

SATURDAY 21 DECEMBER 2024

SAT 00:00 Midnight News (m002623c)

National and international news from BBC Radio 4

SAT 00:30 Your Face Belongs to Us by Kashmir Hill (m0026222)

Episode 5

What if you could be identified by anyone with just a blurry photo?

When the US journalist Kashmir Hill stumbled upon Clearview AI in 2019, a facial recognition platform with an alleged 98.6% accuracy rate, the implications were startling, and worrying. She set out to find out who were the people behind Clearview and just who was using its technology.

The story of this tiny start-up and the powerful tool it built is accompanied by accounts of how it has been used for good and for ill, across the world.

Today Clearview AI declares that it has a database of 50 billion facial images sourced "from public-only web sources, including news media, mugshot websites, public social media, and many other open sources." Your face may well belong to them.

Your Face Belongs To Us was shortlisted for the Royal Society Science book prize 2024 and described by the Financial Times as "A parable for our times". According to The Economist, "A walk down the street will not quite feel the same again."

The author, Kashmir Hill, is an award-winning technology reporter at The New York Times. She is interested in how technology is shaping our lives and impacting our privacy, and has written for publications including The New Yorker, The Washington Post and Forbes.

Written by Kashmir Hill
Read by Julianna Jennings
Abridged and produced by Jill Waters
The Waters Company for BBC Radio 4

SAT 00:48 Shipping Forecast (m002623f)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

SAT 01:00 Selection of BBC World Service Programmes (m002623h)

BBC Radio 4 joins the BBC World Service.

SAT 05:20 Shipping Forecast (m002623k)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

SAT 05:30 News Briefing (m002623m)

The latest news from BBC Radio 4

SAT 05:43 Prayer for the Day (m002623p)

I wonder when Christmas begins for You?

A spiritual comment and prayer to start the day with Canon Ann Easter

Good morning!

I wonder when Christmas begins for you? The news talks about Christmas creep – how the busyness of Christmas seems to come earlier every year. I think we had catalogues of suggestions for Christmas gifts before we went on our summer holiday.

Actually, the month before Christmas is called Advent, which means 'coming' and the church tries to encourage people to prepare spiritually for Christmas rather than getting the beer and spirits in!

But some people don't look forward to Christmas at all – some people dread it – people who can't afford all they'd like to give; people, especially women, who see Christmas just as a lot of very hard work, and people for whom Christmas will be desperately sad because someone close to them has died during the year.

For some of those people, the idea of a Christmas which will be irrevocably full of lights and presents and music has been balanced by carol services which are remembrance services too. I have conducted carol services at our local cemetery, and all those who have had funerals there in the past year are invited.

A lot of people come, and we cry, and we laugh too, as we remember the happier times and sing the familiar carols. It gives us comfort to think of our loved ones in Heaven, still loving us, just as we love them, and every much still part of our family. And, as they leave the chapel, people are invited to light

a candle in memory of those they love so that the prayer remains in the holy place long after they have gone home.

The dead go no further than God – and God is very near.

Amen

SAT 05:45 Something to Declare (m002622d)

How to Treat Others with Reverence

In this episode, Jack Boswell explores the intricate Iranian custom of taarof, a tradition of elaborate etiquette and rituals of deference that reveal how small acts of courtesy can foster deep connections and mutual respect.

Joining Jack is Eve Esfandiari-Denney, a poet and PhD candidate in creative writing, who shares how taarof has shaped her identity and family relationships. For Eve, taarof is more than just politeness - it's a way to honour loved ones and express care, even in simple gestures.

Jack also speaks with William Beeman, an anthropologist who has spent years studying Iranian culture. William explains how taarof acts as a "social lubricant", smoothing interactions by encouraging people to symbolically elevate others while lowering themselves. Rooted in humility and reciprocity, taarof creates a balanced social harmony where respect is shared, and hierarchies are softened.

Beyond its role in daily life, Jack and his guests uncover a deeper spiritual dimension to taarof, with ties to ancient Sufi traditions of love and unity. Whether among strangers or family, taarof becomes a ritualised way of showing reverence, empathy, and even joy - turning ordinary exchanges into meaningful moments of connection.

This episode reflects on the beauty of this tradition and how it reminds us of the profound value in elevating others, nurturing relationships and expressing gratitude in our own lives.

Host: Jack Boswell
Producer: Emma Crampton and Sophie McNulty
Senior Producer: Harry Stott
Executive Producer: Sandra Ferrari
Production Coordinator: James Cox
Audio Supervisor: Tom Biddle
Sound Editor: Alan Leer and Lizzy Andrews

A Message Heard production for BBC Radio 4

SAT 06:00 News and Papers (m00268k8)

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

SAT 06:07 This Natural Life (m00260sv)

Delia Smith

Martha Kearney meets much-loved cook and writer Delia Smith for a winter walk around her garden in Suffolk. She speaks of her lifelong love of nature, and her deep concerns for the environment in the face of climate change. She tells Martha about her childhood growing up in the Greater London suburb of Bexleyheath, climbing trees and digging up vegetables in her Grandfather's allotment. Then, in the early days of marriage, Delia and her husband Michael decided to leave London for a tiny hamlet in the country, where they have lived ever since. At the bottom of the garden is a field that Michael bought her as a surprise birthday present, which they have now turned into a wildflower meadow with a duck pond at the centre. Even in winter, the place is a hive of activity. Delia gives Martha a tour of the pond, past a memorial tree with special significance, and into her treehouse where she wrote many of her best-selling cook books. Their walk winds up in her kitchen garden, where the sprouts are growing in time for Christmas, and where the winter herbs are soon to be picked to make stuffing.

Producer: Becky Ripley

SAT 06:30 Farming Today (m00268kd)

21/12/24 - Inheritance tax row, poinsettia troubles and ancient carols

Carrot and sprout discount wars are in full swing as the supermarkets vie to be the best value for Christmas. While growers acknowledge what's becoming an annual pricing competition can be helpful for hard-up shoppers, they're worried that this sends the wrong messages to consumers.

As many as 7.5 million poinsettias are sold in the UK every year, and 4.5 million of them are grown here. But UK poinsettia growers say next year's crop could be under threat from what they call "disproportionate" plant hygiene rules, which mean crops are being destroyed unnecessarily. They want Government action.

And carols - in the pub. It's a tradition that sprang up in Yorkshire in the nineteenth century, where people would go to the village pub and sing carols to the old tunes.

All week we've been looking at the fortunes of rural pubs. And to celebrate Christmas, locals in the small market town of Bradford-on-Avon in Wiltshire are reviving village carols from Somerset, Wiltshire and Cornwall.

Presented by Caz Graham
Produced by Heather Simons

SAT 06:57 Weather (m00268kj)

The latest weather reports and forecast

SAT 07:00 Today (m00268kn)

Including Sports Desk, Weather and Thought for the Day.

SAT 09:00 Saturday Live (m00268ks)

Peter Lord, Sarah Ward, Josh Widdicombe, The Choir With No Name

Radio 4's Saturday morning show brings you extraordinary stories and remarkable people.

SAT 10:00 Curious Cases (m0024055)

Series 1

12. Bored to Death

Anyone who has ever done a long car journey with kids will be familiar with the idea of being bored to death – but can this feeling really be fatal?

Hannah and Dara hear about a club where members count roundabouts and collect milk bottle tops, but boredom expert Wijnand van Tilburg explains these dull-sounding hobbies might actually have mental health benefits. He explains that science and comedy are stereotypically both seen as exciting subjects but warns them their chat about Venn diagrams might tip the balance the other way.

Mind-wandering specialist Mike Esterman reveals why we're rubbish at staying on task when there are more rewarding things to do, and sets the pair a challenge to play a computer game that distracts them with pictures of cute babies and fluffy animals.

Contributors:

Dr Wijnand van Tilburg: University of Essex
Dr Mike Esterman: Boston Attention and Learning Lab

Producer: Marijke Peters
Executive Producer: Alexandra Feachem
A BBC Studios Audio Production

SAT 10:30 The Kitchen Cabinet (m0026811)

Series 46

Walthamstow

Jay Rayner and a panel of chefs and food writers are in Walthamstow answering questions on Christmas side dishes and festive vegetarian centre pieces. Joining Jay are materials expert Dr Zoe Laughlin, and chefs, cooks and food writers Will Hughes, Melissa Thompson, and Andi Oliver.

The panellists discuss how to pimp up a Boxing Day sandwich and the best ways to use up a cupboard-full of chutneys and jams. They also debate their top side dishes for a Christmas dinner, and answer the most intriguing of questions - what's the biggest mess they've ever made in the kitchen?

Alongside the Q and A, Jay chats to Annabelle Clarke from Walthamstow's Coven of Wiches sandwich shop about the key to constructing a top-notch sarnie.

Producer: Bethany Hocken
Assistant Producer: Dulcie Whaddock
Executive Producer: Ollie Wilson
A Somethin' Else production for BBC Radio 4

SAT 11:00 The Week in Westminster (m0026818)

The BBC's deputy political editor, Vicki Young assesses a year when the political landscape shifted with the Whitehall Editor of the Financial Times Lucy Fisher, commentator and director of the London Defence Conference Iain Martin and Guardian columnist Gaby Hinsliff.

SAT 11:30 From Our Own Correspondent (m002681h)

Searching for Syria's missing

Kate Adie introduces stories on Syria, Myanmar, Ivory Coast, the Russian Orthodox church and Tunisia.

The threat of being 'disappeared' was central to Bashar al Assad's system of repression and intimidation. Now he is gone, Syrian families want to know what happened to their loved ones. Yogita Limaye met people who've been searching for relatives for years – and who have discovered likely clues at a hospital morgue.

BBC Eye has been investigating the role of moles in Myanmar's military - soldiers sharing intelligence with pro-democracy groups. These moles have helped the advance of rebel groups and the balance of power is now shifting, with the military now controlling less than a quarter of the country. Rebecca Henschke tells the story of the 'watermelon spies' - military green on the outside, rebel red on the inside.

Chocolate has been one product that has notably suffered from 'shrinkflation' - rising in cost, and shrinking in size. This is in part due to the spiraling cost of cocoa - but not everyone involved in its cultivation is getting rich, as John Murphy discovered when he met farmers in Ivory Coast.

The war in Ukraine has been sanctified by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow - head of the Russian Orthodox Church. He's even said Russian soldiers who die on the battlefield will be washed of their sins - but not everyone in the church agrees with this stance. Lucy Ash catches up with one priest risking punishment for speaking out.

Tunisia recently hosted the World Morse Code championship – a fiendishly competitive tournament, in which participants are challenged to accurately receive, copy and send coded transmissions as fast as possible. Monica Whitlock went to watch the competitors in action.

Series Producer: Serena Tarling
Production coordinator: Katie Morrison and Sophie Hill
Editor: Richard Fenton-Smith

SAT 12:00 News Summary (m00268lp)

The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4.

SAT 12:04 Money Box (m00268lt)

Energy Bill Support and Christmas Cheer!

Electricity and gas suppliers say they're offering hundreds of millions of pounds of additional support for customers this winter. Energy prices will rise again on New Year's Day and the latest figures from the regulator Ofgem show customers already owe suppliers a record £3.7bn in unpaid bills. We'll look at what help customers might be able to get if they're struggling to pay their bills.

On Thursday the Bank of England kept the Bank Rate unchanged at 4.75%. We'll ask a mortgage broker what buyers can expect in 2025?

As a deadline approaches for government funded childcare hours for some working parents – how does it work and how can they apply?

We'll look back at some of the help given to Money Box listeners this year and hear music from the Barton Road Choir.

Presenter: Paul Lewis
Reporter: Dan Whitworth
Researchers: Emma Smith and Jo Krasner
Editor: Jess Quayle

(First broadcast at 12pm Saturday 21st December 2024)

SAT 12:30 The Naked Week (m002622s)

Series 1

Episode 4: Spies, Uncanny Ghosts, and Christmas Crackers

The team give the news a hard stare as they try to recruit a spy and steal some of the Uncanny podcast's listening figures by contacting Nigel Farage with a ouija board.

From The Skewer's Jon Holmes comes The Naked Week, a fresh way of dressing the week's news in the altogether and parading it around for everyone to laugh at.

Host Andrew Hunter Murray and chief correspondent Amy Hoggart will strip away the curtain and dive into not only the big stories, but also the way the news is packaged and presented.

From award-winning writers and a crack team of contemporary satirists - and recorded in front of a live audience - The Naked Week delivers a topical news nude straight to your ears.

Written by:

Jon Holmes
Katie Sayer
Sarah Dempster
Gareth Ceredig
Jason Hazeley
Adam Macqueen
Louis Mian

Guests: Neil Frost and Chris Banatvala.

Production Team: Laura Grimshaw, Tony Churnside, Jerry Peal, Katie Sayer, Phoebe Butler

Produced and Directed by Jon Holmes
Executive Producer: Philip Abrams

An unusual production for BBC Radio 4

SAT 12:57 Weather (m00268m1)

The latest weather forecast

SAT 13:00 News and Weather (m00268m8)

The latest national and international news and weather reports from BBC Radio 4

SAT 13:10 Any Questions? (m002622z)

Timandra Harkness, Richard Holden MP, Calum Miller MP, Emily Thornberry MP

Alex Forsyth presents political debate from the BBC Radio Theatre in London, with the writer and broadcaster Timandra Harkness; shadow paymaster general Richard Holden MP; the Liberal Democrats' foreign affairs spokesperson Calum Miller MP; and Emily Thornberry MP, chair of the Commons foreign affairs committee.

Producer: Paul Martin

Lead broadcast engineer: Clive Painter

SAT 14:00 Any Answers? (m00268mj)

Call Any Answers? to have your say on the big issues in the news this week.

SAT 14:45 The Archers (m002622v)

Natasha's self-conscious about their small, messy home as visiting Brenda talks about her assets. Natasha's ears prick up on hearing the new offer on Kirsty's house is not proving straightforward.

Brenda's heading to Birmingham tomorrow and asks Kirsty to keep her updated on the Beechwood house sale, reminding her that the clock is ticking for Roy and Hayley and the sale of Willow Farm. Bold Natasha reiterates her offer on the Beechwood house to Kirsty, and after some reassurance about Helen, Kirsty accepts. Natasha promises it'll be the easiest house sale ever.

Ed and Emma aren't keen on the idea of The Grundys and Carters spending Christmas Day together at Ambridge View, especially as Eddie could end up on his own. Clarrie's disappointed the St Stephen's concert is sold out, although Eddie doesn't seem bothered.

At Lower Loxley Ed tries to persuade Emma to put on some skates as he joins Keira on the ice. Vince catches Emma alone and she shares her worries about George. Vince mentions how Freddie turned things around after prison – prison could turn out to be the making of bright, capable George. Emma admits she'd like to just shut the world out and have a cosy day at home on Christmas Day. Vince advises her to do whatever she wants and not feel guilty.

Cheered up, Emma joins Ed and Keira on the ice. She tells Ed about her plan for Christmas Day – just her, Ed and Keira. Ed wonders how they're going to break the news to their parents.

SAT 15:00 The Ambridge Mystery Plays (m0012rj0)

Episode 1

1/2 The Nativity

Queen of Ambridge amateur theatricals, Lynda Snell, takes charge of this adaptation of the Mediaeval dramas. Join the cast of The Archers in a unique promenade production around Ambridge, telling the Christmas story with warmth, humour and festive cheer.

Adapted by Nick Warburton
Director Kim Greengrass
Executive Editor Jeremy Howe
Technical Producers Andy Partington & Vanessa Nuttall
Production Coordinators Sally Lloyd & Andrew Smith

1st Angel Sunny Ormonde
2nd Angel Katie Redford
God Carole Boyd
Isaiah Timothy Bentinck
Mary Molly Pipe

Joseph Nick Barber
Herod Timothy Bentinck
Messenger Sunny Ormonde
1st Shepherd Ryan Kelly
2nd Shepherd Trevor Harrison
3rd Shepherd Katie Redford
1st King ... Charlotte Martin
2nd King Ryan Kelly
3rd King Katie Redford
1st Soldier Charlotte Martin
2nd Soldier Trevor Harrison
Simeon Carole Boyd

Other parts played by members of the company.

A BBC Audio Drama Birmingham production.

SAT 16:00 Woman's Hour (m00268mq)

Weekend Woman's Hour: Anne-Marie Duff, Gisele Pelicot, Black female journalists, Daisy Edgar-Jones, Ballet Shoes

It's the rape trial that has shocked the world. Gisele Pelicot's ex-husband Dominique was sentenced yesterday to 20 years in prison for her rape, alongside 50 other men. We hear Gisele's own words, and Anita Rani was joined by the BBC's Andrew Harding who has covered the trial from the beginning, and French journalist and founder of The Women's Voices website Cynthia Illouz.

Anne-Marie Duff joined Nuala McGovern to talk about her latest stage role in The Little Foxes at London's Young Vic Theatre. It's a family drama where she plays Regina Hubbard, an ambitious woman who is thwarted by her position in Alabama society in the early 1900s, where her less financially savvy brothers have the power and autonomy to run the family business. Anne-Marie discusses playing ruthless characters and the stage roles that place women front and centre.

A recent report by the National Council for the Training of Journalists found that 91% of UK journalists come from white ethnic groups. This has increased by 3% since last year. Amid large numbers of job cuts within the sector, what can be done to help keep female black and minority ethnic journalists within the profession? Nuala was joined by Habiba Katscha, a freelance journalist considering an alternative career, and award-winning writer and journalist Afua Hirsch.

Daisy Edgar-Jones and her co-star Paul Mescal rocketed into the public gaze in the BBC adaptation of Sally Rooney's novel Normal People. Following a couple of notable film performances Daisy is now on stage as the formidable, if unhappy, Maggie in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. She joined Anita Rani live in the Woman's Hour studio.

Noel Streatfield's classic children's book Ballet Shoes was written in 1936, and had never been staged - until now. The National Theatre's production of Ballet Shoes is directed by Katy Rudd and tells the story of the three Fossil sisters, Pauline, Petrova and Posy, who were given their name because they were all "discovered" as babies on the travels of adventurer Great Uncle Matthew and then abandoned to his Great Niece Sylvia, or Garnie, played by Pearl Mackie. Anita was joined by Katy and Pearl to discuss this children's classic.

Would you ask your friends to describe you in one word? Comedian Sophie Duker did. She joined Nuala to talk about their responses and how it influenced her new standup show, But Daddy, I Love Her.

Presenter: Anita Rani
Producer: Annette Wells
Editor: Rebecca Myatt

SAT 17:00 PM (m00268mz)

Germany market attack

The latest from Magdeburg where a man drove a car into a crowded Christmas market, and Chris Packham resigns as president of the RSPCA.

SAT 17:30 Sliced Bread (m00260sl)

Insulation Hacks

Can you insulate your home for less than £100?

With winter setting in listener Robin got in touch with Sliced Bread to find out if there's a way he can insulate his very old, very cold Victorian house on a budget. He's seen plastic films that go over the windows and silver foil-type backings that go behind the radiators. Do any of them work to keep the cold out and more of that precious heat in? And what about other solutions like thick curtains or blinds - can they be effective?

Greg is joined in the studio by listener Robin and expert David Farmer from the Energy House in Salford - a bespoke replica terraced house built in a warehouse which can recreate a range

of weather conditions, from snowstorms to balmy summer days!

And as always, all of our investigations start with YOUR suggestions. If you've seen an ad, trend or wonder product promising to make you happier, healthier or greener, email us at sliced.bread@bbc.co.uk OR send a voice note to our WhatsApp number, 07543 306807.

PRESENTER: GREG FOOT
PRODUCER: SIMON HOBAN

SAT 17:54 Shipping Forecast (m00268n6)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

SAT 17:57 Weather (m00268nd)

The latest weather reports and forecast

SAT 18:00 Six O'Clock News (m00268nl)

A 9-year-old child was among the five people killed at a Christmas market in Germany.

SAT 18:15 Loose Ends (m00268km)

Toyah Willcox, Adam Riches, John Kearns, Grace Dent, 30 years of Stay Another Day, Georgia Cecile, Clive Anderson

It's a glorious fusion of nostalgia, tinsel and song this week in a show recorded with an audience at the BBC Radio Theatre.

Clive talks to punk princess Toyah Willcox about her Xmas Party tour with King Crimson guitarist Robert Fripp and a blistering year that's seen her perform at Glastonbury, take part in Strictly Come Dancing and join the cast of Now That's What I Call a Musical.

To celebrate 30 years since boyband East 17 scaled the charts with Stay Another Day - songwriter Tony Mortimer performs the song with Edele Lynch of B*Witched for a boy and girl band treat. Find out the true origin of the song and why it almost wasn't released.

There's bromance, baubles and banter with a pair of Edinburgh Comedy Award winners - Adam Riches and John Kearns - who this year are collaborating on a "once in a lifetime, yuletide extravaganza" show at the Soho Theatre.

And the columnist, broadcaster and newly-announced MasterChef host Grace Dent - who knows a thing or two about comfort eating having written a book about it - on creating Christmas food memories, including loading up on yellow-stickered trophies at the supermarket late on Christmas Eve.

Plus in this 40th anniversary year since the release of Wham's Last Christmas we have a gorgeous soulful version from singer and former UK Jazz Act Of The Year - Georgia Cecile.

Presented by Clive Anderson
Produced by Olive Clancy

SAT 19:00 Profile (m00268nt)

Daniel Křetínský

Since it was privatised over a decade ago, there's been speculation around the future of the UK's troubled postal service, Royal Mail.

Now the government has approved its purchase by the Czech billionaire, Daniel Křetínský, a relative unknown here in the UK.

Born in communist Czechoslovakia in 1975, Křetínský was a teenager when the Berlin Wall came down. He started his career as a lawyer, but after taking a job in an investment firm soon acquired a reputation as a financial prodigy. He went on to make his fortune in energy investments, but has since expanded to become a big player in the media scene, as well as buying stakes in businesses in Western Europe, especially France and the UK.

In this episode of Profile, Stephen Smith finds out more about the man who's set to take on the challenge of turning around a once cherished national institution.

Production Team

Producers: Nathan Gower and Ben Cooper
Editor: Sarah Wadson
Sound: John Scott
Production Co-ordinator: Maria Ogundele

Credits

Canal+

SAT 19:15 The Infinite Monkey Cage (m0025dvn)

Series 31

Is Extinction the End?

Brian Cox and Robin Ince dig into de-extinction asking, could we and should we resurrect creatures of the past? They are joined by geneticist Adam Rutherford, palaeontologist Susannah Maidment and comedian/virologist Ria Lina.

Extinction has played a significant role in shaping the life we see on Earth today. It is estimated around 95% of species to have ever existed are already extinct - but could any of these extinctions be reversed? Our panel explore the different methods being pursued in these resurrection quests, including back-breeding, cloning and genetic engineering. They take a close look at the case of the woolly mammoth and the suggestion they could be returned to the Arctic tundra. Some claim the mammoth is the key to ecosystem restoration, but our panel have some punchy opinions on whether this Jurassic Park fantasy is even ethical.

Producer: Melanie Brown
Executive Producer: Alexandra Feachem
Researcher: Olivia Jani

BBC Studios Audio Production

SAT 20:00 Archive on 4 (m00268nz)

A Child's Christmas

Drawing on an iconic recording of Dylan Thomas reading his tale A Child's Christmas in Wales, Cerys Matthews digs into the archive to discover those other writers and poets - both the wide-eyed and the cynical - who have been inspired to write Christmas through the eyes of a child.

From Raymond Briggs and Judith Kerr, to Dylan Thomas and CS Lewis, time-travelling back to a childhood Christmas is a strange, nostalgic drug. Its rituals, sounds, smells and emotions become a lens through which to explore pure wonder but also more thorny issues of loneliness, grief and coming-of-age.

Cerys talks to author Katherine Rundell who says, "For children, Christmas has such a surfeit of magic and limitless possibility. For the adult you see it from the other side - you see how Christmas is made - but you never really get to experience it again as something miraculous. That is, unless you conjure it once again by catching it in your text."

Writer and actor Mark Gatiss describes how Christmas tales can also be a way to carry our child heroes to the edge of the adult world, a place of peril, haunted by the spectres of mid-winter. Think of Susan Cooper's eerie cult classic, The Dark is Rising and John Mansfield's The Box of Delights.

In this parallel other Christmas, Cerys also finds themes of entrapment within family and religion and she talks to the author Lemn Sissay about his experience of writing Christmas through the eyes of the orphaned or the fostered child. 'To really be a child without a family at Christmas is perhaps the most painful story of all,' he says.

