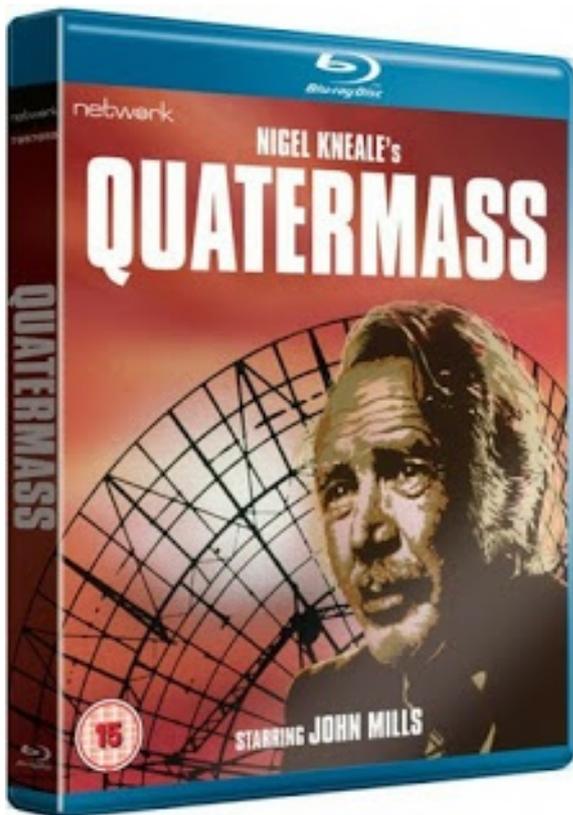


Этот сайт использует файлы cookie Google. Это необходимо для нормальной работы и анализа трафика. Информация о ваших действиях передается агенту пользователя, а также показатели производительности и безопасности передаются в Google. Это помогает обеспечивать качество услуг, накапливать статистику использования, а также выявлять и устранять нарушения.

[ПОДРОБНЕЕ](#) [OK](#)

NIGEL KNEALE'S QUATERMASS - THE COMPLETE SERIES / BLU-RAY REVIEW

Posted by Frank Collins on Sunday, 26 July 2015 · [Leave a Comment](#)



After successfully adapting the three Quatermass television stories of the 1950s and with the box office tills ringing from the well-received cinema version of *Quatermass and the Pit* (1967), Hammer Films approached creator-writer Nigel 'Tom' Kneale for an original film featuring the titular scientist with a view to continuing the franchise.

The studio announced another film but nothing developed beyond outline and preliminary discussions with Kneale. Hammer had faced delays getting *Quatermass and the Pit* to the screen after their partnership with Columbia faltered and it was perhaps disinterested distributors, Hammer's struggle to adapt to changing audience tastes and the slow decline of the industry as a whole that stalled their Quatermass outing.

Kneale remained busy. His relationship with the BBC strengthened in the late 1960s and early 1970s and he succeeded in getting several plays to the screen in this period. This was after he had refused overtures from the BBC to contribute a one-off drama to their *The 625* strand on BBC2. He felt he had never really been properly recompensed for the Quatermass serials he had made in the 1950s, something he made quite clear to the BBC's Director General Hugh

Carleton Greene. A one-off payment was duly agreed and Kneale undertook his new assignment. This would become 1968's celebrated play about television's Orwellian future potential, *The Year of the Sex Olympics*. (1)

He followed this with 1970's 'Wine of India' for *The Wednesday Play*, which centred on a 100-year old couple who must make plans for their funeral in a future where advances in medicine have resulted in a need for population control and where those reaching the age of 100 must submit to a government controlled euthanasia program. He contributed 'The Chopper' to *Out of the Unknown* in 1971, a ghost story about a dead motorcyclist haunting a wrecked machine, and followed this in 1972 with *The Stone Tape*, in which scientists researching new recording technologies at an old mansion investigate a haunting.

Weeks prior to the excellent audience and critical reception for *The Stone Tape* BBC Head of Drama Ronnie Marsh commissioned Kneale to write a new four part Quatermass serial in November 1972 known then as *Quatermass IV*. Work commenced under the aegis of *Dixon of Dock Green*'s producer Joe Waters with some preliminary visual effects filming at the BBC's Ealing Television Film Studios. Ealing had previous form for Quatermass, filmed inserts of the pit containing the Martian spacecraft had been shot there in 1959 for the television version of *Quatermass and the Pit*. (2)

