



## Midsomer Murders

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## Neil Dudgeon is DCI John Barnaby

Neil Dudgeon is celebrating 10 years in the role of DCI John Barnaby in ITV's popular and much-loved detective series Midsomer Murders.

"In the new episode there is a character who is an estate agent, and she is the agent who sold the Barnabys their house when they moved to Midsomer 10 years ago," recalls Neil. "It was 2010 when Fiona (Dolman) and I first came to Midsomer. Usually as an actor if a job goes on for three months it is a long job, if you go to the National you might stay there for a year but the idea that you might be in the same job for 10 years, playing the same character, seems to me to be tremendously unlikely... This idea that we meet the estate agent again who sold us our house 10 years ago stirred these sorts of memories for myself and for Fiona. You don't really think about how long you've been doing it whilst you're doing it because there is always so much to do that you don't have a lot of time to reflect. When I do look back on it I see myself starting and thinking 'oh no the other fella has been here for 13 years, if they cancel it after one episode that's going to look pretty bad for me.' So, when they commissioned a second series I thought 'phew'. If you are going to work in television as an actor what else would you want to be doing? It's a fantastic job – wonderful crew, beautiful locations, great scripts, marvellous guests, great fun and nice catering... What more could one ask for? But 10 glorious years, it did bring back some memories for Fiona and I. Nine series because we had a year off."

And what are Neil's highlights from the past 10 years?

"The standout moment I guess is the beginning, thinking 'oh is this going to be okay? Will they like me?' and then just realising I was just going to have to do what was in the script and if they like me they like me and if not well I have done my best. My first two episodes the guest stars were David Warner, huge theatre star, one of the greats of the 60's and 70's and Edward Fox who was lovely but just arrived as such a star to me, I admired his work for many years and then to walk into the readthrough and say hello and then to spend days filming with him was just marvellous. That is definitely one of the highlights from doing the show over these 10 years, the wonderful guests. For me it is always the more mature guests I get most excited about. Claire Bloom, Bernard Cribbins, William Gaunt from *The Champions*, people I look back to my childhood and watched on the TV.

"Some of the deaths have been marvellous, Murray Melvin falling to his death having seen a headless horseman is something that doesn't happen around our house every day. Martine McCutcheon killed by cheese of course, the guy who was covered in truffle oil and then eaten alive by a wild boar was very inventive. The marvellous episode I love was all about

the UFOs and then we actually showed one crashing in the woods, I thought we had lost the plot but the writing was so brilliant and it all made sense and Alison Steadman was in that episode. It's the people; the crew, the cast, the murderers and some of the more lavish, thoughtful deaths are the highlights that stand out to me. The biggest highlight is that the show has gone on for 10 years with me in it! It's a curious little landmark moment."

This series Neil has the chance to show off his talents on the yoga mat...

'*Sting of Death* is an episode all about bee keeping, honey production and yoga. I love doing yoga and I am a big fan of bees, so I felt very much in my element. The Barnabys practice some yoga at home with Paddy who is better than either of them. They had done yoga about nine years ago and I didn't know anything about it but since then, about two years ago, I took yoga up and so I was very excited to show my stuff. However I had to pretend that Barnaby didn't know how to do it, when actually I am a bit of a dab hand. I had to hide my yoga light under a bushel...One day, whilst the cameras were being set up, the yoga teacher got the actors who would be involved in the class all rolling around doing yoga at 8am. I was sitting around have a cup of tea and I saw this impromptu, alfresco yoga class and I ran over, threw myself down and joined in. It is a fantastic way to start the day. I thought I'd like to do this every day; maybe we'll introduce it on set.'

Another episode, *The Wolf Hunter of Little Worthy*, is set in the world of glamping. Neil admits he isn't a natural at camping but glamping is another matter.

"I have quite strong views on the whole are of camping and glamping. In an ideal world I always thought that camping would be perfect for me, a man goes off into the woods with a tent, maybe not even a tent, dig yourself a little ditch and cover yourself in leaves, that would be kind of great. It seems to me if you are going to go camping you are going out to be close to nature, to be in the woods at sunrise and that kind of thing so going camping and then taking everything you possibly can from your home to the field or woods... what's the point? Camping is about living in a simpler way with some hardship. I thought I would love camping until I actually did it and then I went camping with my family, who are still quite keen campers, they'd gone off camping somewhere and I joined them and we ate burnt food, sitting outside covered in smoke and then went to bed and lay down on this little air mattress on bumpy ground and I probably slept for about 20 minutes the entire night. I was very uncomfortable, and I got up the next morning, having hardly slept in a very grumpy mood thinking this is awful, this is torture. I actually found that experience of camping rather disagreeable. Now, we have also had the experience of glamping, we went to a very nice site in Devon with a big yurt and it had a double bed and two single beds and a wood stove and everything. But as I said, if you're going camping you're going for hardship and

degradation and to get back to nature, if you're going to go glamping why not stay in a hotel? So I am a bit torn.

"The one thing I did rather like is waking up at 6 o'clock in the morning and going out of your yurt to the mist in the meadows and you're right in the heart of all of the nature. It's great; you wake up and go 'hello nature.' If you live in a city then that's a marvellous and thrilling experience. Then you have to yomp across the meadow to the toilet block."

After 10 years in the role how often does Neil manage to guess who the murderer is when reading the scripts?

