

The Insider

Volume 2, Issue 3

Your Connection to the BBC Sales Company

March 2001

Editor's Note

This issue of *The Insider* is almost an homage to the importance of writers. First, we feature an exclusive interview with Bob Larbey, co-writer of the classic *The Good Life* and writer of the long-running smash *As Time Goes By*. Also in this issue we look at another program that is very much writer-driven. *One Foot in the Grave* is a phenomenal mixture of laughter, tears, pathos, truth, and humanity all rolled into brilliant scripts by David Renwick.

Then *The Insider* visits Craggy Island and introduces you to the insanity of *Father Ted*. Despite the perfection of the show's cast and direction, kudos must go to the team of Graham Linehan and Arthur Mathews for providing the brilliantly surreal situations and words.

I feel it's important to acknowledge the contribution of writers because as a general rule they are highly undervalued. Without the creativity of people like Larbey, Renwick, Linehan and Mathews, our world would be a lesser place.

Also in this issue, if you've ever wanted to know more about the man behind the imperious Captain Peacock, here's your chance as *The Insider* profile features Frank Thornton, who has had the honor of appearing in not only one but two classic Britcoms: *Are You Being Served?* and *Last of the Summer Wine*. Enjoy and I'll talk to you next time.

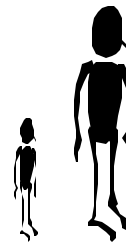
Michelle Street, Editor

Frank Thornton

Captain Peacock Struts His Stuff

If you ask me, you just can't trust those tall people. They tend to lord their height over the rest of us mere mortals with smug superiority, thinking that the air they breathe up there is somehow different.

As one of the Pythons once said: "Gosh, we're all really impressed down here." To which I add: NOT!



Like myself, the men who play little dictators such as Peacock are nearly always the ones who wouldn't dream of hurting a fly.

-Frank Thornton

A perfect example of one of those smug git tall types is Captain Stephen Peacock, chief floorwalker at Grace Brothers Department Store.

As played by Frank Thornton, Captain Peacock is the very essence of military poise and efficiency, even though his military duty wasn't exactly what could be termed dangerous. He's aching to be an executive at Grace Brothers, but has to accept the fact that he's still stuck somewhere in the middle of the pecking order.

The character of Peacock is a far cry from the man who made him a household name. In fact, Thornton once said that he was "diametrically opposed" to his most famous creation. Frank Thornton was actually born Frank Thornton Ball (now there's a name *AYBS?* fans could love) in London on January 15, 1921.

(continued on page 14)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Frank Thornton: Captain Peacock Struts His Stuff
- 2 In The News/Mailbox
- 3 The Insider Interview: Bob Larbey
- 5 The Father Ted Bible
- 7 One Foot in the Grave Comes to an End
- 9 The Red Dwarf Dictionary
- 11 The Insider Episode Guide: Keeping Up Appearances
- 13 Spotted on the Internet

The Insider Mailbox



In The News



ARTICLE REQUEST

Thanks to my wonderful PBS station I now get *The Insider* and I have to say you do a **great** job! I just started getting the magazine last quarter, and now my only wish is that it was a monthly publication.

I'm a **huge** fan of *As Time Goes By*, and even though you just did a wonderful review of season 8, I'd like to see an article about Moira Brooker. Could you possibly do a little something about her?

DJ Richard Bowie, MD

EDITOR REPLIES: Thanks for the kind words and I'll certainly see what I can come up with about Moira. In the meantime, check out our exclusive interview with *ATGB* writer Bob Larbey in this issue.

THE "INNIE" AWARDS – YOUR NOMINATIONS

I enjoyed reading your Innie awards in the winter issue of *The Insider*. I nominate Wendy Richard as Shirley Brahm on *Are You Being Served?* for the Best Cockney Accent.

Dan Lee

I enjoyed The Innies, but was disappointed not to see any characters from my favorite show, *Last of the Summer Wine*. If one is looking for real characters, they can be found in this show. They are *all* characters.

Chas. Eshelman

=====
The Insider welcomes all correspondence. Send letters via email to editor Michelle Street at bcdigest@soltec.com or by snail mail to: *The Insider*, c/o Greg Parsons, BBC Worldwide Americas, 747 3rd Avenue, New York, NY. 10017 - 2803. Include your full name and location. All letters are assumed to be for publication unless marked otherwise. **The Insider** reserves the right to edit letters for reasons of space or clarity. Let us know what you think!

The Insider, copyright 1999, 2000 by the BBC Sales Company. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without written permission. Unless otherwise indicated, all material written by Michelle Street.

The life of *As Time Goes By* star **Judi Dench** has certainly been a Dickensian best of times/worst of times situation lately. While earning kudos for her work in HBO's *The Last of the Blonde Bombshells* and another Oscar nomination for her role in the film *Chocolat*, Dame Judi suffered the devastating loss of her husband, the actor **Michael Williams**. Williams passed away in mid-January after a long battle with lung cancer. The couple met while working with the Royal Shakespeare Company and married in 1971. Their daughter, Finty, was born a year later. Williams was a well-respected actor in his own right and co-starred with his wife from 1981-1984 in the sitcom *A Fine Romance*.

John Inman suffered a severe asthma attack that caused him to be hospitalized for several days during January. Inman, who spent much of last December and January doing a season of pantomime, is now back home and reportedly resting well.

Break open the champagne, sweetie darlings, and brace yourself for another onslaught of *Absolutely Fabulous*. The **Jennifer Saunders/Joanna Lumley** sitcom will return for a fourth series with the original cast, including **Julia Sawalha, Jane Horrocks, and June Whitfield**. The quartet reunited last year to do a pilot called *Mirrorball*, which was about a down-on-her-luck theatre actress and her best friend. There was talk of an entire series being made, but instead, Saunders has decided to revive *AbFab*.

The popular **Rowan Atkinson** comedy *Mr. Bean* will also return to the small screen, but this time as an animated series. Atkinson himself will be filmed and then animators will re-create his movements for the cartoon. Atkinson will also provide the voice for the character, though as we all know Mr. Bean never says much.

While we're on the subject of **Rowan Atkinson**, don't forget that during the March PBS pledge drive many stations will be showing the marvelous *Blackadder Back and Forth*, during which Edmund and Baldrick travel through time and, well, mess things up. This 30-minute film was originally made as an attraction for London's Millennium Dome and is a definite DO NOT MISS.

The Insider Interview

Bob Larbey



A Chat with the Writer of *Good Neighbors*, *As Time Goes By*, and Many More

By Garry Berman

Bob Larbey is not a household name, but those who appreciate the finest in British comedy know his work. On his own or with his former partner John Esmonde, Larbey has created and/or written no fewer than 18 sitcoms during his career, dating back to the mid 1960s. His best and most popular series have fortunately been imported to America, and the list is impressive: *Good Neighbors* (a.k.a. *The Good Life* in the U.K), *A Fine Romance*, *The Darling Buds of May*, *Mulberry*, and most recently *As Time Goes By*. He and John Esmonde also created and wrote *Man About The House*, which became *Three's Company* here--one of the few examples of a successful American adaptation of a hit Britcom.

Larbey was born in London in 1934. His father loved the theater and aspired to be an actor, but when his children were born he went back to his job as a stage carpenter in order to support his family. He met Esmonde while in school and the pair bonded over a mutual hatred of the menial jobs they found themselves trapped in as well as a similar sense of humor. When Esmonde decided to decrease his workload and move to Spain, Larbey struck out on his own and eventually wrote *As Time Goes By*.

