SPY’S GIRL
U.N.C.L.E.’S FEMALE WANNABE!

PLUS:
• ROBIN HOOD • THE HOODED MAN • NEVERWHERE • NEWS
• THE STARLORD STORY • PETER WYNGARDE • RADIO SCI-FI
• WIN THE COMPLETE TWILIGHT ZONE ON BLU-RAY!

GO FOR YOUR GUN!
THE WONDERS OF WESTWORLD

YOU’RE NICKED, SUNSHINE!
The Sweeney-TV’s Hardest Cops

BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE
In the unlikely event that you still haven’t checked out our acclaimed companion magazine, The Dark Side, then this is definitely the time to do so because the latest issue offers incredible value - 100 glossy colour pages for just £3.99!

We knew we had to get a bigger magazine to showcase our stunning Making of Jaws feature this time round, and in fact we are really pushing the boat out to celebrate our historic 200th issue. There’s no wasted space in this very special issue, which is crammed full of truly amazing features on some of the greatest horror films ever made.

Alongside Jaws we bring you the full story of how The Exorcist came to be such a terrifying movie classic, and we chat to actress Jenny Agutter about the terrors of Call the Midwife, er, sorry, we mean An American Werewolf in London. We also bring you the strange tale of the Frankenstein dummy bought by the British Film Institute for £15,000. Neil Pettigrew’s fascinating, splendidly researched feature, reveals that the BFI didn’t get exactly what they paid for...

Infinity and Dark Side editor Allan Bryce is on board to provide an epic history of the magazine from its early days as just a gleam in his teenage eye to the various trials and tribulations of buying the title from its original publishers and keeping it on the shelves for what is now an astonishing 29 years!

We also pay tribute to a trio of genre stalwarts who have passed on recently, with features on the late Bernie Wrightson, creator of Swamp Thing, Hammer’s Last Man Standing, producer Roy Skeggs, and actor Dick Miller, the B-movie favourite seen in everything from 1950s cult efforts like Little Shop of Horrors to latter-day hits such as Gremlins, The Terminator and The Howling. Add to that a creepy feature on the classic 1940s ghost story, The Uninvited, a unique look at the very first horror films to be made in various countries around the world and a great deal more and you have one of the best issues of The Dark Side ever published - and that is in 29 years! What more do we need to tell you? Put this on your shocking list right now!
**Features**

08: **ROBIN TAKES A BOW**
The story of Robin of Sherwood, a hugely influential 1980s television retelling of the Robin Hood legend.

14: **TECHNOLOGY GOES WEST**
The original *Westworld* movie that inspired HBO’s hit series, and the man who created it, Michael Crichton.

19: **A STARLORD STORY**
A slick companion to 2000AD, is the short-lived Starlord a comic classic ripe for rediscovery?

22: **GIRL FROM U.N.C.L.E.**
We open Channel D (or DD?) for a look at the campy spin-off from the hit Robert Vaughn NBC spy show.

28: **IS THERE LIFE ON MARS?**
Jon Abbott recalls 1980’s 6-hour Rock Hudson mini-series of Ray Bradbury’s *The Martian Chronicles*.

42: **‘YOU’RE NICKED, SUNSHINE!’**
Remembering The Sweeney, the grittiest and most entertaining cop show ever produced for British TV!

50: **A SAGA OF TWO WORLDS**
Roger Crow goes underground to look back at Neil Gaiman’s cult BBC saga *Neverwhere*, and its legacy.

54: **THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING**
Mark Mawston talks to Peter Wyngarde in one of the late Jason King star’s final interviews.

60: **ALIENS IN THE MIND**
Richard Molesworth reveals the drama behind the cult Vincent Price & Peter Cushing BBC radio drama...

62: **AVENGERS, PUPPETS AND TIME TRAVELLERS**
Meet Dennis Spooner, one of the most influential figures in British genre TV in the 60s, 70s and 80s...

**Regulars**

06: **INFINITY NEWS ROUND-UP**
12: **LETTERS AND EMAILS**
32: **SUBSCRIPTIONS**
37: **REVIEWS**
65: **THE INFINITY SHOP**
66: **BACK ISSUES**
67: **NEXT ISSUE PREVIEW**
I wish to order a Dark Side Book
£20.00 Each (+ £5 p&p if ordering outside the UK)
(Please tick which book you require and how many copies you require)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>No: OF BOOKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRITISH HORRORS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAMMER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMICUS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I enclose my cheque/postal order for £
Made payable to Ghoulish Publishing Ltd.

Name: ____________________________
Address: _________________________
Postcode: ________________________

You can also pay online via our PayPal account: www.thedarksidemagazine.com

How to order
These stunning books are available now and cost just £20 each including p&p. Please be aware that the price per book for foreign orders is £25 to take into account higher shipping rates.

Payment can be made in two ways - via PayPal on our website at: www.thedarksidemagazine.com,
or by cheque made out to Ghoulish Publishing, along with the form below, to:

29 Cheyham Way, South Cheam, Surrey SM2 7HX.

NB. A photocopy of the order form will suffice
right you lot, pin your ears back and listen. No cop series now or in the future will ever match up to The Sweeney, and if you’re thinking even for a second of arguing about it, SHUT IT, YOU SLAGS!

Now I’ve got that out of my system I’ve got to tell you that while this issue’s cover is devoted to The Girl From U.N.C.L.E. it is surely The Sweeney that will be the star attraction for most of our readers. Okay, I know that Infinity is basically a sci-fi mag, but we make no excuses for including articles on our favourite cult TV shows too, and when Rob Fairclough suggested the definitive feature on TV’s toughest cops I didn’t need him to take me up a back alley and give me a good kicking (“He fell down the stairs, guv!”) to persuade me to have it on my toes with it. Can you believe that the first episode of The Sweeney was 44 years ago? A dead giveaway is the lack of swearing. No F’ words in this show, but they didn’t need them because the language was colourful enough anyway. How many times did Regan get called an evil bastard? Then there was always the obligatory scene where they broke in on some hardcase blagger while he was in bed with some brass: “Look slag, I don’t give a toss who you have in your bed... Get your clothes on, you’re nicked!” Season 3 episode, May, had Regan saying, “If you weren’t who you are I’d kick your arse up your shoulderblades.” Sheer poetry.

Think back to the series as a whole and the memories that surface are the boys piling out of the back of a transit, mob-handed, to take on the blaggers at the scene of their crimes. Inevitably Dennis Waterman’s George Carter gets a bloody nose – looks like it’s schnozzle’s birthday again! “Nah, course I wasn’t scared. Mind you, some bugger peed in my pants.”

The show was actually made at a lightning pace. Throughout The Sweeney’s four series, writers were apparently given a month to write each script, but many were delivered in just a few days. With only a ten-day shooting schedule it’s amazing they managed to keep the quality so high throughout the entire 54 episodes. The Sweeney was influenced by contemporary cop shows like The French Connection and Dirty Harry, Regan and Carter weren’t much different from the villains they were out to catch, and their off time was spent drinking and womanising. “Cor, that Sheila has got some lunch on her!” One of the first shows that set the tone was the classic episode, Ringer. While Regan is ‘on the nest’ with his latest bird, a small-time criminal nicks his car, which has a series of surveillance photographs in the boot. The bad lad takes them to their subjects – top local gang boss Brian Blessed and his tough henchmen Ian Hendry and Alan Lake. When Regan and Carter arrive at the dodgy garage where the stolen car has been taken, they put the frighteners on the thieves.

“Who are you anyway?” asks the lad with lots of false bravado, prompting Regan’s now-legendary reply: “We’re the Sweeney, son, and we haven’t had any dinner. You’ve kept us waiting, so unless you want a kicking you tell us where those photographs are.” Of course the series provoked a lot of controversy, giving the public an image of the police that was a helluva long way from Dixon of Dock Green. Mind you, it was probably more accurate – at the time of transmission, a prominent officer in the Squad was under investigation and was eventually imprisoned for corruption. The Sweeney was shot on location around London on 16mm film, which gave it a grainy and realistic look, so the shows don’t look anywhere near as good as slick ITC programmes like Danger Man, The Saint and Man In A Suitcase that were shot in studios on 35mm. But that’s just part of their gritty charm, my son.

I’m sure you’ll love our Sweeney feature, and the rest of the magazine of course. And if you’ve got the bottle for it I recommend you pick up the entire 16-disc Complete Sweeney Box Set from Network Distributing - it will only set you back a bullseye and a couple of deep sea divers, or six coconuts if you like. That’s sixty well-spent quid in posh people’s money. I guarantee that it will only take you a few episodes to start chain-smoking, reminiscing about the positive virtues of flares and Cortinas, and drinking heavily, straight out of the bottle.

Allan Bryce.
On Sunday March the 10th at the Olympiad Leisure centre in cosy Chippenham there was a charity event organised by the Sons of Skaro and as you can guess by their name, it was all about Daleks!

The Sons of Skaro are actually a friendly bunch of Dalek builders and fanatics who like to display their creations at various events around the UK and help raise funds for charity in the process. They also help others who want to create their own Daleks. Now, me and the wife arrived just after the show opened but I quickly realised how popular this would be as the car park was totally full and we had to park in the train station down the road. Dean Stoner, one of the organisers, had told me one of their aims was to assemble the largest number of Daleks ever seen in one place, with a view to them taking over the world! The previous largest assembly of Daleks in the UK had been just under 50 Daleks at a event in Leicester.

The main event was in the exhibition hall, around which were lined scores of Daleks of every design and colour from the show’s history (including the two movies) and a few that were slightly more unique. Many of these were active, either radio controlled or with a human operator in them. Throughout the day these Daleks wandered around the event threatening you to show respect and obey them. There were stalls dedicated to the Daleks and that Doctor fella - who seems to upset them a lot - where you could buy bits of Daleks, Dalek props, models etc, and get advice on how create, fix, keep or even tame your own Dalek!

Down the far side of the hall, celebrity guests sat to meet with fans for autographs and selfies, and there was a Tardis for purchasing a photo of your choice. The event was crammed full with Daleks and punters, but everyone was very friendly and helpful, with cosplayers dressing up as the Doctor, his helpers, Silurians and Cybermen etc. I asked many what they thought of the new shows and nearly everyone said they thought Jodie was great as the 13th Doctor but the stories were awful. One of the dealers told me he ships loads of stuff to the States but has been told recently not to bother sending anything more with the 13th Doctor in it!

I bought a few things for myself, and the wife reckons we may have to move as my collection is taking over the House. Luckily for her I did not win the Dalek but the various people I spoke to about building one got me thinking...

All in all a great day out for all the family. I never thought Daleks could be so friendly. So, well done Dean and the gang. In the end they assembled 76 full-sized Daleks and two Davros’s so they now hold the record for the largest Dalek gathering ever. If the Sons of Skaro put on a show next year I will see you there, but remember, a Dalek is not just for Xmas so do not upset them.

Daleks: Invasion Chippenham 2018 AD

Bill Mac and his lovely wife Sam get around even more than The Beach Boys and they seem to make it to a whole host of sci-fi, fantasy and horror-themed events both in this country and the good old US of A. Very generously Bill also finds time to take pics and scribble some words about a lot of these fun days (or weekends) out. Here’s his report of a recent close encounter with a small army of Daleks in Chippenham! Take it away, Bill...

The event was left nearly full with Daleks and punters, but everyone was very friendly and helpful, with cosplayers dressing up as the Doctor, his helpers, Silurians and Cybermen etc. I asked many what they thought of the new shows and nearly everyone said they thought Jodie was great as the 13th Doctor but the stories were awful. One of the dealers told me he ships loads of stuff to the States but has been told recently not to bother sending anything more with the 13th Doctor in it!

I bought a few things for myself, and the wife reckons we may have to move as my collection is taking over the House. Luckily for her I did not win the Dalek but the various people I spoke to about building one got me thinking...
One of 2019’s biggest sci-fi films has mostly slipped under the radar outside of its native China: The Wandering Earth, a movie billed as China’s first cinematic science fiction blockbuster. The film is based on a novel by author Cixin Liu that follows the efforts of scientists and engineers who discover that the sun will destroy the Earth within the next century. To save humanity, they hatch an ambitious plan to use thousands of mountain-sized rocket engines to move Earth out of its orbit and travel around Jupiter to slingshot the planet toward another star 4.2 light-years away. But as they do so, the engine system fails, and teams have to rush to reactivate them before Earth crashes into Jupiter. While the film has been a huge hit in China, it had a more limited release across the world. That will soon change, as Netflix has purchased the rights to stream the film worldwide.

**IN MEMORIAM**

We were sad to hear of the recent death from cardiac arrest at 73 of actor Jan-Michael Vincent, whose sleek good looks belied a troubled personal life. Born in 1945 in Denver, Colorado, the impossibly handsome Vincent first came on to our radar in 1972’s The Mechanic, the Charles Bronson thriller with a stunning final scene. He was also in 1978’s Hooper, in which he played a stunt man opposite Burt Reynolds. Perhaps his best-known role was in the television action-adventure series Airwolf, which lasted for several seasons after launching in 1984. Vincent played pilot Stringfellow Hawke, a rugged pilot who could pull off aerobatic crime-fight ing manoeuvres in an advanced helicopter — but also play the cello. His most notable work was as one of a trio of blond Malibu surfer buddies in John Milius’s mythic and highly regarded coming-of-age drama Big Wednesday (1978). The film follows its characters from the start of the 1960s to the mid-70s as they variously confront maturity, fatherhood, Vietnam and the eternal allure of the Pacific ocean. Vincent, a passionate surfer himself, came to Milius’s attention after the film’s co-writer Dennis Aaberg saw him catching waves at Topanga. Though stunt doubles were involved in the filming, he and his co-stars, Gary Busey and William Katt, did some of their own surfing on screen. However, his surfer-like demeanour was overshadowed at times by his troubled personal life, which caused his career to plummet faster than a falling chopper. He pleaded guilty in 1997 to a drunken driving accident that left him with a broken neck and was sentenced to a rehab program. He was also charged in 1980s bar-room brawls, receiving probation in one and an acquittal in another. He was sentenced to 60 days in jail in 2000 in Orange County, California, after he admitted to violating his probation by appearing drunk in public and assaulting his then-girlfriend. There were many film and TV roles before his last recorded credit in 2002, but they were confined largely to tacky straight-to-video thrillers such as Deadly Embrace (1989), Sins of Desire, Hidden Obsession, Indecent Behaviour (all 1993).

Jan Michael Vincent’s death came as no surprise since he had been in poor health for many years. The loss of actor Luke Perry at the young age of 52 came as much more of a shock. Best known for his portrayal of rebellious heartthrob Dylan McKay in Beverly Hills, 90210, Luke was often compared to James Dean in his early years. Born Coy Luther Perry on 11 October 1966 in Mansfield, Ohio, to a steelworker father and housewife mother, he auditioned for 215 acting jobs in New York before finally securing a single TV commercial. In the 90s he was cast in Aaron Spelling’s Fox TV series Beverly Hills, 90210. Playing the brooding son of a millionaire, and Perry soon became a household name.

Two years later he won a supporting role in the film version of Buffy The Vampire Slayer, starring in the movie Terminal Bliss the same year. The late 90s and noughties saw Perry find consistent work on television including on HBO prison drama Oz from 2001 and 2002 and Windfall, a series following friends who win the lottery, in 2006. Perry also cameoed in The Simpsons and more recently was a regular in Riverdale, based on a series of Archie Comics. On 27 February Perry suffered a serious stroke at his home in Sherman Oaks in California. He was hospitalised and died four days later, aged just 52.
Richard Carpenter spent most of the 1960s as a jobbing actor, notching up an impressive roster of roles in TV series such as Knight Errant, Z Cars, Emergency Ward 10, Dixon of Dock Green, and Hancock. But as the decade progressed, he began turning his hand more towards writing, and in 1969 devised the TV series Catweazle, which featured Geoffrey Bayldon as the eponymous wizard who managed to somehow 'magic' his way forward in time by about a thousand years, to arrive and have adventures in modern-day England.

Carpenter switched to full-time scriptwriting in the 1970s, chipping in with episodes of such ITV fare as The Adventures of Black Beauty, The Famous Five, Smuggler and Doctor Snuggles, as well as originating such series as The Ghosts of Motley Hall and Dick Turpin.

In the mid-1980s, Carpenter joined forces with Goldcrest Films, the company behind such successful British films as Chariots of Fire, Gandhi and Local Hero. With the backing of Goldcrest, Carpenter devised a series that would re-style and re-tell the olde-English folktale of Robin Hood in a new, dark, mystical way.

The legends of Robin Hood had long been the subject of countless films and television series, but by the mid-1980s, they had become something of a cliché. The spectre of The Adventures of Robin Hood (with Richard Greene as Robin) had lasted long decades after the series ended its four-year run in 1959, and the character was more-often lampooned than taken seriously (most recently in the film Time Bandits, where John Cleese had portrayed Robin Hood at his green-hosed silliest).

Goldcrest secured backing from HTV (one of the smaller ITV regions) in the UK, and the US channel Showtime, and so began production of the series, christened Robin of Sherwood. The main reason for the convoluted - for the time - structure of the production of the series was to secure a large enough budget to do the project justice. Carpenter’s series would be made entirely on film, and shot mainly on location, at a time when most programmes were made in the studio and shot on videotape. The filming, centred around HTV’s hometown of Bristol, made extensive use of the surrounding picturesque countryside, and handy medieval remnants such as Blaise Castle. Never had England’s lands looked so green and pleasant.

The series also made a bold statement of intent with its casting. The lead role of Robin of Loxley went to Michael Praed, who had previously only appeared in bit-parts in programmes such as The Professionals. Praed’s flaxen-haired Robin became an instant hit and heart-throb, which helped...
catapult both him - and the series - to dizzy heights almost from the first episode.

Almost as unknown at the time was Judi Trott, who won the role of Robin’s traditional love-interest, Marion of Leaford. Trott bestowed upon Marion a particular fiery intensity which belied her petite stature. Coupled with her porcelain-like complexion, flowing red hair, and waif-like figure, she became as much of a pin-up as Praed.

WHO’S THE SCARLET DADDY?

Leading the rest of the ‘Merry Men’ was Ray Winstone’s Will Scarlet. At this point in time, Winstone was well on his path to becoming the much-loved cockney hard-man heavy character he is today, and was perhaps the most experienced member of the cast, having achieved early notoriety with his leading role in the controversial drama-cum-film *Scum* in the late 1970s.

Will Scarlet was a constant source of friction within the group of outlaws, which Winstone portrayed at his menacing, snarling best. At the opposite end of the spectrum was Clive Mantle, in his pre-*Casualty* days, who crafted John Little (know as Little John, of course) into a thoughtful, gentle character, despite his imposing stature. Phil Rose brought an avuncular charm to the role of Friar Tuck, which didn’t particularly break any new ground for the character, but was the ‘glue’ that helped cement the core group of outlaws together.

All of the above characters were ones steeped in the folklore and tradition of the Robin Hood myth. The opening episodes tick most of the folklore boxes: Robin meets Will Scarlet while they are held prisoner in Nottingham castle, he encounters a bewitched John Little on a river crossing and defeats him with a quarterstaff, he infiltrates an archery tournament organised by the Sheriff of Nottingham and wins by splitting his opponents arrow in two.

However, Richard Carpenter introduced a new, original character into Robin’s clan of outlaws - the Saracen assassin Nasir, played with a minimalistic sultry menace by Mark Ryan. Robin frees Nasir from captivity in the opening story of the series, leading Nasir to willingly join forces with Robin’s outlaw band. Carpenter was the original innovator of this novel twist on the Robin Hood legend, and unsurprisingly - and perhaps somewhat disappointingly - this has led to copycat Arabic characters turning up in all manner of post-Robin of Sherwood adaptations of the Robin Hood myth, from 1991’s Kevin Costner blockbuster *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, to TNT’s *The New Adventures of Robin Hood* series.

On the other side of Sherwood Forest were the bad guys. The Sheriff of Nottingham was a slimy, scheming, pantomime-esque villain of the highest order, portrayed with moustache-twirling scenery-chewing aplomb by Nickolas Grace. At his side was his slimy henchman Sir Guy of Gisburne, played by Robert Addie, who managed to add a layer of snarling condescension to a part that could have just been a hackneyed two-dimensional character in lesser hands.

Alongside the traditional dollops of Sherwood Forest folklore, Richard Carpenter also liberally sprinkled many pagan religious motifs and themes into his scripts. Central to the premise of the series was the concept that Robin was ‘chosen’ by Herne the Hunter - the pagan spirit of the forest - to be his son and do his work. Herne was an ethereal, enigmatic figure, portrayed as an elderly, quietly-spoken man (John Abineri), with a penchant for wearing a headdress made from the head of a deer. He occasionally gives cryptic warnings to Robin, and also hands him his distinctive weapon, Albion, one of the seven mystical Swords of Wayland.

AN EPIC FEEL

And so Robin of Sherwood launched on Saturday nights on ITV in early 1984, with a six-episode run. Carpenter’s...
scripts were finely-crafted period dramas, steeped in English pagan folklore, but with a healthy slice of 'Saturday Matinee Serial' derring-do thrown in for good measure.

Over the course of the first series, Robin of Loxley and his outlaw gang became a catalyst for rebellion, a figurehead for the downtrodden English railing against their Norman overlords. The high production values gave each episode an epic feel, while the masterstroke move of getting new age-Celtic-folk-pop band Clannad to provide the haunting theme tune and incidental music helped craft a product which felt that every last piece of detail had been carefully honed to perfection.

One key factor in the production of Robin of Sherwood hadn’t been carefully planned in advance. The programme became a huge overnight hit, and a second series was quickly commissioned, only for HTV and Goldcrest to then realise that Michael Praed had quickly become a very hot acting property in America, due to the series’ success on Showtime. Crucially, Praed wasn’t on a long-term contract for Robin of Sherwood beyond a second series, and the actor was made an offer he couldn’t refuse to join the cast of the American glossy soap opera Dynasty. The makers of Robin of Sherwood were resigned to the fact that they would lose their leading man at the end of the new, second series.

Robin of Sherwood returned to ITV Saturday teatimes in 1985, helping ITV to undermine the BBC’s longrunning Doctor Who series, which had returned to a Saturday night slot that
year for the first time since 1981. The second series (of seven episodes) built strongly on the foundations of the first, and went for bigger, bolder and darker storylines. The highlight was the epic two-part (or two-hour, depending which ITV region you were watching) story ‘The Swords of Wayland’, which featured Rula Lenska as the head of a powerful coven of witches posing as devout nuns, who seek to raise the Devil himself by using the power of the seven Swords of Wayland. They have collected six of the swords - all they need is the seventh, Albion, and all that stands in their way are Robin and his band of outlaws...

The second series ended with the episode ‘The Greatest Enemy’, which sees the Sheriff of Nottingham finally motivated enough to commit his resources into capturing and/or killing the outlaws of Sherwood Forest.

His plan works to perfection, as one-by-one the outlaws are cornered and captured, until only Robin, Marion and Much remain at liberty, but are surrounded by the Sheriff’s men. Faced with insurmountable odds, Robin keeps the Sheriff’s men at bay long enough for Marion and Much to make their escape, before snapping his longbow in half across his knee and facing his fate atop a stony hillock. In shocking scenes, the Sheriff’s men unleash a hail of crossbow bolts at the defenceless outlaw.

Robin’s fate is never seen on-screen, adding to the mystique of what then unfolds. The Sheriff returns, victorious, to his camp with his troops, where the captured outlaws are told of Robin’s demise. Meanwhile, Herne the Hunter summons a Hooded Man, face unseen, to Sherwood Forrest. The Hooded Man frees the outlaws, and he confronts the Sheriff’s men as they make their escape. The sight of him - longbow raised in the stance of Robin before his death - freezes the outlaws in their tracks. Marion and Much return, to the surprise of the outlaws, to such an extent that they, and everyone else, begin calling him Robin. He is given Robin’s sword, Albion, and also tries to win the affections of Marion, but she rejects him a number of times.

Connery’s initial episodes see him appear ill-at-ease with the role, but as the season progresses, he relaxes into the part, and manages to make the role very much his own. The third series ends with the story ‘The Time of the Wolf’, which sees Marion eventually succumb to Robin’s charms, and they announce that they are to be wed. The necromancer Gulnar reappears, and tries to kill Herne using a clang Gollum replica of Robin, but his plan is thwarted by the real Robin. However, Marion thinks that Robin has died, and the pain of losing a second lover leads her to join the clergy as a nun. Even after discovering that Robin is indeed alive and well, she decides that her days in Sherwood Forrest are at an end.

Work began on planning for a fourth series of Robin of Sherwood, due to air on ITV in 1987. Judi Trott had decided to leave Robin of Sherwood behind, and so plans were afoot to write her character out of the show. Marion’s newfound devotion to her religion would therefore see her absent for most of the fourth series, only for the character to return to Sherwood, and then die at the hands of Guy of Gisborne, in the final two-part story of the series.

