WATCH & SMILE!



A POTTED HISTORY OF THE SATURDAY MORNING LIVE TELEVISION SHOW

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Introduction

Imagine the scenario.

A visual cornucopia of entertainment, pop music, phone-ins with big name guests and viewers questions that know no boundaries, cartoons, games, the occasional adventure stunt, and comedy all taking place within one show.

The viewer on the other hand is relaxed, possibly still in their pyjamas with a bowl of cereal on hand, knowing that amongst the fast paced antics, they're in safe hands of up-for-a-laugh presenters, with a one-to-one relationship that's crucial within a thriving atmosphere of this kind.

All those conventions when blended together are associated with only one genre of television; the live Saturday morning magazine show.

For over 30 years, both the BBC and ITV spent that one day of the week breaking the rules of conventional television, and that fact that it was primarily aimed at children meant that if anything went wrong, no one cared.

It was one of the rare strands in television where the viewers both at home and in the studio were central to the proceedings.

In fact the very name of ITV's best regarded Saturday morning series *Today Is Saturday Watch And Smile* better known as *Tiswas* was sent in by a viewer.

It was the training ground of many a television presenter, Noel Edmonds, Chris Tarrant, Phillip Schofield, and Ant & Dec, many of whom still survive in the competitive world of television, where satellite channels and the internet have gained notoriety.

They were allowed to get away with things that would be unthinkable in today's restricted and tightly formatted television.

It has also seen success behind the scenes, breeding producers and directors such as Tony Gregory (*Big Brother*) Angelo Abela (*My Parents Are Aliens*), Joe Mace (Head Of Entertainment Development at ITV) and some bloke called Andi Peters…

But it's a great shame that what was once the most inventive format in television is now looked back in retrospect, as a result of being overlooked by viewers, and frowned on by television executives.

In the last five years, children's programmes have been scaled down from terrestrial television, and Saturday morning shows have suffered with it.

In 2001, Steve Williams in a column for the much missed website *Off The Telly* wrote in his analysis of *Live & Kicking* of how ITV were then the channel to watch on Saturday mornings due to the immense success of *SM:tv Live*.

It stated that whilst it was a very good programme, it would be a shame for a generation of children to lose the long-standing tradition of watching BBC 1 on a Saturday morning.

What no one predicted at the time was that in less than 10 years, Saturday morning shows themselves would disappear from both channels and it's easy to point fingers at who was ultimately responsible.

Some would suggest the programme makers and executives themselves, who decreed that adults shouldn't be watching the programmes despite the fact that they made up half the viewing figures.

Only when they tried to aim the shows solely towards children, it emerged that they preferred to watch the likes of *Spongebob Squarepants, Hannah Montana*, *The Suite Life Of Zack and Cody* and other US imports on satellite channels.

Either that, or opting for the excitement of the internet and games consoles, the latter of which actually achieves the aim of television being interactive.

Others would blame Jamie Oliver, whose successful campaign for healthier school meals opened up another struggle, when in 2006 junk food advertising was banned from UK television in children's hours, giving ITV an excuse to pull the plug altogether on children's programmes with immediate effect.

Partly thanks to the station lobbying the easy-to-give-in regulator OFCOM.

This leaves the BBC with a monopoly on producing home-grown children's programmes as other terrestrial broadcasters have followed ITV's suit, as a result of decreasing television budgets.

Channel 4 have disposed of both children's programmes and their award-winning animation department to focus towards the over 15s with T4.

And whilst Channel 5 may still have *Milkshake* and its counterparts, the strand has been hit by the departures of long-serving presenter Naomi Wilkinson to the BBC, and head of department Nick Wilson, who had a firm track record in producing television for younger viewers.

Not to mention the channel itself being bought out by Richard Desmond, a man whose background in television couldn't be any further from children's programming.

The BBC continue to produce very well made children's programmes such as *Tracy Beaker Returns, The Slammer,* and *Horrible Histories,* the latter of which is set to transfer to prime time BBC 1, proving that they still have influence.

But whilst the programmes themselves are successful, presentation has been lacking, with in-vision links banished to the CBBC digital channel and presenters replaced by performers, playing desperately for laughs with little viewer interaction.

Fragmentation has also played a major part which with regards to the success of CBeebies has proved worthwhile in that respect.

But the main worry is the BBC's belief that viewers stop watching their children's output as soon as they start secondary school, leading to many programmes being scaled down and compromised, and Saturday mornings are one of the victims, not helped by a demotion to BBC 2.

The most recent Saturday morning winter magazine show *TMi* has been through the motions, shortened to half it's length from series 2, moved half an hour early to 8:30am from series 4, and the most recent series was switched to Friday evenings on the CBBC Channel only, guaranteeing the death knell.

The BBC believed teenagers should be served separately, but the opportunity was wasted, with BBC Switch proving disastrous from the offset.

Mainly due to the getting-it-completely-wrong approach, and bad scheduling, resulting in the fact that many potential viewers in the demographic profile didn't even know such a strand existed.

Joe Godwin, the current director of children's programmes for the BBC recently stated in an article on the BBC News website that the demise of three hour Saturday morning shows from CBBC is not an observation we should be looking at poignantly;

"*We make programmes for children, not nostalgic old farts*"

Ironically, Saturday morning entertainment is now found on satellite television, as Nickelodeon have recently hired Jamie and Anna from GMTV's *Toonattik* to front their *Big Weekend* strand, and *Soccer AM* continues to provide raucous entertainment on Sky Sports every Saturday during the football season.

And to counter the "*nostalgic old farts*" sentiment from Godwin, Russell T Davies countered that argument in a BAFTA speech in 2009 stating that there's a difference between being cynically nostalgic, and remembering something that was inventive, fun, and exciting even by today's standards, using the Broom Cupboard as an example.

Davies himself being no stranger to Saturday mornings, as a writer in the late 80s at BBC North on what he now refers to as "*the BBC's Saturday morning show that wasn't Going Live!*"

And he'd know a thing or two about resurrecting a long-lost television series from the past and making it successful again in the present day.

Or maybe the decline could be pinned down to the politicians, as both Labour and the current "government" in economic struggles have seen ITV closing down many of their regional studios around the UK, and to make things more twisted, David Cameron has frozen the license fee for the next seven years.

It beggars the question in this so-called "Nanny State" as to whether any politicians actually watch or own a television, seeing as they're screwing it up.

The most worrying thought is how future generations of children will have no home-grown shows of their own, if programme quality continues to decline.

The importance of the situation has been stated by Simon Hickson, one half of arguably the funniest comedy double act to grace Saturday mornings;

"*The children of today are the programme makers of tomorrow*"

But rather than look bitterly at the present state, a more constructive approach would be to take a joyful look back over the years as to how we got here, through the many shows, presenters, pop stars, puppets, (and not forgetting the crushes), that defined the best part of a television weekend.

And more importantly, how the genre shaped the face of television as a whole, with a look into what happened for better or worse behind the scenes.

Expect to see the names of many important and commendable figures from the production side, such as Paul Smith, Ged Allen and Vanessa Hill, Chris Bellinger, Nigel Pickard, the late Cathy Gilbey, and even Lewis Rudd.

Although many *Tiswas* fans may despise the last name as much as *Doctor Who* fans despise Peter Cregeen, if it wasn't for Rudd commissioning Central's *Your Mother Wouldn't Like It* starring a certain Steve Ryde, the idea for the equally anarchic *Dick & Dom In Da Bungalow* may never have happened.

With all due respect to *Tiswas* and *Swap Shop*, I haven't written a great deal about them in as much detail as the other shows that followed.

Partly because they were a bit before my time, but also because there's plenty written about them on the internet already, with websites such as *Tiswas Online* giving a fantastic dissection into their history.

There's also a notable lack of Timmy Mallet and *The Wide Awake Club* as well, despite it being equally influential, but that's due to the fact that it is covered in Ian Jones' superb book *Morning Glory*, analysing the strengths and struggles of Breakfast Television in the UK.

What is included however is a special sub-chapter listing the obscure names of very familiar musical pieces associated with Saturday morning items.

The list of acknowledgement follows, but if anyone has any corrections, suggestions or worthy information that I've missed out, e-mails are welcome via robinblamires@easy.com

Overall, I hope you enjoy reading this retrospective of the most innovative, creative, anarchic, and perhaps misunderstood strand of British television.

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And most of all, my mum Jo, my dad Mike, my sister Kate and my brother Oliver for sharing the experience of enjoying such shows over the years.

Chapter 1: "You'll Never Know What You'll See!"

In the days before (and after) purposely made Saturday morning shows, British television simply filled the airwaves with whatever spare programmes or animations they had on their shelves.

In 1973 Peter Tomlinson, an announcer at ATV started a viewers competition, resulting in large bags of mail sent from children in the Midlands area, meaning a full length show aimed at them was a guaranteed proposition.

Hence the launch on January 5th 1974 of *Today Is Saturday Watch And Smile*, adapting the acronym *Tiswas* pretty soon into the run, providing entertainment for viewers in "ATV Land" for two and a half hours on Saturday mornings.

In the early days it was more of an on-the-spot sort of affair, all down to the opening titles which involved the show's name superimposed over a loop of the first few seconds to that of *The Golden Shot*.

It shortly evolved into a chaotic, yet very unique programme for the time with buckets of water and custard pies as the major selling point, and the rule that no item should last longer than three minutes.

Initially it was presented by Tomlinson, sports bod Trevor East, and *ATV Today* newsreader Chris Tarrant in a dark and secluded studio with kids being used as comedy foil in ways that hadn't been seen before.

By the end of the decade, *Tiswas* spread round the regions who abandoned their own somewhat inferior shows allowing children and a few mums and dads to marvel at the anarchy provided by Tarrant and his stellar supporting cast.

They included sketches from John Gorman, Lenny Henry's "*Compost Corner*", Bob Carolgees with Spit the Dog, and not forgetting Sally James, from London Weekend Television's *Saturday Scene* known for her "*Almost Legendary Pop Interviews*", as well the main reason why all the dads were drawn to the show.

Music acts such as The Clash, The Tourists, Robert Plant, Motorhead and Bad Manners would appear for the pure fun of it as opposed to a quick plug, leaping at any opportunity to be drenched in The Cage.

The BBC meanwhile took notice of the programme as it spread over the UK, and it was left to producers Rosemary Gill and Edward Barnes to come up with their own equivalent to draw in younger viewers on Saturday mornings.

Hence the launch of the *Multi-Coloured Swap Shop* on October the 2nd 1976 which was to bring together all the elements of popular live television and experiment on taking them to the next level.

Initially planned for twelve weeks, it would be hosted by Noel Edmonds, best known for presenting the Radio 1 Breakfast Show and *Top Of The Pops*, but also had experience of hosting children's television on *Z Shed*, an agony aunt style show which was one of the first children's programmes on television to incorporate live phone-ins.

Swap Shop's premise would be to encourage viewers to swap possessions of varying degrees (provided they weren't living creatures) inviting pop stars not just to perform on the show but also take viewers calls on the phone.

The process of which fascinated *Blue Peter*'s Lesley Judd so much when she was a guest on the show, she ended up undergoing the treacherous job of being a phone op as part of a report on the show and was also featured in *Blue Peter* Book 14.

19 year old Keith Chegwin was the roving reporter on the "*Swaporama*", providing possibly the first regular outside broadcasts on children's television and a young Delia Smith made her first TV appearance with cookery items.

Compared to what was to follow over the next 30 years, *Swap Shop* looked rather formal, although the chemistry with co-presenters such as newcomer Maggie Phibin, and most notably John Craven proved that nothing was taken too seriously, especially when things went wrong.

The success of the show on its launch meant it was extended for twice the number of shows in later series and soon became a fixture of the BBC's winter schedule with stars such as Dame Edna and Billy Connolly making the journey up west on Saturdays to take part.

With regards to what was on offer on ITV, the efforts of *Swap Shop* looked very tame when compared to the shameless anarchy of *Tiswas*.

By 1980 Tiswas was broadcast in 90% of the ITV regions and lead to many a rivalry in school playgrounds between those who watched *Tiswas*, and those who preferred *Swap Shop*.
It even got as far as football pitches, judging by the amusing chants at various grounds.

The show had now got its own specially made theme tune declaring "*Saturday Is Tiswas Day*" penned and sung by Tom Bright and Suzi Breeze.

It was perfectly summed up by the star of the Tiswas himself judging by his many outbursts with the now legendary catchphrase; "*THIS IS WHAT THEY WANT!*"

However, in 1981 it appeared that the success of *Tiswas* and its cult following with the mums and dads had reached a point of notoriety, when Chris Tarrant announced his departure from the show.

The presenter/producer would be joining fellow cast members John Gorman, Bob Carolgees and Lenny Henry (and Algernon) on a spin-off to be broadcast late at night in the new year, provided by ATV under its new name Central.

Replacing Tarrant was Gordon Astley, known to viewers in the West Midlands from Beacon Radio in Wolverhampton, although Sally James who stayed on took on a dominant role as presenter, effectively taking over from Tarrant.

Other additions included the rather attractive Den Hegarty formerly of 50s revival band The Darts and had previously been sacked by Tyne Tees from their rock magazine show *Alright Now* for being "too outrageous".

Unfortunately for those at City Road, they would now be beaming him to the North East every Saturday morning, now that they were taking the show.

The theme tune was rearranged, and the new titles included a subtle dig towards the BBC's offering with "Slop Shop" displayed on a TV screen.

With the aim now solely on the younger end of the viewers, the show started to decline in risqué material and spontaneity which many saw as part of the downfall.
The bosses believed that any adult content should be relegated to the late night spin off which would be called O.*T.T.*

Gordon Astley later summed up his tenure in an interview with Tiswas Online stating "*We were trying to do a children's show called Tiswas, and I'm not too sure if we succeeded*"

Midway through the series, Den swapped roles with Gordon as main presenter.

O.T.T made its debut on Saturday the 2nd of January 1982, and was heavily promoted as one of the centrepieces from the new Midlands franchise whose change of ident was brought to attention on that morning's *Tiswas*.

But despite a budget of £250,000 and major publicity, the show ended up looking like a television station's staff Christmas tape, due to its emphasis on crude and dated risqué material, with added swearing. In the end it lasted only one series.

There was no cross-promotion on either show, and the team from *O.T.T.* didn't even speak to their replacements on *Tiswas*.

A bigger controversy took place in the South of England, where the new ITV franchise TVS, opted out of *Tiswas*, in favour of their own show *No. 73*.

73 was the first of many Saturday morning shows to be based around a fictional premise (or pretence) with the on-screen presenters not using their real names, alongside a running storyline.

In this case it was based at an imaginary house where the main protagonist was landlady Ethel Davis played by comedy actress Sandi Toksvig, alongside market trader nephew Harry Stern (Nick Staverson), rollerskating Dawn Lodge (Andrea Arnold), and Ethel's love interest Percy Simmonds, played by Patrick Doyle who tried too hard to disguise his Scottish accent.

The cast weren't even acknowledged by their real names in the credits, which wasn't helped by the show not getting a set of titles until about *5* shows in.

The new series was not welcomed by *Tiswas* fans within the region who protested outside the TVS studios in Northam, and after six weeks the anarchy resumed in the South, although *73* would return in the summer.

The anarchy was also disposed of in the South West by new franchise TSW who in its place screened their own regional offering; *The Saturday Show*.

When *Tiswas* made its summer departure on the 3rd of April, there were fears of uncertainty between the viewers with regards to the show's future.

Gordon Astley instigated a "Save Tiswas" campaign, and announced that he would be touring shopping centres around the UK over the summer.

The show itself saw the departure of Sally James and ended with the line; "*How do ya like that? She didn't even say goodbye!*"

It was sensed that the new Central Independent Television was doing all it could to remove any shadows of ATV, and it made no hesitation of removing many of their long running programmes.

Lewis Rudd had been brought in as Central's head of children's programmes, from Southern Television who didn't start showing *Tiswas* until 1980, in favour of their own series *The Saturday Banana,* and unsurprisingly *Tiswas* happened to be one of the shows on his removal list.

One week earlier, *Swap Shop* came to an end, when Noel decided that after 6 successful years, the time was right to move on from "the Swappie".

Unlike *Tiswas*, the news was announced a few weeks in advance.

The sixth series of *Swap Shop* had seen a few changes, notably the theme tune where Mike Batt's composition was replaced by a tune by BA Robertson known as "*Hello, Hello*".

Robertson, was also responsible for spin-off single "*I Wanna Be A Winner*" by the show's team under the name "Brown Sauce" which reached number 15, whilst *Tiswas* released their own single "*The Bucket Of Water Song*", and an album, featuring Matthew Butler's rendition of "*Bright Eyes*" and produced by Neil Innes.

Keith Chegwin and Maggie Philibin were also going places, after being brought in to co-present Tony Blackburn's Radio 1 weekend breakfast show to cross-promote the show.

This possibly came about after an O/B, where Cheggers visited Radio 1 and Tone blatantly lied about how he enjoyed presenting the *Junior Choice* programme.

Also introduced was Lamb, a woollen toy operated by John Craven where the man himself was revealed on the final show.
It always seemed to be the authoritative figures who operated puppets, as Gordon the Gopher would prove later on.

The final show ended with Noel being given the *Swap Shop* sign from behind his desk as a present, and playing out with "*I Wanna Be A Winner*".

Taking over from the show over the summer months was *Get Set For Summer* hosted from Manchester with Mark Curry formerly of YTV's *Junior Showtime*, alongside Radio 1 DJs Peter Powell and Gary Davies.

The series later evolved into *The Saturday Picture Show* and in a twist of fate, Maggie Philbin went onto become one of the show's co-presenters.

Back to '82, and both her and Cheggers would be staying on for the successor to *Swap Shop* along with John Craven, where another Radio 1 breakfast DJ was to take on the main presenter role of what would be known as the *Saturday Superstore*.

The show took to the air at 9:30am on the 2nd of October 1982 with "general manager" Mike Read cutting the ribbon into the theme tune, composed again by BA Robertson, with vocals by "The Assistants" AKA Cheryl Baker, Dave Edmunds, Suzi Quatro, and Junior Giscombe.

Read had come top in a poll on the BBC's *Take Two* as the man to succeed Edmonds, and was given the task of overseeing the many departments.

John Craven manned the news, newcomer David Icke ran the sports desk, and Keith Chegwin was based either in the warehouse, or on location with the Delivery Van which made use of the Radio 1 Roadshow lorry so games could be played, and live bands could perform.

The phone number remained the same with the memorable; 01-811 8055.

The show continued the tradition of getting high profile guests although in terms of musical guests, it could get very over-indulgent with Mike Read using them as an excuse to get out his guitar and perform with them.

Cliff Richard being the most obvious example.

Noel Edmonds occasionally made guest appearances himself, and coincidentally he stood in for Readie himself for a week on his Radio 1 breakfast show in the mid 80s, joking about Mike's habit of turning up late.

By the second series in 1983, Sarah Greene had joined from *Blue Peter* as the "Saturday Girl" and shortly after the puppet "Crow" and his nephew "Malcolm" were introduced, as voiced by record plugger Judd Lander.

Over on ITV, Central came up with the idea of bringing wrestling star Big Daddy to Saturday mornings with "*Big Daddy's Saturday Show*".

Shirley Crabtree to give his real name, was no stranger to the timeslot mainly due to an appearance on *Tiswas* where strongman Tony Brutus attempted to lift both him and Bernard Manning, resulting in Brutus injuring his leg, and the comedian splitting his trousers.

The premise of the show would involve the wrestler becoming a Jimmy Savile figure, fulfilling children with their biggest ambitions, with Isla St Clair brought in as his co-host following her stint as Larry Grayson's partner on *The Generation Game*.

Saying that, she would take the more formal presenting role in pretty much the same way as she did with Grayson.

Nervous tension built up even before the series started as after recording a pilot, Crabtree got cold feet and walked out, disappearing from known whereabouts to the public.

Tommy Boyd was brought in as a replacement, and the opening titles were hastily edited to remove any traces of the wrestler with the name of the programme reverted to simply *The Saturday Show*.

Compared to *Tiswas*, the show took a more civilised approach with not a flan flinger in sight although the opening titles shared a few similarities using random extracts of Disney animations, save for the rather jaunty theme tune sung by a gaggle of children.

The show went out in all regions, apart from TSW, who continued to broadcast their own show of the same name causing a lot of confusion, later changing to *Freeze Frame*, which carried on opting out until late 1986.

It was to be ITV's winter fixture, later becoming *Saturday Starship* with Bonnie Langford hosting with Boyd, whilst the summer show was given to *No. 73* now broadcast to all regions from TVS's new studios in Maidstone.

The more familiar theme tune was introduced by now, penned by Andy Wilson with the immortal line "*Hey You!*" and new additions were brought to the cast with Scouse artist and former Marseille vocalist Neil Buchanan, and singer Kim Goody although unlike the existing cast, they used their real names.

Also appearing were Martin and Hazel Edwards, the neigbours from No. *75* as played by Richard Addison and Jeannie Crowther.
The antics taking place in the house were complemented by cartoons such as *Roger Ramjet,* shown on the house's projector.

The series grew in popularity as it progressed with items such as the many serial dramas from "Front Door Productions" and of course Ethel's "*daring, dazzling, death-defyingly dull, devastatingly dangerous, delectable, delicatessenable, divinely decadent Sandwich Quiz!*"

A line recently uttered by Sandi Toksvig on Radio 4's *The News Quiz*.

Musical guests continued to perform (or rehearse) in the house including Five Star, Aswad, Nik Kershaw, and even The Who.

73 gained a cult following with children and teens, with its fictional but spontaneous regime, combined with Ethel, Harry and the rest of the gang providing one of the unique television shows of its time.

The team also spent a month linking the shows for the newly introduced Children's ITV, where Tommy Boyd and Isla St Clair also had a go themselves respectively.

73's annual presence became rather higgledy piggledy mid-decade, most notably in 1986 where after the failure of *TX* with a young Tony Slattery, *No. 73* was brought back a month earlier than usual starting in January.

However another reason could have been due to the IBA wanting the smaller ITV regional companies to fulfil their quota of network contributions, hence the launch of a new summer show which would go round the regions mainly from Anglia, Border, Ulster, and Tyne Tees who devised the format.

Headed by series producer Janet Street-Porter, *Get Fresh* made its debut in May 1986 with hosts Charlotte Hindle and Gareth Jones AKA "Gaz Top".

The aim of the show according to Gareth's website, was to be "*cool, stylish and a little anarchic*" which it sort of achieved with the of-its-time theme tune with many a distorted orchestra hit, penned by Mick Jones who at the time was performing with Big Audio Dynamite.

The show was broadcast from via a mobile studio disguised as a spaceship known as "The Millenium Dustbin" and contained an array of items such as "Get Around" which focused on the week's location for the show, a feature on animals called "Get Wild", and the gameshow "Get Lost".

The latter was hosted by the show's comedy double act "The Vicious Boys" also known as Andy Smart and Angelo Abela.

There was also "Fresh Out" hosted by radio DJs David 'Kid' Jensen and Nino Firetto with the latest chart gossip, the latter of whom hosted Thames Television's *Splash*, an attempt at resurrecting *Magpie* for the 80s.

"Fresh Out" could have possibly been as a precursor to Kid Jensen's short-lived pop music show *The Roxy,* also produced by Tyne Tees for the ITV network.

73 returned in the autumn, but minus one of its key players, that being Ethel, who had moved to Australia in the storyline.

Sandi Toksvig later progressed to her own children's magazine/sketch show *Toksvig*, also produced by TVS with Kim Goody singing the theme tune.

The show continued to evolve, most notably with the addition of a pre-recorded Sunday morning show, shorter in length with more cartoons.

A more infamous moment however emerged when the series celebrated its 100th show featuring a special live performance by Iggy Pop where midway through, he proceeded to make suggestive use of a giant teddy bear.

The incident resulted in the real wild child's future appearances on British television looking shallow.

What was to be the final series of *Superstore* over on BBC 1, managed to prove eventful for a number of reasons.

By now the theme tune had been revised by music producer Steve Levine giving a more contemporary feel to the original BA Robertson tune and David Icke was replaced by Vicky Licorish, often seen in the coffee shop.

The programme had also developed one or two successful spin offs, with the most notable being the 1986 "Search For A Superstar" winners "Claire and Friends" singing *"It's 'Orrible Being In Love When You're 8 ½"*.

The song was released as a single and reached number 13, which was two places higher than Brown Sauce at least. And certainly more successful than the presenters' own "musical" offering "*Two Left Feet*".

The contest was revived the following year with Prince Edward announcing "Juvenile Jazz" as the winners, and staying on to take part in the Pop Panel.

Spring 1987 saw what many would view as the news event that was to have the biggest effect on the otherwise uptempo Saturday schedule.

The Zeebrugge ferry disaster on Friday the 6th of March saw BBC 1 broadcast a special edition of the recently revamped *Breakfast Time* the following morning, meaning that *Superstore* was delayed by an hour resulting in the now infamous line by presenter Frank Bough;

> *"And we apologise for viewers waiting for Superstore, in fact we don't apologise…"*

The show itself that morning managed to provide a stable running whilst taking the news into account and being careful as to what items followed where.

ITV meanwhile broadcast *No. 73* as planned albeit with a news update from ITN at 10am.

Unfortunately for them, they were broadcasting the show live on location from Camber Sands, and the last thing on screen before going to ITN was the caption "*Sea You Later*" which lead to more than just a little misinterpretation.

The crew from that morning's show had to re-locate to Dover on the same day later on, to broadcast a memorial service.

Towards the end of *Superstore*'s run, the show covered the run up to the 1987 General Election with leaders David Steele, Neil Kinnock and prime minister Margaret Thatcher taking turns to appear on the show and have viewers put their questions to them, where as expected no holds were barred.

The talking point arose when caller Alison Standfast would not let Mrs Thatcher off the hook with regards to her whereabouts in the event of a nuclear war taking place.

Alison herself appeared on BBC 2's *It Started With Swap Shop* 19 years later, where it was revealed that husband Denis was also present at TVC and thought that the question had been staged, which it hadn't.

Even more embarrassing was in the Pop Panel where the prime minister was asked to rate the latest releases along with Vicki Michelle from *Allo Allo*, and Terry Nutkins and Chris Packham from *The Really Wild Show*.

Mrs Thatcher didn't appear to rate the solo efforts of Pepsi and Shirley, or the sophisto pop of the Style Council, but was all for the "more melodic" offering by The Thrashing Doves which resulted in the band losing all hope of gaining credibility.

Saturday the 18th of April saw the final *Saturday Superstore* after 142 shows, best remembered by fans for the first TV appearance of Wet Wet Wet.

It was decided over the summer, that the show to replace *Superstore* in the autumn would be a lot faster, ditching all signs of pretence and imaginary locations, in order to simply get on with the show.

The production staff would remain relatively unchanged with Chris Bellinger, Angela Sharp, and Cathy Gilbey remaining in their respective roles, although major changes would take place in front of the camera.

Rather than go for a Radio 1 DJ as the main presenter, the production team turned their attention to the Children's BBC Broom Cupboard and presenter Phillip Schofield, who also hosted the "TV Talkback" item in the final series of *Superstore*.

Having turned down an opportunity to host *Blue Peter* the year before, Phillip was very keen to make the move to Saturday mornings, having been a massive *Swap Shop* fan himself.

Sarah Greene was promoted as co-presenter, and both her and "Schofe" were set to take Saturday mornings to a greater level than before.

But before what many would view as the best Saturday morning show made it's debut on screen, the summer of 1987 was covered by what would have to be one of the worst formats to appear in that timeslot with a title to match.

It's Wicked, hosted on location each week by Carolyn Marshall and Craig Charles stunt double Jake Abraham, was quite possibly the first of many shows that fell into the category of trying too hard to be trendy with current fashions.

The show's title and "*Studio Line*" inspired theme tune pretty much proved a point.

The programme was also notable (if that's the right word) for having quite frankly the worst ever conceit within a Saturday morning show, in which the it was based around two individuals flicking through the television channels.

This became the continuity device, where pop videos and cartoons would be under the pretence of being shown on different channels.

It's a bugger to explain, although thankfully the BBC felt the same about the show as most of the viewers, and it only lasted one series.

Making a return on ITV was *Get Fresh* which in turn, had a few changes following the departure of Janet Street-Porter to *Network 7* in her continuing quest to pioneer "yoof programmes".

Out went Adrian Mole and The Vicious Boys, and in came sports expert Carmen Pryce, and most notably of all, a snot ridden alien by the name of Gilbert created by producer Michael Forte, designed by Roger Law and Peter Fluck from *Spitting Image*, and voiced by impressionist Phil Cornwell.

The alien's knowledge of Earth was made up entirely from popular culture, and the many voices from Cornwell's repertoire allowed the alien to develop a cult following with viewers, and a raucous rapport between the hosts and the many guests who would step inside the Millennium Dustbin.

Compared to earlier examples such as Posh Paws, and Crow from Superstore, the alien was a lot more abrasive and irreverent, leaning towards Roland Rat.

Sometimes the alien went below the belt with incidents such as when Aswad were on the show, and Gilbert's allusions to the term "skin up" lead to trouble with the IBA.

The show followed in the footsteps of *No. 73* by inaugurating a pre-recorded Sunday show hosted solely inside the "dustbin" by Charlotte, Gaz Top and Gilbert.

As September approached however, Saturday morning television was on the brink of many changes, some for the better, but in the case of those living in an imaginary house in Maidstone, probably not so.

Chapter 2 – "Swing Your Pants!"

At 9:30am on BBC 1 on Saturday the 26th of September 1987, the revolution of Saturday mornings began with the image of a 1930s BBC tuning signal as a homage to the traditional broadcasting regime.

Over a test tone and interference noises, Peter Gosling's brash and climatic theme tune made its first airing, and the bright opening titles span off in a star charisma accompanied by a laser sound effect revealing presenters Phillip Schofield and Sarah Greene making their entrance into Studio 7.

From here onwards it was all about getting on with the show and making it more vibrant and fast paced, showcasing everything great about live telly.

Phillip and Sarah hit it on the right level with the viewers, with Phillip's experience in the Broom Cupboard and enthusiasm for live television making himself a more likeable and quick-witted presenter than Edmonds and especially Mike Read, allowing chemistry between Sarah to develop quickly.

Phillip being 15 years younger than Mike Read, delivered a more spontaneous accessible presenting manner, and Sarah developed a more dominant role than on *Superstore*, with a flirtatious manner, and cheeky demeanour.

Gordon had his own little seat between Phillip and Sarah's main seating area where the relationship between him and Phillip continued to blossom.

Returning to the show from *Superstore* were Peter Simon who was now the host of *Double Dare*, a gameshow imported from Nickelodeon in the US bringing gunge and messiness to the BBC on Saturday mornings, where not one edition went without Peter slipping over the gunge in true slapstick fashion.

Nick Wilton (who also appeared in *No. 73* as Tony Deal) was on hand to announce the prizes on offer in his inimitable wacky style;

> *"You get to take home your Double Dare t-shirt and trainers!"*

Peter would also occasionally be seen on the main show hosting various items.

The majority of items were designed to put the viewer at centre stage including the return of Phillip Hodson and the successful "*Growing Pains*" where issues became more revealing than ever before, such as divorce, betrayal, and bereavement, assuring viewers that no topic was off limits.

Also introduced were "*Soapbox*" where viewers sounded off opinions, the "*Joke Box*" filmed on location where children provided fast-paced gags, and "*All About Me*" profiling children with unique talents and backgrounds.

The serious bits were balanced well with the more lively parts of the show including "*Live Line*" where Phillip would phone a viewer at home by surprise which didn't always work as planned.

Annabel Giles made a few appearances in the first series offering fashion tips which caught the eyes of a few TV bosses as both Giles and Sarah Greene were enlisted to host the TVS fashion series *Posh Frocks and New Trousers*.

Pop Panel was simply retitled "*Video Vote*" where as well as the studio guests, callers at home could offer their own opinions giving scores out of 5 individually for both the video and the song.

Towards the end of the show, big name guests were interviewed in the "*Press Conference*" not just by viewers on the phone, but also in the studio.

The major selling point of the show came in the form of two fresh faced comedians Trevor Neal and Simon Hickson, who were enlisted to provide witty interludes as themselves and other characters with "*The Bottomless Bin*" being the standout sketch of series 1.

The combination worked well as Phillip and Sarah were the avuncular hosts who could adlib at any given time, but Trevor and Simon were there solely to provide the laughs full stop, with the crew brought in to share the mirth.

The "*Search For A Superstar*" competition was carried over from *Superstore* and renamed "*The Going Live! Young Entertainer Of The Year*" where the winners were disabled performers Helen Jenkinson and Damien Ward.

The pair danced through an emotional routine to Michael Crawford's "*Music Of The Night*" prompting the man himself to return specially from America to see the performance.

Theme tune composer Peter Gosling had his work cut out where in addition to main theme, he also did the music for *Double Dare*, and the preceding 8:30am strand *Saturday Starts Here* introduced by Phillip and Sarah before the main show.

A mid tempo closing theme was also introduced which gave a nice winding down feel after three hours of live chaos, over still images of the show's highlights.

Going Live! quickly became one of the most popular shows on the BBC, with the team even providing a greeting for the BBC 1 Christmas trail.

Overall it was the perfect live Saturday morning show for the time that managed to look fresh and trendy without trying too hard, in what was back then a fast moving transitional period for television.

And the best was still yet to come.

Over in Maidstone, *No. 73* had undergone a minor makeover with a revised theme tune remixed by Ray Shulman who had previously composed many TVS children's themes such as *On Safari*, *Do It*, and Kid Jensen's quiz *Worldwise*.

The new theme tune was more reminiscent of a Paul Hardcastle record with stuttered shouts of "*Hey You!*" and the removal of the fast-talky "*#Never Seen Nothing, No Not Like This Place*" line near the end.

The reason for the change could have been the change of address to "ME14 6RS" as the old titles had "ME15" on the letter graphics.

Ethel's ill-fated replacement Maisie McChonie played by Scottish actress Kate Copstick was dropped, and replaced by new characters including lodgers Nadia and Jules who used their real names, and new neighbour Hamilton Dent played by Richard Waites.

Things were looking unstable as the house was collapsing every week and by Christmas the residents faced eviction under evil landlord J.C Birch and solicitor James Squire who had quite a thing for Dawn.

The residents of 73 departed on the 2nd of January 1988.

The reason for the strung out plot was to disguise what was really going on at the Maidstone studios, as the permanent studio sets of *73* were causing problems for other programmes, including the immensely popular gameshow *Catchphrase* which required use of the studios to film a large number of shows.

To allow flexibility, it was decided that *73* would broadcast from an outdoor set which bosses believed would allow extra scope for story lines, and more room for location development.

Regular guests such as the late Frank Sidebottom and vet David Taylor would continue to appear, but from the 9th of January, the show underwent a major name change to *7T3*.

It would be based around a Wild West theme park, built on a disused netball ground on Vinters Park, and the name came about with the familiar yellow "73" logo placed on red saloon swing doors, and the painted golden hinges on the inner sides resembled a T.

The theme tune was re-arranged yet again with a synth mouth organ, and gun shots to reflect the Wild West influence with only the stuttered "Hey You!" remaining from the original.

The show ended up looking very awkward on screen due its over the top Albert Square exterior, making it hard for presenters to stay in character, and the high production costs of producing a live show entirely as an outside broadcast rendered a return in the autumn untenable.

The confirmation pretty much came when "Harry" appeared on the third series of *Get Fresh* that summer providing updates on one of Ian Botham's many charity treks, but this time under his real name Nick Staverson.

The actor later went on to become a gardener, and the rest of the cast (apart from Neil and Dawn) opted to move away from Saturday mornings.

The final time the cast of *73* appeared together was on the first *ITV Telethon* in May 1988, although the event was more notable to fans, for the (first) reunion of the *Tiswas* gang, with Chris, Sally, John, Lenny, Bob and the Phantom Flan Flinger making a welcome return.

After a successful first series of *Going Live!*, BBC bosses didn't want to replicate the disaster that was *It's Wicked*, so two new shows were commissioned to provide entertainment for viewers over the warmer months.

The first of which was *On The Waterfront* running from April until June and was more of a modern day variety show, with comedy sketches and elimination games, broadcast from a warehouse in Liverpool and had a rather good theme song, based around a tune by Wax.

The team consisted of Andrew O'Connor, Terry Randall, Kate Copstick and Bernie Nolan.

Two of them were no strangers to Saturday mornings as O'Connor and Copstick had previously appeared on *No. 73* in the mid 80s.

Also on hand on writing duties was a certain Russell T. Davies who was responsible for penning the standout part of the show in the form of dubbed episodes of ancient foreign series *The Flashing Blade*.

Co-voiced by a young Jon Culshaw, the shorts recently got an outing on the CBBC series *Chute!* produced by the team behind *Da Bungalow*.

The sketches were often interspersed with jokes read by TV presenters and popstars.

July to September was covered by *UP2U* which was more of a straight magazine show hosted by Jenny Powell from *No Limits*, Anthea Turner from *BFT*, and Tony "Laters!" Dortie.

Normally the show would involve two presenters in the studio and one on location which was rotated each week, and the premise as suggested by the title would be that the viewers would have control of what the presenters would be doing.

A BBC Micro "Doomsday Book" produced a computer map to track down the O/B.

The series finished in mid September although *Going Live!* would return later than scheduled due to coverage of the Seoul Olympics.

Back on ITV *Get Fresh* continued for what would be its final outing that summer, as the concept was wearing thin, and increased pressure from the IBA over Gilbert's material suggested that three series was a good time to end on.

However both Gaz and Charlotte would return to Saturday mornings in the 90s and Gilbert was given his own spin-off series *Gilbert's Fridge* produced by Tyne Tees with a theme tune by the Pogues.

Taking its place for the winter was a brand new show from TVS with the name *Motormouth* making its debut on the 3rd of September 1988.

Devised by *73* creator John Dale, many of the team from said show would be looking after the production although only Neil Buchanan and Andrea Arnold (using her real name) would make the transition as presenters, joined by future TV producer Tony Gregory and Scouser Julian Ballantyne now a familiar telesalesman on QVC.

A few weeks into the series they were joined by the attractive Caroline Hanson.

Described by TV fan Paul Morris as "*a title in search of a show*" the first series of *Motormouth* was an example of trying too hard and failing badly.

The programme desperately wanted to be in fashion and up to date with the team posing for one of their early publicity photos in denim jeans and jackets which looked very awkward.

The opening title sequence was based inside a mechanical mouth anatomy with the theme composed by Peter Miller and Ian Porter who would compose many a theme tune for ITV's Saturday mornings over the next 18 years.

Whereas the graphics in and out of the ad-breaks were another sign of attempted "coolness" by simply removing the word "Part" and just the number, if that makes any sense.

For example "*End Of 3*".

Not to mention the audience being placed on forklift trucks causing a few participants to be sick off screen, and a giant mouth which acted as a sofa.

In an attempt to sustain ties with *73*, a fictional concept was introduced set at "*The Spin Off Complex*" where the show was apparently produced from, with a reprieve for Richard Waites, and an on-screen debut for Joe Greco who later appeared in Thames Television's US sitcom spoof *Spatz*.

The set for the sketches bore many a shade to that of *7T3*.

To say the pretence was lost on the viewer would be an understatement, as around mid-way through the series, the Spin Off segments were introduced by the presenters as standard sketches.

Whilst the programme managed to get the usual S.A.W. fodder as musical guests as well as obscure indie bands, one unlikely guest who made his TV debut on the show happened to be comedian Bill Bailey.

Reminiscing about the experience on *Room 101*, Bill was the piano player for a mind reading dog, which didn't exactly go to plan, leaving presenter Julian Ballantyne in stitches.

Such mishaps were a result of the mish mash of interchanging items each week, with one show devoted to ska music which more or less proved how out of touch the programme was.

Another sign of embarrassment came from the cartoons that were shown as it looked really bad for a programme trying to look hip and fresh to be showing the low-rate *He-Man* spin off *She-Ra – Princess Of Power*.

Whereas *Going Live!* were showing the *Thundercats* which by now had influenced its own inevitable merchandising boom, and *Muppet Babies* to entertain the younger viewers.

It's odd when looking back at it, that credits for animations were still shown within the programmes although *Motormouth* was one of the first to "crush the credits" so presenters could link into a break alongside them.

A Sunday show was also inaugurated in line with *73* and *Get Fresh* but *Motormouth* still had a long way to go in terms of achieving success in the wake of *No. 73*.

ITV knowing that they were struggling on Saturdays went out of their way to poach a popular Channel 4 programme, previously shown in the slot vacated by *The Tube*, to be broadcast alongside their main show.

Hence the launch of *The Chart Show* on the 7th of January 1989, broadcast between 12 and 1pm and saw a refresh of the fairground graphics including an impressive title sequence based around an animated simulation of the Corkscrew rollercoaster at Alton Towers.

Not all regions took the programme, as TSW playing their regional card would often opt out if there was a sports event taking place that afternoon, in order to broadcast their news review programme *The South West Week*.

The second half-hour would usually be filled by the Night Time import *America's Top 10* hosted by jumper-clad Casey Kacem.

By now Channel Television in Jersey had switched their feed to TVS, as they couldn't cope with the number of opt outs from the Plymouth based franchise.

The second series of *Going Live!* due to start after the Olympic Games on the 8th of October was hampered due to a helicopter accident involving Sarah Greene and her soon to be engaged partner Mike Smith the previous month.

It was decided that Phillip would present the first few shows on his own with studio guests helping out on various items, whilst live link ups to the hospital with Sarah in her bed ensured her presence would not be missed, where she took part as a panellist on the Video Vote.

The first show in fact saw half an hour removed in favour of "*The Great Heap*" an extended episode of the animated Star Wars *Droids* spin off.

Helping Phillip out on the first show were T' Pau's Carol Decker on the Video Vote, and Anthea Turner from *UP2U* brought on the following week.

Phillip managed pretty well in the studio without Sarah, save for a misunderstanding on putting an addressed envelope into another to enter the 1989 Young Entertainer competition which was ridiculed throughout the first show.

The studio set had undergone a revamp, replacing the vertical stripes redecorated from the set of Superstore, with a jagged, contemporary image including honeycomb shaped wire and glittery blue backgrounds.

Variations on the "*LIVE!*" typeface were also added to the trimmings.

The new set was also adapted to *Double Dare* which returned for a second run with celebrity contestants from shows such as *Grange Hill* and *Eastenders* alongside the younger participants.

"All About Me" was back to showcase unique and talented viewers where the first in this series was 16 year old Shakespearean actor Lyndon Davies, known to older viewers as the young Phillip Marlow in BBC 1's *The Singing Detective*.

