

TELLY TALK



Emilia found out she was pregnant around the time of filming *Silent Witness*.

SILENT WITNESS —
BBC1, Monday, January 3, 9pm

Mixed emotions for Emilia with autopsy scene

SILENT WITNESS star Emilia Fox has told of the angst she felt filming a distressing autopsy scene with a child — followed by the delight of finding she was about to become a mum herself, writes *Bill Gibb*.

In the opening two-parter of the new series that kicks off this week, *A Guilty Mind*, her pathologist Dr Nikki Alexander struggles mentally dealing with the investigation into the brutal death of a young girl.

"A lot of the real pathologists we deal with choose not to work with or do post-mortems on children because of the effect it has on them," she reveals.

Hard-hitting

"This is taken to quite an extreme level of how it affects Nikki, so I tried to think about it as someone who doesn't have children — although I quite quickly found out after that episode that I was pregnant.

"In a funny way, it had a doubly hard-hitting effect because of how incredibly protective you feel over a child, anyone's child."

The baby joy for Emilia was especially welcome as she had suffered a miscarriage a few years back with husband Jared Harris, from whom she has now split.

She's now in a

relationship with actor Jeremy Gilley, and baby Rose was born in November.

This is now the 14th series of the remarkably popular *Silent Witness*, with Emilia having been a regular alongside Tom Ward and William Gaminara, as fellow pathologists Harry Cunningham and Leo Dalton, since 2004.

"Every post-mortem we do, we have a proper expert in the room with us, otherwise the point of the show would be ruined," adds Emilia.

"The models and prosthetics can make you feel squeamish but I think it was the little girl that I worked with on *A Guilty Mind*, where I had to remind myself that she was going to be able to wash all the injuries off afterwards."

Mark's starry-eyed with his new show

by *Bill Gibb*

MARK THOMPSON is praying for some clear skies to kick off the year — otherwise his new telly show is going to be a bit of a struggle!

He's spending three nights next week gazing upwards for new BBC show *Stargazing Live*.

And if it's cloudy, it's going to lead to Mark and his team relying on plan B.

"It's stressful doing astronomy TV work, even if it's pre-recorded, simply because you're so reliant on clear skies," admits Mark, a familiar face to viewers from his regular appearances on *The One Show*.

Key events

"So, the prospect of doing it live is pretty exciting to say the least.

"I have been involved in astronomy for many years and I've learned to my pain that the British weather is, at the best, unreliable.

"We've been making sure that we have some back-up options, including some pre-recorded items.

"And we also have links to some of the world's biggest telescopes, from which we'll be able to get live images if it all clouds over here."

The three one-hour episodes on BBC2 will be hosted by Dr Brian Cox with Dara O Briain in the studio and Mark out in the field.

And he'll have some celebrity support in the shape of Jonathan Ross.

"We picked this time of year because there are three key events," explains Mark.

"Jupiter, which most people will have seen in the sky with the naked eye because it's

so bright, will be lying very close to the planet Uranus.

"There's also the peak of a meteor shower and, finally, a partial eclipse that can be seen.

"We're trying to do two things. One is to get people just to go out and look at the night sky — and we're also trying to show them what some of the wonders are and entuse them to take the next step.

"And you don't need lots of fancy, expensive telescopes.

"Yes, that might help but you can see stuff with the naked eye, with binoculars and basic telescopes.

"Jonathan is involved because he's a keen amateur astronomer with three telescopes, although he doesn't really know how to use the things.

Popularity

"So, I'm kind of holding his hand as it were and guiding him through using them, which will obviously be good for others, too."

The programmes should bring astronomy to a new audience and its popularity is a thrill for Mark, a keen amateur.

"I've been *The One Show's* astronomy presenter for about the past year and a half and it's been going down really well with viewers," adds Mark.

"Being able to try to entuse five million people is fantastic."



STARGAZING LIVE —
BBC2, Monday, January 3, 8pm

Top, Mark and, above, hosts Dr Brian Cox and Dara O Briain.

BABS' EXTRA-SPECIAL EASTENDERS GIFT



Barbara with Boris Johnson and the Queen Vic bust.

BARBARA WINDSOR was thrilled when the cast of *EastEnders* gave her the bust of Queen Victoria from the Queen Vic pub as a leaving present, writes *Ron McManus*.

"They also gave me the Peggy Mitchell licence plate from above the door of the pub. It's lovely, I'll treasure both of them," said Barbara.

The bust is the original that stood on the bar of the Queen Vic for 25 years.

A copy of the bust was destroyed in the recent fire plot which led to the renovations of the soap's boozery.

No doubt Queen Victoria would not have been amused at the scenes witnessed by her statue — last year, the bust was used to murder Archie Mitchell!

The bust also went on tour a few months ago as part of a BBC exhibition celebrating 25 years of *EastEnders* and, for many visitors, the highlight of their day out was having their photograph taken with the bust.

Barbara has been marking 60 years in show business by starring in the panto *Dick Whittington* in Bristol.

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