

Tom Squires Meehan

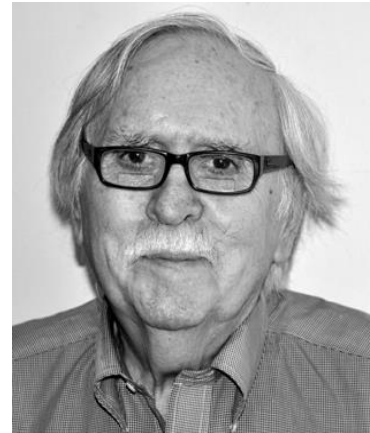


Of Irish heritage, Tom Squires Meehan was born on March 7, 1915 in Lancashire, England. He was an excellent student and an outstanding athlete; he played rugby, soccer, lacrosse and cricket. When World War II broke out, he joined up immediately and was sent to France where he survived the Dunkirk evacuation. He served in Persia and India until he was taken prisoner. He was a POW until the end of the war. He returned home to England, but he was soon sent back to India. On the long ship voyage, he met, fell in love with, and married, Betty Mungavin.

Tom began his civilian career as a sport writer for the Johannesburg Star in South Africa, went on to serve as Assistant Sports Editor for the Daily News in Durban, wrote a weekly column for the Sunday Tribune, and began broadcasting now and again for the South African Broadcasting Company. Finally, he was offered a lead in *Brave Voyage*, a long-running soap opera. When this proved successful, he became a full-time radio actor and broadcaster. His next major coup was to be offered the title role in *The Saint*. He portrayed Simon Templar for South African audiences for approximately six years.

At this point, he had become a successful radio sports commentator. He added publication of print medium (*The Winning Post* and *Open House*) to his skills, and went on to direct a range of South African radio programs including *Drama of Medicine*, *The House that We Built*, and *Desert Island Date*. Tom also turned his hand to the hard-boiled detective genre. *Walk Softly, Peter Troy* aired on Springbok Radio on December 10, 1963. It was designed to replace *Gunsmoke*, but the program suffered an early demise on February 21, 1964; the sponsors, Irving and Johnson, did not care for the series, and it was sold to another studio.

In 1965, Tom Meehan opened his own production company. He was responsible for introducing *Men from the Ministry* (a British radio comedy), *Father, Dear Father*, *The Navy Lark*, etc. to South African audiences. He was most renowned for *Men From the Ministry*, which was first broadcast in 1968 on Springbok Radio. After a long and productive life, Tom Meehan died on January 2, 2003.



Compiled from:

Text:

http://www.artlink.co.za/news_article.htm?contentID=18298

<http://otrarchive.blogspot.com/2009/04/walk-softly-peter-troy-sa.html>

Images:

<http://www.blouinartinfo.com/sites/default/files/20120521tommeehan1.png>

http://www.saint.org/images/actors/meehan-old_3x4.jpg

John Simpson



John Simpson was born near Manchester, England in 1924. After World War II broke out, he joined the RAF as a bomber pilot. After the war ended, he and his wife, Beulah, emigrated to Durban, South Africa.

He began selling answering machines and public address systems, but gradually began working in the broadcasting industry in the early 1950s as a newscaster and announcer for the South African Broadcasting Corporation. Like Tom Meehan, he was also an incredibly versatile actor. He worked in long-running serials, like *From Crystal, with Love*, and starred with Tom Meehan and Merle

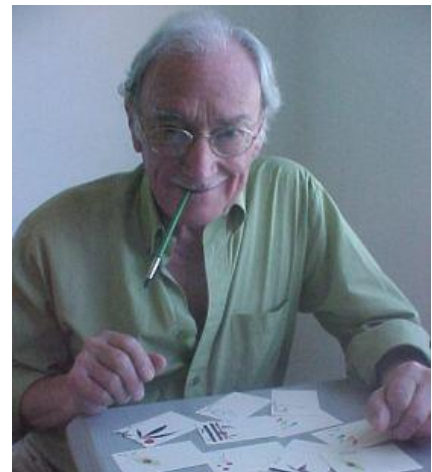
Wayne in the short-lived *Walk Softly*, *Peter Troy* in the mid-1960s.

In 1965, he joined Tom Meehan at Tom Meehan Productions. Simpson is best remembered for his roles in *Men of the Ministry* and *The Navy Lark*.

His colleague, Barry Meehan recalled that, “[h] was one of radio's true gentlemen [...] His sharp wit and wonderful turn of phrase were his tools of the trade, along with the deep, rich voice so well known to millions of listeners. [...] Meehan added, “the secret to his longevity was his cast-iron stomach, as he used to love devouring a packet of chillies from Snappy Snacks before a recording. He used to knock back a whole packet, shake himself, wipe his eyes, and be ready to record. I tried half a chilli one day, and could barely talk for hours afterwards!”

After a long and successful career in radio, Simpson became inspired to become an artist. His charming and delicate water colors were sought after for several years.

He died in April of 2008 at 84 years of age.



http://mysite.mweb.co.za/residents/radavis/men/men_rsa.html
http://mysite.mweb.co.za/residents/radavis/men/men_rsa2.html

DEATH OF MERLE WAYNE - Sunday, January 24, 2016

Fans of radio drama from the English Service and Springbok Radio days will be sad to note the death of actress Merle Wayne (Thorpe) who passed away on January 17 after a fall followed by a hip replacement operation].

“At 94 she didn't survive the shock to her system,” says friend and former radio drama colleague Margaret Logan, who posted the news on Facebook. “What a wonderful woman and actress Merle was! She remembered the early recording days at the City Hall when, as a child, she took part in the Children's Hour.”

Barry Meehan who, with his father Tom Meehan, produced numerous plays, series and serials in Durban for Springbok Radio, adds: “Merle was a wonderfully polished radio actress with a genuine warmth to her voice.”

<http://news.artsmart.co.za/2016/01/death-of-merle-wayne.html>