Richard Carpenter began work on writing the initial scripts for the fourth series, completing the two-part story ‘The Knights of the Apocalypse’, when Goldcrest suddenly announced they were pulling out of the production of the series, due to a financial down-turn in their cinema films division. HTV were unable to fund the series on their own, and so Robin of Sherwood came to a premature end. A number of plans to revive the series stalled over the next few years.

The most interesting of these was a proposed mini-series that was touted in 1991, which Nikolas Grace and Michael Praed both talked about with great enthusiasm at the time - although how the series would continue with the original Robin back from the dead was never fully divulged. Ultimately, Robin of Sherwood would never return to the small screen, although the series’ legacy can be seen and felt in most of the retellings of the tale staged since the series aired (most tellingly the BBC’s Robin Hood which aired between 2006-2009, which saw the characters of both Marian and Robin killed off).

After all... Nothing’s forgotten. Nothing’s ever forgotten...
**Dear Editor,**

At the end of last year I finally decided to take out a subscription to your brilliant magazine, as I was finding it more and more difficult to get the mag here in Dublin. I may not know or remember all the shows you write about, but I do enjoy the magazine all the same. Some of the shows probably didn’t make it to Belgium, where I grew up. The first issue of Infinity Magazine that I got was number 3 - *Crisis on Moonbase Alpha*. *Space: 1999* was my all-time favourite show when I was 14.

I rediscovered it (*Space: 1999*) - and discovered the fandom - thanks to a broken ankle in 2014. I haven’t looked back since, and on the plus side have made many lifelong friends in said fandom. Actually at the time this issue was on sale I was on my way to New Jersey to attend Alpha 2017 in Parsippany. Browsing through WH Smith in Dublin Airport, I found 3 copies tucked away at the back of a shelf. I bought them all and made some people on the other side of the Atlantic very happy.

Now we are looking forward to the next Convention - Breakaway: 2019 20th Anniversary Celebration in the Best Western Lehigh Valley Hotel & Conference Centre. I hope you’ll forgive me for this shameless plug -:, but Roy Bjelquist (Organiser), Todd Morton (Administrator of the *Space: 1999* Props and Ships Facebook Group) and Gordon Moriguchi (Administrator of several *Space: 1999* Facebook groups) have been working tirelessly to pull this together. It will be the biggest convention of the last few years, with Barbara Bain, Nick Tate, Anton Phillips, Prentis Hancock, Clifton Jones, Lisa Harrow (guest star in ‘Testament of Arkadia’), Suzanne Peterson and Christopher Penfold planning to attend in person, and Brian Johnson and Catherine Schell attending via Skype.

As these conventions - this will be my 3rd since 2014 - are fan organised, it does actually feel more like a reunion and we do have more time to spend with the stars compared to Comic Con or other bigger conventions.

Anyway the aim is to get up to 311 people attending, and I include the information for people who might be interested, but are not part of the Facebook communities. Website for the convention is [https://www.breakaway-2019.com](https://www.breakaway-2019.com). The Facebook page is [https://www.facebook.com/Breakaway2019/](https://www.facebook.com/Breakaway2019/)

**Dear Allan,**

I’ve been meaning to write to you since *Infinity* no.3 and I’ve finally got around to it. I am yet another person to extend my gratitude and congratulations on *Infinity* magazine, which I have on subscription, as you have certainly catered for many thousand of enthusiasts.

I would like to share with you a few pictures of my “Bridge Room”, so called because my main interest is *Star Trek* the original series... these days people call them “Man Caves”. The room is located in the basement of my house in Bristol, Pennsylvania. *Star Wars* (mainly my son Liam’s models), Gerry Anderson’s *UFO*, classic Universal monsters, *King Kong*, Hammer films and another passion of mine, H.G. Wells’ *The Time Machine*.

I have amassed my collection steadily over the last thirty years, which even includes a few of my own childhood pieces, from sci-fi conventions and eBay which people must agree is a great way of sourcing specialist items. I have a 40” TV on the wall on which I watch my favourite films or series from yesteryear whilst sitting in the Captain Kirk chair that I built from scratch. Using LED lights I can light the room into different colours, blue, red, white, green etc... to compliment my collection which sits on mirror-backed floating glass shelves.

I am 54 years old and enjoy your magazine as it reminds me of favourite programmes, films and series that I remember watching growing up and because when I was younger you didn’t have the facility to record the programmes if they clashed on TV, so some of the articles in the magazine have been a reminder of what I missed and I have been inspired to source copies of these to enjoy them now. So again well done for the high quality of subject matter in the magazine. Keep up the good work. Live Long and Prosper

Phil Thomas, by email.

You’re living the dream, Phil. Great pics, thanks for sharing them with us. Sadly I don’t think that Yannie would let me get away with such a set-up!

**Dear Editor,**

I just discovered *Infinity* at a Barnes and Noble book store here in Texas, and I love it! I enjoyed the one with *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, and just got the one featuring *This Island Earth* and *The Outer Limits*. I’m 59 so I saw these shows originally as a kid, grainy black-and-white versions on TV (or ‘tele’) out of respect to Dave Barker from Wakefield. By the way, Dave, this magazine may...
use American spellings, but it’s still British enough to cause us Yanks a few headaches, for instance, the fact that *This Island Earth*’s spaceship “was an aluminum model weighing eight kilograms.” I have no idea what a kilogram is. I would watch these old shows on my little TV in my room at night, quietly, because my folks didn’t think I should be watching shows like *Monty Python* at that age. I’ve recently re-discovered the colour episodes of *The Avengers* and have become a late-arrival huge fan. For you good Brits over there, let me make an apocryphal admission. I was never a huge fan of *Dr. Who*. I’ve watched it off and on over the years (especially the doctor with the long scarf, was that Doctor number 4?) and I do like the new doctor, she’s fresh and funny.

I grew up in America but my parents and relatives were all from England, so I was used to British humour and phrases, so these shows weren’t as alien to me as they were to my pals. And from her photo on your magazine’s “Messages” page I’m now a huge fan of the lovely Gabrielle Drake from UFO. Wow! I remember watching that show and don’t remember much except the strange hairstyles and cars, but I do remember one scene where they send a probe to follow a UFO back to its home planet, then discover something is wrong and they can’t determine the planet’s size, or something like that. To illustrate this, they show the leader an image of a slightly arced horizon on a screen, saying they can’t tell from how far away the image was taken. Then the camera backs away and you see it’s not the rim of a planet but the top of the thigh of one of the beautiful women in the UFO HQ. I remember THAT as a kid. blue wigs be damned!

Lastly, love the article on *This Island Earth*, but have you seen M3TK’s take-off of that movie? It’s absolutely hilarious! Keep up the good work.

Rogan McAllister, Pleasanton, Texas.

Great to know we are picking up a lot of readers in the good old US of A, Rogan, though goodness knows what you make of *The Sweeney* over there. Just for the record, I am told a kilogram is three dollars. (Er, can editorial subs please check that?)

Dear Infinity,

I had been enjoying your mag as a glossy souvenir of my sci-fi past, but I was disappointed with your editorial position on Season 11 of *Dr. Who*. I regret that you faced a backlash to your, my or anyone’s take, or was or was not a critical failure, is all grist to the mill. However, I would ask that you reconsider using a language that has now been co-opted or generated by the fat right and media to illustrate your editorial with H.G. Wells’ greatest works of social commentary: *The Time Machine*, combining Darwinian Evolution with Class politics and *The War Of The Worlds* which, if memory serves me right, was inspired partly by a massacre of an indigenous people by the British army and, as I have read, was also preceded by the Berlin conference of 1884 which marked the height of Britain’s imperial power by stripping the nations of Africa of their identity, rights, and autonomy.

Whether or not *Dr Who* Season 11 was to your, my or anyone’s taste, or was or was not a critical failure, is all grist to the mill. However, I would ask that you reconsider using a language that has now been co-opted or generated by the fat right and media to illustrate your editorial with H.G. Wells’ greatest works of social commentary: *The Time Machine*, combining Darwinian Evolution with Class politics and *The War Of The Worlds* which, if memory serves me right, was inspired partly by a massacre of an indigenous people by the British army and, as I have read, was also preceded by the Berlin conference of 1884 which marked the height of Britain’s imperial power by stripping the nations of Africa of their identity, rights, and autonomy.

There was lots about *Dr Who* Season 11 that I found bewildering, tedious, poorly visualised and badly structured. That said, some criticisms seem overly reductive. So for me, *Demons of the Punjab* was hardly a criticism of British Imperialism and more a remarkable exploration of post-colonial identity and the importance of commemoration for a sense of nationhood and self.

Being nostalgic for a simpler more enjoyable past on TV, Film, Comics or in life does not have to mean erasing from personal and public memory things that are uncomfortable to watch, hard to learn or difficult to enjoy.

I wish your publication well,

Tim Robins, Brighton.

If only those keyboard warriors were as erudite as you, Tim. I freely admit I was being a bit controversial in my editorial, and it’s true to say that the stuff you mention about earlier *Who* shows went way over my head when I was just happy to be running around the school playground shouting ‘Exterminate! Exterminate!’ I still think that they were less obvious in the way they incorporated messages back in those days, but you have won this argument for sure. A really good letter, pleased to print it.

Dear Allan,

Reading the recent articles on non-genre TV treats such as *The Sandbaggers* and *Bulman* makes me happy that your mag has room for “fantastic” shows as well as “fantasy” shows. With this in mind, I would love your regular writers to each write a feature on a “straight” drama show they have a soft spot for. I personally love *Duchess of Duke Street* and *Crossroads* and even spent Christmas day watching David Nixon’s Christmas Box (Anita Harris singing “you’re my best friend” to a dog, some close up magic, Rolf Harris jumping out dressed as Santa : it was a long time ago in a telly universe far away...)

I even said to my fellow local *Infinity* reader, “Big Nige”, that I’d love *Infinity* to get together with the Network DVD crew and release a quarterly companion mag just full of vintage comedy, kids and drama shows: less keen, he dead-panned “if it has Crossroads in it they could even call the mag, *Eternity*.

I also think you should provide a separate spot aside from the letters column where readers can ask for help from *Infinity* readers to identify childhood memories of half-glimpsed TV shows. For instance, I remember seeing a Canadian short-film on childrens’ TV in the early 80’s where two girls break into a clothes wholesale unit and the fur coats inside turn into foxes and chase after them. Despite this precise memory, there’s no way typing that into the internet will provide anything other than a hyperlink for “those who may have ingested too much Mescaline”... so only fellow “Infinities” can help.... Call the column *Answers in Infinity*!

Finally, another appeal to remove your centrefold posters. I just flick past them (even frickin *Barbarella*)! Maybe use the pages to do a landscape-partwork where you can do paragraph-long reviews of fantasy film and TV shows in an A-Z format aping those brick-sized film guides of yore by Halliwell et al - *The Bryce Bible of Fantasy* begins inside this issue! I’ll stop now before I start insisting on a free spud-gun selftaped to the cover.

Jeremy Clarke, Sunny Cleethorpes.

I didn’t know the mystery story, but luckily designer Kev did - he identified it as an American short entitled *Fur Coats*. It can be found online at *www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnXKNK50KM*.

I took a right kicking for my endless movie guide in *Dark Side* so I am not sure if that would work either, and we’ll have to take a vote on the posters. Coming soon: Amy Turtle and Shughe McFee, the true story of their forbidden *Crossroads* love. And what other magazine would publish a pic of the great David Nixon? That spud gun idea is pretty good too. Check out my editorial in *Dark Side* 200 for my own magical *Spud Gun* memories!
Brian J. Robb looks back at the original *Westworld* movie that inspired HBO’s hit series, and also discusses the man who created it, Michael Crichton...

The original *Westworld* first appeared over 45 years ago, in November 1973. It was enough of a hit - combining the perennial Western genre with high tech artificial intelligence and robotics - to lead to a sequel, *Futureworld*, in 1976. It even spawned a short-lived 1980 television series, *Beyond Westworld*, which lasted all of three episodes before cancellation. For *Westworld* creator Michael Crichton, however, this was all just prologue to him reusing his theme-park-runs-amok idea again in 1993’s *Jurassic Park*, a far bigger and more impactful film franchise. That makes it all the odder, then, that it was to *Westworld* that HBO looked to find a replacement for the soon-to-end *Game of Thrones*.
Michael Crichton initially trained as a doctor - an experience that would give rise to long-running TV series E.R. (1994–2009). However, what he really wanted to be, ever since he was 14, was a writer. He began publishing pulp novels under pseudonyms in the late-1960s, regarding his competition as in-flight movies. He designed his novels to be easily read; they were fast-paced and could ‘be read in an hour and a half’.

He began with techno-thrillers, with Odds On (1966) about a computer-assisted bank robbery, while Easy Go (1968) followed the adventures of a rogue Egyptologist. His breakthrough came in 1969 with biological thriller The Andromeda Strain, a bestseller about a team of scientists investigating a potentially extraterrestrial micro-organism. The book rapidly became a film in 1971, directed by Robert Wise (Star Trek: The Motion Picture).

While continuing to write novels, Crichton became more interested in working in film and TV, writing for the religious-themed anthology series Insight in the early-1970s, and directing TV movie Pursuit (1972), based on his novel Binary about a political extremist attacking San Diego. That led directly to Westworld, his theatrical film debut as both writer and director. It was based upon an original idea and not drawn from a pre-existing novel (a novelisation of the film duly followed).

**HIGH CONCEPT PULP**

Crichton was dealing with a difficult situation from the beginning on Westworld. He hadn’t wanted to make his movie directorial debut with science fiction, but it was the only way he was to be allowed to direct, so he rolled with it.

‘I got the idea for Westworld because I was very interested in the astronauts,’ said Crichton of the screenplay’s genesis. ‘I was fascinated by the fact they were being trained to be machines. Then I was...’

Every studio rejected the screenplay, except MGM, who had a poor reputation with science fiction, but it was the only way he wanted to make his movie directorial debut as both writer and director. It was his core idea of an out-of-control theme park and for his skills as a writer and director. Nonetheless, and despite the film’s less-than-cinematic look, it was a hit, grossing over four times its production cost. There was clearly more to the ideas behind the film than Crichton was able to express with the tools available to him in the early-1970s.

**GOING BEYOND WESTWORLD**

An extended TV version of Westworld aired in 1976 on NBC, with some cut footage reinstated (this is now the widely available version). The ideas behind the movie were extended in the short-lived 1980 TV series Beyond Westworld that aired on CBS. Only three of five episodes filmed were aired, as ratings were catastrophically bad. Set behind the scenes of the Delos Corporation (owners of the robot park), Beyond Westworld anticipated some ideas in HBO’s own series. It starred Jim McMullan as the Delos security chief tasked with taking down evil scientist Quaid (James Wainwright), who plans on using Westworld’s robotic technology to take over. Crichton was credited as ‘creator’ of Westworld.
Beyond Westworld was a disaster - it took an innovative idea from a hit film and squandered it in a misguided attempt to produce formula TV, the weekly formula being a game of ‘find the robot’. No wonder it was pulled after just three episodes aired; it was badly written, poorly acted, and bore little relation to the film it was attempting to move ‘beyond’. It’s virtually unwatchable. As Jim McMullan’s Delos security chief says in the first episode: ‘There’s no point to any of this!’

Although it followed it, Beyond Westworld simply ignored Futureworld, the 1976 sequel to the first film. Made by Samuel Z. Arkoff’s B-movie producer/distributor American International Pictures, rather than MGM (who preferred to make Logan’s Run, 1976), the sequel was directed by Richard T. Heffron (a director of episodic TV like The Rockford Files) and written by Mayo Simon (Man From Atlantis, 1977) and George Schenck (The Phantom of Hollywood, 1976) - not exactly the top league of mid-1970s filmmakers.

Crichton had nothing to do with the follow-up film, either. It went in a different direction, bringing in ideas of biological cloning to go alongside the robotics of the original. There’s also a hint of virtual reality in a bizarre fantasy dream sequence that sees the brief return of Brynner’s silent Gunslinger.

While Peter Fonda and Blythe Danner made for capable leads as the journalistic investigators invited as part of a PR offensive to explore the revamped Delos theme park, the second movie all but ignored the park aspect, opting instead to explore the behind-the-scenes running of Delos.

Westworld itself has been ‘retired’ as a scenario. The twist in this one is that the technicians, who panicked during the original ‘incident’ depicted in Westworld have now been replaced by more ‘reliable’ humanoid robots. The park’s director, played by Arthur Hill, has a plan to replace important people in the world with robot duplicates, all in the interest of humanity’s wellbeing. To that end, our journalistic heroes are themselves duplicated (to ensure a good write-up), and the film plays like a post-Watergate science fiction infused conspiracy thriller.

Futureworld lacked the originality of Crichton’s conception, although filming at NASA facilities in Houston gave the movie decent production values, even if the pedestrian direction let the whole thing down. Like the previous film, Futureworld boasts a minor achievement in the
development of digital effects. Incorporated is a computer-animated wire-frame hand - that hand belongs to Pixar’s Ed Catmull and was produced for his 1972 proof-of-concept short film ‘A Computer Animated Hand’. This was augmented with a 3D scan of Fonda’s head, to signify the ‘cloning’ process. As a result, *Futureworld* really pointed to the future by including the first 3D computer-generated image in a commercial movie.

**BACK TO THE PARK: JURASSIC PARK**

After *Westworld*, it was five years before Michael Crichton made another movie with *Coma* (1978), although he continued to publish novels, including *The Terminal Man* (1972, filmed by Mike Hodges in 1974) and *The Great Train Robbery* (1975, which became Crichton’s third movie in 1979).

He continued to direct through the 1980s, with *Looker* (1981), *Runaway* (1984), and 1989’s *Physical Evidence*. His novels *Congo*, *Sphere*, *Rising Sun*, and *Disclosure* all became movies made by others, but his theme park idea continued to play on his mind, with Crichton believing that the movie of *Westworld* had failed to properly explore the more intriguing aspects of his idea. That led to his 1990 novel *Jurassic Park*, in which the gunslinger robots were replaced with biologically resurrected dinosaurs.

The resulting 1993 movie, directed by Steven Spielberg (who had been instrumental in bringing Crichton’s *E.R.* to television), and co-scripted by Crichton and David Koepp, proved to be another ground-breaking breakthrough in visual effects with the CGI dinosaurs successfully realised on screen. Spielberg’s work led directly to George Lucas resurrecting the dormant *Star Wars* franchise, as he now believed digital effects had reached a level to allow him to make the prequel trilogy. Arguably, without Crichton writing the novel of *Jurassic Park*, we might not have *The Last Jedi*.

As the highest grossing film to that point (until 1997’s *Titanic* came along, anyway), *Jurassic Park* revived the *Westworld* idea in a more crowd-pleasing format, with the theme park located on an isolated island, Richard Attenborough playing the aged billionaire philanthropist owner of the park, and a cast of lifelike prehistoric creatures. Three sequels followed - *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (1997, based on Crichton’s sequel novel), *Jurassic Park III* (2001), *Jurassic World* (2015), and *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* (2018).

**THESE VIOLENT DELIGHTS HAVE VIOLENT ENDS**

Given the success of *Jurassic Park*, and the fact that in the 21st century the original *Westworld* had failed to properly explore the more intriguing aspects of his idea. That led to his 1990 novel *Jurassic Park*, in which the gunslinger robots were replaced with biologically resurrected dinosaurs.

The resulting 1993 movie, directed by Steven Spielberg (who had been instrumental in bringing Crichton’s *E.R.* to television), and co-scripted by Crichton and David Koepp, proved to be another ground-breaking breakthrough in visual effects with the CGI dinosaurs successfully realised on screen. Spielberg’s work led directly to George Lucas resurrecting the dormant *Star Wars* franchise, as he now believed digital effects had reached a level to allow him to make the prequel trilogy. Arguably, without Crichton writing the novel of *Jurassic Park*, we might not have *The Last Jedi*.

As the highest grossing film to that point (until 1997’s *Titanic* came along, anyway), *Jurassic Park* revived the *Westworld* idea in a more crowd-pleasing format, with the theme park located on an isolated island, Richard Attenborough playing the aged billionaire philanthropist owner of the park, and a cast of lifelike prehistoric creatures. Three sequels followed - *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (1997, based on Crichton’s sequel novel), *Jurassic Park III* (2001), *Jurassic World* (2015), and *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* (2018).

**THESE VIOLENT DELIGHTS HAVE VIOLENT ENDS**

Given the success of *Jurassic Park*, and the fact that in the 21st century the original *Westworld* had failed to properly explore the more intriguing aspects of his idea. That led to his 1990 novel *Jurassic Park*, in which the gunslinger robots were replaced with biologically resurrected dinosaurs.

The resulting 1993 movie, directed by Steven Spielberg (who had been instrumental in bringing Crichton’s *E.R.* to television), and co-scripted by Crichton and David Koepp, proved to be another ground-breaking breakthrough in visual effects with the CGI dinosaurs successfully realised on screen. Spielberg’s work led directly to George Lucas resurrecting the dormant *Star Wars* franchise, as he now believed digital effects had reached a level to allow him to make the prequel trilogy. Arguably, without Crichton writing the novel of *Jurassic Park*, we might not have *The Last Jedi*.

As the highest grossing film to that point (until 1997’s *Titanic* came along, anyway), *Jurassic Park* revived the *Westworld* idea in a more crowd-pleasing format, with the theme park located on an isolated island, Richard Attenborough playing the aged billionaire philanthropist owner of the park, and a cast of lifelike prehistoric creatures. Three sequels followed - *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (1997, based on Crichton’s sequel novel), *Jurassic Park III* (2001), *Jurassic World* (2015), and *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* (2018).

**THESE VIOLENT DELIGHTS HAVE VIOLENT ENDS**

Given the success of *Jurassic Park*, and the fact that in the 21st century the original *Westworld* had failed to properly explore the more intriguing aspects of his idea. That led to his 1990 novel *Jurassic Park*, in which the gunslinger robots were replaced with biologically resurrected dinosaurs.

The resulting 1993 movie, directed by Steven Spielberg (who had been instrumental in bringing Crichton’s *E.R.* to television), and co-scripted by Crichton and David Koepp, proved to be another ground-breaking breakthrough in visual effects with the CGI dinosaurs successfully realised on screen. Spielberg’s work led directly to George Lucas resurrecting the dormant *Star Wars* franchise, as he now believed digital effects had reached a level to allow him to make the prequel trilogy. Arguably, without Crichton writing the novel of *Jurassic Park*, we might not have *The Last Jedi*.

As the highest grossing film to that point (until 1997’s *Titanic* came along, anyway), *Jurassic Park* revived the *Westworld* idea in a more crowd-pleasing format, with the theme park located on an isolated island, Richard Attenborough playing the aged billionaire philanthropist owner of the park, and a cast of lifelike prehistoric creatures. Three sequels followed - *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (1997, based on Crichton’s sequel novel), *Jurassic Park III* (2001), *Jurassic World* (2015), and *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* (2018).
achieved in his 1973 movie - after all, HBO allowed for greater explorations of sex and violence. He cast a wide net for inspiration, taking in not only the Westerns of Sergio Leone, but also ‘open world’ videogames like Red Dead Redemption and Skyrim. A major part of the thinking of Nolan and Joy in developing Westworld was the novels of Philip K. Dick, especially their exploration of android consciousness.

Abrams suggested Nolan and Joy tackled the series from the viewpoint of the robots, eventually called ‘hosts’ in Westworld. That was the breakthrough the pair needed to draft the pilot script. They took the ‘open world’ concept of videogames and applied it to the real world theme park, populating it with non-player characters that go through daily ‘loops’ around which the visiting ‘guests’ can interact.

Videogames, said Nolan, gave the writers ‘a language for what we wanted the hosts to be. We wanted them to be NPCs. We wanted the videogame equivalent of extras, because in Westworld, the guest is the hero.’ The coming-to-consciousness of Westworld’s robotic NPCs would be the over-arching theme of the series. The 10-episode first season was budgeted at $100 million, with the pilot alone costing $25 million to produce. The series, especially the scenes in the town of Sweetwater, was largely filmed at Melody Ranch in California, the location

of such Western TV series as Gunsmoke and Deadwood. Delos Corporation interiors were a mix of studio shooting and locations including the Pacific Design Centre in West Hollywood and the Los Angeles Convention Centre. For Western authenticity, some filming took place in Moab, Utah, back prop for such films as Stagecoach (1939), Rio Grande (1950), and Once Upon a Time in the West (1968) through to 2013’s Lone Ranger.

The cast was made up of veterans such as Anthony Hopkins and Ed Harris (whose mysterious ‘Man in Black’ echoes Brynner’s Gunslinger), mixed with relative newcomers (to American television, at least) Evan Rachel Wood (as frontier fembot Dolores) and Thandie Newton, and familiar film and TV faces such as Jeffrey Wright and Borgen’s Sidse Babett Knudsen (who replaced the initially cast Miranda Otto).

