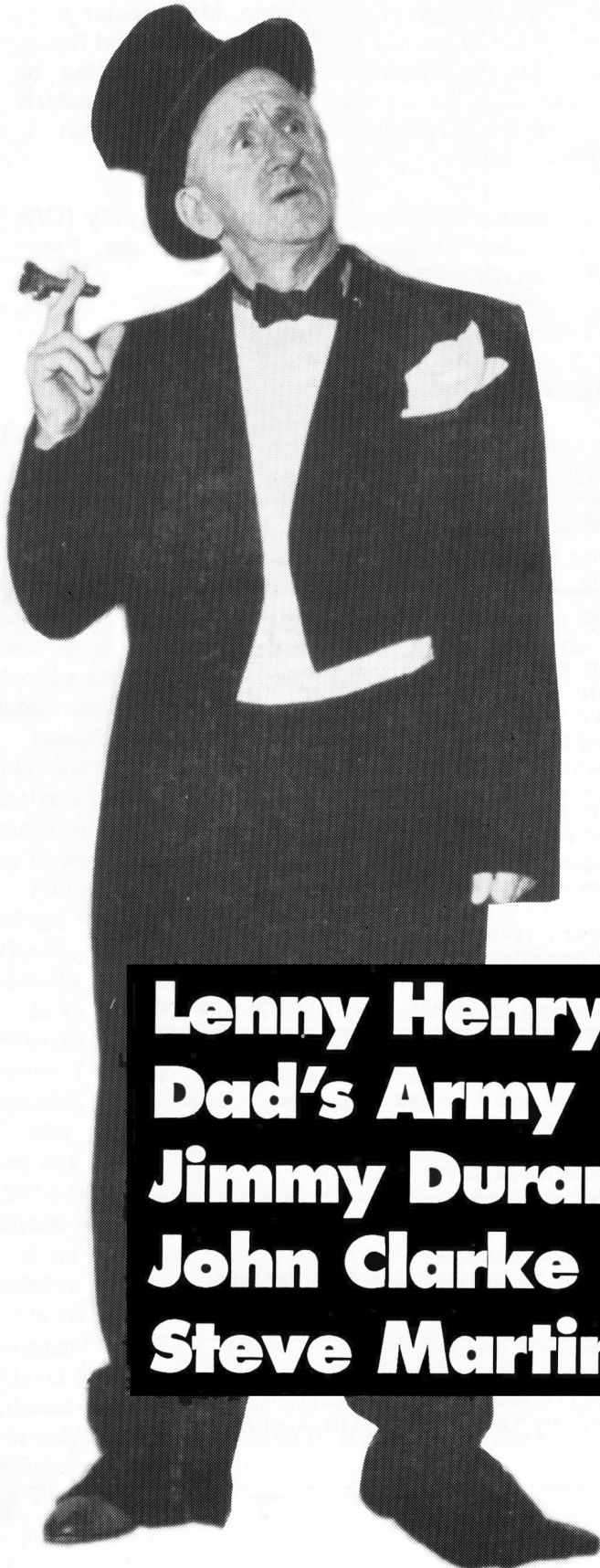


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LAUGH

The Comedy Magazine

Issue 6 1993



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

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The "Doctor" Movies
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Hundreds of THREE STOOGES liscensed merchandise for sale. Also want to buy 16mm Stooges and / or Ted Healy films. Send long, self-addressed, stamped (2 oz postage) envelope to Frank Reighter, 10220 Calera Rd, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19114, U.S.A.

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Wanted: Video copy of Ruth Rendell Mystery - Wolf For The Slaughter. Don Reis, 8 Valley Street, Kingaroy, Queensland 4610, Australia.

Lenny Henry

by Peter Tatchell



In January 1975, a sixteen year old impressionist named Lenny Henry made his television debut on *New Faces*. Show business veteran Ted Ray (who was one of the judges) called him 'the most exciting comedy discovery for years'. In the two decades since that fateful appearance, Ray's comments have turned out to be remarkably prescient.

Lenny's parents emigrated to Britain from the West Indies in 1957 and he was born in the West Midlands a year later. While at school he had his first taste of performing on stage, and a brief career as an unhappy engineering apprentice motivated him to try his luck at the bright lights.

Following the *New Faces* success he was signed for a cabaret season with comedian Charlie Williams and then joined *The Black And White Minstrels* for a stage tour which ran for several summer seasons.

In 1976 he was cast in Britain's first all-black sitcom *The Fosters* playing the student son of a South London immigrant family. The series ran to two seasons and a total of twenty-six episodes.

More standup followed until late 1980 when he joined the cast of the popular Saturday morning children's show *TISWAS* (Today Is Saturday Wear A Smile). Apart from a regular diet of custard pies and buckets of water in the face, he did regular send-ups of David Bellamy and created a Rastafarian character called Algernon Razzamatazz.

In early 1982 it was decided to do an adult version of the program called *O.T.T. (Over The Top)* which would also feature Alexei Sayle and include material from the burgeoning 'alternative' comedy scene. The result was often controversial but only marginally successful. It only lasted one series of thirteen editions.

The enterprise did have a bonus for Lenny's private life in meeting *Comic Strip* performer Dawn French, whom he married in 1984. The new wave style of comedy also influenced his own approach to performing and more and more he steered away from the traditional standup stereotypes.

The early 1980s also saw Lenny on the BBC, taking part in another sketch series *Three Of A Kind* (the other two being Tracy Ullman and David Copperfield). A four-episode trial run in mid-1981 led to follow-up seasons in 1982 and 1983 establishing it as a successor to the popular *Not The Nine O'Clock News*.

Lenny was now becoming well-known for his own characterisations, rather than imitating those created by Michael Crawford, Dick Emery and others. These included Delbert Wilkins, the cool, street-smart hustler, the aging blues performer Deakus, and the outrageous sex animal Theophilus T. Wildebeeste.

So successful were his gallery of characters becoming, that the BBC gave him his own series in late 1984 and Lenny Henry was at last in the big time of British show business. Initially the program was a continuation of the sketch and musical mix of *Three Of A Kind*, but by his fourth season (in late 1987) it had evolved into a sitcom revolving around the activities of his Delbert character who sets up his own pirate radio station.

In 1984 he also released his first LP, a mixture of live standup (performed in Deptford at the Albany Empire) and a handful of studio vocals. Apart from his one-man stage appearances, Lenny also took part in several all-star fundraisers like the 1986 Comic Relief concert and *The Secret Policeman's Third Ball* a year later. When the BBC staged their 8-hour

Comic Relief telethon in February 1988 Lenny was invited to cohost the event (with Griff Rhys Jones), and has been a mainstay of this annual event in the year's since.

ITV's prestigious *South Bank Show* did a 60-minute profile of the comedian in March 1988 tracing his career from his hometown of Dudley to his first attempts at breaking into the American market at a comedy club in New York.

Other television ventures included hosting one of the initial editions of *Saturday Live* (February 1 1986), starring in a BBC2 feature-length comedy-thriller *Coast To Coast* (January 4 1987) and joining his wife Dawn French (and her partner Jennifer Saunders) in a *Comic Strip Presents* episode titled **Oxford** (February 22 1990).

One of his most ambitious projects was a film version of one of his live concerts in 1989. Titled *Lenny Live And Unleashed* the movie was given a theatrical release before transferring to video.

Into the 1990s, Lenny has appeared in such television specials as *Bernard And The Genie* (December 23 1991) and *In Dreams* (December 23 1992). He also returned to Hollywood to star in an ill-fated Disney/Touchstone feature film *True Identity*, before embarking on a 6-part sitcom called *Chef* at the start of 1993.

Television

The Fosters

London Weekend Television

Series 1

April 9 to July 2 1976

13 episodes.

Sex And The Black Community/My Son The Lover/(title unknown)/The Check-Up/Black Jesus/The Man I Most Admire/Situations Vacant/Sonny Gets A Patron/Buy Now, Pay Later/The Windfall/Over The Hill/The Matchmaker/Benjamin's Rebellion

Series 2

April 16 to July 9 1977

13 episodes.

(title unknown)/Up In Arms/Give A Little Whistle/Take Your Partners/That Lovely Weekend/The Family Business/The Bargain/The Diet/Home And Away/Who Needs Friends?/That's My Boy/The Family Way/The Houseguest

TISWAS

ATV

Lenny joined the cast of this long-running Saturday morning children's show in December 1980 and stayed until March 28 1981

O.T.T.

Central

January 2 to March 27 1982

13 episodes.

Three of a Kind

BBC1

Series 1

July 1 to July 22 1981

4 episodes.

Series 2

November 27 1982 to January 8 1983. (Not on December 25)

6 episodes.

Series 3

September 3 to October 8 1983

6 episodes.

Also special Montreux edition (highlights) on October 28 1983

The Lenny Henry Show

BBC1

Series 1

September 4 to October 9 1984

6 episodes.

Series 2 (September 5 to October 10 1985

6 episodes.

Series 3 (titled *Lenny Henry Tonight*)

September 4 to October 9 1986

6 episodes

Series 4

October 27 to December 1 1987, and December 24 1987

7 episodes.

Series 5

September 15 to November 3 1988, not on October 6 or 27.

(Also Christmas special on December 26 1988)

7 episodes.

Video

Three of a Kind

BBC BBCV 4007

90 minutes of highlights

Lenny Live and Unleashed

Palace Video PVC 4031A

Live performance

Lenny Go Home

4 Front Video 0832743

Live performance

The Best of the Lenny Henry Show

BBC BBCV 4314

100 minutes of highlights

Lenny is also featured in:

TISWAS—The Best of the Best Bits

TISWAS—More of the Best Bits

The Secret Policeman's Third Ball

Virgin Video VIR 205

The Secret Policeman's Biggest Ball

Video Collection VC 6096/Columbia-Tri Star CVR 16921

Amnesty International's Big 30

Virgin Video VIR 767

Hysteria 2!—The Second Coming

Palace Video PVC 2173A

The Best of Hysteria 3!

Picture Music International MVN 9913183

Just for Laughs

Telstar TVE 6001

Records

Boiled Beef And Carrots/Pick Me Up When I'm Down

Pye 7N 45499 (7" single)(July 1975)

Mole In The Hole

C.B.S./Jet JET 7006 (7" single)(March 1981)



Three Of A Kind

BBC REB 480 (LP), ZCF 480 (cassette)(1983)

Peter O'Sullivan/signature tune/Married Couples/Da Doo Ron Ron/ Vasectomy + Doctor + Cars/No Particular Place To Go/C.B. Radio/P.C. Ganja/ Roz + Three Of A Kind/Orson Welles + Aspirin + Australian Express/ Aussie Blue Peter/The Reverend Nat. West/Bachelor Boy/Fungus/Scrunge/ Sheik Ya Hamburger/Computer Dating/Sing A Sappy Song + Dollop + Three Of A Kind/Interview/Clever Dick/Fred Dread + Three Of A Kind/ Strippers + Have To Go + Talk Dirty/Wired For Sound + Three Of A Kind/ Chicken/Delbert/Break Wind And Fire/Maura McBitch/What's Wrong + Video/ Darts/Memphis Tennessee + Three Of A Kind/Scrunge/Wingy Wangy Song/ Woman Newsreader/Ghandi Doll + Three Of A Kind + Medallion Man + signature tune + Space Invader

A montage of highlights from all three series of the BBC television show

Stand Up ... Get Down

Chrysalis CHR 1484 (LP), ZCHR 1484 (cassette)(November 1984)

HelloEverybody/Olympics/Kid's TV/School/Katanga/ Blackpool/J.A. Deakus/Scratch Joke/Sex And Kids And Growing Up/Big Love/Delbert/Crucial Times

A mixture of studio vocals and Albany Empire Deptford stand up (of August 26th and September 2nd 1984)

Crucial Times/Big Love

Chrysalis CHS 2819 (7" single)

Crucial Times (extended version)/Crucial Times (the Floor-Crusher Mix)/Big Love

Chrysalis CHS 12 2819 (12" single)(both October 1984)

Comic Relief Presents—Utterly Utterly Live

WEA 240 932-1 (LP), 240 932-2 (cassette)(1986)

An original cast album of the concerts for Comic Relief staged at the Shaftesbury Theatre, London on April 4, 5 and 6th 1986. Lenny is featured on two tracks: Big Love/Romeo And Juliet And Harry (with Frank Bruno)

The Secret Policeman's Third Ball

Virgin V 2459 (LP)(1987) An original cast album of the concerts for Amnesty International staged at the London Palladium on March 26, 27, 28 and 29th 1987. Lenny is featured on one (self-titled) track

Lenny Live And Unleashed

Island ILPS 9937 (LP), ICT 9937 (cassette), CID 9937 (compact disc)(1989)

Line Up Ragamuffin Style/Bad Jokes/Harrassing The Paying Public/In Clubland/International Negro/Delbert Wilkins Kickin' It Live/International Negro Continued/I Come From Dudley .../Tales From Disco City/Pay Attention/Everybody Knows/Men & Women/Catflaps!/Animal Heaven/The Blues Ya' All/The Music Scene/Mandela Day/Deakus/Theophilus P. Wildebeeste/I Don't Wanna Leave/Don't Even Think About It/Bad Jokes
Island IS 433 (7" single)

Don't Even Think About It (12" version)/**Don't Even Think About It** (instrumental)/**Bad Jokes**

Island 12 IS 433 (12" single)

Don't Even Think About It (7" version + 12" version + instrumental)/**Bad Jokes**

Island CID 433 (CD single)(all three August 1989)

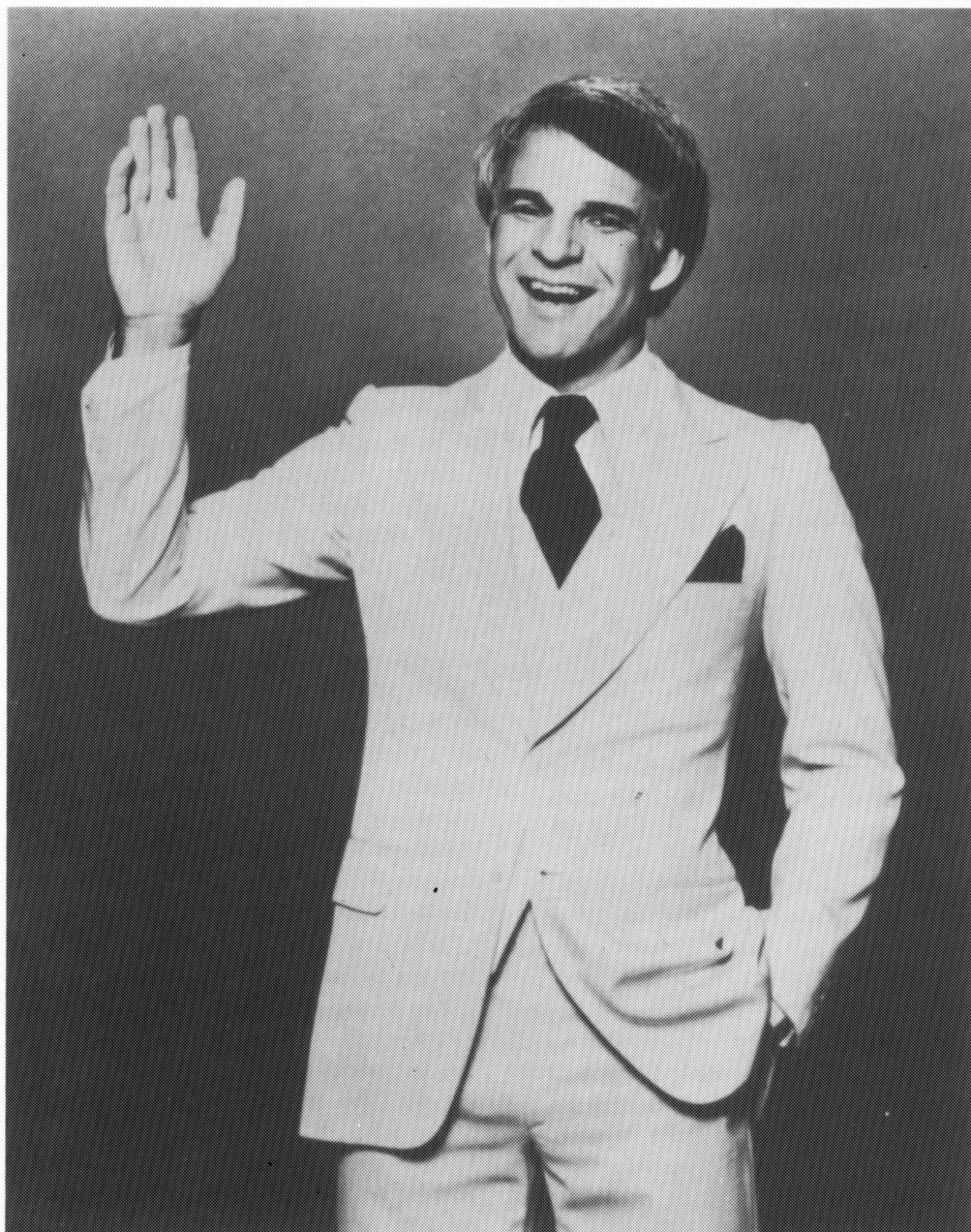
The Best Of Hysteria 3!

