

= Peggy Mitchell =

Margaret Ann " Peggy " Mitchell (also Butcher) is a fictional character from the BBC soap opera EastEnders . Peggy was initially played by Jo Warne when she first appeared in the episode broadcast on 30 April 1991 , featuring in the series on a recurring basis over several weeks . Peggy was reintroduced in 1994 , recast to Barbara Windsor , who made her first appearance in the episode broadcast on 7 November 1994 . Peggy became a regular character , and Windsor played the role until 2003 . She returned for two episodes in September 2004 , before rejoining as a regular character in 2005 . Windsor announced in October 2009 that she would be leaving the show and departed on 10 September 2010 . Windsor returned to the show for guest appearances on 20 September 2013 , 25 September 2014 , 17 February 2015 (as part of the show 's 30th anniversary celebrations ; see EastEnders Live Week) and 15 January 2016 . She then appeared in six episodes between 9 and 17 May 2016 and the character was killed off . Her voice is last heard in the following episode , on 19 May 2016 . Peggy 's funeral aired on 4 July 2016 .

Peggy is fiercely protective of her family and the Mitchell name , and has become famous for her catchphrase " Get outta my pub ! " , used when ejecting people from The Queen Victoria , of which she is the landlady . Her storylines have seen her embark on a series of failed romances , including marriages to Frank Butcher (Mike Reid) and Archie Mitchell (Larry Lamb) . She has been central to several plot strands revolving around health issues , launching a hate campaign against the HIV positive character Mark Fowler (Todd Carty) , and going on to make amends with him when she is later diagnosed with breast cancer . Though she recovers from her cancer , it later returns and leads to her suicide . Inside Soap named Peggy the UK 's top soap matriarch in 2009 .

= = Storylines = =

= = = Backstory = = =

Peggy married Eric Mitchell because she was pregnant with Phil (Steve McFadden) . Eric , a keen boxer , worked for gangster Johnny Allen (Billy Murray) . Johnny would taunt Eric , making him do demeaning jobs because Eric was a better boxer than him . Eric fell in love with a woman called Maureen and planned to elope with her , but changed his mind , unable to desert his family , who he grew to resent . Eric took his anger out on Peggy and was often violent towards her and Phil . Peggy considered leaving when her sons , Phil and Grant (Ross Kemp) were teenagers , and once even tried to seduce Johnny Allen , but he turned her down . Eric cheated on Peggy with Claudette Hubbard (Ellen Thomas) , who he also intended to run away with , but changed his mind , leading to Claudette hating the entire family . Peggy turned to Eric 's younger brother Archie (Larry Lamb) because he was there for her when Eric began to abuse her . She tried to save her marriage by having another child in 1975 - her only daughter Samantha (Danniella Westbrook and Kim Medcalf) . Her relationship with Eric improved , but only temporarily , and when Kevin Masters (Colin McCormack) employed Peggy to work at his minicab firm , they began a secret affair . When Eric developed cancer , Peggy gave up work to care for him , but Kevin returned promptly after Eric 's death in 1985 and Peggy 's children took against him .

= = = 1991 = = =

Peggy makes her first appearance in Albert Square , when Sam 's desire to escape from her family causes her to elope with Ricky Butcher (Sid Owen) , at the age of sixteen . Peggy tries to persuade Sam that getting married at the age of sixteen will ruin her life , but she is unsuccessful . Peggy later accepts Sam and Ricky 's relationship and leaves , after giving the couple her blessing . In 1992 , it is revealed that Peggy is in a relationship with Kevin , whom she had an affair with during her marriage to Eric .

== 1994 ? 2010 ==

Peggy is not seen for three years , during which time her relationship with Kevin ends . She returns to Walford when her sons fall out after Phil 's affair with Grant 's wife , Sharon (Letitia Dean) , is revealed . Peggy becomes acting landlady of The Queen Victoria public house and blames Sharon for the affair . Peggy tries to force her out of Walford , resulting in Sharon signing over her share of the pub and leaving the Mitchell family as the sole owners , with Peggy in charge .

Peggy starts dating businessman George Palmer (Paul Moriarty) , unaware that he is a criminal involved in illegal money laundering . She instigates a hate campaign against local resident Mark Fowler (Todd Carty) when she discovers he is HIV positive and begins a feud with his mother Pauline (Wendy Richard) . Peggy later realises she was wrong when she is diagnosed with breast cancer . She initially refuses surgery and ends things with George , fearing that he will not be able to handle her illness . However , supported by George and her family , she eventually has a lumpectomy . Peggy and George get engaged but their relationship ends when Phil reveals his criminal nature . Peggy goes on to date local car lot owner , Frank Butcher (Mike Reid) , and they become engaged . Peggy has doubts about the wedding when her cancer returns and she has to have a mastectomy , but eventually decides to go through with it . Tension develops between Peggy and Phil when Grant leaves for Rio de Janeiro after a violent fight with his brother . To spite Peggy , Phil sells Grant 's share in the pub to local businessman Dan Sullivan (Craig Fairbrass) for £ 5 . Peggy loathes Dan , and the two frequently row over the running of the pub . Eventually , she and Phil call a truce and force Dan out of Walford . Peggy discovers Frank is planning to leave her for his ex @-@ wife , Pat (Pam St. Clement) , so she shames them by reading Frank 's Dear Jane letter to the entire pub and then slaps them both . She throws Frank out and he leaves Walford . Afterwards , Peggy becomes depressed and begins to rely heavily on tranquillisers . When Frank 's daughter , Janine (Charlie Brooks) , taunts her on Christmas Day about her father moving on , Peggy begins drinking heavily and smashes up the pub with a baseball bat . The next year , Peggy is forced to sell the pub as Frank left her in debt , and is furious to discover the new owner is Sharon .

