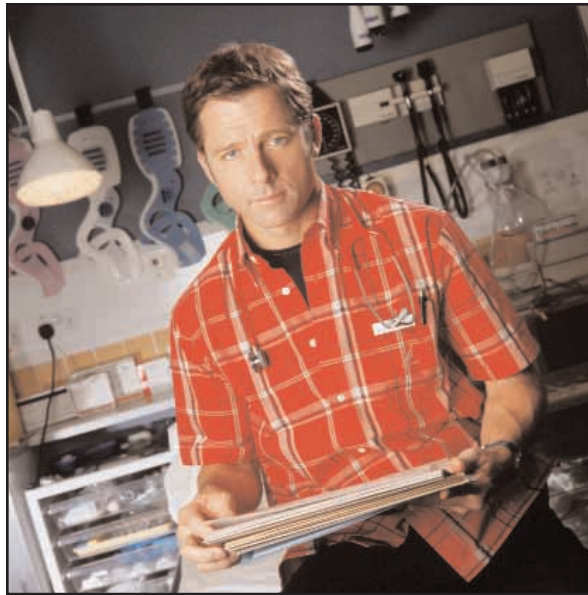


Maxwell Caulfield plays Jim Brodie Consultant Paediatrician



Maxwell Caulfield, who is 43, is delighted to be back in “old England”. So often associated with high-gloss American soaps is he that one forgets that his roots are in the Midlands and that he has Scottish ancestry. He was very much a Londoner for most of his youth, a dedicated fan of Chelsea FC and a boy scout in west London, before moving to the heart of Soho.

“I had a very strong sense of myself when I was in my late teens and early twenties, albeit culled from the American rebel hero characters that I admired,” he explains. He figures that is why he was tossed out of The Drama Centre, where he studied. “After suggesting I see the school psychologist, they showed me the door quite quickly because they thought I was a somewhat disruptive influence. They thought I wasn’t mature enough for the kind of schooling they had in mind. I was too busy being a slouching punk!”

Maxwell decided to take a shortcut to getting his Equity card and enrolled as a go-go dancer at the Raymond Revue Bar, living, at the time, above a

topless bar in Great Windmill Street. “I didn’t fancy carrying a spear and making cups of tea in rep theatre for nine months, which is what you had to do to get an Equity card back then.” He lasted 10 weeks as a high stepper, dancing to Pink Floyd for the delight of German and Japanese tourists, before getting embroiled in a brawl on stage. “All of a sudden I could afford a Suzuki motorcycle. It was great fun while it lasted but I was glad as hell when it was over,” he says.

After feeling stifled, Maxwell jetted off to “La La Land”, where he has spent much of his adult life. Maxwell claims he never aspired to being on American television; “I went to Hollywood sooner than I’d meant to. The move from being discovered on Broadway and being thrust into a three-picture deal with a major Hollywood studio all happened very quickly.”

Maxwell then met his wife, Juliet Mills – “the great steadying influence on my life” – at the age of 21 (she was 39) when they appeared together in *The*

Elephant Man. He moved back with her to LA, where they still live with their daughter Melissa who is, he says, “very much a Mills girl – she’s got the fabulous eyes and she’s a natural comedienne”. Maxwell is not discouraging her from becoming an actress – “she’s seen what a great lifestyle it can afford you: the travel, the variety and the opportunity to meet people” – but he is keen that she head to New York, “where she’ll have more control over her own destiny”.

As a young actor, Maxwell was selected from thousands to appear as Michael Carrington in *Grease 2* (1982), the sequel to one of the most successful musical films of all time. Both he and his co-star, a fresh-faced newcomer called Michelle Pfeiffer, were hailed as “overnight sensations” and he was promised the movie was going to make him a star. But the film did not live up to its billing. “We opened opposite *ET* and we got creamed. The studio yanked it and I came down to earth with a bump,” he laments. Maxwell is pleased that the film has found a life through television and video in the ensuing years. “It shows up regularly and it has a cult-like status, which I’m proud of.”

