

COSMIC



MASQUE



EDITORIAL by Grant Bull

Season's Greetings One and All,

It feels good to be back. It's been a little longer than planned but I think it's worth the wait; this issue is literally overflowing with treats. Firstly my thanks to Annalisa Leoni for our stunning Christmas cover which sets the standards of this issue right from the off. We have opinion pieces, reviews, interviews, art and more besides, so dive in and enjoy!

One of those mentioned interviews is with *Who* historian (what an awesome title that is!) David J Howe on his very exciting *Who* Museum project. Please can I urge everyone to get behind this and donate whatever you can, even it's only a pound, to the cause. Personally I can't think of anything cooler than a museum of *Who* merchandise. But this is coming from someone who has Howe's *Transcendental Toybox* on his bedside table where other people have their Bibles! Seriously, though, support it please.

EDITORIAL by Ian Wheeler

It's been a quiet year in terms of *Doctor Who* on television, but the *Doctor Who* universe continues to grow with everything from the animated version of *The Power of the Daleks* on DVD to the spin-off *Class* on BBC3 and even a *Doctor Who* cookbook! We

New *Who* is finally around the corner starting with the Christmas Special and then a new season next year, yes, remember those? It's been strange not having new episodes this year, like a friend who hasn't bothered to be in touch, but as they say "absence makes the heart grow fonder" and I for one can't wait to see Peter Capaldi back in action.

The plan going forward is to present you *Cosmic Masque* twice a year, so we will see you again in the summer. But that doesn't mean we will be putting our feet up, oh no, work on that issue begins now, so if you want to be involved then drop us a line at cm@dwasonline.co.uk

Finally please do share feedback with us on CM, help us shape this 'zine into something you can enjoy and relate to personally by saying what you want to see more of or less of.

Happy Holidays! ▲

Grant

think you'd struggle to find a 'zine with quite such a diverse range of material as *Cosmic Masque* so we hope you'll stick with us as we continue to bring you the lowdown on the wider worlds of *Doctor Who*! This time round, we've got interviews, reviews and a whole lot more besides! Enjoy the issue and see you next time! ▲

Ian

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CONFESSIONS OF A JUNIOR SCHOOL WHOVIAN by Tim Gambrell

I wrote a piece recently for a forthcoming charity anthology (*You On Target*, Watching Books) about my earliest engagement with the Target range of *Doctor Who* novelisations, and how it did three things:

- 1) It made me a fan (or, more probably, made me realise that I was a fan);
- 2) It made me a more accomplished reader for my age;
- 3) It made me a collector (there are more in the series? I must have them all!).

I realised upon further reflection that the Target books did more than that, though – they also made me want to write creatively. I'm not under any misapprehension of originality here; I'm fully aware that many now successful writers in and out of the *Whosphere* will say the same. But here's my story.

I always enjoyed 'story writing', as it was referred to in my infant school classes, and somewhere there is an exercise book containing some of those stories from my earliest school year. I very proudly got through two exercise books in that first year, whereas all my classmates only filled one. The stories are beautifully simple and clearly influenced by the kind of books I was having read to me by my parents.

A shift happened, though, in the juniors after I'd borrowed *Destiny of The Daleks* from our recently-opened local library (previously a hardware shop!) Not only did I write a Fourth Doctor, Leela and Davros story heavily influenced by that tale (and my memories of it on TV), but I also wrote it one afternoon at my grandparents' house and not at school. I was in the second year juniors, under Major Bagley. I even took it in to show him. He said we'd read it to the class one afternoon before school finished, but there was a trainee with us at the time and she insisted on *Charlotte's Web* instead. Not that I'm bitter or anything...

I think my story writing got a bit more adventurous after that, though; I'm certain I grew in confidence at least. The following year, now in Miss Joliffe's class, *The Five*



Doctors was on television and something odd happened. Amazingly the Target novelisation came out *before* the programme was transmitted. Also amazingly I was shopping in John Menzies in Bath and spotted a copy. Its silvery luxuriousness made it look like the most precious thing on Earth to me. I had enough pocket money to snap it up and decided I would read the book before watching it on TV. I didn't quite achieve that, alas – I think I'd got through about three quarters of it before the broadcast started. I know I finished it at some point though, because Sarah Jane's line in Rassilon's tomb (not used in the televised version) about how she would have liked to see the Fourth Doctor again stuck in my mind as very poignant – plus it echoed my own feelings.

Meanwhile, at school, I decided to write my own adaptation of the story in our writing sessions. I'm not entirely sure what possessed nine-year-old me to do this – it's the only time I can recall writing a *Doctor Who* story at school and the work is long gone - but I do remember I included a lot of what I thought was atmospheric description and as much dialogue as I could remember; not everything happened in the right story order either, as I forgot bits as I went along! It's clear, though, that I was emulating Terrance Dicks whilst at the same time developing my own abilities. Miss Joliffe didn't see it that way. After several weeks, with the beast still quite a way off ending, she'd had enough. She sternly told me I had to leave the story as it was, unfinished, and write something new

of my own instead. Rather sourly I wrote a story about some mountaineers who fell to their death because they didn't use the correct equipment!

After that I didn't try to adapt a TV story again, and any further *Doctor Who* stories I created were written at home in my own time, so I wouldn't risk encountering the teacher's wrath. It was all part of me internalising my fandom as a lone voice of appreciation amidst a school of children who had lost interest after Tom Baker left the show. But, my psychological reaction aside, it got me writing in my own time and more importantly it got me *wanting* to write, to use words to create worlds and stories of my own. Curiously, though, having been inspired to start writing by these Target books, they ended up a key factor in me stopping to write *Doctor Who* stories a few years later. I would get excited by my own story ideas, then frustrated with myself that I couldn't get the words to flow quickly enough or with the same pace and ease as those I read by Terrance Dicks (largely), so I came to the conclusion that writing *Who* stories was not for me, even if watching and reading them was. I didn't stop writing, though, I just turned my attention elsewhere instead: comedy sketches, Douglas Adams-inspired zany prose. I'm still doing that now, really, still trying to find my niche, but the journey, which started all the way back in junior school, is giving me great pleasure - even if I've yet to make any commercial or creative impact on the world. ▲



DOCTOR WHO: THE POPPELGANGERS

The Hypothesis:

All Doctor Who companions strongly resemble at least one popular musician, major or minor, from around the time they appeared on the series.

The Rules:

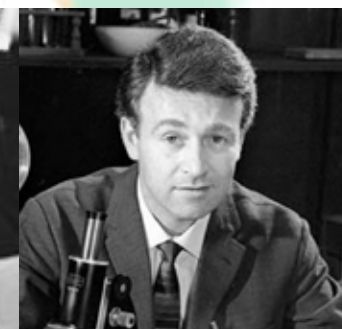
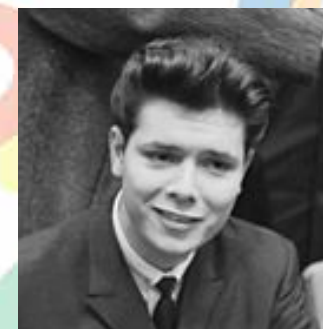
The doppelganger must be roughly contemporary with the companion. A few years before is OK; a few years after may be allowable, given that musicians are often on the popular radar for a while before they actually become stars. Doppelgangers of a different ethnic group to the companion are permissible if the resemblance is otherwise strong enough.



Connie Francis
and
Barbara
Wright

Cliff Richard
and
Ian Chesterton

(Just to make it completely obvious, the original name for Ian's character was, of course, Cliff)



Francoise
Hardy
and
Susan
Foreman



Lulu
and
Vicki Pallister



Beverley
Bivens (Lead
singer of We
Five - 2nd
from right)
and
Dodo Chaplet

Mike Smith
(keyboardist
for the Dave
Clark Five)
and
Steven Taylor



Twiggy



Lauren Ripley



Polly Wright

Polly appears to have two doppelgangers: One still well-known, the other less so.



Ronnie
Spector
and
Katarina

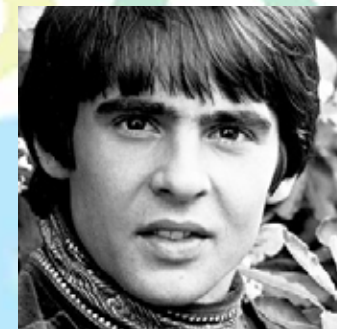


Alan Price
(Keyboardist
for The
Animals)
and
Ben Jackson

Cher
and
Sara Kingdom



Davy Jones
and
Jamie
McCrimmon



Dottie West
and
Victoria
Waterfield



Sandie Shaw
and
Zoe Heriot

**JOIN US LATER IN THE ISSUE TO SEE
IF WE CAN FIND LOOKALIKES FOR ALL
THE COMPANIONS...**



Grant Bull

Interview **DARREN LANGLANDS- LAST MAN ON EARTH** by Ian Wheeler

Darren Langlands is the director of Last Man on Earth, a crowd-funded short film starring Colin Baker which was premiered at the Supernova Film Festival in Manchester earlier this year. Ian Wheeler caught up with him...

Can you tell us a little bit about your background and how you came to direct *Last Man on Earth*?

I'm originally from Australia and a journalist rather than filmmaker. But I've always loved cinema so I fell into it quite naturally and short films are a good way to explore ideas on a smaller scale. I've been making films now for about four years and *Last Man on Earth* is easily the biggest thing I've done in terms of scale. There have been several versions of this story floating about over the years – most of them were pure postapocalypse. But I never felt I could do those without them feeling like we hadn't already seen that kind of world. So that's how this version came about.

How did you go about getting Colin Baker involved in your project?

Colin was top of our list. We wanted to bring in an actor who had a profile and while there were a couple of other Doctors on our list, Colin was top of it for a lot of reasons (and particularly because he's so wonderful with the fan base) and to be honest I kept seeing his face when we were writing it so I was really happy he came on board. We sent his agent the script and once it had gotten into his hands he came back very quickly and the ball got rolling from there.

What was he like to work with? Were there any amusing incidents during filming?

Colin is very collaborative. So in readthroughs and rehearsals we'd talk a lot about the story and we added little things in here and there based on those conversations. On set he was very gracious and practically everywhere we went he was taking selfies with fans and just being the gentleman that he is in real life. The shoot was pretty gruelling in parts but he was a real pro. Colin also insisted on doing his own stunts and one scene called for him to be hauled from a car boot to the ground. He insisted on doing it and said if Jake Gyllenhaal could do his own stunts then so could he!

Are you a *Doctor Who* fan yourself? Which era of the show do you enjoy?

I've dropped out of *Doctor Who* a bit of late but I was massive fan of the Jon Pertwee and Tom Baker eras of the show which is what I grew up watching in Australia. I do like the newer Doctors though and thought John Hurt was a terrific War Doctor. I have to be honest and say I had to refresh myself on Colin Baker's period but having spent a lot of time talking about *Doctor Who* with Colin (all of that is secret of course) I do really like his take on the role and I'm glad that the Big Finish Audio series has enabled him to explore it further.

What sort of themes does your film explore?

The central themes are greed and exploitation. Both on a corporate level but also on a personal level. I think revenge is a deep and personal greed that often has the same fallout as the more abstract forms of it. But that's the subtext of it. On the surface it's (hopefully) a fresh take on the postapocalypse genre. I've always been interested in the characters and decisions that lead up to the worlds we typically see. So that's what we focus on. The last few months before the world goes to hell – or not. No spoilers now!

Your film has a similar title to a classic Vincent Price movie, did that film provide any inspiration at all?

I'm glad you mentioned it because in a way it has, yes. What I definitely didn't want to do is make another "zombie" postapocalypse film and my frames of reference for this genre are much older films like this one. There's also things like the *Twilight Zone* episode "Time Enough at Last" and more subdued films like *The Quiet Earth* that have influenced it. Ultimately the title goes back to the greed thing. What's the end product of greed? Isolation.

How important do you think crowdfunding is to the future of independent film-making?

It was my first big attempt at this and I was really pleasantly surprised at the response. Funding for short films is rare and competitive so crowdfunding is really important. I think it's also a lot more collaborative and creative. The important thing is not making back a profit but creating something unique. And it does open you up to the idea that you're making something for someone else other than yourself.

What sort of reception did your film get at the Supernova Film Festival in Manchester earlier this year?

It wasn't a massive crowd to be honest as it was screened around lunchtime. But we did good responses from some of the other filmmakers there and it was a little different to some of the other things on the bill. It was a quite a diverse programme in that sense and we're all very proud to be a part of it. The response from contributors that have seen it has also been terrific. And it's now

been subbed to a bunch of festivals so fingers crossed it will find more fans over the next six to twelve months.

What implications do you think us leaving the EU will have for British film makers?

It's all a bit of an unknown to be honest. Creative England, which has been a huge help to us, has issued a statement saying its business as usual until we know more. I hope that whatever happens there is a strong commitment to the arts but it really depends on what sort of government we end up with and what sort of deal they can broker with the EU. Certainly tax breaks have helped to boost the industry and I hope that that would continue. In any case low-budget filmmakers aren't going to stop making films. Stories need to be told and for the most part people look after each other.

What are your future plans?

Last Man on Earth was 12 months of my life so I'm taking a step back now for a little while to recharge. You need to live a bit of life to be able to tell stories about it truthfully so that's what I'll be doing for now. I do have a few irons in the fire and who knows, you might even see Mr Baker in some of them.

Thank you Darren!

You can find out more about the film and future screenings at www.facebook.com/lastmanonearthshortfilm. ▲



Fiction

ON A CUSHION OF STARS

by Gary Merchant

He stood in front of the mirror, clearly pleased with his choice of clothes. Wouldn't do to be running around in someone else's pyjamas – presents totally the wrong impression. "Now, do I need a hat?" he wondered, before putting that idea right out of his mind. "Nah. Too much like Sam Spade."

Satisfied, he strolled out from the TARDIS toward the Tyler home, with thoughts of Christmas dinner filling his mind and hopefully his stomach. The lifts still weren't working, he noted, as he bounded up the stairwells connecting each floor of the tower block. Then something caught his attention, and he paused in mid-bound.

On the second floor, the door of the nearest flat to the stairwell was ajar. A hundred and one things could be responsible for that – a family having gone out without locking the door, or a burglar might be inside, ransacking the place. But there was no damage to the lock or the doorframe – somehow the Doctor couldn't imagine a burglar on the Powell Estate being that sensitive. Nonetheless, he made no sound as he stepped inside, entering the hallway.

No obvious signs of criminal activity, he was glad to see. But just ahead he could hear sounds coming from the living room. This was silly, he told himself. It had to be down to an overactive imagination, with his regeneration having only just stabilised. But he couldn't ignore the nagging feeling at the back of his mind. Whatever was going on, it needed to be investigated.

He pushed open the living room door, and took in the scenario before him. "Well," he gaped. "This was the last thing I expected to see."

Rose checked the wall clock for the fifth time. The Doctor had promised to be there in time for Christmas dinner, so where was he? She felt in her pocket for the TARDIS key, and was reassured by its glow. He was still here on Earth, that much was certain, but where? "Come on, darlin'," Jackie said. "Or the turkey'll get cold. He'll be along soon enough," she added, noting her daughter's concern.

Mickey shrugged. "How long can it take to throw some clothes on?"

"Oh, leave him alone," Jackie chided him good-naturedly. "Besides, anyone who saved the world dressed in Howard's pyjamas can take as long as he wants, in my book. Ain't that right, Rose?"

Rose smiled. Jackie seemed to have taken a shine to the Doctor's new form. She was certainly more forgiving now than when they had first met.

"Sorry I'm late." They all turned to see the Doctor standing there, hands in pockets, beaming.

"Come on then." Jackie began dishing up a fresh plate. "Come and get it while it's still hot."

The Doctor's smile faltered. "I'm afraid we need to postpone dinner for a few minutes," he said. "Something important just came up. And it's right on your doorstep – well, two floors down, to be precise."

"But I'm starving," Mickey complained.

"So am I," the Doctor admitted. "But if we don't sort this out, we might not have a Christmas this year."

The Doctor's words had been enough to persuade Rose, Jackie and Mickey to follow him back down to the second floor and the

flat in question. "I never had you down as a nosy neighbour type," Jackie said to him.

"Maybe I've become a bit more domestic in my outlook," he replied. "Come on, he's just through here."

"Who?" Rose pressed. Instead of replying, the Doctor opened the door to the living room. Every available space was decked with all manner of decorations, tinsel and a huge number of presents, all beautifully wrapped, but it was the figure before them that rendered them all speechless. He was sat on the sofa immediately facing them, and was very much a picture of gloom. The fact that his left leg was encased in plaster and was resting on a footstool probably had something to do with his current demeanour.

But it was his appearance that had stunned the group. The likeness was incredible, down to the stout frame and white beard – not to mention the outfit lying discarded over the armrest of the sofa, but even so... The Doctor performed the introductions. "This is Rose, Jackie and Mickey – but then, you knew that already," he said to the stranger. "I've brought them along to help."

The stranger perked up at the news, but seemed doubtful. "Doctor, are you sure about this? I don't like to involve outsiders, as a rule."

"I understand that," the Doctor said. "But as a rule, you don't normally have your leg in plaster at Christmas. Needs must, I'm afraid."

Jackie at last found her voice. "Doctor, what's going on? What have you got us into this time, and who's that?"

He turned to her with a wry smile. "As if you have to ask. You know exactly who it is, Jackie. And he never let you down, did he? Not even when you asked for that doll's house when you were nine years old."

Her cheeks flushed with embarrassment as Mickey and Rose looked at her enquiringly. "How did you...?" Jackie looked from the

Doctor to the stranger, shaking her head. "But it's impossible. He can't be here, living on a council estate with his leg up."

The stranger smiled knowingly at her. "It's not exactly the ideal circumstances for us to finally meet, Jacqueline, but I still have all of your letters from when you were little. There was one in particular – now, how did it go? Ah yes – 'I don't know how you do it, visiting all of us children in one night. You are a very special person, and Christmas wouldn't be the same without you. Lots of love and kisses...' well, I'm sure you know the rest."

Tears welled up in Jackie's eyes as she at last accepted the truth, stepping past the Doctor to wrap her arms around the man in a grateful hug. The Doctor quietly ushered Rose and Mickey out into the hall. "I think we should give them a moment, don't you?"

"Doctor, what's going on?" Mickey protested. "Who is that guy?"

