

Monty Python Characters

- “It’s” Man
- BBC Announcer
- The Gumbys
- Knight With Chicken
- Nude Organist
- The Pepperpots
- Women’s Institute audience
- The Colonel
- Arthur Pewtey
- Vicar of St Loony-Up-The-Cream-Bun-and-Jam
- Mr. Badger
- Mr. Eric Praline
- Mr. Cheeky
- Biggles
- The Spanish Inquisition
- The Frenchmen
- Spiny Norman
- Cardinal Richelieu
- Raymond Luxury Yacht

Recurring characters

- **The "It's" Man** (Palin), a [Robinson Crusoe](#)-type castaway with torn clothes and a long, unkempt beard who would appear at the beginning of the programme. Often he is seen performing a long or dangerous task, such as falling off a tall, jagged cliff or running through a mine field a long distance towards the camera before introducing the show by just saying, "It's..." before being abruptly cut off by the opening titles and Terry Gilliam's animation sprouting the words 'Monty Python's Flying Circus'. *It's* was an early candidate for the title of the series.
- **A BBC [continuity announcer](#) in a [dinner jacket](#)** (Cleese), seated at a desk, often in highly incongruous locations, such as a forest or a beach. His line, "[And now for something completely different](#)," was used variously as a lead-in to the opening titles and a simple way to link sketches. Though Cleese is best known for it, Idle first introduced the phrase in Episode 2, where he introduced a man with three buttocks. It eventually became the show's [catch phrase](#) and served as the title for the troupe's first movie. In Series 3 the line was shortened to simply: "And now..." and was often combined with the "It's" man in introducing the episodes.

Recurring characters



- The [Gumbys](#), a group of slow-witted individuals identically attired in:
 - [gumboots](#) (from which they take their name)
 - High-water trousers,
 - [braces](#)
 - [Fair Isle tanktops](#)
 - Round, wire-rimmed glasses
 - [toothbrush moustaches](#)
 - Knotted handkerchiefs worn on their heads (a stereotype of the English [working-class](#) holidaymaker).
- They hold their arms stiffly at their sides, speak slowly in loud, throaty voices punctuated by frequent grunts and groans, and have a fondness for pointless violence. All of them are surnamed Gumby: D.P. Gumby, R.S. Gumby, etc. Even though all Pythons played Gumbys in the show's run, the character is most closely associated with Michael Palin.

Recurring characters



- **The Knight with a Raw Chicken** (Gilliam), who would hit characters over the head with the chicken when they said something particularly silly.
 - The knight was a regular during the first series and made another appearance in the third.

Recurring characters



- A nude organist (played in his first appearance by Gilliam, later by Jones) who provided a brief fanfare to punctuate certain sketches, most notably on a sketch poking fun at *Sale of the Century* or as yet another way to introduce the opening titles. This character was addressed as "Onan" by Palin's host character in the ersatz game show sketch "Blackmail".

Recurring characters

- **The "Pepperpots"**

- are screeching middle-aged, [lower-middle class](#) housewives, played by the Pythons in frocks
- They engage in surreal and inconsequential conversation
- "The Pepperpots" was the in-house name that the Pythons used to identify these characters, and were never identified as such on-screen
- On the rare occasion these women were named, it was often for comic effect, featuring such names as
 - Mrs. Scum,
 - Mrs. Non-Gorilla
 - The duo Mrs. Premise and Mrs. Conclusion.
- "Pepperpot" refers to what the Pythons believed was the typical body shape of middle-class, British housewives, as explained by John Cleese in [How to Irritate People](#).^[9]
- [Terry Jones](#) is perhaps most closely associated with the Pepperpots, but all the Pythons were frequent in performing the drag characters.

Recurring characters



- Brief black-and-white [stock footage](#), lasting only two or three seconds, of **middle-aged women sitting in an audience and applauding**.
- The film was taken from a [Women's Institute](#) meeting and was sometimes presented with a color tint. This was used as a reference to the types of audiences they had to face during the first series.
- The first-year BBC audiences had no clues as to what the Pythons would be like, and were basically expecting traditional music hall type of comedy with punch lines.

Recurring characters



- "[The Colonel](#)" (Chapman), a British Army officer who interrupts sketches that are "too silly" or that contain material he finds offensive.
- The Colonel also appears when non-BBC broadcast repeats need to be cut off for time constraints in [syndication](#).

Recurring characters



- Arthur Pewtey (Palin), a socially inept, extremely dull man who appears most notably in the "[Marriage Guidance Counsellor](#)" and "[Ministry of Silly Walks](#)" sketches.
- His sketches all take the form of an office appointment with an authority figure (usually played by Cleese), which are used to parody the officious side of the British establishment by having the professional employed in the most bizarre field of expertise.
- The spelling of Pewtey's surname is changed, between appearances.

Recurring characters

- The Reverend Arthur Belling is the [vicar](#) of St Loony-Up-The-Cream-Bun-and-Jam.
- He is known for his bizarrely eccentric behavior.
- In one sketch (within Series 2, played by Chapman), he makes an appeal to the insane people of the world to drive sane people insane.
- In another sketch (within Series 3, played by Palin), he
 - politely joins a honeymooning couple at an outdoor café, repeatedly insisting he does not wish to disturb them;
 - he then sits down, opens a suitcase full of props, and calmly proceeds to
 - smash plates on the table,
 - shake a baby doll in their faces,
 - bounce a rubber crab from a ping-pong paddle,
 - spray shaving cream all over his face, all whilst loudly chanting nonsense syllables.
 - Rev. Belling's odd version of 'not being disturbing' serves to convert the couple to his bizarre sect of Christianity.

