

# Richard Briers: National & Local Treasure

Richard Briers (1934-2013) lived for many years in The Orchard, Bedford Park, with his wife, the actor Ann Davies. They met while both were at Liverpool Rep: she was employed as a stage manager and had acted on television and in films from the mid-1950s. Soon after meeting, he borrowed £5 from his mother, bought an engagement ring and they were married within six months.

They had two daughters, Kate and Lucy, who is also an actor.

Richard was a household name, best known for BBC TV series such as *The Good Life*, *Marriage Lines*, *Ever Decreasing Circles* and *Monarch of the Glen*.

He was also a much-loved voice in many children's TV and film series.

He narrated the animated children's TV programme *Roobarb* (1974), originally shown on BBC1 just before the evening news and produced by Bob Godfrey. He was the original narrator and voice actor for all the characters in the *Noddy* (1975) TV series based on the Enid Blyton character, and then another series with Godfrey, *Noah and Nelly in... SkylArk* (1976). He memorably provided the voice of Fiver in the animated film adaptation of *Watership Down* (1978).

In 1990, Briers appeared as Rat, with Griff Rhys-Jones as Toad, in Alan Bennett's celebrated adaptation of *The Wind in the Willows* at the National Theatre, which earned him a nomination for the Laurence Olivier Award. That year, he also narrated and voiced all the characters in the five-minute animated series *Coconuts* about a monkey, a king lion and a parrot who lived on a tropical island. In the 1990s, he voiced the part of Mouse, opposite Alan Bennett's Mole in the TV series *Mouse and Mole*, based on books by Joyce Dunbar and James Mayhew. He latterly starred alongside Neil Morrissey in *Bob the Builder* (2005) as Bob's Dad, Robert.

As well as performing Fiona Waters' stories on the 1995 *Stories For Bedtime* book for audio cassette, he recorded the *Percy the Park Keeper* stories for a CD based on the books by Nick Butterworth, creating memorable voices for all of the animal characters as well as Percy the Park Keeper himself.

He also featured in the television series adaptation of *Watership Down* (1999–2001), voicing a new character called Captain Broom for all three series.