Student Price* resurfaced. Not to mention a generous helping of Muir & Norden one-liners.

Choice moments include a simultaneous public beating of five boys, with the Head brandishing an obscenely long cane ("Once more into the breeches"), and Jim's loss of half a moustache in a close-range explosion ("Semi-de'tash'ed!"). Support was provided by Melvyn Hayes and Donald Hewlett (both better known today for *It Ain't Half Hot Mum*) and a very young Richard Briers. Released under the title *Bottoms Up!*, it has happily worn well and is still capable of giving the chuckle muscle a thorough work-out.

Shortly after the last television episodes were in the can, **Whack-O!** became the first TV sitcom to be recorded for sound only, a trend which has continued with **Steptoe & Son**, **The Likely Lads**, **Dad's Army**, **Yes Minister**, and more recently **One Foot In The Grave**. The original scripts were adapted by David Climie, and production was by Edward Taylor, later responsible for **The Men From The Ministry**.

No sooner had the series begun than, in a typical case of real life imitating art, a Chiselbury master found himself doing 'bird'! Amazingly, it was the meek Mr. Pettigrew, who, although billed in *Radio Times*, was unable to attend recordings whilst he was detained at Her Majesty's pleasure!

Widower Arthur Howard stood trial for importuning (or more precisely "cottaging", the street term for frequenting public toilets with homosexual intent) on June 2 1961, with Muir and Norden accepted as sureties. A fine of £25 was imposed. The scandal clearly worried the BBC, and consequently he never returned to **Whack-O!**. His place was taken by Taylor-discovery Roddy Maude-Roxby, fortunately quite wonderful as the adenoidal Aubrey Potter.

In 1971, Chiselbury returned to TV, but now in colour and making the most of modern studio technology. The dust was blown off thirteen old scripts, which were performed by a new cast for transmission in an early evening timeslot. Asked how difficult it was to get back into the rôle, Jimmy confided that "to play this frightful character is no effort at all."

Tragically, it appears that **Whack-O!** is destined to be remembered only in audio form. Only two original black and white episodes remain in the BBC vaults, together with one edition from the 1970s revivals. We live in hope that others will come to light, but in the meantime, retribution is called for. BBC archivists, report to Jim's study for a whacking!

Episode Guide

Television

Titles for series 7 are taken from the script cover pages. In addition, titles were supplied for the 17 shows from series 5, 6 & 7 (all except 6/6) issued for overseas use. Other titles given are unofficial.

Starring Jimmy Edwards (*Professor James Edwards*), Arthur Howard (*Mr. Oliver Pettigrew*), Edwin Apps (*Mr. Halliforth*) (from series 3)

Series 1

BBC, Thursdays 7.30pm (1), 8.00pm (2-5), 7.45pm (6).
Fortnightly, 4 October to 13 December 1956 (6×30mins)

1/1 4.10.56[†]

1/2 18.10.56 **Top School**

(based on final sketch from *Take It From Here* 9/17 [31.1.56])
Forced to demonstrate scholastic achievement, the Headmaster decides to enter Chiselbury in a radio school quiz programme. To ensure a win, masters are dressed as boys and the answers are relayed up to the cricket scoreboard.

1/3 1.11.56 **The French Mistress**

A sexy Latin mistress from Paris on a temporary Anglo-French teachers' exchange, has boys and masters alike fluttering around her 'like a lot of old bees round a young honey'. Jim decides this can't go on, and chooses one lucky member of staff to spend the evening with Mam'selle.

1/4 15.11.56[†]

1/5 29.11.56 **The Student Prince**

A distinguished visitor, Prince Gopal of Jakari, turns out to be an 11 year old boy wishing to continue his education at Chiselbury. Chaos breaks out when the VIP student does a bunk just as Mr. Burgess of the Foreign Office is due to visit.

