



When "The Hitchhiker's guide to the galaxy" first episode was aired on Radio 4, late at night the 8th march 78, nobody thought it would become one of the world most famous radio series.

The original radio series : the birth of a legend !



At the age of 24 years old, Douglas was not really a successful guy. He had done a lot of various and strange jobs (chicken ched cleaner, bodyguard...), he had hitchhiked around Europe, he had formed a revue group called "Adams-Smith-Adams", wrote some stuff (or

rather drank a lot) with Monty Python's Graham Chapman,... But well nothing really definitive for this young ambitious young man.

Then he wrote a few sketches for the BBC thanks to his pal Simon Brett, who was in 1976 producer of Radio 4 comedy program, "The Burkiss way". Simon asked Douglas if he had ideas for a comedy show and , after some hesitations (Douglas thought that radio was too concervative to agree new concepts), he answered that he wanted to make a comedy science fiction series. Douglas' first idea was to make a show called 'The ends of the Earth", a serie of six shows , each of which would deal with the destruction of the Earth for a completely different reason".

Then, as Douglas told to Neil Gaiman (in "Don't Panic"/Titan Books), "I remembered this title I thought of while lying in a field in Innsbruck in 1971 and thought "Ok, he's a roving researcher of "The Hitchhiker's guide to the galaxy". And the more I thought about it, the more that seemed a promising idea for a continuing story, as opposed at "The ends of the Earth", which would have been a series of different stories" (according to MJ Simpson, Douglas maybe got the idea in fact a couple years later in Greece).

Douglas knew exactly what he wanted : "Though it was now ten years since Sergeant Pepper had revolutionised the way that people in the rock world thought about sound production, it seemed to me, listening to radio comedy at the time, that we still hadn't progressed much beyond Door Slam A, Door Slam B, Foosteps on a Gravel Path and the odd comic Boing.... I wanted Hitch-Hiker's to sound like a rock album. I wanted the voices and effects and the music to be so seamlessly orchestrated as to create a coherent picture of a whole other world - and I said this and many similar sorts of things and waved my hands around a lot, while people nodded patiently and said "Yes, Douglas, but what's it actually about?" (in "The Hitchhiker's guide to the galaxy - the original radio scripts"/Pan Books)

Fortunately, even if the BBC was not used with science fiction comedy, and had doubts about its viability, Douglas had some allies in the BBC, and Radio 4 finally approved the making of the pilot on 1st March 1977, and by the 4th April, Douglas has finisdhed the first script. The pilot was then made, and a series of six episodes was commissioned the 31st August.

The first episode was aired wednesday 8th march 1978, late in the evening, at 22h30, without publicity. The five other episodes followed, one episode per week. And surprisingly, the series rapidly began to pick up a following! And at the end of this first broadcast of the six episodes, "The Hitchhiker's guide to The Galaxy" had become a cult! And Douglas was proposed to write a book and make some records.

The first radio series have some excellent stuff that does not appear in later editions of Hitchhiker's : the Haggunenonn sequence has been replaced by Hotblack Desiato.

The seventh episode, known as the Christmas Special, was recorded on November 1978, and transmitted on 24 December. It was probably a difficult episode for Douglas to write, because Zaphod, Marvin and Trillian died at the end of the first series! Marvin and Zaphod are brought back to life, but Trillian has disappeared, "forcibly married to the President of the Algolian Chapter of the Galactic Rotary Club"! Towels also appear for the first time in Hitchhiker's history!

Five other episodes have been commisionned in 1979 (known as the second series), and recordings begun in May. They have been broadcasted from the 21th to the 25th January 1980. They introduce a lot of great ideas and include a lot of never repeated elsewhere characters and situations like the Lintillas, the Wise Old Bird and the Shoe Event Horizon.

Even if the second series was less succesfull than the first one, it's obviously part of the radio series cult. The first series are now kown as The First Phase, while The Christmas Episodes and the second series constitute The Second Phase.

Who did what?

Produced by..... Geoffrey Perkins (episodes 2 to 12)/Simon Brett (ep. 1)
 Written by..... Douglas Adams (with John Lloyd - episodes 5 & 6)
 Sound effects & recording..... The Radiophonic Workshop
 Signature tune..... Eagles "Journey of the sorcerer"
 Music (Narrator)..... Various pieces from Ligeti, Terence Riley,
 Jean-Michel Jarre, Fripp and Eno, Stockhausen,
 Gruppe Between,.... and Louis Armstrong of course!

