



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Contents

Title Page

Introduction

Central Characters

Regular Cast List

Production Credits

Production Notes

Characterisations

Production Biographies

Episode Synopses

Ratings

Awards

What the Papers Say

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**

British Broadcasting Corporation BBC Worldwide Woodlands 80 Wood Lane London W12 0TT

Tel +44 20 8433 2000 Fax +44 20 8740 1182 Email [international.distribution.worldwide@bbc.co.uk](mailto:international.distribution.worldwide@bbc.co.uk) Online catalogue [www.bbcworldwidetv.com](http://www.bbcworldwidetv.com)

**BBC** Worldwide

# MONARCH

SERIES ONE

# OF THE GLEN

He's a young, trendy city slicker. And he's just inherited a run-down feudal estate in the middle of the Scottish Highlands.

"As warming as a bowl of porridge on a frosty morning." Mirror

starring

Richard Briers, Susan Hampshire,  
Alastair Mackenzie, Lorraine Pilkington and Anna Wilson-Jones

Drama

8 x 50 minutes



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Introduction

Inspired by the novels of Compton Mackenzie, this marvellously shot, hugely enjoyable drama follows in the BBC traditions of *All Creatures Great and Small* and *Ballykissangel*: heart-warming drama, gentle comedy, glorious scenery and a small rural community of eccentric characters.

The magnificent Cairngorms are the beautiful backdrop as Archie MacDonald tries to get to grips with being the new laird of a huge, decaying family estate in the Highlands of Scotland.

Archie is 28 and just about to open his trendy new fish restaurant in London with his beautiful girlfriend, Justine (Anna Wilson Jones, *Wonderful You*), when he gets the news of his unexpected inheritance. Glenbogle is one of the largest sporting estates in the Highlands. He will be the feudal landlord over 40,000 acres, 200 tenants, a house which makes Balmoral look like a cottage, and with an overdraft to match.

To make matters worse, his aged eccentric parents, Hector (Richard Briers, *The Good Life*) and Molly MacDonald (Susan Hampshire, *The Forsythe Saga*), come as part of the furniture and the local schoolteacher, feisty Katrina Finlay (Lorraine Pilkington, *Human Traffic*), is determined to make things as difficult as possible for Archie. There is also the high-spirited and fiery cook/housekeeper Lexie (Dawn Steele, *Split Second*) to contend with...

*Monarch of the Glen* is created by Michael Chaplin (*Grafters*) and inspired by the Highland novels of Compton Mackenzie. The producers are Nick Pitt (*Dalziel & Pascoe*) and Paddy Higson (*Life Support*), directors are Edward Bennett (*Poirot*) and A J Quinn (*Ambassador*). Executive producers are Barbara McKissack and Douglas Rae.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Central Characters

#### Hector

Aged 60, Hector is the eccentric, anarchic, former Laird, who refuses to accept the encroachment of the 21st Century. Steadfast to his wife, he has a more complex relationship with his son, Archie, whom he believes will never fill his dead brother's boots. Hector is a law unto himself, and although he has passed the reins of power to his son, he causes mayhem whenever he chooses.

#### Molly

The long-suffering wife of Hector. Although she has had to put up with her husband's foibles over the years, she still loves him. Always sensitive to Archie's predicament, she helps whenever she can. Although outwardly a little scatty, underneath she is very insightful. Molly indulges her passion for gambling through her bookie, Geordie.

#### Archie

The reluctant new Laird of Glenbogle, Archie has to choose between loyalty to his family and his life in London with the glamorous Justine. He has to endure many obstacles in his attempt to turn the estate around financially. Whilst still attached to Justine, his growing attraction to Katrina is hard to resist.

#### Katrina

Feisty and outspoken, Katrina's life is the glen and particularly the school she runs with calm efficiency. Archie represents everything she disagrees with politically, but she is drawn to him and has to wage a constant struggle when dealing with him, which is often. Katrina's ambition is to become a member of Parliament for the area, and by the last episode she has achieved her goal of becoming Regional Councillor.

#### Lexie

Lexie is Glenbogle's sexy and unconventional housekeeper. Always one to speak her mind, she injects much-needed commonsense and urban humour into the household. Having fled an unhappy childhood in Glasgow, Lexie has an abiding loyalty to the family and an enduring attraction to Archie.

#### Justine

Justine is Archie's girlfriend and co-owner of their restaurant. When Archie is reluctant to come back to his life in London, Justine ventures up to Glenbogle. By the last episode she realises that his heart is no longer with her. She makes one final bid to make the relationship work by arriving at the estate – just as Archie is about to kiss Katrina.

#### Duncan

The junior ghillie at Glenbogle, Duncan is infatuated with Lexie but is continually frustrated by her disinclination to grant him her favours. A madcap full of energy, Duncan hopes ultimately to help Archie run the estate. He is constantly trying to better himself, with often comic results.

#### Golly

Gamekeeper and local sage. Little happens on the estate that misses his knowing glance and wise opinion.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Regular Cast List

Hector	Richard Briers
Duncan	Hamish Clark
Molly	Susan Hampshire
Archie	Alastair Mackenzie
Golly	Alexander Morton
Katrina	Lorraine Pilkington
Lexie	Dawn Steele
Justine	Anna Wilson-Jones

Drama

8 x 50 minutes



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Production Credits

Created by	<b>Michael Chaplin</b>
Inspired by the novels by	<b>Compton Mackenzie</b>
Written by	<b>Michael Chaplin</b> (Episodes 1, 2, 3, 7 & 8) <b>Niall Leonard</b> (Episodes 4 & 5) <b>Patrick Wilde</b> (Episode 6)
Directors	<b>Edward Bennett</b> (Episodes 1-4) <b>AJ Quinn</b> (Episodes 5-8)
Producers	<b>Nick Pitt</b> <b>Paddy Higson</b>
Executive Producers	<b>Barbara McKissack</b> <b>Douglas Rae</b>



**E C O S S E F I L M S**

An **Ecosse Films** Production for BBC Scotland

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Production Notes

Inspired by the Highland novels of Compton Mackenzie, *Monarch of the Glen* centres on the dilemma of Archie MacDonald, whose unexpected inheritance takes him from his sophisticated, city life and back to his roots in rural Scotland where the internet has hardly impacted on the traditional way of life.

At first, Archie is torn between his two lives. In plumping for the latter, he comes into conflict with his eccentric, dyed-in-the-wool father, Hector, and well-meaning, if flaky mother, Molly. It is a classic confrontation between the generations. While trying to sort out the chaos of the estate, Archie has any number of amusing and sometimes moving adventures. Gradually forgetting about his smart London lifestyle and designer girlfriend, Justine, he finds himself seduced by the sheer majesty of the Highland setting and its feisty inhabitants, notably the beautiful but assertive local school-teacher, Katrina. It all adds up to a wonderfully warm, spectacular-looking treat.

Barbara McKissack, Head of Drama at BBC Scotland and executive producer of *Monarch of the Glen*, is delighted with the inviting ambience of the series. "One of the crucial things about this type of drama is that you're welcomed into a world you want to spend time in. Viewers have to think 'it would be fun to live there. I'd like to be part of that extended family'. I hope people will think that about *Monarch of the Glen*."

"There is a charming innocence to it," chimes in the series creator, Michael Chaplin. "Viewers will like to visit Glenbogle because it's a place where bad things don't happen. It's a magical place that many will see as paradise. That's not to say that the drama is simplistic. *Monarch of the Glen* is peopled with rich, three-dimensional characters whom you are intrigued to know more about."

"It does not ignore the challenges and realities of life," McKissack continues. "People don't want completely safe, happy-families drama. Viewers are very sophisticated about storytelling these days. At one of our early screenings a member of the public was talking about 'the arc of a character's journey'. They want to see rounded characters whose stories have some substance to them. That's what they get from *Monarch of the Glen*."

The makers of the drama are full of praise for the screenplay by Chaplin (who also created *Grafters*). "Without a good script, it doesn't matter how beautiful the scenery is," says producer, Nick Pitt. "People won't watch it for the scenery. Fortunately, this is an excellent script. Michael has combined all the necessary constituent parts of popular drama engaging characters in a gripping story without making it derivative or patronising. In his hands, this material seems gloriously fresh."

What is particularly pleasing about *Monarch of the Glen* is the fact that it is laced with warm-hearted humour. "Michael has given Mackenzie's books a contemporary resonance by bringing Archie, a sophisticated New Labour man, out of London and plonking him down in a totally alien feudal system," says Douglas Rae of Ecosse Films, who is executive producer and was previously responsible for BBC Scotland's award-winning film, *Mrs Brown*. "It's a classic fish-out-of-water set-up. There's a lot of humour to be derived from unexpectedly placing someone in the middle of an odd situation. In addition, the series scores in addressing many themes close to all our hearts. It is, for example, a very strong portrait of a warring, yet ultimately close family."

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Production Notes continued

According to McKissack, "It will strike a chord because it tells us a lot about modern families. The whole issue of ageing parents is not something that drama often tackles. Yet it's something we all have to face especially with the long hours we work. Where's the space in our lives for our ageing parents these days? It's a really potent debate. People on the crew kept asking, 'What would you do if one of your parents were left alone?' Everyone can relate to Archie's dilemma."

Just as everyone will be able to relate to the clash between father and son. "The series focuses on the conflict between the old world and the new," McKissack carries on. "At the moment, change is happening everywhere and being foisted on conservative people, whether they like it or not. That is summed up in the fascinating contrast between the MacDonald father and son. Hector represents the old forces, while Archie is a more modern man. This story shows that the competition between generations can be huge, and the opportunities for conflict, misunderstanding and humour are enormous. It's terrifically rich territory for drama."

Pitt chips in that these people are recognisably human. "They treat each other with an obstreperous compassion familiar to us all. The underlying fraught sense of humanity is what makes this family every family."

Chaplin is in agreement. "Archie thinks his father is a difficult old beggar, but he is still his dad. He knows that if he loses Glenbogle, it would kill his father. There's a lot of conflict going on within Archie. That's what makes him interesting because drama thrives on conflict. We all face those contradictions – what is the right place, the right partner, the right job for us?"

Another issue strongly highlighted in the series is the clash between the rural and the urban. "We all feel that pull between the countryside and the city," says McKissack. "It's one of the main planks of the drama, although not in a heavy way. Archie represents that conflict: he's an urban self-made man who is simultaneously confronted by his anachronistic rural past. How does he marry the two?"

