TVH
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Cult Special

THE AVENGERS
the epitome of glamour and style

the Prisoner
what way out for a free agent?

RED DWARF
three million years on

TORCHWOOD
fighting for the future of the human race

Honor Blackman Tribute

DON'T PANIC!
THE HITCHHICKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

Back in July I thought it'd be good to follow on from the first issue, a **Doctor Who** special, with one paying tribute to other cult television shows, and I started putting this issue together in August after I received the first article, **'The Avengers'** by John Winterson Richards.

The article (which starts on page 3) was already 'in the can' if I can borrow that term, by the end of the month. Then, just a few weeks later, the sad news was announced that Dame Diana Rigg, one of our favourite and most gifted actors and for many the epitome of sixties cool, charm and charisma had passed away.

Diana Rigg, who was a much loved and admired member of her profession, helped propel **'The Avengers'** into its true golden age. In middle age she made a dazzling change of direction to be become one of our great classical actors. The recipient of Bafta, Emmy, Tony and Evening Standard Awards for her work on stage and screen she was a true force of nature. On page 41 we pay tribute to her.

What is Cult TV?

You can't predict what is going to become a TV cult. It's not the makers of a particular show that bestow cult status, but the audience who view it. Those with a passion who, long after a series has finished and gone to television heaven (shameless plug), keep it very much alive with devoted fan communities, online message boards, writing fan-fiction, and attending conventions dressed as their favourite characters. Although this does raise the question 'what is cult television?'

A few years ago, I was invited onto a BBC Radio show to talk about the 'cult television show Fawlty Towers'. I quickly pointed out that, IMHO, John Cleeese and Connie Booth's masterpiece of comedy was really a mainstream sitcom and not one you'd term cult. After all, you'd hardly expect hundreds of fans to descend on Torquay for a convention dressed as Spanish waiters! Would you?

This Issue

by John Winterson Richards

Television is a circular medium. It is influenced by the culture in which it is produced and in turn it influences that culture. Most of this traffic is one way, in the former direction, but sometimes a show has such an impact that it **changes the world in which it was made**. To a great extent, the "Swinging London" of the Sixties, or at least the image of it we have today, is based on four of the six seasons of **'The Avengers.'**

It is the biggest direct influence on **'Austin Powers,'** but also the biggest indirect influence through a number of other "spy caper shows" of the Sixties and Seventies that tried, with varying degrees of success, to copy its format and style.

It did not start out that way. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine a show with a stranger evolution. Television drama runs on a "spectrum of seriousness," with very serious "docudrama," which is basically documentary with actors, at one end, and more light hearted "comedy drama" at the other. In the course of just over a season, **'The Avengers'** effectively migrated from the far side of that spectrum to the other extreme.

The Bond film **'Doctor No'** may have had a big influence on the transformation. The show had already started in that direction, but the huge financial success of the film in 1962 encouraged and accelerated it, and helped its acceptance. Post-War "social realism" was replaced by fantasy as the defining style of the Sixties. The spy went from being a lonely figure on the margins to a glamorous "superagent" possessed of extraordinary abilities and almost limitless resources. What Bond offered on the big screen, **'The Avengers'** offered on television. It was the beginning of a symbiotic and mutually exploitative relationship between the two franchises.

The show had been intended originally as a star vehicle for **Ian Hendry**. Blessed with acting abilities and looks that made him ideal for the "social realist" dramas that were the fashionable thing at the turn of the decade, Hendry - more than Connery or Caine or Shaw or Moore - was seen very much as the coming man in 1961.

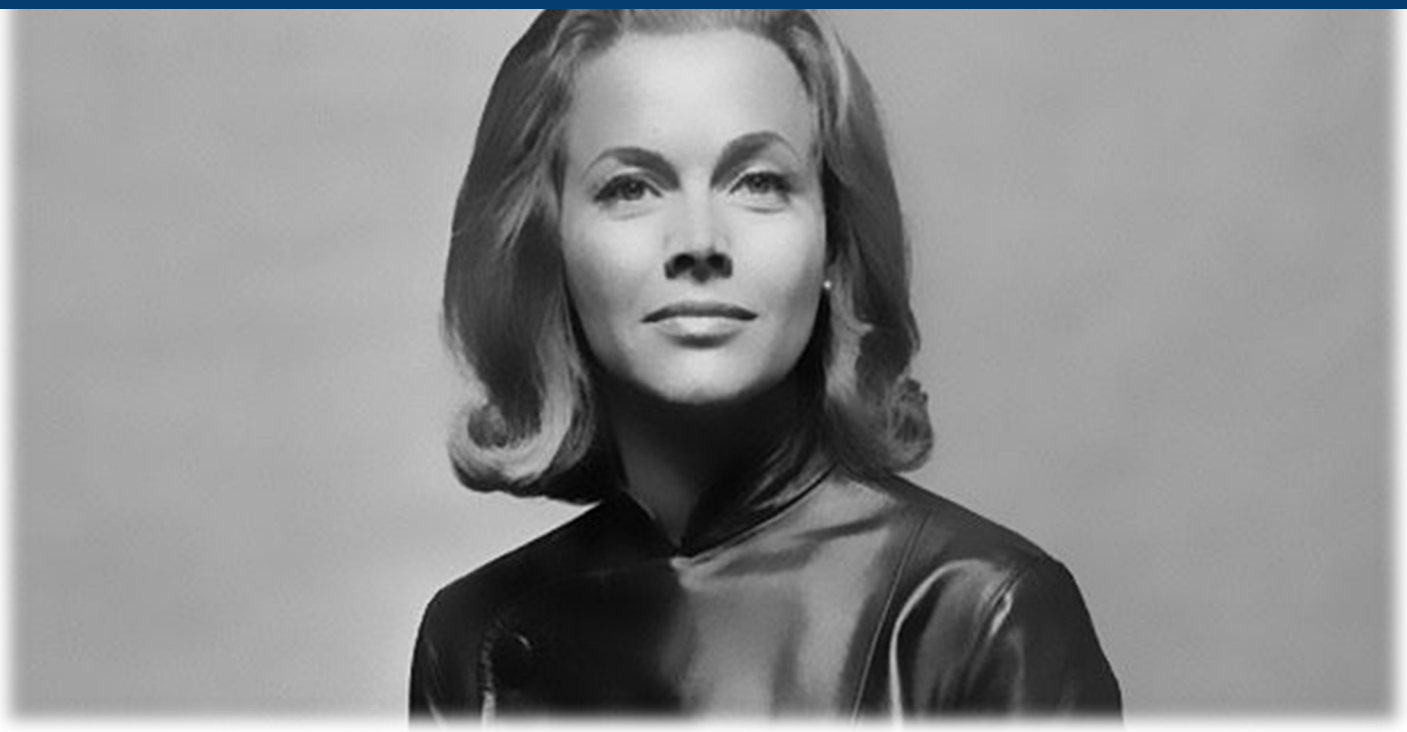
He had therefore been well cast as the eponymous **'Police Surgeon '** in a short-lived Associated British Corporation (ABC) series. This was, at least initially, a full on "docudrama," with story ideas from an actual General Practitioner based on real life situations. As the show began to move more into fiction, the GP asserted his contractual right to greater control over the script. Rather than waste time and money litigating or buying him out, **Sydney Newman**, the legendary Canadian television executive who was then head of drama at ABC - and was soon to go on to the BBC, where he greenlit **'Doctor Who'** - simply dropped the whole show.

However, Newman still wanted to retain the services of Ian Hendry. So he set up a new show for him, one that was curiously similar to **'Police Surgeon'** but sufficiently different for legal purposes. Thus Hendry and his **'Police Surgeon'** co-star **Ingrid Hafner** went straight from playing a GP and a nurse to playing, er, a GP and a nurse - but a completely different GP and nurse.

This was the beginning of **'The Avengers.'** While it retained the same realistic style as **'Police Surgeon,'** it was unashamedly fictional. Hendry's fiancé is murdered. As he seeks justice, he is met with official indifference, but is helped by a mysterious man calling himself John Steed (**Patrick Macnee**), apparently an agent for an unnamed Government Department, to avenge the murder - hence **'The Avengers.'** The pair subsequently team up for other cases.

The new show was not a great success. Macnee later described it as a couple of men hanging around in trenchcoats. At the end of the first season, Hendry decided he was better off pursuing his career in the cinema and left - thus beginning something of a tradition for stars of **'The Avengers.'** Sadly, he did not have the perfect role lined up as two of his successors did and the great future predicted for him never quite happened before his tragically premature death.

After this false start, a second soon followed. Macnee had established his character as the more interesting of the two leading roles, so it was decided to continue with the show with him as the star. However, instead of giving him a new partner, the strange decision was made to alternate between another male physician, to pick up the scripts written for Hendry that demanded one, and two female partners. One of these was Venus Smith (**Julie Stevens**), a nightclub singer, which was the pretext for a musical interlude in each of the episodes in which she appeared.



Steed's other partner in the second season was Cathy Gale, PhD, played by **Honor Blackman**, who was destined to become one of the most significant female characters in the history of television, and indeed Western culture in general.

The story is well attested that, when Hendry left, the producers did not want to spend time or money rewriting the dialogue that had already been prepared for him, so they just gave it unedited to Blackman. As a result you had Steed talking with a woman as he would talk with another man - having serious conversations about the matter in hand as equals, with the woman having her own ideas and defending them. This was quite revolutionary on television at the time.

Julie Stevens—a one season Avenger.

It helped that Cathy Gale was a different kind of woman. A widow whose husband had been murdered by the Mau Mau in Kenya, she was a tough colonial who had seen it all, not the usual virgin in distress. Being proficient in judo, she was quite capable of looking after herself. In case that was not enough, her penchant for leather said it all.

It was quickly obvious that something special was happening, and in the third season she became Steed's sole partner and the Golden Age of **'The Avengers'** began.

This is what most people remember when they think of 'The **Avengers**,' a nicely ambiguous relationship between a supposed modern liberated woman and a supposed traditional English gentleman - for by this time Steed had also had an image change: the downbeat 1950s trenchcoats had been replaced by a bowler hat, an ever present umbrella, and, apparently, considerable private means.

Yet this standard reading of the pairing needs some qualification. For a start, Cathy was not a Swinging Sixties Girl but a practical, independent, emotionally mature woman of a type quite common in the last days of the British Empire, if not so common on television.

Moreover, a traditional English gentleman like Steed has never existed. The character was more of a pastiche of a type very common at the time, perhaps even a satire on the bowler hatted legions that could still be seen on the commuter trains into London. Yet none of them had their clothes designed by Pierre Cardin as Steed did. Steed was therefore arguably the more modern character of the two. If he was an aristocrat, he was the sort of aristocrat who was friendly with pop stars and had wild parties at his stately home. It is said that the producers disliked putting him in crowd scenes because they would only show up how eccentric he looked.

The key to the success of their relationship was maintaining a degree of sexual tension without any hint of consummation. By the third season, the show had worked through the dialogue written for Hendry, so the lines became more flirtatious - and humorous. Indeed, the whole tone of the piece changed. The grim idea of "avenging" was forgotten and its place was Agatha Christie style amateur sleuthing. The plotlines got sillier.

“The Avengers became a victim of its own success”

The result was a definite hit, both with British audiences and in foreign markets. It even attracted serious money from the American Broadcasting Corporation (also ABC, rather confusingly) for the fourth season, which aired during prime time in the United States, a rare accomplishment for a non-American series. Production values improved as a result.

That vote of confidence came just in time because it was at this point that **'The Avengers'** became a victim of its own success. At the end of the third season, Blackman left, like Hendry before her, for the cinema - except in her case it was for the plum role of Pussy Galore in **'Goldfinger**,' which she got largely on the basis of her work as Cathy Gale. The Bond franchise had claimed its price for its contribution to the making of **'The Avengers**,' and not for the last time. Since many consider **'Goldfinger'** the best of all the Bond films, and all agree that Blackman was ideally cast, it was a good move for the actress, but it left **'The Avengers'** in a quandary.

It seemed that the producers had no sooner found the winning formula - at last - than they had lost it. Given its considerable commercial success - again, at last - and the availability of that American money, there was no doubt that the show must go on. The question was "What show?"

'The Avengers' made yet another false start as the filming of the fourth season began with the casting of the attractive **Elizabeth Shepherd** as Steed's new partner. There seemed to be no spark there, so the brave decision was made to recast and reshoot.

An even braver decision soon followed with the selection of the inexperienced **Diana Rigg**, largely on the basis of a screen test with Macnee, with whom she seems to have had an instant rapport.

It was the birth of a legend. Whatever her personal feelings might have been, onscreen Rigg brought to the role of Emma Peel a precocious self confidence that energised the entire show. The name Emma Peel was a play on "m-appeal," i.e. "man appeal," the elusive quality people involved in developing the character said she had to have. Yes, sometimes the Sixties really did sound like an episode of **'Mad Men.'**

In practice, it was as if someone had made the sensible decision to list everything that had made Cathy Gale so interesting and then said, "Take it up a notch."

So Cathy's thing for leather became Emma's infamous catsuit. Where Cathy was a fighter at need, Emma was a positive action woman. Cathy was skilled at judo, but Emma was a complete martial artist - Rigg is credited with being the first person to use kung fu on Western mainstream television. Unlike Cathy, Emma really was the epitome of the liberated young woman of the Sixties, at least in style and manner. In one respect, however, she was a traditionalist and that really was the making of the show:

Emma Peel was married. More than that, she really loved her husband, who was conveniently lost in the Amazon. This dialed the romantic tension with Steed up to 11. An obviously passionate woman in her prime, she was left in a state of sexual limbo, attracted to a man who was clearly attracted to her, but still feeling bound by her vows, because to do otherwise would be effectively killing her husband in her mind.

The much married Macnee was of the opinion that this did not matter and that they would have had an affair anyway, but Rigg is surely right that they did not. For one thing, sexual frustration is all over the fourth and fifth seasons of **'The Avengers,'** from the Freudian use of the Champagne bottle in the famous titles sequence to Steed's rather stalker-like behaviour in the way he summons her to another adventure.

