

the Sweet & Lowdown



Michelle Clancy reports
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR
michelle.clancy@munster-express.ie

WATERFORD Variety Theatre Club and producers Michael Grant and Padraig O'Griff will present the irreverent, sometimes edgy, t-say down-right brazen, but always hilarious Bilberry Goat's Comedy Team live at Garter Lane on 8th October.

This is a new venture for the Variety Theatre Club that will feature some of the Bilberry Goat's best sketches in a night of 'manic' activity. The 'Goats' are led and directed by comedy script writer Tony Coogan, who is ably assisted by Day Sutts, Brian Coblins, Brenda Coogan, Giles and Seb Grant.

They spoke to us about life, comedy and how the Bilberry Goats got their name...

Main script writer and comedy director Tony Coogan is the second eldest son of legend comedy theatre producer Denny Coogan.

"I was reared through the heyday of John Player Tops in a house where even having dinner became the raw material for a sketch. My Dad was always writing sketches and performing in the Theatre Royal so I guess I just picked it up from him."

"My best theatre memories are the Tops days and my own involvement in the 'Silent Mikes' with my brother Paul and the late, great Eddie Coady."

"I have written a lot of sketches over the years without ever really knowing what way they would turn out but, since I teamed up with the Goats, I can now write with definite characters in mind. Always knowing that whatever I wrote, they would add something that I or even God himself would not have thought of."

"Staging a show in Garter Lane is new for us... it might even be a little posh but it is challenging and exciting. We are trying new things in how we present



High on a hill...The Bilberry Goats, from left, Jucky, Scol, Brenda, Davy and Tony.

"It's a long walk to the Munster afterwards..."

the sketches. We have a big team assembled: besides the Goats, we have the great Brian Power, the infamous Dee Lanigan, the fantastic Hazel Tebay, the wonderful Jamie Murphy, the astounding David Hennessy along with a few new friends in Jamie Nagle, Julie Power and Megan de Courcy. All of them are joining in the madness of the whole Bilberry Goats Live at Garter Lane journey...it will be some craic.

The name Bilberry Goats? I don't know, you would have to ask Scol about that one.

Day Sutts hails from 'the best part of Waterford, the capital of the city, McDowell Road'. Across the road resides the 'superbly handsome' Brian Coblins (sometimes known to his mother as Jucky).

"I've lived there most of my life. I'm married to Annette (Scol's sister) and have one son 'Sutts',

who is the outstanding hurler of our house (Annette wouldn't be known for her hurling skills).

Day spent twenty three years in the Waterford Panto before retiring to get Tony and Seb a break'.

"I loved every minute of it. I still meet people today - adults now - who remember me as Buttons or some crazy panto character from their childhood. I look at comedy as everyday life, how someone speaks and their reactions to things. How they get mad, sad, glad, it just clicks with me. I think that is what I bring to a sketch, mannerisms that you did not immediately notice but when you see me doing them you say 'oh yeah, that's it'."

No intimidated by the prospect of the Goats taking over Garter Lane for three nights, Day sees only one major impediment.

"It's a long walk to the Munster afterwards..."

"And the name Bilberry Goats, you'll have to ask Scol about that!"

Brian Coblins has been better named as Jucky since he was five years old.

"It means sound, good looking, handsome as Brad, generous to a fault and modest, it's in the dictionary!"

The son of Richie and Madge ('the Queen of McDowell Road'), Jucky's lineage is also closely linked to theatre in Waterford - possibly little to do with it.

"My Dad was always in shows and on stage. Actually Richie and Madge met during a De La Salle Musical. I hope I wasn't conceived at the break. I have two brothers, Ray and Archie, both well-known in theatre circles. They are both the proud owners of Tops trophies the size of match boxes. I have one

sister, Helen, who is married to Jim somebody or other?"

"Comedy... life is comedy. If I didn't see life as an absurd set of circumstances that carries you along, I would probably be a boring, middle-aged handsome fool. I'm not that am I?"

