

= The Museum of Curiosity =

The Museum of Curiosity , formerly titled The Professor of Curiosity , is a comedy panel game on BBC Radio 4 that was first broadcast on 20 February 2008 . It is hosted by John Lloyd ( Professor of Ignorance at the University of Buckingham , and later at Southampton Solent University ) . He acts as the head of the ( fictional ) titular museum , while a panel of three guests ? typically a comedian , an author and an academic ? each donate to the museum an ? object ? that fascinates them . The radio medium ensures that the suggested exhibits can be absolutely anything , limited only by the guests ? imaginations .

Bill Bailey acted as co @-@ host of the programme in the first series , under the title of curator of the museum . Bailey left the show after he initially decided to " retire " from panel games , and was replaced by Sean Lock in the second series . Each subsequent series has seen a different comedian take over as the sidekick / curator , with Jon Richardson , Dave Gorman , Jimmy Carr , Humphrey Ker , Phill Jupitus , Sarah Millican and Noel Fielding assuming the role in the third , fourth , fifth , sixth , seventh , eighth and ninth series respectively . Gorman also stood in for Richardson for one episode of the third series , after Richardson was stranded due to the eruption of Eyjafjallajökull . Ker also functioned as a stand @-@ in , this time for Jimmy Carr , when Carr was unable to attend one episode in series 5 .

The programme has often been compared to the television panel game QI . Both were co @-@ created by Lloyd , several of the Museum 's ' curators ' and comic guests have appeared regularly on QI , and the QI Elves ( QI 's research team , who provide host Stephen Fry with live information as required during the programme ) provide the research . As a result , some critics consider the radio show to be a spin @-@ off of the TV programme , and some have further ventured that The Museum of Curiosity is not as good as its forerunner . Most reviews of The Museum of Curiosity , however , are positive .

= = Format = =

In series one , the programme began with Bailey introducing the show and playing its theme tune , which he performed in a slightly different way in each episode . In subsequent series , the theme tune was , instead , performed by House Of Strange Studios of East London . The host / professor and the curator / sidekick introduce themselves . They then give a short guide to the museum , followed by the introduction of the " advisory committee " , a guest panel made up of celebrities and academic experts , during which Lloyd reads their CVs aloud .

Afterward , each member of the " committee " donates something to the museum . The donation can be anything , regardless of its size , cost , tangibility , or even existence . Examples of donations include a yeti , the Battle of Waterloo , and absolutely nothing . Lloyd and the curator then decide what form the exhibit could take and where in the museum it could be displayed . In series one , the programme ended either with Lloyd and Bailey reading audience suggestions for additional exhibits or asking the audience curious questions . Bailey ended the show by giving a humorous comment on a Bertrand Russell quote . Both of these ideas were dropped in series two .

From series two onward , the show has maintained a standard format . It is presented in two halves ; in the first half , Lloyd and the curator introduce the three guests , provide an explanation of who they are , and the five engage in a general discussion . In the second half , the curator declares the Museum open for donations , and each guest explains what they wish to " donate " to the museum ( again , as the museum is fictional , nothing is actually exchanged ) . Questioning of all three guests ensures that everyone says something about each donation .

= = Production = =

The programme 's pilot episode was recorded on 16 April 2007 and was the entitled The Professor of Curiosity . The guests for this episode were Alastair Fothergill , Victoria Finlay and Simon Munnery . This pilot , recorded at the Rutherford Room at the institute of Physics , has not been

broadcast . The first series was recorded at the Pleasance Theatre in Islington and , since then , the show has been recorded at the BBC Radio Theatre , with occasional recordings at other venues , such as the Shaw Theatre and RADA Studios ( formerly The Drill Hall ) , all in London . The series was created by Lloyd , Richard Turner and Dan Schreiber . Turner and Schreiber also produce the show . The show 's researchers are James Harkin , Xander Cansell ( for series one ) , Molly Oldfield ( from series two onward ) and Stevyn Colgan ( Series 5 onward ) .

