Life With The Lyons

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By Phil Watson

2003-2014

This BBC radio comedy series, probably the first sitcom in Britain, ran for twelve years between 1950 and 1961, and starred American movie stars Ben Lyon and Bebe Daniels, and their children Barbara and Richard. It broke the mold of BBC radio comedy of the day, which usually comprised sketches alternating with musical items or guest star spots.

Bebe & Ben

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Bebe Daniels was born in Dallas, Texas, on January 14th, 1901, and went into silent films in her early teens in westerns and Hal Roach comedies. She dated stars such as Harold Lloyd, and became a big star in 1920 after she signed for Paramount and Cecil B. DeMille. She was one of Hollywood's top stars during the silent era, but when sound was introduced in the late 1920's her career faltered.

Ben Lyon was born on February 6th, 1901, in Atlanta, Georgia. He always wanted to be an actor, working in stock companies for several years, drifting into Hollywood and films in 1923, working in supporting roles, continuing with stage work when he could get it.

Ben & Bebe met in New York in 1925. She didn't like him and they didn't meet again until 1928 in Hollywood at a bridge party, recreated years later in one of Bebe's radio scripts.

When the talkies came in, Bebe's contract expired and not renewed. With few offers in the new talkies, she worked for a part of the profits of "Rio Rita", which became an unexpected hit, and she made a lot of money.

Ben signed for Sam Goldwyn, made his way up the ladder in films, and was in the smash hit "Hell's Angels" in 1928, mainly because he was one of the few actors who were qualified pilots. Bebe was impressed that he could fly and they started dating. Ben was financially wiped out by the Wall Street crash of 1929, but eventually repaid all his debts, with Bebe's help. They married on June 14th 1930, and on September 9th 1931 their daughter Barbara was born.

Ben & Bebe first visited England in 1933 for a theatre tour, just after Bebe filmed a supporting role in the smash hit "42nd Street". On their return they continued working but they were frightened by a kidnap attempt on Barbara, one of many involving actors' families, following the Lindberg baby murder case. They had an armed bodyguard look after the child but decided to work in England for a while until things settled down at home. They worked with variety acts, playing a married couple in a cross-talking squabble routine. They were a big hit in England, making several tours. In 1937 they adopted a son, Richard, moving their home to London later that year with their children.

They worked on independent radio, recording transcriptions with Tommy Handley in London but broadcast from Luxembourg. In early 1939 they sent their children back to America due to the impending war. However, unlike many American entertainers, they elected to stay in London, living in Southwick Street in Paddington.

They devised the radio variety show "Hi Gang" which was broadcast "from the heart of London" each week from 26th May 1940. Bebe wrote the scripts, and Vic Oliver and Benny Lee joked and sang. They were bombed out of several theatres, eventually moving to the underground Paris Theatre, in Lower Regent Street, which became the most popular BBC studio for comedy and light entertainment for over forty years, until its closure in 1995. Radio audiences became very loyal to the Lyons for remaining in the capital, among the bombing, when they could have escaped back home. They continued to work on stage, both in London and around the country. They earned long term respect from the British public for braving the danger when so many others left.

They made a low-budget film of "Hi Gang" in 1941 which was very popular.

When America joined the war, Ben & Bebe devised a coast to coast American show, "Stars & Stripes in Britain" for their servicemen in England to pass messages to their families back home. "Here's Wishing You Well" was another of Bebe's shows aimed at the Armed Forces in England. In 1942 Ben, forty-one years old, joined the US Air Force in England and Bebe visited troops overseas, broadcasting right up to enemy lines. Recordings still exist of her chatting to soldiers while shells explode nearby. As a result, she was decorated by the US Government for her war efforts.

After the war they went home to collect their children, and Ben joined 20th Century Fox as casting director, signing and renaming Marilyn Monroe. They soon returned to London, Ben working for Fox as casting director for the UK, working on his radio and stage career when he could. Hi Gang continued after the war, until it ran out of steam in 1949.

Life With The Lyons

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Bebe Daniels, the creative side of the couple, came up with the format of the Lyons playing themselves, with Ben working for a film company, living in London, bringing up their children, even giving their (almost correct) home address.

From 1950 to 1961 we listened to them raising their children, watching them mature, get engaged and married. She made them larger than life, but basically they played themselves. Bebe was the scatterbrain, Ben the authoritarian father, Barbara the teenager flitting from romance to romance with the catchphrase "I'll die...... I'll just die" when things went wrong. Richard would do anything for a shilling but never spent one. They had a hard time with Barbara & Richard who didn't want the discipline of a regular radio show, with Bebe's rules - no nights out, no onions or garlic, before a broadcast. Barbara especially became a "star" in her own mind until Bebe sorted her out.

