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VOLUME TWO: ROBERT OF HUNTINGDON

ANDREW ORTON

Free chapter:

THE KNIGHTS OF THE APOCALYPSE

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# THE KNIGHTS OF THE APOCALYPSE

written by  
RICHARD CARPENTER

starring JASON CONNERY

Released June 2016

## Summary

**Which one's this?**

The one made on audio thirty years later.

## **Synopsis**

England during the reign of King John and a dark force is intent on conquest. Only the Hooded Man can stand against it.

The church lies impotent at the mercy of the Pope and the interdict against King John. With the people living in fear and a series of strange disappearances that threaten the very fabric of Noble society, Robin i' the Hood and his band of outlaws must race to rescue the past so that the future may be protected. A journey to Huntingdon and beyond Sherwood will see them battle their most dangerous enemy yet as Herne's Son faces The Knights of the Apocalypse...

## In Brief

### **Cast Notes**

**Freddie Fox** takes over the role of Sir Guy of Gisburne from the late Robert Addie. Addie died in 2003 after being diagnosed with lung cancer. Fox was Nickolas Grace's suggested choice for the role. He has appeared in **The Three Musketeers**, **The Mystery of Edwin Drood**, and Channel 4's **Cucumber / Banana** project. He is the son of Edward Fox and Joanna David.

**Daniel Abineri** is the son of original Herne actor John Abineri, who died in 2000. He was a regular in **Bless Me Father**, and has appeared in **International Velvet**, **Return to Eden**, and has made guest appearances in **Secret Army** and **The Bill**.

Perhaps best known to one generation for his role as mentor Giles in **Buffy the Vampire Slayer**, **Anthony Stewart Head** is just as well known as the coffee-proffering advert flirt in a series of Nescafé Gold Blend commercials to another. After early appearances in **Enemy at the Door**, **Secret Army**, **Bergerac**, the first series of **Howard's Way**, **The Comic Strip Presents...** and **Woof!**, he was cast as Adam Klaus in the first episode of **Jonathan Creek**, before having to give the role up to move to America when he won the part in **Buffy**. He has gone on to be one of Britain's most recognisable television

actors, with parts in **Manchild**, **Monarch of the Glen**, the revived **Doctor Who**, **Little Britain** (as the Prime Minister), **Merlin**, as well as an appearance as former Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe in **The Iron Lady**. He is also an accomplished singer, and contributed heavily to the soundtrack of the **Buffy** musical episode *Once More With Feeling*, as well as releasing a number of his own albums.

**Colin Baker** will forever be known as the sixth **Doctor Who**, a role he played for two seasons on television in an unfeasible coat, and has continued to play to increased acclaim in Big Finish's audio plays of the series since 1999, without the coat. His early television work includes his turn as unlikeable yuppie Paul Merroney in road-haulage firm drama **The Brothers**, and as Crown Prince Willy in the BBC's excellent **Fall of Eagles**. He also had roles in **Blakes 7** as crazed mercenary Bayban the Butcher, and in **Doctor Who**, two years before he took over the part himself, where he had the pleasure of shooting previous incumbent Peter Davison. His other television appearances include **Casualty**, as a UFO-hunter with glowing green eyes (yes, really), **A Dance to the Music of Time**, and as himself in both **Countdown**'s Dictionary Corner and **I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!** On stage he has performed in **HMS Pinafore** and as Inspector Morse. He also appeared in the first episode of **Jonathan Creek** (with Anthony Stewart Head), where he delivered the memorable line, 'I just want you to get round here and make me bark like a sea lion.'

**Terry Molloy** has played Mike Tucker in Radio Four's **The Archers** since 1973. Another **Doctor Who** and Big Finish alumnus, Molloy played Dalek-creator Davros for three television serials in the 1980s, and has reprised the role on audio several times with several different Doctors (including Colin Baker). Other roles on television include **Bergerac**, the BBC's 1985 **Oliver Twist**, **Chancer**, **Jupiter Moon**, **Urban Gothic**, **Casualty** and **Harry Hill's TV Burp**, where Hill commented on his likeness to Eric Clapton. He has appeared in Bafflegab's audio series **The Scarifiers** since 2007.

**Lisa Bowerman** is yet another **Doctor Who** and Big Finish favourite. She appeared in the last televised **Doctor Who** story of the original series, *Survival*, playing Karra the Cheetah Person, before taking on the role of spin-off companion Bernice Summerfield for a series of Big Finish audio plays from 1998 to the present day. She was a regular in the first two series of **Casualty** as paramedic Sandra Mute. She has also appeared in **Grange Hill**, **Doctors**, **Bad Girls**, **Spooks** and **Coronation Street**. In later years she has directed a number of Big Finish's audio plays, and frequently documents productions as a photographer.

