

THE GREAT PLAGUE RATINGS AND REVIEWS

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CONTENTS

- Synopsis Page 3
 Headlines Page 4
 Pick/Previews Page 5-11
 Reviews Page 12
- Social Page 14-16



SYNOPSIS

THE GREAT PLAGUE (3 x 60')

Also known as Epidemic: The Great Plague

Between 1665 and 1666 The Great Plague claimed the lives of 1 in 4 London residents, leading to a death toll of 200 000.

This timeline driven, presenter-led three part series, explores the story of the plague, using new evidence which fundamentally transforms our understanding of how the disease spread.

Through heart breaking human stories, brand new science and experimental history, this series sheds new light on the infamous epidemic.

Medic Dr. Xand van Tulleken, archaeologist Raksha Dave and journalist John Sergeant unpack the story of the plague, day by day, week by week and month by month. Xand is the guide to the outbreak in London, while Raksha undertakes the experiments and John explores the remedies.

The Great Plague aired on Channel 5 in the UK across 3 consecutive nights, from the 17th November 2020.





HEADLINES

THE GREAT PLAGUE WAS A RATINGS SMASH!

- Channel 5's top rated show 3 days in a row
- All episodes rated above slot average, peaking at 1.8m viewers
- Episode 1 was the 2nd most watched documentary of the year
- The Great Plague had a great reception from outlets, securing 47 picks and previews, 1 positioning piece in The Sunday Telegraph, a feature in What's on TV and good online coverage in outlets including the Mail Online, Broadcast and The Telegraph.





The Great Plague has had 47 picks and previews in broadsheets and many major volume outlets so far, these include:

- The Sunday Telegraph
- The Times (Saturday Review)
- The Times (T2)
- The Sunday Times Culture
- The Daily Telegraph
- Radio Times
- Daily Mail Weekend
- Daily Mirror
- The Sun
- The Mail on Sunday
- TV Times
- Total TV Guide







Plaqued by our sick past



Mike Ward previews tonight's TV

HE GREAT PLAGUE is starting today. And before you cry: "Oh, blimey, really? As if we don't already have enough on our plates", let me clarify that, by explaining it's the name of a new Channel 5

documentary series. Presented by TV medic Xand van Tulleken, archaeologist Raksha Dave and ballroom dancing legend John Sergeant, it's a three-night special (9pm, tonight until Thursday), focusing on the pandemic of 1665 that claimed the lives of 100,000 people in London alone (a quarter of its population back then) and as

many across the rest of the country.

So, yes, it's one of those programmes that will have you thinking either: (a) what a tremendously timely idea, well done to <u>Channel 5</u> for thinking of it; or (b) who in the name of God would want to watch a programme like that right now, have these people taken leave of their senses?

"We're telling the horrifying story of how the catastrophe unfolded, day by day, week by week," Xand explains. Just so that we're not in any doubt.

Among the things we'll hear, assuming we haven't already switched over to MASTERCHEF: THE PROFESSIONALS (9pm, BBC One), is how a 17th century form of lockdown was among the ways they tried to fight this thing, and how the cleaning methods they used were in some ways as

Oh, and guess what - apparently, it wasn't the rats' fault after all. Filming on the series, Xand explains, began as Covid-19 began to spread. "And for me," he adds,

the connections between the two andemics are remarkable. It's a frightening lesson from history. Well, quite. By way of a viewing alternative, you may, as I say, prefer a trip to the MasterChef kitchen,

which remains encouragingly plague-free as the contest enters week two. As the latest hopefuls arrive,

what fiendish opening challenge has judge Marcus Wareing lined up? Funny you should ask, because host Gregg Wallace wants to know that as well.

"Marcus, what are you going to get them to do with that chicken?' Gregg inquires. If Marcus is

tempted to reply: "I'm going to ask each chef to run around with it on their head, like Joey did in Friends," he shows tremendous restraint in resisting.

Instead, he simply asks them to serve the thighs with a mustard, mushroom and cream sauce.

