

# The Magnificent Two

Yearly Round-Up Of Morecambe & Wise News



December 2009

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Issue #1

## IN THIS ISSUE



### Eat, Drink and Laugh

A look back at how the proposed Eric Morecambe museum came together. Who made it possible, who is involved and what it might be like.

### Chip Off The Old Block

It all started with a letter to a newspaper, now the Ernie Wise statue is to be unveiled to the public in 2010. We take you back to where it all started and follow the ups and downs of the project.

### In The Media

Its been a busy year for Eric and Ern fans. We glance back at the years releases and look forward to what is to come in 2010. Taking in DVD's, books and even a new audio CD.

### Coming To Light

There are still things being found that fans have not seen or heard before, we round them up and tease you a little.

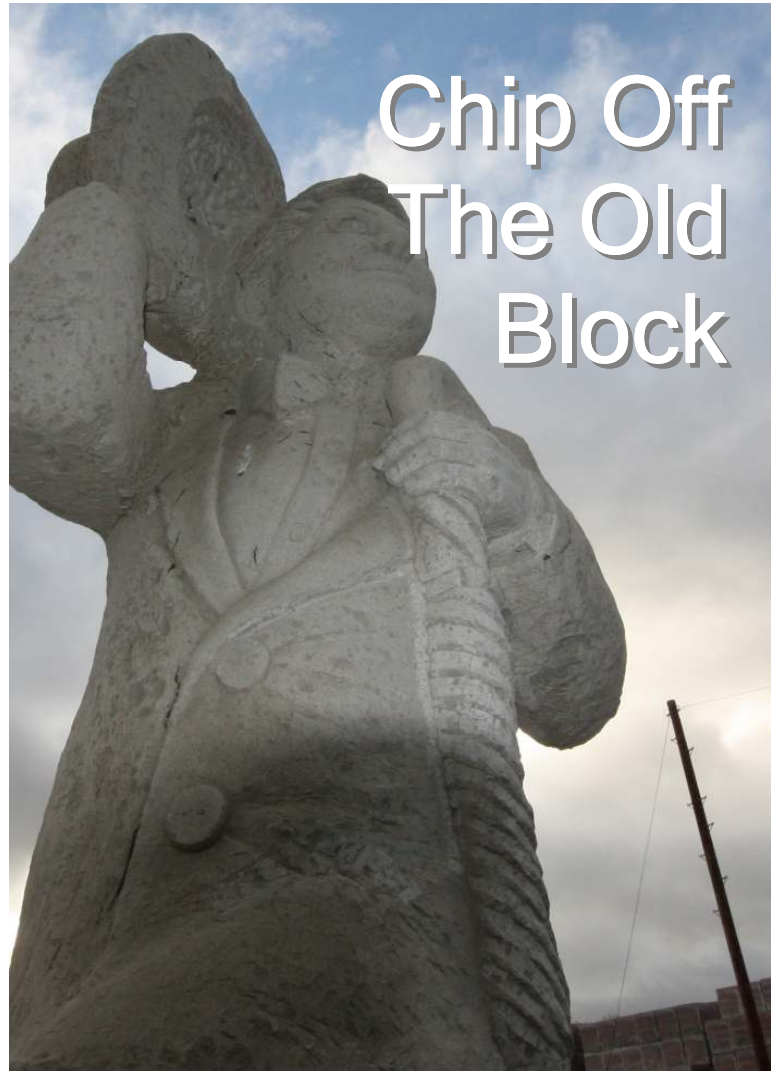
### In The News

A quick round up of the years Eric and Ern news items with updates and comments.

### Compo News

Look what you could have won, a round up of prizes....

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## Seasonal Greetings

Hello and welcome to our yearly round up of all things Morecambe & Wise. This is the first newsletter style project we have done, and its future all depends on how well it is received in the community. So, if you like it or hate it, please let us know by going to our website and sending us some feedback.

This will not be just news and features taken directly from the site, but an all round general look at everything that happened over the last twelve months.

We will add new material, update you on older material and even squeeze in a few unpublished photographs from the many events we attended.

What a year it has been though, to think Eric and Ern have not been with us for nearly 25 years as a partnership, and still there are new and exciting things..

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*Seasonal Greetings and all the best for the New Year*



*"Its going to be a huge success, people will come in droves..."*

*Mark Bushell*

The bronze statue of Eric Morecambe has been looking out over his home town now since 1999 when it was unveiled by Her Majesty the Queen.

During those years ideas for a museum dedicated to Eric have been raised, but none have actually moved beyond a dream.

It was during another event in August 2008, that yet again, the idea was talked about and interest increased.

