

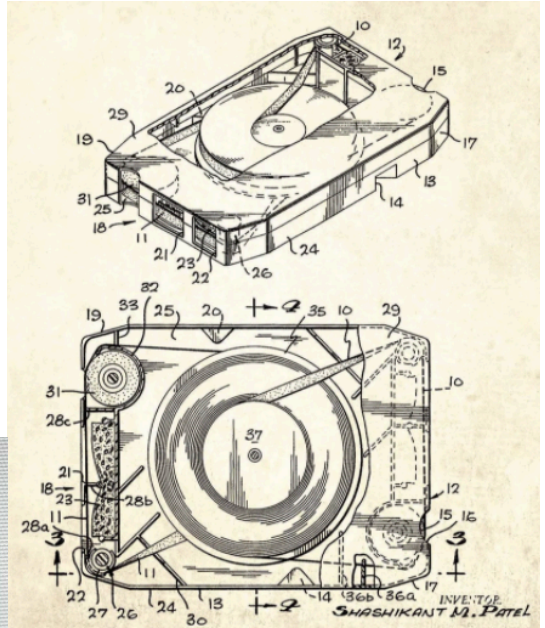
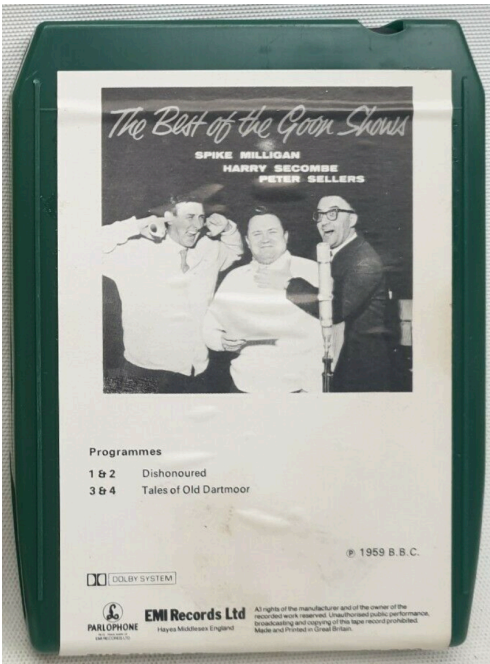
Goon Show News



8-track archive updated

NEEDED please: does anybody maybe have an 8-track player and any Goon related 8-track cassettes please?

You probably won't want to rip it out of the dashboard of your Cortina Mk 3, but they did make home players and studio players.



Neil Trickey, our maker of Encyclopaedia Goonicus Vols 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 and all things archive, is, in the name of completeness, after digitised versions of all Goon Show and related releases on 8-track cartridge.

If you can help, can you drop him a line please on:
grytpype_thynne@yahoo.com

He's hoping for success.



Number 175 – March 2022

Goontents

- 4 It started...: BBC censorship
- 6 The new SPIKE play reviewed
- 8 Beryl Vertue RIP
- 13 Another new Sellers' release
- 14 A Goon Show review, 1956
- 16 Michael Bentine, why?
- 17 Barry Cryer RIP
- 18 The Idiot Weekly, Price 2d
- 26 Tiddlywinks programme sale
- 28 A Kick Up The Archives
- 30 Goon Pod update
- 32 Letters from letter writers
- 28 Starting our anniversary year
- 38 Contacts
- 39 Harry Secombe signed poster
- 40 Quiz answers/Binders available

Contributors:

Mark Cousins, Neil Trickey,
Chris Smith, Peter Embling,
letter writers.

Patron: HRH Prince of Wales

Honorary Presidents:

John Antrobus, Jane Milligan,
Mike Coveney

newsgoonsgps@gmail.com
www.thegoonshow.org.uk

The Goon Show Preservation Society

March

Welcome to the latest issue.

Well here we go again. First issue of 2022 and an excuse to escape from all the nonsense in the newspapers, the horrible weather at the end of February, all the Number 10 goings on or did they(?) and that 'orrible illness beginning with C. I can't call it 'lurgi' because all you had to do to be cured of that was to play a brass-band instrument. I can do that and still caught it! Thankfully that was post-jabs, so minor symptoms only. I hope that all you Goonites came out of it unscarred but the very best of good blessings to any who didn't.

Have a look at the cover, new year new colour masthead. Not quite as bold as last year's, but I think that it works.

Very much a mixed bag this time. A piece about the BBC's censorship imposition, whether anyone wants it or no, the latest play reviewed, Goon Show samples and why Michael Bentine possibly left. Tiddlywinks, *The Idiot Weekly Price 2d*, two sad RIP's and, oh, loads of bits. All good I hope and I know you'll tell me otherwise if appropriate.

It is very wordy, this issue. There must be a lot to say.

If you've got a lot to say, or anything! Please drop me a line, or an article, or an idea, or if you've discovered a long-lost piece of television from 1956, for example. If you collect old televisions perhaps there's one or two old programmes left on one of them?

Thanks, see you in March. PeterE, editor

BBC cuts race and s

It started like this:

Jake Kanter Media Correspondent

The BBC is quietly editing classic radio comedies to remove racially insensitive and politically incorrect jokes as the corporation grapples with changing audience expectations.

Reports of shows including *Dad's Army*

disgraced stars Jimmy Savile and Rolf Harris.

Jim Sooty, I'll Read That Again, a comedy starring John Cleese, Bill Cambridge Footlights and *Rediffusion* were among the sharp end of many of the cuts, according to the compiler's decision. A repeat of a 1970 episode was

removed. Other included a spoof of Rolf Harris's *Dirty Sc*

A repeat of a 1971 *Steptoe and Son* was "poofy" from a line Brambell said: "You're some poofy Victorian

... in sombre tones

A cutting was sent to me by Neil Trickey, he who makes our Encyclopaedia Goonicus, the quality of which is testament to the fact that he looks out for this sort of thing and is interested enough to care.

It was a cutting from *The Sunday Times*, 23rd January, 2022. The email was headed: Has anybody noticed? and posed the question... According to yesterday's *Sunday Times*, the BBC is quietly removing racially insensitive and politically incorrect jokes from classic radio programmes. Has anybody noticed cuts in Radio 4 Extra broadcasts of *The Goon Show*?

Here's the article's headline: *BBC cuts race and sex slurs in archives*, an article by Jake Kanter, Sunday Times Media Correspondent. Several other newspapers picked up on this later and provided the reading world with their versions of events as far as they were known.

The article started: 'The BBC is quietly editing classic radio comedies to remove racially insensitive and politically incorrect jokes as the corporation grapples with changing audience expectations.' It went on to say that repeats of shows on Radio 4 Extra have been altered including having had whole sketches removed and that edits have been taking place for a good while, several years, to 'remove content likely now to be considered racist or misogynistic'.

I'm not going to take up precious space with detailed examples, but things like: reference to Africans being cannibals, CUT; an impersonation of an Eskimo (sic) with a Chinese accent DELETED; references to an Indian boy being 'browned off' and a 'tinted person' GONE; the n-word REMOVED.

I wanted to get an idea of what the listening public might think of this, what some might think of as 'underhand skullduggery' and otherwise as being 'quite right, let's protect everybody whether they want protecting or not' and more others as ... 'well I don't know really'.

So, I asked some of GSPS's top table what they thought. Here are some replies.

Hello Jim fans!

I think this is disgraceful. You can tell by their recent comedy output (and this confirms it) that the BBC has completely lost its sense of humour. As far as I

know, for example, Talking Pictures TV doesn't edit old films but merely points out the issues and allows their grown-up audience to decide. This action by the BBC is backdoor retrospective censorship. If we airbrush out Rolf Harris, Gary Glitter and Jimmy Savile and issues with women, misogyny, slavery, race and the like, it's an insult to the victims of these issues and society as a whole since it will be like they never existed. They and their crimes will be forgotten and we will have learned nothing! We should be proud that we're addressing these issues, not ashamed or in denial. It could also be argued that it's an encroachment into our freedom of speech. Who's next for the chop? Where does this stop: Adolf Hitler? Winston Churchill? Genghis Khan? Margaret Thatcher? Jack The Ripper? Who makes these decisions and by what right? Who are the BBC to say what is and isn't acceptable anyway? Big brother is watching you! What happened to the BBC's ethos: 'Nation Shall Speak Truth Unto Nation'. Happy 100th Birthday!

Bic Parker [pen name, get it!] details withheld by request

.....

Yes, I have been extremely irritated by this meddling for several years. Two of the perpetrators of this knavery have been the radio producer Dirk (*Flywheel, Shyster & Flywheel, Hitchhiker's Guide*) Maggs and Mary (ex-Radio 4 Extra producer) Kalemkerian. Both have had a splendid time over the years carving their names into Spike's handiwork as though it was their own. So far this radio vandalism has been restricted to broadcasts and does not include commercial recordings, to my knowledge. This obviously protects listeners from hearing something over the airwaves that might give them an unexpected heart attack, while a recording bought in a shop might still give them a heart attack but only an expected one.

I recall Lenny Henry bursting with indignation at the discovery that some *Goon Show* lines and phrases could be construed as racist. He wasn't concerned about other references that might be having a laugh at the expense of anyone old, Jewish, Irish, Indian, sexist, homophobic, thick or metabolically challenged (dead).

Yes, if we all recommended sneaky, thief-in-the-night cuts to our beloved show, there would be nothing left but a couple of music interludes, courtesy of Messrs Ellington and Geldray. And even they could end up getting the chop. So much for the BBC's great pioneering spirit which helped produce the most revolutionary show of them all. And shame on the BBC for casting out its principles to please the wishy-washy liberals.

All the best, John Repsch, Chair, GSPS

And without further ado I planted a description of the bones of the aforementioned article on what pretentious folk call, *The Book of Face*, and got quite a few responses, 214 to be precise (at the time of writing) across two Facebook groups: our own and a popular Spike Milligan fan group. *more...*

'Big news appeared in the newspapers over the last two-or-so days: that the BBC have been cutting out bits from vintage radio shows that might cause offence.'

'I wondered what your thoughts might be on this please?'

This is just a small sample...

IY

They already have. There are some gags cut. In 'The Scarlet Capsule', the gag about 'a Chink in my armour' has gone and that was cut years ago.

TH

I have all I need on DVD and CD. Big Brother won't be editing those in a hurry

NJ

It's fair enough. The dodgy gags are never amongst the best of their humour. And it's good PR when younger listeners discover it, not to be put off by what is now considered offensive

NJ I agree! I've been looking at some scripts online as I've listened to episodes and the jokes I've noticed have been cut are badly aged (being either racist or in poor taste) and it's none the worse for their absence. But they should keep the originals intact for historical purposes and just use the edited ones for rebroadcasting.