"How long are you going to give them? asks Gregg. "Twenty minutes," Marcus

replies. Sounds easy-peasy. I could do that myself. Give me 20 more and I might even cook it.

E Elsewhere, it's the semi-final of THE GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF (8pm, Channel 4) and everything's melting.

PICKS OF THE DAY



Film: Red Sparrow. 4Seven, 9pm

Thriller starring Jennifer Lawrence (left) as Dominika, a former ballerina who becomes a "sparrow", schooled in the art of seduction by the shadowy military of post-Cold War Russia. However, her superiors suspect she may be acting as a double agent, collaborating with the very CIA operative she was assigned to entrap setting the scene for an intriguing series of cat-and-mouse plot twists. Co-starring Matthias Schoenaerts and Jeremy Irons.

that saw all 700 Villagers lock themselves in, to try to stop the disease spreading to surrounding areas. Meanwhile, co-presenter Raksha Dave (far left) trials 17th-century disinfection methods and reveals a surprising substitute that reveals a surprising substitute that can be just as effective as modern antibacterial cleaners. The show also features presenter John Sergeant (pictured right). Last in the series. ar John Se

Documentary: The Great Plague:

Xand van Tulleken (left, centre) visits

Samuel Popys' parish church and discovers the sad tale of the Poole family, who within 11 days lost all

five of their children. He also heads to Eyam in Derbyshire, revealing the heroic story of self-sacrifice that saw all 700 villagers lock

Aftermath, Channel 5, 9pm



Comedy: Taskmaster, C4, 9om

The second half of the comedy challenge series kicks off here, and it looks as if four of the contestants still have a good chance of lifting Taskmaster Greg Davies's golden head (above) in the final. Regular viewers will have guessed whose chances are looking rather more bleak. This week, Daisy May Cooper gets rather cross, Mawaan Rizwan learns a lesson about aterfowl and Richard Herring wrings out a wet sock

Soap: EastEnders, BBC1, 7.35pm

In another helping from Albert Square, tension rise for a nervous Phil as the group try to get away with the heist. Have they pulled it off or has it all gone horribly wrong for them? Mon while, a hom Tina ends up on Shirley's doorstep in a desperate plea for help while elsewhere, Kim (Tameka Empson, right) encourages Denise to pursue things with Jack, convinced that they're in love. Can she help fan the flames of desire for the uncertain couple?



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Daily Express 19.11.20

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Daily Express 17.11.20



Finance: The Martin Lewis Money Show: Live, ITV, 8.30pm

As the second lockdown continues, Martin (above) and Angellica Ball give out advice as the country navigates these unprecedented and economically uncertain times. He answers questions on interest rates, the job support scheme and consumer rights there is also the latest News You Can Use, as well as Martin's tips on making your finances go further.

PICK OF THE DAY THE GREAT PLAGUE: OUTBREAK, 9PM, CH5

HERE'S something to take your mind off the current pandemic — a new

documentary series on a pandemic, albeit one that gripped the country uncover new evidence 355 years ago. Over the next three nights, archaeologist Raksha Dave, Dr Xand van **Tulleken and John** Sergeant (pictured) will explore the Great

Plague of 1665, tracing its deadly spread across London - where it killed 100,000, 25 per cent of the city's population — and beyond. They also exploding the long-held belief that rats and their fleas were responsible for spreading the plague, and bring viewers face to face with the real culprits.



Daily Mail 17.11.20

CHRISTOPHER STEVENS LAST NIGHT'S TV The Great Plague: Outbreak ★★★★☆ How To Soend It Well At Christmas With Phillip Schofield ★★☆☆☆

Lice one, doc! Proof that Ratty didn't cause The Great Plague <text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text>

Daily Mail 18.11.20

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PICK OF THE DAY

The Great Plague: Outbreak 9PM, CH5 ****

Here's something to take your mind off the current pandemic a new documentary series on a pandemic, albeit one that gripped the country 355 years ago! Over the next three nights, archaeologist Raksha Dave, Dr Xand van Tulleken and John Sergeant (right) will explore the Great Plague of 1665, tracing its deadly spread across London and beyond. They also uncover new evidence exploding the long-held belief that rats and their fleas were responsible for spreading the plague, and bring viewers face to face with the real culorits.