Other returning items included Soapbox, Growing Pains, and the Joke Box which saw the launch of a tie-in book promoted on the first show, pleasing the television fans by sporting the new slanted "/B/B/C/" logo which was gradually being introduced across the corporation.

The interactive game "Treasure Hunt" also returned for a second outing where Phillip understandably got exasperated with callers using the game to make dedications to their mates.

The numbers would normally appear on screen to a square wave sound similar to that of the original Children's BBC jingle.

The Young Entertainer competition returned for a second outing where the eventual winner was 6 year old Scottish singer Stuart Anderson who's performance was recently shown on *8 Out Of 10 Cats* with Jimmy Carr referring to him as a young Frankie Boyle.

Other items included "*Book It!*" where flamboyant children's author Brough Girling gave monthly updates of children's literature releases, Lynn Faulds-Wood dealt with consumer issues on "*Watchdog Going Live!*" and 18 year Jane Goldman took over the fashion slot from Annabel Giles.

Jane's presence on the show may have been responsible for the many guest appearances by future husband Jonathan Ross who would often star alongside Trevor And Simon.

And on that note, the standouts of show were back where this series saw the introduction of perhaps their most well remembered characters "*The Singing Corner*", with Trev on guitar and Simon occasionally playing hand percussion.

Possibly as a send up of The Proclaimers who happened to be guesting in the hospital with Sarah and partner Mike Smith on the first show.

Dressed up as old fashioned folk singers along the lines of Wally Whyton or Lonnie Donegan, the sketches gained a cult following with viewers both young and old, with their acoustic renditions of current pop songs.

Watching it at the time aged around three or four years old, I was convinced that the Singing Corner and Trev And Simon were not the same people.

Each week they would normally get one of the musical guests to join in with their folk induced crooning with acts such as Erasure, Jason Donovan, Sonia, Lisa Stansfield, and even Cliff Richard joining in with them over the course of the series.

To think that Mike Read used to do that sort of thing for real on Saturday mornings not long before, added to the hilarity.

The first victim of The Singing Corner was Kylie Minogue who was introduced as "*one of the Pogues*" and the duo proceeded to interrupt an interview with the former Neighbours star much to Phillip's annoyance.

The same interview saw the first British TV appearance of Kylie's sister Dannii and in the series offbeat manner, Phillip let Dannii sit in his chair and continued with the interview kneeling down in between them.

That was the charm of *Going Live!*, proving that anything out of the ordinary could take place on television, and such behaviour would later be adapted as the entire premise for shows such as *The Big Breakfast*.

Anything could happen, and inevitably did for the right and wrong reasons.

Even more out of the ordinary was that *Going Live!* became the first of the BBC's winter series of its kind to take the whole show on location, with the first being from Centre Parcs in Bury St. Edmonds on the 5th of November.

Guests included Sylvester McCoy, a man who was no stranger to Saturday mornings, dressed in his first *Doctor Who* costume.

The concept of being hosted on location would be repeated at least once a series for the rest of it's run.

Another guest who made a return to Saturday mornings was John Craven who exclusively revealed that he would be leaving *Newsround* in June 1989.

The second series wasn't without its mess ups, with the most memorable being a phone in with Five Star who were subjected to bad language from caller Elliot Fletcher asking "*why they're so fucking crap*", only to be hurriedly faded out, with Sarah politely thanking him for his call in a knowingly polite manner.

Ironically, the show happened to go out on April Fools day of 1989.

It wasn't the first instance of Saturday swearing, as the then England manager Bobby Robson was once addressed by a caller as a "*prized berk*", Matt Bianco were called "*a bunch of wankers*" five years earlier on *Superstore*, and the Five Star incident certainly wouldn't be the last of such outbursts.

On some occasions however it turned out to be the other way round with Phillip Schofield deciding to speak his mind when a Live Line went wrong.

After getting the wrong number and it took two minutes for the boy at the end of the line to establish that it was the case.

When trying again for a second time and succeeding it turned out that the girl who he was meant to be ringing knew the person who Phillip had spoken to, much to his shock prompting him to ask her;

"Is he thick or something? What's the matter with the boy?!"

Not even Dick & Dom resorted towards those sort of insults.

To make up for his embarrassment, the following week they gave the male caller a chance to explain what really happened and Phillip was left more embarrassed when the caller said he thought Phillip was the girl's mother.

Phillip ended up in Noel Edmonds' Clown Court for the gaffe, on the *Saturday Roadshow* that year and later went full circle as the recipient of a Gotcha and a victim of the Gunge Tank.

Already possessing a Golden Egg for his early Broom Cupboard cock up, it was probably no surprise that the man who started it all on the BBC's Saturday mornings was Phillip's biggest presenting influence.

The final show went out on Saturday the 15th of April with a performance by the London Community Gospel choir, although it also happened to be the day of the tragic Hillsborough disaster.

For the second and final time in its run, a special edition of *Breakfast Time* went out at the weekend in commemoration, this time on a Sunday with Jeremy Paxman presenting although unlike the Zeebrugge incident, the opening titles were still used.

The incident's only major effect on the Saturday morning schedule was two weeks later when an edition of the new ITV summer show *Ghost Train* was shortened in favour of a memorial service, meaning that *The Chart Show* was delayed by 15 minutes, apart from in the TSW region.

The *Ghost Train* itself, it made its entrance on April Fool's day sharing the same premise as *Get Fresh* by travelling round the country in a mobile studio, but this time with a narrative subplot a la *No. 73*.

Presenting the show were actress Frances Dodge, an early television crush, Sabra Williams who caused many a viewer confusion with Jenny Powell, and Paul J. Medford who formerly appeared as *Eastenders*' Kelvin Carpenter, and later starred alongside Danny John-Jules in CBeebies' *The Story Makers*.

The concept was devised by Billy MacQueen, now one half of production company Darrall MacQueen, behind many popular children's programmes including *Smile* and *Bear Behaving Badly*.

The premise involved Frances and the gang travelling around the country In her inherited ghost train from her grandmother, attempting to escape from the crafty Barry Mafia played by Joe Hall.

Barry being Frances' ex boyfriend turned villain who tricked her grandmother into entrusting him the Ghost Train, with Frances getting hold of it and trying to escape from Barry and his gang of "Mafiettes".

Making a return were The Vicious Boys in sports insert "*Wake Up*", with Angelo Abela also appearing as "Gerard", an unwilling slave of Barry Mafia who broadcast from the Ghost Train to the alien planet Ajax, alongside mohican bound puppet Nobby The Sheep, voiced by Simon Buckley with a Scouse accent.

The sheep was found in a field where the first show was broadcast, which happened to be that of founding company Tyne Tees.

The plot itself was explained in the lengthy opening titles with the theme tune composed by John Cook.

The cartoons and items were given the pretence of shows being broadcast to the aliens, hence the majority of them being introduced by a countdown from 5 to 1 on a VT monitor near Nobby in a creepy looking font.

The style of the show remained virtually unchanged with the first series containing a wide range of inserts made by the various regions with different presenters making the show look disjointed in places.

One such example being "*The Impro Show*" which was essentially a children's version of *Whose Line Is It Anyway*, hosted by one of the show's regulars Sandi Toksvig, which could be seen as a kick in the teeth for fans of *73*.

Nobby was meant to host alongside Toksvig, but filming taking place before the series started, the sheep puppet wasn't built in time and in its place was Brumble The Bear, which at anyone's guess was a spare puppet from Simon Buckley's attic.

One insert that sticks in the mind from when I first saw the show was Tony Robinson, an otherwise hero of children's television, providing *Jackanory/Five To Eleven* style environmental anecdotes.

The item was topped and tailed with a sting using the opening zoom shot of the *Ghost Train* titles, accompanied by building organ chords which appeared unnerving at the time.

Cartoons shown were mainly those that had some sort of haunted theme including *The Real Ghostbusters*, *Scooby Doo*, *Tales From The Crypt*, and most notably *The Trap Door* which would normally be shown in the last five minutes of the show with a truncated version of the theme tune.

Possibly to remove the sinister looking red eyes that appear on the line "*You're A Fool If You Dare!*" known to give many a young child nightmares.

Not that I was one of them…

For the first series, a supplementary Sunday morning show was introduced by Belfast girl Shauna Lowry and produced by Border with studio based games and updates from the crew with Nobby retaining a weekly presence.

Nobby was more than evidently the star of the show with his cheeky adlibbed approach and less random than Gilbert in terms of humour.

The sheep would often be the most dominant on presenter on-screen, with the musical guests normally on hand to read out viewers letters, such as Sonia, Sam Brown, and Corrine Drewery from Swing Out Sister lending a hand over the series, instead the main presenters.

That said, it was enough to warrant a second series on Saturdays the following summer.

On The Waterfront and *UP2U* returned for a second and final run for the 1989 summer on BBC 1, the latter this time was broadcast from the offices of BBC Manchester's Oxford Road studios..

The success of *Waterfront* lead it to being repeated towards the end of the summer in 25 minute compilations on Friday afternoons, under the banner *Waterfront Revisited* which had me confused as to why it was broadcast, in what I thought at four years old as a peculiar timeslot.

That said, it finally achieved the aim of being *Crackerjack* for the late 80s.

Post *Waterfront*, Andrew O'Connor became a gameshow host and founder of Objective Productions, and Kate Copstick became a comedy critic, with a recent appearance on Channel 4's *100 Greatest Stand Ups* saying why she thought Shappi Khorsandi wasn't funny.

UP2U this year was more infamous for a very dangerous incident at the Royal Tournament in Earls Court where due to a mis-timed count in, Anthea Turner burst into flames mid sentence after an explosion resulting in worried faces in the main studio.

Anthea recovered gradually but ended up suing the BBC and was successful.

The accident also made its way onto a BBC Health And Safety training video for staff.

Early September saw *Motormouth* commence its second series billed in the listings and in the opening titles as "*Motormouth 2*".

The theme tune and giant mouth remained, but a change in presenters was implemented with Andrea, Julian and Caroline dropped, and new presenter Gaby Roslin was brought in who previously introduced pre-school programmes on The Super Channel's *Hippo*.

Also joining the team was Steve Johnson who hosted the messy game insert "*It's Torture*" with the finale "*Gunge 'Em In The Dungeon*" which became the series' selling point.

Things had started to settle down from the overly trendy approach of the first series, but still had quite a job competing with Phillip and Sarah on BBC 1.

The series was preceded by the new Children's ITV ident with the IT=/ corporate logo, which was also part of the relaunch of *The Chart Show* now rebranded as the *ITV Chart Show*.

Changes were made to the all-video show including an extended rundown of the Top Ten with no rewinding, and the addition of the "*Vintage Video*" allowing the TV Times to have something to blurb ahead of transmission.

The programme was moved half an hour early to 11:30am straight after *Motormouth*, although for the first week it went out at 11 due to the athletics coverage.

The new series of *Motormouth* saw an end to the Sunday morning tie-in, as a brand new show would take over the timeslot from here onwards.

Sunday mornings now saw its own show introduced to the ITV network with *The Disney Club*, a format imported from Europe and sharing the same theme tune as its foreign counterparts.

Overseeing the animations were Gordon Inglis, John Eccleston (who once operated Gilbert) and 18 year old Andrea Boardman, daughter of Scouse comedian Stan and a stunt and near name double of Anthea Turner.

The show was produced by Scottish Television with the set based around a colourful village and life-size dummies of Mickey, Donald and Goofy.

Going Live! returned for a third series on the 23rd of September with another set redesign, featured yellow and pink as the dominant colours with bezier and chess board designs spread out around the studio.

A specially designed neon clock with an analogue design was also introduced to replace the flip one that graced the set over the last two series, possibly as far back as *Superstore*.

Trev and Simon were back with the welcome return of "Theatre Shop" with Robin and Ray, and new characters such as the tache-clad wheeler dealers "The Sister Brothers" who gave away competition prizes.

Not forgetting a memorable rendition of "*Hound Dog*" by The Singing Corner with Jason Donovan, and Nigel Kennedy playing violin.

Double Dare got a new set of titles involving Peter Simon trying to hang up a 3-D version of the Double Dare logo only for it to fall down.

An animated set of titles were introduced halfway through the run for the editions that featured celebrity teams, with the last show of the series featuring none other than Phillip and Sarah themselves going head to head.

New experts arrived including Jonathan Porrit with environmental news in "Green Line" whilst regular pet expert Nigel Taylor struggled to keep a straight face in what became the much played moment of a puppy trying to "get it on" with Gordon.

Emma Forbes made her debut in December 1989 hosting a cooking slot with Phillip who could be disastrous at the worst of times, proving there were no signs of elitist traits.

The interactive phone game for viewers was also given a makeover and probably the most exciting one featured on the show "*Star Shot*", which involved the caller guiding a target to shoot stars.

Halfway through the series it became "*Mega Shot*" with all the stars in different colours as opposed to just orange.

This year's away day saw the whole show travel abroad on a ferry crossing the English channel with Phillip Hodson and Growing Pains, and Victoria Wood as the Press Conference guest.

No attempt was made to hide the fact that the show in between Christmas and the New Year was pre-recorded, billing it as *Gone Live!* where this series featured the pantomime "*Philderella*" where Trev and Simon appeared as "*The Ugly Sister Brothers*".

It was also the final series that the *Saturday Starts Here!* banner was used, this time hosted by Wayne Jackman as "Dennis" assisted by Clive, a puppet kangaroo voiced by Ian Tregonning, and set supposedly in the BBC basement.

The premise was similar in style to the "CBBC Office" of recent with a comedic presenting manner proving popular with viewers, resulting in Dennis and Clive spinning off into their own series *Radio Roo*.

The final show in April saw the obligatory "guest from the summer show" who this year was Charlotte Hindle who had jumped ship to co-host *The 8:15 From Manchester* which this year would last the whole summer.

Broadcast at 8:15am each Saturday for just over two hours Charlotte co-hosted the show with Ross King from a studio built from the BBC Manchester props cupboard which had to be cleared out every Thursday ahead of rehearsals.

Since the last series of *UP2U*, spare studio space at BBC North still proved hard to find, but the cheap surroundings added to the charm of the show.

Inserts included the cartoon *Rude Dog And The Dweebs* and the staircase game "*Iiiiiit's Tough At The Top!*" hosted by the main presenters.

Best of all was the welcome addition of vintage episodes of *Rentaghost* which was an odd inclusion but very popular with older viewers.

The theme tune to the series was a fantastic re-working of the Inspiral Carpets' "*Find Out Why*" with many an organ present leading to similar "Madchester" inspired acts performing live on the show.

It kept things stable at BBC North over the summer.

Ghost Train returned to ITV over the summer months, giving many a TV anorak excitement of seeing endcaps for Ulster, Border etc, now incorporating the ITV corporate logo within them.

The second series saw the departure of Sandi Toksvig and Tony Robinson, and the arrival of a new gunge-based gamsheshow *Skull* which involved searching for said anatomy in a pool of slime surrounded by water-gun-armed Mafiettes.

Barry Mafia would always offer a trick question to the contestants such as "*What's my favourite colour?*" in order to make sure they got one wrong to make sure at least one mafiette would be faced in the second round played near the end of the show.

Gerard, Frances, and Sabra would take turns each week to compere the game where they were supposedly transported via a shower cubicle in the studio.

Jokes about changes of outfit showed no pretence of the Skull inserts being recorded earlier on.

It all ended on a cliffhanger where Barry Mafia tricked Nobby into helping him gain possession of the Ghost Train.

The second series of *Ghost Train* gave way to a third series of *Motormouth* which would see a new set, a new theme tune, and most importantly of all a new presenter, who was a very familiar name to viewers.

Chapter 3 – Strong Sustainable Saturdays

"Hi there! Welcome to Saturday mornings!
You're watching ITV and yeah that's right, I ***am*** *Andy Crane,*
you've not mistuned or anything like that!
This is Motormouth for 1990.
You've seen nothing like ***this*** *on the television before!"*

The opening words of the high profile addition to ITV's Saturday morning show on the 1st of September.

It was quite bizarre at my age seeing a face so familiar with the BBC on a rival channel, but despite the desperate use of a denim jacket and baseball cap, Andy Crane made himself a central figure to the team, gelling well with Gaby, Neil, and Steve Johnston, now promoted as a main presenter.

The set was completely revamped to a predominantly white studio with a café for the studio audience providing drinks throughout the show.

The mouth itself was removed, with the only trace being in the first few seconds of the opening titles yelling a Tarzan style cry.

The theme tune was given a re-arrangement retaining elements of the previous theme, but based around a backbeat sounding similar to Betty Boo's "*Doing The Do*".

An extended version featured on a TV Times compilation CD, which made use of the opening of the original theme in the middle 8.

The new look gave a more solid presence on screen and with a brighter set managed to stand out against *Going Live!* with its structured approach including animal items with Terry Nutkins, and chefs Greg Robinson and Max Schofield providing cookery which both continued into series 4.

Best of all was the new game insert based on the popular board game *Mouse Trap* with Steve Johnson as host, and enlarged implements.

It looked as if *Motormouth* was finally getting its act together.

Series 4 of *Going Live!* saw a new set of opening titles similar in style to the last but involving Phillip, Sarah, Gordon, and Trevor and Simon trying to arrange the studio set and props including the *Double Dare* logo.

Having said that, halfway through the series *Double Dare* was replaced by the popular Children's BBC gameshow *Clockwise* with Darren Day featuring a new endgame based on a gunge filled tunnel with superimposed images of Queen Elizabeth I.

It was to be the final outing of the gameshow, although it got a repeat run alongside *Double Dare* on BFT over the summer.

Cartoons this series included *The Racoons*, and the increasingly popular *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles*.

Trev and Simon returned with old favourites "The Sister Brothers" and "The Singing Corner" whilst introducing new characters such as "*World Of The Strange*" and barbers "Ken And Eddie Kennedy" who established the catchphrase "*We Don't Do Perms!*".

The usual items returned including more cookery chaos with Emma Forbes, whilst "*Book It!*" got a new host with the late American author Paula Danziger offering her flamboyant reviews on the latest publications.

The phone in computer game this series was the amphibian based "*Feed The Frog*" which was followed in the 5th series with "*Feed The Dog*" with the awkward moment when a caller asked for Terry Wogan's autograph when offered one from any BBC gameshow host.

And on that note, after over a decade, the long standing phone number 01-811 8055, was changed to fit in with the new London area codes for inner and outer London.

A jingle was introduced in the style of a rap which the presenters always had to use the word "*call*" as the "run word" as the jingle went;
"*Going Live! on 0-8-1, 8-1-1, 81-81, Yeah!*"
Noel Edmonds, guesting from his gunge tank on the Press Conference that series, lamented the departure of the old number.

Christmas once again saw another panto, with "*Scrooge: A Christmas Sarah*"

Series 4 was also notable for being the first programme on BBC 1 to be introduced by the new spinning world on February the 16th with the announcer corrected by Phil for accidentally saying; "*Anything can happen in the next two hours!*"

This was because all programmes beforehand used Children's BBC branding and everything else was part of the new look Open University with the new BBC 1 logo revealed in the top left hand corner;

"*This Is BBC 1. It's good looking don't you think?*"

The new ident was given an "official opening" by the presenters with Sarah dressed as the queen in a silver gown, and Phillip giving a brief history of the previous globes used.

Adlibbed antics carried on, with one such incident being Cliff Richard who happened to be in TVC one morning making an unscheduled appearance, lending a hand with the prize picks.

And the away day for the series proved even more ambitious broadcasting on a steam train travelling the Watercress Line, which included a cooking spot from Emma Forbes which as expected proved chaotic.

Returning for a second series that summer was *The 8:15 From Manchester* where Charlotte and Ross were joined by Radio 1 weathergirl Dianne Oxberry.

A bigger studio with an audience was introduced, and many fans of the previous series thought it was a step down.

A change in musical guests was also evident, where in place of the indie bands that dominated the first series, were what looked like the repertoire of the "Talkin' Loud" record label with performances from The Young Disciples, Omar and Incognito.

The biggest band of the decade made their debut Saturday morning appearance on the show, who back then were just a little known boy band from Manchester called Take That, who had a rather naughty video.

A new gameshow insert from the Blackpool Sandcastle swimming pool was introduced with *The Wetter The Better* hosted by Ross King and Sonia, which was a cross between *Double Dare* and *Beat The Teacher*.

The item outlived the series by being scheduled for a second run as its own show within Children's BBC the following year.

Cartoons show this series included *Attack Of The Killer Tomatoes* and *Gravedale High* featuring the voice of Rik Moranis.

Rentaghost also made a return, but halfway through the series it was replaced by what many saw as the unwelcome arrival of Clive Dunn's *Grandad* sitcom being repeated, which didn't use his 1971 hit as the theme tune, and the one on used the show had one of the worst endings;

"#The words are right, but the tune's all wroooong"

August the 17th saw the show being dropped for one week, in favour of a special edition of *BBC Breakfast News* covering the fall of the Soviet Union.

It turned out to be the series' final outing, and the last summer show from the BBC to be produced from Manchester after 10 years.

Ghost Train returned for its third outing on ITV that summer with a revised title sequence including a new logo.

This time more emphasis was made on the plotline, with the departure of Paul J. Medford, and the Vicious Boys were replaced by "The Two Marks", a pair of Barry's hapless servants featuring a young Mark Heap.

Their main role in the show was presenting the new insert "*Boo!*" where a viewer would be nominated by a friend or relative to be surprised by the duo and turned into a Mafiette with the splatting of a custard pie.

One particular Boo! was done in Canterbury where I had just moved to at the time and it was quite exciting to see it on television.

It was most likely to have been TVS's only contribution to the series although they did produce a show for series 1 from Chatham Dockyard featuring a live performance from Swing Out Sister.

Boo! even had its own theme tune composed by Mr Miller and Mr Porter, and was also adapted as the underscore for the revamped *Skull* with a finale where contestants had to avoid getting hit by blindfolded Mafiettes with maces before confronting their leader.

The show made its final outing on the 24th of August where Barry offered to make up with the *Ghost Train* crew but ended up stealing it out of their possession and banishing them to the planet Ajax.

Apart from Sabra Williams, it wasn't to be the last of such outings for the crew on Saturday mornings.

Motormouth was back the following week with no presenter changes but a re-arrangement of the theme tune to give it a "new jack swing" feel with new additions to the opening titles including a weird turquoise character.

This series was known for once again incorporating another plotline this time involving characters based on "the production team" with characters Max, Millie, Paul and Juliet.

If the faces looked familiar, Millie was played by future *Benidorm* and *Downton Abbey* actress Siobhan Finneran, Paul was played by Gary Parker who later appeared as "S.A.M." the lift in the second series of Children's BBC's *Incredible Games*, and Juliet AKA Carla Mendonça became the second actress as mother Sophie Johnston in the popular CiTV sitcom *My Parents Are Aliens*.

This worked out better than the "Spin Off" plotline in series 1 as this time it was interwoven within the main show, with the presenters and experts taking part.
Part of the success was possibly due to a certain Sandi Toksvig having a hand in the writing, alongside fellow 73 writer Elly Brewer.

Despite the large number of presenters, all four blended in together well using ever opportunity to take the mickey out of each other whenever possible.

Mouse Trap made a return midway through the series with cut down episodes of Neil Buchanan's room-raiding game *Finders Keepers* shown previously.

The format of which was imported from Nickelodeon who also owned the rights to *Double Dare*.

Going Live! began its fifth outing on the 21st of September, where a new inferior sounding arrangement of the theme tune was introduced.

It was more than evident that the production crew weren't impressed as the last few bars were drowned by a brass band in Studio 7 and unsurprisingly, the original tune was reinstated the following week to accompany the new test card inspired titles with a logo based around the colour bars.

All the stings used within the show were changed to fit in with the new logo, a lot of them based around old black and white film footage, which at times could look inappropriate when introducing an item such as Growing Pains.

This series was most remembered for the absence of Trev & Simon who were busy working on their own BBC 2 Friday evening sketch show *100%* scheduled to be shown in the new year.

In their place were the inferior James Hickish and Nick Ball whose characters included two Hinge And Bracket style pensioners and a poor magician pairing.

On the more positive side, Peter Simon was back with *Double Dare* which also saw a revamp of the titles and theme tune, with circular "DD" symbols placed around the studio.

This time round the theme tune remained the same throughout the run and spanned the whole series, including the return of celebrity contestants such as one Pat Sharp who boasted at the start of the show about staying clean and dry during the messy games on *Fun House*.

The reverse results of his *Double Dare* outing proved that there was no real rivalry between him and Peter Simon on screen.

The first Going Live! of the series saw the unveiling of a cityscape mural painted on the side of Television Centre from a winning design in a competition in series 4 and was later used by Phillip for an abseil challenge.

The mural was competing to get into the record books, as were guests Status Quo, who commenced their "*Rock Till You Drop*" multiple performance tour at the end of the first show, assisted by Cheryl Baker.

Other highlights this series included the infamous "Great Conker Challenge" where Phillip was accidentally knocked in the face by a giant swinging conker.

Series 5 was also the last to spend a whole show outside of the studio with another nautical journey, this time en route to the Isle Of Wight featuring Press Conference guest Patrick Moore who had recently gained a cult following with younger viewers on Channel 4's *Gamesmaster*.

Also introduced on the same show was American psychiatrist Dr Aric Sigman with a section called "Getting Physical" resulting in the Olivia Newton-John song used in the preview for the item in the show's menu.

Other tunes used included Billy Swan's "*I Can Help*" for Growing Pains, and "*All This Time*" by Sting for Jonathan Porrit's "Green Line".

Other guests this series included a raucous appearance for Rowan Atkinson as Mr. Bean, and Dudley Moore whose "*Goodbye*" song was re-used on the final show with a large "*See You In September!*" graphic ushering out the series.

Over at ITV, things were looking nervous as TVS lost its license in the controversial franchise round of 1991 under the new ITC, where the winner of each regional franchise now went to the highest money bidder.

Only that TVS lost, because they had bid too much money, proving the new regime was less of a beauty contest (which fittingly enough had disappeared from British television altogether) and more reminiscent of *The Price Is Right*.

Motormouth bowed out on Saturday the 4th of April 1992 where the centrepoint was a wedding between Juliet and Ray a "singing telegram", with a return appearance for Richard Waites as the vicar.

It was a *73* reunion of sorts, as Jeannie Crowther and Richard Addison returned, appearing amongst the congregation.

The plot ended with Juliet marrying Max after Ray deceived her, and Paul and Millie discovering oil underneath Vinters Park in a scenario reminiscent of the final *7T3* four years earlier.

If that really was the case, it would have justified TVS's overbidding in the ITV franchise race.

The hosts said their goodbyes outside the marquee in a not so tearful manner;

Neil: "*We've got oil! We'll never have to work again!*"

Steve: "*You never will anyway!*"

Neil Buchanan had the final words as the longest serving presenter thanking viewers for "*letting me into your living rooms over the last 10 years*" and the show played out with a performance of "*I'm Too Sexy*" from Right Said Fred.

The summer show for the ITV network this year took a back to basics format with *Gimme 5* taking to the airwaves from the Tyne Tees studios in Newcastle.

Taking the helm were Jenny Powell, Lewis McLeod now better known for his comic voices on many a Radio 4 sketch show, and Nobby The Sheep who managed to gloss over his excursions with the *Ghost Train* crew in the opening seconds of the first show.

Radio presenter Matthew Davies was given a Peter Simon style role as the host of "*The Hooter Game*" that could take place at any time live in the show whenever an airhorn went off.

At one point it interrupted an interview with a girlband which didn't go down to well.

Three rounds would take place with the first involving dropping balls into a gauge, the second being a specially designed game for the studio guests to assist with, and the remaining two contestants would take part in a go-kart race on the roof of the City Road studios towards the end of the show.

The theme tune, composed once again by John Cook, was a hip-hop influenced sample-fest which culminated with the Thunderbirds countdown being played in reverse order over the beats.

Everything aside, it was essentially the usual fodder of live bands and viewer competitions although rather bizarrely, the series ended at the end of June with films taking the 9:25 slot until September.

The *ITV Chart Show* continued as usual where by now the series had gained a sponsor, that being Pepe Jeanswear, later replaced by Twix in 1993.

New titles and stings were introduced, making use of the sponsor and for one week only a new viewer designed computer display in the videos was introduced before being replaced with the previous interface.

BBC 1's summer offering for 1992 also saw changes, with it being the first to be produced by an independent production company.

Roach And Partners who previously produced the "*Streetwise*" inserts for *The Channel 4 Daily* had been given the green light to produce a space themed series with the name *Parallel 9*.

Parallel 9 was a prison on the planet Zarb where time went backwards, and the knowledge obsessed Prince Mercator was banished to, released for two hours "*on the sixth day of the seven cycles*"

"*You will only know the day they call Saturday!*"

Long eye browed Mercator played by actor Roddy Maude Roxby was assisted by Earth girl Calendular played by Helen Atkins and alien beings Steyl, Thynkso, and Skyn who had a voice identical to that of "The Bear" from *Bo' Selecta*.

The ongoing plotline involved the cast trying to escape from the parallel universe over the course of the series, which was based on a dark studio set in the Pinewood studios.

Items included computer game reviews, updates on the week's news from a water display in the studio, and guests who were beamed up via the Tope, a camp talking transparent booth voiced by Stephen Hope-Wynne.

Not to mention the cartoon *Toxic Crusaders* of which Andi Peters expressed his disdain for, after it was replaced by *Defenders Of The Earth*.

The programme's style appeared too far fetched with no straight presenters, and many of the guests looked befuddled by it all.
Adding insult to injury was the fact that the series producer was Glyn Edwards, formerly that of *Tiswas*.

Interviews could be awkward at the worst of times with the actors desperately trying to stay in character, with one infamous moment involving Steyl accidentally giving away the answer to a Kylie Minogue competition.

Neighbours actor Kristian Schmid later referred to his experience on the programme in Look In magazine (yes it was still going, albeit on its last legs) a year later referring to is as "a bit of a weird show"

Musical guests mainly ranged on the dance side, with Soul II Soul, Incognito, and The Shamen being such examples.

The stand out part of the show had to be the theme tune, penned by TV theme legend Ed Welch and sung by Eddie Mooney with the lyrics;

> *"#Time, It's time for you to pay, You've broken every rule,*
> *We're gonna take your time away"*

Whilst *Parallel 9* had the advantage over *Gimme 5* of being broadcast over the whole summer, the show took a two week break in late July/ early August for the Barcelona Olympics.

A cliffhanger in the last episode before the break saw the crew transported to netherspace after losing a quiz hosted by presenter "Spam Ulelux".

The character was re-introduced as the host of "*Parallel Playback*" which involved children identifying TV theme tunes played backwards, and undertaking an obstacle course which involved "un-bursting balloons" whilst "going up the slide".

Incorrect answers were given a "bong on the gong", and the Tope announced the scores after being cued with the *Shooting Stars* style catchphrase *"Tope! Tope! How did they cope?"*

The series came to an end with Mercator using a spell to reverse time transporting the aliens back to Earth but leaving Cal trapped on Zarb.

To call the series a success would be an overstatement.

The sixth series of *Going Live!* made its entrance five years to the day when the show started, on the 26th of September 1992 with another new set of titles based on a virtual reality headset-clad army activating a large transmitter raised from underground, generating the show's logo, which brilliantly matched the last few seconds of the theme tune.

Co-designed by Paul Baguley, the titles were nominated for a BAFTA the following year, although it's safe to say they were of their time.

The studio set took a design based around comic strip style superhero characters although the neon signs from the previous series remained.

The new series would be distinct in the fact that it would have three presenters with Kristian Schmidt being the third prong.

The addition to the team was to allow Phillip to have a lie in due to his stint in the West End as Joseph where he would normally arrive halfway through.

Kristian's most notable moment on the show being when his tonsils were removed and he gave them away as a competition prize.

Unfortunately, due to problems with work permits, Kristian Schmidt was dropped from the show in November, and was replaced by a rotation of guest hosts, including Emma Forbes, Toby Anstis, Andi Peters, Jason Donovan, a nervous Krishnan Guru-Murthy from *Newsround*, and Shane Richie who along with Peter Simon was the co-host of the new gameshow insert *Run The Risk*.

With the contract with Nickelodeon for *Double Dare* now up, it was decided to unveil a big budget revamp with a more industrial feel and a revolve uncovering a gunge moat in the middle of the studio.

The one thing that didn't change was Peter Simon not just slipping over, but also falling into the gunge.

Most of the "risks" were designed by both Peter and Shane themselves and the finale involved the contestants dressing up in giant costumes ranging from penguins to cavemen, similar in style to *It's A Knockout* with hysterical results and Peter Simon becoming the Stewart Hall of the 90s.

The phone in game this series was the aqua based "*Nip The Squid*" which gave away singing mermaid dolls for those who managed to collect the "*Mighty Muscle*".

Guests in the studio for 1992/93 included Cher, Terry Waite, Ben Elton, and new BBC 1 controller Alan Yentob who later became director of CBBC.

The funniest guests were probably "The Tracy Brothers" who hosted CBBC's music show *What's That Noise* and included Mark Billingham from *Maid Marion*.

They wrote a special song for Gordon with the not so subtle line;

"Can I have a small hand in your future?"

Even more notable was the guest appearance of Gaby Roslin who appeared with Chris Evans following their success on *The Big Breakfast*, where Gaby's profile VT included the whole opening titles to series 4 of *Motormouth*.

Best of all was that this series saw the return of Trev and Simon with a fresh set of sketches including the "*Pot Fish Hot Pop Rave Club*" featuring "Mick McMax the man with the mix" and "Moon Monkey" AKA Simon dressed in a bright yellow suit encouraging the audience to "*Make Some Noise!*".

Also introduced was the DIY spoof "*Blimey That's Good*" which saw the destructive appearance of WWF wrestler Hacksaw Jim Duggan and perhaps funniest of all, the gameshow parody "*It's A Shame*" where celebrity guests were invited to take part in the low budget quiz;

"What have we got? *No Budget!*, What do you win? *No Prizes!*
What's the point? *Who Cares!*"

Broom Cupboard host Andi Peters was one of the new experts for the series, presenting the "*Game Talk*" section reviewing the latest computer games and was occasionally seen on set filling in for Phillip.

Geordie actor Michael McNally was also seen assisting with the Live Line stunts including one where Take That surprised a viewer at her house.

It was becoming evident that changes were being slipped into proceedings.

At ITV, Scottish Television following the successful investment in *The Disney Club* on Sunday mornings, had gained an exclusive contract with Warner Brothers to produce a show on Saturday mornings themed around their animations.

However with the STV studios in Glasgow currently under refurbishment they turned their attention to the production talent in Maidstone enlisting former *Motormouth* producers Ged Allen and Vanessa Hill to develop the new show which would be called *What's Up Doc?*

The series would be presented on STV's behalf by TVS until their franchise ran out, and STV would take over in 1993 whilst still coming from Maidstone.

Former TVS head of children's Nigel Pickard had also joined Scottish to take on the same role, inheriting many of TVS's successful shows for younger viewers such as *How 2* and *Art Attack*.

Andy Crane would be brought back as presenter and was joined by recently departed *Blue Peter* host Yvette Fielding, alongside his old Capital Radio colleague and "Tony Blackburn's son" Pat Sharp.

On reading the feature on the new show in Look In magazine I seriously believed that Pat Sharp's real name was "Patrick Sharpin".

The new series arrived on the 5th of September 1992 and introduced an irreverent manner to proceedings with an emphasis on comedy sketches featuring the presenters and the guests amongst a stellar supporting cast.

They included two puppet wolves voiced by Don Austin and John Eccleston who became the stars of the show despite generating complaints over scenes of them supposedly seen eating children.

Other characters included Baljit who was a furry creature, Mr Pasty the worm, and human characters Gaston The French Frog played by Peter Cocks, and "Cheese Ranger" Simon Perry played by Stephen Taylor-Woodrow, both of whom had appeared previously on *Motormouth*.

Simon's popularity reached its height when he was asked to replace an ill Spike Milligan in the Marlowe Theatre's panto of Snow White in Canterbury.

All the cartoons shown were from the WB stable with the animated *Batman* series, and *Taz-Mania* which had a rather dangerous title sequence with flashing images, later edited on its move to the BBC.

Ironically, *Going Live!* still showed the occasional classic Looney Tunes animation, with Shane Richie at one time using Bugs Bunny's catchphrase to introduce the short.

Other items included spoof soap opera "*Life With The Amoebas*" and the audience going crazy whenever "*Spam & Blooms*" was mentioned.

Informative items were kept on from *Motormouth* with the return of Terry Nutkins and Greg and Max with their own respective nature and cooking slots, and live music guests such as East 17 and Take That made appearances throughout the series, playing along in sketches.

STV's Sunday offering *The Disney Club* carried on with Andrea Boardman still hosting, but by now she had two different co-presenters in the form of Simon Parkin-esque Paul Hendy, and Richard Orford who replaced John Eccleston in order for him to concentrate on his "wolf operating duties".

By February 1993 Phillip and Sarah decided that the time was right to bow out together from *Going Live!* with the final episode airing on the 17th of April.

The show opened with an amalgamated title sequence showing four of the titles from the show on each corner of the screen, bearing a resemblance to those of *Swap Shop* in the late 70s.

Highlights of the series were shown via "*The A-Z Of Going Live!*" throughout the show, with Mike Smith providing the narration.

Studio guests included Ade Edmondson and Rik Mayall, Kristian Schmidt who according to Phillip had finally got a work permit, Sean Maguire, Andi Peters, Phillipa Forrester and Toby Anstis, and live music was provided by Sybil, and Wet Wet Wet who rather fittingly also had the honour of performing on the final *Saturday Superstore* 6 years earlier.

Trev and Simon gave one last outing for the Potfish Rave Club, and a big budget "It's A Shame", using every opportunity to plug their UK tour.

The final Live Line tied in with a special live edition of *Run The Risk* allowing the show to fulfil it's ambition of being *It's A Knockout* for the 90s taking place at the nearby Hammersmith Park.

This involved PC Mick Dunkley at West Drayton police station being set up by his children to take part in the game against five other teams including anaesthetists, postmen, and air hostesses .

The teams would be judged by a celebrity panel featuring Vicki Michelle, Daniella Westbrook from *Eastenders*, and *Home And Away*'s Richard Norton who would be the new "Earthbase" host of *Parallel 9* the following Saturday.

Phillip and Sarah were the final Press Conference guests with Emma Forbes asking the questions, where the hosts hinted that their worst guest was Michael Fallon, the then junior minister for education.

It was Phillip's second time in the Press Conference, having been a surprise guest during series 2 in 1989.

Before the credits rolled, a much awaited return for the Singing Corner took place, unaware that the series was ending rather than beginning.

It was followed by Phillip and Sarah throwing their scripts away, and saying goodbye whilst "swinging their pants" to the poignant closing theme tune.

And that was it, the end of what many have said was the greatest Saturday morning show to rule the BBC's airwaves in the timeslot.

So much so, that it was the only Saturday morning show to be featured as its own segment on the BBC's *I Love* series, where BBC executive Paul Smith was revealed as the operator of Gordon The Gopher, although the secret had been let out a few years earlier in the BBC's *Live & Kicking* "TX File".

The nostalgia show was also the first television series to replay the Five Star outburst from 1989, 12 years after it took place.

Overall Phillip and Sarah would be quite an act to follow, and as Peter Simon would say;

"They did a good job!"

Chapter 4 – "Have You Ever Stroked A Weasel?"

Parallel 9 had not been well received on its first run by both viewers and the Children's BBC presenters who would often make many a subtle dig when promoting or introducing the show.

A major revamp was unveiled for series two, trailed immediately after the final *Going Live!* where the most notable change was the theme tune, which was a bit of a comedown from the first series with heavily echoed lyrics over a psychedelic title sequence.

The lyrics were something along the lines of;

"*#Parallel 9, When time is on your side you've got to get to Parallel 9, Deep in outer space we're gonna take you out of this world, To Parallell Niiiiine!*"

The new series arrived the following Saturday where the biggest change was the addition of an Earthbase, or to be more specific a caravan in the middle of nowhere, with presenter Richard Norton who was best known for starring as Simon Fitzgerald in *Home And Away*.

The show's guests would arrive at the caravan and would be beamed up to the Tope via a teleport where instead of a distant planet, Parallel 9 was now a space station with Mercator now a younger character played in a flamboyant manner by Christopher Wild.

Assisting him was Zee as played by a bowl-cut Frances Dodge, Doctor Kovan played by Karl Collins who looked similar to Andi Peters but with a beard, and puppet dinosaur Brian who hailed from Rotherham with a love for heavy metal and had a voice very similar to Roland Rat with the catchphrase *"Cup o'tea, eh?"*.

Brian interviewed guests "*In Bed With Madinosaur*" and viewers were invited to take part in the interactive computer game "*P9 Pinball*" where callers "controlled" the flippers via the keypad on their telephone.

Midway into the series Brian was joined by baby brother Derek also voiced by David Claridge who had a preference for Take That over Brian's heavy metal obsession.

Also around this time was the sudden departure of Richard Norton who was replaced by Neighbours actress Lucinda Cowden.

Lucinda announced on her first appearance that Richard was unwell, but she ended up holding the fort until the series ended in September.

Whilst the earthbase provided a more natural regime, the change of presenter mid-run, and lack of chemistry between the cast proved uneasy over the series.

Unsurprisingly, it was Brian and Derek who ultimately became the most popular presenters, living up to their puppet predecessors of Roland Rat and Kevin the Gerbil.

At ITV, *Gimme 5* returned in May for a run of 14 episodes that barely saw any changes made from the first series.

It wasn't helped that during the later half of June, the show took a three week break to make way for the international rugby coverage.

This series was notable however, for featuring the first TV appearance of Cheryl Cole, taking part in a ballet contest.

August saw the much awaited announcement of *Going Live!*'s replacement which would be hosted by Andi Peters, Emma Forbes and Scottish/American West End actor John Barrowman, and would be known as *Live And Kicking*.

The series was due to start on Saturday October the 2nd, 27 years to the day *Swap Shop* launched, and would be produced by the same production team as *Going Live!* with Chris Bellinger remaining as editor.

The series was trailed on BBC through a series of spoof advertisements with *Live & Kicking* advertised as a breakfast cereal, juice drink, and shower gel which John Barrowman proceeded to taste in his mouth.

Another trail aired closer towards the launch date featured Take That who announced that they would be amongst the first guests.

On the day itself the first "face" to appear on screen was CGI cat Ratz voiced by comedy writer Paul Brophy introducing the show over the spinning world in a more than enthusiastic manner;

> *"Hello, it's 9 o'clock, and you're watching BBC 1*
> *for the very first addition of Live And Kicking! Woooh!"*

It lead to the now legendary titles with the metal balls bursting out of BBC Television Centre with the catchy theme music as composed by David Arnold, who had previously written the theme to *The Big Breakfast*.

