



Ian Puleston-Davies plays Lagrathorn – Thane of Banning

As Thane of the Banning, a forest people living deep within the woodlands, Lagrathorn is a proud, humorous and determined leader, who is partial to a drink or ten, with the capacity to be unpredictable and dangerous in the face of defiance and disappointment. A man of tradition, Lagrathorn does not take too kindly to change but, despite being set in his ways, he still has the capacity to surprise where one would least expect it.

Q: How did this role come about?

“It was a scary decision to leave Coronation Street. A big decision to leave Owen Armstrong behind. You have lovely people working around you and it’s so comfortable, in a good way. Having then made the decision to go you do get concerned about the next role. Particularly when you’ve been in a soap for a certain amount of time, there’s always an insecurity that you will be known as that character forever more. But I don’t think that’s true anymore. I think it was Sarah Lancashire who broke the mould and later the likes of Suranne Jones and Katherine Kelly.

“So people knew I was leaving with my release date looming and it was a great relief to get the part of Lagrathorn and hit the ground running. I finished my last couple of weeks on Corrie knowing I’d soon be wielding a sword, wearing a wig and riding a stallion. I’ve always known what a loyal bunch and good friends the Coronation Street cast are. So it wasn’t a surprise that they were genuinely pleased for me.

“I had also really enjoyed working with Beowulf producer Stephen Smallwood before on The Vice. Lagrathorn was a great role to go into.”



Q: Beowulf must be a big change from Weatherfield?

“Here we are in the Dark Ages in a windswept quarry in County Durham. You can’t get further away from the Rovers Return than this. Talk about swapping Owen’s hard hat and hi-vis for a horse. It’s just wonderful.

“You hope the next role is going to be as far removed from the previous character as possible. My heart would have sank if my next job was a builder. But this is perfect. The wig and costume and period all help to dispel any hint of Owen Armstrong. I could not have wished for a better first job after Corrie.

“We had some cold days filming on the cobbles of Coronation Street but I’m never going to complain about the cold again because I hadn’t seen anything until I came up here.

You get used to being on the cobbles, knowing the set inside out. And most of the time in Corrie you’re on that street set. A day out to the local church is exciting. So there’s a joy about being able to wear new clothes and have a different look. That’s one thing.

“But when you go on to a brand new set like this in a huge location in the wilderness, it’s fantastic. It was like starting all over again. A real thrill to walk up and see Herot. It’s just overwhelming and very exciting. It takes your breath away.

“And it is always great to be part of something at the beginning, pioneering a new programme. There’s an extra buzz and very different to joining something already established. It’s a thrill to know you’re starting something brand spanking new and a privilege to be part of this cast and crew.”

Q: Who is Lagrathorn?

“Lagrathorn is one of the Thanes who will determine the fate of Rheda (Joanne Whalley) in a group vote. She very much hopes to get him on her side. But he wants the jackpot. He’s not happy with just being one vote. He wants to be a lot more involved.

“There are a number of bad guys in this drama and he also has a wicked streak. So his cards on the table are, ‘Yes, you can have my vote but on one big condition.’ He’s asking for a great deal.”

Q: Did you know anything about Beowulf before this came along?

“I knew it was an epic tale and involved swords, cloaks, daggers and political intrigue. I knew it was revered. But that was it. Seamus Heaney’s adaptation was the one that stuck in my mind. So I knew of it but I’d certainly never sat down and read it.”



Q: Do you do much horse riding in the drama?

“When they asked me if I could ride, I said, ‘I remember doing a donkey derby in the ‘70s on Rhyl Beach.’ No, I’ve ridden all my life. I grew up on a farm in Wales and had my first Welsh mountain pony when I was seven. So I can ride.”

Q: How was death viewed in Beowulf’s time?

“There was an acceptance of death back then. Death was very much part of everyday life. Whereas now it’s seen very much as the end. They embraced it as part of daily living. It’s a different approach to how we perceive death today.”

Q: What was it like working with Kieran Bew?

“He’s a great Beowulf. Kieran is throwing everything and more into the role. That’s always nice to see. Obviously there’s no room for complacency when you’re Beowulf. A terrific choice for the role.”

Q: What else appealed to you about Beowulf?

“One of the perks of being an actor in a period piece like this is you can look in all directions and half imagine you are actually back in time. You get a real sense of what it must have been like. To actually wear those clothes and live and breathe the environment is a huge thrill. You embody it. It will be the nearest we will ever feel to getting back to what it must have been like. To soak up the atmosphere.

“I watched an early promo for Beowulf and I had goosepimples. Filming miles from anywhere, you get lost. You forget what the end result will be and just live in the moment. But the end goal is going to be wonderful. It certainly re-invigorated me when I’d been standing on a hill all morning to see that taster of what it will look like on screen.

“It’s shot beautifully and a terribly exciting journey for the viewers to go on. It looks fantastic. I was blown away.”