



# MONARCH

SERIES TWO

# OF THE GLEN

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**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



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SERIES TWO

# OF THE GLEN

Eccentric tradition opposes modernisation on the young laird's run-down estate in the Scottish Highlands

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

Drama

8 x 50 minutes



# MONARCH

## SERIES TWO OF THE GLEN

### Introduction

Since it first screened in February 2000, *Monarch of the Glen* has become one of the BBC's biggest hits, with TV companies from New Zealand to Bulgaria and from Hong Kong to Iceland showing the weekly tales of the Laird of Glenbogle. In Finland, the series soared to the top of the TV charts and Alastair Mackenzie, who plays Archie the young laird, became an overnight pin-up. Hamish Clare, who plays Duncan the young ghillie, said: "Everyone is delighted with the success of the series, particularly since it has now been sold to America. But for it to be shown in places like Malta, Romania and now in Israel (with Hebrew sub-titles) is quite something."

Richard Briers, Susan Hampshire, Alastair MacKenzie and Lorraine Pilkington once again star in this popular family drama set in Scotland. Against a backdrop of stunning Highland scenery, the young laird of Glenbogle faces an uphill struggle to make the estate pay.

In the last series, Archie MacDonald had been lured from the chic restaurant he ran in London back to Glenbogle, his huge family estate in the Highlands. His eccentric father, Hector, and mother persuaded their reluctant son to take over as the laird.

In Series 2, Archie has finally pledged himself to Glenbogle, but now faces a titanic struggle to make the estate pay. The young laird has visionary plans for his ancient homestead, but faces fresh challenges at every turn. Rebellious tenants, local vendettas, scheming goldiggers... Archie must confront all these and more as he strives to make Glenbogle a thriving tourist attraction. And then, of course, there's Hector, Archie's unruly and mischievous father, who finds ever more elaborate ways to frustrate his son's endeavours.

Family life is as eventful as ever at Glenbogle, with Archie frequently caught in the crossfire. Molly's dangerous addiction to gambling, Hector's refusal to accept his impoverished circumstances, Lizzie's unexpected (but not unwelcome) pregnancy all strain family relations to breaking point. Archie must play judge and nurse maid to his eccentric and irresponsible family, whilst simultaneously coping with his very unusual staff: lascivious Lexie, ambitious Duncan and the increasingly dour Golly. Life is seldom dull for the head of the MacDonald household.

All of which leaves Archie precious little time to sort out his complex love life. The course of true love never runs smooth for the desirable Laird as paranoid girlfriend Justine vies against the delectable Katrina and the ever hopeful Lexie for Archie's affections. When Justine decides to quit the race, the way seems clear for Archie and Katrina. Until, that is, Fegal arrives. The dashing, new Head Ranger soon excites the passions of both Lexie and Katrina, promising unexpected heartache for Archie.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES TWO OF THE GLEN

### Introduction.../2

Building on the strengths of the first series, *Monarch of the Glen* maintains the rich vein of imaginative and anarchic humour, but delves deeper into the lives of the residents of Glenbogle.

Hector's murky history is exposed to the world as past misdemeanours return to haunt him. Molly's addiction to betting is laid bare, as is Lexie's tragic childhood, in a dramatic confrontation with her mother. These gripping, emotionally charged stories take us deep into these rich characters and provide the perfect backdrop for comic tales of disappearing barrels, crumbling masonry and arranged marriages. Perfect prime-time viewing.

### WEBWATCH

[www.bbc.co.uk/Monarch](http://www.bbc.co.uk/Monarch)

Drama

8 x 50 minutes



# MONARCH

## SERIES TWO OF THE GLEN

### Central Characters

#### **Hector (Richard Briers)**

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

#### **Molly (Susan Hampshire)**

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

#### **Archie (Alastair Mackenzie)**

The reluctant new Laird of Glenbogle, Archie has to choose between loyalty to his family and the life he leads in London with his girlfriend Justine. He has to endure many obstacles in his attempt to turn the estate around financially and allow himself the chance to decide where his future lies. Whilst still attached to Justine, he feels a growing attraction to Katrina which he finds hard to resist.

#### **Katrina (Lorraine Pilkington)**

Feisty and outspoken, Katrina's life is the Glen and particularly the school she runs with calm efficiency. Despite Archie representing everything she disagrees with politically she is drawn to him nonetheless. Katrina has to wage a constant struggle when dealing with Archie which is often. Katrina achieved her ambition of becoming Regional Councillor by the end of series one.

#### **Lexie (Dawn Steele)**

Sexy and unconventional, Lexie looks after the household in her role as housekeeper. Always one to speak her thoughts, she injects much needed common sense 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.

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

The junior ghillie at Glenbogle, Duncan is infatuated with Lexie but is continually frustrated by her disinclination to grant him her favours. Full of energy and madcap, Duncan's aspiration is to ultimately help Archie run the estate. To this end he is constantly trying to better himself with often comic results.

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

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

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



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## Main Cast

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
Fergal	Jason O'Mara

**Drama**

8 x 50 minutes



# MONARCH

SERIES TWO

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## Production Credits

Created by **Michael Chaplin**

Inspired by the novels by **Compton Mackenzie**

Directors **Simon Massey** (Episodes 1-3)  
**Richard Signy** (Episodes 4-5)  
**Rick Stroud** (Episodes 6-8)

Producer **Jeremy Gwilt**

Executive Producer **Barbara McKissack**  
**Douglas Rae**



An **Ecosse Films** Production for BBC Scotland

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



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## SERIES TWO

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### Production Notes

If Barbara McKissack, head of drama at BBC Scotland and executive producer of *Monarch of the Glen*, was pleased with the first series of the drama, she is absolutely delighted with the second. "It's just more confident and fun this time round," she says, the satisfaction clear in her voice. "There is that sense of everybody really enjoying being back at Glenbogle. As viewers, we are so glad to meet up with these characters once more. There is something so lovely about encountering old friends again. We feel like we're part of the family now."

She continues the family analogy when analysing the strength of the characters in the series. "They're a group of people who love each other, annoy each other, support each other and wind each other up – in the way that all families do. Many people can relate to the up-and-down father-son relationship between Hector and Archie. In the same way, lots of viewers will identify with the marriage of Hector and Molly; he appears to be a cantankerous old devil who's got the upper hand and she appears to stay very much in the background, but in fact she is getting her own way on all the important issues. The series feels like a wonderful window on to a family that we're all familiar with."

Douglas Rae, the head of Ecosse Films and executive producer, is equally thrilled about the way the second series of *Monarch of the Glen* has turned out. "I'm very optimistic about this run," he says, "because all the characters have now settled beautifully into their roles. For example, Al Mackenzie in the lead has blossomed and gained in confidence and experience. Audiences will also be surprised and delighted by the marvellous production values. There's a great sense of excitement and dramatic energy about the whole show. The comedy has an anarchic, wacky quality that audiences latch onto. In one episode, we've got guests parachuting onto the lawn outside the house. In another, the estate goes online and puts web-cams all over the place so Internet surfers all over the world can tune into the domestic arguments at Glenbogle. This series is just bursting with good ideas. It reflects the enormous sense of confidence that is coursing through Scottish film-making at the moment."

