

**JASPER CARROTT & ALISTAIR MCGOWAN**  
**Interview by Tim Saunders October 2016**

BAFTA award winning comic Jasper Carrott has been an insomniac for the past two years, he reveals during his sell out Evening Shared with Alistair McGowan currently touring the UK.

This affliction hasn't affected his performance one bit, though. He's still as sharp as ever and his delivery is spot on. Mundane topics such as obesity and old age are turned into side-splitting sketches.

"The audience always determines what's funny," he admits. "If they're not laughing after three attempts I drop the gag. I did a sketch years ago 10 or 12 times and then there was a magic ingredient that came up, which then gave a whole new attitude to the piece."

The current show is a format that Jasper knows well having started it with fellow comic and friend Phil Cool in the '90s – they did 250 shows together. "It works well because there are two different approaches to comedy. With Alistair the fascination is that you never know who he is. So you never know what's coming. Between us we bring 60 years of experience to the stage."

Before sharing the performance with Alistair McGowan, Jasper did not know him.

"Alistair is married to Charlie Page, a lovely lady I worked with when I was Ko-Ko in *The Mikado* (the comic opera by Gilbert and Sullivan) in the West End. So we had a link. Alistair and I had our first joint performance at the Henley Festival in 2014."

It was only in 2009 that Jasper came out of retirement. Prior to this he preferred to play golf. "But my golf was getting worse. I do still play and am getting better. I had been performing in *Made in Brum* with my mate Bev Bevan from ELO, I'd do half an hour of stand up and he'd do the music. But this format had its limitations, particularly the name. We did about 50 shows; it was very successful. So we decided to change the name and went with *Stand Up and Rock* so I've been doing a little of that in between working with Alistair. "That got me back into comedy and it is the small venues that I enjoy doing the most because that's how I started. So I got back into it and the Alistair thing fitted in with that. And I really started to enjoy comedy again – I am doing it for the sheer love of it. Also I don't have to do the whole evening so the responsibility is not all mine. The band was great and then I swapped that for Alistair."

These recent performances made Jasper realise that he had found an audience that wasn't catered for; a 50 plus audience. "They didn't like comedy with effing and blinding and with us they can bring their daughter or the daughter can bring the mum."

A career that has spanned five decades first started when Jasper became resident compère at the Boggery Folk Club in Birmingham in the mid-1970s. There he discovered his talent for comedy.

A hugely popular stalwart of the British folk club scene, his comedy single Funky Moped shot to the top of the British pop charts in 1975, establishing him as a

household name overnight. The flipside was his take on the legendary Magic Roundabout, a record still sought out today by a whole new generation of fans. Carrott's Lib was winner of a BAFTA Award in 1983.

Live work is what's important to Jasper these days. "In TV you are ruled by people who do not really know what comedy is. I am very content. I can do what I want when I want to and I really enjoy it."

<http://www.jaspercarrott.com/>

<http://www.alistairmcgowan.co.uk/>