

SATURDAY 16 DECEMBER 2023

SAT 00:00 Midnight News (m001t9wv)

The latest news and weather forecast from BBC Radio 4.

SAT 00:30 Just One Thing - with Michael Mosley (m001t9kt)

Cold Therapy - with Michael Mosley

Cold Therapy - Ep 5: Sleep and the Cold

There's a chill in the air as the winter months come around again. But the cold isn't always something to fight or guard against. With a little bit of care, you can invite the cold into your life - with real benefits for health and mood. In each episode of this new podcast series, Dr Michael Mosley uncovers the science behind a different way you can harness the power of the cold, alongside the very latest research and atmospheric sound design.

In this final episode, how keeping a colder bedroom can lead to better, deeper sleep - and how our sleep is affected by the changing climate.

Guests:

Kathryn Reid, research professor, Centre for Circadian and Sleep Medicine at Northwestern University, Illinois.
Dr. Nick Obradovich, Laureate Institute for Brain Research, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Series Producer, Sound Designer and Mix Engineer: Richard Ward

Researcher: William Hornbrook
Science Producer: Samantha Lewis
Production Manager: Maria Simons

Editor: Zoe Heron

Specially composed music by Richard Atkinson (Mcasto)
A BBC Studios production for BBC Sounds / BBC Radio

SAT 00:48 Shipping Forecast (m001t9x6)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

SAT 01:00 Selection of BBC World Service Programmes (m001t9xl)

World Service

BBC Radio 4 joins the BBC World Service.

SAT 05:20 Shipping Forecast (m001t9y3)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

SAT 05:30 News Briefing (m001t9yk)

National and international news from BBC Radio 4

SAT 05:43 Prayer for the Day (m001t9z1)

A spiritual comment and prayer to begin the day with Rabbi Warren Elf

The Boston Tea Party

Good morning and Shabbat shalom.

Today is the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party, the day in 1773 when demonstrators boarded the ships of the East India Company and threw the chests of tea into the Boston Harbour. The Sons of Liberty, some disguised as Native Americans, destroyed an entire shipment of tea in protest at the proposed taxes.

In many ways this led to further unrest and ultimately to the American Revolution.

Protest is a human right protected by Article 11 of the Human Rights Act.

We value our right to protest against anything we deem unfair, unjust or even that we simply disagree with. It is one of the most effective ways for the majority of us to have our voices heard. It is the reflection of public feeling in an attempt to generate change, especially by groups who feel overlooked or ignored. Protest is about coming together in solidarity to demand our rights are respected and can be regarded as a key tactic for humanity to win.

Many important changes for human rights would not happen without the right to protest. Many great movements in world history used protest and benefitted humanity as a whole.

Movements for change have often stood firm and courageous in the face of repression like police brutality, imprisonment or worse. Countless rights and freedoms enjoyed today, like women being able to vote, workers able to enjoy weekends, the abolition of slavery and the end of Apartheid, have all been won by protesting against injustice.

Dear God, we are children of many traditions, inheritors of shared wisdom, of proud hopes and humble successes. Give me strength to continue to work for justice, freedom and peace. May courage match convictions and integrity match hope, so that the right to protest brings blessings for the future.

SAT 05:45 New Storytellers (m001p7nk)

Our Dad

Growing up in the shadow of violence and alcohol abuse can leave you with questions. So, what happens when a child becomes an adult and tries to answer them?

Weaving through displaced memories, this documentary explores the experiences of four siblings with one distinct focus - their father. When time and context shifts, what remains is shame, uncertainty, and the inexorable search for clarity. An upended audio mystery, this piece follows the life of an abusive man from the perspectives of four of his children. The narrator, switching between the roles of daughter and journalist, takes a gruelling journey into the past, re-discovering what she thought she knew about the person she once loved most.

"This is a story. Well, it did really happen. But this is the kind of story that you wish didn't. This is the story of our dad."

New Storytellers presents the work of new radio and audio producers, and Thea Rickard's feature won the Gold Award of the Charles Parker Prize for the Best Student Radio Feature in 2023. The award is presented every year in memory of the pioneering radio producer Charles Parker who produced the ground-breaking Radio Ballads featuring voices of communities unheard at the time, with musical narratives by Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger.

The judges of the prize, made up of producers, critics and commissioners, praised Thea's top prize winning work as "captivating and horrifying", "well-written and considered," "a properly structured and layered piece."

Producer: Thea Rickard

A Soundscape production for BBC Radio 4

SAT 06:00 News and Papers (m001thm7)

The latest news headlines. Including the weather and a look at the papers.

SAT 06:07 Open Country (m001t9pl)

Wintertide in Hartlepool

Sally Rodgers from electronic musical duo 'A Man Called Adam' takes us to the Headland of Hartlepool to explore the landscape, culture and history which has inspired her music. As part of Wintertide Festival, the artists of the area have created installations, art and music inspired by their fishing heritage. We hear about the songs of the 'gutter girls' - women who gutted herring along the East Coast - which 'A Man Called Adam' have reworked into electronic soundscapes, to be played along the Wintertide Trail. Sally meets the curators and creatives at work transforming the Headland and learns more about how industry and culture here have been shaped by the features of this coastline. As dusk falls, the Headland is lit up as the Wintertide Festival begins.

Produced by Helen Lennard

The Gutter Girls project was commissioned and funded for Wintertide Festival by Tees Valley Festivals Volunteering.

SAT 06:30 Farming Today (m001thm9)

16/12/23 Farming Today This Week: Dartmoor review; Community deer stalking; Rare breeds; Drones to spray nematodes; Minecraft.

An independent review has told Natural England it needs to completely change the way it engages with farmers on Dartmoor. It also says more cattle are needed for "conservation grazing" to help tackle the spread of purple moor grass and sheep farmers have been warned they'll need to demonstrate they can control their flocks and not let them overgraze areas of heather and dwarf shrubs.

A Scottish nature reserve is training members of the local community to stalk deer at Creag Meagaidh in the Highlands. NatureScot says community models of deer management are common in many European countries, but this is the first time it has been tried on publicly owned land in Scotland.

Applications are now open for a new £4 million Smaller Abattoir Fund. The fund is to enable abattoirs in England to improve productivity, enhance animal health and welfare, and will allow farmers to add value to their meat and encourage innovation. Abattoirs will be able to apply for funding of up to £60,000. The Rare Breeds Survival Trust welcomed that

announcement - they said the network of small abattoirs had been in sustained serious decline, and the fund offered a lifeline. All this week we've been looking at the future for rare breeds, among them North Ronaldsay sheep from the Orkney Islands and the endangered Welsh Pig.

The forestry industry is using drones to drop microscopic worms or nematodes onto trees, to control pests. Foresters say it helps them reach areas that machinery can't.

A virtual world is being used to get children interested in conservation. The Crown Estate has teamed up with Microsoft to create a version of the very popular world-building game Minecraft, based on Windsor Great Park.

Presenter = Charlotte Smith
Producer = Rebecca Rooney

SAT 06:57 Weather (m001thmc)

The latest weather reports and forecast

SAT 07:00 Today (m001thmf)

Including Sports Desk, Weather and Thought for the Day.

SAT 09:00 Saturday Live (m001thmk)

Steven Moffat, Robin Shaw, Kelda Wood, Kelvin Fletcher

Steven Moffat, the BAFTA and Emmy award winning TV writer and producer, famous for Doctor Who and Sherlock has made his debut as a playwright with The Unfriend returning to London's West End.

Kelda Wood is the former GB Para-Canoeist, first adaptive-rower to row the Atlantic unsupported, and a charity founder, whose world turned upside down by not one...by two lifechanging incidents.

And the animator and illustrator Robin Shaw, the International Emmy Award winning director of The Tiger Who Came to Tea and brought The Snowman to life, now turns his attention to Mog for our festive television enjoyment.

Plus, we have the Inheritance Tracks of the actor and former Strictly Champion Kelvin Fletcher.

Presenters: Nikki Bedi and Huw Stephens
Producer: Ben Mitchell

SAT 10:00 Your Place or Mine with Shaun Keaveny (m001thmm)

Greg James: Venice, Italy

Can Greg tempt Shaun to the watery wonderland of a city in which he spent his honeymoon? Shaun's been to Venice Beach and Little Venice but remains to be convinced about this one. Resident geographer, historian and comedian Iszi Lawrence has been there too and strongly advises them not to fall in.

Your Place Or Mine is the travel series that isn't going anywhere. Join Shaun as his guests try to convince him that it's worth getting up off the sofa and seeing the world, giving us a personal guide to their favourite place on the planet.

Producers: Beth O'Dea and Sarah Goodman

Your Place or Mine is a BBC Audio production for BBC Radio 4 and BBC Sounds.

SAT 10:30 The Kitchen Cabinet (m001tgsk)

Series 42

Luton

Jay and his team of food experts are answering questions from Luton for this week's episode.

Joining Jay are broadcaster and chef Lerato Umah-Shaylor, food writers Jordan Bourke and Sumayya Usmani, and food historian Dr Annie Gray. The panellists attempt to resolve a variety of culinary conundrums, including their best advice for cooking risotto, how to use mace in cooking, and their dream fusion food.

Also, Jay chats to Guinness World Record holder for the largest onion bhaji, Oli Khan, and proud producer of the Bedfordshire clanger, Jamie Gunns from Gunns Bakery.

Assistant Producer: Rahnee Prescod
Senior Producer: Dominic Tyeran

A Sometin' Else production for BBC Radio 4

SAT 11:00 The Week in Westminster (m001thmp)

Radio 4's weekly assessment of developments at Westminster

SAT 11:30 From Our Own Correspondent (m001thmr)
Poland's Political Drama

Kate Adie presents stories from Poland, CAR, Hong Kong, Armenia and Tunisia

This week the former Polish PM Donald Tusk returned to power marking a clear break from the right-wing, populist government that has been in office for the last eight years. Voters filled cinemas screening the parliamentary proceedings, as the country was gripped by the political drama. Sarah Rainsford was in Warsaw.

In the Central African Republic, the Wagner Group is wielding significant political, economic and cultural influence. Yemisi Adegoke visited the capital Bangui and spoke to the President about his reliance on Russian mercenary group, despite allegations of abuse and extra judicial killings.

The introduction of the Beijing-imposed national security law in 2020 led to an immediate crackdown on anti-government protests in Hong Kong. Several people were arrested under the new law, including the billionaire media mogul Jimmy Lai, whose trial is due to start on Monday - and there are many others. Danny Vincent spoke to another activist currently on remand.

In Armenia, Julia Paul speaks to journalists who fled the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh in September, along with more than 100,000 others after the takeover by Azerbaijan. They tell her about the lives they left behind.

And the latest round of climate talks in the UAE, looked to end in disappointment as leaders failed to incorporate any reference to the phasing out of fossil fuels in the conference's initial draft agreement. But in a dramatic turnaround, nations finally announced a 'transition away' from coal, oil, and gas. Justin Rowlatt was behind the scenes of the talks in Dubai.

Series Producer: Serena Tarling
Editor: Richard Fenton-Smith
Production Coordinator: Gemma Ashman

SAT 12:00 News Summary (m001tjht)
The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4.

SAT 12:04 Money Box (m001thmw)
Inflation, Gift Cards and Energy Deals

The Office for National Statistics has published the first of a new quarterly set of figures designed to reflect how inflation is experienced by households. They are called the Household Costs Indices and include things like mortgage costs, interest and insurance. It showed that overall UK household costs rose by 8.2% in the 12 months to September. How does it compare to other measures and what impact could it have?

Are you thinking of buying a gift card as a present for Christmas? There's a warning that people looking to use gift cards this Christmas need to be on the look out for scams and fraud.

And from 1st January the cost of heating and lighting your home and cooking your food will rise in England, Scotland, and Wales. The average increase in energy bills will be just over 5% adding £94 a year to the typical bill. As some suppliers begin offering deals to fix your costs we'll ask what should you do?

Presenter: Paul Lewis
Reporter: Dan Whitworth
Researchers: Eimear Devlin and Jo Krasner
Editor: Jess Quayle

(First broadcast 12pm Saturday 16th December 2023)

SAT 12:30 Dead Ringers (m001t9sj)
Christmas Specials 2023

Episode 1

Topical comedy as everyone's favourite impressions show returns... with a festive twist.

This episode features the Rwanda migrant crisis, Tory factionalism, Sir Keir Starmer's latest policy and troubling times for The Wombles.

This week's impressionists are Jon Culshaw, Lewis MacLeod, Jan Ravens, Jess Robinson and Duncan Wisbey.

This episode was written by: Nev Fountain & Tom Jamieson, Laurence Howarth, Ed Amsden & Tom Coles, Edward Tew, Robert Darke, Peter Tellouche, Sophie Dickson, Rachel E

Thorn and Jo Topping.

Produced and created by Bill Dare.

An EcoAudio certified production.

SAT 12:57 Weather (m001thmy)
The latest weather forecast

SAT 13:00 News and Weather (m001thn0)
The latest national and international news and weather reports from BBC Radio 4

SAT 13:10 Any Questions? (m001t9tw)
Sir Ed Davey MP, Sherelle Jacobs, Darren Jones MP, Rebecca Pow MP

Alex Forsyth presents political discussion from Stonehenge Visitor Centre in Wiltshire with the Leader of the Liberal Democrats Sir Ed Davey MP, columnist at The Daily Telegraph Sherelle Jacobs, Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury Darren Jones MP and Environment Minister Rebecca Pow MP.
Producer: Camellia Sinclair
Lead broadcast engineer: Tim Allen

SAT 14:00 Any Answers? (m001thn2)
Call Any Answers? to have your say on the big issues in the news this week

SAT 14:45 The Planet Earth Podcast (m001thn4)
8. Changing Planet

In the final episode of The Planet Earth Podcast, Mike Gunton and the Planet Earth team share their own thoughts on the pressures our planet is facing today, and how we might change our behaviours to protect it. Contributors from across the series including Emma Napper, Abdullah Kahn, Steve Greenwood and Sir David Attenborough open up about what it means to work on a series like Planet Earth and how those working on the frontlines of conservation inspire them to keep hoping for a better future.

SAT 15:00 Sweeney Todd and the String of Pearls (m000tckn)
Episode 2

It's the reign of George III. What's going on at Sweeney Todd's in Fleet Street?

Joanna disguises herself and enters the barber's employment as 'Charley'. Is her sweetheart Mark really lost at sea?

A dark humour enhances outstanding performances from Joanne Whalley as Mrs Lovett and Martin Jarvis as Sweeney Todd. With Rufus Sewell, Jonathan Cake, Julian Sands, Moira Quirk, Jack Cutmore-Scott, Matthew Wolf and Ian Ogilvy.

What will be discovered in the vaults beneath St Dunstan's? Investigator Richard Blunt and loyal Lieutenant Jeffreys aim to protect Joanna. Can Mrs Lovett extract herself from a fearful relationship with Todd? What is the true secret of the barber's shop? Betrayal, blackmail, murder? Is justice possible?

Cast:
Mrs Lovett...Joanne Whalley
Colonel Jeffrey...Rufus Sewell
Sir Richard Blunt...Jonathan Cake
Sweeney Todd...Martin Jarvis
Mark...Jack Cutmore-Scott
Joanna...Moira Quirk
Arabella...Elizabeth Knowelden
Crotchet/Mr Brown/Dr Murphy...Matthew Wolf
Mr Wrangle...Julian Sands
The Judge...Ian Ogilvy
Morgan/Attorney...Neil Dickson
Clerk/Sir Ernest...Darren Richardson
Boatman/Counsel/Fisherman...Alan Shearman
Other parts played by members of the company.

Dramatised by Archie Scottney, based on the novel by Thomas Prest

Director...Rosalind Ayres
A Jarvis and Ayres production for BBC Radio 4

SAT 16:00 Woman's Hour (m001thn6)
Weekend Woman's Hour: Imelda Staunton, Quitting parties, Mica Paris

Imelda Staunton has played Queen Elizabeth II for the last two series of television drama The Crown. As the final episodes are released this week, she joins us to discuss playing the monarch,

and what it's been like to take on this role since Her Majesty died.

How could people step in safely if they see a woman being harassed in public? Former police officer Graham Goulden and criminologist Molly Ackhurst tell us how bystanders can protect themselves while helping others.

Soul singer Mica Paris will headline an evening of gospel music on Sky Arts, where she'll be joined by 10 gospel singers and a four-piece band to perform Christmas songs. She gives us a taste of what to expect on A Gospel Christmas.

It's been a year and a half since Roe vs Wade was overturned in the United States, ending the constitutional nationwide right to abortion for millions of women. It remains an issue that divides opinion. The British writer Nazrin Choudhury has directed a short film, Red White and Blue, which follows the character Rachel Johnson, played by Brittany Snow, who is forced to cross state lines in search of an abortion.

Should we celebrate quitting a job? When Hannah Witton decided to stop making her successful YouTube and podcast series, Doing It, her friends threw her a surprise quitting ceremony. Hannah tells us whether this party helped, alongside the career coach Soma Ghosh with her advice for anyone thinking of quitting.

The bestselling author Louise Doughty joins us to discuss a new ITVX drama based on her novel: Platform 7. She tells us how she has turned male-heavy police procedurals on their head – and why she thinks all middle-aged women long to go on the run.

Presenter: Anita Rani
Producer: Lucy Wai
Editor: Sarah Crawley

SAT 17:00 PM (m001thn8)
Full coverage of the day's news

SAT 17:30 Sliced Bread Presents (m001r7vs)
Sliced Bread - Weighted Blankets

Do weighted blankets reduce stress and help you sleep better?

They've gone from a middle-aisle fad to being a regular fixture in supermarkets and online stores. Weighted blankets can cost up to £200 and promise to give you a deeper, more restful sleep. But do they?

Listener Theresa wanted to know about the science behind them. What is it about the 'deep touch' or 'deep pressure' stimulation that the manufacturers claim helps us to sleep? They're also often marketed as offering help with anxiety and autism. Listener Claire runs a support group for children with autism and is keen to know more, so I speak to the lead scientist of a big study into that. And listener Pauline wonders whether there are any health risks associated with weighted blankets?

Once again this series we're testing and investigating your suggested wonder-products, so if you've seen an ad, trend or fad, and wonder if there's any evidence to back up a claim, drop us an email to sliced.bread@bbc.co.uk or you can send us a voice note to our WhatsApp number: 07543 306807.

Presenter: Greg Foot
Producer: Simon Hoban

SAT 17:54 Shipping Forecast (m001thnb)
The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

SAT 17:57 Weather (m001thnd)
The latest weather forecast

SAT 18:00 Six O'Clock News (m001thng)
The Israeli army says three hostages mistakenly shot dead by its troops in Gaza had been holding a white flag.

SAT 18:15 Loose Ends (m001thnj)
Janine Harouni, Morfydd Clark, Jared Harris, Guvna B, Deniece Pearson, Arthur Smith, Clive Anderson

Clive Anderson and Arthur Smith are joined by Janine Harouni, Morfydd Clark and Jared Harris for an eclectic mix of conversation, music and comedy. With music from Guvna B and Deniece Pearson.

SAT 19:00 Profile (m001thnl)
Tucker Carlson

Tucker Carlson, the American conservative political

commentator and newscaster.

He was born in California and from the age of six was brought up by his father after his mother left the family home. Tucker Carlson followed in his father's footsteps when he left college and took up a career in journalism. He's worked for CNN, MSNBC and Fox News from which he was 'let go' in April this year.

As he launches his own streaming website 'Tucker Carlson Network', Stephen Smith finds out about the man who has been described as one of the most influential people in American media in recent years.

CONTRIBUTORS

Neil Patel, Co-founder and CEO of Tucker Carlson Network
Chadwick Moore, Journalist and Author of 'Tucker' a biography of Tucker Carlson
Alex Shephard, Senior Editor, 'The New Republic'
Heather Hendershot, Professor of Communications and Journalism, Northwestern University

PRODUCTION TEAM

Producers: Diane Richardson, Julie Ball
Editor: Bridget Harney
Sound: James Beard
Production Co-ordinator: Maria Ogunde

CREDITS

Network, MGM 1976, Peter Finch, Faye Dunaway-
Tucker Carlson Network, Last Country Inc
Anchorman - The Legend of Ron Burgundy, Dreamworks
Pictures

SAT 19:15 The Infinite Monkey Cage (p0gr7p58)
Series 28

Jo Brand's Quantum World

Brian Cox and Robin Ince are subject to a non-hostile take over by comedian and non-physicist Jo Brand, as she challenges the panel to help her understand the almost unbelievable world of cheeky particles who may or may not be in several places at once. To help Jo get to grips with the bizarre and strange world of our Quantum Universe, Brian and Robin are joined by theoretical physicist Prof Ben Allanach from the U. of Cambridge and Cosmologist Prof Fay Dowker from Imperial College London who introduce Jo to the weird and wonderful ways of quantum theory, dead and alive cats and multiverses.

Executive Producer: Alexandra Feachem.

SAT 20:00 Archive on 4 (m001thnp)
Jim Kerr on Jim Morrison

Jim Kerr, lead singer of the Scottish band Simple Minds, on the importance and influence of 'The Doors' Jim Morrison - marking what would have been the iconic rock stars 80th birthday.

Making a pilgrimage to Pere Lachaise cemetery in Paris where Morrison was buried shortly after his untimely death in July 1971, Jim describes the enormous impact Morrison has had on his life, from the very first time he heard 'The Doors' Riders on the Storm on his father's car radio as an 11-year-old, and the immediate fascination with all aspects of Morrison's poetry and 'The Doors' music that continues undimmed more than 50 years later.

Deeply affected by the intoxicating and menacing atmosphere of 'The Doors' music, the teenage Jim Kerr set out on a mission to find out as much as he could about the enigmatic Californian counter-cultural icons and soon discovered a small group of like minded Glaswegians, including his school friend Charlie Burchill, all of whom were fascinated by the dark drama of Morrison and his band.

The more they leaned about 'The Doors' and their influences, the more Jim and Charlie were determined to follow 'The Doors' blueprint and form their own band to see how far their artistic visions could take them.

When Jim first visited Morrison's grave in 1979, he viewed the rock legend as a young man, who had lived a dynamic, exotic life. Now, returning as a 65-year-old, Jim has a different perspective on what he views as a young man's legacy, which he examines through the prism of his own poetry and music, featuring previously unheard Morrison poetry, studio out takes and archive interviews with the self-proclaimed Lizard King.

