

Best on the box for New Year

We take a look at what is worth watching over the holiday weekend

If the Christmas festivities have left you drained and a New Year celebration in front of the box sounds appealing, then settle back and enjoy the final TV treats of 2006 and the first gems of 2007.

On December 31, a two-part Casualty special concludes on **BBC One at 8pm**, with staff treating patients from a brothel fire.

Following that, Graham Norton hosts The Big Finish, an end-of-year quiz with five celebrity teams recalling the finest events of the year. McFly and Orson provide the music, while Emma Bunton and the Strictly Come Dancing cast will be putting on a special performance.

On **BBC Two at 8.05pm**, there's a welcome re-screening of Grumpy Old New Year, in which celebs including Des Lynam, Jeremy Clarkson and Linda Robson vent their spleen about ringing out the old and ringing in the new. That's followed by the acclaimed Fear Of Fanny (**BBC Two, 9pm**), a black comedy with Julia Davis as British TV's first female celebrity chef Fanny Craddock. The League of Gentlemen's Mark Gatiss plays her on-screen husband Johnnie.

No New Year's Eve would be complete without Jools' Annual Hootenanny, and the 14th edition promises to be unmissable at 10.50pm. Among the highlights are Paul Weller duetting with singer-songwriter Amy Winehouse, Lily Allen making a few million viewers 'Smile', while Marc Almond, the Kooks, Ray Lamontagne and the Zutons will also be seeing out 2006 in style.

It's pretty much business as usual for a Sunday night on ITV1. Toni is livid about Paddy's half-hearted proposal in Emmerdale at 7pm, and Jamie receives a shocking phone call in Coronation Street at 7.30pm.

There are two helpings of Heartbeat from 8pm, with Just Good Friends veteran Paul Nicholas playing a Swedish sailor in the second edition at 9pm.

This time of year it's hard to avoid retrospective news shows, but at least I Was There: The People's Review 2006 (**ITV1, 10pm**) adds a fresh spin on the subject.

Katie Derham looks back at the key stories of the past 12 months with all the footage captured by eyewitnesses on camcorders, mobile phones and other personal devices.

Top Gear presenter Richard Hammond's high-speed crash, the Queen's 80th birthday celebrations and the return of Take That all come under the spotlight.

Time Team: Big Royal Dig (**Channel 4, 7pm**) features highlights of the excavations at three royal residences over

the summer, while The 2006 Fame Review at 9pm profiles 50 celebrities who dominated the tabloids this year. Kate Moss and the Beckhams are all expected to feature prominently in this three-hour offering.

Over on Five, World's Strongest Man kicks off a new series at 8pm, but there's more brain than brawn in the terrestrial premiere of Adaptation at 9pm. This wonderfully surreal comedy drama about twin writers stars Nicolas Cage, Meryl Streep and an Oscar-winning Chris Cooper.

By January 1, a quiet night might be called for, so a new version of classic novel The Wind In The Willows (**BBC One, 6.20pm**) should have everyone captivated.

Little Briton Matt Lucas portrays the car-loving Toad, while Bob Hoskins, Mark Gatiss and Lee Ingleby play his pals Badger, Rat and Mole respectively.

That may be great fun for the whole family, but the laughter ends at 8pm as the residents of Albert Square turn out for the funeral of Pauline Fowler in EastEnders. That will be followed by the one-off EastEnders Revealed: Goodbye Pauline (**BBC One, 8.30pm**).

Wendy Richard reflects on her favourite moments from the 22 years she's spent in Walford, while tributes come from Paul O'Grady, Todd Carty (Mark Fowler), Leslie Grantham (Den Watts) and Anna Wing (Lou Beale).

After a second helping of EastEnders, we also say farewell to The Vicar Of Dibley (**BBC One, 9.30pm**), but will chocoholic Geraldine (Dawn French) go through with her wedding as the series finally draws to a close? That would be telling, but you can be guaranteed a few almighty giggles before she hangs up her cassock for good.

On **BBC Two at 9pm**, there's plenty of thrills and spills in the terrestrial premiere of 2002 epic The Four Feathers, with Heath Ledger and Kate Hudson.

If you fancy something a bit different, don't miss The Armstrongs: The Movie at 11.35pm, a feature-length documentary profiling double-glazing entrepreneurs John and Ann Armstrong.

Their fly-on-the-wall series was one of the highlights of the year, and this spin-off proves to be just as much fun.

ITV1 opt for their usual Monday night soaps, Emmerdale and a double-bill of Coronation Street, but at least the one-off drama Dead Clever at 9pm offers something a bit different.

Corrie veteran Suranne Jones, plays a woman seeking revenge on her adulterous husband. Good support comes from Helen Baxendale and Rachel Leskovic.

So there you have it, enjoy this heady mix!



Jools Holland presents his 14th Hootenanny on New Year's Eve
Photo: Courtesy of the BBC

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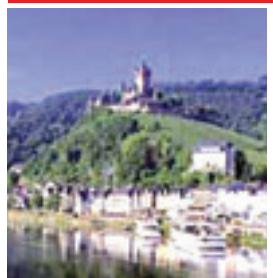
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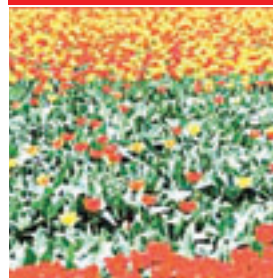
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