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THE TIMES

Monday's TV: Broadchurch



Broadchurch makes its much-hyped return (ITV, 9pm)

David Chater

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Broadchurch ITV, 9pm

Details of tonight's opening episode are being kept a closely guarded secret. During the first series, the show's creator, Chris Chibnall, was so worried about the identity of the killer being leaked that copies of the scripts used on set were kept in a safe; the cast and crew were sworn to secrecy and the main actors were told whodunnit only in late-night telephone conversations hours before they went on set. Olivia Colman even had to stop using public transport because she was bombarded by people wanting to find out who murdered 11-year-old Danny Latimer.

It obviously paid off, because more than nine million viewers tuned in to watch the big reveal. If anything, the levels of secrecy surrounding the new series have been ramped up even higher — so much so that even Kim Jong Un and his merry men couldn't hack into this one.

This, however, is what we know for certain. Chibnall has said that the focus of the new series will be on how the shattered community rebuilds itself. David Tennant and Olivia Colman are returning, so this won't be like a *Morse* without a Morse or a Lewis.

And most of the old cast — including Andrew Buchan, Jodie Whittaker and Pauline Quirke — are back, with new cast members Charlotte Rampling, Marianne Jean-Baptiste, James D'Arcy, Eve Myles and Meera Syal. All will (eventually) be revealed.

Food Unwrapped: Diet Special Channel 4, 8pm

As the New Year was approaching, all the good people of Tellyland sat huddled in a conference room sipping Badoit and brainstorming . . . when suddenly someone came up with an inspired idea. "How about a programme about diets after Christmas?" **YES!**

So here we have Jimmy Doherty and Co travelling from the wilds of Cornwall to the Amazon rainforest to learn about the relationship between certain foods and weight loss. Is soup the key to losing weight? If you're off to the gym, is beetroot likely to improve your performance? Do gluten-free products help you to shed the pounds, and will drinking gallons of green tea make you look svelte in lycra?

You could of course reduce your calorie intake and take exercise, but where's the fun in that?

Waterloo Road

BBC Three, 8pm/BBC One, 10.35pm

It's the start of the final term at Waterloo Road and the headmaster (Neil Pearson) is determined to give it his best shot. "Feels good to be back, doesn't it?" he tells the staff. "A fresh bite at the educational cherry." Well, yes and no.

There's a new intake of pupils who have been excluded from every school they've ever attended. The new deputy head teacher is punched in the face the moment she arrives. The council wants to sell the land; the head teacher's estranged wife turns up as a supply teacher and a private and a deeply embarrassing conversation is broadcast all over the new tannoy system.

As Angus Deayton's jaundiced teacher puts it: "Today is the gift that keeps on giving."

Rich, Russian and Living in London**BBC Two, 9pm**

In 2001 there were 15,000 Russians living in London. Last year there were 100,000. It has to be good for the economy — it is estimated that every Russian who buys a property worth £10 million spends on average £4.5 million a year here.

Some are fleeing Putin's regime; others want an English education for their children, and many are simply attracted to the capital. "I'm in love with London — forever," says one affluent Russian supermodel.

As this sympathetic film is at pains to point out, Russia is such a vast country that it has produced an abundance of multimillionaires who aren't totally corrupt and criminal and are far more obsessed with art and philanthropy than bling. It's a refreshing antidote to the usual tired clichés.

The Undateables**Channel 4, 9pm**

Everyone wants to fall in love, but more of us are crippled by insecurity and the fear of rejection than anyone would care to admit. Twenty-one-year-old Alex, for example, has autism and is struck dumb every time he meets someone he fancies.

"When the time comes to do the talking," he says, "the words just don't come out. The words are just stuck down in my vocal chords and I'm like, 'Come on out! Come on!'" The programme also features an artist's model with a bad stammer, and a lovely girl called Daniella from an incredibly supportive family who suffers from Apert syndrome.

Here are three people and three love stories, with plenty of awkwardness and not one drop of sentimental gloop.

