

= Robert Bathurst =

Robert Guy Bathurst ( born 22 February 1957 ) is an English actor . Bathurst was born in the Gold Coast in 1957 , where his father was working as a management consultant . His family moved to Dublin , Ireland , in 1959 and Bathurst was enrolled at an Anglican boarding school . In 1966 , the family moved to England , and Bathurst transferred to Worth School in Sussex , where he took up amateur dramatics . At the age of 18 , he read law at the University of Cambridge and joined the Cambridge Footlights group . After graduating , he took up acting full @-@ time .

He made his professional stage debut in 1983 , playing Tim Allgood in Michael Frayn 's *Noises Off* , which ran for a year at the Savoy Theatre . To broaden his knowledge of working on stage , he joined the National Theatre . He supplemented his stage roles in the 1980s with television roles , appearing in comedies such as the aborted pilot episode of *Blackadder* , *Chelmsford 123* , *The Lenny Henry Show* , and the first episode of *Red Dwarf* . In 1991 , he won his first major television role playing Mark Taylor in Steven Moffat 's semi @-@ autobiographical BBC sitcom *Joking Apart* . Although only thirteen episodes were made between 1991 and 1995 , the role remains Bathurst 's favourite of his whole career . After *Joking Apart* concluded , he was cast as pompous management consultant David Marsden in the ITV comedy drama *Cold Feet* , which ran for five series from 1998 to 2003 .

Since 2003 , Bathurst has played a fictional prime minister in the BBC sitcom *My Dad 's the Prime Minister* , Mark Thatcher in the fact @-@ based drama *Coup !* , and a man whose daughter goes missing in the ITV thriller *The Stepfather* . He also made a return to theatre roles , playing Vershinin in *The Three Sisters* ( 2003 ) , Adrien in the two @-@ hander *Members Only* ( 2006 ) , government whip Alistair in *Whipping it Up* ( 2006 ? 07 ) , and Alex in *Alex* ( 2007 , 2008 ) . In the following years he starred in the television dramas *The Pillars of the Earth* ( 2010 ) , *Downton Abbey* ( 2010 ) , *Hattie* ( 2011 ) and joined the cast of *Wild at Heart* ( 2012 ) . Bathurst appeared in his first Noël Coward play , *Present Laughter* , in 2010 and followed it with a role in *Blithe Spirit* in 2010 and 2011 . He is married and has four children .

= = Early life = =

Robert Guy Bathurst was born in Accra , Gold Coast ( modern @-@ day Ghana ) , on 22 February 1957 to Philip Bathurst and Gillian Bathurst ( née Debenham ) . His father was a major in the Royal Engineers during the Second World War and was working in West Africa as a management consultant , and his mother was a physiotherapist . They had two other children ; Nicholas and Charlotte . The family lived in Ghana until 1959 , when they moved to Ballybrack , Dublin , Ireland . Bathurst and his brother attended two schools in Dublin ? the Holy Child School in Killiney and a school in Ballsbridge ? before being sent to a preparatory school in Kells , County Meath . He compared the time he and his brother , Catholics , spent at the Anglican boarding school to Lord of the Flies ; " we were incarcerated in a huge , stinking , Georgian house , where we were treated very brutally . "

In 1966 , the family moved to England . Bathurst transferred to the Worth Abbey boarding school in Sussex , which he much preferred to the school in Kells . At the age of 13 , he began acting in minor skits and revues and read old copies of *Plays and Players* magazine , " studying floor plans of theatres and reading about new theatres being built " . He had first become interested in acting when his family saw a pantomime at the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin , and he watched actors waiting for their cues in the wings .

He left Worth at the age of 18 to read law at Pembroke College , Cambridge . Describing himself as " hopeless at anything academic " , he spent much of his time at university performing in the Cambridge Footlights alongside Hugh Laurie , Rory McGrath and Emma Thompson . From 1977 to 1978 , he was the secretary of the group , and from 1978 to 1979 the president . Among the Footlights Revues he participated in were *Stage Fright* in 1978 , which he also co @-@ wrote , and *Nightcap* in 1979 . He also directed and appeared in the Footlights pantomime *Aladdin* as Widow Twankey during the 1978 ? 79 season . He took the Bar Vocational Course at the University of Law

, in London , which allowed him to go on to become a practising barrister , but stuck to acting instead .

