



# ‘As dangerous dead as alive’

## The making of *Survivors* Mad Dog

Rich Cross

It was, actor Denis Lill would later recall: “one of the most exhausting jobs I have ever done.” More than that: “it was a ‘huge’ episode, and it really was like living on an assault course for the time that it took us to shoot it.” Director Tristan de Vere Cole concedes that it “was a tough shoot for Denis, but I think he enjoyed the challenge.” For seven days in January and March 1977, Lill was the lynchpin of one of the best-remembered *Survivors* episodes from the programme’s third series, shot on location, and in the depth of a particularly hard winter, at sites in the Derbyshire Peak District and on the Severn Valley Railway.

For many aficionados of the programme, **Mad Dog** is not only one of the standout episodes of *Survivors*’ third year but of the entire series. For Lill, **Mad Dog** was: “the episode which sticks in my mind more than any other.”

**Mad Dog**’s distinctiveness comes from the fact that the episode isolates a single member of *Survivors*’ regular cast and, through a series of unexpected twists and turns, pitches them into a gruelling battle for survival in which they have only their wits and resourcefulness to rely upon.

There were precedents for *Survivors* scripts that focused on only a small number of the regular ensemble cast. Series two of the show had included the two-part adventure *Lights of London*, which had — in the main — concentrated on the characters of Greg, Charles and medical student Ruth Anderson, unwilling guests of an ailing central London settlement. *The Chosen*, the ninth episode of the second series, had featured only two regular cast members: Charles and his partner Pet Simpson, who visit an isolated and isolationist community in search of medical help for two gravely ill travellers they encounter. Scriptwriter Don Shaw secured an agreement from *Survivors*’ producer Terry Dudley to take this process one stage further, and to draw up a script in which only *one* of the programme’s existing characters would appear. Shaw remembers that he and the production crew: “did sense that we’d produced something very different to a normal *Survivors* script — that’s true. I think we did — because it became more filmic... less dialogue and more action.”

Lill recalls that an ‘unusual’ episode, starring only one of the programme’s leading characters had been mooted some time earlier, and that he was intrigued by the news that this was an idea that the scriptwriting team were exploring. He remembers Dudley discussing the script for **Mad Dog** with him “and saying: ‘you’ve got your western’. Which really made my day, because one thing that I’d always wanted to do was a western. And it took several years to realise that ambition. But that was as close to it that I’d ever got, I think... And it actually stands out... Because it really does fall outside the rest of the [*Survivors*] ‘genre’, as it were, and becomes a one-off episode — and I was delighted to be involved in that.”

Although **Mad Dog** would evolve into a truly unique *Survivors* story, director de Vere Cole was not preoccupied by the episode’s atypical storyline: “For all I knew, there had been other episodes in the first two series where there was just one main regular. So it wasn’t particularly significant to me.”

Shaw remembers that the original premise for the episode — the threat posed by rabies in the post-Death world — was his own: “That was my idea. I remember thinking about what would life actually be like then without any controls in place — disease would have been a huge problem, and of course there’d be no stopping rabid animals getting into and out of the country... I cannot remember exactly my thought processes, but I’m pretty certain it was me who thought of it.”

The unforgiving and harsh setting for **Mad Dog** reflected very strongly Dudley’s insistence that the third series of the show should adopt a darker and nastier narrative tone and atmosphere than its Whitecross-based predecessor. The combination of a superlative script, keenly judged direction, assured performances and perfectly suited settings would together produce an unforgettable entry in the *Survivors* canon.

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## Signing up for series three

**P**roduction on *Survivors*' third series got underway in the autumn of 1976, after Dudley received the go-ahead from the BBC to prepare a further set of thirteen episodes. As part of a writing team of five, Don Shaw was commissioned to provide the script for two series three episodes: **Mad Dog** (scheduled as the fourth episode in the run) and *Reunion* (the sixth episode, which Dudley would himself direct). Shaw had worked on *Survivors*' second series, contributing two memorable scripts (*Greater Love* and *Face of the Tiger*), and was one of four writers who were invited back to the programme in its final year (along with Ian McCulloch, Martin Worth and Roger Parkes). The fifth and final member of the writing team for *Survivors*' third series would be Dudley himself, who would pen the opening episode *Manhunt*.

In contrast to the continuity that Dudley sought amongst the series writers, he chose to rebuild his directing team from scratch for *Survivors*' third series, hiring seasoned TV professionals George Spenton-Foster, Peter Jefferies and Tristan de Vere Cole. Scriptwriter Shaw had followed *Survivors* from the very beginning, but before joining the show de Vere Cole had not. He "was aware of the series, and I had watched a bit of the first one, but it didn't grab me." Over the preceding two years, de Vere Cole had been: "extremely busy. I have been looking at what I was doing between April 1974 and December 1976, when I started my contract — and I did three episodes of *Warship*, four episodes of *Trinity Tales*; one *Z-Cars*, six *Angels* and a play called *The Game*." He recalls that: "Dudley asked me to go and see him, and that was it really... I'd never worked for Terry before, I don't think I'd actually ever even met him." De Vere Cole was assigned his three third series' episodes at the same meeting at the BBC, being awarded *Sparks* and *Long Live the King* at the same time as **Mad Dog**.

The leading characters of *Survivors* had been revised prior to the start of work on series three, just as they had been between the first and the second series. In 1977, Jenny Richards and Charles Vaughan would be joined by Hubert Goss to form a wandering group of emissaries who would leave the security of Whitecross behind, and set out on a quest to reunite with Greg Preston and push forward their joint efforts at reconstruction and socio-economic revival.

The character of Charles Vaughan, played by Denis Lill, had first appeared as a one-off guest-star in the first series *Survivors*' episode *Corn Dolly* back in 1975, before returning to become one of the shows joint leads in series two the following year. In 1977, with actor Ian McCulloch (who played the role of Greg Preston) opting to appear in just two episodes of the final series, Lill's position as the leading male actor on the programme was assured. What enhanced his status still further was the award of what was effectively a 'showcase' episode for his character in the guise of **Mad Dog**.

## Writing the script for Mad Dog

**P**rior to his work on *Survivors*, Shaw had worked with producer Terry Dudley on a number of other TV projects. "I'd worked with him on *Doomwatch*. I wrote some episodes for that, and I was one of the first writers on that. It came from Kit Pedler and Gerry Davies, and I worked with them. Surprisingly, Terry Dudley had me writing a series called *The First Lady*, which starred Thora Hird. She was a Labour town councillor in northern England — before *Survivors*. It was in 1969. Terry Dudley got me working on that." Following their various collaborations, Shaw had come to admire Dudley "because he was doing some very interesting work at the BBC, and at that time I was very much an up-and-coming hot-shot writer."

For Shaw, the particular attraction of working on *Survivors* was that it gave him the opportunity to explore his own interest in "ideas and philosophies. This is what fascinated me, particularly people who are up against it. This is why *Survivors* was such a great series, fundamentally. People are tested against the very basic elements of life — life and death."

On both series one and two of *Survivors* conflicts between Dudley and his team of scriptwriters had been an unwelcome and recurring aspect of the behind-the-scenes process. With Dudley taking a less invasive approach to his work on series three, this issue appears to have become far less fraught and there were far fewer instances of Dudley attempting to rework the scripts of his writers' team. Shaw felt that Dudley gave him a huge amount of creative room for manoeuvre: "I think he trusted you, and he picked writers that he could trust. So what happened was that you had the basic outline — not the plot, no, or where it was going even, but where we were at. 'How do you want to take it forward?' In other words, he left it to the writer."

Shaw was commissioned to produce scripts for **Mad Dog** and *Reunion* in October 1976. During the time in which he researched his first series three episode, Shaw spoke with a doctor friend of his who advised him in detail how a rabies infection would affect a patient as it developed. Early on in the writing process for **Mad Dog**, Shaw settled on the dramatic shift that would occur part way through the episode: a change that would shift the focus of the drama from the philosophical and political conflict between Charles and Dr Richard Fenton (who rescues him from the attack of the wild dog pack) to Charles' flight for his life, pursued by the hard-headed Sanders and his hunting party, convinced that this wounded stranger in their midst is a potential rabies carrier.

Shaw explains that he didn't want the drama "to get bogged down in verbiage. Philosophical discussion is not really what drama is about. It's about conflict, basically, isn't it? Dramatic conflict of some sort. So I think that... gave it a good balance."

Shaw remembers that the deadline for each *Survivors* script was usually very tight: "I had three weeks in which to write an episode. Three weeks — that was all you had! That was very, very short."

Director de Vere Cole was immediately impressed by Shaw's completed script, which he felt required very

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few changes: “One sometimes gets a script, and you can see the potential. It’s not arrogance, but, the producer’s had a go at it and the script editor’s had a go at it, and then the director had a go at it, and then the actors want to have their say. But my theory is that, however bad or so-so a script is, basically, what ends up on the screen is going to be, minimum, seventy-per-cent the writer’s own words. Now, with Don Shaw’s scripts obviously one had queries, one had questions, one had ideas, but I would say... ninety-per-cent of what ended up on the screen was there in the beginning.” Moreover, he was particularly pleased that **Mad Dog**: “had the good contrast” between the dialogue-driven character based components and the roving action sequences. The script was given a swift go-ahead: “I don’t remember even having a ‘script conference’ with him when the script came in.” There was absolutely “no fiddling by Terry Dudley.”

