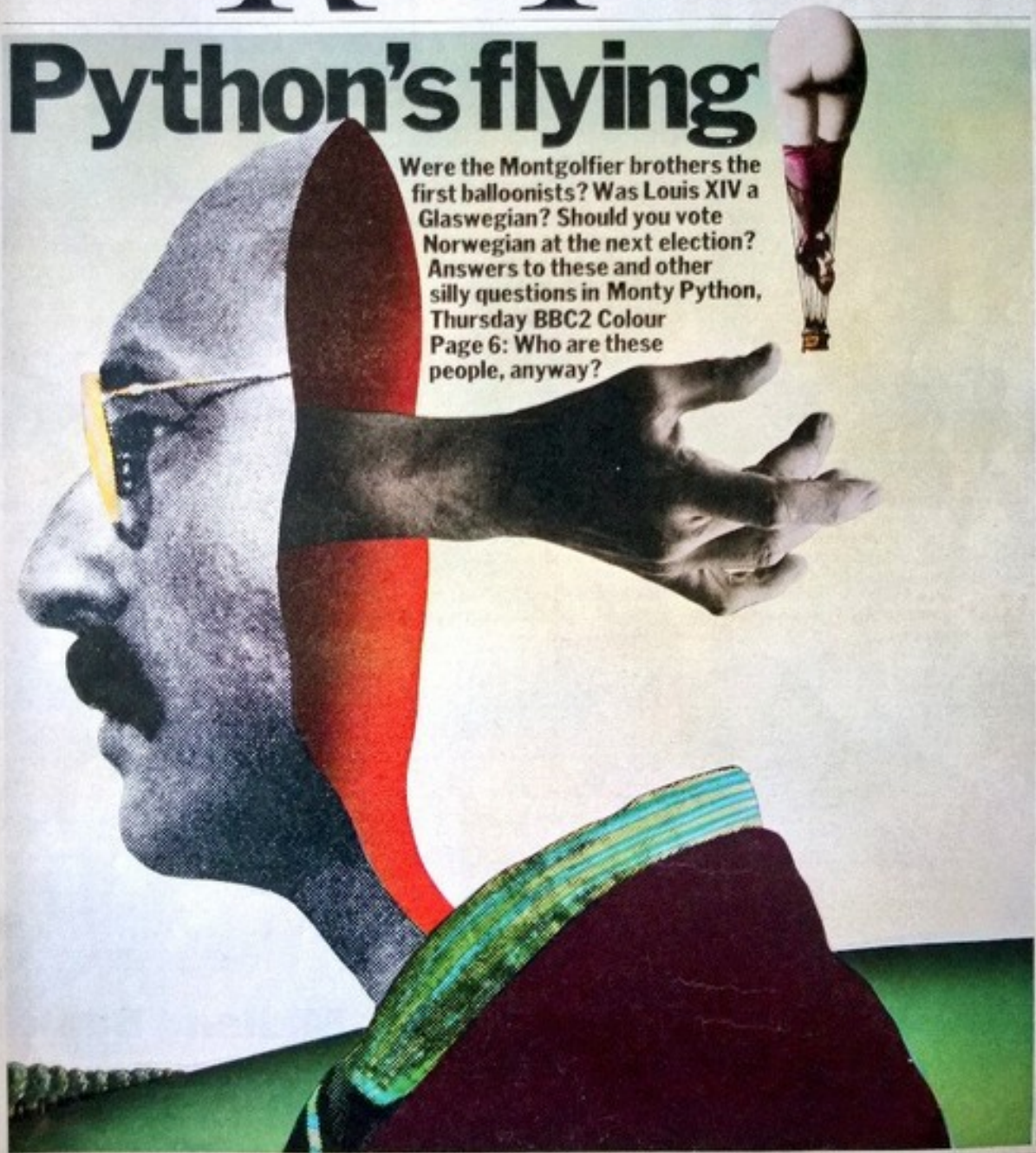


WOODS
NORTH WEST BBC Radio Merseyside
26 October-1 November 1974 Price 8p

Radio Times

Python's flying

Were the Montgolfier brothers the first balloonists? Was Louis XIV a Glaswegian? Should you vote Norwegian at the next election? Answers to these and other silly questions in Monty Python, Thursday BBC2 Colour Page 6: Who are these people, anyway?