"We have great craic with the sketches, we work hard. There are times when we go slightly off the script and say something or do something that sets some of the other lads off. The producer would say control it lads, but what would he know. Sorry will this be printed?"

Jucky considers himself a veteran of the boards at Garter Lane!

"Now I hope this will be printed in bold letters. Yes I have played Garter Lane before, in the world premiere of 'The Glass' the world premiere of 'Lar Power' and the brilliant 'Stags and Hens', not

The Bilberry Goats 'go posh' next month, with a new show in Garter Lane on 3rd to 5th October. Hilarity will ensue....

Waterford Variety Theatre Club Presents:
~ A night with a difference! ~

THE BILBERRY GOATS

COMEDY TEAM

LIVE!

@ GARTER LANE

October 3rd, 4th & 5th.

Tickets €15/€18. Booking now open.

like some of those other sunshine actors...

"And the Bilberry Goats name, let me think now, you will have to ask Scol about that."

Brenda Co co an Giles must surely hb d a recd d in Waterf d panto – she's been in the shw fo thirty yrs, withu t a break! The eldest daug ter b Denny and sister to Tn y, abo , she has also been inb e d in see ral Tp s and b her prd uctin s.

"Comedy to me is a tonic, I love to laugh, I love to share it with friends and without it life would be such a bore, wouldn't it? My Dad wrote as many sketches as his hero Groucho Marx so all my life I have been exposed to looking askew at the so-called normal things in life.

Tony is following my Dad's footsteps but without the Tops stage to show his talent. I am delighted that we can display his gift for comedy in Garter Lane. Myself and Hazel are the only females in this troupe so we have to make sure these boys do not have it all their own way.

"We are all really looking forward to Garter Lane as it is a brand new experience for a comedy / variety type show. The emphasis is heavily on comedy but we have some great songs as well to relax the night a bit. I have performed in Garter Lane before but never in a show that will 'flow where you go', like this one.

"That Scol Grant called the Bilberry Goats... Goats now I ask you. It would take a man."

Finally, say ng the best fo last (o so he say), Scol Grant is a nativ 6 St n's Park, t he real capital" and currently resides in Au dale with his wife Brinan. The cu ple hav two daug ters, a sn and twg andchildren.

"I have been involved in the panto off and on for fifteen years. Before that I was in the Clover, Nokia, Rayban and Crystal Tops shows. These shows were produced by my brother Michael but that had nothing to do with why I was the lead in all of them.

"I love comedy. My Dad Teddy used to have us in the stitches when we were growing up. My Mother Biddy loved every sitcom that came on the telly, Lucy Ball, Sergeant Bilko, Get Smart, Mr Magoo, so I guess I always looked at the funny

side of life.

"Of course when we started in Tops years ago we were the new kids on the block and we were propelled onto the big stage, taking on the big guns like Denny, Bula, Leo, Eddie, Richie. It was sink or swim for us."

"The sketches in this show are really great and they depict a lovely sense of madness about everyday things. The thing about this show is that it is the music that calms it down to catch your breath. Actually I have played Garter Lane before in the Glass (I betcha Jucky called it the World premiere, didn't he?)"

And the questin y 've all been waiting fo – why the 'BilberryG at s'?

"The Bilberry Goats, well my

Dad worked in the Foundry as did Tony's Dad, Denny. All our lives we heard our fathers talking about Bilberry rock where the Foundry used to be. The characters that worked up there were legendary to us, so 'Bilberry' had a head start for any name we were likely to come up with. Our heroes Monty Python had a snake in their title that gave it great strength but still held a sense of fun. So it wasn't a huge leap in our imagination to capture what Bilberry was also famous for, it's herd of Goats. Hence we are the Bilberry Goats Comedy Team."

* The Bilberry Goats will b live in Garter Lane on 8 d, th and 6 Octob r. Tick ts now on sale.