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LAUGH

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P. TATCHELL

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Morecambe and Wise

by Peter Tatchell

ERIC Morecambe and Ernie Wise were the most successful and best-loved double act in the history of British comedy. In their peak years of the 1970s their television shows achieved huge audiences and attracted the biggest show business names as guest stars. For their last B.B.C. Christmas special nearly half the country watched the two men who had become Royal favourites and national treasures.

Eric (born John Eric Bartholomew in 1926) and Ernie (born Ernest Wiseman six months earlier, in 1925) had come a long way since their humble early years in the north of England. They first met as performers in the stage production *Youth Takes A Bow* in 1940, with Eric's mother Sadie eventually taking charge of both youngsters and suggesting they form a double act. It lasted until Eric's death over forty years later.

Taking inspiration from their movie heroes Laurel and Hardy and the wordplays of the more recently successful Abbott and Costello, the duo soon featured in the West End production *Strike A New Note* and were able to witness the nightly routines of the legendary Sid Field and his straight man Jerry Desmonde. Field's "overnight success" with the show had taken years of hard work to achieve, and Morecambe and Wise would spend an equally long period climbing their way up the show business ladder.

After a short break for war service (Ernie in the Merchant Marine and Eric down the mines) the pair struggled to secure dates with touring shows and in variety theatres but by the early 1950s was popular enough to gain radio spots on *Variety Fanfare* and *Workers' Playtime*.

By 1953, their workload included engagements in pantomimes, summer seasons and their own radio series on the Northern Home Service, *You're Only Young Once*, which ran to three seasons and a number of episodes were rebroadcast nationally on the Light Programme. At the same time, the B.B.C. starred Morecambe And Wise in their first television series, *Running Wild*, but the venture was a huge disappointment and they retreated to radio work.

Commercial television began in Britain soon after and A.T.V. signed them as comedy support to Winifred Atwell in mid-1957, performing scripts by Johnny Speight. The future *Till Death Us Do Part* writer saw enormous potential in Eric and Ernie, and was probably the first to create material that concentrated on their characters.

A year later they were back on B.B.C. screens, making appearances on *Double Six*, before embarking on a successful six month tour of Australia.

Upon their return Eric and Ernie were shocked to note the change the coming of commercial television had caused to the variety stage, with theatres closing across the country as audiences stayed home to watch the electronic box in their living rooms. With their futures uncertain, they hired a new agent, Billy Marsh, whose drive and expertise soon had them booked for dozens of appearances on such shows as *Star Time*, *Saturday Spectacular* and *Sunday Night At The London Palladium*. The most tumultuous decade of their careers had begun and Morecambe And Wise were on the threshold of national stardom.



Initial approaches to Lew Grade for a series at A.T.V. were unsuccessful, while at the same time the B.B.C. appeared keen to sign the pair (and even had six scripts prepared). But in 1961 Grade suddenly changed his mind and agreed to sign them for a prime weekly timeslot. For their part, Eric and Ernie insisted the show engage the writers Sid Green and Dick Hills (who'd been recommended to them by Jimmy Jewel and Ben Warriss).

The first episode of *Two Of A Kind* (in October 1961) found the stars lost in a procession of sketches surrounded by army of support actors. Fearing a repeat of the *Running Wild* failure, Morecambe And Wise decided to take a stand but, in a moment of serendipity, Actors Equity suddenly went out on strike. The result was a much less cluttered presentation, with Eric and Ernie (who, as members of the Variety Artists' Federation, were still able to appear) squarely in the spotlight. There was even a touch of irony, with writers Sid and Dick forced to appear as bit players in some sketches. As the series progressed, audience figures increased and the two north country comics (after twenty years together) finally had a hit on their hands.

Each half hour edition of *Two Of A Kind* had a strong variety flavour, including a band number and a vocal spot to separate a couple of lengthy comedy routines, with shorter pieces at the opening and closing. By the second season, the following June, the show was moved to a regular Saturday evening timeslot where it stayed for all but its last A.T.V. season.

Two Of A Kind opened the door for Eric and Ernie to gain international stardom, to a degree. In February 1964 several seasons of the show began appearing on Australian television screens, with the A.B.C. eventually airing all episodes from series 2, 3 and 4. Later that year an enthusiastic Ed Sullivan was in the audience of their London Palladium season (in support of Bruce Forsyth) and signed them for appearances on his top-rated Sunday night C.B.S. series. Thus began a strenuous period of transatlantic flights which would continue until May 1968 (and a total of some 17 guest spots).

Morecambe And Wise's television popularity led to their 1964 movie debut in a big screen sendup of the James Bond phenomenon, *The Intelligence Men* (also known as *Spylarks*). Written by Hills and Green (who could also be seen in brief walk-ons), it was an enjoyable if unexceptional outing that made enough money to be followed by *That Riviera Touch* a couple of years later and *The Magnificent Two* in 1967.

After five increasingly successful seasons on A.T.V., Lew Grade capitalized on Eric and Ernie's ongoing exposure to the Americans (via *The Ed Sullivan Show*) by signing a deal with the U.S. ABC Network to screen their new season of one hour programmes which, as a result, would be made in colour. Rechristened *Piccadilly Palace* there, they were scheduled as the summer replacement for the *Hollywood Palace* timeslot, and aired several months before the ten shows could finally be seen by British viewers (where I.T.V. was still only able to transmit the recordings in black and white).

Though the American venture did not lead to a followup season, Eric and Ernie were keen to continue appearing in colour and when Lew Grade vetoed the idea, they signed with Britain's only channel then transmitting such programming ... BBC2. It was a momentous decision that would result in some of the finest television Britain had seen, but Eric would first have to survive a serious health crisis.

A fortnight after the season of eight half-hour shows was aired in late 1968, Eric suffered a serious heart attack driving home from a live performance near Leeds, and was lucky to reach a hospital in time. His recovery was slow and frustrating and for a time there was doubt whether the act would be able to continue. When doctors finally gave Eric the go ahead to return to work (to a great sigh of relief from Ernie and the B.B.C.) there was a further complication — contractual problems with scriptwriters Green and Hills had resulted in their signing an exclusive contract back at A.T.V. Their unlikely replacement, Eddie Braben, was best known for supplying one-liners in various Ken Dodd shows, but his contribution to the careers of Morecambe And Wise from that point on turned out to be monumental.

Far from merely supplying jokes for the team, Braben reshaped their public personas, replacing the previous comic and straight man roles with humorous character roles for Ernie as well as Eric. The little man with the short, fat, hairy legs was now portrayed as miserly, pompous and childlike whenever the subject of sex was involved. And he was now a writer of grammatically-incorrect plays ... a plethora of them. The addition of Braben and producer John Ammonds took Morecambe and Wise to the next level.

To lessen Eric's workload following the heart attack, the B.B.C. scheduled a season of only four 45-minute programmes to air on a fortnightly basis from late July 1969. As before, the format included a traditional variety mix of guest vocalists, a regular offering by Kenny Ball and His Jazzmen, a

handful of short blackouts (often involving the antics of a couple of monks) and lengthier pieces set in the living room or bedroom of the flat where they supposedly lived.

The highlight of that first programme was a "play what Ernie wrote" about King Arthur, with movie great Peter Cushing taking the lead role, and launching an ongoing saga in pursuit of payment for the appearance. Subsequent participants in those early Ernest Wise theatrical offerings included Juliet Mills and Edward Woodward. Also seen at the end of each programme was the ample figure of Janet Webb, who (for no apparent reason) suddenly burst forth on to centre stage waving and blowing kisses at the audience.

The series was an enormous success and the only downside to the team's comeback was that year's festive special, which was almost abandoned with both Eric and Ernie laid low with flu, leaving producers to stitch together a handful of pre-recorded segments and musical items by guest stars. In subsequent years *The Morecambe And Wise Christmas Show* would become essential viewing for half the nation and a ratings goliath, but that first venture was a travesty.

Despite being screened by Britain's third channel (which could not be received by large numbers of viewers), subsequent BBC1 repeats ensured Morecambe And Wise were not lost to those late-1960s audiences and as the new decade began their popularity increased enormously.

A dozen new episodes were shown throughout 1970 (in two fortnightly seasons) with notable guests including Fenella Fielding, Diane Cilento, Ian Carmichael and Richard Greene. There was also a special half hour edition entered for the prestigious Montreux festival and a Christmas offering. It was a remarkable turnaround. A heart attack and a change of writers had propelled Eric and Ernie to the top of British television.

The golden era of Morecambe And Wise was underway. The fourteen editions produced throughout 1971 included some of their best work. Guests included Flora Robson, Arthur Lowe (and cameo walk ons from the *Dad's Army* cast), Francis Matthews, Keith Michell, John Mills and Glenda Jackson as Cleopatra. And that Christmas saw Shirley Bassey in boots and Andre Previn conducting *Grieg's Piano Concerto*. It was also the year Janet Webb began thanking everyone for watching her little show and loving us all.

After twelve months out of the spotlight, the 1972 Christmas special brought back some favourite guest stars and featured a throwaway jibe about their friend Des O'Connor during a World War I sketch. It was the start of a celebrated feud that would last to the end of their career and include a memorable retaliation by Des on their 1975 Christmas Show. (The team had not produced a traditional festive programme in 1974, feeling they didn't have enough high quality material so a chat with Michael Parkinson was aired instead).

As the decade progressed Eric and Ernie began exploiting their musical talents more and more. Throughout their A.T.V. years they had performed the memorable *Boom-Oo-Yatta-Ta-Ta* (with Sid and Dick), a clever dance sendup of *Puttin' On The Ritz* and even *Grieg's Piano Concerto* (with Ernie as conductor). Their B.B.C. shows always ended with fairly straight renditions of ballads inspired by the Flanagan And Allen songbook like *Following You Around*, *Don't You Agree?*, *Just Around The Corner* and the song which would become their signature tune, *Bring Me Sunshine*. By the 1973 season, Ernest Maxin was creating occasional production numbers which sprinkled humorous bits amongst the song and dance routines.

Along with the historical sendups, famous guests and the sketches set in living room or bedroom of their flat, these musical offerings would soon become some of their most fondly remembered work.

By the end of 1975, Maxin had replaced Ammonds as the show's producer and the consequent increased musical content led to the classic pieces where they prepared breakfast to *The Stripper* and parodied *Singin' In The Rain*. Their Christmas editions of 1975 and 1976 also offered memorable versions of *The Liar Song* (with Diana Rigg) and Elton John trying in vain to teach Eric how to sing *Play A Simple Melody*.

Then, the incredibly popular festive edition of 1977, when an estimated 28 million people tuned in to see a chorus line of B.B.C. personalities and Penelope Keith awkwardly climbing down the scaffolding from an unfinished stairway. A daring conclusion to the show featured the unexpected return of Elton John for a vocal after the end credits had rolled.

Though unknown at the time, the careers of Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise had peaked with that final B.B.C. show. Weeks later, newspaper headlines announced the pair had signed with Thames Television and were headed back to I.T.V. A major factor in negotiations had been the desire by Eric and Ernie to return to the big screen, with Thames (unlike the B.B.C.) then producing movies as well as TV shows.

But the fates began working against the team. Writer Eddie Braben was not willing to move across with them and the duo's first two programmes (aired as one hour specials in late 1978) didn't capture the usual magic. Then, in early 1979, Eric suffered more life-threatening heart troubles and was out of action for the whole year, being barely able to take part in a predominantly talk programme with David Frost that Christmas. Their promised return to cinema screens was put on hold.

By the time he had recovered fully (a further six months later), both Eddie Braben and John Ammonds had been signed by Thames for the proposed series of half hour programmes. Disappointingly, these consisted of almost total reworkings of old B.B.C. sketches, with little new material being included.

Eric and Ernie did four seasons for Thames in as many years with original scripting taking second place to the tried and true "old favourites". At least most of the musical offerings were being done for the first time. Even their prestigious Christmas specials were not immune to the practice, and also fell victim to programming problems from the early 1980s.

With the lucrative commercial franchise for London being split between two companies, December the 25th fell outside the evenings covered by Thames from 1981 to 1983. Unwilling to allow their stars' annual ratings winner to be telecast on London Weekend's days of operation, it was no longer scheduled on Christmas Day.

The 1983 Christmas show was notable for including two particularly successful pieces written by their old scriptwriters, Sid Green and Dick Hills, amongst the inevitable updating of old Eddie Braben B.B.C. scripts. Sadly, it was the last programme Morecambe And Wise would ever present.

As 1984 commenced, Eric's health was once again causing concern and he was seriously considering devoting his talents to writing books (he'd already written a handful of novels). He was also unhappy at the lack of originality in their Thames shows and the disappointing quality of a telemovie called *Night Train To Murder* they had recently recorded.

On May 27th Eric took part (without Ernie) in an evening of reminiscences at a theatre in Tewkesbury as a favour to his

friend Stan Stennett. The show went well but as he walked off stage, he suddenly collapsed in the wings. Five hours later in hospital, Eric Morecambe died. The double act that the British public had taken to their hearts was no more.

Though Ernie continued performing (a nostalgic one-man tour of Australia, appearances in the West End musical *The Mystery Of Edwin Drood* and the longrunning farce *Run For Your Wife*, plus TV panel games and pantomimes) it could never be the same without his beloved partner. He retired after a series of strokes in the mid-1990s and died in 1999 (aged 73).

Thanks to the videotaped copies of nearly all of their television work since the 1960s, the magic of Eric Morecambe And Ernie Wise lives on.