The event in question was the launch of the Morecambe & Wise bus, an in-service vehicle embellished with images of Eric that would give the people of Lancashire a smile during their trip.

The idea behind the bus came from business man and exhibitions director Mark Bushell, who had decorated other buses around the country.

At that same event was Eric's son Gary, and once the two got talking, the museum idea came to light, and with Mark's background in exhibitions, the chances of things happening looked much more promising.

After a lot of debate they decided to move forward and get the public on their side and generally make the residents aware of the plans.



"We need to find out," Mark said during one radio interview, "if this is the right time for this kind of project. If its right economically especially in today's climate."

What was needed was a feasibility study and Mark was soon on the case trying to get funding to carry it out. More radio and newspaper interviews ensued and finally it happened.

August 2009: A press conference was called at the Statue to announce that, at last, they had been given the money to do the study.

Meanwhile, several organisations announced their interests, with one, Mitchells, hitting all the right notes. They even had several buildings lined up as possible locations.

Gary again visited the town to look over one such building, almost directly opposite the statue of his father.

All concerned thought that this particular building would be an ideal location for such a museum.

Gary, in several interviews, hinted at the treasures he and his mother Joan still had at the family home, and that one day might see the light of day.

This included scripts, clothing, personal items such as Eric's first shoes and of course Charlie, the famous ventriloquist dummy.

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### Eat, Drink and Laugh

*Continued from page 2*

The current thinking amongst those that are involved is that the whole 'experience' will include much more than a museum.

There is certainly plenty of space for all of these things based on the potential building we saw.



One aspect of the museum would include mock ups of the famous sets used in the 70 shows such as the kitchen where the 'stripper' routine took place and of course the bedroom.



Another aspect would be the educational side of things, where groups of people, especially children, could learn about Eric and Ern in a variety of activities.

With Mitchell's involved there will also be a restaurant and bar incorporated into the museum along with a gift shop.

All of these are just ideas at the moment, but the project team are confident that by the end of next year, there will have been significant progress, even to the extent of actually having a finished and open museum.

Keep watching.

## In The Media...

For fans of Morecambe and Wise, 2009 was a good year with the release of some great books plus the continued release of the fantastic BBC series on DVD.

The BBC gave us Series 5, dating back to 1971, but most, if not all of the material was timeless. Such classic sketches as Monty On The Bonty, The Jewellery Shop, Antony & Cleopatra, The Wig Shop and Bob Hope's Scriptwriter all came in this series.

Not content with that they followed this with Series 6 and more great moments.

We had so much to review it's a wonder we ever got round to updating the website, but throughout the year we managed an average of three updates per month.

In the newspapers and magazines, we got quite a few articles like the one in *Best Of British*, called Simply Eric and Ernie. There was also a plethora of articles in national newspapers covering Gary Morecambe's new book.

The Daily Express opted for a refreshingly different slant and produced (with some help from us) a great article about Sadie, Eric's mother

On to books now and we had a few to choose from this year, not all of them brands new. Yes, I am talking about the re-release of the 77 special. We didn't cover this much, no need really, there was absolutely no attempt to update it in any way, so the old review was still relevant.

As previously mentioned, Gary's new book, *You'll Miss Me When I'm Gone* proved to be a good read, with interviews and opinions from Eric's school day friends.

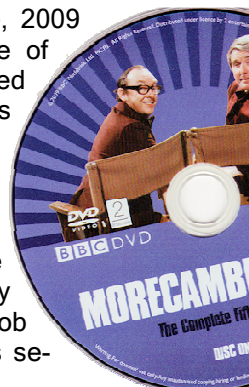
We also learned of another re-release, this time on CD. The BBC, under it's 'Vintage Beeb' banner are to re-release the 1976 LP *It's Morecambe & Wise*

Gary, was also on television a few times, notably on The One Show (May 6th) with a nice piece about being the son of a comedy legend. You can see the full clip on our website.

From TV to stage and the smash hit play 'Morecambe' getting rave reviews from its run in Edinburgh and subsequent UK tour.

This wonderful one man show will be touring the country in 2010 and is enjoying a long stint in the West End over the festive season.

We end the year with news of recently discovered rare audio recordings to be broadcast next year. A great end to a great year. Lets hope the next one will be just a fruitful.





*"It's  
backbreaking  
work, all carved  
by hand, but it's  
worth it."*

*Melanie Wilks—Sculptor*



Just before Christmas 2007, a letter appeared in a Yorkshire newspaper from a reader. It simply said it was about time that Ernie, who was born in Leeds, had a statue like the one in Morecambe for his partner.

