

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Compiled by Charles Legge

### QUESTION Why did Willie Rushton bring Tony Hancock's ashes from Australia? Were the two men friends?

WILLIE'S wife was an Australian, and he met Tony down there. When Tony died, my agent, Roger Hancock, Tony's brother, asked Willie to bring his ashes home.

When Willie was passing through 'nothing to declare', one Customs man, who knew Willie, jokingly demanded to know what was in his bag. Willie answered honestly: 'Tony Hancock's ashes!' and then produced them, to the men's shock.

*Barry Cryer, Hatch End, Middx.*

FROM 1954, the antics of 'Anthony Aloysius St John Hancock', the lad from East Cheam, made him one of the nation's most-loved characters. Sadly, Tony Hancock's own life was dogged by chronic insecurity, depression and alcoholism.

In 1968, Hancock was in Sydney making a TV series about an English immigrant unimpressed by Australian 'culture'. It was never completed: on June 24, 1968, 44-year-old Hancock died from a combination of vodka and barbiturates.

Willie Rushton was a cartoonist, comedian and actor who co-founded satirical magazine *Private Eye*. Ned Sherrin saw his impression of Harold Macmillan, and made him a regular on BBC's *That Was The Week That Was*. He was a favourite on panel games, satire shows and as *Jackanory's* voice for the tales of *Winnie The Pooh*.

In later years, he is best remembered by radio fans as a cricket lover on *Trivia Test Match* and for his razor-sharp puns in *I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue*, appearing alongside Humphrey Lyttelton, Graeme Garden, Tim Brooke-Taylor and Barry Cryer.

While presenting a Sixties show called *Stars And Garters*, Willie met his wife, the Australian actress Arlene Dorgan. It was in Australia that he struck up a friendship with Tony Hancock. Willie died in 1996.

*Eric Moore, Middle Burnham, Somerset.*

# Hancock's last hurrah



Great wit: Rushton (with beard) and the *I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue* crew