## Discussion

Where did this come from?

*'The Knights of the Apocalypse* is a somewhat famed script within fandom, as it was written as a coda to the last series, which would have been a two-part special or a feature-length movie. It's big, bold and epic. It really is a grand tale and, when I first read it, I

could see it playing out in my mind. It's so well-written that, oddly, you feel like you've watched it; but then again it's from the pen of the man who created and wrote the majority of the series, so it's got that style and panache and excitement that he's able to bring to the page.'

— Barnaby Eaton-Jones, producer

Several years prior to the release of the final audio, Bafflegab Productions contacted Richard Carpenter and his agent to ask if a new series of **Robin of Sherwood** on audio was possible. Bafflegab (then called Cosmic Hobo Productions) were the producers of long-running series **The Scarifiers** and **Brenda and Effie**, and were seeking to expand their range. The rights situation for the series was complex to unravel, and producer Simon Barnard of Bafflegab undertook email discussions with Goldcrest and ITV in an attempt to clarify who owned the rights.

Carpenter's death in 2012 caused something of a problem with the plan, though Bafflegab were keen to continue with the idea. After lengthy delays in email communications with Bafflegab, ITV ultimately firmly but politely said no, fearing that **Robin of Sherwood** was not a viable commercial property. The series has a significantly complex rights situation due to the way the original contracts for the series were drawn up in the 1980s (see the chapter *The Rise and Fall of Goldcrest* for details), and the amount of effort involved to unravel the rights issues surrounding the series for little financial gain on ITV's part was considered too much by the network.

In May 2014, an event was held to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of **Robin of Sherwood**. 'The Hooded Man 2014' event was the brainchild of Barnaby Eaton-Jones, a freelance writer and theatre producer/director, and long-time fan of the show. Eaton-Jones attracted a number of guests to the event, including Michael Praed, Jason Connery, Judi Trott, Mark Ryan, Nickolas Grace and Michael Craig; indeed, the event was the first time the two Robins had been on stage together. The first volume of the book you're reading was also launched at this convention by author Andrew Orton. Eaton-Jones formed good relationships with the cast at the event, and those of us in attendance remember it as an absurdly good-natured weekend.

Also at the event was fan Rowena Sayer, who had won a copy of Richard Carpenter's *The Knights of the Apocalypse* script at a fan auction many years ago for a large sum of money. The script was written for an attempted continuation of the series as a one-off special in the late 1980s, and was set 'within a year' of the end of Series Three. Various attempts to produce it had been made in the intervening years.

When bidding on the work, Sayer had been concerned that the script would have left the country had she not won the auction, and noted that Carpenter had personally circled the copyright symbol on her copy. The script was originally typed by Carpenter in 1989, and was covered in his annotations. Sayer approached Eaton-Jones at the convention, offering to return the script to Carpenter's estate for free, suspecting that they did not possess a copy. Eaton-Jones contacted Carpenter's daughter Harriet Whitehouse, and discovered that this was correct and the estate did not have a copy of the script.

For some time, Simon Barnard had been in contact with Barnaby Eaton-Jones, organiser of the ‘Hooded Man 2014’ convention. Eaton-Jones helped with aspects of Barnard’s plans, such as ascertaining if the cast would be interested in returning to their roles on audio. The cast that Eaton-Jones contacted were keen on the idea of an audio play when approached, particularly because they would be working from Carpenter’s script. All would eventually agree to work for a flat fee in order to get the production made.

‘Nobody had to be persuaded, which was a very lovely thing. The affection and love that they all hold for that series, and the friendships that still endure to this day, meant that it was an easy sell – even though we were offering them peanuts to do so. Everyone who signed on, worked for a flat fee across the board, if they were a named role in the script. So, that way, we could hopefully afford to get this amazingly successful cast together for a budget that we could afford, considering this was a non-profit production.’

— Barnaby Eaton-Jones, personal interview

A number of members of the cast were particularly influential in ensuring the audio was made: Mark Ryan asked Clive Mantle and Ray Winstone to get involved directly rather than through their agents, and personally vouched for the credentials of Eaton-Jones. Nickolas Grace also personally called at least one former member of the cast to take part, of which, more later. Shortly afterwards, Bafflegab invited Eaton-Jones on board as a co-producer.

