A Neal Street Production for BBC One

Created and written by Heidi Thomas and based on the best-selling memoirs of the late Jennifer Worth, Call the Midwife returns for a Christmas special in December 2012 and a second series early in 2013.
Introduction by Heidi Thomas (Series Creator and Writer)

I think the audience response to the first series of Call the Midwife was the warmest I’ve ever known. From the word go, it seemed it was loved not just by midwives and by mothers, but by one group we thought would turn off straight away – men! In fact I think my favourite fan of the show was a chap in his 70’s who came up to me in my local supermarket. With tears in his eyes, he told me how he had been banished from the room when his children were born, and Call the Midwife had at last allowed him to share in the miracle of birth.

For everyone involved, the prospect of returning to the world of Nonnatus House was irresistible. Series 2 - like Series 1 - draws heavily on the original, bestselling trilogy of books by Jennifer Worth and blends her stories with original material to create a multi-layered whole. However, having a Christmas special and eight episodes has given us the chance to delve more deeply into the lives of our regular characters.

Each week, compelling tales of midwifery and social medicine intertwine with the touching, intimate stories of the nurses and nuns who serve the community of Poplar. Secrets are revealed, and lessons learned, as we follow these dedicated, vibrant women through the run-up to Christmas 1957, and then the spring, summer and autumn of 1958. Jenny continues to shy away from jumping into the swimming pool of love - whilst Trixie has no such trouble, and almost comes unstuck. Gentle Cynthia suffers when a birth goes wrong, and Chummy faces an unexpected challenge when offered the chance to fulfill her dreams. Sister Monica Joan’s dementia worsens, and she finds comfort in the friendship of a newcomer, Jane, who has a hidden sadness of her own. Meanwhile, Sister Julienne struggles to keep the beleaguered convent on an even keel, Sister Bernadette experiences a spiritual crisis, and Sister Evangelina puts her foot down regarding pain relief. The male regulars – PC Noakes, Fred and Dr Turner – are also revealed in greater detail than before, and Jenny’s childhood friend Jimmy makes an unexpected reappearance.

When asked to bring the curtain up on a new series with a Christmas special, we jumped at the chance. At its’ heart Christmas has always been about love, hope, and generosity of spirit – all qualities we celebrate in Call the Midwife.

Nevertheless, throughout Series 2, we continue to tell the gritty social and medical stories that so moved – and even shocked – the audience during our first outing. Appalling housing continues to be an issue, as does prostitution. But we also feature domestic violence, infant death, and the birth of a disabled child. And even as we celebrate the triumphant National Health campaign against TB, we take a clear-eyed look at the parlous state of women’s’ reproductive rights in the 1950’s in a story that ends in a back-street abortion. These are not easy stories to tell, but they are real, and important, and often shine a light on the way we live today.

Welcome to Series 2.
Christmas is coming and in Poplar the nuns and midwives of Nonnatus House are busier than ever. When an abandoned baby is discovered on the steps of the convent, the whole community rallies round to provide food and clothing and to try and trace his mother.

Nurse Jenny Lee, meanwhile, gets caught up in the heart-breaking mystery which surrounds an elderly, semi-vagrant local woman, Mrs Jenkins, played by Sheila Reid. For newly married Chummy, other challenges await, as she pulls out all the stops to mount a truly memorable children's nativity play.

Executive producer Pippa Harris, said: "As the nights draw in and Christmas approaches, the residents of Nonnatus House pull together to celebrate the season in their own very special way. Christmas celebrates one particular birth, and so it's especially fitting for BBC One to pay a visit to these much loved characters, whose daily lives revolve around the joys and tribulations of childbirth."

Extended to eight episodes, BBC One’s most successful new drama series since ratings began, sees the return of all its well-loved characters as well as some new faces. Nonnatus House opens its doors to warmly welcome the audience back into 1950s East End London and continues to follow Poplar’s community of exceptional midwives and nursing nuns. This new series stays true to its roots and viewers can expect to see more births, babies, and bicycling plus blossoming romance from an unexpected quarter. ....

*Call the Midwife* completed its first season in the U.S. in early November. The first three episodes rated 55 percent above PBS’ primetime average for the 2011-12 season. Critics in the U.S. were equally effusive, with the Washington Post declaring it “absorbing and inspiring” and the Los Angeles Times saying it is “lovely and engaging.”

The series was commissioned by Danny Cohen, Controller BBC One, and Ben Stephenson, Controller BBC Drama. It was created and written by Heidi Thomas (*Upstairs Downstairs*, *Cranford*).

Executive Producer for Neal Street Productions is Pippa Harris (*The Hollow Crown*, *Revolutionary Road*) with Christopher Aird as Executive Producer for BBC. The series was produced by Hugh Warren (*Above Suspicion*, *Survivors*) and the Christmas special and Episode 1 were directed by series 1’s principal director Philippa Lowthorpe (*Five Daughters*).
Jessica Raine plays Jenny

How did it feel getting back into the uniform again?
It felt great putting the uniform back on, it feels like you are slipping back into character. Jenny Lee has experienced so much in that uniform so the memories feel sort of embedded.

How was it seeing the rest of the cast again?
We do a great deal of our stories with guest actors, so when we all come together at Nonnatus House it actually does feel a bit like coming home to all your buddies.

What are your favourite places to film on set?
My favourite places to film on set are at the dinner table, as we are all sat down with fabulously detailed 50's food in front of us. I also love it when we use the long corridors of the building with beautiful light streaming through the windows.

What are your favourite scenes to film?
I really like filming the scenes with Jimmy and Jenny, as it is a complicated relationship that never quite gets resolved. We often have long dialogue scenes where you can really get in to it without stopping and starting too much for camera angles etc. Also George Rainsford is very funny and makes us all giggle.

