

## **BBC Christmas Highlights 2005**

Full details on all shows will be available from 23.11.05

### **BBC ONE**

#### **Casualty @ Holby City - Part One**

**[bbc.co.uk/casualty](http://bbc.co.uk/casualty)**

Ric and Harry interview for a locum Consultant General Surgeon when a familiar face turns up – Nick Jordan. However, the interview comes to an abrupt end and Nick storms out.

Elsewhere, Charlie is back and goes to the party. However, he gets a call from the baby-sitter saying that Louis has gone missing and heads back home.

Meanwhile, Nick offers Woody, Kelsey and Donna a lift to the Holby City Trust's Christmas party. However, en route they are involved in a pile up, and Charlie, Nick, Woody, Kelsey end up trapped.

Selena is the first on the scene and single-handedly copes until the emergency services arrive. But rescue attempts are dashed when Donna and Woody try to reach a trapped baby and inadvertently cause the tunnel to collapse on those trapped...

Ric is played by Hugh Quarshie, Harry by Simon MacCorkindale, Charlie by Derek Thompson, Woody by Will Thorpe, Kelsey by Janine Mellor, Donna by Jaye Jacobs, Selena by Liz Carling.

**RS**

#### **Casualty @ Holby City - Part Two**

As news of the tunnel collapse reaches the hospital, everyone struggles to concentrate on their work not knowing if their friends and colleagues are dead or alive.

Woody fights his way free of the lorry carrying sand, which almost drowned him, and goes in search of help. But Donna, the father and the baby are all still trapped in the car.

Meanwhile, outside the tunnel, one of the casualties confesses to possessing stolen toxic chemicals, which have started to leak into the tunnel. Those trapped inside quickly become engulfed by the noxious fumes and there's a race against time to see if they will make it out alive.

Back at the hospital, Ric, who has been impressed by Nick's performance, offers him a job. However, Nick says he wants to wait for a Consultant post and doesn't think he should settle for anything less.

Woody is played by Will Thorpe, Ric by Hugh Quarshie, Nick by Michael French.

**RS**

## **Chopra Town**

This January, a brand new comedy drama comes to BBC One specifically written for its star, Sanjeev Bhaskar (*The Kumars at No 42*, *Life Isn't All Ha Ha Hee Hee*). Sanjeev plays Vik Chopra, a British Asian private detective working in and around the cultural melting pot that is East London. One thing these people all share is a strong sense of pride and a deep mistrust of the police; myriad immigrant communities bring their quirky cases to ex-cop Chopra, whose police training and street-wise savvy deliver the goods.

His new assistant Annie (Natalie Casey, *Two Pints of Lager*, *Hollyoaks*) is young, enthusiastic and smart, and she won't take his bad temper or attitude lying down. Meanwhile Chopra's ex-mate and nemesis Nigel Caro (Neil Stuke, *Twenty Thousand Streets Under The Sky*) is still in the force and turns up on Vik's patch as a newly promoted Detective Inspector. Vik handles all of this whilst juggling the twin demands of his estranged wife and baby daughter and his overbearing parents.

Producer Anil Gupta comments: "***Chopra Town*** is inspired by shows such as *The Rockford Files* and *Minder*, interesting, funny people in an interesting, funny world. Lots of cop shows nowadays are gritty and moody, about gruesome serial killers and we wanted to do an antidote to that, something light and vibrant, warm, exotic and exciting. We have cast people with great comic timing as characters who, like Jim Rockford or Arthur Daley, people can take to their hearts."

Sanjeev Bhaskar says: "In Chopra's head he is Philip Marlow or Sam Spade, a loner who doesn't care, a glamorous private eye, but in fact his cases involve bakeries and a kidnapped cow and he has to go round his parents' house for dinner."

***Chopra Town*** also stars Omid Djalili, Basienka Blake and Morwenna Banks. It is created by Anil Gupta, Richard Pinto and Sharat Sardana (*Goodness Gracious Me*, *The Kumars At No 42*), written by Richard Pinto and produced by Anil Gupta. It is directed by Sean Grundy and is a Hat Trick Production for BBC One.

## **EastEnders**

Heartbroken Alfie decides Christmas is the time to move on and leave Walford for good. Alfie's always had his heart set on travelling across the US on the back of a motorcycle and still shattered by the tragic loss of his beloved Nana, he decides to follow his dreams.

"Nana told Alfie to never regret anything in life and to always follow your dreams" says Shane Richie who plays him.

"He realises he has to pull himself together and make a new start somewhere else" but will that be with Kat?

Alfie faces up to a sensational seasonal showdown with his lost love that will determine the future of both their lives.

