The BFI today announces full details of IT’S… MONTY PYTHON AT 50, a month-long season celebrating Monty Python – their roots, influences and subsequent work both as a group, and as individuals. The season, which takes place from 1 September – 1 October at BFI Southbank, forms part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of the beloved comedy group, whose seminal series Monty Python’s Flying Circus first aired on 5th October 1969. The season will include all the Monty Python feature films; oddities and unseen curios from the depths of the BFI National Archive and from Michael Palin’s personal collection of super 8mm films; back-to-back screenings of the entire series of Monty Python’s Flying Circus in a unique big-screen outing; and screenings of post-Python TV (Fawlty Towers, Out of the Trees, Ripping Yarns) and films (Jabberwocky, A Fish Called Wanda, Time Bandits, Wind in the Willows and more). There will also be rare screenings of pre-Python shows At Last the 1948 Show and Do Not Adjust Your Set, both of which will be released on BFI DVD on Monday 16 September, and a free exhibition of Python-related material from the BFI National Archive and The Monty Python Archive, and a Python takeover in the BFI Shop.

Reflecting on the legacy and approaching celebrations, the Pythons commented: “Python has survived because we live in an increasingly Pythonesque world. Extreme silliness seems more relevant now than it ever was.”

IT’S… MONTY PYTHON AT 50 programmers Justin Johnson and Dick Fiddy said: “We are delighted to share what is undoubtedly one of the most absurd seasons ever presented by the BFI, but even more delighted that it has been put together with help from the Pythons themselves and marked with their golden stamp of silliness. With this 50th anniversary season, the Pythons are now fully recognised as being 100% respectable and we guarantee that BFI Southbank will be home to thoroughly decent British vulgarity and comic irreverence from September 1st to October 1st, after which time we will go back to only playing titles with Le, La or Les in front of them.”

Special guests appearing on stage during the season will include: Python member Terry Gilliam, actor Carol Cleveland (Monty Python’s Flying Circus, Monty Python and the Holy Grail), actor and musician Neil Innes (Do Not Adjust Your Set, Monty Python’s Flying Circus), Bill Jones (son of Python member Terry Jones), editor Julian Doyle (Monty Python’s Life of Brian), Valerie Charlton (Supervising Model Maker, Time Bandits), actors Aimi Macdonald and Tim Brooke-Taylor (At Last the 1948 Show) and Monty Python’s US Manager Nancy Lewis. IT’S… MONTY PYTHON AT 50 will be the largest and silliest celebration of the ingenious sextet, the show and its many roots, branches and offshoots. Albatross!

In addition to the BFI Southbank season, further 50th anniversary will include a BBC takeover, the release of the fully restored Monty Python’s Flying Circus series, a series of new Monty Python radio programmes executive-produced by Michael Palin, and a World Record attempt for the ‘Largest Gathering of People Dressed as Gumbys’.
FULL PROGRAMME DETAILS

PYTHONS ON TV AND FILM
In a back-to-back binge worthy of Mr Creosote, BFI Southbank will screen all 24 hours of Monty Python’s Flying Circus over the weekend of 14-15 September; a rare opportunity for audiences to revisit The Ministry of Silly Walks, The Man with a Tape-Recorder Up His Nose and (unexpectedly) The Spanish Inquisition – all on the big screen. All three Python feature films will screen in the season, accompanied by Q&As and rarely seen material. Made on a very low budget with the intention of introducing the Pythons to the US market, all of the favourite early Flying Circus sketches were filmed without a live audience for And Now for Something Completely Different (Ian MacNaughton, 1971). Monty Python and the Holy Grail (Terry Gilliam, Terry Jones, 1975) will screen alongside The Quest for the Holy Grail Locations, in which Palin and Jones revisit the locations used on The Holy Grail, and a screening on Friday 20 September will be introduced by regular Python actor Neil Innes. On Friday 6 September, Editor Julian Doyle will introduce Monty Python’s Life of Brian (Terry Jones, 1979) which will be paired with Away From It All (John Cleese, Clare Taylor, 1979), a Pythonesque extra that originally accompanied the Life of Brian release. The final Python feature Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life (Terry Jones, Terry Gilliam, 1983) will screen with The Crimson Permanent Assurance (Terry Gilliam, 1983) about a group of accountants who mutiny against their bosses in favour of a pirate’s life.