Radio

Youth Must Have Its Swing

Home Service May 4 to June 15 1943

You're Only Young Once

Series 1: North of England Home Service November 9 1953 to January 14 1954

Series 2: North of England Home Service May 6 to June 24 1954

Series 3: North of England Home Service October 1 to December 17 1954

• five episodes were rebroadcast nationally on the Light Programme from July 20 to August 17 1954

with Pearl Carr, Kenneth Connor

The Show Goes On

Light Programme Thursdays 7-30pm March 31 to June 9 1955

The Morecambe And Wise Show

North of England Home Service October 19 to November 2 1955

Laughter Incorporated

Light Programme Mondays 8-00pm July 21 to September 22 1958

The Morecambe And Wise Show

Light Programme July 24 to August 28 1966

Morecambe And Wise Sing Flanagan And Allen

R2 Saturday 2-00pm December 25 1971 (40 min)

Eric And Ernie Play Morecambe And Wise

R4 Monday 12-00pm April 3 1972 (25 min)

Eric And Ernie's Hall Of Fame

R4 Thursday 1-45pm December 26 1974 (75 min)

(SECOND HALL OF FAME) R4 Friday 1-30pm December 25 1975 (75 min)

The Eric Morecambe And Ernie Wise Show

Series 1: R2 Sundays 2-00pm January 26 to March 2 1975

Series 2: R2 Sundays 2-00pm September 5 to October 10 1976

Series 3: R2 Sundays 2-00pm December 4 to 25 1977,

and Saturday 1-00pm March 25 1978, Monday 1-00pm May 1 1978

• a one hour compilation programme was aired on R2 at 10-00pm December 25 1979

Wise On The Wireless (Ernie only, after Eric's death)

Series 1: R2 Thursdays 10-00pm July 9 to August 13 1987

Series 2: R2 Thursdays 10-00pm July 28 to September 15 1988

with Janet Brown, Hugh Paddick, Jon Glover

Television

RUNNING WILD (BBC)

Wednesday 9-30pm fortnightly April 21 to June 30 1954 (6 x 30min)
with Alma Cogan, The Four In A Crowd, Ray Buckingham,
Hermione Harvey, Amanda Barrie

THE WINIFRED ATWELL SHOW (ATV)

Saturday 8-15pm April 21 to June 23 1956 (10 x 45 min)
script by Johnny Speight

DOUBLE SIX (BBC)

Sunday 9-30pm August 11 to September 8 1957 (5 x 30 min)
with Ted Lue

TWO OF A KIND / THE MORECAMBE & WISE SHOW (ATV)

with Sid Green, Dick Hills
script by Sid Green and Dick Hills

Series 1:

Thursday 8-00pm October 12 to December 7 1961 (9 x 30 min)

- 1 *no guest*
- 2 *with The Confederates*
- 3 *with Acker Bilk And His Paramount Jazz Band, The Barney Gilbraith Singers*
- 4 *with The McGuire Sisters, Dick Charlesworth & City Gents*
- 5 *with The Peters Sisters, Kenny Ball's Jazzmen*
- 6 *with Cleo Laine, The Clyde Valley Stompers*
- 7 *with Gary Miller, Monty Sunshine's Jazzband*
- 8 *with Valerie Masters, Micky Ashman's Ragtime Jazz Band*
- 9 *with The Kaye Sisters, Alex Welsh And His Band*

Series 2:

Saturday 9-30pm June 30 to September 22 1962 (13 x 30 min)

- 1 *with The Kaye Sisters, Terry Lightfoot's Jazzmen*
(Pen and Paper Quiz/Alcoholics Anonymous/Boxing Match/
Cossack Dancing/Pilbroch Bla Scottish Folk Song)
- 2 *with The Beverley Sisters, Kenny Ball's Jazzmen*
(The Flintrocks/Scientific Lecture and Paper Bags/Soccer Play-
ers/Fear Of Flying/Alice In Wonderland)
- 3 *with The Beverley Sisters, Alex Welsh And His Band*
(Dr. Ben Kildare/Eric's Tape Recordings/A Shocking Ver-
sion Of Grenada/Snooker/Eric's Impersonations)
- 4 *with The Beverley Sisters, Mr. Acker Bilk's Paramount
Jazz Band*
(Supercar/Eric's Dictionary/Chinese Restaurant/Julius Caesar)
- 5 *with Susan Maughan, The Mike Cotton Jazzmen*
(Pick Your Luck/Coin and Card Games/Zoo Quest/Eric As A
One-Man Black And White Minstrel)
- 6 *with The Beverley Sisters, Chris Barber's Jazzband, Otilie
Patterson*
(Dick of Doxon Green/Magic Moments With Morecambe/
Honeysuckle Rose On Piano/Eric's Pick Of The Ladies)
- 7 *with The Beverley Sisters, The Clyde Valley Stompers*
- 8 *with Teddy Johnson and Pearl Carr, Eric Delaney & Band*
(77 Sunset Strip)
- 9 *with Teddy Johnson and Pearl Carr, George Chisholm's
Jazz Gang*
(Naked City)
- 10 *with Lita Roza, Humphrey Lyttelton And His Band*
(Mystery Tale/Pas De Deux/Abraham Lincoln)

- 11 *with Janie Marden, Alex Welsh And His Band*
(Y Cars/Pruning Eric's Plant/East Of West Side Story/Eric's
Party Games/Folk Singers Frederick And Frederick)
- 12 *with Teddy Johnson and Pearl Carr, Mike Cotton Jazzmen*
(Eric's Pipe/New Talent/French Film/Hollywood Medley)
- 13 *with Teddy Johnson and Pearl Carr*

Series 3:

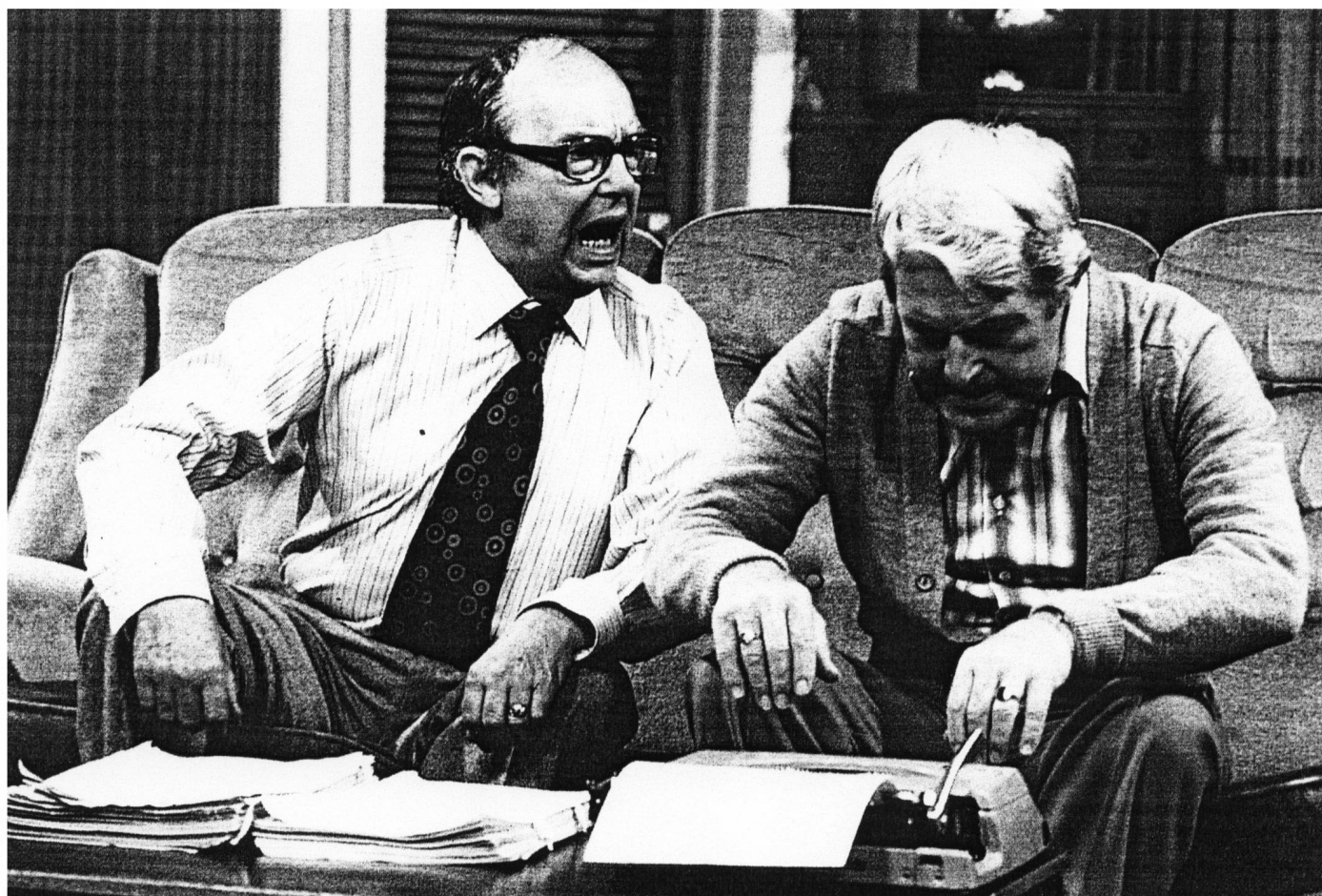
Saturday 8-30pm June 15 to September 7 1963 (13 x 30 min)

- 1 *with Joe Brown, Michael Sammes Singers, Sheree Winton*
(Coming On Together/Xylophone Duet/Washing Machine
Demonstration/Samson Morecambe)
- 2 *with Mr. Acker Bilk And His Paramount Jazz Band, The
Michael Sammes Singers*
(Stop Smoking/Puppet Theatre/Peter And The Wolf/Samson's
Haircut)
- 3 *with The King Brothers, Barbara Law, Murray Kash*
(Ventriloquist/Card Sharp Morecambe/Singing With A Radio
Mike)
- 4 *with Sheila Buxton, The Michael Sammes Singers, Gillian
Cobbold*
(Eric's Holiday Slides/Inconvenient Phone Call/Hamlet/Dance
Of The Six Veils)
- 5 *with The King Brothers, Janie Marden, Norman Mitchell*
(The Fat Lady in the Audience/The Battle Of Wellington/Come
Dancing/The Flying Doctor)
- 6 *with The King Brothers, Susan Maughan*
(Ernie's Glasses/Louis XIV Glasses/Puttin' On The Ritz/
General Custer)
- 7 *with The King Brothers, Sheila Southern*
(Eric's Matchstick Tower/Eric's Roulette System/Grieg
Piano Concerto/Alice And The Cheshire Cat)
- 8 *with Roy Castle*
- 9 *with Shani Wallas, Michael Sammes Singers, Jill Curzon*
- 10 *with The King Brothers, Maureen Evans*
- 11 *with The King Brothers, Kathy Kirby*
(Remembering Names and Faces in Show Business)
- 12 *with Eric Delaney's Band, The Michael Sammes Singers,
Lucille Gaye*
- 13 *with The King Brothers, Rosemary Squires, Gillian Cobbold*
(Eric's Sales Resistance)

Series 4:

Saturday 8-25pm April 4 to June 27 1964 (13 x 35 min)

- 1 *with Eddie Calvert And The 'C' Men, The Raindrops*
- 2 *with Kenny Ball And His Jazzmen, Janie Marden*
(How to Deal with Pickpockets)
- 3 *with The Beatles*
- 4 *with Chris Rayburn, The Viscounts, Janet Webb*
(Eric's Yo-Yo)
- 5 *with Mr. Acker Bilk's Paramount Jazz Band, Jackie Trent,
Penny Morrell*
(Eric Needs a Wig)
- 6 *with Patsy Ann Noble, The Fraser Hayes Four*
(Eric's Invention)
- 7 *with Edmund Hockridge, Sheila Buxton*
- 8 *with Kathy Kirby, The King Brothers, Freddie Powell*
(Eric has a Cold)
- 9 *with Joe Brown And The Bruvvers, Joy Marshall*
- 10 *with Dickie Valentine, The Four Macs, Jo Williamson*
- 11 *with The Bachelors, Valerie Masters*
- 12 *with Ray Ellington And His Music, Barbara Law*
- 13 *with Susan Maughan, Migil 5*



Series 5:

Saturday 9-20pm January 22 to March 19 1966 (9 x 35 min)

- 1 with *Lulu, Paul and Barry Ryan*
- 2 with *The Morgan James Duo*
- 3 with *Jackie Trent, The New Faces*
- 4 with *Millicent Martin*
- 5 with *Georgie Fame, Julie Rogers*
- 6 with *The Settlers, Barbara Law*
- 7 with *The King Brothers*
- 8 with *The Shadows, Janie Marden*
- 9 with *Herman's Hermits, Teddy Johnson and Pearl Carr*
(Home From The Wars/School Days/The Four Clark Sisters/
The Wife Home From The Wars)

Series 6:

Sunday 8-25pm October 1 1967 to March 31 1968 (10 x 60 min)

• *screened by the A.B.C. Network in the United States between May 20 and September 9 1967 as "Piccadilly Palace"*
all with *Millicent Martin*

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Oct 1 | with <i>Freddie And The Dreamers, Jimmy Rodgers</i> |
| Oct 22 | with <i>The Small Faces, Bobby Rydell</i> |
| Nov 12 | with <i>The Hollies, Tom Jones</i> |
| Dec 10 | with <i>Manfred Mann, George Maharis</i> |
| Dec 31 | with <i>The New Vaudeville Band, Frankie Avalon</i> |
| Jan 14 | with <i>The Moody Blues, Tommy Leonetti</i> |
| Feb 4 | with <i>The Tremeloes, Peter Nero</i> |
| Feb 25 | with <i>Eric Burdon And The Animals, Genr Pitney</i> |
| Mar 17 | with <i>Georgie Fame, Bobby Vinton</i> |
| Mar 31 | with <i>The Dave Clark Five, Cliff Richard</i> |

THE MORECAMBE AND WISE SHOW (BBC)

with *Sid Green and Dick Hills* (series 1),
Janet Webb (series 2 - 6), *Arthur Tolcher* (series 8),
The Pattersons (series 3), *Kenny Ball And His Jazzmen*
(series 2 - 6), *Wilma Reading* (series 8)
script by Sid Green and Dick Hills (series 1),
Eddie Braben (series 2 - 9)

Series 1:

BBC2 Monday 8-50pm September 2 to October 21 1968 (8 x 30min)

• *Show 6 and edited off-air soundtracks of the others are all that survives of this series*

- 1 with *Georgia Brown, Los Zafiros*
(Topical Jokes Will Be Out Of Date/Old Mexican Love Song/
Conning Eric With Gibberish)
- 2 with *Acker Bilk, Roy Budd*
(Miming To Bing And Satchmo/"Bodgers And Hammerhead
Musical"/Introducing Booboo The Stripper)
- 3 with *Trio Athinee, The Paper Dolls*
(How To Get To The Party At Harpenden/Boxing Match/
Nudist Camp)
- 4 with *Bruce Forsyth, Kenny Ball And His Jazzmen*
(Bruce Forsyth And The Commissionaires/A Backing Group
For Bruce)
- 5 with *Ronnie Carroll, Kenny Ball And His Jazzmen*
(Eric's Instant Camera/Irish Sketch/Dear Old Donegal)
- 6 with *Edmund Hockridge, Kenny Ball And His Jazzmen*
(Teaching Eric Golf/"The Desert Song")
- 7 with *Michael Aspel, Chris Langford, Kenny Ball & Jazzmen*
(Sailing Round The World For A Knighthood/Conning Eric
Out Of His Pools Win/"Hollywood Musical")
- 8 with *Matt Munro, Kenny Ball And His Jazzmen*
(Exchanging Trousers/"The Road To Gateshead")

Series 2:

BBC2 fortnightly July 27 to September 4 1969 (4 x 45 min)

1 with *Peter Cushing, Bobby Gentry, Vince Hill*
(The Robin Catbush And Phyllis Ludicrous Show/A Lady Doctor Visits The Flat/Turtles Desiree And Eric/"King Arthur And The Knights Of The Round Table")

2 with *Trio Athinee, Malcolm Roberts*
(Ernie's Unseen Facet - Poetry/In Bed With Crisps, A Book And Some Pills/Birdwatchers/25th Anniversary Of D-Day In The Flat)

3 with *Juliet Mills, Moira Anderson*
(Palm Reading All Over/Ernie's Au Pair/Rosie Morecambe And Fanny Wise/"The Tea Planter's Wife")

4 with *Edward Woodward, Kenneth McKellar*
(Eric's Lucky Talisman/A Neighbour Borrows Some Sugar/Peter Cushing Wants His Money/Danny La Rue Unfrosted/"Murder At The Grange")

*** BBC2 Sunday 8-15pm December 25 1969 (60 min)

with *Susan Hampshire, Frankie Vaughan, Nina, The Pattersons*

Series 3:

BBC2 fortnightly January 14 to February 11, March 11 and 25, April 22 1970 (6 x 45 min)

1 with *Herman's Hermits*
(Ern, The Baggy Pants Comic/Bedroom Discussion On Growing Old/Samson The Great/The Vicar Visits The Flat)

2 with *Ian Carmichael, Nina*
(An Award For Ernie/Ernie Walks Out For Twenty Years/"Frankenstein's Monster")

3 with *Fenella Fielding, Sacha Distell*
(With-It, Way-Out Ernie/Bathtime For Ernie/A Visit To Fenella's Flat/"Trafalgar 1805")

4 with *Diane Cilento, Vince Hill*
(Eric's Wig/Restaurant Rendezvous With Diane/"The Barretts Of Wimpole Street")

5 with *Edward Chapman, Clodagh Rogers*
(Permissive Television/"Trouble At Mill"/Courting Princess Anne)