Bebe worked as script editor from the writers' layouts, honing the scripts until she was happy. They recorded rehearsals, playing the acetates that night to cut out unsuccessful lines, or make improvements. Acting was second nature to her, but praise for her scripts brought her real pleasure. Bebe finalised the scripts in her basement at Southwick Street, from drafts by Bob Block, Ronnie Hanbury and others, including at one time Bob Monkhouse. Brad Ashton was brought in to help following Ronnie Hanbury's death in a car crash in France.

During out-of-season breaks each year, they went back to America where in 1954 Bebe was surprised by "This Is Your Life", thinking she was going to praise Louella Parsons.

The Supporting Cast

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The regular cast was ITMA's Molly Weir as their housekeeper Aggie, another ITMA team member Horace Percival as neighbour Mr. Wimple, Doris Rogers as Bebe's friend Florrie Wainwright, Ian Sadler as her henpecked husband George, Hugh Morton as Ben's boss, Mr. Fox (sic), with future Carry On star Charles Hawtrey popping up in several small roles from time to time.

When Richard was called into the American Army to do his national service in 1955, they wrote in a second son to replace him while he was away. Robin was played by the youngster Richard Bellaers, but Richard Lyon failed the medical and was sent home. They had to write him back into the series, and until 1957 both "sons" appeared. Unfortunately the episodes in which Robin joined and left the cast have been lost so the explanations in the scripts are unknown. Bellaers left the series when his voice broke, later leaving acting to become a jazz musician, until he retired to Somerset. Despite Molly Weir's claim, he never worked as a BOAC pilot.

Guest stars such as Vic Oliver, Richard Murdoch, Robert Beatty, Dick Bentley and boxer Len Harvey appeared from time to time.

Films and Television

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They made two films "Life With The Lyons" in 1953 and "The Lyons In Paris" in 1954, for Hammer/Exclusive Films. While the latter was partly filmed in Paris, they were cheaply made and are sad final film appearances for the former Hollywood stars.

In the mid 50's they took "Life With The Lyons" to BBC Television for four episodes in 1955 and another four in 1956, all transmitted live every two weeks. They were made after the radio series has finished, so they were not working in both media at the same time.

After those two short series, they went to the ITV company Associated Rediffusion. There they made 9 episodes in 1957/8, 10 in 1958/9, again transmitted live every two weeks, and 13 in 1960, shown weekly. During January 1959, they were busy recording the radio series while working on the TV series. Usually they made sure they made the TV series when the radio series were off-air.

No episodes survive in the archives of the BBC or the present owners of Associated Rediffusion. One episode from the BBC exists in the British Film Institute, but none of the A-R series were thought to exist until an episode turned up in America where it had been offered to US networks in the 1950s, and was released in the 1990s on videotape as part of a series of unsold pilots.

Later TV stars Wilfred Brambell (Steptoe & Son), Richard Thorpe (Emmerdale), and Geoffrey Palmer (As Time Goes By) made early appearances in the TV series.

But the Lyons always had the radio series as well. There were over 250 episodes, listed after this article.

In 1957 Richard was in a car accident with his then-fiancee, film starlet Jill Ireland. Despite several injuries, he missed only one radio recording. Shortly afterwards she dumped him when she met and quickly married David McCallum, later known for the hit TV series "The Man From Uncle". Richard began to suffer from depression, which plagued him for many years.

In 1959 they moved to Abbottsbury Road, Kensington, because Southwick Street was being demolished to make way for a new road, and Bebe and Richard opened an antique shop on Kensington High Street.

By 1961 Ben was becoming concerned at Bebe's health. Always active, and involved in every facet of the series, she became very stressed. Ben decided to take a desk job with the ITV company, Associated Rediffusion, and closed down "Life With The Lyons", leaving the BBC.

After Life With The Lyons

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Molly Weir in particular was badly affected, not working for thirteen months. She later became a very busy supporting actress, working throughout the next four decades until retiring in 1988, aged 78. She died in London on November 28th 2004, aged 94.

Horace Percival died a few months after the series ended, on 9th November, 1961, aged about 75.

Doris Rogers worked in supporting roles through the sixties, and then retired. Her death date has not been traced. IMDB reports her last role was in 1975 and she was the mother of character actor Colin Blakely (1930-1987).

Charles Hawtrey, who played several small roles throughout the 1950s, became a star in the "Carry On" film series, and died on 27th October 1988, aged 74.

Harry Fowler, who also played several roles, became a TV star in the late 1950's in "The Army Game", and then a businessman, and died January 4, 2012.

The others in the cast moved onto other roles on the radio or whatever work they could get.

