

Charles Dale, Neil Morrissey and Ralf Little star in *Paradise Heights*, a major new drama series for BBC One

Charles Dale, Neil Morrissey and Ralf Little star as three brothers struggling to keep their business afloat in *Paradise Heights*, a new drama series, starting in July on BBC One.

Charles Dale plays Clive Eustace, the eldest of the brothers, who runs the Paradise Heights discount warehouse in Nottingham, selling everything from bargain beer to fake designer gear. All he wants is to make a decent living but he's thwarted at every turn – not least by his own brothers, Charlie (Neil Morrissey), who's always on the look-out for an easy scam, and the youngest, Richard (Ralf Little), who's still deciding what he wants out of life.

Pam Ferris is their mother, Marion, and Joanne Froggatt is Julia, their adoptive sister. Between them, the women manage to keep some sort of order in the family but sometimes they just can't help trying out schemes of their own.

Adding to Clive's woes are local big-shot Jack Edwards (played by David Troughton), whose money and muscle are a constant threat to the family's survival, and his unresolved difficulties with ex-wife Claire (Lindsey Coulson). And as if that wasn't enough, Julia is engaged to be married to Jack's son, Toby (Rupert Evans), and Charlie is having an affair with Jack's elegant wife, Yvonne (Mary Tamm).

The Eustace brothers know that the only way to get Jack Edwards off their back is to pay him the money they owe him. The question is: how far are they willing to go to get it?

Jane Tranter, BBC Controller of Drama Commissioning, says: "We're delighted to have a new drama series from Ashley Pharoah, after the success of *Down To Earth* with Pauline Quirke and Warren Clarke. *Paradise Heights* is part of BBC One's push into contemporary, post-watershed signature drama, complementing

other new series such as *Spooks* (created by David Wolstencroft), Debbie Horsfield's *Cutting It*, and the return of Paul Abbott's *Clocking Off*.

Neil Morrissey is best known as the hapless Tony in *Men Behaving Badly*. Charles Dale played love-rat Dennis Stringer in *Coronation Street* – this is his first role since leaving the soap – and Ralf Little starred as "our Anthony" in *The Royle Family*.

Paradise Heights is created and written by Ashley Pharoah, with one of the episodes written by Adrian Mead. The producer is Polly Hill and the directors are Ashley Pearce and David Innes Edwards. The executive producers are Simon Lewis, Susan Hogg and Ashley Pharoah.

For more information on *Paradise Heights*, check out the website at www.bbc.co.uk/drama

Paradise Heights

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Introduction

Dodgy business deals, family loyalties and even a lonely kangaroo feature in Ashley Pharoah's new BBC One drama, *Paradise Heights*.

"I've written a lot of pre-watershed drama before and, this time, I really wanted to write something that was post-watershed," explains Pharoah, whose writing credits include *Where The Heart Is*, *Down To Earth* and *Anchor Me*. "I've also written a lot about women and thought it was time to have a look at some guys. This time I wanted to do something different, I wanted this piece to combine the vibrancy of youth with the melancholy of middle age."

At the centre of *Paradise Heights* is the Eustace family and, in particular, three brothers – Clive (Charles Dale), Charlie (Neil Morrissey) and Richard (Ralf Little). Together, they struggle to keep the family business afloat, the Paradise Heights discount warehouse in Nottingham, which their father worked hard to establish. Their father was a miner and, when he was made redundant, wisely invested his money.

Pharoah says: "The whole idea for *Paradise Heights* came from the father's desire that his family would never have to live like he had. Having spent the whole of his working life down the pit, he swore that his sons would never have to do such a humiliating job. He would have seen all his mates down the pub, staring into their pints and wasting their money, and he thought, 'That's not going to happen to me and my family'.

"We chose Nottingham because we wanted somewhere that had a post-industrial culture, where people were having to reinvent themselves. Nottingham was perfect – it's a fascinating city with a long history and the people there have a lot of pride in their city. Also, part of what the brothers do is haulage, so it made sense to put them in the Midlands."

Polly Hill, producer of *Paradise Heights*, agrees: "I think the Eustace family are a typical East Midlands family – hard-working, loyal and they look out for each other. The relationship between the three brothers is the key and the performances from Charlie, Neil and Ralf make it completely believable. They try so hard to preserve their father's memory but just can't help getting into scrapes."