Do you have good camaraderie on set?
I can genuinely say that our cast get on very, very well, there is masses of respect and no one takes themselves too seriously, which makes it relaxed and allows good work.

Have any episodes been your favourite to film in this series?
I like the episode where Jenny gets seconded to the London Hospital. It was a good change of scenery- good for the character. And I also think the episode that tackles abortion is important and hard hitting.

Any favourite guest stars this series?
Personal faves were Sheila Reid, who plays Mrs Jenkins in the Christmas special, and Sharon Small who brought such empathy to her character who makes the toughest of decisions. Anthony Calf was also particularly good at being a mean doctor. Terrifying.
Do we see Jenny interact with any new characters?
Jenny is always interacting with new characters! Nonnatus House recruits a new member, who the girls all find quite curious, and towards the end of the series Jenny allows herself a dance in a seedy jazz club with a young man, a young man who is good friends with Jimmy...

What is different about this series compared to the first?
The first series concentrated on introducing this quite eccentric world through Jenny’s eyes. In this series, that is all established which allows characters to develop and everyone gets their moment. I think some of the issues tackled in this series are more delicate and difficult too.

What is Jenny’s involvement in the Christmas special?
We are introduced to a character called Mrs Jenkins (Sheila Reid), a strong character I remember vividly from the books. A woman that had been broken by the harsh Victorian institution of the workhouse, and Jenny helps rehabilitate her. On a lighter note, Jenny plays the Piano at the community Nativity that Chummy directs at the Parish Hall!

How has Jenny changed since series 1?
I think Jenny has become more confident in her nursing abilities, and a lot more forthright in dealing with difficult patients. She is still a dark horse when it comes to her personal life, preferring to throw herself in to work than address her own issues.

How does Jenny react to the Spina Bifida birth?
Jenny doesn't react particularly well to the baby with Spina Bifida. She just doesn't know how to deal with it, so over compensates because she feels very guilty about her initial reaction of horror. It is a very honest account and Jenny is a human being with flaws she has to address in herself, so it was interesting to play this.

What happens with Jimmy and Jenny this series?
Jimmy reappears, and Jenny suddenly feels ready to perhaps give things another try. But Jimmy isn't being entirely honest with her, so it all gets rather complicated and heated again. Jimmy also falls very ill, and Jenny is the one who takes responsibility for his recovery, right in the middle of this sticky situation!
How did it feel getting back into the habit again?
I was really pleased to hear a second series had been commissioned. It is a good feeling returning to a character that you enjoy and I looked forward to the new scripts and seeing what the stories would be and how they would develop.

How was it seeing the rest of the cast again?
As soon as we were all together, it felt as though no time had passed. We fell into comfortable habits (pardon the expression) that had grown in the first series of sitting around the corridors of Nonnatus House talking between scenes. Mostly about our own domestic situations like moving house, decorators, food recipes and restaurants.

Where are your favourite places to film on set?
I love the common room which is filled with great magazines and the bits and pieces that make up the nuns and midwives lives. I also love my office because on my desk there are always letters and the props department have taken the trouble to create worlds and lives in the letters so that if I glance down I can read a wonderful thank you letter from someone in Poplar referring to how well they were taken care of.

What are your favourite scenes to film?
I think the nuns would all agree that a good way to start the day is with plain song in the chapel, it is so meditative and soothing. I have only filmed one birth but it is a special experience. These are the most difficult scenes to film and a great deal of time and care goes into them. Birth scenes are always rehearsed in advance and it is brilliant working with the midwife Terri Coates who knew Jennifer Worth and is our advisor. She takes us through every birth and the way it should be handled. When we are on set filming there is great concentration and quiet, particularly when the very young babies join us. It is hard not to become emotionally involved in the scenes.

Have there been any favourite episodes you've filmed in this series?
Episode 5 deals with some difficult and important issues and I love the way Heidi Thomas does not step back from the problems Jennifer Worth described in her memoirs, but confronts them and dramatises them. It is not a matter of displaying right and wrong but finding a way to show honestly the terrible circumstances which people lived with and the way they were forced to deal with them. I enjoyed the relationship between Jenny and Sister Julienne who are forced to look at some terrible situations but from very different perspectives.

Were there any hard episodes to film this series?
We have dealt with sickness and death almost as much as with birth and there were two episodes where birth and death come close to one another and my character is very much present in these situations. I found them difficult because the moments are such private personal ones and it was very important to serve them well and as straightforwardly as possible.

Are there any memorable guest stars in this series?
Fortunately there is always a chance to get a sense of the whole episode and the other characters at the read through before we start filming. So, although I don't film with Warren Clarke, I think he creates an awful, self-centered man, who is redeemed by his brow beaten wife played by Nicola Sloane.
It is always a pleasure having guest actors join us, they bring with them new situations to react to and keep us on our toes. They are at the centre of new storylines and give us the opportunity to discover interesting aspects of the community outside Nonnatus and the clinic. We have more men coming into in the very female environment of Nonnatus House - the Reverend Applebee -Thornton is beautifully and amusingly portrayed by Jason Watkins and, yet again, we see an unlikely romance emerge.

Do we see Sister Julienne interact with any new characters?
Sister Julienne interacts with those who come into the community and we have a number of new people arriving. One woman, Jane, is introduced by her, to Nonnatus House. She is someone who has come from an unusual and unstable background and finds it exceedingly difficult to fit in. Sister Julienne also has to work with a very forceful but well-meaning Vicar's wife; the sort of person who gets things done but you are not sure whether you want what she is proposing.

What is different about this series compared to the first?
We learn more about the nuns and midwives as we see them deal with different situations and understand more about what motivates them.

What is Sister Julienne’s involvement in the Christmas special?
The first time you see Sister Julienne deliver a baby is in the Christmas special. I can't say too much but the circumstances of the birth are not very easy! Sister Julienne is only there by chance but takes things in hand. In the rest of the special she deals with some of the other difficulties the episode examines; difficulties created by living with the remnants of a pre-war world in a city which is struggling to change. The episode looks at birth, poverty and age.