Peggy begins dating Harry Slater (Michael Elphick) , who owns a bar in Spain and convinces her to move there with him . They become engaged but break up when it is revealed that Harry is guilty of sexually abusing his niece Kat (Jessie Wallace) . When Phil begins dating Sharon again and becomes joint owner of The Queen Vic , Peggy moves back in . She later becomes sole licensee again when Sharon sells her half of the pub back to her . Peggy is briefly reunited with Frank when she travels to Spain to attend his funeral . She discovers he faked his own death to avoid creditors . While she 's in Spain , she shockingly finds her daughter Sam (now played by Kim Medcalf) working as a lap dancer and takes her home . Peggy later decides to move to Brazil to be with Grant but visits Walford for Sam 's wedding to Andy Hunter (Michael Higgs) before returning to Brazil .

When Peggy returns to Walford in 2005 , she is furious to discover Sam has lost possession of The Queen Vic , and that the new licensee Chrissie Watts (Tracy @-@ Ann Oberman) has framed Sam for her husband Den 's (Leslie Grantham) murder . While trying to exonerate Sam and reclaim ownership of the pub , Peggy ignites a feud with Johnny Allen , who also wishes to buy The Queen Vic . Johnny hires a mobster to assault Peggy , but she is saved by her sons , Phil and Grant . They are able to deal with Johnny , secure Sam 's release from prison , and return Peggy to The Queen Vic . Peggy begins a romance with Jack Edwards (Nicky Henson) , the father @-@ in @-@ law of Peggy 's relative Billy (Perry Fenwick) . However , when Peggy discovers Billy 's newborn daughter has Down 's syndrome , she declares that the baby should be put up for adoption , causing friction in her relationship with Jack . Although Peggy comes to accept the baby , Jack breaks up with her and leaves Walford .

Peggy begins a relationship with her brother @-@ in @-@ law , Archie , father of Ronnie (Samantha Womack) and Roxy Mitchell (Rita Simons) . They get engaged and Archie begins subtly controlling Peggy . They marry , but it ends a few hours later when it is revealed that Archie lied to Ronnie about her infant daughter 's death . Peggy has Archie evicted from The Queen Vic , and tries unsuccessfully to coerce Phil into murdering him . Peggy files for divorce and Archie plots

revenge on the entire Mitchell family . When Peggy loses the bail surety she has paid on behalf of her daughter Sam (who breaks the conditions of her bail following coercion from Archie) , the Mitchells are forced to use The Queen Victoria to gain a collateral Loan from Ian Beale (Adam Woodyatt) . Archie blackmails Ian to sell the loan to him , and when the Mitchells are unable to meet the loan repayment , Archie evicts them and assumes ownership of the pub . However , Archie is murdered on Christmas Day 2009 by an unknown assailant . Peggy grieves for Archie , but she and various other members of her family become suspects for his murder . Following a police enquiry , Bradley Branning (Charlie Clements) is posthumously found guilty of the murder , though unbeknown to everyone , the actual murderer is Bradley 's wife , Stacey Slater (Lacey Turner) , after Archie raped her . In his will , Archie leaves The Queen Vic to Roxy , who reinstates Peggy .

After being disgusted with the state of the Square and learning that a councillor has stood down , Peggy and Pat both decide to run for council and are interviewed by journalist Harvey Freeman (Martin Jarvis) . Eventually they both pull out of the election , but Harvey hears of this and individually invites them both out . They both finally discover his two @-@ timing , and humiliate him in punishment . When Phil prevents his daughter Louise (Brittany Papple) from contacting her mother Lisa (Lucy Benjamin) , Peggy interjects and Phil punches her . Believing he is an unfit parent , Peggy takes Louise to Lisa against Phil 's wishes . Although , Lisa promises to allow Phil visitation , she flees with Louise . Phil blames Peggy for the loss of his child and begins using alcohol and crack cocaine . Peggy tries to stop Phil using crack by locking him in her pub , but Phil escapes and in a drunken bid for revenge , he sets fire to Peggy 's pub . Peggy watches in horror as it is destroyed . Realising her role in Phil 's problems , Peggy decides to leave Walford for his sake . After saying tearful goodbyes to her family and making peace with Phil , Peggy takes one last look at The Queen Vic and leaves Albert Square .

= = = 2013 ? 16 = = =

In January 2012 , Peggy misses Pat 's funeral as she is on a cruise , and in 2013 , Phil visits Peggy in Cornwall with Ben 's baby daughter , Lexi Pearce (Dotti @-@ Beau Cotterill) . Three months later , Peggy flies in to London to visit Phil in hospital , and encourages him to stand up to Carl White (Daniel Coonan) , who is trying to take over the Mitchell business empire . After , she visits Pat 's old house , and leaves a bottle of gin on the doorstep as way of goodbye . In September 2014 , Peggy appears in Portugal , telling Ronnie to go back to Walford and stop Phil from marrying Sharon . In February 2015 , Peggy returns to the square to confront Dot Branning (June Brown) , after her son Nick Cotton (John Altman) cut the brakes on a car and falsely incriminated Phil . She is also in on the secret that Ben 's mother , Kathy Sullivan (Gillian Taylforth) , faked her own death ten years ago and wants to return to Walford . Before returning to Portugal , Peggy visits the Queen Vic and meets its new landlord , Mick Carter (Danny Dyer) , who tells her to " get out of my pub " .

