

## The Beatles TV video clips

As

we know, the Beatles started filming on various TV shows very early on - back at the end of 1958, when they were still known as "The Quarry Men" (ABC - TV, in South Manchester, England). After this they played on many other TV shows during which they performed a host of songs, etc. But the first ever video clip, if we are to take the word of the universally acknowledged Liverpool and British Beatle expert, Billy Harry ("Beatlemania An Illustrated Filmography"), was filmed by the Beatles at the beginning of 1967. This was "Penny Lane". This clip was followed by others which we have listed below in chronological order.

We

should add, however, that with all due respect to the venerated Beatles expert, we have taken the liberty of adding to this list two earlier pieces of footage, which can also be described as clips, shot by the Beatles: 19 - 20 May 1966 - "Paperback Writer" and "Rain". These two clips are the world's first video clips!

1.

"Paperback Writer"  
(Lennon-McCartney)

"Rain"  
(Lennon-McCartney)  
EMI Studios and Chriswick House, London.

It was shot on 20 May 1966. The director of the clips, Michael Lindsay-Hogg, shot them on 20 May 1966 for the BBC 1 TV show Top of the Pops. The filming took place in the beautiful turn-of-the-century gardens belonging to the ancient and grand Chiswick House (Bullington Lane, Chiswick, West London). First of all the Beatles were filmed walking around this botanical garden and orangery with their fantastic song "Rain" playing in the background. The Beatles were then filmed sitting on a bench in front of the orangery, and after that running among the garden statues to the sound of "Paperback Writer". "Paperback Writer" was first shown to TV viewers on 2 June 1966, repeated on 2 - 3 June 1966 on the BBC 1 show Top of the Pops, and "Rain" was shown on 9 June 1966. All these programmes were broadcast on Thursdays, between 7.30 pm and 8.30 pm.

"Strawberry  
Fields Forever"  
(Lennon - McCartney) (1967)

## The

is a colour clip written and created by the Swedish TV director Peter Goldmann, who had been recommended to the Beatles by their good German friend, Klaus

Voormann. This clip was shot on 30 January and 31 January 1967 at Knole Park, near Sevenoaks, Kent, which is around 32km to the south-east of London. The Beatles are shown here moving through a magical landscape which is constantly changing colour, often in slow motion, forwards and backwards. The magnificent 15th-century house, a huge oak tree and the piano next to the oak are a beautiful inclusion in the clip. We see Paul running up to the tree and back again, leaping into the air, and all the Beatles playing the upturned piano. We should add that TV viewers first saw this clip on 16 February 1967 on BBC 1's Top of the Pops show.

"Penny Lane" (Lennon - McCartney) 1967

## This

is a black-and-white clip made by the now familiar to us director Peter Goldmann. This features a "faked" ride by the Beatles on horseback through Liverpool. In actual fact, filming took place at Angel Lane, Stratford, East London and in Sevenoaks, Kent. The Beatles, mounted on white horses, rode in a procession up and around Angel Lane. Filming of the clip started on 5 February 1967 and resumed on 7 February 1967 at Knole Park, Sevenoaks, Kent, where the concluding "Penny Lane" shots were filmed as well: on their white horses, John, Paul, George and Ringo ride under an arch in the outer wall, and the next time we see them they are sitting at a dining-table and drinking tea alfresco. Two people, one of whom is Mal Evans, are serving the Beatles. The "Penny Lane" clip also had its debut on 16 February 1967 on BBC 1's Top of the Pops show.

"Hello Goodbye" (Lennon - McCartney) 1967.

## There

are three colour video clips of the same name, directed by Paul McCartney on 10 November 1967 on the stage of London's Saville Theatre. In the first clip the Beatles are performing and "rolling" around the theatre stage in their multi-coloured Sergeant Pepper uniforms. At one point they are shown in their collarless Pierre Cardin suits, 1964 model. (It was this clip that was shown in the USA on 26 November 1967 on the local TV programme The Ed Sullivan Show. The two other eponymous clips have never been shown to the public at large. One of these two clips is almost identical to the "official" clip, apart from the fact that the Beatles are wearing hippy clothes. And in the third clip the Beatles are wearing a mixture of the Sergeant Pepper uniforms and clothes favoured by followers of the hippy movement. It is on this clip that, during the performance of "Hello Goodbye", John and Paul dance the Charleston and wink at the camera filming them. As for George, he looks extremely solemn here; you could go so far as to say wise. And Ringo - Ringo is the same as ever.