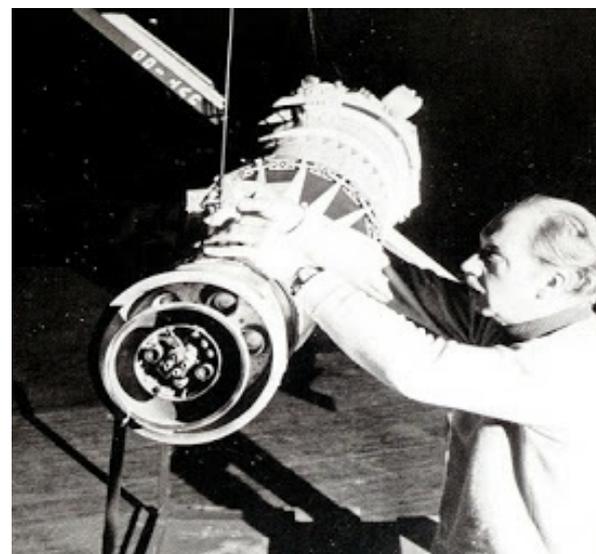
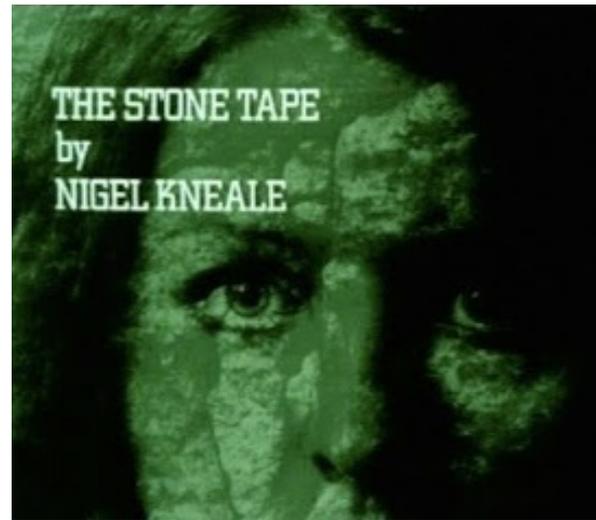
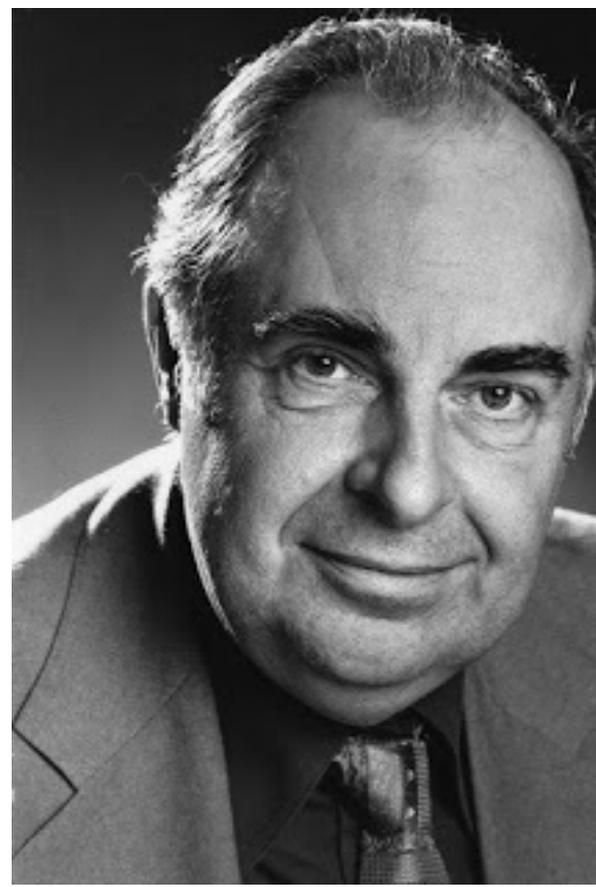
While Kneale completed re-writes with Joe Waters, BBC effects men Bernard Wilkie, Ian Scoones and Rhys Jones set up production at Ealing in June 1973. Linking two stages - 3A and 3B - to provide a longer line of sight they completed test filming of the Soviet-American space station featured in Kneale's new story and carried out tests using the foreground miniatures process. This combined models of the station and miniature astronaut figures with filmed live action of actors costumed as astronauts climbing over black covered rostra and ladders. (3)

An early intention had been for the BBC to make the series as a co-production, mirroring the funding partnership formed with 20th Century Fox to produce the *Colditz* series in 1972. Waters had even mooted which composers he might opt for - Malcolm Williamson or Joseph Horowitz perhaps - but there were growing concerns about the mounting costs for the four part series. With the production already spiraling toward a budget of £200,000, the BBC rejected the further expense of building a studio or location based version of Stonehenge and cancelled the project after they were refused permission to film on location at the ancient site. (4)

As Kneale reflected in 1979, "I had lightly written in Stonehenge because my last visit to it had seemed to make it very possible. What I hadn't realised was that, in the interim, it had become Big Business and the place was like a factory with tourists there from dawn to dusk. It was the pride of the Department of the Environment and they weren't going to let anyone go near it." (5)

Although the BBC held the rights to Kneale's scripts until 1975 the option to produce *Quatermass IV* was never taken up. Kneale was commissioned to include a new play he had developed with director Michael Elliott, 'Cracks', for the next series of *Play for Today* but it also remained unproduced after some disagreements with producer Irene Shubik. Shubik had, coincidentally, asked Kneale for a new Quatermass story for her *Out of the Unknown* anthology's first series back in 1965. His last work for the BBC was a modern version of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' he contributed to Innes Lloyd's anthology *Bedtime Stories* in 1974. (6)

ITV franchise ATV came calling and Kneale commenced a similarly frustrating relationship with commerci



television. It was one that would, ironically, bring about the return of Quatermass. Kneale's evocative 1975 play about witchcraft, *Murrain*, inspired ATV to commission his anthology series *Beasts* in 1976 but he was bitterly disappointed when the company cancelled his play about Manx slavery, *Crow*, due to cost reasons.

"...a fantastically interesting idea, something that would be really good to do."



Enter producer *Verity Lambert*, then an executive at Thames Television but now given the responsibility for its Euston subsidiary, bringing its input under the overall remit of Thames drama production. As Euston's new chief executive, with a different outlook from its previous executives Lloyd Shirburn and George T Taylor, she hired Linda Agran as script executive and Johnny Goodman as executive in charge of production, working with her and producer Ted Childs. She immediately started looking for projects that would expand Euston's portfolio.