The titles gave way for the first appearance of the presenters alongside Trev and Simon who continued to provide the laughs, right from the first link in fact, with Simon slipping in a gag about Queen's "*Seven Seas Of Rhye*".

New items included "*Famous For Five Minutes*" which surprised viewers in their own homes, a well known celebrity of a specialised profession giving their "*Top 5 Tips*", behind the scenes slot "*Electric Circus*", the abysmal videophone based game "*Haunted House*" with John, and star guests were interviewed each week by Emma in the "*Hot Seat*".

Trevor and Simon were given their own segments including the phone-in competition "*Daft As A Brush*", history spoof "*Encyclomedia*" and guest interviews as part of the "*Star Driving Test*" where every week Simon's "Mr Ribbon" character would slip in the question;

> *"Have you ever stroked a weasel?"*

The concept was later revived by Sam, Mark and Caroline on the first series of *TMi*.

The duo also presided over a new twist on the Video Vote inviting guests to take part in the Video Garden at the end of each show, where two willing participants would water flowers representing videos which would stay up if successful, or droop if not in favour.

The videos themselves would be surrounded by a border made up of flowers which once made the on-screen aston for Soul II Soul's "*Wish*" appear as "*Wosh*" due to a sunflower covering the "I".

Run The Risk returned with Peter Simon and Shane Richie, and features such as Paula Danziger's book review were carried on, whilst Dr Aric Sigman took over from Phillip Hodson as the show's agony uncle.

Ratz in addition to appearing throughout the show, also had his own video games section called "*Ratz's Chip Shop*" which was occasionally assisted rather awkwardly by John Barrowman which the CGI feline was not afraid to pick up on.

Barrowman turned out to be the loose screw within the presenting team often finding it hard to blend in towards proceedings due to his lack of quick witted ability.

It didn't seem to bolster the presenter from becoming the third host of CBBC's *The Movie Game* for two series, originally hosted by Phillip Schofield, who in turn was now hosting ITV's *Talking Telephone Numbers* alongside Emma Forbes who continued on the show throughout her whole tenure on L&K.

It was clear that the *Live & Kicking* had quite a lot to follow on from in the wake of *Going Live!*, but it didn't stop the launch of a successful magazine publication which in turn lead to the demise of "*Fast Forward*".

A live 90 minute Christmas Day special was another standout with guests including Take That and Eternal.

The ups and downs had an advantage on ITV's *What's Up Doc?* now in its second series and was neck and neck with *Live & Kicking*, occasionally achieving higher ratings.

This was boosted by the arrival of the popular cartoon *Animaniacs* and the antics of characters such as the Wolves getting even more riskier who by now had gained their own series *Wolf It!* which rendered Rolf Harris redundant from his *Cartoon Club*.

A new interactive game "*Hugo The Troll*" was introduced as presided by Andy, and involved viewers guiding the troll via their phone keypads either riding a self-operated train, flying a plane, or avoiding boulders on a mountain.

Unfortunately, the bosses at Scottish Television were not happy with the complaints about unsubtle jokes, and persuaded the Saturday morning show to tone down the risqué content, fearing that Warner Brothers may terminate their contract.

This resulted in the resignation of producers Ged Allen and Vanessa Hill midway through the series, stating that they'd rather spend Christmas on the dole than produce a safer version of the show to please the ITC.

Replacing them as series producer was *Ghost Train* creator Billy MacQueen.

Nigel Pickard also left STV, to return to Maidstone running "*The Family Channel*", later hiring Crane and Sharp as presenters.

Ged continued co-writing and producing *Wolf It*! for CITV for at least three more years, and at the same time, both him and Vanessa set up their own production company "The Foundation" which Nigel Pickard later took over.

Peter Cocks AKA Gaston also departed to join *Parallel 9* as a writer for the third series.

By this time Yvette Fielding had taken maternity leave for her first son, although during her absence she appeared on *Live & Kicking* as part of a trek through the soon to be opened Channel Tunnel alongside a team of celebs including Tim Vincent from *Blue Peter*.

For some reason or other it was amusing when Tim advised *Blue Peter* viewers not to turn up to Folkestone on the Saturday as no one would be there.

The series soldiered on in 1994 with a few noticeable awkward moments, with one such instance being an interview with all but one of a jet-lagged New Kids On The Block who had now changed their name to "NKOTB" once described as "*an anagram of knob, almost*".

Andi Peters was lost on the band's obscure answers to viewers questions and later referred to it as his worst interview on the programme.

It was fair to say that like all first series, *Live & Kicking* was steadily going through the motions, and ironing out initial teething problems.

Another near nervous moment came during Famous For Five Minutes, where pyjama-clad viewers Darryl and Sam Bellamy seemed pretty miffed on the reveal, but after a couple of hours they provided amusing take offs of Harry Enfield's characters including "*The Old Gits*" "*Mr Don't*" and "*Smashie And Nicey*".

Darryl later returned in series 3 as part of an Ace Ventura impression contest.

Trev and Simon continued to amuse with sketches such as the car boot shopping channel "PVC", futuristic frolics in "*Live From The Footur*" and new competition "*Every Looney Wins*" often invaded by a mystery yodeller.

The last show in the series featured a Famous For Five Minutes similar in style to the final Live Line on *Going Live!*, only it was Keith Chegwin who was the victim surprised on his own doorstep invited to take part in a special *Run The Risk* live from Newbury racecourse.

Taking part alongside Cheggers were guest contestants Collette Brown from CBBC's *Hangar 17*, and Steve Johnston who was now hosting CITV's *Terror Towers* as created by Neil Buchanan.

At the end of the O/B Keith acknowledged Chris Bellinger, and wished the *Live & Kicking* team the best of luck for their next series.

Paul Brophy also made an appearance away from Ratz playing Mr Ribbon's brother in the Driving Test, and Tony Blackburn guested in PVC, proving he wasn't afraid to send himself up as a shopping channel host.

It wasn't to be his last appearance in the sketch as he stood in for an unwell Trev one week during series two.

The final Video Garden revealed the identity of the mystery yodeller who turned out to be noneother than Jonathan Ross who added the usual irreverence to proceedings.

The chat show host later reflected with fondness on his time on Saturday mornings with the pairing during his radio show, which itself could have been the catalyst in the decline of the hallowed television timeslot.

The show went out in an unceremonious manner, but would return for a second series in the Autumn, with the magazine tie-in carrying on over the summer.

Parallel 9 returned for a third series, still with Lucinda Cowden at the helm, but Zarb had now been transformed into a research laboratory with a rather pompous Mercator played this time by 73 alumni Richard Waites, now better known as Cuthbert Lily in the popular children's series *Zzzap!*.

Doctor Kovan, and Brian and Derek remained, but Zee had departed and was replaced by Flynn played by Kate Lonergan from Maid Marion who also happened to be one of the guests on the final show of series 2.

Another connection may have been one of the writers being Mark Billingham who played one of the guards in the popular comedy series.

There was also the introduction of "The Little Green Man" who in a search to find a friend, commenced his own letters section called "*The Little Green Man And His Little Green Friends*".

Halfway into the run, Lucinda was joined by Paul Hendy from *The Disney Club* and new games were introduced including "*Noodle In A Haystack*", and another phone tone game in the form of *"Feed The Monster"* which involved guiding a truck around a specially built course to do so.

Also in August, the show was moved to Sunday mornings on BBC 2 to make way for the coverage of the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Canada.

Gimme 5 was back for a third series on ITV with *Hangar 17*'s Paul Leyshon taking over from Lewis McLeod, and Matthew Davies took a more dominant role as presenter as well as continuing with "*The Hooter Game*".

A new title sequence was introduced involving the presenters in a self operated jeep along with a slight re-working of the theme tune.

Also on the new side of things were the phone tone game "*Bash The Buggy*" and the snot based true or false quiz "*Tweak The Beak*" played near the end of each show.

This happened to be the very series of *Gimme 5* where Hunter from Gladiators accidentally exposed his nipple on air, which was later picked up in a sketch on *The Adam & Joe Show* years later.

Another comedy duo happened to make regular appearances with fledgling pop stars PJ & Duncan AKA Ant & Dec providing comic interludes which caught the eyes of the BBC who rewarded them their own series in 1995.

But in spite of this being the strongest series of *Gimme 5* mainly due to a continuous run throughout the whole summer this time round, it was to follow in the footsteps of Tyne Tees' predecessors with the third series being the last, ending on the 27th of August and bringing Tyne Tees' eight year reign of summer Saturdays to an end.

Jenny Powell's presenting career took off further, while Paul Leyshon turned to acting with a part in Channel 4's *Hollyoaks* as Ollie Benson.

Parallel 9 was also to depart for the final time on the 17th of September with guests including Let Loose, and Bad Boys Inc. as well as Emma and Andi plugging the new series of *Live & Kicking*.

Andi managed to cheekily slip in the controversial Shamen lyric; "*Got any salmon? Sorted!*" possibly aware of the snout reference.

Paul Hendy in the final link thanked all the guests who had appeared over the last three years (not individually of course) and the guests sang out with an impromptu performance of "*We Go Together*" from Grease fading to a Michelle Gayle video that was cued in too near the end, and cutting back to the caravan.

The plot finished with all the team members apart from Greeny being transported away from Parallel 9, with Mercator being demoted to commander of Parallel 5 which was a sewage research facility.

Greeny who was left on his own, met a female equivalent of himself who wanted to be his friend and they disappeared in the style of a Hollywood movie.

A predictable and contrived ending to the most bizarre show that filled BBC 1's summer Saturday mornings.

The second series of *Live & Kicking* was to undergo major changes, with the most notable being the departure of John Barrowman as the main presenter.

This allowed Andi & Emma to develop more of an on-air chemistry and restore a faster *Going Live!* feel to the show which even brought back the Futura font used in the last couple of series for L&K's predecessor.

As well as being used for the *Swap Shop* logo.

Other departures included Ratz who had also disappeared from Children's BBC after the new idents were introduced.

Another major change was the start time which was shifted to 9:15am to allow repeats of *The New Adventures Of Superman* to be screened on Children's BBC before each show.

Before the first show took off on the 24th of September, The Little Green Man made an unscheduled appearance over the credits of Superman under the delusion that he was the host of the programme after Andi Peters predicted "*he would go far*".

It lead into the opening titles which were revised for this series to incorporate the new /B/B/C/ signage at the front of Television Centre.

Signs of the show returning to its old self included the return of a computer phone-in game which for this series was called "*Nobble The Wobbles*".

Designed once again by Dave Mansfield, the game involved Vac Man a human vacuum cleaner sucking up jellies with eyballs to give a visual description, with the caller shouting out "Left Vac!, Right Vac!" and so on with the bonus wobble winning the viewer a Vac-Man back pack.

And on that note, a brand new phone jingle was introduced composed by David Arnold and sung in Dallas at established jingle company TM Century.

The number was changed halfway through the series to incorporate the new "01" addition to area codes where for the first week it featured a dodgy" razor cut" version which went "*#O1 81 811 81-81*" before the vocals were re-recorded the following week.

Andi Peters was given the role of hosting the nasal based phone-in game "*Pick Your Nose*" with guests sticking their hands up three giant noses to find the top prize envelope, with the catchphrase;
"*Where The Big Bogey Goes, Nobody Knows!*"

After complaints poured into *Points Of View* over the games premise, it was swiftly replaced by the photo booth game "*The Big Bang*" where every time Andi mentioned the title, the camera tilted upside down accompanying an explosion sound effect.

The finale of the game involved a guest inside a cage in the storage room of TVC, bursting balloons in 15 seconds where three of them included prizes with the top prize being a television or a games console or whatever.

On finding a prize which wasn't the first, the caller was asked if they would like to "stick or prick" which was probably another of Andi's many innuendos.

John Barrowman didn't depart the show altogether, as he was given the job of introducing the pre-recorded "Electric Circus" insert which had now evolved into a review magazine looking at the latest movies, video games and showbiz interviews with Hollywood stars.

Trev and Simon remained and were on probably their best form this series with sketches including the dry cleaners Don And Dougie Draper with the well remembered catchphrase "*We Don't DO Duvets!*".

One of their most memorable guests was Sting where the catchphrase "*Stiiing!*" was introduced and yelled by the crew in a depressed manner whenever he was mentioned.

Car boot shopping channel PVC returned, and each week a studio guest got involved with "*Let's Go Bonkers*" with the duo sat on fairground horses side by side where the guest would have to speak on a chosen subject.

If they uttered a special word shown only to the viewers at home, the studio would go bonkers with people dressed in giant fruit costumes parading round the studio, Trevor yelling through a megaphone, and Simon repeatedly blasting an airhorn.

The reason for doing so was because "*We all like a bit of a laff*".

The "*Video Garden*" transformed into a "*Video Goldmine*" with bars of gold rewarded for videos that got the nod, and cans of beans for those that didn't.

The item was introduced by a "hoedown" version of the *Live & Kicking* theme.

Andi Peters started appearing with child actor Simon Bright as dodgy dealers "Bob 'N' Baz" who gave away prizes from their Only Fools style three wheeler with Baz each week trying convince Bob that there was "nothin' dodgy" about what they were giving away.

Changes were made to the prize picks as the bins were dropped, and a Perspex tombola was introduced, which lead to a memorable outtake where Andi broke the handle and it dropped on the floor.

The fluff-up ended up being shown on *Auntie's Bloomers* later in the year in addition to his hilarious "*#Barcelona!*" slip-up from *The Travel Quiz*.

One significant addition to the show was the introduction of an on-screen graphic at the top right hand corner of the screen with *Live & Kicking* being the first show on Saturday mornings to use them.

Initially a bright yellow graphic with the initials "L&K" it was soon changed to a transparent version of the Live & Kicking logo which lasted a few years.

New cartoons were introduced including one which became a mainstay of the show, with the ever popular *Rugrats* proving a draw for viewers who sent their pictures of the characters to the "Rugrat Flat".

For some reason, the end credits were cut, but the manic Klasky Csupo animated endcap was left in.

Also introduced was the popular sitcom *Clarissa Explains It All* also from the Nickelodeon stable, and starring Melissa Joan-Hart.

The items with experts including Aric Sigman, and Paula Danziger continued but overall Live & Kicking had finally found it's feet with a more spontaneous approach than series one and adapted the slogan "*The Only Way To Start Your Weekend*".

It was more than just a kick in the teeth for *What's Up Doc?*, who had entered their third series and undergone more changes with producer Sandy Ross moving the show to Scottish Television's Glasgow studios in Cowcaddens and cutting a large number of the characters.

A magazine style approach was adapted with many of the sketches now dropped, resulting in it looking more like a bog-standard show with features including the complicated interactive adventure game "*Joe Razz*", which was apparently a pun of "*Jurassic*".

Wolves Bro And Bro survived due to their popularity, but puppeteers Don Austen and John Eccleston got cold feet, and in February 1995 switched sides to *Live & Kicking* to operate and voice two Leprechaun puppets with one of half of the duo introduced just at the end of the show where they made their debut.

Ironically John had appeared on screen earlier in the series hosting *Run The Risk* with Peter Simon, which made the mistake of replacing the *It's A Knockout* style finale with the ambitious "Dark Zone" obstacle course.

The wolves remained on *What's Up Doc?*, voiced by Dave Chapman who was heard by more viewers as the voice of Otis The Aardvark on CBBC.

Don and John however continued to reprise the roles on *Wolf It* which continued for a few years after *What's Up Doc?*'s demise.

Yvette Fielding made yet another departure halfway through the series and was replaced by Jenny Powell which confirmed to me as a viewer that *Gimme 5* would not be returning for another series that summer.

And with a significant but unsurprising drop in viewing figures, the current series of *What's Up Doc?* would also be the last.

The Disney Club continued on Sunday mornings now hosted by Richard Orford and "Flippa" Forrester, and now part produced by GMTV to make up for the time lost on *Saturday Disney*, in favour of the popular *Power Rangers*, fulfilling their contract with the animation studios.

The pair only lasted one series together, with Richard moving onto Channel 4's *Big Breakfast*.

Series 2 of *Live & Kicking* came to an end on the 15th of April 1995 where the highlight was finding out why the machine in the Draper Brothers' Dry Cleaners "*didn't do duvet's*".

The result as expected caused the machine to explode resulting in a Benny Hill style chase around the studio.

By this stage of the series, Andi Peters had now developed a few talents behind the camera, producing many of the energetic trails shown both within and outside of the show.

One of which involved a roll-call of the presenters and supporting artists accompanied by Michael Jackson's "*Jam*" where a shorter version acted as a sting at the end of the programme with the editor's credit, which would normally follow a short sketch with the leprechauns after the main credits.

The credits themselves now involved moving images of show highlights as opposed to still images.

Taking over the BBC 1 schedule this summer was a new magazine show *Fully Booked* set in an imaginary hotel, presented from Glasgow, and hosted by Zoe Ball and Grant Stott who was John Leslie's brother.

The owner of the hotel was a Scottish cow called Morag and voiced by *What's Up Doc* escapee Julie Westwood, while Paul "Ratz" Brophy made a return as the handyman"*Wee Alistair McAllister*" as well as a range of different characters.

A more solid show than *Parallel 9*, features included viewers competition "*Dash The Flash*", Morag's "Groan Zone", Kriss Akabusi providing VTs of sports challenges, and prizes were given away in "*The Luxury Luggage*".

The theme tune was by John Cook where the middle 8 bore a slight resemblance to that of his *Ghost Train* theme.

The show lasted for two hours between 8:30 and 10:30, with US drama import *Sweet Valley High* broadcast afterwards until 11 where BBC 1 broadcast the usual fillers of Australian films such as "*Dot And The Koala*" or *Grandstand* if it started early.

Whilst *Fully Booked* was nothing spectacular, it was certainly a lot more stable than ITV's summer offering.

In what looked completely different to anything else that had aired in the timeslot, the late Mark Speight donned a rubber wig and transformed into a Max Headroom esque character in *Scratchy And Co*.

The series was a co-production between Mentorn Films and Central Television, in their first networked Saturday morning show in ten years, making its debut on the 6th of May.

Scratchy was seen only in mid shot against a background of clouds with a test card style border round the screen of red and white squares.

Assisting him was "Reg" a deep voiced deadpan character played by 6 year old Elliot Henderson-Boyle, and had a blue and white border.

It spoke for itself where after the speedy and rather strobe opening titles, Scratchy in his contrived American accent introduced himself with the line "*Maybe ya' wonderin' what this show is all about!*"

There wasn't a great deal in the name of content with the characters introducing cartoons such as *Garfield*, *Animaniacs*, and "*that man Batman*".

The only worthy part of the new series was the welcome addition of repeats of the early 90s burger bar sitcom *Spatz* often introduced by Scratchy in a deep voice.

The last half hour of the show was taken up by magazine show *Massive* with hosts Malcolm Jeffries and Denise Van-Outen who had appeared on *Live & Kicking* earlier in the year as part of pop duo "*Those 2 Girls*".

The new series didn't go down well with viewers, who made their feelings public on the new series of Children's BBC's *Take Two* which by now had been taken over by Andy Crane as presenter.

It was an early indicator of ITV's negligence towards children's programmes which seemed to begin after the 1993 franchises commenced, as the arrival of Steve Ryde as the out-of-vision announcer drew similar responses to the BBC's viewer talkback show.

Unsurprisingly ITV were struck down dead at coming up with an autumn replacement, so *Scratchy and* Co carried on until December, with new additions to the cast including Brummie penguin Sedgely, an annoying football puppet and two female characters played by Ronnie Ancona from *Fist Of Fun*.

A children's spin off of *Gladiators* made its exclusive debut on the show called *Train 2 Win* which was later produced by Andi Peters.

And on that note, *Live & Kicking* returned for its third series in September with a new addition to the team in the form of Virgin Radio DJ Mitch Johnson who acted as an out of vision co-host.

Mitch had been used throughout series two voicing trails for the show and his presence became a welcome addition to proceedings, adding extra irreverence and cheeky jokes to Andi and Emma's banter as being a useful tool in holding the show together.

Mitch's main duties included reading the show menus, and announcing the prizes for the new competitions including the pig based computer phone-in "Snuffle The Truffles" which gave away many a skipping pig.

Mitch also provided amusing anecdotes over the show's closing credits.

"The Big Bang" was replaced by the equally cheeky title "Up Your Jumper" which had more or less the same premise with the balloon bursting endgame.

The premium rate phone jingle for the competition was also revised with Andi & Emma singing *"#Play Up Your Jumper, By Calling This Number! 08-91-33-99-55"*

Trev & Simon took a nautical take on the video vote with the Video Galleon, and new sketches included "Encylomedia's Looniversity Challenge" and "Robert's Records" set in a record shop with the third variant of the catchphrase that became "*We Don't DO Disks!*".

The record shop sketch was introduced by Buddy Merril's "*Busy Bee*" which became the emphasis of a sketch with their old friend Sting who on revealing his real name Gordon, the protagonists played "*Jilted John*" with the infamous lyric "*Gordon Is A Moron*".

"*Let's Go Bonkers*" was revamped as the jungle themed "*Let's Go Nuts*" introduced by a tribal version of the Live & Kicking theme tune, and the premise was pretty much the same as "*Bonkers*", although the "magic word" was shown to the audience and those watching at home by "*The Funky Monkey*".

Bob & Baz were also back with studio guests every week donning black Bob & Baz badges.

"*Famous For Five Minutes*" continued with Andi surprising viewers and Emma Forbes took over the helm of *Electric Circus* with the first show revealing the whereabouts of John Barrowman who had started acting in US drama series *Central Park West*.

Ben Keyworth, AKA "Ben The Boffin" from *The Big Breakfast* was brought in to introduce the computer review section, who was later replaced by Adem Ay who later became a popular target of comedians Lee & Herring.

The success of *Electric Circus* got resulted in it being broadcast on BBC 2 exclusively on Friday nights from 1996 before being re-shown on L&K the following morning.

Another insert that received similar treatment was *Run The Risk* with new co-host Bobby Davro and the inflatable based gunge filled finale brought back.

The first show also featured a guest appearance from Shane Richie along with new Blue Peter presenter Katy Hill, who both emerged from the TARDIS, prompting Peter Simon to mistake Bobby Davro for "*Davros*" in a specially contrived gag.

Davor later followed in Shane Richie's footsteps by getting a part in *Eastenders* the following decade.

With new episodes shown in a 4:35 afternoon slot on BBC 1 from January, the series generated complaints from parents over the innuendos slipped in.

Guests this series included Richard Branson, Cher, Robbie Williams on his first Saturday morning appearance since leaving Take That, and probably most exciting of all, Phillip Schofield.

This included an amusing attempt to perform his top 30 single "*Close Every Door*" scuppered by interruptions by the leprechauns.

And speaking of which, a competition was held halfway through the series for viewers to suggest names for the pair with the 5 best put through to a phone vote with the winning names being "Sage And Onion".

Sage being the one with a wig voiced by Don, and Onion voiced by John with Mr Onion continuing to show his love for Emma.

In mid-December the first series of *Scratchy and Co* came to an end with the rubber headed presenter promising that they would be back in the summer.

January 1996 saw two new shows take over ITV's Saturday morning timeslot with the first hour filled by *Telegantic Megavision* hosted by "tour guides" Emma Lee from CBBC's *Reactive*, and Dave "Otis the Aardvark" Chapman.

Produced for Meridian by Neil Buchanan's Media Merchants in association with Warner Brothers, the premise of the show was to take a behind the scenes tour of the supposed shows of the Telegantic Megavision studios which were mainly programmes from the show's production company including *Art Attack* and *Terror Towers*.

Up and coming TV producer Nic Ayling was the host of gameshow insert "*Slops*" featuring an appearance for former *Press Gang* actress and future Eastender Lucy Benjamin who played waitress Cynthia Sundae.

Cartoons including *Animaniacs* and *Pinky And The Brain* were introduced via the equally contrived "Animation Station".

To sum it up and regarding the show's title, it was easier said than watched.

Telegantic Megavision lasted between 9:25-10:25, and between then and *The Chart Show* was the *Word* inspired *It's Not Just Saturday* hosted by Danni Minogue and Gareth Jones, and produced by Scottish Television.

The contrast between this and Telegantic Megavision was by quite a distance as it was clearly aimed at a teenage audience twice the age of the target audience of the preceding show, with discussions about sex and drug abuse positioned alongside the chaotic and desperately laddish content.

One morning remembered well by television fans, was that of February the 10th where the planned edition of INJS was replaced by an episode of Seaquest DSV.

It also happened to be the day after the Canary Wharf bombings which saw GMTV's children's programmes replaced by news coverage, leaving ITV with probably its worst Saturday morning schedule during their "wilderness period".

A few weeks later INJS was shortened to half its length and between 10:25 and 10:55 were further repeats of Spatz which unusually featured the pre 1989 "Thames Colour Production" endcap.

It was to be the first and only series for both shows.

Sundays were still provided by *The Disney Club*, although this time the series started in late October and apart from the theme tune was completely relaunched with Irish sports presenter Craig Doyle as the main host.

From here on the series was pre-recorded and featured stage-school children assisting Craig as the presenters although it looked very contrived and Doyle appeared to look out of his depth.

The change of premise and presenters was probably signified by the departure of producer Conor McAnally, who would later have a hand in restoring long term Saturday morning success for the channel.

Still co-produced by GMTV, the first hour involved the spin off *Disney Adventures* where either Yvette Fielding or Jenny Powell would be at an exterior location.

Prior to the new series, Jenny Powell hosted *Disney Parade* on Sunday mornings, although her sights were set on prime time having become the letter turner on *Wheel Of Fortune*.

In March 1996, Andi Peter announced his departure from *Live & Kicking* at the end of the current series, with Emma Forbes staying on to present alongside a new male host.

The former Broom Cupboard occupant would be joining London Weekend Television to oversee their shows for young people, allowing him to leave the Saturday morning show whilst it was still on top.

The final show, broadcast on the 13th of April 1996 featured many a surprise with the most notable being a sketch with the leprechauns involving a time machine which could transform people into what they would look like in twenty years.

Andi tried it out to humourous results looking like Trevor McDonald, but when Emma went in, the person who came out was her mother Nanette Newman much to Andi's shock and overall hilarity.

The real Trevor McDonald was the Hot Seat guest that week, alongside Babylon Zoo's Jas Mann, Lisa Coleman from C*asualty* who later starred as Cam in *Tracy Beaker*, and a return appearance for Tony Blackburn.

Emma Forbes was dressed as a skipping pig for the last game of "Snuffle The Truffles", and Andi Peters donned a ginger wig and large glasses to resemble Chuckie for the last look at the pictures in the "Rugrat Flat".

The last 15 minutes saw an emotional Andi being interviewed in the Hot Seat himself in which the chair was decorated with a decoration that read "*Mr Showbiz*".

During the interview itself Andi revealed that he would return to the show as a guest, but only if they made a "*Fact File*" VT, and spoke about how he was the most excited about producing one for Phillip Schofield which included a rare piece of footage of him in the Broom Cupboard introducing *Beat The Teacher* in 1985.

Emma also coaxed into reminiscing about his awkward interview with "NKOTB" back in series one which was definitely a sign of the show at its lowest which thankfully didn't last too long.

The tears started flowing when he revealed that he would miss Emma the most from *Live & Kicking*, and everyone reached breaking point after a specially recorded surprise VT performance of "*There's No Business Like Showbusiness*" was played out over the credits.

Breaking into song were the various team members (including Chris Bellinger), and stars of other shows including the *Blue Peter* team, Ian McCaskill, the CBBC presenters, Chris Rogers from *Newsround*, Richard Orford and Zoe Ball at *The Big Breakfast*, Peter Simon, and Gaby Roslin.

Popstars appearing included MN8, Louise, Sean Maguire, Michelle Gayle, Boyzone, and finally on an ironic twist, Ant & Dec who made a jokey aside about their relief of his departure.

Definitely a piece of television that's impossible to watch without breaking down.

Andi who by now had practically flooded Studio 7, parted by blubbing "*Whoever gets my job, will have the best job in the world because you'll work with Emma*" with Emma saying goodbye assuring that she would be back in September.

A lot can happen over 22 weeks…

Andi's farewell happened to reach number 90 in Channel 4's countdown of *The 100 Greatest Tearjerkers* in 2005, where Dick & Dom dismissed it as "*just a kids show he hosted for three years*".

Summer Saturdays on BBC 1 took a slightly different direction as Children's BBC would host *The Saturday Aardvark* with Otis holding the fort assisted by Simeon Courtie and new presenter Kirsten O'Brien.

The trio provided extended links wrapped around shows such as *The Marvel Action Hour*, *The O-Zone*, and vintage episodes of *Grange Hill* moved from Sundays.

Comedy sketches with Otis included sports spoof "*Antstand*", whilst Chris Jarvis and Josie D'Arby carried on sketches from the Sunday slot on CBBC including "Club 10:30" and "Class Of 96" where the dialogue was made up entirely of viewers jokes.

Fully Booked moved to Sundays for the second series, broadcast on BBC 2 between 9:30 and midday, with yet another *Neighbours* actress taking presenting duties alongside Grant Stott, that being Sarah Vandenberg who played Lou Carpenter's daughter Lauren.

The other major change to the series was that it would be pre-recorded on the Friday which saw competitions reduced solely to The Luxury Luggage.

Studio games carried on with "*Dash The Flash*" renamed "*Breakfast In Bed*", as introduced by Billy Cotton's "*Wakey Waaaaakey!*" catchphrase.

Morag the cow remained as did the many faces of Paul Brophy including a smartened up "Wee Al", and Jan Van Der Val with the catchphrase "*Why naahht!*"

There was also the addition the viewer lead review feature "*Viewfinders*".

Musical guests this series included OMC, Incognito, and a fresh new female vocal group known as "The Spice Girls" who's single would go on to dominate the top spot throughout the summer.

May saw the return of *Scratchy And Co* to ITV's Saturday mornings this time running for just the summer and with the settings changed to a "mad house" where Scratchy adapted a more casual manner without the rubber hair.

Reg remained as his old self in a picture frame and continuing to introduce *Animaniacs* by singing the theme tune in his deep voice.

Sedgeley the penguin was now in a snow globe, but Ronnie Ancona's characters were abandoned this series.

Special guests were now welcome such as Dan Falzon from *Neighbours*, and Tim Whitnall from *Mike & Angelo*, who also happened to be one of the composers of the *Scratchy And Co* theme tune.

However the guests would often get the door slammed in their faces and would be treated with very little respect or reverence adding to the slapstick manner of proceedings.

Massive was back with Denise and Malcolm still at the helm,
and new jingles were introduced for the address and phone numbers
with one such example;

"#PO Box Number 450, Birmingham B1-3SY! Why am I so funky?"

A surprise appearance at the end of the series came from Andi Peters
desperately trying to plug his new show *The Noise* which would be
one of two new Saturday morning shows starting in the Autumn.

It was Andi's first appearance on a Saturday morning ITV show since
the team from *Freetime* guested on *Motormouth* 8 years earlier
and co-presenter Tony Gregory would be the director of Andi's new show.

Before that, Andi would make one last appearance on the BBC
(for the time being) as part of a special programme broadcast on the
August Bank Holiday celebrating 20 years of *Multi-Coloured Saturdays*.

Hosted by Noel Edmonds, the programme gave an in depth look at how
Swap Shop had evolved into a bigger and more action packed show
that retained the immediacy of the original show back in 1976.

Interviews came from just about all the presenters, as well as founders
Edward Barnes and Rosemary Gill, and even appearances
from Sally James and The Phantom Flan Flinger!

Shortly before the special was broadcast, it was announced that
Live & Kicking would return in September with not one but two new presenters.

Zoe Ball who had escaped from an uncomfortable stint on *The Big Breakfast*
would be joined by *O Zone* presenter Jamie Theakston, making them
the first duo to take over as hosts of an already established
Saturday morning show on the BBC.

The decision to introduce a new pairing came when Emma Forbes
announced she was pregnant and that it would be the best time
to depart from the show as a presenter to give it a fresh new start.

However she wouldn't be leaving without one more appearance
as part of the next generation of *Live & Kicking*.

Chapter 5 – A One Horse Battle

The new duo to take on the challenge of hosting the BBC's flagship Saturday morning show were promoted heavily, with a trailer accompanied by Boston's "*More Than A Feeling*" incorporating the show's new slogan "*Miss It, Miss Out*".

Saturday 21st of September 1996 was the day Zoe Ball and Jamie Theakston would grab hold of the reigns, beaming down to Studio 7 alongside Trev, Simon, and the leprechauns in a pre-titles scene with the tagline "*Live And Kicking: The Next Generation*".

Rather bizarrely, the show was introduced by the spinning world (and probably the only time it was done apart from the first show of series 1) but the opening titles were preceded by the Children's BBC ident as normal.

Minor changes were made to various items with "*Famous For Five Minutes*" replaced by "*Cloud 9*" where Zoe would call an unexpecting viewer and reveal their surprise, and a visit linked to it would be filmed during the week and transmitted on the following show.

"*Up Your Jumper*" was replaced by a new competition featuring an addition who was viewed by many as one of the most unwelcome to the show.

Mr Blobby was moved from Saturday nights to Saturday mornings as the mainstay of a competition called "*Blobby's Baggage*" where instead of bursting balloons, Barry Killerby to give him his real name would raucously unpack suitcases with prizes hidden in three of them, varying in expense as always.

This lead to a chaotic and almost violent relationship with Jamie Theakston.

Zoe Ball meanwhile was given the reigns of handling the phone in computer game "Loot The Fruit" with Mitch once again announcing the prizes.

The Hot Seat interviews remained the same albeit with both Zoe and Jamie asking the questions to guests including Steve Redgrave who was on the first show.
And not forgetting the phone jingle where the number didn't change but the jingle got a rocky reworking.

Electric Circus was now in the form of a pre-recorded insert hosted by Andrea Boardman, who was replaced later on in the run by Dannii Minogue.

The show was still broadcast as a BBC 2 spinoff during the week as was Trevor and Simon's new insert *Transmission Impossible* with a theme tune by The Lightning Seeds.

All the sketches were now given their own half our slot linked by the duo in their own city with Trev sat behind a building displaying "Hotel Trevi" and Simon sat behind one reading "Café Simoni".

The duo were assisted by Tony Globes, who was a rather irritating character with a Northern accent donning a giant globe.

New sketches included "*Pickling Jeff*" and his assistant Jobe, "The Eggs Files" with Lincoln Eggs and "his close friend", and "*Art For 'em*" where Dominic Belgeddis, and Daniel Cakebread would review paintings in a tongue in cheek manner and were best known for their tendency to "*roll on the floor*" at the end of each sketch.

The item would end with the Video Grand Prix where two guests would review two videos represented by Scalextrix cars racing round the miniature town.

One of the other guests on the first show happened to be Emma Forbes who was interviewed and took part in a quiz about her time on *Going Live!* and *Live & Kicking*, which saw a surprise appearance from noneother than Sarah Greene.

Coincidentally both her and her husband happened to be in TVC filming their scenes for a Bill Murray film called "*The Man Who Knew Too Little*" playing TV presenters.

It was a rather emotional moment to have three generations of female Saturday morning presenters in the studio, but it was a nice unexpected touch.

As for the film itself, one of Sarah and Mike's co-stars was Richard Wilson who later went on to disown the film in public, labelling it as "*a load of shit*".

Emma's departure from the show was certainly not an emotional one, with her last on screen appearance in the leprechauns post-credits sketch, catching them trying to get a fiver from Zoe, claiming Emma always used to pay them every show.

Zoe and Jamie meanwhile made themselves stand out with an emphasis on attitude and were more vibrant than the previous pairing.

Jamie settled in quickly with a less effeminate manner than Andi and a quick-witted manner reminiscent of Phillip Schofield, and brought along his flirtatious interview style from *The O-Zone* which carried on beyond his tenure on Saturday mornings.

The "Miss It Miss Out" slogan became prominent and the guests began wearing "M.I.M.O." badges.

By the series' halfway stage, most viewers had forgotten about the new pair's predecessors altogether.

One of them was part of ITV's new Saturday morning schedule which commenced in late August with the magazine show *Wow* (standing for 'Watch Out Weekend') broadcast between 9:25 and 11am.

Wow was once again produced by the Media Merchants for Meridian and broadcast live from the Maidstone Studios, in one instance from the car park after a power failure in the main studio.

If it could be done 8 years earlier with *7T3*, there was nothing to lose.

The show's host were former CBBC presenter Simeon Courtie, and Sophie Aldred who was subjected to many a gag about her *Doctor Who* past.

The show took a more chaotic angle and featured a supporting cast including Pat and Barbara, two randy tea ladies played by Peter Cocks and Stephen Taylor-Woodrow, a puppet monster called Sidney voiced by Phil 'Gilbert' Cornwell, and loud gimp Adrian Wells with the ironic catchphrase "*There's No Need To Shout!*".

There was also the viewer's phone in competition "Fly In Your Soup" which involved a blindfolded guest hovering over a giant bowl, and video and film reviews from a kebab van with Sophie playing the character "*Donna Kebab*".

With a presentation style mixing *Tiswas* with *What's Up Doc?* the show was a possible return to form for ITV's Saturday morning schedule.

Unfortunately it was hampered by Andi Peters' new Saturday morning vehicle *The Noise* produced by LWT and featured live band performances (with a strict rule on no miming), pre-recorded interviews in far flung locations, and viewers phone in competitions.

The show failed poorly trying to cram too many items into half an hour and succeeded in making *The Chart Show* that followed look superior.

However, unlike *Telegantic Megavision* and *It's Not Just Saturday*, cross promotion between both shows was prominent including live link-ups halfway through *Wow* to promote Andi's offering.

Both Andi and Simeon also appeared in a trailer for the shows on CITV which rather bizarrely also mentioned *The Chart Show*.

Unfortunately, there were big problems at ITV (although probably not from the Network Centre's point of view) as the channel had purchased the rights to broadcast live coverage of the Formula 1 Grand Prix from 1997 onwards at a very high price.

This meant cutbacks on other live shows on the network, and the ever neglected children's department was one of the victims, meaning that *Wow* and *The Noise* would be dropped in mid December with the announcement made to the producers only three weeks into the series.

The Noise continued in 1997 in the form of one off specials before Andi Peters moved on to a more successful venture as commissioning editor for children and young people at Channel 4.

Both shows were replaced by a premature return for *Scratchy And* Co In January 1997, which saw a change of titles with Scratchy and Reg "unsplatting" a wall with the logo on, played backwards.

The early start for the series was referred to in the first show with Reg moaning "*What are you all lookin' at? You're five months early!*"

With Denise Van-Outen now on *The Big Breakfast*, Malcolm Jeffries had singer Carryl Varley alongside him for *Massive*, and mid-way through the series, Gail Porter then known for the CiTV magazine show *Sticky* became a permanent co-presenter with Scratchy and Reg in "the mad house".

Guests still poured into the mad house, including one slightly rude appearance by performing flatuist and future *Britain's Got Talent* contestant "Mr Methane".

The Disney Club returned for another run on Sundays with a new theme tune, and the links presented from a warehouse, and incorporating the GMTV insert "*Roadhog*" which previously ran throughout the summer with Craig Doyle and "Des" travelling around the country in a specially designed campervan.

The series also saw an early presenting debut for Reggie Yates, under the character name was "Robbie" and had previously starred in the Children's BBC sitcom *Agent Z & The Penguin From Mars*.

Live & Kicking had nothing to worry about with regards to the ever-changing competition, and as always the show switched back to starting at 9:00 after Superman finished its run.

Over Christmas, a pre-recorded special was broadcast from Lapland under the name *Almost Live, Definitely Kicking* which was adapted in subsequent years.

By this point of the series Trev and Simon's "*Transmission Impossible*" was shortened and sketches such as "Art For'em" were shown separately, as was the Video Grand Prix, now moved back to it's rightful slot near the end of the main programme.

Run The Risk had also being quietly dropped, and it would be the last time that the series, and Peter Simon would appear on Saturday mornings.

Whilst it had taken a bit of time for them to settle in, Zoe and Jamie had become a solid pairing for the show, and *Live & Kicking* finished for the summer on the 19th of April, with special guest Gary Barlow in the Hot Seat promoting his new Madonna penned single.

Over the summer Jamie would carry on with *The* O-Zone, and Zoe would co-host the year's *Red Nose Awards* on the Whitsun Bank Holiday, alongside Nick Hancock.

Schedule wise, Kirsten and Otis were back with *The Saturday Aardvark*, which had the honour of being the last to broadcast live from Presentation Studio A, before Children's BBC moved to the specially built TC9 in June 1997.

Fully Booked meanwhile returned for a third series on Sundays with Grant and Sarah at the helm once again.

Morag the cow in the haze of the remastered *Star Wars* trilogy adapted the catchphrase "*May The Horns Be With You*" which would often be used to tail the CBBC trail for the show with voiceover Chris Jarvis adlibbing "*Silly Moo!*".

Paul Brophy was back with new characters including clergyman "Father Barry Kissangel", who had a love for the Teletubbies, and a tendency to go spare if the theme tune to *Ballykissangel* was played.

"I SAID BARRY! NOT BALLY!"

There was also, the Elvis inspired "Les Vegas" who hosted the irreverent quiz "*The End Of The Show Show*" which had buzzers in the shape of hamburgers that would play extracts from Elvis Presley songs.

A new spoof soap opera was introduced with "The Smedleys" which even had it's own theme tune;

> *"#When things are going wrong, you're sure to hear this song,*
> *It's the Smedleys, the mixed up family!"*

Grant played the ugly looking Hedley, Paul Brophy was "Pop", Julie Westwood in human form played Gran, and Sarah appeared as twin sisters Lovely and Stormy Day.

One memorable episode involved the characters having to act the episode using only song titles and occasional song lyrics resulting in amusing dialogue such as this;

Gran: "*Shaddap ya face! Child!*"

Hedley: "*I'm a man, not a boy*"

Not to mention the more tenuous;

Hedley: "*Hello Lovely Day, Lovely Day, Lovely Day, Love-ley-Day*"

Regular items such as the Luxury Luggage were brought back, as well as the outdoor metal detector based gameshow "*Buried Treasure*" filmed on location at Loch Lomond.

The game was notable for its guitar theme which sounded similar in style to Dick Dale's "*Nitrus*".

A bizarre occurrence came in early September when due to the death of Princess Diana happening on a Sunday, the week's edition of *Fully Booked* was shown the following Tuesday morning as part of the Children's BBC breakfast show.

Over on ITV, Tyne Tees got back the reigns of providing the live summer show with the title *Mashed* hosted by another "*Sticky*" escapee, that being Mancunian Jez Edwards.

Jez was joined by a puppet monkey and musician by the name of Jarvis who drank bottles of "*BritPop*" and was voiced by Simon Buckley, this time with a Brummie accent developing the catchphrase "*Kiss The Monkey!*".