Once it had been established that the cast were on board, Eaton-Jones and Barnard discussed the idea of speaking to Carpenter’s estate to seek their blessing for the production. Eaton-Jones then revealed the existence of Sayer’s copy of the script. Rather than simply return the script to Carpenter’s estate, Eaton-Jones asked Harriet Whitehouse if he could read it, and after doing so, asked again if he could mount an audio production based on it, and use it as the basis for another bid to ITV. Carpenter’s estate readily agreed. Suspecting that an original script by the creator and writer of the series might have a chance of persuading ITV to go ahead with the project, the producers explored several options, and eventually suggested to ITV that the script be made as a charitable venture, with a one-off licence. This would allow money to be raised for Carpenter’s chosen charities, the British Red Cross and the Sherwood Forest Trust, which Eaton-Jones had previously had some dealings with as part of his managing of the ‘Hooded Man 2014’ convention. This had a beneficial effect on the production: with a large ensemble cast and a limited budget, it was clear that producing a full-cast audio drama for profit would be difficult. A charity production had far more chance of being made, and indeed, the cast and crew worked for a significantly lower fee than they would usually charge; several of the cast also donated their fees to charity.

With the cast on board, and after some timely email intervention with ITV by the former producer of **Robin of Sherwood**, Esta Charkham, ITV agreed to the proposal and granted a one-off licence.

Funding was to be provided by the crowd-funding website **Indiegogo**. The producers were conscious of previous successful crowd-funding campaigns, including the then-recent **Thunderbirds 1965** Kickstarter project which eventually raised over £200,000. However, crowd-funding is known to be a hit-and-miss approach, and many projects never meet their goal. Nevertheless, feeling that **Robin of Sherwood** had a pre-existing fanbase that would rally to the cry of a new episode with the original cast returning, a target of £10,000 was set to be raised within the thirty-day funding window.

The crowd-funding process also allows a number of ‘perks’ to be offered to those who contribute greater amounts, and this was taken advantage of by the production.

In July 2015, the existence of *The Knights of the Apocalypse* was announced online.

‘My time in Sherwood was spent working with wonderful actors who became lifelong friends, and behind it all was Richard ‘Kip’ Carpenter’s brilliant writing, whose scripts we brought to life. After many false dawns, I can finally say that **Robin of Sherwood** is coming back. And so am I! The Hooded Man is ready to face the evil machinations of the Sheriff of Nottingham again, surrounded by my wonderful band of Merries, in a brand-new audio adventure written by Kip himself. We may be a little older and wiser in real life but, on audio, we’re forever young and golden-haired.’

— Jason Connery, press release

‘I’m thrilled to learn of the return of **Robin of Sherwood** as an audio production, especially as it is based on a script my father wrote many years ago. I think it says something about my dad that so many members of the original cast have agreed to be a part of it, so I sincerely thank them all for their support. Dad loved his work and spent hours sitting in his study mulling over a word or sentence. We often said he lived in his own little world, and it was true. His world consisted of history and music, legends and magic. And this is what he wrote into the stories of **Robin of Sherwood**. The fact this audio will benefit two such worthy causes as the Red Cross and the Sherwood Forest Trust simply makes it all the more worthwhile. Nothing is ever forgotten.’

— Harriet Carpenter (Whitehouse), press release

‘We can’t begin to say how excited we are to be producing this audio revival of **Robin of Sherwood**, the best retelling of the Robin Hood legend ever made. We’ll do our very best to hold the bow steady, and to do justice to Richard Carpenter’s wonderful script.’

— Producer Simon Barnard and Barnaby Eaton-Jones,  
press release

As Carpenter’s script was written originally as an expansive television production,

it was a very visual piece of writing, and Eaton-Jones was conscious that a big part of the appeal of the series was the way it was directed, and the look of its costumes, design and locations. In order to adapt the piece for audio, Simon Barnard approached John Dorney (Best Scribe Award winner for 2015), who had enjoyed previous success in writing and adapting audio plays for *Doctor Who* and *The Avengers*. The intention all round was to create an adaptation which stayed faithful to Carpenter's words and vision but which in an audio medium. An added benefit of audio was that even though the story was set shortly after Series Three of the television programme, the intervening years were less visible on audio than they would be on screen. As Eaton-Jones says, 'Voices, as a rule, don't age as much as looks! Mind you, Judi Trott (Maid Marian) doesn't age AT ALL, apparently.' Views on the finished script were mixed: one producer was keen on it, though Whitehouse and several members of the cast expressed their reservations about it.

The release was accompanied by artwork provided by Stuart Manning showing the logo for the project, designed in the rather beautiful typeface Origami (Roman, Medium and Semi-Bold), and a silhouetted Robin Hood against a background of distinctly not-medieval, non-indigenous trees. It was announced that the crowd-funding campaign would begin in September.