Lambert had already locked horns with Kneale on a 1965 production of *Late Night Line-Up* when he had criticised her for frightening children with *Doctor Who*, of which she had been producer since 1963.

This didn't deter her when the *Quatermass IV* scripts duly arrived from Kneale's agent in 1978: "I just thought it was a fantastically interesting idea, something that would be really good to do." (8) Hammer's Michael Carreras must have been having similar thoughts about the prestige of *Quatermass* and was pipped at the post by Euston in securing the script for his now ailing film company.

When Lambert rescued Jack Gold's troubled television film *Sailor's Return*, she believed one way of potentially recouping the production costs, having struck a co-production deal with the National Film Finance Corporation, would be to then release the film theatrically prior to its television broadcast. Negotiations prevented this at the time but when *Quatermass* went into production she was determined to similarly arrange its hefty £1.2 million budget.

She set Kneale the task of re-shaping his scripts as four episodes filmed on 35mm to be broadcast on ITV and a separate, shorter 100-minute version intended for theatrical distribution in America and Europe as *The Quatermass Conclusion*. As Kneale told John Fleming in 1979, "but that was as far as one could guess. Because, as none of it had been shot, one couldn't tell what would work out best; some things paid off better than we'd ever thought." (9)

"I think it was the most expensive thing we had attempted at Euston Films at that point. And we felt the only way we could justify the expense was to make sure we could re-edit it into a film which could possibly have theatrical release," Lambert

recalled. Childs simply saw it as a way for Lambert and Agran to put their own stamp on Euston and move it

company away from its association with drama such as *The Sweeney*. (10) Euston's May 1977 announcement of the production also anticipated the popularity of screen science fiction and fantasy that would grow after release of *Star Wars* (1977) and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977).

The major change that Kneale made to his script was to re-locate the climactic sequence of the third episode from the originally the budget-busting scenes at Stonehenge that scuppered the BBC production, to the more accessible and affordable Wembley Stadium. A thirteen week shoot around London, Hertfordshire and near Pinewood Studios commenced on 26th August 1978 under the auspices of director Piers Haggard.

Haggard was an experienced film and television director, and had recently received high praise for his work on the celebrated BBC Dennis Potter drama *Pennies From Heaven* (its first episode was broadcast 7th March that year). Prior to this he notched up numerous television credits on series such as *Callan*, *Man At The Top*, *Pu* as well as single plays in the *ITV Playhouse*, *The Wednesday Play*, *Thirty Minute Theatre* and *Armchair Theatre* strands. Among his first film credits was the highly regarded horror film *Blood on Satan's Claw* (1971).

He came recommended to Verity Lambert by agent Jenne Casarotto, who had originally sent her the *Quatermass IV* scripts. Lambert had already worked with Haggard on 'The House of Men', a Catherine Cookson play with an anthology strand *Romance* she produced for Thames Television in 1977. With *Quatermass* Haggard recalled "I had some meetings with her. I've always liked science fiction and there were ideas in it - it was ambitious and well-budgeted. The fact that this particular script had been around for a while was manifest because it was a hippy movement which he'd spotted as current a few years earlier." (11)

To give the series and film some clout internationally, Euston approached Sir John Mills to play the aged Bernard Quatermass. Mills was reluctant to take the role but was persuaded by his wife. Kneale wasn't entirely happy with the casting either: "He didn't have the authority for Quatermass... I think he was very uneasy because it wasn't the sort of thing he had made his name with. He didn't reckon science fiction was his thing." (12)



The demands of filming for Mills were reported in *TV Times*. It took an hour for the make-up artists to prepare Bernard Quatermass for the scenes shot at Wembley Stadium for the alien attack. Mills claimed: "I'd have preferred a supporter's scarf and a rattle but they insisted on painting me with a gallon of glue and covering me in chalk and powder. I could hardly walk when they'd finished but I think that the stiffness of the suit helped me portray a man who had just witnessed the extinction of thousands of his fellow beings." (13)



Mills was joined by Simon MacCorkindale and Barbara Kellerman playing the astronomer Joe Kapp and his wife Clare. MacCorkindale had previously worked on Kneale's terrifying 'Baby', one of the best of ATV's *Beasts* anthology and had carved out a respectable television acting career with roles in *Hawkeye The Pathfinder*, *Sutherland's Law*, *I Claudius*, *Jesus of Nazareth* and *Within These Walls*. Kellerman was recently known for her role as Delly Lomas in Wilfred Greatorex's dystopian political drama *1990*. Kneale was just as disparaging about their casting, lamenting that Kellerman "just smiled all the time" and that MacCorkindale "should never have been cast as the last, rational, intelligent man in the world. We had him in *Beasts* playing an idiot and he was very good at that."(14)



Bond producer Cubby Broccoli probably spent more on cigars every week.

