

# TV TIMES / 6d

COVER STARS

*Patrick Macnee  
and Diana Rigg in*

THE  
**AVENGERS**

Thursday, 8 p.m.

**BARGAIN**

offer of Courtelle  
blankets for  
winter warmth

*Charlie Drake*

*comedian extraordinary  
talks to Max Caulfield*

Another £1,000 cash  
competition: this week  
featuring Violet Carson





# More McGoohan Magic

Patrick McGoohan chose 26-year-old Winchester College and Oxford educated bachelor and newspaper columnist

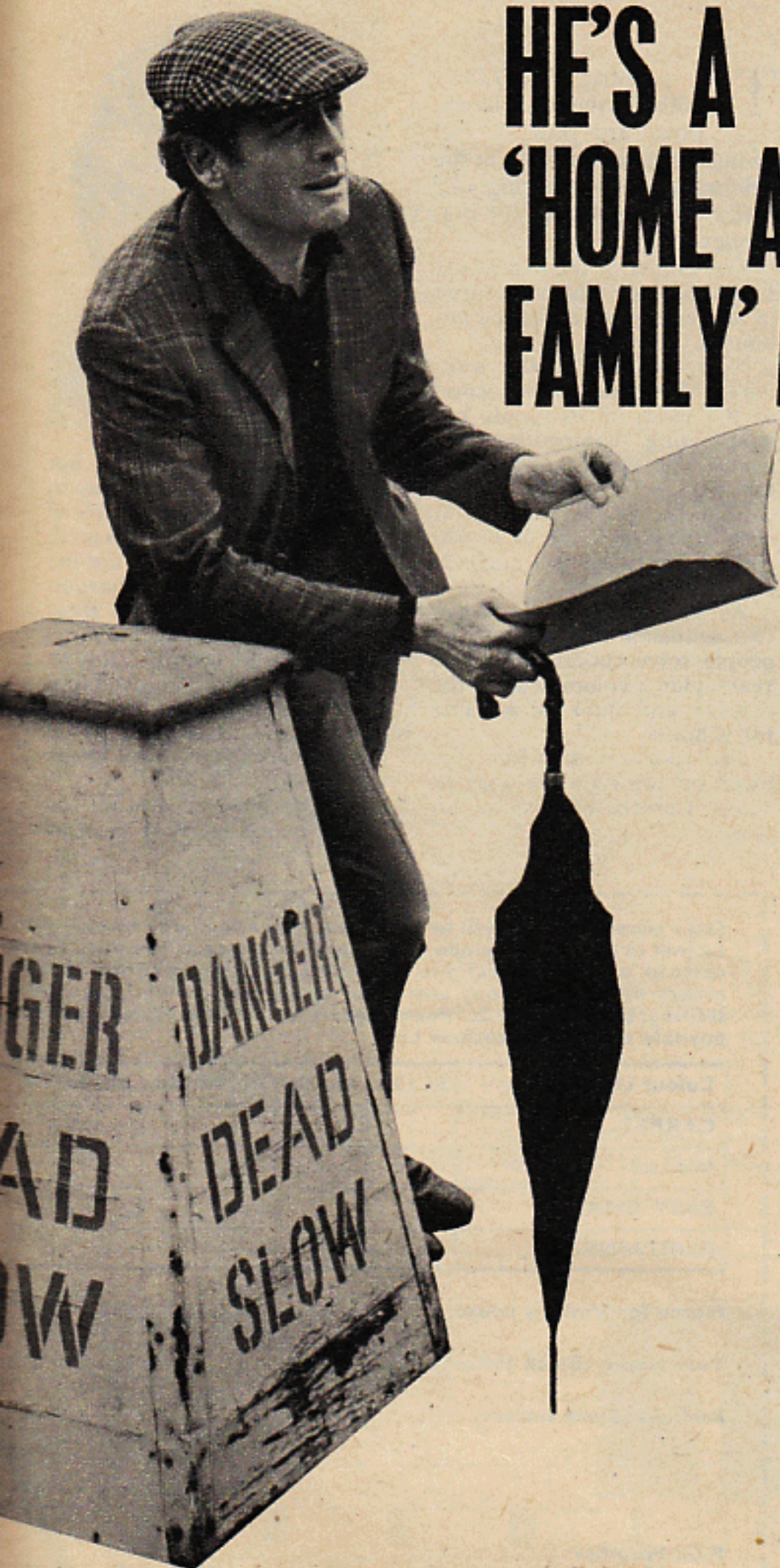
## IAIN SPROAT

to write this deep look into the McGoohan magic. This second instalment deals with McGoohan at home