Then came *Dynasty* and *The Colbys*, which epitomised the Eighties. Maxwell was cast as bad boy Miles Colby in the saga of a wealthy Denver family in the oil business. After a decade, these cultural landmarks in television came to an end and Maxwell Caulfield went on to win rave reviews for his roles on Broadway, including *Entertaining Mr Sloane* and *An Inspector Calls*. Those performances led to him winning the prize role of Bob in *The Real Blonde* opposite such luminaries as Matthew Modine, Kathleen Turner and Darryl Hannah.

Now that he’s back in the UK, Maxwell is staying at the home of his father-in-law, Sir John Mills. Luckily, they get on well. “Sir John is the genuine article – a living legend and deservedly so. At 95 years of age, with failing eyesight and the inevitable physical challenges that being a nonagenarian brings, he really is a study of bravery. And he’s always happy when I’m picking up a regular pay cheque!

“Coming back here has reignited my love of acting and put me back in touch with my essence,” says an enthusiastic Maxwell. “I’m really delighted with the character they’ve fashioned for me. He’s a bit of a

live wire and a bit of a romantic, it would appear. What’s more, I get to interact with a lot of little shrunken actors – and it’s certainly never dull working with children!” Maxwell has generally played privileged characters – well-heeled and self-interested – but, he says, “I like playing a doctor, one of those archetypal figures that society admires. It is nice to play a somewhat selfless character and it’s making me recall the first-aid training that I received as a boy scout.”

Being credited with the intellect of a doctor was very gratifying for someone who never made it past “O” levels,” he jokes. Maxwell has been reading up on the human anatomy and is amazed at what he is learning about the female endocrine system. “I’m now totally in awe of women for having to contend with those hormonal surges. So that’s why they claim to be the tougher of the two sexes!”

Maxwell brings a certain Yankee sensibility to the part of paediatrician Jim Brodie, who has a teenage son (Andy) and daughter (Kelly) by Elizabeth, his ex-wife to be played by Gwyneth Strong (*Only Fools And Horses*). He’s a transatlantic character whose roots are in England but who has been through the American system and has some impulses that do not necessarily fall in with the way in which Harry Harper likes to run his operation. Jim also quickly lavishes his attentions on Nikki and it amuses Maxwell to be playing the older man in a relationship, given his own circumstances.

While Maxwell is falling in love with Bristol, his wife Juliet is looking after his Jaguar in Tinsel Town. “She’s visited a couple of times and we’ve just done a lovely tour of the West Country but she’s back in LA in an NBC daytime drama called *Passions*, playing an eccentric New England witch,” he explains.

Maxwell is philosophical about the distance. “Juliet has been very supportive and believes in what I’m doing – *Casualty* being a stalwart of British television. We never relish the prospect of long-term separation but we recognise that it is part and parcel of the business and it is nice for once that we’re both making money at the same time. Usually one of us is and one of us isn’t. That insecurity comes with the profession. There’s always a price to pay and, in this case, it’s the distance.”

Suzanne Packer plays Tess Bateman Emergency Nurse Practitioner



Suzanne knew what she was letting herself in for when she assumed the role of Tess Bateman in *Casualty*, having appeared in the drama as a guest in 1995. “My character was a patient who had swallowed some drugs and was trying to leave the country. The guy who set me up tried to kill me and I ended up being dragged out of a river.” The role of nurse practitioner Tess Bateman seems to be a little closer to the actor’s heart. Tess is a traditionalist and is keen to maintain the standards she was taught at nursing college. “She is a stickler for the rules and I think it pays off because she gets results with few mistakes. It is not that she is out to make people’s lives a misery, more that her experience proves it is the best way.”

It is Tess’s job to keep the numbers down and her appointment at Holby reflects the real-life move towards recruiting more nurse practitioners in NHS hospitals. She gets on well with Harry Harper and with Charlie, but is likely to clash with Dr Kaminski, who doesn’t always tow the line. She also

struggles with Abs’s unconventional and laidback work ethic but, Suzanne claims, “He brings out the mummy in her. There is a lost little boy in there somewhere, so I don’t think she could ever be really tough with him.” If Tess had the choice to be a doctor, she would still rather be a nurse because there is a part of her that’s “maternal,” she says.

Welsh-born Suzanne can relate to the maternal instinct, having just had a little boy named Paris (after Greek mythology rather than the city). When at work, Suzanne’s parents look after her six-month-old baby in Cardiff and she’s looking forward to settling there herself when her husband, American actor Jesse Newman, follows her to England after their two-year stint in New York.

