

**SATURDAY 10 MARCH 2012**

**SAT 19:00 The Golden Age of Canals (b01173hf)**

Most people thought that when the working traffic on canals faded away after the war, it would be the end of their story. But they were wrong. A few diehard enthusiasts and boat owners campaigned, lobbied and dug, sometimes with their bare hands, to keep the network of narrow canals open.

Some of these enthusiasts filmed their campaigns and their home movies tell the story of how, in the teeth of much political opposition, they saved the inland waterways for the nation and, more than 200 years after they were first built, created a second golden age of the canals.

Stan Offley, an IWA activist from Ellesmere Port, filmed his boating trips around the wide canals in the 40s, 50s and 60s in 16mm colour. But equally charming is the film made by Ed Frangleton, with help from Harry Arnold, of a hostel boat holiday on the Llangollen Canal in 1961. There are the films shot by ex-working boatman Ike Argent from his home in Nottinghamshire and looked after by his son Barry.

There is astonishing film of the last days of working boats, some shot by John Pyper when he spent time with the Beecheys in the 60s, film taken by Keith Christie of the last days of the cut around the BCN, and the films made by Keith and his mate Tony Gregory of their attempts to keep working the canals through their carrying company, Midland Canal Transport.

There is film of key restorations, the Stourbridge 16 being talked about with great wit and affection by one of the leading activists in that watershed of restorations in the mid-60s, David Tomlinson, and John Maynard's beautiful films of the restoration of the Huddersfield, 'the impossible restoration', shot over two decades.

All these and more are in the programme alongside the people who made the films and some of the stars of them. Together they tell the story of how, in the years after 1945, a few people fought the government like David fought Goliath to keep canals open and restore ones that had become defunct, and won against all the odds.

**SAT 20:00 Sicily Unpacked (b01b320c)**

Episode 3

In the final episode of the series, Andrew and Giorgio take the pulse of contemporary Sicily, experience the change that is sweeping through the island, and find out how the future of it is linked to its ancient past.

Over the last 100 years, Sicilians have seen their beautiful island sink under the weight of corruption, recession and the mafia. But today, Sicily is experiencing a renaissance and celebrating a rediscovery of their unique ancient heritage.

Andrew and Giorgio visit Mount Etna, the tallest active volcano in Europe, and explore the rich vegetation of its foothills and the dramatic moonlike craters of its upper slopes. Etna truly is a great beauty with a seductive dark side, just like Sicily.

During this journey, our presenters meet the ordinary people really trying to make a difference in Sicily. Including Ciccio the fisherman, who retrieved a statue dating back 2,300 years, which he generously gave back to his town rather than sell it to a private art dealer, so that his fellow Sicilians can enjoy the riches of their past. Likewise, a little museum in the small town of Aidone, which successfully reclaimed the spectacular Morgantina statue of Demeter - as old as the frieze sculptures on the Parthenon - from the Getty Museum in California.

And it's not only art that is experiencing a resurrection on the island, but agriculture too - the wine, that just 20 years ago was considered only good enough for blending vats on the continent, is now one of the most fashionable in Europe and is being exported all over the world.

Andrew and Giorgio also visit the magnificent villa of Romana del Casale in Piazza Armerina where they get a chance to help restorers in bringing back to life exquisite mosaics some 1,800-years-old.

Combining old traditions with contemporary trends is a current behind a lot of the success stories emerging out of modern Sicily. One the most exciting examples is Accursio Craparo, a Michelin-starred chef taking the best of Sicily's food traditions and putting an ingenious modern twist on them.

Andrew and Giorgio finish their journey around Sicily back in Palermo. Here they meet Prince Bernardo Tortorici, whose family have been in Sicily since the 12th century. He confirms the renaissance of Sicily that the presenters have witnessed on their travels, but insists Sicilians must not rest on their laurels. Sicily will have a brilliant, bright future if Sicilians cherish and believe in their island's great beauty and, most importantly, nurture it.

**SAT 21:00 Inspector Montalbano (b00g31qt)**

Excursion to Tindari

A young Don Juan is found murdered in front of his apartment building and an elderly couple are reported missing after an excursion to the ancient site of Tindari. Inspector Montalbano tries to solve these two seemingly unrelated cases amid the daily complications of life at Vigata police station. But when he discovers that the couple and the murdered young man lived in the same building, his investigation stumbles onto Sicily's brutal 'New Mafia' and leads him down a path more twisted and far-reaching than any he has ever been down before.

In Italian with English subtitles.

