

GADGET GIRL

Pollyanna Woodward promises more hi-tech gizmos and amazing prizes as *The Gadget Show* returns for a new series

**THE
GADGET SHOW,
FRIDAY WEEK,
CHANNEL 5**

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**Below: Pollyanna
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People can get the wrong idea about *The Gadget Show*'s hosts. Just ask Pollyanna Woodward, who is about to embark on her third series as a co-host of the hugely popular Channel 5 technology show.

Fun though it is to be playing with the latest gizmos – and there's a whole pile of shiny new stuff for them to get their hands on when the show returns this week – they don't get to keep the fantastic gadgets.

“The one thing most people ask when they meet me is whether I get lots of freebies,” reveals Pollyanna. “They're shocked when I tell them I don't!

“I do get some good discounts, but very few free things. I don't mind, though. It's nice buying something you've worked hard for.”

This latest series, including the 200th episode in October, will again see some remarkable and entertaining product testing. And the team, which also includes Jason Bradbury, Ortis Deley, Suzi Perry and Jon Bentley, have been racking up the air miles.

“Our presenters are becoming regular globetrotters,” says series producer Colin Byrne. “Morocco is the stage for our series opener. Ortis and Pollyanna are challenged to make the best video they can. You'll see them using some of the smartest consumer technology on the market and you'll be astonished by what they achieve.”

Pollyanna has also travelled across Europe and the US for this new series, searching for the latest prototype robots and high-tech vehicles. “I came across some mind-blowing technology in Germany that leaves you feeling like you're in a sci-fi film,” she says.

Of course, *The Gadget Show* has also become famous for its weekly competition – the one where a lucky

viewer scoops an absolute truckload (and a pretty big truck, at that) of high-tech prizes, from computers and games consoles to smart phones and 3D TVs. And it's about to get even better, promises Colin.

“Viewers are in for a real treat. We want it to be a surprise, but they can expect the same massive prize fund we're famous for – with a clever way of deciding what they could win!”

The Gadget Show may have been off the air for some weeks, but the team have been working hard on items for the new run.

“Jon has just returned from Italy,” says Colin. “He braved the rush hour in Rome to test the latest folding bikes. Apparently, it was terrifying! Also, Suzy and Pollyanna embarked on a challenge to find out exactly what tech you can buy these days for £100. The results were quite astonishing.

“In September, we're also going to be showing a very special task that Suzy and Jason recently took part in. I can't say much more at the moment, but it will change something about *The Gadget Show* forever. And it's something they'll be getting the viewers involved in. You won't want to miss it!”

And will the show still be testing items to the

point of destruction? “Inevitably,” chuckles Colin – although Pollyanna is quick to add that it's not just a question of trashing high-tech products to make entertaining TV. It's about seeing if they'll cope with real-life rough-and-tumble.

“I can be quite heavy-handed myself,” she says, “so if a piece of equipment is meant to be built to withstand, I'll put it through its paces.”

Besides, as Colin reminds us, the show's consumer tests are ultimately there to help viewers decide what to spend their money on. “If people trust us with their buying decisions, then we're doing a good job,” he says.

For Pollyanna, of course, it's a dream job. Playing with these grown-up toys, travelling the world – and by all accounts having a right old giggle along the way. Especially when she's working with Jason Bradbury.

“Every day spent with Jason is the funniest,” she says. “He has me doubled over with tears from laughing. There's never a dull moment. And when it comes to geeks, of course, none of us can match him!”

Mansfield-born Pollyanna, 29, has certainly come a long way since her first TV appearance in 2002, competing on ITV1's *Popstars: The Rivals* – and very nearly becoming a member of

Girls Aloud. Sadly, she hasn't kept up the singing. “I wouldn't do it in front of anyone now,” she says. “I'd have to work on warming it up for a few months.”

And with *The Gadget Show* keeping her so busy, what little spare time she does have is mostly spent chilling out with friends. Even then, mind you, she can't entirely switch off.

“Since I joined the show I have become their technology fix-it girl.

Friends are always asking me for the best offers, the best tech to buy. It's as if I've become a tech personal shopper. But they think it's great that I'm doing something I love.”

Mike Ward