Since their father died, the brothers, led by the eldest Clive, have taken on responsibility for the business and things have gone slightly pear-shaped. Struggling for money, a bank loan was not an option, so the brothers were forced to go to their rival, Jack Edwards, for a loan, and are now reluctantly in debt to him for £100,000. Clive and his brothers are constantly struggling to keep their heads above water and provide for the rest of their family, while trying to pay the debt off.

"Clive has taken on more of a controlling role within the family, which is why he always has a slightly weary demeanour to him. He feels he has to shoulder all the pressure of the warehouse and the people who work there, as well as the family and the responsibilities that go with it," explains Pharoah.

"I'm interested in people in their forties who have had their roll of the dice and are disappointed. Clive's character is like this. He is still ambitious and aspirational, but has a broken marriage and is struggling to keep the business his father started.

"The Edwards family – what Jack Edwards has and what he has achieved – is what the Eustace brothers aspire to. One generation back, Jack Edwards was working class too and struggling to make a go of it, but now he's got the big house and the lovely cars. What Clive doesn't have is Jack's ruthlessness and, in a sense, he's almost doomed never to succeed because he's too nice."

Clive has a son, Sam, whom he adores, but is separated from his wife, Claire (Lindsey Coulson). Claire had an affair but, in many ways, Clive blames himself for her infidelity, realising that he spent too much time working at the warehouse and not enough with his wife and child.

Then there's Charlie (Neil Morrissey), the maverick whose wayward scams are always getting them into trouble, and Richard (Ralf Little), the brains of the family, who is about to start a new life at university.

“Neil Morrissey is just superb as Charlie,” enthuses Polly Hill. “He adds an element of cheekiness to the character of Charlie, who seems to have this incredible ability to get into trouble even when he isn't intending to!

“And Ralf Little brings a tremendous energy to the character of Richard. He has all his life in front of him but when he comes back from university after just a week, he feels like he has let the family down. But he also knows that they love him to bits and will forgive him. He feels that he has a lot to prove to his brothers, but he's very smart and eventually they will realise that.”

The mainstay in the Eustace family is undoubtedly the boys' mother, Marion (Pam Ferris). Having lived through the miners' strike of the early Eighties and supported her husband when times were hard, she has emerged as a strong-minded woman, whose life now revolves around her children.

“Marion's a very strong character, a lovely woman, but with a slightly steely edge to her,” says Pharoah. “The boys are definitely protected by Marion because they know that, no matter what they do, she will wrap them in love. That gives them a certain confidence in life.”

But Marion doesn't just have her three sons to keep in check – there is also Julia (Joanne Froggatt), the adopted daughter whom Marion took under her wing when she was just six years old. The three brothers are extremely protective

towards her and Marion strikes up a particularly strong bond with Julia, despite the fact that she isn't her natural daughter. Julia is engaged to be married to Jack Edwards's son, Toby (Rupert Evans), but not everyone is pleased about this. Clive displays his concern at their engagement party and Richard is destroyed by the news. He and Julia have become particularly close over the years – perhaps a little too close ...

Cast

Clive Eustace	Charles Dale
Charlie Eustace	Neil Morrissey
Richard Eustace	Ralf Little
Marion Eustace	Pam Ferris
Claire Eustace	Lindsey Coulson
Julia Sawyer	Joanne Froggatt
Jack Edwards	David Troughton
Yvonne Edwards	Mary Tamm
Toby Edwards	Rupert Evans
Sam Eustace	Nicholas Harvey
Hennessy	Bruce Byron
Davey Robinson	Lee Oakes
Eddie Aspen	Nigel Betts
Russell Woodman	Rowland Rivron
Kylie James	Danielle Brown

Production credits

Writers	Ashley Pharoah (Eps 1-3, 5-6) Adrian Mead (Ep 4)
Directors	Ashley Pearce (Eps 1-3) David Innes Edwards (Eps 4-6)
Producer	Polly Hill
Director of photography	Simon Maggs
Production designer	Anna Higginson
Original music and musical direction	Rick Wentworth
Make-up designer	Cherry West
Costume designer	Joey Attawia
Film editors	Tim Murrell (Eps 1-3) John Parker (Eps 4-6)
Executive producers	Simon Lewis, Susan Hogg, Ashley Pharoah

Regional interest**Staffordshire**

Pages 9-10

Neil Morrissey (Charlie) was born and grew up in Stoke-on-Trent. He now lives in North London.