JR

In the Birmingham Comedy Festival production of 'The Phantom Head Shaver of Brighton' we decided against using the original intro, where Wal makes a scripted remark that I doubt would be acceptable now, but our other show in the double-header was 'The Canal', which kind of relies on the input of a couple of heavily stereotyped characters.

My personal feeling is that if it's integral to the story, and the audience understand the historic attitudes, it should stay, however if it's an irrelevant aside then perhaps it should be left in original recordings and not repeated.

HT

I think it makes perfect sense for public broadcasting. It's nothing new, but the press loves stirring up a culture war about it.

RS

The BBC made edits to *Goon Show* recordings from the very beginning before transmission to the Empire or the Commonwealth. Quite right too.

AW

The way things are going, so much will be cut, there won't be much of any of the old shows left. I object to the editing. They were a product of a bygone time and very little of it is genuinely offensive unless you're a real buttercup.

NG

As a white, heterosexual male I don't really feel it's my place to determine whether a sketch, joke or comment is homophobic, racist or sexist enough to warrant removal. If I was in any minority I probably wouldn't like prejudice dressed as humour to be spread about tbh.

BA

Take the programmes in the context of their time. And remember, the primary target of most British comedians is ourselves. If we poke fun at 'Johnny foreigner' you can bet we've used a sharper stick on ourselves

PG to PB

Don't you go blaming it on anyone? These decisions are made by people who THINK certain things are now offensive. This word 'woke' is the laziest term I've ever heard in my life. Everyone is offended by something these days and want their 15 minutes in the spotlight.

KW

Simply white washing history. I though it was only the Soviets who did this. Who that knocking at my door?

MC

If they are that concerned, just leave the program complete and publish/broadcast a warning. Old Bill Shakespeare will be getting the treatment next

TA

I can see both sides of the argument to be fair.

DS

History cannot be altered. If we keep trying to stop 'offending' people then you will be able to find insults in everything. I grew up with *Love Thy Neighbour*, *Till Death Do Us Part*, etc. But my parents taught me to respect everyone and everything.

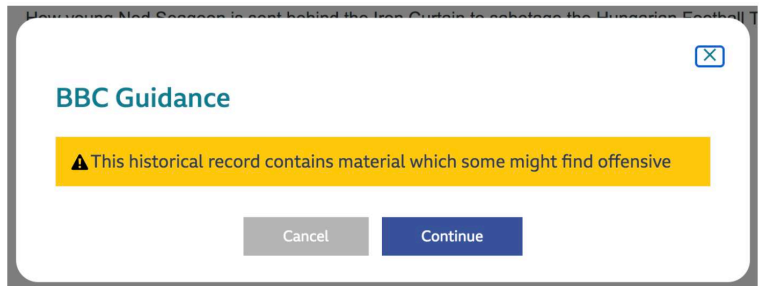
JP

It's a very bad idea. Historical context is everything. Milligan risked his life in a World War to preserve the rights of those people modern sanitisers say they are trying to protect. A thing can be understandably offensive to modern sensibilities and at the same time very funny. Complicated isn't it?

Me? What do I think? Be respectful and polite is what I think. If you are concerned that what you write or say might cause offence, then don't do it because it probably will. Is it fair and balanced criticism or comment if it's a joke? Well, maybe a joke is only what is thought of by the recipient as being a joke. Individually some comments might seem trivial, but imagine hearing 'trivial' comments constantly and everywhere. It must be horrible.

Ed, on the fence where he should be

This is what you see when you click to view an original actual page from Radio Times on the BBC's Radio Times website:



THEATRE NEWS



What an excellent play!

I went to see **SPIKE**, early February, and thoroughly enjoyed myself. Father Christmas had bought me a ticket, but I was very firmly told that I would be 'on my own'. No problem with that!

150+ miles each way with my sat-nav set to avoid motorways and drove deep into the heart of Berkshire with several other counties in between. I

arrived at my pre-booked but very smelly Travelodge, watched a bit of Winter Olympics and went for a meal at the Watermill Theatre down some very mysterious overgrown single-lane roads spotting snowdrops all over the place. My plan worked, I wasn't going to be late for the play, no matter what! And I wasn't.

I was up in the circle, the only disappointment with that was that I had only limited view of three projection screens, one either side of the stage and one above the stage. However, I don't think this loss detracted from my enjoyment at all really. It was pretty obvious what was going on – filmed shots of war action and explosions, sometimes during scene-shifting. The scene-shifting was very nicely stage-crafted, choreographed you could say. The lights went out and the

cast moved the furniture and props with ease around the uncurtained stage in an almost balletic form – entertaining in itself.

The play opened with a table full of props and an actor playing the role, and doing the role, of sound effects operator! All noises made



JEREMY LLOYD, JOHN DAGLEISH, GEORGE KEMP (HS, SM, PS)



JEREMY LLOYD, JOHN DAGLEISH, MARGARET CABOURN-SMITH,
JAMES MACK, GEORGE KEMP

on-stage, just like a Goon Show! Who'd have thought!

The fun continued. There were some darker bits, particularly towards the end, but it did finish with a timely song to lighten the mood a little.

The show portrayed the battles that Spike had: with Hitler, with himself and with the BBC. He

felt very controlled by them, but they did give him a fair amount of work, if 'give' is the right word; 'allowed' might be more appropriate. He'd had to cope with officer-twits in the army and now they had taken over the BBC! The play showed that the punishment of 'the war' didn't leave him in a good position to cope with his struggles that were caused by 'the war'. We all know this, but we must remember it. I think there's a therapeutic quality in beginning to understand what Spike was going through.

Sorry, getting too serious. Great show, very funny, you're sat in an audience of like-minded souls there to find out more and to be entertained.

When I was getting into my little yellow pick-up in the car park, I heard and saw this bloke having a right go at two of the cast because they hadn't used the '... fallen in the water' tag-line. That wasn't the point sir, it wasn't a flippin' panto, nor a Goon Show enactment, (thought I), but they accepted the comment with manners and moved towards their waiting vehicle. I called out to say 'thank you' for an excellent play and left them to it.

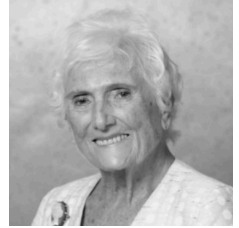
Back to my smelly room and noisy night thanks to some incessant banging safe in the knowledge that the previous couple of hours of joy and pleasure had left me able to cope with this sort of thing. That reminds me though, I was promised a credit voucher...

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAMELA RAITH PHOTOGRAPHY

PeterE, GSPS magazine guy

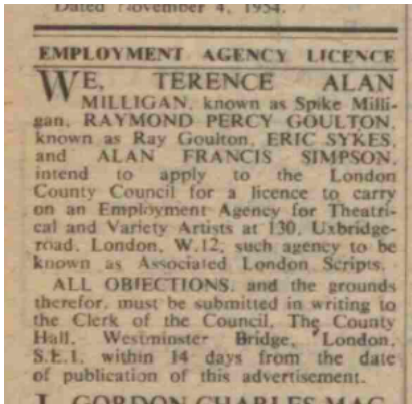
Beryl Vertue CBE, RIP

This issue's sad news is that Beryl Vertue died on 12th February, at the age of 90.



Why is this important to us? The easy answer is to direct you to issues 147, where you will find a transcript of her appearance on *Desert Island Discs*, and issue 170 where she joins a panel in a radio show called: *The Real Comedy Controllers*.

But, in the early days... Through a school friendship with Alan Simpson, who began writing sketches with Ray Galton when they were both in a sanatorium with TB and carried on writing together after they both survived, they would ask Beryl to type out their work with the promise that, when they become famous, they would ask her to work for them. Then came the formation of the famed Associated London Scripts (ALS) with Galton and Simpson, Eric Sykes and Spike Milligan and, as it grew, Beryl was invited to join them as receptionist / secretary to look after them all.



The Stage, 4th November 1954, repeated the following week, 11th November

In an interview prior to the launch of *The Real Comedy Controllers*, in 2017, when Beryl, aged 85 declared that no, she was certainly not ready to retire, she told the tale of when Spike had 'locked himself in his office for three days, pulled down the blinds and refused to come out'. She knocked on his

door, was eventually allowed entry and took in a pot of primroses saying, "It's Spring". Spike then apparently lifted up the blind to let the sun shine on the flowers and he came out soon after. So, we learn something there not only about Spike, but about Beryl's skills with 'gentle persuasion' which served her well in business.

After the spell with ALS she had a blistering career: worked for a while for Robert Stigwood, when his company absorbed ALS, continued to represent Galton and Simpson as agent, produced the acclaimed 'no speak' film *The Plank*, was executive producer of film spin-offs of television comedies and sold British television formats to the US of: *Steptoe and Son*, *Till Death Us Do Part* among others. She was co-exec on the film of The Who's *Tommy*, produced television series *Men Behaving Badly*, *Is It Legal* and many, many others plus was executive producer of the Cumberbatch *Sherlock* series.

An unchecked summary from wikipedia: 'In the year 2000, Beryl Vertue was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to

television and Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2016 for services to television drama. In 2004, she received the British Academy Television Awards (BAFTA) Alan Clarke Award for Outstanding Creative Contribution to Television and was conferred a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Royal Television Society Programme Awards on 20th March 2012. Ten days later, she was presented with the Harvey Lee Award for Outstanding Contribution to Broadcasting at the BPG TV and Radio Awards.'

Beryl Vertue was one of the first people that John Antrobus met in his quest to become a script writer, as he describes in his book: *Goon But Not Forgotten* (2020):

I squeezed past a crate of vegetables that tottered and asked me to dance. Declining the invitation, I climbed the narrow stairs on mildewed carpet that led above the green grocers shop – on the wall I noticed a framed cheque for one million pounds with the instructions, 'IN CASE OF BANKRUPTCY BREAK GLASS AND CASH CHEQUE IMMEDIATELY'.

I arrived in the reception area of Associated London Scripts. They are waiting for you upstairs said the ever-cheerful Pam Vertue, sister of Beryl Vertue, with such a nice smile and was further directed upstairs. The aroma of vegetables fading I entered Spike's office. Peter Sellers beamed at me.

Peter: Hello, young John. Where have you come from?