Including reference to:

Dylan Thomas - A Child's Christmas in Wales
Hans Christian Andersen - The Little Match Girl and The Snow Queen

Raymond Briggs - The Snowman
Clement Clarke Moore - The Night Before Christmas
Jacqueline Wilson - Tracy Beaker's Christmas
Katherine Rundell - One Christmas Wish
The Haunted Wood: A History of Childhood Reading - Sam Leith

Judith Kerr - Mog's Christmas
Charles Causley - Shepherds' Song
Louisa May Alcott - Little Women
John Agard - If Only I Could Take a Snowflake Home
Carol Ann Duffy - Christmas Eve
CS Lewis - The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe
John Masefield - The Box of Delights
Susan Cooper - The Dark is Rising
Charles Dickens - A Christmas Carol

Readers: Jesse, Aurora, Ori, Lochan, Ionas, Elba
With music by The Enchanted Cinema
Produced by Sarah Cuddon
A Falling Tree production for BBC Radio 4

SAT 21:00 Moral Maze (m00261gg)

Should morality be enforced?

Here are the instructions for your office Christmas party, issued by the Public and Commercial Services Union: "Sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour are just as unacceptable at social events as they are in the workplace. This includes unwelcome comments, gestures or physical actions. Alcohol is not a defence for such conduct and employers are

obligated to address these issues seriously."

This could be considered an example of Moral Managerialism - a philosophy of enforcing, by rules and regulations, behaviour that once was left to the individual's sense of decency. Since human beings are fallible, is this a welcome institutional safety net or an attack on an individual's agency to do the right thing?

Philosophically, can - and should - we try to make people better behaved? There's one approach we haven't tried, but it's exciting some scientists. It's called 'moral bio-enhancement' - basically a drug that can make you good, a do-as-you-would-be-done-by pill, a statin for the soul. If all you have to do, to be a good person, is obey the rules or take a tablet... can human virtue exist?

Chair: Michael Buerk
Panel: Anne McElvoy, Mona Siddiqui, Giles Fraser and Inaya Folarin-Iman.
Witnesses: Ros Taylor, Zoe Strimpel, Julian Savulescu and Andrew Peterson.

Producer: Dan Tierney
Assistant Producer: Peter Everett
Editor: Tim Pemberton

SAT 22:00 News (m00268p4)

The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4

SAT 22:15 The Food Programme (m0026220)

Christmas: The Gift of Food

Christmas is a time for giving, and for many charities, that often means food. Jaega Wise explores the tradition and looks into the planning that goes into festive food donations.

Food historian Carwyn Graves explains how the custom of giving food at Christmas has evolved over the centuries, and why the season inspires so many to give back to their communities.

In Aberdare, we meet the team behind Company at Christmas, who host a festive feast for anyone who doesn't want to spend Christmas Day alone. The new CEO of Fareshare discusses how the charity manages the extra surplus food during the festive season, while Tim O'Malley from Nationwide Produce Ltd explains how his company has been working to ensure as little fresh food goes to waste as possible.

In Glasgow, Social Bite founder Josh Littlejohn discusses why Christmas has become a cornerstone of his social enterprise and charity, alongside one of the volunteers who will be there to greet guests. Meanwhile, Lesley Gates in Bridgwater—known locally as Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo—shows how she's helping people make the most of their Christmas dinner ingredients through practical demonstrations on saving money and reducing waste.

And in Cumbria, Rahina Borthwick, founder of the Grange-Over-Sands Community Foodshare, reflects on the importance of giving within her seaside town. She shares how their community space has become an important gathering point, including for Ukrainian refugees to celebrate Christmas together.

Presented by Jaega Wise

Produced for BBC Audio in Bristol by Natalie Donovan.

SAT 23:00 Wing It (m0026892)

Series 1

3. I Wasn't Supposed to Do That

Alasdair Beckett-King puts the panel through their paces, with insane new characters like Teen Pope and the robbers of The Bat Cave. The improv all stars also set themselves their own challenge of how many times can they get 'fish and fishmongers' into the show.

"No Script. No Prep. No Clue."

Presented by Alasdair Beckett-King.

Starring Monica Gaga, Steen Raskopoulos, Amy Cooke-Hodgson, and Luke Manning.

Devised by Shoot From The Hip

Producer: Sam Holmes
Executive Producer: James Robinson
Production Co-ordinator: Becky Carewe-Jeffries
Sound Editor: Joe Bayley

A BBC Studios Audio Production for Radio 4

SAT 23:30 Brain of Britain (m00261tv)

Semi-final 4, 2024

(16/17)

The fourth of the 2024 semi-finals will determine who takes the last of the places in the grand Final, and stands a chance of becoming the 71st BBC Brain of Britain champion. Russell Davies asks questions encompassing the widest possible spread of topics, including performance poetry, children's television, South American geography, Labour party leaders, Italian cooking, German literature and the history of ancient Rome.

Facing Russell's questions today are:

Tim Hall, from Kidlington near Oxford
 Alan Eeles, from Kidderminster in Worcestershire
 Caroline Latham, from Romford in Essex
 Sarah Thornton, from Holmfirth in West Yorkshire.

The competition is sure to be keen, as all of the competitors have already either won their heats or been notably high-scoring runners-up.

Brain of Britain is a BBC Studios Audio production for Radio 4.

Assistant Producer: Stephen Garner

Producer: Paul Bajoria

SUNDAY 22 DECEMBER 2024**SUN 00:00 Midnight News (m00268pb)**

The latest news and weather forecast from BBC Radio 4.

SUN 00:15 Take Four Books (m00261ts)

AL Kennedy

Take Four Books, presented by James Crawford, speaks to award-winning writer A. L. Kennedy about her new book, *Alice in The Merciful Country*, and its connections to three other literary works. The books A. L. Kennedy chose were: *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville (1851); *Petersburg* by Andrei Bely (1913); and *Lord Of The Rings* by JRR Tolkien (1954).

Producer: Dom Howell

Editor: Annie Maguire

This was a BBC Audio Scotland production.

SUN 00:48 Shipping Forecast (m00268pj)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

SUN 01:00 Selection of BBC World Service Programmes (m00268pn)

BBC Radio 4 joins the BBC World Service.

SUN 05:20 Shipping Forecast (m00268pt)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

SUN 05:30 News Briefing (m00268pz)

The latest news from BBC Radio 4

SUN 05:43 Bells on Sunday (m00268q4)

St Sepulchre without Newgate in Holborn, London

This week's Bells on Sunday comes from St Sepulchre without Newgate in Holborn, London. Built on the site of a pre-Norman church it was rededicated to St Edmund and the Holy Sepulchre during the Crusades. Completely rebuilt in the 15th century it was rebuilt again after being gutted by the Great Fire of London. The church today is the largest parish church in the City of London. There are twelve bells from various London foundries spanning the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The Tenor weighs twenty eight and a half hundredweight and is tuned to the note of C sharp. We hear them ringing Stedman Cinques

SUN 05:45 In Touch (m00260xv)

The UK's First Blind Female CEO

Sandi Wassmer is thought to be the UK's only blind female CEO. She heads the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion, which is a membership organisation offering companies training and services to make their workplaces more inclusive. Sandi tells In Touch how she worked her way up to get to where she is today, how the impact of losing her vision nearly halted her career and how she no longer deals with 'cane rage'.

Presenter: Peter White

Producer: Beth Hemmings

Production Coordinator: David Baguley

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 of 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.

SUN 06:00 News Summary (m00268rm)

The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4

SUN 06:05 Beyond Belief (m00260x9)

Do our pets go to heaven?

The Rev Tara Hellingens, an Anglican vicar, outlines her experiences of conducting funerals at a Pet Crematorium in Winchfield, and Nurul Ain Abdul Hamid, a Muslim who runs a dog and cat shelter in Malaysia, shares her beliefs on the equality of all animals.

Do animals have souls? Are all animals equal? And, how do these concepts feed into religious teachings about animals in the afterlife?

To discuss, Giles is joined by Anuradha Dooney, a Fellow of the Oxford Centre Hindu Studies, Fr Terry Martin, a vegan and Catholic priest, and author of the new book 'Animals in Heaven?' and Joyce D'Silva, Compassion in World Farming's Ambassador Emeritus and the author of 'Animal Welfare in World Religion: Teaching and Practice'.

Producer: Alexa Good

Assistant Producer: Linda Walker

Editor: Chloe Walker

SUN 06:35 On Your Farm (m00268rp)

Nuts about nuts

For many of us, walnuts are something which only make an appearance at Christmas, but for farmers growing them it's a year-round business. In this programme Caz Graham visits a commercial nut farm in Warwickshire, where brothers David and Tom Tame grow walnuts, pecans and hickories. They show Caz how they harvest the crop - first using a tractor to shake the tree branches and then a "nut broom" to scoop the nuts up from the ground in the orchard. The brothers also have a cracking and shelling line at the farm, where they process the nuts, as well as a drier and a press for making oil. They still rear sheep as well, which graze in the orchards as part of agroforestry system. Meanwhile Tom is experimenting for the future, running trials with around 140 different varieties of trees at the farm - including heartnuts, black walnuts and butternuts. He tells Caz that in our changing climate, pecans - more usually grown in Southern Europe and the USA - can now bear fruit here in Warwickshire.

Producer: Emma Campbell

SUN 06:57 Weather (m00268rr)

The latest weather reports and forecast

SUN 07:00 News and Papers (m00268rt)

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

SUN 07:10 Sunday (m00268rw)

A Plot Against the Pope, Christmas at Great Ormond Street, and the Spirituality of Gold

As Christmas draws near, this week's Sunday brings the latest religious stories shaping the news agenda.

Pope Francis is about to release his autobiography - the first by any pontiff. Among its revelations is a startling account of how UK intelligence foiled an assassination plot during his 2021 visit to Iraq. Colm Flynn, who accompanied the Pope on that trip, shares his insights into the dramatic events.

At Great Ormond Street Hospital, the fallout from disgraced surgeon Yaser Jabbar has cast a shadow over its vital work. Yet, amid the challenges, lead chaplain Dorothy Moore Brookes is bringing comfort and joy to families spending Christmas far from home. We join her on the wards to witness the impact of her work.

Gold has always been more than a precious metal - it carries deep spiritual significance and a cosmic story. Alan Ereira, author of *A History of Gold: How It Shaped Humanity*, traces its journey from interstellar collisions to its role in empires and its environmental legacy today.

In Gaza City, where the conflict rages on, aid worker George

Antone describes life in the compound of the Holy Family Church. With homes destroyed and hope tested, 500 parishioners prepare for their second Christmas in exile.

And after a tumultuous few weeks for the Church of England - with Archbishop Justin Welby stepping down and safeguarding allegations swirling around his successor - we ask Bishop Michael Igrave of Lichfield what lies ahead for the embattled institution.

Presented by Emily Buchanan

Producers: Rajeev Gupta & Katy Davis

Editor: Chloe Walker

SUN 07:54 Radio 4 Appeal (m00268js)

ERIC, The Children's Bowel and Bladder Charity

Model, former health worker and Traitors' contestant Mollie Pearce makes the Radio 4 Appeal on behalf of ERIC, The Children's Bowel and Bladder Charity.

To Give:

- Freephone 0800 404 8144

- 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 'ERIC'.

- Cheques should be made payable to 'ERIC, The Children's Bowel and Bladder Charity'.

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

Registered Charity Number: 1002424. If you'd like to find out more about the charity's work visit [*https://eric.org.uk/](https://eric.org.uk/)

*The BBC is not responsible for content on external websites

SUN 07:57 Weather (m00268ry)

The latest weather reports and forecast

SUN 08:00 News and Papers (m00268s2)

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

SUN 08:10 Sunday Worship (m00268s6)

Carols for the Christ Child

The Advent series "Carols for the Christ Child" ends this Fourth Sunday of Advent with a service from Fisherwick Presbyterian Church in Belfast with the Chapel Choir of Methodist College, Belfast.

Led by Rev Emily Hyland, the College Chaplain and the preacher is Rev Dr John Alderdice, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

Readings: Isaiah 60:1-9; John 1.1-14

Adam lay ybounden (Boris Ord)

Angels from the Realms of Glory (arr Jacques)

Advent Candle (Bob Chilcott)

Unto Us a Boy is Born (Shaw)

E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come (Paul Manz)

Of the Father's Love Begotten (arr. Trevor Manor)

Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day (John Rutter)

The Choir is directed by Lynda Roulston and the organist is Graeme McCullough.

Producer: Bert Tosh

SUN 08:48 A Point of View (m0026231)

A Jolly Good Pud

Mary Beards reflects on what really lies behind our attachment to Christmas ritual and tradition.

In a special edition of A Point of View, recorded in Mary's kitchen as she prepares her Christmas puddings, she ponders 'why those of us who aren't particularly wedded to the idea of tradition for the rest of the year, fall hook, line and sinker for it at this time.'

'My hunch,' Mary says, 'is that our fixed traditions are about constructing a family identity for ourselves, about displaying to ourselves as a family - changing, expanding and contracting as families always are - what makes us "us."'

Producer: Adele Armstrong

Sound design: Peregrine Andrews

Production coordinator: Gemma Ashman

Editor: Richard Fenton-Smith

Reading of Dickens/Herodotus: Simon Slater

Reading of Mrs Beeton: Ruth Everett

ARCHIVE

1. Extracts of Keith Floyd from A Farewell to Floyd, produced by Cactus TV.

2. The ancient recipe for Herodotus pudding is from Herodotus, Histories 2. 40.

SUN 08:58 Tweet of the Day (m002685s)
Michael Palin on the Robin

A new series of Tweet of the Day for Sunday morning revealing personal and fascinating stories from some fresh voices who have been inspired by birds, their calls and encounters.

At this time of the year, the red-breasted robin is a familiar sight, not just in our gardens and countryside, but on cards, displays and decorations. Sir Michael Palin brings to Tweet of the Day a seasonal story of the robin. When did our love affair begin with this confiding bird? Sir Michael Palin explains the increased use of Christmas cards by Victorian Society went some way in securing the robin in our affections forever.

Producer : Andrew Dawes, BBC Audio, Bristol
Studio Engineer : Ilse Lademann

SUN 09:00 Broadcasting House (m002688sb)
An End of Year Review of the New Government's Work

We're joined live by the minister Lucy Powell and the German Ambassador responds to the Christmas market attack. Plus the cast of Outnumbered tell us about the upcoming Christmas special.

SUN 10:00 Desert Island Discs (m002688sq)
Gareth Southgate OBE, football manager

Gareth Southgate OBE is the most successful England men's football manager in the modern game.

He holds the record as the man who has represented England in more games than anyone else, with 102 games as men's senior team manager, 57 caps as a player and 37 as men's under-21 head coach, leading to a total of 196 games in which he has been involved as a player or coach.

It's a remarkable career and one which shows his resilience and determination. Ever since he joined a football team as a schoolboy, he dreamed of being a footballer and perhaps one day, wearing the England shirt. He was rejected by Southampton as a teenager and was determined to come back and succeed. He managed to do that, playing for Crystal Palace, Aston Villa and Middlesbrough as a defender and midfielder. After his playing career ended he went into management eventually becoming one of the England national team's most successful managers. Along the way, his different approach to leadership in sport, together with his quest to understand what is Englishness makes him one of the most impressive football managers in England's history.

Southgate is an Ambassador for The Prince's Trust and Help for Heroes.

DISC ONE: The Way It Is - Bruce Hornsby and the Range
DISC TWO: Rainy Days and Mondays - Carpenters
DISC THREE: Everybody Wants to Rule the World - Tears for Fears
DISC FOUR: The Whole of the Moon - Waterboys
DISC FIVE: One - Mary J. Blige, U2
DISC SIX: Shape of You (Stormzy Remix) - Ed Sheeran
DISC SEVEN: Someone Like You - Adele
DISC EIGHT: Experience - Ludovico Einaudi

BOOK CHOICE: The Chimp Paradox by Dr Steve Peters
LUXURY ITEM: Coffee
CASTAWAY'S FAVOURITE: Experience - Ludovico Einaudi

Presenter Lauren Laverne
Producer Sarah Taylor

SUN 11:00 The Archers Omnibus (m002688sl)
WRITER: Tim Stimpson
DIRECTOR: Pip Swallow
EDITOR: Jeremy Howe

David Archer.... Timothy Bentinck
Helen Archer.... Louiza Patikas
Natasha Archer.... Mali Harries
Ruth Archer.... Felicity Finch
Leonard Berry.... Paul Copley
Susan Carter.... Charlotte Martin
Vince Casey.... Tony Turner
Clarrie Grundy.... Heather Bell
Ed Grundy.... Barry Farrimond
Eddie Grundy.... Trevor Harrison
Emma Grundy.... Emerald O'Hanrahan
Brad Horrobin.... Taylor Uttley
Kirsty Miller.... Annabelle Dowler

SUN 12:15 Profile (m002688nt)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 on Saturday]

SUN 12:30 I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue (m002625g)
Series 82

Episode 2

This series of Radio 4's multi award-winning 'antidote to panel games' promises more homespun wireless entertainment for the young at heart.

This week the programme pays a return visit to the Great Hall in Exeter where Lee Mack and Miles Jupp are pitched against Tony Hawks and Caroline Quentin, with Jack Dee in the chair. At the piano, Colin Sell.

Producer: Jon Naismith
A Random production for BBC Radio 4

SUN 12:57 Weather (m002688sq)
The latest weather forecast

SUN 13:00 The World This Weekend (m002688sv)
Fresh pressure on Archbishop of York

The Archbishop of York is facing fresh calls to resign after new evidence about his handling of a case of historical sexual abuse. Can the Church of England regroup under a new Archbishop of Canterbury? We hear from one of the people in the frame for the top job, Bishop Rachel Treweek.

SUN 13:30 Fifty-One Frenchmen (m002688nr)
In the seemingly idyllic village of Mazan in the south of France, a woman in her 60s was being raped by dozens of men over the course of almost ten years - all unbeknown to her and at the invitation of her husband, who had sedated her to the point of unconsciousness, by putting drugs in her food. He found the men online, and admitted his guilt.

The husband, Dominique Pelicot, and fifty other men have now faced justice for these rapes in a trial that has shocked many in France, and has raised awareness of issues like consent, and the use of drugs to rape people. The victim, Gisele Pelicot, waived her right to anonymity and has become a feminist hero, not least for her stance arguing that it is the rapists who should be ashamed, not her.

BBC Paris correspondent Andrew Harding has been to Mazan, and has been following the trial in the nearby city of Avignon. In this programme, he asks what this case tells us about France, and whether in the age of the internet, these crimes could be happening anywhere.

Producer: Arlene Gregorius
Producers in France: Paul Pradier and Marianne Baisnee
Production Coordinator: Maria Ogundele
Sound engineer: Neva Missirian
Editor: Penny Murphy

Photo of Gisele Pelicot by YOAN VALAT/EPA-EFE/REX/Shutterstock
Audio of President Emmanuel Macron: C a vous, France TV

SUN 14:00 Gardeners' Question Time (m002622g)
Postbag Edition: Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Where have all the worms gone in my garden? How do I use a glasshouse? Can plants survive without being watered for a month?

Kathy Clugston and a team of gardening experts explore the 70 acres of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, all while digging the GQT postbag to answer your gardening grievances.

Joining Kathy on this extensive tour are ethnobotanist James Wong, garden designer Neil Porteous, and Head of Gardens at Balmoral Kirsty Wilson. They're led around the garden by Head of Collections, David Knott.

Producer: Bethany Hocken
Assistant Producer: Rahnee Prescod
Executive Producer: Carly Maile

A Somethin' Else production for BBC Radio 4

SUN 14:45 Opening Lines (m002688ti)
Christmas Pudding

John Yorke looks at Nancy Mitford's depiction of the lives and loves of the English upper classes as a group of friends and acquaintances gather in the Cotswolds for Christmas. It's a sharply observed, mostly gentle, satire of the aristocratic type

that Mitford herself knew so well. This was her second novel, written in 1932. She became, and remains, famous for her subsequent bestsellers *The Pursuit of Love* in 1945 and *Love in a Cold Climate* in 1949 but Christmas Pudding shows very clearly the direction in which she was heading as the witty chronicler of a vanishing world.

John Yorke has worked in television and radio for 30 years and shares his experience with Radio 4 listeners as he unpacks the themes and impact of the books, plays and stories that are being dramatised in BBC Radio 4's Sunday Drama series. As former Head of Channel Four Drama and Controller of BBC Drama Production he has worked on some of the most popular shows in Britain - from *EastEnders* to *The Archers*, *Life on Mars* to *Shameless*. As creator of the BBC Writers Academy, he's trained a generation of screenwriters - now with over 70 green lights and thousands of hours of television to their names. He is the author of *Into the Woods*, the bestselling book on narrative, and he writes, teaches and consults on all forms of narrative - including many podcasts for R4.

Contributor:
Laura Thompson, author of *'The Six: The Lives of the Mitford Sisters'* and *'Life in a Cold Climate - Nancy Mitford: A Biography'*

Archive from BBC Television, *The World of Nancy Mitford 1970*

Reader: Esme Scarborough
Producer: Alison Vernon-Smith
Production Hub Coordinator: Nina Semple
Executive Producer: Caroline Raphael

A Pier Production for BBC Radio 4

SUN 15:00 Drama on 4 (m002688td)
Christmas Pudding

In Nancy Mitford's classic festive comedy, Paul Fotheringay, our penniless, feckless anti-hero, contrives to spend Christmas at the ancient country seat of the Bobbin family at Compton Bobbin.

To salvage his reputation and his pride, Paul Fotheringay decides to write an unmistakably serious biography of a Victoria poetess, Lady Maria Bobbin, whose copious journals survive at Compton Bobbin, now presided over by the terrifying and redoubtable current Lady Bobbin.

When Paul asks to see the journals, Lady Bobbin, who cares for nothing but fox-hunting, refuses access. However, with the help of her son, the spoilt and dissolute young Etonian Bobby Bobbin, and acting on the advice of woman of the world and retired courtesan Amabelle Fortescue, Paul smuggles himself into the household as Bobby's "tutor" for the Christmas holidays. But here Paul falls hopelessly in love Bobby's sister, the naïve and charming Philadelphia, and romantic chaos ensues.

Will Paul ever get to write his life of Lady Maria, or will he have to find a proper job so that he can marry Philadelphia? Will Philadelphia plump for him or for the marvellously rich and titled Lord Lewes? And what will Lady Bobbin do when she discovers that Paul is a fraud? Moreover, how will they all get through the ghastly Compton Bobbin Christmas?

Recorded on location in Suffolk, Christmas Pudding is a wonderful comedy of bad manners, in which the carefully measured ingredients of disguised suitors, amorous rivalry, unsuitable liaisons and comic misunderstandings, are cooked up into a delicious festive treat, topped, like a generous spoonful of burning brandy, by the glowing brilliance of Mitford's comic dialogue.

Cast:
Nancy Mitford....HILARY GREATOREX
Paul Fotheringay....JAMES ANTHONY-ROSE
Walter Monteath....THEO FRASER STEELE
Sally Monteath....ROSANNA MILES
Amabelle Fortescue....CHARLOTTE PARRY
Lady Gloria Bobbin....GEORGIE LOTTE
Bobby Bobbin....ISAAC FRANKLIN
Philadelphia Bobbin....CHARLIE CAMERON
Major Stanworth....PETER HAMILTON DYER
Michael Lewes....JACK GOGARTY

Adapted by Robin Brooks
Directed and Produced by Fiona McAlpine
Sound Design by Alisdair McGregor
Broadcast Assistant: Hermione Sylvester

An Allegra production for BBC Radio 4

Picture Credit : Nancy Mitford in 1932 by Bassano Ltd © National Portrait Gallery, London

SUN 16:00 Take Four Books (m0026818)

Nick Harkaway

Take Four Books, presented by James Crawford, speaks the writer and son John Le Carré - Nick Harkaway - about his new book Karla's Choice and its connections to three other literary works. The books Nick Harkaway chose were: Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy by John Le Carré (1974); The Garden of Evening Mists by Tan Twan Eng (2011); and The Passion by Jeanette Winterson (1987).

Producer: Dominic Howell

Editor: Annie Maguire

This was a BBC AUDIO SCOTLAND PRODUCTION

SUN 16:30 Brain of Britain (m002681d)

The 2024 Final

(17/17)

For the four competitors in today's edition it has all been leading up to this, as they line up to find out which of them will become Brain of Britain 2024. The winner becomes the 71st official Brain of Britain champion since the title was inaugurated in the 1950s. Russell Davies tests them with questions on science, cinema, history, art, the natural world, and music with a distinctly seasonal ring for this festive Final.

