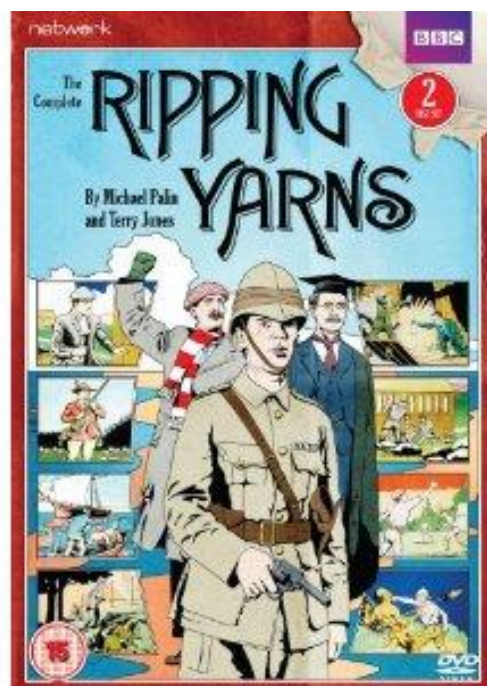
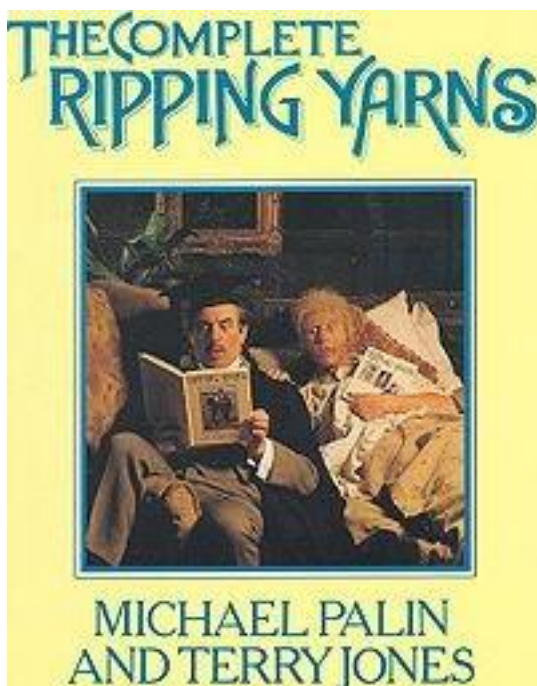


Ripping Yarns – "Golden Gordon" and its connection with Kildwick Hall and a butcher's shop in Bradley

Most people will recognise the names Michael Palin and Terry Jones. They were both members of the world-famous comedy troupe 'Monty Python's Flying Circus'; and Palin, in particular, has gone on to have a long and successful TV career.

Between 1976 and 1979, Michael Palin and Terry Jones made a nine part series for the BBC called 'Ripping Yarns', a parody of 1950s boys' adventure magazines.



The eighth episode (Series 2, Episode 2), which was first broadcast on 17th October 1979, was called 'Golden Gordon'. This was filmed in and around Yorkshire and includes scenes filmed at Kildwick Hall and what was a butcher's shop in Bradley village (see below).

The story

The story tells the final days of Barnstoneworth United, a team playing in the Yorkshire League that had seen better days. In the 1920s the team had seen much success but 1935 had seen the club struggle and the fan support dwindle.

[Golden Gordon](#) is not a player, but Barnstoneworth's biggest fan. Gordon Ottershaw (Michael Palin) spends his entire life surrounded by everything Barnstoneworth – he has even named his son Barnstoneworth, and the lad's schooling seems to consist of being able to recite the entire 1922 Yorkshire Premier League Team, rather than a list of British Prime Ministers.

After suffering another humiliating defeat (8-1 to Brighouse, whose centre-forward wears glasses), Gordon returns home, smashes-up the front room in disgust, and throws the clock through the window.

The club calls an emergency meeting at the Barnstoneworth United Social Club, which Gordon also smashes up. The chairman informs the assembled members that the club is to be sold to the 'Foggen Scrap' company, who will name a crushing mill in honour of the club, and that the following Saturday's cup game against Denley Moor Academicals will be the last game at the Sewerage Works Ground.

As the team can only muster four players (including player/manager Mr Dainty who joined BUFC on a free transfer from Walsall), Gordon decides to go and round up all the stars from the early 1920s to play the final match.

The result? Well, that would be giving it away wouldn't it ?

Local scenes to look out for

Bradley butcher's shop

One of the old players Gordon rounds up for the final match is a butcher in Bradley, and the old butcher's shop in the village was actually used in the filming. The script even includes the line "I'm going to see the butcher in Bradley ..." before the screen shows Gordon riding his bike down Lidget Road.

The butcher's shop (now a private house, with completely redesigned frontage), appears between 23:05 and 24:15; and a very short snippet from inside the shop shows the wall of the mill building opposite – which might already, by then, have been in use as a greetings card factory. The mill stood on the corner now occupied by Brown's Court. (When the old mill was demolished, the better quality stones from the old mill building were separated out, taken away, cleaned, and then reused in the new building.)

Kildwick Hall

Kildwick Hall appears, most obviously, topping and tailing a sequence between 15:27 and 20:45. The tail sequence shows the wrought iron gates across the road from the Hall that were removed when the current formal garden was created.

You may spot other local scenes, including Kildwick churchyard and maybe more ! In any case this is a brilliant and classic piece of British comedy.

The complete Ripping Yarns is available on DVD.

Recollections of a Farnhill teenager

Mandy Wass lived in Farnhill and has written to us with her memories of the Golden Gordon cast members and other people who stayed at Kildwick Hall Hotel around that time::

I worked at Kildwick Hall: my friend and myself used to be weekend chambermaids there in our teens, for extra pocket money. I went on to work there full time for a while after I left school.

At that time it was a very popular hotel and we met quite a few celebrities. One was Fred Perry [the tennis player], I still have his autograph, he was there with Clement Freud [TV celebrity of the '70s] who refused to speak to us.

I worked there, in 1979, during the filming of Ripping Yarns and met the cast; Michael Palin, John Cleese and Bill Fraser were staying in the hotel. In fact I had an 18th birthday card signed by John Cleese and had a personal note from Michael Palin. It was interesting serving his breakfast in his room while he was in his dressing gown and shaving, he was very nice and chatted about local history.

I was out in Skipton one evening, with my boyfriend, and Michael Palin was on the other side of the street. He shouted across to ask if could join us, but my boyfriend wouldn't let him – I was a little disgruntled, as it would have been nice.