A Lonesome Pine production for BBC Radio 4

SAT 21:00 Drama on 4 (m0015476)
Talking About a Revolution

By Sarah Daniels

When Maya unearths new information about her Aunt's death, and the curious circumstances behind a car crash that happened over 40 years ago, she's determined to find out the truth. What she discovers opens up a murky world of radicalisation and revenge.

A story about violence against women that imagines the extremes that some women might go to in order to fight back.

Maya Saffron Coomber
Diane Clare Perkins
Louise Christine Kavanagh
Jude Rebecca Crankshaw
Ava Amy Golden
Young Diane Elexi Walker
Young Nina Alexandra Hannant
The Police Officer Neil McCaul

Written by Sarah Daniels
Directed by Anne Isger
A BBC Audio Production

SAT 21:45 Short Works (m001t9q6)
Mudlarks

Seeking distraction from her work, a junior doctor looks to take up mudlarking on London's River Thames.

Sophie Haydock's debut novel, *The Flames* (2022), was about the four muses who posed for Egon Schiele in Vienna. Her second, *Madame Matisse*, will be published in 2024.

Writer: Sophie Haydock
Reader: Bryony Hannah
Producer: Jeremy Osborne

A Sweet Talk production for BBC Radio 4

SAT 22:00 News (m001thnr)
The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4

SAT 22:15 Screenshot (m001t9tk)
Terence Davies

Ellen E Jones and Mark Kermode celebrate the life and career of the much-loved Liverpoolian screenwriter and director Terence Davies, who died earlier in 2023 at the age of 77.

From an astonishing trilogy of early short films, to his final feature, 2021's *Benediction*, Terence Davies seamlessly blended personal recollections with wider essential truths. His subjects ranged from autobiographically inspired portraits of postwar working-class life in Liverpool in films like *Distant Voices Still Lives* and *The Long Day Closes*, to intimate portraits of real-life authors, most remarkably the American poet Emily Dickinson in *A Quiet Passion*.

Mark speaks to Scottish actor Jack Lowden, who played poet Siegfried Sassoon in *Benediction*, about his relationship with Davies. He also talks to critic and historian Lillian Crawford about why the director's work resonates so deeply for so many.

And Ellen discusses Davies' relationship to his hometown with two fellow Scousers - author and screenwriter Frank Cottrell-Boyce, and actor Tina Malone, who starred in *The Long Day Closes*.

Producer: Jane Long
A Prospect Street production for BBC Radio 4

SAT 23:00 Counterpoint (m001tb5)
Series 37

Heat 1, 2023-4

(1/13)
The new season of the general knowledge music quiz kicks off at the Radio Theatre in London with Paul Gambaccini in the chair. Competitors from around the UK face questions on all varieties of music, with extracts to identify and special topics to test their knowledge in depth.

Appearing in the first heat are:
Ralph Barnes from Cheltenham
Katherine Madge from Stafford
Anju Sharda from Hertfordshire

The winner will go forward to the semi-finals in the new year.

Assistant Producer: Stephen Garner
Producer: Paul Bajoria

SAT 23:30 Limelight (m001638c)
Dead Hand

Dead Hand – Episode 2: Zero Sum

A contemporary thriller set in Northern Ireland written by Stuart Drennan.

Greg is the host of a true crime podcast dedicated to uncovering the identity of a serial killer, last active over twenty years ago, known only as Dead Hand. A killer named after a mysterious radio transmission which has been broadcasting an indecipherable code in the years since Dead Hand vanished. A code told in the voices of Dead Hand's victims; including Greg's missing father. However, when a new voice is added to the code, Greg realises that Dead Hand is active again. With time already running out, can he finally crack the code and catch the killer?

Cast:
Greg ... Paul Mallon
DS Murray ... Michelle Fairley
Kate ... Roisin Gallagher
Lucy ... Hannah Eggleton
Stacey ... Eimear Fearon
May ... Julia Dearden
Thomas ... Patrick Fitzsymons
Daniel ... Desmond Eastwood
Assistant Jo ... Nicky Harley
Control ... Louise Parker
Police Officer ... Andrew McCracken
TSG lead ... Patrick Buchanan
All other roles played by members of the cast.

Writer ... Stuart Drennan
Script Editor ... Philip Palmer
Producer ... Michael Shannon
Executive Editor ... Andy Martin

A BBC Northern Ireland production for Radio 4.

SUNDAY 17 DECEMBER 2023

SUN 00:00 Midnight News (m001thnt)
The latest news and weather forecast from BBC Radio 4.

SUN 00:15 Poetry Please (m001tb7c)
Jason Allen-Paisant

Jason Allen-Paisant joins Roger McGough, sharing a selection of listener requested poems.

They'll discuss classics by Ted Hughes and William Wordsworth, alongside new classics by Caleb Femi and Kei Miller. Jason also shares a poem from his award-winning second collection.

Jason Allen-Paisant is a Jamaican poet and scholar. His collection 'Self-Portrait as Othello' won the 2023 Forward Prize for Best Collection and is currently shortlisted for the 2023 T. S. Eliot Prize.

Produced by Alice McKee for BBC Audio

SUN 00:48 Shipping Forecast (m001thnw)
The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

SUN 01:00 Selection of BBC World Service Programmes (m001thny)
World Service

BBC Radio 4 joins the BBC World Service.

SUN 05:20 Shipping Forecast (m001thp0)
The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

SUN 05:30 News Briefing (m001thp2)
National and international news from BBC Radio 4

SUN 05:43 Bells on Sunday (m001thp4)
St. Edward's, Stow-on-the-Wold in Gloucestershire.

Bells on Sunday, comes from St. Edward's, Stow-on-the-Wold in Gloucestershire. The market town of Stow on the Wold is situated on a 800 foot hill at the junction of ancient roads through the Cotswolds including the Fosse way. St Edward's church has a ring of eight bells the earliest of which were cast in 1620 by Henry Farmer of Evesham. The tenor, weighing twenty-seven and a half hundredweight, is tuned to D. We hear them ringing 'Gloucestershire Triples'.

SUN 05:45 Profile (m001thnl)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 on Saturday]

SUN 06:00 News Summary (m001thr8)

The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4

SUN 06:05 Something Understood (m0001msl)

The Annunciation

In conversation with former BBC Deputy Director General, the journalist and author, Mark Byford, Mark Tully asks why the story of the Angel Gabriel's visit to Mary has become a neglected part of Jesus' narrative. They discuss the literal and metaphorical importance of the conception of Christ, the idea of the Virgin Birth and the iconography of Mary. The programme draws on the poetry of Denise Levertov and Elizabeth Jennings and there is music from Sir John Tavener, Percy Grainger and Brazilian pop composer Milton Nascimento.

The readers are Jane Whittenshaw and David Holt.

Presenter: Mark Tully

Producer: Frank Stirling

SUN 06:35 Natural Histories (b07h9xdl)

Ant

For centuries we've peered at them, delighted and terrified at seeing our best and worst traits in miniature. Brett Westwood investigates why we see ourselves in the Ant. With contributions from the Ant Lab of Nigel Franks, giant ants as seen by Judith Buchanan, slave-making ants as interpreted by John Clarke and Tom Waits, and the robot swarm of Sabine Hauert. Plus St Paul's Cathedral and a whole ant colony between 2 microscope slides. Plus the fearsome threat of H G Wells' The Empire of the Ants, and the films Antz, and THEM!

First broadcast in a longer form : 28th June 2016

Original Producer (2016): Melvin Rickarby

Archive Producer (2023) : Andrew Dawes

SUN 06:57 Weather (m001ths4)

The latest weather reports and forecast

SUN 07:00 News and Papers (m001thsj)

The latest news headlines. Including a look at the papers.

SUN 07:10 Sunday (m001thss)

Israel-Gaza latest; C of E same sex blessings; the rights and wrongs of 'Surveillance Santa'

Security correspondent Frank Gardner has the latest from Tel Aviv as Lord Cameron calls for a 'sustainable ceasefire' in the war between Israel and Hamas.

In the midst of the Covid inquiry and following the government's response, last week, to the 2017 Hillsborough report, it seems public inquiries are constantly in the news. But what is their purpose and what are the ethics of inquiry?

From today, same-sex couples in the Church of England are able to receive a blessing. We know that private blessing services have been happening for years, below the radar, but the House of Bishops has authorised the use of a new suite of special prayers to be used as part of regular services from today. William talks to Rev Catherine Bond and Rev Jane Pearce being blessed in their parish in Suffolk.

It's been called the Vatican 'trial of the century', Crux reporter John Allen has the latest from Rome where Cardinal Becciu, once considered a possible future Pope, has been found guilty of embezzlement and sentenced to five and a half years in jail. After the verdict was read, the cardinal's lawyer indicated that he was likely to appeal.

Not long til Santa comes down the chimney, but is it ok for parents to frighten kids into good behaviour by saying he's watching them, or that they need to behave to be rewarded with presents? William talks to Catholic columnist Cristina Odone and Canon Ann Easter about whether it works.

SUN 07:54 Radio 4 Appeal (m001tht3)

The Tree Council

Presenter Ben Fogle makes the Radio 4 Appeal on behalf of the charity The Tree Council.

To Give:

- UK Freephone 0800 404 8144

- You can donate online at bbc.co.uk/appeal/radio4

- Freepost BBC Radio 4 Appeal. (That's the whole address.

Please do not write anything else on the front of the envelope). Mark the back of the envelope 'The Tree Council'.

- Cheques should be made payable to 'The Tree Council'.

Please note that Freephone and online donations for this charity close at 23.59 on the Saturday after the Appeal is first

broadcast. However the Freepost option can be used at any time.

Registered charity number: 279000

SUN 07:57 Weather (m001thtk)

The latest weather forecast

SUN 08:00 News and Papers (m001thv0)

The latest news headlines. Including a look at the Sunday papers.

SUN 08:10 Sunday Worship (m001thvg)

God's Justice: A place to live

Continuing Sunday Worship's theme of 'Justice' for advent, this service reflects on the issue of homelessness.

Shermara Fletcher from Churches Together in England hosts a service at her home church, in Acocks Green, Birmingham to acknowledge the work the church does for those experiencing homelessness. Pastor Michael Bailey from the Church of God of Prophecy runs a homeless project each month and shares how they provide for the community in Birmingham. This is set against the backdrop of the nativity story in Gospel of Luke, and the often quoted line 'no room at the inn' - with Mary and Joseph, not having a place to lay their head before the birth of Jesus.

The music is provided by the AMC Gospel Choir led by Audrey Lawrence Mattis with Christmas carols like Silent Night and Joy to the World and gospel favourites Emmanuel.

Producer: Miriam Williamson

SUN 08:48 A Point of View (m001t9v4)

Dearly Beloved

In a pew in Edwin Lutyness' ecclesiastical masterpiece, St Jude on the Hill in North London, Will Self ponders the contemporary power of the sermon.

'Dearly Beloved,' he begins, as he explains the appeal of a good sermon!

And he reminds us that 'the sermon was instituted, in part, to correct the fake news of an age before the media that now disseminate it.'

Producer: Adele Armstrong

Sound: Peter Bosher

Production coordinator: Gemma Ashman

Editor: Richard Fenton-Smith

SUN 08:58 Tweet of the Day (b04t0vb1)

Black Sicklebill

Michael Palin presents the black sicklebill of New Guinea. The black sicklebill is a breath-taking creature. It's a bird of paradise, and the male sicklebill's black feathers gleam with metallic blue, green and purple highlights. But his most striking features are a slender scythe-like bill, and an extremely long sabre-shaped tail whose central plumes can reach 50cm in length.

During courtship, he transforms his pectoral and wing feathers into a huge ruff which almost conceals his head and exposes an iridescent blue patch. Perching on a dead branch, he displays horizontally, looking less like a bird than a small black comet, all the while producing strange rattling cries.

It is thought that the Black sicklebill and its relative the Brown Sickle bill may have spooked the Japanese in the Second World War. Japanese forces had occupied the North coast of (Papua) New Guinea and during their push south to the capital, Port Moresby, had to cross the mountain territories of the sicklebills. It's said that on hearing the birds' courtship displays; they flung themselves to the ground, thinking that they were under fire from the Allies.

Producer : Andrew Dawes

SUN 09:00 Broadcasting House (m001thvv)

The Sunday morning news magazine programme. Presented by Paddy O'Connell

SUN 10:00 The Archers Omnibus (m001thw8)

WRITER: Sarah McDonald Hughes

DIRECTOR: Jeremy Howe

Brian Aldridge.... Charles Collingwood

Ben Archer.... Ben Norris

David Archer.... Timothy Bentinck

Pip Archer.... Daisy Badger
Tony Archer David Troughton
Lilian Bellamy Sunny Ormonde
Leonard Berry Paul Copley
Alice Carter Hollie Chapman
Harry Chilcott Jack Ashton
Ian Craig Stephen Kennedy
Justin Elliott Simon Williams
Jakob Hakansson.... Paul Venables
Joy Horville Jackie Lye
Paul Mack Joshua Riley
Adam Macy Andrew Wincott
Freddie Pargetter Toby Laurence
Lily Pargetter Katie Redford
Stella Pryor Lucy Speed
Lynda Snell Carole Boyd

SUN 11:15 Desert Island Discs (m001thwh)

Greta Gerwig, writer and director

Greta Gerwig is the director of the feature film Barbie - the first woman in cinematic history to have the sole director's credit for a billion dollar blockbuster. Her previous films include Lady Bird, inspired in part by her own childhood, and Little Women, a widely acclaimed adaptation of the much-loved novel.

Greta was born and brought up in Sacramento in California. Her parents encouraged her love of the arts and she started trying to direct her friends in productions while she was still in kindergarten. She studied English and Philosophy at Barnard College in New York where she started acting and writing.

After she graduated she appeared in a series of low budget, improvised, so-called mumblecore films, noted for their often low-key naturalistic style. Her solo directorial debut came in 2017 with Lady Bird, starring Saoirse Ronan and Laurie Metcalf. The film won two Golden Globe Awards and was nominated for five Academy Awards. Her follow up film, Little Women, received six Academy Award nominations including Best Picture and Best Adapted Screenplay.

Greta has been named president of the jury for next year's Cannes Film Festival. She lives with her partner, the writer and director Noah Baumbach, and two sons in Manhattan.

DISC ONE: Opening: I Hope I Get It - Don Pippin, A Chorus Line Orchestra, A Chorus Line Ensemble
DISC TWO: Pinball Wizard - The Who
DISC THREE: Sleigh Ride - Johnny Mathis, Percy Faith & His Orchestra
DISC FOUR: And The Grass Won't Pay No Mind - Elvis Presley
DISC FIVE: Moonage Daydream - David Bowie
DISC SIX: Top Hat, White Tie and Tails - Johnny Green & His Orchestra, Fred Astaire
DISC SEVEN: Camelot: Finale Ultimo - Camelot Orchestra conducted by Franz Allers, Original Broadway Cast of Camelot
DISC EIGHT: Ain't Got No / I Got Life - Nina Simone

BOOK CHOICE: The Complete Poems: Emily Dickinson
LUXURY ITEM: A writing set
CASTAWAY'S FAVOURITE: Sleigh Ride - Johnny Mathis, Percy Faith & His Orchestra

Presenter Lauren Laverne
Producer Paula McGinley

SUN 12:00 News Summary (m001tjgs)

The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4.

SUN 12:04 I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue (m001tbc3)

Series 80

Episode 5

The godfather of all panel shows pays a visit to the Dorking Halls. On the panel are Fred Macaulay, Milton Jones, Lucy Porter and Omid Djalili with Jack Dee in the umpire's chair. Colin Sell accompanies on the piano.

Producer - Jon Naismith.

It is a BBC Studios production for Radio 4.

SUN 12:32 The Food Programme (m001tgs4)

Dark and stormy: A journey through rum

A refreshing mojito? Rum punch? Maybe just a simple rum and coke? Many of us might think no further about rum than how to mix it within a drink. But it actually has a unique story within our history through its links with slavery and the navy, where it was used as a currency and became an integral part of the maritime trade in people and sugar.

Fast forward to today, and the popularity of rum is still rising. But amid the flavours, brands and a vast range of rum-based drinks, there is very little information about how it's made and where it comes from.

In this episode, Jaega Wise visits two British rum producers making it in very different ways. One, Goldstone Rum, is the latest addition to a new group of distillers making rum from scratch in the UK. The other, the BBC Food and Farming Award-winning Isle of Wight Distillery, is part of a long tradition of blending and spicing rum made in the Caribbean.

But while rum has a sociable, sunny image thanks to its Caribbean heritage, not many people want to talk about its darker history and how it was once used as currency to buy enslaved Africans, who in turn worked on the sugar plantations that were the source of rum itself.

Who better to hear about the history and culture of rum than global rum ambassador Ian Burrell, who meets Jaega at RumFest to explain more about its origins, the rum scene in the UK and mix a cocktail or two.

Throughout this journey of rum, Dr Christy Pichichero, professor of history and expert in Black studies at George Mason University, explains why understanding the true story of rum is an important part of our shared history, and what it means to rum makers and drinkers today.

Presented by Jaega Wise.
Produced by Nina Pullman for BBC Audio in Bristol.

SUN 12:57 Weather (m001thx3)
The latest weather forecast

SUN 13:00 The World This Weekend (m001thx7)
Radio 4's look at the week's big stories from both home and around the world

SUN 13:30 Behind the Crime (m001thx9)
Marc

This is the story of a man who learnt early on in life that he couldn't trust the police, and that his group of older friends could protect him from harm. It happened that those friends were into committing crime. Between the ages of 15 and 21, Marc only spent one Christmas out of prison. He graduated from stealing hubcaps to committing armed robberies. During his last sentence, he ended up in HMP Grendon – a prison run on the principles of a 'therapeutic community' – where, for the first time, Marc was forced to confront his own actions and account for them not to the authorities, but to his peers. HMP Grendon was 'the hardest prison' Marc had ever done. He cried for the first time inside Grendon. And then, in an extraordinary twist, Marc was forced to use some of the 'skills' he had learned during his criminal career to save the lives of others – and he was labelled a hero. Is it possible to prevent crime by understanding the root causes of offending behaviour?

Sally Tilt and Dr Kerensa Hocken are forensic psychologists who work in prisons.

They help people in prison to look at the harm they've caused to other people, understand why it happened and work out how to make changes to prevent further harm after they've been released.

In Behind the Crime, they take the time to understand the life of someone whose crimes have led to harm and, in some cases, imprisonment.

The job of the forensic psychologists is to dig deep into Marc's story, to understand the sequence of events that got Marc to the point where he committed a crime. For details of organisations that can provide help and support, visit bbc.co.uk/actionline

Producer: Andrew Wilkie
Editor: Clare Fordham
Behind the Crime is a co-production between BBC Long Form Audio and the Prison Radio Association.

SUN 14:00 Gardeners' Question Time (m001t9pt)
Wildmoor Heath

How do you successfully prolong the life of an orchid? What can I do to keep my indoor tropical plants in good condition during the winter? What plant do you consider to be overlooked and underrated?

Peter Gibbs is in Wildmoor Heath, Berkshire for this week's programme, with his panel of horticultural experts including

garden designer Matthew Wilson, proud plantswoman Christine Walkden, and passionate plantsman Matthew Biggs.

Fitting with the recent cold weather, James Wong is joined by Head of Arboretum and Temperate Collections Tony Hall and Arboretum Supervisor Rebecca Lane, as they give him a tour of Kew Gardens' brand new Winter Gardens

Producer: Bethany Hocken

Assistant Producer: Rahnee Prescod

Executive Producer: Hannah Newton

A Somethin' Else production for BBC Radio 4

SUN 14:45 Opening Lines (m001thxc)
A Grain of Wheat

John Yorke takes a look at A Grain of Wheat, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's groundbreaking book about the lead up to Kenyan Independence. Published in 1966 as part of the Heinemann African Writers Series, A Grain of Wheat offers an authentic insight into Kenya's Land and Freedom Army rebellion (better known in Britain as the Mau Mau) and its brutal suppression by British colonial authorities. Told from the perspective of various Kikuyu characters living in Kenya's central highlands, it is set in the four days leading up to the hard-won Uhuru, or Independence celebrations. But through flashbacks, we also learn of what has happened in the decade prior to that; how characters have been sent to detention centres, or held in concentration camps, resisted British authorities, or collaborated with them. Now, on the eve of change, it is time for reflections and recriminations.

John Yorke has worked in television and radio for nearly 30 years, and he shares his experience with Radio 4 listeners as he unpacks the themes and impact of the books, plays and stories that are being dramatised on BBC Radio 4. From EastEnders to the Archers. Life on Mars to Shameless, he has been obsessed with telling big popular stories. He has spent years analysing not just how stories work but why they resonate with audiences around the globe and has brought together his experience in his bestselling book *Into the Woods*. As former Head of Channel Four Drama, Controller of BBC Drama Production and MD of Company Pictures, John has tested his theories during an extensive production career working on some of the world's most lucrative, widely viewed and critically acclaimed TV drama. As founder of the hugely successful BBC Writers Academy John has trained a generation of screenwriters - his students have had 17 green-lights in the last two years alone.

Contributors:
Njambi McGrath, author of *Through the Leopard's Gaze*, award-winning comedian and political commentator.

Credits:
Abridged readings from A Grain of Wheat by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, published by Penguin Modern Classics in Association with Heinemann African Writers Series.
Archive recordings from World Book Club, 9th March 2019, BBC World Service

Readings: Patrick Gatua
Researcher: Nina Semple
Production Manager: Sarah Wright
Sound: Sean Kerwin
Producer: Redzi Bernard
Executive Producer: Sara Davies

A Pier production for BBC Radio 4

SUN 15:00 Drama on 4 (m001thxf)
A Grain of Wheat

Written in 1967 and set four years earlier, on the eve of Kenyan independence, A Grain Of Wheat covers the years of the Mau Mau rebellion and is widely recognised as a classic of post-colonial African literature.

In his epigraph to the book, first published only three years after Independence, Ngũgĩ states, "The characters are fictitious... But the situation and the problems are real – sometimes too painfully real for the peasants who fought the British yet who now see all that they fought for being put on one side."

Like all great stories, this depicts a Rite of Passage – cultural, political, personal – a story of the transformation from one state of being into another, the story of a nation being born from a struggle against colonialism through the liminal times of the Emergency and the half-life in the internment camps. Every character, black and white, male and female is caught up and has a part to play in this ordeal of violent change.

The 'Present' of the story is the four days preceding the day of the Uhuru celebrations when Kenya became an independent

nation, presided over by Jomo Kenyatta, Burning Spear, on 12th December 1963.

