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ALL CREATURES GREAT & SMALL





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SYNOPSSES

Series synopsis

Three months have passed since the end of Series One. A trip back home to Glasgow presents James with a dilemma that will mean choosing between the people he loves. As Helen and James navigate their feelings for one another, Siegfried, Tristan, and Mrs Hall are also forced to consider their places in the world, while James must decide between supporting his family or following his heart.

Episode 1 – ‘Where the Heart Is’

It's spring in 1938, and three months have passed since the end of Series 1. James' parents are overjoyed when he's offered a position at his old mentor's forward-thinking practice in Glasgow. When he returns to the Dales, James is reminded of how much he loves the place and the people - and thinks of one person who it would be worth staying in the Dales for.

Since Helen Alderson left Hugh Hulton at the altar, she has kept a low profile and James has given her the space she needed. But the pair find themselves forced together again when neighbouring farmer Rob Benson's sheep are in trouble.

Inspired by his time at the Glasgow surgery, James pushes Siegfried to let Tristan do more veterinary jobs so that they can take on more small animal cases at Skeldale House. Tristan tends to a budgerigar whilst Mrs Hall uncovers a difficult truth.

Episode 2 – ‘Semper Progredivens’

A letter from home weighs heavily on James. Though James and Helen are now talking, James still hasn't expressed his feelings to her and realises that he needs to make a move if he is going to find out whether Helen is ever going to be able to move on.

With Tristan's encouragement, James asks Helen if she'd like to go to the local spring dance. But village resident Gerald's arrival with his injured dog, Rock, puts a spanner in the works. James has to man the surgery alone with Mrs Hall and a long list of patients in the hope that he can finish in time to be able to take Helen out. Meanwhile, Gerald has a somewhat unexpected impact on Mrs Hall.

Siegfried accidentally misses an appointment at Colonel Merrick's estate which brings in rival vet George Pandhi. Tristan worries that Siegfried is in danger of losing his edge and questions whether his older brother is looking forward enough, both personally and professionally.

Episode 3 – ‘We Can But Hope’

James is called out to visit widow Phyllis Dalby and finds that her young herd of cows are seriously ill which could leave her family with nothing. James struggles to accept that perhaps there is nothing he can do to save them, and

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therefore the farm. A reminder from Phyllis on how fleeting time can be pushes James to take a risk with Helen, but his dilemma causes friction between the pair.

Siegfried can't abide Tristan not having enough to do and so presents him with a new challenge. Tristan's need to impress his older brother makes him feel like he needs to produce results at any cost, but James reminds him that honesty is often the best policy. Tricky Woo turns up needing a babysitter and Mrs Pumphrey returns.

Episode 4 – 'Many Happy Returns'

It's an important day for Tristan in more ways than one when he celebrates his birthday and Siegfried gives him new responsibilities as a vet for the first time. Tristan has to withstand the pressure and succeed in the challenge set by his older brother before making it back to Skeldale for birthday festivities. However, things unravel when Siegfried catches wind of the fact that Tristan might not have been telling him the whole truth about the events of his special day.

Mrs Hall also reminds James that he needs to tell Helen some home truths too. A miscommunication pushes the issue to the surface unexpectedly, turning Tristan's happy evening into a turbulent one with big consequences.

Episode 5 – 'The Last Man In'

When a familiar face from Helen's past returns to Darrowby, James worries that he has to vie for her attention and steps up to compete against them at Mrs Pumphrey's annual cricket match. The rest of Skeldale House are apprehensive as the game can be brutal. Siegfried tries his best to train James and get a reluctant Tristan to step in, but it's not looking good for their Darrowby Eleven team.

At the cricket match, Tristan has to reconsider his refusal to help and things are tense for James until he realises he has to put things right in his own way.

Siegfried is asked to deal with a delicate veterinary matter which helps him to better understand his difficult relationship with his brother.

Episode 6 – 'Home Truths'

As Chamberlain heads to meet with Hitler in Munich, James prepares to face his parents and give them some difficult news. Meanwhile, the prospect of a return to war acts as a timely reminder to make the most of life while you can. But James' agenda is derailed by an emergency with the Alderson's pregnant mare, Candy.

James hopes that he can show his parents why the Dales mean so much to him. He also introduces them to Helen, hoping that they will love her and understand why living in Darrowby is so important to him.

Tristan remains at a professional crossroads but when Mrs Donovan's dog ends up in an accident, he learns a valuable lesson which helps him make a decision about his future.



BEN VANSTONE LEAD WRITER

Ben explains what is happening in Darrowby when we return for series two of All Creatures Great and Small...

“Since the Christmas episode, James has been keeping his head down and getting on with work in his new role as senior vet. He’s given Helen the space and time she needs to get over what happened. Having missed out on seeing his family at Christmas, he’s gone back home to Scotland for Easter to spend some time with his mum and dad.

Siegfried has allowed Tristan to continue believing that he’s passed his exams but is careful not to let him take on any work that might tarnish the practice’s reputation should be mess-up. For his part, Tristan is glad to have Siegfried off his back and is quite glad to live the easy life carrying out menial tasks in Skeldale House.”

James starts the series back home in Glasgow, what was the inspiration for that beginning?

We wanted to make sure that James’s choice was about more than just his relationship with Helen. It’s also a love story between him and the Dales. We made the decision to have James offered a job so we could play out that choice to stay in the Dales. A place he’s come to love and to think of as his new home.

What can viewers expect in terms of the James and Helen story...

“It was important for us to play out the truthful consequences of Helen’s decision not to marry Hugh. It didn’t feel right that the next time we see Helen, she was already in a relationship with James. We wanted to play out the impact of Helen’s decision and allow her the space to discover quite what she wants next in life. We are quite aware of James’s feelings towards Helen but I don’t think the same can be said for her. Obviously, she has some feelings for James but we really wanted to give Helen some time to discover who she is and what she wants before launching into a relationship as a fait accompli.”