Backchat with Jack Whitehall and His Dad**BBC Two, 10pm**

This would be just another routine, run-of-the-mill chat show were it not for the presence of Jack Whitehall's father, Michael. Jack and his Dad are as different as different can be, and yet it's immediately apparent where Jack gets his talent.

The two guests on tonight's show are Michael Ball and David Walliams, and while Jack bounces up and down with chat-show enthusiasm his father sits in the corner, his face set in a mask of misanthropy. "Are you excited about tonight's show, Daddy?" asks Jack. "No!" is the withering response, delivered with crushing urbanity.

Jack's dad loathes musicals. And as for *Britain's Got Talent*: "If I was producing that show," he says, "I would call it Britain's Got F***-All Talent." Give that man a Bafta.

Bodyshockers: Nips, Tucks and Tattoos**Channel 4, 10pm**

Bodyshockers is an unfortunate title for a strand. It screams Shock! Horror! sensationalism, and yet the programmes themselves are invariably calm and serious. In a world where tattoo guns can be bought online, Katie Piper — the presenter, model and campaigner who had sulphuric acid thrown in her face seven years ago — meets people who have modified their bodies and lived to regret it.

One man was sacked from his job after he had tears tattooed down his cheeks after a drunken dare; another girl ended up with sliced ear lobes, and Piper meets a 20-year-old who is proposing to have a huge spider and an hour glass tattooed on his face. She is the voice of sanity.

Film choice by Wendy Ide**Bully (2001)****Film4, 11.15pm**

The photographer Larry Clark has made a career out of turning his lens on to the dark side of youth culture. He follows his controversial film-making debut *Kids*, and the junkie odyssey *Another Day in Paradise*, with one of his most divisive films.

Based on an actual event, the film explores the murder of a bully by his victims. Nick Stahl plays Bobby, a troubled kid who has spent several years terrorising his friends. Brad Renfro plays Marty, one of the main targets of Bobby's erratic savagery. Together with Lisa (Rachel Miner) and Ali (Bijou Philips), Marty plots to kill his tormentor.

This being a Larry Clark film, the plot is sandwiched in between a lot of voyeuristic footage of teenagers doing drugs and having sex. (115min)

Goodbye Bafana (2007)

Channel 4, 1.50am

This drama was based on the memoir of a South African former prison guard, James Gregory, titled *Goodbye Bafana: Nelson Mandela, My Prisoner, My Friend*. Gregory (Joseph Fiennes) was raised on a farm and learned Xhosa from his friendship with one of the black children. As an adult in the Apartheid era, he is troubled by the friendship, and mocked for it by other white South Africans.

To make amends, he takes a job as a censor and guard — his main duty is to watch and gather information on the imprisoned leader of the African Congress party, Nelson Mandela (Dennis Haysbert). Over time, Gregory begins to question the Apartheid regime and seeks to improve conditions for Mandela. Some controversy over the veracity of the source material notwithstanding, this is stirring stuff. (118min)

Radio choice by Catherine Nixey

Magna Carta

Radio 4, 9am

Lord Bragg of Knowledge takes on the Magna Carta, “one of the best known of all historical documents”. Except by our prime minister, who famously, despite having attended one of the finest Latin-teaching schools in the country, didn’t know what it meant (it means “Great Charter”, pub quizzers).

Here, Bragg sets out to describe the social and political situation that led to “Bad” King John being led off by the Barons to Runnymede where he (although reluctantly) did “A Good Thing”.

Book at Bedtime: The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher

Radio 4, 10.45pm

It can’t be often that the Venn diagrams of what interests the *Daily Mail* and the producers of Radio 4’s *Book at Bedtime* overlap. Though this month they did with fascinating results.

“Thatcher ‘murder’ is BBC’s *Book at Bedtime*” ran the headline in the paper. “Radio 4 ignores protests to give author’s ‘sick and perverted’ fantasy a coveted broadcast slot”. Now, one could quibble with large sections of that. “Coveted”? *Book at Bedtime*? Really?

Anyway, the BBC prevailed and Hilary Mantel’s short story about how the former PM is assassinated by an IRA gunman is read here.

0 comments



Brian Edwards

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