

MR SELFRIDGE

PRODUCTION NOTES

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MR SELFRIDGE

Award-winning actor **JEREMY PIVEN** (*Entourage*) leads the cast as American entrepreneur, Harry Gordon Selfridge, in new drama ***Mr Selfridge***, about the life of the flamboyant and visionary American entrepreneur, produced by ITV Studios for ITV1.

Created by multi-award winning writer Andrew Davies, and written by Andrew Davies, Kate Brooke and Kate O'Riordan, ***Mr Selfridge*** tells the story of 'Mile a Minute Harry', a man with a mission to make shopping as thrilling as sex. Pioneering and reckless, with an almost manic energy, he created a theatre of retail where any topic or trend that was new, exciting, entertaining - or sometimes just eccentric - was showcased.

Jeremy Piven takes on the role as Mr Selfridge following a successful eight-season run on hit drama *Entourage*, in which he won three Emmys and a Golden Globe for his portrayal as Ari Gold. Born and raised in Chicago, Piven has a successful career on stage and screen with credits including, *Runaway Jury*, *Old School*, *Black Hawk Down*, *Serendipity* and Guy Ritchie's *Rocknrolla*. Piven also starred as Boddy Gould in Broadway hit *Speed-the-Plow* and in Neil LaBute's *Fat Pig*. Most recently, he appeared in films *Angels Crest*, starring alongside Elizabeth McGovern, Mira Sorvino, Kate Walsh and Lynn Collins, and *I Melt With You*, which premiered at the 2011 Sundance Film festival.

KATHERINE KELLY (*Coronation Street*) joins Piven in ***Mr Selfridge*** as the confident and alluring socialite Lady Mae, whose connections prove vital for Harry as he builds his empire.

Also starring is **FRANCES O'CONNOR** (*Piccadilly Jim*) who plays Harry's wife Rose, acclaimed French actor **GRÉGORY FITOUSSI** (*Spiral*) as Henri Leclair, Harry's flamboyant creative director, **AISLING LOFTUS** (*The Borrowers*, *Dive*) as shop assistant Agnes, **TRYSTAN GRAVELLE** (*Anonymous*) as ladies' man Victor, the Assistant Manager at Selfridge's in-store restaurant, and **ZOE TAPPER** (*Desperate Romantics*) playing a celebrated stage entertainer, Ellen Love, who becomes the new 'face' of Selfridge's.

The drama is set in London in 1909, at a time when women were revelling in a new sense of freedom and modernity. Harry wanted to indulge, empower and celebrate these women and so opened the doors of his lavish department store, on London's famous Oxford Street.

Through the innovations and spectacular events Harry staged within the store, the stories shines a light on hidden moments of the history of women, be it fashion, cosmetics, technology or domestic affairs.

Harry's colourful life plays out against the rich tapestry of London at the turn of the century. In his leisure hours he was a gambler, and although happily married, he enjoyed the company of glamorous show girls and film stars. His womanising was legendary and he very much lived life in the fast lane.

Mr Selfridge is based upon the book *Shopping, Seduction and Mr Selfridge* by author Lindy Woodhead which is the account of the real life story of Harry Gordon Selfridge and his store.

Andrew Davies and his writing team have cherry picked the most intriguing aspects of Harry's real life and used them as a spring-board to create a big, glamorous city story. There is a rich cast of fictional characters to fall in love with, whose fortunes are all interlinked with his own extraordinary story. From the opulent life of London's social elite, to the bright lights, glamour and back-stage intrigue of London's theatres, from board rooms, private poker games and smoky music halls to the working men and women trying to make their own success, this is period drama firmly set in the advent of modernity.

Mr Selfridge is produced by Chrissy Skinns (*Marchlands, Secret Diary of a Call Girl*) and executive produced by ITV Studios Drama's Kate Lewis. The series is directed by Jon Jones (*Titanic, Northanger Abbey*) John Strickland (*Whitechapel, Bodies*), Anthony Byrne (*Silent Witness, Upstairs Downstairs*) and Michael Keillor (*Young James Herriot, Shameless*).

Mr Selfridge has been commissioned by ITV's Director of Television, Peter Fincham, Director of Drama Commissioning Laura Mackie and Controller of Drama Sally Haynes.

Said Peter: "The story of Harry Selfridge and how he transformed the world of retail is fantastically rich territory. Andrew Davies and the team have created a compelling and entertaining series that is part family saga and part workplace drama."

Kate Lewis, Executive Producer for ITV Studios added: "It's impossible to read about the real Harry Selfridge and not be enthralled. Here's a man that had it all and lost it all in the most spectacular fashion. His life and the extraordinary legacy he left behind are dripping with drama."

Mr Selfridge will be distributed internationally by ITV Studios Global Entertainment.

Foreword
by Andrew Davies
Creator, Writer & Executive Producer

I was, I confess, a little taken aback when Kate Lewis sent me Lindy Woodhead's "Shopping, Seduction and Mr Selfridge." The seduction bit was right up my alley, of course, but like most men, shopping holds no thrills for me. But then I started reading about Harry Gordon Selfridge, and that was what sold the idea to me. Here was a wonderful flawed hero for our times, a genius in business with a fatal self-destructive streak. Selfridge liked to live on the edge, he was addicted to risk, and enjoyed being in debt. And despite being a dedicated family man, deeply in love with his wife and devoted to his four children, he was fatally drawn to other women – and the women he chose tended to be wildly attractive, high-maintenance and unstable. A rich mix indeed.

I began to see parallels to my favourite TV show *The Sopranos*. A charismatic hero with self-destructive tendencies, at the centre of a drama that explores the world of business and the emotional joys and traumas of family life. The big difference being that Harry Selfridge's business was entirely legitimate, but just as full of secrets, rivalries and betrayals as any Mafia crew.

We know a lot about Selfridge's life, and his family, but we know relatively little about the people who worked in the store when it was first founded, and that gave me the licence to create vivid characters for the store, from the senior managers through the heads of departments, to the lowliest workers on the shop floor and in the warehouse. And our brilliant cast have made them into real people that we care about, with rich and complex, often very moving stories.

Another thing I liked about this project is that although it's a period piece, it's not about country houses and traditional values: it's a big city story about innovation, progress, ambition and glamour. Harry Gordon Selfridge was right at the cutting edge of a changing world.

It's been a delight to write, and I hope it will be a delight to watch as well.

Kate Lewis

Executive Producer

The spark that led to Mr Selfridge coming to the screen came when Kate read the book 'Shopping, Seduction and Mr Selfridge' by Lindy Woodhead.

"I'd been on the look out for an idea for a big returning series when I read Lindy's book. I just fell in love with Harry Gordon Selfridge, he's a fascinating character and must have been such fun to hang out with. His story is an epic rise and fall, almost Shakespearian in scale. He made it all and blew it all in glorious style.

"And it felt to me that the shop itself was a brilliant prism for looking at the turn of the century in London from a new angle. I found the detail in Lindy's brilliant book, really intriguing, like the rise in popularity of perfume and cosmetics, for example. Here was an opportunity to tell the story how women's every day lives were changing at this time through their shopping habits.

Kate approached award-winning screenwriter Andrew Davies about the idea.

"Andrew and I have worked together for a long time. I was his script editor on shows like 'The Way We Live Now' and 'Daniel Deronda' and I went on to produce his adaptation of the Booker Prize winning novel, 'The Line of Beauty.'

"Andrew has an uncanny instinct for what will make a great story, and I love his trademark wit and verve. There's always something slightly wicked about his characters too. I sensed he would get this and do something exciting with it. At the very least, I thought it was an excuse for one of our long, wine-fuelled lunches. Andrew Davies is a famously good lunch date.

"But his first reaction was, 'I don't want to write a drama about shopping. That sounds so boring!' I said, 'No, no. Read about Harry Selfridge's life. It's amazing.'

"Luckily Andrew soon saw the potential in Harry's story for TV. Harry was a real showman and he infected everyone and everything with a sense of fun and theatre. Harry wanted to make his store one of the attractions that you would go to see in London along with the Houses of Parliament and London Zoo. But his life also followed a very strong emotional arc.

"And it's all laid out in Lindy Woodhead's carefully researched book so he could just steal all the most dramatic bits.

"Andrew was quite clear from an early stage however that he wanted creative freedom to dream up his own characters too. So we decided to keep to the broad strokes of Harry and his family's real lives but that the other characters would be Andrew's.

"And Andrew was brilliant at identifying what ingredients were required. We had great fun with Siobhan Finnigan our script executive, discussing who could be our baddie, love interest, ingenue, comedic turn etc..."

American actor Jeremy Piven appears to share the same dazzling energy that Harry Selfridge displayed.

"He's the perfect Harry Gordon Selfridge! When our talented producer Chrissy Skinns, who I had also worked with on 'Marchlands' last year, came on board, she hired an American casting director to look for our Harry. We discussed some interesting suggestions, and then Jeremy's name came up and we just all knew he was the one.

"He had the showmanship essential for the role of Harry Gordon Selfridge, as well as being a great actor.

"Chrissy and our first director, Jon Jones, went out to LA to meet Jeremy. What started off as a meeting, turned into drinks which then turned into supper. They were bowled over with his enthusiasm for the project, his understanding of the character and his energy.

Like Harry, Jeremy is from Chicago.

"That was probably the lynchpin for both him and us. He had a genuine affinity with Harry being from Chicago himself.

Adds Kate: "I am incredibly proud of the cast we have assembled. I've worked with the casting director Kate Rhodes James many times before and she is a class act and always offers up surprising choices. Chrissy and Jon were also really determined that the cast would feel unlike any other show.

"On paper the cast is pretty thrilling, but it was only when Chrissy and I watched them bring their characters to life that we realised how lucky we were.

"For me, Katherine Kelly is a revelation as Lady Mae. It's wonderful to have snared her for her first major television role after Coronation Street. And the role is so different from anything she has done before. She's amazing and great to work with.

"We were also thrilled to attract the brilliant Frances O'Connor. I've been a fan of hers for years and she is utterly compelling as Harry's wife, Rose. And then there are Samuel West, Zoe Tapper, Grégory Fitoussi (from my favourite French series Spiral), Aisling Loftus, Amanda Abbington, Tom Goodman-Hill, Nick Moran, Ron Cook...it's an embarrassment of riches!

The set of Selfridges in 1909 impressed everyone who saw it, including top executives who run the real 21st century version of the store.

