



The
HALCYON



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Steven Mackintosh and Olivia Williams star in major new drama series The Halcyon

Two of the UK's most acclaimed actors, Steven Mackintosh (*Luther, The Sweeney, Inside Men*) and Olivia Williams (*Anna Karenina, Hyde Park On Hudson, The Sixth Sense*) join forces in a brand new ITV drama series, *The Halcyon*, produced by award-winning independent production company Left Bank Pictures.

The Halcyon tells the story of a bustling and glamorous five star hotel at the centre of London society and a world at war. The eight-part drama series also features Kara Tointon (*Mr Selfridge, Sound Of Music Live*), Alex Jennings (*The Lady In The Van, The Queen*), Matt Ryan (*Constantine, Arrow*), Hermione Corfield (*Knights Of The Roundtable: King Arthur, Pride and Prejudice And Zombies*) and Mark Benton (*Eddie The Eagle, Waterloo Road*).

The drama, set in 1940, shows London life through the prism of war and the impact it has on families, politics, relationships and work across every social strata with a soundtrack of music from the era.

Multi award-winning singer-songwriter Jamie Cullum has specially written two songs and top UK recording artist and celebrated singer Beverley Knight will make a special guest appearance in *The Halcyon* when she performs at the Café De Paris.

Created by Charlotte Jones (*Trust Me*) and lead series writer Jack Lothian (*Doc Martin, Harry Price: Ghosthunters*), *The Halcyon* reveals how war permeates everyone's lives from the glamorous guests to its loyal, hard-working staff watched from within by American journalist Joe O'Hara (*Matt Ryan*).

Further cast includes Sope Dirisu (*Humans, Undercover, The Mill*), Liz White (*The Woman In Black, Pride*), Charity Wakefield (*Close To The Enemy, Wolf Hall*), Annabelle Apsion (*Call The Midwife, The Village*), Jamie Blackley (*If I Stay, The Borgias*), Edward Bluemel (*Holby City*), Nick Brimble (*Granchester, War & Peace*), Michael Carter (*The Illusionist, Casualty*), Akshay Kumar (*Legends, Homeland*), Imogen Waterhouse (*Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*), Nico Rogner (*Looking For Simon*), Kevin Eldon (*Danger Mouse*) and Lauren Coe (*Camelot*).



The Halcyon is executive produced by Sharon Hughff (*Strike Back*, *Waterloo Road*) and Left Bank Chief Executive Andy Harries (*DCI Banks*, *The Crown*) and produced by Chris Croucher (*Downton Abbey*). The drama was filmed in London and surrounding areas during 2016.

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Introduction

Sharon Hughff, executive producer

As bombs were raining down over London during the black out, the occupants of five star hotels were inside quaffing champagne and eating foie gras, all to the beat of a big band sound. We read this fact in our early Halcyon research. That was just too irresistible! The party still raging despite Hitler's bombs. Talk about Blitz spirit. So, two things were obvious from the start. This show should be glamorous and opulent reflecting the five star experience of London hotels during the war. It should also capture the sexy night time life that was going on behind the black out blinds. People really did feel that they could die tomorrow, so they might as well live for today. Of course this is nothing new, we've all heard stories of war time London and how Blitz spirit prevailed. So, our challenge was to take these received ideas and stories and make them feel fresh. One way in which we did this was to put music front and centre. There is something very evocative and deeply emotional about this soundtrack as it plays in the background of our characters lives and punctuates every high and low.

But first things first. We needed to create a world that felt believable and a rich tapestry of characters that we could love and want to spend time with. Both Charlotte Jones and Jack Lothian are masters of this creation. A hotel provides a classic and simple structure for a strong and compelling drama series. All the layers of British life are housed inside - from the wealthy hotel owners to the poorest refugee kitchen assistant. We could view the encroaching war from all of these varied perspectives. And so our hotel provides us with a wonderful window onto the war as it approaches British shores and we see our various characters react to that very real threat.

Lady Hamilton is such an interesting creation, a woman widowed early on and with the war about to change everything, the big question is what will she do? She doesn't need to be someone's wife, the war and widowhood emancipates her on some level and allows her to find her own voice not only as a woman, but as a woman who owns a hotel and has influence in society. This development of Lady Hamilton forms the back bone of our show and her awakening is Garland's night mare! There is much fun to be had as these two unnatural bedfellows attempt to run a hotel together. And that is something else we aspired to with our show. We wanted it to be witty and fast paced - definitely not poe faced. We knew that the mechanics and pace of the hotel machine should be reflected in how we shot the drama and the fluidity in which our characters moved around the set. In some ways we took our lead from Garland - the gliding swan, keeping the machine going front of house, whilst behind the scenes the attention to detail and five star service is second to none. We see what it costs Garland and his team to keep this show on the road, but the guests are dancing and drinking martinis, blissfully unaware!

There is something so wonderful about walking onto a set for the first time and seeing your dreams become a reality. Our hotel exceeded all expectation. Matt Gant's amazing set was an amalgamation of every hotel we'd visited as we researched the period - a little like the Savoy, Claridges and many more - but very distinctively The Halcyon. The double height atrium towered over us and we all stood a little straighter and realised that we had our final piece in the puzzle. Of course Anna Robbins costumes are sublime and sumptuous and the whole effect when we see Kara Tointon, our Chanteuse take to the stage, is one of being transported back to another era, when the spectre of war hung heavy in the air and London partied on regardless. The idea is that each season of The Halcyon will take us on a journey through the war, year by year. We begin in May 1940 - the phoney war. But halfway through the series the blitz begins and we see our characters as the dress rehearsal becomes a reality. As the first season draws to a close, we are approaching the end of 1940 and Britain is well and truly in the fight.



Character Biographies

Richard Garland played by Steven Mackintosh

Hotel Manager and widower, Garland is propriety itself: the smooth, silent engine of the hotel, unwavering in his sense of duty and responsibility. But don't be fooled, behind this calm façade lies a man not afraid to get his hands dirty. Garland is fiercely intelligent and a masterful reader of people, a skill he employs time and time again to protect The Halcyon and to outsmart and outmanoeuvre the tricky characters who cross his path. Lady Hamilton is the exception, and their relationship is characterised by antagonism from the outset. Garland has a softer side, which we see through his love for, and devotion to his daughter Emma. As with so many people, Garland has a past – a secret he wants to forget.

Lady Hamilton played by Olivia Williams

Lady Hamilton begins the series as a problem to solve: she turns up unexpectedly as her husband is otherwise (indiscreetly) engaged, and the staff must put hands to the deck to deal with her quickly. She and Lord Hamilton are in a marriage of understanding, but it's clear that she has to be far more understanding than her husband. Lady Hamilton, in middle age, must reckon with who she is: spiky, sharp, funny and bemused, heartbroken, a champion of both sons, a scourge of Richard Garland. And it's not an easy journey: her children at work or war, her husband's indiscretions and with none of her own passions to speak of, Lady Hamilton looks as though she may be at a loss for what to do, but antagonise Garland for the rest of his days.

Betsey Day played by Kara Tointon

Sultry singer with The Halcyon's Sonny Sullivan Band, Betsey is sassy, brassy, glamorous and tough. Best friend and confidante to Emma, Betsey's straight talking charm assures she's a hit with hotel guests and staff alike. Betsey's on-stage chemistry with band-leader Sonny Sullivan is undeniable, but off-stage she is blind to Sonny's total devotion to her. Betsey knows how to have a good time, but scratch the surface a bit and you will find an air of world-weariness about her: her looks and talent are the only things that she's had to hustle with from a young age. And although she's tried hard to escape her dysfunctional past, it's never too far away.

Emma Garland played by Hermione Corfield

Receptionist and daughter of hotel manager Garland, Emma is a spirited and mischievous young woman on the cusp of spreading her wings just as the war hits. Emma's mother died when she was a child, leaving her to grow up in the hotel her father managed. She is a child of the hotel and it's here that she forged a strong bond with Freddie Hamilton, son of the owner, one that looks set to blossom into something more than friendship. Emma is headstrong, with a burgeoning sense of justice, and a yearning for life to begin beyond The Halcyon Hotel. As the world around them changes, she will step up and assume a greater role in guiding the hotel through these troubled times.

Freddie Hamilton played by Jamie Blackley

Freddie is the heir to the Hamilton title: born four minutes before his twin brother, he has had a lucky start, privy to many advantages denied to Toby: his father's fortune, love and approval. He looks set to continue his heroic streak as he signs up to be a fighter pilot and declare his interest in Emma Garland when the political landscape changes and war looks certain. Freddie's foundations, once firm, are shifting rapidly: now he is to risk his life, over and over again for his country. He's little prepared for the turbulence that's to come.

Character Biographies continued

Toby Hamilton played by Edward Blumel

Toby has lived his life under the shadow of Freddie: his elder twin brother and the heir to the Hamilton title, by virtue of four minutes. Toby is sharp and clever; gifted in mathematics and statistics – he’s more at home amongst his academic peers at Oxford than the aristocratic world he heralds from. For this reason he’s always been at odds with his father Lord Hamilton. But Toby’s shy disposition belies a fierce self-assurance and a strong moral code – which we see when his feelings towards his father bubble over into open hostility. We meet Toby during a time of great transition, as the clouds of war hang heavy over London he sets about forging his own path both professionally, as he proves himself invaluable to the war effort – and romantically, as he grapples with what he wants.

Joe O’Hara played by Matt Ryan

Joe O’Hara is a thirsty broadcast journalist: he came to the UK on the advent of the war, looking to cut his teeth as a foreign correspondent. We open with him restless for stories, only to find one in the very hotel he’s staying: fascists and appeasers conducting secret meetings in The Halcyon. It doesn’t exactly ingratiate him with the staff, but Joe has his eyes on a big career. The only other thing he may have eyes for is Emma, who he’ll come to pursue, even when it means running up against Freddie Hamilton. Joe may have started out a young buck, but the war will be the making of him: and not in the way he expects.