How much pressure do you feel to keep true to the character she is based on?
I hope that I have stayed true to character. It is important to keep the continuity. However, different directors have different ways of seeing and telling stories and perhaps the way they interpret the characters may make them appear different. But I love referring to the notes given to me by the niece of the character I play which are very full and descriptive and give me an image of the person I want to portray. I have a number of photographs as well; the geniality, simplicity and humour of the woman is apparent in these photos.

What is the relationship like between Sister Julienne and the other nuns?
Sister Julienne remains quietly in charge. She respects and enjoys the other nuns with whom she shares important parts of her life. She draws on Sister Evangelina's strength and she has great hopes for the young nun Sister Bernadette. However, she has to deal with a number of problems arising from changes that are occurring; she has to deal with sickness in Nonnatus House and help others face questions they have about faith and the future of the house itself.
Pam Ferris plays Sister Evangelina

How did it feel getting back into the habit again?
Love my familiar, comfortable, well-worn old habit. Love my sensible shoes. Hate my wimple – it’s like wearing a harness.

How was it seeing the rest of the cast again?
Great to catch up on everyone’s news – who has moved house etc but most importantly - who’s got a new puppy – and can I cuddle it?

What are your favourite places to film on set?
Anywhere out of the draught! We work in a big old derelict building with the doors open for the power cables. Cosy it ain’t.

What are your favourite scenes to film?
Love the singing in the chapel. It’s so calm and uplifting. We sometimes have two or three extra singers dressed as nuns to boost our numbers and we get to chat quietly with them between takes. I find musicians are usually very interesting people.

Do you have good camaraderie on set?
Of course! We are all focused on making the programme the best it can be – not on our personal relationships – but I always find if the focus is there, good relationships follow on.

Have you got any favourite episodes in this series?
They all made me cry when I first read them and that’s a good test. The strand of the Christmas episode that I was in was very touching, and quite moving to film – Sheila Reid’s performance is so believable.

Did you find any of the episodes hard to film in this series?
Physically hard yes. It’s tough being a midwife and you need a lot of stamina to film it. Emotionally hard, too. If you want to find the truth of a scene you sometimes have to go into dark places. The spina bifida birth was hard in both ways.

Any favourite guest stars in this series?
Warren Clark – we’d worked together before and we make each other laugh. His balance of off camera wit and on camera professionalism makes him a joy to work with. He’s also a very fine actor.
Do we see Sister Evangelina interact with any new characters?
Jane joins the regulars at Nonnatus House. She and Sister Evangelina are polar opposites. Sister E hardly notices that quiet, shy Jane exists! I love it when the sisters are joined by men at the table – there’s a subtle excitement about the nuns that makes them behave like teenagers.

What is different about this series compared to the first?
I think it is both darker and funnier in places.

What is Sister Evangelina’s involvement in the Christmas special?
Sister Evangelina reveals her knowledge of the cruel, inhuman effects of the workhouse system. The workhouses are closed but the effects go on. Her response to the suffering is, as ever, to treat the pain in an immediate and practical way, not to ponder on the situation.

How was it to film the ship scenes in episode 1?
We had a set built on rockers for some of the scenes. That was fun! And on the real ship we shot in a tiny hot cabin – there were sometimes five or six people in there – just as well we get on!

What is the relationship like between Sister Evangelina and the other nuns?
In Sister Evangelina’s eyes a midwife or nun is only as good as the service they give their patients. Her standards are high, and she’s quick to comment if someone falls below them. This might breed respect- but possibly not affection.

How much pressure do you feel to keep true to the character she is based on now its second series?
I feel a huge loyalty to the real Sister Evangelina – but making drama is a team effort – many people are involved in decision making. I can only try to be true to my idea of her in every scene, and hope that the whole adds up to a portrait of a truly amazing woman.
Judy Parfitt plays Sister Monica Joan

How did it feel getting back into the habit again?
It felt like a second skin. It was very strange in the first series but for the second I felt completely at home in it.

How was it seeing the rest of the cast again?
It is a very happy company, with no egos, so it was lovely to see them all again. Everybody is very supportive in the cast and crew. We also have wonderful caterers which makes a big difference in the long hours and at the cold, damp St Joseph’s!

What are your favourite scenes to film?
I like scenes when Sister Monica Joan is being a bit naughty; when she’s nicking things and being mischievous!

Do you have any favourite episodes in this series?
I liked filming the Christmas episode because it was happy and nice.

Were there any hard episodes to film this series?
It’s difficult because we don’t get a lot of rehearsal time and there are a lot of different people coming in. The actors we’ve had in have been absolutely fantastic though.

Do you have any favourite guest stars in this series?
I was very pleased to see Warren Clarke (episode 7) again because we’ve worked together four times since we were at Granada.

Do we see Sister Monica Joan interact with any new characters?
I’ve worked with Jason Watkins (episode 4) before on Funland so it’s a great privilege to have him in this series. Dot (Atkinson), who plays Jane, is an incredibly nice woman and very good.

What is different about this series compared to the first?
We’re all more at ease and know each other better, which always makes a difference. It really helps the scenes.

What is Sister Monica Joan's involvement in the Christmas special?
She is having a whale of a time and is very childlike and innocent. She loves the music, parties and everything that is associated with it.

**How is it to play her failing health scenes?**
I hope I strike the right note playing her. The reason I’ve got for why she behaves that way is that when she’s not feeling well, when she’s stressed and very tired her mind starts playing her up.

**What is the relationship like between Sister Monica Joan and the other nuns and midwives?**
They’re all very protective of her but she wants to pull her weight. She gets fed up with Sister Julienne not treating her as someone who is an attribute. Sister Monica Joan wants to be doing things and Sister Julienne is always trying to protect her and stop her from doing them.