Suzanne first met Jesse on tour in Europe. They planned to stay in Britain but thought they’d test the waters in the US for “another experience and another opportunity”, and New York felt comfortable. Of her experience in the States, she

recalls, "It was an adventure. The competition is much harder over there, because the standards are very high. The audition process is a lot less "touchy feely" and you really have to be hard-nosed. There's no time for a warm up! That was a big shock, and I wasn't ready." Jesse is still in the States but Suzanne is not worried: "New York is only five hours away. And when we're apart we communicate a lot."

Suzanne Packer is better known as Josie, the estranged wife of poor Mick in Liverpool soap *Brookside*. She is delighted to be reunited with her co-star, Louis Emerick, who joins *Casualty* for four episodes, once again playing her on-screen husband – fireman Mike. "It was a really lovely surprise when I found out. I always enjoyed working with Louis." Mal Young, BBC Controller of Drama Series and ex-producer of *Brookside*, said, "It's like unfinished business, just in a different incarnation."

"We go back further than *Brookside*," explains Suzanne. "My second-ever job was with Louis in *Playboy Of The West Indies* at the Manchester Contact Theatre in 1985, so we didn't need to worry about the 'getting to know you' bit. We dived straight in." Suzanne hasn't watched *Brookside* recently; she asked to be written out because she felt the longer she stayed, the harder it would be to let go and she might not have had the chance to play other parts.

Suzanne admits to being a bit of a stickler for the rules in real life, which suits her newest character quite well. Suzanne trained as a teacher at Goldsmiths in 1996 and, when she's not acting, she teaches drama. She has worked as a supply teacher in London, Brooklyn and New York at inner-city schools. "It is very challenging – doubly so as a supply teacher because the kids think that means holiday!"

She is frustrated that there are so many drama teachers without work because so few schools value it these days. "It just doesn't make sense. In drama you learn so much, especially about life and working as a team. It teaches kids to be different and see themselves as individuals."

Suzanne managed to combine her love of music, children and acting when she filmed an educational programme for the BBC called

Music Makers six years ago. "It is teaching music and rhythm to under-fives. It is a really clever little programme with a futuristic setting. It keeps getting repeated and repeated. Kwame is in it too!

"I find the more I teach, the more I feel that it is probably the best job in the world," she says, though acting is definitely her first love. "Teaching is even bigger than being a doctor in a way because you literally shape these young minds. How I treat a child could make a difference for the rest of his or her life, and I've suddenly realised that it is a pretty responsible role.

"I loved school myself. I had a great time and nearly all my teachers had a big influence on my life. Part of the reason why I did drama was that my music teachers were very good. The highlight back then would have been the school musical."

Suzanne confesses that she never used to watch *Casualty* for the simple reason that her mother was a nurse. "If you were a teacher, you wouldn't watch programmes about teaching," she says. Her mother and father hail from Jamaica and they moved to Great Britain where they met in the Fifties and had Suzanne and her kid brother, champion Olympic hurdler Colin Jackson. Her mother was also in a position of authority in her hospital in Wales. "She was in charge of her theatre. I do call her about certain things in the script and ask: 'Would this happen? Would that happen?'. And even though medical jargon has moved on since her day, she has been of tremendous help."

James Redmond plays Abs Mental Health Nurse



“I was misunderstood as a kid,” reveals James Redmond. “I probably had ADD – attention deficit disorder – which meant I was hyperactive and never paid attention. I was disruptive and got kicked out of a few schools, so I was constantly being assessed.”

But James did well in his exams, infuriating his teachers who, he says, must have been thinking: “He was outside the door for most of my lesson!” Despite his academic achievements, he was always getting into fights and claims, “I felt like an outcast in my teenage years, with no one to talk to.”

James has been able to draw on considerable personal experience for his role as Abs, a psychiatric link nurse, in *Casualty*. He sees himself, he says, in some of the individuals his character has to treat at Holby.

Abs has a certain charm but is a bit of an oddball. The breakdown in hierarchy at NHS hospitals means that he is able to diagnose and treat certain

patients, despite not having medical training. Like James, he was a bit of a tearaway as a kid and was arrested for joyriding. On one occasion, he took his younger brother with him without his parents’ knowledge and crashed. His brother was paralysed and Abs has not spoken to his parents since.