Dennis Feldman played by Mark Benton

The hotel’s affable concierge and resident fixer, his genteel veneer is well rehearsed. Underneath, he’s a wheeler-dealer with a finger in every pie: knows where to get lobster at 4am, where contraband, rationed items can be procured. Fiercely loyal to Garland, his is often the voice of reason. The hotel is his family and he will go above and beyond to help any one of them out of a scrape. Feldman knows all of the hotel’s goings-ons. He has an eagle eye, information is his currency and keeps him at the top of his game. Feldman is part of the fabric of the hotel and as the blitz begins and the hotel comes under increasing pressure, he will not falter in always delivering flawless five star service.

Cast interviews



Steven Mackintosh plays Richard Garland

Can you tell us what attracted you to *The Halcyon*?

“As an actor your initial instinct is all about the page-turnability of a script. How quickly it manages to keep or lose your interest. *The Halcyon* gripped me straight away. Setting the story within this high-class hotel and also against the backdrop of the Second World War gives you such a huge scope for drama and for what’s to come. It’s such an evocative period. It’s recent history and anything to do with that period of time still has such power.

“The beginning of the story is the very beginning of war. So we have this fantastic contrast between the turmoil and potential jeopardy of everything that’s about to come with this opulent environment. I love the idea that war may be going on outside but five star service must continue at *The Halcyon*.

“Having done a bit of reading about the high class hotels of London during that period, that really was the remit. ‘We must carry on come what may and still find the finest ingredients known to man. As far as possible keep our guests in the manner to which they are accustomed.’ As if nothing has changed. So that’s a wonderful idea.

Steven Mackintosh interview continued

“But inevitably, of course everything changes because the war is such a huge thing and the impact it has on everyone’s life is so enormous. In terms of the drama and the story there are so many different ways the war can affect the building physically and also the people within the building. Be they the aristocracy that owns the hotel or the staff, because everyone is going to be affected personally and the chances are that some people are going to lose their lives at some point.

“Then you have the possibility of lots of international guests filing through the doors and the potential for spies and people from the continent.

“My character Richard Garland has to keep an eye on all of that, as much as he possibly can. The other fantastic thing for me reading the story was the scope of the character. He is a manager, a host, the man who keeps the wheels of the operation turning and keeps it running beautifully smoothly. He is the bridge between the guests and the staff and the staff and the owners. He’s all of that.

“But also, as the story develops, we understand he has got quite an interesting history himself. Which we come to know is related directed to war. There’s a lot to discover about this man as the story goes on. He’s more than he first appears.”

Richard Garland seems to have a sense of duty and service. Does he live by the motto – ‘the guest is always right’?

“He’s brilliant at that. The guest must always come first. The guest is usually right. What’s lovely about Garland is if there is a totally despicable guest, and sometimes there are, he’s not afraid to do what’s right. He’s very good at making the outcome good for all the right reasons. He knows what’s right. He’s knows what’s fair. He’s an authority figure who can be tough. He is very tough with his staff. But at the same time they know him to be a decent and fair man.

“He also has this added responsibility of his daughter Emma, who he has raised within the hotel as a single father whose wife has died 10 years ago. He is incredibly protective towards Emma and feels deeply responsible for her.

“He is also training her within the hotel management business. Obviously he wants her to be as capable as him and is creating a career for her. So he’s got that tricky balance of looking out for her, feeling protective towards her within this environment and within the war itself. That brings other fears and concerns around his daughter. But also it’s that balance of not wanting to be seen as treating your daughter as a favourite. Having to be very fair in front of all the rest of the staff in terms of employing his child.

“And then there’s Garland’s relationship with the aristocratic owners of the hotel, Lord and Lady Hamilton. Garland has an interesting relationship with Lord Hamilton, where he protects his interests in terms of Lord Hamilton’s non-marital personal relationship. There’s an understanding that Garland will keep all of that sweet and hidden as much as possible from his lordship’s wife.

“There’s another tricky game to play, because Lady Hamilton is well aware of this situation and she despises Garland who she sees as a ally to Lord Hamilton. So there’s lots of lovely tension between Lady Hamilton and Garland whenever they meet. Which is a great thing to play.”

Steven Mackintosh interview continued

In the early days of the war, did people think the war would really come to London?

“In the early episodes you really do get a sense of that. The air raid sirens are going but most of the time they’re false alarms. People got used to them as a sort of drill. And thinking maybe that was as far as it would ever go. Maybe the war isn’t really going to come that close. But of course it does. And when it does it’s big and it’s devastating. The hotel and all the staff also don’t escape that devastation.

“It’s just an extraordinary idea to think of the Blitz. I live in the centre of London and the thought of looking up and seeing the sky full of enemy aircraft about to drop bombs is a mind-blowing thought and image. It’s so powerful.

“So we get to explore the Blitz and my character leaves the hotel at one stage and goes out into the East End. We have been filming these extraordinarily powerful scenes in public shelters where dust was falling and they managed to create the noise of the bombs. It was really spooky, unnerving and frightening.

“I was born in the late sixties and when I was younger the Second World War seemed like centuries ago. But as I’ve got older, and as time shrinks, I realise when I was born it had only been slightly over 20 years since the war had finished. And I realise now that is nothing.

“Everyone’s family has a relative involved. My grandfather was in Burma and my grandfather on the other side was a fireman in the Blitz. And many families have their own individual stories to tell.”

What did you make of The Halcyon’s huge studio set?

“I first saw the hotel set during rehearsals. The scale of it took my breath away. You never know quite what to expect with sets. They didn’t hold back from the scale of it, which is wonderful. It looks amazing. The hotel foyer is big, with a large sweeping staircase and this wonderful ability to be able to travel through the foyer, directly into the opulent bar area with the stage at one end. And then you can continue through, out of the bar, backstage as it were into a staff area where the musicians gather before the show.

“You can continue down a corridor, go through a door into Garland’s office and through another door into the switchboard, carry on into a staff corridor and then down to the restaurant. So the fact you can do that - you are able to travel with the camera through doors and down corridors and actually physically show how these spaces link - is a wonderful thing. It’s no acting required.

“Then there’s a wonderful contrast going through into the kitchen set, one of the most amazing things I’ve seen. The kitchen filming days were just breathtaking. On the days when it was full of the cast with flames and steam I was just blown away. The design element and the detail that went into all aspects of this just made it a pleasure every day to walk on to the set and just go, ‘Look at all this.’ Right down to minute little details on my desk. Just wonderful. The design on this series was second to none.

“The exterior of The Halcyon itself is in Lincoln’s Inn Field. Filming on those days was fantastic because it’s a very beautiful exterior. We’d have vintage London buses and old cars and lots of supporting artists all in costume. It did look very good indeed. I felt very proud to be part of it.”



Steven Mackintosh interview continued

How important is music important to the series?

“The days with the music, the band playing and all the guests were stunning. And to have great musical guests like Beverley Knight and Jamie Cullum, again that raises the stakes. It just makes it a nice high-class affair.

“It’s lovely to feel the sense no-one is holding back on anything. It gives you a sense of pride. You know it’s going to be really beautiful and it shows on screen. It’s breathtaking to see.

“Those big scenes are crucial for the scale of this series and that lovely contrast between the intimate scenes and then being able to switch to this high energy, glamorous music. The music element is an important part of this show and its appeal too.”

Would you make the comparison between how a hotel is run and a theatre?

“Absolutely. A hotel is like a theatre. You have front of house and backstage and the story plays on that. Garland is constantly aware that when he’s out front he is on display. As are all of his staff. He doesn’t miss a trick in terms of that. He’s got his eyes on everyone and everything.

“But, of course, sometimes tensions rise and things start to strain at the seams and he has to deal with that. So you have those spaces just behind the bar and down in the corridors where you can reveal all the tension along with the romance, which is inevitable. All of that stuff going on behind the scenes. So very much like a kind of theatre.”

Could you live full time in a hotel, like Richard Garland?

“I have to spend quite a lot of time in hotels for my work. And I have been lucky enough to stay in some very nice suites. But interestingly enough the thrill does wear off quite quickly. For me, there’s nothing quite like being at home. Personally I don’t see the appeal in living in that environment. I understand the transient thing and the anonymity to a certain degree. But not as a permanent environment, it’s most definitely not for me.”

Has playing Garland changed the way you view things when you visit a hotel?

“I was lucky enough to spend some time with the manager of The Savoy before we started, who was immensely helpful. I spent the day shadowing him and watching the amount of detail that goes into his work in getting that next level of service. It’s aiming for that perfect, seamless service.

“It was just wonderful watching him not missing a trick and noticing every little detail on his travels. I think I do view hotels slightly differently now. It’s not an easy job by any means. It takes a certain temperament. It takes a Zen-like calm to remain unruffled. Because there are so many things that can potentially go wrong but it must never show. I don’t think I could do that.”

Cast interviews



Olivia Williams plays Lady Hamilton

What attracted you through the doors of The Halcyon?

“What sets The Halcyon apart is that it feels incredibly lively. The writing was very visual and imaginative in the way it moves through people and spaces. I didn’t want to be in something static where people sit around and talked about things happening. The camera work is really fluid and we can do what we want on our huge set. The piece has an incredible energy, both in the physical space and in the relationships between people.

“The producers said how important they wanted music to be in getting the feel and atmosphere of the time. There’s no better way of creating atmosphere than with music. The fact they were getting original artists to write original songs - they are musicians in their own right who are not here to just decorate a TV show. They are writing original music that is great music. I just thought, ‘I want to be part of that crowd.’”

Can you tell us a bit more about who Lady Hamilton is?

“Lady Hamilton has elements of battleaxe about her and someone who is spoiling the fun. When we first see her you wonder if she is going to walk in on her husband’s affair. It’s a great entrance. The story is funny but also quite sad. She’s obviously used to being in complete control of her life. She thinks she is and then very quickly she finds she is not. In a heartbeat.

Olivia Williams interview continued

“I’ve known people in that situation and there have been incredible stories we’ve all read about where an affair has been going on under their nose for years. There’s a kind of willful denial about it. It’s not really whether she knew or not, whether he told her or whether it was an arrangement. It’s that she believed she didn’t know.

