

Bruce *Almighty*

Her love of travel and an insatiable curiosity makes Fiona Bruce the perfect choice as the presenter of BBC's Antiques Roadshow – coming to Lincoln this month.

Photographs: Courtesy of the BBC

Rejoining the team for the 32nd series as it criss-crosses the country in search of new discoveries has a special poignancy for Fiona Bruce. "The Antiques Roadshow has been part of my life for as long as I can remember," says Fiona. "I grew up watching the programme with my family every Sunday evening so it's an incredible privilege to be invited to present it."

She is no stranger to the world of antiques, having also presented BBC2's Antiques Show, and her years at the coalface of television news reporting on both Newsnight and Panorama make her uniquely qualified to respond to the stories as they unfold at each Roadshow.

"I went along to Kentwell Hall before joining the show to observe and get a feel of how it works and found it absolutely fascinating," says Fiona. "I decided the best place for me to be that day was behind Reception, where visitors show what they've brought and collect their tickets for the different tables."

"I was so impressed with how patiently people wait and just how popular the event still is after so many years. 3000 visitors came that day, and watching as so many wonderful things were unwrapped whetted my appetite for hearing the stories behind them. Like the viewers at home, I want to know when things were made, who made them and how the current owners came by them."

Presenting BBC's Ten O'Clock News and Crimewatch in recent years has meant being studio based, so Fiona enjoys being out and about with the team, and rising to the challenge of filming the adventurous introductions to each



EXPERT ADVICE



CHATTING TO THE VISITORS

location devised by the directors. The last should pose few problems since she was once charged with pulling Jeremy Clarkson out of a lift whilst he had his six foot plus frame crammed into a 1960s Peel P50 microcar.

Fiona's own taste in decorative objects is eclectic, the result of a childhood spent on the move. "I was born in Singapore and we also lived in Italy and on the Wirral. I used to go to auctions with my parents when we were in England, and every time my father went abroad on business, he brought me back a doll dressed in national costume.

"I still remember the thrill of opening those parcels and the pleasure of playing with the dolls. They've been packed away in the attic for more years than I like to remember, but I took them along to the Ascot Roadshow and showed them to Hilary Kay. Seeing them again brought back many fond memories."

At home in London, Alfie's antiques market has become a favourite haunt and a good source of retro classics which Fiona likes to mix with inherited family pieces.

"We've got an enormous

Pulsynetic clock hanging on one wall and I've put a 1930s stainless steel film lamp on a little nineteenth century occasional table I inherited from my grandfather."

Fiona says, "I've so much enjoyed my first series of the Antiques Roadshow. I was lucky enough to visit so many fabulous homes and palaces, meet fascinating people and see a wealth of intriguing objects. I also learnt a lot about filming a series outdoors in the great British summer – wellies and thermals played a major role! But I'm still looking forward to this year's travels."

FIONA ON LOCATION

