

SATURDAY 19 AUGUST 2023

SAT 19:00 Eisteddfod (m001prmc)
2023

Episode 3

It's one of the biggest festivals in Europe, a celebration of Welsh culture and a natural showcase for music, dance, visual arts, literature, original performances and so much more.

Sian Eleri heads to Boduan to bring all the best performances from the different stages at this diverse festival - from soloists to choirs, folk bands, brass bands, rap, reggae and rock bands, classy pop performances and classical music.

SAT 20:00 Rome: A History of the Eternal City (b01pdt0s)
The Rebirth of God's City

Simon Sebag Montefiore charts Rome's rise from the abandonment and neglect of the 14th century into the everlasting seat of the papacy recognised today. His story takes us through the debauchery and decadence of the Renaissance, the horrors of the Sack of Rome and the Catholic Reformation, through to the arrival of fascism and the creation of the Vatican State. By taking us inside Rome's most sensational palaces and churches and telling the stories behind some of the world's most beloved art, Sebag Montefiore's final instalment is a visual feast.

SAT 21:00 Radioactive (m0018481)

Marie Skłodowska, a Polish immigrant to France, meets and marries fellow scientist Pierre Curie, and they start to collaborate - resulting in them receiving a Nobel Prize. Growing doubts over the safety of radium casts a shadow over their research, but even after Pierre's death, Marie is determined to carry on.

SAT 22:40 Parkinson (b007bkwd)
Parkinson Meets Muhammad Ali

Michael Parkinson searches the archives and revisits four outstanding interviews with the late boxing legend Muhammad Ali.

SAT 23:20 Parkinson (m001q7cl)
The Interviews - Billy Connolly

Michael Parkinson looks back on some unforgettable moments with his most frequent guest, Billy Connolly. Anarchy reigns as the Scottish comedian brings his unique brand of comedy to the show.

SAT 00:00 Oppenheimer (p0g3jddp)
Series 1

Episode 3

1943: Oppenheimer is Director of Los Alamos atomic bomb laboratory, but his past Communist associations alert the FBI.

SAT 01:00 Oppenheimer (p0g3jf53)
Series 1

Episode 4

Summer 1944: The race against the Germans to produce an atomic weapon continues apace. Oppenheimer, his security problems behind him for the time being, is now facing difficulties with his staff and with the development of the bomb itself.

SAT 02:00 Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em (b00786sx)
Series 1

Love Thy Neighbour

Classic sitcom with one-man disaster area Frank Spencer. Crossing the road and phoning the doctor seems straightforward enough - but not for Frank.

SAT 02:30 Yes, Minister (b007831f)
Series 1

The Official Visit

Sitcom about a British government minister and the advisers who surround him. When Hacker recognises a visiting head of an African nation as someone he knew from his student days, he does his best to offload some British-made oil rigging gear on him.

SAT 03:00 My Family, Partition and Me: India 1947 (b091zjfj)
Series 1

Episode 2

Anita Rani presents the second episode of a two-part documentary series marking the 70th anniversary of the Partition of India.

Anita begins her own partition journey as she and her mother Lucky become the first members of their family to return to what is now Pakistan since the Partition of India. In the Punjabi village where her Sikh grandfather's first family were slaughtered, Anita meets locals who were eyewitnesses to that terrible event.

Across the border in India, Sameer Butt retraces the epic train journey across the Punjab to Pakistan which his seven-year-old Muslim grandfather Asad and his family took in 1947. Binita Kane explores how her Hindu family managed to escape the violence that engulfed their Bengali village, as well as the perils they faced as refugees.

SUNDAY 20 AUGUST 2023

SUN 19:00 The Classical Collection (m001gn00)
Series 1

Nature

The natural world has always been a powerful inspiration to composers. From vast forests and tiny fish to wild storms and epic seascapes, this programme takes us on an evocative journey through some of the best-loved musical responses to our living planet.

SUN 19:15 Dame Janet Baker Sings (m0019mbb)

Mary Marquis introduces a concert recorded in the Queen's Hall, Edinburgh in 1981 with Dame Janet Baker. She performs Mendelssohn's concert aria Infelice and Handel's dramatic solo cantata Lucrezia with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

SUN 20:00 BBC Proms (m001pvdp)
2023

NYO at the Proms

After stealing the show on First Night of the Proms last year, soprano Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha joins the National Youth Orchestra for a night of joyously defiant music. Strauss's Four Last Songs, considered by some the most beautiful music ever written, is played alongside Hindemith and Copland, all conducted by the vibrant Carlos Miguel Prieto.

As if that wasn't enough, multi-award-winning composer Errollyn Wallen debuts a new piece written especially for this remarkable orchestra's 2023 summer tour.

The NYO annual Prom is a night of joy, energy and friendship not to be missed, presented by Jess Gillam with special guests Alexis Ffrench and Vikki Stone.