Denis Lill was equally taken by the finished article: “I looked at the script and I thought ‘my goodness, this is a remarkably good idea.’” Shaw was, in turn, particularly pleased by the on-screen realisation and execution of his **Mad Dog** script — much to de Vere Cole’s evident satisfaction.

## Recruiting the production team

**D**irector de Vere Cole recalls that: “my contract started on 6 December 1976 and the first shooting day was 27 January 1977. Now, of that six or seven weeks, part of the time was also spent on — even though the scripts weren’t there right from the beginning — thinking about them [*the other two episodes*] as well. Obviously, my main attention was on **Mad Dog**, but it wasn’t an awful lot of time.” In preparing for the **Mad Dog** shoot, he was extremely pleased to be able to call upon the expertise of a range of technicians and specialists with whom he had either worked before or whose reputation was well known.

Production Unit Manager Gordon Elsbury, with whom de Vere Cole had collaborated previously, had three wide-ranging behind-the-camera roles on **Mad Dog**, serving as Assistant Director, Production Manager and Location Manager. On comparable productions today, these roles are split between three specialist crew members. Elsbury was responsible for sourcing suitable locations, securing the director’s approval of his selection; arranging filming permissions and fees; planning the mechanics of the shoot; finding and booking transport and accommodation, and, ultimately, “making up the schedule” that would serve as the timetable for the shoot.

De Vere Cole’s Production Assistant was Patricia Preece; a colleague he’d also worked with prior to *Survivors*. She was, he recalls, “cool and efficient.” Her job: “covered all aspects of the paperwork on the production, calling the shots... and being a personal sounding-board for the director — amongst many other diverse tasks.” Preece was also responsible for continuity on the shoot: “which is terribly important, particularly when filming complex set-ups with one camera.” On *Survivors*, de Vere Cole remembers that he could rely on both the skills and commitment of camera crew who “were so keen and willing.” Three cameramen worked on the original **Mad Dog** shoot: Frank Hudson, Simon Fone (who both served on *Survivors* second series, and several other series three episodes) and Roger Prior (who only worked on **Mad Dog**).

Working closely with his camera operators was the episode’s Lighting Director. “I had particularly asked for the lighting guy to be Hubert Cartwright. Now, Hu Cartwright was a brilliant lighting man for video. When they did *The Major of Casterbridge* series with Alan Bates, the lighting was fantastic. It was all done with candles and through windows and [*using*] natural light — so I asked for him on a *Z Cars* I was doing, and he did it and he was great to work with, and I asked for him to be on my three [*Survivors*]. He was somebody who believed in natural light as much as possible and not augmenting too much, to the point that sometimes the technicians in the van would say ‘we’ve got a noisy picture, I think we need more light.’ And I would say ‘I like the picture as it is, and I’ll buy the grain.’” From the technicians there’d be: “a lot of tooth-sucking going on, and I’d say ‘well, let’s wait until Hu comes back in, and he’ll have a look at it.’ And I’d say ‘Hu, we’re just discussing these pictures — do you think they’re too grainy?’ ‘Oh, I like them as they are.’ I’d say ‘fine, I’m happy.’”

“I also had a very good sound guy called Ian Lieper, who’d worked with me before on OBs. A brilliant man, not afraid of using radio mics. There’d always been, in that period, [*the problem*] that sound people didn’t like using radio mics. Either they were frightened of them, or they felt that they hadn’t got control.” Many technicians, when it came to using such technology: “if they could avoid it, they’d avoid it like the plague.” In contrast, Lieper was a radio mic enthusiast, and “any problems, he solved with no kind of fuss.” De Vere Cole adds: “He was brilliant, a lovely man, and when we were doing the storm stuff” in which Fenton and Charles ride on horseback through sleeting snow “the pitch-perfect sound was still there.”

De Vere Cole was also “very pleased to have” on board the very capable Lisa Westcott (joined by assistant Jill Thomas) who was in charge of make-up, and Geoff Powell, who was employed as set designer. Powell, whose distinctive appearance was “not unlike a Hell’s Angel”, was “a very talented and organised guy. I had not worked with him before, but I was lucky to have him on the team.” Powell worked closely with Assistant Floor Manager Kate Osborne who: “marshalled all the props on site, getting all the stuff together and looking after that side of things.” Andre Salat and Kay Woodley served as set dressers, with Roger Williams responsible for sourcing the props prior to the shoot.

Jack Wells was the armourer for **Mad Dog** (he worked on many episodes of both series two and three), and was responsible for all of the firearms used by the actors and stunt performers at Monsal and Ilam; Ben Ford was in charge of all the horses used across the whole of *Survivors* third series; while Sam Perrie was similarly employed as a dog handler.

For de Vere Cole the confidence and competence of his production crew was central to the episode’s success: “I couldn’t have asked for a better lot of people.” He remains insistent that their contribution to the production

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process needs to be more widely recognised and acknowledged. “They don’t get the credit they are due [*because*] they’re in the background; they’re not in the picture.”

## Recruiting the guest-stars

**A**lthough **Mad Dog** relies on a focus on the single character of Charles Vaughan (played with great panache by Denis Lill), its success is also premised on the presence of some very effectively and economically drawn guest characters with whom Charles interacts. Central amongst these is the mischievous and deeply melancholy Doctor Richard Fenton played with consummate skill by Morris Perry. Perry is joined on screen by Bernard Kay (Sanders), Ralph Arliss (Jim), Stephen Bill (Ron), Heather Canning (Ellen), Max Faulkner (Phil), Robert Pugh (Fireman) and Eric Francis (Driver).

The director remembers that (with the obvious exception of Lill) the choice of all other actors on **Mad Dog** was his own: “When I was hired for **Mad Dog**, and the other episodes, I did all the guest casting. And the process with me, and I think with directors at the time, was that you would check on the availability of actors — and some were available and some were not — and then you’d check on their fees — and some were too high and some were reasonable. You’d whittle it down, and you’d interview some, or, if they were well known, you’d send them a script. But with the final casting, you would go to your producer, whether it was Terry Dudley or [*his counterpart on*] *Z Cars* or whoever, and say ‘these are the people I’m thinking of having.’ And a producer might know somebody a bit better than you... The ultimate decision on guest casting was always with the director, but it was a foolish director who didn’t actually consult with the producer, in case other ideas came up. Nobody had been cast, except for the regulars, when I appeared.”

Morris Perry remembers: “I did [*some episodes of*] *The Sweeney* around that time, and I had done three series of *Special Branch*, which finished in '71. So it was a kind of period when I was doing quite a lot of telly.” On meeting Perry, de Vere Cole was immediately convinced that he possessed the right sort of “erudite, professor-ish” feel for the character.

Perry recalls that his director suggested that he look at a famous novel to help him prepare for the role of the doomed Fenton: “There’s a passage in *The Story of San Michele* he asked me to read. But the rabid don’t write much and I didn’t find it much help... [*in evoking a sense of what*] it feels like.” In addition, Perry “did a bit of research elsewhere”; however except “that it’s dangerous and makes you froth at the mouth” he acknowledges he knew “very little” about the disease. He concedes that, as an actor: “In the end, you’re pretty much alone and you just have a shot at it.”

De Vere Cole had employed several of the actors that he hired for **Mad Dog** on earlier productions on which he’d been director. “I’d worked with Bernard Kay and Ralph Arliss before”, in Kay’s case “two or three times.” The director first encountered Robert Pugh at the Rose Bruford School in Kent, where he’d been studying stage and screen acting. “He’d been there as a student, and I’d been very struck by him, so I offered him the part of the fireman on the train.” Pugh had the right sort of “physical presence... He looked the part totally.” In de Vere Cole’s view: “He was excellent in what was a small part.” The director also felt that his colleague Francis had just the right demeanour and presence to be credible in the role of the train driver. The director was similarly impressed by Ralph Arliss, another “very physical” actor. “When we were up there staying in this little broken down hotel in the snow, at Alsop-en-le-Dale, Ralph got up before shooting and did a sort of marathon run every morning.” Morris Perry remembers that Arliss was: “good with horses, and he was capable of running five miles before work in the morning.”

On meeting with Heather Canning, the director was sure that she possessed the “serenity... kindness and warmth” that was required for the role of Ellen. Canning’s background was principally as a stage actress, but de Vere Cole was confident that she grasped the very different requirements of acting on the small-screen.

In selecting all of his guest actors, de Vere Cole chose to forgo the normal auditioning process (getting the actor to read through a section of this script) as he had decided from experience that this was an unreliable guide to the actor’s true on-screen abilities. Instead he preferred to get a measure of the performer through an informal discussion of the role and the actor’s ideas about how they might approach it.

Tragically, Bernard Kay’s wife Patricia Hayes died just prior to shooting on the episode was due to get underway. De Vere Cole immediately offered to reschedule Kay’s scenes, but the actor was insistent on his desire to work and joined the production as scheduled. “She had literally just died the week before shooting. And he arrived... and I had said to him ‘look Bernard, we can leave your scenes.’ He said ‘no, no — I want to work.’ So we stayed up, when he’d arrived that first night at the hotel, until three o’clock playing backgammon.” Come the next morning: “he did his job, he was so professional.”