“There was a way of coping, which people probably still do, where if you don’t say it then it doesn’t exist. The appalling thing about this situation is no-one can ignore it. She has been placed in a very humiliating position where everyone in the hotel is trying to create an illusion, which makes her look like an idiot. And nobody likes that feeling.

“She has run a country estate and a house and raised two children, or arranged for a nanny to raise two children. That is her domain. It’s a job. She has run a family and a home and very quickly all of that is taken away from her.

“This is also happening in wartime. You couldn’t staff the country houses because all the people who were supposed to staff them went to war. So Lady Hamilton has had to move to London. But she’s not a country bumpkin. She is very sophisticated and dresses in a very sophisticated way. But usually she comes to town, swans in and swans out again. Having to move to town and live in the hotel is humiliating for her.”

Are appearances everything in her world?

“She is trying to claw back what dignity she can. Someone who feels their dignity has been compromised can seem very cold, because her way of coping is to grip on. She has a sort of lizard mode. She goes almost completely frozen in those situations. The only way she can cope with it is to stay very still and very steely. But she’s also under tremendous pressure and that pressure bursts. It doesn’t happen over the big things but the little things. There’s a moment where she really feels she’s been betrayed. She may seem very unfeeling but she is still a mother and still has that mother love. But she doesn’t express it in a way that we know, post sixties ‘I love you’. You didn’t constantly remind your children they were loved in those days. But she doesn’t feel it any less.”

Have men dictated to Lady Hamilton all her life?

“The war places a challenge on her. We’ve heard a lot about the working class women who went from running the home into the factories to do manual tasks. This is Lady Hamilton’s equivalent. Is she going to get her hands dirty and learn how to run a business and a family when there are no men? She complains about the men running her life but can she step up and take that place?

“I come from a generation that benefited from all of that change. My mum was quite a pioneer in the law. I remember when I had a job and a bank account with money in it and a car, I thought, ‘I’m really part of the first generation of women who have complete autonomy at this stage.’ My mum didn’t really have that time I had in my twenties where I was out there and independent.”

Can you imagine life in London whilst fearing bombers in the sky?

“I listen to the radio and if you want to hear what it’s like to be bombed, listen to some people in Palestine and Syria. There seems to be an extraordinary myth now that people weren’t afraid in the London Blitz. But I read some testimony of a woman who said she had a neighbour and whenever the

Olivia Williams interview continued

sirens went off she would have a hysterical panic attack. It's completely comprehensible.

"So I hope we capture the full range of that. This is a period piece but there are people living with that kind of bombing every day. If you want to find out what it's like, listen to the news."

Is there anything different or special about this series?

"The Halcyon tackles the things other shows haven't had the time or breadth to tackle. That's the joy of long form television. I don't think this story of wartime has been told from this angle before in what is a very international place. Hotels are where transient people are necessarily transient. And that makes for fantastic weekly drama, because you have the people who are always here who are the fixtures and then a constant stream of people coming through for whatever reason from all over the world. That happens with both the guests and the staff. If you go into a hotel, much more so today, you are unlikely to find anyone who was born and raised in the same post code as the hotel. It's the most international job in the world."

Were hotels like The Halcyon special places for 'ordinary' people to visit?

"There is that class thing. The Halcyon is diverse. But it's also not diverse in many ways. If you want to stay here you've got to be rich. And if you want to drink here you've got to be rich. So a party thrown for Army officers is opening the doors to a different class of people. No-one is pretending it's democratic.

"One of the things people love is watching the appalling snobbery and class-stricken system - the worse the better. Lady Hamilton completely embodies that. There's part of me saying, 'Can't she be a little bit more enlightened?' But then actually going, 'The whole point of her is to demonstrate the very worst of it and to relish in it.' You jump in with both feet and relish playing that dreadful person. I've come across people like that a few times in my life and they have the worst manners in the world. What they set out to do is make the people they despise feel uncomfortable and miserable. That's what I intend to do. With relish. As Lady Hamilton."

What can you tell us about the style of Lady Hamilton?

"One of the wonderful things about Lady Hamilton is many of the other women in the show are in uniform. So the budget has been blown on Lady Hamilton. She's the Imelda Marcos of The Halcyon. She would need a whole floor of the hotel for her wardrobe because she never wears the same thing twice and it's always beautiful.

"We have an astounding costume designer, Anna Robbins, who is trawling the truly vintage clothes stores - high class places in London and Paris which keep these clothes, many of which haven't been worn. Beautiful clothes of the period. And then they're altering them to fit me. I've drawn the very long straw. I have beautiful and highly sophisticated clothes. She has so many perfectly cut and gorgeous items of clothing. It really does evoke the time and they are original and beautiful to wear.

"A huge amount of credit for the look of the show goes to hair and make up. Women's hair now does not look like it did in the 1940s. They are astounding. When the supporting artistes walk through it's just breathtaking. They look fantastic. Women never went out without their face on. They would always put their lipstick on."



Olivia Williams interview continued

What did you make of The Halcyon's vast set?

"It's pretty extraordinary and the detail is so beautiful; all the statuettes and every light fitting; the art work is wonderful. The production team on this are people you are proud to work with.

"What The Halcyon has to be is a place that is a little bit magical and a little bit heightened. The outside was grey and dreary in the Blitz. And you came into the hotel and there was light, music, dancing and champagne. So we really want those scenes to sparkle. And they do. Our dance choreographer has these great dancers who look so natural. The party scenes and the bar scenes have a real energy to them."

How did luxury hotels survive in the war with rationing in force?

"Allegedly Winston Churchill gave a special dispensation to hotels. He did it because he wanted to be able to go and have steak tartare and a glass of claret without having to break the law to do it. So they were this slightly dreamy haven of excess and gourmandising while everyone else was having to make a quarter of an ounce of butter last for ages."

We see Lady Hamilton making her first ever visit to a cinema, was this a turning point in her life?

"People can choose to lead an incredibly sheltered life. If you don't want to rub shoulders with people who are not like you then you could avoid them. And that's what she has spent her life doing. Wartime broke down those barriers. There's a wonderful line - that it never occurred to her she was the one missing out. This idea of a truly popular entertainment everybody went to, sitting in a large room in the dark with a bunch of people - but not at the opera. To go to the cinema was a new and completely democratic way of being entertained."

Can you watch yourself on the big and small screen?

"Yes. I don't have this terrible affliction that some actors seem to have. I like to think not because I sit there admiring my own fizog, but I genuinely get caught up in watching the story I've been in. Because when you shoot it so piecemeal you don't get a feel of the whole thing.

"When I'm watching it I'm like a kid. I get completely caught up in it. So I don't watch in order to watch myself. Although I'm curious to see how my performance fits in with the rest of it. I love to see all of the work, all the things the creative people have done, and watch it all put together.

"At worst it's a fantastic summer movie of the way I spent four months. And at best...I was watching Peter Pan again with my kids the other day and that was such a beautifully made film. I was just completely absorbed in it. I had quite a small part. So no, I have no trouble watching myself. I don't fall away in embarrassment. I just try and watch the thing as a whole."

Do you have a favourite hotel in the world?

"There's a lovely hotel just outside Los Angeles called the San Ysidro Ranch. It's where Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh got married. The Kennedys stayed there in their day. We know of California as surfing or Hollywood. But there are some very beautiful places. The land of plenty. That bit of the coastline is so breathtaking.



Olivia Williams interview continued

English people can be very rude about California and Los Angeles and the movies. I've always had a very nice time there. Not least because I've done jobs that have meant I can stay a couple of nights at the San Ysidro Ranch! Which if I'd stayed in British theatre for the past 25 years I wouldn't have been able to do. I have been lucky enough to stay in some beautiful hotels."

Have you had any nightmare hotel experiences?

"I've talked about this in the past and some horrible trolling comment was put on the article afterwards that I sounded very spoiled when I complained about it but...anyway, it was a truly nightmarish hotel.

"I'm a great one for planning. I love to plan. And I was going out with somebody who didn't like to plan. We got a flight to Eilat and he said, 'Let's fly to Eilat and see what happens.' And we ended up in this miserable place where the sheets definitely had the streaks of make-up of a former occupant. The towels were probably infectious in some way and it was just grim. It was horrible."

Is there a period in your life you regard as your halcyon days?

"I can't predict whether they are still to come but I had a most amazing time, the whirlwind from starting to date my husband, we got married and pregnant very quickly....a lot of people talk about when their kids are little as some living nightmare, but I think they were intensely happy years. From first date through to birth of second child. Amazing.

"Thank God we had two healthy children who slept through the night pretty quickly. And so it isn't for me a tunnel of sleepness nightmare. I know that is the luck of the draw. They can be very hard years. They were very happy years. Not that they're any less happy now. But that was a magical bubble of time. Little babies and all those weird, happy hormones pumping around the place."

Finally, how do you reflect back on filming *The Halcyon*?

"I think of the tremendous group of people you only know once you're actually doing the show. It's the actors, the hair, make up and costume departments, the camera crew - this doesn't happen in every job. I'm very lucky that I have been in a few jobs like this where people have come together and clicked.

"Everyone comes into the make up bus and are happy to be there. I really think that translates to good work. We've developed a shorthand amongst ourselves which you have to have when you're shooting at this speed. Where we're creating good spontaneous drama, because there's this bedrock of talent and excitement about the show.

"This lovely American TV show I did, *Manhattan*, got cancelled. But if that hadn't been cancelled I wouldn't be here. This job constantly reminds you that if you are booked up years in advance then you're not available for that crazy, last minute casting that takes you to an extraordinary place. So I don't get too edgy. Being adaptable keeps you young. And if you can stay open to the next thing that comes, that is half the battle.

"I thought I was a very conventional person who needed to plan. And then I got a couple of jobs that looked like they might last five or six years and I actually felt very caged in. All the long form TV I've done has done two seasons, which suits me fine."



Cast interviews



Kara Tointon plays Betsey Day

Betsey Day is described as a 'sexy bad girl'. Just the role to play after Maria in *The Sound of Music Live*?