The Doctor looked at him, as if wondering why the question had been asked in the first place. Then he stood between Mickey and Rose, an arm draped over each of them. "Tell me, what do we get at Christmas?"

"Visits from half-forgotten relatives who we don't see the rest of the year," Rose replied. "And presents, of course."

"And where do the presents come from?" He looked from one to the other. "Put it another way, who do the children of the world look out for on the night of Christmas Eve?"

"Well, Fathe..." The reply froze in her throat, as Rose glanced back to the living room, a look of incredulity on her face. "You're kiddin'. It can't be!"

Mickey had also realised what the Doctor was getting at. "What, that's him, stuck in a council flat with his leg in plaster?" It was meant as a joke, but then Mickey saw the look of seriousness in the Doctor's face. "So,

where's all his little helpers, then – the elves and that?"

"Back in Lapland, I expect. It is him," the Doctor stressed. "Believe me, I should know."

They took in this revelation – that he was indeed here, in a council flat, talking to Jackie. "So, what's he doing here?" Rose asked. "And how did he break his leg in the first place?"

"Oh, he always pays a flying visit to all the countries of the world before Christmas," the Doctor replied. "What you might call a fact-finding tour. He takes the time to find out what the most popular toys are, all the current trends, just so he can deliver exactly the right gift to the right person. Only this time, it didn't go according to plan."

"We can see that," said Mickey. "How'd his leg get busted?"

The Doctor sighed. "Turns out he slipped down the stairs, coming down from the roof after feeding the reindeer – yes, they're here, along with his sleigh. Anyway, he managed to get back into the living room, which is where I found him. I took him to the local hospital, where they reset the bone, and put his leg in plaster."

"So, why's he back here? Shouldn't he have stayed in hospital?"

"Oh, come on, Rose," the Doctor scolded her. "He couldn't have stayed there, not tonight of all nights. And imagine what would have happened if he'd given his name and address. They'd have thought he'd escaped from some institution. No, he discharged himself, and I brought him back here." The Doctor shrugged helplessly. "But now he's stuck. He can't walk on that leg, not for a few days at least. And it's nearly Christmas."

Before Rose or Mickey could say anything, Jackie came out to join them, wiping her eyes dry. "I knew it was him," she said. "I just didn't want to admit it to myself, that's all."

"Childhood memories are always the strongest," the Doctor observed. "They're the ones that stay with you, and they mean the most. So, are we all set?"

The three of them shared a confused glance. "Set for what?"

The Doctor sighed. "Didn't you see the stack of presents piled high in each room? How are they going to get delivered tonight if we don't pitch in?"

"What, us? Standing in for the big guy?" Mickey seemed unsure, but the more he thought about it, the more the idea seemed to appeal. "Okay, I can go with that."

"So let's get on with it," said Rose, ever practical. "If we're quick, we can get all of this stuff inside the TARDIS and be off."

"Ah, no." The Doctor raised a hand. "Not the TARDIS. Not this time." He took in their looks of puzzlement before broaching the next question. "Anyone fancy a trip in a sleigh?"

High on the roof of the tower block, a group of eight reindeer stood patiently waiting, tethered to a sleigh already loaded with presents. The Doctor, Rose, Jackie and Mickey slowly approached, not wanting to spook the animals. "This is just so impossible," Rose laughed, as she hauled her sack of presents into the sleigh. Instead of lying on top of the existing pile of presents as expected, Rose's sack seemed to merge into the overflowing mass. Rose blinked and turned to the Doctor. "Compression field, right?"

He nodded, heaving his own sack into the sleigh. "Spot on. Come on, Mickey boy. Once we get these presents in, we can set off."

Mickey's sack was the last to be loaded. "So how do we fly this thing?"

"We leave that to Donner and Blitzen and the rest of the gang," the Doctor told him. "All we have to do is strap ourselves in, and then hold on tight to the reigns."

"Just like that?" Jackie hesitated before boarding. "And why do I have to come?"

"Because it's been your dream," said the Doctor. "Ever since you were a child it was the one thing you wanted to do every year, to ride in this sleigh. It might be a few years down the line, but tonight, Jackie, you can live that dream. Do you really want to pass up the opportunity?"

Her eyes were filled with wonder as Jackie shook her head. The Doctor reached out his hand, and she gratefully took her seat next to him. Rose and Mickey sat behind, watching them. "Your mum, she's like a big kid," Mickey noted, smiling.

"Or the child who never quite grew up," Rose suggested. "It's really sweet."

"Everybody ready?" the Doctor called out. "Wagons roll!" With a light snap of the reigns, Donner and Blitzen led the others in a slow trot, which quickly gathered pace to

a canter and then a full gallop. Just as they met the edge of the roof, the reindeer rose up from the ground, pulling the sleigh with them. They were now riding on a cushion of stars, which trailed behind them as they went. Jackie clung onto the Doctor, and Rose held onto Mickey – and they all shared the same thrill of excitement and awe.

Jackie chanced a look down at the houses passing beneath them, and turned to the Doctor excitedly. "I never believed this would really happen, not after all this time."

"Believe it, Jackie," he grinned, snapping the reigns. "Okay, boys. Best hooves forward, and on to the North Star. As the great Noddy Holder once said, 'It's Chriiiiistmaaaaas!'"

He heard the laughter, and saw them pass by his window, before sinking back into his sofa, relieved. A potential Christmas disaster had been averted, and he was sure the Doctor and his friends were more than up to the task. "I just hope they're not too successful," he mused. "I don't want to find myself out of a job next year." ▲



SERIES REVIEW

LETHBRIDGE-STEWART

from Candy Jar Books

Lethbridge-Stewart is a new series of novels set after the 1968 Doctor Who serial *The Web of Fear*, primarily centered around the characters of Alistair Lethbridge-Stewart who was at that time a Colonel in the Scots Guards, and Anne Travers.

THE FORGOTTEN SON

by Andy Frankham-Allen

Review by Nick Mellish

I think the main reaction I saw online when the **Lethbridge-Stewart** range was announced was, "Oh! I'm surprised that hasn't been done before." We live in a world of Big Finish, which seems determined to plug any gap going across their various ranges, and in many cases create ones of their own which they can sort out later (probably with a Vardan or David Warner if current form is anything to go by) so it was somewhat strange to realize it hadn't already been done.

We'd had hints of what Lethbridge-Stewart did between *The Web of Fear* and *The Invasion* in some of the novels but it was mostly ignored as gaps go. It's quite possibly because on paper it sounds a bit uninspiring: Alistair sees Yeti and then engages in a few years of tedious admin and meeting

with men wearing ties before setting up UNIT, with a little bit of help from Group Captain Chunky Gilmore, if the *Missing Adventures* range is to be believed. It may be that, with Nicholas Courtney sadly gone, it wasn't seen as something viable to do on audio. It could be that it was seen as a tricky one to do.

Now, that I can understand. In *Spearhead From Space*, he explicitly states Earth has been attacked by aliens twice, which leaves little wriggle room for additional goings-on; in *The Invasion*, he mentions Yeti and nothing else. What to do, then?

In the case of this range, the answer is to just go for it anyway and add a get-out-clause, namely that the Brig cannot say a word about what happened due to various Official Secrets Acts. I'm not sure I entirely buy it and I'm not sure it entirely works, though I suppose your two options are 'he doesn't talk about it' or 'he cannot remember due to some sort of memory wipe', and the latter has been done to death and beyond far too many times to mention, so the 'he just doesn't mention it' route is probably the lesser of two evils, even if it is a bit... silly. That's not to say, however, that I'm not intrigued by the range and haven't enjoyed novels in it, hence volunteering to review a fair few of them for this magazine.

With caveats out of the way then, let's go back to the very start and the tale of the forgotten son...

You can expect a range focussing on an established character to stand by what we know about them, and also to add a bit more colour to their background and flesh things out. Certainly, Gary Russell gave this a go in *Scales of Injustice*, with a big focus on the Brigadier's marriage crumbling gradually due to his job, and both *Downtime* and *Deadly Reunion* touch on his past, too, but here is a whole range to play with. Will it eke things out slowly, or go full throttle?

The answer here is Full Throttle, with capital letters and knobs on. Straight away, this novel decides to create its own additional

mythos for the character with no apologies or warning. It is a brave move, for so beloved a character.

The Forgotten Son is written by Andy Frankham-Allen, who also serves as editor for the entire range, so it makes sense for it to be him to give us the series opener. Across the novel, we get a hitherto unheard-of fiancée for Lethbridge-Stewart, revelations about the Lethbridge-Stewart's family (including an explanation of the novel's title), new supporting characters for the range as a whole, background on the origins of what will become UNIT in the end, and a whole whack of new stuff to do with the Great Intelligence. The story also acts as a sequel to *The Web of Fear* and, to some extent, *The Abominable Snowmen*, not to mention a prequel to *The Snowmen*. It's an attempt to tie up all Great Intelligence continuity, and it works pretty damn well in that respect. Frankham-Allen has clearly given this a lot of thought beforehand, and he shows his workings well here.

Where it is perhaps less successful is in some of the more for-the-fans moments, such as an opening that sees a child finding a Yeti on their loo at their home in Tooting Bec (no, really), which feels a bit embarrassing and too knowing instead of amusing, and a cameo appearance from Driver Evans, which is superfluous at best and mostly shows how much of a nonsense the character is in a world outside of the London Underground.

There is arguably a bit too much new mythology for Lethbridge-Stewart's character to take in all at once, though for the most part this world-building does not interfere with the plot, but in other ways it's a very strong mission statement: "This is our new Lethbridge-Stewart background. Deal with it or leave now."

For those who stick around, the rest of the range slows down the pace of new revelations a bit whilst also developing what we have here further still, only enforcing how clear the vision of Frankham-Allen and his Candy Jar Books co-editor Shaun Russell is.

This feels at times like a very different Brigadier and world for him to the one we know of, but the clarity of intent and vision and thought is admirable and strong enough for the rest of the range to ride this novel's coat tails, and that should be applauded.

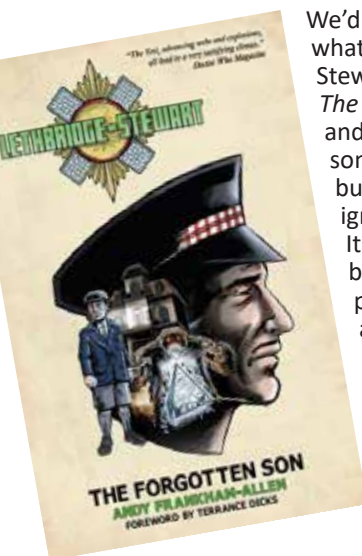
THE SCHIZOID EARTH

by David A McIntee

Review by Allan Lear

The Schizoid Earth is the second in a series of what could be describe as "Young Brigadier" stories from Candy Jar Books. This series follows the adventures of a pre-fame Colonel Alastair Lethbridge-Stewart as he deals with peculiar happenings, crazed science, the possibility of alien interventionism on Earth and other X-Filesian occurrences. In doing so, they demonstrate how the Colonel built a portfolio of past experiences that would, eventually, qualify him to head up the United Nations Intelligence Taskforce.

In style the Lethbridge-Stewart books read little like traditional *Doctor Who* novels. Gone are the stuttering and sometimes unbearably adolescent attempts at a "mature" outlook that sometimes plagued the Virgin New Adventures series; ousted is the low aim of the current BBC book series, designed as it is to appeal to the various tots and moppets who watch the present series rather than retain any interest for the long-term viewer. In its place is a lightweight, zippy feel that is reminiscent of the best



sort of Boys' Own Adventure Stories. Here, in the parallel universe of golden summer days, the beneficent military specialists defend our world from two-dimensional villains and the cack-handed meddling of well-meaning but far-from-commonsensical mad science boffin types. Problems are solved with pragmatic know-how or a straight right to the jaw. The Union Flag stands for liberty, justice, tolerance, decency and not making a fuss.

This is a fictional, Arthurian England in which Britons of all colours and both sexes stand together in an egalitarian meritocracy and face down the dangers to Her Majesty's territories that emanate, not from some jingoistically-portrayed Yellow Peril, but from the evil that lurks in the hearts of twisted men. It's a resuscitation, almost a rescue, of the problematic Empire texts of Kipling and H Rider Haggard, bringing them up-to-date and preserving their patriotic lustre while expunging the elements of prejudice that hampered the originals. The innate goodness of our protagonist enables the series to maintain this conceit without having to satirise or undermine it, as seen for example in George MacDonald Frazer's *Flashman* series.

The Schizoid Earth concerns mysterious unpowered aircraft that, like the Martian capsules of *The War of the Worlds*, are falling to ground from inexplicable origins. In the process of investigation, the Brigadier-to-be is captured, heavily drugged for interrogation, and then exposed to a sequence of events that will rattle his sanity, confound his senses, and perhaps even jeopardise the very nature of our reality.

McIntee, by research or instinct, has the requisite style for this novel down pat. His prose rattles along at a good lick, unencumbered by prolixity or jargon even when the science-fiction aspect of his story is to the fore. Like Alistair himself, the writing is no-nonsense, to the point, and completely free of pretension or faff. This is not to say that it is unaccomplished; on the contrary, in order to read as smoothly as it does, it must

necessarily be possessed of strong focus and a stern disregard for unnecessary minutiae or trickery.

The deceptive simplicity of the writing serves well in contrast to a complex but not convoluted plot which piles bafflement upon impossibility in the way of poor Lethbridge-Stewart. Guest appearances from historical figures are used effectively as shorthand to alert the reader to what is likely to be happening without spelling things out advancing the characters' knowledge, in a neat reversal of the overused "unreliable narrator" trope. Fans of *Doctor Who* will also note bit-part characters making appearances, which adds an element of in-joke fun to proceedings and cementing the relationship between the Lethbridge-Stewart series and its parent show.

The Schizoid Earth is a sturdy tale of scientific misadventure reminiscent of *Quatermass*, and for any fans of the more muscular, action-led style of science fiction it comes recommended. A wholesome, red-blooded yet well-intentioned piece of escapist fantasy, it is what would have once been referred to, without irony or parodic intent, as a ripping yarn

BEAST OF FANG ROCK

by Andy Frankham-Allen

Review by Nick Mellish

The third book released in the **Lethbridge-Stewart** range, *Beast of Fang Rock* was pushed far up the pecking line when the range lost *Horror of Det-Sen*, the Lance Parkin-penned novel that was due to be the second novel released. We'd even got an extract of *Det-Sen* printed at the end of *The Forgotten Son*, and I know a lot of people (myself included) who were excited to see Parkin's name attached to the range, so the loss of him, and the fact that this novel is the sequel to one of the most beloved TV stories in the Fourth Doctor's era piles the pressure onto this one.

Andy Frankham-Allen, the book's author (more on that in a second) notes in his Thanks for the book that, much like its televisual sibling, this book was in part written during a scheduling crisis. Much like the original *Fang Rock* outing though, you'd never know it.

The first thing to note here is one of authorship. Originally announced as being written by Terrance Dicks and Andy Frankham-Allen, the novel cover says it's based on a story by Dicks, whilst Candy Jar themselves say it was 'authorised' by Dicks, and the author notes make it clear that Frankham-Allen did this himself. It's a bit muddled and makes you wonder if the use of Dicks's name on the cover is *entirely* fair. That brings me onto the second thing to note, thought, which is that the novel boasts a truly lovely cover by Colin Howard, the stand out in the range so far to my eyes, and one which puts Anne Travers squarely in the spotlight.

I should confess at this point that by now, book three in the range, I found myself wondering what an Anne Travers spin-off series would look like, reasoning that it'd solve continuity issues with the Brigadier if nothing else. (I noted these in my review of *Forgotten Son* but essentially it boils down to how much you are willing to suspend your disbelief with what the character does or does not know about aliens and how much experience he may or may not have in this specific field by the time UNIT is formed.)

That said, a range based around Anne Travers is probably a harder sell, even with Philip Morris's recovery of *The Web of Fear* showing the world how brilliant she is. Perhaps this novel is the closest we'll ever get, though she is a major character across the range: and rightly so. More Anne, please.

Beast of Fang Rock (a title searching for a definite article if ever I saw one) is set around the lighthouse we are familiar with. It's known for being haunted, the BBC are going to broadcast from it, and there's trouble a-coming from the skies above. On paper, the set up feels a bit like a cross between

Horror of Fang Rock and *The Dæmons*, but in reality, it is very much its own thing, and that, I think, is the novel's finest feature and Frankham-Allen's smartest move. He never tries to emulate and copy what we had before. He uses the original story, and in part some of its dialogue and characters, as colour to paint his own story, being one of time travel, shape-shifting, the nature of fate and destiny, family, love, and big blobby Rutans: tell me that doesn't sound like the most **Doctor Who**-y thing you've ever heard. It's a perfect recipe.

At times, two timelines are running parallel within the narrative, which lets Frankham-Allen play with us, teasing out comparisons or plot points at times, and making it feels rather movie-like in its scope in part. You can imagine that if it were recorded, the direction for a lot of it would be a doddle due to how he's written and arranged things here. Again, it's a smart move, which invests the plot with a sense of dynamism and urgency, and is a direct contrast to the opening seventy-or-so pages, which are far slower than what happens later. I don't think this was an error on Frankham-Allen's part though, but another clever move, kicking things up in pace with his prose as soon as Anne has played her most integral part in the unfolding events.

He writes for Anne and Lethbridge-Stewart very well, too. You can absolutely hear the original actors in their dialogue, so even when scenarios feel (appropriately?) alien to what we know of the Brigadier, you can hear Nicholas Courtney speaking loud and clear.

I'm not sure what I was expecting from this novel, but I came away satisfied with the plot, writing and execution. I love *Horror of Fang Rock* and found this to be an intelligent use of it, with some nice nods and smart use of the 'Beast' and a clever wink to the oft-mentioned confusing reference to lycanthropy in the story as seen on TV (though not in the novelisation, where Dicks removed it, having presumably realised that Rutans and Werewolves are very different things).

I want to say all this now before I move onto the next part, because there were also elements that really put me off parts of this book, sadly: and I mean sadly, as it clouds an otherwise fun read.

The most pressing is one of continuity, the others feeling trivial in comparison. To get those out of the way though, they are: some proof-reading/grammar errors that feel rather sloppy for a professional publisher (reference to Rutan's, for example: the rogue apostrophe strikes again); a couple of moments that feel unnecessary, such as a bizarrely long conversation about how to pronounce the acronym 'UFO'; and most notably the Cosmic Hobo joke.