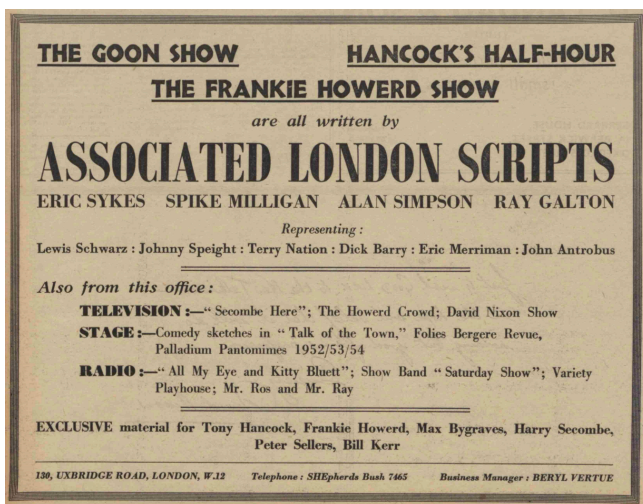
Spike: He's come from downstairs.

Peter: Downstairs? There is so much of it! It spreads out into the street and Heaven knows where?

Spike: I know. It's terrifying.

Peter: Try not to think of it. John? That's an unusual name. John? Why could it not have been Fluganaghan? What took you so long to get here, John?

Me: I was born in Woolwich. But lost my way.



The Stage, CTV Supplement, 22 September, 1955
(Commercial TV Supplement)

Spike: He went to the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. John Antrobus was an officer cadet.

Peter: Really? What did they train him to do?

Spike: They trained him to leave the army.

Me: I became a pacifist.

Peter: Ah, that's a principle worth fighting for! I was going to be a pacifist but I didn't fancy jumping out of an aeroplane...

*And in the opening bars of his play, **Of Good Report**, due out this year in a three-play volume: **BERYL** is *Beryl Vertue* and **JOHN** is *John Antrobus*.*

Continuing on from JOHN, addressing a soliloquy to a skull...

Enter BERYL.

BERYL

What have we here? A man with an umbrella. It hasn't rained for weeks. A herring-boned suit... Hello?

JOHN

Hello. Where do I start? Where do I sit?

BERYL

Pardon?

JOHN

I've come here to write. I'd rather like to get on with it. Plunge in.

BERYL

You're?

JOHN

Yes.

BERYL

John Antrobus.

JOHN

You were expecting me.

BERYL

Not quite like this.

JOHN

I'm longing to write. Have you a desk free? Available. I've so many ideas.

BERYL

Would you like a cup of tea?

JOHN

Is that how one starts? A career? Do the others? Did they? Start that way? Is that the secret?

BERYL

Our other writers are out to lunch, *to audience*: I've got a weird one here. I feel safe with him but good heavens! If he'd submitted himself instead of the scripts he would never have got inside the door.

JOHN

Where is the tea?

BERYL

Imagine it.

JOHN

Right. *MIMES DRINKING CUP OF TEA*

BERYL

Where are you from?

JOHN

I don't know. That is I don't know where it all started. Or whether there was a beginning – for any of us – I don't know these things. I came from an egg. I'm new laid, that's it. Scratching around in the farmyard. It's my first day out of the egg. I stand. I move around. Peck. There's a lot of light. Bustle. I'll soon be at home. Actually I'm from Sandhurst. The Royal Military Academy. I asked to leave because I didn't want to kill people.

BERYL

The pen is mightier than the sword.

JOHN

We hope so. Where are the others?
Where is Spike Milligan?

BERYL

Behind that door.

JOHN

Reads the sign. "Do not disturb. I am disturbed enough already." I like that. God, it's lonely without... a parade or something. I'm used to more people...

BERYL

Beryl.

JOHN

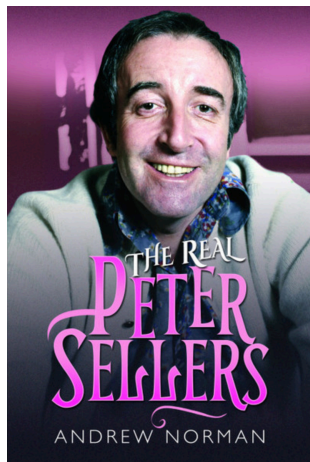
Beryl. And a military band. But I'll settle down. Where's Eric Sykes?

BERYL

He's having egg and chips. He always has three eggs. At the local cafe.

JOHN

That's wonderful. So close. Eric Sykes is a brilliant writer, yes. He wrote all those monologues for Frankie Howerd I used to listen to when I was, well – was I anything ?



It's only another book about Peter Sellers, don't panic.

A note from the author: "Throughout the world, people regard Peter Sellers purely as a comedic genius: surely, one of the greatest ever to have lived. But, the astute observer will notice that he always appeared to be acting, even when being interviewed. So, who was Peter Sellers?"

'To discover the real Peter Sellers is no easy task, and when we do, what we encounter is a totally different persona from the comedic characters that he portrayed on the screen.'

Available from <https://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk/> and Amazon. £20.00 + p&p or a different price from Amazon.

Review...

... of a random Goon Show, found in *The Listener*, 20th December, 1956

All goes according to plan in 'The Goon Show' (Home), but it is never a plan that would commend itself to the staff of Area H.Q., Military Air Corps. 'I am informed thoroughly of the cause', says Portia (that play is in my mind this week), but I hardly think she would know much of the Goons' most recent project. It is not, on the whole, plain sailing. I gathered – you will forgive me if I am wrong – that some sensual, pleasure-loving fellow, the inventor of the black telephone, wants to have one installed. 'As you will guess from the tune', a familiar voice observes presently, 'I am the senior outdoor line-layer, Uxbridge area'. There follows the remarkable colloquy [discussion]: 'Good morning, postman, three pints'. I've come to install the telephone'. 'Four pints and a small brown'. We are not astonished to learn that the wanted man has moved to a new address, '17a, Africa': 'Can I get there down Finchley Road?' 'Eventually'.

After this the reeling brain refused to register. Still, 48,000 miles of cable having been laid, we duly reach 'the steaming hell of Africa': I suspect that the script writers, unless, of course, there was super-efficient programme planning, had listened to 'The African Queen' and 'Heart of Darkness'. What occurs next I cannot now record, though a single line has filtered through: 'Hold him down while I force this brandy between my lips'. Just how extravagant can you get? The Goons, usually hovering on the frontier, can be very funny, or they can blast a joke into splinters. For most of the way, I think, this one – with Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe. Spike Milligan, and all – comes off according to plan. Certainly no one can fault the resource of its producer, Pat Dixon.

J.C. Trewin

Series 7, episode 11: The Telephone - excerpt

FX

(knocking on door, door opens)

Grytpype

Oh, good morning, postman. Er, three pints, please.

Neddie

No, no, no, you don't understand. I've come to install a black telephone.

Grytpype

Four pints and a small brown.

Neddie

I'm sorry, I've only got a large black.

Moriarty

Ohowww. A large black. Sapristi
bompert. What-type talking are you
doing there?

Neddie

I'm from the GPO.

Moriarty

We have nothing to hide.

Grytpype

And... we have nothing to show
either, but do come in, G'PO. You'll
um...

Moriarty

GPO, please.

Grytpype

GPO, yes. You'll pardon the mess,
we... can't help it really. We're
bachelors, you know.

Neddie

I see. Why don't you get married?

Grytpype

I would, but Moriarty doesn't love me.

Neddie

(ahem) Um... um... er, are you
Mr. Crun?

Grytpype

No, I'm er Grytpype-Thynne. Er,
criminal by appointment to the Royal
Household Cavalry.

Moriarty

Owww.

Neddie

Really? Why are you living in a hole
in the ground?

Grytpype

Er, something to do with the shortage
of money, you know.

Neddie

Oh. Mr. Crun's moved then?

Grytpype

Yes. To seventeen A, Africa.

Neddie

Seventeen A, Africa. Hm. Can I get
there down the Finchley Road?

Grytpype

Eventually, yes.

Neddie

Aha. I'd better write that down. E V
EN... C H E W, chew... A L Y,
eventually.

Moriarty

Oh, wait wait wait.

Neddie

Right. Goodbye.

Moriarty

No! Look... come back, little boiling
bubble. Oh, dear. Listen to me.
Before you go to seventeen A,
Africa...

Neddie

Yes?

Moriarty

Would you take this suspicious-
looking brown paper parcel, wrapped
in string and tied with newspaper?

Neddie

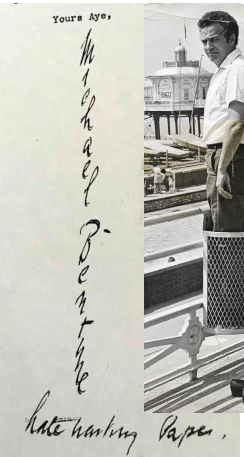
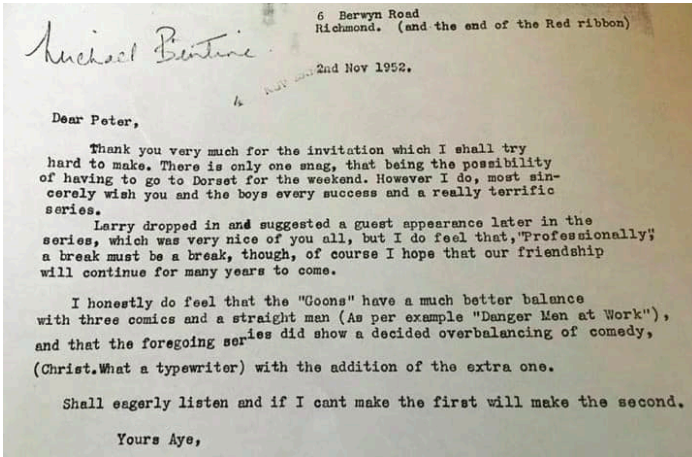
Certainly. certainly. OK, William...
seventeen A, Africa, and step on it!

GRAMS

*(boots marching, then speeded-up,
fades)*

**Thank you to EG6, aka
Encyclopaedia Goonicus 6 for the
transcription of this episode so I
could creep up and take the bit I
wanted. Done it, you can go now,
but please make yourself ready for
my next call.**

OOOH VERY INTERESTING... THE LONG LOST THEORY OF WHY HE LEFT?



A very interesting letter was sent to me by Andy Aliffé, former Senior Producer at BBC Radio Light Entertainment and Comedy. Thanks also to Roger Stevenson who brought it to my attention and to Neil Trickey who confirmed some of my thoughts. We reckon that 'Dear Peter' is directed to Peter Eton, about to take over as producer of *The Goon Show* from Dennis Maine Wilson for its third series. '*Danger - Men at Work*' refers to another slightly off-the-wall radio show from 1939 to 1940. The 'straight man' would be Wallace Greenslade.

Dear Peter,

Thank you very much for the invitation which I shall try hard to make. There is only one snag, that being the possibility of having to go to Dorset for the weekend. However I do, most sincerely wish you and the boys every success and a really terrific series.