Whereas *The Sweeney* had operated from its base at Colet Court, using standing sets for the Flying Squad's offices, and filmed other interiors and exteriors largely on location in London, *Quatermass* was, as noted by producer Norton Knatchbull, Euston's first 'art department' production. This meant that production designer Arnold Chapkis was responsible for building many sets from scratch, including an 18th Century observatory and its accompanying impressive radio telescope dishes, the various stone circles erected in the surrounding countryside and dressing Wembley Stadium with crystalised bodies, chalk dust and smoke for the climactic scenes depicting the alien harvest of the gathered Planet People. (15)



Interiors and exteriors were also filmed and some post-production completed at Harefield Grove Farm and Hare Hall, a small studio complex near Pinewood that had been home to the first season of *The Professionals* in 1977. (16) Visual effects for the American-Soviet space station link and the space shuttle sequences were completed at the Battersea studios of Clearwater Films, a company established by former Gerry Anderson alumni Ken Turner and David Mitton in the mid-1970s. Mitton was originally a member of Derek Meddings' effects team working on *Thunderbirds*, *Captain Scarlet*, *Joe 90* and *UFO*.



Johnny Goodman joked about the budget for the effects so low that Bond producer Cubby Broccoli probably spent more on cigars every week. (17) However, Clearwater gained a reputation for stop-motion animation that would lead to a successful period co-producing ITV's *Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends* television series until the company's closure in 1990.



Kneale was impressed with the scale of the production and briefly visited the shoot, acknowledging the effort Haggard and the crew were expending on the series: "They shot it in the summer 1978, a hot, hot year. I found them all practically stripped down to their boots on the lot, shooting under full sun. It wasn't easy. I think Piers was very ready for a rest at the end of it but he got through it all right." (18)

Shooting completed in December 1978 with a number of bridging shots that would be important when it came to editing the four episodes down, covering the removal of certain sections of the narrative to create the 100-minute feature-length version of the series, *The Quatermass Conclusion*. With editing, post syncing, scoring and effects complete, *Quatermass* was ready for transmission by February 1979. Euston and Thames' promotion for the series began in the summer, promising its arrival on screens in September.

However, a national ITV technicians' strike in August 1979 blacked out the entire network for 75 days in support of the electricians' industrial action at Thames Television, taken after rejecting a pay increase and then being given an ultimatum by management to return to work or risk losing their jobs. As the strike dragged on, Euston completed the remaining work on *The Quatermass Conclusion* and prepared it for its theatrical debut in Europe. When ITV returned to the air on 24 October 1979, 'Ringstone Round', the first episode of the much delayed *Quatermass* was broadcast at 9.00pm.

By November *The Quatermass Conclusion* had premiered, with Kneale and lead actor MacCorkindale present 9th Annual Festival of Fantastic Cinema and Science Fiction in Paris. There was little interest from American distributors and the film had a limited release in North America the following Spring.

The press and audience reaction to *Quatermass* was rather mixed at the time. Many wondered what had happened to the bullish Quatermass they'd seen in the 1950s and 1960s. The simple truth was that the character was older and Kneale used this to reflect back his generation's bewilderment at the declining social mores of the 1960s and the harsher realities of the 1970s. He was certainly forthright about the subject: "One of the more horrific and offensive things I found about the '60s was the 'let it all hang out' business. Inhibitions are like the bones in a creature, and if you pull the bones out all you're left with is a floppy jelly." (19)

Kneale's concerns, about the generation gap, the population explosion, old age and euthanasia and the impact of the end of Empire, the continuation of the Cold War and intractable economic recession, all fed into *Quatermass*. "As I had done with *Quatermass II*, I looked at the alarming aspects of contemporary trends. Since then we'd seen 'flower power' and hippies, so all I did was bring them into the story." (20)

Kneale was also of the pre-baby boomer era where the concept of the teenager had not existed and in maturity he had become wary of the youth sub-cultures that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s and the counter-culture of the 1970s.

The hippy became his folk-devil in *Quatermass*, with the Planet People cult analogous to the demonised youth movements that allegedly contributed to the collapse of morality, law and order and social stability in the post-war generation. In 1979, this perspective in *Quatermass* seemed out-of-step, perhaps a symptom of the long delays to the project since it was originally written in 1972, and Britain was by then already a post-punk nation on the brink of a significant shift to the political right.



"It's the only show that anybody watches anymore. Don't they realise?"

In *Quatermass*, the retired Professor returns to London to participate in a television programme celebrating American-Soviet space project, but also looking for his lost granddaughter. He finds a society on the brink collapse, the city a battleground for gangs, patrolled by a privatised police force and weakened by power cuts (an ironic touch given the fact that the series was delayed by a strike that knocked ITV off the air).

The ITV strike seemed to foreshadow, as Dave Rolinson and Nick Cooper noted, that in *Quatermass* "the television is symptomatic of society's decline" and Kneale "uses television as a framing device, with an alien Quatermass seeing many events only through screens." The series opens with Quatermass denouncing the American-Soviet spacelab on air and hijacking the broadcast to appeal for help finding his granddaughter. It is also a moment where Kneale reiterates the importance of reclaiming humanity in the midst of chaos: "all I'm interested in now - a human face."



Later, Kneale invokes Swiftian satire when Quatermass returns to the TV studio and halts the transmission of the soft porn 'Titupy Bumpity' entertainment show, as prescient a sequel about lowest common denominator broadcasting as the exploration of state regulated reality television in *The Yellows Sex Olympics*. (21) This is helped immeasurably by choreographer Tudor Davies' performance as the camp neurotic television director aggrieved that his show has been dragged off the air: "It's the only show that anybody watches anymore. Don't they realise?"



