

= Hattie Jacques =

Hattie Jacques (/ dʔeʔks / ; born Josephine Edwina Jaques ; 7 February 1922 ? 6 October 1980) was an English comedy actress of stage , radio and screen . She is best known as a regular of the Carry On films , where she typically played strict , no @-@ nonsense characters , but was also a prolific television and radio performer .

Jacques started her career in 1944 with an appearance at the Players ' Theatre in London , but came to national prominence through her appearances on three highly popular radio series on the BBC : with Tommy Handley on It 's That Man Again ; with ventriloquist Peter Brough on Educating Archie ; and then with Tony Hancock on Hancock 's Half Hour . After the Second World War Jacques made her cinematic debut in Green for Danger , in which she had a brief , uncredited role . From 1958 to 1974 she appeared in 14 Carry On films , playing various roles including the formidable hospital matron . On television she had a long professional partnership with Eric Sykes , with whom she co @-@ starred in his long @-@ running series Sykes and Sykes and a The role endeared her to the public and the two became staples of British television .

In private , Jacques led a turbulent life . She was married to the actor John Le Mesurier from 1949 until their divorce in 1965 , a separation caused by her five @-@ year affair with another man . Jacques , who had been overweight since her teenage years , suffered ill @-@ health soon after the separation from Le Mesurier and her weight rose to nearly 20 stone (130 kg) . She died of a heart attack on 6 October 1980 , at the age of 58 . Her biographer , Francis Gray , considers Jacques had a " talent for larger @-@ than @-@ life comedy which never lost its grip on humanity " , while she could also display " a broader comic mode " as a result of her " extraordinary versatility " .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early life : 1922 ? 44 = = =

Jacques was born Josephine Edwina Jaques on 7 February 1922 at 125 Sandgate High Street , Sandgate , Kent . She was the youngest child of Robin Rochester Jaques (1897 ? 1923) , a serviceman in the British Army and later the Royal Air Force , and Mary Jaques (née Thorne) , a nurse who served in the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) .

The Jaques family were predominantly non @-@ theatrical , with the exception of Mary who appeared in the small role of Harry Hathaway in the Christmas pantomime Robinson Crusoe at the Palace Theatre , Cologne , in 1920 . Mary enjoyed the theatre , and took Jacques to live performances from an early age . The result had a " profound effect " on the young girl , particularly a love of dance . Robin Rochester Jaques , who attained the rank of flight lieutenant with the RAF , was a keen sportsman and became a semi @-@ professional footballer . He signed to Clapton Orient and Fulham F.C. , but his career was cut short when he died in a flying accident on 8 August 1923 . Upon his death , Mary , Jacques and her elder brother Robin moved from Newton in Lincolnshire to London , where Jacques was sent to the Lady Margaret primary school in Chelsea . In July 1930 Jacques started her secondary schooling at the Godolphin and Latymer School in Hammersmith , and also attended a local dance school , the Dean Sisters Academy , where she was a principal dancer in the Academy 's shows . She left Godolphin and Latymer in the summer of 1939 with unremarkable grades . She continued intermittently with amateur theatricals , and in May 1939 appeared with the Curtain Club in Barnes in productions of Fumed Oak and Borgia .

At the outbreak of the Second World War Jacques became a nurse in the VAD ; she served in a mobile unit in London , attending bombed sites during the Blitz . After a reorganisation in the VAD , Jacques sought new work and , in the summer of 1943 , she became a welder in a factory in north London , a job that lasted until the end of the year . Around this time she became romantically involved with an American soldier , Major Charles Kearney . Jacques later claimed that the pair had been engaged and that Kearney had been killed in action , although her biographer , Andy Merriman , discovered that Kearney had a wife and children in the United States when he had proposed to

Jacques , and had returned to them after the war .

