

The Avengers/Patrick Macnee Fan Network Newsletter Nine



Issue Number Nine

May * June, 1979

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Ramblings

One year ago this month our first half-page format issue of the Newsletter was published. Visually it was not as outstanding as current issues - it contained only 25 pages printed on 20# bond with inexpensive cover stock and only one small photo appeared within the pages. Since then we have added pages, gone to 60# offset paper with better cover stock and photos are now featured throughout.

Until recently I have absorbed the added costs for production and postage myself... as much as \$50 per issue over what had been uncovered by subscriptions before. With a price of \$2.00 per single issue being charged for overseas subscriptions, I discovered that postage alone on #8 was \$1.76 for airmail delivery! So when I found myself selling my guitar to feed this hobby I decided that subscription prices would need to change before I'm forced to stop eating as well.

I sincerely hope that everyone will understand the necessity of this change and feel that it is worthwhile in order to continue the high quality which we have achieved. Subscriptions currently on file will not be affected, but new or renewal subscriptions must go by the prices (effective April 15, 1979) listed on the title page of this issue. Back issues #3, 4, and 5 will remain for sale at a price of \$1.40 each or 3/\$4.00 as long as supplies last. Issues #6, 7, and 8 are sold out.

At this time I would like to say a very warm 'Thank You' to everyone who has made such generous donations of stamps, article clippings, books, photos and spare change to help me keep the Network going in past months. It's because of such thoughtfulness that I've been able to hold off until now with increasing prices. Persons who send along a SASE with their letters receive a pat on the back as well. Everyone's assistance is greatly appreciated.

I hate to start off an issue with such dismal news but maybe some of the entertainment within will offset the announcement a bit. Good reading!



Black Day in April

As promised in an earlier Newsletter, I now have some information to pass on concerning the ABC-TV movie, "Billion Dollar Threat" which stars Patrick Macnee and Dale Robinette. Although this issue will not reach readers until after the program is aired it will go to the printer before I can view and comment on the show. I hope to have comments from members in issue #10, so let me know what you thought of the movie and Patrick's performance.

Until then, I have a press release from the ABC Television Network which I will share with you:

America's ace intelligence agent encounters beautiful girls, a steel-armed assassin and flying saucers when he battles a self-proclaimed ultimate criminal who plans to destroy life on Earth if he is not paid \$1 billion in "The Billion Dollar Threat", airing as "The ABC Sunday Night Movie" April 15 (9:00-11:00 pm, EST), on the ABC Television Network.

Agent Robert Sands, sent to an expensive mountain resort to investigate mysterious flying saucer reports, meets up with rich Horatio Black, his villainous steel-armed assistant, Benjamin, and Black's beautiful twin girlfriends. Sands discovers that Black has paramilitary forces engaged in building a secret base in the mountains protected by what are reported to be "flying saucers".

Captured by Black, Sands learns that the master criminal plans to extort \$1 billion from all the governments of the world by threatening to pierce the Earth's protective ozone layer with a stolen missile.

Dale Robinette stars as Robert Sands and Patrick Macnee as arch villain Horatio Black. Also starring are Ralph Bellamy as American intelligence

* * * * *

Opposite page: Patrick Macnee as Horatio Black in "The Billion Dollar Threat". Photo courtesy of the ABC Television Network.

chief Miles Larson, Ronnie Carol as weapons researcher Marcia Buttercup, Stephen Keep as American intelligence agent Harold Darling, Robert Tessier as Benjamin, and Beth and Karen Specht as Black's girlfriends, Holly and Ivy.

Jay Daniels produced and Barry Shear directed the teleplay by Jimmy Sangster for Columbia Pictures Television.

Actually, I rather fancy that as a job for John Steed and company to tackle. I wonder if Patrick would wish to handle the double duty!

The April 14-20 issue of "TV Guide" contains a nice half-page ad for "Billion Dollar Threat" with a portrait photo of Robinette surrounded by smaller photos of the show's other stars including Patrick. The "This Week's Movies" review section by Judith Crist has mention of the program although it is largely uncomplimentary. One bit stated...

"Worst of all, the villain, played by Patrick Macnee, has all the charm.

Robinette is a clod allotted cloddish lines..."

Anyone care to add their own observations?



Report from England

by Bill Bradshaw

You'll never believe this. There I was at lunchtime today, in the bank waiting for someone to see me about my overdraft. In walks this very tall blonde with her hair tied back in a ponytail. She looked at the window I was standing by and (as the others had queues) asked, "Is there anyone there?" I said, "Well, this is enquiries only..." She smiled and joined a queue. I thought - hello, she looks like Joanna Lumley. She was. (I said you'd never believe this!)

I saw the bank guy wasn't ready to see me yet, so I reached into my attaché case for a Network card, took a deep breath and walked over to her. I said, "I've heard about coincidences, but..." and showed her the card (Cary Grant of the modern world, eh?). She was as amazed as I was! Anyhow, she was really nice and took the card and my name and phone number. Phew! We finally contacted the last of the New Avengers.

Upon reading the "Radio Times" - Joanna Lumley is one of the 6 panelists on BBC2's "Call My Bluff" for the next 2 weeks (2 shows) which she was on last in 1977. I'll be taping both of those and the programme she's on Saturday afternoon, "Seven to One". This is where 7 members of the public meet someone famous and it's her turn on Saturday.

Copy of this week's "Radio Times"... too beautiful to miss and too beautiful to cut, so here's the whole issue. ((Contains photos and article about "The Oresteia - Serpent Son" with Diana Rigg and Linda Thorson.)) The trilogy was on BBC-TV recently. Part 3 was tonight, in fact. Linda Thorson's episode, this one, and rather good. ... Photocopies of Diana Rigg enclosed. Latest ones show the plucky lady back on stage again after that painful illness.