**SAT 22:55 Top of the Pops (b01932g9)**

The Story of 1977

Following BBC Four's Top of the Pops 1976, the next stop is 1977 - in some ways a year zero for Britain's most iconic music programme. As the country veered between strikes and street parties, pop bastion Top of the Pops was stormed by punk and new wave acts such as the Stranglers and the Jam. Yet Top of the Pops at first seemed unaware of the changes afoot and the way in which the show is made was beset by working practices that are perhaps symptoms of the way in which Britain could be said 'not to be working'.

Jeans were getting tighter, hair shorter and the tunes louder, but it was an incredibly diverse year. Disco was also a dominant force with Donna Summer's I Feel Love, alongside the reggae of Bob Marley and the Wailers, the pub rock of Eddie and the Hot Rods and the plastic pop of Boney M. British pop that year was in a state of flux - unpredictable and exciting.

Appearing on Top of the Pops in 1977 is explored in the documentary by artists such as the Adverts, John Otway, members of Darts, JJ Burnel from the Stranglers and Paul Cook from the Sex Pistols, with insights from the Top of the Pops production team, Nicky Wire from the Manics and journalists Alexis Petridis and Pete Paphides.

**SAT 23:55 Horizon (b00qszch)**

2009-2010

To Infinity and Beyond

By our third year, most of us will have learned to count. Once we know how, it seems as if there would be nothing to stop us counting forever. But, while infinity might seem like an perfectly innocent idea, keep counting and you enter a paradoxical world where nothing is as it seems.

Mathematicians have discovered there are infinitely many infinities, each one infinitely bigger than the last. And if the universe goes on forever, the consequences are even more bizarre. In an infinite universe, there are infinitely many copies of the Earth and infinitely many copies of you. Older than time, bigger than the universe and stranger than fiction. This is the story of infinity.

**SAT 01:00 The Sky at Night (b08slbrh)**

Citizen Astronomy

Amateur astronomers are scanning the night skies looking for asteroids, comets and supernovae, and making vital discoveries in our quest for knowledge. Meanwhile, space missions produce millions of images, but who is to say which ones are truly unusual and interesting? It's a job that computers struggle with, but one in which humans excel. This, more than ever, is the age of the amateur astronomer and Sir Patrick Moore tells us how we can all play a part whilst also enjoying the beautiful cosmos.

**SAT 02:00 The Golden Age of Canals (b01173hf)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

**SAT 03:00 Sicily Unpacked (b01b320c)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

**SUNDAY 11 MARCH 2012**

**SUN 19:00 Songwriters' Circle (b01dc4xl)**

American Folk

Distinguished American singer-songwriters Steve Earle, Diana Jones and Tom Morello kick off a short run of Songwriters' Circle recorded at Bush Hall in London, with songs that deal with the experience of the common man and woman in the tradition of Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger.

Since his Guitar Town debut in the late 80s, Steve Earle has been equally famed for his political activism and former life on

the edge, but his music alone would have ensured star status. Here, the master craftsman shares paens to the oppressed and the overlooked with The Mountain and This City and nods to his own gun-toting past with The Devil's Right Hand.

One Man Revolution, Tom Morello, steps outside his career as lead guitarist with rabble-rousers Rage Against The Machine to wield a mean acoustic guitar as agit-folk alter-ego The Nightwatchman. He's an upbeat, likeable presence, with songs ranging from the righteous anger of No-one Left to the sensitive articulation of doubt, The Garden of Gethsemane.

Holding her own between the two is Nashville resident Diana Jones, channelling the Appalachian mountain music of her forebears, in the tradition of the likes of the Carter Family. She performs her sparse, beautiful songs of love and loss, from the revenge fantasy of If I Had a Gun to the heart-wrenching Henry Russell's Last Words and Pony.

**SUN 20:00 She-Wolves: England's Early Queens (b01bgpm7)**

Matilda and Eleanor

In the medieval and Tudor world there was no question in people's minds about the order of God's creation - men ruled and women didn't. A king was a warrior who literally fought to win power then battled to keep it. Yet despite everything that stood in their way, a handful of extraordinary women did attempt to rule medieval and Tudor England. In this series, historian Dr Helen Castor explores seven queens who challenged male power, the fierce reactions they provoked and whether the term 'she wolves' was deserved.