The Finalists are:

Andrew Fanko from Market Harborough in Leicestershire

Anthony Fish from Pontypool in south Wales

Alan Gibbs from St Helens in Lancashire

Tim Hall from Kidlington in Oxfordshire.

The Brains will also be asked to tackle a pair of challenging questions set for them by last year's Brain of Britain champion.

Brain of Britain is a BBC Studios Audio production.

Assistant Producer: Stephen Garner

Producer: Paul Bajoria

SUN 17:00 Witness History (w3ct5ygz)

How the air fryer was invented

In 2006, Dutch engineer Fred van der Weij invented a kitchen device that changed the way many of us cook today: the air fryer.

Fred's first prototype was nearly as big as a dog kennel and made of wood and aluminium, with a chicken wire basket. It was only a partial success.

But Fred was certain he could make the machine work thanks to an idea he patented called rapid air technology.

Four years later, and after several more prototypes, Fred took his invention to the electronics company, Philips, and signed a deal.

Today, there are many other air fryer brands and models, and by the end of 2024, it's estimated 80 million will have been sold around the world.

Fred died of cancer in 2022 but his daughter Suus van der Weij witnessed the development of his invention. She told Jane Wilkinson about the family's pride in her father.

Eye-witness accounts brought to life by archive. Witness History is for those fascinated by the past. We take you to the events that have shaped our world through the eyes of the people who were there. For nine minutes every day, we take you back in time and all over the world, to examine wars, coups, scientific discoveries, cultural moments and much more.

Recent episodes explore everything from football in Brazil, the history of the 'Indian Titanic' and the invention of air fryers, to Public Enemy's Fight The Power, subway art and the political crisis in Georgia. We look at the lives of some of the most famous leaders, artists, scientists and personalities in history, including: visionary architect Antoni Gaudí and the design of the Sagrada Família; Michael Jordan and his bespoke Nike trainers; Princess Diana at the Taj Mahal; and Görel Hanser, manager of legendary Swedish pop band Abba on the influence they've had on the music industry. You can learn all about fascinating and surprising stories, such as the time an Iraqi journalist hurled his shoes at the President of the United States in protest of America's occupation of Iraq; the creation of the Hollywood commercial that changed advertising forever; and the ascent of the first Aboriginal MP.

(Photo: Fred van der Weij with his prototypes. Credit: van der Weij family)

SUN 17:10 On the Run (m00237gv)

Stay Alive

Writer, Poet and Runner Helen Mort trails a history of running, from prehistoric times to present day. Helen asks why we run, and finds out what running has meant through the ages. Helen looks at stories of running through the ages, to chart the development of humanity's relationship with running. She'll be finding out what role running played in societies through the ages, and how it has been represented in culture.

In the first episode, Helen examines the role of running in prehistoric times. What role did running play in life of early humans, and what kinds of running did they do? Did we evolve to sprint, or to run long distances, and why? How did people represent running in their culture, such as cave art? Helen finds out if cultures of running in different indigenous communities today, with traditions stretching back thousands of years, can tell us anything about humanity's approach to running.

Helen's route then leads to Ancient Greece, the site of some of the earliest known records of running as a sport. She relives the famous journey of the messenger Pheidippides to Athens, whose feat, and feet gave us the marathon.

Interviewees:

Dr Nathalie Hager, Lecturer in Art History, University of British Columbia

Prof Dan Lieberman, Evolutionary Biologist at Harvard University and author 'Exercised: The Science of Physical Activity, Rest and Health

Dustin Martin, Executive Director, Wings of America

Christopher McDougall, writer and author of 'Born to Run'

Andrea Marcolongo, Classicist and author of 'The Art of Running: Learning to Run Like a Greek'

Roger Robinson, Runner, Historian and author of 'Running in Literature'

Readings by Andi Bickers and Nuhazet Diaz Cano

Excerpt from Henri Lhote, A la découverte des fresques du Tassili (The Search for the Tassili Frescos) (Arnaud, 1958).

Thanks to Dr Judith Swaddling

Producer: Sam Peach

SUN 17:54 Shipping Forecast (m002681j)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

SUN 17:57 Weather (m002681n)

The latest weather reports and forecast

SUN 18:00 Six O'Clock News (m002681s)

More details have emerged about the Archbishop of York's handling of a sexual abuse case.

SUN 18:15 Pick of the Week (m002681w)

Huw Stephens

'Twas a few nights before Christmas, where Huw Stephens could be found

Picking the best of radio plus pods on BBC Sounds.

There's You and Yours wrapping, with paper merry and bright - Whilst always making sure to put listeners' consumer wrongs right;

Sidetracked's Annie Mac and Grimmy sat welcoming friends Sharing fav'rite Yuletide songs (or those that drive us round the bend);

And on music, plenty - carols, a Bavarian concert and East 17 galore

Plus even a quick look to the future for fans of Radio 4;

And alas we can't fit all, the billing scribe is joyous to declare: There's not just one, but TWO Old Saint Nick-sized servings of the wonderful Cher;

So gather round! Sing out! We're full of Yuletide cheer!

For this extremely festive roundup 'fore Pick of the Year.

Presenter: Huw Stephens

Producer: Anthony McKee

Production Co-ordinator: Jack Ferrie

A BBC Audio Northern Ireland production for BBC Radio 4.

SUN 19:00 The Archers (m002681m)

Mick and Joy make eggnog and wrap presents. Mick's really looking forward to doing Christmas with Joy now they're 'housemates'! Kenton spoils the mood as he gives Mick short shrift about his motor home, still parked outside The Bull.

Time's up, and if Mick can't get it moved, Kenton will have to take action. Eddie drops them off a turkey, and Mick takes the opportunity to ask about some other Christmassy bits and pieces

Eddie has. He tells Joy he's got an idea for his old van – it might as well go out with a bang. Ticket tout Eddie tries to flog them tickets for the St Stephen's concert.

Will comments on all the stuff in Eddie's van that he's hoping to sell for last minute Christmas goodies. Will's dismayed that everyone's doing Christmas Day separately. George still isn't speaking to them; at least he's in contact with Poppy and Keira. Eddie acknowledges it's not easy on anyone.

Eddie gives stranded Brian a lift home, enlisting his help on his delivery round. He's grateful for Brian's help, and Brian expresses his sympathy over how difficult things are for Christmas at Grange Farm. He's keen that he and Eddie don't fall out over George. They still don't see eye to eye, but Brian recalls something Joe once said, prompting Eddie to invite Brian to The Bull. Later over a convivial pint and chat with Kenton, Eddie realises he can sell some of his concert tickets to Brian. The hottest ticket in town, declares Eddie – Miranda will be impressed.

SUN 19:15 Illuminated (m002681v)

The Horse at the Door

Every year's end, as the days shorten and the nights grow darker, you might be fortunate enough to hear a distinctive knock at your door. Upon opening it, you'll be met with a group of Guisers – men in disguise – here to perform their mystery play, part of the ancient Mummung tradition. There's the Enterer In, Saint George, The Prince of Paradise, The King, The Old Woman, The Quack Doctor, Beelzebub, Little Johnny Jack with his wife on his back, Little Devilly Doubt, The Groom, and The Horse.

And it's the vision of The Horse At The Door that has stayed with Isy since childhood.

Isy hasn't seen the Guisers for over 30 years, but that horse and the clack of its jaw frightened her so much, she thinks of it often.

In The Horse At The Door, Isy will see if she can come face to face with her fears and see whether that black painted skull still holds the same magic and power. She will speak to local pub owners and residents about The Guisers habit of bursting in, to the folklorist Richard Bradley about the Derbyshire traditions of mummung and guising, to the psychotherapist Jane Watson about why we enjoy being scared, and to The Winster Guisers themselves about the traditions they are keeping alive – and the children they are scaring.

Can Isy finally look that horse in its red bulging eyes?

The Horse At The Door is written and presented by Isy Suttie

The Music is by Jane Watkins and Isy Suttie

The Sound Design is by Jane Watkins

It is produced by Laura Grimshaw

It's a Mighty Bunny production for BBC Radio 4.

With thanks to The Winster Guisers, Richard Bradley, Jane Watson, Colette Dewhurst at The Barley Mow, The Miners Standard and - especially - The Old Horse.

SUN 19:45 Just One Thing - with Michael Mosley (m001rq3z)

Reheat Pasta

Load up on those leftovers - because it's surprisingly easy to make your bowl of pasta better for you! In this episode, Michael uncovers how reheating carb-heavy foods actually boosts the resistant starch in them. Resistant starch is a healthy carb that can benefit your gut, reduce blood sugar spikes and lower your cancer risk. Dr Darrell Cockburn, Assistant Professor of Food Science from Penn State University, reveals how these carbs can benefit your microbiome. They discuss why reheating leftovers can not only reduce food waste, but also make your food more nutritious than the original dish!

New episodes will be released on Wednesdays, but if you're in the UK, listen to new episodes, a week early, first on BBC Sounds: bbc.in/3zq6BB

Producer: Nija Dalal-Small

Science Producer: Catherine Wylor

Assistant Producer: Gunar Mimaroglu

Trainee Assistant Producer: Toni Arenyeka

Executive Producer: Zoe Heron

A BBC Studios production for BBC Sounds / BBC Radio 4.

SUN 20:00 Feedback (m00260sz)

BBC Radio Comedy, and the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols broadcast

Comedy on BBC Radio 4 generates a lot of discussion in the Feedback inbox, and this year's been no different, especially after the introduction of a new raft of comedy commissions over the last twelve months. Andrea Catherwood talks to to Julia McKenzie, Commissioning Editor for Comedy and

Entertainment, and Jon Holmes, comedian and creator of one of those new commissions, The Naked Week - and they respond to listener comments and critiques.

And as Christmas approaches, we go behind the scenes in King's College Chapel as preparations take place for Radio 4's annual Christmas Eve broadcast of the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.

Presenter: Andrea Catherwood
 Producer: Pauline Moore
 Assistant Producer: Rebecca Guthrie
 Executive Producer: David Prest

A Whistledown Scotland production for BBC Radio 4

SUN 20:30 Last Word (m002622l)

Baroness Wilkins, Charles Handy, Renee Bornstein, Tony Brignull

Matthew Bannister on

Baroness Wilkins who became a wheelchair user after an accident aged 19 and went on to present TV programmes on disability issues and to campaign for the rights of disabled people.

Charles Handy, the social philosopher and management theorist who predicted many changes to the world of work.

Renee Bornstein who, as a child, survived being imprisoned by the Nazis.

Tony Brignull, the acclaimed copywriter behind famous ads for Cinzano, Fiat Cars and Parker Pens.

Producer: Ed Prendiville

Archive:

France Crumbles, AP Archive, Uploaded to Youtube **30.07.2015**; Paris Liberated, British Pathe, 1944, Uploaded to Youtube **13.04.2014**; My Family, The Holocaust and Me, BBC, 2020; To remember but not to hate, French Holocaust Survivor Renee Bornstein, Dr Les Glassman, 2023; The testimony of Renee Bornstein, survivor of the Holocaust, Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, 2021; 1 minute to leave your mark, Arjo Creative Papers, 2012; Clarks Shoes, CPD, 1978; Birds Eye's Beefburgers, CPD, 1978; Heineken, CPD, 1970; Cinzano advert, CPD, 1978-83; Creative Leads - Tony Brignull, Uploaded to Youtube **30.04.2019**; House of Lords, Hansard, *parliamentlive.tv*, **25.06.2015**; 24 Hours, BBC, 12/01/1971; Open Door: America – We can do that, BBC2, **30.03.1983**; Open Door: America – We can do that, BBC2, **30.03.1983**; We Won't Go Away, The MN Gov. Council on Developmental Disabilities, Uploaded to Youtube, **25.04.2014**; Belief, BBC, 2003; Something Understood: Buying and Selling, BBC, 2009;

SUN 21:00 Money Box (m002681t)

[Repeat of broadcast at 12:04 on Saturday]

SUN 21:25 Radio 4 Appeal (m00268js)

[Repeat of broadcast at 07:54 today]

SUN 21:30 From Our Own Correspondent (m00268lh)

[Repeat of broadcast at 11:30 on Saturday]

SUN 22:00 Archive on 4 (m000cpx6)

Sontag's Radical Will

Susan Sontag - writer, public intellectual and "empress of American culture" - may have died in 2004, but she continues to shape how we think today, on subjects as diverse as photography, illness, sexuality, and violence.

Novelist, poet, and playwright Deborah Levy charts Sontag's role as a lucid chronicler of major cultural moments, from the sexual revolution of the 1960s to the AIDS crisis and the Bosnian war.

Sontag broke with traditional post-war criticism in America, articulating how the boundaries between high culture and popular culture were crumbling. She advocated a sensual approach to seeing and experiencing art, arguing that "interpretation is the revenge of the intellect upon art." She was concerned with what it means to make images out of reality and to pay attention to the suffering of others.

A fearless, outspoken thinker, Sontag had a complex relationship with her own gender and sexuality. She was determined to hone a public persona that ensured people took her seriously. Levy examines her views on feminism and considers her attitudes in light of contemporary notions of identity politics and self-expression.

Alongside biographer Benjamin Moser, writer and friend Sigrid Nunez, American essayist Leslie Jamison, and British writer Lisa Appignanesi, Deborah Levy considers Sontag's major works - including *Against Interpretation*, *On Photography*, and *Illness as Metaphor* - in the context of our current era, arguing that her rigorous voice and daring imagination are ever vital.

Produced by Meara Sharma
 A Somethin' Else production for BBC Radio 4

SUN 23:00 In Our Time (m00260s5)

Plutarch's Parallel Lives

Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss the Greek biographer Plutarch (c46 AD-c120 AD) and especially his work 'Parallel Lives' which has shaped the way successive generations see the Classical world. Plutarch was clear that he was writing lives, not histories, and he wrote these very focussed accounts in pairs to contrast and compare the characters of famous Greeks and Romans, side by side, along with their virtues and vices. This focus on the inner lives of great men was to fascinate Shakespeare, who drew on Plutarch considerably when writing his Julius Caesar, Coriolanus, Timon of Athens and Antony and Cleopatra. While few followed his approach of setting lives in pairs, Plutarch's work was to influence countless biographers especially from the Enlightenment onwards.

With

Judith Mossman
 Professor Emerita of Classics at Coventry University

Andrew Erskine
 Professor of Ancient History at the University of Edinburgh

And

Paul Cartledge
 AG Leventis Senior Research Fellow of Clare College, University of Cambridge

Producer: Simon Tillotson

Reading list:

Mark Beck (ed.), *A Companion to Plutarch* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2014)

Colin Burrow, *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity* (Oxford University Press, 2013), especially chapter 6

Raphaëla Dubreuil, *Theater and Politics in Plutarch's Parallel Lives* (Brill, 2023)

Tim Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford University Press, 1999)

Noreen Humble (ed.), *Plutarch's Lives: Parallelism and Purpose* (Classical Press of Wales, 2010)

Robert Lamberton, *Plutarch* (Yale University Press, 2002)

Hugh Liebert, *Plutarch's Politics: Between City and Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2016)

Christopher Pelling, *Plutarch and History* (Classical Press of Wales, 2002)

Plutarch (trans. Robin Waterfield), *Greek Lives* (Oxford University Press, 2008)

Plutarch (trans. Robin Waterfield), *Roman Lives* (Oxford University Press, 2008)

Plutarch (trans. Robin Waterfield), *Hellenistic Lives* (Oxford University Press, 2016)

Plutarch (trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert), *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives* (Penguin, 2023)

Plutarch (trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert), *The Age of Alexander: Nine Greek Lives* (Penguin, 2011)

Plutarch (trans. Richard Talbert), *On Sparta* (Penguin, 2005)

Plutarch (trans. Christopher Pelling), *The Rise of Rome* (Penguin, 2013)

Plutarch (trans. Christopher Pelling), *Rome in Crisis: Nine Lives* (Penguin, 2010)

Plutarch (trans. Rex Warner), *The Fall of the Roman Republic: Six Lives* (Penguin, 2006)

Plutarch (trans. Thomas North, ed. Judith Mossman), *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* (Wordsworth, 1998)

Geert Roskam, *Plutarch* (Cambridge University Press, 2021)

D. A. Russell, *Plutarch* (2nd ed., Bristol Classical Press, 2001)

Philip A. Stadter, *Plutarch and his Roman Readers* (Oxford University Press, 2014)

Frances B. Titchener and Alexei V. Zadorojnyi (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plutarch* (Cambridge University Press, 2023)

In Our Time is a BBC Studios Audio Production

SUN 23:45 Bunk Bed (m001p1x0)

Series 10

2. Peter Curran and Patrick Marber grapple with life's woes and wonders

Late at night our tired minds can wander through funny, bizarre and poignant territory before we drift off. This is what it sounds like when two Herberts sound off to delight.

'Bunk Bed is funny, strange, enchanting, and beautifully put together.' - The Observer

'Bunk Bed is beloved by broadsheet critics, but don't let that put you off....' - Metro

Produced by Peter Curran
 Sound mix by David Thomas

A Foghorn production for BBC Radio 4

MONDAY 23 DECEMBER 2024

MON 00:00 Midnight News (m00268v6)

The latest news and weather forecast from BBC Radio 4.

MON 00:15 Crossing Continents (m00260xx)

Argentina - Milei's Chainsaw

It has been a year since chainsaw-wielding Javier Milei won the Presidency in Argentina. During his campaign, his chainsaw became a symbol of how quickly and drastically he wanted to cut the Argentine state. And he has slashed government budgets and sliced subsidies on power, food and transport. He stopped printing money to try and halt inflation which was running at 211.4% annually when he was sworn in.

How have his actions changed life for ordinary Argentines? Buenos Aires based reporter, Charlotte Pritchard, talks to Argentines about how they're feeling now. From the gauchos at the annual event to show off their herds of horses, to those taking advantage of a scheme to 'whiten' black-market money they have hidden under their mattress - is there hope or despair?

Produced and presented by Charlotte Pritchard
 Studio Manager: Donald McDonald
 Production Coordinator: Gemma Ashman
 Editor: Penny Murphy

MON 00:45 Bells on Sunday (m00268q4)

[Repeat of broadcast at 05:43 on Sunday]

MON 00:48 Shipping Forecast (m00268vf)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

MON 01:00 Selection of BBC World Service Programmes (m00268vm)

BBC Radio 4 joins the BBC World Service.

MON 05:20 Shipping Forecast (m00268vt)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

MON 05:30 News Briefing (m00268w1)

The latest news from BBC Radio 4

MON 05:43 Prayer for the Day (m00268w7)

The first ever Transistor Radio

A spiritual comment and prayer to start the day with Canon Ann Easter

Good morning!

Today, is the seventy seventh anniversary of the demonstration of the first ever transistor, the semi-conductor device that amplifies or switches electrical signals and power. That demonstration led to many wonderful things but especially to the invention of the transistor radio which was so important a

part of my youth.

My Dad talked about his home-made crystal set, having to move a piece of fine wire, called a cat's whisker, around on a crystal to receive the faintest of signals through giant earphones that he'd saved up to buy from a local pawn shop. The invention of the transistor was an amazing development for him and his generation.

And so my Dad bought his Mum a transistor radio and she would take it out in the garden to listen to Woman's Hour and Mrs Dale's diary as well as the music on the BBC's Light Programme and, when the batteries ran out, my grandmother would pretend ignorance of what had stopped it working and would give the little radio to one of her grandchildren to fix..... well, until all ten of us had a 'Nanny's tranny' as we called them!

How I loved my little radio. I'd burrow under the blankets at night to listen to the Beatles and the Stones until I fell asleep dreaming of the music; it was such a comforting and uplifting pleasure.

I Thank God for all the discoveries and inventions that bring light, laughter, love and music to our world.

Amen

MON 05:45 Farming Today (m00268wf)

23/12/24 - 'Difficult' Stormont budget for environment minister, Victorian farm diaries, Turkey farmers

The Northern Ireland Executive has published its draft budget for 2025-26 and it's now open for public consultation. Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs is set to receive just over £715 million pounds, an increase of 3%. But no specific funding has been allocated to address serious pollution in Lough Neagh and Andrew Muir, the environment minister, says his department has only been awarded around a third of what he'd requested for day to day spending. He describes it as 'a difficult budget'.

Historic farm diaries provide a fascinating glimpse into agricultural, social and cultural life in years gone by. So curators at the Three Rivers Museum in Hertfordshire were excited to unearth a diary written in Victorian times by a farmer from Rickmansworth called John White. Masters students at the University of Hertfordshire have been scrutinising the diary entries to see if there's anything that John's observations from 150 years ago might teach farmers today.

Rearing and selling turkeys for Christmas has become a major source of income for some family farms, including Cuckoo Mill Farm at Pelcomb Bridge, in Pembrokeshire. And at this time of year, it's a real family affair, with all hands on deck.

Presented by Caz Graham and produced by Beatrice Fenton.

MON 05:57 Weather (m00268wn)

Weather reports and forecasts for farmers

MON 06:00 Today (m00268kz)

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

MON 09:00 Start the Week (m0026816)

Animals – up close and talking

The poet laureate Simon Armitage challenges himself to write a new poem to capture the spirit of an animal and to see if he can bring it closer to the human world. For a new 10-part series, My Poetry and Other Animals (on BBC Radio 4 at 1.45, from December 23rd), he is guided by his fellow poets as he experiences a series of close encounters – looking into the eye of a tiger, tracking a fox and standing amongst a room full of spiders.

Elizabeth Bishop and Feargal Sharkey are Simon Armitage's guides to the world of fish. But the science writer Amorina Kingdom wants everyone to listen more closely to what's happening underwater. In her book, Sing Like Fish, she traces how sounds travel with currents; the songs, clicks and drumming that help sea creatures to survive, and how this musical landscape is being affected by human noise.

If humans could finally grasp what animals were communicating to each other, could it enable us to join in the conversation with animals? The behavioural ecologist, Professor Christian Rutz, from the University of St Andrews, is a specialist in the different behaviours of crows. He believes that with recent breakthroughs in AI and data collection, talking with animals might be closer than ever.

Producer: Katy Hickman

MON 09:45 Dementia: Unexpected Stories of the Mind (m001kx6y)

Susan

Neurologist Jules Montague and William Miller continue their journey through the world of rare dementias.

In this episode, they meet Susan and her husband Terry. Susan has posterior cortical atrophy (PCA), a rare neurodegenerative condition that means she can't see what's right in front of her, even though her eyesight is normal.

PCA affects the part of the brain responsible for visual processing. Its seemingly bizarre symptoms make this condition particularly prone to misdiagnosis.

Details of organisations offering information and support with dementia are available at the BBC Action Line here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1Y8B7y39T07GnTIMSLPJG2S/information-and-support-dementia>

Producer: Eve Streeter

Original music: A Brief Encounter by Max Walter
A Raconteur production for BBC Radio 4

MON 10:00 Woman's Hour (m00268ld)

Amy Dowden, Syrian Women's Affairs Office, Nancy in Oliver!

Strictly Come Dancing professional dancer Amy Dowden was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer last year, and she shared her treatment journey in a BBC documentary. Now, Amy is preparing for a comeback with the show's live tour, as well as a tour of her own: Reborn, with dancer Carlos Gu. Amy joins Krupa Padhy to tell us more.

South Korea is currently experiencing huge-scale protests against President Yoon Suk Yeol. Young women are instrumental to these protests, campaigning against the President who is often seen as a representation of a patriarchal society. BBC News Correspondent Jean Mackenzie is in Seoul – she joins Krupa to tell us more about the role being played by women.

Metal detecting is an activity often linked to men, but there's a women-only metal detecting group on Facebook that has thousands of members. Jade Cuttle is a member – she's also a BBC New Generation Thinker, journalist & PhD Researcher at Cambridge. She joins Krupa to tell us why she thinks more women should consider taking it up as a hobby.

In a significant development for Syria, Aisha al-Dibs has been appointed as the head of the Women's Affairs Office under the Syrian interim government. What does this mean for women in Syria, and what has their reaction been? Krupa speaks to Dr Rim Turkmani, Director of Syria Conflict Research Programme at the London School of Economics.

As a new production of Oliver! hits the West End, we look at the character of Nancy. Who was she and what does she mean to us today? Professor Jenny Hartley, academic advisor to the Charles Dickens Museum, and Shanay Holmes, who is playing Nancy in the new production, join Krupa to discuss Nancy and to perform a song from the musical.