6 with *Richard Greene, Nana Mouskouri*
(Boy Scout Ernie/Late Night Visit By Richard Greene/Eric's Pocket Transistor Radio Kit/"The Lost Valley")

*** MONTREUX EDITION: April 8 1970 (30 min) with *Nina*
(Exchanging Trousers/Multilingual Introduction To Nina/Banana Boat With Maraccas/Powerful Binoculars/Eric's Enormous Ventriloquist Doll)

Series 4:

BBC2 fortnightly July 1 to August 12, August 25, October 8 1970 (6 x 50 min)

1 with *Eric Porter, Jan Daley, Trio Athinee*
(This Is Your Life/Eric Porter's Dressing Room/Jovial Doctor/Uncle Eric And His Little Friend/"Wuthering Heights")

2 with *George A Cooper, Kenneth McKellar, Samantha Jones*
(Fox Hunting/Eric's Homecoming/Prms In The Park/Frankie Vaughan's Son David/A Pregnant Lady Visits The Flat)

3 with *Nina, Craig Douglas*
(Eric's Health Food/Buying Lingerie/Nina's Fruit Cake/Bringing Ernie's Characters To Life)

4 with *Fenella Fielding, Ray Stevens, Sylvia McNeill*
(Ern's Nasty Ballet Accident/Fenella Comes To Tea/Eric's Long Player/"I'll See You Again")

5 with *Barbara Murray, Dusty Springfield, Michael Redgrave, Flora Robson, Felix Aylmer, Robin Day*

(A Stool For The Star/Splitting Up/Political Discussion/Drama Critic's Racy Past/"There's No Business Like Big Business")

6 with *Paul Anka, Patricia Lambert*
(Eric's Moustache Seeds/Ernie In Hospital/Ear Specialist/Scenery Collapses On Eric/Honeymoon Couple Next Door)

*** BBC2 December 25 1970

with *Peter Cushing, William Franklyn, Nina, Eric Porter, Edward Woodward*

(The Gift Of A Musical Watch/Sawing Peter Cushing In Half/Ann Invited To Christmas Dinner/Eric Porter's Song And Dance/Scenery Problems For Nina/That's Not John Wayne/Edward Woodward Wants To Sing/"The Three Musketeers")

Series 5:

BBC2 fortnightly April 8 to June 17, July 15 1971 (7 x 45 min)

1 with *Flora Robson, Esther Ofarim, Peter & Alex*
(Piano Duet of "60 Seconds"/Impressing Dame Flora/"Queen Elizabeth The First")

2 with *Arthur Lowe (and the cast of Dad's Army), Robert Young, Susan Maughan*

(Arthur Meets The Star Of The Show/Marriage Guidance/Explaining The Facts Of Life/Park Chat With Unhappy Father/"Monty On The Bonty")

3 with *Frank Ifield, The Settlers*
(Eric's Younger Replacement/The Connoisseurs: Objects D'Art/Buying A Diamond Ring/A Visit By A Fellow Writer)

4 with *Jack Jones, Sheila Southern*
(Ern's Magnificent Body/Record Shop Robbery/Dracula Books A Room/Introducing Arthur Tolcher/Making Ern Invisible/A Nasty Thing, Flu)

5 with *Glenda Jackson, Mary Hopkin, Ronnie Hilton*
(Ernie Announces His Retirement/Glenda Jackson Visits The Flat/"Antony And Cleopatra")

6 with *Ian Carmichael, Matt Munro, Kiki Dee, Peter & Alex*
(Ern's 23 A-Levels/Wig Boutique/Eric The Peg With The Extra Leg/Most Popular Guest Star Award/"Mystery In Mayfair")

7 with *Trio Athinee, Design*
(Newspaper Critics/Hotel Receptionist/Fishing With A Saxophone/Man with the Reversals/Bob Hope's Chief Scriptwriter)

Series 6:

BBC1 September 19 to October 31 1971 (not Oct 24) (6 x 45 min)

1 with *Francis Matthews, Anita Harris, Robert Young*
(Tape Recording Ernie's Voice/The Language Of Birds/Francis Impersonates Cary/"The House Of Terror")

2 with *Keith Michell, Design*
(Eric's Premonition/Bobo The Glove Puppet/The Call To Mrs. Nutter/Keith Wants Eric For The Play/"Legion Of The Lost")

3 with *Cilla Black, Ronnie Carroll, Percy Thrower*
(Eric's Jasper Rawlings Painting/A Recording Contract For Ernie/Ten Years Hence/Gardener's Wild)

4 with *John Mills, Mrs. Mills, Trio Athinee*
(Eric's Threatening Letter/Top Of The Form/Mrs. Mills' Fruitcake/Eric's Autographed Banana/"Escape From Stalag 54")

5 with *Nina, The Pattersons*
(Great Men Of Our Time - Ernie Wise/Car Accessory Shop/Leg Rejuvenating Machine/An Award For Nina/Ernie Spots The Ball Every Sunday)

6 with *Tom Jones, Design*
(Eric's Dog Brutus/Backing Singers For Tom Jones/etc.)

*** BBC1 December 25 1971 (65 min)
with Shirley Bassey, Glenda Jackson, Andre Previn, Francis Matthews, Dick Emery, Frank Bough, Robert Dougall, Cliff Michelmore, Patrick Moore, Michael Parkinson, Eddie Waring (Tankards From The B.B.C./Christmas Turkeys/A Special Set For Shirley Bassey/Grieg's Piano Concerto With Andre Previn/An Award For The Antony And Cleopatra Sketch/A Tribute To Fred And Ginger/"Robin Hood")

*** BBC1 December 25 1972 (60 min)
with Glenda Jackson, Jack Jones, Vera Lynn, Pete Murray, Shirley Bassey, Ian Carmichael, Fenella Fielding, Eric Porter, Andre Previn, Flora Robson
(Eric's Practical Jokes/Santa's Reindeers/The Impersonations Of Jack Jones/Jack's Backing Duo/Dawn Patrol/Down Memory Lane With Vera Lynn/"Victoria And Albert")

Series 7:

BBC1 January 5 to March 23 1973 (12 x 45 min)

1 with Cliff Richard, Vicki Carr
(Tips On How To Play An Old Man/Yoga In Bed/Tennis Game/Dance Rehearsal In The Flat/musical: The Fleet's In)
2 with Robert Morley, Vicki Leandros, New World
(A Recital Of Poetry And Fine Music/Convincing Robert Morley To Be In Ernie's Play/"The Curse Of Tukankhamun")
3 with Lulu, Henry Cooper, Percy Edwards, Rostal & Schaefer
(Eric's Injured Bird/Buying A Violin/Harpenden String Quartet/The Bully On The Bench/The Call To The Battle Of Trafalgar/Ernie's Duet With Lulu/Backyard Birdcalls)
4 with Susan Hampshire, Henry Cooper, Georgie Fame & Alan Price, The Settlers
(Eric's Engagement/Eurovision Mucky Poem/After The Pictures/Eric Tangled In A Rope/"The Mighty Kong")
5 with Frank Finlay, Wilma Reading, Design
(Eric's Antique Television/Buying A Stereo/Introducing The World's Greatest Lover/"Lust Over London")
6 with Helen Reddy, Alex Welsh & His Band
(Ernie's Bi-Centenary/Synchronized Comedians/Ancient Railways Bye-Law/The Connoisseurs: Chips/Health Food Shop)
7 with Anita Harris
(Mr. Memory/"Pretty Baby" Song And Dance Number/Ernie's Greeting Card Poetry/"The Northwest Frontier Of India 1890")
* an Omnibus documentary about the production of this episode was aired two days later

8 with Wilma Reading, Springfield Revival
(Eric's Mucky Movie Club/Historical Tree/Hollywood Party Impersonations/Byron Meets Keats/Bedtime Memories Of School/Investing Ernie's Legacy)
9 with Hannah Gordon, Mary Travers, Christopher Neil
(Happy Birthday, Ern/Hannah Auditions In The Supermarket/Reading Eric's Play/"The Moon And 2½p")
10 with Roy Castle, Pete Murray, Anne Murray, the Pattersons
(Eric Impresses The Make-Up Lady With A Wig/Roy Castle To Replace Eric/Musical Memories/Side By Side Up And Down/The Repentant Poacher/"Call Of The Yukon"/Everything's Comin' My Way)
11 with Nana Mouskouri, The Black & White Minstrels, George Hamilton IV, Harry Corbett & Sooty
(Eric The Nomad/The Sooty Show/The World's Greatest Racing Driver/Birth Certificates/Greek National Dance/Disturbing Ernie's Reading/"Mame" With The Minstrels)

12 with Peter Cushing, Bernie Winters, Wilma Reading, Alan Price & Georgie Fame
(Getting Ernie's Autograph/Ernest Wise Reads Dickens/Eric's Mind Reading Act/Peter Cushing Still Wants His Money/"A Couple Of Swells" Musical Number/Ernie's Lodger)

*** BBC1 December 25 1973 (60 min)
with Vanessa Redgrave, Hannah Gordon, John Hanson, The New Seekers, Yehudi Menuhin, Rudolph Nureyev, Laurence Olivier, Andre Previn
(Lord Ern Of Peterborough/Musical Comedy Ern/"Stout-Hearted Men" Chorus/Hannah Gordon Pop Star/Wonky "Windmills Of Your Mind"/Christmas Memories/Vanessa Meets Herbie Wise/Latin American Extravaganza/Napoleon And Josephine)

Series 8:

BBC1 September 27 to November 1 1974 (6 x 45 min)

1 with Andre Previn, Magnus Magnusson, Mrs. Mills
(Shakespeare's Hamlet/Mastermind/Business Gents Two-Step/Childhood Memories Of Church And Cubs/Predictable Eric/Conning Andre Previn/"What A Perfect Combination"/Arrival Of A Queen)
2 with Ludovic Kennedy
(Ernie's Pain In The Leg/The Art Of Conversation/Eric Has No Jokes/Holiday Plans/The Colonel On The Train/Death Cottage/"Give My Regards To Broadway")
3 with Wilma Reading, The Sid Lawrence Orchestra
(Spick Sparkle, Pop Singer/Eric's Cigarette Cards/Business Gents Dance To The Big Band/Eric's New Nose/Contortionist Accident/Ernie's New Secretary)
4 with Richard Baker, Wilma Reading
(Eric Has Lost His Voice/The Connoisseurs - Wine Tasting/Introduction For Wilma/"Authors Of Our Time" Interviews Ernie/"Murder In Mayfair")
5 with Hughie Green, David Dimbleby
(Writing The Opening In Bed/A Booby-Trapped Chair For Eric/The Dimbleby Talk-In/Eric And Ernie Jr./Opportunity Knocks For Ernie)
6 with June Whitfield
(The Bard Of Harpenden/The Echo In The Well/Ernie's Lost Love/"The Plantation Of Passion")

• a Michael Parkinson interview with Eric and Ernie aired in lieu of a 1974 Christmas Special

*** BBC1 December 25 1975 (60 min)
with Diana Rigg, Des O'Connor, Gordon Jackson, Robin Day
(Des O'Connor Retaliates/A Gift For Annie's Baby/Des's Hitchcock Subterfuge/Lady Psychiatrist/Friendly Discussion With Robin Day/Nell Gwynn)

Series 9:

BBC1 January 7 and 21, February 11, March 10 and 24, April 19 1976 (6 x 45 min)

1 with Gilbert O'Sullivan, Dilys Watling
(Hands Off Little Ern/Male Nannies On The Park Bench/Dancing Drunks/"The Legend Of Dick Turpin")
2 with Michele Dotrice, Frankie Vaughan, Patrick Moore
(Ern's Wife Has Left Him/The Sky At Night/The Harpenden Hot Shots Play For Frankie/"The Handyman And M'Lady")



THE MORECAMBE AND WISE SHOW (Thames)

*** ITV October 18 1978 (60 min)

with *Donald Sinden, Judi Dench, Leonard Sachs, Peter Cushing, Derek Griffiths, Syd Lawrence Orchestra*
(Hijacking The Syd Lawrence Orchestra/Pet Shop/Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde)

*** ITV December 25 1978 (60 min)

with *Leonard Rossiter, Frank Finlay, Sir Harold Wilson*
(This Is Your Royal Life/Half-Dressed Eric/The Fabulous Forties/Sir Harold Visits The Flat)

*** ITV December 25 1979 (60 min)

with *David Frost, Glenda Jackson, Des O'Connor*
(I Taut I Taw A Puddy Tat)

Series 1:

ITV September 3 to October 8 1980 (6 x 30 min)

1 with *Terry Wogan*

(Eric The Nomad/Songs Of The Highland/Special Branch Nun/Plugging Ernie's Pop Record/"Painting The Clouds With Sunshine" song and dance)

2 with *Hannah Gordon, Hugh Paddick, Frank Coda*

(Evil Eric, The Stuntman/Making Hannah A Pop Singer/Banana Boat Song/A Fellow Writer Visits)

3 with *Dave Prowse, Anthony Chinn, Raymond Mason*

(Rent A Giant/Chinese Restaurant/Focus On The Arts/Disturbing Ernie's Reading)

4 with *Deryck Guyler, Gerald Case*

(This Is Your Life/Multilingual Hotel Reception Clerk/Sammy The Glove Puppet/Ozzie Springer, Washboard Vicar)

5 with *Suzanne Danielle, Valerie Minifie*

(Jasper Rawling Painting/Travel Agency/Ernie's Gold-digger)

6 with *Gemma Craven*

(Mr. Fantastic/Legionaires/Ernie's Au Pair/Bring Me Sunshine Hollywood Ballet)

*** ITV December 25 1980 (60 min)

with *Peter Barkworth, Glenda Jackson, Jill Gascoigne, Hannah Gordon, Peter Cushing, Alec Guinness*

(A Gigantic Wallet For Ernie/The Bully On The Park Bench/Jill Gascoigne Invited To Christmas Dinner/Dancing Police/Eric The Peg/The Ventriloquist With Laryngitis/Borrowing £20 From Peter Cushing/The Double Act At The Psychiatrist/We Only Work With Sirs/Hamlet/Sir Alec Wants To Sing And Dance)

Series 2:

ITV September 1 to October 13 1981 (7 x 30 min)

1 with *Gemma Craven*

(Eric's Army Reunion/Art Gallery/Marriage Guidance Office/Are We Past It?/Eric's Plaster Cast/Springtime In The Park song and dance)

2 with *Richard Vernon, Max Bygraves*

(Eric's Novelty Bicycle/The Connoisseurs: British Rail Catering/Splitting Up/Max Sings With Ernie)

3 with *Diane Keen*

(Mad Morecambe, The Wrestler/Pet Shop/Ernie's Female Doctor/Travel song and dance)

4 with *Hannah Gordon, George Chisholm, Richard Vernon*

(Eric's Miracle Hair Restorer/The Connoisseurs: Objects D'Art/Bathtime For Ernie/"Chicago Style" song and dance)

3 with *Lena Zavaroni, The Spinners*

(A Statue Of Ernie/The Connoisseurs: The Sausage/Nothing Personal, But You Irritate Me/"There's Something About You Baby I Like" Dance Number/Ernie's Reputation For Being Mean)

4 with *Jackie Darnell, Kenny Ball & His Jazzmen*

(Ernie's Scottish Song And Dance/Sun Tan Tablets/Tapdancers Hidden From View/Ernie's Backyard Gym/"The Lives Of The Bengal Lancers")

5 with *The Karlins, Vincent Zarra*

(Eric Quits After 36 Years/Antique Shop/Absent-Minded Introduction/Slaughter On Western Avenue/A Surprise Appearance By Frank Sinatra/Afternoon Backyard Sunbake)