"And all the while, viewers will be gripped by Archie's central dilemmas. Is he going to be able to turn the estate into a viable economic proposition and which woman is going to win his favour? He has to choose between the chic Londoner Justine, the feisty local schoolteacher Katrina and the punky Glaswegian cook Lexie. He has three different women fighting for his attention."

For Jeremy Gwilt, the series producer, *Monarch of the Glen* is a commendably original drama. "The preconception about a series set in the Highlands is that it would be terribly cosy and dated and full of cute crofters and stupid lairds. But we've done something much more daring and gone for a mix of rude mechanicals in a feudal setting who are actually fiercely intelligent. Placed in their midst is a reluctant but fundamentally decent laird. We can easily sympathise with Archie. Because his parents are stuck in a different era, all the burdens of responsibility are suddenly heaped on his shoulders. People will be able to relate to him. We have come up with a fresh take on an old set-up."

Drama

8 x 50 minutes



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### Production Notes.../2

Rae underlines that *Monarch of the Glen* "has all the elements of classic family drama. It unashamedly sets out to be an entertaining show. It was conceived as a programme you could sit down in front of without being worried about its suitability for the whole family. You can watch it on a Sunday night with a glass of wine and the children around you, and not be embarrassed, but thoroughly entertained. People want that feelgood factor on a Sunday night as they head into the gloom of a Monday morning. Also, it's a nice sunny show to watch while it's dark and wintry outside."

An essential part of the show's appeal is its magnificent scenery. The Highland landscape proved so popular with viewers that local tourist officers have recently erected brown road-signs proclaiming: "You are now entering *Monarch* Country."

"Glenbogle is heart-stoppingly beautiful," McKissack confirms. "The estate is twenty miles across and is at the heart of The Cairngorms, one of the last great wildernesses in Europe. You sit by that loch for five minutes thinking 'this is wonderful' and all your troubles disappear. It's a balm – and it has the same effect on viewers."

"During the first series, Archie was thinking 'should I stay or should I go?' But by the end of the series, you could see that Glenbogle was part of his soul. People could understand why it gets under everybody's skin. There is something magical and mystical about it. I'm a real city girl, but Glenbogle is just right. It's spectacular. A place which has big characters in a big landscape."

McKissack is just as pleased with her leading actor. She feels the Alastair Mackenzie has truly grown into the role of Archie in this second series. "His looks help, but Al has an amazing ability to capture Archie in his various guises," she says. "Like most of us, he wears different faces with family and friends. There are lots of different facets to him."

"But Al manages to make him a wholly plausible, captivating character." She is similarly enthused by the performance of Richard Briers as Hector. "He is simply a comic genius. He understands comedy intuitively, and his timing is second to none. He can turn in an instant from someone very badly behaved to someone who evokes great sympathy. Off screen, Richard and Al have a fantastic relationship. They live together during filming and wind each other up all the time. A lot of pranks are played. But their close friendship pays off on screen."

The characters are ultimately what make *Monarch of the Glen* so special. "We have an incredibly strong ensemble and they all have amazing stories to tell," McKissack concludes. "Every week, my mum changes her mind about who her favourite character is. The show works because it is a combination of the feelgood factor and an astonishing emotional depth brought about by the strength of the characters' feelings for each other. It's not a programme which you simply watch and then forget about a minute later. There are powerful emotions involved, and that's why the characters – and I hope the show – will endure. Glenbogle is a place people will want to visit again and again."

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



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### Cast Interviews

#### Alastair Mackenzie (Archie)

Alastair Mackenzie plays Archie, the lynchpin of *Monarch of the Glen*. He is the central figure of the drama, and all the action revolves around him. In the second series, he is desperately trying out various schemes to turn the Glenbogle estate into a viable business – and his efforts lead him into all manner of complications. Equally importantly, he has to contend with a fiendishly tangled love life, as he attempts to weigh up the merits of different women.

“The first series was a case of ‘should I stay or should I go?’,” says Mackenzie. “It hinged on whether Archie would stay and try to make a go of running the Glenbogle estate or whether he’d pack it all in and return to his restaurant business in London. In the second series, he has decided to stay. Although he no longer has that dilemma, he has an immensely difficult job on his hands, both in terms of who he is going to go out with and how he is going to ease the estate’s debts. These are dilemmas we can all relate to.”

The romantic drama revolves around the love triangle between Archie, Katrina (the beautiful local schoolteacher) and Fergal, the hunky wildlife ranger Archie has hired. “Archie is basically in denial about Katrina,” the actor explains. “When she develops a relationship with Fergal, it makes Archie jealous and he suddenly realises that he loves her. But despite the fact that they are both clearly in love with each other, they just can’t face up to it. This triangle is central to the series – without it, there wouldn’t be such drama. You always need conflict to make good drama.”

Mackenzie continues that he has come to feel a great affection for his character. “People empathise with Archie because his problems are problems which we can all identify with. We may not all have 35,000 acre estates, but his problems are universal. We’re aiming to humanise his plight. He’s vulnerable and he tries hard, and viewers warm to those qualities. Whenever you see someone struggling against great odds, you feel sympathy for them.”

The other main engine that drives along *Monarch of the Glen* is the spiky relationship between Archie and his father, Hector, who is a fully paid-up member of the awkward squad. “Archie has resigned himself to the fact that his father is basically a mischievous little boy who is never going to change his spots,” says Mackenzie, who had a starring role in the acclaimed drama, *Psychos*, and is soon to be seen in the lead of a new feature film, *The Last Great Wilderness*. “Hector is still exasperating and always sticks his oar in where it’s not welcome. He is a cantankerous old sod at the best of times, so he’s not at all keen on Archie’s plans to bring the estate into the 21st Century.”

However, Mackenzie feels that the balance of power in the father-son relationship may be shifting in this second series. “Despite Hector’s meddling, Archie is trying to get things together on the estate, and Hector is beginning to sense that his role in running Glenbogle may be nearly over. He’s aware that Archie is more and more in control. It is a bit like the transition from Prince Hal to Henry V in Shakespeare.

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### Cast Interviews

#### Alastair Mackenzie.../2

"Archie simply has to become more assertive because he's taken on the mantle of leader. He knows that it will require leadership to turn the estate around. His big scheme is to get a grant to build a visitor centre. The idea is that he'll bring in tourists by opening up the estate to the public. There is a whole modernisation vibe going on, which is bound to intrigue people."

Viewers will also be enticed by the stunning Highland setting of *Monarch of the Glen*. Mackenzie was himself brought up nearby and says, "We always get nostalgic about good times in our lives, and childhood was a good time for me. This landscape brings that all back to me."

"The Highland scenery is a very important part of the show's appeal. In the back of most shots, there are these amazing mountains. The landscape adds a sense of majesty to the whole project. There's a real richness to it. It's so beautiful, I can't think of a better place to be. On my rare days off, I try to put on a pair of walking-boots and feel the air on my face up the mountains. Archie should take more time to wake up and smell the roses. It's a magnificent area, but when you're constantly embattled it's difficult to find the time to look up at the mountains."

