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The Beatles: Rare and Unseen

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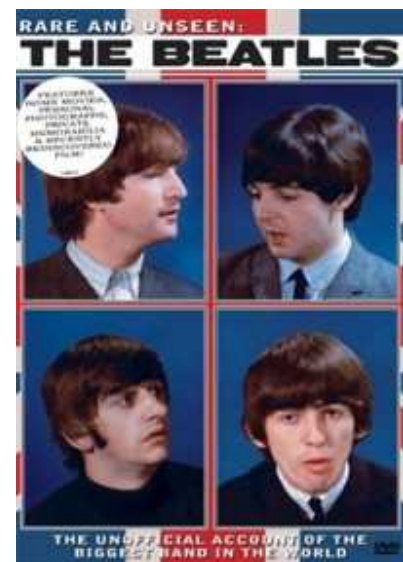
Dir. Chris Cowley & Paul Clark

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By [Piers Marchant](#)

Can anything about the Beatles truly be "unseen?" A band with such unprecedented success -- and exposure -- with decades of fans, scholars and maniacs sifting through the detritus of materials left behind, scouring every nook and hob for a particle of matter that might have been missed by the others? This is a band, after all, whose tramped-upon sod at an airport tarmac literally left young women clutching at the tufts of grass and sobbing in their wake. In telling the story of band for the umpteenth time, then, the challenge for directors Chris Cowley and Paul Clark was to find something different -- however slight -- to say. Suffice it to say, they don't entirely succeed. What ensues is essentially a bunch of talking heads -- everyone from Tony Barrow, an early press officer; to Phil Collins, whose expertise comes from being an extra on *A Hard Day's Night* -- speaking their minds on the subject of the band, against a backdrop of early and "unseen" home movies. The filmmakers take pains to explain that the whole project is unofficial and largely unauthorized -- sort of like a Beatles blog asking their readers to send in photos and memorabilia they've collected and producing a piece about it. Not that the film is wholly uninteresting: We learn from one of their early recording producers that the band's seminal recording of "Twist & Shout" came at the end of a long day of recording when John's voice only had "one take" left in him; we hear from the band's first drummer (not poor Pete Best, who came later), Colin Hanton, that George was "very small" and "very quiet" when he first joined The Quarrymen, the first incarnation that had John, Paul and George together. The film continues on in this vein, offering occasionally diverting nuggets of info about the band over the arc of their well-documented history. In short, for serious fans only, and even for them, with downgraded expectations.

The extra features entirely consist of additional interview footage from many of the myriad of interviewees.



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