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The Adventures of Black Beauty

UK TV series : 1972 : dir. Gerry Poulson : Fremantle / London Weekend TV : 52 x 35 min
prod: : scr: David Butler : dir.ph.:

[Stacy Dorning](#)
Judi Bowker; Roderick Shaw; Tony Malden; William Lucas; Charlotte Mitchell; Michael Culver;
Frederick Bennett; Leo Dolan; George Fisher

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	♀	M	♂	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
2020a	3	4	5	516	-	-	-	-	-	No	<i>unseen</i>



Getting your hair trapped in the bridle was just one of the hazards of work on this series, as Judi Bowker discovered

Source: TV Times

Halliwell's Television Companion review:

"Two well-brought-up children, a horse, and a country estate in Victorian days. Pleasantly made adventures with no relation to Anna Sewell's book."

The Golden Age of Children's Television
note:

"...More sedate equine stars were seen in "**My Friend Flicka**"... and, from Britain, "**Follyfoot**" and the ever popular "**The Adventures of Black Beauty**", which starred William Lucas and Judi Bowker as father and daughter. Stacy Dorning [later] took over from Judi Bowker..."



Stacy Dorning (left) and Judi Bowker. It's interesting to note how far horses have become differentiated in the affections of humans from other farmyard beasts of burden. Goats, oxen and camels never engendered this sort of fondness, while pigs, probably the most intelligent of them all, are far down the popularity ratings.

Sources (left): The Golden Age of Children's Television, (right) TV Times

25 Years of ITV – 1955-1980 – caption:

“Anna Sewell’s classic story for children about a girl and her horse provided the basis for a drama series (LWT).”

TV Times (1986) note:

“It’s 14 years since **“The Adventures of Black Beauty”** first appeared on our screens. Now, all 52 episodes of the award-winning series are being repeated. Playing the main role of 15-year old Vicky in the first 26 episodes is Judi Bowker, who was 18 when she made her television debut in the series. More recently, Judi appeared in **“THE SHOOTING PARTY”**

(84) and she’s currently on stage at London’s Old Vic in **“The Women”**. ”

“ **“The Last Round Up”**

Kevin, Albert and Black Beauty take over Coombe’s job when the old shepherd falls ill. But tending the flock presents unexpected problems. Writer: David Butler ”

[**no listing** in **“Into the Box of Delights – a History of Children’s Television”** or **“Television’s Greatest Hits”**]

No further information currently available. The cantering theme song to this series leaps immediately into mind, although I never watched it – it seemed too demure and sedate for my appetites at the time. Bowker as Vicky, more than the horse itself, seems to have been the key ingredient to the series’ popularity, even though she was three years too old for the role

While many of the principal boys' hobbies of the early 70s – fishing, train-spotting, stamp collecting – seem to have all but disappeared in the intervening decades, horse-riding for girls seems as popular as it ever was, and increased affluence has put it within the means of a broader spectrum of parents.

Below: Bowker with William Lucas
Source: TV Times



(and probably insufficiently Victorian). A film of **"BLACK BEAUTY"** – more directly drawn from the book – was released in 1971 to capitalise on the post-**"OLIVER!"** fame of Mark Lester, though he appeared in it only briefly. This series was presumably "inspired" by that.

See also ["The New Adventures of Black Beauty"](#), and subject index under [HISTORY, HORSES & PONIES](#) and [SERIALISATIONS](#).