How did Ben approach Patricia Hodge joining the show as Mrs Pumphrey?

“Firstly, I have to say that it was terribly sad to lose Dame Diana Rigg last year and she’ll be sorely missed. We appreciate all the time we spend with her and know that she was well loved by fans of the show. When we looked to recast, we wanted to make sure that we honoured the work Diana had done before and continue the legacy of the iconic character of Mrs Pumphrey. I was absolutely thrilled when I heard Patricia accepted our invitation to join the show and I did have a detailed conversation with her about what she wanted to bring to the part.”

Tell us how you came to write such strong female characters in this adaptation?

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"We always strive to have well-rounded, truthful characters, with their individual wants and needs so naturally this is how we approach our female characters. Both Mrs Hall and Helen are women of their time but who are perhaps more forward looking and progressive than many of their contemporaries of that era. Mrs Hall is someone who carries the burden of a difficult past that sometimes prevents her from moving on in certain aspects of her life. But time can be a great healer and hopefully this year we might see Mrs Hall doing something for herself for a change."

What animal storylines should we look out for in series two?

"There's a very moving story about a widowed farmers wife called Mrs Dalby. It's brilliantly told by a new writer joining the show, Chloe Mi Lin Ewart and comes at a crucial point in the development of James and Helen's relationship. I think my favourite story is one involving a budgie and Tristan. Callum (Woodhouse) does an excellent job and it still makes me laugh after watching it goodness knows how many times in the edit."

World War II is on the horizon this series how will that affect storylines?

"All Creatures Great and Small is a show about a family of vets in the Dales and the community they serve. While it's impossible to ignore the fact that war is on the horizon, we never wanted it to be something that overrides the fundamental nature of the show. We will experience the gradual creep of looming conflict but this will be very much through our characters rather than with a bird's eye view of the wider political context."

Why does All Creatures Great and Small appeal to viewers, especially during the difficult times we've faced in recent months?

"So much TV drama portrays events that are outside the realm of human experience. How many of us have been party to a grisly murder, or death? How often do we conduct illicit affairs that lead to bloody consequences? And I can't remember the last time I saw a Zombie chasing someone through Westfield shopping centre; true I've not been there on a Friday night for some time but still..."

"In all seriousness, I think the success of the show has far more to do with the fact that it portrays more relatable human experience. Hard-working people, trying to find ways to get through life, where small and simple acts of kindness have huge significance. We don't all have soaring romances or have lives ruled by cataclysmic events. Instead, it's the small things that matter, a friend checking in on you when you've had a hard time, someone noticing that you need support when things aren't going well, a squeeze of the hand when someone sees your upset and all the things left unsaid when a look is all it takes. This has never been more true in the difficult times we've all experienced lately and maybe there is a desire for a more gentle form of storytelling alongside the high octane fare that dominates a lot of the various platforms."



NICHOLAS RALPH IS JAMES HERRIOT

For Nicholas Ralph, being back in The Dales during lambing season to film a new series of All Creatures Great and Small was a total dream.

“It was fantastic to see all the lambs on the hills while we were filming. I didn’t see one being born; we had a documentary style crew filming those separately as it is a waiting game! But I worked with one tiny little guy who was about 48 hours old - it was beautiful. We filmed a scene around the birth of a lamb and his little friend who had just been born was running around him. I was busy birthing the lamb and the other little fella is in between my legs, on my shoulder just so full of beans. After last year when Rachel and I were so excited to meet the puppies on set but never had the chance they totally owed us! And it was great.”

And Nicholas admits being back filming in such a beautiful landscape was like a homecoming of sorts...

“We are so lucky with where we go to work, these stunning locations, these little towns and villages, beautiful little crofts when we’re in the middle of nowhere and it’s really stunning. After being so isolated for months not seeing more one other person in a room it took a second to readjust and get back into the swing of it. But it was so lovely to see everyone again. I hadn’t even seen my parents for months and then I got to see the whole cast and crew. We had the lead director back again from series one and our writer, so there were a lot of familiar faces, so it did feel a wee bit like a homecoming.”

James’s relationship with Helen (Rachel Shenton) is a little bit awkward at the start of series two. Nicholas explains how James is feeling ...

“Three months have passed since they last saw each other and to just not see someone you are so close with, as a friend, someone you have strong feelings for, that’s really hard. Being back at home in Glasgow for those few weeks was probably quite good for James, to get him out of that world for a little bit but ultimately, he knows where he wants to be and who he wants to be with. It’s a little bit awkward and Helen has taken some time to herself, and James has respected that and given her space. When she turns up at Skeldale house out of the blue this series it takes him by surprise, a really pleasant surprise. From then on, they are reacquainting with one another as Helen is single now and James is a little more confident, he’s coming into his own. So they’ve both grown and are in different places. They’re reconnecting with each other under these new terms.”

We are told James is not really a dancer when we see him at a ball this series. Was it difficult to play being a poor dancer or did that come naturally to Nicholas?

“Apart from my stint doing my breakdancing when I was eight, I haven’t done a lot of dancing! In drama school I was described as ‘enthusiastic’, but I don’t think I was very good. So, when they said James wasn’t very good either, I was quite pleased. We did Scottish country dancing at school and weddings, and I love that. Rachel and I worked

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on our dance a lot and I think we managed to get it looking quite good. James says his mum used to take him to these tea dances and he'd be dancing with her and all the other older ladies so he can dance a little bit but he's self-conscious about it and he doesn't want to stand on her toes. Even with that I think he comes into his own..."

Nicholas reveals a storyline where James helps Helen's sister Jenny out with her wayward dog. Does Jenny become a bit of an ally for James with Helen?

"This cements the friendship between Jenny and James - she is totally on his side. It's a really lovely relationship in the story. Jenny has a keen interest in the animals and that side of things and James is more than happy to teach her. Imogen (Clawson) who plays Jenny is brilliant, it was her first job as well as being my first TV job and she's a joy to work with."