"It was a lovely U-turn. Maria was all angelic and light. So Betsey Day is a complete change. Betsey is so much fun. No holds barred and she says whatever she's thinking. It's almost a holiday of a role because she's such a vivacious, very forthcoming person. Especially when she is in the bar and on stage. I spend most of my time up there jiggling along with the band."

Can you tell us more about Betsey?

"Betsey is a runaway with a past. Her mother Gloria is also a livewire. She yearns for her mother to live with her in London but her mum is with someone in Liverpool.. When you meet Gloria you see the back story of Betsey.

"There was a break up in her parents' marriage and since then Gloria has always gone for the wrong guy. Betsey has seen this same mistake time and time again. Her mum is fairly outrageous and loud. Betsey's own outlook on men is very different. I don't think she can take anyone that seriously. Everything is just a little bit of fun and she would rather leave it at that.

"As a singer, Betsey was spotted by Sonny, the manager and leader of the band, in a club about two years before. And working in *The Halcyon* is her big break. It's massive for Betsey. But she's fitted right in as if she's been there all her life. She totally owns it.

Kara Tointon interview continued

“Sonny is the first man in her life she has a real link with and a trust. They have this love of music that’s quite powerful. She’s leant on him a bit, which is rare for her. That might scare her in the future because the feelings are bubbling. There is a warmth between them but she is oblivious to how he feels.”

Betsey charms everyone and says she is always right. But is she?

“She definitely thinks she is. Betsey has a really lovely friendship with Emma who is a little younger. She is genuine and honest with Emma and doesn’t want to see her friend get hurt. Perhaps she learns from her own mistakes.

“They are from very different worlds. Emma gets along with everyone in the hotel. She’s the magnet in the middle who can mix with all different classes with no prejudices. Betsey and Emma just hit it off. Emma likes Betsey’s free living. Betsey says people complicate matters too much. And I tend to agree. I think we over complicate everything.”

When is Betsey at her best?

“All I can say is that Betsey is definitely not a morning person. She works late and then finds a spare room or bathroom in the hotel to sleep in. She lives quite nearby but the hotel is very beautiful with five stars so she thinks, ‘Why not? I’ll use it where I can.’ The head of housekeeping isn’t a fan of Betsey. She finds her randomly in rooms all the time. Which is ironic as you actually have to get up before dawn for filming.”

What did you think when you first walked on to the massive set for The Halcyon?

“It was really special because I got to see it from its beginnings, at a very bare stage. Then I came back two weeks later and this amazing set had been built. It was quite comforting to see it from the start because normally you come in and it can be really intimidating. Because the sets are so overwhelmingly beautiful. So it was good to see the design team do their thing.

“The kitchen is my favourite set. When it’s live with all the smoke and steam, you really feel like it’s a real kitchen and it’s all going on in there. It looks fantastic. Sometimes I go into one of the rooms and I do lie down on the bed. It’s like a real hotel. The perfect five star set for a nap. Five star luxury.

“There is a real exciting feel about The Halcyon. As soon as I read the script and found the pace so fast, I just knew it was something special. There are a lot of characters but you quickly get into each storyline. The Halcyon takes you along and you get sucked into it.”

Why is a hotel such a great backdrop for a drama?

“There’s something about it - everyone in the hotel, from the kitchen to the manager’s office, is doing what they do. And so you get this great mix of everything. But they all have to be in this one place. That really makes for great storylines. You have the ‘royal family’ of the hotel and so on - I love watching the other characters. It’s really exciting. We had someone come in and teach us about hotel etiquette and the kitchen tended to be the hub of gossip where people would gather. The staff are close, which is nice. And a hotel is just like a theatre. Everyone is performing from backstage to front of house.”

Kara Tointon interview continued

What is it like when you are singing in the ballroom and in the big party scenes?

“It’s just been incredible. Some of the songs have been composed especially. They are really good songs that I’ve fallen in love with. Although, obviously, only little bits of the songs will be featured on screen.

“It’s really difficult technically when you’re singing. We have these little things you put in your ear, so if there’s dialogue going in I’ll hear the music so I can be miming at the time. Then maybe we’ll do a live take. They do so many different set ups to cover all bases. It’s very different to the live Sound of Music. You can mess up and have another shot at it.

“Then all of a sudden sometimes they just blare the music out really loud. And that’s when you feel this excitement of what that time must have been like. Music is a big part of this show and you really feel like you’re in 1940. It’s electric. Not much acting required. The musicians are always around. I just soak it all up. I love it so much. And singing is a dream.

“It’s also taught me a lot. What’s lovely about jazz is there is no right and wrong as such. You feel it and you can go any way with it. It was a bit scary at first but I’m getting into it. You just have to be really confident with it, play around and see what happens.

“I also went into the studio to sing with the orchestra. I think that was the most special thing.”

You filmed scenes with Beverley Knight in Cafe de Paris in London – what was that like?

“That was quite special. We filmed at the actual Cafe de Paris. I have a line where Betsey says, ‘Is she better than me?’ And I thought, ‘Really?!’

“The Cafe de Paris was bombed during the war and they actually lost someone in the band. Just the fact it’s still going and it has that historic feel. We were all dancing and having fun. It was a big, intense day but it looks amazing on screen.”

Is it hard to comprehend how people must have felt with the very real fear of being killed by a bomb?

“It’s really bizarre because you come into The Halcyon and feel so safe in this big haven. But that is what’s so powerful. The senses are so heightened that people are living each day and perhaps making decisions based on the fact this could be their last day.

“That makes life really interesting and in a different mindset to how we live today. It was very much close to home and on your doorstep. Betsey’s attitude is, ‘If I’m going to go, I’m going to go.’ People lived much more for the moment. Nowadays we live life at such a fast pace. Back then it would have been slower but then the war sped everything up.”

Can you explain Betsey’s style to us?

“She’s just living the dream. Anna Robbins, who is the head of costume, comes up with some wonderful outfits. I don’t think I’ve ever had this much fun costume-wise ever. Because every new one tops the last. The stage clothes are just beautiful. And even her day wear is lovely.



Kara Tointon interview continued

I think the 1940s was a really flattering time. To do my hairstyle alone would take an hour or so a day. I suppose people did have time to perfect themselves. More time was spent on you.”

Can you tell us about the scene when Betsey is wearing no clothes at all?

“It was the funniest day ever. I’m sitting there with the bubbles and for the first hour I was loving it. And then my hands started to shrivel up. That took several hours that scene. I had all this sticky stuff on my front and then I’m naked at the back. But it was all coming off because the masking tape was losing its stick.

“It’s not that I’m against nudity on screen. I just don’t know if it’s always necessary. But I think it was in this case. That scene says a lot about Betsey as a character. That’s her. So I thought it was a good scene. I didn’t request a body double. Although maybe I should have! It’s all very quick.”

Betsey tells an audience, ‘You make a girl giddy.’ What makes you giddy in life?

“I was about to say food. But I guess what makes me go giddy is I’m really artistic. For instance this set makes me go giddy. And when I’m looking at art. That’s my thing. That’s what I enjoy.”

Do you have a favourite hotel in world?

“I love skiing and The Fairmont Hotel in Canada in Whistler is very special.”

Is there a period in your life you would describe as your halcyon years?

“I hope there’s some more to come. But I guess in my childhood. I have really fond memories of growing up. I have an incredible family, parents and so on. So probably aged seven to 13. They were good times. With no worries.”

Cast interviews



Hermione Corfield plays Emma Garland

Can you tell us about Emma?

“Emma is the daughter of the hotel manager Richard Garland and very much between two worlds. She’s part of the staff because she’s working in the hotel. But she’s also grown up with Freddie, Toby and the Hamiltons. So she has seen that life and is part of it as well. So she is very much in between and is always moving between the two.

“For Emma the world is a much bigger place than the hotel. That’s why she has such an interesting arc because she finds herself, understands herself and then finds her place in the world.

“Emma grows up very quickly between episodes two, three and four. She takes on a real responsibility. It’s a big shift to adulthood. Everything is pushed and heightened by the coming of the war.”

Would you say Emma is the conscience of the hotel?

“That’s really interesting. Yes. She is always around watching and listening. And she gets involved. She has a good heart. And while her father does have a good heart he can be very cut throat. As is Lady Hamilton.”

Hermione Corfield interview continued

You get to say, 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.' And was it?

"In the first few episodes Emma is still enjoying normality before the war really comes home. Then you start to get the tension building with them all on the cusp of, 'What if?' That sense of 'what if?' is relevant today because there are always wars going on and a threat from elsewhere. And there was a heightened sense of that at the start of World War Two. For that first year it was called the phoney war and people didn't quite believe it would come to their own doorstep."

How would you describe Emma's relationship with Freddie?

"Emma and Freddie have known each other since they were children. At the start of the series it's almost a brother and sister relationship. There's a spark there. But it could remain platonic. The class system was huge in 1940. Emma is described as 'Freddie's little receptionist'. So there is that difficulty between them."

And what about Emma's relationship with her father?

"Emma has a great bond with her dad. When we started filming we spoke about how to build the staff relationship alongside the father and daughter one. So we had to find the difference between whether he is telling me off as a father or as my boss. At the beginning Emma is still a girl and there are moments where she goes against what her father says. Then later on there's a bit more of a level-playing field."

"She feels like she has imposter syndrome. Emma is very much trying to find her place and I don't think she does at first. She is still in her father's world trying to discover where she stands within that. Then she is hit with so much drama. She is struggling to feel like she can justify her position and can do it all."

How does Emma get on with American guest Joe O'Hara?

"Again, Emma is very much the conscience - trying to make him stay in London. Ensuring they have the best people they can have to get through the war. Joe definitely is interested in Emma but, then again, he is always interested in the women around the hotel. Who knows if that might develop over time?"

Betsey tells Emma she complicates matters. Do we over complicate things today?

"We definitely over complicate things today. Back then, with the war approaching and life heightening you act on impulse and live in the moment. Whereas today we plan ahead and think. I definitely over-think everything."

