



PATRICK MacNEE

OUR LOVE

BACK with a bang to ITV screens on Wednesday week come The New Avengers. Here DON SHORT fills in some background you didn't know.



I didn't bed with because not ask

LINDA THORSON

Gareth was 'sentenced'—to Kiwi cocoa

VISITING a New Zealand jail to sample the cocoa and cuisine has the elegantly off-beat ring of a typical script idea from *The New Avengers*, which starts after much ballyhoo this week.

But Gareth Hunt, who plays Steed's newly-recruited trouble-shooting sidekick Mike Gambit, and is pictured on our cover with Patrick Macnee and Joanna Lumley, did it in real life.

"Yes, I was a sort of non-paying guest in an Auckland prison for three months," he said. "It was during my days in the Merchant Navy. Three of us jumped ship in New Zealand, which technically is a maritime offence.

"We were ordered back to Britain on the next ship—but it was not due for three months. As we had no money and no chance to work, the local nick was the only alternative waiting room. But we were only there for the free lunches and late cocoa. The standard was about one-star hotel and

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Not so Patrick Macnee—impeccable, elegant, English through and through.

Eton, where he was educated, may have produced legions of leaders, but it has never spawned a sex symbol before.

"It hasn't done so now, either," Patrick Macnee will argue modestly.

"The fans recognise me not as they would a movie star, but more like an old grand piano in the corner. They've grown accustomed to it."

Maybe as John Steed with the bowler, broly and Bentley, he is jolly old-fashioned, but the remarkable thing is that the chemistry works. Hollywood's glut of

superstuds would gladly have swapped roles with Steed because of his range of glamorous accomplices in previous Avengers series.

There was Honor Blackman as Cathy Gale, Diana Rigg as Emma Peel and Linda Thorson as Tara King.

And seemingly Steed's luck hasn't changed. After a seven-year absence he steps spritely back into *The New Avengers* to find that he's in league with the luscious Joanna Lumley as the pulsating Purdey.

Already Patrick Macnee is impressed.

"She is utterly lovely and so natural. She takes everything in her stride," he says during a break in shooting at Pinewood Studios, Elstree.

Sexual tension has always been an essential ingredient of Steed's relationship with his ladies.

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The fantasy was sustained with Emma Peel. Fresh ammunition was supplied when Tara King came on the scene. The question then asked was, "Will they?"

Bearded co-producer Brian Clemens, who has written the major episodes of *The New Avengers*, has been careful to preserve these sexual overtones.

"Steed is discriminating about his women," he says. "He is also a much gentler man and in my opinion shows better taste than James Bond."

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seduce a Duchess but not a virgin, while Bond I suspect would have anything going around."

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Of Honor Blackman he says:

"She was, and still is, an intensely beautiful woman and very remarkable. She pursued Cathy's role with great strength of character.

"She was a tremendous spur for Women's Lib, but she was still very feminine, warm and fascinating."

Very close

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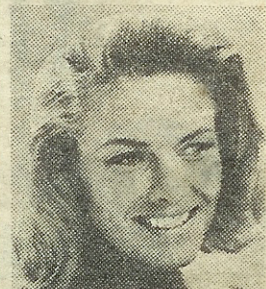
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Return of The Avengers



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Clemens explained: "Although *The Avengers* hasn't been on the screen here for some six years, it has hardly been off the screen in America. We've been trying to set up a new series for some time now and about six months ago Rudolph Roffi, who heads an independent French film and TV company, offered to put up the money to make an initial series of 13 episodes."

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ever we are. We are great friends."

Linda Thorson arrived at the age of twenty from acting school to fill the Tara King role.

"I adored Linda and I went out socially with her. We dined and danced," says Patrick.

"Whatever doubts were cast on her acting ability, she has certainly proved herself now."

So which one of the three did he form the closest affinity with?

"Quite honestly, I didn't fall in love with any of them. Not 'love' in the real context of the word. But that is a very different thing from saying that I would not have had an affair with any of them.

"I would have been delighted to. But I didn't. Maybe that kind of thing happens in Hollywood, but I am not of that school."

