

TO THE MANOR BORN: REVISITED

Penelope Keith and Peter Bowles returned to our screens as the aristocratic Audrey fforbes-Hamilton and the dashing, self-made businessman Richard DeVere, for a one-off special of the classic British comedy *To The Manor Born*.



Keith and deVere reprise roles in special

It is now a quarter of a century since we last heard from Grantleigh Manor. That was the day that the indomitable Audrey fforbes-Hamilton, the dispossessed Lady of the Manor, finally got round to marrying Richard Devere, her usurper and supermarket tycoon of Czechoslovakian stock.

It was a perfect love match, yet their romance was never less than a tempestuous on-off affair due to their one-and-only source of disagreement - which was pretty well everything. As you may or may not remember, at the time of their marriage their positions had suddenly reversed when a timely inheritance restored Audrey to the Manor at the very moment when Richard's business fortunes had hit rock bottom.

Ever since they have been man and wife there has been a total news blackout on the goings-on at Grantleigh Manor, whereas before the intimate details of their stormy courtship had been played out with such discretion and secrecy that only 25 million television viewers *(continued, next page)*

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SUMMER 2008

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EDITOR'S CHIN-WAG

For better or for worse, welcome to the newly designed *The Insider*. After eight glorious years, I decided it was time for a "new look" (think the episode of *Are You Being Served?*). You be the judge and your feedback is welcomed as always. I hope you feel it was worth the wait.

I want to thank ALL who submitted ideas and articles for this issue. As I sit here at my computer each quarter writing the next issue, I get great pleasure from knowing there are those of you who appreciate the work and take the time to write and/or submit ideas.

Let me know what you think of this new format and features. From all of us at the Beeb, we appreciate your continued support of BBC British Comedies. Happy reading!

N. Scott Jones, Editor

To The Manor Born, (continued from previous page)

Knew the first thing about it. The question then was always 'Will they or won't they?' Well, as we now know, eventually they did. And so far as anyone knows, 'they lived happily ever after'. The question now is 'Did they or didn't they?' Has their marriage been happy? Did Richard manage to keep his bride in the manner to which she was born? Who wears the trousers? Did Richard ever recover his fortunes and continue his high-rolling lifestyle or has he settled for the more humdrum existence of a gentleman farmer? Have the Deveres prospered or merely survived? Does Audrey continue to dominate the neighborhood as of old and hold out against all things modern? Marjory, The Rector, where are they now? What happened to Brabinger and old Mrs. Polouviccka? And is there anyone new in their lives?

Some highlights from the special. As Richard and Audrey plan to celebrate their silver wedding (25th) anniversary, with both planning a surprise party for the other, Richard confesses to Audrey that he owns "Farmer Tom", a company that has been putting the neighboring estates out of business. Audrey then leaves him, and stays with Marjory. Richard then tries to think of a way to get her back and goes to the grave of his mother, who died in 1988, for help. He then gets the idea of allowing a rock concert to be held on the estate. When the license application is up before the Magistrates' Court, Richard changes his mind, in front of a furious Audrey, and says that he does not want the concert held there. However, Audrey still does not forgive him, until the following day, her anniversary, when Marjory leads her to a surprise party organized by Richard.

New characters in the Christmas Special include Emmeridge, the Manor's outspoken butler, with Brabinger having died some years before, having worked until he age 91. Other characters include Adam Forbes-Hamilton, the nephew of Audrey's first husband Marston and Audrey's godson, who has recently moved to Grantleigh to be trained on how to run an estate; and Archie Pennington-Booth, a neighboring landowner who is close to bankruptcy due to Richard's company, "Farmer Tom". Meanwhile, Marjory is now living in the Lodge, where Audrey used to live, and she develops a crush on Adam. Bertie, Audrey's dog, has long since died and has not been replaced. **BBC**



In The Post



We really enjoy Tea Time at 10. We never miss *As Time Goes By* (recording it if we aren't home) and would like to know what each of the cast is up to now. We understand "Madge" died and, of course, there is usually news re Judy Dench but what are all the other wonderful cast members up to? We are getting to be like the ladies who watch "*As The World Turns*" (American soap opera) without fail and feel like the characters are their close friends!

Sue E. — Milwaukee, WI.

I see that your deadline for letting you know what we'd like to see in the future was May 31, but you would really make me (and others, I'm sure) happy if you could include these few that I remember from as far back as the 70's. Thank you for your time and attention. I look forward to seeing your new format.

Sincerely,

Sue M. — Texas

Sue M: I will see what I can do and many thanks for your input! — Scott

News, Trivia & Naughty Bits

The BBC is marking the 40th anniversary of classic British sitcom *Dad's Army* by releasing many never-before-seen documents and pictures which tell the story behind one of the UK's most-loved comedy series.

July 31, 2008 will be exactly 40 years since the first episode of *Dad's Army* was broadcast. The comedy would go on to become one of Britain's top ten favorite comedies.

This collection of archive material being released by the BBC contains many items not available to the public until now, including candid post-war letters from the actors as they began their careers and internal BBC memos that show just how popular the series was right from the start. A photo gallery also looks at the stars of the show from the first episode to the last, as well as taking a peek behind the scenes.