In January 2016 , Phil calls Sal , wanting Louise 's (now played by Tilly Keeper) address , and when he goes to her house , Peggy is there , having returned a week earlier . Peggy is disgusted to see that Phil has returned to alcoholism , but does give him Louise 's address . She then reveals her breast cancer has returned , and she is dying . Phil tries to admit that he has cirrhosis of liver , but she refuses to see him again and he leaves . In May , Peggy turns up on Ronnie 's doorstep , and the next day Sal arrives with the news that Peggy 's chemotherapy is not working and she is dying . A hospital appointment confirms that Peggy 's cancer has spread to her brain and it is terminal . Peggy finally faces Phil , who is in recovery from his alcoholism , and admits she is dying . He is upset that she is refusing any more treatment , and takes her on a boat trip on the Thames , and back to their childhood home , to try and make her fight . However , Peggy is not convinced and asks Phil to help her die .

Sharon calls Grant back to Walford , and he persuades Phil not to help Peggy . She tells them both she will not kill herself , and after settling old feuds with Dot , Stacey and Sharon , Peggy receives a vision of Pat . She decides she wants to be remembered as a strong woman , not as weak in her bed , and takes a lethal overdose of pills that she hid from her sons and dies in her sleep that night . Phil is devastated to find her body , and a letter from her urges him to love himself as others love

him . Peggy 's funeral takes place on 4 July 2016 , and Phil is due to do an eulogy to her there but gets too emotional and runs home . Sharon later calms him down by revealing that Peggy was the one who sent Eric to prison when Phil was a child , not corrupt police officers as he was previously told , and that she did it to protect him . Phil later works up the courage to finish his eulogy to Peggy at the wake , and then returns to her grave at the church to finish his goodbyes to her , unaware that Grant has secretly left a rose at the grave .

= = Creation = =

Peggy was introduced as a guest character in April 1991 , by executive producer Michael Ferguson . The character was brought in as the mother of the already established Mitchell clan : Phil (Steve McFadden) , Grant (Ross Kemp) and Sam (Danniella Westbrook) . Specifically , she played a key role in a storyline about the elopement of her daughter Sam with Ricky Butcher (Sid Owen) . Peggy was played by actress Jo Warne for a period of three months , but was written out upon the completion of the storyline . Two other actresses had been cast in the part before Warne . The first quit before she could film any scenes , and the second filmed eight episodes , though all of her scenes were scrapped before broadcast .

The character did not make another appearance until 7 November 1994 , when she was reintroduced by series producer Barbara Emile as a regular character . The actress was recast , the role being taken over by Barbara Windsor , already well known to viewers as a comic actress , notably appearing in the long @-@ running Carry On films . Scott Matthewman of The Stage commented on the recast in 2006 : " Quite the biggest ? and most inexplicable ? transformation is that of Peggy Mitchell in EastEnders . While Barbara Windsor has dominated the role ... first appearing in [1994] , the character had appeared briefly [three] years earlier , played by Jo Warne , a lady who physically is as different from our Babs as it 's possible to get . "

Steve McFadden and Ross Kemp had attempted to persuade EastEnders writer Tony Jordan to develop a spin @-@ off for their characters , which would star Windsor as Peggy . The idea never advanced beyond informal discussions , but when the producers decided to reintroduce Peggy , McFadden and Kemp suggested Windsor play her . Windsor had previously expressed a desire to join the cast of EastEnders . Chat show host Chris Evans of Channel 4 's The Big Breakfast made a public broadcast instructing viewers to fax or phone the BBC with pleas for Windsor 's instatement . However , Windsor was already in negotiations with the BBC about appearing in the serial . June Deitch , the EastEnders casting director , had met with Windsor to discuss the matter , and was convinced when Windsor declared that she would " like to play my own age for a change " . At the time , the producers had already thought about reintroducing Peggy , and Windsor was cast despite originally being considered too " well @-@ known " . Windsor has spoken of her " terrified " reaction to being asked to audition , commenting : " I had the weekend to prepare and I cried all the time . I didn 't know how to do soap acting . I was so used to using my hands , my eyes . " She auditioned with two scenes , one emotion , one " jolly " which Windsor has described as " agony " , explaining : " I was afraid of playing Barbara Windsor , so when I had to laugh I went ' huh , huh ' . Anything rather than ' tee , hee , hee ' . " In an interview with the Walford Gazette , a US @-@ based newspaper dedicated to EastEnders , Windsor commented on her casting : " I was thrilled , I could rest my tired bones working on a marvelous television show that I deeply respected . I was very excited about the possibility [of] playing this feisty lady who would come in and shake up her two boys ' lives . "

Windsor has been described as the biggest " name " that EastEnders has ever added to its cast , and her arrival came at a time in the show 's history that has been branded its " worst creative period " . Mark Lawson for The Independent wrote that Windsor 's casting was intended to combat low ratings , commenting : " The Windsor initiative seems to be a direct response to suggestions that EastEnders has become too gloomy : a view heavily advanced by Roy Hattersley , former deputy leader of the Labour Party , and fan of the BBC series ' rival on ITV , Coronation Street . Certainly , Miss Windsor has been associated throughout her career with the lighter touch . " According to Windsor , 27 million viewers watched her first appearance as Peggy on @-@ screen .