The Great British Bake Off 8PM, CH4 **** It's the semi-final, and just patisserie week stands between the four bakers

and a place in the grand final. But after a bocze-soaked signature, who will be able to keep a steady hand for the tricky showstopper, in which the bakers must demonstrate finesse and precision on both a small and a large scale?



How To Spend It Well At Christmas

8.15PM, ITV *** As Christmas approaches, Philip Schofield returns to bing us some much-needed festive cheer. Throughout the series, he will be joined by a team of experts, celebrity friends and members of the public to test the latest mushhave gifts to see if they are suitable for your loved ones.

THE GREAT PLAGUE: OUTBREAK C5,9pm

It's not exactly cheering telly, but the parallels between the Great Plague of 1665 and what's happening today are astonishing.

In a three-night series, Dr Xand van Tulleken guides us through the catastrophe as it unfolded day by day.

He says: "When Covid-19 hit the UK, it seemed a uniquely terrible event. But it wasn't the first time we'd

suffered a deadly epidemic. "In a frightening parallel 355 years

earlier, we endured one of the

greatest tragedies in British history the Great Plague."

The horrific disease swept through Britain, killing 100,000 people in London alone, and a further 100,000 across the country.

Dr Xand, archaeologist Raksha Dave and journalist John Sergeant trace how it started and how it spread, revealing a form of lockdown was used.

There's new evidence exploding the long-held belief that rats and their fleas were entirely responsible. And John reveals the symptoms of the bubonic plague.

Dr Xand says: "There are frightening lessons from history."

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Daily Mirror 17.11.20

Daily Mail Weekend 14.11.20



TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER TUESDAY Choices The pick of today's TV

Emmerdale

7.00pm **ITV**

SOAP Soaps have always been able to dream up left of leftfield scenarios when it comes to the business of bringing characters back from the dead. But points for originality go to *Ammerdale*, where the very-muchdeceased Lisa has returned as her delusional daughter Belle's (Eden Taylor-Drape) hner voice.

It must have been an easy gig for actress Jane Cox, who presumably got to record all her dialogue from home. But it's making for decent on-screen drama too, what with an off-meds Belle now hallucinating wildly while holding acake knife. The voice of Lisa is compelling her to protect the Dingles, but how far will Belle got to keep her nearest and dearest safe? David BROWN Saving Lives at Sea 8.00pm BBC2

DOCUMENTARY For some people, crossing a tidal causeway like the one off the coast of Northumberland to Lindisfarne is unthinkable without taking an obsessive interest in tide tablesbeforehand. The idea of being stranded in a car with a young family as the waters start rising, lapping over your car tyres... well, it doesn't bear thinking about.

Previews weren't available for tonight's episode but it features that nightmare scenario, as a car is caught on the road to Holy Island by a rising sea, ten miles from the nearest RNLI crew at Seahouses. Elsewhere, there's another coastal crisis as a fossil hunter in Dorset is cut off at a crumbing clifface. DAVID BUTCHER

The Great Plague: Outbreak

9.00pm <u>Channel 5</u> DOCUMENTARY New series Visiting

the 1665 streets of London to examine the outbreak – and subsequent epidemic – of the bubonic plague feels eerily familiar. Particularly when, during their whistlestop tour of plague hotspots – which also takes in Marseille – Dr Xand van Tulleken, archaeologist Raksha Dave and journalist. John Sergeant discover striking parallels with the current coronavirus pandemic.