6 with *Diane Soloman, Maggie Fitzgibbon*

(Ernie Granted Freedom Of The City/Calculator Shop/Making Breakfast To The Stripper/Women's Magazine Wants To Interview Ernie)

*** BBC1 December 25 1976 (60 min)

with *Elton John, John Thaw, Dennis Waterman, Kate O'Mara, Marion Montgomery, The Nolans*

(A Watch For Ernie/Pinball Soccer Players/Elton Accompanies "Play A Simple Melody"/"Singin' In The Rain"/Elton Wants To Replace Eric/Mata Hari/A Newsreader Dances)

*** BBC1 December 25 1977 (65 min)

with *Penelope Keith, Elton John, Francis Matthews, Angharad Rees, Stella Starr, BBC news personalities*

(Names In Lights/Eric's Puppy/Introducing Hand-Grenade Rees/Cornshire Romance/Moving House/"There Is Nothing Like A Dame"/Francis In A Spin/Penelope Meets Derek Moron/"Cyrano De Bergerac"/The Interrupted Stairway/Elton And The Cleaning Ladies)

5 with Peter Bowles, Suzanne Danielle
(Videoing Ernie/Disappearing Patient/Beekeeper/Ernie's Book On Health/"All That Jazz" song and dance)
6 with Robert Hardy, Ian Ogilvy, Kay Korda
(Eric The Gypsy/Boots In The Hall/Legionnaires Seeing Mirages/Acting Advice For Ernie)
7 with Joanna Lumley, Richard Vernon
(Theatrical Pickpocket/The Connoisseurs: Motorway Food/The Barratts Of Wimpole Street/"Thoroughly Modern Millie" song and dance/The Coldstream Guards Play The Finale)

*** ITV December 23 1981 (60 min)
with Ralph Richardson, Robert Hardy, Ian Ogilvy, Susannah York, Alvin Stardust, Suzanne Danielle
(A Statue Of Lord Mayor Ernie/Impressing Sir Ralph With A Butler/"Razzle Dazzle" song and dance/Health Food Shop/Alvin's Backing Singers/Eric's Film And TV Book/Julius Caesar)

Series 3:

ITV October 27 to December 8 1982 (7 x 30 min)
1 with Richard Briers, Diana Dors
(Ernie's Moustache/Claiming Benefits For Sixteen Children/"Varsity Drag" song and dance/Captain Blood)
2 with Trevor Eve, Wayne Sleep, Jimmy Young
(Save Little Ern/Tribute To Hollywood ballet/Beau Jest)
3 with Roy Castle
(Eric's Food Trolley/Patient Who Isn't Himself/"At The Copacabana" song and dance/The Guinness Book Of Records Wants To List Ernie)
4 with Colin Welland, Isla St. Clair
(This Is Your Life/Country And Western extravaganza/An Oscar Winning Writer Visits The Flat)
5 with Patricia Brake, Royce Mills
(Eric's Enormous Guard Dog/Buying Ernie A New Desk/Ten Years Hence/"Me And My Shadow")
6 with Alan Dobie, Marian Montgomery
(The Great Nosmo, Escapologist/The Informative Neighbour/"Do I Feel High?" song and dance/Burgled And Conned)
7 with Nigel Hawthorne, Patricia Brake
(Happy Birthday, Ern/Lost Legionnaires/Reprived From Madame Guillotine/The Adventures Of Sherlock Holmes)

*** ITV December 27 1982
with Robert Hardy, Rule Lenska, Richard Vernon, Wall Street Crash
(Retiring The Act/"Alexander's Ragtime Band" song and dance/Video Shop/The Explorers: The Amazon Trek/Lingerie Shop/Popular Actor Award/Business Gents dance/"Chatanooga-Choo-Choo" song and dance/Yukon Gold Rush)

Series 4:

ITV September 7 to October 19 1983 (not Sep 21) (6 x 30min)
1 with Margaret Courtenay, Anna Dawson
(Thinking Up A Good Ending/Ghandi Morecambe/Honey-moon Hotel/"The Waiter And The Porter And The Upstairs Maid" song and dance/Antique Renovations/No Time For Jolson Number)
2 with David Kernan
(Repairing The Electric Blanket/Sacked By Mail/Swiss Slapping Dance/Tyrolean Extravaganza/Repairs Around The Flat/No Time For The Hunchback)

3 with Stutz Bear Cats
(Warming Up The Bed/The Great Basket Escape/The Language Of Birds/Chinese Musical Extravaganza/Eric's Coin Tricks/The Nudists Next Door/No Time For Robin Hood)
4 with Cherry Gillespie
(Bedroom Telescope/Eric And Ernie's Scrapbook/The Star Guest Chickens Out/Spanish Gypsy Dance/Old Men's Memories/Ernie's Brush With The Law/No Time For Long John Silver)
5 with Margaret Courtenay, Stutz Bear Cats, Peter & Jackie Firmani
(Peter Pan Morecambe/Hand Bell Player/Record Shop/"Frankie And Johnny" song and dance/Mr. Bartholomew, The Pigeon Man/No Time For Peter Pan)
6 with Harry Fowler
(Fixing The Bed Leg/One Man Band/Male Nannies In The Park/Impressario Wants Ernie/Department Store song and dance/No Time For Elvis)

*** ITV December 26 1983 (60 min)
with Gemma Craven, Nigel Hawthorne, Derek Jacobi, Fulton Mackay, Nanette Newman, Peter Skellern, Patrick Mower, Felicity Kendal, Burt Kwouk
(A Watch And A Donkey For Christmas/The Backing Pianist/The Invention Of The Light Bulb/Who Gets The Pie?!/Harpندن Hot Shots/Nelly From The Deli In The Movies/"The Planter's Wife"/"Swingin' Down The Lane")

specials and documentaries

*** THE BEST OF MORECAMBE AND WISE (*highlights*):
BBC2 February 22 1969 (30 min)

*** OMNIBUS - FOOLS RUSH IN:
BBC1 February 18 1973 (50 min)

*** MORECAMBE AND WISE - THIS IS YOUR LUNCH:
BBC1 May 14 1974

*** PARKINSON TAKES A LOOK AT MORECAMBE AND WISE:
BBC December 25 1974 (55 min)

*** TWO OF A KIND:
Thames February 3 1982 (60 min)

*** ERIC AND ERNIE'S VARIETY DAYS:
Thames March 2 1983 (60 min)

*** ERIC MORECAMBE TRIBUTE:
Thames May 28 1984 (60 min)

*** BRING ME SUNSHINE:
Thames December 25 1984 (2½ hours)

*** NIGHT TRAIN TO MURDER (*telemovie*):
Thames January 3 1985 (90 min)

*** MORECAMBE AND WISE ON STAGE:
Thames February 17 1987 (60 min)

Films

The Intelligence Men (released April 19 1965) 104 minutes with William Franklyn, Richard Vernon, Terence Alexander, Frances Matthews, Warren Mitchell

That Riviera Touch (released April 11 1966) 98 minutes with Suzanne Lloyd, Paul Stassino, Armand Mestral, Peter Jeffrey

The Magnificent Two (released August 6 1967) 100 minutes with Margit Saad, Cecil Parker, Virgilio Texera, Martin Benson

Simon, Simon (1970 silent short) 30 minutes with Peter Sellers, Michael Caine, David Hemmings, Bob Monkhouse, Graham Stark, Bernie Winters

Bibliography

humorous collections by Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise
THE MORECAMBE AND WISE JOKE BOOK (Wolfe Publishing, 1968)

THE MORECAMBE & WISE SPECIAL (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977)

BRING ME SUNSHINE (William Kimber, 1978)

THE MORECAMBE AND WISE FAMILY FUN BOOK (Premiums In Print. ?)

THE MORECAMBE AND WISE JOKE BOOK (Arthur Baker, 1979)

novels by Eric Morecambe

MR. LONELY (Methuen, 1981)

OVER THE MOON - SICK AS A PARROT (Hutchinson / Stanley Paul, 1982)

THE RELUCTANT VAMPIRE (Methuen, 1983)

THE VAMPIRE'S REVENGE (Methuen, 1983)

STELLA (Severn House, 1986)

biographies and autobiographies

ERIC & ERNIE - THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MORECAMBE & WISE

by Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise, with Dennis Holman (W.H. Allen, 1973)

THERE'S NO ANSWER TO THAT - AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY BY MORECAMBE & WISE

by Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise, with Michael Freedland (Arthur Barker, 1981)

FUNNY MAN - ERIC MORECAMBE

by Gary Morecambe (Methuen, 1982)

MORECAMBE & WIFE

by Joan Morecambe, and Michael Leitch (Pelham Books, 1985)

THE ILLUSTRATED MORECAMBE

by Gary Morecambe (Macdonald / Queen Anne Press, 1987)

STILL ON MY WAY TO HOLLYWOOD

by Ernie Wise, with Trevor Barnes (Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1990)

ERIC MORECAMBE: BEHIND THE SUNSHINE

by Gary Morecambe and Martin Sterling (Robson, 1994)

MORECAMBE & WISE - YOU CAN'T SEE THE JOIN

by Jeremy Novick (Chameleon / Andre Deutsch, 1997)

HARD ACT TO FOLLOW

by Gary Morecambe and Michael Sellers (Blake, 1997)

MORECAMBE & WISE

by Graham McCann (Fourth Estate, 1998)

MEMORIES OF ERIC

by Gary Morecambe and Martin Sterling (Andre Deutsch, 1999)

ERIC MORECAMBE - LIFE'S NOT HOLLYWOOD, IT'S CRICKLEWOOD

by Gary Morecambe (BBC Books, 2003)

THE BEST OF MORECAMBE AND WISE

by Eddie Braben (Woburn Press, 1974; amended edition: Virgin, 1999)

MORECAMBE AND WISE - THEIR BEST JOKES, ONE-LINERS AND SKETCHES

by Eddie Braben (Ebury / Random House paperback, 2003)

THE MORECAMBE AND WISE COMIC BOOK!

by Denis Gifford (Corgi Carousel paperback, 1977)

ERIC AND ERNIE'S TV FUN BOOK

by Denis Gifford (Arrow / ITV paperback, 1978)

Recordings

Me And My Shadow / We're The Guys (Who Drive Your Baby Wild)

H.M.V. 45rpm POP 957

Boom Oo Yatta-Ta-Ta / Why Did I Let You Go?

H.M.V. 45rpm POP 1240

A-Wassailing / The Happiest Christmas Of All

H.M.V. 45rpm POP 1373

Now That You're Here / That Riviera Touch

H.M.V. 45rpm POP 1518

Mr. Morecambe Meets Mr. Wise

H.M.V. LP CLP 1682/CSD 1522 (reissued as Music For Pleasure LP MFP 1190)

Not Now Later / Indians / Singing The Blues / Ton Up Boy / Why Did I Let You Go? / Impressions / Grieg Piano Concerto / Boom Oo Yatta-Ta-Ta / Tape Recorder / The Pilbroch Bla / Get It Right Corporal / Song Of Youth / Ambassador Of Khasiland

An Evening With Ernie Wise At Eric Morecambe's Place
Philips LP BL 7750 (reissued as Wing LP WL 1217)

Avis Morecambis / The Bare Facts / The Stand / The Man With A Tail / The Great Wall Of Harpenden / One Of The Old Favourites Of The Future / Shopping For The Wife / One More Time / Gather Round The Piano (Camptown Races + Poor Old Joe + Swanee River)

Twelve Days Of Christmas / Bingle Jells

Pye 45rpm 7N 17436

Bring Me Sunshine / Just Around The Corner

Columbia 45rpm DB 8646 (reissued as DB 8753)

Following You Around / Eric And Ernie's Theme

Philips 45rpm 6006 069

Bring You Sunshine

Starline compilation LP SRS 5066

(reissue of Mr. Morecambe Meets Mr. Wise with extra track: Bring Me Sunshine)

Get Out Of That!

Philips compilation LP 6382 005

(reissue of An Evening With Ernie Wise At Eric Morecambe's Place with extra track: Following You Around)

Morecambe And Wise Sing Flanagan And Allen

Philips LP 6382 095

Underneath The Arches / Run Rabbit Run / Umbrella Man / Are You Havin' Any Fun? / Strollin' / A Shanty In Old Shanty Town / Down And Out Blues / Nice People / Hometown / Dreaming / Can't We Meet Again / Where The Arches Used To Be

We Get On So Easily / Positive Thinking

E.M.I. 45rpm EMI 2475

Cinderella And Dick Whittington

Polydor LP 2478093

Morecambe & Wise

E.M.I. CD 528602 2

(We Get Along So Easily) Don't You Agree? / Ton Up Boy / That Riviera Touch / Indians / A-Wassailing / Not Now - Later / Me And My Shadow / Just Around The Corner / Boom Oo Yata-Ta-Ta / Tape Recorder / We're The Guys / The Happiest Christmas Of All / Singing The Blues / Songs Of Youth / Positive Thinking / Get It Right Corporal / The Pilbroch Bla / Now That You're Here / Your Loving Smile / The Ambassador Of Khasiland / The "B" Side / Impressions / Why Did I Let You Go / Battery Chickens / Grieg Piano Concerto / Bring Me Sunshine

television soundtracks

It's Morecambe And Wise

B.B.C. LP RED 128M

(reissued as REC 534: **The B.B.C. T.V. Shows**)

Here You Are, 45 Minutes Of Fun And Laughter / Eric Morecambe, You'll Do Anything For A Laugh / There's A Lot Of Flu About - Flu's A Nasty Thing / The Diamond Ring In The Window / Ern, You Have Got A Magnificent Body / Carry On Ern / A Visit From The Police - Are You Mrs. T. Potter? / Welcome To The Show / I'm Going To Be Bob Hope's Chief Scriptwriter / Finale

Morecambe And Wise Christmas Special

B.B.C. 2CD 0563 53683 7

90 minutes of highlights from 1969 to 1975

radio soundtracks

So, What Do You Think Of The Show So Far?

B.B.C. LP REB 210

Overture And Beginners "When Was The Last Time We Did Radio?" / Byron And Keats "Oh What A Treat, When Two Poets Meet" / A Marriage With Licence "Have You Told Her About Teddy?" / Pilchards "Shall I Tell You What's Coming On Telly?" / Bath Time For Ernie "What's This Contraption Hanging On The Door?" / The Spy With The Cold Nose (A Play What Ernie Wrote)

Morecambe & Wise - Bring Me Sunshine

B.B.C. double-cassette ZBBC 1611 (reissued as ZBBC 1928), 2CD 0563 52809 5

reissue of LPs: *It's Morecambe And Wise* and *So What Do You Think Of The Show So Far?*

Morecambe & Wise 2 - What Do You Think Of It So Far?

B.B.C. double-cassette ZBBC 1734

broadcasts of February 2 1975, February 9 1975, September 5 1976 and September 12 1976

Morecambe & Wise 3 - You Can't See The Join

B.B.C. double-cassette ZBBC 2134

broadcasts of September 26 1976, October 10 1976, December 11 1977 and March 25 1978

Videos

Two Of A Kind (6 volumes of A.T.V. highlights)

I.T.C. Home Video

Morecambe And Wise - The Classic Collection (5 volumes of B.B.C. highlights)

Watershed Video

Morecambe And Wise Musical Extravaganzas

B.B.C. Video

(reissued as DVD **The Best Of Morecambe And Wise**)

Comedy Greats - Morecambe & Wise

B.B.C. Video

(reissued as DVD)

The World Of Morecambe And Wise

Thames Video

(reissued as Laser Disc)

The Very Best Of Morecambe And Wise

Thames Video

Christmas With Morecambe And Wise

Thames Video

Eric And Ernie's Christmas Show

Thames Video

Eric And Ernie Live

Polygram Video

Christmas Cracker

Polygram Video

Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy

by Peter Tatchell

HE was probably the most well known ventriloquist in the world, whose enormous fame derived from the unlikely medium of radio. Edgar Bergen's success rested squarely on the shoulders of a forty pound block of wood named Charlie McCarthy, a character so endearing and believable that the pair conquered vaudeville, movies and the airwaves across America.

