

Little Britain, anything new please?

Imagine: you turn on your television and you see two psychiatrists walking around in the Louvre, while one of them smilingly praises a patient of his for her extraordinary love for art and culture. Next thing, the camera pans to the left and you see the aforementioned patient tearing the Mona Lisa from the wall and sticking her head through the painting.

Ladies gentlemen, for those not familiar with the matter: welcome to Little Britain and its humour, defined by its core values of dryness, a slight predictability and heavy mockery of the weak. However, none of that seems to be an excuse to dislike the television show for the vast majority of the Britons. And who cares in the end anyway, huh? The show is damn funny and we all have our guilty little pleasures, don't we? And if you wished to answer 'no' to that question.. well... too bad for you because Little Britain has become an outrageous success – both on the British isles and in the rest of the world.

The foundation for this success was laid years ago, though things started out relatively simple. The comedians Matt Lucas and David Walliams – who later recalled they didn't like each other much when they first met – started out their friendship at the University of Bristol during the mid-90s. In the years to follow, this bond would ultimately expand into a professional partnership. The duo had considerable success in 1999 with their comedy series 'Rock Profile', in which they imitated the rich and famous of the music industry, and in 2001 with two seasons of the radio series of Little Britain which involved sketches with recurring characters.

BBC Television saw the huge potential and strength of this franchise and asked Lucas and Walliams to let Little Britain do the crossover to televisions. Many audio sketches were visualized and even some new characters were invented, including the ever popular physically disabled Andy and his caretaker Lou.



Famous characters Andy and Lou.

The first season was soon ready and aired on BBC3 in 2003, after which a second season was broadcast in the year thereafter. Some new characters were introduced at the expense of some others who were either not funny enough or short of jokes. All in all, however, there weren't really any major changes. The third season though, due for 2005, did receive some heavy editing as most of the sexually explicit jokes had to be removed in order for the BBC to broadcast Little Britain on the mainstream channel BBC1. By that time, many foreign television channels had picked up on the hit series and millions of pounds were made by selling the series to all the corners of the world.

Having three seasons all wrapped up, Lucas and Walliams embarked on a theatre tour, initially just within the UK, but eventually ended up all the way to the east - Australia. There have also been Little Britain books, videogames and cd's on retailers' shelves, but as far as television goes... *Im Westen nichts Neues*, though. And although Walliams is all over the boulevard magazines multiple times per month, the third installment of Little Britain is still the most recent work up to date.

It may seem like the Little Britain ship has been abandoned for good, but fortunately for

all the fans that's all but true. Yeah well, Lucas and Walliams are taking their time, but something new is on our way. At the moment, they're currently busy shooting and editing the long awaited new season of Little Britain. This time around, most of the famous characters will pack their stuff and move to the States. The series itself will be called 'Little Britain USA' and will be produced primarily for HBO Television instead of the BBC. But although the setting changed, this is still "effectively series four," according to Lucas, who also revealed that "there's a kind of way into it if you've never seen the show before."



How will the extravagant Welsh gay Daffyd Thomas like college?

The series was originally due for broadcasting around this time, but the Writer's Guild strike – Lucas and Walliams are both members of this guild – prevented that from becoming reality. But the strike is over now and some fog that surrounds the new season is

becoming thinner. Some details about the characters in Little Britain USA have found their way to the press. Allegedly, new characters will be a vacuum cleaner seller and Madonna's personal assistant. Daffyd Thomas also seems to have been able to finally leave Llandewi Brevi and enroll into college, while Lou has taken Andy to a healer in order to see if he can be cured and the spoilt brat Vicky Pollard is finally cast out of the community of Barkley Noon and sent to a boot camp. Hopefully, Lucas and Walliams can release this season just in time, because few will deny that Little Britain's current catchphrases are growing old. Eh-eh-eeeeeh!

By Tim Engelbart

Sources:

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The other Englishes: Canada

Could you tell us a little something about yourself? Where you come from, what you do, what you're into, that kind of thing.

Well, I'm a 40 something wannabe writer type, who works professionally (full time even) in the wonderful wide world of Purchasing and Inventory Management for a computer company.

Many people here in Europe see Canada as a kind of extension of the US, even though you still have Queen Elizabeth as your head of state. Do you feel closer to the US or England?

Yes and no. With the US, sometimes it's very easy to see: "Ah, yeah, right; I get what

you are talking about." And other times, it's more like: "What the heck are you on about?" I get to talk to Americans all the time. Most of the time, I don't really see too much different between Americans and Canadians. Sometimes, though, it's really striking to see where the "national" mindset sits and differs. The biggest difference I've ever seen is in "world history." In Canada, there is a lot of emphasis on learning and understanding the rest of the world, and the role Canada plays in it. In the US (from my observations), more emphasis is placed on the history of the US, and the world's place in it.

With England, it's about our roots. A good portion of the country can and does trace its ancestry back to various places in Europe.