1/6 13.12.56 **The Book Prizes**

When Lady Uppingham withdraws from the book prize-giving ceremony, Jim has to manage with only 17 dust jackets and one spicily confiscated novel, *Piccadilly Gun Moll*.

Series 2

BBC, Tuesdays 7.30pm.

Weekly, 1 October to 3 December 1957 (10×30mins)

2/1 1.10.57 **The TV Set**

Brigadier Taplow wants to see the new TV he has donated to the school, unaware that it is no longer in a working condition. The staff and students are forced to create their own broadcast, projected into the empty TV case via a giant periscope.

2/2 8.10.57 **The Girl**

Professor Edwards awaits the arrival of Harry Littlewood, son of the British Consul-General to Fernando Po. But when young Harry turns out to be a 'Harriet', a deception must be staged, with Pettigrew playing the Consul-General's wife.

2/3 15.10.57 **Jim's Attempt To Win Respect**

Following a spate of schoolboy pranks, the school governor warns the Head that he must earn the boys' admiration. Jim decides to be seen saving the school trophies from a dangerous, armed burglar (Pettigrew).

2/4 22.10.57 **The Marchioness**

When Jim hears Dr. Sopwith of Melchester is to meet a new prospective parent, the Marchioness of Retford, he ensures that Chiselbury will take on her 13 year old son instead. However the Marchioness insists on a married Headmaster, and a suitable woman cannot be found.

2/5 29.10.57 **The £25 Outing Money**

(based on The Glums from *Take It From Here* 10/12 [20.3.57])

The Headmaster finds himself needing to replace the Lower Third's outing money, which he has borrowed to purchase a Ph.D. gown and degree. Suddenly hope is offered in the guise of an old schoolboy burglar and a falsified insurance claim.

2/6 5.11.57 **Pettigrew Takes Over** (unconfirmed)

The school governor is aghast when Wordsworth's *Daffodils* is judged the winner of the original poetry competition, and Edwards is sacked. Pettigrew is duly promoted, introducing new 'progressive education' policies.

2/7 12.11.57†

2/8 19.11.57†

2/9 26.11.57†

2/10 3.12.57 **The End-Of-Term Report** (unconfirmed)

On the last day of term, Jim has written a vindictive damning report. As a result, he falls victim to a campaign of psychological warfare, aimed at persuading him to produce a more favourable assessment.

† These storylines correspond to three unidentified episodes:

The School Council

In a sentimental mood on his birthday, the Professor is persuaded by the boys to set up a joint School Council.

The Grange School For Boys

'The Grange' next door has become a rival boys' school, but Prof. Edwards is determined it will not be granted a licence when the ministry inspector calls tomorrow. Dressed in *Nicholas Nickleby* costume from the school play, he poses as the Headmaster.

The Cricket Pavilion Fire

Jim is caught in the act of setting fire to the school, in an attempt to cover up a burnt-out new cricket pavilion. He tries to transfer the blame.

Series 3

BBC, Tuesdays 7.30pm.

Weekly, 23 September to 4 November 1958 (7×30mins)

3/1 23.9.58 **Exposure!**

A wealthy American, Mrs. Van Stuyvesant, enrolling her son Marvin for the new term, turns out to be a Sunday newspaper reporter, investigating corruption in phony private schools. Jim endeavours to prevent the story from being published.

3/2 30.9.58 **This Is Your Life**

Guest star: Eamonn Andrews (*as himself*)

Unable to produce Pettigrew's back-pay enabling him to visit his elderly aunt in Australia, Edwards offers to bring her to England instead. The plan is to encourage the BBC to feature his assistant as the subject on *This Is Your Life*. A fictitious Pettigrew story is concocted, highlighting daring sea rescues and heroic action with the Indian army.

3/3 7.10.58 **The New Matron**

The masters have to take on all the domestic duties following matron's departure. When Mr. Lumley sees the appalling condition of his son, he insists that a replacement be found. His choice is a dictatorial battleaxe, so Jim dreams up a bogus illness to force her resignation.