**How much pressure do you feel to keep true to the character she is based on?**
You have to be very careful about keeping it truthful, fresh and alive all the time. You have to play each scene like you’ve never played anything like it before.
How did it feel getting back into the habit again?
When I took the habit off at the end of filming the first series, I had a feeling we’d be re-united so I was very happy to see it again! However, as comfortable as it is, we were filming for almost 6 months and there was a point where I found myself looking longingly at the girls getting their hair in curlers and wearing pretty dresses. On the plus side, there are no costume surprises when you walk into your trailer in the morning!

How was it seeing the rest of the cast again?
We all got along so well together last year and it was no different this series. In fact it was even better as we know each other even more this time. When Miranda’s on set we usually have a good sing a long! Practically everyone from cast and crew came back for the second series, which supposedly is quite unusual, but a huge testament to how much everyone enjoys working on it and how we all feel about the piece. It’s a real honour to be telling Jennifer Worth’s stories and the same level of detail and care that was taken on the first series is in the second. It really is such a special place.

What are your favourite places to film on set?
I’ve still not been to film at Chatham Docks - I’d love to see that, it looks so lovely when I see the finished product. We spend a huge chunk of time filming at Nonnatus House, which also doubles up as sets for other locations and feels like home now. However, it is nice to get out and occasionally film elsewhere. We filmed in Luton Hoo, at a farm, and I’m convinced the recent BBC adaptation of Great Expectations was filmed there, which excited me greatly. I also used to live in Crouch End, so there was something quite nice about getting to film in the Town Hall there.

What are your favourite scenes to film?
I got to do my first birth scene in this series, which I found really helpful because that is ultimately what they are all about. It felt important for me to get to experience what Sister Bernadette has tons of experience in. Especially as we know she was an extremely good midwife.
I do enjoy when we have a full complement in a scene! We all enjoy each other’s company so much and so it’s great to be all together. There is lots of gossiping and laughter on days like that and I feel very lucky to be a part of such a great gang.
And I have to say, I have loved working with Stephen McGann. When you throw two characters together, there is not necessarily going to be any chemistry between the actors, but we had a wonderful working relationship and hopefully that will translate on screen.

**Do you have any favourite guest stars in this series?**
There have been loads of actors coming in that I admire. Sharon Small is an actress who switches between playing Scottish and English characters with ease and is someone I look up to. Although I never got to tell her as I didn’t do any scenes with her. We were all in awe of the Bafta winning Monica Dolan. I thought she was extraordinary in Appropriate Adult. I found it really interesting to observe her level of focus on set and have hopefully learnt from her! Andy Pryor is such a clever casting director.

**What is different about this series compared to the first?**
Heidi Thomas is such an amazing writer and I feel like the journey she wrote for Sister Bernadette this series is the most precious gift. I’m sure all the actors feel that way, as she made sure everyone got their moment to shine. I think the main difference is how much more we learn about all the inhabitants of Nonnatus House. A high percentage of my scenes were with Dr Turner. People started to talk!

**What is Sister Bernadette's involvement in the Christmas special?**
Like me, Sister B loves to sing so she leads in one or two festive hymns!

**How has sister Bernadette changed since series 1?**
She goes on such a huge journey. I never could have predicted the journey she takes. It took me by as much surprise as it does Sister Bernadette. And therefore it has been so interesting to play her as there is absolutely no going over the same ground. She isn’t quite her usual self at times in this series and we and she eventually learn why this is the case. She also becomes close to someone! The moment in series 1, when she looks in the mirror, was not an isolated one.
Helen George plays Trixie

How did it feel getting back into the uniform again?
It felt great to be back in my uniform! I remember the first day back feeling as though it was the first day back at school, and all the excitement of seeing my mates again. It was so lovely to be back with my pals, I'd missed them. We have lots of time between scenes when we just sit around eating biscuits and chatting. It's so great to be in a cast with so many funny and strong women who are always up for a laugh… or a sing along. Pam does a mean harmony!

What are your favourite places to film on set?
My favourite place on set is the makeup bus. It's where the party's at. It's where our day starts and it's always filled with gossip and laughter. Bryony and I sit next to each other whilst being made up, which is perfect for our intense X Factor chats. It's a very important subject on set, we both love James Arthur.

What was your favourite episode to film in this series?
I love the Christmas special, I think the story has been so beautifully crafted by Heidi Thomas and Sheila Reid was incredible.

Do you have any favourite guest stars in this series?
Well Trixie finally gets some action, although it's not quite what she's looking for! So I'd have to say one of my favourite guest stars would be Tristan Gemmill for his wonderful Clifford Raines (episode 5). He looked like a 50s James Bond.

Do we see Trixie interact with any new characters?
Trixie really tries to encourage our new character Jane, and attempts to work her magic on yet another romantic set up!

What is different about this series compared to the first?
I think the difference between this series and the last is the detail we go into with getting to know the regular characters at the centre of Nonnatus House. Whilst guest stories come in and out, what's lovely this time is that we get to see how all of these affect our midwives and how we progress or indeed diminish with them.

What is Trixie's involvement in the Christmas special?
Trixie's involvement in the Christmas special is mainly with the tragic story of baby Raymond found in a box on our doorstep. We all completely fall in love with him, and mother him as a community. Oh and I get to wear angel wings… always a highlight.
How has Trixie changed since series 1?
I don't know if Trixie's changed since the last series, rather developed. I think she is gaining strength and confidence in herself (not that she was lacking in it!) but we do get a rare glimpse of her vulnerability!

How is Trixie involved in the ship storyline (episode 1)?
Trixie is involved with a wonderful birth story set on a Swedish cargo ship docked in Poplar. Unfortunately for her she is on call with Sister Evangelina- which she always dreads! You really get to see Trixie's passion and sense of protection for women in vulnerable situations. Other than fish and climbing on board cargo ships, she is fearless and willing to take on any battle.

