

CALL THE MIDWIFE



A Neal Street Production for BBC One

Starring Jessica Raine with Jenny Agutter, Pam Ferris,
Miranda Hart and Judy Parfitt

Based on the best-selling memoirs by Jennifer Worth and
dramatised by Heidi Thomas

Call the Midwife is a moving and intimate insight into the colourful world of midwifery and family life in 1950's East London. We are introduced to the community through the eyes of young nurse Jenny Lee as she arrives at Nonnatus House to live and work as a midwife alongside an Order of Nuns.

As Jenny comes to terms with her new life, we meet some phenomenal people who prove that their warmth, resilience and determination are to be admired beyond measure. At the heart of this world are the Sisters of St Raymond Nonnatus who have been active in the East End as Anglican nursing nuns since the beginning of the 20th century. The Sisters and the midwives of Nonnatus House carry out many nursing duties across the community. However, with between 80 and 100 babies being born each month in Poplar alone, their primary work is to help bring safe childbirth to women in the area and to look after their countless newborns.

The series was commissioned by Danny Cohen, Controller BBC One, and Ben Stephenson, Controller BBC Drama. It was adapted with the blessing and guidance of Jennifer Worth, who worked closely with Neal Street Productions and screenwriter Heidi Thomas (*Upstairs Downstairs*, *Cranford*) up until she passed away shortly before filming began in the summer of 2011.

Starring newcomer Jessica Raine as Jenny, the cast includes Jenny Agutter, Pam Ferris, Miranda Hart and Judy Parfitt. Three other new faces, Helen George, Bryony Hannah and Laura Main, complete the regular ensemble cast. Vanessa Redgrave provides the narration as the mature Jenny.

Executive Producer for Neal Street Productions is Pippa Harris (*Revolutionary Road*, *Stuart A Life Backwards*) with Christopher Aird as Executive Producer for BBC. The series was produced by Hugh Warren (*Above Suspicion*, *Survivors*) and directed by Philippa Lowthorpe (*Five Daughters*) and Jamie Payne (*The Hour*, *Ashes to Ashes*).

On bringing the books to life, Pippa Harris says, "The books were first brought to my attention by my Neal Street colleague, Tara Cook, when *Call the Midwife* was published in 2007. We were working on several feature films, and scouting for more film projects, but *Call the Midwife* cried out to be a TV series. It was the mixture of wonderful characters, gripping storylines and the combination of humour and pathos that made me think it would work well on TV. I loved the fact that Jennifer's writing gives you an insight into a recent, yet long vanished world. Although she was only writing about the late 50s, this post-war period in the East End was extremely tough. Surrounded by bomb damage, and sometimes living in slum conditions, women gave birth to baby after baby often with no running water, clean bed linen or pain relief. Yet despite the hardship, Jennifer's books are filled with warmth and humour and show the powerful bonds of family and community that held people together."

Heidi Thomas says, "Most of my adaptations have been of 19th century novels – *Cranford*, for example. So I was looking for something a little more modern – 1957 feels bang-up-to-the-minute for me! However, as soon as I started reading I realised that *Call the Midwife* was actually a very profound social document, a depiction of a world with which we can all identify, but which has vanished from our view. It was funny, and it was touching and I simply could not put it down. I was up till three in the morning, turning the pages, because I just felt compelled to devour it all at one sitting. And every woman I have ever met who has read the books has said exactly the same."

Philippa Lowthorpe says, "I love stories about real people and I love stories about women which are unearthed from an unknown history and this project had both elements. I thought these midwives and Nuns are truly unsung heroines. The work they did in the East End was amazing and no one has ever celebrated that before. But the women themselves were

completely down to earth, very funny, and very human, sometimes bad tempered and fed up, sometimes making mistakes - just so real. I love the fact that the nuns weren't at all saintly. I also adored Heidi Thomas' writing. She's captured the world so brilliantly and so movingly."

Jamie Payne says, "I sincerely hope that I have captured even an ounce of the incredible heart and courage of the nuns, midwives and the people whose lives they became such a big part of. The inhabitants of Poplar in 1957 had very little but hope and humour dominated their lives. I hope that each episode captures their incredible, inspiring attitude to life, family and love."

Ben Stephenson, Controller, BBC Drama Commissioning, says, "This superb cast of some of our best established and new actresses will bring to life the extraordinary true stories and friendships of midwifery and family in 1950s East End London. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the late Jennifer Worth for both her support and insight on Call the Midwife which I hope will serve as a fantastic tribute to both her life and work."

The Nuns and Nurses

JENNY (Jessica Raine)



NURSE JENNY LEE arrives at Nonnatus House in 1957, at the age of 22, completely unaware of the world she is about to enter. Believing she's accepted a job with a small private hospital, it comes as somewhat of a surprise to JENNY to find she's moving into a convent. Furthermore, the deprivation of the East End is a huge culture shock for the young woman who has enjoyed a privileged upbringing in the Home Counties, and spent time in Paris before training as a nurse. However, although initially shocked by the conditions in which her patients live, JENNY comes to accept the material limitations of the world in which she works, and to love the people who must live there.

Jessica on Jenny: *"Jenny walks into Nonnatus House quite green to the East End way of life, but she also has quite an old head on young shoulders in many ways as she's running away from a mysterious relationship."*

She's young, she's 22, and she sees all these amazing life stories happening in front of her. She's constantly learning and re-evaluating her own way of seeing the world. I really like that, I like people who can change their opinions and she does that during the course of the series."