EMI CDP 7980212 (compact disc)

An original cast album of the concert for the Hysteria Trust staged at the London Palladium on June 30th 1991. Lenny is featured on one track: Take Me In Your Arms (with Steve Nieve & The Love Band)

Steve Martin

by David Hirsch



During the 1960's and 1970's, America saw a rise of talented young comedians in the manner of *Saturday Night* (later known as *Saturday Night Live*). Such a bunch included John Belushi, Dan Ackroyd and Gilda Radner. But among them was a particular clown called Steve Martin, who started out as a comedy writer and starred in a film short in 1976. Now, sixteen years and over seventeen major films later, Martin is still associated with comic genius in the United States and beyond.

Steve Martin was born in Waco, Texas, but was raised in Southern California. He graduated in Theatre Arts at UCLA, with a major in philosophy. He wanted to be a professor in philosophy, but fate clearly had other plans for him. He formally began his career writing for Pat Paulsen, Sonny and Cher, John Denver and the Smothers Brothers. The Brothers' television show was a perfect venue for Martin to perform his own

material, which he took on the road for several years, as well as on NBC's *Tonight Show*, *Saturday Night Live* and *The Muppet Show*.

From viewing his stand-up material, one can see why Martin has often been dubbed as a clown; a large portion of his routine is exactly what one might find from a clown on the street rather than a stand up comedian. He would wear an arrow through the head, bunny ears, and a Groucho nose-with-spectacles. He made balloon animals (sometimes he would even blow them up), and juggled oranges. Aside from the clown act, he was (and still is) a first rate banjo player, always ready to strum one to get out his aggression. His best known banjo tune was *Ramblin' Guy* followed by improvisation (babbling). His jokes were seldom conventional or logical: "I bought me a \$300 pair of socks, I got a fur sink...electric dog polisher...and I bought some dumb stuff,

too.” So often he did not need to tell jokes—just watching or listening to Martin was funny enough. His stand-ups delivered catchphrases like “Excuuuuuuse me”, “a wild and crazy guy” and the unpredictable “happy feet”. Although he hasn’t done concerts for well over a decade, such phrases still stick with him.

As well as touring, Martin expressed himself through book and song in the late 1970’s. His book, *Cruel Shoes* was number one on the bestseller list. It was a compilation of short, surreal stories with titles like, *The Day the Dopes Came Over*, *How to Fold Soup*, *Cows in Trouble*, and, of course, *Cruel Shoes*—a horror story about dangerous shoes which did hideous damage to the feet. Also, when the world was going crazy over the King Tut exhibition, Martin’s hit single **King Tut** sold over 1½ million copies.

Martin’s first film breakthrough was in 1976, in a film short based on one of his sketches entitled, *The Absent Minded Waiter*. He plays Steve, a waiter who has incredible incompetence and equal confidence. His memory span is about three seconds. Buck Henry and Teri Garr play Bernie and Susan Cats, the people Steve is to wait on. After Steve pours water on the table, then sets the glasses, and serves the wrong order, Susan is exasperated, but her mood changes when he gives back \$10,000 in change when no cheque has even been issued.

In 1977, Martin starred in his first full-length movie, Carl Reiner’s *The Jerk*. (Reiner must have felt comfortable with Martin in his nutty films—enough to cast him in three more.) Martin played Navin Johnson, the “jerk” in question. Navin was raised by a poor black family in Mississippi, and after learning he was adopted, he goes out into the world to seek his fortune. Unlike the family who raised him, Navin was incredibly naive and clueless in the real world; hence a perfect comic opportunity for Martin. After working in a gas station and a carnival, and after being in love with Bernadette Peters, he strikes it rich by inventing the Opti-Grab, a wire device that holds spectacles onto the nose. Sadly, this same Opti-Grab is to be his undoing when it proves to have some cockeyed side effects. This film was a new vehicle for Steve Martin to use many of his stand-up jokes, such as being brought up in a poor black family, using lots of money to buy weird things (an all red billiard room, his own disco ballroom with his own dancers) and watching someone juggle cats. Although *The Jerk* was given lukewarm reviews, in the long run it became a cult classic.

One of the most hilarious aspects of Martin is that in his many different character roles, be they stupid or smart, evil or good, childish or responsible, he has a certain aura in his face and body gestures, as if to say, “Well, hey, folks, here I am.” He ended his touring in the early 1980’s, and his career was to be shaped mostly by the movies he was to star in.

His second film was Dennis Potter’s *Pennies From Heaven*, directed by Herbert Ross. The scene is Chicago in 1934. Martin plays Arthur, a sheet music salesman, who copes with the Great Depression, has marital problems with his wife, Joan (Jessica Harper) and has an affair with a schoolteacher, Eileen (Bernadette Peters). The grim reality of life would usually jump into happy musicals, with people suddenly dancing to and

miming popular songs of the time, by artists such as Gene Kelly and Bing Crosby. It mattered not if the lip-synching was unrealistic such as Martin singing the woman’s role and Peters singing the man’s in *Life’s Just a Bowl of Cherries*. The film was panned by most critics, as they felt that the music productions were not enough to carry an otherwise grey film.

About a year later, Martin was to emerge in a 1930’s parody, this time having fun with old private detective movies. The film was *Dead Men Don’t Wear Plaid*, another Carl Reiner project. (Martin himself also co-wrote the script.) Martin plays private eye Rigby Reardon, who takes the case of Juliet Forrest (Rachel Ward). Her father, a famous scientist and cheese maker is reported dead, and she believes it was a conspiracy. Reardon follows ridiculously complicated clues which all connect and inevitably lead to his dressing as a woman and travelling down to Peru to track down a killer. Some of the most lively moments are when he spends two long minutes pouring coffee, shaves his tongue to prepare for a date; and goes berserk when someone says, “cleaning woman”. Also, this film splices clips from other movies so Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Cary Grant, and James Cagney can join in the dialogues. The film was a tremendous hit.

The following year, Martin appeared in Reiner’s wacky comedy, *The Man With Two Brains*. He played Dr. Hfuhruhurr (you try to spell it), a brain surgeon who loves his work because of the brains and mess involved. Kathleen Turner appears as Dolores Benedict, the doctor’s lover who makes him very tense. In a laboratory, he falls in love with a certain brain and communicates with it through “some kind of telepathy”. (Says the doctor, “For the first time, I’m aroused by a mind.”) He escapes with the brain, intending to put it into a beautiful woman, perhaps Dolores. (See, it all comes together, doesn’t it?) The funniest scene is when he’s stopped for driving too fast in Austria, and the local police put him through a strict sobriety test which includes him walking on his hands, doing flips, juggling and singing. The sheer nuttiness of the film was hailed by the reviewers.

By 1984, Martin had vowed to keep on doing movies until he was thrown out, and it was clear that the movie industry was far from contemplating that. That year was a mixed bag for Martin. He starred in Neil Simon’s *The Lonely Guy*, based on Bruce Jay Friedman’s book, *The Lonely Guy’s Book of Life*. Martin plays Larry Hubbard, who speaks for “lonely guys”, a sect of people we are probably all familiar with. Set in New York City, Hubbard, who has just loved and lost, will try to overcome his loneliness, while a professional “lonely guy” (Charles Grodin) guides him through the inevitable phases (playing chess against machines, throwing parties for cutout people, et al.). This was a charming and predominantly low-key film, and also a great New York comedy, at times resembling Woody Allen classics *Annie Hall* and *Bananas*. Still, it was generally ill-perceived by the critics.

But later that year, Martin bounced back in Reiner’s *All of Me*. In this, he plays lawyer Roger Cobb, and Lily Tomlin appears as dying aristocrat Edwina Cuttwater. She intends to pass along her soul, as she’s rich enough to. Through a fluke

convenient for the plot, the stubborn soul gets into Cobb's body. Martin, who had started out as the straight man, now plays half-straight man, and half-posh woman in his most popular physical comedy yet. The film relied mainly on that running joke, but it held out well.

1986 was a very successful year for Martin. First, there was the movie version of *Little Shop of Horrors*, in which he appeared as Orin Scrivello, a dentist with a formidable combination of sadism, stupidity, and song-and-dance. It was not the leading role, but it was a positive element for the film. Later that year he starred with Chevy Chase and Martin Short as one of a group of simple Hollywood actors who play *The Three Amigos* from the movie of the same name. These heroic charros were known for their perilous fighting, happy dancing, and rude words. ("You son of a motherless goat") That film was a smash for the Christmas season.

The following year, he starred as C.D. Bales in *Roxanne*, a modern day version of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Bales is a chief fire fighter, a karate expert, and popular in his community. He is able to laugh about his enormous nose, enough to make 20 jokes about it on the spot. ("Laugh and the world laughs with you—sneeze and it's goodbye Seattle") Still, he finds himself very insecure when he encounters his love, Roxanne (Daryl Hannah). There is undoubtedly a bit of *The Lonely Guy* in Bales, as in other Martin roles which involve romance.

Later that year, Martin played straight man Neal Page in *Planes, Trains, and Automobiles*. Page's intent to travel home to Chicago for the holiday is outrageously complicated by travel inconveniences sending him all over the country by means of planes, trains, and even automobiles. All the while, he is pestered by Dell Griffith, (John Candy), a friendly but clueless loudmouth. The film was a disaster at the box office, and Martin's character was far too restrained to be funny.

In 1988, he came back swinging in one of his most hilarious films, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, directed by Frank Oz. The "scoundrels" in question were two confidence tricksters each trying to outdo the other in their own way. Martin played Freddy Benson, who used an approach rather like *The Jerk* in contrast to Lawrence Jamenson (Michael Caine) and his suave, sophisticated style. One instance in this film which shows Martin at his funniest, when he poses as a Quasimodo type called Ruprect, during a joint scam by Benson and Jamenson.

In 1989, Martin developed a new character in Ron Howard's *Parenthood*. It was Gil Buckman, a father of three young children, who is trying to manage his kids and career, but feels he is not where he should be. Other than knowing he can be a comic relief, like dressing up as a cowboy for his son's birthday, he feels he is an inept father. It was a new beginning for Steve Martin, where viewers could see a serious and well acted side of him, dealing with the trials and tribulations of life. As he described Buckman: "A very regular guy with regular problems in a simple life showing how complicated that really is."

This new character was to show up in later films, but not in his next one, *My Blue Heaven*. Here, Martin plays Vinni Antonelli, an Italian mob criminal. Rick Moranis appears as Barney Coopersmith, an FBI agent hired to protect Vinni, as he was needed as a trial witness. The difficult task was keeping Vinni out of mischief. The Vinni character was most likely a parody of Andrew Dice Clay, but was not Martin at his best. The film had little else to offer, and was inevitably a disaster.



At the beginning of 1991, Martin appeared as weatherman Harris K. Telemacher in *L.A. Story*. The film went through the love life of Telemacher, who was "deeply unhappy, but (he) didn't know it because he was so happy all the time." This was a hilarious parody of Los Angeles, where people were unmoved by earthquakes, reckless car driving (especially through the neighbour's yard) and shooting on the highway as if it was a regular sport. This was a comic masterpiece for Martin, and it treated L.A. as *The Lonely Guy* treated New York.

Martin had a relatively cameo role in *Grand Canyon* as Davis, a middle-aged, eccentric movie writer, whose films thrived on bloody violence. This was not as much a comedic role, but a well acted display of a real person mired in his own world and not really "there".

As 1991 came to a close, the next major film for Martin released was *Father of the Bride*, a remake of the 1951 classic. Martin played George Banks, a father who goes through the psychological trauma and financial strain when his daughter is to wed and he has to foot the bill. In the original, the role of the father (here called Stanley Banks) was played by Spencer Tracy. The storyline remained the same, as well as the setting; in each the family was upper-middle income living in the suburbs. But whereas Tracy's character was alcoholic, bad tempered and at times spiteful, Martin's was a continuation of the Gil Buckman role. Naturally, each movie was a reflection of the times, so viewers would never have heard Tracy make a gaffe that Martin did: "Don't forget to fasten your condom ... seatbelt." In a strong sense, the remake of *Father of the Bride* was *Parenthood* many years later; both had hilarious scenes and at the same time were very moving.

1992 saw him teamed with Goldie Hawn in *House Sitter* where he finds himself host to an unwelcome and totally neurotic female who uses an assortment of means to stay put not only in his home, but his life in general.

This was followed up with a much more dramatic role in *Leap of Faith* playing a money-motivated evangelist who tours the country luring in the religiously gullible. A far cry from the arrow-through-the-head crazy who entertained live audiences fifteen years earlier.