"The drama plays on the idealistic sense of a rural idyll that we all experience. Look at Fleming, the bank manager in the series. He thought that if you moved to the countryside, everything would be lovely – if only it were that simple. We all harbour that dream that things would be easier and less stressful in the country. But that's just not true. Archie, for instance, just takes stress with him wherever he goes."

For all that, the landscape in the series is stunning and is a significant part of its overwhelming charm. It was shot on the Cairngorms estate where *Mrs Brown* was also filmed, and local tourist boards are apparently already calling the area '*Monarch of the Glen* country'.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**





# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Production Notes continued

We see the effect of the landscape through Archie's eyes. "It has a great impact on Archie which we can all identify with," McKissack says. "He has come up from London where he thinks he is having a fantastic time. Then suddenly his eyes are opened to the compelling attractions of the Highlands. The landscape is like another character. Its very grandeur tells viewers what's at stake for Archie. It's so mesmerisingly beautiful, it just gets to you. It has an absolute magic about it. Even if you are only there for a few hours, it affects you; it's like a balm. Nobody would want to leave that setting. The vastness of the landscape makes you keenly aware of how small you are and of how tiny your day-to-day worries are by comparison. That's a good thing for us all to think about."

Chaplin concurs: "I adore that Highland landscape. I often go there to write. It's magical because of its romantic and tragic history. I like its barrenness; it's much more dramatic than the rolling English landscape. I also like its solitude; it's fantastic that you can walk all day without seeing anyone else. In addition to the breathtaking scenery, this series also features the incredibly beautiful family home at Glenbogle. With its turrets and towers, it looks like a fairytale never-never land."

The drama also succeeds in reflecting the changing face of Scotland today. Says Douglas Rae, "Scotland has a new confidence now. After 300 years of British rule influenced by Westminster, the Scots have now realised that they want to assert their own individuality. That creates an energy and reduces the chippiness which has beleaguered Scottish success over the years. More Scots are now remaining in Scotland, and there is more of a celebration of Scottish talent. Through the characters of Archie and Katrina, we can look at such topical political issues as land reform, the rights of tenants and the right to roam. This show may not have worked five years ago, but now *Monarch of the Glen* has found its time. In an amusing and dramatic way, it will reflect the social renaissance that is sweeping the country. It will bring up serious topics, but treat them in a witty way."

In Pitt's view, the series coheres with "the great Scottish tradition of storytelling. Here there is a cultural richness and otherness that is appealing, intriguing and romantic."

All the signs are that *Monarch of the Glen* will be a great success. Rae concludes that it should work because, in an age dominated by 'precinct' dramas stuffed with cops and docs, *Monarch of the Glen* is strikingly original. It also offers the perfect balance of light and shade. "There's nothing like this on television. It is ideal popular drama, but it can't just be dismissed as Highland whimsy. It has edge. It is entertaining and poignant at the same time. If you can make someone laugh and cry at the same time, you've got a great project."

Which *Monarch of the Glen* undoubtedly is.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Characterisations

#### Alastair Mackenzie (Archie)

**Alastair Mackenzie was most recently seen by television audiences in the Channel 4 drama *Psychos*. His previous television credits include *Hamish Macbeth*, *Phil Kay Feels ...*, *Soldier Soldier*, *Lovejoy* and *Chef*, plus film roles in *Misadventures of Margaret*, *Down in the City* and *California*.**

Mackenzie plays Archie, the central character in *Monarch of the Glen*. He is running a successful, trendy London restaurant when he is called back to his ramshackle family estate of Glenbogle in the Highlands. Informed by his cantankerous but ailing father, Hector, that he now owns it, Archie finds himself torn between the Highlands and London, between duty and desire, and between natural rural beauty and metropolitan sophistication.

Mackenzie has the tough challenge of embodying that dilemma and rises to it magnificently. He says that it was this duality that drew him to the role in the first place. "Archie has his foot in both camps. He is caught between the old and the new. Someone torn between two worlds is a very contemporary theme.

"The part is an actor's dream. Archie has a journey to make. At the start, he's in a dilemma and conflicted – and conflict is always vital to drama. The funny thing is, he wasn't aware he was torn until he was reluctantly called back to Glenbogle as the prodigal son. Only when he gets back there does Archie realise that the place gets under your skin."

Archie's dilemma is highlighted when he has to choose between the two women in his life: the feisty Highland head teacher, Katrina, and the elegant London restaurateur, Justine. "Katrina is a firebrand given to polemical diatribes, while Justine is much more proper and sophisticated, but it's still a terrible problem for Archie," says Mackenzie. "What a nightmare for any man trying to decide between two beautiful women!"

Mackenzie also had very personal reasons for being pulled towards the character. He felt it reflected his own background. "I was brought up just 30 miles from the Highland estate where the series was shot. That is my country. My heart is in those hills, but at the same time I live and work in London. There is always one scene that stands out and attracts me to a project. In this, it was the moment Archie leaves London on the sleeper. When he wakes up the next morning, he lifts the blinds in the carriage and immediately sees the wonderful Highland hills.

"For me, that is so resonant. It just what I used to do. You leave the hustle and bustle of London and wake up in those tranquil hills. The series also gave me the opportunity to spend four months up there. It was like a homecoming. Spending time there has rekindled the fire for me. I've fallen head over heels in love with the Highlands."

The natural grandeur of the area, so marvellously captured in the series, has clearly affected the actor. "The landscape is so powerful; it's like another leading character in the drama," Mackenzie reckons. "It's such an amazing backdrop.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Characterisations

#### Alastair Mackenzie (continued)

"There's something out there that's so overwhelmingly beautiful, it's beyond our control. When you are there, you're constantly aware of Nature because the landscape is so dramatic and the weather is so extreme. That engenders passion much more than a flat, unchallenging landscape. It gives your soul space to breathe. With its sense of history and magnificence, it has a fairytale quality to it. *Monarch of the Glen* reflects the vastness and the magnitude of that countryside. God is in those hills. If I were called upon to create a religion, I'd base it on mountains."

Viewers will also be gripped by the stormy, yet ultimately close relationship between Archie and his father. "It's a universal picture," says Mackenzie. "It will strike a chord with everyone. At first, you have what appears to be an unloving father in a dysfunctional relationship with his son, but Archie gradually comes to accept Hector's cantankerousness and even to love him for it."

Mackenzie relished playing opposite such a splendid actor as Richard Briers. "He's perfectly cast as Hector," Mackenzie enthuses. "He's such a great tragi-comedian. He can make you laugh and cry at the same time. He's like a little boy beneath the grumpy surface, he's someone you just want to cuddle. It's very easy to love him."

"Richard and I laughed the whole time during filming. One day he couldn't remember his lines and I had to hold up an idiot-board for him, but I couldn't hold it still because I was laughing so much."

This really has been a breakthrough year for Mackenzie, who came into *Monarch of the Glen* after a starring role in Channel 4's *Psychos*. "Before *Psychos*, I struggled doing bits and bobs in TV and a lot of obscure films," he admits. "Casting directors seemed to be so unimaginative. I remember at one point Daniel Day-Lewis had three films out at the same time – *Room with a View*, *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Stars and Bars* – and everyone said how versatile he was. I thought, I could be versatile, too, if they'd just give me the chance."

Mackenzie has developed even further in *Monarch of the Glen*, and the producers are clearly delighted with his performance as Archie. He is able exactly to convey the dilemma the character is undergoing. "The moment Alastair walked through the door at the auditions, before he had even spoken, we knew we had found our Archie," recalls Douglas Rae.

"He's incredibly charming. He lives in London, yet he has a Scottish background. He combines just the right mixture of confidence in who he is with vulnerability about his situation. He pulls it off without looking wimpish or not up to much." "With his dark good looks, he looks like a character out of *Friends*. According to the girls in the office, he's drop-dead gorgeous. He's got the potential of a young Tom Cruise, but he's completely unaffected about it."

Drama

8 x 50 minutes



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Characterisations

#### Alastair Mackenzie (continued)

In his odd spare moment, Mackenzie has been working on his own screenplay which he is hopeful of getting made. "Coincidentally there's rather a good male lead in it. I wonder who could play that?" he asks with a smile.

For the time being, however, he is focusing on *Monarch of the Glen*, which he is overjoyed to report will be "the first time my family will like something I've been in. It's the first time I've been on screen without taking drugs or killing someone. Finally, my mother will be pleased!"

But the element of *Monarch of the Glen* that appealed to Mackenzie above all others was the sheer charm of the piece. "It's so warm," he declares. "It has a great charm, which is lacking in so much TV drama these days. It is unthreatening family drama, but that's not to say it's dull.

"You look at the title and have preconceptions that this might be a load of Tartan-clad nonsense, but it isn't. It takes those preconceptions and twists them into something romantic and magical.

"This drama has rich colours and even richer characters. It has very wide appeal. Richard Briers and Susan Hampshire will bring in the older punters, and we'll appeal to the younger ones. *Monarch of the Glen* is not gritty, arthouse, cutting-edge drama; it's perfect winter, early evening viewing. Get around that fire and turn on the television."

Drama

8 x 50 minutes



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Characterisations

#### Richard Briers (Hector)

One of the United Kingdom's most famous and beloved actors, Richard Briers has enjoyed a long and varied career. Up until the late 1980s, he was probably best known for his starring roles in the hit BBC comedies *The Good Life* and *Ever Decreasing Circles* which made him a household name, and for his many appearances in historic West End theatre productions. In the late 1980s, however, he began a professional association with Kenneth Branagh and the Renaissance Theatre Company and gained fantastic acclaim for his performances in Shakespearean roles. On film, he played Bardolph in *Henry V*, Leonato in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Polonius in *Hamlet* and most recently a singing/dancing professor in *Love's Labours Lost*. In 1997, Richard starred in the BBC series *A Respectable Trade*, appeared in *The Student Prince* and then capped his already brilliant theatrical career with his performance of The Man in the Theatre de Complicity/Royal Court production of Ionesco's *The Chairs*, which sold out immediately and was extended due to popular demand. Richard Briers has received the Order of the British Empire for his services to the acting profession.