Cast, in alphabetical order:
Philip Jackson as John Thompson
Ivanno Jeremiah as Kihika and Gikonyo
Denver-Isaac Kwashe as General R
Sarah Lawrie as Margery Thompson
Wela Mbusi as Karanja
JC Niala as the Narrator
Bel Odawa as Mumbi
Jude Owusu as Mugo

Written by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o
Adapted by Michael Eaton
Creative Consultant* JC Niala
Directed by David Morley

A Perfectly Normal production for BBC Radio 4

SUN 16:00 Open Book (m001thxb)
Janice Hallett

Janice Hallett on her new book, *The Christmas Appeal* - a murder mystery at the local am-dram panto.

Plus, recommendations of literary gems to put under the tree. From writer and critic Max Liu; Syima Aslam, Founder and Artistic Director of Bradford Literary Festival; and Johanna Thomas Corr, Chief Literary Critic for The Times and Sunday Times.

And, as we approach the 70th anniversary of the Ian Fleming Bond classic, Ken Follett explains his love for *Live and Let Die*.

Presenter: Johnny Pitts
Producer: Emma Wallace

Book List – Sunday 17 December and Thursday 21 December

The Christmas Appeal by Janice Hallett
The Appeal by Janice Hallett
The Twyford Code by Janice Hallett
The Bee Sting by Paul Murray
The Camomile Lawn by Mary Wesley
Ways of Life by Laura Freeman
The Letters of Seamus Heaney by Seamus Heaney
Letters of Note: Correspondence Deserving of a Wider Audience by Shaun Usher
The Most Beautiful Libraries in the World by Jacques Bosser
Soldier Sailor by Claire Kilroy
Impossible Creatures by Katherine Rundell
The Hero of this Book by Elizabeth McCracken
River Spirit by Leila Aboulela
The Ottomans: Khans, Caesars, and Caliphs by Marc David Baer
An Uneasy Inheritance by Polly Toynbee
Wish I Was Here by M. John Harrison
The Mathnawi of Rumi translated by Jawid Mojaddedi
Enter Ghost by Isabella Hammad
The Invention of Essex by Tim Burrows
Live and Let Die by Ian Fleming
The Armour of Light by Ken Follett

SUN 16:30 Poetry Please (m001thxx)
Jeanette Winterson

Jeanette Winterson joins Roger McGough, sharing a seasonal selection of listener requested poems. Together they explore light, love and religion, through the words of Carol Ann Duffy, Stevie Smith, Anne Sexton and many more.

Jeanette Winterson is an award-winning novelist, essayist and memoirist. She is best known for her semi-autobiographical novel *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*, which she wrote at the age of 23, inspired by her strict Pentecostal Evangelist upbringing in Accrington, Lancashire.

Produced by Alice McKee for BBC Audio

SUN 17:00 File on 4 (m001tbhh)
Shoplifting and organised crime

File on 4 reveals how hundreds of vulnerable women and children are being trafficked to the UK by organised crime gangs to work as shoplifters. The victims are forced to live in squalor in overcrowded houses in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Investigators have discovered there are 154 known members of one gang which is making millions for the gangmasters from Eastern Europe. High street stores have reported a 25 per cent increase in the number of shoplifting incidents over the last year.

Reporter: Datschiane Navanayagam
Producers: Holly Clemens and Kate West
Editor: Carl Johnston

SUN 17:40 Profile (m001thnl)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 on Saturday]

SUN 17:54 Shipping Forecast (m001thxn)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

SUN 17:57 Weather (m001thxr)

The latest weather forecast

SUN 18:00 Six O'Clock News (m001thxt)

Humanitarian aid is being delivered to Gaza through Israel's Kerem Shalom crossing for the first time since the Hamas attacks in October.

SUN 18:15 Pick of the Week (m001thxw)

William Crawley

This week we examine the art in speaking out and in shutting up. We also find out how ten days in the clink turned a debut playwright into the second richest person in America. We demonstrate that New York is not a city, but a symphony and that Stanley Tucci's eyes unlock the secret to true happiness. And in a scoop for us we expose the maths teachers in the pocket of 'Big Casio'...

Presenter: William Crawley

Producer: Jessica Treen

Production Coordinator: Lydia Depledge-Miller

SUN 19:00 The Archers (m001tgpz)

David tries out several unfunny jokes on Pip and Stella for The Agricultural Show. Their unenthusiastic response leads David to suggest reviving Brookfield's Sound of Music Eurovision entry instead. But with Josh potentially unavailable, David and Pip think Stella would be a great addition to the team. Stella isn't keen but is soon persuaded, if they have a full dress rehearsal in church. They will need Jakob to change his mind about not rehearsing the show at all, though. There's an embarrassing dad moment as the thought of Stella in lederhosen prompts David into some ill-advised remarks about her legs, before Stella outlines her demands: they go on first and have an endless supply of triple chocolate cookies in her dressing room! Whilst sorting Martha's Christmas presents into different piles at Ambridge View, Alice broaches the subject of Harry with Chris. Chris covers that he's fine about it and Alice is grateful he's taken it so well. Later, Chris talks to Susan about making sure Martha's presents are well hidden, so she doesn't find them before Christmas Day. Chris and Emma did once, only for Neil and Susan to swap their presents out for other ones because they knew what they'd done. Susan then susses something isn't quite right between Chris and Alice, before Chris confesses his true feelings about her seeing someone else. It's been a shock and it hurts. Susan is sympathetic, but advises Chris not to dwell on it. He has to get on with his own life, his and Martha's.

SUN 19:15 Carbon Lifeforms (m001th7v)

Christmas Special

Not content to simply be carbon neutral, environmental comedian (and actual Council Waste Education Officer) Jon Long teams up with scientist and TV presenter Dr Tara Shine to emit jokes, games, songs and facts as they aim to (carbon) capture all things climate and environment - demystifying the issues, and helping listeners make positive choices in their everyday lives.

Carbon Lifeforms Christmas Special

It's the most wonderful - and most wasteful - time of the year so Jon and Dr Tara bring us fun facts and practical advice to help us all cut down the amount of food, drink, and packaging that gets thrown away over the Christmas period. They'll be joined by hungry comedian Jessica Fosteckew to discuss ingenious uses for leftovers and how breaking tradition - with new traditions - might be the way forward. And there will be a host of festive special guests along the way.

Producer: Laura Grimshaw

Executive Producer: Jon Holmes

Live sound: David Thomas

Post-production sound: Tony Churnside

An unusual production for BBC Radio 4

SUN 19:45 Love on the Main Line (m001thxy)

Episode 3 - Clapham Junction

Jess Searle's life is mapped out like a timetable. A successful data analyst, she's created her own dating app to find your perfect match. It worked for her! She found devilishly handsome Jean-Baptiste and they will be married at the start of the new year. Everything is running to schedule. Until she meets

cynic and sceptic Kev Warnley - a stand up comedian who believes love cannot be determined by an algorithm but by the rhythm of your heart. And the odd fart joke. Is Jess's life about to be completely derailed? Or will she find Love On The Main Line...?

Written by Colin Bytheway

Read by Rasmus Hardiker and Tigger Blaize

Directed by Celia de Wolff
Studio Manager - Matt Bainbridge
Sound Design by Lucinda Mason Brown
Production Manager - Sarah Wright

A Pier Production for BBC Radio 4

SUN 20:00 Feedback (m001t9qx)

Historian Dr Mary Beard on her first series for BBC Radio 4, Being Roman

How often do you think about the Romans? Historian Dr Mary Beard speaks with Andrea Catherwood on her new series for BBC Radio 4 'Being Roman'

BBC Radio 4 recently released the latest series of The Lovecraft Investigations - based on the occult writer HPLovecraft's stories. Many Listeners told us how unsettling they were. Feedback's Special Correspondent Rob Crossan investigates the enduring appeal of audio horror.

And we're almost at the end of year of cuts and changes to BBC Local Radio in England, which has left some listeners worried that the spirit of Christmas won't sound the same this year, and there'll be a lack of local companionship. We hear some of your comments.

Producer: Gerry Cassidy

Presenter: Andrea Catherwood

A Whistledown Scotland production for BBC Radio 4

SUN 20:30 Last Word (m001t9qj)

Benjamin Zephaniah, Laura Lean, Stacy Marking, Eric Freeman

Matthew Bannister on

The dub poet Benjamin Zephaniah who overcame childhood trauma to become an acclaimed performer and writer.

Laura Lean, who volunteered for the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry, helping to support distressed families after The Grenfell Tower fire and greeting Afghan evacuees.

Stacy Marking, one of the first women directors in documentary television whose work focused on social issues.

Eric Freeman, the Gloucestershire farmer who played a key role in saving the county's rare breeds of cattle, sheep and pigs.

Interviewee: Qian Zephaniah

Interviewee: Neil Astley

Interviewee: Dot Newman

Interviewee: Adam Henson

Interviewee: Clifford Freeman

Interviewee: Havana Marking

Producer: Gareth Nelson-Davies

Archive Used:

Benjamin Zephaniah performance of Dis Poetry, BBC Radio 1, 05/06/1984; Benjamin Zephaniah, To Do Wild Me (trailer), Blood Axe Books, director: Pamela Robertson-Pearce, Uploaded 17/02/2013; Benjamin Zephaniah interview, Desert Island Discs, BBC Radio 4, 13/06/1997; Benjamin Zephaniah, I Luv Me Mudder, Benjamin Zephaniah Orchard Enterprises, YouTube uploaded 08/11/2014; Benjamin Zephaniah - What has Stephen Lawrence Taught Us?, AKL Concepts, YouTube, Uploaded 16/02/2012; Laura Lean interview, First Aid Nursing Yeomanry; fany.org.uk; 2022; Princess Alice inspects First Aid Nursing Yeomanry Unit and donated ambulances (1940), British Pathe, British Pathe YouTube channel, uploaded 11/11/2020; Eric Freeman interviews courtesy of Vernon Harwood, Eric Freeman, Auction Memories, Farming Today, BBC Radio 4, 17/04/2017; Eric Freeman Future of Rare Breeds, On Your Farm, BBC Radio 4 03/03/2013; Gloucester Cattle, Country Matters, BBC Radio Gloucestershire 19/05/2013; Wassail, Country Matters, BBC Radio Gloucestershire 14/01/2007;

SUN 21:00 Money Box (m001thmw)

[Repeat of broadcast at 12:04 on Saturday]

SUN 21:25 Radio 4 Appeal (m001tht3)

[Repeat of broadcast at 07:54 today]

SUN 21:30 Loose Ends (m001thnj)

[Repeat of broadcast at 18:15 on Saturday]

SUN 22:00 Westminster Hour (m001thy1)

Ben Wright's guests are the former Minister for London, Paul Scully; Labour's Dame Meg Hillier; and the Lib Dem Foreign Affairs spokesperson, Layla Moran. They discuss the government's Rwanda plan, the situation in Gaza, and the outlook for the year ahead at Westminster. George Parker - political editor of the Financial Times - brings his insights and expert analysis. The programme also includes an interview about Labour's election prospects with former minister, Denis MacShane - who's just published his diaries of Tony Blair's first term in office.

SUN 23:00 The Reith Lectures (m001t9f9)

Ben Ansell: Our Democratic Future

3. The Future of Solidarity

This year's BBC Reith Lecturer is Ben Ansell, Professor of Comparative Democratic Institutions at Nuffield College, Oxford University and the author of "Why Politics Fails." He will deliver four lectures in a series called "Our Democratic Future." The series asks how we can build a politics that works for all of us with systems which are robust to the challenges of the twenty first century, from climate change to artificial intelligence.

In this third lecture, recorded in Sunderland, Professor Ansell explores whether we can develop a shared sense of belonging in today's polarised societies. How can we ensure that we look after the less fortunate in an economy that seems only to reward the 'already haves'? Ansell addresses the challenges posed by technologies that enrich a small elite and privatise solidarity with bespoke healthcare and benefits that might undermine collective solidarity. And he assesses how policy reform - from universal basic income to civic nationalism - might help renew our communities.

The Reith Lectures are chaired by Anita Anand and produced by Jim Frank.

The Editor is China Collins, and the co-ordinator is Brenda Brown.

The series is mixed by Rod Farquhar and Neil Churchill.

MONDAY 18 DECEMBER 2023**MON 00:00 Midnight News (m001thy3)**

The latest news and weather forecast from BBC Radio 4.

MON 00:15 The Deadly Ring (m001tbh3)

Thousands of people have taken part in 'white collar' boxing bouts since it was introduced in the UK in the early 2000s. The premise is simple - a non-boxer spends six to ten weeks training for a fight which usually takes place in front of friends and family. But critics of white collar boxing have called it another form of unregulated boxing, which falls outside the jurisdiction of governing sports bodies.

Two young men have died in the last two years after taking part in white collar boxing bouts, leading to renewed calls for these types of matches to be banned. While the exact cause of their deaths has yet to be determined through an inquest, the dad of one of these young men is now fighting for white collar boxing to end.

Presenter Richard Butchins goes on the trail of this type of boxing, asking whether participants are being put at unnecessary risk. He wants to know what kind of damage white collar boxing is doing to the reputation of the sport in the UK, and if it has a future.

Presenter: Richard Butchins

Producer: Emily Uchida Finch

A Whistledown production for BBC Radio 4

MON 00:45 Bells on Sunday (m001thp4)

[Repeat of broadcast at 05:43 on Sunday]

MON 00:48 Shipping Forecast (m001thy5)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

MON 01:00 Selection of BBC World Service Programmes (m001thy7)

World Service

BBC Radio 4 joins the BBC World Service.

MON 05:20 Shipping Forecast (m001thy9)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

MON 05:30 News Briefing (m001thy2c)

National and international news from BBC Radio 4

MON 05:43 Prayer for the Day (m001thyf)

A spiritual comment and prayer to begin the day with Rabbi Warren Elf

World Arabic Language Day.

Good morning.

Today is World Arabic Language Day.

The date coincides with the date in 1973 when the United Nations adopted Arabic as the sixth official language of the organization.

Arabic is the sixth most-spoken language in the world and is the official language for twenty two countries in the Middle East, Europe, and Asia.

Many English words were influenced by the Arabic language and, as a former Maths teacher, I am fully aware of the use of Arabic terminology in Mathematics – Algebra being the most famous. It is even more prevalent in medicine, chemistry and astronomy.

Arabic is derived from the Central Semitic language family, which includes Hebrew, Aramaic, and Phoenician. Many years ago I learned the Arabic alphabet and was struck by how many Arabic letters have similar names to Hebrew ones. Because of the beautiful way it is written, the Arabic language is often used in poetry, philosophy, and song.

Calligraphy is an art form in Arabic and many Mosques and homes have religious quotations or the names of God beautifully inscribed around the walls and in picture frames – they will not have pictures or images but the Arabic calligraphy more than compensates.

The influence of Arabic language and culture on the West has been considerable and I wish that I knew more than a handful of words. In my dialogue here between communities on Israel and Palestine and my interfaith work an understanding of the language of others can be an important skill.

I pray to you God, aware we are children of many traditions – inheritors of shared wisdom and sometimes tragic misunderstanding. With the variety of languages, I see the common prayer of humanity; where people differ, let people wonder at human freedom; in their unity and their differences, may people be blessed by the uniqueness that is God. May this bring us closer to each other and blessing for the future.

MON 05:45 Farming Today (m001thyh)

18/12/23 Welsh magpie row, Christmas farm experience, review into fresh produce sector

Come the new year, it'll be an offence for farmers in Wales to kill or take a magpie. The change in the rules has been introduced after the bird moved onto the amber list of endangered birds, meaning the population has moderately declined and they're in an unfavourable conservation status. Natural Resources Wales says farmers who need to control magpies can apply for a specific licence. But the Countryside Alliance has criticised the decision saying NRW has bowed to campaigners' pressure and it will inevitably mean damage to crops and livestock.

We've all heard stories of grotty grottoes and rotten reindeer, when Christmas experiences on wintry farms go wrong. So how do you avoid those pitfalls? One Scottish farm has turned a potential disaster into a successful Santa experience.

Another government review of the supply chain has been announced, this time into fresh produce. It follows the review of the dairy sector and joins ongoing reviews into egg and pork supply chains. This follows concerns from farmers about the fairness of contracts and the prices they're paid for what they produce. The Secretary of State for the Environment, Steve Barclay, says it delivers on commitments made back in May at the Prime Minister's Farm to Fork Summit and that it's only fair that producers should be paid a fair price.

Presented by Charlotte Smith and produced by Beatrice Fenton.

MON 05:56 Weather (m001thyk)

The latest weather forecast for farmers.

MON 05:58 Tweet of the Day (b03k5bgg)

Gadwall

Tweet of the Day is a series of fascinating stories about our British birds inspired by their calls and songs.

Chris Packham presents the gadwall. Gadwall were rare ducks until a few decades ago, now though, gadwall are spreading fast in the UK. Gadwall can be sneaky thieves, exhibiting what scientists call klepto-parasitic tendencies. They often wait for birds such as coot and mute swans to bring up aquatic vegetation beyond their reach and seize it before their victims can eat it themselves.

MON 06:00 Today (m001tgj0)

News and current affairs, including Sports Desk, Weather and Thought for the Day.

MON 09:00 Start the Week (m001tgj9)

AI, states and corporations

Artificial Intelligence will be the focus of this year's Royal Institution Christmas Lectures by the Oxford Professor of Computer Science, Mike Wooldrige. In his series of lectures (broadcast on BBC Four in late December) he will attempt to disentangle the realities from the myths, but will also demonstrate the huge impact AI is already having in fields ranging from medicine to football to astrophysics, as well as on the creative arts.

The bestselling novelist Naomi Alderman has fun with AI and its tech trillionaire-creators in her latest thriller *The Future*. While the wealthy corporate heads are effectively decapitated by an end-of-the-world scenario, the story explores whether the technology that could presage the apocalypse can also be used for the good of society.

The Professor of Politics at Cambridge, David Runciman, wants to change the way people think about a future in which artificial intelligence has taken control. In *The Handover* he looks back to the formation of states and corporations, arguing that these are the precursors to AI: powerful artificial entities that have come to rule our world. While they have made us richer and safer, he questions what will happen to human existence if these two machines – states and AI – join forces.

Producer: Katy Hickman

MON 09:45 Starborn: How the Stars Made Us and Who We Would Be Without Them by Roberto Trotta (m001tgjp)

A Pale Blue Dot

From myth to science though timekeeping and navigation, the night sky is central to the human story. Cosmologist Roberto Trotta explores the many ways in which our lives are intertwined with the stars and asks, as the glow of artificial lighting dims our view, how do we retain our connection with the cosmos?

Read by Khalid Abdalla

Abridged by Anna Magnusson

Producer: Eilidh McCreadie

MON 10:00 Woman's Hour (m001tgkf)

Gracie Spinks' parents, Child-free women at work, Grandma Wong

23-year-old Gracie Spinks was killed by a man who she had reported to the police for stalking her. The inquest into her death reported several failures by Derbyshire Police in how her case was handled. Now, her parents, Richard Spinks and Alison Ward, are campaigning for Gracie's Law, which would ensure better training for police officers around stalking, and the appointment of independent stalking advocates. They join Emma Barnett to discuss Gracie and the changes they want to be made in her memory.

'There is an expectation that women like me – without children - will pick up the slack so the working mums can have time off with their families'. Those are the words of Sam Walsh who has worked every Boxing Day for the last 20 years. She decided to quit her retail job in October because she resented having to work over the Christmas period. Sam, who runs The Non Mum Network Facebook group and website, says working parents shouldn't be given priority.

Today is the beginning of the Jimmy Lai trial in Hong Kong – a national security case against the media mogul and pro-democracy activist who has been accused of conspiring to collude with foreign forces. Outside the court is the familiar face of a woman affectionately known as 'Grandma Wong', real name Alexandra. Cindy Yu, Assistant Editor of *The Spectator*, tells us more about her.

The damage being done to girls' education in Afghanistan has

been well documented, but new research suggests the Taliban is causing 'irreversible damage' to boys' education too. Research carried out by Human Rights Watch found that female teachers have been replaced by men with no qualifications, and that boys are subject to brutal punishment. Emma speaks to Sahar Fetrat, the author of the report.

Presenter: Emma Barnett

Producer: Emma Pearce

MON 11:00 Fed with Chris van Tulleken (m001tgkz)

Series 1: Planet Chicken

8. Beyond the Bird

So we've got a comprehensive overview of the chicken planet we live on... Do we still want to eat it? And if NOT, what are the alternatives?

Dr Chris van Tulleken wrestles with the final dilemma: slaughter. Could he bring himself to dispatch an animal himself? Is he happy supporting an industry which kills animals in his name? And if not, what could he eat instead?

We explore the rise of the alternative protein industry – plant-based meat alternatives, lab-grown meat, or most shocking of all for some, actual meat abstinence. Veganism.

Where should we go from here?

And it's time to revisit that initial question: what's influencing our choices when it comes to eating chicken, what impact is that having – and are we bothered?

MON 11:30 Analysis (m001rgyw)

What makes a good school?

How should we evaluate schools? Is it about delivering a wide range of subjects, or extra activities and pastoral care that make a "good" school? Who gets to decide what is a good school and what does that mean to different people? Many people are influenced by the four Ofsted grades and Ofsted reports so what does research tell us about how consistent those judgements are? Would you choose a school with a good local reputation but a lower inspection grade. The programme talks to Sonia Exley, an associate professor at the London School of Economics, Professor Christian Bokhove at the University of Southampton, Natalie Perera, chief executive of the Education Policy Institute, Andreas Schleicher, Director of Education and Skills at the OECD, George Leckie, Professor of Social Statistics at the University of Bristol, Dr Ellen Gleaves, a postdoctoral researcher.

Presenter: Branwen Jeffrey

Producer: Bob Howard

Editor: Clare Fordham

MON 12:00 News Summary (m001tgllj)

The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4.

MON 12:04 You and Yours (m001tgm3)

BNPL, Police scam puppet, Foraging for Christmas

Buy-Now-Pay-Later is getting ever more popular. In a survey for Citizens Advice more than one in four people said they planned to use it for some of their Christmas shopping this year. Buy-now-pay-later is pretty much unregulated. Two of the biggest providers, Klarna and Clear Pay say they would welcome future regulation, but right now there are no rules on the agreements themselves or how they're promoted. We take a look at what could change.