Barbara

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Barbara had been briefly engaged to George F. Getty, son of one of the world's richest men, in 1950. She was a fair singer and in the mid '50s made several records for Columbia and Capitol Records, gaining chart success with a couple. She was top of the bill in a variety show celebrating Independent Television's launch in 1955, and even had a short-lived TV musical series called Dreamtime With Barbara, produced by Russell Turner.

She carried on recording, with a single in 1960 for the legendary producer Joe Meek, on his Triumph label. It didn't sell. When the radio series finished, Barbara, who had married and divorced Russell Turner during the show's run, tried to pick up her career.

She is not to be confused with the American Barbara Lyon who worked on "Sale Of The Century", and had bit parts in television shows such as "McHale's Navy" and "My Three Sons".

She couldn't get work so around 1970 she retired. She had remarried, to Colin Burkitt, her accountant, now deceased, and had a son, Bruce, now an estate agent in the London area.

When traced in 2003, he said he had a few tapes of the radio shows, but none of the lost episodes, and is not in contact with the rest of the Lyon family. He really didn't know his mother until he was older as she often went to America to see Ben, leaving him with his paternal grandparents for long periods.

He appeared on British television in January 2004 in a reality show "Boss Swap" when he came over as a successful, if unlikeable, businessman. Indeed his company has convictions for illegal professional practices.

When Ben died, Barbara was again divorced, and his death "left Barbara profoundly saddened, and she seemed to lose one of the props of her life. Her life lost momentum and she was forced to exchange an ample central London home for a flat in a featureless suburb" according to an obituary.

She lived alone in Maida Vale, in very poor health after several strokes and in early 1995 she was placed by her son Bruce in Brinsworth House, the entertainment industry's home for retired performers, unable to look after herself, probably after another stroke. She died of a brain haemorrhage in a London hospital on 10th July, 1995. Richard did not attend her funeral as they had been estranged for some time.

Richard

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Richard, who had appeared in several films in supporting roles, made an unsuccessful pop record in the 1950's for Fontana, and worked as a disc jockey for EMI on Radio Luxemburg in the early '60's. He married Angela Ferguson, a dancer to whom he had become engaged during LWTL (she appeared in several episodes), raising two children, Timothy Daniels DeForrest Benjamin and Penelope. Always a keen amateur photographer, he got a job with the British Film Institute as their official photographer around 1970.

In 1986 Richard donated his father's collection of radio recordings to the BBC, but when auditioned they were deemed unsuitable for broadcast. The BBC were about to scrap the tapes when they were contacted by the late Barry Hill, owner of ORCA, the Old Time Radio archive, based in Leeds at the time. Hill agreed to take the reels from the BBC for his archive and copy them for release to members of his library.

Richard moved to Wales, working for a charity. Although his son Tim and ex-wife Angela have been traced, Richard was unwilling to discuss his career and refused to be interviewed. He appears to have been very bitter about his show business career.

The BFI were trying to trace him at the turn of the century to obtain his permission to include some of his photographs in their 50th Anniversary Exhibition, but were unable to find him. In December 2004 his son Tim reported he has finally found a copy of Richard's only record. One side features on You-Tube at the time of writing.

IMDB reported Richard died in Dafen, Llanelli, South Wales, on October 16, 2013, aged 79.

Bebe

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Bebe suffered a stroke in May, 1963, so she and Ben moved from Abbottsbury Road into a flat in Dolphin Square in central London to avoid stairs. She had a second stroke in 1970 and died on 16th March, 1971. After cremation at Golders Green Crematorium, her ashes were placed in her mother's grave in a London cemetery. Bebe's mother had always lived with them in England until her death in 1959, although the fact was never mentioned in LWTL.

After her death Ben donated Bebe's collection of memorabilia from her long career to the British Film Institute's archives. They hold three very large and fragile scrapbooks holding news cuttings etc going back to the silent movie days. They may be made available to researchers on request but they have not been examined for many years. They are housed in a purpose built cabinet in the archives.

Ben

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Soon after Bebe's death, Ben retired to California, leaving his children living their own lives in England. He remarried, to old friend Marion Nixon, and worked on cruise ships, reminiscing about his time in Hollywood and telling show business stories to the passengers. He died on such a trip on the QE2 on March 23rd, 1979, near Hawaii, while working with songwriter & singer Hubert Gregg.

At some point he had recovered Bebe's ashes, which were placed next to his in Hollywood Forever, a cemetery in Los Angeles County, California, USA. They are located at the Chapel columbarium, second floor, niche 7-8, tier 3, North wall.

Availability of "Life With The Lyons"

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Many episodes of the radio show survive among collectors, but they have not been broadcast for many years. In the 1970s the BBC destroyed whole warehouses of old radio show discs, retaining only a few representative samples of entertainment series such as the Lyons.