SISTER JULIENNE (Jenny Agutter)



SISTER JULIENNE is the Sister-In-Charge at Nonnatus House. Deeply religious, she is also

profoundly practical and confers dignity on her patients through her sensitive, non-judgmental approach. She is often called upon to mediate between her fellow sisters when they quarrel - this is an almost exclusively female world, and her tact and gentleness are essential to its happiness.

Jenny on Sister Julienne: *“My mother was tended by a nursing sister from a religious order in Westminster for many years. This nun was wonderful and radiated warmth, there was an almost childlike joy with which she took on every task. Her sympathy was not clawing but unfussed and honestly felt. I think that childlike element is there in Sister Julienne, she’s responsible and in charge, but there’s a twinkle there and a sense of fun. She finds everything she is involved with really interesting and people are rather extraordinary. Nothing is ordinary or mundane life is amazing.”*

“The dynamic between the older nuns is an interesting one; it might be assumed that because of shared values and common beliefs that the nuns would live in perfect harmony with one another, but like anyone else they differ in their characteristics and this can cause friction.”

SISTER EVANGELINA (Pam Ferris)



SISTER EVANGELINA is the only one of the sisters who comes from the same tough, uncompromising background as the community they serve. Physically vigorous, she has a robust sense of humour. Her energy and drive make her extraordinarily effective at her job. However, she does not suffer fools gladly, and her blunt speech often offends. She has a particularly contentious relationship with the aristocratic SISTER MONICA JOAN, who often provokes her to breaking point.

Pam on Sister Evangelina: *“Evangelina has an interesting history which doesn’t appear in the actual scripts. She was parachuted onto the front line of the First World War because they needed nurses at the front and the only way they could get them there was to parachute them. They had to do it without training and the survival rate was fifty percent at that point so that tells you something about the courage of someone who can be dropped at the front line of a massive war with a 50/50 chance of surviving.*

The other story about her that really affected me was that there was a point where she had to get to a patient who was on the other side of the Thames – this was in her later years when she was about 60 – and she found that bridge was open to let a boat through and she needed to get across quickly so she whistled up the barge drivers and they lined up and she leapt from barge to barge to get across. And you think, what kind of a woman is this? Absolutely fearless, courageous, single minded. I just think she’s wonderful.”

SISTER MONICA JOAN (Judy Parfitt)



Born into a leading titled family, SISTER MONICA JOAN was one of the first women in Britain to qualify as a midwife. In the closing years of the 19th century, this was seen as a radical act. Her additional decision to become a nun scandalised her relatives, who never came to terms with her life choices. She dedicated her entire adult life to providing midwifery services to the poor of the East End. Now in her 90's, SISTER MONICA JOAN has retired from practice, but lives full-time at Nonnatus House, cared for by her fellow sisters. She has an eccentric, mercurial personality, and is obsessed with cake, astrology and knitting, in no particular order. She has a very different nature to SISTER EVANGELINA and as such misses no opportunity to bait her. It is never entirely clear how much of SISTER MONICA JOAN's eccentricity is due to the frailty of age, or (as JENNY suspects), sheer willful naughtiness.

Judy on Sister Monica Joan: *“She comes from a good family and she’s an innocent. She’s very eccentric but she’s also getting dementia so she’s in and out of reality which makes it really interesting to play because it’s a very difficult line to get through.”*

SISTER BERNADETTE (Laura Main)



SISTER BERNADETTE is still in her 30's - the closest in age to JENNY and the other secular midwives. A consummate professional, she has a fresh, uncomplicated approach to her work that means she connects well with JENNY and her other younger colleagues.

Laura on Sister Bernadette: *“She is closer in age to the younger ones so there is perhaps a bit more understanding between them and there’s one episode where she gets a little bit involved in what’s happening with them and the romances that are going on. That’s actually been fun as it’s different side to her.”*

TRIXIE (Helen George)



NURSE TRIXIE FRANKLIN is a bright, glamorous girl in her mid-twenties who is already living and working at Nonnatus House when JENNY arrives. All fully-fashioned nylons and lush red lipstick, TRIXIE loves jazz and dancing, smokes Sobranie cigarettes and, it’s fair to say, is a bit of a flirt. She has a much more outgoing disposition than JENNY, but the two share the sense of adventure in their work and become firm pals.

Helen on Trixie: *“She’s the fun loving, party going midwife who’s always up for a drink and a fag and to go out with the boys and have a good dance. She relishes trying to set up her fellow midwives with other guys and push them into relationships and get them married off but with a twinkle in her eye. Fundamentally though she’s a midwife and that’s what she’s there to do.”*

CYNTHIA (Bryony Hannah)



NURSE CYNTHIA MILLER, like TRIXIE, is also a resident at Nonnatus House when JENNY appears.

Caring, stoical, and intelligent, she finds her midwifery work both challenging and rewarding, a highly desirable alternative to the dull domesticity that would otherwise be her only option. Quiet and sensitive, and also in her early twenties, CYNTHIA becomes JENNY's confidante and life-long friend.

Bryony on Cynthia: *“She's not terribly experienced as a midwife, she's still learning but she's very conscientious and really wants to do well. She puts everything into it. She's quite shy but she grows through the series and becomes much better friends with Jenny as it goes on.”*

CHUMMY (Miranda Hart) – arrives in episode two



CAMILLA CHOLOMONDELY-BROWNE, otherwise known as CHUMMY, is the daughter of a prominent family who has found her way into nursing and midwifery by a circuitous route. Eternally good-humoured and monumentally kind, CHUMMY is crippled by lack of self-confidence. Her great height and physical clumsiness plays its part, but a loveless childhood spent in boarding schools has made the greater impact. An adept midwife, she is hampered by acute shyness and - perhaps more crucially - a complete inability to ride a bike. CHUMMY soon wins the hearts of her colleagues, but her struggle for self-belief will threaten to capsize her.

