

= Bernard Quatermass =

Professor Bernard Quatermass is a fictional scientist , originally created by the writer Nigel Kneale for BBC Television . An intelligent and highly moral British scientist , Quatermass is a pioneer of the British space programme , heading the British Experimental Rocket Group . He continually finds himself confronting sinister alien forces that threaten to destroy humanity .

The role of Quatermass was featured in three influential BBC science fiction serials of the 1950s , and again in a final serial for Thames Television in 1979 . A remake of the first serial appeared on BBC Four in 2005 . The character also appeared in films , on the radio and in print over a fifty @-@ year period . Kneale picked the character 's unusual surname from a London telephone directory , while the first name was in honour of the astronomer Bernard Lovell .

The character of Quatermass has been described by BBC News Online as Britain 's first television hero , and by The Independent newspaper as " A brilliantly conceived and finely crafted creation ... [ He ] remained a modern ' Mr Standfast ' , the one fixed point in an increasingly dreadful and ever @-@ shifting universe . " In 2005 , an article in The Daily Telegraph suggested , " You can see a line running through him and many other British heroes . He shares elements with both Sherlock Holmes and Ellen MacArthur . "

= = Character = =

Little is revealed of Quatermass 's early life during the course of the films and television series in which he appears . In The Quatermass Experiment , he at one point despairs that he should have stuck to his original career as a surveyor .

In Nigel Kneale 's 1996 radio serial The Quatermass Memoirs , it is revealed that the Professor was first involved in rocketry experiments in the 1930s , and that his wife died at a young age . The unmade prequel serial Quatermass in the Third Reich , an idea conceived by Kneale in the late 1990s , would have shown Quatermass travelling to Nazi Germany during the 1936 Berlin Olympics and becoming involved with Wernher von Braun and the German rocket programme , before helping a young Jewish refugee to escape from the country . According to The Quatermass Memoirs , during World War II Quatermass conducted top secret work for the British war effort , which he subsequently refused ever to discuss .

By 1953 Quatermass is the head of the British Experimental Rocket Group , which has a programme to launch a manned rocket into space from a base in Tarooma , Australia . Although Quatermass succeeds in launching a three @-@ man crew , the rocket vastly overshoots its projected orbit and returns to Earth much later than planned , crash @-@ landing in London . Only one of the crew , Victor Carroon , remains , and he has been taken over by an alien presence , eventually forcing Quatermass to destroy him and the other two crewmembers who have been absorbed into him in a climax set in Westminster Abbey .

Despite this trauma , Quatermass continues with his space programme , and by Quatermass II ( 1955 ) is actively planning the establishment of Moon bases . In this serial we see his daughter , Paula Quatermass , who works as an assistant at the Rocket Group , but there is no sign of a wife or other children . In the fourth episode of the serial he mentions that he never reached his twenty @-@ fifth wedding anniversary , tying in with The Quatermass Memoirs ' later assertion of his wife 's early death .

At the beginning of the third serial , Quatermass and the Pit ( 1958 ? 59 ) , Quatermass 's funding is being cut back and the Rocket Group is being handed over to military control , much to his disgust . Command is to be handed over to Colonel Breen and Quatermass senses that he is being forced out : however , after the events of the serial , Breen is dead , Quatermass has helped to save the world , and London is in chaos .

It is not clear what happens to the Rocket Group immediately after this : the next time Quatermass is seen on screen ( Quatermass , also released internationally as The Quatermass Conclusion and Quatermass IV , 1979 ) he has long been retired , living in retreat in the Scottish Highlands . He has recently become the guardian of his teenaged granddaughter , Hettie , after her parents were killed

in a road accident in Germany . After Hettie runs away from home he travels to London in search of her , and finds a dystopian world there . Quatermass and the scientist Joe Kapp establish that an alien force is causing the collapse of society and Quatermass forms a plan to drive the intruder away by the detonation of a nuclear bomb . He presses the button to detonate it himself , with Hettie 's help , and they are killed in the blast as the planet is saved .

