

= Cold Feet ( series 1 ) =

The first series of the British comedy @-@ drama television series Cold Feet was first broadcast on the ITV network from 15 November to 20 December 1998 . The six episodes were written by series creator Mike Bullen , produced by Christine Langan , and directed by Declan Lowney , Mark Mylod and Nigel Cole . It follows the award @-@ winning pilot episode , broadcast in 1997 . The storylines focus on three couples : Adam Williams and Rachel Bradley , Pete and Jenny Gifford , and David and Karen Marsden . They are played by James Nesbitt , Helen Baxendale , John Thomson , Fay Ripley , Robert Bathurst and Hermione Norris respectively .

The storylines follow the three couples as they try to stay faithful to each other . They are held back by issues such as impotence , infidelity , and unplanned pregnancy . Their lives are further complicated by their jobs , money troubles , and moving in together . Bullen embellished the scripts with events from his own personal life . The directors and producers made additional contributions , with the intent to keep the fiction in the programme as true to life as possible . The series was filmed in Greater Manchester in the first half of 1998 , using Granada Television 's studios , and exterior locations .

Critical reaction to the first episodes was negative , with many reviewers not liking the characters and finding the comedy drama format unusual . As the series progressed , critics ' opinions became more positive ; the production values rated highly and the fantasy scenes , which became a hallmark of Cold Feet , were well received . An average of eight million viewers watched the series each week . The following year it won awards from the Royal Television Society , the Broadcasting Press Guild and the British Comedy Awards . It was also nominated for the Rose d 'Or and a Banff Rockie Award . All six episodes have been released on VHS , DVD and internet media formats .

= = Episodes = =

= = Production = =

Cold Feet 's pilot episode was intended by Andy Harries , the executive producer and Granada Television 's controller of comedy , to lead to a series commission from the ITV network . Poor ratings on its night of broadcast in March 1997 stalled a commission ; Harries told writer and creator Mike Bullen and producer Christine Langan to " forget it " . ITV 's limited portfolio of comedy meant that although it was a ratings failure , the pilot was selected by default to represent the network at the Montreux Television Festival that year . The pilot won the Silver Rose for Humour and the Rose d 'Or . ITV still did not commission a series , and in the meantime Granada received offers from the BBC and Channel 4 for a six @-@ part series . In August 1997 , David Liddiment , who had chaired the panel of judges at Montreux , became ITV 's director of programming and pledged to rebrand the network 's comedy output . This included six new episodes of Cold Feet , which were announced that August . Production began in January 1998 . Each episode was budgeted at £ 500 @, @ 000 , a small amount for a 50 @-@ minute drama .

= = = Cast = = =

All six main cast members from the pilot returned for the series ; James Nesbitt and Helen Baxendale play Adam Williams and Rachel Bradley , a couple in a fledgling relationship ; John Thomson and Fay Ripley play Pete and Jenny Gifford , a married couple whose first child is born in the first episode ; Robert Bathurst and Hermione Norris play David and Karen Marsden , an upper @-@ middle @-@ class couple who are considering having a second child . Each had mixed feelings about whether there would be a series commission after the poor reception of the pilot ; Ripley did not stop thinking about it , in contrast to Bathurst , who viewed it as just another failed pilot he had done .

Following the resolution of Karen and David 's storyline in the pilot , in which David concedes that

the couple need to hire a nanny , Jacey Salles was cast as Ramona Ramirez . Salles was a bit @-@ part actress in BBC sitcoms and had previously appeared in the 1998 Granada film *The Misadventures of Margaret* , which was co @-@ produced by Harries . In her *Cold Feet* audition she was required to have a loud argument with her boyfriend over the telephone . She embellished this with " a bit of comic bastardisation of the English language " and won the part . Initially contracted for only two episodes , Salles assumed the Marsdens would employ a new nanny every few episodes , though she made two more appearances in the first series and eventually appeared in every series . Lennie James made two guest appearances as Kris Bumstead , though his second appearance in Episode 6 was mostly in the form of flashbacks . James was keen to find out the resolution to the " who 's the father ? " cliffhanger , reportedly repeatedly asking the producers whether the baby was Kris 's . Other actors to make appearances were Denis Lawson as Alexander Welch and Sam Kelly as Algernon Gifford . John Thomson was pleased to work with Kelly , as he was a big fan of ' *Allo ' Allo* ! , a sitcom in which Kelly appeared .

