

The life and works of Roger McGough

Roger McGough is a **well-known** and popular British poet. He was born in Liverpool on 6th November 1937. He studied French at the University of Hull and he worked in the library there. At that time, the university librarian was Philip Larkin, another British poet.

McGough didn't stay in Hull. In the early 1960s, he returned to Liverpool and worked as a French teacher. It was an exciting time to be there. McGough met the pop band, The Beatles, and they became friends. The Beatles were making Liverpool very popular. He also met two musicians called Mike McGear and John Gorman and they formed a **comedy** band called The Scaffold. They had some **hit** albums. Their song Lily the Pink was number one in the British **charts** in 1968. McGough wrote many of their songs, but they didn't have another number one. He also wrote a lot of the **script** in The Beatles' funny movie Yellow Submarine.

McGough **published** two best-selling books of poems with Adrian Henri and Brian Patten. These three poets were called the 'Mersey Poets' because they were all from Liverpool and the river there is called the Mersey. Many books of poems **followed**. A very famous one in 1967 was called 'The Mersey Sound' and it is still popular today. McGough still writes for adults and children. He loves playing with words, and his poems are often very **witty**. He now presents a BBC radio programme called Poetry Please. Listeners write to McGough and ask to hear their favourite poems – old or new. Here is one of Roger McGough's poems:

Poem for a dead poet

He was a great poet he was.
A proper poet.
He said things
that made you think
and said them nicely.
He saw things
that you or I
could never see
and saw them clearly.
He had a way with language.
Images flocked around
him like birds,
St Francis, he was,
of the words. Words?
Why, he could almost make 'em talk.

I. Are the sentences True (T), False (F) or is the information Not Mentioned (NM) in the text?

- 1) McGough spoke French with a British accent. T / F / NM
- 2) He went back to Liverpool before he was 30. T / F / NM
- 3) Before he was famous he was a shop assistant. T / F / NM
- 4) He was one of the musicians in a band called The Beatles. T / F / NM
- 5) The Beatles' number one hit was called Lily the Pink. T / F / NM
- 6) The movie Yellow Submarine was a comedy. T / F / NM
- 7) The Mersey poets had two hits in the charts. T / F / NM
- 8) McGough writes children's plays, but his poems are just for adults. T / F / NM
- 9) You can sometimes hear McGough's poems on a radio programme. T / F / NM
- 10) The poem is about a friend of McGough's. T / F / NM

II. Match the highlighted words in the text with these definitions.

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| 1) happen after something else | well-known |
| 2) written words of a play or TV programme | comedy |
| 3) clever and funny | charts |
| 4) list of most popular songs | hit |
| 5) produced copies of a book or paper for people to buy | script |
| 6) entertainment to make people laugh | published |
| 7) a successful song or CD | followed |
| 8) famous | witty |