"It is a massive investment for ITV Studios and hugely ambitious. We hope it's one that will reap rewards for years to come. We had quite a challenge on our hands to capture the glamour of Selfridges and we pushed it as far as we could.

"Rob Harris - the designer also responsible for the epic design job on ITV's recent 'Titanic' - is the best in the business and he's in constant demand so we were very

pleased to get him on board. Rob has done an extraordinary job in bringing the store to life. Walking on the set for the first time was a breath-taking experience for Andrew and I.

“We’ve tried not to slavishly replicate Selfridges - we could never have done the full scale of it for a start. But Rob and the other key creatives, James Keast, costume designer, and Konnie Daniel, our Hair & Make up Designer, have created their own wonderful version of the store. Hopefully it captures the spirit of Selfridges.

“I approached Selfridge's, the store, about 18 months before we’d even got the green light for the series and they’ve always been very enthusiastic and helpful. They’re not involved in the project but their senior management have been on set. We were a bit nervous but they thought it was great.

Kate describes the script process for Mr Selfridge as “remarkable.”

She explains: “From the outset, Andrew said he wanted to collaborate with some other writers. He wrote the first couple of scripts and it’s very much his vision. But then we brought two other writers on - Kate Brooke and Kate O’Riordan - and a writers’ room kind of organically evolved.

“That has been a really inspiring experience. Team writing doesn't always work so well in this country, but this just felt so creative and energised. Maybe it’s the alchemy of that particular bunch of writers but everyone has been generous and brought so much to the process.

“And it has been a great experience to be developing scripts as the rushes come in. The characters start to take on a life of their own.

Early on in the shoot, Chrissy and I were watching rushes of a scene involving two of our leads. We suddenly went, ‘My God, look - those two fancy each other and we never noticed!’”

Kate’s credits include Marchlands, Vera, Blackpool, The Alan Clark Diaries and The Line Of Beauty.

Character Biographies

HARRY SELFRIDGE (Jeremy Piven)



Harry Gordon Selfridge was an American retail visionary, who moved to London with his wife Rose, their four children and his mother Lois in 1906 to build and open the most ambitious and ground-breaking department store the world had ever seen.

Unimpressed by the way the British 'shopped', Harry built Selfridge's & Co – transforming the 'dead end' of Oxford Street in the process. With an innate understanding of women, pioneering business methods and boundless vision and energy, 'mile a minute Harry' put the sex and seduction into shopping - changing the way we shop forever.

Charming and inspirational, but also sometimes slightly manic and volatile, Harry is a truly magnetic character who commands respect, admiration and love from his staff and all those who know him even if it is sometimes slightly grudging! With a keen eye for the ladies that sometimes gets the better of him, Harry has buried within him a dangerous self-destruct button that's just waiting to be pressed...

ROSE SELFRIDGE (Frances O'Connor)



Harry's true soul mate, the beautiful and dutiful Rose Selfridge uproots her family from Chicago to be at her husband's side. Educated and smart, Rose is a big figure in society in her own right in the States. However in London, she is a fish out of water, struggling to find her place in the rigidly stratified British 'society' with its odd traditions and expectations.

Crucially, Rose knows how to handle Harry - magnanimously dealing with his indiscretions and his oft-consuming manic energy. She represents 'home' to Harry: someone who provides him with reassurance and comfort at a time when the stakes couldn't be higher. As the store takes off, she feels increasingly isolated and these subdued feelings lead to a tempestuous friendship with a handsome young artist...

AGNES TOWLER (Aisling Loftus)



Agnes Towler is an intelligent and spirited working class shop girl who gets a lucky break to work in the Accessories department in Selfridge's. Always immaculately presented, she makes the best of herself. She also looks after her little brother George. Agnes impresses Harry and her other colleagues, particularly Henri Leclair, with her bright and instinctive ideas, and it isn't long before her career is on the rise, but will her success be thwarted by her violent drunkard father Reg?

ELLEN LOVE (Zoe Tapper)



Sultry star of London's West End, Ellen Love is a good-time Gaiety girl who has used her stunning beauty and talents to rise to the top of the variety and music hall scene. Needless to say she soon becomes the apple of Harry's eye; he is a moth drawn to the flame...

Nothing short of a 'celebrity' as we know them today, she is adored by all classes and, boy, does she love the attention! However, underneath the glittering costumes and the rouge is a brittle and fragile girl, with emotional demands that might just become too much for Harry.

MR GROVE (Tom Goodman-Hill)



Selfridge's Chief of Staff, Mr Grove rules the store with a quiet authority. He is however, a very fair man. Married with a longtime sick wife, Grove is having a warm and loving affair with the store's Head of Accessories Miss Mardle a secret that must *not* come into the public domain.

MISS MARDLE (Amanda Abbington)



Selfridge's Head of Accessories is a beguiling character. Clearly a confident, traditional woman with vast retail experience, Miss Mardle runs her department with naval discipline. However, this formidable outward persona is at odds with her less successful private life: a clandestine affair with Chief of Staff Mr Grove brings Miss Mardle pleasure but much tension and heartache. We yearn for her to be happy.

LOIS SELFRIDGE (Kika Markham)



Lois is Harry's stoic and formidable mother who lives with the Selfridge family. A former schoolteacher, Lois is Harry's ultimate rock. She has always pushed him hard to follow his dreams, and is always there for him through the thick and thin. A sensible and reassuring voice of reason, Lois keeps an eye on Harry and often spots when he's vulnerable.

Lois is brilliant with the Selfridge children, constantly telling them of their Pa's rags to riches story. She also regales them with tales about the great Major Selfridge, Harry's father and American Civil War hero. But there is a hidden truth about Major Selfridge that Lois is hiding, a truth which threatens to come between her and her beloved son forever.

LADY MAE LOXLEY (Katherine Kelly)



An exquisitely attractive and witty London socialite, Lady Mae's renowned influence and power among London's social elite can make and break reputations in a heartbeat. Embedded comfortably in a marriage of convenience, her London 'salon' is *the* place to be entertained. She also has a penchant for beautiful young men and has a voracious sexual appetite.

Lady Mae is traditional but still forward-thinking: she's all about the next zeitgeist, the next big thing. A supporter of the women's rights movement, she rightly senses that Selfridge's is an up-and-coming phenomenon, and so finds a new backer for the store when Harry is in his greatest need, planting him firmly in her debt.

MR CRABB (Ron Cook)



Harry's chief accountant, Crabb is a loyal and reliable man of figures rather than creativity. Often discombobulated by Harry's impetuous and spontaneous business approach, he is over time won over by him. Against his better judgment, he ends up going heart before head as he gradually becomes one of Harry's of his most loyal and trusted advisors.

HENRI LECLAIR (Grégory Fitoussi)



The creative and artistic Henri Leclair began his retail career in Paris before working with Harry in Chicago and now Harry has brought him to London. A Parisian 'Don Draper' with his sleek stylish and devilish handsomeness, the talented Henri is drafted in to head up the revolutionary window designs and overall store presentation. He has an unparalleled eye for aesthetic detail, but like many artistic types can sometimes get in a flap under pressure!

VICTOR COLLEANO (Trystan Gravelle)



Handsome cheeky-chap Victor is bright, capable and exceedingly ambitious. With a natural charm and fun demeanor, Victor intends to use his placement as a waiter in the Palm Court Restaurant in the store to further his experience and to make contacts because he wants his own restaurant one day. Whilst the elder patrons of the Palm Court take a shine to Victor, he is drawn to Agnes Towler, but events may just conspire against them...

FRANK EDWARDS (Samuel West)



A seasoned London newspaper editor, Frank Edwards knows exactly where to take Harry and who to introduce him to, taking Harry the American outsider into the upper echelons of the oft-impenetrable London society. But Frank also has an bit of an appetite for the darker side of London life, which could be a danger for Harry.

KITTY (Amy Beth Hayes)



Agnes's pretty nemesis who also works in Accessories, Kitty at first appears to be a somewhat manipulative girl with mischievous nature. She is often jealous of Agnes' talent and successes, and is quite content when stirring trouble. After George joins the store, he becomes besotted with her and she knows it. It isn't long before we warm to Kitty, particularly through her relationship with pal Doris.

DORIS (Lauren Crace)



Always in the shadow of her best friend Kitty, Doris is more timid and has a strong moral compass. Content to get down to work, she occasionally allows herself to be led by Kitty but underneath knows her own mind. Doris has a big heart, becoming a vital support to one Selfridge's store member and a surprising love interest for another...

MISS BLENKINSOP (Deborah Cornelius)



Harry's prim secretary. She is efficient, discreet but sometimes a bit nervy around Harry's bounding energy - she's never known anything like it!

MR PEREZ (Timothy Watson)



Palm Court Restaurant Manager, Perez is officious and superb at his job. Often looking over Victor's shoulder, he sees that Victor's good looks will help build the success of the restaurant amongst the primarily female clientele, and encourages him to flirt with the rich women. However, he soon becomes threatened when Victor starts to show his own initiative.

MISS BUNTING (Pippa Haywood)



The nervous and timid Head of Fashion, the kind and thoughtful Miss Bunting is a real team-player and very thorough. At a time of need, Miss Bunting turns to Doris for support.

MISS RAVILLIOUS (Anna Madeley)



A visionary Head of Fashion who joins the store later on, the bicycle-riding Miss Ravillious is a force to be reckoned with. Utterly no-nonsense, direct and to the point, Miss Ravillious is a Suffrage supporter and also an advocate of the Rational Dress Movement. Occasionally coming to blows with Miss Mardle, she also runs a tight ship and spots a talent in Agnes Towler, which she soon takes advantage of.

GEORGE TOWLER (Calum Callaghan)



George is the hard-working, slightly shy and somewhat gullible younger brother of Agnes. He's not the sharpest knife in the drawer, but he's reliable and trustworthy. Agnes is very much a motherly figure to him, to the extent of securing him a job in the store. Petrified by his father, George has the same honest work ethic as Agnes.

REG TOWLER (Nick Moran)



Reg is the cruel and violent father of Agnes and George who tracks them down when he needs somewhere to live. A big drinker, he taunts his children and makes their lives a misery with his bitter and twisted views on the world. He often feigns sobriety, and can charm his way through life when he needs to – well, when he's not drunk.