More importantly, it is the notion of unconsummated love that gives the ending of their partnership its poignancy. Spoiler alert: Emma's husband turns up in the end. It so happens that he looks rather like Steed - which is not surprising since he was played by Macnee's stunt double - and, like Steed, drives a Bentley. We are left wondering if her love for Steed was ultimately a manifestation of her love for her husband - or vice versa.

There was a lot of fun to be had before then. The series had already left its realist roots far behind. Now it became positively surreal. Elements of science fiction were increasingly frequent in the storylines.

The list of guest stars was already a 'Who's Who' of the British acting profession in the 1960s, with several well known faces, like **Geoffrey Palmer**, **Roy Kinnear**, **Peter Bowles**, and **Philip Madoc**, appearing in different roles in different episodes. **'The Avengers'** was a place to be seen.

It was with its fifth season that the show reached its zenith. In America **'The Avengers'** was competing with American shows that were being made in colour, and colour television ownership there had reached a point where that mattered. So ABC - the American one - insisted that some of their dollars be used to make the show in colour.

It was the final ingredient necessary to make the formula complete. In the early days of colour television, those investing in it in any way - broadcasters, producers, or viewers - wanted their money's worth. That is why in the Sixties, colour really was colour.

It was expected to be bright and distinct. Added to that was the general fashion for such vibrant colours that came to define the decade. The extent to which this fashion was itself a cause or an effect of the rise of colour television may be a matter for debate. The point is that it all came together at the same moment, and at that moment **'The Avengers'** was the perfect show for it.

Since Cathy Gale, the producers had made a point of putting their leading ladies in the latest cutting edge fashions, which were in turn adopted by viewers. The show was therefore already a trend setter before it was made in colour, but it was the colour episodes that made it the definitive showcase for Swinging London. As well as choosing the most colourful clothes they could find, the producers also made sure the sets and locations were selected with a view to making the most of the new technology.

When older people think of **'The Avengers'** it is those colourful images from the fifth season that tend to come to mind. In the case of most British viewers, these are false memories, for, despite being shot in colour for the American market, it was still broadcast in black and white in the UK.

Either way, it had become - and remains to this day - a major part of the Sixties cultural landscape. Songs were written about Emma Peel. She was the mid Sixties personified. Steed too became a definitive symbol of post-Imperial Britain, slightly stuffy but not taking itself too seriously. Macnee had gradually developed the charm of the character from its rather rough beginning until it reached the height of amiability. The chemistry between the two was undeniable. In real life, the two were good friends and it comes across onscreen.

It was of its moment, and that moment was never going to last. It was at the end of the fifth season, the season that got everything right, that Rigg followed Blackman and left to do a Bond film. In Rigg's case that film was the excellent **'On Her Majesty's Secret Service'** and many believe she was the best Bond girl of them all, a woman who could actually make Bond, briefly, cease to be Bond. Her time on **'The Avengers'** had given her the perfect apprenticeship to achieve that.

Yet her departure was the beginning of the end of **'The Avengers.'** Her replacement, **Linda Thorson**, as Tara King, did a fine job by any standards. If she had starred in a completely new show, she might have become a legend in her own right, but from the start she was overshadowed by no less than two previous legends, both revolutionary figures in television history. No one could have overcome that situation.

It was made worse by some bad conceptual decisions. Since Emma had been younger than Cathy, and that had worked, the producers reasoned that Tara should be younger still, about twenty. They might have got away with that had they not tried to repeat something else that had worked when Emma had taken over from Cathy: the flirting became more overtly sexual. This was completely misjudged. Since Steed, like Macnee, had served in the Second World War, he was easily old enough to be Tara's father. The romantic element was therefore at best out of place and at worst positively unpleasant. It did not help that Macnee was beginning to look a bit tired, even if his personal charm was undiminished. Putting him next to a much younger partner highlighted that.

The scripts were also getting a bit tired. They had long been satirising other shows, including shows it had influenced. It was therefore beginning to be a satire of itself. While much of this was very witty, it could only go on for so long.

Nevertheless, the sixth season was a commercial success in Britain and most other markets. Much of the credit for this belongs to Thorson, who was in fact a more convincing representation of Sixties Girl than either of her esteemed predecessors.

The exception was the only market that really mattered, America. ABC - the American one - scheduled it against the popular **'Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In**,' which attracted many of the same type of viewers. The result was a predictable ratings defeat and cancellation by ABC.

By this stage, the American money, and the quality demanded in return, had made **'The Avengers'** a very expensive show to produce. It might have been possible to reduce the production budget and go back to producing a show for British and European markets similar to what it had been before, but this would have been at the expense of the glamour and style which were now synonymous with **'The Avengers.'** It was therefore the right decision to quit while they were ahead.

Times were, in any case, changing. The bright, colourful optimism of the mid Sixties, of which **'The Avengers'** was symbolic, was starting to become a little overcast. This was reflected in another, very different spy drama now also being made for ITV, the dark but thought provoking **'Callan**.' The party was winding down and the hangover was not long in coming.

In any case, **'The Avengers'** had already established its legacy in a host of other "spy capers" featuring highly accomplished and affluent "superagents" in fantasy situations. Its influence on **'The Man From U.N.C.L.E.,' 'The Baron**,' **'The Prisoner**,' **The Champions**,' and, later **'The Persuaders'** and **'The Protectors**,' among many others, is fairly obvious. Apart from anything else, and in addition to having the word "The" at the start of the title, many of these projects employed **Brian Clemens** who had been the most influential writer on **'The Avengers**.'

In addition, it is interesting to note how many ideas from **'The Avengers'** turned up in later Bond films - as did Macnee himself on one occasion.

Macnee also joined in Clemens' revival of the show as **'The New Avengers'** in 1976, with Steed now acting as mentor to two younger agents, played by **Joanna Lumley** and **Gareth Hunt**. Although some die hard fans of the original can get a bit sniffy about **'The New Avengers**,' it was a well made and likeable show that had quite a bit of impact at the time. Its problem is that it is inevitably compared with the original, the cultural impact of which was unique.

In any case, **'The New Avengers'** was basically a jolly Sixties style caper show in the wrong decade: it seemed that everyone in the Seventies was depressed and anyone trying to cheer them up was striking a false note.

For the secret of the success of **'The Avengers'** is that it was a product of its time and place. Older viewers watching it now may find it is not quite as good as they remembered. Indeed, whisper it but the better episodes of **'The New Avengers'** may be smoother and better produced than those even of the revered season five of **'The Avengers.'**

No matter. The point is that when it came out, **'The Avengers'** seemed the epitome of glamour and style, and it had something to say to an aspirational and optimistic generation. Today, it is best rewatched as an evocation of that time and place, or rather how that time and place wanted to see itself and be seen. As such, it has no superior.

Besides, if nothing else, it was - and remains - great fun.

TVH

Honor Blackman

by Laurence Marcus

Very few actresses have ever been given a role that redefines the public's vision of women on television. That in itself would be a significant achievement; but as **Cathy Gale** in **The Avengers**, **Honor Blackman** not only altered that public perception and re-characterized the role, she also **single-handedly** kick-started the whole 1960s 'second wave' **feminist movement**. And while her name may not be on a list of **'notable historical feminists'**, her contribution to the cause can never be overestimated. Before Cathy Gale, the role of the female in television drama was to be the dutiful wife or the damsel in distress waiting for the dashing male hero to rescue her. After Cathy Gale, the writers' rulebook to television would have to be **completely rewritten**.

Things would never be the same again.

Honor Blackman was born on 12 December 1927, in Cumberland Road, Plaistow, East London. In her early days, Honor was very athletic; a gifted sprinter and games captain at Ealing Girls School. "As a child I was a complete tomboy," she said. "I used to fight with my brother and his friends. We did everything together, and Ken was the one I matched myself against. He was a year older than me and his early death at the age of 35 was a terrible blow."

Honor had no aspirations of becoming an actress at an early age. On her 16th birthday her father offered her a choice of two gifts: a bike or elocution lessons. She said she would have preferred the bike, but knowing her father would rather she took the lessons was enough to sway her. It turned out to be a fortuitous decision. The lessons her teacher chose, in order to rid Honor of her cockney accent, was reciting poetry and scenes from plays, and in doing so, the teacher spotted a talent and suggested that she attend drama school. Her family could not afford this, so at the age of 16, Honor left school and followed both her father and her sister into the Civil Service. She worked as a clerk by day, and with the money she earned was able to afford lessons at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, twice a week at lunchtime and once a week in the evening.

In 1942 Honor also did her bit for the war effort by volunteering as a dispatch driver. "I was known as **'Top Gear Tessie'**," she said. "I was only just old enough to ride a motor-bike and my mother was terrified, but I thought it was heaven. It was pretty dangerous because we were in the midst of war and had to mask the headlights during the blackout. I remember one girl drove straight over a roundabout, whilst another found herself in Brighton, which wasn't supposed to be her final destination. Bombs were falling, but the roar of the motorbike engine used to drown out the sound of the doodlebugs so we never heard them coming. It seemed terribly exciting to me. We were young and believed ourselves invincible."

"You've got to fight - or go under. "

Her break into movies came at the age of 18. She was interviewed by John Boulting shortly after making her mark in a play called **The Guinea Pig** - in which she had to take the lead role at short notice after the leading lady fell ill. She was very nervous at the interview-especially when a request to take off her shoes revealed that she was wearing darned stockings. Nonetheless, she won a part in **Fame Is The Spur.** Not long after, she became a Rank starlet. "I signed up for a two-year contract. Although the films weren't always great, I was constantly in front of the camera and this was a very good training ground." She was seen in **A Boy, A Girl And A Bike** - which also starred a young Anthony Newley. She was also cast in **Diamond City** - which featured another up and coming starlet...Diana Dors.

But things were destined not to go smoothly and she was beset with personal troubles. The failure of her first marriage to Bill Sankey, whom she'd married in 1946, led to a loss of confidence in her professional life. "To find myself, after the unreal success of the Rank contract days, with a failed marriage, a failed career and, worst of all, with the feeling I had failed completely as a person-that was more than I could bear. I had a nervous breakdown." With the aid of psychiatric help, Honor got through what she later described as her 'private hell.'

"You've got to fight - or go under. There's a pretty tough streak in me, and I survived. My father always used to tell me success seldom comes easily. He was certainly right about that! But I kept plugging away - hoping for the really big breaks to come. Eventually they did - but they took an awfully long time!"

In 1958 she landed a role of Mrs Lucas in **A Night to Remember,** a film about the Titanic disaster. That was followed by a role in the Norman Wisdom comedy **The Square Peg.** The following year (1959), Honor landed the role of Iris Cope in the first hour-long TV series that ITV produced; **Probation Officer.** She began to turn up on TV screens with great regularity and landed parts in **The Four Just Men, Danger Man,** and **The Saint.** Then, in 1962, she landed the role that would prove seminal.

The Avengers, already an established and popular crime/drama series on ITV, was losing one of its two leading men. Ian Hendry had decided to quit the series and producer **Leonard White** and series creator **Sydney Newman** were looking for a new side-kick to **Patrick Macnee**, who, as **John Steed**, was to be promoted to lead actor. In his autobiography, *Blind In One Ear,* Macnee recalls that when Newman suggested replacing Hendry with a female character ITV bosses "shook their cynical heads." In fact, it was Leonard White and not Sydney Newman who originally came up with the notion of casting a woman. There was huge resistance to the idea, even with a threat of the show being scrapped. But being the determined character he was, Newman, who completely supported White's idea, forged ahead with their plan. "At the time of the Mau Mau insurrection in Kenya, Sydney read of a redoubtable lady whose farm had been besieged by native insurgents. With a gun in one hand and a baby in the other, this lady had managed to survive the onslaught while her husband and other children were hacked to death in the sitting room of their bungalow. Greatly impressed by such courage and coolness, Sydney wanted to introduce such a female character into the series."

ITV bosses tried to interfere and demanded a romance between the two characters

"The character would be called **Mrs Catherine Gale**. Added to the outstanding characteristics of the Kenyon heroine, Mrs Gale would also be imbued with several attributes of two further real life ladies, Margaret Bourke-White, one of **Life Magazine's** leading photographers, and Margaret Mead, the eminent anthropologist. Sydney envisaged her physically as an ice cool blonde in the Grace Kelly mould. A woman of impeccable moral standards, Mrs Gale would combine intelligence with great strength of character. She would be an ace with firearms, a judo champion, and possessed of acerbic wit, great feelings of humanity and enormous resilience."

Eventually, Sydney Newman won out over his reluctant bosses but not without a fight, which took the form of a succession of rows and threats. Leonard White began auditioning actresses for the role of Cathy Gale and Honor was cast, although she was Leonard White's first choice, not Sydney Newman's, who wanted to cast **Nyree Dawn Porter**. The casting decision was to be made while Newman was on holiday. He left feeling certain that Leonard White would cast Porter and was surprised on his return to find that Blackman had been given the role. But once the decision was made, Newman backed it to the hilt. "I was aware that the scripts were innovative and enigmatic," said Honor of the role, "but I didn't envisage just how ground-breaking the series would be. I remember when reading those first scripts, I liked the fact that Dr Cathy Gale was an anthropologist and in every way an intellectual equal to Steed." It was decided in the early days of Honor's arrival that her relationship with Macnee's John Steed character would be a strictly formal one and he would refer to her as "Mrs Gale" and she would refer to him as "Steed." Once again ITV bosses tried to interfere and demanded a romance between the two characters, but the production team didn't want to go down that route and said so. With the rules of the character set out the next step was to design Cathy Gale's wardrobe. The man put in charge of this was fashion designer Michael Whittaker, who dressed her in tailored suits, rakish hats and knee-length boots. But as fashionable as they were these clothes were totally unsuitable for the action scenes that Cathy Gale would get involved in.