Four episodes were released in 1991 in the BBC's Radio Collection series of twin cassettes, but no further sets were released. Happily, over 100 episodes are available on rental from ORCA, taken from Ben Lyon's own reels donated by Richard to the BBC. Unfortunately they were incomplete, and over 20 episodes are entirely lost. Until Barry Hill's death in October 2004 he occasionally worked on Ben Lyon's decaying old tape reels, copying them for issue for ORCA members. Other episodes are available from various collectors in Australia and America.

A partial revival

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In 2003 the two Hammer/Exclusive films were released in the UK on a two DVD set, and the new BBC digital radio station, BBC7, broadcast "Crooner In The House" in May 2003, as part of a series of the best comedy shows of the 1950's. Featuring Ronnie Harris, it led to the release of a CD featuring Barbara Lyon and Ronnie Harris, from the vaults of Columbia, on the Vocalion label in the UK in late 2004.

More radio episodes have been played on BBC Radio 4 Extra (formerly BBC7) in the years since 2010, donated by listeners.

Regrettably this fine show is history. It's warm, funny, old fashioned yet reassuring. They may have been movie stars, but they had the same ups and downs in life as the rest of us. Over the years the series presented a fictional front to the real lives behind the scripts, yet listeners grew to believe that the radio series was their real lives. In a way it was, because most events in their lives were adapted and portrayed on radio.

PART TWO

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Complete Radio episode listing, prepared by David J. Elliott, assisted by Barry Hill, Penny Fabb & Graeme Stevenson of ORCA, and Julie Snelling at BBC Written Archives. Intros for later series by Phil Watson to aid identification.

Foreword by David J. Elliott (slightly amended by Phil Watson).

Many actors and actresses appeared as guest artists on LWTL from time to time, some famous and well known - others less so - but all who appeared played a valuable part in starring in one of the most enduring and entertaining sit-com series of all time.

Some names to mention who starred as special guests are actors Michael Rennie, Patrick Barr and Robert Beatty; musical comedy star Jack Buchanan; comedians Ted Ray, Dick Bentley, Richard Murdoch, and Charlie Chester; sports commentator Raymond Glendenning; singers Ronnie Harris and Bruce Trent; radio & TV presenter Godfrey Winn; boxer Freddie Mills, and of course Vic Oliver, from Hi Gang

The Lyons were joined by a regular and occasional cast including Molly Weir, Horace Percival, Doris Rogers, Hugh Morton, with David Enders, Wilfrid Brambell, Charles Hawtrey, Ian Sadler, Philip Ray, Clive Baxter, Harry Fowler, Gwen Lewis, Wilfrid Babbage, Molly Rankin and Patricia Field. Scriptwriter Bob Block made several appearances.

Special mention should be made of non-actors Russell Turner, the TV producer who married Barbara Lyon, and Angela Ferguson, who married Richard after the series finished, who played themselves; and young Richard Bellaers who played Robin Lyon in three series. His part was dropped when his voice broke in 1957. He had been brought in to replace Richard who was to be drafted into the U.S. Army, but he failed the medical.

On several occasions the scheduled episode was cancelled at the last minute and Ben introduced the show and apologised for the change due to illness of a cast member and then put on an episode recorded earlier, usually a repeat of a previous show. The fact that Ben introduced the show gave it a very personal touch.

On completing the draft log David discovered that some of Ben Lyon's original tape reels had been incorrectly labelled but the transmission dates and titles as listed are now correct. The log has been prepared "as broadcast" and not "as scheduled".

Series 1

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Broadcast on the Light Programme on Sundays at 3pm, repeat unknown.

The episode titles are given by the announcer.

01-001 50-11-05 Thirteen For Dinner

02-002 50-11-12 Fairy Cakes

03-003 50-11-19 Is There A Doctor In The House?

04-004 50-11-26 It's In The Air

05-005 50-12-03 The Dented Wing

06-006 50-12-10 Let Ben Do It

07-007 50-12-17 Pardon My Glove

08-008 50-12-24 Under The Tree

09-009 50-12-31 Under The Table

10-010 51-01-07 It's A Man's World

11-011 51-01-14 Bebe Buys A Bargain

12-012 51-01-21 Ben Bluebeard

13-013 51-01-28 Ben Does It Again

14-014 51-02-04 That Old Friend

15-015 51-02-11 Tally-Ho

16-016 51-02-18 Three Little Pigs Stayed At Home

17-017 51-02-25 Time Marches Back

18-018 51-03-04 Ben Holds The Baby

19-019 51-03-11 The Green-Eyed Monster

20-020 51-03-18 Ben Builds A Garage

21-021 51-03-25 It Could Happen To You

22-022 51-04-01 The Private Life Of Ben

23-023 51-04-08 Spring Is Here

24-024 51-04-15 Other Green-Eyed Monster

25-025 51-04-22 Family Affair

26-026 51-04-29 Back In October

Series 2

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Broadcast on the Light Programme on Thursdays at 9.30pm, repeated on Sunday at 5pm.