I know some fans will find it an amusing in-joke that characters have to refer to the Second Doctor as 'Cosmic Hobo' but I found myself cringing painfully every time it was done, as if someone was continually whispering "See what we did there?" into my ear. I know it's mostly done for reasons of copyright (the Doctor being off the cards, whilst Isobelle Watkins is apparently fair game, as she gets mentioned by name here) but I wish they'd found a less embarrassingly fan-boy way around it. The jokes about Kleptonmania feel very tame in comparison.

Back to continuity though. The problem is threefold, so I'll tackle them one by one.

The first is with the short stories that Candy Jar publish for the range. I always assumed that they were meant to be supplementary, but we get so many mentions of 'the Grinning Man' in this novel that it feels like we definitely need to read it, which is surely not on for a supplementary feature (and given the collected print versions of the eBook stories are limited editions, I feel 'supplementary' is a fair label). This feels completely alienating to people who for various reasons may have not read it beforehand. I

understand that Candy Jar wish their free eBooks to be read and celebrated, but here it really does feel like we're being condemned slightly if we haven't done so and that we're missing out on important goings on, which, if anything, puts me off reading it.

Second comes with continuity with the range itself. I understand that they want to create a coherent world and internal continuity for **Lethbridge-Stewart** but the opening is so full of references to the past two novels that I found myself desperately panicking and struggling to recall all the minutiae. Now, this is coming from someone who had actually read the first two books. Imagine now all the people coming to this novel as their first taste of the range because they rather like *Horror of Fang Rock*, and you can bet that there will be such readers. They open the first few pages and: bam! Lethbridge-Stewart has a dead brother resurrected in another body! Something happened to do with a thing called the Grinning Man! There was something to do with an alternative Earth or maybe Germany that affected memory and something or other to do with his fiancée! Lethbridge-Stewart HAS a fiancée!

I'd have given up right there and then. It is brutally unforgiving for newcomers to the range, and pretty heavy going for people who may have read the first two novels a while back or don't retain information all that well for one reason or another. If this were book nine or ten in the range, it'd be more forgivable, but three novels in and a sequel to a popular TV show? No. Given how smartly the book deals with its use of The Vault, a Gary Russell creation used in other novels and by Big Finish, too, and indeed how smartly it deals with *Horror of Fang Rock* itself, in that you won't actually have to have watched the original or read its novelisation to understand the plot here, this feels especially silly.

Third comes hot on the tails of this, and is, to my mind, the most damning aspect: it uses, as a plot device, an alien drug (Om-Tsor) taken not only from an entirely different novel

range, but one published last millennium and long out of print.

We have here multiple mentions of the novel *Revolution Man* by Paul Leonard. You're forgiven for saying "...what?" here. For those who don't know, it was a novel (number twenty-one, fact fans) in BBC Book's Eighth Doctor novels range, published back in 1999 and long since deleted.

I think if they had just used the drug from that novel here, you'd go with it. Instead, characters specifically refer multiple times to 'the Revolution Man' and events in that novel, meaning that you as readers *need* to know what that book is and where it comes from and when it's set and how it ends to fully appreciate and understand what's going on here. You may be lenient and forgive the nods to *The Cult of the Grinning Man* seeing as at least that's from the **Lethbridge-Stewart** range, but to anchor the key plot device and a fair whack of action on something from a book over fifteen years old, which is out of print, and just expect your readers to either know about it or just go with it is utterly unforgivably foolish and alienating. Worse still, David A. McIntee pulled a similar move in the last novel, *The Schizoid Earth*, including a character there from a book he wrote for BBC Books, which makes ones fear this sort of thing will carry on happening. (Again, you may be lenient and say "Well, at least there it was by the same author..." but still.)

It's a damagingly off-putting gesture to any readers not well versed in every book written with the **Doctor Who** label upon it, and it's what moves this novel firmly into the realms of fan-fiction, albeit professionally published, and is a crying shame.

There is much to like in this novel, but sadly also things that need to be addressed as they genuinely weigh the book down and actively harm it. It doesn't render things a total write-off and it remains an enjoyable read for the most part, but it drags this novel down massively. Forewarned is forearmed, as they say, which, for a range about the Brigadier, feels perhaps appropriate.

MUTUALLY ASSURED DOMINATION

by Nick Walters

Review by Nick Mellish

When Candy Jar Books said they had the rights to Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart and other characters created by Mervyn Hainsman and Henry Lincoln, the focus seemed to be on the Great Intelligence and Yeti and their ilk; which is fair enough. The two stories they wrote are immensely popular, with the return of *The Web of Fear* to the archives only adding to their reputation for being solid and good tales written by a very strong team.

Then Candy Jar announced that one of their books would feature the Quarks and the Dominators, and a fair few of us blinked in surprise.

Bless *The Dominators*. Bless it. I'm one of those few people who don't mind the story, but even I would say it's not a classic in any sense. Its novelisation is fine but doesn't really solve its issues, and the notion that it was originally a whacking great six episodes in length is...well, far scarier than the titular Dominators themselves ever were. I did love the Quarks though.

I don't think it was ever crying out for a follow-up though, but credit where credit is due, Nick Walters gives us his best shot at convincing us otherwise, and in doing so writes the best novel in the range up to this point.

The plot is simple to pick up and well told: it's the height of the 1960s peace movement and the Dominators are up to no good, plundering the Earth for its nuclear material and building a power plant in the countryside, where trespassers have vanished, never to be seen again, thanks to the might of the plant's fully-automated and robotic guards, the Quarks. It feels the most 'Nu-Who' the range has done, its very opening begging for the title music and sequence to slam in



once the scene is over, and yet it also feels absolutely at home within the overall range.

Doing as other **Lethbridge-Stewart** novels have done, it takes a character from *The Web of Fear*, namely Harold Chorley, and fleshes him out, moving him from one-note joke to genuinely interesting character. It's his character and the skill with which Walters writes him that is the absolute highlight. Again, he is able to make Chorley both the character he was on screen and much, much more besides. It's by no means an easy task to do that. Back in *The Forgotten Son*, Driver Evans popped up and...was exactly the same and felt out of place in this new world being created. Here, Chorley is completely at home, and his somewhat fragile relationship with the Brigadier is perfectly drawn out. On both sides, there is mistrust, a mild dislike perhaps (to start with at least), but also recognition of skills the other has that they themselves don't possess and admiration for them. I hope the range returns to them both as uneasy co-workers in the future, with the same level of skill.

Waters also writes well for Lethbridge-Stewart himself, and does some nice work pushing on the plot and relationship with him and his fiancée, Sally, though how believable she is as a person working in the Secret Service is up for debate. I understand that as a character she is going to be worried about her husband-to-be, and it feels like they're trying to paint a solid image of their relationship, namely that she cares more about him than vice versa, but it also can be read as the tired old 'woman more emotionally compromised than man' cliché, which is less appealing.

The plot moves along nicely, and makes good use of the 1960s setting with its locations, political backdrop and supporting characters, and Waters is clearly having a lot of fun reimagining the Quarks as a force to be reckoned with, never shying away from their comical nature, which only makes them the more sinister. He fleshes out the background of the Dominators rather well, too, retaining their outfits and ranks (as well

as the green eyes Ian Marter gave them in his novelisation) and explaining a lot about their past...but they are still the same old squabbling, war-hungry aliens we saw before and, despite being a credible threat, prove to be the least exciting of the two foes in the book. You can't polish a turd, as they say, though hats off to Waters for doing a damn good attempt.

Things slightly fall apart near the end of the novel, with the baddies doing the tired thing of carefully explaining their plan to the heroes because "it hardly matters anyway since you will all soon die! Bwa ha ha ha ha!", removing Chorley from much of the action, which is a crying shame, and chucking in some new squaddies. I wonder if this last thing was something he was asked to do, introducing these new characters here in this book so they can be used in later novels, but all feels a bit eleventh hour, especially the inclusion of another member of the Bell family, Corporal Bell herself having already made an appearance elsewhere in this range (I did smile at the out-of-the-blue cameo from a certain tramp from the Pertwee era though: utterly unexpected but oddly amusing).

There are some proof-reading errors in the novel, too, but nothing too major and nothing we haven't seen elsewhere in the range. It also makes too many nods to one of the Candy Jar short stories again (*The Dogs of War*), which is slightly off-putting, though it's not to the extent that the *Beast of Fang Rock* did it, which is a relief.

Niggles aside though, this is a fun and well-crafted and -paced novel that surprised me somewhat in making good on *The Dominators* and Harold Chorley, two things I did not foresee myself writing any time soon! The ending suggests that things in the range are now moving onwards and we are slowly approaching the Lethbridge-Stewart we know and love from TV. I'm certainly interested to see how it's done, and hope Nick Walters gets another crack of the whip before too long. ▲



Do you remember your first time?

Grant Bull

The first televised Doctor Who story I watched was...

Dragonfire, a youth spent but not wasted it must be said on cartoons evolved into something acted and it blew my mind.

The first Target novel I bought was...

I was gifted my first Target novel. As a kid on a family holiday to Spain we met an English couple who had teenage boys a few years older than me. Their parting gift to me was a copy of *The Seeds of Doom*. That cover remains one of my favourites until today. We all gained wonderful friends that trip who we are still in touch with and a book I still have and treasure.

The first fan letter I sent was...

I have to be honest, I've never done this. I've sent emails to some of my *Who* heroes, so I guess that counts, right?

The first convention I attended was...

I was late to the convention scene. I attended a lot of signings at The Stamp Centre and Forbidden Planet but my first full *Who* convention was Tenth Planet's Time Quest in Barking in 2008 which was a celebration of Tom Bakers era.

The first Doctor Who video I bought was...

This was *The Trial of a Time Lord* boxset in that super cool TARDIS tin, still got and still love it.

What were your Doctor Who firsts? Let us know!



Ian Wheeler

The first televised Doctor Who story I watched was...

The first one I can say for sure is *Destiny of the Daleks*. But I do have vague memories of watching the show much earlier than that, probably as far back as Tom and Leela.

The first Target novel I bought was...

The War Games! I spent ages in WH Smith selecting my first one. It was the superb cover that swung it! Soldiers from different periods of history - awesome!

The first fan letter I sent was...

I wrote to both JN-T and Sylvester McCoy. Both sent lovely replies back.

The first convention I attended was...

Tencon (celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Merseyside Local Group) in Liverpool in 1988. Guests included Fraser Hines, Richard Franklin and Deborah Watling. It was amazing to meet my heroes in person for the first time.

The first Doctor Who video I bought was...

Death to the Daleks. And how amazing it was to be able to watch it at home whenever I liked. I soon caught up on the other titles. The idea of one day owning every existing story would have seemed absurd.

FICTION

SECRET SANTA

by betawho

"Where are the sleigh bells?" Amy asked, rummaging through the boxes and bags scattered all over the TARDIS floor.

Rory turned around, covered in Christmas tree lights. He had a neat loop of them around his neck and around both shoulders, like a bright bandolier. He was methodically unwinding them as he draped them around the artificial purple Christmas tree the Doctor had dug out of the hold.

"Not me," he said, sucking around the haft of a green candy cane. Amy looked up and shook her head in fond exasperation at him; only he would so practically hang lights on a tree that way.

"Not me!" the Doctor said from the base of the main stairs up on the console floor. He brandished a spatula. He was covered in icing, wearing a Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer apron, and was building a rather lopsided gingerbread house, with liberal use of multi-colored icing and sprinkles.

"I've got them!" River caroled as she trot-jingled her way down the stairs, the sleigh bells wrapped around her hips. She grinned and dropped a sprig of mistletoe on the Doctor's head as she passed. She gave him a kiss on the cheek then licked her lips. "Hmm, lemon icing!" The words sounded like sin on her lips. The Doctor grinned.

River held up two bunches of sleigh bells to Amy, "Where do you want them?"

Amy stood up and dusted her hands off. She grinned. "Let's wind them around the railings, that way when we get thrown around by his driving they'll jingle."

"Oi!" the Doctor protested, "My driving is not that bad!"

"Yes it is, sweetie. That's why I installed the tree with a magnetic clamp," River said, kissing another colorful icing smear off his lips. His lips automatically smooched back at her.

Amy grinned.

"Just for that, I'm driving with the blue stabilisers on!" he declared, frowning.

"Blue stabilisers, what're those?" River asked as she helped Amy wind the bells around the rails. Amy flashed a surprised glance at the Doctor behind her back. The Doctor grinned with manic glee, suddenly waving with his spatula like he was conducting a triumphal orchestra.

"I'll show you," he said, biting down to a serious expression when she turned around.

Amy giggled.

The Doctor plopped down his spatula on the table. His gingerbread house leaned precariously to one side, then collapsed. He frowned down at it. Then ignored it.

He clapped his hands, "Right! Has everyone got their presents?" he said, twirling toward them, virtually dancing with excitement.

Rory finished hanging the last of the lights on the tree and pointed to his and Amy's gifts, sitting by the door. "What's that all about anyway?" he asked as he climbed up to the dais. He stopped by the Doctor's table and filched a piece of gingerbread. "We're all to buy a Christmas gift, but not for each other?"

The Doctor danced around the console and inputted coordinates. He very gleefully showed River where the blue stabilisers were.

He looked up, "That's right. We're going to Tradoran, where they've developed the art of the Secret Santa to a whole new level!"

He threw the lever and they whirled away. Smoothly.

They strode down the streets of a bustling port city. It was another of those overpopulated future worlds. Buildings towered, crowds jostled.

There were Christmas decorations everywhere. Christmas trees, Santas, snowflakes, angels, and giant candy canes. The people even decorated their clothes. Rory saw a man walk by wearing a vest trimmed around the edges with twinkling Christmas lights.

Quite a lot of people were wearing sleigh bells; on shoes, on hats, on coat tassels and belts. Which explained why River was still wearing the belt of sleigh bells around her hips. The air shimmered and twinkled and chimed. Christmas songs filtered out of hidden loudspeakers, and everyone was happy and smiling.

Amy bounced and turned in circles, trying to look everywhere at once. "This is amazing!"

"Oh, you haven't seen anything yet," River said.

Amy turned to her, eyes gleaming. "I bet the shopping here is fantastic!"

River grinned. "Oh it is."

"No," Rory said from behind the mound of presents he was carrying. He leaned sideways to see around them. "We are *not* going Christmas shopping here!"

Amy and River just exchanged a glance and ignored him.

He sighed and rolled his eyes. "Where exactly are we going, Doctor?" he asked, as he dodged a tall skinny lizard man in a red Santa hat, equally weighed down with presents, even carrying one looped over his high arched tail.

"To the Secret Santa Station!" the Doctor said, pointing forward like he was leading a charge.

Amy peeled her eyes away from all the glittering shopfronts and turned to him. "I thought Secret Santa was just something you did at the office or at parties," she said.

"It originally was," River said in her calm, reasonable voice, following the Doctor. "But the tradition expanded over time."

"That's part of the fun of Christmas here," the Doctor interrupted, turning around and jittering like an excited child. "The children have Father Christmas, and the adults have Secret Santa."

"How do they explain that to the kids?" Rory asked. "That Santa doesn't deliver to grownups."

The Doctor shrugged. "Can't expect one guy to deliver to all the kids in the universe and all the adults *too*."

Rory shrugged and nodded, seeing the sense in that.

The Doctor dashed forward through the crowd and jumped to a stop, brandishing his hands up. "And here we are!"

It was beyond tacky, but sort of beautiful too. "Secret Santa Station" was written in huge flowing letters over a brick entrance that had been painted snow white and pillared with candy canes. A red velvet carpet was rolled out under a portico dripping with Christmas lights.

There were large display windows on each side, sectioned out into display boxes of various sizes, showcasing everything from toys to electronics to mink coats to holos of personal vehicles.

"People give away cars?" Rory asked, goggling.

River nodded. "A Secret Santa gift can be anything you want, from a box of sweets to personal vehicles and anything in between."

Rory suddenly clutched his stack of presents self-consciously to him. "But we aren't even residents," he protested.

"Doesn't matter," the Doctor said, turning to them. "Everyone's welcome. All you have to do is bring a gift."

"Come on, Rory." Amy grabbed him by the sleeve and hauled him inside.

"But..." he protested all the way.

River and the Doctor grinned at each other and followed.

Inside was a slightly more mature and elegant foyer than the outside indicated. The floor was a plush, deep green carpet. White spindly chairs sat around the walls, with little white tables spaced every couple of chairs, and a gleaming mahogany counter took up one side wall.

The attendant was wearing a green elf hat, and looked as if her ears had been surgically altered. "Merry Christmas!" she said, smiling in sincere cheer.

River took the packages from a subdued Rory and grinned back at her, efficiently transferring them to the counter. "Merry Christmas."

The attendant counted the packages and the patrons. "One for each of you?" she asked.

River nodded, and accepted the forms and pencils she was handed.

River led the others over to the tables and chairs and handed out the forms. "What's this, there's a test?" Amy asked.

River laughed. "No. They're questionnaires, to help match up the people with the presents."

Amy looked down at hers.

Age:

Gender:

Species:

Religion:

Profession:

Personality:

Interests:

Hobbies:

There were spaces left for answers. She flipped it over on the back to find another, similar form.

"That one's to describe who you think would like your gift," the Doctor pointed over her shoulder. He grabbed one of the pencils from River and folded himself down into a chair, he started filling out his form with flair, as if he were writing a concerto.

River slipped the paper out from under his flying pencil. "I'll fill yours out, Sweetie." He pouted at her. She shrugged. "Your interests alone would take all day."

"Not to mention what they'd make of some of the answers," she whispered to Rory. He grinned.

"Fine." The Doctor bopped up and started perusing the line of Father Christmas portraits that lined the room, each one different, each year showing the changes in culture and taste.

Amy quickly finished her form and handed it to Rory to hand in. She joined the Doctor. "Ooh! I like this one!" the Doctor said. He leaned in to study the painting. All the others

were some variation of red and white, but this Santa was dressed all in green. He had a tiny little white goatee beard, and a truly curly moustache, and the sly mischievous look of a sea captain or rock star.

Amy grinned. "You would."

"Come along, children," River caroled as she handed in the completed forms.

The attendant grinned and ushered them all into the next room. It was completely bare, white, about ten feet in diameter, and had the feeling of some kind of submarine pressure chamber.

"What's this?" Rory asked. There was nothing in the room but a blue fluorescent circle on the floor. There was another door on the far side.

"Me first!" The Doctor jumped into the circle and held his arms out to each side, forming a T. Lights flashed and he grinned and bounced over to the other door.

