

CONFIDENTIAL

CLARION CALL
(working Title)

GENERAL NOTES
(First Thoughts)

Location:

The Dales (Non-specific. Could be Durham, could be Yorkshire).

River:

The Staithe. Excellent trout fishing. Jealously protected.

Market Town:

Micklethorpe (Pop. 5000 approx.)

Local Authority:

Micklethorpe Town Council, headed by Mayor. Has no real authority though now following local government re-organisation. Not much more than a Parish Council in fact.

Principal Employers in Micklethorpe Area:

Agriculture.
CorVol Limited.
H.M. Open Prison, Gillside.

The Newspaper:

The Micklethorpe Messenger. Publishing day, Wednesday.
(Circulation around 4800 copies a week give or take a dozen).

Local Competition:

(Published in nearby large town)

The Advertiser (weekly)

The News (daily)

Both part of a Provincial Newspaper Group.

Principal Running Characters

FRANK SCULLY

Early to mid-forties. (maybe a bit younger, say 38). Midlands or East Anglian born. Has had many jobs but mostly in journalism. Never stuck at anything for long and has never quite made it. Hit the bottle for a time. Worked in London for a spell either on one of the Nationals or with an Agency. Maybe did time in prison perhaps on a charge of causing death by dangerous or reckless driving (while drunk). Did 9 months of a 12 month sentence. If so also lost his licence for five years and has only just got it back. Now very seldom drinks. Last job Assistant Editor or News Editor on a trade magazine. Divorced. Ex-wife, son and daughter live in Hertfordshire. Ex-wife thinking of re-marrying. He has recently inherited (from mother or uncle) £8,000 to £10,000. Has quit job and opted to write novel in cottage in Scotland lent to him by friend.

FIONA LYTTON-NEVE

Known more generally as Fiona Neve. 35ish. Married to Brian Lytton-Neve who, according to local gossip is related in some way (probably illegitimately) to the Staithedale family. She could still be married but no-one knows for sure. One day husband wasn't around any more. Local feeling is that he just upped and left her. She seldom mentions him. She owns and runs Neve Printing Works and small shop (stationery, art materials, books, etc.) Both businesses fairly prosperous. Could be having an affair, very discreetly and entirely on her own terms, with Lord Staithedale. Part of - albeit peripherally - the local Establishment and by and large in favour of preserving the status quo. A strong willed, independent, free thinking and determined character nonetheless. Lives in a cottage on the Staithedale estate.

LORD STAITHEDALE

Late forties, early fifties. Tom to his family and close friends. Lord of all he surveys. Married; wife Beatrice (Beatty). Three children. Lives in Aynsgill House. Family seat, Aynsgill Castle.

MISS BANNER

Late seventies. Known to everyone as Miss Banner. Very much a recluse. Far from lovable; sly, mean and vindictive. The story is that she is very rich but, if so, she certainly doesn't live up to it. The Banners are an old established family in the area and even Lord Staithedale tends to hold the only surviving memoer in some awe and with a certain respect. Since the very recent death of the elder of her two brothers, JOHN WESLEY BANNER, Miss Banner owns The Micklethorpe Messenger.

REUBEN FLANMAN

Early sixties? Very much a local; taciturn, stubborn, proud and suspicious of all 'foreigners' which means anyone from outside the immediate Micklethorpe area. Seldom, if ever, willing to put himself out for anyone (certainly not for a 'foreigner'). Reuben is a widower but he has two married daughters both of whom he runs - along with their husbands - with an iron hand.

DONALD HOPPER

HARPER

Around the same age as Scully. Public Relations Officer for CorVol Pharmaceuticals Limited. CorVol, a part of the giant, multi-national Friedman Chemical Company, has a small but very important factory just outside Micklethorpe which employs around 1200 local people. CorVol is the only industry in the immediate area and the town is almost entirely dependent upon it. There are fears that the recession will cause redundancies and although this is unlikely, due to the high demand for the range of drugs which the factory produces, there is always the risk that Friedman Chemicals, with no local connections or allegiance, may be tempted by tax incentives and Government grants to close down the factory and then re-open it in a Development Area. Donald Hopper is based on the works at Micklethorpe but he travels a great deal and he is often abroad. Like to think of himself as having opted out of the rat race and gone back to his roots in the country which is absolute nonsense as his roots are Hampstead and he's very much a 'Company' man and extremely ambitious. He is very good at his job. Looks on Frank Scully as an old friend. They met when Scully was working in Fleet Street but lost touch when Hopper went to work for Friedman and then moved North so neither knows anything about the other's recent past. Hopper is outwardly a likeable, generous man but he could be a vengeful and dangerous enemy.

