

*The Avengers / Patrick Macnee  
Fan Network Newsletter*



*Special  
Feature  
Issue*





# Issue Number Ten

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## Ramblings

There are a couple of important items to bring up here. First off, please notice my new mailing address on the title page of this issue. As of the first of July, I will be moved back to my home-town of Kansas City, suburb thereof. The post office box is rented already and mail sent to the Longmont address after I move will be forwarded, but I urge you to change over to the new address as soon as possible to avoid confusion and delay. My new home address is as follows: #7 Redwood Court, Belton, MO 64012 USA. Please use the PO Box for mailing, however, since I have had a bit of trouble with my mail box being raided and want to avoid losing anything!

Anyone with orders out to me for anything... please be patient if they are not filled immediately and I will get to them as soon as allowed. If you have not heard from me within a month after writing, please drop a line to be sure that things have not been lost or misplaced in the move. Thanks.

Next, you will notice that this is a 'Special Feature Issue' of the Newsletter! I contacted Patrick Macnee about doing a Question & Answer interview for the club and his response was most gratifying. The following pages contain the questions sent and Mr. Macnee's beautifully detailed answers, transcribed from tape word-for-word as much as possible.

Because of the length of this special feature there might be some regular features left out... probably the plot synopses and "Meanderings". In view of what is replacing them, however, I didn't think you'd mind! Unless something else comes up, we should be back to normal by issue #11 (the synopses for "House of Cards" and "Love All" will be in the next regular issue). Also, from the rough draft of this issue, it would appear that we will be a trifle short of material on other "Avengers" stars. As before, the next installment should remedy that.

One last thing... I don't yet know my new phone number. Most likely, it will be in the next issue. If anyone wishes to call, you can get it from Directory Assistance. Now, on to the goodies!





*Interview*

*with*

*Patrick Macnee*

Q: Since you're best known for your role in "The Avengers" I suppose that we should start with that. What is your opinion of the character of John Steed?

A: "The Avengers", obviously, is what made one known. It started in 1960 with a man, Ian Hendry, went into Honor Blackman, '62, '63, early '64, then laid off for a bit and went onto film with Elizabeth Shepherd. That didn't work out. After three months they had tests and engaged Diana Rigg. She stayed with it for a year and a half... I think 39 episodes. Then Linda Thorson took over until they finished in '69 and was finally out-rated to such an extent by "Laugh-In". Also, the show had lost its original impetus and it finally folded.

The character of John Steed was purely created as a name, as an opposite type to the rather steady doctor. At first you never knew whether he was evil or good. He was a shadowy sort of person. I remember the producers saying after the first two shows, "Well, you don't seem a very interesting character. Try and think up something a bit more lively." That's when I got the idea and based it on various people; my father, Ralph Richardson in the film "Q Planes" with Olivier in which he played a man who had a stick and, in his case, a homburg hat and was a Scotland Yard detective, and my commanding officer in the Navy who was a dandy and a very, very brave man indeed.

Steed I was stuck with as a name and it stayed. Underneath was steel and outwardly he was charming and vain and representative of the type of Englishman that, I suppose really is more valued abroad. It's not really the case in England now at all. In fact, I approve of all the changes because now the wealth in England is being more evenly distributed and, as you've just learned, we're even much more polite. Not because she's a conservative, not because she's a woman, but we have a woman Prime Minister. A very, very competent lady. We'll see how it goes.

The character of John Steed was evolved and it was merely an extension of myself in circumstances which you wouldn't normally encounter in real life. Hopefully, during the war one had encountered very frightening actions of the Germans off the coast of



Holland and France with a certain amount of equanimity covering, I imagine, tremendous fright underneath. But the idea was to be calm and cool under fire. The Steed character evolved from that.

Also, one's attitude to women is not chauvenistic. It's always been sharing. Women, to me, are not women but persons and consequently we're all persons. The fact that we're the opposite sex just enables the race to continue and causes, hopefully, a lot of pleasure between both parties. But basically we all talk the same language and hopefully we all have the same aims in life. So we really ought to use that in "The Avengers".

On the other hand, we use our own caprices. We've got Honor Blackman in black leather, partly because it was better than wearing a skirt when she was doing sort of violent action. The character was based on Margaret Mead, the anthropologist who just died, and Margaret Bourke White, the famous photographer for "Life" magazine and evolved, of course, in comic strip form to a woman tossing men over her shoulder and doing karate chops.

It was an idea before its time to show women in the positive sense and not in the receptive, submissive sense and I find that exciting and interesting. We used a lot of sexual fetishes - leather, bondage, whatever - in a very, very light way. But than Cecil B. De Mille had been doing that in the 20's and 30's and under much heavier censorship. In other words, we titillated. I used to call it the upside down show. One used to take a situation and turn it slightly or tilt it a little and give it just that slightly subverted sort of look which, I think again, was before its time. I think "The New Avengers", unfortunately, has tried to stay abreast of its time instead of once again being ahead of its time and consequently we're now a bit behind our time. I think possibly this is the swan song of "The Avengers".

I might possibly do a film with Diana Rigg meeting later on somewhere, possibly in the United States. People are interested in doing it. But basically I think I've had my time as John Steed and I now am deeply grateful to him. Of course I'm known and greeted over most of the world as a result, which

I enjoy because I love meeting people. But now I think... it's time to explore new areas as I have been doing on American television.

I probably will now do a Tom Stoppard play, "Every Good Boy Deserves Favor", which is the one with the full symphony orchestra with music written by Andre Previn in a Shostakovich sort of style. The play is sharp, witty, abrasive, ironic. Hopefully I shall be doing that in Chicago, Detroit, New York and around cities in Canada, certainly Toronto and Montreal. We'll see. I'm leaving myself open and sitting out here in the country and trying to work on the script for the Stoppard play... and answering just a few of your questions.

Q: How have you changed the character (of Steed) with each of his successive partners?

A: Yes, I did change the character. With Ian Hendry I never did anything consciously. I hadn't been acting for a long time, I'd been a producer working on the Winston Churchill series, "The Valiant Years". I just played it as myself, I suppose. Ian Hendry was such a volatile character and brilliant actor and writer. We put a great deal more into the series, really, than was there and that's how it started. I passed that knowledge that I gained from Ian Hendry onto Honor Blackman. We also had such wonderful Johnny Darkworth music. We had a feeling of alertness and it came mainly from Ian Hendry's mind and Peter Hammond who was a wonderful director. It went back to the early style which they used to have in Germany and so, again, tilted the world on its side and the people in it. It caught the public's fancy in England. We won the Variety Artists' Award and all those things same year as the Beatles did, in '63. But it basically caught the public's fancy and you can never explain why these things happened.