Miranda on Chummy: *“She comes from a very upper class background and she has decided that her calling from God is to be a midwife so she comes to the east end to join Nonnatus House much to the horror of her viceroys father and her upper crust mother.”*

Male cast

There are four men who play a very important role in the lives of the Nonnatus House residents. Firstly there's FRED (Cliff Parisi), handyman and boiler-stoker for the Nuns, whose enthusiasm for any opportunity to make money, legal or not, often lands him in hot water. There's handsome Dr TURNER (Stephen McGann) who is always on hand to help the midwives when complications arise, and PC NOAKES (Ben Caplan) who plays a particularly important role in CHUMMY's life. We also see a romantic interest for JENNY arrive in episode three in her old friend JIMMY (George Rainsford).

Cast and crew quotes

On babies and childbirth:

“I remember speaking to an actor who’s a Doctor and he said something really useful. We were parting in the corridor and he said that it (delivering a baby) never isn’t amazing. You think maybe you’d get used to the job of being a midwife but he said it’s always amazing, it’s a new life in the room. It’s never not a miracle, it’s utterly incredible. I’m trying to remember that when you’re dealing with a prosthetic strange baby.” **Jessica Raine**

“We’ve had fabulous actresses doing the birthing, really believable noises and the emotional temperature in the room is really high when we’re doing those sequences. It’s very, very powerful stuff. You don’t get much more fundamental than that really. The anxiety and the joy combined make it very, very high moments for everybody. Although we’re sometimes only giving birth to a little bit of plastic you still get very excited!” **Pam Ferris**

“I absolutely loved learning how to do it, especially with the prosthetic baby to make it look so real. It’s such a movement, it was so choreographed and precise. It’s so interesting and something that we never really learn about. I’m giving all my friends advice now – 1950’s advice but it’s advice!” **Helen George**

“One of the statistics which just blew my mind away was that in this area of Poplar, which was very crowded admittedly and very poor, there were between 150 and 200 births every month. After the pill, that dropped to four or five. That is the biggest social revolution that I can imagine has ever happened. We’re just on the cusp of that. Sister Evangelina says that as soon as one child vacates the pram, another one is there to take its place and thus it was and every shall be until such time as someone invents a magic position to put a stop to it, which is exactly what happened.” **Pam Ferris**

“The first week of work was Conchita’s difficult birth scenes and I thought, ‘Are you serious? Are we going to start with that?!’ I remember just being completely overwhelmed and having all this medical jargon about urine and pre-eclampsia. It was just terrifying! We were dealing with a pig’s placenta as well and there’s poor Carolina who plays Conchita sitting there saying not to worry about it!” **Jessica Raine**

"We all wanted to get the detail of the births themselves absolutely right. Early on Jennifer Worth suggested that I contact Terri Coates who had been the clinical adviser on the books. Terri is a practising midwife, but also knows a huge amount about medical history. She came on board as our midwifery consultant, giving advice on the scripts as well as working with the actors on set to ensure everything was accurate. The other key consideration was over how much medical detail we show. Although we wanted to be accurate, this isn't 'One Born Every Minute'! For us, the strength of these scenes comes from the characters' emotions, so that it isn't necessary to always linger on too much graphic detail." **Pippa Harris, Executive Producer**

“When we filmed our first birth scene - a premature baby - it was so tense and moving. The film crew, Terri the midwife and I were moved to tears. I have had two children myself so I should be used to it, but there is something so powerful and profound about showing a new life coming into the world in such difficult circumstances. And these women gave birth at home, with no pain relief!” **Philippa Lowthorpe, Director (episodes 1-3)**

“Jennifer’s books brought tears to my eyes and made me laugh out loud, and I continued to laugh and cry throughout my own writing process and on set when we were filming. Everybody did – actors, directors, hardened electricians - we were all completely unashamed. Childbirth is terrifying and beautiful, and funny and completely undignified. It lies at the very heart of human experience, and it unleashes every emotion we possess.” **Heidi Thomas,**

Writer and Executive Producer

“One of our biggest challenges was dealing with the birth scenes. In order to have credibility it was important to us to use newborns as much as possible but then it was in the lap of the gods as to what babies would actually arrive on the day of filming. However, we also had a number of prosthetic babies which actually worked much better than anticipated. There’s a particular scene in episode two where Chummy delivers a breech baby and being able to use a prosthetic baby for the delivery really helped to make it look so realistic.” **Hugh Warren, Producer**

“Being medically accurate was very important to us. The Royal College of Midwives helped us to find the right equipment and gave us advice on what was appropriate for the era. We also had a good midwifery consultant called Terri Coates - Terri was actually the catalyst for Jennifer to write the books after she read an article of Terri’s in the Midwifery Journal some years ago. Terri came on board as our consultant and was invaluable on set in guiding the cast through every birthing scene. If the births feel real then a lot of the credit is due to Terri.” **Hugh Warren, Producer**

On the highlights of filming the series:

“Sitting around that huge table with everyone there, I’ve really loved those scenes. I wish there were more of them – the big banquet scenes with loads of food and all the young midwives and all of the nuns in the same place. I’ve loved that.” **Jessica Raine**