In an exclusive interview, he speaks with *The Insider* about his long and illustrious career.

When you sit down to create a series, is there anything in particular you strive to achieve?

I don't think we ever set out with a master plan of what we wanted to write. We just used to think of ideas that we hoped were funny, and hoped that somebody else found them funny. I think a style just naturally evolves, and I think John and I together and me singly tended to concentrate on characters, to make them character comedies as opposed to situation comedies.

I suspect you still get asked about *The Good Life* more than your other series.

That's absolutely true, yes.

What stands out most in your memory about having done that show?

I think it was a good idea. We started with the premise of somebody reaching his fortieth birthday, in this case the character [Tom Good]. People think of it as one of those milestone ages, the "Oh, God, what have I done with my life? What do I do about it?" That was the premise. Then we added the self-sufficiency, which seemed a good idea. It started slowly--bad reviews and low audiences, and then somewhere in the second series it just took off and flew. And it sort of passed into legend for some reason.

(continued on next page)

No doubt due to the cast as well as the writing.

Oh, it was a wonderful cast. I think that was a dream cast. Only Richard Briers was known as a comedy actor on television. The others were all fine actors, but mostly on the stage. They'd done television but never sitcoms. So what we got in fact were four leads, including three faces that were new to television comedy viewers, who kept saying, "where did you discover these people?"

The Queen once attended a taping of *The Good Life*. How did that come about?

I've heard various versions myself. I don't think she wrote in and asked for tickets! I think the BBC felt it would be a good idea for the Queen to actually go to a studio and see a situation comedy recorded. And rumor has it, I don't know whether it's true or not, that *The Good Life* was her favorite. We were told, panicked, then wrote what was in fact the last-ever episode we recorded.

It was one of two specials we did. We recorded it right at the end of all the others. And the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh came along and sat in the studio, and laughed, and it was wonderful. The episode was called "Anniversary," in which Tom and Barbara's house gets burgled. I remember that evening. I've never seen so many technicians in one studio. I think there were three people for each job!

I don't exaggerate to say that [during the taping of "Anniversary"] people were crying in the studio at the injustice of the Goods being robbed! When we pulled back the curtain and showed that wrecked room, the audience went "Ahh!". Tears all over the place. Nobody was smiling, but it worked extremely well.

You and John Esmonde later collaborated again with Richard Briers for *Ever Decreasing Circles*.

Yes, we always got on very well with Richard. Apart from being a very good actor, he's a very nice bloke to work with. We had quite a lot in common without ever becoming real close friends. I think we shared quite a lot with Richard. So we did get on well together and that's why we wrote *Ever Decreasing Circles*. We thought, it's time for another idea for Richard.

How did you and Esmonde write together?

We always wrote together in the same room. I've heard of pairs of writers who do scenes each and then

meet up and put them together, but that never appealed to us. We rented a series of disgusting little offices and just used to go to work--sit in the same room, talk a lot, drink a lot of coffee, and ad-lib dialogue. We used to get the story fairly straight first, and then start to ad-lib dialogue. And that was it. Ad-lib it and write it down, and try to remember what you've just been laughing at. That's the hardest part.

About ten years ago, the two of you parted ways. Was it amicable?

It was totally amicable. We were kind of headed in different directions in our personal lives. John had bought a house in Spain, and wanted to cut down on the work and spend more time there--maybe spend six months here and six months in Spain, which was fine by me. At that time, my wife and I were moving house down to the country. We couldn't sell our old house so we got a loan at the bank, which put us into debt. I phoned my agent and said what do I do about this, so she said, "You're a comedy writer, write a comedy." That's what kicked me off my writing alone. Some years afterward John and I just came naturally to the end of our writing together. The last series we tried was a series called *Down To Earth*, again with Richard Briers [and 'Allo, 'Allo! alumnus Kirsten Cooke]. Unfortunately it didn't work. We didn't write it very well I don't think, so it just ran one series.

One of your early solo projects was adapting *The Darling Buds of May* for television [starring David Jason], which was very successful.

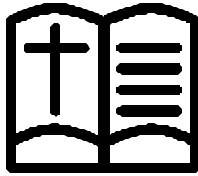
That was a *huge* success. I did the first four episodes of that. I adapted two of the books. And, without being mean spirited, I saw some things starting to happen that I didn't particularly want to happen so I quit then. But I did have the advantage of meeting Catherine Zeta-Jones, who played Mariette. I remember the stunned silence as she walked into the rehearsal room!

In the early 1980s, when the "alternative" comedians became popular, did you and writers like yourself become concerned that your style of comedy might have to give way to the more outrageous kind of things that became common on television?

No, I don't think we did. I don't want to sound like Mr. Nice, but I've always thought there's room for just about every kind of comedy. I've laughed at some of the anarchic stuff like *The Young Ones* just as much as

(continued on page 16)

The *Father Ted* Bible



Your Essential Guide to This Year's Hottest New Series

American viewers can see what has been hailed as **the** British sitcom of the 90s now that the multi-award winning *Father Ted* has reached the shores of America. Join *The Insider* for a look at this modern classic.



Chapter One

In the Beginning...

...there were two writers from Ireland named Graham Linehan and Arthur Mathews. They met while working at the venerable Irish music magazine *Hot Press* and eventually moved to London to try their hand at comedy writing.

They sold sketches to popular comedy double act Mel Smith and Griff Rhys Jones before attempting a sitcom. Their first effort was *Paris*, a period comedy which, despite a terrific cast including Alexei Sayle, Neil Morrissey (from *Men Behaving Badly*) and James Dreyfus (Constable Goody in *The Thin Blue Line*), proved to be rather tepid.

Next time out, however, they hit a bull's eye. Mathews – whose uncle is a member of the clergy – had been doing a priest character in his stand-up act and this provided the inspiration for *Father Ted*. In a textbook example of sitcom writing, he and Linehan took four disparate characters, put them in a situation where they are forced them to live together, and let them have at it.

The premise may have come from a textbook, but the execution turned *Father Ted* into something completely fresh and original.



Chapter Two

Meet The Fab Four...

...who share a big parochial house on a small island off the coast of Ireland.

Father Ted Crilly (played by the wonderful Dermot Morgan) is probably as well versed in the films of Clint Eastwood as he is in the Bible. He's basically a decent man, but a bit self-serving with dreams of fame, fortune, Vegas, Hollywood, and show business.

His reality, however, is something entirely different. As punishment for some shady financial dealings, he's stuck on desolate Craggy Island as the leader of this not so fab four.

His underling is Father Dougal McGuire (Ardal O'Hanlon), a childlike nitwit who is endearing and innocent, but often does things that defy logic like give the parochial house to a Catholic-bashing pop star. Well, what do you expect? He's not used to dealing with women.

Then there's Father Jack Hackett (Frank Kelly), a retired priest with a vocabulary limited mainly to expressing his affinity for girls and drink. He doesn't do much except sit in his chair in a stupor, but can clean up well when necessary and even spout phrases

(continued on next page)

like “that would be an ecumenical matter” in a convincing manner.

Finally, there’s the housekeeper, Mrs. Doyle, who can only be described as scary. She won’t take no for an answer, so resistance is futile when she offers tea or one of the sandwiches from the mountain she has prepared.

Take these four characters, put them in sublimely silly and surreal situations, and you have the marvel that is *Father Ted*.