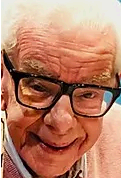
Larry dropped in and suggested a guest appearance later in the series, which was very nice of you all, but I do feel that, "Professionally", a break must be a break, though, of course I hope that our friendship will continue for many years to come.

I honestly do feel that the "Goons" have a much better balance with three comics and a straight man (As per example "Danger Men At Work"), and that the foregoing series did show a decided overbalancing of comedy, (...) with the addition of the extra one.

Shall eagerly listen and if I can't the first will make the second.

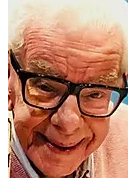
Your Aye,

Michael Bentine... hate wasting paper. [NB: middle pic]



RIP BARRY CRYER

23 MARCH 1935 TO 25 JANUARY 2022



An opening comment from a very much involved member, then not, now back again: Chris Smith.

Several of us GSPS idiots gathered to attend one of the recording sessions of *I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue* in the days of all four original performers in London, including Barry Cryer.

As part of the warmup the floor manager acknowledged group bookings including a group, something like "GPSS" which was another genuine group and we weren't mentioned.

Not fazed by this one of our number, fearless Paul Geraghty ("Karl la Fong") from Preston, piped up to correct the floor manager, asking "shouldn't that be GSPS?"

Barry Cryer burst on to hot microphone with "there's always one!"

Cue laughter, etc etc. Not bad to be the butt of a Cryer quip.

We caught Barry Cryer afterwards in the nearby pub and a nice chat was had by all...

Barry Cryer sadly passed in January, in Harrow at the age of 86.

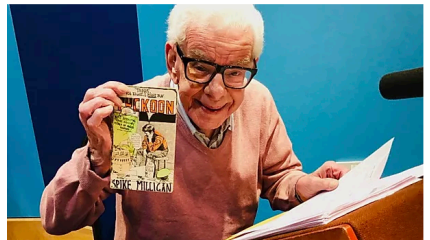
There are several other links between Barry Cryer and Goon folk:

He started his career at The Windmill Theatre, like most of The Goons did, but separately.

He wrote for Harry Secombe, with Marty Feldman in 1966 and 1977.

Had a documentary series on SKY where he paid tribute to heroes of comedy he had worked with including Peter Sellers and Eric Sykes.

Was in the cast of a new radio version of Milligan's *Puckoon* in 2019, playing the author. And here he is to prove it.



Thank you Marjorie Graham!

Enter: *The Idiot Weekly*, Price 2d

Here we go, continuing our celebration of the loan of what are becoming known as: The Marjorie Graham scripts. Last issue we outlined what it was that we had been loaned and plotted our investigation into the three shows that go to make up the 'Fred' shows plus *At Last the Cathode Ray Tube Show*. In each of the magazines of 2022 will be looking at each of these in turn.

The first, as above and below, arrived on to television screens with little ceremony. There was very little press coverage by way of preview. Very little in the local papers, but I did find some trifles in the nationals...



The Idiot Weekly, Price 2d

Peter Sellers struck a pose. “The Idiot Weekly, Price 2d.,” he announced, “might not be exactly the comedy you expect. But by heaven, sir, it will be different.”

He spoke in a clipped cavalry-colonel English.

Spike Milligan, who will be engaged in this new show, concurred from his corner of the room. In Eccles-English he announced: “Daaaaaaa.”

In a third corner sat producer Dick Lester. I noticed he had shrunk as far into the corner as possible. It even looked as though he was trying to push himself through the wall.

Lester described the new comedy show, which starts a six-week run this Friday, like this: “It’s not a Goon Show – but it has the Goon humour. We shall use Sellers as editor of a tatty Victorian weekly paper. That will be our medium for dashing from one subject to another.

“We might flash a headline from the paper on to the screen. A moment of music with Patti Lewis – and that would get us from a fast sketch to a song spot.

“The paper will just be our linking device. Everything will be tied up with it.”

You are warned

“Then we’ll have some sketches...”

“How do they fit into the paper?” I asked.

“Oh, they don’t,” said Lester, too brightly I thought, “they aren’t related to anything. We just think they’re funny.”

So, inside two minutes, I found a Goon Show that isn’t a Goon Show but has Goon humour, and a show revolving *entirely* around a Victorian magazine and its features, but taking in sketches which have nothing to do with the magazine.

Well, we should have been warned. As Peter Sellers said, the show will certainly be different.

TV Times, 24th February, 1956

The ‘Idiot Weekly, Price Tuppence’ gang don’t mean to starve. During a break in rehearsals for the AR/TV show on Fridays, are (l to r): June Whitfield, Max Geldray, Patti Lewis, Peter Sellers, Kenneth Conner and Graham Stark.

The Stage, 8th March, 1955



THE UTMOST IN GOONERY

Now you can see madness as well as hear it

A man called Mr Herbert Norridge will play the violin under water while being accompanied by a pianist at the side of the swimming pool. He will drown.

That’s the sort of thing you can expect in “The Idiot Weekly, Price 2d”, a new ITV series that starts on Friday.

It is the utmost in Goonery and the first major attempt to translate their madness into visual terms.

The instigator and chief exponent of this madness is Peter Sellers. He is the man of many voices, who brings to the Goon Show these characters:

Major Bloodnok, blustering army type:

Mr Henry Crun, the old gent in the city:

Mr Hercules Gryp-Pype Thynne, with the George Sanders voice:

Bluebottle (“You rotten swine! You deaded me!”)



Some of the cast reading a copy of The Idiot Weekly, Price 2d.

L to R: June Whitfield, Kenneth Connor, Max Geldray (behind), Peter Sellers, Patti Lewis, Graham Stark

He tells me, by the way, that some listeners have formed a Bluebottle fan club, and they actually write to the squeaky-voiced character.

“You should have seen the Valentine’s he got”, said his creator. “He is the most talked about character I’ve ever done.”

Bluebottle won’t be in the TV series for the sensible reason that every listener has his own idea of what he looks like. Sellers doesn’t want to spoil an illusion.

But he did bring Mr Henry Crun into his film, “The Mukkinees Battlehorn.”

Plays three parts

This burlesque of Scotland Yard was made in a week. It has been doubling them up at the Marble Arch Pavilion and is now going the rounds in the provinces.

“It was a half-hour experiment that Spike Milligan and I did to see if we can put Goonery on the screen, explained sellers.

Peter plays three parts, and Spike (among other things) is Catchpole Burkington, an elderly actor of the silent movie era who causes the sound track to go dead whenever he appears.

“Any chance of a bigger and better film about the Goons?” I asked him.

“Wardour Street is scared of us, he said. “I mean as Goons, not as individuals.”

In repertory

Peter was the teddy boy member of the Alec Guinness gang in “The Lady Killers.” I wonder how many of the cinema audience realised that they were watching one of the Goons. I wonder how many knew that Sellers graduated into Goonery from his acting in repertory.

He was recently offered a big part in a new Alistair Sim comedy, but had to turn it down because he was committed to the TV series.

Michael Baleen^(sic) has signed up Harry Secombe for some film comedies.

On the stage?

He will of course, bring a Goonish flavour to the screen as he did in his TV shows. But nobody yet will take a chance with the entire Goon Show as Hollywood did (and successfully) with “Helzapoppin.”

But actor and producer Sam Wanamaker wants to put them on the stage. Always on the lookout for the off-beat idea, he thinks he can perform this miracle.

But how? “The Goon Show” depends almost entirely on the comic ideas in sound. Somebody opens the kitchen door and the Golden Arrow comes roaring through. They could put that sort of thing on the screen with trick photography. But on the stage?

Anyway, Wanamaker’s idea will have to wait for awhile. Harry Secombe is going into a show at the Palladium in the spring, and that will run until heaven knows when.

Whatever else happens, the Goons will stick to radio as long as the BBC sticks to the Goons – which is likely to be forever and a day.

Meanwhile, each of the three chief lunatics is making a separate career in a more sober way.

Sellers is determined to go in for more serious acting. Secombe’s operatic records are selling in a big way. Spike Milligan has turned scriptwriting into a highly profitable business.

Sellers has a properly ghoulish attitude towards “The Idiot Weekly.” He doesn’t expect it to succeed, despite a cast that includes Spike Milligan, June Whitfield, Patti Lewis, Valentine Dyll, Graham Stark, Max Geldray, and Kenneth Connor.

“Shock treatment – that’s what I’m going to give viewers,” he said. “And they may not like it.

He wouldn’t tell me much about his ideas because he wants them to be surprises.

But I did learn that there will be a burlesque of the Chinese National Theatre, some of which you saw on BBC TV last year.

Will be monk

Sellers will be a Tibetan monk who does a dance with two invisible friends. You will hear their feet on the floor and the gongs they beat, but you won't see any sign of them.

“And,” he said, “there will be a boxing match to end all boxing matches.”

It's not all nonsense. One scene will have the Hunchback of Notre Dame standing by a gargoyle and looking down on Paris while he recites Hamlet's soliloquy

Or maybe it is all nonsense after all.

Moore Raymond's Show-Piece
Sunday Dispatch, 19th February, 1956

[The *Sunday Dispatch* (called *Weekly Dispatch* up to 1928) a national newspaper, published 1801 – 1961, when it was merged with the *Sunday Express*.]

TELEVIEW

I HAVE often thought that Peter Sellers ought to be a TV star; and last night he became one.

His new series, “Idiot Weekly, price 2d.,” was the funniest thing of its kind since the last Askey series—which was, as it happens, presented only an hour earlier.

“Idiot Weekly” was an attempt to translate to TV comedy the lunatic irrelevancies and exaggerations of the BBC's “Goon Show.” As such it was not 100 per cent, successful, and never can be until TV learns to equal the speed of sound radio in level flight.

In the Goon Show the voice of Bluebottle conjures up the image of a beguiling grotesque; but when last night's show presented Bluebottle in what is euphemistically called the flesh, he, she (or it) was quite remarkably unfunny.

Of the success of the show there can be no doubt whatever. It was fast, furious, frenzied, a bubble of nonsense which stayed miles above the surface of reality and restricted nobody at all.

Even pretty Patti Lewis, an attractive singer in her own right, was given a custard pie full in the face.

Peter Sellers, as a schoolmaster, an Edwardian boxer, and others established the correct blend of absurd incident and a precise, unsmiling impersonation.

A clever supporting cast and production helped to make this a decidedly encouraging first edition.

by Peter Black
Daily Mail, 25th February, 1956

Peter Sellers in his 'burlesque sketch' on the naturalist, Peter Scott in 'Idiot Weekly', Price 2d. It says so on the back of this press photograph.