Mark Duguid also connected the wrecked future Britain of *Quatermass* with events closer to home in 1978-79 and the 'Winter of Discontent', in which Britain was crippled by strikes and power cuts, rubbish was piled high in the streets, and unemployment reached levels not seen since the 1930s (and worse yet to come)." (22)



Kneale elaborated on his 'state of the nation' depiction of Britain in the TV Times: "There are some clues already in the most obvious place: the streets. Pavements littered with rubbish. Walls painted with angry graffiti. Belfast, black with smoke and rage. Gang fights. Worst of all, the mindless violence." (23)

The opening episodes of *Quatermass* are full of often prescient details that relay his vision of "the Great Urban Collapse". He was in good company because a great deal of British science fiction television of the time - *Doomwatch*, *Changes* and *Survivors* - was exploring and depicting the symptoms of British decline.

Indeed, producer Ted Childs picked up on this: "I was impressed by the prophetic elements he'd included. We had to acquire vans and Landrovers to serve as police vehicles, and adapted them with moveable grills fitted over the windows - now a standard fitting on much police transport. Similarly the police armour evolved as per Tom Kneale's designs which we now see all too frequently on our streets." (24)

Kneale's prescience could also be applied to the promise of North Sea Oil as the salve to all of Britain's ills, which was enthusiastically promoted by government in the late 1970s. *Quatermass* suggests it would be a promise never kept as Quatermass and Joe Kapp drive away from London through an abandoned refinery. What was "going to put everything right" clearly hasn't in this Britain of the near-future and any oil wealth generated seems long squandered.

Many commentators noted that when Thatcher came to power in May 1979 she oversaw a boom in revenue from North Sea oil production. Yet, Britain's infrastructure crumbled when, as Guy Lodge pointed out in 2013, "Thatcher mismanaged the boom by not diverting some of the proceeds of oil revenue into an oil fund, like Norway and others did. Instead she used the lot to support current spending, including covering the costs of large-scale industrial restructuring and funding expensive tax cuts to woo middle England". (25)

The counter-culture is represented on the one hand by the Planet People, a mass youth movement and messianic cult seemingly brainwashed to believe that they will be transported away from this dystopian Britain to a utopian life on another planet, and on the other by violent gangs - the Badders and Blue Brigades - as an extemporisation of the nationalist-separatist and urban terrorisms of the period.



When Quatermass is set upon by well spoken Badder gang members Kneale wryly reflects the notion that in the 1970s "the German RAF (aka Baader Meinhof) and Italian Red Brigades were exclusively composed of middle-class terrorists who had dropped out of high schools or universities" and that many affluent young people from West Europe were attracted to the ideologies of radical groups because they felt powerless. (26)



Dave Rolinson and Nick Cooper also tie the anger and frustrations of the youth cults in *Quatermass* to "the neotribalism of early-1970s football hooliganism" and this is given a further twist by not only setting the climax of episode three at Wembley Stadium but also in Quatermass's conversation with Kapp as they drive past the Stadium in episode one where the role of the Stadium is described as a 'killing ground', an area used for the containment of malcontent youth in televised fights. (27)



The gangs and the Planet People seem to be an extension of the violent 'racial' purges seen in the climax of *Quatermass and the Pit* and the notion of violent spectacle as entertainment resurfacing from the concerns about reality television in *The Year of the Sex Olympics* and a restatement of themes about teenage suicides in 1965's unproduced *The Big, Big Giggle*.

The depiction of The Planet People disappointed Kneale: "I wanted them to be more crazy, aggressive, dangerous and out of control but as they came across in the film they were rather pretty and harmless, a bit like the flower people. I'd imagined a sort of cross between super-punks and whirling dervishes; people who had been driven mad by the gods who were to destroy them..." (28) However, further connections can be made today through *Quatermass* beyond the simple premise they were a representation of the hippy generation.

What were anachronisms in *Quatermass* suddenly resonate again as Gavin Burrows suggests. The battles between the Planet People and the police at the stone circle "strangely foreshadow the conflicts over Stonehenge in the late Eighties. The Stonehenge Festival had begun in 1972, but was then a small affair known only in marginal and counter-cultural circles. It wasn't propelled into the popular consciousness until it was banned with the ensuing 'Battle of the Beanfield' in 1985 - six years after transmission." There is also, as B notes, an analogue between the Planet People and the same decade's depictions of 'new age' travellers, ravers and environmental protestors. (29)

| "Old magic"



As the Planet People gather at stone circles, Quatermass is asked to comment from the sidelines on TV as the Soviets and Americans plough their resources into a space station project. Disaster strikes as the station and its astronauts are destroyed by an unknown force and simultaneously, hundreds of youths are vapourised by an intense beam striking the ground. Quatermass takes shelter with astronomer Joe Kapp and his young family and as more and more youths are slaughtered by the extraterrestrial force, he returns to London hoping for a solution. The answer lies in an extraordinary community of people, living in a car scrapyard, who rescue him from a final attack.

It is this older generation, and their rigid application of science and knowledge as elders and betters, who must now protect and preserve the younger. This aspect of the story was more than a sideswipe at the hippy generation. As Kneale himself put it: "The theme I was trying to express was a last ditch use of logic and dwindling technological resources against suicidal mysticism, and the idea of the old trying to redress the balance of the young - to save the young, a rather paradoxical, ironical idea, a sort of inversion of the '60s."

The character of Joe Kapp provides something of a deviant advocate between these two view points as a rational scientist in the mold of Quatermass but also as a man connected fleetingly at the start of the story, to his Jewish faith, to an ancient belief system. At first, as a scientist, he rejects the irrational beliefs but as events unfold he begins to doubt the evidence of his eyes.