Unlike the original Westworld, the HBO series offered a high level of sex and violence, much stronger than was allowed even in 1970s cinema, although it also explores the consequences of both for the visitors and the ‘hosts’ in far greater depth than any previous iteration of Crichton’s theme park idea has achieved. These androids might be paranoid, but they’ve got good reason to be. ‘There were days where I had existential-crisis moments and started to wonder, ‘Wait, am I a robot?’’ Evan Rachel Wood told Rolling Stone. ‘Then, after I watched the pilot, I was genuinely creeped out by myself. It fucked with all of our heads, I think.’

Westworld proved to be a very ‘modern’ TV show. Ratings built along with the online ‘buzz’ as the show progressed, yet it barely broke two million ‘live’ viewers. However, combined with streaming and on-demand viewing, HBO were able to class the first season as a ratings as well as a critical success. The season finale reached 2.2 million live viewers on broadcast, HBO’s biggest audience since True Detective’s first year. Across all platforms, HBO claimed a viewership of 12 million, making the series the most watched of an HBO first season ever, surpassing even the legendary Game of Thrones. Despite that success, however, and the high engagement factor with fans of the series online, there was some hesitation at HBO over commissioning a follow-up season.

The high cost of the show - $100 million or more - and the network’s worry as to whether Nolan and Joy had a proper creative handle on the series, following the early 2016 shutdown in production, gave executives pause. A clear outline for the second season was required from Nolan and Joy before HBO pulled the trigger on a renewal, and then the executives waited until the first season had finished transmission to ensure there was no fall off in viewership. That combination of factors, and the complicated production process for a show with a complex narrative, meant that the sophomore run for Westworld didn’t arrive until 2018, five years on from the project’s instigation.

Through its various incarnations, the idea that Michael Crichton had that led to Westworld have been refined and focused, with each iteration reflecting the fears of the age. The 1973 original featured physical robots, with heads packed with wires, transistors, and circuit boards, while the sequel moved things on with ‘organic’ circuitry and a setting verging on virtual reality. In the Jurassic Park variation of the idea, the park’s main attraction, the dinosaurs, are fully organic, recreated from ancient specimens trapped in amber.

The behind-the-scenes conspiracies at Delos have also evolved, from megalomaniacal plots as in Futureworld and Beyond Westworld to use robots to take over, to the new Westworld TV series’ concerns about newly-conscious ‘hosts’ replacing mankind through being nearly indistinguishable from humans. The corrupt corporation trope would re-occur in films like Alien (1979), Blade Runner (1982), and Robocop (1987), and plays a part in the new Westworld.

The Gunslinger led directly to 1984’s The Terminator’s relentless T-800, as portrayed by Arnold Schwarzenegger, and indirectly to John Carpenter’s creation of Michael Myers for slasher Halloween (1978). Michael Crichton didn’t live to see the return of his idea, fully explored in unparalleled depth in HBO’s Westworld. He died of cancer in November 2008, aged 66.

No doubt he would applaud the way Nolan and Joy have given much fuller life to his original 1973 conception of theme park robots run amok.
Forty years ago, in May 1978, Starlord came to Earth. “A new wild era of sci-fi starts here!” the front page of the new comic promised and on early evidence, it seemed to deliver, promising a weekly offering of British comic strip excellence likely to endure well into the 1980s and beyond. Starlord was bold. It was exciting. It was a bit like 2000AD.

Ultimately, Starlord’s star shone brightly but only briefly. The last issue, only the 22nd, appeared that October. Readers who had bought every issue from the start would have spent 12p a week during 1978, adding up to a grand total of £2.64. This is slightly less than one copy of 2000AD costs today.

What went wrong for the Galaxy’s other greatest comic? Let’s take a look back...

THE SAME ONLY DIFFERENT
Starlord was supposed to be 2000AD’s older brother. Indeed, perhaps a slightly posher brother who had picked up certain airs after attending the local grammar school. Eight of its pages were in full colour – a lot for the time – and at 12p, it was actually more expensive than 2000AD, which was a mere 9p.

2000AD, which was also edited by Kelvin Gosnell, had started just over a year before. Although a success – Judge Dredd was enjoying his first major epic storyline in ‘The Cursed Earth’ at the time of Starlord – there is little doubt looking back. Starlord was for a while the better of the two comics. Just as 2000AD had Tharg the Mighty, Starlord had Starlord himself, an alien humanoid with something of the look of Shakin’ Stevens about him. Unlike Tharg, Starlord provided a stark warning to humans everywhere. “Hail, Star-Troopers,” he declared in the first of his “starzines,” “I have escaped the satanic forces of the INTERSTELLAR FEDERATION... to bring you A DIRE WARNING!”

Yes! Earth was under threat and a crash course in interstellar survival offered the only hope for survival. The comic’s stories were thus “Starlord Survival Blueprints” while the range of six badges given away with issue one were “Starlord Star-Squad Equipment”. Rather alarmingly, Starlord warned of the badges: “DO NOT place it on your skin, as the badge is made from a special metal mined on AXIS 1A you could develop a skin disorder, putting you out of combat!”

Issue 2 incidentally included a free space calculator offered to the reader with the warning: “Use it! It could save your life!”

Like a series of tweets written by an increasingly unbalanced 21st world leader, the use of capital letters grew more frequent as Starlord’s tone grew increasingly shrill.

“I have seen the Gronks swarming in the star-spawned outer reaches of space – a sure sign of inter-Galactic disaster!...THE ENEMY IS MASSING TO STRIKE!”

Finally, Starlord evoked the memory of a line from the 1951 film, The Thing From Another World, which ended with an appeal to “Watch the skies!” “REMEMBER TROopers, STICK WITH ME,” urged Starlord. “AND WATCH THE STARS!”

How long could Starlord have maintained this perpetual state of high alert and frantic calls for vigilance? Sadly, we never got to find out.

TIME AFTER TIME
According to Starlord’s Survival Blueprints, the story ‘Planet of the Damned’ “toughens your endurance as your strength is tested to the very limit!” In fact, this description turned out to be surprisingly accurate. The first ever story in the comic was a hoary tale of nonsense based on what might happen to

"A STARLORD STORY"

Starlord was launched as a slick companion comic to 2000AD, and introduced us to characters like Strontium Dog that are still around today. Chris Hallam looks back at an underrated comic classic...

Starlord was a short-lived weekly British science fiction comic book magazine published by IPC in 1978 as a sister title to 2000AD, which had been launched the previous year to anticipation of a science fiction boom surrounding Star Wars.
survivors lost in the midst of the mysterious Bermuda Triangle. In short, they got transported to another dimension. The story held over from its original planned home in 2000AD was the weakest of the new line-up. A test of endurance indeed...

Things improved somewhat with Timequake in which London tramp steamer skipper and working-class hero James Blocker inadvertently causes World War III. He then gets the opportunity to undo his error thanks to the intervention of a Starfleet-type organisation called Time Control made up of recruits from Earth’s past and future, ranging from the Roman era to the 40th century. This after we are told ‘Lyon Sprague’ invented time travel in the year 1997. Remember?

The characters including Blocker (“M-me? Y-you’re round the flamin’ twist!”) were all pretty dull but there were lots of fun moments in Timequake. There were the frog-like Droon, Time Control’s enemy who inspired Brian Bolland to do an excellent cover for issue 2. “Human scum! You’re the last survivors!” one Droon says (as with Star Trek’s the Borg, the plural and singular are the same). “We have destroyed every one of your accursed sub-stations from 1978 backwards! And now we Droon destroy you!”

The next Timequake story envisaged a Nazi future created by a maniac who turned out to be real-life Nazi Martin Bornmann in disguise, but the follow-up in which another defunct empire, this time the Incas, took over the

Roman era to the 40th century. This after we are told ‘Lyon Sprague’ invented time travel in the year 1997. Remember?

The characters including Blocker (“M-me? Y-you’re round the flamin’ twist!”) were all pretty dull but there were lots of fun moments in Timequake. There were the frog-like Droon, Time Control’s enemy who inspired Brian Bolland to do an excellent cover for issue 2. “Human scum! You’re the last survivors!” one Droon says (as with Star Trek’s the Borg, the plural and singular are the same). “We have destroyed every one of your accursed sub-stations from 1978 backwards! And now we Droon destroy you!”

The next Timequake story envisaged a Nazi future created by a maniac who turned out to be real-life Nazi Martin Bornmann in disguise, but the follow-up in which another defunct empire, this time the Incas, took over the

Roman era to the 40th century. This after we are told ‘Lyon Sprague’ invented time travel in the year 1997. Remember?

The characters including Blocker (“M-me? Y-you’re round the flamin’ twist!”) were all pretty dull but there were lots of fun moments in Timequake. There were the frog-like Droon, Time Control’s enemy who inspired Brian Bolland to do an excellent cover for issue 2. “Human scum! You’re the last survivors!” one Droon says (as with Star Trek’s the Borg, the plural and singular are the same). “We have destroyed every one of your accursed sub-stations from 1978 backwards! And now we Droon destroy you!”

The next Timequake story envisaged a Nazi future created by a maniac who turned out to be real-life Nazi Martin Bornmann in disguise, but the follow-up in which another defunct empire, this time the Incas, took over the

Roman era to the 40th century. This after we are told ‘Lyon Sprague’ invented time travel in the year 1997. Remember?

The characters including Blocker (“M-me? Y-you’re round the flamin’ twist!”) were all pretty dull but there were lots of fun moments in Timequake. There were the frog-like Droon, Time Control’s enemy who inspired Brian Bolland to do an excellent cover for issue 2. “Human scum! You’re the last survivors!” one Droon says (as with Star Trek’s the Borg, the plural and singular are the same). “We have destroyed every one of your accursed sub-stations from 1978 backwards! And now we Droon destroy you!”

The next Timequake story envisaged a Nazi future created by a maniac who turned out to be real-life Nazi Martin Bornmann in disguise, but the follow-up in which another defunct empire, this time the Incas, took over the

Roman era to the 40th century. This after we are told ‘Lyon Sprague’ invented time travel in the year 1997. Remember?

The characters including Blocker (“M-me? Y-you’re round the flamin’ twist!”) were all pretty dull but there were lots of fun moments in Timequake. There were the frog-like Droon, Time Control’s enemy who inspired Brian Bolland to do an excellent cover for issue 2. “Human scum! You’re the last survivors!” one Droon says (as with Star Trek’s the Borg, the plural and singular are the same). “We have destroyed every one of your accursed sub-stations from 1978 backwards! And now we Droon destroy you!”

The next Timequake story envisaged a Nazi future created by a maniac who turned out to be real-life Nazi Martin Bornmann in disguise, but the follow-up in which another defunct empire, this time the Incas, took over the
future, rather suggested inspiration was starting to dry up, despite some excellent visuals from Ian Kennedy.

But the best Strontium Strips were yet to come...

**ALPHA MALE**

John Wagner and Carlos Ezquerra’s Strontium Dog introduced us to the world of 2180 and mutant bounty hunter Johnny Alpha, a man warped by the impact of a Neutron War thirty years earlier (neutron bombs which kill people while leaving buildings and property relatively intact being briefly a fashionable but terrifying concept in 1978). Alpha, as extensive captions inform us, has been given white eyes and mind-reading powers by his mutation. Like all mutants, however, he is shunned by society, forced to work as a bounty hunter: an SD or Search/Destroy agent. In common, anti-mutant parlance they are known as ‘strontium dogs’.

Originally conceived as a New York taxi driver type, Alpha’s sidekick ultimately became Wulf Sternhammer, a formidable but benevolent Viking. “Comrades we are, Johnny! Vere you go, Wulf go!” Wulf argues, explaining why he sticks with Alpha, despite his own non-mutant status. “A skull to crack with the happy stick and Vulf is fine!” Strontium Dog provided Strontium with its first cover hero and many of the comic’s best moments: a space pirate attack, a giant deaf computer called McIntyre and a character called the Gronk, a timid creature, who lives in a box and has a mouth in its stomach.

Was this one of the same Gronks Starlord had been the creation of Kelvin Gosnell, writes Steve MacManus. “His initial concept was a monthly science-fiction title that would sit comfortably alongside magazines such as Omni and Metal Hurlant. Both these titles were printed on glossy magazine paper and were aimed at fans of science-fiction stories and comic strips”. It was envisaged as an aspirational magazine packed with stories and sci-fi features which a 2000AD reader’s older brother might enjoy.

Sadly, all of these admirable plans soon went out the window as MacManus explains: “Out of the blue, management had decreed that the frequency should be reduced to six pages an episode. This leads to all kinds of pacing problems,” Mills explains. And these were problems which he didn’t have time to fix. “A pity, because I knew the new format was wrong for it, and it’s why I started to lose interest in the series.”

MacManus soon found himself frustrated to be writing Starlord’s comparatively juvenile starzines. Although it often sold better than 2000AD, its similarity to the Galaxy’s Greatest Comic essentially doomed it. “Starlord was still a relatively unknown quantity to the five thousand odd newsagents who stocked comics and magazines at the time,” muses Steve MacManus. “whereas they’d had a year to grow accustomed to 2000AD.”

So that was it. The final cover proclaimed: “Starlord’s ship is waiting to carry him beyond the stars!” “Now that your future is assured, I must return to the spaceways for the Gronks are calling and I cannot let them down.”

He concluded: “And so, it is farewell for the last time, my friends! But keep watching the stars, for one day I may return!”

This hasn’t happened...

**STARLORD LEGACY**

Actually, in a way, Starlord did return: in three annuals dated 1980, 1981 and 1982. All three were a pale shadow of the short-lived comic which had spawned them: a monochrome assortment of below par Strontium Dog and Mind Wars episodes, random short stories (“Ghost Hunter”) and scientific features (“Telephone Lines in Space”) and stories which had never been in the original comic (“Jimmi From Jupiter”). 2000AD and Starlord became 2000AD and Tornado in 1979 when another short-lived sister comic merged into it. In 1980, it became just 2000AD again. It has been so ever since.

Timequake returned briefly in 2000AD in 1979 but never appeared again. The other characters have enjoyed a rich post-Starlord afterlife, however. Although Ro-Busters ended in 1979, the characters Ro-Jaws and Hammerstein have appeared in the strips Nemesis the Warlock and particularly The ABC Warriors. Hammerstein even appeared in the 1990s Judge Dredd film Strontium Dog too continues to this day.

In short, forty years on, Starlord’s legacy continues. Watch the stars! —IPC found that publishing two-weekly science-fiction titles split the market, and Starlord, with its higher cover price, was cancelled. After 22 issues it merged with 2000 AD in issue 66 of that title. Its last issue was dated 7 October 1978.
s the spy craze boomed Stateside in late 1964, so too did NBC’s new weekly espionage TV show *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* By summer 1965 the action-packed hit series had been recommissioned for its second season and was airing around the world, including on BBC1 in Britain.

In August 1965, spurred on by this success, NBC programming executive Ross Donaldson suggested a potential spin-off titled *The Lady From U.N.C.L.E.* to executive producer Norman Felton, who was initially unenthusiastic, suggesting this concept might only support a half hour show.

Undeterred, NBC’s programming VP Mort Werner engaged his screenwriter wife Martha Wilkerson to develop the idea. Her first pilot storyline, *The Gilded Cage Affair*, featured one Caroline ‘Cookie’ Fortune as its heroine.

A later pilot script by Dean Hargrove was made and shown within *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*’s successful second season. Felton had revisited notes made by James Bond creator Ian Fleming as part of *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*’s earliest development back in 1963 and borrowed the name of a secretary character, April Dancer, for the potential spin-off’s leading lady.

Eventual pilot *The Moonglow Affair* starred beautiful brunette Mary Ann Mobley (right) – Miss America 1959 no less – as 24-year-old April (U.N.C.L.E. Agent 34), with Norman Fell as her long-in-the-tooth comedy foil, the 40-year-old Mark Slate (Agent 19). Filmed in November 1965, its plot investigated links between sabotaged American space shots, a cosmetics firm, and U.N.C.L.E.’s arch enemies, the crime syndicate THRUSH.

A few days before the episode aired on 25 February 1966, NBC had ordered a spin-off series, but subject to both leads being recast. Mobley and Fell were perfectly adequate but the straight approach and Mobley’s couture wardrobe already looked dated, nay square. NBC wanted their new series to be hip to the latest youth programming trends.

**THE BRITISH INVASION**

Ever since The Beatles conquered the States in early 1964, American youth had looked to Britain for inspiration, with British accents from Scouse to Cockney now in fashion. ‘Swinging London’ became a cultural phenomenon globally after featuring on *Time* magazine’s cover in April 1966.

Small screen British import *The Avengers*, featuring Diana Rigg as lithe action heroine Emma Peel, would debut on ABC in the US in March 1966, garnering switched-on audiences who had earlier admired former Avengers-femme fatale Honor Blackman in the 1964 Bond film *Goldfinger*. Also on the big screen, the much-hyped, mod-styled comic strip *Modesty Blaise*, starring Monica Vitti as a deadly superspy, would premiere in May.

Looking to tap into this London-centred zeitgeist, NBC suggested that producers Arena Productions/MGM recast with an American actress currently living in Swinging London who had originally tested for April.

As Stefanie Powers recalled to NJ.com in 2011: “I was in England working when I got the message to do *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.* Because I was in England – with the mods and rockers and Carnaby Street and all of that Swinging Sixties stuff happening – I thought it would be interesting to bring that into it.”

Stefania Zofja Federkievicz had been a dancer and movie bit player since her teens, with early credits as Taffy Paul. Her recent movies had included Westerns *McLintock!* (1963) and *Stagecoach* (1965), and stalker thriller *Die! Die! My Darling* (1965). MGM bought Powers out of a Columbia Pictures film contract for the series.
The concept’s newfound Anglophile accent led to an Englishman being recast as April’s more youthful Mark Slate. Noel Harrison, 32-year-old son of movie legend Rex Harrison, was a former British Olympic skier, turned folk singer. Apocryphally, U.N.C.L.E. producer Douglas Benton woke from sleeping in front of Johnny Carson’s Tonight Show to chance upon Harrison singing. Powers meanwhile later recalled she had a hand in Harrison’s casting: “I’d read an article about Noel … and thought it would be interesting if we could have a kind of mid-Atlantic couple, in keeping with the fashion that was going to hit America full-swing.”

Lean, laid-back, blonde and British, with some obvious similarities to U.N.C.L.E.’s original blonde bombshell David McCallum (Ilya Kuryakin), Harrison’s style was all camp Mockney mannerisms and slightly fey womanising, dropping ever-so-English words like “luv” into every line. The accent appeared to rub off on April, with Powers also adopting a very Chelsea delivery despite Dancer’s American upbringing.

With April now sporting U.N.C.L.E. badge number 22 and Slate as number 14, as in the parent series both reported to their largely office-bound boss Mr Waverly (80-year-old English actor Leo G Carroll). Waverly had his own sidekick inside U.N.C.L.E.’s New York HQ; 24-year-old Randy Kirby played Randy Kovacs, an U.N.C.L.E. trainee interning from high school. Hoping to become a fully-fledged field agent, Kovacs rarely ventured out of the office and Kirby was dropped after just seven episodes.

The series had begun shooting in May 1966, sharing stages with its parent show at MGM’s Culver City studios, Los Angeles. The extensive outdoors back-lots allowed The Girl from U.N.C.L.E. to ‘travel’ to not just New York but also France, Austria, London and many more global locales. Even MGM’s Wild West lot was shoehorned into The Furnace Flats Affair.

With each principal shoot taking around six days, each episode cost $150,000 to make, with April’s way-out mod wardrobe alone costing a reputed $1000 a time.

OPENING CHANNEL LINKS
When the show debuted on NBC at 7.30pm on Tuesday 13 September 1966 with The Dog-gone Affair, there were many format similarities with the parent show, which itself now aired Friday nights. Jerry Goldsmith’s theme tune remained, albeit rearranged with frenetic psychedelic harpsichord. Story titles continued to be structured The … Affair and Man’s four-act format was retained, each using witty onscreen subtitles. The famous whip-pan flashing lights sting between scenes was kept, while the U.N.C.L.E. globe and man emblem was naturally updated to feature a female figure.

There were two crossover episodes, with Robert Vaughan appearing alongside Powers in The Mother Muffin Affair, and Harrison similarly switching over to The Man from U.N.C.L.E. to assist Ilya Kuryakin in The Galatea Affair. Plans for a two-part crossover story called The Concrete Overcoat Affair, handing over across both series, were quietly dropped.

In another link to the parent show, April continued to use the famous U.N.C.L.E. pen communicator (“Open Channel D…” but possessed her own feminine arsenal of gadgets. A transistor radio was a disguised walkie talkie, an umbrella doubled as a radio satellite dish, and April’s charm...
bracelet was armed with exploding charms. Meanwhile, her oft-used perfume atomiser fired knock-out gas at any attackers. This however only highlighted one of the series’ chief drawbacks, namely April’s lack of fighting technique.

Sadly, she was no karate-kicking Emma Peel, and indeed in many fight sequences she appeared untrained to the point of near-incompetence. Norman Felton was reputedly less than keen on April being a proficient strong-arm agent. One publicity line reproduced in TV Guide all but admitted Felton felt the world was not ready for a tough leading lady: “Unlike her fellow U.N.C.L.E. agents, the ladylike April is not required to kill the bad guys,” went the promotional puff. “Her feminine charms serve as the bait, while her partner Noel Harrison provides the fireworks.”

Mark Slate is often called upon to rescue the sometimes klutzy Dancer, undermining any progressive credentials the show might have been aiming for.

Despite endless gun-toting publicity shots, April rarely carried a firearm, much less being seen to be proficient in them. Rare exceptions to this passivity saw April demonstrate sword-fencing prowess in The Atlantis Affair, and give a fair account of herself in a knife tussle with a female gypsy rival in The Romany Lie Affair.

Elsewhere there’s yet more Sixties sexism; when April’s not getting perved over by sweating, lusting villains, the producers needed no persuading to showcase Stefanie Powers’ appreciable physical charms. She briefly becomes a reluctant stripper in The Phi-Beta Killer, go-go dances in The Drublegratz Affair, performs a jazzed-up Dance of the Seven Veils in The Mata Hari Affair, and in any number of episodes falls into water as the camera lingers on her clinging attire. In The Fountain of Youth Affair she even mud-wrestles a Teutonic blonde, and all under the network censor’s nose.

**BATMAN INFLUENCE**

Many episodes were gadget-filled spy hokum interchangeable with The Man from U.N.C.L.E., albeit with a higher humour quotient (which Man itself also adopted during its 1966/7 season). Several utilised the classic U.N.C.L.E. template of an innocent bystander caught up in events – comic actor Dom DeLuise played one such role in The Danish Blue Affair, mistakenly eating a THRUSH microdot hidden in a blue cheese salad.

Producer Douglas Benton was the show’s driving force, pushing a comedic send-up angle. He was heavily influenced by Batman, then airing on rival network ABC and starring Adam West. Batman’s tongue-in-cheek comic strip style had been an instant smash-hit from January 1966 and Girl attempted to replicate its success by taking a similar campy comic strip spoof approach. It’s these most outrageous, fun episodes that really stand out.

One of the more ‘out there’ early episodes into production was The Garden of Evil
Affair, which saw an ancient Egyptian cult attempt to transfer the brain of their dead goddess into her descendant. For The Moulin Ruse Affair the whackiness was stepped up several gears, with villain Vladimir Toulouse (played as the double of Toulouse Lautrec by Shelley Berman shuffling on his knees with little shoes attached!) feeding senior citizens pep pills at his sinister health farm and attempting to kill April and Mark with explosive toy robots. Guest baddies were The Munsters’ Yvonne De Carlo and Russ Meyer’s Tura Satana, leading Toulouse’s retinue of Amazon women.

The Batman influence was clearest in a run of stories with comic strip super villains. In The Faustus Affair Raymond Massey was B Elzie Bubb, a failed comic book artist who dresses up in Devilish attire to gain a super weapon from an eccentric scientist (Tom Bosley) that bleaches everything white, so that Bubb can turn all of the great artworks of the world into blank canvases! The Dublegratz Affair featured a crazed composer using experimental music to trigger an avalanche and assassinate an Austrian prince. For The Mother Muffin Affair, Boris Karloff was dragged up as the titular villainess, an Old Mother Riley-like character living in a fantasy Olde Englanede.

Milder episodes still featured way-out plot elements; The UFO Affair had THRUSH use a flying saucer and alien costumes to scare away a town to carry out a bullion raid, while The Atlantis Affair, by noted Twilight Zone scribe Richard Matheson, featured crystals supposedly hailing from Atlantis that act as deadly laser beams. Though still played largely for laughs, The Fountain of Youth Affair, with a storyline by Psycho author Robert Bloch, featured some rare creepy moments as a de-aging serum suddenly wore off. Possibly the silliest episode of all The Carpathian Caper was seen by serious-minded U.N.C.L.E. fans as the worst episode in the entire canon. April and a newlywed couple are stewed in a giant bowl of soup by famed soup-maker Aunt Magda (Ann Sothern) and trapped in a gigantic pop-up toaster!

Sothern was just one of many notable guest stars, who also included John Carradine, Margaret Leighton, Edward Mulhare, Bonanza’s Pernell Roberts, Gena Rowlands, Ed Asner, Hermione Gingold, Grayson Hall and singer Peggy Lee. Most had clearly been instructed to enjoy chewing the scenery.