Records

1977

Let's Get Small

Warner Bros. KBS 3090

Side One: Ramblin' Man/Theme From Ramblin' Man/Vegas/
Let's Get Small Side Two: Smoking/ One Way to Leave Your
Lover/Mad at My Mother/Excuse Me Grandmother's
Song/Funny Comedy Gags/Closing

1978

A Wild and Crazy Guy

Warner Bros HS 3238

Side One: I'm Feelin' It/Philosophy/Religion/College/
Language/Creativity in Action/I'm in the Mood For Love
Side Two: A wild and Crazy Guy/ A Charitable Kind Of Guy/
An Expose/Cat Handcuffs/You Naive Americans/My Real
Name/King Tut

1979

Comedy is Not Pretty

Warner Bros HS 3392

Side One: Born to be Wild/The All Being/McDonald's/Men's
Underwear/Drop Thumb Medley
Googlephonics/ Hostages
Side Two: Cruel Shoes (From the book *Cruel Shoes*)/Comedy is
Not Pretty/How to Meet a Girl/Rubberhead/ Jackie O. and
Farrah F./ You Can Be A Millionaire

1981

The Steve Martin Brothers

Warner Bros BSK 3477

Side One: (Cocktail Show, Vegas) American Photography/ A
Scientific Question/What I Believe/ A Show Biz Moment
(Comedy Store, Hollywood) The Real Me/ Love God/ Make
The Rent/ The Gospel Maniacs
Side Two: Sally Goodin'/ Saga of the Old West/ John Henry/
Saga (Reprise)Pitkin County Turn Around/ Hoedown at Alice's/
Song of Perfect Spaces/Freddie's Lilt, Parts I and
II/Waterbound/Banana Banjo
(Side One of this album is all stand-up comedy, and Side Two is
all banjo playing.)

1986

Little Shop of Horrors

Original Motion Picture Soundtrack Geffen M5G 24/25

Martin as Orin Scrivello, sings, "Dentist"

Book

1977

Cruel Shoes

Videos

1974

The Funnier Side of Eastern Canada

Directed, created and produced by Bruce Campbell
Comic material at a Canadian nightclub plus a Steve Martin
video tour of Montreal and Toronto.

1986

Steve Martin Live

No director credited

Martin's 1976 short, *The Absent Minded Waiter* plus a concert
performance at the Universal Amphitheatre, California on Sept
28, 1979

Film

1979 *The Jerk*

1980 *The Muppet Movie*

1981 *Pennies From Heaven*

1982 *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid*

1983 *The Man With Two Brains*

1984 *The Lonely Guy*

All of Me

1986 *Little Shop of Horrors*

Three Amigos!

1987 *Roxanne*

Planes, Trains and Automobiles

1988 *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*

1989 *Parenthood*

1990 *My Blue Heaven*

1991 *L.A. Story*

Grand Canyon

Father of the Bride

1992 *House Sitter*

Leap of Faith

Dad's Army

by Peter Tatchell

In the late 1960s, scriptwriter Jimmy Perry found himself watching the Changing Guard at Buckingham Palace. Suddenly his mind's eye took him back to an earlier parade ... that of the Home Guard troop in which (as a boy) he'd served in World War II. Realizing the idea had potential on television, he and producer David Croft wrote a thirty-minute play about the unit and offered it to the BBC. They too thought the situation had promise, and asked for a further five stories to make up a series.

The program's leading players were to be Arthur Lowe (fresh from *Pardon The Expression*) and John Le Mesurier (who'd just concluded four seasons as the Colonel in *George And The Dragon*). Indeed the original idea was to have Le Mesurier in the role of Mainwaring, with Lowe as the sergeant, but wise heads reversed the parts before production began.

Also cast were Clive Dunn (old Mr. Johnson in the popular *Bootsie And Snudge* series), Arnold Ridley (actor and writer of the theatrical evergreen *The Ghost Train*), John Laurie (a familiar face in British films since the 1930s) and two relative newcomers James Beck and Ian Lavender, as the younger characters. Revue artist Bill Pertwee (coming from the successful radio series *Beyond Our Ken* and *Round The Horne*) was signed as the chief antagonist, A.R.P. Warden Hodges.

When the show premiered at the end of July 1968, its wartime setting was highlighted by the use of archival newsreel footage after the opening credits, and as an added touch, the great Bud Flanagan sang a specially written theme *Who Do You Think You Are Kidding Mr. Hitler?*. It was to be his last recording and he died of a heart attack soon after.

Whether nostalgia for the dark days of the second world war, or the skillful blending of endearing characters and farcical (but believable) storylines, audiences around the country soon took the inhabitants of Walmington-On-Sea to their hearts. A second batch of six programs was screened in early 1969, and *Dad's Army* was off on the road to becoming one of television's all-time favourites.

After twelve episodes in black-and-white, the show transferred to colour by the end of the year with a further fourteen editions. Such was the popularity of the series, Columbia Pictures commissioned a movie version using the team, which went before the cameras in the summer of 1970 (premiering the following April). The film retold the origins of the squad (now in colour, and on the wide screen) with a much larger budget than the early BBC programs could boast.

The TV version, though, was back on the small screens by the end of 1970 and a one-hour special was shown the following Christmas. Apart from the millions of viewers in Britain and around the world who regularly watched the show, it was known to be a particular favourite by certain inhabitants of Buckingham Palace as well.

In late 1973, having amassed some sixty episodes, *Dad's Army* was adapted for radio, with twenty of the original scripts re-recorded for broadcast in early 1974. BBC elder statesman John Snagge was invited to set the scene at the beginning of each of the storylines.



Despite having several cast members in their seventies, it was ironical that actor James Beck should be the first of the group to die (mid way through this series of radio recordings) at a tragically young age. His characterization of the spiv 'Walker' had opened the doors to a very promising career which was not allowed to reach its potential.

A further two seasons of television editions were made by the end of 1975 when the Walmington-On-Sea Home Guard unit set off to conquer a new medium ... the West End stage. *Dad's Army* (the musical!) opened at the Shaftesbury Theatre on October the 2nd with regular cast members being joined by John Bardon (in the Walker role) and Hamish Roughton (filling in for John Laurie who did not take part in the production). The show's plot allowed the characters to pay tribute to the great performers of the war years, from Flanagan and Allen, Max Miller and Robb Wilton to the Andrews Sisters.

A high spot of the presentation was the team's performance of The Floral Dance, which resulted in the cast being "commanded" to repeat it at that year's Royal Variety show.

Special Christmas editions of the show were transmitted at the end of 1975 and 1976 and the following year the BBC announced *Dad's Army* would have its ninth and final season. For nearly a decade it had been a treasured favourite and no one wanted to see it finish with any lessening of appeal.

It's now nearly a quarter of a century since the Walmington-On-Sea platoon first marched into our living rooms. If nothing else, their durability cannot be questioned ... television, movies, radio, the West End stage, books, records, cassettes and now videos. A sizeable number-of their players have now left the scene, but the enjoyment they created can be relived at the flick of a switch.

Television Version

Starring Arthur Lowe (as Captain George Mainwaring), John LeMesurier (Sergeant Arthur Wilson), Clive Dunn (Lance Corporal Jack Jones), John Laurie (Private James Frazer), Arnold Ridley (Private Charles Godfrey), James Beck (Private Joe Walker), Ian Lavender (Private Frank Pike), Bill Pertwee (Air Raid Warden William Hodges), Frank Williams (The Reverend Timothy Farthing—The Vicar) and Edward Sinclair (Maurice Yeatman—The Verger)

All programs were written by Jimmy Perry and David Croft

Series 1:

(Black-and-white)

July 31 1968

The Man And The Hour

Britain is at war and the residents of Walmington-On-Sea form their own Home Guard unit led by the local bank manager.

August 7 1968

Museum Piece

Captain Mainwaring hears the local war museum houses a case of Boer War carbines and he decides to commandeer them for the platoon.

August 14 1968

Command Decision

A retired colonel who owns a private collection of twenty rifles tries to take over command of the platoon.

August 21 1968

The Enemy Within The Gates

Walker and Pike capture a German parachutist, but before they can claim their £10 bounty, Godfrey lets him go.

August 28 1968

The Showing Up Of Corporal Jones

The officer-in-charge of the Home Guard training section inspects the platoon, and has serious doubts about Corporal Jones' capabilities.

September 4 1968

Shooting Pains

Mainwaring's men must compete in a shooting contest to decide the unit to be chosen as guard-of-honour for a visiting V.I.P.

Series 2

(Black-and-white)

March 1 1969

Operation Kilt

The platoon takes part in training exercises with the regular army and Captain Mainwaring places great store in "enemy" intelligence.

March 8 1969

The Battle For Godfrey's Cottage

Private Godfrey's cottage is considered to have strategic importance in the face of an enemy attack, so a machine-gun post is set up there.

March 15 1969

The Loneliness Of A Long Distance Walker

When Private Walker is called up Captain Mainwaring considers his impending loss of black market goods.

March 22 1969

Sergeant Wilson's Little Secret

When Mrs. Pike decides to take in a refugee child, talk of the impending "little stranger" is misconstrued by Wilson who decides to do the honourable thing.

March 29 1969

A Stripe For Frazer

Captain Mainwaring has to decide which member of the platoon should be promoted to the rank of corporal alongside Jones.

April 5 1969

Under Fire

In the midst of an air-raid the platoon have to deal with a number of incendiary bombs.

Series 3

(Colour)

September 11 1969

The Armoured Might Of Lance Corporal Jones

Corporal Jones's delivery van is converted for military purposes when Walker makes available some illicit petrol coupons.

September 18 1969

Battle School

The unit takes part in a weekend course of guerilla tactics under instruction by former members of the Spanish International Brigade.

September 25 1969

The Lion Has Phones

When an enemy aircraft crashes into the reservoir, Captain Mainwaring's communication system is put to the test.

October 2 1969

The Bullet Is Not For Firing

Mainwaring arranges a court of enquiry when the platoon fire their ammunition at a low-flying enemy aircraft.

October 9 1969

Something Nasty In The Vault

A bank inspector pays a visit to Walmington-On-Sea at the very moment an unexploded German bomb lands in the vault.

October 16 1969

Room At The Bottom

An officer from H.Q. arrives to tell Mainwaring he is not entitled to his commission.

October 23 1969

Big Guns

The platoon is given a large naval gun to defend the Walmington-On-Sea coastline, but unfortunately none of them knows how to work it.

October 30 1969

The Day The Balloon Went Up

A large barrage balloon becomes entangled in the church steeple and Mainwaring's men have to release it.

November 6 1969

War Dance

Captain Mainwaring decides to stage a platoon dance and a committee is set up to organise things.

November 13 1969

Menace From The Deep

The unit is in charge of a machine-gun post at the end of the pier when a mine is noticed drifting their way.

November 20 1969

Branded

Private Godfrey confesses he could never actually shoot anyone should the occasion arise, and tenders two week's notice.

November 27 1969

Man Hunt

Private Walker finds an enemy parachute and arranges for the material to be made into ladies lingerie.

December 4 1969

No Spring For Frazer

A vital spring from the platoon's Lewis gun has disappeared and all indications point to it being in the coffin of a newly-deceased villager.

December 11 1969

Sons Of The Sea

When the bank acquires a boat in lieu of an unpaid debt, Mainwaring arranges for the platoon to train in seamanship.

Series 4

September 25 1970

The Big Parade

Mainwaring selects a ram as the platoon's mascot when it takes part in a parade for Spitfire Fund Week.

October 2 1970

Don't Forget The Diver

The unit must capture a windmill when they take part in a series of manoeuvres.

October 9 1970

Boots, Boots, Boots

To maintain the platoon's fitness, Captain Mainwaring decides to instigate a number of long route marches.

October 16 1970

Sergeant, Save My Boy

To confuse the enemy, Mainwaring moves his headquarters to a holiday hut previously occupied by deserted orphans.

October 23 1970

Don't Fence Me In

The platoon replaces a Polish unit in charge of guarding a group of Italian prisoners-of-war.

October 30 1970

Absent Friends

When only two members of the platoon turn up for parade, the rest are located playing darts in the pub.

November 6 1970

Put That Light Out

Mainwaring assigns Corporal Jones to take charge of the platoon at the Walmington lighthouse.

November 13 1970

The Two And A Half Feathers

A new recruit has some interesting stories to tell about the military exploits of Lance Corporal Jones.

November 20 1970

Mum's Army

Mainwaring decides to recruit some female members into the platoon to release his regular team for more important duties.

November 27 1970

The Test Air-Raid

Warden Hodges challenges Mainwaring's men to a game of cricket but secretly brings in a "ringer".

December 4 1970

A. Wilson (Manager)?

Wilson is offered managership at the bank's Eastgate branch, a position with more authority than that at Walmington-On-Sea.

December 11 1970

Unwanted Guests

Mainwaring is forced to share his office with Air-Raid Warden Hodges when the A.R.P. headquarters is bombed out.

December 18 1970

Fallen Idol

Captain Mainwaring loses face with the platoon when he insists on separate accommodation at a weekend camp on grenade training.

December 27 1971

Battle Of The Giants

(60 minute special)

The Walmington-On-Sea platoon competes with the Eastgate unit to be chosen as the guard of honour for a visit by the Prime Minister.

Series 5

October 6 1972

Asleep In The Deep

Walker and Godfrey are on watch at the pumping station when it is hit during an air raid.

October 13 1972

Keep Young And Beautiful

To prevent their being retired for being too elderly, several members of the platoon resort to using male beauty aids.

October 20 1972

A Soldier's Farewell

Following a cheese-supper, Mainwaring dreams he is Napoleon Bonaparte at the Battle of Waterloo.

October 27 1972

Getting The Bird

Walker's attempts at marketing a batch of stolen pigeons, together with Wilson's domestic problems threaten scandal for the platoon.

November 3 1972

The Desperate Drive Of Corporal Jones

Jones misreads a map reference and inadvertently sends the platoon into an area where live ammunition is being tested.

November 10 1972

If The Cap Fits

Misunderstandings occur when Mainwaring temporarily promotes Frazer to the rank of Captain.

November 17 1972

The King Was In His Counting House

A party at the Mainwaring home is disrupted when a bomb hits the bank and immediate measures must be taken to ensure the money is guarded.

November 24 1972

All Is Safely Gathered In

The platoon volunteers to help a friend of Godfrey's to harvest her crops.

December 1 1972

When Did You Last See Your Money?

Jones has mislaid five hundred pounds that the townspeople have donated for the establishment of a servicemen's canteen.



December 8 1972

Brain Versus Brawn

To demonstrate the worth of his platoon, Mainwaring arranges for them to take place in a commando raid.

December 15 1972

A Brush With The Law

When Mainwaring is charged with showing a light during the blackout, he elects to defend himself at the magistrate's court.

December 22 1972

Round And Round Went The Great Big Wheel

Mainwaring's platoon is selected for a special assignment in connection with a new top secret War Office weapon.

December 29 1972

Time On My Hands

The platoon must extricate an enemy pilot whose parachute has become entangled round the steeple of the town's mechanical clock.

December 25 1972

Christmas Night with the Stars

BBC1 80 minute special

Featured a *Dad's Army* segment.

Series 6

October 31 1973

The Deadly Attachment

Mainwaring's men come face to face with the enemy when they find themselves guarding the survivors of a sunken German U-boat.

November 7 1973

My British Buddy

Mainwaring organises some traditional British hospitality for some visiting American servicemen.

November 14 1973

The Royal Train

The platoon is to provide a guard of honour for the royal train of King George VI when it travels through Walmington-On-Sea.

November 21 1973

We Know Our Onions

The unit takes part in a Home Guard initiative test which ranges from an interview session to an obstacle course.

November 28 1973

The Honourable Man

Following the death of a relative, Sergeant Wilson ascends to the outer fringes of the aristocracy, much to Mainwaring's annoyance.

December 5 1973

Things That Go Bump In The Night

The platoon is forced to spend the night in an apparently deserted house when Jones's van breaks down.

December 12 1973

The Recruit

Whilst Mainwaring is in hospital, Sergeant Wilson takes it upon himself to recruit the Vicar and the Verger into the platoon.