There's have been more reports of incidents involving XL bully dogs across the UK in the past week or so. This is all ahead of the XL Bully dog ban coming into place on the 31st December, when it'll be illegal to breed, sell, advertise, exchange, gift, rehome, abandon or allow XL Bully dogs to stray in England and Wales. The Dogs Trust joins to clarify the situation regarding insurance they offer for XL bully dogs.

The Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero is on the programme to talk about free energy efficiency improvements to your home. Listeners have told us how they've received letters from an energy provider or a company contracted by them. Some people have had contractors coming to their street, on behalf of an energy company, knocking on doors, offering to inspect homes and fit a range of energy efficiency improvements, free. It's part of a government-funded scheme. But even if you want and accept the help, it isn't straight forward.

2023 has been another bumpy year for retail with consumers and retailers. As the year draws to a close we wanted to reflect on some of the key retail trends of the last year

And Christmas Day is just a week away but if you haven't had time or money to decorate your home with lots of shop-bought stuff, you could consider foraging instead. We've been out to see what you can find and what you can make with it.

PRESENTER: WINIFRED ROBINSON
PRODUCER: CATHERINE EARLAM

MON 12:57 Weather (m001tgmq)

The latest weather forecast

MON 13:00 World at One (m001tgnb)

Forty-five minutes of news, analysis and comment.

MON 13:45 Mythical Creatures (m001tgp0)

1. Black Dogs

Fantasy writer Rhianna Pratchett takes us across an enchanted British Isles to discover mythical creatures that lurk in all corners of the land. She uncovers what they can tell us about our history, our world and our lives today.

In the first episode of the series, Rhianna is on the trail of Black Dogs. She visits Suffolk, to hear a tale of a hellhound that left its mark on the small town of Bungay. It's one of many spectral black dogs that are said to stalk coastal paths and lonely crossroads. Rhianna explores why Black Dogs appear so often in folklore, and their psychological link to fear and negative emotions.

Storyteller: Michael Lambourne
Other Contributors: Helen Bruce, Mark Norman

Presenter: Rhianna Pratchett
Producers: Lorna Skingley and Sarah Harrison
Executive Producer: Mel Harris
Production Manager: Nikki Cannon
Original Music by Ben MacDougall
Sound Design and Mixing: John Scott

A 7digital production for BBC Radio 4

MON 14:00 The Archers (m001tgpz)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 on Sunday]

MON 14:15 Drama on 4 (m001tqqm)

A Wireless War

At the outbreak of war in 1939, the BBC evacuated its newly-formed Radio Drama Company of actors, led by Val Gielgud, to Worcestershire. To mark a hundred years of radio drama at the BBC, a cast of current and former members of the RDC perform this new drama by Hannah Khalil. So how do you record a play in the stables of a Victorian stately home?

Val Gielgud Carl Prekopp
Laurence Joel MacCormack
Audrey/Wendy Clare Corbett
Pete/Bill Ben Crowe
Gladys Jessica Turner
Leonard John Lightbody
Mary Kitty O'Sullivan
Charles Siepmann Michael Bertenshaw
Warden Tyler Cameron
Marius Goring Josh Bryant-Jones

Sound design by Peter Ringrose with Alison Craig and Mike Etherden
Production Co-ordinator - Maggie Olgiati

Directed by Toby Swift
A BBC Audio production for BBC Radio 4

MON 15:00 Counterpoint (m001tgr6)

Series 37

Heat 2, 2023-4

(2/13)

Paul Gambaccini welcomes another three music-lovers to the Radio Theatre in London, for the second heat in this year's quest for the nation's musical mastermind.

They'll face Paul's questions on all genres of music, from the classical repertoire to jazz, Broadway musicals, novelty songs, Christmas music and rock and pop of all eras. They'll also each have to pick a special category on which to answer a set of questions, with no prior warning of the choices on offer.

Appearing today are:
Paddy Baker from Brighton
Nathan Hamer from West Sussex

Liz Tray from North London.

The winner will go forward to the semi-finals in the new year.

Assistant Producer: Stephen Garner
Producer: Paul Bajoria

MON 15:30 The Food Programme (m001tgs4)

[Repeat of broadcast at 12:32 on Sunday]

MON 16:00 The Infinite Monkey Cage (p0gr7p58)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:15 on Saturday]

MON 16:30 The Patch (m000fn8t)

Blackford, Perthshire

The random postcode generator takes us to the village of Blackford near Gleneagles, where a mysterious championship golf course has sat maintained and empty for a decade.

The golf course is called gWest - but as the story unravels it reveals much more about the wealth in the area.

Produced/Presented by Polly Weston

MON 17:00 PM (m001tgsv)

Afternoon news and current affairs programme, reporting on breaking stories and summing up the day's headlines

MON 18:00 Six O'Clock News (m001tgd)

Officials say an international coalition will protect the boats from attacks from Yemen

MON 18:30 I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue (m001tgtx)

Series 80

Episode 6

Back for a second week at the Dorking Halls, panellists Fred Macaulay, Milton Jones, Lucy Porter and Omid Djalili compete with one another, with Jack Dee the unimpressed umpire. Piano accompaniment is provided by Colin Sell.

Producer - Jon Naismith.

It is a BBC Studios production for Radio 4.

MON 19:00 The Archers (m001tgs3)

Alan and Usha are impressed by how many people have turned up for the Agricultural Show rehearsal, after Jakob agreed to Brookfield's suggestion. Sykesy arrives, wanting to know who his competition is, then ambles off with his silent assistant, Bernard. When Jakob joins Alan and Usha he complains that everybody wants to go on first. Despite Lynda's insistence that she should be given the honour, as promised, they draw names out of a hat to decide the running order - and Lynda's comes out first anyway! Chaos then ensues once the rehearsal is underway, before Jakob imposes a three-minute limit on each act. He'll use a bell and a hooter to let people know if they overrun or the content of their act is inappropriate. Later, Jakob is in his element as MC, timing Lynda out and warning Sykesy that his joke is unacceptable when he's barely said a word. But come the middle of the night Alan and Usha can't sleep - the run-through was desperately dull. What might just save it is a compere to pull it all together and Jakob is their best bet.

When Emma gets an invite to Christmas drinks with her fellow Literature students George offers to look after Keira so Emma can go. When Emma finally gets back at two in the morning she's considerably the worse for wear and witters on about a hilarious game they played. It's the funniest thing she's ever seen. Or the most embarrassing, George suggests. His mum is so going to regret this in the morning.

MON 19:15 Front Row (m001tgv)

Helena Bonham Carter and Russell T Davies, Stranger Things: The First Shadow

Helena Bonham Carter and Russell T Davies talk to Samira about their ITV drama series Nolly, in which Bonham Carter plays Crossroads star Noele Gordon.

As a new stage adaptation of the hit TV drama Stranger Things opens in London, writer Kate Trefry discusses how she made the much loved TV series work as theatre.

And musician Laura Misch explains how technology can bring us closer to nature and performs songs from her debut album, Sample The Sky, live in the Front Row studio.

Presenter: Samira Ahmed
Producer: Ciaran Bermingham

MON 20:00 South Africa: The Children of Paradise (m001tgw1)

Without hope, you're dead

Three decades after the momentous transition from Apartheid to a democratic South Africa, Fergal Keane returns to see what happened to the hopes and promises of a better nation.

In a famous speech thirty years ago, as he collected the Nobel Peace Prize, Nelson Mandela spoke of a "common humanity" in which all South Africans would live "like the children of paradise."

In this final episode, in which Fergal Keane and Milton Kmosi re-visit some of the places and people they encountered 30 years ago, they are in the Western Cape, around Cape Town. They visit a school in the sprawling Khayelitsha township, and the university in Stellenbosch, once the centre of white and Afrikaner intellectual thought.

With the country's high crime rates, lack of jobs, violence and intense corruption, is all lost or can South Africans still hold onto hope?

Presenter: Fergal Keane and Milton Kmosi
Producer: John Murphy
Series mixed by James Beard
Production coordinator Gemma Ashman
Editor Penny Murphy

MON 20:30 Crossing Continents (m001t9kz)

Ukraine: Fighting for Openness

As hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers defend their country against Russia, many patriotic civilians are engaged in a struggle that's less risky, but that they believe is also vital. They're battling for a fairer, less corrupt Ukraine, worthy of its heroes.

For Crossing Continents, Tim Whewell follows one tireless citizens' group in the city of Dnipro as they continue, even in wartime, to hold local authorities to account. They've been investigating a contract to repair housing damaged in a Russian attack. And they claim there's been corrupt profiteering. But Dnipro's powerful mayor dismisses the allegations - and deliberately insults those who question his priorities. What's the role of civil society when rockets are falling? And can Ukraine - one of the world's more corrupt countries - pursue reform while the war continues?

Produced and presented by Tim Whewell
Fixer in Ukraine: Rostyslav Kubik
Mixed by Neil Churchill
Production coordinator: Gemma Ashman
Series Editor: Penny Murphy

MON 21:00 Seven Deadly Psychologies (m001tbgf)

Envy

Becky Ripley and Sophie Ward take a cold hard look at the psychology behind each of the seven deadly sins, in the order established by Pope Gregory the Great: pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and lazy old sloth. Why have we evolved these ugly emotions? What's going on in the brain and the body when we feel them? And how best can we live alongside them - in ourselves and with others?

Envy is in the spotlight today. On one hand, it indicates what it is you want, and it motivates you to go out there and get it. On the other hand, it can be a corrosive feeling of yearning that eats you up from the inside. And at its ugliest, it can drive you to seek the destruction of others...

How can we listen to our feelings of envy, without being riddled with resentment? And how can we make peace with that restless, nagging feeling that the grass is always greener?

To guide us through this mess is evolutionary anthropologist Dr Anna Machin from the Department of Experimental Psychology at the University of Oxford, psychotherapist and author of 'Coping with Envy', Professor Windy Dryden, from the Department of Psychotherapeutic Studies at Goldsmiths University, author and scholar Professor Ian Kapoor, from the Department of Critical Development Studies at York University in Toronto, and clinical psychologist, poet, writer and educator, Dr Sanah Ahsan.

MON 21:30 Start the Week (m001tgj9)

[Repeat of broadcast at 09:00 today]

MON 22:00 The World Tonight (m001tgwt)

How to protect Red Sea shipments from rebel attacks

The US has announced an international coalition to protect ships in the Red Sea from attacks by Houthi militants. The oil giant BP is one the latest firms to announce it's avoiding the route - we'll discuss the implications and ask how to keep merchant vessels safe.

Also on the programme:

Large numbers of menopausal women could see an end to hot flushes and night sweats after a new drug is approved - we'll hear about the difference it could make.

And Scotland could force venues to charge an extra pound on tickets for stadium artists like Taylor Swift. But is it a fair way to help struggling smaller venues? We'll discuss.

MON 22:45 The Happy Couple by Naoise Dolan (m001tgx7)
Episode 6

A sparky comedic exploration of modern love and millennial malaise from the Irish author Naoise Dolan. As read by Archie Steele.

Celine (a pianist) and her boyfriend Luke (a serial cheater) are to be married. However, on the night of their engagement party, Luke disappears with Celine's ex-girlfriend...

Phoebe (the bridesmaid and Celine's sister) just wants to get to the bottom of Luke's frequent unexplained disappearances.

Archie (the best man) should be moving on from his love for Luke and up the corporate ladder, but he finds himself utterly stuck.

And Vivian (a wedding guest) is the only one with enough emotional distance to offer something resembling good advice.

As the wedding approaches and these five lives intersect, past lovers, old friends and new enemies will search for their happily ever after — but does it lie at the end of an aisle?

The Author

Naoise Dolan is an Irish writer born in Dublin. Her debut novel 'Exciting Times' was a Sunday Times bestseller. She has been short-listed and long-listed for several prizes, including the Women's Prize for Fiction, the Dylan Thomas Prize, and the Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year Award.

Reader: Archie Steele

Author: Naoise Dolan

Abridger: Rowan Routh

Producer: Michael Shannon

Executive Editor: Andy Martin

A BBC Northern Ireland production.

MON 23:00 Don't Log Off (m001tgxq)
Series 15

A Seasonal Journey

In the last episode of this series, he explores places which are isolated from the bustle of urban life. To landscapes that conjure up nostalgic images of worlds frozen in time - but are also a magnet for tourists seeking beautiful vistas, exotic wildlife, or even the imagery of their childhood's past.

His conversations this week include Pat who is 92 years old and the matriarch of a tiny town in Indiana, Joona who works at the Husky Park in Lapland and he catches up with Lisa and tales of the red crabs on Christmas Island.

Producer Emma Betteridge

MON 23:30 Today in Parliament (m001tgy5)

Susan Hulme reports as Home Office Minister Laura Farris announces new laws to tackle "spiking" - where alcohol or drugs are secretly administered to a victim. Also, ministers are accused of delaying justice for the victims of the contaminated blood scandal.

TUESDAY 19 DECEMBER 2023

TUE 00:00 Midnight News (m001tgy1)

The latest news and weather forecast from BBC Radio 4.

TUE 00:30 Starborn: How the Stars Made Us and Who We Would Be Without Them by Roberto Trotta (m001tgjp)
[Repeat of broadcast at 09:45 on Monday]

TUE 00:48 Shipping Forecast (m001tgz2)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

TUE 01:00 Selection of BBC World Service Programmes (m001tgzn)

World Service

BBC Radio 4 joins the BBC World Service.

TUE 05:20 Shipping Forecast (m001th07)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

TUE 05:30 News Briefing (m001th0t)

National and international news from BBC Radio 4

TUE 05:43 Prayer for the Day (m001th1f)

A spiritual comment and prayer to begin the day with Rabbi Warren Elf

Buddy the Elf Day

Good morning.

Yesterday was "Answer The Telephone Like Buddy The ELF" Day!

As I have the surname ELF, I thought it is probably worth addressing, not that I am fan of the film Elf, or the character, Buddy.

The suggestion for the day was simply answer the phone and say "(Your Name) the Elf, what's your favourite colour." As you answer, smile and spread some joy. It's nearly impossible not to. Encourage others to do the same.

Another way to enter into the spirit of the day is by telling elf jokes. Elves spread fun and joy wherever they go. And I suppose that is something I try to do too, so here goes:

Q: What do you call an elf who wins the lottery? A: Welfy!

Q: What's the first thing elf children learn in school? A: The elf-abet!

Q: What kind of photos do elves like taking? A: Elfies of course!

And of course, something to advocate strongly for is the National Elf Service!

A few years ago, I received a call from a magazine researching into people with Christmas related names and what they do at Christmas. They thought it was hilarious that someone with the name Elf was Jewish and a Rabbi, but not enough so to do a story on!

So even though it was yesterday, I think we should all be trying to spread light and joy, especially at this time of year! In the aftermath of Chanukah the Jewish festival of Light, in the final week of Advent with Christmas less than a week away, the message of smiling, spreading joy and kindness across our world is certainly needed.

So, Eternal God, I pray that joy is spread today and every day. Help me do acts of love and kindness that will encourage this. And at times when people are struggling, I pray that others will also be kind and spread joy. I pray for light and joy around the world.

TUE 05:45 Farming Today (m001th21)

19/12/23 AHDB levy increase, food waste, edible festive wreaths

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board have over 100,000 livestock, dairy and cereal farmer members across the UK, who pay a levy for industry representation and support...but that payment is due to go up significantly. The new increase in payments will start from April and will be between 25 and 33 per cent. For example, the levy for one litre of milk is currently six pence per litre, it will soon be eight pence. The cost per head of lamb is going up from sixty to seventy-five pence.

Will Jackson from AHDB talked to Anna Hill

While farmers have been working hard to get produce to supermarket shelves in time for Christmas, the reality is that tonnes of food gets wasted each year.

A food recycling company in Lincolnshire say they're heading into their busiest time of the year, turning wasted food into renewable energy.

Linsey Smith has been to the BioteCH4 site in Helmswell to speak to see what happens to it all.

All this week we're looking for the extra parts of our Christmas celebrations provided by our farmers - but not just turkeys and sprouts.

Stuart Oates has been to growers Rocket Gardens on the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall where owner, Mike Kitchen has found a festive niche farm diversification in edible wreaths.

TUE 05:58 Tweet of the Day (b038qk90)

Jay

Tweet of the Day is a series of fascinating stories about our British birds inspired by their calls and songs.

Brett Westwood presents the jay. This bird is a colourful member of the crow family. In September and October you'll often see jays flying around woodland with their bills and throats crammed with acorns. Many of these they bury as winter stores but not all are retrieved by Jays and many germinate and grow into young oaks, making the jay a tree-planter on a national scale.

TUE 06:00 Today (m001tgjd)

News and current affairs, including Sports Desk, Weather and Thought for the Day.

TUE 09:00 The Life Scientific (m001tgk9)

Michael Wooldridge on AI and sentient robots

Humans have a long-held fascination with the idea of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a dystopian threat: from Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, through to the Terminator movies.

But somehow, we still often think of this technology as 'futuristic': whereas in fact, it's already woven into the fabric of our daily lives, from facial recognition software to translator apps. And if we get too caught up in the entertaining sci-fi narrative around AI and the potential threat from machines, there's a more pressing danger that we overlook real and present concerns - from deep fakes to electoral disinformation.

That's why Michael Wooldridge is determined to demystify AI and explain how it can improve our lives, in a whole host of different ways. A Professor of Computer Science at the University of Oxford, and the Director of Foundational AI Research at the Alan Turing Institute, Mike believes the most common fears around this technology are "misplaced".

In a special 300th edition of The Life Scientific, recorded in front of an audience at London's Royal Institution (RI), Mike tells Jim Al-Khalili how he will use this year's prestigious RI Christmas Lectures to lift the lid on modern AI technology and discuss how far it could go in future.

Mike also reminisces about the days when sending an email was a thrilling novelty, discusses why people love talking to him about the Terminator at parties, and is even challenged to think up a novel future use of AI by ChatGPT...

Produced by Lucy Taylor.

TUE 09:30 One to One (m001tgk9)

Parenting advice in the age of social media: Samira Shackle and Helen Oliver

Since becoming a parent to a now-toddler, Samira Shackle has been bombarded with advice on social media - sometimes useful, sometimes not-so. She meets Helen Oliver, mother to two teenagers and school counsellor, to discuss navigating this online world and the affect it has on mothers, in particular.

Samira Shackle is a journalist and the author of Karachi Vice: Life and Death in a Contested City.

Produced by Eliza Lomas for BBC Audio, Bristol.

TUE 09:45 Starborn: How the Stars Made Us and Who We Would Be Without Them by Roberto Trotta (m001tgzr)

Cosmic Clocks

From myth to science though timekeeping and navigation, the night sky is central to the human story. Cosmologist Roberto Trotta considers the many ways in which our lives are intertwined with the stars.

Trotta examines the contribution of clockmakers to astrological exploration, and explores what happens when two different navigation traditions collide.

Read by Khalid Abdalla

Abridged by Anna Magnusson

Producer: Eilidh McCreadie

TUE 10:00 Woman's Hour (m001tglz)

Kirsty Wark on leaving Newsnight, Sports Personality of the Year

Kirsty Wark joins Emma Barnett to talk about stepping down from Newsnight after 30 years; what she's planning to fill the extra time with and she also shares some Christmas cooking tips.

A new book, A Heart Afire, paints a picture of paediatrician Helen Taussig who dedicated her life to looking after children with heart defects. We hear from author Patricia Meisol.

We look at the issues of "workplace housework" - tasks like organising office Christmas parties, sorting the secret santa gifts, decorating the communal spaces - with economist Lise Vasterlund and comedian Cally Beaton.

Could a woman win the BBC's annual Sports Personality Of The Year award later today? Now in it's 70th year, we talk to Lady Mary Peters who won the gong in 1972 – the same year she won gold in the pentathlon at the Munich Olympics.

Presenter: Emma Barnett
Producer: Lisa Jenkinson
Studio Manager: Neva Missirian

TUE 11:00 Seven Deadly Psychologies (m001tgmm)
Gluttony

Becky Ripley and Sophie Ward take a cold hard look at the psychology behind each of the seven deadly sins, in the order established by Pope Gregory the Great: pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and lazy old sloth. Why have we evolved these ugly emotions? What's going on in the brain and the body when we feel them? And how best can we live alongside them - in ourselves and with others?

Gluttony is on the menu today. On one hand, the odd bit of indulgence isn't such a bad thing. Eat, drink, and be merry. But sometimes we overdo it. We crave, we binge, we short circuit our dopamine reward systems, and before we know it, we can't stop.

But why do we crave? Can we control our cravings? And when does a little bit of bingeing become too much?

To guide us through this mess is evolutionary anthropologist Dr Anna Machin from the Department of Experimental Psychology at the University of Oxford, food writer Mark Schatzker, author of 'Steak', 'The Dorito Effect' and 'The End of Craving', Dr Andrew Moynihan from the Department of Psychology at the University of Limerick, and writer AK Blakemore, author of 'The Glutton'.

Producer: Becky Ripley

TUE 11:30 Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics (m001tgn8)
Series 9

Livia

Livia was the first Empress of Rome, a faithful wife, excellent friend and trusted advisor. So why is she still best known as a serial killer?

Natalie is joined by guests Dr Emma Southon and Professor Llewelyn Morgan to discuss the life of Livia. Her marriage to the Emperor Augustus (Octavian) was a love-match. They were both married to other people when they first met, but that didn't last long, despite the added complication of her pregnancy and existing child. Before he became Emperor, Octavian was a powerful war lord who got what he wanted. He wanted Livia. He adopted her two sons and numerous other children but had none of his own.

The family was unlucky in losing many members to untimely death, and Livia seems often to have got the blame, however unreasonably. But Augustus appears to have respected and loved his wife and not to have listened to the rumours. Their marriage lasted over fifty years, but still she was accused of poisoning him (in a mysterious fig-painting incident) when he died at the ripe old age of seventy six.

Rock star mythologist and reformed stand-up Natalie Haynes is obsessed with the ancient world. Here she explores key stories from ancient Rome and Greece that still have resonance today. They might be biographical, topographical, mythological or epic, but they are always hilarious, magical and tragic, mystifying and revelatory. And they tell us more about ourselves now than seems possible of stories from a couple of thousand years ago.

Producer...Mary Ward-Lowery

TUE 12:00 News Summary (m001th0c)

The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4.

TUE 12:04 You and Yours (m001tgpl)

Call You and Yours: Christmas decorations

It's Christmas and we want to know how you go about getting your home ready for the festive season. Do you follow the latest trends, or dust off an ancient box of baubles? What's the most eco-friendly way to do it - and how can you decorate your home without spending a fortune?