Mackenzie has relished the whole experience of being among the close-knit cast and crew during the five-month shoot in the remotest part of the Highlands. "Now we've spent two years living and working together, we're even more like a family," he confirms. "Our isolation from the rest of the world encourages everyone to muck in and bond. It's such a great job description – come and spend half the year in the most beautiful place with people you really like doing the sort of job you've always wanted to do. It doesn't get much better than this. Sometimes, I have to pinch myself."

In conclusion, Mackenzie sees no reason why the second series of *Monarch of the Glen* should not be even more popular than the first. "It's an unthreatening, warm family show, and people love that on a Sunday night."

"These are the sort of characters that people want in their sitting-rooms. It's nice, uncontentious fare. On cold winter nights, viewers don't want confrontational, in-your-face drama. This has that clever combination of comedy and drama which enables people to laugh and cry during the course of the same episode. It's a truly enjoyable viewing experience. And how many shows can you say that about these days?"

#### Biography

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*.

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### Cast Interviews

#### Richard Briers (Hector)

Richard Briers plays Hector, the lovable old curmudgeon who has handed over the running of the family estate to his son Archie, but still can't resist putting his oar in when it suits him.

Briers, whose career has included such outstanding shows as *The Good Life* and *Ever Decreasing Circles*, is thrilled to be playing a big part in such a successful series. He thinks that viewers have really taken the characters in *Monarch of the Glen* to their hearts. "Viewers genuinely warm to these characters," he says. "This series stands out because people can't find a family show like this anymore. Because of the insidious process of dumbing down and the proliferation of new channels, it's hard to find programmes of such high quality these days. This series is so well-written. There are scores of good actors around, but it's very hard to find good writers.

"We may not be cutting-edge television, but we're producing something for all the family, which is very rare nowadays. What would once have been seen as old-fashioned is now viewed as revolutionary because nobody else is doing it anymore. But we're doing nothing more complicated than making a very pleasant 50 minutes for viewers to lap up."

The actor has relished playing such an adorably flawed old cross-patch as Hector. "It's a case of role-reversal here," Briers explains. "Hector behaves like the son, while Archie behaves like the father. Hector is actually very childish. He's an irascible right-winger who lives in 1910. For instance, when Hector discovers that an unmarried woman is pregnant, he explodes: 'I believe that a child should have two parents, preferably of the opposite gender and preferably married.' In many ways, he's off his head." But, the actor adds, this sort of role is a riot to play. "These eccentric parts are tremendous fun," he beams. "Now I'm elderly, there is a good pool of these reactionary old fuddy-duddy parts."

All the same, Briers has some sympathy for Hector's viewpoint. "I like the fact that he stands up for his values. These days you can say and do what you like. The world is absolutely terrifying now - technology and drugs have sent us all mad. The Internet is frankly beyond me - what's all that nonsense about? My wife forced me to get a fax machine but I don't know how it works. Surely as an actor, all you need is to pick up the phone to see whether or not you've got the job."

What Briers has found particularly touching about *Monarch of the Glen* is its complex portrayal of the relationship between Hector and Archie. "Al [Mackenzie] and I do convey the fact that this father and son love each other, but they still have their problems. Hector is not mad about youthful ideas, and when Archie turns Glenbogle into a tourist attraction, that does not go down well with him. In his heart of hearts, Hector knows these changes are for the best, but he is worried. He realises that if he lost the estate he would die within three weeks. Contact with the real world would kill him!"

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



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### Cast Interviews

#### Richard Briers.../2

Briers believes that the sheer pleasure the cast generate is helped by the fact that all live together in a shooting-lodge during filming. "We've become like a family," he enthuses. "We all get on terribly well. We all meet up in the evenings and swap stories. We're incredibly close, and that is mirrored on the screen."

Briers has also enjoyed *Monarch of the Glen* because it gives him a chance to escape from the *Good Life* image that he is still saddled with in some quarters. "Some viewers still think of me as the 38-year-old Tom Good," he laughs, "but in this they see someone quite different, a geriatric with white hair. This might help me to get more parts of my age."

All the same, Briers looks back with great affection on his period in the self-sufficiency comedy, *The Good Life*, one of the most successful sitcoms of all time. "The scripts were just so good," he says, "and the casting was from heaven. It also hit a pulse – giving up the job is what everyone would like to do. Everyone has that dream: 'This morning I don't want to go to work on the overcrowded tube. I just want to stay at home and do my own thing.'"

In the New Year, Briers is starring in a new play called *Spike*. "I play a fascist car dealer who sells cars to the Arabs. He's a nasty piece of work, and the whole thing is pretty strong meat for my older fans. I'm glad we're not doing any matinees so the old dears will not be shocked by seeing me, Mr Squeaky Clean, playing such an unscrupulous character."

As his career has progressed, Briers has increasingly enjoyed playing against type and taking roles as out-and-out baddies in such pieces as *Inspector Morse* and *A Respectable Trade*. "Certain people have said they don't like me doing it – they want me to stay as Tom Good forever. But I'm sorry, I'm an actor and I have to make a living. And anyway, villains are wonderful to play; it's such fun to portray someone who is so completely unlike you. That chap I played in *Morse* gave me the creeps, but there is no point in denying that people like that exist."

Finally, Briers underlines why *Monarch of the Glen* has proved so popular with viewers. "It's just a really pleasant show. It's clean, it has no swearing or sex, it looks marvellous, and the whole family can sit down and safely watch it together. It's filling a gap. It's unique."

#### Biography

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 he began a professional association with Kenneth Branagh and the Renaissance Theatre Company and gained fantastic acclaim for the roles that followed in *Twelfth Night*, Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the eponymous role in *King Lear*. On film he appeared *Henry V*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Hamlet* and *Love's Labour's Lost*. In 1997, Richard starred in the acclaimed BBC drama *A Respectable Trade*. Richard Briers has received the Order of the British Empire for his services to the acting profession.

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### Cast Interviews

#### Susan Hampshire (Molly)

Susan Hampshire plays Molly, the delightful, multi-faceted wife of Hector, the former laird of Glenbogle. The actress, who over the years has had a string of acclaimed roles in such works as *The Forsyte Saga* and *The Pallisers*, is very pleased that the characterisation of Molly is so rich. "She really has developed a great deal in this second series. She has always been a very caring person, and her maternal side shines through. But now she comes into her own in other respects, too. She gambles recklessly and nearly loses the estate after becoming tangled up with some gangsters in order to protect a friend. We even hear her answer her husband back and give him an ultimatum. It's all a bit of a turn-up!"

Hampshire has a genuine fondness for *Monarch of the Glen*. "It's such an enchanting show," she enthuses. "It's much more difficult to write a witty programme than a straight drama, but this pulls it off brilliantly. There is such a need for series like this, and I'm so glad to be part of it."

"I had the most amazing reaction from people in shops and trains. When the series finished last year, complete strangers would come up to me in bus stations, cling to my arm and wail, 'Please don't tell me there aren't going to be any more till next spring. I can't wait until then'."

Viewers have been especially captivated by the relationship between Molly and Hector. "People long to see a couple like this who have weathered the storm and stayed together," Hampshire reckons. "Viewers find them comforting; things may not be perfect between them, but they have found a good way of coping. They complement each other well and fulfil each other's needs. They're also popular because they deal with things in a humorous way. They're always teasing each other."

