

BRITISH ACTORS WHO SERVED IN WORLD WAR II

ALEC GUINNESS

Sir Alec Guinness CH CBE (born Alec Guinness de Cuffe; 2 April 1914 – 5 August 2000)



Guinness began his stage career in 1934. Two years later, at the age of 22, he played the role of Osric in *Hamlet* in the West End and joined the Old Vic. He was one of the greatest British actors who made the transition from theatre to films after the Second World War.

Guinness served in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve in the Second World War, initially as a seaman in 1941, before receiving a commission as a temporary Sub-lieutenant on 30 April 1942 and a promotion to Temporary Lieutenant the following year. He then commanded a Landing Craft Infantry at the Allied invasion of Sicily, and later ferried supplies and agents to the Yugoslav partisans in the eastern Mediterranean theatre. During the war, he was granted leave to appear in the Broadway production of Terence Rattigan's play *Flare Path*, about RAF Bomber Command, with Guinness playing the role of Flight Lieutenant Teddy Graham.

After an early career on the stage, Guinness was featured in several of the Ealing comedies, including *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949), in which he played nine different characters, *The Lavender Hill Mob* (1951), for which he received his first Academy Award nomination, and *The Ladykillers* (1955). He collaborated six times with director David Lean: Herbert Pocket in *Great Expectations* (1946), Fagin in *Oliver Twist* (1948), Col. Nicholson in *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957), for which he won both the Academy Award for Best Actor and the BAFTA Award for Best Actor, Prince Faisal in *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), General Yevgraf Zhivago in *Doctor Zhivago* (1965), and Professor Godbole in *A Passage to India* (1984). In 1970 he played Jacob Marley's ghost in Ronald Neame's *Scrooge*. He also portrayed Obi-Wan Kenobi in George Lucas's original *Star Wars* trilogy; for the original 1977 film, he was nominated for Best Supporting Actor at the 50th Academy Awards.

In the later 1930s, he took classes at the London Theatre Studio. In 1939, he took over for Michael Redgrave as Charleston in a road-show production of Robert Ardrey's *Thunder Rock*. At the Old Vic, Guinness worked with many actors and actresses who would become his friends and frequent co-stars in the future, including Gielgud, Ralph Richardson, Peggy Ashcroft, Anthony Quayle, and Jack Hawkins. An early influence was film star Stan Laurel, whom Guinness admired.

Guinness continued playing Shakespearean roles throughout his career. In 1937, he played Aumerle in *Richard II* and Lorenzo in *The Merchant of Venice* under the direction of John Gielgud. He starred in a 1938 production of *Hamlet* which won him acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic. He also appeared as Romeo in a production of *Romeo and Juliet* (1939), Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, and as Exeter in *Henry V* in 1937, both opposite Laurence Olivier, and Ferdinand in *The Tempest*, opposite Gielgud as Prospero. In 1939, he adapted Charles Dickens's novel *Great Expectations* for the stage, playing Herbert Pocket. The play was a success. One of its viewers was a young British film editor, David Lean, who would later have Guinness reprise his role in Lean's 1946 film adaptation of the play.

Guinness was reluctant to appear on television but accepted the part of George Smiley in the serialisation of John le Carré's *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (1979) after meeting the author. Guinness reprised the role in *Smiley's People* (1982), and twice won the British Academy Television Award for Best Actor for his portrayal of the character.

Guinness won an Academy Award, a BAFTA, a Golden Globe, and a Tony Award. In 1959 he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for services to the arts. He received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1960. He appeared in nine films that featured in the BFI's 100 greatest British films of the 20th century, which included five of Lean's films.

DAVID NIVEN

James David Graham Niven (1 March 1910 – 29 July 1983).

Born in London, Niven attended Heatherdown Preparatory School and Stowe School before gaining *a place at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst*.



In 1928, Niven attended the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. He graduated in 1930 with a commission as a second lieutenant in the British Army. He did well at Sandhurst, which gave him the "officer and gentleman" bearing that was his trademark. He requested assignment to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders or the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment), then jokingly wrote on the form, as his third choice, "anything but the Highland Light Infantry" (because that regiment wore tartan trews rather than the kilt). He was assigned to the HLI, with which he served for two years in Malta and then for a few months in Dover.

Bored with the peacetime army, he resigned his commission in 1933, relocated to New York, then travelled to Hollywood. Upon the outbreak of the Second World War, Niven returned to Britain and rejoined the army, being recommissioned as a lieutenant in the Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort's Own) on 25 February 1940 and was assigned to a motor training battalion.

He wanted something more exciting, however, and transferred to the Commandos. He was assigned to a training base at Inverailort House in the Western Highlands. Niven commanded "A" Squadron GHQ Liaison Regiment, better known as "Phantom". He was promoted to war-substantive captain on 18 August 1941. On 14 March 1944, Niven was promoted war-substantive major (temporary lieutenant-colonel). He took part in the Allied invasion of Normandy in June 1944, although he was sent to France several days after D-Day. He served in "Phantom", a secret reconnaissance and signals unit which located and reported enemy positions, and kept rear commanders informed on changing battle lines. He acted in two wartime films not formally associated with the AFPU, but both made with a firm view to winning support for the British war effort, especially in the United States. These were *The First of the Few* (1942), directed by Leslie Howard, and *The Way Ahead* (1944), directed by Carol Reed. Peter Ustinov also played a large supporting role as a Frenchman in *The Way Ahead*.

Niven resumed his acting career after his demobilisation and was voted the second-most popular British actor in the 1945 Popularity Poll of British film stars. He appeared in *A Matter of Life and Death* (1946), *The Bishop's Wife* (1947) with Cary Grant, and *Enchantment* (1948), all of which received critical acclaim. Niven later appeared in *The Elusive Pimpernel* (1950), *The Toast of New Orleans* (1950), *Happy Go Lovely* (1951), *Happy Ever After* (1954), and *Carrington V.C.* (1955) before scoring a big success as Phileas Fogg in Michael Todd's production of *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956). Niven appeared in many shows for television and nearly 100 films. He also began writing books, with considerable commercial success. In 1982, he appeared in Blake Edwards' final Pink Panther films *Trail of the Pink Panther* and *Curse of the Pink Panther*, reprising his role as Sir Charles Lytton.

Niven also worked with the Army Film and Photographic Unit. His work included a small part in the deception operation that used minor actor M. E. Clifton James to impersonate General Sir Bernard Montgomery. During his work with the AFPU, Peter Ustinov, one of the scriptwriters, had to pose as Niven's batman. Niven explained in his autobiography that there was no military way that he, a lieutenant-colonel, and Ustinov, who was only a private, could associate, other than as an officer and his subordinate, hence their strange "act". In 1978, Niven and Ustinov would star together in a film adaption of Agatha Christie's *Death on the Nile*.

DONALD PLEASANCE

Donald Henry Pleasence OBE (5 October 1919 – 2 February 1995). He received his formal education at Crosby Junior School, Scunthorpe, and Ecclesfield Grammar School, in Sheffield, South Yorkshire.