Wales

Pages 7-8

Charles Dale (Clive) was born in Tenby in Pembrokeshire but he now lives in Manchester.

Pages 13-14

Pam Ferris (Marion) was brought up in Llanelli.

Lancashire

Pages 11-12

Ralf Little (Richard) was born in Bury and went to school in Bolton. He now lives in West London.

Yorkshire

Pages 15-16

Joanne Froggatt (Julia) was born and went to school in Whitby and now lives in Derbyshire.

Bath

Pages 3-4

Ashley Pharoah (writer) lives in Bath.

Charles Dale is Clive Eustace

Did you know..?

- Charles Dale and Ralf Little play in the same football team. Charles is the goalkeeper.

Born: Tenby, Pembrokeshire

Appeared in: *Coronation Street, The Lakes.*

Charles on Clive: “Clive is the archetypal hard man with a heart of gold. Everybody relies on him and it’s beginning to tell.”



Charles Dale is known to millions for being killed in a car accident – but not in real life, thankfully. When Charles’s *Coronation Street* character, Dennis, was killed off earlier this year, the actor couldn’t go anywhere without being told: “You’re looking good for a dead man!”

Fortunately, Charles is back from the dead to play Clive Eustace in the new BBC drama, *Paradise Heights*. Following in his late father’s footsteps, Clive finds himself running the family business and, as head of the family, the one that the rest of the family rely on.

“*Paradise Heights* is very much an ensemble piece with an extraordinary cast,” says Charles. “I love Clive and I really wanted to play him. He is very old-fashioned and he’s honest – in a dodgy way! He dabbles in all kinds of stuff but tries as hard as he can to get everything straight. He’d love to be able to afford to go totally straight but he just keeps getting drawn into trouble.”

Clive takes it upon himself to look after the rest of the family, which is a responsibility that he takes incredibly seriously. “He’s constantly keeping Charlie out of trouble, constantly worrying about Richard going away to university and then there’s mum and Julia as well,” says the actor.

Clive also has a wife, Claire (Lindsey Coulson), and a son, Sam (Nicholas Harvey). Clive and Claire are estranged, since he discovered that she was having an affair. But Clive slowly starts to realise that Claire wasn’t the only one to blame; he wasn’t always around and often neglected his family to concentrate on the business.

Though he is proud to be running the warehouse, Clive does find it hard going at times and, when the business goes pear-shaped after his dad’s death, he and his brothers are forced to borrow money to keep it afloat. A

bank loan isn't an option for the Eustaces, who are forced to borrow £100,000 from business rivals, the Edwards. Faced with such a big debt, the three Eustace brothers have to pull harder together to make the business succeed.

"Neil, Ralf and I have become very similar," explains Charles. "I find myself speaking to them as Clive would, which makes us all laugh! That always happens when you work with such good actors.

"The three of us always have a laugh when we're out together and people usually recognise one of us and call me 'Dennis', Neil 'Tony' or Ralf 'Anthony'. We're such an unusual group that one of us is always going to be recognised wherever we go," he smiles.

His on-screen brood is quite different from Charles's real family; off screen, he has just one older sister.

"My sister is eight years older than me and she's a teacher in South Wales," says the actor. "When I was little, she used to look after me a lot. I think that is the case with a lot of families where the eldest sibling takes on more responsibility. My sister still looks out for me now!"

For Charles, the opportunity to appear in *Paradise Heights* arrived at the perfect time; he was just coming to the end of a two-year stint playing Dennis Stringer in *Coronation Street*.

"When *Paradise Heights* came up, I was doing *Coronation Street* but I had made a promise to myself that I wouldn't do it for more than two years. It was perfect timing – I read the scripts which were fantastic and I really wanted to do it. It's the first time in my life that a plan has come to fruition!"

