

# TELEVISION TODAY

## BBC Scotland making three-part Icelandic thriller

BBC Scotland starts production next week on a new three-part thriller serial filmed in Iceland and in Scotland.

Jack Gerson has dramatised a novel by Desmond Dwyer, *Running Wind*, which Bob McLennan is producing with an international cast, although the production is in a way a co-production, the BBC is putting up all the money. Each episode will be 30 minutes long.

The serial is being made for next week showing and Bob McLennan hopes to have it ready for transmission by September so that it could go into the autumn schedules this year.

### Archive allegations unfounded

THE BBC has been found not guilty of wiping videotapes of historic or important programmes. The allegations, which have been made from time to time, often refer to drama productions either written or directed by people who have since become distinguished in their field, so that early examples of their work are not available.

The Archives Advisory Committee, set up in 1976 by the BBC under the chairmanship of Lord Brigh, has just made an interim report to the

The case and the production unit will be living rough in Iceland. They will be filming in the interior where there are no hotels and no visitor accommodation, so that the whole unit will be living in tents. They are also likely to be the first people this year into the interior, until now the weather has prevented work there. Shooting is scheduled to take two months.

Bill Brynne is directing the serial, which has a secret service thriller background. Stuart Wilson plays the special agent and George Sewell is the secret service boss who gives him his assignment.

The female lead is being played by an Icelandic actress, Helmar Solundsdottir, who was trained at the Bristol Old Vic, and others in an international cast are Ian McCulloch and Richard Hurndall.

BBC Scotland's other major project is a dramatisation of John Buchan's *Huntingtower* which is to be made in six 30-minute episodes with Phyllis McLaren producing. The director, Bob Hird, starts filming next month and hopes to have the serial completed by October.

Casting is in progress at the moment but contacts have not yet been signed.

Phyllis McLaren has been looking at *Huntingtower* as a serial subject for some years, but the screen rights are held by Wals Dimeson Productions and he has only now been able to obtain clearance.

Meanwhile three of the six 30-minute plays that Roddy Graham told us about when we talked to him last year have been placed on BBC 2. The first, Tom Gallacher's *Off the Face*, can be seen this Saturday.

It is Gallacher's first script for television and the purpose of this group of plays, under the umbrella title *Scottish Playbill*, is to display the talents of some hitherto under-discovered writers and directors. If the

Face Film was the first play to be faced by Christopher Baker.

The second play of the trio, to be transmitted on May 27, is *Hot and Shine* by Sean McCarthy. This is a two-hander played by Dermot Crowley and Angie Rew and takes place entirely in bed, as the couple decide whether to change their life style and who shall do the changing. Roddy Graham himself has directed this one.

Finally, there is another first television play by Iain Liggart, writer of children's books. This, too, deals with marital problems, though of a different kind, and the leads are played by Cate O'Neill and Alison Key. Fiona Cunningham is the director.

All three plays are produced by Bob McLennan who hopes that the response to these three plays will induce BBC 2 to show some of all of five other half-hour productions which have been sitting on the shelf in Glasgow for up to two years.

Last weekend saw the end of shooting on BBC Scotland's version of *Macbeth*. The most involved and play of the Month. Produced by Phyllis McLaren and directed by Donald McWhinnie, the play has been put into a Scottish situation, though played in period costume.

So Ricki Faltan, whose performance in the main part has led even Phyllis McLaren to talk about a tour de force, has become the Laird of Griggy.

Others in the cast are Jenny Twigg, Anne Kratten, Valerie Fyfe and Jack Galloway. The play is being rolled to 110 minutes.

A second play of the Month, *Baroness What Every Woman Knows*, was completed almost a year ago and has now been placed in the BBC-1 schedule for July. This is another Phyllis McLaren Donald McWhinnie partnership which runs to 110 minutes and has Arie Heaghe, Hannah Gordon, Cheryl Kennedy and Margaretta Scott in the leading parts.

## Got the same share of audience in April

NO appreciable change in audience viewing habits is revealed by the figures issued by Jicar and BBC Audience Research for April. Jicar's research shows a ratio of \$545 in favour of ITV, the only difference from the March figure being that BBC appears to have taken two per cent of BBC-2's audience. The BBC claims \$2.48 in its own favour, exactly the same as in March.

According to the BBC, the highest audiences of the month, in millions, were:

Soccer, England v Brazil, BBC (19.5)

The Grand National, BBC (18.0)

Eurovision Song Contest, BBC (18.0)

Riding Day, April 11, Yorkshire (18.0)

The Best, film, BBC (14.5)

Kodak's Harvest film, ITV (14.5)

It's A Knockout, BBC (14.5)

The BBC's research also made Vodafone's *Raising Damp* the most popular series on either channel with an average over the month of 17.5 million viewers. BBC-2 recorded nearly a million for its *Montreux* series, Dave Allen at Large, and 6 million for the final of *Playhouse*.

