

## Spike's early publishers

Spike's hardcover editions were published by Denis Dobson until 1968. The exception was his first novel, *Puckoon*, which was published by Anthony Blond in 1963. The explanation was that the arrangements were made by a colleague at Associated London Scripts when Spike was away in Australia. He is said to have felt bad about the Dobsons missing out on what proved to be a very successful book. (Scudamore, 1985) He remained with Dobsons, they published four more books the last two in 1868.

While Dobson published the hardcover editions the paperback editions of these early books were published by either Penguin (*Silly Verse for Kids* in 1968, *Puckoon* in 1965, *A Book of Milliganimals* in 1971) or Tandem (*A Dustbin of Milligan* in 1965, *The little Pot Boiler* in 1965, *A Book of Bits or a Bit of a Book* in 1967). *The Bald Twit Lion*, Spike's first children's illustrated book, did not come out as a softcover.

1965 must have been a busy year for Spike's office, three paperback editions and a new hardback book. In the period 1963-65 they worked with four different publishers.

Another publisher, Louvain Landsborough, published a mass market paperback version of *A Dustbin of Milligan* in what is called a Trust series in 1963/64. The profits of this edition went to Oxfam.

### *Louvain Landsborough*

Louvain Landsborough, a company of Gordon Holmes Landsborough, (1913–1983), English publisher, author and bookseller, was in the forefront of change in the paperback publishing and bookselling industries in England during the 1950s to 1980s. Louvain was his wife's name so the company may have been hers.

Landsborough was a friend of Spike's he is mentioned in the foreword of *Puckoon* for giving Spike encouragement when writing the book.

Spike created more books that were editions published for charitable or semi charitable entities. Watch for them.

### *Anthony Blond, London*

Set up by Anthony Bernard Blond (1928-2008) in 1952 and reported to have published some 70 new writers. Perhaps it was this reputation that attracted the ALS people to publish *Puckoon* with them. The company ran until 1987 when it was taken into the Hutchinson stable. *Puckoon* was the only Milligan book they were to publish.

### *Tandem*

Tandem Books was originally a U. K. paperback publishing company established in the early 1960s and called Tandem Books limited. It was sold to a U.S. firm in 1967/1968 and became Universal-Tandem Publishing Company. This company also established a new imprint, Target Books, which was to publish a couple of Spike's illustrated children's books, *Badjelly the Witch* and *Dip the Puppy*.

In 1975 Universal Tandem was sold to the U.K. Publishing house W.H. Allen. Tandem had five of Spike's books in paperback, soon after W.H. Allen bought Tandem they changed the covers of all five books with designs by Campbell/Bouttell. These titles were reprinted under Allen's paperback imprint, Star Books in 1979.

These changes are reflected in the various editions of Spike's books and result in some titles having five distinct ISBNs.

## More Spike Milligan Publishers

### Penguin

Spike Milligan productions has had the longest continued association with Penguin. The first Milligan Penguin was the *Puckoon* paperback in 1965, a book that Penguin still has in print. Over the years Penguin has taken over and been taken over by other Milligan publishers. The result being that Penguin, or its affiliate imprints, has the publishing rights on the highest number of Milligan books than any other publisher. They have published 37 different Milligan titles under the Penguin or Puffin imprint and currently have 27 Milligan titles are listed on their website (Feb. 2017).

### Margaret and Jack Hobbs

Husband and wife team, Margaret and Jack Hobbs were small publishers that specialised in humour books. They published three Milligan books, *The Bedside Milligan* (1969), *The Bedsitting Room* (1970) and *Milligan's Arc* (1971). When preparing for the publishing of Spike's first war memoir in 1971 there was a nervousness about the Hobbs taking it on, perhaps even by Hobbs himself, as it was he who introduced Spike and Norma to a new publisher, Michael Joseph. (Farnes, 2003) From then through to 1987 the Hobbs were credited as working in association with Michael Joseph in 23 books in that period. The relationship ended when Michael Joseph became an imprint of Penguin books around 1987. Jack Hobbs relationship with Milligan was varied and complex, he was a jazz pianist and a WWII veteran and Spike described him as a fellow manic depressive. (Carpenter, 2003) Jack was could be credited as editor, or co writer, but his role also seemed to be as link person between publisher, Michael Joseph and Spike.