“Abs is now fascinated by anybody who has mental problems or issues,” says James. He is keen to champion mental health and is constantly frustrated when it is hidden away and ignored.

James feels the same. “I saw child psychologists when I was at school (or should I say ‘not at school’). The people I got on with were not just asking the obvious questions – they just chatted away and often they had had problems themselves. But, to some, therapy is a dirty word ... people are scared.

“I believe every single one of us needs therapy. It’s when we don’t have the strength to admit it that psychoses and all sorts of problems set in. Abs is a

bit of a loner and sees himself alone in his battle but he doesn't care. He's driven and passionate about his work but doesn't suffer fools gladly. He'll bark at anyone who gives him any grief, even if it's Harry, his boss, and he doesn't sugar-coat anything. What's more, he knows that they can't afford to lose him because he's the only one who can do the job."

When he left school, James decided to go travelling. "I couldn't find a job that I could keep for more than three months," he says. "I did monotonous factory jobs and worked in nightclubs but got bored easily."

He spent two years in Greece, where he was scouted by a model agency and ended up on the catwalk for the next four-and-a-half years. "It was 1994 and Blur and Oasis were top of the UK charts and, because I looked like an Indie band kinda guy, my face fit," he explains.

James lapped up the glitzy lifestyle. "The travelling was great, I was working with beautiful girls and the money was good – I had a flat in Milan, a flat in New York and one in London all at the same time."

The 6ft 3in actor oozes sexy confidence when he adds: "And I didn't really have to try too hard!" He did, however, have to watch his belly. "I've always been quite sporty, which helps. I play football and love tennis. Obviously, I'd like to have a physique like Brad Pitt but I'm a skinny bloke with a bit of a belly – more Mick Jagger after a heavy drinking session."

Fashion icons such as Calvin Klein and Paul Smith didn't appear to mind but it soon dawned on James that he was "26 and trying on clothes for a living. What the hell am I doing?"

James gave up modelling and decided to pursue a career on the small screen. Following a string of TV ads, he signed up for acting lessons and, almost immediately, was offered a part in Channel 4's *Hollyoaks*.

"The first day on set was a nightmare," says James, recalling his panic. "I even had a stutter at the time." But a course of speech therapy and dedication to the cause meant that legions of female fans now remember James for his part as

Fin, the loveable rogue with a penchant for older women.

A stint of presenting on ITV's *SM:TV* was followed by a role in Sky's steamy drama, *Mile High*, filmed in Majorca and centred on the lives of six young air stewards, one of whom was played by James's fellow *Casualty* actor Sarah Manners.

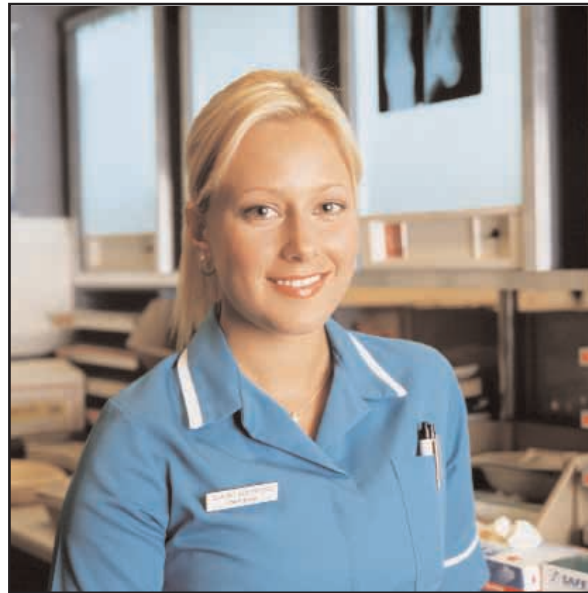
James is thrilled to have landed the role of Abs in *Casualty*, which is produced in Bristol. "Just when I'm getting married and wanting to settle down and start a family, I'm offered a job near my parents, in my home town. Perfect!" he says.