“Number one has to be meeting and getting to know the wonderful Judy Parfitt. I just adore her and we’ve got into trouble corpsing a few times. She makes me laugh a lot so that’s been tricky in a couple of scenes. That kind of friendship’s amazing.” **Miranda Hart**

“The laughs I’ve had with Miranda Hart. It’s a wonderful company but Miranda and I make each other laugh a lot which is always a joy to find someone who makes you laugh like that.” **Judy Parfitt**

“The privilege of being able to hold a newly born baby - there’s no acting required when you look at their faces. It’s so beautiful and such a privilege. There was one baby who was ten days old and her Mum had managed to bring her in after a caesarean, it was incredible.” **Bryony Hannah**

“I like the singing very much. I enjoyed learning the singing as we’ve learnt plain song from a man who is an expert in it. That was very interesting.” **Pam Ferris**

“It’s been really nice to do something different and not to have to write it. To have the brilliant words of Heidi Thomas is amazing. Just to be an actress is brilliant.” **Miranda Hart**

“There’s a dance scene, which my character doesn’t get to go to, but I did watch and that looks amazing. It made me excited to be part of this drama, even though I wasn’t actually in that scene. It was just quite magical.” **Laura Main**

“One of the many highlights was being able to film in one of the actual churches that the young midwives used to dance in. It was a very real connection to the people whose story we were telling.” **Jamie Payne, Director (episodes 4-6)**

On the cast:

“It’s great because us girls are all quite new to it so we’re learning together and excited

together and you know that you're all in the same boat so you're learning as you go, yet to see the others at work is just tremendous. On our second day we had a tea scene with Pam and Jenny and everyone and it was a real moment to remember to see how comfortable they are on set. Hopefully one day we'll feel as comfortable as that." **Bryony Hannah**

"It's been amazing. We didn't have that much rehearsal time so we didn't know each other well at all. I hadn't met half of them before we started but I just felt that I was in a group of friends immediately. I love them all. I feel like I've met some very good friends." **Miranda Hart**

"It's been fantastic working together. It's rare that you get a room full of strong women and I really do enjoy that." **Pam Ferris**

"There's a great chemistry when we all get together and I think that is a major plus. It just works when we're together. We all gel, there's not a bad egg." **Helen George**

"It has been a joy discovering and working with new young talent. Jessica Raine has a huge amount of theatre experience and it is lovely to see what she is bringing to the screen. Laura, Helen and Bryony are very different from one another but all very exciting actors." **Jenny Agutter**

"I was completely thrilled to be cast and then I couldn't believe it when my agent told me who the other nuns were. That blew my mind." **Laura Main**

"I was able to show Jennifer Worth some photographs of the young cast and it was especially moving to show her a picture of Jessica Raine who was to play her younger self. I was so relieved that Jennifer was delighted to be played by Jessica. It felt like a big responsibility to get the casting right for her." **Philippa Lowthorpe, Director (episodes 1-3)**

On Jennifer Worth and the book:

"I began a dialogue with Jennifer, as soon as I knew we wanted to option the books. Once Heidi came on board, she and I would go and visit Jennifer and her husband Philip, both of whom were immensely helpful as we developed ideas for the series. Jennifer read all the episode outlines, and sent through notes on the early script drafts, which Heidi incorporated. She remained very involved throughout the development process, and right through choosing the director and casting. It's such a great pity that she didn't live long enough to see any of the filming, or the finished episodes. However Philip, their daughters and grand children have all stayed involved, which has been great for us." **Pippa Harris, Executive Producer**

"I met Jennifer very early on, after the first book in the trilogy was published. She invited Pippa and I to her home in Hemel Hempstead for lunch, with herself and husband Philip. Interestingly, she didn't watch a great deal of television so she was happy for me to have my head in terms of what we did dramatically. Nevertheless we would have the most marvellous conversations about her time in the East End - she passed on several tremendous anecdotes that weren't in the books at all, and I was able to quiz her about all sorts of details. I think though that the most important thing was that we actually got to know each other rather well, and there was real friendship between us as two writers. Many of our conversations were about things other than Call the Midwife - we share a religious faith (which is a hugely important theme in the books) and both love fashion. So often we'd just talk about things like God, and clothes, and cookery, and one way and another all of these things made their way into my screenplays, just as they had featured in her books." **Heidi Thomas, Writer and Executive Producer**

“I feel we’ve been faithful to Jennifer’s books and I’m proud of the emotional honesty of the piece. Obviously the topic of childbirth provides heightened emotions anyway but there’s a universal theme of love across the stories which provides an enormous resonance and truth that’s timeless. Jennifer seemed to pick up on people who had found happiness in adversity, and provided support and love for each other despite living in a tough, poverty-stricken world. They’re really life-enhancing stories.” **Hugh Warren, Producer**

"I was very privileged to meet Jennifer a couple of times before she died. When I met her she was very ill and confined to her bed. I sat by her bedside and even though she found it difficult to talk she gave me answers to the questions I had. I could tell she was a very strong person even though she was so frail. She had a strong spirit. She was thrilled that her book was being made into a TV series." **Philippa Lowthorpe, Director (episodes 1-3)**

“The book is a brilliant memoir, true stories full of heart and humour and one of the best collection of Love stories you could hope to read. When I saw Heidi Thomas was leading the adaptation for a TV series I was very keen to pitch to be a part of it as I knew that she would capture the world brilliantly. Life in the East end of London post the Second World War is an incredible part of British social History.” **Jamie Payne, Director (episodes 4-6)**