Things aren't looking too good for Martin and Sonia. Both thinking that they are drifting apart, the relationship reaches crisis point but will Martin stop Sonia from walking out on their marriage? Although Pauline is despairing with Martin and Sonia things are looking up for her. Pauline hasn't been close to anyone since the death of Arthur but Joe spends Christmas at the Fowlers' – could romance start to blossom?

There's trouble in store for Ruby Allen. Just when the troubled teenager thought her relationship was going well with Juley, there's an unexpected shock in store.

There's also a surprise in store for the Millers when Mike arrives out of the blue. With his mother unwell, Mike wants to know if any of the family would like to visit her in hospital but how will his arrival affect Rosie and the rest of the family?

A new face is set to arrive in the Square in the New Year. Pat's great nephew, Deano Wicks shows up looking for his Aunty Pat. He quickly manages to charm everyone in the Square. However, when he finally meets Pat, she agrees to let him stay but is fully aware that she is in the presence of a typical Wicks Charmer.

**JA2**

## **Doctor Who – The Christmas Invasion**

**[bbc.co.uk/doctorwho](http://bbc.co.uk/doctorwho)**

Jackie Tyler is at home preparing for the festive season, unsure of whether or not her daughter Rose will be home in time, when she hears the familiar sound of the Tardis. Mickey, who is hard at work, also hears it and they both race across the estate just in time to witness its glorious, chaotic crash landing.

The doors open and, much to their delight, out steps Rose and a complete stranger. Except it isn't a stranger. It's the Doctor. Disorientated, yet overwhelmed to see them, he takes a few minutes to regain his balance and considers what it is he wants to tell them before yelling "Oh, I know! Merry Christmas!" then promptly collapses.

The Doctor falls in and out of consciousness, with Rose and Jackie powerless to help him. In a bid to boost Rose's spirits, Mickey suggests a spot of Christmas shopping but they soon find themselves under attack by a sinister brass band of masked Santas.

However, they are not the only ones with problems. Prime Minister Harriet Jones has just been informed that a British space probe, on its way to Mars for a Christmas Day landing, has gone missing. It has been kidnapped by a monstrous race known as the Sycorax, who are set on taking over the world.

Meanwhile, back at the Tylers', Mickey and Jackie try to fend off a killer Christmas tree, while Rose tries to wake the Doctor.

David Tennant plays the Doctor, Billie Piper plays Rose Tyler, Camille Coduri plays Jackie Tyler, Noel Clarke plays Mickey, Penelope Wilton plays Harriet Jones and Sean Gilder plays the Sycorax leader.

*CP*

## **My Family And Other Animals**

Award-winning actress Imelda Staunton stars in Simon Nye's warm and magical new adaptation of the world-famous autobiography by Gerald Durrell.

Escaping the dreary wet weather of Thirties England, the eccentric and bohemian Durrell family uproot and ship themselves to the sunnier climes of the Greek island of Corfu. This rag-tag family – innocent naturalist and intrepid biologist, 10-year-old Gerald, acne-infested Margot, gun-loving Leslie and overbearing, intellectual Larry – headed by their warm, sympathetic mother - experience the joys of living a life of freedom and adventure. For Mother especially, the experience is emotionally moving as she watches her youngest child, Gerald, grow up more and more each day.

Spending so much of his time in the garden and fields watching one sort of the animal kingdom in their natural habitat allows Gerald to learn more incisively about the habits of an altogether different genus: his family. But news of home and the imminence of the Second World War lift the veil of magical innocence felt by the whole family, as they leave their beloved Corfu, an emotionally richer family than the one that arrived.

The cast list includes: Imelda Staunton as Mother; Eugene Simon as Gerald; Tamzin Merchant as Margot; Russell Tovey as Leslie; Matthew Goode as Larry; Chris Langham as Theodore Stephanides, a biologist and witty raconteur; and comedian Omid Djalili as Spiro.

*AF*

## **Sweeney Todd**

Ray Winstone stars as notorious barber Sweeney Todd in a new film for BBC One. Set in 1765, on the harsh streets of London, *Sweeney Todd* is a dark and enthralling tale of love, obsession, murder and, ultimately, redemption, where life is not for the faint-hearted and only the fittest survive.

Living in the shadow of Newgate Prison, Sweeney Todd tries to carve out a quiet and simple life, until his past comes back to haunt him and he is unable to quell his inner demons. Sweeney hopes that his new friend, Mrs Lovett, will bring him solace, love and salvation. But life has never been kind to these devoted companions, whose romantic yearnings flounder and remain unrequited.

As time passes, it seems Mrs Lovett isn't too choosy about her men or the source of meat for her pie shop. Indeed, once Sweeney has installed Mrs Lovett in a shop next to his thriving Fleet Street business, the pair forge a complex and destructive partnership, but customers begin to disappear with alarming regularity.