Photo from: Associated-Rediffusion Ltd, GSPS archive



TELEVIEW

(another one)

Away in Birmingham for a month, I wasn't able to see the first copy of Peter Sellers's "The Idiot Weekly, Price 2d." on ITV. But I heard glowing reports, and looked forward eagerly to last night's edition.

Its surrealist interview and delicious bird films had me giggling uncontrollably. We idiots have too long been neglected on TV. Hooray for "The Idiot Weekly." It is so good that I fear it can't last.

*by Philip Purser
Daily Mail, March 3rd, 1956*

TV and Radio Topics

More Goonery

"Goonery" may defy analysis but it has become a recognisable brand of contrived British humour amusing to many who may think, for example, that Stephen Potter's "gamesmanship" is a bore. Personally, I found Peter Sellers's "The Idiot Weekly" on A-R TV hilariously funny.

He threatens to go a stage farther into a larger lunacy with "A Show Called Fred," scripted by his fellow Goon, Spike Milligan. A series of five programmes starts on Wednesday.

There will be crazy sketches "connected", he says, "in their own rare way," whatever that may mean. The cast will be almost the same as in "The Idiot Weekly."

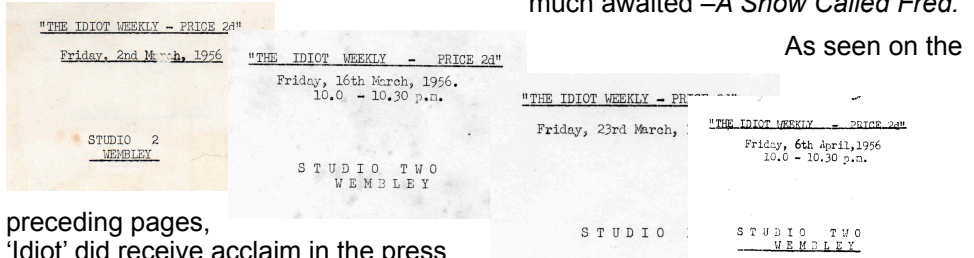
*by L Marsland Gander
Daily Telegraph, March 3rd, 1956*

The Idiot Weekly, Price 2d

So, what have had the loan of then?

...continued

Well, *The Idiot Weekly, Price 2d*, to give it its full title, ran in one series, had a break, and came back re-vitalised as, pre-announced and much awaited – *A Show Called Fred*.



preceding pages, 'Idiot' did receive acclaim in the press and the previews and reviews give us some idea of what was going on. It's a huge pity that we can't see the programmes 'in the flesh'. It's a dream of mine for one of these present-day theatre companies to look at these scripts, the programmes of which no recordings still exist and, rather than regurgitate the better-known episodes of *The Goon Show*, for a performance for example, perform a show that we haven't seen or heard since the 1950's when they were 'live' on the radio.

The Idiot Weekly, Price 2d, was aired from 24th February, 1956 until 6th April, 1956. Just six programmes. There were five of *A Show Called Fred* and eight *Son of Freds*. Just concerning ourselves with the first one in this March issue, we have scripts of the second, fourth and sixth complete shows and the first half of the fifth show.

In the busier days of GSPS there many meetings, weekend trips away and a lot of connected people involved and guest speakers at the meetings were commonplace. Our chairman, John Repsch did manage to find a new victim for our last meeting in September, in the shape of David, son of Harry Secombe.

Marjorie Graham was a guest at more than one such meeting and got a strong sense of the enthusiasm in the Society for delving into the Goon past. She did say, as reported in the December issue, giving her talk from 1997, that she had 'lost' her copies of the scripts as well as other memorabilia. Thankfully, from whatever source she managed to amass this collection that we had for a short time and were able to scan and plant in the well-nurtured growing medium that is Encyclopaedia Goonicus. The brand new version 6, contains all of these scripts for perusal but not for public performance because of copyright©. So please do behave.

Next issue we'll talk about *A Show Called Fred* and see what we can find. If you have any personal memories of watching these shows, please do let me know.



"These crazy mixed-up kids are (l to r) Kenneth Connor, Alun Owen, Valentine Dyall, Graham Stark, Peter Sellers and Max Geldray. They are involved in "The Idiot Weekly" on ARTV Friday night."

Some more photographs found, but they are a rare find regarding this particular show. These were in a magazine from the same year, but unfortunately the story was a little more general in interest.

The story goes that Spike wasn't too sure about The Goons transferring to television, but after seeing some of the script examples by John Antrobus, he became keen, as did everybody else, especially after watching it.



"June Whitfield discovers what happens to young ladies who take the mickey out of commercial TV. Man with the cash is Sellers"

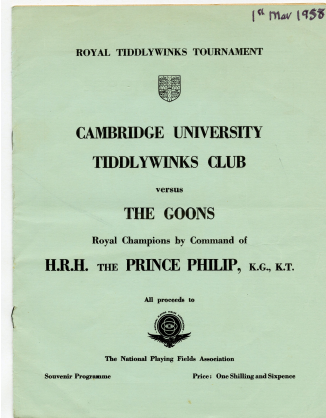
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

TIDDLYWINKS CLUB

H.R.H. PRINCE PHILIP, DUKE OF EDINBURGH, without whose sportsmanship and sense of humour this match would not have taken place.

versus

THE GOONS



Old news? Well you would be a fairly long term member of this erstwhile society to remember, so congratulations.

Yes, it has been reported on before in the GSPS Newsletters, but it's not every month / year that Spike's own copy comes up for auction on the well-known internet auction site: the Bay of E's. It is up for sale at £165 + £7.50 p&p, not auction, it was still for sale at the time of writing and is the second time it has been offered in the last month.

But it is not the first time that this programme has been offered to the public.

It was Lot 63 in the Sale at Christie's: Entertainment Memorabilia including "The Private World of Spike Milligan" held in 2008. With it came a flyer advertising an appearance of Spike at the Gaumont State, Kilburn in June 1955, sharing the bill with Petula Clark, Derek Roy and Ronnie Harris and others. Spike was billed as: 'From the BBC Goon Show', not 'Late of the Human Race' or 'Performing Man' as he more often billed himself in those days.

The programme sold that day in 2008 for £240 including premium, so not a huge profit is being sought. None at all really.

One was sold in December, 2020, together with the two books of scripts and a copy of *The Book of the Goons*. That Lot sold for £130. But the best one that I can find had the 'team Goons' page signed by all the members: Spike Milligan, Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe, Graham Stark, Max Geldray, Wallace Greenslade, Alan Simpson and Ray Galton plus their umpire John Snaggle! What an event! Sorry, I digress – that one sold at Christie's again, but in July, 2013 for £562 including premium.



*Peter Sellers,
concentrating*

Brief summary: the full story is in the programme and on the internet on this site: <http://tiddlywinks.org/history/winks-rampant/>. The full text of an amazing document called: Winks Rampant is on there to read with every detail including that Harry Secombe had to be flown by helicopter, courtesy of Fison's Pest Control, for his matinee performance in London. Do read it, but put a bit of time by. *Tip: search for 'Goon'.*

Also, have a look at these tiny pieces of film: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=372142119825491> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MB6OfzaUtDk>. There is also a piece of film included in The Goon Show Compendium, Volume 8: In addition, there are some rare archive bonus items including The Royal Tiddlywinks Tournament, a special recording of the tiddlywinks match in which the Goons, as Royal Champions, took on Cambridge University.

Following an article in The Spectator magazine which asked, 'Does the Duke of Edinburgh cheat at tiddlywinks?'. So he was challenged by the Cambridge University's tiddlywinks club to a match. He called for his champions, The Goons! And what a turnout! It must have been a fabulous session.

What happened next? Well listen to Series 8, Episode 24: **Tiddlywinks**. And it's all available on **EG6!** Including a full audio report of the match! You can also read: **previous cover: N/L's: 92 p4, 93 p8, 159 p25.**

Thanks to Mark Cousins for the nudge about the eBay sale.



Spike and Harry mid-play

A Kick Up The Archives

by Mark Cousins

Here we go with another round of goodies to delight your pallet for all things Goon!

The Goon Show

An interesting website with a short piece on The Goons plus the complete *Bridge On The River Wye*. Also a clip dated 1966, of which it is said: *This rare clip of the Goons is from the ATV show 'Secombe & Friends'. It was thought to be wiped from TV history but this small section is rumoured to have been found in the Peter Sellers film collection. Unconfirmed.*

<https://www.mislaidcomedyheroes.com/the-wonderful-wit-of-wireless>

For the River Wye film head for Bumf, then Audio & Video and scroll down till you reach the heading: Milligan, Sellers, Miller & Cook. Do be careful though, you could be stuck on this website for hours.

What's So Funny? - The Six Degrees of The Goon Show

<https://evergreenpodcasts.com/whats-so-funny/the-six-degrees-of-the-goon-show#episodeContent>

Now for a treat for Max Conks Geldray fans!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hm-GBET0-Yw>

And now, some words from the illustrious President of The Goon Show Preservation Society

<https://flashbak.com/the-story-of-prince-charles-comedy-from-the-goons-to-nowhere-15455/>

You'll have seen it before, but here it is again in readiness for its 50th anniversary next year. *The Last Goon Show Of All!*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XF745ywyvVY>

Time to remind you of Tyler Adams' excellent weekly home for all things Goon which goes by the title of **GoonPod** which is tailor-made for all those of you interested in all things Goon. Simply wind up your internet connection and point it to:

<https://anchor.fm/tyler-adams0>

Ed's extra:

Herewith, an excellent website on The Goon Show. Beautifully laid out and full of well written, well researched fact-giving articles and excellent links.

Big thanks and congratulations to the maker:

Nick Reeve:

<https://www.theseagoonmemoirs.com/>

And, in alphabetical order by first name:

Harry Secombe

Midlands News from August 1957.

Presentation of university chair to Harry Secombe

<https://>

[www.macearchive.org/films/midlands-](http://www.macearchive.org/films/midlands-news-00081957-presentation-university-chair-harry-secombe)

[news-00081957-presentation-university-chair-](http://www.macearchive.org/films/midlands-news-00081957-presentation-university-chair-harry-secombe)

[harry-secombe](http://www.macearchive.org/films/midlands-news-00081957-presentation-university-chair-harry-secombe)

[harry-secombe](http://www.macearchive.org/films/midlands-news-00081957-presentation-university-chair-harry-secombe)



A Royal Celebration, *40 Years of Peace*, 1985 with Sir Harry starting at about 1hr 35 mins

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MGoRLsDqMY)

[v=8MGoRLsDqMY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MGoRLsDqMY)

The *Royal Variety Performance* 1978 – Sir Harry can be seen at around 45 minutes in and again at 1hr 3mins in and 1hr 7 mins

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCv-rAKYNqQ>

Here's a very interesting piece written by Harry's son David - [we met him at the September meeting, remember?]