01-027 51-09-27 Home Again - title also used for the first show of series 3, but it is different.

02-028 51-10-04 The Life Of The Party

03-029 51-10-11 Sorry, Right Number

04-030 51-10-18 The Female Of The Speeches

05-031 51-10-25 Accidents Will Happen

06-032 51-11-01 Let The Women Do It

07-033 51-11-08 Keep Up With The Kids

08-034 51-11-15 Let Them Eat Cake

09-035 51-11-22 It's A Wise Father

10-036 51-11-29 Stranger Things Have Happened

11-037 51-12-06 I Don't Know What To Get Her

12-038 51-12-13 It Happens In Every Family

13-039 51-12-20 I Dream Of Santa

14-040 51-12-27 Let's Go To The Party

15-041 52-01-03 A Foreign Romance

16-042 52-01-10 The Wife's Birthday

17-043 52-01-17 Family Trouble

18-044 52-01-24 Tree Of Knowledge

19-045 52-01-31 Too Young

 - 52-02-07 no broadcast

20-046 52-02-14 There Goes That Song Again - Thursday broadcast on 52-02-14 cancelled due to the death of the King; broadcast on usual repeat slot on Sunday 5pm 52-02-17

22-047 52-02-21 Family Secrets

22-048 52-02-28 Dangerous Age

23-049 52-03-06 Rocks In Your Garden

24-050 52-03-13 Home Sweet Home

25-051 52-03-20 The Upper Set

26-052 52-03-27 There's Always Room At Our House

27-053 52-04-03 The Play's The Thing

28-054 52-04-10 Back In November

Series 3

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Broadcast on the Light Programme on Fridays at 8.45pm, repeat unknown

01-055 52-11-14 Home Again - title also used for first show in series 2

02-056 52-11-21 The Hole In The Road

03-057 52-11-28 Mr. Jones Is Missing

04-058 52-12-05 A Duel & The Son

05-059 52-12-12 The New Maid

06-060 52-12-19 Sauce For The Gander

07-061 52-12-26 A Christmas Story

08-062 53-01-02 Ben's Handicap

09-063 53-01-09 The House On The Route

10-064 53-01-16 Muscles

11-065 53-01-23 The Barbecue

12-066 53-01-30 Stupid Cupid

13-067 53-02-06 Ben's Birthday

14-068 53-02-13 Cousin From America

15-069 53-02-20 It's Never Too Young

16-070 53-02-27 For Art's Sake

17-071 53-03-06 Let Sleeping Dogs Lie

18-072 53-03-13 How To Be A Good Father

19-073 53-03-20 The Ten Gallon Hat

20-074 53-03-27 It's An Ill Wind

21-075 53-04-03 Easter Parade

22-076 53-04-10 You Can't Get Blood Out Of A Stone

23-077 53-04-17 Cross My Palm With Silver

24-078 53-04-24 Ne'er Cast A Clout

25-079 53-05-01 A Place In The Country

26-080 53-05-08 Wedding Bells

27-081 53-05-15 And How Are All You Kids - cancelled due to Richard having 'flu. Replaced by repeat of 52-01-31 Too Young

28-082 53-05-22 El Gaucho

29-083 53-05-29 The Great Day

30-084 53-06-05 Lovely To Look At

31-085 53-06-12 The Anniversary

32-086 53-06-19 Once A Ham

33-087 53-06-26 Back In The Autumn

Special (not part of series)

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00-000 Gala Performance 53-02-27 \*\* This is an extract from a Royal Variety Show, hosted by Ted Ray. The Lyons' segment last about six minutes. The complete programme was repeated for the first time in 60 years on BBC Radio 4 Extra in 2013.

Series 4

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Broadcast on the Light Programme on Thursdays at 9.30pm, repeat unknown

01-088 53-11-12 Coming Home

02-089 53-11-19 Nature Boy

03-090 53-11-26 Let The Men Do It

04-091 53-12-03 Come To The Fair

05-092 53-12-10 No Rest For Ben

06-093 53-12-17 Christmas Shopping

07-094 53-12-24 T'was The Night Before Christmas

08-095 53-12-31 Who Gave Me That ?

