



TORVILL & DEAN



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WILL TUDOR AND POPPY LEE FRIAR STAR IN NEW ITV BIOPIC, TORVILL & DEAN

Brand new one-off drama, *Torvill & Dean*, premieres this Christmas on ITV. Starring Will Tudor (*Game Of Thrones*, *Humans*) and Poppy Lee Friar (*Ackley Bridge*, *In The Club*) as the iconic leads, the feature-length film narrates Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean's early years and the creative impetus that finally drove them to become ice dancing royalty.

Written by acclaimed film, television and theatre writer, William Ivory (*Made in Dagenham*, *Burton and Taylor*), the one-off drama has been produced by leading production company Darlow Smithson Productions and will follow the pair's humble beginnings and family life in Nottingham and how they came together to become Olympic champions.

Acting royalty, Anita Dobson (*The Rebel*, *Call the Midwife*) takes the role of Miss Perry, Jayne's first coach at the Nottingham Ice Stadium, whilst Stephen Tompkinson (*The Split*, *DCI Banks*) plays Jayne's father George and Jo Hartley (*Bliss*, *This Is England '90*) plays her mum Betty.

Dean Andrews (*The Moorside*, *Last Tango in Halifax*) and Christine Bottomley (*Fearless*, *In the Club*) will play Chris's parents, Colin and Mavis, and Jaime Winstone (*Babs*, *After Hours*) is Janet Sawbridge, the ice dancing instructor who pairs Chris and Jayne together for the first time. Susan Earl (*I Want My Wife Back*, *Reggie Perrin*) takes the role of Betty Dean.

Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean commented:

“We feel very honoured that ITV have commissioned this film based on what was a very significant period in each of our lives. We have thoroughly enjoyed the time we have spent with William Ivory and the team at Darlow Smithson sharing experiences of our passion for skating, the life long friendship that came through our sport and everything that it took to achieve our eventual goal of becoming Olympic champions.”

Torvill & Dean is executive produced by Darlow Smithson’s Emily Dalton and writer William Ivory. It is produced by Emma Burge (*Shameless, The Village*) and directed by Gillies MacKinnon (*Hideous Kinky, Small Faces*). Northern Ireland Screen are co-production partners with Darlow Smithson and international distribution is handled by Endemol Shine International.



Foreword by writer, William Ivory

Torvill & Dean is the story of ice dancing's greatest partnership. It begins in the late 1960s, in the coalfields of Nottinghamshire and on the largest council estate in Europe – Clifton Estate, positioned on the Southern edge of that same city – and concludes at the 1984 Olympic Games in Sarajevo when Jayne and Chris danced their Bolero and achieved a score of 12 perfect 6.0s, thus securing gold medals and a place in skating history.

But it's not a sports movie. I'm not even sure it's a sports story. Certainly, when I was first asked to tackle the telling of Jayne and Chris's odyssey, about five years ago, I declined – precisely because, at that stage, I thought this *was* the task ahead. And it wasn't that I had any issues with recounting such a tale – I had watched Jayne and Chris as a lad, and was hugely proud of what they had achieved for the country, particularly as residents of my own home town. Furthermore, as somebody who was sports mad, I was only too aware of their astonishing athleticism, their technical expertise, their competitiveness and their determination. It was all unquestionably inspiring – but from a writing point of view, I believed that here was a story probably best suited to documentary: a story of undeniable brilliance and unstoppable success but one which lacked the psychological subtext I always look to explore in my own practice. In short, I couldn't see what I might unearth or add by way of rendering Jayne and Chris's journey as a drama.

However, over time, and having at last met them, my view started to shift. Not only did I realise that there was SO much about Torvill and Dean as skaters which still lay undiscovered, Jayne and Chris as people were (to borrow an analogy from the world of the pits where Chris's dad worked) one of the richest, most unexpected and totally unmined seams I had ever encountered.

Quickly, I came to realise that this story of perfection – for that was what they achieved with their Olympic Bolero routine, *and* how their partnership was more generally described – was extraordinarily intricate and contradictory.