Born in Michigan in 1903 of Swedish immigrant parents named Berggren, from an early age Edgar was fascinated by touring troupes of show people. His hobbies were magic and ventriloquism and a wood carving barman named Mack created a dummy for the teenager, who imbued it with the cocky, quick-witted personality of a red-headed Irish school friend named Charlie.

Deserting a college education studying medicine to tread the boards, Edgar Bergen and "Charlie McCarthy" spent the 1920s working their way across the small-time vaudeville circuits and tent shows, finally landing a spot on the bill at Broadway's legendary Palace Theatre in 1930. Edgar also made his film debut the same year, appearing in a succession of movie shorts.

But the early thirties was a tough time to be in show business, with the arrival of the talkies and radio proving a knockout blow for vaudeville theatres, which quickly replaced live performers with those on celluloid.

In desperation, Edgar upgraded his act and began appearing in late night supper clubs, the duo now wearing dress suits, with Charlie even sporting a monocle. Recommendations by famed party-giver Elsa Maxwell and Noel Coward led to a booking at the prestigious Rainbow Room in Manhattan and a spot on Rudy Vallee's radio show at the end of 1936. The single appearance was extended to three months and America's hottest ventriloquist was then signed for his own weekly programme.

The Chase And Sanborn Hour had begun on N.B.C. in 1931 as a vehicle for Eddie Cantor, but the revamped version of six years later starred Edgar and Charlie, Nelson Eddy, Don Ameche and Dorothy Lamour with a few months of guest appearances by W.C. Fields. The on-air battles between Charlie and the larger-than-life movie comedian were some of the funniest the medium ever produced and led to a number of return bouts until Fields' death in 1946.

Another comedy legend from the movies also made a notable visit to the programme at the end of 1937. Signing Mae West to appear in a skit about Adam and Eve was bound to cause controversy but no one seemed to have noticed the double-meanings her script contained or imagined the furore they would create. Bergen's wholesome, upstanding character was able to weather the backlash from the offended religious masses, but West was uniformly banned from the airwaves for over ten years.

As for the programme itself, *The Chase And Sanborn Hour* was the most popular on air and Edgar and Charlie were soon back in the movies themselves, but this time in full-length features, not shorts.

By January 1940, skyrocketing advertising rates meant the show was trimmed to thirty minutes, the spotlight now firmly on Edgar, Charlie and an assortment of new dolls he was busily creating. There was Mortimer Snerd, the slow-witted hayseed (who later became an inspiration for the *Goon Show's* Eccles), old maid Effie Klinker and Podine Puffington.

The Edgar Bergen - Charlie McCarthy Show of the 1940s also gave birth to a regular segment highlighting the unhappily-married Bickersons, featuring Don Ameche and Frances Langford as the warring spouses, which eventually spawned its own half hour series in 1946.

For eligible bachelor Bergen himself, 1945 saw him embark on a much happier married life than his radio characters, with he and bride Frances remaining together for the rest of his life. May 1946 saw the birth of their daughter Candy who, as a six-year-old, would make her show business debut on the radio programme, many years before becoming Candice Bergen, the movie and television star.

Edgar and Charlie had become radio perennials ... a nine-month break from the airwaves in 1949, returning with a new sponsor (Coca Cola) on a new network (C.B.S.), didn't dampen the show's popularity. (Coke also backed two Bergen television specials during the momentous 1950/1 season).

Edgar's Sunday night radio programme had become an institution ... it stayed on air until 1956, outlasting Benny, Hope, Crosby, Cantor, Burns & Allen and all the other broadcasting giants.

However, despite ventriloquism being regarded as a visual form of entertainment, and Bergen being acknowledged as the master of the craft, he didn't really achieve much success on television. He hosted a game show *Do You Trust Your Wife?* for a little over a year in the mid-1950s, then stepped out of the spotlight.

Wise real estate investments throughout his radio years ensured he no longer needed to perform, but Edgar continued to entertain at venues from county fairs to elegant night clubs throughout the sixties and seventies.

By 1978 Bergen's health was failing and he reluctantly announced his retirement. His final appearance would be a three week engagement that September at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. Audiences were thrilled by the artist and his wooden offsider in an immaculate performance that brought back two old friends for a last nostalgic encore. It was a triumph, but three days into the run, Edgar died in his sleep.

A year later, movie audiences could see one final glimpse of the entertainer ... a cameo appearance he'd filmed for *The Muppet Movie*, the brainchild of Jim Henson, whose legendary creations took their inspiration from a radio ventriloquist named Edgar Bergen and his dummy called Charlie McCarthy.



Radio

THE CHASE AND SANBORN HOUR/PROGRAM (NBC)

Series 1: Sunday 8-00pm May 9 1937 to December 31 1939 (60 min)

with Don Ameche, Dorothy Lamour, Werner Janssen Orchestra (until June 27), Robert Armbruster Orchestra (from July 4)

Series 2: Sunday 8-00pm January 7 to June 30 1940 (30 min)

Series 3: Sunday 8-00pm September 1 1940 to June 29 1941 with Donald Dickson, Robert Armbruster Orchestra

Series 4: Sunday 8-00pm September 7 1941 to June 28 1942 with Abbott & Costello, Ray Noble Orchestra

Series 5: Sunday 8-00pm September 6 1942 to May 30 1943 with Don Ameche, Ray Noble Orchestra

Series 6: Sunday 8-00pm September 5 1943 to May 28 1944 with William Gaxton, Victor Moore, Dale Evans, Ray Noble Orchestra

Series 7: Sunday 8-00pm September 3 1944 to June 3 1945

Series 8: Sunday 8-00pm September 2 1945 to May 26 1946

Series 9: Sunday 8-00pm September 1 1946 to May 25 1947

Series 10: Sunday 8-00pm September 7 1947 to May 30 1948

Series 11: Sunday 8-00pm October 3 1948 to December 26 1948

with Don Ameche

THE EDGAR BERGEN AND CHARLIE McARTHUR SHOW (CBS)

Series 1: Sunday 8-00pm October 2 1949 to May 28 1950 sponsor: Coca Cola

Series 2: Sunday 8-00pm October 8 1950 to June 3 1951 sponsor: Coca Cola

Series 3: Sunday 8-00pm October 7 1951 to June 1 1952 sponsor: Coca Cola

Series 4: Sunday 8-00pm October 5 1952 to May 31 1953 sponsor: Richard Hudnut

Series 5: Sunday 9-30pm October 11 1953 to June 24 1954

Series 6: Sunday 9-00pm September 12 1954 to February 20 1955 (60 min)

sponsor: Kraft Cheese

Series 7: Sunday 7-00pm October 2 1955 to July 1 1956 (60 min)

Television

* debut on Hour Glass (NBC November 14 1946)

THE EDGAR BERGEN AND CHARLIE McARTHUR SHOW

#1: CBS Thursday 5-00pm November 23 1950 (30 min) with Diana Lynn, Jim Backus, Pat Patrick

#2: CBS Friday 9-30pm April 30 1951 (30 min) with Dorothy Kirsten, The Wiere Brothers

DO YOU TRUST YOUR WIFE? (half-hour game show)
CBS January 3 1956 to March 26 1957

Movies

- 1930 The Operation (short)
- The Office Scandal (short)
- 1933 Africa Speaks ... English (short)
- Free And Easy (short)
- 1934 At The Races (short)
- Pure Feud (short)
- 1935 All American Drawback (short)
- Two Boobs In A Balloon (short)
- 1936 Two Minutes To Play (short)
- 1938 The Goldwyn Follies
- Letter Of Introduction
- 1939 Charlie McCarthy, Detective
- You Can't Cheat An Honest Man
- 1941 Look Who's Laughing
- 1942 Here We Go Again
- 1943 Stage Door Canteen
- 1944 Song Of The Open Road
- 1947 Fun And Fancy Free
- 1948 I Remember Mama
- 1949 Captain China
- 1950 Charlie McCarthy & Mortimer Snerd In Sweden (short)
- 1964 The Hanged Man (telemovie)
- 1965 One-Way Wahine
- 1967 Don't Make Waves
- Rogue's Gallery
- 1968 The Phynx
- 1971 The Homecoming (telemovie)
- 1975 Won Ton Ton, The Dog Who Saved Hollywood
- 1979 The Muppet Movie

Recordings

W.C. FIELDS ON RADIO

Columbia LP CS 9890

The Skunk Trap / Children / Old Friends And Old Wine / Feathered Friends / Moths (plus five non Bergen tracks)

THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF LARSEN E. WHIPSNAD AND OTHER TARADIDDLES

Columbia KC 33240

Life Among The Bolivians / Romeo And Juliet / Scurvy Among The Extras, Jabberwocky & Etcetera (plus three non Bergen tracks)

THE GREAT RADIO FEUDS

Columbia KC 33241

Communing With Nature / Fathers' Day / The Golf Game / Elephants Et Al / Laughs Take A Holiday

THE UNCENSORED W.C. FIELDS

Murray Hill 3LP M5467X

side four features Bergen & McCarthy segments

THE EDGAR BERGEN SHOW

Radiola LP MR 1034

includes broadcasts of May 3 1942 and November 9 1952

FRACTURED FAIRY TALES

Radiola LP MR 1096

includes Screen Guild Theatre: Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs, plus three segments

MAE WEST ON THE CHASE AND SANBORN HOUR

Radiola LP MR 1126

The Chase & Sanborn Hour of December 12 1937 (60 min)

CHARLIE McCARTHY RIDES AGAIN

Radiola LP MR 1157

includes broadcasts of November 16 1941 and October 12 1947

THE CHASE AND SANBORN SHOW

Mark 56 LP 615

includes segments

EDGAR BERGEN

Mark 56 LP 740

includes segments

EDGAR BERGEN AND CHARLIE McCARTHY

Memorabilia LP MLP 713

EDGAR BERGEN AND CHARLIE McCARTHY

Murray Hill 3LP 60130

includes three complete shows: plus segments

THE GREAT RADIO COMEDIANS

Murray Hill 5LP 931699

includes broadcast of January 7 1945

LESSONS IN VENTRILOQUISM

Juro LP EB 591

RADIO'S GREATEST COMEDIANS

MMP CD 724-3, J.C. Entertainment 8008

Charlie Stays Out Late / Mortimer Gets A New Job / Charlie Needs A Lawyer / Charlie Caddies For W.C. Fields / Charlie's Pet Rabbits / Charlie Goes To The Hospital / Mortimer Gets The Hiccups / Bergen Plays Football / Charlie Sees A Psychiatrist / Charlie Studies For A Test

THE BEST OF EDGAR BERGEN AND CHARLIE McCARTHY

Metacom/Listener's Choice CD RM 0482212

segments

THE EDGAR BERGEN AND CHARLIE McCARTHY SHOW

Radio Spirits CD 7702

The Chase & Sanborn Hour of September 12 1937 (60 min)

THE EDGAR BERGEN AND CHARLIE McCARTHY SHOW

Radio Spirits 3CD 27822

includes the Chase & Sanborn Hour of July 11, August 1 and August 22 1937 (3 x 60 min)

ESCAPE / THE CHARLIE McCARTHY SHOW

Radio Spirits 2CD 80072

includes The Chase & Sanborn Hour of July 24 1938 (60 min)

THE SMITHSONIAN COLLECTION - OLD TIME RADIO COMEDY FAVORITES

Radio Spirits 4CD SCFD 1 - 4

includes broadcast of May 23 1943

THE SMITHSONIAN COLLECTION - OLD TIME RADIO COMEDY AND LAUGHTER

Radio Spirits 4CD SCLD 1 - 4

includes broadcast of June 11 1953

THE SMITHSONIAN COLLECTION - OLD TIME RADIO ALL-TIME FAVORITES

Radio Spirits 4CD SAFD 1 - 4

includes broadcast of September 12 1943

THE SMITHSONIAN COLLECTION - OLD TIME RADIO SHOWBIZ TEAMS

Radio Spirits 4CD SSTD 1 - 4

includes broadcast of November 17 1946

OLD-TIME RADIO COMEDY SUPERSTARS

Radio Spirits 20CD 4482

includes broadcasts of January 5, 12, 19 and 26, February 2, 9, 16 and 23, March 2 and 9 1947

OLD-TIME RADIO'S GREATEST COMEDIES

Radio Spirits 20CD 4209

includes broadcasts of April 25 1943, May 2 1943, October 15 1944 and November 2 1947

THE 60 GREATEST OLD-TIME RADIO SHOWS OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Radio Spirits 30CD ISBN 1-57019-244-8

includes broadcast of December 12 1937 (60 min)

THE GREATEST OLD-TIME RADIO SHOWS OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Radio Spirits 20CD 40662

includes broadcast of December 12 1937 (60 min)

OLD-TIME RADIO'S 60 ALL-TIME FAVORITES

Radio Spirits 30CD 4462

includes broadcast of April 11 1943

RADIO'S GREATEST CHRISTMAS SHOWS

Radio Spirits 10CD 47122

includes broadcast of December 24 1944

RADIO COMEDY CLASSICS

Radio Spirits 6CD 50432

includes broadcast of March 26 1946

THE CHARLIE McCARTHY SHOW - Volume 1

Radio Spirits 6 cassette 4098

includes broadcasts of February 4 1945, April 22 1945, May 9 1947, September 14 1947, September 21 1947, September 28 1947, October 5 1947, October 19 1947, October 26 1947, November 9 1947, November 16 1947, November 23 1947, November 30 1947, December 7 1947, December 14 1947, April 4 1948, October 17 1948, December 26 1948

THE CHARLIE McCARTHY SHOW - Volume 2

Radio Spirits 6 cassette 4115

includes broadcasts of April 21 1940, June 28 1942, November 12 1944, December 3 1944, December 24 1944, September 9 1945, September 16 1945, September 23 1945, September 30 1945, October 14 1945, October 21 1945, November 4 1945, October 5 1952, December 26 1954 plus four undated shows

THE CHARLIE McCARTHY SHOW - Volume 3

Radio Spirits 6 cassette 4688

includes broadcasts of May 9 1937, June 13 1937, August 8 1937, August 22 1937, October 3 1937, August 14 1938, September 5 1943, March 24 1946, October 2 1949, October 9 1949, April 15 1951, January 17 1954

THE BEST OF BORIS KARLOFF

Radio Spirits 9CD 47132

includes broadcast of October 28 1945

TOO HOT FOR RADIO

Great American Audio Corporation 5CD 49501

includes broadcasts of December 12 1937 and November 9 1952

THE GREAT RADIO COMEDIES

Great American Audio Corporation 3CD 49703

includes broadcast with Dick Powell

DVD

THE EDGAR BERGEN AND CHARLIE McCARTHY SHOW / THE LIFE OF RILEY / OUR MISS BROOKS

Radio Spirits DVD 7803

includes one half hour tv show from the 1950s

Book

Knock Wood

by Candice Bergen (Hamish Hamilton, 1984)

Don Ameche and Frances Langford as

The Bickersons

Radio

Drene Time:

NBC September 8 1946 - June 1 1947

with Danny Thomas

Old Gold Time:

NBC September 24 1947 - June 25 1948

with Frank Morgan

The Chase And Sanborn Show:

NBC October 3 to December 26 1948

with Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy

Recordings

The Bickersons

Columbia LP (1960s)

Breakfast With John And Blanche / The Bickersons At Sea / Wedding Anniversary / Later That Same Evening

The Bickersons Fight Back

Columbia LP (1960s)

Round I / Round II / Round III / Round IV

The Bickersons

Radiola LP MR-1115

from Old Gold Time:

The Easter Parade (March 28 1948) / Blanche's Birthday Present (November 15 1947) / The Tax Refund (June 11 1948) / The Operation (November 26 1947) / Happy Anniversary (June 4 1948) / Moving Day (June 18 1948)

The Return Of The Bickersons

Radiola 3LP 3MR-4

from Drene Time:

The New Puppy (January 12 1947) / The New Tux (February 9 1947) / Amos Does Time (February 23 1947) / The Business Trip (March 2 1947) / The Race Track Tout (March 16 1947) / The Fishing Pole (March 30 1947) / The Bachelor Party (April 13 1947) / The Will (May 18 1947) / Amos Borrows The Car (c spring 1947) /

from Old Gold Time:

The Reading Of The Will (Chase & Sanborn: May 9 1947) / The Vacation Trailer (April 16 1948) / A Sprained Ankle (April 23 1948) / The Streetcar Conductor (April 28 1948) / The Kitty's Litter (May 7 1948) / Two Weeks With Pay (May 14 1948) / An Eight-Horse Parlay (May 21 1948) / The Presidential Suite (May 28 1948) / The Vacation Trailer (Chase & Sanborn: December 28 1948)

Peter Brough and Archie Andrews

by Mark McKay

RADIO in the 1940s seemed to venture into some ludicrously inappropriate areas, with broadcasts of darts, ballroom dancing, chess,... even ventriloquism. However, this very visual art proved extremely popular on the wireless on both sides of the Atlantic, most significantly due to Edgar Bergen in the US and Peter Brough in Britain.