RODERICK (RODDY) TEMPLE (Oliver Jackson-Cohen)



A handsome young artist and bohemian-type, Roddy is very much part of the new modern art scene. After a chance meeting with Rose Selfridge, Roddy enchants her with his artistic flair and they begin a curious friendship that could all too easily get dangerous for Rose. He is utterly besotted with her but is it reciprocated?

FRASER (Malcolm Rennie)



Scottish butler to The Selfridge family. Fastidious, impeccable and loyal to the last.

HARRY'S CHILDREN



ROSALIE (Poppy Lee Friar)

Harry's eldest and slightly impressionable daughter, who gets help from Lady Mae to be introduced into London society.

GORDON (Adam Wilson)

Harry's only son, and the heir to the Selfridge Empire. Gordon is a sweet boy who misses his dad's affection when he works all the time.

VIOLETTE (Freya Wilson)

Harry's second, slightly rebellious suffrage-cheering daughter.

BEATRICE (Raffey Cassidy)

Harry's youngest daughter, who is very good at finding out secrets

Cast Interviews

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Jeremy Piven is Harry Selfridge

“I remember exactly where I was when my agent told me about Mr Selfridge,” recalls award-winning American actor Jeremy Piven.

“I was fascinated and blown away by the story of this true pioneer and a role that’s rare to come by, whether it’s stage, film or TV.

“He was a pioneer in every sense of the word. You have this American at the turn of the century coming over here and having a real sense of what he wants to do - even though it hasn’t been done before.”

Flamboyant and visionary Harry Selfridge transformed Chicago’s Marshall Field’s into a modern department store before coming to Britain to found Selfridge’s.

“It’s a great role and a story many people won’t know.

“Growing up myself in Chicago and going to Marshall Field’s from the time I was a kid, my family have a real history with it. So I had a sense of where this guy came from.

“There are so many parallels. I’m an American, also from Chicago, making my way in this new series in uncharted territory.

“Harry Selfridge is a showman and likes to be the centre of attention, whereas I like to disappear in a room and watch everyone else.

“So in some ways I’m different and in others I can find parallels that I can use. I grew up on stage and he didn’t. He performs as a means to an end to inspire people to work hard.

“He loves his workers and motivates them through that personal connection and through inspiration as opposed to intimidation. It’s infectious.”

Working in Britain was a big draw for Jeremy, best known for his Golden Globe and Emmy-award winning role as Ari Gold in Entourage.

“I’ve been such a fan of the UK and their arts for a really long time. I studied here at the National Theatre as part of an exchange programme and got the chance to see plays every night, including Dame Judi Dench and Sir Anthony Hopkins on stage.

“So I already knew how high the level of acting was over here. But actually working on Mr Selfridge has exceeded my expectations.”

Retail outlets were very different before Harry came along and invented the modern department store with his shopping palace in London’s Oxford Street.

“We’re shooting an episode right now where he embraces the beauty products and basically decides to put them at the front of his store when no-one was doing that over here.

“They were dabbling with it in Paris. But he was smart enough to take from the really brilliant trailblazing cultures. So as soon as customers walked in they would see these perfumes and beauty products.

“He even decided to take a chance with make-up, powder, rouge and lipstick when no-one else was doing it. At the time people thought it was only for people on the stage or prostitutes.

“And what’s so fascinating is that here we are 100 years later and you walk into any store and what he took a chance with and implemented in 1909 is going strong in every place that I can think of.”

Harry Selfridge appeared to be able to look into the very soul of what women wanted.

“He loved, honoured, respected and celebrated women and wanted them to come and feel empowered.”

But as a married family man, Harry also had an eye for the ladies and in the drama falls for celebrated stage star Ellen Love (Zoe Tapper), among others.

“You could look at him and say from the outside, ‘How could a man who loved his wife and his family be seduced by these other women?’

“Because of his love for the arts and for women he falls for Ellen. He’s so enamoured with her, the way she carries herself and her as an artist. Then you see her rise and fall.

“I’m not saying you’ll understand it morally but the writer Andrew Davies has done it so beautifully that you could possibly understand why he would take the path that he does. And yet it’s still surprising.”

A replica of the 1909 Selfridge’s store was built on a massive set on a site in the north of the capital.

“It’s just incredible. Here you have Selfridge’s that we all have a reference for in the modern day. And they’ve recreated it at the turn of the century. It’s wonderful to work in it and to have that expansiveness of it and how specific they are.

“The attention to detail is beautiful. And yet they also built it for a range of movement with the camera. So it’s genius the way they do it. You can stick a crane in there and get a real sense of the multiple floors. It’s just a real playground. And this whole thing is going to look very big.”

After getting the role did Jeremy re-visit the real Selfridges?

“I did. I went in honour of Harry Selfridge and I bought a jacket. I was totally under the radar and it was fantastic and I loved it. But I didn’t go parading around going, ‘Do you have any idea who I am?’ I will never be that guy!

“The shell of our 1909 department store is obviously still there today in Oxford Street. The exterior of the real building is wonderfully grandiose but Harry’s original plans were even bigger than that.”

Mr Selfridge illustrates the battle Harry fought to ensure his vision became a reality.

“The money falls through. But instead of taking a moment and regrouping, he doubles his efforts and willed the whole thing to happen. Failure is not an option.

“That’s a very American thing to do. The people around him at first were incredibly doubtful, then intrigued and they all rallied behind him.”

Harry was the man at the birth of modern day shopping as we know it today and treated his store like a theatre of retail.

“He was a showman. He loved to rely on publicity. But never false publicity. He really wanted to make sure that it was always truthful. He put a lot of time, money and effort into publicising his store. Like you would a play.

“The windows were very much his stage with a little play going on in each one. So his store was always in a constant state of creative transformation.”

One episode sees Harry persuading Louis Blériot to display his plane inside the store after the French aviator had become world famous by making the first flight across the English Channel.

“That’s one of my favourite scenes. This genius inventor and daredevil Blériot is so sceptical of Harry. As he should be. Who is this guy? You see Harry Selfridge at work as he convinces Blériot he should put his plane in the store.”

Jeremy says viewers will be intrigued by the other characters in Mr Selfridge.

“It’s a true ensemble piece. There isn’t a character that I’ve seen so far that you aren’t curious about. You’ve got these wonderful catty shop-girls with these beautiful cockney accents.

“And then you’ve got Katherine Kelly as the posh Lady Mae. Those who only know her from Coronation Street won’t be able to recognise her in this at the opposite end of the spectrum. She’s a genius.”

He is a long time fan of British television.

“My initial inspirations would be Monty Python and then everything from that to modern day drama like Luther. I watched Downton Abbey before it took off in the States and loved it from the first moment.

“I’ve worked with Elizabeth McGovern, who plays Cora in Downton Abbey, and I’m really proud of her. It’s funny that we both end up in series over here.”

Sports fan Jeremy has enjoyed his time off from filming, including an invite to the Wimbledon Centre Court Royal Box and a seat next to David Beckham at the London 2012 Olympics.

Jeremy’s credits include: Entourage; Cupid; Ellen; The Larry Sanders Show.

Frances O'Connor is Rose Selfridge

Frances O'Connor thinks viewers will buy into what Mr Selfridge has in store for them.

"It's escapist in some ways, very glamorous looking and it does have a champagne feel. Very bubbly and fun to watch with a genuine charm to the characters.

"Also it doesn't feel like a period piece. It just feels like you're watching people, like you're peering into a real world and not a television show.

"It's just great TV and something I'd watch."

Frances plays Harry's wife Rose, a real person who began life as Rosalie Buckingham from a leading Chicago family.

She has travelled with Harry across the Atlantic to a new home in London, along with their four children and her mother-in-law Lois (Kika Markham).

"Moving thousands of miles to a new life with your husband and family is no easy feat for any woman. She does struggle. You might not realise it at first but she is quite a strong character underneath it all. When push comes to shove she stands her ground and fights for what she needs in her life.

"The Rose in real life is a little different from the Rose in this series. What they've created is quite an introverted character to balance Harry's extroversion. It's been nice playing that in contrast to Harry.

"I love playing Rose. At the start she's put away a lot of her dreams of what she wanted to do with her life so that Harry could achieve his. When they get to London he becomes so entrenched in pursuing his dream that he forgets about Rose.

"And Rose left to her own devices ends up going on her own journey which is about self-fulfillment and realising her dreams. That's fun to play. Especially a character that's introverted and a little shy.

"I also loved the idea of community in Mr Selfridge. All these people working towards a common cause of making the store a success. I thought there was something really lovely about that. And I thought all the characters were so delightful and really authentic and all very different. So I was intrigued."

Did Frances know much about Harry and Rose's story before she got the role?

"I didn't. I've been a faithful shopper at Selfridge's for many years. But I didn't know it was founded and run by an American or how he changed shopping in the UK, with it becoming this exciting, pleasurable thing. A pastime that we now indulge in. He started all of that in England."

Harry was a force of nature, rather like American actor Jeremy Piven who plays him on screen.

“Jeremy is a lot like that character in some ways. He is very effervescent and full of life and energy. It was great to have the contrast of the American with the British. The mix of that created a good atmosphere on set.”

Harry insists he is a family man at heart but has an eye for the ladies, including London stage star Ellen Love (Zoe Tapper).

“Rose is no fool. She knows her husband has dabbled in affairs before and she knows what’s going on with Ellen Love.

“I really love the way they’ve placed Rose in the series. She’s unassuming at the start and then she builds momentum as it progresses.

“Rose is not the first person you’d notice when you walk in a room but if you did actually happen to talk to her you’d probably end up having a great conversation. She has a kind of quiet beauty and strength to her.”

Rose shocks Lady Mae (Katherine Kelly) by travelling on the London Underground.

“She does have that sense of adventure because women of that kind of level in society probably didn’t go on the tube.

“It was fantastic shooting those scenes. We went down to a disused tube station at Aldwych. It was great to see what it would have looked like then, including the original lighting. What it would have been like for Rose.

“Lady Mae ends up respecting Rose. They become allies, rather than friends. I think it would be hard to be friends with Lady Mae. She’s real scary and would probably eat me for breakfast!”

At the end of her Bakerloo Railway journey Rose goes to the National Gallery, where she has an intriguing encounter with an artist called Roderick (Oliver Jackson-Cohen).

“I don’t want to give away too much but they end up becoming friends. He opens up this whole artistic world.

