

WHAT'S HARRY'S GAME?

Harry Hill's staying tight-lipped but the new series of *TV Burp* could be his last. Mike Ward analyses the ten things that make it great

If you're a fan of Harry Hill's *TV Burp*, the hilarious ITV1 show that's been mercilessly (but affectionately) ridiculing Britain's small-screen output for more than a decade, then you'd better make the most of the new series, starting tonight.

That's the advice of Harry himself, who's promised that this eight-week run will conclude with "a huge finale".

He still hasn't confirmed that he's quitting for good once this series ends. But it's fair to assume that, at best, he'll be resting the multi-award-winning show for some considerable time.

And who can really blame him, given the extraordinary amount of work which, since 2001, he's put into every episode, wading through stacks of mockable TV programmes with his writing team and recording sketches at short notice.

What we can fairly safely dismiss, however, are claims that a new presenter may step into Harry's shoes (baffling suggestions, dreamed up by people who've missed the point of the show, have included Vernon Kay and Jonathan Ross). Harry Hill is the show.

"He combines sharp wit with physicality and silliness," says Lisa Campbell, editor of *Broadcast* magazine. "It's that which entertains audiences across age and class.

"It's unusual to find a comedian who can operate pre-watershed, and this has played a major part in elevating him to one of ITV's most important stars."

Here, with the help of experts from the unofficial Harry Hill Fansite (www.harryhill.wordpress.com), who've been following Harry for the last five years, we recall some of *TV Burp*'s highlights.

HARRY HILL'S
TV BURP,
SATURDAY,
7.15PM,
ITV1

BAFFLING
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Left: the Knitted Character – could his career unravel?

included Harry's *Downton Abbey* rap, mixed with a real scene from the show and featuring recurring guest and ex-*Big Brother* winner Brian Belo.

THE K FACTOR

A *TV Burp* classic, this knitting-based reality show featured thousands of items submitted by viewers – the judging panel consisting of knitted versions of Simon Cowell, Cheryl Cole, *Popstar To Operastar*'s Rolando Villazon, and the original Knitted Character himself. It was won by Peter The Duck.

FREAKY EATERS

This BBC3 documentary series, on bizarre food fads, was another perfect target, a gurning Harry mocking the participants' dubious diets ("Chippy chips!" and "Hoopy Hoops!" being prime examples). So regularly did he poke fun that he even teasingly dedicated his 2008 Bafta to *Freaky Eaters*' producer.

TV HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

Accompanied by its own hummable jingle, just about any clip could qualify for this regular award – provided it was laughably inconsequential. A prime candidate, for example, would be a kettle boiling or a *Holby City* character walking into a room and just sighing. Also inspired the equally pointless TV High Voice Of The Week.

FIGHT!

Possibly the feature that will linger in the mind longest once *TV Burp* finishes, the surreal weekly fight, just before the ad break, would feature a physical scrap between... well, just about anything, from spoof soap characters to inanimate objects: a shark versus a toaster, Phil Mitchell versus Mr Blobby, and so on...

Trott. Often seen trying to rescue a sausage from distressing situations, Heather is also fond of biscuits.

With her Walford counterpart soon to leave Albert Square, one fears for her future.

WAGBO

Wagbo was dreamed up as the wild and crazy love child of *X Factor* contestant Wagner and *Britain's Got Talent* runner-up Susan Boyle. Known for causing terror and panic after being unleashed on the public in 2010, he's sprung up everywhere from Bluewater shopping centre to the set of *Emmerdale*.

LOUIE SPENCE

Not a spoof, but the real deal. Louie's appearances on Sky1's *Pineapple Dance Studios* brought him to Harry's attention and he became a *TV Burp* favourite, dancing with the Queen Vic bust and coughing up furballs while dressed as a cat.

THE APPRENTICE

Candidates on Lord Sugar's series are usually funny enough in their own right, albeit unintentionally so. But Harry has been unable to resist highlighting their delusional self-importance. We've also been treated to a truly inspired Lord Sugar/Nick Hewer rap.

DOWNTON ABBEY

ITV1's hit costume drama has been a prime target for a ribbing. The best moments have

THE KNITTED CHARACTER

The little Knitted Character has become something of a cult figure for *TV Burp*. His escapades have included being set on fire, getting lost across the week's TV shows, becoming a reality TV judge – and saving Harry from assassination. But perhaps his best moment was his revelation that he is, in fact, crocheted...

HEATHER

Played by ex-mechanic Steve Benham, this burly character is a spoof on *EastEnders*' Heather