Email us now - youandyours@bbc.co.uk. Please include a contact number. And from **11am** on Tuesday - you can call us on 03700 100 444

PRESENTER: WINIFRED ROBINSON
PRODUCER: TOM MOSELEY

TUE 12:57 Weather (m001tgq5)

The latest weather forecast

TUE 13:00 World at One (m001tqqt)

Forty-five minutes of news, analysis and comment.

TUE 13:45 Mythical Creatures (m001tgrh)

2. Dragons

Fantasy writer Rhianna Pratchett takes us across an enchanted British Isles to discover mythical creatures that lurk in all corners of the land. She uncovers what they can tell us about our history, our world and our lives today.

In this episode, Rhianna seeks out dragons, and heads up to Sunderland, to meet one such specimen, The Lambton Worm.

Rhianna explores how these powerful creatures reflect human power struggles, symbolise changing threats, and how they are used to justify who has rights over the land.

Storyteller: Stuart Miller

Other Contributors: Dr. Jamie Beckett, Natalie Lawrence

Presenter: Rhianna Pratchett
Producers: Lorna Skingley and Sarah Harrison
Executive Producer: Mel Harris
Production Manager: Nikki Cannon
Original Music by Ben MacDougall
Sound Design and Mixing: John Scott

A 7digital production for BBC Radio 4

TUE 14:00 The Archers (m001tgs3)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 on Monday]

TUE 14:15 Drama on 4 (m0001rzz)

Porcelain

Are you a witch, or are you a fairy
Or are you the wife of Michael Cleary?

Jessie Buckley stars as Hat, an overqualified admin assistant who grew up in the shadow of a fairy fort, famously the site of the murder of Bridget Cleary. And when Hat's life changes, unexpectedly, her familiar mythologies are all that can make sense of her world.

Hat Jessie Buckley
Bill Don Gilet
Silvertongue Emma Handy
Sarah Niamh Denyer
Michael Alan Mahon
Bridget Lucy Doyle

Written by Margaret Perry
Directed by Jessica Dromgoole

Notes

What are now identifiable psychological syndromes, used to be attributed to the intervention of other realms. Capgras Delusion, the belief that a close family member has been replaced by an identical impostor gave impetus to the notion of changelings, while the old 'shapeshifter' myth that different people are in fact a single person who changes appearance is now called Fregoli Delusion. In Porcelain, Margaret Perry lightly weaves these two conditions into this story of past and present, psyche and myth.

Bridget Cleary was an Irish woman killed by her husband in Tipperary in 1895. Her husband believed that she had been abducted by fairies with a changeling left in her place; a belief so fervent he invited her family to witness the killing of the changeling.

Margaret Perry is a playwright and poet. Porcelain was her debut play and premiered at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin early in 2018.

TUE 15:00 The Kitchen Cabinet (m001tgsk)

[Repeat of broadcast at 10:30 on Saturday]

TUE 15:30 Doctor, Doctor (m001tgtl)

Public health visionary Dr John Ashton

Doctor Doctor reveals the stress, excitement and challenges facing a 21st century medic. These are life-affirming stories of highs and lows, of commitment, bravery, skill, heartache and love.

Dr Phil Hammond dissects the medical lives of professionals at all levels of the health service: surgeons, intensive care nurses, NHS executives, junior doctors, psychiatrists - fascinating jobs, the titles of which we know very well, but our understanding of which may be lacking.

Dr Phil's guests range from the recently qualified to the recently retired, from well-known medical grandees to unknown regional heroes, covering all specialities in hospital and community.

Producer: David Morley

A Perfectly Normal production for BBC Radio 4

TUE 16:00 The Big League (m001tgn)

Real Madras, Borussia Moosandbackfat, OB City, Man Titty, Inter PieAmi, Pork Vale, ScranMere Rovers - all real teams that play in the big league.

Man Vs Fat is a football league designed to help men lose weight.

The league says it has helped around 23,000 men lose 601,288lbs since it started in 2016. But dropping a few belt notches is not the only thing that has transformed lives

Men talking about their mental health is still typically rare - Jay Unger has struggled with his own weight and has played in Man V Fat for a few years.

Being part of a fat football community, has helped him and thousands of other men to open up about their mental health and get through some of the most difficult situations in their life

Some of the stories are really heart-breaking and difficult to listen to - but ultimately the men in Newport, North Tyneside and Edinburgh Jay meets tell him how a community, brought together by football, has helped them reshape their lives..

Presenter: Jay Unger
Producer: Jay Unger
Editor: Richard McIlroy
A BBC Audio North Production

If you've been affected by some of the issues raised, details of organisations that can provide support relating to feelings of despair, addiction and mental health, are available at bbc.co.uk/actionline.

TUE 16:30 Great Lives (m001tgv9)

John Gray on JG Ballard

Philosopher John Gray chooses as his great life the iconic British writer of dystopian and speculative fiction, J.G. Ballard, in conversation with the author's daughter Bea Ballard.

Presented by Matthew Parris
Produced in Bristol by Beth Sagar-Fenton

TUE 17:00 PM (m001tgvv)

Afternoon news and current affairs programme, reporting on breaking stories and summing up the day's headlines

TUE 18:00 Six O'Clock News (m001tgws)

It has urged a 'very cautious approach' and said in most cases parents should be informed

TUE 18:30 Henry Normal: A Normal... (m001tgx4)

Journey

"Shove up National Treasures. We need to make room for Henry Normal" Simon O'Hagan - Radio Times

Join Henry Normal for the eleventh instalment of his acclaimed, occasional series in which the acclaimed, occasional writer tackles those subjects so big only radio can possibly contain them.

So far on this journey Henry has covered the subjects of 'Family', 'Life', 'Love', 'Imagination', 'Nature', 'The Universe', 'Communication', 'Ageing', 'Community' and 'Home'; in this new episode he'll be concentrating on the 'Journey' itself.

Through poems, jokes, and stories, we'll discover what has made him the man he is today, and how everything in his life so far has led to this point - recording this latest show in Bury at The Met.

--
Henry Normal is a multi-award winning writer, producer and poet. Co-writer of award winning TV programmes such as The Royle Family, The Mrs Merton Show, Coogan's Run and Paul Calf, and producer of, amongst many others, Oscar-Nominated Philomena, Gavin and Stacey and Alan Partridge.

He's published ten collections of poetry including his most recent 'The Fire Hills'. Plus his memoir written with Angela Pell 'A Normal Family' everyday adventure with our autistic son.

Praise for previous episodes in this series:

"It's a rare and lovely thing: half an hour of radio that stops you short, gently demands your attention and then wipes your tears away while you have to have a little sit down"
"It's a real treat to hear a seasoned professional like Henry taking command of this evening comedy spot to deliver a show that's idiosyncratic and effortlessly funny"
"Not heard anything that jumps from hilarious to moving in such an intelligent, subtle way as Henry Normal's show"

Written and performed by Henry Normal
Production Coordinator - Katie Baum
Sound manager - David Thomas
Produced by Carl Cooper

A BBC Studios production for BBC Radio 4

"An EcoAudio certified production"

TUE 19:00 The Archers (m001tgxm)

Emma's struggling after her late night and covers when Susan invites her round for coffee. Then George comes in, teasing Emma mercilessly about her behaviour last night. He convinces Emma she woke Jim up by shouting a limerick through his letter box, then mooned him when he opened his front door. Emma is mortified, confessing all to Susan, who can't believe she did it. Jim was dumbstruck when Emma apologised this morning. But Jim has since telephoned Susan and explained he didn't know what Emma was talking about. They quickly realise George has tricked Emma. Later, Emma pays George back by pretending Jim took her apology seriously. And he wants compensation in the form of doing a couple of dirty jobs for him – which Emma has agreed George will do on her behalf! George is indignant, before sussing that Emma's been just as clever as him and they've both caught each other out.

When Chris drops Martha off at The Nest Alice asks if he will babysit tonight. Chris agrees, guessing it's a date with Alice's new boyfriend. Later, Alice gets a text from Chris during dinner, then tells Harry she came to the same restaurant once with Chris. She feels awkward about it, but thinks Chris has accepted the new situation pretty well. Later however, Harry, identifying himself as Mr Chilcott, rings Chris to say a friend recommended his skills as a farrier and asks if Chris can shoe a horse for him. In blithe ignorance Chris agrees to squeeze Harry in tomorrow and Harry says he looks forward to meeting him.

TUE 19:15 Front Row (m001tgxz)

Movie stars Adam Driver and Bill Nighy, author AL Kennedy, and the Process of Poetry

Adam Driver stars in Michael Mann's film Ferrari, set in the summer of 1957 as the ex-racer turned entrepreneur Enzo Ferrari pushes his drivers to the limit on a thousand mile race across Italy while his business and marriage are failing.

A poet would never publish a first draft. Well, not until Rosanna McGlone interviewed 15 of our finest poets – Don Paterson, Gillian Clarke and Pascale Petit among them. They revealed their first drafts alongside their finished poems in her book The Process of Poetry. Tom Sutcliffe talks to her and to Don Paterson about writing poetry.

As radio drama turns 100 this year, Bill Nighy is stars in A Single Act, a new radio drama going out on Boxing Day written by long term collaborator AL Kennedy. They both talk to Tom Sutcliffe about their mutual love of the form – and whether the pictures really are better on radio.

Presenter: Tom Sutcliffe
Producer: Paul Waters

TUE 20:00 Uninsurable Planet (m001tgyd)

Felicity Hannah explores how climate change is leaving communities 'uninsurable' because of the rising risk of them being hit by extreme weather events.

She speaks to one businessman living in 'Hurricane Alley' in Louisiana, who has seen his premiums rise by \$200,000 in just three years, and learns how many residents are now having to run the risk of living without insurance, because the cost is just too high.

In Australia, she speaks to residents resigned to the fact that

their hometown is considered too much of a risk for the insurance industry. Instead, the government has bought their homes and they have been forced to leave.

In the UK too, Felicity meets business owners already deemed 'uninsurable' because of the frequency of flooding they have faced. Meanwhile British homeowners relying on a temporary fix that has helped reduce their premiums must hope flood defences are built before time runs out.

Could rising premiums be the canary in the coalmine for taking more decisive action on climate change?

Presenter: Felicity Hannah
Producer: Nick Holland
Production Coordinator: Gemma Ashman
Editor Richard Fenton-Smith
Sound Design: Graham Puddifoot

TUE 20:40 In Touch (m001tgyx)

Christmas Time at New College Worcester

Peter White pays a visit to the school that he used to attend, now called New College Worcester, to find out how some of the current pupils are preparing for Christmas. They tell him about what is happening at the college over the festive period, how they deal with the chaos of present unwrapping and knowing who has got what and they discuss inappropriate presents they have received as visually impaired people.

Presenter: Peter White
Producer: Beth Hemmings
Production Coordinator: Liz Poole
Website image description: Peter White sits smiling in the centre of the image and he is wearing a dark green jumper. Above Peter's head is the BBC logo (three separate white squares house each of the three letters). Bottom centre and overlaying the image are the words "In Touch" and the Radio 4 logo (the word Radio in a bold white font, with the number 4 inside a white circle). The background is a bright mid-blue with two rectangles angled diagonally to the right. Both are behind Peter, one is a darker blue and the other is a lighter blue.

TUE 21:00 All in the Mind (m001tgzg)

What Mastermind can tell us about blinking, how music shapes memory and why anger can be a useful emotion

How stressed out do you get by TV quiz shows? And would that change if you were a contestant yourself? Cognitive researchers at the University of Arizona have studied back-episodes of Mastermind to find out how people react in high-stress situations - particularly how much they blink. Their findings offer insight into how blinking changes in stressful and mentally challenging situations – but also what it can tell us about cognitive processes. Claudia Hammond hears from BBC presenter and Celebrity Mastermind "Champion of Champions" 2019, Samira Ahmed, and speaks to Bob Wilson, associate professor in cognitive science and psychology at the University of Arizona, about the research.

Have you ever walked into a room and completely forgotten what you came in for? Studies show that changing your physical location can "bookend" thoughts and shape how our memories compartmentalise information. Now a new study has been looking at whether shifts in our moods can do the same. Researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles, used music to elicit specific emotions in subjects, so they could assess how changes in emotional states might affect how memories are formed. Claudia hears from assistant professor of psychology, David Clewett, one of the paper's authors.

And this week's studio guest Catherine Loveday, professor of cognitive neuroscience at the University of Westminster, explains why anger can on occasion be a rather useful emotion.

Organisations offering information and support relating to some of the issues covered in this series of All In The Mind can be found at bbc.co.uk/actionline.

Presenter: Claudia Hammond
Producer: Lucy Taylor
Studio Manager: Tim Heffer
Production Coordinator: Siobhan Maguire
Editor: Holly Squire

TUE 21:30 The Life Scientific (m001tgk9)

[Repeat of broadcast at 09:00 today]

TUE 22:00 The World Tonight (m001th00)

Gaza ceasefire talks continue at UN

Also on the programme: a young transgender man tells us teachers should only tell parents with child's agreement; and we ask if old documents should be destroyed once digitised.

TUE 22:45 The Happy Couple by Naoise Dolan (m001th0n)

Episode 7

A sparky comedic exploration of modern love and millennial malaise from the Irish author Naoise Dolan.

Celine (a pianist) and her boyfriend Luke (a serial cheater) are to be married. However, on the night of their engagement party, Luke disappears with Celine's ex-girlfriend...

Phoebe (the bridesmaid and Celine's sister) just wants to get to the bottom of Luke's frequent unexplained disappearances.

Archie (the best man) should be moving on from his love for Luke and up the corporate ladder, but he finds himself utterly stuck.

And Vivian (a wedding guest) is the only one with enough emotional distance to offer something resembling good advice.

As the wedding approaches and these five lives intersect, past lovers, old friends and new enemies will search for their happily ever after — but does it lie at the end of an aisle?

The Author

Naoise Dolan is an Irish writer born in Dublin. Her debut novel 'Exciting Times' was a Sunday Times bestseller. She has been short-listed and long-listed for several prizes, including the Women's Prize for Fiction, the Dylan Thomas Prize, and the Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year Award.

Reader: Archie Steele
Author: Naoise Dolan
Abridger: Rowan Routh
Producer: Michael Shannon
Executive Editor: Andy Martin

A BBC Northern Ireland production

TUE 23:00 Now You're Asking with Marian Keyes and Tara Flynn (m001th16)

The Thank You Card Problem

So many questions in this week's instalment: Does the thought of writing a stack of thank you cards fill you with dread? Why does nobody seem to send them, anymore? Can you find a way to a new you after a long-term relationship – especially an abusive one – in the harsh world of modern dating? How can you make amends when you've accidentally angered all the old ladies in your apartment block? Can you really make stock from feathers?

Pull up a chair at Marian and Tara's virtual kitchen table and the producer might even pour you a cup of sound effect tea.

Marian Keyes is a multi award-winning writer, with a total of over 30 million of her books sold to date in 33 languages. Her close friend Tara Flynn is an actress, comedian and writer. Together, these two friends have been through a lot, and now want to use their considerable life experience to help solve your biggest - and smallest - of the things that keep us awake at night.

Previous series were welcomed by listeners and critics: "Both are warm and kind enough to not only be funny but also offer genuinely thoughtful, if left-field, advice." (Miranda Sawyer, The Observer) "Keyes and Flynn are my new favourite double-act." (Jane Anderson - Radio Times) "I found their compassion endlessly soothing." (Rachel Cunliffe - The New Statesman)

Recorded in Dublin with emails received from listeners around the world.

Got a problem you want Marian and Tara to solve? Email: marianandtara@bbc.co.uk.

Producer: Steve Doherty.
A Giddy Goat production for BBC Radio 4 and BBC Sounds

TUE 23:30 Today in Parliament (m001th1s)

On the last parliamentary day before the Christmas break, prime minister Rishi Sunak faces questions from senior MPs about his Rwanda scheme.

WEDNESDAY 20 DECEMBER 2023

WED 00:00 Midnight News (m001th2b)

The latest news and weather forecast from BBC Radio 4.

WED 00:30 Starborn: How the Stars Made Us and Who We Would Be Without Them by Roberto Trotta (m001tgzr)

[Repeat of broadcast at 09:45 on Tuesday]

WED 00:48 Shipping Forecast (m001th2s)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

WED 01:00 Selection of BBC World Service Programmes (m001th35)

World Service

BBC Radio 4 joins the BBC World Service.

WED 05:20 Shipping Forecast (m001th3g)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

WED 05:30 News Briefing (m001th3q)

National and international news from BBC Radio 4

WED 05:43 Prayer for the Day (m001th3z)

A spiritual comment and prayer to begin the day with Rabbi Warren Elf

International Human Solidarity Day

Good morning.

Every year on 20th December, International Human Solidarity Day seeks to celebrate the world's unity in diversity. It's also a day to raise awareness about the importance of solidarity.

Solidarity is defined as an awareness of shared interests and objectives that create a psychological sense of unity. It also refers to the ties in a society that bind people together as one.

According to the United Nations Millennium Declaration, solidarity is among the fundamental values that are essential to international relations. It states that global challenges must be managed so that costs and burdens are distributed fairly, in accordance with the basic principles of equity and social justice. Additionally, those who suffer the least should help those who suffer the most.

Solidarity creates a spirit of sharing, which is essential for eradicating poverty.

On this day, events are held all over the world to promote the importance of solidarity and also to focus on how to combat poverty.

Twenty-one years ago today, the UN General Assembly established the World Solidarity Fund. The Fund was set up as a trust fund of the United Nations Development Programme to eradicate poverty, and also to promote human and social development in developing countries, especially among the poorest segments of their populations.

So, on this International Human Solidarity Day,

God, I pray that when we are tempted to turn away from the poverty and injustice of the world, You renew in us the vision of how empathy, generosity, and solidarity can bring hope to others. Through us let the Psalmist's hope be fulfilled: 'God will champion the cause of the poor and do justice to those in need.'

WED 05:45 Farming Today (m001th48)

20/12/23 Rural dentists, swede harvest, mistletoe auction

The Nuffield Trust has published a damning report saying that NHS dentistry was in 'perilous decline' across England, particularly in rural and coastal areas, with many people struggling to enrol with NHS dentists.

It's the last big push for farmers to get veg into the shops before Christmas, but it's been an incredibly difficult year for many root vegetable growers - with near drought followed by deluge. We catch up on the swede harvest in action.

All this week, we're looking at our farmers' contribution to Christmas trimmings, and today we hear about mistletoe and holly. Mistletoe grows naturally in the countryside, mainly in the South and West Midlands, and for more than 160 years it has been auctioned off in an annual sale in the town of Tenbury Wells on the Shropshire / Worcestershire border.

Presented by Anna Hill and produced by Marie Lennon.

WED 05:58 Tweet of the Day (b04t0syn)

Poorwill (American Nightjar)

Michael Palin presents the common poorwill from an Arizona desert. In the dead of night, loud calls pierce the stillness on a moonlit track, a small shape suddenly sprouts wings and flutters into the darkness ... a Common Poorwill is hunting.

Poorwills are small nightjars that breed mainly in western North America, often in deserts and dry grassland. By day the poorwill

sits in the open or among rocks relying on its mottled plumage for camouflage. By night, it emerges to hawk after insects snapping them up with its large frog-like mouth.

This technique works if it's warm enough for insects to be active, but in some places where poorwills live there are sudden cold snaps. Instead of migrating, the poorwill slows down its metabolism and goes into torpor for days or even weeks. This hibernation-like state is very rare among birds and allows the poorwill to get through lean periods and was first scientifically described in 1948, although the phenomenon had been recorded more than 140 years earlier by the great explorer Meriwether Lewis, during the Lewis and Clark Expedition to discover western side of America in 1804.

Producer : Andrew Dawes

WED 06:00 Today (m001thyr)

News and current affairs, including Sports Desk, Weather and Thought for the Day.

WED 09:00 The Reith Lectures (m001thz1)

Ben Ansell: Our Democratic Future

4. The Future of Prosperity

This year's BBC Reith Lecturer is Ben Ansell, Professor of Comparative Democratic Institutions at Nuffield College, Oxford University and author of "Why Politics Fails."

In four lectures called "Our Democratic Future," he asks how we can build a politics that works for all of us with political systems which are robust to the challenges of the twenty first century, from climate change to artificial intelligence.

In this fourth and final lecture, recorded in Atlanta, Georgia in the United States, he interrogates a crucial question: can we continue to grow our economies without despoiling the earth? Focusing on the existential threats created by our own innovation - from climate change to out-of-control artificial intelligence - Ansell asks whether our politics is up to the task of supporting sustainable growth.

The Reith Lectures are chaired by Anita Anand and produced by Jim Frank.

The Editors are China Collins and Clare Fordham, and the coordinator is Brenda Brown.

The series is mixed by Rod Farquhar and Neil Churchill.

WED 10:00 Woman's Hour (m001thzk)

Mary Earps' SPOTY win, Women's Super League founder Kelly Simmons, Pregnancy sickness

England goalkeeper Mary Earps has been voted BBC Sports Personality of the Year. She was a big part of the Lionesses' win at the Euros in 2022 and was named goalkeeper of the tournament in this year's World Cup. But back in 2019 she was ready to quit the game. Jessica Creighton speaks to Rebecca Myers from the The Sunday Times about Earps' bumpy road to success.

Kelly Simmons has recently left the Football Association after 32 years with the organisation. Best known for her time as Director of the Women's Professional Game, Kelly joins Jessica to discuss her long career and the future of the Women's Super League which she helped to launch and transform.

A breakthrough on why women get pregnancy sickness could open the way to finding a cure. Scientists have discovered a hormone that causes nausea and vomiting in pregnant women, sometimes to the extent that they get Hyperemesis Gravidarum - the most severe form of sickness often resulting in hospitalisation. Professor of Clinical Biochemistry and Medicine at Cambridge University Sir Stephen O'Rahilly and CEO of the charity Pregnancy Sickness Support Charlotte Howden join Jessica to discuss the implications of this discovery.

Could planning for a simpler, more realistic January be the best way to help your mental health this Christmas? Author and psychological decluttering expert Cathy Madavan and clinical psychologist Dr Emma Hepburn join Jessica to discuss why less might mean more as we move into the new year.

'Go to the front line yourself - and die'. Those are the reported words of the wives and girlfriends of Russian soldiers to Vladimir Putin, who they are addressing on a Telegram channel called The Way Home. According to UK estimates, 300,000 military personnel from Russia have died during the war in Ukraine. Jessica gets insights from Dr Jenny Mathers from the Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth University.