A LIMITED LIFESPAN
By 1967 viewers had arguably had their fill of spies, while the exaggerated camp cycle was only ever going to have a limited lifespan. Ratings on The Girl from U.N.C.L.E. started at number 23 in the charts but soon fell away. The otherwise supportive TV Guide magazine published a stinging review by Cleveland Amory, who said: “If a spoof is going to be effective, it must surely have, to begin with, something serious to spoof off from. Or failing that, it must at least be funny enough so that you don’t care whether you believe it or not. Unfortunately, this show has neither one nor the other. It’s about as believable
as women’s wrestling.” Amory continued; “Noel Harrison ... seems to conceive his role as a combination of court jester and village idiot.”

Powers and Harrison guested on Carson’s Tonight Show on 30 December. April even had a cameo in an episode of MGM’s domestic sitcom Please Don’t Eat the Daisies, aired 18 February 1967.


Warner issued a two-volume Region 0 DVD set in the US in 2011, with no UK release so far. The Girl from U.N.C.L.E. is admittedly perhaps an acquired taste, only for Sixties cultists who like a dollop of camp with their action series. Many Man from U.N.C.L.E. purists blamed Girl's headlong diversion into comedy for killing off the parent show soon after. The series was regularly pilloried for its comedic tone, but as Stefanie Powers reflected in 2011; “That was one of the points of it. Douglas Benton loved that kind of crazy comedy. He was a great devotee of the great comedians. He's the one who set the tone of the show. It was markedly different from The Man From U.N.C.L.E. It was satire. Because that half-hour series with the cartoonesque characters – Batman and The Green Hornet – had already been on. He loved that. He incorporated a bit of that into our show, which was adorable, I always thought.”

Powers neatly summed up: “It irritated NBC, who thought we looked as if we were having too much fun.”

Run of digest mini-novels, and five Gold Key comic issues were published, while the UK saw three further novels, three annuals, a set of A&BC gum cards, a weekly comic strip in Lady Penelope from January 1967, and Lone Star Toys’ garter gun holster set. The jazzy soundtrack was issued on LP in November 1966, a belated CD reissue came 42 years later in 2008.

Above: MGM’s groovy soundtrack album from the series featured music by Jerry Goldsmith, Dave Grusin, Teddy Randazzo and Richard Shores. Those in search of space-age bachelor pad vibes are advised to seek it out!
The mini-series *The Martian Chronicles*, which was given a prime Saturday evening slot on BBC1 for three weeks (those were the days!), was based on a series of short stories written individually for the pulp magazines *Thrilling Wonder* and *Planet Stories* by the highly regarded and respected science-fiction author Ray Bradbury.

They were compiled by him in book form in 1950 as *The Martian Chronicles* (in Britain it was originally published as the more obtuse *The Silver Locusts*, a reference to the armada of colonists’ ships heading for Mars).

The book was put into mini-series form thirty years later in 1980 as a co-production between the BBC, Germany’s Polytel, MGM, and NBC, as three TV movies for a ninety minute slot. "The Expeditions", "The Settlers", and "The Martians", each comprised of three half-hour short stories. The French also aired it, but first released it theatrically in a pared-down 90 minute version, an edit that would be interesting to see. Because a tighter edit would have been helpful.

The mini-series format had taken the television industry by storm in the mid-1970s, and all three networks were busily engaged in turning doorstep novels into star-studded multi-part monsters of short duration in parts, but long stay in individual segments. Thus, the networks could lure in advertisers with short run television events and big names in even bigger cast lists, and by the time anyone knew if this or that particular epic was going to bring in the ratings, it was a done deal, hit or miss.

Most of them were television equivalents of holiday novels, bonk-busters, or doorstep reads from big name schlockmeisters, but there were a few gems amidst the paste, including the superb fictionalisation of Watergate, *Washington: Behind Closed Doors*, and the legendary *Roots*. As with all television fads, over exposure and a few duds killed the golden goose, but the formula clogged up the schedules for a few years (one of those duds was NBC’s little known 1980 watering down of Huxley’s *Brave New World*, starring 2001’s Keir Dullea).

**PIECEMEAL APPROACH**

Directing *The Martian Chronicles* was workmanlike filmmaker Michael Anderson, who - while enthusiastic about the genre - had only George Pal’s misfire *Doc Savage, Man of Bronze*, and the dreary *Logan’s Run* to his name in his extensive but utterly ordinary credits. Neither film inspired much enthusiasm for anything more than technical competence. The piecemeal approach of *The Martian Chronicles* was well-suited to television, but meant that like earlier anthologies such as *The Twilight Zone* and *The Outer Limits*, some parts were better than others. However, one had to watch to find out, and so (while a series would obviously have followed in some form or another in the event of through-the-roof ratings), *The Martian Chronicles* was immune from cancellation.

Unfortunately, it wasn’t immune to the blundering Bradbury. Although the presence of Richard Matheson suggested (erroneously, as it turned out) that we might get a quality script, the end result was indifferent, and Bradbury found he could give the production only his grudging approval. He claimed to be neither disappointed nor thrilled with the end result, although that didn’t stop him from sabotaging the programme’s release at a press conference, where he peevishly told the assembled journalists it was “boring.”

Having had everyone’s efforts and expenditure trashed by the Great Man himself, NBC promptly replaced it as a prestige production opening the new 1979-’80 TV season, and instead ran it off in January. The BBC aired it nine months later. No-one begrudges Bradbury his honest opinion, but this sort of tactless pomposity from SF writers and aficionados when venturing into the real world is what frequently made science-fiction a no-go area for a presumed audience of misanthropes and children for so long in the TV and film industry.

**THE AUTHOR’S TALE**

Bradbury’s rise had been meteoric. From fanzine publishing in the late ’30s, he had spent the 1940s turning out sci-fi and fantasy for the pulps (his idols included Burroughs and Poe). By the end of the decade, with some
of his stories already collected in hardback, he was writing for more prestigious mainstream magazines, and in the early 1950s came the publication of *The Martian Chronicles* and his novel *Fahrenheit 451*, an expanded short story about book burning for Galaxy magazine titled "The Fireman", filmed in 1968.

But while Hollywood has occasionally dabbled with Bradbury’s material for film and TV, his most significant achievements were again in the early 1950s, when Hollywood first came calling. Of the three classic science-fiction films that formed the template for almost every other sci-fi film of the 50s - *It Came From Outer Space, The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms, and Them!* - the first two were based on Bradbury properties. While I've always found his prose twee and corny, there’s no denying his popularity, imagination, or influence, and he produced the occasional poetic and quotable line.

The wit and intelligence of Bradbury and Matheson is apparent from the off, with an amusing opening scene later ripped off by Disney’s *My Favourite Martian* movie two decades later. An unmanned probe is launched from Earth in 1976, and scans only desert. We told you so, say the small-minded, there’s no life on Mars or anywhere else, stop wasting our tax dollars. But what if a Martian probe landed in a similarly barren area of Earth, say the Sahara Desert, ask the dissenters?

Just over a hill is a Martian city, missed by just a few miles. But that’s okay. They don’t believe in us, either. Just under a quarter of a century later, in January 1999, NASA tries again. On Mars, a laid-back female alien tells her dour partner that she has had a telepathic encounter with visiting aliens from Earth. Despite a wealth of detail including descriptions and names, “Our scientists have made it abundantly clear that there is too much oxygen in Earth’s atmosphere to sustain life” snaps her humourless partner. When he realises the astronauts are real, and that his partner’s telepathic adventures are erotic and arousing in nature, he takes a weapon and kills the hapless and innocent Earthmen as they emerge from their ship.

It’s a crass, senseless and absurd conclusion to humankind’s first known alien encounter, but entirely credible.

Though one of the most accurate book to television adaptations in science fiction, 1980’s 6-hour mini-series of Ray Bradbury’s *The Martian Chronicles* was a bit of a mixed bag, as Jon Abbott recalls...
Maggie Wright, by the way, who plays the female Martian, has quite a few footnotes in pop culture, including Bond, the Beatles, other milestones in pop music and theatre, plus ITC, Hammer, and ’70s sex-coms before she moved on.

**TOY TOWN SPECIAL EFFECTS**

The series goes on to most closely resemble assorted episodes of The Twilight Zone, with a character from just one of Bradbury’s short stories, Colonel John Wilder (played by a tired-looking Rock Hudson), used to link all the various chapters. That some parts were better than others goes without saying, and is the curse of all anthologies. Unfortunately, much of the series’ potential mainstream audience probably departed during the opening ten minutes of toy town special effects and technobabble, and the rest during the first story, which is slow, difficult, and dull.

The model work that opens the production is appalling, unforgivably dwarfed and shamed by any colour sci-fi film of the ’50s… and these are the opening shots that will either sell or shoot down the film’s credibility. We are then asked to sit through lengthy opening credits, and the laborious launch procedure of the second mission, interspersed with exposition by Hudson’s mission controller.

Hudson was an extremely likeable leading man, best known for romantic comedies, but his career was on the wane at this point, and while way too professional to give a bad performance, he looks bored. The bit players used as reporters play as if they’ve been dragged in off the street, rather than sent by an actors’ agency. Once on Mars again, the actors playing the Martians, impressive behind imaginative costumes and painful glittery contact lenses, and inhabiting an attractive, yet alien set, are instructed to be whispery and mysterious. These languid scenes drag the production to a standstill. So ended the first thirty minutes, and the weakest part of the production.

That the collection got off to such a dismal start is regrettable, as when the second group of explorers set off a few months later (the date is now April 2000), the result is a grim, chilling mystery that holds the attention despite the ominous inevitability of what is happening. The three astronauts find a very different version of Mars than their predecessors, a Norman Rockwell small town America facsimile of Earth, complete with fully grown trees, birds, and children.

The three astronauts speculate and theorise wildly and creatively, but never submit the likeliest and most obvious possibility, which is that what they are seeing is an illusion. The Commander of the group (Nicholas Hammond of the short-lived 1970s live action Spider-Man series, also by Fries) recognises it as the town he grew up in as a child, and the first local they encounter tells them that this is indeed Green Bluff, Illinois, 1979. Is it time travel or is it heaven?

Even though everything around them has TRAP written all over it in neon letters, the three dummies walk right into it. As the story progresses, the stupidity and gullibility of the three astronauts becomes almost too much to bear. The Twilight Zone played the ‘dead relatives returning’ card better as “Death Ship”.

**THIRD EXPEDITION**

The final part of the first episode deals with the third expedition, a much larger one that finds the Martians were right to be fearful of Earth’s clumsy investigations. Almost their entire civilisation has died of chickenpox. The crude and vulgar Briggs, a modernised version of the oafish boy from Brooklyn seen in numerous 1950s movie space missions, could care less. It’s extraordinary that a lout like him would be on the mission, stranger still that Wilder defends him.

The thoughtful Spender (a fine performance by
Bernie Casey, the reluctant military man of *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, always the most dubious about Earth's right to “colonise” (invade?), is un luckily enough to have been the one to discover the bodies and see the art and hear their music. Angered and disgusted by the callousness and indifference of his colleagues to this terrible tragedy, he takes it upon himself to avenge the Martian civilisation.

The three stories in "The Settlers" concern the elderly parents of one of the astronauts from the second expedition, who have relocated to where he died, the inevitable arrival of missionaries, one of whom must deal with his own fallibilities, and the crass and tasteless Sam Parkhill, the other survivor of the third expedition, who wants to start a fast food franchise on Mars.

The first two stories start separately but finish together, merging into an hour-long yarns built around the colonists left behind (for some bizarre reason, as atomic war looms, everyone heads for home?!!). Christopher Connelly is the sex-starved man who discovers that old sexist truisms that one hundred women isn’t enough and one is too many. While Space: 1999’s Barry Morse works toward a time-worn twist ending that I won’t reveal here, but which you’ll surely guess.

*The Martian Chronicles* is a strange confection. Parts are wonderful, but it almost seems to have been made for the Briggs and Parkhills in the audience rather than the more sensitive souls who make up Bradbury’s readership. Hudson’s John Wilder pays lip service to the Martian people, but there is very little genuine reflection on the fact that humankind has destroyed two planets in just over ten years, wiping out an entire alien race with little more than a sorrowful, cynical shrug and a shake of the head. Spender’s viewpoint that they are little more than invaders calling themselves colonists is supported only by himself, and he is clearly in the minority.

It’s left to the audience to come to that conclusion for themselves from various parallels through history (disease, cruelty, and religion have always been our first three imports to other peoples), but this is conveyed less through the sophistication of the production as by its lack of sophistication. No-one, not even Wilder, expresses the slightest genuine interest in investigating the Martian culture until his awakening at the very end, in seeing the cities, translating the books, listening to the sounds and stories of an alien people.

*The Martian Chronicles* just isn’t as smart or as liberal as Bradbury, and is preaching only to the converted. The real Sam Parkhills of this world would probably have been more impressed with the *Martian Chronicles* mini-series than Ray Bradbury was, but most of them wouldn’t have been watching after the first botched but crucial thirty minutes. You, bright reader, will probably enjoy *The Martian Chronicles* if you haven’t seen it. It’s worth your time, just for a dozen or so beautiful moments. But it might have been so much better.
SUBSCRIBE TODAY BY FILLING IN THE ORDER FORM BELOW:

Should you not want to remove this page from the mag, (And why would you?) a photocopy or a simple letter request will be accepted!

We hope you enjoyed this great issue of INFINITY, the superb science-fiction magazine for the discerning reader. Every issue is packed with amazing features on your favourite sci-fi movies and television shows, with extensive episode guides and fascinating behind-the-scenes information. INFINITY is different from the rest of today’s science-fiction mags in that it caters to the older reader as well as the young sci-fi fan, and you can expect the finest of genre journalism within its pages. INFINITY is on sale every six weeks in most major newsagents, so it will be easy enough for you to find, but why not save yourself the shoe leather every month and get your copy of the magazine delivered to your door a few days before it even officially goes on sale?

Better than that, if you take a subscription you will also save money too, because a 12-issue sub gets you almost £8 off over 12 issues!

HOW TO ORDER

By PayPal to Ghoulish Publishing at yamieoverton@gmail.com, or if you prefer to pay by cheque or postal order, simply send the details asked for on the form opposite together with the payment to:

INFINITY Magazine, Ghoulish Publishing Ltd,
29 Cheyham Way, South Cheam, Surrey SM2 7HX

6-issue subscription Only £22.00 – 12 issues Only £40.00

INFINITY Overseas Subscription Rates:
Europe 6-issue subs: £42, 12 Issues: £80
USA and Canada/Rest of the World: 6-issue subs: £48, 12-issue subs £90

Terms and Conditions: We want you to know exactly how our service works and you can view our terms and conditions at www.infinitymagazine.co.uk
Contact Permission: We’ll always treat your personal details with the utmost care and will never sell them to other companies or third parties for marketing purposes. We will only contact you electronically to confirm your subscription or remind you your subscription is due for renewal. Should you not wish to be reminded via email when your subscription is due for renewal then please notify us by contacting yamieoverton@gmail.com
“WESTWORLD”

Starring YUL BRYNNER RICHARD BENJAMIN

JAMES BROLIN

Music FRED KARLIN Written and Directed by MICHAEL CRICHTON

Produced by PAUL N. LAZARUS III

PANAVISION® METROCOLOR
WESTWORLD

...where robot men and women are programmed to serve you for

...ROMANCE

...VIOLENCE

...ANYTHING

INFINITY

THE MAGAZINE BEYOND YOUR IMAGINATION
The opportunity to write and direct a screen adaptation of the Len Wein / Bernie Wrightson horror comic came at an interesting juncture in Wes Craven’s career. Having navigated his way out of hardcore pornography through exploitation cinema (The Last House on the Left, The Hills Have Eyes) into the horror mainstream (Deadly Blessing), Swamp Thing allowed Craven to demonstrate his ability to handle action scenes, location work, special effects and a relatively tight $2.5m budget. Unfortunately, despite bringing the project in on schedule and within Avco Embassy’s cost estimates, it would be nearly three years before A Nightmare on Elm Street earned him wider recognition (by which time any comics fans picking up Swamp Thing on VHS would probably wonder why it diverged so much from Alan Moore’s 1983 reboot).

The movie was clearly aimed at a family audience, although 88 Films has chosen to go with the ‘European cut’; this version features brief nudity excised from the original US theatrical release, most notably a sequence in which its well-endowed heroine Adrienne Barbeau (The Fog, Escape from New York) skinny-dips under the no doubt sexually frustrated gaze of mutated biologist Alec Holland (stunt man Dick Durock, who stepped in to play the beast of the bayou after Ray Wise (Twin Peaks) found the costume too cumbersome). Heading the cast as the urbane mad scientist Anton Arcane is Hollywood veteran Louis Jourdan (1977’s Count Dracula), who was most likely fulfilling a contractual obligation when he reprised the role in Jim Wynorski’s decidedly less effective 1989 sequel The Return of Swamp Thing.

In the excellent commentary track hosted by Sean Clark (Horror’s Hallowed Grounds), Craven readily admits there were problems with the production values – Jourdan’s climatic transformation into some kind of sword-wielding werewolf is more comical than comic book – but Swamp Thing remains a fun romp, much of its charm lying in its being produced in an era before computer graphics became a knee-jerk panacea for lazy film-makers.

Extras: Slipcase, 16pp photo-book and A3 poster (limited edition only); commentary by Wes Craven, which drops out during the nude scenes; interviews with production designer Robb Wilson King, critic Kim Newman, original trailer. The HD restoration is very nicely handled and my only regret is that 88 Films weren’t able to import the additional commentary by makeup artist William Munns and interviews with Adrienne Barbeau and Len Wein which appeared on Shout Factory’s 2013 Blu-ray (although that release omits Ms Barbeau’s steamy ablutions). SG.

Allan Bryce and Steve Green take a look at some of the latest cult TV, sci-fi and fantasy movie home video releases...

**Review Ratings**

- ★★★★★ = Excellent
- ★★★★ = Good
- ★★★ = Average
- ★★ = Below Average
- ★ = Abysmal


**★★★★**

The opportunity to write and direct a screen adaptation of the Len Wein / Bernie Wrightson horror comic came at an interesting juncture in Wes Craven’s career. Having navigated his way out of hardcore pornography through exploitation cinema (The Last House on the Left, The Hills Have Eyes) into the horror mainstream (Deadly Blessing), Swamp Thing allowed Craven to demonstrate his ability to handle action scenes, location work, special effects and a relatively tight $2.5m budget. Unfortunately, despite bringing the project in on schedule and within Avco Embassy’s cost estimates, it would be nearly three years before A Nightmare on Elm Street earned him wider recognition (by which time any comics fans picking up Swamp Thing on VHS would probably wonder why it diverged so much from Alan Moore’s 1983 reboot).

The movie was clearly aimed at a family audience, although 88 Films has chosen to go with the ‘European cut’; this version features brief nudity excised from the original US theatrical release, most notably a sequence in which its well-endowed heroine Adrienne Barbeau (The Fog, Escape from New York) skinny-dips under the no doubt sexually frustrated gaze of mutated biologist Alec Holland (stunt man Dick Durock, who stepped in to play the beast of the bayou after Ray Wise (Twin Peaks) found the costume too cumbersome). Heading the cast as the urbane mad scientist Anton Arcane is Hollywood veteran Louis Jourdan (1977’s Count Dracula), who was most likely fulfilling a contractual obligation when he reprised the role in Jim Wynorski’s decidedly less effective 1989 sequel The Return of Swamp Thing.

In the excellent commentary track hosted by Sean Clark (Horror’s Hallowed Grounds), Craven readily admits there were problems with the production values – Jourdan’s climatic transformation into some kind of sword-wielding werewolf is more comical than comic book – but Swamp Thing remains a fun romp, much of its charm lying in its being produced in an era before computer graphics became a knee-jerk panacea for lazy film-makers.

Extras: Slipcase, 16pp photo-book and A3 poster (limited edition only);


**★★★★**

Despite the presence of headliners Dennis Quaid (Innerspace, The Day After Tomorrow) and James Franco (Spider-Man, Oz the Great and Powerful), Kin feels oddly more suited to small screens than the large, with an open-ended finale which leaves you anticipating (albeit not rooting for) a spin-off TV series.

When the recently-widowed Quaid’s estranged elder son (Jack Reynor, soon to be seen in Scandi folk horror Midsommar) gets out of jail, he might be forgiven for thinking strained family dynamics are the biggest problem on his plate. Unfortunately, Reynor is in debt to a local gangster (Franco), adopted teenage son Myles Truitt (last seen in Black Lightning and here making his feature debut) has salvaged an extraterrestrial weapon from the site of an unexplained alien shoot-out (seriously, it’s time for a moratorium on that cliché) and Quaid has the misfortune to walk in on Franco’s gang as they’re robbing the construction company he works for. The two brothers escape, joining forces with a kind-hearted stripper (Zoe Kravitz, X-Men: First Class and Mad Max: Fury Road), but Franco is soon hot on their trail, as is a team of aliens eager to retrieve their bad-ass bazooka.

Although competently executed, the resultant road movie is crushingly familiar, and that’s not because I saw Bag Man, the 2014 short by Kin...
**THE LIKELY LADS (1976) Blu-ray.**
Out Now. Network Distributing. Cert. PG.
★★★★
Written by comedy legends Dick Clement and Ian La Frenais, *The Likely Lads* made its debut on BBC in 1964 and ran for three seasons detailing the adventures of Terry Collier (James Bolam) and Bob Ferris (Rodney Bewes), two ‘likely lads’ ostensibly living in the North East of England (though the show was filmed in Willesden Junction, London). They have been friends since childhood, and while Bob is the sensible one trying hard to get on with his job and with life, Terry is the wild card, always ready to lead Bob astray.

This big screen spin-off didn’t come along until 1976, by which time the lads had been back on the small screen in three colour seasons of *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?* This therefore has more of the melancholic edge of the latter show with Bob and Terry being forced to confront that things are changing. The homes they grew up in are being demolished to make way for soulless high-rises and their local pub is going to be underwriting adventures? Now I have nothing against ducks in general. Donald has always provided plenty of amusement over the years, and you can’t beat some nice crispy duck from the Chinese takeaway. It’s good with orange sauce too. But I do draw the line when it comes to films featuring dwarfs in obvious duck suits. Based on a Marvel comic book, the film opens like 2001 with a bombastic John Barry score and epic style credits. Then we find ourselves on a Planet of the Ducks in a far-away universe, where all ducks can talk and all Chinese takeaways are banned.

Everyday cigar-smoking, beer drinking working duck Howard is relaxing in his living room on his recliner reading “Playduck” after a hard day doing whatever working ducks do, when suddenly the chair starts vibrating. No, it’s not because it came from the duck branch of Anne Summers. Before you know it, Howard is yanked through space and deposited on earth. In Cleveland.

Once he has landed in an oil drum he sees a task that means enlisting the aid of goofy, baby-faced lab janitor Tim Robbins and eccentric nuclear scientist Dr. Jeffery Jones. It seems that a giant laser developed by Jones went haywire and was responsible for Howard’s wild interstellar ride. Now all that he needs to do is reverse the laser and send Howard back where he came from. The sooner the better as far as we’re concerned.

But a member of an alien race called The Dark Overlords of Evil also hitched a ride on the laser, and he craftily possesses Jones, who now feeds on electricity by plugging his tongue into a truck cigarette lighter.

The rest of the movie sees Howard and Tim Robbins attempting to rescue Thomson after the evil alien has kidnapped her, and involves lots of explosions and car chases plus an endless number of truly lame duck jokes. At one point Howard is attacked by a diner chef who wants him on the menu. “I can’t believe this planet. Fried eggs – quack!”

It doesn’t help that the central character is such an annoying little twerp – Howard the Duck might have been a more appropriate moniker. The script is excruciatingly bad throughout and even the action scenes are a bit ho-hum. The single most amazing thing about the movie though is how cheap it looks considering the vast amount of money spent. It has the feel of a mediocre TV movie and the pathetic special effects mark an all time low point for George Lucas’s own Industrial Light and Magic (ILM) team.

The movie was nominated for seven Golden Raspberry Awards in 1986 including Worst Director (Willard Huyck), Worst Original Song (“Howard the Duck”) and Worst Supporting Actor (Tim Robbins). It won four Razzies, for Worst New Star (“the six guys and gals in the duck suit”), Worst Visual Effects, Worst Screenplay, and Worst Picture, which it tied with Prince’s Under the Cherry Moon. George Lucas apparently stated back in 1986 that in 20 years time he believed audiences would rediscover the movie as a masterpiece. Bad call on that one, George. But then it seems like par for the course for the man who thought Jar Jar Binks would gain a huge fan base.

101 Films are releasing Howard as title 008 on their exclusive Black Label marking the film’s UK Blu-ray debut. Now here’s the thing, they are touting it as one of the essential cult films of the 1980s, and who is to say that they are wrong and we are the ones who are quacking?