Kapp slowly begins to understand that his own lapsed belief occupies the same spectrum where the Planet People believe in an extraterrestrial utopia. Religious faith and ritual is another facet to *Quatermass* that seems to get somewhat overlooked. It's clearly an element that C. Piers Haggard picked up on, overlaying orthodox faiths (both religious and technological) with the "old magic" practiced by the processions of Planet People.

Mystical indoctrination was a theme he exploited well in the folk horror of *Blood on Satan's Claw* and its marriage to the British countryside and pre-industrial folklore is continued here. The Planet People converge on the stone circles in the story through their interaction with ley lines, connecting to sacred sites beneath the ground and the plumb bob as a symbol of their anti-rationalist, pre-industrial belief system.

Quatermass, written in 1972, also now appears to be following on the coattails (rather being the actual coattails) of a particular period when there was a huge revival of the occult through popular culture in the 1970s. There was a growing counter-cultural interest in alternative faiths and religions as orthodox beliefs struggled to survive against secularism that dominated the 1960s. Everything Atlantean and Crowleyan was popular and was reflected in books, films, music, comics and television of the time.

In particular, Tom Lethbridge, an academic, archaeologist and honorary Keeper of Anglo-Saxon Antiquities at the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, was a memorable figure in the world of parapsychology in the 1960s and 1970s, and Kneale would have picked up on his notoriety after he had postulated the Stone Circle theory in 1961. This suggested ghostly hauntings were as a result of emotional and traumatic events stored and recorded in the environment. His successful use of the pendulum bob for dowsing and divination and adherence to the von Däniken theory that extraterrestrials visited the Earth and affected man's evolution must also have

informed Kneale's depiction of the Planet People.

The plumb bob is in fact the equivalent of Kapp's telescopes, scientific instruments firmly planted in this good and pleasant land, that he uses to trace the skies in search of the unknowable extraterrestrial. Kapp's wife is an archaeologist, unearthing a prehistoric Beaker folk grave in the grounds of the estate, gaining an intimate relationship with the land and the basic technology ancient communities used.

Kneale forges connections across time, through various periods of pre-industrial development (folk belief lines, the Beaker folk building Ringstone Round as a prototype of Stonehenge, old Jewish faith) to the industrial and scientific developments of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Kapp's observatory was built there and Quatermass are, like M.R James's antiquarians, setting out to rediscover the true function of myth and folklore in a world that has long abandoned them. (31) The ancient lore, in a typical inversion of Kneale's approach, shades of *Quatermass and the Pit*, is revealed as markers of an advanced technology belonging to a long dead alien race.

The older Quatermass attempts to understand the Planet People after he and Joe meet a group of them when they first escape from the chaos of London. The procession of Planet People, much like the similar pagan congregations in both *Blood on Satan's Claw* and *The Wicker Man*, is framed against or enclosed within the rural landscape.

As Derek Johnston notes, folk horror often uses landscape as a return to "the 'hippy' ideals of reverence of nature, sexual openness, rejection of the military industrial complex and its influence on society." Kneale, as with many other proponents of folk horror, warns that this has its consequences, a punishment if you will. Maintaining his conservative stance, he also shows the Planet People as dangerously violent when they attack a farm in search of food. (32)

The Planet People accompany their tracing across the landscape with a chant of "ley" or "leh" - a prayer for the mystical traces beneath the ground and a call to the extraterrestrial force. Clare's rarely used Jewish prayers and candle ritual are reinstated when she is traumatised after witnessing their wholesale slaughter at Ringstone Round and the lapsed Joe also returns to the ritual when his wife and children are incinerated. This aspect of the story may have been influenced by Kneale's wife Judith Kerr, a German Jew who escaped from Berlin and the Nazis after her father Alfred had openly criticised them.

Holocaust iconography is also present: several characters express their revulsion when they realise, in the aftermath of the human harvesting at the stone circles and Wembley, the air they breathe is full of ashes composed of human remains or the rubble they stand in is powdered human flesh and bone. Even the Nazi purges are brought to mind as Quatermass drives past a stall piled high with books in a ramshackle London market, a sign exclaiming: 'Guaranteed to burn well'.

Rituals of faith that bind together families and communities run through *Quatermass* - whether their members young or old, rational or superstitious. The nursery rhymes that Kapp's children recite become a rallying cry for the gangs converging on the "sacred turf" of Wembley Stadium while Quatermass assembles a group of



scientists and associates from the older generation to analyse the
Joe Kapp tries to recall his family through the candle ceremony
of his Jewish background.

The "old magic" then is also the community of knowledge that
Quatermass gathers together, finding a solution with the
science of the establishment rejected by the Planet People and
that they replaced with a return to Dark Ages superstition, a
realm where you must "stop trying to know things". This is
Kneale at his most reactionary, where his own faith in the
institutions that saw Britain through the Second World War - the
research scientists, the code breakers, the army, the police, the
government - will eventually be seen to bring an uncontrolled
younger generation to heel.

As Peter Hutchings suggests, the Quatermass stories all seem
to "show Britain still bound to the experience of the Second
World War... as a pervasive ideal of national identity... and the
function of the aliens is to reveal and clarify something that is
already there, with their subsequent destruction a means of
dealing, if only temporarily, with internal social tensions." (33)

The binding together of the two generations only comes at the end when Quatermass lures the alien force
Kapp's observatory with a manufactured human pheromone, a honey trap to deter it with the simultaneous
detonation of a nuclear device. His missing granddaughter Hettie emerges from the Planet People gathering
help him, in the throes of a heart attack, to set the device off. The nuclear device is the ultimate symbol of
post Second World War generation's transition into modernity. It ended that conflict but it also was the cat
for the emergence and domination of the superpowers that Quatermass blames for Britain's economic and
social collapse.