SYLVIA HOPPER

Early thirties. Attractive. Very physical. Bored. Hates living out of London. Married Donald on the rebound after a stormy affair with Frank Scully. Donald is unaware of this. And Scully gets something of a shock when Hopper introduces Sylvia as his wife. Sylvia rather fancies Lord Staithedale but when she meets up with Scully once more she happily lowers her sights.

THE MESSENGER

The Micklethorpe Messenger has been owned and edited by a Banner since the day it was founded in 1826. Its present circulation is around 4800 copies a week. It is published from a small, first floor office above the stationers shop and printing works in Gate Street, Micklethorpe, which are owned by Fiona Neve.

It's last editor (and co-owner with his younger brother, Samuel, deceased) was John Wesley Banner who was also a formidable lay preacher and very much a local character. When the series begins John Wesley has just died at the age of 82 and control of The Messenger has passed to his sister and only surviving relative.

Whereas The Messenger was once the only newspaper covering the district today it survives alongside The News (daily) and The Advertiser (weekly), both part of a Provincial Newspaper Group and published in an industrial town some fifteen miles away. And, by and large, the people of Micklethorpe and district buy The Messenger out of habit and a stubborn sense of local identity rather than a feeling of any great loyalty for the paper. And while the proprietors of The News and The Advertiser do not consider the paper any kind of threat to them as far as they are concerned things would be tidier all round if it ceased publication.

Fiona Neve, though, considers The Messenger as something of a nuisance; a continuing and not very profitable interference with the smooth running of her printing works and something of a hindrance to its expansion. And the death of John Wesley Banner has freed her from her contractual commitment.

If this prospect pleases Fiona it positively delights her chief printer, Reuben Flaxman, who sees himself freed at last from what is, to him, the unwelcome tyranny of setting the paper up each week.

**YORKSHIRE
TELEVISION**

5th February 1982

Jim MacTaggart
Teesdale Mercury
24 Market Place
Barnard Castle
Co. Durham

Dear Jim

A brief note to express my sincere thanks for the time you spent with us last Wednesday. We found it a most informative and interesting day and I do hope that we did not take up too much of your valuable time.

Nearer to our production date we will be in touch. In the meantime, renewed thanks and all good wishes.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Michael Glynn
Producer

**YORKSHIRE
TELEVISION**

Jim McTaggart Esq.
Teesdale Mercury
24 Market Place
BARNARD CASTLE
Co. Durham.

16 April 1982.

Dear Jim,

FILM REHEARSAL "WRATHDALE" (WORKING TITLE) FOR ACTORS -
FRIDAY 21 MAY

Nice to talk to you today, and just briefly to confirm arrangements.

Many thanks for agreeing to let our two actors (Flaxman and Holliday), Directors and Stage Managers come up to you on Friday 21 May for a crash course in the making up and printing of a newspaper. As explained this will enable our cast to be familiar with the technical side before they are "thrown in" at the deep end filming the next week.

I have told Keith and Hugh, our Stage Manager, you work between 0830-1700 with lunch at 1200-1300, and they will contact you nearer the date to give you an arrival time.

Apologies for the brevity, and once again many thanks for your help.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Mary
Mary Rotherham
UNIT MANAGER -
DRAMA DEPARTMENT.

c.c. Roger Cheveley, Director
Frank Smith, Director
Sue France, P.A.
Nancie Smith, P.A.
Hugh Boyle, S.M.
Keith Ansell, S.M.
Simon Somers, Unit Manager
Michael Glynn, Producer