

LOGS, PIGS AND YOYOS!

BY MARTIN MCCONACHIE

HAVING already revealed that we have award-winning comedian Diane Spencer as a Yeovil fan, it gives us great pleasure to also inform you that we've found another celebrity Glover, actor James Purefoy.

At first glance, James Purefoy is a familiar face but one that you can't immediately tag to one series. His acting CV runs to almost 25 years, impressive longevity in a ruthless industry, and his versatility has seen him in roles such as Mark Antony in *Rome*, a billionaire playboy in *The Philanthropist* and led to him almost getting the role of James Bond on more than one occasion. But more on 007 later on; we need to start at the beginning with logs, pigs and yoyos.

Born in Taunton and educated at a Sherborne public school, James left school and worked in a variety of jobs as he explains. "I began on a log splitting farm in Somerset then on to a pig farm in Long Load and eventually I got into Yeovil District Hospital as a porter. They employed me under the Youth Opportunities Programme so I got £25 a week for a full 40-hour week. I used to do night shifts, day shifts, as much overtime as I could get. I thought I'd end up working there for longer but my father said I'd never be a porter all my life, pulled me out of there and I ended up falling in love with acting."

The entertainment bug was well and truly within by now thanks to a

yoyo. "Yes," he laughs. "I could do amazing tricks with a yoyo; certainly the most talent I've had in sport and I tried to amuse the more anxious patients in my care as I wheeled them down to surgery. I had a great time there and met some strong, interesting people during my formative years after being in a public school for ten years."

Another growing love was for his boyhood football team, Yeovil Town. "I started going to games when I was about the same age as my nephew whose here with me today, about seven or eight. My stepfather took me to the sloping pitch and I loved that pitch and the way Yeovil knew how to use it perfectly when crossing the ball into the area."

Fast forward three decades and he admits to having mixed feelings about the ill-fated Wembley trip in May 2007 where Russell Slade's side lost 2-0 in the playoff final to Blackpool. "The match was a bitter disappointment, made your heart sink and you see Blackpool progress into the Premier League and thing 'My God; that could have been us!' Yet it was great to see Yeovil actually play at Wembley and it was terrific to see all the Glovers supporters up there for the day."

The acting career was developing nicely by the time he entered his mid-twenties and then really took off. Well versed in classical acting and theatre work through roles in *Macbeth*, *The Tempest*, *The Man Who Came To Dinner* and *King Lear*; he later went on to star in a huge variety of parts for film and television productions working alongside the

likes of Sean Bean, Reece Witherspoon, Kevin McKidd and Neve Campbell. His CV contains HBO/BBC series *Rome*; other TV series such as *Sharpe's Sword*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Beau Brummel*: This Charming Man and films like *The Knights Tale*, *Resident Evil* and *Solomon Kane*.

Next up for the Glovers nut is a Disney Pixar production set on Mars called *John Carter* which is set to be released in the United Kingdom in March and will hopefully lead to more TV and film parts shortly after. One role he's not too bothered about missing out on is James Bond.

Tipped to be 007 in *Goldeneye*, he missed out and was also rumoured to be in the running for *Casino Royale*, the part going to Daniel Craig. Yet the 47-year-old Glover sees the upside of not being everyone's favourite secret agent. "Apparently, Daniel can only stay in a pub for 15 minutes before it all gets out of hand whereas I like nothing better than to spend far more time in a pub with my mates. Someone once called me a "stealth celebrity" and I guess I've actually achieved a certain amount of anonymity by not being that sort of actor (Bond)."

If his next movie is out of this world, so are his hopes for the Glovers as he describes his dream as seeing the day when Yeovil hold the European Cup upon their shoulders. But every dream has to start somewhere, be it on a pig farm, splitting logs or simply using a yo-yo! It's a funny old game.

THE **BIG**
INTERVIEW
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LEAD ROLE: James in the film *Soloman Kane*. Inset: With the Jolly Green Giant during his recent visit to Huish Park for the Charlton match