What makes The Halcyon such a great backdrop for a drama series?

"Obviously there's a constant flow of new guests, new interests and ever changing events. Also you have the upstairs, downstairs thing of the staff behind the scenes. We had a hotel expert come and talk to us at the start of filming. There is that amazing thing of the staff knowing everything about each of the guests. You find out all the little secrets. You have to know as part of your job."

Hermione Corfield interview continued

“There is so much room for scandal and there’s a network of hotels and staff talking to each other across London. So many secrets. These are places where people meet their mistresses, big deals happen and so much else beside.

“The hotel expert worked in a top hotel and she was really great. She gave a talk after the first script readthrough about what it is to run a hotel. I loved that aspect of knowing everyone’s secrets. She talked about the huge demands some guests make. Wanting a piano in their room, for example.

“In the war they weren’t rationing food in the hotels such as caviar and steak and so on as the demand wasn’t as huge. They were rationing things people were eating every day, so they still had that sort of decadence in the hotel.”

What was your reaction when you first saw the hotel set?

“I first saw the studio set in the early stages when there was just a staircase. From there on it just became more unbelievably amazing. All of the sets are so stunning. It’s such a great place to work every day. Everything is real and where it should be. Amazing. We all love it.”

What was it like filming the big set pieces?

“Those scenes with the parties and music were brilliant to film. Although Emma is always working. The Cafe de Paris scene we had was fun as, for once, Emma wasn’t working. It was actually filmed at the real Cafe de Paris in London with the singer Beverley Knight. It looked beautiful. Everything looks so real in this series. The dancers looked fantastic.”

What is Emma’s general look in the series like?

“She starts off very plain. Bare-faced, scraped back hair, grey dresses - very simply dressed. Then later she has this look with beautiful suits. So it’s a progression. When I got the new suits and was in a waspie corset and had my hair done, I felt like this was Emma all grown up. That was really exciting.

“It was a glamorous time when people dressed properly. People would have beautifully-made suits because they would only have a few of them compared to today.”

Emma speaks French to refugees from France checking in. Did you struggle with that at all?

“I did study French for A-level and didn’t do too badly. So when I saw that in the script I wasn’t panicking. But I did call my brother because he is fluent. Just to check.”

Could you live in a hotel full time like Emma?

“I don’t think I could. Simply because I’d never leave; then I’d just eat the same thing every single day and get into a terrifying cycle of similarity. You could get too used to it very quickly. Relying on room service.”

Is there a period in your life so far you regard as your halcyon days?

“I feel like these might be my halcyon days. But maybe they are still to come.”



Cast interviews



Jamie Blackley plays Freddie Hamilton

What was your reaction when you got the role in *The Halcyon*?

“I’ve not done a great deal of TV before so the idea of being in people’s living rooms every week just scared the life out of me. But then when they approached me about playing Freddie it was a no-brainer. It was such an interesting part with a brilliant cast. So it was just excitement. But I don’t love watching myself on screen. The thought of doing that week after week could potentially be a bit dangerous.”

Can you tell us about your character Freddie?

“Freddie is the non-identical twin brother of Toby Hamilton, son of Lord and Lady Hamilton. The family owns the hotel. In the first episodes he gets his RAF wings and becomes a Spitfire pilot. So we see his struggles with that but also with his position as heir to both *The Halcyon* and the Hamilton estate.

“There are things his father has got up to that Freddie knows about but doesn’t let his mother know. His mother is quite a force in herself. While there is constant rivalry between the two brothers. As the episodes go on the war changes everything. It makes the bond between the two brothers a lot stronger. Freddie was born four minutes before Toby and those four minutes count for so much. Maybe Toby, in fact, is the lucky one.”

Jamie Blackley interview continued

Can you tell us more about Freddie's relationship with his father?

"Both Freddie and Toby just want to impress their father. We spoke a lot with one of the directors, Stephen Woolfenden, about the masks that have to go on for the two boys, as soon as they are out in the hotel around staff and guests. We have to represent our family in a certain way and that's something their father instilled in them. There's a scene in a lift where the doors open and there are cameras everywhere. There's not a moment's rest. I can't imagine living like that.

"I think both sons are pretty frightened of their father. But there is a moment in the first episode where Freddie stands up to his father for probably the first time."

And what about Freddie and his mother?

"She feels like Freddie hasn't done enough for her. She wants him to be a son to her and help her. That really hits home later on. He does feel really guilty about what secrets he has kept from his mother."

Are Freddie and Toby typical brothers?

"They are typical brothers. In one scene they fight in the hotel kitchen. That was a really fun day with all of the equipment everywhere and getting to throw each other around.

"It is a real wrestle. They're both frustrated and guilty and they're taking it out on each other. The fight was choreographed. It's like a dance. We had a little competition. There were pots and pans on the side of the kitchen and we had a points scoring system to see if you could knock off certain pans."

Did you do any research into Spitfire pilots during the Battle of Britain?

"Our historical advisor Alastair Bruce said Spitfire pilots were quite cocky. They had to be because it was the only way for them to get through those scary moments in the sky.

"Freddie would have been scared. If something happens to a friend or someone close to you, it makes that moment more real. I imagine if you've done a few flights and it's gone fine, you almost feel untouchable. But that fear will always come creeping back again. Fear is always there.

"He has to put on a mask. Fear breeds fear. And that's when mistakes are made. It must have been such an intense experience because our natural instinct is to run away from danger. So to fly into it isn't a natural reaction. I can't even imagine that.

"I went down to the RAF Museum in Hendon and Alastair taught me how to march and how to stand. My cousin, who unfortunately isn't with us anymore, was in the RAF for a little while. So I'd had a few conversations with him. You soak all that in but as soon as you get to work it goes out the window. You try and take in as much information as possible but then try and convey the human side.

"The war always comes first with Freddie. It's a running theme throughout his story. That is the priority. At the same time the family own The Halcyon that has to be run as a fully functioning hotel, keeping guests happy as London is under threat. Then being bombed with the fear of a German invasion."



Jamie Blackley interview continued

“Pilots came from all over the world to help Britain in its hour of need. As soon as I read the script I thought about how topical that is, in terms of refugees and people migrating today. A lot of people don’t realise these people came to help us. They risked their lives to wear our colours in our skies and some died for us. I think it’s so important to remember that.”

Does the proximity of death heighten his sense of life?

“That nearness of death does heighten his sense of life. For Freddie it’s something that affects his relationship with everyone. Every time a plane goes down they wonder if it is Freddie. It must have been so scary for family and friends. Every time you walk out the door it could be the last time they see him.”

Can you divulge anything about the relationship between Freddie and Emma?

“Freddie and Emma were childhood friends so have known each other for a long time. There is obviously an attraction there as their feelings for each other develop. It’s quite a delicate situation. It will be interesting to see where it goes. There’s also the fact they come from different classes, which was a big thing then. His mother wants Freddie to be with someone from the same background. But that doesn’t matter to him. You can’t just turn off those feelings.”

What did you make of the huge hotel set?

“If you woke up on this set you’d think you were in a real hotel. It’s incredible. It’s so beautiful with lots of little details. And the way it flows. You can go upstairs and you have the corridors and rooms. The royal suite is really beautiful. It’s like a different world. I’ve nearly fallen asleep on one of the beds. I also love the kitchen. It’s so intricate with all of the equipment.”

The first time we see Freddie he pulls up in a sports car; what was driving it like?

“It was pretty awesome to drive but it’s one of the most narrow cars in the world. When it came to the pedals, I had to use my big toe to accelerate and then my next toe to brake. It was quite something. I was simply chugging around the corner so I hope it looks all right. At one point I was trying to brake and it was accelerating.”

Do you have a favourite hotel in the world?

“The Bowery in New York. I just love it.”

Is there a period in your life you regard as your halcyon days?

“I’ve had my halcyon days when I was around 18 with the boys. We used to go out every single night in the summer and have a good time.”

Cast interviews



Edward Bluemel plays Toby Hamilton

Why did you want to be a part of The Halcyon?

"I just loved it. Everyone loves a period drama but this has something extra. As it goes on it gets sexier and grittier and the stakes soar. My first impression was that it was really stylish. I could see it all when I read it on the page. It's cool with fascinating subject matter. With all this partying and excess going on while people were being killed."

Can you tell us who Toby Hamilton is?

"Toby is the non-identical twin of Freddie. Four minutes' younger. He is in line for nothing from the Hamilton estate. He lost out by four minutes. And because of that he is quite bitter when we first meet him and quite negative."

"He can be funny and is very clever but is very much the overshadowed child. He's not in the military, unlike Freddie, which is definitely what his father would have wanted for him. Toby is a mathematician studying at Oxford. So in his father's eyes he is a complete disappointment and it's very hard for him. He drinks his way through it and makes sarcastic comments to get by. So he's not a very happy boy when you first meet him."

Edward Bluemel interview continued

“His father talks in private about Toby’s ‘pathetic little life’, which is incredibly brutal. And yet his father puts on a good pantomime in front of people, describing Freddie and Toby as two of his finest achievements. But really he is very disappointed in Toby. He is the odd child. He is strange, an odd character. He’s clever but he hasn’t hit any of his father’s expectations because he’s happy to do things his own way.

“Toby is a very interesting character. There’s a lot to come from him. Even I don’t know what it is yet. What I like is he starts slowly and then suddenly you realise he has a certain strange power over people and a lot of influence. I think he’s going to become a very important player in the game. As for his love life, it all comes back to the fact that Toby is one character who through this first series discovers who he is and where his role in life is. He learns a lot about himself.”

Is there also a sense that Toby not being the heir makes him the lucky one?

“I think that’s definitely true. That’s where things start to change for him. He realises he is free to live his own life and do what he wants. Whereas Freddie has this weight of expectation upon him. Toby has a much better relationship with his mother. It’s still not amazing but better than with his father. And he is able to be his own person.”

Toby and Freddie fight in the hotel kitchen. How was that to film?