Little information is available on the rehearsal process for **Mad Dog**, although the general trend of series three episodes was that such sort of preparation ahead of arrival on location had been sharply curtailed — such were the time pressures on the series’ directors. What de Vere Cole certainly had clearly mapped out before his cast assembled on site was a meticulous shooting schedule for each of his five allotted days, from which little deviation could be afforded.

Since the latter part of series one, *Survivors* had become almost entirely reliant on on-location recording by Outside Broadcast (OB) video cameras. These twin cameras would be attached by lengthy ‘umbilical cables’ to a ‘scanner van’ where both sound and image would be recorded to tape for later editing. From *Starvation* onwards, *Survivors* principal locations had been at or close to Hampton Court near Hope-under-Dinmore (the setting for the Grange community). Making use of sites in close proximity to one another was, series one and two director Pennant Roberts recalls, a vital requisite for completing an episode shoot in the available time. On series two, the following

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year, the programme followed the same logic: making the the Callow Hill settlement just outside Monmouth its principal location, although a number of episodes did venture further afield. For series three of *Survivors* there was no such fixed base, as the programme rediscovered the wandering format with which the first series had begun.

For **Mad Dog**, the challenge was not just that previously-unseen locations had to be sourced and secured, but that — once these had been found — the production needed travel to, set up and record at three separate sites within its five day allotted time-slot.

## Selecting the Mad Dog locations

**F**ew viewers would disagree with Lill's assessment that, for **Mad Dog**, recording took place: "in some stunning locations." For this unusual episode, the production unit found the ideal isolated rural locations in which Charles' encounter with Fenton, his slide into fever, and Charles' flight for his life could all be depicted. Shaw suggests that TV production was: "not yet in the film age for television. We were still in that transitory world between studio drama and film. With those lightweight OB cameras we could go out and explore the environment, as television does at its best." In Shaw's view: "OB liberated you. You could go out and do the whole thing like film; without the quality of film but nevertheless with the freedom of film. You could go onto locations. You could record people on bikes riding down lanes, and people being dragged by horses, suffering rabies, in the depths of the winter." He reflects that: "The cast and the technicians had to be very hardy for this type of work since they had to spend a long time just standing around in the cold."

Although the locations on which de Vere Cole ultimately settled seem perfectly suited, scriptwriter Shaw is clear that he had not been prescriptive in describing the locations in which the episode was to be set. Shaw explains: "I'm not a locations manager. I didn't go out and hunt these places down." Shaw had set the story of **Mad Dog** in some unspecified part of the Peak District — having Fenton refer to the "urban dogs", now escaped from the nearby conurbations of Sheffield (where Fenton himself worked as a lecturer) and Manchester, who will soon have killed: "every sheep between here and Buxton." The exact locations for the shoot, however, remained a matter for the director. De Vere Cole was alerted to the existence of Monsal Dale, just outside of Bakewell, by his Production Unit Manager, who thought that the valley together might provide many useable sites in close proximity to one another. The director remembers: "Monsal Dale was found by Gordon Elsbury, who died some time ago, he was my production manager. His father suggested it." Elsbury and de Vere Cole were also recommended to look at locations just above the village of Ilam, some thirty miles to the south, where a remarkable isolated farmhouse, built as a recuperative sanatorium, stood high about the Dovedale gorge. On checking out the area, and discovering the nearby Ilam Tops Farm, Elsbury and de Vere Cole were confident that (with the Severn Valley Railway scenes already agreed) they had found all of their necessary locations. The director recalls: "You go round; you see your locations; you have a mosey round, you say 'yeah, this'll do.' You go back on your own, and you spend time on your own, working out what you want to see in the confines [of the setting] and what's required in the script. Then you do your reece with your cameraman and sound and lighting, and you say 'this is what I want to do.'"

De Vere Cole first travelled to the Derbyshire locations for **Mad Dog** on December 8 1976, when he stayed at the Isaak Walton Hotel in Ilam for a 'reece' lasting until December 10. It became almost immediately clear that Monsal Dale would provide an ideal location for the vast majority of the episode's scenes. With a shooting schedule now in draft form, de Vere Cole visited scriptwriter Shaw on December 18 1976 at his home in Etwell in Derbyshire to discuss the episode further. He had: "nice chats with Don, whom I'd met before, because he did a lot of work with Innes Lloyd, on *Thirty Minute Theatres* and so on, and I'd worked a lot with Innes Lloyd, so our paths had crossed." After filming on **Mad Dog** had been completed, the pair were to learn that the Monsal locations which feature so prominently in the episode had five years earlier been utilised on an adaptation of *The Watercress Girl* — an instalment of Granada TV's *Country Matters* drama series. **Mad Dog's** place in the production run in series was dictated by Dudley's schedule for the entire series, and the need to have the seasons on screen unfold in broadly chronological order. Shaw could not have dictated the wintry weather conditions which so enhanced the on-screen realisation of his story. De Vere Cole recalls that **Mad Dog**: "was not 'set' in any time — 'this is to be filmed in January'... The writer would be commissioned to write. He wouldn't know when his story was going to be shot. He wouldn't say 'I want this to be shot in January', because the whole schedule of how all the other episodes would be shot would then have to be worked round it, and the producer would not... [entertain that sort of constraint] on something like *Survivors*... I don't think he and Terry Dudley said 'let's shoot this in the depths of winter, and we might get snow and ice and it might look good.'" Shaw agrees: "It wasn't written into it, because you can't do that. Episodes have their slots, and they have to go out on certain days and you get the weather that you've got. We were just fortunate... we could not predict the weather. It just so happened it was like that... There was snow there; there was ice; and the cold undoubtedly was there. You cannot plan for that though."

## Day One: beginning the shoot at Hampton Loade

**T**he five-day shoot for **Mad Dog** (the standard allocation for each *Survivors* episode) began on 27 January 1977, with the production unit leaving London early that morning to head to the first locations on the Severn Valley Railway. Dudley had arranged for *Survivors* to make extensive use of the rail line in three series three episodes which would be recorded concurrently: *Law of the Jungle*, which had preceded **Mad Dog**, and *Bridgehead*, which was to follow it. (A short establishing shot of a train in motion, filmed during the making of *Bridgehead* would

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also later appear in the opening scenes of the series' final episode *Power*). De Vere Cole recalls that his unit "was not ordered to go there" first off, but as the previous and following episodes were scheduled to make use of locations on the same line: "I said 'fine, let's go there.' I was very happy with it."

Starting with the Severn Valley locations meant that the closing sequences of **Mad Dog**, featuring Charles' escape from the district by stream train, and his nursing back to health by the train crew's community, were the first to be recorded.

These scenes were shot at and close to Hampton Loade station on the Severn Valley Steam Railway, which had recently been brought back into operation by a restoration team, and which had in 1972 appeared in an unsuccessful series' pilot penned by *Survivors*' creator Terry Nation: *The Incredible Robert Baldick: 'Never Come Night'*. Several of the sites made use of in **Mad Dog** have since disappeared in the course of the line's redevelopment, although Hampton Loade station is itself still regularly served by trains from the Kidderminster and Bridgnorth terminuses of the line.

As he travelled to the location, de Vere Cole recalls that he did not feel in any way anxious about beginning work on his first Outside Broadcast shoot on *Survivors*. Given his wide previous experience, he was: "Not at all worried, because I'd worked with video on location since 1970. I did a series called *Waugh on Crime. Z Cars* I did in 1971 and 1976, and *Trinity Tales*, by Alan Plater, which was his version of *The Canterbury Tales*, in 1975, which was a mixture of studio, film and OB cameras. And I'd also done, at the opening of the Manchester [BBC] studios, for David Rose the producer, *The Game* by Harold Brighouse which Henry Livings had adapted, for which we used a mixture of studio and OB cameras around Manchester. So I actually quite enjoyed that sort of working, and was not apprehensive."

Having prepared exhaustively in advance, the director began with a clear sense of how he was going to approach the shoot: "And I think if you asked people... I'm not exactly 'pedantic', but I know what I want to see... With the OB work on *Survivors* you didn't actually stand and jaw-jaw about how you were going to shoot it. You told them what you wanted to see, and they'd throw up the pictures on the monitor, and you'd say 'no, let's go tighter and come out with them', or 'let's go wider to begin with and zoom in.'"

### The Incredible Robert Baldick

In 1971, *Survivors* creator Terry Nation approached the BBC Drama Department with a pitch for a new series that would follow the adventures of Victorian gentleman sleuth Robert Baldick. This fiercely intelligent and forward-thinking investigator was to become involved in supernatural goings-on across the continent of Europe, bringing scientific reasoning to bear on unexplained crimes and bizarre phenomena. Initially entitled *The Incredible Dr Baldick*, Nation won a commission for a 'Drama Playhouse' pilot for a possible series. This first instalment, "Never Come Night", broadcast in October 1972, introduced what was to be Baldick's signature mode of transport: his private train *The Red Czar*, on which he was to roam far and wide at home and abroad. Sequences involving the train were filmed as locations close to Hampton Loade (later used for the closing sequences of **Mad Dog**). With the pilot proving unsuccessful, these were to be the only scenes involving Baldick's stylish locomotive ever recorded.