They're not aggressive, but they poke fun at each other and both take it in good humour."

Hampshire thinks it helps that the actors have all become such good friends. "Off screen, we're all terribly close, and I think that is reflected in the warmth of the performances. When you make the audience happy, that is mirrored in the cast. We convey our enjoyment to the viewers."

The actress concludes by musing on exactly why *Monarch of the Glen* has proved such a hit with viewers: "It has struck a chord because it covers subjects that everyone can relate to, problems with children, boyfriends, girlfriends, money. It deals with all the things that people face on a daily basis, but set in a wonderful, romantic context. It has a timeless quality to it, and that's why it works so well. You can sit down as a family in front of *Monarch of the Glen* and enjoy a magical 50 minutes."

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### Cast Biography

#### Susan Hampshire

Susan Hampshire originally trained as a classical ballet dancer at a ballet school founded and run by her mother June. 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 play the leading part 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 BBC Television series *The Forsyte Saga*, and won the same award in 1971 as Sarah Churchill in *The First Churchills* and again in 1973 for *Vanity Fair*, in which she played Becky Sharp. Susan is also well-known to audiences for her roles in *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*, and she received 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 and Honorary Doctor of Literature at St Andrews, Scotland in 1986, Hon D Ed at Kingston University, Surrey and Hon D Arts in Boston, USA in 1994. She was awarded an OBE in 1995.

Drama

8 x 50 minutes



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### Cast Interviews

#### Lorraine Pilkington (Katrina)

Lorraine Pilkington plays Katrina, the beautiful local schoolteacher at Glenbogle who, in the words of the song, finds herself torn between two lovers: Archie, the deeply attractive laird, and Fergal, the smouldering wildlife ranger he employs.

Pilkington, who had a starring role in the hit film, *Human Traffic*, reckons that this development has given her character a whole new dimension. "I think in this second series Katrina is funnier and nicer and has more of a laugh. She is even, dare I say it?, sexier. In the first series, she was a bit of a tomboy, always wearing combat trousers and tearing around on a bike. But now she's not afraid of the womanly side of her character."

As an actress, she has found the love triangle a particularly rich seam to mine. "The arrival of Fergal creates all sorts of spice," she says with a mischievous grin. "Katrina really enjoys bouncing off both him and Archie. She's actually in love with Archie, but thinks she's in love with Fergal. She loves Archie, while she wants Fergal."

"It is perfectly understandable that she should be attracted to Fergal," she continues. "After all, he's a six foot two hunk of a man who's also bright and funny. He epitomises the sort of man Katrina would go for. He's a rugged, energetic outdoors type, and she's all that. But at the same time, she also loves Archie. However, she doesn't feel that her love for Archie is reciprocated, so she doesn't allow herself to feel too much for him. It's bottled up inside her. It's all very confusing!"

But these romantic shenanigans do not leave Katrina unaffected. "She becomes softer as a person and less confrontational," says Pilkington. "You can see how loving Archie affects her and makes her more vulnerable."

Pilkington is sure that viewers will home in on what in the industry is known as UST (Unresolved Sexual Tension). "People love watching that 'will they, won't they?' kind of situation. It's something that people can relate to their own lives, 'it could be me and Jim from the office'. It's a great way to keep people glued to the screen. It's one of those situations that people long for, but when it actually happens they rather regret it and wish they had kept it in its fantasy form. The chase is always better than the capture."

The actress was delighted by the acclaim that the first series of *Monarch of the Glen* received. "Television has become all about harsh, in-your-face realism, and people have forgotten about charm. My parents, for instance, adored the first series. They thought it was hilarious, heart-warming, gorgeous and exciting. They were riveted, and that's good enough for me."

#### Biography

Lorraine Pilkington also appeared 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*, *Runway One* and *West End Girls*.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES TWO

# OF THE GLEN

### Cast Interviews

#### Dawn Steele (Lexie)

Dawn Steele plays Lexie, the incorrigible and spirited cook at Glenbogle. She has an affectionate but fiery relationship with her employer, Hector, and harbours even warmer feelings for his son, Archie. The actress, who also created a stir with her memorable performance in the BBC drama *Tinsel Town*, is delighted by the way Lexie has developed for the second series of *Monarch of the Glen*.

"I feel like I know her inside out now," Steele beams. "She's still as feisty and cheeky as ever, and still not a very good cook, but this time you find out lots more about why she left Glasgow and ended up at Glenbogle. You also see that she's got a much softer side. It's great to get your teeth into a meaty storyline like this. Lexie has also grown up a bit more as far as Archie is concerned. She has become more adult and doesn't flirt with him so much. She's still in love with him, but knows that she doesn't have a hope in hell while Katrina is still around. She gets slightly frustrated because she's right there under Archie's nose, but he still can't see past Katrina. All the same, she helps him sort out his feelings for Katrina. That's why Lexie is such a lovely character. She has a heart of gold and would do anything to see Archie happy."

Steele, who clearly relishes the part, also adores Lexie's sparring with Hector, which was one of the most popular features of the first series of *Monarch of the Glen*. "It's still enormous fun," she says. "Their wee interchanges are still pretty snidey. But Richard [Briers] and I have been working on putting in some extra funny looks between them. It's a classic love-hate relationship."

Lexie has also become closer to Molly, who appreciates the fact that Lexie actually runs the house."

The actress does not have to look far to explain the massive success of the original series. "It's charming and funny. I watched some rushes the other day and I was crying and laughing at the same time. Once people really get to know the characters, they feel more strongly about them and live through everything with them. I particularly hope that they go on a journey with Lexie." Lexie is certainly one of the best loved characters in *Monarch of the Glen*. "I have lots of fan mail from children," says Steele, clearly chuffed. "They love Lexie because of her clothes, her hair in bunches, her quirkiness and her boldness. One wee boy came up to me and said: 'say that line where you're serving up the deer – 'another slice of Bambi anyone? Say it again.' That sort of moment makes your whole job worthwhile."

#### Biography

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 credits include *Tinsel Town*, *Split Second*, *Highlander*, *Haywire*, *Dreams and Recollection* and *In Search of Unicorns*. Dawn is currently filming two short films in London.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES TWO

# OF THE GLEN

### Cast Interviews

#### Hamish Clark (Duncan)

Hamish Clark plays Duncan, the factotum on the Glenbogle estate, who is always getting into all sorts of scrapes – often caused by the fact he carries a torch for Lexie, the feisty Glaswegian cook. The actor was delighted to return for the second series of *Monarch of the Glen*, feeling that the first run had worked so well because “it was something really out of the ordinary. It took people off guard, because it was quirkier than they expected. It was never meant to be straight down the line, and it offered a clever juxtaposition of two different worlds – jet-skis co-existed happily with characters straight out of PG Wodehouse.