WED 11:00 South Africa: The Children of Paradise (m001tgw1)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 on Monday]

WED 11:30 The Hidden History of the Wall (m001thzr)

Cultural Sociologist Rachel Hurdley travels round England and Wales to uncover what walls tell us about how we live, from iron age roundhouses to Victorian mansions, medieval halls to terraced workers' cottages, castles to the domestic interiors of today.

Rachel explores how walls, which we often take for granted, define the spaces we inhabit and make sense of everyday life and our place in the world, talking to a range of experts and academics including architectural writer Jonathan Glancey.

She tries her hand at making wattle and daub for roundhouses at Castell Henllys in Wales, with archaeologist Dr David Howell. She climbs through the thick stone walls of the Norman castle at Conisbrough in South Yorkshire, with buildings archaeologist James Wright and English Heritage curator Kevin Booth.

From the top of the tower, Rachel explores ideas of status and wealth, where building the tallest tower was as much about impressing the neighbours, as it was about military defence and protecting the vast wealth of the aristocratic elite. She also visits St Fagans National Museum of History Wales - a living museum of vernacular buildings throughout the ages.

Rachel looks at the way walls have redefined our living spaces from medieval times, such as the longhouses where farmers lived side by side with their animals and the great medieval halls. Here, daily life carried on in one space - masters and servants - until the ruling family was wealthy enough to seek privacy by building first floor solars. Now in modern day Britain, privacy can be at a premium in warehouses and factories converted into rented accommodation to meet to housing demand in sought after areas such as Hackney in London.

She also hears stories of horror and superstition - people and animals incarcerated in walls - as well as the use of burn marks at Gainsborough Old Hall in Lincolnshire to keep evil spirits away and visits one of the oldest medieval houses to survive in England, the National Trust's Ightham Mote in Kent, to see centuries of change through its walls with conservation architect Stuart Page and collections manager Amanda Doran.

She looks at how fashions and styles have changed with a visit the Museum of the Home where Director Dr Sonia Solicari tells Rachel more about social change through the Museum room sets. Wallpaper was a game changer, a much cheaper alternative to tapestries or rich wall paintings. She hears some surprising facts - the introduction in the 18th century of wallpaper tax, and also how the arsenic in some of the wallpaper pigments was poisoning people. Yet it was the industrial revolution which brought wallpaper and the other mass produced trappings of the home to almost everyone and a chance to curate our spaces - like those of British born Caribbean playwright and artist Michael McMillan, who remembers from his childhood the power of the front room to impress and reveal who we are.

Presenter: Rachel Hurdley

Producer: Sara Parker

Executive Producer: Samir Shah

A Juniper production for BBC Radio 4

WED 12:00 News Summary (m001tjpp)

The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4.

WED 12:04 You and Yours (m001tj04)

Christmas Coaches, Million Dollar Lover and the Rise of Craft

It has been a tough year for rail with continuing strikes and more commuters than expected still working from home, at least some of the time, but coach travel is booming and they are looking forward to a bumper festive period. We speak to the brand leader and a new entrant.

Young people are going crazy for craft and handmade and its fuelling a boom in 'maker's markets' and craft fairs.

This year has seen sustained high rates of inflation. Throughout it all we have been speaking to you about that. Three listeners tell us about that and give us their take on the prospects for the coming year.

Christmas treats may start to appear in the supermarket these days hours after Halloween but they've been a long time in the making we speak to supermarket chefs about creating their Christmas range of food.

What will be hot, or not, next year. Pinterest, the syle, food and design platform, where billions of people search every year for inspiration, thinks it knows. They have crunched the data and European Managing Director Louise Richardson will be with us to explain why 'Jelly Fish' and Grandad are trends you should be 'on'!

Most of us would like to be wealthy but when you are older holding a huge fortune can make you a target for the

unscrupulous. The new BBC Sounds Podcast, Million Dollar Lover, poses such questions and we'll be hearing from UK lawyer Ann Stanyer who specialises in inheritance. She has written about a book, 'How to Spot Abuse of an Elderly Client.

WED 12:57 Weather (m001tj0b)

The latest weather forecast

WED 13:00 World at One (m001tj0g)

Forty-five minutes of news, analysis and comment.

WED 13:45 Mythical Creatures (m001tj0l)

3. Water Demons

Fantasy writer Rhianna Pratchett takes us across an enchanted British Isles to discover mythical creatures that lurk in all corners of the land. She finds out what they can tell us about our history, our world and ourselves.

Rhianna explores the dark world of water demons, from Jenny Greenteeth in the North of England to kelpies – shapeshifting water horses – in Scotland. She hears chilling details of their activities and their purpose but also learns what can be used for protection against these fearsome creatures.

Storyteller: Lari Don

Contributor: Mark Norman

Presenter: Rhianna Pratchett

Producers: Lorna Skingley and Sarah Harrison

Executive Producer: Mel Harris

Production Manager: Nikki Cannon

Original Music by Ben MacDougall

Sound Design and Mixing: John Scott

A 7digital production for BBC Radio 4

WED 14:00 The Archers (m001tgxm)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 on Tuesday]

WED 14:15 Drama on 4 (m001tj0q)

Tess of the Tollbooth

The festive season is in full swing, New Year is looming, a time for renewal and Tess is stuck in a box. Literally in a box. Wrangling the small change and the big issues of the night owls who cross the toll bridge. Tess feels like everyone's going somewhere, except her.

The only delight in the dark for Tess is Rob, a drummer who crosses the bridge most nights on his way home from a regular house band gig. But can you really get to know someone in multiple twenty-second intervals? Maybe even fall for him?

As Tess's night shift world steadily descends into a festive farce there's a life to be saved before New Year's Day.

It might even be hers...

From award winning author and BBC Radio 4 comedy writer Ali Sparkes, inspired by the tales of tollbooth workers on Southampton's Itchen Bridge,

TESS Shaparak Khorsandi

KEL Rosie Cavaliero

BOBBY Hasan Dixon

ROB Jonathan Forbes

DARREN Kiell Smith-Bynoe

Directed by Nadia Molinari

A BBC Audio Drama North Production

WED 15:00 Money Box (m001tj0v)

Money Box Live: The Rising Cost of Rent

A typical rental property gets 25 enquires from people who want to view it, according to the property listings site Rightmove. That high demand also comes alongside high prices. The estate agents Hamptons says tenants have been hit with the biggest rise in rental costs in at least a decade. And it's not just tenants feeling the pinch. We look at the impact rising interest rates have had on those owning the homes people are renting.

With Felicity Hannah today to go through your questions and comments we have Richard Blanco from the National Residential Landlords Association, Jasmine Basran - Head of Policy and Campaigns and CRISIS, and Richard Donnell - Head of Research and Insight at Zoopla.

Presenter: Felicity Hannah

Producer: Sarah Rogers

Editor: Jess Quayle

(First broadcast 3pm Wednesday 20th December, 2023)

WED 15:30 All in the Mind (m001tgzg)

[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 on Tuesday]

WED 16:00 Living Free (m001tj0z)

Almost £20,000 a year in free money, no strings attached. That's been the offer to all 18 year olds leaving the child care system in Wales, as part of the most generous trial of a basic income ever tried. The Welsh Government hope it will turn round the lives of those impacted by their time in care and save money in the long term, while opponents have called it a 'failed socialist experiment'. We hear the stories of care leavers to find out what impact it has had on them.

Produced and presented by Gavin Fischer for BBC Audio in Wales

WED 16:30 The Media Show (m001tj13)

How CNN got into Gaza

It's currently almost impossible for international journalists to enter Gaza. For those who can, it's a deadly conflict to cover. We talk to news organisations working on the ground since before the current war began, alongside those monitoring the situation from abroad, and hear about legal action being taken by the Foreign Press Association in Israel to get access.

Guests: Clarissa Ward, Chief International Correspondent, CNN; Mohamed Moawad, Managing Editor, Al Jazeera; Josef Federman, News Director, Associated Press and board member of the Foreign Press Association; Jeremy Bowen, International Editor, BBC News.

Presenter: Katie Razzall

Producer: Simon Richardson

WED 17:00 PM (m001tj17)

Afternoon news and current affairs programme, reporting on breaking stories and summing up the day's headlines

WED 18:00 Six O'Clock News (m001tj1h)

It reached its lowest level for more than two years, raising hopes of interest rate cuts

WED 18:30 Whatever Happened to Baby Jane Austen? (m001tj1m)

Series 2

Episode 2

Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders star as respected novelist Florence and movie star Selina, in the second series of this sparkling comedy about two sisters at war, by David Quantick.

The first series of 'Whatever Happened to Baby Jane Austen?' won the Writers' Guild Award for Best Radio Comedy and the Comedy.co.uk award for Best Radio Sitcom.

"Thank you, Mr Quantick – this is nigh on perfect" Radio Times

And now Dawn, Jennifer and David return with Series 2.

Episode Two: Libel She Wrote

Florence is sued for libel when a character in one of her books is based on a real person. Selina's diaries are serialised in the Daily Mail. Oh, and Lucy's going to the Moon.

Written by David Quantick

Florence - Dawn French

Selina - Jennifer Saunders

Mrs Ragnarrok – Meera Syal

Lucy – Georgia Tennant

All the men - Alistair McGowan

Producer: Liz Anstee

A CPL production for BBC Radio 4

WED 19:00 The Archers (m001tj12)

At Brookfield Stella rehearses her dance moves with Pip but finds it tricky, convinced their routine will be a disaster. She suggests an alternative comedy routine, but when they toss a coin Stella has to accept they're sticking with the Sound of Music. Jill's glad it fell out that way as Rosie's looking forward to it. Stella then commits the cardinal sin of agreeing with Jill's criticism of her own lemon drizzle cake, before Stella doubles down in a frosty exchange about post-war farming methods not being up to the standards of modern-day ones. Jill staunchly

defends her generation before Pip intervenes as peacemaker. Perhaps they should agree to differ – and eat more cake.

Whilst shoeing Harry's horse, Chris tells him how much he likes his job and the independence it affords him. When Harry gives his first name Chris realises who he is and Harry apologises for his subterfuge. Chris says he'll finish this job, but won't take any more work from him. Harry admits he's handling this badly, but avers that Alice only has good things to say about Chris. Harry doesn't want him and Chris to be enemies – he's not trying to take Chris's place in Alice and Martha's lives. Later, Susan agrees with Chris that he's right to be suspicious of Harry's intentions in offering to put more work his way. Chris admits Harry is easy to get on with, but found his self-confidence unsettling. As far as Susan's concerned though, Chris is just as good as Harry and has nothing to feel inferior about.

WED 19:15 Front Row (m001tj1r)

The Unthanks, Lucinda Coxon, the North East Cultural Partnership

Acclaimed English folk group The Unthanks are currently touring the UK with what they describe as a winter fantasia - a mix of traditional and newly written songs inspired by winter and Christmas. They join Front Row, as the winter solstice draws near, to discuss and perform some of the songs they've been playing.

Screenwriter Lucinda Coxon talks to Nick Ahad about her new film One Life which stars Anthony Hopkins as humanitarian Nicholas Winton, who helped to rescue Jewish children from Czechoslovakia in the months leading up to World War II.

How successful has the North East Culture Partnership been so far? 10 years on from its launch and halfway through the 15 year timeline for the partnership's cultural strategy, Front Row hears from former Culture Minister Lord Ed Vaizey, Jane Robinson Co-Chair of the North East Cultural Partnership board, and Keith Merrin, Director of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums.

Presenter: Nick Ahad

Producer: Ekene Akalawa

WED 20:00 AntiSocial (m001t9m9)

The National Anthem

Bristol University has dropped the national anthem from some of its graduation ceremonies, sparking a discussion about the song's relevance to students and the merits of the national anthem more broadly. The university made the change in 2020 and will now sing 'God Save the King' at just two ceremonies a year, when a representative of the royal family attends. So why has it sparked a heated discussion this week? Some say the national anthem is too focused on the monarch, which represents an outdated way of running the state and reminds us of a problematic past. Others say it's an important tradition, we have much to be proud of and there is too much snobbishness about displaying national pride. Our panel discuss their views and we consider what a new anthem might sound like. We hear that the anthem originates from a turbulent time for the monarchy. Pollsters at More in Common explain that a small group of the population that are most likely to dislike the monarchy are also the most likely to write political social media posts, giving them a disproportionate say in the debate.

WED 20:45 Starborn: How the Stars Made Us and Who We Would Be Without Them by Roberto Trotta (m001tj1y)

A Golden Flower in Space

From myth to science through timekeeping and navigation, the night sky is central to the human story. Roberto Trotta explores the many ways in which our lives are intertwined with the stars.

The cosmologist lays out a brief history of stargazing, from 17th century Florence and Galileo, to the James Webb Space Telescope.

Read by Khalid Abdalla

Abridged by Anna Magnusson

Producer: Eilidh McCreadie

WED 21:00 When It Hits the Fan (m001tj22)

Harry's victory, Baroness Mone Part 2 and 2023's PR lessons

David Yelland and Simon Lewis discuss Prince Harry's phone-hacking victory in the High Court and how the British print press is dealing with its own reputational crisis by pretending it didn't happen.

Also – Baroness Mone is back in the headlines for all the wrong reasons following her latest attempt to control the narrative in an interview with Laura Kuenssberg. Why is her PR offensive failing?

And David and Simon look back at the top PR lessons of 2023.

Producer: Eve Streeter
 Editor: Sarah Teasdale
 Executive Producer: William Miller
 Researcher: Sophie Smith
 Music by Eclectic Sounds
 A Raconteur production for BBC Radio 4

WED 21:30 The Media Show (m001tj13)
 [Repeat of broadcast at 16:30 today]

WED 22:00 The World Tonight (m001tj26)
 Teens guilty of Brianna Ghey's murder

Two teenagers have been found guilty of murdering 16-year-old Brianna Ghey in a frenzied knife attack. We speak live to the family's local MP about the issues raised by the transgender teenager's killing.

Also on the programme:

After a ruling in Colorado - could judges stop Donald Trump running for president next year?

And why Poland's state broadcaster has been taken off air.

WED 22:45 The Happy Couple by Naoise Dolan (m001tj2b)
 Episode 8

A sparky comedic exploration of modern love and millennial malaise from the Irish author Naoise Dolan. As read by Seána Kerslake ('Bad Sisters').

Celine (a pianist) and her boyfriend Luke (a serial cheater) are to be married. However, on the night of their engagement party, Luke disappears with Celine's ex-girlfriend...

Phoebe (the bridesmaid and Celine's sister) just wants to get to the bottom of Luke's frequent unexplained disappearances.

Archie (the best man) should be moving on from his love for Luke and up the corporate ladder, but he finds himself utterly stuck.

And Vivian (a wedding guest) is the only one with enough emotional distance to offer something resembling good advice.

As the wedding approaches and these five lives intersect, past lovers, old friends and new enemies will search for their happily ever after — but does it lie at the end of an aisle?

The Author
 Naoise Dolan is an Irish writer born in Dublin. Her debut novel 'Exciting Times' was a Sunday Times bestseller. She has been short-listed and long-listed for several prizes, including the Women's Prize for Fiction, the Dylan Thomas Prize, and the Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year Award.

Reader: Seána Kerslake
 Author: Naoise Dolan
 Abridger: Rowan Routh
 Producer: Michael Shannon
 Executive Editor: Andy Martin

A BBC Northern Ireland production.

WED 23:00 We Forced a Bot to Write This Show (m001tj2g)

1: Action Movie, Army Advert and Bake Off

We forced Artificial Intelligence to digest massive amounts of human media and then write its own versions. Everything from The One Show, Game of Thrones, Friends, Songs of Praise and more via movies, fables, adverts, Shakespeare, poetry and, er, gardening tips (and much much more) are all forever ruined by technology.

We take the scripts, push them word-for-word into the mouths of actors, and the result is absurdly, joyously - and then absurdly again - hilarious.

This is the comedy that conclusively proves that AI is an absolute idiot.

Based on materials by Saturday Night Live and Jimmy Kimmel writer Keaton Patti.

Forcing A Bot To Write This Show are:
 Jon Holmes
 Sarah Dempster
 Gareth Ceredig

Performed by:
 Isy Suttie

James Lance
 Lauren Douglin
 Esmonde Cole
 and
 Craig Parkinson as The Narrator
 Olivia Williams as The Storyteller

Original Music by Jake Yapp. Lyrics: Holmes / Ceredig / Patti

Produced and Directed by Jon Holmes

Technical Wizardry: Tony Churnside
 Production Co-ordinator: Laura Grimshaw

An unusual production for BBC Radio 4

WED 23:15 Jokes (m001tj2I)
 Nora Meadows' Week of Wellness

Nora Meadows' Week of Wellness - 3. Dedicated to Father Ian

A trust exercise leads to a surprise revelation for a couple this week while Nora also helps a hostage negotiator manage his stress. Finally we get a sneak peek into Nora's own relaxation side-hustle - making ASMR sleep-aids...

Nora Meadows... Katy Wix
 Claire... Emily Lloyd-Saini
 Brian... Sunil Patel
 Gwen... Shivani Thussu
 Saz... Lorna Rose Treen
 Sam... Alexander Owen
 Baldacci Fan... Rory Marshall

Written and directed by Will Farrell and Ben Rowse, with additional material from the cast

Producer: Nick Coupe

A Hat Trick production for BBC Radio 4

WED 23:30 The Mandates (m001r1h1)
 Takeover

It is a century since the British and French Mandates in the Middle East formally began. In this new series for BBC Radio 4 marking that anniversary, Tom Bateman draws on his years as a BBC Correspondent based in Jerusalem to examine this critical period in the region's history — a period when decisions taken by the two European nations shaped so much of what we see today. From institutions and movements of people to ideas and lines on maps, Britain's role was foundational, yet little understood in Britain today. In this first episode Tom looks at the 1920s, and the consequences of Britain's and France's efforts to divide and rule.

Producer: Giles Edwards.

THURSDAY 21 DECEMBER 2023

THU 00:00 Midnight News (m001tj2q)
 The latest news and weather forecast from BBC Radio 4.

THU 00:30 Starborn: How the Stars Made Us and Who We Would Be Without Them by Roberto Trotta (m001tj1y)
 [Repeat of broadcast at 20:45 on Wednesday]

THU 00:48 Shipping Forecast (m001tj2w)
 The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

THU 01:00 Selection of BBC World Service Programmes (m001tj30)
 World Service

BBC Radio 4 joins the BBC World Service.

THU 05:20 Shipping Forecast (m001tj33)
 The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

THU 05:30 News Briefing (m001tj37)
 National and international news from BBC Radio 4

THU 05:43 Prayer for the Day (m001tj3c)
 A spiritual comment and prayer to begin the day with Rabbi Warren Elf

Anne and Samantha Day

Good morning.

Apparently today is ANNE AND SAMANTHA DAY, a day celebrated bi-annually on the summer and winter solstice. Anne and Samantha Day honours Anne Frank and Samantha Smith.

Anne Frank is someone we have probably all heard of, the Jewish girl who hid in Amsterdam in an attic with her family from the Nazis for more than two years, until they were betrayed in August 1944, and taken to concentration camps. Her father, Otto, was the only family member to survive. He was given Anne's diary found in the attic, which was published and became a best seller as The Diary of Anne Frank, read by millions of school children and adults.

Samantha Smith may be less well known to us in the UK. When she was ten years old, in 1982, she questioned the Cold War between the United States and Russia, and wrote a letter to the Soviet leader, Yuri Andropov.

Her letter was published in the Soviet newspaper, Pravda, but she didn't receive a response from Andropov. So she sent a letter to the Soviet Union's Ambassador to the United States asking if there would be a reply from President Andropov.

On April 26, 1983, she received one. Andropov addressed each of Samantha's questions in a lengthy letter, with an invitation to visit the Soviet Union. Samantha soon became known as "America's Youngest Ambassador." She wrote a book about her visit and travelled the world participating in peace-making activities. Her young life was cut short on 25th August 1985, aged 13, when the plane she was travelling in crashed.

On this day, I give thanks for the bravery and courage of all children. I thank God for the joy they can bring into our lives, for their questions, their thirst for knowledge and their desire to make a difference and put things right. I pray that I may have the strength and vision to match their ideals and the responsibility to take care of our world for their future.

THU 05:45 Farming Today (m001tj3h)
 21/12/23 Cuts to agriculture budgets in Scotland and Wales, The Archers' comedy night, Operation turtle dove

Rural affairs budgets for next year are being cut by both the Scottish and Welsh governments. In Wales spending will fall by around 10% in comparison with this year's budget, while in Scotland agriculture faces an 8% cut. Both governments say the money is being "repurposed" to other areas like the NHS. Both also stress that BPS, the basic payment scheme which pays farmers directly based on the amount of land they farm, has been protected. While BPS is already being phased out in England with farmers now getting about half what they got in 2020, Scottish and Welsh farmers won't start that transition to new schemes until 2025.

The turtle dove is always associated with Christmas because of the song, 'The 12 Days of Christmas'. In fact it's a summer visitor to the UK and has been on the RSPB's red list since 1996, meaning it's in decline and at risk of global extinction. Operation Turtle Dove was launched in 2012 and the RSPB has just reported that a record number of farmers are joining in, creating habitats for the birds.

We hear about The Archers' Christmas comedy night, called Gagriculture!

Presented by Charlotte Smith and produced by Beatrice Fenton.

THU 05:58 Tweet of the Day (b098jn2p)
 YOLOBirder on the Peregrine Falcon

Birdwatching's irreverent Tweeter YOLOBirder tells how a kindly hotel owner took him to see peregrine falcons and got him hooked on watching these magnificent flyers for the rest of his life.

Producer: Andrew Dawes
 Photograph: Adrian Dancy.

THU 06:00 Today (m001thz6)
 News and current affairs, including Sports Desk, Weather and Thought for the Day.

THU 09:00 In Our Time (m001thzh)
 Vincent van Gogh

Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss the Dutch artist famous for starry nights and sunflowers, self portraits and simple chairs. These are images known the world over, and Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) painted them and around 900 others in the last decade of his short, brilliant life and, famously, in that lifetime he made only one recorded sale. Yet within a few decades after his death these extraordinary works, with all their colour and life, became the most desirable of all modern art, propelled in part by the story of Vincent van Gogh's struggle with mental health.