“The books are wonderful, Jennifer Worth writes from her experience of the fifties beautifully and with great clarity; I think we have captured what she has illustrated in her writing, young people will be intrigued by this part of our history and those that remember the period will feel nostalgia for those more innocent times.” **Jenny Agutter**

“I remember being a little bit overwhelmed when the Worth family first came on set... it made it feel real that this is someone’s life.” **Jessica Raine**

“There’s someone who said to me ‘my wife’s read it, I think she’s read it three times!’ It’s very much loved.” **Laura Main**

“I sat on the tube reading them crying my eyes out. They’re just so incredible.” **Helen George**

“They’re horrifying at times and fascinating and wonderful. It’s all of life packed into a book. It’s fantastic. I found it a real eye opener reading them.” **Bryony Hannah**

“Jennifer wrote to me with a copy of the book and said ‘I’ve been watching your sitcom and this is my novel which is based on true stories and I watch you and I think of my friend Chummy. It looks like it’s being made into a TV show so I really hope you get to play Chummy as I can’t think of anyone who’s more suited,’ which was such an honour. I started flicking through and read the chapter with Chummy’s arrival and was hooked and immediately wrote back to her and said I really do hope I get to play this, what an amazing character.” **Miranda Hart**

On the cycling scenes:

“I love it. I’m very happy because we have a lot of interior scenes in Nonnatus House or inside a cramped tenement building so to get outside is really important. It just makes you happy to get on a bike and cycle through the docks.” **Jessica Raine**

“Chummy couldn’t ride a bicycle amazingly. I say amazingly because, for me, I’m a bit of a cyclist and I was thinking how on earth am I going to act not being able to ride a bike because obviously the old saying goes, once you learn how to ride a bike it will always come back. In the end, luckily it was good that I was a good cyclist because I could wobble quite easily and

was completely relaxed, so I loved the bicycling.” **Miranda Hart**

“I don’t recommend an old boneshaker on not just ordinary old cobbles but very, very deep high cobbles with big grooves in plus a camera car and trying to steer it in exactly the same way and say lines! That was one of my hardest days, that was a tough day.” **Pam Ferris**

“Chatham docks was beautiful. Sometimes I felt like I was in a film cycling along the docks with a hundred extras. It’s filmed on such a lovely scale, they’ve done it beautifully.”

Miranda Hart

On the costumes:

“The costumes are just stunning. We have the nurses uniforms which are great and are cut to fit us but to be honest we all totally love it when we’re in our civvies. The nurses all have different styles too. It’s really cool to see Bryony walk out of her trailer and Helen walk out of hers and we’re all completely different.” **Jessica Raine**

“I enjoy not having to fiddle about with lots of costumes. I like this (the nun’s outfit) very much. It’s very comfortable, I like my habit, I hate my wimple. It’s not even a love/hate relationship it’s a hate/hate relationship with my wimple and I should think that’s why a lot of the nun’s orders are silent because trying to talk in a wimple – you can’t hear properly for a start and it ties your jaw up so you’re fighting it constantly and I end up with a terrible headache. I like the habit, hate the wimple.” **Pam Ferris**

“I am enjoying not worrying about costumes, make up or hair. There’s no struggling with possibilities of what the character should be wearing on any particular day. Everyday it’s the same thing... apart from perhaps wearing an apron or a coat to go out - all very freeing, but I am mindful not to swear as it does seem shocking dressed as a nun.” **Jenny Agutter**

“I’m loving them! It’s a relief when we’re out of the nurses’ outfits – they’re lovely and purposeful but it’s really nice to put some dresses on. We’re getting used to the funny underwear and pointy boobs and putting on suspenders and stockings every day. It’s such an effort!” **Helen George**

"I wanted all aspects of the characters to feel as authentic and truthful as possible as they are based on real people, from encouraging actors to be as natural as possible in their performances to researching the clothes they wore. Amy Roberts, the costume designer and I visited the last remaining Nuns - who are now very elderly - to find out what they wore. Although the nuns don't wear habits any more, Sister Christine rooted out her old one and we used the exact same costume on our actresses! While we were there, Amy Roberts made me try on Sister Christine's wimple so she could learn from them how it worked! The nuns told us lovely details like when they were on their bikes they would tuck their long tunics into their belts so they wouldn't get stuck in the bike chain. So that is what Pam Ferris, who plays Sister Evangelina, did when she was riding her bike in the scenes we filmed." **Philippa Lowthorpe, Director (episodes 1-3)**

On the sets:

“The props and design department are extraordinary. You go on set to find the furniture, the pictures that set the scene; but more than that, all the props, magazines and bits and pieces people live with, add to the picture and on Call the Midwife we have sets that are jam packed with wonderful stuff from the period. Pam Ferris and I were talking about things our characters would do. Pam said that Sister Evangelina would probably collect stamps, whereupon we found books of green shield stamps already there on one of the tables in the nuns and nurses common room. Perfect! It’s lovely because it brings the whole thing alive.” **Jenny Agutter**

"One of the challenges for us was to find our central location of Nonnatus House. The real convent where Jennifer was based has now been turned into luxury flats, so that wasn't an option. Hugh Warren, our producer, discovered a magnificent disused seminary in Mill Hill, which designer Eve Stewart was able to convert not only into the dining room, kitchen and clinical room for the nuns and midwives, but also their bedrooms, as well as the interiors for most of our guest characters' homes." **Pippa Harris, Executive Producer**