Now for something entirely similar

Cover Story Pull up your comfy chair! Switch on the telly! Cover the screen with the budgie's night curtain! They're back! The zany, anarchic, subversive etc etc *Python* returns as anarchic, subversive etc etc as ever, on Thursday. Russell Miller reveals the story of the men behind the madness

Monty Python
Thursday 9.0 pm
BBC2 Colour

THIS WEEK Monty Python takes to the air with a moving historical study entitled 'The Golden Age of Ballooning,' interspersed with a party political broadcast on behalf of the Norwegian Party.

No one will be watching the show with more interest than the writers and performers: Graham Chapman, Terry Gilliam, Terry Jones, Eric Idle and Mike Palin. If previous experience is anything to go by, they will all be laughing immoderately at their antics, for it is a cornerstone of Python humour that the authors themselves think it is funny. Chapman has been known to fall off his chair while watching it.



I had a hunch that together they would have an effect on each other
BARRY TOOK

The new series is the first without John Cleese, he of the tombstone face. Physically and emotionally exhausted by the strain of too many silly walks, he wanted more opportunity to work independently. His is the first defection since the team was put together in 1969 at the instigation of BBC comedy adviser, Barry Took.

'I had been watching them in two commercial television shows,' Took explained. 'Chapman and Cleese were in *At Last, The 1948 Show* and Palin, Idle, Jones and Gilliam's graphics were in *Do Not Adjust*

Your Set. At the time, I felt that television comedy was getting a bit flat-footed and I just had a hunch that by getting them together and giving them their heads they would have an effect on each other.'

In fact, with the exception of Gilliam, it was almost inevitable that, in the end, they should work together. All of them were at Oxford or Cambridge at the same time, along with people like Bill Oddie, Tim Brooke-Taylor and Graeme Garden, later to become better known as the Goodies. It was a vintage period for inventive and creative humour which has overshadowed all undergraduate revue ever since.



Spike showed us there was no need to think in terms of sketches
TERRY JONES

While the leading Oxbridge writer/performers were ostensibly studying for their degrees, few of them had any intention of pursuing careers outside entertainment. So this little nucleus of academics and qualified doctors and lawyers drifted quite naturally into the world of television and the theatre, their paths constantly criss-crossing via programmes like *The Frost Report*, *I'm Sorry, I'll Read That Again* and *Do Not Adjust Your Set*.

A genre had been established, but it was still limited by the strictures of traditional comedy: three-minute sketches, punch lines and quickies. It was Spike Milligan who showed them the way out of the rut.

Terry Jones explains: 'Right at the beginning, while we were still trying to think of a format, Spike did a BBC2 series called *Q5*. He broke up the rigid forms of comedy and showed us there was no need to think in terms of sketches and punchlines.'

'Watching these shows we suddenly realised we had been writing in complete clichés. What he was doing to comedy was amazing and so from that moment we started breaking out of the traps.'

It took them about two

weeks to think of a title. 'Flying circus' came first and Mike Palin suggested it should be called 'Gwen Dibley's Flying Circus.' Gwen Dibley is a pianist who once played in an afternoon concert given by the Shropshire Townswomen's Guild and Mike thought it would be nice if she had her own television show. But then, after much agonising, someone said: 'What about Python?' and 'Monty' was immediately suggested as the first name.

Python humour has been variously described as insane, surreal, anarchic, subversive, disgusting, violent, anachronistic, sexually-obsessed, offensive and zany. They are more likely to describe it as silly.

'As soon as you start to try and analyse,' says Jones, 'ask why it works, why it doesn't work, you can't do it any more. The only reason for Python is to be funny. I suppose if you have a consistent outlook and point of view, your attitudes must come over even if you are writing nonsense, but there is certainly no conscious effort to put over a message.'

