

PEAKY BLINDERS

SERIES THREE

PRESS PACK



CONTENTS

Cast.....	Page 03
Crew	Page 04
Character Background.....	Page 05
Production Interviews:	
Steven Knight	Page 11
Caryn Mandabach	Page 16
Tim Mielants.....	Page 18
Simon Maloney	Page 20
Richard Bullock.....	Page 22
Cast Interviews:	
Cillian Murphy	Page 25
Helen McCrory	Page 29
Paul Anderson	Page 33
Joe Cole	Page 34
Annabelle Wallis.....	Page 36
Sophie Rundle	Page 37
Finn Cole.....	Page 39
Aimee-Ffion Edwards	Page 41
Natasha O’Keeffe	Page 42
Kate Phillips	Page 43
Gaite Jansen	Page 45
Synopses.....	Page 47
Caryn Mandabach Productions	Page 50
Tiger Aspect Drama	Page 51
Stills	Page 52

CAST

Tommy Shelby Cillian Murphy
 Polly GrayHelen McCrory
 Arthur Shelby Paul Anderson
 John Shelby..... Joe Cole
 Grace Burgess..... Annabelle Wallis
 Ada Shelby.....Sophie Rundle
 Michael Gray Finn Cole
 Finn Shelby Harry Kirton
 Esme Shelby Aimee-Ffion Edwards
 IsiahJordan Bolger
 Charlie Strong..... Ned Dennehy
 Curly Ian Peck
 Inspector Moss Tony Pitts
 Lizzie Stark.....Natasha O’Keeffe
 Johnny Dogs Packy Lee
 Jeremiah Jesus..... Benjamin Zephaniah
 Linda Shelby Kate Phillips
 Alfie Solomons..... Tom Hardy
 Father John Hughes..... Paddy Considine
 Duchess Tatiana Petrovna Gaite Jansen
 Duke Leon Petrovna Jan Bijvoet
 Grand Duchess Izabella Petrovna..... Dina Korzun
 Ruben Oliver Alexander Siddig
 Anton Kaledin Richard Brake

CREW

Writer and CreatorSteven Knight
Executive Producer.....Caryn Mandabach
Executive Producer..... Will Gould
Executive Producer..... Jamie Glazebrook
Executive Producer..... Frith Tiplady
Executive Producer..... Cillian Murphy
Executive Producer for the BBC Matthew Read
ProducerSimon Maloney
Director Tim Mielants
Director Of Photography Laurie Rose
Production Executive..... Amy Mobley
Production Designer..... Richard Bullock
Costume DesignerAlexandra Caulfield
Make-Up and Hair Designer Loz Schiavo
Casting Director..... Shaheen Baig
Composer Dickon Hinchliffe
Editors Mark Davis, Celia Haining
Head of Music Amelia Hartley

CHARACTER BACKGROUND



Tommy Shelby (Cillian Murphy)

The charismatic leader of criminal organisation the Peaky Blinders, Tommy Shelby now has more wealth and success than ever before. As he prepares to turn the family business away from illegal activities, he becomes caught in a web of international intrigue more treacherous than anything he's previously encountered. Tommy is forced to plan his most audacious crime yet, and in doing so, must compromise everything he holds dear.



Polly Gray (Helen McCrory)

Aunt Polly is Tommy's second-in-command, the person he most trusts with the secrets and ambitions of the family business. But the return of her son Michael to the fold has made Polly uneasy about the company's illegal enterprises. When she befriends a member of the upper classes, Polly imagines different possibilities for her future, and begins to ask herself questions that could strike at the very heart of the Peaky Blinders.

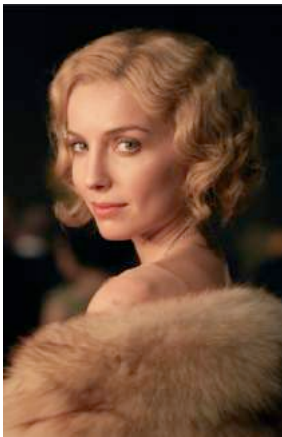


Arthur Shelby (Paul Anderson)

In an attempt to overcome his demons, Tommy's older brother Arthur has turned his back on excess, instead embracing marriage and God. But while Arthur continues to work the illicit side of the business, he struggles with the moral implications on his soul. Both he and Tommy know that at some point Arthur will need to decide where his heart, and his future, truly lies.

**John Shelby (Joe Cole)**

Tommy's younger brother John has always been the most level-headed member of the Shelby business. However, shifts in the family structure are pushing him towards progressively excessive behaviour. When there is a power vacuum, even the most dependable sibling could become the one who takes the whole family down.

**Grace Burgess (Annabelle Wallis)**

Grace first met Tommy while working undercover for the police, gathering evidence against him. Her loyalties were divided and confused after the pair fell in love, and it seemed their slim chance of happiness had passed after Grace fled to New York and married. Returning to London for a brief visit, Grace reconnected with Tommy and they slept together – a move that sent both into turmoil when she discovered that she was expecting his baby.

**Ada Shelby (Sophie Rundle)**

A socialist like her late husband, Tommy's sister Ada has kept away from her family's criminal and blatantly profit-first activities. But Ada is starting to feel the true realities of being a single parent, and pursuing a cause that can't seem to get traction. Aware of her appetite for excitement - and always appreciative of her intelligence - Tommy sees an opportunity to lure her back into the fold.

**Michael Gray (Finn Cole)**

As chief accountant, Polly's son Michael has been groomed by his cousin Tommy to be the presentable face of the business, dealing solely with legitimate activities. But when he encounters a dark figure from his past, Michael finds himself compelled towards the Shelby family's criminal side.

**Finn Shelby (Harry Kirton)**

The youngest member of the Shelby family, Finn was raised by Aunt Polly and his siblings after their mother died and father abandoned them. He is the next generation of the Shelby business.

**Esme Shelby (Aimee-Ffion Edwards)**

Born into the Lee gypsy family, Esme is married to John and works in the betting shop calculating the books. But along with other women in the family, she sees a different future for the organisation - one where the women have a much more influential part to play.



Lizzie Stark (Natasha O'Keefe)

Tommy's deputy treasurer at Shelby Company Limited. Although Lizzie isn't a member of the family, she is treated as such, with all the members of the clan keeping a close eye on her.



Linda Shelby (Kate Phillips)

Arthur's new wife Linda used to be a Quaker, and she has brought sobriety and equilibrium to his life. Initially delighted to see more stability in his brother, Tommy is less enthusiastic to see Linda's moralising influence lead Arthur to question his own orders. Perhaps Linda will be more of a challenge to the Shelby family than Tommy anticipated.



Alfie Solomons (Tom Hardy)

A business agreement now exists between Tommy and his old adversary Alfie Solomons. But no one is more aware than Tommy that it wouldn't take much to break the peace.



Father John Hughes (Paddy Considine)

Beneath Father Hughes' pious exterior lies a man more poisonous than any Tommy has ever encountered. For he is a representative of the Economic League – a secret far-right organisation that transcends government and will resort to extreme measures to oppose its perceived enemies.



Duchess Tatiana Petrovna (Gaitie Jansen)

A young aristocrat forced to flee her beloved Russia after the revolution, Tatiana knows what it is like to lose everything. Her experiences have made her desperate, ruthless, and willing to do whatever it takes to survive.



Ruben Oliver (Alexander Siddig)

Handsome, charming and well educated, Ruben is a beguiling portrait painter who is immediately attracted to Polly. The pair are worlds apart in terms of their backgrounds, but there's a spark that unites them. But is Polly too trusting with this charismatic artist about whom she knows so little?



Duke Leon Petrovich Romanov (Jan Bijvoet)

Exiled from Russia, the eccentric and volatile Duke has begrudgingly accepted the grace and favour house bestowed upon him by the British crown. And now he has (with the help of Churchill himself), begun plans for a counter-attack against the Reds in his home country.

Steven Knight | Writer and Creator

This period in history is scarcely represented on UK television screens. What was your motivation and inspiration for creating *Peaky Blinders*?

The inspiration was motivated by stories I was told by my parents who lived in Small Heath, Birmingham and both had connections with illegal bookmakers as many people had in those days. My mum was a bookies' runner at nine years old and my dad's uncles were Peaky Blinders and gangsters. He told me lots of stories about how they looked, how they dressed and how people felt about them and how life was in those days, so I always felt this was a drama waiting to be told.

Where did we leave Tommy Shelby in series two?