Whilst it was good to have a live summer show back on TV screens, it appeared very cheaply made and despite being produced by Tyne Tees, the majority of the film crew were from their sister franchise Yorkshire who travelled up to the City Road studios.

For its weaknesses, *Mashed* was a far more commendable effort than the show that was to replace it in the Autumn of 1997.

That being *Tricky* which was based entirely around an animated dragon called Tricky voiced by Marc Duane with a Lancashire accent sounding similar to Keith Lemon, and introducing cartoons such as *Animaniacs*.

The lack of wit and substance was evident from the first show with the dragon dryly uttering "*Er, hello. Ah'm Tricky the Dragon, and this is Tricky, the show*"

The format was very similar to *Scratchy And Co* with regards to content with Tricky just sat in the same position throughout the show alongside his pet "Purrdy" who hatched from her egg at the end of the first show.

The show itself was produced by Granada, and the production team consisted of many behind the scenes staff from *The Chart Show* including show founder Keith McMillan and producer Gail Screene.

The theme tune to the programme owed quite a lot to Georgie Fame's "*Yeh Yeh*" in pretty much the same way *Get Your Own Back* did for Slade's 1981 hit "*We'll Bring The House Down*".

As the format had little substance, about a month into the series a young Claudia Winkleman was brought on to do outside broadcasts from toy shops around the country, including the suggestively named game "*Beat The Balloon*".

It was just one of the many naughty jokes slipped in with a the dragon in a supposed relationship with GMTV's Penny Smith with a photo caption reading "Tricky Sex".

Other items included the dismal interview section "Tricky Questions" where interviewees such as "Kavana" would record their answers to the questions in advance with Tricky asking them "live" on the show.

The series was also infamous for being cancelled one week for Princess Diana's funeral after only the first show.

Unsurprisingly the programme faired poorly in the ratings and was dropped in December, although the dragon was resurrected six years later on The Chart Show's children's channel *Pop!* introducing their shows, with a new name "Rorry", and swapping his Lancashire accent for a Scottish one.

Purrdy remained with the name intact.

Series 5 of *Live & Kicking* saw a revamp of the titles in show 2 incorporating what they thought would be the new signage at BBC Television Centre after the logo was introduced on the same day.

The end result looked distinctly different but L&K was the first show on BBC 1 to use the new copyright symbol.

Zoe and Jamie returned, but Trev and Simon had vanished and were replaced by a new comedy trio consisting of Ben Ward, Gez Foster, and Richie Webb who appeared in BBC Radio 4's *The Cheese Shop*.

Their centrepiece was the summer blockbuster inspired "Men In Trousers" ("*This pair!*") which saw the trio dressed in a specially made pair of trousers showcasing weird letters sent in by viewers, a la "*World Of The Strange*".

The boys also starred in a sketch called "*The Staff Room*" notable for Ben's "Mr Moody" who had the catchphrase "*It's not like the old days!*" as shouted by the studio crew.

Zoe appeared as the headmaster "*Mr Ball*" and Jamie was soon introduced as the "Head Boy".

The computer phone-in competition for the series was the memorable "Grabbit Rabbit" mainly for the jingle that introduced it, and Mr Blobby was back, in the competition "*Blobby's Office Trolley*" where the finale involved tipping bins of parcels instead of unpacking suitcases.

One of the most controversial changes was that of the phone jingle which used a full on Dallas vocal group, resulting in Mitch quipping that it sounded like a Radio 2 jingle and many viewers complaining.

Five shows into the series it was abandoned and replaced by a Latin version, a ballet version, and even one adlibbed by studio guest Gary Barlow.

At one point the classic rendition from Andi & Emma's era was reused before a football chant style one became permanent and remained for the rest of Zoe and Jamie's stay.

Sage and Onion were back with their comic intervals, where one memorable sketch involved what appeared to be them picking their noses to the song "*Boogie Nights*".

I'm sure you can work it out.

A more traditional return to form the video vote was brought back with Zoe presiding over "*Hit Miss Or Maybe*" with three guests given giant hands to rate three music videos.

If a video was voted a "maybe", the crew would start shouting "*We Don't Rightly Know!*" a la Mavis Riley.

The item soon got a Thursday night repeat on BBC 2, along with *Electric Circus* which this series was presented in turn by Toby Anstis and Margharita Taylor.

Adem Ay meanwhile spun off into his own section of the show in the studio reviewing computer games with Jamie as part of "*The @y Files*".

Live And Kicking also got a spin off as its own show with *L&K Friday* broadcast between January and April in a 25 minute slot on Children's BBC.

Features included the Leprechauns with their own game "Crock Of Gold" and a sports slot with guests playing on a table football game whilst previewing the weekend's fixtures.

The first show was notable in particular for an interview with an shades-clad Peter Andre who's career was on the slide at the time and not helped by a caller who rang up labelling him "*a commercial whore*" correcting it to "*bore*" when asked by Peter to repeat himself.

Peter responded by saying "*Hey, I didn't make music for you, I made it for all these lovely people*" resulted in a cheer from the audience and played along with the jibe as a joke answer to the next question.

It wasn't the only utterance of bad language on the show this series as an energetic Brian Blessed let out two bastards, live on the Saturday show earlier in the month.

To be fair on Blessed's behalf, the viewers were missing Trev & Simon.

Zoe definitely had her worked cut out by this stage of the series as she was now co-hosting the Radio 1 Breakfast Show with Kevin Greening being the first presenter to juggle both jobs since Mike Read 15 years earlier.

Zoe was initially reluctant to do so at first as she was a big fan of her predecessors Mark Radcliffe and Lard, who made a guest appearance in Studio 6 that series.

Both Radio 1 and *L&K Friday* had no effect on the quality of the main show on Saturdays mainly because the Friday show was rather rushed and didn't feature any sketches from The Cheese Shop team.

At this stage of the series they introduced new sketches such as consumer spoof "*Watch Out!*" and 60s tribute band "The Krazees" allowing Rich to showcase his musical abilities as the band's keyboard player.

The band were also used to play out of the final programme in April with a specially written song allowing the team to say goodbye with the crew joining in near the end and editor Chris Bellinger throwing his script in the air.

Zoe and Jamie would return in May to host what would be the final *Live & Kicking Red Nose Awards*, and would both continue to present the newly revamped *Top Of The Pops*.

Kirsten and Otis were back on Saturdays during the summer on CBBC whilst Sundays saw a major revamp for *Fully Booked*.

This saw a new set of CGI opening titles where in the first 5 seconds what was meant to be an audio speaker looked like a contraceptive device.

The hotel concept was abandoned with the only hint being a building with "No Vancancies" in the opening titles, and the theme music was also revised for the series.

Three new presenters were unveiled with Chris Jarvis, Tim Vincent, and Gail Porter taking the reigns with Morag the cow being put back to pasture.

The phrase "three is a crowd" became evident as the presenters were rarely seen together apart from the opening and the end of each show.

Tim developed a flirty relationship with Gail during the series whilst Chris took over hosting a revamped "*End Of The Show Show*" where the contestants were given buzzers that belted out their names, such as "*Timothyyy!*"

Despite still being pre-recorded, the programme continued in a relatively stable form with new items including "*The Real Review*", Tim's "Disk Drive" running down the top 3 music videos, and the "*Luxury Luggage*" made a comeback.

Chris was given his own spoof chat show "*Jarvis*" which featured guests including a reluctant Lee & Herring, and a livelier John Shuttleworth.

Lee and Herring later reflected on their time on the programme with disdain via the online diary on their website.

The phone number would normally be read out by Chris in one of his many impressions, such as Homer and Marge Simpson, the cast of C*oronation Street*, and a rather desperate sounding one making use of extracts from Steps songs;

"089 "#One For Sorrow" 33 99 66".

That aside, an impressive set of live band performances also appeared this series including Shed Seven, Catatonia, Ultrasound, Hinda Hicks, and Kele Le Roc.

After their "Tricky disaster" the previous autumn, ITV resorted to their old guns at the start of 1998 by bringing back *Scratchy And* Co for its fourth and final series.

Gail Porter was back on co-presenting duties, but *Massive* was dropped and replaced by the new gameshow insert *It's Not Fair!* hosted from the "Unfair Ground" by Nickelodeon presenter and Man City supporter Mike McLean, assisted by helpers "Candy" and "Floss".

Floss was played by Andrea Green who later went onto become a presenter on CiTV alongside future *Doctor Who* actor Arthur (then Tom) Darville.

Mashed made a return appearance in the summer with Jez and Jarvis looking after stable but otherwise unspectacular proceedings and more monkey kissing.

One memorable moment involved a Bugs Bunny caricature, miming a conductor to the *Merrie Melodies* sting at the end of a Warner Brothers cartoon which looked as if it could have been a homage to a routine on *Tiswas*.

Sundays remained the same with *The Disney Club* now hosted entirely by the child actors with a viewers vote to find a new presenter with 16 year old London girl Fearne Cotton chosen as the winner.

Both Fearne and Des went on to host the new GMTV live weekend strand *Diggit*, co-produced by Disney with Billy MacQueen as executive producer, and would later see the end of *The Disney Club* as a series after 9 years.

However with the arrival of two popular children's entertainers and one influential man behind the cameras, ITV was about to make a brave gamble after almost a decade of Saturday morning shambles.

"What's That Tune?"

A rundown of the various library tracks and music used for various items on Saturday Mornings.

This is in no way a complete list, so if you've got any tracks that I've missed, additions are very much welcome (and needed!).

Tiswas

1975 Theme Tune – "*Atomic Butterfly*" from De Wolfe DWLP-3199

"Up By The Ears" Sting – "*Coming Frantic*" from KPM-1145 "*Jingles*"

"Dying Fly Dance" – "*The Typewriter*" by Leroy Anderson

"Compost Corner" – "*Ariette des Jouets*" by Roger Roger

"The Bucket Of Water Supporters Club" – "*Sailor's Ahoy*" from KPM-1181 "*Silver Band*"

Going Live!

"Treasure Hunt" Prize Music – "*At The Organ*" from KPM-22 "*The Editor's Companion Volume 3*"

The Sister Brothers – "*Pacific 808*" by 808 State

Ken And Eddy Kennedy – "*A Quiet Stroll*" by Charles Williams

"Potfish Hot Pop Rave Club" – "*Jericho*" by The Prodigy

Parallel 9

"Parallel Playback" – "*Spin The Wheel*" from Parry-CD 1061 "*Showbiz*"

"Parallel Playback"-Round Intro – "*Cheap And Cheerful*"
from KPM-78 "*Commercials And Programme Cues*"

"In Bed With Madinosaur" – "*Manhattan Swing*"
from Carlin CAS-12 "*TV Radio Jingles Logos*"

"Noodle In A Haystack" Underscore – "*Swamp Thing*" by The Grid

Live And Kicking

"Famous For 5 Minutes" – "*When Will I Be Famous*" by Bros

"Top 5 Tips" – "*Play To Win*" from Atmosphere-43 "*Get Happy*"

"Encyclomedia" – "*Onwards And Upwards 1*" from Bruton-CD12
"*Fanfares, Links And Stings*"

"Star Driving Test"/"The Big Bang" – "*Tip Toe*" from Bruton-CD27
"*Just For Laughs*"

"PVC" Sting – "*Prize Winner 1*" from Bruton-CD12
"*Fanfares, Links And Stings*"

"PVC" Underscore – "*Leisure Line*" from Carlin-191 "*TV Leisure*"

Red Nose Awards Theme – "*Shop Girls*" from Chappel-AV46 "*Pop Culture*"

"Nobble The Wobbles" Underscore – "*Texas Cowboys*" by The Grid

"The Draper Brothers" – "*Funny Little Man*" from KPM-81
"*Archives Volume 1 – Light Activity*"

"Let's Go Bonkers" – "*Almost A Lullaby*"/"*Barrel Organ 3*"
from Chappell-161 "*Organ & Mechanical Instruments*"

"Snuffle The Truffles" Prize Music – "*Jackpot*" from Bruton-CD33 "*Game Shows*"

"Let's Go Nuts"-Funky Monkey – "*Light My Fire*" from Bruton-CD185 "*Tribute To The 70s Volume 2"*

"Robert's Records" – "*Busy Bee*" by Buddy Merrill

"Loot The Fruit" Picture Gallery – "*Visit To Florida*" from Chappell-205 "*Kitsch Pop*"

"Blobby's Baggage" Prize Music – "*Toy Train Blues*" from Bruton-CD28 "*Loony Tunes*"

"Cloud 9" – "*Dreams*" by Gabrielle

"Hit Miss Or Maybe"-Hit Sting – "*Blaze Of Brass*" from KPM-84 "*Archives Volume 4 – Newsreel/Sport*"

"Battle Of The Bands" (L&K Friday Series 1) – "Pop Logo 1" from KPM-322 Logos, Links And Stings

"The Staff Room" (Series 6) – "*School Daze*" from Chappell AV-85 "*Comic Tunes*"

"Who's In The Box" – "*Goldrush*" from Sonoton-213 "*Showbiz Plus 2 – Gameshows*"

Supergirly – "*Cocktail Time*" from Match-169 "*Kitsch And Lounge*"

"**Stop The Snot**" – "*Win A Fortune*" from KPM-255 "*Peak Time Television*"

"F.O.T."-Game Underscore – "*Bikini Parade*" from Match-169 "*Kitsch And Lounge*"

"F.O.T."-VT Underscore – "*Girl Crazy*" from Match-169 "*Kitsch And Lounge*"

Fully Booked/FBi

"Morag's Top 10" – "Bull Fight" from KPM-021 "*The Editor's Companion 1-2*"

"Buried Treasure" (Series 4) – "*Carnival De Paris*" by Dario G

"Jarvis" (Series 4) – "*Glossy Feel Good*" from Chappell-224 "*Titles and Trailers*"

"Jarvis" (Series 5) – "*National Express*" by The Divine Comedy

"The End Of The Show Show" (Series 4-5) – "*Space Cadet*" from Atmosphere-87 "*Fun Fun Fun*"

"Don't Drop The Gonk" – "*Hoots Mon*" by Lord Rockingham's XIII

"Get Gobby" – "*He's The Greatest Dancer*" by Sister Sledge

SM:tv Live

"**Splatoon**" – "*Sportsmaster*" from Chappell-185 "*Famous Themes Revisited 1*"

"Challenge Ant" Fanfare – "*Show Fanfare 1*" from Bruton-CD169 "*Showbiz-Circus*"

Pokefight Music – "*Computer Adventures*" from KPM-246 "*Background Music*"

"Dec Says"/"The Secret Of My Success" – "*Louie Louie*" by The 3 Amigos

"Anty & Decky The Garden Goblins" – "*Playschool*" from Music House MHS-19 "*Tiny Tots*"

"Stephen Mulhern's Sick Tricks" – "*Chit Chat And Fancy That*" from Extreme XCD4 "*Cheeze*"

Dick & Dom In Da Bungalow

Show Underscore – "*Fit To Burst*" by Andy Blythe and Marten Joustra from Atmosphere-168 "*Kool Kids*"

Show Underscore 2 – "*Ants In Your Pants*" by Andy Blythe and Marten Joustra from Atmosphere-168 "*Kool Kids*"

"Energy Walk" – "*Kinky Boots*" by Honor Blackman and Patrick McNee

"Creamy Muck Muck" Fight Music – "*Ace Of Spades*" by Motorhead

"**Outboard Motor Gob Game**" – "*Ahoy*" from Atmosphere-69 "*Clever Kids*"

Ladder Dance – "*Samba Latino*" from Kosinus-*75* "*Cine Dancing*"

First Prize Music (Series 4) – "*Build Up*" from KPM-93 "*That's Showbiz*"

Handbag Land Song (Series 4 Finale) – "*Bright Spark*" from Bruton-355 "*Classic Film And TV 3*"

Ask The Family-Hostess Walk-On Music – "*Blockbuster*" from MHE-*76* "*Hawk's Hammond Lounge*"

Scoreboard Keyboard – "*Horrible Hammond*" from Carlin-198 "*TV/Radio Shorts And Stings*"

First Prize Music (Series 5) – "*Kick Start*" from Xtreme-XEL-06 "*That's Showbiz*"

Harry Batt Theme – "*Sole Witness*" from Xtreme-XEL-10 – "*Crime Time*"

"Raymond Newsreader" – "*Newsbreaks*" from KPM-433 "*Classic Television And Radio Themes*"

(Visit dabungalowonline.com for a comprehensive list of library tracks used on the show)

Ministry Of Mayhem/MoM/Saturday Showdown

"Double Trouble" – "*Who Are You*" by The Who

"Ram Ray"-Entrance Music – "*Keep On Running*"
by The Spencer Davis Group

"Name That Tone" Intro – "*Call On Me*" by Eric Prydz

"Name That Tone"-Mr Lee – "*Mr Lee*" by The 5-6-7-8s

"Judge Mental" – "*Here Comes The Judge*" by Shorty Long

"Supermarket Sneak"-Stephen's Team – "*Oh Yeah*" by Yello

"Supermarket Sneak"-Holly's Team – "*Woo Hoo*" by The 5-6-7-8s

Mighty Truck Of Stuff

"Hunge"-In Game Music – "*Holy Mackerel*" from KPM-1164 "*Looney Tunes*"

Winner Sting – "*Awards Night*" from Killer Tracks-121 "*And The Winner Is*"

Chapter 6 – "You Know Where It's At!"

In 1998 ITV hired Nigel Pickard as head of children's output for the channel where he re-introduced live in-vision presenters to host in between the shows.

Pickard then drew his attention to Saturday mornings where he had previously been a major player, working on shows such as *No. 73*, *Motormouth*, even as far back as Southern Television's *Saturday Banana*, and a brainwave started flowing when discovering a proposal from none other than Ant & Dec.

The Geordie duo's first regular TV appearance outside *Byker Grove* was on the Tyne Tees Saturday morning show *Gimme 5*, which lead to three series of their own, with the last one airing on Channel 4.

The final series didn't fare well as hoped for and the duo took a breather from presenting and their pop career for over 18 months whilst planning potential ideas with their production company "Ant N Dec Productions".

One of which was a music show to rival *Top Of The Pops* originally planned to air on Sunday evenings on ITV, immediately after the chart was revealed.

Nigel Pickard invited the duo in for a chat, and decided to place the idea on Saturday mornings, as part of a three hour entertainment show hosted by the duo.

What would set this Saturday morning show from the rest would be that it would run all year round.

Ant & Dec initiated 22 year old MTV presenter Cat Deeley as their co-host former *Top Of The Pops* producer Ric Blaxil was hired to oversee production alongside executive producer Colin McAnally formerly of *The Disney Club* and had worked with the Geordie duo on both the BBC and Channel 4.

The shows would be divided into two, with the main show *SM:tv Live* between 9:25 and 11:30 designed as a warm up for the new music show *CD:uk* (with the CD standing for 'Countdown') taking things up until 12:30pm.

This meant the demise of *The Chart Show* after 12 years on the air and 9 of those on ITV's Saturday mornings, bowing out on the 22nd of August.

The following Saturday saw the Geordie duo make their debut, preceded by a pre-recorded sequence with Ant and Cat waking up in luxury, but Dec waking up screaming from a random outdoor location.

The process was repeated over the next three shows which in turn gave way to an animated title sequence featuring cartoon characters designed by Jamie Hewlett who later created The Gorillaz.

The titles themselves were accompanied by a guitar lead dance theme by Interfearance with the refrain "*#Wake Up, It's Saturday*".

The Geordie duo then appeared outside the LWT building leading the viewers into Studio 2 promising a new kind of Saturday morning show, with no gunge or puppets.

Cat was introduced to the viewers as the one time "Miss Sutton Coldfield of 1974", and was subjected to many jokes about her first name although she appeared more feisty on screen to start off with.

All the goings on for *SM:tv* initially took place on a platform known as "*Mission Control*" with all the cartoons and ad breaks supposedly played from the large operating desk.

The rest of the studio was primarily designed solely for *CD:uk*, but the "Mission Control" pretence was binned after about a month as the pretence was obviously lost on viewers.

The show was heavy on cartoons such as *Cow And Chicken*, and *Dexter's Lab*, although the competition "*Wonkey Donkey*" was introduced where callers had to guess an animal that was in a situation that rhymed with its being, for example a "Flat Cat" or a "Punk Skunk".

The idea of the competition was thought up by writers Richard Preddy and Gary Howe who had previously worked on *The Fast Show*.

It was hinted in The Guardian just a month before the show launched that the duo were debating on whether to bring back "*Beat The Barber*" from their Children's BBC series although the concept never resurfaced.

There were also backstage interviews with the guests appearing on *CD:uk*.

Cat acted as the straight presenter, whilst Ant & Dec's main role was to provide the comedy, with sketches such as "*The Big Interview*" where Dec interviewed Ant, disguised as characters such as Bart Simpson, and the Queen.

A more amusing example was consumer spoof "*It's Not Flaming Good Enough!*" with the pair playing two Anne Robinson caricatures in a scenario similar to Ben, Gez and Rich's "*Watch Out!*" sketch from *Live & Kicking*.

Many of the early sketches would be revisited three years later as part of the Geordie duo's final show.

A specially designed on-screen graphic with the CiTV logo appeared on screen based around a new ident which made its debut before the first show.

The D.O.G. stayed on the show, long after the ident had been refreshed.

The first show didn't really get a chance to establish itself properly as it was cut short by half an hour with *CD:uk* starting at 11am to make way for ITV's F1 coverage, or a loose sense of the word.

The main format of CD:uk was to count down "*The Saturday Chart*" whilst acknowledging the official chart in their predictions, and was introduced with the hosts holding long microphones announcing; "*Music has never lived and breathed in front of your eyes like this before*"

The theme tune was similar in style to *SM:tv,* lasting after the theme to the former was dropped, and had the refrain "*#Countdown UK, Countdown UK*" which was also played at the end of each live studio performance.

The first band to perform in the studio were Faithless with "*God Is A DJ*" and features such as phone vote "*The People's Choice*" were introduced.

CD:uk was more lively than *SM:tv* mainly due to the addition of a studio audience in a style very similar to *Top Of The Pops* but becoming more credible pretty quickly.

That's not to say it didn't have its own unsuccessful features, such as live interviews in record shops from the imaginatively named "Doctor Pop".

As with *The Chart Show*, *CD:uk* also had a late night repeat on ITV Night Time.

Ant & Dec later admitted themselves that they were unsure about *SM:tv*'s lack of content, and with warnings about treading the line beforehand the presenting style did look rather forced, and too knowing.

Show 4 introduced the more familiar theme tune by Steve Brown, which happened to be the same day Series 6 of *Live & Kicking* hit the screens, that being that significant date of the 26th of September.

The series commenced with one of the Leprechaun's trademark sketches during the Superman credits, with what was meant to look like both of them in the shower, and Mr Onion getting sucked down the plughole.

Mr Sage spent the whole show trying to find the whereabouts of his brother, until right at the end of the credits when a female leprechaun was revealed, claiming to be Sage's sister, leading into the Eastenders "*duff duffs*".

The new female character was called Shamrock and voiced by Rebecca Nagan AKA "Rosie" from Rosie and Jim.

Behind the scenes John Eccleston had travelled to Australia to film the sci-fi " *Farscape* rendering him unavailable for the new series of L&K.

Zoe by now had gone solo as the main host on the Radio 1 Breakfast Show and Jamie was leading a colourful life in a brief relationship with Natalie Appleton from the All Saints.

This lead to an awkward situation in November 1998 when the band were on the show to promote the single "*War Of Nerves*" just weeks after the pair had split up.

Another major change behind the scenes saw director Angela Sharp taking over as the show's editor with Chris Bellinger now promoted as the BBC's Head of Children's Entertainment.

That aside, it didn't cause any major disruption to what was another solid series with Ben, Gez and Rich providing further comedy sketches with return outings for "*The Staff Room*" and "*The Krazees*".

New sketches included the "*Animal Rescue Squad*" which went as far as using an acronym, making it only the second "arse" to appear on Saturday mornings since the *No. 73* postcode.

Electric Circus was back with Margharita Taylor, Kate Thornton and Newsround's Kate Sanderson sharing host duties, but Adem Ay was dropped from reviewing the video games with Jamie Theakston taking control with "*J:\Drive*".

One amusing review was of a re-issue of R-Types 1 and 2 for the Playstation where Jamie Theakston described it as "*My favourite game. 11 years ago! I used to like Kid Creole and The Coconuts 11 years ago but I wouldn't play that now!*"

The other experts remained including Paula Danziger and Dr Aric Sigman.

Zoe was back manning the duck based computer game "*Kwak Attak*" and Mr Blobby's competition this series was "*Blob-A-Job*" sharing pretty much the same premise as the last.

Hit, Miss, Or Maybe got a new set of titles, and a theme tune reminiscent of John Barry's *Jukebox Jury* theme, and continued to be repeated during the week on BBC 2 in the evening.

A set of new in-show promos were introduced with celebs waxing lyrical about the show including Billie, Louise, Joe Absolom from *Eastenders* and even offbeat stars such as Chris Moyles, Loyd Grossman, weatherman Richard Edgar, and Lionel Blair.

The music used to accompany them was "*Real Good Time*" by Alda.

L&K Friday returned for a second series in the new year this time hosted by CBBC presenter Steve Wilson and newcomer Liz Fraser who introduced music performances and guest interviews as well as incorporating the Leprechauns' railway based sketch "*Up The Junction*".

Steve and Liz also starred in the Christmas and Easter comedy specials with the rest of the team, as penned by Ben, Gez and Rich.

L&K Friday had quite a part to play in CBBC's coverage of Comic Relief in March, with Steve Wilson going behind the scenes of TVC and introducing special VTs including a vote for the funniest CBBC moment of the last year.

Liz Frazer meanwhile was at Radio 1 observing Simon Mayo breaking the record for the longest ever radio show, lasting 36 hours.

The main show soldiered on where Phillip Schofield also made his second appearance at the start of 1999, where by now he was starring in the West End play of *Doctor Doolittle*.

The same month saw the announcement that Zoe was to leave the show at the end of the current series and Jamie shortly announced that he would be leaving too.

Both had decided that three series was a good time to leave the show, in the same way as Andi and Emma.

Their final outing was broadcast on the 17th of April 1999, introduced by "Ian Hislop's son" Scott Chisholm who had become an occasional guest on the show following his popular "Future Generations" promotional film for the BBC.

As well as appearing live in the studio, Scott was seen in a series of VT inserts looking back at the more embarrassing moments of the pair, mainly involving hairstyles, with Jamie's fringe from their first series getting the most stick.

Many a surprise took place with the real Rolf Harris bursting out of a painting during a sketch with Jamie dressed up as the entertainer from Oz.

Zoe's dad Johnny also made an appearance inside a gorilla costume and did an impressive intro to the *Rugrats* cartoon.

Other twists included a "human" version of Kwakatak played in the *Blue Peter* garden, Toby Anstis presiding over a special live Cloud 9 with 911 surprising a viewer, and Lionel Blair and Prince Naseem making an appearance in the "*Who's In The Box*" sketch with Ben, Gez, and Rich.

The tears started flowing earlier than expected, after a special VT montage was used during a performance of Boyzone's "*You Needed Me*" causing Zoe to almost break down in her next link.

Luckily she quickly removed the moist to preside over her final *Hit Miss Or Maybe* with a surprise appearance from fiancé Norman Cook stepping in for an "ill" Phillippa Forrester.

Many a VT highlights package was shown during the final show where much attention and hilarity was made towards Jamie's fringe in the first series with the duo presenting.

The pair were the guests in the final Hot Seat of the series with Michael Parkinson asking the questions along with the studio audience and viewers phone calls.

The interview came to a poignant end when Jamie referred to Andi Peters' speech in his final show, and mentioned that he was right about his successor "*having the best job in the world*".

Apart from the bit about working with Emma Forbes.

Like Andi Peters, Zoe and Jamie had a surprise song shown to them which this time was a specially written version of "*More Than A Woman*" renamed "*More Than Presenters* sung by 911.

Also appearing were The Honeyz, Cleopatra, Steps, Reeves and Mortimer, Kirsten O'Brien, Andrew Lynford from *Eastenders* and the rest of the *Live & Kicking* team.

It was an emotional VT, but nowhere near as tear jerking as Andi Peters' farewell.

Ben, Gez and Rich, presented the pair with flowers, and after the credits had rolled, Scott Chilsholm pushed the final button into a special endcap assuring viewers that the series would return in September.

Zoe Ball continued with the Radio 1 Breakfast Show for another year, and Jamie had also joined the station hosting a Sunday afternoon show, whilst carrying on with *The O-Zone* and assisting with the BBC's coverage of the 1999 Cricket World Cup.

By a weird twist of fate, the pair were reunited together by the end of the year presenting Channel 4's Tuesday evening entertainment show *The Priory*, after Zoe's original co-host walked out at the last minute.

The series ran into the Millennium and allowed the pair to be that extra bit cheeky, remaining popular with viewers.

One memorable moment was when Mitch Johnston was unmasked as part of a feature on where viewers had to guess why a mystery guest was famous.

Jamie however later referred to his time on *Live & Kicking* as "embarrassing" in an interview with Heat in 2001 and mentioned that he thought Ant, Dec & Cat made a better show with *SM:tv*.

Being able to run through the summer was a gamble that paid off for *SM:tv Live* as it was during the summer of 1999 that the show started to adapt a looser feel to proceedings.

The show had also gained a sponsor with Nesquick, later changed to Ambrosia Splat and *CD:uk* was sponsored by Tizer who previously did the same for *The Chart Show* a couple of years earlier.

The summer saw the introduction of established features such as "*Challenge Ant*", "*The Postbag Dance*" to the tune of "*Please Mr Postman*" and Dec's love poems into *Sabrina The Teenage Witch* proving Melissa Joan Hart was still a draw on Saturday mornings.

Part of the success was down to the departure of Ric Blaxill as producer who was replaced by Phil Mount who had worked on *TFI Friday* on CD:uk and former *Big Breakfast* producer David Staite was brought on for *SM:tv*.

The other part was down to the duo starring in panto in Sunderland the previous year whilst still on air, and the interaction with children helped them realise that they needed to give viewers content on Saturday mornings they genuinely found funny, and something that the BBC wasn't providing.

A signifier of this came in June of 1999 and the show before Fathers Day where viewers were asked to e-mail about their embarrassing dads and Ant ended up corpsing when reading an e-mail about one viewer whose dad would fart in the biscuit tin when friends came to visit.

This was evidence of the level of humour *SM:tv* would touch that other shows aimed at children wouldn't, and it looked as if ITV had a serious contender on their hands.

The BBC, confident that viewing figures would regain when L&K returned in the autumn resorted to the usual regime of broadcasting CBBC on Saturdays with the new strand *Planet Saturday* with Kirsten, Otis and new presenter Michael Underwood.

Fully Booked was back on Sundays for its fifth series with 18 year old Scotswoman Kate Heavenor from digital channel BBC Choice taking over from Gail Porter who had swapped the playpen of children's programmes for the outside walls of the Houses Of Parliament.

Other changes included the phone number for the Luxury Luggage where "0891" numbers were abandoned in the latter half of the decade with FB's number changed to "0900 1 33 99 66".

The number was still voiced by Chris with one example being a send up of the infamous "*#0-8-9-1 50 50 50*" chatline ad.

A high point of the series came with the 100th Show featuring an odd array of guests including boyband Five, Jane McDonald, and Loyd Grossman.

Various highlights packages were shown featuring the many guests to have visited including Rolf Harris, Ant & Dec, Michaela Strachan, and even Andy Crane.

However the programme had quite a tough competitor on it's hands with T4 on Channel 4 eating away viewers, and with SM:tv becoming a very likely threat to the BBC's Saturday mornings, it was to be the last series of *Fully Booked* that would air on Sundays.

In July and August, the *SM:tv* presenters took their respective holidays with Cat leaving Ant & Dec to present on their own in July, whilst Westlife and soapstar/wannabe popstar Adam Rickitt stood in for Ant & Dec during their four week break in August.

To compensate for the F1 Coverage, episodes of *CD:uk* were shortened, with the usual format replaced by documentaries following bands such as A1 and Five on their tours.

September the 4th saw what was essentially the second series of *SM:tv Live* commence, with a new arrangement of the theme tune which was to last for the next couple of years.

The set had been given a makeover with new window panels and the Geordie Boys were back in town with Cat singing that very song to welcome them back.

"*Challenge Ant*" returned where each week a viewer would take on "the king of common knowledge" resulting in the audience chanting "*#You're Thick!*" if Ant incorrectly answered the make or break Killer Question.

If Ant answered correctly, the contestant would lose all the prizes they had previously won.

Other new sketches included "Farmer Ant & Duck" which would normally finish with a song where Farmer Ant, and Dec dressed as a duck would exchange verses with Dec's normally being on the naughtier side of things.

The stand out was the launch of the new Friends spoof "*Chums*" where Ant, Dec and Cat lived in a flat together with the studio guests making appearances where apt, with Dec attempting to snog Cat but always getting interrupted by Ant or one of the guests.

There was also an amusing take off of the title sequence with it's own theme with well observed lyrics;

> *"#No one thought that comedy could ever be this lame,*
> *Every week a different show yet somehow all the same,*
> *We'll be Chums forever, we'll be jolly good Chums"*

Chums was the creation of two of the new writers to join the show who happened to be Ben Ward and Gez Foster who had jumped ship from *Live & Kicking*.

Richie Webb meanwhile went on to compose many a theme tune to a CBBC series including *Get Your Own Back,* and *Bring It On* which starred a certain Richard McCourt and Dominic Wood.

SM:tv and *CD:uk*'s production company by this period was transferred to Blaze, a division of Zenith who produced Byker Grove.

August 1999 saw the announcement of Zoe and Jamie's replacements for *Live & Kicking*, with CBBC believing that it was important to carry on with a strong brand that had lasted through two sets of presenters and still had a magazine publication to its belt.

Steve Wilson was promoted from *L&K Friday*, and presenting alongside him was 22 year old Irish MTV presenter Emma Ledden who had presented in her homeland on RTE's *The Den* alongside the guys who operated Zig And Zag.

The BBC taking a hint from ITV, regarding Cat Deeley's haunt.

Before the new series began, there were airs of uncertainty, and suspicions that the producers wanted a pairing who were safe and kept their private lives away from the tabloids.

As with all new pairings, Steve and Emma had quite a task in terms of establishing themselves, with Zoe Ball persuading the public to give them a chance when she was interviewed on *TFI Friday*.

A new title sequence heralded the launch of the new series on Saturday September the 25th.

Well, the beginning was altered to show a newly designed ball bursting out of a new extension to BBC Television Centre, and the logo at the end was redesigned.

The fonts were also changed, marking a departure for the long serving "Futura" font which ironically resurfaced a year later on *SM:tv*.

The new presenters arrived at the "concrete doughnut" after the titles had finished and were greeted by a few familiar faces on their walk up to TC6.

They included a commissionaire, who bore a resemblance to Jamie Theakston, a tea lady who looked suspiciously like his presenting partner, and Andi Peters who was posing as the boss of the BBC, informing the new hosts with a witty aside;

"*Now remember, Saturday Morning Television Live was created by the BBC for the BBC, so whatever you do, don't trend on the ants, don't kick the cat, or someone may very well deck you*"

An even more unsubtle dig was made through the showing of a "Miss It Miss Out" promo featuring Ant & Dec, with Emma knowingly stating that "*They never ever miss a show!*"

Steve and Emma were joined by the oddly spelt Ortis Deley from CBBC's *Short Change* who surprised viewers in a feature called "*We've Got Your Number*".

Also introduced was a squeaky puppet rat called "Renoir" who assisted with the competition winners slot "Lucky Loos".

Unfortunately as the series went on, things just didn't feel the same with a noticeable lack of chemistry between the pair, no comedy act at this stage of the series, and certain items revamped with *Electric Circus* given a jazzed up reworking, and the Hot Seat renamed "*Live & Chatting*".

The phone number was also changed to a premium rate number with a jingle that went "*#0845 610 1515*" in a style reminiscent of S Club 7.

The competition jingle was also changed to "*#0900 1-Double-1 4444*" sung in a similar vocal style.

One guest who didn't take very kindly to the change was *Eastenders*' Joe Absalom who could clearly be heard asking;

"*What happened to '0181? The new one's too long!*"

The failure of the show was either down to the new presenters, but more so of the fact that the main format itself was starting to look very tired with items such as *Hit Miss Or Maybe* still pedalled out.

Even worse was the reprieve of Mr Blobby, who with the axing of *Noel's House Party* was now beginning to make regular appearances on the ailing *Generation Game* with Jim Davidson.

The show was even still preceded by repeats of *The New Adventures Of Superman* which had long been axed as a series in the States.

On a more positive note Mitch Johnston was kept on and read the menu over an odd underscore based on a Spanish football chant, and the leprechauns were back with the return of Mr Onion joining Sage and Shamrock.

Neither of them however could act as a stopgap to *SM:tv*'s increasing success which by October saw the show beating *Live & Kicking* on a weekly basis.

Big stars started flocking to Studio 2 of The London Studios, including The Pet Shop Boys, Paul Whitehouse and Mark Williams from *The Fast Show*, Tom Jones, Carol Vorderman, Sting, Davina McCall, Gaby Roslin, Prince Naseem, Dale Winton, Jerry Springer, Sooty and Sweep, Graham Norton, and even Chris Evans who asked the boys if he could make an appearance just one night earlier on his own show.

A bigger coup for the show was the acquisition of the popular Japanese animation *Pokemon* to tie in with the Nintendo game.

I wasn't a massive fan of the craze myself, but that part of the show was the ideal time for a toast and orange squash break.

The new cartoon also saw a couple of new sketches introduced with the first being the "Pokefights" with Dec as main character Ash, and Ant playing his enemy "*G-G-Gary*".

Occasionally Dec would play Ash's red haired sidekick "*mmmmmMistayyyy!*" with one memorable occasion involving her going hysterical over an appearance by Bryan from Westlife.

There was also the introduction of the rap, with the pair dressed in red jumpers with Pikachu on them with the premise being that Ant was always reluctant to do them.

The first few lines changed each week, but the rap would always end with;

> *"SMTV will make you Poketough, make it 9:25 every Saturday,*
> *Don't be a Jigglypuff, ahh yeah!"*

The best part of the programme however was "Wonkey Donkey" and they had to be commended for coming up with so many different animals such as "*Smitten Kitten*" and "*Yule Mule*".

What made it work however was Dec getting genuinely angry with the idiotic callers who completely misunderstood the concept of the animal having to rhyme.

It would often have Dec leaving in a huff, occasionally knocking the podium over.

There was also the introduction of the instant win competition "Ring To Win" which was only memorable for the jingle and accompanying dance.

Overall the programme had now put ITV at the top of its game on Saturdays and had embraced an appeal among older viewers that had not been seen on Saturday mornings for many years.

Ant & Dec provided the laughs, and Cat was easy on the eye whilst blending into proceedings and holding it all together with the duo, with all three of them appearing accessible to viewers and more as best mates than presenters.

A Christmas Day special proved one such highlight, lasting for an extra half hour until midday.

CD:uk continued to perform well, with a new title sequence based around an intergalactic maze, looking very similar to the titles of C*atchphrase* when TVS produced the show.

It was by this time where "*You Know Where It's At!*" was introduced as the line into the break between *SM:tv Live* and *CD:uk*.

Live & Kicking in all fairness was trying it's best to retain what made it successful including pulling in established musical guests such as Tom Jones, and Phil Collins, who would more than likely be coaxed into a self-indulgent singalong with presenter Steve Wilson accompanying them on the piano.

The indulgence of which, hadn't been seen on Saturday mornings since the days of Mike Read and his guitar on *Superstore*.

And there was still the annual tradition of getting the controller of BBC 1 interviewed where current incumbent Peter Salmon was brought on in early December, where one of the callers happened to be a young and in his own words "sycophantic" Matt Edmondson who five years later joined CBBC as a presenter.

The entire premise of getting the controller of BBC 1 interviewed would be one of the elements frowned upon by the presenters of *Live & Kicking*'s subsequent series.

CBBC still saw it as one of their biggest shows and it was given two of the 26 hours of BBC 1's *2000 Today* broadcast into the new Millennium where that morning's show included many an outside broadcast, including an awkward *Hit Miss Or Maybe* using said technology.

The show was introduced with Mr Blobby invading the main *2000 Today* studio hassling presenters Huw Edwards and Gaby Roslin to let the show go out, with a special set of titles featuring the acronym "*L2K*".

SM:tv meanwhile on the other hand still went out live, albeit with the whole show presented on a bed in the Chums set with Ant & Dec being far from sober with many a cheeky innuendo joke slipped in.

Matthew Kelly was the guest appearing in that week's "*Chums*" which ended amusingly abruptly, so they could play "Wonkey Donkey" near the end of the show.

It was an lively and irreverent start to what would be the biggest year for the show.

Live & Kicking started to pull out their guns by finally introducing a comedy act in the form of Australian comedy duo Supergirly, AKA Louise McClachy and Jai Simeone whose stage act involved witty song parodies, with the most notable being their take on "*West End Girls*".

Their main premise on the show was as playing make up artists although the limitations from the adult surrounding of their stage act prevented them from being as funny as they could have been.

They also began appearing in the post end-credits sketches instead of the leprechauns.

However, the most desperate move made by the show was the decision to screen episodes of *The Simpsons* within the programme which was clearly a sign of badly wanting viewers to return.

Whilst *The Simpsons* is an easily superior cartoon to *Pokemon* any day, *Live & Kicking* really wasn't the right show for the series, which wasn't helped by the majority of the episodes being from season 1.

One individual who was crestfallen over the show's decline was Radio 1 DJ Chris Moyles, who despite being on the radio at the same time, initiated a campaign to "Save Live & Kicking", persuading viewers to watch at least half an hour of the show every Saturday Morning.

It was more than evident that Chris clearly wasn't watching properly as there was many an awkward moment on screen, such as reluctant competition callers in the space based computer game "*Klunk The Junk*".

Not to mention Steve Wilson getting caught on camera telling boyband "Northern Line"; "*just pretend to take calls*" which if it was done now would more than likely result in an OFCOM fine.

In fact, in the process of writing this, it's been a bugger being able to view footage from this era without wanting to hit the fast forward button at certain points.

SM:tv on the other hand featured many rewind button moments every week, with new sketches including viewer advice slot "*Dec Says*".

Dec would answer viewers letters wanting help, and whilst he went off in an egotistical tangent, the camera would zoom towards phone operator Ant whose thoughts could be heard by the viewer linking into a flashback of what really happened, with Dec dressed as "*Downright Dirty Donnelly*" causing problems for fellow characters played by the studio guests.

"The way it really was, was a very different story…."

8 year old Kirsty Netzell played the girl answering the phones with Ant, and soon became a regular comedy foil on the show.

