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KUDOS



Grantchester Series 9

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GRANTCHESTER TO BID FAREWELL TO REVEREND WILL DAVENPORT

- ***Tom Brittney to leave the series and Rishi Nair set to join as the charismatic Vicar Alphy Kottaram***

As the ninth series of hit MASTERPIECE and ITV show, ***Grantchester***, makes a return to the schedules, lead actor Tom Brittney confirmed that this series will be his last.

Tom, who has played much-loved character, Reverend Will Davenport, since 2019 is stepping back from his role to focus on new projects. But as one door closes, another one opens and the village welcomes Rishi Nair (*Hollyoaks*, *Count Abdulla*) as the charismatic vicar, Alphy Kottaram.

Grantchester is a Co-Production of Kudos and MASTERPIECE for ITV. It airs on MASTERPIECE on PBS in the U.S. and on ITV1 and ITVM in the U.K.

Tom Brittney said:

“I’ve had the most incredible time playing Will Davenport for the last five years. I got to solve crimes with my best friend, and work with the best cast and crew I could ever ask for. I’ll miss it more than anything. But it’s time for the baton to be passed, as it once was to me, and I’m so excited for Rishi to join the *Grantchester* family.”

Rishi Nair said:

“I’m absolutely thrilled to be joining *Grantchester*. The welcome and support I’ve received from everyone has been overwhelming. The success of the show and the reason we are here for a ninth season is a testament to all the people that have previously worked on it. I’m really excited to get started and cannot wait for the *Grantchester* fans to meet Alphy and to see all that’s in store for him.”

Robson Green added:

“I feel so blessed to be embarking once again on this thrilling journey with the beloved series, *Grantchester*. The anticipation is palpable however, amid the exhilaration, a tinge of sadness lingers for all of us as we are bidding farewell to my close friend and remarkable actor Tom Brittney, whose portrayal of the charismatic Will Davenport will be sorely missed. Yet, we are all delighted in welcoming the incredibly talented Rishi Nair to the *Grantchester* family! With his exceptional skills and magnetic presence, I have no doubt that Rishi will be captivating the hearts of millions not only in the UK but also across the globe.”

Emma Kingsman-Lloyd, Executive Producer for Kudos, said:

“It’s the end of an era as we say an emotional farewell to Tom Brittney. He’s been extraordinary in the past five series, and we’ll miss him very much. But audiences can look forward to a new and fantastically entertaining chapter as we welcome Rishi Nair to the series. Alphy Kottaram is charismatic, witty and will give Geordie a run for his money. I think the audience will love our new addition.”

MASTERPIECE Executive Producer Susanne Simpson added:

“It’s so hard to say goodbye to Tom Brittney, who has become a beloved member of the *Grantchester* ensemble. Fortunately for MASTERPIECE and the show’s devoted audience, Rishi Nair is terrific as Alphy Kottaram, a character who we know will quickly become a fan favorite.”

It’s 1961 and life is good for Will and Geordie. The families are always together, from Sunday lunches to planning summer holidays and with honorary Grandparents Mrs C and Jack, and adopted uncles Daniel and Leonard, it’s one big happy family! But when Will is approached with a life changing offer, can he leave Grantchester, and Geordie behind?

As Geordie struggles with personal loss and ever-growing family conflict between Cathy and teenage daughter, Esme he has no one to turn to. But when he arrests an intruder breaking into the Vicarage, he may find his days of working with a Vicar are not over.

Reverend Alphy Kottaram has an instinctive distrust for authority and absolutely no desire to get involved in murder investigations. But Alphy and Geordie will discover they have a lot more in common than they first think, and Alphy will find that in Grantchester, murder is never far away.

From deadly circuses, abandoned babies, and hostile historians to vanishing valets and murderous satirists. Together, Geordie and Alphy witness first-hand how religion can be corrupted, but also how faith, love and friendship can offer hope – and renewal.

Robson Green returns alongside Charlotte Ritchie as Bonnie, Al Weaver as Leonard Finch, Tessa Peake-Jones as Mrs C, Kacey Ainsworth as Cathy Keating, Oliver Dimsdale as Daniel Marlowe, Nick Brimble as Jack Chapman, Bradley Hall as DC Larry Peters and Melissa Johns as Miss Scott.