= = Acting career = =

= = = Early career = = =

After graduating from Cambridge , Bathurst spent a year touring Australia in the Footlights Revue Botham , The Musical , which he described as " a bunch of callow youths flying round doing press conferences and chat shows " . Although he enjoyed his work with Footlights , he did not continue performing with the troupe , worrying that he would be " washed up at 35 having coat @-@ tailed on their success through the early part of [ his ] career " . After leaving , he found that he was considered a dilettante , which resulted in it taking him longer than expected to be accepted as a serious actor . His first professional role out of university was in the BBC Radio 4 series Injury Time , alongside fellow Footlights performers Rory McGrath and Emma Thompson . His first role for television came in 1982 when he appeared as Prince Henry in the unaired pilot episode of Blackadder . He had already appeared in a training video by director Geoff Posner and got the role of Henry by way of thanks . The character was recast and downgraded when the series was commissioned as The Black Adder .

Bathurst 's professional stage debut came the next year when he joined the second cast of Michael Frayn 's Noises Off at the Savoy Theatre . He replaced Roger Lloyd @-@ Pack as Tim Allgood and stayed at the Savoy for a year . Between roles , he worked as a television presenter for BBC East . After declining an offer to be a presenter of That 's Life ! he joined the National Theatre in 1984 , where he appeared as a background actor in Saint Joan . He regards it as " the most demoralising " job he has ever had but was grateful for the theatre experience it gave him . The following year , he appeared at The Man In The Moon , a pub theatre in Chelsea , in Judgement , a two @-@ hour monologue on cannibalism . The opening night audience was made up of three people but after good reviews in the national press the audience grew to an average of fifteen .

A casting director for the James Bond film The Living Daylights persuaded Bathurst to audition for Bond . Bathurst believes that his " ludicrous audition " was only " an arm @-@ twisting exercise " because the producers wanted to pressure Timothy Dalton to take the role by telling him they were still auditioning other actors . Bathurst noted " I could never have done it - Bond actors are always very different to me " .

He continued to make minor appearances in television throughout the 1980s ; in 1987 , he auditioned for the role of Dave Lister in the BBC North science fiction sitcom Red Dwarf . The part eventually went to Craig Charles but Bathurst was given a role in the first episode of the series as Frank Todhunter , second officer on the ship , who is killed in the first ten minutes . Ten years later , Bathurst was invited to reprise the role when a storyline in the series allowed former characters to return , but filming commitments prevented him from appearing . In 1989 , he appeared in Malcolm Bradbury 's Anything More Would Be Greedy for Anglia Television , playing Dennis Medlam , MP . The programme was broadcast in 1990 to little fanfare . In 1990 , he performed on Up Yer News , a live topical programme broadcast on BSB .

= = = Joking Apart = = =

While working on Up Yer News , Bathurst auditioned for a one @-@ off television comedy called Joking Apart . Earlier in the day , he noticed a fellow Up Yer News performer reading the script to prepare for his own audition . As Bathurst went into the audition room , his colleague was leaving , and told Bathurst he would " break his legs " if he got the part , a threat that seemed not to be " entirely jocular " . Bathurst got the part , and the pilot of Joking Apart was broadcast as an installment of the BBC 2 Comic Asides strand . It returned for two series in 1993 and 1995 . Bathurst appeared as sitcom writer Mark Taylor in the series . After the first series was broadcast , a critic

called Bathurst the " Best Comedy Newcomer of 1993 " .

The show was punctuated by fantasy sequences in which his character performed his thoughts as a stand @-@ up routine in a small club . In the commentary and the interview on the DVD , Bathurst says that he was told that they would be reshot after filming everything else , an idea abandoned because of the expense . He has an idea of refilming the sequences ' now ' , as his older self , to give them a more retrospective feeling . He has also said that he believes Mark was too " designery " and wishes that he had " roughened him up a bit " . The role is his favourite of his whole career ; he has described it as " the most enjoyable job I will ever do " and considers several episodes of the series to be " timeless , beautifully constructed farces which will endure " . Bathurst is often recognised for his appearance in this series , mentioning that " Drunks stop me on public transport and tell me details of the plot of their favourite episode " . As punishment for arriving late for the series one press launch at the Café Royal in Regent Street , London , writer Steven Moffat pledged to write an episode in which Mark is naked throughout . To a large extent , this vow is realised in the second series .