Now with Diana Rigg, because the lady before just didn't work... the woman needs to be, in a biological sense, an aphrodite. In other words, a woman, but one who runs like a man. In fact, the part that Honor Blackman originally played... she played the remaining scripts which were left over,





which were written for Ian Hendry. He'd left and decided to go into the movies... there was an actors' strike and so there was a long gap, about five months. So Honor came in playing virtually a man and turned it, in her own inimitable way, into a character-like person, but with strong tendencies which were met by my seeming disarming, outward casualness which would take it over to the area of camp or remotely sort of... gay would have been fatal. We trod a very, very gentle narrow line.

But I did change, yes. Certainly from Honor Blackman. We looked at each other, we had a nice submerged humour and we had deep respect for each other and we were nearer the same age. When Diana came in she was only 28, but she had this total, complete technical comedic style and sparkle and surity and assurance. In fact, she was so good that it sharpened, in a sense, my own comedy style which was there. I noticed this the other day. I just met a man who is a drummer up in one of the hotels here and he's a north country Englishman with a very refined, sharpened wit and I found that I had got a bit rusty sitting quietly out here and hearing the cow bells and things. I enjoyed this sharpening. Diana did that sharpening. I also had a great personal affection for her and admiration as an actress. Indeed the affection has spread over and beyond to now where she is starring in the West End in Tom Stoppard's "Night and Day" and has had a baby. I'm deeply fond of her.

My style sharpened and changed considerably. Also, we were doing it on film which necessitated a different form of approach. The scenes that we did together, with the full approval of Brian Clemens, were largely rewritten by Diana Rigg with the aid of myself. She had a very sharp, lively imagination and understanding of what a woman, a woman like her anyway, would say in any given situation, however outrageous and mad. So consequently our teamwork was extraordinary. We were a working marriage, in fact, it was so close.

Now when Linda came in I was naturally very disappointed that Diana had left and felt that Linda was far too young and inexperienced. She was only

Honor Blackman as Cathy Gale in "The Avengers"



20 at the time. But I had a great affection for her. I think they led her, particularly the American ABC Television Network which presented the show and subtly infiltrated their ideas, went for the obviously what they call 'sexy' over here. I don't quite know what that is except that everything is presented in a more direct way and not in such a subliminal way. We had implied sex, but not run-around-shouting-about-it. And I think that Linda was led into the trap of trying to be overtly sexual. Also, she did not have the experience to do the highly complicated technical scenes. Therefore, they invented a character called 'Mother' who I felt, although interesting, made the show more ordinary. The show became more ordinary, not because of Linda but because of the authorities pitting Linda into a situation which didn't work for the series. I consequently became slightly avuncular and, of course, was considerably older on this occasion.

Therefore, subtly my character Steed had to have changed from the man to Honor Blackman to Elizabeth Shepherd for a short time who was deeply attractive, a very womanly woman and really rather above anything as... she was too serene and lovely and Marlene Dietrich for anything like "The Avengers" in which you have to be a bit quick and turn-about and cocky the way that Diana Rigg was. Then into Linda Thorson in which one became avuncular.

I'm afraid in "The New Avengers" with the two of them, although we could have worked out the most beautiful threesome idea, I've become the elder statesman and I don't think that suits Steed at all. I've lost a lot of my cheekiness. I don't think age really comes into it. I didn't check enough on the character in these new ones. I'm too serious. I think the writers, particularly Brian Clemens, wanted to show me in a more serious light and I think they thought they were doing me a favour in doing so, but I don't think they were doing the show a favour.

I think the character of Steed has got to be not remotely associated with any establishment... to be not necessarily anti-establishment, but to be alone and to be his own man. I was in motor torpedo boats during the second World War and I remember at the

end of the war before we wondered what we were going to do when we got back into civil life we all thought of gun-running or smuggling rum or doing something slightly outrageous in the Mediterranean or the Channel or somewhere. He always has slightly the outlook of a pirate (which, incidentally, I'm playing next with Elke Sommer in "Stunt Seven"). Free form, free of restraint and I think that's the character of Steed, but with an observance of the small forms. As I say, I've always treated the trivial as important and the important things as trivial. So, again, he turns the world upside down a bit without in any sense wanting to be in a state of anarchy or a Trotskyist, but just somebody who probes and questions and alerts people to the fact that underneath a perfectly ordinary eccentric exterior or a quiet, graceful manor house or an odd knitting group or people who are trying to work out new chemical reactions to the rains and the skies and the flowers... behind that there's always some form of Mafia or evil. That's what we want rooted out. God knows, all the eccentricity, the fun, the genius and the humour that the world possesses must remain and must be preserved, but it mustn't be exploited by evil people of which, unfortunately, there are a great many about.

Q: Would you make any further changes in Steed if another series of "New Avengers" was shot?

A: I think I've answered the thing about whether a new series would be made. I don't think that Steed really has a life beyond, and I didn't think he had one before. I only did the remake because they asked me to and I felt it stood a chance. I don't think it worked but a lot of people enjoy it and that's fine. I just don't think they have enough money to do another lot.

I think CBS would take it on late night forever. They wouldn't take it at prime time because they don't think it's a prime time show. I'm inclined possibly to agree with them. I think it's what they call a 'cult' show which, in fact, I do mention on



the Dinah Shore show which I did on Monday. I don't know when that will be seen. I was on with Dr. Dyer, the author of "Eroneous Zones" and Melba Moore and the young boy, Greg, from "BJ and the Bear". It was a very happy Dinah Shore show and I talked quite a lot there about "The Avengers". CBS have said it's fine for a late night show, but it's a cult show. In other words, it appeals to a few people a great deal and therefore is seen late night.

I'm not really concerned too much about it. It would have been nice to have gone on, but I think there were a lot of faults with the conception of the stories and with the inter-relationship between the three people.

I thought Joanna Lumley was superb and could be and will be a very big star. She should be a movie star like Lesley-Anne Down. Gareth is a really fine actor and, I believe, is starring in a film anyway. So I think it could have done them both nothing but good and I was glad because it obviously took me back to England for two whole summers which just happened to be the most gorgeous summers in England for the last 25 years.

Q: Did the rewriting of dialogue which you and Diana Rigg did carry over at all to the Linda Thorson episodes or new series?

A: I think I've really covered the Linda Thorson, Diana Rigg. And I don't like to say anything because I'm deeply fond of Linda who's now just over 30 and is a very fine actress indeed. One of the best. Certainly one of the nicest people and a great person to take to discoteques, she's a great dancer. A very dear person.

Q: Do you recall any amusing or embarrassing incidents which occurred on the "Avengers" set?

A: Now, things that occur to me on the "Avengers" set... we took pride, in fact, in things not happening and in it being highly professional. Honor Blackman knocked the stuntman out cold once for 5 minutes and Diana Rigg's double, who's my friend Ray Austin, one

of the top directors out here, doubled for her on a horse and had to fall off and knocked himself out. But those sort of things happened on "Billion Dollar Threat" the other day out in Las Vegas. There were twelve accidents in fourteen days. We used to take pride in there not being accidents. I had a very fine double to do all the work. Anyway, I had conceived using as little violence and action - I was in my 40's at that time - clearly out of laziness and the fact that I had not been trained in that sort of thing.