At the end of series two we see Tommy has escaped death by the skin of his teeth, to fight another day. There was a threat hanging over him, that a favour would be called in and we find him in series three two years later when that favour is just about to be called in. It's a huge imposition and it takes him to places no self-respecting gangster would normally go.

What sort of man is Tommy at the start of series three?

Tommy's trajectory is always upwards, but it's never smooth and never simple. He has to do things at the request of some very powerful people and all of it illegal as ever. The consequence of his success will be huge. Already he has made a lot of money and his living standard is unrecognisable from when we first met him at the beginning of series one and that trajectory will continue. His is a cash business and he is converting that cash into objects.

What are the main themes of series three?

The themes that are prevalent are power; the abuse of power and the effect that power has on Tommy and the family. It is also about how everyone is trying to escape where they are and it's a question of, 'are any of them able to escape?' Can any of them get away from their past, the history, and in a sense their destiny? It's about aspiration and if you look at it sociologically, it's about people from the working classes in England and can they ever, no matter how much money or material wealth they have accumulated, ever escape where they are from.

What's in store for Arthur in this series?

I'm hoping Arthur's storyline will be a surprise to people because he was like a shot down aircraft at the end of series two and it's not what people will be expecting. I can say that he is not on the road to hell in a handcart. He's found some sort of redemption but again the question is, will it work? Will he be able to escape from who he has always been and what fate seems to have in store for him?

Where did we leave Polly in series two and what can we expect for her character in series three?

Polly had just carried out an act of vengeance at the end of series two, which I'm sure the audience applauded (I know I did). She got rid of someone who had been particularly awful to her. She isn't someone who deals with guilt well and she is still carrying that. She's quite a religious woman and in series three we see how that faith is challenged – does she stick with it or does she abandon it and of course she meets a man which sort of changes everything.

Michael had not crossed the line in the sand that makes him a true Peaky Blinder. How does this series test his decisions?

There is huge jeopardy involved in Tommy's business and the emerging situation that develops throughout series three make it a necessity for all members of the family to do things they don't want to do. Michael comes at this from a surprising angle and is required to approach that line and whether or not he crosses it is to be seen.

In series two John was trying to be more his own man. How has he grown in this series?

In series three John wants to establish himself and not just as third fiddle in the family hierarchy. An opportunity does present itself and John is more than capable of filling the shoes of anyone who chooses to absent himself. He is encouraged by his wife, Esme (played by Aimee-Ffion Edwards) who also wants a different life, but rather than aspiring to a life of wealth and big houses, Esme is missing the life she used to have as a gypsy traveller. There are real pressures on John to keep his life together as well as remain part of the Shelby family.

You've said in the past that series one was opium, series two was cocaine, what is series three?

Opium was essentially used by people who were trying to alleviate acute pain and that seemed reflective of the tone of the first series. The second series was cocaine reflected by the wildness and the madness of the early 1920s. People

were revving it up and getting into gear. In the third series I think it is power and the effect that has on people; how they respond to it and how intoxicated they can become as a result of it. Even though the other drugs are still around in series three, it is more of an existential thing for Tommy.

When you sat down to write the third series had you already mapped out the journey or do you approach each series individually?

I never map things out in advance. It would be better if I did and more economical in terms of time, but I've found that if you work out a plot line from beginning to end, at the beginning it becomes very rational. I prefer to just start writing because I find the process of writing offers all sorts of random possibilities that are much more like life - far-fetched and unbelievable.

Describe the character of Father Hughes? Is this Tommy's toughest adversary yet?

I would describe him as the most evil character that has ever appeared in Peaky. He is part of a very powerful group. He represents various pressures of the time and a particular sort of self-justification and righteousness that the Shelby's have always fought against. He is more of a spiritual authority than a political authority therefore he is more of a difficult enemy for the Shelbys' to take on.

What does Paddy Considine bring to the role of Father John Hughes?

To get Paddy to play this part was sensational because he is just so, so good. And one of the great pleasures of this series is that I know I can write Cillian and Paddy together and just know that it is going to happen. It is brilliant.

How much of Alfie Solomons was on the page and how much did Tom Hardy bring to the role?

On the page is the 'stuff'; the stuff he's got to do and he has to make it from A to B and with Tom in particular, almost exclusively, there is a lot of improvisation that is very exciting. But the most important thing is that Tom arrives with the character and the character is so manufactured in the moment that it is fantastic to watch his performances unfold.

The opening of the series is multi layered. We have the backdrop of the wedding; a deal going down with Russians, but all in front of the bride's gathered guests. Was this always your vision of Tommy's happy day?

Tommy's wedding is a typical Birmingham wedding; a big fight and a family dispute. I like the idea of kicking everything off together in the same place and weddings are great for that and technically it is a great way to meet the family

again. I wanted to explore the idea of when business meets family, which has essentially been what *Peaky Blinders* has been about right from the beginning. Can the two be separated and what we see in this series is how the two collide in the first episode.

Are there things that you already have planned for the Shelby family further down the line?

I want the family trajectory to continue upwards and for them to become wealthier and more powerful. The only thing I want to do is for Tommy to become knighted; to become Sir Thomas Shelby for various nefarious reasons! But I just want to shine the light on the 1920s and hopefully the 1930s with this family. The only clear thought I have for series four, if there should be one, is to include the general strike of 1926.

Has there been a particular scene that you have written for *Peaky Blinders* that, on seeing the final version turned out to be better than you ever imagined?

The execution scene at the end of series two where everything came together beautifully, brilliantly directed and a brilliant performance by everyone concerned, particularly Cillian. That is the scene that I had most satisfaction with of anything I have ever written.

When you created the series, was Tommy Shelby always your central character?

It always began with that central character of Tommy. He was always going to be the second oldest so that it was not a natural thing for him to be in charge, proving that he is charge for a reason.

How did the brothers and Aunt Polly develop around him?

Aunt Polly was a real person; my dad's auntie and she was very, very formidable. I never met her but I came from a big family with lots of brothers and sisters so just dealing with how people get along is quite interesting. It was natural to use that experience in the story.

How have the actors grown into their roles over the course of the three series?

Cillian began with Tommy as a man with a mission; someone who was going to change things right from the opening scene in episode one, series one. He was in a situation where, following the First World War, he felt dead already and so he could break the rules. He was broken by what he saw and what he experienced. He could have made a choice to kill himself but he decided to carry on. In series two he experienced success and getting what he always thought he wanted and now in series three he is questioning that. I think Cillian mapped that out

beautifully all the way through from the first to the last moment of this series so far. He is such a fine executor of a character's progress. It's a long process in television, unlike in film where you can really get your hands round a character quickly.

The character of Arthur Shelby is fractured and torn. How has Paul Anderson reacted to the various twists and turns his character has taken?

Paul Anderson, particularly in series three, is playing a character at a crossroads in his life because of the woman he has married and is having to examine his loyalties to her and the Shelby family. He really has to explore if he's able to escape the world he's living in and considers if he is fit to do anything else in life. Paul has tracked that beautifully in his portrayal of Arthur, in not just this series but throughout.

Polly is such an important character within the family. How does Helen McCrory make this role her own?

The entire show is almost like a dance where the characters all go hand in hand and always there with them, between them, arm in arm, is Polly. Helen McCrory is simply the mistress of all of this. She is so good at being scary; being formidable; being vulnerable and especially in this series we see this vulnerability much more at the fore. It's a real joy to have actors of this calibre to take these characters on.

How much are you involved in the design and look of the show?

Luckily, we are not starting with a blank canvas now we are two series in. We want to keep the show embedded in this world because it works, and the audience like it but because the characters have moved on they are in different places now with bigger environments and more opulent homes so the direction and the style moves along with it. It is an evolution rather than a revolution.

Caryn Mandabach | Executive Producer

***Peaky Blinders* has a strong fan following. What do you think attracts people to the series and keeps them wanting more?**

I think that the series deals with themes that are very modern as well as subjects we all care about regardless of the timeframe in which they're set. I also think that people love a bit of danger and they love a bad guy. People watch *Peaky Blinders* for the family aspect but they relate to people in many ways: how they are as individuals, how they are with each other, how they are to their loved ones, how they are to their greater family and how they are to their society. We're really interested in what Tommy Shelby does in that regard.

The Shelbys' are back, bigger and better than ever. What's changed for them?

Tommy and the Shelbys' have grown as a family and as a business. *Peaky Blinders* is about a lot of things, but in particular the growth of a family as they move forward together in time.

Describe what it is that Cillian continues to bring to this role that is so enduring and compelling?