“That was great fun. It was the second scene I did. Me and Jamie Blackley, who plays Freddie, get on very well and it’s scenes like those that are exciting to act. It’s great to be able to let go in a scene because normally we’re playing two characters constantly on show in the public eye and having to set a good example. Being the Hamiltons’ boys. So it’s great to do a scene where it all builds up to a point where they just release it all.

“It was all choreographed. It’s not a huge fight but it’s a realistic fight. It’s a messy fight, a grapple between two brothers, knocking over pots and pans.

“Some of the best parts for me for Toby and Freddie as a relationship is when you just see them revert to little boys. They have obviously grown up together and when the mask and expectation is stripped away and they are on their own they turn into little boys.”

Does Toby give Freddie advice even though he is the younger brother?

“Toby is very perceptive and he tells Freddie he doesn’t have to be like his father. His ability to influence people and talk some sense into them appears a few times. People listen to what he says despite what he might think at the beginning. When he talks to Freddie like that, Freddie really listens. That’s all part of Toby finding his way into who he is and the role he has to play in this family. Because he’s always felt like the spare part.”

Toby is a junior research scientist at Oxford when we first meet him. But does he have an important role to play in the war?

“I imagine he will end up doing something to do with code. Down the line that could be where he ends up. But he starts off doing very menial war effort jobs to start with. We’ll just have to see where he goes from there. Who knows what might happen?”



Edward Bluemel interview continued

The series begins in 1940. Was it easy to get into the mindset of that period?

“What’s great is having a set like this that’s so immersive. As soon as I’m on set with everybody in costume I find it quite easy to slip into that 1940 mindset. But it’s a type of fear we just don’t get today on a regular basis. The prospect of bombing and even invasion.

“So there is that fear but then after a certain point it just becomes normality. That is the point where it gets really interesting because you have a group of people who should be scared for their lives at all times. But there’s almost an arrogance about it. ‘OK, well we’re just going to party our way through it.’ And that’s when things can go wrong.”

What were your first impressions of The Halcyon set?

“Breathtaking! It was more than I could ever have imagined. It’s a fantastic set. The detail is superb. It all links together and that’s part of how special it is for me. You really do feel like you’re in a real hotel. You can go upstairs to the rooms. It’s amazing and on screen it looks even better. Everything is where it should be so you can do shots walking from the bar to the foyer, up the stairs and so on.”

What is it like to film the big set piece parties with the band playing?

“It’s amazing. It feels like a real party with the music and everything. They’ve been my favourite days. So much fun. We have lots of supporting artistes in, all looking glamorous in their costumes. Kara Tointon as Betsey is up on stage singing with real musicians. When they pump up the music it’s great fun. It’s such a treat. You don’t really have to act. You just feel like you’re at brilliant party. You really do live it. It’s so cool.

“Everyone on set gets on very well. There’s not a single difficult person. I relish coming to work.”

Are there any parallels between a hotel and a theatre?

“The hotel is very much like a theatre. The Hamilton family, who own the hotel, are very much the actors, the people on show and being the focal point. That’s also why Toby feels left out because he doesn’t get the sort of attention Freddie does. Toby lets the mask slip more often. He also drinks a lot. It’s a great hotel bar.”

Toby lives at The Halcyon most of the time. Would that suit you?

“I think the luxury of staying at a top hotel would wear off quite soon. You’d just get used to them. But I’m sure if you only lived there for a short amount of time you could definitely enjoy yourself with everything done for you. I think I’d enjoy it but not for a long time.”

Do you have a period in your life you regard as your halcyon days? Or are they still to come?

“I would say my halcyon years are right now. For the last few years training to be an actor, then becoming one and getting this role. That or probably between the ages of four and seven. You do what you want then and there’s nothing to worry about. But probably now - and hopefully more to come.”

Cast interviews



Matt Ryan plays Joe O'Hara

Who is Joe O'Hara?

“Joe is an American broadcast journalist who has come to Europe to make a name for himself. He’s very ambitious, quick-witted and not shy at all. What’s interesting is we don’t actually know he’s a broadcast journalist until near the end of the first episode. We just think he’s another guest in the hotel. He becomes integral to the story and communicating the war to America.

“When we first meet him he is this journalist who is out for his career and very ambitious. But he really does discover who he is and there is a big shift in his development as a person. It’s a well-written role in a stylish drama set against the backdrop of the Second World War.”

Did you do any of your own research into this period?

“What’s great about doing anything based in a real historical time is you get to spend a lot of time watching documentaries. There is so much material on the Second World War. I watched a bunch of movies involving broadcast journalists and gave myself an excuse to have a little bit of fun with that research as well. Also researching broadcast journalism at the time.

“Edward R. Murrow was someone who came over to Britain to report on the war and was integral to America later coming into the war. So I spent time just looking at him, his life and what kind of person he was. That’s not to say Joe is based on him.

Matt Ryan interview continued

There are certainly bits of him that I can pull out and use, just for myself more than anything, because Joe is very much his own person. But what's great is all this wealth of information you can delve into and use if you want.

"America was very much on the sidelines in 1940 and Ed Murrow was crucial to the American people becoming connected to the British people. There's this great piece he did when he talked about the people of Britain and their bravery. That's something that really struck him and the American people as well. I know it was Pearl Harbour that actually triggered America coming into the war but in terms of public opinion he was vital in getting the everyday American on the side of the Brits and more involved with the war. Joe is the link in the series to what's going on in the war."

Was it hard to imagine what people must have felt in 1940?

"It's really hard for us to imagine what it would have felt like then. These people had this impending doom hanging over them. You can tap into some of that with what's going on in the world today. I had also talked to my late grandfather about the war. He served as a mechanic.

"Plus you have to consider the forms of communication then, the secrecy, all those things so different to the world of technology we live in now. It's difficult because we have the world at our fingertips today. But those guys didn't. It's fascinating to be able to delve into that time period, immerse yourself in it and try and get into that mindset."

Did the proximity of possible death change how people behaved?

"That's one thing Joe finds astonishing. How brave these people are when there are warplanes flying over London. It's that keep calm and carry on thing. That British sense of humour as well. That's something that really surprises him. He's really taken with the British people and feels a sense of responsibility then to communicate that back home to America. About these people who are standing in the face of death with this bravery and humour."

How would you describe Joe's relationship with Emma?

"There's an interesting love triangle involving Emma, Freddie and Joe possibly being set up. Joe does take a liking to Emma. He doesn't pursue it initially but there is definitely something going on there. After the first broadcast he does when he mentions the Hamiltons, Joe gets sucker punched by Freddie. And he goes, 'I guess I deserve it.' Maybe that's part of being in journalism. You hack some people off, you get punched sometimes."

Why is a hotel such a good backdrop for a drama?

"What's amazing about it is the palette you have to play with in a hotel. All the different types of people that come and go in the hotel. The different relationships and dynamics. All of that against the backdrop of the war. Where everybody within these complex relationships all have something in common, which is this war and the impending doom over their heads. It gives you a great scope for so many different things. There is so much drama that can happen. It really is a great backdrop for a TV drama.

Matt Ryan interview continued

The Halcyon is a fantastic ensemble drama with a huge cast and so many different characters and storylines going on. It's very rare in my experience to have a cast who are all great people as well as great actors. It's wonderful being involved in something like this when you get on with everyone. There's a real togetherness and a family about this series. And I think that bodes well for the whole show. The directors have been great as well as Chris Croucher, the producer. Everybody has been fantastically supportive. There's a really good vibe about The Halcyon."

What did you make of The Halcyon set?

"The hotel set is pretty awesome. My jaw dropped when I first walked in. There was a very pungent smell of paint drying and it was all but finished. It's amazing what they've done. My favourite part is the bar when the band is playing and they have the dancers doing all the dances of the period. You're standing there smoking a cigarette and you're completely transported into that time. It really does help. You immerse yourself in it. It's pretty cool. Along with the music of that time."

As Joe is an American, is his look slightly different?

"Yes it is. Most British men at that time had the flip down collars. Joe wears double-breasted suits. Americans had a slightly different style, more boxier in the shoulders. Whereas the British men would wear single breasted suits. There are subtle little differences in the fashions of the time in the U.S. and the UK. I'd like to think he's a bit sharper in his look."

"And in terms of attitude, he is American so he's not so mannered. He's a little looser than a lot of the British and the lords and ladies of this time. So you do get a contrast by having this American in among the British."

You are from Swansea but no stranger in your career to the American accent?

"I've been working with an accent coach who has been great. You do your work and your research and then you let it go when you're playing Joe and try and get into the character as much as possible."

Joe is a radio journalist. Have you done much radio work yourself?

"I've done a bit of radio when I was younger but not that much. One thing I did a lot of research into was Joe's public voice and his everyday voice. His radio voice. Not that it's so far away from who he is but he is someone communicating through the radio and they had a lot of voice training back then. I looked into a lot of that and then wanted to make some subtle differences between the way Joe speaks to anyone in a bar and then the way he addresses the American public on the radio."

"Radio was king in those times. Around about this time was when radio was really important. Edward R. Murrow actually helped make radio the thing it became. It really was a crucial medium at this time."

Do you have a favourite hotel?

"I do like The Jane Hotel in New York. It's cool because it's rustic and not too glam. If you just get a standard room you get a single bed. It's like being in a cabin on a ship. A friend of mine recommended it and the first time I went there I thought, 'What is this place? It ain't that great.' But it's got such character to it and a great restaurant. It's the character that is so brilliant."



Matt Ryan interview continued

You don't have some of the amenities you have in other hotels and some of the rooms aren't as big. But the character really stands out for me."

And any hotel nightmares?

"I've had a couple of hotel nightmares. I've been chucked out of a few hotels. I was doing a TV show in America and when we first started my apartment hadn't become available yet so they checked me into a hotel. I moved from one hotel because there was another hotel which had a kitchenette and I thought, 'Well that's going to be easy, I can cook for myself.' I was going to be in there for about a month so I was trying to make myself as comfortable as possible.

"So I moved to this new hotel. I had worked about 15 hours that day and when I got back I smoked a cigarette out of the window. Then they threw me out the next day. And what was funny was the character I was playing in the NBC TV show was a chain-smoking alcoholic. I tweeted that I got chucked out for smoking and everybody went nuts."

