

Today's Choices



CASUALTY 1909
Edwardian TLC served with a whiff of starch and carbolic

It's easy to get wrapped up in the challenges facing the medics who walk the beautifully tiled halls of the London Hospital, but it might be even easier if each case didn't come wrapped up as a finger-wagging history lesson. One patient is a bruised girl whose sad tale doesn't go anywhere but serves to remind us that, as a caption points out, girls as young as ten worked as prostitutes. Meanwhile, the bloody aftermath of an explosion is a chance to reveal that some police in 1909 were, you'll be shocked to learn, racist.

When the writers trust the characters to rustle up proper drama, things work better, partly thanks to a splendid cast. David Troughton steals the show as bluff surgeon Hurry Fenwick, while Sarah Smart shines as steely nurse Ada Russell (pictured near left). And in the end, who could resist a drama where patients on the operating table are offered a cup of tea? **DB**
Behind the scenes: page 8

Kingdom

9.00pm **ITVI, ITV HD**

DRAMA As an advert for Norfolk's charms, this week's episode may not go down well with the East Anglian tourist board – it seems to suggest the place is populated by nutters. Turn up in a lovely market-town pub like the Startled Duck, for instance, and you'll be greeted by the sight of people dressed as musketeers, Hawaiian hula dancers or Mr Spock. Venture into the countryside and there's the fourth Doctor Who stumbling about, complete with long scarf and jelly babies (a nice twist, that, as one of the other locals is played by sixth Doctor Colin Baker).

And then there are the crop circles that have appeared in a field owned by eccentric farmer Geraldine (Sandi Toksvig). It's all jolly good fun. That there's very little legal action (other

BBC Cardiff Singer of the World

5.30pm **BBC2**

MUSIC The classical singing contest reaches its final movement with a field that began as 600 young (mostly in their 20s) singers from 68 countries narrowed down to five finalists. Tonight, they sing their lungs out for the chance to win a modest prize by TV standards of £15,000 and, more significantly, prestige by the bucketload: this is the contest that launched the career of Bryn Terfel 20 years ago and many others since. Huw Edwards and Aled Jones host what should be a glorious finale. **David Butcher**

Hope Springs

8.00pm **BBC1, BBC HD**

finish off the lot of them. There are another six episodes to go, so this would seem unlikely. **Alison Graham**

Stephen Tompkinson's African Balloon Adventure

8.00pm **ITVI, ITV HD**

DOCUMENTARY Stephen Tompkinson and his pilot spend precious little time in the air this week. First, a wind threatens to blow them over the border to Zimbabwe, so they give up on the idea of drifting gently over the spectacular Victoria Falls. "Although the spirit of adventure flows in our veins, we're not completely insane," explains Tompkinson. Then there's a problem with the valves on the gas cylinders. Next, the Botswanan government

think the balloon will scare the wildlife – although they don't mind helicopters buzzing about the place.

But there's plenty to see at ground level including some orphan elephants, an eccentric English mansion built after the First World War, a magnificent wild leopard and a cow that for some reason is called Kate Moss. **Jane Rackham**

PICK OF THE DAY Casualty 1909

9.00pm **BBC1, BBC HD**

DRAMA *New series* The Edwardian medical drama returns, its sleeves starched and ready for action. So brace yourself for moustachioed doctors barking at nurses in frilly headgear, while period gore spills out: the series is beautifully realised, but needs a strong stomach.