In *Monarch of the Glen*, Briers turns in a wondrously charismatic performance as Hector, the crotchety old Highland laird who battles with his metropolitan son to whom he has bequeathed his dilapidated estate of Glenbogle. He was lured to the drama by Michael Chaplin's marvellously original script. "I read it and immediately thought, 'Hello, this is something a bit different.' It's off-the-wall, eccentric and amusing. It was amazing to find something so original at a time when we're blanket-bombed by so many different channels. Good comic writers are very thin on the ground."

The actor was also attracted by the gentleness of *Monarch of the Glen*. "You see so much violence in real life; the papers are full of stories about disease and killing. If there's too much of that, it acts as a natural depressant. So it's nice occasionally to be able to smile and escape to a fantasy land like this. People need programmes which are fun. You need a balance in the schedules. You have got to be able to have a laugh."

Sitting in his trailer in wellington boots and green cords held up with braces, Briers reveals that he was also captivated by the natural grandeur of the Highland setting. "It's an extraordinary place, he says in awe-struck tones. "In parts of it, you feel as though you're on the moon because it's so remote. But you're really in touch with nature up there. I just wish it were nearer Chiswick," he adds with a characteristic wicked chuckle.

Never very far from the next joke, Briers continues, "*Monarch of the Glen* also offered me the chance to make a comeback. I have to remind viewers that I'm now 25 years older than *The Good Life* and have white hair. Hopefully that will engender more parts as grandads and mad old people in general. Remember I'm 65 and I have a bus pass."

Drama

8 x 50 minutes



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Characterisations

#### Richard Briers (continued)

Briers was also won over by the sheer richness of Hector. "He's an enchanting character," he enthuses. "He's well out of date and behind the times which I am too. Like me, he lives his life in the 1890s. He is eccentric and irascible with old-fashioned values. He lives in a dream world which his more realistic son has to make sense of. Hector is a grumpy old bugger, but a lovable one."

For all his gags, Briers is relishing his more mature years, during which his acting has really flourished. "When you're playing grandpas and great uncles, you can use a bit of eccentricity. The pressure isn't on to be as naturalistic as young actors. You can get away with being more theatrical."

Briers has perhaps created his greatest work recently under the direction of Kenneth Branagh. "It was a wonderful career change at my age to work with Ken and perform Shakespeare," he enthuses. "He's a remarkable director and I'm very good at taking direction. I first met him when he was starting out at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, and we treated him like a second son. Then he suddenly leapt into the stratosphere, but he never left his old friends behind. He's amazingly loyal to his mates."

Briers performed a particularly memorable stage performance of *King Lear* for Branagh. "He brought a lot out of me as Lear," he recalls. "He kept on and on at me to dig out every emotion possible, and occasionally he'd say, 'Don't be too Wimbledon.' It was quite tough, but I learnt a lot even attempting the part. You never stop learning. Every part has its own problems; that stops you getting big-headed."

For all his other hits, Briers is probably still best remembered for *The Good Life*, the hugely popular 1970s sitcom about a couple who left the rat race and adopted a self-sufficient lifestyle in Surbiton. "When that series started, I told Penelope Keith that whatever we did after it, our obituary would still say he was in *The Good Life*," Briers remembers. "It struck such a chord because deep-down everyone would like to be their own boss. Also, people adored Margot's snobbishness. She was a classically unPC woman. It was marvellous to be able to send that up."

In recent times, Briers has carved out a new niche for himself and has been very successfully cast against type as a villain in such classy work as *Inspector Morse* and *A Respectable Trade*. "I love villains; they are such fun," he smiles. "It's nice being really evil, particularly when it's not what people expect. People were shocked to see me play that hateful man in *Morse*. My faithful fan club was shocked. But I had to say to them, 'I'm an actor'."

And one of Britain's finest, at that. Barbara McKissack, executive producer of *Monarch of the Glen*, praises his unrivalled comic abilities. "Richard and comic timing are a marriage made in heaven," she says. "I've never seen anything like it. He's a genius. You'll read a line that you think is funny, but in the performance he'll then make it hilarious. The crew are standing there trying not to laugh. Now I can't think of Hector as anyone but the wily Richard Briers."

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Characterisations

#### Richard Briers (continued)

For his part, producer Nick Pitt, emphasises the actor's talent for tragi-comedy. "Richard is great at being funny, but like all genuine clowns, he also has a streak of melancholy. He can make you laugh, and then cry and then laugh again. That ability to flip-flop emotionally is central to what Hector is; it gives him depth and resonance. He is no mere upper-class caricature. Like a lot of fathers, he feels his status has been usurped by the generation he gave birth to. He is not comfortable with the new-fangled world that threatens to envelop him. It's poignant and universal. All fathers feel that way."

Briers admits that there were moments of discomfort during the filming of *Monarch of the Glen*. "I nearly got hypothermia when I had to shoot a scene in the loch."

"I'm not noted for my athleticism, and I had to spend 15 minutes up to my neck in the water. The nurse told me blithely, 'If you start to shiver, then you'll die.' In the end, I managed it alright. But all in all, I've adored this series. The Highlands is such a magical place to be. It's like being on holiday."

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Characterisations

#### Susan Hampshire (Molly)

Susan Hampshire originally trained as a classical ballet dancer at a ballet school founded and run by her mother. At 15, when she became too tall for ballet, she turned to acting and an extensive and award-winning career in television, theatre and film followed. Her first stage appearance was as Dora in *Night Must Fall* in repertory; a few years later, she was to re-create the role opposite Albert Finney in the film version. Her theatrical career has ranged from musicals to Shakespeare and Ibsen. Susan won a Best Actress Emmy Award for her role as Fleur in the highly acclaimed television series *The Forsyte Saga*, and won the same award in 1971 as Sarah Churchill in *The First Churchills* and again, in 1973, for her Becky Sharp in *Vanity Fair*. Susan is also well-known to audiences for her roles in *The Pallisers*, *Barchester Chronicles*, *My Secret Garden*, *The Grand* and the mini-series *Coming Home*. Her many film credits include *Wonderful Life*, *Monte Carlo or Bust* and *David Copperfield*, as well as a Best Actress award for her role in *Malpertuis*. In addition to acting Susan has written several books, including the highly acclaimed *Susan's Story*, an autobiographical account of her struggle against dyslexia which she also focused upon for *Every Letter Counts* – both were best sellers. She was made Honorary Doctor of Letters at the City University, London, in 1984; Honorary Doctor of Literature at St Andrews, Scotland, in 1986; Honorary Doctor Education at Kingston University, Surrey and Honorary Doctor Arts in Boston, USA, in 1994. She was awarded an OBE in 1995.

In *Monarch of the Glen*, Susan Hampshire plays Molly, the eccentric but well-meaning woman who tries to mediate between her husband Hector and her son as they war over the future of their run-down Highland estate.

She was bowled over when she first read Michael Chaplin's script. "I thought the series was enchanting and unique," she says enthusiastically. "It wasn't pandering to viewers and approaching things the way everyone else does. It is very individual in its presentation of the world. It sets a unique tone. It's a serious story with a lovely, light comic touch."

She was instantly taken by the part of Molly. "It's an enthralling role. I was thrilled to find such a good part. It's so refreshing to find a role where I'm allowed to play my own age rather than someone younger. It's a gift."

Producer Nick Pitt is lost in admiration for Hampshire's performance. "She brings to the role a compassion for the situations that all the members of her family find themselves in. Susan has the ability to make you feel that Molly is the emotional glue holding the family together and that without her, these people would either have run away or killed each other by now."

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**





# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Characterisations

#### Susan Hampshire (continued)

Relaxing in her caravan between scenes, Hampshire says she has also been entranced by the Highland setting of *Monarch of the Glen*. "We are so lucky to be working in one of the most beautiful places on earth. The beauty is all around you. It wouldn't have been the same if we'd made it anywhere else. The country house too is a big statement in itself.

"The local people are absolutely lovely, and the air is wonderful. Think what it is doing for our health. In the first two days here, I felt I was drunk because the air was so pure. It's stress-free up here. We seem far removed from the nasty bits of life. We're in our own bit of paradise."

Hampshire has relished playing opposite Briers. "He's an absolute darling and very brilliant. He has a great ability to be both incredibly funny at the drop of a hat and very touching so your heart goes out to him. It's such a wonderful combination of emotions."

With all these elements in place, the actress is very confident that *Monarch of the Glen* will be a huge success. "All you pray for is a chemistry between the show and the audience and that's something you can't predict. But I know that it will look beautiful and that the writer and directors are of a very high standard. It's so nice to make a programme that the whole family can watch together; people are getting out of that habit. There just aren't that many shows that have this kind of magic."

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Characterisations

#### Lorraine Pilkington (Katrine)

**Lorraine Pilkington was recently seen in the poignant television drama *Four Fathers* and in the highly acclaimed film *Human Traffic*, under the direction of Justin Kerrigan. Other film and television credits include *The Boxer*, Neil Jordan's *The Miracle*, *Her Own Rules*, *Runaway One* and *West End Girls*.**

Lorraine Pilkington takes the role of Katrina, the spirited local headteacher who is one reason why Archie decides to stay in the Highlands rather than heading back to London.

One of our most exciting young actresses, Pilkington was attracted by the sheer richness of the role in *Monarch of the Glen*. "Katrina is wholesome, but at the same time she has passion. She's strong and feisty, but also very caring – a real pleasure to play. People will relate to her vulnerability and her softness more than her political commitment. She's very human and very real." Producer Nick Pitt reckons that Pilkington has the ideal qualities to play Katrina. "Lorraine is strong and rooted, but at the same time she has the charm and beauty which will make the audience fall for her in the way that Archie does. She slowly reveals a soft centre under a tough exterior."

The actress was particularly delighted because the role "gave me the opportunity of starring in a primetime production that's going to do my career a lot of good in terms of exposure. Every time you start a new episode, it's like beginning a whole new film. It's a lovely freedom to be able to develop a character over such a long period of time. Usually, you have to decide who your character is before you arrive on set. It's a *fait accompli* and there's no space for growth. But things happen to the character of Katrina during the series which help to mould her personality. You can let it fly a bit. That's a rare privilege." In addition, Pilkington felt privileged because, "The series offered me the wonderful chance of working with actors of the calibre of Richard Briers and Susan Hampshire. I didn't take a whole lot of persuading."