## HE'S A 'HOME AND FAMILY' MAN



McGoohan in his second 'home'—at the studio—complete with coffee and script



**P**ICTURE Patrick McGoohan at home in Mill Hill, North London. He sits at ease in a room furnished comfortably but elegantly. The walls are white, the carpet mustard; there are well-polished brass lamps with green shades.

Book-cases cover most of two walls, well-filled with an assortment of books—leather-bound sets and paperbacks—obviously there more for use than for show. It is a library that gives a sense of being lived with.

Pictures of his wife and children, Catherine (13), Anne (six) and Frances (four), are dotted around. In a corner stands a reasonably well-stocked drinks table. It is a family room, a pleasant room—not too coldly tidy, but clean and welcoming.

At home, McGoohan is at ease; he sits relaxed without sprawling; he exudes a healthy well-being.

His wife Joan, dark-haired, attractive, complements him.

He enjoys making films with his family. He writes special scripts for his daughters and shoots them on 8mm. film as professionally as possible.

And he enjoys taking his wife for an occasional extravagant night out, and giving her what he calls "unbirthday presents."

"I don't," he said, "like birthdays or anniversaries." (He

keeps no scrapbook of nostalgic memories.) "I mean, if I'm ever going to drink a lot, it won't be on my birthday, or St. Patrick's day!"

"You know, I forget to give my wife birthday presents, which makes her very angry, but then I give her a present at an odd time, and that makes up for it. It's more romantic somehow that way."

This romantic view of life is very much a part of McGoohan. It ties in with what he sees as a fault in himself: a habit of putting off decisions, and then taking a whole lot at once.

It ties in with his undoubted idealism. For example we were once talking about the totally hypothetical question of what he would do were he Prime Minister.

I remember he said nothing for a moment, and then: "I would be overwhelmed with fear, but if I were, I would try to get everyone to cease combat just for one minute. Just peace on earth for one minute!"

"It's a fairy tale but you never know. It would feel so good that they might not start again."

Such is an unusual, seldom seen side to McGoohan. Perhaps it springs from an Irish romanticism: the more normal McGoohan is realistic and pragmatic.

Perhaps, too, part of his  
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# More McGoohan Magic

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appeal is in this unusual blend of a touch of wild, romantic, Celtic charm with the stiff-upper-lip of an Anglo-Saxon. Perhaps this accounts for the description one actress gave of him: "A man's man who appeals to women."

As Britain's highest-paid TV actor, and biggest TV dollar earner, McGoohan can well afford to support the happy family life. The figure most commonly mentioned as his salary is £2,000 a week, though McGoohan claims that this is exaggerated.

"I give most of it away to the Inland Revenue anyway," he said ruefully.

He has also invested in a little property, and in a restaurant. He supports certain charities—which ones he keeps secret, save to say: "For children, after all they're our only hope."

He has not spent his money on foolish extravagances: for example, he has two eminently sensible cars, an Austin Mini, and a Commer van. But he is driven to work.

His house is furnished in comfortable, but not absurd luxury. In the large garden, which has a splendid view over an un-built-up valley, there is a gipsy caravan McGoohan bought from Walt Disney.

He said: "I enjoy the work I am doing now. I make a good living, I'm lucky to be working at all.

"It's easy for things to go sour in this business. Very easy. But if they did, I wouldn't be concerned. My life is not just acting. To get into the really big time you have to dedicate yourself exclusively to the job and I'm not prepared to do that; it's not worth it.

"What's the incentive?—financial? At the very top you have to get a million dollars a picture to pay the tax on the last million.

"In any case, the values are out of proportion. It's ridiculous to pay anyone that kind of money. And, anyway, if you're not careful, when you do get to the top you just join

the glorious galaxy of alimony payers."

Perhaps in the understanding of what is the flavour, the texture, the impact of McGoohan, nothing is more important than to understand his feelings towards family life, and all that is implied by this.