SUN 22:05 Return of the Architect: Glyndebourne (m001px87)

Michael and Patty Hopkins, the architects responsible for the design of Glyndebourne Opera House, return to the scene of their creation eight years after its completion. Chairman John Christie, staff, performance and audience members assess the building.

SUN 22:35 The Ascent of Man (p0g1kkp2)
The Ladder of Creation

How did life begin on earth? Dr Jacob Bronowski recounts the adventures of Alfred Russell Wallace, and how they triggered off the ideas of Charles Darwin.

SUN 23:25 The Ascent of Man (p0g1klmk)
World within World

Dr Jacob Bronowski tells the story of the men and ideas that gave concrete expression to the invisible, intangible structure that lies beneath all matter.

SUN 00:15 Janet Baker - In Her Own Words (m00048q7)

In her first documentary for more than 35 years, great British classical singer Dame Janet Baker talks more openly and emotionally than ever before about her career and her life today. With excerpts of her greatest stage roles (as Dido, Mary Stuart, Julius Caesar and Orpheus), as well as of her

appearances in the concert hall and recording studio (works by Handel, Berlioz, Schubert, Elgar, Britten and Mahler), she looks back at the excitements and pitfalls of public performance.

She tells the film-maker John Bridcut about the traumatic loss of her elder brother when she was only ten years old, and how that experience coloured her voice and her artistry. She explains why she felt the need to retire early some 30 years ago and discusses the challenges she and her husband have to face in old age. She also gives tantalizing clues to the question her many fans often ask: does she still sing today at the age of 85?

Among the other contributors to the film are conductors Raymond Leppard, Jane Glover and André Previn (in one of his last interviews before his death in March), the singers Joyce DiDonato and Dame Felicity Lott, the opera producer John Copley, the pianist Imogen Cooper, and the actress Dame Patricia Routledge.

This feature-length film is a Crux production for the BBC, following the award-winning 'Colin Davis - in His Own Words' in 2013. John Bridcut has also made film profiles of Herbert von Karajan, Mstislav Rostropovich, Rudolf Nureyev and Jonas Kaufmann, as well as 'Prince, Son and Heir: Charles at 70' for BBC One in November 2018.

SUN 01:45 Victorian Sensations (m00059cx)
Series 1

Electric Dreams

Victorian Sensations transports us to the last years of Queen Victoria's reign to explore a moment of thrilling discovery and change that continues to resonate today.

In the first of three films focusing on the technology, art and culture of the 1890s, mathematician Dr Hannah Fry explores how the latest innovations, including x-rays, safety bicycles and proto-aeroplanes, transformed society and promised a cleaner, brighter and more egalitarian future.

Whereas Victorian progress in the 19th century had been powered by steam and gas, the end of the 1800s marked the beginning of a new 'Electric Age'. Hannah discovers how electrical energy dominated the zeitgeist, with medical quacks marketing battery-powered miracle cures, and America's new electric chair inspiring stage magicians to electrify their illusions. The future had arrived, courtesy of underground trains and trams (as well as electric cars), and in the 1890s the first houses built specifically with electricity in mind were constructed.

Like our own time, there was concern about where this technology would lead and who was in control. HG Wells warned of bio-terrorism, while the skies were increasingly seen as a future battleground, fuelling the race to develop powered flight.

Hannah outlines the excitement around the coming Electric Age. Electricity was a signifier of modernity, and Hannah discovers how electric light not only redefined the way we saw ourselves but changed what we expected from our homes. The new enthusiasm for all things electric was also something exploited by canny entrepreneurs. In the 1890s, many believed that electricity was life itself and that nervous energy could be recharged like a battery.

In 1896, out of nowhere, the x-ray arrived in Britain. Hannah delves into the story of what Victorians considered to be a superhuman power. This cutting-edge technology was a smash hit with the public, who found the ghoulish ability to peer under flesh endlessly entertaining. In the medical profession, x-rays caused a revolution and, as well as changing our views of our bodies, the x-ray revealed new fears in society about personal privacy and control over technology - concerns that sound very familiar today.

Electricity ruled the imagination, but it was a simple mechanical device that brought the greatest challenge to the social order: the safety bicycle. It offered freedom on a scale unimagined before and, for women of the time in particular, a new independence, changes to their clothes to make cycling easier and the opportunity for a chance encounter with a member of the opposite sex. But there was also a darker side, with fears of how technology might be turned against us becoming a constant element in contemporary 1890s fiction.

One technological landmark that the Victorians knew was coming, and that they (rightly) anticipated would one day unleash fire and bombs on British cities, was the flying machine. A thing of fantasy yet also, due to the ingenuity of the age's engineers, something that might become a reality at any moment. Leading the way for British hopes of achieving powered flight was Percy Pilcher. Hannah looks at how, after several successful flights, Pilcher designed a triplane with an engine he intended to fly, when disaster struck.