"I don't know how many episodes of Midsomer Murders I have done now but I think of all those I've filmed I have managed to guess who the murderer was once, which alarmed me greatly because I am hopeless at guessing the murderer. To be honest I don't hugely try to guess whodunit. It's an argument my wife and I used to enjoy when watching the likes of Midsomer before I started doing it. I would happily sit and watch a whodunit, just enjoying it and knowing at the end they'll tell me who the murderer was and I am happy with that, my wife is of the other school where from about two minutes into a two hour film she will be saying 'it's the woman on the bicycle' and then of course the woman on the bicycle gets killed so then it's the man in the hat and the more she comes up with reasons to justify her stab in the dark the more it spoils my enjoyment. It is like watching the football on time delay and someone keeps running in and going 'they're going to score in a minute, it ends up 2-1' and I don't want to know that! Just wait for the ending. So I am the worst possible person to figure out who has done it. Maybe it's a good thing because I'm seeing it through the eyes of our viewers who are sat there thinking 'where do they film this? Where is his shirt from?', the kinds of questions I find myself asking when I watch. So no, I am afraid I am terrible at figuring out who the murderer is and I certainly didn't figure it out in this episode, that was way beyond my personal capabilities. Obviously John Barnaby is on to it..."

DCI Barnaby may have been solving crime in Midsomer for 10 years but his sidekick DS Jamie Winter, played by Nick Hendrix, has been by his side for many of those years...

"Over the many years I have been doing this show I have had two series with Jason Hughes, three with Gwilym Lee and now this is my fourth with Nick so he has become my longest standing, most suffering detective sergeant. Nick is great. He is a tremendous giggler, he is very reliable and very good on everything you want a fellow actor to be good on but a great perk to me is he is a terrible giggler and when he starts he can't control it, once he starts to go you know that's the end of the take. So we do have a nice time. It's so important for me as I spend more time with my DS than I do my wife and children when we are filming! Nick is also very chatty and lovely to the guests that come in and it is very important to me that when guests come into the show that they're put at ease and it's a nice atmosphere. We are

fortunate to have such a lovely environment and I am always pleased when the guests find it a lovely and happy show to work on.”

“Once again in this new series we have an array of magnificent guest stars and a wonderful array that from a personal point of view I love very much because for reasons tied to the story most of the guests are of a similar vintage to myself so again, there’s several people who I have known for years – Lizzie McInerney and I did a play together in 1998, Nimmy March and I played husband and wife in a series called Common as Muck in the late 90’s, It is lovely to go to work and meet again people you may not have seen very recently but who you have carried in your heart for a quarter of a century and then there they are again and you get to work with them and catch up with them. I am a fan of Fulham football club and Keith Allen, who guest stars in an episode called The Stitcher Society, is also a fan so we spent a lot of time discussing Fulham and over the course of shooting the episode Fulham started the season off not very well and then they started playing rather marvellously so we rushed together on set to say ‘did you see the game last night!’”

## Nick Hendrix is DS Jamie Winter

Currently filming new episodes of Midsomer Murders, Nick Hendrix takes a break from his role as DS Jamie Winters to divulge some on set secrets...

Talking about an episode where he gets to show his more physical attributes Nick explains; "*With Baited Breath*, is an episode which centres around a 'psycho mud run' assault course that Winter competes in. It was a lot of fun for me because I got to be a little more physical, which I always enjoy and it is another great crossover of worlds, which the script writers do so cleverly on Midsomer. The psycho mud run element is a very modern invention and it is juxtaposed with these old school anglers all competing in a local fishing competition, trying to catch this legendary, mythical fish. So, you have lots of good, eccentric fishing related accidents and murders in this episode. Vincent Franklin was in this episode and he is a bit of a legend, mainly because he is in the most famous scene of *The Office* in the entire show and being a huge Ricky Gervais fan, I was very excited about that.

'Winter also meets an enthusiastic policewoman in this episode who he takes a liking to, although things don't go too smoothly for him. Jade Marie is a WPC who happens to be there at the time of a crime and is very keen to help out. Winter starts to think Jade fancies him and he gets a little big for his boots...'

Another episode this series is *The Wolf Hunter* of Little Worthy. Nick explains the concept: "There is a physical world we live in which is a world of glamping, essentially high-end camping and also the folklore tale of a Wolf Hunter - an urban myth. The Wolf Hunter is an online invention that the community of Little Worthy invest in based around a gothic inspired character that has the head of a wolf. And, as ever in Midsomer, some people invested in this scary character a little too much and people get murdered. So that's the dark, gothic thread of it."

And how does Nick feel about the world of camping?

"To be honest I hate camping because, my mum would say, I am a bit precious. I think I was scarred by an early experience; I don't know if anyone else had to do these but at school we had outward bound trips where you would go to the British countryside and have to camp and learn something about yourself when you were about 12. I remember going to Dartmoor and it was cold and wet and miserable and we had to put up these tents in a disused quarry and all I can remember is trying to get out of the tent in the middle of the night to go to the toilet, unzipping the tent and it was raining and dark and horrible and you try to get back in without bringing the weather in with you which is basically impossible... so my feeling towards camping is one of great distaste but the world of glamping, which has tried to raise the living standards of camping, I quite like the idea of. I went on a trip with some friends for a stag do where we rented these fancy campervans and that felt a little like glamping, it meant we had a nice bed to sleep in and we could shut the weather out, it was nice."