"Filming at the docks in Chatham was a great experience. It allowed us to bring a real sense of scale to the production and glimpse what it must have been like to work alongside a busy dock in the 1950s. Watching our midwives cycling through the crowds of extras, with cranes unloading heavy goods, trains trundling past, and the river in the background, was really terrific." **Pippa Harris, Executive Producer**

"I knew that we would have to start with at least the shape of an historic dock and was lucky enough to have seen Chatham Docks before. I just knew it was the right place to go and the people there were amazingly helpful. They moved trains, cranes and original vehicles for us." **Eve Stewart, Production Designer**

"It's actually more difficult to produce a drama set in a more recent era than a period costume drama, partly because there was a lot more stuff around to prop, and also because a lot of the audience will have personal memories of the era. Obviously the docklands have been completely redeveloped but we were very lucky to be able to use Chatham Historic Dockyard which, along with Eve Stewart's amazing talent in dressing the set, gave us a fantastic scale. That was one of the best days on set for me. You don't often get the chance on a television budget to film a production on such scale and it was a real privilege to be able to do that. I think viewers will be surprised when they see it." **Hugh Warren, Producer**

Episode one synopsis

The opening episode sees JENNY LEE arriving at Nonnatus House. We are introduced to the world and its regular characters through her eyes, whilst she undergoes her initial training in the community. The story of the week focuses on the first case JENNY is allowed to handle alone - the care of MRS CONCHITA WARREN, during her 25th pregnancy. CONCHITA is married to LEN WARREN, an East End painter and decorator who fought in the Spanish Civil War. He brought CONCHITA home with him after hostilities ceased - a living, breathing and very beautiful souvenir. CONCHITA speaks no English - according to LEN "there's never been any need" - and spends her days caring for her enormous family. Her case appears to be routine, but, when a freezing smog descends on London, events take a turn for the worse. CONCHITA slips, falls, and goes into labour at 26 weeks gestation - suffering from severe concussion. JENNY, alone in the house with CONCHITA and her husband, must draw on all her reserves of skill and courage if CONCHITA and her one pound eight ounce child are to survive. This episode also features PEARL, whose indomitable spirit rises above a dose of venereal disease, and MURIEL, whose home delivery shows us the best and worst that the system has to offer.

Episode Two

JENNY has a chance, late-night encounter with MARY, a young Irish girl aged 15. She is heavily pregnant, and reveals that she ran away from an abusive home life in rural Ireland and made her way to London. She is unwilling to give away many details of her current situation. Mary is desperate and terrified and eventually JENNY discovers the full, horrific details of the young girl's plight. Destitute upon arrival in London, MARY was "taken in" by ZAKIR, the owner of an all-night cafe in the notorious Cable Street area. It transpired that the cafe was in fact a brothel and MARY was forced into prostitution almost immediately. Her suffering has been extreme, but, in the tough world of the criminal East End, is far from unusual. SISTER JULIENNE arranges for MARY to be helped by a religious charity but sadly it is not to be the end of her tragic story.

Running counterpoint to Jenny's tragic story CHUMMY arrives at Nonnatus House. She answers mainly to SISTER EVANGELINA, who (being a bit of an inverted snob) has little patience with her or with her passionate and somewhat lofty desire to become a missionary. Nerves and an overwhelming keenness to please almost overwhelm CHUMMY, and she makes slow progress.

A particular obstacle is her inability to ride a bike, and although JENNY, TRIXIE and CYNTHIA struggle to teach her, their efforts are hampered by catcalling and jeering from local children. Twelve-year-old JACK is the ringleader, and a particular nuisance. Her initial attempts to learn, end in a spectacular collision between the three midwives and a policeman, PC NOAKES.

After the accident - and more condemnation from SISTER EVANGELINA - CHUMMY's future at Nonnatus House seems to be hanging in the balance. One evening she is first on call when her services are needed. She is terrified, and struggles to cycle, eventually getting off her bike and pushing it there as she half-runs, half-walks to her destination. When she arrives, it transpires that her nemesis, JACK, is a member of the sizable, vibrant wedding party.

In the thick of this raucous atmosphere - and about to deliver a baby on her own - CHUMMY is as far out of her comfort zone as she has ever been in her life. When the baby presents as breech, CHUMMY has to draw deep on her own resources in order to ensure a safe delivery. She is eventually proclaimed the heroine of the hour. She also earns both SISTER EVANGELINA's and JACK's respect and, as a result, the latter takes it upon himself to teach her to ride a bike, and becomes her avowed protector. We end the episode with CHUMMY in a position of confidence and strength, having overcome some major obstacles.

Cast and Crew Biographies

Jessica Raine

Jessica graduated from RADA in July 2008. Following her professional debut in *Harper Regan* at the National Theatre, Jessica was selected as one of The Observer newspaper's *Hotlist 2009* and the Telegraph newspaper's *Stars to Shine in 2009*.

Other theatre credits includes *Earthquakes in London* (National Theatre), *Ghosts* (Duchess Theatre, West End) for which she was nominated for the Ian Charleston Award and *Punk Rock* (Lyric Hammersmith/Royal Exchange, Manchester) for which she won the Best Actress in a Supporting Role at the Manchester Evening News Theatre Awards. Prior to filming *Call the Midwife*, Jessica played the lead role of Cleo in The National's rare revival of Clifford Odets 1930's New York Comedy, *Rocket to the Moon*.