“Rose wanted to be a painter when she was young and she had to put all of that aside. Essentially she’s an artistic person but has never really been able to express that.

“So meeting Roddy, I guess in some ways it’s very appealing to her because it’s all her unfulfilled dreams. And he ends up helping her realise them in a way.

“Rose adores and loves Harry and would do anything for him. That’s the great love of her life. But she has been neglected for quite a while.”

Mr Selfridge is set over a century ago at a time of great change for women.

“For women with some money there were some options. But you weren’t expected to be anything other than a wife. It’s kind of quite unconscious her desire for more because I think she feels she’s not supposed to have any of that.”

Frances was born in Oxfordshire, raised in Perth, Australia and is now based in Los Angeles.

But she was happy to spend time in London where Harry and Rose Selfridge once lived in a magnificent home.

“It really is such a gorgeous set. It’s bizarre to arrive at work and end up in this amazing house. It has quite a modern feel to it with a Moroccan theme, which was quite cutting edge at that time.

“The sets are beautiful and everybody has been blown away by them. They’ve done such a great job. The shape of the store is identical to the original Selfridge’s and you can still picture it when you visit the real thing today.

“Some of the executives from Selfridge’s came to visit the set and were genuinely excited. It must have been strange for them to see their store, but dressed as it was 100 years ago.”

Adds Frances: “The exterior set is down at Chatham in Kent and just looks like the outside of Selfridge’s. Then if you step a couple of feet one way you’re in the water of the docks.

“That’s the magic of filming. It really does look amazing.”

Frances’ credits include: The Hunter; Timeline; Bedazzled; Piccadilly Jim.

Aisling Loftus is Agnes Towler

Aisling Loftus knew just how to mark landing a role in Mr Selfridge.

“I celebrated with a massive bowl of porridge for breakfast and a trip to Selfridge’s,” she recalls.

“I felt completely shell-shocked and didn’t expect it at all. I said to my boyfriend, ‘I’ve got to go to Selfridge’s and buy something.’

“So I bought some jelly beans just to have that little bag. It felt really special. It was a really amazing day.

“I worked as a waitress at a masonic hall, in a pub, but I’ve never worked in a shop. So this is my first retail job!”

Aisling plays young shop assistant Agnes Towler who viewers meet at the very start of the series.

Agnes is working on the glove counter of an old fashioned store called Gamages when a charismatic American walks in.

She doesn’t yet know that this is Harry Gordon Selfridge who is set to play a big role in her future path.

“The store Agnes is working in is a very austere and straight-laced establishment. It would seem more like a museum to us today than a shop. Everything was kept behind glass cabinets.”

Agnes immediately recognises there is something special about Harry.

“An American in London in 1909 is an exotic creature anyway and his charisma, charm and showmanship takes her aback. Especially in an establishment like that where it’s very proper and people are expected to speak in a certain way to a shop girl.

“He’s like a whirlwind going through the store.”

Aisling says the cast were stunned by the set of Selfridge’s in 1909 built for the drama.

“When we walked in on the first day we were all blown away by the grandness and the opulence. It’s so beautiful.

“Now it’s become our little home so you can get a bit blasé about it. But then every now and again I see things back on the monitor and it looks so wonderful.

“And when it’s empty first thing in the morning it’s almost like we’re waiting for the real customers to come in. I love it.

“Having had that retail background elsewhere, Agnes finds the way Selfridge’s is being set up and run all the more exciting and inspiring.”

Agnes has not had the easiest of lives, having to support her brother with their violent father in the background.

“She’s at the helm of her family and has a difficult time of it. Financially she’s the backbone but she’s also the fibre of the family. I think she shoulders that very well.

“Agnes is a survivor. She makes the best of her circumstances and is one of the modern women of that time who has a growing sense of identity, ambition and self.

“When she’s given the opportunity to work in Selfridge’s it plants a seed of ambition in her which grows throughout the series. She starts to believe that she is better than what she has been led to believe.

“Henri Leclair, who is the head of the creative department, sees something in her and then really encourages it. She takes that encouragement and runs with it. She has an eye for things.

“She’s on a journey to better herself despite the things at home which might hold her back.”

Aisling adds: “I didn’t know much about this period of history before I got the role. It’s a fascinating insight because it’s before the First World War and a time of great change with the emergence of women being empowered.

“When the munitions factories opened in the First World War there was suddenly this huge workforce that had a disposable income. This is when women with power were born in terms of that part of society.”

“I’ve been into Selfridge’s many times and never really thought about its history. There’s such a rich history and story to Harry Selfridge and the store. Harrods and the like took their cue from Selfridge’s to make it more of a spectacle and putting the customer at the centre of the experience rather than the products.

“Some of the initiatives that Harry set up are still there today - restaurants within the store, shoppers being able to touch things. He even started up food halls and had the seed of that idea. And window displays. I love looking at the window displays in Selfridge’s. They’re just so beautiful and often funny and so creative. And it was Harry that started it.

“It’s very hard to get your head around the birth of something which is just so normal now. Today it’s so much part of the fabric of everyone’s life.

“Hopefully we can convey the excitement of this thing that we love but now take for granted. The birth of that.

“There’s a very rich foundation from which all the different characters and stories within the drama are born.

“Plus the real life story of Harry Selfridge himself. He’s a fascinating man. So different, tenacious and unpredictable. Tightly wound up ready to spring forward.”

Aisling’s credits include: Five Daughters; Dive; The Fattest Man In Britain; The Borrowers.

Zoe Tapper is Ellen Love

Dancing on stage at London's Theatre Royal, Drury Lane was a highlight of the Mr. Selfridge shoot for Zoe Tapper.

"I was absolutely terrified beforehand," admits Zoe, who plays celebrated stage star Ellen Love.

"At drama school I did a bit of dance but certainly in terms of kicking your legs and doing specific steps it was really quite daunting. Especially because I also had about eight other professional dancers who were doing the routines with me.

"They only had to be shown the dances once and that was it, they had it. Whereas I took a little bit longer to nail down the routines. But I loved it.

"I've not performed on that stage before. It felt like we were actually playing a live show because of all the extras in the audience.

"It was definitely nerve-wracking but I got a real adrenaline rush from it as well in such a beautiful theatre. We were intruding on Shrek, which is playing there at the moment. I think I had the donkey's dressing room!"

Adds Zoe: "Funnily enough, we did the rehearsals for the stage dancing scenes at a place on a little street right opposite the real Selfridge's store.

"It was quite weird in a way. There I was walking along in my little warm-up dance gear, over my shoulder was the big imposing facade of Selfridge's and I'm thinking, 'That's Ellen's domain!' It certainly put me in the right mood."

Zoe knew she wanted a role in Mr. Selfridge as soon as she read the scripts.

"It was something quite different from anything I'd seen before. Andrew Davies had created something really theatrical but at the same time rooted in character and circumstance.

"I loved all the sensuality of it and the love stories that are part of the drama. I thought it was really exciting and different."

Ellen Love is a showgirl who attracts the romantic attention of married Harry Selfridge. He makes her the face of his new store in London's Oxford Street.

"Ellen Love is a two-sided character. She reminds me a little bit of Holly Golightly and is Marilyn Monroe-esque.

"She's got this vivacious, sexy, wide-eyed side to her. She lives the dream of the showgirl. And then on the other hand she's also got these inner demons that lurk underneath and a fragility that can rear its head at any given time.

“Ellen says in the script, ‘I’m an upside down creature. Day is my night, night is my day.’

“I think that describes her quite nicely. She’s a lovely social butterfly but sometimes allows herself to get a little bit too close to the fire, has her wings singed and gets herself hurt. But she’s ultimately a survivor and can always claw her way back.

“Andrew has pictured her as the first real celebrity of the day. She was originally Joyce Humphries and part of the chorus line. Then one day the leading lady fell ill so she was told to step forward and given an hour to change her name because they said her dancing was good but her name was awful.

“She decided that Ellen Love was going to be her name and the rest is history.”

Harry Selfridge is smitten from the first time he sees her.

“Ellen underestimates Harry at first. She’s quite used to the attention of men and perhaps uses them for their spoils. But Harry comes along and is quite similar to Ellen in a way.

“He also shines too brightly and they’re both massively drawn to one another. It takes her by surprise that she actually ends up falling in love with him. Her barriers go down.

“She loves and relishes the jewels, the glamour and the fame that is attached to him. But she underestimates the fact that she has actually fallen for him as well.

“Harry is very good at playing the family man as well as the lover. He enjoys spoiling Ellen and giving her this platform for more fame and glamour, as well as jewels and an apartment.

“Ellen is very much the other woman, a sexy red-lipped showgirl. But at the same time there’s almost an innocence to her in that she believes her own hype. She’s enjoying herself, living her moment and doesn’t necessarily realise the reality of the situation at all.

“Harry thinks that when he’s finished with her that will be it and he can go on to the next woman. But Ellen has other ideas. He can’t get rid of her that easily.”

Journalist Frank Edwards (Samuel West) is the man who introduces Harry to his friend Ellen.

“Frank and Ellen have a very poignant relationship. He is her rock and is always there for her on the other side of this wild life that she likes to live.

“She’s got a real appetite for drink and drugs - and he guides her away from that and tries to help. Obviously at the heart of that Frank has feelings for her and clearly he would be a better match for her than Harry any day.

“But, as in life, the right man sometimes does pass you by. She certainly doesn’t see it. She sees Frank as a really good friend. But who knows?”

Mr Selfridge brings Harry’s amazing life to wider attention.

“It’s quite extraordinary that most people today don’t know about him. Selfridge’s the store is such an iconic part of our landscape and he was clearly an incredibly charismatic man. He had such a colourful life that it makes for a brilliant drama.”

The series also charts the birth of the modern department store.

“When you read the details, it’s quite astonishing. Things that you take completely for granted now, he created back then.

“For example, the facts that shop windows are kept illuminated at night to draw people to them. That’s something we’re used to. But he was the first person to think about it.

“And the concept of try before you buy. Whereas before everything was hidden away and it was quite an elitist thing. You had to know what you wanted to buy. He brought it out into the open and revolutionised the way we shop.

“Women really weren’t supposed to wear make-up. It wasn’t a respectable thing to do. But he changed that and took full advantage of the changes that were happening in Europe and in Paris, particularly.

“He could see a trend starting and he brought it over here. That was the dawn of women wearing full make up and red lips.”