Chapter Three Pulling It All Together...

...included assembling a group of actors who ended up forming one of the best ensemble casts in recent memory.

Dermot Morgan already had a reputation as a highly controversial performer and writer before taking on the role of Father Ted. His material took pot shots at the church and the government and in the late 70s he wrote a book entitled *Trendy Sermons*, based on a character he created called Father Trendy. The Catholic Church wasn’t very appreciative of Father Trendy or of Morgan’s views and the resulting backlash caused him to become a persona non grata in the media for a while.

Morgan was a man of very passionate beliefs and this allowed him to make Ted a multi-dimensional, complex character even within the context of a sitcom.

Newcomer Ardal O’Hanlon was chosen to play Father Dougal and his portrait of the curate as a young nitwit was perhaps the best look at vacuous stupidity since Hugh Laurie donned a powder wig to play the Prince Regent in *Blackadder*.

Like the Cambridge-educated Laurie, however, O’Hanlon proved that sometimes you have to be smart to play dumb. In real life he is the whip-smart university-educated son of a member of the Irish Parliament.

The interplay between Dougal and Ted formed the most important part of the show, but there was also the invaluable contribution of Pauline McLynn as Mrs. Doyle, the maniacally devoted housekeeper with the

incredible moving mole and an unnerving tendency to repeat herself. Linehan based this character on his own mother, but it was also an exaggeration of the Irish propensity to be hospitable.

The real life Pauline McLynn looks absolutely nothing like Mrs. Doyle (thank Heaven) and she once said the best thing about this job was that they wanted her to look her worst so she didn’t have to be overly concerned about late nights and looking her best.

Less visible but no less important was veteran comic actor Frank Kelly as the grizzled, monosyllabic Father Jack Hackett. He may not have had many lines to memorize, but nevertheless managed to steal almost every scene he was in.

Where Have I Seen Them?

In the course of three seasons, *Father Ted* used a number of actors who are familiar faces.

- CP (Clare) Grogan, the original Kochanski from *Red Dwarf*, shows up in the episode *Rock A Hula Ted* as a Sinead O’Connor style feminist pop singer.
- Richard Wilson (*One Foot in the Grave*’s Victor Meldrew) plays himself in an episode entitled *The Mainland*.
- Two stars of *Ballykissangel*, Don Wycherley (who played Father Aidan) and Peter Caffrey, (who played Padraigh O’Kelly) both made guest appearances.



Chapter Four Surreal and Silly...

...situations formed the basis of every episode of *Father Ted* and the creativity of Linehan and Mathews ensured that the fast pace never let up. Nevertheless, the duo admitted that they “rarely sweated” over the scripts and that the writing process was more like “dropping by the parochial house, turning on a tape recorder and seeing what happened next.” They simply wanted to have fun with it and their enthusiasm is contagious.

(continued on page 17)

I Don't *Be-lieve* It!



One Foot in the Grave Comes to an End

It could happen to many of us. The job of a travel agent is already being usurped by on-line sites that allow you to make vacation arrangements via the Internet. Cashiers might eventually become obsolete now that technology is in place enabling customers to scan and pay for their own groceries.

Planned obsolescence has already become somewhat standard in cars and appliances, so should it surprise us that it may be coming around to human beings?

Victor Meldrew knows the feeling. He was forced into early retirement after twenty-six years of service to the same company. His replacement? A box with a computer chip. At his age Victor realizes his job prospects are close to nil, yet he also knows that he's far from useless. Trying to convince others of that becomes his *raison d'être* in the brilliant series *One Foot in the Grave*.

Victor is not only trying to convince others, but himself. Somehow, though, his cranky personality keeps getting in the way. In other words, Victor is good at angering other people. **Very** good. Just ask the litterer who gets a taste of "Victor's revenge" and ends up with a sack full of maggots in his meal.

Curmudgeons have long been a comedy staple, but Victor Meldrew is one of the best and most complex of that genre thanks to the teamwork of writer David Renwick and star Richard Wilson, who came virtually out of nowhere to create the role of a lifetime.

Renwick's scripts are a large part of the success of this series. They are an amazing blend of laughter, tears, and pathos with enough twists and turns that a roadmap should be mandatory. But isn't that what life's all about?

This makes it one of those rare series that must actually be *watched*. It harkens back to the classic Zucker Brothers series *Police Squad!* starring Leslie Nielsen. This show was a brilliant piece of comedy and slapstick, but didn't last long because the elaborate sight gags meant that people actually had to pay attention to what they were watching.

OFITG is similar in that it cannot be used – as many programs are – as "background noise." It demands the viewer's attention and concentration, but rewards them amply with large doses humor, intelligence, humanity and truth.

Following five seasons and several Christmas specials, it was announced last year that a final season of *OFITG* would be filmed. In fact, an extraordinarily important plot point was given away before the series even aired.

In a show that has always thrived on twists and turns, it seemed an odd move to leak such an important "spoiler." However, on second thought it almost **does** make sense. The end may have been divulged, but the true beauty of *OFITG* has never been the destination; it's been the journey.

(continued on the next page)

SPOILER SPACE

STOP READING NOW IF YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS

David Renwick recently confessed that “the terrifying way people behave on the roads is one of my concerns about modern life,” so perhaps he was hoping to work through some of his fears when he decided to make Victor the casualty of a hit and run accident. In a brilliant scene, Victor’s death is shown simply with a close-up of his cap falling into a rain-filled gutter, followed by his flailing arm.

It is a brave move to kill off a character in any sitcom, but especially someone like Victor, who had grown into such an icon over the past decade. Yet as Renwick acknowledged, “death is the ultimate truth.” and besides, getting Victor to that “ultimate truth” allowed Renwick to give us plenty of surprises and laughs in the episodes leading up to Victor’s demise. My favorites included Pippa’s drunken fling with a stranger (and her confession to Patrick) as well as dear Mrs. Warboys mistakenly getting a tattoo when she thought she was going to the dentist.

There are also brilliant tosses of the hat to the mundane things that drive us crazy. Who can’t relate when Victor moans about how difficult it is to open up a new package of videos? In another beautifully scripted episode that serves almost as a final “duet” for Wilson and Crosbie, Victor and Margaret deal with boredom and an eccentric neighbor when a power outage leaves them hot and cranky.

However, here’s what in my opinion is one of the most intriguing turns. The series has always revolved around Victor, but in some respects the final episode – and the final word – don’t belong to him. They belong to Annette Crosbie, whose performance as Margaret Meldrew always matched Wilson’s step for step. Margaret is a less flashy character, but Crosbie made her as unforgettable as Victor with eloquent silences and eyes that said everything.

The episode is told mainly in flashback and begins with Margaret attending to the necessary but draining duties that follow the death of a family member. She berates a

lawyer in a way that would make Victor proud. It’s obvious that the wound is still fresh, plus there’s the added guilt she feels because Victor was killed on the way home from party she practically begged him to attend. How is Margaret coping? She confesses to a priest that the only thing keeping her going is the possibility that one day whoever murdered Victor will be found and then she will kill the person herself.

While doing charity work she befriends a recently widowed woman named Glynis and the two bond quickly due to their mutual sense of loss. However, though the usual series of unexpected twists and turns, Margaret discovers that it is in fact Glynis who is responsible for Victor’s death.

Before a wonderful montage of Victor’s final adventures, which include a syringe and a naked bottom, Margaret gets in her car, takes a deep breath, drives away, and demonstrates what her husband rarely did – patience and forgiveness.