"The original plan," remembered Macnee, "was to have Honor equipped with a tiny .25 calibre pistol, which she'd carry in her handbag." Since this proved impractical, other methods of concealment were experimented with. Honor Blackman also remembers this: "I recall that practically every script contained the following line, 'Cathy Gale reaches into her handbag for a gun'. Well, you and I know that we'd all be dead if we had to find a gun in our handbag! So that was pretty amusing." Patrick Macnee: "It was then that an imaginative and sensual mind came up with the quite novel idea of what we dubbed a garter holster." But this also had its drawbacks; the main one being it caused Honor to walk bowlegged. With the combat gear proving to be a big problem the two stars were packed off to Rene Burdet, a former head of the French Resistance, for a course in self-defence. Douglas Robinson, a Black Belt was also bought in to teach the actors the basic moves of Judo.

"I noticed that Honor appeared to be unhappy." Wrote Macnee. The problem was that whenever the scene called for Cathy Gale to take a tumble in a fight scene the audience would see the tops of her stockings. "I'm not sure what inspired me to telephone my old friend Peter Arne, but possibly thinking that Peter had the answer to some of life's more interesting problems, I explained the predicament to him." Sure enough, it was Arne who suggested putting Honor into trousers - black leather trousers with matching jerkin and boots. The two of them went to Honor and suggested their new idea. In response, Honor looked at them both and said, "Oh God. Don't the two of you realise what you might be starting?" Nevertheless, she went along with the idea although once again it was met with resistance from ITV chiefs. It was another battle that the producers of the show won and the style was adopted. Cathy Gale first appeared on **The Avengers** in 1962. The public went wild for her.

“She was a tantalising mixture - faintly male and very female”

"I had no idea she would be so successful." Said Honor. "I don't think any of us had. I just knew I liked the character and I enjoyed the fighting, and it was when the fighting really began that the series clicked. In those days it wasn't possible to edit videotapes so it *had* to be right first time.
I use to go out to kill.
I remember Pat Macnee saying: "Darling, you don't have to be quite so hard..."
"Oh yes I do!" I said, and meant it.
I had to go in with all my strength if I was going to throw those great big men about, and the truth was I wasn't sure I could do it. I'd have looked a right Charlie if I'd tried and not been able to manage it, and I didn't want to look a Charlie. I didn't break anyone's neck, but I accidentally knocked out Jackie Pallo (the all-in wrestler). He hit his head as he fell, so it wasn't really my fault."

"All the time I was making **The Avengers** I was black and blue all over. Nobody believed I did the fighting myself, till they came to the gym and watched. I surprised myself in a way because playing Cathy revealed a violent streak in me that I didn't know I'd got, though I suspect, deep down it's in all of us."

There is no doubt that Cathy Gale helped change the perception of women on British television forever. "When I started, men were still of the opinion that women would always be seen as the weaker sex due to their lack of strength. I was the first woman to be seen defending herself and so illustrated that this was no longer the case. Despite being glamorous and witty, Cathy was also Steed's intellectual equal. I think her character gave heart to many women at the time. Cathy Gale was a fantasy woman - but there was an awful lot of me in her. I liked her because she was cool and determined and unsentimental, and she never gave up. She could take on a man on his own terms and go all out to win; yet she managed to stay sexy. She was a tantalising mixture - faintly male and very female."

Honor's contract for the series was due to expire on 21 March, 1964 and as that date approached she had to make a tough decision. "I didn't want to be permanently typecast as an offbeat sex symbol in black leather and boots." But at the same time she didn't want to return to the conventional English rose roles she had been cast in previously. Then-a couple of months before the vital date-there came an offer that was to make up her mind. The offer was to play a character called Pussy Galore in the next James Bond movie; **Goldfinger.**
"I was already a James Bond fan but I asked to read **Goldfinger** before taking the part and by the time I had read it, I was convinced it was absolutely me!"
The films co-producer Albert R Broccoli, who had noted her success in **The Avengers** also thought she was perfectly cast. "The Brits would love her because they knew her as Mrs Gale, the Yanks would like her because she was so good - it was a perfect combination."
Although gone from **The Avengers**, she was not forgotten. In a 1965 episode, titled **Too Many Christmas Trees,** John Steed received a Christmas card from Cathy Gale. "A card from Mrs Gale!" Steed exclaimed in delight. Then, reading the inscription, he said, (in a reference to the 'Bond' movie), "Whatever can she be doing at Fort Knox...?".

Some years later, Honor reflected on the fact that her decision to leave **The Avengers** might have come a little too soon. "I walked away at the wrong moment. They were just going from black and white to colour; they were starting to get real film money."

Her popularity in the high-profile Bond movie should have led to better films, but it didn't, and for the most part the only offers that came in were for low-level melodrama and routine adventures. So Honor returned to the stage, and received rave reviews, as a blind heroine in the thriller **Wait Until Dark**
"Playing the part of a blind woman was an enormous challenge, because it wasn't enough to give the impression of blindness. Technically it creates a lot of problems because you are acting in a vacuum." She said. "It is a strange experience to cut yourself off from any communication by sight with the other actors."
Around the same time, Honor also launched into the business side of entertainment, forming Six-Star Entertainment, an alleged million pound venture with John Mills, Hayley Mills, Richard Attenborough, Herbert Lom and Curt Jurgens.

Her second marriage, to actor Maurice Kaufman (in 1961) led to the adoption of two children, Carlotta (Lottie) in 1968 and Barnaby in 1969. "We waited a long time before we decided to adopt simply because we couldn't believe we couldn't actually make a baby," Honor was quoted as saying in 1968. That same year Honor appeared in an ABC **Armchair Theatre** production (**Recount**) in which she played the role of a woman who discovers she is pregnant in middle age. Her marriage to Maurice Kaufman ended in divorce in 1975 but Honor never remarried. Following that, TV appearances became few and far between, and although Honor kept working in film and theatre, it wasn't until 1981 that she was seen in anything like a regular role on British television when she appeared as **Veronica Barton** in five episodes of the sitcom **Never The Twain.**

In 1986 Honor also returned, briefly, to the world of 'cult' TV when she appeared in four episodes of the **Doctor Who** story **Terror of the Vervoids** from **The Trial of a Time Lord** season. It was another four years before she returned to play a regular starring role as the sexy grandmother Laura West in the hit sitcom **The Upper Hand,** a British version of the US series **Who's The Boss?** In 1995 Honor was chosen by *'Empire'* magazine as one of the *100 Sexiest Stars* in film history, coming in at number 51. After being asked her secrets of youth many, many times, she wrote a book in 1997, *'How to Look & Feel Half Your Age for the Rest of Your Life.'*

The Lib Dem-supporting former Avenger became involved with the Fairtrade Foundation, a British organization that offers a "Fairtrade" mark for products grown or manufactured in the third world, if the importers can certify that low-level foreign workers received reasonable wages and fair treatment. "Most of the Bond girls have been bimbos." She said. "I have never been a bimbo." She turned down a CBE in 2002 because she claimed that to have accepted it would have made her a hypocrite as she is also a member of Republic, The Campaign for an Elected Head of State. "We're supposed to be a democracy and we, quite shamefully, are not," she said. However, she made it quite clear that she never sought publicity for refusing the 'honour'.
"I don't know how that story got out, but it did. I never told anyone about it."

Honor Blackman continued to grace the small screen with guest appearances in a number of established series', the most famous of which was **Coronation Street** (2004) as the flirtatious pensioner Rula Romanoff. "I was terribly surprised. I never thought I'd be in something like this, and I never thought they would ask me," she said. "When I read the script I thought it was so much fun, and it's the best soap in the country. It is so iconic." And as she approached the grand age of eighty there was no hint of her slowing down. She did a one-woman show called *'Word of Honor'* and in 2007 she took over from Sheila Hancock the role of Fraulein Schneider in **Cabaret** at the Lyric Theatre in London's West End. It was her first West End role for 20 years and she found it exhilarating. "When I put my foot on the stage, I come alive and that's it. It's always a bang. It's thrilling, I think, theatre. Thrilling." And because of that thrill there has never been a thought of retiring. "I shall retire when I'm made to retire." She said. "I mean when nobody offers me a job or my memory goes or I can't walk or when I die! I mean we're so lucky, it's not like going into the office, it's so varied and you don't know what is round the corner."

But in 2014, at the age of 88, Honor did finally decide to call time on her illustrious and iconic career. But not before undertaking one last farewell theatre tour in *'Honor Blackman as Herself.'* "I just didn't feel like writing a book," she said, "so I'm doing this show instead because I love the theatre." On completion of the tour she retired to her villa in a remote part of Catalonia, Spain. When asked to look back on her career and choose her favourite period she had no hesitation in answering, "The 1960s was a wonderful time, both in my work and with my children arriving, so that has to take the cake." Very few would disagree with her. The role of women in society changed dramatically in the 1960s. Feminism began to find a voice with movements like Women's Lib demanding equal pay and opportunity. And while the feminist movement has made monumental strides since that era, the campaign for equality continues. But in popular culture the emerging generation had a role model, a strong-willed indomitable woman that television audiences had never seen the likes of before.

Honor Blackman passed away on 5 April 2020, aged 94 years. **TVH**

RED DWARF THREE MILLION YEARS ON

by Daniel Tessier

On the 15 February 1988, a peculiar low-budget series had its first broadcast on BBC2. 'Red Dwarf' was an, at-the-time, rare combination of science fiction and situation comedy, a genre that is hard to pull off successfully. The series had a troubled gestation and few at the BBC expected it to be a success.

Thirty years later, **Red Dwarf** is a hugely successful television phenomenon. The most-exported series to originate on BBC2 (it's huge in the former Czechoslovakia), after a long hiatus it has experienced a resurgence on the digital channel **Dave**. Over the years it has won multiple awards, from an International Emmy for Outstanding Popular Arts Programme, a Royal Television Society award for special effects, a British Comedy Award and several British Comedy Guide awards. The series has developed a huge fanbase, becoming both a popular and cult hit, with a fan club and an annual convention (**Dimension Jump**, looking at its twenty-first event next year).

It's not at all bad for a series that very nearly didn't get made at all. Science fiction was a hard sell at the BBC in the late 80s. **Doctor Who** was on borrowed time, **The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy** was of the past and the idea of a sci-fi sitcom was viewed with derision and as a better subject for kids' TV. It was a tough sell for **Rob Grant** and **Doug Naylor**, long-time writing partners and creators of the series. In fairness, it's not hard to see why the programme commissioners might have baulked at the idea. It's a series with a strange and elaborate central concept. The two lowest-ranking members of the crew of a gigantic spaceship are the central characters. The lowest of the low, Lister, is put into suspended animation for smuggling a pet cat onboard, while his superior, Rimmer, fouls up the replacement of a vital drive plate. The resultant radiation leak wipes out the entire crew, save Lister, who is protected by the stasis field. Three million years later, with the radiation at a safe level, ship's computer Holly revives Lister. Wary of him losing his sanity, alone in deep space, Holly resurrects Rimmer as a hologram. Meanwhile, Lister's pregnant cat, sealed away in the hold, has given rise to a race of highly-evolved feline humanoids, the last of whom makes the fourth member of the core characters.

That's a tough concept to sum up easily, but the complex trappings boil down to something very simple: **The Odd Couple in space**. Lister is a down-and-out slob, barely capable of looking after himself in spite of his innate intelligence, who eats vindaloo daily and ends up wearing most of it. He's lazy, dirty, out-of-shape and disgusting, and he's the hero! Arnold Rimmer, his immediate superior and bunkmate, is the exact opposite: precise, anal, career-obsessed, a military enthusiast, always has a pen. They despise each other. It's a classic sitcom set-up, forcing two incompatible people to live together – in this case, probably forever.

In developing the script for television, the writers made significant changes. The time scale was settled on as a comparatively modest three million years, although Lister's home century has never been cleared up. Dave Hollins became Dave Lister, Hab became Holly. Wary of including robots and aliens in the series, considering them sci-fi clichés, the writers came up with the idea of a hologram and a cat person, expanding the characters while technically keeping Lister as the last human being. The backstory for the series was established in more depth: Lister and Rimmer worked for the Space Corps, as part of the crew for the Jupiter Mining Corporation ship Red Dwarf. Lister held dreams of settling down with the widely desired navigation officer, Kristine Kochanski. Rimmer came from a successful family of officers, all of whom looked down on him because of his lowly position as Second Technician. Holly was an advanced AI with an IQ of 6000 (the same IQ as six thousand PE teachers). The script for the pilot episode was complete by 1983, but wasn't picked up until 1986, when it was championed by Paul Jackson, who used his position as executive producer and director to insist the series be made (even then, the budget was only available because his previous project, the Ben Elton sitcom **Happy Families**, had its second season cancelled). Set for production in 1987, **Red Dwarf** then fell foul of the BBC electrician's strike, which delayed filming by almost six months.

***"Red Dwarf** was a very low-budget affair with limited scope for **special effects.**"*

Initial casting was also difficult. Grant and Naylor had their own ideas as to who should play Lister and Rimmer, but approached the casting with very open minds – perhaps too open, considering the difficulty they had in deciding on a final cast. Initially they had hoped to get quite respected actors involved, and both **Alan Rickman** and **Alfred Molina** auditioned for the role of Rimmer. Molina was, in fact, cast in the part, but struggled to get to grips with the concept of the series and the writers decided that he wasn't suited after all. There were flirtations with a female cast – **French and Saunders** were briefly considered – but eventually they selected a very different cast. First to be cast was **Norman Lovett**, a deadpan comedian who tried for the role of Rimmer but was eventually cast as Holly. Initially considered a vocal only role, Lovett managed to convince them to make Holly a visual component of the series, although he was still isolated from the rest of the cast, recording against a black screen and appearing as a disembodied head on a monitor. Singer-dancer **Danny John-Jules** was cast as the Cat. Turning up in an old zoot suit, much of the character of the Cat owed to DJJ's flamboyant audition.