And it wasn't just Imogen that Nicholas enjoyed working with...

"This new dog Scruff, played by Bobby, is a beautiful red spaniel, such a gorgeous dog - I fell in love with her. Of course, Derek, who plays Tricki Woo, is always up there in my favourites too."

In fact, one of Nicholas's favourite moment from filming involves Derek...

"I had a wonderful little scene with Del Boy where I had to sedate him, and I did the injection and he slowly started to close his eyes and he went to sleep just as if he had really been injected with anaesthetic. Then the director shouted 'cut' and he was straight back up. That's just a wee story about how professional Derek always is on set - a real pro."

We see James getting his teeth into farm work even more this series and realising he wants to help the people as much as the animals, which is something the real James Herriot - Alf Wight- wrote about. Is that something that is in Nicholas's mind when working on these stories?

"Absolutely. It runs through all of it; you're helping out the people as much and sometimes more so than the animals. Sometimes there is very little you can do for the animals and it's about the personal stories. As we move into series two James is growing into himself as a vet and as a person, he is more confident, and he's being given more responsibility."

"There is a beautiful story about a farmer's wife taking over the farm after her husband passes away and the storyline is really quite poignant. We see James really tackling everything head on, multiple facets of people and the farm and the animals and he takes on that role to try and help. It's all part of him growing up. In series one it was similar, but the onus was on impressing Siegfried and securing the job, whereas this series he is more self-assured with the vet stuff and seeing what else can be done to help these people. And through this he is gaining respect and reputation in the community."

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And what about James' continuing friendship with Tristan (played by Callum Woodhouse). Do you think that friendship helps James?

"Yes, absolutely and what's brilliant about this year is we are seeing both sides to that coin and James is really there for Tristan and really helps him out with various things he is going through. Because they have a lot of what the other needs, they balance each other well; James is very book smart, and an incredible vet and Tristan is a bit savvy and more social. They have this wonderful and eccentric leader in Siegfried and so they can join forces to figure out how best to work under him and try and have a quieter life."

Does Nicholas read ahead with the Herriot books?

"I try to remain as much in the present as possible, but I've read the first two books, the ones we had optioned, and I also did the audio books so I know them inside out, back to front and upside down. Which can be a blessing and a curse! I have not read any ahead because I like to keep within the realm, we are playing in."

And how does Nicholas feel about the huge success of the first series of All Creatures Great and Small?

"Just brilliant, I couldn't believe the response; it took me a few days to get my head around it. Subsequently now I've seen so many lovely comments about it and it's so wonderful to hear. Coming from a small town in Scotland where no one is an actor, I'll be playing football and obviously I get the expected craic and the stick but even there they've been so supportive. People have really taken to it. The odd time where I have been stopped in the street, I am completely happy because people have said such lovely things about how the show came at a really important and rough time. I was just so happy for everyone, it's a huge team effort and you don't appreciate until you're on set how much time and how many people go into making something like this. For people to say they can't remember the last time they sat as a family to watch something... it's exactly what we wanted to help bring back when we started, so I think it is something we can all be proud of."



SAMUEL WEST IS SIEGFRIED FARNON

Samuel West is so happy to be back playing Siegfried Farnon in *All Creatures Great and Small*, a role he truly believes in and enjoys playing.

“It’s a real privilege. I haven’t enjoyed playing somebody like him as much for a long, long time, and to be able to do it again is a privilege, especially at the moment. He feels like a real person. I like his contradictions; I like the way Ben Vanstone writes them. I enjoy the fact that he’s short-tempered and kind; he’s a family man with no children. It feels like he’s at the head of a dysfunctional family - a bit of a bubble, actually, funnily enough. I’ve enormously enjoyed coming back to him, and it still feels like there are loads of other things we could explore. Not much is off the table with Siegfried.”

Discussing his character Siegfried Farnon and the relationship he has with his brother Tristan (Callum Woodhouse), Sam continues...

“Siegfried is an enormously stubborn person, and quite childish at times. Not to get too psychological on it, but and the idea that he’s now got to be a father to Tristan (when he isn’t Tristan’s dad, he’s his brother) irritates him. Partly because Tristan’s having quite a lot of fun at Siegfried’s expense at college - and not passing his exams - and partly because Siegfried didn’t get to do enough of that when he was Tristan’s age, because he was busy looking after Tristan. Also because James and Tris are this... it’s not a bromance, but they’re great friends, and they’re younger, and Siegfried slightly resents it. Because he feels like a bit of a stick-in-the-mud, and he’s a widower. There are all sorts of things that make Tris seem footloose and fancy free, and that’s enormously annoying. Siegfried’s not good at dealing with it, and not mature about it at all. But what we do see in the series, I hope, is a more mature understanding of what a proper, responsible relationship with Tristan might turn into. I’ve got two young daughters, and it’s extremely hard sometimes, but I try to live by the principle that parenthood is gardening, not carpentry. You can’t knock them into shape; you have to plant them and let them grow. Tristan needs love and water and earth, but he doesn’t need to be told off all the time. What we might see in this series is Siegfried realising that some of the things that Tristan is good at, or is going to be good at, come from letting him make his own mistakes, and giving him responsibility, ceding control.”

This series Tristan teases Siegfried about his love life and accuses him of being stuck in a rut...

“This is a function of the lovely backstory Ben has given me. Tristan’s not much more than a boy. He’s out for fun. He doesn’t yet know what it is to be truly in love, and perhaps we’ll see that. Siegfried has lost his wife, and that, in his head and in his heart, was a great love match, he would say. So even if Evelyn isn’t mentioned, she’s always in his thoughts, and we live in a house that she decorated. And so at his age, even though he gets lonely and he needs companionship, on some level he still feels that a relationship would be betraying Evelyn’s memory, and he wants it to matter instead of just going, “Let’s see what happens”.”

