



BFI FAMILIES

FAMILY FRIENDLY FILM SCREENINGS,
ACTIVITIES AND WORKSHOPS



THE RAILWAY CHILDREN RETURN

+ Q&A with writer Danny Brocklehurst, director Morgan Matthews, producer Jemma Rodgers and actors Jenny Agutter, KJ Aikens, John Bradley, Beau Gadsden, Eden Hamilton, Austin Haynes and Zac Cudby.

What's it about?

A group of children are evacuated to a village in Yorkshire during WWII, where a retired head teacher has set up a school for them. Soon, some of the youngsters find a soldier who's hiding away far from home... In this much-anticipated follow up to the beloved original, Jenny Agutter revisits the iconic role of Bobbie over 50 years on.

The Genesis of the Film

‘My adopted daughter had come home from primary school, where she’d been learning about the evacuee children in World War II,’ recalls producer Jemma Rodgers about the origins of the project.

‘Because her journey to us as an adopted child had been via a train and she’d shared the experience of the evacuee children, being moved on a train to a new family, it affected her profoundly.’

Looking for a film to show her daughter that reflected her own experience, Rodgers found herself turning to the beloved children’s classic, *The Railway Children* – Lionel Jeffries’ 1970 adaptation of E. Nesbit’s tale of adventure and steam trains.

The story of children – Bobbie (Jenny Agutter), Phyllis (Sally Thomsett) and Peter (Gary Warren) – whose move from London to Yorkshire in the wake of their father being accused of espionage prompted a new life alongside the rails and new friendships, *The Railway Children* has become a family favourite over the years, and inextricably linked to the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway where it was filmed.

As Rodgers watched the film with her daughters in 2018, inspiration hit. As a former resident of Haworth, the location for Jeffries’ film, Rodgers realised that all the places in the film were unchanged in the 21st century. ‘I got to the end of the film and I thought, “Why hasn’t anyone done a sequel?” All the locations are exactly the same!

‘I literally stopped watching the film, went to my office, and started looking at the numbers. If Bobbie is 16 in the original film, to set it in World War II she would have to have been in her fifties. I started concocting a plan: if Bobbie was a grandma, then she’d have to have a daughter. And then the evacuee kids would come from the city, so there was a change when they moved to the country...’

Production notes

THE RAILWAY CHILDREN RETURN

Directed by: Morgan Matthews

©: Studiocanal Limited

Production Company: Junction Films

Presented by: Studiocanal

International Sales: Studiocanal

*Executive Producer:*s Anna Marsh, Alex Hamilton, Dan MacRae

Produced by: Jemma Rodgers

Line Producer: Steve Newton

Production Accountant: Paul Hills

Unit Manager: Sharon Wood

Location Manager: Matt Bowden

2nd Unit Director: Jack Warrender

1st Assistant Director: Jonathan Eckersley

Script Supervisor: Gabrielle Wood

Casting Director: Kate Ringsell

Screenplay by: Danny Brocklehurst

Based on a Treatment by: Jemma Rodgers

Inspired by the Lionel Jeffries film The Railway Children and the characters created by:

Lionel Jeffries, E. Nesbit

Director of Photography: Kit Fraser

2nd Unit Director of Photography: Richard Bevan

Special Effects: Scott MacIntyre, Iain McDonald

Editor: Rebecca Lloyd

Production Designer: Jeff Tessler

Costume Designer: Dinah Collin

Make-up and Hair Designer: Adele Firth

Prosthetics Artist: Rebecca Scott

Titles Designer: Matt Curtis

Music by: Edward Farmer, Martin Phipps

Violin: Lana Trotovek

Orchestra: Chamber Orchestra of London

Orchestra Conductor: Edward Farmer

Sound Designer: Ben Baird

Sound Supervisor: Pip Norton

Production Sound Mixer: Martin Beresford

Re-recording Mixer: Pip Norton

Dialogue Editor: Alexej Mungersdorff

Sound Effects Editor: Jamie McPhee

Stunt Co-ordinator: Gary Kane

Dialect Coach: Elspeth Morrison

Armourer: Scott MacIntyre, Iain McDonald

Animal Wrangler: Sue Clark Animals

Cast:

Jenny Agutter (*Bobbie Waterbury*)

Sheridan Smith (*Annie*)

Beau Gadsdon (*Lily Watts*)

KJ Aikens (*Abe*)

Austin Haynes (*Thomas*)

Eden Hamilton (*Pattie Watts*)

Zac Cudby (*Ted Watts*)

John Bradley (*Richard Perks, station master*)

Hugh Quarshie (*General Harrison*)

Tom Courtenay (*Uncle Walter*)

Jessica Baglow (*Angela*)

Caroline Cookson (*upset parent*)

Oscar Wallwork (*Jimmy*)

Thomas Flynn (*Pox*)

Jude Grillo (*little boy*)

Neil Hurst (*teacher*)

Liam Dhillon (*American officer*)

Tashinga Bepete (*American G.I.*)

Mickey Williams (*children's dad*)

Joseph Richards (*Georgie Duckworth*)

Hannah Wood (*Miss Eckersley*)

George Webster (*telegram boy*)

Jacqueline Rodgers (*Mrs Wilks*)

Dumo Mkweli (*American soldier*)

Ellana Danby (*young woman*)

Max Duane (*Hartley, Military Police*)

Gabriel Freilich (*Rouse, Military Police*)

Peter Youngblood Hills (*Military Police*)

Eddie Caswell (*station master*)

Elliot Benn (*police officer*)

Andrew Ellis (*2nd police officer*)

UK 2022

98 mins

Courtesy of StudioCanal

Programme notes and credits compiled by the BFI Documentation Unit

Notes may be edited or abridged. Questions/comments? Email prognotes@bfi.org.uk

The British Film Institute is a charity registered in England and Wales No. 287780