After working as the clerk-in-charge at Swinton railway station in South Yorkshire, he decided that he wanted to be a professional actor, taking up a placement with the Jersey Repertory Company in 1939.

In December 1939, Pleasence initially refused conscription into the British Armed Forces, registering as a conscientious objector, but changed his stance in autumn 1940, after the attacks upon London by the Luftwaffe, and volunteered with the Royal Air Force.



He served as aircraft wireless-operator with No. 166 Squadron in Bomber Command, with which he flew almost sixty raids against the Axis over occupied Europe. On 31 August 1944, his Lancaster NE112 was shot down during an attack on Agenville, and he was captured and imprisoned in the German prisoner-of-war camp Stalag Luft I. Pleasence produced and acted in many plays for the entertainment of his fellow captives. After the war and his release, he was discharged from the RAF in 1946.

He began his career on stage in the West End before transitioning into a screen career, where he played numerous supporting and character roles including RAF Flight Lieutenant Colin Blythe in *The Great Escape* (1963), the villain Ernst Stavro Blofeld in the James Bond film *You Only Live Twice* (1967), SEN 5241 in *THX 1138* (1971), and the deranged Clarence "Doc" Tydon in *Wake in Fright* (1971).

Endowed with a bald head, a penetrating stare, and an intense voice, usually quiet but capable of a piercing scream, he specialised in portraying insane, fanatical, or evil characters, including the title role in *Dr Crippen* (1962), the frontier prophet Oracle Jones in *Hallelujah Trail*, the double agent Dr Michaels in the science-fiction film *Fantastic Voyage* (1966), the white trader who sells guns to the Cheyenne Indians in the revisionist western *Soldier Blue* (1970), the mad German psychoanalyst with Bud Spencer–Terence Hill in *Watch Out, We're Mad!* (1974), Nazi leader Heinrich Himmler in *The Eagle Has Landed* (1976), and the Bond arch-villain Ernst Stavro Blofeld in *You Only Live Twice* (1967), the first film in which Blofeld's face is clearly seen. His interpretation of the character has become predominant in popular culture considering the popularity of the comic villain, Dr. Evil in the successful *Austin Powers* film series, which primarily parodies it. In the crime drama *Hell is a City* (1960), shot in Manchester, he starred opposite Stanley Baker, while he was memorably cast in the horror comedy *What a Carve Up!* (1961) as the "horrible-looking zombie" solicitor opposite Shirley Eaton, Sid James, Kenneth Connor, and Dennis Price.

He appeared as the mild-mannered and good-natured POW forger Colin Blythe in the film *The Great Escape* (1963), who discovers that he is slowly going blind, but nonetheless participates in the mass break-out, only to be shot down by German soldiers because he is unable to see them. *Variety* highlighted Pleasence and Richard Attenborough as giving some of the better performances in the film, Pleasence specifically being praised for having the most moving portrayal and depicting "the film's most touching character." In *The Night of the Generals* (1967), he played another uncharacteristically sympathetic role, this time as an old-school German general involved in a plot to kill Adolf Hitler. In 1971, he returned to the realm of the deranged, delivering a tour de force performance in the role of an alcoholic Australian doctor in Ted Kotcheff's nightmarish outback drama *Wake in Fright*.

CHRISTOPHER LEE



Flying Officer C. F. C. Lee in 1944.

Sir Christopher Frank Carandini Lee CBE CStJ (27 May 1922 – 7 June 2015). Lee was born on 27 May 1922 in Belgravia, London, the son of Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Trollope Lee of the 60th King's Royal Rifle Corps, and his wife, Countess Estelle Marie (née Carandini di Sarzano).

When the Second World War broke out in 1939, Lee had enrolled in a military academy and volunteered to fight for the Finnish Army against the Soviet Union during the Winter War. Lee decided to join up while he still had some choice of service and volunteered for the Royal Air Force. After he had passed his exams in Liverpool, the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan meant that he travelled to South Africa, then to his posting at Hillside, at Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia. Training with de Havilland Tiger Moths, Lee was having his penultimate training session, when he suffered from headaches and blurred vision. The medical officer hesitantly diagnosed a failure of his optic nerve, and he was told he would never be allowed to fly. He applied to join RAF Intelligence and was seconded into the British South Africa Police and was posted as a warder at Salisbury

Prison. He was then promoted to leading aircraftman and moved to Durban in South Africa, before travelling to Suez.

After "killing time" at RAF Kasfareet near the Great Bitter Lake in the Suez Canal Zone, he resumed intelligence work in the city of Ismaïlia. He was then attached to No. 205 Group RAF before being commissioned as a pilot officer at the end of January 1943 and attached to No. 260 Squadron RAF as an intelligence officer.

As the North African Campaign progressed, the squadron "leapfrogged" between Egyptian airstrips. Lee, "broadly speaking, was expected to know everything." The Allied advance continued into Libya, through Tobruk and Benghazi to the Marble Arch and then through El Agheila, Khoms and Tripoli, with the squadron averaging five missions a day. As the advance continued into Tunisia, with the Axis forces digging themselves in at the Mareth Line, Lee was almost killed when the squadron's airfield was bombed. After breaking through the Mareth Line, the squadron made their final base in Kairouan; following the Axis surrender in North Africa in May 1943, the squadron moved to Zuwarah in Libya in preparation for the Allied invasion of Sicily.

They then moved to Malta, and, after its capture by the British Eighth Army, the Sicilian town of Pachino, before making a permanent base in Agnone Bagni. At the end of July 1943, Lee received his second promotion of the year, this time to flying officer. After the Sicilian campaign was over, Lee came down with malaria for the sixth time in under a year and was flown to a hospital in Carthage for treatment. When he returned, the squadron was restless, frustrated with a lack of news about the Eastern Front and the Soviet Union in general, and with no mail from home or alcohol. Unrest spread and threatened to turn into mutiny. Lee, by now an expert on Russia, talked them into resuming their duties, which much impressed his commanding officer.

After the Allied invasion of Italy, the squadron was based in Foggia and Termoli during the winter of 1943, where Lee was then seconded to the Army during an officer's swap scheme. Most of this time during the Battle of Monte Cassino was spent with the Gurkhas of the 8th Indian Infantry Division. While spending some time on leave in Naples, Lee climbed Mount Vesuvius, which erupted three days later. During the final assault on Monte Cassino, the squadron was based in San Angelo, and Lee was nearly killed when one of the planes crashed on take-off, and he tripped over one of its live bombs. After the battle, the squadron moved to airfields just outside Rome, and Lee visited the city, where he met his mother's cousin, Nicolò Carandini, who had fought in the Italian resistance movement. In November 1944, Lee was promoted to flight lieutenant and left the squadron to take up a posting at Air Force HQ. Lee took part in forward planning and liaison, in preparation for a potential assault into the rumoured German Alpine Fortress. After the war ended, Lee was invited to go hunting near Vienna and was then billeted in Pörschach am Wörthersee. For the final few months of his service, Lee, who spoke fluent French, Italian and German, among other languages, was seconded to the Central Registry of War Criminals and Security Suspects. Here, he was tasked with helping to track down Nazi war criminals. Of his time with the organisation, Lee said: "We were given dossiers of what they'd done and told to find them, interrogate them as much as we could and hand them over to the appropriate authority ...". He retired from the RAF in 1946 with the rank of flight lieutenant.