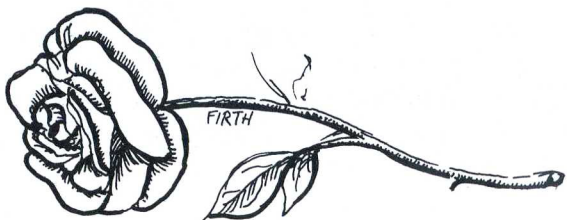
Linda Thorson did a spot on "Give us a Clue" on ITV a couple of weeks ago. It's a very enjoyable charades game, made not only bearable but un-missable for me because of Chairman Michael Aspel's palter and the spectacle of stars playing the fool quite happily! (Try and imagine Linda doing a mime of a buffalo???)

Patrick Newell is on TV this week in a comedy sketch with comic Les Dawson in "The Dawson Watch".

Saw a clip from "Galactica" last night which showed Cylon warriors attacking a space station city in fighters. Looked very good and it was a nice surprise to hear Pat's doom-laden narration! I'd almost forgotten someone wrote into the Newsletter to say his voice appeared over the titles of the show every week.

Got some nice TNA stills at a movie sale and a promise by a record dealer there to sell me his old 45 of the original Johnny Darkworth theme for the Steed/Cathy Gale "Avengers"! I also picked up the "Themes and..." LP by Laurie Johnson. (For £13.00!! Hell - still, it's something I wanted...) It's only in mono, but very good and the photos are nice. Have you heard any of his other music? I've had "The Belstone Fox" and tapings of "First Men in the Moon" and "Kronos" for some time. He does some beautiful work.

Production started this week on series #3 of !!! "The Professionals". (Cruel, isn't it?) Apparently this "Professionals" will be quite lavish. They've got foreign locations lined up in Gibraltar and Europe according to the papers. One even ran a photo spread of the stars Lewis Collins and Martin Shaw being swarmed over by Gibraltar apes!



Network News

There is a gentleman at the University of Arkansas who is preparing a book on fandom, fan clubs and the people involved. This book will cover all varieties of fan clubs through the years. Fans and club members are invited to contact the author to share their views, experiences, feelings, human interest stories, and so on. The book will deal with the reasons for clubs, how they are run and will give a history of clubbing.

The author is Dr. Kent R. Brown, associate professor of speech and dramatic art at the University of Arkansas. Dr. Brown has been conducting a study of fan clubs for over 3 years during which time he has given speeches before various groups and published articles on the topic. Besides researching fan clubs, Dr. Brown directs three productions a year at the University of Arkansas Theater and is currently working on a motion picture screenplay.

"The Avengers"/Patrick Macnee Fan Network is assisting Dr. Brown in his study and I strongly encourage members to contact him if you have something to share. This book will be about a topic quite near and dear to all of us and it would benefit "Avengers" fandom to have a few members represented. Anyone wishing to contact Dr. Brown may do so at: The Department of Speech and Dramatic Art, 417 Communications Center, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701. The phone is (501) 575-2954. You should state in your letter that it may (or may not) be quoted from in Dr. Brown's book.

The Gareth Hunt/Joanna Lumley "Avengers" Fan Club has published its first newsletter now and it is available for \$1.50. I have a copy of the publication and must say that it is very good quality for a first effort! There are 17 pages, not counting the photo covers front and back. Contents include articles on Joanna and Gareth, trivia questions, an introduction and information about the editors, news of interest, a photo caption contest and a dedication to Patrick Macnee. For more

information - send a SASE - or to order, write
Cindy Phares, President, PO Box 267, Nederland,
TX 77627.

Larry Charet is sold out of the "New Avengers"
1979 Annuals as reported last issue. Please do not
order any more from him at this time. Bill Bradshaw
writes that he is unable to supply the Annuals for
the price listed in Newsletter #8. There was an
error in calculating the American/British exchange
rate and postage costs. Please do not order the
Annual from Bill until he sends details of the
correct price. Hopefully I'll have that information
by next Newsletter.

The British "Return of the Saint" series has
been purchased by CBS-TV for their late-night
schedule. The series will begin this fall, probably
in late September. One episode, entitled "The Roman
Touch", guest stars Linda Thorson as Diamond, a rock
star manager. I have an audio tape of the episode
and it sounds fantastic! Watch for it.

Speaking of the CBS late-night line-up, you
probably have noticed that "The New Avengers"
repeats did not begin in late March as was reported
in the last Newsletter. I phoned CBS right before
typing this issue and the (current) plan is to show
the series reruns this fall, starting in September.
CBS says that a third series is under consideration
and being talked about, but nothing is at all certain
or definite about it. Still, there is a chance so
we can all keep our collective fingers crossed.

Joanna Lumley was in a recent installment of
the British talk show, "Seven to One" (see 'Report
from England'). During the program Joanna discussed
such topics as the differences between Purdey and
herself, her feelings on the character and people's
reaction to it, TV violence, her early work as a
model, the 'glamour' - or lack thereof - associated
with her work, television commercials, problems with
society, and so on. A most interesting discussion
and a chance to see Joanna as she sees herself.



Linda Thorson
recently finished
a run at the Alley
Theater in Texas
starring in the
Joanna Glass comedy,
"Artichoke". This
new play and its
performers received
an excellent review
in the "Dallas Times
Herald" (March 1,
1979).

The story
unfolds around a
Saskatchewan farm
couple and their
houseguest, the
wife's big-city
cousin who is
visiting for the
summer. Early in
their marriage the
husband had been
unfaithful to his
wife thus causing a
rift which now, some

10 years later, still separates the couple both
physically and emotionally. The wife and cousin had
grown up together on the Canadian prairie and his
return after 14 years provides romantic possibilities
for the wife who has lived in celibacy since the early
days of her marriage.

Linda Thorson played the wife, Margaret, opposite
Michael Donaghue as her husband, Walter. Others
performing in the play included David Wurst, Jack
Van Evera and Robert Symonds. An item of interest
to "Avengers" fans: Michael Donaghue also played
the part of Hartley in the "New Avengers" episode
"The Gladiators".

Debbie Stoy, 21 Marion Avenue, Sumter, SC 29150
is working on a fanzine and is in need of material.
Debbie asks that anyone with stories, artwork or

poems dealing with "The Avengers" or "Space: 1999" please contact her. If you send material for consideration please be sure to enclose sufficient return postage if you want it back.