When body parts are found in the Fleet River, Sir John Fielding orders his fledging Bow Street Runners to investigate but even with the threat of capture surrounding him, Sweeney is unable to run away from the monster inside - indeed his murderous spree only intensifies, threatening the lives of all those around him. Can Matthew Payne, an upstanding Bow Street Runner, who owes his life to Sweeney, save the barber?

Ray Winstone is Sweeney Todd, Essie Davis is Mrs Lovett, Tom Hardy is Matthew Payne, David Warner is Sir John Fielding, David Bradley is Sweeney Todd's father and 12-year-old newcomer, Ben Walker, is Tobias, Sweeney's loyal yet unsuspecting apprentice.

### ***Drama Publicity***

## **As Time Goes By Reunion Specials Ep 1/2**

Dame Judi Dench and Geoffrey Palmer return as Jean and Lionel in two *Reunion Specials* of the heart-warming comedy *As Time Goes By*. The specials pick up some time after the ninth series left off and reveal Jean's great longing for grandchildren, much to the dismay of husband Lionel.

With son-in-law Alistair and daughter Judith having problems, things don't look too promising. Determined to be a grandmother, Jean offers Lionel's services to talk to Alistair but Lionel refuses to be drawn into discussing such personal matters.

However, when Jean contrives to leave him alone with Alistair, Lionel finds himself suggesting he seek medical help and, even more grudgingly, he ends up accompanying Alistair to his appointment.

Not able to rely on Judith and Alistair, Jean turns her attentions to Sandy and Harry, but Harry has more pressing plans than babies – he wants to join the police armed response unit to gain promotion. Jean insists he be talked out of it, but Sandy is adamant it must be his decision.

With Alistair's appointment and Harry's interview taking place on the same day, Jean, Sandy and Judith wait nervously for news. Lionel is the first to return home but has no words of comfort as he's left Alistair waiting for his test results.

When they're finally alone, Jean and Lionel reflect on the day. Lionel is keen to talk about something other than babies, but Jean wants to know why he and his first wife never had children...

Jean is played by Dame Judi Dench, Lionel by Geoffrey Palmer, Alistair by Philip Bretherton, Judith by Moira Brooker, Sandy by Jenny Funnell and Harry by Daniel Ryan.

***Entertainment Publicity***

## **As Time Goes By Reunion Specials Ep 2/2**

Jean's longing for grandchildren is reaching crisis point and, despite her hints, forced discussions and newly purchased cots, no one has announced a pregnancy, nor is it looking likely.

However, when a mysterious stranger turns up on Jean and Lionel's doorstep with a startling revelation, it seems that grandchildren is the least of Jean's worries when she is forced to question Lionel's past.

Meanwhile, family friend Stephen is not content with his life as a retired dentist and has decided that it is now his mission in life to become a celebrity, although his dreams of fame and fortune are brought crashing to the ground when a night in casualty beckons.

In the vain hope of keeping her family close, Jean offers Sandy the opportunity to run the secretarial agency, but Sandy declines. Her husband, Harry, wants them to find a place of their own so is not too keen on Jean's idea to modify the house to create extra space for them.

Lionel's aspirations are a little less challenging – he just wants some peace and quiet to read the paper and enjoy a custard tart but, as he learns, there's not much chance of that with a full house.

Just as he puts his feet up, Lionel is summoned by his father, Rocky, to casualty. The family flees to the hospital and finds that Rocky's injuries are the result of an energetic line dancing session. They also discover that Rocky is being treated by Lionel's mystery visitor...

Jean is played by Judi Dench, Lionel by Geoffrey Palmer, Stephen by Paul Chapman, Sandy by Jenny Funnell, Harry by Daniel Ryan and Rocky by Frank Middlemass. David Oyelowo guest stars.

***Entertainment Publicity***

## **Celebrate Oliver**

Shane Richie hosts *Celebrate Oliver*, a spectacular show celebrating one of the most popular and best-loved musicals of all time.

A selection of the nation's favourite actors and musical stars take to the stage to perform their own interpretations of some of the most recognisable songs in musical history.

Matthew Kelly, Suranne Jones, Amy Nuttall, Hayley Westenra and Aled Jones are just a few of the performers who will pay homage to the musical, singing classics such as *Consider Yourself*, *As Long As He Needs Me* and *Who Will Buy?*.

The original Fagin, the legendary Ron Moody, dons his fingerless gloves once more to give his definitive rendition of *Reviewing The Situation*, and host Shane Richie performs his own special version of Fagin's signature tune, *You've Got To Pick A Pocket Or Two*.