Eight hundred years ago, Matilda came within a hair's breadth of being the first woman to be crowned queen of England in her own right. Castor explores how Matilda reached this point and why her bid for the throne ultimately failed. Her daughter-in-law Eleanor of Aquitaine was an equally formidable woman. Despite being remembered as the queen of courtly love, in reality during her long life she divorced one king and married another, only to lead a rebellion against him. She only finally achieved the power she craved in her seventies.

**SUN 21:00 Frost/Nixon (b015psyn)**

The story behind one of the most unforgettable moments in TV history. When disgraced President Richard Nixon agreed to an interview with jet-setting television personality David Frost, he thought he had found the key to saving his tarnished legacy. But, with a name to make and a reputation to overcome, Frost became one of Nixon's most formidable adversaries and engaged the leader in a charged battle of wits that changed the face of politics.

**SUN 22:55 Birdwatchers (b01dk4bg)**

In the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul, tensions arise when a tribe of indigenous Guarani Indians attempts to re-inhabit its ancestral land, once a part of the rainforest but now turned into farmland belonging to a wealthy landowner.

In Portuguese, English and Guarani with English subtitles.

**SUN 00:30 Friday Night, Saturday Morning (b016bgt2)**

Series 1

Episode 7

Talk show, hosted by Tim Rice and featuring a discussion about Monty Python's Life of Brian, which had been banned by local councils and caused protests. Guests are John Cleese, Michael Palin, Malcolm Muggeridge, the bishop of Southwark Arthur Stockwood, Norris McWhirter and Paul Jones and the Blues Band.

**SUN 01:40 Still Bill: The Bill Withers Story (b01d28tn)**

You know the music - now meet the man. Still Bill is an intimate portrait of soul legend Bill Withers, best known for his classics Ain't No Sunshine, Lean on Me, Lovely Day, Grandma's Hands and Just the Two of Us. With his soulful delivery and warm, heartfelt sincerity, Withers has written songs that resonate within the fabric of our times. Through concert footage, journeys to his birthplace and interviews with music legends, his family and closest friends, this documentary presents the story of an artist who has written some of the most beloved songs of our time and who truly understands the heart and soul of a man.

**SUN 02:55 She-Wolves: England's Early Queens (b01bgpm7)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

**MONDAY 12 MARCH 2012**

**MON 19:00 World News Today (b01dc57y)**

The latest national and international news, exploring the day's events from a global perspective.

**MON 19:30 Great British Railway Journeys (b00q2qt0)**  
Series 1

Edinburgh to Kirkcaldy

Michael Portillo takes to the tracks with a copy of George Bradshaw's Victorian Railway Guidebook. In a series of four epic journeys, he travels the length and breadth of the country to see how the railways changed us, and what of Bradshaw's Britain remains.

Michael's second epic journey takes him north, from Preston to Scotland, on one of the first railways to cross the border. On this fifth leg, he makes apple juice in the Clyde Valley orchards, pays a thrilling visit to the top of the Forth Rail Bridge and relives his childhood memories in his grandparents' home town of Kirkcaldy.

**MON 20:00 Ice Dogs (b01dc580)**

Episode 3

In the harshest winter in Siberian memory, Benedict Allen is in Siberia's remotest and most secretive province of Chukotka to learn from native hunters how to use a team of husky dogs to travel 1,500 kilometres into the Arctic and attempt to cross the Bering Strait into Alaska.

Benedict and his team are nearing the end of the trek. When they reach the home town of his guides he will be on his own. Coming across a family of nomads and an Arctic Stonehenge in the middle of nowhere shows Benedict that people can thrive in this seemingly impossible terrain. But has he learnt enough to lead his dogs onto the shifting ice floes of the Bering Strait? On his first night alone, his dogs start howling - there is an intruder in the camp.

Alone on the frozen Bering Strait trying to cross over into Alaska, Benedict is right on the path of the annual polar bear migration, packs of Arctic wolves are patrolling about and gales come out of nowhere, plunging the temperature to -40 degrees. When the ice walls form a barrier ahead, he is forced to leave his dogs and try to find a route through. The unthinkable happens, as he loses his team, his tent and his supplies, and is left stranded 150 kilometres from help with no radio.

Originally broadcast in 2002.

**MON 21:00 Dirk Gently (b01dc582)**

Series 1

Episode 2

With business far from booming, Dirk and Macduff style themselves as holistic security consultants and return to the university that expelled Dirk for cheating twenty years earlier. Charged with protecting a valuable state-of-the-art humanoid robot, things veer rapidly off course as, within hours of their arrival, the robot is stolen and Dirk and Macduff find themselves the prime suspects in a murder case.