Yet in all this there is one strange factor. McGoohan feels all the time "an urge to gamble with my security. For me there must be an edge, a tension about life. Otherwise, I do not get the best out of things.

"I can never be content to remain still—and here I am not just talking about acting. Once you say to yourself everything is very nice—that's death.

"I like working at high pitch. Frustration and slowness are what I loathe. They give me a real physical pain in the guts."

For his money, McGoohan works very hard, usually rising between 5.30 and 6 a.m. and not leaving the studio until after 6.30 p.m. Then there are the next day's scripts to learn.

The first thing you realise when you watch McGoohan filming is that he really can act. He was nominated best television actor of the year in 1958 for his role in *The Greatest Man in the World* and in 1959 best theatre actor of the year for his performance in *Brand*.

He is also a perfectionist: when he had to play a jazz drummer in *All The Night Long*, he would lock himself in his garage for hours on end with a drum, practising till he became expert.

He is fortunate in having a good memory for a script, though after 16 months without a break "your memory gets like a sponge."

Bad scripts are harder to learn. If he gets a really bad line, his custom, which you can hear for yourself on television, is to say it very slowly, each word separately, to give the line more apparent meaning.

He is a firm believer in discipline in acting. For example, he believes "it is unforgivable not to know your lines." Outside acting, however, "I just react to circumstances. I have few constant habits there."

McGoohan detests people arriving late for a scene. To him, acting is just like any other job. He refuses to think of what he does in any high-flown terms of art: it is just entertainment; a therapy.

This down-to-earth attitude makes him easy to work with in some ways, difficult in others.

**Next week: McGoohan the man.**

from page 8

## PIONEERS PLAY MUSICAL CHAIRS

bought the old Granville Theatre in Fulham Road as studios—which meant taking the whole theatre to pieces, turning the stage around, tearing out the old dressing rooms and redesigning everything to TV studio specifications.

But the real nail-biting problems centred round Adastral House in Kingsway, the giant rabbit-warren of out-of-date offices from which the air war against Germany had been directed.

Although a 50-year lease was taken out in January, the company were unable to get in until the Air Ministry moved out—which was not until late in May. Then the gigantic job of tearing the whole place asunder and redesigning it began.

ATV, with only the weekend programmes to worry about (their transmission in the Midlands did not begin until the following spring) were able to make do in London with one big studio, the old Wood Green Empire in North London and a smaller studio and master control room in Foley Street, near the G.P.O.'s Museum Exchange, through which all TV lines pass to the transmitters. For office space, they hired two floors in Television House.

"My overriding memory of the very early days," said Keith Rogers, "is of a small group of us, Bill Ward, then Head of Light Entertainment, now Executive Controller, Elstree Studios, his deputy, Frank Beale, Terence MacNamara, the chief engineer, and myself, sitting on the floor of an office in Regent House in the evenings, plans for studios and equipment scattered all around us, trying to work out exactly what were our requirements.

"We weren't given a budget. We simply worked out what we

needed and sent up the list to the directors. The most sobering thought for all of us was that when we totted up what we'd ordered after an evening's work, we'd find we'd spent perhaps £500,000."

By July, the job still seemed an impossible one. Skilled television technicians were at a premium. Men, of course, were being lured away from the BBC by prospects of promotion and better pay.

"But," said Bill Ward, "not everybody was prepared to take the risk like we were. The directors of ITV companies risked losing their money if the new venture failed. And those of us who left the BBC knew that ITV simply *had* to succeed. If it failed, there was no going back—the BBC had made it plain they wouldn't take us back. We knew we'd all be out of work."

But, nevertheless, staffs slowly grew. Men like Presentation Officer Cyril Francis quit a job in commercial insurance to join; Neil Bramson gave up a career as a professional French-horn player with a leading orchestra. Muriel Young gave up acting to become an announcer. Chris Chataway chucked a safe job with a big brewery concern to become a newscaster with ITN.

In July, staffs at last moved into Adastral House, by then renamed Television House. Few offices were ready for occupation. Pneumatic drills thundered everywhere; barrow loads of cement were trundled up and down; dust fell in showers. Women employees were given a hairdressing allowance; the men were told to have their suits cleaned once a month at company expense.

**Next week: No audience for the quiz show.**