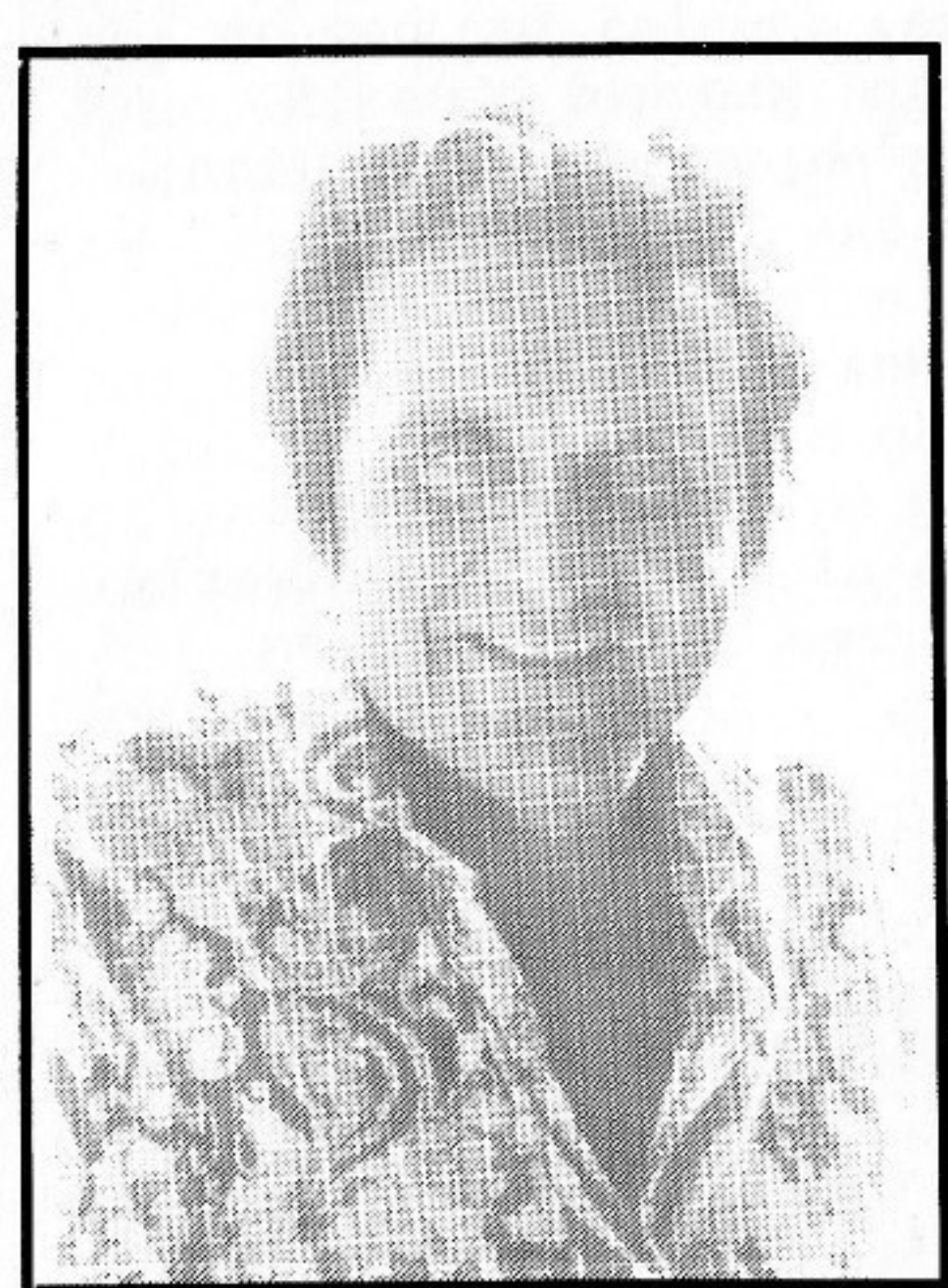
Q: What have been your favorite "Avengers"/"New Avengers" episodes?

A: My favourite "Avengers" episodes are very simple. There's the one about the Hellfire Club ((("Touch of Brimstone"))) and there was one, I always forget the title, but which was about clowns and an old clowns' home which I did with Linda Thorson ((("Look (Stop Me if You've Heard This One) But There Were These Two Fellers..."). No wonder the title's difficult to remember!!)). The only "New Avengers" episode that I enjoyed was ((("Medium Rare"))) the one about psychic communication, which is the only way to have done "The New Avengers", in my opinion... to take it off into new areas ahead of its time instead of approximating the Kojaks and the fast car chases and the whiz, bang, whallop thing which the Americans do so much better anyway. We missed the point.

Q: I know that you were raised around horses and had considered buying a ranch of your own. Did this have anything to do with the fact that Steed now resides at 'Steed's Stud' in "The New Avengers"?

A: No, Brian Clemens thought up the whole of the new Steed thing. I, in fact, did not even see a script because I trusted them to get it right. A new idea was necessary and I couldn't have thought it up anyway. I didn't have enough time. I was doing "Sherlock Holmes" with Roger Moore at that time and touring with "Absurd Person Singular", the Ayckbourn





play. So it was all done and fixed and ready. In fact it wasn't until the second lot of "New Avengers" episodes that my voice was heard and I then became more a character in keeping with the original Steed and less of the retired Steed. No, I didn't like being retired to 'stud'... I don't like the feel of it at all. Nice house and all that, but rather boring.

Q: If "The New Avengers" continues will you remain with the show?

A: Yes, of course, if "The New Avengers" continued I would remain with the show... if I was asked.

Q: What other work would you like to do?

A: Well, I'm doing the other work and I do everything. I mean, I work for a living which is a quite important thing, I feel, to mention... not because it's an indulgence.

Thereby, I do what's offered to me which, at the moment, seems to be heavies. I'm doing those to the best of my ability and, of course, also choosing some stage work or not choosing some. I could have toured Australia in "Deathtrap" by Ira Levin this year and decided to stay here as a result of my daughter's serious illness. She had a tumor removed from her head which was benign, thank God, then had staph infection complications so she's been through a very considerably heavy time. I've been very glad to be a support to her. She's now much better.

Q: Some actors have a preference of working on TV, films or stage. Which do you enjoy more?

A: I have no preference as to working on TV. Films I just don't get parts in. Maybe when I'm an old gentleman like Sir John Gielgud or Ralph Richardson I'll be the perfect C. Aubrey Smith or elder statesman type person.