PYTHONS DOCS AND LIVE SHOWS
It will screen with Pythonland (Ralph Lee, 1999), a Michael Palin travelogue in which he revisits the Python TV locations, and be introduced by the Python’s US Manager Nancy Lewis on Sunday 1 September and by regular Python actor Carol Cleveland on Saturday 7 September. Filmed during their four-day run at the Bowl in 1980, and released after the huge success of Life of Brian, Monty Python Live at the Hollywood Bowl (Terry Hughes (live footage), Ian MacNaughton (film footage), 1982) gives a sense of the rock-star status Python achieved worldwide, with an adoring and vocal crowd interacting throughout. Alongside Python (and pre-Python) live sketches is material from the German TV special Monty Python’s Fliegender Zirkus (Ian Macnaughton, 1972).

Monty Python: The Meaning of Live (Roger Graef, James Ragan, 2014) is a candid and revealing documentary that follows the Python team as they re-form and play a marathon 10 shows at The O2 Arena in London. With unprecedented access, this observational portrait reveals the humour, chaos and passion that went into creating the shows. It also includes newly found archive revealing how Monty Python pioneered stadium comedy, with rare footage from early live shows. Also filmed around the same time was And Now for Something Rather Similar (Jack Cocker, 2014), part of Alan Yentob’s Imagine series; this film presents one of the most telling observations of the Python era, which is both uncompromising and unsentimental. The screening on Thursday 5 September will be followed by a panel discussion, with guests to be announced soon.

PYTHON INFLUENCES
The season will offer audiences a chance to discover the people and shows that inspired the comedy sextet, beginning with a special event on Tuesday 17 September dedicated to Ernie Kovacs. Kovacs was a mercurial American comedy talent whose brilliant, sometimes surreal, visual gags proved to be a strong influence on the young Terry Gilliam. For this timely tribute, in his centenary year, Terry Gilliam will introduce a bespoke compilation featuring highlights from Kovacs’ career, one that was cut tragically short due to his death in a road accident in 1962. On Wednesday 4 September there will be a screening of Michael Palin & John Cleese’s Pick of Python Influences, including Q5 (BBC, 1969) a surreal television comedy sketch show written by Spike Milligan and Neil Shand, The Goon Show: Tales of Men’s Shirts (Thames Television, 1968) who both Palin and Cleese cite as an influence, and Not Only... But Also (BBC ,1965), the famous Peter Cook and Dudley Moore series, chosen by Cleese as a particular influence.

PRE-PYTHON PICKS
On Monday 16 September the BFI will release new collector’s editions of two of the most influential comedy sketch shows in TV history. Do Not Adjust Your Set (ITV, 1967-69), produced by Humphrey Barclay, first for Rediffusion Television and later Thames Television, which helped launch the careers of future Pythons Palin, Jones, Idle and Gilliam, as well as actors David Jason and Denise Coffey. At Last the 1948 Show (ITV, 1967) was made by Rediffusion Television and was executive produced by David Frost. It was written and performed by some of the UK’s best loved comedians: John Cleese, Graham Chapman, Marty Feldman, future ‘Goodie’ Tim Brooke-Taylor, and Aimi MacDonald. Both releases are 3-DVD sets and will be lovingly curated, complete with all the existing episodes.
(including many previously thought lost) and packed with new interviews and archival extras. On **Sunday 8 September** BFI Southbank will host two events to launch the releases, featuring exclusive previews of extra materials and newly recovered episodes of the shows. At **Last the 1948 Show** actors Aimi Macdonald and Tim Brooke-Taylor will take part in a Q&A following the event celebrating the show, while following the **Do Not Adjust Your Set** event there will be a discussion with guests to be announced.