BBC TV will be celebrating *Dad's Army* with a weekend of programs. Saturday evening on BBC2 is *Dad's Army Night* which will feature repeats of the writers' favorite episodes and documentaries about the show and star Arthur Lowe. Then on Sunday BBC1 will be broadcasting *Jonathan Ross Salutes Dad's Army* - a one-off TV special featuring interviews with the surviving stars. Maybe coming to America? Stay tuned.

PBS, British Comedies and YOU

Editor's Note: One of the rewarding facets of doing The Insider has been seeing what other PBS stations and British Comedy viewer enthusiasts have done throughout the country to promote and celebrate the genre. This new feature is designed to share ideas and highlight the creativity of PBS stations and viewers whose enthusiasm and enjoyment of Britcoms are extraordinary. British comedy Clubs, Viewer Groups and Special Events are highlighted to potentially spawn an idea for YOUR viewing audiences in the celebration of British Comedies. If your club or local PBS station would like to be featured, you are encouraged to write an article and send it to me for possible feature in a future issue. — Scott

MONTY PYTHON MADNESS HITS DALLAS-FORTH WORTH'S

KERA BRITISH COMEDY FANS

By Sheela Kadam, Contributing Writer

Calling all Python fans in Texas! Last year we held our first Monty Python Charity Festival in North Texas to coincide with the opening of "Spamalot" at Dallas Summer Musicals. The event was such a success that we're taking the 'loony route' again. This year, Spamalot's back, this time in Fort Worth - and we partnered with The City of Grapevine to present a bigger and better event. Yes, it's official - "Monty Python Madness" is now an annual festival here in North Texas, where you can expect the unexpected.

Slightly north of ordinary, this historic city is the perfect home to a loony fest. You can walk into the local pharmacy dressed as a Viking, and nobody will bat an eyelid (this happened to me at last year's event when I ran out of batteries for my camera).

SILLY EVENTS, WORTHY CAUSE

It's not every city that can boast a festival celebrating vintage British comedy. Proceeds from this year's festival benefited The Joey Wilkins Foundation, a local charity which assists victims of catastrophic spinal cord injuries - a very worthy cause. An added benefit is to build renewed interest in the genre of British Comedy. We've all enjoyed watching Python and our other favorite British Comedies on television, but with the recent success of "Spamalot", and with the 40 year anniversary of Monty Python next year, it's time to take things further. At our festival, you could EXPERIENCE all things Python in everyday life. Yes, live, breathe, eat, sleep it. Dress up, do the silly walk, try a spam recipe creation, pay to have an argument, get slapped by a 'fish' or watch 'Holy Grail' at a midnight screening (if you doze off we'll pelt you with stuffed cows).

Prior to the event, vintage Python aired on our local PBS station, KERA Channel 13 - fitting, because thanks to then-Director of Programming Ron Devillier, KERA was the first television station in the country to show Python. We've always been proud of that! Seriously, though, such events should be encouraged in other places to help to build interest in PBS member-related events. We hope to introduce many folks to classic British Comedies that have stood the test of time. And we want to encourage them to support British comedy programming on PBS, whether by pledging or volunteering. We all need a good laugh from time to time, and have an excuse to be silly. And when it's for a great cause, that's a good thing!

Other events include have your picture taken with a Viking, a costume competition, live tribute shows and "ground-breaking" Retail Theatre. That involves breaking into the dead parrot sketch and the cheese shop skits at the counter of our British grocery store during normal business hours, much to the delight of unsuspecting customers.

This year's live tribute shows was directed by Bill Fountain. This award-winning director is thrilled at his assignment, and says: "Getting a chance to direct a Python Tribute show in Grapevine is really a dream come true for me. I fell in love with the Python humor at about the age of eight and, like a lot of people, never stopped enjoying their imaginative and outrageous performances. It made a big impression on me. I think one of the most enduring things about the Python's legacy is that it truly gives the audience a chance to laugh at something incredibly silly. Most of the time, we don't get a chance or the comfort level to laugh at something that is funny just because it's really funny. And let's face it, with gas prices the way they are and some of the current problems in the world, we could all use a tremendously silly laugh now and again. It would have been easy to simply imitate the Pythons and mimic the skits.

(continued next page)

PBS, British Comedies and YOU (continued from previous page)

We didn't want to do that. We wanted to capture the spirit and essence of the Pythons. Each of the actors portrays a particular Python and all the characters that that particular Python handled. We wanted to bring the skits to life in such a way that our audience would get a total "Python Experience" in a new and engaging way. It's our ambition to give our audiences a show they won't soon forget. I am extremely fortunate to get the chance to work with Sheela Kadam and the amazing cast and crew on this show. They are literally some of the best actors I have ever had the pleasure of working with. The audience is in for a real treat."

So even if you can't join in our event, be a good egg and support your local *PBS* station. Encourage them to air British Comedies in your market and Monty Python in anticipation of their anniversary. Messrs Palin, Cleese, Jones, Gilliam and the late, great Graham Chapman have delighted viewers for nearly 40 years and their unique brand of humor has influenced so many comedians both sides of the Atlantic. Together we can help keep the great tradition of British Comedies alive on public television! Enjoy the photos of our most recent event below and happy viewing! — *Sheela*

Photo Highlights of Python Madness in North Texas — *KERA-PBS*



Python Players' Version of Abbey Road



And yes, a costume contest



This! Is an EX-parrot say The Players



Wouldn't you like to have this lot of Gumbys over for tea?