Between 1991 and 1995 , Bathurst also appeared on television in No Job for a Lady , The House of Elliott and The Detectives , and on stage in The Choice , George Bernard Shaw 's Getting Married at Chichester with Dorothy Tutin and Gogol 's The Nose adapted by Alastair Beaton , which played in Nottingham and Bucharest . He also filmed a role in The Wind in the Willows ( Terry Jones , 1996 ) as St John Weasel .

= = = Wider recognition = = =

In 1996 , while appearing in The Rover at the Salisbury Playhouse , Bathurst got an audition for the Granada Television comedy pilot Cold Feet . He arrived for the audition " bearded and shaggy " , on account of his role in the play , and did not expect to win the role of upper @-@ middle class management consultant David Marsden . The role in the pilot was only minor , and created at the last minute to support characters played by James Nesbitt and Helen Baxendale ; the only character note in the script about David related to his high salary . Bathurst identified the character as merely a " post @-@ Thatcherite whipping boy " .

Bathurst reprised the role in the Cold Feet series , which ran for five years from 1998 to 2003 . He described the character of David as an " emotional cripple " , originally with little depth . The third series features an affair between David and a political activist played by Yasmin Bannerman . Bathurst appreciated the opportunity to bring some depth a previously one @-@ dimensional character but was more impressed with the storylines that came out of the affair , rather than the affair itself : " It was the deception , the guilt and the recrimination rather than the actual affair , which was neither interesting nor remarkable " . Like other cast members , Bathurst was able to suggest storylines as the series went on ; one episode features David celebrating his fortieth birthday and Bathurst suggested the character could get a Harley @-@ Davidson motorbike . Granada paid for him to take motorbike lessons and a test . On the day before his test , the filming of a scene where David takes off on his new bike was scheduled . Bathurst " wobbled , missed the camera and crashed into the pavement " leading director Simon Delaney to exclaim it was the funniest thing he had ever seen . In another episode , David buys a racehorse ? ostensibly as a birthday present for his wife ? in a plot borne out of Bathurst 's own love of horseracing . The role made him more widely recognisable and he often received prospective scripts that were " obvious rewrites of the character " . He turned them down , preferring to play a " good person " , which would be more interesting from a dramatic point of view .

Between 1998 and 2003 , he made television appearances in Goodbye , Mr Steadman ( 2001 ) , starring opposite Caroline Quentin as a headmaster who has been declared dead after one of his pupils erases all computer records relating to him , and the adaptation of White Teeth ( 2002 ) . On stage he appeared in Michael Frayn 's Alarms and Excursions in 1998 and in Hedda Gabler in 1999 , his last theatre role for several years . In the Daily Telegraph , Charles Spencer described his role as Tesman as a " weird casting choice " but called his acting " a brave stab " . In 2001 , Bathurst appeared in the music video for Westlife 's Comic Relief single " Uptown Girl " .

In 2002 , straight after finishing Cold Feet , Bathurst went straight into filming My Dad 's the Prime Minister , a series in which he portrays fictional British prime minister Michael Philips . The first series was broadcast in a Sunday afternoon CBBC slot in 2003 . He watched debates in the House of Commons to prepare for the role but did not base his portrayal on Tony Blair . In 2003 , he returned to theatre for the first time in four years to play Vershinin in The Three Sisters , opposite Kristin Scott Thomas and Eric Sykes . He had not seen The Three Sisters before starring in it . Director Michael Blakemore advised him to turn this to his advantage , as he would not feel he had to live up to previous portrayals . After its run concluded , a special edition of The Three Sisters was filmed with the same cast for television broadcast on BBC Four . In 2005 , the second series of My Dad 's the Prime Minister was broadcast , now moved to a Friday night timeslot to take advantage of the adult humour . The same year , he starred in the ITV thriller The Stepfather playing Christopher Veazey , a man whose daughter goes missing . Bathurst was pleased that this white @-@ collar worker had an emotional side , in comparison to David Marsden , whom he used as a yardstick when accepting those sorts of roles . Also in 2005 , he played Mr Sesseman in an adaptation of Heidi and Dottore Massimo in The Thief Lord .