“It’s not typical happy-go-lucky fare or a mere jolly romp; it is full of sadnesses and awkwardnesses that make it much more intriguing than your run-of-the-mill series. It’s drama with laughter as opposed to outright comedy. There’s a bit of edge to *Monarch of the Glen*, rather than a cartoonish approach to the problems of the world. Our series reflects the reality of a gradual and ongoing sense of unease – which is after all what the human condition is about. It makes our drama far less cloying. Also, viewers don’t always know what is going to happen next, and that’s a good thing. It isn’t a question of ‘here’s this week’s problem which we will now proceed to solve.’ It is more complex than that, and the unpredictability of the drama makes it something really quite original. Almost despite themselves, viewers find themselves drawn into the story.”

Clark, who has become a famous face on the back of a hugely successful mobile phone advertising campaign (“it’s been brilliant for me”), continues that audiences during the first series particularly latched onto the characters in *Monarch of the Glen*. “People immediately warmed to the characters,” he smiles. “The feedback I got was that people were on their side. And although there was a huge range of characters, they all dovetailed marvellously. All the actors were from different backgrounds and at different stages in their careers, but their styles blended together really well in the final product. We all brought different energies to the project, but they all blended most successfully.”

Audiences proved to be especially fond of Duncan – a fact that Clark can’t deny pleased him. “He was very popular because he is so vulnerable,” the actor explains. “It’s not weakness he displays, but an openness and a lack of artifice that is highly appealing. He doesn’t have much armour to protect himself. He’s never disingenuous, he’s an innocent little Highlander who simply loves his job and charging around the hills. However, he’s like a rabbit caught in the headlights when it comes to women. He’d love to be seen as the dashing, eligible type, but unfortunately he never can be because he’s just too frightened of women. Of course, it’s this very vulnerability that attracts the audience to Duncan.”

#### Biography

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 Meets Frank, Daniel and Laurence* (aka *The Very Thought of You*). Hamish is also the face of the UK Vodafone advertising campaigns. In addition Hamish’s various theatre and comedy credits include his own comedy production *Hamish Whips It Out* for the Edinburgh Fringe festival.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES TWO

# OF THE GLEN

### Cast Interviews

#### Alexander Morton (Golly)

Alexander Morton plays Golly, the faithful retainer at Glenbogle, who has spent his whole life helping the family run the estate. He is devoted to both Archie and Hector. Morton obviously has a real affection for Golly.

He's a brilliant character, the one I would have picked if I'd had the choice. He doesn't say a lot, but that's a good thing. He's the kind of person who only speaks when there is something worth saying. Even if he's taciturn, there's an awful lot going on inside Golly. He's an emotional man, but he keeps that under wraps. There is an innate sadness in the man because of his missed opportunities. It's a 'what if?' situation.

Women of a certain age find him attractive, but he's still on his own." The actor underlines Golly's fondness for the MacDonald family. "He has a paternalistic relationship with Archie. He has had more to do with Archie's upbringing than his actual father. Archie spent every school holiday with Golly, who taught him all he knows about the countryside. But Golly is also very close to Hector. They have a special relationship because although they come at it from different angles they both care about the estate so much." It is the estate that is perhaps Golly's deepest love.

"He is a traditionalist," Morton continues. "He was born into his job, and it would devastate him to lose it. But he knows all is not quite right on the estate, and has to go along with Archie's changes."

The actor goes on to account for the enormous popularity of the first series of *Monarch of the Glen*. "Viewers loved the relationships between the characters. For instance, they loved the way in which Lexie talked back to her boss, Hector. She doesn't behave like a normal downstairs maid. And they adored the character of Molly, who could display feyness one minute and great inner strength the next. They're all characters that people genuinely warm to."

#### Biography

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

Drama

8 x 50 minutes



# MONARCH

## SERIES TWO

# OF THE GLEN

### Cast Interviews

#### Jason O'Mara (Fergal)

Jason O'Mara plays Fergal, the hunky ranger whom Archie hires in an attempt to bolster the estate as a wildlife centre. But soon a rivalry develops between Fergal (dubbed "The Lone Ranger") and Archie as they both start to show a keen interest in Katrina. Although a newcomer to *Monarch of the Glen*, the actor felt immediately drawn to the part. "The character appealed to me because he's exactly the kind of guy I'd like to be, but in reality could never manage to be," O'Mara laughs. "He's a delicate balance because he's tough, but sensitive, serious but witty, practical but romantic, decisive but generous. Fergal's a mass of contradictions – and that's what makes him such fun to play. I've really grown to like him."

O'Mara, who has also taken leading roles in the BBC drama *Playing the Field* and in Steven Spielberg's *Band of Brothers*, was especially attracted by the love triangle between his character and Archie and Katrina. "Katrina has to choose between two very different people. Fergal offers her many things that Archie can't – like unconditional love and attention. Fergal has made Katrina his project, and despite what Archie thinks, he's not going to give up until he gets the girl. The fact that Fergal is employed by Archie makes it a very tricky business. When they cross swords, it can get quite hairy. But, of course, that merely enhances the innate drama of the situation."

This romance is one area where the actor differs from his character. "If I was Fergal, I'd back off from Katrina," he smiles, "because the set-up is complicated. It's a very small world in the Highlands, and everybody knows everybody else's business. There is a delicate eco-system there, and Fergal comes along and upsets it all. He lights a candle under the crucible at Glenbogle, and everything just explodes."

Fergal is not insensitive as such – just tunnel-visioned. All he can see is Katrina."

The actor was also impressed by the richness of the scripts. "What I love is that there is always something going on. Even in an apparently straightforward scene, there is always some subtext underlying it – and that's so rewarding to play. There are, for instance, no straightforward scenes between Fergal, Archie and Katrina. Everything between them is loaded. Even a single look can become something meaningful."

O'Mara is confident that the second series of *Monarch of the Glen* will build on the huge popularity of the first. "The characters are so lovable, funny and interesting that viewers respond immediately to them," he declares. "And for city-dwellers, it's wonderful escapism. I wouldn't have missed this experience for anything."

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES TWO

# OF THE GLEN

### Episode Synopses

#### Episode 1

Archie's plans to turn his crumbling estate into a cash cow are immediately thrown off course by the arrival of a clutch of bankers from Lascelles bank, the estate's backer. The bank is planning a cull of its senior executives, amongst them the lovable and generous Fleming from Series 1. A management training weekend has been planned at Glenbogle to separate the wheat from the chaff. For Archie this spells real danger. Without Fleming's constant and lucrative support, Archie's visionary plans will found at the first hurdle. Archie must ensure Fleming wins – by any means necessary.

Not an easy task when no-one else will help you. The inhabitants of Glenbogle are all too busy arguing amongst themselves to be any assistance. Six months of Justine's imperial rule have taken a toll and the natives are restless. Lexie is vowing to quit her job, Hector and Molly have already quit the house and Katrina has decided to avoid the big house altogether – having been warned off by the jealous Justine. Archie can ignore the problem no longer. It is time for him to take action.

#### Episode 2

A rare and valuable barrel of whisky provides the focus for episode 2. Confiscated by Archie, the barrel is destined to change hands several times before its fate is sealed. Archie is determined to sell it, Hector resolved to drink it, the latter requesting the assistance of portly sidekick Kilwillie as he attempts a desperate *Mission Impossible* style heist.