Pilkington made her name in *Human Traffic*, the acclaimed but uncompromising movie about young clubbers. *Monarch of the Glen* provides the perfect contrast to that film. "From the point of view of my career," she continues, "I knew that I'd just come from an edgy modern film that deals with drugs, and that playing someone at the opposite end of the spectrum wouldn't do me any harm at all."

The actress, who has also starred in *The Nephew* and *The Miracle*, was equally drawn to Michael Chaplin's warm and witty scripts. "It will have a wide audience appeal," she says. "What I especially liked is that it's quite wacky. Some of the storylines are quite far-fetched, but it's always a lot of fun. But what will really appeal to people is the fact that it contains both drama and comedy. I like that combination. Michael mixes both beautifully. He manages to cross difficult emotional issues with hilarious situations. We don't have enough of that; it's all either sitcoms or hardcore dramas. There's a gap in the market for something like this. If we've all done our job properly, people will want another series of it."

And the best thing of all? "It'll be a pre-watershed, family show. The characters will appeal to young and old. There's something in it for everyone!"

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Characterisations

#### Dawn Steele (Lexie)

**Dawn Steele graduated from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in July 1998 with First Class Honours. In the short time since graduating, Dawn has gained a considerable number of film, theatre and television credits. Her television appearances include *Split Second*, *Highlander*, *Haywire*, *Dreams and Recollection* and *In Search of Unicorns*. Dawn has also recently completed filming a leading role in *Tinsel Town*, a new contemporary BBC drama. Her film credits include *Gregory's Two Girls* and *The Debt Collector*.**

Dawn Steele plays Lexie, the wonderfully feisty Glaswegian cook who enjoys a stormy but affectionate relationship with her employer, the eccentric Hector. What Steele really liked about the series was its originality. "It's very charming without being twee," she reckons. "It's not all pretty Highland scenery and kilts; it's got a twist to it. You might think that only old grannies will be interested in it, but that's not the case. It's strong comedy drama that will chime with all ages. Through its younger characters, it will appeal to a younger audience."

Steele was particularly taken with the character of Lexie. "She's very quirky," the actress enthuses. "She can be quite sarcastic and dry, but at the same time she's bubbly and lovable. She's always good fun. She's also very strong and doesn't take any nonsense from anybody. She's a lovely character to play." The actress relished Lexie's lively exchanges with Hector. "When he says about her cooking, 'What's this muck?' she comes straight back with, 'It's been seasoned.' There is a nice contrast between Hector's old-fashioned clothes and beliefs and Lexie's more open-minded approach. She's a sussed young woman from Glasgow who works for a dodderly old man who walks the dog in his plus-fours."

Her relationship with Hector is very sparky, but deep down they're very fond of each other. He would never want her to leave Glenbogle. Steele, recently out of drama school, felt honoured to be acting opposite Richard Briers. "At first, it was terrifying, because he can turn it on just like that; it's awe-inspiring. When you watch him on screen, he's got that David Jason quality – the ability to make you laugh one minute and cry the next. Once I got to know him, I found him a brilliant laugh. He's 65 and still such a life force. We all lived together in the same house for five months, and every night Richard would tell us stories. I could sit and listen to him forever." She was also knocked out by the breathtaking Highland landscape. "The place just grabs you."

"The scenery is so beautiful, there is a magic about it. The silence is amazing, too. It's so quiet, it's quite difficult to get to sleep at night. In one scene, Archie is in a boat in the middle of a loch on the phone to his girlfriend in London. She asks what the place is like, and he replies, 'Not bad really.' At that moment, the camera pulls back and you see these stunning surroundings. As for the house itself, it's like the Magic Kingdom from Disneyworld. There's a clever juxtaposition between the serene countryside and this mad house." Steele reckons that *Monarch of the Glen* will have resonance for both country people and city-dwellers. "The whole story is about how Archie comes to terms with life in the Highlands. You see the change in him during the series. He starts in a smart City suit and ends up wearing a big jumper and kilt. It's about how different that rural life is to the big city. Everyone will be able to relate to that."

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Cast Biographies

#### **Anna Wilson - Jones** (Justine)

Anna has recently worked on several hit television dramas including *Streetlife* for the BBC, *Spaced*, *Wonderful You* and *Boyz Unlimited*.

#### **Hamish Clark** (Duncan)

Hamish trained at the Welsh College of Music and Drama. He will be familiar to television audiences for his role as Roger in *My Wonderful Life*. His film credits include *Bring me the Head of Mavis Davis* and *Martha Meet Frank, Daniel and Laurence* (aka *The Very Thought of You*). In addition Hamish has a variety of theatre and comedy credits, including his own comedy production of *Hamish Whips It Out* at the Edinburgh Fringe festival.

#### **Sandy Morton** (Golly)

Sandy's recent film work includes the highly acclaimed BBC film, *Ratcatcher*, by Lynne Ramsay, and Bill Forsythe's *Gregory's Two Girls*. For television, Sandy's credits include the BBC drama series *Life Support* and *Looking After Jo Jo*, and the recent detective drama *Second Sight*, with Clive Owen.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Production Biographies

#### Barbara McKissack (Executive Producer)

Prior to joining BBC Scotland, Barbara was a producer and company director at Navigator Films Ltd, and earlier in Barony Film and Television Productions. She was Development Executive for BBC Scotland Drama from 1995-1998, working on the Oscar-nominated, multi award-winning film *Mrs Brown*, the critically-acclaimed series *Looking After Jo Jo* starring Robert Carlyle, and the BAFTA-nominated film, *Bumping the Odds*.

Since becoming BBC Scotland's Head of Drama in May 1998, Barbara has been the Executive Producer on the highly acclaimed series *Life Support*, starring Richard Wilson and Aisling O'Sullivan; Lynne Ramsay's critical success *Ratcatcher*, which opened the International Edinburgh Film Festival to brilliant review; *The Darkest Light*, by *Full Monty* writer Simon Beaufoy and currently on cinematic release; *Donovan Quick*, a film starring Colin Firth written and directed by the award-winning team of Donna Franceschild and David Blair; *A Love Divided*, a film starring Orla Brady and Liam Cunningham; and a new drama series, *Tinsel Town* about a group of 20-somethings trying to balance love, work and relationships in Glasgow.

#### Douglas Rae (Executive Producer)

Douglas Rae began his career as a newspaper journalist, then went on to present the hugely popular children's programme, *Magpie*, for five years. Following a course at The National Film School, he became a producer and director and, in 1988, formed Ecosse Films to produce documentaries and arts programmes.

He produced and directed *The Great Moghuls* in India with Bamber Gascoigne, and *Harry Enfield's Guide to Opera* for Channel 4. His production for the BBC of Ralph Steadman's *Plague and the Moonflower* won the 1994 Best Arts Programme in the Indies Awards. Douglas won the BAFTA Scotland award for Best Arts Programme for his direction of *The Bigger Picture*, starring Billy Connolly for BBC Scotland. His executive producer credits include *The Ambassador*, which starred Pauline Collins and Denis Lawson, and the PD James series, *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman*, starring Helen Baxendale and Annette Crosbie.

Douglas was executive producer on his first feature film, *Mrs Brown*, with BBC Scotland and he is currently working on two feature films, *The Water Horse*, a \$20 million film to be shot in Scotland written by Simon Beaufoy (*The Full Monty*) for Miramax, and *Charlotte Gray* – written by Jeremy Brock (*Mrs Brown*) for Film Four – and a number of drama projects for the BBC, including a new detective series, *McCready and Daughter* starring Patsy Palmer in her first dramatic role since *EastEnders*.

Douglas was named Scottish Filmmaker of the Year by Scottish Screen in 1997 and he is currently Deputy Chairman of the BAFTA Film Committee.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Production Biographies

#### Nick Pitt (Producer)

As a graduate of Bristol University's Drama department, Nick went into theatre firstly as a director, then as a producer, in which capacity he produced a number of shows in the West End and on tour, as well as running The King's Head Theatre in London and the Octagon Theatre in Bolton. Nick then joined Portman/Zenith as Assistant Head of Development, prior to moving to BBC Pebble Mill as Script Editor on the long-running series, *Dangerfield*. Nick also produced *Dalziel & Pascoe*, which was recently nominated for an Edgar by the Crimewriters Guild of America and Best Drama Series by the Royal Television Society.

#### Paddy Higson (Producer)

Paddy Higson has worked in film and television for over 20 years. She can name among her credits some of Scotland's most successful films, including such internationally acclaimed pictures as *That Sinking Feeling*, *Gregory's Girl* and *Comfort and Joy*. Her numerous television credits include *Dalziel & Pascoe*, three series of the award-winning BBC hospital drama *Cardiac Arrest*, and the highly acclaimed BBC series *Life Support*.

#### Michael Chaplin (Series Creator)

Michael trained originally as a newspaper journalist and worked for 10 years in current affairs and documentaries for LWT. He began producing drama in the late 1980s, then progressed to controller of Drama and Arts at Tyne Television before moving onto Head of Programmes at BBC Wales. He began writing full time in 1994 and amongst his extensive credits are *Dalziel & Pascoe*, PD James's *Original Sin*, the highly successful *Grafters*, starring Robson Green and Stephen Tompkinson, and *Studs* for the BBC. Michael has also written for the theatre, he has a long working association with Live Theatre in Newcastle for whom he has written many plays over the last 10 years.

#### Edward Bennett (Director)

Edward Bennett can be credited with directing some of the UK's most successful television programmes, including most recently Clive Owen in *Second Sight* and Richard E Grant in *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. Previous television work also includes *Dalziel & Pascoe*, *Poirot*, *Bergerac* and *Inspector Morse*. For film, Edward wrote *Ascendancy*, winner of a Golden Bear award at the Berlin Film Festival. He is currently working as Director and Co-writer with Ed Whitmore on Portobello Productions' *Ingenious Pain*.

#### A J Quinn (Director)

Anthony joined the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon as an Assistant Director after graduating from Queens College, Cambridge. In 1986, he joined BBC Radio Drama as a producer, where he directed many plays and readings for Radios 3 and 4. In 1989, he became resident Director of the Channel 4 soap, *Brookside*, working on 21 episodes. His other TV credits include *The Ambassador* with Pauline Collins, the highly successful *Where The Heart Is* and *Peak Practice*, 99-1 and two series of *The Chief*. In addition, Anthony was the co-creator and co-producer of the BBC Radio 4 drama series, *Citizens*.