Before appearing in *Coronation Street*, Charles played Chef in two series of BBC One's *The Lakes*, but actually started his career as a singer in local pubs and clubs. "Music has always been an important part of my life and I really enjoy it. I have no desire for a pop career though!" he laughs.

Neil Morrissey is Charlie Eustace

Did you know..?

- The character of Tony in *Men Behaving Badly* was only introduced in series two. Gary's original flatmate was played by Harry Enfield.
- When Neil is not working, his favourite pastime is cooking.

Born: Stoke-on-Trent

Trained: Guildhall School of Music and Drama

Appeared in: *Boon*, *Men Behaving Badly*, *My Summer With Des*, *Happy Birthday Shakespeare*.

Upcoming: *Triggermen* (film) and a new series of *Men Behaving Badly*.

Neil on Charlie: "Charlie is a belligerent maverick with a short fuse. He's prepared to take a risk in order to make money."



Neil Morrissey is probably best known for his role as layabout lothario Tony in *Men Behaving Badly*. And fans of the dark-haired actor will be pleased to hear that, as Charlie Eustace in *Paradise Heights*, Neil plays another man behaving very badly indeed.

The actor says: "Charlie is a great character – he's angry and he's out there having fun. He gets involved in a few fights; in one episode he gets to beat up three blokes and is quite nasty about it as well. Of the three brothers, Charlie is the one most likely to fly off the handle. He has a short fuse and loses his cool on occasions. That's the thing with Charlie – when his back's up against the wall, he will hold his fists up."

Charlie is the middle brother in the Eustace clan. "They're a very close-knit family," explains Neil. "We're three tough Nottingham

lads, ambitious, outgoing and free-thinking. Charlie gets on particularly well with Clive, though he does have a habit of getting involved in some schemes which aren't as legitimate as Clive would like. Clive is the more stable one and tries to be in charge of the rest of the family – he's in charge of the business and tries to keep everyone on track.

"The dynamic of the three brothers is really good and it was great working with Charlie and Ralf. The three of us get on really well and we had a really good laugh making it. We've decided that Ralf and I look like our father and Clive looks like mum! Ralf and I are both over six foot tall, whereas there's a certain similarity between Charles and Pam."

At the heart of Ashley Pharoah's storyline is the rivalry between the Eustace family and the local

businessman, Jack Edwards (David Troughton), and his family. The Eustace brothers will stop at nothing to get their revenge on Edwards.

“They are doing it to survive, basically. We enter the series being in debt to our big rival who was associated with our father,” explains Neil. “The Eustace family feels the pressure of being under Edwards. *Paradise Heights* is about the conflict between the family dynasties – like that between the Montagues and the Capulets in *Romeo And Juliet* – because Jack Edwards’s son, Toby, is marrying our sister, Julia.”

Unlike his elder brother, Charlie is still single, though he’s certainly had his fair share of relationships over the years. And he treads on very dangerous ground when he embarks on an illicit affair with Jack Edwards’s wife, Yvonne (Mary Tamm) behind his back – though it’s initially unclear whether Charlie really has feelings for the gorgeous Yvonne or if he’s just trying to wind Jack Edwards up.

Paradise Heights was shot on location for four months outside London and in Nottingham, and Neil has clearly enjoyed every minute of filming. “We’ve got such a great cast in this series,” he enthuses. “And Ashley Pharoah, the writer, has done some really good stuff before. There’s so much going on with explosions, gun shots and even a deranged kangaroo!”

Neil says that he was inspired to train as an actor by one of his school teachers, Sheila Steele, and he’s come a long way since his days playing Michael Elphick’s sidekick in *Boon* – a role he played for seven years and 78 episodes. “It was the first thing that got me noticed,” says Neil. “I learnt a lot about the business and Michael Elphick was a fantastic teacher.”

The actor’s success looks set to continue. Three BBC One *Men Behaving Badly* specials are currently in the pipeline, which will reunite the award-winning team, and Neil also has a role in the feature film *Triggermen*, due for release later this year.

“I play a bloke who’s a conman in America. He steals a briefcase and accidentally gets involved

in an assassination plot. It’s a comedy which also stars Adrian Dunbar, Pete Postlethwaite and Donnie Wahlberg.”