A big part of Midsomer Murders are the guest stars. Nick talks about some of the actors he worked with on this series...

“As ever we had some amazing guest stars and one in particular was a real treat for me. Mark Williams who is well known from a million things from the Harry Potter movies to Father Brown, but I grew up watching The Fast Show religiously with my brother, so to get to work with Mark, who obviously did some of the most iconic sketches on the show, was fantastic. It took me about 10 minutes of trying not to ask him about The Fast Show to then being like ‘by the way I am a huge fan of the show, can I please talk to you about it?’ It was wonderful chatting to him about working with Paul Whitehouse and the various sketches. It’s one of the joys of doing Midsomer, we get these amazing actors, and we get to basically interview them backstage which is what Neil and I do relentlessly.”

Another high point of Midsomer Murders are the beautiful English locations.

Nick agrees, saying: “One of the great joys of doing Midsomer is that we tend to waft around the home counties of England, going to various houses and village greens and church yards and all kinds of idyllic, British places. The Wolf Hunter of Little Worthy was a unique experience for us because of COVID19 and the way the world is working at the moment, our shoot had to adapt like everyone else. One of the main principals of that was that we had to try to have one location for the whole episode so there was less moving around and less transitions for actors and crew, which meant we were pretty much locked in to one location for a whole episode. The glamp site which features in this episode was a real camp site near Henley and we essentially had booked out a field at the end of the site and built a real glamp site, so we were there filming in and around tents and cottages buildings... A lot of people who go camping in this country are Midsomer demographic, so we had a lot of fans who were having a calm holiday and then they happened to see Neil Dudgeon, DCI Barnaby wandering around...”

Another episode this series is The Stitcher Society which is shrouded in mystery...

Nick reveals: “Without giving too much away it is about a group of people who share a common medical experience, people who have all gone through something and have now come together and formed this society as a way to move on emotionally or physically. It’s all about how these people bond with and deal with each other and how they recover and move on from this medical situation they all share. It’s a very interesting, dynamic episode. And we have another former member of The Fast Show, John Thomson guest starring so I bored him to death with questions. He wrote a lot of the episodes; he is a very clever and funny man who is full of stories. People will likely know him best from Cold Feet, but he has worked a lot with comedians. He was great fun and very special.”

On the subject of guest actors Nick continues: “What’s wonderful about Midsomer is that we have these older actors who have been around and done it all and have stories to tell and I can learn such a lot from them. Then we also have young people who are straight out of drama school or who have only done a couple of jobs. On this episode we had the wonderful Jacob Fortune-Lloyd who was recently in The Queen’s Gambit, which is the most watched limited series Netflix has ever put out which is extraordinary.

“We got a master class on playing chess from him in our downtime. He admitted he was basically one of the only actors in that show who knew how to play chess. He told us all of the secrets and behind the screen stories about the Queen’s Gambit!”

And what has it been like for Nick back filming with the great Neil Dudgeon?

“Well, the thing with Midsomer and Neil is it’s like that old friend you don’t see very often but when you do you slip straight back into the patter and banter. Because of the pandemic our shoot was delayed by a few months, like a lot of shoots had to so I hadn’t seen Neil for about a year and the amazing thing about Midsomer, which is part of its appeal as a job is that it is so familiar. The crew are nigh on the same every time, so there is something lovely about turning up and seeing all of these familiar, lovely faces and within seconds it was like we had never left, like we’d walked off one episode and stepped onto another. I like hanging out with Neil so it’s a nice place to be. The hardest thing is that we are all a bunch of lovey actors and like to hug and kiss, but this was the first episode where we couldn’t do any of that...”

A disgraceful allegation was made against Nick by Neil Dudgeon who claims he is the most terrible giggler...what does Nick have to say about that?

“I’ve heard talk that DCI Barnaby is accusing me of being a bit of a corpser and giggler on set and I will say that my giggling, which does happen sometimes, it’s rife, around 4.30/5pm where you start to go a bit strange because you have been filming since 8am. I would say that Neil keeps a very straight face but he does it to trap me. He has a little twinkle in his eye which sets me off and it looks like I’m the one ruining filming, he’s there with a straight face looking like a professional but actually he started it. But once I’ve started laughing, he then starts and he is a runaway train, getting him back to the station is very difficult.”

## The Sting of Death

The Deddington's thriving bee empire has put Granville Norton on the map, but what lengths will they go to to ensure they're never dethroned...

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Beautiful manor house, Apley Court, on the edge of the village of Granville Norton is home to historic hives that produce 'Apley Gold' honey; a valuable top of the range honey. Bee obsessive Lord of the manor AMBROSE DEDDINGTON (Griff Rhys Jones), the eighth generation of honey producers at Apley Court, is a survivor of a life-threatening cancer, for which he cites a combination of Apley Gold and bee venom from his famous bees as his saviour. And with the unyielding support of his sister TAMARA (Imogen Stubbs), his faith in its extraordinary healing power has brought Ambrose success, wealth and a dedicated following of Apitherapy devotees.

For years now Ambrose has maintained his status as top dog of the village, with his wealth and aristocratic title ensuring his position. But that position comes under threat when he and his precious hives are attacked by a masked assailant.