The first casting process for non-recurring actors was carried out by Simon Barnard of Baffle Gab. Eaton-Jones and Barnard disagreed about some aspects of this casting, and due to his recent engagement as a producer, Eaton-Jones occasionally felt he was deferring to Barnard's greater experience at audio production and ultimately agreeing to casting decisions that he didn't think were exactly correct (Eaton-Jones is keen to point out that he thinks Barnard's casting would have worked in its own way).

Particularly important was the recasting of both Herne the Hunter and Sir Guy of Gisburne, following the deaths of John Abineri and Robert Addie, who had played the roles on television. Eaton-Jones was keen to cast Abineri's son Daniel Abineri as Herne, due to their similar-sounding voices, but consideration was also given to the idea of casting former Robin of Loxley actor Michael Praed as Herne. Both producers were keen for Praed to be involved in the production in some way, even though the script had been written by Richard Carpenter specifically for Jason Connery's Robert of Huntingdon and Loxley was long-since dead. Harriet Whitehouse felt that taking on the role of Herne would be a fitting use of Praed's talents, though the producers were concerned that his voice was too distinctive and would not be suitable as Herne. Nevertheless, Praed was asked by email if he would be interested in the part, but there was no response, due mostly to Praed's busy schedule as an in-demand theatre actor. Having listened to samples of Daniel Abineri's voice, Barnard and Eaton-Jones agreed that he should take over the part from his father.

The part of Sir Guy of Gisburne caused its own troubles. Nickolas Grace's opinion had been sought and he had suggested Simon Williams for the part, though this idea did not progress.

Sir Guy of Gisburne was a bigger problem and I don't think Simon and I ever truly agreed on what we should do about it. Initially,



I did suggest a sound-a-like. As an actor and mimic myself, I could do a passable imitation of Robert Addie and I knew a few voice actors who could also carry it off. But, that seemed slightly disrespectful. Simon, quite rightly, said that we needed to cast a well-known actor as a sign of respect to Robert and the fact it is such a pivotal role in the script and a major series regular.

[...]

Simon cast Jonathan Heffernan in the role.

— Barnaby Eaton-Jones, personal interview

However, this casting would not survive until the recording took place...

Michael Craig's casting was announced to the public on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2015, playing once again the Earl of Huntingdon, as he had in the original series' *Herne's Son* and *Rutterkin*. Two days later, members of one of the charities chosen for the production, the Sherwood Forest Trust, appeared on BBC Radio Nottinghamshire to promote the drama.

Philip Jackson's casting was announced on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2015, returning as the Abbot Hugo for the first time since *Herne's Son*, recorded in 1985. On 17<sup>th</sup> August 2015, Nickolas Grace recorded a video to promote the crowd-funding campaign, explaining the project to camera and asking the public to donate. Grace was a strong supporter of the project from the start, and video featured a small moment at the end where Grace briefly donned his 'Sheriff of Nottingham' voice to shout 'Gisburne!' once more. Grace's promotional video was uploaded to **YouTube** on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2015.

The thirty-day crowd-funding campaign proper was launched on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015, with the Grace video being made public; it was immediately a huge success. As per **Indiegogo's** business model, a number of perks were made available to encourage backers to contribute more. These included:

- £10 – A digital download of the finished play, in MP3, FLAC, ALAC (Apple Lossless), AAC, Ogg Vorbis, WAV and AIFF formats.
- £12 – A copy of the planned novelisation of the audio.
- £14 – The 2-disc CD release, as well as a copy of the digital release.
- £25 – The limited edition 3xCD box-set, containing *The Knights of the Apocalypse* plus an audio documentary, sleeve notes, behind-the-scenes photos and much more. Also, a copy of the digital release.
- £100 – A 200gsm A4 art print of the poster artwork, signed by the cast. Also the standard CD release and digital release.
- £125 – A copy of the script for the play, signed by the cast. Also the standard CD release and digital release.
- £200 – A 5-inch figure of Nasir created especially for the project by Ludicris, showing the character in his The Sheriff of Nottingham-era fighting outfit. The piece was signed by Mark Ryan. Also the standard CD release.

Within an hour, a fifth of the £10,000 target had been pledged. Within four hours, the total had reached £4,000. Once £5,000 was reached, the casting of Peter Llewellyn Williams as Much the Miller's Son was announced on the group's **Facebook** page. Within twenty-four hours of the launch, the full £10,000 had been pledged.

On 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015, a press-release was distributed, featuring quotes from key personnel about the success of the funding:

We hoped to raise £10,000 towards production costs in thirty days, and achieved it in less than a day – all thanks to you lot.