3/4 14.10.58 **The Burglary***

When the cash box from a £500 laundry robbery is found in the school grounds, Prof. Edwards suspects Lumley and Taplow, and the boys suspect their Headmaster. Then the real burglars return...

3/5 21.10.58 **The Boxing Championship**

Mr. Lumley wants to see his son achieving something, so Jim decides A. J. Lumley should win a boxing championship. The boy is initially reluctant, until he falls in love with Deirdre at mixed ballroom dancing classes.

3/6 28.10.58 **The Whacking Machine**

With his flogging arm in a sling after a football 'accident', the Headmaster is at the mercy of schoolboy pranks. That is, until he introduces a caning machine, dubbed the 'TERRA'. Is Chiselbury about to enter a 'golden age of obedience'?

3/7 4.11.58 **The Popularity Ballot**

An old boy has left £100 to be awarded to the most popular school personality, as decided by ballot. Jim is determined to win, so he organises a publicity stunt. Our hero will overpower a maniacal Pettigrew, who is threatening to blow up the school.



SP 25.12.58 **Christmas Night With The Stars***

Featured a *Whack-O!* segment.



Series 4

BBC, Tuesdays 7.30pm.

Weekly, 12 May to 16 June 1959 (6×30mins)

4/1 12.5.59 **The Russian Visitor**

In preparation for a visit by the Russian Underminister of Culture, the Headmaster orders in various exhibits from the Victoria & Albert museum, hoping to pass them off as the pupils' handiwork. Meanwhile, a booby-trapped bottle of whisky almost starts World War III!

4/2 19.5.59 **The Factory**

The Head is told he is eight years in arrears with the rent for the school playing fields, and that consequently the land has been sold for industrial development. With his protests falling on deaf ears, Jim impersonates the proposed factory owner in a bid to enlist support from the villagers.

4/3 26.5.59 **The Upjohn Statue**

In need of money to settle outstanding bills, Jim decides to make use of an unwanted Greek statue. He sends out letters requesting donations for the purchase of a memorial to spurious old boy, Samuel Upjohn.

4/4 2.6.59 **The Fête**

Keen to once again host the annual village fête, Prof. Edwards promises a performance of the Chiselbury floral dance, conducted by Mr. Halliforth. When the boys discover they will be dressing up as flowers, a sit-down strike is called.

4/5 9.6.59 **Mr. Phipps' Bet**

Charles Phipps' father wagers £50 that the Headmaster cannot outwit his son within a month. Jim arranges a public flogging for Phipps, until he finds something worth more to him than money — the perfect wife.

4/6 16.6.59 **The Cross-Country Cup**

Jim pays his staff using the money given to him for the purchase of a sports day trophy. A cup is ordered on approval from the jewellers, with the Head relying on his champion to win the race. But hopes are not high as Mr. Pettigrew dons his running togs.

Series 5

BBC, Tuesdays 7.30pm.

Weekly, 10 November to 15 December 1959 (6×30mins)

5/1 10.11.59 **The New Post**

When Jim learns that the Americans have taken over a local airfield and a Headmaster is needed to teach their children, he offers his services. Unfortunately, his Chiselbury contract can't be broken unless he is dismissed for gross moral turpitude.

5/2 17.11.59 **Task Master**

Crombie overhears a conversation about a schoolboy taking his teacher to court for excessive cruelty. After receiving six of the best, he too brings his case before a magistrate, alleging that Prof. Edwards administered 347 whacks!

5/3 24.11.59 **The Inspector's Visit**

Jim allows his boys to become guinea pigs for St. Tallulah's girls' cookery class, believing it will become useful as a threat. When the meal turns into a success, the threat becomes an incentive for hard work before the inspector's visit.

5/4 1.12.59 **The Empty Cash Box**

The governor's chartered accountant nephew, examining the accounts, finds a cash box with £30 missing. To replace the money, Prof. Edwards takes over Crombie and Potter's insurance scheme against whacking.