What happens with Trixie and her love life this series?
Trixie's love life takes a surprising twist this series, as she is sent out to bait a variety show host, Clifford Raines, to be a celebrity judge in our summer fete baby show. He agrees to this on the condition that he can take her out to the Dorchester (Trixie's dream date venue!) Her imagination runs away with her and she is convinced that she could have quite a lovely life with such a man, but things do not go quite to plan...
Bryony Hannah plays Cynthia

How did it feel getting back into the uniform again?  
I quite enjoy wearing the uniform. It immediately gets you back into character and reminds you of the etiquette of the era. Wearing the grey tights in the height of summer was challenging, but I'm a big fan of the red cardi whatever the weather.

How was it seeing the rest of the cast again?  
We have all become great friends. It's lovely seeing how people have grown from the last series and great to have pals to share special moments with.

What are your favourite places to film on set?  
I love filming outside. The camera is normally set up further away so you can really get lost in the world of your character. In episode 2 I did a lot of cycling and enjoyed playing the scene where Jenny finds Cynthia in the street. We are old friends in real life so it felt particularly special.

What are your favourite scenes to film?  
Scenes with the girls in the kitchen or bedrooms are my favourites to film. It's fun to show a more relaxed off-duty side of Cynthia, and it's always a warm intimate atmosphere. Big table scenes with the nuns are fun too, but not straight after lunch!

Do you have good camaraderie on set?  
Yes we all look after each other on set. And our makeup and costume teams are wonderful for morale too. Every now and again someone unexpected will mention a scene they enjoyed and it really gives you a boost on a long job.

Do you have any favourite episodes in this series?  
My favourite to film was episode 2 because Cynthia goes on a challenging journey of self-discovery. It is quite a harrowing story so I hope I've done it justice.

Was anything hard to film in this series?  
Episode 3 with Meg and Maeve was quite a challenge. Each scene had to have triple the amount of shots as usual, and occasionally you had to speak to thin air. Monica (Dolan) and her double were both fantastic though.
Do you have any favourite guest stars from this series? All of our guests are amazing. I think Kirsty J Curtis (Irene Kelly) in episode 2 was astonishing and has a very bright future. It was also great to work with Nicola Sloane and Warren Clark in episode 7. During the read through of our Christmas episode we were all mesmerised by Sheila Reid's performance and I am so looking forward to seeing it on screen - she was inspirational.

Do we see Cynthia interact with any new characters? Cynthia is still very close to Trixie and Jenny especially, but she tries to welcome and involve Jane. She goes on rounds with Sister Evangelina in episode 7, so it was fun spending time with Pam who gave me advice on interior decorating!

What is different about this series compared to the first? I think this series is even more ambitious than the first. You get to know each character a little better and follow some quite challenging storylines.

What is Cynthia’s involvement in the Christmas special? In the Christmas special Cynthia discovers a baby on the doorstep of Nonnatus House. She helps care for him and also gets involved with making costumes for the Nativity Play.

How has Cynthia changed since series 1? I think Cynthia will always take things very much to heart but she gradually finds her voice through series 2. She is still very close to Jenny but manages to give her some tough advice when needed. By spending time with Trixie I think she has also learnt to let her hair down now and again amongst friends.

What is Cynthia’s journey this series? Cynthia learns to overcome her deepest feelings of self-doubt with the help of her friends at Nonnatus House. She also learns to stand up to bullies and express her opinions. Gradually she is growing up and trying to find her place in the world.

Have you learnt any new skills from CTM? I learnt how to do a cycle stunt for episode 2, which was quite scary. And I also learnt how to prep a needle for an injection, although I won't be putting that skill to the test anytime soon!
**Miranda Hart plays Chummy**

**How did it feel getting back into the uniform again?**
Lovely! Apart from having to wear the 50's tights – every morning I seem to get in a muddle putting them on, getting the line right at the back, laddering them within seconds. Me and the tights are not friends.

**How was it seeing the rest of the cast again?**
So great. I think often the success of a show is because there is love, friendship and warmth between the cast. And that translates. There are no big egos flying around, everyone has a great sense of humour – we laugh a lot – and we all love the show and work hard to make it as good as we can. It’s a great vibe on set.

**What are your favourite places to film on set?**
This series we see Chummy and Peter's married home and that was quite fun to film on a new set and see Chummy in a different place, having moved on with her life. Other than that, we don't film often in there, but I think we all really like the parlour/sitting room.

**What are your favourite scenes to film?**
In the first series I loved the big scenes around the dining room table, with the whole cast there. I particularly liked the one when Jimmy arrived for the first time and poor Chummy made a bit of a fool of herself having to sit next to a good looking young boy. That was a fun scene to do. And me Jess, Bryony and Helen love the times when we get to be 'the girls' in the kitchen, just hanging out. They are all more relaxed scenes. The births are incredibly technical and hard work. Often in difficult positions physically – we all ache the next day after a birth scene.

**Do you have good camaraderie on set?**
Absolutely. I laugh a lot with Judy Parfitt – she has such a dry sense of humour and I just look at her and laugh. We are the naughty ones! But I love them all. And the crew are amazing too – the make-up and costume buses on set are the central places to be.

**Do we see Chummy interact with any new characters?**
Chummy has a couple of lovely stories with two other women. One in episode 8 which informs a lot of her secret story. But the one in the Christmas episode I particularly loved as she helped a young girl who fell pregnant deal with the shame of telling her parents and potentially having to give the child up for adoption. It was very moving. And the actress who played the part was so young but so mature and a brilliant actress already.
What is different about this series compared to the first?
For Chummy she is in a different phase of her life – married and more confident at work. And I think all the characters just feel more developed and real. That's the joy of getting a second series to have the chance to do that. I loved filming episode 8 – it's an amazing story - and I can't reveal anything about it. What a tease!