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But Siegfried takes quite a shine to Diana Brompton...

"She's perfectly easy on the eye, that doesn't harm. Siegfried has always admired strong women, and Diana doesn't give a fig. She really doesn't care what people think of her. She's a divorcee in a small town, and people are gossiping, and she doesn't care. He thinks that's enormously attractive, and also funny. She's funny, she tells a good joke, probably quite filthy. At the Daffodil Ball, which she has organised, she jokes about having buried her husband in the garden. He thinks, "That's my kind of woman!" Also, you know, she's played by Dorothy Atkinson, who's brilliant and enormously funny and just a wonderful person to work with."

Mrs Hall gives Siegfried a run for his money. Are those scenes fun to play with Anna Madeley?

"Huge fun. Probably my favourite bits. I think this is turning out to be quite a special relationship, Siegfried and Mrs Hall, partly because Mrs Hall is becoming less apologetic about her opinions. But there's something to say about the period of the thing, and about men and women. Siegfried is of that generation, and of that sex, where he would quite like his home to be his castle. He would also quite like to be the person who gets to say what happens in it, but he's wise enough to know that an awful lot of things happen in it that aren't his decisions, and they happen rather well."

"What I love in this series is that Ben (Vanstone - writer) has given Siegfried permission to know that Mrs Hall is a proper force, and to appreciate the game she plays with him by allowing him to be nominally in charge, and also allowing him to be wise enough not to challenge that. It's a sort of dance. She's not just an employee, although we call each other Mr Farnon and Mrs Hall. I don't want to say she's the mother of Skeldale House, because that makes it feel like she's all about caring and food. It's much more than that, though she is obviously a good cook, and cares very much about all of us. But it's more to do with our partnership. We're given proper scenes where we get to say what we think of each another, and we're allowed to lose our temper with one another, but actually we're clever enough to know that it's a slightly co-dependent relationship, and deep down – unusually, socially, and for the time – it's a friendship between a man and a woman who aren't married, and I think that's really delightful."

Scenes with the large farm animals didn't always go smoothly for Sam this series...

"I got trodden on by a cow. Again. It's not that they're very big, it's worse because they've got very, very small feet. And as we know from basic physics, a big weight going through a very small area means a lot of pressure. Cows can't hit marks during filming either, because they get nervous. If you move away from them, they don't like knowing you're not there, so they move towards you. So as soon as you get the cow on its mark and walk away, it follows you. And if you're wearing wellies, which I was, when they tread on you it's very painful!"

"We had lambs this year; that's been the best thing. I got to do a bit more with the animals this time round. I delivered a lamb very early on. Siegfried is a big softie at heart. At the heart of him is love, no question. And also something which is true of all vets, but perhaps particularly of him: the need to avoid suffering. Which he feels as



an absolute affront - the idea that an animal, which may not be able to communicate, can still suffer. As you know, he experienced their loss in the war. It gives him, deep down, a calling, if you like. He calls it calling in series two, which is interesting.”

And how was it welcoming Patricia Hodge into the All Creatures family?

“I think that’s been one of the happiest moments. Given that it was such a sad occasion, such a sad reason that Diana wasn’t with us, it’s been about as happy as it could sadly be. Patricia gives a really fine performance, I think. She’s not just posh. She’s got a little bit of new money in her - the character has in the books - she’s a little bit of a lonely older woman, but quite without self-pity. She’s got a lot of energy in life. I also know Patricia quite well and have directed her and worked with her a few times. I think we got very lucky. It’s a great piece of casting, and I think the baton has been handed on really well. It’s a fine continuation, but not in any sense a copy as a portrayal, and I think people will find just as much to enjoy as they did in Diana’s beautiful performance.”



ANNA MADELEY IS MRS HALL

Filming series one was magical for Anna, so returning to Darrowby for a second series was a real treat.

“We had a really magical time doing series one, it was a real gem and we all got on so well and so it was a real treat to be able to come back together. Most of our lovely crew came back as well, which was amazing and a real testament to how much fun everyone had. Obviously, we couldn’t get out and meet people because of the lockdowns but hearing on social media about how well series one had gone down, it was so lovely to know that the series was bringing real joy to people. It’s an added bonus to making a show that we all love.”

And being back up in the Dales for filming has also been a huge blessing for Anna.

“I had a week where I stayed up in the Dales and we went to beautiful places like Brimham rocks. It was really lovely as it was all outdoorsy stuff so there was lots to go and do. There’s a lot more going on than your eye initially sees. It’s such a huge and expansive landscape and after you have been there a little while your eyes become attuned to all the things going on. There are so many stunning vistas and you can then take a turn and meander down a little road and find something new, which makes it great for exploring. It’s just stunning, you can’t quite believe it when you’re there.”

When we last saw Mrs Hall, she had a rather despondent Christmas. So what can we expect when we meet Mrs Hall again in series two?

“Mrs Hall was hoping that Edward would visit for long time throughout series one and it culminated in that scene in the church at Christmas, it was a painful time in her relationship with her son. But I think Mrs Hall now realises that she’s opened the door for him and has done what she can in sending him messages and money and baking his favourite things. She’s done all the things she could possibly do to start building that relationship with him, but she’s going to have to let him come to her now, there’s nothing much else she could do. So, I think in a way when we meet her in Series two, she’s a bit more settled with that, and she’s quite happy in her life at Skeldale. She still wants that relationship with Edward, but she has made peace with the fact that the next gesture needs to come from him, she can’t make him want to come and talk with her.”

Mrs Hall’s bond with Siegfried Farnon (Samuel West) has been a firm favourite with fans from series one, but in the Christmas special, we saw Siegfried lie to Tristan about passing his exams. Anna explains Mrs Hall quickly smells a rat...