Recurring characters

- A somewhat disreputable shopkeeper, played by Palin, is a staple of many a two-person sketch (notably "Dead Parrot Sketch"). He often speaks with a strong Cockney accent, and has no consistent name.
- Mr. Badger (Idle), a Scotsman whose speciality was interrupting sketches ('I won't ruin your sketch, for a pound'). He was once interviewed, in a sketch opposite Cleese, regarding his interpretation of the [Magna Carta](#), which Badger believes was actually a piece of chewing gum on a bedspread in [Dorset](#). He has also been seen as an [aeroplane hijacker](#) whose demands grow increasingly eccentric.
- [Mr. Eric Praline](#), an eccentric, disgruntled man, played by Cleese and who often wears a [Pac-a-Mac](#). His most famous appearance is in the "[Dead Parrot sketch](#)". His name is only mentioned once on-screen, during the "[Fish Licence](#)" sketch, but his attire (together with Cleese's distinctive, nasal performance) distinguishes him as a recognisable character who makes multiple appearances throughout the first two series. An audio re-recording of "Fish Licence" also reveals that he has multiple pets of wildly differing species, all of them named "[Eric](#)".
- Mr. Cheeky, a well-dressed moustachioed man, referred to in the published scripts as "Mr. Nudge" (Idle), who pointedly annoys uptight characters (usually Jones). He is characterised by his constant nudging gestures and cheeky innuendo. His most famous appearance is in his initial sketch, "[Nudge Nudge](#)", though he appears in several later sketches too, including "The Visitors", where he claimed his name was Arthur Name.

Recurring characters

- [Biggles](#) (Chapman, and [in one instance](#) Jones), a World War I pilot. Derived from the famous series of fiction stories by [W. E. Johns](#).
- Luigi Vercotti (Palin), a [mafioso entrepreneur](#) and [pimp](#) featured during the first series, accompanied in his first appearance by his brother Dino (Jones). He appears as the manager for [Ron Obvious](#), the owner of La Gondola restaurant and as a victim of the [Piranha Brothers](#). With his brother, he attempts to talk the Colonel into paying for [protection of his Army base](#).
- [The Spanish Inquisition](#) would burst into a previously unrelated sketch whenever their name was mentioned. Their catchphrase was 'Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition!' They consist of Cardinal Ximinez (Palin), Cardinal Fang (Gilliam), and Cardinal Biggles (Jones). They premiered in series two and Ximinez had a cameo in "The Buzz Aldrin Show".

Recurring characters



- Frenchmen: Cleese and Palin would sometimes dress in stereotypical French garb, e.g. striped shirt, tight pants, [beret](#), and speak in garbled French, with incomprehensible accents. They had one fake moustache between them, and each would stick it onto the other's lip when it was his turn to speak. They appear giving a demonstration of the technical aspects of the flying sheep in episode 2 ("Sex and Violence"), and appear in the [Ministry of Silly Walks](#) sketch as the developers of "La Marche Futile". They also make an appearance in [Monty Python and the Holy Grail](#).
- The Compère (Palin), a sleazy nightclub emcee in a red jacket. He linked sketches by introducing them as nightclub acts, and was occasionally seen after the sketch, passing comment on it. In one link, he was the victim of the Knight with a Raw Chicken.
- [Spiny Norman](#), a Gilliam animation of a giant hedgehog. He is introduced in Episode 1 of Series 2 in "Piranha Brothers" as an hallucination experienced by Dinsdale Piranha when he is depressed. Later, Spiny Norman appears randomly in the background of animated cityscapes, shouting 'Dinsdale!'

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Recurring characters



- [Cardinal Richelieu](#) (Palin) is impersonated by someone or is impersonating someone else. He is first seen as a witness in court, but he turns out to be Ron Higgins, a professional Cardinal Richelieu impersonator. He is later seen during the "Historical Impersonations" sketch as himself impersonating [Petula Clark](#).
- Ken Shabby (Palin), an unkempt, disgusting man who cleaned public lavatories, appeared in his own sketch in the first series, attempting to get approval from another man (Chapman) to marry his daughter (Booth). In the second series, he appeared in several *vox populi* segments. He later founded his own religion (as part of the "Crackpot Religions" sketch) and called himself Archbishop Shabby.

Recurring characters



- Raymond Luxury-Yacht (Chapman) is described as one of Britain's leading skin specialists. He wears an enormous fake nose made of [polystyrene](#). He proudly proclaims that his name 'is spelled "Raymond Luxury-Yach-t", but it is pronounced "Throat-Wobbler Mangrove"'.
- A Madman (Chapman) Often appears in vox pops segments. He wears a [bowler hat](#) and has a bushy [moustache](#). He will always rant and ramble about his life whenever he appears and will occasionally foam at the mouth and fall over backwards. He appears in "The Naked Ant", "The Buzz Aldrin Show", and "It's a Living".

Singled Out For Scorn

- Some of the Pythons' real-life targets recurred more frequently than others.
 - [Reginald Maudling](#), a contemporary [Conservative](#) politician, was singled out for perhaps the most consistent ridicule.^[11]
 - [Margaret Thatcher](#), then-[Secretary of State for Education and Science](#), and (well after the program had ended) Prime Minister. In particular referring to Thatcher's brain as being in her shin received a hearty laugh from the studio audience.
 - [Richard Nixon](#), U.S. President, was also frequently mocked
 - [Edward Heath](#), Conservative party leader and prime minister for much of the series' run.
 - The [British police](#) were also a favorite target, often acting bizarrely, stupidly, or abusing their authority, frequently in drag.