

WINNER! EDITOR OF THE YEAR, WOMEN'S WEEKLIES

# The Lady

11 JULY 2014

## MARY BERRY

reveals her relaxing way to entertain (and some jolly nice recipes, too)

### SAVE OUR LIBRARIES

By bestselling author Michael Arditti

### DAMIAN LEWIS

Henry VIII, his OBE and *that* red hair

Hot topic  
**SUMMER ETIQUETTE**

The lady who made Horrockses  
**A BRITISH FASHION CLASSIC**

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# Theatre

## FUNNY GIRL

From Evil Granny to attention-seeking toddler, a show packed with poignant and laugh-out-loud true stories



**Richard Barber**

### DAWN FRENCH: THIRTY MILLION MINUTES



When you've spent the whole of your career being one half of the UK's most celebrated female double act, it takes considerable courage to step out alone. But that's exactly what Dawn French has done and she's compounded the bravery, what's more, with her choice of material.

Because what Dawn has chosen to talk about in her one-woman show, *Thirty Million Minutes*, is herself. And nor does she confine her anecdotes to self-deprecating observations about her body shape, although there's a fair dollop of that. We hear about her struggle to have a child with first husband Lenny Henry; the rewards - and demands - of adoption; and, most

poignantly of all, the suicide of her adored father when she was just 19. There's a lot of ground to cover but then she's 56 now or, to put it another way, she's been on the planet for 30 million minutes, give or take.

Whether funny, sad or reflective, Dawn is a natural when it comes to performing. 'At the root of all performers,' she says at one point in the two-hour show, now touring the country for the rest of this year, 'is a little kid in a nappy going: "Mum, Mum, look at me!" We want approval and, even when we get it, we want loads more. We're just greedy little toddlers at heart.'

Greedy maybe, but giving too. With one exception, she doesn't hold back on any aspect of her life. It's a considerable achievement, not to say an impressive feat of memory, and it's very well written.

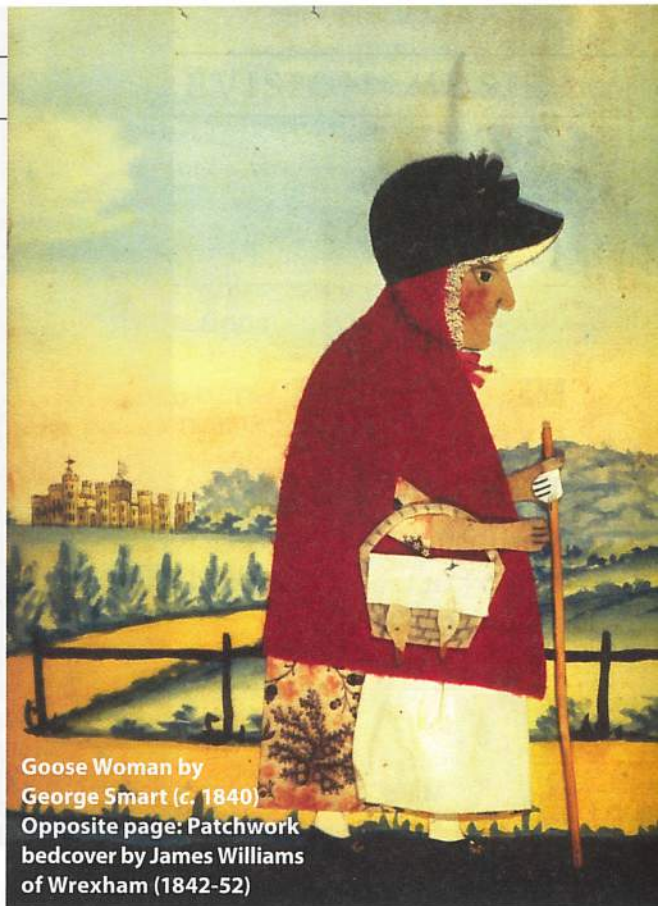
Set on a blank stage, she's framed by a rectangle of red neon lighting and a screen on to which is projected the occasional photograph - Good Granny, for instance, followed by Evil Granny - or a piece of film footage showing the day when three-year-old Dawn and her family entertained the Queen Mother on a visit to the air force base where her father was stationed. (I won't spoil the reason why Dawn came to regard the Royal visitor as a witch.)

The only omission, strange given the importance of the partnership, is an almost total absence in the proceedings of Jennifer Saunders. Dawn might argue that this is all about personal recollections. I'd counter by saying it's the story of her life. But it's a minor niggle in a memorable evening.

◆ On tour until 6 December:  
0844-875 8758,  
[www.dawnfrenchontour.com](http://www.dawnfrenchontour.com)



Natural performer - Dawn French



Goose Woman by George Smart (c. 1840)  
Opposite page: Patchwork bedcover by James Williams of Wrexham (1842-52)

### CD OF THE WEEK

**THE NATION'S FAVOURITE MOTOWN SONGS, various artists, £9** Some 50 years on and *Motown* remains as close to our hearts as ever, and this double-disc compilation features 40 of the best-loved Motown hits. With tracks including *Baby Love*, *I Heard It Through The Grapevine*, *My Guy* and *Please Mr Postman*, you'll be singing and dancing away *All Night Long* (yes, that's another great track on the album!). MC

### BOOK AHEAD

**LAPADA ART & ANTIQUES FAIR** A must-visit event for buying fine art and antiques. More than 100 dealers, all of whom are experts in their field. 24 to 28 September, Berkeley Square, London W1: 020-7823 3511, [www.lapadalondon.com](http://www.lapadalondon.com)

**AFTERNOON TEA AT WESTON PARK** Enjoy finger sandwiches, pastries, cakes and cream scones in the newly restored Victorian Orangery. 26 to 28 August at Weston Park, Telford, Shropshire: 01952-852100, [www.weston-park.com](http://www.weston-park.com)

**CAMBRIDGE FILM FESTIVAL** One of the UK's longest-running film festivals. Expect outdoor screenings, silent films, Q&A sessions and more. From 28 August to 7 September, in venues around Cambridge: 01223-500082, [www.cambridgefilmfestival.org.uk](http://www.cambridgefilmfestival.org.uk)



Take tea at Weston Park