Or does she? Call me nuts, but weeks after seeing this episode I still wonder about the tablets Margaret gave Glynis at the very end. Were they actually the pain relievers Glynis asked for or perhaps something else? After all, Margaret did say she would kill Victor’s murderer and *I* certainly believed her. Did she get her revenge or am I just crazy? Answers on a postcard or via e-mail, please.

Now that the show is over, how did its stars feel about it coming to an end? Wilson admitted that no matter what else he does he will more than likely always be seen as Victor, with fans shouting at him daily to bellow Victor’s signature “I don’t *be-lieve* it” line. However, he has moved on, directing plays and also starring in a pilot called *Other Animals* with another formidable female talent – Stephanie Cole from *Waiting for God*.

Crosbie said that she could have carried on playing Margaret forever and called it “one of the most rewarding things I’ve done in 42 years of acting.”

Perhaps one of these days, fans of *OFITG* might forgive David Renwick for putting an end to a marvelous series that stretched the form and content of the sitcom like no other before or since. It will be sorely missed.



The Red Dwarf Dictionary



Hey smegheads! Can you name both Skutters? The green blob who stole Kryten's heart? If not (or even if you can), *The Insider* gives you the A (for Ace) to Z (for zero-gravity football) of everything Dwarf so that you'll be prepared in case of a Swirley Thing Alert.

Ace. This is the nickname Rimmer desperately wanted as a child, but sadly, he got stuck with Bonehead instead.

Android. Also known as a mechanoid, these robotic creatures were created to serve and believed that once their time ran out they would go to "Silicon Heaven." Lister considered it his mission to deprogram and corrupt the mechanoid Kryten.

Artificial Reality. The technology that allowed the crew to visit other "worlds," such as Jane Austen World, without ever leaving the ship.

AWOOGA. The sound made by the ship's alarm (or by Holly) when there's an emergency.

Bob. Lister's favorite skutter.

Bonjella, Princess Beryl. Damsel in distress saved by superhero "Ace" Rimmer.

Bullet, Jake. Mechanoid detective developed by Cybernautics who tried to come off as tough and macho but actually worked in traffic control. Took on the character of Kryten during the *Red Dwarf Total Immersion Video Game*.

Camille. A pleasure gelf who captured Kryten's heart, even though she was in reality a big green blob.

Captain's Table. The place where Rimmer desperately wanted a permanent seat because it meant honor and prestige. However, his one chance at this turned into a disaster. (*See Gazpacho soup.*)

Cassandra. A computer version of the Psychic Friend's Network that could predict the future with startling accuracy.

Cloister the Stupid. A man deified by the Cat People, who thought he would lead them to the Promised Land. However, seeing as Cloister was actually Lister, it's no surprise this never happened.

Crapola, Inc. Makers of such wonderful products as Talkie Toaster. Howdy doodly doo!

Curry. Indian food much beloved by Lister in any number of odd varieties.

Deathday. Anniversary celebrated by Holograms instead of birthdays.

Despair Squid. The product of an experiment, this creature emitted venom that caused extreme melancholy and, in some cases, even suicide.

Dibbley, Duane. The unstylish, buck-toothed Duke of Dork who became the ultra-stylish diva Cat during the *Red Dwarf Total Immersion Game*. Duane made a couple of "return visits," much to Cat's chagrin.

(continued on next page)

Epideme. A wacky, charismatic virus that tried to kill Lister. Kochanski, however, was there to save the day.

Esperanto. A language Rimmer worked diligently to master only to find it came much easier to Lister.

Fiji. The island where Lister dreamed of settling with Kochanski. His plans called for marital bliss and raising animals, but alas, it was not to be.

Flibble, Mr. Puppet who became Rimmer's right hand "penguin" and evil sidekick when Rimmer lost his sanity thanks to the Hologram virus.

Future Echoes. Time glitches that allowed the crew to see future events, such as Cat breaking a tooth and Lister having an artificial limb.

Gazpacho Soup Day. The date Rimmer suffered his biggest humiliation. Invited to dine at the Captain's table for the first time, he sent his gazpacho soup back to be warmed up, not realizing it was actually supposed to be served cold. Rimmer blamed the fallout from this episode for his failure to be promoted.

Gelfs. Short for "genetically engineered life forms," these creatures came in a variety of shapes and sizes. The crew came across a number of them (including Camille and Emohawk) and the result was usually bad news.

Groinal Socket. One of Kryten's handiest features, this allowed him to hook up the vacuum cleaner or whisk up some eggs for a tasty omelet.

Inquisitor, The. A simulant that traveled the universe judging whether people had lived up to their potential and lived a worthwhile existence. If they hadn't, the Inquisitor had the power to erase them from history. Understandably, the Dwarfers did not look forward to facing him when their time came.

Jupiter Mining Corporation. The company to which Red Dwarf belonged.

Kinitawowi: A tribe of Gelfs who were actually rather friendly and didn't skin you alive as a greeting. Not the most attractive creatures, however, as Lister found out when he was forced to marry one.

Lanstrom, Hildegard. Once prominent doctor who became a victim of the holovirus and tried to kill the crew.

Lister, Jim and Bexley. Lister's twin sons, who were conceived in the female-dominated parallel universe.

London Jets. Lister's favorite zero-gravity football team. His favorite player was Jim Bexley Speed, hence the names given to his twins.

McGruder, Yvonne. The woman of Rimmer's dreams and the only one to have actually slept with him. In the episode *Better Than Life*, a fantasy showed Rimmer and McGruder married with seven children.

McIntyre, George. Flight coordinator aboard Red Dwarf and all-round wacky guy who had "See Ya Later, Alligator" played at his funeral.

Madge. Female companion to Bob the skutter.

Mind Swap. Process during which a person's mind is emptied and another personality is allowed to take over.

Nanobots. Miniscule robots that had the ability to break objects down into their smallest components and then reconstruct them.

Nipple Nuts. Another one of Kryten's handy features. These were used pick up radio stations and regulate his body temperature. Most important, though, they were referred to in his immortal phrase, "Spin my nipple nuts and send me to Alaska."

Outland Revenue. The British version of the IRS, who came after Rimmer to collect his back-taxes.

(continued on page 16, column 2)

The Insider Episode Guide

Keeping Up Appearances

By Harold Snoad, Producer/Director

Compiled by Keith P. Hutchins
hutchk@koyote.com, <http://www.koyote.com/personal/hutchk/>

Everyone loves Hyacinth. Well, except maybe her next door neighbor Emmett, and the poor man who tries to deliver the mail, and the ladies at the church. Well, ok.... scratch that thought. NOT everyone loves Hyacinth. Fans, though, can't get enough of Patricia Routledge as the ultimate social snob Hyacinth Bucket in Keeping Up Appearances. Here's The Insider episode guide to the show that has kept American Britcom fans laughing for over a decade.

First, though, I'll pause for everyone to change into their best clothing and get a few light refreshments plus a cup of coffee in a Royal Doulton cup before continuing.

Season One - 1990

Episode 1: Hyacinth's beloved "Daddy" is brought to hospital after an escapade involving the milk woman, a chase and a lack of sartorial adequacy on Daddy's part. Hyacinth goes to near manic lengths to ensure even the most routine events are just so, much to the chagrin of her long-suffering husband, Richard, and her good-natured neighbor, Elizabeth. Can you imagine Hyacinth's mythic powers of rationalization working overtime on this one?