**MON 22:00 Storyville (b01dc584)**

Who Is Gorky? An Abstract Life

In a personal journey into a family tragedy, filmmaker Cosima Spender explores how she and her relatives have been shaped by her grandfather - the pioneering Abstract Expressionist painter, Arshile Gorky. Following a series of tragedies, he committed suicide in 1948, leaving a young wife and two daughters behind. Through conversations with her grandmother, Gorky's widow, Spender tries to make sense of his creativity, the reasons for his death and the shadow it subsequently cast. The film takes the viewer through the pain and courage of the family, coming to an emotional climax in Gorky's Armenian birthplace.

**MON 23:00 Storyville (b001221f)**

Blindsight

Set against the breathtaking backdrop of the Himalayas, this documentary follows the gripping adventure of six Tibetan teenagers on a climbing expedition up the 23,000 foot Lhakpa Ri, on the north side of Everest. A dangerous journey soon becomes a seemingly impossible challenge made all the more remarkable by the fact that the teenagers are blind.

Believed by many Tibetans to be possessed by demons, the children are shunned by their parents, scorned by their villages and rejected by society. Rescued by Sabriye Tenberken, a blind educator and adventurer who established the first school for the blind in Lhasa, the students invite the famous blind mountain

climber Erik Weihenmayer to visit their school after learning about his conquest of Everest.

Erik arrives in Lhasa and inspires Sabriye and her students Kyila, Sonam Bhumtso, Tashi, Gyenshen, Dachung and Tenzin to let him lead them higher than they have ever been before. The resulting three-week journey is beyond anything any of them could have predicted.

**MON 00:40 Dirk Gently (b01dc582)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 today]

**MON 01:40 Ice Dogs (b01dc580)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

**MON 02:35 Great British Railway Journeys (b00q2qt0)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:30 today]

**MON 03:05 Dirk Gently (b01dc582)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 today]

**TUESDAY 13 MARCH 2012****TUE 19:00 World News Today (b01dc59k)**

The latest national and international news, exploring the day's events from a global perspective.

**TUE 19:30 Empire of the Seas: How the Navy Forged the Modern World (b00qlmcq)**

Series 1

Sea Change

In the last of this four-part series, historian Dan Snow explores the ups and downs of a climactic century in naval and British history.

Rapacious and ruthless, the 19th-century Navy used 'gunboat diplomacy' to push British interests further afield than ever before. It was control of the sea rather than her land empire that was the key to Britain's growing wealth.

Technological advances saw Britain and France engage in an arms race over battleships. While Britain's navy appeared to be winning, the meritocracy fostered in Nelson's time was slowly being eroded by an entrenched hierarchy which smothered any spark of initiative among its sailors.

When Germany emerged as a new threat, modernising admiral Jackie Fisher was called to reform the Navy. Fisher believed in peace through deterrence and had plans for a huge new battleship - the Dreadnought.

When war finally came, the British and German fleets clashed off Jutland in 1916. But the outcome was not the knock-out blow the British public wanted. Britain emerged from World War I victorious but broke, and no longer able to maintain by far the world's largest fleet. In time, other nations eclipsed her. It was the end of centuries of naval supremacy.

**TUE 20:30 Timothy Spall: All at Sea (b01dc59m)**

The Last Splash

Six years ago, Timothy Spall and his wife Shane left London to tour Britain's coast. This final episode of their journey sees them complete their circumnavigation, but not before a dramatic and frightening twist.

They arrive in Suffolk where they moor in Shotley marina, the site of the former naval training camp HMS Ganges. From here they venture into the serene Walton backwaters and then out into the North Sea for a trip to Brightlingsea, Essex. Essex to Kent should have been fairly trouble-free. Tim filled his boat with friends, including actress Frances Barber, before setting off on this celebratory leg.

Chatham is the port where the Spalls spent months learning the art of navigation before venturing out into the sea for the first time all those years ago. They know the area well, but Tim hadn't realised how much the waters of the Medway would change in the blackness of night. After hours at sea they are close to land, but soon become lost. The lights from all the factories and power plants on land add confusion and low tide increases the risk of running aground. After hours of fretting, Tim reluctantly calls the coastguard. The lifeboat crew take them to the nearest port, Queenborough in Sheppey.

The next day they safely make it to Chatham, where both Tim and Shane are emotionally drained and relieved. The final journey up the Thames into London is where he eventually realises why he did this adventure in the first place - 'It's been a

celebration of life and a spit in the eye of the audacity of fate trying to kill me, so we went out and tried to kill ourselves.'