Drama

8 x 50 minutes



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Episode Synopses

1. Archie MacDonald, the young owner of a fashionable London restaurant, is called to his ailing father's bedside, at a lochside mansion in the Scottish Highlands. He has walked into a trap. His cantankerous father, Hector, has merely a chill, and his mother – the amiably dotty Molly – has dragged Archie North on a pretext. For tax reasons, they have turned over ownership of the rundown Glenbogle estate to Archie. Molly has also rigged things so that escape back to his London bistro is not on the menu just now. Archie must stay to solve two crises: a crooked estate-manager, and the rustling of valuable osprey eggs. In the process, Archie tangles with feisty local school-teacher Katrina Finlay, who is determined to overthrow the ancient, aristocratic traditions that Archie now represents. For all that, Archie is drawn to her.

2. Archie tries to flee back to London when a visitor halts him in his tracks. It's a banker (**Simon Slater**), come to foreclose on a huge loan to Glenbogle. Archie calls on the help of his eccentric household. But can grouchy Hector, scatty Molly or Glenbogle's loyal retainers (sturdy estate-keeper, Golly Mackenzie; the punkish young housekeeper Lexie; or Golly's awkward assistant, Duncan) soften the heart of the implacable financier? Finally, Lexie persuades the banker that love can be more than a match for any balance sheet. Archie clashes with Katrina over the way forward for the estate. And during the Annual Glenbogle Hill Race, the two are in a neck-and-neck struggle for the finish, just as the banker lands up to his neck in a fast-flowing river.

3. Justine, Archie's girlfriend and business partner from London, has arrived out of the blue to find out what Archie is up to in his Highland wilderness. But when she strays into a locked room at Glenbogle, she learns there are family ghosts here that Archie must lay to rest. The room belonged to Archie's brother, who drowned in the loch when he and Archie were teenagers. Hector is drawn to revisit these painful memories and to cope with the fear that Molly may have a secret lover. Justine thinks Archie has too much of a soft spot for Katrina. Jealousies come to a head at the social event of the season, the Glenbogle Ball.

4. Justine has returned, grudgingly, to London. Katrina has a shock when a visit to Glenbogle by an old genealogist friend of Hector's uncovers an ancient diary. It belonged to a former servant at the house – Katrina's late mother – and records an affair she once had with someone called "H". Could Hector be Katrina's father? And could Katrina and Archie be brother and sister? The two embark on an odyssey across the Highlands to discover the truth. Molly walks out on Hector over the revelations, but the genealogist, not Hector, is unmasked as Katrina's natural father. His return to Glenbogle has revived memories of a long-lost love. Archie and Katrina can resume their strange, cross-purposed courtship.

Drama

8 x 50 minutes



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Episode Synopses

5. Archie's troublesome sister, Lizzie, turns up with her New Age boyfriend, Gerald, intent on converting Glenbogle into a healing centre. Archie, searching for a supply of mineral water to bottle and sell, is staggered when the charismatic Gerald finds a spring using "mystic" powers. But the two are soon at loggerheads when Gerald spurs Hector to discover his lost youth by taking a swim in the loch, during which Hector nearly drowns. Archie is determined to oust Lizzie and Gerald, while Katrina is furious that the well in her garden has dried up because of Gerald's ministrations. In the end it takes a full moon for harmony to be restored, as a strange air of amorousness descends on Glenbogle.

6. As the new Laird of Glenbogle, Archie must take part in a traditional boat race across the loch against a neighbouring landowner, Laird Kilwillie (**Julian Fellowes**). The wily Kilwillie feels sure of success in this annual grudge-match and the MacDonalds are further disheartened when Kilwillie asserts finder's-keepers privileges over an ancient ring, once a MacDonald heirloom, found on the shore of the loch. Archie comforts Hector, who is upset at the loss of the ring, and decides it can only be won back by a victory against the odds in the boat race. Katrina, meanwhile, has her own grudge-match against Kilwillie; he is standing against her in a local election. She has her own plan for upsetting the odds in the race.

7. Archie has organised a special Highland Night at his restaurant in London. He and Lexie must fly South by helicopter with the very first pheasants killed during the Scottish shooting season. But the helicopter breaks down and the patience of Archie's long-suffering girlfriend, Justine, wears thin when he finally turns up. The Highland Night is overtaken by culinary mishaps and recriminations. On the trip home Archie seeks solace in the arms of Lexie. Meanwhile, it's election day for Katrina. Molly and Hector become election workers, both helping and hindering Katrina's campaign. Archie returns to Glenbogle just as she triumphs in the vote.

8. Justine gives Archie an ultimatum: return to London or give up his share in the restaurant. Archie must decide where his future lies. To add to his problems, Glenbogle House is falling down and huge repair work is needed just as the bank is again calling in its loan. Archie's plans to sell off houses in the estate village to rival land-owner, Kilwillie, provoke Hector to climb onto the roof in a prison-style protest. He is joined there by Lexie and Katrina, upset at what they see as Archie's betrayals, both romantic and economic. Unable to please anyone, Archie offers to save Glenbogle by selling his share in the restaurant. But Hector and Katrina unveil an elaborate idea to save face all round, just as Justine arrives to claim back her man.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**





# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### Ratings

Episode	UK Txn Date	Channel	Time On	Viewers	Audience Share
1	27.02.00	BBC1	20.10	8.4 million	29.9%
2	05.03.00	BBC1	20.00	7.5 million	26.2%
3	12.03.00	BBC1	20.00	7.9 million	27.9%
4	19.03.00	BBC1	20.00	8.4 million	30.8%
5	26.03.00	BBC1	20.00	7.6 million	28.8%
6	02.04.00	BBC1	20.00	8.1 million	31.0%
7	09.04.00	BBC1	20.00	8.0 million	31.4%
8	16.04.00	BBC1	20.00	8.1 million	31.1%

Drama

8 x 50 minutes

British Broadcasting Corporation BBC Worldwide Woodlands 80 Wood Lane London W12 0TT

Tel +44 20 8433 2000 Fax +44 20 8740 1182 Email [international.distribution.worldwide@bbc.co.uk](mailto:international.distribution.worldwide@bbc.co.uk) Online catalogue [www.bbcworldwidetv.com](http://www.bbcworldwidetv.com)



# MONARCH

SERIES ONE

# OF THE GLEN

## Awards

### TV Quick Awards 2000

Nomination:

Best New Drama

### Television & Radio Industries Club Awards 2000/01

Nomination:

TV Drama Programme of the Year

**Drama**

8 x 50 minutes



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### What the Papers Say

"The eccentric characters. The heart-warming drama. The gentle comedy. The stunning scenery... It is as warming as a bowl of porridge on a frosty morning." *Mirror*

"*Monarch of the Glen* swept off to a wonderful start with Richard Briers in fine form as the loony Scottish laird. Sensational scenery, undemanding action and all accents and links with reality carefully removed. It looks like a hit." *People*

"...a weird cross between *Brigadoon*, *Hamish Macbeth* and, thanks to the presence of Briers, *The Good Life*. And there's a distinct touch of *Ballykissangel* there, too... The scenery is stunning, the weather wonderful, and *Monarch Of The Glen* has most of the elements that make a sure-fire success of country-based shows." *Daily Mail*

"...lovely Scottish scenery, a handsome lead and the promise of romance to come. It also fielded a secret weapon in the shape of Richard Briers, always guaranteed to add a couple of noughts to the viewing figures. The combination of all these factors was irresistible... it jogged along nicely, fulfilled all its promises and made you want to ring the Scottish Tourist Board." *Guardian*

"The performances are all sound, and it is impossible not to fall in love with this mythical landscape... a safe, pleasant escapist jaunt." *Observer*

"*Monarch Of The Glen* will go on for years." *Mirror*

"Every sleeper leaving Euston should be heading for such a place... The Highlands look ravishingly beautiful." *Sunday Times*

"...Susan Hampshire, still gorgeous after all these years... Archie, a real hunk in his woolly jumper, according to the ladies of my household." *Observer*

"Richard Briers was at his batty best as crotchety landowner Hector MacDonald." *Mirror*

"*Monarch Of The Glen* has made a lot of people happy over the past eight weeks." *Daily Mail*

"*Monarch of the Glen* is well acted and very watchable, not least for the hero." *Mail on Sunday*

### USA

"A missed inheritance and 'an ironic goat' both make for a very good reason for this reporter to miss the Super Bowl, to watch BBC America's *Monarch of the Glen*." *Dallas Morning News*

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### What the Papers Say

#### Daily Mail

Briers' Highland sting

Crumbling shooting estates in the Highlands are probably more in danger of annexation on behalf of 'the people' by a Scottish National Party government than being taken over by millionaire pie-makers named Potts. But BBC1's new Sunday night series, *Monarch Of The Glen*, has its roots in the stories of Compton Mackenzie, whose writing life covered the first half of the 20th Century when people like Potts were busy turning themselves into Highland gentlemen. Inspired by the Scottish nationalist Mackenzie, Michael Chaplin's eight-part contemporary comedy-drama is about the frustration of knavish upstarts like Potts by a new generation of proper gentlemen coming to realise their hereditary responsibilities.

Mind you, given the antiquity of its origins, I was surprised to hear one character say, 'Allo, 'Allo-style: 'I'm going to say this only once!' The process of updating the tale of a heavily-indebted laird Richard Briers – who tricks his son, played (a happy coincidence) by another Mackenzie, Alastair, into returning from running a restaurant in London to take over the estate has produced a weird cross between *Brigadoon*, *Hamish Macbeth* and, thanks to the presence of Briers, *The Good Life*. And there's a distinct touch of *Ballykissangel* there, too.

On the strength of last night's opening episode, it is obvious that Briers is having all the fun. 'Bad behaviour is one of the few privileges of old age,' he declares, as he ruthlessly employs ill-health to inflict emotional blackmail on all those around him and studiously ignores the fact that he's in hock to the bank for £375,000.

Alastair Mackenzie's Archie, by contrast, is understandably morose, torn away from the opening night of his new fishrestaurant by the news that his father, Hector, has had an accident, only to find that it's simply a device to get him back to Scotland. He leaves behind in London his girlfriend and partner, Justine (Anna Wilson-Jones), to find himself verbally fencing with - and beginning to fancy - a tough-talking environmentalist schoolteacher, Katrina (Lorraine Pilkington).