The series will be executive produced for Kudos (part of Banijay UK) by Emma Kingsman-Lloyd (*SAS Rogue Heroes*, *Deadwater Fell*), writer and series creator Daisy Coulam (*Deadwater Fell*, *Humans*), Robson Green and Tom Brittney. The Executive Producers for MASTERPIECE are Susanne Simpson and Rebecca Eaton at GBH Boston. ITV Drama commissioner Helen Perry is responsible for the production of *Grantchester* on behalf of ITV1 and ITVX.

Adapted from the *Grantchester Mysteries* novels by James Runcie, the series was developed for television by Daisy Coulam. Writers this series include Daisy Coulam, Richard Cookson, Nessah Muthy and Ayeesha Menon. The series is directed by Katherine Churcher, Rob Evans and Al Weaver (who will direct two episodes). The producer is Jyoti Fernandes.

Grantchester is commissioned by PBS MASTERPIECE and PBSd for US audiences and is one of ITV’s most popular returning series. MASTERPIECE is presented on PBS by GBH Boston.

Banijay Rights will be responsible for international distribution.

Robson Green is Geordie Keating



Robson Green plays DI Geordie Keating

As the series opens, where do we find Geordie?

We find Geordie in a very good place, in a metaphorical garden of Eden. He's accepted Cathy's [Kacey Ainsworth] situation, that she's a liberated woman and in charge of her own destiny. Mrs. C [Tessa Peake-Jones] is still looking after the children, but we don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing until a couple of episodes go by. And then the news comes out that Will wants to leave and take up a new job.

What is it like for you and for the show to lose Tom Brittney?

It was really, genuinely upsetting to see Tom go, because we've been through so much together, both in front of the lens and behind it. And it's the stuff behind the lens, before a take, that I'll miss. And it's just one word: laughter. And another one: joy. I miss the laughter and the shorthand that I had with Tom. For the creators of the show, [producer] Emma Kingsman-Lloyd and [writer] Daisy Coulam, who had been there from the start, like me, it was heartache. We were saying goodbye to something really special, a relationship that had developed over many years, but also an integral part and a really important part of the show.

How does Will's leaving affect Geordie?

It's all about Geordie projecting onto Will how it'll all play out. He's thinking Will is doing it for selfish reasons, rather than reasons of broadening one's horizons. And Geordie is very spiteful and selfish about it all. He tells Will about the damage he'll do to his adopted son Ernie and all his friends, and how it will affect Cathy and the family, how it will affect the other the characters. Geordie thinks it's such a selfish act. And therefore, when Will is asking Geordie for his blessing, Geordie doesn't give it.

But we suspect that Geordie and Will won't part on bad terms. There are rumours of a very emotional farewell scene...

It wasn't difficult to film, because the words were so beautiful, because they were Daisy's words. But it was me looking him in the eye and saying, 'I'll miss you.' It's like a living bereavement. But again, we're not only saying goodbye to Tom, we're saying goodbye to that beautiful character who's brought so much to the series. And we're saying goodbye to that relationship between two men who genuinely love each other. And so it wasn't a difficult scene to do. It was so easy to play the reality of the situation because we were genuinely saying goodbye to each other. So there was no acting required. I was in bits.

With Tom leaving, does it give you itchy feet as an actor, now that you've been on the show for a decade?

It doesn't. I never get itchy feet because I'm at a stage in my life where I want to work with people who make me genuinely happy, in front of the lens and behind it. I'm not chasing awards. I'm not chasing fame. I'm just being present in a very enjoyable and healthy environment, and that's what Grantchester is. It's one of the nicest jobs I have ever done in my career.

As an executive producer of Grantchester, how involved were you in choosing Rishi Nair to play the new vicar, Alphy Kottaram?

Very involved. I was there for the chemistry reads and the auditions. Because I know how actors feel when they come into auditions, I met all the actors outside and chatted with them before they went in to help them relax. Rishi came in and the first thing he said was, 'You're a Newcastle fan, aren't you?' and then we just talked and talked about football and other things and immediately we had a likeable rhythm with each other. It was an enjoyment, being each other's company. And I walked into the audition and I winked at Emma Kingsman-Lloyd, which meant, 'You're going to like this guy.' We knew it was going to be Rishi as soon as he walked in. The chemistry was there immediately. It's a completely different and new and wonderful energy with Rishi, and that's the most delightful thing. He just fitted into the Grantchester family perfectly and he cares so much about the job.