To understand it fully, one first has to realise that ice dance is one of those rare sporting disciplines in which artistry is at least as important as technical prowess. The usual rules of being fastest, highest, furthest, don't apply in quite the same way. And when it comes to art, what *is* perfection? Not simply from the point of view of the judges, but from the perspective of those delivering the content? It is a mind bogglingly complicated thing, is what I discovered – but it was also the very heart of the drama.

Jayne and Chris came from tough, working-class backgrounds, neither had a great deal of money growing up and neither was being inculcated in the ways of fine art as they moved into young adulthood. What they were doing, however, was what so many other Nottinghamians at the time were, which was escaping to the local rink – a good place to hang out, to skate and of course, to literally bump into members of the opposite sex. But here was the thing about Jayne and Chris – from an early age, they weren't *actually* doing that. They really were different to those around them because from the outset they went onto the ice in order to discover the thing which was ultimately to define them as skaters and artists, which was how to reflect how they *felt*, when they skated. In other words, though they were technically peerless, it was never the technical which first motivated Torvill and Dean. It was always the content and especially how to refract their own lives, their own beliefs, their very *selves* through dance, which was their *raison d'être*.

Once I understood this and looked back at all they had achieved and the manner in which they did it, I was even more awe struck, marvelling that they had been so brilliant for so long – because it seemed to me that this perfect (there's that word again) partnership was founded very much on the principle of yin and yang and contained at least as much friction as it did harmony.

At its core, and because of the particulars of how they had grown up and the paths they had taken onto the ice, I became convinced that Chris danced to transcend life and Jayne to transform it. She, ever the Romantic, lit flames beneath the stultifying streets on which she walked to emerge butterfly-like, as something better, brighter, more vibrant – whereas Chris, it seemed to me, danced to still his rage, to impose order on chaos and ultimately to turn his back on a world which was spiteful and arbitrarily cruel. The point, though, was that there was an overlap. And the X of cross-pollination with Torvill and Dean was beauty. Both Jayne and Chris sought out the exquisite in life – perhaps for different reasons but always with the same forensic determination.

That may all sound a little esoteric, because of course, for much of the time, Jayne and Chris, were at the sharp end of sporting endeavour. They were part of the athletic elite and *that* meant long, long, hours of practice, early in the morning and late at night. It meant broken bones and torn ligaments and endless blisters as well as dead eyed exhaustion, training spats and interminable

hours on trains trailing across Europe. It meant giving up jobs, a social life, wealth (Jayne and Chris's glory days were before the advent of professionalism) and, ultimately, romance – which is why what I've written above isn't esoteric at all.

Jayne and Chris fell in love many years ago. They bonded over a shared belief, and a shared need, to refract all of life's vicissitudes through dance – on ice! But they never became an 'item'. They have found happiness with husbands and wives and family of their own and yet the bond between them remains as strong as ever – as passionate, as bloody minded, as committed and as beautiful as it was almost fifty years ago when they first started dancing together. That they never took their partnership, their love, beyond the world of ice dance is the other question the film explores – and the answer to *that* is tied up with the first point I was trying to make: that they are artists. They are artists who chose ice dance as the means to express their creative view. And the British, the European, the World crowns – even the Olympic gold medals and the MBEs, the vast and impressive array of titles which garland their achievements, they don't *intrinsically* speak of what Jayne and Chris are about, what they are, to every last atom of their beings, attempting to do when they dance – and that is to deliver the sublime, through their art. *This* is what matters to them – more than *anything*. And that is why Torvill and Dean *isn't* a sports movie.





Interview with Poppy Lee Friar

Poppy Lee Friar plays Jayne Torvill in the upcoming drama. She tells us about the journey the pair go on throughout the film and discusses Torvill and Dean's unique and strong bond.

"It is a very emotional script. The story charts the lives of Torvill and Dean from when they are young. They meet for the first time as teenagers and there's a lot of passion and love involved. They develop such a strong bond with each other.

"A lot of the dialogue between them is very intense. Their arguments and disagreements about the craft and how to approach it. It is moving. The drama takes viewers right up until their Olympic performance at Sarajevo where they work to achieve their moment of glory. It is a truly remarkable story."

She admits she couldn't skate before taking on the role and has thoroughly enjoyed learning this new skill.

