



Photo credit: BFI/Archbuild/Associated Rediffusion.

Top left – right: Opening title for *At Last the 1948 Show*; Marty Feldman and John Cleese in *The Bookshop Sketch*; an exciting climax to a crime-caper detective sketch *Mice Laugh Softly Charlotte*; Graham Chapman and Tim Brooke-Taylor see a sheep dog go out of control

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**BFI ANNOUNCES RE-DISCOVERY OF PRE-PYTHON CLASSIC TV SERIES
'AT LAST THE 1948 SHOW'**

**Radio Times Festival will be the first chance to see British comedy
programme since original broadcast 48 years ago**

Following the BFI's rediscovery of two episodes of the much-loved and highly influential comedy series, *At Last the 1948 Show* last year a member of the public has come forward

with a further two episodes starring John Cleese, Tim Brooke-Taylor, Marty Feldman, Graham Chapman, Bill Oddie, Eric Idle and “the lovely” Aimi Macdonald. One of the discoveries - Episode 3, of the first series of *At Last the 1948 Show* (tx. 1/3/1967) will be screened at the Radio Times Festival at Hampton Court on 25 September. The programme features a legendary sketch which John Cleese considers one of his best, The Bookshop; Cleese plays an exasperated shop owner dealing with the increasingly surreal requests for books by a very demanding Marty Feldman (Copperfield with one ‘p’).

At Last the 1948 Show is a landmark in British television comedy. The extraordinary early flowering of its surreal, British humour led to the creation by some of the same team of the Monty Python programmes two years later.

Twenty five years ago only two episodes of the series were known to survive but happily rediscoveries from various sources mean that today, of the thirteen episodes which were produced, eleven episodes are now safely contained in the BFI National Archive. However, audio recordings do survive of the remaining missing shows.

Ben Preston, Radio Times Editor, says: *“I’m delighted that Radio Times Festival goers will be the first to be able to watch one of the most important TV comedies. The 1948 Show inspired Monty Python, The Goodies and a host of greats. Finding a comedy unseen for years starring John Cleese, Marty Feldman, Tim Brooke Taylor, Graham Chapman and Eric Idle is finding the missing link.”*

Steve Bryant, Senior Curator, Television, BFI National Archive said, *“Once almost forgotten, the recovery and restoration of episodes of At Last the 1948 Show by the BFI over the past 25 years has led to it being acknowledged as one of the key milestones of British television comedy. Now we have another two missing episodes, and a third which was missing a brief segment, and the archive’s collection is almost complete – but the search still goes on. It is particularly gratifying to get back the Bookshop Sketch, one of the show’s great classics and recognised as such by John Cleese in his recent autobiography.”*

At Last the 1948 Show is a comedy sketch show offering a range of spoofs of different broadcasting formats and occasional long-running gags, such as the recurring appearance of “the lovely” Aimi Macdonald as a presenter between sketches, under the impression that she is the star of the show. In one linking item she utters the words, *“And now for something completely different...”* the continuity announcement cliché which would resurface as a recurring motif in *Monty Python’s Flying Circus*.

Steve Bryant, Senior Curator, Television, BFI National Collection is available for interview.

Notes to editors:

At Last the 1948 Show will be shown at a **BFI Session: Missing Believed Wiped Special** at the **Radio Times Festival** at the Green at Hampton Court Palace at 2.30pm on Friday 25 September.

The BFI are also hosting three further sessions at the festival: *A History of Radio Times*, *The Ultimate Quiz with Richard Osman* and *ITV 1964*

For further information visit www.radiotimesfestival.com

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About the BFI

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world

Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

About the BFI National Archive

The BFI National Archive was founded in 1935 and has grown to become the one of the largest and most important collections of film and television in the world with over 180,000 films and 770,000 television programmes. For over 80 years the BFI has been an international leader in film preservation and guardian of Britain's unparalleled film and TV heritage. The BFI is an innovator in presenting films to audiences in new and dynamic ways, from cinemas to film festivals, outdoor events to online video-on-demand. At the heart of all its activities is the BFI's central aim to ensure that everyone in the UK has access to the widest possible range of film and their own film heritage.

That heritage includes all time great British directors Alfred Hitchcock, David Lean and Powell and Pressburger; and the rich vein of documentary filmmaking, in which Britain led the world, including the lyrical work of Humphrey Jennings. The archive also boasts significant Special Collections of filmmakers' papers, including the papers of David Lean, Ken Loach and David Puttnam, as well as extensive stills, posters and production and costume designs along with original scripts, press books and related ephemera.

Expert teams undertake the time-consuming and complex task of restoring films at the BFI John Paul Getty Jr Conservation Centre in Hertfordshire. The BFI's most precious film materials are kept in optimum conditions in the world-leading Master Film Store in Warwickshire.

***** PICTURE DESK *****

A selection of images for journalistic use can be found at www.image.net under BFI / BFI National Archive / Missing Believed Wiped / At Last the 1948 Show

Media clip available: a 20 second extract featuring John Cleese is available