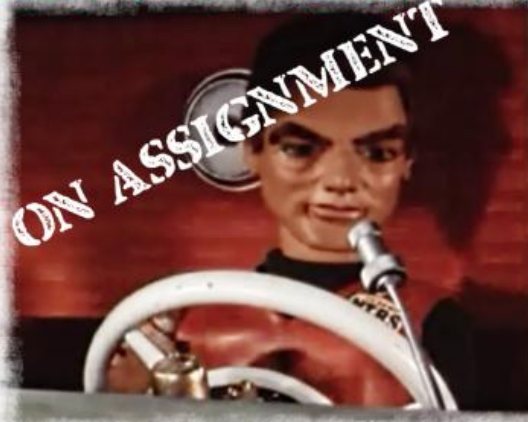




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NED COOK



Oh, the indignity. You have no idea what flying coach does to my knees.

I should not be suffering like this. Am I not a venerated newsman? Am I not pinky-swear buddies with Eddie R. Murrow III? Was I not last year's runner-up to fourth place in the World Broadcasting Guild Awards for Bravery in Journalism? (And let me tell you, I earned every bit of it...those pygmy goats were savages. You should have seen what they did to my Versace espadrilles!) I should be interviewing dignitaries in the halls of power. Taking selfies with the vice president's third assistant on Capitol Hill. Risking my life at a reasonably safe distance from the front lines of Bereznik!

But no. I've been demoted. Stripped of my anchor status. My name removed from the Newsflash masthead. MY Newsflash! And worst of all, the heartless new owners of NTBS are *sending me back into the field*. Something about earning my keep and remembering what it was like to be an airquotes-*real*-airquotes reporter. As if I wasn't *always* looking for news stories when I was taking in the view from the Penthouse Suite at the Burj Al-Arab in Dubai, or snorkeling in the crystal clear waters off Turtle Island, Fiji, or contemplating the frescoes at the Excelsior in Rome. It was all for business purposes...just look at my tax returns! Some people network on LinkedIn. I just prefer the in-person approach.

My pleas are falling on deaf ears, alas. These barbarians don't care that my heart is broken. They've canceled my black AmEx card and warned me that they're going to be watching every expense report I submit. Apparently there is a global recession...who knew? I just don't know how I will be able to give my best to the job without all my little perks... What will I do without my weekly visits to the men's salon, where I get twelve-year old Scotch to ease the discomfort of my mani-pedi? How will my hair ever look good again on camera without the personal attention of Johann, stylist to the stars?

When I tried to threaten them with the names of my wealthy friends and allies, they just laughed. They said if Jeff Tracy was such a friend, then I should ask *him* to pay my salary.

I would. I really would. But ol' Jeffie is still a teensy bit peeved at me over the whole revealing their secrets in the Haynes *Thunderbirds* manual thing. He's not exactly returning my calls.

Le sigh. Two months, three days and five point three hours ago...that was the day my life took this terrible turn. Black Wednesday Afternoon. There was no warning. It started out like any other day at my beloved NTBS offices, where I've worked since I was much too old to still be a copy boy. One minute all was normal and we were all happily doing whatever news people do — and the next minute my broker was on the phone screaming about a hostile takeover. He said he thought the new owner's name was Kim...and I ask you, was it such a leap to assume that our news organization had been conquered by North Korea? And yes, I did barricade myself under the desk with nothing but a coffee maker and a can of Campbell's soup. But rumors of a hunger strike are greatly exaggerated — I just couldn't open the can. And it's not true that I

attacked the policeman who tried to drag me out. I was just trying to get at the Twinkie in his pocket.

So here I am, most ignominiously reduced to the rank of field reporter. My first assignment was to fly over to the UK (our penny-pinching new owners wouldn't even spring for business class, and I wasn't walking properly upright for a week!) to cover the vote for Scottish independence. Who the Scots wanted to break up with, I had no idea...but I figured a smart, almost-Emmy-winning (my agent tells me) investigative journalist like me could pick it up as I went along. I'd forgotten what it felt like to be a stranger in a strange land, though...the natives claim they speak English there but I swear I can never understand a word they're saying. As usual I was forced to resort to grunts and hand signals, but they must not have been having too much difficulty understanding *me*, since they quite often gave me that victory sign they're so fond of over there.

But what happened to me after that is a tale for another day. I've just spotted a flight attendant I hadn't seen before, a nattily-dressed fella with wingy-things on his jacket pocket and gold braid around his sleeves. I'm going to flag him down and see if he won't let me move up to first class before my knees are irreparably damaged. This is Ned Cook on assignment, signing out.

Stay tuned for the continuing adventures of Ned Cook, Star Reporter (we have to call him that, it's in his contract) in the next issue of the NTBS Newsflash!

INTRODUCING TICIPEDIA!

The day we've looked forward to for a long time is here at last...we are ready to proudly unveil the newest addition to the Tracy Island family of websites...TICipedia!

As its name suggests, [TICipedia](#) is designed to be an online storehouse of knowledge about Gerry Anderson's *Thunderbirds*. It's also a work in progress, and we welcome and encourage your participation.

To date, the chief components of TICipedia are:

The Canon Foundry

Another long-awaited feature, the Canon Foundry is the brainchild of Pen Turner. Pen envisioned the Canon Foundry as a place where *Thunderbirds* writers and other fans could go to figure out the often convoluted and confusing canon that the original series is blessed — and cursed — with.

With the launch of the Foundry, there will at last be a central place where we can try to sort it all out, as well as build the resource together. Read Pen's article entitled "The Canon Foundry is Go!" on page 3 of this issue for more information and to find out where to submit your own facts about the series and its characters, vehicles and locations.

Our first rollout in the Canon Foundry includes facts on Jeff Tracy, Jeff's wife, and Scott Tracy. You will also see sections on Thunderbird One and Thunderbird Two (under Vehicles) as well as Tracy Island (under Places). And that leads us to the second part of TICipedia...

The Voice Actor Archive

As the Canon Foundry is to Pen, the Voice Actor Archive is to Chris Davis. Here, Chris shares with us the many facts, images, sound bytes and videos that she has gathered over the years, and in this inaugural rollout, she starts us off with the career of the man who gave voice to Jeff Tracy, Peter Dyneley. (In this issue of the Newsflash you will also find Chris's interview with Peter's son, Richard Hessey-White.)

Future updates will showcase more of the men and women who brought our beloved *Thunderbirds* characters to life. We hope you'll go over and check out [TICipedia](#) and let us know what you think!

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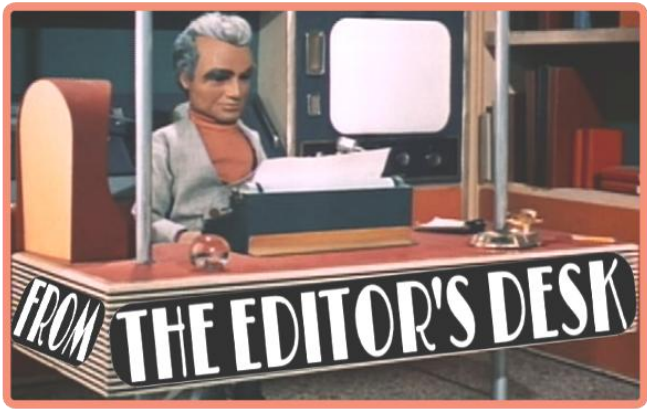
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www.plotfishpress.com



DATELINE: TRACY ISLAND, SOUTH PACIFIC,
OCTOBER 18, 2014

We're baaaaaack!

Welcome to the NTBS Newsflash version 3.0! We're back on the job, bringing you all the news and views about Gerry Anderson's original series *Thunderbirds* that's (in our humble opinion!) fit to print. We're still exploring our options and finding our style for this new incarnation so please be patient with us while we settle in. Besides, we can't get Brains to answer the lab door at the moment so we're kind of in an "as is" state for now!

Before we completely move on, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the designer and layout artist of our Newsflash 2.0, Lee. She did an amazing job issue after issue, and it's a testament to her skills that it has taken us so long to follow in her footsteps. Lee moved on to other projects last year after generously giving us tons of her time and talent for nearly five years, and we wanted to make sure she's remembered by everyone for all that she did for our boys in blue.

Now, on with the show! We have a lot of fun stuff for you in this issue. As you've already seen from our front page, we have finally launched the newest member of our Tracy Island family of websites, the much anticipated TICipedia, which will incorporate Pen Turner's equally anticipated brainchild, the Canon Foundry as well as Chris Davis's labor of love, the Voice Actor Archive...and who knows what else in the future! In addition to announcing the Canon Foundry, Pen also treats us to some interesting information she's managed to uncover about the mysteries surrounding both Alan Tracy's birth (and the death of the boys' mother) and the Date Debate, the ongoing speculation among fans about what year *Thunderbirds* was really set in.

After the success of the crowdfunding project for *Gemini Force One*, Jamie Anderson is now working on bringing another of his father's creations to a fresh audience. The project is called Gerry Anderson's *Firestorm* — Filmed in Ultramarination, which isn't actually, as it was spelled on one website we've seen, a really awesome new way to flavorize meat. Instead, it's something much more interesting: the successor to the original Anderson team's iconic Supermarination process. In this issue we talk to Jamie and also Peter Greenwood, licensing designer, media consultant and voice-over actor (*see our interview with Peter, pre his involvement with Anderson Entertainment, in the Nov-Dec 2012 issue of the NTBS Newsflash — Ed.*) about *Firestorm*, the incredibly talented team they've assembled, and the Kickstarter campaign that is blazing toward its second stretch goal with fifteen days still to go!

Speaking of voice-over actors, Chris Davis celebrates the launch of the TICipedia Voice Actor Archive with an interview with Richard Hessey-White, son of the voice of Jeff Tracy himself, Peter Dyneley. Superspy Lady Penelope Creighton-Ward begins her new feature, "Conversations with Lady Penelope," in which she has tea with the guys and gals who keep the memories of the boys in blue alive through writing *Thunderbirds* fiction. (If you have a question you've wanted to ask a *Thunderbirds* writer, check out Lady P's page and you'll find out how!) Pen Turner brings us a report on two conventions that catered to Gerry Anderson fans this year, the inaugural 'Andercon' and the RAF Cosford 'Flights of Fantasy.' And did you know it's possible that the helmets in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* could have been inspired by Frank Bellamy's *Thunderbirds* artwork in the TV21 comics? Norman Boyd's article explains all.

This issue we bid a fond farewell to Pennyspy's long-running series of *Thunderbirds* Episode Guides with her thoughts on the very last episode of the original series, the Christmas-themed "Give or Take a Million."

As has become traditional for us, we also feature a two-page spread of Chris Thompson's awesome *Thunderbirds* art, and Norm brings us another Frank Bellamy-themed episode in his ongoing feature, '*Thunderbirds* in the TV21 Comics.' Rounding out the lineup are Jaimi-Sam's "Poolside Pointers" for the grammar-conscious, an article about the stories that have won Tracy Island Writers Forum writing challenges since the last Newsflash was issued, and teasers on all the stories that have been archived on the Tracy Island Chronicles over the past eighteen months. There's even a personal ad from the villain's villain himself, Belah Gaat. Sort of.

We hope you'll have as much fun reading this issue as we've had putting it together for you. The NTBS Newsflash is go once more!

Jaimi Sorrell

(aka Samantha "Jaimi-Sam" Winchester)

TIWF IS ALL NEW!

Since the last time you heard from us, a lot has changed in the world of the Tracy Island Writers Forum! The original TIWF began on October 1, 2003 as a discussion group on Yahoo! Groups. Over time, Yahoo kept making changes to their Groups format, which we managed to weather until, round about August/September of 2013, the radical "Neo" update made such a mess of things that it all became unbearable.

Even the members who had not wanted to leave Yahoo finally agreed that it was time to move to our own site, and so we embarked upon a new chapter in TIWF's life by launching a phpBB-based Tracy Island Writers Forum. New look, new location but same great members and discussions! The new TIWF went live September 12, 2013 and three days later, the brand-new TIWF website was launched as well.

So what is the TIWF website itself about? Have a look for yourself at www.tracyislandwf.com! You'll find information about the discussion forum and our TIC Chat days and times as well as TIWF's purpose and how to contact us.

And if you're not a member of the TIWF discussion board yet, please do join in the fun! We talk about everything in the International Rescue universe, from writing to the *Thunderbirds* vehicles to favorite Tracy boys and beyond. Sound like a good time? Then point your browser to <http://tracyislandwf.com/forum/> and register today!

Hang on, don't put the vidphone down yet! It's been so long since we've said hello, this would be a good time to tell you about the rest of the "brother" sites in our Family, too!

The [Tracy Island Chronicles](http://www.tracyislandchronicles.com) at <http://www.tracyislandchronicles.com>.

The Tracy Island Chronicles was created in 2004 to archive 'the best of the best' in *Thunderbirds* fan fiction (in our humble opinions!). Stories are selected by the TIC Story Selection Committee. There are a few other things on this site for fans to have fun with, too, like Gordon's games and the *Thunderbirds* version of the Mary Sue Litmus Test (a must-read for writers!) in Thunderbird Four's Pod, plus character biographies, episode guides and images in Thunderbird Three's Silo! For the facts-oriented *Thunderbirds* aficionado, there is also the Date Debate (in Brains' Lab), which presents both sides of an ongoing argument among die-hard fans...was *Thunderbirds*, the series, set in 2026 or 2065?

[Belah Gaat's Temple](http://www.bgtemple.com) at <http://www.bgtemple.com>.

One of the Newsflash staff doesn't do a good job of hiding that she loves villains. Chris Davis, a.k.a. fanfic writer TB's LMC, works with Belah Gaat, a.k.a. the Hood, to search the Tracy Island Chronicles for stories that feature a villain. If you happen to share a villain kink, head on over to the Temple to get your fill of pure evil!

[TICipedia](http://www.ticipedia.info) at <http://www.ticipedia.info>.

TICipedia is exactly what it sounds like: the *Thunderbirds* version of Wikipedia! Launching concurrent with this issue of the NTBS Newsflash, this site is designed to be a place where *Thunderbirds* canon facts and their sources are compiled in one place. In addition, TICipedia showcases facts about the voice actors from the show, as well as videos, images and sound bites of them from other non-*Thunderbirds* work, because a huge part of the show's success was due to the actors who brought the wonderful vocal

tones of Jeff, Scott, Virgil, John, Gordon, Alan, Tin-Tin, Kyrano, Brains, Lady Penelope, Parker, Grandma and the Hood to life! TICipedia will roll out new information on characters, vehicles, *Thunderbirds* places and voice actors quarterly with each new issue of this newsletter!

The [TIC Chat](http://tracyislandchronicles.com/tb1/TICchat.html) at <http://tracyislandchronicles.com/tb1/TICchat.html>.

The TIC Chat isn't its own website; it's part of the Tracy Island Chronicles, but it's worthy of its own little section. This is our chat room in which we hold live group chats on the first and third Saturdays of every month, with members from all over the world in attendance. You can find out what times the chats are scheduled on this page: <http://www.tracyislandwf.com/chat.html>. We talk about writing and *Thunderbirds* and whatever else we've a mind to. You should come join us. It's really quite a lot of fun to get together with other like-minded fans and talk about our favorite show!

[Thunderbirds Are Still Go](https://www.facebook.com/thunderbirdsarestillgo) at <https://www.facebook.com/thunderbirdsarestillgo>.

Since we have a family of websites, we decided we needed one place to share not only what's going on in the Family, but also to bring you *Thunderbirds*-related news in a way only Facebook can. So if you're on FB, please head over to 'Thunderbirds Are Still Go' and Like our page! And keep an eye on it, because you never know what you'll find from day to day!

VILLAIN SEEKS OTHER VILLAINS FOR TEMPLE PLACEMENT



Grrr, my minions inform me that this headline sounds far too much like a personal ad. I hate minions. Although they are sometimes tolerable after you boil them in oil. Their opinions notwithstanding, let me tell you why I have chosen to grace this issue of the NTBS Newsflash with my evil presence.

My name is Belah Gaat. Some of you do-gooders might know me better as the Hood. That's right; arch-nemesis to those blasted Tracys and their ill-conceived rescue organization, and attacker of my half-brother Kyrano, when the mood strikes.

There has never been a place for those of us who wish to do the Tracys (and others) harm to exist freely and openly without having to explain ourselves or our wicked actions. I have therefore opened my temple doors to all villain-centric stories, which I summon from the [Tracy Island Chronicles](http://www.tracyislandchronicles.com). When I find a TIC story that I want to invite to my evil party, I contact that story's author for permission to archive it at [Belah Gaat's Temple](http://www.bgtemple.com).

I say to you, therefore, that if you have written a villain-centric story which has been voted onto TIC, you...ah, your *stories*...are fair game! Do not be surprised if my mesmerized minion TB's LMC contacts you as a result!

Sounds of scuffling, lots of grunting and a well-placed punch

Begging your pardon, Newsflash readers...this is TB's LMC. I hate it when the Hood gets control of my computer. Oh, man, this thing sounds like a personal ad! What the heck was he thinking?

The truth is, this is all my fault. I have a weakness for villains and he's taking advantage of that. Shhh, don't tell the Tracy boys. However, as Hoody said, Belah Gaat's Temple, or BGT for short, exists as a secondary archive for stories which feature a villain, whether it's a canon one from the original *Thunderbirds* or an author's own original character!

Stories cannot be submitted directly for archiving on BGT; as Belah stated, he summons (read: his minions hunt!) for these villainous stories on TIC, and you'll hear from me if he wants yours!

So if you know of a villain-centric story that's not yet on the Tracy Island Chronicles then please suggest it for inclusion on TIC first by sending an email to ticmobilecontrol1@gmail.com with the author's name, the story's name and a link to where we can find it.

Please note: TIC does not allow authors to submit their own stories...all stories must be nominated by someone other than the person who wrote it!

If you love the bad guys as much as I do, then [click here](http://www.bgtemple.com) to head on over to Belah Gaat's Temple, where you'll get your fill of 'em! And I apologize for letting the Hood get onto my computer. I'll try to keep him away from now on. Yeah, good luck with that...



IS GO!

Pen Turner

You've heard us talk about this project for a while, and now, with a flourish of trumpets, your TIC management are proud to announce that the Canon Foundry is ready to go live!

What's it all about?

We're always getting questions on the forum like *How old is Scott when IR starts? How did Jeff's wife die? What is Brains' real name?*

This is due to the fact that while some TV shows suffer from lack of canon background material that leaves their fans floundering and having to make it up, with *Thunderbirds* the problem is that we have too much — half of which conflicts with the other half.

So as a solution, at TIC we have created the 'Canon Foundry' — a source where canon can be found, in all its many forms! The Canon Foundry will be located in a new companion site to both the Tracy Island Chronicles and the Tracy Island Writers Forum, called TICipedia (see the article on the front page of this issue about the launch of the site and all that we have planned for it — Ed.). The Canon Foundry itself will be rolled out gradually as a series of fact files, one for each character, vehicle and location. We welcome your feedback, whether this is on the way the information is laid out or if you have any new facts to add to one of the files. Just send an email to the TICipedia Librarian at contact@ticipedia.info!

The information in the Foundry has been drawn from three levels of sources, ranked in order of importance, and aims to give an overview of all the data on each character/subject. The primary source is the *Thunderbirds* television series and Gerry Anderson-made movies. Secondary sources are all the *Thunderbirds* comics, annuals, and published novels written about this iconic series by others from the 1960s onwards. The third level of material is books and articles written about the series or its creators, or interviews with people involved in making the show.

For the purpose of the Canon Foundry, we are defining **canon** as known facts that are mentioned either in the show or its officially produced peripherals, such as the comics, the annuals, or the reference books sanctioned by Gerry Anderson; as opposed to **fanon** — the facts invented by fans during the production of fan fiction based on the series (e.g., any name used for Grandma Tracy, who has no official name in any of the Anderson-produced materials).

Unlike some sites that produce a straightforward profile of each character, ignoring anything that doesn't fit, here we list *all* the (frequently contradictory) information

that we have been able to find on each character, noting when it first appeared and the source.

We want to make it clear that the Canon Foundry has *not* been created to set down rules for what is 'official canon' and what is not. We list the sources, but leave you to judge whether a reference that comes from, for example, one of the 1960s novels or a 1980s fanzine, should be accepted as canon or not. Our role at TICipedia is to provide the information and leave you, as the reader or writer, to make the choice.

So if you want answers to the questions listed above, then you'll find the evidence here. It might not give you a straight answer, but it will give you plenty to consider.

And in case you are wondering, the answers are —

- 1) Both could be considered 'correct'; Scott is 26 in one source and 30 in others, plus a third gives his age as 30 the year *after* IR was formed.
- 2) Some sources list her as dying in childbirth; others claim that she died when the children were young. A third source says it happened in an avalanche and a fourth version just states she died 'shortly after Alan was born'.
- 3) Brains' name is given variously as Horatio Hackenbacker, Hiram K. Hackenbacker, Hiram J. Hackenbacker, Homer Newton III and none of the above (Hackenbacker, from the title of the episode bearing the name, being an alias).

EXPLOSION

AT THE CANON FOUNDRY!

Pen Turner

For several years now I have been involved in researching the convoluted tangle that makes up *Thunderbirds* canon, trying to separate canon from the original series and its accompanying official publications from fanon subsequently introduced by fans of the show. In the process, I am comparing all the many contradictory threads to try to establish why we have so much confusion. Recently I uncovered information about a shadowy but key character that reveals just how one particular thread originated.

There have always been several different versions in *Thunderbirds* canon of how Jeff Tracy's wife died. As far back as in the 1966 *Thunderbirds* annual we were told that she had '*died prematurely, leaving him to raise five sons*', though the cause of her death was not mentioned.

The first time that a cause was given was in the '*Thunderbirds* All Series Guide' written by *Thunderbirds* fan Theo de Klerk and published in *S.I.G.* (the official Fanderson magazine) in Spring 1984. This stated: '*At the height of his career (Jeff's) wife died whilst giving birth to Alan, the youngest of his five sons.*'

It's widely assumed that this *S.I.G.* article was the main source for John Marriott when he produced his resource book on the show, *Thunderbirds Are Go*, in 1992. The wording in Marriott's book echoes de Klerk's article, saying that Jeff's 'wife died giving birth to Alan,' and the chief researcher for the book was Fanderson's Ralph Titterton.

I had often wondered where this idea originally came

from and so recently I contacted Theo de Klerk through Fanderson and asked him what his source was for this childbirth thread. If he had replied saying that he had heard it from an interview/correspondence with Sylvia Anderson, or some similar source, I would have been quite happy with the response. However, it turned out to be nothing so simple.

Theo was happy to answer my question, and initially he told me that he had read this information in a Dutch TV magazine. He then went on to explain that between 1966 and 1969 the Dutch had a magazine called *TV2000* which published stories drawn from both the *TV21* and *Lady Penelope* comics published in England. In addition, it produced profiles of all the characters (called 'Thunderbirds Codes') as well as having a page for readers' letters that were answered by 'Lady Penelope'. The fact that this had been published in the Netherlands explained why I had never come across the source myself in any printed version.