Amy scowled. "Security scan?" she guessed.

"Seems a lot of fuss for a bunch of Christmas presents," Rory said, scuffing his foot uncomfortably on the floor.

River walked calmly into the circle and held her arms out, the bells at her hips jingling faintly. She smiled. The lights flashed.

"It's only a full body scan. To get our sizes, in case the presents are clothes or need shoe sizes, like the hover skates the Doctor brought."

"Oi! Presents are supposed to be a secret!" the Doctor protested.

River joined him. Amy went next. And Rory, dubiously, followed.

The attendant met them in the hallway beyond. It looked like a doctor's surgery corridor, with several blank doors leading off it.

"What now?" Rory asked.

"This is the best part," the Doctor rubbed his hands together. "This is where we get the presents!" He bounced on his toes, looking as excited as a boy.

River smiled at his excitement. But Amy could tell River was excited too.

The attendant passed along the corridor and handed out badges. "Amy, you're in room three. Rory, room four. River, room one. Doctor, room two. Observation rooms are open if you wish to observe. Only the recipient is allowed in the gift rooms."

Rory looked down at the large colourful badge in his hand. It had a large 4 on it. He squared his shoulders. "So, I guess I'll go first."

"Wait a minute," Amy said, laying a restraining hand on his arm. "What is this? We can't all go in? Observation rooms? What's going on? I thought we were getting Christmas presents, not being interrogated."

"It's okay, Amy," River said. "It's nothing bad. It's part of the service. Each person is recorded opening their gift, and the recording is sent to the giver as an e-card, so they can see how their gift was received."

The Doctor nodded eagerly. "It's part of the fun!"

"Come on," River grabbed Amy's wrist and tugged her through a narrow closet-like door beside number 4. "We can watch from in here."

It was a narrow room with a wide, two-way mirror on one wall. A plain white room beyond was decorated with a Christmas tree in one corner, garlands on the walls, and a plain white table in the middle which held a small gold-wrapped present.

She saw Rory stumble into the room, apparently pushed by the Doctor's long arm.

The Doctor nipped into the observation room. "Did I miss anything?"

Amy rolled her eyes at him. Rory had barely had time to catch his balance. He looked around the room, saw the mirror, the decorations, he moved to the table. "What do I do?" he asked, his voice tinny over the intercom. "Just open it?"

River pushed a button under the window. "Just open it. And enjoy it, Dad. It's a Christmas present, not a tooth extraction." Amy giggled. Rory rolled his eyes.

He picked the box up, looked at it, jiggled it beside his ear, then pulled loose the shiny red ribbon. He opened the box and pulled out a thumb-sized cylinder. He frowned, he turned it over. He looked down at the inside of the box lid. Amy could just see the edge of what looked like instructions.

Rory read, and then twisted something on the cylinder. He jumped. Amy could hear a loud, "thump thump, thump thump" coming from the room. She frowned.

Rory's frown dropped away in an amazed look. He read the instructions again, adjusted the device a different way. A soft blue wavery light emitted from the end, he ran it over his hand. His face transformed. He grabbed up the lid of the box and began reading quickly, trying out all the different settings, his face becoming brighter and brighter.

"Woo-hoo!" he finally did a little dance and fisted his new toy in the air. He looked down at it as if it was the biggest diamond in the world. "Thank you!" He looked around at all four walls, looking for the camera. "This is great! Thank you again!"

He gathered up his box and wrapping and bundled them out of the room, still fiddling with his present.

Amy dashed out and met him in the hallway. He was practically glowing with excitement. It was a good look on him. "What is it?" she

asked, wondering what could bring such a look to his face.

"Amy! Look!" He held out what looked like a small LED flashlight. "It's a PMA, according to the box."

"A what?"

"A Personal Medical Assistant," the Doctor translated. "Basically a medical Swiss army knife." He smiled at Rory's obvious delight. He was still playing with it, trying out features.

"It has a dermal regenerator, a surgical laser, nerve dampeners, a sedative setting, a sonar scan, and you can even use it as a light, see!" He flashed the lit end at her, she jerked away her eyes.

"That's great, Rory," she said.

"Great? It's fantastic! Do you have any idea how much I can *do* with this?" He was in love. It was obvious. Suddenly his face fell, and he clasped the tube tightly in one fist. "But it's from the future," he said quietly. He looked up hesitantly at the Doctor. "I can't keep it, I suppose."

The Doctor looked at him very sternly. Then broke out into a grin. "It's your Christmas present, Rory. Who am I to take it away from you? Besides, you'll probably have plenty of reason to use it. River's always getting herself banged up."

"Thank you, sweetie!" River said sarcastically. "I'm next!" She flashed her room number badge and trotted off, jingling, Amy right behind her.

"I can really keep it?" Rory asked the Doctor softly. His fist was still tight around the tube.

The Doctor laid a hand on his shoulder. "There's no one I could trust more with it, Rory. I know you'll use it well."

Rory blew out a breath and grinned.

"Come on!" Amy yelled from down the hall.

River's room was similar to Rory's – tree in the corner, garlands – but a different colour scheme and with different personal touches.

Her present sat on the plain white table. It was wrapped in Christmas tree patterned paper, and was the size of a breezeblock. From the way it scooped across the table when River tried to pick it up, it must have weighed as much as a breezeblock too.

"What kind of a gift do you think they gave her?" Amy whispered to Rory, the voice of a parent who had no idea what to get for her magnificent child. The Doctor looked back and forth between them fondly, behind them. "I don't know," Rory whispered back. "I didn't see what she wrote down."

They all settled to watch River unwrap her present. She pulled a knife casually out of her boot, and slit the paper neatly up the centre, returning her knife to her boot without apparent thought. Amy grinned and shook her head.

River parted the paper and peered inside. Her eyebrows shot up and she tore the rest of the paper off with no regard to finesse. She ran her hands over the lizard skin cover of the book inside. Her touch was reverent. She leaned side to side and peered avidly at the tome. For tome it was, leather buckles held it closed on one side, and it was thicker than her hand was long. The pebbled, reptile-skin cover was stamped and embossed with strange alien letters.

River reverently unbuckled the straps and carefully folded it open, unconsciously looking left and right as if she was searching for gloves or tweezers to handle it with.

Inside, it was a magnificently illuminated manuscript, the pages yellowing, but well preserved, the colours rich and jewel toned. The alien script flowed across in tiny symbols, crammed end to end between the illuminations.

She breathed out a sigh, almost a hyperventilation, and leaned on the table, supporting herself with a hand on each side of the book. Her hair hid her face.

"I don't know who gave me this, or why they would part with it," she said, without looking up. "But I want you to know I will *treasure* it." She looked up. Looked unerringly at the far right corner of the ceiling. "Thank you."

She closed the book and buckled it carefully. She hefted it up, wrapping its heavy weight against her chest, and turned and exited the room with dignity.

The Doctor raced out of the room. Amy and Rory followed him. River was standing in the hallway, staring down at the heavy tome in her hands as if she couldn't believe it.

"What is it?" the Doctor twisted his neck to see. "What did you get?"

"River?" Amy asked.

River tilted the book so they could see it. It was obviously old. Looked like something an alien wizard might write. "It's the 'Annotated History of the Emperor Dsai, Draconian First Empire.'" She looked at the Doctor. "It's a first edition." She hugged the book back to her chest like it was a child.

The Doctor grinned. He kissed her on the forehead. She smiled and relaxed. But she didn't let go of the book.

Amy grunted. "Well, if I knew all it took to impress you was a book written by lizard men, I'd have gotten the Doctor to get me a Siluran novel."

River grinned. "I think Silurian romances would probably be a bit much even for you, mother dearest."

Amy snorted. Rory wisely said nothing.

"All right, me next," Amy held up her badge and trotted down the hall. She slotted it into the door and whisked inside. The others

jumped and ran to catch up with her, piling into the observation room just as she started investigating the truly huge box on the table.

This room was all done in icicle blue, looking a bit like a festive ice cave. The box on the table was four feet long and two feet high and wrapped in elegant frosted peach paper.

She ripped the huge bow off and lifted off the lid. “You guys seeing this?” she asked, unwrapping swathes of fragile white tissue paper.

Rory thumbed on the intercom, “Yeah, we’re here. What’s in that thing?”

“Dunno,” she shoved aside the last of the paper and revealed a long swath of fur.

“Oh, wow!” Amy said. She rubbed her hands down the fluffy fur, revelling in its softness, the hairs tickling her palms. It was thick, snowy white, heavy. A Clouded Leopard fur, frosty white patterned with smoky blues and greys.

She pulled out a small card.

“Evans and Sons Genetic Furriers. This coat is made of genetically grown construct fur from our finest finishing vats. Designation and Extraction – Winter Cloud Leopard.”

She pulled the fur out of the box. It was a huge fluffy coat patterned with smoky grey and silver blue on elegant white.

She pulled it on, and pulled her hair up out of the collar. She wrapped it around herself. It was warm and fluffy and sleek as mink.

It covered her from neck to calves. With only her legs showing, it looked like she wasn’t wearing anything under it.

Rory’s eyes dilated. “I love Secret Santa,” he whispered, unable to take his eyes off his wife.

River and the Doctor’s eyes met over his head, grinning.

“Oh, wow! This is great! Thank you!” Amy’s voice came over the intercom, breaking the spell.

Amy twirled in the room, showing off the coat to her giver, then blew a kiss at the walls and breezed out of the room, leaving the box behind.

They all piled out of the observation room. River stalked around Amy, still clutching her book, and nodded her head sagely. “Very nice. You do realize I may have to borrow that from you, mummy dear?”

“Not on your life!” Amy laughed back, wrapping the coat possessively around her. “Finders keepers.”

Rory stroked his hand down the sleeve. “It’s as soft as kitten fur,” he said wonderingly. Amy twisted and gave him a sloe-eyed look over her shoulder.

She rubbed her chin in the collar. “Yes, it is.”

Rory cleared his throat.

“Right! My turn!” the Doctor said. He whirled and bounced off down the corridor waving his room badge.

“Oh, god,” Amy said. “I don’t even *want* to think what they got him!”

The others followed, tumbling into the observation room with a sort of morbid fascination. The Doctor was inside, gleefully inspecting the Christmas tree. Apparently his twirled and sang Christmas carols. He twiddled happily with a little elf ornament on it. Then abruptly pulled out the sonic screwdriver and scanned the tree, eyeing it warily. When it continued to spin slowly, non-threateningly, he nodded happily, pocketed his screwdriver, snatched a candy cane off the tree, then approached the table with the peppermint stick poking out of his mouth.

His present was small, wrapped in plain white paper and a blue bow. He held it up and

weighed it. He put it to his ear and shook, listening to the sound while he screwed up his mouth in concentration. He held it up close to his eyes and studied the wrapping, turning it all around, inspecting the seams. He sniffed it.

“Open it already!” Amy’s voice yelled over the intercom. He jumped.

“Just savouring the moment,” he said. He placed the box back on the table, pulled out the sonic and gave it a blast.

All the wrapping paper crumpled and fell away. He lifted the lid and peered inside, sucking on his candy cane. He almost inhaled it when he saw what was inside.

He gave a little high pitched squeal and spat out the candy. He pulled out whatever was inside the box and turned his back.

“What’s he doing?” Rory asked.

“I don’t know,” River said slowly, with awful anticipation.

“Doctor?” Amy said demandingly. He held up one finger but didn’t turn around. He looked

over his shoulder at them, then sidled to the side of the window where they couldn’t see him.

Rory started biting his fingernails.

The Doctor stepped back into sight, his tweed back still to the window. He bounced on his heels. He twirled around.

Amy threw her hand up. It was rainbow-coloured, blinding bright, and it *twinkled*. He reached up and pressed the centre. It started spinning, and singing Christmas carols.

Rory dropped his face in his hand.

Amy groaned. “Oh god.”

River growled. “I may have to kill someone.”

The Doctor stood there wearing a white velvet bow tie *covered* in Christmas lights. It was spinning and blaring out Jingle Bells.

He was grinning like a loon.

“Bow ties are *so* cool!” ▲



MAKING MOVIES- SIMON WELLINGS Interview by Ian Wheeler

Continuing our series of interviews with *Doctor Who* fan filmmakers, we catch up with Simon Wellings, who has written, directed and starred in such fan projects as *Cold Blood*, *Warm Heart*...

When did you first become a fan of *Doctor Who*?

The first story I watched was *Spearhead from Space* in 1970 when I was a kid. I became a proper fan during the Hinchcliffe/Holmes era, which I still think is a golden era for the show.

What appeals to you about the programme?

They are good stories, well told. They have big concepts that inspired my imagination and creativity. They gave me a love for dialogue and the English language. The Doctor is arguably the finest character ever to appear on TV. He solves problems in a smart way and rarely resorts to violence. I like that.

Who is your favourite TV Doctor?

The people’s Time Lord – Tom Baker. Still great to watch forty years later!

And favourite story?

My favourite Tom Baker story is *Genesis of the Daleks* with *The Deadly Assassin* as a



close second. My favourite story from the Classic Series is *The Caves of Androzani*. Tales of betrayal, hatred and revenge have formed the basis of dramas that span the centuries and *Caves* is a brilliant one. Robert Holmes' Shakespearean tragedy deserved the best possible treatment and got it – outstanding acting from the entire cast (it was Peter Davison's best performance, easily worthy of other Doctors); a villain you can genuinely sympathise with (Sharaz Jek sensitively played by the late great Christopher Gable); cinematic direction from Graeme Harper giving a compelling visual feel with mixes, precisely-timed edits and hand-held shots which led to some superbly dramatic moments. It has an atmospheric music score as well and some marvellous cliff-hangers. I even like the Magma Beast and its little cape! My favourite New Series story is *The Empty Child* two-parter. Absolutely outstanding.

What made you want to get involved in making fan films?

I loved the show in the 70s and early 80s. I became critical of it in the mid to late 80s and I wanted to see if I could do any better – I think opinions should be earned! I wrote, starred in and directed my own spin-off called *Cold Blood, Warm Heart* in 1996. I was really pleased with the end result. The post-production made it look far better than it should have done. And the (human) actors gave top performances. I wanted to make a film that did not have the Doctor in it because I thought it would make it more credible if he were just referred to in the third person. However, Chris Hoyle, a more prolific fan filmmaker than me (interviewed in CM 1), played the Brigadier's son and

his character was a bit Doctor-ish anyway. The story was essentially a chase around woodland with a space traveller on the run from some Cybermen. Another fan film that I was involved with ten years ago was one of Chris' films called *The Schrodinger Effect*. I played a Time Lord lurking in the shadows and I even shared a little scene with Colin Baker who kindly supplied the voice of the TARDIS. There were fantastic special effects in this one!

What are your memories of the first fan film you were involved with, *The Troubled Spirit*?

Ah, *The Troubled Spirit*! The incomplete *Doctor Who* amateur film that starred me as the villain and a certain Phil Collinson as The Doctor. Phil used to be in the DWAS West Yorkshire Group. I met him in November 1987 – almost to the day when Pete Tyler got run over! Sorry, that was a joke. Phil and I and a mutual friend called Colin wanted to make our own *Doctor Who* film. It was 1989. We had a VHS video camera. I wrote the script (badly) – it was about Time Lord reproduction having failed and a mad scientist, played by me, had tampered with the Matrix to solve the problem but had inadvertently unleashed his own future ghost! It was crazy, very badly shot and edited by me, with some dodgy acting – although the location was impressive and the cliff-hanger, in which Colin gets strangled by a disfigured apparition, quite scary. Phil was quite good as the Doctor. Looking back on it now, Phil played it a bit like Peter Davison – I suppose because he looked so young (he was only 19). There is a story attached to this film, which featured in a DWM article a few years ago called *Sex, Lies & Videotape*. Apparently, Phil had shown Russell T Davies the film and he thought it was hysterically funny. Russell then told David Tennant who was also highly entertained by the notion. A few weeks prior to Phil's departure from the show, David happened to be in Phil's house and he pinched the tape and made arrangements for it to be shown during Phil's farewell celebration, in front of a hundred people. When the film came on the big

screen in front of the assembled crowd, Phil was so embarrassed that he hid under a table in shame! Peter Davison, who was also at the event, remarked that it was the worst film he had ever seen! Not just the worst *Doctor Who* fan film, but the worst film of anything, ever! Anyway, I got my fifteen minutes of infamy, hamming it up as the villain. In fact, looking back at my scenery-chewing performance, I engaged in such rampant sub-RSC thesping that it sounded like the queue at the bar at a Brian Blessed convention.

You've played a Cyberman. What are the challenges of working behind a mask?

I played the Cyberman in *Cold Blood, Warm Heart* and also in two of Chris' films, *The Deadly Alliance* and *Masterplan*. It was a bit restrictive in the costume but I just kept in mind that I wanted to give a good performance. Visually it was difficult. I remember nearly falling down an incline in full costume during the filming of *Cold Blood* because I couldn't see the edge.

You also appeared as a Cyberman at a Tom Baker book signing. What are your memories of that?

Yes. It was September 1997 and Tom was at Austick's Bookshop in Leeds signing copies of his autobiography – and I was the token Cyberman. The Yorkshire Evening Post was there and the cameraman wanted a shot of me in my cyber costume (complete with *Earthshock* head mask) standing next to Tom. I asked the photographer whether he wanted me to look "happy, sad, surprised or impassive?" Tom nearly spat out his drink. He laughed heartily for what felt like ages. I felt great because I had made my childhood hero laugh. Guffaw almost. He also liked it when I thumped my chest and gave a little asthmatic cough whenever he signed anything with a gold pen. He wrote quite a nice comment in the Visitors Book. "Very witty Cyberman!" it said.

Are you happier in front of or behind the camera?

In my youth, I quite liked being in front of the camera. I have also played Count Dracula and Billy Liar on stage – a fantastic experience! Now that I'm middle-aged and have acquired love handles, I prefer the writing, filming and editing.

How can *Doctor Who* fans get involved in making fan films?

Just make something and learn from there. Twenty years ago the internet was only in its infancy. But now, anyone can publish their work online. Although you have to be careful with copyright. It's probably best these days to make an entirely original work and just take *Doctor Who* as your main inspiration.