SUN 02:45 Dame Janet Baker Sings (m0019mbb)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:15 today]

MONDAY 21 AUGUST 2023

MON 19:00 Great American Railroad Journeys (b08ndbb0)
Series 2 (Extended Versions)

Chicago to Champaign, Illinois

Michael Portillo continues his 1,000-mile journey from the northern state of Minnesota to the home of the blues in Memphis, Tennessee. In the nation's rail capital, where tracks pass underground and over ground and are elevated into the air, he investigates the ultimate marshalling yard. At the ornate Palmer House Hotel, Michael recreates the original chocolate brownie, invented by Bertha Palmer in 1893. He discovers the origins of the Sanitary and Ship Canal and uncovers the history of an incredible civil engineering project which raised the city to new heights. Heading deep underground, Michael inspects a modern-day scheme on a similarly awesome scale, described by the boss as the largest toilet in the world!

On the trail of one of America's most famous railroad names, Michael heads south to Pullman to investigate the legacy of its founder, George Pullman. Beside the Kankakee River, Michael is invited to visit the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed house that changed the face of American architecture. On the platform at Kankakee station, Michael parties with the locals as they celebrate the City of New Orleans rail service, immortalised in song by Arlo Guthrie. He gets his hands on a vintage hooter riding on the Monticello Heritage rail line and in Champaign learns a thing or two at a railroad university.

MON 20:00 Digging for Britain (m0013f61)
Series 9

Episode 5

The west of Britain is explored for the best of its archaeological digs and post excavation discoveries.

In north Somerset, archaeologists are blown away by the discovery of an entirely new Roman town in the intended pathway of some new electricity cables. Multiple, impressive layers of road building from the Roman era are revealed, including a spectacular section from the 4th century when Emperor Constantine presided over a boom in Britain's economy.

On the sleepy hills of south Dorset, we finally discover the age of Britain's cheekiest giant chalk figure – the Cerne Abbas giant. Previous guesses ranged from the Bronze Age to the early Georgian period and anywhere in between. But a combination of miniature medieval snails and cutting-edge luminescence dating have narrowed the date of his origin to the late Anglo-Saxon era.

Alice visits a Ministry of Defence dig on the chalky downs of Salisbury plain. A team of ex-servicemen working with Operation Nightingale, a charity that helps ex-servicemen and women suffering with PTSD, dig down to save an astonishing early Anglo-Saxon burial site from treasure hunters. A single large grave is surrounded by smaller graves, all revealing beads, combs, knives, rings and even a spear. Lead archaeologist Richard Osgood brings the best of the finds into the Digging for Britain tent to show Alice what they tell us about Anglo-Saxon migration.

In Pembrokeshire, Alice revisits Whitesands Bay, where a team are excavating a mysterious collection of child burials. A strange ceremonial feature that has been uncovered shows clear evidence that early medieval people made great efforts to bury their dead children as close as possible to it.

And in Northern Ireland, a dig finally locates the site of a WWII aircraft which crashed after a secret mission went terribly wrong. The families of the young men who died have asked a young team of volunteers to locate and recover any remaining debris and hold a proper memorial for their relatives.

MON 21:00 Oceans Apart: Art and the Pacific with James Fox (b0bjj2r6)
Series 1

Australia

James Fox tells the story of Australia's indigenous culture, the oldest continuous culture anywhere in the world, and the disaster of its contact with the West.

He traces how Aboriginal peoples were almost destroyed by the impact of European colonization, but held on to their art to survive, to flourish and ultimately, to share their culture with the world.

James Fox begins by exploring the ancient rock art of Arnhem Land, Northern Australia, depicting fish and animals in an 'x-ray' style developed over 8000 years. The arrival of Captain Cook in Botany Bay, he argues, changed everything. Over the following centuries Aboriginal peoples were destroyed or marginalized as the new nation of Australia developed. Yet, in the 20th century, through works such as the watercolour landscapes of Albert Namatjira or the dot painting style of the Western desert, art has enabled Aboriginal people to re-imagine an Australia of their own.

Australia might long have been colonised but now, James Fox argues, Aboriginal people are reconquering it with their imaginations.

MON 22:00 Royal History's Biggest Fibs with Lucy Worsley (m000pj18)
Series 2

The Russian Revolution

We think we know the story of the Russian revolution - in October 1917, the Bolsheviks rose up, swept the tsar from power and communism was born. In this film, Lucy explores the myths and fibs that swirl around the dramatic events of 1917. She finds it was really a group of women workers who kick-started the Russian Revolution in February 1917. At the time, the Bolsheviks tried to stop it, and Lenin, the radical leader of the Bolsheviks, wasn't even in the country.

Lucy discovers that the tsar was forced to abdicate long before the Bolsheviks took control. And she finds out how King George V betrayed his cousin by opposing the British government's offer of asylum to the tsar and his family. This was kept secret for decades.

