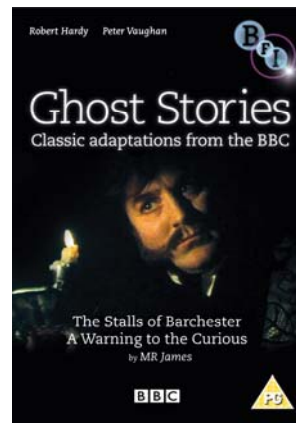


DVD press release



BBC TV's acclaimed *Ghost Stories* finally come to DVD in five individual volumes and a box set from the BFI

First releases *Whistle and I'll Come to You* (1968 & 2010 versions) and *The Stalls of Barchester & A Warning to the Curious* on 20 August 2012

The BFI will make all twelve of the classic BBC films from *A Ghost Story for Christmas* series available on DVD this year, with the first two volumes – each containing a double bill of chilling tales – released on 20 August.

The first release features **Jonathan Miller's** *Whistle and I'll Come to You* (1968), with **Sir Michael Hordern**, paired with the 2010 adaptation of the same chilling tale, starring **John Hurt** and directed by **Andy de Emmony**. Released alongside it is a pairing of *The Stalls of Barchester* (1971), starring **Robert Hardy** and receiving its DVD premiere, and *A Warning to the Curious* (1972), with **Peter Vaughan**, both directed by **Lawrence Gordon Clark**. Each set comes with numerous special features and illustrated booklets, full details on page two.

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*).

The release of the first two *Ghost Stories* volumes is timed to mark the 150th anniversary of MR James' birth on 1 August 1862.

Two more volumes, the first containing *Lost Hearts*, *The Treasure of Abbot Thomas* and *The Ash Tree*, and the second containing *The Signalman* (Andrew Davies' adaptation of the Charles Dickens story) *Stigma* (written by Clive Exton) and *The Ice House* (written by John Bowen), will follow in September, while the fifth and final volume, containing the more recent instalments *View from a Hill* and *Number 13*, as well as a complete *Ghost Stories for Christmas* box set, will be released in October.

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Whistle and I'll Come to You (Jonathan Miller, 1968)

When a sceptical professor, played with eccentric intensity in a brilliant performance by Michael Hordern, finds an old whistle on a Norfolk beach he unleashes a horrifying monster from the depths of his psyche.

Jonathan Miller's (*Beyond the Fringe*, *The Drinking Party*, *Alice in Wonderland*) adaptation of MR James' terrifying tale, made for BBC's *Omnibus* series, uses the bleak Norfolk landscape, superbly photographed by Dick Bush, to instil a sense of isolation and unease.

Whistle and I'll Come to You (Andy de Emmony, 2010)

In this recent rendering of MR James's celebrated ghost story, the legendary John Hurt plays James Parkin, a lonely retiree who has left his wife in a nursing home. Troubled by this loss, he visits their old holiday haunt, but his discovery of a mysterious ring on the beach sparks a series of ghostly encounters and disturbing nightmares which refuse to disappear in the cold light of day.

Atmospheric and emotive, this modern adaptation brings a fascinating new interpretation to an endlessly creepy yarn.

Special features

- Jonathan Miller and Christopher Frayling discuss *Whistle and I'll Come to You* (BBC, 2012, 3 mins)
- MR James' original story, 'Oh Whistle and I'll Come to You, My Lad', read by Neil Brand (2001, 42 mins)
- Introduction to *Whistle and I'll Come to You* by horror writer Ramsey Campbell (2001, 16 mins)
- Ramsey Campbell reads his own MR James inspired story 'The Guide' (2001, 27 mins)

RRP £19.99 / Cat No: BFIV959 / Cert PG

UK / 1968 + 2010 / black and white & colour / English / 42 mins + 52 mins / DVD9 / Original aspect ratios 1.33:1 and 2:35.1 (16x9 anamorphic) | Dolby Digital mono audio 320kbps

The Stalls of Barchester (Lawrence Gordon Clark, 1971)

Whilst cataloguing the collections of Barchester Cathedral library, Dr Black (Clive Swift) stumbles across an intriguing box of papers belonging to a former Archdeacon Haynes (Robert Hardy), which has remained under lock and key since the nineteenth century. In it he discovers a hidden history of blood guilt and macabre supernatural revenge.

With its superb cast and beautiful choral accompaniment by Norwich Cathedral choir, Lawrence Gordon Clark's (*Harry's Game*) evocative adaptation of MR James' short story sparked the BBC's popular *Ghost Story for Christmas* series of the 1970s.

A Warning to the Curious (Lawrence Gordon Clark, 1972)

The second of Gordon Clark's MR James adaptations features Peter Vaughan (*Straw Dogs*, *Our Friends in the North*) as a doomed amateur archaeologist who pays a terrible price for his curiosity about an ancient Saxon legend.

John McGlashan's extraordinary photography imbues the wide open Norfolk coastline with an uneasy sense of dread in this chilling re-working of James' classic tale.

Special features

- Introduction to *The Stalls of Barchester* by Lawrence Gordon Clark (2012, 10 mins)
- Introduction to *A Warning to the Curious* by Lawrence Gordon Clark (2012, 12 mins)
- *Ghost Stories for Christmas with Christopher Lee* - 'The Stalls of Barchester by MR James' (Eleanor Yule, 2000, 30 mins): Christopher Lee recreates MR James' famous soirees, at which the antiquary would read his tales of the supernatural to eager undergraduates.

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- *Ghost Stories for Christmas with Christopher Lee – ‘A Warning to the Curious by MR James’* (Eleanor Yule, 2000, 30 mins): Christopher Lee plays MR James in this dramatic reconstruction of one of the author’s famous Christmas readings.

RRP £19.99 / Cat No: BFIV959 / Cert PG

UK / 1971 + 1972 / colour / English / 45 mins + 50 mins / DVD9 / Original aspect ratios 1.33:1 / Dolby Digital mono audio 320kbps

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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 the BFI

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

6 July 2012