= = = Early post @-@ war work : 1944 ? 50 = = =

In 1944 , after being auditioned by Leonard Sachs , Jacques made her professional theatrical debut as Josephine Jacques ? adding a " c " to her birth name as she did so ? at the Players ' Theatre , London in a revue called Late Joys . Almost immediately she became a regular performer with the company , appearing in music hall revues and playing the Fairy Queen in their Victorian @-@ style pantomimes . Her biographer , Frances Gray , described the Players ' as being Jacques 's drama school , as she acted , directed , wrote lyrics and " developed the persona she was to use in pantomime for years , the large , bossy , but vulnerable fairy queen " . It was while appearing in a Late Joys revue in June 1946 that she made her debut on television , when the show was broadcast on the BBC . While appearing at the Players ' in 1946 she acquired the nickname " Hattie " after performing in the minstrel show Coal Black Mammies for Dixie . A member of the backstage staff compared her " blacked up " appearance with the American actress Hattie McDaniel , known for her work in Gone with the Wind , and Jacques adopted the name for the rest of her life .

Jacques made her big @-@ screen debut , briefly and uncredited , in the 1946 film Green for Danger , directed by Sidney Gilliat . In December that year , she joined the Young Vic Theatre Company and played Smeraldina in The King Stag . The play ran at the Lyric Theatre for a month before going on a five @-@ month tour of the UK . It received favourable reviews ; the Gloucestershire Echo described the piece as " a noble play " , and thought that Jacques was " very solidly in step " . In March 1947 Alberto Cavalcanti 's film Nicholas Nickleby was released , in which Jacques had her first credited big @-@ screen role as Mrs Kenwick . While engaged at the Players ' in June 1947 , Jacques was introduced to the actor John Le Mesurier and the two began a relationship . Le Mesurier was married but estranged from his wife .

In August 1947 Ted Kavanagh , the scriptwriter of the BBC Home Service show It 's That Man Again (ITMA) , visited the Players ' and invited Jacques to audition for the series , which she did on 18 September , for a fee of five guineas . She became so nervous during the audition that Tommy Handley , the show 's star , held her hand , which she found made her more nervous . Jacques joined the cast of ITMA as the greedy schoolgirl Sophie Tuckshop , where she " would regale listeners with terrifying accounts of epic binges " , before finishing her stories with the catchphrase " But I 'm all right now " . Jacques started her run in ITMA in September 1947 , at the beginning of series eleven , which ran for 38 episodes , and was paid ten guineas per episode .

For much of 1948 Jacques continued to record episodes of ITMA for half the week , while spending evenings in the Players ' Theatre ; she also found time during the spring to record the role of Flora in No , No , Nanette for the BBC and appear at the Whitehall Theatre in Bates Wharf with the Under Thirty Theatre Group . Later that year she appeared as a singer at the Three Cripples tavern in the David Lean film Oliver Twist . In September she started recording her second series of ITMA ? the show 's twelfth ? before returning to the Players ' for the Christmas pantomime , The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood . In the latter performance , The Times commented that Jacques " must surely be among the funniest fairies " in her role as the Fairy Queen Antedota ? which was one of her favourite parts .

Tommy Handley died suddenly on 9 January 1949 ; the BBC decided that he was " so much the keystone and embodiment of the actual performance " of ITMA , that they cancelled the show immediately . Jacques later remarked that Handley was " one of the greatest radio performers we have ever known . I learned ... so much from him " . Later that year Le Mesurier divorced his wife ; shortly after the divorce came through , Jacques proposed to him , asking , " don 't you think it 's about time we got married ? " The couple wed on 10 November that year , at Kensington Registrar 's Office . After a week 's honeymoon in Southsea , she returned to the Players ' where she was engaged to appear as Marrygolda in the Christmas pantomime Beauty and the Beast .