“Very quickly this series Mrs Hall smells a rat! But I don’t think her discovering what Siegfried has done would affect their bond. Because as misguided or... idiotic...as Siegfried’s decisions can be, his heart is in the right place, he’s trying to do the right thing and encourage Tristan and he wants him to be successful and happy. He wants to see his brother into the real world as a man with qualifications and a career ahead of him, so I think as frustrating as it might be to hear what Siegfried has been up to, it’s always done out of love...no matter how wrong he gets it! Mrs

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Hall also knows that Siegfried isn't perfect, and I think she would want to be there with him to steer the ship and help him sort things out."

But whilst Mrs Hall is kept incredibly busy steering the ship in Skeldale, Anna reveals that she does have some moments of loneliness this series.

"I think as families do, they grow up and they move on and life changes. James is on the brink of lots of new things, and hopefully Tristan is too. So, it's an interesting time. There is a moment where all the men go out one evening and Mrs Hall is enjoying her book, Jess the dog is great company for her and it's lovely for her to have someone to talk to. But sometimes you can have enough of your own company and feel ready to go out and mingle. It's all part of a journey for Mrs Hall, where she does start to think about going out and trying new things. You sometimes need that moment of quiet to realise that, as we all know that's often the time when new doors start to open..."

Anna hints at what is in store for Mrs Hall...

"The folk inside the house are her surrogate family and she loves them all and nurtures them. But it's nice that Mrs Hall has a wider life, and to see characters like Diana Brompton come along. They know each other from around and about, but not very well, and through this series Mrs Hall gets to know her much better. In this series Diana comes in and she assumes friendship with Mrs Hall straight away and kind of wrong foots Mrs Hall a little bit, which is great fun.

"It's also lovely to meet Gerald, who is of her generation and has been through the war, which Mrs Hall's husband would have gone through. Those other points of contact mean that we see other parts of her life or personality that come to light through those relationships and new people."

And as Anna reveals, we discover more about Mrs Hall's many hobbies too

"Mrs Hall is the centre and the heart of that home but I think one of the reasons I really love her as a character is that she's passionate about a lot of things. That makes it much more fun as an actor – it meant that this series I learnt a little about cricket! Samuel West taught me to score and that was fun. It's really complicated, I've learnt enough to know that scoring cricket is really hard, and I have a newfound respect for all the complex work that goes into it. I heard people say it was challenging and then I sat down with Sam to go through it and thought ah... But once you dip your toe in it is quite fun. It adds to the whole picture of that person you're portraying, and it brings out that side of Mrs Hall that is a lot of fun. She's game for a laugh."

Cricket aside, Anna has also been putting her own cookery skills to the test in preparation for Mrs Hall's feasts

"It's Tristan's birthday in one of the episodes this series and he gets a special birthday treat. I did a little research for that, I made my own Beef Wellington, which was amazing as everybody ate it, so it was definitely a winner. I didn't however make a Blancmange. Mrs Hall is very good at making that though... Or rather Bethany Heald is! She's our Home Economist and on set secret, cooking up a storm behind the scenes."



Behind the scenes, working with the Retriever that plays Jess has also been a highlight for Anna

“Jess has been such fun this series, I’ve spent a lot of time with Jess the dog. Sometimes you’re filming a poignant quiet scene and Jess jumps straight onto your lap and changes the tone of things. Or I’ve just got some knitting out and Jess thinks I’ve got a ball for her to play with!

“I had a wonderful time with Jess in Skipton when we were out walking and we had beautiful views across the Dales, you could see all the way down to the canal. Mrs Hall is out walking and Jess is super strong. She pulled me down the hill at speed, but she then pulled me back up the hill, which was incredibly helpful.”

And of course, little Derek, who plays Tricki Woo, is also still a firm favourite on set!

“He’s the most delightful and relaxed dog on set. I think Derek is blissfully unaware of his newfound fame and popularity. I think most of the time Derek’s not entirely sure what’s going on – he just knows that he’s being looked after really well and that makes him incredibly happy.”



CALLUM WOODHOUSE IS TRISTAN FARNON

Callum Woodhouse admits the scenes he films with housekeeper Mrs Hall (Anna Madeley) are the ones he enjoys the most during series two of All Creatures Great and Small.

“Anna (Madeley) is my absolute favourite! She’s so much fun, she’s just great. Playing those scenes with Mrs Hall, it’s definitely one of the warmest relationships that Tristan has in his life. She’s not actually family, whereas Siegfried is, but you would think almost that it was the other way around sometimes because of the way they are with each other. It’s an ongoing storyline that she’s slightly estranged from her son, and I think in Tristan and James, she can put those motherly instincts to use. And she does.”

So how does Tristan get on with his older brother Siegfried this season?

“Their relationship has never been more of a roller coaster than in this series. Without giving too much away, every emotion that you could possibly feel passes between these two over the course of this series. I don’t think it will be a spoiler to say that it’s inevitable that him not passing his exams officially is going to come up. So that’s bubbling away under the surface, and you can only imagine how that is going to erupt with these two brothers.”

But also Tristan just loves to tease his big brother...

“Those scenes are always so much fun, especially when you get on with someone so well. I love doing them with Nick (Ralph) as well. At his heart, that’s what Tristan is, he’s a bit of a wind-up merchant. He absolutely loves getting a rise out of someone, and nobody in the world gives a better rise than Siegfried, so he’s just going to keep on doing it and doing it. My sister and I have a really similar relationship with our older brother, we just love winding him up! But he secretly loves it. I like to think that Siegfried does as well. He very convincingly feigns annoyance.”

This series Tristan starts to realise that being a vet isn’t just about the animals; it’s about the people too...

“I remember Siegfried saying it to James in the car in episode one, which means it’s obviously something that he’s been drilling into Tristan for years and years and years. Now he’s out and about as a vet this series he’s presented with these problems and he finally sees what Siegfried has been saying to him all these years, and he can put it into practice and realise that actually, he’s really good at that side of things. It’s like an emotional intelligence that Tristan’s just got in spades, that really helps him with that side of the job.”