The restrictions of budget were also not a significant concern to the director: "Well, because one had been brought up on television, with *Z Cars* and all those sorts of things in the past, where you were given a budget, and, basically, in those days, if you wanted to spend more on design, you would do so and you would cut back on your extras or whatever." As a result, he: "wasn't really conscious of the restraints of budget. Time — time was always the thing in television in those days. Getting it done in the time was the problem."

As recording on **Mad Dog** began, with useable daylight in seasonally short supply, time pressures were again at their most acute — as they had been for directors shooting the early episodes of the previous two series of *Survivors*, each of which had had a January start date. De Vere Cole points out that what made his job on **Mad Dog** still more challenging was that the majority of the episode was set in daytime exterior locations: "There were very few night scenes, apart from those at Fenton's cottage... In a funny sort of way, you might have thought that they would have scheduled an episode that had a lot of night shoots, because it gets dark at 4.30pm in January. You can't start shooting until 9.00, or 8.30 if you're lucky, in the morning, and you have to stop shooting at 4.00-4.30pm. You've wasted time, in a way... I hadn't thought of it before — there must have been other episodes where there was a lot more night shooting than I had."

De Vere Cole began work on what was effectively a half-day of recording with actors Denis Lill (Charles), Robert Pugh (Fireman), Eric Francis (Driver), Alfreda Atkinson (Alfreda) and extras Stanley Welch and Kenneth Reynolds (who appear — in non-speaking roles — as farmers loading supplies onto the train in one of the closing scenes).

The first scenes scheduled to be shot on **Mad Dog** were those at and close to Hampton Loade station. The montage of shots of the steam engine racing along the track with the unconscious Charles aboard (Scene 50 on the shooting script) were the very first to be recorded. This and the next camera set-up involved locations in and around some sidings on the line, an site since redeveloped as a picnic area close to what is now the Country Park Halt on the line. The recording schedule made very clear that in these sequences the Driver and Fireman aboard the train were 'Not actors' but the actual rail crew. Next came Scene 49, in which Charles is seen crawling through the thicket by the track side before stopping to watch the stationary engine emerge from amidst a great cloud of steam — a scene the director was particularly pleased by. Avoiding the train crew, Charles sneakily climbs aboard the empty wagon at the rear of the rolling stock in the hope of making good his escape. The production then moved to Hampton Loade station itself, to record the arrival of the train at the station (Scene 51), and then Charles' discovery by the

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disembarked crew. (In 1977, southbound trains arrived at the station at Platform 2. Since then the lines and platform numbers have been switched. The main action from **Mad Dog** was therefore shot on what is now Platform 1.) These sequences were recorded amidst a persistent rain shower – an early indication of wintry weather conditions that would get considerably worse as the production headed northwards the following day. Scenes 52-53 were the last set out on the schedule, which would – in the properly assembled edit of the episode – be the episode’s final sequences. In these, Charles emerges from the station building and, thanking Alfreda for her hospitality, joins the engine driver on the platform to encourage him to think about plans for a national rail network. In these scenes, the OB camera reversed backwards along the platform, keeping Charles and the driver in mid-shot as they approached and then boarded the cab, where they rejoined the engine’s fireman. In very cramped conditions, the final close-ups of the episode were then recorded inside the cab.

De Vere Cole had to tolerate a brief blur of interference lines on the picture as Lill sounded a blast on the engine whistle, before the vehicle (again, with the real crew aboard) departed the station. The continuing shot of train’s departure, recorded from the station platform, was intended to provide the background for the episode’s closing credits. The schedule noted that further footage for the opening railway montage could then be recorded if there was sufficient time available (but it seems likely that there was not), before location work concluded for Day One and the production broke camp to head northwards some seventy miles to Ilam on the edge of the Derbyshire Peak District.

When edited, the Severn Valley sequences would together account for just under five minutes of screen time (44:30 – 49:24), and with the target for all *Survivors*’ shoots of ‘12-minutes cut footage per day of recording’, this increased the work pressures for the remaining four days of the shoot.

## Day Two: relocating to Ilam

**A**rriving in Derbyshire, the cast and crew bunkered down overnight at The New Inn in Alsop en-le-Dale, where they would stay for the remainder of the **Mad Dog** shoot. De Vere Cole recalls that, although the building was a little ragged around the edges, it was “a place of real character” and itself “perfect for a location”. Perry recalls that it was always “good to get back to the hotel where I remember low rafters and real blazing fires.” On the morning of 28 January 1977, the production arrived on site just above the village of Ilam and atop of the Dovedale George, outside the isolated Air Cottage farm. Lill remembers being made aware that “this curious little cottage had been built to house a tubercular daughter of a rather rich family. And this entire thing had been built there – an extraordinary location. Rather decayed and falling apart, but obviously quite a valuable piece of real estate now, I should imagine.” He adds: “It was a beautiful little Victorian house in miniature for her to live in; presumably she died in it too.”

For the next two days, all of the sequences making use of Air Cottage, the nearby Ilam Tops Farm and the surrounding area, would be recorded, despite the fact that these scenes appear at different points in the episode’s storyline. The shoot at Ilam and later at Monsal Dale would show the ingenuity and sharp-eye of director de Vere Cole and his camera crew. Through the most intelligent and effective use of framing and editing, de Vere Cole was later able to imply on-screen that sites that are in reality many miles apart stood in close proximity, and also to make separate locations that are in truth adjacent to one another. De Vere Cole recalls that recording in such locations ‘blocks’ was the only practical way to work: “When we got to Ilam... you’ve got your caravans, you’ve got your circus of trucks up there, you don’t want to be moving them out and then come back again. That’s wasting time you haven’t got.”

Joining the production on its second day were actors Morris Perry (Fenton), Bernard Kay (Sanders) and Ralph Arliss (Jim).

The move northward to the Peak District coincided with a significant fall in temperature and a worsening of winter weather conditions that would accompany the team for the remainder of the shoot. Lill remembers: “it was bitterly cold – so cold in fact that we were snowed in at one stage, and we had to... [*take shelter in*] the pub! Awful, actually!” De Vere Cole remembers that the freezing conditions even affected the equipment. There were times “when we arrived in the morning, if we’d been on the site for two or three days, particularly Ilam, and we’d have to wait half-an-hour while we thawed out all of the equipment. That was par for the course.” The director was, however, determined to make best use of all that the weather could throw at the production: “As you get more experience in filming, and it’s pissing with rain... you’re going to shoot anyway, when you actually look at it on the screen, provided that it has rained reasonably constantly and not just been one shower and you’ve had to reshoot, it’s a bonus... And it was the same with the weather on **Mad Dog**. It paid off; it was a bonus. It was part of what made the programme successful. In many ways, it was lucky.”

The sequences above Ilam were the first of the **Mad Dog** locations at which writer Shaw was present during the recording. For the remainder of the shoot, Shaw recalls that he: “was there all the time. Loved it, loved it.” The presence of a writer on-set might not always be welcomed by cast and crew, but Shaw recalls that there were no objections from: “people that I worked with. They often liked the writer there. So long as the writer didn’t interfere. It would help them occasionally, because they could turn round to the writer and say ‘hey, what about this?’” De Vere Cole remembers that Shaw “never intruded” on his directorial decision making.

Recording on Day Two of **Mad Dog** began with all of the exterior sequences set outside and in close proximity to Air Cottage – Fenton’s ‘half-way house’ in the episode. First up was Scene 9, in which Fenton, standing in the doorway, hurls out the pan of water that Charles has fetched for him from the river. He and Charles share a second’s revealing eye contact, before Fenton slams the door and retreats inside. On the DVD audio commentary

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track for **Mad Dog**, recorded in August 2005, Perry reflects that this (actually his first sequence on the shoot) was a “great moment”.

This short, but highly memorable, scene was followed by the more extensive sequence in which a distraught Fenton attempts suicide by threatening to jump from the wall behind his ‘half-way house’ into the river in the valley below (Scene 11). The crash-zoom of the flowing water by which Fenton is repulsed was recorded later from the top of the viaduct in Monsal Dale, and cut-in at the editing stage. The conceit works wells, although de Vere Cole suggests that use of a shot of the Monsal weir would have provided him with a more dramatic image: “I have to say, it isn’t a very good shot... We should have done it looking down at the weir, but I expect I couldn’t get a high enough POV [*point-of-view*] shot looking straight down.”

This was the first of many planned cutting-together of Monsal and Ilam locations which de Vere Cole and his team had carefully plotted ahead of time. After Fenton has collapsed delirious and semi-conscious, Charles ties him up and drags him back towards the house. This was a particularly uncomfortable scene for Perry to endure. Shaw can remember watching the sequence being recorded: “They made a little sledge for him to lie on, but it was a very thin sort of sledge. It just kept him off the ground, but when he was dragged it looked as though he was being dragged through the ice – when he was just a little bit off it! But he was bloody cold.” Shaw also recalls discussing this sequence with Perry many years later when the pair: “last met at Stratford, he was in one of the Shakespeare productions... and I met him afterwards at the Stage Door, and we talked about that and he said ‘oh yes, wonderful’. I said ‘My god, you were hours being dragged around... in the snow suffering from rabies – supposed to be suffering from rabies – you must have been absolutely frozen.’ ‘Well’, he said, ‘it comes with the job; you do it.’ Great trooper, wonderful actor, and a delight to work with.”

