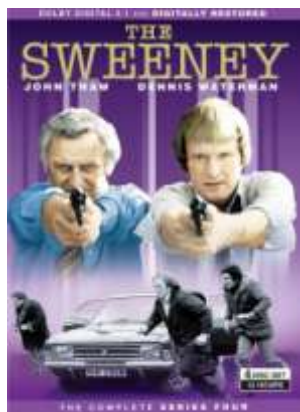




Newsletter

On TV - *The Sweeney*, Series 4



There was a two-year gap between the third and fourth series while the team made two full-length feature films (*Sweeney!* and *Sweeney*

2). Both starred John Thaw and Dennis Waterman. In *Sweeney!* (1977), a Jaguar XJ6 has a 2 star role as Regan and Carter get embroiled in a deadly political plot, based loosely on the Profumo scandal. In *Sweeney 2* (1978), a Jaguar XJ6 has a 3 star role and Regan and Carter investigate a gang of bank robbers. Both films are said to contain levels of violence, sex and nudity that would not have been allowed on television at the time. A final film, *The Sweeney* was released in 2012; however the title is the only thing this film has in common with the originals, although it does include a Jaguar XF-R.

For the fourth season, the opening with tinted stills of *The Sweeney* in a Ford Granada chasing the criminals in a Jaguar 'S'-type were 'retired' and replaced with new opening and closing title sequences. The new opening uses live footage, in kaleidoscope style showing *The Sweeney* in a Ford Granada in pursuit of criminals in a Ford Granada estate followed by a foot chase.



You can see the Series 4 opening and closing at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D99O6oTJVHo>

There was more violence – both by *The Sweeney* and the villains as guns became more prevalent. The background stories became more risqué and included more guest stars such as an aging Diana Dors, a very young Clive Owen, and the comedians Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise.

In several episodes of series 4, reference is made to corruption within the Metropolitan Police and New Scotland Yard. Perhaps because, in 1977, at the height of *The Sweeney's* popularity, Commander Ken Drury, the former head of the real Flying Squad, and several other very high ranking New Scotland Yard detectives, were convicted of bribery and corruption and given lengthy jail sentences. In the final episode, Jack or Knave, Regan is falsely accused of corruption, and leaves the force in disgust at his treatment.

There were few classic *The Sweeney* car chases in season 4 and **no 'S'-types** used by police or villains **as the fleet of film crew 'S'-types** was depleted in season 3 with the

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final crashes of GJE177E and JRY387E. Jaguar 'S'-types had previously always been used when a car chase ended in a crash scene. This was because the stunt drivers felt they were the safest cars to use. The film crew loved them because a crashed 'S'-type could be fixed up, repainted, and re-used many times. If you look careful at the 'S'-types in Series 3, you can see that they are in very rough condition.

'S'-types remained the get-away car of choice even when more than 10 years old. In episode 7, Bait, filmed in 1978, escaped convict Vic Tolman leads a gang of blaggers to a successful string of wages robberies in the North: **Sunderland (where your Editors' daughter was born);** Doncaster; and Cardiff. They come down to London for the big one. Lenny, the stoppo driver, needs a new fresh motor for the blag.

Vic goes out to nick one, Lenny says, "I hope it's a Jag. I like Jags. They're my favourite!" When Vic returns with a bronze Ford Zodiac, **Lenny is disappointed and Vic tells him, "All the Jags I saw was rubbish."** After carrying out an **£82,000 wages snatch**, Vic tells Lenny, **"I'll buy you a new Jag!"** But Regan and Carter get them before they can spend any of the loot.

Episode 3, Drag Act, broadcast September 21, 1978. A daring gang of thieves have high jacked articulated lorries carrying brandy on two occasions. They decouple the trailer, switch registration plates and tow it away while the driver is inside at a motorway stop. Regan and Carter investigate. The Sweeney stake out a motorway stop, a lorry is high jacked, they pursue in a Ford Granada, accompanied by a Rover 2000 TC MkII. The Rover crashes.