We see a real transformation in Tristan’s work ethic this series. Is that quite a rewarding journey to portray?

“Yes, definitely, Tristan being Tristan, he’s always going to enjoy a pint at The Drovers Arms, and maybe a lovely lady’s company, but yes, he definitely does seem to step up in all the other aspects of his life. Tristan and James are

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helping each other through, its them taking aspects of each other's personality, and it helps him stick at his job, because he sees James, and the way that he is, and he wants to be at that level."

This series Tristan has a lot of interaction with farm animals, some of them pretty large!

"Buttercup was a really, really big pig! I don't know if it was the make-up or prosthetic department, but they did an amazing job of this boil on the pig's head, which was absolutely horrific. But it's always such a pleasure whenever we have to do anything with the animals, because our animal handlers are just so unbelievably good on this show. As the series goes on Tris does more and more stuff with the live animals, similar to the type of work James does a lot of the time. Being the one in the prime, crucial position in those scenes for the first time was a real thrill."

"Luckily the pig was preoccupied with her piglets whenever we weren't filming, so she didn't come to the green room with us! I didn't actually get too up close and personal with it to be honest, because Tristan is pretty terrified..."

Tristan also had to rasp a horse's teeth. What sort of prep did Callum have to do for that?

"Just learn how a vet would do it really. Andy Barrett, our vet advisor who was with us on series one and was back this series, was there to show me exactly how you do that. It's a really straightforward thing. I don't want to make it sound easy, but the hardest part is the actual rasping of the teeth, basically filing them down, which wasn't me. That was someone else. But the actual checking and looking through the gums, yes, I managed to get taught how to do that. The horse was quite calm, luckily! I don't know if I got him on a good day, or if he liked me..."

"All this stuff that we learn on the show is amazing. Even just reading other people's storylines, like the whole storyline in the first episode with the sheep, and what happens to them, and then how they are treated, it's all so educational. We've obviously done our research for the show, but we can't learn absolutely everything in preparation, so reading about the things that happened to these animals and the way the characters sorted them out is always fascinating to me."

One other skill that Callum had to turn his hand to this year was cricket.

"I've actually never really played cricket, so we had a good couple of sessions. I only have to bat in the scene, so I got a lot of training with that. Weirdly, in my final year at drama school at LAMDA, we did a play that was all about cricket, called *The English Game*, and then in the second series of *The Durrells*, there was a cricket match, so this is actually the third cricket match I've done in my acting career, weirdly. I should be all over it but in the play there was actually no cricket played, and in *The Durrells*, a lot of it was CGI. So this was the first time I had to some batting and some running..."



“What was really cool about those scenes is that all of the supporting artists on either team were the actual cricketing team of Studley Royal Cricket Club, which was where we shot the cricket match. All of those guys really helped us out like if we had to ask, “How do I hold the bat for this one?”. And they’d be bowling me perfect balls to hit. So we just looked great because of those guys!”



RACHEL SHENTON IS HELEN ALDERSON

Returning to the Dales to film Series two was a blessing for Rachel, especially after the warm reaction to series one.

“We were absolutely thrilled to be returning for series two! And after such a warm and welcoming reception, it makes it even more sweet. We would all be excited anyway as we had such a lovely time filming the first series, we all felt very passionate about it and thought we were making something people would love, but you can never quite know what the reaction will be is the truth, and so when people really took it to their hearts it makes coming back even more special. And we all get on so well, it’s such lovely company to work with – we feel really lucky!”

However, the Yorkshire weather wasn’t on their side for most of the shoot, despite filming over the Spring and Summer!

“When we began filming the second series back in March, the weather was worse than series one! I had thermals on all the time, we all had hand warmers, none of us could believe it. We were so excited to be shooting in the Spring, we shot at Heston Grange (The Alderson’s farm) at the beginning of April and the wonderful man that runs the farm is now a friend and I said ‘Well Stuart the next time we are up here, it will be May, so the weather’s going to be better then!’ and he just laughed and said ‘Lass, you’ve not spent much time in’t Dales!’ and he was spot on! We didn’t have nice weather until we were into June, but when the sun has come out, it’s been perfect. However, we have had lots of scenes where we have been holding lambs and they’re just gorgeous, so that makes the weather troubles easier!”

Last time we saw Helen, she was leaving the Church with James after she couldn’t go through with her wedding with Hugh, so where do we find Helen at the start of Series two?

“At the start of the series, Helen has retreated. She’s very much at home all of the time, with her sister and her dad, looking after the farm and taking on that role that is so familiar to her. Helen really is the emollient in that house, she really makes sure everything is running as it should and that everybody is fed and watered! Helen takes on that role with a smile – it’s her safe place and that’s where we see her when we rejoin her for series two.”

“I love the journey and the trajectory for series two as we feel and see Helen emerging as herself. She’s had such a lot to deal with as such a young woman, she’s taken on a parental role, she’s looked after the Alderson house and the farm, she had been with Hugh since they were so young. They both lost parents and that united them as they both understood their responsibilities, but because they got together so young, I don’t know if there was ever anything truly romantic between them. I don’t think either of them knew life in any other way. It was expected that they would get married. I think it was only when James came along, Helen kind of thought ‘Oh okay maybe this isn’t it for me’. So, in series one we saw her question her situation, and then question it more and more until she didn’t get married.”

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“In series two, when Helen does eventually come out, she wants to have fun again and have a good time. It’s been a while since she’s done that, for a number of reasons.”

Rachel tells us that contrary to what we might expect, things are a little bit awkward between James and Helen at the start of series two. Rachel explains how Helen is feeling...

“At the end of series one obviously Helen left the church with James (Nicholas Ralph), but nothing was said and although there are still feelings there, no one has acted on it. Helen thinks it’s really important not to act upon her feelings at this stage, so that she can take that time to breathe and step back. It isn’t that she’s avoiding James, it’s just awkward and she doesn’t want to have those conversations with him.”