Another long standing feature was added to the postbag slot with "Ant's Song" where each week, Ant would perform a song about the show sent in by a viewer.

The most popular was by a band called "Sparky" with a song called "*We All Love Cat Deeley*" which resulted in the band themselves being invivited to the studio to perform the song live.

Guests would appear in the "*SM:tv Stripsearch*" answering 'this or that?' questions normally ending with "*Ant Or Dec?*".

And not forgetting the competition "*Splatoon*" where the boys played two dirty minded aeroplane pilots who flirted with "Single Person Deeley", and invited callers to guide a blindfolded guest to aim at balloons filled with gunge.

It sort of deviated from the promise on the first show of no gunge being involved, but it wasn't too much of an issue as they probably meant that no one would get covered in the bright liquid stuff which was certainly the case with "*Splatoon*".

The show even took risks, with an April Fools joke back firing when millions of viewers started ringing in after Dec supposedly collapsed live on air before a *Pokemon* cartoon, resulting in the team apologising for the stunt.

It proved no hindrance for the show's ongoing success.

Live & Kicking made its departure for the summer in April as usual, but returned on the Whitsun Bank Holiday for *Music Live And Kicking* as part of the BBC's "Music Live" event.

Presenting the show were Steve, Emma, Ortis and the late Stephen Gately whilst David Arnold was live in the studio conducting a live version of the show's theme tune.

Much to the relief of the team (and those watching at home), Steve's keyboard was given away in a viewers competition.

Another Boyzone member also turned his hand to presenting as part of the show that would replace *Live & Kicking* over the summer and this time would be broadcast live on Saturdays for the first time in five years (with the exception of the 1998 Commonwealth Games).

It would be shown for three hours between 8:45 and 11:45 with the start time changed to 9:15 midway through the run.

Broadcast from Glasgow, *FBi* (Fully Booked Interactive) was a revamped version of *Fully Booked* casting away just about every shade of the series with the exception of presenter Kate Heavenor, joined by Keith Duffy from said Irish band, and model Vernon Kay who presented on satellite music channel Play UK.

The new show succeeded in not just appearing inferior to *Live & Kicking*, but also to its predecessor *Fully Booked*, which took some doing.

Ironically, former host Chris Jarvis continued to voice trailers for the show, and others that appeared on CBBC.

Features included pre-recorded star guest interviews "FBi VIP", the viewer competition "Don't Drop The Gonk", and probably the most infamous of all "Get Gobby" introduced by Vernon, which lead to it being given a deserved ribbing on *Room 101*, over Anne Robinson's more favourable nomination of "*shouty children's presenters*".

The studio audience and participants were referred to as "agents", (complete with shades), and live studio interviews were resorted to little known bands such as "Scooch", and "Girl Thing", as well as cheap guests from CBBC shows such as *Microsoap* and *The Wild House*.

FBi's main problem was that it tried too hard to look "with it" by emphasising on interactive technology, but ended up looking incredibly dated not helped by the opening titles that featured CGI robots, looking very similar to the final set of Children's ITV idents from the Stonewall era in 1990.

The bias towards Scottish competition participants also continued to prevail.

The tweeness and "*getting it completely wrong*" approach of *FBi* lead to *SM:tv* increasing it's audience over what was to be quite a memorable summer where during the month of June, Ant & Dec took time off to watch the Euro 2000 tournament, and one of the guests in their place was none other than Chris Evans.

Evans had listed *Swap Shop* and *Tiswas* as two as his all time TV shows and was a more than capable stand in, taking the mickey out of his ongoing downfall in the media, and leant himself to the usual features such as "Challenge Chris", and the revived competition "What's Ant Whistling", which was also altered for similar effect.

The boys returned in July when Cat went on holiday and one of the guests to stand in was Kylie Minogue who brought her acting abilities into the sketches with great effect.

One of them being the wrestling spoof "W.I.F. Blast Time" with Ant dressed as characters such as "The Farmer" and "The Postman" taking on "The Monster Man Destroyer" as played by Kirsty, who made her entrance to Queen's "*We Will Rock You*".

By this time it was announced that Steve Wilson and Emma Ledden were to leave *Live & Kicking* by mutual agreement.

"M11" had returned to MTV, and the abler half of the pair Steve initially persuaded to stay on, decided to depart with her, putting the show's future in great doubt.

The timing couldn't have been better for ITV as the 22nd of July saw the 100th edition of *SM:tv Live* with a star studded studio including two of the Spice Girls now embarking on respective solo careers, Steps, S Club 7, Billie Piper, Atomic Kitten, and even Andi Peters who made an appearance at the start of the show.

Steve Wilson also made a surprise appearance, taking part in a special episode of Chums where "Ant Aid" was initiated with all the guests recording a special song in the style of "*Do They Know It's Christmas*" called "*Blink For Ant*" to raise money for Ant who seemingly had his eyes wide open.

CD:uk saw a special "*People's Choice*" vote where one of the songs up for nomination was "*Let's Get Ready To Rhumble*" to be performed by Ant & Dec live in the studio.

Unsurprisingly the vote went in their favour and the Geordie duo played out of the show singing live, alongside all the guests appearing on the show.

The Geordie Boys took yet another holiday during the whole of August with Emma Bunton stepping in to cover for them alongside Cat, and were occasionally joined by T4's rising star Dermot O'Leary.

A memorable sketch during this period was a spoof of *The Price Is Right* with studio guest Jackie Chan modelling the prizes.

There was also a launch of a competition for viewers to own an exclusive edition of *Pokemon* for the Game Boy with new character Mew added, and the grand final was billed as "*Who Wants To Be A Mew Trainer?*".

The success of both series lead to merchandising hitting the shelves in the autumn with a video compilation of "*Chums*", an annual, and a *CD:uk* compilation CD.

The programme was set to enter its third year on air at its strongest, with an even larger audience gained throughout the summer.

FBi ended on the 23rd of September with Keith moving on to the first series of *Celebrity Big Brother* and a more successful acting career in *Coronation Street*, Vernon joining short lived spin off *Top Of The Pops Plus* before switching to T4, and Kate eventually becoming a full-time CBBC presenter.

Over the summer the future of *Live & Kicking* had remained in the balance with the show's production team considering whether the format was still stable as it was more than the case that no one liked Mr Blobby, and items such as *Hit Miss Or Maybe* had been around since the days of *Saturday Superstore*.

In all fairness and without meaning to be ageist, a large number of the production team including editor Angela Sharp and producer Cathy Gilbey had been at the show since *Swap Shop* and they it was evident that they were lacking with regards to innovation and present day styles.

It was decided in September that *Live & Kicking* would be returning but with a brand new format and four presenters at the helm.

Katy Hill who had recently left *Blue Peter* was promoted as the show's main host, alongside Ortis who was kept on from series 7, Trey Farley from Channel 4's *Loves Like A Dog* and the rather naughty Sara Cawood from MTV and notably from the mid 90s Channel 4 series *The Girly Show*.

The new series would begin in October after the Sydney Olympics, and the new hosts made their debut the day before on CBBC in a special programme called "*Live & Kicking Plays Dirty*".

The title only being a hint of the desperation that was to come.

The new series of *Live & Kicking* commenced on Saturday the 7th of October with a brand new arrangement of a theme tune in an equally dated style to *FBi* a la techno, with an equally contrived new set of titles with phrases such as "*Pump It Up!*" and "R U Ready?" being flashed on screen.

There was also a pre-credits sequence with the line

"*The Time Is Now, A Time For Change, The Evolution Has Begun*"

"*Live & Kicking – Don't Flick With Us*"

The new presenters were unveiled, literally, and almost everything about the old *Live & Kicking* had been shunned including Mitch, the Leprechauns, and thankfully Mr Blobby.

Katy, Otis and Trey remained in Studio 6 whilst Sara spent the majority of the show getting wet on the roof of TVC as part of the messy game "*Sacrifice Your Family*".

An emphasis on "vibrancy" was the mainstay of the new show with all serious items also given the push, and interviews reduced solely to the "*Talk To The Hand*" feature.

Each week a guest was put under the spotlight and had a giant hand that would be raised it they didn't want to answer a difficult question, on the basis that the hand could only be used once.

Other items included the viewers phone-in competition "Prize Idiot" and the "Popoholics" quiz played towards the end of the show, as well as weekly gungings involving a wide range of contrived set ups.

Sadly the idea of having four presenters failed, with a distinct lack of chemistry between all four of them and the large number of features reducing any chances of establishing themselves as personalities.

More importantly, the series had lost everything that had defined it in the past and even though it was criticised for stringing out old features in the last series, the new incarnation had changed beyond recognition and ended up losing more viewers to ITV.

SM:tv Live carefully timed the launch of the new series and relaunched old favourites such as "*Challenge Ant*" "*Wonkey Donkey*" and "*Chums*" on the same day as *Live & Kicking*'s comeback with trails for the items running in the shows leading up beforehand.

The "Dec Says" sketches also saw the arrival of a younger Cat Deeley who wore a long black wig, dark rimmed specs, a blue puffer jacket and false dentures to become "Cat The Dog" with a strong Brummie accent leading to utterances of "*Buurrminghamm!*" when asked of the whereabouts of her hometown.

There were also new sketches including the juvenile but amusing spoof "*F'art Attack*" with Ant playing the flatulent host "Neil Pumpcannon".

And not forgetting consumer spoof "Captain Justice" with Ant playing a superhero solving guests problems, developing what looked like a homoerotic liking for Dec, who finished each sketch with the line;

"*There goes Captain Justice, always disappears with a puff*"

More star guests made appearances in the studio and in the sketches including Philippa Forrester, Denise Van Outen, Les Dennis, Rolf Harris Frank Skinner and David Baddiel, and even Mark Lamarr shunned his grumpy man image to join in the proceedings.

A Christmas/New Year special broadcast towards the end of 2000 featured a top 20 rundown of Ant's Songs, although rather controversially "We All Love Cat Deeley" only reached Number 4.

The programme also contained highlights of the celebrity Soccer Six charity tournament with Ant acting as the goal keeper and Dec in defence, in a tournament that featured Robbie Williams, Jay Kay, and Peter Beardsley.

CD:uk still continued to be a more credible competitor to *Top Of The Pops* although the show wasn't without it's controversial moments, including many a four letter word utterance from former Gun's N' Roses guitarist Slash on an appearance on the show in December 2000.

By this period, one of *SM:tv*'s founding fathers Nigel Pickard had moved to the BBC as head of Children's Programmes and introduced the tried and trusted concept of shows running all year round, with *Blue Peter* being one such show, albeit reduced to only Mondays and Wednesdays during the summer.

Inevitably *Live & Kicking* was to also jump on the bandwagon but their compromise was that during the Summer, the programme would be transmitted from and produced by BBC Scotland in Glasgow as they still held the contract to produce CBBC's Saturday morning show between mid-April and mid-September.

But before the move could take place, it was announced in March 2001 that *Live & Kicking* was to be axed in the autumn after 8 years and would be replaced by a "*fresh*" and "*funky*" style show.

The announcement was more or less inevitable, as many thought the show should have followed in the footsteps of *Swap Shop* and *Going Live!* by ending after six series, but on a more positive note it would become and still remains the longest running Saturday morning show from the BBC.

One final twist came on the final show from Television Centre as Katy Hill, arguably the most stable of the team, waved goodbye to her co-presenters as they departed from outside the entrance of Television Centre.

No real reason was given for Katy's departure, although it was rumoured she didn't get on with Sara Cawood, which may explain why they were rarely seen in the studio together.

Katy was replaced by yet another Scottish presenter of the Gail Porter ilk, that being Heather Suttie who recently presented CBBC's technology series *Hyperlinks* alongside one Dominic Wood.

The first show from Scotland was broadcast on the 21st of April with the tagline "*One Great Show, Three Times as Kicking!*" coinciding with the programme splitting into three separate sections.

The first hour was branded "*Kicking Toons*" and was devoted entirely to cartoons including yes you've guessed it, the *Rugrats*, and *Mona The Vampire*.

The feature used a "Looney Tunes" arrangement of the Live & Kicking theme.

The second hour would be *Live & Kicking* itself with the *Take Your Pick* inspired "Stop The Snot" game, where guests would have to last a minute without responding "Yes" or "No" to the questions put forward by Heather, a concept that once existed as a game played on the *Superstore* delivery van.

If one of the unlucky words was uttered, a child hoping to win a set of prizes would get gunged.

The contestants would be introduced by a voiceover who sounded like he was attempting to take off *Double Dare*'s Nick Wilton, with one of the guests being a reappearance of Louise from Supergirly.

Ortis dressed up as artist "Van Guff" and presided over a Pictionary style art competition "*L&K's Big Draw*".

Trey continued to interview guests in "*Talk To The Hand*", and Sara was now the host of "*F.O.T.*" (False Or True) a sort of revival of what was once a whole programme made by BBC Scotland for CBBC.

Also introduced was the desperate outdoor adventure feature *L&K Castaway* where each week Toby Waterman and Tammy Huff oversaw a team of young contestants would face the trials and tribulations of the poorly named "*Island K*", in a sort of precursor to CBBC's *Escape From Scorpion Island*.

A catch-up show was broadcast within the week on CBBC.

The final hour was the music magazine "*Live & Loud*" which was designed to compete with *CD:uk* and inevitably failing.

Items included the viewer vote with the ever inspired title "*UP 2 U*" and finished with the Popoholics quiz as hosted by Trey.

This lead to what would be the final sweary moment on the show where on introducing the guests Trey would end a risky rhyming couplet before the last word.

Unfortunately the illusion was lost on guest Mel B, where during an introduction to DJ Pied Piper, Trey's rhyme went "*If Sara's team wins, I'm sure that he'll thank her, but if I judge he loses, he'll call me a…*" resulting in Mel B joyfully blurting out the forbidden word only to be told off on air by Sara, and the show itself getting a telling off in the autumn by the BBC.

The concept of three separate strands was phased out by the end of the series although the running of each show carried on in roughly the same order.

SM:tv Live on the other hand was about to take quite a big leap by going for six shows straight between May and June without Ant & Dec hosting.

The duo were to concentrate on their first and inevitably unsuccessful attempt at cracking ITV's Saturday nights with *Slap Bang!,* which proved that what may work at 9:25am on a Saturday morning, didn't really work in prime time.

Cat was joined by Louise Redknapp as her co-presenter and in addition to *Chums*, a new spin off sketch called "*The Further Adventures Of Cat The Dog*" was introduced where Cat and her "bestest ever friend" Lou embarked on many an misadventure.

Ant & Dec returned in July, with guest hosts such as Amanda Holden standing in for Cat, whilst new sketches were introduced such as the Steve Irwin spoof "*Animals That Would Knack You In A Fight*" and the risqué "*SMTV 2099*" '*boldly going where many space sketches have gone before*'.

The sci-fi spoof ended up in the Screen Grabs section of Heat magazine involving Victoria Beckham drawing what appeared to look like a pair of breasts on the transparent navigation board.

The new sketches appeared to lack wit, and it was probably an early sign of the series starting to show its age.

Taking over from "*Wonkey Donkey*" was the penalty shoot out based competition "*Eat My Goal*" where unsurprisingly Ant was the one in goal and looked like simply an excuse to used the Collapsed Lung song of the same name.

Compared to "*Wonkey Donkey*" there was more a sense of competitiveness than comedy.

The announcement of *Live & Kicking*'s replacement came in August where former host of *The Word* Dani Behr and 30 year old Joe Mace from the short lived *O-Zone* replacement *Top Of The Pops Plus* would be the new hosts of the originally titled *The Saturday Show*.

An emphasis on attitude was promised, and a contest for a house band was promoted stating; *"No dancing boy or girl bands please. Do you want to be the next Travis, Catatonia or Wheatus?"*

The final *Live & Kicking* took to the air on the 15th of September 2001 and in the traditional manner it cocked up at the beginning by accidentally flashing a trailer for the new *Saturday Show* over a pre-recorded sketch with Sage and Onion.

This time round it was just the original pair appearing live in the studio and in pre-recorded sketches with past presenters including Andi Peters, Emma Forbes, Zoe Ball, and Emma Ledden.

Mitch was also brought back although it was later revealed he was also pre-recorded, when one of his lines accidentally got played at the wrong time.

The show opened with a mixture of the original titles and the current set but using the Series 8 theme tune throughout leading into the opening link with the presenters pretending to break down in the sickly tradition, although Ortis attempted to reassure viewers; "*It ain't gonna be that kinda show*".

It was pretty much like a normal show albeit the usual features given unexpected twists with the morning's "*Stop The Snot*" competition turning the tables on Heather and getting her gunged after just 1 second.

At least it meant a change of dress.

Even more memorable was Ortis stitching up Trey in "Talk To The Hand" prompting Trey to respond to his question in the predictable manner.

Only one old feature was brought back with "Cloud 9", where a "lucky viewer" in Glasgow (where else?) was surprised by Dominic Wood.

No sense of assumption that in just over a year later he would be one half the team that would put the BBC back at the top of their game on Saturday mornings.

The studio guests weren't really anything special with Steps making a return appearance which was sort of appropriate as they were one of the bands who had been around as far as the show's heyday with Zoe and Jamie.

Other guests included *Hollyoaks* actors Lesley Johnson and a young Gary Lucy who were involved in just about every item on the show.

A preview of *The Saturday Show* was shown midway through the programme and the fresh new titles made *Live & Kicking* look passé in comparison.

The final moments of the show were rather anti-climatic, starting off with a sketch with the leprechauns realising that they (or Mr Sage at least) were the longest serving members of the *Live & Kicking* team.

It was followed by the hosts saying goodbye into a series of scrambled-up slow motion montages placed at random, during a studio performance of Steps and "*The Way You Make Me Feel*", in the same style as Boyzone's performance on Zoe and Jamie's last show.

It was followed by a sketch with the Leps fighting over an on and off switch, concluding with a shot of all four current presenters delivering a variation of the much remembered slogan "*Missed It, Missed Out*".

Since their departures, Ortis continued with *Short Change* and hosting CBBC, Heather turned to a career in radio, Sara progressed to Lotto draws and Trey ended up marrying Katy Hill.

The final programme definitely proved how it had become more structured compared to the fast paced approach in its heyday.

But *SM:tv* for all it's strengths still had to go to a cartoon in order to prepare for a comedy sketch and one item in the studio very rarely followed another.

Whilst *Live & Kicking* had better days, it was sad to see the series depart, but it was probably best that it ended gracefully, rather than string it out even further, which in the eyes of many had probably already done so.

The new replacement programme had high hopes, including that of restoring what many believed as the BBC's rightful place as the leader of Saturday mornings.

Chapter 7 – "You Asked For It!"

The demise of *Live & Kicking* was pretty much put to one side as the press and public were drawn to the launch of the new *Saturday Show* with plenty of promotion on CBBC, most notably the trailers featuring the tagline "*You Asked For It!*" which were shown all over the BBC including BBC Four's precursor BBC Knowledge.

It was clear that "*attitude*", and "*no prizes for coming second*" would be the premise behind the BBC's new Saturday morning offering.

When transmission commenced on the 22nd of September 2001, it was as if they had gone all out to make the show look as different as possible from its predecessor, straight from the opening titles with a theme tune of the punk rock vein, similar in style to The Clash's cover of "*I Fought The Law*".

Then the new set was revealed which caused quite a shock with those watching as it couldn't have been more different from any other standard Saturday morning magazine show.

The set positioned Dani and Joe on one stage, the house band on another, and a third for musical guests, whilst the audience were sitting down in pods at the back of the studio giving a very distanced approach, not normally associated with Saturday mornings.

After the titles had finished the house band, a young guitar act performed what would become their own signature tune to the show "*No Ordinary Day*" and it was pretty much evident throughout the first show that a lot of work needed undertaking.

The band's main role was to sing the stings throughout the show such as the phone numbers and get the audience to stand up to a tune similar to Eminem.

"*#Everybody in the house, come on now, Please stand up! Please stand up!*"

The procedure was dropped pretty quickly although the band finally decided on a name by December through a viewers vote opting for "*Stamford Amp*".

The main problem was the lack of home audience participation, and an overdose on studio games, some of which didn't even make it past the first show.

One infamous example being "The Guess List" which was a game involving the audience answering multiple choice questions via keypads in an attempt to whittle the audience down to one.

Not only was it a concept that been done before, but it didn't even finish properly with a clear winner.

The big features promoted were the new cartoons with *Super Duper Sumos* ("*#They've got guts, and butts!*") and *The Jackie Chan Adventures*.

The former had a game to tie in with it called "*Gut Busters*" where sumo-clad Joe took on an identically dressed member of the audience, attempting to bring the nature of *Tiswas* into proceedings.

The much talked about item of the new series was "*Risk*" a game where a lucky (to use the word loosely) viewer could put their possession on the line to win a bigger prize and their possession intact by completing a steady hand puzzle in the shape of the world "RISK" within 90 seconds.

If they failed their toy would be shredded and everyone would see the result.

This time it really happened as in 1995, *Get Your Own Back* came under fire (ironically) for when they put possessions into a "Forfeit Furnace" which after three or four shows resulted in Dave Benson-Phillips appearing on CBBC explaining that it didn't really happen.

However after a teddy bear was "destroyed" and drew complaints, they edited out all uses of the furnace from future shows and repeats.

Risk didn't cause as much controversy on the basis that barely anyone was interested in the programme at all.

Later on however, celebrities were nominated to undergo the steady hand task on the contestant's behalf.

Another feature that could be seen as completely pointless was a review of the latest singles via a link up at BBC Radio 1 with Nemone, where viewers could vote by phone one out of three singles they thought would chart highest on the following day's Top 40.

The question being why would viewers even ring up if they weren't going to get anything out of it?

It was proof that Nemone had participated in something a lot worse than *101 Ways To Leave A Gameshow*.

The show also relied on heavy use of words and sayings within the titles and stings such as "*Keepin' It Real*", "*Shawwing*", and "*In The House*".

The twist would be that the saying would come up on screen in the Cooper Black font, followed by a posh voice explaining it, for example

Female Voice: "*Cheeky Monkey!*"

Posh Male Voice: "*Pushing the boundaries of acceptable behaviour*".

Where *Live & Kicking* had brought back gunge to Saturday Mornings the previous year, *The Saturday Show* decided to bring back puppets and introduced were Tiny and Mr Duk.

Tiny was a giant hamster made as the result of a *Tomorrow's World* experiment in 1992 that went wrong, and Mr Duk was his showbiz agent who was pretty self-explanatory.

The first thing that many viewers noticed was the similarity between the hamster's voice and Otis the Aardvark as it was voiced by Dave Chapman.

In fact there was barely any difference within the voices to start off with.

Mr Duk was voiced by Damian Farrell and later donned a brown leather suit a few weeks into the series.

From the first show, the puppets developed a habit of attempting to rip the piss out of it as much as possible.

Unfortunately it fell flat on it's backside, if the examples below are anything to go by;

> *"We're fantasy creatures. Created for people's entertainment, a bit like Joe Mace"*

> *"Dear producers of The Saturday Show. I liked the Radio 1 link up but I think it would be better with TV's Ainsley Harriot. Yours Sincerely, Tiny the Giant Hamster"*

> *It's short and pointless, just like this link we're doing right now"*

There was also the introduction of the "Lady Loo Roll Challenge", which was an attempt to be as naughty as possible, asking a guest to answer as many questions in 45 seconds, a lot of them making heavy use of innuendo such as the examples *"Do you prefer sparrows or tits?"* and *"True or false?, Britney Spears' real name is "Trevor Minge"*

Further digs were evident in the show's end credits with one of the names being "Anton Dick".

The new series shared the same flaws as the last series of *Live & Kicking* where the intense number of features and games didn't give Dani & Joe a chance to prove themselves, with Dani looking completely out of her depth.

It probably wasn't surprising that the majority of the production team had been carried over from *Live & Kicking* when it was in London, and still didn't seem to have the grasp of appealing to older viewers which many thought the new show was trying to hard to achieve.

Another issue was that there was too much involvement with those in the studio and not one instance of viewers getting the chance to interact live on air.

Work was certainly cut out in West London.

SM:tv for the second year running had carefully timed the arrival of the BBC's new show by using it to bring back old items such as "*Chums*" and "*Challenge Ant*" on the same day as well as introducing slightly modified titles and fonts with a new arrangement of the theme tune.

There was also the continuation of "*Dec Says*" which by now had changed its name to "*The Secret Of My Success*".

It was the same premise, only that instead of running a counselling service, Dec was trying to flog copies of his autobiography.

The sketch was swapped every other week with the continuation of the *Flowerpot Men* send up "*Anty & Decky The Garden Goblins*" with Cat acting as both the narrator, and "*The Giggle Fairy*" originally named "*Prozac*".

The two goblins were also known for their love of "*dizzy water*".

Other new sketches included the flatulent police drama spoof "*Fartbeat*" which again, was possibly a hint of future sketches to come.

New recurring jokes were introduced such as Cat linking to the popular sitcom *My Parents Are Aliens* followed by Ant & Dec responding with "*We thought there was something strange about you!*"

CD:uk also introduced a new title sequence with a shorter version of the theme tune.

The new fonts, addition of text messages and refreshed show presentation managed to wipe the floor with the BBC's offering, proving the show was back on top form after a rather disjointed summer.

It didn't mean Ant & Dec's work wasn't cut out elsewhere, as they were now hosts of ITV's new prime time talent search *Pop Idol* that was beginning to cause more than just a stir.

With the shows due to go live on Saturdays from December, the pair realised it would be an exhaustive struggle to present two live TV shows in one day and decided to leave *SM:tv* whilst it was still at its height, with their final show going out on the 1st of December.

A replacement was immediately announced, as if it had been planned in advance, with questionable choice of 29 year old James Redmond, best known for playing Finn in *Hollyoaks* presenting alongside Cat who would be staying on.

James had made a series of guest appearances on the show and proved witty in the sketches although many were speculating on whether he would make the grade as a presenter, having previously stood in for the boys the previous summer.

The show continued to stay on form during their final months, with the popular sketch involving the trio dressed as "*The Bayoutiful Corrs*" invaded by the band themselves who gave them a playful telling off.

An equally memorable moment came when the real Neil Buchanan guest appeared in the "*F'art Attack*" sketch with Ant, with the star of *No. 73* sinking down to the show's level of humour by joining in with the "pumping".

The Geordie duo's final show contained an impressive guest list with Denise Van Outen, Amanda Holden, Frank Skinner, David Baddiel, Mark Lamarr, Carol Vorderman, and a combination of pop stars including Samantha Mumba, and Hear'say, as well as Mariah Carey guesting as the maid of honour in the final episode of *Chums* where Dec and Cat were finally going to tie the knot.

The show opened with a special song sung by the hosts and all the guests, with Frank Skinner cheekily slipping in a jibe towards Dani Behr.

There was also the final outing of "*The Secret Of My Success*" which went back to the days of *Byker Grove* with Amanda Holden as Spuggie complete with a ginger wig, and Frank Skinner doing an amusing turn as youth leader Geoff.

Music was provided by two live performances by Jamiroquai, and Robbie Williams performing big band tunes with Jonathan Wilkes.

Both Robbie and Jonathan took part in a special "Eat My Goal" which featured Peter Beardsley as one of the players, and the former Take That star mooned at the camera whilst Cat linked in to break.

Acknowledgment was also given to the writers during the postbag section including Richard Preddy and Gary Howe, Ben Ward and Gez Foster, and long-term partner Dean Wilkinson.

The boys were also given specially made games of "*Championship Manager*" with Ant as the goalkeeper for Newcastle United, and Dec as a striker for Sunderland much to his disapproval.

Perhaps the biggest laugh came when during an interview with the duo, Frank Skinner asked how they felt when they "*destroyed Live & Kicking*".

Not to mention the question "*Are you called Cat because you bury your own poo?*"

There was also an outing for one of the duo's more cherished songs; "*Shout*".

The teary bit came during the last few moments of *CD:uk* in a well made montage containing some of the funnier moments including a few of the legendary outbursts from Dec on Wonkey Donkey;

"*Yer mum's rubbish as well!*"

The show finished with a replay of Ant & Dec's live performance of "*Let's Get Ready To Rhumble*" from the 100th show and it was more than evident that it would be a tough job filling not one but two pairs of shoes.

Despite 2.4 million viewers tuning into their swansong, the last thing Ant & Dec wanted was to go away hoping the show would be inferior in their absence.

Cat Deeley beating the duo to the "Best Children's Presenter" category at the BAFTA Children's Awards that same month gave hints that the show had a lot more to offer than its two main stars.

The Sutton Coldfield girl continued to provide a commendable job over Christmas with Louise Redknapp and Dermot O'Leary returning as guest hosts, and "*The Further Adventures Of Cat The Dog*" was reinstated once again co-starring the footballers wife who in the words of Mark Lamarr "could actually sing".

January the 5th 2002 saw James Redmond's debut as a presenter,
but he wouldn't be on his own as alongside him and Cat would be
Mancunian model Tess Daly, almost certainly the decade's Charlotte Hindle,
and *Big Brother* 2001 winner Brian Dowling.

Both Brian and Tess had guest presented over Christmas
and were now promoted as permanent presenters.

James would also present alongside Cat on *CD:uk* and acknowledged
Ant & Dec in his first link after being coaxed on with a wad of cash.

New sketches were introduced such as hospital spoof "Casually" with
characters such as James' "Doctor Prettyboy" and Cat's "Sister Sledge",
and a reprieve for "*SMTV 2099 – The Next Generation*" making further use
of navigation board gags which had started to run their course by now
although James stood out as Elvis inspired "Commander Vegas".

Older competitions such as "*Ring To Win*" and "*Eat My Goal*" carried on
and "*Wonkey Donkey*" was eventually brought back with Brian and James
holding the reigns for a brief period.
Sadly neither of them had the lack of patience that Dec had, and the callers
were getting too good at identifying the rhyming animals on the first guess.

Many saw the idea of four presenters as a questionable move
having worked unsuccessfully on *Live & Kicking* the previous year.

In an interview on *This Morning* shown the day before the first show,
Cat defended the move as it would give sketches more of a coherent feel,
with more regular characters.

It was evident however that the show needed more than sketches to survive,
and the former *Hollyoaks* actor wasn't really fitting in well as a presenter,
despite having potential.

It didn't help that most of the links were heavily scripted as comedy skits,
with Cat presumably as the bossy one in charge, James as the stud,
and Brian and Tess always getting the stick and into mischief.

Brian in particular was proving the most popular with the viewers,
with an interview with Britney Spears being one such highlight.

Another issue was half an hour of the show was taken up by the awful MTV series *Becoming* where members of the public transformed into popstars and were followed through the makeover.

Cracks were starting to show at the London Studios and Cat announced in February that she would soon be leaving *SM:tv* but would carry on with *CD:uk*.

The launch of the CBBC Channel on digital meanwhile saw the opportunity for *The Saturday Show* to reach its full potential.

The studio set and titles were revised, removing the seated sections for the audience, and bringing back *Live & Kicking* style gantries and studio staircases, with a stage for live bands positioned opposite the main set.

New features were introduced including the guessing game "*Who Are Ya?*" where callers had to identify what Joe was cunningly disguised as.

There was also the launch of *The Saturday Show Extra* broadcast exclusively on the CBBC Channel hosted by Welsh S4C presenter Sarra Elgan-Rees and a pre-Radio 1 Nihal Arthenyka.

The change seemed to have an impact as ratings between both the BBC and ITV started to reach neck and neck.

In mid March it came to a head when James Redmond was sacked from *SM:tv* just hours after a tabloid newspaper reported it as a rumour.

The producers claimed that James was reluctant to introduce manufactured bands and refused to lead what went on to be Brian's well received Britney Spears interview, stating a preference for bands such as Radiohead.

His position on the show was declared "untenable".

Rather bizarrely the TV review website *Off The Telly* were supportive of James since his introduction, and were bitterly disappointed with his sacking, although in all fairness he was wasted due to the ridiculous number of presenters alongside him.

James returned to acting, ironically landing a part in the real *Casualty*.

After 189 shows "Catherine Noddy Slade Deeley" made her *SM:tv* farewell on the 6th of April 2002 with a return appearance for Louise in a special "Cat The Dog" sketch, and the final outing of "*Casually*" which saw the death of "Sister Sledge" with a special montage that was careful not to include any clips with "Dr Prettyboy" AKA James Redmond.

Guests included Jeremy Edwards, Cat's former MTV co-host Edith Bowman, and surprise appearances from Cilla Black in a special game of "Challenge Cat" with Kirsty from the "*Dec Says*" sketches asking the questions.

Ant & Dec themselves made a surprise appearance at the end of the show to chat about the last four years which more or less involved the same questions the Geordie boys were asked themselves on their last show.

In her leaving speech Cat thanked the viewers and acknowledged former boss Nigel Pickard and successor Janie Grace, and a special montage was shown, featuring the popular song about Cat sent in by Sparky.

Cat's (and possibly James') replacements were H & Claire from Steps who had recently launched their own their own pop career as a duo following the split from the band.

The duo were no strangers to TV presenting having hosted two series of the CBBC talent show *Steps To The Stars* and both had individually hosted *SM:tv* before, with Claire being Cat's first stand in, back in April 1999.

A spin off of Casually entitled "*Casually – The Clinic*" was introduced with Paramedic Roger and Nurse Emma Ridge demoted to a mental clinic owned by "Nurse Ranker" played by Claire, and H's "*Doctor Hollywoooood!*"

The concept proved disastrous and was soon replaced by new sketches such as "*Table Footballers Wives*" and "*Big Bother*" which were even more inferior.

It was now reaching the point that anything new that was attempted on the show would go down really poorly and end up being dropped after a short space of time.

Struggles were made more evident through the desperate recycling of items closely associated with the show's inaugural hosts but with new names reminiscent of when *Tiswas* attempted to replace "C*ompost Corner*" with the DIY themed "*The Knack*".

"*Splatoon*" was now "*Men In Splat*" to tie in with the new *Men In Black* cartoon, and Ant's Song was transformed into "*The Campaign Song*" which involved the team performing song parodies of a persuasive nature.

Examples included the Westlife send up "C*rying Without Swings*" and Atomic Kitten's "*You Should See Your Gran Again*".

"*Challenge Ant*" meanwhile had become "*Brian's Brain*" with a variation of the same theme tune, and Brian getting annoyed when a question about Harry Potter was asked.

Brian often caused children to get upset when correctly answering the killer question, although one instance when it didn't happen proved hilarious;

Contestant: "*What do you put in a toaster?*"

Brian: "*Toast. BREAD! BREAD!*" (BUZZ SFX)

There were also one off editions with Brian's sisters taking him on and another with the late Jade Goody, pretty soon after leaving the *Big Brother* house first time round.

Ant & Dec continued to make occasional return appearances to "their baby" including a Bank Holiday Monday edition during the World Cup to promote their single and take part as shooters in "*Eat My Goal*".

Unfortunately, none of the new presenters had the charm and stability to hold the show together in the absence of Cat, and *SM:tv* was becoming a victim of what it was aiming not to be, as stated in the first show.

The Saturday Show carried on over the warmer months as planned with the annual move to Scotland still prevailing, although there were little changes to the moderately stable show content.

The Karaoke contest had expanded into special segments with one month devoted entirely to Westlife, and another for Britney Spears.

With a sport heavy summer, there were occasions when the show switched to BBC 2, sometimes halfway through the programme.

Things weren't looking too good for the series when Dani Behr revealed revelations of sexual activities in a car park to a tabloid newspaper leading to a reprimanding from the show's producers and the CBBC bosses.

With Joe's sights set on bigger things behind the camera, the BBC decided that the presenters' contracts would not be renewed and a new presenting team would be introduced in September with Fearne Cotton and 24 year old Simon Grant as the new hosts.

The producers admitted that they had tried to appeal to older viewers, by hiring Dani Behr, but it turned out that Behr was probably ***too*** adult for Saturday mornings, and the series needed to aim more towards CBBC's 6-12 year old demographic.

Nigel Pickard mentioned that the BBC had finally got their act together by restoring successful elements associated with the timeslot, but also stated that the days of interviewing the Prime Minister were over on Saturday mornings, and that they belonged on shows such as *Newsround* and *Blue Peter*.

Prior to *SM:tv*, the majority of Saturday morning shows including *Tiswas* had contained some sort of educational content, and in the ever competitive market of its day, informative items no longer had a place on Saturday mornings.

As well as standing in for Dani during her holidays, Fearne had a good experience of live television with GMTV's *Diggit*, as well as *Smile*, broadcast on Sunday mornings on the CBBC Channel alongside former *Diggit* co-star Reggie Yates and "DJ Devstar".

Newcomer Simon Grant from Cornwall on the other hand hadn't presented before with his previous job being a holiday rep.

It was also revealed that the final hour of the show would be taken up by *Top Of The Pops Saturday,* in yet another attempt by the BBC to take on the well established *CD:uk*.

This time they were putting one of the biggest brands on television in the opposing corner, with live performances, features and interviews.

Dani and Joe's final *Saturday Show* went out on the 14th of September where their departure wasn't too over indulgent and certainly not fondly nostalgic, as the beginning of the show involved both presenters taking the mickey out of their first appearance one year earlier.

The presenters said their goodbyes and the last few moments of their reign saw one last performance by Stamford Amp of their song "*No Ordinary Day*".

A more child-friendly approach would be evident when the show returned to London the following Saturday.

Fearne and Simon made their debut with a new set of titles involving them alongside Stamford Amp and Tiny & Mr Duk sat at a breakfast table with everyone appearing on miniature variety pack esque cereal boxes with their names on.

A more accessible approach was introduced to proceedings and performances by US metal bands such as Wheatus and Jimmy Eat World were also dropped in favour of chart fodder such as Busted and Liberty X.

Although Simon and Fearne were likeable presenters they seemed to struggle with new features and content that stayed unstable throughout the series.

One item being the phone in competition "*Loose Goose*", where on the first show the mechanical goose wouldn't "deposit" its eggs. Another new feature that didn't need as much mechanics to work was "*Place Your Burps*" which was basically a burping contest that was done with characters at an auction.

The Saturday Show Extra continued on the CBBC Channel hosted by Sarra on her own, who would occasionally appear on the main show alongside Simon if Fearne was away.

It was pretty much evident that they wanted to phase out old features of the show, as Tiny & Mr Duk were reduced to their own 20 minute slot "*The Tiny & Mr Duk Show*" whilst Stamford Amp barely played any part at all.

"*The Tiny & Mr Duck Show*" involved the puppets doing completely silly items with a celebrity guest each week, along the lines of Uri Geller for example looking very gormless within proceedings.

The characters had improved with their cocky behaviour providing the laughs and Tiny's voice had become more raspier and individual.

An item that returned from the first series was "The Lady Loo Roll Challenge" which this time involved the guest stood inside a giant toilet but the premise of silly questions with occasional innuendo remained.

Top Of The Pops Saturday on the other hand lived up to what everyone imagined it would be, i.e. a poor attempt at competing with *CD:uk* and didn't really have anything that made it stand out.

One concept they added to distinguish it from the Friday edition of *Top Of The Pops* was the inclusion of the words shown at the bottom of the screen during performances which was a nice touch, but still had little to make it stand out, and made heavy use of the "Star Bar" from the main TOTP show, which was unpopular with license payers.

Stamford Amp released their first single in November but didn't really achieve the same sort of success they were hoping for.

By January 2003 both Stamford Amp and the puppets had left the show altogether and a new title sequence had been introduced with the same theme tune but involving Fearne driving Simon to a redecorated BBC Television Centre, complete with an appearance from the CBBC bugs.

The car used in the titles was also adapted for a feature, supposedly taking guests back in time to reveal shameful secrets.

Although Tiny & Mr Duk disappeared without trace, they resurfaced on the CBBC Channel in 2004 with their own spoof gameshow *Tiny & Mr Duk's Huge Show* which showcased puppeteers Dave and Damien at their sharpest.
A letter sent to the Radio Times from a viewer, questioned their sudden departure from Saturday mornings.

This resulted in Simon and Fearne having more freedom as presenters with new items including "*Celebrity Fastermind*" involving guests taking part in endurance challenges such as Batak walls.

There were also gameshow skits with the gunge-heavy "*Is The Price Right?*", and "*Play Your Heights Right*" allowing Simon to show off his impersonation skills with as "Brucie Grant", and Fearne playing his "*glamourous assistant*" "Ferengei Pavlova".

Both items carried on during the summer as the show made its annual move to Scotland with little change content wise, although the success of Simon and Fearne saw the series finally overtake *SM:tv* in the ratings.

It helped that *The Saturday Show* had a more consistent presenting line up, compared to the goings on at the South Bank.

SM:tv was still going through the motions by the autumn and was hit in October 2002 by the departure of H and Claire due to "*music commitments*".

Stand ins such as Jonathan Wilkes took over the presenting reigns with new sketches such as the innuendo laden "*Tess Grows Her Own*", "*Brian The Builder*", police spoof "*Taggfart*" which was a direct clone of "*Fartbeat*", and the cookery spoof "*Delia Whiff's Kitchen Sink*" where Tess played a character with similar traits.

Old features continued to be rehashed, with a live version of "*The Stripsearch*" introduced, putting guests into Brian's "*Booth Of Truth*".

By now it was definitely starting to look as if it was giving up, with one episode in November ending by going straight into an ad break sting from an episode of *Sabrina* without the presenters getting a chance to say goodbye, due to a studio item overunning beforehand.

Ratings by now had halved from the 2 million viewers at its height, and were very close in numbers with *The Saturday Show*.

Producer David Staite had left the series by this stage.

CD:uk continued with Cat hosting, although she would often be replaced by Tess due to her many other presenting engagements. It fell into the same trap as *SM:tv* by looking to similar to the offerings on BBC 1, with both shows incorporating a celebrity video vote.

One infamous moment on the Hot Shots Review came in November 2003, where Sir Bob Geldof was on the panel, and Cat mentioned that there wasn't time to review the third video in a set of three.

Bob then gave a repeat of his Live Aid outburst by jokily commenting "*Do it anyway, fuck the tape!*" only to be told by Cat "*We can't use that kind of language at this time of the morning!*"

In March 2003 it was announced that two new permanent presenters would be joining Brian and Tess, to accompany a relaunch of the show which saw a brand new animated set of titles and a new arrangement of the theme tune which was faster in tempo and changed key near the end.

The show title also had the "Live" removed from it with and established the catchphrase into the ad breaks "*Take it from me, keep it on SMTV!*"

The new presenters were Scottish comedian Des Clarke, and New Zealander Shavaughn Raukere. Des in particular was very sharp witted and most memorable for his David Dustbinman character in the "*Garbage Hunt*" sketch.

> "*Next week we'll have One True Voice in, and trust me, they can produce some right old rubbish*"

Other sketches included "*Eminemerdale*" which gave way to the visually revolting "*Vicar Of Dribbley*", and the Harry Potter influenced "*Only Fools And Hogwarts*" with Brian knowingly cast as the lead character.

