

A CONVERSATION WITH >>>> DIANA RIGG

When you emerge into the light at the Arrivals Hall at Heathrow Airport, there is always the chance of seeing someone famous or, failing that, a TV celebrity who is not famous for anything except being a TV celebrity.

If they have just arrived, it would probably be wise to avoid them as they will be stressed by the flight or concerned that their driver may not be there yet and they would have to endure the stares of the public. On the other hand, they could be equally concerned about the ultimate blow to their ego by not being recognised at all.

I was therefore very fortunate and delighted that the lady I have always admired was not like this at all, and rose above such things.

I saw Diana Rigg across the concourse as I exited the Arrivals channel. She was standing alone in a corner close to W H Smith's. She was taller than I imagined, about 5'11" and she was wearing black boots and an ankle-length fur coat. She was instantly recognisable.

My first thought was, "I must go talk to her," but then I stopped. No, I can't do that. She must get bothered so many times that I wouldn't be welcome. I wrestled with that dilemma for some moments. Should I or shouldn't I?

'Should I' won. I just couldn't pass up the opportunity to talk to my favourite actress. I advanced with trepidation.

I said, "I hope you will excuse me Miss Rigg, but I felt I had to tell you that I've loved everything I've seen you in. I hope you don't mind."

She smiled a lovely smile and replied, "No I don't mind, it's very kind of you to say so."

Our encounter could have ended there. What else could I say? But she continued, "I'm waiting for my driver. He's a little late, probably held up in traffic, so I'm just watching the people."

Of course, I thought, she's an actress, what else would she do standing outside W H Smith's?

To my amazement, we continued talking for half an hour while she was waiting for her car. I had seen her in several West End plays, including one in which she was, for the briefest moment, naked on stage.

She told me that, this very morning, she had spent a couple of hours wearing thigh length waders standing in a river in Scotland, whilst fishing. That image I've never forgotten.

Her destination that day was to meet a friend at a house in Ascot. I was about to offer her a lift, when sadly her driver arrived and she said, "Goodbye, John, it was nice to talk to you."