Lee's stepfather served as a captain in the Intelligence Corps, but it is unlikely he had any influence over Lee's military career. Lee saw him for the last time on a bus in London in 1940, by then divorced from Lee's mother, though Lee did not speak to him. Lee mentioned that during the war he was attached to the Special Operations Executive as liaison officer to Tito, the Long-Range Desert Group. Lee provided voices for numerous films and video games. He spoke fluent English, Italian, French, Spanish, and German, and was moderately proficient in Swedish, Russian, and Greek. In 2008, Lee in his role as Count Dracula featured on a commemorative UK postage stamp issued by the Royal Mail to mark 50 years since the release of *Dracula* (1958) by Hammer Films. In 2010, Lee received the Spirit of Hammer award at the Metal Hammer Golden Gods Awards, for his contribution to the metal genre. In 2011, Lee was awarded a BAFTA Fellowship; he received a BFI Fellowship in 2013.

In 2011, accompanied by his wife Birgit, and on the 164th anniversary of the birth of Bram Stoker, Lee was honoured with a tribute by University College Dublin, and described his honorary life membership of the UCD Law Society as "in some ways as special as the Oscars." He was awarded the Bram Stoker Gold Medal by the Trinity College Philosophical Society, of which Stoker was president, and a copy of *Collected Ghost Stories of MR James* by Trinity College's School of English.

NIGEL STOCK

Nigel Hector Munro Stock (21 September 1919 – 23 June 1986)

Stock was born in Malta, the son of an Army captain. He grew up in India before attending St Paul's School, London, and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, where he earned the Leverhulme Exhibition, Northcliffe Scholarship, and the Principal's Medal.



He made his stage debut in 1931, and during his career achieved numerous classical and contemporary credits at various distinguished theatres, including the Old Vic and on Broadway, with productions of *The Winter's Tale*, *Macbeth*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *Uncle Vanya*. His start in films came with uncredited bit parts in *The Man Who Could Work Miracles* (1938) and *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* (1939). In 1937 he made his first credited film appearance in *Lancashire Luck*. [

His acting career was interrupted by wartime service between 1939 and 1945 with the London Irish Rifles and the Assam Regiment of the Indian Army in Burma, China, and Kohima. He was honourably discharged with the rank of Major, having twice been mentioned in despatches.

Between 1964 and 1968, Nigel Stock became a household name in the UK for his portrayal of Dr. Watson in a series of Sherlock Holmes dramas for BBC television. Later in life, he portrayed the mentor of Sherlock Holmes in *Young Sherlock Holmes*. His other numerous television credits included *Danger Man* (1965), *The Avengers* (1964 & 1966), *The Prisoner* (1967), *The Doctors* (1969–71), *Owen, M.D.* (1971–73), *Quiller* (1975), *Van der Valk* (1977), the *Doctor Who* serial *Time Flight* (1982), *Yes Minister* (1982), *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (1979) and for a BBC dramatization of *A Tale of Two Cities* (1980) as well as *The Pickwick Papers* (1985) as Mr. Pickwick.

WILLIAM HARTNELL

William Henry Hartnell (8 January 1908 – 23 April 1975).



Hartnell was born in the slums of the district of St Pancras, London. Hartnell was brought up partly by a foster mother, and also spent many holidays in Devon with his mother's family of farmers, from whom he learned to ride horses. He was a second cousin of the fashion designer Norman Hartnell.

He entered the theatre in 1925 working under Frank Benson as a general stagehand. He appeared in numerous Shakespearian plays, including *The Merchant of Venice* (1926), *Julius Caesar* (1926), *As You Like It* (1926), *Hamlet* (1926), *The Tempest* (1926) and *Macbeth* (1926). He also appeared in *She Stoops to Conquer* (1926), *The School for Scandal* (1926) and *Good Morning, Bill* (1927), before performing in *Miss Elizabeth's Prisoner* (1928). His first of more than 60 film appearances was in *Say It With Music* (1932).

From the outbreak of the Second World War, Hartnell attempted to volunteer for the RAF. He served in the British Army in the Tank Corps, but he was invalided out after 18 months as the result of a nervous breakdown and returned to acting.

He is best remembered for his portrayal of the first incarnation of the Doctor in *Doctor Who* from 1963 to 1966. In film, Hartnell notably appeared in *Brighton Rock* (1949), *The Mouse That Roared* (1959) and *This Sporting Life* (1963). He was associated with military roles, playing Company Sergeant Major Percy Bullimore in the ITV sitcom *The Army Game* (1957, 1961) and Sergeant Grimshaw, the title character in the first *Carry On* film *Carry On Sergeant* (1958).

ANDRE MORRELL

Cecil André Mesritz (20 August 1909 – 28 November 1978) known professionally as André Morell.

His best-known screen roles were as Professor Bernard Quatermass in the BBC Television serial *Quatermass and the Pit* (1958–59), and as Doctor Watson in the Hammer Film Productions version of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1959). He also appeared in the films *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957) and *Ben-Hur* (1959), in several of Hammer's horror films throughout the 1960s and in the acclaimed ITV historical drama *The Caesars* (1968).

His obituary in *The Times* newspaper described him as possessing a "commanding presence with a rich, responsive voice... whether in the classical or modern theatre he was authoritative and dependable."



Morell was born in London, the son of André and Rosa Mesritz. Prior to taking up acting professionally he trained as a motor engineer, while also participating in amateur theatrical productions. He turned professional in 1934, initially acting under the name André Mesritz; he anglicised his surname to Morell in 1936 and adopted the latter name legally by deed poll in 1938.

The onset of the Second World War interrupted his acting career, and he joined the Royal Welch Fusiliers in 1940. He served with the regiment until 1946, by which time he had attained the rank of major.

In 1969, he became the vice president of Equity, the trade union for British actors and performers. He then served as president of the organisation for a year from 1973–74. During this time he was involved in a dispute in which Equity threatened to expel Laurence Olivier as a member due to comments he made in a newspaper feature about the possibility of forming a breakaway union. The union also suffered from financial problems, and Morell continued to warn against destructive divisions amongst the members when he stepped down as president.

JACK HAWKINS



John Edward Hawkins, CBE (14 September 1910 – 18 July 1973). One of the most popular British film stars of the 1950s, he was known for his portrayal of military men.

Hawkins was born in Wood Green, in what is now Haringey, London, the son of a builder. He was educated at Wood Green's Trinity County Grammar School, where, aged eight, he joined the school choir.