James isn't so sure about living back at home, though. "You're always 12 years old to your mum! My alarm went off on my first morning back and she was very excited. When she heard the beeps, she left it five seconds before calling upstairs: 'Son, are you getting up now?' I had to say, 'Mum, I'm 31 years old and have been getting myself up for the last 15 years!'"

James plans to marry Yvette, his make-up artist girlfriend of almost two years, in Bristol this year. And, with his feet firmly on the ground, he no longer feels he is at odds with the world.

"I talk to other actors who say, 'So what's your ambition, then?' And I say: 'To be a daddy and be happy'."

Leanne Wilson plays Claire Guildford Staff Nurse



Leanne Wilson exudes a gentle, happy glow as dependable and down-to-earth staff nurse Claire Guildford. This is a world away from her tantalising performance as Jess, a scantily-clad English pole-dancing barmaid in the big budget sci-fi series *Tracker*, which was made in Canada and transmitted throughout the States last year.

“It was an amazing experience,” enthuses Hertfordshire-born Leanne “*Chicago* was filming on one side of us and *Phonebooth* on the other. We were sandwiched in the middle and it was so exciting. I met some amazing people including Catherine Zeta-Jones and Renee Zellweger.” *Tracker* was Leanne’s first stab at a long-running series and, fortunately, it has taken off and is repeated on various channels in the States – keeping her image fresh in the minds of the Hollywood producers she intends to wow in due course. “I really want to do film. Whilst it wasn’t LA, I learnt so much about the North American film industry while in Toronto. I do visit some great friends I’ve made and I’d love to work there again.”

Her roles on the British small screen have been slightly more “girl next door”, save for a Müller Rice commercial in which she had to pad along a beach and whip her top off in 2001. She starred in BBC’s daytime soap, *Doctors*, as Candy, the receptionist who took over from Sarah Manners’s character. She then appeared in ITV’s *Night And Day* before hot-footing it to the States. She is also friendly with Will Mellor, with whom she starred in the movie version of *Is Harry On The Boat* in 2000.

Leanne has never been swayed from her childhood ambition to be an actress, having danced from the age of three. “My mum knew I was going to be an actress the day I came home from school crying because I hadn’t got the lead in the school play,” recalls Leanne, who went on to study at Sylvia Young’s Theatre School. “When everyone was out partying, I was fitting in as many productions as I could and in half-term I’d even do the filing in Sylvia’s office because I wanted to be there so much.” Such was her dedication that at the tender age of seven, she would catch the 97 Green Line to

Saturday school in London on her own. “From a very young age I was in an adult world; I was ahead of my years in that respect.”

She describes her current character, Claire, as “independent, honest, confident and good at her job. She’s determined, outgoing and not only does she say what she thinks, but she also stands by what she believes in. What’s more, she loves getting up in the morning for work.” Leanne is straight in at the deep end with a big storyline involving Keith, Claire’s boyfriend of six years, with whom she breaks up. “She’s realised she needs more in her life than he can offer. Their life together has got predictable as he wants to settle down. She’s not ready so it’s become one-sided,” explains Leanne. Keith wants her back more than anything, “which is really unattractive,” Leanne interjects. “He gets more and more serious in his pursuit to the point of being scary. He just won’t take no for an answer.” To complicate matters, Keith’s mum, Joan – played by ex-*Bad Girls* actress Helen Fraser – puts the pressure on since she doesn’t want to lose the daughter she’d always wanted, but never had. It is tough for Claire because she is kissing goodbye to the whole package.

Leanne can relate to Claire’s dilemma, having been in serious relationships herself that didn’t work out. “I was with a guy for a few years and I had to break it off. You feel really, really guilty and it is hard, having been really close friends with someone, to have to do that but when two people don’t feel the same way, it’s never going to be easy.” Ultimately, she asserts, it was the right decision and she discloses that she has been on the receiving end, too. She recalls: “I over-analysed things and just saw what I wanted to see.” At 22, Leanne feels Claire has a lot to learn. She’s never been hurt in love before and needs to see a bit more of life. Leanne, who isn’t currently in a serious relationship, is enjoying the freedom to do just that.

It is hard to believe the pretty blonde has an ounce of aggression in her body but Leanne is a fan of kick-boxing in her spare time. She enjoys releasing all the pent-up frustration of the week, but her big love is dancing. Street dancing is her bag and, when time allows, she trains at Pineapple Studios in London. Referring to her tight schedule, she laughs: “I have to dance round my sitting room to keep in there!”