"A  
Day In The Life" (Lennon  
- McCartney) 1967.

This  
is a colour clip the director of which is unknown. What is there to  
say about this project? That  
a wonderful video clip was made for a superb song! The filming and  
recording took place at the large studio no. 1 on London's Abbey  
Road. A 42-strong orchestra was hired. The male members of the  
orchestra wore spangled evening suits and the women beautiful,  
dazzling dresses. Paul McCartney and George Martin conducted the  
orchestra. The members of the orchestra had also sprinkled  
themselves with sequins, donned funny hats, and attached  
brightly-coloured clown's noses and paper eyes and other fancy  
dress items to themselves. Big Ben can be heard during this  
wonderful and fantastical recording, and at the end there is a piano  
chord, executed simultaneously on three pianos by all the Beatles and  
George Martin in a quintet! It is here that we see Ringo, towering  
above with a hand-held camera, ? [sic] Mick ? ? [sic], Faithful, yet  
another Rolling Stone, Keith Richards, Donovan, Pattie Boyd Harrison  
and Mike Nesmith of The Monkees.

This  
film/clip was never shown in Great Britain because, as an assistant  
from the Beatles' team, Tony Bramwell, said, of the ban imposed by  
the BBC who suspected that "A Day In The Life" implicitly  
advocated taking drugs.

"Lady  
Madonna"  
(Lennon - McCartney) (1968). The director of this colour clip, shot  
on 11 February 1968 whilst the Beatles were working on new songs at  
the Abbey Road studio in London, is unknown. In this clip we see  
Paul sitting at the piano and John at the microphone. George looks  
very happy playing a rock segment on his guitar. Ringo is playing  
the drums. This clip was first shown on 15 March 1968 on the British  
TV show All Systems Freeman.

"Back  
In The U.S.S.R."  
(Lennon - McCartney) (1968). This is a black-and-white clip. The  
director of the clip is unknown. Neither are there any details to  
say whether or not it was shown on British or American TV. The  
clip is made up of frames depicting various scenes during  
Beatlemania, as well as of events associated with the Beatles'  
arrival at various airports throughout the world. The shots are  
from the 1964 period.

"Hey  
Jude" (Lennon

- McCartney) (1968),

"Revolution"  
(Lennon - McCartney) (1968).

The Beatles recorded these two songs in the form of colour clips at the Twickenham Film Studios, Twickenham, with the help of director Michael Lindsay-Hogg on 4 September 1968. "Hey Jude" was shown to British TV viewers on 8 September 1968 on ITV's David Frost On Sunday programme, and the other superb television version of the song "Revolution" appeared on BBC 1's Top of the Pops on 19 September 1968.

"The Ballad Of John And Yoko"  
(Lennon - McCartney). This is a colour clip, first shown on the television programme Music Scene. There is no further information on it.

"Something"  
(Harrison).  
This is an outstanding video clip of George's song. By the way, the famous Frank Sinatra who, at the dawn of the Beatles epoch, had all but called them the curse of the 20th century, said that this was the greatest love song in the last five years. (1969). All four Beatles take part in this clip with their wives: John and Yoko, Paul and Linda, George and Pattie, and Ringo and "Mo" - Maureen. They are all shown walking through fields, or standing and looking lovingly into each other's eyes. In other frames Ringo and Maureen jump onto a couple of scooters, and Paul and Linda romp around with their dog March. The result was an extremely "saccharine" sentimental scene. The director, the date the clip was shot and when it was shown on television are not known.

"Don't Let Me Down" (Lennon - McCartney) (1969).