Cillian is simply brilliant and I think his luminescence, that starts inside his eyes and goes through every part of his physicality, means that you can really feel his honesty inside that performance, and technically, I don't think he has a peer. In terms of what he makes you feel – it's magic.

Can you describe the setting of episode one?

At the beginning of series three there's going to be a wedding and of course Tommy is going to be beset with a number of problems. He's marrying into a family where the bride's side will not sit well with the Shelbys'. He's still working for Churchill and trying to conduct business on his special day. And I think more than anything he's really afraid of what Arthur is going to say in his speech! Every member of his family is a potential loose cannon, and so it makes for an explosive first episode, along with finding out exactly who Tommy is going to marry.

How involved do you get in the script process with Steven Knight and do you contribute to the casting process alongside the director?

Steven is brilliant and that's a very lucky thing for me as a producer standing next to the best writer. Steven has put a lot of trust in myself and Jamie Glazebrook (Executive Producer) and we have a wonderful collaborative meeting of minds. We sit down at the start of every series and it is the highlight of my year. I do work closely with Steven but it's all credit to him really. In terms of the casting process

everyone contributes because it is so vital. The first thing we do is hire a director, then the second thing we do is ask everyone to give an honest performance. That's all we really care about.

You have a new villain in Paddy Considine. What were you looking for in the character of Father Hughes?

We were looking for the worst person in the world; worse even than Campbell (from series one and two). A character who was a self-righteous baddie coming from a very serious place of moral rectitude; a person without any possibility of redemption. If Campbell had a little possibility, Father Hughes has even less.

Polly is the driving force behind the women going out on strike. Is this an early indication of the changing roles of women in that time period?

I think Steven has written the most elegant description of a textured female in Polly. As such, she has a rich internal life that includes a social and political stance and real power. At the very beginning of the series Tommy Shelby said to his Aunt Polly 'If I go, you're in charge' and that really is the truth. That old saying that the woman is the neck and the man is the head – well the head doesn't get there without the neck.

Are you surprised how American audiences have embraced *Peaky Blinders*?

As an American I'm not surprised how American audiences have appreciated *Peaky Blinders*. I think that it's strange to think that different nationalities have different tastes. Lovers of good TV drama are the same in Nigeria as they are in Alaska; it just doesn't matter. This is a story about family, about people who are impoverished and have very few choices in life, this is known to everybody on the planet. I'm really, really proud of it.

What can audiences expect from series three of *Peaky Blinders*?

I think that an audience watching series three will appreciate our commitment to the depth of Tommy Shelby's character and television's ability to make characters rich and real and deep and lasting.

Tim Mielants | Director

What was it about *Peaky Blinders* as a series that drew you to the project?

The scripts, it is as simple as that. I'm a huge fan of *Peaky Blinders* and Steven Knight's writing. The scripts are fresh, new and like entering another world; I wanted to be part of that.

What challenges came with filming a *Peaky Blinders* script?

There were lots of challenges. As a director you've got to be truthful to yourself. I think the biggest mistake you can make is to try and be somebody else, so follow your intuition and treat *Peaky Blinders* with the greatest respect.

Can you talk about the look of series three and working with director of photography, Laurie Rose?

What's different with the look this series is there's probably a bit more scale. I was introduced to Laurie Rose by a friend of mine, Jakob Verbruggen, who was the director of *London Spy*. After being shown a few scenes of the show I became a big fan of Laurie's. It looked really amazing and I noted to myself that I wanted to work with that guy.

What were your inspirations and themes for series three?

There are so many themes all happening at the same time. I think the most important one is that everybody is trying to escape from the world they're living in but they try to do it in different ways. The family are living in different places and the locations are bigger, grander.

Describe your inspirations when approaching series three.

We took inspiration from *Citizen Kane (1941)*, where there is a lot of perspective so the scale is larger and broader. The house where Tommy is living almost has to become his enemy towards the end, like living in a prison. I was also inspired by *The Shining (1980)*; the wide-angle shots and centre frame. So that's what I attempted to achieve with this series.

Has there been a scripted scene that, on arriving on the set or working with the actors, has turned out better than you imagined?

The end of the last series was so good, so, so strong and I thought how are we ever going to do that again? Then, when we started working on our ending, it turned out to be really impressive.

What was it like to working with Cillian Murphy, Helen McCrory and Paul Anderson?

They were amazing; it's like someone gave me the keys to a really, really great car. You can do whatever you want and everything works. It was very exciting this series because the characters are experiencing something totally different in their lives. They're going through an existential crisis, questioning themselves and asking what are they doing with their lives? We explored different layers of the characters.

Tom Hardy returns to the cast for series three. What does he bring to the role of Alfie Solomons?

I think Tom is a genius. He is really interesting in that he goes for it all the way. It was such an amazing experience working with him.

As an audience member, what can we expect from series three?

There are heart-breaking moments that are really, really beautiful. When I'm watching it I'm really emotionally engaged and emotionally involved, sometimes I'm really crying too. So it will touch you in every way I hope.

Simon Maloney | Producer

Where did we leave Tommy at the end of series two and where do we find him in series three?

Tommy walked out of an open grave at the end of series two and was told that he had a very important job to do for Churchill. We start series three with Tommy's wedding day where the majority of the episode takes place over a single day and night. Even on his wedding day Tommy comes into contact with some of the toughest adversaries he has ever come across. They are well resourced, powerful and connected and he soon realises that he's going to have to use all of his guile, cunning and connections to keep his head above water.

Is the scale of series three bigger than previous years?

When you make a returning series you always try to outdo yourself and evolve, and this series is no different. Steven Knight's writing, in its very essence, is bigger and bolder than the previous two series, as are the new characters we encounter. The Shelby family have moved up in the world and now have this huge country pile that they inhabit. The scale has moved up and so we have tried to reflect that visually. Tim Mielants, our director, filmed all six episodes, so has visual and style ownership across the entire series. We wanted to evolve the series without detaching from the previous style, which the fans love so much. The aim was to remain true to the *Peaky Blinders* ethos but at the same time take everything a step further.

Can you tell us about Paddy Considine joining the cast of series three?

Paddy was a suggestion by our incredible casting director, Shaheen Baig, for the role of Father John Hughes. Steven describes Father Hughes as 'pure evil' and I don't think you get a chance to see a lot of characters like that. A lot of characters have light and shade and you can see some sort of redemption in them but with Father Hughes there is none of that. To pull that off I think it needs an actor of such reputation like Paddy to just be able to inhabit that character and revel in the playing of it. Paddy is an exciting British actor that I have personally admired over many years, so it was wonderful to have him join the cast.

Alfie Solomons returns in series three and is fan favourite. Has Alfie also moved up in the world?

I think because we don't know very much about Alfie's back-story, it makes him an intriguing character. All we really know is that Tommy needs him about, and the way he is revealed in series three is very cool. We don't know if he has gone up in the world when we meet him but he's certainly harbouring some grudge from his

previous encounter with Tommy and the Shelby family. Tom Hardy is always very generous with his time on set and with the cast and crew. You just look at Cillian Murphy and Tom Hardy in the same frame of film and you feel very privileged to have had this cast saying Steven's fantastic words.

The Shelby family have a new country home – can you describe the location you found?

The new stately home for the family is Arrow House. We wanted to steer away from the archetypal country house, wanting it instead to be a space that played against the dark of industrial Birmingham that's been so prevalent in the previous series. It's as if Tommy has bought his own gypsy kingdom. He can camp out in the wagon and no one is ever going to move him on. At the same time, we didn't want it to look like other period TV shows. It had to be a *Peaky Blinders* country house. So it had to have an element of rock and roll about it. We decided on Arley Hall and Richard Bullock, our production designer, worked very hard on the dressing of the hall. What Arley gave us was a real playground. We were able to walk from the interior ground floor rooms out through the main entrance hall to the exterior of the building. We were able to use both the interior and the exterior of the location, which is not always the case with television locations.

What goes into filming a large day such as the opening scenes in series three?

On a big day such as the wedding day, my main focus is to facilitate. We talk to the camera, make-up and costume department in advance to see if any additional teams are needed to assist the main unit. We need to be mindful of what technical equipment might be needed, for example if it is a large crowd scene then we may need a crane for the camera. Timing is key on a big day and so we just make sure that all departments are fully supported so that all the time spent on the set, is up on the screen.