5/5 8.12.59 **Madison Avenue**

Jim attempts to fund an advertising campaign for new pupils. A commercial is filmed, but must be scrapped when the son of a BBC governor is sent to Chiselbury.

5/6 15.12.59 **The Recording**

Guest star: Vera Lynn (*as herself*)

Pettigrew has promised Mr. Dinwiddie a cottage for his long service present, and the Headmaster decides a hit tune for the school will bring in the loot. Vera Lynn is persuaded to come and sing *The Chiselbury Boating Song* at Dinwiddie's bedside, unaware that her performance is being recorded!

SP 25.12.59 **Christmas Night With The Stars**

Featured a *Whack-O!* segment.

Series 6

BBC, Fridays 8.30pm.

Weekly, 13 May to 17 June 1960 (6×30mins)

6/1 13.5.60 **The New Uniform**

When Jim hears the boys' detested new Eton suits have been stolen in a burglary, he smells a rat. Then the masters' clothes are also pilfered, with the village ladies arriving any minute to hear a recital by the musical Moussaka Ensemble.

6/2 20.5.60 **The Quiz Game**

Featuring Jerry Desmond (*Quiz-Master*)

An old boy now in commercial TV offers the Headmaster an appearance on the *Break The Bank* quiz show, with questions supplied beforehand. Jim chooses maths as his subject, relying on his top pupil to come up with the answers.

6/3 27.5.60 **The Dismissal**

A photo of a naked lady is found in the school magazine under the heading 'Proposed new addition to hobbies room', and Edwards is sacked! Mr. Foster takes over as Head, but, determined to clear his name, Jim stays on — as a schoolboy!

6/4 3.6.60 **The Old Lag**

Lady Westbury offers to halve Prof. Edward's rent if he helps her humanitarian cause by accepting an ex-Pentonville inmate on the staff. Mr. Tozer gains the respect of the boys, but Jim is adamant that he must go.

6/5 10.6.60 **The Missing Sculpture**

The Headmaster decides to accompany the boys on their form outing to the Tate Gallery. All his trepidations prove well founded when one pupil and a piece of sculpture disappear.

6/6 17.6.60 **The Variety Concert**

Guest star: Max Bygraves (*as himself*). Also featuring Barry Took (*Barry Hayman*)

As chief of entertainments, Jim books Max to perform at the Chiselbury village hall Grand Variety Concert.

Series 7

BBC, Tuesdays 7.30pm.

Weekly, 22 November to 27 December 1960 (6×30mins)

7/1 22.11.60 **Pools Win***

Seeing no benefit in his £38,000 pools win, Pettigrew plans to give it all to the Four-Footed Friends Fund. Disgusted, Jim urges him to first sample the fleshpots, so they head off for a night of wine, women and song at the flashy Ritz-Carlton.

7/2 29.11.60 **Mildred's Little Bit**

The lovesick geography master, Mr. Halliforth, announces his engagement to Mildred, daughter of the village tea shop proprietor. The Headmaster convinces him of the folly of such a union until he learns of a £8000 inheritance.

7/3 6.12.60 **The New Master (aka Minimum Wage)**

Mr. Halliforth departs and his Welsh replacement, Mr. Morgan, demands that the teachers' salaries are raised to regulation levels. To find the money, Jim plans to run adult evening classes, until he discovers a demand for English lessons for foreign domestics.

7/4 13.12.60 **Chiselbury Experiment**

Featuring Cliff Michelmore & Derek Hart (*as themselves*)
Jim decides to give a poor urchin free education at Chiselbury and ensures maximum publicity by appearing on the *Tonight* TV show. Suddenly he has two weeks to make a gentleman out of a young tough from the Dockland slums.

7/5 20.12.60 **Jim's Better Self**

The Head is preparing for a winter holiday in St. Moritz when the doctor diagnoses an infectious case of measles in the school. Jim upsets Pettigrew by refusing to authorise extra food for the quarantined boys, and so suffers a troubled sleep during which he is visited by his conscience.