= = = Increasing fame : 1950 ? 58 = = =

In the early months of 1950 *Chance of a Lifetime* was released into British cinemas ; it was a film in which Jacques " really made her mark " , according to her biographer , Andy Merriman . *Chance of a Lifetime* is a social and industrial relations drama based in a plough factory whose manager cedes control to the workforce . Jacques played Alice , a welder : when she was offered her fee for 17 days filming , she replied " I 've done this job welding Bailey and Pontoon Bridges and I know how hard it is . That 's not enough money ! " and the offer was raised accordingly . The film critic Geoff Mayer considered that Jacques had " the best scene in the film with her mock seductive dance in front of an angry [Niall] MacGinnis " .

On 6 June 1950 Jacques was cast in the first episode of the weekly radio show *Educating Archie* as Agatha Dinglebody . The " Archie " of the title was the ventriloquist 's dummy Archie Andrews , operated by Peter Brough . The first series ran for 29 weeks until 19 December . In the show Jacques appeared alongside Max Bygraves , Julie Andrews , Beryl Reid and ? in the second series ? Tony Hancock . It was on this programme that she first worked with Eric Sykes , who was providing scripts for the series . Sykes had been impressed with Jacques since he visited the *Players '* in 1948 . He later wrote that she " moved about the stage with an elegance and grace as if she owned it . At the end of her act , to great applause , she leapt in the air , finishing in the splits , landing as softly as a snowflake in July " . After the show Sykes was introduced to Jacques backstage and thought that the meeting was " the beginning of a new flight " in his professional life . At the end of the series Jacques returned to the *Players '* to appear in the Christmas pantomime , *Ali Baba and the Thirty @-@ nine Thieves* , which she and Joan Sterndale @-@ Bennett had adapted after they had copied it out long @-@ hand at the British Museum . The reviewer in *The Times* thought that Jacques was " as appealing as last year " , in her performance as Ali Baba 's wife , Cogia .

Throughout 1951 Jacques continued to mix work in different media , including appearing as Mrs Fezziwig in the film *Scrooge* starring Alastair Sim ; from 3 August until 25 January 1952 she appeared in a second radio series of *Educating Archie* , as well as appearing in the related stage show , *The Archie Andrews Christmas Show* at the Prince of Wales Theatre from December 1952 to January 1953 . She again appeared in ? and co @-@ adapted ? a Christmas pantomime at the *Players ' Theatre* , *Riquet with the Tuft* , a French fairy tale by Charles Perrault . In 1952 Jacques also portrayed Mrs Jenks in John Gilling 's comedy horror film *Mother Riley Meets the Vampire* , co @-@ starring Arthur Lucan and Bela Lugosi .

Jacques became pregnant in 1952 , but worked though most of her pregnancy , appearing in the *Players ' revue* *The Bells of St Martins* between August and November 1952 : she slid down the table and did the splits at the end ? something *The Times* thought was " especially good " , although *The Manchester Guardian* considered that she was " monumental of person but surprisingly thin of voice " . *Le Mesurier* reported that he was " faintly relieved " when the revue came to an end because of her exertions , added to which she appeared in the 27 episodes of the third series of *Educating Archie* between September 1952 and June 1953 . She then directed ? but did not appear in ? the *Players ' Christmas pantomime* of 1952 , *Babes in the Wood* . In March 1953 Jacques gave birth to her first son , Robin , and returned to work after a few days to film *Up to His Neck* . Later that year she provided the lead alongside *Le Mesurier* in the 38 @-@ minute " movie @-@ masque " *The Pleasure Garden* ; filmed in 1952 , it won the *Prix de Fantasia Poétique* at the 1954 Cannes Film Festival . From October until April 1954 she was in series four of *Educating Archie* , while in December 1953 she also appeared in and directed *Cinderella* at the *Players '* ; *The Times* commented that " Miss Jacques as actress , playing a deliciously arch and absent @-@ minded Fairy Queen , goes a long way to retrieve the failure of Miss Jacques as dramatist " .