Richard Bullock | Production Designer**What do you first look for when you receive your scripts of *Peaky Blinders*?**

When I first receive the scripts, the first thing I do is read through them, enjoy it and try and get an overall sense of the series. I then go back through them and think about it in terms of what we're going to have to do design wise. The essential thing is to look at locations and sets and work out the best way to approach them. I also look for the big locations and set pieces. The series three house appears the whole way through the show so that is obviously something the team focused on from the beginning. Whether it is a new set build, or a location that we are returning to from a previous series, we need to be mindful about any changes that may have occurred.

What challenges come from recreating the 1920s in the modern day?

Some locations we could quite easily tweak into the twenties, whereas others take a lot of work. It's not just recreating the twenties; it is recreating the *Peaky Blinders* twenties, so everything, every detail, needs to have a nudge in that direction. It is very unusual to find a place where you can just walk in and not have to do anything to it. Usually we will change the colour or heavily dress it in some way to bring it into the *Peaky Blinders* world. The main thing is to find locations that fit the look and feel of the scene and series as much as possible.

Were there any key points or themes given to you for reference for the look of series three?

We looked at a number of films such as *Citizen Kane (1941)* and Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining (1980)*. They were all about men that get isolated by power so they were really interesting references. They included big scale sets and scenes that work against the individual. We also watched *The Godfather: Part II (1974)* and *Once Upon A Time In America (1984)*, which has probably been a reference for the whole drama. We also looked at a lot of photography from the period, as well as contemporary photography. In particular a photographer called Saul Leiter whose work is heavily referenced for this period despite working in the 1950s.

What creative discussions were had about the look of the new Shelby home?

The first set we looked at when we started this series was the new Shelby home. We went to see just about every stately home and large country house that is within striking distance of Liverpool. We kept the brief reasonably open to start off with and just went to see what was out there. We ended up with a composite of three separate locations, which I think has worked out really well. The main

exterior and ground floor interiors are at Arley Hall, the kitchens are at Tatton Park and the upstairs is at Croxteth Hall.

Series three opens on Tommy Shelby's wedding day. What key elements of Steven Knight's script did you have to translate to the location you settled on?

The opening of series three is a massive thing to get right, to create something that is unexpected but also a striking return to the world of *Peaky Blinders*. We start off with a carriage on the way to a wedding, but we don't know who is in it. This in itself presents a few challenges. It has to be the right carriage and it has to be the right location. We looked at Béla Tarr's film, *The Turin Horse (2011)*, for inspiration for the journey to the church, which was a very interesting reference from Tim (the director). In fact Tim had some fantastic and interesting European references, which we otherwise may not have thought of. We then find ourselves at the chapel, which had to have a very specific look. We found a chapel whose seats faced each other, much like the Houses of Parliament, rather than in rows and facing the altar. This creates a confrontational set up to start the series off with, which is great. We've got an enigmatic opening, in an environment we aren't used to seeing the Shelby clan in and hopefully it works well.

How much transformation did the chapel require?

The basic chapel that we started off with was great; it had incredible dark wood and an interior like I've never seen before yet still felt very English. But the paint was an off-white colour, which was too contrasting to the dark wood therefore wouldn't have worked with the dark, moody interior we were trying to create. So we painted it a deep teal colour then added a dirty glaze on top of that to make it feel like it had been that way for years. In discussions with Laurie Rose, the director of photography, we filled in the lower bank of windows to create a moody set, with all the light coming in from above and not behind everybody. It helped create that dark and slightly mysterious world that we wanted to have for this opening scene.

Have there been any additions made to the betting shop or the Shelby Co. offices?

The studio build of the betting shop is a huge set, which had already been extended for series two. This series the shop hasn't moved on that much, the Sheldys have moved on to other ventures but their base and the betting shop hasn't developed. What has changed is that they've built this huge vault to stack all the money they're making so that was the significant change we had to make.

Tommy and Alfie Solomons have a crucial scene in a warehouse setting, what was that like to set-dress?

That was an interesting scene to work on as it all happened quite last minute. It's a location we saw at the beginning of the scouting process and loved but didn't know what to film there. The original idea for the scene between Tommy and Alfie was a pine forest in the middle of summer. We also needed it to have a 360 degree view so Laurie could move the camera around the action without having to re-light too much. On top of that, in an ideal world, it was written as happening on a crossroads. We looked and looked and just couldn't find the right location. Eventually we were getting close to filming and had to make a decision so we went back to the docks and it really worked. The only problem was it was so huge we couldn't fill it, so we just dressed the areas that were going to be lit. It was also great because we had a certain amount of privacy that we wouldn't have had in a public location. It felt like it had proper scale and looked really epic.

What was the process in having the family portraits painted?

The portraits of members of the family are massively important to the script and I was really conscious about doing something that looked right, as they can really stand out if they are done badly. Julie Ann Horan (art director), really focused on getting the look right. She has a fine art background, so rather than going to someone who does standard film work we went to an artist who is a portrait painter and I think he's come up with something that feels real.

Cillian Murphy | Playing Tommy Shelby | Executive Producer

Describe how life has changed for Tommy Shelby since the end of series two?

At the end of series two we all thought Tommy was a gonner and we start series three two years later. What I like about television is that when you come back to a new series you can create a gap where the story continues that the audience isn't privy to. In series three we see him and the family on an upward spiral. Tommy and the family are now very wealthy, with big houses and fancy cars, so materially they are doing very well. Emotionally however, that is another matter.

What sort of man has Tommy Shelby become?

At the beginning of series three Tommy is getting married. I think however the gangster part of his life is still the most important. In the first couple of episodes the contrast between his personal life and the business clashes, which makes for a dramatically interesting conflict.

Have Tommy's newly found responsibilities affected his relationship with his family?

I think having a semblance of family life helps Tommy in many ways, in terms of making the Shelbys' more cohesive. It creates a communal environment for the family and there is a newly formed support network later in the story involving Polly and Ada. There is a big junction between family life, criminal life, violence and Tommy's ambition and it's a tricky one for him to negotiate this time around.

What was your first reaction on reading this series of scripts and seeing what Steven Knight had in store for Tommy?

What is great about Steve's writing is that having played him for a while, you think you know the character of Tommy, but you can never ever predict what Steve is going to do with him. It is so exciting to get the scripts, as they always astonish me and he pulls out a few shockers in this series. I also think by the time you get to a third series you need to be quite bold because the audience are so invested in the characters, they feel like friends to them. It is important that you move on with the characters and take leaps so that the audience feel that they are going on a journey with them. I feel that Steve has really nailed that in this series.

What we can expect from the opening of series three?

Weddings are usually intensely boring affairs except to the bride and groom, but Steve has managed to create an opening episode (which is a wedding day), that is riveting. There are so many layers of drama going on and right from the get go it's a really stunning piece of writing. On the one hand it is supposed to be the union

of these two people that love each other and then on the other there is the business and gangsters, violence and familial tension going on. I found it really compelling and I hope it will be equally engaging for the audience.

Despite moving up in the world Tommy never really lets go of his gypsy origins. How do we see Tommy return to his gypsy roots in series three?

For somebody who doesn't believe in religion and is completely godless, Tommy is an incredibly superstitious man. I think people who have that belief in superstition don't really use it when things are going well; it becomes something to blame or a way to justify something that has gone wrong. In this series things go wrong quite quickly and Tommy uses the gypsy superstition as a means of getting himself out of a situation.

Why has Tommy given Polly a position of seniority and power in the company?

Tommy and Polly's relationship is a fascinating one and it keeps growing and evolving from series to series. They represent a number of roles within the family. They are brother and sister, but can act like husband and wife, and mother and father to the family, yet they are none of those things and all of those things all at the same time. Each series Polly seems to go through different phases. Series three is about her growing independence and being upwardly mobile, and perhaps even having relationships. However, it seems that any time somebody moves away from the role that Tommy has designated for him or her, he finds it very difficult to deal with. Tommy has a lot thrown at him in this series and by the end of it he is probably not behaving completely rationally. It gets the most serious that it has ever become in this series, when dealing with the gravity of the fracturing of their trust for one another.

Does Tommy see Michael as his natural successor and is that why he is placing more trust in Michael's hands?

Michael impresses Tommy as he has a good business head on him and seems quite unafraid of things. I believe Tommy sees something of himself in Michael, sees him as someone he could mentor but it's tricky as Polly doesn't want her son to become involved in the darker side of the business. For the moment Michael is kept in the legitimate world of the Peaky business but Tommy sees him as a potential leader and probably Michael sees himself walking in Tommy's shoes.

Steven has created some nasty characters but none more so than Father Hughes. Describe the effect he has on Tommy.