However, the mystery then deepened when Theo went back to check these sources. Much to his surprise, he could only find one reference to Jeff's wife which stated that she '*died when the kids were young*' which ties in with what we already knew from the 1966 *Thunderbirds* annual. So he now thinks that when he came to write his *S.I.G.* article more than fifteen years later, he misremembered '*died at early age of the kids*' as '*died after/at Alan's birth*'.

So what has long been accepted as canon is in fact fanon created in error; this shows just how easy it is for these ideas to start.

The more research I do for the Canon Foundry, the less we seem to know about the boys' mother. As an example, Chris Bentley made a post to the Fanderson Yahoo forum (April 21, 2010), stating that the name given to her in the 1990s *Thunderbirds: The Comic*, Lucille, had originated in fanzines in the 1980s. (I am still trying to track down the exact source and would love to hear more information on this, if anyone has any!) Bentley says that Alan Fennell adopted the name (it first appeared in the comic series in Issue #6, December 1991) simply because it was already established in fan circles, even though it has no official foundation at all. In fact, Bentley goes on to say that Gerry once told him he would never have given Jeff's wife a name like Lucille.

When Alan Fennell created his 'Complete Thunderbirds Story' (a serial that ran through multiple issues of the aforementioned *Thunderbirds: The Comic*, which he edited in the early 1990s), he wrote that Jeff's wife died in an avalanche when the boys were much older. However, Chris Bentley stated in a post to the Fanderson forum (21st Apr, 2010): '*Alan Fennell's 1990s version of International Rescue's origin and development did not meet with Gerry's approval and he was not consulted about it.*'

Glo Thorogood has shared correspondence between herself and Sylvia Anderson in which the latter stated that '*Jeff's wife died in an unfortunate accident, which does account for Jeff's interest and involvement in International Rescue.*'

So to recap, the only actual canon we have about the fate of this character is that she did die, as opposed to leaving Jeff for some other reason, and that this happened sometime when her children were young.

I'd just like to emphasise that, for me, the fun of doing this research into canon is to discover how, when and why all the conflicting threads we have to deal with first occurred. My purpose is not to lay down a rigid code about what backstory authors should/should not use. Indeed, when it comes to Jeff's wife, the fact that we have so little canon for her means writers have a free hand to create their own!





FILMED IN ULTRAMARIONATION

Newsflash Editor-in-Chief Jaimi Sorrell talks to Jamie Anderson and Peter Greenwood about Gerry Anderson's *Firestorm*.

How could any self-respecting Gerry Anderson fan, raised amid the beloved marionettes, awesome machines and thrilling go-boom! effects that we knew collectively as Supermarionation, pass up a chance to find out more about something like this? How could we not want to support it? Jaimi Sorrell reached out to Jamie Anderson and Peter Greenwood (who Jamie credits with being the driving force behind getting this project off the ground) and asked them to tell us all about Gerry Anderson's *Firestorm* and the Kickstarter Campaign that's proving to the television industry that the world wants more Anderson shows!

JAIMI SORRELL: Tell us a little about Gerry Anderson's *Firestorm*. What is the series about?

JAMIE ANDERSON: In a utopian 23rd century where mankind has pulled itself up by its bootstraps a new threat emerges. But the threat is much more complex, and far deadlier than anyone could have imagined.



Sam Scott

JS: Who are the characters based on this time?

JA: They are, for the most-part, the same as in the original 2003 anime series. New characters have been/are being developed now as we develop the *Firestorm* universe.

JS: What is "Ultramarionation?"

JA: The next step in evolution of Supermarionation. Hi-tech puppets, in combination with physical sets and props, miniatures and practical effects.

JS: This isn't the first attempt to make *Firestorm*.

What happened the first time?

JA: Dad started writing this in 2001 — back then it was called Storm Force. In 2002 the premise was bought by a Japanese company and was then produced as an anime series in 2003. It never really made it outside of Japan.



JS: What will be different about this new version?

JA: Well — primarily the filming techniques. The shift from anime & CG combined with an almost-all-in-camera live action show with puppets and miniatures is quite a big change! We're also developing the plot a little. The original series, despite having a strong premise, was a little too much like "V" for my liking, and that limited its scope for story. Now we have new elements to the story, including a morally dubious aspect which I'm particularly proud of, and is something I think will keep the adults in our family audience guessing and thinking!

JS: Jamie, when did you decide to pursue this project? Why?

JA: About 18 months ago I was approached by a group of investors — they were keen to develop an existing Gerry Anderson property, and the one that seemed most appropriate was *Firestorm*. Although that relationship didn't lead to the project coming to fruition, it inspired me to seek new ways to fund the project. We had control of the IP (intellectual property) - without any other parties to interfere or answer to - and with a great premise it seemed like the right project to develop at the right time!



JS: Peter, we hear you'll be behind the microphone as well as a production desk for this show...tell us about that.

PETER GREENWOOD: With any voice work you have

an obligation to meet the design of the character, in most cases animated. The thing is, a Gerry Anderson puppet voice over is very different from that. While you can apply a form of comic charm, a level of realism is called for as well.

The storytelling that is present in all the classic shows ramped up with each series as they were produced. *Stingray* began the style of voice over direction that became the standard. *Thunderbirds* and the shows that followed were the ultimate defining pieces that gave a clear direction to how these shows are to be recorded.

FireStorm will be a return to that timing and the gravitas that is called for in this classic format.



Drew McAllister

JS: What do you each see as the most important component of this project?

JA: The Gerry Anderson sensibility. I know that's a bit of a catch all answer, but I think it's true. There's a style of story telling, a positive aim, and a type of future that you can find in any Gerry Anderson show — and that's the most important thing for me... to preserve it, and keep the show as true as possible to how he would have made it.

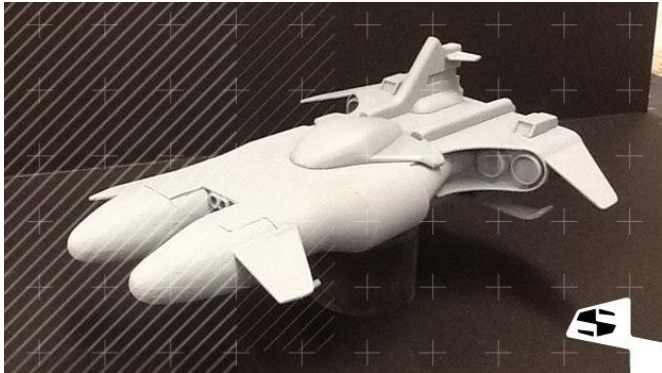
PG: To bring back all the qualities that inspired so many, including myself. No short cuts, no omissions of technique. This is a real, 100% return, with a mindset for the real puppets and sets and miniatures that defined those productions we all love.

JS: What are each of you looking forward to the most about *Firestorm*?

JA: It's obvious isn't it? Blowing things up! I was lucky enough to be at Bray studios the day the *Filmed in Supermarionation* team recreated the *Thunderbirds* titles oil refinery explosion. Ever since then my passion

for practical effects has been cemented.

PG: Gerry Anderson shows were my learning ground in voice over and also visual design, so to bring back a show with these same high standards has always been a hope of mine. Thankfully Jamie Anderson has the vision to do this as well.



An early maquette of Ocean Storm by Bill Pearson

JS: The *Firestorm* Kickstarter is going extremely well — you shot past your base goal in the first 96 hours, and at the time of publication you’re steaming toward your *second* stretch goal. And there are still 15 days to go! What do you think that says about the perennial popularity of Gerry Anderson’s creations?

JA: That multiple generations all over the world love Gerry Anderson shows and want more. We couldn’t really ask for a more positive response. We have backers from 8 to 78, and that’s something that makes me feel really proud.



JS: The Kickstarter for *Gemini Force One* proved that Gerry Anderson’s creations are as popular now as ever. What do you think it will say to the television execs out there if *Firestorm*’s Kickstarter campaign achieves the same or greater success?

JA: I hope that they’ll regain some more trust in the Gerry Anderson brand. So many execs have to be very cautious with the choices they make, and successes like these really strengthen our position to tell the execs: The world wants more Gerry Anderson shows!

JS: What’s next up on the goals list? Will we get to see things blow up soon? (You know we want to just as much as you do!)

JA: We’d like to add more characters, and add another vehicle launch if possible. But basically — the more we can raise, the more we can make of the minisode. I don’t want this just to be a sizzler showing the techniques (even though that would be cool)... I want it to be an exciting introduction to the story, and a thrilling fast-paced introduction to the *Firestorm* universe.

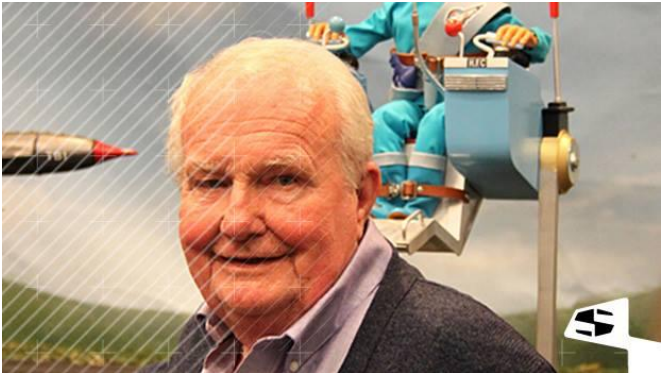


Nagisa Kisaragi



JS: What’s the most expensive part of producing a series like this?

JA: Hmmm... I guess the puppets! Mackinnon and Saunders are the best people in the world for this job — we have a bit of a task on our hands. There’s quite a lot of development work to do to get the puppet movement and control just right. The whole idea is that the controls for the puppets translate the puppeteers’ movements into caricatured, but physically believable, puppet movements. The fine mechanics, animatronics, and other components are an expensive part of the production.



Shane Rimmer

JS: Do you have any past Anderson series voice-over actors returning for this project?

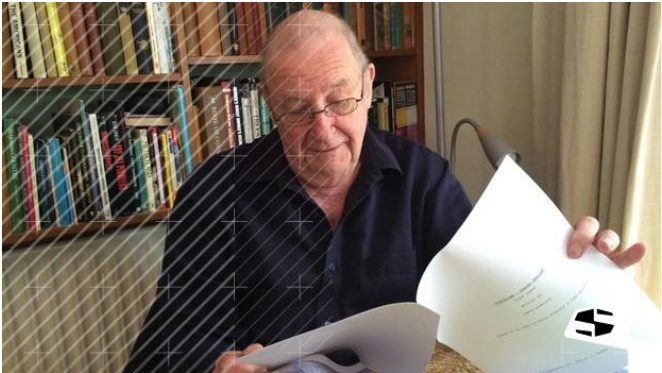
JA: Yes indeed — we haven’t announced the precise casting yet, but I’m pleased and proud that Nick Tate (*Space: 1999*), Shane Rimmer (*Thunderbirds*, *Dick Spanner*, *PI*), Matt Zimmerman (*Thunderbirds*), Denise Bryer (*Terrahawks*) and Liz Morgan (*Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons*) will all be appearing (subject to availability).



Matt Zimmerman

JS: What about crew and production staff? Any returning names?

JA: Yes indeed! Steve Begg is our effects supervisor — I can’t think of anyone better for making sure our effects look absolutely stunning, and utterly believable. We’re also joined by Mark Woollard and David Elliott as director and consulting director, Steve Kyte, Andy Rolfe... the list goes on. Our crew is stuffed full with Anderson regulars, and those who went into TV and film because of their love of Gerry Anderson shows.



David Elliott

JS: What would you like to say to all the Gerry Anderson fans out there about supporting *Firestorm*?

JA: To those of you who have supported us so far — and that’s over 1000 now — thank you so much! Your support means a great deal, and thanks to all of you we’ll be able to produce a mini pilot that will hopefully will lead to a brand new and exciting Gerry Anderson series that will entertain generations of fans for the next 50 years (and beyond!).

And if you’ve not yet supported us — I’d just ask that you please consider helping us — whether it’s by spreading the word or supporting the project financially. We can’t do it without you. If you’ve ever thought “TV today is so rubbish!”, “They don’t make it like they used to”, or “Where are all the practical effects?!", and if you’ve ever enjoyed a Gerry Anderson TV show — then please help us bring this new show to a modern audience and generations to come!



PG: *Firestorm* is perhaps the most important Gerry Anderson production since AP Films began. Anderson Entertainment is a company that has been founded in quality and integrity of product, be it our recent tribute poster or the Dick Spanner figure we produced with Robert Harrop. The one thing everything we do has in common is zero compromise of production and design. In short, we deliver exactly as promised — high quality with a view to continue to more products and productions in the Gerry Anderson style.

For those who have supported *Firestorm*, you are part of the return of a magic time we thought we would never see again. For those who haven’t, do it because with your help we will bring back to the screen a new Anderson film that will stand the test of time — as the others have done before.



Gerry Anderson, Jamie Anderson and Thunderbird 2

Thanks so much, Jamie and Peter, for taking time out of what we know is a very hectic schedule to talk to us about this eagerly anticipated project! We can’t wait for the completed minisode. And if any of you readers out there haven’t gone over and viewed the *Firestorm* Kickstarter page yet, [click here](#). We dare you. Once you see how amazing the project is and how many of the Anderson production stars are involved, then you’ll realize it’s a no-brainer... Imagine if you’d had the opportunity to be a founding supporter of a series like *Thunderbirds*! Let’s help Jamie and Peter bring Gerry’s creative spirit to a new generation of viewers. Or if that’s too poetic for you, at least help them make lots of things go boom!

Don’t make them hire the Hood to persuade you...

(For more on Peter Greenwood’s career pre-Anderson Entertainment, see our interview with him in the [Nov-Dec 2012 issue of the NTBS Newsflash.](#))

A Tale of Two Conventions

Pen Turner

British fans were spoilt earlier in 2014 by having not just one but two Anderson related events to attend.

ANDERCON 2014

The first was the brand new 'Andercon', organised by Gerry's son Jamie and the team at Anderson Entertainment. It was held in the conference centre attached to the Park Inn Hotel near Heathrow airport (the site of IR's first rescue!) over the Easter weekend (19th and 20th April). When we arrived on the morning of the first day we were greeted with the sight of the replica FAB 1 parked outside the centre and Glo Thorogood walking her Virgil Tracy marionette (who was looking very smart in his IR uniform).

Inside, one of the first things to catch my eye was a beautifully detailed model of



Photo Courtesy: amberdon

Scott Tracy sitting in the cockpit of Thunderbird One. Beyond this, a corridor lined with artwork from all the Anderson series led to two halls where events were taking place throughout the day, while other rooms were dedicated to merchandise and autographs.

Jamie had gathered together a team of enthusiastic supporters who brought fresh ideas to the event. The main exhibition area was dominated by a puppet stage which showed the set of the Tracy villa lounge, with all the main characters present; over this was a gantry where the puppeteers would have stood to operate the figures. This proved to be a big attraction and was always surrounded by an eager crowd taking photos.

Other set pieces included a reconstructed rolling road, an oil refinery and a set showing *Stingray* and a Terror Fish in what was intended to have been a demonstration of how underwater filming was done. This was one case where I knew the backstory... When Kirsty and I had arrived at the venue the night before to collect our tickets we had found the crew rushing up and down with buckets of water. The tank had sprung a leak! Chris Thompson dashed past us with a bucket, calling out 'Send for Thunderbird Four!' Apparently they hadn't managed to fix it by showtime, so we never got chance to see how the water tank should have looked.

All this in addition to the things one expects to see at an Anderson event - models of various craft and characters, which must have taken many hours to make.



The events in the two halls were run on a ticket system in which we all had to book in advance. This seemed to work well — at least I never saw anyone having problems. The first scheduled event that I had booked for was a *Dick Spanner* episode, which turned out to be an unseen pilot for a third series. Even the crew who had made it (Terry Adlam, Steven Begg, Mark Woollard) hadn't seen the finished cut version. As with all episodes from this series (and if you haven't seen it, you're missing a treat — especially as Shane Rimmer does the narration!), I could have done to watch it several times to get all the jokes ('*Ban Graffiti*' scrawled on a wall; '*Rue de Noises*', '*There was a lift but no elevator so I had to take the stairs*'). Afterwards, the crew talked about how much fun it had been to work on it, and Stephen brought out the model 'Gerry' that had been used in series two - which had apparently amused him.



The next presentation — to a packed room — was about the (at the time) forthcoming *Gemini Force One* project. Jamie, author MG Harris, and designer Andrew Probert talked about their ideas. From MG's comments on the project, I would say that Jamie has inherited his father's drive and determination to get things done.

After this, I spent some time looking round the displays and talking to other visitors and exhibitors. I was wearing my Tracy Island Writers Forum (TIWF) T-shirt and a couple of people commented on it and asked about the Forum. One display contained craft from various Anderson shows — but these had all been built with Legos! Each bore a note to say how long it had taken and how many bricks it contained - the detail was amazing, including a cutaway to show TB2's cockpit with figures inside.

Then I was back in the main hall for a preview of the *Filmed in Supermarionation* documentary which has been produced by Stephen La Rivière and his team, based on Stephen's book of the same name. Stephen, who directed as well as co-wrote the script (with Andrew Smith), said he had wanted to tell the 'human story' behind the shows. There is no narration — 'All the story is in the people's own words'. The film is about two hours long, and will be released at the end of September.

We saw footage of the puppet gantry, rolling road and water tank in use, and of blowing up an oil refinery, first at normal speed, then slowed down with loud explosions added.

When Stephen and his crew came on stage, I was struck with the thought that most of them were probably the same age that Derek Meddings and his team must have been in the days when they worked on Anderson productions. One of the team mentioned how amazing it had felt to have the words he had written spoken by David Graham as Parker, and how it was only when they were filming that it brought home the truth of what all the people they had interviewed had told them — how hard it was to work with puppets!

That was the end of the formal programme for the day, but on my way out I bumped into one of the crew who told me there were going to be some screenings that evening, so we were back at the conference centre by 7.30 to watch Jamie's 'family movies' — which are a bit more fun than most people's! When we arrived they were showing a documentary about making *Space 1999* (which had been screened earlier but I had been at another event so hadn't seen it). Jamie then showed one about *Terrahawks*, contrasting the original and the remastered prints; he had been busy chasing down prints of his father's series — another example of him inheriting his father's drive!

We then saw some very early Anderson work; a Noddy Ricicles advert and a hilarious TV programme made for the pre-school age group called *Candy* (about a koala and a kangaroo) which had us in stitches: '*Can I bang something please?*' When it was over and the laughter had died down, Jamie mock-scolled us for having 'filthy minds'.

This was followed by the first *Captain Scarlet* and a *Stingray* episode. At the end of the latter there was a lovely moment when most of the audience joined in singing the 'Aqua Marina' theme song. I'm sure Jamie must get such a kick out of hearing how much love there is for his father's work more than fifty years on.

I started the second day by wandering around, having a closer look at some of the exhibits. There was so much to see that it was hard to take it all in first time. I was lucky enough to encounter Stephen La Rivière operating the rolling road. He told me he had had it built (based on the original design) for his *Filmed in Supermarionation* documentary but it had been stowed away in Mary Anderson's garage since then.

Richard Gregory was walking around with his model of Brains. He had worked with Christine Glanville on *Terrahawks*, and told me that when the Slough studio was closing she had 'emptied all her drawers of spare parts for puppets'. He has her Scott, Brains, Parker (not the original — that was sold to a collector) and Virgil.



Richard told me he once took Parker to a filming session in a big London studio (I think this must have been for the Swinton insurance advert) and within minutes of their arrival, word had gone round the studio and the place filled with 'high powered executives all acting like ten-year-olds at the sight of Parker'.

The first talk I attended was a panel of the cast of both original and new *Captain Scarlet* series. One member spoke of how Gerry's name had opened doors — allowing him and Gerry to meet the Red Arrows display team — which is why the RAF have a title credit on the new *Captain Scarlet* (usually referred to as *NCS*).

I was interested to learn how *NCS* was made — first by recording the voice artists,



then the episode would be storyboarded, then actors/stuntmen were brought in to act out the moves for motion capture, then the images processed into a proper edit. Presumably the same techniques will apply to the new *Thunderbirds* series that is due to premiere in 2015.

From here I nipped over to the smaller discussion room to hear a talk from the comic artists. This covered the whole gamut from Mike Noble who had worked on the *Fireball XL5* and *Zero X* strips in the 1960s *TV21*, Graham Bleathman and Steve Kyte who had drawn for the 1990s *Thunderbirds: The Comic* and Lee Sullivan who apologised for the 2000s Redan series!

The panel started by saying that Gerry had not just been an innovator in TV but in publishing and merchandising as well. I knew Alan Fennell had been the editor of *TV21*, but hadn't realised that it was because Gerry had liked the work he had done there that he was then offered the chance to write some scripts for *Thunderbirds*. Both Steve Kyte and Graham Bleathman described how they had 'leapt at the chance' to work on the 1990s *Thunderbirds: The Comic* with Fennell as they had both grown up with *TV21*.

After this it was back to the main hall where Brian Johnson & Steve Begg were talking about special effects. Both have gone on to bigger things in the intervening

years: Brian with *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *The Empire Strikes Back*; Steve with *Skyfall* and *Casino Royale* (which has a homage to Derek Meddings. I haven't seen the film myself, but apparently if you look closely at the right moment you can spot Derek's name on a notice on the side of a hangar).

The next event was guaranteed to draw the crowds. Onto the stage came Matt Zimmerman, Shane Rimmer, David Graham, director David Elliott and puppeteers Judith Shutt and Mary Turner. I love to see the banter between the cast — they are all obviously old friends and get along well (David telling Matt off: 'Will you shut up for one moment!')

David talked about his new role as Parker in the reboot series *Thunderbirds Are Go*; he has recorded his part with Rosalind Pike, but not whole episodes with the rest of the cast. Parker is as handsome as ever though slightly younger than before. There are twenty-six episodes and the series should be released in the spring of 2015.

Someone asked the panel who was their favourite character (other than their own). Matt said '*Ned Cook!*' — then looked at where I was sitting in the second row and said '*Say hallo to him for me!*' [Ed.'s Note: *We'll do our best, Matt. Ned is currently on assignment in the UK... We sent him over to report on the vote for Scottish independence several weeks ago, but last we heard he'd gotten on the wrong train and is thought to be wandering around the countryside somewhere in South Wales, probably a little confused by the lack of kilts!*]

The final event was Jamie Anderson talking about the Anderson Legacy, including more information about the *Gemini Force One* project. He then asked if we had enjoyed the weekend (the response was a resounding 'yes!') and announced that there would be an Andercon 2015. The rest of the session turned into very useful feedback with people contributing ideas for next time, which ranged from name badges to a live script performance or demonstrations using the puppet gantry — and getting a water tank that doesn't leak!

Overall, I would say the event was a great success. Talking to the other TIWF members who were there, the main hit seems to have been the puppet gantry. Other highlights were the screenings; the infectious enthusiasm with which MG Harris, Jamie Anderson and Andrew Probert talked about *Gemini Force One*; the story game and the whole audience joining in singing the Marina theme.