09-096 54-01-07 Once Upon A Mime

10-097 54-01-14 Love Sneaks Up On Richard

11-098 54-01-21 Father's Day

12-099 54-01-28 Let The Kids Do It

13-100 54-02-04 New Neighbours

14-101 54-02-11 Be My Valentine

15-102 54-02-18 I Hear You Calling Me

16-103 54-02-25 The Unlucky Winner

17-104 54-03-04 Oliver Twist, An

18-105 54-03-11 I Did It With My Little Hatchet

19-106 53-03-18 Go To Your Corner

20-107 53-03-25 Left Bank

21-108 53-04-01 April Fool

22-109 53-04-08 Say It With Music

23-110 53-04-15 A Ghost In The House

24-111 53-04-22 Take Back Your Lawn Mower

25-112 53-04-29 The Kick-Off

26-113 53-05-06 Back In The Autumn

Series 5

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Broadcast on the Light Programme on Thursdays at 9pm, repeat unknown

01-114 54-12-02 cancelled as Barbara was ill. Replaced by repeat of 51-11-15 Let Them Eat Cake

02-115 54-12-09 The Lyons In Hollywood

03-116 54-12-16 Danger - Richard At Work

04-117 54-12-23 A Christmas Story

05-118 54-12-30 The New Job

06-119 55-01-06 Just Call Me Curly

07-120 55-01-13 Bebe's Birthday

08-121 55-01-20 A Crooner In The House

09-122 55-01-27 My Hat

10-123 55-02-03 The Poet

11-124 55-02-10 Your Presence Is Requested

12-125 55-02-17 Neighbour Trouble

13-126 55-02-24 The Family Heirloom

14-127 55-03-03 Bonnie, Bonnie Heather

15-128 55-03-10 I've Got You Covered

16-129 55-03-17 The Other Generation

17-130 55-03-24 The New Wallpaper

18-131 55-03-31 Second Honeymoon

19-132 55-04-07 Home Stretch

20-133 55-04-14 I Can Do It By Myself

21-134 55-04-21 Afternoon On The Thames

22-135 55-04-28 Ben Vs. Scotland Yard

23-136 55-05-05 cancelled, reason unknown. Replaced by repeat of 55-03-03 Bonny, Bonny Heather

24-137 55-05-12 Three Blind Dates

25-138 55-05-19 The Bottom Of Our Garden

26-139 55-05-26 Children Should Be Seen And Heard

27-140 55-06-02 We'll Send You A Postcard

Series 6

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Broadcast on the Light Programme on Thursdays at 7.30pm, repeat unknown

01-141 55-11-03 It's Good To Be Home

02-142 55-11-10 The 100 Quiz

03-143 55-11-17 The Good Citizen

04-144 55-11-24 The Flitch

05-145 55-12-01 Who Knows ?

06-146 55-12-08 The Bazaar

07-147 55-12-15 Ben Kicks Off

08-148 55-12-22 Make Me A Child Again

09-149 55-12-29 Happy New Year

10-150 56-01-05 The Alibi

11-151 56-01-12 The Stranger

12-152 56-01-19 Curtain Up

13-153 56-01-26 Robin's Birthday

14-154 56-02-02 For Men Only

15-155 56-02-09 The Comic Valentine

16-156 56-02-16 The Intruders

17-157 56-02-23 cancelled, reason unknown. Replaced by repeat of 56-01-12 The Stranger

18-158 56-03-01 The Law & The Lyons

19-159 56-03-08 This Must Be Love

20-160 56-03-15 Out Of Space

06-161 56-03-22 Come Back Little Bebe

06-162 56-03-29 When Fools Rush In

06-163 56-04-05 Double Trouble

06-164 56-04-12 Young & Foolish

06-165 56-04-19 The Garden Fete

07-166 56-04-26 It's Not Goodbye

Series 7

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Broadcast on the Light Programme on Sundays at 3.15pm (episodes 1-7), or at 3.15pm (episodes 8-end), repeat unknown

01-167 56-11-11 Here Comes The Bride

02-168 56-11-18 The Way To A Man's Heart

03-169 56-11-25 How Now Brown Cow

04-170 56-12-02 From Rhythm To Rachmaninov

05-171 56-12-09 Barbara Buys A Bargain

06-172 56-12-16 Don't Give Me That

07-173 56-12-23 And A Very Merry Christmas To All

08-174 56-12-30 A Star Is Born

09-175 57-01-06 Bend & Be Beautiful

10-176 57-01-13 It's A Snap

11-177 57-01-20 You Are My Lucky Star

12-178 57-01-27 A House Divided

13-179 57-02-03 Danger Is My Job

14-180 57-02-10 cancelled as Richard taken to hospital. Replaced by repeat of 56-12-02 From Rhythm To Rachmaninov.