Silly walkies Minister?

The Insider Editorial and Reader Forum

Editor's Note: Another of the rewarding facets of doing The Insider has been hearing from our readers, the moments of Britcom hilarity they share and, significantly, the contributions submitted for publishing. Not all make it, but many do. In this new feature, we will publish appropriate submissions we believe of interest to readers throughout the country. For this issue, we held a contest for submissions, and I am pleased to announce that Wanda and Lisa Cox from the KERA-PBS viewing area is our winner of the autographed copy of Michelle Street's book "Everybody Loves Hyacinth". Congrats Wanda and Lisa and we hope to have more submissions to share here in coming issues. Don't be shy, you know you want to. - Scott

Our Memorable & Funny Britcom Moments

By Wanda and Lisa Cox

1. Tom panicking when he and Diana go up in the helicopter to take pictures (*Waiting For God*)
2. Richard falling as he's trying to learn to ski (*To The Manor Born*)
3. Auntie Wainwright putting Smiler in a suit of armor (*Last of the Summer Wine*)
4. Lionel giving a false name at his and Jean's wedding to try to cure Jean's hiccups (*As Time Goes By*)
5. Tom and Barbara celebrating their decision to become self-sufficient and waking up the Leadbetters (*The Good Neighbors*)
6. The model at the life class turning out to be the referee who threw out Miss Farnaby, Mulberry, Bert, and Alice after Miss Farnaby yelled at him at the football match (*Mulberry*)
7. Harry successfully explaining a joke to Alice before he and Geraldine leave on their honeymoon (*The Vicar of Dibley*)
8. Audrey sending Richard home via the "Poohsticks" bridge route knowing the bridge would break when he walked on it, and her satisfied smile when she hears his surprised shout when it happens on the night of the summer Hunt Ball, and (*To the Manor Born*)
9. Lieutenant George dressing in drag for the soldiers' cabaret and getting engaged to Colonel Melchett (*Blackadder Goes Forth*)
10. Geraldine sticking her head in the chocolate fountain (*The Vicar of Dibley*)
11. Captain Peacock dressing up in women's clothes, including black stockings, before going to a party with his wife, who appears dressed in men's clothes (*Are You Being Served*)
12. Alice and Hugo's wedding: her headdress, the attendants dressed as Teletubbies, Frank walking her down the aisle with a sign on his back that reads "I am **not** Alice's father," an irate woman interrupting the wedding only to find it's the wrong one (*The Vicar of Dibley*)
13. Basil giving hints to Polly about the name of the horse that Sybil thinks she put a bet on and Polly coming up with names that could describe Sybil before Polly remembers the name of the horse--Dragonfly (*Fawlty Towers*)
14. Gareth ferociously berating a patron who asks for salt before tasting his food (*Chef!*)
15. Geraldine losing a filling when Owen snogs her and getting it back from him a few days later (*The Vicar of Dibley*)
16. The Gumby Gang foiling a robbery at Grace Brothers (*Are You Being Served*)
17. The Grace Brothers menswear and women's wear staff making a lot of inadvertent bad puns when they're trying not to talk about the boil on Captain Peacock's posterior (*Are You Being Served*)
18. Black lingerie-clad Daisy surprising Onslow with a stripper act (*Keeping Up Appearances*)
19. Hyacinth giving Elizabeth a sippy cup ("Pink for a little girl!") to use when she has a coffee at Hyacinth's (*Keeping Up Appearances*)
20. Hyacinth catching the Royal Doulton tea cup that Elizabeth, startled, let fly, and then falling over the couch (*Keeping Up Appearances*)

A Special Award to Hyacinth Musical Moments in *Keeping Up Appearances*

1. Hyacinth not being able to hit a note while practicing "You Can't Get A Man With A Gun" then plonking the note on the piano and musing "I suppose Irving knew what he was doing"
2. Hyacinth singing loudly to cover up the sound of Rose's boyfriends arguing on the doorstep
3. Hyacinth attributing "Happy Talk," the song that she was just singing in front of Emmit and Elizabeth, to "The King and I" and Emmit saying "That was *South Pacific!*" in a stage whisper
4. Hyacinth singing "Shenandoah" while looking for the Commodore at the railway station and a passerby putting money in the hat that Richard has just removed
5. Hyacinth singing "Sisters, sisters . . ." as a hint to Emmit that he should ask her to take a role in *The Boyfriend*

Cast Profiles and Where Are They Now?