Away from the screen, Neil runs his own television advertising and production company and is also well-known for his charity work, particularly with the charity War Child. Neil has visited Rwanda, Kosovo and Sudan to raise awareness and vital finances for the charity.

Ralf Little is Richard Eustace

Did you know..?

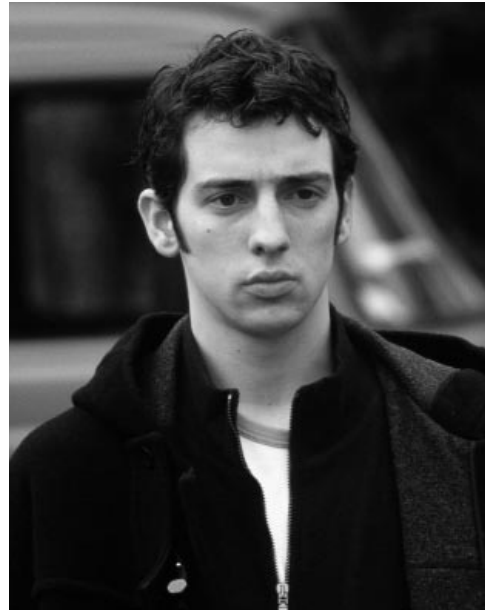
- Ralf won a place at Manchester Medical School to study medicine but turned it down to appear in *The Royle Family*.
- Ralf dates TV presenter Lisa Rogers.

Born: Bury, Lancashire

Trained: Bolton School

Appeared in: *The Royle Family*, *Two Pints Of Lager And A Packet Of Crisps*, *24-Hour Party People*.

Ralf on Richard: “Richard wanted to go to university but when he gets there, he realises that he misses the family and the action.”



Ralf Little came to prominence as “our Anthony” in the BBC comedy *The Royle Family* – the one always being sent to the kitchen to make a pot of tea. But Ralf has come a long way since then, having starred in two series of *Two Pints Of Lager And A Packet Of Crisps*, alongside *Royle Family* co-star Sheridan Smith, and recently appearing on the big screen as New Order bass guitarist Peter Hook (Caroline Aherne’s ex-husband) in the film *24-Hour Party People*. But the young actor is now turning his hand to serious drama as Richard Eustace in BBC One’s *Paradise Heights*.

“Richard is part of a loveable family who live in Nottingham,” says Ralf. “The family are struggling to make the business work, while Richard wants to go off to university. For the family, that’s the biggest success they have seen in a long time.”

Richard is the youngest of the three Eustace brothers; Clive, the eldest, is played by Charles Dale and Charlie is played by Neil Morrissey.

“Clive has all the worry and responsibility, whereas Charlie is the hothead who has all the silly ideas!” laughs Ralf. “I think that Richard is more of a steady influence on both of them. The three brothers get involved in all kinds of stupid deals and we do find ourselves in the most ridiculous situations. We’ve all really settled in to acting like brothers. When we get in costume, Neil and I really look like we could be brothers.”

The three brothers also have an adopted sister, Julia (Joanne Froggatt), who they think the world of. But for Richard, this relationship becomes more than he bargained for – he falls in with love her.

“I think deep down they both really fancy each other,” says Ralf. “But Julia is going to marry Toby, so Richard is having a really tough time. Everyone keeps telling Richard to forget about Julia because she’s family but, in actual fact, she’s not family because she’s adopted.”

In real life, Ralf has an older sister, Rowena, who is studying for an accountancy course, and a younger brother, 10-year-old Ross, who recently appeared in BBC One’s Fifties drama, *Born And Bred*, as Michael Gilder. “Me and my sister look out for each other and we both look out for my brother who is the youngest,” says the actor.

As a child, growing up in Lancashire, Ralf joined his village drama group, and his first appearance on screen was in a children’s drama called *Sloggers*.

“I was just 13 and I played Scooby in *Sloggers* which was about a kids’ cricket team,” says Ralf. “My character was the star batsman! I was hugely proud but terrified that all the lads at school were going to rib me for being in a children’s programme – which of course they did!

“*The Royle Family* was my first big break. I was going to go to medical school if I hadn’t got my break into acting. In fact, I had actually started medical school but I was only there for four weeks. I thought that if acting didn’t work, then I’d become a doctor.