Episode 2: Hyacinth has invited the new vicar to tea and, in her usual meticulous way, has organized everything down to the last sugar lump. Proving the best laid plans of mice, men and mesdames gang aft a-gly, Rose chooses this time to decide on suicide in "mummy's wedding dress."

Episode 3: Hyacinth looks forward to soaking up a little culture at her favorite stately home, hovering near "the family area," but balks at being seen at such august premises "in the company of someone who drinks beer in his undershirt."

Episode 4: Hyacinth is at her wit's end trying to deal with the charity shop's Councilor Nugent, Rose's roller-coasting love-life and Daddy's amours! Can she cope? Don't doubt her for a moment.

Episode 5: Hyacinth's social standing at a church function is jeopardized when Daisy tries to encourage Onslow to become more ardent.

Episode 6: Hyacinth enjoys a family christening as well as the next person, but we know we can expect complications when it's Daisy's family.

Season Two - 1991

Episode 1: Hyacinth spies a strange man who has obviously spent the night next door at Liz's house. What will such moral turpitude do to property values on the avenue? To make things worse, Daddy has disappeared again.

Episode 2: Hyacinth is thrilled when the aristocratic Mrs. Fortescue asks for a lift into town. Unfortunately the ride does not go as planned.

Episode 3: Hyacinth wants to be recognized as vocally talented by Emmet, Liz's brother, a professional musician and director of the local amateur operatic society. When she plans to use a candlelight supper as her arena of opportunity, the situation sours, as do most of Hyacinth's notes.

Episode 4: Hyacinth awaits with joyful anticipation the arrival of a new three-piece suite, an exact replica of one in Sandringham House. However, what good is
(continued on next page)

such a momentous delivery without neighbors to notice the royal warrant on the delivery truck. The Royal Ballet does not often deal with such intricate staging!

Episode 5: Hyacinth drags Richard to a weekend at an exclusive golfing resort. Richard does not like to golf, but Hyacinth cannot wait to mingle with the elite at the club. Adding to fun are the amorous advances (repelled, of course) of the Major and the anonymous antics of the occupants of Room 210!

Episode 6: A series of problems engendered by her relatives threaten to put a chink in Hyacinth's hard-won facade.

Episode 7: Despite the failure of her earlier attempts to impress Emmet, Hyacinth recognizes a new opportunity and seizes it immediately. Unfortunately, she still cannot sing.

Episode 8: Daddy has disappeared again, only to be found in a toy store and having already altered a large amount of stock. The family turns to Hyacinth to help foot the bill.

Episode 9: When Hyacinth takes Daddy out for a picnic in the country, he disappears with both the car and the lunch. She can only hope he will drive at speeds commensurate with the needs of her crystal glassware.

Episode 10: Onslow's birthday is no cause for Hyacinth to celebrate, but Rose's impressive new gentleman friend may be.

Season 3 - 1992

Episode 1: Hyacinth's husband, Richard, has no hiding place from her now that early retirement has been thrust upon him. While she is delighted at the prospect of all that free time together, the stoical Richard is daunted at the thought. Hyacinth, as oblivious as ever of Richard's feelings, is full of plans for Richard's future, plans that are sure to go awry. Neighbors Elizabeth and Emmet try to maintain a low profile where Hyacinth is concerned, while in Hyacinth's viewpoint, her sisters, Rose and Daisy, as well as Daisy's layabout husband, Onslow, never seem to engage in suitable pursuits.

Episode 2: Now that Richard has officially started his early retirement, Hyacinth ecstatically proceeds with her plans for their time together. First on her agenda is an ill-fated foray into the countryside to search for Iron Age remains, but further cultural expeditions are curtailed when sister Daisy and her husband Onslow inform Hyacinth that her sister Rose is behaving in an outrageous manner. As the eldest sister, unflappable Hyacinth must rise to occasion to sort things out, preferably before the "dishy" vicar arrives!

Episode 3: When the opportunity arises for Hyacinth to borrow her well-to-do sister Violet's holiday cottage for the weekend, she packs a carload of fine crystal and beloved bibelots, gives a royal wave of farewell to her relieved (of Hyacinth) neighbors, and sets to planning a barbecue with the intricacy worthy of a Normandy beach landing. A gunshot, a missing dog and a chance for social climbing combine to offer the redoubtable Mrs. Bucket (translation, bouquet) some surprising moments and the chance for a contemporary conga line!

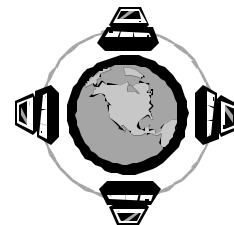
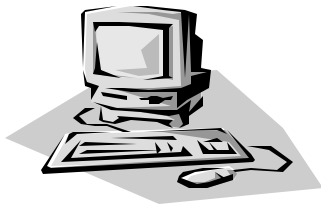
Episode 4: "If there's one thing I can't stand it's snobbery and one-up-manship. People who try to pretend they're superior," philosophizes Hyacinth, "make it so much harder for those of us who really are." If Delia Wheelright can spend a month in the Caribbean, then Hyacinth is determined to best her - even if it is only in the unwrinklable quality of her holiday brochures and with a trip to the travel agent! Beleaguered Richard finds a real diversion, however, when sympathetic brother-in-law Onslow, pitying the monotony of Richard's life, leads him off the straight and narrow.

Episode 5: Hyacinth decides (in her usual imperious manner) that husband Richard needs a suitably patrician hobby. Ignoring his dreams of sailing around the world, hurricane Hyacinth deposits a video camera into Richard's hands and tells him to "be artistic," an instruction she will live to regret.

Episode 6: Hyacinth and Richard have been invited to an art exhibition just as Daddy runs off leaving word that he has gone to join the French Foreign Legion. A concerned Hyacinth dragoons the ever-faithful Richard into a search for the straying parent, finds Daddy, puts him into the car and asks Richard to drop her off at the

KUA regular cast members:
*Hyacinth Bucket...*Patricia Routledge
*Richard Bucket...*Clive Swift
*Onslow...*Geoffrey Hughes
*Daisy ...*Judy Cornwell
*Rose (Season 1 only)...*Shirley Stelfox
*Rose (Season 2 on)...*Mary Millar
*Liz...*Josephine Tewson
*Emmet...*David Griffin

(continued on page 18)



SPOTTED ON THE INTERNET

Web Reviews by David Darryl Bibb

Father Ted

<http://www.channel4.com/entertainment/fatherted/index.html>

A rather odd web site run by Channel 4. It lacks the usual features of this type of site such as episode guides, quotes, and sound files, but somehow you don't miss them.

The page features a short but witty description of the show along with pictures of the two main characters. Father Dougal McGuire's picture has a quote with a hyperlink in it. Clicking the link brings up a quote under the picture of Father Ted. Each click allows the viewer to get another bit of the dialogue and eventually play [Father Dougal's Pelmanism Puzzle](#)." The game is rather interesting, in an odd sort of a way. After this game you get the option of playing [Mrs. Doyle's Mystery Game](#) or going back to the main information page. Mrs. Doyle's game is quirky and a bit of a surprise but somehow makes sense. The site is as original as the show itself and manages to do it justice.

Rating: 5 mouse clicks

One Foot In The Grave

<http://www.phill.co.uk/comedy/onefoot/list.html>

Phil Hill's site is perhaps the Net's best on-line TV Comedy Database and the entry on *One Foot in the Grave* contains most of the normal sections: episode guide, summary, main character information, cast list, and a list of videotapes to purchase. There are no sound files but there are some pictures of the actors.