How does Geordie get on with Alphy?

In the first scene I had with Rishi, he punched me in the face! Geordie turns up to investigate an intruder in the vicarage and so his first impression of Alphy is he's got a very good right hook. And then his second thought is, 'Christ on a bike, you've stirred up a hornet's nest by planting yourself in the middle of this quintessentially English village' because he's a 'swarthy gentleman,' as one of the characters says. Can you imagine?! But because Geordie has become quite enlightened, he quickly warms to Alphy. He hears Alphy's opinion of the police and Alphy gets Geordie's steer on his opinion of God and they get past that. Then Geordie recognises that inquisitive outlook Alphy has on life, especially for crime, and they become solid friends. Very quickly they end up needing each other, and we get on with the cases.

At home, things get tricky when Cathy hits the menopause and it becomes a challenge for her and for Geordie, who doesn't handle it well.

I quite like the fact that Geordie's a bit stuck in his ways. It's realistic. I think in the Sixties, the notion of men and women talking about how they're feeling, both physically and mentally, was taboo. I remember my mother calling menopause 'the change of life,' but let's say it how it is – all that oestrogen is leaving the body and in Cathy's case it's having a catastrophic effect on her mood. The storyline has slight levity to it because they're both trying to understand what's going on, but the actual pathos of it is that Geordie feels he's losing Cathy. She's not smiling anymore and that really upsets him. So he seeks advice from the one and only Mrs. C, who comes to the rescue.

What were your high points of the ninth series?

In the first episode a circus comes to town and it was fabulous. We got a big circus tent with loads of extras watching these acrobats and the guest actors. It was like actually going to the circus. And then there was the murder itself and the working out of that with Will, which was all really lovely to do. There's also a great slow-burning story arc about a character called Sam who arrives at Leonard's [Al Weaver] halfway house to talk to the men about self-development, and Daniel [Oliver Dimsdale] is sucked in by this charismatic cult leader. And Leonard sees that he's losing him. By the time the story comes to fruition, all our lives are jeopardised by this guy.

The Grantchester cast is known for joking around and playing pranks on each other. Has Rishi had his initiation yet?

Of course. When the crew would tell us to get ready for a take and Rishi and I would be getting ready to do the scene, I would say to him, 'They've shouted "Action!" Rishi.' But they hadn't. So he would start acting away and everybody's wondering what he's doing because there's nobody operating the camera – they're still having a cup of tea. And it was hilarious to watch the first 20 seconds of that. I got him three times already.

Grantchester is obviously hugely popular all over the world. Where's the strangest place you've been recognised recently?

Rishi and I went to a press launch of Grantchester in Las Vegas last summer and were expecting about 100 people tops, but about 2,000 super fans turned up. It was like being at a Taylor Swift concert! They went bonkers. It was so surreal. We spent a lot of time talking to them. It really reinforced the love and joy and happiness I have for this show, because it just transcends so many barriers and has so many universal themes. And the fact that it's loved around the world and in Las Vegas fills my heart with joy.



Rishi Nair is Alphy Kottaram

Rishi Nair plays Alphy Kottaram

How was your audition to play Grantchester's new vicar?

When it got to the final stages and I went in for a chemistry read with Robson, I felt a mix of real excitement but also nerves. When I first arrived, Robson came up to me straight away and said, 'Rishi!' and gave me a really big hug. And we sat and spoke about football for about ten minutes, which was really lovely because it just calmed me down. I felt comfortable and I was able to go in and just perform.

What research did you do for your role?

I went to different Church of England churches in London and in Liverpool, where I live, and sat at the back and watched the vicars do their sermons to get some inspiration. It was really interesting – some vicars are quite performative; some are quite conversational. And to spend time in those stunning churches was so nice. And then to tap into the early 1960s when Grantchester is set, I listened to music from that era on Spotify to get in that mindset. I really liked Dusty Springfield and I listened to a lot of Elvis and Etta James. I found myself really falling in love with '60s soul music. It's become a really big part of my music library now.

How was your first day on set?

