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The Country Boy

UK TV serial : 1991 : dir. Colin Cant : : 6 x 25 min
prod: Brenda Ennis : scr: Bernard Ashley : dir.ph.:
Jeremy Sweetland
Bronwyn Baud; Siobhan Burke; Claire Callaghan; Helen Duvall; Nikky Gordon; Leila Hoffman;
Nigel Humphreys; Paul Jayson; Robert Kenley; Will Kenton; Tony London; Mary Wimbush

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω 8 ♀ M ☼	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Ben (Jeremy Sweetland) with Duke. Erm... in the country. Source: Radio Times

Radio Times note:

"Episode 1 : Ben Westcott's family have been sheep farmers on the marshlands of Kent for many years. It is a way of life that is under threat, as modern industry moves into the area. One hot summer's day, after helping his father with the sheep, Ben and his dog Duke go for a swim in a nearby creek."

TV Quick programme listings:

- " : Ben is admitted to a London hospital, while Duke is still lost.
- : Ben is worried sick about the missing Duke. (Duke is the one who woofs.)
- : Ben (boy) is still worried about Duke (dog). With good cause.
- 5 : Believing he is going to die, Ben (Jeremy Sweetland) runs away from the hospital and returns to the marshes."

What's on TV note:

"Episode six of the family drama set in Kent. On his way home from the hospital, Ben accidentally discovers West and the others loading up more crates of stolen chemicals."

[no listing in "The Golden Age of Children's Television", "Halliwell's Television Companion", "History of Television", "Into the Box of Delights - a History of Children's Television" or "Television's Greatest Hits"]

CAST:

Dr Skellman.....Bronwyn Baud
 Sally Westcott.....Siobhan Burke
 Lyn Westcott.....Helen Duvall
 Jo.....Nicky Gordon
 Mrs Craddock.....Leila Hoffman
 Dave Westcott.....Nigel Humphreys
 Pilk.....Paul Jayson
 Tony Long.....Robert Kenley
 Skipper.....Will Kenton
 Brit.....Tony London
 Ted.....Eric Mason
 Scot.....Joe Mullaney
 Baz.....Sean Murray
 Lisa.....Patsy Palmer
 Div.....Gary Powell
 Stephen West.....Marc Sinden
 Ben Westcott.....**Jeremy Sweetland**
 Alice Westcott.....Mary Wimbush

No further information currently available. Broadcast BBC1 – June 1991. Do I detect the faint whiff of an ecological *message* in there somewhere? (Children's TV is terribly PC – a boy is the central character of the series, but the first five names on the cast list are female, and his own name is second from bottom.) In the early 70's, another "**Country Boy**" was a rustic walkabout series in which a boy ambled along with Jack Hargreaves as a tweedy pipe-smoking sage discussing angling, sheepdogs and nuggets of rustic lore. Hargreaves continued in that vein in programmes like "**Out Of Town**". This serial clearly has more by way of a plot, being from the pen of the same south London headmaster, Bernard Ashley, who wrote "**Dodgem**" and adapted his own book for TV.

Environmentalism sermons aimed at children under the guise of "adventures" or drama serials have become increasingly commonplace. Fly-tippers and river-polluters have supplanted the hoary old bank-robber as arch villains to be brought to book, but once again the implicit support of children for Law and Order (in this case, green politics) is taken as read. Instead of being presented with balanced argumentation and allowed to form their own views, children are propagandised (doubtless in the classroom more than anywhere) to submit to the notional consensus. (With such resounding success that our streets are now more litter-free than ever before, and waste-recycling is a mania with the young.)

Nothing else is known of Jeremy Sweetland. Director Colin Cant is doubtless the son or brother of children's TV presenter Brian Cant. Probably half of the cast list above are children, but have not been added to the biographical index for lack of corroboration.

See subject index under **DOGS, ECOLOGY / ENVIRONMENTALISM, FARMS & FARMING, HOSPITALS / SICK CHILDREN / PAEDIATRICS, KIDS OUTWIT THE CROOKS** and **SERIALISATIONS**.