Festive perils call for you know who

IT'S Christmas Day and it's early evening.
You're probably still feeling bloated after the lunch to end all lunches and want nothing more to stare at the TV for an hour or so.

Thankfully, for the past nine years, the BBC has provided viewers with the perfect way to recuperate after their overindulgences by producing a series of special festive episodes of Doctor Who.

The latest - entitled Last Christmas - is the first to star Peter Capaldi. And no, it has nothing to do with the Wham! song of the same name.

As usual when it comes to the long-running sci-fi classic, we have scant details to offer you. That's because showrunner Steven Moffat is slightly obsessed with keeping his plots a secret in case spoilers leak out.

Now, we applaud that idea, but a few morsels to whet the appetite would be nice.

“Frost at Christmas – it just makes sense!” laughs Moffat. “I worked with Nick on the Tintin movie many years ago and it's a real pleasure to lure him back to television for a ride on the Tardis.”

The action takes place on an Arctic base which is under attack from terrifying creatures - and only the Doctor and his pal Santa can save the day.

Watch out too for a few other familiar faces, including former Coronation Street star and Strictly Come Dancing runner-up Natalie Gumede.

But of most interest to Whovians is the presence of Michael Troughton, who continues his family's association with the programme – his brother David has appeared in the show several times, most notably in The Curse of Peladon alongside Jon Pertwee, and in Midnight, with David Tennant.

They are, of course, the eldest sons of Patrick Troughton, who played the Doctor's second incarnation. Sharp-eyed fans may also have spotted a photo of Patrick as Robin Hood in the recent Robots of Sherwood episode.

Michael published a biography of his father a couple of years ago and is currently working on an encyclopedia about Patrick's career, which should reach shops next year.

This is one of his first forays into TV since he gave up acting to teach physics and, later, to become a school's head of drama. Now it seems he's back in the family business for good.

Would his father have been pleased to see him in the show that turned him into a children's hero? You would imagine so.

Patrick remained a supporter of the programme until his death at the age of 67 at a Doctor Who convention in Georgia in 1989, so you could imagine him tuning in, belt undone, like the rest of us.