At the moment I would say I have a slight preference of working on TV because there's something different each day. You do eight performances a week of the same play, which I did in "Sleuth" for sixteen months, it drives you around the bend even though you enjoy the rehearsal period. No, I'm an Aquarian. I enjoy the questing, the originality and the imaginative part of rehearsal and conception. Repetition I find not easy.

Q: Of all the roles you have played over the years, do you have a favorite?

A: I suppose the Steed character was the favourite because it enabled me to have so many different actors of very, very fine stature, particularly in the 60's, to play with and to act with. You do a show with Donald Sutherland and Charlotte Rampling in the same show... and Hugh Manning and a lot of the very high, brilliant character actors in England. Ronny Fraser and Christopher Lee, the type of people who brought delight because the parts were so well written in those days.

I consider in "The New Avengers" the villains were badly written and very ordinarily conceived and should have been far more fun. In fact, if "The New Avengers" had been more like the old "Avengers" we'd have had a hit. Not because we had three people - three people I thought was an excellent idea - but it lost a lot of the charm, character and humour, most important of all, of the character, and cheek.

Q: Have you ever been dissatisfied with a character you created?

A: Yes, I've been dissatisfied with many characters I've created. I couldn't get to grips with "Deathtrap"



in two weeks for Miami and so had a breakdown and had to pull out. This was only last year. I have never been satisfied with a Shakespeare character I've created because I'm not a good Shakespearean actor.

Q: Recently you played two sinister roles in "Battlestar Galactica" and "Billion Dollar Threat". Do you enjoy playing the villain compared to the heroics of John Steed?

A: I enjoyed playing the villains in "Battlestar Galactica" and "Billion Dollar Threat" and basically they came about through restudying "Sleuth", the Anthony Shaffer play which I was going to do for three months in London last September and suddenly decided at the last minute to do "The Billion Dollar Threat". I restudied "Sleuth", which is a genuine psychotic on a very high level, and as a result of restudying the play I was able to see more the darker side of the characters and hopefully played them with a reasonable amount of effect.

Q: You have played Steed for such a long time. Are you afraid of being typecast?

A: Well, no, I'm not afraid of being typecast. I just am typecast because I work within a narrow range. I don't claim to any particular versatility.

The fact that I'm employed, well as Steed for such a long time, must have implied some form of success. And the fact that I was employed before in the 50's and late 40's, except for the war, both in Canada and in the United Kingdom and also in the United States... the list is as long as your arm. I wouldn't bore you with the list, but if you checked with the CBC in Canada from the years '52 to '60 you would see me in practically every show there was.

Also, from '56 to '60 I made quite a good many appearances. I played the designer for George Roy Hill, who is now a famous film director, in one of live television's most famous shows about the sinking of the Titanic, "A Night to Remember". In fact, I played in that the designer of the Titanic and I had a famous line in it. It was, "The ship must go down."

Now, he was a Scotsman so I used to say, "The ship must go doon." which, of course, is a Scots accent. George Roy Hill, who is an American, said, I remember after the dress rehearsal, "Patrick, it's fine, but not so heavy on the Irish." I said, "But that's Scottish." He said, "I don't care what, not so heavy... they won't understand what you're talking about." But that was one of the great shows and was only beaten for an Emmy that year by "Requiem for a Heavyweight".

Q: If you were offered the opportunity to write a play with yourself as the lead character what would the play, and the character, be like?

A: I've often thought of writing a play, but about some strange female characters I used to know when I was a child. I'd be more likely to write a play about women. Women interest me far more, their reactions to life, than men. If I wrote a play I would write a play about five women.

I did rewrite a play which I was in, a David Frost type character, some years ago in London. No, it wasn't in London, it was just touring England. But they decided that their play was better than my rewrite, so we did their play and were off in six weeks. I don't say that with bitterness but with irony.

Q: Why did you become an actor? Did you ever regret the decision?

A: I've often regretted the decision to become an actor. I became an actor when I was eight when I was at a preparatory school in England. I played Henry V. I just gravitated into it naturally and never thought of anything else except I was five years in the Navy as a First Lieutenant and then a Commander of a motor torpedo boat.

I gave it up - or it gave me up - in 1959-60 when I came back to England after my time in Canada and the United States and I had to get a job in an office. What it turned out... I was Assistant Producer on this thing about Sir Winston Churchill.



I found being a producer very great fun, although it was a rather humble position. They just called me the 'research team' if you ever see the credits on "The Valiant Years", but I consider I did most of the work with John Schlesinger as my director (who is now a very famous director. At that time, of course, he wasn't.). We interviewed everybody who knew Churchill, from Lord Mountbatten Montgomery and that lot down to his cook and parlourmaid, round and about and his dog practically. I was told to photograph his slippers in a shop in Bond Street.

In fact, it was not until my friend from Toronto, Sydney Newman, rang me up and offered me "The Avengers", I really didn't want to leave this job because acting is tense, I find it a strain. I quite enjoy it when I get it, but I don't find it easy by any manner of means. I'm not a natural show-off, performer or exhibitionist. It's something that I find I have to do very privately to get right and then I have to make it appear as though I've known how to do it all the time.

Q: When you were first starting your career did you ever think that you would become as successful as you are today?

A: I always think we think we're going to be a success. Or no, I thought I was going to be a lot more successful. In fact, if I hadn't been so neurotic in the 50's - out here I had a wonderful agent, Richard Burton's agent - I could have become a movie star which would have been much, much bigger. It was sheer luck, "The Avengers".

Q: What is your opinion of the fan reaction and recognition you receive as a public personality?

A: The fan reaction and public personality is extremely pleasing, obviously. I love meeting people who've seen "The Avengers" and enjoyed it. It happens every day in every sort of place. People come up and make comments and start a conversation in almost any conceivable location. It's just sort of instant recognition thing and it's delightful. If you don't

want it then you stay at home or go to a place where you don't see anybody else, which is where I am now... I'm out in the middle of the desert.

Q: Are there any performers who you particularly enjoyed working with? Any with whom you had difficulty working?

A: I've worked with so many people, which is usually women. It's headed, obviously, by Diana Rigg, closely followed by Susannah York and Faye Dunaway, Joan Hackett, many actresses, Elke Sommer... these are the recent ones I was just thinking of at the moment. Joanna Lumley, obviously, and Honor Blackman. I was just trying to think of men. All three men, Jordan Christopher, Kurt Dawson and Brian Murray, who's a particularly fine actor, all of whom I worked with in "Sleuth". And I worked with some fine actors in "The Secretary Bird" in Australia for a year.

I had worked with many, many actors when I was playing small parts. I would work in the 50's with people like Mike Landon, Lorne Greene and in Canada with Chris Plummer and Kate Reid. The people from way back in the old days... Dame Flora Robson, Isabel Jeans, Adrian Allen, Ronald Squire... that's going back, back, back!