Series 7

November 15 1974

Everybody's Trucking

The platoon is given signposting duties as part of a military exercise but the arrival of a steamroller causes problems.

November 22 1974

A Man Of Action

Captain Mainwaring decides that martial law must be declared when a bomb lands at the edge of town.

November 29 1974

Gorilla Warfare

When Mainwaring takes an initiative test to be trained as a secret agent, members of the regular army set out to thwart his plans.

December 6 1974

The Godiva Affair

The residents of Walmington-On-Sea are organising a carnival for the Spitfire Fund and the platoon volunteers to do a Morris dance.

December 13 1974

The Captain's Car

Mainwaring is loaned a Rolls Royce but it soon becomes confused with the official vehicle used by the Mayor.

December 23 1974

Turkey Dinner

The senior citizens are treated to a free dinner when Jones inadvertently shoots a turkey.

Series 8

September 5 1975

Ring Dem Bells

Whilst dressed as Nazi soldiers for the shooting of a training film, the platoon accidentally sets off an invasion scare.

September 12 1975

When You've Got To Go

The platoon rallies round Private Pike who has been issued with his call-up papers.

September 19 1975

Is There Honey Still For Tea?

It falls to Captain Mainwaring to have to advise Private Godfrey that his country cottage has to be demolished.

September 26 1975

Come In, Your Time Is Up

The platoon's exercise afloat on the lake creates conflict with the local sea scouts but the arguments subside when a German air crew bales out.

October 3 1975	1/12	Apr 15 1974	Something Nasty In The Vault
High Finance	1/13	Apr 22 1974	The Showing Up Of Corporal Jones
Mainwaring decides that Corporal Jones must do something about the precarious state of his bank account.	1/14	Apr 29 1974	The Loneliness Of
October 10 1975	1/15	May 6 1974	A Long Distance Walker
The Face On The Poster	1/16	May 13 1974	Sorry, Wrong Number
Mainwaring's plans for a recruitment campaign suffer a set back when the photographs on the poster are mixed up.	1/17	May 20 1974	(based on The Lion Has Phones)
December 26 1975	1/18	May 27 1974	The Bullet Is Not For Firing
My Brother And I	1/19	Jun 3 1974	Room At The Bottom
(40 minute special)	1/20	Jun 10 1974	The Menace From The Deep
Captain Mainwaring's sherry party for local dignitaries attracts an unwelcome guest.	•	Dec 25 1974	No Spring For Frazer
			Sons Of The Sea
<i>Series 9</i>			Present Arms (60m)
December 26 1976			(based on Battle Of The Giants)
The Love Of Three Oranges	2/1	Feb 11 1975	Don't Forget The Diver
Mainwaring's men pitch in when the Vicar stages a bazaar to raise funds for troop comforts.	2/2	Feb 18 1975	If The Cap Fits
October 2 1977	2/3	Feb 25 1975	Put That Light Out
Wake-Up Walmington	2/4	Mar 4 1975	Boots, Boots, Boots
Mainwaring believes the town has become apathetic to the threat of invasion so he arranges for the platoon to pose as fifth columnists.	2/5	Mar 11 1975	Sergeant Save My Boy
October 9 1977	2/6	Mar 18 1975	Branded
The Making Of Private Pike	2/7	Mar 25 1975	Uninvited Guests
Private Pike creates havoc with Captain Mainwaring's new staff car.			(based on Unwanted Guests)
October 16 1977	2/8	Apr 1 1975	A Brush With The Law
Knights Of Madness	2/9	Apr 8 1975	A Soldier's Farewell
The platoon takes part in a reenactment of the story of St. George and the dragon but things don't go as planned.	2/10	Apr 15 1975	Brain Versus Brawn
October 23 1977	2/11	Apr 22 1975	War Dance
The Miser's Hoard	2/12	Apr 29 1975	Mum's Army
Mainwaring tries to convince Frazer to put his box of gold sovereigns in the bank for safe keeping.	2/13	May 6 1975	Getting The Bird
November 6 1977	2/14	May 13 1975	Don't Fence Me In
Number Engaged	2/15	May 20 1975	The King Was
The platoon finds a bomb enmeshed in the wires of a strategically important telephone line.			In His Counting House
November 13 1977	2/16	May 27 1975	When Did You Last
Never Too Old			See Your Money?
Corporal Jones has decided to get married but getting to the Church on time could be a problem.	2/17	Jun 3 1975	Fallen Idol
	2/18	Jun 10 1975	A. Wilson (Manager?)
<i>Radio Adaptations</i>	2/19	Jun 17 1975	All Is Safely Gathered In
1/1 Jan 28 1974 The Man And The Hour	2/20	Jun 24 1975	The Day The Balloon Went Up
1/2 Feb 4 1974 Museum Piece	3/1	Mar 16 1976	A Man Of Action
1/3 Feb 11 1974 Command Decision	3/2	Mar 23 1976	The Honourable Man
1/4 Feb 18 1974 The Enemy Within The Gates	3/3	Mar 30 1976	The Godiva Affair
1/5 Feb 25 1974 The Battle For Godfrey's Cottage	3/4	Apr 6 1976	Keep Young And Beautiful
1/6 Mar 4 1974 The Armoured Might	3/5	Apr 13 1976	Absent Friends
	3/6	Apr 20 1976	Round And Round
			Went The Great Big Wheel
1/7 Mar 11 1974 Sergeant Wilson's Little Secret	3/7	Apr 27 1976	The Great White Hunter
1/8 Mar 18 1974 A Stripe For Frazer			(based on Man Hunt)
1/9 Mar 25 1974 Operation Kilt	3/8	May 4 1976	The Deadly Attachment
1/10 Apr 1 1974 Battle School	3/9	May 11 1976	Things That Go Bump In The Night
1/11 Apr 8 1974 Under Fire	3/10	May 18 1976	My British Buddy
	3/11	May 25 1976	Big Guns
	3/12	Jun 1 1976	The Big Parade
	3/13	Jun 8 1976	Asleep In The Deep
	3/14	Jun 15 1976	We Know Our Onions
	3/15	Jun 22 1976	The Royal Train
	3/16	Jun 29 1976	A Question Of Reference
			(based on The Desperate Drive Of L. Cpl. Jones)
	3/17	Jul 6 1976	High Finance
	3/18	Jul 13 1976	The Recruit
	3/19	Jul 20 1976	A Jumbo Sized Problem
			(based on Everybody's Trucking)

3/20 Jul 27 1976 The Cricket Match
(based on The Test)
3/21 Aug 3 1976 Time On My Hands
3/22 Aug 10 1976 Turkey Dinner
3/23 Aug 17 1976 The Captain's Car
3/24 Aug 24 1976 The Two-And-A-Half Feathers
3/25 Aug 31 1976 Is There Honey Still For Tea?
3/26 Sep 7 1976 Ten Seconds From Now
(based on the Dec 25 1972
Christmas Night With the Stars)

• *It Sticks Out Half A Mile*

A radio spinoff from *Dad's Army*.

Featured John Le Mesurier, Ian Lavender and Bill Pertwee as Wilson, Pike and Hodges in a 1948 seaside pier setting. Scripted by Harold Snoad and Michael Knowles (who had adapted the radio versions of *Dad's Army*) six programs were broadcast from November 20 to December 25 1983.

Film

Dad's Army

Columbia Pictures, 1971. 95 min

Theatrical release featuring the entire television cast.

Stage

Dad's Army

Shaftesbury Theatre, London from October 2nd 1975

A live presentation (with 1940s musical numbers) featuring all the television cast except John Laurie (replaced by Hamish Roushead) and the late James Beck (replaced by John Bardon).

Records

Dad's Army March/What Did You Do In The War?

Columbia DB 8766 (single)(March 1971)

We Stood Alone/Down Our Way

Columbia DB 8952 (single)(November 1972)

Dad's Army

BBC REH 183 (LP)(?/1974)

Contains two radio versions: Sergeant Wilson's Little Secret (Mar 11 1974) and Something Nasty In The Vault (Apr 15 1974)

Dad's Army

(original cast recording)

Warner Bros. K 56186 (LP)(?/1975)

Overture/Put That Light Out/Carry On On The Home Front/Command Post/When Can I Have A Banana Again?/The King Is Still In London/Lords Of The Air/Siegfried Line + We'll Meet Again/Floral Dance/A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square/Radio Personalities Of 1940 (Happidrome/Gert And Daisy/Robb Wilton/Max Miller)/Home Town/The Beach/Finale

Comedy Special

BBC REH 294 (LP)(October 1977)

Contains an extract from Something Nasty In The Vault (radio version) under the title An Unexploded Bomb

Cassettes

Dad's Army

BBC ZBBC 1140 (double cassette)

Contains four radio versions: When Did You Last See Your Money?/ A Jumbo Sized Problem/Time On My Hands/Ten Seconds From Now

Dad's Army 2

BBC ZBBC 1272 (double cassette)

Contains four radio versions: The Man And The Hour/Museum Piece/Command Decision/The Enemy Within The Gates

Videos

BBC BBCV 4892

The Man and the Hour/Museum Piece/Command Decision

BBC BBCV 4088

The Day The Balloon Went Up/Sons Of The Sea/Don't Forget The Diver

BBC BBCV 4089

Asleep In The Deep/Boots Boots Boots/A Soldier's Farewell

BBC BBCV 4320

The Two And A Half Feathers/The Test/Fallen Idol

BBC BBCV 4400

The Deadly Attachment/If The Cap Fits/The Honourable Man

BBC BBCV 4489

Big Guns/Menace From The Deep/The Bullet Is Not For Firing

BBC BBCV 4490

Mum's Army/The Armoured Might Of L. Cpl. Jones/Put That Light Out

BBC BBCV 4660

When Did You Last See Your Money?/Battle School/Branded

BBC BBCV 4661

Manhunt/Sergeant Save My Boy/Don't Fence Me In

BBC BBCV 4764

Uninvited Guests/The Desperate Drive Of L. Cpl. Jones/The King Was In His Counting House

BBC BBCV 4763

No Spring For Frazer/Absent Friends/A. Wilson (Manager?)

RCA./Columbia CVR 11735

Dad's Army (feature film)

Bibliography

Dad's Army

A Peter Way magazine, London 1972

Dad's Army

by Jimmy Perry and David Croft (Elm Tree Books/Hamish Hamilton, London 1974. also paperback) contains five scripts: Asleep In The Deep/The Deadly Attachment/The Godiva Affair/Everybody's Trucking/Keep Young And Beautiful

Dad's Army Annual

Five editions published by World Distributors, Manchester, 1974 to 1978)

Dad's Army—The Defence Of A Front Line English Village

by Paul Ableman (BBC Books, London 1989)

Novelisations based on four Jimmy Perry and David Croft scripts: The Battle Of Godfrey's Cottage/Getting The Bird/Mum's Army/My British Buddy

Dad's Army—The Making Of A Television Legend

by Bill Pertwee (David And Charles, London 1989)

Jimmy Durante

by Peter Tatchell



The early decades of the twentieth century produced a remarkable array of comic talents. Most of them came from Vaudeville, the Music Hall and later from the infant world of motion pictures. One performer though, made his way up the show business ladder as a ragtime piano player, but as the years went by, his exuberant personality and knockabout humour took over.

Jimmy Durante was born to Italian-American parents in the Lower East Side of New York City on February 10, 1893. Like most immigrant families living in the famed 'melting pot' times were tough. By the age of six he was helping out in his father's barber shop, and later sold newspapers to the mayor. Forced to leave school after the eighth grade, he worked as a coalwagon driver, and errand boy and a window washer; anything to help support his parents, two brothers and a sister.

Piano playing soon became his passion, and by the time he was seventeen he got a job providing accompaniment for the singing waiters at a Coney Island saloon (one of them was a young Eddie Cantor). By 1915 he'd moved uptown to a Harlem cabaret where he became the leader of a five-piece band. It was there he met a cakewalking baritone, Eddie Jackson, who would soon become his partner and lifelong friend.

In 1918, Jimmy made his first recording, playing piano with "The Original New Orleans Jazz Band" for the Okeh label. A year later the group did two numbers for Gennett, and Jimmy also played on releases by "The Whiteway Jazz Band", "Ladd's Black Aces", "Bailey's Lucky Seven" and "Lanin's Southern Serenaders" in the early 1920s. One of Gennett's titles even had a piece by "Jimmy Durante's Jazz Band".

Jimmy married the former Jeanne Olson in June 1921 and later that year began playing piano at the Nightingale Club in the heart of Manhattan. By now, prohibition was in force, and thousands of speakeasies had responded to the public's want for liquor. Jimmy and a co-worker at the Nightingale decided to open one of their own and the Club Durant opened its doors at the end of 1923. The misspelling was caused by a donated electric sign.

Soon after, a popular soft-shoe dancer named Lou Clayton was enticed to join the venture, and keep things running smoothly. His business acumen and show biz 'savvy' were a major influence on the Durante career for the next thirty years. It was Clayton who first coaxed Jimmy away from his piano and into centre stage to sing and joke with the customers.

Lou and Eddie Jackson joined him in the performance, and the "Three Sawdust Bums" (as the editor of Variety called them)

were becoming a Broadway sensation. Jimmy was also dubbed “Schnozzola” and the nickname stuck with him for the rest of his life.

For two years Club Durant was the place to be seen but in late 1925 it was closed down when a prohibition agent was served liquor. The trio weren't idle for long and moved to the Dover Club and later the Parody Club. In 1927 they were booked to play the Palace Theatre, and were so successful they were invited back again and again (breaking the house records). The great Florenz Ziegfeld signed them for his production *Show Girl* in 1929 and with the coming of the talkies, Clayton, Jackson and Durante made their movie debuts in the Paramount feature *Roadhouse Nights*.

The roaring twenties had ended with a bang with the Wall Street crash, but months later Jimmy and his partners were back on Broadway in a show called *The New Yorkers* (with a Cole Porter score). It was another huge success for them, but soon after Jimmy received an offer from MGM to sign a film contract. But the deal was for him alone and he didn't want to desert his partners. Clayton however, insisted he accept the offer, agreeing to become his manager, with Eddie Jackson to work behind the scenes.

Over the next four years, MGM featured Jimmy in a dozen movies, but none of them did much to enhance his career and the whiz-kids of Hollywood couldn't come up with an appropriate vehicle to utilise his unusual talents. He also worked for all the other major studios, but with equal success.

In early 1933, Durante was back on Broadway, but this time without his two partners for the first time. The show was *Strike Me Pink* but like many productions staged during the depths of the depression it could manage only a relatively short run.

Later that year Jimmy turned his attention to radio, and filled in for Eddie Cantor for ten weeks during Eddie's holiday break. For the 1934 break, Durante hosted the program for twenty-four weeks.

Billy Rose signed Jimmy for his spectacular Broadway extravaganza *Jumbo* at the end of 1935, and NBC broadcast an hourlong radio version for over four months. When it closed, Jimmy headed for England to make a movie with Richard Tauber called *Land Without Music* (or *Forbidden Music* as it was released in the US) and play the Palladium.

Cole Porter provided the score for the next Durante stage venture *Red, Hot And Blue* and also came up with a novel way of billing Jimmy and his co-star, Ethel Merman, to ensure both appeared on equal terms. Bob Hope had to be content with third place on the posters.