By the age of ten Hawkins had joined the local operatic society and made his stage debut in *Patience* by Gilbert and Sullivan. His parents enrolled him in the Italia Conti Academy and whilst he was studying there he made his London stage debut, when aged thirteen, playing the Elf King in *Where the Rainbow Ends* at the Holborn Empire on Boxing Day, December 1923, a production that also included the young Noël Coward. The following year aged 14 he played the page in a production of *Saint Joan* by George Bernard Shaw. Five years later he was in a production of *Beau Geste* alongside Laurence Olivier.

He started appearing in films, including a number of "quota quickies" as well as more prestigious productions. His appearances included *Birds of Prey* (1930), *The Lodger* (1932) (starring Ivor Novello), *The Good Companions* (1933), *The Lost Chord* (1933), *I Lived with You* (1933), *The Jewel* (1933), *A Shot in the Dark* (1933) and *Autumn Crocus* (1934). Stage roles included *While Parents Sleep* (1932) by Anthony Kimmins, *Iron Mistress* (1934) by Arthur Macrae; then an open-air Shakespeare festival – *As You Like It* (1934) (with Anna Neagle), *Twelfth Night* (1934), *Comedy of Errors* (1934). Some of these productions were done on radio. *The Maitlands* by Ronald Mackenzie (1934) was for John Gielgud's company. He was Horatio to Gielgud's Hamlet (1934). He also appeared in *Accidentally Yours* by Clifford Grey (1935), *The World Waits* by Clifford Hummel (1935), *Coincidence* by Bryce Robertson (1935) and *The Frog* (1935). Films in the late 1930s included *Beauty and the Barge* (1937), *The Frog* (1937) (which Hawkins played on stage), *Who Goes Next?* (1938), *A Royal Divorce* (1938), *Murder Will Out* (1939) and *The Flying Squad* (1940).

Having attended an Officer Cadet Training Unit, he was commissioned into the Royal Welch Fusiliers, British Army, as a second lieutenant on 8 March 1941. On 22 January 1944, he transferred to the Expeditionary Force Institutes in the rank of lieutenant. He served with ENSA in India and Southeast Asia. He relinquished his commission as a lieutenant (substantive) on 11 October 1946 and was granted the honorary rank of colonel. During his military service, he made *The Next of Kin* (1942) for Ealing Studios.

He was recruited by 20th Century Fox to support Tyrone Power and Orson Welles in the expensive epic *The Black Rose* (1950). He made another with Powell and Pressburger for Korda, *The Elusive Pimpernel* (1950), playing the prince of Wales. Hawkins played the lead in *The Adventurers* (1951), shot in South Africa, then had a good role in another Hollywood-financed film shot in Britain, *No Highway in the Sky* (1951), with James Stewart. It was followed by a British thriller with Ralph Richardson, *Home at Seven* (1952).

In the spring of 1951 he went to Broadway and played Mercutio in a production of *Romeo and Juliet* with Olivia de Havilland. Hawkins became a star with the release of three successful films in which he played stern but sympathetic authority figures: *Angels One Five* (1951), as an RAF officer during the war; *The Planter's Wife* (1952), as a rubber planter combating communists in the Malayan Emergency (with Claudette Colbert); and *Mandy* (1952), the headmaster of a school for the deaf. All films ranked among the top ten most popular films at the British box office in 1952 and British exhibitors voted him the fourth most popular British star at the local box office. Hawkins consolidated his new status with *The Cruel Sea* (1953), playing a driven naval officer in World War II. Sir Michael Balcon said: "Even before the script was written, we knew it had to be Jack Hawkins. If he hadn't been free to play the part, then there wouldn't have been a film." *The Cruel Sea* was the most successful film of the year and saw Hawkins voted the most popular star in Britain regardless of nationality.

Hawkins began experiencing voice problems in the late 1950s; unbeknown to the public, he had undergone cobalt treatment in 1959 for what was then described as a secondary condition of the larynx, but which was probably cancer. Hawkins became worried about his voice and was concerned he would lose it. This caused him to take almost any work that was available. "I had to be realistic and take as much money as I could get while the going was good", he said.

This may explain why he took the part of General Cornwallis in a European epic, *La Fayette* (1961). He was third lead to Shirley Maclaine and Laurence Harvey in *Two Loves* (1961), and supported Rosalind Russell in *Five Finger Exercise* (1962). "There are not all that number of mature leading men around", he said in a 1961 interview. "There seems to be a generation missing. I think people quit going into the acting profession. A lot of them drifted out during the war. And then when the war was over it was difficult for them to get back into the theatre." He was in another big hit in *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), as General Allenby. *Rampage* (1963) was less distinguished, but *Zulu* (1964) gave him a good role as a cowardly priest; it was, however, clearly a supporting part, and Hawkins's days as a star seemed to be over.

In May 1973, Hawkins had an experimental operation on his throat to insert an artificial voicebox. He started haemorrhaging and was admitted to St Stephen's Hospital, Fulham Road, London in June, forcing him to drop out of *The Tamarind Seed* (1974), in which Hawkins was to have played a Russian general. He died on 18 July 1973, of a secondary haemorrhage. He was 62. According to his Guardian obituary, he "exemplified for many cinemagoers the stiff upper lip tradition prevalent in post-war British films. His craggy looks and authoritative bearing were used to good effect whatever branch of the services he represented."

RICHARD TODD

Richard Andrew Palethorpe-Todd OBE (11 June 1919 – 3 December 2009). An Irish-British actor known for his leading man roles of the 1950s. He received a Golden Globe Award for Most Promising Newcomer – Male, and an Academy Award for Best Actor nomination and a Golden Globe Award for Best Actor nomination for his performance as Corporal Lachlan MacLachlan in the 1949 film *The Hasty Heart*. His other notable roles include Jonathan Cooper in *Stage Fright* (1950), Wing Commander Guy Gibson in *The Dam Busters* (1955), Sir Walter Raleigh in *The Virgin Queen* (1955), and Major John Howard in *The Longest Day* (1962). He was previously a Captain in the British Army during World War II, fighting in the D-Day landings as a member of the 7th (Light Infantry) Parachute Battalion.

Richard Todd was born in Dublin. His father, Andrew William Palethorpe-Todd, was an Irish physician and an international Irish rugby player who gained three caps for his country. Richard spent a few of his childhood years

in India, where his father, an officer in the British Army, served as a physician. Later his family moved to Devon, and Todd attended Shrewsbury School.



Paratrooper Lt. Richard Todd landed near Pegasus Bridge on 6 June 1944.

Upon leaving school, Todd trained for a potential military career at Sandhurst before beginning his acting training at the Italia Conti Academy in London.

He first appeared professionally as an actor at the Open-Air Theatre, Regent's Park in 1936 in a production of *Twelfth Night*. He played in regional theatres and then co-founded the Dundee Repertory Theatre in Scotland in 1939. He also appeared as an extra in British films including *Good Morning, Boys* (1937), *A Yank at Oxford* (1938) and *Old Bones of the River* (1939).