Another performer recommended for the Cat role was **Craig Charles**, with whom Paul Jackson had worked on **Saturday Night Live**. After speaking to him about the character of the Cat – concerned that it might be considered a little racist – his enthusiasm for the series led them to casting him in the role of Lister. A stand-up poet (so very eighties), the young Scouser was quite a different person to the middle-aged layabout originally envisioned. The final member of the core four to be cast was **Chris Barrie**, who initially tried for Lister but was perfect for the uptight Rimmer. Best known at the time as an impressionist, Barrie had collaborated with Grant and Naylor on **Spitting Image**, **Happy Families** and **Carrott's Lib**, and had voiced Hab on "*Dave Hollins*." Far from the serious actors they had originally hoped for, Grant and Naylor ended up with a comedian, a dancer, an impressionist and a poet, and certainly in the case of the latter three it's now almost impossible to imagine other people in the role. And let's be honest, if Rickman or Molina had taken roles, it's unlikely they would have stayed long enough for the series to become the success it is now.

Due to the nature of the storyline, there were limited opportunities for recurring characters. However, the first episode, wittily titled "*The End*," featured American actor Mac MacDonald as Captain Hollister, actor and singer Clare Grogan as Kochanski and a then little known actor named Mark Williams as Lister's best friend Olaf Peterson. All three characters were reduced to dust along with the rest of the crew, but were able to reappear several times during the first two seasons via flashbacks and time travel. The first series of **Red Dwarf** was a very low-budget affair with limited scope for special effects. While model and effects designer Peter Wragg created a remarkable visual with the spaceship Red Dwarf – battered and bruised and supposedly six miles long – the interiors of the ship were unimpressive. Set designer Paul Montague was aiming for a submarine feel, but the uniform grey look of the sets and the beige uniforms left many scenes looking dull and lifeless. More memorable was Howard Goodall's score for the series, including the opening theme which strove for a classical science fiction feel, and the more upbeat closing theme song, performed by Jenna Russell, which has remained a staple of the series to this day.

Keen to distance themselves from the hostility towards science fiction, Grant and Naylor pushed the sitcom elements and the series relied on dialogue rather than flashy visuals. Nonetheless, the more popular episodes tended to be the more sci-fi oriented ones, such as "*Future Echoes*," in which breaking the light speed barrier caused visions of the future to appear, and "*Me2*," in which Rimmer tries to live with a duplicate hologram of himself.

Much was made of the relationship between Rimmer and Lister, with Rimmer revelling in his position as most senior crewman, while Lister preferred to sit around, eating curry and watching cartoons, while the ship slowly made its way back to Earth. "*Balance of Power*" saw Lister try to outrank Rimmer by passing the chef's exam, while "*Confidence and Paranoia*" was a high concept piece that saw aspects of Lister's psyche come to life. There was some fun exploration of the Cat's background in the episode "*Waiting for God*," which explored Lister's role as the Cat People's holy father, but the poor reception of the episode meant that this wasn't explored again for decades. Instead, most the Cat's material focused on his feline characteristics – his laziness, selfishness and above all, his extraordinary vanity. Each episode after the first opened with an introduction by Holly, explaining the concept of the series for the benefit of new viewers. The once brilliant AI was revealed to be suffering from computer senility, his three million years of isolation having sent him a bit peculiar.

With a seventh episode slot left vacant at the end of production, the writers took the opportunity to review the first episode and rework elements that they felt didn't come across well. As much as two-thirds of the episode was reshot, with many scenes excised or rewritten. There have been multiple versions of the opening episode released over the years, including the remastered version (from video re-releases in the mid-to-late 1990s), the "original assembly" version and two slightly different Japanese versions with heavily reworked visual effects. Most of these have had DVD releases over the years, although some are now hard to find.

Premiering on the 15th of February, 1988, "*The End*" performed very respectably indeed, with five million viewers. However, the viewing figures dropped over the course of the first series, in spite of very positive reviews, feedback and a strong Audience Appreciation Index Score. Response was positive enough that the BBC commissioned a second series, which was fast-tracked and began broadcast in September that same year. Continuing along much the same lines as the first series, Series II had a slight budget increase and saw Grant and Naylor experiment more with sci-fi elements. Notably, the first episode introduced several elements that would become staples of later series, including a smaller, shuttle-type spacecraft named Blue Midget, which allowed the Dwarfers to travel to new and more varied locations. It also introduced Kryten, an android, or "mechanoid," with an amusingly-shaped head, who was built to serve mankind but was left alone for three million years, sending him almost as batty as Holly. Overcoming their reluctance to use a robotic character, Kryten, initially played by David Ross, was popular enough to be brought back for the following series.

The sixth episode of Series II, "*Parallel Universe*," was atypical, opening with a musical number ("*Tongue Tied*," released some years later as a single by Danny John-Jules, reaching a respectable No.17 in the UK charts), and ending with a cliffhanger in which Lister found himself pregnant by his own female alter ego (don't ask). While the cliffhanger was left mostly unresolved onscreen, the parallel universe concept would be revisited time and again throughout the run of the series, with multiple alternative versions of the characters appearing, not to mention clones, teleporter duplicates and potential future versions. A third series was a given, although there would be big changes in store.

"*Red Dwarf III was a huge success.*"

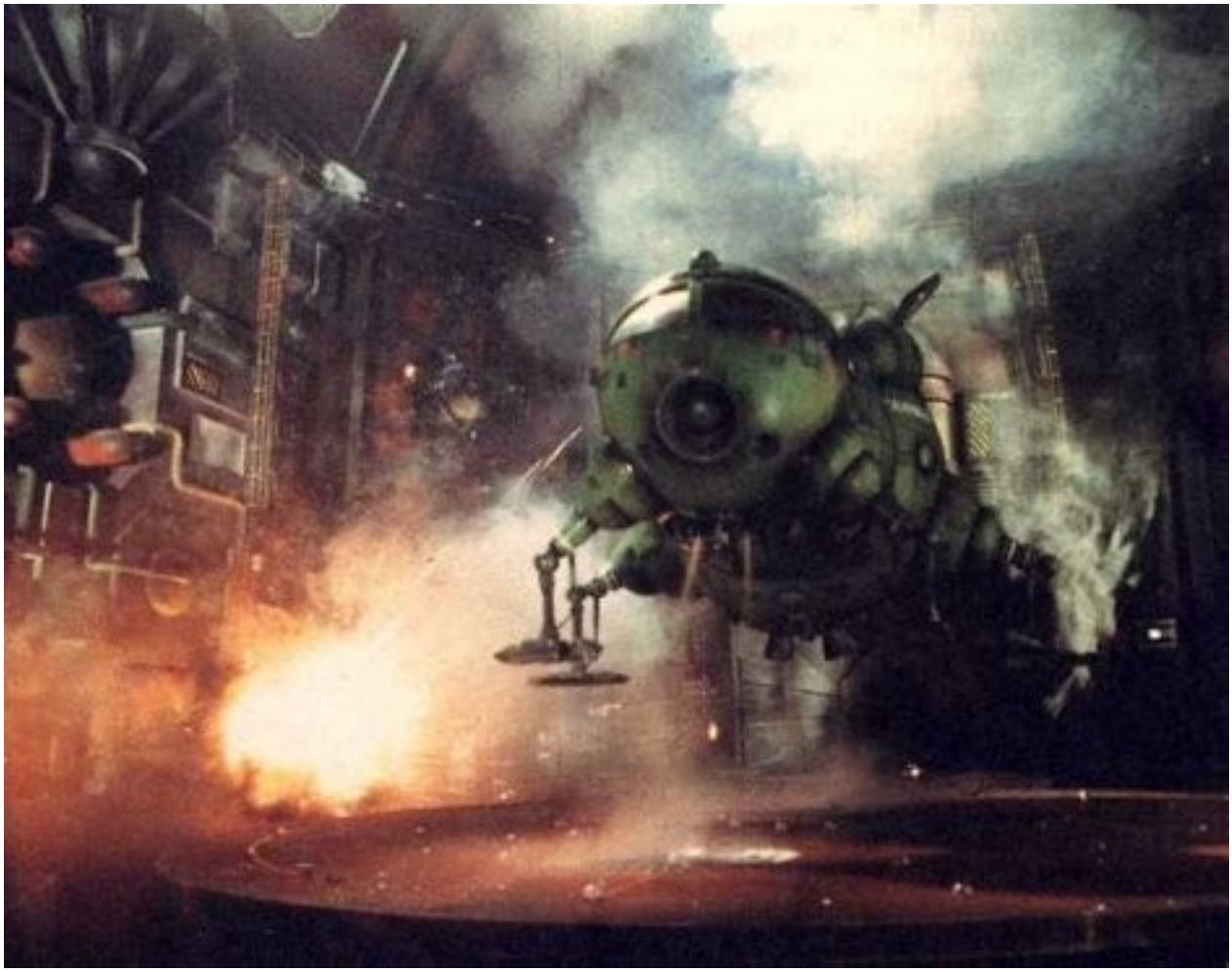
Red Dwarf III (as it was named in the ***Radio Times*** and in the closing line of the series introduction, setting the pattern for how the series would be listed on video and latter-day broadcast releases) both looked and sounded very different to its predecessors. Although the budget had only been increased slightly, more prudent spending made it look like there had been a substantial boost. Mel Bibby completely redesigned the sets (explained internally as a relocation to the officers' area of the ship), which, along with shooting on industrial locations, gave the series a much-needed visual boost. Howard Goodall reworked the opening theme into a new, rocked up version, which played over a montage of scenes from the upcoming episodes, a technique which has continued on every series to this day.

A very, very fast *Star Wars*-styled opening crawl brought audiences up-to-date (but only if they recorded it and played it back in slo-mo), hurriedly explaining the events between series II and III. While Charles, Barrie and John-Jules were all back, Norman Lovett had grown weary of the commute from Edinburgh and had declined to return to the programme. Instead, the showrunners cast Hattie Hayridge as a new version of Holly, after she had played Hilly, the character's parallel universe equivalent in the previous episode. Hayridge would portray the ditzy blonde version of the computer for three series. The other new addition to the cast was Robert Llewellyn, the recast and redesigned Kryten. Over the course of the first two series, it had become clear that a new character would be useful in facilitating storylines, given that Lister and the Cat were disinclined to do work, and Rimmer, as a hologram, was unable to touch anything. Other changes included removing Holly's introduction, giving Rimmer free reign off the ship (explained in the following series by the introduction of a small, portable "light bee,") and a brand new shuttle, Starbug, which replaced the rather poky and ugly Blue Midget.

Red Dwarf III was a huge success, and secured the direction of the series for the next few years. Episodes such as the opener, "*Backwards*," the two-hander "*Marooned*" and the sci-fi monster fest "*Polymorph*" are considered absolute classics by fans. The series had by now started to develop its cult following, and had begun to be exported to Europe and the USA. 1989 also saw the writers publish their first novel, under the combined pseudonym Grant Naylor (later the name of their production company). *Red Dwarf – Infinity Welcomes Careful Drivers* was the definitive take on the concept, giving considerable space to Lister's backstory before adapting several popular episodes. It followed in 1990 with *Better Than Life*, very loosely based on the Series II episode of the same name. **Red Dwarf IV** was broadcast from Valentines Day in 1991. This incorporated some elements from the novels, for example changes to Lister's backstory – the writers considered Lister's unrequited pining for Kochanski rather puerile and rewrote history so that the two had enjoyed a whirlwind affair. A move from Manchester to Shepperton Studios also gave them access to more industrial location filming, cementing the look for the series. Otherwise, Series IV continued with the same winning formula as Series III. It's most notable episode, "*Dimension Jump*," introduced another parallel version of a regular character – Ace Rimmer, the heroic counterpart to Chris Barrie's usual character.

The following year saw **Red Dwarf V** continue the series' most successful period, and is considered by fans and critics as among the best, if not the best, years in the programme's run. Having relied mostly on sitcom-style character interaction in its earliest years, the series now shifted very heavily towards sci-fi adventure, albeit still as a comedy first and foremost. Series V featured such favourites as the Rimmer-in-love episode, "*Holoship*," the existential threat of "*The Inquisitor*" and the outright ludicrous "*Quarantine*," which saw Chris Barrie go for broke as an insane Rimmer in a gingham dress (and army boots). Barrie was fast becoming the star of the show, with more and more episodes revolving primarily around him, although Lister, Kryten and the Cat remained hugely popular. Holly, on the other hand, was becoming increasingly sidelined, with Kryten as the brains of the operation. The Series V finale, "*Back to Reality*," is consistently rated as one of the very best in fan polls. It features a common sci-fi trope – the main characters waking up to find their lives are a fantasy or virtual construction – but with **Red Dwarf** you could actually believe they might go through with it and rewrite the whole of the series' past. (The fact that a sixth series was uncertain helped sell this even further). Although normality (such as it is) was restored at the episode's end, "*Back to Reality*" had a huge influence on certain later episodes, and introduced yet another recurrent character – the Cat's geeky alter ego, Duane Dibley.

There was a reasonable gap between the end of Series V in March 1992 and the premiere of Series VI in October 1993. This was primarily down to Grant Naylor Productions exploring new avenues and projects, but the intention to produce a sixth series was always there, especially as American distribution was increasing. With this in mind, the writers touted the series for an American studio remake. Both Llewellyn and Barrie were approached by the Universal and NBC to reprise their roles in the States, although only Llewellyn took them up on the offer. The remaining parts were recast for a pilot episode (simply titled **Red Dwarf**, although commonly referred to as **Red Dwarf USA**). With the original creators onboard as executive producers, it was written in a clearly American style by Linwood Boomer (later creator of **Malcolm in the Middle**) and lacked the appeal or easy style of the original, although there were some good gags. A second pilot with a mostly new cast was more of a show reel, with several classic scenes from the original remade with new actors. Neither pilot was considered successful enough to spawn a new series, and the writers returned to the UK to work on Series VI.