Mark Lawson for The Daily Telegraph has stated that five million extra viewers watched her first scenes , reporting that initially : " The critics said that she lacked the ' brassiness and vulnerability ' for soap acting and that , stripped of her bubbly image , ' nothing much of interest was revealed ' . Ironically , viewers complained that she was too upmarket . " Windsor has commented of the impact of her pre @-@ existing celebrity status :

= = = Characterisation = = =

Hilary Kingsley , author of The EastEnders Handbook (1991) , has described Peggy as tough , with a " knack for getting her own way " . She adds , " Peggy likes to think she looks much younger [than she is] . She 's flash , fast @-@ talking and nobody 's fool . She has always done things her own way , and heaven help anyone who crosses her , though her bark 's usually worse than her bite . "

When Windsor took over the role in 1994 , she was unhappy with the way Peggy was being scripted . She has commented , " a few things weren 't quite right about Peggy at the beginning . On a purely superficial level , the wig didn 't fit right . And the clothes weren 't right either . They appeared too downmarket . I was particularly worried about how the character was viewed by the producer and writers . I saw her as much ballsier than they did . I think they envisioned Peggy as this rather sad , vulnerable lady who spent all her time worrying about her children . " However , early in 1995 , EastEnders acquired a new executive producer , Corinne Hollingworth , who shared Windsor 's vision of Peggy . It was Hollingworth who decided that Peggy would be a central character , the new landlady of The Queen Victoria public house , one of the soap 's main focal points . Hollingworth stated that Peggy was " not going to be allowed to just sit in some flat polishing her nails " . Windsor has said : " It was like a dream . [Hollingworth] let me go out with the costume designer and choose Peggy 's wardrobe , which needed to be a lot more flash and upmarket . Corinne and I worked on getting Peggy right and I finally began to believe ... " .

Windsor has described Peggy as " from the old school , the generation which doesn 't put up with rubbish from anybody ... She can get through practically anything because she 's tough , tough , tough . " The character has been classified by Rupert Smith , author of EastEnders : 20 Years in Albert Square , as a matriarch , assuming " papal infallibility . Whatever anybody does ? particularly her own children ? she knows better . " She has also been branded a " battleaxe " by Dave West of entertainment website Digital Spy , and someone who " wears her heart on her sleeve " by Windsor . Family @-@ orientated , Windsor adds that : " [Peggy] loves her family with a passion . Her worst qualities are that she 's blinkered , sometimes wrongly passionate about her family . "

It has been speculated that Windsor based Peggy on Violet Kray , mother of the infamous East End gangsters , the Kray twins ; however Windsor has denied this . Instead , she claims that Peggy is based on women she has seen in East End pubs and her own mother : " women whose hair is great and their outfits are more Walthamstow market , they get it wrong slightly ... Some things I 've done with Peggy is from my Mum . She was one of those East End snobs . I drew on all of those experiences . " In a 2009 radio interview with Dale Winton , Windsor said three people have influenced her portrayal of Peggy : Violet Kray (thus retracting her earlier statement) , her own mother , and the actor Mike Reid , who played her on @-@ screen husband Frank Butcher .

= = Development = =

Peggy has been central to numerous high @-@ profile storylines , including a battle with breast cancer , a failed marriage to Frank Butcher , and various business and family upsets .

= = = Breast cancer = = =

In 1996 , Peggy featured in a storyline about breast cancer . It was the first time that the soap had given one of its characters the illness , though the issue was covered much less substantially in 1987 as a means of promoting breast cancer screening , when Sue Osman (Sandy Ratcliff)

discovered a lump on her breast , which turned out to be benign .

Peggy 's breast cancer storyline was devised at the suggestion of a scriptwriter in a story conference session and , according to the production staff , was an idea " that had been knocking about for a long time . " In Lesley Henderson 's book , *Social Issues in Television Fiction* , an EastEnders researcher explains that : " A lot of illnesses [...] translate quite readily into strong dramatic material " , and the experience of being hospitalised or waiting on test results is something everyone can identify with . The programme sought expert advice on " storyline visuals " from a variety of sources including cancer organisations , breast cancer charities and medical professionals . There were anticipated problems with running a breast cancer story , such as timing , characterisation , casting , and interweaving the plot with other ongoing storylines . A story editor has explained : " EastEnders is perceived as being an issue @-@ led show , but it isn 't , it 's character and story @-@ led [...] If you haven 't got the character to fulfill that storyline then it won 't work . You 've got to be careful to make sure that the illness actually impacts on the family dynamics and the character development . "

Producers decided to use Peggy Mitchell in the breast cancer storyline , conforming to a soap opera tradition of reserving strong roles for a firmly established middle @-@ aged matriarch . The audience were familiar with Peggy 's history , knew that her first husband had died from cancer , consequently making her fear hospitals , and she had : " the right mentality for [the story theme] , which was about ' a woman who discovers a lump and then refuses to accept that anything 's wrong ' . An added factor was that in choosing Peggy the programme could avoid appearing too issue driven , and [the] storyline could be used as a device to expand and develop her characterisation . " Additionally , as the causes of breast cancer are not attributable to risky behaviour , the disease was deemed " more attractive " in storyline terms . A member of the EastEnders production team explains :

In the view of the production team , Peggy 's breast cancer was a catalyst , creating new dynamics and tensions amongst existing characters . Realism was also an issue . As a middle @-@ aged woman , Peggy was epidemiologically at higher risk for developing breast cancer . In 2001 , it was reported that Peggy 's character was one of only a few media portrayals of older females to be given the disease , and source organisations have praised EastEnders for this .