"I got a call from my agent asking, 'Here's an audition for Torvill & Dean. Can you skate?' To which my answer was, 'No, I can't skate!' I'd only been ice skating the average amount of times at Christmas and a couple of times here and there.

“After the audition they asked me to send over a video of myself ice skating, so I headed to an ice rink and got someone to film some footage of me skating. My standard was very basic at that stage but, at their request, I tried to add some balletic arm movements, because not only are Torvill and Dean great skaters, they are great dancers. It’s very much about that posture, poise and elegance of the dancing.

“Ideally, I’d have liked a year to train for the ice skating after getting the role, but we only had two weeks. We were obviously never going to match Torvill and Dean’s standard in that time! Even so, we got the basics down. I really enjoyed skating and still do.

“It was also brilliant to have such great teachers – ice skating professionals Robert Burgerman, Penny Coomes and Nick Buckland. I just wanted to soak up as much of their talent as possible and learn backwards crossovers, progressives and all of that stuff.

“We do have stunt doubles in place for some of the scenes – Olympic ice skaters Penny Coomes and Nick Buckland did all of the intense ice skating. If I could have squeezed in a triple axel I would have tried though!”

Poppy goes on to discuss how Torvill and Dean are such national treasures and how special it was to have the chance to speak to Jayne and Chris themselves during filming.

“It’s strange because you know Torvill and Dean’s iconic name, but you don’t really know how. I knew of Bolero, vaguely, but I wasn’t around at the time. It was my parents’ generation, but I had seen their original Bolero performance at some stage on TV.

“My main reference to them was from Dancing On Ice, so when I initially thought about them I associated them with that. What’s been great about this process is looking at their back catalogue of work - not only the Bolero but Mack and Mabel and their later routines. They danced to John Lennon’s Imagine at one point and that’s a very emotional piece.

“Myself and Will Tudor (who plays Christopher Dean) spoke to Jayne and Chris which was very special. To hear their voices and them talk about their background was invaluable, as well as just seeing their behaviour with each other. It’s a relationship built on so much trust and it’s clear that they completely understand each other which is important to our story. It is crazy to think of Torvill without Dean. They are such a pair.

“In the drama, we explore how they both came from humble backgrounds in Nottingham. Jayne grew up with her mother and father in a small house. When she got her first job she worked as an insurance clerk – a stable, reliable job.

“Jayne was a shy person but had this desire to express herself and perform. She started going to the ice rink aged about eight and fell in love with ice skating which, in itself, was probably quite unusual for her parents.

“As a young girl, she maybe felt a little bit repressed because she didn’t know how to express herself. The dancing, ballet and ice skating is a different form of expression. She didn’t have to express herself through words; she did it through performance.



“I think ice skating was Jayne’s chance of an escape. Chris and the ice skating offered that romantic, magical escape for her.”

“Then as a teenager, Jayne and Chris met. Eventually deciding to pursue their goals and dreams and gave up their jobs as the insurance clerk and policeman to dedicate all of their time to the skating. That’s a great thing to take away in itself. They had this passion and love for something and took a risk to pursue that. And look at what they achieved. It’s remarkable.”

Despite now being synonymous with each other, Poppy describes how the drama depicts Torvill and Dean’s first meeting and impressions of one another.

“I think Jayne’s first impression of Chris was as the blond prince. I think she was mesmerised by what he had - this intense passion and creativity and desire for perfection. It was something she felt was lacking from herself and the partners she had been dancing with previously.

“Chris wasn’t a slacker. He wouldn’t let someone get away with not trying. I think Jayne was amazed and impressed, and wanted to work with someone like that. I think she admired Chris and that’s probably the basis of her fondness and love for him.

“Jayne had grit and determination. They worked together for so long and so hard, achieving such great heights. She was a fighter, and you see her grow from that shy, meek young girl to an Olympic gold medallist. You don’t get to that level of success without having something within, being defiant and having drive and passion.

“I think ice skating was Jayne’s chance of an escape. Her mother thought stability was the way forward. At the time it was about not working in a factory and going to secretarial college. Chris and the ice skating offered that romantic, magical escape for her.”

Poppy believes what makes the pair so special is their ability to tell stories and develop performances full of emotion.