New competitions included "*What's Put The Wind Up Des*" which doesn't need too much explaining, as well as "Eat My Goal", and "Wonkey Donkey" which made a comeback in April.

Whilst it wasn't 100%, Des and Shavaughn were seen by many as a more solid line up with Brian and Tess, compared to the former Steps rejects.

But despite the new look showing signs of potential, by mid summer, *SM:tv* had followed in the direction of *The Saturday Show* by reducing their titles to a brief sting at the beginning of the show normally including the show menu after a pre-recorded sketch.

This was a personal sign of things declining as a really good Saturday morning show would have an exciting set of titles, with *Tiswas*, *Going Live!*, *Live and Kicking*, and *SM:tv* itself, being prime examples, setting up the viewers for what was to come.

Whilst *The Saturday Show* was still riding high in the ratings, a series broadcast live for 3 hours on both Saturday and Sunday mornings on the CBBC Channel featuring two of the channel's stalwarts had been gathering a cult following with young viewers and a few adults since its launch in the Autumn of 2002.

The show featured Richard McCourt and Dominic Wood as the hosts of *Dick & Dom In Da Bungalow* where each week six schoolmates or "Bungalowheads" would stay over at Dick and Dom's "Bungalow" and take part in messy games, with not a celebrity guest, studio audience, or script in sight.

The show itself was aimed at a younger audience than *The Saturday Show* but developed a cult following with the mums and dads who viewed it as a true modern day *Tiswas*.

The fun and anarchic presentation with cheaper production values got a few heads turning, and in June 2003 CBBC controller Dorothy Prior announced that Dick & Dom would be promoted to BBC 1 in a two hour slot on Saturdays.

The show would be broadcast simultaneously on the CBBC Channel, with the Sunday edition remaining exclusive to digital viewers.

The Saturday Show would return as a Summer series but Fearne would carry on hosting *Top Of The Pops Saturday* and Simon would present in between shows on the CBBC Channel in a move similar to Gaz Top after series 1 of *Get Fresh*.

Fearne also had her work cut out hosting the Sunday morning show *Smile* which had been promoted to BBC 2 since the launch of *Da Bungalow*.

Many questioned why Dick & Dom were brought in at a time when *The Saturday Show* was riding high in the ratings, but Prior defended her motives by saying it was important to try new things.

Not to mention the show being very cost effective.

In July it was announced that Brian Dowling would be leaving *SM:tv* after 18 months, where his final show involved a compilation of highlights and hilarious wrong answers from "Brian's Brain" even including footage with James Redmond.

Towards the end, in the traditional manner Brian ended up breaking down to a slow montage with Billy Joel's "*Just The Way You Are*".

Brian's temporary replacement was CiTV's Stephen Mulhern who was easily confused with Simon Grant in terms of his presenting style.

Stephen introduced new features such as "Sick Tricks", a send up of his *Quick Trick Show* involving plenty of messy stuff breaking one of Ant & Dec's promises from the very first show about there being no gunge.

The opening titles even used animated custard pies which deviated further from the original show.

Other items throughout the summer included the Pop Brain 2003 contest which was essentially an uninspiring knockout quiz hosted by Des where children competed against each other to identify pop videos from 2 second clips.

Around this time was the sudden departure of Shavaughn leading to several members of online TV discussion forums speculating why she left, as no official reason was given.

Another departure was soon announced with Tess Daly wanting to move on to pastures new.

The timing was well made as ITV announced that *SM:tv* would be coming to an end in December that year, with a new show taking it's place co-produced by Carlton and independent production company The Foundation, owned by none other than former *Motormouth/What's Up Doc?* producers Ged Allen and Vanessa Hill.

CD:uk would continue as normal with Cat, which had recently gained its own late night "Hot Shots" spin off to air more racier performances, after a live performance of Christina Aguilera's "*Dirrty*" received complaints.

It was decided that the last 16 weeks of *SM:tv* from September would be rebranded as *SM:tv Gold* with Des and Stephen introducing highlights from *SM:tv* over the last 5 years, although there would still be live studio guests and competitions such as "*Eat My Goal*" and so on.

Returning to August, and Tess Daly's final show was broadcast on the 23rd of that month, commencing with a rather staged surprise followed by a song along the lines of Tina Turner's "*The Best*" called "*Simply Our Tess*".

Guests on the show included Dane Bowers, Melanie Blatt, Federico from *Big Brother 4*, Tess's soon to be husband Vernon Kay and a surprise return for Louise promoting her new double A-side.

Tess appeared in a special Garbage Hunt sketch with some rather naughty ad-libs from David Dustbinman;

> "*So you're getting married to Vernon Kay. It's a good job you're not marryng Jon Tickle otherwise your name would be Tess…*"

A large part of the show involved a celebrity Pop Brain where Des got angry with people buzzing and not knowing the answers.

Vernon Kay also provided a great line when trying to identify a Dannii Minogue video;

"Dannii Minogue, and er, 'I wish I was my sister!'"

There was also the final outing of the boyband influenced sketch "*Ghost Busted*" with Tess playing a dark eybrow clad caricature of Charlie Simpson.

Tess didn't burst into tears at the end despite Vernon hassling her to do so but there was a highlights VT where the funniest bits included her getting panicky after saying that Christina Aguilera was "*a bit rough*".

There was also a tuneless rendition of "*The Tide Is High*" during a Table Footballers Wives sketch with Dannii Minogue and Tara Palmer-Tompkinson;

Dannii: "*That's atrocious!*"

Tess: "*No it ain't, it's Atomic Kitten*"

The music played in the VT was "*Can't Get You Out Of My Head*" which lead nicely on to the song parody "*Can't Get Enough Of Brown Bread*" where Tess was dressed up as Kylie in an equally seductive looking dress.

The bit where it all went slow was accompanied by Elvis Costello's version of "*She*" which is probably no surprise why Tess didn't break down.

The Saturday Show despite riding just that bit higher in the ratings was still looking unstable as a format, with feature heavy content, and a large number of cartoons positioned in between each item as well as the CBBC sitcom *Kerching*.

The karaoke contest returned for a second year running with themed contests for artists such as Busted, and Gareth Gates.

During the summer months, Simon and Fearne took their respective holidays, with Simon's stand-in being a rather cocky turn from Fame Academy winner David Sneddon.

One moment where he was put down to size was when revealing the answer to a Busted competition and complaining that a large number of viewers had written in with the members names in the wrong alphabetical order, only to burst into laughter when he got it wrong himself.

Fearne's stand in was Sarra Elgin from *The Saturday Show Extra* who also stood in for Fearne in March, while she took part in C*omic Relief Does Fame Academy*.

Regular features carried on as usual with Sarra taking Fearne's respective roles in "*Play Your Heights Right*" and "C*elebrity Fastermind*".

Series 2 of *The Saturday Show* finished on Saturday the 13th of September with the CBBC bug logo cleverly displayed on a piggy bank at the start of the show in place of an ident, with a joke about having no budget left leading to a light switch gag revealing a circus style set up.

Guests included Mis-Teeq, Abs, Gareth Gates, Louise who coincidentally was a guest on the first ever show, and an appearance from miniature acrobat Pityu who also appeared on the final *Big Breakfast* 18 months earlier.

Dick and Dom were also in the studio plugging their new series starting the next week in their irreverent manner.

One such moment being "*Play Your Heights Right*" where when the contestant was asked if they wanted to gamble, the pair started shouting "Lower!"

There was also the revealing of what "Lionel" the voiceover person "*looked like*" although it was evident that it was just Simon camping up his own voice.

Simon and Fearne weren't bitter about the end of their reign, and took a tongue in cheek manner to the show, although it was pretty evident that this would be the last traditional *Saturday Show* in terms of a full on extent.

The traditional regime of "showing embarrassing photos from when they were younger" took place as expected.

By now both TSS and *Top Of The Pops Saturday* had split into separate shows, running alongside each other of course, with the slow highlights montage played at 11:15 just before TOTP Saturday which was a brief selection of highlights accompanied by S Club's swansong "*Say Goodbye*".

Understandably it was a bit emotional as this was *The Saturday Show* at its height and the BBC were finally returning to form.

However the following Saturday would take it to an even greater level and prove that the BBC really had regained their Saturday morning crown.

Chapter 8: DaD Vs MoM

Dick and Dom made their terrestrial debut on the 20th of September 2003 and established from the beginning that this would be a completely different sort of show from what had filled the timeslot on BBC 1 in the past.

In the first 10 minutes they proved exactly that, by destroying a china decoration brought by one of the Bungalowheads as a present, and joking that another's trout impression resembled Lesley Ash.

Although the show was designed to be set in Dick & Dom's "Bungalow" any signs of pretence were thrown away, illustrated perfectly through the duo's ability to deal with games that didn't work as planned.

The most often occurrence was Dick opening the door to welcome a contestant, before the sound effect of the doorbell played.

This was technically the third series of *Da Bungalow* on the BBC's production log as the first series was split into two with a break over Christmas, as it was presumed that the initial run would only last a few months.

The rules were made up on the spot with contestants given random numbers of points at any time, but also facing deduction at the same time, with the lariest contestants often ending up with "*Diddley Squit*", a catchphrase that caught on to other CBBC shows.

The opening game was a *Blankety Blank* style game where all the bungalowheads had to fill in missing words from sentences, under instruction by the presenters; "*Don't be rudeey!*" although it didn't necessarily relate to sentences about flatulence and so on.

Games brought over from the first two series included "*Pumpy Rumpy*" where contestants inflated novelty trousers, "*Head Shoulders Knees And Toast*", "*You'll Never Do That With A Carcass On Your Hand*", and the viewer competition "*Make Dick Sick*" which took on their literal meanings.

Dom also put his magic skills to use with "*Tricky Training*" despite being previously thrown out of The Magic Circle.

With a minor budget increase, a "cellar" was introduced for games such as "Scary Dick" which was introduced by Dom as "Bob Peep" a character who had an obsession for his homeland of Yorkshire with an accent to match.

Later characters included "Martin Floppyhorns" and "Inspector Mutton Chops" both played by Rich.

The cellar was also used for "Dom's Lonely Love Song" where each week, Dom would attempt to give his rendition of a well known ballad only to be interrupted a third of the way through.

Supporting cast included a puppet turtle who lived in the toilet and told jokes, and a cat with a raspy northern accent voiced by Dave Chapman who would tell of his travels every week.

The toilet also doubled as a gunge tank where the Bungalowhead with the least points would be sent to at the end of the show.

One forfeit on the Saturday edition that didn't go down well with parents was the "Pants Dance" where the losing contestant would dance with pants on their head to a specially written song;

"*#I've got my head in my pants, I'm in a groovy disco trance*

They were clean on just last week, Yeah Yeah, baby look at me!,

I'm gonna dance in my pants, Just like they do in France (har! hee har!)

You gotta take a chance, And do the knickers on your noodle prance,

And dance in your pants!

The rule of no celebrities still applied, with the exception of those making appearances locked in a cage in the cellar, normally a faded star of children's television such as Peter Simon, Cheryl Baker, Bungle from *Rainbow*, Michaela Strachan, and even Hugo Myatt as Tregard from *Knightmare*.

There were also intervals with miniature characters Diddy Dick & Dom who lived in a cupboard, which to this day are still being shown on the CBBC Channel albeit with the 2005-2007 CBBC logo in the titles.

The final moments of the Saturday show would involve a Creamy Muck Muck fight which was usually preceded by a hastily done sketch normally parodying a film or TV show until either Dick or Dom yelled "*GO GO GOOOO!*" and the splatting commenced accompanied to great effect by "*The Ace Of Spades*" by Motorhead.

The last few minutes would involve Saturday's highest scorer crowned King or Queen of the Bungalow preceded by the announcement "*It's The Beginning Of The End Of The Show!*"

The winner would sometimes be decided by an "Almighty Kid" on the phone who could award or remove points from any contestant.

The Sunday show continued to appear on the CBBC Channel for two hours where Dick's cockney character "Tomdickunarry" continued to appear presiding over the Forfeit Auction.

Other games played on Sundays included "The Cereal Race", "The Repetition Competition", and "Do Not Laugh Or You Will Lose" which if it was compered by Ben Elton would have lasted for eternity.

The duo had their own character traits with Dom being the cheekiest and possibly the naughtiest in terms of humour, whilst Dick was essentially a modern day Rik Mayall in *The Young Ones*.

One memorable moment which ended up on Anne Robinson's *Outtake TV* was when a caller's grandmother answered the phone by accident, instead of a caller who from what could be heard in the background was watching *Smile* on BBC 2.

Dom proved his comic touch by explaining to the caller that he was "Dec from Ant & Dec".

The BBC had finally found a winning formula and were back at the top of their game on Saturday mornings.

ITV1 on the same day launched *SM:tv Gold* where for the next 15 weeks, Des Clarke and Stephen Mulhern along with a female guest host each week would introduce highlights and sketches from the last 5 years as voted for by viewers in head-to-heads.

It would often be the case that a more well known sketch would be chosen over a short lived sketch such as "*Casually*" for example.

The studio guests would be subjected to "*This Is Your SM:tv Life*" and shown extracts from different sketches on their many appearances on the programme.

"*Eat My Goal*" also got a reprieve although this time round it was done outside the Riverside Studios where *SM:tv* and *CD:uk* were now filmed.

Compared to the fresh new offering on BBC1 it looked as if we had taken a time warp back to 2000 as the 1999-2001 theme tune was revived, to accompany a split screen title sequence of the original titles and clips of show highlights.

Not to mention yet another resurgence of "*Wonkey Donkey*" and even worse; *Pokemon*.

The BBC had the monopoly for the length of October and November as *SM:tv Gold* was moved to Saturday afternoons to make way for the 2003 Rugby World Cup, including the significant day of the final.

Rather bizarrely the show was screened after *CD:uk* who after four years had changed their sponsor from Tizer to Ribena.

Evidence that links between *SM:tv* and *CD:uk* were severing further prevailed, as SMTV Gold even had its own credits.

Apart from having Louise as the guest host on the first show, it was further proof that the endless nostalgia was no contest for the overall silliness and Creamy Muck Muck over on BBC 1.

One particular part of the Da Bungalow had more of an impact than the competition premise of the show itself, that being a weekly item where the duo would compete against each other in "*Bogies*" attempting to yell the word "Bogies!" as loud as possible in locations such as a library, a theatre, or even an art gallery.

All the hilarity was accompanied by commentary from producer and erstwhile CITV voiceover Steve Ryde.

The success of the feature caught on with the viewing audience, much to the annoyance of adults who despised the show's "toilet humour" and would send in many a letter to Terry Wogan's *Points Of View*.

Top Of The Pops Saturday meanwhile saw changes to the show's format with the studio audience removed and Fearne presenting solo from a stripped-down "Star Bar" within a pre-recorded show featuring interviews and specially recorded performances.

Also included was "*Pop School*", a series of animated sketches involving animated caricatures of pop stars past and present, as written by Trev Neal and Simon Hickson.

Sadly, the sketches were hardly up to the standards of The Sister Brothers.

The show also adapted to the new look introduced to *Top Of The Pops* in late November 2003 under new producer Andi Peters, along with the "new" theme tune penned by Tony Gibber.

Why Andi Peters wanted to resurrect the theme tune used for the programme's unsuccessful early 90s relaunch was questioned by many.

This finally gave a proper use to the spiral logo, used for the "On The Spot" feature introduced prior to the rebranding.

A Christmas version of the new theme tune was also adapted but bizarrely it wasn't used on the main *Top Of The Pops* show.

The new show lacked the live nature of the previous incarnation but it was distinctive compared to *CD:uk* which was starting to slowly lose appeal.

ITV by now had announced the replacement for *SM:tv* with the name *Ministry Of Mayhem*.

Three presenters were confirmed with Stephen Mulhern,
CiTV presenter Michael Underwood who had joined from the BBC,
and Holly Willoughby who had jumped ship from CBBC's *Xchange*
and their *Fame Academy* supplementary show.

Another high profile signing joined from the BBC behind the scenes
with Chris Bellinger hired as an executive producer.

The launch date was scheduled for January 2004 and Stephen gradually
disappeared from *SM:tv* ahead of the new series' launch.

Towards Christmas *SM:tv Gold* soldiered on with Des on his own
with guest presenters and a revival of "*Garbage Hunt*" in its inimitable style.

Pokemon was replaced by the new *Rugrats* spin off *All Grown Up*
where ironically, the original episode with the older counterparts of
Tommy and Chuckie was screened on the final *Live & Kicking*.

The series demise was nicely timed as the show also featured
the final series of *Sabrina*.

Over at *Da Bungalow* the duo marked the festive season in the usual
messy manner with special version of the theme tune with the refrain;
"*#Yo Ho Dick & Dom!*"

The show featured the grand final of "*Strangely Talented*" where the viewers
would decide who was the best out of a series of novelty acts from past shows.

The centrepiece was a special Creamy Muck Muck adaptation of
"*A Christmas Carol*" took place with one scene involving Dom placed against
a backdrop of the *Swap Shop* set, representing everything he hated about
children's programmes and what the future could look like without Muck Muck.

Dick on the other hand was corpsing in hysterics throughout the whole sketch.

The show went out with Dom repeatedly yelling "*Merry Flipping Christmas*!"
and the duo would carry on in with more of the same in the new year.

The final *SM:tv* was transmitted on the 27th of December albeit pre-recorded but with return appearances for Ant, Dec and Cat, as well as Brian, Tess, Des and surprisingly Shavaughn.

It started off with yet another song parody, this time of the R.E.M tune "*It's The End Of The Show As We Know It*" as performed by Brian, Tess, Des and Shavaughn, mentioning all the presenters, and past features such, even including "*Bucking Brian*" and "*Taggfart*".

Studio guests included the Blazin' Squad, S Club 8, James Alexandrou, Louise Rednapp, Nikki Sanderson from *Coronation Street*, and Brian Conley fresh from his "success" on ITV's Saturday night show *Judgement Day*.

Music was provided by Girls Aloud performing a medley of their hits, and Gareth Gates with his unusually impressive single "*Sunshine*".

Classic sketches were brought back such as "*The Secret Of My Success*" where Downright Dirty Donnelly attempted to audition for *Pop Idol* messing about with hosts "Ant & Dick".

That being Ant and the late Richard Whiteley who resulted in several innuendo laden jokes;

"Cat's just blown Dick throw the wall!".

There was also one last round of Challenge Ant where Ant won but they did the loser's song regardless, complete with the dunce's hat.

The overall highlight however was an interview with the show's original hosts Ant & Dec and Cat, with Fern Britton and Phillip Schofield asking the questions which included a clip of the show pilot recorded from the *This Morning* studios.

On the sole basis that the man responsible for one of if not the best Saturday morning show ever was appearing on the final edition of the early 2000's finest Saturday morning show.

There were also a few muddles, meaning an "*Eminemerdale*" sketch with Brian, Tess, Des etc didn't get shown in favour of an episode of *Spongebob Squarepants* but it was probably just as well.

With most of the programme separated between Ant Dec and Cat, and Brian, Tess, Des and Shavaughn, it looked like two separate shows although Dec did use the lead-in to the break; "*Take it from me, keep it on SMTV!*" as used since Spring 2003.

A final outing of Chums saw Ant, Dec, and Cat attempting to sell their flat with an appearance from Dane Bowers in the same wedding singer apparel from the Geordie boys final episode;

"*I'd best head off, Another Level are going to be wondering where I am…*"

The programme ended with a performance of "*My Way*" lead by Ant, Dec and Cat with all the musical guests on stage.

Bizarrely, Brian and Tess weren't seen with them on stage although Des and Shavaughn were amongst those participating.

The final moments involved producer Connor McAnally dressed as a janitor clearing up the studio and shutting down the lights followed by an indoor firework reading "*SM:tv – 1998-2003*" as accompanied by a reverberated audio highlights montage, bringing the show to a predictable but fitting end.

It was a testament to what was not just ITV's strongest Saturday morning show in a long while, but the most talked about children's programme on television for that generation.

With *SM:tv*'s replacement show however, it was speculated that the producers behind the scenes would rather be aiming it at those more closer towards the younger demographic.

From the beginning of January, ten second promos were shown on CiTV in the style of an American news channel complete with tickers, showing familiar buildings and landscapes turning pink that according to a "Ministry source" was "*the shape of Saturdays to come*".

It was more than evident that a huge pretence and fantasy location would be in place within the new show, and it was sensed that Dick & Dom had nothing to worry about.

Things became more clearer at the end of Friday afternoon's CiTV
where presenter Andy Jay dressed up in a suit and glasses
to provide a spoof news bulletin, where all we really got in terms of a
preview was an out of break sting.

The sketch also featured jugglers, clowns, and people on unicycles
with bulb horns and water pistols messing about, which was also
a desperate sign of things to come.

The programme made its debut at 9.25 on Saturday the 11th of January
preceded by a CiTV ident that was just the ITV1 logo exploding,
badly edited to the point that we didn't even see the CiTV logo.

After the sponsor ident carried on from Walkers from *SM:tv*,
the titles were revealed involving a robotic monster/building in a fantasy town
accompanied by a Green Day esque pop/punk theme tune.

The theme itself was by Busted clone "*The Noise Next Door*"
who went on to release the song as a B-side for their debut single
but the version used on the telly had to be re-recorded after a few weeks
due to the chorus saying "*Ministry Mayhem*" instead of "*Ministry **Of** Mayhem*".

Or at least it sounded that way.

The logo bore shades of *Motormouth* with its white and pink colours,
as did the mechanical looking studio set in the Maidstone Studios,
with the sofa bobbing about at random intervals.

To be fair that's not really surprising as executive producers
Ged Allen and Vanessa Hill worked on that very show 12 years earlier.

The first show was pretty much an embarrassment and dreadfully strung out
with characters such as Tina And Gina, two phone girls who spoke in unison,
and Ministry agents who would spray the hosts and guests with foam
at any time during the show.

Tina and Gina were played by real life twins Laura and Jessica Tilli
and were remembered not so fondly for their catchphrase
"*Putting you throoouuuugh!*"

Other characters who included Ray, a dwarf whose initial role was a security guard, and "Doctor Helmut Und Goggles", a German scientist played by the ever witty Peter Cocks who had quite a rapport with Stephen as they'd worked together on his CiTV series *Globo Loco*, also produced by The Foundation.

Another item that started on the first show and stayed for the next two years was Cakey Sk8 where guests would catapult a cake from a skateboard onto a wall.

However around this time Holly wasn't yet dressed up as "Polly With Her Trolley" with her strong bimbo accent and black wig.

Shorter lived features included the electric chair game "*Watt Hertz*" and "*Dat Door Dare*" which due to the delayed phone lines to quite a while to explain.

The name of the latter competition could have inspired a future Gorillaz single.

Guests on the first show included S Club 8, and C*oronation Street*'s Tina O'Brien and Nikki Sanderson who also appeared on the final *SM:tv* just two weeks earlier.

The saving grace of the show was Holly looking absolutely stunning, along with Stephen getting genuinely angry after being covered in foam.

Sadly, Holly decided to undergo a "hair don't" throughout 2004 by growing a fringe, which was a minor turn off.

Michael on the other hand attempted to take the rebellious route by wearing ripped jeans although it was too subtle to come across as notorious.

However that's not to say that the first show fell into that category, with a VT involving a baby reacting in a peculiar manner after tasting a spoonful of lemon juice.

In spite of Holly reassuring the viewers that the baby belonged to a doctor, it didn't stop the programme getting a slapped wrist from OFCOM.

Popular website TV Cream summed up the show's inferiority in comparison to Dick & Dom when comparing their finales.

Whereas Dick & Dom would finish with a creamy muck muck fight, the Ministry's big finale for a show basing itself around chaos was wait for it; a spelling contest.

"*Spelling Smackdown*" was a rather tedious item involving Michael dressed up in a dinner jacket presiding over a duel between the "Spellminator" AKA Stephen, and a young child dressed up as a bee in a contest that seemed to go on forever and wasn't really fun from a viewer's perspective.

Behind the scenes, Trev Neal and Simon Hickson were two of the writers hired to work on the show alongside their former colleague Chris Bellinger.

Other producers poached from the BBC included Nick Hopkin, and Dan Baldwin who later ended up marrying Holly.

Despite what appeared to be a stellar production team, none of the names appeared on screen at the end of the show which more or less defined coy, and possibly the overall arrogance of such people not wanting to be associated with what was considered at the time to be a flop.

As well as the modified theme tune, changes were made over the next few weeks such as the on-screen logo being changed to a rotating one with the CiTV logo on one side and the MoM symbol on the other.

The titles were also revised and shortened with the colour of the logo being changed to a less nauseating blue.

The show also achieved a coup by getting sought after WWE wrestler "Stone Cold" Steve Austin pretty early on in the series who ironically had been rumoured to have refused to appear on *SM:tv* in 2000.

Others fighters who appeared later in the series included the late Chris Benoit, and Edge, who took on Stephen in a ring built in one of the larger studios at the Maidstone complex.

Dick & Dom on the other hand were going from strength to strength with the addition of supporting characters such as next door neighbour "The Prize Idiot", a rather dim looking gimp who delivered prizes at the start of the show, played by Lee Barnett although it was initially presumed to be Dave Chapman.

Dave also made occasional appearances as some of the characters along with Ian Kirkby who had worked with producer Steve Ryde on the Central children's series *Palace Hill* ("*#Your mother wouldn't like it!*")

Not to mention providing the "impressions" for the picture frame which featured celebrities such as Michael Parkinson, Des O'Connor and Terry Wogan.

Ian's characters in this series included "Arthur Clackhangle", and "Raymond Duck" who later became "Raymond Farmer" both of them being references to Dom's favourite film *Withnail and I*.

Luckily they didn't utter that infamous line involving said farmer on the show itself, although judging by Dom's short temper it looked increasingly possible.

Also making occasional appearances was a fella by the name of Melvin Odoom who initially barely had any speaking roles but by the final series would become a key part of the chaos.

To enhance the game element of the show, a bonus prize was added for the winner of the Saturday show to add an element of excitement for those following the game element of the programme but couldn't get the CBBC Channel.

It wasn't too much of a big deal, but it was a nice touch.

Other additions included the "Magic Videos" where those watching BBC 1 would see *Scooby Doo* and CBBC Channel viewers would see *Taz-Mania*.

The cartoons were interchanged throughout the series as transmitted from the Bungalow's television set which had a habit of overheating.

The Muck Muck fight would usually be preceded by a *Looney Tunes* short.

New games were introduced including the viewer betting game "*Codswallop*" which involved slapping a member of the public's face with a mackerel (?) and "Bungalow Boffins" where viewers were invited to design and test out their own games as played by the Bunglalowheads.

The most successful was "*Bogey Cars*" where 6 year old Joe designed an innovative game which involved chucking green putty to the bunglowheads wearing car outfits.

Never afraid to break taboos, the show ended up getting a telling off of it's own when Dom wore a t-shirt displaying the phrase; "*Morning Wood*" allegedly intended as a reference to his surname.

An appearance on *Blue Peter* in April that year also raised eyebrows, when during an interview with questions from viewers in the studio, the duo started corpsing when a child asked "*What made you come together?*"

Dick and Dom's final show of the third series went out on the 10th of April where in an affectionate manner Dom was wearing a t-shirt with the *Tiswas* logo and Dick was wearing one with a logo similar to *Jim'll Fix It*.

The highlights included a heavy metal version of the *Postman Pat* theme, as performed by a live band made up of Andy Blythe and Marten Joustra, who wrote all the music and songs for the show.

Previous shows had included renditions of *Bertha*, *Fireman Sam* and *Jim'll Fix It*.

Another memorable moment involved the duo being thrown out of an Italian motor museum in the final of International Bogies.

Appearing in the cellar cage for the final show were the original Saturday morning comedy duo Trevor and Simon, which was probably deserved for their unfunny contributions to "Pop School" on *TOTP Saturday*, and *Ministry of Mayhem*.

"We still don't do 'em!"

The finale of Saturday's show involved a surprise Creamy Muck Muck sketch unknown to the hosts called "*This Is Your Muck Muck*" which involved Ian Kirkby as Michael Aspel and saw surprise appearances from various family members and school friends.

There was a VT insert from the Chuckle Brothers and a surprise appearance from the duo's "real dad" Pat Sharp, who escaped lightly in his usual manner from the pelting at the end.

There was also a witty revelation about Dom's dad being a gynaecologist.

Definitely an amusing and not too overindulgent end to the series that had well and truly given Saturday's a much needed boost for BBC 1.

For the summer months *The Saturday Show* would return but not in the same format as it the last series.

In fact the only thing that really remained were the titles and theme tune which were now reduced to just a sting.

The presenting line up retained Simon Grant who this time was joined by CBBC presenters Angellica Bell and Jake Humphrey, while the set was changed to a predominantly white studio with plastic windows, and the show's running time was cut to 90 minutes, from 8:30 to 10am.

The rest of the line up on CBBC 1 consisted of new series *The Mysti Show*, and *Top Of The Pops Saturday* continued as usual with Fearne.

Series 3 of the Saturday Show was less of a magazine format and had more of an emphasis on silly games and competitions such as "Flap Your Fish" and "Who's Bin In Da Club" with Angellica dressed up as hip hop DJ "Missy Belliot".

There was also the finale "Gunge Grant" where a contestant from the audience would compete against Simon answering questions to avoid getting gunged.

And once again, the karaoke contest was revived mid-way through the series, pretty much making it the show's longest running feature.

New comedy sketches (if you can call them that) were introduced starring puppet rats "*The Raffia*" provided by the same people behind Zig And Zag from *The Big Breakfast* who around the same time were providing the laughs to an adult audience on Channel 4's *Bronx Bunny Show*.

Whilst Angellica, Simon and Jake were competent presenters, they were let down by a very weak format which many saw as a comedown from the previous series and the solid presenting duo of Fearne and Simon.

However around this time it was pretty much evident that Fearne Cotton had her sights set on bigger things in television and gradually wanted to move away from children's programmes.

The Mysti Show which followed from *The Saturday Show* was even worse.

Basically it was an attempt to blend in magazine with drama which had been done before on live Saturday morning shows but in this case it was pre-recorded and there was more an emphasis on the drama element.

It was made more obvious on screen through the use of a filter throughout the whole programme, as well as a heavy emphasis on split screen shots and charisma effects.

The attractiveness of Mysti, or Laura to give her real name was the only decent part of the programme, but the whole thing was tedious, strung out and was obviously aimed predominantly at a female teen audience.

It's also worth noting that the programme was directed by Angelo Abela, AKA Gerard from *Ghost Train*, who also directed *My Parents Are Aliens*.

The series was recommisioned in 2005, albeit reduced to half hour episodes in a permanent drama format and shown elsewhere in the CBBC schedule.

Top Of The Pops Saturday ran throughout the summer with Fearne soon joined by *Pop Idol* runners up Sam & Mark AKA Barnsley boy Sam Nixon, and Mark Rhodes from Walsall, who had a strong West Midlands accent to match.

With their pop career looking as good as numbered, the duo aimed to become the BBC's answer to the duo who helped make them famous.

Changes were afoot at the Ministry when in mid July, the original set was ditched in favour of a darker studio with blue trimmings, and bright multicoloured squares, whilst the doors were also removed.

The titles were changed to a short sting with the robot and a brasher looking MoM logo, where for the first few months the theme tune was extended to include one of the earlier verses and performed by the presenters and crew in the studio to the Noise Next Door track.

Well, it was more or case of the presenters cracking up in hysterics.

Phone girls Tina and Gina were dropped, and pretences of a fantasy location also disappeared as they took the old method of previous Saturday shows by "just getting on with it".

The Doc was given a bigger lab, and Ray continued to make appearances.

It was around this time that the "*MoM's the word*" catchphrase was introduced to lead into the breaks and remained that way throughout the rest of the series over the next year and a bit.

The musical sting in and out of the ad-breaks was also changed making good use of the main theme tune with the vocal "*#It's the Ministry Of Mayhem*" which was a nice touch.

A weeks worth of links for CiTV behind the scenes of the Ministry also helped to promote the show.

Holly around this time was starting to act as the "cut-price Cat Deeley" standing in on *CD:uk* which resulted in Stephen and Michael presenting MoM on their own, which worked well including well observed gags comparing Michael to Gary Wilmot.

The female guests and girl groups made sure they didn't go too far, often making the presenters the butt of the jokes.

Over the next months, new features where tried out to see what worked and what didn't quite work as hoped.

New sketches were introduced with the most notable being the *Hi-De-Hi* spoof "*Butthaven*" set in a holiday camp with the presenters playing the "rainbowcoats" and a running joke of Ray not getting a line.

One sketch featured Ruth Madoc in a similar role to Gladys Pugh and the concept was thought up by noneother than former *SM:tv* writer Dean Wilkinson.

CD:uk by now had adapted a bizarre technique of referring to *Ministry Of Mayhem* in the link before the opening titles despite following a long commercial break.

Obviously this was edited from the late night repeat and looked hasty on occasions.

The show itself had become even more bog-standard than before although it was questioned as to whether it was a fault of the show itself for not moving on, or the standards of the music in the charts overall.

It wasn't helped with regular absences from Cat who in addition to the BBC's *Fame Academy*, had now taken over from Matthew Kelly on *Stars In Their Eyes*, as well as assisting with Channel 4's coverage of the V Festival 2004.

One thing for certain was that without *SM:tv* to precede it, *CD:uk* didn't have the authority it once had on the Saturday morning schedule.

Onto Autumn and in the week running up to Dick & Dom's fourth series (second series on BBC 1) the duo were brought in to present the afternoon links on CBBC 1 and it was more than evident that these were a far cry from when they used to present in Studio A over 5 years ago.

It was definitely a sign of things to come and that the new series would pretty much carry on from where the old one left off in terms of providing the naughty laughs with a few subtle changes but nothing too drastic.

The show returned from "Handbag Land" on the 11th of September 2004 and amongst the new items were "*Parent Bogies*" which gave mums and dads the chance to behave naughtily alongside either Dick or Dom in a public location for the most talked about item of the show.

The feature proved its worth by reaching number 22 in Channel 4's *100 Greatest TV Treats of 2004*.

There were also new games such as "*Painty Paint Paint*" which involved contestants painting each other, literally, "*Caution Wet Wildlife*" which involved a similar premise (although not with real animals), and the popular "*Baby Race*" which again was exactly that.

The "*Blankety Blank*" game was changed to a speech bubble caption competition, and the cellar game introduced Dom as "Reverend Randy" a gospel choir leader who linked into a VT of Dick visiting a high street "looking for love" by getting people to kiss or hug him.

Faded celebrities continued to appear in the cellar such as Ken Morley and Christopher Biggins, although they soon started appearing in a newly introduced attic, where Bungalowheads would have to "hold their guts" for one minute without getting scared.

Basically the premise of the game involved bedroom sheets and plastic spiders being held in front of them.

Another worthy highlight was the addition of old episodes of the classic cartoon *Batfink*, which became popular to the extent of being shown as a regular fixture on CBBC.

The supporting characters continued to appear including the Prize Idiot, and some were put to further use such as "Raymond Farmer" being brought on to give recaps of the cartoons such as *Fairly Odd Parents* or *Scooby Doo* which would normally provide hysterical reactions from the hosts, right from his utterance of "*Morning!*".

Also introduced was Iain's Geordie policeman character "Harry Batt" who made his debut in the first Creamy Muck Muck fight of the series.

Some of the stings such as the coming up menu graphics and music were revised, but overall no major changes were made and the show carried on as usual, albeit getting naughtier throughout, which made a mark for the right and wrong reasons later on in the series.

October 2004 saw the release of a DVD highlights compilations of series 3 which included several features including a commentary from Rich, Dom, producer Steve Ryde and director Simon Hepworth.

Simon was also known as "Heppy" and contributed to the ever increasing forum topic on Digital Spy where fans showed their support over the show's four year run.

Amongst the DVD highlights were four rounds of "Bogies" including the one in the library, and the one at the boat show at Kensington Olympia which both resulted in frosty receptions from passers by.

There were also a few moments from the Sunday show involving Dick's wheeler dealer character "Tomdickn'arry", but a memorable highlight was a sketch involving characters Bob Peep and Inspector Mutton Chops fighting in a boxing ring.

The fight was accompanied by an amusing commentary by Ian Kirkby in a faux Geordie accent where the best line had to be;

"*I've not seen that since there were ships on the Tyne, and kids runnin' about with no shoes on*"

The sketch must have turned a few heads as Kirkby took on a similar role in the recent Channel 4 sitcom *Pete Vs Life*.

On the DVD commentary, the duo and producers also gave credit to the crew in particular the three grams operators who would be on the spot with appropriate music and sound effects during the live show.

The success of the show in the CBBC schedule lead to the duo winning two gongs at the BAFTA children's awards for Best Presenters and Best Entertainment Show, and the programme continued with pace into the new year.

The Ministry was continuing to steadily find its feet with regular items taking themselves further such as "Cakey Sk8".

By now they had introduced the character "Polly With Her Trolley" which was Holly dressed up as an old fashioned tea maid with a Cockney/Essex accent which was equally as pleasing as the real Holly.

Even if she did bear a resemblance to Su Pollard in *You Rang M'lord* with regards to her hair style and outfit.

Polly would make her entrance to Dolly Parton's "*9 To 5*".

Peter Cox as "The Doc" continued in his sketches with Stephen where he had been given his own lab in the studio where they did near-dangerous experiments blended in with comedy.

The chemistry between the two came across brilliantly to the point that even the pre-recorded sketches looked as if they were done live with Stephen's uncontrollable laughter when things went wrong.

It also established the catchphrase "*The part of the show that puts the U into* "*You Liiike?!*" and continued to show potential progress.

By the end of 2004 more changes were afoot at the Ministry when on the 18th of December, Michael Underwood presented his last show.

No clear reason was given for his departure as to whether it was his decision or that of the producers not to renew his contract but from then onwards, it would just be a two handed show with Holly and Stephen.

The duo's first show on their own was broadcast on Christmas Day and included a special guest appearance from Ricky Gervais who brought plenty of subtle humour to the show, and was more than complementary towards the proceedings.

"*It's like Tiswas, but without the talent!*"

The show had the Seasonal Saturday morning monopoly that year due to *Da Bungalow* being relegated to just the CBBC Channel.

From January 2005 the programme was being billed in the TV listings as MoM, although the original name was still heard in the theme tune and the stings in and out of the ads.

The show made not such a huge relaunch but more or less established its new direction on the 8th of January where new features and games were introduced with the first being "*Ram Ray*".

The game involved a caller selecting one out of 5 doors for Ray to "ram into" with a crash helmet, one being a decoy door made of paper, and four of them were real, which if bumped into would result in general hilarity.

Especially from Stephen, whose hysterics seemed to signify;
"*I can't believe we're doing this on live television!*"

One week had all the doors made of solid wood.

It did look like something out of *Takeshi's Castle* but overall it helped to give the show one of its stand out features to the point of being referred to by Bill Bailey when Holly guested on *Buzzcocks*.

The other new feature introduced was "*Name That Tone*" a buzzer based game involving two contestants competing against each other to guess ringtones after the Crazy Frog craze arose.

This saw another new character introduced played by Chinese actor Vincent Wong by the name of "Mr Lee", who was apparently the man who owned all the ringtones.

Although to be honest it was just an excuse to use the song of the same name as performed by The 5-6-7-8s.

As the feature progressed Mr Lee would be put under even more humiliation by being asked to sing some of the ringtones himself, usually sounding nothing like the actual song.

Ray would pop up as "The Crazy Frog" to signal the end of the game.

There were also a few not so good items such as “Fat Fight Club” which involved Holly and one of the guests fighting in inflatable sumo suits.

The item used Motorhead’s “*Ace Of Spades*” as the music, which was already established as Dick & Dom’s “Muck Muck” music and proved that the producers still had the magpies inside them.

That would be made even more evident later in the year but I’ll go onto that later.

Another item was “*Double Trouble*” where viewers would text in guessing a relative or a former colleague from two people and every week, just as the real person would reveal themselves a mechanical hooter sound effect would go off, meaning that they would have to wait until after the break for the answer.

Luckily the two features were dropped pretty quickly.

The most popular feature judging by the internet TV message boards was the “*Thank You Desk*” where either Holly or Stephen with one of the guests would sit at a desk attempting to thank all the guests whilst being pelted with water and gunge and other messy stuff.

The thank you’s themselves would appear on a crawler aston at the bottom of the screen for the viewers at home whilst all the mess ensued.

It would work both ways as Stephen would get really angry after being pelted, and Holly getting gunged was easy on the eye for obvious reasons.

At this stage the show was without a sponsor, but by the Spring of 2005 they arranged a new deal with Cheesestrings, who’s sponsor idents were based around the *Bugsy Malone* song “*So Ya Wanna Be A Boxer*” which didn’t make too much sense…

Maybe it had something to do with the line about “*the golden ring*”

With MoM finally finding its legs after a muddled first year, and Holly's hair seeing no signs of any fringes, it was becoming slightly more enjoyable than "Da Bungalow" although Dick & Dom were earning even greater publicity.

Conservative MP Peter Luff criticised the show's website in the House Of Commons in January 2005 and questioned whether it was representative of public service broadcasting.

The MP referred to the content such as the game "*Make Dick Sick*", "*The Pants Dance Hall Of Fame*", and "*Bunged Up*" which was a game involving the player avoiding turds being dropped from toilets.

The hosts themselves laughed off the controversy to the point of doing so on the show itself, although they also mentioned in a magazine interview that the following series between Autumn 2005 and Spring 2006 would be the last.

At the time, many viewers and older fans of the show saw it as a sensible decision of which they thought they would go out on a high.

Halfway into series 4, the show was pretty much at it's height with the website *Off The Telly* referring to it as "*the best programme of 2005*".

It had also been announced that Dick and Dom had been approached by BBC 2 to present a modern day revival of *Ask The Family* that would be recorded and transmitted in Spring 2005 in the slot formerly occupied by *The Simpsons,* which at the time sounded very promising….

I'll get back to that.

The show knew how to keep things fresh however by taking the bold option to rest "*Bogies*" and replacing it with *"Eeny Meeny Mackeracka Paridominacka Shickappa Dickywhopper Rom Pom Stick"* originally shown on the Sunday show.

The game involving the pair going round a town and sticking ever enlarging stickers of their faces on the back of unsuspecting members of the public, and would continue to do so until one of them got caught.

Other new additions included the "*Two Word Tango*" and "*The Mucky Puddle Power Shower Game*" which made good use of Queen's "*Bicycle Race*" during the game itself.

CBBC Channel viewers were also given the option of playing the interactive game "*Buttons Balls And Bungalaa*" during the cartoons continuing to provide "added value" for the digital viewers.

