

Lady in wait

There's nothing Caroline Lennon likes more than sneaking off to the cinema on a rainy afternoon. She's a huge fan of old movies and, echoing Siobhan's attitude to men, "the older the better!" Rare Jean Harlow films, Errol Flynn epics, 1940s and 50s black and white Japanese movies, she loves them all. But, whatever you do, don't get Caroline talking about Star Trek. While she's not a paid up Trekkie (fan club member), she's a huge fan of the programme and has visions of herself as a Klingon woman - (very much like Siobhan some Addicts would say!) What she loves about Star Trek is that they're great old fashioned, simple adventure stories not just mindless entertainment. "I think they have a special place in people's hearts in the same way that The Archers does," she observes. "It's an escapism that people can really connect with in the same way that Addicts may live in a city and have their friends say 'but you don't live in the country, how can you relate?' But you can".

From a very early age, Caroline loved performing on stage in school plays. With summers spent working as a theatre usher, she was intent on going to drama school. And Bristol Old Vic theatre school was her obvious choice. Jeremy Irons and Miranda Richardson were graduates and she admires them hugely "I wanted to go where they'd been, learn what they'd learned." Also the school had a reputation of being big on Shakespeare of whom she is a big fan. Her only professional opportunity to perform the Bard so far has been in a film of King Lear with Brian Blessed, playing one of Lear's

daughters Goneril. She has very happy memories of filming: "It's such a serious depressing play and we laughed all the way through. The more serious the scene, the more we laughed," she recalls.

"there's something very naked about singing"

After graduating she moved to London and, like most actors, did many temping jobs. She's picked up a variety of skills including being a bit of a computer whizz, and now travels everywhere with her trusty laptop. However she confesses that she never had to resort to that old classic of



waitressing between jobs. "I have such a rubbish memory", she admits, "I'd never remember orders". But memorising lyrics is a different story. One of the biggest loves of Caroline's life is singing. Despite finding it very scary, she performs as part of a jazz trio but, just lately, she and her fellow singer and pianist have been so busy that they've not been able to gig as much as they would like. (Caroline has had a hectic summer playing Maggie in Brian Friel's Dancing at Lughnasa at Newbury Watermill Theatre as well as recording Archers episodes) "There's something very naked about singing" she says. "It's absolutely 'you' out there". She would love to do more singing roles, particularly a Sondheim musical such as Company and, when she's older, A Little Night Music when she fancies singing Send in the Clowns on stage.

"I'd be more judgmental than Elizabeth"

Sexy doctor's wife Siobhan Hathaway first caused a stir in Ambridge in 1999. Hailing from County Wicklow (south of Dublin), Caroline hadn't been able to listen to The Archers very often as the reception wasn't very good and listening on Long Wave meant that she kept missing episodes because of the cricket. Coming to college in England and with a great friend who was a fan gave her the opportunity to catch up and listen regularly. So when the part of the new doctor's wife came up, Caroline sent in her voice tape and actually auditioned with Terry Molloy (Mike Tucker) who stepped in to play the role of her husband. Now that would have been a fascinating alternative storyline - Mike's secret love child! - is no man safe?

Caroline finds feisty Siobhan an intriguing character to play - and great fun. "She comes across as very modern and has a big impact in a village like Ambridge. It's not

Caroline Lennon
Siobhan Hathaway

ing.

that she's unfeeling, it's just that she knows what she wants and goes all out to get it". Women tell Caroline that they think Siobhan's great because she's not a classic 'bitch' character, she has a big heart. "She just has a different kind of morality" notes Caroline. Undoubtedly Lizzie is a great friend to Siobhan – a much better friend than Caroline would be. "I'm afraid I'd be more judgmental and I'd certainly warn her off having an affair with a married man".

"I can handle everyone finding out except Debbie"

Of course the question on everyone's lips is "when is Jennifer going to find out?" Caroline doesn't know but would love to play a confrontation scene, full of tension. "Jennifer is a classy lady. She wouldn't scream and hit me with her handbag. It would be very painful for both of them. Caroline herself has more fear of Siobhan being tackled by a completely different member of the Aldridge family. "I can handle everyone finding out except Debbie" says Caroline. "I find her really scary and have visions of her coming at Siobhan with a combine harvester!" Otherwise her trips to Pebble Mill have been fabulous especially recording scenes with Brian (Charles Collingwood) "The thing about Charles is he's a dab hand with the duvet" she says, with a twinkle in her eye! But her heart belongs elsewhere. Her favourite Star Trek Captain is Patrick Stewart and, as he too is a graduate of Bristol Old Vic, would she use the 'old school' connection to go through the back door and get a part in the series? "I'd go through any time portal you can think of" she laughs.

Brian may make the earth move for Siobhan, but Caroline would much rather be on a different planet!

SIOBHAN HATHAWAY