I don't think any of the foes that Tommy has encountered over the course of the series have affected him quite to the degree that Father Hughes has. There is this

level of vitriolic hatred that's beyond anything that has come before. With Campbell (played by Sam Neill in series one and two), I think Tommy had some sort of grudging respect for him by the end. With Alfie Solomons (played by Tom Hardy), Tommy can see there are similarities between the two of them but with Hughes it's really dark. Hughes is probably the darkest character Steve (Knight) has written to date and Paddy Considine playing him is absolutely terrifying. Tommy despises what Hughes represents. He despises his behaviour and he despises the institution of the church and the relationship the church has with the State. The State that let down all the soldiers during the war, and to Tommy, Hughes is the very embodiment of that.

Describe the wide scope of the storyline involving the Russians and how Tommy fits into their plan?

The multi-layered stories in this series are a tribute to the quality of Steven Knight's writing. If you imagine a gangster series set in the 1920s in Britain, and that the gang has expanded to such a degree that they control Birmingham and are hugely powerful in London, you might think the natural progression would be to look towards America. What Steve did was the complete opposite. He involved Russia in the world of the Peaky Blinders. It was unexpected to read about this explosive time in Russian history and with a lot of the background to our story actually happening in world history. Steve loves this world and is brilliant at uncovering these historical events and weaving them into this storyline. With Tommy's involvement in this politically charged atmosphere, we see him out of his depth and thoroughly backed into a corner by the end of it all, which could have terrifying consequences for him and the family.

How does Duchess Tatiana Petrovna fit into Tommy's life? Is she the female incarnation of Tommy?

There are elements of this series that leave Tommy emotionally spiralling out of control, which in turn leaves him the most vulnerable we have ever seen him. Then in walks this Russian aristocrat whom he is doing business with and Tommy really does come up against someone who is completely different to what he is used to. Someone who has a whole other set of questionable morals and superstitions and who goes after exactly what she wants. She is not afraid to dip her toe into the world of the Peaky Blinders and hold her own against Tommy.

Tommy is dealt some cruel blows in this series. How does he come back from that place, if at all?

This is the most emotionally beaten down I think we have seen him. Those external forces that Tommy is trying to guard his family and business from, know that the way to get to him is through the family. So when they are threatened that is when Tommy spins out of control and becomes very, very dangerous.

In some ways the music is another character in the show. Do you contribute to which tracks are used on the soundtrack?

I love how important music is to the show and I think the audience do also. I thought what we did in series two with P.J. Harvey, Flood and various other artists that were involved in the soundtrack was exceptional. Being a music fan myself I like to get involved in knowing who is being considered for the soundtrack and what songs producers might be thinking of. It is fantastic to be involved in a show that musicians also want to have their music featured in.

What is it like getting back into the role of Tommy Shelby?

Tommy is a very physical character and goes through a lot this year both mentally and physically. There is a real test of endurance in this series and it was an exhausting shoot but I loved coming to work every day. We had a fantastic director in Tim Mielants and a terrific cast. Compared to a feature film it was a tough schedule - we got through a lot each day.

***Peaky Blinders* has a strong fan following. Have there been any locations where it was a surprise that you were recognised for your work on the show?**

When I get the haircut you can't hide that *Peaky Blinders* is coming back and I am recognised more. It always happens in places that you think would not have much interest in Brummie gangsters from the 1920s, like Greece, the Czech Republic, and they love it in France. It's fantastic that *Peaky Blinders* is globally recognised, the series is quite specific to this time period and location but somehow it has universal appeal.

What do you think attracts people to the show and keeps them wanting more?

For me it is great writing and great characters and originality that attract me to a TV show. From the fans that I talk to that's what they seem to like about *Peaky Blinders*.

What can the audience expect from series three?

This series has a larger canvas with increased jeopardy and danger. It's shocking and bloodier with interesting Russian intrigue.

Helen McCrory | playing Polly Gray

Where did we leave off with Polly in series two and how do we find her in series three?

We left Polly in series two having been reunited with the son that had been taken from her when he was young. She understandably feels hugely guilty about her past and wants to defend him with everything she has. Campbell, played by Sam Neill, sees this weakness in her and uses it to humiliate her, compromising herself in order to save her son. Polly is further humiliated by the fact that her son and everyone else knows what she has done and so she does what Peaky Blinders do and she kills Campbell.

How does Polly reconcile her actions in series two with her conscience?

At the beginning of the third series you find a woman that, as a Catholic, is damned as a murderer. This series explores what happens to Polly's soul and her mind as she carries the knowledge that she has killed a man. It is interesting to see how she battles with her conscience while still being part of this world that continues to be involved in killing.

How did you feel when you read these series three scripts and what Steven had in store for Polly?

My first reaction on reading this series is that it is the best Steven has written. The Peaky Blinders have expanded. They've got more money and therefore they have moved into the upper echelons of British society. It is a fantastic opportunity for Steven to write about how the working classes rubbed shoulders with the aristocracy of the country. This is post First World War and the whole fabric of Britain was being challenged. Within the first fifteen minutes of this series we see both sides of this coming face to face with the tension that was rife in Britain at that time. We also explore what happens when you make that kind of money, you move up in the world but everyone knows where you are from and nobody will let you forget it, that's the tension that kicks off the series. The Peaky Blinders have moved into a different location and a different world but you have people that cannot escape their background, or can they? That's the question Steven poses.

How would you describe Polly's position in the family?

Polly is the matriarch of the family and she's the treasurer of the Shelby Company, which I think is important. She is the one that oversees all the accounts so she knows everything that is going on, every deal. She watches the family and can see who is coping in this new world and who is not. It starts to splinter the family and the situation becomes very much sink or swim, with Polly definitely swimming.

Right from the beginning Polly tries to work out how she is going to assimilate herself within this new world and how she is going to succeed and take the entire family along with her. Polly becomes much more focused on the family's success in this series.

Describe the complex relationship between Polly and her son, Michael?

I think as soon as Polly is reunited with Michael she sees him as the natural successor to Tommy, and nurtures him as such. However, Polly is adamant that Michael is not to become involved in the murkier side of the Peaky Blinders dealings. The tension arises when it becomes clear that Michael has very different ideas. Polly is definitely the woman behind the son and she pushes him forward constantly. She is very protective of him and is the original Birmingham tiger mum of the 1920s.

The family business aside, what is Polly's view of Tommy?

It's hard to separate family from business because Tommy and Polly think the two are intertwined. Polly feels that Tommy runs the business very well and gets frustrated if she sees him take any steps towards the illegal or gangster related crime. She wants to make sure the family's hands are clean. Tommy is the person that she is most honest with and there is a real sense of them working the future out together in this series.

Campbell robbed Polly of her femininity and independence during series two. How has she rebuilt herself?

Campbell does indeed strip Polly of her femininity and independence in the last series and you feel that when you meet her in this series, she feels damned. She is closed up and doesn't want to talk about her actions. She has built a wall around her. As series three progresses Polly tries to move forward from her horrendous experience.

Polly is the driving force behind the women going out on strike. Is this an early indication of where we see the character of Polly heading?

The women of the show and Polly's position is interesting as although they have positions of power within the company, they do not have the same freedom or rewards as the men have. Polly does go out on strike with the other women and goes on the march to see what the feminists of the time are discussing. I think that the characters in this drama would have felt an inequality when it came to the business side of things. Polly does adopt masculine traits in order to communicate with the men so that is the way she copes with being a woman in a man's world.

She was one of those women of that time - strong and intelligent because she had to be in order to survive.

Describe how Polly's style has evolved over the years?

There is a huge shift from last series to this series in the way that we are all styled and dressed. The biggest change for Polly is that they cut all my hair and I was really nervous about that. The shapes of the costumes have changed dramatically as you lose the waist in the 1920s. I think that the audience will accept the change as they do with other long running series where the style changes across a time period.

***Peaky Blinders* has a strong fan following. Have you ever been surprised that you are recognised for your work on this particular show?**

I was genuinely surprised that *Peaky Blinders* was so popular in America. I went over to New York for the summer and people were complimenting my work. I assumed that it was in relation to another series I'd recently finished that had aired in the US. After a while someone mentioned they had to watch it with subtitles, which is when I realised it was Peaky they were talking about. I've also had fellow actors and producers and directors say that they are really big fans, which is so pleasing as everyone works very hard on the series to try and make something original and fresh.

Has there been a particular scene you have enjoyed filming or location that you have enjoyed filming in?

We filmed in a place called Arley Hall; a beautiful house that we open the series on at Tommy's wedding. Steven wrote these amazing scenes where you have one side of the church congregation all suited and booted and then the other side the gypsy families of the Peaky Blinders facing them for the service. There are some really tense scenes between the two families. Steven wrote this series beginning with the shortest day of the year, in the heart of winter, and finishes the series in the summer, on the longest day of the year.