During her run in "Night and Day" at the Phoenix Theatre in London, Diana Rigg was forced to leave the production due to a back injury. The play has been doing very well and Diana expressed disappointment at having to leave. On doctor's orders she flew to Barbados for two weeks to recuperate and has now returned to her part in the play. However, the problem (thought to have been caused during a stage performance some years ago) is not completely cured yet and doctors believe that surgery may be required.

Our best wishes go out to Diana during her illness and on behalf of all members of the Fan Network I would like to extend our most sincere wishes for good luck and a full recovery.

There is a new club under construction for the series "Salvage-1". Dues are \$3.50 per year for which you receive a membership certificate, an address for writing the stars, a year book, info on "Salvage-1" sales items and a 'First-Hand News' post card service. Send a SASE to Bob Ricci, 9 Pierce St. Hyde Park, MA 02136.

A SF convention is being planned for the New Orleans area which might have some "Avengers" related material or activities if enough interest is shown. Network member Glenda Wire has information on the project and asks that all fans in the area please contact her for details and to suggest possibilities for the con. Write to 6625 Memphis St. New Orleans, LA 70124.

There are two groups which deal with fandom in general and have a listing of several fan clubs. If you are seeking a club or wish to have yours listed contact The International Council of Fan Clubs, 206 Ashdale Ave., Toronto, Ontario M4L 2Y9, Canada - or - The National Association of Fan Clubs, 2730 Baltimore Ave., Pueblo, CO 81003. Enclose return postage.

Pen-Pals

STEVEN GLOVER, 51 Endrick House, Allen Crescent, Dumbarton, Scotland. I am 16 - birthdate: 6 June, 1964. Interests include rugby, cricket, football, table tennis, boxing, World Wars I and II, Joanna Lumley. Hobbies: modeling, wargaming and table tennis. Favorite groups: Blondie and Queen.

LYNN WALKER, PO Box 68, Rd. 2, Orwell, OH 44076. Interests: "Star Trek", "The Avengers", SF, fantasy, herbs, UFOs, Big Foot, Atlantis, Bermuda Triangle, astrology, cabala, tarot, folklore/mythology, ecology, ancient/medieval history, reincarnation, earth sciences, creative writing, alien contacts/cultures, psychology, politics, feminist movement, 007, cats, poetry, people, Barry Manilow and strange music.

BEVERLY BROWN, 527 McGavock Pike, Nashville, TN 37217. Birthdate: March 23, 1954. I am interested in Patrick Macnee, Joanna Lumley, Gareth Hunt and Diana Rigg. Other interests: rock music and English performers. I like poetry, SF, television and movies, reading and writing letters, creative, intelligent people with a lot of imagination. Would like to write to someone in France, Germany, England or anyone who has interests similar to mine.

LORRICE DOUGHERTY, 3535 Roberts Ave., Lot 104, Tallahassee, FL 32304. Age 28. Interested in (besides "The Avengers") Gerry Anderson's productions, especially "UFO". I would like to write to people around my own age but will answer all letters.

I'd like to suggest that everyone continue to support the "New Avengers" by writing to CBS, 51 West 52nd St., New York, NY 10019. Keep letters short and to the point, be polite, type if possible and do not write "New Avengers" on the outside of the envelope (or it's liable to be forwarded unopened). If you have questions about the show, sales items, etc. you'd do better to write here since I will most likely be able to answer them better than CBS.

Something Old, Something New

"The New Avengers" has finished its initial run on American television and the time seems right to sit back and regard the episodes gone by. As a fan of the old series "Avengers" as well as the new, it is difficult for me to assess the recent offerings without looking at those episodes of the 60's as well. With several differences and as many similarities, they obviously invite comparison.

For those of us who cut our teeth on the partnership of John Steed and Emma Peel, followed by Tara King - and especially for viewers who go back to the Cathy Gale era - the most readily noticed difference was the addition of a third partner to the team of Avengers. Along with Steed and his standard leading lady we now had another male agent adding an unfamiliar dimension to the show. The reasoning was obvious. By the mid 70's it would seem that veteran sleuth John Steed would be nearing an age more fit for paper pushing than for chasing villains across the countryside. Early publicity for the show gave the impression that this newcomer would be handling the action while Steed relaxed at his country home, phone in hand, directing the melée.

However, Patrick Macnee soon dismissed everyone's notion that John Steed could be put out to pasture along with his horses. The Ministry's top agent could still be found in the heart of an investigation right alongside his younger colleagues. Those who feared that Steed would be incapable in the field had obviously not studied his methods. Patrick granted Steed a timeless approach to his craft by deciding in the earliest stages of the series that he would be a man of mind over muscle. As in the old series when Steed preferred his broily swordstick to the seemingly more lethal handgun, the present day Steed can outwit and disarm an assailant with the flick of his bowler. In his opinion there is no need to rumple one's clothing or hair unnecessarily. Besides, guns can be dangerous... In this respect, Steed will still be able for duty long after younger agents are gone because they relied on a slowed trigger-finger.

Still, Gareth Hunt was on hand as Mike Gambit and

the addition didn't seem to harm the established team of Steed and one female partner. Quite wisely the producers chose not to disregard the character of Gambit in favor of putting a greater emphasis on Steed. In fact, they seem to have done an excellent job of balancing the trio and giving them equal parts of the show. A wise decision - the team would not have worked with one member downgraded to unimportance. There were occasional episodes where one character or another was neglected somewhat, but in view of the whole this new arrangement of an "Avengers" threesome was handled quite well.

Gareth Hunt has done a fine job of developing Mike Gambit into the perfect complement for this previously male/female duo. His ultra-modern character and surroundings counterbalance Steed's traditional elegance. A bit of over-eagerness on his part compliments Purdey's cool. Gambit's inclination toward silly puns and obvious jokes is offset by Steed's refined humour. The fact that he prefers standard black belt karate helps show off Purdey's flashy fighting style. They say that opposites attract, and so the differences in these three characters draw them together and knit them into a believable, well-balanced team.