The (almost) complete cast list (by order of appearance)

The Book Peter Jones
 Arthur Dent..... Simon Jones
 Prosser..... Bill Wallis (episode 1)
 Ford Prefect..... Geoffrey Mc Guivern
 Lady Cynthia Fitzmelton..... Jo Kendall (Episode 1)
 The barman..... David Gooderson (Episode 1)
 Prosternic Vogon Jeltz..... Bill Wallis (episode 1, 2 & 9)
 The Vogon Guard..... David Tate (Episode 2)
 Zaphod..... Mark Wing-Davey
 Trillian..... Susan Sheridan (episode 2 to 6)
 Eddie The Computer..... David Tate
 The Whale..... Stephen Moore (episode 3)
 Slartibartfast..... Richard Vernon (Episode 3 & 4)
 Deep Thought..... Geoffroy Mc Givern (Episode 4)
 First computer programmer..... Ray Hasset (episode 4)
 Second computer programmer.... Jeremy Browne (episode 4)
 Vroomfondel..... Jim Broadbent (episode 4)
 Majikthise..... Jo Nathan Adams (episode 4)
 Benjy Mouse..... David Tate (episode 4)
 Frankie Mouse..... Peter Hawkins (episode 4)
 The Cheerleader..... Jon Nathan Adams (episode 4)
 Shooty..... Jim Broadbent (episode 4)
 Bang Bang..... Ray Hasset (episode 4)
 Garkbit the waiter..... Anthony Sharp (episode 5)
 Zarquon the prophet..... Anthony Sharp (episode 5)
 Max Quordlepleen..... Roy Hudd (episode 5)
 Haggunenonn..... Audrey Woods (episode 6)
 B Ark Number two..... Aubrey Woods (episode 6)
 Captain..... David Jason (episode 6)
 B Ark Number One..... Johnatan Cecil (episode 6)
 Hairdresser..... Audrey Woods (episode 6)
 Management consultant..... Johnatan Cecil (episode 6)
 Marketing girl..... Beth Porter (episode 6)
 Caveman..... David Jason (episode 6)
 Receptionist..... David Tate (episode 7)
 Arcturan Number One..... Bill Paterson (episode 7)
 Air Traffic Controler..... Geroffrey Mc Givern (episode 7)
 Arcturan Captain..... David Tate (episode 7)
 Gag Halfrunt..... Stephen Moore (episode 7 & 9)
 Radio Voice..... David Tate (episode 7)
 Underfleet commander..... Audrey Woods (episode 7)
 Lift..... David Tate (episode 7)
 Roosta..... Alan Ford (episode 7)
 Frogstar Robot..... Geoffrey Mc Givern (episode 7)
 Frogstar Prison Relation Officer.... David Tate (episode 8)
 Robot girls.....
 GargraVarr..... Valentine Dyall (episode 8)
 The Nutrimat Machine..... Leueen Willoughby (episode 9)
 The Ventillation system..... Geoffrey Mc Givern (episode 9)
 Zaphod Beeblebrox the Fourth..... Richard Goolden (episode 9)
 Bird One..... Ronald Baddiley (episode 10 & 11)
 Bird Two..... John Baddeley (episode 10)
 The Footwarior..... John Baddeley (episode 10, 11 & 12)
 The Wise Old Bird..... John Le Mesurier (episode 10)
 Lintilla..... Rula Lenska (episode 10, 11)
 Hug Huttenflurst..... Mark Smith (episode 11)

The film comentator..... David Tate (episode 11)
 The computeach..... David Tate (episode 11)
 The pupil..... Stephen Moore (episode 11)
 Poodoo..... Ken Campbell (epiosde 12)
 The Allitnils..... Stephen Moore (epiosde 12)
 Varntvar the priest..... Geoffrey Mc Givern (episode 12)
 Airline Stewardess..... Rula Lenska (episode 12)
 Autopilot..... Jonathan Pryce (episode 12)
 Zarniwoop..... Jonathan Pryce (episode 12)
 The Man in the Shack..... Stephen Moore (episode 12)

The actors who play many parts

Geoffrey Mc Givern..is..... Ford Prefect, Deep Thought, The Ventilation system
 Frogstar Robot, Air Traffic Controller,
Varvntar the priest

Stephen Moore..... is..... Marvin, Gag Halfrunt, The Man in the Shack,
The Pupil, The Whale

David Tate.....is..... Eddie the computer, Vogon Guard, Frogstar Prisonner
 Relation Office, The Allitnils, Arcturian Captain,
 Radio Voice, Receptionist, Lift

The Original Radio series in a nutshell
 (thanks to Bruno Barwise for the translation)

FIT THE FIRST (Series I, 1st transmittion : 8th March 78)

One thursday morning, Arthur Dent, perfectly ordinary earthling, has to face an awful incident: his house must be demolished to make way for a bypass. Ford Prefect, a friend who turns out to be an alien from outer space convinces him to nevertheless go down to the local pub for a pint and to tell him the most important news he will ever hear: the end of the world has arrived.

Earth is to be blown up by the vile Vogons to make way for a hyperspace bypass, but Ford manages to hitch a ride aboard one of the Vogon Space Fleet's ships. Unfortunately for them, they are quickly discovered, and the Vogon captain threatens to throw them out into space after having read them one of his horrible poems.