Presenter: Krupa Padhy

Producer: Lottie Garton

MON 11:00 The Patch (m00268lk)

Gairloch

One random postcode and a story you probably haven't heard before.

Today, the random postcode generator sends producer Polly Weston further than she's ever been before, to IV21 2. It's remote and beautiful but the number of children has been in decline. Why? And what does it mean?

Fisherman Ian McWhinney's ancestors have lived in this postcode, and in this very same house, for hundreds of years. The house sits alone on an island in Badachro bay, called Dry Island - also known as the Independent Kingdom of Isonia. It's named after Ian's two daughters, Isla and Iona, aged 15 and 17 (their younger brother Finlay, 9, "was born too late" according to Isla). But in Ian's lifetime there's been a change in the number of young people here.

"There used to be two schools in this bay, now I'm responsible for 75% of the children in this area... there's four children and I've got three of them"

Polly catches the school bus with Isla to her high school, where the school roll has dropped below a hundred aged 11 - 18. The number of teachers is calculated according to the number of students, so for small rural schools it means tough decisions about the curriculum. Remote lessons have become a part of

life - with children sitting in small groups or alone on video calls with teachers elsewhere. Acting head Stuart Caddell is constantly aware of how many children are coming through from catchment primaries. Two of the catchment primaries have been mothballed in recent years, with fewer than five students.

But there are rumours of a remarkable baby boom in one catchment primary - down the road in Shieldaig. What's going on down there? And how on earth is the headteacher of Shieldaig Primary School going to fit all the kids on the stage for this year's Christmas performance?

Produced and presented by Polly Weston
Mixed by Ilse Lademann
Editor: Chris Ledgard

With thanks to Gairloch High School, Shieldaig Primary School, the C for Craic band and The Blas Festival.

MON 11:45 The Dead of Winter by Sarah Clegg (m00268lq)

Episode 1: Lords of Misrule

When we think about Christmas, we probably picture mangers, glowing fireplaces, carol singers and snow-covered hills. But behind all this, there's something much darker lurking in the shadows.

In her new book, The Dead of Winter, Sarah Clegg peels back the wrapping paper of modern Christmas to reveal the creepy creatures and customs hiding underneath. Beyond the jollity and bright enchantment of the festive season, there lurks a darker mood - one that has found expression over the centuries in a host of strange and unsettling traditions.

Cambridge-trained historian Sarah delves deep into the folklore of the Christmas season in Europe, detailing the way its terrifying past continues to haunt and entertain us now in the 21st Century. She experiences many of these traditions first-hand joining wassailing celebrations in Wales and attempting a Swedish Year Walk. She also explores the tension between darkness and light that lies at the heart of winter celebrations and argues that we need both the comforting glow of the hearth and the thrilling chill of ghost stories.

Today, Sarah introduces us to some of the ghastly and ghoulish creatures from ancient European Christmas folklore.

Reader: Fenella Woolgar
Producer: Pippa Vaughan
Abridger: Elizabeth Burke
Executive Producer: Jo Rowntree
A Loftus Media production for BBC Radio 4

MON 12:00 News Summary (m00268lj)

The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4.

MON 12:04 Archive on 4 (m001xnvk)

7" of Joy: The Single at 75

What makes the 7" single so magical is its power to instantly gratify, its ability to get the job done and dusted in approximately two minutes and 57 seconds. Its power outstrips its modest size.

Born out of a commercial war between record labels - shellac was expensive and fragile - RCA Records released the first 7" record on 10th January 1949. Eight decades later 7" singles are in more demand than ever from avid collectors - some commanding four figure sums - and a whole new generation born when the iPod became king are discovering the beauty of the physical 7" over the digital file and streaming.

In this Archive on 4, Pete Waterman, who knows a thing or two about the 7" single, charts its history since the 1940s.

Along the way, he hears from a plethora of people for whom the single has played a huge part of their lives - Petula Clark and John Leyton of 'Johnny Remember Me' fame remember the early years as recording artists in the 1950s. There was the moral panic of the rock'n'roll and beat generation, as mothers in headscarves queued up decrying the degenerative influence of the coffee bar and its jukebox. But the force of the 7" single changed lives, and helped to introduce the world to the teenager.

Pete guides us through pop culture high points, and low points, when British artists dominated the US singles charts - events that injected a newfound confidence and self-belief into the domestic music industry.

Among those recalling their own relationship with the 7" single is composer Simon May (of EastEnders fame) who had a series of singles hits in the 70s. He explains the excitement of watching the unlikely success stories rise up the charts. Pete also talks to producer Royston Mayoh who made the 80s ITV

music shows Razzmatazz and The Tube.

We hear about 7" singles parties when enthusiastic young fans would show off and swap their latest records. Pete talks about the sound of the vinyl single, we hear how they were made initially and from one of only two Jukebox factories that exist in the world where they are still making vinyl 7" singles

Pete looks at the phenomenon of the A and B side, the charity and novelty songs which were greatly enabled by the 7" market and the way covers changed everything in later years, and the bizarre and off-beat world of the "flexidisc" - the freebie giveaway often found on the cover of magazines.

Where does the single fit in history and where does it sit today? Peter Waterman, tries to answer the question in a way only he can.

Producers: Wayne Wright and Ashley Byrne
A Made in Manchester production for BBC Radio 4

MON 12:57 Weather (m00268m5)
The latest weather forecast

MON 13:00 World at One (m00268mb)
UK economy flatlines in the three months to September

As revised data shows the UK economy flatlined in the three months to September, we assess what the government can do to encourage growth. Plus, Honda and Nissan announce plans to merge. And, a postcard from the Yorkshire Dales – as we mark the 75th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act.

MON 13:45 My Poetry and Other Animals (m00268mk)
The Fox

The Poet Laureate looks into a tiger's eyes, holds a giant African land snail in the palm of his hand, and stands in the middle of a room full of spiders as he drafts a brand new animal poem across this series.

In this episode Simon Armitage goes to look for foxes in Surrey, and visits the poet Ted Hughes' old bedroom where he once had a mysterious dream about a burned creature that was half fox and half man.

Across different creaturely encounters, meetings with poets, and with some of the most vivid poems about animals ever written, Simon asks whether a poem can bring an animal closer to us, and if poetry can help us grasp what other animals really mean to our species.

Contributors:
Dr Mark Wormald
Adele Brand
The foxes of Surrey

Audio:
Ted Hughes interview - Unterberg Poetry Center
Ted Hughes interview - ITV

Produced by Faith Lawrence
Mixed by Sue Stonestreet

MON 14:00 The Archers (m00268mt)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 on Sunday]

MON 14:15 Hennikay (m00268n4)
Series 2

2. Nuts

Bill Bailey stars as Guy Starling, a middle aged man who, after 45 years, and for reasons quite unknown to him, is suddenly revisited by his imaginary childhood friend, Hennikay.

Guy's relationship with Hennikay has become strained. Because not only is Hennikay intensely irritating, in the way that only an 11 year-old imaginary best friend can be irritating, he also doesn't like Guy's new girlfriend, Gwenda.

Which is a problem. Because Gwenda is a very intense and serious woman, which are the exact attributes that Guy feels is missing from his life and relationship with Hennikay. But they are exactly the attributes that Hennikay dislikes about Gwenda. And, it is very obvious that Gwenda would undoubtedly dislike Hennikay if he was real and was in her head constantly.

And stuck in the middle of them is Guy. And it's driving him nuts.

And so, in desperation, he calls his old friend, Marika, a therapist (who mainly does pets but will also do couples) and

books some relationship counselling for him and Hennikay. And there he learns that even though it's irritating and annoying, there are some friendships that you don't choose – they choose you.

Bill Bailey stars in the second series of this warm, funny look at childhood, adulthood and the follies of modern life.

Written by David Spicer

Guy: Bill Bailey
Hennikay: Max Lester
Marika: Elizabeth Carling
Gwenda: Joanna Brookes

Producer: Liz Anstee
A CPL production for BBC Radio 4

MON 14:45 Marple: Three New Stories (m001g98x)
Murder at the Villa Rosa by Elly Griffiths

Murder at the Villa Rosa (Part 3)

Agatha Christie's iconic detective is reimagined for a new generation with a murder, a theft and a mystery where nothing is quite what it seems.

Murder at the Villa Rosa by Elly Griffiths
As Felix struggles with writer's block - and the effects of homemade limoncello - he starts to suspect that something strange is going on at the villa.

Read by John Heffernan
Abridged and produced by Eilidh McCreadie

Almost 50 years since the publication of Agatha Christie's last Miss Marple novel, 'Marple: Twelve New Stories' is a collection of ingenious stories by acclaimed authors who also happen to be Christie devotees.

MON 15:00 Great Lives (m00268nb)
Lauren Cuthbertson on Margot Fonteyn

Margot Fonteyn was an icon: a ballerina who helped build and indeed embodied the traditional image of a dancer, just as the artform was finding its feet on the British cultural scene.

From humble beginnings she became an international star, enjoying a dazzling career with the Royal Ballet, a glamorous social life as a diplomat's wife, and an electric dancing partnership with Rudolf Nureyev. But it was also a life infused with disappointment, controversy and heartbreak; much of which seems to have been hidden behind Margot's smiling public facade.

Dedicated listeners might remember that Margot Fonteyn has been the subject of a previous episode and although we rarely revisit past greats, when we do it's an opportunity to look afresh and see more. So today, with the assistance of nominating guest Lauren Cuthbertson - herself a dancer who has been with the Royal Ballet for more than 20 years - we take a closer look at the highs and lows of Margot's life.

Joining Matthew and Lauren to share their expert perspectives are Rosie Gerhard, a Lecturer in Dance Studies at the Royal Academy of Dance and creator of the blog 'British Ballet Now & Then'; and the film director and author Tony Palmer, who directed the 2005 film 'Margot'.

Presented by Matthew Parris and produced for BBC Studios
Audio by Lucy Taylor.

MON 15:30 History's Heroes (m00268nk)
History's Youngest Heroes

History's Youngest Heroes: 3. Grace Darling: Maiden of the Sea

When a reclusive young woman spots a shipwreck off the coast of Northumberland, she embarks on a perilous rescue mission. Little does she know, it will make her world-famous.

Nicola Coughlan shines a light on extraordinary young people from across history. Join her for 12 stories of rebellion, risk and the radical power of youth.

A BBC Studios Audio production for BBC Radio 4 and BBC Sounds.

Producer: Suniti Somaiya
Edit Producer: Melvin Rickarby
Assistant Producer: Lorna Reader
Executive Producer: Paul Smith
Written by Alex von Tunzelmann
Commissioning editor for Radio 4: Rhian Roberts

MON 16:00 Fifty-One Frenchmen (m00268nr)
[Repeat of broadcast at 13:30 on Sunday]

MON 16:30 The Kitchen Cabinet (m00268ll)
[Repeat of broadcast at 10:30 on Saturday]

MON 17:00 PM (m00268p2)
Biden commutes most federal death sentences

US president Joe Biden has commuted the sentences of most of the federal death row inmates, instead giving them prison without parole. Also: Why Cadbury has lost its royal warrant.

MON 18:00 Six O'Clock News (m00268p8)
The chancellor, Rachel Reeves, has said she faces a "challenge" in "fixing the economy" after revised figures show it flatlined in the first three months of the Labour government.

MON 18:15 The Wombles to the Rescue (m00268pg)
Episode 1: Great Uncle Bulgaria Gets A Letter

The Wombles live under Wimbledon Common, and it is their special responsibility to 'tidy up' everything that untidy human beings leave behind.

In this series, the Wombles have returned from an extended visit to Hyde Park and are back at their old burrow underneath Wimbledon Common. There's a Womble world shortage of 'this and that' and Great Uncle Bulgaria is called over to America to attend a crisis summit. Back home, a visit from Cousin Botany is full of surprise and new invention.

Full of fun and warmth, with an underpinning environmental message, The Wombles To The Rescue is based on the original books by Elisabeth Beresford, performed by Richard E Grant, directed by Johnny Vegas and nestled in a new soundscape for all the family to enjoy.

Episode 1: Great Uncle Bulgaria Gets A Letter
It's lovely to be back home under Wimbledon Common but a surprise visitor ruffles some feathers (or fur) and Great Uncle Bulgaria receives a very important letter.

Cast and Credits:
Performed by..... Richard E Grant
Written by..... Elisabeth Beresford
Abridged by..... Sally Harrison and Susan Vale
Script Consultant..... Kate Robertson
With thanks to..... Marcus Robertson

Music: The Wombling Song, composed and recorded by Mike Batt

Produced by..... Sally Harrison
Sound Engineer..... Wilfredo Acosta
Sound Designer..... Alisdair McGregor
Directed by..... Johnny Vegas

A Woolyback Productions and Mrs Mellor's Cellar collaboration for BBC Radio 4 and BBC Sounds

MON 18:30 I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue (m002689w)
Series 82

Episode 3

The nation's favourite wireless entertainment pays a visit to the Anvil Theatre in Basingstoke. Marcus Brigstocke and Henning Wehn take on Miles Jupp and Rachel Parris, with Jack Dee in the chair. Colin Sell provides piano accompaniment.

Producer: Jon Naismith
A Random production for BBC Radio 4

MON 19:00 The Archers (m00268p6)
Eddie sells Jolene some tickets for the concert at St. Stephen's. Jolene queries the price, but Eddie claims he bought them from a different website. Jolene asks Alan about the price of tickets, and when Alan mentions they're twenty pounds, Eddie desperately covers telling Alan they were VIP tickets and that's why they were expensive. Jolene and Alan round on Eddie. Realising he's been caught out he offers to give Jolene her money back. Alan asks Eddie how many tickets he bought and tells him he must refund everybody. Eddie has to come clean, telling Alan he can't refund as he's already spent the money on a new drone for George's business. Thinking on his feet, he offers a Grundy goodie bag instead. Jakob finds Kate looking at holidays. Although she's happy they're going somewhere warm, she wishes they could do a Scandi city break too. Jakob points out they can do that any time. Kate looks forward to cooking Christmas lunch for the family. They'll be eating in one of the yurts and she warns Jakob to keep it a secret. Later Alan asks Jakob if he's free to

play the organ over Christmas. Kate mentions they have plans for Christmas Eve. Talk then turns to the concert, and Kate and Jakob volunteer to be ushers. Jakob worries about letting Alan down over the lack of an organist. Kate tells him if he wants to play, he should do what he feels is right; they can always reschedule. She's a lucky woman – and Alan will be very happy.

MON 19:15 This Cultural Life (m002096b)

Salman Rushdie

One of the world's greatest novelists, Salman Rushdie has won many prestigious international literary awards and was knighted for services to literature in 2007. He won the Booker Prize in 1981 for *Midnight's Children*, a novel that was also twice voted as the best of all-time Booker winners. In 1989 Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini declared that Rushdie's fourth novel, *The Satanic Verses*, was blasphemous and pronounced a death sentence against its author. For over a decade he lived in hiding with close security, a period of his life that he wrote about in the 2012 memoir *Joseph Anton*. His most recent book *Knife* details the horrific stabbing he survived in 2022.

Talking to John Wilson, Salman Rushdie recalls his childhood in Bombay, and the folk tales and religious fables he grew up with. He chooses Indian independence and partition in 1947 as one of the defining moments of his creative life, a period that formed the historical backdrop to *Midnight's Children*. He discusses how, having first moved to England as a schoolboy and then to New York after the fatwa, the subject of migration has recurred throughout much of his work, including *The Satanic Verses*. Rushdie also explains how "surrealism, fabulism and mythical storytelling" are such an influence on his work, with particular reference to his 1999 novel *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* which was inspired by the ancient Greek tale of Orpheus and Eurydice. As Rushdie says, "truth in art can be arrived at through many doors".

Producer: Edwina Pitman

Archive used:

BBC News, 12 Aug 2022
 Newsnight, BBC2, 12 Aug 2022
 BBC Sound archive, India: Transfer of Power, 15 August 1947
 Nehru: Man of Two Worlds, BBC1, 27 Feb 1962
Midnight's Children, Book at Bedtime, BBC Radio 4, 27 August 1997
 Advert, Fresh Cream Cakes, 1979
 BBC News, 14 Feb 1989
The World At One, BBC Radio 4, 14 Feb 1989
 BBC News, 28 May 1989
 Today, BBC Radio 4, 27 April 1990
 Clip from *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, Season 9, episode 3

MON 20:00 The Briefing Room (m00260t1)

Is chainsaw economics working in Argentina?

In his election campaign President Milei set out his chainsaw approach to cutting spending and inflation. A year on, how has his presidency turned out?

David Aaronovitch and guests explore - why was Argentina's economy in such a bad state when Milei took office, what new measures has President Milei introduced, and how have things turned out so far?

Guests:
 Monica de Bolle, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics
 Tyler Cowan, Professor of economics at George Mason University
 Pablo Castro, Professor of micro and macro economics at Buenos Aires University

Presenter: David Aaronovitch
 Producers: Charlotte McDonald, Kirsteen Knight and Beth Ashmead Latham
 Sound engineers: Neil Churchill
 Editor: Richard Vadon
 Production Co-ordinator: Gemma Ashman

MON 20:30 BBC Inside Science (m00260t3)

The Year in Science

We look back on 2024 in science, from billionaires in space, to record-breaking heat here on Earth, and the meteoric rise of new weight-loss drugs.

From the biggest stories to the unsung and the plain fun, Inside Science presenter Victoria Gill hosts a special panel, featuring:

- Libby Jackson, head of space exploration at the UK Space Agency
 - Penny Sarchet, managing editor of New Scientist
 - Mark Miodownik, a materials scientist from University College London

Presenter: Victoria Gill
 Producers: Gerry Holt
 Editor: Martin Smith
 Production Co-ordinator: Jana Bennett-Holesworth

To discover more fascinating science content, head to bbc.co.uk search for BBC Inside Science and follow the links to The Open University.

MON 21:00 Start the Week (m0026816)

[Repeat of broadcast at 09:00 today]

MON 21:45 Mythical Creatures (m001tq99)

7. Giants

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.

As a child Rhianna was told of sleeping giants on the hilltops near her grandparents' house in Wales. Now she returns to the Welsh mountains and to Cader Idris – a striking mountain in the Eryri National Park – to meet a particularly intriguing giant. Rhianna discovers why giants have been important to humans for centuries. She explores what they can reveal about ourselves and our landscape, and what giant tales might offer us in the present day.

Storyteller: Peter Stevenson
 Other Contributors: Erin Kavanagh, Dr Mary Bateman

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 22:00 The World Tonight (m00268pw)

President Biden commutes many death row sentences

President Biden has commuted the sentences of nearly all the federal inmates on death row in the United States.

We'll hear from a woman who's been told that her mother's murderer will no longer be executed

and we'll also speak to a death row prisoner who's sentence was commuted today

We speak to the AfD in Germany after the Christmas market killings in Magdeburg

and the classic black and white Dr Who story that you can now see in glorious technicolour

MON 22:45 South Sea Tales by W. Somerset Maugham (m00268q3)

Mackintosh

South Sea Tales by Somerset Maugham - taken from stories written by Maugham largely based in and around the Malay States.
 All stories abridged by Lucy Ellis.

Read by Alan Cox
 Produced by Clive Brill
 A Brill production for BBC Radio 4

MON 23:00 The Missing Hancocks (m000c14)

Series 4

Christmas at Aldershot

The Missing Hancocks recreates those episodes of the classic Hancock's Half Hour that have been wiped or lost from the archive.

The first modern sitcom, Hancock's Half Hour made stars of Tony Hancock, Sid James and Kenneth Williams, and launched Ray Galton and Alan Simpson as one of the most successful comedy-writing partnerships in history. But 20 episodes of the show were missing from the BBC archives. Now, after four highly successful series, the final batch of those episodes have been lovingly re-recorded in front of a live audience at the BBC Radio Theatre.

Tonight's episode: Hancock is looking forward to Christmas, but then his call-up papers arrive. And as if that wasn't bad enough, his commanding officer turns out to be one Sidney James.....

Written by Ray Galton and Alan Simpson, and with the classic score re-recorded by the BBC Concert Orchestra, the show stars Kevin McNally, Kevin Eldon, Simon Greenall, Robin Sebastian and Margaret Cabourn-Smith. *Christmas At Aldershot* was first broadcast on the 21st December, 1954.

Produced by Neil Pearson & Hayley Sterling.

Written by Ray Galton & Simpson

Music recorded by the BBC Concert Orchestra, conducted by Levon Parikian.

A BBC Studios Production.

This programme was first broadcast on Christmas Day, 2019.

MON 23:30 Now You're Asking with Marian Keyes and Tara Flynn (m00268q9)

The Motorway Problem

Motorway driving, trouble at work with HR, and historic nudism exposed. Marian Keyes and Tara Flynn grace us with their witty and wise advice, answering their listeners' questions in the best and only way they know how.

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 the biggest - and smallest - of the things that keep us awake at night.

We have been inundated with emails since the last series but everything gets read and we're always on the lookout for new questions, queries and conundrums to include on the show.

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

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

TUESDAY 24 DECEMBER 2024

TUE 00:00 Midnight News (m00268qf)

National and international news from BBC Radio 4

TUE 00:15 Bunk Bed (m001pfhn)

Series 10

4. Actors Jane Horrocks and David Morrissey join Patrick Marber and Peter Curran to grapple with life's woes and wonders.

Bunk Bed goes on tour - after a fashion. Peter Curran's old caravan is dragged to a field at this summer's Black Deer Americana festival. Patrick Marber hates every moment.

'Bunk Bed is funny, strange, enchanting, and beautifully put together.' - The Observer

'Bunk Bed is beloved by broadsheet critics, but don't let that put you off....' - Metro

Produced by Peter Curran

A Foghorn production for BBC Radio 4

TUE 00:30 The Dead of Winter by Sarah Clegg (m00268lq)

[Repeat of broadcast at 11:45 on Monday]

TUE 00:48 Shipping Forecast (m00268qm)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

TUE 01:00 Selection of BBC World Service Programmes (m00268qr)

BBC Radio 4 joins the BBC World Service.

TUE 05:20 Shipping Forecast (m00268qw)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

TUE 05:30 News Briefing (m00268qz)

The latest news from BBC Radio 4

TUE 05:43 Prayer for the Day (m00268r3)

Moments of Peace

A spiritual comment and prayer to start the day with Canon Ann Easter

Good Morning.

I'm the proud mother of three people, all grown up with children of their own now, but still, when we celebrate their birthdays, my children will say 'Come on Mum. Tell us. What were you doing X number of years ago today' because then I tell them the story of their birth and the days surrounding it. The midwives who were with me, because the children were all born at home; the excited family and friends who came to visit and how each of the babies was very much an individual from the word go while, at the same time, looking like each other and showing various family resemblances too.

My pregnancies were thankfully straightforward and, I remember vividly how, each time, I experienced, a day or two before the birth, a distinct change of pace. Somehow, I felt that my body was gearing itself up for the big push and I needed to stop doing other things and gather all my strength and resolve ready for it - they don't call it 'labour' for nothing!

And I think that now, today, the day before we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we can feel a change of pace around us too. Cards and messages have been despatched, presents bought, wrapped and awaiting eager unwrapping, so I hope that we'll feel that change of pace and that there will be moments of calm and rest now that we will have done as much as we can to make this time special.

Lord Jesus, among all the hullabaloo of Christmas, give us moments of your peace to savour the love that you bring.

Amen.

TUE 05:45 Farming Today (m00268r7)

24/12/24 - Powerless: the rural community getting connected to the national grid

For 50 years the people living in the Upper Coquet Valley in Northumberland have campaigned to get mains electricity.

Living off-grid in one of the most remote areas of England means relying on expensive, dirty diesel generators which often break down and are easily overloaded. But now, a stroke of good fortune means it is finally happening.

A cable is being laid up the valley to connect three emergency phone masts to the national grid which means 16 properties, most of them farms, can be connected at the same time in a project jointly funded by the Home Office and the landowner, the MOD.

We hear from the farming families about how their lives are about to be transformed, about why the Northumberland National Park Authority allowed the scheme to go ahead even though not all the cable could be buried, and from the engineers who are tasked with doing the job with as little impact on a precious landscape as possible.

Produced and presented by Jo Lonsdale.

TUE 06:00 Today (m00268mh)

Justin Webb and Simon Jack are joined by Frank Cottrell-Boyce, the author, screenwriter, for the first of this year's guest edited programmes.

Frank Cottrell-Boyce, who was appointed the Waterstone's UK Children's Laureate earlier this year, has used his guest edit of Today to look at the health benefits of reading to young children.