“When *The Royle Family* first came out, not that many people were watching it, but as people started to talk about it, its popularity grew. I think it paved the way for programmes like *The Office*, which I love.”

Since then, Ralf has appeared in two feature films. In *Al’s Lads*, set in Twenties Chicago and based on the life of Al Capone, he co-starred alongside Marc Warren and Ricky Tomlinson. And in Michael Winterbottom’s *24-Hour Party People*, which is currently on general release, he plays Peter Hook.

“Peter was such a legendary bass player,” enthuses Ralf. “I met him only very briefly and

the man is amazing. Apparently, ‘Hooky’ has seen the film and really likes it.”

Last year, Ralf starred in *Presence*, a stage play by David Harrower at London’s Royal Court Theatre.

“The play was about The Beatles, trying to make it big in Hamburg in 1960,” Ralf explains. “I was amazed when I read the play because The Beatles are these great heroes now, but people forget they were just a group of young lads when they started out. *Presence* was about the real early days of The Beatles and I played George Harrison. It was my first-ever play and I was nominated for an Olivier Award for most promising performer.”

But there are plenty more parts out there that Ralf would love to play in the future. “I would love to have played Robert de Niro’s character in *Taxi Driver* or Han Solo in *Star Wars*. Well, you wouldn’t want to be Luke Skywalker would you, when you know that he does nothing after *Star Wars*!” laughs Ralf.

Pam Ferris is Marion Eustace

Did you know..?

- Pam's family emigrated to New Zealand when she was a teenager.

Appeared in: *Sweet Revenge, Our Mutual Friend, Where The Heart Is, Darling Buds Of May.*

Upcoming: *Death To Smoochy* (film).

Pam on Marion: "Marion is the widow of an ex-miner with three grown-up children who are a bit of a handful. She's a tough cookie."



Pam Ferris has become one of Britain's best-loved character actors. She won the nation's hearts as Ma Larkin in *The Darling Buds Of May*, starring alongside David Jason and Catherine Zeta Jones. She subsequently took on the role of Mrs Boffin in BBC One's Bafta Award-winning adaptation of Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* and played the loveable Peggy Snow in *Where The Heart Is*. As Marion in *Paradise Heights*, Pam plays a woman who bears little resemblance to the roles viewers have seen her tackle before.

Pam says: "I'm really enjoying playing Marion, who is quite different from all the characters I've played before. She has these long, red finger-nails, which is unusual for me. When I go out playing with the dogs, it's a disaster and I always lose another nail!"

Marion's late husband was a miner who endured the miners' strike of 1984 – a traumatic

time for the mining community of the East Midlands where *Paradise Heights* is set.

"The miners' strike changed people's lives so amazingly," explains Pam. "It also changed relationships within families because the wives were the ones who supported their families during that time."

Marion's husband wisely invested his redundancy money, setting up a discount warehouse business. And, since her husband's death, she has thrown herself into making a success of the business and raising the family.

"Marion has four grown-up children who are a bit of a handful, but she still rules them with a rod of iron! I'm not quite old enough to have had them for my real children, though," Pam laughs.

Marion also has an adopted daughter, Julia, who is played by Joanne Froggatt. "I think

Marion is closer to Julia than she is to any of her sons, which is interesting,” says Pam. “Julia has taken over Marion’s accounting role in the firm and Marion has enormous respect for her commitment to work.”

As if Marion doesn’t have enough on her plate, there is also the rivalry between the Eustaces and the Edwards to worry about. “There’s a long-standing feud between the two families and the Edwards’s success infuriates Clive and Charlie in particular, who are determined to get revenge – whatever it takes,” explains Pam.

“The history between the two families will be revealed as time goes on,” she adds, mysteriously. “But the two are dramatically different; there’s quite a lot of money in the Edwards family, whereas the Eustaces are struggling to keep their end up, financially. There’s class, there’s money and there’s enmity.”

The relationship between the families is further complicated by the fact that Julia is engaged to be married to Jack Edwards’s son, Toby (Rupert Evans). Meanwhile, Charlie is enjoying a secret affair with Edwards’s wife, Yvonne (Mary Tamm). But there is romance for Marion, too, as she is pursued by French lorry driver, Stefan Trudot (George Camiller).