Bubonic plague burdened its victims with gangrenous noses and lymph nodes swollen to the size of tennis balls – physical ailments showcased by Sergeant, who lies bed-bound as a make-up artist applies simulated versions. KELLY-ANNE TAYLOR

Radio Times 17.11.20



The Sun 17.11.20

WHAT TO WATCH



THE GREAT PLAGUE: OUTBREAK

For me the connections parkeen the two pandemics are remarkable. It's a rightening lesson in history," says Xand van luistory," says Xand van luistory," says the dist partiain's wors to relevant hree-part examination of stratin's wors pandemic babonic plagme that cost more than 200,000 lives n the mid-17th century. A doctor and regular presenter of health and well-being shows, Van Fulleken is also a former goldenic surveillance on the solution of the strategies have the strategies of the solution of the solution of the polemic surveillance to be is on firm ground here. In this opener he stypiores the authorities to prevent its arrival in Britain, how and where and, above all, how it spread. In his sights is the belief that it was transmitted by rats, or rather ther fleas—an idea he debunks, though his alternative is no more palatible, its also alternative is no more palatible, its also alternative is no more palatible, its also rath according that wealthier communities then as now. Along for the ride are broadcaster John Sergeant and archaeologist talsabs raised in a constant of the symptoms, outcomes and where plaque still persists in modern times. Continues tomorow and Thursday.

Daily Telegraph 14.11.20

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Tuesday

The Great Plague: Outbreak

CHANNEL 5, 9PM

"For me the connections between the two pandemics are remarkable. It's a frightening lesson in history," says Xand van Tulleken at the outset of this three-part examination of Britain's worst pandemic ever (so far, at least) - the bubonic plague that cost more than 200,000 lives in the mid-17th century. In this opener he explores the origin of the 1665 pandemic, doomed efforts by the authorities to prevent its arrival in Britain, how and where it broke out and, above all, how it spread. Along for the ride are John Sergeant and Raksha Dave. Continues tomorrow, Gerard O'Donovan

Sunday Telegraph 15.11.20

The Great Plague: Decimate (<u>C5</u>, 9pm)

Xand van Tulleken traces how the death toll mounted and the pandemic spread – from the City to London's suburbs, and brought by well-off plague refugees to provincial towns – as 1665 advanced. Raksha Dave looks at how bugs caused infection; and John Sergeant tries on 17th-century clothing that carried lethal lice. (JD)

Sunday Times 15.11.20

HISTORY The Great Plague:

Outbreak Channel 5, 9pm Over the next three evenings, Xand van Tulleken (left), Raksha Dave and John Sergeant follow the spread of the 1665 pandemic, and explain the parallels with the current crisis. In tonight's opener; they trace the first outbreak to St Giles In The Fields, London, and challenge the belief that rats and their fleas were responsible for spreading the disease. ****





THE GREAT PLAGUE: OUTBREAK 9PM C5

As we all try to make sense of the Covid-19 pandemic, this series looks to the past to see if we can learn anything. Archaeologist Raksha Dave, Dr Xand van Tulleken and John Sergeant (I-r) present this three-part exploration of the Great Plague, which lasted for 18 months in 1665-66 and killed an estimated 100,000 people in London alone. Continues tomorrow and Thursday.

Mail on Sunday 15.11.20

PASSIO

RIBUTION

The Sun TV Mag 14.11.20

History

John Sergeant fronts a new documentary about the Great Plague - and finds parallels between that devastating epidemic and COVID-19...

FACTUAL CHANNELS+TURSDAT-THURSDAY THE GREAT PLAGUE

Energisted With the help of De Xand van Tulleken and archaeologist Radoha Dave, son make some presty interesting discoveries about the plaque in this scene... about the plaque in this scene... belong plaque, but they dick to in 1668 s kilden 100,000 people in Locdon... but loss of people due to the scene scene interesting and so its more likely that it was passed through loss. The poor wold hardby the hyperne samkets were direktful the forgen on similarities between

the hygerne standards were shreadbil. You focus on similarities between the epidemic and COVID-19. Is it really as bad as the plague? Both specard rapidly, but 1 chank COVID is worse because we more around much more than people did back then, so it's ransomitted easily

sudeed and gave me these hornble baboes (inflamed lymph nodes). Then we asked a medical expert to talk us through the various stages of the illness. We sere all prevint quiet filming that. It was an experience 1 shart floggin in a hurry. Do you think this documentary page what is a largery. ou think this documentary it scare people, given what's ening now? people might say for accessed, don't talk to bout pondemics' but it is nating, it was an extraordinary to make, and it dhink people will ally with this and scam a lot. do you think is the most tant lesson this teaches u e need to take these things ty seriously. When I hear of in America not weather of What the important is They we need to be very very seriously. When, very very seriously, When, very very seriously, When masks, thinking it's all ow masks, thinking it's all ow masks, thinking it's all ow masks, the series of the th aring face rkil, 1 floc How have you coped this year to be honest. I live with my wife a lovely house in Ealing and we's