TUE 09:00 Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics (m00268lf)

Saturnalia

No togas today please. Natalie celebrates the mid-winter festival of Ancient Rome, Saturnalia. According to Catullus, it's the 'best of days'.

Expect cross-dressing, sweets, drinking games and the wearing of special pyjamas. Oh and anarchy and jokes. Sounds a bit like a Christmas pantomime? Not surprising, according to veteran pantomime dame André Vincent, who traces the origins of panto back to the fifth century. Early in that same century - late antiquity - a Roman Christian named Macrobius wrote the most comprehensive extant guide to Saturnalia, which was celebrated in some places, in one way or another, until possibly the eleventh century.

You are invited to be part of this festive show which includes gifts for the entire Radio Theatre audience (cue noisy rustling of sweet bags) and the wearing of traditional Saturnalian pointy hats (the 'pileus') to celebrate. Even Professor Llewelyn Morgan has one. Honest.

Producer...Mary Ward-Lowery

TUE 09:30 All in the Mind (m00268mv)

The Psychology of Nostalgia

In the first of two special holiday episodes, Claudia Hammond and an expert panel of psychologists look back, nostalgically.

At this festive time of year, you might be thinking wistfully about Christmas past – perhaps you'll be rewatching old films, arguing over a game of Monopoly, or listening to Christmas music that drives you mad. Maybe you are looking back with rose-tinted spectacles on the Christmases gone by that seem somehow more magical than they are now. Or perhaps it's hard to look back without feeling a tinge of sadness. Whether you fall on the more bitter or more sweet side of bittersweet, this is the bittersweet feeling of nostalgia. And it is particularly rife at this time of year.

But nostalgia wasn't always just a feeling. Historian Agnes Arnold Forster tells Claudia and the panel that once it was viewed as a disease so deadly that it appeared on thousands of death certificates. And now this poignant emotion stirs political action, bonds us to others, and guides our very understanding of ourselves.

Peter Olusoga, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Sheffield Hallam University, Daryl O'Connor, Professor of Psychology at the University of Leeds, and Catherine Loveday, Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience at the University of Westminster, join Claudia in the studio to discuss how leaning into nostalgia can help us feel better, reduce pain and even inject a bit of romance into life.

Presenter: Claudia Hammond
Producer: Lorna Stewart
Content Editor: Holly Squire
Studio Manager: Emma Harth

TUE 10:00 Woman's Hour (m00268n2)

Minette Walters, Menopause supplement adverts, Blake Lively

Bestselling author Minette Walters shot to fame in the 1990s with her award-winning gritty crime novels *The Ice House*, *The Sculptress* and *The Scold's Bridle*. She continued to write successful crime fiction for over twenty years until, inspired by a plague pit, Minette changed tack in 2017 and began to write historical novels. She joins Krupa Padhy to discuss her new novel *The Players*.

Struggling with menopause symptoms? Social media is full of ads promising miracle cures, but many are too good to be true. The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has banned several ads for making unsubstantiated claims about menopause relief. Krupa discusses this issue with Donna Castle from the ASA, menopause expert Dr Paula Briggs and Katrina Anderson from Mills Reeve.

The summer box office hit *It Ends With Us*, starring Blake Lively and Justin Baldoni, has taken a dramatic turn off-screen. Last week, Lively filed a legal complaint against her co-star, accusing him of sexual harassment and orchestrating a smear campaign against her. The BBC's Yasmin Rufo tells Krupa the latest.

The Gavin and Stacey finale will be on our screens on Christmas Day, BBC 1 at 9pm. Krupa speaks to our own slice of Barry Island - Linda Bailey is the tour guide of the official Gavin and Stacey Bus Tour on Barry. She runs the tour as Nessa's second cousin - Sally from the Valleys - and they visit all the filming locations.

Festive rom-coms tend to follow a comfortably predictable format - small towns covered in snow, romantic misunderstandings and a happy ending. Film critic Rhianna Dillon and journalist Kayleigh Dray join Krupa to discuss this year's releases, whether there's a deeper meaning behind them and the rise of the 'cinnamon roll' man.

TUE 11:00 Add to Playlist (m002622x)

Festive classics with Amy Harman, Francesca Ter-Berg and Roderick Williams

Bassoonist Amy Harman, cellist Francesca Ter-Berg and baritone and composer Roderick Williams get in the festive spirit as they create a dynamic playlist of five classic seasonal tracks. In this Add to Playlist winter special, Anna Phoebe and Jeffrey Boakye are going to take us from a solitary chorister to a massive Christmas singalong banger, so sleigh bells at the ready...

Producer: Jerome Weatherald
Presented with musical direction by Jeffrey Boakye and Anna Phoebe

The five tracks in this week's playlist:

Once In Royal David's City by The Choir of King's College, Cambridge

Drei Dreidel by Moïse Oyscher
Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
All I Want for Christmas is You by Mariah Carey
The Christmas Song by Nat King Cole

Other music in this episode:

Here Comes Santa Claus by Bob Dylan
Hanukkah Dance by Woody Guthrie
Hedwig's Theme from Harry Potter by John Williams
March by Tchaikovsky from *The Nutcracker*
Trepak - the Russian Dance - by Tchaikovsky from *The Nutcracker*
Sugar Rum Cherry by Duke Ellington and His Orchestra
Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy by Mendel
Boas Festas by Simone
Sugar Plum Fairy Introlude by Mariah Carey

TUE 11:45 The Dead of Winter by Sarah Clegg (m00268n8)

Episode 2: Monstrous Visitors

When we think about Christmas, we probably picture mangers, glowing fireplaces, carol singers and snow-covered hills. But behind all this, there's something much darker lurking in the shadows.

In her new book, *The Dead of Winter*, Sarah Clegg peels back the wrapping paper of modern Christmas to reveal the creepy creatures and customs hiding underneath. Beyond the jollity and bright enchantment of the festive season, there lurks a darker mood - one that has found expression over the centuries in a host of strange and unsettling traditions.

Cambridge-trained historian Sarah delves deep into the folklore of the Christmas season in Europe, detailing the way its terrifying past continues to haunt and entertain us now in the 21st Century. She experiences many of these traditions first-hand joining wassailing celebrations in Wales and attempting a Swedish Year Walk. She also explores the tension between darkness and light that lies at the heart of winter celebrations and argues that we need both the comforting glow of the hearth and the thrilling chill of ghost stories.

Today, Sarah investigates monsters, following some dark traditions from early December, and sees how they mingle with - and sometimes clash against - more familiar Christmas customs.

Reader: Fenella Woolgar
Producer: Pippa Vaughan
Abridger: Elizabeth Burke
Executive Producer: Jo Rowntree
A Loftus Media production for BBC Radio 4

TUE 12:00 News Summary (m00268nf)

The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4.

TUE 12:04 Archive on 4 (m001y20q)

ABBA: Inside the Music

On the 50th anniversary of ABBA's legendary Eurovision win, this feature explores the group's music from the inside out - their phenomenal songwriting skill, approach to melody and vocal harmony, the structure of their songs, their pioneering mixing and recording.

From Benny and Bjorn composing from piano on the tiny island of Viggsö in the Swedish archipelago to the myriad of ways in which the vocals of Agnetha (a soprano) and Frida (a mezzo) are blended together in the studio, ABBA's writing, singing and production is opened up to illuminate their entire sound world.

ABBA - Inside the Music follows the evolution of their craft across all eight studio albums before the band separated, from the Schlager influenced folk of *Ring Ring* (1973) to the electronic soundscapes of *The Visitors* (1981) - a huge musical transformation worthy of comparison to *The Beatles*. Along the way, the group experimented with genres as diverse as reggae, glam rock, prog rock, disco and latterly musical theatre. But behind all of it is their signature, Nordic blend of melancholy and euphoria, the two moods - minor and major - running together across the whole of ABBA's output.

The group weren't always as beloved as they are today. ABBA faced huge derision from the serious music press both at home and abroad, which accused them of ignoring politics and disengaging pop music from the counter-culture. "We have met the enemy and they are them," wrote one critic for *Rolling Stone*. But even their fiercest opponents acknowledged ABBA's compositional skill and the special dynamic of Frida and Agnetha's vocals.

Hearing from songwriters, producers, composers, singers and critics, this programme goes inside ABBA's score in search of

their craft and their musical art.

Multiple Ivor Novello winner and Grammy-nominated songwriter Iain Archer presents.

Featuring music writers Jan Gradvall and Paul Morley, ABBA's live concert engineer Claes af Geijerstam, singer and broadcaster Catherine Bott, jazz critic and author Kevin Le Gendre, songwriter Guy Chambers, classical singer Anne Sofie von Otter, ABBA historian Carl Magnus Palm, director of The Ivors Academy Tom Gray, composer and conductor Leo Geyer, singer songwriters Annika Kilkeny and Connie Talbot, author and artistic associate at the South Bank Gillian Moore and Dan Gillespie Sells, lead singer of The Feeling and composer of the musical 'Everybody's Talking About Jamie'.

Presenter and guitar: Iain Archer
Producer and piano (except when it's Benny): Simon Hollis

A Brook Lapping production for BBC Radio 4

TUE 12:57 Weather (m00268np)

The latest weather forecast

TUE 13:00 World at One (m00268nv)

Spacecraft attempts closest-ever approach to Sun

A Nasa spacecraft is attempting to make history with the closest-ever approach to the Sun. Also: We preview the Christmas Day finale of Gavin and Stacey.

TUE 13:45 My Poetry and Other Animals (m00268p0)

The Tiger

Is it possible to capture a tiger in a poem?

The poet laureate, Simon Armitage, has written a lot about animals in the past, but always at a distance. He wants that to change - to feel that he has captured the spirit of an animal, and done it justice in a brand new poem.

In this episode Simon measures William's Blake's poem 'The Tyger' against the real thing, and asks whether it's true that if a big cat could speak, we still wouldn't understand anything it could say.

Contributors:

Daniel Simmonds from ZSL London Zoo
Pascale Petit - poetry collections include 'Tiger Girl' and 'Beast' (forthcoming)
Crispin and Zac - Sumatran tigers at ZSL London Zoo
Rupert Read - philosopher and author of 'Why Climate Breakdown Matters'

Voices heard in programme reading lines from William Blake's

'The Tyger':
John Nettles
Angela Thorne
Sir Michael Tippett

Produced by Faith Lawrence
Mixed by Sue Stonestreet

TUE 14:00 The Archers (m00268p6)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 on Monday]

TUE 14:15 Drama on 4 (m001dn8h)

The Owl and the Nightingale

In this highly engaging new translation of the lively medieval poem The Owl and the Nightingale, Simon Armitage communicates this twitter spat with all the energy, humour and theatricality of the original. A narrator overhears a fiery verbal contest between the two birds which moves from the philosophical to the ridiculous. The disputed issues resonate today - concerning identity, class, cultural attitudes and the right to be heard. They argue about everything from toilet habits to parenting skills, the song of one trying to outdo the other.

Narrator - Simon Armitage
Owl - Maxine Peake
Nightingale - Rachael Stirling

TUE 15:00 A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols (m002611f)

Christmas 2024

A service of carols, hymns and readings live from the candlelit Chapel of King's College, Cambridge.

Processional: Once in royal David's City (Irby, descant Ledger)
Bidding Prayer (read by the Dean)
Sussex Carol (arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams)

First lesson: Genesis 3 vv. 8-19 (read by a Chorister)

Adam lay ybounden (Matthew Martin)

Second lesson: Genesis 22 vv. 15-19 (read by a College student)

Nowell, nowell, nowell (Elizabeth Maconchy)

Third lesson: Isaiah 9 vv. 2, 6-7 (read by a member of College staff)

A great and mighty wonder (arr. James Whitbourn)

It came upon the midnight clear (descant John Scott)

Fourth lesson: Isaiah 11 vv. 1-9 (read by the Master over the Choristers)

The Lamb (John Tavener)

Gabriel's message (Basque trad., arr. Willcocks)

Fifth lesson: Luke 1 vv. 26-38 (read by a Fellow)

Ave Regina Caelorum (Orlandus Lassus)

Nativity Carol (John Rutter)

Sixth lesson: Luke 2 vv. 1-7 (read by the Mayor of Cambridge)

Hereford Carol (arr. Christopher Robinson)

While shepherds watched (Este's Psalter, descant Nicholas Marston)

Seventh lesson: Luke 2 vv. 8-20 (read by the Director of Music)

Three Points of Light (Grayston Ives) - 2024 Commission

I saw three ships (Simon Preston)

Eighth lesson: Matthew 2 vv. 1-12 (read by the Vice-Provost)

Lullay, dear Jesus (Polish, arr. Arnold Bax)

Benedicamus Domino (Peter Warlock)

Ninth lesson: John 1 vv. 1-14 (read by the Provost)

O come, all ye faithful (Adeste Fideles, arr. Willcocks, Daniel Hyde)

Collect and Blessing

Hark, the herald angels sing (Mendelssohn, arr. Willcocks)

Organ voluntaries:

In dulci jubilo, BWV 729 (Bach)

Final from Symphonie VI (L. Vierne)

The Revd. Dr. Stephen Cherry, Dean

Daniel Hyde, Director of Music

The Revd. Dr Mary Kells, Chaplain

Harrison Cole, Assisting Organist

For millions listening around the world, A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, live from the candlelit Chapel of King's College, Cambridge, marks the beginning of Christmas. The service is based around nine Bible readings which tell the story of the loving purposes of God. They are interspersed with carols old and new, sung by the world-famous Chapel choir who also lead the congregation in traditional Christmas hymns.

A new work has been commissioned for the Christmas Eve service every year since 1983, and this year Grayston Ives has set a poem by Peter Cairns, a choral scholar at King's in the 1960s - 'Three Points of Light.' The composer writes - 'The Star in the East is well known as an integral part of the Christmas story. But the poem extends that idea of light: the shepherd's fire, and the glow from the inn. It conjures a compelling picture of the birth of Jesus, viewed from an unusual angle. The music aims to reflect the atmosphere of that scene: the cold, the stillness, the drama, and the joy.'

Pieces by other living composers such as Matthew Martin and John Rutter, sit alongside music by their mainly twentieth century peers such as Arnold Bax, Elizabeth Maconchy, Peter Warlock, John Tavener and Simon Preston. A number of the descants and arrangements are by musicians with a particular King's association, including Nicholas Marston (the current Praelector and Director of Studies in Music), David Willcocks, Philip Ledger and Daniel Hyde. An arrangement by James Whitbourn, who died in March, marks his contribution over a number of years to the Festival.

Producer: Philip Billson. A BBC Audio North production for Radio 4.

TUE 16:30 Beyond Belief (m00268ph)

Blue Christmas

Mona Siddiqui and guests hear from Rev Denzil Larbi. He reflects on his cousin, Elianne Andam, who was 15 when she was fatally stabbed at a bus stop in Croydon, South London, in September 2023. He discusses their Christmases together and how the family mark Christmas without her.

The panel of guests explore the complexities that often come with religious festivals especially those that come with an expectation of jollity.

Do religions do enough for those who are grieving or isolated at times of collective merriment? Should religious leaders and communities be more responsible and nuanced in their approach? And, are some religions better at dealing with grief than others?

To discuss Mona is joined by Jasvir Singh, from the Department of Theology and Religion at Birmingham University, Chair of City Sikhs, and the founder and Chair of the British Sikh Report, the Revd Lucy Winkett, Rector of St James's, Piccadilly, and Priest-in-Charge of St Pancras's Church, Euston Road, and Remona Aly, British Muslim

journalist, commentator and broadcaster with a focus on faith, identity and lifestyle.

Producer: Alexa Good
Assistant Producer: Linda Walker
Editor: Tim Pemberton

TUE 17:00 PM (m00268pm)

Protesters in Syria call for protection for minorities

The latest as demonstrators take to the streets in Damascus over the burning of a Christmas tree. Plus, why do so many of us leave our Christmas shopping to the very last minute?

TUE 18:00 Six O'Clock News (m00268ps)

The new leader Ahmed al-Sharaa said it was his aim to unite and stabilise the country

TUE 18:15 The Wombles to the Rescue (m00268py)

Episode 2: Tobermory Sees Trouble Ahead

The Wombles live under Wimbledon Common, and it is their special responsibility to 'tidy up' everything that untidy human beings leave behind.

In this series, the Wombles are back at their old burrow underneath Wimbledon Common. There's a Womble world shortage of 'this and that' and Great Uncle Bulgaria is called over to America to attend a crisis summit. Back home, a visit from Cousin Botany is full of surprise and new invention.

Full of fun and warmth, with an underpinning environmental message, The Wombles to the Rescue is based on the original books by Elisabeth Beresford, performed by Richard E Grant, directed by Johnny Vegas and nestled in a new soundscape for all the family to enjoy.

Episode 2: Tobermory Sees Trouble Ahead

All the young Wombles are far too excited about being back in their old home burrow to notice that Great Uncle Bulgaria, Tobermory and Madame Cholet are rather quiet and thoughtful. Exactly who will accompany Great Uncle Bulgaria on his overseas trip? And who's going to run the burrow while he's away?

Cast and Credits:

Performed by..... Richard E Grant
Written by..... Elisabeth Beresford
Abridged by..... Sally Harrison and Susan Vale
Script Consultant..... Kate Robertson
With thanks to..... Marcus Robertson

Music: The Wombling Song, composed and recorded by Mike Batt

Produced by..... Sally Harrison
Sound Engineer..... Wilfredo Acosta
Sound Designer..... Alisdair McGregor
Directed by..... Johnny Vegas

A Woollyback Productions and Mrs Mellor's Cellar collaboration for BBC Radio 4 and BBC Sounds

TUE 18:30 Best Medicine (m00268c1)

Series 2

6. Pain Management, Organoids, Prosthetic Leg Covers

Joining Kiri this week is comedian Desiree Burch who explains the best ways to cope with pain following surgery. Dr Abdullah Khan engineers mini versions of human organs in a dish to enable more effective testing of new medical treatments, and Mark Williams shows off personalised prosthetic legs clad in anything from gold and flames to beer and the Welsh Flag.

Best Medicine is your weekly dose of laughter, hope and incredible medicine. Award-winning comedian Kiri Pritchard-McLean is joined by a funny and fascinating panel of comedians, doctors, scientists, and historians to celebrate medicine's inspiring past, present and future.

Each week, Kiri challenges a panel of medical experts and a comedian to make a case for what they think is 'the best medicine', and each guest champions anything from world-changing science or an obscure invention, to an every-day treatment, an uplifting worldview, an unsung hero or a futuristic cure.

Whether it's origami surgical robots, life-changing pineapple UTI vaccines, Victorian scandal mags, denial, sleep, tiny beating organoid hearts, lifesaving stem cell transplants, gold poo donors or even crying - it's always something worth celebrating.

Hosted by Kiri Pritchard-McLean

Featuring: Desiree Burch, Dr Abdullah Khan and Dr Mark Williams

Written by Laura Claxton, Mel Owen, Kiri Pritchard-McLean, Nicky Roberts and Ben Rowse

Producers: Tashi Radha and Ben Worsfield

Theme tune composed by Andrew Jones

A Large Time production for BBC Radio 4

TUE 19:00 The Archers (m00268q5)

There's a Christmas Eve surprise in Ambridge, and Brian is not amused.

TUE 19:15 This Cultural Life (m0011s66)

Nigel Kennedy

John Wilson's guest is the violinist Nigel Kennedy. A prodigy whose childhood talents were nurtured by Yehudi Menuhin, one of the greatest violinists of the 20th century, Kennedy himself became an international star in 1989 with his recording of Vivaldi's Four Seasons. It sold over three million copies, topping the UK classical charts for a year and went on to be listed as the biggest selling classical album of all time in the Guinness Book Of Records. An unconventional classical musician from the outset, it wasn't just his wardrobe, accent and attitude that set him apart. As well as recording all the major violin concertos, his repertoire includes jazz standards, folk tunes and Jimi Hendrix. He remains one of the world's greatest virtuosos.

For This Cultural Life, Nigel chooses his two violinist mentors; Yehudi Menuhin and the French musician Stéphane Grappelli with whom he shared a love of jazz and improvisation. Going to New York to study at the prestigious Juilliard School also proved a turning point for Kennedy, not so much for the teaching he received there, but for the legendary jazz musicians like Jimmy Rowles and Ellis Larkins that he sought out in clubs downtown and in Harlem. Nigel also discusses how being a fan of Aston Villa football club has made him think about crowd dynamics in his concerts and reveals the influence of his dog Huxley on his approach to his career.

Producer: Edwina Pitman

TUE 20:00 Café Hope (m00268qb)

Café Hope's Christmas Dinner

A Café Hope with a difference as Rachel Burden speaks to a range of guests who are making the festive season better for their community.

We hear from author Lemn Sissay about the Christmas dinner for young care leavers, Nicola Marshall who started meet and grief get together after the death of her son, and newsagents Shashi and Deepan Patel talk about how opening their shop on Christmas Day over 20 years ago, has now turned into an annual Christmas party with hundreds attending over the day.

Café Hope is our virtual Radio 4 coffee shop, where guests pop in for a brew and a chat to tell us what they're doing to make things better in big and small ways. Think of us as sitting in your local café, cooking up plans, hearing the gossip, and celebrating the people making the world a better place.

We're all about trying to make change. It might be a transformational project that helps an entire community, or it might be about trying to make one life a little bit easier. And the key here is in the trying. This is real life. Not everything works, and there are struggles along the way. But it's always worth a go.

You can contact us on cafehopen@bbc.co.uk

Silent Night performed by the Lighthouse Choir
Arrangement by Kirk Franklin
Composed by Joseph Mohr and Franz Xaver Gruber

TUE 20:40 In Touch (m00268qg)

Christmas Eve: With Chris McCausland and Betsy Griffin

What a year it has been for blind comedian Chris McCausland. Having just been crowned Strictly Come Dancing's 2024 winner, Chris joins the In Touch team for a very special Christmas edition of the programme, co-hosted by 11-year-old author and YouTube star Betsy Griffin.

Presenter: Peter White
Producer: Beth Hemmings
Production Coordinator: David Baguley

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 of 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 Crossing Continents (m00268qj)

Poland's Ghosts, Ukraine's Heroes

Ukraine and Poland are neighbours and close allies in today's conflict with Russia. But the ghosts of victims of an earlier war have returned to divide them. Tens of thousands of Poles were murdered by Ukrainians in Volhynia, in what's now western Ukraine, in 1943. Most of the victims still lie in unmarked graves, and Ukraine has only just lifted a ban on exhuming the bodies.

That followed heavy diplomatic pressure by Poland, which threatened to block moves towards Ukrainian integration with the EU unless the ban were lifted.

But Poland's demand has stirred a controversy inside Ukraine about one of the darkest periods of its history. Ukrainian nationalists who were involved in the massacre - and their leader Stepan Bandera - are regarded by many Ukrainians as heroes.

Reporter Tim Whewell travels through Poland and western Ukraine to try to find out what really happened in 1943, and ask whether Poland and Ukraine can ever lay a fiercely-contested history to rest. And can the record of Ukraine's Second World War nationalists be openly discussed without giving a propaganda victory to Russia, which has tried to use the subject to vilify Ukraine?

Produced and presented by Tim Whewell

Sound mix: Rod Farquhar

Research by Grzegorz Sokół, Taras Shumeiko and Serhiy Solodko

Translation by Eugenia Maresch, Grzegorz Sokół and Serhiy Solodko

Production co-ordinator: Gemma Ashman

Editor: Penny Murphy

Wild bird recordings by Izabela Dłużyk

"Lecieli Zurawie" (Cranes Were Flying) sung by Franciszka Bydychaj

"Ave Maria" from "Kres Kresów" oratorium, composer Krzesimir Dębski

"Siadla Hanula Na Posażęfiku" (Hanula Sat on her Dowry) sung by Olga Kozielec and Anna Jurkiewicz, of the "Wolyń w Pieśniach" ("Volhynia in Song") project

TUE 21:30 Short Cuts (m00268qn)

Merry Christmas

A criminal defence lawyer finds a surprising new job foisted upon him and a son attempts to recover his joyfulness on a family holiday. Josie Long presents short festive documentaries and merry sonic adventures.

