

# Evans back for Peggy's final hours: "That's the face you'd want to see at the end"

On the show's 35th anniversary BBC4 salutes Pat and Peggy and we talk to Sarah Phelps, who wrote the landlady's final episode



By [Paul Simper](#)

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Peggy Mitchell's (Dame Barbara Windsor) death will forever go down as one of the greatest EastEnders' episodes to date.

Fans will remember she was joined by her long-time frenemy, Pat Evans (Pam St Clement) for the special, who was brought back from the dead for the iconic scene.

The writer of that particular episode was Sarah Phelps, who recently penned the Agatha Christie adaptation, *The Pale Horse*.

"I had to bring back my beloved Pat for Peggy," says Phelps, who returned to write it for then Executive Producer Dominic Treadwell-Collins [who Dame Barbara had asked to oversee her exit storyline](#). "How can you resist the opportunity to put those two great great dames – Barbara and Pam – in a room?"

Pat had been controversially killed off on New Year's Day 2012, dying of pancreatic cancer. "The greatest character" is Barbara's verdict of her onscreen sparring partner. "I was very upset."

Peggy took her own life in May 2016 after cancer had spread to her bones and her brain.

"If you're going to kill Peggy Mitchell and she's ill I thought if she's got a tumour in her brain there's that thing where you can always smell smoke," explains Phelps to [RadioTimes.com](#). "You have these olfactory hallucinations. So what if she keeps smelling burning? It's terrifying and it's horrible. You know that your end is nigh and your body is packing up on you."



EastEnders' Pat Evans

"What if in that moment of extreme crisis and loss and terror you came round the corner and you realise that the burning you could smell is Pat's cigarette? When you'd been scared she'd actually been there keeping you company."

"Because if you're gonna die you don't want any of your ex-husbands or any of your lovers. You want Pat lit up like a Woolworth's Christmas tree to see you across the river. That's what you want."

Fans will get a tantalising look back at Peggy and Pat's incredible friendship tonight on BBC4 in a special repeat of *Back to Ours*, featuring both actresses.

It was first broadcast to mark [EastEnders](#) 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the two greats riotously revisit some of their most iconic moments. All that is missing is their last ever scene together, which was filmed the following year when Pat's ghost visited Peggy on the day she died.



EastEnders' Peggy and Pat

In *Back to Ours* the love between the two pals is clear. There are roars of laughter at Mike Reid wearing nothing but his revolving dickie-bow and respect for their historic bonfire night showdown from 2000 which is repeated the same night.

Sarah Phelps still marvels at that classic fight which erupts after Peggy discovers Frank Butcher (Mike Reid) has betrayed her with Pat.

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- [EastEnders cast: Who is joining, leaving and returning to the soap?](#)
- [EastEnders reveal first look at the aftermath of the 35th anniversary as Whitney faces life behind bars](#)

"That iconic moment. "You b\*\*\*h! You cow!" Slapping each other's faces. What it was was love. "You cow." "Oh, my friend." The face you'd slap. That's the face you'd want to see at the end."

In this week's anniversary boat dramas Linda Carter raised a glass to "the ghosts of Walford past" – so Here's to Peggy, Pat and all the magnificent East End matriarchs.

EastEnders: *Back to Ours*, 11pm BBC4, *Classic EastEnders*, 11.15pm BBC4. *The Pale Horse* is available on BBC iPlayer.