From that point on, the fight was picked up by a group of people called the Morley Murals Committee, chaired by the now Lord Mayor of Leeds Judith Elliot.

### Statue plan to honour our Ernie



**E**RNEST WISEMAN was born in 1920 and when he was six years old his father introduced him to the stages of the working men's club here in the city of Leeds.

Ernie's childhood was spent in the city of Leeds and he was a member of the club for many years.

Throughout the first year, 2008, the project had many ups and downs, and even today, just before the statue is due to be unveiled, there are rumblings.

People who live in East Ardsley, a few miles from Morley, think the statue should be there, after all, they claim, he was born there.

The problem is, he actually wasn't born there at all, he was, as our research confirms, born in Bramley and moved many times before he eventually found himself in East Ardsley.

He didn't even spend most of his childhood there either, that dubious honour goes to a home in the small mining village called Kinsey.

Regardless of where the statue is to be, we, as fans, are just pleased that finally Ernie is getting recognition for his fantastic and often underrated part in the double act.

More problems had to be overcome, mainly to do with funding. Many ideas were considered, taking note of how funds were raised by Morecambe, but all seemed unfeasible.

Not deterred, the committee applied for money from the People's Lottery, but in December 2008, they learned the bid had failed.

Still eager to continue, their luck was in and Do-reen, Ernie's wife, heard about the campaign, and stepped in offering the funds required.

Now with funding it was all go, and plans could swing into action. The sculptor, Melanie Wilks, was offered stone from a local quarry and the back breaking work began.

As I write this, the statue has been delayed slightly, the plan to unveil it on Ernie Birthday, November 27th, has not come to fruition, and so a new date is being organised.

Melanie continues her work, with regular visits from Do-reen and the local, and national press.

We interviewed her just before the statue was complete, and that will be featured on the website early in 2010 to coincide with the statue.

Along with the unveiling, there are plans for several events including a Ernie Wise tribute being run by the Rotary Club of Morley.

When the statue is finally unveiled, no doubt there will be a lot of interest in the press, so roll on the day when at last, Ernie can stand tall and be remembered for the great comic he was.



# IN THE NEWS

Looking back over 2009



Have you got a red nose? No it's not the first line of a Morecambe & Wise joke, but the sentiment that started off 2009.

It was, of course, red nose day and as part of the special money raising events going on, a unique T-shirt was designed by Stella McCartney featuring Eric and Ern with huge red noses.

They proved exceptionally popular, selling out in every store and online shop. They were even being offered (and bought) on eBay for sums of up to £50.

As the year moved on Eric was voted Britain's 5th most iconic specs wearer and the release of Series 5 from the BBC grew closer.

Luton FC played Morecambe, probably for the last time at Christies park due to demotion and the ground being demolished. Gary was there to watch the game between his father's home team and the team supported by Eric. Morecambe, despite a valiant effort, lost 2.1.

Eric's last film, *The Passionate Pilgrim*, was released on DVD in a short run to 'test the waters' and those lucky enough to grab one got a much better quality version than the previous VHS release.

The person behind that was the director Charles Wallace, who has more unseen footage from the third instalment. The three part film was not to be, as Eric sadly died just after the first one went out, but not before filming segments for the third one. Hopefully we may see this soon as a still was included in Gary Morecambe's latest book.

Moving on and news of a new play, paying tribute to the life of Eric, reached our ears. Simply called 'Morecambe' it was due to start at the Edinburgh festival for a short run.

So successful was it that a small tour was organised, quickly followed by a large tour and then a long run in the West End. Even grabbing a slot on the Royal Variety Show (although the producers did not actually broadcast that segment!)

A year of change for us too, as the old website was phased out, to be replaced by what we have

now. It took a long time to get it finished but it was well worth the effort.

Series six from the Beeb quickly followed Series five and as we were celebrating we almost missed the news that work on the much anticipated film '*Mr. Lonely*', based on Eric's first novel, had been put on hold. We hope this will be re-started once the financial climate recovers enough to support it.

Intriguing hints at a dedicated Eric Morecambe Museum came to light and we followed this story closely. We continue to do so with regular updates and even short video documentaries.

We have part two half complete now, and as soon



as a site is selected and work begins, we hope to finalise it and release it on the site. If you haven't seen part one yet, nip on to the website and go

to the video section.

Talking of films, we also heard a new biopic following on from the much praised BBC drama series, the *Curse of Comedy*. It seems that Eric and Ern's young days may be next for the small screen; we are still waiting for this one.

One of the most exciting news stories we had was about the rare find in Doreen Wise's garage. Apparently she discovered a huge collection of audio material dating back to the 50's that Ernie had stored.

