



Sunday, 20 January 2013

## Benny and the Brits

If you wanted to get an old-timer in show business to light up, all you had to do was say the word "vaudeville." All of them seem to have been nostalgic for it, despite the endless travel, low pay and unresponsive audiences that they endured. Maybe because it was a simpler time, one without an entourage who used them for a livelihood or the daily disruptions in life that fame brings. Maybe it was being part of a supportive group (of outcasts, in some cases) all trying to make it big. Fred Allen wrote a whole book about his struggles in vaudeville (the delightful *Much Ado About Me*), but left you with the impression he'd go back to it in a second. And Jack Benny loved it, too, despite the fact he struggled along with everyone else at one point. Unlike Allen, Jack didn't just recall it. He tried to live it one last time. Again and again.



World War Two took Jack Benny around the world but post-war, his destination of choice was London. The *New York Times* wrote on July 21, 1948:

British theatre critics were almost as enthusiastic today as the fans of Jack Benny who filled the Palladium last night to welcome him in person. The audience obviously knew every aspect of the comedian's material by heart and revelled in its translation from air to stage by Phil Harris, Mary Livingstone and Marilyn Maxwell.

About the same show, a headline in the *Boston Globe* read: "Jack Benny Given 10-Minute Ovation by London Audience." Is it any wonder he went back? In June, 1950, Benny, Harris, Rochester and a cast of 40 took their tour to London, where he gave a command performance for the royal family. In 1957, he performed with the London Symphony and appeared on the BBC. Two years later, London was among the overseas destinations where Jack had filmed part of his TV show. In 1961, he gave a command performance for the Queen Mother—as Gracie Allen, with George Burns. Four years later, he was before the Queen himself. And as himself.

Here's a United Press column from 1948 where Jack talks about England—and vaudeville.

### Jack Benny Finds Londoners Are Going Big For Vaudeville

By VIRGINIA MacPHERSON

HOLLYWOOD, Oct. 1.—(UP)—Jack Benny came up today with the answer to the old wheeze: "Whatever happened to vaudeville?" It went to England, he says, where they think the "two-a-day" is a bit of all right. "They've got everything over there," he says. "Jugglers, trained seals, even old gals who sing squeaky songs and double on a fiddle."

Also Hollywood's best movie stars.

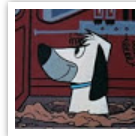
The dyed-in-the wool greasepaint hams who started in vaudeville and never got it out of their systems are trekking to London at the drop of a contract.

They get out there on the stage and whoop it up till the customers can't sit still any longer. They don't even mind following those seals.

That includes Benny, Hollywood's frustrated fiddler, who started as a doorman in Waukegan, Ill., and talked his way up from there, was one of the first on the boat.

"Everybody's been over there," Benny said. "Danny Kaye, Carmen Miranda, Dinah Shore, Betty Hutton . . . everybody. They broke all records and they ate it up."

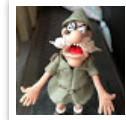
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3 hours ago

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Vehicle Verification Centers of Mexico City will reopen in August with COVID

[safety measures.](#) - ©2020 fernandollercartoons.com

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### Movies with Michael

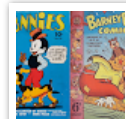


Cowboy Church #67 - Hello my friends and welcome back for another

service of cowboy church. Today's musical selection begins with Gene Autry singing "Dear Hearts and Gentle Pe...

7 hours ago

### Termite Terrace headlines



Question for All You Cartoon Collectors! - OK so I've been doing some

looking around. Bosko apparently had a comic book and I'm wondering if any of you know of

The Londoners will hawk everything but ration points to see a Hollywood star in the flesh. But that does not mean they let their own performers play to empty seats.

“It’s part of the British tradition,” Benny explained. “Once an entertainer hits the top, he stays there—just because the English do not like to change things.”

“There could be the worst paper shortage in history and they would still have that big, floppy paper money. Same way with their vaudeville stars. An old guy may have to hobble out on a cane, but they’re loyal to him. Once a headliner always a headliner with the British.

And you can forget all you ever heard about the English sense of humor being slow, Benny added.

“They’re great. Got every joke I told,” he said. “And I use some pretty sophisticated stuff on the stage. They didn’t wait till the next morning to hawhaw, either.

Made him feel kind of lonesome for the old days, it did.

He said wistfully:

“There’s nothing like vaudeville. Too bad it’s so far away.”


Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:51](#)

Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

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**Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog**




**Born on**  
**July 18,**  
**1913 - Red**  
**Skelton -**  
**\*Today's**  
**post**  
**commences**

with the Guzzler's Gin routine ...


1 day ago

**News From ME**


**Sorry...** - As far as I know, I do not have any diseases. I just have too much to deal with right now so I won't be blogging much if at all. I'm postponing all the web...  
2 days ago

**Cartoon Research**

**In His Own Words: H.T. Kalmus on Disney in Technicolor** - Suspended Animation #276 Many references may be found regarding two-strip Technicolor. I have been guilty of discussing Walter Lantz's King of Jazz (1930)...  
2 days ago

**AFRTS Archive**

**Mary Turner 1985** - Mary Turner today Mary Turner really rocked the house.



Normally when any of the jocks got a reaction, it'd be split. The ones that were really liked wou...


4 days ago


**The World of Knight**



**TONIGHT,**  
**11:54 PM. -**  
**COPYRIGH**  
**T 2020 BY**  
**MILTON**  
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**Yowp**



**Hanna-Barbera**  
**Birthday**  
**Did-You-Knows** - 63 years ago today, some forms were signed by George Sidney, Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera creating what eventually became the biggest TV cartoon operation i...

1 week ago

**Supervised By Fred Avery: Tex Avery's Warner Brothers Cartoons**

**Wabbit Twouble: A Small Addendum to An Outstanding Podcast** -




Original animation drawing from Wabbit Twouble with color notations

for the ink and paint department. Release date: 12/20/41 Availability: Looney Tunes Gol... 3 weeks ago

**Mark Kausler's CatBlog**  
**The Lady and the Tiger** - From the Cathy Hill Archive of Unpublished Comics comes "The Lady and the Tiger". This story was drawn before Cathy started the "Mad Raccoons" series. U... 4 weeks ago

**What About Thad?**  
**Cartoon Logic Podcast** - And yet another distraction from this brick and mortar blog... I've entered the world of podcasting with renowned animation director and historian Bob Jaques... 10 months ago

 **Likely Looney, Mostly Merrie**  
**That's all, folks!** - My posts have gotten thinner over the years. I'm aware of that. I've been hopeful for a long time, that I can remain active with blogging and sharing furth... 1 year ago

 **Dr. Grob's Animation Review**  
**The Flying Man** - 'The Flying Man' is a very short absurdist film in which a man drops his coat to take a swim in mid air. Another man with a dog drops by, tries the same th... 2 days ago

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