Further **Pre-Python Picks** will be screened in a bespoke compilation event on **Friday 13 September**; vintage clips from shows such as **The Complete and Utter History of Britain**, **The Frost Report**, **How to Irritate People** and others will feature various Pythons in action (as performers and writers) before they came together for **Flying Circus**.

**ODDITIES AND RARITIES, INCLUDING MICHAEL PALIN’S HOME MOVIES**
The season will include two programmes of **Oddities and Rarities**, with everything from corporate videos to guest spots, plus a unique chance to see some of **Michael Palin’s Super 8mm Film** on the big screen.

The first film will feature footage shot by Palin in Jersey in autumn 1971 of which he said:
“I had a morning off and took film of the preparation for a sequence in which John Cleese as Moore holds up a passing stagecoach. Looking back now, I realise that the unique aspect of filming I captured that day was its boredom. In that way it is, at least, an honest bit of footage and remains almost the only movie material of Python at work in those early days of the TV series.”

The second film will feature material Palin shot in Barbados in 1978, of which he said:
“The Pythons assembled to pull together the script of **Life of Brian** in the idyllic surroundings of Heron Bay, a house loaned to us by a friend of Eric’s. Believe it or not, despite the glimpses of bronzed Pythons larking about and eating and drinking, we achieved an awful lot during our time there.”

**POST-PYTHON PICKS**
Following **Flying Circus** and the subsequent film, the Pythons all had incredibly successful careers in film and TV, be it as performers, writers or directors. On **Tuesday 17 September**, **Terry Gilliam** will introduce a screening of his first solo outing as director, **Jabberwocky** (1977); this comic fantasy utilised Gilliam’s visual skills and eye for detail to great effect. Gilliam’s **Time Bandits** (1981) sees a band of outlaws use time holes to jump between different historic events, meeting Robin Hood, Napoleon and Agamemnon on the way. The screening on **Saturday 7 September** will be introduced by **Valerie Charlton, Supervising Model Maker** on the film. In **A Fish Called Wanda** (Charles Chirchton, 1988) a couple of American jewel thieves plan to cheat their cohorts after a successful job, but end up involving an unwitting barrister who falls for Wanda, the brains of the operation. This hugely enjoyable comic heist was co-written by John Cleese, directed by Ealing veteran Charles Chirchton (**The Lavender Hill Mob**) and features great turns by all the leads. On **Wednesday 4 September** BFI Southbank will screen the UK **Restoration Premiere** of Richard Loncraine’s **The Missionary** (1982), scripted by and starring Michael Palin as a missionary who is given a role supporting women in London’s East End, under the patronage of Lady Ames, brilliantly played by Maggie Smith.

Terry Jones writes, directs and co-stars in the comic romp **Erik the Viking** (1989) about a Erik, a Viking who renounces the more unsavoury aspects of being a Viking warrior and sets off for Valhalla to lobby the gods to end Ragnarok, a series of terrible, world-shattering events. The screening on **Wednesday 18 September** will be introduced by Terry Jones’ son **Bill Jones**. In **Yellowbeard** (Mel Damski, 1983), the titular pirate is released from jail and sets sail to track down the treasure he buried many years earlier. The film boasts an incredible cast of some of the UK’s greatest comic and acting talents, including Pythons Chapman, Idle and Cleese. Kenneth Grahame’s classic tale **The Wind In The Willows** (Terry Jones, 1996) about a vain toad who’s always bailed out by his friends gets a Pythonesque makeover with Terry Jones writing, directing and starring, alongside a fine comedy cast including Eric Idle, Steve Coogan and Stephen Fry.