Would you want to live in a hotel full time like Joe?

"I'd want to stay in a hotel like The Halcyon. It's pretty awesome. But I prefer to have a base where you can get away from people and have your privacy. Joe has this line where he says, 'I've never had a problem moving on. Any job, cities, girls, you give me 10 minutes and my bags are packed.' That says a lot about him as a person. He doesn't really have too many strong ties. Or at least he doesn't let on if he does."

Is there a period in your life you regard as your halcyon days?

"They were the best of times...they were the worst of times. I think my halcyon days are yet to come."

Cast interviews



Mark Benton plays Feldman

What drew you to The Halcyon?

“Initially I only got the first two scripts and I thought The Halcyon was really exciting and glamorous. It’s a really interesting concept behind the character of Feldman. He goes in and out of a lot of the storylines and links many of the people at the hotel.

“The Halcyon is a fresh look at that Second World War era. They’ve cast this series really well, everyone is perfectly suited to their role. It’s full of fantastic actors. Great actors in a great story.”

Who is Feldman?

“Feldman is the concierge at The Halcyon. The go-to man for everybody and specifically for the hotel manager Garland (Steven Mackintosh). If Garland needs something doing then Feldman is the man he goes to. If you need some geese for the kitchen or cigarettes you would talk to Dennis Feldman.

“He’s got a public and private side. In public he is the concierge and helps everyone out. And in private he knows a lot of shady people. You usually find Dennis behind his desk. And he pops up a lot elsewhere. But he’s normally in the foyer.”

Mark Benton interview continued

What engaged you about the story?

“Because The Halcyon story is told over eight episodes, it’s a gradual progression. At the start people are pretending nothing is wrong when they all know there is. The scripts also set it apart from a lot of other dramas. The scripts and writing were so good.

“The way it’s filmed is also really interesting. It looks very modern, in a weird way. So, hopefully, viewers will find it different to other things we’ve seen.

“We have this beautiful glamorous hotel which looks unbelievable with the war going on outside. And you see a gradual encroachment of the war. Then sad and big things happen as the war arrives.

“There’s a real sense of this horror and fear outside but in the hotel people are still drinking cocktails and enjoying themselves. There’s a lovely balance in the series.

“Feldman has a line where he says it’ll be over before Christmas. A lot of the time there is that disbelief. ‘It’ll be fine. It’s not going to happen here.’ And then as the series goes on you realise the war is closing in. There’s almost that sense of the monster outside the door.”

Did you get an idea of what it must have been like in London with German bombers overhead?

“There’s a scene where Feldman is on the roof of the hotel watching a plane dogfight and bombing. Obviously when you film a scene like that it’s just you sitting on the roof with a big green screen. But the finished scene looks amazing. Scenes like that give The Halcyon real scope. Most of my scenes are inside the hotel but when he goes outside it’s a real reminder of what is going on.”

How would you describe Feldman’s relationship with hotel manager Garland?

“Feldman and Garland are the best of friends. Garland looks on Feldman as a confidante. Feldman, switchboard operator Peggy (Liz White) and Garland are a little gang. Although Garland is in charge, Feldman very often talks to him as an equal. A different relationship than you would normally have in those positions. He’s a good, loyal friend to Garland.”

What was your reaction when you first saw The Halcyon set?

“My initial reaction when I first saw The Halcyon set was, ‘Wow!’ It’s unbelievable. You walk in and it feels like a real hotel. The fantastic thing about the set is it goes all the way around and behind the scenes as well. So if you wanted to set a Steadicam shot up to go from upstairs down to the basement, you could do it in one shot. It’s an amazing set. I never tired of walking on to it and looking at all of the detail. Amazing.”

There are some big set piece party scenes?

“The big set piece scenes take a long time to set up, with lots of people involved. But when you see them you understand why. That’s what gives the series the glamour and makes it something special.”

Mark Benton interview continued

What's Feldman's general look in the series?

"He's devilishly handsome. Feldman has a uniform made of all wool. Which is really great in the hot weather. There was one particular day in the summer when it was the hottest day and we were all just sitting on the air conditioning units because it was so hot. The costumes are amazing. Mine were made for me, so they fit like a glove."

What makes a hotel such a good setting for a TV drama series?

"You have the upstairs, downstairs dynamic. The staff behind the scenes. You have the regulars in the hotel but you've also got all of the guests who come through, maybe for just one episode. So the possibilities of different stories and exciting new characters are endless."

Do you have a favourite hotel?

"We stayed at a lovely hotel in Mauritius called The Sugar Beach. There are a few I really love in England. We had a Christmas in The Pig Hotel once in the New Forest. That was beautiful."

"And in terms of those big, high end London hotels like The Halcyon, they are the ultimate in opulence and luxury where behind the scenes things can be falling apart. But the guests would never know."

Is there a period in your life you regard as your halcyon days?

"I'm in them right now."

Production Interview

Chris Croucher, producer

Can you tell us what the aims were for the series?

“What hooked me was when I went to my first meeting, Left Bank Pictures’ chief executive Andy Harries said, ‘I want to make The Ritz In The Blitz.’ And that stuck with me. We used the phrase quite a lot, ‘London’s most glamorous air raid shelter.’ We wanted to create a classic period drama but also one that had a quite contemporary feel about it. Music being a big part of the show as well. We really wanted to create something that was classic entertainment but also with a bit of a darker edge to it. And I think we’ve done that.

“I was initially quite wary, having just produced Downton Abbey. Was it going to be a similar thing? Upstairs and downstairs but just in a hotel. But this is very different and the decision process has led to some exciting choices. I do think we are telling a story about a side of the war people haven’t really had a chance to see before.

“I didn’t realise until I started working on this that although rationing was around, Churchill actually had a waiver for hotels and some top restaurants, because he wanted to still be able to dine well. That changed later on in the war but it’s fascinating to see how, with all of the chaos of war, people still wanted to carry on as if nothing was wrong. That’s what is so fascinating about The Halcyon. We have one episode where bombs are dropping and a society wedding carries on.”

What were the initial thoughts when casting actors for the roles?

“We really didn’t want it to feel like everyone was watching it going, ‘Oh yeah, they’ve rolled out this cast.’ Our casting directors Kelly Valentine Hendry and Victor Jenkins did a phenomenal job of mixing known established heavyweight actors - but not necessarily in the kind of roles you normally see them in - with new up and coming actors.

“As an example, before Downton Abbey nobody really knew who Michelle Dockery or Laura Carmichael were. That show broke those people and several others. We’re hoping to do the same with, for example, Hermione Corfield, who plays Emma, Jamie Blackley, who plays Freddie, and Edward Bluemel, who plays Toby. These actors are on the cusp of being massive and we’re very lucky to have them. Our younger cast are just phenomenal. That’s what is so exciting. They are young, sexy and really good actors.”

Did the proximity of death heighten the sense of life?

“That’s why I think there are so many amazing stories about what people did in their personal lives during the war because there really was the idea of, ‘Well, sod it, any day now a bomb is going to drop on my head so I might as well party when I want to party.’”

Why is a hotel such a good backdrop for a drama series?

“One of the things I like about it is there’s no normal to The Halcyon. Any day anyone can walk through those doors and the whole thing will change. That’s one of the things that keeps it on its toes. That at any point something is going to happen - it could be a wedding, a funeral, a birthday party, or just a normal day. But it’s always different.”



Chris Croucher interview continued

The hotel set is both huge and highly detailed. Why was that important?

“That was one of the things we talked about from the very beginning. If you’re going to make the audience believe this is a real five star hotel then it has to have that scale. Essentially we built a hotel. And it is about scale.

“The detail in all of that set is what really blows everyone’s mind. Once you walk through the door you really are in a hotel. And because it’s all connected you can walk from the lobby to the bar to the backstage to the offices to the switchboard. And you can do all of that as one fluid move. That also helps sell its reality. Our production designer Matt Gant did an absolutely extraordinary job creating the set.

“We talked a lot about The West Wing meets Merchant Ivory and I love that idea of how things are often on the move. Because if you’re working in a hotel and you need to have a conversation, you’re very likely not to be standing still. You are working somewhere, on your way to do something, you’re inspecting this or grabbing that. Therefore that fluidity needed to be encapsulated in the set as well.”

The series opens with a ‘flash-forward’ scene of the hotel being bombed. So how did it feel to blow up your own set?

“We obviously did that at the very end of the filming shoot. It was emotional. We had done all that amazing work and then we had to blow it up. Although the great thing about special effects now is it’s mainly just dust and debris. It’s all now clean and spick and span again.

“I hope that is a really entertaining hook for the audience. Two minutes into the series we’re showing the hotel is going to be blown up with the whole series leading us back to that point. It’s really exciting. We can build to that moment so it’s a really interesting rollercoaster.”

How did Beverley Knight and Jamie Cullum get involved with in The Halcyon?

“Music was such an important thing then. When people needed a distraction from the war, where better than in a nightclub? And so if we were going to have music it seemed the right idea to put in some well known stars.

“We worked with music producer Amanda Ghost, who came on board. She managed to get us Beverley Knight and Jamie Cullum and they are simply wonderful. Beverley Knight singing in the real Cafe de Paris - bombed during the war - in London is one of the highlights of the entire series. So vibrant. As is Jamie Cullum who appears in another episode. He wrote two new songs for The Halcyon. And is the most lovely guy. As well as being such a talented performer.”

The series opens in 1940. Why did you choose that year?

“There have not been that many dramas about this period, between May and September of 1940, before the bombing started. It was called the ‘Phoney War’. There was all this big build up and then nothing happened for a while.



Chris Croucher interview continued

“Then suddenly Dunkirk happened and we start getting dogfights in the sky over London. And by the time you get to the mid-series point when the bombs start dropping you really have felt this pressure cooker of everything building to this point. So many other dramas begin right in the middle of the Blitz. So it’s nice to build that.”

Where did you film the RAF airfield scenes?