The storyline used elements of suspense , created by the use of " shared secrets " between Peggy and her daughter @-@ in @-@ law Tiffany Mitchell (Martine McCutcheon) , who invented elaborate cover stories to mask Peggy 's trips to hospital from her sons and partner . Tension was deliberately built for viewing pleasure , posing the questions of whether Peggy 's lump was benign or malignant and whether she would die , but also in terms of Peggy 's relationships , whether her children would discover the truth or if George would end their relationship . Henderson has suggested that : " such devices [added] pathos to Peggy 's treatment path . Audiences [knew] that she [was] terrified and about to discover her biopsy results , but must watch as she is casually castigated by her son Grant for pestering his wife Tiffany to accompany her to ' the dentist ' . " Hospital scenes were also played for narrative pace to build tension and drama .

Because " radical , body @-@ altering " surgery on a long @-@ running character would cause the production team ongoing problems with continuity , it was decided that Peggy would have a " less visible " lumpectomy , rather than a mastectomy . A member of the EastEnders production team explained : " We have to think about costume and what it 's going to look like afterwards and what we 're lumbering ourselves with [...] you have to think of that for a long @-@ term character . " Additionally , giving Peggy a lumpectomy at that stage of her disease was viewed favourably by source organisations , as it helped to spread a message that a mastectomy is not necessary in all breast cancer cases . However , the storyline was revisited several times over the next few years . In August 1997 , Peggy was given the " all @-@ clear " at her follow @-@ up mammogram , and in March 1999 the cancer returned and she underwent a mastectomy , while in 2000 she had a breast reconstruction . It has been reported that Peggy was the first soap opera character to undergo a mastectomy . BBC Production chief executive Matthew Bannister praised Windsor 's portrayal of Peggy coming to terms with a mastectomy , commenting : " It 's brought a good deal of comfort and help to us and a lot of other people . "

Oncology nurses and consultants were involved in the development of the storyline , which was based on a real life case study . In Clive Seale 's book , Health and the Media , EastEnders was praised for putting its message across without being " gruelling " . It has also been praised for showing " potent scenes " of a woman coming to terms with her diagnosis , scenes that also provided " rare opportunities " to portray a cancer patient " behaving badly " and depicting " ambivalent feelings (such as denial or anger) " ? as it had been noted that cancer patients are typically portrayed in the media as " beatific , serene figures " . When Peggy had a mastectomy , hundreds of viewers wrote to the BBC to thank producer , Matthew Robinson for tackling " a difficult subject so sensitively " . However , not all viewers were impressed with the storyline . Felicity Smart , who had undergone a mastectomy , wrote to the BBC on behalf of the Breast Carer Support Group at St Thomas ' Hospital in London to say that emotionally the storyline " hit the spot " , but medically it was " hopelessly inaccurate " as according to Smart : " No one pulls pints and wisecracks with customers three days after having a mastectomy . "

= = = Marriage to Frank Butcher = = =

In 1998 , Peggy was romantically paired on @-@ screen with the character Frank Butcher . Their coupling was part of producer Matthew Robinson 's plan to place the focus of the soap back on to the Butcher and Mitchell families , while various other long @-@ running characters were axed following a decline in ratings . The soap was attracting 15 @.@ 74 million viewers in May 1998 , as opposed to rival soap Coronation Street 's 16 million .

Played by Mike Reid , Frank had been a regular character in the serial from 1987 to 1994 , and had appeared in a recurring role until 1998 , when Reid agreed to return full @-@ time . Frank 's history on the show included a former marriage to another long @-@ running matriarch , Pat Butcher (Pam St. Clement) . Their history as lovers featured prominently in Peggy 's narrative in 1998 , when , after agreeing to marry Frank , Peggy was wrongly told that Frank and Pat were having an affair . A special two @-@ hander episode aired in November 1998 , featuring only Pat and Peggy for the entire duration . It concentrated on Peggy 's reaction to the suspected affair , whilst simultaneously addressing Pat 's unresolved history with Frank and the apparent destruction of Pat 's own marriage to Roy (Tony Caunter) , who had also responded badly to the rumours about his wife 's infidelity . The episode , written by Tony Jordan , featured what the Sunday Mirror described as one of " the most vicious fights ever filmed by a soap " , with both throwing glasses at one another and Pat slapping Peggy across the face exclaiming " You bitch ! " and Peggy responding by slapping Pat exclaiming " You cow ! " . According to press reports , the fight scene between the characters was " so powerful that it had to have scenes and dialogue cut so it could be screened before the 9 pm watershed . " Barbara Windsor was reportedly bruised during the filming . Windsor commented , " The writer didn 't want a namby- pamby cat fight between two silly girls . We were throwing chairs and bottles and the adrenaline was at a high . When I saw the programme I couldn 't believe how good it was . Pam and I were really proud . " The Sunday Mirror described it as : " one of the most impressive episodes of all time " . In the climax of the storyline , both couples resolved their differences , and their relationships remained intact .