Personally, as well as all the above, I would mention the enjoyment from seeing people I had met before at previous events, and the sheer buzz I got being in a crowd when you know that everybody is there for one reason — because they love Gerry Anderson's work and want to share that enthusiasm with others who feel the same.

So if you've never been to a con, start planning for 2015!

FLIGHTS OF FANTASY 2014

A month later another event took place, 'Flights of Fantasy', at RAF Cosford. As this was less than an hour's drive from where I live it was too good to miss. This was a fairly low-key event, not on the same scale as Andercon. Instead, exhibits, either free-standing or in display cases, were set against a backdrop of the venue's own displays in their 'Cold War' hangar. There were a smattering of tables offering items for sale, from Fanderson's own wares to recent publications and older books & comics from the Supermarionation era. The exhibits that drew the largest crowds were models of the craft from various shows lovingly made by enthusiasts, and glass cases holding marionettes, some replicas but also some originals. Most interesting were three Joe 90s and three 'Macs' with different expressions — smiley/serious/neutral — and a small tableau with Lady Penelope and Parker in a 'drawing room' scene. The *Space 1999* fans were displaying their full-size model of Alpha's computer and mannequins dressed in Moonbase costumes that had also been on show at Andercon.

My main interest was in the talks that took place downstairs in the lecture hall and it was there I spent most of the day. The guest list included some of the people who had worked on the production team for the various Supermarionation series. The big attraction had been that Sylvia Anderson would be speaking for the first time at a Fanderson event, though when I arrived on the Sunday I found out that though she had attended on the Saturday, she had decided to cancel her Sunday talk due to 'pressing business reasons'. (Her Saturday talk can be found on YouTube).

Despite that disappointment, I spent most of the day listening to a range of speakers, many of whom I had not heard before.



One of the most interesting featured three of the Century 21 production crew. At its height the studio employed 150 people between four buildings and six units. Between them they told many stories about what went on, on and off the set — how one guy built a kit car in a corner of the workshop in between work times; that Gerry used to drive his Rolls more like a sports car, taking off with a squeal of tyres, but Barry Gray only drove his Lamborghini at 30mph!

I was amused to learn that the salesman from the fire extinguisher company considered Century 21 to be his best customers and often brought potential buyers round to see his wares in action. Most companies would buy one fire extinguisher and not need another for at least a year; with Derek Meddings' talent for making things go bang the SFX department was getting through thirty-forty per *week*!

But the story that really made me prick up my ears was about how when *Thunderbirds* became popular, letters from children were arriving to the studio, asking questions. At first these were answered by any of the staff 'off the cuff' but then they realised that they were giving inconsistent answers. So this accounts for why, even in published sources, Scott is both 26 and 30, Alan 19 or 21 and the convolutions of the birth order tangle! Eventually, Gerry called them all together and told them to draw up a 'Tracy family tree'. Of course my hand shot up at this point to ask the obvious question (much to the amusement of my fellow TIWF members) but it seems the answer is now lost to time. I think it is even more frustrating to know the answer is now lost than to think there never was a definitive answer!

The next talk should have been Sylvia Anderson and Shane Rimmer, but in her absence this was replaced by an informal demonstration by puppeteers Mary Turner and Judith Shutt which took place up in the main hangar. Here we gathered round to watch Mary operate her own original Lady Penelope puppet that she had made and used in the series — a wonderful piece of history! It was fascinating to see the expressions on the faces in the crowd as her helper 'walked' the replica Parker up and down in front of the audience; whether the watchers were young or old, the sight of these characters brought a sense of wonder to all.

The puppeteers told us it had often got very hot up in the puppet gantry and

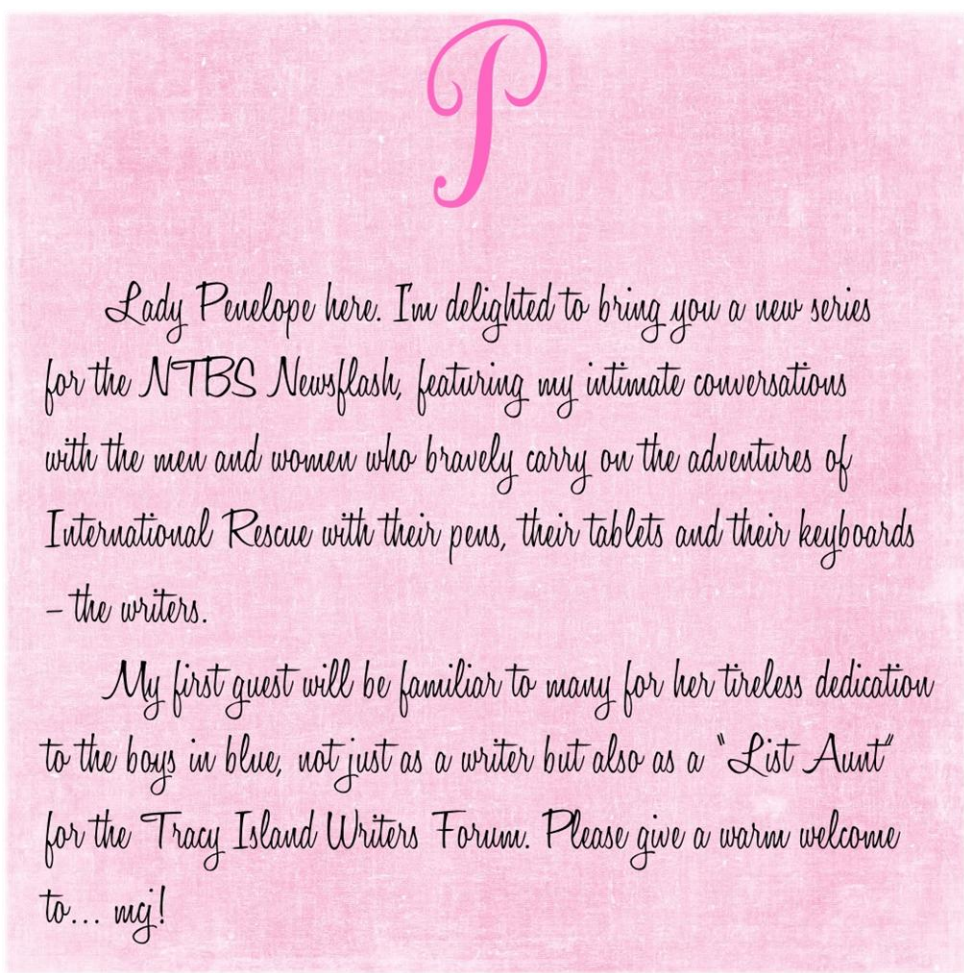
sometimes smoke (from episodes like 'Pit of Peril') made it hard to see the puppets at all. In answer to my query as to whether operating the puppets ever caused them physical problems, Judith told me that she developed very strong arms. The puppets weighed about 12lbs and when she had to go for a medical check-up the nurse told her she had arms 'like a navy's'! Unfortunately Mary has a very quiet voice so I could not hear most of what she said in such a huge echoing space and wished someone had thought to provide her with a clip-on microphone.

Back down in the lecture theatre, the next talk was a Powerpoint presentation by Alan Shubrook using many of the photos he had taken while working in the special effects dept. It was delivered under trying circumstances as he had hardly any voice left; he gave the talk using a throat mike but it was in very croaky tones and we had to strain to listen. Despite the audio difficulties, though, it was one of the most interesting sessions of the day. He started by saying he was going to destroy many people's illusions, then showed us how some of the famous launch sequences were achieved. For instance the swimming pool was a baking tray full of water that was pulled back by hand while another member of the crew held a fan above it to generate ripples; simple but effective. Airfix kits were used to supply parts and functional looking attachments to buildings and craft; even the plastic frame that held the kit parts together made handy tubing for industrial complexes like oil refineries. Alan showed us a series of shots to illustrate this and I will now be watching my DVDs playing 'spot the Airfix kit'.

Unfortunately the whole event was not very well attended. For the talks I attended the lecture theatre was less than half full and I found out it had been the same on the Saturday as well. The exhibits up in the hangar were more popular, but these were open to the public without having to pay (RAF Cosford does not charge any admission fee); it was only the talks that required a ticket.

Tickets for the original Flights of Fantasy event in 2012 had sold out soon after going on sale. One difference I noticed was that this time there were less families in the audience; perhaps the potential 'local' audience had already been satisfied by the previous event, while the main core of Anderson fans had already had their fix at the recent Andercon.





Mcj, you're well known to be one of the busiest members of the *Thunderbirds* writing arena. Where are you located? Tell us something about your hectic daily schedule.

Alas, Lady Penelope, I do live a very long way from your stately mansion. It's a desolate land without the luxury of butlers, pink Rolls Royces and, I'm sorry to say, sheep RANCHES. Lots of sheep and cattle STATIONS, though! I live in Brisbane, the capital city of Queensland, on the east coast of Australia. Brisbane is called the River City and I own a home in the suburb of Keperra, where venomous snakes come to visit from time to time, we use the kids to make pots of tea and I love to drive my red hot Hyundai around the neighborhood fast! And yes, even I shake my head at my ridiculous schedule.

As a Property Valuer I head the Real Estate Unit of Australia's largest rail freight company. This means the airport, which is situated exactly twenty-four minutes from my office, has become my second home. I am also a Highland Dancing teacher with forty-three students, some of whom are national champions. This means when I get back from flying around Australia with my work, I'm usually repacking my suitcase and travelling back to the airport again.

My third hat is that of a Judge on the Worldwide Panel of the Scottish Official Board, so on the weekends I'm not watching my dancers compete I am usually on my way to the airport again to travel interstate or over to the north island of New Zealand to judge championships. People say I'm lucky to have seen so much of the world but to be honest all I ever see are airports, multi-million dollar rail projects and way too much Highland Dancing. But my travels have also introduced me to a lot of wonderful people, including quite a number of our lovely TIWF members!

What's your favourite part of the day, the part you look forward to most?

I love watching the dawn break, especially when I'm taking an early morning flight. There is something magical about being thousands of feet up in the air and feeling the gentle warmth of the rising sun on your face through the glass. Australian sunrises are even more magnificent than the sunsets, especially in the summer, my favourite season of all. Watching the sunrise from an old jetty overlooking the Pacific Ocean is the ultimate. That literally takes my breath away.

If you could sum up your strongest attribute in one word, what would it be?

That's a tough one. I will say I'm disciplined. I don't think there's any choice if you have a busy schedule because, let's face it, without discipline I'd sure miss a heck of a lot of planes! Now... if only that discipline extended to writing.... Hmm... Next question...

What got you started in writing? When was that? And what did you start with if it wasn't *Thunderbirds*?

Most people don't know this about me but I started writing historical fiction when I was around twelve. Back then I was studying English History (which I absolutely hated) and the only way I could make myself remember anything was to create this beautiful, fictitious world incorporating the historical figures we were studying. My first short story was about the execution of Anne Boleyn and it was featured in the school magazine that year. All through high school my English teachers kept telling me I was born to be a journalist. I couldn't figure out what on earth journalism and historical fiction had in common, so I ignored the advice and became a Valuer instead. I still dabble in historical fiction privately as I know not that many people share my fascination with the Tudor era.

I began writing *Thunderbirds* when I was fifteen and Lady Penelope, my first story was about you meeting Jeff Tracy at the Annual Spies Ball! I still laugh about that and the story was bloody TERRIBLE!

What drew you to TB? What keeps you here?

I always tell the story about Saturday mornings in our home, when *Thunderbirds* was on the television at 9.00am and I had to be at dancing class by 10.00. That meant I only ever saw the first half of every episode and it made me so unhappy. I'd sit on the floor entranced with the characters, worried sick for those trapped and in danger while my mother nagged me to stretch, put my jig shoes on and get in the car or we'd be late for class.

What keeps me interested all these years on? Probably my rebellious side! Every time my mother visits, I make sure I play a FULL episode of *Thunderbirds* and I sit

and watch the thing from start to finish without wearing dancing shoes or stretching. But most of all what keeps me here is my love of the original series characters. They are truly inspirational.

As a reader, what is the genre you're most interested in? Is it the same as what you like to write most, or is there a difference? Who is your favourite professional author?

What I read is definitely far removed from the *Thunderbirds* and historical fiction that I write. When I read fiction, I am drawn towards mystery. I have been told more than once that I was murdered in a former life so maybe I'm trying to figure out who did it! Who knows? When I read non-fiction, I seek out stories about people, their hardships, experiences and circumstances. I don't have a favourite author and I like it that way. I like to vary my reading as it gives me greater exposure to different styles of writing.

How do you feel your writing has changed and evolved since you began?

I have always been adventurous when it comes to writing, which didn't start out too well when I first began posting my work eleven years ago. People say I have a distinctive style (which bothers me a bit) so I've worked really hard to make sure I approach each new story from a different angle to make them guess a little. I think my characterization has improved a lot thanks to my friend and very patient beta reader Jaimi Sorrell. That was a hard road to walk at first but I think I'm getting there. What I *have* learned is the best way to stay true to an established character in any fandom is to channel your creativity into building original characters (OCs) of your own. Creating believable OCs is where I feel I have really grown over the last few years and I've appreciated the feedback from those who have noticed.

Where do you feel your writing is headed in the future?

I think I am almost ready to write that elusive original novel. For me it's all about taking the quantum leap away from the security blanket of being "just a fan fiction writer" and of course, finding the time. I have a non-fiction book half-written that I began in 2011 (called *Off the Rails in Queensland*), which tells the stories of some of the real characters in the Rail Industry that I have encountered in my 37 years in the job. Unfortunately, last year I was advised that it wasn't in the best interests of my managerial career to bring this book to fruition. But you can be assured that I intend to finish it the moment I leave that position in a few years' time.

What do you find most difficult about writing? And what do you find the easiest?

Sadly, I am a perfectionist and no one has been able to convince me yet that it's OK to just write that "shitty first draft." I really admire those who do that but I have accepted that I am not one of them. With my technical training and the expectations surrounding peak performance in competitive dance, I am programmed to practice and practice alone until my effort is of a reasonable standard. However, that mindset leads me into what I find the easiest about writing. I am notorious for starting challenge entries only a few days before the challenge closes. With only three days to write a story there's no time for me to mull over that "shitty first draft." So give me a deadline and no way to get out of it and writing suddenly becomes the easiest thing of all.





You know we have to ask you this..., which is your favourite *TB* character to write about and why?

You may be surprised at the answer. My favourite *TB* character is actually Jeff Tracy. As someone heavily involved in the corporate world I truly appreciate what Jeff would have had to sacrifice to build a successful business from nothing, raise five young boys and then go on to create something as selfless as International Rescue. Alan, of course is my favourite Tracy son and despite the ribbing I receive from time to time, I'm not going to

change my preference. However, when I write Alan, I try to blend his petulant side with a growing maturity. That seems to work well.

And which is your least favourite? Why?

Definitely the Hood. I have never written a story about that character because I simply don't find him interesting. I always chewed my nails to the quick when submitting a TIWF FicSwap request, worried sick that I would get an assignment featuring the Hood in return. I don't know what it is that I don't really like. I've tried to embrace his mysterious powers ... his haunting eyes...hell, I've even tried to gain inspiration from his fabulous clothing. Maybe one day it will happen but I'm not risking any more FicSwaps just in case! However, my experience has taught me that writing what you don't like can really grow you as a writer. It's painful but it's worth it!



Which of your fics has been the most difficult for you to write? Why?

Red River for sure. It was a story that I felt needed to be told and the way I chose to tell it had the potential to offend a lot of people. The idea for *Red River* began two weeks before Christmas last year when three children drowned in separate accidents in Australia in only a matter of days. I remember how sad I felt for the families and how awful it would be for them to have to deal with the festivities on Christmas Day after their loss. The only way I could deal with the feeling was to write *Red River*, extending the circumstances to an ill-fated orphanage and trying to articulate the impact their deaths might have had on those who tried so hard to rescue them. I was emotionally exhausted after writing it, but it gave me such a feeling of peace within myself that it was worth every second.

Do you have a favourite of your fics?

I do. *Dear John*. I am very proud of that story. It was the result of another fic-swap and it was about the terror of potential exposure to the Ebola virus. It's so surreal now, seeing the world in the grip of the panic I wrote about almost three years ago. It is also my favourite because I experimented with two OCs (Colonel Bryson and Maria Magetti) and was able to integrate them as leads into the living nightmare being experienced by John, Gordon and Tin-Tin. I received a number of personal messages from people who really hated Colonel Bryson's arrogance and that pleased me a lot. I knew I had achieved my goal. I didn't WANT people to like him! Maria Magetti's character development was the result of a recommended rewrite and I think she worked out fine, too. One of these days I hope to write the sequel to *Dear John*. Someone needs to tell you what happened to Thunderbird Two!

If you could fly or drive just one of the Thunderbird craft or rescue machines, which would it be, and why?

Lady Penelope, please don't be offended but ever since I watched the movie *Thunderbird 6*, I've wanted to take control of that Tiger Moth. Watching Parker hanging on like grim death, heading straight for a road bridge was more than a little unsettling. So was the final landing. I'm surprised everyone survived. I fully understand that, as a secret agent, life is always so much more interesting when you live it on the edge, but still ...

Now the writing challenge... One of the IR crew (your choice) encounters something he hasn't seen yet on a rescue. What is it and how does he react? 200 words.

Farewell Belah Gaat
mcj's first and last Hood fic

Alan staggered backwards, helpless at the sheer force of it. All balance lost, he lay there useless. Gaspd against the pain of shattered bones.

Through the haze of failing consciousness he heard her beg him to let them go. The heat from the fire in the temple was intensifying. Couldn't he see that the makeshift doorway was the only way for them to make it out?

"So, you think your International Rescue friends will save you from your fate, do you?"

A voice of pure evil.

Such strangely hypnotic eyes.

He'd never experienced such helplessness before.

Those staring...

... Debilitating ...

... Horrible...

... Eyes.

He felt his own eyes sting. He couldn't do anything to help her. He struggled to pull himself up against the agony.

"Tin-Tin!"

"Your father is USELESS to me. YOU will tell me their secrets. Tell me NOW or you will DIE!"

"No!"

"Tin-Tin!"

He couldn't lie here and let that happen.

"ALAN! STAY DOWN!"

One shot.

A dull thud.

Gaat crumpled, lifeless, on the temple floor.

"Move it, fellas! We're running out of time!"

Never had he been more relieved to hear the voice of his eldest brother.

Or that Gordon never missed.

Oh, my goodness, how exciting! Thank you, mcj, it has been an absolute pleasure. (Although I must say it does make me want to know just why this Belah Gaat gentleman has such an effect on people. Maybe I'll invite him to tea and find out...)

Do you have a question you are dying to ask your favourite *Thunderbirds* writer?

If so, then send it without delay to Lady Penelope, care of TICMobileControl1@gmail.com with the subject line MY WRITER QUESTION FOR LADY P. Penny will put her super spy skills to use uncovering an answer for you, and your question could be featured in a future issue of the NTBS Newsflash, so don't be shy! Ask away!

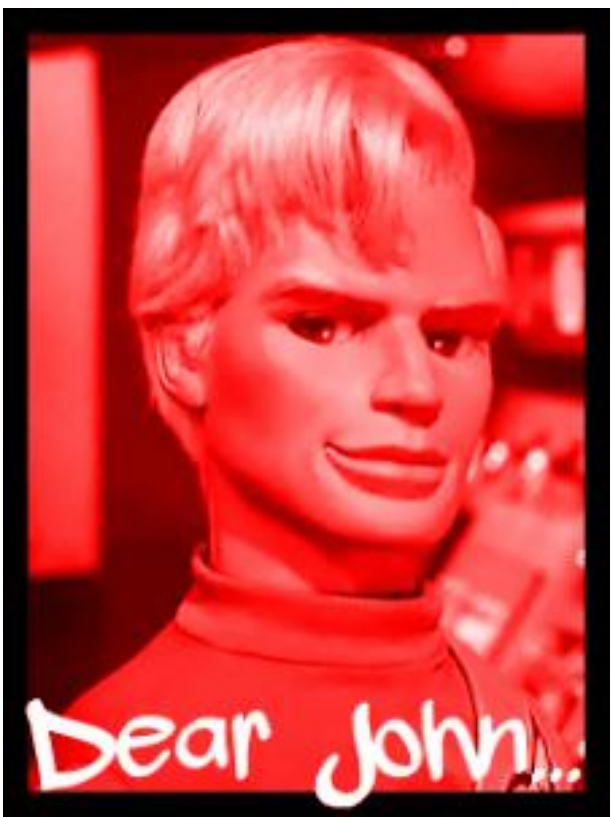
LOLBIRDS

What's the next line? You get to be the writer! Send your caption to TICMobileControl1@gmail.com and it may be chosen to appear in the next issue of the NTBS Newsflash! We dare you to share that rapier wit with more than just your bathroom mirror...

← Last issue's winning caption by Anonymous:

"Not now, Scott, Alan's watching."

What's the next line? →



IN EACH ISSUE OF THE NTBS NEWSFLASH,
JOHN TRACY ANSWERS THE CALLS OF THOSE
IN NEED...

Dear John,
My boyfriend is just about perfect in every way except one. He has really bushy eyebrows — like spin-a-cocoon-and-turn-into-Donald-Trump’s-hair kind of bushy! One moment you’re feeling romantic, and the next you’re thinking about Mothman, know what I mean?
I don’t know how to tell him without hurting his feelings. The last time I tried to give him a hint, he pouted for a week. He’s so sweet otherwise and just stupidly good looking but those eyebrows need an edit. Any suggestions?

Signed,
Fear of Brows

Dear Fear,
It sounds to me like your boyfriend may have doubts about his manhood. Perhaps it would be better to keep reassuring him and keep your eyes closed when you kiss him.

DO YOU KNOW A *THUNDERBIRDS* CHARACTER WITH A PROBLEM? JOHN CAN HELP! SEND HIM A LETTER ON THEIR BEHALF!

Dear John,
My girlfriend has recently started saying odd things about my eyebrows like, “Your eyebrows are so wild and free and uninhibited,” “they’re like sexy eye hats,” “passionate, burly-faced caterpillars” or “shameless wooly-faced mammoths.”
All of this is making me very self-conscious. My brother thinks she’s trying to hint that my eyebrows might need a tiny bit of grooming, but I think he’s just jealous because I have a hot babe and he doesn’t. What do you think?

Signed,
Manly Man

Dear Manly,
While it’s certainly not something I’m personally familiar with, some of us are more in need of manscaping than others.

EMAIL TICMOBILECONTROL1@GMAIL.COM WITH THE SUBJECT LINE *DEAR JOHN* AND YOU MIGHT SEE AN ANSWER IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE NTBS NEWSFLASH!

PAST TIWF CHALLENGE WINNERS!

Because this is the first Newsflash since the April/May/June 2013 issue, we wanted to take this opportunity to recognize winners of Tracy Island Writers Forum challenges that have taken place between then and now. Without further ado, everyone give a big clap for the following very talented writers!

2013 3-POV CHALLENGE

Our 3 Point-of-View (3-POV) challenge from May of 2013 invited entrants to take one scene or situation from either the original series or the two original 1960s movies (*Thunderbirds Are Go* or *Thunderbird 6*) and describe it from the POV of three different characters. The winner of this challenge was Lee with her story entitled “Trigger!” Congratulations, Lee, and to whet our readers’ appetites, here’s an excerpt from this great story to sink your teeth into!