Editor's Note: Every month, folks write in asking about their favorite British Comedy actor, their background, and most often, what they are up to now. The predominance of inquiries this last interval related to actors in Are You Being Served? Followed in a close second by As Time Goes By. AYBS is up first in this issue and ATGB will be featured in the October issue. If you have an actor or set of actors that are your faves, send them along and I will see what I can find about their accomplishments and current pursuits. - Scott

Are You Being Served?: Cast Profile and Updates

*Skirts are up and bras are down...a glass of water for Mr. Grainger... staying late wreaks havoc on my pussy (Mrs. Slocombe's cat)...Mr. Humphries, are you free?...these and other examples of double entendre and banter form the backbone of one of the most successful British comedies ever. The writers and actors of this hilarious and timeless comedy created characters and comic situations that arguably could outlive us all. What gives the program its staying power is the actors' character development that made them, well, uniquely *them*. The series is profiled in a related story on Page 9. Here, we take look at the celebrated actors and actresses who captured the hearts of millions with their antics at Grace Brothers department store.*

JOHN INMAN AS MR. HUMPHRIES

Born: June 28, 1935, Preston, Lancashire, England. **Passed away in March, 2007.**

Other roles: JOHN INMAN was just thirteen when he first appeared at the South Pier in Blackpool, his home town. Since then he has never looked back, with innumerable appearances on television, in cabaret and stage productions all over Britain and overseas and with starring roles in London's West End. His West End debut came in the musical *Ann Veronica* at the Cambridge Theatre, followed by seventeen months at the famous Windmill Theatre after which John starred as Lord Fancourt Babberley in the production of *Charley's Aunt* at the Adelphi Theatre in the Strand. Summer seasons have also been an important element in John's varied career. His favorite show is pantomime, of which he has done over 40, and he is firmly recognized as the best dame in the business. He has appeared in six Royal Variety Performances, before most of the members of the Royal Family. In spite of his world tours, he still returns home each Christmas for his pantomime appearances. *Are You Being Served?* is shown on American television from coast to coast with huge success, which makes John a truly International star.

Something you may not know about him: He is cousin to actress Josephine Tewson (Elizabeth in *Keeping Up Appearances*)

Seek out: *The Best of 'Are You Being Served?'* A compilation of the show's funniest moments set around the story line of Mr. Humphries' mother writing a book. Yes, he plays both Mr. Humphries *and* his own mother.

MOLLIE SUGDEN AS MRS. SLOCOMBE

Born: July 21, 1922, Keighley, Yorkshire, England

Other roles: She has had a long and varied career on British TV screens. Born in 1922 in Yorkshire, she first made an impact in the comedy series *Hugh and I* in 1962. She began the 1970s in the Carla Lane series *The Liver Birds*, a comedy about young women in Liverpool. In it she played Nerys Hughes mum, Mrs. Hutchinson. With her domineering style, talk show host Vanessa Feltz once described Mrs. Hutchinson as: "Hyacinth Bucket (Patricia Routledge's famous role in *Keeping Up Appearances*) before her time." From 1973-74 Sugden had a bit, but pivotal, part as Nellie Harvey in the long-running soap *Coronation Street*.

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Are You Being Served?: Cast Profile & Updates (continued from previous page)

In 1978 she was also in the short-lived science fiction spoof *Come Back, Mrs. Noah* as a middle-aged housewife accidentally sent into orbit. Written by Jeremy Lloyd and David Croft, the role of Mrs. Noah was written especially for Sugden. Despite only running for six episodes, it still turns up occasionally on PBS prompting Sugden to receive letters from America wondering when they'll make more!

Comedy isn't her only craft, and her drama credits are solid and include *Maggie* in 1964, the 1970 production of *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, and Mrs. Goddard in 1972 mini-series *Emma*.

In 1983 she appeared in *That's My Boy, My Husband and I* in 1987, and in 1996 reprised her role as Mrs. Hutchinson in the revival of *The Liver Birds*. Ill health at the time somewhat diminished her on-screen impact, but Mollie Sugden is a trooper and her tremendous contributions and memorable characters guarantee her a place in the hearts of British comedy fans forever.

WENDY RICHARD AS MISS BRAHMS

Born: July 21, 1946, Middlesbrough, Cleveland, England

Other Roles: Wendy's first big break came when Sammy Davis Jr. asked her to appear in his show "Sammy Meets the Girls". This led to small parts on shows like "Dixon of Dock Green" and finally a number one hit single "Come Outside" with Mike Sarne. "Harpers Bizarre" followed and whilst filming this Wendy had a chance meeting with Michael Caine and Johnny Speight who recommended her for a part in the "Arthur Haynes Show". The Beatles film "Help" followed, but unfortunately Wendy's scene ended up on the cutting room floor. Next was "Doctor in Clover" and another step up the ladder. Work began to flood in and Wendy found herself working on BBC's first soap opera "The Newcomers". This went out live, twice a week, and earned her many useful contacts and friends. Small parts in "Dad's Army" and "Up Pompeii" followed. Wendy next went to the big screen with a small part in "On the Buses" and then, her next big break, "Gumshoe", starred Albert Finney and Wendy received rave reviews for her portrayal of Anne Croft. American fans will know Wendy best as Miss Shirley Brahms in the comedy series "Are You Being Served?". This was a long running series, but Wendy still managed to fit in more work with "Carry On Girls", more episodes of "Dad's Army" and appearances on various radio shows. Constantly working Wendy managed to perform in pantomimes and "Grace And Favour", a spin off from "AYBS" before her longest running part was created. British fans know Wendy best as Pauline Fowler in "EastEnders". This soap was first screened in 1985 and Wendy's career is still going strong!

TREVOR BANNISTER AS MR. LUCAS

Born: August 14, 1936, Durrington, Wiltshire, England

Other Roles: Various characters and guest appearances including, but not limited to: *Keeping Up Appearances: Angel Gabriel Blue* (1990), *The Tomorrow People* (1975), *Doomsday Gun* (1994), *Hostage* (1992), *Au Pair Girls* (1972), *Doomwatch* "Public Enemy" (1971), *The Avengers Something Nasty In The Nursery* (1967), *Object Z* (1965) and *Object Z Returns* (1966).