Todd enlisted soon after the outbreak of the Second World War, entering the Royal Military College, Sandhurst in late 1939. On 29 January 1941, he was one of 26 cadets injured when 'D' Block of New College was hit by a German bomb in an attack by the Luftwaffe. In his memoirs, he describes seeing the bomb pass through the ceiling in front of him before he was blown out of the building by its blast, landing on a grass bank and suffering lacerations; five cadets were killed in the incident. Todd passed out in the spring of 1941; i.e., completed the course. On the day he received his commission, he tried to join several friends at the Café de Paris in London but could not get a table booked for the evening. That evening, the venue was destroyed in an air raid and 15 newly commissioned subalterns were killed.



He was commissioned into the 2nd/4th Battalion of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (KOYLI). Following arctic warfare training in Iceland he returned to the UK as a lieutenant (having been promoted to that rank on 1 October 1942). For a short while he was posted, at his request, as liaison officer to the 42nd Armoured Division then applied to join the Parachute Regiment to have a better chance at seeing action. He was accepted and after training was posted to the 7th (Light Infantry) Parachute Battalion as part of the 6th Airborne Division. On 6 June 1944, he participated in Operation Tonga during the D-Day landings. He was among the first British soldiers to land in Normandy and the first Irishman. His battalion parachuted after glider-borne forces had landed to capture the Pegasus Bridge near Caen. During the operation he met Major John Howard on the bridge and was involved in helping to repulse counterattacks by the Heer forces in the area. Five days after D-Day, while still in the bridge defence area, he was promoted to captain. Todd later played Howard in the 1962 film *The Longest Day*, recreating these events.

After three months fighting in Normandy, the 6th Airborne Division returned to the UK to reconstitute and went back to the continent three months later as emergency reinforcements to halt the Battle of the Bulge the German offensive in the Ardennes. Short of transport as they advanced into Germany, Todd, as the motor transport officer, was responsible for gathering a rag-tag selection of commandeered vehicles to ferry troops forward. After VE day, the division returned to the UK for a few weeks, then was sent on counter-insurgency operations in Palestine. During this posting he was seriously injured when his Jeep overturned, breaking both shoulders, and receiving a concussion. He returned to the UK to be demobilised in 1946.

After the war, Todd was unsure what direction to take in his career. His former agent, Robert Lennard, had become a casting agent for Associated British Picture Corporation and advised him to try out for the Dundee Repertory Company. Todd did so, performing in plays such as *Claudia*, where he appeared with Catherine Grant-Bogle, who became his first wife. Lennard arranged for a screen test and Associated British offered him a long-term contract

in 1948. He was cast in the lead in *For Them That Trespass* (1949), directed by Alberto Cavalcanti. The film was a minor hit and Todd's career was launched.

Todd's cinema career rapidly declined in the 1960s as the counter-culture movement in the Arts became fashionable in Britain, with social-realist dramas commercially replacing the more middle-class orientated dramatic productions that Todd's performance character-type had previously excelled in. Todd was the first choice of author Ian Fleming to play James Bond in *Dr. No*, but a scheduling conflict gave the role to Sean Connery. In the 1960s, Todd unsuccessfully attempted to produce a film of Ian Fleming's *The Diamond Smugglers*, and a television series based on true accounts of the *Queen's Messengers*. He was also announced for a proposed film about William Shakespeare. Todd died at his home near Grantham in Lincolnshire on 3 December 2009.

PERCY HERBERT

Percy Herbert (31 July 1920 – 6 December 1992)



He served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps during the Second World War and spent four years in the Japanese prisoner of war camp Changi. After the war, he was helped by Dame Sybil Thorndike to secure an interview with the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art where he won a scholarship. His acting career began in the theatre, which included working at John Gielgud's Old Vic Company.

Beginning in 1954, he went on to make nearly seventy films, often playing soldiers, most notably in *The Cockleshell Heroes*, *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (for which he also worked as consultant as well as suggesting the use of the well-known "Colonel Bogey March" which the prisoners whistled in the film), *Sea of Sand*, *Tunes of Glory*, *The Guns of Navarone*, *Guns at Batasi*, *Tobruk* and *The Wild Geese*. However, he was equally at home in comedies (*Barnacle Bill*, *Casino Royale*, two *Carry On* films), fantasy (*One Million Years B.C.*, *Mysterious Island*), drama (*Becket*, *Bunny Lake is Missing*), and science fiction (*Quatermass 2*, *Night of the Big Heat*). He also acted on television; he was a regular on the short-lived American series *Cimarron Strip*, during a brief foray to Hollywood. Other television work includes *Danger Man*, *The Saint*, *Z-Cars*, *Dixon of Dock*

Green, and *Worzel Gummidge*.

Herbert was born in East London and spent his youth learning to become a boxer at the Repton Boxing club. One of three siblings, he was the middle child. His father left home when he was a young boy, and he was brought up by his mother Ann Herbert along with his brother Lawrence and his sister Maisie. During World War II he joined the British Army as a young man and was sent to Singapore via ship to fight in the Pacific. The British ship miscalculated the timing of its entry into harbour and sailed into Singapore Harbour in broad daylight. The British were immediately bombed by Japanese aircraft and Herbert jumped ship and swam to shore with a broken collar bone. He was picked up by British soldiers and taken to the Alexandria Hospital, where Herbert survived what was to be the massacre of doctors and patients of the Alexandria Hospital in Singapore. He was among eleven soldiers who survived and ultimately captured and sent to the notorious Japanese Prison Camp at Changi, where he remained as a POW for the duration of the war. He was assigned to work on the Burma Railway and was released from Changi at the end of the war by American troops, after which he returned to London. One of the first films he was cast in was *Bridge on the River Kwai* which was based on the experiences in Changi prison camp. David Lean, the producer of the classic film, paid Herbert a stipend to be a consultant on the film as he had been a POW there and was also cast in the role of Grogan, one of the first roles in which he was cast during his long and varied acting career. Herbert died of a heart attack, aged 72, on the 6th of December 1992 in Broadstairs, Kent. He was survived by his childhood sweetheart and wife Amy and his two daughters Vanessa and Katrina .

JIMMY HANLEY

Jimmy Hanley (22 October 1918 – 13 January 1970). Born in Norwich, Norfolk, Hanley began his career as a child actor before becoming popular in juvenile roles. He was groomed by the Rank Studio system during his teenage years and earned film stardom as a "boy-next-door" type. The young actor attended the Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts and whilst he was studying there, made his stage debut at age 12 at the London Palladium, as John Darling in *Peter Pan*. He began to make films in his teens.



During the Second World War he served as an officer with the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, and in a commando raid in Norway he was wounded in the leg and was invalided out of the service. He returned to films, including *Salute John Citizen* (1942), *Henry V* with Laurence Olivier (1944), *For You Alone* (1945) and the Huggett's films.

He later worked on radio and TV, appearing in several television series, and hosting the ITV series *Jim's Inn* from 1957 to 1963, which combined advertising messages with the plot of a soap opera, where he and his wife Maggie played the hosts of a pub where customers discussed bargains and new products whilst drinking. The series finished when advertising magazine programmes were banned.