**TUE 21:00 Frost on Interviews (b01dc5ft)**

Television interviews seem to have been around forever - but that's not the case. They evolved in confidence and diversity as television gradually came of age. So how did it all begin? With the help of some of its greatest exponents, Sir David Frost looks back over nearly 60 years of the television interview.

He looks at political interviews, from the earliest examples in the postwar period to the forensic questioning that we now take for granted, and celebrity interviews, from the birth of the chat show in the United States with Jack Paar and Johnny Carson to the emergence of our own peak-time British performers like Sir Michael Parkinson and Sir David himself.

Melvyn Bragg, Joan Bakewell, Tony Benn, Clive Anderson, Ruby Wax, Andrew Neil, Stephen Fry, AA Gill, Alastair Campbell and Michael Parkinson all help trace the development of the television interview. What is its enduring appeal and where does the balance of power actually lie - with the interviewer or the interviewee?

**TUE 22:00 Mark Lawson Talks To... (b01dc5fy)**

Frank Skinner

Mark Lawson talks to Frank Skinner about a career that has made him one of the most successful and well-paid comedians of his generation. By Skinner's own admission he's a 'nondescript bloke from a working class family in West Bromwich who got lucky'. Lawson explores what drove him to succeed in stand-up, broadcasting, writing and even a No 1 hit single with the football anthem Three Lions. Skinner also talks candidly about his personal life, including his former alcoholism and reputation as a womaniser.

Originally born Christopher Graham Collins, he first found fame when he won the prestigious 1991 Perrier prize for stand-up comedy at the Edinburgh Festival. He went on to present the highly successful Fantasy Football with David Baddiel as they inadvertently became the poster boys for the 'new laddism' of the 1990s. Skinner was subsequently poached by ITV and went on to present his own chat show, before parting ways with the broadcaster. In 2007 Skinner successfully returned to stand-up and has prodigiously worked on various BBC entertainment shows including Frank Skinner's Opinionated and the revamped Room 101.

**TUE 23:00 Ruby Wax Meets... (b01dc5fw)**

Series 1

Imelda Marcos

Ruby Wax visits Manila to interview the former first lady Imelda Marcos.

**TUE 23:50 Catholics (b01d27lc)**

Women

In the third of three films exploring Catholic identity, award-winning documentary filmmaker Richard Alwyn talks to Catholic women about how Catholicism has shaped their lives.

With remarkable behind-the-scenes access to Westminster Cathedral, this is a moving and intimate film in which Alwyn meets the female staff, volunteers and congregation of the cathedral. Set against the rhythm of cathedral life, Alwyn's meetings are brief but intense encounters that describe what it is to be a Catholic woman in Britain today.

Rose is second-in-charge of the cathedral's sacristy, preparing the altar for six daily masses and making sure the priests have all they need. It's like running a busy train station. A convert, Rose is the consummate 'handmaid of the Lord' for whom Catholicism is an anchor in life.

Jennie, on the other hand, is a cradle Catholic who feels her education by nuns was repressive, with an unspoken emphasis on sex - and especially abstaining from it. She feels her Catholic 'indoctrination' was a cross for her generation to bear. Despite that she staffs the cathedral's information desk once a week and feels her Catholicism is a valued part of her identity, having developed over the years into an appreciation of the spirit of faith more than the letter of the Church.

Elsewhere, Alwyn meets a retired doctor who feels alienated by the Catholic Church's teachings on Aids and contraception and its recent history of child abuse. No longer practising, she nonetheless feels her Catholic identity has provided her with an important moral compass for the chaos of life.

These and other encounters form the backbone of Alwyn's moving film. What emerges is a portrait of Catholicism as an identity that, whether positive or corrosive, is always tenacious

and hard to leave behind. Once a Catholic...

**TUE 00:50 Timothy Spall: All at Sea (b01dc59m)**  
[Repeat of broadcast at 20:30 today]

**TUE 01:20 Empire of the Seas: How the Navy Forged the Modern World (b00qlmcq)**  
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:30 today]

**TUE 02:20 Frost on Interviews (b01dc5ft)**  
[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 today]

**TUE 03:20 Timothy Spall: All at Sea (b01dc59m)**  
[Repeat of broadcast at 20:30 today]

#### WEDNESDAY 14 MARCH 2012

**WED 19:00 World News Today (b01dc5gf)**  
The latest national and international news, exploring the day's events from a global perspective.