Great Mr. Lucas Moment: Multiple great moments in the "Dear Sexy Knickers" episode.

(continued next page)

FRANK THORNTON AS CAPTAIN PEACOCK

Born: January 15, 1921, Dulwich, London, England

Other roles: Extensive including the recurring role of Herbert Truelove in the current run of *Last Summer of Wine*. Some the more notable include *The Reg Varney Revue*, *Some Matters of Little Consequence*, *The Gordon Peters Show* and dozens of others,

Great Captain Peacock Moment: He develops a painful boil on his posterior and the entire staff finds out from the head of the sports department. They make wisecracks at his expense until he confesses. Ducks out of a fight with the sports department head when challenged to settle the dispute over the sport's guy's indiscretion in passing rumors about the affliction.

NICOLAS SMITH AS MR. RUMBOLD

Born: March 5, 1934, Banstead, Surrey, England

Other Roles: Limited. (2001) Plays Duncan, the King Of Scotland in "Macbeth" and Baptista in "The Taming Of The Shrew", alongside **Elisha Gzadowicz**, at the Nottingham Shakespeare Festival.

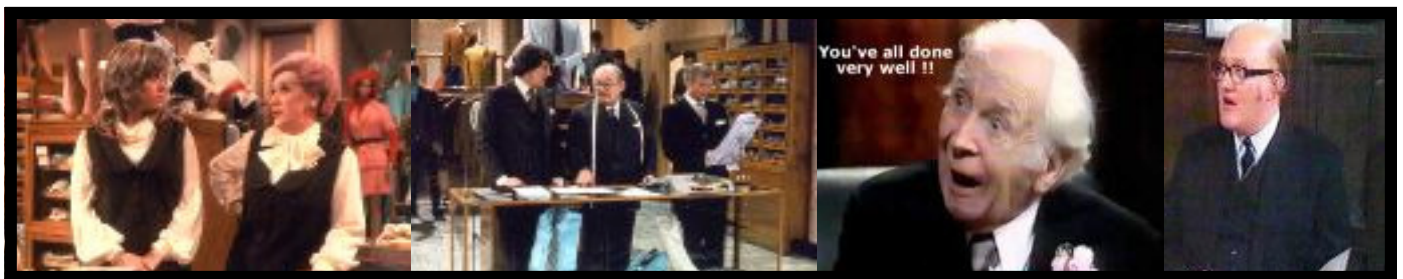
Something you might not know about him: He is father of actress **Catherine Russell**.

ARTHUR BROUGH AS MR. GRAINGER

Born: In 1905 in Petersfield, Hampshire, England. He passed away in May, 1978 in Kent, England.

Other Roles: Predominately *AYBS* along with numerous parts in repertory theater productions over more than 50 years in England.

Something you might not know about him: Great Mr. Grainger Moment: When Mr. Humphries tries to teach him moves from the stage production number *Mammy*; and anytime he tried to eat soup (oftentimes you can tell those moments tickled fellow cast members by the looks on their faces as they tried not to laugh). **Second great moment:** An entire episode where Mr. Grainger has a case of the "gastrics" and can't complete a sentence without having to run for the gents restroom.



Series Profile: The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin



The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin brilliantly captured the mid-1970s zeitgeist.

It opened each week with a naked Reggie walking out into the sea to end it all before rapidly rethinking the whole idea, and told the story of a man desperate to escape his loving but dull marriage, disappointing offspring and the daily grind of his job.

The first series - while hilariously funny - was incredibly dark, focusing on a man in nervous breakdown. Each week Reggie's behavior becomes more erratic, his excuses to his secretary for lateness weirder and weirder ("22 minutes late, Joan: a badger ate a junction box at New Malden") and his fantasies of seducing her more vivid. The mere mention of his mother-in-law is enough to send an image of a hippo lumbering through his head and each episode ends with Reggie screaming in frustration.

Ultimately he fakes his own death but is reunited with wife Elizabeth when he attends his funeral in disguise and can't resist wooing her all over again. Reggie returned a year later bent on setting up a new business, "Grot", selling useless goods. It was, of course, a massive success, leaving Reggie trapped back in the rat race.

For the third, less successful series, he abandoned wage-slavery again, this time setting up a commune for his former co-workers. Overall, a brilliant satire, the program will also be remembered for its catchphrases including Reggie's boss CJ's "I didn't get where I am today by..." and Reggie's brother-in-law Jimmy constantly cadging food on the basis of "a bit of a cock-up on the catering front".

Above all there was Leonard Rossiter's brilliant performance as Reginald Perrin. RIP to both.