Past "Avengers" ladies are gone from the scene of this new version. Except for occasional fleeting references they are out of sight, if not out of mind. The new series heroine had her job cut out if she were going to live up to the exploits of Steed's former partners and the actress chosen to play her had to be carefully selected. I doubt that anyone could have handled the task more ably than Joanna Lumley. She is beautiful, graceful and decidedly feminine while, at the same time, level-headed, competent and totally convincing as a well trained agent. Most importantly, however, she is an individual and without imitating past efforts has created in Purdey a character which fully meets the standards set by the original "Avengers". Quite an achievement when you look at what had come before!

"New Avengers" or old, there is one connecting link which holds the two together and provides a dash of continuity between the decades. The name

might be the same, but it would not be "The Avengers" without Patrick Macnee as John Steed. Woe be the day when this element is gone from the series!

With the passing of the years and reflecting other changes made in the series, Steed has altered somewhat. Fortunately, the main ingredients of the character are untouched by time. Elegance, charm, sophisticated tastes in clothes, food and women... these remain an integral part of Steed. He still retains an endearing ability to make light of world crises while considering very solemnly the proper method of enjoying a fine wine. Still, there have been changes. We see a much more human side to Steed being presented this time around. Whereas the characters of the 60's had a feeling of comic-book-brought-to-life, the present day John Steed is based more in reality. He is much more serious and there seems to be a practicality to the character which wasn't there before.

Ever since the introduction of 'Mother' in the Tara King episodes Steed's job and position have become more clearly defined. He is no longer the self-appointed Avenger of All Evil which we knew from the days of Emma Peel. In a way this is unfortunate. It removes a bit of fun from the show to think that Steed and his partners are actually bound to regulations and limitations as we all are rather than being self-governed free agents with unmeasured resources.

Along with the characters there is more reality to the basic format and flavor of the new series as well. If I were going to find fault with any aspect of the "New Avengers" in comparison to the original it would be in this area. The storylines, characters and situations in the old series were often fantastical and sometimes downright absurd. Although totally unbelievable at times, they added a great deal to the essence of the program. Each strange society, unusual occurrence and odd character was executed with the perfect amount of flair and accepted as a completely normal part of life. They were all an indispensable part of the lovely adult fairy tale treatment given the old series. Luckily this fantastical format was not completely abandoned in the new series and we saw some delightful touches in "Emily", "Medium Rare",

"Lion and the Unicorn" and "Cat Amongst the Pigeons", to name a few.

However, the new series has its advantages as well. For one, there was a larger budget available which allowed for a more expensive production. We no longer had to suffer through obvious 'drives' through the studio when auto scenes were shot. There was more location work in "The New Avengers", especially evident by the episodes shot in France and Canada. Obviously Steed would not be residing in splendor comparable to 'Steed's Stud' on the old series budget. Another bonus from the new series was the increase of seat-edge action. The auto chases, fight sequences and other assorted stunt work add spice to an episode as long as they aren't relied upon too heavily.

The cast and crew took on a difficult task when they decided to revive such a classic as "The Avengers" and attempt to live up to the standards set before. Fortunately there were many old hands from the original back to work on the update and see that things were done properly and in true "Avengers" style. After surveying this new version of an old favorite I would have to say that it has passed muster with flying colors! My only question is - when do we get more?

* * * * *

The above article is by the editor and reflects her own feelings and views on "The Avengers"/"New Avengers" and characters. Readers are encouraged to send in their own comments, similar or opposing. Letters sent may be used in future Newsletters unless otherwise specified.

Along the same line, the suggested topic of discussion ('Meanderings' or LOCs) for next issue is as follows: Now that you have viewed the "New Avengers" series choose a particular scene which you liked or disliked and explain your reasons for feeling as you do. If you disliked the scene, what would you have done to change it?

"A Touch of Brimstone"

Photos courtesy of Avengers (Film & TV) Enterprises

An important diplomat from the Eastern bloc is held up to ridicule before a television audience of millions; a massive oil deal is cancelled when the Sheik is made to look like a monkey. National prestige - not to mention big business - is in danger of ruin by a series of such hoaxes when The Avengers are ordered to take a closer look.

Telling Emma that he has only one suspect - the Honorable John Cleverly Cartney - Steed suggests that she might find out something from him.

From the moment they meet the Hon. John is attracted to Emma. Believing her story about collecting for charity, he immediately donates a thousand guineas, and requests her company at dinner. Their conversation is interrupted by the arrival of Lord Lancelot Darcy. While the two men move away to talk in quiet, almost secretive tones, Emma surreptitiously searches Cartney's bureau. All she can find is a diary which contains the cryptic message: "Today - 4.30 - Friendship".

In the meantime Steed has followed another lead, and is searching Darcy's apartment. He finds a number of pairs of scissors - all made of rubber. He makes his escape only after fighting off Horace, Lord Darcy's 'man'.

Steed is puzzled by the rubber scissors - until Emma mentions the entry she read in the diary. Suddenly the pieces fall into position, and The Avengers are tearing across London to the newly-built Hall of Friendship. They arrive too late. Another hoax has been played - with more serious consequences. While performing the opening ceremony the V.I.P. was electrocuted by a current passed through the ribbon.

Sending Emma to have another 'go' at Cartney, Steed goes in search of Darcy. He finds his man - whose apparent unhappiness is matched only by his inebriation - and immediately sets to work on him.

The luckless Lord soon confesses his part in the plot, but insists that he didn't know that murder was intended. Steed believes him, but asks why the joke was played. Darcy tells him that such hoaxes are part of the rules of the Hellfire Club.

At a meeting of the Hellfire Club - in Cartney's home - Emma sees that it is an exact replica of the infamous eighteenth century organisation. Dressed in Regency costumes, the members drink and letch their fill. In company with her host, Emma is forced to watch as two men fight before the drunken company.

The festivities are interrupted by an agitated Darcy, who has escaped from Steed, to accuse Cartney of duplicity and murder. Cartney calmly orders a meeting of 'Superior' members, and they, with Darcy, withdraw from the revels.

Later, as they stand over the coffin containing Lord Lancelot Darcy's mortal remains, Emma tells Steed that she is sure Darcy's murder was committed by the 'Superior' members. Steed decides that he might find the Hellfire Club to his taste, and makes immediate arrangements to join.

Suspicious of Steed, Cartney changes the induction rules, and the Secret Agent has to face a number of tests.