TREVOR HOWARD

Trevor Wallace Howard-Smith (29 September 1913 – 7 January 1988). After varied work in the theatre, he achieved star status with his role in the film *Brief Encounter* (1945), followed by *The Third Man* (1949). He is also known for his roles in *Golden Salamander* (1950), *The Clouded Yellow* (1951), *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1962), *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1968), *Battle of Britain* (1969), *Lola* (1969), *Ryan's Daughter* (1970), *Superman* (1978), *Windwalker* (1981), and *Gandhi* (1982). For his performance in *Sons and Lovers* (1960) he was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actor.



Howard was born in Cliftonville, Kent, England the son of Mabel Grey (Wallace) and Arthur John Howard-Smith. Although Howard later claimed to have been born in 1916, the year quoted by most reference sources, he was born in 1913 (this is supported by school and other records).

His father was an insurance underwriter for Lloyd's of London, serving as representative in Colombo, Sri Lanka and elsewhere; Trevor spent the first eight years of his life travelling around the world. He was educated at Clifton College (to which he left in his will a substantial legacy for a drama scholarship) and at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA). In 1933, at the end of his first year, he was chosen as best actor in his class for his performance as Benedict in a school production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. While Howard was still studying, he made his professional debut at the Gate Theatre in *Revolt in a Reformatory* (1934). When he left school he worked regularly on stage, including in Sheridan's *The Rivals*, several performances at Stratford-upon-Avon, and in a two-year run in the original production of *French Without Tears*.

Howard did little to stop the stories that he had a courageous wartime service in the British Army's Royal Corps of Signals, which earned him much respect among fellow actors and fans. However, as set out in a 2001 biography of Howard by the journalist Terence Pettigrew, files held in the Public Record Office revealed he had actually been discharged from the British Army in 1943 for mental instability and having a "psychopathic personality". Initially Howard's widow, actress Helen Cherry, denied this, but after being confronted with the official records, she said that Howard's mother had claimed he was a holder of the Military Cross adding that her late husband had an honourable military record with "nothing to be ashamed of".

The London Gazette shows that Trevor Wallace Howard-Smith (247202) was actually commissioned into the South Staffordshire Regiment as a Second lieutenant effective 3 October 1942, but he had relinquished his commission on 2 October 1943 "on account of 'ill-health'", still a 2nd lieutenant, contradicting the stories that he had been a captain in the Royal Corps of Signals. A British government document leaked to the Sunday Times in 2003 shows that Howard was among almost 300 individuals to decline official honours. He declined a CBE in 1982.

BERNARD LEE

John Bernard Lee (10 January 1908 – 16 January 1981).



Lee's film career spanned the years 1934 to 1979, though he had appeared on stage from the age of six. He was trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. Lee appeared in over one hundred films, as well as on stage and in television dramatizations. He was known for his roles as authority figures, often playing military characters or policemen in films such as *The Third Man*, *The Blue Lamp*, *The Battle of the River Plate*, and *Whistle Down the Wind*. He died of stomach cancer in 1981, aged 73.

After graduating from RADA in the 1930s, Lee began working in repertory theatre in Cardiff and in Rusholme, Manchester, before beginning work on the West End stage in thrillers, such as *Blind Man's Bluff*. He also played comedic roles, such as in the play *Ten Minute Alibi* with Arthur Askey.

Lee's screen debut was in *The Double Event* (1934), followed by a role as Cartwright in Berthold Viertel's *Rhodes of Africa* (1936), a biopic of Cecil Rhodes, in which he starred alongside Walter Huston, Oscar Homolka, and Basil Sydney. Although Lee was in wartime service in the army between 1940 and 1946, he had managed to act in several films earlier which were released between 1939 and 1943, including *Murder in Soho*, *The Frozen Limits*, and *Let George Do It!* (known in the US as *To Hell with Hitler*, 1940) with George Formby.

Lee served with the Royal Sussex Regiment during the Second World War. While waiting to be demobbed he attended a golfing ladies' night where he met a producer. This subsequently led to his being offered a part in the play *Stage Door*.

During the 1950s, Lee had a long run on stage, appearing as Able Seaman Turner in *Seagulls Over Sorrento*, a role he later reprised in the film of the same name with Gene Kelly (released in the US as *Crest of the Wave*). Lee starred opposite Gregory Peck in *The Purple Plain* (1954), playing a Royal Air Force medical officer based in Burma during the late Second World War and portrayed Captain Patrick Dove in Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's war film *The Battle of the River Plate* (1956), based upon the battle of the same name. He starred alongside John Gregson, Anthony Quayle, and Peter Finch. George Lovell remarked that Captain Patrick Dove was played "ponderously by Bernard Lee, but he forms a much closer bond with the battleship's commander, Captain Langsdorff (Peter Finch)." The film was the fourth most popular film in Britain in 1957. Other films of this period include *The Spanish Gardener* (1956), *Dunkirk* (1958), *Beyond This Place* (1959), *Whistle Down the Wind* (1961), and *The L-Shaped Room* (1962).

In 1962 Lee was cast in the role that *The Illustrated Who's Who of the Cinema* described as his best remembered, playing the character of M, the head of the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6)—and the superior of James Bond—in the first Eon Productions film, *Dr. No*. A number of writers have noted that Lee's interpretation of the character was in line with the original literary representation; Cork and Stutz observed that Lee was "very close to Fleming's version of the character", whilst Rubin commented on the serious, efficient, no-nonsense authority figure. Smith and Lavington, meanwhile, remarked that Lee was "the very incarnation of Fleming's crusty admiral."

According to the actor Jack Warner, "Bernard and Gladys had a lovely 17-century cottage in the Kent village of Oare, and it was there she died tragically in a fire early in 1972. Bernard and Gladys were trapped in their bedroom when the fire started on the ground floor. Bernard escaped through a window and ran to get a ladder in an attempt to rescue Gladys, but unhappily was unsuccessful. It was an awful end to a long and happy marriage." In February 1972, Lee was mugged and robbed by two youths. After the mugging and fire, Lee turned to drink, was unable to find work for two years, and ran into debt. By chance, Lee met Richard Burton in a pub, who, upon hearing of Lee's problems, gave him a cheque for \$6,000 to clear his debts, together with a note saying that everyone has a spot of trouble once in a while. Burton's gift assisted Lee in overcoming his depression.

RICHARD BURTON

Richard Burton CBE (born Richard Walter Jenkins Jr.; 10 November 1925 – 5 August 1984).

Basildon Borough Heritage Society



Richard was barely two years old when his mother died on 31 October, six days after the birth of Graham, the family's thirteenth child. Edith's death was a result of postpartum infections; Richard believed it occurred because of "hygiene neglect". According to biographer Michael Munn, Edith "was fastidiously clean", but that her exposure to the dust from the coal mines resulted in her death. Following Edith's death, Richard's elder sister Cecilia, whom he affectionately addressed as "Cis", and her husband Elfed James, also a miner, took him under their care. Richard lived with Cis, Elfed and their two daughters, Marian, and Rhianon, in their three-bedroom terraced cottage on 73 Caradoc Street, Taibach, a suburban district in Port Talbot, which Bragg describes as "a tough steel town, English-speaking, grind and grime".