Jicar's list of the most popular

programmes in April is:

This Is Your Life, April 5, Thames (18.80)

Rising Damp, April 11, Yorkshire (18.80)

Coronation Street, April 5, Granada (17.45)

Sunny Hill Down Under, ITV (17.15)

Armchair Thriller: As Quiet As A Nun, Thames (17.10)

Jicar's figures also show that ITV's south west area had the largest audience share vis-a-vis the BBC with 58 per cent, closely followed by Wales and the West and North East Scotland with 57 per cent.

When comparing the two sets of figures it must be remembered that the BBC samples all viewing everywhere, whereas Jicar samples only those homes able to receive both BBC and ITV. Additionally, the BBC samples individual people by personal interviews, while Jicar samples households and their individual members by meters and viewing diaries. Finally, Jicar next year the Jicar system, adapted to give results for BBC transmission areas as well as for ITV areas, will be used by both BBC and ITV for counting heads in television.

### Moscow One goes all-colour

FROM this month, all programmes on Moscow's channel one are being transmitted in colour. The aim now is to create a situation where channel one can be received throughout the Soviet Union so that the stations in the capitals of the republics and in the large regional centres, which at the moment undertake a considerable amount of production, will have only minor supplementary roles.

There are now 60 million television receivers in the USSR which allow 80 per cent of the population to watch. Only a very small proportion, however, are colour sets. It takes 610 relay stations and 80 space satellites to cover the audience.

For the future, Soviet television sees satellites and cable television as the most efficient method of multi-programme transmission.

**YORKSHIRE TELEVISION** has vacancies for

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at the Leeds Studios

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Yorkshire Television Ltd.  
The Television Centre  
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Applications are invited from persons who are fully trained, and qualified for these interesting positions.

The Company offers excellent Pension, Life and Accident Insurance Schemes, and good staff restaurant facilities.

ACITT current rates of pay will apply.

Please write stating age, experience and details of education to:

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**SOUTHERN TELEVISION LIMITED**

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### PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

Applicants should have considerable experience in direction of television programmes involving the use of both film and electronic cameras. The successful candidate would be called upon to direct news and daily magazine programmes and to be responsible for a wide-ranging series of programmes. The post is based at our Southampton Studios.

The Company offers 4 weeks' holiday a year, an excellent comprehensive pension scheme, widow/widower's pension, life and accident insurance and staff restaurant.

Please apply in writing, stating age and experience, to:

The Personnel Administrator  
Southern Television Limited  
Northam, Southampton SO9 4YQ



**SOUTHERN TELEVISION LIMITED**

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### WARDROBE ASSISTANT

on the permanent staff at the Southampton Studios

Previous experience in wardrobe work in television would be an advantage.

Please apply in writing, stating age and experience, to:

The Personnel Administrator  
Southern Television Limited  
Northam, Southampton SO9 4YQ

### FILM AND T.V. SCRIPT BREAKDOWN SERVICE

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### ENTERPRISING PERSON

MUST HAVE PROVEN LASTING AGENCY EXPERIENCE, BUSINESS ACUMEN AND CURRENT CONTACTS WITH PRODUCTION AND CASTING PERSONNEL.

For work from home, own car and telephone essential. Salary £100 p.a. minimum. Tel. 01825 11118



**SOUTHERN TELEVISION LIMITED**

has an immediate vacancy for a

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Southern Television Limited  
Northam, Southampton SO9 4YQ



**SOUTHERN TELEVISION LIMITED**

requires a

### WARDROBE MISTRESS/MASTER

on the permanent staff at the Southampton Studios

The post calls for someone with sound professional television experience to work on a wide variety of productions.

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Southern Television Limited  
Northam, Southampton SO9 4YQ



**SOUTHERN TELEVISION LIMITED**

requires a

### PRODUCTION BUYER

on the permanent staff at the Southampton Studios.

Previous experience in production buying in television or the theatre would be an advantage.

Please apply in writing, stating age and experience, to:  
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Southern Television Limited  
Northam, Southampton SO9 4YQ



**GRANADA TELEVISION LIMITED**

### REPORTERS

Granada Television is looking for on screen reporters to work in their Regional Programmes departments. Applicants should preferably have journalistic, and/or camera experience.

Candidates without such experience but with other exceptional abilities will also be considered.

Write to:  
GRANADA TELEVISION LTD.  
Gully Street  
Manchester, M60 9EA

Closing time for receipt of applications, Thursday, May 25, 1978

## Wardrobe Assistant

ATV requires a female Wardrobe Assistant at its Elstree Studio Centre in N.W. London.