= = History = =

Nigel Kneale conceived the character of Quatermass in 1953 , when he was assigned in his capacity as a BBC television staff drama writer to create a new six @-@ part serial to run on Saturday nights in July and August . Kneale initially named his leading character Professor Charlton , but during the writing process decided he wanted something more striking and memorable . A native of the Isle of Man , he was inspired by the fact that surnames beginning with " Qu " were common on the island . The eventual name was picked from a London telephone directory ; there was a family of that name who traded as fruiterers in the city 's East End . The surname has its origins as a measurement of land assigned in the division of England by the Normans following their conquest of the country under William the Conqueror in 1066 . The Professor 's first name , Bernard , was in honour of the astronomer Bernard Lovell , founder of the Jodrell Bank observatory .

= = In television ( 1950s ) = =

The director assigned to the serial , which was eventually named The Quatermass Experiment , was Rudolph Cartier . A few months beforehand he had directed a play entitled It Is Midnight , Dr. Schweitzer for the BBC , and he offered the role of Quatermass to one of the stars of that play , André Morell . Morell considered the offer but declined the part , which Cartier then offered to another actor who had appeared in It Is Midnight , Dr. Schweitzer , Reginald Tate , who accepted .

The serial was a success , with the British Film Institute later describing it as " one of the most influential series of the 1950s . " The following year the BBC 's Controller of Programmes , Cecil McGivern ? who had initially feared that viewers would not accept such an unusual name for the leading character ? noted in reference to the impending launch of the rival ITV network that : " Had competitive television been in existence then , we would have killed it every Saturday night while [ The Quatermass Experiment ] lasted . We are going to need many more ' Quatermass Experiment ' programmes . "

A sequel , Quatermass II , was accordingly commissioned in 1955 , but Reginald Tate died of a heart attack only a month before production was due to begin . With very little time to find a replacement , John Robinson was picked as the only suitable actor available . Robinson was uncomfortable about taking over from Tate and with some of the technical dialogue he was required to deliver , and his performance has been criticised as " robotic " , although others such as Andrew Pixley in Time Screen Magazine praised Robinson for doing compelling work after the initial episode of the serial .

By the summer of 1957 , Kneale was working on the scripts for a third and final BBC serial . Titled Quatermass and the Pit and again produced and directed by Cartier , this was eventually broadcast in December 1958 and January 1959 . John Robinson was no longer available to play Quatermass , so the role was offered instead to Alec Clunes . Clunes turned down the part , and it was offered once more to André Morell , who this time accepted . Morell has been praised by several reviewers as having given the definitive portrayal of Quatermass . The serial itself has been praised by the BBC 's own website as " simply the first finest thing the BBC ever made . It justifies licence fees to this day . " Despite this success , Kneale was unsure about whether the character would ever return , later telling an interviewer : " I didn 't want to go on repeating because Professor Quatermass had already saved the world from ultimate destruction three times , and that seemed to me to be quite enough . "

Of the TV serials , Quatermass II and Quatermass and the Pit have been preserved in full . Only the first two episodes of The Quatermass Experiment now exist .

= = = In film = = =

At roughly the same time as Quatermass II was being transmitted by the BBC , Hammer Film Productions released their film adaptation of the first serial in British cinemas . Directed by Val Guest , it was retitled The Quatermass Xperiment , and starred American actor Brian Donlevy as part of a deal to help the film find US distribution . Kneale , who had little involvement with the film , was unimpressed with this casting . " I may have picked Quatermass 's surname out of a phone book , but his first name was carefully chosen : Bernard , after Bernard Lovell , the creator of Jodrell Bank . Pioneer , ultimate questing man . Donlevy played him as a mechanic , a creature with a completely closed mind . " Val Guest has praised Donlevy 's performance , saying that " he gave it absolute reality . "

Despite Kneale 's reservations about the casting , The Quatermass Xperiment was the highest @-@ grossing film Hammer had made up to that point in their history , and has since been described by one academic as " the key British science fiction film of the 1950s . " Hammer were keen to make an immediate follow @-@ up , and wanted to use Quatermass in their 1956 film X the Unknown ; however , Kneale refused them the rights , and they created their own substitute character , Doctor Adam Royston . They did release an adaptation of Quatermass II in 1957 , called Quatermass 2 and this time with Kneale 's involvement in the script . To the writer 's displeasure , Donlevy returned as Quatermass .