Richard remained forever grateful and loving to Cis throughout his life, later going on to say: "When my mother died she, my sister, had become my mother, and more mother to me than any mother could ever have been ... I was immensely proud of her ... she felt all tragedies except her own". Daddy Ni

would occasionally visit the homes of his grown daughters but was otherwise absent. Another important figure in Richard's early life was Ifor, his brother, 19 years his senior. A miner and rugby union player, Ifor "ruled the household with the proverbial firm hand". He was also responsible for nurturing a passion for rugby in young Richard. Although Richard also played cricket, tennis, and table tennis, biographer Bragg notes rugby union football to be his greatest interest. On rugby, Richard said he "would rather have played for Wales at Cardiff Arms Park than Hamlet at The Old Vic".

From the age of five to eight, Richard was educated at the Eastern Primary School while he attended the Boys' segment of the same school from eight to twelve years old. He took a scholarship exam for admission into Port Talbot Secondary School[a] in March 1937 and passed it. Biographer Hollis Alpert notes that both Daddy Ni and Ifor considered Richard's education to be "of paramount importance" and planned to send him to the University of Oxford. Richard became the first member of his family to go to secondary school. He displayed an excellent speaking and singing voice since childhood, even winning an eisteddfod prize as a boy soprano. During his tenure at Port Talbot Secondary School, Richard also showed immense interest in reading poetry as well as English and Welsh literature. He earned pocket money by running messages, hauling horse manure, and delivering newspapers.

Richard made his first foray into theatre with a minor role in his school's production of the Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw's *The Apple Cart*. He decided to leave school by the end of 1941 and work as a miner as Elfed was not fit, owing to illness. He worked for the local wartime Co-operative committee, handing out supplies in exchange for war-time ration-coupons. He also simultaneously considered other professions for his future, including boxing, religion and singing. It was also during this period that Richard took up smoking and drinking despite being underage.

When he joined the Port Talbot Squadron 499 of the Air Training Corps section of the Royal Air Force (RAF) as a cadet, he re-encountered Philip, who was the squadron commander. He also joined the Taibach Youth Centre, a youth drama group founded by Meredith Jones[c] and led by Leo Lloyd, a steel worker and avid amateur thespian, who taught him the fundamentals of acting. Richard played the role of an escaped convict in Lloyd's play, *The Bishop's Candlesticks*, an adaptation of a section of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. The entire play did not have any dialogues, but Alpert noted that Richard "mimed his role". Philip gave him a part in a radio documentary/adaptation of his play for BBC Radio, *Youth at the Helm* (1942). Seeing the talent Richard possessed, both Jones and Philip re-admitted him to school on 5 October 1942. Philip tutored his charge intensely in school subjects, and also worked at developing the youth's acting voice, including outdoor voice drills which improved his projection. [41] Richard called the experience "the most hardworking and painful period" in his life. Philip called Richard "my son to all intents and purposes. I was committed to him", while Burton later wrote of Philip, "I owe him everything".

In autumn of 1943, Philip planned to adopt Richard but was not able to do so as he was 20 days too young to be 21 years older than his ward, a legal requirement. As a result, Richard became Philip's legal ward and changed his surname to "Richard Burton", after Philip's own surname, by means of deed poll, which Richard's father accepted.

It was also in 1943 that Richard qualified for admission into a university after excelling in the School Certificate Examination. Philip requested Richard to study at Exeter College, Oxford as a part of a six-month scholarship programme offered by the RAF for qualified cadets prior to active service.

In late 1944, Burton successfully completed his six-month scholarship at Exeter College, Oxford, and went to the RAF classification examinations held in Torquay to train as a pilot. He was disqualified for pilot training because his eyesight was below par and was classified as a navigator trainee. He served the RAF as navigator for three years, during which he performed an assignment as Aircraftman 1st Class in a Wiltshire-based RAF Hospital and was posted to the RAF base in Carberry, Manitoba, Canada to work as an instructor. Burton's habits of drinking and smoking increased during this period; he was involved in a brief casual affair with actress Eleanor Summerfield. Burton was cast in an uncredited and unnamed role of a bombing officer by BBC Third Programme in a 1946 radio adaptation of *In Parenthesis*, an epic poem of the First World War by David Jones. Burton was discharged from the RAF on 16 December 1947. For his contributions to cinema, Burton was inducted posthumously into the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2013 with a motion pictures star located at 6336 Hollywood Boulevard. For his contributions to theatre, Burton was inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame,

DENHOLM ELLIOTT

Denholm Mitchell Elliott, CBE (31 May 1922 – 6 October 1992)



Elliott was born May 31, 1922, in Kensington, London, the son of Nina (née Mitchell; 1893–1966) and Myles Layman Farr Elliott, MBE (1890–1933), a barrister who had read law and Arabic at Cambridge before fighting with the Gloucestershire Regiment at Gallipoli and in Mesopotamia. In 1930, Myles Elliott was appointed solicitor-general to the Mandatory Government in Palestine. Three years later, following a series of controversial government prosecutions, he was assassinated outside the King David Hotel and buried in the Protestant Cemetery on Mount Zion. Elliott's elder brother Neil Emerson Elliott (1920–2003) was a land agent to Lady Anne Cavendish-Bentinck.

Elliott attended Malvern College and trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) in London. He was asked to leave the Academy after one term. As Elliott later recalled, "They wrote to my mother and said, 'Much as we like the little fellow, he's wasting your money and our time. Take him away!'"

In the Second World War, he joined the Royal Air Force, training as a wireless operator/air gunner and serving with No. 76 Squadron RAF under the command of Leonard Cheshire. On the night of 23/24 September 1942, his Handley Page Halifax DT508 bomber took part in an air raid on the U-boat pens at Flensburg, Germany. The aircraft was hit by flak and subsequently ditched in the North Sea near Sylt, Germany. Only Elliott and two crewmen survived, and he spent the rest of the war in Stalag Luft VIIIb, a prisoner-of-war camp in Lamsdorf (now Łambinowice), Silesia. While imprisoned, he became involved in amateur dramatics. He formed a theatre group that was so successful it toured other POW camps playing *Twelfth Night*.

In 1988 Elliott was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for his services to acting. His career included many stage performances, including with the Royal Shakespeare Company, and a well-acclaimed turn as the twin brothers in Jean Anouilh's *Ring Round the Moon*. His scene-stealing abilities led Gabriel Byrne, his co-star in *Defence of the Realm*, to say: "Never act with children, dogs, or Denholm Elliott."

HUGH BURDEN

Hugh Archibald Nairn Burden (3 April 1913 – 16 May 1985).

Hugh Archibald Nairn Burden was the eldest son of Harry Archibald Burden, a colonial official, and Caro Cecil née Jackson on 3 April 1913 in Colombo, Ceylon. He was educated at Beaumont College and trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama and RADA. He appeared on stage in repertory theatre in Croydon and in London's West End before military service in the Hampshire Regiment and the Indian Army from 1939 to 1942.

