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SWNS - Plymouth
Tel: 01752 500080, Email: news@swns.com
SWPLflag - by Tom Bevan
A battle-torn Union flag carried onto the beaches of Normandy on D-Day has sold at auction for more than £16,000.
Sub-Lieutenant Alan Dalton, of the Royal Navy 'P' Commando - then just
DHGDHGDHGDH
SWBROUDDOORS - by Steve Richmond, 72Point
Office workers feel more productive and in a better mood after being in the

ALL CREATURES STAR ADMITS...



ANIMAL MAGIC: Nicholas as the popular vet and, left, with co-star Callum Woodhouse. Far left, show star Derek

It's Tricky working with dogs

I'VE just told Nicholas Ralph, who plays legendary vet James Herriot in the new *All Creatures Great And Small*, that he's not the best actor on that show.

THE MIKE WARD INTERVIEW
NICHOLAS RALPH
Actor & TV vet

"No, you're quite right, Mike," he concedes. "It's definitely Derek who's the star. He's a legend. I can't wait to work with him again."

But whether that feeling is mutual, we can't be sure. Mostly because Derek is a dog.

If you've been watching this brilliant remake of the Dales-set 1930s drama, continuing on Channel 5 tonight, you'll probably know Derek by his character's name: Tricky Woo.

Tricky is the crazily-spoilt Pekinese of posh eccentric Mrs Pumphrey, played by the late Dame Diana Rigg - and tonight's episode sees the little chap totally hogging the limelight.

"The best thing about doing a scene with Derek," Nicholas tells me, "is he gives you something back. You'll go, 'Tricky, what are you up to?' and he'll actually respond with a little grumbling noise. His comedy timing is impeccable!"

Nicholas's own timing hasn't been bad either, mind you - landing this, his first TV role, as our thirst for escapist telly hits a peak.

"Life has been so tough lately," he says. "These stories take us back to a simpler time."

"They're full of charm, warmth and humour!"

They're also full of animals, of course. Nicholas has no trouble with that - he grew up in the Highlands

next to a farmer's field. Besides, the show's production vet Andy Barrett made sure he and co-stars Callum Woodhouse (Tristan) and Samuel West (Siegfried) were well prepared. "We did a vet bootcamp," says Nicholas, "getting up close and personal with sheep, horses and cows."

Not too personal, mind. Older viewers may recall Christopher Timothy (who played Herriot on BBC One in the 80s) with his arm up a cow's rear end, but the backside Nicholas probes are prosthetic.

"The law was changed," he says. "You can't do anything an animal doesn't require and you're not trained to do. Which is fair enough."

A second series has yet to get the go-ahead but the signs are there. "It's taken a while to get my head around how popular it's been," he says.

If it does return, there's a massive void to fill, with Dame Diana having sadly passed away just a fortnight ago, aged 82.

The veteran actress left TV newcomer Nick with some great memories. "She was brilliant to work with," he says. "So down to earth."

● *All Creatures Great and Small* continues at 9pm



SAD LOSS: Rigg with Derek

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