

# As Time Goes By

*Older does not necessarily mean wiser – especially in affairs of the heart*

Oscar-winning actress Dame Judi Dench stars with distinguished actor Geoffrey Palmer in an evergreen comedy by Bob Larbey, one of Britain's finest, funniest and most successful scriptwriters.

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

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

Don't expect them to jump into each other's arms; Third Age romance takes time and older doesn't always mean wiser. There are also problems which wouldn't even have occurred to their younger selves: Are they too old and set in their ways? Can they live with each other's irritating habits? Is marriage really necessary at their age...?

Meanwhile, those around them make life even more complicated. Both Judith and Jean's personal assistant, Sandy (**Jenny Funnell**), have chaotic love lives. And, after briefly fancying Jean, Lionel's young publisher, Alistair Deacon (**Philip Bretherton**), turns his amorous attentions to Judith.

After a series of misunderstandings, Jean and Lionel finally tie the knot – but the story doesn't end there. What with the publication and American mini-series of Lionel's book, Jean's agency, their country house and the antics of Lionel's father Rocky (**Frank Middlemass**) and his wife Madge (**Joan Sims**), Mrs Bale (**Janet Henfrey**) and Lol Ferris (**Tim Wylton**) to distract them, life is never dull.

Series 9 ties up all the loose ends. Alistair and Judith finally decide to tie the knot and are planning a country wedding. Jean's sister-in-law Penny (**Moyra Fraser**) and husband Stephen (**Paul Chapman**) may not make the wedding as he is due to receive an OBE for services to dentistry; and Sandy is wondering whether she will accompany her boyfriend Harry to Canada on his attachment as a Mountie. Then, after all the fun and games are over, Jean and Lionel sit back and reminisce about old times in a 60-minute special.

**Bob Larbey** is best known for his partnership with John Esmonde, which produced the classic comedies *The Good Life*, *Brush Strokes* and *Ever Decreasing Circles*. He also wrote *A Fine Romance*, which also starred Judi Dench.

**Voice of the Listener & Viewer Awards Best TV Individual Contribution 1996: Judi Dench**

"[Dame Judi and Geoffrey Palmer] provide an acting masterclass in gentle comedy. The pair are so natural together it is hard to believe they are not man and wife in real life." **Mirror**

"You can almost cut the air with their impeccable timing." **Time Out**

Starring  
**Judi Dench**  
(*Shakespeare in Love*, *Mrs Brown, Iris*, Bond movies, *The Shipping News*, *Chocolate*)  
**Geoffrey Palmer**  
(*Butterflies*, *Reginald Perrin*, *Mrs Brown*, *Tomorrow Never Dies*)

Written by **Bob Larbey**

Producer/Director **Sydney Lotterby**  
(*Porridge*, *Yes Minister*, *May To December*)

A Theatre of Comedy production for the BBC in association with DLT Entertainment UK Ltd

**Entertainment**

**UK TX Date:** 12.01.92

**64 x 30 & 1 x 60 minutes**

**BBC** Worldwide

# As Time SERIES 9 Goes By

## Contents

Title Page  
Introduction  
Cast List  
Production Credits  
Cast Biographies  
Production Biographies  
Episode Synopses  
Ratings  
What The Papers Say

**Entertainment**

4 x 30 & 1 x 60 minutes

**BBC** Worldwide

# As Time SERIES 9 Goes By

Older doesn't necessarily mean wiser – especially in affairs of the heart

starring

**Judi Dench and Geoffrey Palmer**

**Entertainment**

4 x 30 & 1 x 60 minutes

**BBC** Worldwide

# As Time SERIES 9 Goes By

## Introduction

Oscar-winning actress Dame Judi Dench and Geoffrey Palmer star in the final series of this gentle comedy romance by Bob Larbey, one of Britain's finest, funniest and most successful screenwriters.

A lot has happened since Jean and Lionel rekindled their love after meeting up again after 38 years. They have been happily married for some time now. Jean is now retired (she prefers to think of it as "semi-retired") from her secretarial agency, which is now run by her daughter, Judith, and secretary, Sandy.

