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Captain Kangaroo

US TV pre-school magazine : 1955- : dir. : ? x? min
prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:
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Presenter: Bob Keeshan

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	∞	M	⊗	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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*Not so much a father figure perhaps as a gentle, slightly dotty uncle
Source: How Sweet it Was*

Halliwell's Television Companion review:

"An early morning studio show for small children, hosted since 1953 by Bob Keeshan.

Two generations of American kids have grown up with it."

How Sweet it Was – Television: a Pictorial
Commentary review:

"Bob Keeshan donned a uniform cap and a walrus moustache in 1955 when he became the Captain, and thus began a long reign as the dominant figure in pre-school children's programming. Until that time most children's shows, with a few notable exceptions, had been loud, gaudy, and rather limited in creative imagination. (Keeshan himself had once served as Clarabell on the "**Howdy Doody Show**".) "**Captain Kangaroo**" was an abrupt departure from the past. Its emphasis was on quiet conversation, gentle fantasy, and easy-to-swallow morsels of an educational nature. The programme's acceptance and popularity seemed to grow with each passing year, as did the

number of awards and citations from groups of parents, teachers, and educators."

"...Kindly old father figures have long dotted the television landscape, but none could ever match the long-running success of "**Captain Kangaroo**"."

[no listing in "The Golden Age of Children's Television", "History of Television", "Into the Box of Delights - a History of Children's Television", "Television's Greatest Hits" or "25 Years of ITV - 1955-1980"]

No further information currently available. The programme was never seen by UK audiences, but its name at least will be familiar from a single line in the pop song "Flowers on the Wall" –

"Playing solitaire 'til dawn with a deck of fifty-one
Smoking cigarettes and watching '**Captain Kangaroo**'
Now don't tell me I've nothin' to do..."

So now we know what the very definition of 'nothing to do' was held to be.

I've been scratching my head for the closest UK equivalent, and it would probably have to be David Kossoff, although he only did occasional storytelling stints for older children. In pre-school terms, Brian Cant was long a fixture on children's television with his gentle voice and easygoing manner. Both were of a slightly later vintage however. "**Captain Kangaroo**" coincides more closely with "**Muffin the Mule**" and "**Watch With Mother**". Women presenters had the armlock on early British children's programming, including puppet shows like "**Andy Pandy**", "**Bill and Ben**" and "**The Woodentops**", all of which fall outside the remit of this archive, since no human interaction was involved.

See subject index under **EARLY MORNING CHILDREN'S MAGAZINES**.