After passing the tests, Steed pretends to leave. Listening at the door, he hears Cartney tell the others that they have succeeded in embarrassing the Government by their anarchy. Their next coup will, he says, be so outrageous that the whole country will be up in arms. It will, he orders, be put into operation during the next evening's Gala.

The party's really 'swinging' when Steed arrives, and everything looks set for a great old orgy. Seeing members carrying a Sedan Chair, Steed asks Emma to follow it, while he turns his attentions to Sara - Cartney's ex-girlfriend.

Following the Sedan deep into the catacombs beneath the house, Emma sees the men unload boxes of high explosives. Hurrying to find Steed, she meets Cartney who tells her that he has something 'special' in mind for her.

Steed learns from Sara of a number of underground passages under the house. One, she says, leads to the

Government-owned Culverstone House. Their conversation is interrupted by Cartney who introduces the 'Queen of Sin'. It is Emma, dressed in a corset and boots, and carrying a live snake!

Dancing with the 'Queen', Steed puts forward the theory that Cartney's men are going to blow-up Culverstone House where three foreign Prime Ministers are staying. His fears become greater when Emma reminds him that the original Hell Raisers were dedicated to overthrowing the Government.

Steed is suddenly in trouble when Horace, the late Darcy's manservant, recognises him. He faces an immediate challenge to a duel from a particularly sadistic member called Frant. Emma slips away from the crowd, followed by Cartney, as Steed and Frant commence their fight to the death.

In the catacombs Emma makes short work of the men who guard the explosives, but, as she turns to leave, she looks down the barrel of an automatic pistol held by her host. She suddenly hurls the rapier she is holding at him.

As she stands over the dead Cartney, Steed rushes in - to the rescue!

In an elegant eighteenth century coach two laughing Avengers ride off in search of another adventure.

Written by Brian Clemens

Music by Laurie Johnson

Directed by James Hill

Produced by Julian Wintle

CAST

John Steed Patrick Macnee
Emma Peel Diana Rigg
John Cartney Peter Wyngarde
Lord Darcy Colin Jeavons
Sara Carol Cleveland
Horace Robert Cawdron
Roger Winthrop Michael Latimer
Willy Frant Jeremy Young
Tubby Bunn Bill Wallis



"Hostage"

by Brian Clemens

Directed by Sidney Hayers

John Steed had been warned by McKay that there was possibly a rotten apple in the security barrel. Steed had planned an intimate dinner for two. The woman was stunningly attractive, the claret was just right. The telephone rang and a voice informed Steed that Purdey was being held hostage. To prove the point, her car was now parked in Steed's garage. He was told to play along or Purdey was dead. No one must know - least of all the headstrong Gambit.

Steed raced to Purdey's empty apartment. There was another telephone call demanding five thousand pounds. Steed delivered the money to the rendezvous. Later Steed received another contact, this time there was an envelope containing some of Purdey's hair. Steed was being manoeuvred - he had to dash to a telephone box near his house. The money had been a dummy run. They wanted something else - The Full Allied Attack Plan which was being held in secrecy before being handed over to the Americans. Steed removed the Plan from McKay's office safe - Gambit and the other agent Spelman were both in the security area... Steed photographed the plans.

McKay was suspicious when he saw grainy film of Steed making the money drop at a house which the department had under surveillance... the other side's post office. McKay passed it off with the knowledge that Steed often played his own game. However, as Steed left with the Plans in an envelope, the department moved in and intercepted his morning post. There was a letter containing five thousand pounds. Steed was under suspicion - Steed was being tailed. He rendezvous'd at a telephone box and was told he had to lose the tail. There was a car chase during which Steed, with cool aplomb, lost the tail.

Purdey was being held chained. A man disguised as Steed shot one of the department's agents leaving a gun... it was Steed's gun. Gambit was worried - could Steed have feet of clay. McKay put Gambit on



to tag Steed. If the suspicions were confirmed, it would be up to Gambit to bring Steed in. While Steed prepared to deliver the Full Allied Attack Plan, the gun was confirmed as belonging to Steed and Gambit was ordered to bring him in.

Gambit confronted Steed - Gambit lost. Packer stopped Steed's car, climbed in, frisked Steed and found the envelope. Steed explained that it had an incendiary in it and he would only defuse it when he was taken to Purdey.

Purdey didn't believe Steed would hand over any plans... Spelman was there - he was the traitor. Steed arrived - he was outnumbered. He had been framed. Could Steed save Purdey with a firecracker? Would Gambit arrive and could Steed clear himself?

CAST

Steed Patrick Macnee
Purdey Joanna Lumley
Gambit Gareth Hunt
McKay William Franklyn
Spelman Simon Oates
Walters Michael Culver
Suzy Anna Palk
Packer Barry Stanton
Vernon Richard Ireson
Marvin George Lane-Cooper