Peggy and Frank were married on @-@ screen on 1 April 1999 . A " hen night " was thrown for Windsor with the show 's make @-@ up team , and the BBC threw a " massive " party in the show 's Albert Square to celebrate the event . Actors Windsor and Reid joined fellow stars , celebrities and TV executives for a celebration on the programme 's set in Elstree , Hertfordshire . Windsor admitted she had been so nervous before filming the wedding she was sick on set . She commented , " I broke out in spots and threw up in the vestry . I was very nervous ? we were both very nervous . The day you stop getting nervous you can hold your hands up . It shows you care . " The soap wedding was filmed in Harrow , North West London in February 1999 . A BBC spokesman commented : " It is one of the best weddings Walford has ever seen but it is not problem free . There are a lot of people who do not want to see Frank and Peggy married ? Grant being one of them ? and it remains to be seen whether they will get through the day without a major upset . And as if the wedding is not gripping enough , there are certainly shocking revelations back at the Vic . " In the

eventual episode , it was actually Grant Mitchell who persuaded his mother to marry Frank ? with whom he had been feuding following his accidental killing of wife Tiffany ? after Peggy was having second thoughts , thinking that Frank was only marrying her out of pity . Nearly 20 million viewers watched Peggy and Frank marry .

Together Frank and Peggy ran The Queen Victoria , and were involved in various family and business crises , including a " tug @-@ of @-@ war " for their public house with " cuckoo @-@ in @-@ the @-@ nest " Dan Sullivan (Craig Fairbrass) . After taking time off in 2000 due to ill @-@ health , Reid announced that he was quitting the soap in May 2000 . After Reid publicly declared that he would love Frank to have a last fling with Pat before he left , EastEnders ' bosses granted his wish and an affair was scripted . The pair enjoyed a liaison on a Spanish beach during a week @-@ long August special set on the Costa Blanca , which saw Frank and Peggy go away with Pat and Roy and Terry and Irene Raymond (Gavin Richards and Roberta Taylor) . A BBC spokesperson said : " Pat is obviously incredibly torn between her love for her husband , Roy , and her old feelings for Frank . She 's been hurt by Frank in the past , but she 's coming to realise that she still has strong feelings for him and he has made no secret of his soft spot for her . I can confirm they do enjoy a romantic kiss on the beach . " On @-@ screen , Pat and Frank 's affair continued until they decided , in November 2000 , to elope . In the specially extended episode marking Frank 's official exit ? which aired on 2 November 2000 , but was Guy Fawkes Night in the on @-@ screen events ? Peggy discovered the affair amidst Frank 's attempt to retrieve a letter of confession , following Pat 's change of heart .

After revealing their deception to a busy Queen Victoria public house , Peggy slapped both Pat and Frank , rebuffed Frank 's attempt at reconciliation and left him to depart alone . In December 2000 , Ian Hyland of the Sunday Mirror voted the scene in which Peggy slaps both Pat and Frank as one of the " TV fights of the year " , saying " It was Peggy 's speech which really made it a Bonfire Night to remember . But the slaps were equally well dispatched . " Commenting on Reid 's exit , Windsor has said , " We fell out when I found out he was leaving because it was a shock for me . I was really upset . I 've known him 30 odd years and I really like working with him . We had a great relationship as friends as well as performers . I got my own back when I had to slap him after I found out he was fooling around with Pat . I did the slap twice as I didn 't think I did it hard enough the first time . "

= = = Sabbatical = = =

Peggy was written out of EastEnders in 2003 , sent to live in Rio de Janeiro with her son Grant for two years , while Windsor took a sabbatical from the show after being diagnosed with the Epstein @-@ Barr virus . Windsor had previously never taken more than two weeks leave annually during her eight years on the show , as Peggy was considered such a central character to the series . Windsor 's absence was originally only supposed to be a year long . She stated at the time : " This has been a very hard decision for me to make because I 'm so happy here on EastEnders but it 's been a long time without a proper break . I just feel some time off would be good for me and for the character too . " Louise Berridge , then EastEnders ' executive producer , commented : " Barbara has been an absolute trouper for more than eight years on this show . We hope she has a great time and look forward to bringing her back with a big story in 2004 . "

Although Peggy did return briefly in 2004 to attend her daughter Sam 's wedding to Andy Hunter (Michael Higgs) , it was not until 2005 that she resumed her role as a series regular . Her full return was announced in January 2005 , with John Yorke , the BBC controller of continuing drama series , stating he was " delighted " as " [Peggy] is a hugely loved character and one we think will be stirring things up from the moment she steps back into Walford . " Windsor said that she was " over the moon " to return , adding : " I had a great time when I came back to film for a couple of weeks recently . It really reminded me that the square is where I feel at home . " BBC executives hoped that Peggy 's return would help to revive EastEnders ' ratings . Her absence coincided with a two @-@ year ratings slump for EastEnders , with David Liddiment in The Guardian drawing direct correlation between her return and the show 's " ratings rejuvenation " . The episode in which she returned was watched by 10 million viewers , winning EastEnders a 47 % audience share in the

timeslot .

= = = Relationship with Archie Mitchell ; running for local government = = =

In March 2008 , the BBC announced that Larry Lamb had been cast as Archie Mitchell , the brother of Peggy 's late husband Eric . Archie was scripted as a love @-@ interest for Peggy and Peggy 's backstory was retconned to incorporate a romantic history with Archie . Portrayed as an adulterous villain , Archie began controlling Peggy , changing her clothing and her hair style and instructing her on how to behave .