What do you think attracts people to the series and keeps them wanting more?

We are used to British television exploring the upper echelons of society but not so used to watching it explore the below stairs as much, and the Peaky Blinders are not even that; they are the below, below stairs. In fact they're underground really. I think it's interesting to see how people simply struggled to live in Britain at that time. If they were born now Tommy and Polly wouldn't be the criminals they are in the 1920s because they have the brains to get out. It's compelling to watch people that have the passion to try and improve their situation, however bleak

that might be. Despite the awful things the Peaky Blinders get up to, you realise that there are few alternatives open to them. They pick themselves up and start again so I think that the energy these characters have, dragging themselves up from the gutters of Birmingham is something we haven't seen before.

Paul Anderson | playing Arthur Shelby**How has Arthur changed in this series?**

A lot has happened to Arthur since we last saw him in series two. He has gone through some very big changes. I think when we meet him in series three he is happier, but the demons have not gone.

Has Linda (played by Kate Phillips) been a calming influence and does she really know what Arthur gets up to at work?

Linda most definitely has a calming effect on Arthur and Kate is such a lovely, generous actor. She has created a very strong woman in Linda and the character is a big part of Arthur's life. I think that Linda is fairly wise (in a watered down way) to what Arthur gets up to.

What was your reaction to these scripts and seeing what he had in store for Arthur?

I was very grateful to Steven, as he has written such a powerful character in Arthur. In my opinion it is the best series he has written.

The Shelby family are moving up in the world. What's your take on the larger scale look of this series?

Steven has written some wonderful things for this series and has taken the family in a very strong direction. We like the opulence and the look, and that is also thanks to the director Tim Mielants and director of photography Laurie Rose. They have done an incredible job with the cinematography, lighting and direction, moving the family along seamlessly, without losing the essence of what the Peaky Blinders stand for.

Has there been a particular scene you have enjoyed filming or location that you have enjoyed filming in?

The first episode we shot was my favourite, as I thoroughly enjoyed seeing all the main characters together, along with some very cool new entries!

How would you describe Arthur and Tommy's relationship? How has it evolved?

They are family, brothers and their relationship will always be strong. The love, the hate, the support; it is all there as before, but with some big shifts in store for this series.

Joe Cole | playing John Shelby

What's happening in John Shelby's world when we meet him again in this series?

We left series two with John in turmoil. He was questioning his place and whole involvement within the gang and the family and wondering where he stood. There is a moment with Lizzie where she tells him that he perhaps needs to rethink what he's doing. That maybe he's not cut out for this line of work, unlike some of the other boys. So that's all thrown up at the end of series two. At the beginning of series three John is very much in the thick of everything, doing a lot of the dirty work as Tommy tries to move the family into more legitimate society circles. John is left with Arthur to maintain the illegal side of the business and ensure they stay a strong force to be reckoned with.

What was your reaction on reading what this series of scripts had in store for John?

One of the most exciting parts of this job is reading the new scripts because Steven Knight has such a brilliant mind and such a fascination and emotional connection to this particular story. It is really exciting and breath-taking stuff. We always try to guess and figure out what's happening for our characters and for the series and we are always wrong! Steven likes to throw curve balls and mix things up. This series, (and I know we say it each time) is the best so far. Steven and the cast have really found their feet. We've had a couple of series to figure out what's going on, who is who, and now we're really punching. It's going to be very visceral and intense.

How is John dealing with his position in the family and the business in this series?

I think John is most interested in the illegitimate side of the business. That's where he gets his enjoyment and it's all he's ever known. The family are very much stepping into a more legitimate world and we see how that impacts John. He wants things to stay as they were but the world around him is definitely changing. John is a loyal soldier and sometimes Tommy takes advantage of that. In this series you'll see just how much that impacts on John and how his sense of value within the company is tested.

How would you describe John and Arthur's relationship?

John and Arthur are paired up by Tommy to do a lot of the illegitimate things required for the business to run. We spend a lot of time together and we have a lot of fun. When our characters are secondary to a scene, we tend to ad-lib and

embellish some stuff and have a laugh! You've got to be on your toes. We try and add subtle things to the scene and try to bring additional detail to what's on the page.

Annabelle Wallis | playing Grace Burgess**How does series two end for Grace?**

At the end of series two Grace had just confessed her love to Tommy. She cannot live without him and it was left very open-ended in many ways. He's moved on and she's disappeared from his life.

What was your initial reaction to reading Steven Knight's opening scenes of this series?

I loved it. Steven's writing is so rich so the second you start a script you are completely immersed in his descriptive narrative. The opening scene of this series is so overwhelmingly evocative of the series. The moment that I began reading his writing on the page I was totally immersed not knowing what to expect.

How does it feel to come back to the series?

It's wonderful to return to *Peaky Blinders*. We're all here for the right reasons; to work and do justice to what's written on the page. Steven is a genius who writes characters so well. He builds characters with so many shades of grey and writes women who are multi-layered with strong story arcs. He has really made the show bold, brave, contemporary but with a through-line to classic film and television making. It's true to the period but it has moved with the times. It's grown over the years and the third series really opens on a different level and scale to previous years. It's so cinematic and exciting for all of us.

Describe the grander scale of series three?

I think the premise from the start was to make a television show that felt like cinema with big epic production values. It began with that mission in mind. We wanted it to go global in terms of its look and it's exciting for me that it has followed its path in the right way. The sets are bigger, the cast is bigger and it seems television is really where people are taking the biggest risks now and this is one of the shows lighting the way for the rest.

What can we expect this year in terms of tone and scale?

I think you can expect fast-paced, sexy, bold, brave, exciting, scary drama; all the things under the sun that inspire you. It's great television and I hope the audience are really going to enjoy it. I think that people are going to laugh, cry and scream, it definitely has an experience for everyone and it's going to be an emotional ride.

Sophie Rundle | playing Ada Shelby

When we last met Ada she was an independent woman living away from the family. What's changed for her?

The last time we saw Ada she had branched away from the family and started a new life for herself in London. She was trying to put some distance between herself and the Peaky Blinders. She discovered she was quite politically minded and wanted to explore her independence in that way. She isolated herself, having lost her husband, and was bringing up her child on her own. She was really trying to establish who she is and get out from under the shadows of her brothers. When we meet her in series three Ada is still very keen to keep her independence but she has softened slightly. She's lost a bit of that teenage angst where she was raging against her brothers and her background and is more comfortable in who she is. However, she still retains all that grit and determination she had in series two.

What are the themes or the series and how does Ada fit into all of this?

A big theme of series three is seeing the Shelby family in an entirely new world. This series is about identity and how far you can remove yourself from what you were born into. It's their strong connection with each other that makes them a force to be reckoned with. Ada is a good representation of that as, having tried to break away it's her bond with the family that pulls her back. They are stronger when they are together. The brothers have all the muscle and the brawn but it dawns on Tommy that Ada is incredibly intelligent and has this extraordinary political mind. He quickly realises that if he harnesses that strength, it can only benefit the family. He's drawing on the strengths of the family to build their empire even further.

How does this series test Ada's relationship with the family?

There has always been a strain on Ada's relationship with her family and her own identity. I think this year, because of the events that transpire, she finds herself drawn back to the family by instinct. Ada discovers that you can't really hide who you are or where you come from. It's about aligning the person that she wants to be with the person that she has become, and how the two can live along side each other.

How is the family's new social standing reflected in the show?

They've really moved up a level and they appear to have infiltrated this higher level of society that they could only ever dream about in series one. It is a huge leap. What I think is so exciting is that we filmed in these beautiful big period

houses and the scale just feels bigger, richer and wealthier. The colours are deeper and less smoky but it is not like a classic period drama. It's done with the Peaky swagger and still has that rock and roll, gutsy feel to it that is really exciting. It marries up two things that I think British television does very well; period drama and bold television.

Has there been a particular scene you have enjoyed filming?

I've enjoyed the weeks where we were together as the Shelby family because I was very distant from them during series two. All being together during the big family scenes is enormous fun because there's this mad energy between us all.

What would you like to see happen to Ada in the future?

I think she should run the lot of them! I'd love to see Ada really embrace the feral side of her nature. The Shelby boys are wild and tough and I'd love to see her accept that she is really intelligent and smart but that she can also be hard as nails, bold and incredibly progressive for a woman of her era. This is a time of incredible social and economic change and I'd like to see her take that and run with it.