Life is far less complicated for Pam herself and the actor says that she couldn’t be happier after such a variety of roles. “I’ve had a ball. My aim in life was never about money but always to act as best I can,” she says. “The most wonderful thing for me, which felt like winning the lottery, was when Danny de Vito asked me to play the headmistress, Agatha Trunchbull, in his film version of Roald Dahl’s *Matilda*. I was so proud to be in it.”

Pam had to spend hours in make-up to be transformed into the bullying headteacher, a role far removed from her public image. And she has recently renewed her working relationship with de Vito on another feature film, *Death To Smoochy*, in which she plays Tommy, the female head of an Irish mob in New York. The film is released later this year.

“I love working with Danny,” says Pam. “He’s a really good director and he inspires confidence. *Death To Smoochy* is a very weird film which is hard to describe but I think everyone’s going to enjoy it.”

Joanne Froggatt is Julia Sawyer

Did you know..?

- Joanne made her TV debut playing a teenage prostitute in *The Bill*.
- Joanne's best friend on *Coronation Street* (in which she played teenage mum Zoe Tattershall) was Georgia Taylor and they shared a flat together.

Born: Whitby, North Yorkshire

Trained: Redroof Drama School, Maidenhead

Appeared in: *Coronation Street, Bad Girls, Nature Boy, Other People's Children, Lorna Doone.*

Upcoming: *The Stretford Wives, The Last Detective.*

Joanne on Julia: "Julia is Marion's adopted daughter. She works in the family business and is very organised and always on top of things."



With such an impressive list of roles behind her, it is hard to believe that Joanne Froggatt is just 21 years old. Having played a selection of troubled teenagers, Joanne now tackles the role of pretty and confident Julia Sawyer in *Paradise Heights*.

"It's nice for me to play someone my own age for once, as I quite often play younger characters," laughs Joanne. "Julia is witty, clever and assertive. She's had a good upbringing with the Eustaces and so she's quite level-headed."

Julia is engaged to be married to Toby Edwards (Rupert Evans), the son of Jack Edwards, business rival of the Eustace family. As a result, she finds herself caught in the middle of the conflict between the two families.

"I think her family tried hard not to let it affect her and Toby's relationship, but I think Julia

does feel under pressure," says Joanne. "She has this huge amount of love and respect for the family who has brought her up, but she has fallen in love with Toby. Toby is nothing like his dad and I think the Eustace family are happy as long as Julia is happy."

But as is so often the case, the course of true love does not run smooth. Much as she and Toby love each other, they have more than just the families' conflict to deal with – Richard (Ralf Little), the youngest of the Eustace brothers, has a secret crush on his adopted sister.

Joanne explains: "Julia does really love Toby and wants to marry him, but who knows what will happen in the end?"

Julia has an excellent relationship with all three of her brothers. Clive (Charles Dale), in particular, is very protective of his younger sister, and strives hard to make sure that she

will get the wedding dress of her dreams. Costing £8,000, it's well beyond Clive's means, but he is determined not to let his sister down.

"I have one older brother," says Joanne. "He's four years older than me and he does look out for me just like Clive does with Julia. He's a typical big brother figure and we've always got on really well."

Born and bred in Whitby, North Yorkshire, Joanne left home as a teenager to attend the Redroof Drama School in Berkshire, where Kate Winslet also studied, and, soon afterwards, got her big break in *Coronation Street*.

"Originally, I was only going to be in it for four episodes but it grew and grew, which was fantastic for me. I played Zoe Tattershall, who got pregnant at 16 and then sold her baby. I learnt a lot from the people I worked with, particularly Ian Mercer and Gaynor Faye who played Gary and Judy. By the time I left, I had been in it for three years."

A role in *Bad Girls* quickly followed, after which she played Jenny in *Nature Boy*; the teenage step-daughter from hell, Becky, in Joanna Trollope's *Other People's Children*; and feisty Lizzie Ridd in *Lorna Doone*, all for the BBC. And the roles just keep on coming. Later this year Joanne will also be seen in BBC One's *The Stretford Wives*, and she appears in an episode of BBC One's *Nice Guy Eddie*, with Ricky Tomlinson, as a Scouser who works on a sex chat line.