The rest of the decade, Durante alternated between Hollywood movies (in supporting roles), a Broadway show *Stars In Your Eyes*, and a short NBC radio series with Robert Benchley titled *Melody And Madness*. On the eve of the Second World War he'd been reduced to playing a minor role in a Gene Autry western and taking part in a failed musical *Keep Off The Grass* which, despite also featuring Ray Bolger, Jane Froman and Larry Adler, closed after only forty-four performances.

The early 1940s were the worst of his career. And to add to his professional woes, his private life was to suffer the tragic deaths of his father, sister and finally his wife Jeanne all in a brief period of time.

It took another health problem to get things rolling again. This time it was a bout of rheumatic fever suffered by Lou Costello in March 1943 that jump-started the Durante career. With Costello unable to continue with his radio show (and Bud

Abbott unwilling to go on without him) Jimmy was teamed with a young Garry Moore to fill the vacated N.B.C. timeslot. Overnight, radio had found a sensational double act.

The nimble-tongued Moore and the word-mangling Durante were in fine contrast. Though a generation apart, the ragtime pianist from the lower end of Manhattan worked well with the newcomer he'd call “Junior”.

As a result of his newfound success, Jimmy was back in pictures at MGM where he appeared in supporting roles singing his favourite numbers (*Inka Dinka Doo*, *Umbriago*, *I'm The Guy Who Found The Lost Chord* and *I'll Do The Strut-Away In My Cutaway* among others). They also got him to record studio versions of nearly two dozen songs for their newly set up record label.

Even so, Billy Rose wasn't so sure they were using him properly. He wrote in one of his columns ... “If they cool him off again, strong men will come down from the mountains and up from the valleys and turn your studio into a bowling alley”!

Durante and Moore stayed together for four seasons on radio, before Jimmy continued on separately for three more years (with straight men like Alan Young or Don Ameche). He also worked with regulars Victor Moore and Vera Vague (the man-chasing character played by Barbara Jo Allen).

1950 saw another turning point in Durante's personal and public life. His manager and ex-partner Lou Clayton was stricken with cancer but before he died he made sure Jimmy was signed for the entertainment medium that was just coming into its own ... television.

On November 1 1950 Jimmy Durante made his debut on *Four Star Revue* (alternating with Ed Wynn, Danny Thomas and Jack Carson). To use one of his own words, he was “collossial”. For the next six seasons he was one of television's hottest properties, winning award after award as comedy personality of the year. It was Jimmy's finest hour.

Like nearly all of the other big names of show business, Jimmy's appearances were rationed to once a month and his encounters with Helen Traubel, Carmen Miranda, Ethel Barrymore and Sophie Tucker produced a magic rarely equalled since. He was also host to such star surnames as Sinatra, Pinza, Merman and Bankhead.

After a season with *Four Star Revue*, Durante moved to Saturday nights with the *All Star Revue* and then a year on *The Colgate Comedy Hour*. In late 1954, he switched to a half-hour format (initially on a fortnightly basis, then a year later appearing every week).

Now in his sixties, Jimmy was a top headliner on the cabaret circuit, playing the Copacabana in New York and Las Vegas casinos for season after season. In 1960, he decided to marry his longtime ladyfriend Margie Little, and the couple adopted a baby girl (they named Cecilia Alicia) soon after.

The 67-year-old papa Durante may have been in his September years, but his 1963 recording of *September Song* proved an enormous hit with music lovers of all ages, and led to a series of popular LP releases.

A year later he hosted his first *Hollywood Palace* television show and appeared on the programme a dozen times before it ended. Response by the viewing audience was enough to convince ABC to give the 76-year-old a weekly one-hour series *Jimmy Durante Presents The Lennon Sisters Hour*.

It was to be Jimmy's last major television venture and a career of sixty years in show business was coming to an end. In 1974 he suffered the first of several strokes and was confined to a wheelchair. When he died, on January 29 1980, Bob Hope

eulogised "Success can be measured by the friends one has. And believe me, Jimmy Durante was the most successful man I know".

Broadway Shows

Show Girl

July 2 1929 at the Ziegfeld Theatre ... 111 performances

The New Yorkers

December 8 1930 at the Broadway Theatre ... 168 performances

Strike Me Pink

March 4 1933 at the Majestic Theatre ... 105 performances

Jumbo

November 16 1935 at the Hippodrome ... 233 performances

Red Hot And Blue!

October 29 1936 at the Alvin Theatre ... 183 performances

Stars In Your Eyes

February 9 1939 at the Majestic Theatre ... 127 performances

Keep Off The Grass

May 23 1940 at the Broadhurst Theatre ... 44 performances

Films

Roadhouse Nights

(1929 Paramount 80m)

The New Adventures Of Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford

(1931 MGM 96m)

The Cuban Love Song

(1931 MGM 91m)

The Passionate Plumber

(1932 MGM 73m)

The Wet Parade

(1932 MGM 120m)

Speak Easily

(1932 MGM 82m)

The Phantom President

(1932 Paramount 80m)

Blondie Of The Follies

(1932 MGM 90m)

What! No Beer?

(1933 MGM 66m)

Hell Below

(1933 MGM 105m)

Broadway To Hollywood

(1933 MGM 85m)

Meet The Baron

(1933 MGM 67m)

Palooka

(1934 United Artists 86m)

George White's Scandals Of 1934

(1934 20th Century Fox 80m)

Hollywood Party

(1934 MGM 68m)

Strictly Dynamite

(1934 R.K.O. 71m)

Student Tour

(1934 MGM 85m)

Carnival

(1934 Columbia 76m)

Land Without Music (aka Forbidden Music)

(1936 Capitol/G.F.D. 80m)

Start Cheering

1938 Columbia 78m)

Sally, Irene And Mary

(1938 20th Century Fox 72m)

Little Miss Broadway

(1938 20th Century Fox 70m)

Melody Ranch

(1940 Republic 84m)

You're In The Army Now

(1941 Warner Bros. 79m)

The Man Who Came To Dinner

(1941 Warner Bros. 112m)

Two Girls And A Sailor

(1944 MGM 124m)

Music For Millions

(1944 MGM 120m)

Two Sisters From Boston

(1946 MGM 112m)

It Happened In Brooklyn

(1947 MGM 105m)

This Time For Keeps

(1947 MGM 105m colour)

On An Island With You

(1948 MGM 107m colour)

The Great Rupert

(1950 Eagle Lion 86m)

The Milkman

(1950 Universal 87m)

Beau James

(1957 Paramount 105m colour)

Pepe

(1960 Columbia 195m)

Billy Rose's Jumbo

(1962 MGM 125m colour)

It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World

(1963 United Artists 162m colour)

Jimmy also appeared in two sketches filmed for MGM's *Ziegfeld Follies* (1946) but cut before release, a 1961 Italian-made *Giudizio Universale* which was never released, and can be heard singing the title song in the 1969 *Those Daring Young Men In Their Jaunty Jalopies* (aka *Monte Carlo Or Bust*).

Radio

The Chase And Sanborn Hour

(sponsored by Chase And Sanborn Coffee)

Series #1: NBC Sundays 8-00pm (60m) September 10 to November 12 1933 (10 eds)

Series #2: NBC Sundays 8-00pm (60m)~April 22 to September 30 1934 (24 eds)

Billy Rose's Jumbo

(sponsored by Texaco Gasoline)

NBC Tuesdays 9-30pm (60m) October 29 1935 to March 3 1936 (19 editions)

Melody And Madness

(sponsored by Old Gold Cigarettes)
NBC BLUE Tuesdays 9-00pm (30m) October 3 to November 14 1939 (7 editions)

The Jimmy Durante And Garry Moore Show

(sponsored by Camel Cigarettes)
Series #1: NBC Thursdays 10-00pm (30m) March 25 to October 28 1943 (32 eds)

Series #2: CBS Fridays 10-00pm (30m) October 8 1943 to June 29 1945 (90 eds)

• Rexall Drug Products took over sponsorship from April 6 1945
Series #3: CBS Fridays 10-00pm (30m) September 14 1945 to June 7 1946 (39 eds)

Series #4: CBS Fridays 10-00pm (30m) September 13 1946 to June 27 1947 (42 eds)

The Jimmy Durante Show

(sponsored by Rexall Drug Products)
Series #1: NBC Wednesdays 10-30pm (30m) October 1 1947 to June 23 1948 (38 eds)

• Camel Cigarettes took over sponsorship for the 2nd and 3rd series

Series #2: NBC Fridays 8-30pm (30m) October 8 1948 to July 1 1949 (39 eds)

Series #3: NBC Fridays 9-30pm (30m) October 7 1949 to June 30 1950 (39 eds)

Television

Four Star Revue

NBC Wednesdays 8-00pm (60m)
November 1 1950 Donald O'Connor
November 29 1950 Helen Traubel
December 27 1950 Luba Malina
January 24 1951 Helen Traubel
February 21 1951 Don Ameche
March 21 1951 Carmen Miranda
April 18 1951 Sophie Tucker
May 16 1951 Fred Allen and Eddie Cantor

All Star Revue

NBC Saturdays 8-00pm (60m)
October 6 1951 Helen Traubel
November 3 1951 Margaret Truman
December 1 1951 Ethel Barrymore
December 29 1951 Helen Traubel
January 26 1952 Mickey Rooney
February 23 1952 Gloria Swanson
March 22 1952 Margaret Truman
April 19 1952 Bette Davis

September 20 1952 Margaret Truman and Phil Harris

October 18 1952 Frank Sinatra

November 15 1952 Lily Pons

December 13 1952 Sophie Tucker

January 3 1953 Linda Darnell

January 31 1953 Ezio Pinza

March 7 1953 Carmen Miranda and Cesar Romero

April 11 1953 Helen Traubel

The Colgate Comedy Hour

NBC Sundays 8-00pm (60m)

October 11 1953 guest unknown

November 8 1953 Frank Sinatra

December 6 1953 Ethel Merman

January 3 1954 Paul Douglas and Eartha Kitt

February 7 1954 Tallulah Bankhead and Carol Channing

March 14 1954 Eddie Cantor and Robert Montgomery

April 11 1954 Liberace

May 9 1954 Shelley Winters

Texaco Star Theatre

NBC Saturdays 9-30pm (30m)

October 2 1954 Donald O'Connor

October 16 1954 Rusty Hamer and Jean Hagen

November 6 1954 Vivian Blaine

November 27 1954 Margaret Truman

December 11 1954 Lauritz Melchior

January 1 1955 George Raft

January 22 1955 Vivian Blaine

February 5 1955 Marilyn Maxwell

February 26 1955 Lisa Kirk and Bob Hope

March 19 1955 Pat Carroll

April 2 1955 Peter Lawford

April 23 1955 Patty Andrews

May 14 1955 George Jessel

May 28 1955 Dorothy Lamour

June 18 1955 Janet Blair

July 9 1955 Barbara Whiting

July 23 1955 Cass Daley

August 13 1955 Jimmy Ames

September 3 1955 Dave Barry

September 17 1955 Pat Carroll

September 24 1955 Toni Arden and Max Baer

October 8 1955 Jose and Ampora Iturbi

October 15 1955 Carmen Miranda

October 22 1955 Marguerite Piazza

October 29 1955 Peter Lawford

November 12 1955 Jeannie Carson and Peter Lawford

November 19 1955 Celeste Holm

December 3 1955 Janet Blair

December 10 1955 Polly Bergen

December 17 1955 Vivian Blaine and Stubby Kaye

December 31 1955 Jane Froman

January 7 1956 George Raft

January 14 1956 Jeanie Carson and Tab Hunter

January 28 1956 Liberace

February 4 1956 Milton Berle

February 11 1956 Robert Mitchum

February 25 1956 Esther Williams

March 3 1956 Charles Laughton

March 10 1956 Liberace

March 24 1956 Gordon MacRae

March 31 1956 Charles Boyer

April 7 1956 Ernest Borgnine

April 21 1956 George Jessel

April 28 1956 Johnny Ray, Liberace, George Raft and Peter Lawford

May 5 1956 Peter Lawford

May 19 1956 Connie Russell

May 26 1956 Marilyn Maxwell

June 2 1956 Lisa Kirk

June 16 1956 George Sanders

June 23 1956 Anna Marie Alberghetti and Peter Lawford

The Hollywood Palace

ABC Saturdays 9-30pm (60m)

April 18 1964 Silvio Francesco and Piccola Pupo

May 1 1965 Edward G. Robinson and Louis Armstrong
December 10 1966 Peter Lawford, George Carlin and Mrs. Mills

December 5 1967 Ethel Merman, Noel Harrison and the Lennon Sisters

December 26 1967 Anissa Jones and circus performers

February 17 1968 Van Johnson, Vikki Carr, Jimmy Dean and The Temptations

March 30 1968 Liza Minelli and Tim Conway

October 5 1968 Joey Heatherton, Frank Gorshin and the Lennon Sisters

December 14 1968 Ethel Merman, Vikki Carr, Bill Dana and Sugar Ray Robinson

January 11 1969 Ella Fitzgerald, Sergio Franchi and Marvin Gaye

Jimmy Durante Presents The Lennon Sisters Hour

ABC Fridays 10-00pm (60m)

• pilot edition aired May 6 1969 with guest Bobby Goldsboro

September 26 1969 Jack Benny, Jimmy Dean and Noel Harrison

October 3 1969 Glen Campbell, Arte Johnson and The Lettermen

October 10 1969 Joey Bishop, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans

October 17 1969 Martha Raye, Buddy Ebsen and Bobby Goldsboro

October 24 1969 Bob Hope, Andy Williams and The Osmond Brothers

October 31 1969 Danny Thomas and Jimmy Rodgers

November 7 1969 Fess Parker and John Byner

November 14 1969 George Burns and John Gary

November 21 1969 Kate Smith and Louis Nye

November 28 1969 Don Ho, Merle Haggard and Corbett Monica

December 5 1969 Milton Berle and John Stewart

December 12 1969 Mike Douglas and Norm Crosby

December 19 1969 Lorne Greene

December 26 1969 Raymond Burr, Al Martino, Eddie Jackson and Sonny King

January 9 1970 Mel Torme and Kaye Ballard

January 16 1970 Ed Ames, David Frye and Ferrante And Teicher

February 14 1970 (now Saturdays 9-30pm) Jack Benny and Sammy Davis Jr.

February 21 1970 Dinah Shore and Walter Brennan

February 28 1970 Wayne Newton, Tony Randall and Senor Wences

March 7 1970 Leslie Uggums, Vic Damone and Arte Johnson

March 14 1970 Jack Jones and Jerry Lewis

March 21 1970 Bobby Goldsboro and Desi Arnaz

March 28 1970 Perry Como and Charlie Callas

April 4 1970 Jimmy Dean and Rich Little

Recordings

Between 1918 and 1922, Jimmy played piano on a number of jazz band 78s issued by Okeh, Gennett, Paramount, Arto, Pathe Actuelle and Emerson. A list of some three dozen of these may be found in Brian Rust's "Jazz Records 1897—1942". Listed below are his vocal recordings (many of which also feature his piano playing) ...