My advice is write a short, simple script with a clear protagonist who the viewing audience can identify with and a clear



antagonist/villain. It needs an emotional pull or something to really grab the attention. Don't make it too talky but make sure you write one or two memorable lines and one or two good moments of tension or doubt as a hook for the viewer. The script needs to reflect your budget so it shouldn't be too ambitious or difficult to film. However, a multitude of sins can be removed in post-production. Also when building up a scene with multiple camera shots, try not to "cross over the 180" (look it up). And for your first film, make sure you use a tripod – there's nothing worse than trying to watch a film with shaky camera work. For moving shots, use a chair with wheels or a shopping trolley – make sure you return it afterwards to get your £1 coin back.

Have you got any future *Doctor Who* projects in the pipeline?

No. Although I'd like to remake *The Troubled Spirit* – this time with me as The Doctor and Phil Collinson as the villain of the week!

If you were in charge of *Doctor Who* on TV, what changes would you make?

I would take the best bits of Russell and the best bits of Steven – the powerful emotional pull of Russell and the clever psychological ideas of Mr Moffatt. I would make it less complex and less zany but more dramatic and adult. You've got to have something for the grown-ups! ▲



REVIEW

TIME SHADOWS from Pseudoscope Publishing

Book Review by Jolyon Drake

Fans of a certain age will have a shelf holding a *Decalog* or a *Short Trips* anthology, left over from the time that the short story was the perfect format for the established writers and the newcomers to share a platform for expanding the narrative of *Who*. Somewhere along the way, fans began producing unauthorised anthologies to raise money for a good cause, and in *Time Shadows* we are offered twenty short stories and one longer tale that raise money for the Enable Community Foundation.

Credit to the editorial work of Matt Grady with Samuel Gibb, that the stories feature the full range of Doctors and whilst the tone of the collection offers something for everyone, the standard is high throughout. There is a nice mixture of Earth-based adventures and alien world-building. There are villains and monsters and ghosts and time travellers. There is a wealth of well-drawn original characters, but most importantly, each Doctor and companion has a recognisable voice that makes the anthology trot along without any misfires in characterisation. What you like and dislike will marry up with how you feel about the show, because every era is represented by an author who clearly cares about and knows how to capture the feeling of the TARDIS team they have taken on.

We are given a chance to enjoy another outing for the Doctors under-represented in the written word. In 'Someone Took the Words Away' Roger McCoy brings the

ninth Doctor and Rose to a place where not a word can be wasted. The War Doctor appears in 'Visitor from Space!' by J.R. Loflin, being grumpy and compassionate in equal measure. Meanwhile, 'Inertia' by Pete Kempshall and 'The People in the Wood' by Steve Hatcher are a reminder of the season seven cast and just how glorious the stories of that period can be.

Some of the contributions contain more kisses to the past, filling in gaps or offering 'what if' scenarios that only fans could devise. If expanding the mythology of the series is your thing, look no further than 'Indigo' by David McLain, where the Doctor and Ian find that aliens trying to mess with the past are tampering with something surprisingly personal, or 'The Godfather' by John Davies, where the Doctor and Jamie, fresh from *The Two Doctors*, show what they are capable of when they have expert control of the TARDIS. If you want to know how Mike Yates got from *Invasion of the Dinosaurs* to *Planet of the Spiders*, 'The Neither' by Ian Howden will help you to fill the gap and make even more sense of our old Captain's interest in the mystical.

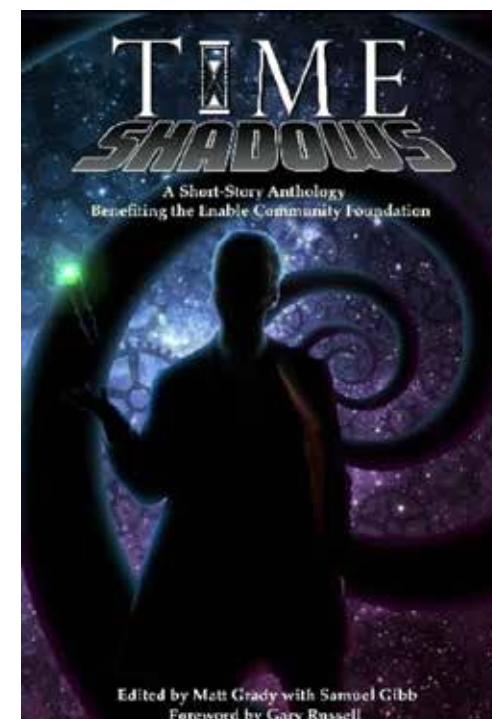
My era of *Who* is perfectly captured in 'Straight on Till Morning' by Chris Heffernan, with a story you could believe JNT would have commissioned on the spot – the Doctor and Mel visit a theme park where all is not right. Their investigation leads them into a world of animatronic characters from the Wizard of Oz to Peter Pan. I was taken straight back to 1987 and loved the experience.

It is good to see that a book raising money for prosthetics doesn't shy away from using the Cybermen, and one of the stand-out stories of the collection is 'Confirmation Bias' by Andrew Blair, where the reader is given a devastating insight into what the Doctor doesn't know about his opponent.

Linking the collection together is 'A Torch in the Darkness' five episodes that weave through the anthology from Dale Smith, David N. Smith & Violet Addison and Christopher Colley. Each part raises the

stakes and pulls the collection together as it goes, referencing events from along the journey. In the centre, the 'Medusa' chapter gives an appearance of the Weeping Angels crying out to be realised on television; it is worth the cover price alone. The story builds to a brave, bonkers and unlikely conclusion that reminds you how much fun the worlds of *Doctor Who* can be.

This anthology has left me wanting more extracts of Romana's diary and persuaded me that the ever-growing number of stories that take place in the middle of *The Daleks' Masterplan* should not be stopped. As long as the editors carry this much respect for every era of the show, nobody is short-changed by the results, and knowing that the sale proceeds are contributing to a good cause is a welcome bonus. ▲



Time Shadows is available from
<http://pseudoscopepublishing.com>

DOCTOR WHO: THE POPPELGANGERS

ROCKING THROUGH THE 70S WITH THE
PERTWEE AND BAKER COMPANIONS...



Dusty
Springfield
and
Liz Shaw



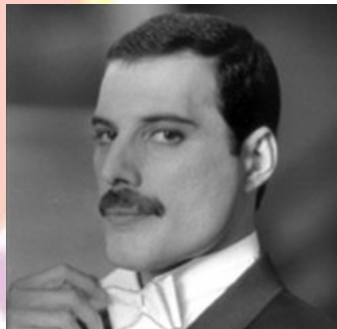
Joni Mitchell
and
Jo Grant



Mick Jagger
and
Captain Mike
Yates



Freddie
Mercury
and
Brigadier
Alistair
Gordon
Lethbridge-
Stewart



Karen Carpenter



Kiki Dee



Sarah Jane Smith



Lou Reed (in
his early days)
and
Sergeant John
Benton



David Essex
and
Surgeon
Lieutenant
Harry Sullivan



Joan Baez
and
Leela



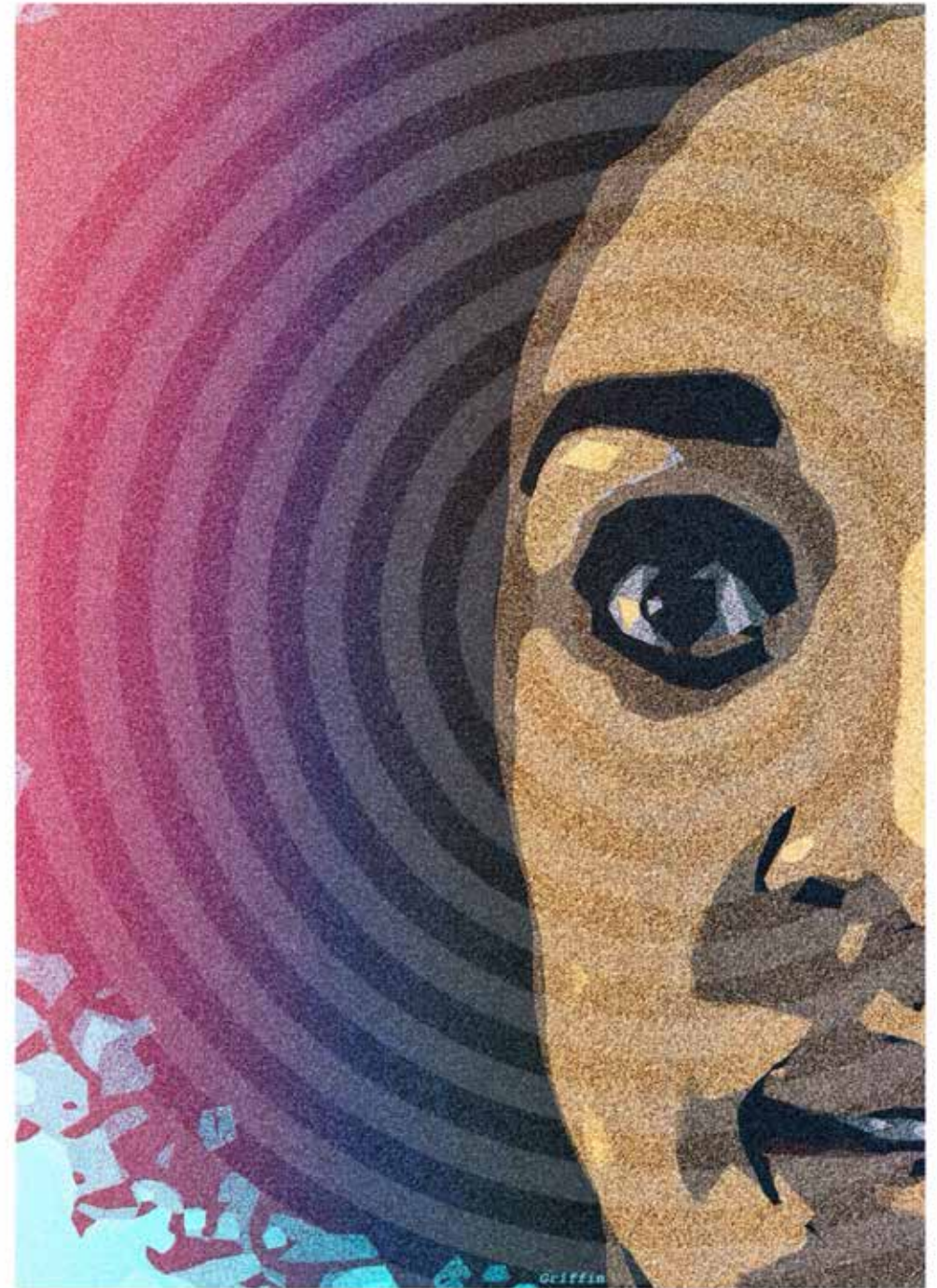
Benji
and
K9

(The dog himself, of course, was not a pop star but the theme tune from the film *For the Love of Benji* was nominated for a 1974 academy award)

Carly Simon
and
Romana I



Olivia Newton-John
and
Romana II



Paul Griffin

FESTIVE FICTIONS

By Jez Strickley

There's nothing like a great piece of supernatural fiction to warm the cockles on a winter's night. The much-loved tradition of ghostly stories and phantom menaces at Yuletide, preferably told in front of a roaring fire, goes back at least as far as Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* readings. It's so quintessentially Christmassy, juxtaposing the light and the dark, the safe and the scarifying*, as though the dimming of the days sharpens the imagination and builds up an appetite for tall stories.

Given the way storytelling is such an integral part of the twelve days of Christmas, it should come as no surprise that *Doctor Who* fan fiction is also known for its seasonal fare. The online series *The Doctor Who Project* (whose Senior Editor and Publisher, Bob Furnell, is interviewed elsewhere in this issue) has been publishing original *Doctor Who* adventures for the past seventeen years and can lay claim to a number of Christmas specials. The latest instalment is the aptly titled *The Night Before Christmas* by *Project* regular Craig Charlesworth, due to be released on Christmas Eve.

Charlesworth is no stranger to this sort of storytelling. The *Project's* first Christmas special, 2007's *A Christmas Story*, was also written by Charlesworth, who is the author of several works for the range, not least of which is one of my favourites, *Aurum in Plumbum* (2008).

The tradition of releasing a new work of fiction over the Christmas period is one which the *Project* shares with its televisual inspiration. On screen *Doctor Who* has enjoyed regular Christmas outings since its return in 2005, steadily becoming a Christmas Day staple which has kept the series in the public eye when new adventures have been hard to come by. The 2009 Christmas Special *The End of Time Part One*, for instance, was one of only three new adventures for that year. Fast forward to 2016 and the latest

example, *The Return of Doctor Mysterio*, is the only new television episode for the good Doctor since the last Christmas Special, *The Husbands of River Song* (2015), put the final stamp on Series Nine.

So these festive fictions are a pretty big deal. They tap into an annual audience spike and provide a vital burst of publicity. But do these stories, whether BBC productions or fan-made publications, really live up to expectations?

When I first sat down to read *A Christmas Story* I had a very similar question in mind, namely, would this novella be a solid addition to the *Project's* range or a seasonal gimmick? Put another way, would it prove to be strong enough to stand on its own two fictive feet, and not end up as just another slice of storytelling candyfloss, soon forgotten once the fairy lights have been packed away.

It's this last point that has the most resonance where the television series is concerned. In fact, I am really rather caught in two minds over whether these specials manage to be anything other than a bit of fun at Christmas. There are exceptions of course. *The Christmas Invasion* (2005) launched David Tennant onto our screens; *Voyage of the Damned* (2007) took us into record-breaking viewing figures; and *The Next Doctor* (2008) toyed with a foreshadowing of Tennant's successor. Yes, *The End of Time Part One* was pretty massive, as was *The Time of the Doctor* (2013), but recently I've felt the wheels have started to loosen and that the Christmas theme is so dominant that it's difficult not to see these specials as anything other than a frothy Yuletide extra.

When I reviewed Craig Charlesworth's *A Christmas Story* I was pleased to discover that this was not the case. On this occasion storyline substance trumped seasonal style. And that's where a winter's tale really catches fires. It's all very well to make a fuss and spotlight a one-off adventure at a time of the year where you might pull in more interest than usual, but you need to deliver on that promise with a genuine narrative.

Delightful scenes and dashing dialogue may give momentary satisfaction, but if the plot lacks punch no amount of decoration can conceal it.

Therein lies the rub, because the very nature of the Christmas story attracts exaggeration and hyperbole. It's the season of the pantomime, of caricatures and grotesques. And there's no reason why these ingredients shouldn't take their traditional place in a *Doctor Who* adventure set amongst Christmas trees, turkey and tinsel. But there needs to be an artful balance, which allows the gloss and the glitz of the Yuletide buzz to be steadied by solid, reliable storytelling. Dickens' seminal 1843 work is the epitome of the Christmas tale, unfolding its Victorian lesson amidst roasted chestnuts and carolling. Yet it's also a wonderful piece of fiction in itself – that's what makes its appeal so timeless.

I guess that's the point I'd like to emphasise above all else. A Christmas special, in my humble view, is meant to be fun and showy,

but there should be a plot of sorts in amongst the seasonal distractions, which hangs things together and bears at least some little scrutiny. Is that too much to ask for? Well, where the *Project* is concerned it's a given that the Christmas special should be more than just a winter's tale, but I'm not sure the same can be said of every festive helping. That's a pity, because the very audience spike that tends to come with Christmas television means that these specials need to put in the extra yard and show those viewers who wouldn't ordinarily tune in just how great *Doctor Who* can be.

Here's hoping that the titular Doctor Mysterio will see a timely return to form. ▲

*If you've not partaken of the utterly excellent audio adventure series *The Scarifiers* by Bafflegab Productions (www.bafflegab.co.uk), then you really ought to. Along with the voices of *Doctor Who* veterans Terry Molly and the late great Nicholas Courtney, there are a number of *Doctor Who* references which are a real treat for the discerning fan.



Grant Bull



THE NEW ADVENTURER by Nick Mellish

The following article contains spoilers for the books.

I looked at the first *Cat's Cradle* novel last time, and this article will look at the next two. Before I get there, however, there is a question that needs to be raised, namely: when is a trilogy not a trilogy? Answer? When it's this.

Someone, somewhere, in the Virgin publishing offices clearly sat down after *Timewyrm* had come and gone.

"Guys!" they said (possibly. I'm imaging here; go with me). "Guys! *Timewyrm* has been a success. Yes, even the first one. I think part of the reason was that it was a quartet. We should keep doing that. What's up next?"

A plucky young intern (intern? No, maybe not. Probably a new proof-reader? Wears a tie. Drinks coffee even though they hate it. Probably never had sex. I'm just speculating.) looks through the schedules: "Erm, next up we've got one by Marc Platt? *Cat's Cradle*, it says here."

"Brilliant. Fab. I like you. We like him, don't we?" (Muttered cries of approval/sympathy/desperate noises to try and hurry the meeting up.) "Good! Great! Let's make that a thing then. You know: a thing; a trilogy."

"Will that work?"

"Yeah, sure. Why not?"

And so *Cat's Cradle* was born: a trilogy. Ish. Because despite claiming it to be so...it isn't, is it? Not really. It's three books that someone, somewhere, has desperately tried to link together in the cynical belief that by giving them all the same name, fans will be more likely to buy all three. Who knows:

maybe it actually worked. Maybe it made people buy them. Or maybe, like me, they read them all and then felt mildly annoyed because calling them all 'Cat's Cradle' is actually completely misleading as there are no connections here, bar a glimpsed cat in the third novel and, erm, the Doctor stroking it at one point in the middle novel. I can see why someone thought having another trilogy was a good idea, but it's done so badly here that it fails on almost every conceivable level and makes me super happy that they don't carry on down this route from hereon in.

Back to the novels in hand though. First up, we have **CAT'S CRADLE: WARHEAD** by **ANDREW CARTMEL**. It must have seemed like a real coup at the time to have the show's final script editor write for the range; certainly, years on, it made me smile to see his name on the cover. The first thing that's immediately apparent is how well Cartmel knows and writes for the Doctor and Ace. They feel more authentic here than they arguably have been at any point before now, pitching them at roughly the same levels they were at in *Timewyrm: Revelation* and giving us a more adult world than we had on screen, with that tell-tale comic book feel that Cartmel so loved (and which, in all fairness, I rather like, too).

Cartmel's story is set on a heavily industrialized Earth with sinister companies that need taking down, gang warfare, a Doctor with a plan that goes awry, Ace not entirely liking the pawn aspect to how the Doctor is approaching things, and some nice comic book horror imagery (Jack Blood, anyone?). Throw in some internal continuity, with Shreela from *Survival* making a cameo, some explosions and action set pieces, and some up-to-date technological knowhow (computers and humans merging, with consciousnesses being down- and uploaded to various forms) and it feels very true to the time.