Eric Idle’s brilliant mockumentary on the rise of the ‘Pre-Fab Four’ **The Rutles: All You Need Is Cash** (Eric Idle, Gary Weis, 1978) perfectly blended the worlds of Python and The Beatles. He was ably assisted by ex-Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band member **Neil Innes**, whose Beatle pastiche songs would become fan favourites and stand the test of time; Inness will take part in a Q&A following a screening on **Friday 20 September**, and the film will also screen alongside an episode of **Rutland Weekend Television** (BBC, 1976), which introduced the world to The Rutles. In **The Rise and Rise of Michael Rimmer** (Kevin Billington, 1970), Michael Rimmer turns up at a small advertising agency and soon makes a meteoric rise up a ladder that knows no end. With Downing Street in his sights, his unstoppable ambition
sees many falling in his wake. Chapman and Cleese wrote the script with Peter Cook and Kevin Billington, and the resulting comedy features appearances from stars such as Harold Pinter, Denholm Elliott and Dennis Price.

On **Wednesday 25 September** there will be a compilation of TV made by the Python’s including John Cleese’s legendary sitcom *Fawlty Towers* (BBC, 1975), *Ripping Yarns* (BBC, 1976), in which Michael Palin and Terry Jones turned to adventure stories for inspiration and *Out of the Trees* (BBC, 1976) in which Graham Chapman teamed up with writer Douglas Adams for a comedy series that never went beyond a pilot. When *Flying Circus* finished, many TV pundits heralded the death of the sketch show, as the Python’s brilliant deconstruction of the genre seemed to make it impossible to launch a traditional sketch show. However, *Not the Nine O’Clock News* brilliantly demonstrated this wasn’t the case and delivered a fast-paced, contemporary, cutting-edge show that took pot shots at late-70s and 80s Britain – lampooning pop videos, breakfast TV, punk rock and Margaret Thatcher. On **Monday 30 September** we’ll host a special 40th anniversary event with the show’s producer, **John Lloyd**, and other guests to be announced, to revisit this fondly remembered series and consider the influence Monty Python had on it.

**MEZZANINE GALLERY EXHIBIT**

From **Friday 13 September – Sunday 13 October**, the Mezzanine Gallery in BFI Southbank will play host to *Monty Python Explodes!*, a free exhibition that takes us behind the scenes of their most well-known works and includes never-before-seen working papers, photographs, publicity and more drawn from the **BFI National Archive** and the **Monty Python Archive**. The BFI Reuben Library will also mark the anniversary with a specially curated display (from 1-30 September) dedicated to all things Chapman, Cleese, Gilliam, Idle, Jones and Palin – covering their TV and film work, as well as their solo endeavours and collaborations.


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**SEASON LISTINGS:**

**And Now for Something Completely Different**  
+ Q&A with actor Carol Cleveland**  
+ intro by Nancy Lewis, Monty Python’s US Manager*


**+ Pythonland**  
**UK 1999. Dir Ralph Lee. 25min**

**SUN 1 SEP 17:30 NFT1*/ SAT 7 SEP 15:20 NFT3**

**Monty Python and the Holy Grail + intro by actor and musician Neil Innes*  

**+ The Quest for the Holy Grail Locations (47min)**

**SUN 1 SEP 20:00 NFT1 / FRI 20 SEP 20:40 NFT1* / SUN 22 SEP 15:00 NFT1**

**Monty Python’s Life of Brian + intro by editor Julian Doyle*  
Away From It All
UK 1979. Dirs John Cleese, Clare Taylor. With John Cleese. 13min
FRI 6 SEP 20:30 NFT1* / MON 9 SEP 20:40 NFT2 / SUN 22 SEP 18:00 NFT1

Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life
+ The Crimson Permanent Assurance
UK 1983. Dir Terry Gilliam. 16min
THU 19 SEP 18:10 NFT1 / SUN 22 SEP 20:20 NFT1