Along the way, Lucy finds reveals how the Bolsheviks used films and books to big up the October revolution while belittling the February revolution as irrelevant and bourgeois. And when Lenin died in 1924, Stalin lied his way to the top - he repressed Lenin's last wishes and faked paintings and photographs to support his claim to be Lenin's chosen successor.

MON 23:00 Queen Victoria's Letters: A Monarch Unveiled (b04pl2mn)
Episode 2

AN Wilson discovers the real story behind the woman who supposedly spent the last half of her life in hiding, mourning the loss of her beloved Prince Albert. Alongside this well-known image of Victoria as the weeping widow, Wilson reveals that the years after Albert's death were actually a process of liberation and her most productive and exciting.

By examining her closest relationships in the four decades after Albert's death, Wilson tells the story of the Queen's gradual freedom from a life spent under the shadow of domineering men. Victoria's marriage had been a source of constraint as well as love, as Albert had used her pregnancies as a way to gain power and punished her for resenting it. But in her widowhood Queen Victoria, although bereft and deranged, was free to move in the world of politics and make deep friendships without concern.

From the controversial friendship with her highland servant John Brown to her most unconventional behaviour with her young Indian servant Abdul Karim, Wilson uncovers Victoria as a woman who was anything but 'Victorian'. Far from being prim and proper, she loved life in all its richness - she was blind to class and colour and, contrary to what we think, had a great sense of humour.

Queen Victoria's journals and letters are read by Anna Chancellor throughout.

MON 00:00 Victorian Sensations (m0005hhg)
Series 1

Decadence and Degeneration

The 1890s was the decade when science, entertainment, art and morality collided - and the Victorians had to make sense of it all. Actor Paul McGann discovers how the works of HG Wells, Aubrey Beardsley and Oscar Wilde were shaped by fears of moral, social and racial degeneration.

Paul, seated in Wells's time machine, sees how the author's prophecies of a future in which humanity has decayed and degenerated highlighted the fears of the British Empire. Paul finds out how these anxieties were informed by new scientific theories based on Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Paul learns how Darwin's cousin Francis Galton sought to improve the genetic stock of the nation, through a project he coined as 'eugenics'.

Another of the decade's prominent scientific thinkers – Austrian physician Max Nordau – declared that it was art and culture, and their practitioners – the aesthetes and decadents – that were causing Britain's moral degeneration, singling out Oscar Wilde as the chief corrupting influence. Paul explains how Wilde sought to subvert traditional Victorian values. Tucked away in one of Wilde's haunts - the famous Cheshire Cheese Pub on Fleet Street - Paul hears from Stephen Calloway about how Aubrey Beardsley – the most decadent artist of the period – scandalised society, in much the same way as Wilde, through his erotic drawings. Wilde and Beardsley were not alone in being parodied by Punch Magazine. Historian Angelique Richardson shows Paul caricatures of a new figure who had begun to worry the sensibilities of Victorian Britain. Known collectively as The New Woman, this was a group of female writers, who in more than 100 novels, portrayed a radical new idea of femininity that challenged the conventions of marriage and motherhood. However, as Paul discovers through reading a short story called Eugenia by novelist Sarah Grand, some advocated the idea of eugenics through their writing.

For eugenicists, if one means of keeping a 'degenerate' working class in check was incarceration, then that either meant prison or, increasingly by the 1890s, the asylum. Some lost their freedom due to 'hereditary influence', others to so-called sexual transgression. Paul explains how the 'vice' of masturbation was seen as sapping the vitality of the nation. The idea of sexual transgression was to intrude into the Victorian consciousness as never before when, in 1895, Oscar Wilde was found guilty of gross indecency and sentenced to two years in jail.

While Oscar Wilde had made a very public show of defiance, Paul uncovers another leading – and gay - writer of the period, John Addington Symonds, who together with the prominent physician Havelock Ellis, sought to produce a scientific survey of homosexuality. At the London Library, Symonds expert Amber Regis shows Symonds's rare handwritten memoirs to Paul, which served as a source for the groundbreaking 1897 work, Sexual Inversion. Paul explains how questions of sex and gender also lie at the heart of a very different book, published in the same year - Bram Stoker's Dracula. Paul explains how Stoker had his finger – or teeth – on the pulse of the 1890s, infusing his novel with many of the decade's chief preoccupations and growing fears of racial prejudice and immigration.

Paul also meets Natty Mark Samuels (founder of the Oxford African School) reciting a speech by a young West Indian called Celestine Edwards, who took a brave stand against imperial rule and its racist underpinnings. Edwards became the first black editor in Britain, and his pioneering work would be continued by a fellow West Indian, Henry Sylvester Williams, who in 1897 formed the African Association. Outside the former Westminster Town Hall, Paul describes how, in 1900, Williams set up the first Pan-African Conference to promote and protect the interests of all subjects claiming African descent.