The task of mediating between the cantankerous Hector and the trendy Archie is assumed by Susan Hampshire's Molly, the chatelaine of Glenbogle Castle. Her secret vice is gambling, though it seemed like a virtue when we learned that she's accumulated winnings of £55,000, which she presents to her son. I thought he could have shown a little more gratitude. What both parents desire is for Archie to somehow save the estate and allow them to spend their old age there.

The scenery is stunning, the weather wonderful, and *Monarch of the Glen* has most of the elements that make a sure-fire success of country-based shows such as *Peak Practice* and interminable dramas about country vets. Anything is possible, if only Archie can be persuaded to cheer up a little.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### What the Papers Say

#### Mirror

Bagpipe saga is Bally good

There was something terribly familiar about *Monarch Of The Glen*. The eccentric characters. The heart-warming drama. The gentle comedy. The stunning scenery. It didn't take long for the penny to drop. It was *Ballykissangel* with kilts. The green fields of Ireland were replaced by the purple heather of the Scottish Highlands. And instead of Guinness the preferred tippie was a wee dram of the finest malt. They must have their fingers crossed that the new eight-part series will do the same for holidays in Scotland as *Ballykissangel* did for the Irish Tourist Board.

There was tartan as far as the eye could see and it was not long before the sound of bagpipes was heard. But don't let that put you off. Comedy favourite Richard Briers was at his batty best as crotchety landowner Hector MacDonald, who signed over his crumbling castle and debt-ridden estate to his son.

Susan Hampshire potted around the garden as if to the manor born as wacky wife Molly, who was a secret gambler. She was not as scatty as she seemed, because she had a habit of picking winners.

The series was inspired by the novels of Compton Mackenzie, who wrote *Whisky Galore* back in the 1940s, but it is firmly set in the 21st Century. That was made clear from the start when Hector went stag hunting by jet ski and came a cropper in the loch.

The accident provided the old rogue with an excuse to drag son Archie away from his swanky restaurant in London and inform him that he was the new Laird of Glenbogle.

*Monarch Of The Glen* may be corny, but it is as warming as a bowl of porridge on a frosty morning. They should rename it Ballyglenbogle and be done with it.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### What the Papers Say

#### Sunday Times

*Monarch of the Glen*, BBC1's new hope for Sunday nights, is set in the fictitious Victorian gothic castle of Glenbogle. All turrets and eccentric plumbing, it is the sort of ancestral pile where you half expect stags' heads to slide off the wall and into your oatcakes, and where you cannot get a decent signal on your mobile phone. As befits its age and station, Glenbogle is home to an anarchic laird (Richard Briers in cracking form), who likes to get out his toy soldiers and refight the Battle of Culloden; his fragrant wife (Susan Hampshire), who would really rather be living in a little flat in Cadogan Square; and a collection of lively staff, who appear in a fashionable collection of kilts and tattoos. Every sleeper leaving Euston should be heading for such a place, even if you would find, when you got there, that it rained half of the time, and none of the pubs did decent bar food.

Which is more or less what Archie, the laird's son and heir, objects to about the place. Played by Alastair Mackenzie, who was last seen going crackers as Dr Shug Niven in *Psychos*, Archie has long since abandoned Glenbogle for London. Suddenly summoned back, he finds the estate so deep in debt that someone might as well drown it in the loch. He is then faced with the choice of staying to save the place from the bailiffs, or heading back to his London life and designer girlfriend.

Adapted from the Highland novels of Compton Mackenzie, it is more sentimental than his best-known book, *Whisky Galore*, but a bit of a caper just the same. If Ballykissangel were relocated to the Cairngorms, the characters would come out something like this. The locals wrestle with feudalism rather than Catholicism, but the small community focus is much the same.

Alastair Mackenzie, getting his first big break, turns out to be a native of these parts. "I grew up in Trinafour, about 30 miles from where we filmed it, and I used to drive past it, but I can't reveal where it is. We have all been sworn to secrecy about who lives there and what they do." Queen Victoria once thought of buying it, but could not stand the midges. Famous for its ferocity, the Scottish midge is a relentless little bloodsucker and managed to hospitalise one of the crew. "Oh God, the midges," says Mackenzie. "They were unbelievable. We had to reshoot scenes because, even under midge nets, people would be covered in thousands of pinprick bites."

Midges, however, prefer clean-living folk. Drink and smoke enough, and they turn up their insect noses and look for someone more wholesome instead. "Susan Hampshire is a testament to that because she is a picture of health, her body is very much her temple, and the midges just loved her," says Mackenzie. But midges or no midges, Mackenzie fell in love with the Highlands all over again, and almost thought of relocating himself. "Some people got cabin fever, but I thrived on it. I just loved it." You can see his point. The Highlands look ravishingly beautiful. As Richard Briers says, if only they were closer to Chiswick.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### What the Papers Say

#### Observer

A glorious e-mail list was recently sent round our office highlighting the real lessons to be learned from watching films and TV. From these we gain incontrovertible insights: that a cop cannot solve a murder until suspended from duty; that nuclear devices have conveniently colour-coded wires to help heroes defuse them; and that everyone living in Manhattan has a large, tastefully decorated loft apartment.

We can all add our own favourites, and after watching *Monarch of the Glen*, I have a new one: that Scotland's Highlands are a sun-drenched paradise inhabited by amiable eccentrics and lovely lasses. This is the same mythical landscape of *Hamish Macbeth*, of course, though in this case it is apparently based on Compton Mackenzie's Highland novels (though the producers never say which ones). Archie MacDonald makes a brief return visit to the grand, debt-ridden estate of his birth and to his curmudgeonly father Hector and potty mother (Susan Hampshire, still gorgeous after all these years).

He also finds local girls Katrina and Lexie are not only beautiful but probably available, and that the scenery is glorious. There is no sign of cloud or rain, only blue skies, nor do people suddenly clutch their heads, and begin scrabbling at the midgie hordes devouring them.

This is *Brigadoon*, in other words. In reality, the Highlands are wet, cold and insect-infested and ignoring this observation rather undermines *Monarch of the Glen's* basic dramatic premise. Archie (a real hunk in his woolly jumper, according to the ladies of my household) is supposed to face a dilemma. Should he stay and help his family or return to his successful business and girlfriend in London? Given that in these ersatz Highlands, Archie has lovely women, fantastic weather, wonderful scenery and a great house, he has no believable problem.

The performances are all sound, and it is impossible not to fall in love with this mythical landscape. Some of the early scene-setting dialogue creaks a bit, but perks up enough to make for a safe, pleasant escapist jaunt. Just don't be tempted to go on holiday there without midgie cream and anoraks.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### What the Papers Say

#### Guardian Guide

BBC1 made a blatant bid for disaffected *Heartbeat* fans with *Monarch Of The Glen*, a new drama series with lovely Scottish scenery, a handsome lead and the promise of romance to come. It also fielded a secret weapon in the shape of Richard Briers, always guaranteed to add a couple of noughts to the viewing figures. The combination of all these factors was irresistible. Granted, the story of young urbanite Archie returning to his ancestral home of Glenbogle and discovering his roots was hardly original, but it jogged along nicely, fulfilled all its promises and made you want to ring the Scottish Tourist Board.

#### Sunday Times

The mainstream drama requirement for Sunday nights seems to be a setting that is an area of outstanding natural beauty, preferably in Ireland or Scotland. Onto such landscapes are grafted local characters, areas of conflict, and a good-looking young couple – seemingly at odds but destined for romance (the bally kiss angle). So here are Richard Briers, Susan Hampshire, Alastair Mackenzie and Lorraine Pilkington struggling to make ends meet on a huge sporting estate in the Highlands – and the ingredients are all there.

#### Mirror

Monarch's set for long reign

So the new Laird of Glenbogle decided to turn his back on the bright lights of London and stay put in his crumbling castle in *Monarch Of The Glen*. I always knew he would. A second series of the gentle comedy drama set in the Scottish Highlands has already been commissioned and it looks set to run and run. It is perfect Sunday evening viewing for those sick of the sight of sex and violence in the living room.

The only drawback is that Alastair Mackenzie, who plays reluctant landowner Archie, is the spitting image of the irritating Tony Slattery from *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* Despite the handicap he manages to come across as a likeable hero. The good laird revealed he was selling his share in the posh fish restaurant he was involved in south of the border to make a go of the debt-ridden 40,000 acre estate. "It will give it and us a future," he told his family and friends.

He can say that again. *Monarch Of The Glen* has every chance of becoming as successful as the long-running *Ballykissangel*. It is just as corny and just as daft. There was certainly nothing to scare the stags even though Archie had three attractive women chasing after him.

Golden oldie Richard Briers was gloriously over the top as eccentric dad Hector. He wore tartan trousers and kept blowing kisses at his equally dotty wife Molly, played by Susan Hampshire. The romantic pair celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary with a fireworks display. It was pure fantasy – but lots of fun.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**





# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### What the Papers Say

#### Mirror

Trish, who sits next to me in the office, was raving on yesterday about a four-poster bed she'd spotted in the Glenbogle mansion in *Monarch Of The Glen*. She'd also just realised that Hamish Clark, who plays resident bit-of-rough-in-a-kilt Duncan, is the bloke on the beach who ends up writing a message in the sand in the Nokia mobile phone ads.

So that's *Monarch Of The Glen* for you. Never mind the plot. Just look at the furniture. (Oh, and the lovely Highland scenery.) And clock that hunky young Jock you're sure you've seen somewhere before. (Question: Is anything worn under the kilt? Answer: No, it's all in perfect working order...)

Sunday's last episode cliff-hanger gripped like a vicar's handshake. Would the reluctant young Laird Archie accept his fiancée Justine's ultimatum, turn his back on Glenbogle and return to London to run the restaurant they owned together?

Well, we knew that the BBC were so pleased by the show's success that they'd already commissioned a second series. So unless it was going to be set in a Scottish-themed restaurant on the Fulham Road called *Monarch Of The Glen* (tartan tablecloths, stags' heads on the walls, claymores for cutlery, haggis-en-croute on the menu, you know the sort of thing), the answer had to be "No, he flippin' well wouldn't."

There was one surprising(ish) twist in the tale.

Archie had accepted Justine's offer to buy him out, and had pledged to plough his windfall into propping up Glenbogle's crumbling pile. He was just about to snog Katrina, the permanently nagging and grumbling schoolma'am-turned-local councillor (aka The Famous Grouse), when Justine arrived, breathlessly wittering away: "I can't lose you, Archie! Maybe I can change! Maybe I can come and live here with you! Make our lives here! What do you think?" Archie looked like he thought what he always thinks. Nothing in particular.