“They are very different characters. They both worked on the routines technically and Chris and Jayne would both come up with ideas, but they are exceptional storytellers together. What makes their routines so special is that they put so much emotion into their performances. As a team that worked so well, and they are still doing it today which is testament to their bond and working relationship.

“Jayne said herself that on the ice she becomes a character. They were essentially actors as well, both learning how to tell the story in these routines. Michael Crawford helped them with the acting and it’s very much a performance art. It’s not just ice skating. They were dancing and acting at the same time. They were superb at all of those things and that’s why they achieved what they did.”

Poppy talks about how despite never being romantically involved, there is a powerful love between the pair.

“There is obviously love there between them. The relationship wouldn’t have lasted as long as it has without love. For their art and for each other and they work so well together as a team professionally, it almost transcends a romantic relationship. However, they have this unspoken communication with each other. It’s like soulmates but in a working way as well.”

She goes on to discuss Stephen Tompkinson who plays Jayne's father, George, in the drama. She tells us how she was a fan of his work before getting to act with him, along with Anita Dobson and Jo Hartley.

"I watched Wild At Heart religiously when it was on, so when it was announced Stephen would be playing my dad it was so strange. All I could think of was wanting to be in South Africa with him! Both Jo Hartley (who plays Jayne's mum Betty) and Stephen were lovely to work with and played the characters really well.

"It was also great working with Anita Dobson, who plays an ice skating coach called Miss Perry. Anita is lovely - she is so sweet and gave such lovely advice. She has had such a long career and was a joy to work with."

Filming took place in Belfast, and Poppy describes how the production team went to great lengths to capture the look and feel of the period, as well as recreate details of their iconic Bolero routine.

"We filmed at Dundonald International Ice Bowl in Belfast. We were filming in 2018, and most of the ice rinks, including the one in Nottingham, now look very modern. That's why we had to use one ice rink to double as quite a few all over the world. Some CGI helps make it look of the time.

"Most of the work, however, went into creating the ice skating costumes from scratch, particularly the costumes for the likes of Mack and Mabel and the iconic purple Bolero costumes for Will and I to wear. It was also great fun to be able to wear those seventies and eighties' clothes – the funky trousers and polo neck jumpers.

"Aside from them winning Olympic gold, what is magical about it is the story first and foremost. Bolero is a doomed love story. A Romeo and Juliet ill-fated journey of two lovers up to a volcano and at the very end they throw themselves in. It's very dramatic.

"The costumes are billowing in the wind and Jayne and Chris are so in sync with each other. It's flawless. Technically, from the small amounts I've learned recently, their leg lines are completely identical and they are completely in their own emotional zone with each other. It's so graceful and very emotional."

In the drama, Jayne tells Chris: "We dance our dance and nothing else matters." Poppy explains why she thinks this motto is ideal for the modern age.

"That line is about being true to yourself. It's a perfect time to hear something like that. Social media today is so invasive and people start comparing their lives or trying to be like someone else. The art of investing in yourself and finding out what you like and dislike is easily lost, so that's great advice. Dance your dance. Find out what your dance is, love your dance and don't worry about anyone else."



Interview with Will Tudor

Will Tudor plays Christopher Dean in the drama. He tells us how he was aware of the iconic pair whilst growing up, despite not knowing their story in full.

“When I first read the script, I found it surprisingly emotional. Like many others, I didn’t know the story behind Torvill and Dean. I just knew they performed these amazing routines. Seeing the journey they went on and the dedication they needed to have to get to that level was inspiring, especially as an actor. Getting the opportunity to see the process behind their art was fascinating and really moving, particularly learning about the trials and tribulations of what they went through to get there.

“Despite not knowing their story, I was very much aware of them growing up. They are part of the cultural fabric of Britain. I had seen clips of their performances but coming to do the audition and then preparing to take on the part, I watched all of their routines.

“I have to say it’s a very emotional experience watching them. Firstly, it’s a beautiful medium, but it’s also moving seeing the passion they put into each performance. You completely understand how they got to where they are. It’s going to be very nice for people to see more of that in this film and their routines shown in a dramatic light.”

Like Poppy, he had only been ice skating a handful of times before taking on the role, so describes how fortunate he felt to have such incredible mentors throughout the process and how proud he is of how far he and his co-star have come.