What is Chummy's involvement in the Christmas special?
We get to see her in her new role as Akela – running the scouts. Just perfect for Chummy! She is in charge of bringing Christmas to Nonnatus House, and the show, because she puts on a nativity play with the scouts. She gets quite bossy in her attempt to make it perfect, and having to deal with some rowdy children. And Sister Monica Joan who plays the tambourine loudly and out of time!

What is it like playing Chummy 'the wife'?
It's very lovely to finally be married in a show! I am never married! Her and Peter are perfect for each other. It's also interesting playing a couple in the 50s because there is still a kind of slight formality and shyness between them. A respectful quality I suppose. A sense that some things they keep to themselves. Whereas today the divide between men and women is less and less, we all know everything, for better or worse! The roles are less defined.

How has Chummy changed since series 1?
She fits in more now. She is more confident and competent at her work. There is a confidence to her. I deliberately didn't stutter or break up sentences as much when I was learning the lines, as I did in the first series, because I think everything flows a bit easier for her now. She isn't quite as shy or awkward. She is still in a completely different world to her family but realises she has found her place in the world. She is part of a community and people love her.

What does Chummy do in Sierra Leone (from episode 3)?
She and Peter go there for 6 months. It was something Chummy always wanted to do. She felt God was calling her to work there and she went to be a midwife, train midwives, teach women out there how to deal with their new-born’s, share her wisdom and her faith if they asked.
Dorothy Atkinson plays Jane (from Ep 3)

How did it feel joining the cast of Call the Midwife?
I was very happy to join the cast. It all happened very quickly so I didn't have much time to think about it. I felt like I'd won the lottery. The cast and crew were very welcoming and so it was never daunting to get stuck in.

Were you a fan of the show before you started?
I was a fan of the show yes. I always thought that the production values were so high and the characters very real. The stories really draw you in. Oh and the beautiful babies in 50s home knits.

Do you have any favourite characters on the show?
I couldn't single out a favourite character because all the residents in Nonnatus House are so beautifully drawn and clearly defined you couldn't have one without the other really. The same goes for the guest characters.

What is Jane like?
Jane is a very interesting character with a difficult past. She spent her life in various institutions and finds adjusting to her new life in the outside world pretty daunting. She arrives at Nonnatus as a medical orderly and quickly has to cope with the real world. She does well with the help and encouragement of all the women at Nonnatus. She is a bit of an odd-bod and quite innocent.

Where are your favourite places to film on set?
Definitely my favourite place to film on set is in the parlour room, not least because I misheard our assistant director and thought she had said it was the 'darling room'. I feel very much at ease in there and it reminds me of my Grandma’s house. Scenes in there usually involve drinking tea which is always a good thing.

What are your favourite scenes to film?
I like filming scenes when we are all together because there is good camaraderie on set and our characters’ personalities are strong and clear.

Do you have any favourite episodes?
My favourite episode to film was episode 4 because such a lot happens for Jane and she only just manages to hold it all together. She is really thrown in at the deep end professionally and personally.
Has anything been hard to film?
The only thing that was hard to film was the practicalities of having to pretend it’s a summer’s day when in fact you are shivering in your thermals and it’s cold November!

Have you filmed with any favourite guest stars?
The Reverend Appleby-Thornton was a favourite guest artist. And all the babies and children in their period costumes make me melt.

Does Jane have any romances in the series?
Jane does have a bit of romance which is very much against the odds. Watch this space.

Have you learnt any new skills whilst being on set?
I haven’t learnt any new skills but am desperate to get a go on the Vespa!

What’s it like wearing the 1950s outfits?
I love wearing the outfits. Jane started the series in very drab clothes and only one pair of shoes but slowly the wardrobe is getting more extensive. I love getting the costume right for the character, it’s really important to me. The wardrobe team are brilliant on the show and the costumes look and feel so authentic.

Stephen McGann plays Dr Turner

How would you describe Dr Turner?
He is a deeply good man. He is a vocational doctor who works desperately hard. He is always tired. He works incessantly for the people on his watch. However, he’s also a man of his time. In the 50s nurses had to defer to the doctor in a way they don’t quite so much now. Doctors did have a habit of swanning in and taking all the credit, at the time when the groundwork had been done by women. The suit he wears has a small darn on the knee that seems to say so much about this dedicated doctor. He works among the poor and isn’t that well off himself. He is literally kneeling at his patient’s bedsides wearing himself to a thread in their service.

How was it filming the Christmas special?
For the special I was trained in exactly how to conduct an ear examination using an instrument correct for the period. Everything is so carefully researched, both at the script stage and during filming.
How would you describe PC Peter Noakes?
There’s a real sense of chivalry about him, he’s very straight but always very respectful. I really warm to him as a character.

What is the relationship like between PC Noakes and Chummy?
They come together because there are similarities between them. Neither is particularly comfortable in their own skin. We had a rehearsal before we started filming and it felt very easy. And Miranda and I got on well together when we were just hanging out. I identified with him, and I think she identified with Chummy. I love PC Noakes’ simplicity – he loves Chummy for who she is, and he’s not worried by appearances. She is very authentic.
Cliff Parisi plays Fred

What is Fred’s relationship like with the nuns and midwives?
Fred lost his wife and several of his children in the Blitz. Now, he sees the nuns and the girls as his family. They are pretty much all he has got. At the same time, he sees opportunities to make a few quid presenting themselves. He is still looking to make his fortune. He hasn’t given up on life at all.

Weren’t your own beginnings in the East End quite tough?
When my mum came back from hospital with me she wouldn’t give me or my sister up so the landlady threw us all out. My parents came from big families but they were all cramped up in one room. No one physically had the space for them or they would have taken them in. Mum and dad jumped on a bus with us but it was chased by a police car and stopped. Me and my sister were ripped from their arms and they were left sobbing at the side of the road. We were put into care but they both found jobs and worked tirelessly towards reclaiming us and we were reunited.

