

## Monty Myth-on

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The myth that the Monty Python film, *Life of Brian*, was banned in Aberystwyth for nearly 30 years was laid to rest by Aberystwyth University student Rory Hogan in March 2009. Find out the true story about the ban that never existed:



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It has been generally taken for granted that Monty Python's *Life of Brian* was banned in Aberystwyth in a blasphemy row but Monty Python fan Rory Hogan discovered the film was not banned and shown in the town in March 1981.

At the time, there was opposition from some councillors in Ceredigion to the film being shown but eventually people had the chance to see it at Aberystwyth's Commodore cinema after a Ceredigion Council sub-committee agreed that the film was suitable to be shown in the county.

Mr Hogan, 20, an international politics student at Aberystwyth university, spent two days researching the film's history in Ceredigion at the National Library of Wales.

He discovered a report in the 6 March 1981 edition of *The Cambrian News*.

The report stated that a Ceredigion Council sub-committee comprising Cllrs O.M Owen of Cardigan, J.E Evans of Caerwedros, Rev Samuel Idris Evans of Henllan, R.J Evans of Cardigan and W.A Jenkins of Cardigan was formed to watch the film after the owner of Cardigan's Cinema Pavilion had applied to the council to show the film.

The five councillors watched a private viewing of the film in Cardigan on Monday 2 March 1981.

The *Cambrian News* report adds that although the councillors found certain parts of the film 'quite unacceptable', they did not feel they could depart from the normal practice of allowing films with certificates of the British Board to be shown.

Consequently they decided to allow *The Life of Brian* to be shown in Ceredigion.

Mr Hogan also discovered an advertisement for forthcoming films for Aberystwyth's Commodore Cinema in the 13 March 1981 edition of *The Cambrian News*.

It shows that 'The Life of Brian' was listed to be shown at the cinema for six days from 16 March 1981, twice nightly on the Wednesday and Saturday.

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##### **Ian Pegler, Aberystwyth**

I was wrong. Life of Brian returned to the Commodore in 1982 !!! According to the archives it was shown for six days from March 15th 1982 as a double-bill with Airplane. So it had at least two runs, and was shown perfectly legally. There is now no reason to suppose that there is anything to the "30-year ban" theory at all. All the evidence evaporates under scrutiny like snow-flakes in the Gobi desert. The recently screened documentary (now on Youtube) was really quite poor in this respect - it implies that it was shown in spite of a ban, i.e. illegally, which was most certainly not the case because there never was a ban in the first place.

Sun Jun 7 21:10:38 2009

##### **Colin Albert, Cardiff (ex Aberystwyth)**

I saw Life of Brian at the Commodore in 1981.

Wed May 13 08:57:23 2009

##### **Ian Pegler, Aberystwyth**

Prior to the release of "Life of Brian", in May 1979, Presbyterian Ministers put pressure on Ceredigion Council because they were concerned about the number of Cert X. "sex-movies" being shown (Cambrian News, May (18th??) 1979). The archives also show that "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" was shown by the Coliseum as early as June 1975, just two months after it was released. When "Life of Brian" was released in Nov. 1979, the Commodore was showing John Frankenheimer's monster-movie "Prophecy". This was followed by a double-bill consisting of "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" and Mel Brook's "Blazing Saddles". Clearly they were anticipating getting hold of "Life of Brian" but why did we wait for over a whole year before anything happened? Also, the late D. M. Davies very often brought back popular films for a second run, or even a third run. This didn't happen for "Life of Brian". It was shown for just those six days and never came back. You have to wonder WHY?? I saw Life of Brian in the Commodore in March 1981. Last year I wrote into the Cambrian News and said there was "more evidence for the Loch Ness Monster" than there was for a ban on Brian in Aber. Kind of a hint, don't you think?

Mon Apr 20 09:41:43 2009

##### **David Clues, Port Moresby**

I have been off line for ages and have only just discovered the garbage about L.O.B. not being shown in Aberystwyth (the hub of the universe). I wrote a letter to the local paper (The Cambrian News) at the time disagreeing with the proposed ban by the local religious element of populace in the town declaring, "is this the eleventh commandment according to ... (named person) ... though shalt not watch Life of Brian?"

Wed Apr 8 18:33:48 2009

##### **Teresa Spenser**

I was attending the University of Wales, Aberystwyth in 1981 and went to every new movie that came to town. I remember seeing 'Life of Brian' and hoped that it didn't disturb very religious people who may have been in the audience.

Fri Apr 3 09:08:36 2009

**Dave Hamilton Aberystwyth**

Myself and several other work colleagues attended the film Life of Brian in 1981 at The Commodore . We all sat in hysterics throughout the film and never considered it blasphemous at all , just very funny !

Sun Mar 29 18:10:49 2009

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