Thankfully, Cartmel can write good prose as well, making this a nice and easy read, especially after how dense and complex (needlessly so?) *Cat's Cradle: Time's Crucible*

was. He may go a bit overboard at times with violence, free of the restraints of a teatime transmission slot and a tiny budget, but this is a decent read and manages to both feel in keeping with his vision and how it was realized on screen, and move it on somewhat. I can't imagine Ace dealing with information terrorists on television, and yet here it feels natural, somehow. Maybe it's because the Doctor retains his role as behind-the-scenes manipulator? Maybe it's because Cartmel wrote it (though I'll confess that I found his DWM comic strips harder to enjoy, with the exception of *Evening's Empire*, which is great). Whatever the case, this is a fun enough read that manages to tell a story with sci-fi concepts in a world that feels real.

Real World is not a term you would use when talking about the next novel though. **CAT'S CRADLE: WITCH MARK** by **ANDREW HUNT** gives us a unicorn striking a pose on the cover, which is one up from Ace holding a cat that only pops up in a throwaway sentence for the last book. In name alone, really, this is the final novel in the 'trilogy' and is also the only contribution by Hunt to the New Adventures range, which I'd say is a pity on the evidence here.

Again, Hunt seems to nail the dialogue and behaviour of Ace and the Doctor down really well, though they are far more in their TV guise than the slightly more adult personas we've seen them have here and there across these first novels. I suspect this yo-yo-ing of tone is going to be a problem across this range though, to start with at least. This was certainly evident when comparing something like *Timewyrm: Exodus* to *Timewyrm: Revelation* but then again this is the show that gave us *Marco Polo* followed by *The Keys of Marinus*, so it's safe to say that consistent tone hasn't always been a strength.

Hunt and Cartmel share first name alone when it comes to how they want to ground their stories. Unlike the definite 'real' feel of the previous novel,

Andrew Hunt goes full-on fantasy in parts here, with a world leaking through into our own where tribes wage war on neighbouring tribes, bring down dragons, know unicorns and centaurs alike, and live in high towers. I can imagine that some people will *hate* this approach, saying that high fantasy and **Doctor Who** are not natural bedfellows, and whilst in some respects I can see their point, here it works so well as to render it invalid.

It's true that even the characters in the 'real' world feel a bit literary at times, or slightly exaggerated grotesque, from mysterious drinkers to obese detectives, and this does at times make the contrast between presented worlds less stark than maybe the story really needed them to be to fully work. It's also true that this novel could definitely have done with an edit, as it feels very long for its page count, but the ideas are really lovely: a world of fantasy entwined with a sleepy village! American tourists stumbling upon it and finding the bizarre goings on in the village itself as 'alien' to their culture and ways! The Doctor casually popping in on old friends in their cosy cottage (because after spending so long on Earth, it makes sense for him to be chummy with people outside of the usual regulars!)

And then the drama: friends slain, fantasy creatures burnt to death, refugees from another world wishing to enter ours, clones of our heroes, a crashed coach full of unknown humanoids.

For every aspect that doesn't quite click (such as having two characters with an almost identical name: yes, Bat, I mean you), there are a couple that either do, or have a really keen sense of confidence there. This feels like a very coherent vision laid down, and I feel it's a shame Hunt didn't get to pop back again one day, maybe trying his hand at a slightly different genre mash.

Still, I'm glad we at least got this, and more thrilled that the silly arbitrary trilogy label is dropped now. Next up is the debut novel of one Mark Gatiss and after that? Hello,

Benny... ▲

INTERVIEW

THE DOCTOR WHO MUSEUM WITH DAVID J HOWE

by Grant Bull

CM chats to Doctor Who historian David J Howe about his ambitious plans for a Doctor Who museum. We find out what the project is about and how you can get involved...

'The Doctor Who Museum', what's all this about then?

Ever since I started collecting Who stuff, which was way back in the early seventies, I have enjoyed sharing it with others, and always wanted to have somewhere permanent that it could be displayed and housed. So a couple of years ago, we decided to move house to somewhere which might allow that, and managed to find a place with a large business unit which could serve as the museum...since then I have been slowly putting it together, until a massive heart attack last year stopped me in my tracks. Since then work has been hard to find, and with no income, efforts on the museum had to stop. So we decided to see if we could fundraise the amount we need as otherwise this may never happen and it's been a lifetime dream of mine to see it happen!

What rewards are there for those that donate?

There are loads of perks on the Indigogo pages, from being listed as a contributor to meals with Frazer Hines and Chase Masterton and all sorts of things in between. New perks are being added all the time, so people need to have a look and see what takes their fancy! There are packages of signed art prints and goodies from the Long Island Who convention, to proof pages from The Target Book, being killed in one of author Sam Stone's books, a pile of goodies from Richard Dinnick...quite a large diversity of things.

How do you visualise the museum looking and working?

It's intended as a private museum, so not open for the general public to just walk in. However we will have open days, and probably tours can be given by arrangement... the idea is to showcase all the merchandise through the years with displays looking at each decade, plus original artwork, costumes, props, advertising materials...plus a large reference section where people can browse old copies of Radio Times and fanzines and documentation and so on...

What's the time scale for the project?

Assuming we get enough money, then we want to spend 2017 doing all the premises work with the aim to be able to hold the initial Open Day in Summer 2018.

How many items do you have in your collection?

Thousands and thousands. I've never counted them, but when we set up for display, I want to create a catalogue of everything I have...so then I'll know!

What's your favourite piece?

I have lots of favourite pieces... from the pinball to a 60s Marx Dalek.

What's the most bizarre piece?

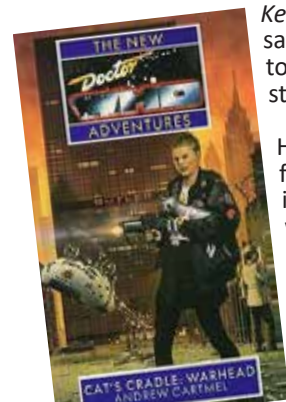
Probably the original Tom Baker Underpants from Marks and Spencers in the early 80s.

And the rarest?

Probably the props and costumes as these are one-offs...maybe the wooden horse of Troy from the 1965 story The Myth Makers.

Oh, and will there be a little gift shop? Love a little gift shop...

There will be somewhere that spare and duplicate items will be sold off to raise funds for maintenance... Not sure about a gift shop though.



Thank you to David for taking the time to chat to us, we wish you well with the museum. CM will look forward to catching up with the latest on the project in the next issue. For more information please see advert below. ▲



**BE A PART OF THE CREATION OF THE WORLD'S FIRST
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REVIEW **A TIME LORD FOR CHANGE**

From Chinbeard Books

Book Review by Grant Bull

100 words, that's not a lot of when you think about it, not a lot of time to play. A 'drabble' is just that though, one hundred words arranged into a story. They have been popular in fan fiction for some time now and many a *Doctor Who* story has been written. But never before has every televised serial of *Doctor Who* been transformed into one. Until now. Yes, *A Time Lord for Change* has drafted a top team of writers to take on this very challenge and all for charity. See, that was a hundred words. It's not a lot...

On display here are not only works from some of the best fan writers around but also people connected with the show. Yes, the editing team has managed to lure the talents of Colin Baker, Katy Manning and Andrew Cartmel to name just a couple and worthy additions they are. Clearly we're in safe hands and good company. Speaking of which, the layout of the book is smartly done, as always is the work of Nicholas Hollands and each *Doctor's* era/chapter is welcomed with a charming caricature by Gary Andrews, all wrapped up in a stylish cover by Steve Horry.

The drabbles themselves are an eclectic assortment of delight. There are diary entries, songs, poems, prose, scripts, answerphone messages, letters and so on. This variation on the theme is what keeps this book whizzing along and refreshing. Also helpful is the fact that each one is only a hundred words long and a quick read – but a quick read doesn't necessarily mean they don't stick in the mind. There is some highly skilled and crafted writing going on here; some will have you thinking more than others and some will have you making a connection or a realisation long after reading.

It wouldn't be fair to pick out favourites, though I do have some. Instead I will say as I always do; that *Doctor Who* fandom is blessed with its creative talents and this book showcases that point perfectly. What really works is the structure that is presented by the decision to have one for each serial. Reading the show from its 1963 beginnings to its latest offering is a joyous journey. Sure, you might know what episode is coming next, but you don't know how the author will approach it or deliver it – that's all part of the fun.

Charity projects such as this are terrific things. This talented bunch has taken time out of their busy lives to put pen to paper for two reasons; to support a worthy cause and for their love of *Doctor Who*, and those two things always seem to sit beautifully together. The chosen charity is MIND, who support people with mental health problems in the UK, and commissioning editor Cliff Clapham speaks movingly on the subject in his introduction. The subject of depression and anxiety is a tough one to express especially in a written format but Cliff does so with sincerity.

This is a wonderful book by wonderful people for a truly wonderful cause. Well done all. And yes, in case you hadn't noticed, I have tried to be clever with this review, each of the paragraphs have been exactly one hundred words long. Until this one... crap! ▲



A Time Lord For Change is available from Amazon, and includes a donation to MIND

SERIES REVIEW Contd

Taking a further look at the
LETHBRIDGE-STEWART books...

THE HAVOC FILES Review by Nick Mellish

“Did you hear about his [Lethbridge-Stewart’s] transfer from Libya? Or the mysterious Cult of the Grinning Man?” asks the blurb on the back of *The HAVOC Files*, the first short story anthology from Candy Jar Books. The answer to this is probably going to be “Yes”, as you’ll either have read the Tweets and e-mails about them from Candy Jar themselves, or know about them from the countless references made to them in the main range of novels.

I’ve already mentioned in my reviews of other entries in the range that I think it’s been a continually bad move to make people who read the main range only feel they’re missing out on vital information by putting a great emphasis on these shorts, with *The Cult of the Grinning Man* and *The Dogs of War* being the main offenders in this regard. There could be any number of reasons readers will not have dipped into eBooks, and it feels less like teasing and more like nagging you to read them. Still, here at least was a printed collection for those who prefer their words

outside of the digital medium, albeit in limited quantities only and now out of print.

As well as gathering the first few digital download stories, *The HAVOC Files* also contains one exclusive short story, *The Enfolded Time*, by series editor Andy Frankham-Allen;

Frankham-Allen’s DWM teaser story for the range, *The Ambush*, in its extended edit previously released digitally; and extracts from the first three **Lethbridge-Stewart** novels for 2016 (*Moon Blink*, *Showstoppers!* and *The Grandfather Infestation*). It makes for eight stories and three tasters in all, which is a nice amount.

First up is the anthology’s exclusive read, *The Enfolded Time*, which attempts to address the dating issue which has plagued UNIT and Alistair Gordon Lethbridge-Stewart since day one. It’s a credible effort to do so, which makes sense of the issue in a very character-specific way, though trying to then tie it in with the Time War and throwing in a secret child for the now ex-Brigadier pushes things that bit too far. Somewhat bizarrely, it also gives us very specific spoilers for supporting characters’ fates in the **Lethbridge-Stewart** range. I understand that we know certain characters won’t be around for ever, and we know where Lethbridge-Stewart himself is going, but it does somewhat rob the range of mystery. It’s not like things are painted in a vague way either: “Something will happen to character X... but how?” Instead we get things painted pretty specifically. A very, very strange move and not an entirely smart one with regards to keeping you interested in the characters in question in future books.

Next up is *The Creatures in the Cave* by Rick Cross, which aims to bridge the gap between the two televised Yeti stories, picking up from the moment Travers sees a real Yeti at the end of *The Abominable Snowmen*. It works to some extent, making clear that the Intelligence is using Travers as a pawn more than is perhaps ever explicitly stated in *The Web of Fear*, but it’s also extremely slight and doesn’t actually have all that much of a story. It’s told in only eleven pages, but even that feels a bit too long.

The Ambush is next, and it’s the story most readers will be familiar with, having popped up twice before. As a teaser to the range, it’s a strange one in that it’s tonally more akin to the Yeti on the Loo in Tooting Bec opener of *The Forgotten Son* than the main bulk of the

range, with a great emphasis on continuity, explaining how Evans and Lethbridge-Stewart got to be where they ended up in *The Web of Fear*, as well as explicitly emphasizing how important it was all to be for our hero. Dicks did much the same in his novelisation of *The Web of Fear*, so perhaps it’s just a bit too tempting for authors to not.

Norma Ashley (see what they did there?) is the next author in the anthology, with *Legacies*, the **Lethbridge-Stewart** range’s attempt to do *Turn Left*.

Does it work? No. It’s easily the worst story in the book, and probably the worst in the range so far, by quite some distance. It fails for various reasons. We don’t really know the main character for a start, so we never really have the emotional weight we’re expected to. It also cannot decide if this is a tale about how good and important the Brig is or how good and important the Doctor is. The structure and characters in the story are not so much inspired by how things were in *Turn Left* as direct rip-offs and pale copies at that. They lack the drama, subtly and, crucially, depth which Russell T Davies so wonderfully gave us on TV. It feels like someone has watched it and gone, “Yeah, I can do that...” and then proven that they can’t. The very ending, which explicitly mentions New Earth in a move which surely made the copyright department of BBC Wales raise an eyebrow, is meant to be touching, but just feels tacky and, sadly, ludicrous and unbelievable. It’s a bad ending for a badly-told story, which shows how good a writer Davies is compared to many others if nothing else, though that was never the story’s intention.

The next story, meanwhile, is utterly bizarre. Named *One Cold Step* and written by Andy Frankham-Allen, when it was originally released digitally, it had extracts from *The Schizoid Earth* either side of it, emphasizing that this is not so much a story as a very, very brief deleted scene, presumably intended for that novel. Taken as that, it’s a curio but nothing more. In isolation, it adds nothing much at all and is probably more confusing than anything else, stripped of all its context.

Thankfully, things then leap up in quality with *The Cult of the Grinning Man* by Tom Dexter. It’s easily the highlight of the whole anthology, and shows how good and effective a protagonist Lethbridge-Stewart can be when written well. It tells of him investigating mysterious goings-on involving a new cult that could have unintended political consequences due to one of the cult’s members being an ambassador’s daughter. It’s a story of spying, infiltration and deduction that shows off Lethbridge-Stewart’s strengths as a character in a very short space of time. In fact, the only complaint here is that the story is far too short and would very easily have run to being a novella, with its page count here not doing things justice. It’s the stand out story here though, by quite some margin. On the evidence here, Tom Dexter is a very good find by Candy Jar Books.

The penultimate story is the aforementioned *The Dogs of War*, telling us of the infamous meeting between the Brigadier and Group Captain Gilmore alluded to in other novels. It’s bright and breezy enough but often feels like the author is having a lot more fun than maybe the reader is, and it is definitely the most fanboy of all the stories: the Doctor is named Cosmic Hobo by those in the know! Professor Jensen and Gilmore get hitched! The Brigadier visits 76 Totter’s Lane!

I can fully understand the temptation to play with all the toys in the toybox that is *Who* mythology, but there is such a thing as overkill. Not only that, but by having things like Lethbridge-Stewart visiting 76 Totter’s Lane, it runs the risk of making the ‘Whoniverse’ feel extremely insular and tiny and smacks of the worst excesses of the 1980s or latter-day Big Finish. Sadly, the Cosmic Hobo joke is just as embarrassing/cringe-worthy here as it was before. It’s like your drunken uncle doing a comedy wink whilst making a sexual innuendo at a funeral.

The anthology ends with another Dexter story, *The Fright Before Christmas*, though one that has been built around an image someone has pitched rather than a plot as



such: what would it be like if Lethbridge-Stewart dressed up as Santa?

The answer to this is “a bit silly”, but is in keeping with a very slight story about invading spheres, which feel like a cross between the humans in *The Last of the Time Lords* and cubes from *The Power of Three*. It's a throwaway tale that never really rings true, and never really goes anywhere. For a range that purports to treat the Brigadier seriously, too, it's also very strange in that it's utterly implausible and manages to successfully make the Cromer moment in *The Three Doctors* far from the most demeaning the character has ever had. At least that was genuinely amusing.

So what did I think of the anthology overall? Well, it's a mixed set of results. Some tales feel so brief as to not be stories at all; some are fun but flawed; *Legacies* is actively bad; *The Cult of the Grinning Man* is brilliant.

It's arguably very representative of the range overall, perhaps. When it's good, the range is very good and shows how well it can work. When it's flawed, it can be frustrating. When it's bad, it's very bad. When it's going overboard on continuity, it's the worst kind of fan fiction excess, and I say this as someone who doesn't mind fan fiction in any way, shape or form: I don't use the label as an insult; more a comment on the more tiresome 'jokes' or continuity points.

I think the range has a lot of potential, but a lot of it is as yet untapped. Sort out the poor proof reading across every book in the range (sloppy for a professional outfit), lessen the superfluous continuity nods, make more use of Lethbridge-Stewart's investigative and military skills, stop interlinking main range novels with additional freebie stories a great wodge of readers won't read. As a range, **Lethbridge-Stewart** could be brilliant. We're not there yet, but the promising signs are encouraging indeed and I hope that as the range continues, it learns from the past and turns into something wonderful. It's just out of sight, but promising.

MOON BLINK by Sadie Miller Review by Nick Mellish

The second year/'season' of **Lethbridge-Stewart** novels kicks off with *Moon Blink*, a story written by Sadie Miller: actress, author, and known to many **Doctor Who** fans as Elisabeth Sladen's daughter.

Heritage doesn't necessarily equate to quality of course, but here is the exception that proves the rule as Miller proves herself to be a good writer, and whilst not the best entry in the series to my mind, *Moon Blink* is definitely one of the more interesting, simply because it feels very different to what's come before. This is a tale of motherhood and xenophobia, drug abuse and international politics, babies and identity. Rather wonderfully, by telling a story such as this that doesn't necessarily fit the usual series mould, it pushes the characters into new and exciting places, too. For a debut novel, Miller certainly doesn't make it easy for herself, and by and large it works to her and her story's credit.