Jessica's screen credits include Ridley Scott's *Robin Hood*, *Garrow's Law* and *The Woman in Black*.

Pam Ferris

Pam Ferris is undoubtedly one of British television's most loved actresses perhaps best known for her roles in *The Darling Buds of May* (1991-93), *Where the Heart Is* (1997-2000) and *Rosemary & Thyme* (2003-2006). Pam's many other television credits include *Luther*, *Gavin and Stacey*, *Midsomer Murders*, *Clocking Off* and *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*.

Pam's roles in other period dramas include the recent BBC adaptation of *Jane Eyre*, *Middlemarch* and *Little Dorrit*.

In addition, Pam has starred in several films including *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *Matilda* and *Children of Men*.

Jenny Agutter

Having been discovered by Walt Disney at the age of eleven, Jenny Agutter has undertaken an extensive range of roles across film, theatre and television.

Jenny's career began with a series of now classic films including *The Railway Children*, *The Snow Goose* and *An American Werewolf in London*. Aged twenty-one she joined the National Theatre to play Miranda in Sir Peter Hall's production of *The Tempest* with Sir John Gielgud. Following a move to Hollywood where Jenny was signed up by MGM to make *Logan's Run*; Jenny continued her theatre work with the Royal Shakespeare Company and with roles in the West End and on Broadway.

Jenny's numerous television credits include *A War of Children*, *Beulah Land*, *Silas Marner* and *The Buccaneers*. In 2000 Jenny returned to *The Railway Children* to play Mother in the Carlton TV adaptation of the story. More recently, Jenny played Tessa in the BBC TV series *Spooks* and played opposite John Hurt in the much acclaimed BBC4 adaptation of *The Alan Clark Diaries*.

Judy Parfitt

Twice BAFTA nominated actress, Judy Parfitt has had an extensive career across film, television and theatre. Judy's television roles include *The Jewel in the Crown*, *ER*, *Funland*, *Little Dorrit* (for which she won a Satellite Award for Best Supporting Actress) and recently *Just William*.

Judy's many film credits include *A Girl with a Pearl Earring*, *The Bourne Identity*, *Dolores Claiborne* and *Wilde*.

Laura Main

Laura began her television career in *The Forstye Saga* in 2003, following which she played roles in *Monarch of the Glen* and *Murder City* where she played DC Alison Bain from 2004-06. Subsequent credits include *Holby City* and *Doctors*.

Laura has also appeared in a number of films including horror sci-fi *The Invisible Monster from Mars* and *Dead Cat*.

Bryony Hannah

Bryony Hannah trained at RADA before moving into stage work. Her performances for the National Theatre include *Earthquakes in London*, *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*, *The Pillowman* and *War Horse*. However, it was her performance alongside Keira Knightley and Elisabeth Moss in *The Children's Hour* which propelled Bryony into the limelight after receiving stunning reviews from the critics.

Bryony's other theatre credits include *The Winter's Tale* for Headlong, *The Crucible* for Sheffield Theatres and *The 24 Hour Plays* for the Old Vic. Her first on screen role was in 2010 for *Cemetery Junction*.

Helen George

After studying at The Birmingham School of Acting and then The Royal Academy of Music, Helen's stage career began when she was cast by Trevor Nunn in *The Woman in White*. Television roles soon followed in *Hollyoaks*, *Doctors* and *Hotel Babylon*.

Helen made her Hollywood debut recently in *The Three Musketeers* and also appears in the forthcoming Danny Dyer film *7Lives*.

Miranda Hart

Miranda Hart is a comedy writer and actress whose BBC 2 sitcom *Miranda* has recently earned her four BAFTA nominations, three RTS awards and three Comedy Awards.

Before her own series was commissioned Miranda played Barbara in BBC 1's *Not Going Out* with Lee Mack, and earned a British Comedy Award nomination for her role in *Hyperdrive* alongside Nick Frost. She has also appeared in *Nighty Night*, *Smack the Pony*, *Absolutely Fabulous*, *Vicar of Dibley* and *Jack Dee's Lead Balloon*. She also recently played a cameo in David Baddiel's feature film *The Infidel*.

She earned her reputation as a comedian from her stand-up and sketch shows at the Edinburgh Festival and on the London circuit. Her role as a stand-up has earned a place as a regular on the panel show circuit, most recently hosting *Have I Got News For You*.

Pippa Harris, Executive Producer

Pippa Harris established Neal Street Productions in 2003, alongside Sam Mendes and Caro Newling, and runs the company's Film and TV division.

Since the formation of Neal Street Productions, Pippa has produced *Starter for Ten* (2006) starring James MacAvoy and Rebecca Hall, *Stuart A Life Backwards* (2007) for the BBC/HBO and also co-produced *Jarhead* (2006), starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Jamie Foxx for Universal pictures. In 2007, Pippa executive produced *Things We Lost in the Fire* starring Halle Berry and Benicio Del Toro and in 2008 co-executive produced Sam Mendes' Oscar-

nominated *Revolutionary Road*. Most recently, Pippa was the Executive Producer on *Away We Go* (2009).

Previously, Pippa was the Head of Drama Commissioning for the BBC where her commissions included the Emmy award winning *The Lost Prince*, *Cutting It* and the Prix Europe Best Drama *Flesh and Blood*.