BARNABY (Neil Dudgeon) and WINTER (Nick Hendrix) are called in to investigate, with Ambrose convinced that the only person of interest should be his nephew JUDE (Jack Fox), who was outlawed from the family pile years ago with his mother MELISSA (Jacquetta May).

Jude protests his innocence – he has no concern with Ambrose's hives, he has his own enterprise making home-brewed mead, and anyway he's far too busy caring for his mother whose mental health is starting to decline.

Whilst Ambrose sticks to the traditional methods of bee husbandry and honey making, his entrepreneurial sister Tamara has been busy making an empire over at 'The Hive'; a honey themed wellness centre and yoga studio. Having heard about the great yoga classes they hold, SARAH BARNABY (Fiona Dolman) heads over there to sign herself and a very reluctant Barnaby up for a trial class where she meets heart throb yoga instructor NOAH MOON (Ben Starr). He's become a victim of his own success and his classes are always fully booked... mostly by his many admirers which seem to include Tamara and her PR guru CAL (Aaron Anthony).

HANNAH (Nina Toussant-White), Vicar NIGEL BROOKTHORPE's (Derek Griffiths) daughter, returns from a year abroad and is quick to hear of Noah's overbooked classes. Immediately she suggests that he holds them in the church instead; she knows church attendance is at an all time low and that the income would really help the church and her father.

With the increase of space, Barnaby and Sarah are off of the waiting list and Barnaby finds himself less than comfortable with Noah's very hands-on method of teaching. The class takes a turn for the dramatic when Nigel bursts into the hall and demands that the yogi 'heathens' get out of the church, outraged to discover that his Parish has been used for such new age worship.

Barnaby doesn't have time to recover when he learns that village Doctor SERENA (Renee Castle) has been found dead on the village green, her head and neck entirely covered in bees. FLEUR (Annette Badland) discovers that she had in fact been hit on the head and then covered in 'swarm lure' – an elixir that is used to lure bees. It looks like someone was trying to send a message, and the pressure is on to work out from who and why before the killer has a chance to strike again...

## **Imogen Stubbs** is Tamara Deddington in *The Sting of Death*

Imogen Stubbs has known Neil Dudgeon since before he became DCI John Barnaby. Imogen reveals what *Midsomer's* favourite detective was like at drama school.

'Neil was like a much-loved head boy at RADA; he was the centre of the year, everyone wanted to be in a show with Neil, Ralph Fiennes hero worshipped him and everyone wanted to be his friend... except in dance classes. We had an elderly lady who taught us a dance to the Eurythmics and although he wasn't in his comfort zone, Neil still really enjoyed it. We did lots of shows together, he played my father a few times and we did *Heartbreak House* in which he was the older sea captain and I was the young Ellie Dunn and they shared this spiritual love affair.

'One time we had to pretend to be trees and I remember thinking to myself, oh I like this guy, because we all just stood there on one leg and stuck our arms out but Neil did this weird thing where he went all low down and looked like he was doing some strange dance and when they asked him what he was doing he said he was a tree growing from sap. His dry humour was always amazing and he hasn't changed at all.'

Working alongside her old friend was one highlight for Imogen; another was discovering and falling in love with the British countryside.

'Working on *Midsomer Murders* has been a revelation for me as I live in London and I had no idea how beautiful some of these places along the green belt are. We filmed in a place called Little Missenden that was full of hills and beautiful forests and we saw piglets and chicks and sat in deck chairs by a river that looked clean enough to drink. There is something almost healing about reminding oneself about the beauty of England.'

Imogen tells us about her character, Tamara Deddington.

'Tamara is queen bee. She is someone who chose to give up her life and her love to take care of her brother who was diagnosed with cancer. Having lost her fiancé as a result, Tamara has decided to dedicate herself to the family business; they produce honey from bees, which, they found out through the treatment of her brother, repairs cancerous cells, and is a wonder boost for building back the immune system. So Tamara has dedicated herself to her brother and this business but not without some bitterness.

'Tamara wants to take over the hive and doesn't want any competition, she definitely does not want to be disposed of by an heir. She is someone who likes to know everything that is going on and she is very controlling but she soon loses her heart to somebody. Tamara feels they could take over the house and the business together. She wants to bring in her new love and she has it all planned out, but things go wrong and she doesn't like it when things go wrong...'

Imogen discusses what she thinks makes *Midsomer Murders* so popular.

'Midsomer Murders doesn't take itself too seriously but it also doesn't mock anything. You're never going to get identikit episodes but at the same time you know that within the episode you will get a complete story, everything will be resolved and nothing will be too overtly shocking so you don't have to worry if a child is watching it with you or an elderly person who may be offended by certain things.

'Midsomer also has a nostalgic feel to it and so it feels familiar and belongs to a world that is not completely run by technology but is rather rooted in community... despite the fact they all kill each other! I had the best time filming on this show, there is a fantastic atmosphere on set, which definitely starts with Neil and trickles down. Working on Midsomer is like being on the best camping trip of your life with excellent catering.'