= = = Writing = = =

Storylines for a potential series had been drafted by writer Mike Bullen during production of the pilot . When production on the series began , producer Christine Langan worked with him to create detailed plots for all six episodes , also acting as a script editor to redraft Bullen 's work . Many of the plots were drawn from his own life ; Pete and Jenny bringing up their new baby paralleled Bullen and his wife , whose first child was born in late 1997 . The scenes where Pete and Jenny attend the antenatal classes were written from Bullen 's memory , when he and his wife were " given callipers , forceps and a suction cup to play with " . The conclusion of the fourth episode , in which Pete 's father dies on the way to his grandson 's christening , was suggested by Harries , whose own experience of the death of his father taught him that people rarely have the opportunity to say goodbye to loved ones in real life . Not all storylines were based on real life : For Karen and David 's marriage guidance scenes in Episode 5 , Bullen consulted the relationship support charity *Relate* . Actors and directors also had input into the scripts ; Bullen 's original script for the marriage therapy scenes ended with David shouting and apparently using a fire extinguisher as an offensive weapon . Bathurst was not convinced that was something that his character would do , as David is " too much of a coward to do anything overtly " and would not leave himself so " exposed " :

" As David grapples with the fire extinguisher to remove the hose from the barrel , we hear running footsteps approaching . The door is suddenly flung open and two male colleagues of the counsellor 's burst open into the room . In a second they take a look at the scene , and we see what they see ? the counsellor looking lost , Karen looking shocked , and most significantly , David standing over the counsellor , brandishing a fire extinguisher in an apparently threatening manner . Presuming their colleague to be in danger , the two men hurl themselves at David , knocking him to the ground . He squeals as he goes down , and complains loudly as he 's pinned to the floor . "

? Episode 5 's marriage guidance scene as originally scripted . Robert Bathurst believed that the scene left his cowardly character " exposed " , so Mike Bullen rewrote it .

When storylining the six episodes , Bullen and Langan planned to split up Adam and Rachel at the series ' climax , as " If [ they ] had just left them all living happily in their homes in Didsbury , there would be a less compelling reason to revisit them [ in the second series ] " . Harries opposed the idea , believing that the audience would want a happy ending for the characters . However , he allowed the writer and producer to proceed with their idea . Langan and Episode 6 director Nigel Cole wanted Adam to leave after finding out about Rachel 's pregnancy . She would have followed him and proven her love to him by singing to him over the PA system of the train ? similar to the pilot 's conclusion . Bullen thought that this idea was " atrocious " , so spent the Easter weekend drafting an end to the series . The genesis of Rachel becoming pregnant , possibly by Kris , came during the filming of the second episode . Langan suggested to Bullen that they return to Rachel 's marriage later in the series , using an adage she had learned from working on a soap opera that if the " seeds " of a storyline are sown early on it can pay off later . The *Brief Encounter* homage was conceived close to filming . Bullen had not seen the film so had to rent it on video before writing the scene .

## == Filming ==

The directors had twelve days to film two episodes each , equating to approximately five minutes of screen @-@ time per day . Langan asked Father Ted director Declan Lowney to helm the first two episodes after his successful direction of the pilot . Lowney declined in order to shoot a film in Ireland with Terence Stamp ; production on it was scheduled to begin in October 1997 and would have overrun into Cold Feet 's production calendar . Funding for Lowney 's film fell through and he took the two episodes of Cold Feet after Langan offered them to him a second time . The other two directors were Mark Mylod and Nigel Cole .

Sets were constructed at Granada 's Blue Shed studios in Salford for interior filming , which ran over 14 weeks from March to May . Exterior filming and location shooting was done in and around the city from February . The climax to the first episode ? where Rachel drives her Mini across a golf course to pick up Pete ? was filmed at Withington Golf Club in West Didsbury . A long lens was used to film the Mini approaching Thomson and Bathurst , making it appear closer to them than it was and avoiding having to drive it on the green . Filming on Episode 1 came close to overrunning , so Lowney filmed most of Jenny 's birth scene in one uninterrupted take , encouraging the actors to ad @-@ lib . Ripley wore a prosthetic abdomen to simulate the appearance of pregnancy throughout the episode and had a pubic wig applied for the birth scene . The uncredited baby who played Baby Adam in that scene was a two @-@ week @-@ old child who had been born two weeks premature , giving it the appearance of a new @-@ born baby . The conclusion of the first episode was originally scripted to feature Pete and Adam playing crazy golf indoors . Lowney did not like the scene , so made thirty minutes available at the very end of production and directed Nesbitt and Thomson to just " talk " . The scene was used by Bullen and Langan as the basis for an attraction between Adam and Jenny , implied in the sixth episode and developed in the second series .