With these completed, the exterior Air Cottage scenes involving Kay and Arliss were next to be recorded, beginning with Sanders’ and Jim’s arrival on horseback (Scene 14) in the company of Charles. This was then followed by the sequences in which they are confronted and menaced by the now-rabid Fenton (the first part of Scene 20). After the brief scene in which Charles is shown returning from the river weir (itself a Monsal Dale location) carrying water for Fenton (Scene 7), the complex fight sequence in which the returning Sanders, Jim and Charles attempt to subdue the deranged Fenton, who is shot dead in the ensuing struggle (the remainder of scene 20), was recorded.

The director was determined that the scenes depicting the onset of Fenton’s rabies should be both convincing and frightening. Not wanting to under-sell the onset of Fenton’s delirium, de Vere Cole had urged make-up artist Westacott to: “Go the full bit” in realising its effects. Of the make-up, Perry reports: “I remember there was a lot of fuss about it, wondering if it was going to work or not...” He adds: “The make up girls produced the froth for foaming at the mouth... Denis took a photo in colour which I still have somewhere. Several things were tried. I think there was cold custard. But in the end it was mostly white of egg.”

With Fenton despatched, attention then immediately turns to Charles’ condition, and – under sentence of death – he struggles with Sanders and Jim and then flees on horseback, but suffers a bullet wound in the process. The director considers that Sanders and Jim were very plausible, human characters: “People call then the ‘villains’ of **Mad Dog**... but they weren’t really villains. They were just making sure that rabies didn’t get more people. They played it well enough for you to believe ‘My god, they’re probably right to kill this guy... because it could spread, and they’ve made a decision.’”

With all the scenes in the courtyard in front of the building now complete, the production prepared to move indoors to record the whole of the interior Air Cottage sequences.

Work to renovate the somewhat dilapidated cottage was underway in January 1977, in the care of its new owners who were present for both days of the recording. (In 2006, the couple were still farming at the site, which now offers visitors a bed-and-breakfast service). Designer Geoff Powell was able to ‘distress’ further aspects of the building’s fabric which had already been earmarked for renovation (such as section of wall in front of which the huddled figure of the now-rabid Fenton is discovered). Powell was able to make use of some furniture and fittings that were already in place (such as a clothes mangle), which he supplemented with items from the BBC Props Department. To give the cottage a more untended look, fake cobwebs (produced from an aerosol can) were sprayed around window and door frames. The atmospheric mood of the enclosed night time interiors was further enhanced by lighting technician Hu Cartwright’s reliance only on the ambient lamplight and candlelight cast by the on-screen light sources. Although these resulted in a slightly ‘grainier’ video image, they produced a textured and suitably-subdued screen image.

Recording began with Scenes 16-18, in which Charles, Sanders and Jim scour the house in search of the missing Fenton. While these sequences were set up and shot with a single camera, the second OB camera was preparing to record Charles and Fenton’s arrival at the ‘halfway house’ aiming to coincide the moment with the atmospheric onset of dusk (Scene 3). Arranging the shots in this sequence obviously made the best use of the available light. All the remaining Air Cottage interiors were either set at night, or did not include shots in which windows were visible. With this complete, the second camera unit returned to Air Cottage to set up in the front room, while the other recorded scenes further back in the building, including the shocking discovery of the fully-rabid Fenton in the furthest room in the house (Scene 19). A section of the episode shot inside Air Cottage, in which (inconsolable and delirious) Fenton harms himself had later to be cut at the insistence of the BBC’s Head of Drama Shaun Sutton. The director acknowledges: “There was a lot more inside the cottage... You can tell from the scratches on his face.” Perry also remembers being prepared with “quite a heavy make up” for these sequences “as the character had knocked himself about.” Once these sequences were finished, Kay and Arliss were released for the day, as the remaining scenes involved only Lill and Perry. On the DVD audio commentary track, de Vere Cole suggests that these scenes were recorded in daylight, with blacked out windows. The shooting schedule records that these sequences were recorded in the evening, once the scenes involving Arliss and Kay had concluded. These included

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Charles' and Fenton's discussions over supper, and the onset of his fever (Scene 4); his rejection of Charles' offer of water (Scene 8); Charles' efforts to discover the location of Fenton's home (Scene 10); and Charles' preparations to leave in search of 'help' (Scene 12). The last sequences to be recorded on Day Two were of the night-time onset of Fenton's delirium (Scene 5) – again lit only by the lamp that Charles' carries from his bedside.

### Sequence cut from the script

One short speech by Heather Canning's character Ellen, which would have featured towards the finale of the episode, revealed a little more about her relationship with the impaired Ron whom Ellen has taken in to care for. These excised lines would have followed on from Charles' discovery by Sanders' men as he prepares to depart from Ellen's farm. The cut lines, which Ellen delivers to Ron, are: "Do you remember the man who said you were too silly? Too silly to live? He wanted to shoot you. When your mother and father died. I said you'd survived them. You were a survivor. It made you special. [*She turns to look after the disappearing horsemen*] He's a survivor, Ron... God help him... [*An afterthought, even quieter*] God help us...". In October 2006, director Tristan de Vere Cole reflected that it was highly likely that this segment of the script was actually recorded on location in Ilam on 28 January 1977. "Cameras, cast and crew were already in place for the earlier part of the scene, and it would have taken very little time to allow a run-on", he suggests. "Although I couldn't swear to it, I think it's very likely that I'd covered those few lines." After Shaun Sutton's review of the initial edit, the director had faced the challenge that the episode might be under-length. However, the additional material recorded in March enabled the director to re-edit the episode to fit the required slot exactly. In doing so, he thinks that he would have judged that Canning's final speech could be removed, because "the audience already had ample evidence that Ellen was an intelligent, warm, caring and sympathetic figure. They knew that she would not punish Ron for his unknowing act of betrayal." He adds that he "probably felt" that dwelling on those extra lines risked detracting from the momentum building up as the chase sequence began. The director's preference was to "crack on with the story."

For Day Three of the **Mad Dog** shoot, 29 January 1977, the production was joined by actors Stephen Bill (Ron) and Heather Canning (Ellen) – both of whom were only present for a single day of recording – and by stunt co-ordinator Max Faulkner, who would remain with the production for the rest of the shoot. Bill recalls the filming: "primarily for the sub-zero temperatures. I had bought a Commer Camper Van and this seemed the ideal opportunity to sleep in it and save money on my expenses. In the event I drove from London to a very icy Derbyshire, met up with everyone in a very cosy country hotel and immediately booked myself in! So I never ever slept in the camper van".

Recording began with second scene in the horseback chase sequence, involving Lill, Kay and Arliss. This (Scene 21) was recorded on the farm track behind Air Cottage, with Charles pulling up his horse, dismounting and slipping away on foot down a steep, snowy bank. This challenging descent was undertaken by Lill himself, although no doubt under the close supervision of Faulkner. On screen it appeared that Charles was racing away from Fenton's 'half-way house'. In reality Lill was approaching Air Cottage from behind.

After the short scene in which Charles first examines his gunshot wound in the small gully in the woods below and beneath Air Cottage (Scene 22), the first sequence involving Stephen Bill was recorded. This scene (Scene 41), in which Charles (wounded, exhausted and alone) collapses exhausted in the snow and is discovered by the simple-minded Ron, was set up in an avenue of trees between Air Cottage and Ilam Tops Farm. Shaw's script had included a voice-over by Fenton at this point, a repeat of the earlier line in which he had insisted to Charles that: "You'll lie down too, when the times comes." De Vere Cole ultimately judged that such a literal reinforcement of Fenton's prediction was unnecessary, and the voice-over was not included. The sequence concludes when Ron races off in the direction of a farm to 'tell Ellen' of his discovery, and Charles slips into unconsciousness. Both OB cameras were then moved to Ilam Tops Farm, only a few hundred yards away, where all of these scenes set at Ellen's residence were recorded.

Unlike the previous day's recording at Air Cottage, work at the farm began with the interior sequences. These were Scenes 42 and 44, in which Charles awakes to find himself chained up inside the barn and is quizzed by Ellen about his condition, before she concludes that the risk he poses is slight. Moving to the front of the farm, the next sequence was the one in which Ellen, interrupted by the arrival of Sanders' gang, attempts to redirect their search elsewhere (Scene 43, Faulkner's first on-camera scene, in which he appears as one of the horseback hunting party). The last in this section was Scene 45, in which Charles bids farewell to Ellen, promising to return, before he has to flee after Ron has unwittingly betrayed him to Sanders.

The owner of Ilam Tops Farm, James Burton, who continues to live and work at the property, recalled during a fan visit to the site in April 2003 that the BBC's catering van, which provided refreshments for all the cast and crew, was parked (just out of shot) in the front yard of his farm as the shoot continued.