#### Cast and Crew List The Sting of Death

Director	Matt Carter
Writer	Julia Gilbert
Executive Producers	Michele Buck, Louise Pedersen
Producer	Guy Hescott
Co-Producer	Ian Strachan
Composer	Evan Jolly
Script Editor	Abi Arthur
Casting Director	Louise Cross

Based on the novels created by Caroline Graham

#### Cast List

DCI John Barnaby	Neil Dudgeon
Ds Jamie Winter	Nick Hendrix
Sarah Barnaby	Fiona Dolman
Fleur Perkins	Annette Badland
Ambrose Deddington	Griff Rhys Jones
Tamara Deddington	Imogen Stubbs
Jude Deddington	Jack Fox
Melissa Deddington	Jacquetta May
Rev. Nigel Brookthorpe	Derek Griffiths
Hannah Brookthorpe	Nina Toussaint-White
Noah Moon	Ben Starr
Cyrus Babbage	Bryan Dick
Cal Ingalls	Aaron Anthony
Lynda Babbage	Wendi Peters
Dr Serena Lowe	Renée Castle
Betty Barnaby	Isabel Shaw

## With Baited Breath

Fishermen flock to the village of Solomon Gorge desperate to catch a giant fish that is said to lurk in the lake. Their plans are threatened however when hundreds of lycra clad sporting enthusiasts descend on the area for the Psycho Mud Run.

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When a violent attack leads Barnaby to the bucolic and picturesque village of Solomon Gorge, he is in complete admiration of the beauty of the place. And when a former colleague shows him a glimpse of the laid-back life of a retiree, Barnaby can't help but wonder if it might be time for him to hand in his badge in favour of a more peaceful life...

Just as Scotland has the Loch Ness Monster, Solomon Gorge has 'Ahab'; a mysterious beast of a fish that has been rumoured to lurk in the lake's waters. With several recent sightings, the stakes are raised when local fisherman FREDDIE LAMB (Aneurin Barnard) puts up £20k as prize money for whoever manages to catch the monster. Word soon spreads and it isn't long until several world-renowned anglers descend into the sleepy town with the hopes of coming away with the prize money, including old school angler DAMIAN LINT (John Stahl) and social media fishing legend BLAISE MCQUIN (Bronagh Waugh).

However, the anglers face some stiff competition over rights to the lake with the arrival of an extreme obstacle course 'Psycho Mud Run', which is set to take place on the exact same weekend. Event organiser NED SKYE (Nitin Ganatra) ruffles feathers when he redirects the course so that it goes through the lake; no one will be able to catch anything once hundreds of lycra clad fitness fanatics start splashing through the shallows.

One such fanatic is our very own JAMIE WINTER, who along with fellow Causton Police officer JADE-MARIE PIERCE (Eleanor Fanyinka) is determined to show the arrogant fire station team, led by cocky LEX BEDFORD (Andrew Brooke), how it's really done. But something seems off with the usually unflappable Lex, and it seems he has good reason to be concerned when the race starts and several of the competitors are injured by fishing hooks and barbs hidden within the obstacles.

The race is called off and it isn't long before BARNABY finds himself pulled on duty. When he goes to interview Ned he is surprised to find him with a friend from his past, former DCI ARTIE BLYTHE (Vincent Franklin). Seizing the opportunity to use Artie's local knowledge, Barnaby employs Artie to help him look into the sabotage.

The next day the course is cleared to reopen, but Winter is surprised to see that his course nemesis Lex is missing. But the puzzle as to where Lex has been hiding is soon answered when Winter and Jade Marie find him electrocuted to death by one of the obstacles. As Barnaby and Winter look into Lex's history, they're surprised to learn that he too used to be a world-renowned fisherman, until he retired out of the blue 10 years ago. Barnaby is left

working out whether his death was another part of a sabotage gone wrong, or whether in fact it was a desperate attempt by an angler to remove possible competition; £20k is a lot of money – how far would someone go to ensure they won?

**Nicola Stephenson** is Izzy Silvermane in *With Baited Breath*

*Midsomer Murders* showcases some of England's most idyllic locations. Nicola Stephenson reveals the fascinating and rather risqué history of one of the sets she filmed in.

'One of my absolute fondest memories from filming this episode of *Midsomer Murders* was getting to film in this incredible stately home because its history is rather juicy. It is a place called Dorney Court, which is an early Tudor manor house, dating from around 1440. I ended up getting very geeky about it and sat there, on set, looking it all up online. One of the old ancestors who had lived in the house was the mistress of Charles II who had had all of these kids by him, who he looked after financially. She even gave birth to one of his babies in Hampton Court Palace, where Henry VIII lived, whilst him and his wife were on honeymoon.'

Nicola tells us about her character, Izzy Silvermane.

'Izzy is the landlady of a pub and is one of those very capable women who are just getting on with life. As a lot of people have in life, there is something in her past that is heart breaking for her, which is the fact she hasn't spoken to her daughter for 10 years. Izzy carries that heartbreak around with her all of the time whilst getting on with life and looking after other people. She brought her daughter, Lola, up as a single mum, she didn't know who her father was but on her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday he sent her a necklace and Lola discovered who her dad was. Then there was a huge blow out argument and Lola set off for a round-the-world trip and has never spoken to her mother since, other than sending postcards from various places. So Izzy has this constant, inner heartbreak whilst seeming, on the surface, to be very capable and stoic.'

Having worked alongside *Midsomer's* favourite detective, Neil Dudgeon aka DCI Barnaby, 25 years ago Nicola was thrilled to be working with him once again.