The Python team operates very much as a comedy commune. When they start work on a new series, all of them generate ideas, initially either working alone or in pairs. This material is offered up for consideration at rowdy production meetings, where a great deal is discarded or radically changed and new ideas injected. From these sessions the final scripts emerge.



As long as we are still laughing at rehearsals then it stays
IAN MACNAUGHTON

Producer Ian MacNaughton (who also produced Milligan's *Q5* series) says: 'As long as we are still laughing during rehearsal then it stays. If we stop laughing, it gets cut.'

Python's compelling visual image owes much to the macabre, Magritte-like animated cartoons contributed by Terry Gilliam, the only non-Oxbridge member of the team. Gilliam, an American, has lived in

Britain for seven years. He became involved with Oxbridge surreal comedy after meeting John Cleese.

His first contributions were to *Do Not Adjust Your Set* and a forgettable series called *We Have Ways of Making You Laugh*. They didn't, except for an amazing animated film by Gilliam linking all Jimmy Young's terrible puns.

Unlike other members of Python, Terry is pessimistic about the future. Success, he feels, is threatening the enthusiasm that they had in the early days.

'It's not quite as much fun as it used to be and that really worries me. What was nice at the beginning - and I think it really communicated - was that we were all really enjoying it. Now it is getting a bit like work. I'm sure everyone feels this, although they may not admit it.'



I think we have avoided the pitfall of comedians of wanting to be loved
GRAHAM CHAPMAN

Graham Chapman, certainly doesn't admit it. A qualified doctor, he has never practised except recently when he acted as unit doctor during the filming of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. 'Actually,' he admitted, 'all I had to do was dispense contraceptive pills to the girls when they realised we were away five weeks instead of four.'

Despite the growth of the Monty Python industry into films, books and records, as well as television series, he still gets a great deal of pleasure out of being involved.

'I think we have avoided that pitfall of all comedians of wanting to be loved. In a sense we want to avoid popularity. All we are trying to do is to be funny.'

'As far as the BBC is concerned I think we have been rather successful. They have given us a tin shed in the car park for a production office. Well, that's fine. If they thought we were better we would probably be lost.'



The silly heroines of the new Python series, thinly disguised and looking pleased to be back: top left, Mike Palin, right, Eric Idle, front left, Terry Jones and, right, Graham Chapman who is known to have fallen from his chair while viewing Python sillinesses

RADIO TIMES DATED 24 OCTOBER 1974

Radio4



'As I've got two little boys, I wanted to look behind the scene at Play School,' says Diana Walls (left). Reporter for a Day. 'It was all very efficient.' 1.45 pm

285, 330, 434m
and VHF: see page 47

Time: GTS on the hour 7.0 am-7.0 pm 18.0

6.20 am News

6.20 Farming Today
6.40 Prayer for the Day
FM JOHN HARRINGTON, 6.7

6.45 Today

Introduced by John Timpson and Barry Norman including at 6.50 and 7.30 medium wave only Travel news, What's on, and (6.50 only) Keep Fit: Weather and programme news at 6.55 and 7.55. At 7.4 and 8.4

News

and more of Today with Sportsdesk at 7.25 and 8.25. Today's Papers at 7.35 and 8.35; and Thought for the Day 7.45-7.50.

8.45

Yesterday in Parliament

9.0 News

9.5

These You Have Loved
medium wave only
(Saturday's broadcast) 1

10.0 News

medium wave only

10.5

From Our Own Correspondent

medium wave only
BBC correspondents throughout the world report on the issues they live in.
(Next edition: Sat, 9.3 am)

10.30

Daily Service

MON. p. 17. Jesus, stand among us (BBC 18.00); Psalm 111; 2 Peter 2, vv 8-14 (BBC); Jesus, good above all other (BBC 18.20)