I suppose the most famous person I ever worked for and with was Laurence Olivier. But then I was just an extra - a rather sort of favoured extra - in the film of "Hamlet". In the play scene I stand with a beard behind Jean Simmons and Olivier as they're watching the play scene in "Hamlet".

Anthony Quayle is practically my favourite man, now Sir Anthony Quayle, who I took over from in "Sleuth" (well, I took over from Paul Rogers, actually, but Quayle got me into it) who I played with in "The Battle of the River Platte" and who's been a friend ever since. Ian Hunter, dead many years, but a fine actor.

There are many people that one has worked with, peripherally or sensually, and it's difficult to single any particular ones out, except that, obviously, Di Rigg, Susannah York and Faye Dunaway are some of





the most successful actresses that one has worked with so they spring most easily to mind. But people with great, great skill... Joan Hackett is an actress of enormous skill and, in my opinion, charm, attraction and vivacity allied to technicality. I always admire people who have a grasp of the technical complexities of a piece.

You never have difficulty working with other actors. You do have difficulty occasionally with directors and certainly with producers because those are things of attitude and conception. But actors who know their job, or even if they know it not so well, it doesn't matter... they're actors, they're the same breed. It's when you get agents and entrepreneurs and people who really don't quite know what goes into the process of actually acting as a skill, as an interpretive skill which it is.

Writers I particularly enjoy working with because to me they're highly creative people. I can't start with a blank page and make a story, but when they've made the story I can do my best to interpret it.

I've had dogs... I'd work with dogs - a Great Dane in "The Avengers" with Honor Blackman - and horses, naturally. I love riding horses. My dad was a racehorse trainer, I was brought up with horses. I don't ride with them so much now. So I suppose that the 'Steed's Stud', yes, did have a certain affinity because it's the only thing that I can do naturally and well and I like the animals.

Q: There was a lovely article published in the London "TV Times" magazine where you discussed your life and work up to the start of "The New Avengers". If you were to add to the article now what would you include?

A: That article in the "TV Times" magazine, that three-part article, kind of really covers it all. The timing seemed to be good, the man was very sensitive and receptive and it seemed to be a time that I wanted to talk. My first wife, the mother of Jenny and Rupert, has been over here lately because her husband died a couple of years ago,



because of Jenny's illness and, of course, it brings back many, many memories of the past. One has lived a long life and I don't know what I would include now. I'm not thinking of writing and nobody has indeed asked me.

I rather like the fictionalized book by Tim Heald called "John Steed". I think it was quite amusing.

No, I think that anything I wrote would have to be published posthumously because the account of my school days, being sent away to boarding school at the age of six and not returning till the age of seventeen, in England (which is a pattern which Anthony Burgess writes about very well) is something that would be really so blasphemous I think possibly I'll have to leave that until another time.

Q: Do you have any plans for the future - professional, personal or otherwise?

A: No, I have no plans for the future. I'm just living today and glad to be alive.

Q: Is there anything which I haven't touched on that you wish to comment about?

A: No, that's about all I wish to comment about, Heather, except once again to thank you for your concern, your care and your professionalism in everything you've been doing in connection with this fan club. I think it's marvelous. Bless all the people in the club and all the people who write and are interested in me, "The Avengers" - past, present... and just possibly, future.



Bless you,

*Pat Mame*

## Network News

### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT!

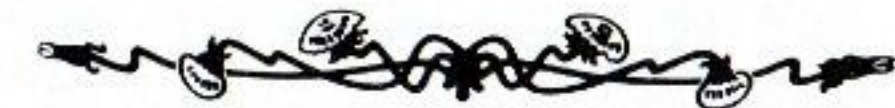
There is some very happy news concerning Linda Thorson which I'd like to pass on to everyone. After her run in the play "Artichoke" for Houston's Alley Theater (see Newsletter #9) Linda moved on to Toronto for the play "Bajazet". I have no information about the play, but it was secondary to another event which took place during Linda's stay in Toronto.

On April 25, 1979 Linda Thorson married Cyril Smith, Jr. The ceremony took place between the matinee and evening performances of "Bajazet"!! Unfortunately, I have no further news of the couple and have no idea what Cyril is like or how they met (so everyone needn't write in asking!). As soon as I learn anything else I'll be sure to let you know.

Good news for Linda's fans in the U.S. - she currently plans to move to this country after a little bit longer in London. With luck, this will mean a few more appearances here... much to the delight of American fans.

From everyone in the Network, I'd like to wish Linda and Cyril the very best of luck and love in years to come. Our congratulations!

((Thanks to Christine Mak and Gene Davidson for the above news.))



Steve Eramo is putting together an "Avengers" fanzine and would welcome contributions. If you have something which might be useful send it to Steve for consideration (enclose return postage if you want it back. Do not send your only copy of a story, in case it gets lost).

The zine is slated for an August printing and will be around 80 to 100 pages. Contents will include stories, articles, reviews, artwork, photos, episode guides, biographies, character sketches and more. Price is \$4.50 for U.S./Canadian orders, \$5.50 for



overseas. Enclose a SASE with your order.

Steve has a good deal of material for the zine already and has been tempting me with a few details. It sounds fantastic and I'd recommend that you place your order as soon as possible. A minimum of 75 advance orders are needed before the publication can go to press.

The title is "The Avengers/New Avengers Yearbook" and can be ordered from Steve at: 5 Kimball Drive, Stoneham, MA 02180.

For you "Space: 1999" fans who don't already know, there is a major club for the show - non-profit, fan-supported, international group - which is looking for new members. The National Save: 1999 Alliance is a "Space: 1999" licensee and have available a variety of sales items to raise funds for the club. Any profits go to charity.

NS: 1999A are the people who ran the 1999 convention last year which received a very complimentary write-up in "Starlog" magazine. They have another con upcoming at the end of July at the William Penn Hotel in Pittsburgh. There is a very complete schedule of events, including appearances by Gerry Anderson, Barry Gray, Anton Phillips and others.

For more information on the convention or the Alliance, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: 123 Fawn Valley Drive, McMurray, PA 15317.

As more clippings are added to our files and a greater number of people are taking advantage of the article clipping service, I've found that the old system of listing and pricing the items on file is a bit confusing to some people. For the sake of consistency, clarity and condensation, I have reorganized the catalogue listings and pricing system. With luck (and a little planning) I hope that this newer version will be simpler to understand and order from.

If you already have the clipping list you can still use it. Prices are basically the same except that some of the smaller items have been added to misc. pages and a few of the larger ones have been chopped to fit into a smaller space. If I have not explained the multiple order pricing to you, please write and ask for

a copy of the clipping catalogue instruction page. Likewise, if you order additional supplements to the catalogue it will be necessary to request the instruction page (the new listing system does not give prices for individual orders).