'I worked with Neil Dudgeon many years ago when I was much younger. It was a cop series called *Out of the Blue* with an amazing cast including John Hannah and Lenny James. I hadn't met Neil since then, so it was really nice to see him and catch up. I think he is a brilliant actor, and he is brilliant in this show.'

Nicola discusses the events of the episode in which she guest stars.

'There are two major events taking place in the village at the same time; a 'Psycho Mudder' run and a big fishing competition. The people doing the fishing competition try to sabotage the race which has some deadly consequences. There is also a big killer fish involved which brings an incredibly eerie tone to the episode. There is an unresolved missing person's case

which runs through the episode and which, we soon learn, has been covered up for years but is revealed at the climatic conclusion of the episode.

'This episode is full of twists and turns I couldn't tell what was going to happen next when I was reading the script. It is also really gory in places. I was quite shocked. I assumed Midsomer was all about the gentle and idyllic countryside, which of course it is, but when reading the scripts there were moments that are rather shocking, including some outrageous and ghastly deaths. I think a body is found in a freezer in this one...'

#### Cast and Crew List With Baited Breath

Director	Jennie Darnell
Writer	Jeff Povey
Executive Producers	Michele Buck, Louise Pedersen
Producer	Guy Hescott
Co-Producer	Ian Strachan
Composer	Evan Jolly
Script Editor	Abi Arthur
Casting Director	Louise Cross

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Ds Jamie Winter	Nick Hendrix
Sarah Barnaby	Fiona Dolman
Fleur Perkins	Annette Badland
Artie Blythe	Vincent Franklin
Pc Jade – Marie Pierce	Eleanor Fanyinka
Izzy Silvermane	Nicola Stephenson
Ned Skye	Nitin Ganatra
Blaise McQuin	Bronagh Waugh
Cornelius Tetbury	Miles Jupp
Harper Kaplan	Lloyd Everitt
Lex Bedford	Andrew Brooke
Griffin Twigg	Morgan Watkins
Simone Skye	Krupa Pattani
Freddie Lamb	Aneurin Barnard
Damian Lint	John Stahl
Gert Michaels	Paul Hunter
Betty Barnaby	Isabel Shaw

## The Wolf Hunter of Little Worthy

After a local photographer wins an urban myth competition with his creation of The Wolf Hunter, it unexpectedly gains a cult following. However, when a man is killed, Barnaby and Winter must investigate if this myth has become murderous reality.

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There is a full moon over Little Worthy this Halloween and the area is buzzing with activity following the chance popularity of Little Worthy's very own meme. The Hub, an internet café run by the maternal MEL, recently ran a competition to create a modern urban myth which was won by struggling photographer STEVE, with his creation of the Wolf Hunter. Unexpectedly, the Wolf Hunter gained a cult following, becoming a viral meme, with people coming from miles around to explore Little Worthy woods in the hope of catching a glimpse of the beast.

The Hub, set up as an oasis of internet connectivity, a nest to bring people together – old and young, saw customers flock to visit their Wolf Hunter exhibition, while the hunky handyman JEZ has been able to make himself a sideline forging Wolf Hunter replicas.

However, not everyone is enjoying the attention that the Wolf Hunter has brought to the area. The gossiping traditional landlady, ANNIE, blames The Hub for her downturn in business. While the husband-and-wife team, the YARROWS, have recently founded Worthy Glamping, an all-singing, all-dancing glampsite with its state-of-the-art eco-lodges, on the edge of the Little Worthy woods and do not want people terrified to step foot in their tranquil woods.

The stressed BRANDON and his calm, holistic wife ROWAN YARROW, have been plagued with teething problems, with Brandon convinced that someone is sabotaging them. They are also having to deal with their disgruntled guests, PAT and RONNIE EVERETT, who have been coming to this site for 36 years. Northern curmudgeon, PAT, knows what he likes and likes what he knows, he resents this new-fangled glampsite and makes no secret of missing his simple campsite – making him the key suspect for the sabotage.

Brandon's fears of sabotage are only cemented when Jez is found murdered in the woods, killed in the unique way in which the Wolf Hunter is read to kill. While temperamental hot tubs might not be bad for business, a murder on your doorstep certainly is!

BARNABY and WINTER are pulled in to investigate, and with Barnaby's unfamiliarity with social media, he must navigate the path between myth and reality after he is unwittingly sucked into the online frenzy. The main obstacle to his investigation; the speed and power at which social media spreads news.

The police must discover if this killing is some prank which has gone wrong, or if this myth has truly become a murderous reality.

## **Maimie McCoy is Rowan Yarrow in The Wolf Hunter of Little Worthy**

Maimie McCoy believes her character Rowan Yarrow's love of the natural world could help us all out in these current times.

"This has been an incredibly difficult year for everybody and it's really fascinating how most people have turned to nature," says Maimie. "I know a lot of friends who have been planting vegetables and taking more time to be outdoors as much as possible. Even noticing the birdsong and light much more than we did before, there has been a sense of taking our natural world very much for granted and Rowan's incredibly in touch with that and I certainly have felt much more in tune this summer. It enriches our soul and our head space; it is vital for our mental health."

Talking about her character Maimie explains: "Rowan is a very calm, grounded, spiritual woman who is running a glamping site with her husband. There is quite a bit of controversy around this glamp site, it has a lot of backs up in the community, but I think this business was a real dream of Rowan's, she has been pursuing it and so we meet the couple, there is an immense amount of stress going on financially and that's quite heart breaking for her because this is something she has put her heart and soul into."