Family Yoga

Produced by Kit Callin

A Conversation with my Mum at Christmas

Featuring Rhik Samadder

A version of this story first appeared in Rhik Samadder's

memoir, I Never Said I Loved You

Music by The Enchanted Cinema

Produced by Sarah Cuddon

Miracle on the George Washington Bridge

Produced by Luke Green

Santa Calls

Featuring Matt Storrs

Produced by Talia Augustidis

Curated by Axel Kacoutié, Eleanor McDowall and Andrea

Rangecroft

Series Producer: Eleanor McDowall

A Falling Tree production for BBC Radio 4

TUE 22:00 The World Tonight (m00268qs)

Protests in Syria over burning of Christmas tree

There have been protests in Syria over the burning of a Christmas tree - amid fears that religious minorities might be vulnerable. We speak to a Syrian Christian.

Also on the programme:

The government has launched a consultation into the phasing-out of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030. Does the plan need a

re-think?

A top food psychologist with a guide on how to make your Christmas dinner a multisensory success.

And a journalist freed in the summer's massive prisoner swap between Russia and the West on spending her first Christmas back with her family.

TUE 22:45 South Sea Tales by W. Somerset Maugham (m00268qx)

The Door of Opportunity

South Sea Tales by Somerset Maugham - taken from stories written by Maugham largely based in and around the Malay States.

All stories abridged by Lucy Ellis.

Read by Sarah Lambie

Produced by Clive Brill

A Brill Production for BBC Radio 4

TUE 23:00 Soul Music (m0012pb3)

A Ceremony of Carols by Benjamin Britten

In 1942, Benjamin Britten boarded the M.S. Axel Johnson, a Swedish cargo vessel, to make the journey home to England after three years in America. During the voyage, the ship stopped at Halifax, Nova Scotia, where Britten came across a poetry anthology in a bookshop - The English Galaxy of Shorter Poems. In his cabin, he began work on setting some of these poems for voices and harp. Originally conceived as a series of unrelated songs, the piece developed into an extended choral composition for Christmas.

There are some pieces of music we return to at special moments and, for many, Britten's A Ceremony of Carols is a beloved winter piece - "Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without a performance of it" says harpist Sally Pryce, who recalls performing the piece in deepest winter, desperately trying to keep her fingers warm as she prepared to play the first harp notes. Music writer Gavin Plumley tells the story of Britten's wartime voyage home and reflects on Christmases past and present. Matt Peacock remembers a very special performance of the work bringing together professional musicians, choristers and people experiencing homelessness in an Oxford college chapel. Dr Imani Mosley reflects on how the piece has helped her create a winter ritual in sunny Florida and how its meaning has changed since losing her partner. Conductor and composer Graham Ross is Director of Music at Clare College, Cambridge; he takes us deep into Britten's sound world and reflects on the genius of his approach to setting texts and the mastery of his writing for harp and voices. And Johanna Rehbaum remembers the joy of singing the work with the women of her choir, days before giving birth to her son.

Produced in Bristol by Mair Bosworth for BBC Audio

TUE 23:30 Midnight Mass (m00268r2)

The traditional Christmas Eve celebration of Midnight Mass comes live from Leeds Cathedral.

Christmas begins with a joyous celebration of the Mass of the Nativity. The Bishop of Leeds, Marcus Stock, leads the service as the Catholic Church begins a Holy Year of Jubilee under the spiritual theme of 'Pilgrims of Hope'.

With Traditional carols, hymns and Mozart's Missa Brevis in C sung by Leeds Cathedral Choir.

Conducted by Thomas Leech and Elizabeth Leather with William Campbell on the Organ.

Producer:

Carmel Lonergan

WEDNESDAY 25 DECEMBER 2024

WED 00:48 Shipping Forecast (m00268r6)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

WED 01:00 Selection of BBC World Service Programmes (m00268r9)

BBC Radio 4 joins the BBC World Service.

WED 05:20 Shipping Forecast (m00268rc)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

WED 05:30 News Briefing (m00268rf)

The latest news from BBC Radio 4

WED 05:43 Prayer for the Day (m00268rh)

Merry Christmas!

A spiritual comment and prayer to start the day with Canon Ann Easter

Good morning and Merry Christmas!

Across the world today there will be millions of people attending church services, and getting together for meals and parties, all to celebrate the birth of a baby to a very young mother.

We hear how the young couple had to travel a long way, how they ended up round the back of an inn, in the stable where the animals were kept, and their baby was born there. They had some unusual visitors – shepherds and royalty – it must have all been very strange.

But what I notice about the Christmas story is the angels – it's an angel who tells Mary that she's pregnant; another angel who tells her fiancé, Joseph, that it's all part of God's plan, not to worry it's all going to be ok; angels tell the shepherds to come and see the special baby, and it's another angel who then tells Joseph they've got to move on to Egypt, because Herod and his troops are after them.

I don't believe that I have actually seen an angel but I do think that they're somehow woven into Creation and that they hover around us both to protect us and to point to things God wants us to notice. Sometimes I've caught the whiff of a perfume that's somehow familiar and it reminds me very vividly of something or someone; or I've caught a light in the corner of my eye as if someone's fleetingly there – and I think they are signs of the angels' presence.

Dear God, on this day long ago, your angels sang of peace and love at your birth. I pray that we may be aware of your angels today and be comforted and inspired by them.

Amen.

WED 05:45 Farming Today (m00268rk)

25/12/24 - Farming and star gazing in an International Dark Skies Reserve

Cranborne Chase National Landscape is an area of outstanding national beauty, which spans the chalk hills of Wiltshire, Dorset, Hampshire and Somerset. It's also an International Dark Sky Reserve, the first UK landscape to get this status back in 2019.

We visit Marshwood Farm in Dinton which attracts visitors who want a bit of "astro tourism": campers come to stay there because it's a place perfect for star gazing. It's not just astronomers who benefit from darker skies, artificial lighting can be bad for insects and birds too. We speak to the farmers who live and work here, visitors out on a night of star gazing and the landscape's dark skies advisor who helps farms and businesses avoid light pollution.

Produced and presented by Rebecca Rooney.

WED 06:00 Archive on 4 (m00268nz)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 on Saturday]

WED 07:00 Christmas Service (m00268s1)

The Royal Albert Hall is filled with the sound of carols for The Salvation Army Christmas Concert as thousands bring their voices to the celebration of Christmas.

A feast of festive music, readings and reflections recorded at the Royal Albert Hall featuring personal stories of hope from those helped by the organisation and the Christmas story read by celebrity guests.

Favourite carols including Hark the Herald Angels Sing, Once in Royal David's City and Joy to the World are performed by the International Staff Songsters, International Staff Band and Salvation Army Big Band as well as special guests, BBC Young Chorister of the Year 2023 Belinda, Anais and Khaim Spencer and Una Voce.

Led by Major Jo Moir

Producer: Katharine Longworth
A BBC Audio North Production

WED 07:57 Tweet of the Day (m00268s5)

[Repeat of broadcast at 08:58 on Sunday]

WED 08:00 The Reunion (m00268jc)

Absolutely Fabulous

Series which reunites a group of people intimately involved in a

moment of modern history.

WED 09:00 Young Again (m00268sc)

19. Nigel Slater at Christmas

Kirsty Young asks food writer Nigel Slater what advice he would give his younger self.

Nigel Slater began his career working in kitchens across the UK before becoming a food writer, initially for Marie Claire magazine. He has written a regular food column for The Observer newspaper for over three decades in which time he has also written numerous cookbooks. His 2003 autobiography, *Toast: The Story of a Boy's Hunger*, detailed a difficult childhood in the West Midlands during the 1960s and was later adapted into a film. He shares memories of Christmases past and last minute tips for making the perfect Christmas dinner in a special festive edition of *Young Again*.

A BBC Studios Audio production.

WED 09:30 How to Play (m00268sh)

Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf with Manchester Camerata and Josie d'Arby

Manchester Camerata invite us into their rehearsal rooms as they prepare for a performance of Prokofiev's beloved "symphonic tale for children", Peter and the Wolf. The piece has been introducing young people to classical music for almost 90 years, and has attracted all manner of celebrity narrators. Leader/Director Caroline Pether and members of the orchestra share their insiders' perspective, showing us how they bring the story to life, and how they work together with narrator Josie d'Arby. Bassoonist Ben Hudson tells us about playing the grumpy Grandfather character, while trumpeter Peter Mainwaring talks about the pressures of waiting for your solo moment. Katy Hamilton reveals the context behind the piece, and Brian Blessed and Baroness Floella Benjamin share memories and reflections on playing the storied part of the narrator.

Produced by Amelia Parker for BBC Audio Wales and West

(Photo credit: Manchester Camerata)

WED 10:00 Woman's Hour (m00268sm)

Comfort: A Woman's Hour Christmas Day special

As this is the season of Comfort & Joy, today's programme is devoted to the theme of 'Comfort'. At this time of year when many women are frazzled and craving a bit of comfort, Nuala McGovern and Anita Rani explore why it's so important with their guests.

Fiona Murden is an organisational psychologist, award winning author of the books *Defining You* and *Mirror Thinking* and host of the podcast *Dot to Dot – Life Connected*. She explains what comfort is, why we crave it and why it's necessary, but she also discusses the importance of sometimes pushing yourself outside of your comfort zone.

Molly Case is a former cardiac care nurse and now works in palliative and end of life care. She works out what matters most to the people she cares for and how she can provide a level of comfort for them.

The Reverend Bryony Taylor is a priest in the Church of England and works as Rector of Barlborough and Clowne in the Derby Diocese. She is also the author of *More TV Vicar?* a book about Christians on the television. She describes how faith can be a source of comfort for many people, especially at this time of year.

The food writer Grace Dent, and chef and restaurateur Dipna Anand, recall the favourite foods from childhood that bring them emotional comfort and bring back happy and nostalgic memories, as well as what they will be having for Christmas.

Hygge took the world by storm when Meik Wiking published *The Little Book of Hygge – The Danish Way to Live Well* in 2016. Hygge has been described as a quality of cosiness and comfortable conviviality that engenders a feeling of contentment or wellbeing. Anita and Nuala are joined by Becci Coombes, whose father is Danish. She grew up with a love of all things Hygge and runs an online business - Hygge Style.

The band The Unthanks are known for combining traditional English folk, particularly Northumbrian folk music, with other musical genres. They have just finished a UK tour, and they have a new album out – *The Unthanks In Winter*. They perform two songs live in the studio: *Bleary Winter* and *The Cherry Tree Carol*.

Presented by Nuala McGovern and Anita Rani.
Producer: Louise Corley

WED 11:00 Café Hope (m00268qb)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 on Tuesday]

WED 11:45 The Dead of Winter by Sarah Clegg (m00268st)

Episode 3: Horse Skulls and Hoodenings

When we think about Christmas, we probably picture mangers, glowing fireplaces, carol singers and snow-covered hills. But behind all this, there's something much darker lurking in the shadows.

In her new book, *The Dead of Winter*, Sarah Clegg peels back the wrapping paper of modern Christmas to reveal the creepy creatures and customs hiding underneath. Beyond the jollity and bright enchantment of the festive season, there lurks a darker mood – one that has found expression over the centuries in a host of strange and unsettling traditions.

Cambridge-trained historian Sarah delves deep into the folklore of the Christmas season in Europe, detailing the way its terrifying past continues to haunt and entertain us now in the 21st Century. She experiences many of these traditions first-hand joining wassailing celebrations in Wales and attempting a Swedish Year Walk. She also explores the tension between darkness and light that lies at the heart of winter celebrations and argues that we need both the comforting glow of the hearth and the thrilling chill of ghost stories.

Today we're introduced to the Mari Lwyd, a ghostly, ghastly horse skull that goes door-to-door in Wales.

Reader: Fenella Woolgar
Producer: Pippa Vaughan
Abridger: Elizabeth Burke
Executive Producer: Jo Rowntree
A Loftus Media production for BBC Radio 4

WED 12:00 Pick of the Year (m00268sx)

Pick of the Year 2024

As the year begins to draw to a close, veteran sports broadcaster Garry Richardson selects some of the best pieces of audio across the BBC in 2024. From classic comedy with Michael Palin, to jaw-dropping interviews with a pair of twins about facing off a crocodile, as well as a rendition of the Hokey Cokey that you've never quite heard before. Plus, we look back at the life of the late broadcaster Dr Michael Mosley and revisit some of the news stories of the year, portrayed by Radio 4 in a different light.

With thanks to all the Pick of the Week presenters of 2024.

Presenter: Garry Richardson
Producer: Anthony McKee
Production Co-ordinator: Jack Ferrie

A BBC Audio Northern Ireland production for BBC Radio 4.

WED 12:57 Weather (m00268t1)

The latest weather forecast

WED 13:00 News (m00268t5)

The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4

WED 13:14 Comb 'n' Paper (m00268t9)

A piano consists of around 10,000 moving parts. It can take years to make a violin. The comb 'n' paper simply requires...some paper and a comb. The paper should ideally be Izal, or to give it its full title, Izal Medicated Toilet Tissue. You really want a good Scottish comb, from Aberdeenshire, where the comb-making industry once thrived. But as Ian Sansom goes into intensive training for the 2024 World Paper and Comb Championships, he discovers that actually playing what might be our silliest and most spontaneous musical instrument, isn't as easy as he remembers.

Producer: Conor Garrett
Editor: Philip Sellars
Production Coordinator: Shan Pillay
With special thanks to the Imaginary Kazoo Orchestra

A BBC Studios Audio production for Radio 4

WED 13:43 My Poetry and Other Animals (m00268tf)

Slugs and Snails

Are slugs poetic? What can the poet laureate learn from a giant snail, and from the experience of being slimed on?

Simon Armitage has written a lot about animals in the past, but always at a distance. He wants that to change - to feel that he has captured the spirit of an animal, and done it justice in a brand new poem.

Molluscs present particular challenges for poets - though not for the award winning Sharon Olds, whose poem 'The Connoisseuse of Slugs' makes unusual and intimate connections between slugs and humans.

Contributors:

Sharon Olds (her poem is 'The Connoisseuse of Slugs')
Dr Isabel Galleymore - (her latest poetry collection is 'Baby Schema') poet and lecturer at the University of Birmingham
Sam Aberdeen - ZSL London Zoo
Lively worm - Blue Peter Garden, Mediacity
Relaxed worm - Blue Peter Garden, Mediacity
Giant Tiger Land Snail (Sam the snail) at ZSL London Zoo

Produced by Faith Lawrence
Mixed by Sue Stonestreet

WED 13:57 Tweet of the Day (m00268s5)
[Repeat of broadcast at 08:58 on Sunday]

WED 14:00 The Archers (m00268q5)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 on Tuesday]

WED 14:15 Punt & Dennis: Route Masters (m0023zjh)
Series 1: From Beer to Eternity

10 – From Flying Reindeers to Eternity

This series of Route Masters has seen Steve Punt and Hugh Dennis make a grand journey from Beer to Eternity. In this festive finale, they reach their end goal, with stop-offs including flying reindeer, Quality Street, Home Alone and Christmas Island.

They're joined in this extended special by Zoe Lyons, who not only helps find random connections of her own, but gets to judge whether Steve or Hugh's final link is the most impressive.

Written and hosted by Steve Punt and Hugh Dennis
With Zoe Lyons
Produced by Victoria Lloyd
Mixed by Jonathan Last

A Listen production for BBC Radio 4

WED 15:00 HM The King (m00268tp)
HM The King

The King's Christmas message to the Commonwealth and the nation, followed by the national anthem.

WED 15:05 News Summary (m0026x2t)
The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4.

WED 15:15 Short Works (m002622j)
Not Even a Mouse

Adrian Scarborough reads a new, specially-commissioned short story for Christmas written by John Finnemore, in which someone discovers that it's never too late to change.

Producer: David Tyler

A Pozzitive production for BBC Radio 4

WED 15:30 Drama on 4 (m00268tt)
Waiting in the Wings

Noel Coward had a deep affection for many of the actresses with whom he had worked over many years and was only too aware of the problems they faced as parts simply dried up. He sets his play in 1960 in The Wings, a charity home for actresses who have fallen on hard times. Here, the ladies grow older ungracefully amid squabbles, memories and jealousies.

Things really come to the boil when the once great actress Lotta Bainbridge arrives. Years earlier, she has married the former husband of another inmate, May Davenport who is resolved to never forgive her. Their feud soon affects everyone. It is only resolved when one of the other ladies sets fire to her room. Following this accident, Lotta and May work towards a reconciliation. However, Lotta's life is further turned upside down when her son unexpectedly returns after 17 years. Coward regarded this scene between mother and son as one of the best he had ever written. He also wrote the words and lyrics for the various songs.

For Penelope Keith and director Martin Jenkins this proved to be a memorable reunion as both were members of the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1963 and over the years they have worked together on a number of occasions. Now in their 80s, they both share a passionate belief in the power of drama on

radio.

'Working on the play some 65 years after it was written was a fascinating experience. Coward clearly knew and understood these women so well. They are totally believable. They are not shallow luvvies but real people experiencing all the problems which come with old age including dementia, boredom and loss of purpose but Coward lifts our spirits by lacing all this with humour, vigour, vitriol, energy and music. One minute you are laughing, the next you are confronting heart-felt emotions. It was a privilege to work with such an outstanding cast.' (Martin Jenkins)

Cast:

Lotta Bainbridge - Penelope Keith
May Davenport - Susan Jameson
Bonita - Frances Jeater
Deirdre - Sorcha Cusack
Maudie - Cheryl Campbell
Sarita - Marcia Warren
Estelle - Jean Trend
Perry - Karl Davies
Miss Archie - Jenny Funnell
Osgood - Andrew Branch
Zelda - Clare Corbett
Alan - Roger Alborough
Dora/Dr Jevons - April Pearson

Written by Noel Coward

Pianist: Zhanna Kemp
Sound Design: David Thomas
Production Manager: Sarah Tombling

Adapted for radio and directed by Martin Jenkins

A Pier production for BBC Radio 4

WED 17:00 With Great Pleasure (m00268kh)
With Jo Brand

Jo Brand shares the poems, stories and jokes that have meant the most in her life, for our festive delight.

Jo is joined for a star-studded recording in the BBC Radio Theatre, by special guest readers Alan Davies and Isy Suttie. Expect hilarious and vivid stories that reflect her work as comedian, psychiatric nurse, writer and TV presenter, as well as moments with her family and friends.

With readings by poets Jackie Kay and Hollie McNish and live music from Police Dog Hogan.

Readings include

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest by Ken Kesey
In the Springtime of the Year by Susan Hill
The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists by Robert Tressell
The Dead by Billy Collins
A Man I Knew by Brendan Kennelly
My Name is Mrs Brady by Allan Ahlberg
When Paul Robeson Came Back to Glasgow by Jackie Kay
Suck it Up by Hollie McNish

Producer...Mary Ward-Lowery

WED 18:00 Six O'Clock News (m00268ty)
National and international news from BBC Radio 4

WED 18:15 The Wombles to the Rescue (m00268v2)
Episode 3: Wellington Vanishes

The Wombles live under Wimbledon Common, and it is their special responsibility to 'tidy up' everything that untidy human beings leave behind.

In this series, the Wombles are back at their old burrow underneath Wimbledon Common. There's a Womble world shortage of 'this and that' and Great Uncle Bulgaria is called over to America to attend a crisis summit. Back home, a visit from Cousin Botany is full of surprise and new invention.

Full of fun and warmth, with an underpinning environmental message, The Wombles To The Rescue is based on the original books by Elisabeth Beresford, performed by Richard E Grant, directed by Johnny Vegas and nestled in a new soundscape for all the family to enjoy.

Episode 3: Wellington Vanishes

As Great Uncle Bulgaria and Bungo leave for America a strange van appears on Wimbledon Common.

Cast and Credits:

Performed by..... Richard E Grant
Written by..... Elisabeth Beresford
Abridged by..... Sally Harrison and Susan Vale

Script Consultant..... Kate Robertson
With thanks to..... Marcus Robertson

Music: The Wombling Song, composed and recorded by Mike Batt

Produced by..... Sally Harrison
Sound Engineer..... Wilfredo Acosta
Sound Designer..... Ailsdair McGregor
Directed by..... Johnny Vegas

A Woolyback Productions and Mrs Mellor's Cellar collaboration for BBC Radio 4 and BBC Sounds

WED 18:30 One Person Found This Helpful (m00268ch)
Xmas Special

In this Christmas special, Frank Skinner and his guests decipher the good, the bad, and the baffling, as they try to work out a mystery item - based entirely on its online reviews.

Which traditional panto features an animatronic dinosaur? What's the worst present they've ever received? And is that one star write-up "bit claggy, made me feel sick" a review of some stuffing or Love Actually?

Written by Frank Skinner, Catherine Brinkworth, Sarah Dempster, Jason Hazeley, Rajiv Karia, Karl Mims, Katie Sayer and Peter Tellouche

Devised by Jason Hazeley and Simon Evans, with the producer David Tyler

A Pozzitive production for BBC Radio 4

WED 19:00 The Archers (m00268jn)

Joy has a big question to ask, and the Aldridge family face an alternative Christmas.

WED 19:15 This Cultural Life (m0015s28)
Judi Dench

Dame Judi Dench reflects on her career playing Shakespearean roles on stage and screen across seven decades.

Judi Dench has spent her career bringing to life a hugely diverse array of characters. But she is, first and foremost, one of the greatest classical actors of our times. Her love of the work of William Shakespeare and the insight she has gained into his plays over the course of her career is explored in her new book *The Man Who Pays The Rent*, written with actor and director Brendan O'Hea.

In a special edition of *This Cultural Life* to mark the 400th anniversary of the publication of the First Folio in a BBC season of programmes celebrating Shakespeare, Dame Judi talks to John Wilson at her home in Surrey. With intimate insights into her relationship with the work of William Shakespeare, she recalls her pivotal experiences and influences that helped steer her career as one of Britain's greatest classical actors. After seeing her older brother act in a school production of *Macbeth*, she knew Shakespeare was for her. She remembers her very first professional stage role, playing *Opheelia* in an *Old Vic* production of *Hamlet* in 1957. Despite bad reviews and losing the role when the production went on tour, she was undeterred. Joining the RSC, she worked her way through many of Shakespeare's plays, including a landmark production of *Macbeth* in 1976, directed by Trevor Nunn. Dame Judi recalls her Olivier award-winning performance of *Lady Macbeth* opposite Ian McKellen, and her later role of *Cleopatra* opposite Anthony Hopkins in 1987 at the National Theatre. Remembering her last stage appearance in a Shakespeare play, she discusses her dual roles of *Paulina* and *Time* in *A Winter's Tale*, and how her degenerative eyesight condition affected her performance.

Producer: Edwina Pitman

WED 20:00 Archive on 4 (m00261x8)
Victoria Wood - Loose Chippings

During the making of her much-loved sitcom *dinnerladies*, Victoria Wood was also recording her own personal audio diary, talking not just about the show she was writing and starring in but with thoughts and reminiscences across her whole career.

Now her biographer, writer and journalist Jasper Rees, has been granted unique access not only to these tapes but also to Victoria's own private archive, including much never-before-broadcast stand-up and songs, and treasures such as the previously-thought lost song that launched her career on ITVs *New Faces* and a private recording of her first ever concert as a student in Birmingham University that lay hidden for 50 years.

The show is a Pozzitive production, who also made dinnerladies as a co-production with Victoria's company Good Fun

Produced by David Tyler

A Pozzitive production for BBC Radio 4

WED 21:00 Illuminated (m00268v4)
Ceefax Strikes Back... with Count Binface

Ceefax has just reached its 50th birthday, and to celebrate this unique golden anniversary, the BBC's once-mighty teletext news service is receiving the greatest gift of all - the gift of life, courtesy of the greatest novelty politician in the omniverse, Count Binface.

For eight years, Binface has pledged in his election manifestos to bring back Ceefax and now, at last, the BBC is granting his wish. With just one small hitch - it's on the radio. Still, you've got to start somewhere.

Featuring the stellar talents of Rory Bremner, Emma Clarke and Jon Harvey, get ready for an aural event like no other, with the unlikely return to the airwaves of the much-missed Ceefax. Or should that be Hearfax?

Starring: Rory Bremner, Emma Clarke, Leah Marks and Jon Harvey
And introducing Ceefax, 4-Tel and The Oracle

Script Writers: Jon Harvey and Matthew Crosby
Sound Design: Tony Churnside
Producer: Jon Harvey
Illustration: Dan Farrimond
Executive Producer: Eloise Whitmore

A Naked production for BBC Radio 4

WED 21:30 All in the Mind (m00268mv)
[Repeat of broadcast at 09:30 on Tuesday]

WED 22:00 Add to Playlist (m002622x)
[Repeat of broadcast at 11:00 on Tuesday]

WED 22:45 South Sea Tales by W. Somerset Maugham (m00268v9)
The Force of Circumstance

South Sea Tales by Somerset Maugham - taken from stories written by Maugham largely based in and around the Malay States.
All stories abridged by Lucy Ellis.