Maybe it is a wacky, elaborately produced spoof of life, love, comic books and horror movies after all, and a misunderstood cult classic, ripe for rediscovery. What the duck do we know? I can tell you, however, that the film looks better than it ever has onscreen before on Blu-ray and 101 have done it proud with loads of extras. All that’s missing is that sachet of orange sauce.

**Extras:** Two commentaries - one with Wil Jones and Robert J.E. Simpson, another with Charlie Brigden and Dan Whitehead; *Howard: A New Cult Hero* - the BFI’s Vic Pratt discusses the movie; Limited edition booklet including *Howard the Duck* and *Marvel Comics: How The Duck Who Couldn’t Swim Survived a Sinking Ship* by Lister Appleton and *The Madness of King George* by Charlie Brigden - that’s George Lucas, by the way. Additional Extras on the Blu-ray. *A Look Back at Howard the Duck: Releasing the Duck news featurette, The Stunts of Howard the Duck, The Special Effects of Howard the Duck, The Music of Howard the Duck, Teasers.* AB.
The revival of the classic anthology series The Twilight Zone has generated a lot of excitement among fans of the show, though Jordan Peele’s 2019 reboot will surely never equal the original, which is still one of the greatest TV programmes ever produced.

Created by Rod Serling, the series explored issues of morality, the human experience, and even the nature of reality with thought-provoking, stand-alone stories featuring some of Hollywood’s best and brightest actors, writers, and directors. The Twilight Zone certainly had an impact on my life. I was still studying for my 11-plus when it popped up in the TV schedules one week and I begged my parents to let me stay up and watch it. Two episodes were screened in an hour slot at 11pm every Tuesday night, and I couldn’t believe how great they all were. The first one I saw was The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street, a fascinating story about a neighbourhood that swiftly descends into violence and anarchy when they begin to believe the power outage affecting their street might herald an alien invasion. Even at my young age the message was clear: humans can pose a greater threat to each other than any external entity!

Even better was Time Enough at Last, the tragic tale of hen-pecked (and far-sighted) bookworm Henry Bemis (Burgess Meredith), who survives a nuclear holocaust only for fate to deal him a further tragic blow. I later learned that Serling himself considered it one of his favourite episodes.

I quickly became such a fan of the show that I wrote a letter to the TV Times wanting to know about Rod, and guess what? They sent me a personal reply with a biography of the great man. I bet you wouldn’t get that kind of service nowadays. Anyway, I collected all the books and comics and even wrote a piece for The Radio Times on TZ when the BBC started screening the show in 1984. Of course the series has been made available on DVD and Blu-ray a number of times over the years, but I’m nevertheless extremely excited to see this truly spectacular new lenticular packaged limited anniversary Blu-ray Box Set from Mediumre Entertainment, which seems to me to be the ultimate collector’s set for die hard TZ buffs. Aside from including all five seasons of the programme - that’s a staggering 156 episodes - it comes with an 80-page companion book written by Twilight Zone Companion author Marc Scott Zicree, plus a 60-page episode guide. The box set also includes reproduction Gold Key Comics, postcards, and a new bonus disc with brand new extra features only available on the Anniversary edition.

These include two featurette docs, both completely in black and white and copiously illustrated with clips from the show. American Masters Presents: Rod Serling Submitted For Your Approval, a decent, though shortish biography of the late writer and producer that was originally produced in 1985 for the American Masters TV series. This offers up a fascinating portrait of the charismatic, chain-smoking Rod, who despite winning six Emmy awards and achieving worldwide recognition seems to have been riddled with self doubt. A copy writer from Syracuse, New York, he toiled for years as an unproduced screenwriter. Then in 1956, his 72nd screenplay, the intense corporate drama Patterns, was broadcast live (as most TV was back then) on NBC’s Big W Kraft Television Theatre. It won Serling an Emmy. He won a second statuette the following year, 1957, for Requiem for a Heavyweight, which starred Jack Palance as a washed-up prizefighter. The doc sort of skips over much of this early work, however, and quickly moves on to The Twilight Zone, where we get many interesting stories about his dealings with the cowardly network and sponsors who insisted he rewrite some of his best work. Passages taken from Serling quotes and writings are spoken by Mitch Greenberg, who does a decent impersonation of Rod, and there are plenty of photos of him at home, in Hollywood, in New York, and even as a paratrooper during World War II. Rod smoked up to five packs of cigarettes a day and died at the age of just 50 from complications arising from a coronary bypass operation - a tragic loss when you think what else he could have accomplished had he looked after his health better.

Also on the extras disc is Timeless As Infinity - Entering The Twilight Zone, a 2014 documentary exploring the history behind the show and the life of its creator. The documentary spends a bit more time on Rod’s early life and features exclusive interviews with Carol Serling (Serling’s wife), Jodi Serling (Serling’s daughter), Marc Scott Zicree (author/historian), Brannon Braga (Star Trek: First Contact), Wes Craven (Nightmare of Elm Street), Joe Dante (Gremlins), Martha Coolidge (Real Genius), Rockne S. O’Bannon (Farscape), J. Michael Straczynski (Babylon 5, Thor), C. Courtney Joyner (writer), H. M. Wynant (actor), and many more. Taken together, these two rather splendid docs provide a fascinating memorial to one of TV’s biggest talents.

‘Fame is short-lived,’ said Rod back in the early 1960s. ‘One year after this show (The Twilight Zone) goes off the air, they’ll never remember who I am. And I don’t care a bit. Anonymity is fine with me. My place is as a writer.’ But we do remember him, and this box set is going to hold pride of place in the collections of countless TZ fans.

Oh by the way, we have a great feature on the show coming up next issue from TZ expert Marc Scott Zicree. I know we’ve covered it before but this will be something special. As for my own favourite episodes, well, since you asked... Aside from the two already mentioned, I submit for your approval The Invaders (Jerry Goldsmith music and Richard Matheson script, robots invading a farmhouse), Eye of the Beholder (challenging everything we know about beauty and society in a brilliant shift of perspective), Nightmare at 20,000 Feet (William Shatner and a gremlin on a plane, what could possibly be better?), Nick of Time (Shatner again, this time stuck in a diner with wife Patricia Breslin and a devilish fortune telling machine - an excellent story whose message is that life is more about choice than luck). Walking Distance (Gig Young travels back in time to revisit the home town of his childhood. Touching, thought-provoking and deeply melancholic, especially knowing what later happened to the star in real life), and last but not least, To Serve Man (An alien race of tall, large-headed humanoids called Kanamits arrive on Earth with promises of aiding humanity. Don’t give away the ending to your friends, even if it IS hinted at in the title).

I’m sure that you will agree with me on some and disagree on others, but like my list of favourite films, my TZ top ten list keeps changing too. Ask me again later, especially after I’ve watched my way through this box set, and I’ll probably have made changes!

To pre-order the exclusive limited edition 60th Anniversary Blu-ray Box Set priced at £149.99, please go to www.burnightzone.co.uk. Please note the limited edition Box Set is not available from any other stockists.

**INFINITY COMPETITION TIME**

**WIN THE TWILIGHT ZONE 60TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION!**

We are delighted to be able to tell you that thanks to the generosity of Mediumre Entertainment we are giving away the stunning 60th Anniversary Edition Blu-ray reviewed in this issue. It’s £149.99 to buy, but one copy will be handed out for FREE to the lucky reader who can tell us the name of the very first episode of The Twilight Zone, starring Earl Holliman. This will be easy for TZ fans so we are expecting plenty of entries, and the winner will be selected at random by the editor of this esteemed publication. If you don’t win the main prize you may still be lucky enough to nab one of our two runner-up prizes of The Twilight Zone: The Complete Series Blu-ray, worth £49.99 each! Please send your entry by email or snail mail to the mag address, which you will find on page 5, and you have until May 25th to do so.
Though it has acquired a considerable cult following over the years, this surprisingly marks the Blu-ray debut for Richard Matheson's underrated time travel romance. Set in the Grand Hotel on Mackinack Island in Michigan, it's the story of a young Chicago playwright Christopher Reeve, in his first role away from playing Superman, who comes to the hotel and sees a photo of a 1912 actress who once played there. Her face looks familiar because he has met an old lady who tells him “Come back to me”, and she could have been that woman. After the old lady passes away, Reeve realises that he did indeed meet the actress, Jane Seymour, a long time ago in another life. In order to go back in time he checks into the same room he thinks he occupied back then and puts on the clothes of that period. Suddenly he finds himself back in 1912, when Seymour is under the controlling influence of Christopher Plummer.

Matheson (who can also be spotted in a cameo) scripted from his novel, Bid Time Return - which actually owes a debt of gratitude to Jack Finney's earlier novel, Time and Again, and the movie downplays its sci-fi elements in favour of delivering a sweet old fashioned romance that many viewers (the less cynical ones) will adore. It's like a decently extended Twilight Zone episode, nicely directed by Jaws II's Jeannot Szwarc and beautifully scored by the great John Barry using Rachmaninov's 'Variations on a theme by Paganini.' Looks absolutely brilliant in high definition, too.

**Extras:** Timing it Right - Cutting Together Somewhere in Time: Interview with film editor Jeff Gourson; A Place in Time: Kim Newman remembers Somewhere in Time: A Romantic Rendevouz with Allan Bryce. I should mention that the last extra doesn't mean I am now on Tinder. AB.

**LINK** (1986) Blu-ray.
Out May 14th. KL Studio Classics. Cert: N/A.
★★★★
After making the excellent Psycho 2, Cloak and Dagger and Roadgames, Aussie director Richard Franklin blotted his copybook by serving up this stodgy terror tale about a killer monkey. A very young Elisabeth Shue stars as a student of primatology who comes to an isolated mansion in Scotland to help scientist Terence Stamp in his experiments to train super-intelligent chimps. One of them is Link, (an orangutan, actually), who turns nasty when he realises he's going to be expected to die for science. Slow-moving and rather silly, the film has nice windswept Scottish locations that look even better on this 4K restoration and one good murder scene where a postman is pulled through a letterbox by the irate ape! Jerry Goldsmith wrote the perky music score, which predictably also makes use of the Kinks favourite, 'Ape Man.'

**Extras:** Commentary by Film Historian Lee Gambin and film critic Jarret Gahan; Deleted workprint scenes; Audio interview with director Richard Franklin; Jerry Goldsmith demo of the Link theme; trailers. AB.

**BEYOND ATLANTIS** (1973) Blu-ray.
Out Now. VCI. Cert: N/A.
★★
Whenever the name John Ashley appears on movie credits, sensible viewers hit the off-switch fast. Here the guy who put the Philippines on the bad movie map sets out with his buddies Patrick
Wayne (John's son) and Sid Haig to steal pearls from some natives on an uncharted island. This puts them into direct conflict with sinister George Nader, the leader of a murderous cult, and a race of amphibian people with ping pong eyeballs. No gore worth mentioning and precious little nudity. In other words a complete waste of time - even the scenery isn't that interesting. And I always thought that Atlantis was under the Atlantic Ocean, not the Pacific... Digitally restored from a new 2K scan of the original 35mm negative, this looks good, so it's not true when they say you can't polish a turd.

Extras: Commentary track by filmmaker, Howard S. Berger and film historian, Andrew Leavold; Video Interviews with John Ashley, Leigh Christian and Sid Haig; Trailer and TV spots. AB.


★★★★

In between leaving The Saint and starring in his first Bond film, Roger Moore made this low-key supernatural thriller which, while interesting to watch, plays more like a Hammer House Of Mystery and SuspenSe TV flick than a bona fide cinema feature. Moore plays Harold Pelham, a businessman executive who has a nasty car accident and momentarily "dies" on the operating table. When he recovers he finds his life being plagued by a mysterious alter-ego, who seems intent on wiping him out and taking his place. It's entertaining enough, and Moore is effective in a dual role, but this is basically a short story idea stretched out beyond its natural length. Basil Dearden, the director of the film died in a car crash the following year. Based on an episode of the Alfred Hitchcock Presents TV show, The Case Of Mr. Pelham, by Anthony Armstrong. The film's most ironic line of dialogue has Moore saying: "I'm not James Bond of the Secret Service, you know!"

Extras: Audio Commentary with star Roger Moore and uncredited writer/producer Bryan Forbes, moderated by journalist Jonathan Sothcott; Joe Dante and Stuart Gordon on the film, trailer. AB.


★★★★

Don't miss the Blu-ray debut of this delightful Launder and Gilliat comedy starring Born Free couple Virginia McKenna and Bill Travers as a nice young couple who inherit a run-down cinema called the Bijou, together with its three eccentric senior citizen staff members. Peter Sellers is the drunken projectorist, Margaret Rutherford the grumpy old ticket lady who was an organ player during the silent era, and Bernard Miles is Old Tom, the ageing doorman. In addition to the problems they face at staff level, the couple have to contend with a venue that earns its title of ‘The Flea Pit’. It doesn’t look like it has had a clean since the Boer War and is situated right next to a railway line - which causes the whole place to vibrate every time a train goes by.

All they want to do is to sell The Bijou, but after being offered a derisory sum by Hardcastle (Frances De Wolff), the gruff Northern owner of the town’s only rival - and much bigger - cinema, the couple decide to open for business in the hope of jacking the price of his offer up.

Clocking in at an all too brisk 80 minutes, this cosy little movie is a sheer joy from start to finish. Sellers is great fun in his old man make-up and the scene where he attempts to project films while in a plastered state is hilarious, as is the famous sequence where the radiators get turned up to eleven while punters are watching a western set in the blazing desert - Devil Riders Of Parched Point. Sweat pours off them and ice cream and Kia-Ora sales go through the roof!

Released as Big Time Operators in the USA, this is such fun, and though there is a distinct lack of extras on Network’s disc (licenced from StudioCanal), the quality of the black and white transfer is equally splendid. AB.


★★

Good old Cliff Richard. I was delighted to hear that everyone’s favourite Bachelor Boy was cleared of all charges in his recent brush with the Jimmy Savile police, and since the BBC aren’t playing his songs any more he’s taking all those missed royalties in one big lump sum. Having said that, Take Me High - Cliff’s last movie, and probably with good reason - is so utterly, embarrassingly awful that this new Blu-ray release will surely only appeal to his most die hard fans. Cliff plays a high flying merchant banker name Tim, hardly a role model even back in the 70s. Expecting a big promotion to his firm’s New York office, he gets sent to Birmingham instead, and when he starts belting out some of the film’s cheesy songs many among you may wish he’d been sent to Coventry.

Cliff’s rival in Birmingham is slimy fellow banker Hugo (Anthony Andrews), and his potential love interest is pretty Sarah (Deborah Watling), a restaurateur who he helps set up a new business selling... wait for it, Brumburgers. There’s even a song about Brumburgers, actually. My mouth’s watering just thinking about them.

In between belting out 12 (count’ em) largely unmemorable ‘new’ songs our cuddly, long-haired, and completely non-threatening hero manages to bring peace between eccentric capitalist Hugh Griffith and grouchy left wing politician George Cole. Nobody gets shot or run over, though the film does take time out to celebrate the dubious pleasures of fox-hunting.

More an extended music video than a proper movie, this looked dated even before it was released. Fair play to Cliff though. He’s a decent enough actor and he holds his own alongside some very good character performers, but this brumburger with cheese, was never going to do for Birmingham what Summer Holiday did for red double deckers. AB.
Forget Dixon of Dock Green and Z-Cars - the grittiest and most entertaining police drama ever produced for British TV was The Sweeney. Robert Fairclough gets his trousers on for a definitive look at a show that made TV history!

Right: John Thaw as Detective Inspector Jack Regan and Dennis Waterman as his partner, Detective Sergeant George Carter. You don't want to run into these lads when they haven't had any dinner!

Above: Jack and George take on a blagger in the opening scenes of Sweeney 2 (1978)

angsters, Strangers, The Professionals, Hazell, Target, Shoestring, The Chinese Detective, Bergerac, Dempsey and Makepeace, Bulman... all 1970s-1980s crime shows, all involving plenty of action, and all made entirely on film, or with a high ratio of location filming in urban settings. By the time Inspector Morse and A Touch of Frost arrived on screen at the end of the 1980s, the template was set for British crime shows, now devoted to the provinces, to be made solely on film.

The series that had set this whole revolution in TV crime fiction in motion – and, ultimately, TV production generally, as over the last forty years British TV drama as a whole has gradually transferred to a film-making model – was Euston Films’ The Sweeney (1975-78), run by Lloyd Shirley and George Taylor as an offshoot of Thames Television. Named after the Cockney rhyming-slang for the Flying Squad – ‘The Sweeney Todd’ – the colourful argot also delivered such evocative terms as ‘poppy’ (money), ‘bottle’ (courage) and ‘grass’ (informer), slang which has remained part of British TV’s fictional criminal landscape ever since.

Currently being repeated in the afternoon on ITV 4, with Minder (1979-1994) and The Professionals (1977-1983) (and what a great three hours that is for men of a certain age), it’s remarkable to see how many firsts there are in The Sweeney. It was shot entirely on 16mm film, abandoning TV studios for both exterior locations such as disused warehouses and city streets, together with real interiors, such as the Pinter Tower tower block, Heathrow Airport and numerous houses, banks and offices across London.

The Sweeney was also the first UK TV drama to be made by a dedicated, freelance film-making unit, paving the way for the modern market place of independent TV production companies. The series was – arguably – the first British crime series to really show how fallible and flawed the police were, with stories shining a light on the lack of co-operation between police departments, and unafraid to show criminals getting away. Finally, and most memorably, The Sweeney presented a cinematic level of violence and action, in the realistic vein of the Michael Caine gangster film Get Carter (1971) and the Dirty Harry movies – car chases, fist fights and shoot outs – previously unseen on British television.

This largely accurate depiction of a London Flying Squad officer’s work and social life in the mid-1970s was appropriated by what became known as ‘Lad’ culture, particularly in Loaded magazine in the 1990s. It’s easy to see why: according to The Sweeney, in the 1970s a Flying Squad officer could sort out some villains in the afternoon, celebrate in the evening with a lock-in – where he pulled the barmaid, naturally – roll into work the next day with a chronic hangover and smoker’s cough, take the edge off at lunchtime with a whisky and a meat pie (preferably Fray Bentos) then, in the afternoon, chat up the bird who did his typing.
That’s the folklore. The reality is that the series didn’t shy away from the downside of a service that could have a terrible cost on its officers: broken marriages, mental breakdowns, alcoholism, disabling injuries, police corruption and middle-aged disillusionment. It all features in the 54 episodes shown on ITV between 1975 and 1978, as well as the two feature films, *Sweeney!* (1976) and *Sweeney 2* (1978).

The dual nature of the series was symbolised by Harry South’s adrenalised theme for the opening titles – as, in a sequence of stylised, grainy stills for the first three series, Detective Inspector Jack Regan (John Thaw) and Detective Sergeant George Carter (Dennis Waterman), arrest two villains after a car chase – and the slower, melancholy arrangement of the music for the end title sequence, where Regan, Carter and Detective Chief Inspector Haskins (Garfield Morgan) left the Squad office after a long day. All of this was marbled with an earthy, sometimes surreal, sometimes laugh-out-loud humour that balanced out the damaging emotional and physical demands of being at the sharp end of policing in London.

That’s the folklore. The reality is that the series didn’t shy away from the downside of a service that could have a terrible cost on its officers: broken marriages, mental breakdowns, alcoholism, disabling injuries, police corruption and middle-aged disillusionment. It all features in the 54 episodes shown on ITV between 1975 and 1978, as well as the two feature films, *Sweeney!* (1976) and *Sweeney 2* (1978).

The dual nature of the series was symbolised by Harry South’s adrenalised theme for the opening titles – as, in a sequence of stylised, grainy stills for the first three series, Detective Inspector Jack Regan (John Thaw) and Detective Sergeant George Carter (Dennis Waterman), arrest two villains after a car chase – and the slower, melancholy arrangement of the music for the end title sequence, where Regan, Carter and Detective Chief Inspector Haskins (Garfield Morgan) left the Squad office after a long day. All of this was marbled with an earthy, sometimes surreal, sometimes laugh-out-loud humour that balanced out the damaging emotional and physical demands of being at the sharp end of policing in London.

That’s the folklore. The reality is that the series didn’t shy away from the downside of a service that could have a terrible cost on its officers: broken marriages, mental breakdowns, alcoholism, disabling injuries, police corruption and middle-aged disillusionment. It all features in the 54 episodes shown on ITV between 1975 and 1978, as well as the two feature films, *Sweeney!* (1976) and *Sweeney 2* (1978).

The dual nature of the series was symbolised by Harry South’s adrenalised theme for the opening titles – as, in a sequence of stylised, grainy stills for the first three series, Detective Inspector Jack Regan (John Thaw) and Detective Sergeant George Carter (Dennis Waterman), arrest two villains after a car chase – and the slower, melancholy arrangement of the music for the end title sequence, where Regan, Carter and Detective Chief Inspector Haskins (Garfield Morgan) left the Squad office after a long day. All of this was marbled with an earthy, sometimes surreal, sometimes laugh-out-loud humour that balanced out the damaging emotional and physical demands of being at the sharp end of policing in London.

That’s the folklore. The reality is that the series didn’t shy away from the downside of a service that could have a terrible cost on its officers: broken marriages, mental breakdowns, alcoholism, disabling injuries, police corruption and middle-aged disillusionment. It all features in the 54 episodes shown on ITV between 1975 and 1978, as well as the two feature films, *Sweeney!* (1976) and *Sweeney 2* (1978).

The dual nature of the series was symbolised by Harry South’s adrenalised theme for the opening titles – as, in a sequence of stylised, grainy stills for the first three series, Detective Inspector Jack Regan (John Thaw) and Detective Sergeant George Carter (Dennis Waterman), arrest two villains after a car chase – and the slower, melancholy arrangement of the music for the end title sequence, where Regan, Carter and Detective Chief Inspector Haskins (Garfield Morgan) left the Squad office after a long day. All of this was marbled with an earthy, sometimes surreal, sometimes laugh-out-loud humour that balanced out the damaging emotional and physical demands of being at the sharp end of policing in London.

That’s the folklore. The reality is that the series didn’t shy away from the downside of a service that could have a terrible cost on its officers: broken marriages, mental breakdowns, alcoholism, disabling injuries, police corruption and middle-aged disillusionment. It all features in the 54 episodes shown on ITV between 1975 and 1978, as well as the two feature films, *Sweeney!* (1976) and *Sweeney 2* (1978).

The dual nature of the series was symbolised by Harry South’s adrenalised theme for the opening titles – as, in a sequence of stylised, grainy stills for the first three series, Detective Inspector Jack Regan (John Thaw) and Detective Sergeant George Carter (Dennis Waterman), arrest two villains after a car chase – and the slower, melancholy arrangement of the music for the end title sequence, where Regan, Carter and Detective Chief Inspector Haskins (Garfield Morgan) left the Squad office after a long day. All of this was marbled with an earthy, sometimes surreal, sometimes laugh-out-loud humour that balanced out the damaging emotional and physical demands of being at the sharp end of policing in London.
Register and decided we'd go see *The French Connection* (1971). We came out, all excited, and said 'Yeah! That's what we should be doing!'

The actor chosen to front *Special Branch*'s replacement – initial titles were *McClean* and *The Outcasts*, before *The Sweeney* was settled on – was Mancunian John Thaw, (1942-2001), a close friend of Ian Kennedy-Martin, author of the pilot TV film, *Armchair Cinema: Regan*. The two had become close working on the military investigation drama *Redcap* (1965-66), in which Thaw took the lead as Sergeant John Mann and the writer was script editor.

“He was very funny,” Kennedy-Martin remembers fondly. “One of the luckiest actors in the world – extremely talented.”

David Wickes, who directed six episodes of *The Sweeney*, remembers Thaw being “100% professional. More than anything else in life, he wanted (to get the performance right)... He was magic to work with from that point of view, because he was always thinking.”

Thaw himself, 32 in 1974, found the character of DI John Albert ‘Jack’ Regan fascinating because he was “a loner, a very stubborn man... He's marvellous at his job and can't see himself doing any other work... And because of that attitude of making his work his whole life, he loses out on a lot of things.”

*Regan Returns*

In 2008, the same year that Gene Hunt was transferred to the 1980s in *Ashes to Ashes*, it was announced that *The Sweeney* would be returning to the big screen under the directorship of Nick Love, director of such tough fare as *The Football Factory* (2004) and *The Firm* (2009), with John Hodge, the writer of the equally hard-bitten *Trainspotting* (1996), supplying the script.

Problems with funding meant release of the film was delayed until 2012. By then, a neat piece of casting had put lovable hard man Ray Winstone – who had appeared as a young tearaway in the 1976 episode ‘Loving Arms’ – in the shoes of a 21st century Jack Regan, with the actor/musician Plan B taking on the role of Carter.

Although the film was praised for its action sequences and a dramatic shoot-out in the National Gallery in particular, the overall impression from the critics was, as *The Guardian* bluntly put it, of “a brainless joy-ride that ends up spinning its wheels in macho cliches.”

Nonetheless, the film was considered commercial enough to be remade in France as *The Sweeney: Paris* (2015), with Jean Reno taking the lead role of ‘Serge Buren’, in effect the third actor to portray Jack Regan.