Leanne lives with a mate in Hitchin but, when working, has a base in Bristol where she is enjoying making new friends with the cast. “We all play softball on a Monday – it’s fantastic fun and makes all the difference to our working relationships.”

Leanne has made her folks proud with her latest role. “I used to go babysitting with my mum and she used to knit while we watched *Casualty* together. She and my gran are avid watchers and I love the fact that they will soon see me in it.” Like Claire, Leanne is very close to her siblings. She has a younger brother, (21), who recently walked out of university and straight into a job at Sky as a trainee camera operator, and a tall brunette of a 16-year-old sister who has her sights set on being a model. “I’m the eldest at 22. They say bossy – I say protective!” says Leanne, the ultimate big sis.

Matthew Wait plays Luke Warren Paramedic



"I was a pure sensation seeker when I was younger," reveals Matthew Wait. "If I could get to the top of it, if it was dangerous, then I'd be there! I'd give anything a go. Socially, too, I'd kick around with the most dangerous idiot going."

Perhaps it's fitting, then, that Matthew has joined the cast of *Casualty* as paramedic and adrenaline junkie Luke Warren. The 37-year-old actor admits that, when he first got into the business, he too sought attention and a buzz but reckons that he has long since grown out of that.

"I see myself in some of these young actors who get carried away," says the actor, who has two children with his partner, Jo, a homeopath. "I don't regret it – I had a great time – but I don't think I'm so much like that anymore. I'm now a very different person and I'm happy with who I am. I don't need all that sensation."

It seems, however, that Luke does. Luke was once a successful footballer, married to Bex and really

going places. But one fateful tackle and it all went pear-shaped. Bex, who was only with him for the glamour, upped and left with everything he owned. But after a chance meeting with a paramedic, Luke's life changed. He retrained and landed a job at Holby.

Matthew says: "He's a difficult one to get on with. He's not a pushover. He's feisty, opinionated and happy to argue if it's called for."

Luke also likes the ladies. "People stop me on the street when I'm on location in my paramedic uniform and they scream at me: 'Oi! Leave that Lara alone! We like her!' and then drive off," Matthew laughs.

Though he has made appearances in TV series including *The Bill*, *Peak Practice* and *The Inspector Lynley Mysteries*, *Casualty* is Matthew's first long-term foray into prime-time popular drama. It is a whole new way of working for the actor who is better known for his roles on the stage, having performed with the cream of British directors and writers. He has worked extensively with director

Max Stafford-Clark, most notably as Bob in *Rita, Sue And Bob Too*, which toured in 2001, and as Paul in the its companion piece, *A State Affair*. Set two decades apart, the plays built a vivid and chilling picture of life on a Bradford estate and won Matthew much critical acclaim.

Never one to shy away from controversial roles, Matthew played a patient in a mental hospital in *Birdy* in the West End in 1996, and starred as a “camp, go-go dancing rentnik with attitude” in Mark Ravenhill’s *Some Explicit Polaroids* in 1999. So why *Casualty*?

“I needed to shake things up a bit,” says Matthew. “I wanted to change my profile a bit and I needed something that would set me up for a little while. This came up and I liked it because the characters are three-dimensional, there is a lot of location work and it looks like it will be loads of fun.”

What is new for Matthew is being recognised in the street. “I get a job on *Casualty* and all of a sudden, people are like ‘Wow!’ But they just point at me – two inches from my face – and don’t even say hello. It’s bizarre ...”

Matthew juggles his time between Bristol and Brighton, where he lives with Jo and their two boys, George (six) and Jack (nine). “I’ve been touring the world for the last five or six years, so we’re used to it as a family. When I’m at home, I have quality time with my kids. We go to the beach, make rafts and try to sail them. We go fishing or scrambling on the BMX track.”

Matthew can spot some of his own personality traits in his eldest son, Jack. “He’s a sensation seeker – big time. He’s an animal! I dread to think what he’ll get himself into,” he grimaces.

Fortunately for Jack, unlike Luke Warren, Matthew is incredibly practical in an emergency. “He once came off a tree swing, 25ft off the ground. Everyone else was screaming but I calmly picked him up and got him seen to,” he says. “Matt Wait is far more together than Luke is!”