If the show sounds familiar to American audiences it may be because Bill Cosby's show *Cosby* was a remake of it. The site is informative but could use more in-depth information.

Rating: 2 mouse clicks

Are You Being Served?

<http://www.albertsquare.com/rubs/>

A small site which would normally not be given much notice, but there is a gem buried inside it.

As they say on the web page, "Jeff Rice once maintained the premiere *AYBS?* Web reference ...[and was] ...kind enough to distribute the entire website in one ZIP archive." The download is 1.1MB and well worth the time it takes to download and install. There are episode and cast lists for the show and its follow up, "Grace and Favour." The Albertsquare site by itself would not rate more than 2½ mouse clicks out of 5 but with the Rice site as a download it gets more.

Rating: 4 mouse clicks

Also Recommended

To purchase videos:

<http://www.bbcproducts.com>

Father Ted: The Craggy Island Examiner

<http://www.geocities.com/Paris/2694/craggy.html>

Keeping Up Appearances

<http://www.britcoms.com/kua>

Disclaimer: Please remember that the World Wide Web is an ever-changing place. The sites reviewed and recommended in this issue are operational at the date of publication. The Insider regrets any inconvenience caused by sites that move or close.

David Bibb is a Missouri-based British comedy addict.
.. . . .

Frank Thornton (cont'd. from page 1)

His love of comedy was fueled by his childhood affection for Laurel and Hardy, but his interest in the arts extended to music as well. He appeared in a number of musicals as well as Gilbert and Sullivan operettas during school and became a talented musician, learning to play the cello.

His heart was set on a career in show business, but responsibility beckoned. Acting was still not considered a legitimate profession when Thornton was young, so at his father's insistence he took on a job with an insurance company while attending the London School of Dramatic Art.

Of course World War II played havoc with his life, as it did the lives of many others, and Thornton served as a navigator in the Royal Air Force. Following that, he was able to find repertory work and began his acting career in earnest.

His first big break came in 1960 when he appeared with former Goon Michael Bentine and future *Dad's Army* star Clive Dunn in a sketch comedy show called *It's a Square World*. This popular series lasted for four years and earned Thornton a reputation as a solid comedy performer.

It's A Square World also proved that Thornton could work well as a member of a team, something that would prove very helpful when in 1972 he became a member of one of the most beloved ensembles ever created.

David Croft's a very perceptive caster, so when he offers a job you know it will be right for you – you don't even need to read the script.

Thornton on getting hired as Captain Peacock

His height and ability to play what he termed "smell under the nose" pompous characters were what made him perfect as Captain Peacock. His dashing good looks and demeanor also made him convincing as a man who definitely liked the ladies – and vice versa.

"He played the character perfectly," co-writer Jeremy Lloyd once said, "as one would expect from such an experienced actor. Although I never met another floorwalker who could dance, play the piano and was game to dress in Tyrolean leather to get a laugh."

"Game" is a perfect word to describe Thornton, who was willing to go whole hog those times when his character broke the façade of sophistication and suffered a few indignities for the sake of a laugh.

The role he played for so many years, however, proved to be a mixed blessing. It provided him with fame, but he also found himself so typecast that other television roles almost dried up.

The success of *AYBS?*, particularly in the States, is unbelievable. I still get regular fan mail, with many people referring to Peacock as the "great English gentleman" – which is absurd because he was anything but.

Thornton on the role that made him famous

This was hard to accept for a man who'd spent years proving that there was much more to him and had worked with comedy greats such as Tony Hancock and Spike Milligan. He'd also shown himself a versatile theatrical performer, appearing in plays by Shakespeare and Chekov.

"I'd always been considered a versatile character actor," he admitted, "and suddenly I was Captain Peacock."

That is, until he was asked to join another famous ensemble as one of the elderly trio of troublemakers on the long running *Last of the Summer Wine*.

Coming into an exceptionally strong, already established group of actors might have proven difficult for many, but Thornton fit right in, joining the cast in 1997 as former policeman Herbert "Truly" Truelove. It could not have been an easy transition, but Thornton said he was honored to join the ensemble.

The history of *Last of the Summer Wine* is similar to *Ballykissangel* in that it has had its share of cast changes and sad deaths. Yet thanks to the brilliance of writer Roy Clarke and the ability to adapt, the show has stayed strong and become the longest running sitcom in British television history.

His height may cause him to stand out in a crowd, but in real life Thornton doesn't appear to be a "peacock" at all. He is by all accounts a modest, unassuming, erudite man whose interests lean toward music and nature. Even more surprising, the man who on-screen had a real eye for the ladies has been married to actress Beryl Reid since 1954.

So who knows? Maybe you can trust tall people after all.



(Bob Larbey – cont'd from page 3)

everybody else, and thought yes, it's funny! But I've never regarded it as competition. It's different. Ask the alternative comedians to write the kind of stuff I write and they couldn't. And vice versa. I think there's room for everything as long as a television company like the BBC or any other company doesn't get totally carried away by thinking that one style is now IT, now the word of the day.

There have been so many attempts to take popular British sitcoms and Americanize them here, which usually involves watering down the very aspects that make them so special. One of your series, *Man About The House* successfully became *Three's Company* here back in the 70s, but more recent attempts have been fairly disastrous. The supposed American version of *One Foot In The Grave*, with Bill Cosby, bears no resemblance to the original at all. But the opposite has been true also.

I remember they tried that with *The Golden Girls*, which was a big hit in the states, but simply didn't work here [as *Brighton Belles*]. In that case, it was a case of British actresses really saying American scripts, which you can't do, and vice versa. The cadence, the rhythms, it's just naturally all wrong. They didn't sound like British women. I think one or two programs were bought [in America] and then watered down because they were considered a bit too raw or savage. It makes me wonder why American television has actually bothered to buy these shows in the first place!

The most popular program of yours in America at the moment is *As Time Goes By*. The credits list Colin Bostock-Smith as having conceived the idea for the series. How did it get from his idea to you actually writing each episode?

I knew nothing at all about it until the Theatre of Comedy [production company] asked me if I'd go along and talk about an idea they had. What Colin had done was a synopsis--whether or not they commissioned a script I don't know--but they gave me the synopsis and said see what you think and come back to us. With nothing at all to lose, I told them what I liked about it and what I didn't like about it, and they commissioned a script. I wrote the script, then the series, and it went from there.

Geoffrey Palmer had left the series *Executive Stress* reportedly because he was getting tired of doing

situation comedy. And yet he returned to sitcoms with *As Time Goes By*.

Geoffrey is a man who has got his life very much in order. He loves fishing, and he doesn't do any work in the fishing season. He doesn't want to do too much. He wants to do what he likes to do. He's very nice about the scripts, but probably most of all he likes working with Judi Dench and the cast--it's a very happy show. It's been an absolute joy. It's the old cliché how everyone gets on, but they really do, and I think he enjoys it.

Since the original premise of the series--the characters of Lionel and Jean "finding" each other again after thirty-eight years--was so compelling, did you personally have any concerns once they decided to stay together that the series might become just another domestic sitcom?

I think I had it in mind that it was a lovely premise, but it was never a premise which in itself was going to last for very long. You can do just so much with two people sort of dancing around each other--and the audience knowing that the outcome was going to be a happy one. I think the reason that I went on was that they were all so good in it and enjoyed it, and I liked the characters that I'd written. It was a happy time, and we said let's go on, let's make it a character comedy.

