

KEN BRIDGEMAN 1930 - 2006

Ken (Kenneth) Bridgeman was a key participant in the visualising of *The Prisoner*. As Set Dresser on all the first thirteen episodes (including *Once Upon a Time*, which was shown much later) he directly contributed to the look of the sets. Under the supervision of Art Director Jack Shampan, Ken worked in particular on the striking Green Dome set and No. 6's apartment interior.

Sadly, Ken seems to have been overlooked in *Six of One's* many years of mailings and no interviews or reminiscences could be found, not even a photo. Therefore it is time to rectify the omission and provide a tribute, albeit posthumously, as Ken died in 2006, aged 75.

Prisoner Art Director Jack Shampan spoke in praise of Ken from their time during the making of the series, "We'd talk about the set, then Ken would disappear and return with armfuls of lovely odds and ends to dress it".

Chris Cook, who was an assistant in the Art Department, fondly recalled, "Ken had a wonderful sense of humour, he was calm and full of fun. He dressed Pat's inside rooms and many other things, never getting flustered at the strange demands made by late scripts."

Chris continued, "When Ken (later) moved to live in Bath, Leo McKern was at the end of his road. Perhaps the most trying times were when Leo joined the *Prisoner* cast. He was working on a London stage production at the time. One episode went wrong and we had to re-film at night. There was also the episode where we had two pages of script at a time, so it was difficult to track what was happening."

The assistant remembered *The Chimes of Big Ben*, "The episode involved sculptures of Leo. His agent sent us PR photos, not telling us that he was in a play that required a goatee chin. So the busts had to be re-modelled at the last minute by Ken in plasticine."

After leaving school, Ken studied commercial art and later worked as a designer in repertory, before moving into the film industry. He worked on many films, including German, Swedish and Italian productions and *The Beatles' A Hard Day's Night* (1964). He was Set Dresser on the 1959 film *The Angry Silence*. Shot on location in Ipswich, this was where he met his wife Brenda, who still lives in Bath.

During his final years, Ken's passion for gardens involved him in a major project, the creation of the public Millennium Garden on the outskirts of Bath. According to the *Guardian's* obituary, Ken was "...gentle and considerate, inspiring others with his flair, creativity and resourcefulness. He never wasted anything, including time, but he was invariably generous with his own."

Ken worked on the following productions, variously as Art Director, Set Dresser, Production Designer, or as Assistant Production Designer:

1984 *Robin of Sherwood* (TV; APD)
1984 *Ordeal by Innocence* (film; PD)
1977 *Let's Get Laid* (film; AD)
1976 *the Slipper and the Rose* (film; SD)
1976 *Deadly Strangers* (film; SD)
1976 *Pure as a Lily* (film; AD)
1976 *The Bawdy Adventures of Tom Jones* (film; PD)
1975 *Diagnosis: Murder* (film; PD)
1974 *Symptoms* (film; AD)
1974 *Vampyres* (film; AD)
1973 *No Sex Please: We're British* (film; SD)
1971 *Straw Dogs* (film; AD)
1971 *Dulcima* (film; Assistant AD)
1969 *A Nice Girl Like Me* (film; AD)
1969 *Arthur? Arthur!* (film; AD)
1969 *Two Gentlemen Sharing* (film; AD)
1967 *Smashing Time* (film; AD)
1963 *Billy Liar* (film; SD)
1959 *The Angry Silence* (film; SD)



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