Zoe had “great fun” filming scenes where Ellen is the face and spirit of Selfridge’s.

“She becomes the poster girl. One of the first scenes I had to do was come in through the big revolving doors on our extraordinary set and walk down the centre aisle of the department.

“So there I am in this beautiful great big red velvet frock and walking through, making a big spectacle of myself. It was so glamorous.

“We also did another brilliant day’s filming where Mr. Selfridge creates this stunt involving Louis Blériot, the first man to fly across the English Channel. He gets his plane, puts it in the middle of the store and places Ellen Love on top of it, also draping the scarves that he wants to seduce women into buying.

“Our set does make you appreciate the store all over again. I’m certainly guilty of becoming complacent about some of the buildings that you walk past every day.

“It has made me look at it again in a completely different light and go, ‘Actually it’s incredible.’ The doorways, the clock and the entrance hallway is absolutely stunning.”

Mr. Selfridge is set at a time of great change for women.

“The suffragette movement was beginning to get into its stride and certainly in Andrew Davies’ adaptation Harry Selfridge is in favour of this and actively supports it.

“It was a great time for the emancipation of women. And in a funny sort of way the whole shopping experience that Harry Selfridge created almost aided that.

“It suddenly became a respectable pastime for women to go shopping, it allowed them to go out without a chaperone. He opened his store to any class of woman with something for everyone from bargain basement to high end luxury goods.

“Andrew has written some fabulous, really strong female roles for this drama. At the time things were really happening for women and it’s exciting to film that.”

Zoe enjoyed working with Jeremy Piven, who plays Harry Selfridge.

“He’s been brilliant. Jeremy has got a Mr. Selfridge quality about him anyway. He’s very charismatic and colourful with such wonderful stories, especially about working on Entourage, which I’m fascinated by.

“He IS Mr. Selfridge. He’s got the charm and charisma to get away with anything.”

Is Zoe a fan of shopping?

“I’m more of an impulse buyer as opposed to someone who wants to spend hours and hours trailing the shops. But I’m certainly drawn to beautiful things and I have had my moments of indulging myself. So, yes, I do like it.”

She also has some real life retail experience of her own.

“I worked on men’s shirts in Marks and Spencer’s in Bromley when I was 16. I used to have to do the night shift. I would put all the men’s shirts in size ratio order and it would take absolutely ages.

“I had this supervisor who wasn’t a particularly nice lady. She would come along and if there wasn’t much else to do she’d just pull them all out again and I’d have to start from scratch. I’d go home and have nightmares about stacking men’s shirts.

“Then when I was 18 I worked in an off licence called Bottoms Up. So I’ve done my fair share of shop work!”

Zoe’s previous credits include: Desperate Romantics; Survivors; Demons.

Amanda Abbington is Miss Mardle

The doors of Selfridge's are about to open to delight and amaze customers in 1909 who have seen nothing like it before.

"I love working on this set. It's like being in my own private museum. I still walk in here every day and marvel at everything," says Amanda Abbington.

"It was such a beautiful period for fashion and elegance. It's almost like a real job - and I get to play with lots of things.

"It feels like a real store when all the supporting artists are on set and we're doing a scene. It's weird when you then go outside and it's not Edwardian London."

Amanda plays Miss Josie Mardle, in charge of the accessories department in the store.

"Miss Mardle is ambitious and loves her job. She is meticulous and likes to run a tight ship.

"But she is in love with the chief of staff Mr. Grove, played by Tom Goodman-Hill, who is married and she is having an affair with him. She's a hopeless romantic.

"She needs the love of a good man. But she also needs a career. The audience will see that she's got a heart. She cares about her girls as well. She's very careful about looking after them in the store."

Amanda recalls: "When I first read the script I desperately wanted to play this part. I'd always wanted to do a period piece like this. I'm quite a contemporary, modern actress and the opportunities never really arose for me to do this sort of thing.

"So when I got offered the role I was very happy, relieved and excited because it's far away from what I'm comfortable playing. You have to be very held and repressed.

"I read the original book - Shopping, Seduction and Mr. Selfridge by Lindy Woodhead - and scoured the internet to research the era. I love this period in history. It's a real time of change and coming out of the darkness."

Miss Mardle goes on quite a journey during the course of the series.

"She is very staid and stern. Quite aloof. But it turns out she's actually not. And I love that. She's got this exterior where she's very held but actually she's quite a girl.

"She's rather old fashioned but that starts to change when she meets another character called Miss Ravillious (Anna Madeley) who shows her the new modern way. It's a great journey for me to play from this very conservative, uptight worker to maybe a free spirit.

“Miss Ravillious is a very modern woman who cares about fashion and wants women to be more liberated. So she doesn’t wear a corset, which is a complete shock to Miss Mardle.

“She guides her towards a new outlook on the way women should be and should behave. It’s the catalyst for her to change her ways.”

Mr. Selfridge reflect the rise of the suffragette movement.

“At that time you couldn’t be married and work. Once you got married, that was it. That was your career over. So you either had a family or you had a career. You couldn’t have both.

“I’m a huge fan of the suffragettes and what they did for women. Yet I think they are sidelined. You see it in Mary Poppins with the ‘Votes For Women’ thing. And actually they were strong women who wanted a voice. We wouldn’t be able to do what we do today if it wasn’t for them.

“Harry Selfridge was very pro-women. He loved women. He knew what made them tick and got under their skin and supported them.

“When the suffragettes had a huge march from the top of Oxford Street down to Hyde Park they were putting all the windows in. He got wind of it and put all this pro-suffragette material in the window. His was the only store that didn’t get its windows smashed.

“He let them come and meet in the store, which was quite a daring thing for a man to do. He knew about women. He knew what they liked. And he achieved so much.

“Harry was a real innovator. He changed the face of department stores and revolutionised how we shop. Even now, the things he did, you can still see it when you go into every department store - accessories and cosmetics are always on the ground floor, fashion on the first floor.

“Cosmetics were frowned upon. Women just didn’t wear them. You weren’t supposed to talk about perfume - it was a lady’s secret. You weren’t allowed to talk about it or discuss it. It was very much behind closed doors. He brought that into the foreground.”

Amanda’s partner is Sherlock actor Martin Freeman who has spent much of the last 18 months in New Zealand filming the lead role of Bilbo Baggins in The Hobbit films.

“He came back to do Sherlock and for Christmas. And I’ve been out there a few times. But we’ve both vehemently decided we’re never doing this again. We’re going to make sure we spend the rest of our time together...together!”

Martin was delighted when Amanda joined the cast of Mr. Selfridge.

“He is a professional shopper. He loves tailoring and Savile Row. And he loves buying clothes for me. He’s got a very good eye for stuff.

“It’s great having a partner who says, ‘I’ll come shopping with you. We can go clothes shopping.’ It’s like, ‘Really? Excellent!’

“He loved it when I got this role. There’s some shoes on the store set that he will have his eye on. I know that. He really will. He’ll want to get a pair of those in size nine.”

Amanda’s credits include: Case Histories; Married Single Other; After You’ve Gone; Man Stroke Woman.

Katherine Kelly is Lady Mae Loxley

“Watch out for the hats. They can cause an eclipse,” laughs Katherine Kelly.

“Lady Mae has to have the biggest and the best. They have to completely change the camera angles to shoot round my hats.

“She was the woman of the time at the top of the ladder. The party that you wanted to go to. And as a socialite she knows everybody.”

Lady Mae is a former Gaiety Girl who began a new life after marrying Lord Loxley and comes to the rescue when Harry Selfridge is looking for funds to launch his new store.

“She obviously married for money. We never see Lord Loxley. He’s in the country and she’s in the town and that’s the way they both seem to like it. She also has younger lovers.

“Harry has lost his financial backing and people think he’s an American who has lost the plot. So his journalist friend Frank brings him to meet Lady Mae.

“If there’s anybody that can get Harry the money it’s her because she’s the richest and most influential woman at that moment.”

Katherine left her role as Coronation Street’s Becky McDonald in an award-winning exit storyline that saw her much loved character jetting to a new life in Barbados.

The RADA-trained and former Royal Shakespeare Company actress then went on to acclaim in a National Theatre production of *She Stoops To Conquer*.

Also filming the role of Kenny Everett’s wife Lee Middleton in BBC4 drama *The Best Possible Taste*.

“If the last thing you saw me do was Corrie and then you see this, it might be a bit of a shock,” smiles Katherine.

“For me, *She Stoops* was a halfway house between the two. Because I played the daughter of a landowner who pretended to be a West Country maid.

“And in *The Best Possible Taste* I played Lee, Kenny Everett’s wife, with the story set in the 60s, 70s and 80s. She was from Sheffield and blonde. But she was not at all like Becky in her nature.

“So those two jobs have been stepping stones to this.

“If you’ve only seen me in Corrie and think I’m going to waltz into Selfridges with a bottle of cider and smash it all up, then you’re going to be really disappointed.

"I left Coronation Street to play other roles and this is a very different role. She's a lady. The script really caught my attention. I love Andrew Davies and think he's brilliant.

"Lady Mae reminded me of a part I played when I was at RADA. I hoped then that I'd get a chance to do a similar part during my career. So it was a no-brainer for me.

"When you first meet her she's quite cold and calculated. She helps Harry but says it will come at a price because she will want a favour at some point.

"It's not until you know her a bit more and she gets to know the Selfridge family that you find out her history and what she wants.

"She's a suffragette and wants Harry to endorse the cause and actively support it.

"My character is fictional but the fact that Selfridge's was pro-women and backed the cause is true. During the riots the windows didn't get smashed."

A series of grand rooms in various locations were used during filming to represent Lady Mae's mansion home.

"We went to the most fabulous places. She is so upper class and at the time people didn't go to the stores as they were then, before Harry came along.

"She says to him, 'But people like me don't go shopping. My dressmaker comes to me.' Harry was about to invent a new way of shopping.

"The set they've created for Selfridge's in 1909 is incredible. When Lady Mae walks in both her and Harry know that without her Selfridge's wouldn't exist.

"She is a key figure. Today they would probably have been business partners."

Harry Selfridge is credited with inventing the modern department store.

"That's why I loved this script and the original book from Lindy Woodhead. It's not just another period drama. It's a story about shopping and the man that brought shopping to the UK. And it just happens to be set in 1909.

"Harry realised the importance of publicity and getting people through the door. His favourite book was Barnum's autobiography. So that says a lot, doesn't it?