Read by Sarah Lambie
Produced by Clive Brill
A Brill production for BBC Radio 4

WED 23:00 Uncanny (m00268vg)
Uncanny Christmas

Christmas Special: Return to Luibeilt

Christmas 1973, and two young climbers experienced the most terrifying night of their lives in a bothy in the Scottish mountains. The events that took place that night would haunt one of those young men, Phil, for the rest of his life.

In 2021, Phil told Danny Robins his story, and it became one of the most popular episodes of Uncanny to date. Now, for this special Christmas episode and five decades on from Phil's original experience, Danny is strapping on his rucksack and heading for the Highlands, to take Phil back to where it all happened.

Is whatever haunted Luibeilt still there? Will Danny survive the night?

Written and presented by Danny Robins
Editing and sound design: Charlie Brandon-King
Music: Evelyn Sykes
Theme music by Lanterns on the Lake
Commissioning executive: Paula McDonnell
Commissioning editor: Rhian Roberts
Produced by Danny Robins and Simon Barnard

A Bafflegab and Uncanny Media production for BBC Radio 4

THURSDAY 26 DECEMBER 2024

THU 00:00 Midnight News (m00268vr)
National and international news from BBC Radio 4

THU 00:15 Christmas Meditation - A Hidden Light (m00268vz)

A reflection on the meaning of Christmas by Malcolm Guite, poet, priest and writer. In this meditation Malcolm takes us on a journey back to his childhood and a magical encounter with Father Christmas. Malcolm then turns to Mary and her plight in Bethlehem via his poem called 'It's Getting Darker', he talks of the hidden light Mary carries and the hope Jesus brings to the world.

Music:

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen - The Choir of Kings College Cambridge
I Saw Three Ships come Sailing In - Winchester College Chapel Choir
The Hidden Light by Joanna Marsh sung by the Choir of St. John's College Cambridge

Producer: Carmel Lonergan

Editor: Tim Pemberton

THU 00:30 The Dead of Winter by Sarah Clegg (m00268st)
[Repeat of broadcast at 11:45 on Wednesday]

THU 00:48 Shipping Forecast (m00268w5)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

THU 01:00 Selection of BBC World Service Programmes (m00268wc)

BBC Radio 4 joins the BBC World Service.

THU 05:20 Shipping Forecast (m00268wj)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

THU 05:30 News Briefing (m00268wr)

The latest news from BBC Radio 4

THU 05:43 Prayer for the Day (m00268wv)

A poor man out in the snow

A spiritual comment and prayer to start the day with Canon Ann Easter

Good morning!

And happy St Stephen's Day when, back in the tenth century in Bohemia, now part of the Czech Republic, a king who was renowned for his love of God and humanity, saw a poor man out in the snow and felt great compassion for him. And that king went out, with his servant, to take food and fuel to the man's home. The King was, of course, called Wenceslas, and we are still singing about that night all these years later.

Christmas is traditionally a time for giving, it's all part of our human response to a God who gives extravagantly – not just one sycamore seed but millions! Not just sunshine and rain but rainbows too!

Sometimes, though, the urge to give at Christmas can go too far and I'm sad when people that I know haven't got a great deal themselves, feel that they must spend lots of money on Christmas presents. But, while we'd all love to give magnificently, the reality is, as another carol says, that what God wants is for us to have love in our hearts. That's all. Love for God and love for all of God's Creation.

Thinking back to that poor man in Bohemia, I have a feeling that the story that stayed in his family for generations was not so much what King Wenceslas brought, but the fact that the King brought it himself and I reckon that he stayed for a little while and heard the man's story too.

Gracious and Generous God, help us to see you in those we love and to give of ourselves to you and to them with joy.

Amen.

THU 05:45 Farming Today (m00268wz)
26/12/24 - Solomon the government bull

Solomon is just one of the bulls owned by the Scottish Government and welcomed by crofters as part of a unique livestock improvement scheme. Small scale crofters in the Highlands and Islands can choose a mate for their beef herds from a select stud of bulls owned by the Scottish Government. Groups of crofters band together to order an animal which spends a few weeks with each herd of cows before being returned to base near Inverness. The visiting animal is known across the Crofting Counties as The Department Bull, a reference to the original Department of Agriculture, and the scheme is highly valued by crofters.

However, catching then removing a bull from his cows and transporting him to his next harem can be a tricky operation, especially if it is done out on a moor with no fixed handling facilities. We follow Solomon the Shorthorn on his journey. Produced and presented by Nancy Nicolson.

THU 06:00 But First, This... (m001trdd)

Continuity announcers' voices are at the heart of Radio 4 - they introduce the programmes and bring us the news. But who are they? What does it take to do their job - from introducing The Archers to reading the Shipping Forecast? And what happens on those, hopefully rare, occasions when things don't go according to plan?

Jane Steel, Viji Alles, Amanda Litherland and Alan Smith take a special look behind the scenes at BBC Radio 4, with contributions from more announcers than ever previously spotted in one place. Tim Harford from More or Less crunches the 'numbers of continuity'; and there's a special musical performance.

Featuring the voices of Neil Nunes, Charles Carroll, Caroline Nicholls, Chris Aldridge, Tom Sandars, Arlene Fleming, John Hammond, Neil Nunes, Lisa Costello, Mark Forrest, Andrew Peach, Tina Ritchie, Jim Lee, Andrew Crawford, Danielle Jalowiecka, Ron Brown and Al Ryan.

Producer and sound designer - Jack Soper
Executive producer - Katy Hubbard
Song - composed by Jake Yapp, pianist - Harry The Piano

THU 07:00 Today (m00268hx)

Nick Robinson and Justin Webb hear from the UK's Chief Scout, Dwayne Fields, in this guest edited episode of Today.

Dwayne Fields, who was appointed to the role of Chief Scout earlier this year has used his programme to explore the value of volunteering. He also shares his own experience of homelessness.

THU 09:00 In Our Time (m00268hz)

Vase-mania

Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss eighteenth-century 'vase-mania'. In the second half of the century, inspired by archaeological discoveries, the Grand Tour and the founding of the British Museum, parts of the British public developed a huge enthusiasm for vases modelled on the ancient versions recently dug up in Greece. This enthusiasm amounted to a kind of 'vase-mania'.

Initially acquired by the aristocracy, Josiah Wedgwood made these vases commercially available to an emerging aspiring middle class eager to display a piece of the Classical past in their drawing rooms.

In the midst of a rapidly changing Britain, these vases came to symbolise the birth of European Civilisation, the epitome of good taste and the timelessness that would later be celebrated by Jonathan Keats in his Ode on a Grecian Urn.

With

Jenny Uglow
Writer and biographer

Rosemary Sweet
Professor of urban history at the University of Leicester

And

Caroline McCaffrey-Howarth
Lecturer in the history of art at the University of Edinburgh

Producer: Eliane Glaser

Reading list:

Vicky Coltman, Fabricating the Antique: Neoclassicism in Britain 1760–1800 (University of Chicago Press, 2006)

David Constantine, Fields of Fire: A Life of Sir William Hamilton (Phoenix, 2002)

Tristram Hunt, The Radical Potter: Josiah Wedgwood and the Transformation of Britain (Allen Lane, 2021)

Ian Jenkins and Kim Sloan (eds), Vases and Volcanoes: Sir William Hamilton and his Collection (British Museum Press, 1996)

Berg Maxine, Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain (Oxford University Press, 2005)

Iris Moon, Melancholy Wedgwood (MIT Press, 2024)

Rosemary Sweet, *Grand Tour: The British in Italy, c.1690–1820* (Cambridge University Press, 2012)

Jenny Uglow, *The Lunar Men: The Friends who Made the Future* (Faber and Faber, 2003)

In *Our Time* is a BBC Studios Audio production

THU 09:45 Strong Message Here (m00268j1)
Words of the Year

In a year where Labour secured a 'loveless landslide' in the UK and Trump sealed his return to the White House, Helen and Armando will be 'laser-focused' on their 'mission' to skewer the use and abuse of political language. From 'freebies' to 'fascism', 'weird' to 'working people', all of the strong messages that helped Make 2024 Great Again will be put under the microscope.

A witty, illuminating exploration of the verbal tricks of the trade from two people both mesmerised and baffled by our political discourse. Helen and Armando will identify the worst political doublespeak, discover where it comes from, examine why it spreads - and look at what effect it has on the rest of us.

Have you stumbled upon any perplexing political phrases you need Helen and Armando to decode? Email them to us at strongmessagehere@bbc.co.uk

Sound Editing by Charlie Brandon-King
Production Coordinator - Katie Baum
Executive Producer - Pete Strauss

Produced by Gwyn Rhys Davies. A BBC Studios Audio production for Radio 4.
An EcoAudio Certified Production.

THU 10:00 Woman's Hour (m00268j3)

The women behind our best-loved puzzles and games - A Woman's Hour special

In a Boxing Day special, Anita Rani celebrates a favourite Christmas activity: puzzles and games.

Anita hears from Leslie Scott, the woman who invented Jenga, and steps into the world of crosswords and general knowledge quizzes with Kate Mephram, setter for the Daily Telegraph.

She pays tribute to Agatha Christie, the woman behind the most famous puzzles ever written, with novelist and essayist John Lanchester, and host of the Shedunnit podcast, Caroline Crampton.

Anne Corbett, professor in dementia research at the University of Exeter, explains the role games can play in the battle to keep our minds fit and healthy.

And Anita dives into gaming with Gabrielle Zevin, author of *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow*, one of the bestselling novels of recent years: a love story set in the world of video games. Eimear Noone, the composer behind *World of Warcraft* and the first woman to conduct at the Oscars, explains how video game soundtracks come together, while Frankie Ward, Esports host and journalist, has tips on the best games to play while breastfeeding.

Presenter: Anita Rani
Producer: Hannah Sander

THU 11:00 The Infinite Monkey Cage (m0025dvv)
Series 31

An Unexpected History of the Body

Brian Cox and Robin Ince uncover the unexpected history of the body in the archives of the Royal Society with special guests Prof Helen King, Sir Mark Walport, Keith Moore and Ed Byrne. Together they dissect some of the most surprising and peculiar beliefs that have been held about the body over the last 500 years, from wandering-womb hypotheses to tobacco-enaema resuscitations. They unearth how scientific discoveries have often originated from brave individuals, willing to volunteer their own bodies in the pursuit of science. Our panellist Sir Mark Walport has continued in this tradition of self-experimentation, and has with him x-rays of his own faeces for show and tell!

Producer: Melanie Brown
Executive Producer: Alexandra Feachem
Researcher: Olivia Jani

BBC Studios Audio Production

THU 11:45 The Dead of Winter by Sarah Clegg (m00268j6)
Episode 4: Punishing the Wicked

When we think about Christmas, we probably picture mangers, glowing fireplaces, carol singers and snow-covered hills. But behind all this, there's something much darker lurking in the shadows.

In her new book, *The Dead of Winter*, Sarah Clegg peels back the wrapping paper of modern Christmas to reveal the creepy creatures and customs hiding underneath. Beyond the jollity and bright enchantment of the festive season, there lurks a darker mood - one that has found expression over the centuries in a host of strange and unsettling traditions.

Cambridge-trained historian Sarah delves deep into the folklore of the Christmas season in Europe, detailing the way its terrifying past continues to haunt and entertain us now in the 21st Century. She experiences many of these traditions first-hand joining wassailing celebrations in Wales and attempting a Swedish Year Walk. She also explores the tension between darkness and light that lies at the heart of winter celebrations and argues that we need both the comforting glow of the hearth and the thrilling chill of ghost stories.

And so, lurking in the shadows of our Christmas cheer are these darker, older traditions - like the Krampus runs in Austria that we hear about in today's episode - performed by looming, terrifying super-sized revellers with curling horns and hideous masks.

Reader: Fenella Woolgar
Producer: Pippa Vaughan
Abridger: Elizabeth Burke
Executive Producer: Jo Rowntree
A Loftus Media production for BBC Radio 4

THU 12:00 News Summary (m00268j9)

The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4.

THU 12:04 The Reunion (m00268jc)

[Repeat of broadcast at 08:00 on Wednesday]

THU 12:57 Weather (m00268jf)

The latest weather forecast

THU 13:00 World at One (m00268jh)

Questions over cause of Azerbaijan Airlines crash

Aviation experts say Russian air defences may have downed the Azerbaijan Airlines plane which crashed in Kazakhstan on Christmas Day. Across Asia, prayers and ceremonies take place to mark 20 years since the Boxing Day tsunami struck in the Indian Ocean. Plus, we hear from the producer of a new BBC documentary about the life of Maria Callas.

THU 13:45 My Poetry and Other Animals (m00268jk)
Horses

The poet laureate has an intriguing encounter with a horse, as he tries to find a way into writing his new poem about animals.

Simon Armitage has written a lot about animals in the past, but always at a distance. He wants that to change, and to feel that he has captured the spirit of an animal, and done it justice.

In this episode Simon gets to know Prince, one of the horses at 'Strength and Learning and Learning Through Horses' - an Equine Assisted Therapy Centre in Hertfordshire. He also shares the poem 'The Horses' by Edwin Muir with the team at the centre, to see if they recognise Muir's description of the creatures they know so well.

Contributors:
Professor Robert Crawford, poet, critic and biographer
Rosie Bensley - Strength and Learning through Horses - Horse Trainer
Jemma Hockley - Strength and Learning through Horses - Clinical Psychologist
Prince the horse
Dr Rosie Jones McVey - Social Anthropologist, author of 'Globtrotting: A Travelogue of Horsemanship in Far Flung Places'

'The Horses' by Edwin Muir is read by John McKay

Producer: Faith Lawrence
Mixed by Sue Stonestreet

THU 14:00 The Archers (m00268jn)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 on Wednesday]

THU 14:15 John Finnemore's Souvenir Programme (m001mb1f)
2023 Special

John Finnemore returns with a one-off edition of his Souvenir Programme, joined as ever by his cast of Margaret Cabourn-Smith, Simon Kane, Lawry Lewin and Carrie Quinlan, as well as composer Susannah Pearce at the piano and cellist Sally Stares on the drum.

This forty-five minute special sees a palaeontologist try to not lose his head, a husband try to explain why he's going to Milan, and the world's top golfer getting a surprise. We also hear from a member of the silent majority and our regular interviewer hears from someone else. And... well, since you ask him for a story about an amazing journey...

Written and performed by ... John Finnemore
Ensemble ... Margaret Cabourn-Smith
Ensemble ... Simon Kane
Ensemble ... Lawry Lewin
Ensemble ... Carrie Quinlan

Original music ... Susannah Pearce
Piano ... Susannah Pearce
Drum ... Sally Stares

Recording ... Jerry Peel & Jon Calver
Editing ... Rich Evans

Production Co-ordinator ... Katie Baum
Exec Producer ... Richard Morris

Producer ... Ed Morrish

John Finnemore's Souvenir Programme is a BBC Studios Production for Radio 4.

THU 15:00 This Natural Life (m00268jq)

Martin Clunes

Martin Clunes is best known for his roles in the long-running TV series *Doc Martin* and the 1990s sitcom *Men Behaving Badly*. He's also known as an animal lover, but few people are aware of the wider importance of nature for him. In this programme Martha Kearney travels to his Dorset farm to meet Martin and find out more about his love of the natural world. She learns of the sanctuary it provides for him from the hectic life of an actor. Together they take his five dogs for a walk, including the retired guide dog Martin gave a home to after hearing about her on a radio programme. He introduces Martha to his horses, as he prepares one of them for a show the next day, chatting to her while on his hands and knees shampooing the horse's fetlocks. He explains how horses were the reason why he came to buy a farm by chance.

Producer: Emma Campbell

THU 15:27 Radio 4 Appeal (m00268js)

[Repeat of broadcast at 07:54 on Sunday]

THU 15:30 Feedback (m00268jv)

Interview of the Year

Andrea Catherwood announces the results of Feedback's Interview of The Year.

"It's been a long process, beginning right back in January," says Andrea. "We've been asking you all year to tell us about exceptional interviews anywhere on BBC Radio or podcasts that have really stopped you in your tracks, made you think again about something or showed off the exceptional skill of an interviewer."

From listener suggestions and comments, the Feedback team compiled a short list of ten interviews, which was then handed to a jury made up of Feedback listeners to decide on the winners. They were asked to base their scores on insight, impact and interviewer skill.

In this programme, we'll hear extracts from all ten shortlisted interviews, speak to the top three finalists, and at the end of the programme, Andrea will reveal the listeners choice of the overall winner of The Feedback Interview of the Year.

Producers: Rebecca Guthrie and David Prest
Judging panel co-ordinator: Mike Hally
A Whistledown Scotland production for BBC Radio 4

THU 16:00 The Briefing Room (m00268jx)

Why we need to care about the Arctic

The Arctic is going through changes to its climate, economics and geo-politics. What does it mean for the region and the rest of the world? The fact that glaciers are melting and the white landscape is turning green is bad for climate change but could it also bring economic benefits?

Guests:

Jennifer Spence, director of the Arctic Initiative at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School.
Heidi Sevestre, glaciologist and member of one of the Working Groups to the Arctic Council.
Heather Conley, senior advisor to the German Marshall Fund's (GMF) board of trustees.
Pavel Devyatkin is a Senior Associate and Leadership Group member at The Arctic Institute.

Presenter: David Aaronovitch

Producers: Charlotte McDonald, Kirsteen Knight and Beth Ashmead Latham
Sound engineer: Rod Farquhar
Editor: Richard Vadon
Production Co-ordinator: Gemma Ashman

THU 16:30 BBC Inside Science (m00268jz)

Board Game Science

It's that time of the year when many of us are at home with friends and family, losing track of time, eating leftovers, and, of course, playing games.

This festive season, we look at the science of games and, of course, play some ourselves.

It's presenter Marnie Chesterton versus producer Florian Bohr at Marnie's kitchen table.... Who will win the Inside Science games special?

Irving Finkel from the British Museum tells Marnie about the Royal Game of Ur, one of the most ancient board games which is strikingly similar to more modern examples of race games. Also, why we play games with author and neuroscientist Kelly Clancy, and why we struggle to comprehend the randomness of dice with author Tim Clare.

To finish it off, mathematician Marcus du Sautory explains the geometry behind the game Dobble and leaves listeners with a Christmas puzzle: Can you figure out the symbols on the two missing Dobble cards?

If you think you've found the solution, please email insidescience@bbc.co.uk

Presenter: Marnie Chesterton

Producers: Florian Bohr
Editor: Martin Smith
Production Co-ordinator: Jana Bennett-Holesworth

To discover more fascinating science content, head to bbc.co.uk search for BBC Inside Science and follow the links to The Open University.

THU 17:00 PM (m00268k1)

Israeli airstrikes hit two cities in Yemen

The latest as the head of the World Health Organisation was at one of the targeted sites. Plus, two stars from Gavin and Stacey give us their review of the finale.

THU 18:00 Six O'Clock News (m00268k3)

The head of the WHO says he was waiting at the country's main airport when it was hit

THU 18:15 The Wombles to the Rescue (m00268k5)

Episode 4: The Grey Wolf of Wimbledon Common

The Wombles live under Wimbledon Common, and it is their special responsibility to 'tidy up' everything that untidy human beings leave behind.

In this series, the Wombles are back at their old burrow underneath Wimbledon Common. There's a Womble world shortage of 'this and that' and Great Uncle Bulgaria is called over to America to attend a crisis summit. Back home, a visit from Cousin Botany is full of surprise and new invention.

Full of fun and warmth, with an underpinning environmental message, The Wombles to the Rescue is based on the original books by Elisabeth Beresford, performed by Richard E Grant, directed by Johnny Vegas and nestled in a new soundscape for all the family to enjoy.

Episode 4: The Grey Wolf of Wimbledon Common.
Great Uncle Bulgaria reports back on his and Bungo's travels and Wellington is inspired by his recent encounter with Human Beings.

Cast and Credits:

Performed by..... Richard E Grant
Written by..... Elisabeth Beresford
Abridged by..... Sally Harrison and Susan Vale

Script Consultant..... Kate Robertson

With thanks to..... Marcus Robertson

Music: The Wombling Song, composed and recorded by Mike Batt

Produced by..... Sally Harrison
Sound Engineer..... Wilfredo Acosta
Sound Designer..... Alisdair McGregor
Directed by..... Johnny Vegas

A Woolyback Productions and Mrs Mellor's Cellar collaboration for BBC Radio 4 and BBC Sounds

THU 18:30 Michael Spicer: No Room (Omnibus) (m00268c7)

3. Like throwing a pigeon at a wall

How not to choose a new name for a train station - a lesson in politics. A billionaire wants your cash. It's for a thing. Louis Theroux thinks he's won another BAFTA.

Comedian Michael Spicer's satirical series features character-filled sketches which brilliantly capture everything that provokes us - culture, politics, work...and other people.

Michael is famous for his Room Next Door government advisor character whose withering take downs of politicians have amassed more than 100 million views and helped keep his audience sane in fractured times.

An omnibus edition of sketches from the first series.

Writer, Performer and Co-Editor: Michael Spicer

Composer and Sound Designer: Augustin Bousfield

Producer: Matt Tiller

A Tillervision production for BBC Radio 4

THU 19:00 The Archers (m00268kc)

There's a Boxing Day challenge for Paul and the events of the year catch up on Will.

THU 19:15 This Cultural Life (m001vsbv)

Frank Auerbach

A rare interview with Frank Auerbach, one of the world's greatest living painters. At 92 years old, he has been painting for over 70 years and still works every day. A child refugee from Nazi Germany whose parents were killed in Auschwitz, he made his name alongside his friends and fellow painters Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud and Leon Kossoff in the 1950s. He's well known for the thick layers of the paint used to create his portraits and images of the streets around the studio in Camden Town where he has worked since 1954.

Frank Auerbach talks to John Wilson about his fragmentary memories of his early childhood in pre-war Berlin and his education at the boarding school Bunce Court in Kent, where he arrived aged 7. He recalls the huge impression that a black and white reproduction in a children's encyclopaedia of Turner's The Fighting Temeraire made on him as a boy, making him want to "do better and be less superficial". Auerbach also discusses the influence on him of the artist David Bomberg who taught him at London's Borough Polytechnic, and his friend and fellow student Leon Kossoff. He also talks about his friendships with Francis Bacon and Lucian Freud and why he still paints and draws in his studio seven days a week.

Producer: Edwina Pitman

THU 20:00 With Great Pleasure (m00268kh)

[Repeat of broadcast at 17:00 on Wednesday]

THU 21:00 Loose Ends (m00268km)

[Repeat of broadcast at 18:15 on Saturday]

THU 21:45 Mythical Creatures (m001trvl)

8. Selkies

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 heads to the Scottish coast to meet shape-shifting sea creature, the Selkie. Selkies are seals in the water but can remove their seal skins and become humans on the land.

Rhianna explores the best known Selkie story, The Selkie Wife.

She delves into what it reveals about some murky parts of our own history, and asks how it can be used to empower and help people today.

Storyteller: Shona Cowie

Other Contributors: Sharon Blackie, Lari Don

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 22:00 The World Tonight (m00268kr)

Israel launches wave of strikes on Yemen

Israel has launched airstrikes on the Houthis in Yemen - vowing to destroy its infrastructure. We ask whether Israel has opened a new phase in the Middle East war.

Also tonight:

Twenty years on from the devastating Boxing Day tsunami, the remarkable account of a man who survived the worst rail disaster in history.

And 40 years after Joan Hickson's portrayal of Miss Marple hit the screens, we reflect on why many consider her the best to have played the role - drawing on the little grey cells of TV's Poirot, David Suchet.

THU 22:45 South Sea Tales by W. Somerset Maugham (m00268kx)

The Outstation

South Sea Tales by Somerset Maugham - taken from stories written by Maugham largely based in and around the Malay States.
All stories abridged by Lucy Ellis.

Read by Alan Cox

Produced by Clive Brill

A Brill production for BBC Radio 4

THU 23:00 Alison Spittle: Petty Please (m00268l5)

There's Something About Mary

In this new series for Radio 4, comedian Alison Spittle explores some of her longest and deepest held grudges. The kind of thing most people would be ashamed to still be thinking about 30 minutes later, let alone contemplating exacting retribution decades on.

Studies show that the role you play in the school nativity can affect your life. And Alison is taking those studies very seriously. She was once cast as Mary - big gig - but forced to drop out after the director said she lacked focus. 30 years on, it's still something she thinks about. Can Natalie Cassidy help Alison get closure?