10.45

Morning Story

medium wave only
Bitter Chocolate
by MARY ELLEN CALVERT
Read by Betty Malherbe
Fanny wants to get rid of her step-mother. Then the cousin comes to tea, and she sees her big chance.
Producer CLARA BENNETT (Birmingham)

11.0 News

medium wave only

11.5

If you think you've got Problems...!
medium wave only
(Sunday's broadcast) 1

11.50

Hall of Fame

medium wave only
A chance to hear again some favourite entertainers of a few years ago.
Suzette Tarré
Yes, it's me, Suzette
Series compiled by
BOWEN TAYLOR

12.0 News

12.2 pm

You and Yours

Presenter Nancy Wise
Shopping Basket: MARGARET reviews reports on the way prices have changed, with some of the reasons why, and where the bargains will be at the weekend.

12.27 Stereo

My Story!

Diana Powell and Frank Muir challenge Anne Scott-James and Denis Norden
(Tuesday's broadcast) 1
12.55 medium wave only
Weather, programme news

1.0

The World at One: News

and voices and topics in and behind the headlines introduced by William Hardcastle

1.30

The Archers

(Wednesday's broadcast) 1

1.45

Woman's Hour

medium wave only from 1.8
Presenter Sue Macgregor
Talk Till Two.
1.8-2.2 News
What We Wear: SILVER MORGAN talks to young mothers about their clothes and how they budget for them.
Reporter for a Day: Woman's Hour listener MRS DIANA WALLS visits the Play School studio at BBC Television Centre.
JOHN PULLER reads
The Jacaranda Tree (3)
by R. S. BATES

2.45

Listen with Mother

medium wave only
Story: Mr Williams the Window Cleaner by JOHN HARRINGTON
Presenters
GLADYS WINTER and VONNY ALTHEA
Scripts by RICHARD KIRBY
Producer JENNY WINTER
Book: Listen with Mother Stories, 12.50, from bookshops

3.0 News

3.5 Stereo

Afternoon Theatre

The Veil of Menander
by JOHN TARRANT
(Wednesday's broadcast) 1

3.50

Jack de Manio Precisely

The life and times of a broadcaster about town
Producer MICHAEL RAPER
1.4-4.5 News

4.35

Story Time

Conscience of the King
by ALAN BROWN
Read by DAVID COOK
4.40-4.55. My brother
wrote with my pen

5.0

PM Reports

The news magazine, presented by William Hardcastle and PM's reporting team
Hardcastle in Vision: Fri 5.00-5.30 medium wave only
Financial Report
6.35 Weather, programme news

6.0 News

6.15

Many a Slip

Twice Isabel Barnett Eleanor Summerfield and David Nixon, Paul Jennings
Three twisters from Steve Kane in the chair Ray Flemer
(Tuesday's broadcast) 1

6.45

The Archers

Written by NICKY WALKER
(Repeated: Friday, 1.30 pm)
Cast for the week:
Dan Archer... MICHAEL HARRINGTON
Doris Archer... GREN HENRYMAN
Peggy Archer... JANE SPENCER
Jennifer Nacy... ANGELA PIPER
Tony Archer... COLIN KIPP
Philip Archer... NORMAN FAIRING
Jill Archer... PATRICIA CHURCH
Shula Archer... JUNE MANNETT
Tom Forrester... BOB ARNOLD
Peter Stevens... ANTHONY EMER
Carol Treggarn... JANE CULLEN
Woodley... FRANK GILBERT-JONES
Sis Perks... ALAN SEVERANCE
Polly Perks... RILEY NEWCOMBE
Nora McAuley... JULIA MAIR
Maurice Woodford... GEORGE WOOLLEY
Neil Carter... BRIAN BERTLEY
Adamson... MICHAEL HARRINGTON
George Barford... CHARLES ROBERTS
Edna Barford... FRANKLIN SHAW
Mike Tucker... TERRY MULLOY
Betty Tucker... FEMMA CRISP
Pat Lewis... PATRICIA GALLAGHER
Dave Escott... JAMES GILLINGHAM
Eric Selwyn... JOHN CONYON

7.0

News Desk

Kath Hindell presenting world news and views

7.30

Any Answers?