And you added other facets such as alternating between their home in the city and the one in the country, Lionel's career versus Jean's, so you gave yourself a lot to work with.

I think I had to, to some extent. There are bits in any comedy series that just sort of peter out. Like the bit in Jean's office, the secretarial agency. That featured quite heavily in three or four series, but that was going nowhere just by itself. So I decided to bring Jean out and leave it to the girls. It's not about an office anymore. But we wanted to keep Jenny Funnell in it, who we all love as Sandy.

I'd have to include myself in that!

Yes, it's a long list! She's sweet. And I wanted her in it. But to have her in it as a secretary that you hardly

(continued on next page)

ever saw was never going to work. It's pretty much of a device that they took her under their wing, she's

moved in with them, and is now part of the family. People seemed to accept that quite easily.

I would think a lot of people are surprised that, given her enormous success on stage and on the screen, such as winning the Oscar, that Judi Dench still returns to her work on the show. What is her response to people who don't think very highly of sitcoms and ask her why she continues with it considering everything else she's achieved?

I think she likes being on television. Having been in the theatre for much of her life, she's quite tickled by the fact that she's watched by several million people, as opposed to a theatre-full, per evening. We have a good time, it's become sort of like an annual reunion.

The first thing I wrote alone was a series called *A Fine Romance*, with her and her husband Michael Williams. The producer and I were trying to cast it, and we batted names back and forth, making endless lists with asterisks and question marks, and he said, "In a dream world, who would you like to play it?" And I said Judi Dench, thinking this is a great classical actress, she wouldn't touch a sitcom with a barge pole. He, bless him, said, well let's send her script, she can only send it back. He sent her a script, she phoned him back and said she'd love to do it.

It was quite a breakthrough back then to get an actress of that quality to do a situation comedy. I can't speak for Judi but if you asked her if a sitcom is this little, easy thing to do as opposed to doing a James Bond film or whatever, she would say no. She would say it's very, very difficult to play.

The show has completed eight series. Are there plans for more?

We've all been saying "this must be the last series" for the past four or five years. The BBC want another series, but it's very difficult to get hold of Judi, who wants to do it but is obviously swamped with offers from all sorts of people, as it should be. So it's a question of her finding the proverbial window. If she finds it, we'll do another series.



Garry Berman is the author of the book Best of the Britcoms.

Red Dwarf Dictionary (continued from page 10)

Petersen, Olaf. Red Dwarf crew member who was Lister's good friend and drinking buddy.

Psirens. Gelfs who would entice gullible space travelers to their death.

Psy-Moon. A "planetoid" that would arrange its landscape according to a person's psyche. Rimmer's psy-moon proved to be very interesting.

Queeg 500. The back-up computer that took over when Holly started becoming senile. However, turned out that Queeg was actually Holly in disguise, proving that he could still kick butt.

Reverse Brothers. When Rimmer and Kryten became trapped on "Backwards Earth," they found success as a cabaret act that actually did things like drink *down* a glass of water.

Skutters. Red Dwarf's cute little service robots. They liked to make obscene gestures and were big fans of John Wayne.

Smeg. All purpose expletive favored by the crew. Variants included the adjective "smegging" and the ever popular insult "smeg head."

Stasis. When someone, like Lister, was placed in stasis, time was basically "frozen" and the person placed in suspended animation.

Talkie Toaster. Over enthusiastic appliance especially hated by Lister.

White Hole. The opposite of a black hole, this object spewed matter back into the universe. When the crew encountered one, the whole for no match for billiards wizard Lister.

Wilson, Reggie. A wizard on the Hammond organ and one of Rimmer's musical favorites.

Zero-Gravity Football. Lister's favorite sport.



(FATHER TED – cont'd. from page 6)

So over the course of three seasons there were scenarios such as the following:

- Ted, Dougal, and Jack portraying the three stages in the life of Elvis to win the “All Priests’ Stars in Their Eyes Lookalike Contest.”
- Various attempts to keep Father Jack from drinking the Toilet Duck bowl cleaner and lots of other things he shouldn’t.
- Ted and Dougal entering the Eurovision Song Contest with an original song entitled *My Little Horse*. Predictably, Ireland ends up with no points.
- The residents of Craggy Island suffering a “crime spree” when a whistle is stolen.
- The trio going on holiday only to be trapped in a miniscule camper with the nauseatingly hyper Father Noel and his youth group. Riverdancing, anyone?
- Mrs. Doyle causing a television presenter to fall off the wagon when she won’t listen to his refusal of a drink.
- Ted and Dougal scheming to get photographic evidence of Ted kicking his boss, Bishop Brennan, up the arse. This act is payment for a bet Ted lost to his nemesis, Father Dick Byrne.

There are also marvelous bits of whimsy, such as the character of Father Larry Duff, who gets killed a number of times when Ted rings him on his mobile phone at the most inopportune times. In the first series viewers also got to know John and Mary O’Leary, a married couple who fought like the devil unless they were in the presence of Father Ted.



Chapter Five In The End...

...Linehan and Mathews decided that *Father Ted* had been taken as far as it could and that the third season would be the last simply because they were having problems coming up with new things for the characters

to say. Better, then, to put an end to it while they were still ahead.

Luckily, the actors were in agreement as they did not want to be typecast and were anxious to move on to other projects. Dermot Morgan especially wanted to do more drama and had a series in the works.

The final episode concerns Ted being offered a job at a parish in Beverly Hills by the mysterious American priest Father Buzz Cagney. He is understandably elated, but can’t bring himself to tell Dougal, Father Jack, and Mrs. Doyle that they’re not coming with him. He even lets them pack and come to the airport, but Ted sneaks on to the plane by himself.

Tragically, Ted discovers at the last minute that the job is dangerous and involves dealing with gangs, so he declines and gets off the plane. The original ending showed him jumping off a ledge and committing suicide after realizing that his future is on Craggy Island with the trio of lunatics.

The episode was edited, however, when Dermot Morgan suffered a massive heart attack and passed away just a day after filming was completed. He was only 45 years old. Out of respect for Morgan’s untimely and tragic death, the scene was changed to a montage of clips from the three seasons. The final words were Dougal and Ted saying good night to each other.

The influence of *Father Ted* belied the fact that it lasted only a short while, at least by American standards. This breath of fresh air was amply recognized with numerous British Academy of Film and Television Art (BAFTA) awards for both the cast and the series itself. Its popularity even caused caught the eye of American producers, who considered a version of *Father Ted* with the main character as an inner city priest. Plans for this seem to have been shelved and that’s perhaps for the best.

Like Bishop Brennan, British comedy was in need of a good kick up the arse during the 90s. Luckily, *Father Ted* came along to provide it. See it yourself and you’ll discover what the fuss was about. Or as Mrs. Doyle would say: *Go on, go on, go on, go on, go on, go on, go on...*



(*Keeping Up Appearances* – cont’d from page 12)

the art show before taking Daddy home. The unpredictable Daddy sneaks off, presumably into the art gallery. An embarrassed Hyacinth asks Richard to pretend that it is his Daddy lest some of the other true art lovers regard Hyacinth's standing somewhat diminished by any possible idiosyncratic behavior on the part of Daddy. Uneasy rests the head that bears the self-styled crown!