In 1954 Jacques continued to work on radio . Between April and July she was in *Paradise Street* , a spin @-@ off series from *Educating Archie* , while in June she was in *Archie in Goonland* , a one @-@ off special programme that was a collaboration between *Educating Archie* and *The Goon Show* . As well as recording in series five of *Educating Archie* , she was also cast as Mrs Leathers for 18 episodes of *Mrs Dale 's Diary* between February and April 1955 . She both produced and directed *Twenty Minutes South* , first at the *Players ' Theatre* , and then for 105 performances at the *St Martin 's Theatre* and finished the year by appearing in seven episodes of *The Granville*

Melodramas on ITV between October and December .

A second pregnancy led to the birth of a son , Kim , " who came rollicking and laughing into the world in October 1956 , a trifle before his allotted time " , according to Le Mesurier . In June 1956 Jacques appeared in an episode of The Tony Hancock Show on ITV ; this led to the role of Hancock 's secretary , Griselda Pugh , in the BBC radio series Hancock 's Half Hour . She appeared in 16 episodes from November 1956 to February 1957 , alongside Hancock and regulars Sidney James , Bill Kerr and Kenneth Williams . Jacques 's arrival on Hancock " provided an additional boost to the series " , according to television historian Richard Webber . She appeared again in five further episodes of Hancock 's Half Hour between April and June 1957 , and again for a further 20 episodes between January and June 1958 , before a special edition on Christmas Day 1958 . She spent much of 1958 at the London Palladium , undertaking 380 performances of the revue Large as Life , alongside Terry @-@ Thomas , Eric Sykes and Harry Secombe . She appeared in the sketches " Concerto for Three Buffoons " with Secombe and Sykes , " The Good Old Days " , and the two full company numbers that closed each of the two halves of the show .

= = = The Carry On series : 1958 ? 63 = = =

When the first Carry On film was made in 1958 , Jacques formed part of the cast . This series would go on to employ the same group of actors who would collectively become known as the " Carry On team " . Jacques appeared in 14 of these films over a 15 @-@ year period and like many of her Carry On co @-@ stars , she quickly became typecast . A reoccurring role for Jacques was a no @-@ nonsense matron which she played in five of the films ? Carry On Nurse , Carry On Doctor , Carry On Again Doctor , Carry On Camping and Carry On Matron . She became known by the team as a " Mother Hen " figure , and was a close friend to many of her co @-@ stars , including Kenneth Williams and Joan Sims , whom Jacques provided with a great deal of advice and practical help . In return , Sims regarded Jacques as her " greatest friend " , and as " both a sister and a mother to me " . Jacques would frequently invite Sims , Williams and Hawtrey to her house for Christmas dinner .

Jacques began her association with the Carry On series in March 1958 with the first film in the series , Carry On Sergeant . She played the small role of Captain Clark , a " battleaxe medical officer " who fails to believe the fabricated ailments of the hypochondriac Private Horace Strong , played by Kenneth Connor . The following year she played " Matron " for the first time in Carry On Nurse , a film which broke that year 's box office records , selling more than 10 million tickets in British cinemas . Although Jacques 's role was still relatively small , she appeared in perhaps the best known scene of the film , in which she retrieves a daffodil from Wilfrid Hyde @-@ White 's buttocks , put there by a mischievous nurse as revenge for his constant harassment of the staff . So popular was Jacques 's scene , that the producers imported two million plastic daffodils from Japan which were then used to promote the comedy . Other characterisations followed , including the formidable maths mistress Grace Short in Carry On Teacher (1959) and the friendly Police Sergeant Laura Moon in Carry On Constable (1960) . Of the former film , Derek Prouse of The Sunday Times thought that Jacques " triumph [ed] over material so remorselessly juvenile that one is battered into a kind of fascinated admiration " .