“I’d only been ice skating twice before. Once was for a birthday party and I remember thinking, ‘This is great fun’ but I wasn’t able to corner in any capacity. There was a lot of bumping into the sides! The second time was on a date, which is probably not the best idea for someone who has only been skating once before!

“We were very lucky to be trained by some of the very best in the business - Rob Burgerman, Nick Buckland and Penny Coomes - who were so patient with us and the nicest people. I’m very proud of my improvement and seeing how both Poppy (who plays Jayne Torvill) and I have come on is really cool.

“Stopping on the ice is such a basic thing and yet it is very hard to do. You have to have absolute balance to be able to get it right and have a sense of the ice and how your blades interact with it. Something that is actually quite simple requires a lot of preparation work before you can get it right.

“There were a few hairy moments. The skates have these toe picks on which are for jumps, spins and things like that, to get a bit of purchase on the ice. And every so often you might clip one on the ice, meaning you would end up running down the ice with arms flailing. Then you would recover and feel a bit like a rock star before realising you probably didn’t look cool at all.”

Famous for their Nottingham roots, one of the big challenges for Will was to get Christopher’s accent right. He discusses how he perfected this and the pressures of playing a living person.


“Apparently the Nottingham accent is a notoriously difficult accent to perfect, but we were lucky in that the writer, William Ivory, is from there and knows the area very well. Having his voice in the script helped a lot, as well as his knowledge of how people speak in that area. We also had a voice coach. It was something I was worried about to start with because there was not much time to work on it, but I think it has come out all right.

“What we know of Chris and Jayne is much later in their development, much further on from when our story starts. As such their accents weren’t and aren’t as strong as they were when they were younger.

“We spoke to them about a week into shooting. We had already been with the characters for a bit and had done a lot of research, so we were very much in a Torvill and Dean mindset and then suddenly we’re speaking to them. That was a peculiar but wonderful experience.

“The thing I took away from it was that they were so kind and generous. What they were quite insistent on was that we were able to put our own slant on this story. They gave us that blessing, which was invaluable. When you are playing a real person there is that worry that, gosh, I have to serve them.

“But in the work they had done with the writer William Ivory they were, obviously, aware this was a dramatisation of their lives, so it was the essence of who they were and that’s what we could aim for.



“Ice dancing allowed them to become more than they could be as individuals. They went around the world and did extraordinary things.”

“We also learned what may seem like small things but they really helped. They said that Chris was always pacing before routines, which in itself is a small detail but, actually informs quite a lot about personality. As an actor, that was very helpful.

“It is a very honest portrayal of their story. I think that’s what the public will really like. Being able to see behind these perfect routines. It’s a very moving story in that regard as you really see the human side of them.”

Will goes on to give more detail about Christopher’s upbringing and how ice skating allowed him to express himself.

“Chris and Jayne both came from very humble backgrounds. Chris’s father was a miner, and it was expected he would follow in his father’s footsteps. Chris joining the police force was a bit of a rebellion, but that sense of rebellion is probably what drove him to be as successful as he was.

“His parents split up when he was very young and it was his stepmother who introduced him to ice skating. You see how these experiences formed his life and his passion for ice skating. He needed an outlet for the anger he had and ice skating provided a platform where he was able to truly express himself. At that time and where Chris grew up, it wasn’t the done thing to be open about how you felt or to let that out. I don’t think he talked with his father or stepmother about the divorce and them getting together.

“It all comes from a drive for perfection, and that perfection being a true expression of how he was feeling. I think that’s what Jayne saw and felt it was something she wanted to be a part of, because when it comes from a real place nothing can better that.”

He reveals that there wasn’t an immediate spark when the pair first met, but it was their passion that made them work so well as a duo.

“Jayne was also an incredibly good skater when she was young. Then they worked together and used their individual talents to complement each other. Just like their personalities complement each other.

“Their relationship was tempestuous but also threaded through with this intense love for each other. Jayne and Chris told us that when they first started skating together they didn’t have this moment of a spark where they thought, ‘This is the person I’m going to achieve all these amazing things with.’ That developed over time and their personalities gelled.