At the end of Scene 45, an additional speech by Ellen present in the original script was not included in the finished episode. It is not known whether this brief segment was excised prior to the shoot, or was recorded but removed from the completed edit. At this point, Faulkner, Arliss and Kay would have been released to return to the hotel, as they were not required for the remainder of the day. What is clear is that none of the other sequences on the remainder of the shooting schedule following on from Scene 45 were recorded on Day Three. The sequence in which Charles stumbles across an empty barn and, hiding within it, tends to his wounded arm had been assigned for recording at Ilam. In early daylight, exterior shots were to show Charles leaving the barn (Scenes 25 and 27). These were to have been followed by an interior shot in which he is shown to awake from a night's sleep (Scene 26). The sequence was to have been completed by two further scenes (both set in the evening) which were to show him arriving at the barn the previous night (Scene 23) and then attempting to clean his wound (Scene 24). This entire sequence was later restaged at a location in Monsal Dale, but in a shortened form and without the implication that Charles rested in the building overnight. With these scenes left unrecorded, recording at Ilam was completed and the

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unit concluded work for Day Three, preparing to begin again the following morning on a final two days of recording at Monsal Dale, just outside of Ashford-in-the-Water. With their contributions to the episode completed, both Stephen Bill and Heather Canning were released. Bill remembers that, in the bitter cold of that January evening: "I did require the services of the cast and crew to push-start [*the camper van*] before I could drive back to London".

## Day Four: Relocating to Monsal for the final two days

**T**he recording schedule for the Monsal Dale sections of **Mad Dog** was extremely tight, with a complex range of scenes on the roster for the remaining two days. The weather with which the crew had to wrestle at Monsal was the most challenging endured at any of the episode's three locations. De Vere Cole's reeve of the dale had enabled him to identify "about 14 different locations all within a mile" and in some cases only separated by a couple of hundred yards. The production unit worked its way around the Monsal valley, making use both of striking outdoor sites and buildings and residences that were rundown, derelict and abandoned. Today, Monsal has been significantly rejuvenated as a recreational and tourism destination, but in the late 1970s, the area still reflected the economic downturn that had followed the closure of the rail line in the Beeching Cuts. Fenton's house (Dean Cottage), for instance, was essentially in ruins, with a tree actually growing up through the roof of the house from the broken floor of one of the decaying rooms.

The tightness of the scheduled and the problems posed by the snow and icy cold meant that meticulous preparation was essential to a successful conclusion of the shoot. The director explains that if he was shooting: "a dialogue scene both cameras were working together, but if it was a landscape scene you would leap-frog, so that while you were shooting with one camera the other camera was moved across to the next location." De Vere Cole is clear that he and his production team had "planned it out thoroughly — and I think I was probably lucky, coming in at series three, because, I think, the engineers had, as far as they could, cracked the system of how long you could run an umbilical cord. And they were very good. And you planned it so that you had one camera up, let's say, doing the snow scene, and the other camera was down ready to start on the scene in the tunnel, let's say... So they were run [*like that*]. We started far out, if I remember rightly, and gradually worked our way backwards to the van. But, apart from the cold and the van — having to wait half-an-hour to warm things up and so on — I can't remember having disastrous stoppages or water in the line, or whatever."

The first scene to be shot on Day Four of the shoot, 30 January 1977, was Charles' rescue from an attack by wild dogs by the armed invention of Fenton. This was the first sequence to featured the 'mad dog' pack, which had been sourced and brought to the location by dog handler Sam Perrie. In earlier *Survivors* episodes, particularly the series one transition episode *Starvation*, the packs of apparently 'wild dogs' that the production had had to use had been an acute disappointment to the production team. For series three episodes, including *Law of the Jungle* the dogs on show had been much more menacing and threatening. De Vere Cole had earlier pressed Perrie to supply a much more varied and mixed breed pack than the one he ultimately supplied: "I, initially, was very disappointed with the pack that arrived. They had warned me, but I'd said 'look, I don't want a pack of the same sort of dogs — Rottweilers or Alsations. I want a mixed pack... with big dogs and one or two yapping small ones, and some very frightening ones, and some mongrels.' And I was told, eventually, that 'we can't get that up here. There's this guy who's got these Alsations.' I said, 'oh god, do keep trying', and I very reluctantly gave in to having, basically, an Alsatian pack." All the indications are that the canine co-stars of **Mad Dog** are the same ferocious creatures who earlier menaced Charles' group in *Law of the Jungle*.

"They were fine, coming down [*the side of the viaduct*], right at the beginning in the opening scene, but they weren't what I really wanted. The guy was good with them, but I would have loved to have had a much more mixed pack." Although he considered the composition of the pack a dent to the episode's credibility, de Vere Cole was broadly satisfied with his handler's on-set work: "He was good with them, and they did their stuff." He was pleased too with the work of his team in staging of Charles' dog bite, which he was able to edit together very convincingly.

After the scenes beneath the viaduct's arches, the crew relocated on top of the structure initially to record all of the shots filmed from that vantage point, namely: the aerial shot of Charles' fall from his horse in the initial dog attack (supervised or carried out by Max Faulkner); the classic image of the riders in pursuit of Charles, set on top of the rocky outcrop: "a true Western shot", in the director's judgement; and the episode's opening image of Charles' arrival in the valley on horseback;

De Vere Cole considered that: "to follow those opening titles, I felt you'd got to have something grabbing, really visual, really stunning to look at, or something dramatic. It wasn't particularly dramatic, but I thought it was a nice opening shot." Writer Shaw has strong memories of the moment: "I remember that scene so well, because I was standing up there behind the camera when it was recorded."

Recollections differ over the amount of planning that went into the tune that Charles is heard to whistle as he arrives in the alley — a very atmospheric sound in the empty, wintry setting. De Vere Cole recalls that the idea was first raised during preparations for the shoot: "I said to Denis during the rehearsals in London, 'we need you whistling or singing something here.' So he thought of something Welsh, and I said 'that's great!'. I said 'what we need here is this guy on his horse, in a very, very long shot, approaching in this wilderness, nobody around and then, when the dogs come, it's an impact.'" In contrast, Lill remembers that when, on location at Monsal Dale, he first put to use a Welsh song learnt from *Survivors*' director Pennant Roberts, the voice of a surprised director boomed out across the floor of the valley: "Who the hell is that whistling!?" To which Lill replied: "It's me, you fool! It's in the script!" Commenting on Lill's recollection in February 2006, de Vere Cole insists that he has no such memory, and observes wryly that: "no actor has ever called me a 'fool'... in my hearing!" Whatever the disagreement over its

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origins, there's no question how effectively the evocative sound of the lone rider's whistle was recorded using a radio mic secreted in Denis Lill's costume. De Vere Cole is full of praise for the efforts of his sound technician: "That's not dubbed, that's Ian Leiper, the sound man. I'd said 'we just want to hear it distantly, and coming closer as he comes closer.'" While his crew then set to work setting up the scenes involving Charles' and Fenton's first conversations over a meal of roasted rabbit, de Vere Cole turned his attention to the sequences staged further along the valley in the environs of Netherdale Farm, which his second OB camera crew had already been preparing. Charles' descent down the hillside above the farm; his slide into unconsciousness in the barn; his discovery by the young girl and his flight from the building in the direction of the river, were all recorded in sequence.

Scriptwriter Don Shaw's young daughter Jane Shaw appears in one brief scene, shot in the interior of one of the barns at Netherdale Farm (the main location used on the filming of *The Watercress Girl*) as a farmer's daughter who finds the collapsed and unconscious Charles, but who runs off to raise the alarm when he wakes and gently questions her. Her father reports that Jane enjoyed being in the episode, but was dismayed by de Vere Cole's insistence that she appeared mucky-faced: "Her memories are of waiting a long time before being called by the director... for her scene with Denis Lill." As de Vere Cole notes in his 1985 book *A Guide for Actors New to Television* (Nadder: Shaftesbury, ISBN 0-0906540-70-4) such waiting periods for actors were an unavoidable component of an efficient production process, and provided the Production Manager the flexibility to: "anticipate all problems, and cover for all eventualities, especially the weather." Having actors on stand-by means that they could be used at short-notice, if light conditions changed or a technical problem was delaying a scene elsewhere. As a result, an actor: "may well be called for Make-Up and Costume at 6.00am and then not work until after lunch, or even not at all that day. This is not necessarily bad organisation – it is playing safe."<sup>1</sup> When she was called, her father recalls that: "She hated having her nose made up to look as though it has not been cleaned properly." Her later memories were more positive: "She was pleased once to receive half-a-crown in royalties from the episode's sale to Hong Kong." After the release of the *Survivors*' series three DVD set in November 2005, Shaw reported that his daughter, now 37, was: "delighted to show her friends her post-holocaust lifestyle as a seven year old dirty-nosed little girl!"

The director and the second OB camera then returned to the top of the viaduct to record Charles' and Fenton's discussions; Charles' discovery of his potential rabies infection; and the second attack by the dog pack – this time from two directions: along the viaduct, and from within the railway tunnel, replete with a stunning collection of stalactites (the tunnel entrance has more recently been completely sealed). The line had been the main rail link between London and Manchester, with Monsal Dale having its own station, until the line was shut in the infamous round of Beeching Cuts of the 1960s. During the audio commentary for the series three DVD release, the director wondered if the small railway hut used to stage Charles' and Fenton's first debate about the likely fate of humanity was one of set designer Geoff Powell's creations. However, the remnants of the structure's concrete base still in evidence today are confirmation that this was a real-life hangover of the line's glory days.