Lionel has also retired. He once wrote a book on his life in Kenya, which was not exactly a best-seller, although the publisher, Alistair Deacon, became a regular visitor to the Hardcastle household. Now a family friend, Alistair has an amazing knack of being able to fix anything and everything through his contacts, particularly his mobile phone.

Judith and Sandy have the most chaotic of love lives. Judith has an on/off affair with Alistair and Sandy's relationship with her policeman boyfriend, Harry, is just as fraught. However, in this series everything looks like being resolved at long last.

After all the fun and games are over, Jean and Lionel sit back and reminisce about old times and various events over the past few years in a 60-minute special.

**Entertainment**

4 x 30 & 1 x 60 minutes



# As Time SERIES 9 Goes By

## Regular Cast

Jean .....	<b>Judi Dench</b>
Lionel .....	<b>Geoffrey Palmer</b>
Judith .....	<b>Moira Brooker</b>
Sandy .....	<b>Jenny Funnell</b>
Alistair .....	<b>Philip Bretherton</b>
Harry .....	<b>David Michaels</b> ( <i>Heartbeat</i> )
Penny .....	<b>Moyra Fraser</b>
Simon .....	<b>Paul Chapman</b> ( <i>Colditz, The Hello Goodbye Man, Cuts</i> )
Rocky .....	<b>Frank Middlemass</b> ( <i>Heartbeat, Miss Marple: A Caribbean Mystery</i> )
Mrs Bale .....	<b>Janet Henfrey</b> ( <i>I Was A Rat</i> )
Lol Ferris .....	<b>Tim Wylton</b> ( <i>My Hero, Mirrorball, Fun At The Funeral Parlour, Lucky Jim</i> )

## Production Credits

Written by  
**Bob Larbey**

Producer/Director  
**Sydney Lotterby**

A Theatre of Comedy production for the BBC in association with DLT Entertainment UK Ltd

**Entertainment**

**4 x 30 & 1 x 60 minutes**

**BBC** Worldwide

# As Time SERIES 9 Goes By

## Cast Biographies

### Dame Judi Dench (Jean)

Dame Judi is one of Britain's most distinguished actresses. She was born in York, England in 1934 and studied at Mount School, York and the Central School of Dramatic Art in London. She made her stage debut as Ophelia in the Old Vic Company's Liverpool production of *Hamlet* in 1957.

**1960s/70s:** In 1961, she joined the Royal Shakespeare Company and swiftly made her mark as a classical actress. Her stage career has been long and successful. She has starred in and directed many prestigious productions. Early awards include a SWET Best Actress for *Macbeth* and SWET, Evening Standard, Plays & Players and Variety Club Awards for *Juno and the Paycock*. Her first film was *The Third Secret* in 1964, followed by *A Study in Terror*, *Four in The Morning* (British Film Academy Award for Most Promising Newcomer) and *Days to Come*. TV appearances from this period include *Talking To A Stranger* with Maurice Denham (Guild of Television Directors Best Actress Award) and the *Morecambe & Wise Show* (1969). During the 1970s, she spent most of her time raising a family and making stage appearances with the RSC, however she did make two films – *Luther* and *Dead Cert* – and three TV films: *The Comedy of Errors*, *On Giant's Shoulders* and *Macbeth*.

**1980s:** In 1980, she appeared in the TV mini-series *Love in a Cold Climate*, but it was in 1981 that Dame Judi really became known to British audiences: as Laura in the popular Bob Larbey comedy, *A Fine Romance*, which co-starred her husband, Michael Williams. Her performance in this series earned her a BAFTA Best TV Actress Award. Other TV appearances from this period include *Saigon: Year of the Cat*, *The Browning Version*, *Mr and Mrs Edgehill* (ACE Best Actress Award), *Ghosts*, *Behaving Badly* and *Can You Hear Me Thinking?* And, on film, *Wetherby* with Ian Holm and Vanessa Redgrave, *84 Charing Cross Road* with Anthony Hopkins, *A Room with a View* (BAFTA Best Supporting Actress), *A Handful of Dust* (BAFTA Best Supporting Actress), Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V* and *Jack and Sarah*.