7/6 27.12.60 **Jim Ahoy**

Visiting disciplinarian Admiral Sir Archibald Ballard is concerned about Chiselbury's 95% school leaver unemployment figures. He insists that before his next visit, Prof. Edwards appoint a vocational guidance master and find a position for the unemployable R. A. Hunter.

Series 8

Revival series of remakes

BBC1 (colour), Saturdays 5.00pm.

Weekly, 27 November 1971 to 26 February 1972 (not 25 December 1971) (13×30mins)

Starring Jimmy Edwards (*Professor Edwards*), Julian Orchard (*Pettigrew*), Peter Greene (*Halliforth*), Harold Bennett (*Dinwiddie*), Gary Warren (*Taplow*), Greg Smith (*Potter*)

8/1 27.11.71 **Exposure!**

8/2 4.12.71 **The New Uniform***

8/3 11.12.71 **The Inspector's Visit**

8/4 18.12.71 **The Quiz Game**

8/5 1.1.72 **The New Post**

8/6 8.1.72 **The School Council**

8/7 15.1.72 **The Whacking Machine**

8/8 22.1.72 **The Upjohn Statue**

8/9 29.1.72 **Pettigrew Takes Over**

8/10 5.2.72 **The Old Lag**

8/11 12.2.72 **Top School**

8/12 19.2.72 **The Recording**

Guest star: Clodagh Rodgers (*as herself*)

8/13 26.2.72 **The Popularity Ballot**

* these editions are held in the BBC Film Library

Film

Bottoms Up

Associated British 1960

Starring Jimmy Edwards (*Professor Jim Edwards*), Arthur Howard (*Pettigrew*), Sidney Tafler (*Sid Biggs*), Raymond Huntley (*Garrick-Jones*), Melvyn Hayes (*Cecil Biggs*), John Mitchell (*Wendover*)

With 12 weeks to produce an improvement in school affairs, Prof. Edwards hears that young Prince Hassid Ali of Giwak is planning to enrol in an English public school. Under pressure to accept his bookie's son at Chiselbury, Jim agrees, adding the proviso that Cecil Biggs, blacked-up, will pretend to be the incognito Prince.

Biggs takes advantage of his unpunishable position, and consequently loses favour with schoolboy ringleader, Wendover. This in turn leads to a full-scale military coup, with boys laying siege to the school. Meanwhile, it has been decided that the real Prince is to stay at Chiselbury.

Radio

Remakes of series 1 to 7 TV episodes

Starring Jimmy Edwards (*Professor James Edwards*), Roddy Maude-Roxby (*Mr. Aubrey Potter*), Frederick Treves (*Mr. Alfred Tennyson*), Edwin Apps (*Mr. Arnold Halliforth*) (series 2 & 3), June Whitfield (*Matron*), Roy Dotrice, Roger Shepherd (*Lumley*) (series 1 & 2), John Coxall (*Phipps* (series 2), *Fenner* (series 3))

Series 1

Light Programme, Tuesdays 8.00pm.

Weekly, 23 May to 3 October 1961 (20×30mins)

- 1/1 23.5.61 ?
 - 1/2 30.5.61 ?
 - 1/3 6.6.61 **The Grange School For Boys**
 - 1/4 13.6.61 **The French Mistress**
 - 1/5 20.6.61 **The Marchioness**
 - 1/6 27.6.61 **The Student Prince**
 - 1/7 4.7.61 **Potter Takes Over**
(based on **Pettigrew Takes Over**)
 - 1/8 11.7.61 **The £25 Outing Money**
 - 1/9 18.7.61 **The Boxing Championship**
 - 1/10 25.7.61 **The Inspector's Visit**
 - 1/11 1.8.61 **The Popularity Ballot**
 - 1/12 8.8.61 **Exposure!**
 - 1/13 15.8.61 **Task Master**
 - 1/14 22.8.61 **The Dismissal**
 - 1/15 29.8.61 **The Book Prizes**
 - 1/16 5.9.61 **The New Post**
 - 1/17 12.9.61 **The Cricket Pavilion Fire**
 - 1/18 19.9.61 **The Burglary**
 - 1/19 26.9.61 **This Is Your Life**
- Guest star: Eamonn Andrews (*as himself*)
- 1/20 3.10.61 **The End-Of-Term Report**

Series 2

Light Programme, Thursdays 8.00pm.