Cast

Leonard Rossiter as Reginald Perrin/Martin Wellbourne

Pauline Yates as Elizabeth Perrin

John Barron as C J

Sue Nicholls as Joan Greengross/Webster

John Horsley as 'Doc' Morrisey

Trevor Adams as Tony Webster

Bruce Bould as David Harris-Jones

Theresa Watson as Prue Harris-Jones

Geoffrey Palmer as Jimmy Anderson

Tim Preece as Tom Patterson

Leslie Schofield as Tom Patterson

Sally-Jane Spencer as Linda Patterson

David Warwick as Mark Perrin

Glynn Edwards as Mr. Pelham

New Releases on DVD



'ALLO 'ALLO!: SERIES 9

Starring: Gordon Kaye , Carmen Silvera
Directed by: David Croft
Produced by: David Croft
Written by: Jeremy Lloyd , David Croft

René has great expectations! The end of the war is in sight and he is eagerly anticipating a quick return to normalcy. Unfortunately, this is Nouvion, and normalcy will have to wait while René is blown to smithereens, shot in the rear end while disguised as an elk, and kidnapped by Louise to serve as love slave to the Communist Resistance. Meanwhile, Herr Flick undergoes plastic surgery to avoid capture by the Allies, General von Klinkerhoffen hatches another fool-proof plan to assassinate Hitler, and no one can remember where they have hidden the painting of the Fallen Madonna with the Big Boobies. As normalcy recedes further and further into the distance, Michelle plots an escape via the annual fishmonger's parade, and Lieutenant Gruber desperately tries to fix his little tank. Can the end of the war come soon enough to save these desperate fools?



KEEPING UP APPEARANCES: LIFE LESSONS FROM ON SLOW

Starring: Geoffrey Hughes , Patricia Routledge
Directed by: Duane Huey
Produced by: Duane Huey

You'll laugh too hard to take notes when Hyacinth's beer-drinking and philosophizing brother-in-law, Onslow, gives a lecture on successful human relationships, using examples from *Keeping Up Appearances*. Extras include fun-filled cast interviews.

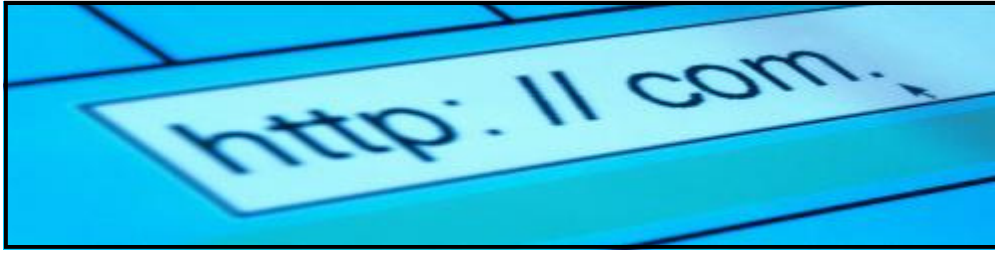


LAST OF THE SUMMER WINE: VINTAGE 1977

Starring: Peter Sallis , Michael Owen
Directed by: Sydney Lotterby
Produced by: Sydney Lotterby
Written by: Roy Clarke

Uncork a barrel of laughs and toast the world's longest running sitcom! Unencumbered by logic or sobriety, Britain's oldest if not wisest geezers - Compo (Bill Owen), Clegg (Peter Sallis) and Foggy (Brian Wilde) - kept us laughing for more than 20 years. In long-requested *Vintage 1977*, the three lovable senior delinquents continue to weave their way through life in the lovely Yorkshire Dales. Compo's ferret escapes. Clegg serenades flowers in the town café. Foggy wants the trio to have its own float in the Queen's Silver Jubilee. Includes seven supremely silly episodes in Season 4, plus a rare, 30-minute interview about *Vintage 1977* with series creator Roy Clarke, the genius behind *Keeping Up Appearances*.

Britcoms on the Net



The Daily Telegraph

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk>

I know, why the heck would I be including the London Daily Telegraph in a bunch of Web reviews on British comedy? Because the Telegraph provides a lot of information on everything from articles about Wallace and Gromit: (Wednesday 8 September 2004 Psychologists look into the eyes of Wallace and Gromit, 17 January 2002: Wallace and Gromit's inventive return on net, 11 January 2002: Man who inspired Wallace dies, 24 September 2000: Angry Kid, son of Wallace & Gromit, slips the net for TV, and 21 October 1996: Wallace and Gromit go missing in New York) to obituaries of famous comedians. For the true fan of British comedy I think the Telegraph is a must! The articles include links to other sites on the Web. The site includes a search engine and a number of color photographs.

Rating: 5 out of 5 mouse clicks

Aardman

<http://www.aardman.com/>

Home of the makers of "Wallace and Gromit" and "Chicken Run" the site offers a collection of information on the old productions and some new ones. The site is a bit confusing and doesn't always provide all of the information one would wish. I located an article dated September 14, 2004 in Digital Spy saying, "Cold Feet star John Thompson, and comic Peter Kay has signed up to provide voices for a new Wallace and Gromit film." I found very little information on the new "Wallace & Gromit Movie: Curse of the Wererabbit." film on the Web site. There was much more information on Wallace and Gromit becoming the new face of Jacobs Cream Crackers and dated 2003.

Rating: 3 out of 5 mouse clicks

Red Dwarf

<http://www.reddwarf.co.uk>

The official Red Dwarf Web page is all that one could ask from a Web Page. It includes information on the cast, crew, television and the upcoming movie. Its Dwarf Tracker is a great way to find when the show will be airing in the UK, US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. You can now discover when and where your favorite Sci-Fi Spoof is being aired and wish that you actually lived near there. The site even has an online arcade coming soon.

