

Forget Nordic Noir, now the Danes are splashing about in our gene pool: CHRISTOPHER STEVENS reviews last night's TV

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Modern Times: The Vikings Are Coming

Rating: ★★★★★

Eat Well For Less

Rating: ★★★★★

The Danes are an odd lot. To judge from their outstanding TV serials, they are all rampant sex maniacs, whose only method of birth control is gallons of red wine sluiced down by strong lager.

And when they talk that gobbledegook language, they sound like Flowerpot Men.

At least Sofie Grabol, who played the detective-in-a-woolly-jumper Sarah Lund in *The Killing*, is speaking English in her latest drama, the bizarre *Fortitude*. It debuted on Sky Atlantic last night, co-starring Christopher Eccleston and Michael Gambon.

The 11-part crime drama cost £30 million to make. It has a stupendous cast, including Stanley Tucci and Jessica Raine. The ad campaign would dwarf most Hollywood movies.



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Great Danes: The documentary focused on the impact that Danish sperm giant Cryos International are having on the British market

But you can't view Fortitude on an ordinary, £145.50 TV licence. You'll have to subscribe to the internet-only catch-up service, Now TV, or buy a pricey Sky subscription pack for your telly...if you've got an arm-and-a-leg to spare.

Nordic noir makes compelling viewing, providing you can afford it. But you wouldn't want to live like that. Never mind the murders and the bed-hopping — boozing on a Scandinavian scale would quickly reduce your liver to the texture of burnt bacon.

So it was alarming to discover, in *Modern Times: The Vikings Are Coming* (BBC2), that Danish sperm donors are fathering a generation of British children, as single mums and lesbian couples purchase deep-frozen 'straws' of Scandi semen on the internet for artificial insemination.

If you want your kids to have a Danish dad, it's as easy as point-and-click, like buying flatpack furniture online from Ikea.

'It's more difficult to adopt a puppy than it is to order sperm off the internet,' commented Kel, as she and her wife Anna cooed over pictures of the donors when they were toddlers.

TAKEOVER BID OF THE WEEK

Father Brown, the excellent murder mystery with Mark Williams as the ordained detective, is being repeated on daytime TV, just before *The Link* (BBC1), a quiz game hosted by... Mark Williams! Why not hand him the whole schedule — he can read the news as well.

This documentary by Sue Bourne started with statistics that suggested Britain will soon be full of moody, blue-eyed seven-footers with cleft chins like Kirk Douglas...and that's just the girls.

The most popular ten donors on offer through sperm giant Cryos International have each fathered more than 100 babies.

One 39-year-old man predicted he would have 500 children by the time he withdrew from circulation — and that's not counting the two boys he has with his wife. He made it very clear that he does not regard his unknown biological offspring as siblings of his sons.

In contrast to this clinical attitude, a teenager called Ina said she knew her dad only as Donor 137: 'I would just like to know who he is, to get a face instead of having a number, to see it's a real person of flesh and blood — because I feel I was a baby made in a factory.'



Eat Well For Less: Gregg Wallace's advice veered from the obvious to the downright imbecilic

These compelling human stories shifted the focus away from Danish genetics. The second half of the documentary followed the yearning efforts of several women to conceive with donor sperm.

Bourne relied too much on video diaries shot by the participants on laptops and phones: there's only so many shots of shoes and upside-down footage you can watch before your eyes start to hurt.

At least these were stories that mattered. No one could say the same for Masterchef judge Gregg Wallace's Eat Well For Less (BBC1), a show about saving money on the supermarket shop.

Most of his advice veered from the bleedin' obvious to the downright imbecilic. Here's one helpful hint: don't buy baked beans if you've already got six tins in the larder.

His guinea pigs were a family of four in Chorley, Lancashire, who already had £1,000 worth of tinned food in their kitchen stockpile.

With so many working families struggling to make ends meet right now, could the Beeb's researchers not find anyone with a more urgent need to cut their food costs?

Gregg's stupidest idea was to replace dad Howard's Friday-night beer with alcohol-free gunk. Not only was it undrinkable, it must also be pricier than many own-brand lagers.

Ale without alcohol will never catch on...especially now we're all going Danish.