Produced by
Albert Fennell
and
Brian Clemens

Music by Laurie Johnson

Production Supervisor Ron Fry

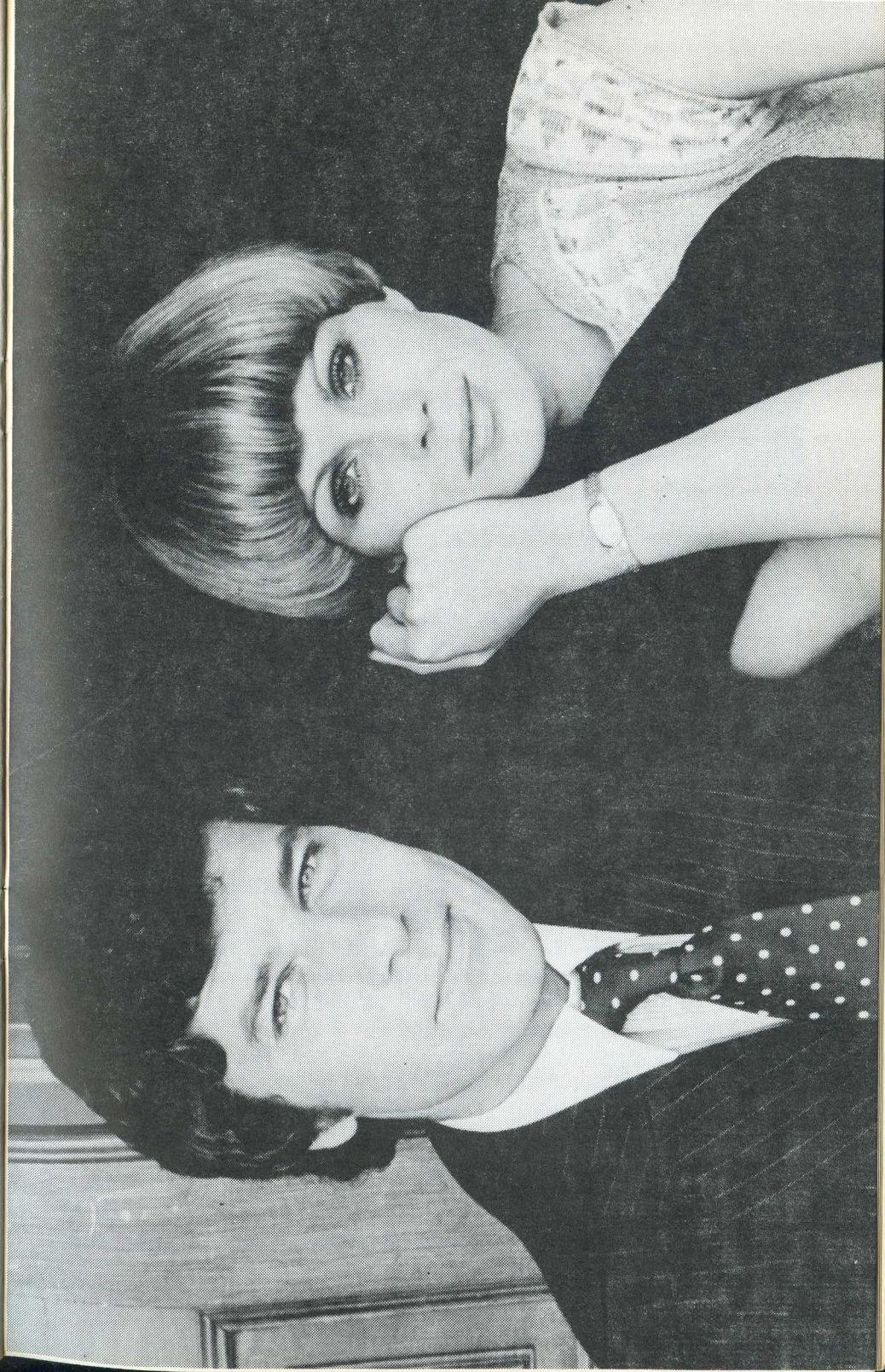
Garage Sale

The following "Avengers" books are available from Marshall Ellenstein, 5975 N. Odell, Chicago, IL 60631: #2 "The Laugh Was on Lazarus", #3 "The Passing of Gloria Munday", #6 "The Drowned Queen", #7 "The Gold Bomb" and #8 "The Magnetic Man". These books are \$1.00 each, including postage. Indicate which book(s) you want and list an alternative to be safe. Enclose a SASE with your order... if they are sold your money will be returned.

The following "Avengers" books are available from Fan Network Headquarters, 1925 Terry #7, Longmont, CO 80501: #5 "The Afrit Affair", #8 "The Magnetic Man", New Avengers #1 "House of Cards" (3 copies), New Avengers #2 "Eagle's Nest" (2 copies). The New Avengers books are the American editions and are new (not used). The price is \$1.50 per book, postage included - \$3.00 overseas. "Afrit Affair" and "The Magnetic Man" are \$1.00 each, postage paid - \$2.00 overseas. First come, first served. Enclose a SASE with your order. Also available are back issues #3, 4 and 5 of the Newsletter: \$1.40 ea. 3/\$4.00 (US)

Sue Cole, 2710 Rohlwing Road, Rolling Meadows, IL 60008 has for sale buttons and stationery from TV shows. Programs include "Space: 1999", "The Avengers", "The New Avengers", "UFO", "Man from Atlantis", etc. Buttons are black and white photocopied pictures, artwork and hand-lettered sayings. Stationery comes in choice of colors. Also available are custom photo/saying buttons. Buttons are 50¢ each, stationery is \$1.25/30 sheets. Postage is 12¢ each for buttons, 75¢ for stationery (1st class). For more information send a SASE to Sue. Specify program(s).

Debbie Phares, PO Box 267, Nederland, TX 77627 has a few B&W 8x10 "Avengers" stills to sell. There are 18 total, excellent condition. Price is 75¢ each. I'm not sure if this includes postage - it would be a good idea to SASE Debbie for more information and details of what she has before ordering.



LOCs of Gold

LIV BOTTUM, Ann Arbor, MI:

I found Mrs. Peel's "New Avengers" appearance ("The Tiger Awakes") an intriguing disappointment. From the previews of the show during the week (which announced "Special Guest Diana Rigg") I hoped for more than those two phone calls. All week, before the show, my main question was, "Would there be any interaction between Purdey and Mrs. Peel?" From the cybernaut episode it was clear that Purdey had not terribly warm feelings about Steed's former partner. The Purdey/Gambit exchange when they are discussing their research on Steed's past cybernaut case made this point.

Purdey's fondness for Steed makes it uncomfortable for her to think about his relationship with Mrs. Peel. She seems to have fewer problems with Steed's current ladyfriends. We see her and Gambit socializing with Steed and "that delectable Trish" (as Purdey refers to her a year later) at Steed's birthday party in the cybernaut episode. (Purdey can afford to be charitable. She's still there - Trish isn't.) Purdey shares a part of Steed's life that his ladyfriends never can - and a part that is more important to him than his personal life. So Purdey has an edge over these ladies who move in and out of Steed's life, although she doesn't (apparently) share their romantic link with him. But Mrs. Peel was a part of his professional life, just as Purdey is, and Purdey isn't so sure that she wasn't a part of Steed's romantic life as well. A formidable rival! No wonder we detect a certain coolness in Purdey toward Mrs. Peel. This is illustrated in her sardonic, "Bringing in reinforcements?" comment to Steed when she heard him on the phone with her.