This is a very interesting video clip from the "Let It Be" period, including scenes from the film studios at Twickenham and from the Apple Corps roof at 95 Wigmore Street, London. Part of it was apparently recorded on 30 January 1969 when the Beatles were performing on the Apple Corps roof. It is more than likely that Michael Lindsay-Hogg directed it. There are no details known regarding whether this clip was shown on television.

Postscript  
to the chapter "The  
Beatles TV video clips"

In  
my introductory words on the abovementioned chapter I wrote that  
Lennon - McCartney's "Paperback Writer" and "Rain", filmed  
and then shown to British television viewers in June 1966, can be  
considered the world's first video clips.  
However, after having written this chapter I came across some  
material which caused me to doubt my words. Why? Well, to start  
with, having watched the Beatles' feature films, I came to the  
conclusion that if you extract from them the musical numbers  
performed by the Beatles, you will end up with really decent, no,  
I'd go so far as to say, wonderful clips of these numbers.  
Needless to say, though, there's no need to extract anything from  
the films. Everything should remain as it is. It follows,  
therefore, that we already have the world's first real video clips  
- or pretty good attempts at making them - in the form of the truly  
titanic work by the Beatles on 23 - 24 November 1965 ...

On  
23 November 1965, a Tuesday, at the Twickenham Film Studios, St.  
Margaret's, Twickenham, the Beatles arrived after lunch and worked  
until the early hours of 24 November 1965 on set no. 3, on the  
material gathered from the parts completed in the space of the two  
days before their arrival at Twickenham. Ten clips were recorded,  
but only nine were shown on television in Great Britain and the USA  
at various points because Brian ? [sic] didn't like the tenth clip  
- "I Feel Fine" (colour version), or to be more precise one of  
two versions of this clip, having decided that the clip wouldn't  
work ...

Below  
are all these ten clips:

1-2-3  
"We Can Work It Out" (Lennon - McCartney) - three different  
versions. John is sitting at the organ in all three versions of the  
clip. The actions of the members of the group are quite different in  
all three clips. And we can see this at the end of each of the three  
versions. One of the clips begins with an image of a large still of  
Lennon with a sunflower in one eye. In another clip we see the  
Beatles in the suits they wore when performing at the Shea Stadium in  
New York, USA.

1-5-6  
"Day Tripper" (Lennon - McCartney). There are also three  
different versions of this clip. In the first one the Beatles are  
again shown in the Shea Stadium suits. Here George and Ringo feature  
against the backdrop of a train carriage. A little later Ringo puts  
away his drumming paraphernalia and then starts to unpack it again.  
John and Paul are standing a few feet away from George and Ringo -  
against the backdrop of a 1920s aeroplane. The two other clips are

largely identical, the only difference being in Ringo's actions at the beginning and at the end. In these clips the Beatles played in the then standard three guitar/drums position.

7.

"Help!" (Lennon - McCartney). Singing the eponymous song, the Beatles are sitting on workbench of some sort and rocking from side to side. It is here that Ringo tries to set up his drums, but fails completely. He then grabs a large umbrella which, a little later on, is just what he and the other Beatles need, when rain starts to fall at the end of the clip.

8.

"Ticket

To Ride" (Lennon - McCartney). There is just one version of this clip in which we see a constantly enlarging bus and railway tickets. This clip was, of course, made to promote the song "Ticket To Ride".

9.-10.

"I Feel Fine" (Lennon - McCartney). There are two versions. In the first one George, John and Paul can be seen walking around several seconds after the start of the song. Harrison then starts singing, hitting a ball, whilst John and Paul do not touch any of the gym equipment or chest expander on the set. They simply sing, looking directly at the camera filming them. And Ringo, he appears in the frame exactly 38 seconds after the video clip begins, and starts riding the exercise bike.

The

second version of the clip differs from the first in that this time the Beatles do not use the gym equipment, apart from at the end of this version, when George sits on the exercise bike ...

During

this second version of the video clip we see the Beatles eating fish and chips wrapped in newspaper, making virtually no attempt to mime the song "Help!" accompanying this clip.