Currently, a new supplement - #6 - is available for the clipping list. Supplement #6 is two pages and includes an additional 43 listings. The price of #6 is 45¢ (which includes the 1-page instruction sheet. The instruction sheet alone is 25¢. Prices include postage.)

For those without the listing... the entire clipping catalogue, including instruction sheet, is 9 pages and available for \$1.35 postpaid. Anyone with questions is welcome to SASE me for further details.

Since the last Newsletter, Patrick Macnee popped up in a CBS Special Presentation movie titled "Stunt Seven". I had no advance warning of the appearance so was unable to suggest that everyone catch the show. Hopefully you were able to anyway.

The plot revolves around a kidnapped movie star, Rebecca Welles (played by Elke Sommer) who is being held for \$10 million ransom by self-proclaimed pirate Maximilian Boudreau (Patrick Macnee). When the authorities are reluctant to pursue a rescue, stunt coordinator Hill Singleton (Christopher Connelly) bands together a group of fellow stunt workers to release Rebecca and destroy Freeland, Boudreau's hideout.

The movie's main purpose is to showcase the work of stunt people and set up the show's seven heroes for future adventures should a series come out of this one. There is an abundance of fancy footwork and limb-risking tricks with plenty of obvious jokes and hearty back-slapping throughout. The action is fun to watch although dialogue and the 'plan' for rescue leave something to be desired. With the necessity to introduce each character in turn and outline their importance to the plot there is not enough time for character development and many persons come off as rather shallow. If a series does come about, one can hope that this problem will be



corrected.

Patrick Macnee as Boudreau is deadly serious with his plans and coldly calculating in their execution. He shows no pity on the lovely Rebecca nor is he tempted by her feminine wiles. Fortunately he has not been molded to the cliché of evil maniac who is foiled by the beautiful maiden. He is quite certain of himself and charming to the point of being oddly out of place amid his crew of leering, simple assistants. Indeed, he is a most professional 'pirate' and one would believe that his plans might succeed had he not surrounded himself with such inept help. This fault is eventually his undoing and Boudreau is thumped royally and taken for a rude plunge in the ocean before being brought in to the FBI.

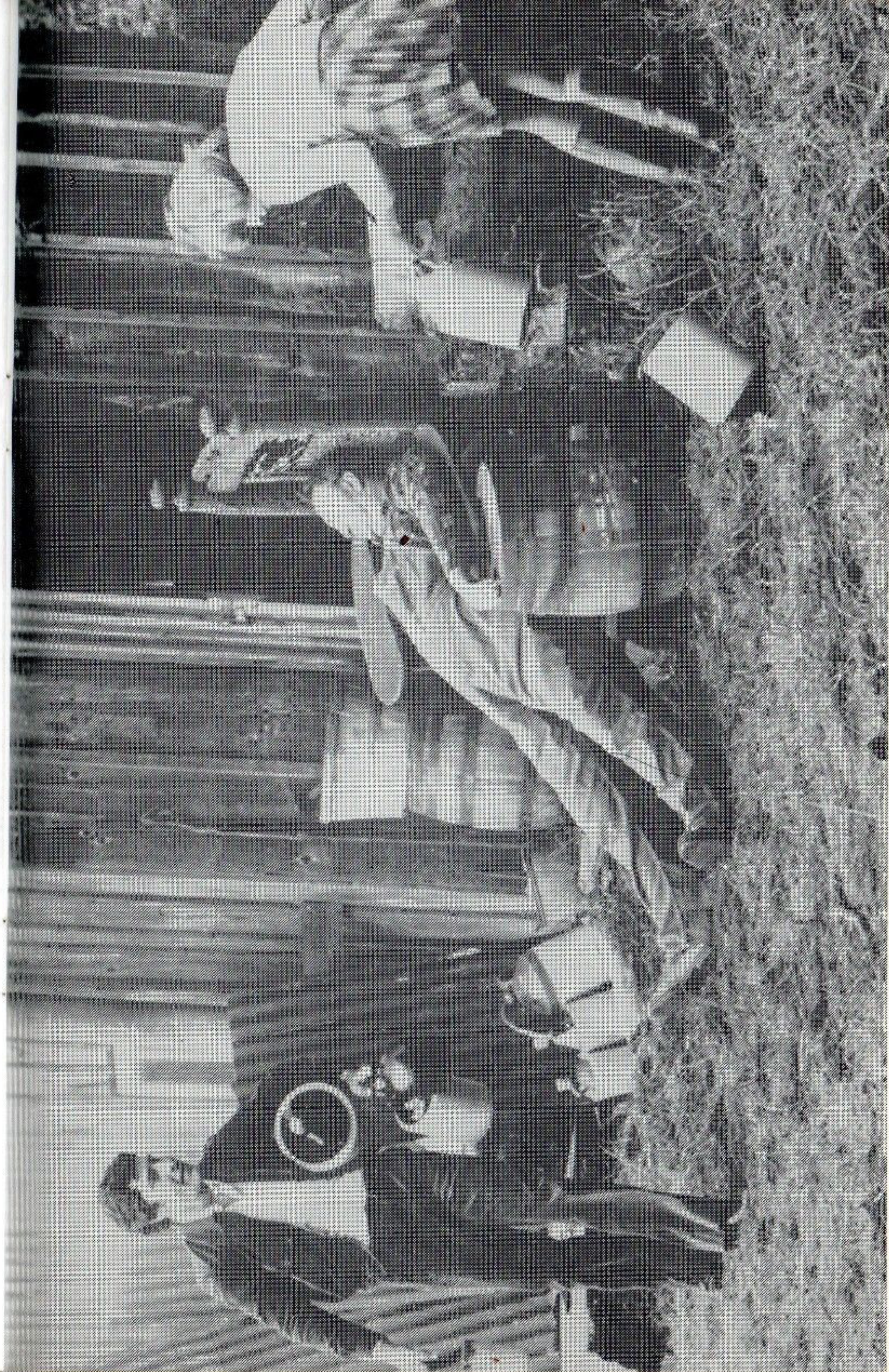
I'm uncertain how the ratings went for "Stunt Seven" and have no idea if it will be picked up as a series. For those who missed it this time around you might want to keep an eye on the local listings to see if it's rerun in your area. Although not terribly cerebral it is fun with lots of good action, nicely photographed. Patrick adds another excellent portrayal to his credits with Boudreau and the film is worth watching just to catch his performance!

Joanna Lumley has been working in a new series for British television entitled "Sapphire and Steel". The 13-part series co-stars David McCallum and is currently scheduled to be shown beginning in July.

"Sapphire and Steel" is somewhat of a horror story with bits of science fiction and occult thrown in for good measure. I have no information on the series yet, but a recent "Photoplay" (England) article quoted Joanna as describing it thus:

"It isn't a horror show or 'Dr. Who' or like anything we've seen before. But it is very, very frightening! ...David and I are just a little bit odd and we can do slightly odd things. It's set in an ordinary, but old house, and we make some eerie investigations into the mysteries of time."