Duties primarily consist of assisting female artistes with costume changes; other duties involve washing, ironing and repairing costumes as required.

Applicants must have a pleasant manner and a tidy appearance; the ability to deal tactfully with artistes, especially under pressure, is essential. Relevant theatre experience would be an advantage. Preferred upper age limit 40.

£3867 p.a. including allowances. 38-hour week (NATKE Agreement). 4 weeks' leave.

Applications to:

The Recruitment Officer  
ATV NETWORK LIMITED  
Eldon Avenue, Boreham Wood, Herts.  
Please quote VACANCY 42(E)





# TELEVISION TODAY

## BBC Scotland making three-part Icelandic thriller

BBC Scotland starts production next week on a new three-part thriller serial filmed in Iceland and in Scotland.

Jack Gerson has dramatised a novel by Desmond Bagley, *Running Blind*, which Bob McIntosh is producing with an international cast, although the production is in no way a co-production: the BBC is putting up all the money. Each episode will be 50 minutes long.

The serial is being made for network showing and Bob McIntosh hopes to have it ready for transmission by September so that it could go into the autumn schedules this year.

The cast and the production unit will be living rough in Iceland. They will be filming in the interior where there are no hotels and no visitor accommodation, so that the whole unit will be living in tents. They are also likely to be the first people this year into the interior: until now the weather has prevented work there. Shooting is scheduled to take two months.

Bill Brayne is directing the serial, which has a secret service thriller background. Stuart Wilson plays the special agent and George Sewell is the secret service boss who gives him his assignment.

The female lead is being played by an Icelandic actress, Heidur Steindarsdottir, who was trained at the Bristol Old Vic, and others in an international cast are Ian McCulloch and Richard Hurndall.

BBC Scotland's other major project is a dramatisation of John Buchan's *Huntingtower* which is to be made in six 30-minute episodes with Pharic McLaren producing. The director, Bob Hird, starts filming next month and hopes to have the serial completed by October.

Casting is in progress at the moment but contracts have not yet been signed.

Pharic McLaren has been looking at *Huntingtower* as a serial subject for some years, but the screen rights are held by Walt Disney Productions and he has only now been able to obtain clearance.

Meanwhile three of the six 30-minute plays that Roddy Graham told us about when we talked to him last year have been placed on BBC-2. The first, Tom Gallacher's *If the Face Fits*, can be seen this Saturday.

It is Gallacher's first script for television and the purpose of this group of plays, under the umbrella title *Scottish Playbill*, is to display

*Face Fits* was the first play to be directed by Christopher Baker.

The second play of the trio, to be transmitted on May 27, is *Rise and Shine* by Sean McCarthy. This is a two-hander played by Dermot Crowley and Angie Rew and takes place entirely in bed, as the couple decide whether to change their life style and who shall do the changing. Roddy Graham himself has directed this one.

Finally there is another first television play by Joan Lingard, writer of children's books. This, too, deals with marital problems, though of a different kind, and the leads are played by Colette O'Neil and Alison Key. Fiona Cumming is the director.

All three plays are produced by Bob McIntosh who hopes that the response to these three plays will induce BBC-2 to show some or all of five other half-hour productions which have been sitting on the shelf in Glasgow for up to two years.

Last weekend saw the end of shooting on BBC Scotland's version of Molière's *The Miser*, intended as a *Play of the Month*. Produced by Pharic McLaren and directed by Donald McWhinnie, the play has been put into a Scottish situation, though played in period costume.

So Rikki Fulton, whose performance in the main part has led even Pharic McLaren to talk about a tour de force, has become the Laird of Grippy.

Others in the cast are Jenny Twigg, Anne Kristen, Valerie Wyfer and Jack Galloway. The play is being edited to 110 minutes.

A second *Play of the Month*, Barrie's *What Every Woman Knows*, was completed almost a year ago and has now been placed in the BBC-1 schedule for July. This is another Pharic McLaren-Donald McWhinnie partnership which runs to 100 minutes and has Alec Heggie, Hannah Gordon, Cheryl Kennedy

## Archive allegations unfounded

THE BBC has been found not guilty of wiping videotapes of historic or important programmes. The allegations, which have been made from time to time, often refer to drama productions either written or directed by people who have since become distinguished in their field, so that early examples of their work are not available.

The Archives Advisory Committee, set up in 1976 by the BBC under

BBC Governors. In it the committee says that allegations of wiping irreplaceable tapes are "largely unfounded" and adds that "the BBC is fortunate in having so many archive-minded people among its staff".

One problem facing the committee, which is due to make its full report sometime later this year, is what to do about programmes transmitted live that could very well