Peter's father, Arthur Brough (no relation to the *Are You Being Served?* actor of the same name), was also a music hall ventriloquist — his last performance was with his dummy Hugo Fitch in the Ealing film classic, *Dead Of Night*. As well as following in the old man's footsteps on the stage, Brough Jr. also went on to join him in the textile business. Together they started an agency representing Scottish mills and the local Highland weavers and crofters.

Invalidated out of his army 'Stars in Battledress' unit, Peter began to reshape his vent act and came up with a new character for his dummy — that of a fourteen year old boy. A 1943 Pathé short shows the dapper young Brough performing with a small disembodied boy's head on a stick. The doll's voice and appearance are nearly there, but not the name. That was supplied by the famous ITMA scriptwriter, Ted Kavanagh, who christened him Archie Andrews*.

Peter Brough and Archie Andrews made their first BBC broadcast in *Music Hall* and were later awarded their own regular spot in the forces entertainment, *Navy Mixture*. Following a minor series with 'the voice of them all', impressionist Peter Cavanagh, and assorted one-offs in *Variety Bandbox* and *Workers' Playtime*, Archie was finally given his own primetime series in 1950.

The show was loosely based around the private tutelage of Master A. Andrews and hence titled *Educating Archie*. A talented cast of newcomers was assembled, including Hattie Jacques, Max Bygraves, thirteen year-old singing sensation Julie Andrews, and as tutor, fruity-voiced silly-ass Robert Moreton. The scripts were furnished by Sid Colin, already responsible for popular programmes like *Ignorance Is Bliss* and *Hi, Gang! 1949*, and a young man who had been writing material for Frankie Howerd, Eric Sykes.

Educating Archie proved an immediate success and by the end of the year was voted the most outstanding variety series at the National Radio Awards (an achievement repeated two years later). Originally commissioned for six episodes, it went on to run for a decade with numerous cast changes, reading like a veritable 'who's who' of British comedy. Tony Hancock, Harry Secombe, Ronald Shiner, James Robertson Justice, Bruce Forsyth and Sid James all played tutor to Archie, while additional characters were provided by Bernard Miles, Warren Mitchell, Ken Platt, Graham Stark and Bernard Bresslaw.

Two supporting actors deserve special mention... Beryl Reid, who made a great impression as cheeky schoolgirl Monica (invariably dressed for the role in gymslip and boater) and later as the wonderfully unflappable Marlene from the

Midlands, and Dick Emery, who portrayed the servile Grimble and Mr. Monty the spiv, demonstrating an individual gift for comic characterisations later given free reign in his TV series.

The 1954 series (renamed *Archie's The Boy!*) introduced Benny Hill and dropped the concept of a tutor, with no discernible ill effects. Eric Sykes had departed following a disagreement concerning Beryl Reid, and subsequent scripts were produced by Ronald Wolfe and Ronald Chesney (who went on pen hit TV shows like *The Rag Trade* and *On The Buses*) and comic hero, Marty Feldman.

Meanwhile Archie was also delighting theatre audiences, either as an act on a variety bill, or in his own *Archie Andrews' Christmas Party* shows. The royal family were all keen fans of the mischievous schoolboy and Brough made regular visits to Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace, often as organiser of the Household party concert. It was after one of these performances that King George VI removed Archie's head to examine his workings, causing the dummy to quip, 'Sir, I'm the only fellow you've ever beheaded in your reign'.

Although initially conceived as an adult entertainment, *Educating Archie's* appeal to children was obvious and shrewd businessman Brough was quick to capitalise on this, with a range of tie-in merchandise. As well as kids' books and records, Archie lent his name and likeness to jigsaw puzzles, keyrings, items of clothing, dolls, ice cream, lollies and even soap!

In 1957 Peter took a trip down under, where his radio show had been regularly transmitted by the Australian Broadcasting Commission for the past four years. Archie and Brough topped the bill in the Tivoli theatre circuit's *Calypso Capers*, and recorded a special series for the ABC with support from local performers.

The following year, back in Britain, *Educating Archie* transferred to television in an ambitious telerecorded series made for Associated-Rediffusion. The star received a radical makeover, resulting in more cartoon-like features, consistent with the public's perception of a cheeky schoolboy. Technical innovations enabled him to talk without visible aid and even to walk about unhindered. Dick Emery appeared as Mr. Monty and the gardener, Freddie Sales as a next-door neighbour and the wonderful Irene Handl played Mrs. Twissle, the housekeeper.

Brough quit showbusiness in 1961, following the death of his father. He felt obliged to take over the running of the family textile and menswear business, which would leave him little time for performing. Occasionally he could be encouraged to bring Archie out of retirement for the odd special appearance, but eventually Father Time caught up with him. Peter spent his last years in an actors home and passed away on 3rd June 1999. Poor Archie hasn't uttered a word since.

* It is not known whether Kavanagh was influenced by Archibald "Archie" Andrews, the American comic strip teenager, who had made his first appearance in print a couple of years earlier, and by this time was featuring in his own US radio series.



Radio

Navy Mixture

Peter Brough & Archie Andrews appeared in a regular segment, **Archie Takes The Helm** on the General Forces Programme from 4 May 1944 to 25 January 1945.

Script by Ted Kavanagh & Sid Colin

Two's A Crowd

With Peter Brough & Archie Andrews, Peter Cavanagh

Script by Gene Crowley

Light Programme, Thursdays, 19 February to 8 April 1948 (8×20mins)

Educating Archie

With Peter Brough & Archie Andrews, Max Bygraves (series 1&3), Hattie Jacques (series 1-4), Robert Moreton (series 1), Ronald Chesney, Julie Andrews (series 1-2), Peter Madden (series 1-5), Tony Hancock (series 2), Beryl Reid (series 3-7), Harry Secombe (series 3-4), Ronald Shiner (series 4), Bernard Miles (series 4), Benny Hill (series 5), Graham Stark (series 5-6), Shirley Eaton (series 5), James Robertson Justice (series 6), Ken Platt (series 6-7), Dick Emery (series 7-10), Alexander Gauge (series 7), Warren Mitchell (series 8-10), Pearl Carr (series 8), Bernard Bresslaw (series 9), Bruce Forsyth (series 10), Sid James (series 10).

Script by Eric Sykes (series 1-4), Sid Colin (series 1-2), Ronald Wolfe (series 4-10), Eddie Maguire (series 5), George Wadmore (series 6-8), Pat Dunlop (series 6-7), Ronald Chesney (series 9-10), Marty Feldman (9-10)

Series 1: Light Programme, Tuesdays (except 1/22 on Monday), 6 June to 19 December 1950 (29×30mins)

Special: **Archie Andrews' Christmas Party**

Light Programme, Tuesday, 26 December 1950 (30mins)

Special: **Archie Andrews' Easter Party**

Light Programme, Monday, 26 March 1951 (30mins)

Series 2: Light Programme, Fridays, 3 August 1951 to 25 January 1952 (26×30mins)

Special: **Archie Andrews' Party**

Light Programme, Wednesday, 26 December 1951 (30mins)

Series 3: Light Programme, Thursdays, 18 September 1952 to 12 February 1953 & 21 May to 25 June 1953 (including **Archie Andrews' Christmas Party** on 25 Dec 1952) (28×30mins)

Series 4: Light Programme, Thursdays, 15 October 1953 to 1 April 1954 (25×30mins)

Special: **Archie In Goonland**

Home Service, Friday, 11 June 1954 (30mins)

Series 5 (retitled **Archie's The Boy!**): Light Programme, Thursdays, 11 November 1954 to 24 March 1955 (20×30mins)

Series 6: Light Programme, Fridays, 30 September 1955 to 10 February 1956 (20×30mins)

Special: **At Home**

Light Programme, Monday, 21 May 1956 (30mins)

Series 7: Light Programme, Wednesdays, 19 September 1956 to 13 March 1957 (26×30mins)

Series 8: Light Programme, Wednesdays, 25 September 1957 to 19 March 1958 (26×30mins)

Series 9: Light Programme, Sundays, 28 September 1958 to 22 March 1959 (26×30mins)

Series 10: Light Programme, Wednesdays, 7 October 1959 to 17 February 1960 (20×30mins)

• *The following episodes are known to survive: 1/22, 2/12, 3/13, 4/18, 4/25, 5/1, 5/?, 5/20, 7/3, 7/?, 7/?, 7/?, 7/?, 7/20, 8/3, 8/14, 9/23 (hopefully a significant number of the episodes issued by the Transcription Service may also exist.)*

Archie In Australia

With Peter Brough & Archie Andrews, Ray Barrett, Wendy Blacklock, Ronald Chesney, Reg Goldsworthy, Reg Quartly, June Salter

Script by Ronnie Wolfe & Hugh Stuckey

ABC, Tuesdays, 28 May to 10 September 1957 (16×30mins)

• *The last episode of this series survives and was broadcast on the BBC Light Programme on Wednesday, 18 September 1957*

Television

Here's Archie

BBC-TV, Wednesday, 30 May 1956 (45mins)

Educating Archie

With Peter Brough & Archie Andrews, Irene Handl, Dick Emery, Freddie Sales

Script by Ronald Wolfe, Ronald Chesney, Marty Feldman
Series 1: Associated-Rediffusion, Fortnightly (later weekly) on Fridays, 26 September 1958 to 20 February 1959 (13×30mins)

Series 2: Associated-Rediffusion, Weekly on Fridays, 18 September to 25 December 1959 (15×30mins)

Recordings

Jack And The Beanstalk (incl. "When We Grow Up")

(with Peter Madden, Hattie Jacques & Julie Andrews)
HMV 78rpm

Archie Andrews' Little Stories

(No. 1 Nobby Nightingale/No. 2 The Robin's Reward etc.)
series of HMV 10" 78rpm discs (1951)

Dummy Song/By The Light Of The Silvery Moon (with Max Bygraves)

HMV 78rpm B.10444

The Red Robin Cantata/Lovely Dollar Lolly (with Max Bygraves)

HMV 78rpm B.10491

Big Head/Say "Si Si" (with Max Bygraves)

HMV 78rpm B.10546

Max Bygraves and Peter Brough & Archie Andrews

HMV 7" EP 7EG 8061

Jack And The Beanstalk/Ginger And The Bird's Eggs/Herbert The Hedgehog And Freddy The Fieldmouse (with Peter Madden, Hattie Jacques & Julie Andrews)

HMV (Australia) 7" EP 7EGO-70005 (1957)

Vintage Variety

BBC LP REC 134M (1973)

features an extract from *Educating Archie* episode 3/13

Educating Archie

BBC Radio Collection double cassette ZBBC 1135 (1994)

with episodes 1/22*, 3/13*, 4/18, 7/20 (*musical item cut)

Books

Educating Archie

by Peter Brough (Stanley Paul hbk 1955)

Archie Andrews Calling Books 1 to 5

(Macmillan hbks 1951-1952)

Archie Andrews Painting Book

(Edwyn A. Birks 1951)

Archie Andrews' Annual Nos. 1 to 5

(Preview Publications/Andrew Dakers hbks early 1950s)

The New Archie Andrews' Annual

(Thames hbk 1958)



• THREE'S A CROWD recordings known to survive

*broadcast on 3DB (Melbourne) Sundays at 8:30pm
from September 9 1956 to March 3 1957,*

and 2UE (Sydney) Sundays at 7:30pm

*from September 16 (or 23) 1956 to February 17 1957,
then Saturdays at 7:30pm from March 2 to 30 1957.*

The following editions survive in the *ScreenSound* collection

- #5 (first half only) Smuggling
- #6 (first half only) Criticism
- #11 The First Australian Midget Submarine
- #12 Atomic Research/Flight Pioneers, The Drongo Brothers
- #13 A.B.C. Radio Covers The Grasshopper Plague
- #14 Ancient Roman Olympics
- #15 Special Australian Long Range Desert Assault Group
- #16 The Antarctic Ice-Cap Refreezing Expedition
- #17 Elizabethan England
- #18 The Blotting Paper Bomb
- #19 A Tour Of Sydney
- #20 The Daily Smut
- #21 Ned Kelly
- #22 The Millie Drongo Story
- #23 The Forged Three Pound Notes
- #24 A Town Like Aunty Freda
- #25 The Amazon Expedition
- #26 The End Of The World
- #27 Gun-Running On The North-West Frontier Of India
- #28 The Motor Car
- #29 The Prisoner Of Pervania
(* includes impersonation of *Goon Show* characters)
- #30 The Secret List Of Dr. Chu Manfu
- #31 The Show Is Jammed In The Typewriter
- #32 The Three Musketeers Reincarnated
- #33 The Adventures Of Sheerluck Bonehead
- #34 Life Can Be Absolutely Ghastly

Three's A Crowd

by Peter Tatchell

IN 1956, at the conclusion of a variety tour of Tivoli theatres, visiting British comedian Michael Bentine was signed for a series of radio half hours by the 3DB / 2UE network.

Born in London (of Peruvian ancestry), Bentine had teamed with Spike Milligan, Peter Sellers and Harry Secombe to create the B.B.C.'s groundbreaking **The Goon Show** five years earlier, but had left the series after its second season in mid-1952 owing to creative differences. (It was apparently an amicable split, and he remained firm friends with the other participants throughout the rest of their careers).

A year later he was back on B.B.C. radio in the Charlie Chester series **Come To Char-lee** (Light Programme February 26 to May 14 1953) before creating the tv puppet series **The Bumbles** (12 ten-minute editions aired between February and December 1954). Soon after, he sailed for Australia.

According to his autobiography *The Long Banana Skin* (Wolfe Publishing, 1975), Bentine and family were about to return home after their thirteen month stay when "an Englishman called Eric Pierce (*sic*) rang and offered me a year's work, writing and recording my own radio programme". Later, the doyen of television newsreaders, Eric Pearce, was at the time Programme Manager at 3DB Melbourne.