Sounds marvelous, and quite different from the majority of programs on now! As I find out more about the program and Joanna's part in it I'll have details in upcoming Newsletters.





## Garage Sale

T-K Graphics, PO Box 1951, Baltimore, MD 21203 is beginning to get in a few "Avengers" items. Currently they have an "Avengers" photo button (\$1) and a 'Steed' memo pad (25 sheets/\$1.25) with promises for additional "Avengers" items soon. They also have items from "Space: 1999", "Star Trek", "Galactica" and so on. SASE to Ted Pauls for more info, and tell him that Heather said 'hi'.

Gene Grainer, 4700 Perelli Drive, New Orleans, LA 70127 has for sale the following books: UNCLE #1 "The Thousand Coffins Affair", UNCLE #5 "The Mad Scientist Affair", UNCLE #6 "The Vampire Affair", UNCLE #10 "The Assassination Affair", AVENGERS #3 "The Passing of Gloria Munday", MOD SQUAD #3 "The Sock-it-to-'Em Murders", MOD SQUAD #4 "Spy-In". Each book is 75¢ or Gene wants to trade for UNCLE books #7, 16, 17, 19 and up. SASE with orders/inquiries.

There is a dealer who carries "Avengers"/"New Avengers" episodes on audio tape: Memories of Radio, Dick Judge, 362 Browncroft Blvd., Rochester, NY 14609. Tapes come in cassette or reel-to-reel. Prices are as follows: \$7/hr for cassettes with 50¢ handling per order (1st Class postage is optional at \$1.00 extra). Reels are \$8.00 for a pre-recorded 1200' reel (4 hours) and \$12.00 for a pre-recorded 1800' reel (6 hours). Shipping/handling is \$1.00 per order (or \$2.00 per order if you want it sent 1st Class). Customized reels (your choice of episodes) are available at a rate of \$5.00/hr. SASE for details.

I have the following letter from Omega Enterprises concerning book orders:

"I have been getting several requests for the 'New Avengers' paperbacks since your Newsletter mentioned our having them. The response has been so great that we immediately sold out of books and ordered more from England. I just spoke to my source in England yesterday and he replied that the books have just gone out of print there and he is having

a hard time finding them. I am waiting patiently with several uncashed checks and have informed all of Omega's book clients to expect a delay. Should anyone write, please remind them that their money is safe.

My man in England informs me that there is a good possibility of him getting "John Steed: Jealous in Honour" ((by Tim Heald)) for me. I have a half dozen of these books on order and should they sell out another dozen or so will be ordered."

So, for those of you who have ordered books from Omega or plan to, this will let you know what is happening on that end.

Howard Rogofsky, PO Box 1102, Linden Hill Station, Flushing, NY 11354 has several Rigg/Macnee/Avengers related collectors' items for sale. Included are program books, stills, TV GUIDE articles, paperbacks, Annuals, comic book and so on. You pay collectors' prices for collectors' items, but if you're looking for an item which isn't readily available...

A note of interest to overseas members: Rogofsky's will ship overseas for an added price, so those of you who have been asking me about photos might want to look into what they have.

Anyone interested in receiving a catalogue may write and request one. They are sent out free of charge, even to overseas customers.

The following books are available from Fan Network Headquarters: AVENGERS #8 "The Magnetic Man", AVENGERS #1 "The Floating Game", UNCLE "The Man From UNCLE" (first one, I assume), UNCLE #3 "The Copenhagen Affair". These last two UNCLE books are the British Souvenir Press/Four Square editions, not American Ace Books. AVENGERS books are \$1.00 each, UNCLE books are \$1.25 each - postage included. Send a SASE with your order! If the book(s) ordered are gone I will return your money. These go on a first come, first serve basis and are picked up quickly. If you wish to order, please do so soon. Thanks.



# LOCs of Gold

BILL BRADSHAW, Representative in England, London:

Item of interest: Patrick Newell is in two commercials. One as an aristocratic tramp who dispenses fine whiskey to his down-and-out compatriots and turns them into connoisseurs, and another (unrecognisable till the fourth viewing) as one of the Ugly Sisters who leave Cinderella to clean up the house - which she does with so-and-so's marvelous gloss paint!

Newell's in a new movie, "The Golden Lady" as Charles Whitlock, a ruthless and powerful oil tycoon who hires the lady assassin of the title (and three beauteous henchpersons) to eliminate the 'opposition' (three other businessmen) in an upcoming oil deal with an Arab state.

Ian Hendry starred as Special Constable Frank Edwards (accused of manslaughter) in a 3-part story of an excellent series called "Crown Court".

Honor Blackman has appeared in the series this last month in the 3-parter, "Heart to Heart" as a producer suing a radio researcher for libel over a report she wrote alleging a homosexual relationship between them.

Patrick Macnee just turned up on TV in a delightful 15-second commercial for Right Guard Anti Perspirant. The ad is set in a London underground train carriage with Pat's voice-over telling us how he can spot someone not wearing RG (because their clothes disappear, believe it or not!). Suddenly, only two people are left with their clothes on... a beautiful girl and a man in a three-piece black suit, silk tie, bowler and who carries an umbrella and sports a red carnation. Yes, it's Pat as Steed.

SALLY SYRJALA, Centerville, MA:

The graphics were lovely, as usual. Bill Bradshaw is a fine artist. His backcover rendition is very good. You can sense the emotion coming from Purdey's eyes. If you look closely enough, you can almost see her peek around the corner to gain a closer perspective of what is happening beyond her range of vision.

A word on fan clubs versus fandom. I regard the

two as entirely different entities. Fan clubs are that which Hollywood creates and the participants go along with that which others make for them. Fandom is something which creates its own existence. The difficult job, describing fandom in 20,000 words or more... it is impossible. However, the basic premise there is that fandom does not let a passive existence take place. It requires an active participation for its continued existence. It is a place where people have to contribute or else the structure of the 'castle in the air' would come crumbling down.

On the other hand, fan clubs are something where an organization 'organizes' everything. There is nothing for the individual member to do but take that which is handed unto them. Fandom requires you create that which is handed onto you.

RUTH BERMAN, Minneapolis, MN:

Liv Bottum's comments on Mrs. Peel's 'appearance' on "The New Avengers" were intriguing. I don't think the episode was shown here. At any rate, I missed it. I'd add to her list of possible meanings of "I've changed my name. I'm not Mrs. Peel any more." the suggestion that nothing has happened to her married life -- she could still be married to Mr. Peel, but have been influenced enough by the womens' liberation movement to change her name back to what it was originally.