Jason Connery (Robert of Huntingdon) said: 'I've checked the hood, and it still fits. It's finally time to bring **Robin of Sherwood** back, and I'm thrilled that our fans have raised so much money in such a short space of time to do exactly that.'

Clive Mantle (Little John) said: 'How amazing. I always knew the show had an incredible and loyal following. This mass show of support is testament to that. Thank you ALL, on behalf of the charities especially, and in memory of the great Kip Carpenter.'

Mark Ryan (Nasir) added: 'This is really impressive and very moving. Fully funded in under 24 hours? Amazing response! It's very humbling to know that something you were involved in and enjoyed so much 30+ years ago is still cherished by the fans and relevant today.'

Phil Rose (Friar Tuck) said: 'I'm so pleased that this project has brought together the cast, Kip's original script, and also the fans that have made this possible and have waited so long for this. They have not waited in vain!'

Kip's daughter, Harriet Carpenter, commented: 'Thank you so much to everybody who has donated to this crowdfunding venture to bring back **Robin of Sherwood**. Dad would have been overwhelmed by the response from the fans who have stuck by the series for all these years. To be remembered like this is something quite remarkable, and I have no doubt it will be a great success.'

And producers Simon Barnard and Barnaby Eaton-Jones said: 'To hit our crowdfunding target in less than 24 hours is unbelievable, and shows the extraordinary amount of love that **Robin of Sherwood** has even now, thirty years on. But it's not over: keep funding, keep sharing, and keep supporting this project, as it's all for a very good cause. And bring on the recording studio!'

Two days later, Mark Ryan was interviewed on BBC Radio Tees by Bob Fischer (himself author of **Wiffle Lever to Full**, a book which celebrates the fan convention, including a memorable chapter regarding **Robin of Sherwood** conventions) about the project.

The perks and goals of the crowd-funding process continued to evolve during this period. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, the crowd-funding goal has reached £15,000, and Daniel Abineri is announced as joining the cast, in the role of Herne the Hunter, previously filled by his late father John. On the 21<sup>st</sup>, a further stretch goal was announced: if £20,000 could be raised, all contributors would receive an ebook of the novelisation of the script, which was due to be written by novelist Paul Magrs, a veteran of **Bafflegab's** previous audio productions, and known also for his work on various **Doctor Who** audio plays and novels (particularly for his character of camp time-traveller Iris Wildthyme). On the same day, Eaton-Jones appeared on BBC Radio Gloucestershire's Claire Carter programme to discuss the project. A further perk was announced on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015: a paperback edition of Magrs' novelisation could be purchased for a limited period of twenty-two days. On 28<sup>th</sup> September 2015, the £20,000 milestone was achieved, and contributors were promised the free ebook of the novelisation. The 9<sup>th</sup> October brought a further stretch goal: if the project reached £30,000, backer would receive a free digital audiobook of the novelisation, read by Nickolas Grace. On 14<sup>th</sup> October, another new perk was made available: a printed collection of 'what if' memorabilia by artist Colin Brockhurst, which mocked up various pieces of merchandise and press coverage of an imagined version of the script filmed in 1989. This was available for a short period of two days.

The 16<sup>th</sup> October 2015 brought the end date of the original planned thirty-day funding period, and contributions had reached £25,835. As new people continued to discover the project, it was decided to leave the option to contribute open longer, and contributions continued to be received for the next five months or so.

With the success of the funding model, the main recording dates were set for November and December 2015, with Barnard to direct. Before this, however, there was one smaller recording session to plan. On Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2015, Michael Craig returned to his role as the Earl of Huntingdon in a session recorded at Up the Lane Recordings, Monmouthshire. Craig was 88-years-old at the time, and did not relish a journey from his home in South Wales to London for the main recordings, so a venue was arranged closer to his home for him to record his lines in isolation. Producer Barnaby Eaton-Jones directed this session, filling in the other parts for him to play against. Eaton-Jones recalls:

‘What was exciting for me was how well he knew the script (he'd not done the trick of just reading his own lines) and how much energy he put into it.’

This first recording was sound engineered by Ron Rogers.

With the rest of the recordings scheduled for the following month, a publicised email from Judi Trott on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2015 summed up her feelings:

‘Thank you for sending me the script, it arrived today and I had a good read; really took me back I can say!! Felt like I was 21 again!!!’