Pippa joined the BBC in 1997 as a Development Executive for BBC films before becoming the Executive Producer of BBC Drama Serials. Other production credits include the BAFTA winning dramas *The Way We Live Now*, *Care* and *Warriors*. Prior to joining the BBC, Pippa worked in the drama divisions of Carlton TV and Channel 4 as a development executive.

Alongside *Call the Midwife*, Pippa is also currently in production on a major new cycle of four of Shakespeare's most famous History plays which will form part of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad on BBC2.

Hugh Warren, Producer

Hugh began his career as a producer in 1999 with the twice BAFTA nominated BBC series *Playing the Field*. Since then, Hugh has gone on to produce a range of drama series including *Above Suspicion: Deadly Intent* (2011), *Survivors* (2008-2010) starring Max Beesley, *The Chase* (2006) *Blue Murder* (2003-2004) starring Caroline Quentin and *At home with the Braithwaites* (2000 -2003).

Hugh has also produced several television movies such as the BAFTA-nominated *Doctor Zhivago* (2002) with Keira Knightley, the Monte-Carlo Comedy Film Festival nominated *The Best Man* (2006) and *Frankenstein* (2007).

Heidi Thomas, Writer and Executive Producer

Winner of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain Award (2008), Heidi Thomas has been Emmy-nominated for writing both *Cranford* (2007-09) and *Upstairs Downstairs* (2010) and also won the Best Writer award at the UK Royal Television Society in 2008 for *Cranford*.

Heidi also wrote the BBC period drama *Lillies* (2007) alongside screenplays such as *Ballet Shoes* (2007) and *Madame Bovary* (2000).

Heidi first gained national recognition in 1985 when her play, *Shamrocks And Crocodiles*, won the John Whiting Award. Other plays include *Indigo*, performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company in their 1987/88 season, and *The House of Special Purpose* which was staged at the Chichester Festival Theatre in 2010.

Philippa Lowthorpe, Director (Episodes 1 – 3)

Philippa's most recently directed the award-winning *Five Daughters* for the BBC in 2010. Other directorial credits include the television movies *Sex, the City and Me* (2007) and *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2003).

Philippa began her career as the director and producer of the documentary *Enniskillen: Splendid Hearts* in 1992, and continued to direct various documentaries including *Remember the Family* (1995) and *A Childhood* (2000).

Jamie Payne, Director (Episodes 4 – 6)

Jamie's recent directorial credits include BBC One's *The Hour* (2011), the award-winning *Ashes to Ashes* (2010) and *Survivors* (2008-2010).

Jamie started his career in 1998 as the director and producer of *The Dance of Shiva*. Since then he has worked as a director on a wide range of television shows including *New Tricks* for BBC One and *Primeval* for ITV.

Key Crew:

The Production Designer on *Call the Midwife* is Eve Stewart who was Oscar-nominated for her work on *The King's Speech*. The Director of Photography is Chris Seager (*The Hour*).

The Costume Designer is Amy Roberts (*Upstairs Downstairs*) and Make up and Hair Designer is Christine Walmesley-Coatham (*Wallander*).

Regular Cast List

Mature Jennifer (voice over)	Vanessa Redgrave
Jenny Lee	Jessica Raine
Sister Evangelina	Pam Ferris
Sister Monica Joan	Judy Parfitt
Sister Julienne	Jenny Agutter
Sister Bernadette	Laura Main
Cynthia Miller	Bryony Hannah
Trixie Franklin	Helen George
Chummy Browne (from ep 2)	Miranda Hart
Fred	Cliff Parisi
Dr Turner	Stephen McGann
PC Peter Noakes	Ben Caplan
Jimmy (from ep 3)	George Rainsford

Guest artists

Episode One

Len Warren	Tim Faraday
Conchita Warren	Carolina Validés
Maureen Warren	Hayley Squires
Pearl Winston	Lorraine Stanley
Mrs Hawkes	Lacey Bond
Muriel	Sarah Ridgeway
Eddy	Benjamin Wilkin
Registrar	David Annen

Episode Two

Father Joe	Stanley Townsend
Ingrid Mason	Sophie Cosson
Clifford Mason	Liam Reilly
Mary	Amy McAllister
Zakir	Darwin Shaw
Charmaine	Jessica Jones
Sailor	Mitchell Hunt
Jack Smith	Jake Bailey
Betty Smith	Victoria Alcock
Mr Smith	Nick Bartlett
Mrs Fraser	Amelda Brown
Brenda McEntee	Penny Layden
Café Proprietor	Terry Bird

Episode Three

Joe Collett	Roy Hudd
Winnie Lawson	Tessa Churchard
Ted Lawson	John Ashton
Officer	David Maybrick
Neighbour	Valerie King

Episode Four

Shirley Redmond	Emma Noakes
Ron Redmond	Tom Colley
Gladys	Susie Baxter

David Jones
Margaret Jones
Eileen
Milkman

Tom Goodman-Hill
Thomasin Rand
Nicola Munns
Anton Saunders

Episode Five

Frank
Peggy
Tip
Elsie May
Barry May
Mrs Leonard

Sean Baker
Elizabeth Rider
Jake Davies
Sarah Counsell
Brett Allen
Candis Nergaard

Episode Six

Cakey Crumb
Cathy Powell
Lady Fortescue-Browne
Chairman
Mrs Leck
Jesu Emanuel
Sergeant Parry
Mr Briggs
Mrs Foster

Jeff Innocent
Tina O'Brien
Cheryl Campbell
Robin Browne
Debra Baker
Kika Markham
John Vernon
Graham Padden
Elizabeth Webster