With

Christopher Riopelle
The Neil Westreich Curator of Post 1800 Paintings at the National Gallery

Martin Bailey
A leading Van Gogh specialist and correspondent for The Art Newspaper

And

Frances Fowle
Professor of Nineteenth Century Art at the University of Edinburgh and Senior Curator at National Galleries Scotland

Producer: Simon Tillotson

Reading list:

Martin Bailey, *Living with Vincent Van Gogh: The Homes and Landscapes that shared the Artist* (White Lion Publishing, 2019)

Martin Bailey, *Studio of the South: Van Gogh in Provence* (Frances Lincoln, 2021)

Martin Bailey, *Van Gogh's Finale: Auvers and the Artist's Rise to Fame* (Frances Lincoln, 2021)

Nienke Bakker and Ella Hendriks, *Van Gogh and the Sunflowers: A Masterpiece Examined* (Van Gogh Museum, 2019)

Nienke Bakker, Emmanuel Coquery, Teio Meedendorp and Louis van Tilborgh (eds), *Van Gogh in Auvers-sur-Oise: His Final Months* (Thames & Hudson, 2023)

Frances Fowle, *Van Gogh's Twin: The Scottish Art Dealer Alexander Reid, 1854-1928* (National Galleries of Scotland, 2010)

Bregje Gerritse, *The Potato Eaters: Van Gogh's First Masterpiece* (Van Gogh Museum, 2021)

Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith, *Van Gogh: The Life* (Random House, 2012)

Leo Jansen, Hans Luijten and Nienke Bakker (eds), *Vincent van Gogh: The Letters: The Complete Illustrated and Annotated Edition* (Thames and Hudson Ltd, 2009)

Leo Jansen, Hans Luijten and Nienke Bakker (eds), *Vincent van Gogh, A Life in Letters* (Thames and Hudson Ltd, 2020)

Hans Luitjen, *Jo van Gogh Bonger: The Woman who Made Vincent Famous* (Bloomsbury, 2022)

Louis van Tilborgh, Martin Bailey, Karen Serres (ed.), *Van Gogh Self-Portraits* (Courtauld Institute, 2022)

Ingo F. Walther and Rainer Metzger, *Van Gogh. The Complete Paintings* (Taschen, 2022)

THU 09:45 Starborn: How the Stars Made Us and Who We Would Be Without Them by Roberto Trotta (m001thzp)
The Sun Worshipers

From myth to science though timekeeping and navigation, the night sky is central to the human story. Roberto Trotta explores the many ways in which our lives are intertwined with the stars.

The cosmologist considers the symbolic potency of the sun and moon and asks what the Scientific Revolution owes to astronomy.

Read by Khalid Abdalla
Abridged by Anna Magnusson
Producer: Eilidh McCreadie

THU 10:00 Woman's Hour (m001thzw)
Spiking, The pill, Family dynamics at Christmas

The Met Police have reported that cases of spiking - putting alcohol or drugs into another person's drink or body without their consent - have quadrupled in London over the last five years. This week the Home Office set out new provisions to provide training for venue staff and test-kits for customers. Campaigner Sharon Gaffka joins Jessica Creighton to talk about whether that's enough for spiking victims.

As we gear up for Christmas, some people might be considering the age-old question: How do you survive the big day without falling out with your family? With unwanted questions about your parenting style, your career or even your love life - tensions can often rise over the brussels sprouts. Camilla McGill is a parent coach and joins Jessica to give us tips on how to

manage anxieties and stress with loved ones.

A 16-year-old girl died last week from what is thought to have been a blood clot - three weeks after being prescribed the contraceptive pill. According to the NHS, there is a very low risk of serious side effects from taking the pill. Dr Janet Barter is a consultant in sexual and reproductive health at Barts Health NHS Trust in London - she tells Jessica the facts we need to know around the pill.

Last year, female-owned businesses received just 2% of all venture capital funding. Parliament's Treasury Committee found. Entrepreneur Grace Beverley wants to raise awareness of the female funding gap. She joins Jessica to talk about her business model and using her platform to empower women.

If you are a woman who is adopted, then the decision to have children of your own can be a complicated one, as your own birth family's medical history may be a mystery to you. How do you know what you are passing on through your genes? Writer and journalist Katharine Quarmby has been looking into this issue because she has had to grapple with it herself. She joins Jessica to discuss.

Presenter: Jessica Creighton
Producer: Lottie Garton

THU 11:00 Crossing Continents (m001tj02)
Ukraine: Building back better

Rebuilding Ukraine after the destruction inflicted by Russia will be a gigantic task. Foreign donors have pledged billions of dollars. But they want reassurances that the money will be properly spent, in a country which still has high levels of corruption. For Crossing Continents Tim Whewell visits Bucha, near the capital Kyiv, site of some of the worst Russian atrocities, to see the beginning of reconstruction. A series of shocking reports by Ukrainian journalists into alleged misuse of rebuilding funds have forced local authorities in the area to explain themselves. But a new state reconstruction agency committed to transparency has now also started work in Bucha. And anti-corruption campaigners believe a new digital accounting and monitoring system they are developing in collaboration with the authorities will help turn Ukraine into a world beacon of openness. The government's slogan is "build back better." But what exactly does that mean? And can it be achieved?

Produced and presented by Tim Whewell
Studio Mix: Neil Churchill
Production coordinator: Gemma Ashman
Editor: Penny Murphy

THU 11:30 Great Lives (m001tgv9)
[Repeat of broadcast at 16:30 on Tuesday]

THU 12:00 News Summary (m001tj08)
The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4.

THU 12:04 You and Yours (m001tj0f)
Gap Finders - Matthew Glover from Veganuary

Veganuary - the movement that is trying to persuade as many of us as possible to give up animal products for January - is 10 years old. What started as a sideline that nobody could pronounce properly is now a slickly-marketed campaign with A-list celebrity endorsements and staff around the world. Matthew says Veganuary has been done in every country bar North Korea and the Vatican City. He tells Winifred Robinson about the difficulties faced in building a campaign from scratch, facing down its critics - and whether he's worried that the meat substitute bubble has burst.

PRESENTER: WINIFRED ROBINSON
PRODUCER: TOM MOSELEY

THU 12:32 Sliced Bread Presents (m001tj0k)
Toast - Toys R Us

Why did Toys R Us have to close all of its UK superstores in 2018?

While Sliced Bread takes a break we serve up... Toast. A study of the spectacular failures of brands which had promised so much to consumers.

In each episode, the presenter and BBC business journalist, Sean Farrington, examines one big idea. What did it promise? Why did it fail? What can we learn from it today?

In this Christmas special, Sean examines the charming story behind one of our best-known toy brands before hearing how it faltered.

Expert commentators and employees reflect on why the business had been so successful and what went wrong.

Alongside them is the self-made millionaire and serial entrepreneur, Sam White, to analyse the missteps that changed the brand's fortunes.

Together, they hear how Toys R Us is making a comeback in the UK.

You can email the programme at toast@bbc.co.uk

Feel free to suggest topics which we could cover in future episodes.

From big tech to high street retail and, of course, food, Toast tackles the business ideas that, one way or another, ended up cooked.

Sliced Bread returns for a new batch of investigations in February. In the new series, Greg Foot will investigate more of the latest so-called wonder products to find out whether they really are the best thing since sliced bread. In the meantime, Toast is available in the Sliced Bread feed on BBC Sounds.

Toast is produced by Jon Douglas and Viant Siddique and is a BBC Audio North production for Radio 4 and BBC Sounds.

THU 12:57 Weather (m001tj0p)
The latest weather forecast

THU 13:00 World at One (m001tj0t)
Forty-five minutes of news, analysis and comment.

THU 13:45 Mythical Creatures (m001tj0y)
4. Redcaps

Fantasy writer Rhianna Pratchett takes us across an enchanted British Isles to discover mythical creatures that lurk in all corners of the land. She uncovers what they can tell us about our history, our world and our lives today.

In this episode, Rhianna tentatively heads to Scotland, in search of a small but vicious castle-dweller, that soaks its cap in its victims' blood - The Redcap.

She explores why stories of such violent creatures originated in a region with its own turbulent past, and finds out how their use has shifted over time.

Storyteller: Graeme Johncock
Contributors: Icy Sedgwick, David C. Weinczok
Additional Voiceover: Neil Hutchinson

Presenter: Rhianna Pratchett
Producers: Lorna Skingley and Sarah Harrison
Executive Producer: Mel Harris
Production Manager: Nikki Cannon
Original Music by Ben MacDougall
Sound Design and Mixing: John Scott

A 7digital production for BBC Radio 4

THU 14:00 The Archers (m001tj12)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 on Wednesday]

THU 14:15 Broken Colours (m001tj16)
Series 3

Episode 4

In the final episode of Matthew Broughton's thriller about art, crime and synaesthesia, Dan is missing, and Jess's doesn't have many options left. How long can she stay free? And is it time to face who she really is? By Matthew Broughton.

Jess.....Hollie Dempsey
Dan.....Josef Altin
Selena.....Brid Brennan
Blue Rider.....Olivia Vinnall
Melissa.....Kezrena James
Anthony..... Tayla Kovacevic-Ebong
Police Officer.....Don Gilet
Mandy..... Michelle Bonnard

Production Co-ordinator... Eleri McAuliffe
Sound Design.....Nigel Lewis
Director.....Fay Lomas
Producer....Emma Harding

A BBC Audio Drama Wales Production

THU 15:00 Open Country (m001tj1b)

Music of the Gloucestershire landscape

The rural landscapes of Gloucestershire have inspired many classical composers - including Herbert Howells, Gerald Finzi, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Ivor Gurney, to name just a few. In this programme, Rose Ferraby finds out about the links between landscape and music and learns about the extraordinary cluster of composers who were associated with Gloucester Cathedral in the early part of the 20th century. She talks to academics and musicians about how a love of the Gloucestershire countryside influenced composers of the time and visits some of the beauty spots which inspired them - including Chosen Hill, believed to be the only hill to have a piano quartet dedicated to it. At Gloucester Cathedral, she hears the choristers sing the Gloucester Service, a setting of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis by Herbert Howells, and meets the cathedral's director of music - who was himself taught by Howells at the Royal College of Music.

Produced by Emma Campbell

THU 15:27 Radio 4 Appeal (m001tth3)
[Repeat of broadcast at 07:54 on Sunday]

THU 15:30 Open Book (m001thxh)
[Repeat of broadcast at 16:00 on Sunday]

THU 16:00 Rewinder (m001tj1g)
Cher and Other Things to Believe In at Christmas

Greg James dives into the BBC Archive to track down audio gems, using listener requests, overlooked anniversaries and current stories to guide the way.

It's 25 years since Cher's pop classic Believe topped the charts, so Greg goes looking for the idol herself in the archives. Where did she choose to debut the single? The National Lottery of course. She returned to the programme a few years later to talk to Dale Winton about her Christmas cookie traditions.

As children up and down the country put tea towels on their heads, Greg heads to a nativity play in Sunderland in 1962 to hear about the showbiz drama behind the scenes. In Gelligaer in Wales he discovers a presenter obsessed with his own childhood appearance as Herod.

And he uncovers some touching transatlantic conversations between refugee children and their parents, broadcast live on Christmas Day during the Second World War.

Producer: Tim Bano

THU 16:30 BBC Inside Science (m001tj1l)
The Science of the South Pole

We're on board the RSS Sir David Attenborough for the vessel's first big science season in the Antarctic, since it launched in 2020. It's crewed by scientists involved in Project Biopole, a 5-year mission attempting to better understand carbon cycle at the poles. Nadine Johnston, a microbiologist with the British Antarctic Survey, joins Inside Science to talk about her work on copepods; zooplankton that build up huge fat reserves over the spring and summer months, then hibernate at 3000m during winter, taking carbon with them which is then locked-up in the deep ocean for up to 600yrs! Her research is a world first in the Southern Ocean and could help improve global carbon modelling of the earth system.

Staying in the South Pole, neuroscientist John-Antoine Libourel, talks about his latest research into the surprising sleeping habits of chinstrap penguins.

And after weeks of intense earthquake activity, the volcano on the Reykjanes peninsula of south-west Iceland has erupted. Dr Evgenia Ilyinskaya, our go-to volcanologist, provides an update. Plus, a nod to the festive season, as composer and AI artist, LJ Rich, explains why Christmas music makes us feel all fuzzy.

Presenter: Victoria Gill
Producers: Hannah Robins, Harrison Lewis & Louise Orchard
Editor: Richard Collings
Production Co-ordinator: Jana Bennett-Holesworth

BBC Inside Science is produced in collaboration with the Open University.

THU 17:00 PM (m001tj1q)
Afternoon news and current affairs programme, reporting on breaking stories and summing up the day's headlines

THU 18:00 Six O'Clock News (m001tj1v)

More than twenty people were wounded in the attack at Charles University

THU 18:30 Ken Cheng: I Can School You (m001tj1z)
2. Cooking Up a Full English

Comedian Ken Cheng focuses his analytical observations on school subjects. In this episode, Ken explores English lessons, the only subject you keep on learning after you've learned it.

Producer: Rajiv Karia
An EcoAudio certified production.

A BBC Studios production for Radio 4.

THU 19:00 The Archers (m001tj23)
There's a full house waiting in St Stephen's for The Gagricultural Show to begin, but Alan's feeling anxious after Monday's terrible run-through. Jakob has a last-minute crisis of confidence too, before Usha convinces him he's the right man for the job. Jakob's awkward delivery as compere actually works in his favour, and the audience are soon laughing. Meanwhile, outside, Pip and Sykesy compare how nervous they are. Sykesy's heard about cake-gate between Jill and Stella, while Pip hopes it won't ruin Christmas.

Back inside, Jakob is going down a storm, as are the acts, including Lynda and Brookfield. Sykesy's routine goes so well it almost feels like he could be a professional comic. When Jakob tries taking him off after three minutes Sykesy whips the crowd up to demand more.

Stella and Pip are mightily relieved that their act is over, before Pip suggests spending Christmas together, on their own. However, Stella's fully committed to Christmas at Brookfield. As they walk home Pip and Stella reflect on how good Sykesy was and how everyone at Brookfield tiptoes around Jill for fear of offending her. Stella is unrepentant about saying Jill's cake was dry and that modern farming techniques are an improvement on the old ones. She's not going to kowtow to Jill at all costs and doesn't think Pip should either.

Finally, Alan and Usha congratulate Jakob on the success of the show. He and Sykesy were a revelation and Usha feels positive the tide has turned. People will definitely start coming back to church now.

THU 19:15 Front Row (m001tj27)
Final Ghosts, Tennant's Macbeth, Next Goal Wins, National Theatre of Wales

One of the TV hits of 2023, Ghosts returns for a one-off special on Christmas Day. Festive viewing for many families will also probably include other work by one of its creators, Simon Farnaby, who co-wrote Wonka as well as the Paddington films.

Critics Kate Maltby and Boyd Hilton review Donmar Warehouse's Macbeth starring David Tennant and Cush Jumbo - which includes headphones for the audience. They also give Samira Ahmed their verdict on Next Goal Wins, the film version of the documentary about the true story of the American Samoan football team trying to qualify for the World Cup.

And culture journalist Gary Raymond on whether the National Theatre of Wales has a future now it's lost all of its Arts Council Wales funding.

THU 20:00 The Briefing Room (m001tj2c)
What's behind the record homelessness figures?

Housing charity Shelter's latest figures show that homelessness has risen rapidly in the last year. In England, 279,400 people are living in temporary accommodation - an increase of 14% - most of whom are families.

And the government's own figures reveal that almost half (47%) of families who are homeless in temporary accommodation have been there for more than two years. Councils have a legal duty to house families and people who are vulnerable if they lose their homes, but the acute shortage of affordable homes means they are having to rely on temporary accommodation for long periods. So what can be done to fix the growing numbers who find themselves homeless?

David Aaronovitch is joined by the following expert guests: Christine Whitehead, Housing Economist, London School of Economics
Rachelle Earwaker, Senior Economist, Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Matthew Wilkins, Head of Value for Money, Centre for Homelessness Impact

Production team: Kirsteen Knight, Alex Lewis and Sophie Eastaugh

Production Co-ordinators: Jacqui Johnson and Sophie Hill
Sound: Rod Farquhar
Editor: Richard Vadon

THU 20:30 Intrigue (m001tj2h)
Million Dollar Lover - Ep 5: Family Fortunes

With Carolyn's encouragement, Dave is making more effort to see his children, including his daughter, Cody. Like her Dad, Cody has struggled with crystal meth addiction and is sometimes sleeping rough in her car as she waits for a place in a recovery unit. She longs for her Dad's love, but she has been let down by him in the past and cannot really trust that he has changed

In this episode BBC Journalist, Sue Mitchell, goes with Dave to Riverside, on the outskirts of Los Angeles. This is where Dave has spent a lot of his life and on a walk at a local landmark he discloses that it is also where he was locked up following a violent attack. As more secrets from his past emerge Sue catches glimpses of Dave's anger and of his more sinister side.

The revelations go to the heart of the question everyone in Cayucos is asking: is Dave really a tender carer who will cherish Carolyn to the end as he promises, or is he a dangerous interloper who will fleece Carolyn - breaking her heart and her family?

Million Dollar Lover is produced at BBC Audio by the team behind The Boy in the Woods and is presented by Sue Mitchell.

The series is scripted by Winifred Robinson; the producers are Sue Mitchell and Joel Moors; the dramaturg is Flo Dessau and sound design is by Tom Brignell

THU 21:00 BBC Inside Science (m001tj1l)
[Repeat of broadcast at 16:30 today]

THU 21:30 In Our Time (m001thzb)
[Repeat of broadcast at 09:00 today]

THU 22:00 The World Tonight (m001tj2p)
Fighting in Sudan forces hundreds of thousands to flee

Also in the programme: a student at a university in Prague has shot dead 14 people; and the story of one survivor of the horrifying 1972 Andes plane crash featured in a new film

THU 22:45 The Happy Couple by Naoise Dolan (m001tj2t)
Episode 9

A sparky comedic exploration of modern love and millennial malaise from the Irish author Naoise Dolan. As read by Seána Kerslake ('Bad Sisters').

Celine (a pianist) and her boyfriend Luke (a serial cheater) are to be married. However, on the night of their engagement party, Luke disappears with Celine's ex-girlfriend...

Phoebe (the bridesmaid and Celine's sister) just wants to get to the bottom of Luke's frequent unexplained disappearances.

Archie (the best man) should be moving on from his love for Luke and up the corporate ladder, but he finds himself utterly stuck.

And Vivian (a wedding guest) is the only one with enough emotional distance to offer something resembling good advice.

As the wedding approaches and these five lives intersect, past lovers, old friends and new enemies will search for their happily ever after - but does it lie at the end of an aisle?

The Author
Naoise Dolan is an Irish writer born in Dublin. Her debut novel 'Exciting Times' was a Sunday Times bestseller. She has been short-listed and long-listed for several prizes, including the Women's Prize for Fiction, the Dylan Thomas Prize, and the Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year Award.

Reader: Seána Kerslake
Author: Naoise Dolan
Abridger: Rowan Routh
Producer: Michael Shannon
Executive Editor: Andy Martin

A BBC Northern Ireland production.

THU 23:00 Artificial Implosion (m001tkbr)
Until 17 November, Sam Altman was riding high. The CEO of OpenAI was bringing artificial intelligence to the world. Then he wasn't.

Deposed in a board coup, Altman's firing kickstarted 106 hours of chaos at the company spearheading the AI revolution.

Journalist and author Chris Stokel-Walker explores the possible reasons why Altman was fired, how the incident reflects a broader deep-seated unease at AI's transformative effects on society, and what it means now Altman has returned more powerful than ever before.

Presented by Chris Stokel-Walker
Produced by James Tindale

A Whistle-down production for BBC Radio 4

THU 23:30 The Mandates (m001r82w)
Revolt

A century since the British and French Mandates in the Middle East formally began, Tom Bateman draws on his years as a BBC Correspondent based in Jerusalem to examine this critical period in the region's history. In this second episode Tom looks at the 1930s, when immigration and a nationalist uprising put extraordinary pressure on British rule in Palestine. He reveals how, from institutions and movements of people to ideas and lines on maps, the decisions taken by Britain then still affect the region today, yet remain little understood in Britain.

Producer: Giles Edwards

FRIDAY 22 DECEMBER 2023

FRI 00:00 Midnight News (m001tj32)
The latest news and weather forecast from BBC Radio 4.

FRI 00:30 Starborn: How the Stars Made Us and Who We Would Be Without Them by Roberto Trotta (m001thzp)
[Repeat of broadcast at 09:45 on Thursday]

FRI 00:48 Shipping Forecast (m001tj36)
The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

FRI 01:00 Selection of BBC World Service Programmes (m001tj3b)
World Service

BBC Radio 4 joins the BBC World Service.

FRI 05:20 Shipping Forecast (m001tj3g)
The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

FRI 05:30 News Briefing (m001tj3k)
National and international news from BBC Radio 4

FRI 05:43 Prayer for the Day (m001tj3m)
A spiritual comment and prayer to begin the day with Rabbi Warren Elf

Forefathers Day

Good morning.

Today is Forefathers' Day which commemorates the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in Plymouth, Massachusetts, on 21st December 1620. The town observes the holiday on December 22nd.

This got me thinking about our forefathers and their importance to us. In our prayers in Judaism we often refer to the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and of our mothers Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah. We read about them in our regular readings from the Torah. We tell the stories about them, their relationship with God, our link to them as our ancestors and what that means for us in our relationship with God; all this is important for us.

The stories of our forefathers, of those at the start of our story, is significant. It is part of our identity and who we are.

The stories passed down to us, with the embellishment and commentary, help provide the basis for the way we look at life and relate to the world.

It may well be that we have different ways of looking at the stories. In conflicts, there are at least two versions (if not many more) of what happened – a winner and a loser, at least. The stories are not always nice and comfortable and sometimes the hardship and oppression stories help give us resilience and strength and help the community to bond.

This is often an important religious or cultural lesson.

Understanding our stories and even more importantly, the stories of others, helps us appreciate each other and gives an insight into what we and our communities have been through.

I pray that we learn from each other and with each other to overcome prejudice and anger, hatred and fear, so that we may learn to live side by side in peace and harmony. Through our prayers and our actions help us to build trust in our world, bringing calm to conflict and peace of mind to all who live in fear.

FRI 05:45 Farming Today (m001tj3p)
The latest news about food, farming and the countryside.

FRI 05:58 Tweet of the Day (b095qmbn)
Melissa Harrison on the Tawny Owl

Nature writer Melissa Harrison describes how the call of a tawny owl takes her back to childhood, reminding her of people and a feeling that slipped into memory.