Can Broadway Do Without Me?/So I Ups To Him

(both with Clayton and Jackson)

Columbia 1860 (May 9 1929)

Inka Dinka Doo/Hot Patatta

Brunswick 6774 (February 13 1934)

Inka Dinka Doo/Umbriago

Decca 23351 (July 26 1944)

Durante—Patron Of The Arts/Start Off Each Day With A Song

(with Jackson)

Decca 23566 (September 26 1944)

Who Will Be With You When I'm Far Away?/So I Ups To Him

(with Jackson)

Decca 23567 (October 3 and 18 1944)

Joe Goes Up—I Comes Down/Jimmy The Well Dressed Man

(with Jackson)

Decca 23568 (October 18 1944)

• Jimmy also recorded **Broadway My Street** at the October 3 1944 session, but it was not issued

There Are Two Sides To Every Girl/G'Wan Home, Your Mudder's Callin'

Majestic 1059 (mid-1940s)

I'm Feeling Mighty Low/I'll Do The Strut Away In My Cutaway

MGM 30015 (May 1947)

I'm The Guy Who Found The Lost Chord/Little Bit This, Little Bit That

MGM 30035 (May 1947)

Chidabee-Ch-Ch/The Day I Read A Book

MGM 30084 (November 1947)

The State Of Arkansas/Dollar A Year Man

MGM 30169 (November 1947)

Any State In The Forty-Eight Is Great/The Pussy Cat Song

(both with Betty Garrett)

MGM 30176 (December 1947)

Fugitive From Esquire/It's My Nose's Birthday

MGM 30207 (December 1947)

Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo/Take An "L"

MGM 30226 (December 1949)

I'm A Vulture For Horticulture/A-Raz-A-Ma-Tazz

MGM 30238 (May 1950)

Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Home/What You Goin' To Do When The Rent Comes Round

(both with Eddie Jackson) MGM 30255 (May 1950)

Frosty The Snowman/Christmas Comes But Once A Year

MGM 30257 (June 1950)

I Like People/Yankee Doodle Bunny

Golden BR-9

The Song's Gotta Come From The Heart/A Real Piano Player

(both with Helen Traubel)

RCA./Victor 12-3229 (January 26 1951)

How D'Yo Do And Shake Hands/Black Strap Molasses

(both with Danny Kaye, Groucho Marx and Jane Wyman)

Decca 27748 (August 12 1951)



You Say The Nicest Things/If You Catch A Little Cold

(both with Ethel Merman)

Decca 27865 (November 26 and 29 1951)

A Husband, A Wife (with Ethel Merman)/flip side unknown

Decca 29248 (November 26 1951)

Pupalina/Little People

Decca 29354 (November 4 1954)

It's Bigger Than Both Of Us (with Patty Andrews)/**When The Circus Leaves Town**

Decca 29537 (April 21 1955)

Swingin' With Rhythm And Blues (with Peter Lawford)/**I Love You, I Do** (with Eddie Jackson)

Decca 29581 (April 21 1955)

Jimmy Durante (In Person) At The Piano

Decca DL (7)8884 (tracks recorded January 30, February 2 and 3 1959)

Start Off Each Day With A Song/Mad Bird Melody/I Want A Girl/Inka Dinka Doo/You Made Me Love You/Carolina In The Morning/By The Light Of The Silvery Moon/Take An "L"/Shine On Harvest Moon/The Best Things In Life Are Free/Ida, Sweet As Apple Cider/Goodnight

Jimmy Durante At The Copacabana

Roulette 25123 (live cabaret performance)

I Could Have Danced All Night + It's My Nose's Birthday/Everywhere You Go/It's Still The Same Old Broadway + Ev'ry Street's A Boulevard In Old New York + Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Home + And They Became Good Friends/My Loving Melody Man + Ragtime Daddy + I Love You, I Do/Introduction/She's A Little Bit This, A Little Bit That + Take Away The Beret/We're Goin' Home + Who Will Be With You When I'm Far Away?/Please Don't Talk About Us When We're Gone/You Made Me Love You/Say It With Flowers/Inka Dinka Doo + Goodnight, Goodnight

September Song

Warner Bros. W(S) 1506

September Song/Look Ahead, Little Girl/Count Your Blessings Instead Of Sheep/When The Circus Leaves Town/I

Believe/Young At Heart/Don't Lose Your Sense Of Humor/You'll Never Walk Alone/One Room Home/Bluebird Of Happiness

Hello Young Lovers

Warner Bros. W(S) 1531

Hello Young Lovers/Try A Little Tenderness/Smile/Hi-Lili, Hi-Lo/Love In A Home/This Is All I Ask/The Glory Of Love/You Can't Have Everything/In The Other Fellow's Yard/The Time Is Now

Jimmy Durante's Way Of Life

Warner Bros. W(S) 1577

A Way Of Life/My Wish/As Time Goes By/Make Someone Happy/I'll Be Seeing You/When Day Is Done/When I Lost You/If I Had You/Once To Every Heart/I'll See You In My Dreams

One Of Those Songs

Warner Bros. W(S) 1655

One Of Those Songs/You're Nobody Till Somebody Loves You/Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Home/(I Wonder) What Became Of Life/Margie/Old Man Time/We're Going U.F.O.'ing/Daddy/This Train/Mame

Songs For Sunday

Warner Bros. W(S) 1713

Down By The Riverside/Precious Lord/He Touched Me/In The Garden/Somebody's Keeping Score/Amen/Beyond The Sunset/Peace In The Valley/His Eye/One Of These Days

As Time Goes By

Harmony HS 11287

A best of' collection featuring a selection of the above Warner Bros. recordings:

As Time Goes By/When Day Is Done/I'll See You In My Dreams/ Try A Little Tenderness/If I Had You/Smile/Make Someone Happy/Hi-Lili, Hi-Lo/The Glory Of Love

Recordings of Jimmy's radio and television performances may be found on the following releases ...

Club Durant

Decca DL 9049 (radio and TV duets from 1948—1955)

A Real Piano Player (+ Al Jolson)/I'm As Ready As I'll Ever Be (+ Sophie Tucker)/There's A Place In The Theatre For You + Who Will Be With You When I'm Far Away (+ Ethel Barrymore)/Start Off Each Day With A Song + Bill Bailey, Will You Please Come Home + I Can Do Without Broadway + Jimmy The Well-Dressed Man + So I Ups To Him + Because They All Love You (+ Lou Clayton and Eddie Jackson)/Sing Soft, Sing Sweet, Sing Gentle (+ Bing Crosby)/Our Voices Were Made For Each Other + Put On Your Old Gray Bonnet + Waiting For The Robert E. Lee (+ Helen Traubel)/The Boys With The Proboskis (+ Bob Hope)/The World Needs New Faces + Start Off Each Day With A Song + If You Knew Susie (+ Eddie Cantor)/Wingin' With Rhythm And Blues (+ Peter Lawford)

Jimmy Durante On Radio

Radiola MR-1080

features the complete Durante broadcast of December 3 1947 (with guest Charles Boyer) plus a selection of extracts

Jimmy Durante And Garry Moore Show

Memorabilia MLP 721

features the complete broadcast of May 23 1947

The Great Radio Comedians

Murray Hill 931699 (SLP Set)

features the complete Durante broadcast of November 22 1946

Songs By Sinatra

P.J. Records PJ 003

features two complete "Songs By Sinatra" broadcasts with guest Jimmy Durante ... February 27 1946 and November 26 1946

Jimmy Durante And Carmen Miranda

Amalgamated/Maracaibo M-809

features a 1955 Durante television soundtrack with guest Miranda

The Legend Of Jimmy Durante

Show-Biz Records SB-1002

a tribute to Jimmy narrated by Walter Winchell which features a selection of extracts from radio and television: I Could Have Danced All Night/What A Day, What A Day, What A Day/You Gotta Start Off Each Day With A Song/Razz-A-Ma-Tazz/It's Kinda Hard To Put It In Words/State Of Arkansas/Pike's Peak Or Bust/I Love Ya, Love Ya, Love Ya/The Boys With The Proboskis (with Bob Hope)/If You Knew Susie (with Eddie Cantor)/I'm As Ready As I'll Ever Be (with Sophie Tucker)/Inka Dinka Doo/I'll Do The Strut-Away In My Cutaway/September Song/ Young At Heart/Goodnight

Dick Tracy In B Flat

Curtain Calls 100/1, Pro Arte CDD 505 (compact disc)

Jimmy is featured in this all-star AFRS "Command Performance" broadcast of February 15 1945

Mail Call

Tandem LP 1903, LaserLight 15 413 (compact disc)

Jimmy is featured on an all-star AFRS "Mail Call" broadcast ... number 91

Command Performance Victory Extra

Radiola MR 1100

Jimmy is featured in this all-star AFRS "Command Performance" broadcast of August 15 1945

Christmas Command Performance

Nostalgia 003/004 (2LP Set)

Jimmy is featured in this all-star AFRS "Command Performance" broadcast of December 1944

Alice Through The Looking Glass

R.C.A. LOC/LSO 1130

Jimmy is featured in the soundtrack of the television special screened on NBC on November 6 1966

Frosty The Snowman

MGM SE 4733

Jimmy is featured in the soundtrack of the television special screened on CBS on December 5 1971

Soundtrack recordings of Jimmy's movie appearances may be found on the following releases ...

Beau James

Imperial 9041

Jumbo

Columbia OL 5860/OS 2260

Those Daring Young Men In Their Jaunty Jalopies

Paramount 5006 (also released as Monte Carlo Or Bust ... Paramount SPFL 255)

reissues of Jimmy's 1940s 78rpm recordings may be found on the following releases ...

Jimmy Durante

Decca DL 5116 (10" LP)

Inka Dinka Doo/Umbrigo/Start Off Each Day With A Song#/I'm Durante—The Patron Of The Arts/Who Will Be With You When I'm Far Away?/So I Ups To Him#/Jimmy, The Well-Dressed Man#/Joe Goes Up—I Come Down (# with Eddie Jackson)

Jimmy Durante Sings/Eddie Cantor Sings

British Decca/Ace Of Hearts AH 25

Inka Dinka Doo/Umbrigo/I'm Durante—The Patron Of The Arts/So I Ups To Him#/Jimmy, The Well-Dressed Man#/Joe Goes Up—I Comes Down/plus seven Eddie Cantor vocals (# with Eddie Jackson)

Jimmy Durante In Person

MGM E 542 (10" LP)

I'll Do The Strut Away In My Cutaway/Fugitive From Esquire/Chidabee-Ch-Ch/The Day I Read A Book/I'm The Guy Who Found The Lost Chord/It's My Nose's Birthday/Dollar-A-Year Man/The State Of Arkansas

Jimmy Durante In Person

MGM 3256

Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Home (with Eddie Jackson)/What You Gonna Do When The Rent Comes 'Round (with Eddie Jackson)/A-Razz-A-Ma-Tazz/I'm A Vulture For Horticulture/It's My Nose's Birthday/I'll Do The Strut Away In My Cutaway/I'm The Guy Who Found The Lost Chord/The Day I Read A Book/Fugitive From Esquire/Chidabee-Ch-Ch/The State Of Arkansas/Dollar-A-Year Man

• re-released as *The Very Best Of Jimmy Durante and The Special Magic Of Jimmy Durante*

Books**Night Clubs**

by Jimmy Durante and Jack Kofoed (Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1931)

Schnozzola—The Story Of Jimmy Durante

by Gene Fowler

Viking Press, New York 1951)

Goodnight Mrs. Calabash

by William Cahn

Duell, Sloan And Pearce, New York, 1963

I Remember Jimmy—The Life And Times Of Jimmy Durante

by Irene Adler

Arlington House, New York 1980

John Clarke

by Peter Tatchell

Barry Humphries has called him Australia's best humourist. In recent years he's become that continent's leading satirist through his weekly appearances on the top-rated television program *A Current Affair*, where he's able to expose the hypocrisy and incompetence of the country's leading public figures with a wit that more often than not goes straight for the jugular.

For most of his life Clarke has battled authority and its intrinsic pomposity. Born in Palmerston North, New Zealand in 1948, by the time he'd reached secondary school the teaching staff had discerned him a troublemaker and he was expelled for an indiscretion before completing his course. As a result, he was unable to proceed to university by way of a scholarship and was forced to spend the better part of a year working as a shearer to help pay for his tertiary education.

It wasn't long before he realized the lectures and tutorials weren't motivating him towards a career path, and instead Clarke found an interest in student revues, both as a writer and a performer. His only theatrical background had been occasional appearances with his mother's amateur dramatic group as a child, but he was confident he could relate to his audience and write the sort of material he (as one of them) would like to see up on stage.

Before long, Clarke and his fellow performers were engaged to present their productions outside the university as well, and get paid for their efforts. On one occasion the troupe found itself employed at a ski lodge and the subject of a rowdy welcome by its customers. The revellers were soon brought down to earth by a few acidic Clarke barbs, and the performance enjoyed a more successful response as a result.

By 1971, he'd developed his "Fred Dagg" character and took part in a stage presentation called *The Brian Edwards Show*, highlights of which were released on LP. He'd also been given a job by the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation, not as a performer or writer, but as a program selector. It was his function to view overseas offerings and recommend those he thought worthy of screening by the NZBC. He soon realized his choices were being overlooked by the bureaucrats higher up the ladder, and a nasty dose of boredom inspired a series of caustic comments and the occasional prank, none of which were appreciated by his employers. Eventually, Clarke and the NZBC parted company with his file bearing an annotation that he was under no circumstances to work for them again.

Now in his early twenties and with no specific career goal, John Clarke decided to head for Britain and though his two years there were mostly frustrating and impecunious, it did result in a brief film appearance and an encouraging shove from one Barry Humphries. In 1972 Humphries and director Bruce Beresford were making a movie version of *The Adventures Of Barry McKenzie* and Clarke was one of a number of antipodeans offered minor roles in the production. Though most of his scenes (and he'd been encouraged to improvise bits) ended on the cutting room floor, Humphries noted a definite comedic talent in the New Zealander and suggested he concentrate his efforts on writing and performing.

Clarke returned to New Zealand soon after and developed his Fred Dagg alter-ego in short segments on television (in much the same way Paul Hogan first appeared to Australian audiences). Before long, the character became a firm favourite with viewers throughout the country, and stage appearances were sellouts. By the mid-seventies, Clarke had become New Zealand's most successful performer, though his satirical remarks were not finding favour with politicians on either side of the House.

In 1975 a selection of the Fred Dagg routines originally aired on Radio Windy were rerecorded for Clarke's first solo LP *Fred Dagg's Greatest Hits*. Engineers at EMI were amazed at the speed with which the session was completed, and the company's executives were more than delighted with the sales figures the disc was soon amassing. The venture wasn't totally trouble-free however, as one of the tracks—a medley of popular song hits performed with the backing of farmyard sounds—incurd the wrath of several copyright holders and a revised version of the record had to be issued. In this, the offending routine was replaced by two short monologue pieces.

By 1977, Clarke decided to venture back on to the big screen, and in the space of four days filmed a short subject *Dagg Day Afternoon*. Financial support for the production was provided by various sponsors who were given screen exposure for their products in return for their cash. Despite its shoestring budget, the enterprise proved a success.

Later that year, he made a far more important career move, and decided he'd gone about as far as he could in New Zealand and headed across the Tasman to try his luck in Australia. Soon after, he was invited to contribute segments to ABC Radio and was eventually heard every week on *The Science Show* expounding his views on such topics as real estate, advertising and education. Clarke was also commenting on the leading players in the political scene and by the end of the decade a certain department head suggested he'd be wise to concentrate his efforts in less controversial areas. Unwilling to being muzzled by the broadcasting bureaucracy, he refused to modify his offerings and all of a sudden found there was no longer a budget allocation for his employment.