MON 01:00 Great American Railroad Journeys (b08ndbb0)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

MON 02:00 Digging for Britain (m0013f61)
[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

MON 03:00 Royal History's Biggest Fibs with Lucy Worsley (m000pj18)
[Repeat of broadcast at 22:00 today]

TUESDAY 22 AUGUST 2023

TUE 19:00 River Walks (b0by0zmn)
Series 1

The Severn

Shobna Gulati takes a revealing stroll through Shropshire and Worcestershire beside our longest river. These days this stretch of the river is tranquil and quiet. But once hundreds of boats served the industries which had grown up along its banks. For Shobna it's a voyage of discovery, as the former star of Coronation Street finds out about a part of the country that's a world away from her native north west.

TUE 19:30 Great American Railroad Journeys (b08ndfg9)
Series 2 (Extended Versions)

Illinois to Tennessee

Michael Portillo continues his 1,000-mile journey from Minnesota to Tennessee, beginning and ending on the Mississippi River. Riding the mainline of mid-America, Michael stops at rural Mattoon, where he gets a taste of the tough early life which shaped President Abraham Lincoln.

Wiping the sweat from his brow, Michael struggles to split one rail compared with Lincoln's estimated 700-a-day. Basket in hand, Michael joins the Schwartz family apple harvest in Centralia and learns how to make apple butter. He uncovers industrial unrest in the coal mines of Carbondale, then heads to Kentucky and the banks of the Mississippi, where a bloody conflict unfolded, which proved decisive in victory for Lincoln's Union.

Aboard a paddle steamer on the lower Mississippi, Michael hears about the life and work of former riverboat captain Samuel Clemens, better known as Mark Twain. In the city of Memphis, Tennessee, he visits the historic Elmwood Cemetery, where he uncovers the story of a devastating epidemic. In the home of the blues, Michael meets contemporary musician Cedric Burnside in the studio before joining millions of Elvis fans at Graceland. Fellow rail fans at Memphis Station share their passion, and an invitation to a duck palace and the honorary position of Duck Master carry curious responsibilities at the 19th-century Peabody Hotel.

TUE 20:30 Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em (b0077srf)
Series 1

Have a Break, Take a Husband

Classic comedy series with one-man disaster area Frank Spencer. Frank and Betty go away for a second honeymoon. Can it be as disastrous as their first?

TUE 21:00 Yes, Minister (b00783yw)
Series 1

The Economy Drive

Sitcom about a British government minister and the advisers who surround him. Jim Hacker wants to implement some cost-cutting initiatives - but Sir Humphrey does not approve.

TUE 21:30 The Thick of It (b00ntrkp)
Series 3

Episode 3

Nicola Murray is stuck in an Eastbourne hotel bedroom with nothing but a laptop, a printer and a tiny kettle while she and Ollie try to finish her speech for the annual party conference. It's not going well.

But Glenn has brought in his secret weapon - Julie Price, tragic widow, people's champion and regional photo opportunity. Is this the breakthrough they need, or the start of a tug-of-Julie with Malcolm Tucker?

TUE 22:00 Storyville (m001pvjf)
8 Bar: The Evolution of Grime

They called it young black kids' punk rock - a genre that radio stations wouldn't play and records that labels refused to sell. But grime would not be stopped. With machine-gun lyrics that shred the eardrums and syncopated electronics that pound the chest like a sledgehammer, grime was a product of social unrest, urban culture and disenfranchised youth colliding in early 2000s UK. It didn't just rouse a grassroots audience, however. Today, grime is surging in popularity all over the globe and widely influencing the music charts. This is the story of the genre's roots.

TUE 23:30 The Rolling Stones: Crossfire Hurricane (b01rrxkl)
Crossfire Hurricane, directed by Brett Morgen, provides a remarkable new perspective on The Rolling Stones' unparalleled journey from blues-obsessed teenagers in the early 60s to rock royalty. It's all here in panoramic candour, from the Marquee Club to Hyde Park, from Altamont to 'Exile, from club gigs to stadium extravaganzas.

With never-before-seen footage and fresh insights from the band themselves, Crossfire Hurricane places the viewer on the front line of the band's most legendary escapades.

Taking its title from a lyric in Jumping Jack Flash, Crossfire Hurricane gives the audience an intimate insight, for the first time, into exactly what it's like to be part of The Rolling Stones, as they overcame denunciation, drugs, dissensions and death to become the definitive survivors.

The odyssey includes film from The Stones' initial road trips and first controversies as they became the anti-Beatles, the group despised by authority because they connected and communicated with their own generation as no-one ever had. 'When we got together,' says Wyman, 'something magical happened, and no one could ever copy that.'

Riots and the chaos of early tours are graphically depicted, as is the birth of the Jagger-Richards songwriting partnership. The many dramas they encountered are also fully addressed, including the Redlands drug bust, the descent of Brian Jones into what Richards calls 'bye-bye land', and the terror and disillusionment of 1969's Altamont Festival.