Finn Cole | playing Michael Gray

Michael appears to possess a similar survival streak in him as Tommy. How is this reflected in the new series?

At the end of series two we find that Michael has disobeyed Polly's orders by staying. He is enticed by the corruption of the gang and he thinks that he can help Tommy. It was an interesting stage for Michael because he faced two different paths. It becomes clear that Michael is capable of helping the Shelby Company and fits in really well. When we meet Michael at the beginning of series three we find he has become a vital cog in the company wheel, although he has strictly kept away from the illegitimate side of the gang that he so desperately craves.

Michael had not crossed the line in the sand that makes him a true Peaky Blinder. How does this series test this decision?

Michael is very aware of the reality of what his life was compared to what it is now. The change in his circumstances from childhood to where he is when we meet him in series three is vast. In series three we see that Michael's got a feel for what he wants and what he believes, but will he cross the line and becomes a true Peaky Blinder? You'll have to wait and see. The definition of being a Peaky Blinder has changed since the previous series. In series two there was violence, murder and cold-blooded anger, but in the third series, although that is still ever present, the family have become prominent figures within society. That's an important part of the storyline progression.

How do we see the family and company moving up in the world?

There is a clear increase in wealth and power and with that comes more responsibility as well as lots of danger. It means that they have to trust more people. That change poses completely different challenges for the gang; business challenges, relationship challenges and all for seemingly different reasons. I think that increase in scale has really made for an exciting storyline and has been executed beautifully. The increase in the family's wealth and power means different locations, which are all bigger and grander.

Do you have a particular scene that has stood out amongst the others as a favourite for you?

There have been horse-races that we shot in the grounds of Tommy's new home that were really exciting but for me the kitchen scenes have been the best. There is something about the small space that makes those scenes particularly intense. There was one scene, which was a real battle for power between Arthur and Michael. There is a real sense of a shift in Michael, as it's the first time we see him

in a position of power in the series. Michael is capable of sticking up for himself, and is beginning to learn how to run things. It was really emotional and quite a powerful scene.

How does your character fit into the story of series three?

Michael is there to safeguard the legitimate side of the business and that's how he likes to work. There is a drive in Michael to earn money. He is a family man, like Tommy, and wants to keep things up. It's exciting for Michael because he is experiencing so many new things and is helping the gang in a way that they never originally wanted him to. However it turns out that he's actually a real asset to them and to the success of the company.

How does the relationship change between Michael, Tommy and Polly?

Michael has become a significant part of Tommy's plans and they have a mutual trust and respect for one another. For Michael, Tommy represents the father figure he never had. Michael also has such a beautifully written emotional subplot throughout this series, which makes his relationship with Polly slightly harder as she wants to keep him safe and hidden away from all the bad things within the gang. The fact is he can't avoid these things if he wants to be a part of a family like this. As a result Michael's relationship with Polly is strained at times, although there are also many lovely moments between them.

Is Michael becoming his own man in this series?

Michael has more of an understanding of the world and is becoming very good at reading people. He takes his time and has patience. The gap between series two and three is where, I think, he begins to find himself. Michael is such an unusual character and this series explores all that makes him the man that he is. He's got money, he's got business sense but it's all the other things in life that he has previously missed out on that he's striving for that makes him this wonderful three-dimensional character.

Aimee-Ffion Edwards | playing Esme Shelby

Esme reads as a strong female character. Was that the main reason you wanted to play her?

Esme is a very headstrong, stubborn and passionate character to play. When I first joined the cast in series one there wasn't a lot to go on in terms of Esme's background at the time. All I knew was that she was a gypsy girl. But the character of Esme and the rest of the female roles have grown so much over the course of the three series, it has been exciting for all of us.

Do we see the women stand up for themselves more?

It's quite a unique situation in that the women within the family are very strong and have a lot of power within the company. The women also have to deal with the responsibility and the danger surrounding the business, but are not necessarily aware of what that danger is as they are not always told the full truth. It is down to them to work it out for themselves.

What have been your favourite scenes to play this year?

I love being in the betting shop with all the women. That's where I get most of my time to explore the dynamics and relationships between them all. As the show and the family expand so do the relationships between them and the whole notion of a pecking order, which of the women has the most control, is exciting. It's all about who has the most information in this series. There is a moment when all the girls get together, put all pecking orders aside and unite together for the same goal.

Natasha O’Keeffe | playing Lizzie Stark

How have the female characters like Lizzie grown from series to series?

To begin with Lizzie was a very small part that was just one long scene with Tommy in a cart. She was a prostitute but with Tommy’s help and Lizzie’s determination, she bettered herself and became a key asset to Tommy in the final moments of series two. I think that Lizzie’s struggle is reflective of working-class women in Birmingham at that time, they were trying to work their way up and so had to have a strong drive to succeed and to try and make money any way they could.

How has the show changed between series two and three?

With series three the Shelby Company offices have expanded a great deal and the Shelbys’ now have this huge house but more importantly, Lizzie has got her own office! On the office door it says ‘Elizabeth Stark’, not just Lizzie, so that’s pretty cool.

As an audience member, what can we expect from series three of *Peaky Blinders*?

I think the audience will really get a feel for the claustrophobia that exists within the family despite the much grander scale of their surroundings. At times there is a real sense of being trapped, and even if certain members want to walk away, they can’t.

***Peaky Blinders* has a very big fan base worldwide. What do you think it is that keeps them coming back for more?**

The show is an intriguing family story and one that takes the audience with them. It is very unpredictable, and in particular series three takes us out of the Shelby Company and focuses on the family unit. We’ve now got Russians and Italians involved in these scripts, which can only make for an exciting story.

Kate Phillips | playing Linda Shelby**How are we introduced to Linda and how does she sit within the story?**

The audience is introduced to Linda almost immediately. About two years have passed between series two and three. During this time Tommy has introduced Linda to Arthur and they have married. You learn what sort of person she is and what her role is within the family as the series develops. So her significance to Arthur is not immediately apparent.

Do you see Linda as a calming influence on Arthur?

Linda finds her strength through her faith. Arthur, at this time in his life, is in search of some sort of guidance and support and he seems to find that through her faith. Together they have an intriguing bond. I was unsure how that relationship could even exist between them with the person we know Arthur to be but it seems that Linda's strong belief system is the source of his renewed strength. It can be difficult to portray that trust and bond as an actor so I've found it really interesting how Paul and I have discovered this partnership between Arthur and Linda.

How much does Linda know about the family business and Arthur's involvement in it? What is her role within the family?

I think that is the one question I kept coming back to, 'what is the role that Linda plays in this family dynamic?' and 'How do her values exist within this family's values.' I think Linda's journey is about her working out all of this for herself and how far she is prepared to go to reform Arthur. It is a really interesting relationship because she is certainly going to be at odds with the family dynamic because of her faith and values. Linda also knows that by engaging and empowering the Shelby women you can shift the power levels within the family.

What was your first reaction on reading the script?

When you get your hands on a script of this calibre it's unbelievably exciting. Steven's storytelling is beautiful and vivid. When you've watched the series as an audience member as I have done, it's thrilling when suddenly somebody tells you that you are going to be in it.

Has there been a particular scene that you enjoyed filming?

Early on in the filming there is a scene between Paul and I in a church, which is the first real close scene between Arthur and Linda. We hadn't really filmed anything prior to that and I was a bit nervous, trying to work out what this relationship is that we are yet to discover, but between Tim Mielants (the director), Paul and

myself we found something really lovely in this beautiful setting. That was the moment that I realised that this experience was going to be wonderful.

Gaite Jansen | playing Duchess Tatiana Petrovna**How are we introduced to Tatiana and how does she fit into the story?**

The first time we meet Tatiana is at the wedding of Tommy Shelby. Tatiana doesn't initially seem like an important character, but don't be deceived. Her and Tommy really level in a business way and they're both pretty intense. Tatiana is full of surprises.

Tatiana reads as a very strong, determined character that goes after exactly what she wants. Was this what appealed to you?

When I first read the script and I was surprised by what she did time and time again. By the end, I realised that she really does just go for what she wants, she isn't afraid to do anything to get things to go her way. Often female characters in this period are written as someone's girlfriend or as a gentle, girlish character. Whilst Tatiana is very feminine, she behaves in a masculine way. I'm a feminist and I don't want to say she behaves like a man, but she is empowered in a way that might have been written for a man.

What were your first reactions on reading the script?