In the latter part of series 4 it was noticeable that Steve Ryde and Simon Hepworth's names were absent from the credits.

It soon emerged that they were preparing for a special contribution to Comic Relief when it was announced that the show would be stripped over the week leading up to Red Nose Day 2005.

The show would be called *Comic Relief In Da Bungalow* with the big twist being that it would involve celebrity bungalowheads taking part.

Any involvement of celebrities on past shows, would have simply involved them being told to piss off at the door, but this was different.

These were people wanting to come on the show for the overall enjoyment and messing about, with Brian Conley, Sian Lloyd, Fearne Cotton, Ed Byrne, Rowland Rivron, Antony Worrall-Thompson, Sheila Ferguson, all of McFly, Colin McAllister and Justin Ryan, Gina Yashere, and of course Timmy Mallett.

And Andy Scott-Lee.

The show would involve a different set of contestants each day between Monday the 7th and Thursday the 10th of March with the show divided into two half hour slots on CBBC 1 from 4:30pm, and on BBC 2 and the CBBC Channel from 6pm, both transmitted live.

The BBC 2 show was introduced without any CBBC idents, which was probably a hint for regular viewers of that timeslot, of what to expect when their new *Ask The Family* series would start the following month.

The overall premise was the same as the usual show,
only that the winning contestant each day would have their points
converted into cash and donated to Comic Relief.

Games played included "*Fairly Hairy Fizzogs*", "*Fat On Your Back*"
"*The Outboard Motor Gob Game*", "*The Repetition Competition*",
"*What A Sweaty Flap*", a disastrous/hilarious round of "*Don't Go Daddy*",
the long awaited return of "*Pumpy Rumpy*" and the first outing of
"*Celebrity Two Word Tango*" which in the end resulted in the "c-word"
being added permanently to the game in the next series.

There was also "*Pro Celebrity Bogies*" where stars such as
Rupert Grint from the *Harry Potter* movies, Carol Vorderman, Sara Cox
and Craig Doyle took part and the ever popular shouting contest.

The grand final was shown on Red Nose Night itself with Sara Cox
taking on Rupert Grint in a duel at Madame Tussauds.

The regular characters such as the prize idiot also made
appearances but the best had to be Raymond Farmer;

"Morning! In New York".

There were also special sketches with the Diddies, with one notable example
being Colin and Justin singing their own version of the infamous
"*Cupboard Love*" song.

Other twists included ordinary children placed in the cellar cage
instead of erstwhile celebrities, and outdoor excursions to raise money
such as the "*Pants Dance*" being done in a school hall, and the "*Grunty Song*"
performed at the London Irish Rugby Club ground.

The finale for each show rather than just a normal creamy muck muck fight
was "*Mucky-Oke*" where the unluckiest celebrity as determined
by phone votes would have to sing whilst being pelted
with Creamy Muck Muck.

Sometimes it would just turn into a Muck Muck fight full on,
"*Ace Of Spades*" et al.

As the Red Nose specials were transmitted the week up to the final show of the series, it made the last edition of Series 4 broadcast on March the 12th seem rather anti-climatic.

It wasn't without controversy, as the premise involved Dick being "pregnant", eventually giving birth to "Muck Muck Babies", stretched throughout the show leading up to the splatting itself, with return appearances for Dick's real mum (doing whatever she could to avoid any muck muck), and his TV presenter brother James.

The set up resulted in many complaints to the BBC, but from a show perspective the main problem was how the premise was strung out throughout the whole programme, and the costume "disabling" Dick from taking part in the games.

From a personal perspective, this was Da Bungalow's "*Jumping The Shark*" moment.

It was probably the earliest in the year that the main winter show on BBC 1 came to an end since series 1 of *Swap Shop*, although the replacement wasn't due to start until the Easter weekend meaning that in between would be compilation shows, looking back at the highlights of series 4.

MoM meanwhile had continued to go from strength to strength finally settling into a coherent and successful format with any references to the "Ministry" now pretty much absent.

In some weeks they even abandoned the singing along to the opening theme in favour of themed introductions.

The graphics and on screen astons also received a make over with the standouts being the large captions used to introduce studio performances, almost similar to the large ones on *Live & Kicking* but in a more metallic, dare I say "futuristic" font.

However it seemed that the producers and those behind the scenes were still envious of Dick & Dom and were starting to try at any expense to emulate them wherever possible, when such moves didn't need to be taken at all.

Items included "*Food Fight*" where two schools would throw inedible food at each other from different sides of the studio and looked almost similar to many a game on *Da Bungalow* to the point of the Doc yelling "*STOP!*" when the time ran out.

The advantage of the item being we got to see the presenters in school shirts and ties, where Holly had her hair done up in pigtails for that part of the show.

If that wasn't enough to please the dads, the female half of the MoM duo accidentally exposed a breast during one of the "Thank You Desk" finales.

Another item "*I Can Burp An Animal*" was pretty self-explanatory although mainly an excuse for a specially written song sung by Holly and the guests, accompanied by Stephen on the piano.

Also introduced was "*Relly From Helly*" where earlier in the week an unlucky viewer would be humiliated by either their mum, dad, sister, brother or even their friends in a public place with hidden cameras, and the "relly" would be doing silly things such as bouncing on a bed in a furniture store.

Stephen would often make digs towards the rival show at various points, with one example being an interview with Busted's James Bourne whose new band "Son Of Dork" had released a single called "*Ticket Outta Loserville*".

To which Stephen asked if there were "*any bungalows in Loserville*".

Throughout late February and into early March there was also the addition of a large crate with some creatures in their providing incessant laughter.

After much building up, it was revealed that inside were two Hyenas voiced by none other than John and Don, formerly from *What's Up Doc?* as the Wolves, and also as the Leps from *Live & Kicking*.

The characters added extra laughs to the show in the duo's inimitable manner, as well as being walloped by the hosts with frying pans at least once a show.

The most questionable decision was that to position the new animated series of *Captain Scarlet* within the show, as shot in "*Hypermarionation*".

This didn't go down well with fans, as each episode was split into two parts and they probably didn't complete the whole series in the end.

Apart from that, the show was continuing to go from strength to strength and the regular items such as "*Ram Ray*" and characters including Mr Lee and The Doc made sure it would continue to be a strong show throughout the summer months.

On the 28th of March, *The Saturday Show* returned, still in a 90 minute format but retaining presenters Jake, Angellica and Simon, and now simulcast on the CBBC Channel.

However the show itself had been given an immense relaunch with a new studio set, logo, and title sequence, sorry, short sting, which was accompanied by an unmemorable electric guitar tune with a stuttered "*It's Sa-Sa-Sa-Saturday!*" towards the end.

The show ran between 9am and 10:30 but even with 90 minutes they couldn't provide a full show without three cartoons within it.

Possibly because they decided to adapt Dick & Dom's premise of the show being celebrity guest-free, only with a "VIP Audience" instead of a team of bungalowheads.

The rest of the show consisted mainly of ridiculous games such as "*Blushing Roulette*", "*Stick Or Twist*", and a new spin on "*Gunge Grant*" renamed "*Gunge GBH*" (Grant, Bell, Humphrey) which saw all three presenters up for a drenching with one getting nominated each week.

After three series, the karaoke contest was replaced by an acting competition, where three hopefuls would compete for a chance to act in a sketch on the show through Jake's "Talent Agency".

It was more than evident that this certainly wasn't a winning formula.

The other shows in the BBC's new Saturday morning schedule
were *Dance Factory* hosted by Reggie Yates which was rather dull show
following the hopes of young wannabe dancers,
followed by *Top Of The Pops Saturday* as usual at 11.

However by the time the main TOTP moved from BBC 1 to BBC 2
the Saturday spin off was rested and with *Dance Factory* also finished,
the slots after *The Saturday Show* consisted of cartoons such as *Scooby Doo*,
and repeats of *Tracy Beaker*, often chosen by viewer votes.

Few predicted at the time that this was possibly a move by the BBC
to see whether it was even worth devoting the whole of Saturday morning
to one single programme.

Dick & Dom's first proper stab at a prime time audience
began on the 4th of April with *Dick & Dom's Ask The Family*
broadcast five nights a week in a 6:30pm timeslot on BBC 2 for five weeks.

The show itself put the quiz concept second with much of the show
centred around the chaos of the duo, with Dave Chapman as
"the supporting cast" apart from the ladies who brought on props.

Characters included the puppet pig "Piggy Cowell" who would faint
on noticing one of the pair eating a pork based snack, and "James Tiddler"
who claimed to be the expert on *Ask The Family* in a round incorporating
questions from the original series.

Chapman also provided the comic voiceovers announcing the scores
which sounded like a cross between Tiny the Hamster and Da Bungalow's Cat,
often ending with an utterance of "*Ha ha! Rubbish!*"

The theme music was a remixed version of John Mayer's "*Acka Raga*"
as used for the majority of Robert Robinson's tenure on the original show.

The sound effects provided a few laughs with silly buzzer noises
for the contestants, and a loud burp used to signal the end of the final round
"*Have Your Cake And Eat It*" where they had to eat cake answering questions.

Other amusing moments included Dom smashing up the consolation prize plates
in one show, and the duo always ending with a no-nonsense "*That's It!*"

As expected, the show drew complaints to *Points Of View* resulting in the producer of *Ask The Family* explaining that it wasn't called "*Ask The Family with Dick & Dom*" highlighting the fact that the duo were at the heart of the programme and the families taking part were very big fans of the pair.

Patricia Owtram, one of the creators of the original *Ask The Family* was also one to show her disapproval of the new show and the incessant jokes about willies, through a column in The Daily Telegraph.

However the main problem with the programme was that it fell into the category previously fallen into by *O.T.T.* and *Slap Bang!*, proving that such crazy childlike antics don't necessarily work in prime time television.

Being placed five nights a week didn't help either, meaning the content got stale very quickly, and became more reverent as the series went on.

Rather knowingly, the duo finished the final show in the series with the line; "*That Is Most Definitely It!*" and as expected, the show was not re-commissioned with the news revealed swiftly in June 2005.

Dick & Dom later went on to disown the series in an LBC interview stating that it was the wrong vehicle for them, and describing it as "*the biggest load of tat we'd ever done*".

The Saturday Show soldiered on throughout the summer, with CBBC presenter Sophie McDonnell standing in for Angellica on occasions, and a return appearance for Ortis Deley who presided over O/Bs in a similar role to when he started on *Live & Kicking*.

Despite an entire show broadcast live from Majorca in August (the sort of thing that hadn't been done since *Going Live!*) the programme's days were numbered, and the final edition went out on the 3rd of September 2005 as a "Christmas Special".

The final moments saw all three presenters placed in the infamous leaky gunge tank as part of the final "Gunge GBH", with Slade playing in the background.

To sum up *The Saturday Show*, despite a shaky start,
it had an awful lot of potential but they just gave up towards the end.

Even if Dick & Dom had the superior show, it would have made sense to keep Simon and Fearne for series 3, rather than just reformatting for the worse every year, and dispelling away the lively studio atmosphere.

But then again, it had to undersell itself in some way.

It was to be the final time that the BBC's Summer Saturday morning show was produced from Glasgow.

MoM's reformatting had resulted in the reverse, and throughout
the summer months more new features and additions were introduced.

Two of them being names for the Hyenas who through a viewers vote became "Scratch And Sniff" and even got their own set for sketches,
in a den supposedly below the studio audience seating area.

Another new item came in the form of "*Judge Mental*" which had
a similar premise to an old *Big Breakfast* item "*Judge The Grudge*"
and was introduced by the soul anthem "*Here Comes The Judge*".

This involved a young child making a case against their parent
who wouldn't let them get their ears pierced for example,
with viewers and the studio audience playing jury in the commercial break.

Holly played a comedy judge who had some sort of tourette's
which resorted to random outbursts such as "*SPONGEBOB!*"
or "*CELEBRITY WRESTLING!*", a reference to a recent high profile
ratings disaster for ITV.

Like many items on Saturday morning by this time, it was mainly the music used at various points that made it amusing, as when the viewers at home voted in favour of the child, their parent would be gunged
whilst accompanied by "*I Fought The Law*" by The Clash.

It looked for the time being that everything was stable and the
show really was at its strongest.

CD:uk on the other hand looked as if it really hadn't moved on when it should have done with the titles and graphics untouched since 2001 and the ever tedious Hot Shots review still in place.

They were even still using the "*#CD-UK CD-UK*" musical sting after every live performance.

Cat Deeley decided it was the ideal time to move on and on the 5th of March she presented her final show, with guests Matt Lucas and David Walliams promoting Comic Relief.

As expected there was a highlights package at the end which harked back to the days of Ant & Dec and the really long mics, and a snippet from Franz Ferdinand's performance of "*Matinee*" with the line about Terry Wogan changed to "*#So I'm on CD:UK now, Tellin' Cat Deeley how, we made it and…*"

Before the VT, Deeley acknowledged Nigel Pickard and Conor McAnally in her final link.

It ended with the song "*Golden Touch*" as performed live on the show by Razorlight and before the Blaze endcap appeared, there was a rather dodgy shot of an earlier hairstyle from one of the first shows, played in slow motion.

No long term replacement host had been found, so the show continued as usual for the time being with guest hosts ranging from MTV's Dave Berry who gave a slightly cheeky and irreverent tone to the show, alongside Holly Willoughby, and the peculiar choice of Nikki Sanderson from *Coronation Street* who wasn't as horrendous as expected.

During the latter months of the Summer however, *CD:uk* was briefly shifted to Sunday mornings to allow more time for the F1 Coverage, with MoM occasionally extended for an extra half hour until 12pm although it was really a case of filling the extra time with an episode of the CiTV series *King Arthur's Disasters*.

ITV were seemingly losing faith in *CD:uk*, threatening it with the axe, and a relaunch was announced in August with a new presenter line up consisting of none of those who had stood in over the Summer of 2005.

Brought in to take over would be Lauren Laverne, Myleene Klass and Sheffield poet Johnny Pitts, with the chart itself being based on the ill-fated MiTracks website where viewers could vote online for their favourite and least favourite tunes, which would determine their chart positions.

The show itself needed to move away from the shades of *SM:tv* which didn't look good being broadcast after MoM.

Speculation arose as to whether the new trio would be able to make like Chris Moyles, and become the saviours of *CD:uk*.

Chapter 9 – "The Beginning Of The End Of The Shows"

After getting over the disaster of *Ask The Family*, the 5th and final series of *Da Bungalow* was set to start on the 10th of September on BBC 1.

The new series was preceded by a set of amusing trailers where the pair were involved in Summer jobs, such as waiters in an Italian restaurant, or as swimming pool lifeguards, getting sacked for resorting to their messy ways.

Each trail ended with the late Patrick Allen uttering the rather apt line "*Dick And Dom are back. Where they belong!*"

However it was announced that major changes were to be made including the Sunday show on the CBBC Channel being cut to just one hour and would be pre-recorded.

The biggest and most infamous change however, was one regarding a part of the show that had previously made it different from the rest.

Many fans of had their fears realised after spotting on the application forms that teams of contestants would require 5 instead of 6, leading to the revelation that would break one of the golden rules of the series, since the very first show.

A celebrity would be taking part as one of the "Bungalowheads".

Yes, you read right.

Following the success of the Comic Relief specials, the duo decided to make it a permanent requirement to have a famous contestant taking part in the chaos each week, although they would only appear on the live show on Saturdays.

It was pretty much changes all round, even to the point of Rich flattening his hair which was an indicator that the show was becoming less anarchic than it had previously been.

The new series was introduced on CBBC 1 by Mohini Sule, and Simon Grant who only the previous week had presented his final *Saturday Show* celebrating the fact that he would not be getting gunged again.

However it was pretty much commonplace by this time for Saturday morning presenters to move back to presenting links, with Angellica Bell following suit.

At the time there was always a good contrast between the anarchic style of *Da Bungalow* and the more relaxed manner of the CBBC presenters introducing the show and there was no real rivalry between them.

So, let's continue with the many changes for changes sake that were pretty much evident from the first show.

The first was the opening titles which were more or less the same, but the theme tune had been modified with more aggressive guitar riffs and the some of the verses changed.

The studio set had also been changed in places with the cellar replaced by a mock-up back garden which it managed to work better in terms of being able to move to that part of the set in a single shot rather than using complicated cutaways.

A lesser welcome addition was a plastic crocodile that "vomited", brought in to replace the burping moose's head.

Thankfully the turtle's head in the toilet had been disposed of, although it also meant that the losing contestant would not get gunged.

The contestants no longer arrived through the front door and were introduced by running against a chromakeyed street VT as if they were running towards the Bungalow, accompanied by an otherwise unfunny introduction, voiced by Steve Ryde in an unusually gruff voice.

Thus preventing the contestants from getting to know the duo on a 2 to 1 basis.

It was also changed so that the winner of *Da Bungalow* would be revealed on the Saturday morning show but I'll go onto the flaws of that concept in a few hundred more paragraphs.

The first celebrity Bungalowhead was Rachel Stevens and many fans will regard her as one of the worst guests to appear on the show and a clear indicator of what was to come.

Not only did Rachel come across as ever lifeless and dull, but it turned out that she had an aim of staying away from anything that was physically mucky.

It was if she had never even seen the show before, although to be fair it's doubtful that many guests who appeared on the show had done so.

A couple of months earlier when as a guest on MoM, Rachel was brought on to umpire the "*Food Fight*" by sitting on a tennis umpire's chair in the middle of it all and ducked as hard as she could into an umbrella.

However the crime she committed on Dick & Dom was even worse when she refused to have chocolate spilt on her in one of the games, and later bottled out of the Creamy Muck Muck fight at the end of the show, right at the last minute.

Melvin Odoom had to take over for that part of the show in a blonde wig and the presenters vented their spleen on air with Dick exclaiming;

"LISTEN! THAT'S HOW YOU SELL RECORDS!"

In all fairness the singer's career was pretty much on the decline anyway.

The former S Club performer became a popular target for the rest of the series, and the presenters apparently stated that they would never work with her again.

That's not to say that Rachel avoided anything messy altogether as the MoM team did get the opportunity to splat her after a performance at the end of one of their shows.

New games were introduced such as "*Shave And Vac*", "Public Transport" introduced by the Python inspired newlyweds "Tony and Toni", and "*Nae Body Move*" which featured Ian Kirkby's ever hilarious character DCI Harry Batt in a musical statues type game.

The first week however was a slightly different premise as all the Bungalowheads had to dress up as the Geordie cop but with props falling over and moustaches going missing they decided to stick to the basic musical statues formula from second show onwards.

Just about all the games fell flat on their backsides in the first show so the following week, they were all labelled "New And Improved", so for example "*New And Improved 'There's A Face In My Bucket*" etc

Bogies made a welcome return and also featured celebrities but that wasn't really a hindrance in the same way a celebrity bungalowhead, as the overall premise of the game stayed the same with people such as Keith Harris and Orville, John McCririck, and Chris Moyles taking part.

Chris Moyles adapted one of their games as his own after Dick & Dom guested on his Radio 1 Breakfast Show in the run up to the new series when they played "*Celebrity Two Word Tango*".

When they eventually brought it back to the Bungalow, several friendly digs were made at Radio 1's saviour in the duo's usual manner.

Ian's character "Raymond Farmer" became "Raymond Newsreader" whose role still remained by giving recaps on the episodes of either *Scooby Doo* or *Pinky And The Brain* before part two of the cartoons.

With regards to the celebrity Bungalowheads, the concept would normally fail, due to the guests seemingly appearing not to get it.

Key examples included Tony Christie who looked ever bewildered throughout, *Big Brother* 3 winner/TV presenter Kate Lawler which speaks for itself, and Dani Harmer who was given a lot more than she was actually capable of doing post *Tracy Beaker*.

Some of the better celebrity contestants included David Schneider who had quite a bit of experience on children's programmes having appeared on CBBC's *Hangar 17* in the early 90s.

Also worth mentioning were Brian Conley who also appeared on the Comic Relief show, and Ewen McIntosh from *The Office* whose dry wit and keen participation fitted in well.

Ian Jones from *Off The Telly* pointed out that with a celebrity in presence, neither Dick and especially Dom could yell at them in the same way as the children if they messed about or wouldn't shut up, which contributed to the show losing it's edge.

It was sad to see one of the most anarchic programmes currently on television resort to being tame.

And it didn't get any more tame than the unwelcome revamp of what became "*The Creamy Muck Muck Grand Finale*".

The opening sting sung it all;

"*#It's the Creamy Muck Muck Grand Finale,*

The Crunch! The Decider! The Ultimate Test!

To sort out the winners, the saints from the sinners,

The wheat from the chaff, and the best from the rest!

Will you be able to capitalise, and win the amazing first place prize!"

Competitiveness had clearly taken over.

The concept would involve the pair spoofing a gameshow each week by adding "Muck" to the title with examples being "Muckiversity Challenge", "Muckety Fortunes", "Muck Phrase" and "Muck Or No Muck".

Some of the send ups were actually rather funny due to the supporting cast, with Dave Chapman's brilliant take on Michael Muckymore in "Strike It Mucky" and Richard O'Muck in "The Crystal Muck" whilst Ian Kirkby gave a brilliant "gentle" Irish accent as "Roy Mucker" on "Muck Phrase" and best of all was his Noel Edmonds impression; *"Don't splatter Little Noely!"*

Sadly the concept usually fell flat on it's arse as most of the children taking part would have never heard of the gameshows being spoofed, meaning that a lot of the set ups were awkward to watch.

Even to the point of the sending up the quick-fire element by replacing buzzers with buckets of Muck Muck.

The first show didn't even have a proper Muck Muck fight at the end with Motorhead etc, although they rectified it for the rest of the series shortly after, normally with the host of the spoof yelling the immortal words "*Go! Go! Gooooo!*".

The supporting cast had to be commended for staying in character and carrying on whilst constantly being splatted.

The main flaw with the Finale was that each week the set up would involve the Prize Winners (1st 2nd and 3rd place) versus the Prize Losers (you can probably work it out yourselves).

If the Prize Losers won the endgame, then they would take first second and third prizes from the prize winners, with the 4th placed in 1st and so on.

That had to be the most stupid decision ever made for the show, and understandably the whole point of the programme was to bend the rules and conventions of children's television.

But to have the contestants losing, partly because they misunderstood a spoof of a show they'd probably never have heard of was rather cruel and to be fair, hard to get your head round as a viewer.

It was pretty much evident from the first few shows that it really was different, and not as fun and anarchic as the first four series.

It was understandable that Dick and Dom possibly wanted to go all out on their final series, but this looked more like controlled-to-the-point-of-contrived chaos.

In some cases it turned into complete nonsense with random individuals running round the set screaming and then disappearing for no apparent reason.

It was also evident that Dick & Dom had become their own victims by resorting to shouting for the sake of shouting and pissing about for the sake of pissing about.

Only that this time it didn't get any laughs.

One of the few positive changes were the revised musical stings such as the jazzed up version of the music used to read out the scores.

The Sunday show despite being only an hour long was still superior to Saturday, where the celebrity contestant was replaced by an adult known by the bungalowheads such as a parent or a teacher.

The usual items remained such as the "C*ereal Race*" and of course Tomdickn'arry with "*The Forfeit Auction*".

"*Alright M'Darlins!*"

Back to Saturdays and the series was part of another new Saturday line-up on CBBC 1 alongside *Top Of The Pops Reloaded* with Fearne, Sam and Mark and the 15 minute magazine *Sportsround*, a long awaited *Newsround* spin off hosted by Jake Humphrey.

Starting with *TOTP Reloaded*, unlike *TOTP Saturday* this had more of a vibrant studio atmosphere along the lines of *TFI Friday*, possibly to distinguish themselves from *CD:uk* and also to compete with MoM.

The standout part was the opening titles, still using the Tony Gibber theme tune but with a rather nice sequence set in a musical city with buldings made of speakers and amplifiers with bright colours.

The titles were co-designed by BBC Saturday morning graphic stalwart Paul Baguley who designed the classic silver ball titles to *Live & Kicking* and continues to design visual delights on *Sam and Mark's TMi Friday*.

There was also the addition of a feature for digital viewers to choose a different performance to watch at the same time as the one being shown on BBC 1 so for example, if you didn't want to see the Sugababes, you could opt for a Green Day performance.

The show itself was an improvement on *TOTP Saturday* with the addition of an audience, but with the main show now in an ailing Sunday night slot on BBC 2, it felt like a desperate spin off for a failing product.

It didn't help with the unwelcome appearances of JK & Joel who in line with their stint on Radio 1 were focused on building a television career.

With them and Sam & Mark on the same show, it essentially contained two double acts of four straightmen.

The TFI element was shown through many gameshow spoofs on the show and the much overused Dad Dancing contest which goes as far back as *Saturday Superstore* and possibly *Tiswas*.

There were also sketches such as "*Sam And Mark: Pop Agents*" although let's say that they certainly weren't in the same league as "*The Singing Corner*".

The programme was repeated on the CBBC Channel on Sundays from 6pm taking over the timeslot formerly occupied by the *UK Top 40* show possibly as a warm-up for the main show on BBC 2.

Overall the show itself seemed like an extended advertisement for both TOTP itself and Radio 1's Chart Show which weren't exactly appointments in a viewer's diary.

Sportsround on the other hand was made in a similar style to *Newsround*, but wasn't as patronising despite retaining the ticker from its parent show.

Jake Humphrey was the ideal choice as presenter and had a good set of reporters such as Ade Adepitan from CBBC's *XChange* and not forgetting the 2002 BBC 1 idents.

And in the long-standing *Newsround* tradition there were silly items on sports such as pier jumping, and belly flop diving.

Despite being only 15 minutes in length it was good to have a sports show designed for specifically for children and it still remains today as part of the CBBC Saturday line up, now renamed *MOTD Kickabout*.

On Saturday the 17th of September ITV celebrated 50 years with a special MoM featuring past presenters of Saturday mornings over 25 years.

The titles were even modified to include a cake with the ITV50 logo.

There weren't many clips from the shows themselves, but the guest list was impressive.

Making an appearance were Neil Buchanan, Gaz Top, Gaby Roslin, Jenny Powell, Pat Sharp, Gail Porter, Brian Dowling and every dad's favourite Saturday morning sex bomb; Sally James.

Gareth in particular tried to shoe horn the fact how he'd actually presented two Saturday morning shows, referring to the flop that was *It's Not Just Saturday* from almost a decade earlier.

Thankfully they showed a snippet from his *Get Fresh* days with ***that*** mullet.

Also, making a minor appearance was Timmy Mallett who appeared in a sketch with Sniff the hyena and Ray playing "*Mallett's Mallet*".

Chris Tarrant also made an appearance via a pre-recorded "live interview", whilst Ant & Dec appeared via a VT message from the studio of *Gameshow Marathon* which started on the same night.

"*Ram Ray*" had it's doors specially designed to represent the various Saturday morning shows, and the winning door fittingly enough was *No. 73*.

It was more than apt as MoM was shot in the very same studio where *73* was broadcast from 20 years earlier.

The only real clips shown were those from *Tiswas* that everyone's seen such as Trevor McDonald, although they did show a publicity photo of Gaby Roslin in 1989, where she posed in a similar manner to Yazz.

The former *Big Breakfast* host could be heard screaming for them not to show it.

They also brought back a couple of vintage games from *Tiswas* such as the cage, and the Phantom Flan Flinger would pop up at random points as you'd expect.

When they did the cage, all the guests were wearing blue raincoats except for Gaz Top who was all up for being pelted wet through and went in with exactly what he was wearing.

With regards to MoM in general, the show also saw the arrival of a new puppy whose name was chosen by the viewers as "Snowy".

It didn't really fit into the chaotic style of the show, but it was a nice addition and didn't mean the programme turned into *Blue Peter*.

Dick & Dom around the same time had also introduced a dog of their own named "Spratt" although there's played a lesser role on the show, reduced to occasional cutaways in the usual manner.

The anniversary edition of MoM ended with the hosts pelted at the Thank You Desk, and the Phantom Flan Flinger splatted out of the show.

The same day also saw the much awaited relaunch of *CD:uk* with a new look based on predominantly white and pink colours and a re-working of the theme tune which bore more a resemblance to the original theme to *SM:tv* from the days of "*#Wake Up, It's Saturday*".

Before the titles themselves started rolling, the new presenters were introduced by a voiceover reminiscent of a ring announcer accompanied by, you've guessed it "*Gonna Fly Now*".

Whilst it was good to see the show being given a fresh new look and potentially good presenters, the format pretty much remained unchanged, and with pop music overall continuing to get even more inferior, it was pretty much evident that the show overall was on its last legs.

However the show was at an advantage as they'd managed to get a new sponsor, that being Rimmel.

Back at *Da Bungalow*, other highlights included "*DCI Harry Batt's Interrogation Game*" which put Ian Kirkby's character to his best use where a bungalowhead would have to smuggle a specific word at regular intervals within 90 seconds.

This lead to a memorable rendition of the Dire Straits "*Private Investigations*" as performed by the Geordie copper himself.

A more infamous musical moment which they surprisingly got away with was when Rik Waller made an appearance performing the Status Quo tune "*Rocking All Over The World*", but replacing the first word with something more colourful in a less than subtle manner.

By November time "C*elebrity Bogies*" had come to an end, replaced by "*Dick And Dom's Dirty Day*" where the boys would visit a town competing against each other to get as dirty as possible in half an hour.

Bogies wasn't dropped altogether as they started to replay classic games mainly from series 3, including a classic that took place at a performance of "Peter Pan The Musical" at a theatre in Dom's hometown of Exeter.

There was also the return of the popular item "*Strangely Talented*" proving that *Britain's Got Talent* wasn't the first show of the decade to showcase idiotic performances in front of a discerning crowd.

One standout moment came on the 3rd of December where one of the contestants was none other than one Matthew Lewis nee Butler.

For those unfamiliar with the name, Butler appeared on *Tiswas* in 1980 aged 5 performing Art Garfunkel's "*Bright Eyes*" in a rabbit costume and now he was doing the same on *Da Bungalow* along with bunny-clad *Tiswas* fans Peter Thomas, Marc Neun and Lee Bannister performing as "4 Carrot Gold".

Unsurprisingly, they lost.

The performance also allowed Dick & Dom to swiftly dismiss rumours of them joining ITV to revive the anarchic erstwhile Saturday morning show.

The 3rd of December was the same day that MoM celebrated 100 shows, and it was full proof, that the show had reached its height over the space of two years.

Viewers in Northern Ireland however were spared from the celebrations due to UTV opting out to broadcast George Best's funeral.

They almost went ahead with opting out mid-show, which hadn't been done on Saturday mornings since April 1989 when *Ghost Train* finished early to make way for the Hillsborough memorial service.

More new features had been introduced including a game which involved the hyenas called "*Snap*" although what it actually involved was guessing which mouse trap out of a wheel of 6 did not snap.

If Scratch or Sniff got his hand caught inside one he would let off a moan which would end up in everyone singing the chorus of "*War*" by Edwin Starr in the usual random manner.

Another popular feature was a rather controversial game called "*Supermarket Sneak*" with Holly and Stephen competing against each other with two viewers respectively, by sneaking large items into people's trolleys trying not to get caught.

The feature itself looked very similar to the out-of-studio stunts done on Dick & Dom, and the duo were going to include it on their 5th series but a "mole" allegedly sent to the BBC from MoM beat them to it.

Once again it went to show how badly MoM wanted to get the better of *Da Bungalow* when it really didn't need to, but the game itself worked well on screen.

This was partly due music used for each team where Stephen's was "*Oh Yeah*" by Yello, and Holly's was "Woo *Hoo*" by the 5,6,7,8s.

In true *Bungalow* style, it was accompanied by a "witty commentary" from Don Austin in a West Midlands accent.

Despite passing the century mark, changes were afoot as it was announced that the programme would be relaunching with a new name and format as a result of cutbacks at ITV.

At least that's what it looked like.

It really couldn't have happened at a worse time as the show was probably ITV's strongest since Ant & Dec had left *SM:tv*, with a viewing peak of 900,000, and it looked as if they had blown it at the wrong time.

The final MoM was broadcast on Christmas Eve 2005, with no mention of the new show itself, but Holly managed to stop Stephen from giving the game away near the end of the show.

Dick & Dom on the other hand repeated their Christmas and New Year specials from 2004 on the CBBC Channel only that weekend, which was more or less a sign that they were giving up.

There was a Christmas show however on the 17th of December with surprise cameo appearances from Todd Carty with Harry Batt, and Rowetta appearing in an *X-Factor* themed Creamy Muck Muck Finale.

It was to be the final morning that BBC 1 would broadcast programmes for children on Saturday mornings after nearly 30 years.

There was quite a lot of confusion as to what was happening with ITV's Saturday morning show but it was announced in mid-December that the new show would be called *Holly And Stephen's Saturday Showdown,* transmitted from a smaller studio, and due to start in the New Year.

The programme was trailed on ITV1 the previous week but only showed clips from the cartoons that would be on, alongside black and white photos of the presenters.

It didn't even use the logo that would be used on the show itself which more or less showed that what we would see, may be the result of a rush job.

The new show made its debut on Saturday the 7th of January which ironically was the same day 17 years ago when *The Chart Show* began on ITV.

However compared to the above, this relaunch was more of a comedown than an upgrade.

New titles were introduced with a brand new theme tune composed by Maidstone veterans Mr Miller and Mr Porter.

Although it wasn't as memorable as MoM's, the titles succeeded in giving the show more of an identity.

The opening titles themselves more or less set the scene for what was to come, involving Stephen and Holly fighting one other to write or "splodge" their names.

The name of the show was also an indicator of what the premise would be, and a further indication that they were stealing ideas from their rivals.

Not least because the show was designed to be set in the presenters own flat.

To add insult to injury, the set contained various pieces of the MoM studio with the stairs redecorated as the entrance to the house, as well as the multicoloured light panels making a reappearance.

As part of the cutbacks, characters such as the Doc and Mr Lee were ousted from the show.
Ray remained but Holly kindly assured him "*you don't need to ram through things anymore*", much to the disappointment of many viewers.

Scratch and Sniff also survived but Sniff disappeared without trace after the first two shows, possibly because John Eccleston had yet another overseas commitment.

Bizzarely, Sniff still appeared in the "*Dodge Dolly's Balls*" phone-in game after his departure, which could suggest that the item was pre-recorded, and was lucky to escape the ITV phone scandal of 2007.

Snowy the Dog was also kept on following letters from viewers.

A new addition was introduced in the form of a young boy who's name was "Wallace", a rapper who looked like Chico's backing dancer from *The X Factor*, but came across as just as annoying, and pretty lifeless.

Unsurprisingly he was dropped after the first show.

As if the half-inched idea of the show's setting wasn't bad enough, the premise was even worse as it involved a team of two girls competing against a team of two boys in a series of games throughout the show.

The main flaw was that the teams themselves didn't appear until at least halfway through the show and to be honest it was impossible to even take the slightest of interest in the whole progress of it all with regards to who got the most points.

Thankfully the gameshow concept itself wasn't strung out to such an extent.

Some of the games included "*Scratch's Cupboard*" which involved guessing which item was in Scratch's cupboard from a series of clues, and "*Ray's Tiny Tiddlers*" where the contestants would have to guess what was to be poured on Ray from an unlabeled tin.

The jingle for the latter sounded very similar to the "Gizmo" one from *The Fast Show*.

As for the games themselves, it was more than obvious that they were a far cry from "*Cakey Sk8*".

The only item from MoM that survived onto the Showdown was "*Supermarket Sneak*" which remained unchanged, although the winning team would contribute 10 points to the overall score accumulated in the show.

The first show also had an item called "*The Parent Trap*" which was along similar lines to "*Relly From Helly*" this time turning the tables on the parents by getting them involved in a bogus television programme, whilst everyone else was in on it.

Despite being dropped after the first show, CBBC decided to string out the concept into a whole series a year later, with JK and Joel's *Hider In The House*.

Unsurprisingly there were still no credits and just a modified endcap with the Granada logo and a modified Foundation logo written in the same font as the *Showdown* logo.

About a week into the run, it changed to the ITV Productions animated endcap with the revised Foundation logo in full colour.

On the same day, Dick & Dom were moved from BBC 1 to BBC 2 as the bosses thought it would be good to experiment their established *Saturday Kitchen* with Antony Worrall-Thompson on BBC 1.

The move was about as temporary as when *Top Of The Pops* moved to Friday evenings almost 10 years earlier, although the alleged reason was that it wouldn't be affected by events to the extent of George Best's funeral, which in turn resulted in a last minute move to BBC 2 on the day itself.

It was far from being a case of "the beginning of the end" as the damage had already been done from the start of the current series.

Dom proclaimed "*We're not bitter!*" in his usual sarcastic manner regarding the channel change, joking that by the end of the series they'd end up on "BBC 10".

From here to the end, Dick & Dom each week would play one of their top 10 favourite games from the series including "*What A Sweaty Flap*" "*The Mucky Puddle Power Shower Game*", and "*Head, Shoulders, Knees And Toast*".

The number 1 game revealed on the final show was "*Make Dick Sick*" (or "*Make Dom Vom*") which had previously been banned by the BBC prompting Dom to yell "*What are you gonna do? Sack us?!*"

Even funnier was on the penultimate show when the pair were expecting to play "*Who Wants To Be A Muckyonaire*" as part of the Creamy Muck Muck Grand Finale, only to be fooled when the set was changed to reveal that of *Ask The Family*, complete with the dancing girls and the "Ha Ha Rubbish!" voiceover.

The duo weren't impressed although the game wasn't played, in favour of Ian Kirkby doing a fine turn as Chris Tarrant.

Soon enough, the final show arrived and was transmitted on Saturday the 11th of March 2006 and as expected, it was going to be a very messy ending.

The opening lift gag involved appearances from past characters such as Martin Floppy-Horns, Bob Peep, Inspector Mutton Chops, and Tony and Toni from the current series.

Appearing in the picture frame were none other than the duo themselves.

The pair were dressed smartly in jackets with t-shirts reading "*RIP Filth*", and "*RIP Dirt*" respectively which made it pretty evident that this would be far from a tearful farewell.

A highlight of the show was that there was no celebrity Bungalowhead, and in their place was just another child who went to the same school as the rest, guaranteeing that the last show would be a return to form.

They also decided to bend the rules by giving all the Bungalowheads the first place prize near the end, which added a looser feel to the show, that had been missing throughout the series.

There were appearances from past celebrity Bungalowheads in places such as David Schneider, Al Murray, Oliver Skeete, and Charlie Higson although they were only really in walk-on or background parts.

Also appearing were the real Christine and Neil Hamilton, and Brian Conley in the final game of "*There's A Famous Face In My Bucket*", sat alongside a doppelganger of Rachel Stevens covered in Muck Muck.

Another former celebrity Bungalowhead was found in the attic, that being David Grant who actually got the "*Yum Yum Yak*" song right for the first time in the series.

Other highlights included a rendition from the Prize Idiot of the Dionne Warwick song "*That's What Friends Are For*" and Harry Batt force-feeding Dom some of the disgusting sloppy stuff resulting in Dom getting really angry as you'd expect, giving an excuse to play the "*Dom's Got One On Him!*" song.

Games played included "*The Bungalow Translation Game*", and as mentioned "*Yum Yum Yak*" where for the final show a viewer from home decided what chocolates Dom would eat.

Although Dom lost, the caller won the PSP prize anyway, albeit covered in Dom's spit.

There was also the legendary "*Baby Race*" guest starring Al Murray, the grand final of "*Eeny Meeny*", and the ever hilarious "*Interrogation Game*" where the tables were turned on Harry Batt where he was interrogated himself by "Barry Fatt".

"*Bogies*" made a final appearance through another classic game with Dom playing against Dani Harmer in a supermarket.

It was also good to see the presenters giving credit to Steve Ryde for coming up with the idea for the game that made the show famous, and developing the show itself.

The Diddies appeared in two last sketches, the first of which involved them planning to head to "Holly"wood after receiving a letter from "Steven" as in Spielberg.

It was more than obvious as to what they were alluding to.

There was one final outing of the "*Cupboard Love*" song with new lyrics, and the final sketch simply involved the real Dick and Dom opening the cupboard and both pairs ended up screaming chaotically.

Throughout the show itself there were cutaways to various props such as the Bungalow scoreboard and Harry Batt's tape recorder leaking of Muck Muck accompanied by rather tense orchestral music, building up to the big finale.

Although it was predictable, it fitted in well with proceedings, and made sure the immense remainder of the budget spent on Muck Muck wasn't wasted.

The finale itself involved no contrived sketches or gameshow spoofs, but a special song, sung by the duo in front of a large crowd consisting of the bungalowheads, various characters, the special guests, and cardboard cut outs of Rachel Stevens.

It's safe to suggest she was lucky to have the show keeping her name in the public eye.

"*#We've sloshed around in Muck Muck Heaven! Except for the girl from S-Club 7!*"

Although it was meant to be funny, it did tug at the heart, mainly because of how they added the "*#Go Go Dick And Dom*" line from the theme tune into the chorus.

Overall it was another gem from the unsung heroes of the show Andy Blythe and Marten Joustra, who wrote the many jingles and accompanying music over the four years.

The song ended with the house finally exploding and everyone involved in a Muck Muck fight with Motorhead playing, although no one shouted "*Go Go Go!*" which was a minor disappointment.

After the producer and director's credit at the end, it cut to a sequence with CBBC boss Alan Yentob waking up and uttering the much used line "*What a terrible dream!*", only to find that Dick and Dom were in his bed, at either side of the BBC boss.

It must have taken the duo a lot of persuading, having received a bollocking from the same man after slating *Ask The Family* in their LBC interview.

Overall it was a superb ending to the show and made up for the otherwise inferior quality of the rest of series 5, which didn't take away the fact that it was one of the most distinctive Saturday morning shows for the BBC, made by a very dedicated team.

It wasn't over completely, as the next couple of weeks would see a few compilation shows, including footage of the first ever show which in the usual manner was looked back on with tounges in cheeks.

Whilst Dick and Dom had their sights set on Radio 1, the production team and supporting cast would continue to make more contributions to CBBC of a similar nature which went onto be just as successful with one of them being *The Slammer*.

Transmitted in Autumn later that year, the series saw return appearances for Ian Kirkby, Lee Barnett, Melvin Odoom and Dave Chapman as the staff and inmates of a prison, where comedian Ted Robbins played "The Guv'nor" and introduced a set of performers locked in the Slammer itself to perform to a discerning audience of children.

One of the wings in the comedy prison was named after the duo themselves.

Andy & Marten were once again brought in to do the theme music and it became one of CBBC's stand out shows, winning a Children's BAFTA of its own.

Harry Batt also made a return for a one off comedy as part of the series *Gina's Laughing Gear*, and several more series followed (including a few with Dick & Dom themselves) from under the eye of producer Steve Ryde.