Express and then decided we'd go see *The French Connection* (1971). We came out, all excited, and said 'Yeah! That's what we should be doing!'

The actor chosen to front Special Branch's replacement – initial titles were *McClean* and *The Outcasts*, before *The Sweeney* was settled on – was Mancunian John Thaw, (1942-2001), a close friend of Ian Kennedy-Martin, author of the pilot TV film, *Armchair Cinema: Regan*. The two had become close working on the military investigation drama *Redcap* (1965-66), in which Thaw took the lead as Sergeant John Mann and the writer was script editor.

“He was very funny,” Kennedy-Martin remembers fondly. “One of the luckiest actors in the world – extremely talented.”

David Wickes, who directed six episodes of *The Sweeney*, remembers Thaw being “100% professional. More than anything else in life, he wanted (to get the performance right)... He was magic to work with from that point of view, because he was always thinking.”

Thaw himself, 32 in 1974, found the character of DI John Albert ‘Jack’ Regan fascinating because he was “a loner, a very stubborn man... He's marvellous at his job and can't see himself doing any other work... And because of that attitude of making his work his whole life, he loses out on a lot of things.”

*Regan Returns*

In 2008, the same year that Gene Hunt was transferred to the 1980s in *Ashes to Ashes*, it was announced that *The Sweeney* would be returning to the big screen under the directorship of Nick Love, director of such tough fare as *The Football Factory* (2004) and *The Firm* (2009), with John Hodge, the writer of the equally hard-bitten *Trainspotting* (1996), supplying the script.

Problems with funding meant release of the film was delayed until 2012. By then, a neat piece of casting had put lovable hard man Ray Winstone – who had appeared as a young tearaway in the 1976 episode ‘Loving Arms’ – in the shoes of a 21st century Jack Regan, with the actor/musician Plan B taking on the role of Carter.

Although the film was praised for its action sequences and a dramatic shoot-out in the National Gallery in particular, the overall impression from the critics was, as *The Guardian* bluntly put it, of “a brainless joy-ride that ends up spinning its wheels in macho cliches.”

Nonetheless, the film was considered commercial enough to be remade in France as *The Sweeney: Paris* (2015), with Jean Reno taking the lead role of ‘Serge Buren’, in effect the third actor to portray Jack Regan.
THE GENE GENIE

In 1998, a boozy weekend in Blackpool by writers Matthew Graham and Ashley Pharoah, charged with devising a new TV series for the production company Kudos, resulted in what became a desire to recreate The Sweeney, their favourite cop show. “It was the first idea we had,” says Graham, realising that, although it was the last thing we wanted to do, [Kudos] would probably want a cop show.”

A wish to retain the more unacceptable aspects of Regan and Carter’s exploits, at the same time making them palatable with a disapproving modern voice, resulted in Life on Mars (2006–07). In tribute to its source material the show was originally called Ford Granada, which the mismatched duo of DI Sam Tyler (from 2006) and DCI Gene ‘The Gene Genie’ Hunt (from 1973) drove in the series. Life on Mars even had The Sweeney’s Peter Braghm arranging the stunts.

Dean Andrews, who played the thuggish DS Ray Carling, was well aware of the series’ heritage: ‘I’d grown up with The Sweeney and The Professionals so they were etched in my memory’, he says, while director David Drury, who worked on the Life on Mars sequel Ashes to Ashes, remembered “as a kid, watching The Sweeney and being blown away by it. It came on and I was riveted, because it was SO different and SO fast.”

Perhaps Life on Mars’ most significant endorsement came from the governor himself, Dennis Waterman, who said, “I really enjoyed it. It did take me back to The Sweeney days – they even had a brown Granada car like we had.”
The Sweeney's combination of authenticity, action and social observation was so well crafted it won over even highbrow critics. 'Regan' moved The Guardian's TV reviewer to praise 'John Thaw and Dennis Waterman as a particularly strong left-hook and right-cross combination', while the morning after 'Ringer', The Daily Telegraph recommended 'a very superior police thriller' that was "beautifully cast at all points."

There were some dissenting voices, however. Clive James in The Observer found the series 'boring and unsettling at the same time', while the Sunday Times put forward the view that in The Sweeney's 'implicit admiration of the coarse and the crude there is something naive about (the series), and something distinctly disagreeable about its gratuitous brutality.'

Gratuitous or not, for such a realistically violent series the show had a surprisingly big following among children. It was a constituency the show had a surprisingly big following among children. It was a constituency

witty style of the show while the second, the last episode of the first series, is unbearably tense as Regan's daughter Susie (Jennifer Thanisch) is kidnapped by criminals.

In Marshall's sombre 'Hit and Run', Carter's wife Alison (Stephanie Turner) is mistakenly killed. Her death results in one of the Sweeney's most affecting scenes, as Regan calls round to see a bereaved Carter with a bottle of whisky, promising to drink it "down to the label" with his sergeant. Marshall also wrote the series' only linked episodes, with two apiece for guest villains Col (Patrick Mower) and Ray (George Layton), a double act of wise-cracking Australian gunmen, in 'Golden Fleece' and 'Trojan Bus', and Tim Cook (George Sweeney) – a psychopath loosely based on the Black Panther – in 'Taste of Fear' and 'On the Run'.

Delivering challenging drama until the end, one of the fourth series' stand-out episodes was Richard Harris's 'Trust Red', in which Regan empathises with an ageing robber, Redgrave (John Ronane), who wants out.

As The Sweeney consistently featured in the top five of the UK TV ratings, the logical next step was to let Eric and Carter had joined the pantheon of heroic greats – a Super Action Heroes set of rubdown transfers entitled The Sweeney: Hit & Run. The adult market was catered for too, with singles releases of the themes to the series and first film, as well as nine original novels, the first three written by Ian Kennedy-Martin from ideas in unused scripts.

Conversely, Waterman's view of the two movies was the opposite of their performance at the box office. 'The Sweeney! was all outside our remit,' he reasons. 'It was oil barons and sheiks, and we suddenly had to have pictures of Big Ben and Tower Bridge. It was like when they film a (TV) comedy and move it into a totally different place. The second film was an absolute Sweeney job through and through. We were chasing blaggers and they were very, very tough blaggers. We had a fantastic cast, and I thought that film was infinitely better than the first one I thought it was terrific.'

A SEASONAL INSTITUTION

A telling sign of how much of a massive success The Sweeney had become came at the end of 1976, when Thaw and Waterman were invited on to the BBC's seasonal institution The Morecambe and Wise Christmas Show.

"We were ITV and they were BBC -- those sort of crossovers didn't often happen then," Waterman observes. "While we were doing it, John and I said, 'Alright, we've done this, why don't you do one of ours?' It was Ernie who picked it up immediately. 'What?' he said. 'You mean come on The Sweeney?'

When the comedy duo defected to Thames Television in 1978, a rematch was duly arranged, in the episode Hearts and Minds. "Once we got it written and started doing it it was hilarious," Waterman remembers. "John and I found it hard to keep straight faces a lot of the time."

"We thought the best thing was to let Eric and Ernie play themselves," Childs recalls. "Don Churchill and I wrote the script. It was a hoot; we were all on the floor with our legs in the air."

"That was when we knew we'd won," Wickes believes of the legendary comics' participation with the Euston Films' Fying Squad. "These were the great icons of comedy in the country and you get them to come to you."

At the beginning of filming on the fourth series in 1977, Thaw and Waterman had a fateful conversation: "John said, 'I don't know about you, but I'm gonna call it a day.' And I said, 'Yeah, I'm with you.' Had it been down to me, I'd have said, 'Yeah, I'll do another series,' as it was fantastic fun. But John was absolutely right; there's nothing sadness in seeing a great programme go downhill quickly.

Childs was in agreement with his two stars: "I think it was right to end it when we did. I did try to bring in new writers and directors to refresh The Sweeney, (but) I think it was running out of steam."
“It was sad, but there were other things to do,” Tom Clegg reflected. “Dennis would have gone on but nobody blamed John… I mean, four and a half years on one programme? He was a young, ambitious actor. I think it was about the right time… If it had been an American series, it would have gone on for at least another five years, it was so popular. They would never let it be as popular as it was.”

After being cleared of corruption in the last episode ‘Jack or Knife’, Regan angrily admits to Carter and Haskins that he’s had enough. As Regan is driven off in a taxi, Haskins says, “He’ll be back. He needs the job like an alcohol needs booz.” “Yeah?” Carter responds cynically.

Sweeney Legacy

The immediate legacy of The Sweeney could be seen in the BBC’s tough police thriller Target (1978-79) and London Weekend Television’s crime/spionage hybrid The Professionals. Both were directly inspired by The Sweeney, and most of the directors and writers who’d worked on the formative series helped shape both of its successors, with Peter Brajham arranging stunts for both.

More widely in popular culture, the tough, conflicted, loner copper archetype The Sweeney established has been referenced in productions as varied as Citizen Smith (1977-1980), Screenplay: The Black and Blue Lamp (1988), Thief Takers (1995-97), and Black Books: ‘The Blackout’ (2000). In 1993, the Comic Strip revealed ‘Shouting’ George of “The Weeney”, one of the ‘Detectives on the Edge of a Nervous Breakdown’, in a remarkably accurate, and affectionate, impersonation of John Thaw by Jim Broadbent. The Sweeney had made such a lasting impression that were two attempts to revive it, one in 1983 and the other in 1998. The first, proposed by Roger Marshall, had Regan seconded to the Hong Kong police.

“John was keen, and I had Ian Kennedy-Martin’s blessing,” Marshall reveals. “I got David Stirling, a major shareholder in Hong Kong television, interested, but ultimately nothing came of it.” In the 1990s, Regan’s creator himself pitched a revival of the series to ITV in which Carter would have been a Commander in the Flying Squad. The idea again came to nothing, but in 2003 Dennis Waterman, a Commander in the Flying Squad, and his partner George Taylor were making a film version of the top-rating TV series. “Lloyd Shirley, the founder of Euston Films, and his partner George Taylor were there, together with quite a lot of people from Thames Television. They were saying, ‘Look, they’ve been several of these TV film spin-offs and they’ve nearly always failed.’ You can see it from the point of view of the punters: ‘Can I can this on television, why should I get in the car and go down to the cinema?’ I was present at that meeting, and after all the executives said what they had to say, I – as someone innocent in the ways of senior management – said, ‘I think you’re absolutely right. I know The Sweeney audience by now, and we should put in the film what they won’t let us show on television.’ Everybody looked up. I’d made a lot of commercials, and this point was known in the commercials world as the ‘nerve point’ – the moment you hit the nail on the head. I said, ‘That’s how you should advertise it, and I’ll make damn sure I get an ‘X’ certificate.’”

To achieve this explicitly adult classification, David devised the graphic shooting of a
A policeman in a London street. "That was so nasty!" he laughs. "I met Frank Maher – a lovely guy – the stuntman who wore the police helmet we exploded a few years later, and he said, 'I'm still deaf, y'know! I knew that one scene would get us the X.'

"Nat Cohen, the head of EMI, was so keen on the film he agreed to provide finance for the whole enterprise and Thames didn't have to pay a thing," David explains. "After that, we had a nice lunch to celebrate with just about everybody from Euston. John Thaw was there and Dusty Miller, the director of photography... the Euston lads were hugely excited. Their attitude was, 'C'mon, we'll really show 'em in Hollywood!'"

Although Ranald Graham is credited with the screenplay for Sweeney!, David insists the truth is rather different. "Ranald – he's passed now – had worked extensively on The Sweeney TV series. Ted Childs, The Sweeney producer, brought him in, as he felt he had a cinematic sensibility. Truthfully, though, Ted and I wrote the film. All three of us were on a commentary we did for Sweeney! a few years ago and, at one stage, poor old Ranald couldn't answer a question and said, 'Listen, there's not a word of mine in this script.' Ted and I looked at our shoes and thought 'Oh my God, this sounds dreadful', but the truth is, as I say, that we wrote it."

The script looked to an international market in mining the popular vogue for 1970s conspiracy thrillers, such as The Parallax View (1974), Three Days of the Condor (1975) and All the President's Men (1976). "Ted's and my background, quite separately, was in documentaries and current affairs," David says, "so I knew what the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was. From there, we developed a big conspiracy based around the oil business."

Pitching the film at a global audience also explained the inclusion of London landmarks such as the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Bridge, largely absent from the TV series. "It's no good setting something in Paris and you never show the Eiffel Tower," David notes, "or you never show the Louvre, or you never show the Arc de Triomphe... Just a minute – why are you there?"

Despite the more ambitious scale of the location filming, David remembers that the Euston crew filmed around on the London streets in exactly the same way as they did for the TV series i.e. illegally.

"Euston practised guerrilla filming, as they called it. We put the camera in a plain Ford transit, bolted down to the floor, and we'd drive up, park it somewhere in the street, then bring past some motorcyclists going at 70 miles an hour. We had no permission at all, because the Metropolitan Police would never have authorised anything like that... What we'd do is use walkie talkies and say 'OK, go in 10 seconds, 9, 8... then we'd open the doors of the van, they'd come past, wallap! we'd shut the doors and drive off. Nobody could get the police on to us in time."

"The scene where John and Diane Keen are on the bus – if you were doing that today you'd cause a traffic jam. I must say that the great Billy Westley, the first assistant director, would say, 'I can't get you any more, you've got no second take – go!' because he knew we'd get closed down. His lads would go out there, wave all these cars past, apologise, and people would shout at us."

The other major difference from the TV series was in Regan – in the best traditions of the conspiracy thriller – becoming the lone, persecuted figure of reason. "I thought – and I discussed it with Lloyd, I think – that on television you can get away with a double act;" David suggests, "because week after week after week, you need to answer the question, 'Who's your hero talking to: who does he unwind to, who reigns him in when he's gone too far?' He needs an oppo, a sidekick, and Dennis Waterman was the one. At that time, he made his living out of saying 'Gunmor!' in disapproval, which he was very good at that. Anyway, I said to Lloyd, 'Have a look at Dirty Harry (1971) and see what the difference is.' He agreed, so we toned down the sidekick idea and kept Regan going as the central character."

David and the Euston team's hard work was rewarded when John Thaw won the Evening Standard Film Award for Best Actor in 1977. "John was a very good actor – really good," David observes. "A lot of actors haven't got that emotional feeling inside them, but he did."

"Much to his (sardonic) amusement, Dennis picked up the award for Best Newcomer, even though he'd been acting since 1960. Sweeney! was also nominated for Best Film and was up against some very distinguished opposition. "We lost the Evening Standard Award for Best Film to Richard Attenborough's A Bridge Too Far by a fraction of an inch, apparently. Of course, Dickie had a thousand, trillion-dollar film, with all the Robert Redfords on Earth in it, and all we had was our little Sweeney! But, I must say, Dickie was a really nice guy. Although I was no longer of any importance because I hadn't won, he came over and said, 'The only reason I got it is because I'm older! Now, come and have a drink.'"

Despite this critical acknowledgement, the biggest vindication for David was in Sweeney!'s box office returns. "It made a fortune," he states unequivocally. "The profit made by EMI Films was 1000% – £10 for every quid they spent on it. It was the most profitable film they had made for many years, and on the back of it they were able to afford to make The Deer Hunter (1978). I've still got a little hand written note somewhere from EMI that says 'Pin this on the wall.' It was the first week's take from the ABC, Shaftesbury Avenue, where Sweeney! premiered. I can't remember the actual figure, but it was something like £120,000 – and that was only from one cinema."

All these years later, David is looking forward to seeing his work in high definition. "I will get the Blu-ray," he promises. "We've got a little cinema here, I'll get my kids in and we'll show it on the big screen."

Reflecting on his pioneering work for Euston Films, and Sweeney! in particular, he says, "I'd like to close with four words - 'Those were the days.' It really was a golden time. We were very lucky.

**This headline appears on the Evening Standard in the film.**

Special thanks to Dennis Waterman and the cast and crew of The Sweeney, Dean Andrews, David Drury and Matthew Graham.

Sweeney! the film was released by Network on February 4. Robert Fairclough and Mike Kenwood are the authors of Sweeney! The Official Companion, published by Titan Books.
Why did you have to come here?” queried newcomer Laura Fraser in the trailer for BBC fantasy saga *Neverwhere*.

Though millions may not have realised it back in 1996, a star had just arrived in their living rooms. While some parts can open doors for aspiring young actresses looking for their big break, it was apt that the role which turned Laura from hungry thespian into a TV favourite was a character called Door.

At the time she had beaten stiff competition to play one of the key characters in that ambitious BBC Two fantasy. ('Key' character... 'Door'? No? Please yourselves.)

In the era of VHS, Spice Girls and four terrestrial UK TV channels, *Neverwhere* was a bold move from the Beeb. Decent post-watershed fantasy dramas were few and far between, but a William Blake-style saga of two worlds co-existing side by side clearly impressed brave BBC money types.

It was the brainchild of then-rising fantasy author Neil Gaiman and comedian/actor Lenny Henry. The former achieved cult success as the creator of hit comic *Sandman*. The latter, of course, was the *Tiswas* veteran who also proved an impressive dramatic actor in early BBC nineties drama *Alive and Kicking*.

They had worked together on a Comic Relief comic in the early 1990s; traded ideas; Gaiman wrote a long synopsis and faxed it to Henry. It was the seed from which *Neverwhere* grew.

Lenny could have created the show as a vehicle for himself, but the Dudley-born star preferred to stay behind the scenes and used his Crucial Films company to create the series.

Gary Bakewell, who played Paul McCartney in fifth Beatles biopic *Backbeat*, was cast as Richard, the London office worker plunged into another world after helping the wounded Door.

Decent post-watershed fantasy dramas were few and far between, but a William Blake-style saga of two worlds co-existing side by side clearly impressed brave BBC money types. It was the brainchild of then-rising fantasy author Neil Gaiman and comedian/actor Lenny Henry. The former achieved cult success as the creator of hit comic *Sandman*. The latter, of course, was the *Tiswas* veteran who also proved an impressive dramatic actor in early BBC nineties drama *Alive and Kicking*.

They had worked together on a Comic Relief comic in the early 1990s; traded ideas; Gaiman wrote a long synopsis and faxed it to Henry. It was the seed from which *Neverwhere* grew. Lenny could have created the show as a vehicle for himself, but the Dudley-born star preferred to stay behind the scenes and used his Crucial Films company to create the series.

Gary Bakewell, who played Paul McCartney in fifth Beatles biopic *Backbeat*, was cast as Richard, the London office worker plunged into another world after helping the wounded Door.

With able support from Doctor Who-in-waiting Peter Capaldi, and Hywel Bennett (as Mr Croup, a villain with prose more purple than a Prince song), the show struck a chord with many.

During a break from making her latest film, the sci-fi thriller *Transience* (aka *The Encounter*), I sat down with Laura and co-star Alice Lowe at Goldfinch Studios in East Yorkshire to talk about that cult TV series.

Laura, who’s elegantly dressed in a navy blue jumper and denim skirt, may be in her early forties, but she still has that youthful spark which wowed Crucial Films’ casting team in the mid-nineties.
I ask about her memories of Neverwhere. “That was my first lead in a TV show,” she explains. (Her time on US hits like Breaking Bad and Better Call Saul have thankfully not taken the edge off those dulcet Scots tones). “I think I was 19 or 20 or something. I got to know Neil Gaiman a bit, and he was very, very sweet to me. Really warm. “I love the character and it’s so brilliant, the idea.”

A WEALTH OF TALENT
Created in an age just before CG made anything possible, the BBC might not have had a huge pot of cash to play with, but what they lacked in funds they made up for with a wealth of acting talent.

“I think it was restrictive because of the budget, but we had some great locations,” explains Glasgow-born Laura. “I’d just moved to London and we were filming in all these great underground locations. We had to go to these abandoned tunnels that hadn’t been open since Victorian times, and each day at the end of the day we’d be black with soot,” she recalls.

“Then we got to take over the HMS Belfast, and all these amazing characters from this company called Weird and Wonderful, or something, and we had all these amazing costumes. It was wild and fun, but I haven’t seen it since the nineties.”

“I’m going to watch it, because I didn’t know you’d done that,” remarks Alice Lowe. “I love Neil Gaiman. Absolutely love him.”

“A Floridian friend who read the Neverwhere novel in 2002 had no idea there was a TV series until I told her. I wondered if Sacred Fools director Scott Leggett also came to the story in a similar way.”

“I had read the novel well before seeing the show,” he explains. “I had heard about the BBC series, but didn’t actually watch it until I had directed it.”

He adds: “I actually didn’t do the original adaptation. It was written by Rob Kazulic, a playwright in Chicago for the Lifeline Theater Company. I had been looking for a directing project to propose to the Sacred Fools Theatre Company in LA and when I found Rob’s script I almost lost my mind.”

Scott had been a Gaiman fan for a while, so it seemed like an ideal project to get his teeth into.

“For me, Neverwhere was the perfect fusion of fantasy, dark humour and whimsy. It was also very moving.”

“I wonder if there was any truth in the rumour that Gaiman had seen the staged version.

“Yes, Neil did come to see it, which was a total thrill,” enthuses Scott. “He was very kind and seemed to really enjoy it, despite being very jet-lagged. He took pictures and took the time to meet everyone.”

SPOTTY MEMORIES
Clearly Laura and Scott are both fans, but not every Neverwhere veteran was bowled over by the series.

In case you didn’t know it, Dave McKean is an artist and film-maker. Which is something of an understatement; a little like saying Rolls-Royce make cars.

He gave the world jaw-dropping offerings such as the 1989 Batman graphic novel Arkham Asylum; Gaiman projects Black Orchid, The Tragical Comedy or Comical Tragedy of Mr Punch, and the retina-searing fantasy movie Mirrormask, to name a few of his many acclaimed projects.

As a fan of Dave’s art before he became a film-maker, I would savour those flickering, compelling Neverwhere titles. They still look ahead of their time today.

I ask him what he recalls from working on the show.

“Just a few spotty memories really,” explains Dave. “I remember drawing and collaging a batch of production design artworks as it was in development, with Lenny Henry very much steering it, and hoping it would shine a light...”
He adds: "I remember visiting the location where most of the underground material was shot, and finding little alcoves and archways to frame my actors."

Most of Neverwhere was shot on video, which sadly gave it a cheaper feel in those grainy days before HD. Dave chose a different medium.

"I shot it on 16mm film, which is how they should have shot the whole thing, to give it a gritty, shadowy feel. I discovered the joys of distorting lenses, and using the flashes created by the film speed ramping up and down as the camera was turned on and off, and avoiding using clapperboards as they rendered all these little flashes and 'mistakes' useless."

He adds, "I didn't know how to use motion software like After Effects at the time, so I had to do everything frame by frame and cross fade all the images. I can't remember how the final comp was done. Maybe in Final Cut."

McKean added more than just visuals. Sadly for him, one of the world's most acclaimed tunesmiths was hired to create
the woozy theme.

“For presentation purposes, and just so I had a complete title sequence for my portfolio, I wrote a little piece of music for it. Brian Eno provided a rag bag of material, out of which the editors found the piece that is in the final show.”

When’s the last time you saw the series?

“I watched it once when it aired. I remember that Christmas, Radio Times (that’s the BBC’s own schedule magazine) published a column saying ‘A good year for...’ and ‘A bad year for...’, and in the ‘bad year’ column was ‘everyone involved with Neverwhere’.”

While Dave’s work on the show may be phenomenal, he wasn’t happy with the series as a whole and doesn’t think it deserves a remake.

“It’s homemade, rather than pushed through a Quantel Paintbox (a computer graphics workstation), which tended to create a rather plastic, homogenous look.

“And pure amateurish ignorance of what a usual title sequence is supposed to look like. Maybe that’s why it still looks quirky.”

If, like me, you are a fan of Dave’s work, the good news is there’s no shortage of new projects in the pipeline.

“I’ve just finished a book with Jack Gantos about a suicide bomber; the book is backed by Amnesty International, and no, it doesn’t glamorise suicide bombing - it’s an anti-violence book,” he explains.

“I’m just about to start work on a new graphic novel inspired by the writer Arthur Machen. I’m still working on my expressionist book Caligaro, and I’ve shot most of my fourth feature film Wolf’s Child, and so I’m editing that slowly.

“It’s anyone’s guess whether we’ll eventually see a new filmed version of Neverwhere. If we do, I’m guessing Dave might not be too keen, but I hope at least Laura Fraser and Alice Lowe are involved.

Gaiman and Henry’s Neverwhere may not be perfect. The erratic editing might irritate, but the ideas and characters are fascinating. The cast is also terrific; Laura and Patterson Joseph are especially good.

There’s a little of The Fisher King here, a touch of It’s A Wonderful Life there, and a couple of villains in the Diamonds Are Forever mould. Elements also pre-date big budget offerings such as Hellboy II and the Harry Potter saga.

There’s little chance of seeing it on TV (repeats have been few and far between), but I managed to pick up a new DVD copy online for £5.99.

