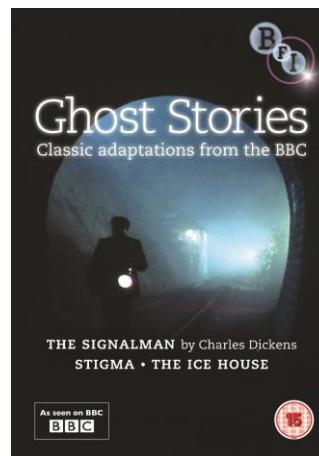
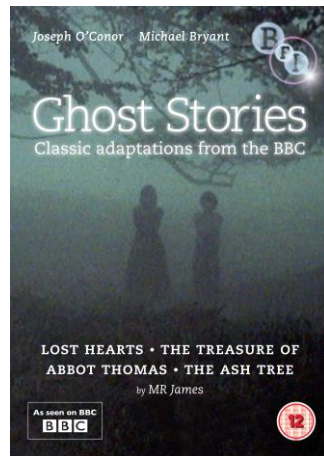


DVD press release



Two new BFI volumes of BBC TV's celebrated Ghost Stories bring six more tales to DVD on 17 September –

Lost Hearts, The Treasure of Abbot Thomas and The Ash Tree *The Signalman, Stigma and The Ice House*

Following August's eagerly-awaited launch of the BBC's classic *Ghost Story* series on BFI DVD, two more volumes – each containing three spine-tingling tales – are released on 17 September. Five of the films have never been available to watch in any home video format before, while *The Signalman* was released on BFI DVD in 2002 but has long since been deleted.

Lost Hearts (Lawrence Gordon Clark, 1973)

When recently orphaned Stephen (Simon Gipps-Kent) goes to live with his uncle he is troubled by two terrifying child spectres whose mischievous acts lead to a blood-curdling revelation. Based on a gory tale by masterful ghost story-teller MR James, Robin Chapman's dramatisation is a spine-chilling piece of atmospheric television which features a superb performance by Joseph O'Connor as the erratic uncle.

The Treasure of Abbot Thomas (Lawrence Gordon Clark, 1974)

Pride comes before a fall in John Bowen's adaptation of MR James' tale of a treasure hunt with a sticky end. Michael Bryant plays The Reverend Somerton whose self-assured intellectual arrogance masks a naked greed.

The Ash Tree (Lawrence Gordon Clark, 1975)

Enlightened eighteenth-century nobleman Sir Richard Fell (Edward Petherbridge) inherits more than he bargained for when he comes into possession of a stately home dominated by a sinister old ash tree. David Rudkin's (*Pendar's Fen*) nuanced adaptation of MR James' short story about malevolent witchcraft also stars Barbara Ewing (*Torture Garden, Brass*).

Special features

- New introduction to *Lost Hearts* by Lawrence Gordon Clark (11 mins)
- New introduction to *Treasure of Abbot Thomas* by Lawrence Gordon Clark (11 mins)
- New introduction to *The Ash Tree* by Lawrence Gordon Clark (8 mins)
- Illustrated booklet featuring newly commissioned essays by horror writer Ramsey Campbell and the BFI's Alex Davidson and Dick Fiddy

RRP £19.99 / Cat No: BFIV961 / Cert 12

UK / 1973 + 1974 + 1975 / colour / 35 mins + 37 mins + 32 mins / DVD9 / Original aspect ratios 1.33:1 / Dolby Digital mono audio 320kbps

Cont...

The Signalman (Lawrence Gordon Clark, 1976)

When a traveller (Bernard Lloyd) stumbles upon a signalbox situated on a lonely stretch of country rail track, he is unable to believe the incredible story of its troubled occupant. Andrew Davies' (*Pride and Prejudice*, *House of Cards*) atmospheric adaptation from a short story by Charles Dickens features a remarkable performance by Denholm Elliott (*Bad Timing*, *A Room With a View*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*) as the eponymous railway employee haunted by dreadful premonitions.

Stigma (Lawrence Gordon Clark, 1977)

The pagan stone circles of Avebury are the backdrop for writer Clive Exton's modern-day horror *Stigma*, the final offering in the BBC series by celebrated ghost story director Lawrence Gordon Clark, available here for the first time on DVD. The attempted removal of an ancient menhir from a family's back garden unleashes a bloody curse on unsuspecting housewife Katharine, whose rising panic is captured brilliantly by Kate Binchy.

The Ice House (Derek Lister, 1978)

After his wife leaves him, Paul (John Stride) seeks solace in a sophisticated health spa run by a pair of creepy siblings (played by Geoffrey Burridge and Elizabeth Romilly). Strangely attracted by the scent of a vine that grows on the old ice house in the spa's grounds, Paul is drawn ever-deeper into a horrifying mystery. Written by John Bowen (*The Treasure of Abbot Thomas*).

Special features

- New introduction to *The Signalman* by Lawrence Gordon Clark (11 mins)
- New introduction to *Stigma* by Lawrence Gordon Clark (9 mins)
- Illustrated booklet featuring newly commissioned essays by broadcaster Matthew Sweet and Dr Helen Wheatley

RRP £19.99 / Cat No: BFIV962 / Cert 15

UK / 1976 + 1977 + 1978 / colour / 39 mins + 32 mins + 34 mins / DVD9 / Original aspect ratios 1.33:1 / Dolby Digital mono audio 320kbps

The fifth and final volume of *Ghost Stories*, containing the more recent instalments *A View from a Hill* and *Number 13*, and a complete *Ghost Stories for Christmas* box set will be released on 22 October.

The BFI's TV consultant and programmer Dick Fiddy is available for interview.

– ends –

For further information or review copy enquiries please contact:

Jill Reading, BFI Press Office

Tel: (020) 7957 4759 or e-mail jill.reading@bfi.org.uk

Images are available at www.image.net under BFI>DVD 2012

BFI DVDs are available from all good DVD retailers; by mail order from the BFI Filmstore Tel: 020 7815 1350 or online at www.bfi.org.uk/filmstore

About A Ghost Story for Christmas

As a Christmas treat during the 1970s, the BBC screened adaptations of the classic ghost stories of MR James, the Cambridge academic and author of some of the most spine-tingling tales in the English language. Most of the instalments, which were broadcast to terrified viewers in the dead of winter, were directed by Lawrence Gordon Clark, who has been interviewed for new introductions on these BFI releases.

With only three of the twelve tales previously released on DVD (by the BFI in 2002, and long since deleted), the films in this brilliant series have been high on many film and TV fans' 'most wanted' DVD lists. With a subtlety and style all of their own, they have been a major influence on recent British horror films, such as *The Woman in Black*, and have inspired screenwriters and filmmakers such as Mark Gatiss (*The League of Gentlemen*, *Sherlock*).

6 August 2012