Apart from Shane Meadows, both Ryde and Ian Kirkby have to be the most talented people to have hailed from the Central Television Junior Workshop.

Over on ITV on the same day as *Da Bungalow*'s departure, *Saturday Showdown* were also celebrating as it was the launch of the new CiTV channel on satellite and digital.

ITV however were very late on the uptake however as where the BBC had launched their children's channels as part of a big relaunch, CiTV on the other hand couldn't have launched at a worse time, mainly due to ITV lobbying OFCOM all it could to remove children's programmes from the network.

A ban on advertising anything with fat or sugar towards children didn't help either and funds for children's programmes on the network were becoming untenable, with regards to commissioning any new series, including those of long established favourites.

Although *Da Bungalow* had been doing it for a long time, heavy emphasis was made on the option to choose which cartoon to watch on either ITV1 or the CiTV channel during the show itself.

Then again Dick & Dom only introduced texting on their final series despite *Live & Kicking* introducing it on their final series one year before *SM:tv*.

The show itself was still sponsored by Cheestrings who had continued their contract from MoM although they had been changed twice by the time the CiTV Channel had launched with the theme of being a "*Cheestrings Showdown*".

They replaced the previous set, which were basic question and answers, similar to the "*Twix Teaser*" from *The Chart Show*.

Saturday Showdown used the opportunities of the new channel to their advantage, by introducing *Saturday Showdown Extra* which would continue for half an hour on the CiTV channel after the main show had finished.

More changes had been made to the show including the much awaited return of "*Ram Ray*" although this time Ray only had four doors instead of six to choose from.

A game reminiscent of "*Name That Tone*" was also introduced called "*Pumping On Your Stereo*" although this time it involved guests identifying tunes played backwards or sped up.

By now the show had abandoned the premise of children taking part in the "Boys Vs Girls" games, where from now on the studio guests were brought in for all the games.

One edition saw Holly at an advantage where in Stephen's absence the guests were Sara Cawood and Fearne Cotton which was a reunion of sorts as both Fearne and Holly first met whilst presenting together on the CBBC Channel.

Another memorable moment was when Peter Cocks returned making a surprise appearance as the Doc at the end of one show and appearing for longer on *Showdown Extra*.

Stephen questioned whether he would be coming back the next week but sadly it turned out to be a one off appearance.

Holly on the other hand was definitely climbing the rungs, as she got her first prime time presenting job alongside Phillip Schofield on ITV's Saturday night entertainment show *Dancing On Ice*.

Willoughby also co-hosted the new CiTV series *Feel The Fear* along with former *Live & Kicking* host Steve Wilson.

CD:uk carried on alongside the relaunched show, with plugs for the programme still trailed towards the end of Showdown.

However the relaunched show had not managed to fulfil expectations and in December 2005 it was announced that the show would be dropped by ITV after 8 years on air.

Not even a mention in the Streets latest single was enough to save the show.

The final live programme was broadcast on the 18th of March with the following two weeks being compilations of highlights from the 8 years of the show.

During the final shows there were many hints placed that *CD:uk* would return elsewhere and sure enough, Channel Five had purchased the rights to the show, due to launch in a Saturday teatime slot in 2007 with Dave Berry as a permanent host.

The relaunch ended up being delayed twice, and almost a year after being dropped by ITV1, Five announced that they wouldn't be re-commisioning the show after all, following managerial changes.

Presenters Myleene Klass and Johnny Pitts were later reunited as the hosts of CBBC's *Escape From Scorpion Island*, as produced by The Foundation.

Over at CBBC, the summer replacement for *Da Bungalow* was another show that had started off on the CBBC Channel; *The Mighty Truck Of Stuff*, produced by Endemol's Initial and co-created by Joe Mace and *Saturday Show* devisor Juliet Denison, with Reggie Yates as the host.

Originally transmitted as an hour long show on Saturday afternoons in Autumn 2005, it was decided to stretch the concept to a fully fledged 2 and three quarter hour long show, the first of its kind since series 2 of *The Saturday Show* in 2003.

This meant the axing of *Top Of The Pops Reloaded*, although *Sportsround* remained in its place.

The premise of the show involved Reggie and his overall-clad packers conducting a series of games where a lucky viewer at home could win the contents of a turquoise truck, filled with a large amount of expensive prizes donated by studio guests.

The most memorable game being "*Hunge*", making use of mouth guards and sponges and inevitably resulting in messy consequences.

Viewer participation was encouraged, mainly involving limericks sent in, prompting the catchphrase "*It's a limerick, limerick, limerick*".

The finale would involve three phone callers having to choose the correct key that would ignite the truck that would be delivered to their house.

Chris Moyles mentioned in his "*Difficult Second Book*" that they stole the concept from his "Truck Of Luck" on his Radio 1 "*Red Nose Rally*" the year before, and made a cheeky dig at them.

To be fair, it was a premise better suited to television, and the show itself proved entertaining due to the supporting cast providing the comedy in a series of sketches, allowing Reggie to take the place of the straight presenter throughout the show and during the games.

It was definitely Yates' best show as a presenter as he was capable of holding it all together and blending in rest of the team without needing Fearne Cotton to "bounce off him".

Characters included Kojo played by a stand up comedian of the same name, and most memorable was Pablo, with a moustache resembling John Cleese.
Pablo played by Phil Gallagher, who previously had a close working relationship with "It" from GMTV's *Diggin' It*, and later became better known as *Mister Maker* in the Foundation's series for CBeebies.

Unfortunately they decided to ruin it by bringing in Dani Harmer as a packer/co-presenter which didn't really work as planned but thankfully didn't give Tracy Beaker any further rungs on the presenting ladder.

Cartoons shown within the programme included *Pinky And The Brain* *The Batman*, and the ever tedious *Zombie Hotel*, as well as a VT insert each week with Reggie driving the truck to the winning viewer, to see how the prizes were divided between friends, family and a chosen charity.

The sharing element was reflected in the show's finale, where the song "*You Give A Little Love*" from *Bugsy Malone* was played after the winning caller chose the right key to ignite the truck, sung right up to the end of the credits.

It was most likely to have been inspired by the song's use on *Da Bungalow* in the well received "Muck Muck Saloon" sketch.

The show itself proved to be a more than worthy contender for the BBC's winter Saturday morning show, with Reggie and his team of packers gaining a cult following with viewers.

Sadly it turned out to be the Truck's sole outing on Saturday mornings with the series drawing to a close on the 8th of July, and CBBC clearly had other ideas as to what would fill the winter mornings.

After a week of shows devoted to Sport Relief, the rest of the summer was provided by *The P.O.D.* (programmes on demand) which saw yet another reprieve for the boys vs girls contest, competing to select the shows transmitted each week, linked via voiceover by the ever versatile Dave Chapman.

It's as if those in television at the time were suffering "producers block" where even *Smile* on Sundays had resorted to the battle of sexes regime.

At ITV things were going from bad to worse as the inevitable happened.

In May it was announced that the *Saturday Showdown* was to be axed the following month in a not so ceremonious manner.

ITV1 had taken into account the success of the BBC's *Saturday Kitchen* and with the show now promoted to BBC 1, they decided that they wanted their own shot at the game.
Thus persuading Antony Worral-Thompson to borrow a cue from Michael Parkinson and move to ITV to present their own equivalent *Saturday Cooks!*.

It would be produced by the same production company behind the BBC show prior to the acquisition, and was instigated by Alison Sharman who moved to ITV in 2005 from her post as controller of children's programmes at the BBC.

This meant that *Showdown* would come to an end on ITV1 on the 3rd of June and continue only on the CiTV channel until July, with Wozza taking over on ITV1, followed by repeats of *Quincy*.

On a Saturday morning of all places.

It was pretty much evident that the departure from ITV1 was made to be more of a promotion for the struggling CiTV Channel.

Holly And Stephen: The Final Showdown was broadcast exclusively on the CiTV Channel on the 1st of July 2006 and it pretty much established from the beginning that it would be a celebration of both *Showdown* and of course MoM.

It could be viewed more as a celebration of almost 25 years of Saturday mornings from the Maidstone Studios which had started off in an imaginary house, and was ending in another.

The show began with a pre-recorded sequence set in the future with a cobwebbed flat and the presenters dressed as their older likenesses, discovering a video of what was the final show.

Guests in the studio included Jeff Brazier whose revival of *Finders Keepers* had been inserted into Showdown, and girlband "Frank" who also had their own T4 series and then vanished.

Making return appearances were Sniff the Hyena, and the Doc arrived in a dummy TARDIS that looked rather like a portaloo, fittingly enough.

Also making an appearance in the final "*Pumping On Your Stereo*" was the welcome return of Mr Lee.

Holly reprised her role as "*Polly With Her Trolley*" and made some rather witty digs at "*that fat big chef*" who had taken over their slot on ITV1, suggesting that they should "*chuck a bit of food abaht*".

Polly's presence meant one final game of "*Cakey Sk8*" where they brought back the skateboard but instead of the giant cake prop, cakes were catapulted onto the front room wall.

The whole thing ended up in a cake fight with custard pies and spray cream, and the good news was that it meant Holly had to change into another dress.

Good luck VT messages came from Sara Cawood, Jamie Rickers and Joe Challands from *Prove It*, and Phillip Schofield who modestly described the pair as "*the king and queen of Saturday morning telly*".

The final moments of the show involved the Buttons and Cinderella (to give a more accurate description) of Saturday morning television expecting to be grilled by the Hyenas.

It turned out to be a surprise appearance from Sara Cawood asking the questions to Holly and "Magic", fresh from telling Fathers For Justice protesters to "*get lost*" during the live Lotto draw.

The feisty presenter introduced various moments that had happened over the last 129 shows, the majority of them from *Saturday Showdown*, but the fans wouldn't be disappointed as the item ended with a longer highlights package from both MoM and *Showdown*.

It was also good to hear the pair acknowledge Michael as well.

The opening of the highlights was accompanied with the Madonna song "*Hung Up*" with the line "*#time goes by, so slowly*", very relevant to the earlier Ministry shows.

The obligatory slow bit at the end was accompanied by the less than emotional choice of "*Goodbye*" by the Spice Girls, which was probably good as Holly and Stephen were still smiling after it had finished rolling.

Partly because they were about to be subjected to one final pelting, via the welcome return of the "*Thank You Desk*" where they were drenched in the wet and sloppy stuff with "*Summer Of 69*" playing in the background.

Even executive producer Chris Bellinger got a mention, as well as director Michael Kerrigan, who had worked on Saturday mornings since the days of *No. 73*.

They also had the credits rolling at the bottom of the screen which was quite a long list and as they said their goodbyes, there was a subtle return of the *Ministry* theme tune being played towards the end.

The chaos in the studio gave way to the older Holly and Stephen alongside Ray accompanied by the theme to Franco Zefferelli's "*Romeo And Juliet*" with the final words being a poignant;

"*Goodbye everybody, MoM's the word*"

It was obviously an emotional moment not just because of the line itself, but on a personal level, it was the end of eighteen years (on and off) watching ITV's finest Saturday morning shows.

On a more positive note, Holly managed to win the BAFTA Children's Award for Best Presenter in November 2006, beating both her co-presenter Stephen, and Sam & Mark.

It was a fitting testament to a show that may have not have set the mornings alight as its predecessor, but had its fans, and a very loyal following.

Chapter 10 – "It's Not Like The Old Days!"

The new faces of the BBC's Saturday mornings were revealed in August 2006, when after a successful stint on *Level Up* over the summer, Sam & Mark were now promoted as the main presenters of the new show.

Along with Caroline Flack who had previously presented shows aimed at an "older audience" they would be the presenting trident of *TMi*, which launched on the 16th of September on BBC 2, broadcast between 9am and 11:45.

The show was transmitted from MTV's Studio 1 in Leicester Square with a large window overlooking the location.

With the title being based on the text speak initials "Too Much Information", part of the show was based around a *Big Brother* style setting, with cameras placed in the "TMi Flat" where Sam and Mark supposedly planned the show.

The studio also featured a round stage for bands, almost visually resembling the transmitter from the titles to the final series of *Going Live!*

The catchy theme tune was penned by Dan McGrath and Josh Phillips (*Strictly Come Dancing/Friday Night With Jonathan Ross*) sounding similar to Girls Aloud's "*Biology*", and used to sing on guests, a la *Fantasy Football League*.

Regular items included were the topical quiz "*MasTMind*", "*Loot Machine*" where viewers sent their tat in exchange for a try on a "human fruit machine", and "*Surely They Can't Make A Game Of That*" where random props were used for a different game each week.

The show also included the new CBBC series *Prank Patrol* hosted by Barney Harwood and based around an American format which even included its own credits, which was a convention that hadn't been used since the days of *Going Live!*

Also featured was the "TMi Playlist" where viewers voted online for their favourite pop videos, and was notable for the large on-screen captions that resembled those from *Going Live!/Live & Kicking*.

The finale of the show was "*The Chinatown Challenge*" played at the nearby location where the presenters would have to undergo forfeits.

Sam, Mark and Caroline proved able presenters in a similar style to Ant, Dec and Cat, with Caroline being able to hold it all together amongst the chaos provided by the former *Pop Idol* contestants.

Whilst the show never reached the heights of its predecessor, *TMi* had its fans judging by the positive response on the CBBC website, and the success lead to a series of daily hour long pre-recorded Christmas specials shown on BBC 1 during the holidays.

There was even a special version of the theme tune in the style of Slade.

In October that same year, it was revealed that BBC 2 would be broadcasting a special retrospective looking back at thirty years of Saturday mornings on the BBC.

Hosted by Noel Edmonds and the rest of the *Swap Shop* team, the programme would be called *It Started With Swap Shop*.

The show was produced by Unique Television, with Chris Bellinger, and the webmaster of "*Saturday Mornings*" Martin Whale, as two of the consultants.

One of the producers happened to be Australian born Mike Brosnan who himself had once hosted TV-AM's successor to *Wideawake, Top Banana* in the early 90s.

The show was recorded in *Swap Shop*'s original studio TC3 on Friday the 15th of December and transmitted at 9pm on the 28th of the month, with Noel hosting from a replica of the *Swap Shop* set alongside Cheggers, Maggie Philbin, and John Craven who was on hand with many a deserved dig towards Tidybeard.

Rather fittingly was the inclusion of camera supervisor Nigel Saunders who was infamously brought on alongside Barry Manilow due to their nasal similarities, when the singer appeared on *Going Live!*.

It was the excellent blend of nostalgia and knowing irreverence that prevented the show from being too serious, whilst at the same time being respectful, and with a studio audience adding to the fun, it helped make the programme the stand out of the BBC's Christmas schedule.

Former presenters who appeared included Mike Read who was interviewed by Keith in a replica of the *Superstore* cellar, and it was good to hear how the show coped with serious issues such as the Zeebrugge disaster in 1987.

Also appearing were Gordon The Gopher, Andi Peters, Emma Forbes and Fearne Cotton, whilst Phillip and Sarah appeared in a specially recorded sequence in a lift at ITV's South Bank studios alongside Trevor and Simon.

The true comedy heroes of Saturday morning appeared in the studio for an interview with Noel and a special outing for Don & Dougie Draper in a sketch which starred both Andi & Emma, and Chris Moyles who made a spectacular transformation into Lawrence Llewellyn-Bowen.

There was no disappointment in terms of vintage footage from the shows, quite a lot of which hadn't been shown since its original live transmission.

Each show would be introduced via two VT packages with one voiced by John Craven looking back at the news of the year each show launched, and another devoted to the show itself as well as other clips scattered throughout.

One memorable outing being Cheggers struggling to read out the bus departures to the location of the morning's "Swaporama".

Some of the footage shown came from personal video copies donated by viewers including the moment from Superstore where Mike and Jay of Bucks Fizz were superimposed over Cheryl and Bobby performing in Jersey.

A personal highlight came in the section about *Going Live!* where there were two outings of the show's theme tune, and clips of some of the lesser known features including gameplay of "*Star Shot*" from series 3.

And of course there was the clip of Five Star being cussed at with the f-word unbleeped, proving that nothing was sacred.

Other guests included Arlene Phillips, Nicki Chapman who talked about music performances on the show mentioning Cathy Gilbey's involvement, and Johnny Ball made an appearance but bizarrely, his daughter was absent.

The most notable guest was Lenny Henry who gave an affectionate look back at the rivalry between *Swap Shop* and *Tiswas* and reminisced over his experience as a guest on the final series of *Superstore*, rightly describing the show on the whole as "*bollocks*".

They even left the expletive intact on the prime time repeat which was more than justified.

Lenny also revealed how he was responsible (in a modest way) for Trevor and Simon's inauguration after suggesting to Chris Bellinger that a dedicated comedy act could make the show more lively.

Other guest appearances included a "live link-up" with Michael Crawford and phone contributions from Dame Edna, Delia Smith, and Cliff Richard.

Noel was fantastic throughout with adlibs such as "*Delia, or No Delia*" as well as one that didn't make it to air In response to Simon Hickson's weasel catchphrase; "*I've stroked a badger, and a few beavers*"

The only flaw of the show was the almost disregard of anything that happened post Andi Peters' departure, with clips of subsequent presenters and shows reduced to two VT packages at the start and the end of the programme, the latter being introduced by a well-groomed Fearne Cotton.

It was some sort of disservice to overlook Dick & Dom considering the impact they had on the BBC's Saturday mornings, although part of the reasoning was probably down to Chris Bellinger's involvement in the special, as during *Da Bungalow*'s reign he was looking after ITV's Saturday mornings.

Sam, Mark and Caroline from *TMi* appeared, in a special message wishing Noel, John, Keith and Maggie well in their inimitable style.

The show came to a rather emotional end through a slow-motion VT of Swap Shop highlights, accompanied by Queen's "*The Days Of Our Lives*". With regards to the state of Saturday morning television at the time, Freddie's words were more than fitting.

Overall the show was a brilliant reminder and testament to the most inspiring, innovative and possibly underrated television that helped lead the way for the medium over the last thirty years.

As for *TMi* itself, the first series finished rather prematurely with the final episode airing on the 27th of January 2007 followed by highlights the subsequent Saturday.

In its place in the 9am slot on BBC 2 from mid February was a new show hosted by JK & Joel originally billed as "*Our House*"

The name of the show being a cover of what was really called *Hider In The House* where every week, a celebrity was hidden within a family's house over two days without the parents knowing.

The premise involved a rather contrived set up of the children playing 8 challenges in an attempt to prevent their parents blowing their cover and finding the celebrity.

The final challenge would normally involve the celebrity confronting one of the parents in disguise with the potential of getting busted.

Despite the show's popularity, it was essentially just part of a standard CBBC Saturday, lasting an hour then followed by *Tracy Beaker*, and so on.

The series lasted up to July and for the first time, there was no summer replacement show.
At this stage it was uncertain as to whether *TMi* would be returning for another series.

ITV1 on the other hand had fought a losing battle broadcasting cookery on Saturday mornings, and having ditched children's programmes altogether on weekdays, there was no choice but to broadcast them for an hour weekend mornings after *Toonattik*.

Shows included what was to be the final series of *Art Attack*, and *Showdown* spin off *Scratch & Sniff's Den Of Doom* where the puppet hyenas presided over a gameshow that was sort of a cross between *Get Your Own Back* and *Trapped Ever After*.

The show was originally going to be called "Trap Door", but the title was changed just before filming commenced.
If they went ahead, goodness knows what Willie Rushton would be doing in his grave.

Within a year, ITV dropped children's programmes altogether and in their place were the *Coronation Street* omnibus, and highlights of *This Morning*.

It did mean that Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby were back on Saturday mornings, just not in the surroundings viewers preferred.

The BBC's *Swap Shop* reunion had not gone down well with *Tiswas* fans unsurprisingly and after much campaigning, ITV announced that they would be doing their own show only that it would be devoted solely to *Tiswas*.

The closest they'd had to a retrospective of Saturday mornings shows was a VT package on CiTV's *20th Birthday Bash* in January 2003 and the MoM special in September 2005.

In fact, the idea had been in the pipeline for almost two years and much of the background research was provided by the team from the Tiswas Online website.

Tiswas Reunited would bring back all the old gang from the golden era of the show and was filmed in London before an enthusiastic audience on the 23rd of April 2007, with transmission delayed by two months in order to get a longer timeslot.

It would be co-produced by ITV and Chris Tarrant's own production company.

Before the recording, fans of the show were asked to donate any missing footage from the show that had been destroyed from the ATV archives.

The show itself was broadcast on the 16th of June 2007 in an identical timeslot to *O.T.T.*, but whilst retaining the anarchy, it would be nowhere near disastrous.

An online petition had been for fans to pledge for an appearance in the infamous cage, and it was more than evident that this would be a far more raucous outing than the *Swap Shop* celebrations.

The show even had the ATV ident at the beginning and the second it appeared on screen, the hyped up audience went wild joining in with the theme tune.

It was more than evident that this was a night solely for the Tiswas fans.

Chris Tarrant emerged dressed in his Millionaire attire, before stripping his suit and revealing a specially made blue t-shirt with the Tiswas logo, and was promptly joined by partner in crime Sally James.

The familiar desk was brought back with the presenters faces placed opposite to where they were sitting, in the usual tradition.

Joining them were, Bob Carolgees, John Gorman's characters, "Sylveste" McCoy, Frank Carson popping up at random intervals to tell jokes and Lenny Henry with a return outing for the "C*ompost Corner*", featuring an appearance by the real David Bellamy for a rendition of "*Wuwal Weetweet*".

It was also nice to see the original opening, albeit with the "*Ardent Elizabeth*" tune as used on ATV and Central's *Gardening Time*.

Tarrant in particular proved anarchic throughout, making many digs at *Swap Shop* and whilst explaining the use of a snail mail competition for the reunion as opposed to a phone-in, rightly quipped;

"*We don't want to do a Blue Peter!*"

Child stars of the show who returned included Matthew Butler dressed in the infamous bunny outfit (made in his current height of course) and sat just two seats behind Dick & Dom appropriately enough.

Not to mention namesake Anthony Royle who needed the loo mid-item after five drinks prompting Tarrant to utter the well remembered sentiment;

"*You'll never get this on Noel Edmonds!, That's what they want!*"

As part of a special challenge, Anthony was given five drinks (two alcoholic) before the show in hope of replicating the incident, of which he succeeded.

Sir Trevor McDonald also made a return appearance without a bucket in sight, and even Porky the Piano Player AKA Johnny Patrick was on hand to provide the music.

Live music was also provided by Status Quo, and Tarrant revealed that the man smoking a joint in the cage was noneother than band member Rick Parfitt.

It was more than evident that the instruments weren't live, due to the amount of messy stuff dropped on and thrown at them during the performance, not to mention a rant from John Gorman's "Albert Grumble" at the end.

Unfortunately an inadvertent f-word from Francis Rossi was bleeped, showcasing ITV's coyness towards cussing.

The clips on the other hand were pretty risky, with examples including a boxing kangaroo, and viewer Jerome Cross attempting to read out a self-written poem called "*Piggy On The Railway*" and bursting into tears.

Luckily Jerome finally got the chance to do so on the reunion, where this time it was Porky the Piano Player wiping the tears at the idea of a pig being run over by a train.

There were one or two amusing moments, such as the clip of Tony Brutus trying to lift Big Daddy and Bernard Manning although ironically, two days after "Reunited" aired, the Manchester comedian died aged 76.

Even more so was later that week when Trevor McDonald himself referred to the comedian as a "fat white bastard" in a feature called "*Racist And Dead*" on his *News Knight* satire show on ITV1, which saw complaints sent to OFCOM that were later cleared.

VT inserts included Tarrant and James visiting the derelict site of the old ATV/Central studios which proved a moving piece of footage.

On reflecting on how the Birmingham studios were also used for programmes such as *Crossroads*, Tarrant joked about not being too sorry about the state that ATV Studio 3 had ended up in.

The studios themselves were demolished by the end of 2007.

Other pre-recorded interviews included Sally James with Ant & Dec which was rather coy, considering that Tyne Tees didn't broadcast the show until its final series, which was disregarded altogether on the reunion.

There were also interviews with Cliff Richard, Joe Pasquale, Phil Collins, a welcome appearance for Robert Plant, and a not so welcome appearance for one time Flan Flinger Jim Davidson.

It was rather questionable for one of the VT packages to use the song "*One For You, One For Me*" by Jonathan King considering how his career fell apart earlier in the decade, but having said that there was an otherwise amusing gag about Gary Glitter made at the start of the programme.

Overall it was the most un-PC television that ITV had transmitted in a near prime-time slot of recent, and the *Tiswas* team were proud of it.

Special guests in the audience included inaugural hosts John Asher and Trevor East, *Coronation Street*'s Sally Lindsay, page 3 girl Jilly Johnston, Paul Henry AKA Benny From *Crossroads* (with the woolly hat), Toyah Wilcox, and pretenders to the throne Dick & Dom (with their producer Steve Ryde) and Stephen Mulhern who became victims of the Phantom Flan Flinger.

In Mulhern's case it was a second splatting from the Flan Flinger after MoM's ITV50 special.

The show ended with the long awaited revealing of the Phantom Flan-Flinger only to find another mask over its head.

Which meant that viewers would have to wait until the 50th anniversary show in 2032, which according to Tarrant was scheduled to be transmitted by ITV "*unless there's a football match*"

In reality the man inside the dark cloak was Benny Mills, who reprised the role from the original series.

The programme played out with a rendition of "*The Bucket Of Water Song*" and another nostalgic touch came with the generic credits being ditched in favour of the old fashioned graffiti style credits from the original series, whilst a poncho clad audience were pelted with liquid filled buckets.

The show itself had very poor segues into the ad breaks which were mainly down to ITV's part on editing the show.

Not even the "Telly Selly Time" caption made an appearance, apart from being one of the many placards held by the audience.

In spite of the editing flaws, the whole show was released two weeks later on a special DVD containing plenty of unseen footage.

Items featured on the DVD included interviews with Peter Tomlinson, John Asher and Trevor East, a "*previously*" sequence shown before the ATV ident at the recording, and everything shown in the original running order, although certain bits of music such as the "*Dying Fly Dance*" had to be replaced due to rights restrictions.

To sum the show up, it was an entertaining and informative retrospective of a pioneering show of television, let alone Saturday mornings.

Despite appearing crude and crass in places, it was a televisual piece of its time, perfectly reflecting the punk and new wave music scene present.

And to sum it up, there's no denying that its strong legion of fans exceeds that of ***any*** Saturday morning show on British television.

Earlier in May, *Tiswas* was profiled on BBC Four's *Children's TV On Trial* season where the main documentary featured an interview with Peter Tomlinson and producer Peter Harris gleefully reflecting on the show's anarchic nature.

Also interviewed was Lewis Rudd who as expected wasn't so complementary, stating that a lengthy programme aimed at children, needed to include "*worthwhile content, and it didn't*".

Also worth mentioning was *When The Stranglers Met Roland Rat,* a documentary looking at pop music's relationship with children's television, featuring interviews with Cathy Gilbey, Sarah Greene, and puppet masters Judd Lander and Paul Smith.

Both the Matt Bianco and Five Star incidents were screened, and a very valid point was raised about the calls taking place on the BBC's offerings, as no one would have taken issue if Buster Bloodvessel was told to fuck off on *Tiswas*.

The documentary hit home near the end when and the disappearance of traditional Saturday morning shows, particularly Emma Forbes lamenting the fact that her own children had nowhere to go to speak to their own idols such as Miley Cyrus and McFly.

The use of S Club's "*Say Goodbye*" towards the end was a fitting song emphasising the emotional side of the decline for many viewers.

Saturday mornings were in a very bleak state of affairs, and it was becoming evident that the BBC were doing all it could to follow in ITV's footsteps.

Children's programmes were becoming more fragmented, aiming towards those aged 11 years old and under, CBBC itself nearing a relaunch in September 2007 with the most notable change being the removal of in-vision presenters on BBC 1.

TMi was one of the shows promoted as part of "*The New CBBC*" (even featuring in the new idents) but the series itself had been in big trouble over the summer, as it was one of those caught in the BBC's phone scandal, with a researcher posing as a caller on "*Birthday Bingo*" in the first show.

Series 2 made its entrance on the 9th of September and many a change had been made from the first series.

The programme had abandoned the spacious surrounds of Leicester Square in favour of the more familiar sightings of Studio 9 at Television Centre, formerly home to CBBC, and also used on Sundays for *SMart*.

A bigger change was the show's running time, reduced to more than half its length between 9am and 10:30 with half of the content involving bought in shows, including *Thumb Wrestling Federation* and the new CBBC sketch show *Hedz*.

It was assumed that more viewers watched the earlier part of the show, making sense to broadcast for a shorter length of time.

The majority of the show involved games with a team of four viewers or "TMlers" which became the show's main premise over the following series. Games played included "*The Power Of Dance*" presided by "Fat Sam", and a game where the contestants had to avoid exploding boxes.

Just about all of the items from the first series were dropped, apart from the TMi Playlist, and the theme for this series jumped on the social networking bandwagon, with all the presenters competing to gain online friends made up of viewers who visited the show's website.

Caroline ended up with the highest number of friends by the end of the series, in December.

2008 saw the surprise return of an old favourite to Saturday mornings when *Swap Shop* returned hosted by Basil Brush alongside Barney Harwood produced in Maidstone by The Foundation.

Basil's Swap Shop involved 9 viewers and a guest in the studio making swaps in exchange for offers from those watching at home, although the majority of the programme involved gunge-based games which were later segmented into their own slot later in the week on CBBC under the title *Basil's Game Show*.

It was probably the BBC's first repackaged Saturday morning show transmitted on afternoons since *Waterfront Revisited*.

The theme tune was penned by Mr Miller & Mr Porter setting Basil's infamous laugh to music, and contained shades of the original Mike Batt theme.

A clip of the original series with Noel Edmonds was also used on the first show with the expected irreverence.

The first series also featured a return appearance for Da Bungalow's Melvin Odoom who acted as comic relief in sketches such as time travel spoof "*Doctor What*".

The flaws within the series included Barney Harwood looking very nervous and out of place within the chaotic proceedings despite previous experience hosting *Smile*, with Basil appearing to have a more dominant role due to his lively persona.

As well as the fact that the programme only lasted one hour, and looked as if it was trying to cram too much into one programme, which by series 2 saw the number of swaps per show reduced from 10 to 5.

The arrival of *Basil's Swap Shop* saw *Hider In The House* moved to Sundays with the format altered due to the show's popularity and knowing parents.

The cover show was changed to "*Big Kids*" as hosted by new addition Kate Edmondson, sister of former CBBC presenter Matt.

Whilst ITV had given up not just on Saturday mornings, but children's television altogether, STV in Glasgow initiated their own strand for younger viewers in January 2009 under the banner *wknd@STV*.

If the title wasn't contrived enough, the premise involved a *Why Don't You* style set up with child presenters on various locations within Glasgow, introducing what appeared to whatever shows Scottish Television had left on their shelves, including *Captain Zed*, *The Hot Rod Dogs* and even Richard McCourt's short lived gameshow *Safari*.

Despite Scottish putting some sort of effort into providing shows for younger viewers at weekends, the strand wasn't successful as hoped for and was dropped in September that year.

The tradition of CBBC presenters promoted to the shows themselves, continued when in the summer of 2009, Ed Petrie and puppet cactus Oucho from the CBBC Channel got their own series *Transmission Impossible*.

Broadcast on Saturdays on BBC 2, and Sundays on the CBBC Channel only it was similar in style to *Da Bungalow* albeit with shorter bits in the studio and the premise involved a team of four "stowaways" taking part in a series of games from an imaginary blimp piloted by the presenters.

The hosts provided many a witty aside, with one example being the day after *Britain's Got Talent* finalist Hollie Steele burst into tears on live television;

"*This blimp has broken down worse than a contestant on Britain's Got Talent!*"

Ironically, one of the shows broadcast within the strand was *The Legend Of Dick & Dom* with the duo acting in a historical drama send up.

Series 3 of "*TMoy*" (as Mark seemed to call it) had seen certain shows presented without Caroline Flack due to her filming schedule on Sky 1's short lived revival of *Gladiators*.

Months before the 2009 series, it was announced that Caroline had left the show altogether, and would not be replaced.

The other major change, saw the show shifted earlier to an 8:30am timeslot running until 10.

TMi series 4 hit the screens on the 26th of September 2009 starting with a pre-credits VT looking back knowingly at how *TMi*'s 1 to 3 had dipped in quality over each series.

Sam and Mark were given the chance to "clean up their act" as part of "*TMi 4 – A Series Too Far?*"

The main premise for this series was to find "*The Mightiest TMiers In The Land*" where each week, a team of three contestants would take part in many half-inched games such as "*Serious Gameshow*" brought back from series 3 and "*Are You Scareder Than A 10 Year Old*", all in hope of winning points, or "Smarks".

"Serious Gameshow" caused problems mid-way through the series, after the tragic incident during the filming of the new "*Serious Explorers*" for CBBC, where a tour guide was killed.

The show due to go out on the 31st of October had been pre-recorded and was reduced in length by 20 minutes as a mark of respect, with the feature returning a few weeks later as "*UlTMite Gameshow*" complete with a mock Peter Dixon voiceover.

A not so successful item was a "Maddest Town" style game involving "Fat Sam" trying to get people in a supermarket to join a conga which was dropped after the first show.

Despite being moved to an earlier time, the show still retained an excessive number of cartoons with three being used within the 90 minute timeslot.

The finale of the show was the physical gameshow amalgamation "*Hole In The Total Wipeout Cube*" played over an obstacle course in the *Blue Peter* garden involving a "*Hole In The Fence*", a doppelganger of the *Total Wipeout* "sucker punch", and a mock up of Phillip Schofield's *Cube* complete with a "body".

The Japanese owners of *Brain Wall* didn't see the funny side of the "Hole In The Fence" due to *TMi* "borrowing" it without their permission, so from show 5 the item was renamed "*Total Wipeout Limbo Cube*" with the fence replaced by a hedge which the contestants had to limbo under.

It was the last series of *TMi* to air not just on Saturday mornings but also on analogue terrestrial, as series five was moved to Friday evenings and broadcast exclusively on the CBBC Channel as *Sam And Mark's TMi Friday* from the 10th of September 2010 with a revised theme tune.

The format of finding "The mightiest TMiers" was retained although a new endgame was introduced, where the team would predict as to when a giant balloon would burst in "*Inflation*".

It was a fun finale, even if it was similar to the endgame from Channel 5's *Britain's Best Brain*, hosted by none other than Zoe Ball and Jamie Theakston.

Which more or less brings things up to date, where Saturday mornings in Autumn 2010 saw a new show introduced to the 9am timeslot with the *Live 'N' Deadly* roadshow.

Popular wildlife presenter Steve Backshall and former *Milkshake* presenter Naomi Wilkinson travelled round the country in their convoy, encouraging viewers to engage in the wildlife around their stop off point each week.

Whilst a unique concept for Saturday mornings, it bore a few shades to the days of *Get Fresh* and *Ghost Train* in terms of travelling the country, and was probably better suited as a summer show.

Or more so as a daily show during the holidays in a similar style to Sam & Mark's *Level Up/Do Something Different*.

The launch of *Live 'N' Deadly* saw an article published on the BBC News website investigating the current state of Saturday morning television for younger viewers and the disappearance of three hour shows lasting the whole morning.

Joe Godwin, a former director of *Going Live!/Live And Kicking*, now director of children's programmes at the BBC said that it was unlikely that viewers within CBBC's demographic would even be allowed to watch television for such a length of time on a Saturday morning, and *Live 'N' Deadly*'s purpose was to motivate viewers to do productive things with their weekend in that one hour.

"*Start on the sofa on a Saturday morning,*
and the rest of the weekend is up to you!"

At the time of writing, it's lucky that there's any children's programmes on terrestrial television at all, especially as the BBC seem to have forgotten that they are not ratings driven, and any signs of decline doesn't necessarily mean people are going to stop paying the license fee full stop.

Unless they're Daily Mail readers.

It's been predicted that within five years, both BBC 1 and 2 will shun children's programmes altogether, demoting them solely to both CBeebies and the CBBC Channel, and with regards to the latter, the demographic seems to be getting more and more narrow, with an increasing lack of identity.

In a BAFTA speech in 2009, Russell T Davies stated that the BBC should be celebrating and not apologising for the fact that they have a monopoly on home grown children's programmes in the UK out of all terrestrial channels, and nowadays it appears they're gradually doing anything they can to dispose of them.

The BBC made the mistake in 2006 of ditching programmes aimed at older children such as *Byker Grove*, and reducing CBBC's demographic to 6-11 year olds, with teens shown in the direction of BBC Switch, launched in Autumn 2007 as a cross platform competitor to T4.

This was a wasted opportunity, as what could have been a modern day *Def II* with the programmes spread out over the 6pm timeslot on BBC 2's weeknights ended up as a half-baked block of shows bunged together in a two hour slot on Saturday afternoons when no one was even watching.

Either that, or the programmes themselves just weren't good enough, to the point of receiving criticism from innovators in the genre such as Phil Redmond and Russell T Davies.

Unsurprisingly the strand was a disaster right from the start, and has been culled by the BBC Trust, ending in December 2010, whilst CBBC looks set to expand its target audience towards older viewers with the much awaited move to extend the digital channel's hours up to 9pm.

In 2004 Channel 4 broadcast the documentary *Who Killed Saturday Night TV?* looking at the rise and what many thought at the time was the fall of priority television viewing on Saturday nights.

Less than a year after the documentary was transmitted, viewing habits had changed dramatically with *Doctor Who* proving a hit on the BBC, and Ant & Dec and *The X Factor* pulling in audiences on ITV.

If attention is now drawn in a similar way to the current state of British children's television, it's safe to say the executives may take note in that area.

With the move to Manchester getting even more imminent, there's no better time to review the current situation, and look into how things can be improved for the BBC's children's output.

First of all, the return of live links and proper presentation along the lines of Angellica Bell and Andrew Hayden-Smith should be re-introduced, as opposed to comedians linking the shows in a style that looks as if the viewer is eavesdropping on a few individuals mindlessly messing about, not to mention little opportunity for interactivity.

Much of this could be down to the fact that the links are pre-recorded.

That's not to say that such presenters should be dropped altogether as Ed and Oucho have proved popular with their *Excellent Inventions* series, but adapting a knowing and ironic presenting style to the holding device of children's programmes undermines CBBC as a whole.

Which is a great shame considering the fantastic drama and comedy on offer, and with regards to the latter, CBBC have made the unexpected move of bringing back their most successful duo Dick & Dom to host a new Saturday morning series starting in early 2011.

Dick & Dom's Funny Business aims to bring stand up comedy and sketches to younger viewers, and the fact that only those aged 16 or over will be allowed in the audience, could be a sign of widening audience appeal.

Whether it will maintain the elements of the well-regarded live Saturday morning show is unlikely, with the possibility of the show lasting no longer than an hour.

The more important question could be if it is older viewers rather than children who long for the return of the two to three hour long magazine show on Saturday mornings.

The idea of parents being able to watch with their children was one that programme makers took great advantage of, slipping in gags that may go over the heads of children, but their mums and dads would find hilarious.

The balance between both generations was understood by Trev & Simon, Ant & Dec, and even with Dick & Dom.

No surprise that it's more than evident that ratings dropped by quite a large scale after the departure of Ant & Dec from *SM:tv*, and never recovered since.

The real reason could be that as the decade went on, both the BBC and ITV became focused towards aiming their shows solely at children, and what was on offer wasn't what the demographic audience wanted.

The way that it can be summed up is not a change of viewing habits, but the fact that the programmes themselves are simply not good enough with very little budget investment not helping.

One thing that's noticeable is that many live shows including *TMi* do not integrate the use of social networking websites in the same way as shows such as *The X Factor*, *This Morning*, and even *Have I Got News For You* who in the case of the latter, go out of their way to display an "official Twitter hashtag" at the start of each episode.

And CBBC themselves recently gained an influence on Twitter, when an appearance from The Wanted on the final *TMi Friday* in December resulted in "CBBC" becoming a trending topic on Twitter.

If social networking can bring people of different age ranges from teens and over together in the same way as television shows could, then why does television for younger viewers in the present day have to be fragmented in such a way?

As rightly stated in BBC Four's documentary "*Goodbye Children Everywhere*", it is simply not possible to increase the speed of a child's mental growth any more than what can be done for their physical growth.

And with the target audience for the CBBC strand now widened, it would be the ideal situation to reinstate the traditional Saturday morning magazine, taking the tried and tested structure with plenty of room for ad-libbing.

That being the majority of the first half leaning towards the younger end, and the latter half aimed nearer the older end of the demographic, but all flowing together smoothly without appearing too defined.

Joel Defries from *Blue Peter* would be the ideal male host, and having proved herself on *Live 'N' Deadly* and *Milkshake,* Naomi Wilkinson would be more than capable as female host, with the same flirtatious appeal for older viewers as Sally James, Sarah Greene, Cat Deeley and Holly Willoughby.

A series such as Sam & Mark's popular gameshow C*opycats* would act as the perfect *Double Dare* style insert and whilst the current state of pop music may be poor, a lack of musical guests didn't hamper shows such as *The Mighty Truck Of Stuff* lasting for a three hour length.

And when it comes to a puppet act, look no further than Hacker and Dodge who have been successful on the CBBC Channel, and would thrive within a show of this sort.

In the real world however, it appears that the much treasured live Saturday morning show as many generations knew it, has fallen victim to the cull of quality television, due to lack of budgets, and lame excuses from the bosses that such shows cannot compete with satellite channels aimed at the same age.

Even *TMi* failed to perform well outside of Saturday mornings, as the final edition of the current series transmitted on Friday the 17th of December 2010 turned out to be the last one ever, judging by the fitting highlights montage at the end, to the strains of Take That's "*Never Forget*" spanning all five series.

Rumours that Sam & Mark didn't want to move to Salford along with the rest of CBBC may also have had a hand in the demise, which many saw as the final nail in the coffin of the live entertainment show aimed at younger viewers.

Whilst ITV have never been able to make their mind up on what to show in the timeslot since Holly and Stephen's departure, the BBC have found a winner with *Saturday Kitchen*, and with ratings higher than the shows aimed at younger viewers, it seems that regrettably, a return to mayhem and madness on Saturday mornings is unlikely to occur in the near future.

But to finish with, the real reason for the disappearance of the live Saturday morning entertainment show could be summed up in a gag by Trev and Simon from the last *Going Live!*, which has become only too relevant;

"What Have We Got? *No Budget!,*

What Do You Win? *No Prizes!,*

What's The Point? *Pure Greed! The Result Of A Self Interested, Capitalist, Consumer Society!*"

And if there's anyone out there who would like to swap the above, for a return to vibrant and inventive live television, our operators are waiting to take your calls…