In 2009 Peggy ran as an independent candidate in the local council elections against Archie 's wishes . Writers wanted a storyline that allowed Peggy to stand up for her beliefs , and felt that running for local government would allow her to speak passionately about the community . After a scene showed Janine Butcher (Charlie Brooks) asking Peggy , " Where would Tony Blair have been without Alastair Campbell ? " , Campbell responded by giving advice to Peggy in a video blog . A response from Peggy was then recorded , thanking Campbell for his input . Peggy pulled out of the election at Archie 's request ahead of their wedding , however the storyline set up a later episode in which Boris Johnson , Mayor of London made a guest appearance in EastEnders . On 1 October 2009 , Johnson appeared in the show as himself , visiting Walford and The Queen Victoria and conversing with Peggy . Johnson commented on his appearance : " It was , of course , a tremendous honour to step inside that most venerable of London landmarks , The Queen Vic , and share a scene with another of the capital 's icons , the fabulous Barbara Windsor . " Executive producer Diederick Santer stated : " We couldn 't let the visit pass without the Mayor entering London 's most famous pub , The Queen Vic , and meeting its formidable and politically active landlady Peggy Mitchell . " The episode was watched by 8 million viewers , winning EastEnders a 38 % audience share in the timeslot .

Peggy and Archie 's wedding was filmed on location in North London in January 2009 and was screened on 2 April 2009 that year in an hour @-@ long special . To promote the storyline , EastEnders screened a trailer showing Peggy being assembled in her wedding outfit by a robot , which symbolised Archie 's control of her . Realising the extent to which Archie had been controlling and trying to change her throughout their engagement , Peggy gave him an ultimatum at the altar : he either accept the real her , or call the wedding off . Archie chose to marry her , though Tim Teeman for The Times commented : " ' [T] he real Peggy ' is a hazy concept : there ? s Peggy the big @-@ hearted East End landlady and Peggy the crone famous for rasping ' Get ahht my pub ' to anyone who crosses her path . For someone into evil mind control , Archie has brilliant taste . The wedding outfit he had chosen for Peggy was much nicer than the tatty net curtains that even Miss Havisham would have rejected that the ' real Peggy ' chose to marry in . " Peggy and Archie 's wedding was watched by 10 @.@ 6 million viewers , winning EastEnders a 48 % audience share . A further 1 @.@ 2 million viewers watched the episode 's repeat on BBC Three at 10 pm . However , the marriage lasts only as long as the reception ; when Peggy realises Archie has been manipulating other members of his family , Peggy throws him out and a feud ignites between Archie and the Mitchell clan .

Peggy resumes her plan to run for council in 2010 , but is furious to discover that Pat is also running . The storyline introduces the character of Harvey Freeman , played by Martin Jarvis , a freelance journalist who is reporting on the election . Harvey is a potential love interest for both Peggy and Pat , and causes friction between the friends .

= = = 2010 departure = = =

On 28 October 2009 it was announced that Windsor had quit the show and would leave in 2010 after 15 years . She said : " EastEnders has been wonderful to me and it 's no secret that it changed my life all of those years ago . I 'll be so sad to leave Peggy behind ; she 's such a wonderful character to play . I have had the pleasure of working with a marvellous cast and crew and have made many lasting good friends . To have had the honour of showing the Queen around the set is

something that will stay with me forever . " Executive producer Diederick Santer said : " Barbara has contributed so much to EastEnders over the last 15 years , plus countless episodes , and countless amazing storylines . Peggy Mitchell is a truly iconic character , and along with Steve McFadden and Ross Kemp , Barbara has made the Mitchells the premier family of British soap . " Windsor filmed her final scene on 16 July 2010 . Peggy 's final episode , which aired on 10 September 2010 , was preceded by a number of television trailers in August and a new section on the EastEnders website dedicated to the character . The episode ended with a special reworking of the piano version of the EastEnders theme tune known as " Julia 's Theme " , called " Peggy 's Theme " . Tribute was then paid to her in a clip programme , Peggy Mitchell : Queen of the Vic . Peggy 's final episode attracted 10 @. @ 1 million viewers , and was the second most @-@ watched programme in the week of 6 ? 12 September .

At the time of the announcement of Windsor 's departure , it was reported she wanted to take a two @-@ year break , but after that would like to make return appearances as Peggy . However , in September 2010 , she ruled out a return , saying , " It was a bit selfish of me but I didn 't want to be killed off . I am never going to go back but I like to think that [Peggy] 's still out there somewhere . " At the recording of the new series of The Rob Brydon Show for BBC Two , Brydon asked if she would consider returning , to which Windsor replied , " Never say never " .

= = = Cancer return and death = = =

After making three separate returns in September 2013 , September 2014 and another in February 2015 to commemorate 30 years of EastEnders in EastEnders Live Week , Windsor made an unannounced return to EastEnders in 2016 , appearing in the episode broadcast on 15 January . After this , it was announced that the character was to be killed off , losing her battle with breast cancer . The scenes were filmed in secret in November 2015 , following Windsor 's personal decision for Peggy to be killed . She said : " Peggy is a character close to my heart but I made the decision a while ago that I need to say goodbye to Peggy once and for all as otherwise she will always be there , urging me to go back and that is something I need to shut the door on . After thinking long and hard about it , I realised that it is time for me and the audience to say our final farewells to the lady who I have loved for many years and I thought that whilst [executive producer Dominic Treadwell @-@ Collins] , who I adore , is still in charge I want him to be the one to oversee it . I am grateful that Dominic has accepted my decision and together , since late last summer , we have been secretly plotting Peggy ? s last scenes . " Treadwell @-@ Collins said , " when [Windsor] told me her decision back in the summer [2015] , we both had a little cry before getting excited about how Peggy Mitchell , the matriarch to end all matriarchs could bid her final farewell to Albert Square . In Peggy Mitchell , Barbara has created one of the greatest ever characters on British television , someone who has become as synonymous with EastEnders as The Queen Vic itself . So this is the end of an EastEnders era . But it is also an opportunity to send Peggy Mitchell out in style in what will be one of the most heartbreaking , uplifting and epic exits an EastEnders character has ever had . We can 't wait to have Barbara back at EastEnders , even if it is for the final time . The most professional of professionals on set and off , and a true friend , we have all been working harder than ever to make Barbara and Peggy Mitchell proud . " Windsor resumed filming on 21 March 2016 .