“We shot those at White Waltham near London. Through our military advisors we managed to get a load of Spitfires. All the actors were just in seventh heaven, running to their Spitfire planes and starting them up. It was truly magnificent. I didn’t realise the name ‘Spitfire’ comes from the fact that when you turn the ignition they spit fire.”

Can you tell us about the character who features in the series who can relate the wider story of what is happening in the war?

“American journalist Joe O’Hara, played by Matt Ryan, is one of our main characters and also feels like a narrator. We based Joe very loosely on the legendary Ed Murrow who did so much towards helping get America to join the war. Also Joe, as an American staying at the hotel, is looking at London and the war from the outside. He can pose the questions no-one else can pose.”

Hotel manager Richard Garland, played by Steven Mackintosh, has a secret, can you give us any hints as to what this might be?

“Garland has his secrets and as the series unfolds we get a glimpse of the fact he may not be who he says he is. Here is a character who can get you everything. He can get you the table you want, the drink you want, but you also know if you’re really pushed he could do the things you probably don’t want him to do for you as well. He doesn’t mind getting his hands dirty.”

You visited some top London hotels before filming began, how was that?

“The archivist at The Savoy has been very helpful to us. We toured The Ritz and The Goring and other places. It was a wonderful period of preparation to just go to lovely hotels in London.

“All of these hotels look so beautiful in the public areas but, of course, you go ‘backstage’ and the look is very different. Because why would you spend money on an area the guests don’t see? So we’ve reflected that in our sets for The Halcyon. Our hotel was ‘built’ in 1890 but was given a revamp in the 1920s, which is why there’s quite a lot of art deco in there. But the ‘backstage’ looks like a Victorian workhouse.”

You’ve mentioned ‘backstage’. Are there comparisons between a hotel and a theatre?

“Hotels and theatres have a lot in common. There’s a great line where band leader Sonny says it’s all just an act. Plus the show must go on. That’s the wonderful truth. All of this craziness is happening but everyone is putting their mask on, performing and pretending everything is fine to still deliver their five star service.



Chris Croucher interview continued

“You could relate that, in part, to what’s happening today. We are living in a world where there are terrorist attacks on the streets of Europe and we’re all just having to continue with our daily lives.

“There are quite a few interesting parallels. We have a character called Max who is treated abysmally because of his accent. But actually he is a refugee. And we have that same story now. It’s interesting when you have a period drama that still relates to our modern time.”

What do you think is so special about hotels?

“All of the hotel managers and concierges would know each other. Especially as the war went further on, to help source the things you couldn’t get.

“What I also love about hotels is actually some of the most important decisions about the war were probably made in a bar over a glass of whisky. That’s where so many decisions are made - and still are today. It’s a hot bed of people who can be discussing great things.”

Do you have a favourite hotel?

“Probably The Eastern and Oriental Hotel in Penang, Malaysia, established by the same people as Raffles Hotel in Singapore. A beautiful old colonial hotel. And in terms of London hotels, I probably am all about The Ritz. Although I love The Savoy as well. No I’m going to say The Savoy. Or both!”

Has working on *The Halcyon* changed your own view when you walk into a hotel?

“I’m a big lover of hotel bars. If anything working on this series has made me love them even more. It’s given me the opportunity to do so much research. It’s just fascinating with some amazing stories from the war. That gives us a hotbed of amazing material that we can continue if we’re lucky enough to move on to later series.

“It feels to me we’ve only scratched a part of this story and, hopefully, if the British public love it as much as we do then we can continue to tell a story about a really fascinating side of the war.”

Episode synopses



Episode one

An American arrives in town and makes his way to the Halcyon Hotel. It's raining hard, and he's distracted by a line of smart black cars that snake their way around the back of the hotel. Meanwhile, the manager, Richard Garland and concierge Dennis Feldman group outside the hotel to greet Lord Hamilton, the owner. Garland registers with some surprise the addition of Charity Lambert, a young, glamorous blonde. But ever diplomatic, he masks the initial shock, and welcomes them in – they're followed by several other mystery men, all upper class and white haired.

The handsome American, Joe O'Hara checks in, immediately asking questions about the "serious cars" coming in earlier. Receptionist Emma Garland only just manages to field them: it's clear he smells a rat. And he's right to: as Lord Hamilton kicks off a closed meeting, it soon becomes clear why sneaking in the back of the hotel has been necessary: Lords, MPs and influencers are plotting how to instate Halifax as PM...but it's clear that the room contains more than its fair share of appeasers and Nazi sympathisers.

A surprise guest arrives, in the form of Lady Hamilton. Panic stations: she's a day early, and presumably unaware that her husband lies in wait upstairs...with Charity Lambert on top of him. Staff frantically collude to keep her out of the Royal Suite, but she's fast approaching. As her key fits into the lock, Garland manages to cut her off at the last – but only just. She departs, but an unspoken humiliation has occurred and she won't easily forget it.

Episode one synopsis continued

Informed of the earlier drama with his wife, Lord Hamilton commiserates in the bar. Joe O'Hara introduces himself and they're making chit-chat when Freddie and Toby arrive, Lord Hamilton's twin sons. Lord Hamilton clearly favours his eldest, Freddie. He leaves them to it to find a room to stay for the night, rightly suspecting he won't be welcome in the Royal Suite where Lady Hamilton has finally taken up residence.

Freddie's just got his wings: he and Emma go down to their childhood haunt in the basement: Emma senses a moment between them, but brushes it off and hurries away. She confides in Betsey who tells her to put it out of her head: he's an aristocrat, and she's just the manager's daughter. They may be old friends, but there surely won't be any romantic spark.

The next day at breakfast, the Hamiltons are dining in the restaurant when Charity Lambert arrives, despite Emma's best efforts to fend her off. Lady Hamilton is appalled: her husband's indiscretions under cover of darkness is one thing, but this is affirmably public humiliation. Freddie ushers her out, and Toby snaps at his father, who responds by giving him a disproportionate, angered dressing down. All witnessed by Mr O'Hara who finds Toby smoking outside and strikes up conversation: Toby is naively indiscreet about his father's business interests, and Charity Lambert's connections to the Fuhrer. Upset and embarrassed, he doesn't seem to notice O'Hara's unnatural interest.

Garland has a hostile visitor: Lady Hamilton, attempting to get the names of every mistress that Lord Hamilton has ever brought to the hotel. Garland declines, which she takes as a direct slight against her. He tries to protest that he is loyal to the hotel rather than her husband, but it's clear he's made a powerful enemy.

Freddie's party begins: Emma's perceptions about their romantic tensions are confirmed as they almost share a kiss on the way down in the lift. And Freddie chastises his father for his behaviour: he can't continue to humiliate his mother like this. To his astonishment, his father agrees: his reaction is melancholy, a man facing a series of bad decisions he has made throughout his life. We leave the Halcyon with both families wondering what does the future hold, for Emma and Freddie's burgeoning romance, and Garland and Lady Hamilton's declared rivalry?

For further episode synopses, please contact either julia.engleman@itv.com or jo.blanket@itv.com



Cast and Production Credits

Richard Garland

Lady Hamilton

Emma Garland

Freddie Hamilton

Toby Hamilton

Joe O'Hara

Betsy Day

Peggy Taylor

Feldman

Max Klein

Robbie

Sonny Sullivan

Billy

Kate

George Parry

Lord Hamilton

Adil Nazir

Skinner

Wilfred

Tom

Lillian

Charity Lambert

Terry

Lord Rowling

Military Policeman

Lady Alexandra Cooper

Producer

Stanislav Radimsky

Harvinder Singh

William Shannon

STEVEN MACKINTOSH

OLIVIA WILLIAMS

HERMIONE CORFIELD

JAMIE BLACKLEY

EDWARD BLUEMEL

MATT RYAN

KARA TOINTON

LIZ WHITE

MARK BENTON

NICO ROGNER

GORDON KENNEDY

SOPE DIRISU

EWEN MITCHELL

LAUREN COE

KEVIN ELDON

ALEX JENNINGS

AKSHAY KUMAR

NICK BRIMBLE

MICHAEL CARTER

ALEX BOXALL

ANNABELLE APSION

CHARITY WAKEFIELD

JESSE RUTHERFORD

GERRARD MCARTHUR

ANDREW BRYAN

IMOGEN WATERHOUSE

CHRIS ROGERS

JOEL PHILLIMORE

JAZ DEOL

CAMERON CUFFE



Cast and Production Credits

Alistair Briggs

Managing Director

Ruby (Singer)

Handsome Solider

Café De Paris Girl

Croupier

CHRISTOPHER DANE

MARTYN STANBRIDGE

BEVERLEY KNIGHT

DAN KRIKLER

JADE MATTHEW

CHARLES ARMSTRONG

Cast and Production Credits

Executive Producer	ANDY HARRIES
Executive Producer	SHARON HUGHFF
Executive Producer/Writer	JACK LOTHIAN
Producer	CHRIS CROUCHER
Writer	CHARLOTTE JONES
Writer	MARTHA HILLIER
Writer	SARAH DOLLARD
Director (Block 1)	STEPHEN WOOLFENDEN
Director (Block 2)	ROB EVANS
Director (Block 3)	JUSTIN HARDY
Director (Block 4)	PHILIP JOHN
Director of Photography (Block 1)	JP GOSSART
Director of Photography (Block 2 & 4)	TOBY MOORE
Director of Photography (Block 3)	ADAM GILLHAM
Production Designer	MATT GANT
Costumer Designer	ANNA MARY SCOTT ROBBINS
Make Up Designer	KAREN HARTLEY THOMAS
Location Manager	MARK "SPARKY" ELLIS
Sound Recordist	CHRIS ASHWORTH
Casting Director	KELLY VALENTINE HENDRY
Casting Director	VICTOR JENKINS
Editor (Block 1 & 3)	CRISPIN GREEN
Editor (Block 2)	DOMINIC STREVENS
Editor (Block 4)	PAUL ENDACOTT





End

Further interviews with cast and production (ie set design, costume) are available upon request.

If you use any material from this press pack, please include a full credit for the show.

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