Telling the story of how a Charles Dickens tale became a timeless musical masterpiece, actors from the original film version of *Oliver*, including Mark Lester (Oliver), Jack Wild (Artful Dodger), Shani Wallace (Nancy) and Barry Humphries talk about their roles in the show's history and what *Oliver* means to them.

Bringing *Oliver* up to date, rising young stars Joseph McManners and Perry Millward become Oliver and the Artful Dodger for the evening.

***HT***

## **The French And Saunders Christmas Special**

Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders are back for a one-off special this Christmas featuring spoofs and sketches and an irreverent look at some celebrities. There's "appearances" from Boy George, George Michael, Jackie Stallone and Brigitte Neilson and there's a visit to The Beckenham Folk Festival, with a special appearance from singer Rufus Wainwright.

*The House Of Tiny Tearaway's* Dr Tanya Byron has her hands full trying to control the behaviour of the irrepressible two as they offer their own take on West End hits *The Graduate* and *Chicago* as well as a cheeky look at acclaimed film *Vera Drake*.

There's an unusual edition of *Mastermind* with John Humphrys, and *EastEnders* stars Alfie, Kat and Little Mo are tested to the limit by the appearance of some very talkative extras.

***KC2***

## **Generation Fame**

Graham Norton follows in the footsteps of Bruce Forsyth, Larry Grayson and Jim Davidson to present *Generation Fame*, a festive, celebrity-packed, one-off special version of the *Generation Game*.

Watching the scores on the doors are four celebrities – and their chosen relatives – who compete in a series of bizarre and funny games, all hoping to win the chance to face the prize-packed conveyor belt challenge and the chance to win cash for their chosen charity and prizes for members of the audience.

## ***Entertainment Publicity***

### **The Green Green Grass Christmas Special**

There's festive fun and frolics with Boycie and Marlene in John Sullivan's popular *Only Fools And Horses* spin-off.

Boycie and Marlene are now settled into their new life on Winterdown Farm, although their aspirations of joining the country set haven't yet come to fruition. That's about to change when they attend the annual Royal Agricultural Ball, and when Boycie learns that royalty are often in attendance, they're off like a shot – Boycie in his black tie and Marlene in an outrageous bling-encrusted pink chiffon ball gown.

At the party they're introduced to Rupert and Jonty – titled gentry who tempt Boycie to invest in their new polo club with insinuations of a huge profit and a possible knighthood. The Boyces are invited to a chalet in St Moritz for Christmas to finalise the deal.

When snow starts to fall in Shropshire, blocking the family and their staff on the farm for the whole festive season (and ruining Boycie's chances of fame and fortune), everyone's convinced that he's fallen under "The Curse of Winterdown Farm". But he soon discovers that one man's curse is another man's blessing...

The cast from this year's first series reunites for this festive special which also stars the infamous Driscoll Brothers and some other very familiar faces.

Boycie is played by John Challis, Marlene by Sue Holderness, Tyler by Jack Doolan, Elgin by David Ross, Llewellyn by Alan David, Jed by Peter Hepplethwaite, Bryan by Ivan Kaye and Mrs Cakeworthy by Ella Kenion.

## ***Entertainment Publicity***

## **The Snow Queen**

**[bbc.co.uk/cbbc](http://bbc.co.uk/cbbc)**

For a magical Christmas, CBBC One brings to life *The Snow Queen*, a beautiful and captivating adaptation based on the fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen.

It tells the magical story of the courage and love of young Gerda, who sets out on a long journey to the North to find and save Kay, a young boy who is being kept prisoner under the spell of the frightening Snow Queen.

Along the journey, with the help of a talking crow and a flying reindeer, Gerda talks to all living things and meets a range of eccentric and mysterious characters: the old lady in the Enchanted Flower Garden, the Prince and the Princess, the Little Robber Maiden, the Lapland Woman and the Finland Woman. They direct her to the final destination, the Snow Queen Palace, where she confronts her.

Shot with a technique that mixes live action and animation, and with the dialogue interweaving with songs and music, *The Snow Queen* stages a fantastic adventure that, like all good fairy tales, is sure to be loved by children and adults alike.

Gerda's mother is played by Juliet Stevenson, Gerda by Sydney White, Kay by Pax Baldwin and the King by Kenneth Welsh, The Raven is voiced by Patrick Stewart.

*The Snow Queen* was first screened on The CBBC Channel on 4 December.

***FS***

## **My Family Christmas Special**

As a prelude to the sixth series, which will be on screen early next year, *My Family* returns with a brand-new Christmas special.