On 29 January 1960 Jacques appeared in the first episode of the BBC comedy series Sykes and a ... , co @-@ starring with Eric Sykes as a pair of twins ; Richard Wattis and Deryck Guyler were also regulars in the cast . Jacques 's character ? Hattie (Hat) Sykes ? was " a middle @-@ class , slightly pretentious lady struggling to keep her dignity as the men made fools of themselves " . Sykes and a ... went on to run for sixty episodes over nine series during the next five years . According to the media historian Graham McCann , the show was " one of the best @-@ natured , least pretentious and most successful British sitcoms of the 1960s " . Because of the success , Jacques and Sykes " became embedded in the public mind as a priceless comic partnership " ; to capitalise , they released a comedy album entitled Eric and Hattie and Things ! ! ! , but it failed to chart . In September 1960 she starred in her second television series , Our House , alongside Charles Hawtrey , Bernard Bresslaw and Joan Sims ; Jacques played the librarian Georgina Ruddy , who was forced to keep quiet at work and so made up for it by being extremely noisy at home .

Later that year she played minor roles in two films : Watch Your Stern , with many of the Carry On regulars , and School for Scoundrels , opposite Ian Carmichael . After these her screen time increased with the part of Nanette Parry in Make Mine Mink in which she co -@-@ starred with Terry @-@ Thomas and Athene Seyler . She later described this as her favourite film .

In October 1961 Jacques appeared on Desert Island Discs , and said that she would be too lonely on such a quiet island for someone of her temperament . By this time Carry On had become a leading film franchise , with the author Robert Ross describing it as a " phenomenon " . That year 's film , Carry On Regardless , was the fifth in the series ; Jacques received a fee of £ 100 for the small role of a disgruntled hospital nurse , who appeared briefly on screen alongside the English character actor Kynaston Reeves who played her cantankerous boss . Jacques was initially intended for a major part in the film , but she was unable to commit to a longer role because of ill health . She appeared in her sixth Carry On , Carry On Cabby , in 1963 , as " Peggy Hawkins " , the emotionally neglected wife of taxi @-@ firm boss " Charlie " , played by Sid James . Jacques later named the film as her favourite of the series , as she was allowed to drop her " battleaxe " persona and play the romantic lead opposite James .

= = = Private turmoil ; new acting ventures : 1963 ? 67 = = =

Jacques 's private life became complicated in 1963 . The previous year she had met John Schofield , a cockney used @-@ car dealer , who chauffeured her to a Leukaemia Research Fund event . The couple became romantically involved after the driver gave her the attention and support that Le Mesurier did not . When Jacques decided to move Schofield into the family home , Le Mesurier moved into a separate room . He later commented about this period : " I could have walked out , but , whatever my feelings , I loved Hattie and the children and I was certain ? I had to be certain ? that we could repair the damage " . During these upheavals in her personal life , Jacques was surprised to be the subject of This Is Your Life in February 1963 , when she was approached by Eamonn Andrews during rehearsal for the sixth series of Sykes and a Although Le Mesurier did not mention the marital situation when being questioned by Andrews , he made the comment that for Jacques " the home comes first " , which Merriman considered had been said " rather pointedly " . Despite the matrimonial upsets , Jacques and Le Mesurier both appeared in the 1963 Tony Hancock film , The Punch and Judy Man . In 1964 Le Mesurier moved out of the marital home , made a decision to protect Jacques from any negative publicity , and allowed her to bring a divorce suit on grounds of his own infidelity . This ensured that the press blamed him for the break @-@ up , casting Jacques as the victim in the matter .

In 1964 , as well as recording four episodes of the radio show Housewives ' Choice , Jacques starred in her own television series , Miss Adventure , as the private investigator Stacey Smith . Although Jacques wanted the series to be full of suspense , the programmes were more comedic and she was disappointed with the results . In August that year she appeared as Madame Arcati in an ITV production of Blithe Spirit . The play 's writer , Noël Coward , felt that " finally someone had delivered a performance that wasn 't overshadowed by Margaret Rutherford " , who had originated the stage role in 1940 and played it in the 1945 film version .