He appeared in films including classics such as *One of Our Aircraft Is Missing* (1942), *The Way Ahead* (1944) and *Malta Story* (1953), but he would become most prolific on television. He starred as J.G. Reeder in *The Mind of Mr. J.G. Reeder* (1969) for Thames Television, based on the short stories by the English crime writer Edgar Wallace. He



is also remembered by cult television fans for his performance as the sinister alien Channing, who plots to take over the world with killer shop window dummies called Autons, in Jon Pertwee's Doctor Who (1963) debut Doctor Who: Spearhead from Space: Episode 1 (1970).

PETER USTINOV

Sir Peter Alexander Ustinov CBE FRSA (born Peter Alexander Freiherr von Ustinov 16 April 1921 – 28 March 2004).



Peter Alexander Freiherr von Ustinov was born at 45 Belsize Park, London, England. His father, Jona Freiherr von Ustinov, was of Russian, German, Polish, Ethiopian and Jewish descent. Peter's paternal grandfather was Baron Plato von Ustinov, a Russian noble, and his grandmother was Magdalena Hall, of mixed German Ethiopian-Jewish origin. Ustinov's great-grandfather Moritz Hall, a Jewish refugee from Kraków and later a Christian convert and colleague of Swiss and German missionaries in Ethiopia, married into a German-Ethiopian family. Peter's paternal great-great-grandparents (through Magdalena's mother) were the German painter Eduard Zander and the Ethiopian aristocrat Court-Lady Isette-Werq of Gondar. Ustinov's mother, Nadezhda Leontievna Benois, known as Nadia, was a painter and ballet designer of French, German, Italian, and Russian descent. Her father, Leon Benois, was an Imperial Russian architect and owner of Leonardo da Vinci's painting Benois Madonna. Leon's brother Alexandre Benois was a stage designer who worked with Stravinsky and Diaghilev. Their paternal ancestor Jules-César Benois was a chef who had left France for St. Petersburg during the French Revolution and became a chef to

Emperor Paul I of Russia.

Jona (or Iona) worked as a press officer at the German Embassy in London in the 1930s and was a reporter for a German news agency. In 1935, two years after Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany, Jona von Ustinov began working for the British intelligence service MI5 and became a British citizen, thus avoiding internment during the war. The statutory notice of his application for citizenship was published in a Welsh newspaper so as not to alert the Germans. He was the controller of Wolfgang Gans zu Putlitz, an MI5 spy in the German embassy in London, who furnished information on Hitler's intentions before the Second World War. (Peter Wright mentions in his book *Spycatcher* that Jona was possibly the spy known as U35; Ustinov says in his autobiography that his father hosted secret meetings of senior British and German officials at their London home).

Ustinov was educated at Westminster School and had a difficult childhood because of his parents' constant fighting. While at school, Ustinov considered anglicising his name to "Peter Austin", but was counselled against it by a fellow pupil who said that he should "Drop the 'von' but keep the 'Ustinov'". In his late teens he trained as an actor at the London Theatre Studio. While there, on 18 July 1938 he made his first appearance on the stage at the Barn Theatre, Shere, playing Waffles in Chekhov's *The Wood Demon*, and his London stage début later that year at the Players' Theatre, becoming quickly established. He later wrote, "I was not irresistibly drawn to the drama. It was an escape road from the dismal rat race of school".

In 1939, he appeared in *White Cargo* at the Aylesbury Rep, where he performed in a different accent every night. Ustinov served as a private in the British Army during the Second World War, including time spent as batman to David Niven while writing the Niven film *The Way Ahead*. The difference in their ranks—Niven was a lieutenant-colonel and Ustinov a private—made their regular association militarily impossible; to solve the problem, Ustinov was appointed as Niven's batman. He also appeared in propaganda films, debuting in *One of Our Aircraft Is Missing* (1942), in which he was required to deliver lines in English, Latin, and Dutch. In 1944, under the auspices of Entertainments National Service Association, he presented and performed the role of Sir Anthony Absolute, in Sheridan's *The Rivals*, with Dame Edith Evans, at the theatre in Larkhill Camp. He spoke English, French, Spanish, Italian, German, and Russian fluently, as well as some Turkish and modern Greek. He was proficient in accents and dialects in all his languages. Ustinov provided his own German and French dubbing for some of his roles, both of them for Lorenzo's Oil.

As Hercule Poirot, he provided his own voice for the French versions of *Thirteen at Dinner*, *Dead Man's Folly*, *Murder in Three Acts*, *Appointment with Death*, and *Evil under the Sun*, but unlike Jane Birkin, who had dubbed

herself in French for this film and *Death on the Nile*, Ustinov did not provide his voice for the latter (his French voice being provided by Roger Carel, who had already dubbed him in *Spartacus* and other films).

BRUCE SETON



Sir Bruce Lovat Seton, 11th Baronet (29 May 1909 – 28 September 1969) was a British actor and soldier. He is best remembered for his eponymous lead role in *Fabian of the Yard*.

Bruce Lovat Seton was born in Simla, British India, the younger of two sons of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Bruce Gordon Seton of Abercorn (1868–1934), 9th Baronet and his wife, Elma Armstrong (died 1960). He was educated at Edinburgh Academy and then trained at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst.

Seton was commissioned into the Black Watch in 1929 as a second lieutenant but resigned his commission in 1932. A brief interruption in his acting career came during the Second World War and in November 1939 he held the rank of captain in the 10th Battalion, Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), ending the war as major (temporary). His service number was 44304 and he was awarded the Medal of Freedom.

He played Inspector Fabian of Scotland Yard in the television series *Fabian of the Yard* (1954–1956). The series was based on the career of the former Scotland Yard Detective Inspector Robert Fabian, who usually appeared briefly before the final fade-out to wind up the story. Seton's last role was as the voice of Beadle in *The Wonderful World of Disney* (1962–1963).

He fenced and boxed in the Army and was a founder member with other actors of the Lord's Taverners, a charity which raises funds to support participation in cricket. In 1963, on 7 February, the death of his brother, Alexander "Sandy" Hay Seton (who had no male heirs), Bruce became the 11th Seton baronet. As Bruce also had no male heirs at the time of his death, in 1969, the title passed to his cousin, Christopher Bruce Seton (1909–1988).

In 1950 a group of like-minded cricket enthusiasts gathered in the famous Tavern at Lord's Cricket Ground. They realised how lucky they were to be enjoying their sport and socialising with friends, and so the conversation turned to a shared desire to help those less fortunate than themselves. With that, the idea of creating a club to help young people took hold.

By September 1950, the club had more than 70 members, including the broadcaster John Snagge and cricketer Jack Hobbs. Esteemed actor, John Mills, took on the role of President and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh was delighted to become the Patron and Twelfth Man. The club began to raise money and the first charitable contributions to the National Playing Fields Association were made.