The film illustrates The Stones' evolution from being, as Mick vividly describes it, 'the band everybody hated to the band everybody loves': through the hedonistic 1970s and Keith's turning-point bust in Canada, to the spectacular touring phenomenon we know today. Richards also reveals the song that he believes defines the 'essence' of his writing relationship with Jagger more than any other.

The film combines extensive historical footage, much of it widely unseen, with contemporary commentaries by Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts, Ronnie Wood and former Stones Bill Wyman and Mick Taylor.

TUE 01:20 Great American Railroad Journeys (b08ndfg9)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:30 today]

TUE 02:20 River Walks (b0bt0zm)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

TUE 02:50 Oceans Apart: Art and the Pacific with James Fox (b0bjj2r6)
[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 on Monday]

WEDNESDAY 23 AUGUST 2023

WED 19:00 Great Coastal Railway Journeys (m001447s)
Series 1

Lairg to Caithness

Michael Portillo's coastal railway journey takes him past lochs and castles on the Far North Line to Britain's northernmost railway station at Thurso. From Lairg on the banks of Loch Shin, Michael heads for a secret conservation area in the 18-mile-long loch to track down one of Scotland's most elusive and endangered species, the freshwater pearl mussel. Michael wades into the water with an expert on the mollusc, who shows him how to spot their shells underwater through a glass-bottomed cone and explains why they are so highly prized.

A glorious journey along the valley of the River Fleet delivers Michael to Dunrobin Castle station, which serves the castle, seat of the earls and dukes of Sutherland since the 13th century. Michael finds out about the second duke of Sutherland, who planned in the mid-19th century to clear his land of crofters in order to graze sheep. His name is forever associated with the misery and destruction of the Highland Clearances.

At Brora, Michael hears how the Clearances affected the crofters evicted by the duke and learns about the purpose-built fishing villages to which they were sent. Two modern-day crofters show Michael how they are turning part of their coastal croft into a low-intensity farm.

Back on the Far North Line, built by the third duke of Sutherland, Michael reaches Georgemas Junction, Caithness, where the local stone is a much-sought-after construction material. At Spittal Mains quarry, Michael learns to split a flagstone by hand with a heavy hammer.

WED 19:30 Pubs, Ponds and Power: The Story of the Village (b0bsrqfw)
Series 1

North East

Archaeologist Ben Robinson unlocks the ancient roots of the Northumberland village of Warkworth. With the help of locals, he discovers clues that point back almost 1,000 years to the Norman conquest when the invaders laid the foundations of a planned community, still visible to this day.

WED 20:00 Meet the Romans with Mary Beard (b01gxqgg)
Streetlife

We still live in the shadow of ancient Rome - a city at the heart of a vast empire that stretched from Scotland to Afghanistan, dominating the West for over 700 years. Professor Mary Beard puts aside the stories of emperors and armies, guts and gore, to meet the real Romans living at the heart of it all.

In this programme, Mary descends into the city streets to discover the dirt, crime, sex and squalid conditions in the world's first high-rise city. This Rome is not the marble Rome we know, but a vast, messy metropolis with little urban planning,

where most Romans lived in high-rise apartment blocks with little space, light, or even sanitation. Forced outdoors into the city streets, she reveals where they went to hang out, get drunk, have sex and get clean. She looks at the Forum as a place of gamblers, dentists and thieves, and she explores the lustiness of Roman bar life and jokes.

Finally, exploring law and order from the bottom up, Mary examines how this city really worked. She meets Ancarenus Nothus, an apartment dweller who lived in fear of the rent collector; 'Notorious' Primus, who wrote about his three great pleasures in life - 'baths, wine and sex'; and 'Unlucky' Doris, a seven-year-old girl killed in one of Rome's many fires.

WED 21:00 Colosseum (p0fwgzv6)
Series 1

The Beastmaster

Over a million animals are slaughtered on the sands of the arena by trained beastmasters, none more famous than Carpophorus. But when met with the unprecedented challenge of battling 20 wild creatures, can Carpophorus survive?

WED 21:45 Colosseum (p0fwh1bd)
Series 1

The Gladiatrix

When the Emperor Trajan stages his great games of AD107, the crowd is treated to a rare spectacle - female gladiators. A Roman named Mevia illustrates the challenges of life for women in ancient Rome. She decides to trade her status as a free citizen to fight in the arena as a gladiatrix.

WED 22:35 Inside Culture (m000n7ps)
Series 1

Episode 3

This week, Mary is inhabiting the worlds of architecture and fashion to analyse how we live now, during a pandemic. With Eddie Izzard, Shahida Bari and Ayesha Hazarika, she discusses how our cities and our homes need to transform to accommodate our new ways of living, and how that we wear for these new ways has already drastically altered.

Mary visits Lullingstone - a well-preserved Roman villa - with star architect Thomas Heatherwick, and compares how the Romans lived then with how we live now. She also meets designer and artist Es Devlin (set creator to Beyonce, Adele, Kanye West and The Rolling Stones) and finds out how we can still feel together even when we are living in the digital world so much more.