<http://adrinkershitoryoflondon.com/distant-laughter/>

Michael Bentine

Michael Bentine's *Potty Time - Father Christmas*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSINnFLviPI>

Back in July, while I wasn't looking, a new DVD (and BluRay) of the film *Rentadick* was released:

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Rentadick-Blu-ray-James-Booth/dp/B095MLP18X/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=rentadick&qid=1633701453&qsid=257-2228373-8280406&sr=8-1&sres=B095MLP18X%2CB000NTPC18

Amongst the plethora of British comedy types are a certain Spike Milligan and Michael Bentine in a script credited to and blamed upon Graham Chapman and John Cleese with additional dialogue by John Fortune and John Wells

Peter Sellers

Hoffman – limited edition Blu-ray (World Blu-ray premiere) Released: 17th January 2022
<https://www.powerhousefilms.co.uk/collections/frontpage/products/hoffman-le>

Here's a complete transcript of the movie!
<https://sublikescript.com/movie/Hoffman-65839>

List of 73 Peter Sellers movies ranked best to worst. [No1 – *Dr Strangelove!*]
<https://www.throughtheclutter.com/peter-sellers-5244.php>

The Blockhouse – Limited Edition Blu-ray (World Blu-ray premiere) Release date: 17 January 2022
<https://www.powerhousefilms.co.uk/collections/limited-editions/products/the-blockhouse-le>

Sellers TV Obit TV coverage
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWtNKQSUvz8>

Did you spot Peter Sellers in the new Peter Jackson Beatles Disney Channel sensation *Get Back*? Poor quality footage of this nondescript encounter has been on YouTube for a while so it's nice to see at least a part of it restored with good sound quality. There will probably be a commercial release of this three-part six-hour Beatles epic next year.
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/178028482246705/>

He also has a page in the book of the same name.
https://www.amazon.co.uk/Get-Back-The-Beatles/dp/0935112960/ref=asc_df_0935112960/?tag=googshopuk-21&linkCode=df0&hvadid=431043955865&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrand=17953395641620302419&hvpone=&hvtwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=1006809&hvtargid=pla-919583733045&psc=1&th=1&psc=1&tag=&ref=&adgrpid=97419294902&hvone=&hvtwo=&hvadid=431043955865&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrand=17953395641620302419&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=1006809&hvtargid=pla-919583733045

Spike Milligan

First, an interview with Father Christmas
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CpdqX1HmQ4&t=11s>

Midlands News: 22.05.1962: Giant postcard to Spike Milligan
<https://www.macearchive.org/films/midlands-news-22051962-giant-postcard-spike-milligan>

1986: Famous Last Words: Spike Milligan
<https://ms-my.facebook.com/BBCArchive/videos/1986-famous-last-words-spike-milligan/555640814808953/>

Idiot's Weekly
Seven shows from Spike's Australian radio series
<https://archive.org/details/idiots-weekly-1950s-the-worlds-greatest-adventure-old-time-radio>

The Omar Khayyam Show
https://archive.org/details/BBC_Radio_4_Extra_20161211_123000_The_Omar_Khayyam_Show?start=119

BBC Archive - #OnThisDay 1970: Spike Milligan was playing it straight for Nationwide as he lamented the neglect of a building, St Albans in Hampton. [Nothing to do with Hertfordshire]
<https://archive.org/details/twitter-1181568679307337729>



An episode of BBC's *Meet the Author*, but, 'an interview with the author's editor' following the launch of her latest (at the time) accumulation of works by Spike, as described at the start of the programme. An interview with **Norma Farnes**.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/entertainment-arts-15390874>



I thought we'd have an update on GoonPod and see how it's doing. Well, it's doing very well actually...

9 FEB 2022

***The Naked Truth* (1957) film starring Peter Sellers**

Joining Tyler is podcaster Scott Phipps, whose knowledge of this era of British films makes for a highly entertaining hour or so of chat.

2 FEB 2022

1985

With Tyler this week is Sean Gaffney, to talk about the Goons' celebrated take on Orwell's *1984*.

26 JAN 2022

Spike...

the new play by Ian Hislop and special guest Nick Newman.

19 JAN 2022

The Mummified Priest

Returning guest John Dredge discusses *The Mummified Priest*, *Goon Show* episode from 1957.

12 JAN 2022

The Bed Sitting Room (1969)

This episode, Adam from RetroTube joins Tyler to talk about Richard Lester's big screen adaptation of Milligan and John Antrobus's acclaimed stage play. Idea by John Antrobus, co-written with Spike Milligan.

5 JAN 2022

The Magic Christian (1969)

The film discussed with writer Jem Roberts, whose latest book *Fab Fools* examines the Beatles and comedy plus has recently been released as an audiobook.

31 DEC 2021

BONUS EPISODE! *Behind The Peter Sellers Story* with Joe Wisbey and director Peter Lydon

Joe Wisbey has been talking to the director of the above documentary, Peter Lydon, exclusively for Goon Pod and the resultant conversation is here.

29 DEC 2021

The Scarlet Capsule

Actor, writer and comedian Toby Hadoke guests on the show to talk to Tyler about the Nigel Kneale-influenced *Goon Show* episode *The Scarlet Capsule*, which aired the week after the final instalment of *Quatermass & The Pit* in 1959.

22 DEC 2021

The Tale of Men's Shirts

Mike Fenton Stevens looks back at some interesting highlights from a

career on television, radio and the stage spanning more than forty years and he explains how the Goons informed his early development in terms of performing comedy business in front of a crowd.

15 DEC 2021

III Met By Goonlight

In March 1957, the Dirk Bogarde Second World War film, *III Met By Moonlight* was released and about a week later the Goons successfully parodied it with their own version. Phil Cannon, co-host of the long-running *Doctor Who* podcast *Who's He?* and also a self-confessed Goon – and especially Spike – addict guests in this episode.

8 DEC 2021

Murder By Death (1976)

Joining Tyler to discuss the film is Jon Morris: cartoonist, writer and one-half of the *Just One More Thing* podcast, which is all about Columbo and incredibly funny.

1 DEC 2021

The Spectre of Tintagel

Cartoonist and comic book writer Roger Langridge joins Tyler to discuss *The Spectre of Tintagel*.

24 NOV 2021

Talking Milligan

Actor, composer and voiceover artist Darrell Maclaine steps into the pod to talk about growing up on a steady diet of Spike, his books and poetry, and how it helped him ignore his draughty portacabin classroom.



Letters & emails



Hi Peter

I hope you're okay! Just thought you might be interested to know that the new Beatles documentary *Get Back* released on Disney+ includes Peter Sellers making an appearance at Twickenham studios after George Harrison had temporarily walked out – the audio and a poor quality black and white work-print of this has been available on bootlegs for decades but now we finally get to see it in pristine colour on an official release! (it's in Part 2 that was released this morning).

Regards, Matt P

See A Kick up the Archives for the link folks. If you want to, no pressure... **Ed**

Received via email (written as sent)

Great page but there is a bit of an over site? Why is the most talented man there always overlooked?

Max Geldray was the most talented of them all and this is not theory; and that is saying something, as they were all Giants, but that swing ensemble the Arrangements (A nightingale sang in Berkeley Square, It's only a paper moon etc, and Max were the really talent there, beyond the trendy fashionable Goon Squad and Princess Margaret knew the score there very well.

It's a real Crime Max gets overlooked; on the grounds of the work involved to play at that level on Chromatic Pocket horn, but also to be such a selfless mensch that gave himself to good causes without blinking or sniffing for the chequebook.

After Goonset , He walked straight into a gig with Surly Sarah Vaughan! You didn't get a look in with her unless you were the top of the top your game especially in the late 50's early 60's.

To then be lightheartedly denigrated as the Conk or as mere noise by Wallace?

Those arrangements are as good as anything Dankworth stuck his name on.

Mountain Greenery etc, all thorough scored with Episodes and tasteful modulatory schemas yet everyone misses it for who it helped to make look hep. Even Genevieve and Adler got more adulation for a barely as good good product against giant performances scored for weekly episodes and to a deadline with one rehearsal if he was lucky !!

Max was a giant.

He's the true genius no one saw and deserves a plug, even if only to show you didn't miss the Alchemists mine that requires full mindfulness and attention; the First Matter is imagination. Max the giant no one saw.

The Conk. The lyrical louvre, Maximus Tinteethnok. The Steel moustache. Max Geldray; the first real Hohner Chromonica 270 Jazz virtuoso.

No one really realised what a true gem they had.

Great site though 😊 Be well,

Steve Widdicombe

REPLY

Thank you for this Steve. I'm not sure what 'site' you've been viewing, could you please let me know whether it is the 'soon to be upgraded' website or the group pages on FaceBook.

We certainly don't ignore Max Geldray, nor indeed any of the musicians or other supports for the Goon Show. I've just checked my index of our Newsletters and he is 'in' at least twenty of them, including some very interesting and original interviews. If you are a FaceBook user I could drop an article or two on our FB page.

Max G is also very well represented in our infamous 'Encyclopaedia Goonicus' which is available to all members.

It's a good email though and I will happily include it in March issue of our magazine, *Goon News*.

Thanks for making contact.

Ed

Hi Pete, (written as sent)

I did notice a bit Max mention with your pages; It was really a bit of a rhetorical question after getting into Goonacular conversations and 95% of the ranks didn't Max and quite didn't know who Bentine was either.

... I can easily determine your a delightful chap, and that was more the point with Max too.

He was delightful chap, which wasn't really an abundant characteristic but leaving it there.

I come from a family of East End musicians with a tradition going back quite some time that eventually emigrated to Australia (against my wishes.) and my Grandfather knew and loved Max and as my Grandfather George bought me all my first instruments and took great care of my musical rearing, and was delightful soul himself, it's a kind of emotional manner of keeping him alive in a way too.

Lovely to meet you Pete. I love your Goon page.

I see in the *Batter Pudding Hurler* and similar nominal headers of the Episodes schemas, a harkening back to things like the Glue-man in a Canterbury Tale which to be expected really isn't it given the timing.

Be well pal,

Steve Widdicombe

Dear Sirs,

'Morning'

If it's relatively easy, is someone able to put me out of my misery, please? I've been trying to remember which episode contains the dialogue that goes something like: 'morning', 'morning', 'mornning', 'morning', 'morning', 'mmmmorning', 'good morning', 'morning to you', 'moorning', 'ah, good,.. morning, 'morning', pause... 'hang on,... it's evening', 'even...ing', 'evening', 'evening', etc

Is anyone able to tell me where this is, please? It's one of those Sheldon Cooper ear-worms and it's been driving me round the bend. I hope this is an easy one and look forward to you, as convenient. Thanking you, in anticipation.