Total TV Guide 10.11.20





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TV Choice 10.11.20

menta

Did fleas on rats really spread the Great Plague of 1665?



Offended by Irvine Welsh Tuesday, Sily Arts HD, 70pm

Horacy, any action to upper the stranger to causing offence, the Scottish author speaks to musicians, comedians, writers and artists, including noveline Nodifa Mohammed (pictured), as he asks whether we are more likely to take offence today than previous emerationes sum: 20 TVaSatellite Weel

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Kitten Rescue with

Jo Brand Thursday, Channel 5 HD, 7pm

Thunkey, Chennel 5 R0, Jam Episode one of the new series features the dramatic researce of kittme Teri, who fell into a river and then became trapped in an underground storm drain. The rescue teams also correct to the aid of Simone, found chained to a factore, and Marta, who fell four atcorys from a balcony.



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attract sponsorship for the project.

NEW

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The Great Plague

TV & Satellite week10.11.20



REVIEWS

Online Reviews:

Mail Online – "CHRISTOPHER STEVENS reviews last night's TV: Lice one, doc! Proof that Ratty didn't cause The Great Plague"

https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-8960225/Last-nights-TV-Lice-one-doc-Proof-Ratty-didnt-cause-Great-Plague.html

The Guardian – "Great plague of 1660s bears sad similarities to Covid pandemic"

https://www.theguardian.com/news/2020/nov/09/great-plague-of-1660sbears-sad-similarities-to-covid-pandemic

I News – "The Great Plague: Outbreak, Channel 5, review: unpleasantly topical, but thoughtful and fascinating"

https://inews.co.uk/culture/television/the-great-plague-outbreakchannel-5-review-unpleasantly-topical-coronavirus-763402

Broadcast – "C5 plague doc takes hold"

https://www.broadcastnow.co.uk/ratings/c5-plague-doc-takeshold/5155038.article

Broadcast – "Hardly escapist viewing, but a thoughtful and fascinating watch nonetheless."

https://www.broadcastnow.co.uk/tv-critics/the-great-plagueoutbreak/5155036.article



REVIEWS

Online Reviews:

The Telegraph – "Coronavirus measures echo Great Plague response"

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/11/08/coronavirusmeasuresecho-great-plague-response/

Belfast News Letter - "Lockdown' was used during the Great Plague"

https://www.newsletter.co.uk/arts-and-culture/film-and-tv/lockdownwas-used-during-great-plague-3037488

SAGA Magazine https://www.saga.co.uk/magazine/entertainment/tv/2020-reviews/1112im-a-celebrity-get-me-out-of-here

The Times https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/whats-on-tv-and-radio-this-weekendsaturday-november-14-and-sunday-november-15-5596wnsqz

News & Star https://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/18872622.must-watch-tv-showsweek-ahead/



SOCIAL

The Great Plague received lots of positive coverage across social...





Videos

Photos

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SOCIAL







10:27 · 15/11/2020 · Twitter for iPhone

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PASSION

DISTRIBUTION

34 Retweets 242 Likes

Tweet your reply

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15

SOCIAL

| | Julie Ann Hart @JulieAnnHart4 · Nov 18 Interesting programme looking forward to part 2 The Great Plague arrived from London at the Derbyshire village of Ey a parcel of cloth infested with fleas. #TheGreatPlague | | | | °°° |
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| PR | | chrishall62 · Nov 18 5 documentary on t l | ne Great Plague is a | bsolutely riveting | ooo g stuff |
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