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Great Britons

Last year, BBC Two launched an unprecedented public search for the country's greatest ever Briton.

This autumn, *Great Britons* reveals, in a special launch programme, the 10 greatest Britons as voted for by the British public. A major series of 10 one-hour biographical programmes follows.

Each programme is fronted by a high-profile presenter arguing passionately why their chosen Briton is not only great, but the greatest ever. Throughout the series, viewers can cast their vote. The series culminates in a special live results programme and the announcement of the public's choice of their greatest Briton ever.

What's Your Problem?

A season of programmes

BBC Two is taking a bold approach to covering disability issues this autumn. These imaginative and discursive films avoid the predictable approach of presenting disabled people as either heroes or victims. Instead, this season of dramas and documentaries tries to reflect what it means to people to be disabled in the 21st century. Here are some of the programmes which will feature:



The Man Who Learned To See

Mike May was blinded by a chemical explosion at the age of three – but his drive and determination helped him to overcome his disability and lead a full life. Then in March 2000, Mike underwent a pioneering operation, regained low vision and was able to see his wife and two young sons for the first time. But his biggest problem was understanding what he was seeing.

Last year, his body began to reject the transplant but doctors saved his vision. However, his sight is not improving – doctors think he should be able to see better than he does, but the stumbling block seems to be Mike's inability to process what the eye is seeing.

What's Your Problem? continues...

World's Apart

Julian has been deaf since birth.

To him, deafness is more an issue of language than disability – try having an argument in British Sign Language and everybody knows about it! Jamie is a theatre director and has cerebral palsy. As he says, he "walks funny and sounds odd" but he's just an ordinary bloke with a passion for football.

Penny has epilepsy and Hugh has been blind since birth, but is a regular rower and part-time DJ. *World's Apart* is a revealing, moving and sometimes comical insider's view of life in Britain today, through the experiences of four people with disabilities.

What's Your Problem? continued



Surviving Thalidomide

Forty years ago the world was shocked by the story of thalidomide – a drug that made women give birth to babies with extreme deformities. Ten thousand women, from Toronto to Tokyo, were caught up in the nightmarish consequences of a medical disaster.

The children of thalidomide are now approaching middle age. Behind many lie inspiring tales of success and achievement in spite of the odds. Chronicling the lives of three thalidomide babies, *Surviving Thalidomide* draws on personal memories of their schooldays and the lives of their friends, partners and children over 40 years.

Surviving Thalidomide returns to the drug industry's darkest hour and the people who refused to become its victims.



Flesh And Blood

When Joe Broughton (Christopher Eccleston) discovers that his parents were patients at a mental hospital, and never knew they had a child, his world is blown apart.

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The Entertainers

(working title)

The household names that dominated television in the Seventies and Eighties are featured in a new documentary series which presents an intimate portrait of the present lives of some of the best-known celebrities from that era, and the hardest-working entertainers today.

The style of the documentaries is a mix of fly-on-the-wall and video diary as those featured get up close and personal with just a director and a camera. The entertainers participating in the series include Bernard Manning, Frank Carson, Leo Sayer, Bobby Davro, Tom O'Connor, Tony Blackburn, Five Star and Bernie Clifton.

All are still working, all have endured and enjoy successful careers beyond TV fame.



Top Gear

Top Gear is back – and so is Jeremy Clarkson!

The programme returns having been given a complete review and overhaul and, after a break of almost four years, Jeremy Clarkson is back on television's top motoring show.

The new, extended one-hour show takes a fast-paced, authoritative and entertaining look at what's going on in the motoring world.

Renowned for his trademark opinionated comments on the motor industry, Jeremy returns to *Top Gear* with his unique mix of expertise and wit. He will banter with guests, interact with experts and have the odd aside with an audience of motor enthusiasts.

True Spies

Distinguished investigative reporter Peter Taylor presents a startling series on the innermost workings of the *True Spies*. Spanning 50 years of clandestine operations, the programmes reveal the full account of secret service dealings within the United Kingdom, from the inception of the Cold War to the new "single issue" subversive groups that have emerged in recent years.

Special Branch officers and MI5 agents speak candidly of their work, including the perils they faced and the motivation behind their actions. *True Spies* also hears from those on the receiving end of the services' attentions; individuals who have long suspected they were being watched, but never before realised the extent of the scrutiny.



Two Men In A Trench

From the team behind *The Naked Chef*, *Two Men In A Trench* introduces best friend archaeologists Tony Pollard and Neil Oliver. Young, handsome and witty, the pair are also Britain's foremost battlefield archaeologists. The programme follows them as they set out to unlock some of the greatest enigmas in British history by exploring battlefields untouched for centuries. Visiting the site of six major British battles, the friends translate archaeological findings into human stories, in some cases uncovering evidence that may totally revise the accepted version of events. From the javelins exchanged at Maldon, to the cannon that proved so devastating at Flodden, Neil and Tony's archaeological double act brings each age's battles and weaponry back to life.