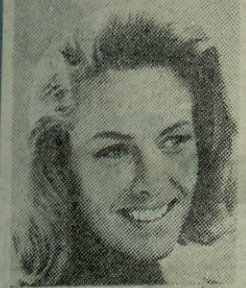
In America where he appeared on Broadway, Patrick voted Princess Anne his No. 1 pin-up girl.

"Oh yes, I meant it," says Patrick with a twinkle in his eye. "I love Princess Anne because she has a glorious common sense. And frankly, I find her highly erotic."

What special qualities does he look for in women?

"I love them to be feminine. For some reason I have always been immensely excited by anyone who looks like Virginia McKenna. She is my idea of utter perfection."

Patrick bites his



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Return of The Avengers



AVENGER ENTERPRISES, the company set up by the successful writer/producer team of Brian Clemens and Albert Fennell following their purchase of the rights

to *The Avengers* series, is now resurrecting ace-agent John Steed.

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The part of Steed is, again, to be taken by Patrick Macnee (below). No decision has yet been reached about who will co-star with him.

Clemens' own non-stop career has recently reached new heights with three stage plays either on tour and waiting to go into the West End of London or, in the case of one play, waiting to go direct to the West End.



8.0

Patrick Macnee returns as suave adventurer John Steed in *The New Avengers*

AVENGER



Pat is my great confidant and friend. A great actor, too. He undervalues himself..

DIANA RIGG ALIAS EMMA PEEL.

ongue." But that doesn't mean to say they are in any way remotely excited by me. Who can work out the chemistry?"

Ironically, Patrick the reluctant sex symbol, melted the hearts of all three of his former aides.

As Linda Thorson says:

"Once I thought I was in love with Patrick because he was the only man in my life. I was alone in London.

"He was so kind and considerate and when things went wrong in the studio I would retreat and cry on his shoulder.

"Patrick was so gentle. I like gentle people. I would have done anything he said.

"The only reason we didn't go to bed together was because he didn't suggest it. Maybe that

was because he was too much of a gentleman."

Honor Blackman now remembers Patrick as she might a brother.

"He is a dear old cuddly fella," she says. "When you're in trouble you can phone up and pour out your heart to him. What is more he will come round and get you laughing again. That is the kind of warm-hearted soul he is."

Diana Rigg says: "He is a great confidant and a great friend. He is a great actor too.

"When I write to him I keep telling him that he undervalues himself."

Does Steed think he undervalues himself? Patrick's eyes twinkle.

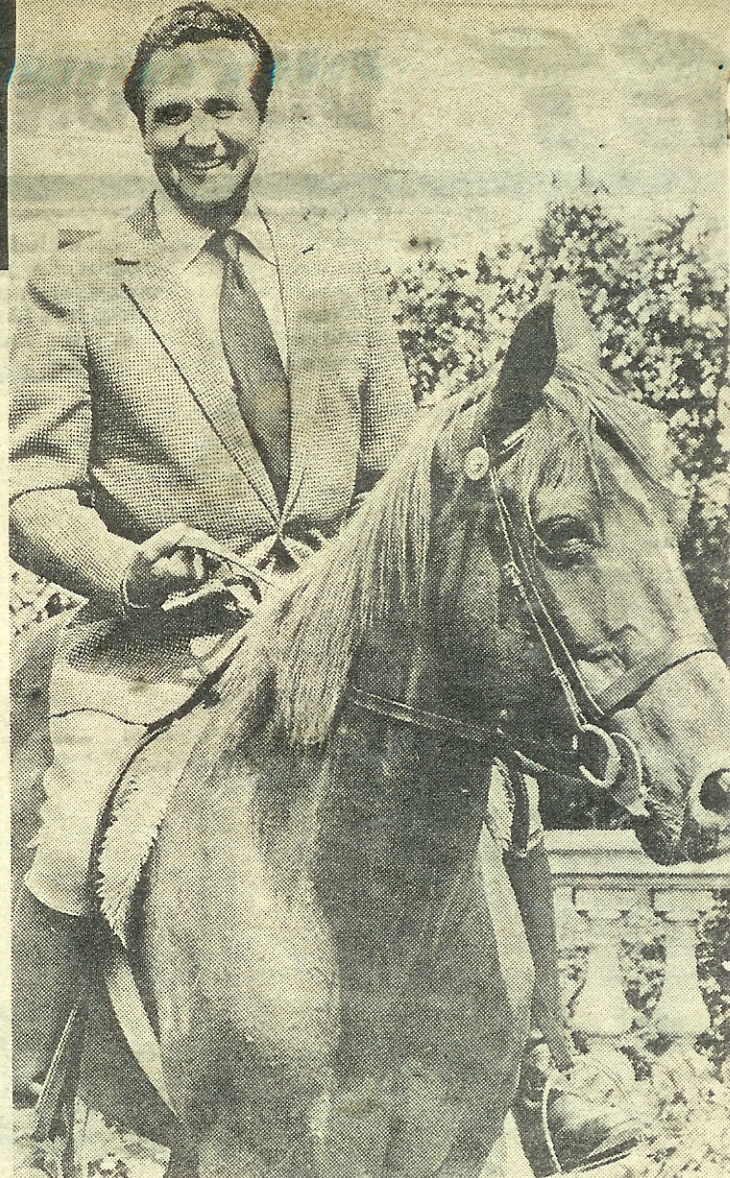
"I have a date," he says... "the girl's name is Purdey..."