= = = 2006 ? present = = =

In 2006 , he played Mark Thatcher in Coup ! , a dramatisation of the attempted coup in Equatorial Guinea . He also starred as Adrien opposite Nicholas Tennant in the UK premiere of Members Only at the Trafalgar Studios . He accepted the part because it was " funny , plausible , plausibly absurd , and cruel " and he liked that it was a translation from an original French play . He enjoyed working on it , telling What 's on Stage , " Nick is a really good actor and really good to work with in that you can have completely frank discussions about tiny issues and it 's totally ego @-@ free . We 're all just discussing the point and not playing games with each other . It does make the working practice easier . If there 's only two of you in a play , you are equally responsible ? there 's nobody else to blame if it goes wrong . So its a greater risk and there 's no hiding . " At the end of the year , he appeared opposite Richard Wilson in Whipping it Up , a play about whips in a fictional David Cameron government . To research his role , he watched more Commons debates .

After a season at the Bush Theatre at the end of 2006 , Whipping it Up transferred to the New Ambassadors Theatre from March to June 2007 , The tour coincided with his appearance as the titular character in Alex , based on the comic in The Daily Telegraph . The play ran at the Arts Theatre between October and November 2007 and featured Bathurst interacting with other characters that are projected onto a screen behind him . He was attracted to the role because of the " duplicity and guile " Alex uses to get himself out of tight situations . The role won him a nomination for Best Solo Performance at the What 's on Stage Awards . He reprised the role in an international tour from September to November 2008 , playing in Melbourne , Sydney , Hong Kong , Singapore and Dubai . As Alex he presented a ten @-@ part series on Classic FM , which won a Gold Award at the Sony Radio Academy Awards in 2012 . He now performs Alex as a corporate after dinner entertainment . 2007 also saw Bathurst perform as linguistician Charles in the first series of the BBC Radio 4 sitcom Hut 33 . He reprised the role for two more series in 2008 and 2009 .

In 2009 , he made his third and final appearance as art dealer James Garrett in My Family . He also played the role of Mr Weston in the BBC costume drama Emma , which was broadcast on BBC One through October 2009 . He previously played Weston in a two @-@ part adaptation of Emma for BBC Radio 4 in 2000 . Between January and April 2010 , Bathurst starred as Garry Essendine in a national touring revival of Noël Coward 's Present Laughter . He had not seen Present Laughter before , though had seen several Coward plays in his 20s , and did not imitate Coward 's speech patterns while performing . Present Laughter was the first time Bathurst had appeared in a Coward play , and he was cast in another , Blithe Spirit , later in the year . He plays Charles Condomine opposite Alison Steadman and his Cold Feet co @-@ star Hermione Norris . The played toured theatres around southern England in 2010 and early 2011 before beginning a three @-@ month run at the Apollo Theatre in London .

On television in 2010 , Bathurst starred as Percy Hamleigh in the German @-@ Canadian

miniseries *The Pillars of the Earth* and had a recurring role as widower Sir Anthony Strallan in the period drama *Downton Abbey* . In 2011 he starred as John Le Mesurier in the Hattie Jacques biopic *Hattie* , and joined the cast of the long @-@ running ITV drama *Wild at Heart* .

He also has a recurring role in the sitcom *Toast of London* .

Bathurst is to star as Andy in the upcoming Sky1 television film adaptation of the M. C. Beaton novel *Agatha Raisin and the Quiche of Death* .

= = Personal life = =

Bathurst met artist Victoria Threlfall through mutual friends and they married in 1985 . They have four daughters : Matilda , Clemency , Oriel and Honor .

= = Filmography and bibliography = =

Written works

Bathurst , Robert ( 4 December 2001 ) . " Yes , Cold Feet beat Trollope , but at what cost ? " . *The Daily Telegraph* : p . 17 .

Bathurst , Robert ( 25 October 2008 ) . " Alex tour : Getting Brezhnev to smile would have been easier " . *The Daily Telegraph* : p . 26 ( Review section )

= = Written works = =

Cheltenham Festival : [http : / / www.independent.co.uk / sport / racing / its @-@ their @-@ loss @-@ but @-@ our @-@ pain @-@ 1639179.html ? printService = print](http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/racing/its-@-@-their-@-@-loss-@-@-but-@-@-our-@-@-pain-@-@-1639179.html?printService=print)