He wasn't idle for long though. Phillip Adams asked for his help with the script for a forthcoming feature film *Lonely Hearts*, and he also wrote a savage lampoon of the Australian film industry under the title of *Block Buster*. Unfortunately, this latter effort has yet to go before the cameras. Though Adams considers it brilliant he suspects the very motion picture types it satirizes would be less than enthusiastic to see their likenesses up on the big screen.

One project which did see the light of day was a television series called *The Fast Lane*, devised by Clarke and Andrew Knight and centring on the activities of a couple of none-too-successful private eyes. More akin to *Minder* than the traditional cop shows, it was screened by the ABC in early 1985.

By then, Clarke was performing again, also on ABC television in the groundbreaking *Gillies Report* which allowed him to take aim at the various political targets he'd been warned off five years earlier on radio. He also gave a weekly report on the little known sport of 'farnarkeling', though at times no one on the set knew exactly what he'd be saying until the very moment of the recording.

Two series with Gillies convinced ABC radio to once again open their portals to Clarke's talents and he and Brian Dawe (then head of their comedy unit) developed a mock interview format where notable public figures would be quizzed on issues

of the day. The sketches made no attempt at impersonation, but relied on the cleverness of their wordplays to achieve their satirical goal.

By 1989, the idea had been transferred to television's *A Current Affair* on the Nine Network where Clarke and Dawe have created a Friday night niche for themselves up to the present day.

Clarke has also continued in other spheres of the Australian entertainment scene ... he and Andrew Knight contributed four of the scripts for the second series of *The Fast Lane* in late 1987, and on the performing side he provided one of the voices for the movie adaption of the comic strip *Footrot Flats*. On television he's appeared in the short film *Man And Boy* and the feature length *Matter Of Convenience* and more recently took one of the lead roles in the cinema release *Death In Brunswick*. And with lawyer-cum-radio personality Ross Stevenson he co-authored *A Royal Commission Into The Australian Economy* which was performed at the 1992 Melbourne Comedy Festival.

Records

The Brian Edwards Show

HMV HSDM 1017 (LP) contains two John Clarke tracks: You Would Have Laughed/In Newsview Tonight

The Royal Wedding Stakes/My Husband And I

Polydor 2069 041 (single)

Fred Dagg's Greatest Hits

EMI DAGG 1 (LP)

The Ascent Of Man/Medley/Sportsman Of The Year/21st Speech/Farmers/Petrol And How To Get It/Larry Loves Barry/Solar Energy/Hamlet/Traditional Air/We Don't Know How Lucky We Are/The Good Samurai/Cricket/Exams/Phone Call*/Opera/ Sleeping Trouble/Driving Lessons/A Child's Guide To The Universe/The National Anthem
(* originally titled **You Would Have Laughed**)

Fred Dagg's Greatest Hits

EMI DAGG 2, EMC 2553 (LP) revised version of DAGG 1 with Medley track replaced by Cooking With Dagg and Understanding The Economy (* the offending Medley track may be heard on the double-LP **Antipodean Atrocities ...** ABC/Festival L 45951/2)

Fred Dagg Live

EMI DAGG 3 (LP) Prologue/Memoirs Of A Dagg/Strangers In The Night/We Don't Know How Lucky We Are/Heartbreak Hotel/She Taught Me How To Yodel/A Classical Interlude/ Only You/The Flea Race/Save The Last Dance For Me/Gumboots/Leftovers/ Folk Songs. Taken from a 1976 live concert at the Christchurch Town Hall.

(details unknown)

EMI Freds One (single)

Gumboots Song/Save The Last Dance For Me

EMI Freds Two (single)

Fred Dagg's Big Single

EMI FEP 1 (EP) It's Not A Bad Day For It/A Rational Approach/Gumboots March/ Parliamentary Broadcast/A Bit Of A Song/\$6 Million Ram

Soundtrack items from the 1977 short film *Dagg Day Afternoon*.

The Fred Dagg Tapes

Festival L 37148 (LP)

Real Estate/Money For Judgement/Government Department/ Escapes/Bob And Malcolm/A Full Public Statement/John Citizen/An Honest Man/The Meaning Of Life/Advertising/ Uranium/Novelist/Standing Orders/The Truth Of The Pudding/Stock Exchange Report/Education/The Socratic Paradox

The Gillies Report—The Songs

ABC/Festival L 38427 (LP), C 38427 (cassette)

Gillies Report Theme/Introduction To Lange Song/Lange Song/Labor Election Commercial: We're Insufferable/ Farnarkeling Song*/Maralinga, Or Wise After The Event*/The Conventionally Powered Ship Venus*/Shout"/"II Dismissale" An Opera In 2 Acts By Gian-Carlo Trimbale*/New South Wales: The Musical*/Introduction To Menzies Song/I'm Glad I'm Not Alive Anymore/Christmas Carol*

(* John Clarke is featured on these tracks)

Shout/The Farnarkeling Song

ABC/Festival K-9686 (single)

(* John Clarke is featured on the B-side)

Swim Between The Flags

Festival L 38874 (LP), C 38874 (cassette)

Coastal Surveillance/Kevin Grey's Elegy/Sunhat Dispute Widens/Obviousness (R.A.C.V. Milne)/Farnarkeling Report/The Miracle Of Advertising/Kubla Khan't (Coleridge)/Farnarkeling Update/Interview With Bob Hawket Prime Minister Of Australia/A Child's Christmas In Warrnambool (Dylan Thompson)/Banking/The Dog's Breakfast (R.A.C.V. Milne)/Contraceptive Vending Machines/Interview With John Howard, Leader Of The Liberal Party/Winter Union Chaos/Lines Composed About Halfway Across Pymont Bldge (Wordsworth)/The Bicentennial/Interview With Joh Bjelke-Petersen, Premier Of Queensland For 20 Years (with Bryan Dawe as the Interviewer)

Great Interviews Of The Twentieth Century

WEA 903172769-1 (LP), 903172769-2 (compact disc), 903172769-4 (cassette)

Concerning The Economy/The Idea Of A University/Matters Of State/A Great Man/Australia-U.S. Relations/The 1989 Ashes Series/All Stand Please/The Tradition Continues/Grace Under Pressure/On Corporate Matters/Election 1990/The Liberals Rampant/A Mystery Explained/Party Unity/A Triumph Of Organisation/A Tragic Loss/The Consumption Tax Debate/The Gallipoli Experience/A Valuable Contribution/Complete Rooster-Up/Concerning His Prostate Operation/The State Of Victoria/The Cambodian Refugee Question/The Annual Premiers' Conference/The Killer

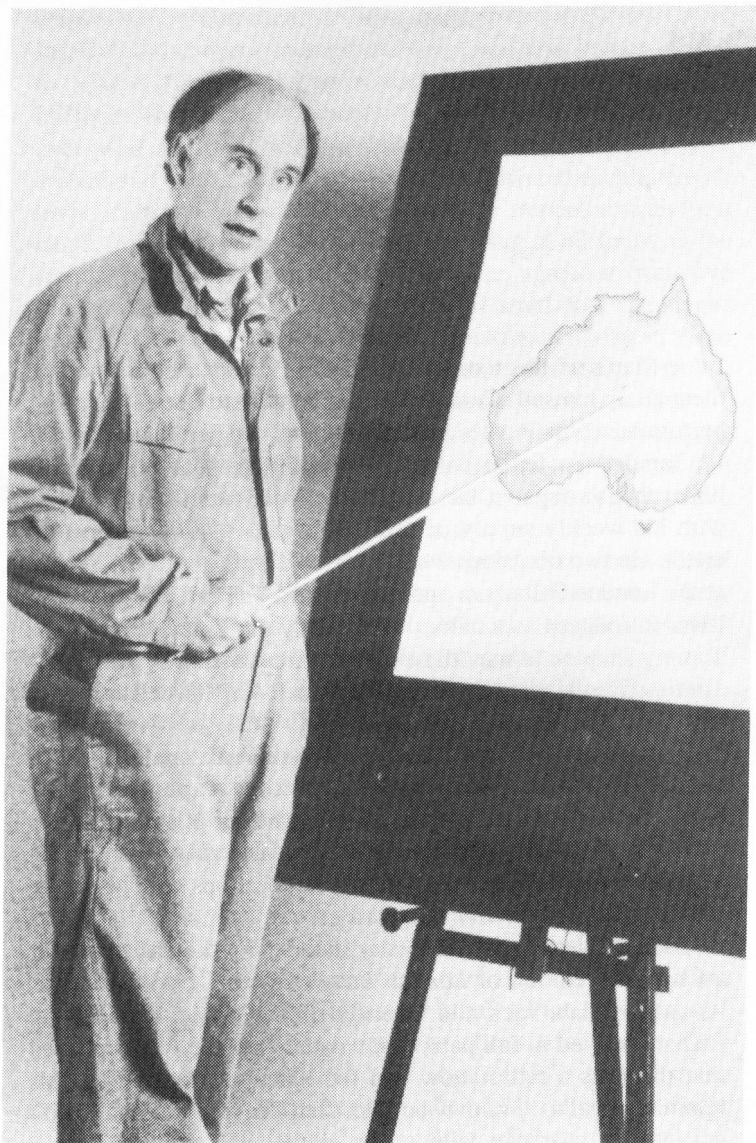
(with Brian Dawe as the Interviewer, from *A Current Affair*)

The Annual Report

Warner Bros./Mana Music 90317599 (compact disc)

Religious Instruction/A Working Class Boy/The Banking Inquiry/Attracting The Green Vote/Trouble With Stamps/On The Vital Matter Of Trade/The Crossword/Protecting The Environment/Our Man In Dublin/Our Man In Perth/Our Man In Wonderland/On The Waterfront/A Couple Of Bucks/The Challenge/A Very Brilliant Man/Standing Ovation/Defending The Faith/The Front Fell Off/Consumption Tax/I'd Rather Not Discuss It/The Big Question/A Message From Spain

(with Brian Dawe as the Interviewer, from *A Current Affair*)



Trouble With Stamps/The Crossword/A Very Brilliant Man/Protecting The Environment/On The Waterfront/The Front Fell Off

Videos

The Gillies Report

ABC Video

The Best of Gillies

ABC Video

John Clarke and Brian Dawe—The Video Collection

Warner Music/Mana Music 903176129-3

The Idea Of A University/Concern For The Environment/On Corporate Matters/The Gathering Storm/The Liberals Rampant/The Gallipoli Experience/A Valuable Contribution/Concerning His Prostate Operation/Complete Rooster-Up/The Killer/The Privatisation Debate/See Me Afterwards/The Soul Of Discretion/Religious Instruction/A Working Class Boy/Trouble With Stamps/Attracting The Green Vote/The Crossword/Protecting The Environment/On The Waterfront/Our Man In Dublin/Our Man In Perth/Our Man In Wonderland/A Couple Of Bucks/A Very Brilliant Man/A Standing Ovation/The Front Fell Off/Consumption Tax/I'd Rather Not Discuss It/The Big Question/A Message From Spain/The Bell Lap
(from *A Current Affair*)

Books

The Fred Dagg Careers Advisory Bureau

by John Clarke (Fourth Estate Books, Wellington New Zealand, 1979)

The Fred Dagg Scripts

by John Clarke (Nelson, 1981)

A collection of 95 scripts, originally performed on ABC Radio between 1977 and 1981.

Daggshead Revisited

by John Clarke (Nelson, 1982)

A further 87 scripts, originally performed on ABC Radio.

A Complete Dagg

by John Clarke (Allen & Unwin, 1989)

A collection of articles, scripts, interviews, etc.

The Complete Book Of Australian Verse

by John Clarke (Allen & Unwin, 1989)

An anthology of Australian poetry collected by Clarke

Great Interviews Of The Twentieth Century

by John Clarke (Allen & Unwin, 1990)

A collection of 47 scripts, originally performed on the Nine Network's *A Current Affair* with Bryan Dawe.

A Royal Commission Into The Australian Economy

by John Clarke and Ross Stevenson (Allen & Unwin, 1992)

Script of the production originally performed at the Universal Theatre, Melbourne for the 1992 Melbourne Comedy Festival.

More Great Interviews

by John Clarke (Allen & Unwin, 1992)

A further 44 scripts, originally performed on *A Current Affair*.

Cassettes

The Dagg Years - ABC Soundtracks

ABC ISBN 0 642 530394 (cassette only)

New Parliament/Lubradagg/Unemployment/Farnarkeling 1/Farnarkeling 2/U.S. Airforce/Broadcasting/Security/Farnarkeling 3/Farnarkeling 4/1980 Olympics/Hayden On Charles For G.G./Nuclear Waste/Farnarkeling 5/Farnarkeling 6/Queensland Nepotism/ Taxation/Interview With Prince Charles/Overseas Investment/ Interview With Meryl Streep/Crash Of '87/Budget Of '88/ Interview With David Hill (the interviewer is played by Bryan Dawe)

The Complete Book of Australian Verse

ABC ISBN 0 642 12913/4

John Clarke (and a number of others) read a selection of poetry

Hazchem

Laughing Stock LAFC A 7 (cassette only)

Reading At The Adelaide Festival Writer's Week (April 1992): Wordsworth/Leigh Hunt/Longfellow/W.B. Yeats/R.A.C.N. Milne/Kahlilij Bran/William Esther Williams/T.S. Elliot/Dorothy Parkinson/Ogden Gnash/Margaret Attwood/ Dylan Thompson.

Selections from *A Current Affair*:

Concerning The Economy/The Idea Of A University/On Corporate Matters/A Mystery Explained/A Valuable Contribution/Concerning His Prostate Operation/The Killer/

A Scriptwriter Remembers

by Brad Ashton

In 1953 both *Workers Playtime* and *Midday Music Hall* were the training ground for new comedy writers like myself. I wrote acts for Stan Stennett ... Dick Emery ... Terry Scott ... Johnny Lockwood ... Joe Church ... Eddie Arnold ... Wally Dunn ... and anyone else who would meet my eight guineas-for-six-minutes fee.

Looking back at some of those old scripts I cringe at such lines as "This morning I was exercising on my vaulting horse and fell off. But I'm not blaming the horse—it was my own vault!" and "I've just bought a foreign car that's so small I don't have to park it. I just stick it on my wife's charm bracelet." and "I have a very dear wife. You should see the cost of her clothes".

Believe it or not, those gags got laughs in their day. Humour's changed a lot since then. Censorship hardly exists anymore. Writers no longer have to skirt round mentioning 'tits', 'bums' and explicit sexual activities. As Frankie Howerd put it "They're now doing on TV things they used to have to do to get on TV". Subtlety itself has now become a dirty word.

When Derek Jamieson lost his libel case against the BBC, the judge ruled that "Anything said on a comedy show was not meant to be taken seriously". That opened the floodgates to a torrent of satirical shows that set out not just to get laughs, but to actually inflict a wound.

That kind of comedy is easy to write. And if I'm ever short of a few bob I'll join the rat race, sell my soul to the devil, and add my name to the endless list of scribes on News Huddlines and its posh brother Week Ending.