The scenes of Adam and Rachel having sex in a shop window in the third episode , inspired by one of Bullen 's ex @-@ girlfriends , was filmed in an empty shop unit near Piccadilly station . The unit was dressed to look like a charity shop , with various items and the bed added . Mylod and the stunt co @-@ ordinator storyboarded the sequence where the car comes through the shop window before setting it up on location . Nesbitt and Baxendale were switched with stunt doubles and the car was propelled up a ramp through the window . Explosive charges were placed on the glass to achieve a shatter effect . As only one take could be done , Mylod trailed five cameras on the window . Filming ran from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. the following day . The location was near several clubs and many passers @-@ by inquired what was being filmed . To avoid giving away the plot they were told that Baxendale was filming a bed advertisement , capitalising on her exposure from appearing in Friends . Baxendale selected the lingerie Rachel wears in that episode herself , buying £ 2 @,@ 000 worth from the Janet Reger outlet in Knightsbridge , London .

Another stunt scene was filmed for Episode 6 ; the charity ball scene was filmed over two days at a Masonic Lodge and concluded with a fight between Jenny and Natalie ( played by Lorelei King ) . The shots of Jenny spraying Natalie with a fire extinguisher were limited to two takes because it took so long to re @-@ apply King 's make up . The table that Ripley and King 's stunt doubles fall through had its legs weakened , and the glasses on the table were replaced with sugar glass . The Brief Encounter fantasy was filmed at a steam railway near Rochdale . Nigel Cole used the scene as an opportunity to make his mark as a television director . Most of the scene was filmed by Cole and the main crew . Establishing shots were filmed by Langan and the second unit , due to time constraints . The lighting and focus of the fantasy station was intended to be a direct contrast to the harsh modernity of Piccadilly , which appeared in the " real life " scenes .

## == Reception ==

## == Broadcast and ratings ==

ITV trailed *Cold Feet* between 3 and 12 November . The trailer featured clips from the pilot episode , including the scene where Adam sings with a rose clenched between his buttocks . Six people complained to the Independent Television Commission ( ITC ) , the commercial television regulator , about the scene being inappropriate . Their complaints were not upheld ; the ITC ruled that the trailer did not breach the programming code , as " the humour of the piece was apparent from the outset " . A 96 Sheet billboard advertising campaign also preceded broadcast , featuring the strapline " A comedy about life & all that " . The broadcast was sponsored by Cockburn 's Port .

The series was broadcast on ITV from 15 November to 20 December 1998 . Harries wanted the series to air in the 9 p.m. timeslot but ITV Network Centre wanted it on at 10 p.m. ( the same time the pilot had been scheduled ) , because the 9 p.m. timeslot was traditionally what was referred to as " the ironing slot " ? programmes that can be watched without viewers having to concentrate . David Liddiment compromised with Harries and scheduled *Cold Feet* for a 9 @. @ 30 p.m. start . The BBC responded by scheduling Andrew Davies ' adaptation of *Vanity Fair* at the same time . The first five episodes aired from 9 @. @ 30 p.m. but Episode 6 began at 10 p.m. The main target audience was the " upmarket " ABC1 's .

Episode 1 averaged 7 @. @ 47 million viewers over its hour , peaking at 9 @. @ 2 million with a low point of 6 @. @ 9 million . The episode ranked as the thirty @- @ fourth most @- @ watched programme of the week and the sixth most @- @ watched drama ( excluding soap @- @ operas ) . The second episode dropped seven places and 1 @. @ 9 % on the previous week with 7 @. @ 33 million viewers . It recovered to 7 @. @ 46 million the following week but still managed only fortieth place in the Top 70 most @- @ watched programmes . The fourth week held steady at 7 @. @ 44 million viewers and fortieth position again . It had its best figures with Episode 5 , which was seen by 7 @. @ 91 million , making thirty @- @ second in the Top 70 . The final episode of the series suffered from its schedule change , dropping to fifty @- @ ninth and 6 @. @ 77 million viewers . Over the six weeks , *Cold Feet* averaged a 34 % audience share , which was six points below ITV 's Sunday peaktime average .