Ben has that same old Christmas feeling of despair as the frustrations of family life, as ever, live up to his worst fears. But this year's celebrations look like being even more fearsome as Susan seems set on giving grandson Kenzo a third birthday to remember; Nick sends a Christmas present that could have a lasting effect on the household; and Susan's mother has found herself a toy boy, whose present – and presence – causes mayhem.

Robert Lindsay plays Ben, Zoë Wanamaker plays Susan, Daniela Denby-Ashe plays Janey, Gabriel Thomson plays Michael, Siobhan Hayes plays Abi and Keiron Self plays Roger.

***Entertainment Publicity***

## **Still Game**

**[bbc.co.uk/stillgame](http://bbc.co.uk/stillgame)**

Christmas comes with a bang and a barrel of laughs to Craighlang in this *Still Game* festive special on BBC One, starring Ford Kiernan as Jack and Greg Hemphill as Victor.

Tinsel, fairy lights, turkeys, party hats, mulled wine, crackers, snow and two wise men lead the way for plenty of fun and festive frolics.

Winston finds his stolen turkey is far from oven-ready; Navid gives his customers more than they bargained for with his mulled wine; Tam and Frances have their first wedded Yuletide together; and Jack and Victor face the prospect of no Christmas dinner at all.

Winston is played by Paul Riley, Navid by Sanjeev Kohli, Tam by Mark Cox and Frances by Kate Donnelly. *Still Game* also stars Jane McCarry as Isa (the local gossip), Gavin Mitchell (as Bobby the Barman) and Shamshed Ahktar as Meena, Navid's wife.

**SV**

## **Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special**

Top-scoring *Strictly Come Dancing* couples go head to head for the first time with their rivals from the USA version of the show, *Dancing With The Stars*, this Christmas. They compete for the title of Champion of Champions 2005 and dance to Christmas tunes among baubles and Christmas trees as well as the usual mirror balls and sequins.

Bruce Forsyth and Tess Daly host and the judging panel is again led by Len Goodman, along with Bruno Tonioli, Arlene Phillips and Craig Revel Horwood. Their verdict counts for 50 per cent of the total score with the studio audience counting for the other half.

Last year's Champions of Champions and winners of series two, Jill Halfpenny and Darren Bennett, compete in the hope of winning the title for the second year running. The five other couples are yet to be announced but will be made up of the three finalists from the third series and two celebrities from the USA show, who are to be paired off with *Strictly Come Dancing* professional dancers.

**CG**

## **Top Of The Pops Christmas**

**[bbc.co.uk/totp](http://bbc.co.uk/totp)**

*Top Of The Pops Christmas* serves up a musical festive feast looking back at some of the biggest hits of 2005 and unveiling a stocking full of fantastic performances from the year's best-selling artists.

The cracking, one-hour show is crammed full of pop pressies with a line-up including Coldplay, Kaiser Chiefs, James Blunt, Charlotte Church, McFly, Pussy Cat Dolls and Tony Christie.

Turkey and tinsel may be traditional fare but no Christmas is complete without the starry battle for the Christmas No. 1, which is revealed by hosts Fearne Cotton and Reggie Yates on this show.

***HT***

## **The Two Ronnies Christmas Special**

The Two Ronnies are reunited for the very last time in Ronnie Barker's final television appearance, which was recorded earlier in the year. In a television career spanning 98 shows, 13 series, various Christmas specials and more than 30 years, Ronnie Corbett and Ronnie Barker regularly attracted some of the biggest audiences in the history of British television with their unique and entertaining mix of gags, sketches, clever comedy monologues and spectacular musical numbers.

Following the huge success of *The Two Ronnies Sketchbook* earlier this year, which saw the two Ronnies picking their favourite sketches from their impressive back catalogue, the pair have selected their favourite sketches from their Christmas shows.

The *Christmas Special* features a mix of festive sketches, including the two Ronnies as Chas and Dave; the *Crosswords* sketch; *Milkman's Christmas Address To The Nation*; *Christmas Day In The Ukon*; *Allotment: 2 Pints A Day* sketch; *Game For A Trial* sketch; Ronnie Corbett's *Christmas Monologue*, *Christmas Quickie At The Door*, an *Alice In Wonderland* musical number; and the famous news items and headlines round-up.

Katie Melua sings *Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas* and, in true Two Ronnies style, they have a special festive – and rather poignant – sign-off:

Ronnie Corbett: "It's a Happy Christmas from me."

Ronnie Barker: "And it's a Happy New Year from him."

Both: "Goodnight."

*The Two Ronnies Christmas Special* includes a specially recorded introduction from Ronnie Corbett, in tribute to Ronnie Barker, who died in October.