I felt like the new kid at school, especially since I didn't join until episode three. When I first saw the vicarage set, I felt like I'd been transported back in time. On my first day I was only in one scene and that's the one when Alphy punches Geordie. I was thinking, 'Oh, brilliant. For my first scene, I have to punch Robson Green in the face.' But it was really fun and just so exciting. I remember going home after that day absolutely shattered. I'd been running on adrenaline.

What do you have in common with Alphy?

I'm not as religious as Alphy, but what I have in common with him are his principles and morals that he takes from his religion. And Alphy is described as really having a problem with people exploiting their power over others. I've always been a bit like that as well. Away from religion, Alphy is massively into sport, which I also love, so that was easy to relate to.

How would you describe Alphy?

He's a glass-half-full kind of guy, happy-go-lucky, very positive, a bit suave. He wants to help people but there's also this stern side to him that Daisy describes beautifully as 'an iron fist in a velvet glove.' If he sees something he doesn't agree with morally, he will always stand up to it. He can't let it pass. There's a lot there to play with. Alphy is happy being single and he's not looking for anyone. Geordie and Mrs C [Tessa Peake-Jones] keep saying, 'Maybe you need to find someone,' but he meets women and has fun with them and doesn't take anything too seriously.

What's Alphy's relationship like with Geordie?

It doesn't get off to the greatest start, Alphy punching him in the face. And Alphy has a thing against the police – he describes them to Geordie as something like 'morally bankrupt, power hungry, violent thugs.' I think Alphy probably has this idea of the police through his own personal experience of being a brown person growing up in London, in the '50s and '60s. He doesn't know if he trusts the police and puts Geordie into that bracket at first. But as the show progresses, Alphy sees Geordie for who he is and slowly changes his perception of him. Eventually he realises they have so much more in common than he first thought, so it's a really lovely journey that they go on together.

Alphy is confronted with racism in Grantchester from people who call him 'a swarthy gentleman' and ask where he comes from. How did you feel about that?

It was really important for me that we portrayed that storyline, of Alphy clearly looking very different to the other two vicars. Grantchester is still very white today, so you can imagine that back in the 1960s it would not have been smooth sailing for him there. There's a scene where he walks into the pub and everyone turns and looks at him, and that's what would have happened. But I didn't want his colour to become the overriding theme of the season – Daisy and Emma did a balancing act of addressing it but not making it the whole thing. It's great for the audience to see Alphy tackle racism head-on – it's something he's experienced his whole life and he's gone to Grantchester to try to change people's minds. He loves that challenge of, 'Don't judge me by the way I look. Judge me by my actions.'

What was it like driving Alphy's beautiful vintage red Triumph?

That car was so cool and actually drives really smoothly. But there was one scene where Alphy is driving Geordie in the car, and we had to drive off down the road, then turn the car around and come back when they shouted 'Action!' on the walkie-talkies. But the problem with these old cars is the clutch can stick and then the car stalls and that happened and it wouldn't turn back on. There was no crew there, so Robson had to get out and push the car while I tried to bump-start it using the clutch. We didn't realise there was a newspaper photographer there that got this all on camera.

What were your favourite episodes to film?

In episode four we have a storyline when Alphy goes to the house of aristocrats to have dinner and try to raise money for the church, and we filmed that at Camfield Place in Hertfordshire, which is the former home of [the novelist] Barbara Cartland. It was very ornate and a lot of her stuff was still there and the woman who runs the house gave us a little tour, which was cool. And in episode eight, some of the much-loved characters of Grantchester find themselves in jeopardy. There are weapons involved, and there's something about having a gun pointed at you that, even if it's not real and it's got no bullets in it, always makes you feel anxious and tense. Working through those big showdown scenes with the director and other actors, you create a magical piece of work.



EPISODE SYNOPSES

Episode 1

A circus performer, Errol Macabre, is found dead having been shot with a crossbow that was used for a magic trick. Was this a tragic accident caused by a malfunctioning prop? Or was there foul play? Will and Geordie must investigate to separate truth from illusion. Meanwhile, Will receives a surprising offer from the bishop that makes him question his life in Grantchester.

Episode 2

A family Sunday at the vicarage is disrupted when Geordie is called to investigate the death of a hotel manager and Will and Bonnie discover an abandoned baby in the church. Are these two occurrences simply isolated incidents, or are they connected in some way? Things are complicated further when Geordie is blindsided by Will and Bonnie's news.