Jacques went to Rome in 1966 to film The Bobo with Peter Sellers ; before this she went on a strict diet and lost five stone (31 kg) , although she was disappointed that so few people noticed . She enjoyed the filming experience , calling it " one of the loveliest things I 've worked on " . While she was in Italy , Schofield came out to stay , started an affair with an Italian heiress and broke off his relationship with Jacques ; deeply upset , Jacques , who had had a weight problem since her teens , began eating comfort food and her weight increased to nearly 20 stone (130 kg) .

= = = Return to Carry On : 1967 ? 74 = = =

In the summer of 1967 the Carry On producer Peter Rogers assembled the cast for the 15th film of the series , Carry On Doctor . Rogers initially chose Joan Sims to play the role of the hospital matron but she declined the part , stating that Jacques 's performance of the role in Carry On Nurse could

not be bettered . As such , Rogers cast Jacques as Matron , with Sims accepting a smaller role as the timid assistant of the film 's lead character Francis Bigger , played by Frankie Howerd . Jacques 's screen time was increased from Carry On Nurse , as the producers considered her part to be an extension of the earlier role . Carry On Doctor was released in December of that year , to much success .

Jacques started 1968 by appearing with Spike Milligan and Frank Thornton in thirteen episodes of the sketch show The World of Beachcomber , based on the Beachcomber column in the Daily Express newspaper and broadcast on the BBC from January to April . Shortly after the series finished , she appeared alongside Frankie Howerd in his sketch show , Howerd 's Hour , on ITV . She continued her busy schedule with appearances in six films for 1969 , including another with Sellers , The Magic Christian . Here she portrayed a character named Ginger , who was described as a " grotesque figure " , with an " insatiable lust for bestsellers on the atrocities of World War Two " . She also appeared on television alongside Harry Secombe and Roy Castle in Pickwick , which was based on the musical of the same name , and in Carry On Christmas , broadcast on Christmas Eve . Although 1969 had been busy , 1970 was relatively quiet in terms of her professional output : apart from an episode of Catweazle , she appeared alongside Willoughby Goddard in a six @-@ episode series of Charley 's Grants . She spent May and June filming Carry On Loving , in which she played Sophie Bliss , released in September that year . Another Carry On film followed in 1971 , Carry On at Your Convenience , where she played Beattie Plummer , the housebound wife of Sid Plummer , played by Sid James . In the same year she completed another series with Sykes , Sykes and a Big , Big Show , a music and sketch programme which had six episodes , broadcast between February and April .

Two further Carry On films followed for Jacques in 1972 : Carry On Matron , for which she was engaged in the title role , and Carry On Abroad , as Floella , the fiery Spanish cook at a half @-@ finished hotel . As well as the film being Charles Hawtrey 's last , it also marked a reduction in Jacques 's screen time ; she spent only one week filming her scenes . During post @-@ production , the film 's insurers became concerned about Jacques 's deteriorating health . In a letter to the series producer Peter Rogers , they expressed their reluctance to insure her on set in any future film .

During the course of 1972 Jacques co @-@ starred in the first series of Sykes , in which she played Hattie Sykes , " the wide @-@ eyed , less @-@ knowing but remarkably patient sister @-@ cum @-@ mother @-@ figure " ; at its height , Sykes had 17 million viewers . In February 1972 Jacques was at home with her son Robin to watch Le Mesurier win the British Academy of Film and Television Arts " Best Television Actor " award for his portrayal of a " boozy British aristocrat ... who became a spy for the Soviets " in Dennis Potter 's television play Traitor . Jacques cried when her ex @-@ husband won the award , and divulged to her son that she " wasn 't crying out of professional resentment or even envy about Joan Le Mesurier ... but from an unhappiness that , through her own actions , she lost John or there was now no @-@ one with whom to spend her life " .