Rating: 5 out of 5 mouse clicks

Learning the Lingo

Beginners' Guide to British Slang

Quid, bob – a slang term for money, "this cost me 20 quid." (pounds)

Bird – a woman, e.g. "I was dating this bird."

Bloke – a man, e.g. "He is an honest bloke."

Toffee-nosed – higher class, stuck-up person, e.g. "She's quite the Toffee-nosed bird."

Cockney – a common English accent, e.g. think East London.

Lorry – a truck, e.g. milkman's lorry.

Belt up – shut up, e.g. "Belt up you lot!"

Bickie – slang for biscuit, a cookie or cracker, e.g. "I prefer to dip my bickie in my tea."

Bog – loo, karzi, lavatory – restroom, e.g. "You will have to use the staff bog."

Braces – suspenders

Bubble and squeak – food, consisting of leftover greens and potatoes and then fried.

Chips – French-fried potatoes.

Crisps – potato chips.

C. of E. – Church of England.

Crumpet – what we call an English muffin, slang word for a desirable woman.

Cuppa – a cup of tea.

Dead cert – slang for a sure thing, e.g. "The sun rising is a dead cert."

Deaf aid – hearing aid.

Debag – to cut someone down to size, literally to pull pants down.

...more to come next issue.

Last Issue's Trivia QUESTIONS

“Keeping Up Appearances”

Q1: Throughout the series, a recurring reference is made to the college “roommate” of the Bucket’s son Sheridan. What is Sheridan’s roommate’s name?

Q2: In one of the funniest episodes, Hyacinth plans a riverside picnic for her neighbors and the Vicar. What pretentious name does she give the “entertainments” for the outing?

Q3: In the episode *Golf With the Major*, The Major ditches golf with Richard to sneak some time with Hyacinth. What is the name of Richard’s surrogate golf partner for the round?

Q4: Neighbor Elizabeth’s brother Emmett is director of what organization in which Hyacinth desires so much to have a role?

Q5: When Hyacinth discovers that Rose’s rich gentleman friend will pick them up in a limo for Onslow’s birthday celebration, what gift does she purchase for Onslow?

Q6: What is the last name of Hyacinth’s neighbors at #23 she is always trying to impress?

Q7: Anytime visitors come calling, Hyacinth is obsessed that they not brush up against her what?

*Want to play trivia? Submit your answers to scott@bbcinsider.net. Those getting 100% correct will be recognized here in the next issue of *The Insider*.*

And the answers are...

Man thanks to Beth Bland, a reader somewhere in America who took the time to e-mail the correct answers. They are:

Q1. Tarquin

Q2. Riparian

Q3. Porky Hooten

Q4. The Amateur Operatics Society

Q5. Cufflinks

Q6. The Barker-Finches

Q7. Her walls

***“It is pronounced Bouquet,
B-U-C-K-E-T, BOUQUET!”***

“If someone happens to mistake me for part of the aristocracy, you will have the good manners not to correct them won’t you dear?”

“If Sheridan were here he would be appalled.”

—Hyacinth

Actor Profile Briefs — Covering Some of the Greats in British Comedy



Geoffrey Palmer

Born in London in June 1927, Geoffrey was educated at Highgate School, London. He was demobilized from the Royal Marines in 1947 and worked in an imports office and as an accountant. He became involved in amateur dramatics through a girlfriend. Another friend persuaded him to venture into acting and his first job in the early Fifties, while he was still living at home, was as an unpaid assistant stage manager at the Q Theatre, by Kew Bridge. After three months, the theatre paid him £3 a week. From there he graduated to the Grand Theatre, Croydon and some years of repertory theater at Leatherhead, Canterbury, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. This was followed by various tours and hundreds of small parts in undistinguished and forgettable television productions.

His so called "break" came in John Osborne's *West of Suez* at the Royal Court with Ralph Richardson. Soon after this he had the pleasure of working with Paul Scofield in *Savages* by Christopher Hampton, also at the Royal Court, and for Laurence Olivier at the National in *Eden End*, and was directed by John Gielgud in *Private Lives* at the Globe. Subsequent theater includes *On Approval* at the Haymarket with Geraldine McEwan and *Piano* at the National.

Over the years his television appearances have been numerous and varied and include comedy programs such as *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin*, *Fawlty Towers*, *Butterflies*, *The Insurance Man*, *Fairly Secret Army*, *A Question of Attribution*, *Savages*, and, of course, nine series of *As Time Goes By* with Dame Judi Dench.

Film appearances include: *O Lucky Man*, *The Honorary Consul*, *A Zed and Two Naughts*, *Clockwise*, *A Fish Called Wanda*, *The Madness of King George*, *Mrs. Brown*, *Tomorrow Never Dies*, and *Anna and the King* with Jodie Foster. Geoffrey and his wife, Sally, married in 1963 and have two children, Charles and Harriet, and grandson Billy.



Jennifer Saunders

One of the most influential women in British comedy, writer and actress Jennifer Saunders studied at London's Central School of Speech and Drama where she met future comedy partner Dawn French. In 1980, they began performing comedy sketches at The Comic Strip Club and found themselves at the core of an emerging alternative comedy scene. Saunders made guest appearances in *The Young Ones* with her Comic Strip colleagues before going on to major success with sketch show, *French & Saunders*, and the landmark sitcom, *Absolutely Fabulous*.