**WED 19:30 Francesco's Italy: Top to Toe (b00791y3)**  
A British Love Affair

Francesco da Mosto enters Tuscany and Umbria to look at the long love affair that Britain has had with the area. He learns how to be the perfect courtier in Urbino, goes grape harvesting in Chianti, discovers the romantic inspiration at the heart of Puccini's operas, travels to Assisi to find out why he was named after St Francis and takes Dame Maggie Smith on a sightseeing tour of Florence.

**WED 20:30 Venice 24/7 (b01dc66q)**  
Carnival

With unprecedented access to Venice's emergency and public services, this series goes behind the 15th-century facades to experience the real, living city. From daily emergencies to street sweeping, bridge maintenance to flood defence systems and a death-defying descent across St Mark's Square, this is Venice as you've never seen it before. This is Venice 24/7.

One of the most famous events in the Venetian calendar is Carnevale. This ancient tradition, meaning 'meat is allowed', celebrates all things decadent in the run-up to Lent. Kicking off celebrations is a 400-metre descent from St Mark's campanile by a young Venetian girl. There is a tourist who has had a suspected drug overdose, a beauty pageant, undercover police hot on the tail of thieves and a dead body found near St Mark's Square. In a season where anything goes, the emergency teams have their work cut out reining the city in.

**WED 21:00 She-Wolves: England's Early Queens (b01dc66v)**  
Isabella and Margaret

In the medieval and Tudor world there was no question in people's minds about the order of God's creation - men ruled and women didn't. A king was a warrior who literally fought to win power then battled to keep it. Yet despite everything that stood in their way, a handful of extraordinary women did attempt to rule medieval and Tudor England. In this series, historian Dr Helen Castor explores seven queens who challenged male power, the fierce reactions they provoked and whether the term 'she wolves' was deserved.

In 1308 a 12-year-old girl, Isabella of France, became queen of England when she married the English king. A century later another young French girl, Margaret of Anjou, followed in her footsteps. Both these women were thrust into a violent and dysfunctional England and both felt driven to take control of the kingdom themselves. Isabella would be accused of murder and Margaret of destructive ambition - it was Margaret who Shakespeare named the She Wolf. But as Helen reveals, their self-assertion that would have seemed natural in a man was deemed unnatural, even monstrous in a woman.

**WED 22:00 Britain's Best Drives (b00jf4jn)**  
The Trossachs

Actor Richard Wilson takes a journey into the past, following routes raved about in motoring guides of 50 years ago.

For his final drive, Richard returns to the country of his birth in a splendid 1950s Bentley. He drops in on his sister, returns to the original 'Dr Finlay' house, takes to the water to find out how Sir Walter Scott inspired a deluge of sightseers to the region, drives Scotland's most famous road in the company of a bevy of vintage bikers, and discovers just what it is about great vistas

that gives us all such a thrill.

**WED 22:30 Lowdown (b01dc66z)**  
Cooper Scooper

When bigshot radio presenter Jack Cooper is arrested for urinating in public, Alex is sent to his house to doorstep him, after he had been on his way to see Phantom of the Opera 2 instead. Alex and Bob weren't expecting to be let in and given a drink by Mrs Cooper. Or to be serenaded by her. Or to be shown her Doctor Who memorabilia. Or to get the scoop of the year.

**WED 23:00 Story of Light Entertainment (b00792q5)**  
Impressionists

60 years ago impressionists were the poor relations of comedy and relatively small players in radio and variety, but since the birth of the genre as we know it, impressionism has continually pushed boundaries in an attempt to make us laugh with its audacity.

Those with the ability to imitate others' vocal patterns and physical mannerisms have long delighted audiences. Peter Cavanagh, billed as 'the voice of them all' was a huge 1940s star of stage and radio, but it was in the 1950s and 60s when their victims (showbiz celebrities, politicians and other public personalities) became well known enough through television that the impressionists enjoyed their greatest success.

Whether it was the shockingly satirical impersonation of Harold Macmillan by the likes of Peter Cook and John Bird, the more benign interpretations of Mike Yarwood, the character-type impersonations of Dick Emery or the sharp satirical wit of Spitting Image, impressionists became increasingly popular. Even today, with the glory days of Yarwood long gone, impressionists like Jon Culshaw, Rory Bremner, Alistair McGowan and Ronni Ancona prove how powerful mimicry can be when used cleverly. In the ultra-competitive world of comedy, impressionists have fought against the inherent snobbery to become some of the coolest, cleverest and most shocking acts in the entertainment schedules.