It works far better as a binge-watch than the original half-hour episodes seen over six weeks. While it won’t be for all tastes, newcomers who like bold, exotic fantasy could do worse than give it a try.

And with Gaiman-inspired hits Lucifer and American Gods going down a storm on TV, I get the feeling that reboot is now only a matter of time.

With thanks to Laura Fraser, Alice Lowe, Straithie Film, Scott Leggett and Dave McKean for their help with this article. Transience (aka The Encounter) is due for release in 2019.
The late Peter Wyngarde’s lengthy career encompassed TV’s Jason King, Dr. Who, Flash Gordon, The Prisoner, The Avengers and many classic films. Mark Mawston was one of the last to interview him, and it wasn’t the easiest of tasks!
Peter Wyngarde's early life could be a film in itself and is certainly more eventful than many so-called biopics we see today. Due to his father being in the diplomatic services, the young Peter found himself as well travelled as some of the playboys he later came to play as an adult. However, his later childhood was far from glamorous.

While his parents were away in India and the young Peter was staying with family friends in Shanghai, the Japanese invaded and took over its International Settlement. Conditions in the camp were said to be horrific. Writer J. G. Ballard stated in his autobiography *Miracles of Life*, that "Cyril Goldbert, the future Peter Wyngarde, was a fellow internee at Lunghua Camp."

Ballard later wrote of these times in his book *Empire Of The Sun*, filmed by Steven Spielberg. Peter's younger siblings, Adolphe Henry and Marion Simeone, were under Swiss protection and thus exempt from internment and some of the terrible things Peter endured, which included having his feet broken by rifle butts for running errands in the camp for other prisoners, and being put into solitary confinement. To escape this harsh reality Peter began to work in the camp gardens then moved on to performing, giving the fireworks in the darkening skies outside were matched by those in the hotel lobby where we sat.

In 1956, just over a decade since the end of hostilities and his internment, he found himself in the United States starring in "Cyril Goldbert, the future Peter Wyngarde, was a fellow internee at Lunghua Camp."

Peter, after returning from Hollywood with what you once described as disillusionment after filming Alexander The Great, you became friends with Laurence Olivier through your friendship with his then-wife Vivien Leigh. It was Vivien who tempted you back to The States to star on Broadway where you won the Best Actor In A Foreign Play in 1959. How did this all come about?

I thought it was earlier than that. I did a play at the Theatre Royal in Windsor, a fantastic theatre. They had both come to see Heather Stannard as he was looking for a leading lady for a new play written especially by Christopher Fry at the time. We were suddenly told, “Lord and Lady Olivier are in to see the play.” Of course everyone started to act up like rats after that. I had the idea to play my part like Paul Scofield (A Man For All Seasons) for some reason, so that’s what I did. I don’t know why. I’ve done terrible things like that before, like play a character in the style of Noel Coward for some reason, which got me the sack. I did it rather well I thought. However on this occasion Olivier ignored me completely as he was there to see Heather Stannard.

Then I did The Good Woman Of Setzuan by Berthold Brecht, with Dame Peggy Ashcroft and who should be in but the Olivier’s. She (Vivien Leigh) had told me I had to audition for a play she was going to do (the acclaimed Duel Of Angels with Fry). I did the audition as it was the great Jean-Louis Barrault (Les Enfants Du Paradis) who was directing and we got on very well.

You returned to England to star in the controversial Siege On Sydney Street as well as in such popular TV programmes as Armchair Theatre before starring in The Innocents with Deborah Kerr. Although it was a small part you made quite an impact as Peter Quint. Small Part! What do you mean small part?

I meant in screen time, in The Innocents. What was Deborah Kerr like to work with?

Well we both hoped one day to star in the unmentionable play together.

Macbeth?

(Rather annoyed). You shouldn’t mention that! Get yourself up there and turn around three times! (This is an old actor’s superstition so as not to curse the play or the actor or the theatre, although more people seem to have died during Hamlet than Macbeth through the years).

My apologies! JK Rowling obviously stole that for Voldemort in Harry Potter!

(Unamused at the reference). I’m serious. Do it.

(After doing it in the hope the interview will continue) Back to The Innocents?

Deborah Kerr was marvellous. She was a wonderful photographer and interviewer. I’ve been lucky enough to meet many of the people whom I idolised as a child, from Doctor Whos on TV to Bonds on the big screen. It’s always a joy when you meet the actors who played these characters many years later to find they are even larger in life. Such was the case with Peter Wyngarde.

What follows is one of the most difficult interviews I’ve ever conducted. It also happens to be my favourite. On reading this interview back, one which was conducted a year or so before Peter’s passing and would prove to be his last, I can still see the sparks flying. I wanted to try and keep Peter happy whilst also trying to make sure that I didn’t buckle under the weight of some of his sometimes barbed responses.

Peter’s agent Thomas Bowington, who kindly arranged this interview and so brilliantly took over from Ed Mason at the London Film Fairs for many years, still thinks that I should have omitted certain questions, especially as regards the casting of Night Of The Eagle, though mentioning the unmentionable play didn’t help!

This is an interview I wanted to go out as it was, as unexpurgated and unabridged as possible, so here it is. Hopefully it’s a fitting testament to the man. He may have been many characters on stage and screen but the most fascinating character was Peter himself and one that I’ll never forget having the privilege to sit and talk to on that early afternoon in November near Guy Fawkes night, where the fireworks in the darkening skies outside were matched by this interview and so brilliantly took over from Ed Mason.
Two, with Patrick Peter as Number INFINITY episode of effete, stylish, mustachioed Peter's most Jason King Prisoner Above: (1966) The is, one of the most undervalued films in atmospheric. Your next film was and still the rain-streaked window, it's incredibly that scene, with Quint half hidden behind Yes, the most famous still from the film is simply because I was in it but that we were up on the back of her neck and it worked, not me afterwards that she felt the hair standing so SOMETHING was happening! So she told the next day and I took my small dog with do it again”. So, we shot the scene again very disappointed and angry with herself. There was no reaction from her character to the situation she was in and she left the scene very disappointed and angry with herself. So I said, “Don’t be angry Deborah, let’s do it again” So, we shot the scene again with me in it. We went to see these rushes the next day and I took my small dog with me. When it gets to the scene where she is walking down the corridor and Quint is behind the glass he (the dog) starts growling so SOMETHING was happening! So she told me afterwards that she felt the hair standing up on the back of her neck and it worked, not simply because I was in it but that we were both in it playing the characters correctly. Yes, the most famous still from the film is that scene, with Quint half hidden behind the rain-streaked window, it’s incredibly atmospheric. Your next film was and still is, one of the most undervalued films in horror history Night of the Eagle (aka Burn Witch Burn). It is the final piece of the jigsaw that makes up the great trilogy of supernatural films of the late 50’s and early 60’s; the others being your previous film The Innocents and Jacques Tourneur’s Night of the Demon (aka Curse of the Demon), with Dana Andrews, based on an M.R. James short story Casting the Runes. Although you were the mute threat in The Innocents, here you are the dashing and erudite leading man. Your naturalistic performance and those of the entire cast elevate this film into an absolute classic of the genre. Are you as surprised as I am that a film of such strength, penned as it was by Charles Beaumont, George Baxt and the great Richard Matheson wasn’t a hit at the time? Well the reason it wasn’t a success is because it was absolute rubbish. The original script was simply terrible. Crap.

But the script was by Richard Matheson, one of the great horror and fantasy writers off all time (I Am Legend and The Incredible Shrinking Man)! Matheson? A crap c*nt!

Really? I think he’s a genius and one of my favourite writers.

Well if the script I got was anything to go by. I certainly don’t! I threw the script out of the window! I then walked down High Street Kensington (where this interview is taking place) in a rage, because I thought it was such a lot of rubbish, when I saw this car in the window of Crooks. It was a Bristol 405. I went in and said “I like that car, how much is it?” He said “Five thousand seven hundred and fifty two pounds and tuppence” so I phoned up my bank and said “How much money have I got?” and they said “Thirteen shillings and sixpence,” so I phoned up my agents and said “So, you know that MARVELLOUS script I received today, its fantastic, can we please do it (laugh). That’s how we did it. What I did was throw all the rubbish out.

So you had a lot to do with its overall feel? As said I think it’s one of the most naturalistic performances of that period; the lines seem to be acted on rather than acted out? That’s the thing I think that elevates the film from those other more stagy offerings.

Well he (Matheson) got all the credit. He’s dead now isn’t he? It was rubbish. B movie to the fore. We went to see the première at the Hippodrome in Piccadilly and there was absolutely nobody in the audience. I went with John Schlesinger, Alan Bates and someone else. There was NOBODY in the cinema! It was the première! Nobody saw it at all then and nobody went to see it again.

I believe you were the third Peter that was offered the main role after Peter Finch and Peter Cushing had passed on it. I don’t know where you get this information. Peter Finch and Peter Cushing were with my agent. Where did you get that crap?

Well, mainly because it’s well documented in several books and articles, but the good thing is that you have just dispelled that, if that’s the case. Is that not so? Can we move on to something else?

Certainly. You moved away from film to TV for most of the 60’s. Saying that, however, the programmes you starred in are probably as iconic as any film from that celebrated decade, appearing as you did in The Avengers, I Love Lucy, The Champions, The Baron, I Spy, The Saint and famously as Number Two in The Prisoner. The episode of the Avengers called A Touch of Brimstone, based on the Hellfire Club, is now one of its most celebrated and notorious as it was banned in certain places. What was it like to work on? Marvelous. It was great fun. I did two or three... Two, that’s right. Yes, they banned that one in America. Are we going to go through my career? I know all these things. Why are you asking?

Because a lot of people will be interested in your views on them, Peter. For example that one episode led to you having a Marvel comic character named and based on you. (Surprised and now rather interested) Really? What was that?

It’s a character in the very popular X-Men comics, called Jason Wyndgarde (aka Mastermind), a cross between Jason King which followed and your own surname. Oh yes, I know of that. I think they are marvelous, although it should have the knighthood mentioned. They shouldn’t leave that out.

What was Diana Rigg like to work with? Marvelous, completely professional. Now, we started getting off on the wrong foot and there are other things I’d like to talk about now we’ve got all that fluff out of the way.

Certainly, please go ahead. Both Diana and Deborah were wonderful. Vivien was wonderful. They are all
tracks of that decade is ‘Neville Thumbcatch’, one of the great stony songs and a psychedelic masterpiece! It’s played a lot on BBC6 so they obviously get it now! Well thank you but Not Guilty! That was the producers. I agree they made a masterpiece and it’s my favourite piece on it too. It came about through RCA, who phoned my agent and said “Would Peter do some songs or something?”. He said “What do you mean” and they said, “Well, for example, would you ask him to sing some Frank Sinatra songs”. I said “I can’t see why, as he’s done it awfully well himself! Why on earth would you want me to cripple my voice as he sings so fantastically? How dare you ask me?”

So they asked “What could you do?” I said “I’d like to do something where I’m entertaining someone, she arrives and comes through the door and we take it from there” It’s a camp send up of Jason King!

Did you have a large contribution to the overall feel of the album? I wrote most of it myself, bar ‘Neville Thumbcatch’. It was supposed to be Jason King sending himself up.

I find it interesting that you did that at the height of that character’s popularity. That was quite audacious. Did the impact of Jason King simply just get too big? Yes, several times out of all proportions!

It got to the stage where I couldn’t walk in any capital in Europe without getting mobbed. It was like The Beatles. For example in Norway or Denmark, I can’t remember which one. I was given the Royal Suite, which I thought was ridiculous. I mean, why? Just because I’m an actor playing a part should I be given this ridiculous honour? I didn’t like it at all. I remember going on the balcony and looking down and there were all these people, which is why I’m convinced any actor could become President of his country for the same reason.

Were you surprised at the sheer amount of success? Department S was where the character started but it wasn’t long before he had his own show!

David Frost had a programme on a Saturday night, The Frost Report, which was going rather well but it was waning, it was going down and down, and some little guy, I’ve never met him, saw Department S and liked it so much he swapped it for the Frost programme and that’s how it went out, without any warning. After, the BBC, the lines were jammed with people asking “who is this Jason King, we want more of him”.

Which led to the character’s own show. You must have been in every magazine then. What was it like to be the rock star of prime time TV, where your image stared back at you from nearly every magazine cover? It was impossible to walk in the street. I simply couldn’t do it, everyone coming up to me. The reason I think it happened was that at that time it was wanted. That’s what people wanted at the time. That’s what happened with The Beatles, The Rolling Stones. It became an icon for no reason, but the fact that they wanted it at that time. They wanted someone who was well dressed, charming and who was funny and could send himself up. It was that quality that they really liked, the thing of someone completely different.
Was he the anti-James Bond?
Exactly, he was sending him up. It was just what people wanted and it was perfect timing. It wouldn’t work now.

Well people thought Austin Powers was just a send up of James Bond but I think it was just as inspired by Jason King as Bond. Did the success enable you to do exactly what you wanted and were you tempted to go back to the theatre?
I’m mad about films. I love films more than anything. I also love acting. Period. For me my ideal thing is directing and writing. I did a lot of rewriting on Jason King but what I love is directing and writing. I did a lot of rewriting on Jason King. I was doing that every night and I think that’s why they were successful as there wasn’t a character like him.

In one of your most famous roles you wore a mask at all times, as Klytus in Flash Gordon. Although you have your face covered, there’s a sense of power that emanated from behind that mask, a sense of nobility. But you must have thought “what can I bring to this part as I’m behind a mask”? Yes. Well it was a tremendous amount of trouble. Nothing was happening. When we first started, my voice came back as it was stopped by the mask. When we saw the rushes it was terrible and they said “You can’t wear that bloody mask as we can’t hear you”. Nothing came through it, no power, nothing. It was very difficult. The mask just went for several thousand dollars recently. The chap who bought it brought it to the 35th anniversary to show me. When he handed it to me I thought he was giving it back to me as a present but he took it away again!

We mentioned Lew Grade but what was Dino De Laurentis like to work with?
Laughs. Oh. What a man! One day I was on the set, I was always on the set as the Fellini sets and costumes were all around. And his secretary came to me and said “He wants you to have tea with him on Thursday” So I thought, “I wonder what’s happening here” as long time ago I was put under contract at Paramount and in the first film I was asked to do I was an English policeman in Hong Kong. It was unbelievably trashy, to do with smuggling or something and I said “Up yours, this really isn’t for me” so they suspended me. The next script that came along was War and Peace and I thought I must do this. At the same time my neighbour Peter Schaffer (Sleuth, The Wicker Man) offered me a film script called The Salt Land which was a wonderful part so I started to do it. It was sort of Orson Welles spoken by John Gielgud. Impossible. Impossible to play. John Clemens who was producing it said you can’t play this it’s impossible. You’ll need the presence of Welles and the vocal energy Gielgud has too! So I tried and of course I couldn’t do it. I couldn’t do Welles but it needed that stature. That kind of gravitas.

Halfway through I was called by Paramount as King Vidor was directing a test with Audrey Hepburn (for War & Peace). So I went over to do the test in Rome and that was it. Then just as we were finishing The Salt Land I got a call to say I need to be in Rome the next morning but I still had at least a week to finish on The Salt Land. So I had to make up my mind either to finish this, THEN go to Rome as I wanted to do it. I’d done a lot on The Salt Land and wanted to see how it came out but they said, delivered and intonated like a Victorian Father “If you don’t come out to Rome, goodbye to your Paramount contract, goodbye to War and Peace and goodbye to working with them again”. So I was sacked. I finished The Salt Land and lost the contract and the part in War and Peace. Who played it? - Henry Fonda! Completely miscast. He was a hundred years older than he should have been, and American with it.

Dino De Laurentis was that film’s producer! Now we cut to Flash Gordon which he was also producing. I’d never told him that I was the one who was sacked but was I was obviously worried. If I had he’d have had a heart attack. Luckily he’d just said nice things about me. I’d got to the office and his secretary said he had been away on business and was held up at Heathrow but not to leave, saying please don’t go. It turned out that why he’d gone to Amsterdam is that part of a set hadn’t been finished and they needed more money to get it finished! So he finally turned up and said (in Italian accent) ”Sorry I’m so late but what I want to do with you is to make you Invisible Man! Play or Not”? It would have been wonderful, if of course, Flash Gordon had been a success. It wasn’t.

It did well in Europe but it didn’t do well elsewhere, because a little c*nt, a little prick of a c*nt, did some videos of the whole film and sold them to a big America dealer. We were all going to do the US premieres. I was going to do New York because of my being on Broadway, as was Max
von Sydow and the James Bond guy (Timothy Dalton), he was going to Atlanta or something but we were all told to wait and then the whole lot was cancelled because of all these illegal videos had been sold. If I could find him now I’d choke him!

So, in effect, one person ruined the film for everyone involved in its making. Did you like the film?

Flash Gordon? I loved it! It had a marvellous opening. I got the first laugh! What was it; “Klytus, what plaything do you have for me today” and I say, what was it again? “An Obscure planet in the SK system. Its inhabitants call it EAARTHHHH” That’s right. It started the whole thing off. It was a wonderful film.

You said at the 35th Anniversary showing at BAFTA that it was a “group” experience. Well there’s a moneymaker right there, just like The Rocky Horror Show! They should re-release it. It’s much better in the cinema with audience participation.

Quite a contrast to Dr. Who, which you filmed in and around this time I’d have thought regarding sets and budget?

Well you say that but this episode (Planet Of Fire) was filmed on location in Lanzarote. We were treated like actors, nice hotels so not so terrible. It was unheard of to go on location!

Were there plans to continue the character of Klytus from Flash Gordon? It has been rumoured that there were.

I’m not sure we should mention that, but as it’s so long ago now, I’ll tell you. I’d rather not tell too many secrets as it isn’t that known publicly, although nothing happened. The idea was that after the ray went into Ming’s chest and he falls down at the end, a black hand comes in with the Klytus insignia and takes it and then there’s a question mark. That’s because what the author wanted to do was to have Klytus come back and because of the power of the ring, build an empire of his own and it happens, in ATLANTIS, under the water! That’s what would have happened if it wasn’t for that little shit spoiling things, especially for me. I suppose that it could still be done but that’s up to them. Nothing to stop it. The underwater theme would have been wonderful with all these gigantic sets.

There was a series with Rag “Crash” Corrigan, made the same year (1936) that the original Flash was released that had a lot in common with called Undersea Kingdom, so perhaps that’s where the idea for that came from. So that idea was there before all this. It was full of all sorts, even robots!

It would have been wonderful. Are we finished now?

Certainly and I’m glad we went off on a tangent as we did.

Well that was down to you!

(Laughs) Peter, before you go could I ask one last thing? If Jason King, like Austin Powers, had been frozen in the late 60’s and re-emerged today, what do you think he’d say about life in the London of today in his own ineffable style?

He’d go back to straight back to sleep! It’s all about TV now. If you are seen enough on that, people will see you as an idol, even if you are in a toothpaste commercial. Imagine what would have happened if Hitler had television? Just think about it. The horror of that thought is terrifying. If Germany had television then we’d have been kaput! What’s going to happen with Trump? That’s the proof in itself. That’s one reason why Jason King would want to simply go back to sleep! (laughs).

The author would like to thank Thomas Bowington of Bowington Management for arranging the interview as well as his help in understanding and who, as a friend as well as an agent, knew Peter the man rather than just Peter the icon.

As Thomas said, Peter gave very few interviews so this last one really was a journey on a road less travelled. Covering the ground we did, hopefully gave us all a better view of things, especially now in hindsight.
It starred Vincent Price and Peter Cushing and was described as: ‘The Wicker Man meets The Tomorrow People meets The Invaders’. Richard Molesworth reveals the drama behind the cult BBC radio drama...

In the early 1960s, writer Robert Holmes cut his teeth churning out scripts for such television potboilers as Knight Errant, Emergency Ward 10, Public Eye and Dr Finlay’s Casebook. In 1965, he wrote a couple of episodes of Undermind - a short-lived science fiction series made by ABC, which concerned an sinister alien infiltration of society at all levels - and had unsuccessfully pitched to write a story for William Hartnell’s Doctor Who. These early brushes with science fiction led Holmes to try and pitch his own genre series, titled Schizo, in December 1967.

His idea revolved around the science and genetics of evolution. Mankind would not evolve any further in any dramatic, physical sense, he reasoned, as evolution had already sculpted us to best suit the environment we lived in. Instead, he reasoned, mankind’s next evolutionary step would be that of mental capacity. People with mental issues such as schizophrenia, might merely be humans whose evolutionary development has failed (hence the title, Schizo). But this failure suggests that there might also be others who have successfully made the evolutionary leap to the next level. These Mark II Humans might be living amongst us, with higher than average IQs, and even facilities of ESP. They would also, he theorised, be devoid of any feelings of compassion, love, or affinity with the human race at large.

Natural selection would have equipped them to be better-suited to live on our planet than their human predecessors, and so these Mark II Humans would work in secret to try and destroy the human race from their places of concealment in society. Holmes’ series would concentrate on one man who has unearthed this evolutionary time-bomb ticking at the heart of society. That man is London-based neurologist John Baxter, who looks to expose the ‘aliens in the blood’ that are the Mark II Humans.

Before Holmes could get down to turning the nitty-gritty details of his series ideas into a script, he got sidetracked by Doctor Who, where a new production team had discovered his earlier, unused, William Hartnell story idea, and decided that they quite liked the concept after all. Holmes quickly turned it into a four-part story titled ‘The Krotons’, which went down well with the production team, and so he was asked to pitch some more story ideas.

Casting around for some quick inspiration, Holmes reworked his Schizo outline into a Doctor Who story titled ‘Aliens in the Blood’ in October 1968. With the Doctor mainly replacing the character of John Baxter, the ‘Aliens in the Blood’ storyline re-used the backbone of Holmes’ earlier ideas, and was largely set on a remote island in the Indian Ocean in the 22nd century, where Mark II Humans have begun to emerge in the native population.

Doctor Who’s then-script editor, Terrance Dicks (who undoubtedly ignorant of the origins of Holmes’ story idea), didn’t think the ‘Aliens in the Blood’ storyline suited the series. In particular, he found some aspects of the proposal (such as an idea that the Mark II Humans might be discernible by having a physical characteristic such as an extra-long thumb) to be too similar to the US TV series The Invaders, which had recently been screened in the UK on ITV. Ultimately, Holmes was persuaded to ditch ‘Aliens in the Blood’ as a Doctor Who story idea, and very soon after was commissioned to write a new story, ‘The Space Pirates’, for the series.

Simmering Away

As a result of these early successes, Holmes would find regular work writing scripts for Doctor Who over the next few years, but kept his Schizo series idea simmering on a back-burner. In September 1973, he had another go at writing a proposed series outline, this time re-titled as Aliens in the Blood. In this revamped version, the story starts on the remote island of Luig, where the only doctor on the isle, Gordon Dexter, has been found dead at the foot of a cliff. Two of his eminent friends and colleagues, the neurosurgeon John Cornelius and Professor Curtis Lark, arrive on the Isle for his funeral, and discover Dexter has left copious notebooks detailing his work he was undertaking.

They discover that Dexter, through working with the unusually large number of schizophrenic patients on the island, has discovered that these are merely the unsuccessful early outbreaks of a mutation that inevitably leads to the creation of Mark II Humans. Lark and Cornelius join forces when they realise the threat from the Mark II Humans is real, and extends far beyond the confines of the Isle of Luig.

Before Holmes could do anything more with his idea, he found himself offered the opportunity to replace Terrance Dicks as script editor on Doctor Who, which he accepted. While this occupied his time almost solidly for the next few years, he became more and more interested in trying to find a suitable outlet to pitch his series idea to. In February 1975, Holmes sent the idea into the BBC radio drama department, in the hope that it might make a good radio drama serial. Finally, in August of that year, he was at last commissioned to write a pilot radio script for the first episode of the series.

In typical BBC style, things then got very confused, very quickly. Holmes, as script editor of Doctor Who, was on a BBC staff contract, and as such, should have been commissioned for the pilot Aliens in the...
Also the writer he had lined-up to script the final six-part story of the season had to pull out of the commission completely. Doctor Who's producer, Philip Hinchcliffe, reasoned that there was no other way out of the problem other than to get Holmes to quickly write the scripts for final story of the season. All of which had to take priority over Aliens in the Blood.

However, the situation with Holmes' ill-fated Italian holiday somehow wasn't clearly relayed back to John Dyas, who hadn't had any contact with Holmes since April. By now, Dyas was leaving increasingly desperate messages with Robert Holmes' agent, and the Doctor Who Production Office, trying to find out what was happening with the scripts for his radio programme. On his return to England, Holmes wrote an apologetic letter to Dyas, which didn't dwell on his wife's recent ill-health, but did explain the various issues that had now arisen with the new Doctor Who season, all of which needed to take priority. Holmes very regretfully informed Dyas that he would have to pull out of writing Aliens in the Blood.

AGE-OLD BATTLE LINES
Considering how long Holmes had spent formulating the idea for the series, and the many attempts he'd had to get the project off the ground, this would have been a huge disappointment for him. Holmes didn't attempt to try mitigate the unfortunate turn of events with his wife's health and he appeared to be taking responsibility for the situation squarely on the chin.

