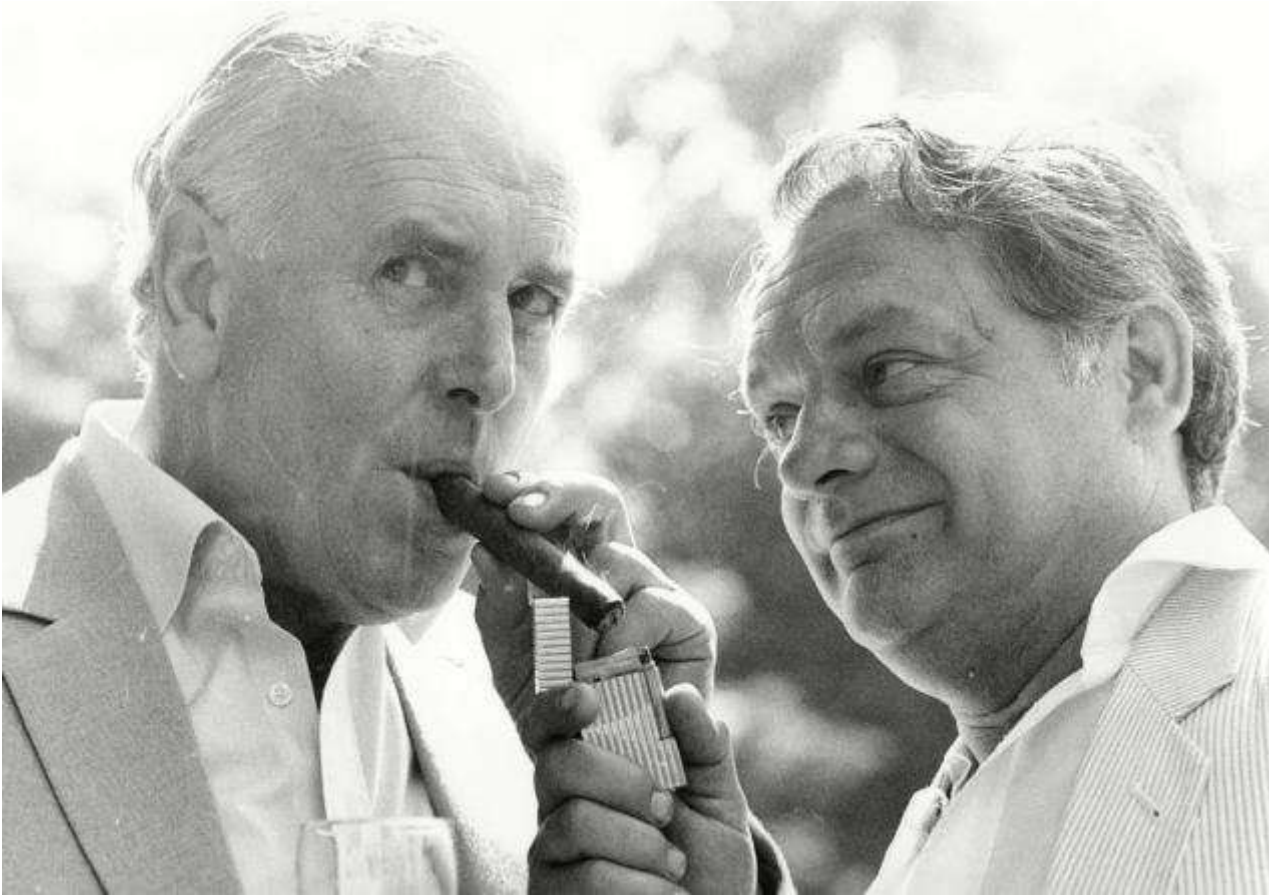


# George Cole – A Man Of Our Times

By **Alexander Baron** - Aug 6, 2015

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George Cole on the left in the scene from the movie *Diamond Geezer*

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Although he will be best remembered as Arthur Daley in the TV series *Minder*, George Cole, who died August 5 at the age of 90, was a character actor of considerable depth whose first entry in the *IMDb* dates to 1941; after that there are entries for every year to 2002 except 1946-7, 1958, 1962, and 1980-81. He continued working until 2008; his last performance was in *Road Rage*, which has yet to be screened.

Like Arthur Daley, George Cole was a South Londoner, and was born at Tooting on April 22, 1925. His first film, *Cottage To Let*, saw the teenager starring alongside Alastair Sim, another character actor of great talent. This was not the last time he and the much older Sim would appear together. In 1954 he starred as the spiv Flash Harry in *The Belles Of St.*

*Trinians*, while Sim, in drag, played the headmistress. Cole's persona fitted the spiv character to a tee, the loveable rogue, but it was not really a lead role, in fact though he was never out of work, Cole and leads did not go together, one exception being when he starred alongside Joan Collins (an unlikely combination) in the 1953 comedy *Our Girl Friday*. He also had a short career in radio, but was destined to be a star of the small screen.



George played a wheeler-dealer, Arthur Daley, for 15 years in TV series *Minder*

In 1968 he played it straight as Max Osbourne in the 13 episode TV series *A Man Of Our Times*, which is what he was, but it would not be until late in his career that he would find the role that would define him as an actor, the spiv *par excellence* Arthur Daley – or Arfur Daley as some might say. The series would run for an impressive 109 episodes, which is enough to typecast even the greatest of actors, which George Cole was, if not in the A List sense then for the depth he brought to his characters.

Married twice, George Cole was awarded the OBE in 1992 and died surrounded by his family at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading. You can check out his legacy on YouTube.