“When they do finally meet in this series, one of the first things that James says to her is ‘You can’t go on punishing yourself’ and she cuts the conversation short, but as she’s walking away, James tells her he’s missed her. Whilst she acknowledges that, she is still really resisting... until the point she can’t anymore!”

Rachel tells us how speaking to the real James Herriot’s (Alf Wight’s) children, Rosie and Jim, has been invaluable to building James and Helen’s relationship on screen with Nicholas...

“Whenever we have spoken to Jim and Rosie, the main thing that they have consistently said is that their parents were completely devoted to each other. They would complement each other and push each other in the right direction and there was an unspoken language and understanding between them. Rosie also told us how they made each other laugh constantly, so Nick and I really worked on James and Helen dancing around each other and finding those ‘moments’ this series. It’s such a rare bond to have, so it was really important to us. I like the trajectory they take together this series, it’s a real love story that evolves over time – it’s undulating, and I hope everyone enjoys being on that journey with us.”

Helen is also often on hand this series to help James navigate some tricky relationships with the Dales farming community...

“I think Helen can be a little more objective – she’s very emotionally intelligent and she has grown up quite quickly. She knows that James loves the animals and cares about them, and she also knows how her dad and the farmers think as she grew up in the Dales. She understands there’s a certain way things are done, so she has a lot of respect for farming life.”

However, Helen and James don’t always see eye to eye, as Rachel teases a storyline from this series...

“There is a little conflict between James and Helen surrounding one of the farming families, and they don’t see eye to eye on something. It’s a conflict between that veterinary stance of ‘this is the way it should be done’ and then

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the opinion that ‘this is the Dales way and this is what you do’. Most of the time though Helen is fairly down the middle and towards the end of the series she very much has James’ back with one of the farmers and sticks up for him. As James notices, it puts Helen in a unique position as the farmers will talk to her in a way that they won’t talk to James and so she uses it to her advantage to help both James and the animals through her relationships with the farmers.”

People aside, what about the animals – does Rachel have any favourites this year?

“In the Alderson House, we have a new pet called Scruff, real name Bobby. She’s a little Working Cocker Spaniel and she was 9 months old when she joined us, and she was super lively as she was a pup!”

“Bobby doesn’t always stick to the script and follow cues. No matter how many times that happened I couldn’t help but smile as she does it in such a cheeky way. We were doing a photoshoot on set and Bobby was in the back of a cart and every time the camera went off, she jumped straight off the cart and out of her position!”

“I also remember one scene where Helen’s making a cooked breakfast in the Alderson House and she could smell the sausages and the bacon, so she kept sneaking up to the table. When she’d done it a few times the director made the decision to keep it in, so we can see Scruff causing mischief in the scene! I love all the animals, but she is definitely my favourite.”

And Scruff isn’t the only new addition on the Alderson farm this year...

“Candy – the Alderson’s horse – real name Aramis, is absolutely beautiful, a gorgeous boy. I had a lot to do with Aramis this season as Candy is in foal for series two. It gets a little bit hairy with Candy and all hands are on deck. That’s when you get to see the realness of the Dales and the importance of the animals in this kind of life. Candy was Helen’s mum’s horse so it’s very emotional. This horse was just brilliant – he’s a javelin horse and has done a lot of fight scenes. He’s just a joy to work with!”

“We also have another bull this year, a fantastic new edition who’s only 18 months old –very lively! Not quite as placid as Clive last series... but he has a big personality.”

Given the strange times we have all been living in, reuniting with all of her cast mates was definitely a highlight for Rachel.

“We hadn’t seen each other for such a long time! All of the press you would usually do in person was all done in our living rooms on zoom, so none of us spent any time together. It took a second to acclimatise to being back at work, I don’t think I’d put jeans on for a year! But you get back into things really quickly and we were all in the same boat and super supportive of each other.”



PATRICIA HODGE IS MRS PUMPHREY

It was love at first meeting for Patricia Hodge and Derek – the talented Pekingese Derek who plays Mrs Pumphrey's beloved Tricki Woo in All Creatures Great and Small.

"I just loved him straight away. He is a sweetie. On the first day of filming Derek's handler came over and said 'oh I gather you want to meet Derek, here he is' and he introduced us, and the first thing I ever do with a dog is hold my hand out so the dog can start to sniff you. And Derek literally looked at me, and looked away, and looked at me, and looked away. As if he was saying 'well what on earth are you holding your hand out for!' His handler told me he was the most laid-back dog, and he really is. He is an extraordinary dog. I've never come across such a placid dog before.

"He really is amazing. Even to the point of taking direction. I don't want to give away too much about the plot, but there is a scene where Tricki really is not well. He laid on the veterinary table and when he was supposed to be drugged, he pretty much fell asleep in front of the camera."

What initially drew Patricia to the project?

As a programme and a set of stories if you like it's a real treasure. I think anything that contains stories of human interaction, particularly with animals as well, where they are all equal inhabitants of the environment is the minutiae of humankind that I think is so important as I think that's timeless. There's also something very reassuring about the series at this time because life is moving almost too fast for many of us to keep up with and I think that people want to look back at a time that was safer – it reassures people and acts as a comfort blanket."

What did Patricia want to bring to the character with her portrayal?

"I think particularly in this case you can't have other people sitting on your shoulders, you have to let the scripts speak to you. it was by chance last year that the first episode I watched had Dame Diana in it, and then I went back to the beginning.

"When I was asked to take on the role, I wiped my mind of anything I previously saw and took my interpretation from the scripts, then it permeates through to you what kind of woman Mrs Pumphrey is, and she was a person that I recognised."

Did Patricia take inspiration from anyone that you knew?