Unfortunately, at this stage, the project suffered a major setback. Simon Barnard and Bafflegab decided to leave the production in mid-November. The entire project was very close to collapsing at this point: ITV was not happy with the development, and neither were the cast or Carpenter’s estate. Eaton-Jones took steps to re-negotiate the deal with ITV, and simultaneously came to an agreement with Bafflegab to sign over their rights to produce the audio. This left Eaton-Jones in sole control of the project, with the need to start the actual production of the audio from scratch. Bafflegab made public their decision to leave on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

The developments regarding Bafflegab meant that the original planned recording dates could no longer be met. Initially unsure whether to continue the project on his own, Eaton-Jones realised that another co-producer with audio production experience was required. He turned to Spiteful Puppet, a company known for its recent re-invention of the Robin Hood tale in its **Hood** series of audio plays.

‘Barnaby Eaton-Jones and I have been sort of flirting with each other and chatting ever since we launched **Hood**. And I think largely because of what we had done with **Hood**, Barnaby brought the project to us.’

— Iain Meadows, interview with **Bold Outlaw**

‘I’d had contact with Iain Meadows of Spiteful Puppet way back before ‘The Hooded Man 2014’ convention and, being a fellow fan, he’d kept in touch. Initially, I was going to go it alone but I decided that a ‘like for like’ swap of production company might be an easier option. Being as Spiteful Puppet were incredibly similar in success (both founded on their respective initial award-winning, original audio series – in Bafflegab’s case, **The Scarifyers**, and in Spiteful Puppet’s case, the reworking of the Robin Hood legend in **Hood**), I approached Iain and he was very excited to take the project on as executive producers.’

— Barnaby Eaton-Jones, personal interview

Spiteful Puppet’s participation was announced publicly with a press release on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

‘Spiteful Puppet is very proud and excited to be part of this project to bring back this most iconic of shows. Anyone who grew up in the 1980s would have been aware of Richard Carpenter’s magical re-telling of the Robin Hood legend and the stars who brought it to life, whilst our expertise at producing high-quality medieval drama with our own award winning reboot **Hood**, makes us the

ideal choice for executive producers. We simply can't wait for people to hear this new story!

— Iain Meadows, press release

On the same day, it was revealed that original series director Robert Young had been drafted in to direct the now-rescheduled recording sessions; Eaton-Jones feeling that this would ease some of the worries the cast had about the production. It was also announced that following extended negotiations, Anthony Horowitz, author of five scripts for Series Three of the programme, had agreed to write a piece to be printed in the inlay of the CD. Andrew Orton, author of the **Hooded Man** guidebooks to the series, was also asked to pen a piece for the inlay.

Further announcements were to follow over the next few days. The 16<sup>th</sup> brought the news that Freddie Fox had been cast as Gisburne. The change of production partner from Bafflegab to Spiteful Puppet meant that the original recording dates were scrapped and its cast (aside from the regulars) had to be let go. This had the benefit to Eaton-Jones that he was free to reconsider all aspects of the production, and he began the casting process again. Eaton-Jones' view was that for a one-off drama, it was important to cast actors who were known and recognisable for their voices – and indeed for their publicity value.

Once more feeling that Nickolas Grace should have a say in who was cast as his partner Gisburne, it became clear that both men felt it was important to maintain the almost public school 'prefect' and 'pupil' relationship that the Sheriff and Gisburne had always had. Eaton-Jones promised that he was cast whoever Grace suggested; Grace immediately gave the name of Freddie Fox, and Fox readily agreed when approached. All were reportedly very happy with the casting.

There were only two parts cast by Bafflegab to survive the change in production partners. One was the 'ludicrously small' role of Serving Maiden, portrayed by Lisa Bowerman. Bowerman was also the official photographer for one of the recording days and maintained her part as a result. One other part caused particular problems for the production. In the Bafflegab era, Barnaby Eaton-Jones had been given the part of Camville by Simon Barnard, after his request that he have a small role in the play. Since taking over the production duties, he felt it would be inappropriate for him to cast himself in this part, and he sought alternatives. Peter Egan was considered for the role, but was not available. Nickolas Grace asked Tim Pigott-Smith if he was interested; Pigott-Smith was attracted to the part but was not free on the recording dates. David Warner was also considered and found to be busy. Eaton-Jones did eventually play the part in the finished audio, when time-pressures made it a necessity.

Other changes were required as a result of the change in production partners. John Dorney's planned adaptation was no longer entirely feasible, and with concerns raised by several key players, the adaptation was heavily altered by Eaton-Jones and Meadows, working in suggestions from Robert Young. This was then script-edited by BAFTA Award winner and regular spiteful Puppet scribe Merle Nygate. This was approved by Carpenter's estate and felt to be very strong.

The departure of Bafflegab also saw the departure of Paul Magrs as the novelist of

the script. It was revealed on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015 that author Jonathan Green would be taking over the reins. Green was known for writing science fiction and fantasy novels, including **Fighting Fantasy** adventure books, as well as similar gamebooks for licensed properties such as **Doctor Who** and **Star Wars**.