In 2003, she was listed in The Observer as one of the 50 funniest acts in British comedy. In 2004, she played the Fairy Godmother in *Shrek 2*. She is married to her former Comic Strip cohort Adrian Edmondson, with whom she has three daughters — the youngest of which plays her daughter in *Clatterford*.

Series Profile Briefs — Some of the Most Popular British Comedies



Only Fools and Horses

Only Fools and Horses is a UK comedy institution, routinely drawing 50% audience shares for their Christmas Day specials. The series is set in the south London district of Peckham, and feature the likable but dodgy Derek Trotter. Derek or Del-Boy (David Jason) is a streetwise chancer, with a never-ending supply of get-rich-quick schemes and an unshakable belief that next year he and his brother Rodney will be millionaires.

John Sullivan had already been writing realistic earthy dialog for *Citizen Smith* and it was while chatting to the producer of that show that the idea of *Only Fools And Horses* was born. Sullivan and producer Butt had both worked in street markets, where, they both agreed, the most interesting characters were the so-called fly-pitchers, men who would turn up to sell a hodge-podge of dodgy items from a suitcase. Sullivan wondered where such people came from and what their life was like, which he promptly turned

into a pilot script for a show titled *Readies*. The BBC's Head of Comedy, John Howard Davies, who had expressed reticence when hearing of the idea alone, loved the script's potential and commissioned a series.

Nicholas Lyndhurst was signed up as the younger brother, Rodney, and Lennard Pearce came on board as Grandad fairly early. Casting the older Trotter brother, Derek, was more problematic. A number of actors including Jim Broadbent were offered the role. Roger Lloyd Pack was also considered, but he looked so much like Trigger (a character so named by Sullivan because he had a face like a horse) that he was offered that role instead. Butt hit on the idea of casting David Jason while watching a repeat of *Open All Hours*. Sullivan wasn't sure - he associated Jason with a different kind of comedy, and certainly couldn't imagine him as the sharp-talking, tough, streetwise Derek Trotter. Jason was invited to a script read-through with Lyndhurst. Happily, Jason 'got' the character immediately, and his rapport with Lyndhurst was electric. Sullivan concurred and one of British TV's most pleasing partnerships was born.



As Time Goes By

In the early 1950s, a young Army officer and a student nurse fell in love. It was a whirlwind romance, but the young Lionel and Jean were separated when he was posted to Korea. His letter went astray and they lost touch.

In the early 1990s, Lionel (now divorced) is in England to work on his autobiography, *My Life In Kenya*. He needs a secretary and Jean (a widow) owns a secretarial agency. She sends her feisty daughter Judith (Moirá Brooker), who makes such a good impression that Lionel invites her out to dinner. And, as mother and daughter share a house, the inevitable happens – Lionel and Jean are reunited.

Don't expect them to jump into each other's arms; Third Age romance takes time. Can they recapture the old magic, or are they too old and set in their ways? There are also problems which wouldn't even have occurred to their younger selves: can they live with each other's irritating habits, is marriage really necessary at their age...?

Meanwhile, those around them make life even more complicated. Both Judith and Jean's personal assistant, Sandy (Jenny Funnell), have chaotic love lives. And, after briefly fancying Jean, Lionel's publisher, Alaister (Philip Bretherton), is always popping round to see Judith.

After a series of mishaps and misunderstandings, Jean and Lionel finally tie the knot – but the story doesn't end there. What with the publication and American mini-series of Lionel's book, the question of whether or not to give up Jean's agency, their country house and the antics of Lionel's father Rocky (Frank Middlemass) and his wife Madge (Joan Sims) to distract them, life is never dull for the couple.

Contacting The Insider

The Insider welcomes all correspondence, story ideas and requests for contributed articles. Send letters via e-mail to Editor N. Scott Jones at scott@bbcinsider.net or by snail mail to: The Insider, c/o Kate Lino, BBC Worldwide Americas, Sixth Floor 747 3rd Avenue, New York, NY. 10017 - 2803. All letters are assumed to be for publication unless marked otherwise.

The Insider reserves the right to edit letters for reasons of space or clarity. Let us know what you think!

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Watch for Upcoming Issues of The Insider

The final two issues of 2008's The Insider will publish:

October 1, 2008

December 15, 2008

Yes, we LOVE doing the Holiday Issues!

PARTING SHOTS

Well, there you have it — the first newly re-designed edition of *The Insider*. As always, feedback and comments are welcomed. Given my neophyte graphics skills, please be kind. I never anticipated the time it would take to make what is a simple and clean design. Oh well, we live and learn.

In any event, my hope it that the new design will make it more readable and reinvigorate your interest in the subject matter by breaking the cycle of the same old-same old.

I just know there are some of you out there who may be in love with a lesser known, or lesser broadcast Britcom that I

haven't covered here. Please let me hear from you if this is the case. I will happily do my homework, and share your discovery of such a program with other readers who seek to discover the lesser known gems in the category.

Again, my heartfelt thanks to those who take time to e-mail me with questions, suggestions and submissions for publication. It keeps me going, knowing that there are those of you who look forward to this newsletter, and so enjoy our beloved Britcoms. Until October, my best wishes to all for the coming Fall.

N. Scott Jones, Editor