Featuring interviews with Jon Culshaw, Rory Bremner, Ronni Ancona, David Frost, Les Dennis, Bobby Davro, Janet Brown, Steve Nallon, Phil Cool, Phil Cornwell, Alison Jackson, Stanley Baxter and Avid Merrion.

**WED 00:30 Inspector Montalbano (b00g31qt)**  
[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 on Saturday]

**WED 02:25 Britain's Best Drives (b00jf4jn)**  
[Repeat of broadcast at 22:00 today]

**WED 02:55 Lowdown (b01dc66z)**  
[Repeat of broadcast at 22:30 today]

**WED 03:25 She-Wolves: England's Early Queens (b01dc66v)**  
[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 today]

#### THURSDAY 15 MARCH 2012

**THU 19:00 World News Today (b01dc8rd)**  
The latest national and international news, exploring the day's events from a global perspective.

**THU 19:30 Top of the Pops (b01dc8rg)**  
10/3/77

David 'Kid' Jensen introduces the Brotherhood of Man, Barbara Dickson, Brendon, Graham Parker and the Rumour, the Real Thing, Smokie, Lynsey De Paul and Mike Moran, the Rubettes, ELO and Manhattan Transfer. Dance sequence by Legs & Co.

**THU 20:00 Lost Cities of the Ancients (b00792tn)**  
The Vanished Capital of the Pharaoh

This episode looks at the legendary lost city of Piramesse. This magnificent ancient capital was built 3,000 years ago by the Egyptian pharaoh Ramesses the Great, but long ago the whole city disappeared. When it was rediscovered by early archaeologists, it opened up a bizarre puzzle - when Piramesse was finally found it was in the wrong place, somewhere Ramesses the Great could not possibly have built it.

Recreating the stories of both the early archaeologists and the ancient Egyptians, the film enters a lost world, recounting the strange tale of the quest for Piramesse and following the

intriguing detective work of modern archaeologists Manfred Bietak and Edgar Pusch as they solve the baffling mystery of how this great lost city could vanish, only to reappear thousands of years later in the wrong place.

**THU 21:00 The Hidden Art of Islam (b01dczjj)**

At the British Museum, a collection of artefacts from the Muslim world is on show, which tells the history of a journey to Mecca always forbidden to non-Muslims. It features a succession of examples of the rich visual language of Islamic culture past and present, artwork created to reflect the powerful experience for any Muslim making the Hajj pilgrimage to Islam's most sacred city and its most sacred building, the Ka'aba. However, an art form not usually associated with Islam is also on show, a form many believe is prohibited by Islam - portraits, depictions of human figures and whole tableaux showing pilgrims performing the most important pillar of the Muslim faith.

In this documentary, Rageh Omaar sets out to find out that if human depiction is the source of such controversy, how is it that the art displayed here shows a tradition of figurative art at the heart of Islam for century after century? He explores what forms of art are acceptable for a Muslim - and why this artistic tradition has thrived - in the hidden art of the Muslim world.

**THU 22:00 Dirk Gently (b01dc582)**  
[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 on Monday]

**THU 23:00 Frost on Interviews (b01dc5ft)**  
[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 on Tuesday]

**THU 00:00 Top of the Pops (b01dc8rg)**  
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:30 today]

**THU 00:35 Lost Cities of the Ancients (b00792tn)**  
[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

**THU 01:35 Treasures of the Anglo Saxons (b00t6xsz)**  
Art historian Dr Nina Ramirez reveals the codes and messages hidden in Anglo-Saxon art. From the beautiful jewellery that adorned the first violent pagan invaders through to the stunning Christian manuscripts they would become famous for, she explores the beliefs and ideas that shaped Anglo-Saxon art.

Examining many of the greatest Anglo Saxon treasures - such as the Sutton Hoo Treasures, the Staffordshire Hoard, the Franks Casket and the Lindisfarne Gospels - Dr Ramirez charts 600 years of artistic development which was stopped dead in its tracks by the Norman Conquest.

**THU 02:35 The Hidden Art of Islam (b01dczjj)**  
[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 today]

#### FRIDAY 16 MARCH 2012

**FRI 19:00 World News Today (b01dc9qg)**  
The latest national and international news, exploring the day's events from a global perspective.

**FRI 19:30 Symphony (b01778mc)**  
New Nations and New Worlds

Simon Russell Beale continues his history of the symphony by taking a musical journey through the rise of nationalism in Europe into the New World. He discovers how nationalist voices such as Tchaikovsky, Dvorak and Sibelius brought the symphony to wider audiences and visits Dvorak's summer house as he left it at his death in 1904, a remarkable insight into the personal life of the great composer.