= = = Critical reaction = = =

The series was welcomed as " the British Thirtysomething " and there was additional publicity generated off the back of Helen Baxendale 's appearances in *Friends* . The first two episodes did not impress critics ; The Independent 's Nicholas Barber called Episode 1 " the most depressing programme [ he 'd ] ever seen " . Commenting on the ending , he observed that " in comedyland , the police 's main duty is to taxi expectant fathers to hospital " . Barber concluded his review with positive comments about the rest of the series , singling out Ripley as being " reminiscent of Elaine in *Seinfeld* " . A.A. Gill also criticised that episode 's conclusion , comparing it to a Norman Wisdom comedy . On *The Late Review* , Germaine Greer described Nesbitt 's acting as " especially awful " and suggested that the series had been developed by a marketing department .

Critical reaction improved with the third episode ; writing in *New Statesman* , Andrew Billen praised Episode 3 as being " intricately constructed as a farce " , and commented positively on Ripley 's and Nesbitt 's acting . Billen compared the production and fantasy scenes with *Thirtysomething* and *Ally McBeal* . In the *Evening Standard* , following the conclusion of *Vanity Fair* and prior to the broadcast of Episode 6 , Billen wrote , " The style is light , the narrative frequently inconsequential . The men go to the pub and lust after the barmaid . The women meet in the wine bar and make fun of the men for lusting after the barmaid . The great settings are DIY stores , antenatal classes and sitting rooms . Why should anyone be interested ? If domestic trivia has now been outlawed by the BBC as a subject for sitcoms and if even soap operas rely on murders and armed sieges to keep up their figures , why should the travails of a set of ex @- @ dinkies have become a minor cult ? " He analysed the series in relation to its early @- @ middle @- @ aged viewers being " a forgotten people " , comparing the storylines to real @- @ life issues experienced by friends . He concluded :

This is not the world of *Ally McBeal* . It is not about finding love remedially . This is a world in which too many of us are asking what use is love if you find it too late . Yet somehow , probably because the moral judgments are lightly made , superannuated singletons such as myself can look on and

see an advertisement for , rather than a warning against , that famously honourable estate ? just as we do when we gaze at the more benign marriages of our friends . In *Vanity Fair* , Thackeray deliberately wrote a novel without a hero . We respond to *Cold Feet* because it , on the contrary , does not despise its characters .

Of Episode 6 , *The Mirror* 's Charlie Catchpole wrote " Although I wouldn 't want to bump into any of these people in a wine bar , I found I really cared about their unravelling relationships , their sad sexual misadventures , their petty jealousies " and concluded by calling the series " Exquisitely written , stylishly produced , superbly performed . " In *The Times* , Paul Hoggart summarised all six episodes as " [ walking ] a tightrope between satire and sentimentality , frequently falling off on the sugary side " , but wrote positively of the writing , directing , acting , and editing . He approved of the deliberately unhappy ending , looking forward to seeing how Rachel 's departure would be resolved in the second series . Andy Harries attributed the mixed critical reaction to the unusual timeslot the series was given .

= = = Awards = = =

It won in the Situation Comedy and Comedy Drama category at the Royal Television Society ( RTS ) Awards , the Best Entertainment award at the Broadcasting Press Guild Awards , and the award for Best TV Comedy Drama at the 1999 British Comedy Awards . Edward Mansell received an RTS nomination for Best Tape and Film Editing in Entertainment and Situation Comedy . The third episode was nominated for the Golden Rose of Montreux , though did not win . Ian Johnson , the publicist for the series , believed that the European judges did not understand the farcical humour in the episode , noting that the British delegates to the festival were " helpless with laughter " . The same episode was nominated for the 1999 Banff Rockie Award for Best Comedy ? the only non @-@ American series to receive a nomination in that category . It lost to the *Ally McBeal* episode " Theme of Life " .

= = Home media = =

The first two episodes were released on a single VHS tape on 11 October 1999 . The other four episodes were scheduled for release over two more videos , to be released on 1 November and 29 November but were cancelled ; the two @-@ tape release of the full series came on 15 November . It was released on 2 @-@ disc region 2 DVD on 25 September 2000 . A re @-@ release , with new packaging and menus , came on 26 March 2006 . The DVD was released in Australia on 4 February 2002 and in the United States on 25 January 2005 . The pilot and first series were made available as free streaming media on ITV 's revamped [itv.com](http://itv.com) website from July 2007 to August 2009 . Additionally , it was one of the first batch of series from ITV 's archives to be made available for purchase on ITV 's iTunes Store shop , introduced in April 2008 .