But Mrs. Peel's appearance on the show offered us no such interesting possibilities as a meeting with Purdey. Instead, it consisted of two clips from "The (old) Avengers" of Mrs. Peel answering the phone and then cut to Steed talking to her disembodied voice. How disappointing!

There was an intriguing note. Her remark, "I've changed my name. I'm not Mrs. Peel any more." (and his

reply, "Yes, I know. But you're still Mrs. Peel to me.") The assumption is that she has married again. What happened? Did Peter Peel crash his plane one final time and leave her widowed? Or did he simply leave her? Or did she leave him? "Forget-Me-Knot" offered us the idea (from our overhead glimpse of Peter Peel with his bowler and umbrella) that Mrs. Peel got on so well with Steed because he reminded her of Peter. But perhaps the 'reminder' surpassed the 'original' - perhaps Peter Peel found himself eclipsed by Steed in her mind. And our main question - What is she doing now? - was, of course, unanswered.

CAROL CRUNK, Mobile, AL:

"New Avengers" is back on in New Orleans. After a couple of week's absence they brought it back on Thursday. It's still off here in Mobile. A local radio station - which is affiliated with the TV station which should show "The New Avengers" - has a talk show. Last night they had the man in charge of TV programming. I called to ask him why they had taken "The New Avengers" off. Do you know he tried to tell me that CBS had taken it off! And he really got mad when I told him that CBS had not taken it off and I knew it. He tried his best to make me seem like a fool and not admit his station took it off. I've never been so mad in my life!

CHRISTINE MAK, Ontario, Canada:

In Newsletter #8 you said that the company selling the "Avengers" films in England were cheaper than the one in Alberta. After I worked the prices out I found that the company in Alberta is cheaper. The price of the films in Alberta is \$169 Canadian. Our dollar in US funds is \$0.8443. The British pound in US funds is \$2.0218. ((So)) the price for Derann Films is \$160.13 with airmail. The Canadian one is \$145.64 in US dollars. (March 15) ((Quite right. I wasn't taking into account the exchange rate between Canadian and American dollars.))

AGNES M. BUREN, Deer Park, TX:

Linda Thorson has been in Houston for about

four weeks acting in a play called "Artichoke" which was written by Joanna Glass. I was very lucky to get to see Linda because when I phoned early in the morning I was told that they were out of tickets. Since it was the last day of the play (Sunday, March 4) I decided to go to the theater and managed to get a ticket. I thought that the play was both interesting and well acted.

I asked Linda if "Artichoke" was being shown all over the US and she said that the play was a special showing for the Alley Theater. According to the program, this is the first time that Linda has been to Houston. Afterwards she is returning to Canada to do another play before she returns to England.

There was a man in the waiting room with Linda who said that he got killed off in one of the "New Avengers" shows. I don't remember the name of the show ("New Avengers" isn't shown in the Deer Park region)). It's terrible that I didn't think to ask him for his autograph. I guess I was so relieved at being able to get Linda's autograph that it never occurred to me to ask anyone else!

When I received your last Newsletter I immediately sent off for the "Pygmalion" record. I received it within two weeks after ordering. I am very pleased with the record and their service.

MARSHALL ELLENSTEIN, Chicago, IL:

I just found your Network Newsletter tucked away in a corner of a book store. I've noticed you are interested in opinions of Purdey vs. Emma Peel vs. Tara King vs. Gambit vs. etc. etc. At the risk of offending everyone in the club before I even say hello... "The Avengers" are Steed and Emma Peel. That's it! All the rest, Purdey, King, Gambit, are imitations. Sure, I'm going to watch "The New Avengers" tonight, but it's sort of like an old guy looking at pix of his past girlfriends... the pix are fine, so are the memories, but he'd rather be with the real thing. So would I. I'd rather see a rerun of "The Avengers" than see "The New Avengers".

It goes without saying that Steed and only Steed, with all his charm, is the main ingredient and his partners are spices. ...The times Steed was shown as

a gentleman like the wine tasting challenge and the classical music challenge (really now, Deutsche Grammophon 'Studio B' - I flipped when I heard that one)... He is a perfect gentleman and that is why I will always watch the show as long as he is on it. Sure miss Mrs. Peel, though!

There will never be anything like "The Avengers", but since there isn't I'll settle for the next best thing - "The New Avengers". It's still better than anything on TV.

I really enjoyed and envied Gene Davidson's article, "The Village Green England of The Avengers" ((Newsletter #5)). He was quite right about the beautiful landscapes and settings. Definitely added a lot!

BOB RICCI, Hyde Park, MA:

((Concerning the "Avengers" comic book...))

The comic was published in 1968 by Gold Key, a company under Western Publishing. The cover had a photo of Steed and Peel opening a coffin. The book is subdivided into two stories.

The first story, "Roman Invasion" defines Steed as a bumbling idiot. In one panel he actually screams for help. Also he makes many mistakes - in one sequence he forgets to take off his bowler while wearing a Roman outfit. The story is pure trash and has no plot whatsoever.

The next story is "Mirage Maker". In this one a scientist named Johnson has a device that creates mirages. When it is stolen the Avengers are called in on the case.

As far as literary value goes this book isn't worth its cover price. This is surely the reason for it lasting only one issue. The impressive cover just goes to show that you can't judge a book by its cover.

In the March 10, 1979 issue of "TV Guide" it stated that the "Tonight Show" is doing poorly against ABC and CBS shows. It then had a list of the shows doing the damage and there was the title "The New Avengers".

CINDY PHARES, Nederland, TX:

Watched a movie last night called "And Soon

Came Darkness". It was produced by Albert Fennell and Brian Clemens. Music was by Laurie Johnson. Very good, suspenseful movie. Two English girls are on holiday in France. Eventually they have a silly argument and split up. When the other goes back to check on her friend she has disappeared. Had a rather unexpected ending. If it's ever on in your area I recommend it.

STEVE ERAMO, Stoneham, MA:

Saw "Trap" last night. A very well done episode. Had a lot of good scenes with Joanna and Gareth and poor Patrick ended up playing a 'broken arm'. He did it so well, though. And only the Avengers could open up a pressurized plane and remain inside while the enemy goes out!