The appointment of a Head Ranger – charged with dragging Glenbogle into the 21st Century – brings fresh tension to the big house. Duncan sees this as his big chance. Golly fears for his future and their competing applications pose a tough dilemma for Archie. Should he promote from within or buy in outside expertise and risk alienating the household? Outsider Fergal Maclure has all the right qualifications, but how would Duncan and Golly react to being passed over, and what would his appointment mean for Archie and Katrina's relationship? It is clear that Katrina has already taken a shine to Fergal, and Archie knows that appointing the dashing Irishman could cost him dear.

#### Episode 3

Hector must dig deep to save Archie's bacon after a vital grant application is rejected, because of a long-held local grudge. With the estate's future hanging in the balance, Hector is forced to confront old flame, Edith Rankin, the fearsome council leader whose feelings of rejection still burn as fiercely now as they did 40 years ago. Archie must watch and wait as his whole enterprise hangs on his father's chat-up technique.

Tempers flare elsewhere on the estate as new man Fergal clashes with a recalcitrant Golly. Fergal wants to be top dog at Glenbogle, but Golly jealously guards his influence and authority. Duncan, as ever, is caught in the middle – torn between ambition and loyalty. The battle is on for Duncan's soul, as Fergal and Golly lock antlers.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES TWO OF THE GLEN

### Episode Synopses

#### Episode 4

Archie would rather just forget about his 30th birthday, but there's precious little chance of that with Molly secretly organising birthday celebrations. Hector too is preparing a big surprise all of his own. Obsessed by Archie's age and the absence of a long-term heir, he's resolved to find Archie a wife. He thinks he's struck gold when he meets Kieran, a rich Irish nobleman, and his charming daughter Tanya. But there is more to this pair than meets the eye and Hector's rash actions could cost the family dear.

Whilst fending off a host of unsuitable brides, Archie has a fight on his hands with Tosh McKellen. A cantankerous former tenant, the aged Tosh has returned to Glenbogle to reclaim his cottage (now a holiday home) and is determined to cause maximum disruption until he gets his way. Archie must get to the heart of Tosh's obsession in order to liberate the estate and mend a broken heart. Katrina and Fergal are on hand to help and Katrina makes the most of the opportunity to let the birthday boy know that she and Fergal are more than just good friends.

#### Episode 5

Molly's gambling addiction places the MacDonald family in serious danger when a hard-bitten Glasgow gangster, Murdo, arrives at Glenbogle determined to cash in his IOUs. Faced with financial ruin, Molly determines on a desperate plan – to gamble all on a poker match against card-sharp, Murdo.

Elsewhere on the estate, Archie has a decorating challenge of major proportions on his hands. Faced with the withdrawal of council funding, he must attempt to turn a derelict crofters' cottage into a fully-functional tourist attraction – all within 36 hours. It's all hands to the pumps and Katrina and Fergal are forced to muck in. Tension is in the air as Katrina finds herself at close quarters with both her suitors.

#### Episode 6

Crockery flies at Glenbogle when Lexie comes face to face with her wayward mother for the first time in four years. Engaged to a millionaire, Pamela is determined to have a lavish wedding at Glenbogle, with reconciliation to Lexie as part of the package. Archie finds himself stuck in the middle of an epic mother-and-daughter confrontation, struggling to reconcile the warring factions and ensure that the wedding goes ahead as planned.

Meanwhile, there's a serious shock for Katrina when the local education authority threatens to close down her school. Staff cutbacks are the only way to avoid closure, leaving Katrina with the unenviable choice of having either to sack her best friend, Maureen, or resign herself. Fergal thinks he has the answer. He is shortly to leave Glenbogle for a job in New Zealand. Why doesn't Katrina go with him? Maureen's job will be safe and Katrina can jet off to a new exciting life. Can Katrina really leave Glenbogle?

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES TWO OF THE GLEN

### Episode Synopses

#### Episode 7

The unexpected arrival of a heavily pregnant Lizzie shatters the peace at Glenbogle. Abandoned by a married man, Lizzie is looking for comfort and support, but runs the gamut of Hector's disappointment and disapproval. The result is an explosive family schism, with Archie caught right in the middle. As Lizzie goes into labour, it is a race against time to heal the breach between his unrepentant father and his fiery sister, before the next MacDonald generation is born.

In spite of her unfortunate position, Lizzie still finds time to play cupid. As Katrina prepares to leave Glenbogle for good, Lizzie slowly works on her old friend, calling into question her desire to start a new life with Fergal. Will Katrina go through with it? Or has Lizzie done enough to throw Katrina and Archie a lifeline?

#### Episode 8

With the transformation of Glenbogle now complete, Archie has good reason to be proud of his achievements. The backward estate he inherited is now a fully-functional tourist attraction, due to be opened amidst a blaze of publicity at Glenbogle's annual clan gathering. But will it still be theirs to open? A rich businessman, Joe MacDonald from Atlanta, USA, arrives for the gathering with a legitimate genealogical claim to the house, lands, everything! With no funds to fight the claim in court, a desperate Archie must invoke the chieftains' challenge – an ancient ritual for settling clan disputes. He must do battle with Joe in a series of gruelling challenges to decide who is the rightful Monarch of the Glen.

Following Katrina's return to Glenbogle without Fergal (who has been left broken-hearted, bound on a solo ticket to New Zealand) the way now seems clear for Archie and Katrina. Or is it? With Lexie eyeing up the desirable laird, Katrina has a fight on her hands if she is to finally win her man.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES TWO OF THE GLEN

### Ratings

Episode	UK Txn Date	Channel	Time On	Viewers	Audience Share
1	07.01.01	BBC1	20.10	7.8 million	26.6%
2	14.01.01	BBC1	20.10	7.7 million	26.7%
3	21.01.01	BBC1	20.10	7.7 million	26.5%
4	28.01.01	BBC1	20.20	7.5 million	26.6%
5	04.02.01	BBC1	19.55	7.4 million	25.1%
6	11.02.01	BBC1	19.10	7.4 million	26.9%
7	18.02.01	BBC1	20.10	7.8 million	26.9%
8	25.02.01	BBC1	20.10	7.8 million	26.5%

Drama

8 x 50 minutes



# MONARCH

SERIES TWO

# 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 TWO

# OF THE GLEN

### What The Papers Say

#### United Kingdom

"What Sundays were made for ... *Doctor Finlay*, *Hamish Macbeth*, *Poldark* and *To the Manor Born*, all rolled into one." *The Times*

"The Highland fling is a perfect antidote to all the miserable weather we have been having lately. The sun always seems to shine in Benbogle and the scenery is terrific ... The everyday story of country estate folk is so feelgood it hurts. It is best taken with a pinch of salt or, better still, a dram of scotch." *Mirror*

"The Highlands are heart-stoppingly lovely. The castle looks as if it is twirled out of barley sugar. Even the new ranger is beautiful, particularly when diving naked into a pool by a waterfall ... A great deal of golden production has been poured over this, like syrup on waffle, so it should suit a sweet tooth or a satiric eye." *Guardian*

"Worth setting the video for." *Sunday Times*

"Richard Briers... is in his element as eccentric Hector." *Mirror*

#### Australia

In Australia, *Monarch of the Glen* is one of the top-rating dramas. In February 2001, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported it as the Number One programme watched by the over-40s.