***GJ***

## **Midnight Mass From Gloucester Cathedral**

**[bbc.co.uk/religion](http://bbc.co.uk/religion)**

Live from Gloucester Cathedral, this traditional Midnight Mass celebration is led by the Bishop of Gloucester, the Rt Rev Michael Perham, with the sermon delivered by the Dean of Gloucester, the Very Rev Nicholas Bury.

The music features popular traditional carols, including *O Come All Ye Faithful*; *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* and *O Little Town Of Bethlehem*.

***HH2***

## **Songs Of Praise**

**[bbc.co.uk/religion](http://bbc.co.uk/religion)**

Aled Jones and Pam Rhodes introduce a feast of traditional carols from the Royal Albert Hall.

At the beginning of the year, *Songs Of Praise* invited viewers to vote for their favourite carols – and they did, in their tens of thousands. Joining Aled and Pam to count down the nation's favourite carols are chart-topping singer Katherine Jenkins and world-famous classical soloist Andrea Bocelli.

Aled and Katherine sing a duet, *O Holy Night*, while Andrea sings *Adeste Fideles* and *Silent Night*. Other festive favourites include *Once In Royal David's City*, *In The Bleak Mid-Winter* and *O Little Town Of Bethlehem*.

The *Songs Of Praise* orchestra provide the music, conducted by Paul Leddington-Wright, and choirs include the Royal Choral Society, Adventist Vocal Ensemble and the Saint Michael's Singers. The *Songs Of Praise* School Choirs of the Year, Stoneygate School from Great Glen in Leicestershire and Haileybury Chamber Choir from Hertfordshire, also join in the celebrations.

***HH2***

## **BBC TWO**

### **Catherine Tate Christmas Show**

One of the most talked about comedy programmes of the year is back for a one-off Christmas special.

Now loaded with industry awards, Catherine Tate made her mark this year with her comic timing, observational acting and extensive range of unforgettable characters.

The Christmas special sees the return of old favourites such as Nan, the opinionated hard-to-please woman who is a mine of misinformation; Lauren, the obnoxious 15-year-old who'd rather be right than happy; Bernie the Irish nurse, who prefers seducing her male patients to caring for them; and "How very dare you" Derek Faye, who finds people's accusations about his sexuality an outrage.

### ***Entertainment Publicity***

### **The Goodies Christmas Special**

They're back, after 25 years. But did they ever really go away? In this two-hour special, which blends documentary, archive, sitcom and audience participation, Bill Oddie, Tim Brooke-Taylor and Graeme Garden break into their old office to present a show which explores their giddy rise to fame in the Seventies, the influence they and their programmes had on the nation, and attempt to explain why *The Goodies* haven't been on TV for so long.

They present the stories behind their finest moments and unearth some things which will be as much a surprise for them as they are for viewers, such as the story behind the Mary Whitehouse saga, and they also try to find out what happened to their three-seater bicycle.

Contributors and fans appearing on the show include Rolf Harris, Huw Edwards, Martin Freeman, Ronni Ancona, Tony Blackburn, Jon Culshaw, Mark Gatiss, Emma Kennedy and Phill Jupitus.

### ***Entertainment Publicity***

## **Tony Hancock (working title)**

Tony Hancock is one of the most extraordinary and enduring comedians Britain has ever produced. Cult sitcoms such as *Hancock's Half Hour* and *Hancock* made him a household name during the Sixties. These definitive shows, coupled with Hancock's near-iconic status, mean that he is still adored today, across the generations, with cult stars such as Pete Doherty publicly professing their admiration.

Part of the allure, of course, is that of the tragic clown. Hancock's public image belied a private life that was increasingly tormented by alcoholism and depression. Aged just 44, he committed suicide in Australia during yet another attempt at reviving his flailing career.

This intimate documentary reveals a rounded and sympathetic portrait of this extraordinarily complex man. Made with the co-operation of Hancock's family, the film hears from some of his closest friends and colleagues to challenge some of the best-known myths about the comic genius. Colleagues – including co-stars Hugh Lloyd, Sylvia Syms and June Whitfield and writers Galton and Simpson – explain what it was like rehearsing and performing with such a charismatic yet extremely nervous star. Key women from Hancock's personal life, meanwhile, reveal what he was really like off screen during the good times and the bad.

With archive footage and touching recollections, this documentary gets under the skin of Hancock, a comic icon who came to represent the hopes, dreams and frustrations of the average man, but who in private was an extraordinarily complex and troubled character.

*IC*

## **Three Men In A Boat**

Griff Rhys-Jones, Rory McGrath and Dara O'Briain star in this series which recreates the most popular comic novel of the Victorian era, *Three Men In A Boat*.

