



£1

ENGLAND WITH REGIONAL VARIATIONS

9 771758 895095 25

Social sickness

Cherie Lunghi returns in the Edwardian hospital drama, and social upheaval is in the air

Racial tension as immigrants arrive in east London; anti-terrorist police on high alert; animal-rights campaigners making louder and more public protests; overworked doctors turning to drugs... Welcome to the Edwardian era.

As the doors of the London Hospital open for another series, the East End facility is as busy as ever. In this week's opening episode, while new doctor Henry Dean (Paul Hilton) battles a cocaine addiction, an explosion brings an influx of injured,

swiftly followed by policemen on the trail of what they describe as 'Jewish anarchists'.

Cherie Lunghi, who plays steely Matron Eva Luckes, says the drama reflects a combustible time in history. 'Change was in the air,' she explains, 'and new schools of thought were emerging. But of course, some things always stay the same, especially in the poorer areas. Poverty for the underclass - so many people fighting for the same resources. But through all that, the hospital

is the backbone of the area.' Not without a degree of struggle, though.

'Remember,' says Cherie, 'there wasn't a National Health Service back then, so these places were privately funded. It was a philanthropic thing, and a lot of energy went into just finding the money. As a result, they were run like a tight ship. 'You didn't get people behaving irresponsibly as the bankers have with our cash now', she adds with an acid laugh.

While increasingly progressive ideas begin to take hold, Matron Luckes remains stoical. 'She's very old school about what a nurse's life should be: complete commitment to her

vocation without any kind of distraction. Eva demands utmost discipline.'

Cherie reckons it's an attribute in scarce supply today. 'Nowadays there's almost a political correctness issue about being a disciplinarian, and I think it's a shame.' Although Cherie says that, personally, she's not in a job where she has to crack the whip, she does demand high standards of herself. And it has paid off for the 57-year-old actress.

'Acting is a tricky industry,' she muses. 'It can have its ups and downs. Plus, there's the cliché of there not being much work for older women. But I'm surviving very happily. A lot of interesting roles keep coming my way.'

FACT FILE
In 1909 a manual worker earned 23 shillings (£1.15) a week and the average life expectancy for men was just 50



Call me Matron: Eva Luckes demands discipline from her staff

NEW SERIES
CASUALTY 1909
BBC1 & BBC HD • SUNDAY

Casualty 1909

CHERIE LUNGI AND THE TEAM RETURN TO THE WARDS

WHAT MADE THE NEWS IN 1909?

PENSIONS
The Old Age Pension, for those over 70, comes into force on 1 January 1909. It pays 5s (25p) a week to those on an income of under 12s a week.

CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS
Chancellor Lloyd George's radical 'People's Budget' proposes increased taxes for the landed classes to finance social spending, but is vetoed by the House of Lords.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY
Woolworths opens its first UK store while construction begins on the RMS Titanic at shipyards in Belfast.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS
Fearing that suffragettes on hunger strike in prison would become martyrs, the Liberal government of HH Asquith allows force-feeding.

TORTURING WOMEN IN PRISON



VOTE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT

TERRORISM
London is home to a growing number of immigrants from eastern Europe. Latvian anarchists cause outrage in an armed robbery on a rubber factory in north London. They injure 21 people and fatally shoot a police officer and a 10-year-old boy. Meanwhile, MI5 is formed to counter German espionage attempts.