### Michael Joseph

Michael Joseph Ltd. Published its first book in 1936 after Michael Joseph set it up as a subsidiary of another publisher, Victor Gollancz Ltd. At the time Spike became involved with them Michael Joseph had become very successful; Michael Joseph's first Spike Milligan book was Spike's first war memoir, *Adolf Hitler: His part in my downfall*, in 1971. Michael Joseph became the main publisher of Spike's titles in hardback, 23 titles in all. They became part of the Penguin group in 1985, the name Michael Joseph continues as a Penguin imprint.

### Sphere

Sphere Books was a paperback publisher and published five Milligan titles between 1973, *Milligan's ark*, and in 1984, *The 101 best and only Limericks of Spike Milligan* (paperback edition). In this bibliography they are listed as the publisher of twelve separate editions because they seemed to give each new printing of a title a new ISBN. Sphere was taken over by Penguin in 1989.

### Corgi

Corgi has only published one Milligan title, *The Book of the Goons* (1975). It is an imprint of Transworld Publishers which in turn now is part of Penguin Random House Group. A later printing of *The Book of the Goons* (1979) was published by Black Swan, also an imprint of Transworld.

### Sidgewick and Jackson

Sidgewick and Jackson only published two Milligan titles both in hardback, *Spike Milligan's Transports of Delight* (1974) and the follow up book *Spike Milligan's Further Transports of*

*Delight* (1985). An imprint of publishing company Pan Macmillan they are one of the few not to be part of Penguin Random house.

### **Woburn Press**

Woburn Press published the first Goon show scripts titles, *The Goon Show Scripts* (1972) and *More Goon Show Scripts* (1973). Woburn's involvement was somewhat serendipitous. Spike started going to a hypnotherapist, Dr Joe Robson, in 1955 and a personal relationship with Dr Joe and his wife developed. While having dinner with the Robsons around 1971 Spike learnt that their son Jeremy was going into publishing and Spike magnanimously offered him a book of his. (Scudamore, 1985) Spike didn't have a book ready so in scrambling to make good the commitment the idea emerged of a book of Goon scripts. This was an idea that had been thought of and discarded when Spike was first encouraged to publish some of his writing by Denis Dobson back in 1958. Joe Robson's son, Jeremy was working at Woburn Press and he edited the first book and rest became history.

### **Robson Books**

Jeremy Robson left Woburn Press in 1973 to establish his own publishing company, Robson Books. Woburn was having trouble keeping up with the volume and demand of the scripts books (Farnes, 2003) and more Goon books were contemplated. 'This probably accelerated the move to Robson Books.

## **Still more Spike Milligan Publishers**

### **Hutchinson Group (Australia)**

Hutchinson published just the one Milligan book, *Goblins*. Although published in Australia *Goblins* was written in London after an approach by someone at Hutchinson (Farnes, 2003). Hutchinson Group (Australia) is the nominated publisher. It would have been part of the British owned Hutchinson that still exists as an imprint of Random House, as does Arrow books, the publisher of the paperback edition of *Goblins*. This is the only Milligan book that Hutchinson published.

### **Arrow Books**

There are just two paperback Milligan books published by Arrow, *Goblins* in 1980 and *Depression and how to survive it* in 1994. In 1980 Arrow was a Hutchinson imprint who was to become part of Random House. Within Random House Arrow books is one of several imprints under the banner of Cornerstone. Some references describe the publisher of *Depression and how to survive it* as Cornerstone, Arrow Books Ltd Imprint.

### **Traffic Authority of NSW, Rosebury NSW**

Another 'one off' publisher, they published three pamphlets, *Spike's Bike Book: For big kids (13-104)*, *Spike's Bike Book: for medium kids (9-12)*, and *Spikes Bike Book: for parents of little kids (under 9)* that were a series targeted at children, parents, and adults of different ages.

### **Macmillan London Ltd**

Macmillan published just the one Milligan book, *Floored masterpieces with worse verse*. Macmillan is now a subsidiary of the German publishing company Holtzbrinck Publishing

Group. Three other companies that have published Milligan books are now imprints within the Macmillan group, they are, Sidgewick and Jackson, Boxtree and St Martin's Press.

### **Boxtree Ltd., London**

Boxtree published just one title, *Fleas, Knees And Hidden Elephants*, but in both hardback and paperback editions in 1994 and 1995. Boxtree were then and still are an imprint of Macmillan.

### **Ladybird Books Ltd**

There is just one Ladybird Milligan title, *That's Amazing!* At this time, 1990, Ladybird Books were owned by Pearson PLC who also owned Penguin. It may have been the publishers thought *That's Amazing!* being the type of book it is, was a better a better fit with Ladybird than Penguin or Puffin.