A selection of listeners' letters continuing the discussion in last Friday's Any Questions? Introduced by DAVID JACOBS
Producer BOB KATWANE
(Repeated: Friday, 4.5 pm)
Write to Any Answers?, BBC, Bristol BS8 2LS



How could Pierre Larcher and Raymond Rolland (above) pull off one outrageously audacious crime and retire on the proceeds? They found the answer - kidnap: 8.0 pm

8.0 New series

The Kidnappers

A series of four dramatizations of 19th-century kidnappings narrated by Rod Culterth
1. The Peacock Child
'A kidnapping? You must be mad. In a devilish country like France... The Emeline I expect. They haven't abducted it yet.'
PIERRE... BRUNO BORG
RAYMOND... SEAN ARNOLD
ERIC... KIMA WILSON
Roland Peugeot... DAVID SINCLAIR
Miss Peugeot... MIRA SCHROEDER
Ing David... SEAN MCCARTHY
Police... MANNING WILSON
Nursemaid... NORMA RONALD
Written and produced by
ALAN BROWN
(Next week: The Missing Wife)

8.45

Analysis

'My Government will seek...'
A new Parliament and, in this week's Queen's Speech, an outline of the new Government's legislative intentions. To what extent do they reflect recent cross-currents and uncertainties in British politics? Analysis examines the measures proposed and assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the Ministers who will introduce them.
Presented by Ian McEwan
Producer GRVILLE HAYWARD

9.30

Kaleidoscope

Presenter Gordon Seal
Producer JOHN POWELL

10.0

The World Tonight: News

John Tusa reporting with voices and opinions from around the world

10.45

A Book at Bedtime

White Mule
by WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS
Read by PETER MARINKEN (3)

11.0

The Financial World Tonight

11.15

Today in Parliament

11.30 News

provided by Weather
11.31 Inshore forecast
11.34* Closedown

Regional News

VHF only
and weather throughout the day 6.50-6.55 and 7.50-7.55 am;
11.55-1.4 (except London and South East) and 5.50-5.55 pm

English Regions

VHF only
6.50-6.55 am Mornings Sea West including Cinema round up
6.45-6.45 am Roundabout East Anglia including Farming Chat with BOB FIDLER

9.5 am-11 noon and 1.9 pm-1.9 For Schools

VHF only
9.5 A Service for Schools
People
(Tuesday's broadcast) 1
9.55 Material for Assembly
The Kingdom Within
9.55 Vols de France, French VI
4. L'atmosphère dans les écoles
9.55 Let's Move!
Movement and Music I
(Tuesday's broadcast) 1
10.15-10.35 Stories and Rhymes
Poetry: The Colour Dance
10.45 Histoires de France
French V: 4. La capitale des Français (sv)
11.0 Time and Tune, Turpitude and the Tree House (4)
11.30 Man, 4: Survival on Dry Land. Narrator BARRY FOSTER
11.40-12.0 Our Changing World
Continental Britain
1.0 Living Language
Keith Goodhart's Drummer
Delany's Jirapence
1.20 Movement and Music II
(Monday's broadcast) 1
1.40 Learning about Life
4. Why don't you grow up?

World Service

BBC World Service is on the air 24 hours a day using both medium and short wavebands. For listeners in Western Europe news and current affairs schedules include World News on the hour at midnight, 0100-0700 (extended until 0400 and 0600), 1200, 1800-1900, 2200 and 2300. Radio Newswest at 0015 and 1315. Twenty-Four Hours (Mon-Fri) at 0500 and 0700. (All times GMT: add 1 hour for CET.)
These programmes are transmitted on medium wavebands: 216m (1800-1900), 322m (1200-1300), 371m (1800-1900) or 464m (0400-0500); on short wave, in the 16, 19, 25, 31, 41 or 49 metre bands.
Further information from External Broadcasting Audience Research, BBC, PO Box 16, Bush House, Strand, London WC1B 4PN