Episode 7: Thrilled by the opportunity of spending the weekend on a borrowed "yacht," Hyacinth sets about the complicated preparations with her usual inspired zeal.

SEASON 4 – 1993

Episode 1: Hyacinth has her heart set on Richard's gaining a position with a local firm which has a vacancy - very executive vacancy, of course. Richard, who does not fancy the job in the first place, is dubious (to say the least) about his wife's plan for him to meet the firm's chief officer in a meticulously staged "casual encounter." The plucky flower of English womanhood proves she is no delicate blossom even though her stratagems go amuck - literally, in Richard's case.

Episode 2: Hyacinth volunteers to meet the Ladies Luncheon guest speaker at the rail station. Since this august personage is a retired commodore, Hyacinth invests him with the achievements of a modern-day Nelson and cannot understand why British Rail has failed to provide a sufficient fanfare for his arrival. Unfortunately, a miscalculation on her part of the commodore's travel plans leads the Buckets and the vicar, who has been pressed into chauffeuring, on a merry chase.

Episode 3: Hyacinth volunteers Richard's services when there is a problem with the church hall's "electrics." Richard is the first to admit that electrical engineering is not his strong point, but Hyacinth is convinced that he is the man for the job. Simultaneously, a bring-and-buy sale is being set up in the hall, and between Richard's tinkering and Hyacinth's mania for organization, the vicar needs a place to hide - and a great deal of divine guidance.

Episode 4: Hyacinth is suddenly imbued with the idea that it would be lovely for the Buckets to acquire a country retreat for pastoral, but elegant, weekends. Of course, it needn't be anything expensive, but

Hyacinth's idea of simple flies in the face of reality. She also discovers, rather sheepishly, that country life is not quite so idyllic as she had imagined. However, for once, it is Richard, who puts his foot into it this time!

Episode 5: Much to Richard's horror, Hyacinth insists on a second attempt in the quest for the perfect weekend home in the country. Unfortunately, because of a sudden problem involving Daddy which Hyacinth wants Richard to settle, Richard cannot accompany her on the property search, and Elizabeth is called into service. Hyacinth's final choice is intriguing, yet alarming to Richard, who must finance this outwardly opulent domicile.

Episode 6: Ensnared in their "old world bijou" retreat which is grand in address but minuscule in size, Hyacinth and Richard invite Elizabeth, Emmett, and just a few more guests for a "country tea." This and Hyacinth's plan to fit in with the local equestrian set go wrong to everyone's discomfort, but with special pain for Hyacinth and Emmet.

Episode 7: Hyacinth, desperate to keep up with the Barker-Finches (she wouldn't know anybody so simple as the Joneses) must find a local celebrity for her barbecue to rival the one who graced the Barker-Finches' recent gathering. Her plans to customize her barbecue and to secure a prize guest are ambitious, complicated and taxing on Richard.

SEASON 5 – 1995

Episode 1: Hyacinth volunteers her services to assist with an outing to the coast which the Vicar is organizing for the old folk. However, she has underestimated the problems - which include a lady who suffers from travel sickness and a romantically inclined Italian pensioner who sets his cap at Hyacinth and chases her all round the fun fair.

Episode 2: Hyacinth is very put out when she and Richard don't receive their invitation to the Mayor's annual fancy dress ball and insists that Richard - who no longer works for the Council - does something about this obvious 'oversight'. He manages to arrange invitations but Hyacinth's nose is put very much out of joint when they turn up on the night and she discovers that her costume is not as unique as she had expected.

(continued on next page)

Episode 3: Richard forgets their wedding anniversary but manages to get away with it by telling Hyacinth that he is planning to have a security system fitted as a special surprise. She is thrilled until a few days later Richard accidentally sets off the alarm himself because he couldn't remember the code Hyacinth had given the installers – the date of their wedding anniversary!

Episode 4: Hyacinth plans a riverside picnic but things go badly wrong.

Episode 5: Hyacinth buys Richard a pair of skis for his birthday - purely because they will look good on the roof of their car! Violet has problems at home and Hyacinth goes to assist.

Episode 6: Hyacinth attends a country house sale - unfortunately for Elizabeth and Emmet who are also attending. She bids for some vintage wine and, in sharing same with the Lord of the Manor, she rather overdoes her intake.

Episode 7: Hyacinth hears about Emmet's plans to do a production of 'The Boy Friend' and is most anxious to get herself a part. However, her plans have to be put on hold when she learns that Daddy is 'on guard' at Onslow and Daisy's and won't let them into the house.

Episode 8: Still attempting to fulfill her desire to appear in 'The Boy Friend' she makes her way to the Church hall where Emmet is rehearsing in order to offer her services but he manages to escape. She then has everyone over to a 'luxury barbecue' at Violet's but has problems because the incessant rowing between Violet and Bruce is difficult to ignore and is in grave danger of being picked up by the guests. A sing song almost succeeds in solving this problem until the barbecue gets out of control.

Episode 9: Having seen an acquaintance driving a new Mercedes Hyacinth 'borrows' a Rolls Royce to be seen going one better. She even makes Richard drive her to a smart hotel but, unfortunately Onslow, Daisy and Rose also turn up and let the side down and then, as they begin driving away, the police arrive and arrest them because the Roll has been reported as stolen.

Episode 10: Hyacinth advertises her services in the local paper as an “experienced hostess” but the response she received wasn't quite what she had in mind!

Christmas Special – 1991: Hyacinth has decided that since it is Christmas, Richard, dressed as Father Christmas, should assist in distributing gifts to the old folk. Feeling foolish, Richard goes to show his costume to Elizabeth and Emmett, and proceeds with Emmett to get extremely drunk. Meanwhile, Rose has a new boyfriend named Mr.Sudbury, and Daisy and Onslow watch in amazement as Rose and Mr. Sudbury dance down the road a la Astaire and Rodgers.

Elizabeth discovers that Richard and Emmet are drunk, and decides to dress up as Father Christmas herself and to drive Hyacinth to church hall. Daddy, who has also gotten very drunk, has lost his clothes and is causing other problems. Hyacinth, who has invited Richard's head of department to the house for mulled wine and mince pie, then spots them on their way to her house so she takes them along to the church hall. Upon arriving at the church hall, Hyacinth is informed by the Vicar of Daddy's misconduct. Richard and Emmet arrive on the bus, mistaken identity ensues as the Father Christmas costume changes hands, but in the spirit of the holidays, Hyacinth and ensemble finish up with happy expectations.

Christmas Special – 1993: On this Christmas Special, Hyacinth buys tickets for a holiday cruise on the QEII, looking forward to making the acquaintance of the better class of person that one encounters at such places. Little does she know that Onslow has won tickets for the very same trip.

Christmas Special – 1994: Hyacinth is planning to have her kitchen worktops replaced and is anxious that they should not only be of a very high standard but also something that other people can no longer order. Richard goes down with athlete's foot but Hyacinth changes it into gout - a very classy illness. On the other side of town Onslow and Daisy report that there is a strange man in Daddy's bed - which, understandably, she rushes over to try and sort out.

Christmas Special – 1995: Hyacinth takes it upon herself to organize a pageant in the Church Hall - seeing herself, of course, as a royal historical figure. When the flood of volunteers she was expecting for the pageant fail to turn up she has to rope Violet, Bruce and - in desperation - Onslow, Daisy and Rose. Unfortunately Elizabeth is not very good when it comes to stage management and some scenery falls on Hyacinth whilst she is posing on her throne.