On set, however, the actor admits to being “a complete fumbling twit”. He says: “Everything seems clear when the paramedic advisor, Dave, explains a

procedure. The rehearsal is fine but, when we go for a take, I’m a complete mess. There’s not time to count in my head, think of my lines and organise the props. The shot has completely changed and I realise the patient is already dead. Shit, I’ve killed them!”

But Matthew hopes it will all get easier. “Maybe it’s a bloke thing. If I’m talking when someone hands me a scalpel, I’ll faint. I can’t do two things at once!”

Sarah Manners plays Bex Reynolds Receptionist



Sarah Manners wasted no time in making her presence known as Bex, the new, feisty receptionist at Holby General. With the longest legs and shortest skirts, it is hard to believe this lad's rag centrefold was once a gawky grammar school teenager who used to be called "Uggers Manners"! A growth spurt and a brace later, the Birmingham-born actress landed five adverts in just one year and has since become one of *FHM*'s Hot 100 Sexiest Women.

Now 27, Sarah brings to *Casualty* a legacy of racy, flirty roles. She first caused a stir in *Doctors*, BBC One's daytime soap, in which her character, Joanne, helped her dying grandmother commit suicide with drugs stolen from the surgery. Then she played sex-toy salesgirl Sam Marsden in *Moving On* and starred with *Casualty* co-star James Redmond as gold-digging air hostess KC in Sky's raunchy airline drama, *Mile High*. But her most challenging role to date was as Tracey Andrews in the TV docudrama *Real Crimes*. Andrews stabbed fiancé Lee Harvey during a row in 1996, then told police he had been

killed in a road rage attack. "Roles that push you as an actress are fantastic," says Sarah.

With a headmistress mother, Sarah was encouraged to do well at school. She was educated at Bluecoat School in Harborne and later left the renowned King Edward's Grammar School with 10 GCSEs and four A-Levels. Sarah knew early on that she wanted to act, however, and won a place at London's Central School of Speech and Drama.

Bitchy Bex is a dream role for Sarah. "She is a footballer's ex-wife who thinks she is better than the job and would rather be doing something a lot more glamorous," she explains.

Bex is impertinent, tactless and highly amusing – but Sarah doesn't think she her character would last a day in a real hospital.

"Even with authority figures, she'll say what she thinks and, if they don't like it, they can lump it," says Sarah, who claims to have put a lot of her own

cheekiness into the role. “I think a lot of the bitchiness with Tally is simply because there is another pretty girl on her patch behind reception.”

But viewers are soon to see a different side of Bex, when she is directly affected by the “Holby disaster” that opens the new series and, in a later storyline, is diagnosed with diabetes – something which reveals her more vulnerable side.

Sarah had to appear in a sexy “morning after scene” with Dan Rymer, who plays Dillon, in the last series. “We were in the shower together and, oh my goodness me, he was wearing nothing at all,” screeches Sarah, who wore a skin-coloured strapless bikini for the shoot. “He did have a special thong but it looked ridiculous, so in bed he used the telephone to cover his modesty”.

Off-screen, Sarah has been with her boyfriend, Ben, for over four years, and is more than content with her lot. She insists that she wouldn’t enjoy the “footballer’s wife” lifestyle.

“Ben shies away from the limelight – he doesn’t like it. We’d never be a Posh and Becks!” she laughs, revealing that she takes the girls to all the celebrity parties while IT salesman Ben stays at home.

Sarah and Ben met four years ago on April Fool’s Day at a pub in Hendon, though he first spotted her on screen. “I was in an advert, dressed up as a bride. He’s since told me that he’d thought, ‘Cor, I’d love to marry someone that looked like that’.

Ben’s wish has come true; Sarah accepted his proposal on Palace Pier in Brighton earlier this year. Plans are afoot for a starry wedding in late July, to which the cast of *Casualty* are invited, followed by a honeymoon in Mauritius.

“I am excited about the wedding but there are lots of bits and bobs yet to sort out. I’ve just handed a load of stuff over to my mum because I have to ask Ben five times before he’ll do anything.”

