

Coronation Street's Charles and Ken's feud takes a drastic turn, says Michael Elwyn: 'They have a fencing match!'

He first confronted Elsie Tanner in the Sixties, now he's ready to do battle with Ken Barlow



By [Paul Simper](#)

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A new [Coronation Street](#) villain has elegantly glided into view since Ken and Claudia moved to their gated retirement community in February 2020. Charles Moore, deliciously played by Michael Elwyn, is the self-ordained "glorious leader" of Stillwaters and the battle of wits between him and crusading Ken is stepping up.

Ken is smarting over the £200 fine that Charles has imposed for an illegally smuggled-in Eccles soiling the precious hallway carpet and as he demands to see a copy of the residents' association rule book (Charles is the unchallenged chairman) battle lines are drawn.

In the offing is a re-election battle with Norris and Claudia as Ken's hardy lieutenants. There is even the mouth-watering promise of a fencing duel between the two adversaries.

[Radio Times.com](#) has been chatting exclusively to Elwyn who is marking a happy return to the cobbles after a remarkable 51 years absence...

What was your storyline when you first appeared in Coronation Street?

I had one episode in 1969 playing the manager of Miami Modes where Elsie Tanner (Pat Phoenix) worked. The episode was about her shoplifting (Elsie had actually been set up by workmate Dot Greenhalgh who later confessed). We had a normal week's rehearsal and then went into the studio to record at the end of it. She was lovely Pat Phoenix. I only had scenes with her.



How did the part of Charles come about?

I knew the director Audrey Cooke because she directed me in *This Life*. We bumped into each other again socially last Autumn and she asked how things were going. The next thing I got a call from the agent in December asking would I like a meeting for this part in *Coronation Street*. Initially I was booked for four episodes and another eight and the storyline became clear.

Are you enjoying sparring with William Roache and Malcolm Hebden?

It was great. Bill's a delightful man. The key thing about Corrie is you really are welcomed into that family. Everybody is so warm and friendly from the moment you walk into reception. I think Bill delights in people coming into the show. He's been in this world for 60 years so it's new energy for him. We had lovely chats. I had worked with Malcolm before on an episode of *Heartbeat*.

The nice thing with Charles is that as Corrie villains go he's not too dark and twisted is he?

No, there's a sense of fun, isn't there? I've always said about Corrie, especially in the early days, that all the characters were just six inches off the ground. They had a comic brio even if the story was slightly dark. I think Charles' story has that. There's a scene coming up where Ken and Charles have a fencing match. Initially they weren't going to show us fencing but Bill said, 'Can't we do a bit?' He was up for it. He is very fit. I'm 77 but he's 87. He's remarkable. So we had a little fence. Charles has a line that's something like, 'I wouldn't have you down as a fencer, Ken. Apart from the one you're always sitting on.' That's a perfect Corrie line.



You are also guesting this Saturday 4th April in Casualty playing Eric Mann who has a gardening accident whilst working for a friend Audrey played by Susan Jameson.

That's a really sweet story. Audrey has employed Eric as a gardener but it's not quite like that. His late wife was a great friend of Audrey's. Since she died Eric and Audrey have got friendly. Eric is holding a special love for Audrey in his heart but then at the start of the episode she suddenly tells him that she doesn't want him gardening for her anymore. He can't believe it. I won't reveal what happens after he accidentally cuts himself but in an episode where the other story is pretty dark involving sex and drugs and rock and roll our storyline is rather lovely.

Have you been in any other soaps?

My very first television job was *Crossroads* in the Autumn of 1964. At that time *Crossroads* was only shown in the ATV Midlands area and the Channel Islands. My character was an Irish television engineer called Ted Roach. I walk through the doors of the motel with a large telly looking for Mrs Richardson. So I was working with Noele Gordon, the Queen of *Crossroads*. Previously I only knew her as the main presenter of *Lunchbox*, a magazine midday morning show like *This Morning*, which we used to watch as a family at home. I was also in *The Newcomers*, a 1965 BBC soap (its cast included a young Wendy Richard) about a London family who move to the South Cambridge/North Essex area in which I played the local squire's rake of a son who gives Judy Geeson her first screen kiss. And in 2012 I played a psychiatrist Dr Curtis in *EastEnders*.

What TV shows are providing you and your partner Alison Steadman with welcome distractions through lockdown?

We've just started the french series *Call My Agent* on Netflix. Actor friends recommended it and so far we're enjoying it. It's about an actor's agency. The two dramas I'm currently watching are *Better Call Saul* and *Ozark*. I worked with Bryan Cranston for six months in the production of *Network* at The National but I'd not watched *Breaking Bad*. I had an hour off in the middle so I watched one episode of *Breaking Bad* each night in my dressing room. On the last but one night I said to Bryan, 'Do you know what I've been doing? I've been watching you.' He enjoyed that. Now I'm totally hooked on *Better Call Saul*. *Ozark* has so much jeopardy. Jason Bateman is so good, I could watch Laura Linney till I die and Lisa Emery as Darlene is someone I didn't know at all but she leaps out of the screen.