**1990s and beyond:** International superstardom came in the 1990s when Dame Judi landed the role of Pierce Brosnan's boss M in the Bond film, *Goldeneye*. This was followed by a remarkable performance as a grieving Queen Victoria in the film *Mrs Brown*, for which she won Best Actress awards from Golden Globe, BAFTA, Scottish BAFTA, London Film Critics and Screen Actors' Guild, New York, and also an Academy Award nomination. A year later she won her first Oscar, for Best Actress in a Supporting Role as Queen Elizabeth I in *Shakespeare in Love*, for which she also received a Best Supporting Actress BAFTA. Other awards include Rothermere Award for Lifetime Achievement (1997) and the Critics' Circle Award for Outstanding Achievement (1998). Dame Judi reprises her role as M in the Bond films *Tomorrow Never Dies*, *The World is Not Enough* and *Die Another Day*. Other recent work includes the acclaimed BBC comedy drama *The Last of the Blonde Bombshells*, Zeffirelli's *Tea with Mussolini*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Chocolat*, *The Shipping News* and *Iris*, for which she won a BAFTA and London Film Critics Award, in addition to nominations for an Academy Award, a Golden Globe, a Golden Satellite and a Screen Actors Guild award.

In 1970, Judi was awarded the Order of the British Empire. She was created Dame of the British Empire in 1988. She has also been awarded Honorary Doctorates by the Universities of Birmingham, Loughborough, Warwick, York, the Open University and Oxford. She was married to the late actor Michael Williams and has one daughter, Finty.

**Entertainment**

**4 x 30 & 1 x 60 minutes**

**BBC** Worldwide

# As Time SERIES 9 Goes By

## Cast Biographies

### Geoffrey Palmer (Lionel)

Geoffrey Palmer has a distinctive face that most viewers will recognise. Born in 1927, he was educated at Highgate School, London. He has a distinguished stage career, but is best known for his work in such classic television comedies as *The Fall & Rise Of Reginald Perrin* (he played Reggie's military-mad brother), *Butterflies* (as Wendy Craig's husband) and *Whoops Apocalypse*. Other TV credits include *Fairly Secret Army*, *The Last Song*, *Hot Metal* and *Executive Stress* (opposite Penelope Keith). He also played the exasperated Dr Price in the *Fawlty Towers* episode, *The Kipper and the Corpse*. On film he can be seen in *O Lucky Man!*, *The Honorary Consul*, *Clockwise*, *A Fish Called Wanda*, *The Madness of King George*, *Mrs Brown*, *Tomorrow Never Dies* and *Anna and the King*.

### Moira Brooker (Judith)

Moira starred in the BBC drama *Blood and Water* and has also appeared as Mrs Phyllis Lucas in three of the Central TV series, *Out of Sight*.

### Jenny Funnell (Sandy)

Jenny's other television credits include the Emmy-winning *Norbert Smith – a Life*, the BBC Children's TV series *Monster TV* and guest appearances in *Drop the Dead Donkey* and *Boon*.

### Philip Bretherton (Alistair)

Philip studied English and Drama at Manchester University. His first professional stage appearance was in 1975 at the Edinburgh Festival in *Golden Oldie*, and he has since appeared in numerous theatrical productions both in Britain and Germany. On television, he played Robert Weston in *Coronation Street* in 1990/9, and also appears intermittently as Duffy's husband in the long-running BBC hospital series *Casualty*. Other TV credits include Detective Inspector Campbell in the BBC's *Miss Marple* story *At Bertram's Hotel*, detective Don Wright in the BBC drama series *The Paradise Club*, and Eric 'Rico' Finnigan in the soap *Hollyoaks*. He can also be seen in the movie *Cry Freedom*, as Major Boshoff.