When she’s not choosing flowers or zipping down the M4 to see her fiancé, Sarah is trying to secure the purchase of a Grade II listed building in Bristol. “The family home will still be North London but

this will be somewhere to stay while I’m working,” she says.

She’s also enjoying life with the *Casualty* gang. “We have great parties, especially at Martina’s [Laird] house. She’s an amazing cook and I’m addicted to her famous special bread and chicken. We have trips away which are usually hilarious – pure carnage.”

Holly Davidson plays Tally Harper Admin Assistant



“I’ve had a few punches in the face but I still go back for more – I love it,” says the stunning Holly Davidson with an air of defiance and conviction. Thankfully, she is referring to her passion for kick-boxing rather than any masochistic tendencies. Holly is about to get her blue belt after a couple of years of learning self-defence. “I find it great for keeping fit and getting rid of aggression. It’s really quite scary but my confidence has grown over the years.” That is apparent from her screen presence at the tender age of 22. Sadie Frost’s younger sister is set to melt viewers’ hearts as consultant Harry Harper’s troublesome teenage daughter, Tally.

Holly describes her alter-ego: “I play the eldest daughter. She’s looking after her brothers and sisters, trying to hold down a job and still trying to grieve as her mother just died. She’s going through a tough time and resents her father for not dealing with the situation well. She’s feisty and independent – I like that in a woman.” Like her character, Holly is headstrong and determined and, while she can’t imagine a trauma such as losing a parent, her parents are divorced so she is able to draw on certain elements of her own life; “Everyone says I’m

so mature for my age. I guess that comes from having older sisters, moving to London so young and having to grow up.” Holly, who left school at 16 and immediately started working with a part in *Pigeon Summer*, an education programme for C4, can relate to 18-year-old Tally’s rites of passage: “The innocence, the experimenting, going out, learning to flirt, learning how to play men and how to deal with the attention she gets.”

Viewers see Tally enjoying the attention of an older man in this series of *Casualty*; desperate for affection, she naïvely turns to ladies’ man Simon Kaminski, who makes her feel special. “Tally truly believes he loves her and wants to be with her and, when it begins to affect her relationship with her father, she rebels further. She’s 18 and won’t be told. She’s old enough to make her own choices and he can’t treat her like a little child anymore,” asserts Holly. Luckily, Holly enjoys an open relationship with her parents. “I didn’t push the boundaries because they trusted me. I’d come home and tell my mum if I’d snogged a guy because I didn’t have anything to hide. It was a give-and-take upbringing but if my dad said no, I knew to let it go, he was the strict one!”

Tipped to become one of the hottest babes on the box, Holly is coy about her scenes of passion with Christopher Colquhoun. "To begin with it was embarrassing, but it wasn't too bad. There were a few brief bra moments but nothing too raunchy." Luckily, Holly's boyfriend understands the business she's in. Ben Jackson is personal assistant to Jude Law and used to be a model, so they've got a great understanding. The distance, however, is tough. "He visits and when I get a chance I go to see him but he's in LA for a couple of months, which is hell." Holly, who has been dating Ben for nearly four years, smiles. "I'm very happy and very much in love. I feel very maternal and see myself having babies but, for now, I'm getting my fix with my nieces and nephews."

Rather than while away the hours pining, Holly gets down to the gym. "I'm very sporty," she says. She also loves the theatre, cinema and going to gigs when she's not babysitting. Holly was brought up in Ludlow, Shropshire. "I'm so grateful to my parents for taking me there. I loved growing up in the countryside in a little black-and-white cottage with a couple of acres, a stream and a waterfall." She's staying in a flat in Bristol, although home now is London, but when she's there she hates the fact that her mobile doesn't stop ringing and she feels "grotty". "I drive to my parents and am soon in lush countryside. I take a deep breath and everything slows down."

Life isn't going to slow down just yet for striking brunette Holly, who is best known for her role as PC Roz Clarke in *The Bill* and for performing alongside Richard E Grant and Joe McGann in *Food Of Love*, directed by Steven Poliakoff. This rising star is already lined up for a new movie which shoots in September. She's cast as a young girl from up North – again, very naïve – who comes to live in Soho. "Her friends work in a strip-club. She's overwhelmed by this whole new world and the film shows her growing up and finding love," Holly explains with a knowing smile having conquered London, grown up AND found love.