15-181 57-02-17 You're The Doctor

16-182 57-02-24 The Separation

17-183 57-03-03 Get Rich Quickly

18-184 57-03-10 Stop Thief

19-185 57-03-17 The Birds & The Bees

20-186 57-03-24 Gone Fishin'

21-187 57-03-31 It's Mothering Sunday

22-188 57-04-07 A Table For Three

23-189 57-04-14 The Lyon Has Wings

24-190 57-04-21 Happy Easter

25-191 57-04-28 Richard Opens A Shop

26-192 57-05-05 Back In The Winter

Special

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00-193 57-12-25 Let's Drop In For Christmas

Series 8

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Broadcast on the Light Programme on Sundays at 6.30pm (episodes 1-8), or at 1.45pm (episodes 9-end), repeat unknown

01-194 58-02-02 Barbara's Dinner Party

02-195 58-02-09 The Rising Son

03-196 58-02-16 Dial Special Branch

04-197 58-02-23 Keep Moving

05-198 58-03-02 A House Divided

06-199 58-03-09 Hold That Man

07-200 58-03-16 Put A Light In The Window

08-201 58-03-23 Luck Is No Lady

09-202 58-03-30 It Shouldn't Happen To A Dog

10-203 58-04-06 Easter In The Country

11-204 58-04-13 The First Fight

12-205 58-04-20 The Man In The Box

13-206 58-04-27 For Love Or Money

14-207 58-05-04 Goodbye For Now

Christmas Special

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00-208 58-12-25 Don't Open Before Christmas

Series 9

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Broadcast on the Light Programme on Fridays at 7.31pm, repeat unknown

From this series, the announcer gave a short introduction instead of a title. For the purposes of this log, the title has been devised from the plot. Episodes can be identified by the short introductions listed.

01-209 59-01-30 Voyage Home - Our old friend Ben has always believed in the theory...

02-210 59-02-06 The Man From Texas - No matter how old or young we are, we all like a surprise...

03-211 59-02-13 Lyon, Cub Reporter - In every family there are days which live forever in our...

04-212 59-02-20 With Murder In Mind

05-213 59-02-27 cancelled, reason unknown. Replaced by repeat of 58-03-09 Hold That Man

06-214 59-03-06 cancelled, reason unknown. Replaced by repeat of 58-03-16 Put A Light In The Window

07-215 59-03-13 Set Another Place At The Table - According to the English dictionary, a boomerang is a.....

07-216 59-03-20 The Confused Cupid - We've all been led to believe that a triangle has but three...

08-217 59-03-27 The Scroungers - Over 300 years ago it was said in Rochester by the Earl...

09-218 59-04-03 This Was Your Wife - Almost everyone enjoys the fun of appearing in amateur...

10-219 59-04-10 Teddy Trouble - Problems never worry the Lyon family, in fact if Ben hasn't...

11-220 59-04-17 The New Address - In just two weeks time, the Lyon Family will be moving...

12-221 59-04-24 The Colonel's Dilemma - Due to the fact that clever old Ben let the house in ...

13-222 59-05-01 Trouble In Camp - When the Lyon family leased Col. Warwick's house on Salisbury Plain they didn't realise that the permanent fixtures included the Colonel & his batman...

14-223 59-05-08 Strike It Rich - When the Lyon family leased Col. Warwick's house on Salisbury Plain for a few weeks, the last thing they expected was that this move would make them millionaires ...

15-224 59-05-15 Saying Goodbye - It seems that the Lyon family got back to their old house... (this episode describes their move from Southwick Street; the ending in particular is very poignant)

Christmas Special

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00-225 59-12-25 Christmas Special

Series 10

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Broadcast on the Light Programme on Wednesdays at 7.31pm, repeat unknown

01-226 60-02-24 The Meddler - As we all know, Spring won't be along for some time....

02-227 60-03-02 The Unwelcome Guest - Over 100 years ago it was Toro (sp?) who said "Some...."

03-228 60-03-09 Don't Put Your Daughter On The Stage

04-229 60-03-16 Mr. Cupid Shoots Again

05-230 60-03-23 Eye Of The Little Green-Eyed God

06-231 60-03-30 The Big Joker

07-232 60-04-06 The Stranger From Sorrento - Our old friends the Lyons have been living in their new ...

08-233 60-04-13 The Weaker Sex - In every family there are red-letter days, like the day...

09-234 60-04-20 Your Policemen Are Wonderful

10-235 60-04-27 Maid To Measure

11-236 60-05-04 Top Of The Pops

12-237 60-05-11 Relatively Speaking

13-238 60-05-18 Invest With Richard

14-239 60-05-25 Let's Go Fishing

15-240 60-06-01 The Big Fiddle - It was once said "If the wise erred not, it would indeed..."

16-241 60-06-08 My Four Legged Friend - There is a time of year when everybody starts planning...

Series 11 (last series)

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For this final series the announcer's opening introduction was dropped after episode two. The opening lines of the script have been used for episode identification.

