

In this video, we will be looking at a significant person from Hartlepool called Reg Smythe. Reg Smythe, born Reginald, was a cartoonist, which is a type of artist. His most famous character, Andy Capp is popular all around the world, have you heard of him?

Reg was born in Hartlepool on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 1917. He was the son of a shipyard worker named Richard Oliver Smith and his wife, Florence. They did not have a lot of money, so Reg grew up poor. He left school when he was just fourteen years old to go and work as an errand boy in a butchers shop. In 1936, he joined the British Army and was posted in Egypt. He then served in World War 2 as a machine gunner. During this time, he worked on his drawing skills. He had his first cartoon published in a newspaper in Cairo, which is the capitol city of Egypt.

Reg later moved to London, where he worked as a telephone clerk in the general post office. He carried on practicing his artwork by drawing cartoons and designing posters. He eventually sold his cartoons to newspapers such as The Evening Standard and The Daily Mirror. His most famous character, Andy Capp, was created in 1957. This was a time when newspapers were still very popular, more so than now where lots of people get their news from the television or the internet.

Andy Capp was a negatively stereotyped Northern man from Hartlepool. A stereotype is when people have a belief or an idea about a group of people, they expect everyone in that group to be the same, even if it a mistake or untrue. For example, some people may say that all girls are not as good at sports as boys, but this is simply not true. Andy Capp wore a traditional flat cap and would often spend all day in the pub. He enjoyed betting, pigeon racing, fishing, snooker and football. He had some bad habits such as smoking and in the early cartoons, he could be quite aggressive.

Reg said of his character that he was a "horrible little man". He later said that he regretted some of Andy Capp's early actions and he certainly wasn't praised for them.

Still, Andy Capp is one of the most famous cartoons in the whole world. He has appeared in over 20,000 cartoon strips in over 50 countries! He celebrated his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2017, with the town honouring him with a special exhibition.

Reg died in 1998 at his hometown of Hartlepool. In 2007 a bronze statue was made of Andy Capp which you can visit on the Headland.

Andy Capp is still produced today by other artists and is loved by many around the world.