# William Roache and Barbara Knox vow to continue iconic Coronation Street roles amid award recognition



Coronation Street icons William Roache and Barbara Knox have emphatically stated they have no intention of retiring, even as they were honoured with the Outstanding Contribution to Television award at the Variety Club Showbusiness Awards. The ceremony, held at the Londoner Hotel, celebrated their combined tenure on the long-running ITV soap, which spans an extraordinary 118 years.

William Roache, 93, has portrayed Ken Barlow since the show’s inception in 1960, earning him recognition in the Guinness World Records as the longest-serving television actor in a continuous role. Barbara Knox, 92, who first appeared in the series in December 1964 before taking on a continuous role from 1972 as Rita Tanner, stands as the second longest-serving cast member. When asked about retirement, Knox was keen to dismiss the notion, attributing their vigour to the opportunity to keep working. "The stimulus from your brain gets you up," she said, highlighting the mental engagement that acting provides. Roache echoed this sentiment, emphasising the importance of enjoying his craft and maintaining an active lifestyle encouraged by his family.

The pair’s enduring presence on Coronation Street is underpinned by significant recognition beyond this award. Roache has received multiple honorary honours, including an MBE in 2001 and an OBE in 2022 for services to television, and an honorary doctorate from the University of Chester recognising his impact on British TV. Recently, in early 2025, he was also honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Entertainment Agents’ Association, where he expressed his ambition to continue playing Ken Barlow until he turns 100.

The Variety Club Showbusiness Awards further acknowledged several other luminaries across the entertainment spectrum. Ant McPartlin and Declan Donnelly were honoured for their outstanding contribution to television, while Vernon Kay received an accolade for his extensive career in radio broadcasting. Actor and presenter Stephen Fry was celebrated for his work in film and theatre, and Olly Murs was recognised in the music category, reflecting his sustained success since first rising to fame 16 years ago.

ITV itself, marking 70 years in business, received an award for Outstanding Contribution to British Broadcasting, underscoring its role as a cornerstone of UK television culture. Other notable recipients included Jamie Wilson for contributions to musical theatre, Leah Williamson in football and sports, and Vanessa Williams for global contribution to the arts and humanity. The ceremony also paid tribute to figures such as Zoe Aldcroft, Adam Hills, Petula Clark, and Lesley Joseph, highlighting a wide array of talents across the entertainment and sports industries.

This event marked the 75th anniversary of the Variety Club Showbusiness Awards, reaffirming its status as a prestigious platform recognising sustained excellence and contribution to British and international entertainment. Roache and Knox’s award not only celebrated their personal achievements but also embodied the enduring appeal and cultural significance of Coronation Street, a programme embedded in British life for over six decades.

### 📌 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), [[2]](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 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), [[4]](https://www.digitalspy.com/soaps/coronation-street/a44680/bill-roache-awarded-with-doctorate/), [[6]](https://www.femalefirst.co.uk/tv/news/teaa-lifetime-achievement-award-winner-william-roache-vows-keep-playing-ken-barlow-coronation-street-100-1415993.html)
* 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), [[4]](https://www.digitalspy.com/soaps/coronation-street/a44680/bill-roache-awarded-with-doctorate/), [[5]](https://www.nottinghamworld.com/community/champions-wins-big-at-teaa-awards-5054461), [[6]](https://www.femalefirst.co.uk/tv/news/teaa-lifetime-achievement-award-winner-william-roache-vows-keep-playing-ken-barlow-coronation-street-100-1415993.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), [[2]](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 5 – [[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), [[7]](https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/music/stephen-fry-olly-murs-vernon-kay-variety-ant-and-dec-b1253725.html)

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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 2025 Variety Club Showbusiness Awards celebrated outstanding contributions to the entertainment industry. William Roache and Barbara Knox, stars of 'Coronation Street', received the Gold Heart Legacy Award for their exceptional contributions to television. Other winners included Vernon Kay for radio, Ant McPartlin and Declan Donnelly for television, and Stephen Fry for film and theatre. The event, held at the Londoner Hotel, also honoured Olly Murs for music and ITV for British broadcasting. The ceremony marked the 75th anniversary of the Variety Club Showbusiness Awards.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/barbara-windsors-career-honoured-at-variety-club-showbiz-awards-6536094.html> - In 2012, actress Barbara Windsor was honoured with the Bernard Delfont Award for her outstanding contribution to showbusiness at the Co-operative Variety Club Showbiz Awards. Windsor, renowned for her role as Peggy Mitchell in 'EastEnders', received the award from theatrical producer Bill Kenwright. Other notable winners included 'The X Factor' for best entertainment and Sheridan Smith for musical theatre. The ceremony took place at London's Grosvenor House Hotel, celebrating achievements in the entertainment industry.
4. <https://www.digitalspy.com/soaps/coronation-street/a44680/bill-roache-awarded-with-doctorate/> - William Roache, the longest-serving cast member of 'Coronation Street', was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Chester in recognition of his sustained contribution to television. Roache, who has portrayed Ken Barlow since 1960, received the honour alongside journalist Joan Bakewell. The ceremony was attended by 500 graduates, with University Vice-Chancellor Professor Tim Wheeler highlighting Roache's significant impact on British television.
5. <https://www.nottinghamworld.com/community/champions-wins-big-at-teaa-awards-5054461> - At the inaugural Entertainment Agents’ Association (TEAA) Awards held in March 2025, William Roache received a Lifetime Recognition Award for his contributions to the UK entertainment industry. Roache, best known for his role as Ken Barlow in 'Coronation Street', has been a regular on television since 1960. The award was presented to him by co-star Claire Sweeney and friend Tony Christie, acknowledging his enduring impact on British television.
6. <https://www.femalefirst.co.uk/tv/news/teaa-lifetime-achievement-award-winner-william-roache-vows-keep-playing-ken-barlow-coronation-street-100-1415993.html> - William Roache, honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award at The Entertainment Agents’ Awards (TEAA) in March 2025, expressed his intention to continue portraying Ken Barlow in 'Coronation Street' until he turns 100. Roache, 92, has played the character since the show's debut in 1960. The award recognises his outstanding contribution to the UK entertainment industry, with Roache aiming to remain on the show for many more years.
7. <https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/music/stephen-fry-olly-murs-vernon-kay-variety-ant-and-dec-b1253725.html> - The 2025 Variety Club Showbusiness Awards celebrated outstanding contributions to the entertainment industry. William Roache and Barbara Knox, stars of 'Coronation Street', received the Gold Heart Legacy Award for their exceptional contributions to television. Other winners included Vernon Kay for radio, Ant McPartlin and Declan Donnelly for television, and Stephen Fry for film and theatre. The event, held at the Londoner Hotel, also honoured Olly Murs for music and ITV for British broadcasting. The ceremony marked the 75th anniversary of the Variety Club Showbusiness Awards.