Yours faithfully,

Jeremy Williams

REPLY – following a swift yet purposeful dalliance into EG6 that all-encompassing deep-filled pizza of Goon knowledge with all the toppings...

To Jeremy via Les our website man:

Hi Jeremy,

According to the *Encyclopaedia Goonicus* [EG6] the show Jeremy is looking for is 8/23 *The Spon Plague*, first broadcast on the BBC Home Service on Monday, 3rd March, 1958 at 20:30. The latest rendition can be found on *The Goon Show Compendium Volume EIGHT* (2012). [or indeed, EG6, available only from GSPS, Ed]

Please pass on the information and point him at the subscriptions page of the GSPS web site.

Neil

Jeremy – you have been pointed...

Ed

NEW MEMBERS – WELCOME TO THE GSPS

Six new folk have joined since the last **Goon Show News**, all in the UK: **Graham Davison, Duncan Gray, Simon Green, Mike Hastings, Andy Leeser and Stephen Towsey.**

Thanks all, feel free to enjoy.

Here's come 'extras' from members when sending in their annual quids.

From: Geoff Burdett

Just had the terrible blasting of Moreton's Bank. Choking horror have found the Silver Dubloons. Under two floorboards. Choking horror. The call of the West. I need the £50 cure, In Honour Bound, to pay £12.50 to Ye Bandits of Sherwood Forest. I have The Ink Shortage, must catch Last Tram. Now back to the brandy.

From: Phil Boswell

Thank you for your payment reminder. I was quite excited when your 'plain wrapper' came through the letterbox. Still the mag is good.

Signed Denis Bloodnok, MT MT MT

From: Alan Wheeler

I've always regretted the shortage of material about Ray Ellington, Max Geldray, Angela Morley, Wallace Greenslade and perhaps others who contributed greatly to the Show's success. Maybe there's very little to be found? But, otherwise, inclusion of reference/reminders of these people would be welcome. As always, my thanks to everyone concerned in keeping the Society active.

REPLY

I'll try and get something done on Goon Show personnel for each issue Alan. Apols for that. I had an article planned, about all the musicians involved, but every time I look at it, it seems too vast a subject. I need to break it down. Thanks for your interest, I very much agree with you and will try harder! Unless you fancy writing something of course... It's hard finding an angle cos I think that we've had the usual biog's. Maybe not – I shall go seek! **Ed**

From: Roger Manns

I find it amazing that when the digits in my membership number are added together they make 6, which when doubled is only 1 short of the date of my birthday!

Hello Peter,

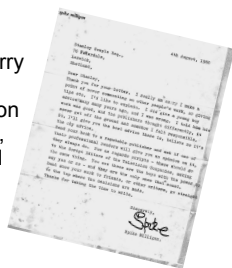
And this is where the story really starts!
Back in 1980, as a spotty eighteen-year-old

Herbert, just a few short years after discovering 'The Goons' and becoming a GSPS member, I thought I would have a crack at writing a radio sketch show with a Goon-type slant for my own enjoyment. I then thought, why not send it to the man himself, Spine Millington, to show him that he inspired me to create such a thing. I was not expecting a critique, although I did I ask for his thoughts on the (extremely amateur) piece and any tips he could offer.

To my astonishment, I received the attached reply which I treasure.

Dear Stanley,

Thank you for your letter. I really am sorry I make a point of never commenting on other people's work, or giving tips etc. I'd like to explain. I did give a young boy advice many years ago, and I was wrong. I told him his work was good, and the publishers thought differently, it never got off the ground and somehow I felt responsible. So, I'll give you the best advice there is, believe me it's the only advice.



Send you book to a reputable publisher and ask if one of their professional readers will give you an opinion on it, they always do. Now as regards scripts – these should go to the Script Editors of the Television Companies, asking the same thing. You see these are the boys with the power to say yes or no – and they are the only ones that count.

Don't show your work to friends, or other writers, go straight to the top where the decisions are made.

Thanks for taking the time to write.

Sincerely, Spike Milligan

Unfortunately, I did not have the confidence, dedication or, more probably, skill to pursue my efforts in the direction of comedy script writing - other than a sketch sent to the producers of the Cannon and Ball show four years later that was met with no response.

I don't think I have sent this in to the GSPS before. If I have, my apologies – it's the heat

you know, the heat, it plays tricks with your mind I tell you! What do you mean it's snowing?! Bladder? Get this man out of here!

Kind regards, Stan Semple Shetland Islands

And after a plea for sight of the script and being told that he didn't know where it was, this:

From what I recall, it was more inspired by the Q series, I think. For example, I recall a couple of things;

“We spoke to the British athletics sprint sensation who ran 100m in a world record 8 seconds. We asked him how he achieved this incredible time. He said; “I took a shortcut.” and

“And now the football results; Sheffield Wednesday 2...Shrove Tuesday nil; Arsenal 1...Fulham lost; Everton 8 Chelsea Bun; Newcastle 145...Liverpool - didn't turn up”

As you see, nothing worth writing home, or to Spike, about! So, I think his letter was being extremely kind.

Hallooo Peter, hope this finds you well.

I am back! After a period of absence, I have re-enrolled with the legendary GSPS. I always felt right at home with various likeminded Charlies with their super humour and size 23 boots!

I would just like to reaffirm my connections with all the members that I recall from those old days when we were all friends... ‘That’s whyyyy, We’re all friends togetheeeeeer, Just like we used to beeeeeee’ But I digress!

Just to say, I hope all my fellow Charlies are well during these Lurgi ridden times. It is great to welcome Mr Cleese to the fold. Where has he been all this time? He is just in time too! It's his round in the GSPS Bar! And not a moment too soon.

I attach for your viewing delight or for use when using the loo, a good show script that I wrote far too long ago. If you ever find that You are struggling for content whilst writing the Newsletter, feel free to add parts of it or whatever to fill in the gaps... Completely free of charge, no money to pay... gratis for the

small sum of 15 golden splonders plus VAT (A wooden one with dreaded alcohol within)

Thanks for all you do Peter! Please keep doing it. (You Naughty Many you). Take care

‘Rambling’ Andy Straw

REPLY

Well done for returning. I'm sure it's good to have you back.

There's a few old soldiers in their barracks I'm sure - the skill is in finding them.

Thanks for the script. I'll have a look at it.

Ta.

Ed

Hello Neil,

Success! The new stick arrived today, so I stuck the stick in the stick hole on the side of my computer (naughty stick!) and copied the content onto my hard drive – existential question: how much did the extra 38GB of data add to my laptop's weight? No hesitation, no indigestion – my PC ate the whole lot in one go. A quick scan of the user destructions and a preliminary browse suggests everything is working OK.

I am mightily impressed by the scale and scope of the work that you and the team have done to compile **EG6**. Access to the material is relatively straight forward and the level of detail and consistency is gob-smacking. Well done, indeed, for building this magnum opus and making it available to us. Over the years, I have compiled quite a library of commercial goons related recordings, literature and videos. Focusing primarily on the Goons and Peter Sellers material, I have copies of all of the extant Goon Shows (~130 of them) and Peter Sellers commercial films (~90 of them). However, your compilation is stratospheric by comparison.

It occurs to me that **EG6** is a magnificent marketing tool for GSPS and irresistible bait for encouraging new members to join the society.

Congratulations, again (and can I stop extolling the EG6 virtues, now?)

Chris Chaney

The GSPS 50th anniversary year commences...

The case for the defence, or I was a teenage Goon zombie

It was April, 1972, when Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe and Spike Milligan stepped into The Camden Theatre to record what would be their last outing as The Goons. Originally called The Goons Benefit Night but later dubbed more appropriately *The Last Goon Show Of All*, the result was broadcast in November 1972 to a waiting world of Goonatics such as myself. I, like so many others, had applied for one of the few hundred tickets but was unsuccessful. Happily, Princess Anne, Prince Philip and other members of the Royal Family were more fortunate. (Years later when asked, I always told everyone that Princess Anne got my ticket. It can now be exclusively revealed that actually, it was Prince Philip.)

Then in October, 1972, with the Goons once more in the ascendant thanks to *The Last Goon Show Of All* and the BBC's 50th anniversary, Woburn Press saw an opportunity to publish a clutch of the show's original scripts. But there were simply not enough Goon Shows to be had. Parlophone had released a few edited LPs and the BBC scarcely if ever repeated the original shows.

So, around the same time as this, two likely Charlies decided that all this needed some kind of preservation. Having dismissed aspic and formaldehyde they settled on forming what became The Goon Show Preservation Society cleverly referred to as the GSPS. It was a masterstroke. Linton Culver became the President while Mike Coveney was dubbed the Chairman and the die was cast.

The first GSPS Newsletter appeared in November, 1972, cleverly followed by No 2 in September, 1973,. Would these two masterminds stop at nothing? The annual subscription was 25p. It was a clever ploy to create addicts and it was working. By September, 1973, there were almost 500 members.

Later more Goon Show scripts were published by Woburn Press in a volume cunningly titled *More Goon Show Scripts*, this time with reference to help with the list of all the show titles from The Goon Show Preservation Society together with an address. I suspect that a lot of like-minded fools such as myself saw this and wrote away for details. This was all too good to be true and on the announcement of a gathering in London I went along with a friend to see what the fuss was all about. It was then and there that I met other idiots with the same affliction as my own including the late great George W Brown and Bob 'The Man In The White Suit' Bray to mention only a few, which kindled a lifelong addiction. The damage had been done.

The 7th edition of the newsletter in October, 1974, announced an orgy which was cleverly disguised as a London Meeting. The announcement read, 'We need the assistance of one or two ladies [it was the 70s] to make coffee, hand round light refreshments...' The temptation became too great. The next thing I knew I was attending this evening of debauchery known as The London Reunion Meeting, a

large gathering at Napier Hall in Victoria with the promise of *The Running Jumping Standing Still* film, the rarely screened *Super Secret Service* and a 45-minute talk by *Goon Show* producer John Browell. By now it was too late. I was hooked. My life would never be the same again.

There followed regular meetings in London to which I felt compelled to go to after work and meet a host of shady characters with the unlikely names of Bill Nunn, Adrian Briggs and John Repsch, to mention only a few. I was beyond saving. Then, not long afterwards someone came up with the bright idea of going on a march between the BBC and Trafalgar Square with the idea of drawing attention to the lack of broadcast shows. Sucked into a frenzy of all things 'Goon', I joined the fray with fellow reprobates including Tina Hammond, Tony Broughton, Bill Nunn, Adrian Briggs, George Brown, Bob Bray and someone who claimed to be John Repsch.

