



Pick of the day

Casualty 1909

BBC1, 9pm

It seems incredible in these days of electrical defibrillators that, 100 years ago, doctors would try to resuscitate patients who'd just stopped breathing by vigorously pumping their arms and legs. Stranger still are the facts that, pre-NHS, average life expectancy was just 45 and one in ten children died before the age of seven.

In a continuation of the historical series that kicked off with *Casualty 1907*, Cherie Lunghi reprises her role as Matron Luckes – a redoubtable 'angel of mercy' working at The London Hospital in the East End. She is joined by a strong female cast, including Aimee-Ffion Edwards, Charity Wakefield (above centre and right with William Houston) and Sarah Smart, whose characters must endure the rampant sexism of the medical hierarchy – one opinion is greeted by, 'Don't think, Sister, that's not what you're here for.'

Tonight, a gas explosion sees numerous casualties left to bleed on trollies in hallways (no change there, then). The staff must also cope with a 13-year-old prostitute with gonorrhoea, and the grieving mother of a little boy who dies from an inexpertly administered dose of chloroform – a worrying phenomenon that not even the brilliant Dr Head can do anything to prevent. ★★★★★

superhuman Test innings average of 99.94 will surely never be beaten – and some choice quotes from Greg Chappell and Jeff 'Thommo' Thomson make this a tasty appetiser for any larrikin anticipating an Ashes romp this summer. ★★★★★

Alan Carr: Chatty Man

Channel 4, 10pm



Getting his feet well and truly under the showbiz table, toothy comic Carr gets his own chat show, promising a mix of topical banter, celeb-led news and, joy of joys, a *Big Brother* round-up. Joining him for the first in a ten-week run are game-show legend Bruce Forsyth and Bafta-winner Ross Kemp, while the Pet Shop Boys get tuneful.

The Incredible Human Journey

BBC2, 9pm

Dr Alice Roberts's route following the course of our genetic history comes to its final stop in the New World of the Americas, as she examines how

surrounding ocean made it appear impenetrable. Archaeologists disagree on when and how the first Americans landed, but the pioneers' tenacity and adaptability led to the habitation of a region that now has a population of one billion. ★★★★★

Ladies Of Letters

ITV1, 10pm

The point-scoring between the two correspondents is interrupted when Irene visits Vera with her admirer Bill in tow, only for an outbreak of man trouble to ensue. If the exchange of post that follows were any more prickly you'd have to open the envelopes with gardening gloves. ★★★★★

Soap of the day

Hollyoaks

Channel 4, 10pm

Omnibus. Lauren plays the grieving girlfriend, wandering around in black, but isn't it time she accepted Warren didn't love her? Also facing rejection is Zoe (Zoe Lister, below), who is forced to resort to underhand methods to save her degree after her plagiaristic film is finally screened.