However, John Dyas was livid at being let down by, what appeared on the face of it, a television writer putting the interests of a television series above that of a radio drama. To a radio producer, well versed in the age-old battle lines between the perceived superiority of television production over that of radio, the situation was untenable. The studio booking to record the radio series was less than two months away, and Dyas didn't have a single script, let alone the six he needed to record the series. All parties had to find a compromise position, and quickly. Robert Holmes and his agent, Jon Thurley, came up with a proposed solution. At the time, Thurley had another writer on his books who he represented, Rene Basilico. Basilico had written one or two minor television scripts up to that point, and had also scripted an episode of the radio series The Price of Fear, which Dyas had produced, back in 1973. Holmes was agreeable for Basilico to take over the writing of Aliens in the Blood, as long as he received due credit for devising the characters and situations of the series. Under the circumstances, this seemed the best solution, and so all parties agreed on this compromise. Basilico followed Holmes' template for the opening episode of Aliens in the Blood almost beat-for beat, setting up Lark and Cornellius's discovery of Mark II Humans on the Isle of Luig. But he abandoned the storylines and plot points that Holmes had, by now, come up with for the second and third episodes of the story, choosing in turn to take the storyline of the series in a direction of his own devising for all the subsequent instalments.

Basilico hurriedly wrote all six scripts over the next few months, with the script for the final episode being delivered on 13th October 1976. The studio recording dates for the series were pushed back to November 1976, and happily, both Price and Cushing remained available to play their roles.

Prior to transmission, the series underwent a last-minute name change, becoming Aliens in the Mind instead, although the reasons for this are undocumented.

The first episode was broadcast on BBC Radio 4 at 7.00pm on Sunday 2nd January 1977, and was then repeated the following Wednesday at 11.30pm, with each subsequent episode following this pattern for the next five weeks.

Although only running for this single series of six episodes, Aliens in the Mind has, over the years, attained a small cult status. Primarily because of the now-legendary profiles of actors Vincent Price and Peter Cushing, but some of this notoriety also stems from the close connections the programme has to the Doctor Who Production Office of the day. As a radio production, it's a beguiling mix of ideas that, at times, comes across as The Wicker Man meets The Tomorrow People meets The Invaders. And while it doesn't really break any new ground as a science-fiction-cum-horror drama, the production can be forgiven and all of its failings simply because of the complete joie de vivre that Peter Cushing and Vincent Price imbue the whole series with from start to finish.

The two lead actors just oozed such utter enthusiasm and joy at being in each other's company, that they made the act of listening to all three hours of the audio drama nothing short of a sheer pleasure.

The full series of Aliens in the Mind was released on CD a few years back by the BBC, and it's well worth seeking out if you're a fan of classic genre audio drama.
Avengers, Puppets & Time Travel

Richard Molesworth enters the world of Dennis Spooner, unquestionably one of the most influential figures in British genre television in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s...

Born in London in 1932, Dennis Spooner returned to his home town after doing a stint in the National Service in the early 1950s. “I decided to become a comedian,” recalled Spooner, when talking to Doctor Who Magazine in 1981. “I toured the clubs and the working men’s halls for a while, but being 22, it was very hard to become accepted as a comedian. I was told I was terrible by one act on one bill, a guy called Harry Worth, who then asked, ‘By the way, where do you get your jokes?’”

Spooner quit performing comedy, and graduated instead to writing comedy material for Harry Worth, who soon made the breakthrough into television with his own series. Spooner followed him into television, and his early writing credits include an episode of the then-new ITV soap opera Coronation Street, and a handful of episodes of the police crime drama series No Hiding Place.

In 1961, Spooner wrote two episodes of The Avengers, ABC’s new oddball crime series starring Ian Hendry and Patrick MacNee. The first of these, Girl on the Trapeze, is one of just three full episodes of the first series that still survives today - a film copy of this once-lost episode only surfaced in 2001, some forty years after it was shown. Alas, Spooner’s second scripted episode, Please Don’t Feed the Animals, is missing from the archives. “The Ian Hendry/Pat MacNee ones were, to all intents and purposes, straight thrillers with a slight variation,” Spooner later explained, in an interview with Time Screen magazine. “John Bryce, the story editor, set one limitation in that he didn’t want the usual rubbish, which is what they all say, but he wanted things which were ever so slightly unusual, which is why I set my first one in a circus.”

Spooner quickly demonstrated an aptitude for effortlessly grasping the quirky nature of the series (even in this nascent iteration, long before the outrageous campness of the later Rigg/Thorson years), coupled with a deft instinct for tight storytelling, and so began his association with a genre of programmes that required more than the usual amount of imagination and insight.

Teaming up with producer Gerry Anderson, Spooner wrote a couple of scripts for the animated puppet series Supercar, but the programme was cancelled before his scripts entered production. Its replacement in 1963 was Fireball XL5, and Spooner ended up scripting no less than nine episodes of the programme. He pitted Steve Zodiac and his crew against space pirates, marauding space clouds and mysterious new planets, while utilising the universe-wide setting of the series to its fullest potential, all in tight 25-minute episodes.

In 1963, Spooner was recommended by fellow writer Terry Nation (with whom he shared an agent) to Doctor Who’s first script editor, David Whitaker, who was trying to pull together story ideas for the BBC’s new sci-fi series. Whitaker found Spooner to be an ideal writer for the show, adding a light comic touch to scripts that, until now, the programme had been lacking.

After penning a historical tale The Reign of Terror, for the programme’s first series, Spooner was invited to replace Whitaker as script editor for the programme’s second year. Spooner accepted, and under his watch, Doctor Who saw the first line-up change since the series began, as Maureen...
O’Brian’s Vicki joined the TARDIS team.

Spooner also scripted two more light-hearted historical tales - ‘The Romans’, and ‘The Time Meddler’ - during his year working on the series. “I think we got the right mix of stories,” Spooner recalled some years later. “People have complained that ‘The Romans’ was too humorous, ‘The Space Museum’ was too intellectual, ‘The Web Planet’ was too weird, but that’s the thing, because we wanted a good mix. In those days, you turned onto Doctor Who and you really didn’t know what you were going to get.”

Though employed on Doctor Who, Spooner also retained his ties with the puppet worlds of Gerry Anderson. Fireball XL5 was consigned to history, and a new, all-colour puppet series was created to replace it in 1964, Stingray. Spooner scripted 12 episodes of Stingray during its run, before it, too was brushed aside by its creator. In 1965, Gerry Anderson unleashed his puppet masterpiece, Thunderbirds, onto the nation’s television screens, and Spooner scripted six episodes between 1965 and 1966.

CHEESY SPY SHOW
Spooner left the Doctor Who production team at the end of the show’s second series, but he was soon asked to briefly return, co-writing the epic 12-part tale ‘The Daleks’ Masterplan’ with Terry Nation, after Nation’s workload on a new ITC series, The Baron, got the better of him. Spooner then followed Terry Nation to ITC to work on The Baron, a cheesy spy show with a lead character who was an undercover antiques dealer and a part-time British Secret Agent.

“I was in a position where I’d left Doctor Who, because I wanted to work in film production,” recalled Spooner. “And Terry Nation was asked to story edit The Baron, and they wanted thirty shows, so he thought, ‘My God, where am I going to get thirty scripts from?’”

Nation and Spooner ended up writing the vast majority of the scripts needed for the series. Although under contract at ITC to work exclusively on The Baron, in 1966, Spooner would also briefly make his final return to Doctor Who for a couple of weeks, providing uncredited re-writes on Patrick Troughton’s debut story, ‘The Power of the Daleks’, partly because David Whitaker (who wrote the original scripts) had written far too much in his original scripts, but mainly because they needed a bit more for the Doctor to do. David’s script has a Doctor in it, but because it was written before Pat Troughton had been cast in the role, nobody knew how the part was going to be played.”

While working on The Baron, Spooner’s path crossed with producer Monty Berman for the first time. Spooner returned to The Avengers once more for the programme’s final series. His script for the episode ‘Look - (Stop Me If You’ve Heard This One) But There Were These Two Fellers...’ is perhaps one of the finest slices of camp, surreal, TV ever made. It pitted John Steed and Tara King against a pair of silent vaudeville performers-turned-killers, and featured John Cleese and Bernard Cribbins in delightfully comic guest roles.
CHAMPION COMBINATION

Berman and Spooner combined forces once more in 1968, and devised another hit show for ITC. The Champions featured a trio of secret agents who, in the first episode, are almost killed when their airplane crashes in the Himalayas during a secret mission. They are rescued by an advanced civilisation living in secret in Tibet, and are granted the powers of telepathy, ESP, and superhuman strength before being sent back home to resume their careers in espionage. Despite the rather far-fetched premise of the series, most episodes were little more than the usual run-of-the-mill spy stories.

As their stock rose in ITC, Spooner and Berman set up their own production company, Scoton Production, with ITC as their main benefactor. Scoton's first pitch - and ITC commission - was Department S, a spy drama with camp undertones, revolving around an elite trio of Interpol agents who specialised in unusual cases. The star of the show was undoubtedly Peter Wyngarde's Jason King, a louche, dilettante, crime writer (and who would heavily inspire Mike Myers' Austin Powers, a big budget - for the BBC - adaptation of the Francis Durbridge series of crime novels), and also wrote two episodes of Doomwatch, the forward-thinking science and eco-drama devised by Gerry Davis and Kit Pedler.

Department S may have closed its doors after its first series, but Jason King was soon back in business, in his own self-titled spin-off show, which Berman and Spooner produced for ITC in 1971. This was followed a year later in The Adventurer, a traditional spy drama for ITC, and which would be their last joint project together.

RETURN OF THE AVENGERS

Spooner returned to freelance writing, but didn't have to look too far for work. Gerry Anderson hired him to script an episode of his live-action spy drama series The Protectors in 1973, and then also asked Spooner to script some new material which was needed to enable Anderson to stitch two TV episodes of his sci-fi series Space: 1999 into one single theatrical release, entitled Alien Attack.

After production on both Department S and Randall and Hopkirk (Deceded) concluded, Spooner teamed up once more with Gerry Anderson to script an episode of his live-action sci-fi series UFO in 1970. He also found his services back in demand at the BBC, where he scripted an episode of Paul Temple (a big budget - for the BBC -

fantasy elements into most of his scripts. The episode ‘Gnaws’ saw Steed, Purdey and Gambit on the trail of a giant killer rat, while ‘Complex’ featured a deadly computer-controlled building. When The New Avengers finished after two seasons, Clemens launched a new programme, The Professionals, and Spooner joined the production team as script editor.

Spooner kept busy as a writer and script editor well into the 1980s, finding his talents keenly sought by the makers of programmes such as Bergerac and Remington Steel. His one dalliance with genre writing this decade came in 1984, when he scripted a particularly gothic episode of Hammer House of Mystery and Suspense, ‘And The Wall Came Tumbling Down’, which reunited him with his Jason King lead actor, Peter Wyngarde.

In the mid-1980s, as many of his old ITC programmes began to be repeated on ITV, or were released on VHS as the burgeoning self-through video market began to gain momentum, Spooner found that a new generation of fans were beginning to discover his back-catalogue of work, and were recognising and reappraising his contributions to the old shows.

‘In ITC at the time we were making products, just like Warner Brothers in the forties were churning out Humphrey Bogart films,’ Spooner noted at the time. ‘It’s only twenty years later that people would say, “My God, do you remember The Maltese Falcon...?”’

During the mid-1980s, Dennis Spooner became a popular figure at various science fiction conventions up and down the country, and his last public appearance was at the Doctor Who convention ‘Panopticon VII’ in early September 1986, when he regaled fans with tales of his time spent working on the early years of the series. Barely two weeks after the event, on 20th September 1986, Dennis Spooner died after suffering a massive heart attack, at the tragically young age of 53. He left an impressive legacy of writing work behind him.
COMPLETE YOUR COLLECTION TODAY WITH INFINITY BINDERS AND T-SHIRTS

T-SHIRTS

OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD DESIGNS!
ONLY £20 EACH (INC P&P)

Now’s your chance to show off your favourite INFINITY cover image with these INFINITY T-Shirts. Sporting six amazing images provided by our excellent artists, these quality Fruit of the Loom shirts come in all sizes, will enhance your wardrobe and make you the envy of your friends, or, friends! Just fill in the details and we will ship your T-Shirt/s to you within 28 days. (Black T-Shirts only)

INFINITY BINDERS TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE!

Now you can keep your back issues of INFINITY in pristine condition with these classy and durable binders. Solidly made with the INFINITY logo on the spine, each one holds a full 12 issues and will enable you to check back through your collection with ease.

ONLY £12 each (INC P&P) (UK Only)
Rest of World £17.50 (INC P&P)

INFINITY BINDER/s
£12.00 each, including P&P. (UK Only)
£17.50 inc P&P each for ROW

NB: Should you not want to remove this page from the mag. (And why would you?) a photocopy or a simple letter request (inc your payment) will be accepted!

I wish to order an INFINITY T-Shirt
Place a tick in the box next to the design you want, (above). Then, tick the box next to the size/s you need and then add the number of shirts you require:

Small: 
Medium: 
Large: 
X Large: 

I enclose my cheque/postal order for £ Made payable to Ghoulish Publishing Ltd.

Terms and Conditions: We want you to know exactly how our service works and you can view our terms and conditions at www.infinitymagazine.co.uk

To pay via PayPal, send your order to: yannieoverton@gmail.com, specifying what item/s you require. Please note that T-Shirts are not currently available on our website.

Contact Permission: We’ll always treat your personal details with the utmost care and will never sell them to other companies or third parties for marketing purposes. We will only contact you electronically to confirm your subscription or remind you your subscription is due for renewal. Should you not wish to be reminded via email when your subscription is due for renewal then please notify us by contacting yannieoverton@gmail.com

Name: ___________________________ 
Address: ________________________________________________
Postcode: ___________________________
COMPLETE YOUR COLLECTION TODAY
WITH OUR INFINITY BACK ISSUES

Terms and Conditions: We want you to know exactly how our service works and you can view our terms and conditions at www.infinitymagazine.co.uk

Contact Permission: We’ll always treat your personal details with the utmost care and will never sell them to other companies or third parties for marketing purposes. We will only contact you electronically to confirm your subscription or remind you your subscription is due for renewal. Should you not wish to be reminded via email when your subscription is due for renewal then please notify us by contacting yannieoverton@gmail.com

I wish to order an INFINITY Back Issue
£5.00 Each (INC P&P)

Issue Number/s: ______________________

Number of copies: ______________________

To pay via PayPal, send your order to:
yannieoverton@gmail.com, specifying what item/s you require.
Please note that this service is not currently available on our website.

I enclose my cheque/postal order for £ ______________________
Made payable to Ghoulish Publishing Ltd.

Name: ______________________
Address: ______________________

Postcode: ______________________

NB: Should you not want to remove this page from the mag. (And why would you?) a photocopy or a simple letter request (inc your payment) will be accepted!

INFINITY BACK ISSUES ARE AVAILABLE AS DIGITAL DOWNLOADS - GO TO OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS - WWW.INFINITYMAGAZINE.CO.UK

Each Back Issue
Only £5* (INC P&P)

* (INFINITY SINGLE BACK ISSUES ARE £7 FOR EUROPEAN PURCHASERS AND £8.50 REST OF THE WORLD)

INFINITY BACK ISSUES ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AS DIGITAL DOWNLOADS - GO TO OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS - WWW.INFINITYMAGAZINE.CO.UK

INF18
We’re sure you will agree that Infinity magazine just keeps better and better with each issue. Our sales are now moving faster than the babysitter’s boyfriend when a car pulls up outside and we are even in some branches of Sainsbury’s, so you can claim your Nectar points too!

Next time round we’ll be entering The Twilight Zone in company with Marc Scott Zicree, author of the legendary Twilight Zone Companion, who will be examining the subversive elements of Rod Serling’s legendary series. Mark Phillips will be looking back on Irwin Allen’s Lost in Space, including the day Mr. Spock confronted Will Robinson on a beach and U. S. President Lyndon Johnson ordered the Robinsons to drop their lasers! We also have a fab interview with Vitina Marcus, whose Athena the Lorelei became one of the show’s most memorable aliens.

If you were expecting Mr. Bond then you’ll be happy to hear we are looking back at Sean Connery’s Outland, or ‘High Noon in space’ as we like to call it, and we will be celebrating the fantasy and sci-fi movies of Trampas himself, the late Doug McClure. Audio sci-fi buffs will be delighted to hear we are going on record (and tape) on that subject, and on the cult TV front we’ll be remembering ITC’s The Adventurer, a Gene Barry show propelled by a mournfully majestic John Barry theme, and Callan, one of the greatest espionage thrillers ever created for the small screen. There’s a lot more too, but frankly if you’re not hooked by now you might as well stick to Woman’s Own or The People’s Friend.
Some of the finest writers in the field of genre cinema have been gathered together to take a new look at one of the most exciting periods in the history of fantasy. The Fantastic FIFTIES explores every aspect of the decade in film, from horror and sci-fi to adventure, westerns, noir, rock 'n' roll and even Walt Disney! Hemlock Books takes you back to the future in the film magazine with a difference. Colour and stereo sound. Widescreen and 3-D. Just pop open a Kia-Ora halfway through...

The Fantastic
FIFTIES
#7 - Teen Screams

Some of the finest writers in the field of genre cinema have been gathered together to take a new look at one of the most exciting periods in the history of fantasy. The Fantastic FIFTIES explores every aspect of the decade in film, from horror and sci-fi to adventure, westerns, noir, rock 'n' roll and even Walt Disney! Hemlock Books takes you back to the future in the film magazine with a difference. Colour and stereo sound. Widescreen and 3-D. Just pop open a Kia-Ora halfway through...

The Fantastic
FIFTIES

#7 - Teen Screams

Some of the finest writers in the field of genre cinema have been gathered together to take a new look at one of the most exciting periods in the history of fantasy. The Fantastic FIFTIES explores every aspect of the decade in film, from horror and sci-fi to adventure, westerns, noir, rock 'n' roll and even Walt Disney! Hemlock Books takes you back to the future in the film magazine with a difference. Colour and stereo sound. Widescreen and 3-D. Just pop open a Kia-Ora halfway through...

The Fantastic
FIFTIES

#7 - Teen Screams

Some of the finest writers in the field of genre cinema have been gathered together to take a new look at one of the most exciting periods in the history of fantasy. The Fantastic FIFTIES explores every aspect of the decade in film, from horror and sci-fi to adventure, westerns, noir, rock 'n' roll and even Walt Disney! Hemlock Books takes you back to the future in the film magazine with a difference. Colour and stereo sound. Widescreen and 3-D. Just pop open a Kia-Ora halfway through...

The Fantastic
FIFTIES

#7 - Teen Screams

Some of the finest writers in the field of genre cinema have been gathered together to take a new look at one of the most exciting periods in the history of fantasy. The Fantastic FIFTIES explores every aspect of the decade in film, from horror and sci-fi to adventure, westerns, noir, rock 'n' roll and even Walt Disney! Hemlock Books takes you back to the future in the film magazine with a difference. Colour and stereo sound. Widescreen and 3-D. Just pop open a Kia-Ora halfway through...

The Fantastic
FIFTIES

#7 - Teen Screams

Some of the finest writers in the field of genre cinema have been gathered together to take a new look at one of the most exciting periods in the history of fantasy. The Fantastic FIFTIES explores every aspect of the decade in film, from horror and sci-fi to adventure, westerns, noir, rock 'n' roll and even Walt Disney! Hemlock Books takes you back to the future in the film magazine with a difference. Colour and stereo sound. Widescreen and 3-D. Just pop open a Kia-Ora halfway through...

The Fantastic
FIFTIES

#7 - Teen Screams

Some of the finest writers in the field of genre cinema have been gathered together to take a new look at one of the most exciting periods in the history of fantasy. The Fantastic FIFTIES explores every aspect of the decade in film, from horror and sci-fi to adventure, westerns, noir, rock 'n' roll and even Walt Disney! Hemlock Books takes you back to the future in the film magazine with a difference. Colour and stereo sound. Widescreen and 3-D. Just pop open a Kia-Ora halfway through...

The Fantastic
FIFTIES

#7 - Teen Screams

Some of the finest writers in the field of genre cinema have been gathered together to take a new look at one of the most exciting periods in the history of fantasy. The Fantastic FIFTIES explores every aspect of the decade in film, from horror and sci-fi to adventure, westerns, noir, rock 'n' roll and even Walt Disney! Hemlock Books takes you back to the future in the film magazine with a difference. Colour and stereo sound. Widescreen and 3-D. Just pop open a Kia-Ora halfway through...

The Fantastic
FIFTIES

#7 - Teen Screams

Some of the finest writers in the field of genre cinema have been gathered together to take a new look at one of the most exciting periods in the history of fantasy. The Fantastic FIFTIES explores every aspect of the decade in film, from horror and sci-fi to adventure, westerns, noir, rock 'n' roll and even Walt Disney! Hemlock Books takes you back to the future in the film magazine with a difference. Colour and stereo sound. Widescreen and 3-D. Just pop open a Kia-Ora halfway through...

The Fantastic
FIFTIES

#7 - Teen Screams

Some of the finest writers in the field of genre cinema have been gathered together to take a new look at one of the most exciting periods in the history of fantasy. The Fantastic FIFTIES explores every aspect of the decade in film, from horror and sci-fi to adventure, westerns, noir, rock 'n' roll and even Walt Disney! Hemlock Books takes you back to the future in the film magazine with a difference. Colour and stereo sound. Widescreen and 3-D. Just pop open a Kia-Ora halfway through...

The Fantastic
FIFTIES

#7 - Teen Screams

Some of the finest writers in the field of genre cinema have been gathered together to take a new look at one of the most exciting periods in the history of fantasy. The Fantastic FIFTIES explores every aspect of the decade in film, from horror and sci-fi to adventure, westerns, noir, rock 'n' roll and even Walt Disney! Hemlock Books takes you back to the future in the film magazine with a difference. Colour and stereo sound. Widescreen and 3-D. Just pop open a Kia-Ora halfway through...

The Fantastic
FIFTIES

#7 - Teen Screams

Some of the finest writers in the field of genre cinema have been gathered together to take a new look at one of the most exciting periods in the history of fantasy. The Fantastic FIFTIES explores every aspect of the decade in film, from horror and sci-fi to adventure, westerns, noir, rock 'n' roll and even Walt Disney! Hemlock Books takes you back to the future in the film magazine with a difference. Colour and stereo sound. Widescreen and 3-D. Just pop open a Kia-Ora halfway through...

The Fantastic
FIFTIES

#7 - Teen Screams

Some of the finest writers in the field of genre cinema have been gathered together to take a new look at one of the most exciting periods in the history of fantasy. The Fantastic FIFTIES explores every aspect of the decade in film, from horror and sci-fi to adventure, westerns, noir, rock 'n' roll and even Walt Disney! Hemlock Books takes you back to the future in the film magazine with a difference. Colour and stereo sound. Widescreen and 3-D. Just pop open a Kia-Ora halfway through...

The Fantastic
FIFTIES

#7 - Teen Screams

Some of the finest writers in the field of genre cinema have been gathered together to take a new look at one of the most exciting periods in the history of fantasy. The Fantastic FIFTIES explores every aspect of the decade in film, from horror and sci-fi to adventure, westerns, noir, rock 'n' roll and even Walt Disney! Hemlock Books takes you back to the future in the film magazine with a difference. Colour and stereo sound. Widescreen and 3-D. Just pop open a Kia-Ora halfway through...

The Fantastic
FIFTIES

#7 - Teen Screams

Some of the finest writers in the field of genre cinema have been gathered together to take a new look at one of the most exciting periods in the history of fantasy. The Fantastic FIFTIES explores every aspect of the decade in film, from horror and sci-fi to adventure, westerns, noir, rock 'n' roll and even Walt Disney! Hemlock Books takes you back to the future in the film magazine with a difference. Colour and stereo sound. Widescreen and 3-D. Just pop open a Kia-Ora halfway through...

The Fantastic
FIFTIES

#7 - Teen Screams

Some of the finest writers in the field of genre cinema have been gathered together to take a new look at one of the most exciting periods in the history of fantasy. The Fantastic FIFTIES explores every aspect of the decade in film, from horror and sci-fi to adventure, westerns, noir, rock 'n' roll and even Walt Disney! Hemlock Books takes you back to the future in the film magazine with a difference. Colour and stereo sound. Widescreen and 3-D. Just pop open a Kia-Ora halfway through...

The Fantastic
FIFTIES

#7 - Teen Screams

Some of the finest writers in the field of genre cinema have been gathered together to take a new look at one of the most exciting periods in the history of fantasy. The Fantastic FIFTIES explores every aspect of the decade in film, from horror and sci-fi to adventure, westerns, noir, rock 'n' roll and even Walt Disney! Hemlock Books takes you back to the future in the film magazine with a difference. Colour and stereo sound. Widescreen and 3-D. Just pop open a Kia-Ora halfway through...