For the sequence in which the dog pack attacks for a second time, the director was keen to extract maximum value from his canine performers: "I did warn the cameramen, when we were outside the tunnel, and they were charging out and [*Charles and Fenton*] were throwing meat and shooting them, to 'keep going with the VT [*video-taping*]... If I shout "cut" because I can't see what's going on, and there are two dogs fighting, let's keep going.' And we did have one [*moment*], I think it was only about two seconds on the screen, when two of the dogs were fighting each other outside the tunnel, and that was great."

To depict the corpses of the dogs shot by Fenton and Charles, the production hired a vet to temporarily sedate the animals. De Vere Cole was clear this was a necessary measure: "A vet came along and gave them an injection... And that's good, because (a) he's making sure that it's done properly, and (b) it looks right, and everybody's happy." Recording for Day Four concluded with Charles' and Fenton's discussions inside the wooden hut. Once again, this made sound practical sense – and insurance against the possible loss of sufficient natural light by this point in the shooting day.

Day Five, 31 January 1977, the concluding day of the (original) **Mad Dog** shoot, got underway with the two scenes set at the Monsal weir: Charles fetching the water from just below the weir (Scene 6); and then the sequences showing Charles, Sanders and Jim fleeing from the rabid Fenton, now ill at his 'half-way house', and arriving at the weir's edge (Scene 20). The recording schedule suggested that Fenton might be included in the flight sequence, and Perry was available on-site, but de Vere Cole opted instead to rely upon the sound of Fenton's moaning brought over from the previous scene to evoke a sufficient sense of menace.

Next to be recorded was the hillside sequence above the viaduct, the scene in which Charles' learns of Greg's earlier visit and agrees to travel to Fenton's 'half-way house'. As the crew set up for this scene, the weather turned sharply: it began to snow heavily.

De Vere Cole remembers that the crew: "went up there and everybody said [*looking at the snow*] 'oh dear.' And I said 'god, no – let's shoot.' Now, the one thing you worry about when you've got something like snow – even more than rain – is that if you want to cut-in close-ups, after you've done the wider travelling shot to begin with, is it still going to be snowing in an hour's time when you get down to them? That's where you're really taking a risk. And I think if you look at Charles and Fenton in the snow, the wide shot's great and Ian Leiper's sound is very good, and if you look at some of the closer shots in the end – and there are very few, deliberately – you will notice that the snow is not falling as thick as it was to begin with. But there was no question of waiting. One didn't do a David Lean and wait for four months for the storm to come up, as in *Ryan's Daughter*. You went out, and if it was raining, you shot.

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<sup>1</sup> In August 2005, Denis Lill was unable to attend the *Survivors* series three DVD studio day, and so did not take part in the audio commentary of **Mad Dog** because he was on 'stand-by' for the ITV series *The Royal*, in which he has a recurring guest role. It is not known if he was called before the cameras on the day in question, or remained unused.

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And if it was snowing, you shot.” The sequence in the driving snow was bitterly cold for the two actors involved. Perry remembers: “They usually have blankets standing by for that kind of thing. There are members of the crew who dash after you as soon as you’ve stopped filming and throw things over you — and your horse! — and then take them away again before you’re on to the next take.”

Perry recalls that the following sequence (Scene 47), in which Sanders, Jim and Phil jumped the drystone wall in pursuit of the escaping Charles: “was quite an occasion on the location”. By the time recording began on this sequence, the snow had subsided completely. The scene, in which Charles’ ‘double’ effects a fall from his horse as he jumps the wall, was the hardest single stunt in the episode. Lill remembers that there was “some good stunt work” co-ordinated and executed by Max Faulkner. Faulkner’s strongest memory of the **Mad Dog** shoot is that many of the stunts for which he was responsible were hard going on the stunt men involved. He recalls that: “a number of people had bad falls in riding sequences.” However, with the majority of Charles’ horseback scenes performed by the actor himself, Lill quite rightly considers: “I was rather good in that episode, I thought, on a horse.” What made the wall jumping sequence difficult was the varied riding skills of the assembled actors. De Vere Cole reflects that: “what was difficult was that some of the actors were very good on horses, and others were competent, but did not always find their mounts to their liking.” Perry can remember Kay “setting his horse at a drystone wall and she wasn’t a very keen jumper.” After several unsuccessful takes, de Vere Cole agreed that several stones should be removed from the top of the wall to make the jump less challenging for Kay and his horse. With a combination of judicious framing and careful editing, the scene was completed to the director’s satisfaction.

The crew now moved back to the valley floor, to record scenes at Upperdale House – the farm where Charles first encounters Sanders and Jim at work on the roof as he searches for medical assistance (Scene 13). The unit then moved to Dean Cottage and its surroundings to record the sequence in which Charles discovers Fenton’s home from which he hopes to retrieve the vital notes (Scenes 35-36). Next was the celebrated scene in which Charles plunges into a freezing cold and fast flowing river, and wades out to hide beneath a road bridge, as the dog pack returns to menace him for a third and final time (Scene 37).

Lill remembers that the sequence was a particular challenge. De Vere Cole recalls that the set-up: “was covered with safety measures, but nobody was doubling for him.” Lill watched: “the men putting out ropes across the river to stop me being swept away. It was winter and the river quite full flowing! And I remember saying to them: ‘There’s no way you’re going to get me in there!’”. Lill reveals that he spoke with members of the crew (out of the hearing of his director) and got their agreement to find reasons to delay the shoot until the flow of the river eased. The sequence was finally shot, and in all likelihood only once. De Vere Cole was particularly pleased to capture on camera the image of a lone Alsatian plunging into the water to momentarily close in on Charles before Sanders’ gunshot causes the pack to flee.

On the recording schedule, the final sequences set to be recorded on the original **Mad Dog** were the ones in which Charles steals and rides off on Phil’s bike (Scene 28) and then, after suffering a puncture, disposes of the bicycle behind a dry-stone wall (Scene 30). The first of these, which included Faulkner’s only dialogue scene in the episode, was staged at Riverside Farm (located on the roadway between the river bridge and the viaduct); while the second was recorded just above the crossroads in the heart of the valley.

Even in the best of weather conditions with a summer-length shooting day it would have been difficult to have completed the recording on so mobile and complex an episode in the time available. But while de Vere Cole had kept to his schedule for the Severn Valley and Ilam sections of the shoot, circumstances at Monsal ultimately made it impossible to complete the episode as intended in the allotted time. De Vere Cole rethought his final sequences to get the best coverage possible before calling an end to the shoot as light failed. The crew then packed up for a return to London. The scanner van and twin cameras were next scheduled to begin a shoot on 7 February for the episode *Bridgehead* (which would contain several continuity references to Charles’ Peak District adventures) under the direction of George Spenton-Foster. However, within a few weeks, de Vere Cole would return to Monsal Dale with *Survivors*’ OB unit to carry out a further two-day shoot on **Mad Dog**.

## The first Mad Dog edit

**B**etween 7-9 February 1977, de Vere Cole and his editor put together what they intended to be their final cut of the programme, completing the ‘sypher dub’ (polishing the episode’s sound track) on 11 February. With no incidental music to add and no ‘special effects’ to be integrated, the additional features were few – one instance was the addition of an wind sound track to the classic shot of the four riders chasing along the rocky outcrop.

De Vere Cole arranged a screening of his episode for the head of the BBC Drama Department Shaun Sutton, who congratulated him on a job well done but who insisted that cuts be made to the sequences in which a rabid Fenton is shown to succumb to his worsening infection. The edits that Sutton required impacted on the running time, and – when combined with the shots that de Vere Cole had been unable to complete – meant that the episode was now at serious risk of being under-length. Shaw was aware that: “The bad weather meant that some scenes had to be remounted.” The director is clear that both factors led to the need for a further shoot: “It was a mixture. When we showed... the Head of Series at the time was Shaun Sutton, a great guy... He’d been a writer, a director and he was somebody who you really appreciated. When you had completed your video editing, you would go to the Head of the Department, which was Shaun in this case, with the producer, Terry Dudley. He would look through it with you, and he might have some notes: ‘I think that’s boring, that bit there, can’t we cut that down. Are you over-running? Well, fine, let’s cut that bit. Oh, you’re under-running, I suppose we’ll have to keep it.’ There’s a discussion afterwards,

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[with insights] from a fresh pair of eyes, who's a professional, saying 'I think this is bloody boring', or 'that's excellent.' Now, Shaun, at the end said, 'fantastic, brilliant – but I'm sorry, the rabies is too frightening. We can't have that.' I said, 'oh, come on Shaun. This story is about rabies. We want to frighten people, it's going to be doing good.' 'I'm sorry', he said, 'I can't allow you to put it out like that. You're going to have to cut this bit, that and the other' – because Morris had done a great job with the foam, and we all knew it looked really good, and it was absolutely right! So we had to cut some. That was the main reason for going back and re-shooting – he wouldn't allow it to go out as we had put it together."