Broadcast on the Light Programme on Fridays at 7.31pm, repeat unknown

01-242 61-01-20 People Who Live In Glass Houses

02-243 61-01-27 Sorry The Lyon's Engaged - As you probably know, Richard is now engaged. However...

03-244 61-02-03 The External Triangle - Mrs Lyon, I've been out in the garden again....

04-245 61-02-10 Barbara's Birthday - Mrs Lyon, would you like some more mushrooms..

05-246 61-02-17 Thanks For The Memory - Oh Aggie, Daddy has to be at the studio at 5...

06-247 61-02-24 The Lyon In Sheep's Clothing - Oh Bebe, I'm home. Hello dear. Sorry I'm late...

07-248 61-03-03 Along Came Mr. Jackson - Miss Barbara, my hands are full, will you take my....

08-249 61-03-10 A Dog's Tale - Mother, it's 3 o'clock, don't you think we'd better..

09-250 61-03-17 What's Buzzin' Cousin ? - Oh ma, we needed some more coat hangers in...

10-251 61-03-24 No Holiday For Strings - Mrs Lyon, could I have the furniture polish...

11-252 61-03-31 Don't Be A Freud

12-253 61-04-07 I Passed By Your Widow

13-254 61-04-14 Once Upon A Dream

14-255 61-04-21 Tree For Two - Oh pop, I've planted all the pansies & violas (sp?)..

15-256 61-04-28 Pardon My Bumper

16-257 61-05-05 Keeping Up With The Brownes

17-258 61-05-12 On The Wrong Side Of The In-Laws - Mrs Lyon, I'll chop the meat up if you'll roll the...

18-259 61-05-19 Roaming Scandals - Mrs Lyon I thought we'd better put loose covers on the furniture now.

PART THREE

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Life With The Lyons (TV version)

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Details taken from www.phill.co.uk - the UK TV Comedy Database.

Cast:

Ben Lyon as Himself

Bebe Daniels as Herself

Richard Lyon as Himself

Barbara Lyon as Herself

Mollie Weir as Aggie MacDonald

Doris Rogers as Florrie Wainwright

Richard Bellaers as Robin (Series 1,2)

Horace Percival as Mr Wimple (Series 1,2)

Writers: Bebe Daniels, Bob Block, Ronnie Hanbury, Bob Ross, Richard Waring, Bill Harding

Director: John Phillips, Joan Kemp-Welch

Producer: Bryan Sears, Barry Lupino

BBC Television (Series 1-2)

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Series 1

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transmitted on alternate Wednesdays, time unknown.

01 55-06-29 Untitled

02 55-07-13 Untitled

03 55-07-27 Untitled

04 55-08-10 Untitled

Series 2

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transmitted on alternate Thursdays, time unknown.

05 56-05-31 Untitled

06 56-06-14 Untitled

07 56-06-28 Untitled

08 56-07-12 Untitled

Associated Rediffusion (Series 3 - 5)

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Series 3

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transmitted on alternate Tuesdays, time unknown.

01 57-09-17 The Green-Eyed Monster

02 57-10-01 Family Secrets

03 57-10-15 I've Got You Covered

04 57-10-24 Cool Cat On A Hot Roof

05 57-11-12 Going, Going, Gone

06 57-11-26 Where There's A Will

07 57-12-10 Unlucky Winner

08 57-12-24 Christmas

09 58-01-21 Signs Of The Times

Series 4

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transmitted on alternate Fridays, time unknown.

10 58-09-19 Who's Your Lady Friend

11 58-10-03 The Reluctant Genius

12 58-10-17 Dangerous Curves Ahead

13 58-10-31 Boxing Gloves

14 58-11-14 Secrets

15 58-11-28 A Guest In The House

16 58-12-12 Thirteen Shoplifting Days To Christmas

17 58-12-26 The Sheriff Of Fractured Wrist

18 59-01-09 It's A Woman's World

19 59-01-23 King Richard The Last

Series 5

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transmitted on consecutive Fridays, time unknown.

20 60-01-01 A Cowboy In Kensington

21 60-01-08 Home Sweet Homicide

22 60-01-15 Stupid Cupid (from the radio script The Confused Cupid)

23 60-01-22 Teddy Boys' Picnic

24 60-01-29 For Love Or Money

25 60-02-05 Just What The Doctor Ordered

26 60-02-12 Top Secret

27 60-02-19 Tease For Two

28 60-02-26 Your Presents Are Requested

29 60-03-04 A Chip Off The Old Blockhead

30 60-03-11 The Nelson Touch

31 60-03-18 Sauce For The Goose

32 60-03-25 Be My Ghost

Additions and correction welcome. Please write to Phil Watson at howstean@yahoo.co.uk