FIT THE SECOND (15th March 78)

In spite of their best efforts Ford and Arthur get thrown into space, even after the poetry reading.

They are miraculously rescued by the Infinite Improbability Drive spacecraft the Heart Of Gold, stolen and piloted by Zaphod Beeblebrox who is part-time ex-president of the universe and semi-cousin of Ford. Also aboard the ship are Trillian Macmillan the sexy scientist whom Arthur already met during a party in Islington (London), Marvin the manic-depressive and paranoid android, Eddie the ship board computer who is extremely cool and just as annoying, as well as an incalculable number of cheerful doors.

FIT THE THIRD (22th March 78)

Whilst the Heart of Gold is in orbit around the legendary planet of Magrathea, specialised in the construction of luxury planets, it becomes the target of an archaic, automatic defense system. Luckily this mishap ends with only one light injury and the sudden apparition of a pot of petunias and of a sperm whale.

Shortly afterwards the spaceship lands on Magrathea. Ford, Zaphod and Trillian go out to explore the planet's underground installations and come under heavy attack. Arthur, who stayed behind to guard the spacecraft, meets Slartibartfast the venerable Magrathean planet coast line designer who specialises in Fjords. He is currently working on the second version of the Earth.

FIT THE FOURTH (29th March 78)

Arthur discovers that the Earth was an organic computer conceived by white mice, and that it was programmed by the stupendous supercomputer Deep Thought so as to find the Question to the Ultimate Answer of Life, the Universe and Everything (the answer being 42). Unfortunately, Earth was destroyed only five short minutes before the program was to finish.

The mice capture Zaphod, Ford and Trillian, but they tag along to the meal which has been organised for Arthur. As last survivors of the Earth, Arthur and Trillian are charged with finding the Question to the Ultimate Answer which must be hidden somewhere in the matrix of their minds. The financial and media consequences could indeed be very attractive.

Shooty and Bang Bang, two humanist and enlightened cops who are chasing Zaphod for his theft of the Heart of Gold, interrupt the meeting with the mice. The cops blow up a computer bank behind which our heroes are hiding out. Is this the end?

FIT THE FIFTH (5th April 78)

Our four fearless heroes find themselves not blasted into the afterworld, but to the Restaurant at the End of the Universe. They were in fact hiding behind a hyperspace field generator which projected them into the future.

While they enjoy a few drinks, Marvin telephones them from the restaurant's parking lot where he has been waiting for them since a few million years. They interrupt their meal and go join him. Once there, they steal a spaceship which later reveals itself to be the admiral's flag ship of a combat fleet, hence putting them at the forefront of a major intergalactic battle.

FIT THE SIXTH (12th April 78)

(Episode in which we also learn that Arthur's brother was nibbled to death by an okapi).

The seat in front of the admiral's control panel is in fact a Haggunennon of Azizatus 3, a cameleonic race capable of changing form several times whilst just having a meal. Arthur and Ford flee in an escape pod whilst the others are devoured by the admiral who has turned into the much feared Ravenous Bug-blatter Beast of Traal.

Our two surviving heroes materialise in the hold of the Golgafrincham's Ark B, occupied by the frozen bodies of telephone sanitisers, hairdressers and marketing experts. The spacecraft crash lands on Earth two million years before it is to be destroyed by the Vogons. Ford and Arthur find themselves stuck in these prehistoric times with the defrosted TV producers, insurance salesmen, personnel officers and other "middle men". These reveal themselves to be the real ancestors of the human race and thereby falsifying the results of Deep Thought's program.

Finally, a test with a scrabble game shows that the Question to the Ultimate Answer to Life, the Universe and Everything (to which the answer is 42) would be "what do you get if you multiply six by nine?"

FIT THE SEVENTH - the Christmas Special (24th December 78)

(or how to restart a series which the author thought would never continue)

Zaphod Beeblebrox is picked up by a cargo ship filled with copies of the infamous magazine *Play Being* (the Haggunennon admiral having taken the form of an escape pod at the very last moment). He makes his way towards the Hitch Hiker's Guide central offices, following his discovery of a message from the depths of his mind, implanted there by the only person he loves and admires: himself! This message summons him to go and find Zarniwoop, the Guide's editor.

Meanwhile on prehistoric Earth, Arthur Dent and Ford Prefect are getting blind drunk and start to see a space ship, which in their state is much less likely than the apparition of a pink elephant.

Zaphod, delayed by a lift's remarkable lack of confidence in it's future, tries in vain to find Zarniwoop. Instead he meets Roosta, and soon the whole building is under attack by a swarm of Frogstar robots sent on his trail. And while Marvin is busy saving Roosta and the ex-president of the Galaxy, the whole building is uprooted and taken away to the foul Frogstar.