"\*\*\* Not to be missed." *Herald Sun*, Melbourne

"Och aye, it's bonny to have good television back." *Canberra Times*

"

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES TWO

# OF THE GLEN

### Press Features

**Express: January 6, 2001**

Heart-throb of the Glen is homesick

For an actor dubbed Britain's answer to Tom Cruise, *Monarch of the Glen* lead Alastair Mackenzie makes a surprisingly unstarry entrance. He slopes into Edinburgh's George Hotel, his hands thrust deep into a pair of baggy jeans two sizes too big. On screen, as the reluctant laird Archie MacDonald in BBC Scotland's comedy drama, he is the archetypal hero – all gleaming teeth and rosy complexion, buffed to perfection by months of filming in the Highlands. Today, he is wearing a grey jerkin which uncannily matches his pallor and an expression bordering on trepidation. Drinking a cappuccino and lighting the first of a series of Marlboros he explains that interviews are not really his forte. "It's a weird thing, you are given a job and then people ask you about yourself. It's not nose – I totally understand; it's just that some people are better at answering. My friends say I should make up stories."

But he must secretly enjoy being compared to Cruise? "Me and Nicole Kidman, mmm... nice thought," he jokes. "It's very flattering. I don't know where it came from, but I endorse it."

In truth, the 30-year-old Scot is nothing like the star. He might look like a heart-throb – even swathed in grey on a winter Edinburgh afternoon he turns heads – but he is more pensive than your average Hollywood pin-up. Questions are duly considered before replies are offered. He qualifies his conversation with phrases such as "without wanting to sound too highbrow" or "this sounds awfully grand but..." The impression is of a cerebral actor at pains to avoid sounding pretentious. In other words, much more interesting than the character he portrays in *Monarch of the Glen*.

It seems even Mackenzie gets frustrated by Archie. "I'd love him to let his hair down a bit and scream at the mountains more. He's always trying to please other people. And his pathological indecisiveness irritates me mainly because it's a quality I recognise in myself. I get up and can't decide which trousers to wear," he says. In the first episodes, viewers saw Archie summoned back to the Highlands from London, as Glenbogle, the crumbling family estate, is sunk so deep in debt it might be cheaper to flatten the place. He then faced the choice of staying to bale out his curmudgeonly, eccentric father, played by Richard Briers, and fragrant mother, Susan Hampshire, or heading back to his designer life and gorgeous girlfriend down south. Its sentimental – some argued clichéd – slant on modern Highland life was panned by critics, but viewers loved it, 8 million of them tuning in each week.

So what is Mackenzie's opinion? Is it as "tooth-achingly whimsy" as one critic described it? Mackenzie, who was a virtual unknown on television before the series began, stresses he loves working on *Monarch of the Glen* and will be eternally grateful to it for the biggest break of his career. However, he adds: "I have to accept the parameters of 8pm on a Sunday but I wouldn't mind if the show was a little more challenging. I think you could make it more surreal. Have you ever seen *Northern Exposure*? That's what I'd like it to be pushed towards."

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES TWO

# OF THE GLEN

### Press Features

**Express: January 6, 2001 continued.../2**

His latest project sounds like the dose of surrealism he craves. He's about to take the lead in a film, *The Last Great Wilderness*, which he describes as "*Withnail & I* meets *Deliverance*". He says: "I play a disenchanted Londoner at my wits' end who inadvertently gets sucked into a world he is unfamiliar with and ends up in the north of Scotland fighting for his life."

Mackenzie spent 10 years desperate to come back to Scotland and looking for ways to do so, and now, having bought a house in London, he's working here all the time. He was brought up with his brother and sister in Trinafour, Perthshire, about 20 miles from where *Monarch of the Glen* is filmed at a secret location. It was an idyllic spot, says Mackenzie of his home. The nearest shop was five miles away. "It was an amazing place – really beautiful with remote woods, moorlands and rivers. Your imagination could run wild." He didn't appreciate it at the time, he says, but ever since his partner, the actress Susan Vidler, gave birth to their first child, Martha, a year ago, he hankers after his home country even more. "You have to be in the right head-space to leave London. It's a brave step but one I'm pretty close to doing. It's the quality of life here; the mountains, the fresh air, and people are friendly." Vidler, an electrician's daughter from Edinburgh, appeared in the film *Trainspotting* and in television dramas such as *Cracker*.

Becoming a parent has been astounding, says Mackenzie. "It's been, without sounding too extreme, the most overwhelming experience. Having Martha has just completely thrown me." Mackenzie is at his most animated when talking about his daughter, who was a year old last week. Gone is the searching for the right word or the nervous, self-deprecating humour. It seems as though in his role of the proud parent, he is most at ease. "For the first three months, she had terrible colic. She was screaming all day. There was never any peace and the reason that's so upsetting is that you see her in this incredible discomfort and doctors use this indefinable word like colic and there's not much they can do for her," he gushes. "But every day you feel like taking her to the hospital and saying, 'Look, something is terribly wrong'. I kept thinking she must have broken her arm." Filming *Monarch of the Glen*, made by Ecosse Films, took him away for six months with weekend trips back home every fortnight or so. "I'd see her for 12 hours and it was like being hit by a juggernaut filled with love. There were times when I didn't recognise Martha – she changed so much. It was scary."

Mackenzie first became interested in drama as a pupil at Glenalmond, the public school in Perthshire noted for producing captains of industry rather than leading men. It was a very sporty school and Mackenzie wasn't sporty at all, he says. His way of expressing himself was to put on plays and make films with friends. "I think we were reacting against the type of establishment which produces captains of industry." So he was a rebel? "Well it sounds awfully grand but we were doing our own thing." An English teacher inspired him by writing a list of books he should read. The list included JD Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* and George Orwell's *1984*. The books and plays provided a welcome respite from school. "Boarding school sends shivers down your spine. I didn't like it, but it's hard to define why. I think maybe I just wasn't the right type," he ponders.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES TWO

# OF THE GLEN

### Press Features

**Express: January 6, 2001 continued.../3**

When he left, he had no desire to follow his peers to university. Instead, at 18, he took a foundation course in theatre studies at Stratford-upon-Avon. The course was affiliated to the RSC. "It was a year of pure acting bliss," he recalls. At 19, he was too impatient to go on to drama school. Instead, he joined the Borderline Theatre Company in Glasgow as a stagehand before going on to the Citizens'. There he did a little acting, a few walk-on parts, but it was enough to earn him his Equity card and get him down to London. "I was like Dick Whittington. I was looking for those golden paving stones. I did get an agent but it was a long haul," he says. Out of work for months on end, it got harder to define himself as an actor when he was taking jobs as a barman and a landscape gardener.

It sounds depressing, I venture. "It was at times," he says, "I'd be lying in bed thinking I should give it up and then something would come along like a bit in *Soldier Soldier* or in *Lovejoy*. It wasn't a step-by-step progression, though. It was more like 'I'm doing well... Oh no, I'm not'."