Arena – The Room: The Life And Work Of Harold Pinter

Since the Sixties, Harold Pinter has been one of the leading forces in British theatre. For BBC Two, *Arena* presents this rare intimate portrait of the playwright. With unique and exclusive access, Nigel Williams's collaborative filmic biography explores Pinter's life, work and political passions. The film opens with Pinter; the travelling actor, through to the 1960 West End hit, *The Caretaker*, and moves from Sixties cool, through Eighties radical to an established force in world theatre.

An accompanying season of Harold Pinter's work will be broadcast on BBC Four.



The Dancer's Body

Deborah Bull, former prima ballerina with the Royal Ballet, presents – and often dances – this landmark series. Throughout Deborah puts her body through a series of challenges in order to illuminate its workings. The series breaks new ground in creating a bridge between science and the performing arts as it investigates the science behind those elements of the human body, brain and mind that make performance possible. Specially commissioned new dance pieces feature in every programme.



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What The Tudors And Stuarts Did For Us

The Tudor and Stuart periods were two of the most significant in English and British history, introducing the dramatic shifts in thinking and innovation that were the birth of modern Britain. England's religious separation from Europe and the invention of the printing press provided a fertile ground for the spreading of new ideas, while the development of cast iron cannons and the first battleships led to the beginning of a professional army and navy. The Stuart period saw the union of Scotland and England and the emergence of some of the world's greatest scientists. Adam Hart-Davis uses his usual mix of enthusiasm and demonstration to tell the story of the inventions and geniuses of the time.

Martin Luther

Martin Luther brings to life the epic story of a solitary monk's struggle against the tyranny of a decadent and corrupt Church.

Travelling from the bleak and plague-ridden landscapes of Northern Germany to the opulence of Renaissance Rome, this drama documentary explores one of the most astonishing conflicts in Western civilisation.

Produced by Bafta-winning film-maker Cassian Harrison, it features Timothy West as Luther, recalling his life over the course of his final days.

This in-depth analysis of Martin Luther's life and achievements explores his role as the founder of the Protestant Church and its resonance throughout Western civilisation.



Scribbling

As numerous new works of fiction hit the bookstores every week, many readers are convinced that they too could write a novel, if they only had the time. But as *Scribbling* reveals, even for the professionals, writing a best-seller is not as easy as it seems.

Scribbling follows two very different authors – AS Byatt and Robert Newman – through every stage of writing their latest works, from conception to publication, stripping bare the creative process behind the writing of a novel. In unique, intimate portraits of authors at work, cameras follow them, charting the highs and lows of the day-to-day slog.



Reputations

The new series of *Reputations* explores the private lives behind the public faces of two very different royals, a much-loved comic actor and a spoon-bender who claims to have psychic powers.

The series shows how Prince Albert, remembered as the beloved husband of Queen Victoria, manipulated public opinion to create the image of himself as model husband and father; explodes the myth of Marie Antoinette, one of history's most vilified characters; tells the story of Uri Geller and his ongoing mission to convince the world he possesses superhuman powers; and examines the complex and troubled life of *Dad's Army* favourite Arthur Lowe.

The Sharp End Of Racism

Racism is rarely off the media agenda these days but coverage of it is often limited to reporting isolated incidents, or trouble-spots in run-down inner cities. In *The Sharp End Of Racism*, BBC Two shows the devastating effects of racism on families across Britain and asks what it's like to run the gauntlet of continuous abuse from neighbours or stay in all night waiting to be attacked.

The programme allows the victims to tell their stories of how difficult it is to live a normal life in an increasingly racist climate and also addresses the complex issue of what constitutes a racist attack. These victims suffer but their voices are rarely heard.



The Essential ...

This series of popular biographies profiles contemporary, controversial, iconic figures who have made an enormous impact on popular culture: Naomi Campbell; Daley Thompson; Diana Ross; Will Smith; and Michael Jackson. The series tells the story of their lives, their achievements and the pitfalls of fame and also examines the contribution each of these black stars have made on their professions and on the wider societies around them.



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The Death Belt

Eighty-nine per cent of US executions occur in the "Death Belt" of Southern states. There is a crisis in defence representation and fears of ongoing miscarriages of justice.

English lawyer Clive Stafford-Smith and the Louisiana Crisis Assistance Center aim to stop the killing in their state. The film follows Clive and his team as they take on the seemingly hopeless case of Leslie Martin – a man two weeks from execution with a negligible chance of reprieve.

The Death Belt follows the unfolding drama, with access to the prisoners' families and their lawyers, as the discovery of evidence suppressed for 10 years leads to a race against time to try to halt the execution.



The Day I Died

Long tunnels, bright lights, reunions with dead friends and relatives, and past-life flashing before the eyes have all been described as experiences in near death.