One might suspect the offer was not only inspired by Bentine's success at the Tivoli ... the A.B.C. had begun broadcasting **The Goon Show** in its prime Sunday night slot the previous November. And while nothing earlier than the show's fifth season was ever aired outside Britain, Bentine's connection with its early days was well known and both relied on the same zany style of humour.

With John Bluthal and David Nettheim contributing a range of character voices, production started on **Three's A Crowd** in autumn 1956. Also on hand were announcer Howard Craven, organist Des Tanner and Frank Scott at the piano.

A major feature of the series, which was pre-recorded well in advance of broadcast, was the use of early multi-track tape machines, allowing a level of technical wizardry that would have been impossible only a few years before. Although present for its first few episodes, **Three's A Crowd** soon abandoned the use of a studio audience and, as a result, was able to rely more heavily on editing in complicated vocal effects. Bentine's radio and television career was noted for the creative use of intricate visual and audio devices.

In his **Goon Show** days, Bentine had played the eccentric inventor/explorer Professor Osric Pureheart. His antipodean equivalent became Professor Bonehead, who appears as the protagonist in most of the episodes. Other regular inhabitants of the show's 'surreality' were Bluthal and Nettheim's intellectually anorexic Bert and Fred Drongo, who often engaged in lengthy conversations that rarely departed the monotone.

After a page or two of byplay, each script then sent up a well-known historical saga (ancient Olympics, knights of the round table, the three musketeers, Ned Kelly) or a previously secret wartime mission (involving midget submarines, U-boats or desert campaigns). Contemporary subjects like insect plagues or melting ice-caps were featured, as were less frenetic topics such as freedom of the press or a tour of Sydney. One episode

used a number of unrelated recordings when the intended broadcast finds itself jammed in the typewriter. Another becomes a pastiche of *The Prisoner Of Zenda*, which somehow finds itself infested with characters from **The Goon Show!**

Unlike its B.B.C. prototypes, **Three's A Crowd** avoided the inclusion of spots by vocalists, singing groups or harmonica players. It did, however, regularly feature a musical offering ... either an original satirical composition or an old perennial like *Greensleeves*, *Colonel Bogey*, *The Toreador Song* or *The William Tell Overture* emerging with newly-written lyrics, courtesy of Bentine and Nettheim.

Three's A Crowd debuted in September 1956 (just before the Melbourne Olympics and the arrival of television) and seems to have created hardly a ripple on the cultural consciousness. Scheduled on Sunday nights to capitalize on the A.B.C.'s popular **Take It From Here** 8:00pm timeslot, 2UE broadcast it before, 3DB had it after. Programme listings for both stations indicate no more than a couple of dozen episodes were actually aired (though more than thirty were produced).

Bentine's autobiography indicated he was eager to return to Britain when signed for the venture ... it would appear most were in the can (or on the tape spool) before any had actually made it to air. By then, Bentine and family were already headed home, and a press clipping indicates Nettheim too was London bound by September 23rd.

The pair would reunite to write and appear (with Peter Sellers) in a 6-part British commercial television series **Yes It's The Cathode-Ray Tube Show** from February 1957 and perform similar duties in the B.B.C. radio series **Round The Bend** (Light Programme October 13 1957 to January 5 1958).

John Bluthal too would benefit from his association with the ex-Goon, gaining from him an introduction to Spike Milligan, who visited Australia in 1958. Bentine's recommendation led to participation in Spike's A.B.C. projects **The Gladys Half Hour** (ABCTV October 17 1958) and **The Idiot's Weekly** (broadcast June 3 to August 19 1958, with a second season June 30 to September 22 1959). It was the start of a lifelong friendship, with Bluthal heading for London and eventually becoming part of Spike's "repertory company" for various radio, stage and tv shows spanning the next two decades.

All three stars of **Three's A Crowd** worked for many years in Britain. Bluthal starred in the sitcom **Never Mind The Quality, Feel The Width** (ABC/Thames TV 1967 - 1971, 6 series) while Nettheim appeared in such shows as radio's **The Men From The Ministry** and TV's **Doctor Who** as well as sending showbiz reports to A.B.C. radio's **The Showman**.

Michael Bentine's greatest success was with **It's A Square World** (BBCTV 1960 - 1964, 7 series) as well as the children's sketch series **Michael Bentine's Potty Time** (Thames TV 1973 to 1980). On radio, he did two more series of **Round The Bend** (BBC Home Service December 26 1958 to March 20 1959 and May 20 to August 12 1960), recorded a gallery of multi-tracked character sketches for **The Best Of Bentine** (BBC Radio 2 January 22 to February 26 and April 15 to May 27 1984) and put together a wealth of reminiscences for **The Reluctant Jester** (BBC Radio 2 September 7 to October 12 1993 and November 1 to December 6 1994).

He died of cancer in 1996.

Till Death Us Do Part

by Peter Tatchell

HE was a loud-mouthed racist, a sexist, a coward, an ill-informed social misfit and probably the most controversial sitcom character in television history. Alf Garnett divided a nation ... his thoughts and expressions were soon embraced by the very people being satirized and four decades later he is still being pilloried by the self-appointed champions of political correctness who have quite simply missed the point.

Till Death Us Do Part was the brainchild of Johnny Speight, who had emerged from a poverty-stricken East End upbringing to become one of Britain's leading comedy writers by the late 1950s. Speight's words had helped Arthur Haynes conquer commercial television, and when colleague Eric Sykes launched his long-running sitcom in 1960, Johnny provided the scripts for that opening season.

For ten years **The Arthur Haynes Show** offered cleverly written sketches that relied more on character examination than jokes, with the star often taking the part of opinionated tramps or frustrated breadwinners bemoaning society's ills. Haynes was an extremely talented performer, now largely forgotten, and certainly warrants exposure to present day audiences.

The 1965 season of the B.B.C.'s **Comedy Playhouse** (the series of one-off scripts that had launched **Steptoe And Son** four years earlier), saw a further Speight creation ... the bickering Ramsey family in their "two up, two down and one out the back" Wapping abode. Starring character actor Warren Mitchell as the main protagonist, the episode was an insightful examination of class, bigotry and the generation gap.

A year later, Arthur Haynes was dead from a sudden heart attack and Speight was asked to expand the Playhouse episode into a fully fledged series. **Till Death Us Do Part** debuted with two major changes... Alf's long-suffering wife Else (originally played by a mousy Gretchen Franklin) was now portrayed by the more amply proportioned Dandy Nichols. And the family had been renamed Garnett, to avoid any confusion with 1960s soccer identity Alf Ramsey. Sharing the household and the arguments were Una Stubbs as their married daughter Rita and Anthony Booth as her long-haired layabout husband Mike.

The seven part series created a furore with its blatant use of invectives and previously untouched subject matter. Not uncommon in the kitchen-sink dramas of the period, it was a reality generally avoided in the cosy world of the sitcom.

Britain was in the midst of "the swinging sixties" and with pop culture sexual attitudes and a progressive new Labour government, conflict between the age groups was inevitable. The Garnetts engaged in heated debates about everything from religion and politics to the influx of coloured immigrants.

Speight used words like "coons" and "sambos" to highlight and satirize the ignorance of people like Alf in their blanket bigotry against the thousands of West Indians and Pakistanis then settling in Britain. Unfortunately, many took exception to the racist language, missing the satire.

Despite the complaints, the B.B.C. commissioned a second series which aired a short five months later, attracting viewers in some eight million homes, making it one of the ten most watched programmes on air. By the third season (in early 1968), **Till Death Us Do Part** actually topped the ratings.

Popularity breeds merchandising and the quarrelling Garnetts inspired paperbacks and LP records. Being largely verbal in content, it's a shame the B.B.C. didn't produce a radio adaptation (as for **Whack-O!**, **Steptoe And Son** and later, **Dad's Army**), with amateur off-air soundtracks all that survive of most of these early black and white editions.

Till Death Us Do Part did switch media, though, jumping to the cinema screen with a movie which traced the wartime experiences of Alf and Else before evolving into the present day era of the series. The film made enough money to spawn a sequel (though neither Booth nor Stubbs was involved).

Then in 1972 it was back to the B.B.C. for a fourth season, this time in colour, and a Royal Command Performance two months into the run.

After the next series in 1974, Dandy Nichols decided to leave the show (for reasons of either ill-health or an ongoing personality clash, depending on your source). Else jets off to Australia to care for her sister Maud, and in her place (as next door neighbours Min and Bert), comedy veterans Patricia Hayes and Alfie Bass joined the cast. Roy Kinnear, Joan Sims, Pat Coombs and Hugh Lloyd also appeared from time to time.

By the end of 1975 (and over fifty editions), the B.B.C. decided the programme had had its day, but Johnny Speight's controversial creation was far from dead and buried. In 1977 Warren Mitchell performed a one-man stage show called **The Thoughts Of Chairman Alf** at London's Criterion Theatre and also took his character on a cabaret tour of Australia.

In 1981, A.T.V. decided to reunite Alf and Else on commercial television for a series called **Till Death ...** Filmed without a studio audience, it saw the Garnetts and newly-widowed Min sharing their retirement at seaside resort, Eastbourne. Una Stubbs also made occasional appearances, but after only six episodes, the cast again went their separate ways.

Four years later, the Garnetts were back at the B.B.C. for **In Sickness And In Health**. with a somewhat frail Dandy Nichols appearing as a wheelchair bound Else living in London with her cantankerous other half. Warren Mitchell would appear in his most famous role for six more seasons, totalling nearly as many episodes as in the original run.

Initially, the stories centred on Alf having to care for his now disabled wife but at the end of the first series, Dandy Nichols died. Speight's scripts then saw Alf coping with life as a widower and beginning an antagonistic relationship with the widow in the upstairs flat, Mrs. Hollingbery (played by Carmel McSharry). Their off-again on-again romance almost led to marriage, with Alf partial to her cooking and apparent financial prospects.

Supporting characters included Alf's drinking friend Arthur (Arthur English), his neighbour Mr. Johnson (Ken Campbell) and a gay West Indian social worker, Winston (Eamonn Walker). Una Stubbs also appeared (particularly throughout the second season), as did Patricia Hayes (in company with Irene Handl as her character Min's sister).

The series eventually wrapped up a healthy run in 1992, but Mitchell continued to revive Alf in several other one-man ventures until Johnny Speight's death six years later.

Alf Garnett was Speight's greatest creation ... without his exceptional writing Alf was finally lost for words.



Television

COMEDY PLAYHOUSE

BBC1 July 22 1965 (25 min)

4/8 **Till Death Us Do Part**

Series 1

BBC1 June 6 to August 1 1966 (not July 11) (7 x 30 min)

1/1 **Arguments, Arguments ...**

Alf and Mike argue politics but reconcile in the pub before returning home to a row with the womenfolk.

1/2 **Hair Raising**

Alf doesn't realize Mike has drawn a face on his bald head while he was asleep and wanders off to the pub.

1/3 **A House With Love In It**

To celebrate Alf and Else's silver wedding anniversary, Rita and Mike arrange a night out at an exclusive restaurant.

1/4 **Intolerance**

Alf receives a black eye at a cup final match in Scotland.

1/5 **Two Toilets ... That's Posh!**

To raise the deposit money for a home for himself and Rita, Mike tries to sell the Garnett house.

1/6 **From Liverpool With Love**

Mike's Irish parents are visiting, much to Alf's annoyance.

1/7 **Claustrophobia**

The Garnetts holiday in a solitary cottage in the west of England

Series 2

BBC1 December 26 1966 to February 27 1967 (10 x 30 min)

2/1 **Peace And Goodwill**

Christmas dinner is not so much peaceful as argumentative.

2/2 **Sex Before Marriage**

Alf and the family discuss the a TV documentary on free love while wallpapering the parlour.

2/3 **I Can Give It Up Any Time I Like**

Mike challenges Alf to give up smoking.

2/4 **The Bulldog Breed**

Charity appeals and an argument about the Vietnam war are interrupted by a driver parking his lorry outside.

2/5 **Caviar On The Dole**

Mike has been getting increased dole money by making out that Alf is a heartless money-grabbing landlord.

2/6 **A Woman's Place Is In The Home**

Alf arrives home to an empty house and burnt supper and tries to use the local phone box to remedy the situation.

2/7 **A Wapping Mythology (The Workers' King)**

Alf claims Edward the 8th was a friend of his father who used to attend the local football matches.

2/8 **In Sickness And In Health**

Alf's gets no sympathy for his stomach pains, which eventually lead to an operation in hospital.

2/9 **State Visit**

Alf isn't pleased about the Russian premier's impending visit.

2/10 **Alf's Dilemma**

Alf has a nasty attack of gastro-enteritis just when the toilet is in need of a plumber.

BBC1 March 27 1967 (40 min)

Till Closing Time Us Do Part

The Garnetts meet several TV personalities at the pub.

Series 3

BBC1 January 5 to February 16 1968 (7 x 30 min)

3/1 **The Phone**

Alf misses winning a £17 racing bet because the local call box is occupied so he decides to have a phone installed.

3/2 **The Blood Donor**

Alf's prejudiced views on transplant surgery provoke Mike to goad him into donating blood.

3/3 **Monopoly**

The family desert Alf for a neighbour's New Year's Eve party.

3/4 **The Funeral**

When the elderly lady across the road dies, Alf takes it upon himself to organise the "send off".

3/5 **Football**

The vicar asks Alf to coach the local junior team.

3/6 **The Dog**

Alf buys a mongrel pup in the pub.

3/7 **Aunt Maud**

With Else ill in bed, her sister Maud comes to help out.

(telerecordings survive of 1/1, 1/3, 2/1, 2/10, Till Closing Time Us Do Part, 3/1, 3/2 and 3/7. In addition to the sound extracts issued on commercial LPs, amateur off-air soundtracks also exist for all but 3/5 and 3/6.)

BBC1 June 18 1970 (20 min)

Up The Polls

BBC1 December 25 1971

Christmas Night With The Stars

Series 4

BBC1 September 13 to October 25 1972 (6 x 30 min)

4/1 To Garnett A Grandson

Alf visits the hospital to see his grandson for the first time

4/2 Pigeon Fancier

Alf makes a bet with a neighbour who races pigeons

4/3 Holiday In Bournemouth

The Garnetts are off to the seaside for their holiday, but the train journey is a portent of things to come

4/4 Dock Pilfering

After an argument over the breakfast table, Alf goes off to work with an empty lunchbox

4/5 Alf Takes The Baby (Up The Hammers)

Rita in unaware Alf and Mike have taken the baby to the football

4/6 Alf's Broken Leg

Being wheelchair bound with his leg in plaster doesn't stop Alf from going up the pub

BBC1 November 5 1972 (15 min)

Royal Variety Performance

The Garnetts watch the Royal Variety show on television

BBC1 December 26 1972 (45 min)

Christmas Special

The Garnetts go "up west" to see *Jesus Christ Superstar*

Series 5

BBC1 January 2 to February 13 (not Jan 16 or Feb 6),
February 19 and 28 1974 (7 x 30 min)

5/1 T.V. Licence

Alf doesn't feel he needs a licence if he only watches ITV

5/2 The Royal Wedding

Princess Anne's wedding inspires Alf to stage a street party

5/3 Strikes And Blackouts

The Garnett's game of Monopoly is disrupted by a blackout

5/4 The Demon Drink (aka Party Night)

Alf's hangover isn't helped by the champagne-inspired revelry of the rest of the household

5/5 Else's Three Day Week

The current political climate inspires Else to cut back her labour

5/6 Gran's Watch

With Gran apparently at death's door, Alf feels she would want him to have her valuable watch

5/7 Paki Paddy

Alf meets his new neighbour in the pub ... an Irish Pakistani

Series 6

BBC1 December 31 1974 and January 8 to February 12 1975
(7 x 30 min)

6/1 Else has decided to go and care for her sister in Australia

6/2 Alf decides to make a long distance call to Else

6/3 Alf gets involved when Min and Bert have a row

6/4 Min and Bert take part in the usual Garnett living room discussion about politics and foreigners

6/5 Alf's enjoyment of the Ali - Foreman fight on TV is spoilt by a phone call from Else

6/6 Alf is treasurer of the Christmas Savings Club

6/7 Else has written to Rita suggesting she, Mike and the baby join her in Australia

Series 7

BBC1 November 5 to December 17 1975 (not Dec 10)
(6 x 30 min)

7/1 Min's cooking lures Alf to move next door

7/2 Min has been engaged to cook and clean for Alf

7/3 Alf is booked for being drunk in charge of a bicycle

7/4 Alf is trapped on an upstairs ledge whilst window cleaning

7/5 Alf is new to golf but benefits from a "hole in one"

7/6 Alf has been made redundant and arrives home to a surprise birthday party

ATV December 26 1980 (30 min)

The Thoughts Of Chairman Alf - At Christmas

TILL DEATH ...