Ferdinand Kingsley plays Rowan's husband – what was their relationship like on and off the page?

"Rowan and Brendan have a good relationship, although when we meet them it's quite fraught as the financial strains on their relationship are taking a hold of them. So it's a very tense, fractious relationship but underneath that there is a lot of love, which has got lost along the way.

"I had never worked with Ferdinand Kingsley before, but we had quite a giggle, which was lovely. Obviously because we did the readthrough during lockdown nobody got to meet before filming so we just met on set for the first time which is always slightly unusual with a partner. But we had good craic."

Maimie admits that although camping was a part of her childhood glamping has evaded her thus far...

"I have never been to a glamp site, although I have been desperate to. I used to camp a lot as a kid. For a number of years, we would go to a campsite in The Pyrenees called Campsite de la Forêt, it was just outside Lourdes so we would go to mass every day! I am remembering how you'd wake in the morning and you'd roll to the side of the tent so you'd wake up soaking wet. We also used to kill a lot of slugs with salt. That was a place we went

regularly, and I actually went four years ago and they've got mobile homes now and so we stayed in one of those, we had a bit of an upgrade but lots of very, happy childhood camping memories."

What was it like guest starring in a Midsomer Murders?

"I was thrilled to do it, I can't believe I have got to 20 years in my career and never done one. It was such a welcome job because for a lot of us it was our first job back after lockdown, so that thrill of being at work was particularly heightened. A lot of the crew have been on the show for a long time so it was lovely going into something really well established, it was a family feel which tends to be what most actors are drawn to, I certainly love it and I was really excited about who they'd cast because I know from having watched it that the cast is always superb and there is always a range of ages, so you get immensely experienced actors and then really new ones all thrown in the same bag so it's a fun surprise.

I was excited to work Siobhan Redmond, she's absolutely fab. Her and Mark Williams and I had a quite a lot of scenes together and they had such a great chemistry, I don't think they knew each other before but it's almost like they needed their own spin-off series They're incredibly funny and they tapped so well into the tone of the show. You just watch and learn with those kinds of actors, anyway."

The Wolf Hunter of Little Worthy is written by Chris Murray whose series *Van Der Valk* stars Maimie...so did she guess whodunnit?

"No, I didn't. I had an inkling, but no idea the full background to the whys, who's, what's and Chris Murray is very good at this, all of these fabulously intricate plots. He is spinning some fabulous plates in the air; it's really interesting where it goes. And then you've got all of your classic red herrings running through it which is typical Midsomer..."

And can Maimie put her finger on why the show is so loved around the world?

"I have family in the states who absolutely adore Midsomer. It seems like it has captured a particular quirk of English life which translates around the world very well. I think there is lots of intrigue. In our episode there is a game of Aunt Sally, a very old English game, particular to a small part of the country and it's things like that, our traditions, that are fascinating and then you wrap it up with this dry, British humour... I have friends in Denmark whose parents are obsessed with it. Something about that humour seems to work internationally."

Cast and Crew List

The Wolf Hunter of Little Worthy

Director	Matt Carter
Writer	Chris Murray
Executive Producers	Michele Buck, Louise Pedersen
Producer	Carol Ann Docherty
Co-Producer	Ian Strachan
Composer	Evan Jolly
Junior Script Editor	Ana Ture
Casting Director	Louise Cross

Based on the novels created by Caroline Graham

#### Cast List

DCI John Barnaby	Neil Dudgeon
Ds Jamie Winter	Nick Hendrix
Sarah Barnaby	Fiona Dolman
Fleur Perkins	Annette Badland
Pat Everett	Mark Williams
Ronnie Everett	Siobhan Redmond
Rowan Yarrow	Maimie McCoy
Brendan Yarrow	Ferdinand Kingsley
Mel Wallace	Sinead Matthews
Annie Davids	Louise Jameson
Eric Gladberry	Brian Bovell
Steve Skelton	Matt McCooey
Josie Skelton	Molly Harris
Kelly Kirk-Lees	Poppy Gilbert
Wade Andow	Kadell Herida
Jez Gladberry	Glen Boateng

## The Stitcher Society

A local outcast, who was controversially acquitted of murder years previously, is the latest inductee into a post-operative heart rehab club. Following his arrival, members' dreams of a second chance at life begin being cut short.

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Tamworth Springs is home to Midsomer's very own Stitcher Society, a social and health club for recovering heart bypass patients; the name of the club was inspired by the post-operative scar running down the middle of the members' chests. Founded four years ago by REUBEN TOOMS, the Stitcher Society is a place for people to embrace their second chance at life, a second chance which is a gift that should be embraced to the fullest. The club does this by offering lectures, counselling, fitness classes, and most importantly new challenges, anything that will ignite a passion for life again!

Bamboo shinai sticks are clashing as part of their latest event day, as the club members are engaged in a kendo class. The session is going well until GIDEON (Reuben's son) introduces the latest member – TOBY. The group are outraged, so much so that the usually timid GEORGIE threatens to kill Toby, leaping to thrust her shinai stick at his throat. Clearly not all second chances are a gift! Blood pressures are raised until Reuben steps in to calm the situation, he then surprises the members when he backs Toby's induction, telling Georgie they can talk about all this later.