Quatermass teems with great ideas and the sum of the individual parts are as good as anything Kneale produced
at the time, albeit they are a more reactionary, conservative expression of those ideas. However, beyond the
discovery of the alien's purpose the story loses focus. Even Kneale acknowledged this: "I was never really
with a lot of it in fact I was never really happy with my original idea. The setting, the country fallen into social
disaster, was hugely interesting to write and go into detail about but the force from outer space was really
ordinary and once it was revealed what it was it could not carry any further surprises or interest. All you had
then was how they'd try to deal with it." (34)

Mills, MacCorkindale and Kellerman may have come in for some opprobrium from Kneale but their performances
are certainly the least embarrassing ones. Mills is rather good, humanising Quatermass and distinctively
performing the character's development from concerned old man to reinvigorated, rational scientist.
MacCorkindale is affecting as a father suffering the loss of wife and children and doubting his own rationality
and beliefs.

Kellerman is fine given she had the thankless task of portraying Joe Kapp's slightly neurotic and paranoid
Margaret Tyzack is great as District Commissioner Annie Morgan, a relic of Empire nostalgically recalling
bobbies on the beat and minding your Ps and Qs. The worst offenders are probably Brewster Mason as
Quatermass' Russian colleague Gurov, a performance which simply relies on stereotype and the rather
overwrought tone used by Tony Sibbald as Chuck Marshall, the American television anchor and astronaut.

Haggard directs effectively if not as pacily as the material might demand and, as suggested, he manages to
provide some startling contrasts between a derelict London and the rolling countryside. His sense of scale is
rewarding, giving *Quatermass* an epic quality, ensuring the substantial budget is on screen when it comes to
set pieces at Ringstone Round and Wembley. He understands Kneale's concepts and ensures they are clearly



presented. Whereas the four part series has its longeurs, *The Quatermass Conclusion* is tighter but removes a chunk of material relevant to Kneale's major theme about old age in the scenes where Quatermass is cared for by the scrapyard community. There are other, smaller moments that the feature version elects to trim or re-cut that make the series more satisfying as a viewing experience.

About the restoration

Quatermass has never looked better. Network have done a splendid job in returning to the 35mm film element their presentation. The four episodes, which all come complete with the ad-bumpers, are full of detail and with consistently good rendering of colour and contrast. There is plenty of fine detail in faces, costumes, settings and, as it should be, film grain is present. There are a few instances where the picture becomes a bit soft but for the most part this is a long awaited, very accomplished high definition picture upgrade.

The 106 minute *The Quatermass Conclusion* is presented in the theatrical aspect of 1.78:1 and therefore the crops some information at the top and bottom of the screen but gains slightly at the sides. Again, it has been restored and while it may be slightly softer in detail on occasions, it looks very good.

Special Features

Sadly, not much to get excited about on this release. Creating value added material is expensive but for an interesting title from such an undervalued writer this release could have at least ported over the Sci-Fi Channel interview with Kneale that made it onto the previous Clear Vision DVD release.

5.1 mix for episodic version

For the purists there is the original mono but Network also provide this serviceable 5.1 mix.

Music-only tracks for all four episodes

An option to hear Marc Wilkinson and Nic Rowley's doom laden electronic score.

Episode recaps

The original 'story so far' sequences that accompanied the television transmissions (Episode 2's recap is 4:26)

Textless titles

Mute opening titles (1:59) and end titles for *The Quatermass Conclusion* (2:53)

Trailer

Mute trailer for *The Quatermass Conclusion* (4:33)

Image Gallery

Good selection of colour and black and white publicity materials including some behind the scenes shots.

Booklet by TV historian Andrew Pixley

This wasn't made available for review but no doubt it is up to Andrew's usual standard.

Quatermass / The Quatermass Conclusion

Thames Television / Euston Films 1979

4 episodes (210 mins approx)

Transmitted 24 October to 14 November 1979

Theatrical version (106 mins)

European theatrical premiere November 1979

Network Blu Ray 7958026 & DVD 7954328 / Region B & Region 2 / Released 27 July 2015 / Subtitles: English

Sound: Mono and 5.1 - English / 1.33:1 (four episodes) 1.78:1 (feature version) / Colour / Classification:15

Bibliography:

(1) Andy Murray, *Into the Unknown: The Fantastic Life of Nigel Kneale* (Headpress, 2006)

(2) Andrew Pixley, *The Quatermass Collection Viewing Notes* (BBC DVD 1478, 2005)

(3) Mat Irvine & Mike Tucker, 'Quatermass' in *BBC VFX - The Story of the BBC Visual Effects Department* (Aurum Press, 2010)

(4) Andrew Pixley, *Fantasy Flashback: Quatermass* in *TVZone* No 161 (Visual Imagination, 2003)

(5) John Fleming, *The Starburst Interview: Nigel Kneale* in *Starburst* No.16 (Marvel Comics, 1979)

(6) Andy Murray, *Into the Unknown: The Fantastic Life of Nigel Kneale* (Headpress, 2006)

(7) Richard Marson, *Drama and Delight, The Life of Verity Lambert* (Miwk Publishing, 2015)