The book was first published in 1889, and the series follows the original journey as faithfully as the passage of 116 years will allow. Throughout their journey from Kingston to Oxford, the trio moor where the original protagonists moored, sleep in the same boat as the original cast, and stay in some of the same pubs and guesthouses.

Their odyssey takes place in an exact replica of the wooden skiff used by Jerome K Jerome, George, Harris and Montmorency the dog.

*AW*

## **Arena – Galton And Simpson**

Alan Simpson and Ray Galton have delighted millions with their creations, which include *Hancock's Half Hour* and *Steptoe And Son*. This Christmas, *Arena* presents the first full-length profile of two of the greatest comedy writers to emerge since the Second World War. They talk about life, laughter and work with author and broadcaster Nigel Williams.

The pair met as teenagers in 1948, when they were both convalescing from tuberculosis in Milford sanatorium. They went from writing and performing scripts for hospital radio to being hired by the BBC in 1951 to write for Derek Roy's radio show, *Happy-Go-Lucky*.

In the Fifties, they hit the big time with *Hancock's Half Hour*. The radio series ran from 1954-59, turned Hancock into a national institution and transferred to television with huge success.

Galton and Simpson went on to help re-launch Frankie Howerd with his first major series, *Frankie Howerd*, after a low period in the comedian's career, and to create a sitcom for Sidney James called *Citizen James*. But a true high point for them came with the creation of the groundbreaking *Steptoe And Son*. The series struck a chord with the nation, and the weekly battles between the father and son were soon attracting enormous audiences, sometimes in excess of 20 million.

Galton and Simpson won lifetime achievement awards from the Writers' Guild in 1997, and were awarded OBEs in 2000. *Arena* pays tribute to the writing team that is a true national treasure.

*IC*

## **Definitively Darcey**

For the last 15 years, Darcey Bussell has been the star of The Royal Ballet and the ballet dancer whose name everybody knows. But life for a professional dancer is tough and relentless. This intimate documentary follows Darcey at home and abroad, through a gruelling schedule of rehearsals, performances and photo shoots, to tell the story of how a very normal girl with an exceptional talent changed everybody's expectations of what a ballet dancer should be.

*SD*

## **The Merry Widow**

Lesley Garrett stars in this brand-new production of *The Merry Widow* from the Welsh National Opera.

This sparkling operetta, which has delighted audiences since its first performance in 1905, is a story of glittering aristocracy, intense passion, romantic mystery, dashing bachelors, elegant ladies and ever-flowing Champagne.

Rich widow Hanna is surrounded by suitors eager to court her (and her new fortune), though she seems interested only in playboy Danilo, who feigns indifference. Hanna then announces her engagement to a Frenchman, causing Danilo to change his tune.

Lesley Garrett plays Hanna and Jeffrey Black plays Danilo.

***SD***

## **Carols From King's [www.bbc.co.uk/religion](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion)**

*Carols From King's* brings the magic of a traditional Christmas to BBC Two, with a celebration from the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge.

The gothic vault of the Chapel roof and glowing stained-glass windows frame the simple story of the Nativity, illustrated with readings from the King James Bible and poetry by Gerard Manley Hopkins, Richard Crashaw and Sr Mary Francis.

The famous chapel choir sing traditional and new carols by candlelight, including *In Dulci Jubilo*, *O Little Town Of Bethlehem*, *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*, *In The Bleak Midwinter* and *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*.

The Dean is the Revd Ian Thompson and the Director of Music is Stephen Cleobury.

***HH2***

**York Minster At Christmas**  
**[www.bbc.co.uk/religion](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion)**

For the first time in its history, York Minster allows the cameras to go behind the scenes as it prepares for the most anticipated celebrations of the year – a year which has been particularly significant with the inauguration of John Sentamu, the Church of England's first black archbishop.

York Minster employs 128 full time staff and a further 600 volunteers. It is both a serene and bustling place where religious and secular worlds intertwine. The programme follows the choristers of the historic Minster School as they prepare for the Christmas Eve *Nine Lessons And Carols* service, and features the daily lives of key personalities from every rank of the Cathedral's hierarchy, many of who work in traditions that date back for some thousand years.

Giving a fascinating insight into one of England's greatest Cathedrals, *York Minster At Christmas* captures the essence of this complex institution at one of its most significant times.

**CR/JC**

**BBC THREE**

**Ideal**

Johnny Vegas returns as Moz, a small-time dope dealer, in a Christmas special of *Ideal*.

Moz's pregnant girlfriend, Nicki, returns from Cardiff full of the Christmas spirit and ready to party, but Moz refuses to acknowledge that Christmas is any different from the rest of the year.