Entertainment

4 x 30 & 1 x 60 minutes

**BBC** Worldwide

# As Time SERIES 9 Goes By

## Production Biographies

### Bob Larbey (Writer)

When it comes to writing comedy, Bob Larbey is among the greats, especially when teamed up with his long-term writing partner, John Esmonde. It all began in 1966 with *Room at the Bottom*, a vehicle for Kenneth Connor which lasted just the one series. *Please, Sir!* followed and was a fantastic success, lasting four series and spawning a feature film starring Sidney Poitier and a three series of a sequel, *The Fenn Street Gang*. Their next comedy, set in the Royal Air Force, starred Robert Lindsay in *Get Some In!* which ran for five series. Next came the series which guaranteed their place in the comedy firmament. *The Good Life*, starring Richard Briers, Penelope Keith, Felicity Kendal and Paul Eddington, remains one of the classic comedies of television and is still a great favourite with viewers more than 25 years after it was made. More hit comedies followed: *Ever Decreasing Circles* (also starring Richard Briers) and *Brush Strokes*, which ran for five series. *Hope It Rains* and *Mulberry* were darker comedies, but still had a loyal following.

Bob Larbey has also had success with several solo projects. *A Fine Romance*, starring Judi Dench with her husband, Michael Williams, ran for several years. He wrote the screenplays for several episodes of the popular drama, *The Darling Buds of May*. *On The Up* starred Dennis Waterman, Guy Siner and Joan Sims. *Down To Earth* starred Richard Briers. And, of course, there are eight series of *As Time Goes By*.

### Sydney Lotterby (Producer/Director)

Since 1969, Sydney Lotterby has been either a producer or director on most of the classic BBC comedies. He was there at the birth of *Porridge* and *Going Straight*, *Yes Minister* and *Yes Prime Minister*, Alan Bennett's *On The Margin*, *The Liver Birds*, *Ever Decreasing Circles* and *Open All Hours*. He has directed four series of *Last of the Summer Wine*. He did the final series of *Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em*. He took over on *Butterflies*. Other credits include *Up Pompeii*, *Brush Strokes*, *May To December*. He has won four BAFTAs for comedy, been nominated for 11 more, and in 1994 was appointed OBE for services to television.

Entertainment

4 x 30 & 1 x 60 minutes



# As Time SERIES 9 Goes By

## Production Notes

*As Time Goes By* is truly an international success. Sixty-five dedicated fans recently flew over from the USA and Canada especially for one of the recordings of the final series at BBC Television Centre in London.

The series is a huge ratings winner in the US, and the fans who jetted across the Atlantic ranged from 16 to 87 years of age, and come from all over the States, from Toronto to Los Angeles, and Chicago to Denver.

The group met through a website dedicated to the hit show and together arranged to fly to the UK. American producers DLT Entertainment worked with the BBC to arrange studio tickets, plus a question-and-answer session and photograph with the cast following the recording. The internet site had been flooded with questions from fans who couldn't make it over for the recording, including many from Geoffrey Palmer's huge female fan base.

Before the recording, the group held an *As Time Goes By* dinner in central London where they played a trivia quiz based on the show. However, they didn't indulge in the *As Time Goes By* drinking game, made up by US fans and currently sweeping across American colleges.

Avid viewers have devised a ritual in which they listen out for a catchphrase, or an oft-repeated phrase – just two of the many favourites are “custard tarts” (a favourite delicacy for Lionel) or “Hi, Li”, (Alistair's usual greeting to Lionel). When dedicated viewers hear the phrase, they immediately celebrate by having a drink. Whether or not they remember the end of that particular episode is not documented.

**Entertainment**

**4 x 30 & 1 x 60 minutes**

**BBC** Worldwide

# As Time SERIES 9 Goes By

## Episode Synopses

### Episode One

Sandy's policeman boyfriend, Harry, calls at the house to tell Sandy some important news. Jean tries desperately to get it out of him, but isn't supported by Lionel, who keeps changing the subject. Meanwhile, Alistair – who has had dates with both girls in the household – suddenly realises he wants Judith and that he should settle down. But his business is booming, so which will come first – work or romance? Meanwhile, Sandy is discovering Harry's news. He has been promoted to Detective Sergeant and has been offered an attachment to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. But though he is making plans for his new life, it is beginning to look as if she may not be part of it.

### Episode Two

Alistair has finally proposed marriage to Judith and has been accepted. Jean is naturally delighted for her daughter and can't wait to make plans for the wedding. Needless to say, there are some complications when realisation strikes confirmed bachelor Alistair, while Judith has her own plans for a country wedding. Jean's sister-in-law Penny and her long-suffering husband Stephen have some news of their own which may prevent them from attending the wedding – he is due to receive an OBE for his services to dentistry. Meanwhile, Lionel's father Rocky and Mrs Bale prepare for the big event in the village.