For de Vere Cole: "In a way, it was to my advantage, because I could polish certain things in the reshoot. I don't know how much we cut? I would have thought we cut, probably, a couple of minutes – which doesn't sound very much... but it all adds up. The one sequence I would have liked to have re-shot was when they were outside [*Air Cottage in*] Ilam, and Bernard Kay and Ralph Arliss's characters realise that Denis Lill might have got rabies, and they try and shoot him, and he gallops off. That was not entirely satisfactory, but I couldn't re-shoot that in the time I was given...!"

### *Play for Today: PQ17*

**Mad Dog** would not be the last time that Tristan de Vere Cole would direct Denis Lill in a major role. The director recalls: "I had a very good working relationship with Denis and asked him to play the lead in a 1979 film about the convoy PQ17." This BBC *Play for Today*, scripted by Roger Milner, dramatised the real-life story of a doomed World War II naval convoy that had set sail in June 1942 to bring vitally needed supplies to the beleaguered Russians. When the British Admiralty received (what proved to be inaccurate) intelligence that the convoy was shortly to be attacked by a large German seaborne force, led by the battleship *Tirpitz*, the order was given for PQ17 to scatter. De Vere Cole explains: "*Tirpitz* was the finest battleship ever built; completed in 1939, she was state of the art." The decision sealed the fate of many ships in the convoy, which – now unprotected – were picked off and sunk, with great loss of life. Lill was to take on the role of Jack (Jackie) Broome, Royal Navy Commander of the convoy. De Vere Cole remembers: "Unfortunately, the production was cancelled a few days into the shoot by a general BBC electricians' strike." The play was subsequently remounted and broadcast in 1982, with Richard Briers taking over the role of Broome, and Frank Cox taking over the director's chair. Already cast by de Vere Cole, *Doctor Who*'s Patrick Troughton (who guest-starred in the second series *Survivors* episode *Parasites*) co-starred, along with his son Michael, while Innes Lloyd (with whom Don Shaw and de Vere Cole had worked previously) served as producer.

For the director, it was still a frustrating process: "Absolutely, but these things happen, and with somebody like Shaun... he did it so nicely, and I appreciated what he was saying. In fact, my wife's got some friends – funnily enough [*their son*] Jason, now works at the BBC – and apparently, he was about eight when this went out, and he just literally couldn't face it, and hid behind the sofa in the best *Doctor Who* tradition. It was frightening to a lot of people even when watered down."

Producer Terence Dudley gave the go-ahead for an additional two days of OB recording on **Mad Dog**, which was quickly scheduled in the next available production window for 12-13 March. Although de Vere Cole had been tasked with "toning down the representation of rabies", it was decided not to return to Ilam to re-record any of the scenes involving the onset or development of Fenton's illness. Instead, the 'offending' rabies sequences would be re-edited and the shortfall in running time made up from extra footage recorded at Monsal Dale. On a standard *Survivors*' shoot, close to half-an-episode's footage might be recorded over a two-day period, especially with the advantages of the improved weather and longer daylight hours offered in early Spring. However, as both days of the **Mad Dog** re-shoot were shortened by a three to four hour travel time (London to the Peak District on the morning of day one; the return leg in the evening of day two) the available shooting time was much reduced. Nonetheless, the extra recording time would still have a significant knock-on effect for production on the series. With the schedule so tight, the remount on **Mad Dog** would ultimately mean that the thirteenth planned episode of the series, entitled *Black Start*, would be cancelled before a draft had been completed or the episode itself entered pre-production. The appalling (if entirely appropriate) weather conditions experienced in the last week of January 1977 – which helped to make **Mad Dog** so evocative – would have an ironic and unintended consequence: the third series of *Survivors* was one episode shorter than either of its predecessors.

## The Mad Dog re-mount

**D**etails as to precisely which Monsal Dale scenes were either re-recorded or staged for the first time during the re-mount for **Mad Dog** are far sketchier than for the original shoot. It does seem clear that Morris Perry was not required to reprise his role, and it is certain that Denis Lill was present on both days – although his own memories of the process are hazy. Of the need to re-shoot he recalls: "Possibly, yes. Yes, we probably did. Oh gosh, it is so many years ago now... and maybe, in fact, I wasn't involved in that?" Precisely which other actors were recalled is not known. De Vere Cole remembers: "We had decided what shots had to be removed and I had worked out what new shots were needed to make the various scenes work. As I recall continuity was not difficult to pick up as we could see on video what we needed to match." Despite the imminent arrival of Spring at the time of the re-mount: "I don't remember the change in weather being a problem." Many of the episode's original production crew returned to Monsal Dale, although there were a number of significant changes – a reflection of the competing commitments of various BBC staff members. With Elsbury unavailable, the role of production assistant was taken on by Jean

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Esslemont (joining the programme for the first of four episodes). Replacement cameramen Dave Gautier and Charlie Snare would only work on *Survivors* for the two days of the **Mad Dog** re-shoot. However, de Vere Cole was still able to secure the continuity provided by Hu Cartwright (Lighting), Ian Leiper (Sound), Geoff Powell (Design) and Lisa Westacott (Make-up) amongst several others. The fact that armourer Jack Wells, dog handler Sam Perrie and horse trainer Ben Ford are all included in the re-mount credits indicates that a number of the completed episode's action sequences must have either been recorded or re-shot during these two additional Monsal days.

It also appears highly likely that the scenes in which Charles happens upon the abandoned barn (demolishing a section of dry-stone wall in the process) and tends to his gunshot wound — a sequence originally planned for Ilam, but left unrecorded in January — were also staged at Monsal during the reshoot.

One sequence that director de Vere Cole is confident was recorded during the March re-shoot is that inside Fenton's home — in which Charles finally retrieves the doctor's precious notebook and reads aloud from the entry recording Greg Preston's earlier visit. Powell's dressing of the dilapidated Dean Cottage made it look appropriately "like a professor's study". Morris Perry's voice-over, which takes-over from Charles' own recitation of Fenton's prose, which would have been recorded on location, must therefore have been committed to tape as part of the original January shoot. At the same time, Perry would have also provided the elegant handwritten contents of Fenton's diary seen on screen. In the director's memory: "the last sequence we shot was the interior of Fenton's cottage."

After picking up the additional scenes at Monsal in March, a second edit on **Mad Dog** was completed and approved, and cleared for a 6 April 1977 transmission slot at 8.10pm on BBC1. Even before viewers got a chance to appraise the episode for themselves, the episode's makers came to realise that they had together produced a stand-out *Survivors* story, something ever more apparent with the passage of time. Scriptwriter Don Shaw remains convinced that his work on *Survivors*: "enabled me to explore a whole range of human emotions and ideas, and it liberated me tremendously. It gave me tremendous freedom, like nothing else ever has since." The autonomy that Shaw found working on the show is, in his view, key to the programme's appeal: "I think the great success of *Survivors* lay in the fact that writers were trusted, they were allowed their heads." Shaw's work on **Mad Dog** — an episode unfettered by the normal constraints imposed on a writer by a series — is confirmation for him that on *Survivors*: "There was no formula, and no formulaic overtones to this whatsoever. It was open."

Director Tristan de Vere Cole: "was pleased with it as an episode" although is, in retrospect, "not sure that it stands the test of modern sophisticated editing and music and everything... It could have been better, and, I think, if it was made nowadays it would probably be much more polished — if they were lucky enough to get the horrible weather we got!" Nonetheless: "It was my favourite [of those three *Survivors* episodes]. I've done hundreds of programmes, and it would be in my Top Ten, of those that I enjoyed doing, and was reasonably proud of — **Mad Dog**."



## Mad Dog credits

Charles: **Denis Lill**  
Fenton: **Morris Perry**  
Sanders: **Bernard Kay**  
Jim: **Ralph Arliss**  
Phil: **Max Faulkner**  
Ron: **Stephen Bill**  
Ellen: **Heather Canning**  
Engine Driver: **Eric Francis**  
Fireman: **Robert Pugh**  
Young Girl: **Jane Shaw**  
Charles' double: **Martin Grace**  
Alfreda: **Alfreda Atkinson**  
Farmer (extra): **Stanley Welch**  
Farmer (extra): **Keneth Reynolds**

*Photo left: The production crew spray cobwebs into the windowframes of Air Cottage*

Director: **Tristan de Vere Cole**  
Producer: **Terry Dudley**  
Production Unit Manager: **Michael Bartley**  
Production Assistant: **Gordon Elsbury**  
Assistant Floor Manager: **Kate Osborne**  
Assistant Floor Manager: **Alan Waring**  
Assistant: **Patricia Freece**  
Engineering Managers: **Hubert Cartwright, George Jakins**  
Sound Supervisor: **Ian Leiper**  
Cameramen: **Frank Hudson, Simon Fone, Roger Prior**  
Sound Assistants: **John Cox, John Caulfield**

Vision Mixer: **Graham Giles**  
Costume Supervisor: **Andrew Rose**  
Dressers: **Andre Salat, Kay Woodley**  
Make-up Supervisor: **Lisa Westcott**  
Assistant: **Jill Thomas**  
Designer: **Geoff Powell**  
Property Buyer: **Roger Williams**  
Scene Crew Supervisor: **Cliff Richardson**  
Armourer: **Jack Wells**  
Dog Handler: **Sam Perrie**  
Horses: **Ben Ford**

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