George Rainsford plays Jimmy

How is it playing opposite Jessica Raine?
We already knew each other socially, and we laugh together very easily. Jimmy and Jenny have known each other for years and it was great it was great to just use that rapport.

What have been your most memorable days on set?
Last series we visited an abandoned country house in Jimmy’s car and I had only had three lessons in my life. But we were on private land so they put me behind the wheel. Then the three
leading ladies got in the back and I was told to drive towards the house at thirty miles an hour. Between series 1 and 2 I made sure I passed my test!
**Synopses**

**Christmas Special**
Christmas is coming and in Poplar the nuns and midwives of Nonnatus House are busier than ever. When an abandoned baby is discovered on the steps of the convent, the whole community rallies round to provide food and clothing and to try and trace his mother. Nurse Jenny Lee, meanwhile, gets caught up in the heart-breaking mystery which surrounds an elderly, semi-vagrant local woman, Mrs Jenkins. For newly married Chummy, other challenges await, as she pulls out all the stops to mount a truly memorable children's nativity play.

**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. Jessica's other theatre credits include *Earthquakes in London* (National Theatre), *Ghosts* (Duchess Theatre, West End) for which she was nominated for the Ian Charleston Award, *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 and 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 a guest lead in *Doctor Who* for the BBC, Ridley Scott’s *Robin Hood*, *Garrow’s Law* and *The Woman in Black*. Between shooting the first and second series of *Call the Midwife*, she returned to her roots appearing at the Young Vic in *The Changeling*, directed by Joe Hill Gibbons.

**Pam Ferris**
Pam is perhaps best known as the terrifying Miss Trunchbull in Danny DeVito’s *Matilda*, although British audiences know and love her for her portrayal of the big-hearted Ma Larkin in the television series *The Darling Buds of May*. Her other screen roles include *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *Children of Men*, Richard Eyre's *The Other Man* and *Nativity* and *Nativity 2*. Most recently, she has starred in *Malice in Wonderland* directed by Simon Fellows, Ed McHenry’s *Jackboots on Whitehall*, and *The Raven*, opposite John Cusack. Ferris has also starred in the UK’s most popular television shows including *Where the Heart Is*, *Luther*, *Little Dorrit*, *Jayne Eyre*, *Our Mutual Friend*, *Linda Green*, *Clocking Off*, *Gavin and Stacey* and Grandma’s House and Bessie and the Bell in Carlton’s series of short films called *First Sign of Madness* for which she won a Best Actress Award at the New York Festival in 2001. In addition to her film and television work, Ferris has also starred in numerous theatre productions, including the successful Royal Court Theatre production of *Notes on Falling Leaves* for which she received an Evening Standard Theatre Award Nomination for Best Actress and, most recently, *The Entertainer* at the Old Vic, starring opposite Robert Lindsay, for which she received an Olivier Award Nomination for Best Supporting Actress, and won the 2008 Clarence Derwent Award for Best Supporting Actress.

**Jenny Agutter**
Jenny Agutter’s work in theatre, film and television is both extensive and eclectic. Discovered by Walt Disney at the age of eleven, she embarked on a career that has spanned four decades.
She has appeared in a number of films that have become classics – *Walkabout*, *The Railway Children*, *The Snow Goose* and *An American Werewolf in London*.

**Judy Parfitt**

Judy has had an extensive career with film credits including *Girl With A Pearl Earring*, for which she earned a Best Supporting Actress Bafta Nomination, *W.E.*, *The Moth Diaries*, *The Bourne Identity* and *Ever After*. 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), *Just William*, *Vera*, *The Syndicate* and recently *Miss Marple*.

**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*. She also appeared in the short film *Rob and Valentyna in Scotland*, which received an honourable mention at Sundance Film Festival in 2010. Laura's professional theatre debut was with the Royal Shakespeare Company in *Alice in Wonderland* and she went on to play Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* and Phoebe in *As You Like It* in London’s Regent’s Park Open Air Theatre season. At Easter she did readings for the BBC Radio 2 programme *At the Foot of the Cross*, recorded at Canterbury Cathedral.

**Bryony Hannah**

Bryony played Christine, one of the series leads, in *Dead Boss* for BBC3 earlier this year. She has an incredible theatre CV having worked in *The West End*, *The National*, Punchdrunk and The Gate. She was nominated for an Olivier for her performance in *The Children’s Hour* opposite Keira Knightley.

**Helen George**

Helen featured in the Orlando Bloom movie *The Three Musketeers*, opposite the gorgeous Luke Evans and plays ‘Valerie’ in the 2011 Danny Dyer movie *7 Lives*. She’s also appeared on *Hollyoaks*, *Doctors*, *Hotel Babylon* and sang in Disney’s *High School Musical* and backing vocals on tour with Elton John.

**Miranda Hart**

Miranda’s excursion to the Edinburgh Festival in 1994 began her journey to becoming one of the UK’s top comedians. After ten years on the stand-up and sketch club circuit, Miranda made her mark appearing in *Smack the Pony*, *Absolutely Fabulous*, *Hyperdrive* and *Not Going Out*, but it was when her sitcom *Miranda* hit our screens in 2009, that her popularity rocketed. Miranda has been crowned the Queen of Comedy at the British Comedy Awards winning three comedy awards, three RTS Awards and has been nominated for five TV BAFTAs for her past two sitcom series and for her performance in BBC drama *Call the Midwife* for which she recently won Best Actress at the TV Choice Awards. Miranda’s first book, *Is It Just Me?* has recently been published to great success.