He clamped his finger on the trigger, doubted the weapon would be able to handle ten thick inches of alligator skull, wondered if he should aim for the eyes or the mouth and what would buy them the most time. If they even had any time...

2013 HALLOWEEN CHALLENGE

Our TIWF 2013 Halloween challenge was subtitled “Things That Go Bump in the Night” which is exactly what it sounds like: the entries had to be about something that goes bump in the night! The winner of that challenge was Chrysexanthe with her entry entitled “Bed and Breakfast!” Congratulations, Chrysexanthe, and to whet our readers’ appetites, here’s an excerpt from this hauntingly good story!

I was forced to watch as the love of my life was tied to the stake in the middle of the square. Oil soaked rags and bundles of sticks were piled around her as our eyes met for the last time. Her terror galvanized me to one last attempt to free myself, but it was to no avail. I hung there exhausted, as she was engulfed by the flames, her screams of torment ringing in my ears...

2013 INAUGURAL CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE

Our TIWF 2013 Inaugural Christmas challenge theme was “A Christmas Rescue” and the *Thunderbirds* story we asked members to write had to follow this theme. To make life interesting it also had to commence with the following: “It was the night before Christmas but it was the last thing he cared about right now...” After that, writers were free to let their imaginations head any direction they wished to

weave magical Christmas tales! The winner of this challenge was mcj with her entry entitled “Red River!” Congratulations to mcj, and to whet our readers’ appetites, here’s an excerpt from this hard-hitting, fantastic story!

No-one could have predicted the second rock-fall or the speed at which it had come. Wracked with exhaustion, still clad in uniforms torn and streaked with human blood, they’d all stood and endured the mandatory debriefing before hitting the showers because what had happened today might happen somewhere else in the world tomorrow.

2014 FICSWAP CHALLENGE

We hold FicSwap Challenges regularly on TIWF, and they are always smashing successes. What’s a “FicSwap?” It’s a story exchange, in which any author who wishes to participate in the challenge submits an idea for a story they want another author to write. Everyone’s ideas are mixed up in a hat and pulled out one-by-one to be randomly (and anonymously) assigned to another participating author. It’s a tricky thing, because you never know what kind of request you’re going to get! The winner of the 2014 FicSwap challenge was Molly Webb with her entry “Mr. Congeniality!” Congratulations to Ms. Webb, and just to get our readers’ goats, here’s an excerpt from this hilarious story!

Loud bleating sounds announced the arrival of at least a dozen very frightened goats, being chased by a handful of men and women in coveralls and hair nets. Running flat out away from their pursuers, they were almost upon the group of rescue personnel before they saw them. They broke and scattered in all directions from this new threat, and chaos reigned for several minutes as the human contingent downed tools and tried to help catch them.

2014 PICK-A-PROMPT CHALLENGE

The 2014 Pick-a-Prompt challenge provided our members with a list of seven different story prompts, one of which they had to pick and build a story around it. The prompt itself also had to be used somewhere in the story. The winner of this challenge was LMC with her entry “Yu Lan!” Congratulations to LMC, and to scare our readers into going over to TIC to investigate, here’s an excerpt from this very suspenseful and surprising story!

A sudden round of shrieking just like the ear-piercing sounds that he’d heard earlier, made Gordon’s hair stand on end. Everywhere was sweating now; he could feel moisture soaking the tee shirt he wore under his flight suit and sweat sliding down from his sideburns to his collar.

2K PHOTO CHALLENGE

The TIWF 2k Photo challenge presented TIWF members with three random photographs:



Entrants to the challenge were tasked with selecting one of the three and writing a story of between 500 and 2,000 words that incorporated the photo as its central theme. The winner of this challenge was Samantha Winchester, otherwise known as Jaimi-Sam, with her entry “Coming Home!”

Congratulations to Jaimi-Sam!

As is our Newsflash tradition, you can find this, the most recent challenge winner, on the next page!

COMING HOME
By Samantha Winchester (aka Jaimi-Sam)

(Based on Challenge Picture #2)

He jolted awake in the black pre-dawn, sweat soaking the white cotton of his teeshirt. The room was dark and still, the only sound the faint hum of the air conditioning. Which one had it been this time? Vague scraps of memory floated just out of reach... a dark road, driving rain, small voices crying out for help that never came... He sat up abruptly, snapping on the bedside lamp. His surroundings, this generic, transitory place that had no association whatsoever with his family, calmed him. Nothing personal in this room at all. No pictures on the walls, no pillow on a bedside chair embroidered by his mother's sister Laura, no knick knacks crowded on the bureau, waiting for him to get around to putting up another shelf. No—Wife. Iron fingers clamped brutally around his chest. He hunched over, the breath he dragged in against the will of his lungs sounding very much like a sob. Slowly, bit by bit, he dug down deep and got hold of the darkness, forcing it to recede again. When he was enough in control to look up once more, the softly glowing numerals on the bedside clock told him it was 4:15 am. Might as well get up and get the day started.

By the time his friend and assistant Rosemary O'Sullivan arrived at their office at seven-thirty, Jeff was working on his second mug of strong black coffee and wading through a sea of reports and blueprints on the moon colony project. He'd already interrupted an engineering contact's lunch in London and a fellow astronaut's dinner in Beijing with questions and had covered several pages of his desk pad with notes. He smelled the breakfast tacos the minute Rosemary opened the outer door to their suite. "Food!" he called out. "How did you know I was starving?" She stuck her head around the doorframe, wearing a startled expression. "Jeff! What are you doing here?" He stared at her blankly. "I work here." "Not today, you don't. You're supposed to be on a plane for Kansas City!" "Oh, crap," he said, folding in on himself. "I completely forgot..." She clucked her tongue, coming round the desk and hustling him out of the chair. "Get on back to the apartment right now and throw your things in a case; I'll book you on a later flight and text you with the details. Oh, and I'll call Ruth as well. They'll worry if you don't show up when you're supposed to." Somehow she'd maneuvered him all the way to the outer door. He caught hold of the frame, made a last ditch plea for mercy. "Rosie, couldn't I just—" Her brows drew together. "We've gone all over this," she said firmly. "It's been six months. I know you're here building a future for those boys of yours, but they need more than your money. They need *you*." There was nothing he could say to that. Defeated, he let her push him into the hall and close the door behind him.

In the past, Jeff had always liked to fly Southwest. He was drawn to the warmth and the sense of humor of that airline's crews. But today he was glad that the substitute flight Rosemary had found was on American instead, because it had been a while since he'd felt much like laughing. The two hour flight was over far too fast. As he disembarked with the other passengers at Kansas City International, walking by the couples and families greeting each other at the gate, he realized he was very glad he still had an hour's drive in front of him. Home wasn't the easy destination it had once been. As he headed the rental car westbound from Kansas City, it dawned on Jeff that he'd missed an entire season. The harvest had come and gone, the straw bales sat baking in the fields in the September sun. The leaves would start changing color soon. It was like the last half-year had been swallowed by time. Time. As a child, he had sometimes wondered what it must have been like for the pioneers who first brought their horses and wagons here, when the prairie grasses had been so tall a man could disappear into them. He had tried to imagine the isolation of those times when there were no computers, or radio, or even telephones. The silence. Now he stared at the two lane blacktop and wished his mind could find that silence. It was useless, of course. Lucy was all over this landscape, as much a part of him as the fields of winter wheat, the tall cottonwoods and the signature brown and gold sunflowers of the home that he loved. He couldn't look at any of it without seeing her. He couldn't remember life without her. He didn't know who he was, without her. Nothing made sense any more. The roaring started in his ears again, the pain in his chest crushing him and robbing him of breath. He pulled the car over to the shoulder and sat there, forehead lowered to the rim of the steering wheel.

I can't do this. I can't... He fumbled in his jeans pocket for his Motorola Razr, flipping it open to dial his parent's number. Rosemary's voice rang in his ears. *They need more than your money. They need you.* Jeff let his arm drop, slumping back against the seat. He put phone back into his pocket and steered the car back on to the highway. Before he knew it he was making the familiar right hand turn on to the dirt and gravel road that led to the Tracy family farm. The flag was down on the battered old mailbox that bore their name; someone had already checked it that day. A half mile later he rounded the final bend, and there before him was the old white farmhouse with the wraparound porch. It needed painting, he thought, feeling a pang of guilt. Ridiculous, really — he hadn't called this place home for many years. He pulled up beside his father's old F150. Grant Tracy had driven that truck longer

than Jeff could remember, and the paintwork was marred by many scratches and dents. But Jeff knew if he started it up right this moment, it would run like silk. He killed the rental's engine. Immediately he heard the sounds of children laughing. Cold sweat broke out down his spine, and he sat there for a few moments with his head back and his eyes tightly closed. *They need you.* Jeff forced himself out of the car. His boots rang hollowly on the boards of the porch as he circled the house toward the back garden. The memories assaulted him mercilessly as he paused in the shadows, watching. His second son, chestnut-haired Virgil, sat crosslegged in the dirt and made enthusiastic "Vroom, vroom!" sounds as he pitted toy trucks against each other in a pretend monster truck rally. Three-year-old John, the tow-head, kicked out his little legs in glee on the swing that hung from the lower branches of the huge old cottonwood tree. "John go high!" he called out, laughing as his eldest brother, Scott, pushed him into the air. His mother sat in her old rocking chair near the steps, watching them play. Gordon was nowhere to be seen, and Jeff, lost in this wonderful tableau, could almost believe that his second youngest was in the kitchen with Lucy, and they would come out together, any moment now... The back door banged, making Jeff start. He'd been holding his breath, caught up in the fantasy. It was indeed Gordon who had burst out on to the porch, but of course he was alone. There was no Lucy. There was never going to be a Lucy, not ever again. The sheer finality of it stabbed him through the heart. He gasped with the pain, leaning hard against the white siding, feeling as though the earth would open and swallow him up. *"Daddy!"* A small whirlwind crashed into his leg, clinging on for dear life and jolting him back to reality. Jeff's eyes burned; he reached down and ran his hand through Gordon's silky hair. Ruth was on her feet, looking at him. Jeff realized he'd been expecting his mother to be angry with him, but all he saw in her eyes now was relief; happiness that he'd come. It struck him then that he wasn't the only person in this family who'd been holding his breath. Jeff gently disengaged Gordon and took him by the hand, leading him down the porch to his grandmother. Jeff wrapped his free arm around her and for a moment mother and son just hugged each other in silence. "You're looking thin," she said to him at last, standing back. "Rosemary tells me you've been working hard." The guilt rose thick and choking in his throat. He didn't trust himself to do anything but nod. Virgil and John had reached them now and he hugged each one in turn, struggling to hold back the tears. He'd forgotten what this felt like, the sheer power of this love that welled up inside him at their presence. He'd spent so long numbing himself, trying not to feel anything at all, and now it felt as though it would split him open. His mother said, "There's someone else here you need to get acquainted with." For the first time he saw the brightly-colored covered bassinet beside her. Jeff froze. Ruth bent down, lifted the baby in her arms. He fussed a little, opening huge cornflower-blue eyes. Jeff backed up until he collided with the wall of the house. The memories of that night crashed into him. The hospital, the fear, the blood, the look on the doctor's face as he told him they'd tried everything they could, but it hadn't been enough to save his wife, his Lucy, his beautiful Lucy. She was gone, and there was nothing anyone could do to bring her back. But his newborn son had survived, delivered by his eldest in their truck while the storm howled around them. Would he like to see him? *No*, he'd said, a hole punched through him that held all the pain and shock and grief in the world. *I can't. I can't.* "I can't." He repeated it now. Deep inside him was an insane thought...If he didn't hold him, didn't think about him, he wouldn't be real, and Lucy wouldn't be dead. He could still turn back time, somehow, if he didn't let this baby be real... Ruth Tracy's voice turned to steel. "You can, Jefferson Grant Tracy, and you will. This is your son, and he needs you, and this family doesn't raise cowards." A movement caught his eye, then. His eldest son stood halfway up the porch steps. Alone of the boys, Scott hadn't run to greet his father. He said nothing, just regarded Jeff with a wary, troubled expression in his deep blue eyes. Jeff remembered then that his eldest hadn't spoken for three days after the accident. Not only that, but the morning after that terrible night, Jeff and his parents, who had flown down the minute they heard about the accident, had awoken to find Scott missing. After a panicked search, they'd finally gotten a call from the hospital, where Scott was keeping watch on his new baby brother through the glass of the nursery. Just like he was doing now. Poised to protect him, to intervene if necessary. Pride swelled so hard in Jeff that he could barely breathe. It was time for him to be a father again, to let this brave boy stand down from his watch. "It's OK, Scott," he managed. "Everything's going to be OK, now. I promise." He looked back at his mother, took a deep breath, and let her settle the baby into his arms. "Hello, Alan," he said, reaching down and enfolding the infant's tiny hand in his.



THE RECORDING BOOTH

STORIES FROM THE TICIPEDIA VOICE ACTOR ARCHIVE

In This Issue: [Richard Hessey-White](#)

Christine Davis

A huge part of what was so essential in bringing the *Thunderbirds* characters to life in the original television series was the voice actors. In 2009 I realized, as I began to research these very talented individuals, that there was little information available on some of them, most notably those who had sadly passed away by the time I began looking.

I must admit that I have always been partial to the voice of Jeff Tracy. From the initial, iconic and memorable “5...4...3...2...1...Thunderbirds Are Go!” which is heard at the beginning of the opening titles, to Jeff’s every appearance in all the series episodes and original two movies, his was a voice that was, to me, as commanding as it was gentle and loving. My initial searches, therefore, focused on the man who was Jeff Tracy: Peter Dyneley.



Peter Dyneley circa 1975

Finding movies that Mr. Dyneley had made, other work that he did outside of *Thunderbirds*, wasn’t a problem. But at first, that was all I really had. And while I went out and purchased all his movies that I could, and took both still photos and sound bites from each of them to preserve him and his work, I still fell short in knowing anything at all about him as a person.

That was when I had a breakthrough. In the (far too numerous) searches I performed on the internet, I happened to find Mr. Dyneley’s name on a genealogy website. It was there that I learned two things about him. His full name at birth was Peter Dyneley Hessey-White. And second, he’d had two children. Subsequent searches on the names of those children led me to more than I ever could have dreamed because I found them both! And in 2010, Mr. Dyneley’s son, Richard Hessey-White, was gracious enough to grant me a telephone interview to talk about his father.

Christine: Thank you so much for granting me this interview; it’s a pleasure to speak with you. We’ve been corresponding a bit and one of the things you shared with me intrigued me. It would seem “Peter Dyneley” was not all there was to your father’s name. If I may, what was his real, full name and why did he not use it?

Richard: First, so everyone knows, the correct pronunciation is *DYNE-lee*. It took me ten years to work out where the name Dyneley came from. His full name was Peter Dyneley Hessey-White. When he was a young man his agent decided a double-barrelled name was not conducive to the stage and at that time there was an actor making his way with a similar name, so my father used his ‘family’ name, which was Dyneley, as his stage name.

I always wondered where the name Dyneley comes from. I undertook some family history research, but all I knew at the beginning was that, according to my aunt, their father made up this rhyme at Peter’s christening: “Peter Dyneley Peter Dyneley Peter Dyneley Hessey-White.” The research took me in various directions. Peter’s maternal grandfather was James Hessey and his maternal great-grandfather was Robert Dyneley. I only know this because the family tree is up on the

internet on ‘Genes Reunited’ and someone contacted me and was able to prove that she and her husband were vaguely related to me.

My dad often played or voiced American characters as he was brought up in Canada but sent back to England for his education. Canada has been more difficult for me to research — I have been trying to track down my grandfather Cyril, Peter’s father, and when and how he arrived in Canada. The White part of the family ended up in Montreal. My father’s family came from Liverpool originally, then he turned up in Montreal with an older brother and both joined the Canadian army during the First World War. Robert White, Cyril’s father, was a policeman in Liverpool, and Cyril was the youngest of eleven children. Robert was born in New York around 1849-1852, but he wasn’t an American citizen. His father was Henry Jackson White. He died in New York, leaving Robert and a sister and their mother in the US. They were brought back to Liverpool by tobacco people.

Christine: Did your father travel back to Canada much throughout his life?

Richard: We actually did. His mother lived in Montreal until she died around about 1979-1980. He used to travel back. I didn’t take trips with him, but I went to Canada on my own when I was ten and she took me around and introduced me to Canada. My mother’s side also has family in Ottawa.

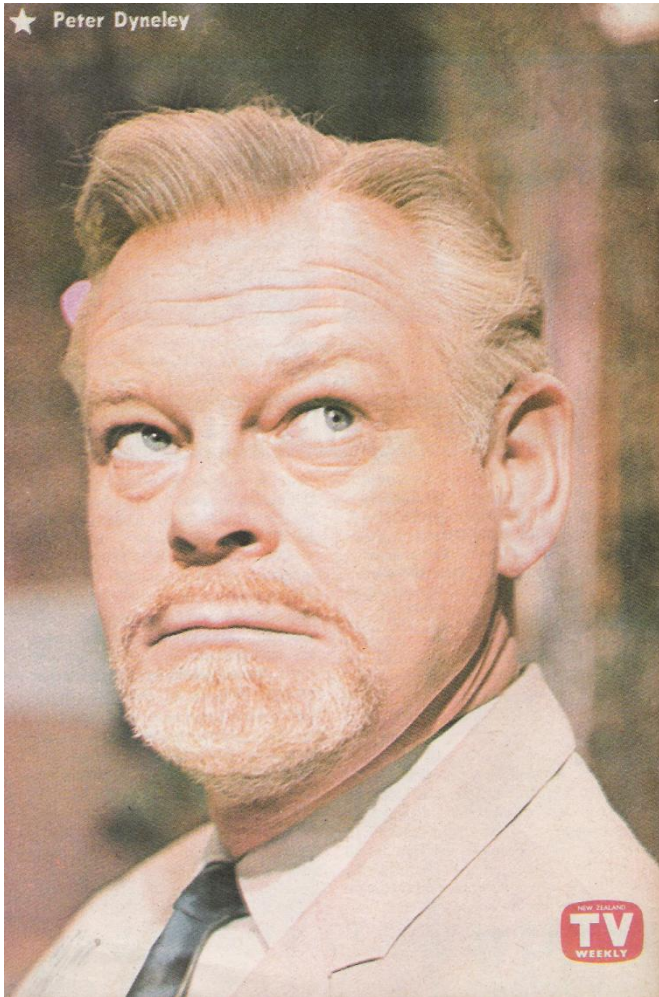
Christine: What are your earliest memories of your father?

Richard: *Brigadoon* in 1950 when I was three. He played Angus in that musical at His Majesty’s Theatre in London’s West End.

Christine: You have said that Peter was one of the top voice-over actors used in the UK by advertising agencies. Could you talk some more about this type of work he did?

Richard: Almost all commercials are voice-overs across the world. Back in the 60s in the UK, three of the big brand advertisers at the time were all for Cadbury. Back in the 50s the UK only had one TV channel, which was BBC. Somewhere in early 60s they had a second channel called ITV; there were about ten separate companies broadcasting to various regions throughout the UK. The advertisers spent a lot of money creating quality advertising and using actors to voice-over the commercials. Cadbury were one of the early big spenders. There was a program (and still is to this day) called *Coronation Street*. One of the ads in the first commercial break of *Coronation Street* was for Cadbury’s Bonneville Chocolate (dark, bitter chocolate). One of the others was Smash, another of Cadbury’s brands, which is instant mashed potatoes. Smash became very famous in the 60s. They have a sort of mechanical voice, finished off by my father saying one or two words on them. There was also the International Wool Secretariat, used to promote wool. My father used to voice those as well.

Christine: What was it like growing up with a man you saw on stage, and then later in movies, TV shows and commercials?



Peter in ‘TV Guide’

Richard: Normal and natural because that’s how it’s always been. You have no idea it’s different. His celebrity had little impact on my life whatsoever.



L-R: Amanda (Richard’s sister), their mother Christine and Richard

Christine: What was Peter’s personality like? For example, was he jolly or rather serious?

Richard: I’m a child and he’s my dad. He was probably more serious than jolly. My mother and father divorced when I was five or six years old. We went and saw our father when he could see us and vice-versa. It was a normal growing up of a child with parents in the theater. Amanda, my full sister, is three years younger than me. She’s retired, exceptionally bright and full of ideas. She’s lovely. She’s full of fun. She has her father’s brains...Peter would do the *Times* crossword puzzle and pick out the pattern of colors just for fun. He was very bright in that sense.

Christine: You have said that your father had a beautiful bass voice. Could you describe the types of songs he would sing?

Richard: He didn’t sing on stage that I ever saw. He would often sing German lieder in bath! A serious singing of the operatic voice is called ‘lieder.’ *[Interviewer’s Note: Richard actually sang to me at this point in the interview — how wonderful that was!]* After the War my father studied at Guildhall *[The Guildhall School of Music & Drama — Ed.]*. He sung with a bass voice. To become a professional opera singer requires continual training; you need a repertoire and a voice coach — but having a family requires income, and it was easier becoming an actor. He also claimed he had a sibilant ‘s’ like a snake that came through in his singing. Another piece of information few people will remember is that after the War there was a radio station called Radio Luxembourg, it was a commercial station and it broadcast to the UK. Peter used to introduce ‘Bing Sings’ on Radio Luxembourg.

Christine: Did your father ever speak of his experiences on stage, film or television with you? If so, do you recall him talking about his work with other actors or perhaps a memorable moment he had during the filming of a movie?

Richard: None that I would pass on to you. (Laughs) Like all actors he was a good raconteur because he knew the one thing that is needed to tell a story: timing — he could hold a table of people recounting a story. Recording his voice for *Thunderbirds*, all I know about *Thunderbirds* is the actual filming was done in Slough, at a sort of out-of-town industrial estate, but you know all that. I think the sound was recorded at De Lane Lea [Studios].

Christine: Do you recall any anecdotes your father may have shared with you about his experience being the voice of Jeff Tracy in *Thunderbirds*?

Richard: You all know that Lady Penelope has a car that has the number plate on it, FAB 1, and they used FAB and fab of course short for ‘fabulous.’ Father rather fancied an MGB British sports car at the time, and we have a tradition in our family. All our cars have names. His first car was Epithania, named for the female lead of the play he was in at the time. She was an Austin Somerset convertible. He later did *African Patrol* which was a TV series, and came back with another different car called Toto, which is the word for ‘child’ in Swahili. Then he had a small British sports car, an MGB, and this was known in the family as FAB 2. I have no idea what happened to it. He had another two MGBs after that, one he called Mortimer G., Esquire. I still have an MGB called Candy. Because it’s sweet, for a girl, and eye candy when she has her top down.

Christine: What can you tell us about your father’s marriage to actress Jane Hylton?