"He put things out on display to be seen. That wasn't done before because people thought it encouraged shoplifting.

"Other stores also used to have shop walkers who were basically security guards - who would ask people to leave if they didn't look like they were buying anything.

"Whereas Harry let people wander round all day. That's the magic because he knew they would inevitably buy something. You can still see his legacy today."

What was it like working with Emmy and Golden Globe award-winning Jeremy Piven?

"I love Jeremy. He's awesome. The first time I met him was when I was in *She Stoops To Conquer*. I got a call saying, 'Jeremy is going to come and watch the show tonight.'

"So he came to see it and we had a drink in the bar afterwards. And I just thought, 'How lovely of him to do that.' And I've got to know him since.

"It's a big part to take on and he's everything you'd hope he would be. You've got to understand why everybody fell at Harry's feet and adored him, so he's got to be so charismatic. And Jeremy has got that in abundance.

"He's a great leading man. He makes everybody feel at ease. And when the lead is like that it filters down and makes for a very happy set, which is what we've got. Everybody is having a great time.

She adds: "He's the real deal. People who adore him in *Entourage* always say to me, 'Come on, what's he like?'

"And I'm going, 'Let me tell you, however brilliant you think he is, he's better than that.' And you can just see the joy in their faces. I'm a big fan both on screen and off screen. He's wicked."

Katherine believes *Mr Selfridge* has something for everyone.

"Girls are going to love it because it's about shopping and I think it will surprise you. It certainly surprised me when I read the book and the scripts - how shopping before *Selfridge's* actually didn't exist. It was something that the lower classes did. And you think, 'I can't believe that *Selfridge's* introduced that.'

"So historically it's fascinating to watch. It's about shopping, so women are going to love that. And things like the fact that people didn't wear make up in those times. So it's all the introduction of make up and perfume.

"Boys will love it because Jeremy is awesome and he's absolutely the businessman that you would want to be in life.

"There really is something for everybody in *Mr Selfridge* and it's such a great cast with so many lovely stories. There are stories for younger people watching who will be interested in the shop girls that are trying to make their way in the accessories department. Then you get characters like mine in their big beautiful houses."

Is she a fan of shopping off screen?

“I’m not the biggest of shoppers, to be honest. My mum hated shopping. And we always had a lot of hobbies as a family. So it wasn’t like we’d go into town every Saturday.

“But I like clothes. I always had a big dressing up box at home and I’d get changed five times a day. I quite like shopping on my own. I’m not somebody who wants to have a group of people to shop with. I’m quite matter of fact about it.”

Katherine’s credits include: Coronation Street; Life On Mars; She Stoops to Conquer; The Best Possible Taste.

Grégory Fitoussi is Henri Leclair

Paris-based actor Grégory Fitoussi is sitting on the set of Mr. Selfridge during a break from filming.

“I have never been to Selfridges on Oxford Street but I know where it is and I have to go and see what it looks like,” he smiles.

“They’ve told me it’s very different now, of course, but you can still see echoes of what we have here on our set.

“I didn’t know very much about Harry Selfridge before I got this role. He was a real eccentric who liked to do things that nobody had done before.”

Grégory plays Henri Leclair, the creative director of Selfridge’s in 1909.

“Henri and Harry Selfridge have been friends and colleagues for some time. Harry originally went to Paris and met Henri there. He then asked him to go back to Chicago to work with him.

“Now he has brought Henri to London from Chicago to help him launch his new store in Oxford Street. Henri is an art director who looks after the windows of the shop.”

Henri sees things - and people - in a way that others don’t.

“Henri is artistic and has a vision of beauty. That’s why Harry has brought him to London. Henri likes to be respected for what he does and has his ego. But I think the two men really appreciate each other and are good friends, despite the pressures at work.

“They both also understand and love women. Mr. Selfridge is about a revolution in the way they saw women and beauty. They allowed themselves to be really creative. Sometimes they might go too far but it was a very exciting time.

“It was in this period of history that women started to assert themselves. And Harry was an innovator with really new ideas. So it’s pretty exciting to play these characters who changed things.”

Harry was accused of tempting people into dishonesty by putting items on open display where everyone could see them.

“It’s amusing to see how they thought before Harry came along. They were really shy about talking about certain things like perfume and make-up was only worn by prostitutes.

“Harry and Henri tried to put on a show to appeal to customers. Harry has the idea to bring famous people like the French aviator Louis Blériot and the Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova into the store.

“He made selling an entertainment. It was a pleasure to go to the shop and spend time there. Also having a restaurant in the store was a really new idea. People could go there and have a good time.”

Grégory says the cast were inspired by their surroundings while filming.

“The set here is amazing and so detailed. It really helps create the right mood for the actors to get into character. It’s easy to believe you are in Selfridge’s in 1909. They’ve done an amazing job.

“I love the ground floor with all the accessories. I can’t stop walking around, watching everything that goes on. It really comes alive when we’re filming.”

Adds Grégory: “As an actor it’s always a real pleasure to do something like this. I’ve filmed several period movies in France and I really love it because everything helps you believe. They stimulate your imagination.

“The costume also means you hold yourself differently and you can have fun with the gestures and the way you talk. It’s a pleasure to come into work.

“And for me, of course, speaking in English is not easy but I am enjoying it. I have to work a lot to pretend to be really fluent with everything, which is not the case off camera,” he laughs.

The French actor says he’s a typical male customer when it comes to shopping.

“It’s not really a pleasure for me. Like many men, I like to be quick, get what I need and then leave.

“But Harry was a genius. He knew women would like to treat shopping as a recreation and built a store where they could spend a whole day having fun and different experiences. Not just buying things but enjoying the space and the various spectacles he brought in.

“It really was an entertainment but they also bought things.”

Romance may also be in store for Henri.

“We also learn that he has a first love, played by Josephine de la Baume, who has stayed in his mind. She’s a French girl living in New York and he has loved her for many years. Viewers will meet her later in the series.”

And that visit to the real Selfridges?

“I’ll have to check out the windows display to see what sort of job they’ve done...maybe I will pick up some ideas.”

Grégory’s credits include: Spiral; G.I. Joe; Revivre; Les hommes de l’ombre.

Samuel West is Frank Edwards

He was the man who made Harry Selfridge headline news from the very start of his retail revolution.

“Frank Edwards is a writer, journalist and man about town who edits the London Evening News,” explains Samuel West.

“We first meet him a year before Selfridge’s opens when plans for the store are starting to come together but it’s just a big hole in the ground at that stage.

“Frank has an eye for people who can help him do things. He also lived in Chicago when Harry was running his store there.

“At the outset Frank and Harry feel like it’s a relationship that they can both do well out of individually. They need each other.

“Frank’s ‘can do’ attitude was partly inspired by his time in America and also his knowledge of what Harry is trying to do through having seen him at work in Chicago. So the two men become friends.

“For Harry, being with Frank is a good way of meeting people in London who he wouldn’t otherwise meet. He opens a few doors, even if he’s not quite sure he wants to see what’s behind some of them.

“He’s one of those people who if you got a call from him saying, ‘I’m in town, let’s party!’ You’d go, ‘Oh, Frank’s here. Drop everything.’”

Frank is one of the few who are not sceptical of Harry’s grand plans.

“The interesting thing about Frank is that he’s been in Chicago when Harry was running the store there. And then, as now, we love American movies and have our noses pressed up against that world.

“Frank has lived that life. He’s gone from a country where he knew he was lower middle class to a place where nobody cares. So he comes back from America with that feeling of possibility and re-invents himself professionally - several times a week if necessary.

“He understands when people like Harry come here and say, ‘Why are you being so negative? You’ve got stuff? Sell it, show it, it’s nice, put it out there!’

“So when they find each other in the street it’s a happy union. Or could be, if they didn’t like the same woman. Frank is very keen on stage star Ellen Love who, unfortunately for Frank, is very keen on Harry, who is married.

"I think many men may relate to Frank's love for Ellen. You have conversations where a beautiful woman turns to you and says, 'It's so nice to have somebody who listens. Can you help me with this absolute cad who won't return my calls?'

"And you think, 'Well I'm here. Talk to me!' But she's not interested. She wants someone she can't have."

Adds Samuel: "Frank is loosely based on a real person called Frank Harris who wrote four volumes of autobiography. He may have written a fifth but it's probably by somebody else called My Life And Loves.

"They are mostly about the number of virgins he deflowered. They were banned immediately and, of course, sold extremely well underground.

"I'm reading one of his biographies at the moment. And his biographer who wrote it in 1932 just after Frank died, said, 'He touched nothing that he did not embellish.'

"His early years are rather confusing. He was born in Galway of Welsh parents and then went to Chicago when he was 11. He became a boot black - shoe shiner - in New York and then a cowboy. He later came back to England and had a number of failed schemes.

"He was also very good friends with some very big people, Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw, people like that. He edited the London Evening News when it still existed and he edits the Evening News during this story.

"Things happen around him. And he does know both sides of London. There's a story about him going past the office of Horatio Bottomley.

"He saw a lawyer of his acquaintance walking out of the office. He stopped his cab and went straight into Bottomley's office and said, 'I want some of what X has just given you.' And Bottomley, without a word, went to the safe, got out £500, gave it to Frank and said, 'How did you know?' And Frank said, 'I didn't.' That sort of sums him up."

Harry has a huge amount of money to invest in his store, with Americans able to exert influence at a time of social change in Britain.

"We see it with what's happening to the aristocracy at this time with wealthy American heiresses. There are two parallel movements going on in terms of marrying rich men. One is showgirls marrying rich men. Gentlemen having a fondness for the chorus line and a glimpse of stocking. We see that in characters like Lady Mae (Katherine Kelly). That was a well recognised career path for certain people.

"And the other is that of the aristocracy leading up to the First World War because things get more expensive and less fashionable. Estates become larger and harder to heat. Suddenly there are these very well educated and rather intelligent

Americans around and there's a movement to teach them the rules of the game so that they can marry into big English families. Some of them are still there.

"Somebody once said that being English means having to behave according to a set of rules, only nobody tells you what they are. When you get an American lead character coming in you realise what mad strictures and behaviours we all had to act under, particularly in this period when the ruling class is on its last legs before a ruinous war.