She has now released these and clips will be played on Radio 4 in spring 2010. (rather than the initial idea, Boxing Day).

All in all it was a good year with a lot of exciting news—but what of next year?

Well there will be the Ernie statue, hopefully the Eric Morecambe museum, possibly another statue, this time of them together (we can't say anymore than that at the moment!), more DVD's (hopefully the Thames shows will be continued.), a new documentary plus a lot more great, as yet unmentionable, things.



We heard last year, and eventually saw for ourselves thanks to the BBC DVD, of long lost material that had been rediscovered and given back to the fans by the person who found them.

We are of course talking about the eBay buyer who noticed an old 16mm print of the last show in the first series for the BBC.

Tim Disney, the man behind the find, purchased it and handed it over to the BBC for inclusion on the DVD. Shortly after the DVD was released more footage from the same series was found, some of which was displayed in the Jonathan Ross documentary.

We are yet to see this new footage in full, but it does remind us that there is still material out there to be found. Sat in old boxes and bags, tucked away on the lofts and sheds around the British Isles and further afield.

This fact was brought to light very recently when Doreen Wise, while clearing out her garage, discovered a treasure trove of material never heard since its original broadcast. Some never broadcast before.

The collection belonged to her late husband Ernie Wise and contained much that was thought lost.

YOYO, (You're Only Young Once) was Eric and Ern's first radio show, and there were a few known recordings in existence, John Ammonds has a few for example, but here we have 5 full episodes!

Also in the find were recordings of their Great Yarmouth and Blackpool shows from the mid-late sixties and Andre Previn's speech to Eric and Ernie at a Variety Club lunch in 1974.

Recently brought to light was an audio recording of the 1970 Royal Gala Performance and all of the Ed Sullivan TV footage from America.

Apart from their work, some of their possessions are also cropping up, Eric's first Rolls Royce has been found and is currently being renovated to its former glory—we will have news of this on the website shortly.

So, the next time you visit a relative, why not dig about in their loft, shed or garage, you never know what you might find, or how much it might be worth – if only to fans.

## Season Greetings...

*Continued from page 1*

Just take a quick look through news pages to see how busy its been, with new books and DVDs still coming out.

Many new and young fans of Morecambe & Wise are discovering their charm for the first time and are eager to learn more, and to watch more.

The BBC have done us proud with their continuing DVD releases, but sadly the Thames material seems to have stalled. We really hope they continue with the set so we can at last get a complete collection, at least from 1969.

All we need now is for the ATV shows to get a release and that would be the cherry on the cake,

The ATV shows, although different in style and with Eric and Ern playing different roles, are still very, very good. Some of the material easily matches up to the BBC years and even beats it.

2010 holds more excitement with the unveiling of the Ernie Wise statue and of course the opening (hopefully) of the Eric Morecambe museum.



New books and documentaries are planned, and if the economic climate picks up enough, we might even get to finally see the movie adaptation of Mr. Lonely.

So, until next year, have a wonderful festive season and we wish you all the very best for the new year.

*Paul & Gideon*



### Give Away



Yes, we have given a lot away this year, and hope to be continuing this theme next year.

You have to be in it to win it, so the saying has it, and if you didn't enter then you missed out on over £150 worth of prizes.

We gave away copies of the BBC series 5 and 6 on DVD, copies of Gary Morecambe's new book and tickets to see the West End show, Morecambe.

What will be next? Keep an eye on the website to find out and who knows, you might even be the next lucky winner.

### And Finally....

The website is run by fans, for fans. If you want to help out, please get in touch.

We appreciate any comments, good or bad, and especially like offers of help :-)

If you feel you can write a feature, or even if you just want to share some of your memories or memorabilia, we will be glad to hear from you.

Because of kind people who have offered to help, we have some great features on the site like the article about the Eric Morecambe statue, written by the editor (at the time) of a local Morecambe newspaper.

Go on... Give it a try—you will get a nice warm feeling inside—we promise...

You know the address.

[www.morecambeandwise.com](http://www.morecambeandwise.com)

### So you want more pictures?

We did promise unpublished pictures from some of the events we attended, and some from our archives that deserve to be seen, so here they are...



We were going to use this in a caption competition... Gary Morecambe and Mark Bushell discuss the Eric Morecambe museum.



Gary Morecambe finds one of his father's favourite records...



Massive amounts of space, all waiting for Eric's belongings...

One of four floors in a potential building.



A picture of the Ernie statue we didn't use, mainly because of the spooky face in the clouds! No, this is not photoshopped!

*See You Next Year....*