Hammer also purchased the film rights to Quatermass and the Pit ( released in the USA as Five Million Years to Earth ) , as it had done with the previous two TV serials , although they did not release their version until 1967 . This time the film was directed by Roy Ward Baker and starred Scottish actor Andrew Keir , after Morell had been offered and declined the chance to play the part again . Keir 's performance was well @-@ received , particularly in contrast to Donlevy 's portrayal . The Guardian newspaper wrote in 1997 that : " Keir also made many films ... most gratifyingly , perhaps , the movie version of Quatermass and the Pit ( 1967 ) , when he finally replaced the absurdly miscast Brian Donlevy . "

Soon after the release of the Quatermass and the Pit film , Kneale was approached by Hammer about writing a fourth Quatermass story directly for them , but the idea came to nothing .

Possible remakes of one or more of the Hammer film adaptations were also mooted at various points during the 1990s , with Dan O 'Bannon scripting a potential new version of The Quatermass Experiment in 1993 , but again nothing was eventually filmed . In February 2012 Simon Oakes , president of the revived Hammer Films , announced that a new Quatermass film was in active development .

= = = In television ( 1970s onwards ) = = =

By the early 1970s Kneale was once again regularly writing for the BBC , who announced plans to produce a fourth Quatermass serial in 1972 . This ultimately was not made by the BBC , but Kneale 's scripts were produced in 1979 as a four @-@ part serial for Thames Television , titled Quatermass . This time John Mills played Quatermass in an expensive and high @-@ profile production , which was screened on the ITV network . The production company Euston Films also released a 100 @-@ minute film version titled The Quatermass Conclusion or Quatermass IV , for distribution abroad . There was , however , little interest among film distributors , and it received only a limited theatrical release .

Kneale was not keen to return to the character following this , telling one interviewer , " I blew him up ... and I don 't feel inclined to invent a ' Son of Quatermass ' either . " However , in the late 1990s he conceived an idea for a prequel serial , entitled Quatermass in the Third Reich set in Germany in the 1930s . The idea was submitted to the BBC , who turned it down .

In 2005 , the digital television channel BBC Four produced a new version of The Quatermass Experiment , transmitted live as the original had been . Jason Flemyng starred as Quatermass . The Times 's television reviewer , Sarah Vine , commented of this production , " Jason Flemyng as

Quatermass made a surprisingly good fist of things ... the live performance lent the drama an edge that might have been lost in re @-@ takes . "

= = Other media = =

In addition to the character 's various television and film appearances , Quatermass was also seen in a variety of other media between the 1950s and the 1990s . In 1955 Kneale was invited by the publishers of the Daily Express to write a new prose Quatermass story for serialisation in their newspaper ; as he was unable to think of a new storyline , they suggested he simply adapt Quatermass II , which he agreed to do . The serialisation ran in the Daily Express from 5 December 1955 to 20 December 1955 , although Kneale was forced to draw it to a rapid conclusion when the paper lost interest in the project and instructed him to complete the story as soon as possible .

A script book for The Quatermass Experiment , including some photographs from the production , was released by Penguin Books in 1959 . This was followed by similar releases of Quatermass II and Quatermass and the Pit , both published in 1960 . All three of these releases were reprinted by Arrow Books in 1979 with new introductions by Kneale , to tie @-@ in with the television transmission of the fourth and final serial .

Arrow Books also released a novelisation of the 1979 Quatermass serial , written by Kneale . This was written during production , and contained many additional scenes and extra background detail not included in the original scripts . Kneale offered many of these new scenes to the producers of the television version , but by this stage it was too late for them to be incorporated .

In 1995 , BBC Radio producer Paul Quinn approached Kneale with the idea of making a new radio series about Quatermass , and the resulting project was produced and aired as the five @-@ part serial The Quatermass Memoirs on BBC Radio 3 in the spring of 1996 . The serial had three strands : a monologue from Kneale recounting the historical environment in which he created and wrote the original 1950s serials ; archive material from the original productions and contemporary news broadcasts ; and a dramatised strand set shortly before the 1979 serial , with Quatermass being visited in retreat in Scotland by a reporter eager to write his life story . Of the actors who had previously played Quatermass , only Keir and Mills were still alive ; Keir took the role , his final professional performance before his death the following year . The Quatermass Memoirs was repeated several times on digital radio station BBC7 from 2003 , and the serial was released on CD in 2006 .