But as Christmas morning progresses, Moz's determined misery is put to the test by a string of merry visitors, including the PC, Brian, Jenny the childminder, who is also pregnant, Derrick and his bride-to-be, Yasuko. All are bearing gifts of skunk, booze and chocolate, and none of them is in any obvious hurry to leave...

Moz is played by Johnny Vegas, Nicki by Nicola Reynolds, PC by Tom Gooman-Hill, Brian by Graham Duff, Jenny by Sinead Matthews, Derrick by Alfie Joey and Yasuko by Haruka Karoda.

**KS**

## **Little Britain**

For two nights only, Matt Lucas and David Walliams invite viewers to join them for another chance to see their six personal favourite episodes of the multi-award winning show. Talking exclusively in front of a studio audience, the creators of the hit comedy introduce each episode and discuss their favourite characters and moments.

This unique event will be screened across two consecutive evenings, and as if that isn't enough, by pressing the Red button, viewers will be able to access a live, running commentary specially recorded by Matt and David.

**AW**

## **BBC FOUR**

### **Arthur Conan Doyle For The Defence**

As part of BBC Four's festive collection of programmes celebrating Sherlock Holmes's creator, Arthur Conan Doyle, a new documentary highlights the author's own prowess as an investigator.

*Arthur Conan Doyle For The Defence* features two of the most controversial and illuminating cases of injustice that the author-cum- detective handled.

The son of an Indian-born vicar in rural Staffordshire, George Edalji was sentenced to seven years' hard labour for the horrific mutilation and killing of horses.

It is a tale of shoddy forensics, poison-pen letters and institutional racism, which intrigued Conan Doyle, especially as it touched on events earlier in his own life when he was a practising doctor; a young man died in his care and the circumstantial evidence pointed towards him.

The second case tells of Oscar Slater, a German Jew, sentenced to hang for the brutal murder of elderly Glasgow spinster Marion Gilchrist.

Doyle fought his corner, revealing a high-level cover-up by the Scottish authorities to convict a man they knew to be innocent to protect a well-connected family.

These cases contributed to the passing of the Appeal Court Acts in England and Scotland.

Rare archive film of the author himself is included in the programme, alongside testimony from modern-day experts.

**HM**

## **The Man Who Loved Sherlock Holmes**

*The Man Who Loved Sherlock Holmes*, part of BBC Four's collection of programmes celebrating Arthur Conan Doyle, provides a unique insight into the world of Sherlock Holmes fans via the life and death of Richard Lancelyn Green.

The son of children's writer Roger Lancelyn Green, Richard's obsession with the great detective took hold at a very early age.

When only 14 years old, he made a faithful recreation of Sherlock Holmes's study in the attic of his family home, complete with a recording of horse-drawn carriages which he played as people approached the room.

His fascination led to an ongoing friendship with actor Douglas Willmer – the Sherlock Holmes fans' Sherlock Holmes.

However, his biggest ambition was to write the definitive biography of Holmes's creator, Arthur Conan Doyle.

It led to close links with the Doyle family and their secrets, a global search for original manuscripts and letters and a desperate bid to save such treasures for the nation.

But it also cast a pall over his last days and he was found dead in mysterious circumstances in his flat in March 2004.

***HM***

## **A View from A Hill**

**bbc.co.uk/drama**

BBC Four presents the television première of M R James's classic ghost story and invites viewers to settle down for a spine-chilling evening with the ghosts of Christmas past. Who dares to whisper the spooky secrets of Edwardian England, where the living and the dead were known to be strange bedfellows?

How different Fanshawe's holiday might have been had his trusty binoculars not broken. The Squire's archaic pair prove strangely bewitching, but is everything they see to be believed? And why does their very mention fill the elderly butler with dread? He looks like he's seen a ghost, or worse. Perhaps Fanshawe should have consulted the old man before venturing up Gallows Hill. Some stones are better left unturned, and questions of the dead should remain the secrets of the past, because sometimes the dead answer back...

The ghost stories of Montague Rhodes James are widely regarded as the greatest and most influential of the English language. They provoke a fascination and terror as potent today as when James first narrated them over 100 years ago. Every Christmas Eve, his Cambridge fellows would gather round the fire for a much-loved evening of frightful horrors and unearthly delights.

Many stories famously brought to the screen include *Casting The Runes*, *A Warning To The Curious* and Jonathan Miller's 1968 classic, *Oh, Whistle, And I'll Come To You, My Lad*. This Christmas, the BBC revives a seasonal tradition by premiering the first screen adaptation of M R James's 1925 *A View From The Hill*, from Dennis Potter award-winning writer, Peter Harness.

Mark Letheren plays Fanshawe, Pip Torrens plays Richards and David Burke plays Patten.

**MO/JS2**