Filmed in time for a spring release, BBC2 decided to hold it back for the autumn in order to maximise the potential audience. Grant and Naylor took the opportunity to rework the series considerably. **Red Dwarf VI** was the first series to not feature the eponymous spaceship at all, and was instead set entirely on Starbug. The gap between series was utilised onscreen as well, with an in-story lapse of two centuries occurring between when we last saw the Dwarfers and when Lister was pulled out of suspended animation in Series VI. At the BBC's request, the first episode was styled as a reintroduction, with Lister's post-sleep amnesia giving Kryten an excuse to explain the new set-up to the audience. Now on the trail of the stolen Red Dwarf, confined to the shuttle and with no Holly, the series was made more of a survivalist adventure, with a monster/villain-of-the-week format. Starbug's interior sets were substantially increased and redesigned to make it a suitable setting for the series, while the model work, by veteran effects artist Mike Tucker and crew, was exemplary. Video effects were also improved, making the series visually impressive. In terms of writing, Grant and Naylor put more emphasis on repetitive gags such as Rimmer's obsession with Space Corps Directives and almost **Blackadder**-esque absurd similes, which was all intended to make the series more palatable to an American style of humour. In spite of the survivalist angle, the characters were made more self-sufficient, with the Cat developing superhuman abilities of smell, while Rimmer was upgraded to “hard-light” in the second episode, allowing him to touch things at long last.

Red Dwarf VI was another big success, although some fans and critics were less pleased with the new style. Nonetheless, it includes some hugely well-regarded episodes, such as the wonderfully strange “*Legion*,” which includes perhaps the best line in the entire series (the one with the red alert bulb), the Emmy Award-winning western “*Gunmen of the Apocalypse*” and the Chris Barrie showcase “*Rimmerworld*.” The series ended with one of Red Dwarf's many time travel-based episodes, “*Out of Time*,” which saw the Dwarfers fight to the death against their own future selves. Hopeful of a seventh series, Grant and Naylor gave the episode a last-minute rewrite, leaving it on a tantalising cliffhanger, one that wouldn't be resolved for over three years.

More events behind the scenes delayed production of the seventh series. Rob Grant and Doug Naylor decided to dissolve their writing partnership in order to focus on their own projects. They were together contracted for two more **Red Dwarf** novels, and elected to write one each, both continuing separately from the end of *Better Than Life*. Of the two, Naylor's 1995 novel *Last Human* bore the least resemblance to the series, although elements later came to play onscreen, while Grant's 1996 release *Backwards* was a particular success, adapting elements from some of the most popular episodes. Chris Barrie had found significant success in the title role of the BBC1 sitcom **The Brittas Empire** since 1991, and had less interest in or time for **Red Dwarf**. More seriously, Craig Charles was arrested and remanded in custody on an entirely unfounded rape charge in 1994, and was not released until early 1995. All these events made a new series of **Red Dwarf** unlikely. In the meantime, BBC2 ran a full run of repeats, the first time that Series I was broadcast since its initial showing.

Red Dwarf VII (numbered onscreen at last, although this time not in the *Radio Times* listing) finally arrived in January 1997. Advances in CGI and a bigger budget than ever before led to more impressive visuals than could previously be achieved, and for the first time the series was filmed in a closed studio instead of in front of the traditional live audience. Grant declined to return, and has kept his distance from the series since. Instead, Naylor took over as head writer and showrunner, with additional script work from Paul Alexander on several episodes, plus one-off contributions from Kim Fuller, James Hendrie and Robert Llewellyn (the Kryten heavy "*Beyond a Joke*"). After six series of six episodes, the count was bumped up to eight, on the basis that two series of that length would bring the overall count to fifty-two, enough for American syndication. The most obvious changes for the audience were in the cast. Committed to filming the fifth (and, it turned out, final) series of Brittas, Chris Barrie could not appear in every episode, instead signing up for only half. In the event, he was written out in the second episode, "*Stoke Me a Clipper*," which saw Rimmer become his heroic counterpart Ace, but appeared in flashback in two further instalments.

To replace him, Naylor went back to the series routes and brought back Lister's one true love, Kristine Kochanski. Having included her as a main character in *Last Human*, Naylor felt that a female presence made for a more well-rounded cast. It certainly made for a very different dynamic for the series. Instead of bringing Clare Grogan back, Naylor cast Chloe Annett, a much posher and far less Scottish version of the character, from yet another parallel universe. Stranded on Starbug with an attention-starved Lister, a jealous Kryten and a randy Cat, Kochanski was not best pleased with her lot. Fans and critics alike were divided on Series VII, but the more complex and dramatic storylines led to some strong episodes, particularly the ingenious series opener "Tikka to Ride." It did particularly well on video, with three of the episodes being released as special extended editions featuring previously excised scenes and souped up effects. Far better than is often remembered, Red Dwarf VII is nonetheless far from the series in its prime – perhaps better science fiction than comedy.

Series VIII would provide further changes, some of which were signposted in the final Series VII episode, "*Nanarchy*." This episode saw the mothership return, having been miniaturised by microscopic robots and left to explore strange new worlds in Lister's laundry basket for the last few centuries. Exploring the excess matter left on a desolate planetoid, the Dwarfers found Holly – rebooted back to his original Norman Lovett self, although somehow even more senile than before. The final shot of the seventh series saw **Red Dwarf** returned to its original state – more or less. **Red Dwarf VIII** – subtitled "*The Tank*," on paper at least – arrived in 1999 and saw massive changes. The nanites had not only restored the ship, but the crew as well, reconstituted from their irradiated remains. Chris Barrie returned full-time as Rimmer, alive once more, along with Mac MacDonald as Hollister, reappearing for the first time in over ten years and promoted to regular. Mark Williams, on the other hand, declined to return as Peterson, having since achieved huge success on series such as **The Fast Show**.

*"The BBC declined to renew **Red Dwarf** for a ninth season."*

With the largest core cast of any version of **Red Dwarf**, and a complete crew complement allowing for multiple guest and recurring characters, Series VIII was a world away from the isolation of the series' beginnings. In other ways, though, it was a return to first principles. Once again in filmed in front of a live audience, the episodes were more in the style of traditional sitcoms, although there were plenty of sci-fi elements. The main characters were imprisoned in the eponymous Tank, a hidden gaol in the belly of Red Dwarf, for stealing Starbug and other misdemeanours. While this was a big change of scene, it also put the characters in reduced circumstances once again, with Lister and Rimmer's cell becoming the equivalent of their confined quarters in the earliest episodes. Although numerous elements from the past were reintroduced, visually it was a world away from Series I and II, with the heavy CGI usage and redesigned ships from the remastered video releases. The uniforms were still beige though.

In spite of what were expected to be fan-pleasing elements, **Red Dwarf VIII** was quite poorly received. The humour was broad and often obvious, and there were some poor performances by some of the recurring cast. The expanded core cast was difficult to handle; Kochanski in particular worked poorly in the new set-up. Although it was wonderful to have Holly back, he was surplus to requirements and was woefully underused. A stretched budget also led to storylines being stretched across several episodes, so jokes often wore thin. Nonetheless, the fourth episode, "*Cassandra*," is a minor classic, a high concept episode that calls back to the style of Series V. The series ended on another huge cliffhanger, with the crew once more facing certain death.

The BBC declined to renew **Red Dwarf** for a ninth season – perhaps unsurprising considering the fairly poor reception. Nonetheless, the series was still popular worldwide, spurring Naylor into pursuing a movie option. A script was written by 2001 and movement on the project went in fits and starts, but by 2005 it appeared to be well and truly dead. One problem might have been that both Naylor and the fans were insistent on keeping the original cast, none of whom were big names internationally and who were not getting any younger. In the event, some material from the film script was reused for the Series X finale some years later, but nothing more has come of the project. Instead, BBC Worldwide made overtures to bring the series back for a twentieth anniversary special in 2008. This, too, went through different permutations, eventually being picked up by channel Dave, which up to that point had relied mostly on repeats for its programming. **Red Dwarf** continued to be one of its most popular programmes – there is a persistent rumour that the channel is named after Lister – and new **Red Dwarf** provided a perfect opportunity for fresh programming. Initial talks suggested an hour-long special, a making-of programme and the intriguing sounding **Red Dwarf: Unplugged**, an improvisational format. In the event, a three-part special was made, entitled **Red Dwarf: Back to Earth**.

Back to Earth was not what fans expected. Broadcast in 2009, and set an equivalent amount of time after Series VIII, the serial maximised its near-anniversary position by incorporating many callbacks to the past, but was quite unlike any previous **Red Dwarf** story. The cliffhanger to the previous run remained unresolved (something even the characters joke about in later series), and instead we joined the core cast of Lister, Rimmer, Kryten and the Cat onboard the once more abandoned and dilapidated Red Dwarf. Holly and Kochanski are no longer included – the latter missing presumed dead, the former offline following a flooding incident after Lister left a tap on for four years. Rimmer is once more a hologram, although it remains unclear as to which version of Rimmer this is. Although it represented a return to the most popular group of core characters, the serial otherwise changed things up considerably. A new hologram named Katerina, played by **Peep Show**'s Sophie Winkleman, guest starred, and the entire cast of characters returned through a rift in spacetime to Earth, in the 21st century. What followed was a fourth wall-breaking escapade that saw the characters discover that they were fictional creations on a television show, and spend a considerable amount of time on the set of **Coronation Street** (Craig Charles having a regular role on the soap from 2005 to 2015). The final instalment was a sustained parody of one of Grant and Naylor's main influences, the 1982 classic *Blade Runner*.

Although the cast slipped effortlessly back into their onscreen personas – perhaps even better than before, having honed their acting talents over the intervening years – *Back to Earth* was disappointing. Often seeming derivative and lazily written, it was a pale shadow of the beloved series. It was not without its moments, of course, although the funniest joke was perhaps at its own expense, with characters from the "real world" commenting that the nonexistent Series IX was the best **Red Dwarf** had ever been. In spite of some strong character moments for Lister, the plot never gelled, and the revelation that it was all a sequel to "*Back to Reality*" only served to remind viewers how good the series was in its prime.

Still, it had been popular and well-promoted enough to gather a decent audience of two million for the first episode, although this halved for episodes two and three. Nonetheless, these represented excellent figures for a digital-only channel and Dave were quick to express interest in a full series of **Red Dwarf**. Reverting to the numbered format, **Red Dwarf X** appeared in 2012, and saw Naylor regain much of the series' successful balance between humour and plot. Something of a return to the classic days of the series, the new episodes were once more filmed in front of a studio audience, an approach that both cast and fans prefer. Rather than the serial plot of *Back to Earth*, Series X returned to the format of six standalone episodes, although there were elements that carried on throughout the series. Wisely, Naylor chose not to ignore the ageing of the cast, but instead to embrace it, poking fun at the idea of a bunch of middle-aged men in space. Still winding each other up, the characters are more at peace with each other after their many years together, although Rimmer still has an uncanny knack for being an unbearable jobsworth. Initial plans for the series would have led to Kochanski being found alive and well, somewhere in deep space, but the usual problems of limited budget and cast availability led to this subplot being nixed late in the day. This is perhaps for the best; the series works best when it is confined to the core group of characters.

Series X gained some of the highest audience figures for Dave, with critics and fans noting that it recaptured some of the feel of the earliest episodes while embracing the sci-fi shenanigans of the popular fourth and fifth series. Mike Tucker and crew utilised both model work and CGI for a well-rounded visual approach that made the episodes look more expensive than they really were, and Howard Goodall used early series music cues to evoke the classic episodes. All in all, Series X was enough of a success to ensure plans for a further two series. After initial discussion had been finalised, Craig Charles quit **Coronation Street** and all were available to film a full twelve episode run in late 2015 to early 2016. This budget-conscious approach of filming two series back-to-back worked well, although keeping a lid on plot developments proved challenging (Steve Coogan's Baby Cow Productions also joined as co-production company, which must have helped financially). Both Series XI and XII built on the success of Series X, with the writing improving further and really capturing much of the original run's successful formula. **Red Dwarf XI** was broadcast in 2016, with the twelfth following a year later. The last episode of **Red Dwarf XII**, "*Skipper*," served as something of an early thirtieth anniversary celebration, homaging several classic episodes and bringing back Norman Lovett and Mac MacDonald for one last hurrah.

A thirteenth series was touted immediately, but in the event, Naylor and channel Dave took a different route and presented fans with a feature-length special. **Red Dwarf: The Promised Land** is the closest Naylor has come to his dream of a **Red Dwarf** movie. Broadcast in the spring of 2020, *The Promised Land* returns to the series' roots by exploring Lister's status as the god of the Cat People. For the first time since the original series, more of the Cat's race are seen, led by Rodon (Ray Fearon of **Coronation Street** and ***Fleabag***), a warlord who has banned all worship of "Cloister" and his gospel of slobbiness. The special resurrected Holly, played again by Lovett, seemingly for good this time, and delved into the Cat's backstory. It also played heavily with Rimmer's story, briefly granting him a superpowered upgrade and presenting Barrie and Charles some emotional scenes together. While the script reiterated elements of the set-up for new viewers, it's clear that the special was made for fans, and was overall a successful new experiment in a new format for the series.

With Naylor and the main cast keen to keep producing the series, it seems likely that more **Red Dwarf** will come, be it more specials, another full series, or the occasionally suggested live tour. Whatever form it takes, the latest episodes have shown that when it sticks closely to its roots it still has what it takes to be a big hit. Over thirty years (or three million, depending on your point of view) *Red Dwarf* has cemented its position as the world's most beloved sci-fi comedy series. Smegging fantastic. **TVH**

"Torchwood, outside the government, beyond the police. Fighting for the future on behalf of the human race. The 21st century is when everything changes. And Torchwood is ready." *– Captain Jack Harkness*

Review by J.D.Collins

Beginning in 2006, **Torchwood** became the first of the two **Doctor Who** spin-off's created by the mastermind behind the revival, Russell T Davies. Davies credits American TV shows such as **Buffy the Vampire Slayer** as an inspiration for the revival due to their epic format and scale. Succeeding two series of 'Who' by 2006, he took further inspiration with the spin-off **Torchwood** which, like the 'Buffy' spin-off **Angel**, was hyped as a darker and more adult series that would premiere on BBC Three in the suitable post watershed time slot.