A live theatrical production of Quatermass and the Pit was staged , with the permission of Kneale , outdoors in a quarry at the village of Cropwell Bishop in Nottinghamshire in August 1997 . The adaptation was written by Peter Thornhill and mounted by Creation Productions , with David Longford starring as Quatermass .

All of the various film and surviving television productions featuring Quatermass have been released on DVD .

= = Themes = =

Nigel Kneale explained in a 1990s interview the background that had led him to formulate Quatermass and the other characters of the original serial in 1953 . " I wanted to write some strong characters , but I didn 't want them to be like those horrible people in those awful American science fiction films , chewing gum and stating the obvious . Not that I wanted to do something terribly ' British ' , but I didn 't like all the flag @-@ waving you got in those films . I tried to get real human interest in the stories , and some good humour . "

Writing in 2005 , the television history lecturer Dr Catherine Johnson felt that in the original three 1950s serials , Quatermass as a character represented the championing of science and rationality over the supernatural and the fantastic . " As a leading scientific innovator , Quatermass is invested with scientific and moral authority . Over the three serials , this authority is tested and undermined ... Despite this , the narrative structure of all three serials works to reinforce the authority invested in Quatermass and in science . Although scientific enterprise is responsible for disastrous

consequences in the first two Quatermass serials , it is only through science that the alien invasions are overcome ... He is invested with the narrative authority to understand and explain the fantastic events depicted . "

The writer and critic Kim Newman went further , explaining in a 2003 television documentary on Nigel Kneale 's career that he believed Quatermass to be not only a representation of science but of humanity itself . Referring to the conclusion of The Quatermass Experiment , he commented that : " It almost boils down to an editorial speech by Quatermass representing humanity , or the humane aspects of humanity . He talks to the monster , and so the monster is defeated by an intellectual argument or an emotional appeal . " Like Kneale , he contrasted this to American science @-@ fiction productions , where the alien adversary would be defeated by " it being blown up or electrocuted , or having the entire firepower of the army turned against it . " Hammer had altered their film version of the story so that the creature is in fact killed by being electrocuted .

In contrast to Newman 's idea of Quatermass as the embodiment of humanity , writer and lecturer Peter Hutchings in his essay " We are the Martians " sees Quatermass as an isolated character . " In the 1950s Quatermass stories , Quatermass himself is someone who , while working to protect the nation , remains a curiously isolated figure , bereft of anything resembling a meaningful relationship . ( In the 1979 Quatermass , he has acquired a granddaughter ; possibly connected with this is the fact that here he seems a much weaker figure who can only defeat the aliens through the sacrifice of the lives of both himself and his granddaughter ) . " Hutchings also compared this to American productions of the era : " The standard , if not clichéd , figures of the clean @-@ cut square @-@ jawed hero and his girl , which are present in some form or other in most US sf films of this period ... are absent . "

= = Outside references = =

= = = Doctor Who = = =

The BBC science @-@ fiction series Doctor Who has often been heavily influenced by the various Quatermass serials , and despite Kneale 's dislike of it ( " It sounded a terrible idea and I still think it was , " he commented in 1986 ) and his refusal to write for it , unofficial references to Quatermass have appeared in the programme and its spinoffs . Serials directly influenced include The Web of Fear , The Invasion , Spearhead from Space , The Ambassadors of Death , Inferno , The Seeds of Doom and Image of the Fendahl , as well as the 2007 " The Lazarus Experiment " , which echoes the first serial 's climax in Westminster Abbey , with the use of Southwark Cathedral . Former Doctor Who script editor and producer Derrick Sherwin admitted on a DVD documentary that the idea of setting more serials on contemporary Earth in the early 1970s was to recall a Quatermass feel .

