

## SCENE

MUSIC / FILM / TV / PO

**Vet me to the church on time:** James (Nicholas Ralph) ties the knot with Helen (Rachel Shenton) in last week's opening episode



# Creature comforts

NICHOLAS RALPH TELLS **PAUL SIMPER** ABOUT THE NEW SERIES OF TELLY'S COSIEST SHOW - ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

**Do you ever forget how massive this show is? It's broadcast all around the world...**

Yeah, on Instagram you get private messages at odd times of day like 'I'm a huge fan from Uruguay' or 'we've just got series two out here in Australia - can't wait for series three.' That's brilliant. A girl I was in drama school with was in Turkey and she sent me a message of a little video clip saying, 'I thought you'd like to hear what you sound like dubbed in Turkish.' I had this really deep Turkish voice. That was fun.

**Where was the first time you were recognised?**

One of the first times was with a taxi driver. He asked, 'Do I recognise you?' I said, 'You might, I'm an actor.' He said, 'Oh, do you do that one with the animals in?' I said, 'Yeah.' He said, 'Oh yeah, it's quite good.'

**'Quite good' - that's high praise from a cab driver.**

People don't recognise me a lot of the time. Rachel [Shenton, who plays on-screen wife Helen] and I were out walking in London, going for a drink after doing a press junket. This couple turned around because they saw Rachel and went, 'Oh my God, we love All Creatures. Can we get a picture with you?' Rachel said, 'Do you not want a picture with him as well?' They looked and were like, 'Oh, it's you!' That also happened with me and Cal [Woodhouse, who plays fellow vet Tristan] in a bar in Harrogate. I think I need to start slicking my hair back and wearing tweed, and talking really loudly about animals...

**James finally married Helen in last week's episode. What pointers have you had from Jim and Rosie, the children of creator James Herriot, on whom this is based, about their parents' lives together?**

I asked Rachel if she would ask Rosie if they had any pet names for one another. Rosie said they didn't actually but whenever James was going out on a job, they always kissed before they left each other's sight. I thought that was really nice. Little details like that are priceless as actors. You want it to be as rich and authentic as possible.

**We left series two with everyone raising a glass to prime minister Neville Chamberlain for supposedly saving Europe from a second world war. How's that working out in, gulp, 1939?**



**Eat like a horse:** Helen and James with Mrs Hall (Anna Madeley) and Tristan (Callum Woodhouse)

We kick off in springtime and there are rumblings and ever more of a presence of recruiters around Darrowby. We hear bits on the radio but it's still a way off and, when it does get closer, it's the whole 'it'll be done by Christmas' thing. Our characters don't know what's coming.

**The animals are the real stars, of course. Which do you find the most challenging to work with?**

Probably the horses because they're so big and I'm always at the wrong end of them! I grew up in the countryside and was told, 'Don't go to the back end of a horse.' When I read the episodes, I'm always at the back end. There was one time where the horse did kick out to get up - I was gone, I was in the other field straight away

**Is Derek, who plays Tricky Woo, the Pekingese dog, still the most professional animal actor?**

Absolutely. I saw him running for the first time in this season, outside where there was a light breeze. He looked like a doggy model for hair shampoo or something. This luscious, flowing fur with those tiny legs below.

*The third series of All Creatures Great And Small continues tomorrow at 9pm on Channel 5*