“What’s great about this film is we see that working relationship. We see where they clashed and why they clashed. Ultimately it shows the passion they both have. Neither would have been able to remain in the state they remain in to this day without the passion for ice dance. And the knowledge that the other one was their answer to everything they had been asking.

“They both brought things to the table for the routines. Jayne and Chris said to us that Chris was very much the ideas man. But the way they worked together brought out these ideas. They probably wouldn’t have been able to do any of this with other people. Torvill and Dean have this amazing connection and chemistry together.

“Their relationship almost felt like it was deeper than a normal relationship. They have this complete, absolute understanding of each other and of what the other is thinking, both on and off the ice. You could see that when speaking to them. They wouldn’t have been able to do what they did without that connection.

“Ice dancing allowed them to become more than they could be as individuals. They went around the world and did extraordinary things.”

He goes on to talk about their iconic Bolero dance and filming the scenes on the ice in Belfast.

“The story of Bolero is so interesting. Normally those dances would be three separate pieces of music and they would mix up the tempos so the dancers would be able to show all kinds of techniques on the ice, but Chris wanted one long piece of music so they could tell their story and it was all the better for it. They were able to act out these ice dramas and transcend where they were and what they were.

“We filmed at the Dundonald Ice Bowl in Belfast. We were very lucky to have the use of the rink and it was a very versatile space. The difficulty with shooting at Nottingham Ice Rink was that because of the work of Chris and Jayne and the funding they managed to get for that area, it’s now too ‘2018’, so would not have worked for our drama. The staff at Dundonald were wonderful and it was a nice place to be for two weeks of night shoots.

“We also had fantastic costume designers. Walking around in these very tight numbers was quite extraordinary but we were so lucky because the costumes really did give us a sense of the era. The material used to make the Bolero costumes came from the same fabric the originals were made with giving a real sense of authenticity running through the production.

“The very first time we put the Bolero costumes on was in a scene where we are walking to the performance surrounded by all these supporting artists. The air completely changed in the room because everyone knows these costumes. They are so iconic, and there we are as Torvill and Dean with all of our hair and make-up done. It was a really nice moment. We got a real sense of what that must have felt like and been like for them just before that performance with the whole world watching.”

Will concludes by explaining what an extraordinary story their lives are and how they’ve become such national treasures.

“It is an extraordinary story. The fact they now have streets and squares named after them shows just how much the British people have taken them into their hearts. Not only were they incredibly good at what they did, they were also very humble.

“How expressive they were on the ice is almost mirrored by how shy they were off the ice when they were doing interviews. I think there is something very quintessentially British about that. People like that.

“Chris and Jayne said to us they weren’t nervous when they were doing these big performances, including at the Sarajevo Winter Olympics. They weren’t nervous because they had this absolute focus, drive and love for their craft.”



CAST CREDITS

Christopher Dean	WILL TUDOR
Jayne Torvill	POPPY LEE FRIAR
Young Christopher	MASON HART
Young Jayne	DANIELLE HADFIELD-ASHTON
Colin Dean	DEAN ANDREWS
Mavis Dean	CHRISTINE BOTTOMLEY
George Torvill	STEPHEN TOMPKINSON
Betty Torvill	JO HARTLEY
Betty Dawson	SUSAN EARL
Brian Dawson	JOE DOCHERTY
Miss Perry	ANITA DOBSON
Janet Sawbridge	JAIME WINSTONE
Betty Callaway	ANNABELLE APSION
Aidy	DANIEL FITZSIMONS
Young Aidy	DANIEL PRICE
Leanne	CASSIE BRADLEY
Shirley	DOMINIQUE MOORE
Ella	SOPHIE ROBERTSON

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Executive Producer	EMILY DALTON
Executive Producer / Writer	WILLIAM IVORY
Producer	EMMA BURGE
Head of Production	HOLLY SAIT
Director	GILLIES MACKINNON
Director of Photography	DAMIEN ELLIOTT
Line Producer	WIN MENSAH-LARBIE
Location Manager	BRENDA GOUGH
Casting Director	MICHELLE SMITH
Art Director	JOHN WEST
Production Designer	JULIAN NAGEL
Costumer Designer	MARION MCCARTHY
Make Up Designer	MARIA MOORE
Editor	ANNE SOPEL