All the photos and drawings in the Newsletter were beautiful. The front cover with Gareth and the still of Purdey going through the car wash with Emily were gorgeous! Liked the two reviews on the episodes as well as the info on the whereabouts of our Avengers from Bill. Must say that Bill is one good artist.

One of my penpals was taking pics from a "1999" episode (she lives in Britain) and one of the Gareth commercials was on. I am now the proud owner of a photo of Gareth Hunt shaking a fistful of coffee beans. What we fans go through for material!

Patrick McGoochan's old series "Secret Agent" is on reruns here. Never guess who played an agent in the department - Patrick Newell! He's been off and on the series so I suppose you could term him as a semi-regular.

In the March 14 issue of "Variety" they had a full-page ad for Gareth's new movie "Licensed to Love and Kill". No release date, but it is selling around the world.

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

Are you familiar with the SF/fantasy magazine, "Fantastic Films"? If not, the latest (June) issue has a mention about "The Avengers". It's part of a continuing feature in each issue which chronicles SF, adventure and fantasy-type shows and serials on TV during the 50's, 60's and 70's. This issue

covers up to and including 1966. There is really nothing too unusual about the "Avengers" information incorporated in the article. It's merely a brief outline of the basic premise and major cast changes in the show from 61-69. There is also a small photo of Steed and Mrs. Peel included with the article. In a future issue the editors promised to continue the Avengers' success story with coverage of "The New Avengers".

I am a great fan of the "New Avengers". However, some of the latest episodes ("Complex", "Dirtier by the Dozen", "The Three Handed Game", among others) lacked any real meaning for me. I think that Joanna and Gareth do a beautiful job and naturally I think Pat is great. But some of the stories or plots or whatever, in my estimation, leave a lot to be desired. The first few episodes were so great and I felt they were really off to a bang-up start. But some of these last ones don't give our threesome a fair chance to even act as they can. In one of the episodes it seemed that all they let Pat do was stand around with a champagne glass in his hand and that's certainly beneath his splendid ability.

GENE GRAINER, New Orleans, LA:

Someone has got to stick up for Mike Gambit! Everyone out there keeps pushing Gambit aside. No room for a third where there was always just two. Well, maybe I have an 'advantage' over some people. I never saw "The Avengers" and all I see now is a man who admires and cares for John Steed and one who loves Purdey. A man who would give his life for both of them without a moment's hesitation - who would sacrifice anything for one John Steed, one Purdey.

Take "Obsession" for one example. Mike Gambit shot Larry knowing full well that Purdey might hate him for the rest of his life. But he did it anyway, for her. Take "Hostage" for another example. There we saw a man who stopped living after being told his closest friend had turned traitor. And who is to deny the emotion on Gambit's face as Steed and

Purdey embraced, discovering the former would have turned traitor to save the life of one they both so deeply care for?

I enjoyed reading issue #8. I liked the synopsis of "Emily" and I loved the episode itself. The only problem is that you were laughing so hard you sometimes missed a line or two! Loved the part where Collings goes to help Purdey off Emily and Gambit locks a hand around his wrist (not to mention Steed's expression)!

The back cover art by Bill Bradshaw... is it from an episode or from the artist's imagination? I love it! ((The artwork was from a photo in the "New Avengers" Annual.))

Did you know that John Steed and Emma Peel are mentioned (along with 'Mother') in the book UNCLE #11 "The Rainbow Affair"? Not mentioned, per se, but you know that is who he was talking about.

* * * * *

That's it for this issue. There are no "Meanderings" this time around, but the feature has not been discontinued. It should be back next issue. I want to remind everyone that the "Midnight Meanderings" and letter column are for readers to express their opinions, thought, criticism, praise, ideas, etc. on anything having to do with "The Avengers". It isn't mandatory that you discuss only the suggested topic (that's only there to give you a few ideas). Anyone who has questions about writing articles or LOCs for the Newsletter is welcome to contact me and I'll be happy to explain further. I'd rather fill the pages with your comments than force you to read my own!

The scheduled synopses for next issue are on the episodes "House of Cards" and "Love All". You will no doubt notice that I'm alternating between the Emma Peel and Tara King episodes in each issue. Occasionally I might revert to having two Emma Peel episodes in a row. Tara fans shouldn't get upset - this is only because there were more Peel episodes made and I'm trying to space them out a bit. I'm open to suggestions of what episodes you would like to see.

etcetera

During the last part of May and first few days of June I will be away from home attending a convention in Lansing, Michigan. This is fair warning so that everyone will know why I'm not writing, filling orders and so on during that time. It is also warning to those who phone me occasionally that you'll only get hold of a grumpy guy if you call. Be kind to him, he's lonely.

The con that I'm attending is 2'Con, to be held May 25-28 at the Hilton Inn Lansing. I've already made arrangements to meet several Network members at the con and at my stop over in Kansas City (where I'll be staying with my parents and trading the motorcycle for auto transportation to complete the journey). If you're going to be around either of those areas at that time please let me know as I'd love to meet you for a chat.

For those members attending 2'Con... I plan to have a get-together of some sort so get in touch and let me know if you'll be there. You can contact me at home until about the 20th of May. At the con I should be easily recognized - look for a "New Avengers" t-shirt on a short-ish person with short, dark hair covered by a blue suede hat (with a feather if I don't lose it.)

I will have my collection of original "Star Trek" artwork on display and up for auction to raise funds for the Fan Network. If you're into "Trek" and want to help the club - bid high! I'll also have assorted "Avengers" material with me (depending upon how much I can load onto the bike, this will include past Newsletters, photo albums, Annuals, books, magazines, flyers, and so on) and will be recruiting new members. Keep an eye out.

At present, I don't know for certain where I'll be staying at the con. Search out the "Interstat" crew - of which I'm a staff artist - and I'll most likely be there. With luck I'll be in a hotel room with them. If not, look for a green sleeping bag in someone's car at night. Cons are so much fun...

"Me Tarzan. No, that's not right. Me Jane...? No, Me Purdey!"