"The 20th century hasn't really started yet. They're still harking back to the 19th. So it's a really interesting time to have an American protagonist because through what he has to learn about the rules we get to look at ourselves a bit harder and go, 'That's interesting,' or, 'That's completely stupid.'"

Samuel continues: "Mr. Selfridge also looks at the politics of shopping. Episode three is mostly about make up and a proper investigation of what it is to be a woman at a time of campaigning for female suffrage.

"They have a wonderful conversation about lipstick, saying proper women don't wear it. It's the province of actresses, suffragettes and prostitutes. But because of Harry's vision, Selfridge's do begin to stock lipstick.

"We need to be reminded of these things. That only 100 years ago these were political decisions about how we were going to present ourselves."

Walking on to the set of Mr. Selfridge is to be transported back in time.

"It's beautiful. One of the best compliments I can pay it is that you feel like you're in a shop in 1909. You look around and there's really nothing to break the illusion. So you can really relax and stay in character.

"I'm delighted that ITV is making dramas like this. Period dramas are expensive but they have been careful to get all the details right.

"We were shooting in Chatham in Kent the other day - it has this great 18th century dockyard wall which is pretty much unchanged on one side of the street.

"One of the main reasons we were there was because of the reflections in the window of Selfridge's. You can find an old street in London and if you build Selfridge's, the reflection of the street won't be wide enough to make it look convincing.

"But if you go to Chatham you've got this lovely reflection that makes it look bigger and older.

"That's a really thoughtful decision and makes viewers believe what they are seeing on screen."

Samuel's credits include: Howards End; Cambridge Spies; Any Human Heart; Eternal Law.

Nick Moran is Reg Towler

“Mr Selfridge is a class act and I’m really proud to be part of it,” says Nick Moran.

“It’s a high quality drama that is entertaining, cultured, riveting, informative, touching and rewarding. All of those things that a lot of other stuff on telly just isn’t.”

Harry Potter and Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels star Nick was enticed back to TV by Andrew Davies’ scripts after a 15-year self-imposed exile from the small screen.

“It’s the first piece of television I’ve done since 1997. I made a career decision after Lock, Stock not to do telly and concentrate on theatre and films.

“And then this came along and it lured me in because it was so good. I enjoyed this job more than anything I’ve done in years.

“Mr Selfridge is pretty cool and deserves to be around for years. It’s entertainment with an edge of culture to it.”

Nick plays Reg Towler, father of young shop girl Agnes (Aisling Loftus) and her brother George (Calum Callaghan).

Reg has a history involving drink and violence but arrives back into the lives of his children promising to mend his ways.

“I’m the rotten apple,” explains Nick, who spoke at length to writer Andrew about his character.

“The interesting thing for me is that, obviously, alcoholics aren’t necessarily bad people. They have a disease, a problem, an issue. He doesn’t think he’s being bad and doing anything wrong. He’s just a bad drunk.

“If it was in other hands it could have been played like a simple villain. But Reg is someone who is full of under-achievement and self-loathing who resents the fact that his children are doing better than him.

“So he asserts his authority by intimidating people and trying to ruin it for them. Not because he’s bad but because he’s unhappy. That’s the important thing.

“Andrew would always write an extra little line here or there or throw a sympathetic sentence in so that we’re always aware that Reg is never a baddie. He’s unhappy and frustrated, which makes him the way he is.”

Adds Nick: “Anyone who lives with an alcoholic, or has had one in the family or anyone unlucky enough to be one, knows that sometimes you’re confronted with a different human being after they’ve had a few drinks.

“With Reg, there’s a completely different person aside from the drink. The drunk Reg is a different person to the sober Reg. And that’s a great thing to be able to play in the script.

“I tried to make Reg as sympathetic as possible and hopefully viewers will at least understand him and his problems.”

Nick co-wrote the stage play *Telstar* about the life of pioneering British record producer Joe Meek and directed the subsequent big screen version.

“I’ve been a big fan of Andrew Davies’ work since I was clever enough to understand what good writing is. No-one was disappointed when they got the scripts for *Mr Selfridge*. He tells a story in a way that is accessible to everybody without losing the class and pedigree of the writing. He makes it universal.”

It seems astonishing that a life as interesting and dramatic as Harry Selfridge’s has not featured in a drama before.

“It’s always great to surprise people. I did the same with Joe Meek in *Telstar*. How come we’d never heard of him? Well, you just haven’t. We were the first. And it’s the same with Harry Gordon Selfridge. Very few people knew his story.

“I knew a couple of bits and pieces about him because I had a friend who worked in the jewellery section of Selfridge’s. But I didn’t know the full extent of the story.

“And the fact that when the London telephone exchange opened, if you dialled ‘one’ you went straight to Selfridge’s. That’s how clever he was. Of course where else would your wife be?”

Mr Selfridge tells the true story of Harry Selfridge and his London store but also includes fictitious characters like Reg.

“As with everything, the least believable stuff is always the stuff that actually happened. That’s the golden rule of biography. The bits you don’t think happened are the ones that did and the more mundane stuff is made up to help the story along.

“Lindy Woodhead who wrote the original book - *Shopping, Seduction and Mr Selfridge* - is at all the read-throughs and comes on set quite a lot. She likes to make sure that everybody is getting it right.”

Adds Nick: “I have two children in this which is quite weird. It’s the first time I’ve played a dad with children aged 17 and 19. Back then, of course you’d have been married at 19. So I’m working with two young people that I wouldn’t normally think of as being my children.

“Aisling is a stunning actress. She’s the next Samantha Morton. I did a film with Samantha years ago and we’ve stayed friends since. And Aisling really reminds me of her. They’re both from Nottingham, both untrained and both very instinctive actors.

“Aisling is scarily good. So working with her was brilliant. She’s really inquisitive and has that candour that you only get from people that are unaffected, young people fresh and new and maybe didn’t go to drama school.

“They come out with these strangely candid questions that you have to have the answers to.

“And it comes across in her work. She is a very much in the moment actress. You’re working with someone who’s got a very curious mind as well being so fresh and so new in their approach. They want to learn.

“They don’t come in with a lot of pre-determined ideas about what’s going to happen. They’re learning while they’re working and it’s really refreshing. A great bit of casting.”

There’s trouble in store in episode four when Reg pays a visit to Selfridge’s.

“He smashes a glass cabinet. I’ve done many stunts over the years on zip wires, doing my own driving and crashing cars through barriers or jumping off a horse. All things that could kill you if they went wrong.

“But they treated the scene as a proper stunt - like I was driving a car at 80mph off a bridge.”

Like the rest of the cast, Nick was impressed by the sets built for Mr Selfridge.

“The interior set in London is amazing. You don’t expect it to be that impressive. As is the exterior set down at Chatham in Kent when they wheel out all the trolley buses, horse and carts and all the rest of it.

“One guy who works in the art department, his job is to shovel horse manure out of a barrow into the street and make it steam. He has to pour hot water on it to give it that authentic look. I looked at him and said, ‘Well, at least it’s showbiz.’

“You realise you’re on a big budget show when you see the sets and the detail that’s gone into them all.

“Bearing in mind I’ve done the last two Harry Potters, I was impressed by the sets, the extras and the look of it all. And the crew are second to none.”

Nick’s credits include: Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1 and 2: Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels.

Synopses

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Episode 1



London, 1908

AGNES TOWLER, a young shop girl at Gamages department store, is bemused and slightly anxious when a colourful American customer cheekily encourages her to empty her stock onto the glove counter. He says he's 'just looking', which is simply unheard of! AGNES deftly presents him with a gorgeous pair of fine red leather gloves. Her product knowledge is impeccable and her passion very clear. After the customer is asked to leave, AGNES is dismayed to be dismissed for the incident. How will AGNES pay her rent? Especially as her little brother GEORGE is also jobless. As she collects her cards, she receives a gift. The pair of red leather gloves with a card from HARRY GORDON SELFRIDGE.

Meanwhile, the bold retailer HARRY SELFRIDGE is assembling his great plans for the biggest and finest department store the world has ever seen at the 'dead

end' of Oxford Street. Facing a frosty reception from the anti-American press, HARRY runs into unexpected trouble when his business partner WARING suddenly pulls out of the project, which leaves the life of the project hanging in the balance. But HARRY'S luck is up when journalist FRANK EDWARDS throws HARRY a lifeline, offering to show new-to-town HARRY around London and introduce him to the right people.

HARRY'S family arrive in London from Chicago. His beautiful and grounded wife ROSE accompanies his four children ROSALIE, VIOLETTE, GORDON and BEATRICE, and his mother LOIS as they move into their extravagant central London home. ROSE is anxious about fitting into London life, and HARRY doesn't want to worry her. So he turns to his mother LOIS for advice about the missing money for the project. They came from nothing in provincial America – does he think he'll let a blip like this get in his way?

Buoyed by LOIS' enduring support, HARRY pushes on. FRANK EDWARDS introduces HARRY to the formidable socialite LADY MAE LOXLEY. One of the most connected women in London, it is via her that HARRY secures a new investor and the future of Selfridge's is saved. Smart, savvy and keen to be ahead of the curve, LADY MAE makes it clear that HARRY, and Selfridge's, lies firmly in her debt. Using the newest engineering techniques and building materials available, the building goes up in record time. Selfridge's is born.

London, 1909

HARRY recruits his new top team. MR CRABB, Chief Accountant who is always worried about the figures; the stoic Chief of Staff MR GROVE who is cool, calm and in control; the handsome Frenchman HENRI LECLAIR in charge of Window Displays and Store Presentation; the formidable MISS MARDLE, Head of Accessories; and the timid MISS BUNTING, Head of Fashion.

Word of the impending store opening spreads through London, and AGNES, who's been struggling to make ends meet, approaches HARRY for a job. He remembers her, and agrees to hire her! On recruitment day, queues of prospective employees build in the street, and we meet AGNES again who is fast-tracked by 'The Chief' himself to a job as a Senior Assistant in Accessories. Fellow assistants KITTY and DORIS aren't best impressed. We also meet cheeky chap VICTOR who joins the Palm Court Restaurant, and we see he's definitely taken a shine to Agnes!

FRANK also introduces HARRY to the stunning ELLEN LOVE, a Gaiety girl whom HARRY employs as the 'Spirit of Selfridge's'. But there is a sizzling chemistry between them, and we sense that there's more than business between them to come...

Opening day in March 1909 is a great success, attracting huge crowds, but with one significant problem: disappointing takings. HARRY could still be ruined yet.