FIT THE EIGHTH (Series II, 21st January 80)

Zaphod discovers he is to be put into the Total Perspective Vortex, the absolute worst torture instrument in the Universe. We later learn he went to a robot disco, that he was indeed put into the Total Perspective Vortex and that all he did there was eat a piece of wedding cake.

Arthur and Ford are finally saved by the strange craft they were seeing in the previous episode. The space ship is piloted by Zaphod himself, he managed to find them thanks to Ford's fossilised towel and despite getting completely drunk two times en route.

FIT THE NINTH (22nd January 80)

Zaphod, Ford and Arthur find themselves aboard the Heart of Gold once again. Arthur tries desperately to get a simple cup of tea from a Nutrimatic dispenser, but all it does is churn out a cup of foul liquid. The Nutrimatic then taps into Eddie the shipbaord computer's banks to try and determine why Arthur likes just a cup of dried leaves boiled in water.

Whilst all this is incapacitating the computer and hence the ship's defense systems, the Heart of Gold is attacked by a fleet of Vogons under the orders of Zaphod's personal analyst, Gag Halfbrunt.

Zaphod decides, as a last resort attempt, to get help from his family. He improvises a séance to inkoke the spirit of his grand father who unwillingly agrees to help them but only on the condition they go out and find the person who is really running the Universe.

FIT THE TENTH (23rd January 80)

Our heros are projected out of harm and into a cave (at least that's what it appears to be)

on the planet of Brontitall. Soon enough though, they find themselves in a most embarrassing situation: falling down through the air, thirteen kilometers above the ground.

Arthur, the first to go down, is caught by a giant bird. He discovers that he fell from what appears to be a gigantic cup which is part of a monumental statue called "Arthur Dent throwing the Nutrimatic Cup". He is then brought to meet the colony of birds living in the ear of his statue, and the meaning of all this is explained to him by Wise Old Bird.

A short while later, Ford and Zaphod also land onto a totally unsuspecting bird who's only wrongdoing was to fly by at the very moment they came through.

Arthur, who decided he'd rather explore the surface of Brontitall than be talking to a bunch of ranting birds, discovers that the planet is owned by the powerful Dolmansaxlil Galactic Corporation. He is attacked by a series of limping foot soldiers, and is then rescued by Lintilla the brilliant and equally sexy archeologist.

FIT THE ELEVENTH (24th January 80)

Ford and Arthur reach the ground, safe.

Arthur discovers that the Lintilla he's met is one amongst three identical Lintillas, or rather amongst 578 000 000 000 Lintillas following a cloning machine's malfunction. Hig Hurtenflirst, of the Dolmansaxlil Shoe Corporation, threatens to 'revoke' Arthur and one of the Lintillas. He then shows them what happened to Brontitall: a Dolmansaxlil Shoe Shop Intensifier Ray was activated in the general direction of the planet, setting off the terrible destruction of the local economy.

Marvin, the last to fall, was not saved by a bird. From his sheer drop a large crater was formed. Although feeling in perfect harmony with the situation of being down a deep dark hole, he nevertheless climbs out to go and rescue Arthur and one of the Lintillas.

In the meantime, Zaphod and Ford discover a derelict spaceport and a curious vessel.

FIT THE TWELFTH (25th January 80)

Whilst Arthur and the three Lintillas bear the brunt of an attack, a strange character called Poodoo appears accompanied by a priest and three Allitnils. Two Lintillas and two Allitnils fall in love, get married and explode in a puff un un-smoke.

Arthur discovers that Poodoo and the priest are employees of the cloning machine company and that their mission is to 'revoke' all of the Lintillas. Arthur then kills the third Allitnil, who is in fact an anti-clone, and escapes with Marvin and the remaining Lintilla.

During all this horrible anti stuff, Zaphod and Ford find out that the curious vessel is filled with passengers placed in suspended animation whilst their ship awaits an arrival of lemon-soaked paper napkins supplies. Amongst the passengers they find Zarniwoop the Guide's editor. He goes on to explain a part of the complex intrigue whilst Ford works himself up into a drunken singing frenzy. Zarniwoop reveals that Zaphod and himself are part of a rebel group that wants to find out who really rules the Universe. Their mission was to get Zaphod elected president of the Universe in order to steal the Heart of Gold, the only ship capable of leading them to the true ruler of the Universe.

Our heroes, reunited at last, go and pay a friendly visit to the said ruler of the Universe, a character called the Man in the Shack. He reveals that Zaphod was in collusion with the psychiatrists' consortium who ordered the destruction of Earth so as to prevent the successful solution of the Ultimate Question. Arthur leaves in an angry rage, taking the Heart of Gold with Marvin and Lintilla aboard, whilst he leaves Zaphod and Ford behind with the Man in the Shack.



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