Written by Alison Spittle & Simon Mulholland

With Ian Smith and Natalie Cassidy

Script Edited by Joel Morris

Produced by Lyndsay Fenner

A Mighty Bunny Production for BBC Radio 4

About Alison:

Alison Spittle is an award-winning screenwriter, actress and comedian.

She is the creator, writer and star of the TV series Nowhere Fast which aired on RTE2 to critical acclaim in 2017. Her play Starlet premiered to great acclaim at the Dublin Fringe Festival, garnering 5 stars from The Sunday Times. She can also be heard on The Guilty Feminist and BBC Radio 4's Wheel of Misfortune.

THU 23:30 Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics (m00268lf)

[Repeat of broadcast at 09:00 on Tuesday]

FRIDAY 27 DECEMBER 2024**FRI 00:00 Midnight News (m00268ln)**

National and international news from BBC Radio 4

FRI 00:15 Bunk Bed (m001pnn8)

Series 10

4. Patrick Marber and Peter Curran grapple in the dark with life's woes and wonders

Marber and Curran muse on the advantages of having once been 'Big in the 1990s'. Squeamish chuckles about finding death in the countryside, and Patrick winning a Tony Award in New York

Produced by Peter Curran

A Foghorn production for BBC Radio 4

FRI 00:30 The Dead of Winter by Sarah Clegg (m00268j6)
[Repeat of broadcast at 11:45 on Thursday]

FRI 00:48 Shipping Forecast (m00268ly)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

FRI 01:00 Selection of BBC World Service Programmes (m00268m3)
BBC Radio 4 joins the BBC World Service.

FRI 05:20 Shipping Forecast (m00268m9)

The latest weather reports and forecasts for UK shipping

FRI 05:30 News Briefing (m00268ml)

The latest news from BBC Radio 4

FRI 05:43 Prayer for the Day (m00268ms)

St John the Evangelist

A spiritual comment and prayer to start the day with Canon Ann Easter

Good morning!

Today, December 27th, is the day that the Western church celebrates St John the Evangelist, a fisherman who became one of the disciples when he witnessed Jesus making a huge miraculous catch of fish. With his brother James, and their friend Peter, John was one of Jesus' inner circle and is referred to as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved'. I think John was a nice man, a good and gentle man, because, from the cross, Jesus asked John to care for his mother, Mary.

And John went on to write his own account of Jesus's life and ministry and, rather than a straightforward historical record like Matthew, Mark and Luke's gospels, John's gospel is rich with reflection and a profound truth.

I wonder if John sometimes wished he was more like Peter who had great presence and was very energetic and exciting and sometimes spectacularly right - though Peter did have an unfortunate habit of opening his mouth to change feet too.

But to get the church going, both types of men were needed and every type of person in between as well. I believe that each of us has a special relationship with the Divine and whether it's our vocation to be quiet, a bit mysterious and visionary or to be loud and active, I reckon what God wants is for us simply to be the best version of ourselves that we can be.

Please help us, Lord, to use every opportunity that comes our way to bring life, love, light and liberty into this world.

Amen

FRI 05:45 Farming Today (m00268n1)
27/12/24 Lake District Barn Rescue

Twenty historic barns across the Lake District are enjoying some long overdue tender loving care, thanks to £3.2 million pounds worth of funding from DEFRA and other sources. The oldest of these barns dates back to the 15th century. Some are traditional cruck barns with ancient timber frames and others are remote stone shelters for sheep from the 18th century.

As Caz Graham discovers, they're part of the UK's rural cultural heritage and tell the story of farming over the centuries. For modern-day farmers however, these buildings can be a real headache: they are often unfit for modern farming practices and hugely expensive to restore or maintain because of building protections like listings, or because they're in a National Park.

Caz joins farmers, builders, architect Mike Darwell and Rose Lord, the historic buildings officer at the Lake District National Park Authority to hear how these traditional buildings are getting a new lease of life.

Produced and presented by Caz Graham.

FRI 06:00 Today (m00268vc)

Nick Robinson and Simon Jack hear from, Sir Sajid Javid, in this guest edited Today.

The former Conservative Chancellor who left parliament earlier this year has used his guest edit to look at what he calls "the good, the bad and the ugly" of AI.

FRI 09:00 Desert Island Discs (m00268sg)
[Repeat of broadcast at 10:00 on Sunday]

FRI 10:00 Woman's Hour (m00268vl)

Shazia Mirza, Haiti, Dutch surnames, Imposter Syndrome, Celia Pym on socks.

Haiti has been ravaged by political instability and gang violence since the assassination of the country's president in 2021 – and this year it's spiralled with armed gangs in control of much of the capital Port-au-Prince. Alongside the violence is an escalating humanitarian crisis, which is severely impacting women and children with widespread hunger and malnutrition. Kylie Pentalow finds out more from the BBC's senior investigations correspondent Nawal Al-Maghafi.

In the Netherlands, the 31st December 2024 marks the deadline for people to register if they want their child to have a double-barrelled surname. Children in the Netherlands automatically took their father's name, but in 1998 the law changed to allow them to take their mother's name instead - but only with the consent of the father. A group of women who believe this is discriminatory are challenging the law. Kylie speaks to Linde Bryk, head of strategic court cases at women's rights organisation Bureau Clara Wichmann, and Maartje Passchier who has been affected by the law change.

The science teacher turned actor, writer and comedian Shazia Mirza has been taking part in a landmark year for Muslim women in comedy – performing in a touring show called Comedy Queens, where the lineup is entirely female and Muslim. She's also been reflecting on her earlier years, growing up in a strict religious family in Birmingham, as she is writing a memoir. She joins Kylie to discuss her life before standup.

On Christmas Day we had a programme devoted to the seasonal theme of Comfort - what it is, why we crave it, and the myriad of ways we can find it. Co-presenters Nuala McGovern and Anita Rani also discussed the flip side - importance of getting outside your comfort zone - with guests including organisational psychologist Fiona Murden and the food critic Grace Dent

BBC News is releasing a new episode of Imposter Syndrome today with guest Sir Richard Branson. Therapist Julia Bueno joins Kylie to discuss the ways that imposter syndrome or self-criticism affects so many of us. In 2022 Julia published 'Everyone's A Critic' based on conversations with her patients and she shares ways to cope when imposter syndrome starts to hold you back.

The artist Celia Pym works with textiles to create her pieces. Her latest exhibition: Socks: The Art of Care and Repair looks at sustainability in fashion and the importance of mending.

Presented by Kylie Pentalow

Producer: Louise Corley

FRI 11:00 The Food Programme (m00268vs)

The Dickens Effect: How the Writer Influenced Food at Christmas.

Dan Saladino explores the impact a Christmas Carol and other Charles Dickens novels have had on festive eating, with food historian Ivan Day and food writer Penelope Vogler.

Produced and presented by Dan Saladino.

FRI 11:45 The Dead of Winter by Sarah Clegg (m00268vx)
Episode 5: The Christmas Witches

When we think about Christmas, we probably picture mangers, glowing fireplaces, carol singers and snow-covered hills. But behind all this, there's something much darker lurking in the shadows.

In her new book, The Dead of Winter, Sarah Clegg peels back the wrapping paper of modern Christmas to reveal the creepy creatures and customs hiding underneath. Beyond the jollity and bright enchantment of the festive season, there lurks a darker mood - one that has found expression over the centuries in a host of strange and unsettling traditions.

Cambridge-trained historian Sarah delves deep into the folklore of the Christmas season in Europe, detailing the way its terrifying past continues to haunt and entertain us now in the 21st Century. She experiences many of these traditions first-hand joining wassailing celebrations in Wales and attempting a

Swedish Year Walk. She also explores the tension between darkness and light that lies at the heart of winter celebrations and argues that we need both the comforting glow of the hearth and the thrilling chill of ghost stories.

In this episode, mingling with the candle-crowned young witches of Finland's St. Lucy Festival, the author captures the revelry at the heart of the winter madness.

Reader: Fenella Woolgar
Producer: Pippa Vaughan
Abridger: Elizabeth Burke
Executive Producer: Jo Rowntree
A Loftus Media production for BBC Radio 4

FRI 12:00 News Summary (m00268w3)

The latest national and international news from BBC Radio 4.

FRI 12:04 Rare Earth (m00268w9)

Reasons To Be Cheerful

Could 2025 be a year of progress on climate change and the nature crisis? Tom Heap and Helen Czerski search for some tentative green shoots with former Green MP Caroline Lucas, editor in chief of Business Green James Murray, and climate comedian Stuart Goldsmith.

Producer: Emma Campbell

Assistant Producer: Toby Field

Rare Earth is produced in association with the Open University

FRI 12:57 Weather (m00268wh)

The latest weather forecast

FRI 13:00 World at One (m00268wm)

Ex-minister David Gauke wants more use of open prisons

The ex-justice secretary is reviewing sentencing for the government and explains why he is looking at open prisons. And Cary Grant, the man behind the myth.

FRI 13:45 My Poetry and Other Animals (m00268ws)

Spiders

Spiders have an image problem - which is why Simon Armitage is keen to have some close encounters with them, as he tries to write a new animal poem.

He has written a lot about animals in the past, but always at a distance. He wants that to change, to feel that he has captured the spirit of an animal and done it justice.

In this episode, the poet laureate walks underneath the blanket-size webs of orb spiders at ZSL London Zoo - and meets Katie, a Mexican red knee spider.

He also reads the poem 'The Spider' by Kathleen Jamie to an arachnid audience, and talks to Kathleen herself to ask what it means to try and occupy the perspective of another creature.

Contributors:

Kathleen Jamie - poet (latest books are 'Cairn' and 'The Keelie Hawk') and former Scottish Makar
Jamie Mitchell - ZSL London Zoo
Katie the Mexican Red Kneede Spider

Film clips are from 'The Spider' - 1958 - directed by Bert Ira Gordon

Produced by Faith Lawrence
Mixed by Sharon Hughes (Shush)

FRI 14:00 The Archers (m00268kc)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 on Thursday]

FRI 14:15 Limelight (m00268wy)

Don't Listen to This

Don't Listen to This: Episode 1

By Anthony Del Col

Gripping psychological thriller, set in the world of competitive gaming (esports).

Cressida Yang was once a top esports psychologist, until she was scapegoated for the burn out of one of her clients. When her former colleague, Park, ropes her back in to do one last session to help out an underperforming player from his new team Klub Kinetic, Cressida is thrust back into dangerous a

world she thought she had left behind.

Cressida Yang..... Sophie Wu
 Blu_Devil Thaddea Graham
 Park Nikesh Patel
 Rooftop Jonny Weldon
 Oliver/Officer Patel Jaz Singh Deol
 Khanaan/Gonzalez Nuhazet Diaz Canc
 Teenager Andi Bickers
 Teammate Dan 'Foxdrop' Wyatt
 Warstrm Ian Dunnett Jnr

Production co-ordinator- Pippa Day
 Assistant Technical Producer- Mike Etherden
 Technical Producer and Sound Designer- Sharon Hughes
 Director- Nadia Molinari
 Co-Producers- Nadia Molinari, Jessica Mitic, Lorna Newman

With thanks to Nimit Mankad, Anthony Wastella and Geoff Moore.

A BBC Studios Audio Production for BBC Radio 4

FRI 14:45 Something to Declare (m00268x2)

How to Take a Break

Jack Boswell explores Sweden's cherished tradition of fika and its lessons on the art of taking a break.

Joining him is Anna Brones, author of Fika: The Art of the Swedish Coffee Break, who shares how this ritual goes beyond coffee and pastries to create intentional moments of connection and reflection. Anna explains how fika encourages us to pause, savour a sweet treat, and enjoy meaningful conversations - whether with colleagues, friends, or family.

Reine Eriksson, CEO of a Swedish telecommunications company, adds insight into how fika transforms workplaces, fostering creativity and collaboration. He reveals how this simple practice, embedded in Swedish culture, builds stronger relationships and a positive work environment by creating a level playing field, where all voices are heard.

Together, Jack and his guests uncover the roots of fika - from its social dimension, to its modern global appeal as a counterbalance to our fast-paced lives. They reflect on how fika's emphasis on connection can combat isolation, nurture creativity, and remind us of the joy in everyday moments.

This episode celebrates fika as more than a coffee break - it's a philosophy that shows how taking time for others and ourselves can enrich our lives.

Host: Jack Boswell
 Producer: Emma Crampton
 Senior Producer: Harry Stott
 Executive Producer: Sandra Ferrari
 Production Coordinator: James Cox
 Audio Supervisor: Tom Biddle
 Sound Editor: Alan Leer and Lizzy Andrews

A Message Heard production for BBC Radio 4

FRI 15:00 Gardeners' Question Time (m00268x4)

From the Archives: Christmas

Peter Gibbs digs, rakes and mulches through the GQT archive to uncover some much needed gardening advice, providing you with knowledge to aid you in the new year.

It's the most wonderful time of the year and the perfect period to get ahead with maintaining you garden during the harsh winter months to come.

GQT's various horticultural experts from over the years share their tips and knowledge on what to do with wonky veg, what to do with an Amaryllis bulb after it's finished flowering, and which plants are deer proof.

Later, we listen back to when Chris Beardshaw visited Tenby Wells to learn all about mistletoe, its origins and the significance it has on the festive period.

Producer: Dom Tyerman
 Assistant Producer: Rahnee Prescod
 Executive Producer: Carly Maile

A Somethin' Else production for BBC Radio 4

FRI 15:45 Short Works (m00268x6)

Shopping All the Way by Karen Quinn

An original short story commissioned by BBC Radio 4 from the writer Karen Quinn. Read by Beccy Henderson.

Karen Quinn is an award winning writer and educator based in

Donegal. She is one of BBC Writersroom's Belfast Voices 2022. She was longlisted for the Mammoth Screen TV Writer's Award 2021, and twice shortlisted for the Sir Peter Ustinov Television Scriptwriting award run by the International Emmy Committee, in both 2014 and 2015. She was also the winner and recipient of the Northern Ireland Comedy Writers programme in 2016, organised by Grand Scheme Media, and a shortlisted writer and director for Jameson First Shot 2016. She has toured her writing both nationally and internationally. She is also a published children's writer, with her work broadcast on television and published in short story collections. At the moment, she is completing her PhD in Creative Writing with Ulster University.

Writer: Karen Quinn
 Reader: Beccy Henderson.
 Producer: Sylvie Conway

A BBC Audio Northern Ireland Production for BBC Radio 4.

FRI 16:00 Last Word (m00268x8)

Weekly obituary programme telling the life stories of those who have died recently.

FRI 16:30 Dreaming of Connie Converse (m00268xb)

Poet Emily Berry explores the music and mystery of Connie Converse.

Connie Converse was ahead of her time. She began writing songs on guitar in New York City in 1949. She wrote of loneliness and rebellion, of ambition, judgement and desire -- in a manner rarely heard from women at that time: witty yet melancholy, defiant but ethereal.

Sitting somewhere between George Gershwin and Joni Mitchell, Connie Converse was a singer-songwriter before that phrase had currency. There was no one else like her.

Perhaps that's why she never really found an audience. She left New York City in 1961, moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan and gave up writing songs.

And then she disappeared.

At least, that's the way the story is often told.

In 1974 Connie Converse wrote letters to friends and family suggesting that she was leaving Ann Arbor to start afresh elsewhere. She drove away in her Volkswagen Beetle and was never heard from again.

There were apparent sightings over the years. A private investigator was no help. Her car was never found.

Almost everything we know about Connie Converse comes from a large filing cabinet, left behind at her brother's house after she drove away, but not thoroughly examined until his retirement many years later. It presents a carefully organised window onto Connie Converse's life: letters, pictures, essays, political activism, mementoes and recordings, all indexed and itemised. She wanted to disappear, but not without leaving a legacy.

In the filing cabinet was an explanatory letter, which begins: "Let me go."

Half a century later, many people can't let her go.

Her songs of wit and vulnerability were out of time in the 1950s but have found a listenership today. She's a cult artist of the streaming era.

Emily Berry dreams about Connie Converse in the company of biographer Howard Fishman, musician Emma-Lee Moss (formerly known as Emmy the Great) and poet Jack Underwood. Including extracts from an interview with Philip and Jean Converse by Dan Dzula and David Herman.

Connie Converse photograph courtesy of the Musick Group / Heroic Cities LLC.

FRI 17:00 PM (m00268xd)

NASA spacecraft survives closest ever approach to the Sun

NASA's Parker Solar Probe makes history. Also, we discuss what can be achieved by the NHS before the Health Secretary unveils his 10 year plan next spring.

FRI 18:00 Six O'Clock News (m00268xg)

NATO is increasing naval presence in the Baltic, after the cutting of an undersea cable

FRI 18:15 The Wombles to the Rescue (m00268xj)

Episode 5: The Big Splash

The Wombles live under Wimbledon Common, and it is their special responsibility to 'tidy up' everything that untidy human beings leave behind.

In this third audiobook in the series, the Wombles are back at their old burrow underneath Wimbledon Common. There's a Womble world shortage of 'this and that' and Great Uncle Bulgaria is called over to America to attend a crisis summit. Back home, a visit from Cousin Botany is full of surprise and new invention.

Full of fun and warmth, with an underpinning environmental message, The Wombles To The Rescue is based on the original books by Elisabeth Beresford, performed by Richard E Grant, directed by Johnny Vegas and nestled in a new soundscape for all the family to enjoy.

Episode 5: The Big Splash
 Wellington and Tomsk construct their 'oil rig' only to come face to face with a furious Cousin Botany who, suddenly, has quite a lot to say.

Cast and Credits:
 Performed by..... Richard E Grant
 Written by..... Elisabeth Beresford
 Abridged by..... Sally Harrison and Susan Vale
 Script Consultant..... Kate Robertson
 With thanks to..... Marcus Robertson

Music: The Wombling Song, composed and recorded by Mike Batt

Produced by..... Sally Harrison
 Sound Engineer..... Wilfredo Acosta
 Sound Designer..... Alisdair McGregor
 Directed by..... Johnny Vegas

A Woolyback Productions and Mrs Mellor's Cellar collaboration for BBC Radio 4 and BBC Sounds

FRI 18:30 The Naked Week (m00268b2)

Series 1

The Naked Christmas Week: Books, Trump, and When Is Bins?

Landing slap-bang in the no-man's land between Christmas and New Year, the Naked Week team will be heading out of the trenches to challenge the news to a game of football. This week, we find out which of the year's political memoirs passes our special test, and we ask the big Christmas question 'When Is Bins?'

Expect festive advice, guests full of joy and wonder, and a little drummer boy (budget depending), as the show sticks its hand into all the Christmas current affairs, pulls out a bag of news-giblets and stuffs the airwaves with irreverent features, mischievous set-pieces and more jokes than you can shake a seasonal stick at.

Presenter of Presents: Andrew Hunter Murray

Chief Christmas Correspondent: Amy Hoggart

Written by:
 Jon Holmes
 Jason Hazeley
 Katie Sayer
 Sarah Dempster
 Gareth Ceredig
 Adam Macqueen
 Louis Mian

Produced by Jon Ho-ho-ho-Holmes.

Production Team: Katie Sayer, Phoebe Butler, Laura Grimshaw, Jerry Peal, Tony Churnside.

An unusual production for BBC Radio 4

FRI 19:00 The Archers (m00268xl)

WRITER: Avin Shah
 DIRECTOR: Jess Bunch
 EDITOR: Jeremy Howe

Brian Aldridge.... Charles Collingwood
 Jolene Archer.... Buffy Davis
 Kenton Archer.... Richard Attlee
 Alice Carter.... Hollie Chapman
 Mick Fadmoor.... Martin Barrass
 Alan Franks.... John Telfer
 Eddie Grundy.... Trevor Harrison
 Will Grundy.... Philip Mollay
 Jakob Hakansson.... Paul Venables
 Joy Horville.... Jackie Lye
 Paul Mack.... Joshua Riley
 Kate Madikane.... Perdita Avery

FRI 19:15 Add to Playlist (m00268xn)

Seckou Keita, Tess Tyler and Nick Patrick, from Prince to Kings

Kora player and composer Seckou Keita and screen composer Tess Tyler join Anna Phoebe and Jeffrey Boakye as they add five more tracks to the playlist, taking us from bootlegs to Africa's biggest-selling single, via an early classic video game. They are joined by the British producer Nick Patrick, the man behind two of the tracks in today's playlist.

Producer: Jerome Weatherald
Presented with musical direction by Jeffrey Boakye and Anna Phoebe

The five tracks in this week's playlist:

Cindy C. by Prince
Donkey Kong Country by David Wise
La Primavera by Ottorini Respighi
Yeke Yeke by Mory Kante
No Volvere by the Gipsy Kings

Other music in this episode:

Sallisaw Blue by John Moreland
You Got The Love by The Source Ft. Candi Staton
Interactive by Prince
Winter Tundra from Lego Worlds soundtrack by Tess Tyler and Rob Westwood
Jungle Groove from Donkey Kong Country by David Wise
Two Tribes by Frankie Goes to Hollywood
Yeke Yeke (original version) by Mory Kante

FRI 20:00 The Today Podcast (m00268xq)

News Review of the Year 2024

Amol Rajan and Nick Robinson are joined by Today programme colleague Justin Webb to discuss a bumper election year that saw the UK elect a new prime minister and the US re-elect a president. Plus, Emma Barnett looks back at her first few months as a Today presenter and Garry Richardson returns to pick out his sporting moments of 2024.

To get Amol and Nick's take on the biggest stories and insights from behind the scenes at the UK's most influential radio news programme make sure you subscribe to The Today Podcast on BBC Sounds. That way you'll get an alert every time we release a new episode, and you won't miss our extra bonus episodes either.

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* Email today@bbc.co.uk

The Today Podcast is hosted by Amol Rajan and Nick Robinson who are both presenters of BBC Radio 4's Today 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.

This episode was made by Lewis Vickers with Nadia Gyane and Grace Reeve. The technical producers were Ben Andrews and Mike Regaard. The editor is Louisa Lewis. The executive producer is Owenna Griffiths.

FRI 20:50 A Point of View (m00268xs)

On Resolutions

Megan Nolan rediscovers a childhood diary with her first New Year's Resolutions.

She was fascinated and appalled, she says, by what she read: 'The final resolution, underlined, read simply 'be a better person!'

These days, Megan looks on self-improvement in a rather different way - less an attempt at perfection and more 'an attempt to courageously embrace living in all its chaos.'

Producer: Adele Armstrong
Sound: Peter Boshier
Production coordinator: Gemma Ashman
Editor: Richard Fenton-Smith

FRI 21:00 The Verb (m00268xv)

A special recording of The AdVerb at The Hackney Empire

A special recording of The AdVerb at The Hackney Empire . Ian McMillan introduces six unique collaborations - new commissions between poets composers and musicians in collaboration with BBC Contains Strong Language and the BBC

Symphony Orchestra

Poets from the East End of London team up with composers to make new pieces that tell stories of this part of the capital city in all its astonishing diversity .

1. Keith Jarrett with his new poem 'E Note' set to music by Iain Farrington
2. Hannah Silva performs 'The Empire Memorial Sailor's Hostel ' with music by Evan Jolly.
3. Christian Foley's Learning to Swim, performed by the poet with music by Calum Au.
4. Livia Kojó Alour and composer Charlie Bates present a new arrangement of Livia's piece Soul Death
5. Yome Sode and composer James B Wilson present their collaboration Roots.
6. Kat Francois and composer Lee Reynolds present Roots

Presented by Ian McMillan with the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lee Reynolds

Produced by Susan Roberts

FRI 22:00 The World Tonight (m00268xx)

In depth reporting, intelligent analysis and breaking news from a global perspective.

FRI 22:45 South Sea Tales by W. Somerset Maugham (m00268xz)

The Back of Beyond

South Sea Tales by Somerset Maugham - taken from stories written by Maugham largely based in and around the Malay States.

All stories abridged by Lucy Ellis.

Read by Sarah Lambie

Produced by Clive Brill

A Brill production for BBC Radio 4

FRI 23:00 Loose Ends (m00268y1)

Loose Ends Lounge: Richard Thompson, English Teacher, Fairground Attraction, Ron Sexsmith, Nadine Shah

In the first of two special programmes, Stuart Maconie showcases some of the best Loose Ends music sessions from the past year. With performances from Richard Thompson, English Teacher, Fairground Attraction and Ron Sexsmith.

Presenter: Stuart Maconie

Producer: Elizabeth Foster

Production Co-ordinator: Lydia Depledge-Miller