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Episode 2



Selfridge's has now been open for a few months. The displays are still as dazzling and seductive as on opening day, and the staff are ready and poised for action. The only thing the store is missing...is customers! The store is eerily quiet. Publicly, HARRY is confident, but privately he is worried. He needs a coup for the store, something to put it on the map in the eyes of the public.

In store, ELLEN is being a bit of a diva - throwing her weight around as the 'Spirit of Selfridge's'. She doesn't "like" her photos, which rubs HENRI LECLAIR the wrong way. Meanwhile, plucky AGNES asks Chief of Staff MR GROVE for a favour: she wonders if he has a job for her younger brother GEORGE, which she duly secures. Selfridge's is becoming a bit of a family affair for the Towlers.

LADY MAE stops by the Selfridge house to see how ROSE and the family are settling in. Slightly disapproving of the fun-loving and energetic Selfridge children, LADY MAE needles ROSE about being an outsider to London Society and about

Harry's behaviour, and is shocked when ROSE tells her she plans to visit the National Gallery, via the Underground!

As art-lover ROSE peruses the Gallery's lively halls, she meets handsome young artist RODDY, and they immediately strike up a keen friendship. Anonymous for now and feeling isolated in London, ROSE secretly revels in RODDY'S attention, but is taken aback when he makes a move on her. Meanwhile, at a flirty lunch with ELLEN LOVE, HARRY gets the new big idea he's been searching for. He orders staff as he leaves suddenly to make some urgent adjustments to the store, but nobody knows what he's up to...

HARRY has dashed to the country with FRANK, where they wait in a field...and then it arrives. A rickety-looking flying machine emerges from the clouds and soars overhead. HARRY looks on in wonderment. It's the first ever airplane to cross the Channel, and HARRY skilfully secures it from aviator MONSIEUR BLÉRIOT for a grand exhibition in store.

Back at the store, GEORGE starts his new job in the warehouse, whilst AGNES gets a nasty shock when her alcoholic father REG appears on the shop floor. He's tracked them down, and we get the sense that REG is not all good. Against her better judgement, AGNES agrees to let him stay for a while – a recipe for trouble. Upstairs, VICTOR is chatted up by wealthy customer MRS WORTHINGTON, who needs 'help' with some 'entertaining' at home.

BLÉRIOT'S exhibition is a huge success, garnering unprecedented press and public attention. Thousands queue to see this revolutionary contraption, as ELLEN poses with the plane sporting a gorgeous silk flying scarf – inspiring a buying frenzy amongst the female shoppers! LADY MAE turns up demanding a free suit for her young lover TONY, not so subtly reminding HARRY that he and the store remain in her debt. As ELLEN publicly vies for HARRY'S attention in public, HARRY appears somewhat distant and lavishes his attentions on ROSE. However, after he and ELLEN are caught in a compromising position in her theatre dressing room - HARRY has an extra special gift for ELLEN.

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Selfridges Department Store

Selfridges has been a top London destination and UK landmark for over a century, challenging the rules of retail from day one.

American entrepreneur Harry Gordon Selfridge known as Harry to his family and friends and nicknamed “the showman of shopping” launched his eponymous store in 1909. From the outset it was widely regarded as the first and best example of a purposeful and modern department store – it was a retail revolution.

Gordon Selfridge ran the store himself until he retired in 1940, although he kept an honorary title as president until 1941, the year of his 85th birthday. Subsequently he became estranged from the store and died practically penniless in 1947.

After several ownerships and a flotation on the London Stock Exchange in 1998, it was eventually purchased in 2003 by Canadian businessman W. Galen Weston. Under his ownership Selfridges has become a unique UK destination for fashion, luxury and retail theatre known for its world-class yet egalitarian customer approach – a legacy from Harry Selfridge updated with vibrancy for a 21st century customer.

The London Oxford Street flagship, its sister stores in Birmingham’s Bullring and Manchester (at the Trafford Centre and at Exchange Square) and its online store, continue to set the pace for retail, with an ongoing mission to create the greatest shops on earth.

The store is committed to creating extraordinary customer experiences that amaze, amuse and delight Londoners and international visitors under current Managing Director, Anne Pitcher and the creative leadership of Galen Weston’s daughter Alannah, who has been Selfridges’ Creative Director since 2004.

At the Global Department Store Summit (GDSS) held in Paris in May 2012, The Intercontinental Group of Department Stores (IGDS), the most respected authority in the industry, announced that Selfridges had once again been recognised as the Best Department Store in the World for an unprecedented second time, and will retain the honour until 2014. Selfridges took the top slot amongst finalists from around the globe, including renowned retailers such as Macy’s in the United States and Woolworths in South Africa.

“The Selfridges brand has gone from strength to strength worldwide, and this prestigious retail award recognizes its true value as a performer and innovator,” said Galen Weston, owner of Selfridges. “The award criteria represent our highest priorities; a strong profile, successful development and execution of products, stores and service innovation strategies, delivery of outstanding in-store experiences, excellent customer service and strong financial performance. Receiving this distinction for a second term is very gratifying.”

When the store opened on 15 March 1909, Harry Selfridge placed an advertisement that contained two phrases that set the path for the business and still resonate today:

“ ...the pleasures of shopping ...” – nobody before him had spoken in this way before and it gave the sense of theatre and entertainment that has become part of the Selfridges DNA ever since; **“... all are welcome ...”** - this is as true now as it was then.

About the serialisation of the life of Harry Selfridge by ITV, inspired by Lindy Woodhead's ultimate biography of “the showman of shopping”, *‘Shopping, Seduction and Mr Selfridge’*, Anne Pitcher, Managing Director of Selfridges says: “We couldn't be more delighted about the life of this outstanding man being made into a television series. It will hopefully let people know how visionary Harry Selfridge was then and give them an increased understanding of how extraordinary Selfridges continues to be as we keep on pushing the boundaries of the retail experience.”

Selfridges Press Office contacts:

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Sophie Hedley – sophie.hedley@selfridges.co.uk or call 020 7318 1356
Lotti Eagles – lotti.eagles@selfridges.co.uk or call 020 7318 3987

Cast Credits

Harry Selfridge	JEREMY PIVEN
Rose Selfridge.....	FRANCES O’CONNOR
Agnes Towler	AISLING LOFTUS
Ellen Love	ZOE TAPPER
Mr Grove	TOM GOODMAN-HILL
Miss Mardle	AMANDA ABBINGTON
Lois Selfridge	KIKA MARKHAM
Lady Mae	KATHERINE KELLY
Mr Crabb	RON COOK
Henri Leclair	GRÉGORY FITOUSSI
Victor	TRYSTAN GRAVELLE
Frank Edwards	SAMUEL WEST
Fraser	MALCOLM RENNIE
Kitty	AMY BETH HAYES
Doris	LAUREN CRACE
Miss Blenkinsop	DEBORAH CORNELIUS
Mr Perez.....	TIMOTHY WATSON
Miss Bunting.....	PIPPA HAYWOOD
George Towler	CALUM CALLAGHAN
Reginald Towler	NICK MORAN
Roderick Temple	OLIVER JACKSON-COHEN
Blériot	ORLANDO SEALE
Nancy	NICOLA MILLBANK
Beatrice Selfridge	RAFFEY CASSIDY
Gordon Selfridge	ADAM WILSON
Violette Selfridge	FREYA WILSON
Rosalie Selfridge	POPPY LEE FRIAR
Tony Travers	WILL PAYNE
Mabel	SOPHIE MAY WAKE
Alf	CHRISTIAN PATTERSON
Arliss	ROSS ARMSTRONG
Waring.....	IAN GELDER

Sam	ALEXANDER COBB
John Musker	TIM WOODWARD
Floorwalker	SHAUGHAN SEYMOUR
Mrs Worthington	ANGELINE BALL
Mrs Payne	KIM BARRY
Young Harry	MICHAEL PETER WILLIS
Harry's Dad	BRENDAN GIBSON
Mildred	REBECCA TANWEN
Anna Pavlova	NATALIA KREMEN
Miss Ravillious	ANNA MADELEY
Cora Braddington	PANDORA COLIN
Sonya	MADLENA NEDEVA
Mr Van Der Mark	GILES TAYLOR
Valerie Maurel	JOSEPHINE DE LA BAUME
Doctor	TERENCE HARVEY
Older Suffragette	KATE BOWES RENNA
Young Suffragette	JOANNA CHRISTIE
Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle	JOHN SESSIONS
Mr Crenell	TODD BOYCE
Sir Oliver	GUY WILLIAMS
Mr Fitch	SEVAN STEPHAN
Mr Woolworth	MICHAEL BRANDON
Jennie Woolworth	LISA EICHORN
Mrs Crabb	WENDY NOTTINGHAM
Shackleton	MARK DEXTER
Fludd	CASSANDRA COMPTON
Lady Lushington	LISA JACKSON
Robin Brackenbury	TOM RUSSELL
Richard Brackenbury	LUKE NEWTON

Production Credits

Creator, Writer & Executive Producer ANDREW DAVIES
Executive Producer KATE LEWIS
Writer KATE BROOKE
Writer KATE O'RIORDAN
Producer CHRISSY SKINNS
Co-Producer CARMEL MALONEY
Director, Episodes 1, 2 JON JONES
Director, Episodes 3, 4 JOHN STRICKLAND
Director, Episode 5, 6 & 7 ANTHONY BYRNE
Director, Episodes 8, 9 & 10 MICHAEL KEILLOR
Director of Photography, Episodes 1, 2 GAVIN FINNEY
Director of Photography, Episodes 3, 4 NIELS REEDTZ JOHANSEN
Director of Photography, Episode 5, 6 & 7 JOHN CONROY
Director of Photography, Episode 8, 9 & 10 OWEN McPOLIN
Production Designer ROB HARRIS
Costume Designer JAMES KEAST
Hair and Make-Up Designer KONNIE DANIEL
Casting Director KATE RHODES JAMES
Composer CHARLIE MOLE
Editor, Episodes 1, 2 CHRIS BARWELL
Editor, Episodes 3, 4 MICHAEL HARROWES
Editor, Episode 5, 6, 7 ISOBEL STEPHENSON
Location Manager RUPERT GRAY
Sound Recordist, Episodes 1 - 4 & 8 - 10 GRANT BRIDGEMAN
Sound Recordist, Episode 5, 6, 7 JAMES BAIN