Simon follows the development of the symphony outside Europe and explores how growing urbanisation led to the construction and growing popularity of some of the world's greatest concert halls, visiting the Musikverein in Vienna, the Philharmonic Hall in St Petersburg and Carnegie Hall in New York.

The symphonies are played by the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Mark Elder.

**FRI 20:30 Transatlantic Sessions (b016ngm6)**  
Series 5

Episode 5

The best of Nashville, Ireland and Scotland in a format that affords a unique insight into the sheer joy of making music.

Recorded in an old hunting lodge at Glen Lyon near Aberfeldy in the Perthshire Highlands, top vocal and instrumental exponents of the country and Celtic traditions gather to rehearse and play together with no audience except themselves and a resident house band.

Music co-directors are Nashville's Jerry Douglas and Shetland's Aly Bain and artists include Phil Cunningham, Donal Lunny, Mike McGoldrick, Danny Thompson, Donald Shaw, John Doyle, John McCusker, James Mackintosh, Eddi Reader, Muireann Nic Amhlaoidh, Bela Fleck, Sam Bush, Nollaig Casey, Sharon Shannon, Jim Murray, Kathleen MacInnes, Eric Bibb and Dirk Powell.

Leavening the intimacy of the music-making is a strong element of Highland scenic photography, while a greater emphasis on informal backstage conversations and stories serves to highlight the series' historic qualities of collaboration and performance.

**FRI 21:00 Arena (b017lhb4)**

George Harrison: Living in the Material World

Part 1

Martin Scorsese's portrait of the late George Harrison.

Scorsese traces Harrison's life from his beginnings in Liverpool to becoming a world-famous musician, philanthropist and filmmaker, weaving together interviews with George and his closest friends, photographs and archive footage including live performances - much of it previously unseen.

The result is a rare glimpse into the mind of one of the most talented artists of his generation.

Part one looks at George's early years in The Beatles - from their first gigs in Hamburg and the beginning of Beatlemania, through to his psychedelic phase and involvement in religion and Indian music.

The programme includes contributions from Sir Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, Yoko Ono, Eric Clapton, Sir George Martin and Phil Spector.

**FRI 22:35 Arena (b017lbr0)**

George Harrison: Living in the Material World

Part 2

The second and concluding part of Martin Scorsese's portrait of George Harrison.

Part two looks at Harrison's post-Beatles days - as a member of the Travelling Wilburys and a solo artist, as well as looking at his non-musical ventures, including his work as a movie producer and his family life with wife Olivia and son Dhani.

Racing legend Jackie Stewart tells of George's love of motor racing, Monty Python's Eric Idle recounts how George saved the Life of Brian from catastrophe by re-mortgaging his mansion to help finance it, and there are contributions from Travelling Wilbury bandmates including Tom Petty.

Harrison's widow Olivia Harrison gives a poignant account of her life with the Beatle, including the harrowing tale of the night when a violent intruder attacked them at home one evening in 1999.

Ringo Starr, Eric Clapton, Paul McCartney, Yoko Ono, Olivia and Dhani Harrison, among many others, talk openly about George's many gifts and contradictions and reveal the lives they shared together.

**FRI 00:30 Songwriters' Circle (b01dc4xl)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 on Sunday]

**FRI 01:30 Folk America (b00h6xmb)**

This Land is Your Land

Three-part documentary series on American folk music, tracing its history from the recording boom of the 1920s to the folk revival of the 1960s.

In the depression of the 1930s, John Lomax found convicted murderer Leadbelly in a southern jail. Leadbelly's music was never quite as pure and untouched by pop as Lomax believed, but it set a new agenda for folk music, redefining it as the voice of protest, the voice of the outsider and the oppressed.

Dustbowl drifter Woody Guthrie fitted the mould perfectly and the two of them teamed up with Lomax's son Alan, Pete Seeger and Josh White - a group of friends who believed 'they could make a better world if they all got together and just sang about it'. Their songs and their radical politics took them to high places of influence, but brought about their downfall in the

blacklisting 1950s.

Contributors include Pete Seeger, Rambling Jack Elliot, Anna Lomax, Tom Paxton, Roger McGuinn, Woody Guthrie's sister and daughter and Josh White's son.

**FRI 02:30 Transatlantic Sessions (b016ngm6)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:30 today]

**FRI 03:00 Symphony (b01778mc)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:30 today]