

# Cornish Steam

*After considerable delay, HTV's Poldark (an adaptation of Winston Graham's eighth Poldark novel The Stranger From The Sea) was scheduled for broadcast on the ITV Network on 2 October 1996. This background "mini-interview" of WG by Jennifer Selway was published in The Observer on 22 September 1996.*

Remember *Poldark*, that seventies TV favourite? Well, now it's back. But the Poldark Appreciation Society is not happy that HTV has dropped original stars Robin Ellis and Angharad Rees (Ross and Demelza). The 5,000-strong society, who love visiting old Cornish locations, took to picketing HTV's offices.

Winston Graham, 84, writer of *Poldark* (and also ***Marnie***, filmed by Hitchcock), finds himself at the centre of the row.

Is it true that the ITV Network thought the new, two-hour *Poldark* so dreadful that it refused to screen it last Christmas?

*It was just a horrible rumour. It simply wasn't ready.*

It sounds as though the Poldark Appreciation Society appreciates the old BBC series rather than your books.

*It does seem to be that way. After the first BBC series in 1975 I said they couldn't do a second series unless they changed the scriptwriter, the director and the producer.*

It seems TV can take all kinds of liberties with classical literature, but when it comes to *Poldark* ... Do you mind the way the novels are designated as popular fiction?

*A little. And please don't refer to them as "bodice-rippers". It's a term I dislike. I've always said I'll give £100 to anyone who can find any bodice-ripping in the books.*

Are you still president of the Poldark Appreciation Society?

*I don't know. I haven't heard from the society for some time.*

Would you like to be?

*I'm not sure. I'll see what kind of reaction there is to the new film.*

[The film was *not* well-received and HTV's tentative plans to produce the ninth, tenth and eleventh Poldark novels were dropped.]

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