= = = After Carry On : 1974 ? 80 = = =

= = = Final appearances = = =

The year 1974 was difficult for Jacques . Her sons were arrested for possession of cannabis , and her house was searched by police . In the same week that the two boys appeared in court , she received official notification of the intention to appoint her as an OBE . In order to protect her sons from further press intrusion she declined the honour . Later that year , while filming the third series of Sykes , she suffered a cancer scare and lost a considerable amount of weight . Despite this she refused to interrupt the busy production schedule ; when filming was completed on 5 December she underwent surgery at Charing Cross Hospital for what proved to be benign tumours on her kidneys .

In 1976 Jacques appeared in a promotional advertising film for British Rail , which pitted her against racing driver Jackie Stewart in a race to London . From 1976 onwards Sykes and Jacques appeared together in the stage play A Hatful of Sykes , both in the UK and internationally . During the course

of the different tours relations between the two stars became increasingly strained and Sykes altered the act several times to ensure he received more acclaim than Jacques . While appearing in Blackpool in 1977 Jacques 's health became problematic as she suffered from arthritis and ulcerated legs , which required daily dressing . Because a dressing room was arranged that avoided her needing to use stairs , Sykes accused her of receiving special treatment . When the show moved to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) , Sykes " began to behave rather strangely ... and he even accused Hattie ... of not being able to deliver a proper feed line " . By the time the show appeared in Brighton in 1979 the relationship between the two " was rapidly deteriorating " , and , although the pair praised each other in public , Jacques felt hurt by Sykes 's treatment of her . Despite the differences , the pair filmed the seventh series of Sykes in 1979 , and ? in April 1980 ? the television film Rhubarb Rhubarb ; although her part was a small one , she looked " a little unsteady on her feet " , according to Merriman .

= = = Death and tributes = = =

In May 1980 Jacques 's doctor advised her against travelling to Greece on holiday as planned , so she visited Ireland instead . During the return ferry crossing she told her friend Bruce Copp that " You know I 'm not going to live long " . Her health remained poor , and insurance companies refused to insure her for film work . By October her weight had risen again ; she had problems breathing and was again admitted to Charing Cross Hospital . She took a weekend break from hospital and returned home to Eardley Crescent , where on 6 October she died from a heart attack at the age of 58 ; she was also suffering from kidney failure .

Jacques 's funeral took place at Putney Vale Crematorium , where her ashes were scattered . Her sons refused to allow Sykes entry to the funeral because they resented the way he had treated her during the stage show ; Sykes was upset by the exclusion and failed to understand why he had been banned . The other notable absentee from the funeral was Joan Sims , who " stayed in her home and spent the day drinking , reading old letters from Hattie and wallowing in self pity " , according to Merriman .

Kenneth Williams was deeply saddened by the loss of his friend , and wrote that " all the chums have died ... one is left marooned on the shore ... the tide is receding and leaving some incongruous wrecks exposed ... I fear I am one of them " . John Le Mesurier described Jacques as " a remarkable lady ... [who] had an aura of love and kindness about her " , while her obituary in The Times observed that " she will be remembered with affection by all who saw her " . A month after the funeral , a memorial service was held at St Paul 's , Covent Garden , otherwise known as the Actors ' Church , which was described by Le Mesurier as a " joyous occasion " .

A memorial plaque to Jacques is situated in St Paul 's , Covent Garden . In November 1995 a blue plaque was unveiled by Eric Sykes and Clive Dunn ? a colleague from her Players ' Theatre days ? at her former house : 67 Eardley Crescent , Earls Court , London . In 2002 plaques were unveiled for Jacques , Sid James and Tony Hancock at BBC Broadcasting House in London .

In 2011 Jacques and Le Mesurier 's marriage was the subject of a BBC Four biographical film called Hattie , which focused on Jacques 's affair with John Schofield . She was played by Ruth Jones , who Robin Le Mesurier thought " had captured my mother perfectly " . Jones was thrilled at playing Jacques whom she considered to be her comedy heroine , describing her as an " incredibly talented and fascinating woman both on and off screen " .