Earlier, he'd sat in a rock in the middle of a stream where Golly the ghillie was fishing, in a doomed attempt to do some thinking. (Archie appeared a mite puzzled by Golly's advice to follow his hat, and so was I. His hat? Then I realised he'd actually said "follow your heart".) Hee gazed into the water and sighed: "Very hypnotic, soothing..." Och, so it was.

And that's why, no matter how many potshots I or any critics take at it, *Monarch Of The Glen* will go on for years.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### What the Papers Say

#### Radio Times

Programme of the week

It would take a powerful vaccine to immunise viewers against the appeal of beautiful Scottish scenery, a castle with turrets, gorgeous wildlife and a handsome leading man. *Monarch of the Glen*, quite unashamedly, has them all. From your first glimpse of a ravishing loch and the ravishing hero, Archie, you will be hooked.

This is very much *Hamish Macbeth* territory, though there are no policemen in it. Just the kind of quirky characters who live nowhere else but in Scottish drama series set in the Highlands – the curmudgeonly old so-and-so presiding over a crumbling, debt-ridden but lovely estate, his slightly dippy wife, their sensible, London-restaurant-owner son who is made laird of the lot without his knowledge or consent, the women with whom he becomes entangled and the usual eccentric locals.

Add to this potent brew cheery Scottish country music on the soundtrack and heart-stoppingly lovely scenery and you have the perfect postdinner, pre-bath Sunday evening entertainment.

*Monarch of the Glen* makes no demands of its audience and is mercifully free of gritty realism, in fact of any kind of realism at all. It is picturepostcard escapism for the one night of the week when you want to lose yourself in a lush world that panders to the fantasies of every town-dweller who has ever dreamt of packing in the rat race. In the first of eight episodes, Archie must choose between his metropolitan life and running the family estate. There's a tough one.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### What the Papers Say

#### Radio Times Interview with Susan Hampshire

The garlic-chewing English rose approves of brothels, champions full-time motherhood having been a working mother herself, and writes bestselling books despite dyslexia. But will her return to TV this week make as many waves?

She exudes optimism to such an extent, she says, "most people think I'm anathema - is that the right word? - because I always make the best of things. I jog along, and if I do a part that's crap I don't say anything. You never admit it, do you? The whole art of life is thinking the cup is half-full rather than half-empty, and it makes you grateful for almost anything. I'm irritatingly like that, but it's better than moaning. Do you live in London?" She was a nicely brought-up young girl - deb of the year - taught to take an interest in others (she asks questions all the time) and is prettily self-deprecating. "It must be much more fun for you to talk to someone of 23 than me. I'm not particularly interesting, there's nothing new, and I'm beginning not to remember anything. I might have to take the HRT [hormone replacement therapy] thing. At least someone of 23 brings joy, although her enthusiasm might soon be knocked on the head, which is sad. I wouldn't want to be a young actress now, would you? The plays are so black. You mustn't entertain the public, whatever you do, or make them laugh."

We meet for lunch - she specified it should be at a restaurant between Fulham and Piccadilly Circus that served avocado and fish. "Food is so enjoyable, and you don't get sleepy after fish, do you? You can feel quite sort of alive." Sometimes, I remark, she is described as too good to be true. "I'm afraid we've all got huge faults. I've been tackling aspects of my life to see if I can improve. I've made no progress whatsoever. My organisational skills are just as hopeless, and I exaggerate all the time." We won't mention her age, then, except to say you'd never imagine she's in her sixties, because she always lies about it. "It's such a harmless little deceit. I could do all sorts of destructive things but if you feel better saying you're several years younger than you are, you should do. I actually enjoy getting older immensely. When you're young all those disappointments, the heartache of romance, lie ahead."

One of her few concessions to age, she says, is a fear of flying. "It's crept up on me. There's nothing you can do, though. Life is an absolute lottery. I could get a fish bone in my throat today, choke, and that's it. I read cod is one of the healthiest fishes you can eat, so I'll have that." She is a wrinkle-free zone with a soft, girlish voice and retrousse nose she had "done" at 17. The quintessential English rose, mellowing beautifully, became famous in a succession of period dramas in the Sixties and Seventies, notably Fleur in *The Forsyte Saga*, Glencora in *The Pallisers*, Sarah Churchill in *The First Churchills*. "I've had a good run for my money. I thought I might do more classical things, but if you're not a good reader you're limited [she is famously dyslexic], and have to rely on your looks. The nose - do we have to talk about that? - was perfectly good, and if I'd gone on to do the classics after I'd had it done, it would have been a disaster." She hasn't always played pure innocence. Her favourite part was as Esme Harkness, an up-market Madame, in 1997 costume drama *The Grand*. "Perhaps I'm a Madame manquée. Glamorous brothels where girls were clean and men could go safely provided a great service and kept a lot of Victorian marriages bobbing along very happily. I'm not saying I'd be happy if it was the situation in my marriage, though."

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### What the Papers Say

#### Radio Times Interview with Susan Hampshire continued/2

The youngest of four children, she was conceived, probably on the Mauritania ("Actually, I don't know which boat it was"), when her parents were trying, unsuccessfully, to patch up a rocky marriage. Soon after her birth they separated for good. Her father, George, lived in Liverpool as a divisional head for ICI, and she was brought up by her mother, June, who ran a dance school in Knightsbridge, west London. Dyslexia, which was undiagnosed, gave her an embarrassing lack of confidence: "I thought I was stupid and looked awful, but my mother, sisters and brother were wonderfully positive reinforcements and I had a happy childhood, although I found it quite difficult moving through the different stages of life, didn't you?" After school she joined Bognor Regis rep and realised for the first time how much of a hindrance her dyslexia was, but she kept it a secret until her mid-thirties, fearful still of rejection, devising her own way to learn lines. In 1967 she married a French film director, Pierre Granier-Deferre, and they had a son, Christopher, now 29, and a premature daughter, Victoria, who died within 24 hours. Subsequently she had several miscarriages, and the marriage ended after five years. It was a tough time, and I wonder if, in spite of all her apparent serenity, even then, she went to a psychiatrist. "I might have done once or twice. I can't remember. There was a turning point in my life when I went to a psychologist or psychiatrist or whatever and she was very helpful." She riffles through her bag, pulls out a bulb of garlic and a sharp, black-handled knife with which she proceeds to peel a clove. "Now you'll think I'm completely barmy. Have you noticed how dreadfully I smell? I eat a tremendous amount. It purifies the blood and is anti-fungal. A lot of us have intestines loaded with candida and this is terribly – what is the word? – therapeutic? No? Healthy. I grow it in my garden and it's very hot. It burns your throat. If you can't stand it I'll put it away immediately. It's only since the millennium that I've dared do this in public." She eats the clove, followed by a chunk of ginger, then pours eight drops of extract of grapefruit and lemon juice into a glass of water – "Very good for the insides. I'm surprised you didn't recoil from my breath when we met. Or are you too polite?" No, I say. Let's return to psychiatry. "Oh yes, I haven't answered your question, have I? It's a long story, and might be best if we scoot off." I assume it was to do with marriage and children. "All those things, really, and about myself as a human being. All right, I'll tell you: I didn't want to keep making the same mistakes in life. I chatted to someone and sorted it out. I can't even remember what the mistakes were now. It isn't deeply interesting, but I'd rabbit on if I felt it would be useful."

In her twenties she was offered contracts by three large Hollywood studios, but the price was too high. "They wanted me to enhance here," she says, pointing to her modest embonpoint, "take a bit off my chin, dye my hair red, fix the teeth, crack my legs and make them straight because I'm bow-legged. Perhaps if I'd been another person, under another sign, I'd have stayed and become a huge star. Who's to say? I'm Taurean. We're dull, stubborn, and probably quite caring." In fact her initial ambition was to be a nurse, and after Hollywood she visited Dr Albert Schweitzer in Africa, with the intention of changing career. "My audience with him was cut short because I spent a lot of time talking to a half-Greek, half-black chap who was very keen on cinema. I realised then that entertainment is vital, even if it isn't Chekhov or Shakespeare, although I'm not saying game shows are vital."

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### What the Papers Say

#### Radio Times Interview with Susan Hampshire continued/3

She cuts the garlic and a clove skids across the floor. "Oh my God," she says horrified, running to retrieve it before a waiter, who hasn't noticed, slips. "God, I stink. Luckily Eddie loves it, too, which is a blessing because you can imagine nobody wants to be near us, although the more you eat the less you smell." Eddie is her second husband, impresario Sir Eddie Kulukundis, knighted in 1993 for services to sport and the arts. "I never call myself Lady Kulukundis, except when I have no option. I'm thrilled for my darling Eddie, though. It's given him such joy. He says who'd have thought a little Greek boy would be knighted." When they married in 1981 she gave up acting. "He was 48 and although he'd had girlfriends he hadn't lived with anyone. It was quite a shock to his system and he rightly expected me not to act. I wrote gardening articles and books [about infertility and dyslexia, and children's novels], a lot of which became bestsellers. Amazing. After a while I returned to acting and Eddie's very happy about it.

"I read the other day an article by a feminist who said you should give in to your husband's whims to create a stronger marriage. I was confused because I thought feminists were keen on women's independence, but this was a picture of them being quite subservient. There's a bit of wisdom in it, to be honest. We're talking about harmony and millions of years of instincts, which won't change overnight. I can't think it's satisfying for a woman to be a ballbreaker, and it must be dreadful for the man. But who is to say? *Chacun a son gout*. I worked when my son was small and although I had the most excellent and qualified nanny, I missed out on a tremendous amount. It's criminal how the media have made women think they're nobody unless they have a job. Why be ashamed of being a mum?

Bringing up children should be glorified. It's far more difficult to be a mum than to do business conferences. If you're in an office everyone thanks you all the time, but you're taken for granted if you clean the house and bring up well mannered children to be happy citizens."

She had several more miscarriages during the early years of her marriage to Sir Eddie. "At the time I'd love to have had a child. Now I'm glad I didn't. I couldn't bear to be looking after a teenager. There's so much television they don't talk to their parents about what's worrying them, which is why so many people seem schizophrenic and depressed. I'm also terribly anti-drugs, and you see how rapidly they bring such terrible degradation. But, of course, if I did have a child I'd be saying, 'I can't believe the joy.' The way to survive, for me, is to find the goodness. If I said, 'All I wanted was seven children, and I lost them, ' I'd be miserable."