**Dorothy Atkinson**

Dorothy has been seen on screen in TV programmes including: *The Town*, *Coronation Street*, *Midsomer Murders*, *Phone Shop*, *Victoria Wood Christmas special*, *Casualty 1909*, *Peep Show*, *Skins*, *Bodies* and *No Angels*. Her film credits include; *Chatroom*, *Look at me I'm Beautiful*, Mike Leigh’s *All or Nothing* and *Topsy Turvy*. She has performed in numerous theatre shows including Alan Ayckburn’s *A Doll's House*, *Fool To Yourself* and *Two Weeks With The Queen*.

**Stephen McGann**
Stephen has worked extensively as an actor in TV, film and theatre since 1982 and is best known to television audiences as Sean Reynolds from the long-running drama series *Emmerdale*. He also starred as Irish rebel Daniel Phelan in the award-winning BBC drama serial *The Hanging Gale*, which he originated and co-produced, and as Johann Strauss in the international mini-series *The Strauss Dynasty*. His numerous other TV credits include *Catherine the Great*, *Home Front*, *Streetwise* and *Help* among others. He starred in the feature films *Business as Usual*, *The Harpist* and the award-winning short film *Milk*.

**Ben Caplan**

Ben has recently played Dr Korzcak in *Dr Korzcak's Example*, directed by Ria Parry at the Unicorn Theatre and the role of Ben in *A Winter's Tale* directed by Purni Morrell. He has starred in high profile films and TV series including *Leap Year* directed by Anand Tucker and *Rocknrolla* directed by Guy Ritchie as well as ITV’s *Whituchapel 3*, *The Runaway* for sky, Jed Mercurio’s *The Candidate, Maxwell and The Passion* for the BBC and Spielberg’s *Band of Brothers* with Tom Hanks. His theatre roles have been varied and include Dominic Cooke’s *Seven Jewish Children* at the Royal Court, *Three Sisters on Hope Street* at the Hampstead and Everyman Theatres, Directed by Lyndsey Posner, Mike Leigh’s *Two Thousand Years* at the National and *Sweat*, with Tamsin Outhwaite.

**Cliff Parisi**

Best known as Minty from *EastEnders*, Cliff has also recently appeared in *Hollyoaks* and *Hustle* as well as *Midsomer Murders*. His most notable film appearances were in *From Hell* and *Sweetnightgoodheart*.

**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.


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 Europa 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. Her 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.

Pippa also developed and Executive Produced the recent critically acclaimed BBC Two Shakespeare mini-series, *The Hollow Crown*.

Pippa sits on the board of BAFTA and is the deputy chair of their film committee. She is also a Governor of Central School of Speech and Drama.

**Heidi Thomas, Series Creator, Writer and Executive Producer**

Heidi Thomas is an award-winning and multiple BAFTA and EMMY nominated screenwriter, producer and playwright. Her plays have been produced by the Liverpool Playhouse, Chichester Festival and Royal Court theatres, and by the National Theatre Studio and the RSC. Heidi’s television shows regularly achieve record breaking viewing figures. In addition to *Call the Midwife* her series work includes *Soldier, Soldier, Dr Finlay, Kiss and Tell*, the rebooted...
Upstairs Downstairs, and the original BBC drama period series Lilies. Her adaptations of classic literature include Madame Bovary, Ballet Shoes, Cranford, Return to Cranford (all for the BBC) and the feature film I Capture the Castle. She is currently working on an adaptation of Elizabeth Gaskell’s Mary Barton, and big-screen versions of Middlemarch and Edith Wharton’s The Buccaneers. Heidi is also the author of the book The Life And Times Of Call The Midwife, which blends 1950’s social history with the behind-the-scenes story of the TV show.

Hugh Warren, Producer
Hugh has also produced several television movies such as the BAFTA-nominated Doctor Zhivago (2002) with Keira Knightley, The Best Man (2006) and Frankenstein (2007).

Philippa Lowthorpe, Director (Episodes Christmas & 1)
Lead director of the first Call the Midwife series, Philippa is an award-winning film maker, who began her career making documentaries for the BBC. Her credits include cult documentary Three Salons at the Seaside, A Childhood and Remember the Family. Her drama credits include the highly acclaimed BBC film The Other Boleyn Girl, Sex, the City and Me and Five Daughters, which won several awards including Prix Europa and the RTS Society award for Best Drama.
Production Credits

Executive Producer
Pippa Harris
Executive Producer/Creator/Writer
Heidi Thomas
Executive Producer BBC
Christopher Aird
Executive Producer PBS
Donald Thoms
Producer
Hugh Warren
Director (Eps Christmas & Ep1)
Philippa Lowthorpe
Director (Eps 2, 3 & 4)
Roger Goldby
Director (Eps 5 & 6)
China Moo-Young
Director (Eps 7 & 8)
Minkie Spiro
Writer (Eps Christmas, 1, 3, 5, 8)
Heidi Thomas
Writer (Ep 2 & 7)
Harriet Warner
Writer (Ep 3)
John Martin Johnson
Writer (Ep 4)
Mark Catley
Writer (Ep 6)
Jess Williams
Production Designer
Eve Stewart
Costume Designer
Amy Roberts
Make-up & Hair Designer
Christine Walmesley-Cotham
Midwife Advisor
Terri Coates
Director of Photography
Chris Seager BSC
Director of Photography
James Aspinall
Director of Photography
Simon Archer
Casting Director
Andy Pryor CDG
Composer
Peter Salem

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 Noakes
Miranda Hart
Jane
Dorothy Atkinson
Dr Turner
Stephen McGann
PC Peter Noakes
Ben Caplan
Fred
Cliff Parisi
Jimmy
George Rainsford

Key Guest Stars

Christmas Special
Sheila Reid (Mrs Jenkins)
Lizzie Hopley (Ivy Duncan)
Ami Metcalf (Lynette Duncan)
David Kennedy (Mr Duncan)