Two young uniformed rookie constables, one male and one a young female that George has been hitting on, investigate a known fence, and find the brandy hidden under hay bales on a farm. He spills the beans and The Sweeney arrest the gang's leader who drives a Rolls - Royce Silver Shadow I. As Regan and Carter drive through town a glimpse of an Opalescent Silver



Blue 'S'-type is seen behind George's head.

You can see the full episode at: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3o9uib>

Episode 11, Hearts and Minds, was the last episode actually filmed, but broadcast November 11, 1978. A burglar is found dead in the home of a pharmaceutical researcher, who has been working on pills to relieve heart disease. After investigating the scene, Regan and **Carter walk past a Warwick Grey 'S'-type** parked outside the house. Their investigation uncovers a Soviet plot to thwart the research and overthrow an Arab kingdom by cutting off the leader's supply of medicine. Morecambe and Wise guest star and their scenes are classic Eric and Ernie, but the one with John Thaw and Dennis Waterman should be seen by all fans! It is said that their appearance on *The Sweeney* was quid pro quo for the appearance of Thaw and Waterman in a sketch on the 1976 *Morecambe and Wise Christmas Special* on the BBC.



You can see the full episode at: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3o9uew>

Episode 14, Jack or Knave, broadcast December 28, 1978 was the very last episode shown of *The Sweeney*. A security guard is murdered during a payroll snatch just outside of The Sweeney's area. The local police force has no luck in catching the robbers/murderers.



The Sweeney are called in, frequently clashing with the local force. Regan breaks the case and they round up the gang. As they march one of the villains out of his house to a police car, there is a **Sherwood Green 'S'-type** parked

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across the street. Regan is going to receive a commendation when he is stopped, charged with **'perverting the course of justice' and locked up.** Fortunately Carter finds a witness, who clears **Regan of the corruption charge, but he's had it** with internal politics, and the series ends with Regan resigning in disgust.

You can see the full episode at: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3o9uh4>

The Sweeney was the top-rated British police series of the 1970s. It was like nothing that had ever appeared on British TV before, a

hard-hitting, action-packed 48 minutes with dog-eared cops bending all the rules to bring down some very nasty yobs. It all came to an end in 1978 and they went out at the top.

Thinking back over the series as a whole, the memories that surface are the boys piling out of the back of a transit, mob-handed, to take on the blaggers at the scene of their crimes, the villains taking off in an 'S'-type chased closely by The Sweeney in a Ford Granada, ending in a crashed 'S'-type and Thaw's famous, "you're nicked!".

'S'-types on *The Sweeney*

Episode	Colour	Registration	Driven by	
1.02	Black or Dark Blue		villains	
1.04	Green	LLX999D	assasin	
1.07	Op. Silver Blue/Black roof	OLY214E	villains	crashed
1.10	Warwick Grey	RBP282E	villains	crashed
1.10	Op. Silver Grey	NTW886G	villains	crashed
1.11	Dark Blue & Silver	DWD606C	villains	crashed
1.11	Old English White			in scrap heap
1.12	Op. Silver Grey	JRY387E	villains	
2.01	Op. SilverBlue	RDY 3	civilian	crashed
2.02	Opalescent Bronze	GJE177E	villains	crashed
2.04	Op. Silver Grey			parked on street
2.07	Opalescent Bronze	GJE177E	villains	
2.08	Op. SilverBlue	NTW886C	villains	crashed
3.01	Opalescent Bronze	GJE177E	villains	
3.02	Opalescent Bronze	GJE177E		parked in police yard
3.03	Opalescent Bronze	GJE177E	civilian	damaged
3.07	Opalescent Bronze	JRY387E	police	crashed
3.08	Opalescent Bronze	JRY387E	villains	crashed
3.12	Opalescent Bronze		civilian	parked on street
4.03			civilian	passing on street
4.11	Warwick Grey		civilian	parked on street
4.14	Sherwood Green		civilian	parked on street