That's John Steed. An Avenger till the end.

©—Don Short, 1976.

I would have been delighted to have affairs..

—MACNEE ALIAS JOHN STEED



8.0

The New Avengers

BY BRIAN CLEMENS

PATRICK MACNEE
GARETH HUNT
JOANNA LUMLEY
PETER CUSHING
DEREK FARR in

The Eagle's Nest

The return of John Steed in another series of swashbuckling adventures, with new assistants Gambit and the gorgeous Purdey. The trail of a kidnapped scientist takes the trio to a sinister island where men deal out death with hook and line. The music is composed by Laurie Johnson.

Sex and John Steed—the truth revealed: see page 21

John Steed
Mike Gambit
Purdey
Von Claus
Father Trasker
Karl
Hara
Brown-Fitch

Patrick Macnee
Gareth Hunt
Joanna Lumley
Peter Cushing
Derek Farr
Frank Gatloff
Sydney Bromley
Trevor Baxter

Lady with dog
Main
Stannard
Jud
Barker
Gerda
Nazi corporal
Ralph

Joyce Carey
Neil Phillips
Brian Anthony
Ronald Porfar
Jerold Wells
Trude Van Doorne
Peter Porteous
Charles Bolton

DIRECTOR DESMOND DAVIS

8.0 The New Avengers

PATRICK MACNEE
GARETH HUNT
JOANNA LUMLEY in
House of Cards

BY BRIAN CLEMENS

When suave Steed, aided by pretty Purdey and gallant Gambit, attempts to outwit sinister spy Perov, it sets up a

game of cards in which the stake is life and death.

Gambit finds that out in a karate to the death; Steed when he falls in with the wrong woman; and Purdey when she is used for target practice.

See In View

John Steed
Mike Gambit
Purdey
Perov
Roland
Cartney
The Bishop
Spence
Jo
Suzy
Olga
David
Vasil
Boris
Tulliver
Frederick

Patrick Macnee
Gareth Hunt
Joanna Lumley
Peter Cushing
Frank Gatloff
Lyndon Murray
Derek Farr
Mark Gatloff
Geraldine Ferrar
Annette Blythe
Ina Saxon
Murray
Gordon Murray
Dan Murray
Jeremy Burrell
Anthony

DIRECTOR RAY AUSTIN

You could call Patrick Macnee 'The 30 Million Dollar Man' because that's how much The Avengers, in which he stars, has earned around the world. It was one of the most successful TV series ever, and one of my own top favourites of the 1960's. As you have probably heard already, Patrick, with co-stars Joanna Lumley, and Gareth Hunt (right) returns in late October in a new series.