

# 'Waterloo Road': Jason Done on bowing out as Tom Clarkson

Digital Spy catches up with *Waterloo Road's* Jason Done.

BY [DANIEL KILKELLY](#) 03/07/2013



SHED PRODUCTIONS (WR)

*Waterloo Road* airs an episode that long-term fans won't want to miss this evening (July 4) as original character Tom Clarkson bows out from the show.

Jason Done, who plays the much-loved teacher, announced his departure from the programme earlier this year and show bosses have promised a memorable exit storyline for him.

**Digital Spy** recently caught up with Jason to hear about his departure from *Waterloo Road* and his future plans.

**How are you feeling now that your time on *Waterloo Road* has come to an end?**

"It's mixed emotions, really, because I'm a sentimental old fool at heart and will always have fantastic memories of working on the show. It was my decision to leave, because I just thought that life is about taking risks. Part of the appeal of being an actor is having this varied life and working on different projects. That allows us to visit different places and meet different people. It also means taking on new challenges.

"I pride myself in thinking that I never got lazy with Tom in terms of working on him, but there's still a certain comfort that you sometimes need to get away from. There's something quite exciting about moving out of that comfort zone. The fear of the unknown quite appeals to me!"

**From a character point of view, did you also feel it was the right time for Tom to leave?**

"Yes, as I didn't want people to get bored of Tom. I wanted to leave while he was still

interesting and appealing to the *Waterloo Road* audience. I didn't want that to change."

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**How did the producers react when you told them you wanted to leave?**

"I was very flattered with their reaction. We're all grown-ups, so they knew that it wasn't a decision I would have taken lightly after being so close to the show for so long. They expressed their sadness that I wanted to leave, but then they immediately sprung into action and decided that they really wanted to do right by the character of Tom.

"The producers decided that Tom would be leaving with a bang rather than a fizzle, so that's very good! I'm very grateful to them, as it's a very dramatic exit which was wonderful to play and it does befit the character. They really stood by me all the way."



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## **We can't give away the exit storyline, but we do know that Kyle Stack is back for your final episode. How does Tom feel about that?**

"God bless him, Tom Clarkson always does like to see the best in everybody, but he can be forgiven for smelling a rat where Kyle is concerned. At the end of the day, this guy fired a crossbow at his son!

"You'll see that Tom isn't totally forgiving and he doesn't welcome Kyle back with open arms. However, Kyle does convince Tom by the end of the episode that he wants to change his ways and do the right thing. With Tom being Tom, he'll forever support and try to do the right thing by the pupils at the school. Ultimately he does forgive him."

## **Did you enjoy being part of the Grantly kidney storyline?**

"Yes - I love working with both Philip Martin Brown and Melanie Hill, but obviously I've had a longer working relationship with Phil. Despite the bleak content of the kidney storyline, it's such a giggle to work with Phil - he's got an incredibly dry sense of humour! There's always light relief when you film a scene with him, and he's a good pal off-set too. It's always a joy."

## **Was it emotional for you after you'd filmed your final scene?**

"It was, although it wasn't tremendously interesting! We don't film the show in chronological order, so the very last shot I did was just part of a school event that happens in the episode. It would have been quite nice for the final shot to be a dramatic one, but it wasn't! It was quite a dull scene to finish on!

"I was quite choked up afterwards, though. Everybody came down and I received some nice cards, gifts and good wishes from everybody. Again, it was mixed feelings, because it was the end of something and the start of something else."

"It's a bizarre feeling - it was like leaving school! To a certain extent, I've been institutionalised. Certainly at the school in Rochdale with the long hours we were filming, I spent more time in that school than I did in my own secondary school. It was possibly longer than my secondary and primary school combined - my whole education! It's been a massive part of my life."



### **What are you hoping to do next?**

"I finished filming *Waterloo Road* a while ago, and it's already been lovely and varied. I've been doing some radio drama. I've been doing a development workshop at the Royal Exchange with a wonderful writer and poet called Simon Armitage on Homer's *The Iliad*! So it's been one extreme to another, going from *Waterloo Road* to the oldest piece of Western civilised literature!

"I've also got a psychological thriller to shoot at the end of the year, and after that I don't know. That's the nature of the business - I'm now free to see what happens next. Anything is possible now, which is brilliant.

"Obviously I carry every actor's paranoia that I'll never work again, but hopefully that's not the case and all the people saying, 'Why are you leaving *Waterloo Road*, you idiot?!' will be proved wrong! It'd be nice for them to see me in a different light on a different programme."

## **Which storylines were your favourites?**

"My very favourite episode was Sambuca's death. As a piece of drama, it just had all the elements. It was shot beautifully and we were away on location in Blackpool. We were blessed with great weather and that whole seaside feel was great. Also, Holly Kenny who played Sambuca is a fantastic young actress. The episode had you in floods of tears one minute and laughing the next, which is just what you'd hope for in a drama.

"The most memorable moment that will go to my grave is Tom turning up at Josh's mother's house and the line, 'Your mother stole my sperm!' I'm never going to top that in terms of classic lines, am I?!"

"Another great 'highlight' was the week after Lorna had committed suicide, I was dressed as a giant chilli pepper as part of a vegetable initiative week. It was just bizarre, and I have to say I did get the huff personally as well as in character! (Laughs.) Tom was pretty cheesed off, but I didn't have to rely too heavily on my acting skills that day!"

## **Do you think *Waterloo Road* can move on from yourself and Philip both leaving?**

"Yes, I do. Part of the charm of the show and what keeps the fans interested is the turnover of staff and pupils alike. It's just like a real-life school. If they continue to use good actors and have strong writing and good storylines, then I think people will remain loyal to it. Like any school, it has a future, just with different staff and pupils."

## **Is there anything you'd like to say to the fans who have supported you and Tom?**

"Just a wholehearted thanks, really! I can't put it into words, but I really am sincerely grateful for all the support. I hope they'll continue to follow me in other projects."

**[> Read our spoiler for tonight's 'Waterloo Road' episode](#)**

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***Waterloo Road* airs tonight at 8pm on BBC One.**

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