Sensing kindred spirits, I tried to help their poor Goon-starved lives by starting something which I called 'Goonews'. Weeks turned into years and years turned into decades. My addiction kept on growing. Before I knew where I was, I was volunteering to set up the first GSPS all singing and dancing tape library under the pseudonym of 'Spools' in the hope that I could hide my shame behind this mask. I dubbed it SPLAT! (Spools Library of Audio Tapes). By now it was too late. All was lost.

Since those heady days, due to a pain in the back of my neck, I haven't looked back. What's your excuse?

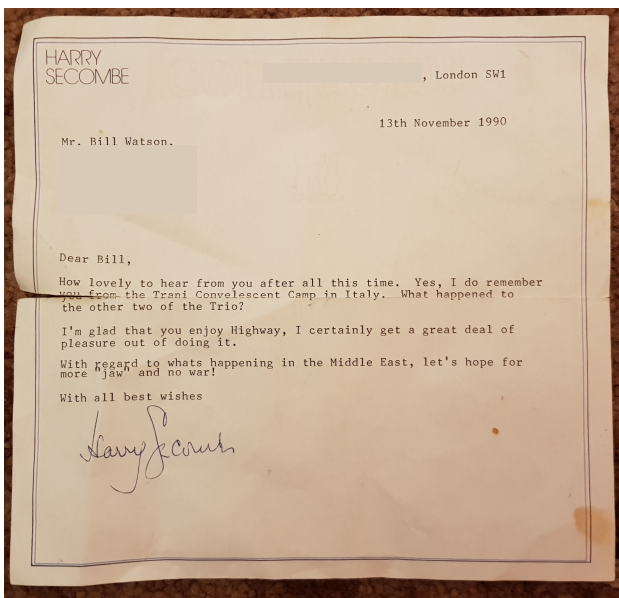
An old wrinkled member (Prisoner number 31765X, HMS Broadmoor - basement)

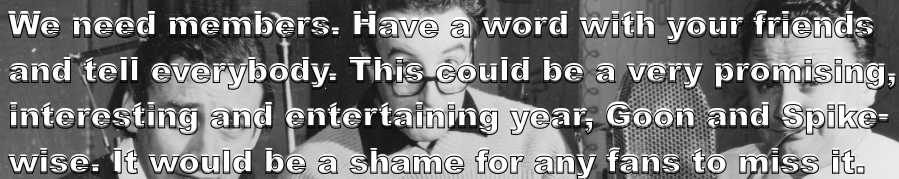
All the best, Mark Cousins

Check out the inside back cover of what you're holding in your hand. What a fabulous piece. It's a good job one of the signatories put a date on it.

And a superb letter validating it as well.

Thank you Dean.





We need members. Have a word with your friends and tell everybody. This could be a very promising, interesting and entertaining year, Goon and Spike-wise. It would be a shame for any fans to miss it.

PICTURE CREDITS:

FC: GSPS archive
Pg 8,9: Watermill Theatre
Pg 10,11: BNA
Pg 16: A Aliffe and GSPS
Pg 17: Perfectly Normal Productions
Pg 19: BNA
Pg 20: Nostalgiacentral

Pg 23: GSPS archive
Pg 25: TV Mirror, Ed's coll'n
Pg 26,27: YouTube
Pg 29: BBC site
Pg 31: Ed's coll'n
Pg 37,39: Den Smith

CONTACTS:

COMMITTEE:

Chairman

John Repsch,
110 Chertsey Court,
Clifford Avenue, Mortlake,
London, SW14 7BX
tel: 0208 878 6912

Treasurer

Janice Desler, 7 Garnham
Close, Smalley Road Estate,
Stoke Newington, London,
N16 7LF
janicedesler@yahoo.com

Membership Secretary

Colin Silk,
305 Maidstone Road,
Rainham, Kent, ME8 0HA
tel: 01634 377682
membership.gspss@btinternet.com

Secretary

Richard Usher
19 Quantock Avenue
Caversham Park Village
Reading, Berkshire
RG4 6PY

OTHERS:

Newsletter Editor

Peter Embling,
2 Knights Court, Hatherleigh
Devon, EX20 3HA
newsgoonsgspss@gmail.com
tel: 01837 811746

Webmaster

Position now officially vacant, the Society is looking for a volunteer please, to re-design the website plus monitor the site and input updates as necessary. Please contact John Repsch, top left.

Social Media

Julie Warren
jw34007@yahoo.co.uk
Twitter @TheGSPS

Newsletter back copies

Robin Perrin
robinofatsfield@gmail.com

NON-UK Rep's:

Germany Rep

Olaf Lezinsky,
Staufenstraße 12
83435 Bad Reichenhall
Germany
Olaf.Lezinsky@t-online.de

Japan Rep

Richard Winton, Acty
Meguro Ekimae, 2-3-507
Meguro 1-chome, Meguro-
ku, Tokyo 153-0063, Japan
winton@m6.dion.ne.jp

South Africa Rep

Aubrey Meier,
% 7 Panorama Road, Hilton,
3245, South Africa
bones@pixie.co.za

USA West Coast Rep

Jeff Kaliss, 230 Hazelwood
Avenue, San Francisco, CA
94127-2110, USA
jefkal@jeffkaliss.com

USA Rep

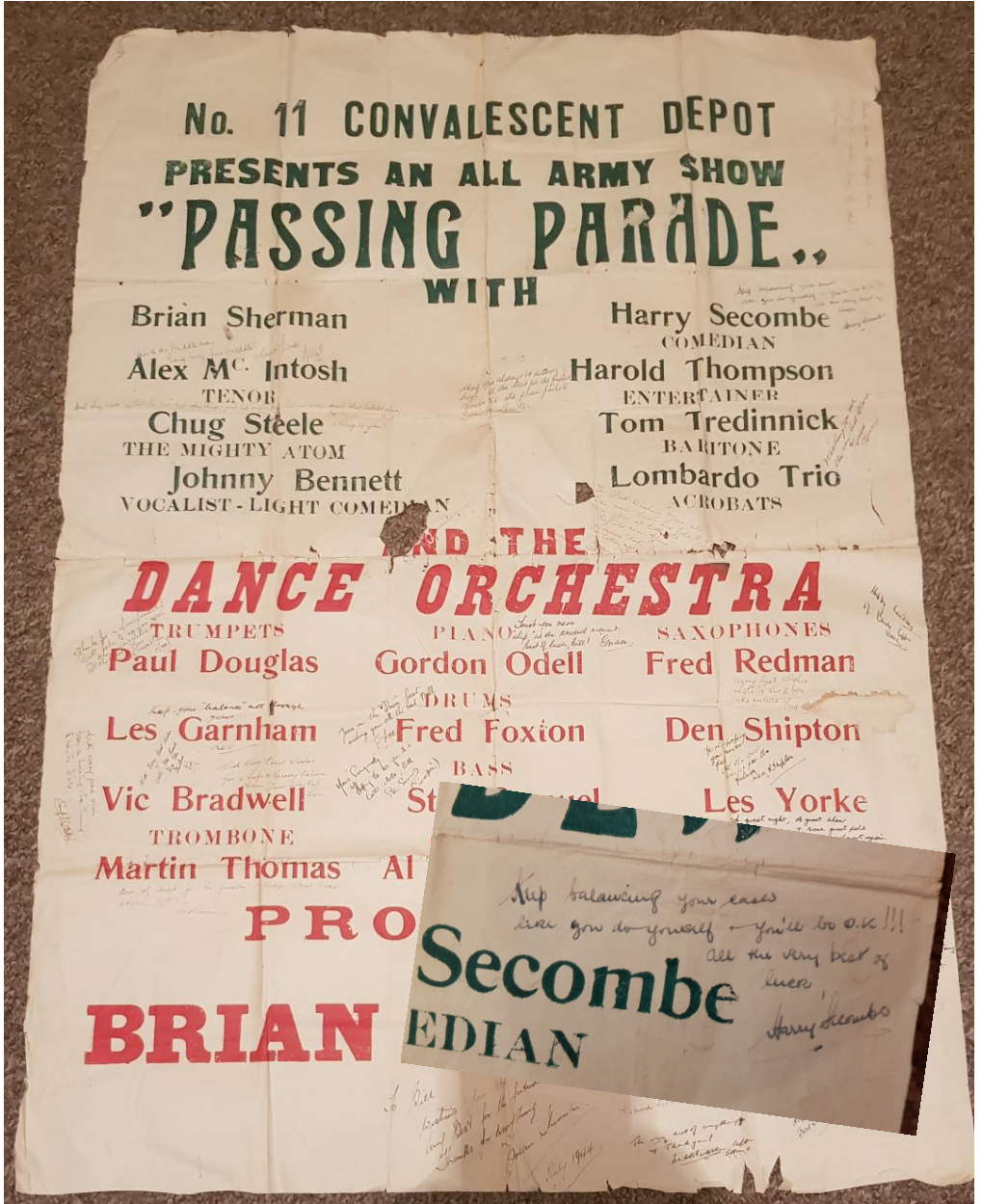
Dick Baker, 3282 Sunset
Terrace, Auburn, CA 95602,
USA goon@dickbaker.org

Hi there.

I acquired this lovely poster dated 1944, advertising a show starring Harry Secombe at an Italian wartime camp.

Every player has signed it including Harry. Also I have a letter from Harry remembering the event. Obtained at a boot sale believe it or not, in Clacton, Essex.

Best regards, Dean Smith



NEWSLETTER BINDERS FOR SALE

There aren't many of these left. They take about five years' worth of the A5 magazines each, including when they used to be called Newsletters.

£7 each including p&p

Please send an email to Adrian,
the guardian of the binders:
abriggs99@live.co.uk



2021 Christmas Answers

1. ALICE the Goon
2. TELEGOONS
3. TYLER Adams
4. Marcel STELLMAN
5. Bill TITCOMBE
6. John ANTROBUS
7. POTTY TIME
8. GOONREEL

9-12: SECOMBE, MILLIGAN, BENTINE, SELLERS

Absolutely festooned with competition entries we were this year. It was encouraging to receive so many. So much so, that next year maybe I'll just stick a pin in the membership list and hand out a prize.

So, thank you again for entering, I honestly didn't know we had that many members! If only I'd charged a pound entry fee! I could have sailed my house to, well, where it is now?

AND THE TWO WINNERS ARE: top scorers, picked out of a tea cup: members:
.....
Ian Kempe and John Collison