It starts with the Moon landings... except it doesn't really, because unbeknownst to nearly all of Earth's inhabitants, the Moon is old hat: we landed on it *ages* ago, and what Neil Armstrong is up to is just for show. I must be honest: I love that as a plot device. It's such a novel way of approaching and mocking/inverting the old, paranoid conspiracies about whether the landings were fake or not. It's cheeky, clever, and better still unexpected, and makes for a lovely contrast early on where we have Professor Travers keen and eager to show off his new colour television to show his daughter the landings...in black and white (again, that's one of several nice observations that Miller makes: small, but very human). His excitement at mankind's voyage to another planet is touching, and made amusing by us, the readers, knowing it's old hat to those who really care about such things.

Things on the Moon are not going well though, and before long Anne is being visited by Patricia Richards, an old friend with a baby in tow. Often when old friends pop out of nowhere to be in a story, I roll my eyes slightly. It's a bit too convenient that an old friend suddenly arrives and just happens to be key to the plot. I am not sure the novel ever really gets past that level of coincidence with the character of Patricia, but the simultaneous affection and exasperation which Anne shows towards her is nicely drawn and feels very real: she clearly loves her, but maybe if she could have popped up some other time and somewhere else, on Anne's terms, that would have been better still. It's petty, selfish, and, again, nice and human.

She's not the only new supporting character to make a debut here though, as we're also introduced to Charlie Redfern, a budding journalist who gets caught up in proceedings. There are times when he feels a bit superfluous to events, and how much he needs to be here for the plot or needs to be here to be introduced into the series is up for debate. That said, his age makes him a better fit for the drug aspect of the plot than any of the regulars would have done (bar the absent Owain), and his eagerness and inability to really understand the secrecy and danger makes a nice contrast to our other regular reporter in the series, Harold Chorley. The trouble is, he doesn't really feature much in the end, and the drug plot is largely separate. The dots are so close to being joined, but just miss, which is a pity as it'd make things feel a bit tighter and his character a bit less surplus to requirements. It feels one draft away from really working as well as it should.

Actually, that's not a bad summary of the book as a whole. It feels like it needed one more go at it to make it really work. The plot is running along nicely, until the ending when it sort of...stops and fizzles away; the

drug aspect is interesting but doesn't come to much; the discussion of attachment and emotional bonds between parents and babies is promising, but soon becomes a case of 'women have a bond with babies' (no mention of men here, something which, as a man who worked in childcare for over six years, always irks me slightly) and the baby/Patricia storyline isn't so much wrapped up as just ended, with a finish somewhere between 'neat' and 'a bit lazy'.

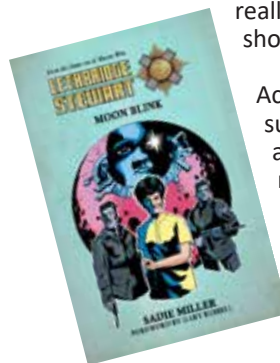
Speaking of things that needed one more go at it, it brings us back to proof reading, though this time I think it should arguably be put to one side; the editor was unwell at the time of this book and he's promised to correct any such errors in future printings: so, one to keep an eye out for and hold him to.

The novel itself though, from Gary Russell's lovely introduction to Sadie Miller's nice prose and the central ideas of her plot, are certainly good. It's one step away from being better than it is, but even as it stands it's worth taking note of.

THE SHOWSTOPPERS by Jonathan Cooper

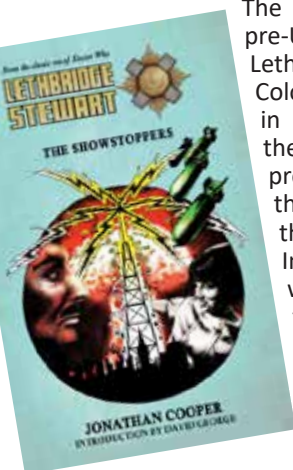
Full disclosure, up front and personal: I love *Dr Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. I love it to a million irradiated pieces. I love the black comedy, the twisted logic, the acting, the directing, the cinematography. I love the stories that echo around it: Sellers broke his leg on purpose to avoid playing a fourth role; Slim Pickens didn't realise he was in a comedy; the only way Kubrick could shut George C Scott up was to beat him at chess. I love it all and everything around it.

When I was offered the chance to review one of the Lethbridge-Stewart range from Candy Jar books, I chose *The Showstoppers* without hesitation. It was described to me as a new take on *Strangelove*, it was endorsed by David George – son of Peter George, the *Strangelove* scriptwriter and noveliser –



and it was from a range centred on quasi-military characters. I looked expectantly forward to learning more about the darkly twisted universe of *Strangelove*, poised as it is halfway between *The Goon Show* and *Catch-22*. More to the point, I was darkly expecting a great deal of satisfaction to be had from tearing both author and book an assortment of new orifices when they failed to live up to George's and Kubrick's vision.

So on getting stuck into the book, I was immediately wrong-footed by the discovery that it has nothing to do with *Dr Strangelove*. No, wait, that's wrong; what I mean to say is that it's not set in the *Strangelove* universe at all. You can see why immediately: the capable, stoic Lethbridge-Stewart would be an incongruous figure amongst the hysteria-prone military basket-cases that populate Kubrick's film. Instead, Cooper has taken not the world, but the essence of *Strangelove* and brought it to bear in constructing his novel. Rather than being about Cold War nuclear brinkmanship, it's about a crazed actor filming a TV series in which he plays every part. It's got comically hyperbolic Nazis, true, and explosives and mad underground schemes; but it's also about the toxic nature of fame, and the insatiable ego of the creator, and broadcast media as mind control. It's a much more intelligent use of the inspiration than a simple aping of the film, and the story told emerges as more wholly Cooper's own as a result.



The series follows the pre-UNIT adventures of Lethbridge-Stewart (only a Colonel at this early stage in his career) and lays the groundwork for how, precisely, he came to be the man for the job when the United Nations Intelligence Taskforce was looking for the top brass. Stylistically, though, this entry comes across less like an early story from *Doctor Who* and more

like a knockabout 60s TV episode from *The Avengers* (the real, British ones, that is), or one of the less overly-serious James Bonds. Indeed, it's about the making of a television series in very much the same mould, about the adventures of a fictional department of British intelligence called "BLIMEY" (the acronym works quite well, but I found myself wondering if such an unmitigated blasphemy would really have been in the title of a TV show from the mid-sixties). The dialogue is well-written, with distinct characters' voices emerging from the page; the Brig himself, and his clipped, no-nonsense style, is caught particularly well, and the action trots along at a good pace despite the effort involved in juggling viewpoints as we see events from multiple characters' perspectives.

The usual complaint rears its ugly head, of course. A further draft or more proofing would have been welcome, just to iron out a few flaws in the text. I originally thought of this as a problem with small press books and the inherent lack of manpower, but you see it everywhere these days and I think it may be symptomatic of how cash investment in the publishing industry as a whole has shrunk over the last two decades. It's a pity for *The Showstoppers*, though, because the novel itself has clearly been written with a great deal of care and attention, and with a great deal of affection for the SF/spy capers that it recalls.

Overall, as a big fan of *The Avengers* and quirky SF written for people with a sense of humour as well as a sense of wonder, I enjoyed *The Showstoppers* quite a lot. It's fun to read in a joyful, innocent way and it pulls you along quickly enough that your suspension of disbelief never wavers.

One word of advice, by the way: skip the introduction written by Peter George's son. It's not only magnificently irrelevant and clunkily written, but it somehow manages to get the date of JF Kennedy's assassination wrong, which – in a book that takes as its dual themes conspiracy theories and early *Doctor Who* – I would have thought was something extremely difficult to accomplish. ▲



FICTION

THE CHRISTMAS SQUIRREL

by betawho

He was just a squirrel. He chewed nervously on the pine nut in his cheek. It wasn't his fault. Whatever *it* was.

But the world had completely changed. First there were the loud blows, and the tree shuddering, and the fall. He'd scrambled to keep a grip. Then there'd been the galumphing, and jostling, and needles raining down everywhere.

Then the world had changed. The bright winter sunlight had been turned to mellow gold. The clear blue sky gleamed bronze.

He felt the tree quaver and tilt upright. He scrambled to keep his purchase. Loud booming voices argued. The air hummed and thrummed like a live thing.

He hyperventilated, his furry chest rising and falling fast, his heart beating like a ball bearing. He gulped and held onto the bole, eyes flickering.

A vine slithered in through the branches, huge, horizontal, advancing toward him like a sidewinding boa constrictor. He eeped and jumped up to the next branch. The vine stopped and draped over the branch where he'd just been sitting. It had huge, glowing fruit growing off it. But they were all different colours.

He snuffled forward and investigated. He nibbled. He snorted. It was hard, and hurt his teeth. And it didn't taste like anything. It made high pitched little sputtering sounds, like insects complaining. It jerked and he jumped back, his tail bristling.

He scampered to the other side of the tree. But there were more vines here. They seemed to be spreading, smothering the tree

like ivy. The lights confused him, throwing strange colours and weird shadows.

He whimpered and scampered for his hole. He tumbled in frantically and twisted around, poking his nose out his knothole. His heart tightened. Why was everything so strange? Where was the forest? He couldn't hear any birds. Just lots of clicks and beeps and humming sounds.

Large shapes moved around his tree. Bears! Huge, but skinny. He cowered back in his hole, shoving some of his nest fur and leaves up to block the hole better.

A giant snow-covered fruit descended onto a branch beside him, dangling from it by a web. His nose sniffled and his ears laid back. It didn't smell like snow.

More giant fruit, icicles that radiated no cold, more deep growly noises from the bears as they prowled around his tree.

He snuffled back a tear. He missed his forest. He missed the robin in the next tree. His stomach grumbled. He didn't dare leave his tree to try to find one of his caches.

So he did what he always did when he was hungry but it was too risky to leave. He curled up, snugged his tail over his nose and went to sleep. It wasn't cold, but he shivered. He curled tighter.

When he woke up it was night, the sky beyond the tree had gone black. And his tree was transformed. He unwound and crept carefully out of his burrow. He stood up and stared around, his tail twitching with surprise.

His tree was as bright as the aurora. Colours blinked and twinkled, making the cave of branches and needles into a dream. A brightly-coloured icicle hung from a branch nearby; the scent of it drove him mad. He scuttled forward, his eyes still large with all the beauty around him.

He sniffed at the icicle, he licked it. It was warm, but it tasted wonderful. He gnawed at the chalky cane, his nose filled with brightness from the taste. He stopped and licked his lips; he needed water.

He looked down. He'd have to leave the tree to find water. Cautiously, he hopped down from branch to branch, his light weight setting the strange fruits and vines jingling.

He stopped on the lowest branch and looked down. There was no ground. No dirt. No pine needles. OK, there were some. But not the carpet of needles and moss that should have been there. It was all flat, like rock, but not.

He sniffed, desperately. There had to be water somewhere. His mouth went dry and he puffed out his cheeks.

Ah, there! He scampered down the bole, claws and toes tight in the bark. There was a little pool right around the base of his tree. He didn't stop to think where it came from. He crouched upside down on the bark and drank greedily, filling his cheeks. He could feel the cool water sooth his parched tongue and throat.

Much better. He stared around at the huge, regular shaped boulders that had appeared under the tree. All covered with bright striations and strange tangled flat vines. He turned himself upright on the bole and let the water trickle down his throat as he stared out at the strange forest he found himself in.

It was all dark, but as far as he could see was copper and flat, the ground hard, no other trees, just crags. No plants, no fruit, no leaves to nibble on.

He felt his mouth go dry despite the water in his cheeks.

Nervous, scared. He scampered back up the tree, setting the pine needles shivering. He gnawed some more on the sweet icicle. It was delicious, but didn't fill the gap in his

belly. He scouted around, racing to the top of the tree and back down.

He found some strange, puffy white flowers growing on a thin vine all around the tree. They were edible, but bland. But they filled his stomach.

He went back and crouched on the branch outside his hole. He considered his home, looking up through the branches, down past the needles. It was actually very beautiful. Glowing with colour. Warm.

The strange humming and throbbing from outside the tree changed, becoming softer, slower, aspirating like a giant, gentle beast breathing. It didn't scare him now. It was calming, almost protective. He settled back on his haunches, his fur sleeked down.

He looked up at the stars between the branches. They seemed much bigger now, closer. He breathed out a sigh.

A huge shape moved beyond the branches. He jumped up, fur bristling. It was one of the bears, out there in the dark! He squinted and ducked his head, peering through the branches at the huge dark shape. It was the tallest skinny one.

It was making soft cooing sounds, not rumbling and barking like it had been doing with the others before.

It shoved a huge, long-fingered paw into the branches. He scampered back, away, jumped up onto the next branch, wondering where he could run. But the paw didn't swipe at him, the claws remained sheathed.

It held its long-fingered paw out flat, palm up. Waiting. The paw was as big as his whole body. There was a small brown square sitting on the end of one of the fingers.

"It's fudge," the voice cooed. "Go on."

He stared suspiciously at the rumbling bear. His nose snuffled. Whatever that was, it smelled wonderful!

He scampered down carefully. He inched forward on the branch, freezing when the paw moved. Then inching forward again when it held still.

He snatched the square and backed off. He sniffled and nibbled, the smell going straight to his brain. His tail trembled and fluffed. It was *delicious*. He crunched down. Ooh! And it had nuts!

He was so caught up in his treat that he didn't see the paw move. A giant finger stroked down his head, he froze, licking chocolate off his lips.

The finger was gentle, smoothing down over his head and back. The heavy weight of it on his back massaged away the tension in his shoulder blades. The finger returned to his head and smoothed down again. He gave a shiver of pleasure.

He bumped the giant hand with his head and heard the gentle happy rumble. He nibbled on his chocolate and felt the gentle finger stroke down his head again.

Maybe it wouldn't be so bad here.

The Doctor chuckled and peered through the branches. The TARDIS dark with night around him, he stroked the squirrel's soft fur and tiny head.

"Happy Christmas, little fellow." ▲



DEATH AND DREAMING By Ann Worrall

*Kaldor City, Kaldor City, where the boys are bad and things ain't pretty, where you gotta keep pushing for fortune and fame, but it's all a gamble when it's just a game.*¹

Exactly how do you go about creating an exciting audio series that is chock-a-block with mind-bending Sci Fi ideas?

You could try the following:

1. Borrow from the best and set your drama in a society that has created robots to carry out all its basic tasks and where fear of the very robots on which it all depends has become endemic.
2. Add in a forensic depiction of the politics of power, a dollop of cynical wit, sparkling dialogue and compelling characterisation.
3. Include a twist that is as surprising as it is apt.
4. As a bonus, mix it all up with two additional short plays that spins events beyond the reaches of our world to the shores of time itself, making us question our view of reality.

Follow these steps and you will have created an audacious audio drama whose narrative has its roots in the *Doctor Who* classic "The Robots of Death", the *Blake's 7* episode "Weapon", the *Doctor Who* novel "Corpse Marker" and another story that I'll leave you to discover for yourself; its ideas come from the mind of Chris Boucher and its soul comes from the hearts of Alan Stevens and Fiona Moore of the Magic Bullet website, who are responsible for producing, distributing and in part writing the aforementioned adventure.

So what is *Kaldor City* about? Well now, how long have you got?

Let's start with the story. Initially, this seems pretty straightforward: a murder mystery that develops into a cynical tale about the exploitation of a paranoid society by two fugitives from the same Terran Federation that was depicted in *Blake's 7*. These fugitives manipulate those in power in Kaldor for their own enrichment – something easily achieved, since the Firstmasters of the city are practically begging to be exploited, already plotting against each other to the extent that it is impossible for any of them to be sure who, if anyone, is on their side.

One of the fugitives, Carnell, is a psychostrategist whose machinations depend on predicting what those embroiled in his strategies will do next. The second, Kaston Iago, eschews such subtleties and ruthlessly murders his way to a comfortable position as security consultant to the leader of the governing body of Kaldor, Firstmaster Chairholder Uvanov, casually seducing and bedding Uvanov's secretary, Justina, on his way.

Both Carnell and Iago prosper because Kaldor City is riven by class hatred and fear and neither of them have any scruples about how they make their money. The only fly in their respective ointments is that they are bitter rivals, but, as they plot against each other, Carnell, through the medium of a chess game, senses that someone else, or something else, is plotting against them all. As the layers of narrative unpack themselves like a set of Russian dolls, each reveals a solution to a previous conundrum which paradoxically is also the start of a fresh one and from these overlapping conspiracies another, perhaps truer reality emerges.

It's compelling stuff. And told in an unusual way. For example, it's nigh on impossible to work out who the 'hero' of the story is, because the narrative perspective changes in each episode.

¹ Apologies to Guns and Roses for mangling the lyrics of Paradise City.

What we do learn pretty quickly is to distrust our first impressions. No one is safe in Kaldor City: death comes for the innocent and guilty alike in the form of a poisoned skull, a plasma bullet, an out of control flier, a killer robot, and is as likely to be administered by a friend as it is by an enemy. And with each revision of what we thought we knew, the suspense increases exponentially, with exhilarating effect. My resolve to listen to an episode a day was abandoned by the third installment, and I found myself cooking dinner, my CD player shoved insecurely down the front of my T shirt, earphones clamped in, desperate to find out what was going to happen next! I suspect you may well find yourself doing the same (although stuffing your CD Player into your T shirt is optional).

It would be unkind to spoil for you all the surprises in store, but I can tease you with the fact that the ending of story five ("Checkmate") is both final and provisional, depending on how you interpret it, and that, if you accept an apocalyptic reading, then the story could be considered to work as an allegory.

Let me explain.

Coincidentally, I listened to *Kaldor City* during the same week that a homophobic madman killed forty-nine young people in Orlando and another real life assassin shot and stabbed a decent, hardworking politician because he believed she had failed to put "Britain First". It was disquieting to recognise that the same fear and hatred that is woven into the fictional Kaldor society threads through our own like a cancer. And tempting to believe that just as the paranoid manoeuvrings of the Kaldor movers and shakers create the circumstances which allow a powerful entity to take control of it and possibly, probably, condemn all its inhabitants to a living death, so that same fear and accompanying aggression is hardwired into our DNA and will create the circumstances that may destroy our own civilisation.

I hope using "possibly" and "probably" to describe what happens doesn't irritate you

too much. I'm not being coy or deliberately vague. There are so many ways of interpreting the meaning of this series that it's probably safer to conclude that there isn't an ultimate meaning at all, just a lot of conjectures that depend on the experiences and interests of the listener for their construction. Nor is the ending of story five actually an ending because the writers have provided a codicil to it which for me, twists the story from a morality fable to one which hints at a possible future for the human race.

