



Nigel Bates makes Christmas return to EastEnders Free 130125

Description



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Nigel Bates has returned to the BBC soap EastEnders for the first time in 26 years in a special Christmas Eve episode.

The character, played by Paul Bradley, appeared at a community centre where Yolande Trueman, played by Angela Wynter, was volunteering during the episode.

Nigel left the show in April 1998 when he and his adopted daughter Clare left Albert Square to start a new life in Scotland with his partner Julie Haye and her son Josh.

"I'm thrilled and honoured to be back as Nigel," Bradley said.

"Despite it being such a long time ago, I still get recognised as Nigel in the street."

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EastEnders' executive producer Chris Clenshaw said it was "fantastic" to welcome back Bradley.

He also teased: "There's a lot of mystery about Nigel's situation and why he's here alone, which will be revealed in the coming weeks."

On Christmas Day, Nigel will be reunited with his childhood best friend Phil Mitchell, played by Steve McFadden, the BBC said.

Bradley said he was having a really good time working with McFadden again.

"I'm a huge admirer of his work, and he sets the bar really high," he added.

During his first run in the show, his character's biggest storylines saw him fall in love with his video shop employee Debbie Tyler, played by Nicola Duffett, before she was killed in a hit-and-run accident, and strike up a friendship with June Brown's Dot Cotton who saw him as the other son she never had.

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