Monty Python Live at the Hollywood Bowl
UK 1982. Dir Terry Hughes (live footage), Ian MacNaughton (film footage). With John Cleese, Michael Palin, Graham Chapman, Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones. 80min. Format tbc. 15
+ Monty Python’s Fliegender Zirkus
BBC 1972. Dir Ian Macnaughton. Ep 1 45min
FRI 13 SEP 20:30 NFT3 / SUN 29 SEP 17:15 NFT3

Jabberwocky + intro by director Terry Gilliam*
TUE 17 SEP 20:40 NFT1* / FRI 27 SEP 18:10 NFT2

A Fish Called Wanda
UK-USA 1988. Dir Charles Chrichton. With John Cleese, Jamie Lee Curtis, Kevin Kline, Michael Palin. 108min. 35mm. 15
SUN 8 SEP 20:15 NFT1 / SUN 15 SEP 20:10 NFT3

UK Restoration Premiere: The Missionary
UK 1982. Dir Richard Loncraine. With Michael Palin, Maggie Smith, Trevor Howard, Denholm Elliott. 86min. Digital. 15
WED 4 SEP 20:45 NFT1

Erik the Viking + intro by Bill Jones, son of Terry Jones*
WED 18 SEP 20:40 NFT2* / SUN 29 SEP 14:40 NFT3

Yellowbeard
UK-Mexico 1983. Dir Mel Damski. With Graham Chapman, Marty Feldman, Peter Cook, Eric Idle. 96min. Digital. 15
MON 16 SEP 18:20 NFT3 / MON 30 SEP 20:30 NFT2

The Rise and Rise of Michael Rimmer
UK 1970. Dir Kevin Billington. With Peter Cook, Vanessa Howard, Arthur Lowe, John Cleese, Graham Chapman. 98min. 35mm. 15
MON 23 SEP 18:20 NFT3 / TUE 1 OCT 20:40 NFT2

Time Bandits + intro by Valerie Charlton, Supervising Model Maker*
SAT 7 SEP 13:10 NFT1* / SAT 14 SEP 18:20 NFT1

Monty Python: The Meaning of Live
UK TV Gold 2014. Dirs Roger Graef, James Rogan. 90min
FRI 27 SEP 20:20 NFT3

And Now for Something Rather Similar + discussion
BBC Imagine 2014. Dir Jack Cocker. TRT 110min
THU 5 SEP 18:20 NFT1

The Complete Monty Python’s Flying Circus
Tickets £6.50 per four-hour session, day ticket £15, two-day ticket £25
SAT 14 SEP STUDIO / SUN 15 SEP STUDIO

Terry Gilliam Introduces Ernie Kovacs
Clip compilation + discussion. TRT c100min
TUE 17 SEP 18:30 NFT1

Michael Palin & John Cleese's Pick of Python Influences
Q5
BBC 1969. Dir Ian MacNaughton. With Spike Milligan, John Bluthal. 30min
+ The Goon Show: Tales of Men's Shirts
Thames Television 1968. Dir Joe McGrath. With Spike Milligan, Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe. 25min
+ Not Only... But Also
BBC 1965. Dir Joe McGrath. With Peter Cook, Dudley Moore. 45min
WED 4 SEP 18:10 NFT1

At Last the 1948 Show + Q&A with actors Aimi Macdonald and Tim Brooke-Taylor
SUN 8 SEP 15:00 NFT1

Do Not Adjust Your Set + discussion
ITV 1968. Dir Daphne Shadwell. With Eric Idle, Michael Palin, Terry Jones, David Jason, Denise Coffey. TRT 110min
SUN 8 SEP 17:40 NFT1

Pre-Python Picks
TRT 95min
FRI 13 SEP 18:10 NFT3

Oddities and Rarities Part 1
TRT c.90min
+ Palin’s Home Movies #1
SUN 15 SEP 15:20 NFT1 / SAT 28 SEP 16:00 NFT1