Producer: Tom Bonnett
Picture: Jim Thurston.

FRI 06:00 Today (m001tjkd)
News and current affairs, including Sports Desk, Weather and Thought for the Day.

FRI 09:00 Desert Island Discs (m001thwh)
[Repeat of broadcast at 11:15 on Sunday]

FRI 09:45 Starborn: How the Stars Made Us and Who We Would Be Without Them by Roberto Trotta (m001tjkj)
A Black Canvas

From myth to science though timekeeping and navigation, the night sky is central to the human story. Roberto Trotta explores the many ways in which our lives are intertwined with the stars.

As light pollution increases and the night sky becomes ever more congested with satellites, how do we retain our connection with the cosmos?

Read by Khalid Abdalla
Abridged by Anna Magnusson
Producer: Eilidh McCreadie

FRI 10:00 Woman's Hour (m001tjkn)
A new drug for hot flushes and night sweats, Combatting loneliness at Christmas

A new drug called Veoza used to prevent hot flushes and night sweats has been approved in the UK. Also known as fezolinetant, it is prescription-only and will be available privately from January. Dr Paula Briggs, chair of the British Menopause Society and consultant in sexual and reproductive health at Liverpool Women's Hospital joins Jessica to explain the importance for many women of this decision.

What would you say to spending Christmas with your friends instead of your family? You may have seen an article this morning in the Independent where the journalist Katie Glass says she'll be having a 'women-only Christmas', sharing the day with four like-minded girlfriends. Some of us may choose to do this intentionally, for others it may not be their first choice but they are making the most of the situation. And sometimes the most unexpected Christmases turn out to be the most fun. Journalist Daisy Finer spent Christmas last year with a female friend, when her children were with her ex-husband, and talks about 'the joy of a very self-centred Christmas'.

Have you got a signature scent – and would you share where you got it from? Whether you are 'gatekeeping' your perfume or keen to spread the word about your favourite scent, smell is one of the most evocative and emotive of our senses. Joining Jessica Creighton to talk all things fragrance, Guardian beauty editor Sali Hughes and Experimental Perfume Club's Roshni Dhanjee discuss why we want to smell unique, gifting perfume, and why smell is so connected to our emotions and identity.

Can loneliness really take the same toll on your physical and mental health as smoking and lack of exercise? The British Psychological Society says it's a scourge on society and should be treated as a public health emergency. It's calling for the Government's 2018 Loneliness Strategy to be updated to reflect the impact of the pandemic. We talk to Julia Faulconbridge, a consultant clinical psychologist from the organisation, and also Liz Veitch, a retired deputy headteacher who became increasingly lonely after being widowed, moving house and then facing the lockdowns. She was introduced to 19-year-old Ankita Menon, a volunteer with Kissing It Better, whose mission statement is 'to reduce the isolation of old age by bringing the generations together.'

Elle and The Pocket Belles sing live in the Woman's Hour studio on the last live programme before Christmas. Describing themselves as an all-girl retro band, they are a vocal harmony group who have been singing together for more than a decade. They'll be creating more Christmas cheer with a couple of seasonal songs.

Presenter: Jessica Creighton
Producer: Kirsty Starkey

FRI 11:00 The Briefing Room (m001tj2c)
[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 on Thursday]

FRI 11:30 Disordered (p0gtz3t3)
Series 1

Episode 3 Haddock and Charlette with an E

A comedy drama, written by Magnus Mackintosh, and starring Jamie Sives as Hector, an optimistic but struggling 42-year-old single father, with long-term mental health issues, who lives in Edinburgh with his unusually bright 10-year-old son William. He is aided by kindly friend and neighbour Susan and hindered by acerbic ex-partner Amanda.

In episode three, Haddock and Charlette with an E, Hector is stung into action when Susan finds an online admirer who seems so perfect she thinks he might be "the one". With no little prompting from William, Hector also goes on a date with Charlette, with an E. Could Hector and Susan both find love at the same time? Meanwhile Amanda is concerned that Finlay is always busy with work.

The writer, Magnus Mackintosh, has personally struggled with mental health issues over 27 years. He openly discusses his own mental health issues on social media in the hope he can help others and raise awareness.

Created and Written by Magnus Mackintosh

Cast
Hector- Jamie Sives
Susan- Rosalind Sydney
Amanda- Gail Watson
William- Raffi Phillips
Haddrick- Jimmy Chisholm
Charlette- Victoria Balnaves

Studio Engineer and Editor- Lee McPhail
Production Manager- Tayler Norris
Title Music- Just Breathe by Police Dog Hogan
Produced and Directed by Moray Hunter and Gordon Kennedy

Recorded at Castlesound Studios, Pencaitland, East Lothian

An Absolutely production for BBC Radio 4

FRI 12:00 News Summary (m001tjkv)
The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4.

FRI 12:04 AntiSocial (m001tj kz)
Culture wars in Europe

An AntiSocial special, charting the culture wars across Europe.

In Italy, there's a battle over surrogacy - bringing into question the rights of same-sex couples, the exploitation of women, and the influence of the Church.

In Spain, more than half the country thinks that men are being discriminated against with the push for women's equality. And across borders, both progressive and conservative activists are creating international networks to spread their message.

Presenter: Adam Fleming
Producer: Ellie House
Reporter: Sofia Betiza
Researcher: Thomas Farmer
Editor: Richard Vadon
Studio Managers: Graham Puddifoot and Matt Cadman
Production Coordinators: Janet Staples and Katie Morrison

FRI 12:57 Weather (m001tj13)
The latest weather forecast

FRI 13:00 World at One (m001tj17)
Forty-five minutes of news, analysis and comment.

FRI 13:45 Mythical Creatures (m001tjlc)
5. Mermaids

Fantasy writer Rhianna Pratchett takes us across an enchanted British Isles to discover mythical creatures that lurk in all

corners of the land. She uncovers what they can tell us about our history, our world and our lives today.

Rhianna is on the trail of one of her favourite mythical creatures - the mermaid. She visits Conwy in North Wales, the scene of a mermaid's curse, and dives into a myriad of salty tales. Rhianna hears how the meaning and representation of mermaids has changed throughout history and how the mermaid can speak to the environmental movement in the 21st century.

Storyteller: Ffion Phillips
Contributor: Professor Sarah Peverley

Presenter: Rhianna Pratchett
Producers: Lorna Skingley and Sarah Harrison
Executive Producer: Mel Harris
Production Manager: Nikki Cannon
Original Music by Ben MacDougall
Sound Design and Mixing: John Scott

A 7digital production for BBC Radio 4

FRI 14:00 The Archers (m001tj23)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 on Thursday]

FRI 14:15 Limelight (m001tj1h)
English Rose - Series 2

English Rose - 4: Young Blood

By Helen Cross. It seems that Rose has been chasing after the wrong father. But neither of the men in Gully's life are great role models. And they're definitely up to something. Meanwhile, Delphine has disappeared.

Stylish and surprising fantasy horror with a comic twist, starring Alexandra Mardell (Coronation Street) and Demetri Goritsas (Ten Percent).
With music by Dana Margolin and Sam Yardley of Mercury-nominated band, Porridge Radio.

Helen Cross wrote 'My Summer of Love' which won a Betty Trask award and was made into a Bafta-winning film with Emily Blunt (recently rated her best film in The Guardian top ten Emily Blunt films). Mary Ward-Lowery won Best Director in 2020 Audio Drama Awards.

Rose ... Alexandra Mardell
Maya ... Miranda Braun
Austin ... Demetri Goritsas
Siobhan ... Deirdre Mullins
Delphine ... Yaseemin Ozdemir
Mam ... Jane Thornton
Jack ... Tyler Cameron
Gym owner ... Don Gilet
Dakota ... Rhiannon Neads
Alina ... Kitty O'Sullivan
Englishman ... Martin Bongor
Angry Man ... Douglas Hodgson
Gully ... Bruce Casswell

Original music written and performed by Dana Margolin and Sam Yardley of Porridge Radio.

Sound design by Ilse Lademann and Mary Ward-Lowery
Assistant Producer ... Alison Crawford
Director ... Mary Ward-Lowery

FRI 14:45 The Haunting (m001cq4x)
Series 4

Star Struck

Travel through the bad gateway in this modern ghost story as writer and performer Tom Neenan discovers what horrors lurk in our apps and gadgets. In this episode, a celebrity birthday message from Joanna Lumley turns into a terrifying gift for Tom

Modern technology is terrifying. The average smartphone carries out three-point-three-billion instructions per second. The average person can only carry out one instruction in that time. Stop and think about that for a second. Sorry, that's two instructions - you won't be able to do that.

But what if modern technology was... literally terrifying? What if there really was a ghost in the machine?

Starring:
Tom - Tom Neenan

With special guest star
Cam - Martin Jarvis

and Joanna Lumley and Peter Davison as themselves

Also starring:
Heidi - Jenny Bede
June - Phoebe Horn
Police Officer - Tayla Kovacevic-Ebong
The Waiter - Dan Tetsell
The Deepfakes - Lewis Macleod

Written by Tom Neenan

Produced and directed by David Tyler

A Pozzitive production for BBC Radio 4

FRI 15:00 Gardeners' Question Time (m001tjlm)
From the Archives: Christmas Edition

Kathy Clugston is visited by the ghosts of GQT Christmases Past, Present and Future for an archive edition of the show.

The panellists of past and present, share their knowledge on how to encourage the growth of moss in our gardens and answer gardening conundrums for the likes of Mary Berry and Anita Anand, who ask about indestructible plants that can survive harsh treatment and how you can maintain poinsettias during the festive period.

And later, we hear from three of GQT's wise men - James Wong, Marcus Chilton-Jones and Peter Gibbs - who'll be hoping to inspire you with the jobs they'll be getting on with this Christmas.

Producer: Bethany Hocken
Assistant Producer: Rahnee Prescod
Executive Producer: Hannah Newton

A Somethin' Else production for BBC Radio 4

FRI 15:45 Short Works (m001tjlp)
Dancing Ganesh

Michael Nardone reads a new short work from Alan Spence, as a frustrated climber seeks enlightenment in Kathmandu.

Produced by Eilidh McCreadie

Alan Spence is an award-winning poet, playwright and novelist based in Edinburgh, where he runs the Sri Chinmoy Meditation Centre. Appointed Edinburgh Makar in 2017, he is also Professor Emeritus in Creative Writing at University of Aberdeen. His longer works include novels, 'Its Colours They Are Fine', 'The Stone Garden', 'The Magic Flute', 'Way to Go' and 'The Pure Land'.

Michael Nardone plays DCI Neil McKinven in BBC crime drama 'Traces', and has appeared in hit TV series 'The Night Manager', 'Line of Duty' and 'Rome'. Stage credits include Black Watch, Knives in Hens, and King Lear and Macbeth for the National Theatre.

FRI 16:00 Last Word (m001tjlr)

Maureen Sweeney, Sir Tim Brighouse, Shirley Anne Field, Juanita Castro

Matthew Bannister on

Maureen Sweeney, the postmistress from the west of Ireland whose weather forecast postponed D-Day by 24 hours.

Sir Tim Brighouse, the educationalist credited with transforming the performance of London's schools.

Shirley Anne Field, the actor who appeared in classic 1960s films like The Entertainer, Saturday Night and Sunday Morning and Alfie.

Juanita Castro, younger sister of the Cuban leader Fidel Castro, who became a CIA informer.

Interviewee: Fergus Sweeney
Interviewee: Harry Brighouse
Interviewee: Lord Blunkett
Interviewee: Brian Latell
Interviewee: Nicola Gill
Interviewee: Anita Harris

Producer: Gareth Nelson-Davies

Archive used:

D-Day Greatest Combined Operation In World's History (1944), British Pathe News, British Pathe News YouTube channel, uploaded 13/04/2014; Maureen Sweeney interview, RTE News, 2005; Maureen (née Flavin) Sweeney interview, Blacksod Lighthouse, Facebook, uploaded 17/12/2023; Tim Brighouse talks to Estelle Morris about his 45-year career in education, Alexander Street Video, uploaded 2006; Tim

Brighouse on purpose of education, RM Education, YouTube uploaded 19/12/2023; Tim Brighouse news report, BBC News; Juanita Castro press conference, ABC News, 1964; Juanita Castro interview, AP Archive, 21/07/2015; Juanita Castro speaks out, New York Times, 28/11/2016; Castro Announces Take Over Of Us Owned Property (1960), British Pathe News, YouTube, uploaded 13/04/2014; Shirley Anne Field, Desert Island Discs, BBC Radio 4, 29/07/1994; Scene extract from the film The Entertainer, 1960; Scene extract from the film Saturday Night Sunday Morning, 1960;

FRI 16:30 Feedback (m001tjlt)

The Feedback Interview of the Year

In the last episode of the series, Andrea Catherwood reveals the Feedback Interview of the Year and discusses the art of the interview with Mishal Husain, Justin Webb and Adrian Edmondson.

And do we need a new national anthem? That was the question posed on a recent edition of Radio 4's Antisocial which prompted a passionate response from Feedback listeners. Andrea talks to the programme's presenter Adam Fleming about how to shed light on hot topics.

Presenter: Andrea Catherwood
Producer: Will Yates

A Whistledown Scotland production for BBC Radio 4

FRI 17:00 PM (m001tjlv)

Afternoon news and current affairs programme, reporting on breaking stories and summing up the day's headlines

FRI 18:00 Six O'Clock News (m001tjly)

A watered down version of the text was approved after days of negotiations

FRI 18:30 Dead Ringers (m001tjm0)

Christmas Specials 2023

Episode 2

Topical satire, featuring all the people you'd least like to have Christmas dinner with.

There are debut appearances from Baroness Mone, Katherine Jenkins and the new Doctor Who, Ncuti Gatwa.

Rishi Sunak and King Charles give their end of year speeches, and there is a surprise guest on Naked Attraction.

This episode was written by: Nev Fountain & Tom Jamieson, Laurence Howarth, Ed Amsden & Tom Coles, Edward Tew, Robert Darke, Rachel E Thorn, Joe Topping, Alex Bertulius-Fernandes and Chris Donovan.

Performed by Jon Culshaw, Lewis MacLeod, Jan Ravens, Jess Robinson and Duncan Wisbey.

Produced and created by Bill Dare

A BBC Studios Production for Radio 4
An EcoAudio certified production

FRI 19:00 The Archers (m001tjm2)

WRITER: Nick Warburton
DIRECTOR: Kim Greengrass

David Archer Timothy Bentinck
Jill Archer Patricia Greene
Pip Archer Daisy Badger
Alice Carter Hollie Chapman
Chris Carter Wilf Scolding
Susan Carter Charlotte Martin
Harry Chilcott Jack Ashton
Alan Franks John Telfer
Usha Franks Souad Faress
Emma Grundy Emerald O'Hanrahan
George Grundy Angus Stobie
Jakob Hakansson Paul Venables
Freddie Pargetter Toby Laurence
Stella Pryor Lucy Speed
Lynda Snell MBE Carole Boyd
Syksey Jasper Carrott

FRI 19:15 Screenshot (m001tjm4)

Double Acts

At this festive time of year it's hard to escape those classic double acts and their equally classic Christmas specials, think Morecambe & Wise, the Two Ronnies, French & Saunders. In this episode, Ellen E Jones and Mark Kermode explore the

origins, legacy and evolution of the double act across film and TV, both in front of and behind the camera.

Guests include one half of a very famous double act, whose members have both gone on to have incredibly successful careers beyond the partnership but in very different ways. He is the Fry in Fry & Laurie, a genuine national treasure - Stephen Fry.

Producer: Tom Whalley
A Prospect Street production for BBC Radio 4

FRI 20:00 News Review of the Year (m001tjm6)
2023

In this special edition of The Today Podcast, Amol Rajan and Nick Robinson review the year in news, featuring the biggest moments and their favourite interviews from the Today programme in 2023.

They're joined by some familiar voices including Chris Mason, Martha Kearney and friend of the pod, statistician Prof Sir David Spiegelhalter. With Gabby Logan on the Lionesses, comedian Andy Zaltzman on The Ashes and Paddy O'Connell on Eurovision.

Episodes of The Today Podcast land every Thursday and watch out for bonus episodes. Subscribe on BBC Sounds to get Amol and Nick's take on the biggest stories of the week, with insights from behind the scenes at the UK's most influential radio news programme.

If you would like a question answering, get in touch by sending us a message or voice note via WhatsApp to +44 330 123 4346 or email us Today@bbc.co.uk

The Today Podcast is hosted by Amol Rajan and Nick Robinson, both presenters of BBC Radio 4's Today programme, the UK's most influential radio news programme. Amol was the BBC's media editor for six years and is the former editor of the Independent, he's also the current presenter of University Challenge. Nick has presented the Today programme since 2015, he was the BBC's political editor for ten years before that and also previously worked as ITV's political editor.

The senior producer is Tom Smithard, the producers are Joseph Wilkinson and Rufus Gray. Technical production from Mike Regaard and Emma Crowe. The editors are Jonathan Aspinwall and Louisa Lewis. The executive producer is Owenna Griffiths.

FRI 20:50 A Point of View (m001tjm8)
Taking Time

Michael Morpurgo reflects on why Christmas is the perfect time of year for 'taking your time.'

In a special edition of A Point of View, recorded on a walk near his home in Devon, Michael invites us to enjoy with him the crispness of a frosty morning, the dry leaves crunching underfoot and the 'frantic flurry of splashing and quacking ducks'.

He takes us to his favourite wood, past the hill he used to roll down, his children rolled down and now his grandchildren, and on to the River Torridge where, a few days ago, he sighted an otter for the first time in 50 years - 'the best Christmas present I've ever had'.

Producer: Adele Armstrong
Recording and sound design: Andy Fell
Production coordinator: Gemma Ashman
Editor: Richard Fenton-Smith.

FRI 21:00 Mythical Creatures (m001tjmb)
Omnibus: Parts 1 – 5

Fantasy writer Rhianna Pratchett takes us across an enchanted British Isles to discover mythical creatures that lurk in all corners of the land. She uncovers what they can tell us about our history, our world and our lives today.

In this omnibus edition, Rhianna meets Black Dogs, Dragons, Water Demons, Redcaps and Mermaids.

Rhianna begins her quest in Suffolk, on the trail of Black Dogs. She explores why they appear so often in folklore, and their psychological link to fear and negative emotions. She hunts for dragons in Sunderland and finds out how these creatures reflect human power struggles, symbolise changing threats, and how they are used to justify who has rights over the land.

Rhianna also explores the dark world of water demons, from Jenny Greenteeth in the North of England to kelpies – shapeshifting water horses – in Scotland. She hears chilling details of their activities and their purpose but also learns what can be used for protection against these fearsome creatures.

She learns about the deadly Redcap and why stories of such violent creatures originated in a region with its own turbulent past. Finally, Rhianna visits Conwy in North Wales on the trail of one of her favourite mythical creatures - the mermaid.

Storytellers: Michael Lambourne, Stuart Miller, Lari Don, Graeme Johncock, Ffion Phillips
Other Contributors: Helen Bruce, Mark Norman, Dr. Jamie Beckett, Natalie Lawrence, Icy Sedgwick, David C. Weinczok, Professor Sarah Peverley
Additional Voiceover: Neil Hutchinson

Presenter: Rhianna Pratchett
Producers: Lorna Skingley and Sarah Harrison
Executive Producer: Mel Harris
Production Manager: Nikki Cannon
Original Music by Ben MacDougall
Sound Design and Mixing: John Scott

A 7digital production for BBC Radio 4

FRI 22:00 The World Tonight (m001tjmd)

In depth reporting, intelligent analysis and breaking news from a global perspective

FRI 22:45 The Happy Couple by Naoise Dolan (m001tjmg)
Episode 10

A sparky comedic exploration of modern love and millennial malaise from the Irish author Naoise Dolan. As read by Seána Kerslake ('Bad Sisters').

Celine (a pianist) and her boyfriend Luke (a serial cheater) are to be married. However, on the night of their engagement party, Luke disappears with Celine's ex-girlfriend...

Phoebe (the bridesmaid and Celine's sister) just wants to get to the bottom of Luke's frequent unexplained disappearances.

Archie (the best man) should be moving on from his love for Luke and up the corporate ladder, but he finds himself utterly stuck.

And Vivian (a wedding guest) is the only one with enough emotional distance to offer something resembling good advice.

As the wedding approaches and these five lives intersect, past lovers, old friends and new enemies will search for their happily ever after — but does it lie at the end of an aisle?

The Author
Naoise Dolan is an Irish writer born in Dublin. Her debut novel 'Exciting Times' was a Sunday Times bestseller. She has been short-listed and long-listed for several prizes, including the Women's Prize for Fiction, the Dylan Thomas Prize, and the Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year Award.

Reader: Seána Kerslake
Author: Naoise Dolan
Abridger: Rowan Routh
Producer: Michael Shannon
Executive Editor: Andy Martin

A BBC Northern Ireland production.

FRI 23:00 Americast (m001tjmj)
Colorado Kicks Trump Off the Ballot

The Colorado Supreme Court has ruled that Trump cannot run for president in the state.

The Trump team has called the decision "completely flawed" and will appeal to the US Supreme Court.

But will this lead other states to follow suit?

The Americast team brings in a constitutional expert – Kermit Roosevelt III – to dive into the 14th amendment and what could happen next.

HOSTS:

- Sarah Smith, North America editor
- Justin Webb, Radio 4 presenter
- Marianna Spring, disinformation and social media correspondent
- Anthony Zurcher, North America correspondent

GUEST:

- Kermit Roosevelt III, author and constitutional scholar

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- Email Americast@bbc.co.uk
- Or use #Americast

Find out more about our award-winning "undercover voters" here: bbc.in/3IFddSF.

This episode was made by George Dabby with Catherine Fusillo, Rufus Gray, Claire Betzer and Cordelia Hemming. The technical producer was Matthew Dean. The series producer is George Dabby. The senior news editor is Sam Bonham.

FRI 23:30 The Mandates (m001rgy3)
Retreat

Tom Bateman concludes his history of the French and British Mandates in the Middle East as he examines how events in the 1940s still reverberate today. Drawing on his years as a BBC Correspondent based in Jerusalem, Tom examines a period in the region's history when the pressures of war and competing national claims pushed Britain to retreat from the Mandate. He reveals how, from political movements and movements of people to ideas and lines on maps, the decisions taken by France and Britain as their Mandates came to an end were foundational.

Producer: Giles Edwards.