# William Roache and Barbara Knox celebrate lifelong TV careers at Variety Club Awards



Coronation Street icons William Roache and Barbara Knox were the headline winners at the Variety Club Showbusiness Awards, receiving the Outstanding Contribution to Television award in recognition of their remarkable longevity and dedication to the industry. Roache, 93, has been a continuous presence on the ITV soap since its inception in 1960, famously portraying Ken Barlow, making him the longest-serving television actor in a continuous role globally. Meanwhile, Barbara Knox, 92, known for her portrayal of Rita Tanner, first appeared in the show in 1964 and has maintained a continuous role since 1972, making her the second longest-serving cast member.

In their acceptance, both actors were unequivocal about their intention to continue working, dismissing retirement speculation. Knox credited the intellectual stimulation from continuing to work as a key factor in their longevity, saying, "I don't want to and I know Bill doesn't want to retire, because stimulus from your brain gets you up." Roache added a touch of humour, advising younger actors that "the first 65 years is the tough bit, the rest is easy," while also revealing that staying active, including exercise encouraged by his son, contributes to his enduring career. Their comments highlight the importance of passion and mental engagement in sustaining a lifelong career in acting.

The awards ceremony also celebrated other notable contributions to entertainment and the arts. The beloved TV presenting duo Ant McPartlin and Declan Donnelly were honoured for their outstanding contributions to television. Vernon Kay received the Silver Heart award for his extensive radio and television career, noted for his versatility and recent successful initiatives like the Children in Need fundraising ultramarathon. Sir Stephen Fry was recognised for his extensive work across film and theatre, underlining his enduring cultural influence. Olly Murs was acknowledged for his achievements in music, boasting chart-topping albums and millions of followers across social media platforms.

ITV, celebrating 70 years in operation, was recognised for its pivotal role in British broadcasting, marking decades of contributions to culture through content production and commissioning. The ceremony also honoured figures such as Vanessa Williams for her global contributions to arts and humanity, Leah Williamson for her leadership in football, and Jamie Wilson for her impact on musical theatre production.

The Variety Club Showbusiness Awards remain a prestigious event, marking its 75th year with the mission of raising funds for disabled and disadvantaged children in the UK while shining a spotlight on outstanding achievements across the entertainment industry.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-15207085/Corrie-icons-William-Roache-93-Barbara-Knox-92-reveal-no-plans-retire-lead-winners-Variety-Club-Awards-bagging-Outstanding-Contribution-TV.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-15207085/Corrie-icons-William-Roache-93-Barbara-Knox-92-reveal-no-plans-retire-lead-winners-Variety-Club-Awards-bagging-Outstanding-Contribution-TV.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-15207085/Corrie-icons-William-Roache-93-Barbara-Knox-92-reveal-no-plans-retire-lead-winners-Variety-Club-Awards-bagging-Outstanding-Contribution-TV.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/music/stephen-fry-olly-murs-vernon-kay-variety-ant-and-dec-b1253725.html), [[3]](https://www.ireland-live.ie/news/tv/1922809/vernon-kay-ant-and-dec-and-stephen-fry-win-at-variety-club-showbusiness-awards.html), [[5]](https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/music/stephen-fry-olly-murs-vernon-kay-variety-ant-and-dec-b1253725.html), [[6]](https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/music/stephen-fry-olly-murs-vernon-kay-variety-ant-and-dec-b1253725.html), [[7]](https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/music/stephen-fry-olly-murs-vernon-kay-variety-ant-and-dec-b1253725.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-15207085/Corrie-icons-William-Roache-93-Barbara-Knox-92-reveal-no-plans-retire-lead-winners-Variety-Club-Awards-bagging-Outstanding-Contribution-TV.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.variety.org.uk/news-item/variety-club-showbusiness-awards-honour-outstanding-achievements-with-the-announcement-of-three-new-prestigious-winners-in-its-75th-year/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-15207085/Corrie-icons-William-Roache-93-Barbara-Knox-92-reveal-no-plans-retire-lead-winners-Variety-Club-Awards-bagging-Outstanding-Contribution-TV.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/music/stephen-fry-olly-murs-vernon-kay-variety-ant-and-dec-b1253725.html> - The Variety Club Showbusiness Awards 2025 honoured several prominent figures in the entertainment industry. TV presenters Vernon Kay, Ant McPartlin, and Declan Donnelly received awards for their contributions to radio and television. Sir Stephen Fry was recognised for his work in film and theatre. Singer Olly Murs was honoured for his musical achievements, and ITV was acknowledged for its contribution to British broadcasting. The event celebrated these individuals' significant impacts on their respective fields.
3. <https://www.ireland-live.ie/news/tv/1922809/vernon-kay-ant-and-dec-and-stephen-fry-win-at-variety-club-showbusiness-awards.html> - At the 2025 Variety Club Showbusiness Awards, several notable figures were honoured. Vernon Kay received the Silver Heart award for outstanding contribution to radio, while Ant McPartlin and Declan Donnelly were awarded for their contribution to television. Sir Stephen Fry was recognised for his work in film and theatre. Other winners included Olly Murs for music, ITV for broadcasting, and Adam Hills for comedy. The event celebrated these individuals' significant contributions to the entertainment industry.
4. <https://www.variety.org.uk/news-item/variety-club-showbusiness-awards-honour-outstanding-achievements-with-the-announcement-of-three-new-prestigious-winners-in-its-75th-year/> - The Variety Club Showbusiness Awards are set to return on April 28, 2024, at The Londoner Hotel in Leicester Square, celebrating its 75th year. The event will honour outstanding achievements across various fields, including film, TV, comedy, theatre, and music. The ceremony aims to raise vital funds for disabled and disadvantaged children in the UK, continuing its tradition of recognising excellence in the entertainment industry.
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/music/stephen-fry-olly-murs-vernon-kay-variety-ant-and-dec-b1253725.html> - The Variety Club Showbusiness Awards 2025 honoured several prominent figures in the entertainment industry. TV presenters Vernon Kay, Ant McPartlin, and Declan Donnelly received awards for their contributions to radio and television. Sir Stephen Fry was recognised for his work in film and theatre. Singer Olly Murs was honoured for his musical achievements, and ITV was acknowledged for its contribution to British broadcasting. The event celebrated these individuals' significant impacts on their respective fields.
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