The following morning, Reuben is found murdered on the village green – a sharpened shinai stick protruding from his chest.

BARNABY and WINTER are called to investigate, and after being informed about the flare up at the club they interview Georgie, asking what Toby did to make himself so unpopular. Georgie explains that five years previously, Toby was arrested for the brutal murder of VIOLA, Reuben's sister-in-law. However, due to an unreliable witness the case fell apart and Toby was controversially acquitted.

Georgie ran the local paper and following the collapse of the trial, publicly hounded Toby, whipping the village into a frenzy until he was hunted down by an angry mob demanding a confession, but Toby managed to escape and fled Tamworth Springs. However, now Reuben is claiming, after all these years, that Toby is innocent... and that he has proof.

Barnaby and Winter question if Toby is he back to settle scores, or could someone be taking revenge for siding with Viola's murderer? The pressure is on to find out and to discover what caused Reuben to suddenly be convinced of Toby's innocence, before the killer has chance to strike again...

## John Thomson is Cooper Steinem in The Stitcher Society

John Thomson admits that appearing in an episode of Midsomer Murders was on his bucket list of most wanted acting jobs.

He explains: "I am in my early fifties and I have been working for 32 years and I said to my agent 'I've got a bit of a bucket list of shows I really want to do and I haven't ever done' and one was Midsomer Murders. Funnily enough Midsomer came to me and I thought 'great, that's one of them!' So it's a huge box ticked for me and I really loved it."

Describing his character John says: "Cooper is a landlord of a pub and restaurant and has been for many, many years down in Midsomer and the pub is called the Cock and Rabbit. To be honest Cooper's pub, without giving too much away, was thriving, it was a very popular hostelry at one time and unfortunately someone has returned to the village who is not popular and that is an understatement. It is in fact his wife's brother who is an outcast, he was been banished and his return shakes up the whole community again and because it is his wife's brother no one comes to the pub anymore. But Cooper isn't the most trustworthy of people, especially when it comes to money and honesty around his good wife. "

A murder mystery fan, John explains reading the script for the first time is akin to reading a novel...

"I love reading crime drama scripts because you don't know if it's you, there's never a brief before you receive the attachment in an email that says 'by the way, you are the murderer.' So that's the beauty of it, it's like reading a detective novel and you don't know who it is but you're going to be in it, which is excellent. So I would say that if ever I do a crime drama there are three things you want to be; murdered, particularly in this show, you want to be killed and the stranger or more grisly manner the better, be the murderer or be a huge red herring that throws everybody off the scent. What you don't want to be is set dressing, just the nice person who works in the sweet shop. I can't say what I am but I thoroughly enjoyed the process of reading the script and finding out if I am the murderer or victim and also who is the real one."

One of John's co-stars in The Stitcher Society is Keith Allen, they share a past...

"The person I know the most in this episode was Keith Allen. We were old Groucho buddies back in the day, when I was wild. We are both very chilled now, isn't maturity a wonderful thing? Keith and me used to hang out in a private members club in London and paint the town red, regularly and have a right laugh. Keith's got a cheeky sense of humour and I really appreciate that, he is really funny.

“But I met some lovely new actors on this, that’s the thing about Midsomer, there’s quite a hefty cast but it’s a little odd when you’re in the same hotel but you can’t mix or go out to the local town, it’s a bit lonely being an actor anyway and it’s double lonely now because of Covid. One of the secrets of being an actor is learning to love your own company, I learned that years ago because I gave up the drink so I went into lockdown 14 years ago!”

And John reveals that some of the Midsomer locations are incredibly familiar to him...

“That whole area of Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire... when I was a kid my dad worked for a company called BTR, British Tyre and Rubber, and one of their main subsidiary factories was in Watford and when I was a kid in the 1970’s I lived in Watford every summer and it was cool as I got to see the north and the south. So I knew some of these areas around where we filmed. When we lived in Watford we used to drive past Pinewood and I would get so excited because the Bond studio was there and I remember it was a little black and white mock Tudor century box. Around that area it’s a melting pot of cinematic creativity. It’s very beautiful, Buckinghamshire and such a lovely place to film. You can see from the show it’s a lovely place to be, Midsomer, but a very dangerous place too...”

## Cast and Crew List

### The Stitcher Society

Director	Roberto Bangura
Writer	Jeff Povey
Executive Producers	Michele Buck, Louise Pedersen
Producer	Carol Ann Docherty
Co-Producer	Ian Strachan
Composer	Evan Jolly
Junior Script Editor	Ana Ture
Casting Director	Louise Cross

Based on the novels created by Caroline Graham

Cast List

DCI John Barnaby	Neil Dudgeon
Ds Jamie Winter	Nick Hendrix
Sarah Barnaby	Fiona Dolman
Fleur Perkins	Annette Badland
Reuben Tooms	Silas Carson
Alberta Toom	Lizzy McInnery
Toby Wagner	Peter de Jersey
Harry Marx	Keith Allen
Mimi Dagmar	Hannah Waddingham
Georgie Tremayne	Harriet Thorpe
Erika Marx	Natalie Simpson
Cooper Steinem	John Thomson
Mack McNally	Michael Nardone
Gideon Tooms	Jacob Fortune-Lloyd
Julia Steinem	Nimmy March
Jocasta Farthing	Sirine Saba