

David Copperfield

UK TV serial : 1974 : dir. Joan Craft : BBC / Time Life : 6 x 50 min
 prod: John McRae : scr: Hugh Whitmore : dir.ph.:
[Jonathan Kahn](#)
 David Yelland; Arthur Lowe; Patricia Routledge; Patience Collier; Martin Jarvis; Ian Hogg;
 Anthony Andrews; Timothy Bateson; Pat Keen; Liz Smith

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ ∅ Z ∞	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Jonathan Kahn, if not spirited, was certainly decorous in the – essentially wooden – title character, but the real surprise was soap and sitcom veteran Arthur Lowe, who gave Micawber a distinct and memorable interpretation to rival W.C. Fields'.

Source: NFT bulletin Nov/Dec 94

Halliwell's Television Companion review:

"A solid, sensible, serial version of Dickens's novel, with all the favourite characters well preserved. Producer John McRae "

NFT bulletin – Nov/Dec 94 – review:

"Of all his novels, "David Copperfield" was Dickens' own favourite and has proved his most popular. Part-autobiography, part-fiction, it has a narrative power and wealth of characterisation that he never surpassed. This 1974/75 version was very well received with plaudits for Patience Collier's Betsy Trotwood and Anthony Andrews' "debonair and superior" Steerforth. But the critical superlatives were reserved for

two performances: Arthur Lowe's Mr Micawber and Martin Jarvis' Uriah Heep. Young David was played by Jonathan Kahn, the older David by David Yelland; Patricia Routledge was Mrs Micawber and Liz Smith was Mrs Heep. The novel was dramatised by Hugh Whitmore in six parts and shown in the Sunday tea-time slot. Producer: John McRae; director: Joan Craft. Transmitted by the BBC 1/12/74 - 5/1/75 "

[no listing in "BBC TV Presents – A Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration", "History of Television" or "Television's Greatest Hits"]

No further information currently available. Jonathan Kahn, son of London theatrical agent Brigitte Kahn, was 14. He later had a key role in "**THE SAILOR WHO FELL FROM GRACE WITH THE SEA**" (76), from the Mishima novel, and was "exquisitely hateful" as Harvey in a 1977 TV remake of "**CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS**", which stuck more closely to Kipling than the 1937 Freddie Bartholomew/Spencer Tracy version.

Obviously this was neither the first nor the last TV production of "**David Copperfield**", but information on the others is scant to non-existent, and they're never re-broadcast, owing presumably in part to the logistical headaches of paying residual fees to the cast and crew of thirty years ago or more. As with all Dickens' tales, so much of the story and secondary characters have to be whittled down to fit feature film length that these can never compare to a 5-hour serialisation, and since television so enjoys doing "theme nights" these days, I can't for the life of me see why they don't show sample episodes at least from a fistful of these earlier Dickens serials.

See subject index under – wait for it – **BOARDING SCHOOL / PUBLIC SCHOOL, BOY MEETS GIRL, CORPORAL PUNISHMENT, CRUELTY / NEGLECT / MALTREATMENT, CHARLES DICKENS ADAPTATIONS, HISTORY, ORPHANS / ADOPTION, RUNAWAYS / STOWAWAYS, SEASIDE HOLIDAYS, SERIALISATIONS, SPECIAL FRIENDSHIPS, STEPFATHERS / STEPMOTHERS** and **WORKING BOYS & GIRLS** (did I miss one?). This was the most autobiographical of Dickens' novels, certainly, but those elements are still too slight to count this even as a semi-autobiographical tale.