‘I am absolutely thrilled to be involved in the **Robin of Sherwood: *The Knights of the Apocalypse*** project. It was **Robin of Sherwood**, along with **Doctor Who** and **Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks**, that made me the writer I am today. Indeed, the show heavily influenced my early work and is still does from time to time today.

‘To be asked to turn Richard Carpenter’s original television screenplay into a novel, in the style of the original ’80s adaptations, is a true honour. To have Robin, Marion and the Merries reuniting in 2016 is a childhood dream come true, and to be involved in this momentous event in my own small way is something I will remember as a highlight of my writing career for many years to come.

‘After all, nothing’s forgotten. Nothing is ever forgotten.’

— Jonathan Green, press release

On the following day, Terry Molloy’s involvement in a number of parts – including replacing the television series’ Stuart Linden as The Old Prisoner – was made public. Molloy had been a long-time cast member of **The Archers**, and played **Doctor Who**’s Davros, creator of the Daleks, on television and in audio plays since the 1980s.

Negotiations with Clannad were lengthy and ongoing. Indeed, the band themselves were keen for their title music to be used on the release, but their record company took more persuasion. Finally, on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016, it was announced that *Robin (The Hooded Man)* was cleared for the release. It later became clear that the masters of the Series Three music had gone missing (the same reason there was no follow up to Clannad’s **Legend** album), and that only the original mix of the theme used in Series One and Two could be used.

The casting of Anthony Stewart Head as lead villain Guichard De Montbalm was made known on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016; Colin Baker’s role was announced on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

Following the collapse of the original planned recording dates, a new recording schedule was set for late February, and took place over several studio days. The sessions all took place at Soundhouse Studios, London W3, the studio Spiteful Puppet had previously used for their Hood audio dramas. Clive Mantle returned as Little John on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016, recording his parts alongside Philip Jackson, once again playing Abbot Hugo. This session saw Robert Young return to the **Robin of Sherwood** director’s chair for the first time since *The Pretender* in 1985; Young would direct the remainder of the sessions. Matt Hopper provided sound engineering for this and all subsequent recordings.

New poster artwork for the production was made available on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2016, designed by Spiteful Puppet’s regular artist Anthony Lamb, using an image of Jason

Connery's Robin that had been cleared with ITV, and a new logo, this time designed in Garamond.

On 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016, an interview with Michael Praed appeared in the **Radio Times**, where he discussed what he'd heard about the project. Praed was suitably circumspect in his responses.

'Funnily enough, Nick Grace [the Sheriff of Nottingham] called me up about this, saying 'Would you like to be involved? Obviously you can't play Robin Hood'. And then I think he sent me an email, which, for one reason or another, I didn't see. And then I completely forgot about it until I spoke to him again but... I'd love to be involved. Even if it's just to play a spear-carrier. He said he'd have a word, but I haven't heard anything about it, so I'm not sure what's happened. But I think it they'd be missing a trick.'

— Michael Praed, **Radio Times**, 24/2/16

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016 was the busiest recording date, with Mark Ryan, Judi Trott, Peter Llewellyn Williams, Phil Rose, Freddie Fox, Terry Molloy, Lisa Bowerman and Nickolas Grace recording their parts. Harriet Whitehouse attended the recording this day to meet the cast and give the production her blessing.

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016 featured Anthony Head, Colin Baker, Freddie Fox, Michael Praed and Nickolas Grace. The events of the day were noted online in a post on **Facebook**.

'Day Three in the studio is complete and was a very chortlesome affair, especially when Anthony Head and Colin Baker were trading accents and insults before slipping menacingly into villain mode when the recording light went on.'

— Barnaby Eaton-Jones, press release

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 saw Jason Connery and Ray Winstone play Robert of Huntingdon and Will Scarlet again.

'Day Four in the studio (Monday 29<sup>th</sup> Feb) was a reunion of Robert of Huntingdon and Will Scarlet. The physicality in Jason Connery and Ray Winstone's performances was a joy to behold, as they really threw themselves into the piece and there were even some ad-libs from Ray that will most definitely make the cut. One particularly difficult scene towards the end required a lot of vocal work and jumping around from Jason and myself (hidden away in a booth, adding all the vocal performances of the actors who weren't there), which Ray was so enthralled by that he videoed it with his mobile phone. As I was facing Ray, through a window in my booth, he'd directly interact with me during exchanges – especially when it was

Little John and Will Scarlet bantering – and it was a thrill for me to be a stunt voice double and be right in the thick of the action. The amount of ribbing, joking and laughing that happened during the recording made you realise what it would have been like had everyone’s hectic schedules allowed everyone to be in the studio at the same time but, after 30 years of trying to get them all back together, I am more than a little humbled that it’s now happened and they are off on an extra adventure.’