Torchwood's protagonist, Captain Jack Harkness, played opposite Christopher Eccelston's Doctor and companion Rose Tyler in the 2005 revival series. Despite only appearing in the second half of the series, the character quickly became popular with viewers thanks to John Barrowman's performance, completely immersing himself in the characters flirtatious, humorous and yet heroic appeal. The character also gained notoriety for becoming the first ever bisexual character in the entire history of **Doctor Who**, and was met with little controversy then it perhaps would have twenty or even ten years earlier. And then there's the 'Torchwood Institute' itself which plays a significant role in the mythology of series two. In the Who episode *Tooth & Claw*, Queen Victoria conceives the 'Torchwood Institute' as a secret organisation dealing with alien and paranormal threats upon the Earth.

With both the character and concept becoming popular amongst Whovians, expectations for the spin-off were high; set in Cardiff, the first episode sees police officer Gwen Cooper (Eve Myles) witness the Torchwood team perform a brief resurrection on a murdered man in order to gain knowledge of his killer. After researching the institute's background and activities, she joins the team and is sucked into its dark and dangerous world. The first series took on a monster-of-the-week format with each episode depicting the team investigating strange and gruesome cases that helped the series live up to its name as the 'adult Doctor Who.' With a supporting cast of characters including Ianto Jones, Toshiko Sato and Owen Harper, the series had a clear premise that would be accessible to viewers.

However, compared to the other **Doctor Who** spin-off, CBBC's **The Sarah Jane Adventures**, it's safe to say that **Torchwood** took a while to find its feet. In order to live up to its name as an adult series, the content including strong violence, bad language, and frivolous sex scenes came across gratuitous and desperate. Not to say that every episode of the first series are terrible, but by going too far into ridiculous adult territory of countryside cannibals and sex addicted aliens, gave the series more of a childish identity than adult. And plus, various storylines were too reminiscent of **Buffy, Angel** and **X File** episodes; three TV shows that I believe made and ultimately exhausted the monster-of-the-week format.

The characters themselves were particularly unlikeable, written as stereotypes with no depth or personality. Toshiko was basically a thirty something Willow Rosenberg, while Owen lived up to all the ugly areas of lad culture and had absolutely no virtues. Gwen, who has an affair with Owen, has no distinct qualities and as for Captain Jack, he's more aggressive than the character we met in **Doctor Who** and while his team know little about him, by the end of series one neither do the audience; indeed the only revelation we learn of is his immortality. The actors are by no means to blame, they tried but their talents couldn't overcome some poorly written scripts.

While gaining record breaking audience figures for BBC Three, some of which haven't been surpassed since, the public and critics were divided by the first series of **Torchwood**. Thankfully, while still not perfect, series two, which began on BBC Two in January 2008, would be a vast improvement. Having learnt of Captain Jack's past in three episodes of the third series of **Doctor Who**, he returns to the team with more confidence and a light hearted breath of fresh air, and the same could be said for the series. Yes it still qualified for its nine o'clock showing, but the humour and banter between the characters made them more bearable and human. The stories became much more character driven and gained further depth than in series one. Freema Ageyman, who played companion Martha Jones in Doctor Who's third series, guest starred in three episodes of series two and by acknowledging the parent series, her appearance was a welcomed inclusion. Further development into Jack and Ianto's relationship examining Jack's sexual identity was done in a sophisticated manner, juxtaposing the immature exploration of relationships and sexuality themes in series one. Series two ends dramatically with the deaths of Owen and Toshiko bringing a dark and unsafe thud to the series that was missing before but ultimately welcomed.

Ending on a dramatic note with Torchwood's second series and with the success of **The Sarah Jane Adventures**, Russell T Davies had created a multi-dimensional universe within the world of **Doctor Who**. This success was celebrated in high style when in the epic two part finale of Doctor Who's fourth series, the three series crossed over for an epic battle against the Daleks, halting their threat against the Galaxy. Whether you had followed all three series, two or even one, these episodes became a huge TV event and cemented the **Doctor Who** revival its place in TV history. And yet only a year later, the recession hit the BBC hard and massive cuts were imposed on all programming, particularly the three **Doctor Who** series. As a result, Davies scrapped the old format and serialised Torchwood's third series by structuring one story over a five episode miniseries. And while this was inevitably a headache and change for the production team, it would be the making of the series.

Under the title **Torchwood: Children of Earth**, the remaining team, Captain Jack, Gwen and Ianto, must work against the government who plan to meet the request of an alien life form demanding the Earth's children. With earth-shattering performances, high action and a downright heart-breaking conclusion, **Children of Earth** was shown on the flagship channel over five nights in June 2009. Attracting an average of 6 million viewers, **Torchwood** had finally become its own series and had moved away from its simple identity as the 'Doctor Who adult spin-off.' Indeed, it finally learnt what the term 'adult drama' means; hard-hitting storylines and mature themes that are simply too difficult for young viewers to process and not just gratuitous violence, swearing and sex. It was an electrifying five nights for those of us who watched it as shown by the viewing figures and critical acclaim. In particular, the character of Captain Jack Harkness finally shows his true colours. He's depicted as an antihero as while his actions ultimately saves millions, it comes at a cost as he becomes a monster to the few people whose lives he devastates. With the death of Ianto, Gwen's pregnancy and Jack disappearing in order to avoid endangering anyone else close to him, the series was given a tragic yet fitting conclusion.

It was clear that the serialised format worked best for **Torchwood** and was approached again in 2011 for series four, which brought about even more changes. Working in conjunction with the American channel Starz, **Torchwood: Miracle Day** would be a Welsh and American production, seeing Captain Jack and Gwen working with a new team of American characters trying to find answers when the world's population spikes due to global immortality. This opportunity cemented Torchwood's status as a global cult series with each episode of the ten part miniseries airing first on Starz and then on BBC One. The stateside move ultimately divided fans, some of whom felt the mix of location and accents lost the Welsh identity of the early **Torchwood** episodes. As for the story itself, the concept of world-wide immortality is one that's rarely been explored on a science fiction TV series, was done to perfection in the first five episodes and was on course to being as impressive as **Children of Earth**. In the end, the second half of the series dragged and perhaps would have been more satisfying had it wrapped up after six episodes.

2011 was the end of an era for many Whovians; while Russell T Davies had left the role of **Doctor Who** showrunner in 2009, he continued work on the two spin-off series. Sadly, after Elisabeth Sladen's death ended **The Sarah Jane Adventures**, Davies declared **Torchwood** as being on 'indefinite hiatus,' with **Miracle Day** proving the last hurrah for the characters.

Over its four series, **Torchwood** experienced a successful and complex television existence. From it's early days as an uneven spin-off before maturing into a brilliant piece of sci-fi drama in its own right, with **Children of Earth** highlighting some of the most hard-hitting TV of the past decade, it feels incomplete. Despite its broad premise, the Whoniverse has changed so much in recent years and so has the audience that it does pose the question, is there really an appetite for more **Torchwood**? Fans are divided on the issue, but as we near a decade since the first series aired, hopefully a resurgence of interest will be experienced and like other cult series such as **The X Files** and **Twin Peaks**, we may see an event series updating us on the characters and giving us a preferable send off. **TVH**

Torchwood—Big Finish Audio Adventures

In 2015 **Big Finish** announced that **John Barrowman** was returning as Captain Jack Harkness in an all new series of audio dramas based on the **Doctor Who** spin-off series.

Torchwood, the intrepid team of alien investigators, initially returned in a series of six audio productions as part of a licensing deal with BBC Worldwide. The series has been ongoing since then.

The first of the new series of audio dramas each focussed on different members of the **Torchwood** team, exploring the impact that a mysterious event has on them. Starting off the range was John Barrowman, who starred in *The Conspiracy*, a deadly thriller by **David Llewellyn**.

*"What's great about **Torchwood** is that it is as unstoppable as Captain Jack and just as persuasive,"* says producer **James Goss**. *"**Torchwood** has been a ratings success on nearly every BBC channel, and it's one of the few UK series to translate to America. It's already been a series of iPlayer-topping audio plays, and we are thrilled to continue it.*

Torchwood creator **Russell T Davies** said at the time: *"Torchwood has been to the Moon, and America, and the Himalayas, but now I think it's finally coming home, to the brilliance of **Big Finish**."*

Time period-wise, each play is set at a different point in Torchwood's history, ranging from its founding in the Victorian Era to the early 21st century and beyond. Certain plays also take place during events from the TV series.

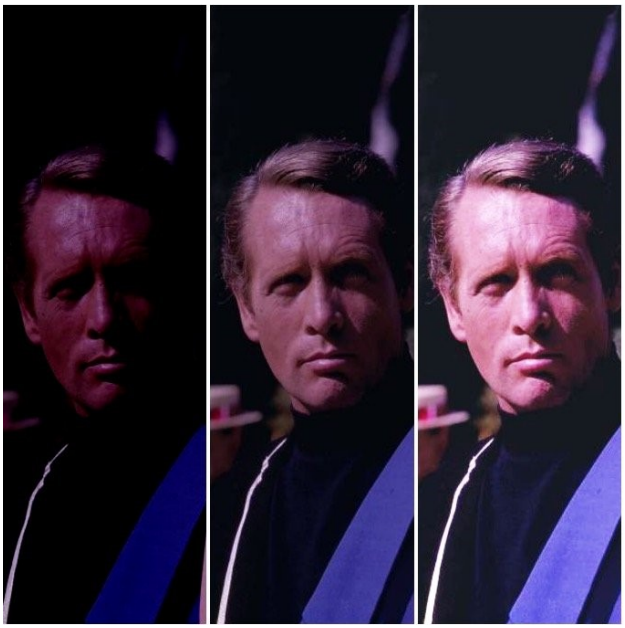
Visit https://www.bigfinish.com/

What Way Out for the Free Agent?

by Nur Soliman

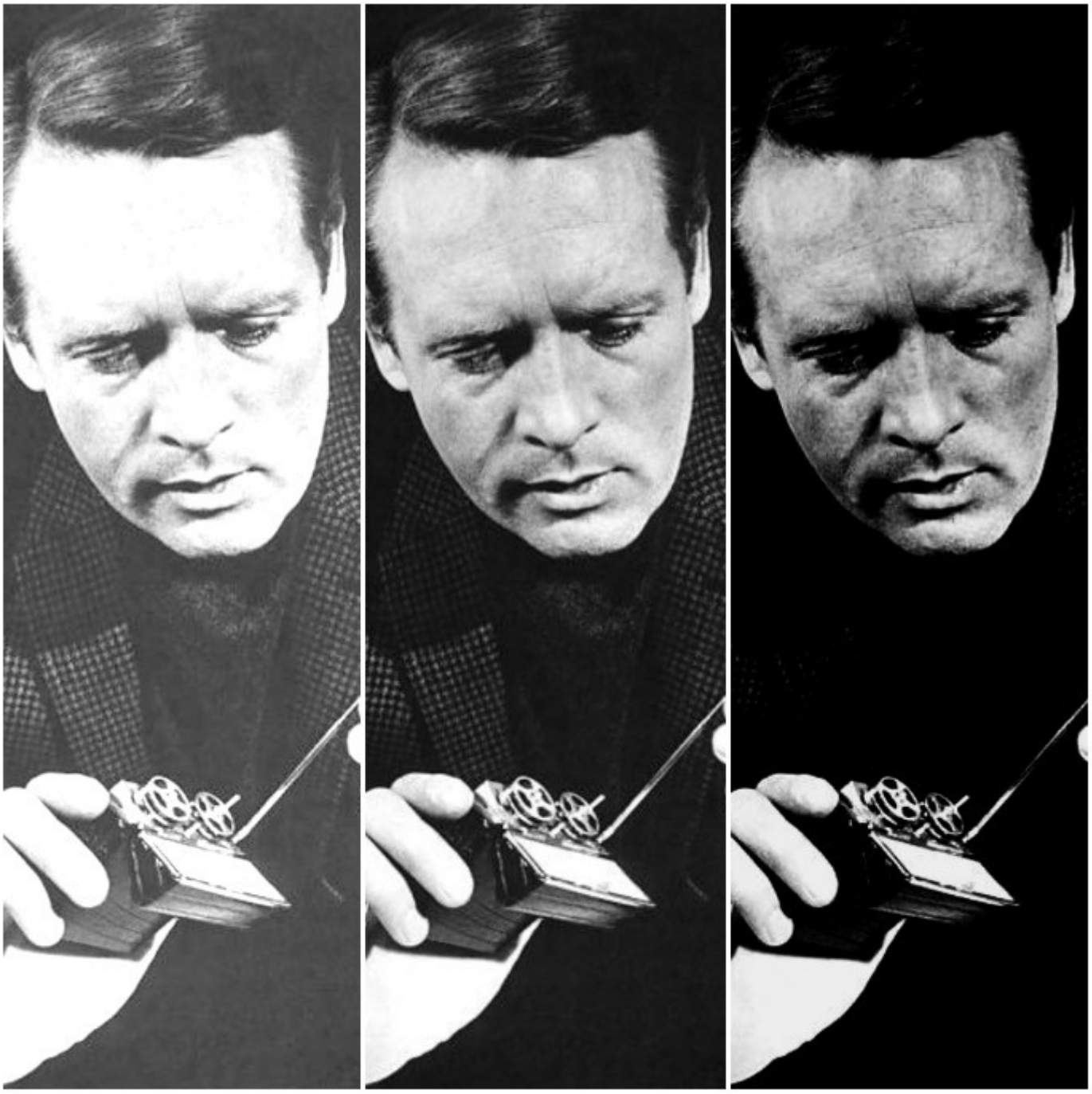
"I am not a number, I am a free man!"