Like a lot of *Laugh* readers, I am fascinated by the great entertainers of what Dennis Gifford calls in his book "The Golden Days Of Radio". I feel privileged to have been part of it. In my mental storehouse are both fond and painful memories of working with such radio greats as Ted Ray ... Arthur Askey ... Tommy Trinder ... Alfred Marks ... Peter Jones ... Kenneth Williams ... Jack Watson ... Deryck Guyler ... Cyril Fletcher ... Eric Barker et. al.

Dickie Valentine stands out as my favourite star to write for. His show *How About You* supported by Stan Stennett and Janet Brown was recorded for twenty-one consecutive Sundays at the Paris Studio. He would surprise me every week by the new and varied voices he came up with. Perfect impersonations of just about every Hollywood actor. If I wrote a Russian part he'd play it as Akim Tamiroff; a cowboy would be Alan Ladd; a comedian, Jack Benny or Bob Hope. But he insisted I never mention their name in the script. Dickie would say "I'll do the voices and let the listeners decide who it is for themselves". Serious bouts of asthma made him end the series and I felt just as bad about it as Dickie Valentine did himself.

Arthur Askey surprised me in a different way. He said he loved the first half hour script "as far as it goes ...". What I hadn't realised was that the writer was expected to put in the

Little Man's ad libs too. In my naivety I'd supposed he thought them all up himself. Certainly he did contribute a few during the performance, but most were carefully scripted beforehand.

Tommy Trinder so jealously guarded his reputation as an ad-libber that throughout the three and a half years I provided him with his weekly supply of thirty-five gags I never received a credit. On two occasions when I was in Tommy's dressing room at the London Palladium and impresario Val Parnell walked in, I was introduced as a tailor. "How many times have I told you" Tommy shouted at me "these sleeves are too short!" Perhaps if Tommy Trinder hadn't been so critical, Val Parnell might at least have asked me to make him a suit.

I remember Ted Ray mostly for his supreme confidence. No matter how bad a script might look on paper, he never complained. He'd just smile and say "The script's not quite so good this week. Never mind, we'll have fun trying to improve it in performance". Then he'd pull out all the stops with his funny voices and collection of catch phrases.

Richard Hearne of 'Mr. Pastry' fame did a sketch I wrote for a Christmas edition of *London Laughs* when Jack Watson was its anchor man. Jack and I nearly fell over backwards when Richard arrived in full pantomime dame costume. We explained that this was a radio show and the listeners couldn't see his feminine regalia. "I know" he said, "but I'm an actor and I can't get into the character without the clothes and make-up". As a gag I sent him a sketch set in a nudist camp, but he never replied.

Eric Barker used to have what he called his 'side bet to make it more interesting'. It's always been difficult to make a comedy show run exactly to time. They always underran or overran by anything up to ten minutes. Eric would ask all the cast to guess to the second just how long each show would last. And we'd all have to put five shillings in the kitty, the one with the nearest guess scooping the jackpot. Audiences never realised how the timing of the gags sped up or slowed down towards the latter part of the shows because of those side bets.

Six and a half years writing *Show Band Show* and then *On Your Marks* for Alfred Marks led me to being almost part of his family. Script meetings were at his house with his wife Paddie and her family all chipping in their ideas. Later, when Alfred was Best Man at my wedding, he told my family how Valerie (my wife) and I had done all our courting in his converted loft where I was supposed to be doing the re-writes on his scripts.

I never officially wrote for Frankie Howerd, but there was one series written by two colleagues of mine Charles Hart and Peter Bishop. Frankie objected to only having 65% of the laughs while June Whitfield, Wallas Eaton and Robertson Hare shared the other 35%. He paid me on-the-side to re-script the shows so that all the laughs went to him. "The other three are there to support me" he said, "not to compete with me".

In the early 1960s I got an award for the pilot show of a series called *Dishonest To Goodness* about two brothers who

were comedy con men. An idea later done on TV by David Jason and Nicholas Lyndhurst in *Only Fools And Horses* written by John Sullivan. Bill Kerr starred in my pilot show and was brilliant. But the BBC powers-that-be decided he was being over-used and replaced him with a straight actor who is still around and unused to radio comedy. He delivered each line with loving care and beautiful diction, but never stopped to wait for a laugh. Apparently he could not see anything at all funny in the scripts. We almost came to blows until he agreed to wait five seconds at all the places where I'd inked a red dot. The laughs came. But it was five shows before I could stop inking in those dots and trust him to time the laughs for himself. I'm not mentioning his name because I know his brother is a lawyer.

Deryck Guyler, the most relaxed of all character actors, dozed off during one show. When a fellow actor nudged him awake he adlibbed some marvellously funny lines to fill in while he frantically searched for his place in the script.

Kenneth Williams had that deep throaty voice which scored best in short bursts. Galton and Simpson gave him some lovely cameo spots to fill in while Tony Hancock popped into the wings for a few moments to oil his larynx with a tot of the hard stuff. But on the panel of *The Law Game* and my other earlier game show *Pro's And Con's*, I found him so overpowering that the other guests had a hard job getting their voices heard. Once I asked Ken to cut a long story down from the four minutes it took at rehearsal. He did cut some of the wording, but with his florid vocal embellishments it went to six minutes on the actual show.

Spike Milligan is a man I respect as a brilliant writer and a very clever performer. But as a self-confessed manic depressive he does have the odd tantrum now and again. BBC producer John Browell fell foul of him over some script 'adjustments' that Spike did not agree with. For about four weeks they wouldn't talk to each other and I, being friends of both of them, would be asked to stand between them and relay their angry messages back and forth. Finally I decided to make myself unavailable so they'd have to speak to each other. Very soon peace reigned again, and they got on better than ever.

Sixteen weeks working on *Life With The Lyons* gave me an insight to the regimented American formula for doing a weekly show. Friday mornings Bebe Daniels gave Bob Block and I the storyline and scene-breakdown of that week's show. There were eight scenes in all, and each scene had to have exactly five hundred words of dialogue. It was the only series I know that was rehearsed with full cast the previous day and actually recorded. Overnight Bebe and Ben would listen to it four or five times and decide which were the weak points. When we met at the studio next day exactly one thousand words would have been deleted, leaving us with a tight three thousand word script. If it ran slightly short, extra sound effects were put in to fill the time.

There has always been an argument about whether there is really a division between North and South in comedy. When I was asked to write a radio series for Mike and Bernie Winters, the brothers decided their brand of very broad comedy was best appreciated by Northern audiences. They were probably right. We recorded them (two shows every Sunday) at the Playhouse Theatre in Manchester and the audiences were certainly warmer than many we'd played to at the Paris.

Those are just a few recollections of forty years writing comedy for radio. Despite the traumas, tantrums and even the BBC Canteen tea, I hope the next forty will be as rewarding.

WHAT'S NEW?

BOOKS

Benny - The True Story By His Best Friend by Dennis Kirkland and Hilary Bonner (Smith Gryphon, London)

The Real Benny Hill by Margaret Forwood (Robson Books, London)

Star Turns - The Life And Times Of Benny Hill And Frankie Howard by Barry Took (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London)

Titter Ye Not! - The Life Of Frankie Howard by William Hall (Grafton paperback, London)

Smith And Jones - Head To Head (Fontana paperback, London) Collection of scripts

Bottom - The Scripts by Adrian Edmondson and Rik Mayall (BBC Books, London) All six Series 1 scripts

How To Be A Real Man by Julian Clary (with Mark Leigh and Mike Lepine) (Virgin paperback, London)

The Penguin Book of Comedy Sketches collected by Frank Muir and Simon Brett (Penguin paperback, London) expanded new edition of the 1982 paperback *The Book Of Comedy Sketches*

COMPACT DISCS

Billy Connolly - Highlights And Footlights (Polydor 517 832-2)

When In Rome/Teenage Parties/The Great Marvo And The Lovely Doreen/Sexy Sadie And The Lovely Raquel/Gandhi's Revenge/Pain In My Ass/Have You Ever Thought About Being A Pervert/Football Violence/Ivan The Terrible/The Two Laplanders/Rentalaugh - The Vaseline Salesman/Rodney And Cynthia

a "best of" collection from Billy's Polydor releases

Billy Connolly - Live (Music For Pleasure/Rainbow RCD 9165) Stainless Steel Wellies/Song For The Small Man/The Donkey/Telling Lies/Glasgow Central/Good Love/A Little Of Your Time/Near You/Winchburgh Junction/Oh Dear/McGinty

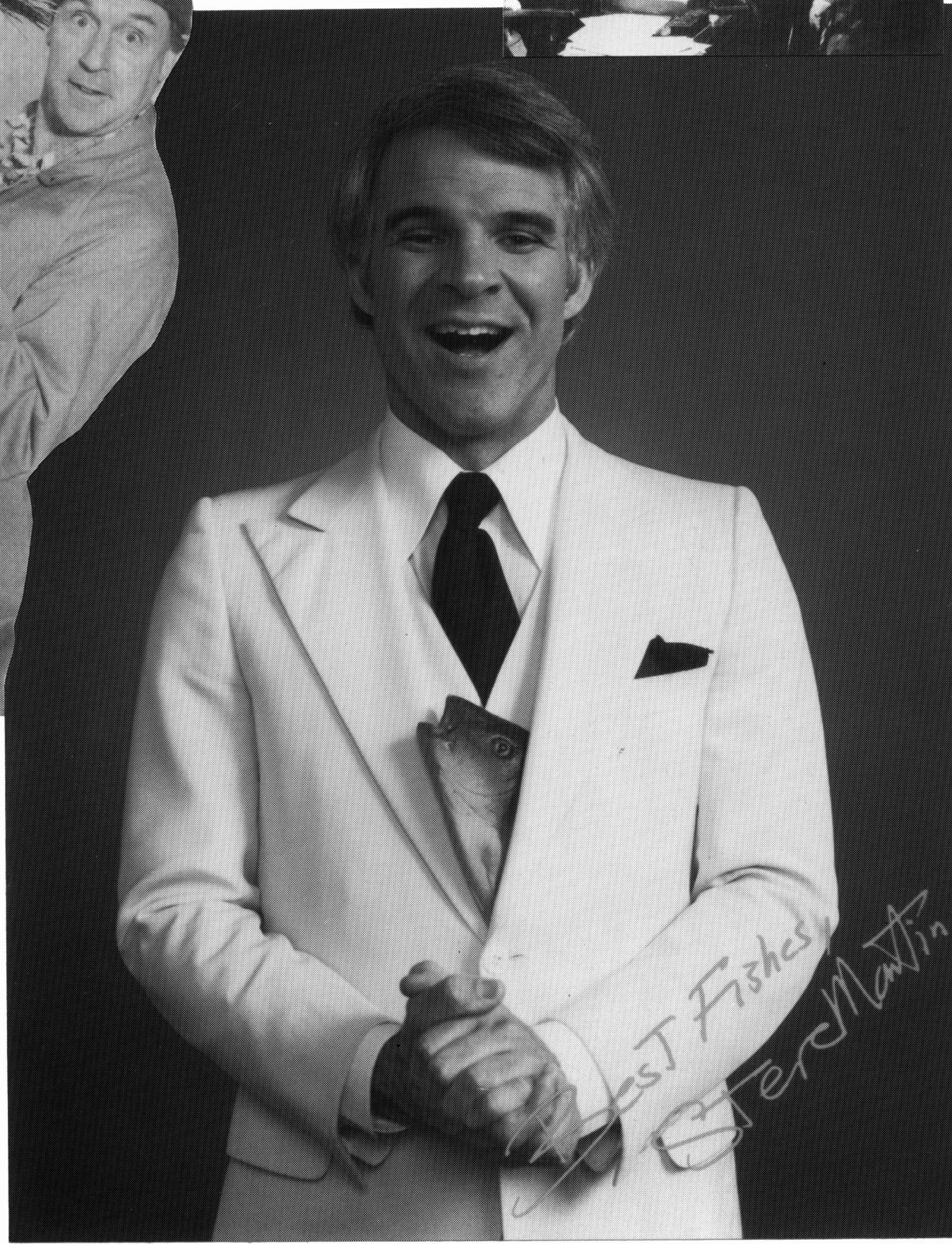
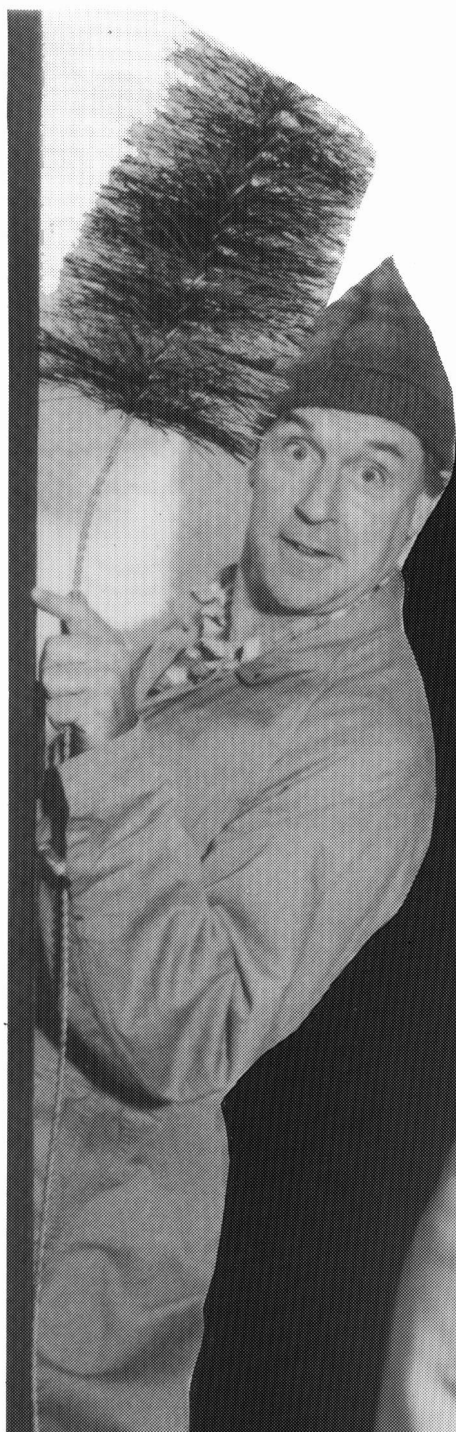
a re-issue of Billy's first solo album of 1972

Laughter Unlimited (E.M.I./Axis 7017912) A Fruity Melodrama (Bobby Comber & Co.)/The Proposal (Arthur Askey and Richard Murdoch)/Laughing Gas (Cicely Courtneidge & Co.)/Running An Office (Harry Tate & Co.)/Adapted From The French (Jack Buchanan)/The Truth About Tristan (Bernard Miles)/The German Commissionaire's Scene (Leslie Henson and Fred Emney)/A Music Hall Trial Turn (Horace Kenney & Co.)/Cinderella Crazy Pantomime (Columbia Artists)/Sid Field Plays Golf (Sid Field)

VIDEOS

The Making Of The Hitch Hikers Guide To The Galaxy (B.B.C. BBCV 4895) 60 minute documentary tracing the show's history

Steptoe And Son (B.B.C. BBCV 4830) features three 1970 colour episodes which now only survive in black and white: A Winters Tale/Steptoe And Son And Son/Two's Company



Best Fishes
Sterling Martin