On 3 May 2016 , it was revealed that Peggy would refuse her cancer treatment and decide to spend time with her family . Windsor said it was a " special week " of episodes with " lots of surprises " that would be " a perfect ending for Peggy " . Peggy 's final scenes aired on 17 May 2016 , but her voice is heard in the following episode , which aired on 19 May 2016 .

= = Reception = =

Peggy has been described by the BBC as one of EastEnders ' " most high @-@ profile characters . " Windsor has won several awards for her performance as Peggy . In 1999 , she was named BBC Personality of the Year . She won Best Actress at the 1999 British Soap Awards , and was granted a

Lifetime Achievement award in 2009 . She also won a Lifetime Achievement award at the 2001 Inside Soap awards , and was named the UK 's top soap matriarch in a 2009 Inside Soap poll . She also won the Soap Legend award at the 2009 TV Now Awards . Furthermore , Windsor was nominated for the Outstanding Serial Drama Performance award at the 2008 and 2009 National Television Awards , Best Soap Actress at the 2007 TV Now Awards , Best Actress at the 2009 British Soap Awards , and Best Actress at the 2009 Inside Soap awards .

The character was viewed unfavourably by a proportion of viewers in 1996 , when Peggy discovered that Mark Fowler (Todd Carty) was HIV positive and subsequently mounted a hate campaign against him . Windsor has since revealed that she was initially opposed to the storyline :

Actress and writer Jacquetta May , who played the character Rachel Kominski between 1991 and 1993 , has discussed the storyline and the role of women in an article about EastEnders . According to May , the scriptwriters were faced with a problem once Peggy , " a key figure of the community " , was shown to exhibit such " pig @-@ headed ignorance and appalling prejudice " . In order for Peggy to be redeemed , she had to be seen to be punished , and so the character was given breast @-@ cancer later that year . May comments , " Peggy , malicious gossip and bigot , herself becomes the victim of a life @-@ threatening illness . At Christmas they run a Christian forgiveness story . Peggy calls on Mark and tells him she now knows what it is like to suffer as he has . She apologises , thus underlining one of the basic tenets of the programme : underneath the skin we are all the same , human and vulnerable , and recognition of this should unite us not divide us . Along the way , a great deal of useful information about these illnesses was broadcast . So , although EastEnders endlessly repeats its conservative format , and although all issues are there primarily to feed the great hungry story @-@ beast , its positive by @-@ products cannot be denied . "

EastEnders has received praise for the handling of Peggy 's breast cancer storyline , as she was a rare media portrayal of an older matriarchal woman with the disease . Older women are at higher risk of being diagnosed ; however , in 2001 , it was reported that media representation of breast cancer is skewed towards younger women in their 20s or 30s , as they are seen as " more tragic " or " more sexy " in media terms . A 2000 study by Kitzinger and Henderson showed that 94 % of newspaper coverage on non @-@ celebrity women with breast cancer was on those aged under 50 . Source organisations working with EastEnders on the storyline have commented : " [The team] decided it was going to be [Peggy] and very rightly so . Bang on , the right age [...] perfect dramatic licence in terms of her sons that she was going to have to share this terrible news with , and how would she share it ? Every female would have that problem . How would you tell your children ? And they followed that with her . She was exactly the right person . " The storyline also received media criticism , for the use of a breast care nurse , who was used to counsel Peggy and translate medical terminology into lay terms for viewers ; a character who could provide both a dramatic and educational purpose . However , not all oncology units in the UK offer breast care nurses , and the character presented " particularly positive messages " concerning patient choice and control over treatment options . Because of this , the UK press dubbed the storyline " didactic " . The storyline was also criticised because Peggy received her cancer test results after six days , which prompted cancer charities to warn that not all patients would receive the same treatment .

In December 2008 , Bupa doctors criticised UK soaps for presenting unhealthy role models to viewing audiences . Paul Bignell and Cole Moreton for The Independent refuted the accusation , naming Peggy as an acceptable role model for her devotion to her family , protecting her nieces and loving her sons despite their numerous misdemeanours . Peggy Mitchell 's (Barbara Windsor) 2010 departure was watched over 11 million viewers .

= = In popular culture = =

Peggy has been spoofed in several programmes , including the ITV cartoon sketch show 2DTV , and Harry Hill 's TV Burp . In the BBC 's Big Impression , impressionist Ronni Ancona performs as Peggy , shuffling around on her knees to exaggerate Barbara Windsor 's petite height , and regularly using the catchphrase " Get outta my pub ! " Impressionist Jan Ravens has spoofed her in the BBC 's Dead Ringers , also mimicking her cheeky laugh . Commenting on Ancona 's impersonation ,

Windsor has said : " she does me brilliantly . I told her it was a great compliment . She made me realise my little hands wave around a lot . "

In November 2005 , Peggy appeared in a sketch for Children in Need , which was a crossover between EastEnders and The Catherine Tate Show . The sketch featured Peggy , Little Mo Mitchell (Kacey Ainsworth) , Stacey Slater (Lacey Turner) and Catherine Tate as her character Lauren Cooper . A 2006 episode of Doctor Who entitled " Army of Ghosts " features a fictional EastEnders scene in which Peggy tells one of the ghosts to " get outta my pub ! "