ATV May 17 to June 21 1981 (London: May 22 to July 3 1981, not Jun 26)

1 Alf, Else and Min brave the icy conditions on Eastbourne pier before taking drinks in the lounge at the Royal

2 Alf isn't a fan of the punks, either on the street or in the form of his grandson who is visiting with Rita

3 Arriving home after a drunken afternoon at the football, Alf argues home economics

4 Alf's £50 motor bike irritates the neighbours and causes Rita and his grandson to miss their train

5 With the TV out of order, Alf and Min bet on pontoon

6 Alf is hospitalized with liver problems due to drinking

IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH

Series 1: BBC1 September 1 to October 13 1985 (not Sep 22)
(6 x 30 min)

1 Alf isn't keen on having to push Else in her wheelchair

2 Else disappears from the street corner where Alf left her

3 When a succession of home help walk out because of Alf, a gay West Indian takes the job

4 Alf uses a neighbour's phone to call Rita in Liverpool

5 When Rita visits, Winston throws her a party

6 Alf wants Else to get a motorized wheelchair

*** BBC1 December 26 1985

Alf wants the free Christmas dinners provided at the church hall and the pub

Series 2: BBC1 September 4 to October 9 1986 (6 x 30 min)

1 Else has died and Alf is host to Rita and the neighbours for her sendoff

2 Mrs. Hollingbery locks Alf out after a night at the pub

3 Alf benefits from one of Else's old betting arrangements

4 Alf has to cook his own Sunday dinner

5 Alf uses the wheelchair in a couple of schemes

6 Min and her dotty sister Gwenneth (Irene Handl) visit

*** BBC1 December 23 1986

Alf's is sacked as a store Santa but his spirits lift when Rita wins a Christmas trip for two to sunny Spain

Series 3: BBC1 October 22 to November 26 1987
(6 x 30 min)

1 Rita wants to get a divorce and move in with the GP

2 Alf rants about the permissive society

3 Rita's doctor boyfriend gives Alf a cordless telephone

4 Min and Gwenneth drop by and conduct a seance

5 Alf's row with Fancy Fred (Spike Milligan) at a tea dance doesn't help things when he's trapped window cleaning

6 Alf fantasizes about batting for England at Lord's

*** BBC1 December 25 1987

Alf needs hip replacement surgery

Series 4: BBC1 September 7 to October 19 1989 (7 x 30 min)

- 1 Arthur convinces Alf to marry Mrs. Hollingbery
- 2 Mrs. Hollingbery decides to consider Alf's proposal
- 3 Alf invites Arthur to dinner when his numbers come up
- 4 Alf is nervous on the eve of the long flight to Australia
- 5 Alf, Arthur and Mrs. Hollingbery fly to Sydney and stay with Ricky and Railene
- 6 The visitors spend a day sightseeing on Sydney Harbour
- 7 Alf discovers Ricky's reason for financing the wedding

*** BBC1 December 25 1989

Rebuffed by the Salvation Army, Alf hopes the vicar will offer him some Christmas charity

Series 5: BBC1 September 1 to November 3 1990

(10 x 30 min)

- 1 Alf has to put up with power cuts at home and in the pub
- 2 Missing out on hot dinners because of Mrs. Hollingbery's part time job, Alf contemplates ending it all
- 3 A pub discussion on wife murderers leads Alf to think Mrs. Hollingbery has poisoned him
- 4 Alf's part time job filling in for a window cleaner inadvertently leads to benefits from the local milkman
- 5 Before taking up a part time job walking dogs, Alf and Arthur reminisce in the pub about their halcyon days
- 6 Alf feels honored to have been selected for jury duty
- 7 Alf worries his jury duty might lead to reciprocation
- 8 Alf and some pensioners take a London bus for an outing
- 9 Mrs. Hollingbery finds Alf's secret hiding place
- 10 Alf talks with the local priest and has a pub stag party

*** BBC1 December 30 1990 (35 min)

Following the disastrous wedding day, Alf and Mrs. Hollingbery aren't in a very festive mood

Series 6: BBC1 February 21 to April 3 1992 (7 x 30 min)

- 1 Alf's Irish drinking companion Michael invites himself to lunch but a car alarm interrupts the meal
- 2 When Alf delivers papers, he lands in a swimming pool
- 3 Mrs. Johnson has run off with another woman
- 4 When Mrs. Hollingbery is unable to cook because of her bad leg, Alf takes out his frustration on the doctor
- 5 Alf finds a stash of banknotes when he moves a wardrobe
- 6 Alf has problems being rich in a criminal neighbourhood
- 7 Alf's wealth leads to visits from Min and the tax man

LWT April 5 1997 (60 min)

An Audience With Alf Garnett

UK Gold various timeslots between November 30 1997 and June 12 2000 (18 x 10 min)

A Word With Alf

THE THOUGHTS OF CHAIRMAN ALF

LWT September 23 to November 4 1998 (6 x 30 min)

Films

Till Death Us Do Part (103 min, released January 12 1969)

The Alf Garnett Saga (93 min, released September 10 1972) with Adrienne Posta and Paul Angelis as Rita and Mike

Bibliography

Till Death Us Do Part

by John Burke from the Johnny Speight scripts (Pan pbk, 1967)

Till Death Us Do Part Scripts

by Johnny Speight (Woburn Press, 1973)

The World Of Alf Garnett

no author credit (Shelbourne Press magazine, c.1972)

The Thoughts Of Chairman Alf

by Johnny Speight (Robson, 1973)

The Garnett Chronicles - The Life & Times Of Alf Garnett

by Johnny Speight (Robson, 1986)

The Thoughts Of Chairman Alf

by Johnny Speight (Macmillan/Boxtree, 1998)

Discography

Till Death Us Do Part (Pye LP NPL 18154)

Arguments, Arguments, Arguments (from 1/1) /

Stalin The American Spy (from 1/5) / Swearing (from 1/6) /

The Wedding Anniversary (from 1/3)

Intolerance (Pye EP nep 24283) (from 1/4)

Sex And Other Thoughts (Pye LP 18192)

Sex Before Marriage (from 2/2) / Smoking (from 2/3) /

T.V. Filth (from 2/10) / My Dad's Royal Mate (from 2/7)

* the above extracts were also re-released as ...

Till Death Us Do Part (Pye/Marble Arch LP MAL 1112)

Intolerance / Swearing / The Wedding Anniversary

Golden Hour Of Till Death Us Do Part (Pye LP GH 550)

My Dad's Royal Mate / Sex Before Marriage / T.V. Filth /

Smoking / Stalin, The American Spy

Till Death Us Do Part (soundtrack) (Polydor LP 583 717)

Warren Mitchell appears as Alf on the following releases ...

The Writing On The Wall / Her Heart's In The Right Place,

Innit (C.B.S. single CBS 2824)

Songs Of World War I (Pickwick/Allegro LP ALL 840)

Alf Garnett's Music Hall (Pickwick/Allegro LP ALL 850,

Pickwick CD PWK 127)

The Thoughts Of Chairman Alf (Warner Bros LP K56425)

(from the 1977 one-man stage show)

The Secret Policeman's Third Ball (Virgin CD CDV 2459)

(from the 1987 Amnesty fundraiser)

(* not included on the video or dvd releases of the concert)

Videos and DVDs

Till Death Us Do Part (BBC Video BBCV 4318)

includes January 23 1974 / January 8 1975 / January 15 1975

Till Death Us Do Part - To Garnett A Grandson

(B.B.C./BFS Video Canada DVD 30278-D)

includes first three episodes from series 4

Till Death Us Do Part - Dock Pilfering

(B.B.C./BFS Video Canada DVD 30279-D)

includes final three episodes from series 4, plus 1972 special

• above two DVDs reissued as single Network DVD

Till Death Us Do Part - The Complete 1974 Series

(Network 2DVD 7952175)

all seven episodes, plus 1/1 and Royal Variety Performance

The Thoughts Of Chairman Alf

(BMG Video 1994)

Something To Shout About

by Jeremy Stevenson

IT was deep midwinter, 1960. The new decade had just begun. The sixties had started. Started, that is — but they had not yet become known as “the swinging sixties”! The disaster currently hitting British radio comedy was no less than three fold.

Hancock's Half Hour had finished on the 29th December 1959. *The Goon Show* folded on the 28th January 1960 and *Take It From Here* was transmitted for the final time on 3rd March 1960. Three programmes, each of which grew to become a British institution, had gone within a few weeks of each other. There were dire predictions that Radio Comedy would never recover.

For a time it looked as if these gloomy forecasts were going to be correct. Then on the 5th July at eight o'clock in the evening, a number of listeners turned on the Light Programme when the first episode of *Something To Shout About* was broadcast. It was the welcoming light at the end of a long tunnel. Over the next few years it was to run for a total of 54 episodes, and what treats they all were! It is reassuring to be able to report that recordings of every programme exist.

The series told the adventures of the London-based advertising agency *Apsley, Addis, Cone, Barbican, Blythe, Giddy and Partners* — a small company that thought big!

The scripts were written by Myles Rudge and Ronnie Wolfe, with production handled (variously) by John Simmonds (series one to August 30 and series 3), Trafford Whitelock (the rest of season one) and Eric Miller (season two).

The characters varied little throughout the run with Michael Medwin as Michael Lightfoot, an account executive, Fenella Fielding as his secretary, Janet Harris and Eleanor Summerfield played TV exec Maggie Tufnell. Others in the cast were Joan Sims as shorthand typist Mavis Willis and Nicholas Phipps, heard as a copywriter named Adrian Beales. Also featured (in various character parts) was man of many voices Warren Mitchell with, for the first season only, *The Jingle Belles* and *The Bernie Fenton Quartet* (under the direction of Cliff Adams) providing the opening music and the signature tune.

The first series also welcomed several guests, with Michael Barrington and Tony Fayne making appearances (on July 5 and 12 respectively), Graham Stark on August 9, Bill Pertwee on September 13 and Peter Hawkins the following week.

On an occasional basis, Sheila Hancock was cast as Mavis's cousin Shirley, replacing Joan Sims for the final two programmes of series 1 and taking over from January 15th 1962 until the end of the run. And on the 13th March 1961 Roy Dotrice stood in for Warren Mitchell.

Even the show's lead, Michael Medwin, managed to miss one programme (December 4 1961) — whilst filming in France he was stranded at a fogbound Orly Airport. The recording session went ahead with a hastily rewritten script barely mentioning his Michael Lightfoot character and distributing his lines amongst the other players.

It was an extremely clever exercise. Indeed, what more fitting a phrase than this could be used to describe the radio classic that was *Something To Shout About*?



Episode Guide

All episodes broadcast in the Light Programme

Series 1: July 5 to September 27 1960 (13 episodes)

The Arrival Of Mr. Pimslow / The Squench Account / Slimmer Slice Bread / Charlie Higgin's Play / The Kipper Marketing Board / Mr. Giddy Jr. Visits The Firm / The Gritley Bay Holiday Camp / A New Brand Of Cigarettes / Niblo Foods' Biscuits / A Bonus For The Employees / Brick Stanton / The Parrot / Fruity Henderson

Series 2: January 2 to May 22 1961 (21 episodes)

Presto Cold Cure / Door Locks / The Elephant / Janet's Flat / Michael's New Job / Cousin Martha's Cake Mix / Mr. Blythe's Assistant / The Trip To Paris / Brian Sackville / Janet Learns To Drive / The Kitchen Sink / Mr. Blythe's Examination / Instant Welsh Rarebit / Mr. Williams's Product / The Russian Product / The Caravan / Burridge's Store / The Bedtime Drink / Turnips / Niblo's Savoury Squares / Mavis's Holiday

Series 3: October 2 1961 to February 12 1962 (20 episodes)

Dog Biscuits / The Firm's Annual Dinner / The Firm's Nurse / Income Tax / Dinner With Mr. Spearman / Janet's Birthday / The Shampoo Commercial / Adrian's Ceiling / Janet's Uncle / The Italian Contract / The Song Contest / The Horse Trough / The Christmas Party / Mr. Park's Exercises / The West End Play / Mavis's Cousin Shirley / The Scottish Stout / The Seaside Town / The Artist / The Cow

• all titles are unofficial

BACK ISSUES

LAUGH #1

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

LAUGH #2

Steptoe & Son/Not Only But Also/The Marx Brothers On Disc/Police Squad/George Wallace/Craig Ferguson

LAUGH #3

The Goodies/Roy Rene, 'Mo'/Tom Lehrer/The 'Doctor' Movies/Eddie Cantor

Issues 1 to 3 are now out of print, but photocopies are available at the same price.

LAUGH #4

Norman Gunston/Doctor on TV/Bob Newhart/Not The Nine O'Clock News

LAUGH #5

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

LAUGH #6

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

LAUGH #7

Ronnie Barker/Stan Freberg/Billy Connolly/Graham Kennedy

LAUGH #8

Amnesty Concerts/Danny Kaye/Aussie Britcoms/Jasper Carrott/Phyllis Diller

LAUGH #9

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

LAUGH #10

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

LAUGH #11

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

LAUGH #12

Peter Cook/Burns & Allen/Rising Damp/My Name's McGooley/The Goon Show on Disc

LAUGH #13

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

LAUGH #14

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

LAUGH #15

Rik Mayall & Adrian Edmondson/Kingswood Country/Don Adams/Whack-O!

LAUGH #16

Hope & Crosby/Please Sir!/Max Miller/Willie Rushton/Kevin Bloody Wilson

LAUGH #17

WC Fields/St. Trinian's/Joyce Grenfell/Mother & Son/Family Ties/Woody Allen

LAUGH #18

Terry-Thomas/Radio Active/KYTV/The Jack Benny Program/Gerard Hoffnung/The 2000 Year Old Man/Acropolis Now

LAUGH #19

Rowan And Martin's Laugh-In/ITMA/Man About The House, George And Mildred, Robin's Nest/George Carlin/Hey Dad!

LAUGH #20

Frankie Howerd/Up Pompeii!/George Formby/All Together Now/Jonathan Winters

LAUGH #21

Eric Sykes/Flip Wilson/Ward Leopold/Victoria Wood/To The Manor Born

LAUGH #22

Benny Hill/Will Hay/Yes Minister/Richard Pryor/Aussie Radio Imports

LAUGH #23

Father, Dear Father/Comic Relief/Lenny Bruce/Ted Ray/Anna Russell/Slightly Out To Lunch

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Please make all cheques payable to P. Tatchell and send to the addresses listed on Page 2

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