For many of us, few characters are as indelibly impressed on the memory as Patrick McGoohan's Number 6 in *The Prisoner* (1967), introduced with literal thunder: a secret agent resigns from his post in anger, is made unconscious, and awakens as a prisoner of a mysterious resort. As he refuses cooperation with the powers that be, then repeatedly tries (and fails) to escape, we contend with many unknowns – where is the 'Village,' who runs it, what side are they on, what do they really want? But one thing appears constant about this ex-agent:



"I will not be pushed, filed, stamped, indexed, briefed, debriefed, or numbered."

From its beginning to its end, there is a near-palpable, mythological aura surrounding this cult series. Many viewers see *The Prisoner* as a puzzle to be solved, and one can hardly blame them; the allegory inspires and frustrates interpretations in equal measure. But part of its enduring magic is the unexpectedly rich, multi-dimensional approach; *The Prisoner* takes the spy adventure and political thriller further by embracing things like science-fiction, surrealism/fantasy, ethics/philosophy, psychology, Shakespeare, counterculture, Westerns, noirs, and its co-creators' world views, to tell the story of one man's fight for himself.



"What happens when an agent retires or resigns?"

Before McGoohan appeared on screen as Number 6, he was already Britain's highest-paid TV actor, known to millions the world over as John Drake of *Danger Man*/*Secret Agent* (1960/1 – 1967/8). When he left the series, McGoohan told journalists that Drake was 'gone,' but suggested audiences would recognise the character in his new series. Maybe, as others have also concluded, he couldn't well adopt a character he didn't create himself, but however you identify the Prisoner, it isn't easy to cleanly separate Number 6 from John Drake – even from their actor in some respects.

"Johnny Drake: true, trustworthy, faithful unto death."

In a postwar televisual field eventually bursting with spy-fiction, *Danger Man* was not alone in highlighting the complexities and ironies of modern Cold War tension, from the lighter touch of *The Avengers* and *The Saint* to unexpectedly dramatic highpoints in *Man in a Suitcase* and *The Champions*. But Drake stood out as a principled, occasionally troubled protagonist who, from the second series on, is both bruised and incensed at the moral conflict with his superiors, increasingly uneasy in the world he moves in. The lines blur between these heroes holding fast to themselves in systems of misdirected control and deepening mistrust.

From this angle, revisiting *Danger Man*'s intriguing stories can enrich and renew our appreciation of McGoohan's cult masterpiece, as *The Prisoner* plumbs their depths then takes us to new, strange places in riveting fever pitch:

"It's Up to the Lady"

Though the series retains its Boy's Own excitement and adventure throughout, with Drake's retcon/transformation into a British agent, there is greater interest in what goes on behind the scenes. After the likeably irritable Hardy and the prickly, blustery Gorton, Drake begins reporting to the menacing, intimidating Hobbs (Peter Madden, later *The Prisoner's* first 'undertaker'), a man who doesn't conceal his dislike of Drake but assigns him to retrieve Charles Glover, missing diplomat and China expert. If the newly cynical Drake understands Glover's feelings of being 'forced out,' worn down by suspicions and surveillance, there's no Wellesian ambiguity about his loyalty or persuading Glover to return home; he's confident with Hobbs' promise that Glover 'has nothing to fear, [that] he'll be left entirely alone.' But the twist ending leaves Drake feeling furiously helpless, a pawn painfully aware of how the chessboard has no forgiving middle spaces.

"Colony Three"

A sign of things to come, when a friendly Routemaster inspires dread, for John Drake – disguised as defector Robert Fuller – is meant to be in Eastern Europe. Hamden is a school for Communist spies, a Village prototype: less Butlin's-bright and more Brutalist-concrete, but with the same Potemkin harmony, a Citizens' Advice Bureau, and danger facing anyone refusing assimilation or attempting escape ('it's like… being in a *zoo*,' Drake/Fuller innocently observes). Years before Benedict Anderson published *Imagined Communities*, new arrivals are told there are only 'countries of the mind,' but this is a 'Checkmate' ideology of keepers vs. kept; Drake/Fuller deliberately but ambiguously warns his inquisitive roommate to avoid those 'who know how to take care of me.' The Village's allegiances are more terrifyingly unknown as 'both sides are becoming identical.' But a momentarily off-guard Drake/Fuller hints the side worth protecting is 'freedom,' the birthright of every Number 6.

"The Ubiquitous Mr. Lovegrove"

This concussion nightmare finds Drake in a blur of mirrors askew and constant midnights, trying to clear his name after a frame-up. And not only does his tetchy superior hardly sympathise, he might even be in on a plot to kick Drake out of the service. Even in his subconscious, Drake cannot be swayed from his Trappist, boy-scout nature (making this a fascinating predecessor to *The Prisoner's* 'A, B, and C' and even the tricky ploys of 'The Schizoid Man'), but it reveals his doubts about the enemies within who harbour antagonistic feelings towards him. There are Bond references and undertakers galore, a proto-Rover, close-up eyes, allusions to Number 1. Drake even smashes a furious fist on the desk of the uncaring Lovegrove. It is ultimately an anxious portrait of a man who's not for turning, but who fears he must 'watch himself' from now on.

"Whatever Happened to George Foster?"

It's comparatively mild action-wise, but I find this to be one of the series' most dramatic stories, so absent is the moral ease of *Danger Man's* cosmopolitan NATO days. Here Drake is hardly his dutiful Starbuck self, defying orders to prevent a millionaire businessman from interfering in the newly-independent Santo Marco. The powerful Ammanford decides Drake is intelligent but anti-progress, with 'old-fashioned ideas of capitalism and democracy' (sounds familiar?), threatening to ruin him 'physically, professionally, mentally.' To good effect too; Drake's superiors deny knowledge of him at one point, a plot point used to far more chilling effect in 'Chimes of Big Ben' and 'Many Happy Returns.' A kind friend entreats him, 'Look Sir Lancelot, this is the 20th century!' But Drake cannot be bought, scared, deterred; with his inner eye unfailingly fixed on his convictions, this is a man who will not be pushed.

"To Our Best Friend"

There is rare poignant warmth in this story, as Drake must prove that his good friend Bill Vincent is not a traitor. Halfway through the mission, M9 sends replacements with a more expedient approach: hound Vincent 'until he bolts for the other side' so they can 'take care of him.' Vehemently opposed to such neatly-arranged 'accidents,' Drake plays detective against both teams (including 'Colony Three' agents), in a Baghdad that is bucolically peaceful by comparison. Drake shows compassionate understanding for those with conflicted loyalties, but in an understatedly alarming turn to the story, the men from M9 aren't as patient and fix Vincent's car without confirming his guilt. On his way to save his friend, Drake is reassured that Vincent 'won't suffer any pain […] absolute complacency and then unconsciousness,' and for once he's rather lost for words, perhaps realising how easily such accidents are arranged.

"The Man on the Beach"

Aside from a somewhat sinister jail-like wine cellar at the bottom of a beautiful seaside resort (from which the hero narrowly escapes), this episode has somewhat softer parallels to offer: while investigating reports of yet another traitor in the tropics, Drake is accused of selling out and goes on the lam, pursued by suspicious colleagues and real enemies alike. One unusual element is the rare superior shown to have certain, complete trust in his 'reliable' agent, but the genteel, thoughtful-to-a-fault Sir Alan soon goes missing, leaving Drake quite alone. Stuck between the double-agent and the deep blue sea, he must rely on his wits – and eventual luck – to stay alive and set things right. One image lingers and rings imaginary *Prisoner* bells, though: a puzzled Drake resting on an upside-down rowboat moored on Runaway Beach, meditatively drawing large question and exclamation marks in the sand.

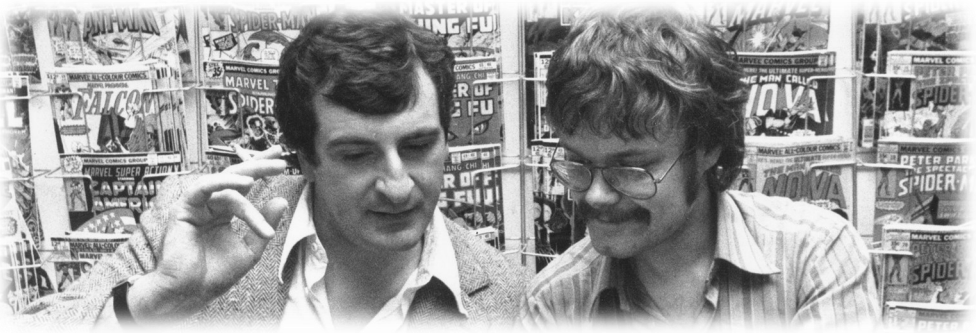
"*The whole worl's in a state of chassis!*"

In the wonderful conclusion of 'A, B, and C,' Number 6's projection holds out the all-important packet of papers he calls 'my future,' and hands them to Number 2's projection, revealing the travel brochures first seen in the opening sequence. Number 14 ruefully ponders, 'He *was* going on holiday.' As both the transatlantic NATO man and the M9 'World Travel' agent, John Drake protested often about never being able to take a decent holiday, too. One wonders, and it is as likely as not, that had the nameless ex-agent simply been allowed to take that holiday wherever it was he wanted, he'd have done just that, finding a desert island (as McGoohan described it to Werner Troyer in 1977) to 'go with Fergus' and obtain the peace of mind he asked for.

"Now voyager, sail thou forth to seek and find."

But for the man in a postcard resort that isn't, it seems there can be no such sojourn – no ending, liberation, or vindication to suit Miles Kendig, Richard Kimble, or even the Count of Monte Cristo. The 'right to be Person, Someone, or Individual is gloriously epitomized' in the Prisoner; in choosing his better self he still defies the Village and 'fails,' and will continue reclaiming and defending his selfhood in whatever small ways he may find possible. Today, 50 and 60 years on, at least *Danger Man* and *The Prisoner* still bring us endless fascination and places to escape to. **TVH**

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy has manifested itself in many forms over the years. For some, the definitive version is the original radio series, which began in 1978. For others, the book series which began in 1979 is the best iteration of the story. Some fans, though, will point to the 1981 television series as their favourite version of the legendary sci-fi comedy.



The history of **The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy** is long and storied, but to be brief, Douglas Adams turned an idea he had whilst bumming around Europe into the basis of a science fiction comedy series for BBC Radio 4. The premise was as bizarre as it was ingenious: just as his home is being demolished to make way for a bypass, ordinary human being Arthur Dent is pulled from his life by his friend Ford Prefect, who turns out to be from a small planet somewhere in the vicinity of Betelgeuse, and not from Guildford as he'd previously claimed. Escaping before the Earth is itself demolished to make way for a hyperspace bypass, Arthur and Ford drift through the universe on a series of adventures that make it clear the rest of the universe is just as bureaucratically nightmarish as the Earth.

In spite of the first episode being broadcast in a graveyard slot, it received an astonishing audience reaction, and the first series of six episodes was rapidly followed by a second. It was while working on the second series during 1979 that Adams was commissioned to write the scripts for a television version. Many considered the series unfilmable, featuring as it did fleets of spaceships, a two-headed alien and people turning into penguins. While there was some talk of making the series animated, it was eventually decided that only the sequences representing the Hitchhiker's Guide itself would be. John Lloyd, who had worked on the radio scripts with Adams, took charge of the adaptation process early on to allow Adams some respite. Nonetheless, given that he was working on the second radio series at the time, along with a position as script editor for **Doctor Who**, it was decided to delay production of the TV version for the better part of a year. (Adams' unique honour of being the only person to write for both **Doctor Who** and **Monty Python's Flying Circus**, and **Hitchhiker's** is about as close to a cross between those three series as you can get.)

Adams delivered the finished script for the first episode in December '79, with terms agreed for the remaining five episodes agreed shortly after. Production began on the pilot early in 1980. Rod Lloyds of Pearce Animation Studios provided the animation for the Guide sequences. The colourful line art gave a futuristic but humorous look to the Guide. While it looks distinctly un-futuristic now, it's also nothing like any recognisable graphic systems, giving the Guide a timeless feel that has helped keep the series from ageing poorly. As in the radio series, the voice of the Guide was provided by Peter Jones (best known at the time as Mr Fenner on the sitcom **The Rag Trade**, which had finished its second television run around the time **Hitchhiker's** began on the radio). His gentle, rather posh intonation provided a reassuring narration to the madcap events, just right for a book with the words "Don't Panic" emblazoned on its cover.

Also returning from the radio series were Simon Jones as Arthur and Mark Wing-Davey as alien layabout and President of the Galaxy Zaphod Beeblebrox. Adams had written the part of Arthur specifically for Simon Jones. This was only early in his career, with notable roles in **Blackadder II**, **Brideshead Revisited** and **Tattinger's** still to come. However, in spite of being only about thirty when recording the TV pilot, Jones still possessed a certain middle-aged weariness; the quintessential exasperated Englishman. Wing-Davey had been picked for the role of Zaphod based on his louche performance in 1976 series **The Glittering Prizes**. While not required for the pilot, his inclusion for the full series was assured. However, his character's possession of a second head – a throwaway joke on radio, a nightmare for television – proved very difficult to realise. His third arm wasn't such a problem, merely inert unless required to move, when another person would hide behind Wing-Davey and stick his arm through the jacket. The head, though, was eventually realised by way of some very primitive animatronics. It's probably the biggest flaw with the effects of the series, and taking the stage play's solution of having two actors share a costume would probably have worked better.