Richard: Dad served in the Royal Canadian Navy in World War II. He loved the sea, he loved ships. After my parents broke up, which I don't know too much about, Dad was engaged to do *The Manster*, a movie I've never seen. In it with him was Jane Hylton and when the filming was finished he decided they would come back to Britain the long way, which was to come back by tramp steamer — today they call them container ships. I think it was the White Star or Blue Funnel Line and Father said, "I'd like to book a double



Jane Hylton and Peter Dyneley

cabin for myself and Ms. Hylton to get back to the UK." He was told they were not allowed a double cabin since they weren't married. So my father and Jane decided that they would get married and then get a divorce when they got back (to England). *The Manster* was filmed in Japan, of course, and the story goes that my father and Jane went along to the (British) consulate and got married. As the first bottle of champagne was being cracked, the translator that had been there to help them came rushing into the room, yelling, "Ha, marriage no good!" My father was asking, what the heck's going on here? Well, the Japanese write in the wrong direction, so Peter and Jane had signed in the wrong place! They got it sorted, got married and they never got divorced. It was a very, very happy marriage.



Peter in *The Manster*

Christine: Anything else related to *Thunderbirds* that you might wish to share?

Richard: I have two children of my own. The two of them and I were on holiday eight or nine years ago to Ibiza in the Spanish Balearics (even back then my dad had already been gone a long time). So I am now at this hotel, I have fought my way to a sunbed and I've got my drink, I've got my book, my children have found various playmates and decided to leave me alone and I'm thinking right, I'm here on holiday. The hotel has one of these people trying to get you into the pool and do exercises. I'm lying there and I'm thinking, ugh, and all of a sudden I hear "Five...four...three...two...one!" — they use it every day. I look up to the heavens and think, "Dad, come on, leave me alone."

Christine: What else would you like Peter Dyneley's fans to know about him?

Richard: A story recounted by my father: He was seconded to the Royal Navy; for much of the War he was in the Mediterranean. His ship was lying off Gibraltar and he was officer of the day (OOD), getting people ashore for leave, etc. Well, somebody had escaped from Germany, made their way through France to Spain and out to Gibraltar. They saw the ship offshore and swam to it, and it was Peter's job to interrogate.

A few years after the war he had a call from his agent saying a film was going to be made in France, go down to Shepperton Studios, they're doing the casting. He went to Waterloo Station and caught the train. He was sitting in the carriage and a fellow with red hair was sitting opposite him. There was also a good-looking younger man in the carriage. The fellow with red hair said, "Don't I know you?" Eventually they realized this was the fellow his father had interrogated on the ship! Then the very good-looking young man entered the conversation with, "Oh, I was with the same unit but didn't see action." And this very good-looking man was allegedly (Sir) Roger Moore who later went on to play James Bond.



Peter with Roger Moore in *The Saint*

They arrived at Shepperton Studios and there were all these actors and because they're called alphabetically, Dyneley went first. There was a semicircle of desks with the producer in the middle and behind them was a small fellow in a flat hat, a tall and wiry fellow. "Hello, Mr. Dinley, we're doing a big casting for a film we're doing in France." The guy mispronounced his name, by the way, and then asked, "Can you ride a horse?"

"The name's Dyneley and I can ride a horse."

"Ok, Mr. Dinley, if you get to a river, can you make the horse go across?"

"Yes, if it'll swim, and by the way, the name is Dyneley."

"We'll let you know."

"And for future reference, the name is Dyneley."

He told the others what was going on so they all got invited to make the film (which never actually got made). An American producer who was involved with it apparently had a place just off Hyde Park, where you can ride horses there in central London. So the three men got some horses and went round and knocked on the guy's door just to prove they could ride..

Christine: Any last thoughts you'd like to share about your dad?

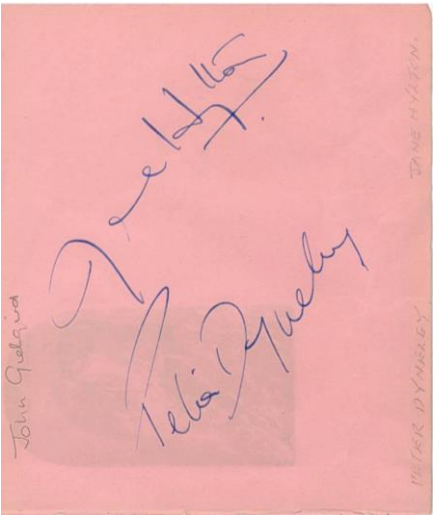
Richard: My father was very bright and intelligent, and died far too young.

Richard Hessey-White is now retired and travels England on his boat called *Persistence* with his dog, Tess. He has two sons (one of whom is named Peter), one daughter and one granddaughter.



Richard Hessey-White

Thank you very much to Richard for granting me this interview originally back in 2010, and for some additional information he's helped with recently. It was an honor to speak with him (and hear him sing!), and I think I can speak for all *Thunderbirds* and Peter Dyneley fans when I say we really appreciate him sharing his father with us!



Jane Hylton's and Peter Dyneley's Signatures

You can also find this interview archived on Peter Dyneley's voice actor page on [TICipedia](#), where there are many facts about Peter, as well as still photos, sound clips and videos from his various non-*Thunderbirds* endeavors.

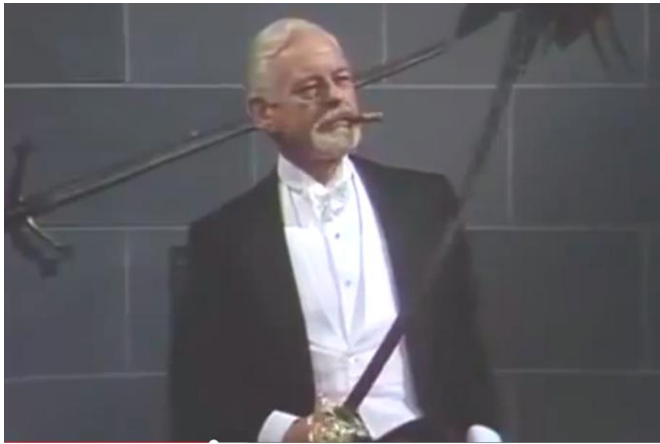
If you have video clips, sound bytes or still photos of actor Peter Dyneley that you would like to share on TICipedia, please email contact@ticipedia.info!



Jeff Tracy, voiced by Peter Dyneley - from the *Thunderbirds* episode "Give or Take a Million"



Peter in *Graf Yoster gibt sich die Ehre* "Castor und Pollux"



Peter in *Father Brown* "The Secret Garden"



Peter in *Death of a Snowman*, his final film

PENNYSPY'S

THUNDERBIRDS EPISODE GUIDE 32: GIVE OR TAKE A MILLION

It's a Christmas episode! So, don't expect too much. But what's going on? On International Rescue's tropical island base, the Tracy villa is whimsically covered in snow. But how? The excitement is...well, nonexistent, actually. But all will be revealed, soon. But, don't worry, pick up a sherry and enjoy. Because it's Christmas...it's Christmaaas! Did I mention it's Christmas?



First, breaking news — the Tracys have invited yet another kid onto this supposedly secret island, this time, it appears, entirely by choice. Jeff and a small boy called Nicky (the kid is kitted out in a small yellow-sashed, Virgil Tracy uniform) and some *Thunderbirds* merchandise are hanging out by the pool. Jeff is cunningly disguised as Santa Claus/Father Christmas, although it might have been a more effective disguise if he'd left the hat on. Not much breathable fabric in that outfit, though. Ick.

The kid is naturally very excited at getting to visit International Rescue's top secret (how's that again?) island base, and is asking Mr Tracy for his 'wish' — though Jeff rather half-heartedly tries to get him to call him 'Santa' instead to hide his identity. Um, OK, Jeff, that's definitely working — slow clap. Also, Nicky thinks that the island's snow is "fantastic" given that it's still tropical just a few metres away. So what's Nicky's wish? The kid wants to see "all the Thunderbirds" lift off. Jeff says that this "not possible" (er, why? Perhaps he means "too expensive!") but then says Nicky can see one take off. Or does he mean Thunderbird One? The kid, Nicky, chooses Thunderbird Three — so Jeff radios from "Christmas Control" to order TB3's "immediate launch."



The launch starts and it seems Alan is taking Three by himself (does Scott know?) and during this long, lonely journey on the sofa, Nicky is worried about missing the launch. Not a problem, Jeff tells him, the ship is 287 feet high. Well, that's going to enrage — or please - any dedicated model builders. We get a beauty shot all the way up Three's curvy orange body (oo-er) then BOOM, she launches!

Nicky is suitably impressed by Three's explosion through the Roundhouse donut hole, and thanks Jeff for the greatest thrill of his life. Nicky is actually so pleased that he thinks he's dreaming — you know, like they deliberately made that kid think he was dreaming at the end of the recap episode from hell (otherwise known as "Security Hazard"). I suppose Jeff's swung

back to the 'ah, stuff it' security mindset. I mean, he's already told Nicky the exact height of TB3, so why not go all the way and give him a tour and some blueprints?

After the launch, Jeff guilt-trips Nicky (depending on your point of view...) that it took a lot of people a "lot of time and trouble" to arrange this. He flashes the story back to a bitchy committee meeting at Coralville hospital, at which he was not actually present, so we won't ask how he knew what was happening... Also, this flashback ends at a non-specific time, so...yes, never mind. The Coralville committee group are arguing vehemently, but all the meeting chairman reminds them that they're there to discuss ways of raising money for a "new solar therapy wing" at their children's hospital. So they get to business. What we have here are two bigwigs of capitalist industry. One company is willing to supply a rocket, the other, Mr Harman, will fill it with toys — on one condition that it's launched from the roof of his own department store. The other bigwig snarks about "free publicity." But Harman adds he will write a cheque for \$10k right there and then. That settles it. Now the final success of the scheme "depends on International Rescue."



Meanwhile, at Coralville Children's Hospital, the music suggests something tense and exciting is about to happen. Don't get your hopes up, people. It's a little while after the committee meeting, and Coralville hospital staff are waiting for the test rocket from the scheme to arrive at the hospital. Wait, is that safe? If it's a *test*, perhaps they should aim it at someplace that's NOT full of children? Anyway, the rocket is launching. By the speed of the action, the ten minute wait seems to be happening in real time, too. Apparently, all the windows at the hospital have been "screened" so no one except the little group can see the rocket arrive. Um, they're totally going to HEAR it, right?

The rocket finally gets there with all the precision timing required and drops a payload box before it continues flying to...somewhere else. Probably they had it hit another rival hospital down the road. The ejected box parachutes gently to the ground. Tense music plays, as if it's full of radioactive material or the Hood's left a deadly virus inside. None of these things happen, sadly. The female nurse opens the box and a load of brown wrapped packages are revealed within.



They open one of the parcels and the china horse ornament inside appears to be in totally perfect

condition. Amazon will be after this delivery technology in a heartbeat — wait, they already are (yay drones!). The nurse is impressed by the test, and everyone is excited about the next launch of the rocket and the whole plan taking place at Christmas.



The plan's next stage, though, is to contact International Rescue. There's the usual wrangling about how they reach IR — of course the answer is, "Oh just use any frequency." The Coralville crew radio to Thunderbird Five, way above the Earth, and tell John that the test operation was a "complete success" and that the Christmas day operation is going ahead "as planned." John is told the early time for pickup of the "lucky winner" and John says they'll be there, then signs off. The nurse asks Mr Harman what International Rescue are actually going to be doing — we're sort of curious ourselves. Anything to keep ourselves awake here. Harman tells her to "wait and see." Hmm. I think this should probably involve a parental consent form.

On Tracy Island, things are seriously laid back. Alan and Tin-Tin lounge by the balcony, Scott is playing a board game on his own (aww), Virgil is reading, and Jeff and Gordon are at the desk. Then John calls in and reports that the Coralville plan is going ahead.



Jeff surmises they will have a guest "besides Penelope" for Christmas, and that it will involve a "trip" for Virgil in Thunderbird Two. Grandma enters the room just as Jeff makes an announcement. Although there's no danger, this operation must be taken "as seriously as any other" and "security" still has "top priority." Gordon makes the very valid point that there could be a distress call on the day, which Tin-Tin tuts about, telling him not to "spoil it." Jeez, Tin-Tin...however, Jeff agrees with her, as making someone "happy at Christmas" is more worthwhile — he's really not balancing this up against potentially saving thousands of lives from massive Christmas Day disasters, is he?

But we're getting ahead of ourselves here. Grandma has even more pressing concerns — it is almost Christmas, after all! (Did you get that yet?) Jeff leaps into order-giving. He assigns shopping duties to Tin-Tin and Scott, packing them off to the mainland on the 21st December for the expedition. Scott asks Tin-Tin if there's much to get. The list she wields is not short. It seems about 287 feet long, in fact...

Heartwarming montage alert. Yet more whimsy as the

islanders prepare for Christmas. Grandma and Kyrano puzzle over Christmas recipes, while Virgil and Alan wrestle with tinsel. Then Grandma is roasting a turkey, or eight, with Brains applying all his technical skills to an electronic whisking device. Jeff is trying to work at his desk when Alan drops a stream of tinsel on him, then the other half falls off too — oh, the hilarity. It's the 23rd now, and Scott and Tin-Tin arrive back at base with all the shopping.



Tin-Tin looks knackered, and Scott is weirdly impassive, much as he has been for all of season two. Maybe they overdid the eggnog in the hotel room. The island is already stuffed with cooked food — it seems odd to have so much meat prepared for the next day, unless Brains has a futuristic preservative technique for this sort of occasion? There are decorations and a bare tree in front of their portraits. And now it's Christmas Eve, the house is fully decorated and there is tinsel everywhere you look. Literally. Everyone is chilling out, and Virgil is reading a card while Tin-Tin puts the finishing touches to the tree. Jeff congratulates them on how “wonderful” the place looks. Gordon asks if they can open their presents now. Tin-Tin tuts “Not yet” and Scott says they're waiting til their “guest” arrives the next day. Christmas Day. The day you're meant to open the presents...most people do it like that, right? Right?



Jeff reckons that they should all take it easy and see how things are going in New York. The TV shows Harman's store, where it's snowing heavily, and the reporter talks about the Christmas Rocket preparations. Tin-Tin loves how the snow looks and Virgil wishes that they could have a “white Christmas, just like the old days.” Aww, I smell a fanfiction lurking right there. Virgil sounds so wistful. We're shown Brains looking rather mysterious following Virgil's words. However, Scott is more interested in the “final section” of the rocket arriving on the report. Virgil reckons that the kids will be really surprised. The screen shows a man packing the rocket with brown wrapped presents for the kids. However, Brains has now disappeared and Gordon heads off to look for him. Haven't we established by now that Brains quickly gets bored watching the TV with the Tracys, and tends to wander off and do his own thing? See ‘Day of Disaster’ and ‘Sun Probe’ for similar moments.

In the Tracy villa kitchen, Kyrano asks Grandma why she doesn't use the nuclear powered cooker. (It was the 1960s, OK?) Grandma, in her chef's hat, tells him she “never did get the hang of those rods...” and thinks they'll taste better the normal way. I suspect she may be right...never mind the fact that they might wind up glowing in the dark... Gordon pops in then, asking if they've seen Brains. Grandma tells him that the scientist said something about an “experiment” and Gordon realises he should probably leave Brains alone if he's “busy.” Strange noises are coming from inside Brains' laboratory, while the door is clearly marked “Do Not Disturb!” Oh boy. Luckily we still get to see inside. Brains pores over a map of the island, working out wind speed. He has the glass beakers of doom going at full bubble. What is going on?

At the department store, the store Santas are finishing up their last shift and say “cut the snow” (which is actually some nifty foreshadowing...). They both leave the Santa's Grotto area, exhausted. One of them feels

“like we had a million kids in there today.” They're going to meet the present-wrapping guy afterwards, for drinks I guess. Then they hear a strange noise. A Jack-in-the-Box pops out and some gnarly looking guys with guns threaten the two fake Santas and order them into a room. These are clearly bad guys.

Oblivious to events in the Grotto, Harman asks his official present-wrapper, Tanner, how the packing is going. Tanner says it's all fine and that the “publicity” has been “tremendous” for the store. Harman says it's “doubled” their Christmas profits, adding that those takings are now stashed away as safely as the Second National Bank, which happens to be right next door. With that subtle segue, we're taken to the sign that says ‘Second National Bank — Vault B.’ Hmm, what's the significance of that, then? Inside the bank, a security guard is signing off to the bank owner on the phone, reporting that they're about to close the vault door. Once they've tested the extremely touch-sensitive vault floor, they lock it up. Apparently, the tiles on the vault floor can “register a pin drop.” That'll be important in a minute.



Next door in the department store, the hapless store Santas have now been tied up and gagged. As the crooks retrieve their equipment from the Jack-in-the-Box, the blond one, Scobie, explains their plan to cut through the wall and get into the vault. His buddy-in-crime, Straker, asks how much they'll be able to steal (interesting that he didn't know the answer to that question already...he must be a trusting sort of guy!). Scobie thinks, “About ten million, give or take a million.” Title reference! His buddy's eyes don't quite light up like the Hood's, or burst wide with dollar signs, but they might as well have.

What follows feels like the longest robbery in history. It's not exactly the opening sequence of The Dark Knight, though I know Nolan is a fan of the show (he did cast Shane Rimmer in the Batman Begins, after all)! The two thieves drill a hole in the vault/department store wall. Inside the vault, there's lots and lots of gold bars just waiting to be stolen. Also, the alarm is still set. The thieving duo finally get the drill through the wall. The drill has a vacuum attached that sucks up all the excess dust.

It's all incredibly exciting. Honest.

Meanwhile, Tanner is wrapping up the present with the International Rescue invitation card inside. It reads essentially that International Rescue request the pleasure of their company. Which is fine, but what if the kid can't go? What if their parents don't want to send them off to a strange island base for Christmas? This could go badly wrong. Except, we know it all goes OK, because of the suspiciously healthy-looking Nicky who's hanging out with Jeff at the start. So, here they've tried to build up Christmassy tension with the present wrapping. I'm not convinced it's worked.



Back at the vault, the drilling goes on. And on. And on. Zzzz. Now they've cut a circle out of the wall and they pull it out together. Inappropriately tense and exciting music tries to liven up the scene. Once the hole is created, the two crooks look through it, admiring the gold inside the vault. Tanner is invited up to Harman's office now he's finished. But not before treating us to a

full two minutes of present wrapping. Just in case we'd forgotten the season.

The heist grinds on... Keep awake at the back, there! The crooks fire a small zip line across the bank vault to the opposite wall. The rope almost gets away from them and is in danger of landing on the floor — d'oh — but they catch it and pull it up just in time. Didn't you practice this, guys? It's a good thing criminals on this show are always rubbish at carrying out these schemes effectively. Once more, we're reminded that it would be very bad if the cable touches the floor, and then they fix the line up so that Scobie can pull himself along it across the vault. Because the floor's touch sensitive, did I mention that? There's very tense music again, it's all so very Hitchcock. The sucker holding the line to the other wall does not look safe at all. As he enters the vault, Scobie is briefly tempted to grab the pile of cash that's just sitting there, waiting for a stiff breeze to blow it off the shelf, but Straker urges him to leave it alone and to get hold of the gold.



On Tracy Island, Virgil and Tin-Tin are enjoying a late night coffee together, and it must be midnight because Tin-Tin pulls the date off the calendar to reveal “25 December 2026.” Now, there's a whole debate lurking here about which year the show is actually set in, especially when the comics say something else entirely, and the creators and those involved in the show changed their minds on pretty much a yearly basis. I'll just say now — there's not enough time here to go into it and I don't want to speculate. So, that's all I'm going to say about it here. It would be nice if it was all just a short time away, though, rather than not for another thirty odd years.

Anyway, Virgil and Tin-Tin's cosy coffee date (nice plaid shirt, btw, Virg) is interrupted by a strange thud up on the kitchen roof. Is it the Hood lurking in a Santa suit? A spooky raven? Is something totally and utterly awesome about to happen? Nope, although the scene is worth it for Virgil's frowny face alone.



As Tin-Tin muses that she thought everyone was asleep, Virgil goes out into the dark garden area, looking like he has every intention of bashing in Santa's head if need be. The door opens with chilling music, and the close-ups on Virgil and Tin-Tin's worried eyes are spooky. Tin-Tin hides behind Virgil as he demands, who goes there?! Then they realise it's Brains! Virgil asks him what on earth he's doing, wandering around at this time of night. Brains mutters that he was checking “the weather” and Virgil gives us and the camera a humorous look that sort of breaks the Fourth Wall. Think he's asking us to find him a way out of this episode?

Fully recovered from the scare, Tin-Tin invites Brains for a cup of coffee, and Virgil says it's “back to bed” afterwards. Get down, you slash fiction writers. Brains meekly agrees to this and tells Virgil “don't look so worried.” Tin-Tin says she will take care of Brains, but that Virgil had “better be going.”

Immediately after this, Thunderbird Two rolls out to launch. I thought that Virgil was leaving around midnight after saying goodbye to Tin-Tin and Brains. But here the launch seems to take place in broad daylight — one of the continuity hazards of re-using old stock footage? Anyway, Virgil is now on his way to the

hospital to kidnap a sick child. I mean, to bring a lucky winner to Tracy Island on a trip of a lifetime. The 1960s were very different times, all right?

Back at the heist — yes, it’s still going on! — Scobie is pushing the pulley’s weight limit by majorly overloading himself with gold bars. He’s soon dangerously close to the floor, and his horrible, two-tone, canvas bowling shoes are skimming the tiles as his buddy pulls him back across the vault.



No idea why they don’t just do this in stages. Or have they been going back and forth all night? Somehow I doubt it. They are the worst. Bank robbers. Ever. Tension increases as Scobie knocks a pencil and it winds up halfway off a desk. There’s a dramatic CRASH ZOOM on the Pencil!

Now, though, it’s Christmas Day, and a reporter is giving some free publicity to Harman at the store.

Still in the vault (how long was this meant to take them?) the two crooks are sure that they’ve made it — then they release the pulley and the rope’s loose length falls down, knocking the Pencil onto the Floor! The alarm gurgles a warning and the two crooks run for it. The two department store Santas are still there. Did Tanner go off to get drunk by himself, then? Or maybe he had a party with Harman on his own. Also, there’s a disturbing naked doll on a shelf behind the two crooks, as they decide to put on the Santa Suits in an effort to escape unnoticed. Maybe the suits were part of their plan all along. Or maybe they were banking on a less frantic getaway if they hadn’t set off the alarm.

Inside the vault, the security guards use a video camera and see the pulley and the great big hole the crooks cut into the wall! Might have been an idea to have that camera switched on all night, then, and like, watch it? The security guards figure out that the crooks might still be in the department store.



They’re right...we’re back with Scobie and Straker as they spot an elevator, or so they think.

A moment later, we see Harman and Tanner initiate the launch, loading the presents canister — which now holds two hapless thieves as well — into the rocket’s belly. The security guards try to warn the rocket launch site about the crooks, as they’ve figured out they’re aboard, but the phone can’t be heard over the take-off roar. And apparently the combined extra weight of two men doesn’t do anything to the rocket’s payload limits. As it lifts, the terrified stowaways are bashing the canister door to be let out. No one can hear them, either.

