

Aussie Hemsworth picks the hammer up in 'Thor'

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Dear Ken: What can you tell me about actor Chris Hemsworth who plays Thor in the new movie? I have never heard of him before this.

Hemsworth, 27, hails from the Land Down Under where he starred in the Australian soap opera "Home and Away" for three years. His brothers, Luke and Liam, are actors in Australia (Liam also tested for the role of Thor). He appeared in three movies, "Star Trek," "A Perfect Getaway" and "Ca\$h," before taking up Thor's hammer. Sometime this year he stars in a remake of "Red Dawn" and "The Cabin in the Woods." Next year he reappears as Thor in "The Avengers." Hemsworth married Spanish actress Elsa Pataky in December. He describes Thor's character saying, "He's doing what he's doing for his family and to protect the kingdom, and he thinks it's the right way to do it. It just happens to be a very aggressive way of doing it, which probably isn't the right way." "Thor" opens at theaters May 20.

Dear Ken: I used to love the British spy series "The Avengers." What background can you share on Diana Rigg, who played Emma Peel?

Rigg, 72, was born the daughter of a railway engineer in Yorkshire, England, but spent the first years of her life in India. After making a name for herself in the 1960s as Peel, she began making movies, working on the stage as well as in TV movies. She served as hostess of PBS's "Mystery" from 1989 to 2003. An avid angler, she has a daughter. Among her movie credits are "On Her Majesty's Secret Service," "Theatre of Blood," "Evil Under the Sun" and "The Great Muppet Caper." "TV Guide" voted her the No. 1 sexiest ever TV star.

Dear Ken: I've been watching "Wagon Train" on TV a lot lately. How old is Robert Horton, who played scout Flint McCullough?

Horton, born in Los Angeles, is 86, and also starred in the TV series "A Man Called Shenandoah" and the soap opera "As the World Turns." He worked on Broadway and in many other TV shows and movies and also had a career as a nightclub singer in the 1960s in the U.S. and Australia.

Dear Ken: What's happening with Nancy McKeon, who played Jo on "Facts of Life"?

McKeon, 44, is raising two young daughters with her husband near Austin, Texas, and has been appearing lately in a recurring role on the Disney Channel's "Sonny With a Chance." From 2001 to 2004, she starred in the TV cop series "The Division."

If you have a trivia question about actors, singers, movies, TV shows or pop culture, e-mail your query to Ken Beck at