He must have doubted his abilities? "You've got to have..." he hesitates, searching for the right word. Ego, I suggest? "I was going to say determination," he laughs. "I had a great sense of injustice. I'd watch other actors and think 'it's not fair. I could do that.' And when I do get to do it, it's like fulfilling a dream. It sounds pretentious but it really is like a strange drug, acting. I get an instant high."

He's not a method actor but, I suspect, thinks very deeply about his characters. His last big role was as the mad psychiatrist, Dr Shug Niven, in the acclaimed Channel 4 series *Psychos*. "I loved playing him. It was as if he'd pressed the self-destruct button and I had to lose it completely. I'm just sorry it's not coming back for a second series."

A fan of American stars such as Burt Reynolds, hugely underrated, he says, Mackenzie would love to join them out in Los Angeles. "More films is what I really want to do," he says before heading off into George Street.

He shrugs on his jacket, draws himself up and suddenly looks like the handsome leading man that has so excited the tabloid newspapers. Who knows, maybe if he does get to Hollywood, Tom Cruise should look out.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES TWO

# OF THE GLEN

### Press Features

**Sunday Mirror: January 14, 2001**

Monarch Star's Real Life Love Triangle  
Newcomer Jason admits he was once torn between two lovers

*Monarch of the Glen's* new star has revealed how a destructive real-life love triangle prepared him for his stormy TV Highland fling. Jason O'Mara, 22, makes his entrance tonight as Laird Archie's love rival for glamorous teacher Katrina Findlay. He strips off for his opening scene and dives into a mountain pool where he is seen skinny-dipping by bashful Katrina, played by Lorraine Pilkington. The teacher falls for the charms of the mysterious hunky ranger and is soon torn between her two admirers in an obsessive love triangle.

Opening his heart, Jason admitted he could draw on personal experience for the storyline. He said: "I have been in love with two women at the same time and I remember being very confused because I honestly didn't know who I was in love with. I didn't know what to do or where to turn and it was a horrible experience. You start asking yourself, what is love and how do I know which girl is the real thing? But it came out in the wash. It was nasty at the time, but the two girls are still friends. It is probably something everyone has to experience once and then avoid making the same mistake again. I don't think humans and love triangles really go together. This happened when I was studying at Trinity College, Dublin, and I am glad to say it hasn't happened since."

The *Monarch of the Glen* love triangle explodes when Jason's character Fergal is hired by Archie (played by Alastair Mackenzie) in an attempt to bolster his estate as a wildlife centre. Jason said: "It all kicks off when Katrina takes a shine to Fergal and has to choose between two very different people. Fergal offers her many things that Archie can't, like unconditional love and attention. He is not the sort of person to be interested in any long-term relationships but makes a huge exception and ends up staying for a little while. Fergal is not insensitive as such, just tunnel-visioned. All he can see is Katrina." Jason added: "There is a delicate eco-system in Glenbogle, and Fergal comes along and upsets it all. He lights a candle under the crucible, and everything explodes."

Love scenes with Lorraine Pilkington were made easier by the friendship they formed while filming in the Highlands. Jason said: "I get on very well with Lorraine. We could talk about how kisses were supposed to look and it is all very choreographed. There is a beautiful kiss by a lake to look out for – the setting was incredible." Unlike his character, all Jason fell in love with while in Scotland were the Highlands. He said: "The Highlands had a profound effect on me and I started wanting to stay there. There is an incredible contrast between its beauty and ruggedness. I felt comfortable while also feeling in awe. I went fishing, and I've left my fishing rod up there so that will force me to go back." Jason also became friends with the rest of the cast, living with them in a shooting lodge for four months. He said: "It was great as we had to operate like a family and I became close friends with all of the cast including Susan Hampshire and Richard Briers."

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**



# MONARCH

## SERIES TWO

# OF THE GLEN

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Prior to filming *Monarch of the Glen*, Jason featured in TV's *Reach for the Moon*, *The Bill*, *Peak Practice* and the West End stage play *Popcorn* – which he left before former Page Three girl Emma Noble joined the cast. Jason said: "I left *Popcorn* just before Emma came in. It was a great part for an actress and with all due respect to her other talents she is not an actress."

He is set to return to comedy after being offered a part in a new ITV sitcom called *High Stakes*, starring Richard Wilson and Jack Shepherd. He said: "It is Richard's first sitcom since *One Foot in the Grave*, so it is eagerly anticipated. "It is set in a merchant bank and it is very, very funny. Two men in the office hate each other and I am the go-between. I consider comedy as a high art form – I admire comedians that are good at it. I do enjoy making people laugh and it certainly improves the length of your career – look at Richard Briers."

Jason is also appearing later in the year in the forthcoming Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks epic saga *Band of Brothers*, set in the Second World War.

Jason said: "I have seen a few clips and the episodes look like feature films for TV. I take over from David Schwimmer as the company commander and am in for the first two episodes. It is quite a high casualty count and Damien Lewis then takes over as commander. Tom Hanks doesn't call this a TV series – he calls it a television event."

Drama

8 x 50 minutes



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**Mirror: February 10, 2001**

My love in the Glen: Irish *Monarch* star Lorraine expecting baby

Irish actress Lorraine Pilkington has told of her double delight - she's about to become a wife and a mother. The *Monarch Of The Glen* star is to marry series director Simon Massey and the couple are expecting their first child in April.

They found happiness in the Highlands after falling in love on the set of the hit show. Lorraine, 26, from Dublin, said: "I've never been in love before and I just couldn't control my feelings on this one."

"It was love after the first week but we didn't do anything about it. Personal relationships tend to make it very difficult for the rest of the cast. What happens on film sets is that people do have affairs sometimes when they are married. It then becomes illicit - people gossip and it's all quite seedy. There was none of that with us. We realised almost from the start that this was going to be more than an affair."

Lorraine and Simon - who is divorced with two children - have planned the wedding for next September 7.

She told *Now* magazine: "Marriage is very important to me. I'm very open-minded but I do crave convention and it's quite a tricky issue for me that I'm pregnant. It wasn't ideal in that we had to go and explain to our families but we wanted to have children in a couple of years in any case and both of us view it as a blessing. I've wanted to have babies since I was 15. Once I'd met Simon and decided he was the man for me I thought we should put off having kids for a couple of years. I said, 'Let's concentrate on you and me and have a fabulous time travelling around and getting drunk'. Yet it was like something clicked inside my body and bang - I'm pregnant."

Lorraine, who plays teacher Katrina in the BBC1 drama, revealed that her good fortune had been foretold by a tarot card reader. She said: "He told me that I was going to meet my husband, have a baby and do well in my career. The fact that it's all happened is amazing, especially since I had a terrible start to the year 2000 - I was dumped by a multi-millionaire. He wasn't very nice and wasn't for me and I worked that out on New Year's Eve. It was six in the evening and I was dressed in a ballgown but I realised I didn't want to spend the evening with him. He said if that's the way you feel, maybe we shouldn't spend our time together. I said that's fine - but I still felt a little bit dumped."

"I've had tons of boyfriends before but with Simon there's great passion and we can also do quiet things like reading in a room and not having to talk."

Lorraine's next role is in a film starring veteran actor Richard Harris. He stars as a gangster boss in *My Kingdom*, while Lorraine plays one of his three daughters.

**Drama**

**8 x 50 minutes**