On screens at Tracy Island, and in Coralville Children’s Hospital, the TV news is reporting on the robbery of \$6 million. The bank is offering a 10% reward to anyone who catches the thieves! The Coralville nurse who we met at the beginning wonders how they even got into the vault.

Meanwhile, Jeff calls Thunderbird Two to tell him that the rocket is en route, and Virgil says he’ll reach the hospital in 3.5 minutes. Virgil flies overhead and will “cruise around” until the winner is ready. Above them, the rocket drops its payload. Hope Virgil is keeping out of the way of that thing. I’m still really curious - where does the rest of the rocket go after delivery?

The canister of presents parachutes to the ground. The Coralville nurse is very excited. Then Doctor Lang pulls out a gun! Pushing ahead of the nurse, he opens the canister — of course, inside it are the two crooks, who are passed out from the “gravity force.” Huh. Well, that was easy.

Apparently the Police Department had already warned Dr Lang about the stowaways. But no one tells this poor nurse anything at all. She’ll probably sue.

Virgil reports the successful present delivery to Jeff, adding that it contained the two crooks. Jeff correctly guesses they are from the recent heist at the bank. Virgil says that Coralville has handed the crooks over to the cops, which means that the hospital gets the reward money — totally predictable and all but, yay. So, that’s that all wrapped up, then. The end, right? Move along. Except that Virgil is waiting for the winner to be revealed. But, we already know who that is. Just a few moments later, Coralville tells Virgil that IR’s guest is ready for collection.

At the department store in New York, Harman raises a toast at his lavish Christmas party. He calls it a “Christmas to remember” and congratulates them on also making Christmas a happier time for the Coralville kids. He adds that the publicity sure didn’t hurt either, prompting lots of guffaws. He toasts to “one and all, especially the children at Coralville.” At a more modest Christmas gathering at Coralville, they also call it one for the books, and mention the reward money again. Ugh, so much repetition in this episode. We know about the reward money. You already mentioned it four times! The nurse wonders how Nicky is enjoying Christmas with International Rescue.



By the sound of it, he’d be enjoying it a lot more with some earplugs. Back at the Tracy villa, the boys are gathered at Virgil’s piano, ‘singing’ along to ‘Good King Wenceslas.’ Poor Virgil’s expression as he plays — halfway between murderous and grudgingly tolerant — is priceless...the Von Trapp family they are decidedly not.

Penelope, Jeff, Nicky, Tin-Tin and Brains are watching this performance — Nicky looks a bit like he wishes he’d won a PlayStation instead. When the carol mercifully ends, Jeff thanks his sons and says he’s glad Penelope could make it this year. Hah, I bet that last year she was escaping from sharks with lasers on their heads, or breaking up a world-wide terrorist organisation. Anything but this sort of thing. Despite probably cursing her inability to come up with a suitably international-security-ish excuse this year, though, she says she’s having a “wonderful time.” Grandma asks how Nicky liked the singing. Nicky kindly calls the brothers’ song a “smash” but quickly asks what’s up next.

Jeff reckons there’s time for another carol before “refreshments.” Scott half-groans “not more food!” Tin-Tin also “couldn’t eat another thing.” Brains then announces he has a “party piece” he’d like to do. Nicky thinks “that’s great.” Brains needs them all to close their eyes, though, before he can pull it off. Virgil isn’t sure he likes the sound of that. Which makes me wonder what their Christmas parties are like when they don’t have a small kid to consider. Grin.

Scott encourages him to play along, “Ah, come on, Virgil.” So, as requested, they all close their eyes — and strange electronic hums start to play. Nicky wants to look, but Brains tells him “not yet” and operates a remote control that sends jets of white foam spurting from the top of the Tracy villa. Um... Anyway, enchanting Christmas music plays while the area around the villa fills with ‘snow.’ I swear that Jeff peeks at this point, more than once, just to make sure Brains isn’t burning down the house.

Finally, Brains tells them that they can all open their eyes again. Nicky double-blinks at the view, and the Tracy boys all turn as one. Penelope exclaims for Tin-Tin to “look!” and Tin-Tin realises that this was what Brains was “up to” the night before. Virgil simply

exclaims “It’s beautiful!” Aww, how sweet, it’s just what he wanted!



Nicky is very impressed by “Snow, on palm trees!” and Jeff notes that Brains has given them a “real, old fashioned Christmas.” It does look pretty, though you can’t help wondering what this artificial snow is made of, and exactly what it’s doing to the rare exotic wildlife. We’ll never find out, though, because a music box version of the *Thunderbirds* theme tune plays us out over the snowy island, and that’s it. Christmas is done, and the show’s all over.

No, that’s really it. That’s the end of the show. Apart from the two movies, *Thunderbirds Are Go* and *Thunderbird Six* — and your mileage may vary on those — that’s the end of the series. Forever.

Goodbye, International Rescue.

While I have fond memories of the final episode, it’s not one of their best by any stretch of the imagination. For a start, remember when *Thunderbirds* was all about daring rescues and planes that couldn’t land and men being set on fire in a pit of burning rubble? It was usually high-stakes, gripping stuff — but I had serious trouble staying awake during this one. Like the automatic car park scene in ‘Move — and You’re Dead,’ only for an entire episode! And of course, it being a Christmas special, it just has to involve kids...which Jeff is developing a perplexing habit of letting run all over his supposedly top secret base. With all the publicity, isn’t Nicky going to be a target for the show’s villain, the Hood, just like the kids in Cry Wolf?

Speaking of the Hood, I want to go on record as saying that it was a horrible mistake to stop using him, and even worse to make him into such a joke. He got his revenge in the TV21 comics, though, where he was able to be a lot more dark and interesting!

‘Give or Take a Million’s’ strengths are in getting to see the Tracy family interact and hang out together.



It’s a great shame that the framing story is so deeply tedious and unimaginative, though it does all hang together better than I remember. It did bother me that there was no actual link between the robbery story and IR at all, except for the fact that they were going to host the winner of the contest. And no rescue on the episode either, even of the crooks after they found themselves accidental stowaways on the rocket. A stronger story for this episode could have involved International Rescue stopping an evil toy seller’s Christmas rocket from crashing into the children’s hospital after his team lose control of it. And yes, the evil toy seller could be the Hood under a mask!

As almost every other rocket tends to explode on this show, the fact that the Christmas delivery one doesn’t blow up or go wrong, is a true miracle. If it had gone wrong, then perhaps IR could have then saved the presents and taken the kid to the Island, and celebrated Christmas anyway. Ah well. It’s all over now and if the show had been allowed to continue, who knows what might have happened to it?

In all, this episode is best watched at Christmas after a mountain of Quality Street chocolates and far too much sherry.

Final Score: A fond farewell, but this one’s a festive 5/10

CHECK FOR



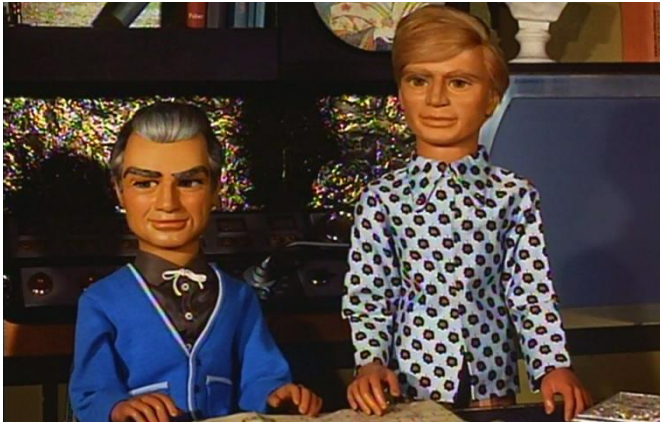
> **Reused stock footage of a launch:** Interestingly, the Thunderbird 3 launch is from the (then) upcoming *Thunderbirds Are Go* movie. Also, the Thunderbird Two launch footage looks seriously old and scratchy compared to the stock of the rest of the episode, not to mention that the launch is going on in daylight, when the storyline's timing suggested a midnight lift-off. Hmm.

> **Hitting on Tin-Tin:** Tin-Tin and Virgil's midnight coffee together certainly raises some questions...

> **Tin-Tin and Alan snuggle:** They're hanging out together by the balcony windows in the first Tracy Island scene.

> **Tin-Tin snuggles someone else...:** Was it only coffee she had with Virg? Nudge, wink, etc...also it was also sweet when she hid behind Virg as the spooky roof door opened!

> **Each bro's appearance:** Scott is relegated to chauffeuring the Christmas shopping and barely gets any lines at all. Virgil gets his best moment when he goes hunting the mysterious noise on the roof. He kind of acted like my cat when there's a stranger at the door — instantly turning into a suspicious hunter. Gordon, Alan and John all get a few lines as we get to see more of the family in their downtime.

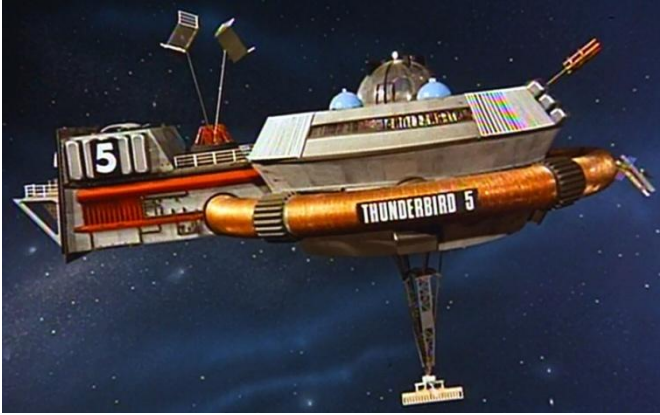


> **IR's fantastic-but-unreliable equipment!:** All working fine, I think, and even the rocket behaves itself (very disappointing). Wait a minute. Why the hell wasn't the story about the Christmas rocket malfunctioning? That would have been awesome!

> **'I'm SURE all the photo evidence got destroyed:** Let's hope Nicky didn't bring a camera phone with him. Let's hope no one interrogates Nicky after he gets home either. Especially the Hood!

> **Alan-teasing:** Nope. Everyone is full of the Christmas spirit this time. The brothers are so nice to each other all episode — unless you count that exasperated look Virgil gives his brothers as they carol merrily away!

> **Rescuing one of their own:** Nope, no rescues at all. Not. A. Single. Rescue. Zzz.



> **Vehicles used:** Thunderbird Two is a taxi (come to think of it, why did they send Thunderbird Two on this mission when there was only one passenger? Wouldn't One have made more sense...?). Three is launched for no reason with just Alan aboard. John is stuck on Thunderbird Five.

> **Surprisingly dextrous puppet hands:** Official present-wrapper Tanner gets to chuck presents around, although human hands get to wrap them in that very odd little scene. Wait, did he wrap ALL the presents himself?

> **Brains actually at a rescue:** Brains isn't anywhere near any action this time, partly because there IS no action, but he is up to something mysterious and pretty much ends the series on a snowy high.

> **'CRASH ZOOM' drinking game:** ON A PENCIL!!! Also, think there's another ZOOM in on the two unconscious crooks, once Dr Lang opens the present container.



> **'Biggest Jerk of the episode' awards:** Although his event had a good result for the hospital, Mr Harman seems to be in it entirely for his store's publicity. Very benevolent capitalism going on here. Also, the two crooks come second for being rubbish AND for ruining the store Santas' Christmas plans. And finally, I reckon Tanner must have ditched the store Santas and gone out for that drink without them, and that's why no one knew they were tied up, or spotted that the crooks were robbing the vault. They're probably still there, actually...no security guards were evident in the department store at all!

> **It was the 60s!** The premise, that a small child would be allowed to hop alone onto a mysterious rescue vehicle to visit a bunch of strange men, with barely ten minutes' notice, on Christmas Day, is very innocent and naive. But the whole episode is SO 1960s it hurts. Although actually, it also kind of has the mood of a stiff 1950s holiday special. Especially the singing. Egads, the singing....

> **The Jeff jinx!:** There's a fake-out jinx when Jeff agrees with Tin-Tin that they should go ahead and have a guest for Christmas Day, despite Gordon's quite reasonable point that they might well have a rescue call and need to go out. I think this particularly applies to a call potentially coming in while Thunderbird Two is busy picking up the prize winner. But, you know, it's CHRISTMAS. Also, nothing exciting actually happens in this episode, so it's all OK.

> **Unanswered Questions:** What's a solar therapy wing? It sounds like a high tech sort of sunbathing... Why were there no security guards in the department store? How did no one even hear the drilling? Will there be a rescue call on Christmas Day after all? Why couldn't Jeff launch all of the Thunderbirds at once? Would the world explode at the sheer awesomeness of that...or would it just have cost too much..?



> **Best Second Series hair:** Nicky has some seriously ugly hair. Penelope has an impressively huge ornamental hairdo at the party.

> **Most Overused Phrase:** Not so much a phrase as a repetition of what we already knew. "There's a reward for the thieves" got repeated over and over and over again. Also anything involving "rocket delivery of the presents", and the process of the rocket launches themselves. But the worst offender was, "Don't touch the flooooooooor! It's alaaarmed!"

> **But couldn't they have just...?:** If the thieves had thought for a minute longer, they might have worked out they could rob the bank in a few trips back and forth and be gone, and avoided that whole overload issue which set off the alarm. And what was their escape plan even if the alarm didn't go off? How the hell were they going to scamper out of the department store, let alone New York, with half a ton of gold wedged down their trousers? The mind boggles.

2065 or 2026?

SOME NEW INFORMATION ON THIS NEVERENDING ARGUMENT

Pen Turner

Since the last issue of the NTBS Newsflash, an article on the Fleetway *Thunderbirds* comics in Fanderson's *FAB News* (issue 74, April 2013) ([link](#)) has brought to light some interesting new information on the confusing conundrum of the 'Date Debate'. Advocates of the 2026 date base their arguments on two key points; first on the date shown in the calendar of 'Give or Take a Million' ([link](#)) and secondly on its use in the 1990s Fleetway comics, in particular the serial 'The Complete *Thunderbirds* Story' that was commissioned by original *Thunderbirds* series scriptwriter Alan Fennell, who, they argue, 'ought to know.'

Concerning the first of these, when doing the research for the Date Debate I came across the fact that Art Director Bob Bell had told the audience at a convention in 1993 that the date in 'Give or Take a Million' had been a mistake by a junior in his department.

As for the second, in the *FAB* article Stephen Baxter (SF author and *TB* fan since his childhood in the 1960s) proposes that Fennell's departure from the 2060s date he had used as editor of the original *TV21* comics was 'probably not his decision; he was operating under constraints set by the 1990s merchandisers who had evidently chosen to set the series in the 2026 timeframe'.

This supposition seems to be supported by Graeme Bassett, who wrote stories for the 1990s comics, when he recalls, 'Alan was having problems with his story being blue-pencilled [by ITC]; I do remember him muttering something about "I should know when Jeff Tracy was born"'. This argument is further supported by artist Graham Bleathman, whose illustrations adorned many issues of the comic, who told Baxter, 'Can't remember why the decision to set it in 2026 was taken; Fennell later told me the series was set in the 2060s'.

So as I see it now, both the major arguments for 2026 have now been eliminated, leaving only circumstantial evidence. The case for 2065 rests.

THE 2014 HALLOWEEN CHALLENGE LAST CALL!

We are almost upon the deadline for the 2014 Halloween Creature Feature Challenge on the Tracy Island Writers Forum! If you happen to have a story handy that fills the bill, or you're a really fast writer, there is still time — barely! — for you to join [TIWF](#) if you're not already a member, and enter the challenge! The deadline is Sunday, October 19 at Midnight US Pacific Time.

Briefly, here's what this year's Halloween challenge is all about...for more details and rules, join [TIWF](#) and check out our Challenge Danger Zone section!

Your mission here (and we hope you'll accept it) is to write a Thunderbirds fic involving any scenario where a creature of some sort is featured. The story does NOT need to be set at Halloween (although that's OK too!); it just needs include a 'creature' as central to the story...in other words, feature a creature!

Feel free to make something up...it can be a totally new creature nobody's ever heard of! Also keep in mind that we're not demanding your story be scary. Maybe one of the TB characters befriends a descendant of King Kong's or something...who knows? The only limits here are the boundaries of your imagination!



Well, now, isn't this a turn-up for the books? Ned Cook turfed out of his comfortable anchor desk and sent back into the field. Goodbye, seven figure expense account! I'm skeptical about how long this will last. It was hard enough for him to fit his entourage into a stretch limo, let alone a rental Toyota Corolla... Let's just hope he only gets assigned to places where he can plug in his hairdryer!

The poolside here on Tracy Island has been buzzing about this news for days. A hostile takeover of NTBS, we hear. Although the Kim Jong-un rumors seem to be unfounded. Ned probably started them in an attempt to skew public opinion in his favor.

While the members of International Rescue are trying to decide whether they should feel sympathetic or not to Ned's plight, we're going to concentrate on something even more amusing.

Horrific Halloween Homophones

A homophone, as you may remember from previous Poolside Pointers, is a word that sounds just like another word...only the other word means something completely different. Like hair and hare, or sighs and size. And here's where the judicious use of a dictionary is vital. When a writer knows what the word they want sounds like but not how it's spelled, hilarity can ensue.

Let's look at some IR and Halloween-oriented examples (because even if spelling and grammar isn't your thing, talking about Tracys might be...and it's nearly October 31st!). See if you can spot the homophones in these sentences before I give the game away.

Gordon shrinks back into the corner of the basement, pushing back hard against the slimy concrete wall. He steals himself as the man with the enormous chainsaw turns slowly back towards him...

Stop, thief! Somebody dial 911! Although it would be somewhat difficult to arrest him if he's both the victim and the criminal. What that second sentence should have been was:

*He **steels** himself as the man with the enormous chainsaw turns slowly back towards him...*

Obviously Gordon is bracing himself for the worst here...not perpetrating grand larceny!

The low growl made Tin-Tin freeze. She and Alan could only stare in horror as the enormous grisly bear lumbered toward them.

Now, it's possible that the writer *could* have been making a pun here...but it's more likely that she should have typed this last sentence instead:

*She and Alan could only stare in horror as the enormous **grizzly** bear lumbered toward them.*

Grizzly is a species of large brown bear. *Grisly* is used to describe something really gruesome to look at.

Here's one that seems to be gathering in popularity...I've seen it misused several times over the past few months...once in the headline of a large online financial newsletter...

"You're too late, Jeff," the old man said, wild-eyed. "I've seen them. We have to get out of here, now. The demon hoard is coming!"

I shudder to think what demons would keep in a hoard, which anyone who watches reality TV will know is an often hidden stash of something, like treasure (see Smaug the dragon!), or household items, or even old newspapers. Or *Thunderbirds* memorabilia. The problem with using it in the example above is that usually this kind of hoard isn't mobile by itself, since it's inanimate...but I suppose at Halloween anything might go!

What the writer meant to say, though, was this:

*"The demon **horde** is coming!"*

A horde is a large group, pack or swarm of anything from Asian nomads to mosquitoes, usually described as in the process of attacking something. Which fits the situation far better.

And one more from our guy with the chainsaw...

Gordon shifts from foot to foot, waiting for his opening. The masked man roars, waving the chainsaw above his head. Gordon faints to the left and the man falls for it, swinging the chainsaw in that direction. But Gordon is already running the other way.

There's no fear that we might be misunderstanding this one, because it's physically impossible. If Gordon faints (loses consciousness), to the left or otherwise, then he can't also be running — in any direction. What the writer should have typed was this:

*Gordon **feints** to the left and the man falls for it, swinging the chainsaw in that direction.*

A feint is a deceptive movement, especially during a fight. When Gordon makes a move that causes his opponent to think that he is moving to the left, he is feinting, or pretending that he is going to go that way. Only one letter different, but the meanings are worlds apart.

One last one before I go join the Tracys...it's pumpkin-carving night!

John shivered as he heard the ghostly howl again from somewhere deep in the trees. He had to get inside, but the cabin door wouldn't budge. He kicked at it with all the strength he could mustard.

Just...no. Mustard is a condiment, you put it on sandwiches. What the writer meant here was:

*He kicked at it with all the strength he could **muster**.*

Muster means to gather together. Mustard wasn't going to help John much against whatever was out there in those woods...unless it was partial to ham and cheese on rye, perhaps...

Okay, one for the road. I know this isn't a homophone, but it's just too perfect for Halloween to pass up:

Scott motioned Virgil to halt, holding his finger up to his lips. Virgil peered around him into the dark cavern. The floor was almost covered in lit candles, and in the middle was a bowl of what looked like blood.

Ew. I don't think the writer meant that there was literally a piece of someone's lower intestine in the middle of the room, filled with blood or otherwise. This is probably what she meant to type:

*The floor was almost covered in lit candles, and in the middle was a **bowl** of what looked like blood.*

Gotta go...Gordon's eyeing the pumpkin I wanted. Have a grizzly...oops, I mean ***grisly*** Halloween, and I'll see you next issue!



Have a look at the great fanfic that has been posted to the [Tracy Island Chronicles](#) since our last issue of the NTBS Newsflash!

TEMPEST – FABREADER

As the winch played out the cable, Scott kept one eye on the controls, the other on the capsule descending smoothly to the ledge below. He watched closely as the cable unwound, judged the length remaining against the distance still to travel. This was going to be tight.

COUNTY FAIR – BOOMERCAT

It gave Jeff a melancholy feeling to realize that all of his sons were growing up. The days of exasperation, having to tell a kid several times to complete a chore seemed to be over. Jeff didn't want to go back to those days exactly, but he also wished life could slow down, give him more time with his boys.

RIDING THE TIGER – QUILLER

H'I tell you, Perce, H'I've been in some tight corners with 'er Ladyship before, h'especially when she was doing some of 'er 'special duties' for the government, but H'I've never been so scared in all me born days as H'I was h'in that plane.

THE BOTTOM LINE – TIYLAYA

I don't let the anger show, just sit at my desk, shoulders straight and face impassive. My eyes scan the balance tables in intermittent bursts. And all the time, steady as a metronome, Virgil's music counts off the precious seconds - of the astronaut Elliot's air supply, and of the life we know.

WHEN HE WENT DOWN – LMC

He hates so many, both within the walls of this great temple, and without. Until now, I thought there were none He hated more than those which operate as International Rescue, for He covets all they possess. Yet here and now, as the air becomes thick with more than incense, as I struggle to breathe, I watch the beaded curtain part. Unseen hands brush it aside almost gently. They rattle in harmony with the blood in my lungs.

THE WRECK OF THE HESPERIA – CATHRL

He was gasping uncontrollably and she didn't want to think about how much air he'd have used in the last minute or so, but he did respond, grabbing the DPV again. Tin-Tin threw caution to the wind and hit the speed on the DPV. Visibility couldn't get worse, and she had to get away from the creeping horror in the dark.

ATTACK OF THE SLASHERS – LMC

"Holy shit!" Al exclaimed, pressing the SOS button on his watch as he sprinted back down the hall to Tin-Tin's room. He keyed in the entry code...but the door wouldn't open. "Tin-Tin!" he yelled, banging on the door, knowing it would do no good. He tried the universal override code, but the keypad didn't respond. "Tin-Tin!"