Mary also fulfils a 40-year-long dream of reuniting the cast of renowned 1970s BBC drama I, Claudius, including Brian Blessed and Sian Phillips.

WED 22:45 I, Claudius (b0074sry)
Poison Is Queen

The Imperial Army on the Rhine has been wiped out and Tiberius is sent to avenge the defeat, followed later by Germanicus. Livia has discredited Postumus, who has been banished. Augustus has been feeling unwell, but is avoiding suspicions of poisoning by eating figs from his own garden.

WED 23:35 I, Claudius (b0074ss0)
Some Justice

As Augustus learned of Livia's plot against Postumus, she took action which resulted in Tiberius becoming emperor. The situation in the east now threatens Tiberius's position.

WED 00:30 I, Claudius (b0074ss5)
Queen of Heaven

Germanicus has been murdered in Antioch and his wife Agrippina is convinced Tiberius ordered the killing. Livia has discovered that Caligula helped to poison his father. While Tiberius's perversions have become notorious, his right-hand man Sejanus, commander of the Praetorian Guard, gathers more power for himself, including a marriage alliance with Claudius.

WED 01:20 Great Coastal Railway Journeys (m001447s)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

WED 01:50 Rome: A History of the Eternal City (b01pdt0s)
[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 on Saturday]

WED 02:50 Meet the Romans with Mary Beard (b01gxqgg)
[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

THURSDAY 24 AUGUST 2023

THU 19:00 Great Coastal Railway Journeys (m00144hy)
Series 1

Thurso to Orkney

From Britain's northernmost station at Thurso in Caithness, Michael Portillo heads for the ferry port of Scrabster to cross the Pentland Firth to the Orkney Islands. Passing the Old Man of Hoy, Michael takes in stunning views of the Orkney archipelago and the rugged coastlines of its 70 islands.

Michael reaches land at Stromness on the largest of the islands, Mainland, and heads for Kirkwall, its most historic town. A visit to St Magnus Cathedral with a Norwegian historian sheds light on how much history the Orkneys share with Norway.

Back in Stromness harbour, Michael joins a diving expedition to the former British naval base at Scapa Flow. It's one of the largest sheltered natural harbours in the world, well-placed for both the North Sea and the Atlantic. As divers explore the wreck of a dreadnought battleship, Michael hears how, in the aftermath of the First World War, nearly the entire German navy was scuttled here.

Michael discovers defensive measures taken during the Second World War in massive causeways designed to seal the harbour's eastern entrances and learns about the beautiful, surprising legacy of the Italian prisoners of war who constructed them.

From Mainland, Michael flies to North Ronaldsay, which lies further north than the southern tip of Norway and is known for its rare breed of coastal sheep. The youngest councillor on the Orkney Islands introduces Michael to her fellow islanders and their native, seaweed-eating sheep. Michael helps to patch up the 200-year-old sheep dyke, a Grade A listed drystone wall around 12 miles long.

Back on Mainland, Michael admires the towering sea stack, Yesnaby Castle, located on the spectacular coastline, which inspired one of Britain's greatest 20th-century composers and conductors, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. Michael learns about his prolific career from his partner, and on the cliffs at Yesnaby, listens to a string arrangement of his best-known work, Farewell to Stromness, played by schoolchildren from the island.

THU 19:30 Climbing Great Buildings (b00tr6g1)
Durham Cathedral

Dr Jonathan Foyle, architectural historian and novice climber, scales Britain's most iconic structures, from the Normans to the present day, to reveal the buildings' secrets and tell the story of how our architecture and construction have developed over 1000 years.

Jonathan's journey begins in the north east of England at Durham Cathedral, one of the finest surviving examples of Norman architecture in the UK.

Jonathan, who has never climbed before, is aided by Lucy Creamer, one of Britain's top climbers, as he conquers his fears to scale over 140 feet to the top of Durham Cathedral to investigate how the Normans revolutionised building in this country. On his climbs, he comes face to face with the crumbling 1000-year-old stone with oyster shells hiding in the mortar, discovers carved stone arches influenced by the art of the Middle East and he braves a tightrope nearly 100 feet above the nave, to get a closer look at the revolutionary and beautiful stone ceiling.

THU 20:00 Arena (m001px5t)
The Many Lives of Richard Attenborough: Part 1

Two-part Arena special celebrating the life and distinguished career of one of Britain's best-loved public figures. Lord Attenborough's film CV as actor stretches from Brighton Rock to Jurassic Park, while as director he has been responsible for Oh! What a Lovely War, Shadowlands and Gandhi. He has also been integral to the work of many charities, while his support for minority groups has led to the building of a Centre for Disability and the Arts. Part one examines his early career, and follows Attenborough as he visits his childhood home, travels to Brighton and Hove, and reminisces with brothers John and Sir David.