### Episode Three

As the day of Judith and Alistair's wedding approaches, the women are putting the final touches to their plans. A minor hitch occurs when the best man breaks his leg, so Rocky is asked to do the honours instead. Alistair is still being emotional while Jean is now working hard to pair Harry off with Sandy. The day of the country wedding finally arrives and turns out to be a big success – with a little help from Rocky, Lol and Mrs Bale.

### Episode Four

With Judith and Alistair away on their honeymoon, the house seems very empty to Jean and Lionel. Despite all Jean and Sandy's efforts, Harry has still not proposed, so Jean is considering asking Sandy to take over as office manager at the secretarial agency. To Lionel's disapproval, she also befriends a young back-packer who they find camping out on their doorstep. However, all ends well as Harry finally sees sense and whisks Sandy off with him to Canada, leaving Jean and Lionel alone at last.

### Sixty Minute Special

It has been several years since Jean and Lionel met up again, 38 years after their youthful romance, and decided to give love another chance. It is also several years since they have had the house to themselves – what with Judith and Sandy's comings and goings. But now they have the leisure to look back and remember all those odd incidents and misunderstandings that have kept them (and us) amused as time went by.

**Entertainment**

**4 x 30 & 1 x 60 minutes**



# As Time SERIES 9 Goes By

## Ratings\*

Episode	UK Txn	Channel	Time On	Viewers	Audience Share
1	07.07.02	BBC1	20.30	5.2 million	22.4%
2	14.07.02	BBC1	20.30		
3	21.07.02	BBC1	20.30		
4	28.07.02	BBC1	20.30		
Special	04..08.02	BBC1	20.30		

\* overnight figures (to be confirmed)

## What the Papers Say

"Much of this show's popularity can be attributed to the deft performances, but its old-fashioned style of humour plays a large part, too. It doesn't deliver a belly laugh a second, nor does it have the repetitive setup/punchline rhythm of a US sitcom, but it does leave viewers with smiles on their faces and warm feelings in their hearts." **Radio Times**

## Awards

Voice of the Listener & Viewer Awards 1996

**Best TV Individual Contribution – Judi Dench**

BAFTA 1998

**Nomination: Best Comedy Performance – Judi Dench**

Entertainment

4 x 30 & 1 x 60 minutes

**BBC** Worldwide

# As Time SERIES 9 Goes By

## Press Feature

**Radio Times**  
**6-12 July 2002**

Time to say goodbye

One of television's best-loved couples are to split up, despite their popularity across the pond

She's an Oscar-winning international film star and a huge Broadway hit – yet in the USA, Judi Dench is best known as the star of a whimsical BBC sitcom. There is even an *As Time Goes By* fan club, 60 members of which flew over to watch the ninth and last series, which begins this week, being filmed at TV Centre.

"It never ceases to amaze me how popular it has been over there," says Dench, who co-stars with Geoffrey Palmer in the story of childhood sweethearts Jean (dotty) and Lionel (crotchety), who rekindle their romance after a chance encounter years later, find happiness and eventually tie the knot.

"The Americans are very proprietorial about it," adds Dench. "One lady wrote to me in disgust and said, 'I'm sorry, but Jean Pargeter would never have had that quilt on her bed!' I think about that comment every time I come to make a series, and it still makes me laugh."

The series is set to bow out with a big wedding, as Jean's twice-married daughter Judith (Moirra Brooker) finally says yes to the dubious charms of Alastair Deacon (Philip Bretherton).

Dench has no time to rest on her laurels, though: she will soon be seen as M in the new Bond adventure *Die Another Day*, and as Lady Bracknell in a new film version of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Following these in the autumn will be *The Breath of Life*, a new play written by David Hare.

"It was partly my and Geoffrey's decision to call it a day on *As Time Goes By*, but writer Bob Larbey and the others agreed it was best to quit while we were ahead," Dench explains. "I suppose you could say that we actually sacked ourselves. How very silly!"

**Entertainment**

**4 x 30 & 1 x 60 minutes**