When I read the scenes, I immediately knew this was something really cool. I started watching series one and two and I just fell in love with the show. All I knew from the audition was that Tatiana was Russian and a Duchess. I didn't know if that would be all there was to her so it was the most wonderful thing to get the full scripts and realise that she is one of the most incredible characters I have ever played. She is so unpredictable, strong and tough and she's not afraid of anything, which I love.

How would you describe Tatiana's relationship with Tommy?

In the audition script, Tatiana had a line, 'you can love someone for just a few seconds' and I think that's the way Tatiana loves. She loves Tommy, but she loves him for moments. She also hates him for moments. I imagine that she has been hurt in the past and doesn't think of the future; so she can love him in that way, hate him and then the next moment it's about business. Her life is just a series of moments.

What are Tatiana's strengths and how does she use them to her advantage?

One of her strengths is that she knows who she is and how to use that to her advantage. She knows that as a woman you can behave in certain ways to get what you want, so she does. She knows how to take opportunities when they come her way and she's brave. She has no fear of dying and there's a real sense

with Tatiana that she has nothing to lose and that makes someone incredibly dangerous.

Was there a particular scene you have enjoyed filming or location that you enjoyed filming in?

I was so amazed by all the locations. I wrongly assumed it was all going to be in a studio but we mostly shot on location and everywhere was really gorgeous. Every time Tatiana comes into the story, she does something unexpected and behaves in a way completely differently to the last time we saw her, she just kept surprising me. She really is a cool character to play and Tim Mielants (the director) is the reason why. He is truly amazing and made every day exciting.

Tatiana always looks well styled. Can you talk about her costumes and the look of the character?

I love the way Tatiana looks because it's so different to how I look day-to-day. I don't generally wear make-up and so to have had all this incredible hair and make-up on everyday was so much fun, you truly wouldn't recognise me out of costume. Her costumes are all very pretty and expensive-looking. All the dresses have been made especially for this character and she looks like a princess.

How does it feel that *Peaky Blinders* is your first UK television appearance?

For *Peaky Blinders* to be my first job in the UK is the best possible start I could have imagined. Tatiana is a fierce character, she's not some fragile little woman, she is straight up danger. It's really the best role I could ever have wished for in my first UK show.

SYNOPSES

Series Synopsis

Thomas Shelby (Cillian Murphy) is drawn into a maze of global intrigue in the electrifying third series of Steven Knight's acclaimed family saga.

Approached by a secret organisation on his own wedding day, Tommy finds himself at the centre of an international arms deal that could change the course of history.

In a sphere where no one reveals their true intentions until the game is up, Tommy has to contend with a White Russian exile whose brutality knows no bounds, a priest with a killer dog, a beautiful Duchess even more manipulative than him, and a powerful entity at the heart of the British establishment that will stop at nothing to accomplish its reactionary aims. The pressures they inflict upon Tommy are carefully chosen and exquisitely unpleasant.

Meanwhile Tommy's legal and illegal businesses have made him rich beyond his dreams. He now inhabits a Roaring Twenties world of beautiful people and sumptuous mansions, and he has found love at last. But Tommy's relatives have become increasingly difficult to handle, and threaten to blow the Shelby family apart.

As Tommy is coerced into the most audacious criminal act of his career, he realises that his response to overwhelming external and internal forces will define the kind of man he is.

Overflowing with characters of startling originality and a story that truly gets under the skin, Steven Knight's phenomenal vision of a family's odyssey through British society reaches new heights in a series that is emotional, intense and wildly entertaining.

Episodic Synopses

Episode 1

Thomas Shelby's wedding day has arrived at last, but while his guests enjoy the celebrations he has important business to conduct, as a mysterious stranger makes their presence known.

For months Tommy has developed interests with a new business partner and, to his fury, today is the day they've decided to show their hand. They are backed by Winston Churchill himself, so he has no choice but to play their illicit game.

More determined than ever to go legitimate and keep his family safe as he starts married life, Tommy finds himself pulled into a web of intrigue more lethal than anything he has yet encountered.

Episode 2

On the orders of the secretive Economic League, Tommy goes to London to meet the wildly eccentric and volatile Duke Leon. He soon discovers the extreme lengths his new paymasters are willing to go to in their quest for power.

In Birmingham, John's temper gets the better of him, and a personal dispute with the Italians threatens to explode into a devastating war.

As Tommy struggles to regain control of the situation, he finds out how extensive his new enemy's hold on the Peaky Blinders is.

Episode 3

Responding to the Italians' actions, Tommy is set on a path of deadly vengeance that could take him to his darkest place yet, and threatens to splinter the family.

As Arthur struggles with his conscience, Linda implores him to stop his illicit work with the Peaky Blinders. Meanwhile, Polly realises the depths of her new friend's intentions for her.

Tommy meets the true force behind his imminent mission: the fiercely uncompromising Grand Duchess Izabella. But he discovers there's a traitor in his paymasters' midst who could unravel the entire plan.

Episode 4

Tommy takes his brothers on a hunting expedition and shares some important family news. Tommy also outlines his intentions for the most daring criminal act the Peaky Blinders have yet to undertake.

Meanwhile, Tommy and Tatiana play a personal and dangerous game to acquire information from one another, and Tommy finally comprehends the magnitude of her warped ideals.

Elsewhere, Polly fights with her conscience and makes a confession to an ill-chosen individual, with terrible consequences for Tommy.

Episode 5

As the Russians test the Peaky Blinders men in their own distinctive and debauched way, Tommy realises that he is being seriously outmanoeuvred. Desperate for help, he rekindles a business relationship with a dangerous former acquaintance.

Polly decides to take her new friendship to another level. Meanwhile, despite the efforts to keep him on the legitimate end of the business, Polly's son Michael shows signs of embracing the Peaky Blinders' darker side.

As the day for the Peaky Blinders' criminal strike approaches, and Father Hughes makes his devilish intentions clear, Tommy assembles a band of trusted allies from the Great War.

Episode 6

As Tommy prepares to commit the most audacious crime of his career, an unexpected blow is struck that puts him under unbearable pressure.

As he faces his worst fears he needs help more than ever, but is increasingly uncertain about who he can trust.

In a nerve-shredding race against time, Tommy is forced to confront hard truths about himself and his family that could change the Peaky Blinders forever.



CARYN MANDABACH PRODUCTIONS

Caryn Mandabach Productions is an independent television company with offices in London and LA. The team is led by Caryn Mandabach, the Emmy-Award winning producer of groundbreaking hits including *Roseanne*, *Third Rock from the Sun*, *That 70s Show*, *Showtime's Nurse Jackie*, which ran for seven seasons and, most recently, the award-winning drama *Peaky Blinders* for BBC TWO and Netflix.

For more information visit www.mandabachtv.com

TIGER ASPECT DRAMA

Tiger Aspect Drama, a division of Tiger Aspect Productions (an Endemol Shine Company), is recognised as one of the UK's most successful and prolific drama producers and has created a wide range of critically acclaimed and award-winning programming.

Current returning series include *Ripper Street* (Amazon Prime/BBC Worldwide) and *Peaky Blinders* (BBC Two). *The Good Karma Hospital*, a six part series for ITV will film later this year as well a new, as well as a three part adaptation of Evelyn Waugh's *Decline and Fall* for BBC Two.

Working with the best talent – on and off screen – continues to be the key to what Tiger Aspect Drama does and the company has a rich and long tradition of producing entertaining, engaging and eclectic content.

In exciting times for scripted drama – with new funding and production models enabling the scale of storytelling to know no bounds - Tiger Aspect Drama's aim is to continue delivering interesting, challenging and ambitious entertainment to audiences in the UK and globally.

STILLS



Cillian Murphy as Tommy Shelby



Helen McCrory as Polly Gray



Paul Anderson as Arthur Shelby



Joe Cole as John Shelby



Joe Cole as John Shelby, Cillian Murphy as Tommy Shelby
and Paul Anderson as Arthur Shelby



Sophie Rundle as Ada Shelby



Finn Cole as Michael Gray



Paddy Considine as Father John Hughes



Gaitie Jansen as Duchess Tatiana Petrovna



Cillian Murphy as Tommy Shelby and Tom Hardy as Alfie Solomons



Annabelle Wallis as Grace Burgess



Natasha O'Keefe as Lizzie Stark



Kate Phillips as Linda Shelby and Aimee-ffion Edwards as Esme Shelby



Harry Kirton as Finn Shelby



Behind-the-scenes of Peaky Blinders, series three.
Paul Anderson as Arthur Shelby with Tim Mielants, director.



Cillian Murphy as Tommy Shelby

Press pack produced by