= = Reputation = =

The writer Susan Leckey described Jacques as " one of the best @-@ loved British comedy stars " , while Jacques 's obituarist in The Times observed that " she was invariably successful " at making people " laugh with , rather than at you " . Peter Chapman of The Independent stated that Jacques was " blessed with remarkable grace , delicacy and warmth , giving her an almost unique comic appeal " . Sunday Life said that for decades she was " Britain 's favourite silly , sexually frustrated , fat woman " . Nina Wadia of Goodness Gracious Me considers Jacques along with Joan Sims and

Barbara Windsor to have " paved the way for younger comediennes in Britain today " , remarking that " if it had not been for women like Hattie and Barbara , there is no way that younger actresses would have any role model , or probably the ambition to do what they do " .

Jacques 's biographer , Francis Gray , highlighted two aspects of the actress 's abilities ; in her appearances in the sequence of post @-@ war Dickens adaptations (Nicholas Nickleby , Oliver Twist , Scrooge and Pickwick) Jacques " reflected her talent for larger @-@ than @-@ life comedy which never lost its grip on humanity " , while in other films , such as Mother Riley Meets the Vampire , she displayed " a broader comic mode " . In her later career Jacques showed " a comic talent of extraordinary versatility . In Sykes her performance had to be a foil for the main character ; in the Carry Ons she blossomed " . As a singer she was also praised ; Jonathan Cecil of The Spectator said that her " bell @-@ tone voice with its cut @-@ crystal diction ? perfect for radio ? had an edge of pain which suggested a greater depth to her talents than she was generally allowed to express " . The actor Neville Phillips , who toured with Jacques , described her as having a " pretty voice " and able to " take an innocuous old Victorian or Edwardian ballad and with just a few intonations and expressions give it another meaning entirely " .

Gray observes that " Jacques is enduringly associated with the role of hospital matron " and her portrayal of the character in five films had a lasting impact on both her legacy and on the role and view of Matrons in the National Health Service . An article in The Guardian by Mark Lawson mixed fiction with reality when he wrote that " standards of hygiene have slipped since Hattie Jacques ran NHS wards " . According to The Scotsman , the 2003 Labour Party Conference " applauded deliriously because the government has revived Hattie Jacques " , in relation to a change in government policy . After complaints about the NHS in 2008 , the Western Morning News suggested the government should " clone a Hattie Jacques @-@ type matron to run a tight ship everywhere " . NHS nurses have complained about the stereotype : in August 2013 the Nursing Times quoted one matron , who protested that they were " not like Hattie Jacques anymore " .

Alan Simpson , the co @-@ writer of Hancock , enjoyed writing for Jacques , and thought that she was " almost like a fella in terms of playing comedy ; you didn 't write for her thinking she 's a woman so we 've got to write the feminine point of view . That made it easier for us " . Neville Phillips thought she was a " complete revelation " , adding " although she was a large lady (very large , in fact) , her movements were dainty , light and graceful , and she had a way of playing comedy that put me in mind of the great Beatrice Lillie ... a subtle , sophisticated actress " . Her friend Bob Monkhouse thought that her career was overshadowed by her size : " She was such a great comedienne ... everyone wanted her but the movers and shakers of entertainment didn 't perceive her as anything other than a fat lady " . Guy Pearce , writing in the Daily Express , noted that " she always chose to play women in funny situations , rather than refer directly to her weight . She concentrated on the script and its interpretation instead of winning easy laughs by playing ' the fattie ' " . The approach of writers differed in how they dealt with the characters they asked Jacques to portray . Morwenna Banks and Amanda Swift consider Jacques to have been " unimaginatively cast as the ' fat person ' " in ITMA , while in Sykes , her weight was rarely referred to ? and Jacques said that Sykes " hardly ever made jokes about my size which was a refreshing change " . Gray considers that " although often cast in broad comedy , she never played it broadly , but with an elegance of voice and body that belied all the clichés about women and weight " .