— Barnaby Eaton-Jones, press release

With recording wrapped, the dialogue edit began on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016, and lasted around a week. Post-production was estimated to take four to six weeks, and the initial edit would be followed by a lengthy period of creating and laying out sound effects, and scoring music. As the edit progressed, the audio began to take shape as a two-part play of roughly an hour for each part.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016, several of the ‘signed’ perks were removed from the Indiegogo offers. On the same day, Anthony Horowitz provided his completed piece for the CD inlay booklet; Andrew Orton provided his piece on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

The first teaser trailer for the production was released on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2016 via **Soundcloud**, and featured a snippet of Connery’s Robert of Huntingdon asking each of the Merries in turn – Scarlet, John, Nasir, Tuck, Marion, Much – if they were ready (to take part in a new escapade). The following day saw the total crowd-funding pledge reach £30,000, fulfilling the requirement for all contributors to receive the free audiobook of the novelisation, read by Nickolas Grace. The total is currently £30,591 as your author types on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

25<sup>th</sup> March 2016 came with a new teaser trailer on **Soundcloud**, this time featuring Daniel Abineri as Herne, calling to Robert of Huntingdon as he walks with Marion.

Following an April Fools’ Day joke which promised that comedy duo Cannon and Ball had been cast as soldiers in the play, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2016 saw an additional, final recording date which had been added to the schedule. This extra session was to sweep up some minor background dialogue that had yet to be recorded, and was carried out at Arpeggio Creative, recorded by musician Alexander White.

The release of the play was set for June 2016. A special premiere event was planned for backers who had selected a special perk when contributing; this was arranged for 16<sup>th</sup> May 2016 (3.00pm to 5.00pm), at The Royal Institute of Medicine at 1 Wimpole Street, London W1G 0AE:

PLACE: The Seminar Suite to begin with – including a free glass of champagne for all – and then in the Naim Dangoor Auditorium for the presentation of 30 x Minutes of Audio, 20 x Minutes of Exclusive Footage from the **Making Of** documentary and 30 x Minutes of Q&A with Producer Barnaby Eaton-Jones, Spiteful Puppet’s Iain Meadows and more TBC.



The producers are tight-lipped on the future of **Robin of Sherwood**. Their licence is specifically only for a one-off play, but if it is successful, then they would certainly be interested in asking ITV for the rights to make a series. At present though, this is the last hurrah for **Robin of Sherwood**...

## Credits

### Cast

Robert of Huntingdon (Jason Connery), Maid Marian (Judi Trott), Will Scarlet (Ray Winstone), Little John (Clive Mantle), Nasir (Mark Ryan), Much (Peter Llewellyn Williams), Friar Tuck (Phil Rose), Abbot Hugo (Philip Jackson), Sir Guy of Gisburne (Freddie Fox), Sheriff of Nottingham (Nickolas Grace), Herne the Hunter (Daniel Abineri), Earl of Huntingdon (Michael Craig), Camville (Barnaby Eaton-Jones), Guichard De Montbalm (Antony Stewart Head), Hugo de Ridefort (Colin Baker), Prior / Old Prisoner / Priest (Terry Molloy), Serving Maiden (Lisa Bowerman), Spectral Voice (Michael Praed)

All other roles (Sophie Jones, Gary Andrews, Ian Kubiak, Kate Young, Cliff Chapman, Ben Perkins, William K V Browne, Nathan Drake, Rob Brunwin, Robert Barton-Ancliffe, Iain Meadows, Gaz Ricketts, James Brazier and Jonathan Allen)

Sound Engineers (Matt Hopper and Ron Rogers), Sound Design (Iain Meadows), Theme Tune (Clannad), Music (Alexander White at Arpeggio Creative), Script (Richard 'Kip' Carpenter (with thanks to John Dorney, Barnaby Eaton-Jones and Iain Meadows), Script Editor (Merle Nygate), Director (Robert Young), Producer (Barnaby Eaton-Jones), Executive Producers (Spiteful Puppet)

Documentary Producer/Editor (Stefan Edwards), Documentary Camera (Ben Galloway and Laura Gallop), Official Photography (Kim Jones, Lisa Bowerman and Matt Hopper), Crowdfunding Artwork (Stuart Manning), Graphic Designer/Artwork (Anthony Lamb), CD Inner Essays (Anthony Horowitz and Andrew Orton)