LYNN WALKER, Orwell, OH:

On "PM Magazine" ((a local talk show))... the scene they showed on "Battlestar" was just before Count Iblis killed Apollo. You want a short description? Here goes - it was early March, I think. The reporter from "PM Magazine" showed the outdoor set for "Battlestar Galactica". It showed Patrick Macnee, Dirk Benedict, Richard Hatch and Anne Lockhart rehearsing their lines before several cameramen. Richard Hatch and Dirk Benedict were hamming it up. Patrick Macnee looked like he were freezing from the strong breeze that was blowing. That's it... the reporter did all the talking.



CHERYL HUFFEY, Essex, England:

I would like to take this opportunity to comment on a couple of the letters appearing in the Newsletter. Marshall Ellenstein of Chicago informs us that "The Avengers" are John Steed and Emma Peel. Anyone worth his salt should know that "The Avengers" were John Steed and Cathy Gale. However, as the succession of partners for John Steed has shown, there is always room for new talent and Gene Grainer has the right approach when supporting Mike Gambit. It's refreshing to see a series that is ready to adapt over the years. How many have retained the same characters and format and died at the hands of the ratings war?

DIANE LIND, President - The Patrick Macnee Fan Club, Omaha, NE:

I'm still chuckling over the "Billion Dollar Threat" reviews. I was particularly pleased with what the critics said about Pat's performance. Villain or not, Horatio did have all of the mystery, charm, refinement and ultra-ultra appeal! Who could possibly be bored by a man with all of those redeeming qualities? If anything, Holly and Ivy were the boring ones. Their performances were definitely an insult to the viewer's intelligence.

As for Dale Robinette... he simply was not experienced enough to play a suave, debonair, elegant secret agent type. Even though Robert Sands is good looking enough, he still lacks all of the necessary traits. Therefore, he just leaves the viewer with a very bland opinion of his character.

GENE GRAINER, New Orleans, LA:

I don't mind the price hike on the zine; it's well worth it!

The report from Bill Bradshaw was very interesting. I wish we could get some interviews or something over here. The main trouble with "The New Avengers" being a British show is that I have no idea what the personality of the actor is. Would have given anything to see "Seven to One". The very thing I'm in desperation for.

Your article comparing the 'old' with the New... really put the whole thing in a nutshell. And you really

brought something home to me. I had never really thought before how difficult a role Joanna Lumley had, fighting back the remembrance of former female Avengers without developing the traits of one or both. Bravo!

MANDI SCHULTZ, Rochester, MI:

"Billion Dollar Threat" was last night. Not bad, but I don't think Bond has anything to worry about. Enjoyed seeing Pat on something new. Funny to see him turning up as a villain now.

Actually, although that "Galactica" story was full of holes (and the network ought to hold a contest... whoever guesses right as to what was in Iblis' ship that so appalled whats-her-name wins a guest appearance on the show as one of Adama's relatives or one of Starbuck's girlfriends), I would've thrown in my lot with Iblis. He had a lot more class than anyone else on the show. He also seemed to be the only one there who knew what he was doing.

SUSAN GLYNN, New Orleans, LA:

I wanted to ask you some questions about "The Avengers" as I intend to write a story if I can ever get all of my mixed up facts straightened out;

1) How long was Mrs. Peel married before her husband was killed?

2) Was she ever pregnant, to the knowledge of the viewers?

3) How much does Steed know about her marriage?

4) Can you give me some of the details of her marriage?

If you can answer any of these questions for me I would be most appreciative.

((Anyone out there able to help her - besides the fact that Peter didn't actually 'die'. If someone has recently seen "House that Jack Built" do you know if there were any answers to #4 there?))

STEVE ERAMO, Stoneham, MA:

I can't believe that station manager tried to say "The New Avengers" had been cancelled and that's why it was taken off! ((in reference to Carol Crunk's



letter in NL #9)) Good for the member for retaliating... and on the air, yet. Terrific! Hope that letter you sent does some good. Will certainly teach the station manager to be more careful about how he answers a question.

By the way, I hope we get the series back soon. I've had enough of basketball!

LARRY CHARET, Chicago, IL:

I was sorry to see that "Billion Dollar Threat" was not picked up by ABC for this Fall. It was a bit too much of a 007 rip-off, but at least the 'threat' was original and was more entertaining than most of current TV fare.

I pretty much agree with your assessment of the run of "New Avengers". A small thing bothered me about the series in comparison with the original; I always loved the opening teasers which, in almost every episode, were a little story to themselves. In the new series, the openings were very routine and in many cases were much-too-elaborate set-ups ("Gnaws", "Last of the Cybernauts", "Trap", etc.) and the actual plot didn't get going until 15 minutes into the show.

Even though there is no new production of "New Avengers", I am told there will be a 1980 Annual. This will probably be out in the early Fall. Will naturally let you know when I get any.

LENI SOMMER, Greeley, CO:

I thoroughly enjoyed my first Newsletter... several times, in fact.

My blessings on Gene Grainer! I have seen "The Avengers" and I look on John Steed as an old and valued friend. After a space of ten years, he seemed sadder, more human, and my first thought concerning his new partners was, "They'd bloody well care for him!" And care they do, as Gene so aptly pointed out as far as Gambit was concerned. And they care for each other - even Purdey lets her defenses down once in awhile long enough to show it. Unfortunately, I don't have the ability to quote 'chapter and verse' to support my case, but just wait until the reruns!

I must say, I find the Emma vs. Purdey debate

rather silly. Both are magnificent - strong and beautiful women whom I, for one, admire immensely! There are differences, of course, but Purdey is worthy of being Steed's partner. She knows her job and she does it extremely well.

I never seem to catch Pat's voice-over on the "Galactica" titles, but I thoroughly enjoyed his appearance as Count Iblis. When Baltar recognized his voice as that of the Cylon Imperious Leader I took the statement with a grain of salt, having never heard the Imperious Leader's voice. When I took myself to see the movie (I missed it on TV), I was prepared for Pat's introduction. However, when the Imperious Leader came on the screen and that deliciously evil voice came forth, I was on the edge of my seat, experiencing delightful shivers. I'm beginning to relish Pat as a villain. As in everything else, he does it so well.

((On "Stunt Seven")) My main complaint is that Pat wasn't on screen nearly enough to suit me. However, the movie was a vast improvement over "Billion Dollar Threat". The good guys were quite likeable and without the over-inflated ego of Robert Sands and there was humor without being 'too cute'.

ETCETERA...

That's it for this issue. I hope that you have enjoyed and been informed.

For next issue's LOCs or "Meanderings"... pick up on something from the pages of this issue and carry it further. Of course, that's only a suggestion and if you have something else to write on, that's fine.

As a final item, I would like to thank those members of the Network who attended our little meeting at 2'Con. It was wonderful meeting some of the persons whom I'd only met through the mail before. Also, thanks to everyone who wrote with good wishes for my trip and art sale as well as those who sent birthday wishes. I love ya' all!

Have you hugged an Avenger today?