In *Monarch of the Glen* she is the wife to Richard Briers's eccentric Scottish landowner, deeply in debt, whose estate is inherited by his son. "I was drunk from that wonderful Scottish air for the first four days, and whenever Richard said anything to me I giggled. What's the series like?" she asks. This is difficult. How can you tell such a delightfully optimistic woman that it's not to your taste?

"Unfair to judge on one episode," I say. "Oh, but it either works or fails on that. I do virtually nothing in it, I have to say, to my chagrin, but I'm sure the public needs and wants a series like this."

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### What the Papers Say

#### Radio Times Interview with Susan Hampshire continued/4

If it doesn't, she could always write another book. "Oh, no. I'm going to have lots of lovely parts and won't have time for writing. The truth is, though, I've had these plans before and often they don't happen, the business being what it is. I just realise how lucky I am to be employed.

From 32 onwards it becomes difficult, from 42 really difficult, and after 52 almost impossible, but it begins to get easier at the end of your fifties. Sometimes the older and more awful you look the better. I enjoy the other things I do [a lot of charity work], although I have to be very careful people's eyes don't glaze over when I talk about dyslexia." Mine do. Has her proselyting caused it to become a fashionable middle-class excuse for children who are not so clever as their peers? "Nonsense," she says briskly. "I'm glad you said that. Many people, even some running schools, don't believe it exists, but when they do an autopsy on the brain of dyslexics they find it's differently formed. Soon they'll be able to zap us with a laser and cure it. I spend two days a week answering letters from parents or young people with dyslexia and they're often deeply moving. The tragedy is you can't bloody see it. If your arm's in a sling people say, 'Let me carry your basket.' If you're dyslexic they say, 'What a tit. She can't even find her way from Harrods to South Kensington.'" It is reported she lost £500,000 in the Lloyd's debacle, but she can even see the bright side of that. "It was a learning curve. Gambling is wrong, but I feel sorry for the many who didn't understand and are now dead or destitute.

Obviously it was not something I chose to do, but the night before we married I asked Eddie, 'Why are you marrying me?' I expected something romantic like, 'I've never fallen in love like this,' but he replied, 'I'm very keen to increase my line at Lloyd's.' He couldn't do it without me. Being the kind of person I am, it's not something I'd have ever done. I've never been paid an incredible amount of money, so I hated to see it go out of the window, but Eddie was so sweet and honourable and paid back everything. It was quite a blow for a man used to having a cushion. But I'm very lucky. He's a wonderful human being.

It's nice we both have our health. And my optimism."

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### What the Papers Say

#### Radio Times Location Report

Lairding it. The hero of BBC1's Sunday-night drama about a Scottish estate has to decide where his love and his loyalties lie, something its star can sympathise with.

Torn between two lives and now torn between two women - the complicated life of the young laird of Glenbogle takes on another twist this week in BBC1's hit Sunday-night drama. The first episode of *Monarch of the Glen* attracted 8 million viewers and the plot thickened last week when Archie's sophisticated girlfriend Justine arrived from London, just as he was becoming interested in feisty local schoolteacher Katrina.

The three young lovers are all played by relative television newcomers and for Alastair Mackenzie at least, playing the ambitious restaurant owner who inherits a crumbling Highland estate brought him back to his roots. Born and brought up not far from where *Monarch* was filmed in the Cairngorms but living in London, he could easily identify with his character's struggle between his independent life and his responsibilities to his parents and ancestral home.

"My family's home is outside Perth, not so far away, and I find they're comforting, these hills, because they're very familiar to me," says the 30-year-old actor, most recently seen in Channel 4's *Psychos*. "I left home at 18, but didn't really appreciate how much Scotland was in my blood, how my formative years had more of an impact than I realised. Working here, the love affair has been rekindled, even though I haven't visited my family enough!" In fact, working with *Monarch*'s crew of 80 for 18 weeks on a picturesque Highlands estate has set him thinking about where his own 18 priorities lie. "I'm even thinking of moving back and having all those sorts of terrifying thoughts - but without the 'travelling circus' [the crew], I'm not sure it'd be the same. I'd have to weigh up between the celebratory atmosphere of a film set, being up here being paid to do what I love, with people I love, and my romantic vision of what it'd be like to be here without them and permanently."

Mackenzie only returned to London twice during filming - "My girlfriend was in Edinburgh doing a show, so I didn't have to go more often" - but shooting in a location so remote that mobile telephones didn't work and the nearest town was an hour's drive away meant that some members of the cast headed home at every opportunity, despite the undoubted attractions of the area.

Susan Hampshire, in particular, who plays Archie's amiably dotty mother Molly, felt very keenly the ten hours separating her and husband Eddie at home in London. She went home at every opportunity, "whenever I had a spare second". Though she loved the countryside, and appreciated the "breathtaking surroundings and the sweetness of the people in the villages" filming in such an out-of-the-way location did make her feel very out of touch with real life. "Richard [Briers, who plays her husband Hector] and I aren't teenagers any more. The younger ones aren't so attached to their homes. They form groups and are happy as a unit."

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### What the Papers Say

#### Radio Times Location Report/2

Briers, meanwhile, missed his wife and grandchildren, but was lured to the Highlands by "the excellent, original script which is jolly and humorous, something that's thin on the ground these days, what with the wall-to-wall misery", and the excuse to dress up in merry costumes and hats as the roguish Hector. That and the camaraderie of the cast and crew. "It's like being in an old-fashioned repertory company," he says. From his warm, on-set caravan, surrounded by the astonishing scenery, he declares, "Who needs the city and crowds and London? I can breathe up here."

The two women in *Monarch's* romantic triangle also enjoyed getting away from it all. Anna Wilson-Jones, 30, who plays Justine, trades insults with her rival Katrina at the Glenbogle ball in this week's episode, but off-camera the women were great friends. "It was not really like work at all – it was more like a holiday. We swam in the loch and sunbathed on the beach – the area was just so beautiful and not the typical idea of the rainy Highlands at all. Richard and Susan were terrific to work with, as were the younger actors – we all became like one big family sitting by the fire >at night telling stories and having a laugh."

Lorraine Pilkington, 24, who plays Katrina, does admit to some homesickness: "After four weeks you stop appreciating the beauty and, though I love this place, I do miss my own home." But the very nature of the location made it the perfect setting for the series, which examines the demands of family expectations and relationships in the modern fast-changing Highlands. The relationship between Archie and Katrina personifies the divide between the traditional and modern ways of life in Scotland. While, as a laird, Archie represents the anachronistic, feudal system of the past, the freethinking Katrina has a mission to overthrow the semi-feudal traditions of the glen. This conflict brings a definite spark to their relationship and makes Archie think twice about returning to his London life, while a series of adventures makes him wonder whether he'd be better off in the London life he knows. Pilkington describes Katrina as "wholesome" but "passionate" and says, "Writer Michael Chaplin manages to cross difficult emotional issues with hilarious situations. It's a lot of fun, both drama and comedy."

There was plenty of drama and comedy for the cast and crew behind the scenes at the gothic Victorian castle that doubles as the MacDonalds' home, Glenbogle. The production team wanted a remote rundown house and settled on a privately owned estate about an hour from Kingussie in the Highlands. Owned by three elderly sisters and with turrets overlooking an extensive lake and surrounded by mauve, undulating mountains, it could be the place where Sleeping Beauty spent 100 years slumbering, or where Frankenstein's monster was created. Apparently Queen Victoria considered it for her Scottish home before she settled on Balmoral (and part of the BBC film *Mrs Brown*, starring Judi Dench as Victoria, was filmed there), but was put off by the midges. According to the cast they persist today, and are seen attacking Justine in Sunday's programme. They were particularly attracted to Susan Hampshire, who found that garlic tablets and lashings of lavender oil dampened their ardour.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**





# MONARCH

## SERIES ONE OF THE GLEN

### What the Papers Say

#### Radio Times Location Report/3

The main part of the castle has wall to wall antlers' heads, dark, damp-encrusted wallpaper after William Morris, and not a jot of anything so modern as heating or telephones. The whole place has a distinct air about it of disintegration, but production designer Annette Gillies was worried that it wouldn't be run down enough to be convincing as the crumbling Glenbogle.

"The camera cleans up even things which are quite bad," she says. "I had to do some theatrical effects to make any impact. We bought the diningroom chairs, for example, and took wire brushes to their upholstery to make it ripped and the stuffing fall out. A very skilled scenic painter put damp on the ceiling by painting speckled mould and cracks above the main staircase. His work was so convincing that one of the owners' daughters said to her mother, 'Oh, Mum, I hadn't noticed that before.' I was very pleased about that. Also, the prop boys put dust everywhere, they make it out of some secret mixture, and covered everything with it. Outside, we got a gardener in to run it down. It took a long time to convince him we wanted it to look worse, not better. I chose fast-growing, very straggly plants."

The logistics of arranging accommodation for so many people for so long in a remote location created another problem. The leading members of the cast stayed in a shooting lodge with a chef, but the rest had to make do with self-catering places scattered over an area of 50 miles, and a hotel in Kingussie. "Physically it was complicated," says Paddy Higson, one of the show's two producers.

"Things like getting rushes to and from London" – a journey which, by any means, even air, takes at least seven hours, by the time you've driven to Inverness. They had to hire two of every piece of camera equipment, in case one broke and a replacement couldn't be obtained quickly enough.

"The up side was that when you woke up to that scenery, you felt anything was possible. Also we got lots of local salmon to eat from the caterers, and the people round about were all very helpful and cooperative. We used local people for extras in the ball scenes in this week's episode, and they were all so willing, excited, and pleased to be there.

In cities, people are more jaded about film crews, less patient."

This was an aspect that Alastair Mackenzie relished. He enjoyed the sociable atmosphere on set and, despite their age difference, he and screen father Richard Briers became inseparable during filming. "We're like brothers," says Mackenzie.

"We regularly go drinking and are irresponsible together. It's perfect in that way, seventh heaven, a second home. It's a really privileged situation to be in." Briers agrees: "There aren't many luvvies around here and I think they found it quite amusing."

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**