Weekly, 1 March to 17 May 1962 (12×30mins)

- 2/1 1.3.62 **The Russian Visitor**
 - 2/2 8.3.62 **Jim's Attempt To Win Respect**
 - 2/3 15.3.62 **The Recording**
- Guest star: Vera Lynn (*as herself*)
- 2/4 22.3.62 ?
 - 2/5 29.3.62 **Mr. Phipps' Bet**
 - 2/6 5.4.62 **The Factory**
 - 2/7 12.4.62 **Pools Win**
 - 2/8 19.4.62 **Chiselbury Experiment**
 - 2/9 26.4.62 **Mildred's Little Bit**
 - 2/10 3.5.62 **The New Master** (aka **Minimum Wage**)
 - 2/11 10.5.62 **The Old Lag**
 - 2/12 17.5.62 **The Cross-Country Cup**

Series 3

Light Programme, Mondays 9.00pm.

Weekly, 29 April to 22 July 1963 (13×30mins)

- 3/1 29.4.63 **Madison Avenue** (unconfirmed)
- 3/2 6.5.63 **The Quiz Game**
- 3/3 13.5.63 **The Girl**
- 3/4 20.5.63 **The Whacking Machine**
- 3/5 27.5.63 **The New Matron**
- 3/6 3.6.63 **Jim's Better Self**
- 3/7 10.6.63 **Top Of The Form** (based on **Top School**)
- 3/8 17.6.63 **The New Uniform**
- 3/9 24.6.63 **The Empty Cash Box**
- 3/10 1.7.63 **The Fête**
- 3/11 8.7.63 **The Upjohn Statue**
- 3/12 15.7.63 **The TV Set**
- 3/13 22.7.63 **Jim Ahoy**

Following **Whack-O!**, Jimmy Edwards starred in numerous television series over the next twenty years...

The Seven Faces Of Jim

BBC December 16 1961 to January 27 1962 (7 episodes)

Six More Faces Of Jim

BBC November 15 to December 20 1962 (6 episodes)

More Faces Of Jim

BBC June 28 to August 9 1963 (not July 12) (6 episodes)

Bold As Brass

BBC1 April 4 to June 13 1964 (6 fortnightly episodes)

I Object

BBC1 April 14 to June 16 1965 (10 episodes)

Mr. John Jorrocks

BBC2 July 23 to September 10 1966 (8 episodes)

The World Of Wodehouse: Blandings Castle

BBC1 February 24 to March 31 1967 (6 episodes)

The Auction Game

LWT August 4 to September 22 1968 (8 episodes)

The Fossett Saga

LWT January 10 to February 21 1969 (7 episodes)

The Galton And Simpson Comedy

LWT April 19 to May 24 1969 (6 episodes)

Edwards starred in #4: Don't Dilly Dally On The Way

Sir Yellow

Yorkshire July 13 to August 20 1973 (London) (6 episodes)

Bruce Forsyth's Big Night

LWT October 7 to November 18 1978 (not Nov 11) (6 Glums segments)

The Glums

LWT November 11 to December 30 1979 (8 episodes)

Does The Team Think?

Series 1: Thames January 14 to March 11 1982 (9 eps.)

Series 2: Thames May 17 to June 21 1983 (6 eps.)

with Will Rushton, Beryl Reid, Frankie Howerd, Tim Brooke-Taylor