T-MINUS CHRISTMAS – LMC

Jeff narrowed his eyes as he took in that nearing-on-smug look Kyrano was giving them. "Don't you even try to tell me..." His voice trailed off, and a few moments of silence reigned until he tried again. "Listen, Kyrano, you've been trying to convince me for the better part of twenty-five years of the existence of the metaphysical. Don't you dare start trying to convince me that fairy tales are actually true."

A CHRISTMAS RESCUE – MAZZA

Scott looked around to see how he could get down. There was no way to climb. He knew it was nuts, but he only had one other option. No way was he going to leave a four-year-old boy in despair on Christmas Eve if his mother "didn't look too good". There was only one thing for it: he had to jump.

THE WAITING ROOM – SAMANTHA WINCHESTER

"Please." He heard his voice crack. "Please don't take him. We need him. I need him." He stared beseechingly at the old man's face, as if he could somehow stop this from happening with a sheer act of will. "I can't do this, without him. I don't think any of us can. It'll all be over if we lose him. Dad won't... Dad can't..."

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUNCTUALITY – QUILLER

Grandma gives a mock frown. "Yes, I shall have to have words with my new grandchild when you bring him or her home. Fancy causing all this fuss and disrupting our family Christmas! But for now, young man, go and pack your bag and change into civilian clothes; your brothers will be with you soon. And stop worrying!"

SEBASTIAN – FABREADER

"I told you! I'm Sebastian! " With a roll of the eyes and shake of his head Sebastian threw the sack into the sleigh and turned back to Scott. "Who do you think I am? Frigging Santa Claus?"

A BLIP ON THE RADAR – LMC

Scott chewed the inside of his cheek, fingertips tapping on Three's console. What the hell was Alan up to? As he watched the seconds tick by on his watch he decided that whatever it was, if his youngest brother survived, he'd first praise Alan, then hug him and then as his field commander, put him on toilet duty for a year.

COLD AS ICE – MCJ

The winching started over. Gordon couldn't even hear Thunderbird Two's engines above the roar of the wind anymore. He clawed at his goggles, eyes useless behind the icy mask. The cage rocked wildly. There was no way to know if he was over the boat.

WALKING IN MEMPHIS –LMC

Scott's hands were gripping the controls of his 'bird so tightly that his knuckles were bone-white. His forward external camera was zoomed in closely now; he could see the woman in quite a bit of detail. The little island tipped to her right yet again. He couldn't help his sharp intake of breath as the angle just became too great and her body started sliding right off the slick bench toward the ever-rising divergent river.

LIFE AFTER DEATH – LMC

The infant squirmed against Alan's chest as the scenario brought to mind all the times Scott had told him the story of his own birth. In the aftermath of the car accident that had killed their mother, Lucille Tracy had gone into labor leaving nine-year old Scott to deliver the newborn even as his mom slowly died right before his eyes.

HAND IN HAND – LIGHTCUDDER

A bubbling rush of murky brown water submerged the man's head and then, with a scream of tearing metal and shattering glass the wreckage ripped into the vehicle. It took Virgil less than a second to snap open his harness before Gordon could pull him to safety, and he clung to the car as the wreckage and floodwater tore the vehicle away from the bank, spinning it into the centre of the torrent to where the grabs waited

MOBILE RODENT EXTERMINATOR EXTRAORDINAIRE – GILLYLEE

And now Scott was back once again in the hangar, and it wasn't the first time that he was frustrated by TB2's slower speed compared to his own Thunderbird. Monte Bianco hadn't been a good rescue from his point of view. Just like Gordon in Minneapolis, Brains had disobeyed orders...





THE THUNDERBIRDS PART OF FILMMAKER CHRIS THOMPSON

Part Six of Our Ongoing Series

All artwork © Chris Thompson



Crash of the Titan (above)

Chris Thompson celebrates his 200th Deviation with a return to Thunderbird 2

"The wheels! They've collapsed!"

Chris's Notes:

Remember that episode when the World Navy broke Thunderbird 2? 'Terror in New York City' is easily my favourite *Thunderbirds* episode, mainly because it really shakes up the formula; it gives us a rescue which normally would be quite straightforward, except in this case, the World Navy ship *Sentinel* picked up TB2 on their radar, couldn't figure out what it was so they decided to blow it up, gits...

The resolution is pretty cool and the final rescue is pretty tense, the episode is also full of iconic imagery, the Empire State Building collapsing and of course Thunderbird 2 crashing. I felt it would be nice to come full circle for my 200th Deviation* and do an image of Thunderbird 2 again.

Made in 4 days with: Blender, Photoshop, Particle Illusion, Canon 600D, lots of "Woodkid"

[Click here](#) for the "making of" time-lapse video!

**[Editor's Note: Pieces of art posted on the deviantART website are known by its members as "Deviations."]*

The Survivor (left)

IR's hovering remote camera explores a burning structure.

Chris's Notes:

International Rescue's underappreciated, unsung hero. Operated from Thunderbird 1, the remote camera is used to transmit images and collect data on areas of rescue sites that are too dangerous for the IR team themselves to traverse. It also makes a freaking cool noise. I love the noise so much I stuck it on at the end of *Thunderbirds 2010* for no reason.

I finally figured out how to work the depth of field function in Vue, so this was an experiment.

Made With: Vue 9, Simply 3D, Photoshop, that cool 'wheooooorrr wheooooorrr' sound

Last Ditch Effort (right)

A storm has hit Malaysia, causing an illegal diamond mine to collapse and trap several miners. Due to the mine's poor construction, water is leaking in. As International Rescue arrive they receive word that the nearby Bakun Dam has burst and the entire area is about to be flooded. With only minutes to spare, Virgil takes the Mole and plots a direct path to the trapped men, knowing full well there won't be time to get back up again...

Chris's Notes:

After years of having my own "Mole" design, I've finally modelled the original. My second favourite pod vehicle next to the Firefly. This one took about two weeks off and on. Must be something about me and rain...

Made with: Vue 10, Particle Illusion, Google SketchUp, mud, metal, Epic, and some vague info on Malaysia I obviously Googled in five minutes...

Snowball's Chance in Hell (below)

An unstoppable wildfire is burning its way across Australia, and International Rescue's key firefighting vehicle, the Firefly, is on the scene...

Chris's Notes:

Continuing International Rescue's ancillary fleet, here comes my favourite, the Firefly. Appearing twice in the series, the Firefly is a heat-resistant bulldozer with a high explosive cannon to snuff out fires and a rear-mounted water cannon.

This vehicle pretty much sums up why I love Derek Meddings' design work. What could have been a run of the mill bulldozer came out pretty much the "Hot Rod" of heavy machinery.

I've tried three times to do the Firefly and never succeeded. Now with my new Blender Skillz I have made what is at least a fairly close approximation. Go me.

Made with: Vue 10, Blender, Photoshop



Neptune's Trident (below)

Deep within one of several construction buildings at Tracy Construction and Aerospace, the revolutionary, reusable, single stage rocket Neptune 1 is being developed. The Neptune 1 was primarily designed to reduce the cost of travel between space stations. It could also be fitted for long-range exploration missions.

Designed by Jeff Tracy's mysterious new chief designer and renowned physicist Sir Jeremy Hodge, the rocket's first test flight began early in 2064, piloted by Colonel Jack Harris and Jeff's son, John Tracy. On the return leg of the journey contact was lost and John and an unconscious Harris were recovered hours later in the South Pacific in Neptune's escape capsule.

John's account of a massive system failure sending the ship into an out-of-control spin (which had also knocked out Colonel Harris) pointed to an unseen flaw in the ship's design. The prototype, however, was never recovered as the ocean was too deep at that point.

The project was deemed a failure and most of the accounts of the Neptune were lost during an electrical fire in the TCA archives. But the story doesn't end there...

Chris's Notes:

Part 2 in my attempt to rationalise to some degree the backstory to Thunderbirds. [Editor's Note: Part 1, Building the Behemoth, was featured in the July-August 2012 edition of the NTBS Newsflash: <http://tinyurl.com/Newsflash07-08-2012>.] Here we have Thunderbird 3, built in the guise of a space shuttle replacement that failed and then craftily stolen for IR's purposes. I'll admit it's not perfect, but I prefer this to the automated production line concept in the comics. I like the idea there's a special story behind each one that makes them somewhat unique. It also makes them very hard to replace, like real characters.

Not entirely happy with the picture but after five days I decided to let it out. Did a lot of research into NASA's Vehicle Assembly Building for this one as well as a making a few references to Doppelganger.

Made with: Lots of Bon Jovi, bravado, superhuman strength, the Power of Greyskull, Photoshop, Simply 3D, Vue 10

Go here for the "making of" time-lapse vid: <http://tinyurl.com/neptunestrident>



**More of Chris Thompson's artwork
in the next issue!**

THUNDERBIRDS

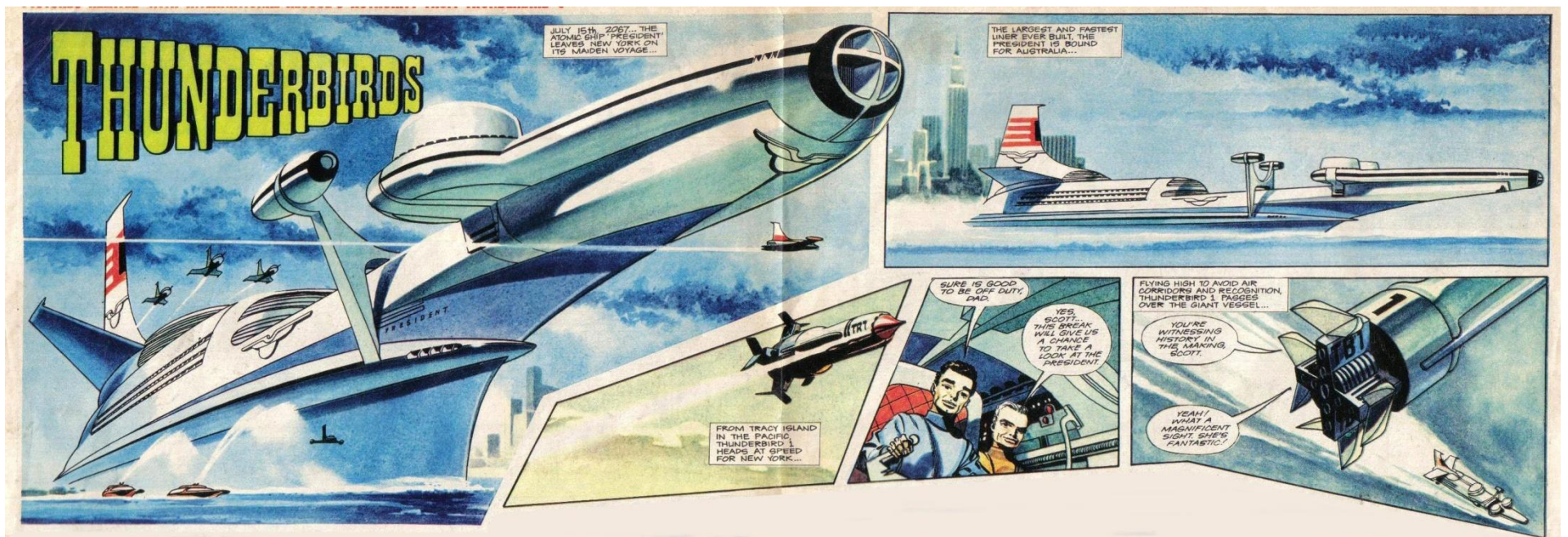
IN THE TV CENTURY 21 COMICS

TV CENTURY 21 #130 - 136 (15 July 2067 - 26 August 2067)

Thunderbirds: "The Revolution"

Written by Alan Fennell (?) and Illustrated by Frank Bellamy

Norm de Plume



TV21 Nicaragua, in Central America has a land mass of 50,193 square miles, of which Lake Nicaragua takes up 3,191. If you look at a map of Nicaragua and plan the next Panama Canal to cut through the country, where would you take it? The narrowest point is through the lake — but that would mix fresh and saltwater and not help the indigenous leaping Lake Nicaraguan Shark. But in the 21st Century a canal is built to allow greater sized ships and because "past troubles in the Panama zone forced the World Government to order the building of a new canal across friendly Nicaragua". So why are we interested in this development? The maiden voyage of the atomic ship *President* (from New York) is enough for Jeff to accompany Scott to get a unique glimpse of the occasion. Jeff must remind his son, after seeing this engineering marvel and then flying down to Nicaragua to see the new canal — the other engineering marvel of the 21st Century — "Let's go home, son, we're still in the rescue business, remember". I think Scott remembers that, as he is wearing his uniform all through this strange sightseeing trip.

The author does a nice connecting piece in this opening episode. Flying over a poor Nicaraguan village on the return home, Jeff says to his son, "It's amazing Scott. Not thirty miles from here, millions of dollars have been spent on a new seaway, yet those hovels haven't been touched in one and a half centuries!" Maybe it's my 21st century culture but isn't using all that fuel to take a flight in a rescue craft just to see a launch that could be seen on television, and then diverting to Nicaragua to see the new canal, just a little bit hypocritical when thinking of the poor?! And I never knew Jeff knew so much about Nicaragua!

Anyway, the connecting piece... We are shown the Nicaraguan peasants, who agree that their government are raking in the money for the canal and not spending their receipts on them. They decide to cause a scandal and blow up... "the new ship, the *President*". They don't appear to have long term planning on their revolutionary agenda and how this peasant knew of the launch, we don't know. Unusually, the TV21 editor uses a real contemporary country for his revolution idea.

Those of you who remember with affection the TV21 decoder will be disappointed as from issue 118-169 there are no secret codes. In their space we learn: "Rebel forces growing....*President* nearing terror state". Hold on! I thought the state being "friendly" was one of the reasons for choosing this country for the new canal! Stay tuned, because messages are going to get further mixed in a few weeks' time!

TV21 We see the rebels plotting and the rebel leader suggests, on being told it will take men and skill to blow up the *President*, "We will arouse the other villagers". Maybe it's just me, but I wonder whether 'rouse' might have been a better choice of word! How long will this take? Well, the ship sailed on 15 July and we assume Thunderbird 1 can fly within hours to Nicaragua where we first met the peasants. They now have "two days" before the *President* sails to 'Teela' where the canal apparently narrows. After stirring up the villagers they have twelve hours to make their plans (as the *President* sails through the Caribbean). That's a pretty hasty revolution. No matter, Bellamy knows what he is doing as he shows villagers with burning torches (100 years in the future and they can't even raise battery torches, never mind Baylis-style

#130 wind-up models!) and the *President* is in a sunset setting east of the peasants' position.

Now, I'm sure your memories are not as bad as Juan's — who previously stated he wanted to blow up the *President*. He now wants to block the canal and get the passengers to leave and *then* blow up the ship "just a little...to cause an outcry"! Golan and Casta are concerned that Juan's plan will bring the army down on them. Their breakaway solution? Raise an army amongst those "who think as we do", says Golan. The next day men spot the *President* coming towards their position and radio Juan, who alerts the team on a tanker (note, a tanker) which will ram the ship, but Juan doesn't know the team consist of those "who think as" Golan does. The caption reads "The *President* reaches the nearest part of the canal" which I assume means the narrowest part. But revolutionary developments are so fast that the news editor, the following week, gets the detail wrong on the cover of TV21 #132 where it states "Using a hover-boat, the terrorists rammed the liner".

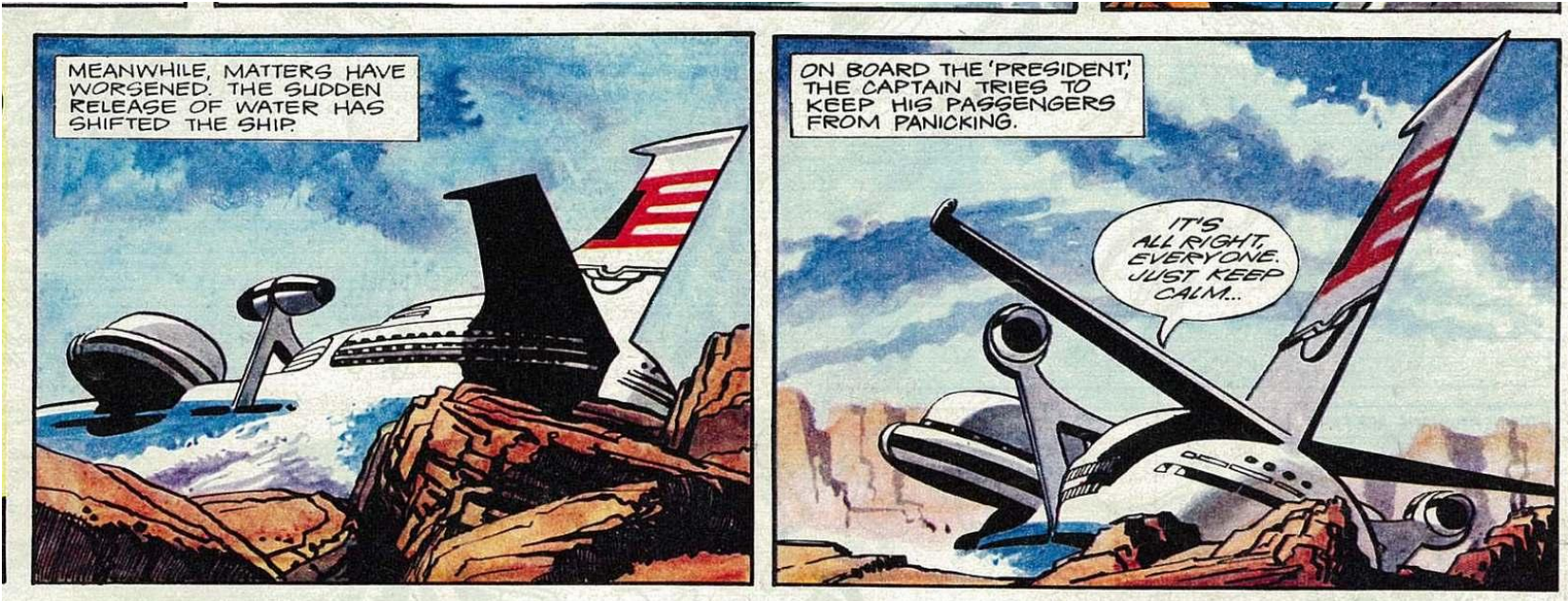


TV21 The tanker rams the giant liner and sure enough does the expected damage. The second in command tells the captain "We're drifting towards the north bank, sir". I would question his eyesight as they are clearly heading towards the bank on their left — and presuming the canal is as straight as possible (but maybe it loops around the country!) that would be the south bank! There's no time to pick him up on this error as the rebel force (no, not *that* rebel force!) tell the passengers they must not set foot on Nicaraguan soil. Juan is worried as that was not the plan, and he should be worried as later (in issue #136) the cover mentions "the violent uprising of the local peasantry who have sacked the new atomic liner", and that's the first we learn of that! So who knows what's going on?

The captain radios the World Maritime Agency New York. He obviously has not been following the adventures of the World Aquanaut Security Patrol — he asks for "air cover and armed protection", although this very week, in TV21 we see that *Stingray* (#3 anyway) "has been attacked by the strange craft which has been responsible for

making planes crash and ship sink", so there's no hope in calling *Stingray*, then! But what about International Rescue? Scott reminds his father that IR "has not been summoned" and his father tells him they have to invite themselves sometimes and that the situation could explode at any moment. Scott dutifully heads off and reports first hand there's a further problem — the ship has jammed the canal and the water is rising. Now I confess to knowing nothing more than what Wikipedia tells me about the Panama Canal and that that canal has many locks with water flowing in different directions, so it could be possible that a buildup would occur behind the jammed liner. So what's likely to happen?

TV21 #133
The Nicaraguan president states he will put down this rebellion with his army and John from Thunderbird 5 asks his father if he heard that. Jeff confirms he did, and states "The president's got it all wrong", as diplomacy, not guns, are called for. Is this



TV21 #134
The opening sentence (after the introductory caption) states "Okay Scott, that's what you're there for". But we don't know what was said to lead up to this remark! Is this part of the grand plan we thought was coming? TB1 continues to rescue victims of the flooding and the next caption states "Jeff proceeds with the next part of the plan" Perhaps the first part, which we seemed to have missed, is for Scott to do what he was doing anyway! I'm no longer as young as I once was and am constantly aware of ageism and ageist attitudes, but still I believe that there comes a time for our elders to retire and Jeff is beginning to show signs, in my opinion. But wait, Jeff says "I suggest we get going" and sends Virgil, Brains and Gordon in Thunderbird 2...that's the plan? That's the grand plan to save the people of the *President* liner? To restore peace to Nicaragua? Jeff, I'm afraid it's time to collect your pension and promote one of the family. Try Grandma, she couldn't be more vague than you and she can make tea and bake cakes!

As the IR crew head to Nicaragua the liner pitches as a result of the sudden release of water. I'm no expert in hydrodynamics (as stated previously) but surely if the liner jams the water in place and it causes flooding (why not overflowing the liner?) then there wouldn't be a sudden release of water? But we will learn shortly that a canal wall needs repairs, so presumably - although not shown - that's what occurred.

But the captain of the *President* has a plan for keeping everyone calm aboard the suddenly shifting liner (see the accompanying picture). Once TB2 and TB1 rendezvous Thunderbird 4 is released to investigate and TB2 starts repairing the canal wall, which now explains the sudden release of water! Meanwhile the Nicaraguan army moves into position and is asked by its head to "synchronise watches" as they attack in in fifteen hours. As TB4 searches for damage under the liner, the ship rolls and begins to crush Gordon! Today's headlines on the cover of this issue state "TB4 trapped under liner" and have two sub-headings: "Aquanaut Entombed" and "Tough Coffin". This makes exciting headlines but Alan Fennell hasn't made much of this incident in the story itself, as we shall see. The latter column is by "our science correspondent" -no name - and states "At this moment, a David and Goliath battle is going on beneath the blue waters of the Nicaraguan canal. That is how top British metallurgists see Thunderbird 4's situation". It then explains the battle is between the 300,000 ton liner and the "tiny five-ton TB4". That sounded to me to be a massive tonnage and checking that 21st Century device (Wikipedia) it seems that before the 1990s we had ships with a tonnage of 100,000 plus but now (2014) have "Allure of the Seas" with 225,282 tons, so Fennell's fertile mind (assuming he wrote the headlines) was indeed dreaming of future engineering marvels!