THU 21:00 Shadowlands (m000qrr7)
Romantic drama. CS Lewis, Oxford don and well-known children's author, appears to be content with his quiet academic life. Then he agrees to meet American poet Joy Gresham, whose forthright personality seems to be at odds with Lewis's

unadventurous routine. But over the course of a Christmas spent together, his feelings begin to change.

THU 23:05 Arena (m001px64)
The Many Lives of Richard Attenborough: Part 2

The conclusion to this two-part profile looks at Attenborough's career as Britain's most distinguished film director, whose biopic Gandhi won eight Oscars in 1982, including Best Director. It also explores his other lives as chancellor of Sussex University and vice-president of Chelsea FC and examines the political commitment behind films such as Cry Freedom and 10 Rillington

THU 00:05 Talking Pictures (b042s1xx)
Richard Attenborough

A look at the life and work of the late Richard Attenborough, with vintage interviews and classic archive clips illustrating a career that has made him one of British cinema's most popular and successful figures. Narrated by Sylvia Syms.

THU 00:45 The RKO Story: Tales from Hollywood (b00fg2zn)
Howard's End

The story of RKO Radio Pictures told through the eyes of people who worked there concludes as Howard Hughes's purchase of RKO has a devastating effect on the studio.

THU 01:50 Victorian Sensations (m0005hhg)
[Repeat of broadcast at 00:00 on Monday]

THU 02:50 Great Coastal Railway Journeys (m00144hy)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

THU 03:20 Climbing Great Buildings (b00tr6g1)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:30 today]

FRIDAY 25 AUGUST 2023

FRI 19:00 BBC Proms (m001pvjh)
John Wilson Celebrates Rachmaninov at the Proms

Legendary conductor John Wilson and his orchestral supergroup, the Sinfonia of London, continue the 150th anniversary celebrations of Rachmaninov. His much-loved Second Piano Concerto is played by the brilliant incoming BBC New Generation Artist Alim Beisembayev.

The concert showcases three composers' ability to transform their pain and anguish into captivating masterpieces. The Rachmaninov concerto takes centre stage, with its hauntingly beautiful melodies written as he overcame his depression, resulting in one of the most beloved pieces of classical music of all time.

In the second half, we enter the emotional world of William Walton's First Symphony, an intense work charting a tumultuous love affair.

And Lili Boulanger was close to death when she wrote her enchanting D'un Matin de Printemps, which nevertheless brings an optimistic spring morning feel to get things under way at this Prom.

Petroc Trelawny presents with special guests Wayne Marshall and Hannah Catherine Jones.

FRI 21:00 Top of the Pops (b096v0jw)
Mike Read and Tommy Vance present the pop chart programme, first broadcast on 23 August 1984. Featuring Alphaville, Elton John, Break Machine, Miami Sound Machine, Tracey Ullman, Spandau Ballet, Rod Stewart and George Michael.

FRI 21:30 Top of the Pops (b014b9nj)
Noel Edmonds presents the pop chart programme, first broadcast on 26 August 1976. Featuring Manfred Mann's Earth Band, Robin Sarstedt, Can, The Stylistics, Acker Bilk, The Chiffons, Cliff Richard, Gallagher & Lyle and Elton John & Kiki Dee.

FRI 22:00 The Carpenters: A World of Music (b00c9n9c)
Karen and Richard Carpenter concluded their 1976 British tour with this specially-recorded programme. Songs include There's A Kind of Hush, I Need to be in Love, Close to You, Strike up the Band, Top of the World, Only Yesterday, I Won't Last a

Day Without You, Hurting Each Other, Superstar, Goodbye to Love, We've Only Just Begun and Yesterday Once More.

FRI 22:50 In Concert (b0074sf0)
The Eagles

Footage of Californian country rockers The Eagles from 1973, performing classic US hits such as Peaceful Easy Feeling, Witchy Woman and Take It Easy.

At the time, they were the epitome of the California sound, with a sweet blend of sophisticated country music that took them to the top of the charts in the US.

FRI 23:15 The Old Grey Whistle Test (m001299s)
Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers

Bob Harris introduces Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers in concert at the BBC Television Centre in London's Shepherd's Bush in 1978.

FRI 00:00 The Old Grey Whistle Test (m001q19m)
Average White Band

Bob Harris introduces the Average White Band in concert, recorded on the last night of their 1975 US Tour in Miami.

FRI 00:40 The Old Grey Whistle Test (m001q1cx)
Billy Joel

Billy Joel in a concert from the BBC Television Theatre, London. Introduced by Bob Harris.

FRI 01:30 The Carpenters: A World of Music (b00c9n9c)
[Repeat of broadcast at 22:00 today]

FRI 02:15 In Concert (b0074sf0)
[Repeat of broadcast at 22:50 today]

FRI 02:45 Top of the Pops (b096v0jw)
[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 today]

FRI 03:20 Top of the Pops (b014b9nj)
[Repeat of broadcast at 21:30 today]