Episode 3

Geordie is still mourning Will's departure when new vicar Alphy Kottaram roars into Grantchester in his red Triumph. They immediately get off on the wrong foot when Geordie charges into the vicarage, having mistaken Alphy for a burglar. When Alphy's first service in the church is derailed by an accusation of murder, Alphy is surprised to find Geordie asking for his help with solving the case.

Episode 4

Alphy is invited to a party at a country manor, where he hopes to raise funds for the ailing church. The evening's frivolities are cut short when a body is found in the basement. As Alphy and Geordie investigate the murky world of the manor, they uncover strange secrets and illicit desires. Meanwhile, Sam's continuing presence at the halfway house begins to drive a wedge between Leonard and Daniel.

Episode 5

When a young woman is found dead at Esme's office, Geordie and Cathy are forced to confront their deepest fears about the safety of their eldest daughter, whilst Cathy also struggles with her own personal crisis. Meanwhile, Alphy is eager to update the bishop on the hard work he's been doing since he arrived but is thrown by the bishop's response.

EPISODE SYNOPSES

Episode 6

A professor of archaeology is found brutally murdered at a dig site outside Grantchester. Alphy and Geordie soon realise that there was more to the professor than met the eye, as they uncover a tangled web of deceit and betrayal in his wake. Meanwhile, still reeling from the bishop's news, Alphy looks for a sign from God about what to do next.

Episode 7

Alphy is stunned to discover that a young woman he knows has gone missing. Soon after, a friend of hers, an aspiring student journalist, is found dead with his throat cut. Alphy and Geordie race to find answers to the two troubling mysteries. Meanwhile, Leonard grows concerned over Sam's increasing influence over Daniel.

Episode 8

Geordie and Larry are called out to investigate the mysterious death of a reclusive man on the streets of Cambridge. As they investigate the apparent suicide, Alphy and Geordie unravel a series of clues that leads them to a shocking revelation. Meanwhile, with Daniel's whereabouts still unknown, Leonard receives a letter from Daniel that only increases his concern.



Cast Credits

ROBSON GREEN	plays Geordie Keating
TOM BRITTNEY	plays Will Davenport
RISHI NAIR	plays Alphy Kottaram
AL WEAVER	plays Leonard Finch
TESSA PEAKE-JONES	plays Mrs Chapman
KACEY AINSWORTH	plays Cathy Keating
CHARLOTTE RITCHIE	plays Bonnie Davenport
NICK BRIMBLE	plays Jack Chapman
OLIVER DIMSDALE	plays Daniel Marlowe
BRADLEY HALL	plays Larry Peters
MELISSA JOHNS	plays Miss Scott
STUART BOWMAN	plays Bishop Aubrey Gray
ELLIOT WARREN	plays Sam White
SKYE LUCIA DEGRUTTOLA	plays Esme Keating
ISAAC HIGHAMS	plays Ernie Evans
CORA KIRK	plays Feathers / Anita
MELANIE KILBURN	plays Nanna Carson
MICHAEL GOLAB	plays Errol Macabre
DAN MERSH	plays Pogo / Jerry
FINNBAR HAYMAN	plays Nick Jeffries
RUBIE-ROSE FEARFIELD	plays Ivy Keating
ROSE ALLEN	plays Dora Keating
CARTER-JAE O'NEIL	plays David Keating



Production Credits

Writer	– Daisy Coulam & Richard Cookson
Developed for television by	– Daisy Coulam
Director	– Katherine Churcher (eps 1-3) Al Weaver (eps 4-5) Rob Evans (eps 6-8)
Producer	– Jyoti Fernandes
Production Designer	– Andrew Piotrowski
Music by	– John Lunn
Director of Photography	– Emily Almond Barr
Costume Designer	– Louise Page
Hair and Make Up Designer	– Melanie Lindsey
Editor	– Meredith Leece
Line Producer	– Richard Godfrey
Executive Producer	– Emma Kingsman-Lloyd
Executive Producer	– Daisy Coulam
Executive Producer	– Robson Green
Executive Producer	– Tom Brittney (eps 1-2)
Executive Producer	– Rebecca Eaton
Executive Producer	– Susanne Simpson



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