Since they were first described in the USA nearly three decades ago, testimonies have been gathered by the thousand all over the world. In the USA alone, over 13 million adults have described their near-death experiences. Now, using the latest scientific evidence and real-life accounts, as well as input from sceptics, *The Day I Died* lifts the lid on these incredible phenomena.

On The Run

Gerry McGowan had just signed a professional football contract to play with Gary Lineker when his world collapsed. Whilst visiting his native Belfast, he woke one morning to find himself wrongfully arrested for murder. Fearing an unfair trial, he jumped bail.

This on-the-road documentary retraces the physical and emotional journeys of Gerry's life on the run. He relives his first night as a fugitive and talks openly of the constant fear of being hunted down, living under false identities. After 20 years he was ruled an innocent man, but by that time he had lost the prime of his life, his career, and his mother, who died while he was in hiding.

The Life Of A Ten Pound Note

Drawing £10 notes from cash machines is an exercise most people perform regularly. But they never stop to think what happens to the note after it passes through their hands, and whose lives it touches.

This film follows just one note, from the moment it emerges from the cashpoint, over 500 miles. It shares its owners' lives and aspirations, enjoying the diversity of the characters who spend it – rich, poor, young and old. Passing through 26 different hands it takes viewers on a journey from city to countryside and gives a fresh look at people's perceptions of money.

Wild New World

Mammoths once strolled through Hollywood, and roamed across what is now the runway at Denver airport. Using the latest scientific research, filming techniques and computer-generated imagery, *Wild New World* travels back in time to uncover the early history of North America. This is a detective story that uses clues from the present to build a picture of the distant past.

It visits North America 14,000 years ago, a time when people were first entering the vast, unexplored continent and quite unexpected animals ruled this new world. The first North



Americans lived side by side with elephant-like mammoths and mastodons, giant short-faced bears, sabre-toothed cats, tree-sized ground sloths and heavily armoured glyptodonts.

"...And Me"

"...And Me" is a landmark new series exploring the public's relationship with six of the most iconic businesses in Britain over 50 years.

It shows how the demands of consumers have affected the fortunes of six of the most famous companies in Britain since the war.

Through interviews with company insiders, celebrities, employees and ordinary people, the series shows how businesses have both created, and responded to, consumer needs. From Marks & Spencer to Habitat, *The Sun* to EMI and Thomas Cook to Ford, each programme focuses on a separate business to reflect very different areas of social change.



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Britain's Best Buildings

(working title)

An extraordinary array of fantastic buildings cover Britain, from every historical age, and of every architectural style. In *Britain's Best Buildings*, Dan Cruickshank celebrates the bricks-and-mortar icons of British history, exploring four buildings, well-known and much loved – Windsor Castle, Tower Bridge, Durham Cathedral and Blenheim Palace. From conservation battles to the ideas behind sacred geometry, *Britain's Best Buildings* gives unique insights into some of the nation's favourite properties and examines their enduring appeal.

Lesley Garrett – Music And Landscape

Lesley Garrett, the dazzling diva from Doncaster, goes back to the roots of some of Britain's best-loved traditional tunes, and to her own northern homeland, for *Lesley Garrett – Music And Landscape*.

With a nod to her forthcoming album, Lesley sings timeless classics such as *Jerusalem* and *Scarborough Fair*, with new arrangements by her music collaborator and British-based composer Tolga Kashif, shot in the rugged vistas and bustling towns of the north of England.

Music And Landscape is the first in a series of three specials Lesley is filming this year, with a Christmas special and a third programme on sacred music in progress.



Treasure – An Ancestors Special From The British Museum

The British Museum is one of the world's greatest treasure houses, displaying thousands of priceless artefacts from every corner of the globe. However, it also houses some incredible British treasures, which are often overlooked. Paul Merton guides viewers around this Aladdin's Cave and discovers a Top 10 of the finest works of British art available for public view. *Treasure* also looks at the human stories behind how these finds came to light, including cases of fortunes won and lost, "sting" operations to catch black-market traders and legal battles over ownership.

Hypersex

This intimate, observational film looks at the extremes of male sexual behaviour in a liberated age, focusing on the relationship between director Oilly Lambert and Paul, a divorcée from Yorkshire, whose weekly trips to sex clubs are only the tip of the iceberg.

"Having sex with strangers in car parks is the best drug known to man," says Paul with a smile as he drives into one of Britain's many secret meeting points for "liberated adults" in search of elicited, no-nonsense sex. But over time viewers begin to see the lengths that Paul will go to for a fix, and when his step-niece makes a startling revelation, his seemingly liberated existence is finally undermined.

Returning series

East	Horizon
Gary Rhodes' Cookery Year	Booker Prize 2002
Hidden Gardens	Later With Jools
The Life Laundry	Prom – LA Philharmonic
Small Town Gardens	Last Night Of The Proms
What Not To Wear	Blue Planet Prom