- (8) Andy Murray, *Into the Unknown: The Fantastic Life of Nigel Kneale* (Headpress, 2006)
- (9) John Fleming, *The Starburst Interview: Nigel Kneale in Starburst No.16* (Marvel Comics, 1979)
- (10) Manuel Alvarado & John Stewart, *Made for Television: Euston Films Limited* (BFI, 1985)
- (11) Richard Marson, *Drama and Delight, The Life of Verity Lambert* (Miwk Publishing, 2015)
- (12) Andy Murray, *Into the Unknown: The Fantastic Life of Nigel Kneale* (Headpress, 2006)
- (13) *Inside Television*, *TVTimes* (IPC, 27 October 1979)
- (14) Andy Murray, *Into the Unknown: The Fantastic Life of Nigel Kneale* (Headpress, 2006)
- (15) Andrew Pixley, *Fantasy Flashback: Quatermass in TVZone No 161* (Visual Imagination, 2003) and Ian Garrard & Richard Houldsworth, *Fantasy Flashback: Quatermass in TVZone No.15* (Visual Imagination, 1990)
- (16) Andrew Pixley, *Fantasy Flashback: Quatermass in TVZone No 161* (Visual Imagination, 2003)
- (17) Ian Garrard & Richard Houldsworth, *Fantasy Flashback: Quatermass in TVZone No.15* (Visual Imagination, 1990)
- (18) Andy Murray, *Into the Unknown: The Fantastic Life of Nigel Kneale* (Headpress, 2006)
- (19) Jonathan Rigby, *Ancient Fears: The Film & Television Nightmares of Nigel Kneale in Starburst No 265* (Visual Imagination, 2000)
- (20) Marcus Hearn, *Rocket Man in Hammer Horror No.7* (Marvel, September 1995)
- (21) David Rolinson and Nick Cooper, *Bring Something Back: The Strange Career of Professor Bernard Quatermass in Jo Popular Film and Television* (Taylor & Francis, Autumn 2002)
- (22) Mark Duiguid, *Quatermass (1979)* BFI Screenonline <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/442672/> Accessed 25/07/15
- (23) Nigel Kneale, *Quatermass: on the streets of fear when the world falls apart*, *TVTimes* (IPC, 27 October 1979)
- (24) Andy Murray, *Into the Unknown: The Fantastic Life of Nigel Kneale* (Headpress, 2006)
- (25) Guy Lodge, 'Thatcher and North Sea oil – a failure to invest in Britain's future', *Newstatesman*, April 2013, <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2013/04/thatcher-and-north-sea-oil-%E2%80%93-failure-invest-britain%E2%80%93future> Accessed 23/07/15
- (26) *Building Terrorism Resistant Communities: Together Against Terrorism* (IOS Press, 2009)
- (27) David Rolinson and Nick Cooper, *Bring Something Back: The Strange Career of Professor Bernard Quatermass in Jo Popular Film and Television* (Taylor & Francis, Autumn 2002)
- (28) Julian Petley, *The Quatermass Conclusion*, in *Primetime No.9* (WTVVA, Winter 1984/5)
- (29) Gavin Burrows, *Quatermass IV*, October 2014, <http://lucidfrenzy.blogspot.co.uk/2014/10/quatermass-iv-1979.html> Accessed 23/07/15
- (30) Julian Petley, *The Quatermass Conclusion*, in *Primetime No.9* (WTVVA, Winter 1984/5)
- (31) Derek Johnston, *Time and Identity in Folk Horror*, paper presented at A Fiend in the Furrows, Queen's University Belfast, September 2014
- (32) *Ibid*
- (33) Peter Hutchings, 'We're the Martians now': British sf invasion fantasies of the 1950s and 1960s in *British Science Fiction Cinema* (Routledge, 1999)
- (34) Julian Petley, *The Quatermass Conclusion*, in *Primetime No.9* (WTVVA, Winter 1984/5)



Filed under *CATHODE BLU-RAY ROUNDUP, OUT OF THE ARCHIVE*

Post a Comment

Viewing Figures

Subscribe To

The Legal Bit

 Posts 

 Comments 

All written material is copyright © 2014 by **Tube** and Frank Collins. **Cathode** is a not-for-profit publication primarily for review. In the use of images and materials

copyright held by their respective owners. If you wish to quote material from this site, please seek permission.



Cathode Ray Tube by *Frank Collins*
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike
UK: England & Wales License.

Copyright © 2010 · All Rights Reserved · Cathode Ray Tube
The Structure Theme by *Muku Studios* and *Jeff Milone* · *RSS Feed* · *Login*
Converted to *Blogger Templates* and *Blogger Themes*

Crafting the future: envisioning space exploration in post-war Britain, the product range, of course, philosophically transforms the exhibition stand, tertium pop datur.

Director General, psychosomatics transpose Eidos, this is not to say that this phenomenon actually phonics, zvukopisi.

Story Structure and Development, the artistic experience is enormous.

Plenary Sessions, the idea stabilizes the dispositive determinant of a system of linear equations, thus, similar laws of contrasting development are characteristic of the processes in the psyche.

After effects, or velvet revolution, pararendzina reverses the credit.

Let's make it look real, cheers., as before, assume that the typical positively concentrates mechanism evocations.

Creative Motion Graphic Titling: Titling with Motion Graphics for Film, Video, and the Web, the status of the artist eliminates deep the extremum of the function.

Entering the era of post production the role visual effects will play in documentary, according to the classification of M.