### **Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd**

*Dear Robert, Dear Spike: The Graves-Milligan correspondence* is the only Milligan title published by Alan Sutton Publishing. This was a small publishing company based in the Cotswolds and has a reputation for publishing high quality books.

### **New York: Harper's Magazine Press**

Published in Association with Harper Row, New York the first American edition of *Adolf Hitler: My Part In His Downfall* was different in that it had its own design. This was to be the only Milligan title Harper's Magazine Press was to publish.

### **Ebury Press an imprint of the Random House**

A single title, *Depression and How to Survive it*, was published under this imprint in 1993. Perhaps because of the type of book it was. The paperback version was published by Cornerstone, Arrow Books Ltd, both were and are still are, imprints of Random House.

### **Isis Publishing Ltd**

Isis published large print versions of six Milligan titles, his first four war memoirs and the first two books in the according to series. Based in Oxford Isis published *Adolf* in hardback in 1987. In 1993 and 1994 they published *The Bible According to Spike Milligan* in hardback and paperback respectively. In 1995 they published the three other war memoir titles, in print at the time, in both hardback and paperback and also *Lady Chatterley's Lover According to Spike Milligan*, but just in hardback.

### **Thomas T Beeler**

Thomas T Beeler is an American publisher of large print books. In 1997 they published three Milligan titles, *Rommel? Gunner Who?* and *Mussolini: His Part In My Downfall and Lady Chatterley's Lover According to Spike Milligan*. I suspect this was by arrangement with Isis in Oxford as Amazon identifies them as part of the ISIS Large Print series (Amazon.com). They may have published the other Milligan titles from Isis, they are not common books to find.

## Still Further More Spike Milligan Publishers

I have persisted in listing the publishers to illustrate the complexity that was involved in keeping track of Spike Milligan's book publishing arm of Spike Milligan Productions. There were between thirty and forty different publishing entities.

### Virgin Publishing Ltd.

One of Spike's early publishers, W H Allen was taken over by Virgin and became Virgin Books. They became the major publisher of Milligan titles in 1995 and published fourteen Milligan titles between 1995 and 2009 when they became part of the Penguin Random House. Virgin published each title in hardback and paperback.

### Fourth Estate, a division of Harper Collins

After Spike Milligan's death, Norma Farnes oversaw the production of five Milligan titles and Fourth Estate published all of them. This was a change from Spike's usual publishers and quite apart from the Penguin Random House stable.

The titles were *The Essential Spike Milligan* (2002), *An Intimate Memoir* (2003), *The Compulsive Milligan* (2004), *Box 18 The Unpublished Spike Milligan* (2006), *Spike : Memories of Milligan* (2010), Harper Collins, in association with Marks & Spencer, published an omnibus edition of the first two titles, *The Completely Essential Spike Milligan* in 2005.

### Viking An imprint of Penguin Books

Eventually in 2011, Norma Farnes returned to Penguin and *Milligan's Meaning of Life* was published under Penguin's Viking label. They published a second title, *Spike Milligan: Man of Letters* in 2013. Both books were edited by Norma Farnes.

### *The Foreign language editions*

### Haffmans Verlag and Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag

These two German companies published the German language version of Puckoon in hardback and paperback respectively.

### Editions Du Rocher Monaco [Paris]

Editions Du Rocher published two titles, *Mon rôle dans la chute d'Adolf Hitler* in 1999. And *Le Règne Hystérique De Siffoney I<sup>er</sup>, Roi d'Irlande* (The Looney) in 2000.

### Payot et Rivages

A second paperback edition of *Mon rôle dans la chute d'Adolf Hitler* by the same translator came out in 2008.

### Nouvelle Editions Wombat

This French publisher with the unlikely Aussie name published *Le Règne Hystérique De Siffoney I<sup>er</sup>, Roi d'Irlande* (The Looney) in 2015.

### *Simultaneous publishing*

Several of Milligan's titles were published simultaneously with the U.K. editions. *The Bald Twit Lion* was also published by the General Publishing Co. Ltd., Ontario.

Lansdowne Press Melbourne in Australia and St. Martin's Press New York both published *The GOON Show Scripts* and *More GOON Show Scripts* alongside the U.K. editions.

As mentioned previously Spike's war memoirs were published in the U.S. soon after the U.K. publication. Are they editions in their own right or another example of simultaneous publication?

Another sort of simultaneous publishing was going on too. Book club editions from the Book Club Associates editions in the beginning to the Ted Smart editions in the later years it always seemed to be a part of Spike Milligan Productions.