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Molecatcher Louise tackles some critters Down Under

From catching mild-mannered moles in Norfolk to “stealing” eggs from angry crocodiles and catching some of the most deadly snakes in the world... it’s been an extraordinary few months for Louise Chapman.

Last year I told you about our very own Lady Mole Catcher, travelling the city and county hunting out the dynamic little diggers and now she is one of the stars of a new “job-doc” filmed in Australia and starting on the Dave TV channel this Thursday night.

“I had a call out of the blue asking if I wanted to be part of a new television series being made in Australia – so I jumped at it,” said Louise, Norwich born and bred, who is one of only a handful of female mole catchers in the country – and certainly the most famous.

And what a time she had.

Called *Deadliest Pests Down Under* the programme features a fistful of pest controllers from the UK and takes them to Australia to see how they deal with a very different kind of “pest.” One that can quite easily kill you.

For pest controllers in Oz, every day is a brush with death and it’s getting more dangerous as the continent’s critters are winning the battle. Desperate for help, they called in the cavalry from the motherland... a move what also

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raised a few laughs. “It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I had a fabulous time. It was quite amazing and I fell in love with Australia,” said Louise, who is now back at work in Norfolk, along with three others in her team, hunting the mighty mole.

Louise spent ten weeks Down Under for the new series with other UK pest controllers who left the cold UK, swapping moles for psychotic possums, baby bed bugs for super-sized spiders and mundane moths for killer crocs... and then there were the snakes.

The guides are some of the toughest pest controllers Australia has to offer. There’s a real-life Crocodile Dundee along with the Barefoot Bushman, Col the exterminator and the “snake yoda” Kylie.

Louise and her colleagues from the UK come face to face with snakes, crocodiles and feral pigs which could kill them. “The series is huge project. Imagine Rodney Trotter



■ Louise Chapman meets the Australian equivalent to the moles she catches in Norfolk... the wombat is a touch larger (as is the black-headed python, left).

meeting Crocodile Dundee, and it should give you an idea of the comedy potential,” said Rory Wheeler, managing director of Popkorn TV which made the series.

And Dave general manager Steve North added: “*Deadliest Pests Down Under* is a great chance to see whether British pest control experts can deal with creatures on a totally different scale. They truly had no real use on what they were letting themselves in for. With amazing characters from this fascinating world it’s set to be the channel’s latest job-doc our audience will love.”

Louise, a former Norfolk teacher and a mother in her 40s, entered the male-dominated world of mole-catching by going on a course at Easton College and becoming the

first woman to run the British Traditional Molecatchers Register. “I had a fantastic adventure. Australia is truly awesome,” she said.

She travelled up and down the east coast visiting Sydney, Brisbane and many other wonderful and exotic places. “When I arrived I went on a venomous snake handling course and moved a Coastal Taipan and Red Bellied Black snake, from one location to another using a hook and bag. I had to ‘steal’ crocodile eggs from a nest as they must be hatched in a controlled environment, lasso a piece of rope around the crocs jaws and tie her to a post so we could collect the eggs safely. She was a 44-year-four metre long old salt water crocodile with 66 teeth,” said Louise, who became a star attraction

in the series.

“I also accompanied a pest controller in Batemans Bay who was dealing with wild pigs and rabbits and on my days off I was able to enjoy Australia and see what a fantastic country it is, such as going on sailing trips around Whitsunday Islands where the sand is so fine that when you walk on it, it squeaks like talcum powder,” she added.

She also captured a black-headed python which had escaped and got up close with the Australian equivalent to our mole which is a touch bigger – the wombat.

Meanwhile it’s back to work in Norfolk for Louise and her team... so beware you moles.

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■ *Deadliest Pests Down Under* starts on Dave on Thursday May 12 at 8pm.