In episode three of the 1988 serial Remembrance of the Daleks , which is set in 1963 , military scientific advisor Dr Rachel Jensen remarks to her colleague Alison , " I wish Bernard was here . " Alison replies , " British Rocket Group 's got its own problems . "

The 1994 Doctor Who novel Nightshade is about an actor who starred in a thinly disguised version of Quatermass , discovering that the events of the serials are becoming reality . The fictional Professor Nightshade was also mentioned in subsequent novels . Author Mark Gatiss described the Nightshade serial in his notes accompanying the e @-@ book release as " a TV series that isn 't quite Quatermass and isn 't quite Doctor Who " , adding " I was utterly obsessed by Quatermass at that time " .

The 1997 Doctor Who novel The Dying Days , set in its year of release , features in one chapter an elderly character introduced halfway through a sentence as " -ermass " , and subsequently referred to as " Professor " and " Bernard " during his brief appearance . Author Lance Parkin confirmed in his notes accompanying the later e @-@ book release that this was a deliberate cameo from Quatermass , specifically the John Mills version from the final serial .

The 2005 Doctor Who episode " The Christmas Invasion " featured the British Rocket Group , although the organisation was only identifiable by a logo not clearly seen on screen and never

referred to in dialogue . It was , however , heavily referenced in a tie @-@ in website for the episode created by the [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk) Doctor Who webteam .

In the 2008 Doctor Who novel Beautiful Chaos , the Doctor briefly mentions being invited to the Royal Planetary Society by " Bernard and Paula " . In the 2009 television episode " Planet of the Dead " , " Bernard " is used as the name for a unit of measurement , and it is explained that this is in reference to Quatermass ? whether as a fictional or a real person is not stated .

Neil Cross , the writer of the 2013 Doctor Who episode " Hide " , has stated in interviews that when he was working on his initial ideas for the episode , he took inspiration from the Quatermass serials , and even intended for the character of Bernard Quatermass to appear in the story . However , it was not possible to gain copyright clearance to use the character .

= = = Other references = = =

Quatermass also appears in a short segment of the 2007 graphic novel The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen : Black Dossier , in which he takes his niece and nephew to visit an interplanetary zoo . Here he is identified as Uncle Bernard , and is drawn to resemble George Bernard Shaw .

The song " Mars Within " , the first track of Bruce Dickinson 's solo album Tyranny of Souls , features the line " Professor Quatermass , where are you ? "

Quatermass appears in story written by Roman Leary published in the 2009 Tales of the Shadowmen , Volume 6

= = Parodies and homages = =

In February 1959 the BBC radio comedy series The Goon Show broadcast a parody of Quatermass and the Pit , entitled " The Scarlet Capsule " . Harry Secombe played his regular character in The Goon Show , Neddie Seagoon , in turn playing " Professor Ned Cratermess , OBE . " This was followed later in the same year by a spoof on another BBC radio comedy show , That Man Chester , which launched a regular strand entitled " The Quite @-@ a @-@ Mess Three Saga " , with Deryck Guyler as " Professor Quite @-@ a @-@ Mess " . However , the " Quite @-@ a @-@ Mess " name and references were dropped after only three of the episodes under pressure from Kneale , who felt that a 13 @-@ week spoof would be to the detriment of the original character .

In the early 1970s , a British progressive rock group named both themselves and their first album " Quatermass " .

A television spoof appeared in a 1986 episode of the BBC sketch show The Two Ronnies , which featured a sketch entitled " It Came From Outer Hendon " , written by David Renwick . This spoof starred Ronnie Corbett as " Professor Martin Cratermouse " .

The film director John Carpenter wrote the screenplay for his 1987 film Prince of Darkness under the pseudonym " Martin Quatermass " . Carpenter had previously worked with Nigel Kneale on the 1982 film Halloween III : Season of the Witch .

In Joe Dante 's 1990 film Gremlins 2 : The New Batch , in a corridor of the Clamp Tower , one of the door nameplates is for " Dr. Quatermass " .

Goa trance musicians Jason Gill & Simon Washington formed a group named Quatermass in 1995 .

In the last episode of The Mask : Animated Series entitled " The Aceman Cometh " ( 1997 , guest featuring Ace Ventura ) , there is a character named Professor Quatermass .

The DVD release of the 2004 remake of Dawn of the Dead includes a bonus feature in the form of a simulated newscast covering the rise of zombies across America . A doctor is interviewed about the zombies being dead people who have come back to life ? his name is Dr. Quatermass .