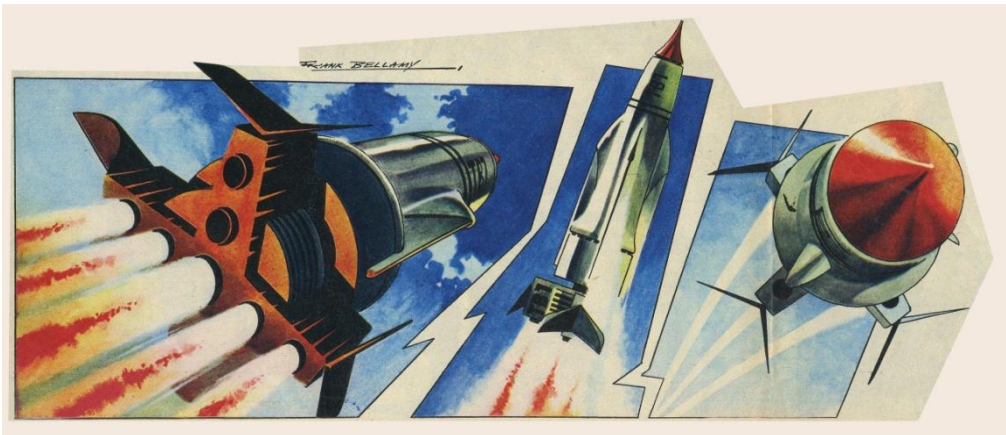
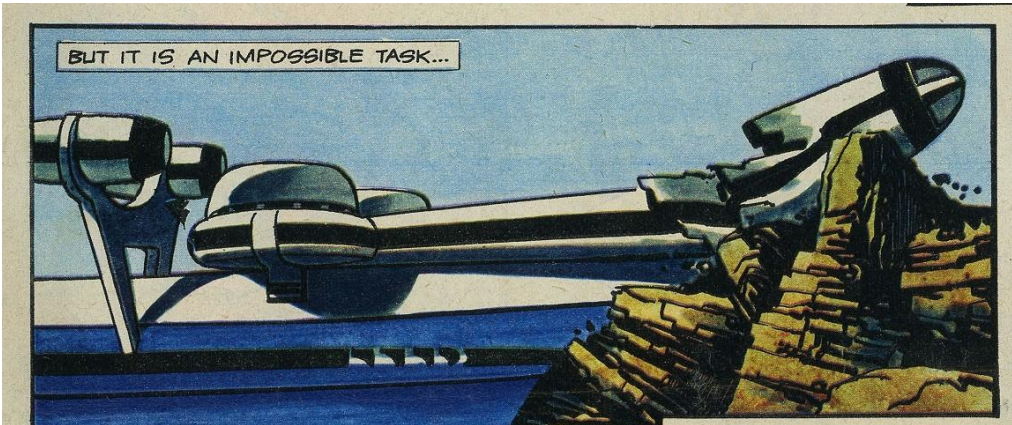
TV21 #135
Trying to free Gordon, TB1 attaches cables to the bow and TB2 the stem of the liner in an effort to swing the ship around. Juan, the leader of the rebels, decides to redeem himself by saving Gordon and succeeds, as far as Bellamy shows both of them freed from the TB4 craft and swimming in the water whilst TB1 and 2 do their work in righting the ship. Whilst this has been happening Casta and Golon *[sic]* have contacted the army to stir them into action by misleading them and saying "the rebels have been joined by foreigners in heavily-armed aircraft".

TV21 #136
The cover of TV21 #136 has a rebellion theme. In the Zero X story there is indeed a revolution as the public want to destroy the Zero X crew (who apparently are ill from a space disease). Also in the week August 26 2067, under a headline "Rebellion — Newcastle" we find "irate workers of the North of England's largest and wealthiest industrial city, attacked and burnt down the architectural pride of the country, the 400 feet high town hall." The cause? "The worker's grievance is said to be the new leisure schedule recently put into operation by the Council". I wonder if the headline writer had attended one of the Sixties concerts at the City Hall, finding it architecturally of no significance and with tongue in cheek was writing an affectionate tribute! Newcastle has been a city since the 1800s so the venue was and still is the City Hall, but of course it may be that a town hall will be built in the years up to 2067! The third and most important item for us, is that TB1 appears to be spearheading the violent uprising.

the same Jeff Tracy who just issues ago (#68) said his solution to a USAF jet straying into Thunderbirds air space was to shoot it down? The same Jeff who in issue 110 said (about the spy in the Bereznik Zoo) "International Rescue is an organisation sworn to neutrality. Under no circumstances can it become involved in political problems"? Jeff now radios the Nicaraguan president and tells him the Nicaraguan people have reason for grievance! The president, "out of respect" for IR, says he will listen to suggestions and Jeff asks him to allow Thunderbirds machines and equipment to help restore peace! The president agrees to delay the troops for 24 hours. While Jeff Tracy repeats what we knew already, in order for Brains to come up with a plan (why send Scott then?), the peasant leader becomes aware of the devastation caused by the flooding - San Pedro is flooding. Scott flies into action and tries to rescue villagers. But things are only getting worse.



The story continues rapidly towards a conclusion. The army advances as the Thunderbird craft have finally freed the jammed liner. But it is still aground, although Virgil says that the water will soon rise to float her when he has repaired the breached walls. The army fires on the Thunderbirds, at which Gordon races on foot to warn off the army and Scott, in TB1, races there too. Scott finds the loud-hailer useless in the racket caused by the missiles fired at his craft so releases a smokescreen to stop them firing. This apparently gives Gordon and Juan time to reach the general, who believes their story and arrests the two traitorous rebels. All's well that ends well and the *President* liner, despite previously appearing with broken bows, sails off with pristine bows. Gordon ends the story on a joke, showing his father his ruined uniform needs replacing — despite his uniform appearing fine when he ran towards the army back at the scene!



SHARE YOUR FOND
MEMORIES OF GERRY
ANDERSON'S
THUNDERBIRDS!

What fond memories do you have where Gerry Anderson's *Thunderbirds* is concerned? Maybe you recall the very first time you laid eyes on those little marionettes who seemed so very alive on our television screens. Perhaps you were a child when you first heard Barry Gray's iconic theme song. Or maybe you didn't discover *Thunderbirds* until you were an adult!

Well, if you're itching to share your fond *Thunderbirds* memories with other like-minded folks who love this show as much as you do, then you might just find yourself featured in a future issue of the NTBS Newsflash!

How, you ask? Very simple indeed! Write up your memory in a Word document (we can accept .rtf, .doc and .docx formats) and email it as an attachment to TICMobileControl1@gmail.com.

And if you're not exactly keen on getting that personal with our readers, we'd still like to hear from you! Short quotes are just as acceptable as full-blown stories about your love of *Thunderbirds*, so don't hesitate to drop us a line. Our frequency is always clear for you!

"I will never forget my first introduction to *Thunderbirds*, which was watching the movie *Thunderbirds Are Go* with my father when I was 14 years old. Nothing before or since has ever crept me out as much as when the Hood injured his foot in the belly of Zero-X. To this day I remember exactly what I said: **But it's a marionette! Marionettes can't bleed!**"
-TB'S LMC

Our intrepid NTBS roving reporter Pen Turner spotted this very intriguing blog post recently and thought our readers would be interested. In it, Norman Boyd discusses the possibility that the space helmets from Stanley Kubrick's iconic film *2001: A Space Odyssey* might just have been inspired by the TV21 *Thunderbirds* artwork of Frank Bellamy...

[From the [Frank Bellamy Checklist Blog](#), dateline Thursday, 1 May 2014. Reproduced with the kind permission of Norman Boyd.]

FRANK BELLAMY, STANLEY KUBRICK AND 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY

Norman Boyd



TV21 #86

Be prepared for a lot of dates, links and assumptions and also a long read! Get a cup of tea and settle down for the story of Frank Bellamy and Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. In the interview (reprinted in full most recently in the Book Palace's excellent [Frank Bellamy's Heros the Spartan](#)) that was conducted by Dez Skinn and Dave Gibbons on 12 May 1973 the interviewers asked:

STILL [talking about] DESIGN, THERE WERE SOME VERY BELLAMY-LOOKING SPACE HELMETS IN STANLEY KUBRICK'S "2001" QUITE A FEW YEARS LATER [than Dan Dare which Bellamy drew from August 1959 to July 1960]

FB: Oh, yes. I was amazed to see the advertising promotions for "2001" on the underground, with the angular sort of visors I'd used back in '59.

DO YOU THINK IT WAS PURE COINCIDENCE?

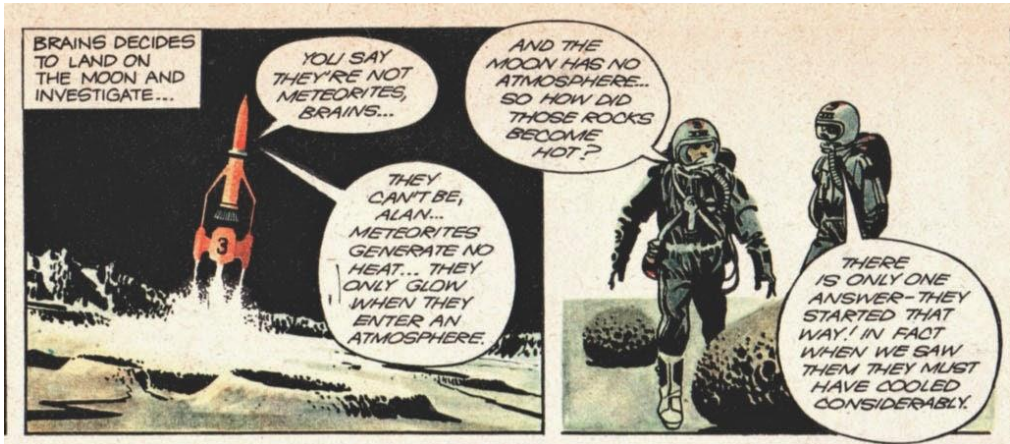
FB: Could be. (Laughter)

I SAY THIS BECAUSE YOU MENTIONED ONCE THAT THEY GOT ALL THE COMICS AND S-F MAGAZINES TOGETHER, TO SEE IF THERE WERE ANY IDEAS SUITABLE FOR "2001."

FB: Yes. I understand they went into it so deeply that they wouldn't turn their noses up at any small article, strip, picture or anything to do with science fiction. They really went to town on it.

Reading this it's reasonable to assume that Kubrick's production team used Dan Dare's helmets as inspiration for *2001: A Space Odyssey*. However I always had a few problems with this.

Firstly the Dan Dare helmets (designed by Frank Hampson, Dare's creator, and team) were more a vertical rectangle with a 'u'-shaped front (see below) and Bellamy's revamp - asked for by management when Hampson vacated the strip he created — had a spherical shape with a prominent oxygen tube at the front (and his Spacefleet logo).

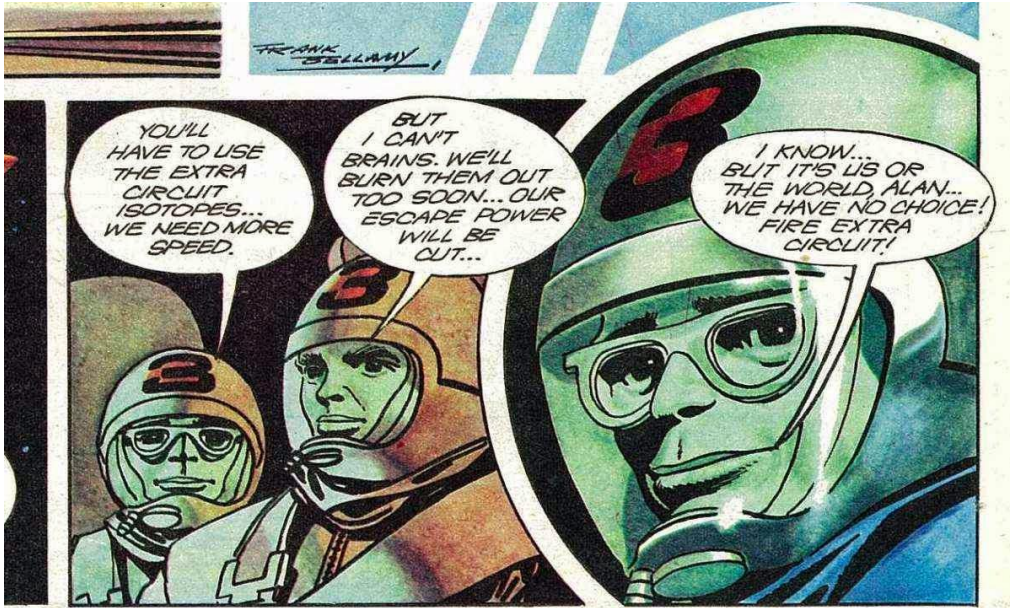


TV21 #84



TV21 #84

In the later issue #86 we see clearly that Bellamy shows helmets in the same manner — spherical — see the image at the top of this article. In TV21 #88 we see the rounded helmets too.



TV21 #88

However, it was David that gave me the bigger clue. Later in the same *Thunderbirds* story — a fan favourite — where there is excessive activity from the Sun affecting the Earth, Brains and Alan save the day but are blown from the Sun by the resultant explosion and 'fall' to Venus in Thunderbird 3. They sink into a sulphur lake and decide the only way out is to don their 'anti-chemical suits' and leave through an airlock.



TV21 #92 dated Oct 22 2066

Secondly the timing of the creation of *2001: A Space Odyssey* doesn't help the argument. It was February 1965 that MGM agreed to "fund the production of *Journey Beyond the Stars*" as the film was originally called. (Krämer, Peter (2010) *2001: A Space Odyssey* (BFI Film Classics) London: BFI Publishing, p.31). The [site](#) that lists interviews by Kubrick list the famous one reprinted many times by Bernstein in the [New Yorker](#) dated April 1965.

I did send an enquiry (back in 2011) to the [Stanley Kubrick Archive](#) held at the University of the Arts London. An archivist kindly responded:

There isn't any mention about Frank Bellamy and Dan Dare in the Kubrick Archive catalogue. There is a file for product development in 2001: A Space Odyssey entitled 'Helmets' containing correspondence and photographs of designs of the helmets for use with the space suits in the film. The photographs of helmets are from Hamilton Standard, a division of United Aircraft Corporation, with their sketches, and some photocopies of images from NASA of astronauts in space suits. There is also a plan from Hamilton Standard of 'Proposed MGM Suit'.

This is the only entry for Helmets in the catalogue therefore I believe they were the final designs for the film. However you never know! They might have thought of Bellamy's designs but were not put into the paperwork generated in the film.

Too true! You can see the full catalogue entry here:

Ref No: [SK/12/8/2/136](#)

Title: *Helmets*

Description: Correspondence and telegrams between Roger Caras and Stanley Kubrick and others discussing the obtaining and designing of the helmets for use with the space suits in the film. It includes several photographs of helmets from Hamilton Standard, division of United Aircraft Corporation, also a quotation from Hamilton Standard for the provision of simulated pressure garments, with an attached sketch of the same, photocopies of images from NASA of astronauts in space suits, also a plan from Hamilton Standard of 'Proposed MGM Suit', space suit for use in the film.

Date: 11 Sep 1965 — 26 Nov 1965

[Caras](#), mentioned in this record was vice president of Stanley Kubrick's production company, Hawk Films, but in [another piece](#) on the web Allan Grimmell Seibert is mentioned as designing NASA's astronaut helmets — and he worked for Hamilton Standard. So lots of people involved and inspiring one another but where does that leave us?

I received an email from a friend who is a fan of Gerry Anderson and she mentioned that [Andrew Probert](#) saw some TV21s that David Power had and the former commented that the helmets Bellamy drew in a particular story looked very much like *2001* helmets. David also emailed me about this and set off this train of thought.

Still with me?

In TV21 #84 (published date August 27 2066) we see the *Thunderbirds* strip with Alan and Brains in their International Rescue helmets on the Moon. The helmets are spherical with an attachment at the front - similar to the Dan Dare helmets designed by Bellamy.



TV21 #92 dated Oct 22 2066

Admittedly these are 'anti-chemical suits' and not spacesuits, but the look of the helmets is so unusual and close to *2001* and so different from other helmets Bellamy did, it makes me wonder. The publication date of this episode was 22 October 2066 — and we know that Bellamy (and other artists) would have had approximately a 6-week lead time, it's not unreasonable therefore to think this was created around mid-September 1966. So who inspired who or is this just serendipity?

I was very fortunate to discover a documentary online — a really interesting 23 minutes — and it tells us a lot about the helmet design — in passing. The documentary — below — (at 5'56") shows both [Harry Lange](#) and [Fred Ordway](#) discussing the scientific basis for the coming film. The whole of this 1966 documentary, produced by the Thomas Craven Film Corporation for Look magazine in the USA can be found on [YouTube](#). Thanks to [Pierre André Lowenstein](#) for uploading it.



Harry Lange and Fred Ordway discussing the 2001 helmet



Keir Dullea is reunited with his red helmet after 30 years



Gary Lockwood being dressed during filming in (some time) in 1965/6 — note: helmet exists already

There are many interesting characters in the *2001* creation story.

Harry Lange's obituary ("Harry Lange." *Times* [London, England] 2 July 2008: 52. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 27 Apr. 2014.) states:

"In a plot worthy of a James Bond novel Harry Lange escaped across the border from communist East Germany into the West under cover of night and wound up working at NASA on ambitious futuristic space projects with a former Nazi rocket scientist."

He then moved from a job at NASA to work on production design for Kubrick and went on to design some of *Star Wars*, and *Dark Crystal*. Kubrick called *2001* a "non-verbal experience" and it seems clear he wanted specialist designers to show — rather than just make audible — the likely scenario of future space travel and Lange is sure to have had a hand in the choice of design.

Fred Ordway:

Which brings me to another important aspect of my work on 2001: A Space Odyssey: coordinating the physical construction of approved designs. This meant a considerable amount of travel inside and outside of metropolitan London. Thus, we had our space helmets built, from our designs, at the MV Aviation Co., Ltd. [sic] of Maidenhead; our spacesuits at the Air Sea Rescue Division, Victoria Rubber Works of the Frankenstein Group, Ltd. of Manchester; and our space pod interiors — instrumentation, controls, displays, etc. — at Hawker Siddley Dynamics at Stevanage not far from our Borehamwood location.

- Taken from: *2001: A Space Odyssey in Retrospect* by Frederick I. Ordway III [on the Stanley Kubrick Site](#) [underlining mine. NOTE: MV Aviation was actually ML Aviation]

Ordway records that he started work in England on 11 August 1965 and we know that Lange and Ordway had been working on designs in New York before heading to England.

He also says:

My final principal activity involved attending to, escorting, and briefing an unending array of visitors. These included reporters, scientists, engineers, dignitaries, friends, just about anyone interested in our progress. We were particularly pleased when, on the 25th of September 1965, the director of NASA's Office of Manned Space Flight, George Mueller, and astronaut Deke Slayton arrived at the studios.

- Taken from: *2001: A Space Odyssey in Retrospect* by Frederick I. Ordway III [on the Stanley Kubrick Site](#) [underlining mine].

Reading [an article](#) reproduced from the *Maidenhead Advertiser* we have several potential names involved in the eventual design and build at MLA, as it was known, so once again no certain names!

So where does this leave us? Did Bellamy 're-purpose' the *2001* design or were the *2001* team inspired by the artist of many space adventures? It seems obvious from a cursory reading that the publicity machine for the film geared up a notch in 1966 but was happening in late 1965 and therefore it's not unlikely that the helmet design might have appeared in a magazine in late 1965/early 1966, but which magazine? I don't know. Bellamy subscribed to many himself presumably for reference material but none of them included contemporary features — to my knowledge. So there you have it. Over to you to add to this fascinating trip down 'Nostalgia Lane'.

[Lee Sullivan](#) recently, on Facebook, showed us his studio shelves which included these shots, among others:



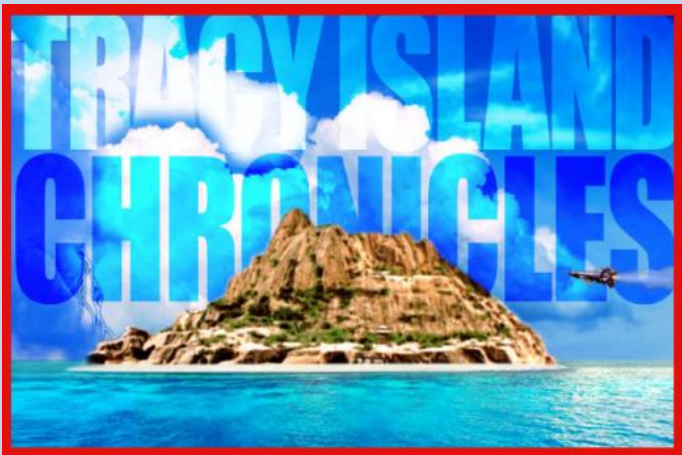
Footnote:

Would you believe in my hunt for information I found a webpage on the [restoration of the original helmet](#) used in *2001*? Unfortunately the site — despite its specialist theme — had no mention of Dan Dare, Bellamy, *Thunderbirds* or TV21.



THE TRACY ISLAND FAMILY OF WEBSITES

CLICK THE PHOTOS TO BE TAKEN TO EACH SITE



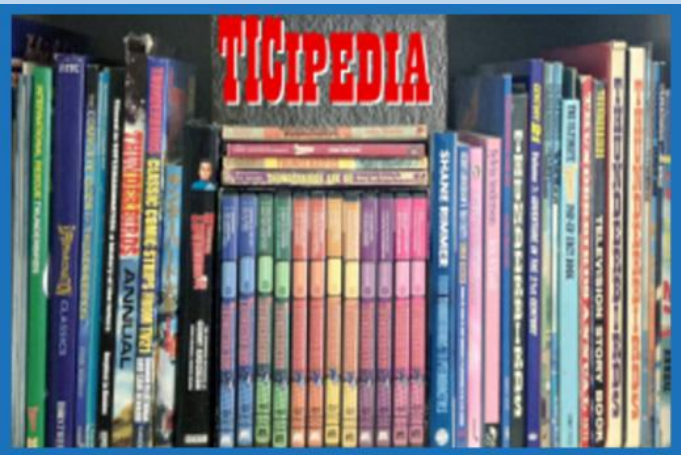
The Tracy Island Chronicles was created in 2004 to archive 'the best of the best' in *Thunderbirds* fan fiction (in our humble opinions!). Stories are selected by the TIC Story Selection Committee. There are a few other things on this site for fans to have fun with, too, like Gordon's games and the *Thunderbirds* version of the Mary Sue Litmus Test (a must-read for writers!) in Thunderbird Four's Pod, plus character biographies, episode guides and images in Thunderbird Three's Silo!



Here you'll find information about the discussion forum and our TIC chat days and times as well as TIWF's purpose and how to contact us. If you like talking *Thunderbirds*, this is the place for you!



Chris Davis (a.k.a. TB's LMC) works with Belah Gaat, aka 'the Hood,' to search the Tracy Island Chronicles for stories that feature a villain. If you happen to share a villain kink, head on over to the Temple to get your fill of pure evil!



TICipedia is exactly what it sounds like: the *Thunderbirds* version of Wikipedia. This site is designed to be a place where *Thunderbirds* canon facts and their sources are compiled in one place. In addition, TICipedia showcases facts about the voice actors from the show, as well as videos, images and sound bytes of them from other non-*Thunderbirds* work.



We decided we needed one place to share not only what's going on in the Family, but also to bring you *Thunderbirds*-related news in a way only Facebook can. So if you're on FB, please head over to 'Thunderbirds Are Still Go' and Like our page! And keep an eye on it, because you never know what you'll find from day to day!



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