The other two main cast members were recast for television. It was decided that Geoffrey McGivern didn't suit Ford Prefect visually, and so he was replaced by David Dixon (**A Family Affair**, **The Legend of Robin Hood**). Dixon's version of the Guide researcher had an air of the perpetual student about him, in a mismatched outfit that wouldn't have looked out of place on an incarnation of **Doctor Who**. Appearing from the second episode, along with Zaphod, was Trillian, *nee* Tricia MacMillan, the other survivor of the human race, who had luckily skipped the planet some months earlier on a whim. Susan Sheridan was anticipated as returning to the role on television, but was unavailable at the time. As such, Trillian was recast, played now by Sandra Dickinson. Early in her career herself, the Anglo-American actress had already become somewhat typecast as a "dumb blonde" type, due to her high-pitched ditzy-sounding voice as well as her appearance. She was quite an odd choice for the highly intelligent, very English Trillian, but made the part her own. Dickinson wouldn't play Trillian again until the revived radio series reached its fifth (or "Quintessential") phase in 2005, in which she played Trillian's Americanised parallel universe counterpart.

The rest of the cast includes some exceptional performances, as well as some surprising cameos. Stephen Moore reprises the role of Marvin the Paranoid Android (or more accurately, the clinically depressed android), having been cast on the radio version partly for his equally morose turn as Jack on musical drama **Rock Follies**. Still a voice role for Moore, Marvin was realised on screen as a charmingly retro-looking silver robot, worn as a bulky costume by David Learner. David Tate returns as the irritatingly chirpy ship's computer, Eddie. **Sword of Freedom** star and prolific cinematic character actor Martin Benson portrayed Prostetnic Vogon Jeltz, captain of the demolition fleet, underneath a mountain of latex and green make-up. Richard Vernon, who had been cast in middle-aged to elderly roles since his thirties, reprised his role as the wonderfully named Slartibartfast, last of the Magratheans.

The Man in Black himself, recently the Black Guardian on **Doctor Who**, Valentine Dyall provided the imposingly booming tones of Deep Thought, the secondmost advanced computer in the history of the Galaxy. At the Restaurant at the End of the Universe, the Dish of the Day – a pig-like food animal desperate to be eaten – was played by none other than Peter Davison, shortly to take the lead on **Doctor Who**. While the original actor cast in the role has been hard to verify, we do know he was recast due to difficulties in recording, with Davison – then husband to Sandra Dickinson – drafted in at the last minute. Notable film actor Aubrey Morris (*A Clockwork Orange, The Wicker Man*) played the affable but ultimately useless Golgafrinchan Captain ("One's never alone with a rubber duck"). As common in radio production, many of the bit-part voices were provided by actors from the main cast. Also of note are several cameos by Adams himself, both in person and as illustrations for the Guide.

The television version runs along more-or-less the same lines as the first radio series, albeit with some jokes tweaked or given to different characters. It's clear that Adams took the opportunity to refine some of his material. Arthur and Ford are picked up by random chance by the starship *Heart of Gold*, thanks to its experimental Infinite Improbability Drive, which has been stolen by Zaphod and Trillian. All this is part of Zaphod's personal mission to find the legendary planet Magrathea, which was once the centre of an industry dedicated to manufacturing bespoke planets. They discover that the Earth was created by the Magratheans to act as the ultimate computer, to find the Question that matches the Answer to Life, the Universe and Everything (which, as we all know, is forty-two).

However, the fifth and sixth episodes, co-written for radio by Lloyd, were heavily altered. While both fifth episodes feature the characters arriving at the Restaurant at the End of the Universe and stealing the spaceship of deceased (for tax reasons) galactic rockstar Hotblack Desiato, much of the material is wholly reworked and the ending entirely rewritten. By this stage, Lloyd's involvement was largely over and his material mostly excised, although he did still receive a credit. Episode six cuts out a lengthy (and not particularly successful) sequence involving shapeshifting aliens, and moves the plot straight to the B-Ark of the the Golgafrinchams, who proceed to crash-land on prehistoric Earth. Nonetheless, both versions end with an uplifting playing of Louis Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World."

These alterations did not originate with the TV series, but were worked in by Adams for the LP recording and stage play script, but these were of limited audience and this was the first time the new version truly overwrote the radio original. This new version is also more in-line with the version of events presented in the first two novels, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*. They've very much become the definitive version of events for all but radio purists.

For all its limited budget, and Zaphod's extra head not withstanding, the series looks wonderful. It's clearly rather cheap but the creativity involved is remarkable, with all manner of peculiar beings appearing throughout. Particularly impressive is the model work, with the *Heart of Gold*, the Vogon Destructor Ship and the B Ark all vividly realised. The series also has a wonderful sound, from the strange otherworldly noises and radiophonic music provided by Paddy Kingsland (who was also working on **Doctor Who** during this period, leading to a certain similarity in the audioscape of the two series). And of course, the **Hitchhiker's** theme tune, "Journey of the Sorceror" began every episode, here in a new arrangement by Tim Souster. Written by Bernie Leadon for The Eagles, the instrumental piece was originally chosen for the radio series by Adams because it combined an ethereal, alien sound with the folk sound of the banjo.

The series was a success, bringing in respectable viewing figures, no doubt buoyed on by the existing popularity of the radio series and novels. A second series was planned, but ultimately never came to pass. The exact details are unknown, with conflicting accounts from different people, but in any case, there was a dispute of some kind between Adams and the BBC. It's unknown whether the second series would have taken any material from the second radio series, although it seems unlikely they would have had much in common, as most of this material was jettisoned for the novel range. The director of the series, Alan Bell, as well as Wing-Davey, have stated that Adams had begun reworking material from his proposed **Doctor Who** film treatment, *Doctor Who and the Krikkitmen*. This story was eventually adapted to become the third novel, *Life, the Universe and Everything*. In the next century, this would in itself be adapted to become the third radio series, and finally, a novelisation was written to bring a version of the original **Doctor Who** story to life.

While the second TV series never materialised, this wasn't the last time the Guide would make it to the screen. In late 2003, the BBC recreated several scenes from the novels as part of **The Big Read**, with Sanjeev Bhaskar (**Goodness Gracious Me**) as Arthur, Spencer Brown (**Garth Marenghi's Darkplace**) as Ford, and Nigel Planer (**The Young Ones**) as Marvin. Of particular interest in terms of casting was astronomer Patrick Moore as the Guide, and theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking as Deep Thought. In 2005, after years of failed attempts to get it on the big screen, a film version was released, starring Martin Freeman (**Sherlock**, **Fargo**) as Arthur and rapper Mos Def as Ford. In this version, the ubiquitous Stephen Fry voiced the Guide and Alan Rickman voiced Marvin, while Helen Mirren was Deep Thought. **The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy** will return to television next year (pandemic permitting), for streaming on Hulu, although casting details have yet to be released. Sadly, Adams did not live to see any of these versions, having died in 2001, aged only forty-nine.

Daniel Tessier (2020) for **TVH**

Diana Rigg

by Laurence Marcus

Diana Rigg who played Emma Peel in **'The Avengers'** passed away on 10 September 2020 after losing her battle with cancer. She was 82 years of age.

An iconic series in the 1960s, **'The Avengers'** transcended its original concept and evolved to actually help shape and define the era in which it flourished. Diana Rigg was brought into the series to replace **Honor Blackman**, the original Avengers girl, and with her arrival the series was propelled into its true Golden Age. At just 22 years of age, Rigg's character **Mrs Emma Peel** - her name created to suggest M(an) Appeal, was a sleek and stylish combination of intelligence, beauty and humour, who dovetailed so perfectly with the more seasoned **Patrick Macnee's John Steed** character, that the combined charisma produced was a near tangible force which ensnared the viewing audience instantaneously.

Dame Enid Diana Rigg was born in Doncaster, Yorkshire in 1938. Between the ages of two months and eight years she lived in Bikaner, India, where her father worked as a railway executive. She later trained at RADA where her classmates were Glenda Jackson and Sian Phillips. Rigg made her first television appearance in **'A Midsummer Night's Dream'** for the NBC Network in America. Her first British TV programme was in the BBC's **'Theatre Night'** which was a series of forty-five-minute excerpts from stage plays running in London, broadcast in 1961. Then in 1963, she made her first appearance in serial television guest starring in an episode of **'The Sentimental Agent'**.

Following her appearance in the **'ATV Armchair Theatre'** production **'The Hot House'** opposite Harry H. Corbett, she made her debut in **'The Avengers'** and played the role of Emma Peel for 51 episodes, hurriedly replacing first choice Elizabeth Shepherd who the producers decided had no chemistry with her co-star Macnee.

Although **'The Avengers'** shot her to fame, Rigg was not entirely happy - "becoming a sex symbol overnight had shocked me" she said. She was also unhappy with the way she was treated and the fact that she was on much lower wages than her co-star. For her second series she held out for a pay rise from £150 a week to £450 but stated that she was painted as a mercenary by the British press for doing so and noted that, "not one woman in the industry supported me."

In a June 2015 interview Rigg also commented about the chemistry between Patrick Macnee and herself on the series despite there being a 16 year age difference between them: "I sort of vaguely knew Patrick Macnee, and he looked kindly on me and sort of husbanded me through the first couple of episodes. After that we became equal, and loved each other and sparked off each other. And we'd then improvise, write our own lines. They trusted us."

Like Honor Blackman before her, Diana Rigg ultimately vacated the show for the lure of a featured role in a Bond movie (**'On Her Majestey's Secret Service'** - where she became the only Bond girl to marry the unscrupulous spy in **George Lazenby's** sole appearance in the franchise), and with her, sadly, the show's greatest tide of inspired creativity ebbed from the production's shores, never again to really recapture its original high water mark.

From 1973 until 1974, she starred in a short-lived US sitcom called **'Diana.'** She returned to the UK to make **'Three Piece Suite'** in 1977. This was a short-lived sketch comedy, each episode consisting of three sketches (or short films) of about 10 minutes each. Here she was able to show her range and comic skills as she took on a wide assortment of roles, from lovelorn spinsters, to middle class housewives, to a homely but spirited powder room attendant.

In 1982, Rigg published *'No Turn Unstoned'*, a collection of "the worst theatrical reviews ever", in which she sportingly cited her own notice from New York Magazine, prompted by her brief moment of nudity in 'Abelard and Heloise': "Diana Rigg is built like a brick mausoleum with insufficient flying buttresses."

In 1985 Rigg appeared in all seven episodes of the BBC production of Dickens' **'Bleak House'**, playing Lady Deadlock. From 1998 to 2000 she played Adela Bradley in 6 feature length episodes of **'The Lady Bradley Mysteries.'** Mrs. Adela Bradley was described by one reviewer as "the naughty version of the rather dull Miss Marple: a quintessentially English lady sleuth, before the war, upper class, rich enough for a Rolls-Royce with private driver. A real socialite, always on the road, sassy, even provocative, an arrogant suffragette. But her sharp sense of observation and deduction still gets the best of the criminals every single time." She also played host of PBS' '**Masterpiece Mystery'** series from 1989-2004.

In 2013 Diana Rigg appeared in the **'Doctor Who'** story *'The Crimson Horror'*, starring alongside **Matt Smith**, **Gemma Coleman**, and her real-life daughter, **Rachael Stirling**. That same year she joined the cast of **'Game of Thrones'** as Olenna Tyrell, also known as the Queen of Thorns, a part she played for 18 episodes and which won her three Emmy nominations for guest actress in a drama.

As well as television and film, Diana Rigg had a wide-ranging theatre career. She made her Broadway debut in 1971 in **'Abelard and Heloïse'** earning the first of three Tony Award nominations for Best Actress in a Play. She joined the National Theatre in 1972 and was an immediate hit as **Lady Macbeth** alongside **Anthony Hopkins' Macbeth** and Dorothy to **Michael Hordern's** George in Tom Stoppard's **'Jumpers.'** In the 1990s, she had triumphs with roles at the Almeida Theatre in Islington, including **'Medea'** in 1992, which then transferred to the Wyndham's Theatre in 1993 and finally on Broadway in 1994. For this she received the Tony Award for Best Actress. In February 2018, she returned to Broadway in the non-singing role of Mrs. Higgins in **'My Fair Lady.'** She commented on taking the role, "I think it's so special. When I was offered Mrs. Higgins, I thought it was just such a lovely idea." She received her fourth Tony nomination for the role. Her commitment to theatre remained the defining aspect of her later career, even after winning two more television awards: a BAFTA in 1990 in which she appeared as an obsessive parent in Andrew Davies' **'Mother Love'** and an Emmy award as Mrs Danvers in Daphne du Maurier's **'Rebecca'** in 1997.

Appointed a CBE in 1988, Rigg was made a Dame in 1994. A visiting professor of contemporary theatre at Oxford University in 1999, she served as chancellor of Stirling University in the decade to 2007.

During the 1960s Rigg lived for eight years with actor-director **Philip Saville**, who was both older and married; she caused some scandal in the British tabloids when she proclaimed no interest in marrying Saville, saying she had no desire "to be respectable." However, after the affair Rigg was married twice, first to Israeli artist **Menachem Gueffen**, from 1973 to 1976, and then to **Archie Stirling**. The couple divorced in 1990 after Stirling had an affair with actress **Joely Richardson**. In 2017, Rigg, a 20-a-day smoker, found herself seriously ill and undergoing a heart operation. During surgery, her heart stopped and she clung onto life by a thread. Diana, a devout Christian later told a journalist, "The good Lord must have said, 'Send the old bag down again, I'm not having her yet.'"

Lionel Larner, Diana Rigg's long-time friend and talent agent, said: "She was a beautiful kind and generous human being that enhanced the lives of all that knew her as well as a great actress. She leaves a great void in my heart."

Michael Parkinson, who first interviewed Rigg in 1972, described her as the most desirable woman he ever met, who "radiated a lustrous beauty."

Her passing immediately began trending on Twitter with the hashtag **#RIPDianaRigg** - as thousands of fans around the world, as well as fellow professionals, lamented the loss of a greatly loved and iconic actress, who left an indelible mark on the world of entertainment and, in particular, cult television. Among her many fans was **Sir Laurence Olivier** who described her as "brilliantly skilled and delicious." To many, **Diana Rigg** was all that and so much more. **TVH**