A live version of the show was staged at the Natural History Museum , London on 9 November 2012 for charity . The guests for this edition were Terry Pratchett , Dave Gorman , Alan West , Baron West of Spithead , Helen Keen , Richard Fortey and Erica McAlister . The show was hosted by John Lloyd , with Producer Dan Schreiber taking the role of curator .

Further live shows were staged at the 2014 Edinburgh Fringe featuring a number of top comedians and other guests .

= = Episodes = =

= = = Series 1 = = =

= = = Series 2 = = =

= = = Series 3 = = =

= = = Series 4 = = =

= = = Series 5 = = =

= = = Series 6 = = =

= = = Series 7 = = =

= = = Coding Special = = =

= = = Series 8 = = =

= = Reception = =

Reaction to the series was mixed . Phil Daoust in The Guardian described the show as being " unusual " and " eclectic " . Chris Campling , who wrote a preview of the first episode , highlighted it in his " Radio Choice " column for The Times . Gillian Reynolds highlighted the programme as one of her radio choices in the Daily Telegraph . Rosanna Chianta in Scotland on Sunday compared the show positively to QI , also created by Lloyd , while Frances Lass from the Radio Times said it was better , claiming it was , " QI with even more jokes . Made me bark with laughter " , that , " Lord Reith would be so proud " and the programme was , " Pornography for the brain ! "

Miranda Sawyer of The Observer criticised the show , saying that , " it 's no QI , because the joy of

that programme rests almost entirely in the host , Stephen Fry , and his subversion of the prissy , clever character we 're familiar with ( in QI , Fry is clever , but relaxed ) . The Museum of Curiosity is presented partly by Bill Bailey and mostly by John Lloyd , producer of QI ( are you getting a theme ? ) . Lloyd may well be a nice chap , but we haven 't a clue who he is , and , on the evidence of this , he isn 't a big or witty enough character for us to feel desperate to get to know him . "

Nicholas Lezard in The Independent on Sunday was lukewarm about the show , saying that the combination of comedian and scientist guests " more or less worked " , but he felt the show may not have been greenlit without Lloyd and Bailey 's involvement .

Kate Chisholm in The Spectator found the show a welcome change from the " smutty jokes and banal innuendo " usually associated with the timeslot , and compared the series to Paul Merton 's Room 101 , " but without the ego " .

Elisabeth Mahoney in The Guardian was critical of the second series . While praising the discussion between the guests as , " funny and flowing , and quite endearingly quirky " , she found that the programme " fizzled away when it reached what ought to have been its crux : the donation of kooky items to the imaginary museum . Instead , we had a reminder of what they were , and then a sudden ending that was both limp and abrupt . "

After appearing on the show in series 6 , Richard Herring wrote on his blog : " What a delightful and fascinating programme this is ( and one that I think might benefit from an extended podcast release - two hours of material is recorded for the 27 minute show and it 's pretty much all gold ! ) . At times I was so enjoying listening to the others talking that I almost forgot that I was meant to be taking part . It was a wide @-@ ranging discussion taking in ants on stilts , pianists with crippling , mechanical little fingers , the changing meridian and okapi sex ( can you guess what I contributed ? ) . The show has a dedicated team of nerds behind it who have dug out amazing facts and I love the way it has a panel comprising comedians , scientists and experts and attempts to link each contribution to similar areas of the different disciplines . While most TV panel shows ( including to some extent even QI ) gravitate to putting in the same well @-@ known comedy faces , you get a lot more interesting stuff by mixing it up a bit . The zoologist , Dr Christofer Clemente , came up with the funniest lines of the show . But would they book him on Mock The Week ? It 's intelligent and stimulating programming that is increasingly being edged out of TV and even radio , leaving a gaping open goal for independent internet productions to score in . I discussed this with one of the razor @-@ minded team after the show . The TV companies insist on getting big names into all shows , which takes up all the budget and seems to ignore the fact that the pool of possible contributors gets smaller and more boring . But glad that a few shows designed to expand the mind rather than crush the spirit still exist . "