"Possibly by osmosis! Without particularly pinning it on any one person. But there's a lot in English eccentricity. There are a lot of eccentric individuals around, particularly there were then. They don't quite live in the real world, but they are true to themselves. Their truth is a very particular one and that's the way they see the world, and you just have to hold onto that."



Do we learn more about Mrs Pumphrey this series?

“Yes. she’s not an aristocrat, nor is she nobility. She’s a woman whose husband did very well in business and lives a lofty lifestyle. She’s been protected by a lot of normal battles in life, so everything comes down to the dog. She lives through that dog.”

And we also learn that Mrs Pumphrey is an avid cricket fan is it a passion Patricia shares?

“The team asked me to have a chat with Ben Vanstone (Lead Writer). The scripts were written but we had a preliminary chat. And when it came to the cricket match, I said that they definitely had the right person as I love cricket, it’s my favourite game.

“So, we had long chats about cricket and he upped Mrs Pumphrey’s love for cricket accordingly. I got into cricket through my older son. I remember when I was growing up, watching it on black and white grainy TV and I used to think oh not cricket! If you don’t understand it, it can be the most boring thing in the world. Once you understand it, it’s absolutely thrilling. There’s nothing better than learning it from the ground up and my eldest son started it at the age of eight at school, so I used to go to all the matches and it became a sport of great significance. My idea of heaven is a day at Lords.

“Those scenes were fascinating to film and they had the real atmosphere of an important village cricket match, and the weather was really kind to us. The sky was royal blue, and we were in this beautiful spot and James (Dean, the producer) and I turned to each other, and both said ‘Well, it doesn’t get much better than this!’.”

And how did Patricia enjoy joining the cast of All Creatures?

“Well, Sam (West) I’ve known for years and he’s directed me before. What I found really touching was that there was never any sense that I was anything other than a part of the team. They were all so sweet, and there was complete acceptance from day one. I was very touched. It’s rare and special again from that point of view and I do believe that comes through on screen as well.”

And the Yorkshire Dales is a special place for Patricia...

“I was brought up in Lincolnshire, so it’s the next-door county, but, I was in the original cast of the stage version of *Calendar Girls*. And of course, that’s their territory and I’ve kept up with them, particularly with Angela, who was the woman I played who lost her husband to Leukemia, she’s still a friend and we have been life-long buddies. She lives in Grassington, so I went to see her whilst I was filming up there this year. And I was very happy being the châtelain of Broughton Hall of course!”



CAST LIST

Siegfried Farnon	Samuel West
Mrs Hall	Anna Madeley
James Herriot	Nicholas Ralph
Tristan Farnon	Callum Woodhouse
Helen Alderson	Rachel Shenton
Richard Alderson	Tony Pitts
Jenny Alderson	Imogen Clawson
Mrs Pumphrey	Patricia Hodge
James Herriot Senior	Drew Cain
Hannah Herriot	Gabriel Quigley
Henry Dinsdale	Mark Noble
George Pandhi	Kriss Dosanjh
Rob Benson	Philip Hill-Pearson
Anne Chapman	Cleo Sylvestre
Bill Weipers	Euan Macnaughton
Nurse Mary	Heather Horsman
Mrs Tompkin	June Watson
Gerald Hammond	Will Thorp
Colonel Merrick	James Fleet
Diana Brompton	Dorothy Atkinson
Annabel Dinsdale	Ella Bruccoleri
Fernley	Chris Kaye
Stephen	Seumas Mackinnon
Mr Ingledew	Neil Hurst
Francois	Joseph May
Maitre D'	Guy Slocombe
Young Billy Dalby	Aiden Cook
Phyllis Dalby	Amy Nuttall



Tom Chapman	Lamin Touray
Margot Sebright Saunders	Jessica Clark
John Monkham	Steven Hartley
Mr Dobson	Jon Furlong
Cranford	Mike Harding
Mrs Donovan	Frances Tomelty
Maggie	Mollie Winnard
Hugh Hulton	Matthew Lewis
Dennis Handshaw	Nigel Betts
Bert Chapman	Dave Hill
Dave Kitson	James Burrows
Hetty Rudd	Hattie Edkins
Tricki Woo	Derek



CREW LIST

Lead Writer (Eps 1, 2, 6 & Xmas Special)	Ben Vanstone
Writer (Ep 3)	Chloë Mi Lin Ewart
Writer (Ep 4, 5). Associate Producer (Eps 4 & 5)	Debbie O'Malley
Lead Director (Eps 1 & 2). Executive Producer (Eps 1 & 2)	Brian Percival
Director (Eps 3 & 4)	Sasha Ransome
Director (Eps 5, 6 & Xmas Special)	Andy Hay
Executive Producers (Playground)	Melissa Gallant
	Colin Callender
Executive Producer	Ben Vanstone
Executive Producers (Masterpiece)	Rebecca Eaton
	Susanne Simpson
Executive Producer (All3Media International)	Louise Pedersen
Executive Producers (Screen Yorkshire)	Caroline Cooper Charles
Producer	James Dean
DOP (Eps 1 & 2)	Erik Molberg Hansen
DOP (Eps 3 & 4)	James Swift
DOP (Eps 5, 6 & Xmas Special)	Ashley Barron
Production Designer	Jacqueline Smith
Location Manager	Gary Barnes
Casting Directors	Beverley Keogh
	David Martin
Casting Associate	Sheraz Ahmed
Costume Designer	Ros Little
Hair & Make-up Designer	Lisa Parkinson
Sound Recordist (Episodes 1,2,3 &4)	Dan Dewsnap
Sound Recordist (Episodes 5, 6, &7)	Jonathan Wyatt
Editor (Eps 1 & 2)	Caroline Bleakley



Editor (Eps 3 & 4)	Pete Drinkwater
Editor (Eps 5, 6 & Xmas Special)	Adam Trotman
Animal Handlers	1 st Choice Animals
Horse Master	Mark Atkinson
Production Vet	Andy Barrett
Composer	Alexandra Harwood