Oddities and Rarities Part 2
TRT c.90min
+ Palin’s Home Movies #2
MON 16 SEP 20:45 NFT1 / SAT 28 SEP 18:30 NFT1

Fawlty Towers
+ Ripping Yarns
BBC 1976. Dirs Terry Hughes, Jim Franklin, Alan JW Bell. With Michael Palin, Terry Jones, Charles McKeown. 30min
+ Out of the Trees
BBC 1976. Dirs Bernard Thompson, Ian MacNaughton. With Graham Chapman, Maria Aitken, Simon Jones, Mark Wing-Davey. 30min
WED 25 SEP 18:10 NFT3

The Rutles: All You Need Is Cash + Q&A with actor and musician Neil Innes
+ Rutland Weekend Television
FRI 20 SEP 18:00 NFT3

Not the Nine O’Clock News at 40 + discussion
BBC 1979. Dirs Bill Wilson, Geoff Posner, Bob Spiers. With Rowan Atkinson, Mel Smith, Pamela Stephenson. TRT 100min
MON 30 SEP 18:10 NFT1

The Wind In The Willows
UK 1996. Dir Terry Jones. With Terry Jones, Eric Idle, Steve Coogan, Stephen Fry. 87min. 35mm. U
SUN 29 SEP 12:30 NFT3

Monty Python Explodes!
FROM FRI 13 SEP-SUN 13 OCT MEZZANINE GALLERY

Collections Focus: And now for something completely different... Monty Python at 50!
BFI REUBEN LIBRARY 1-30 SEP

About the BFI
The BFI is the UK’s lead organisation for film, television and the moving image. It is a cultural charity that:
• Curates and presents the greatest international public programme of World Cinema for audiences; in cinemas, at festivals and online
• Cares for the BFI National Archive – the most significant film and television archive in the world
• Actively seeks out and supports the next generation of filmmakers
• Works with Government and industry to make the UK the most creatively exciting and prosperous place to make film internationally

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

BFI Southbank
The BFI Southbank is open to all. BFI members are entitled to a discount on all tickets. BFI Southbank Box Office tel: 020 7928 3232. Unless otherwise stated tickets are £13.75, concs £11.25 including Gift Aid donation. Members pay £2.20 less on any ticket - www.bfi.org.uk/southbank.
Young people aged 25 and under can buy last minute tickets for just £3, 45 minutes before the start of screenings and events, subject to availability - http://www.bfi.org.uk/25-and-under.
Tickets for FREE screenings and events must be booked in advance by calling the Box Office to avoid disappointment

BFI Shop
The BFI Shop is stocked and staffed by BFI experts with over 1,200 book titles and 1,000 DVDs to choose from, including hundreds of acclaimed books and DVDs produced by the BFI.

BFI Reuben Library
BFI Southbank is home to the BFI Reuben Library which holds the world’s largest collection of books, journals and digitised material about film, television and the moving image. The library is free to access and hosts a year-round programme of talks and events.

'Not just for movie nerds - this huge collection of film and TV books, periodicals, scripts, stills and posters is full of inspiration for anyone involved in the creative arts’ – Evening Standard Magazine

The BFI Reuben Library is open 10:30-19:00, Tuesday-Saturday.

The benugo bar & kitchen
Eat, drink and be merry in panoramic daylight. benugo’s décor is contemporary, brightly lit and playful with a lounge space, bar and dining area. The place to network, hang out, unpack a film, savour the best of Modern British or sip on a cocktail.

There’s more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archival collections, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you.

BFI Mediatheque
Free to access BFI Mediatheques offer users an opportunity to explore the digital collections drawn from the BFI National Archive and partner collections, at select UK-wide locations.

*** PICTURE DESK ***
A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting BFI Southbank can be found via the link below:
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/bvv5defzi4rm5bg/AABM_AW1iEB18kPTK1CVNSUia?dl=0
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