The final CD in the series ("Storm Mine") is mysterious, intriguing and metaphorical. Blayes, a Company Security operative turned terrorist, who apparently died in a shootout with Iago just before the demise of Kaldor City, regains consciousness on a Storm Miner operating in the Blind Heart desert. Is she dead? And if not, how did she get on board?

Blayes has consistently demonstrated impressive innovation and determination when faced with unfavourable odds throughout the series, which is lucky as here she must overcome a series of challenges and locate the "Chief Fixer", who may be able to shed some light on her predicament and, ultimately, help her to solve it. Blayes' search is complicated by the Commander and the Chief Mover on the Storm Mine (representatives of the opposing forces in Kaldor and both unhinged) the insistent, unsolicited advice of Kaston Iago (which can basically be summed up as "kill them all") and a former killer robot, V23 (which is in a state of dormant mutation and which she must learn to trust against her instincts).

You probably won't be surprised to learn that it's the choices Blayes makes that are decisive in this final play and what V23 mutates into depends on those choices. Will Blayes be able to free herself from Iago's influence? Will she finally understand the differences between the authoritarian command "We must all pull together" and the egalitarian statement, "We're all in this together"? Equally, does the future (Kaldor's and our own) belong with electronically controlled intelligences, as

opposed to the chemical, organic ones that are doomed to live by causing death?

And these are only some of the intriguing questions that this series has to offer.

The two bonus short stories "Metafiction" (of which there are two slightly different versions) and "The Prisoner", play with the idea that "one man in his life plays many parts"² and challenges us to decide whether any or all of these roles can be considered to constitute the ultimately 'real' person.

Kaston Iago is the man being questioned in each scenario, an enigmatic figure who may in fact be Kerr Avon from *Blake's 7*. Some of the information he relays in "Metafiction" suggests that he is. Iago claims, like Avon, that he was born on Earth and that he was a white collar criminal. He even has knowledge of the two different amounts Avon is credited with embezzling and an ingenious explanation for the apparent discrepancy. He also states that he was sentenced to life on a penal planet, but escaped from the prison ship taking him there via an alien spacecraft. So far, so Avon. However, in *Liberation*, their guide to *Blake's 7*,³ Stevens and Moore state that Kaston Iago has read their book, so if this is true, then Iago's hints that he is Kerr Avon may be designed to conceal his real identity – if a fictional character can ever be considered real.

Iago claims in both versions of "Metafiction" to be a professional assassin: but also in the second, to be man called Frank Archer, a time-travelling detective from another of Alan Stevens' audio dramas, *The Time Waster*. Of course, if Iago is a time-travelling detective, that would explain how he got his hands on the *Blake's 7* guide, but can he really be Frank Archer? Or Kerr Avon? Indeed, is he even a

² William Shakespeare, As you like it. Arden Shakespeare. Third Series) (The Arden Shakespeare) Paperback – 1 Nov 2004.

³ Alan Stevens & Fiona Moore Liberation: The Unofficial and Unauthorised Guide to Blake's 7. Published Telos Publishing Ltd 2013 edition.

professional assassin? You pays your money and you takes your choice.

Psychologists, like H. Tajfel and J.C. Turner, argue that in our daily encounters with others we have "not one, 'personal self'" but rather several selves that correspond to widening circles of group membership.⁴ So, Iago's constructions of himself as a member of an Assassin's Guild or as a former rebel, or as a time-travelling detective, may occur because the circumstances in which he finds himself warrant it, just as you or I might construct a version of ourselves to impress someone, or to convince a policeman we are trustworthy. Each construction is true for those circumstances although not all circumstances.

But it's also the case, as version one of "Metafiction" points out, that Kaston Iago, Frank Archer and Kerr Avon are roles played by an actor, Paul Darrow. So which is the real person in these circumstances? Easy you may say, it's obviously Paul Darrow... he performs the other roles. Maybe so – except that Paul Darrow is as much a fiction as Kaston Iago: just a professional identity created by a man called Paul Valentine Birkby. Why should we accept the creation "Paul Darrow" as real yet consider "Kaston Iago" to be a fiction? Is Iago right when he tells his interrogator in "The Prisoner" that the problem boils down to "a matter of faith"? Yes he is. It is our belief in what we are that creates our identity, regardless of how we adapt that identity to meet the demand of circumstances.

If we explore this further we can recognise that each of these 'roles', Iago, Avon, Darrow,

Archer and Birkby, has its own cause and effect timeline which stretches like a string from the moment it came into existence, and any point along this string can be visited by anyone in a position either to observe,

⁴ Tajfel, H. and Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of inter-group behavior. In S. Worchel and L. W. Austin (eds.), Psychology of Intergroup Relations. Chigago: Nelson-Hall.

or to interact with it. Such visits cause the string to branch, resulting in anything from a little branch to a zonking big one. The string stretches back and forward, and at some point it becomes inactive, though, theoretically, it would always be possible for some one to reactivate it.

Using time-traveller Frank Archer as an example, he can loop his string back and forward, sometimes creating closed loops, sometimes long, curved loops which cross and recross the original string, depending on the actions he takes. Over time, these loops, curves and branches must become so tangled that although cause and effect could still theoretically be applied to them, in actuality it is impossible to do so because we humans can only hold a small part of their pattern in our consciousness, which we then think of as 'our world'.

However although Darrow, Avon, Iago, Archer and Birkby exist separately and although their strings may touch, Iago both is and is not Birkby, Avon, Darrow and Archer. Iago can choose to send a variant of himself into one of their time strings as he does in both versions of "Metafiction", and an observer meeting him in that reality for the first time would readily perceive him as Iago, but also as Avon, Archer or (depending on which version of the play you are listening to) Darrow, however, he would perceive himself as Darrow as Iago; Iago as Avon; or even Birkby as Darrow as Iago; or... I'll stop there before your head spins any further, but you get the point – the values at the core of each separate identity are shared values so in fact they are not separate at all.

We observers might attach various labels to this process: magic, multiverse existence, creativity, psychosis, even, to borrow a concept from *Doctor Who*, regeneration, but it gives us all the potential for immortality through different aspects of our core self. Paul Darrow will effectively live forever as he can be revisited through the versions of the 'self' he's created in his performances, and the same is true for the rest of us. Letters, books, Facebook posts, we all have

a presence that extends beyond our own physical, temporal and geographic location.

And, an even more exciting thought, if the human race does evolve into artificial intelligences like V23, our heirs will then have the potential to trace the pattern of even the most tangled strings through infinity. It's even possible that they will go further until, like the Doctor, they master time itself, moving about it freely, aware of and using the infinite possibilities it contains and regenerating their 'selves' to fit in with the various circumstances they may face while retaining the core values that inform their sense of who they are.

So that's *Kaldor City*: a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma and if you enjoy the kind of theorising I've indulged in this article, then the series is for you.

And did I also mention that it's very, very funny? Because it is. Beautifully acted as well. With a first rate sound design courtesy of Alistair Lock.

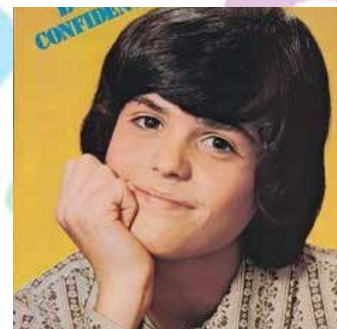
And funny!

I promise you'll laugh as hard as I did, even as you embrace the glorious idea that, at the point of our extinction, we humans may yet escape from the savage fight/flight principles that we currently depend on for our survival, and create artificially intelligent heirs who will step out fearlessly among the stars. ▲



DOCTOR WHO: THE POPPELGANGERS ON THROUGH THE 80S AND 90S... WILL WE SEE ADAM ANT?

Donny
Osmond
and
Adric



Kate Bush
and
Nyssa



Madonna
and
Tegan Jovanka





John Lydon (depicted from
around the time of the
launch of Public Image
Limited)
and
Vislor Turlough

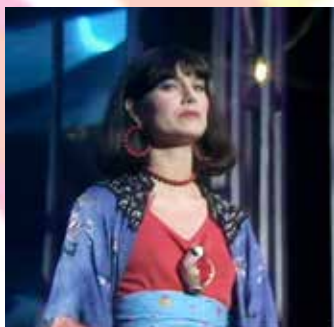


Salt N' Pepa
and
Dorothy 'Ace'
McShane



Yo Yo Ma
and
Chang Lee

Herbie Hancock (Not
Hancock himself, but the
deconstructed robots that
appeared in the video for
Rockit)
and
Kamelion



Barbara
Gaskin
and
Perpugilliam
Brown

Dido (who was admittedly
a couple of yar off her
breakout hit at the time the
telemovie aired)
and
Grace Holloway



Bonnie Raitt
and
Melanie Bush



**THINGS TAKE A POSSIBLY SURPRISING
DIRECTION AFTER THE TURN OF THE
MILLENNIUM...**

SEASONS OF WAR

Review by Allan Lear

Seasons of War is a charity anthology that has been produced in aid of Caudwell Children, an excellent charity that supports disabled children in the UK. Charity anthologies seem to be two a penny nowadays, what with the rise of affordable online printing and the multiplicity of good causes that always need help from the public; just recently, I have also read a Lovecraftian horror anthology in support of MIND and collection of comic fantasy stories raising money for Alzheimer's Research UK and in memory of the late and extremely lamented Sir Terry Pratchett.

It is therefore a testament both to the esteem in which Caudwell is held and to the essential brilliance of *Doctor Who* people that this anthology is not merely a package of fan fiction delivered by well-meaning amateur authors. Instead, the contents page reads like a rollcall of established *Who* writers, both from the television series itself and from the New Adventures range. Names that jumped straight out at me included Paul Magrs, Jim Mortimore, Kate Orman, Lance Parkin, John Peel and Andrew Smith, and even Nicholas Briggs joins in by providing a preface, which is about as official as it's possible to get without the BBC getting in on the act. Briggs also adds a dedication to the late Paul Spragg, a founder member of Big Finish and – as I can attest personally – a generous friend to charitable causes championed by *Doctor Who* fans. The small conventions that my wife has run on the Wirral could always count on Mr Spragg to make a significant contribution in aid of Cancer Research UK, and I still recall the moment of surprise and delight that accompanied the opening of one of his packages to find a script cover signed by both Tom Baker and the much-missed Mary Tamm for that year's charity auction. That he would send such a gift without a qualm to a small, out-of-the-way event he had never attended purely because it was for a good cause is, in my mind, a measure of the man.

As a reader, probably no less than to the authors, part of *Seasons of War's* attraction for me was its subject matter. Getting in while the ground was fresh, editor Declan May has commissioned a collection of stories concerning the Doctor's most enigmatic incarnation (if one discounts the Valeyard); the War Doctor, as portrayed by Sir John Hurt. That this incarnation has, at one and the same time, a huge mythological significance and almost no documented history is a hugely tempting attribute, and May assembles a collection of tales from various phases of the War Doctor's personal history, held together with linking stories written by May himself and John Davies of this parish.

What really strikes you on reading this anthology is the degree to which *Doctor Who* fans find the War Doctor problematic. Let loose with the opportunity to write, for once, a Doctor who is angry, violent and wrathful, many of the authors find themselves shrinking away, preferring to write the War Doctor as though he were merely a scruffier version of the Eighth Doctor. Clearly the idea of the Doctor committing any violent act is as distasteful for these writers as it was for Moffatt himself, whose own War Doctor's shameful, awful history in *The Day of the Doctor* consisted of nothing more grievous than using a machine gun to write a graffito on an innocent wall. An honourable exception is *The Celephais Gift*, by Andrew Smith, which does indeed show people dying at the War Doctor's hand and which is an excellent story despite a complete inability ever to spell "Celephais" the same way twice, but mostly we are treated to tales of attrition and Pyrrhic victory.

Seasons of War is a generous anthology, weighing in at forty stories if one includes the various episodes of linking arc story which editor May and lead contributor Davies have constructed to hold the collection together. It is also unafraid to play with form; as well as those straight stories, there is a comic strip co-written between Simon Brett and Jim Mortimore called *Time Enough for War*, which is a school-of-Alan-Moore-via-2000-AD attempt to render the Time War visually,

and which is superb; a real stand-out treat of the collection. There are also two poems, which are less successful but brief.

With so many stories to choose from the reviewer needs must refrain from critiquing them all, lest he eat up all the time the reader should be spending on the book, but the vast majority are very successful. One wonders whether the presence of so many established writers has caused the amateurs to raise their game to match, as sometimes happens when a veteran actor treads the boards with a young and inexperienced supporting cast. Of particular note from the amateur contributors is *Gardening*, by Sami Kelish, which strikes a sad and elegiac note amongst the carnage; but overall amateur and semipro contributors including Dan Barratt, Jon Arnold and JD Southall all acquit themselves well. By the same token, none of the professionals seem to have taken the work any less seriously because they are

keeping less exalted company, and the result overall is a fine and well-balanced anthology, with plenty of different perspectives and story genres to keep things fresh until the end.

Editor Mr May is to be congratulated on this achievement. I would, however, point out to him that if a fleet's called the *Ferroucity*, then it's not the Silver Fleet, is it? It's the Iron Fleet. A Silver Fleet would be called the *Argentmada*. I look forward to seeing this correction in the second volume. ▲

Caudwell Children provide financial, therapeutic and personal support for disabled children in the UK. They also run the Enable Sport programme for young disabled athletes. For further information and to find out how to support their work, please visit their website at www.caudwellchildren.com

Pre-orders for Seasons
of War will open for two
weeks on 01.01.2017

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INTERVIEW

DOCTOR PUPPET

with Alisa Stern
by Grant Bull

First up, for the uneducated what is 'Doctor Puppet'?

Doctor Puppet is a stop motion animated on YouTube. It's basically Doctor Who, but with puppets. We tell stories that the real show hasn't been able to tell. We are 7 episodes into an 8-part story that stars all the Doctors (or at least all the Doctors that existed when it was written in 2013!)

How was such a project born?

It wasn't originally web series. The whole project evolved very organically. At first there was only one puppet, the Eleventh Doctor, which I made as an example to show my students in a puppet-making class I was teaching in Philadelphia. I loved Doctor Who, and thought Matt Smith already looked like a puppet, and that's why I made him. I liked the puppet so much; I started bringing him around with me and taking photos, which I posted on Tumblr. The photos went viral, then one thing led to another, and here we are! It's all a bit crazy.



Why stop-motion as an animation choice?

I always loved stop motion in particular because I love making things. At some point, I realised that artists must get paid to make things for films like 'The Nightmare before Christmas' and 'Wallace and Gromit,' and decided to be one of those people. I think the appeal of stop motion is because it's real. Someone has made every part by hand, and literally touched it to bring it to life. Stop motion is downright magical. Of course we use a lot of computer animation too, but stop motion is always at the heart of Doctor Puppet, and it gives it a certain charm that can't be replicated.

How long does each episode take to film on average?

The early episodes were much simpler and made in just a few months. The most recent episodes have become a bit epic, and take much longer to make. Episode 7 took nearly a year. Episode 8 is even more epic. We did some fundraising via an Indiegogo campaign to make it easier for us, but it's still taking longer than any other episode, unfortunately. The sets alone are massive and there are many of them too. Stop motion animation of course takes a long time. In a good week, we get a minute done. Once we release Episode 8, you'll see why it took so long! I hope that is sooner rather than later... :/

Who or what would you say are your influences, outside of Who of course?

Lots of animation! I already mentioned 'The Nightmare before Christmas' and 'Wallace and Gromit' of course. The other biggest influence is probably the stop motion holidays special by Rankin/Bass, which aren't as well known outside the US. But here, they are holiday staples, especially 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,' which the first ever Doctor Puppet video is a homage to. Design wise, my puppet look very much like Rankin/Bass puppets. I love little black eyes on puppets!

What plans do you have for the future?



Well, the most important thing is for us to finish Episode 8, which is the finale to the story we've been telling since 2013. Outside of that, I'm not sure! We want to keep making stop motion animated Doctor Who of course. We'll see how that goes.

Any chance of a cross-over with my stop-motion hero Postman Pat?!

HAHA I wish!! Do you know anyone at CBeebies? Let's do it!

Alisa thank you for talking to CM, we cannot wait to see Episode 8 of Doctor Puppet... ▲



You can watch all their videos on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/HelloDoctorPuppet>

Or follow them on social media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TheDoctorPuppet/>

Tumblr: <http://doctorpuppet.tumblr.com/>

Twitter: @TheDoctorPuppet

Instagram: @DoctorPuppet

IS LIKING DOCTOR WHO A UNIVERSAL 'TREND'?

by John Davies

In the ten years since Twitter first made its presence felt on the Internet, trending has become an increasingly present force within social media. One Direction fans are often passionately sharing a variety of # themed Tweets about the band, reality TV shows flood feeds when winners are announced, and in 2013 *Doctor Who* joined in as we were asked to #SaveTheDay. My personal favourite was when Coke ran their #ShareACoke trend, for which I Tweeted a montage shot of each Doctor (to date) besides a bottle of the beverage bearing the actors' names. As well as basic trending, another feature that has made a powerful impact is Twitter's seemingly daily obsession to give each day a #NationalDayOf... theme. These range from established patron saints to some frankly surreal choices (today, for instance, is Saturday 7th May and #WorldNakedGardeningDay).

Personally, I am still waiting for #NationalNoSpecificTagDay, but I feel I may be a long time waiting for that to happen.

One of the most visible #Day themes in recent years occurs in early May, when the fourth day of that month is declared #StarWarsDay and thousands of people Tweet #MayTheFourthBeWithYou. These appear without the ridicule, the sneering and the occasionally vitriolic side swipes fired toward some of the aforementioned One Direction campaigns, which made me question why. Why were these Tweets, words that spawn from a Sci-Fi franchise, an interest often specifically targeted for derision, largely re-Tweeted and liked with universal acceptance? Putting aside the cold logical fact that this was probably down to my choice of following, I quickly, and more quixotically, concluded that this was because

the *Star Wars* phenomenon was so culturally ingrained in society that it was an accepted, shared part of our makeup, and not just a trend but actually, and eternally, trendy. This immediately 'forced' me to ponder whether *Doctor Who* was in the same ball-park, or does it exist in a virtual galaxy far, far away?

Some readers here might be wondering why I was actually questioning the notion that *Doctor Who* was as/is universally loved as *Star Wars*. They will be the lucky ones, born into a generation where the show had returned to television after a sixteen-year absence and become an almost overnight family viewing success. They will be the ones who became aware of the show when shops were awash with merchandise, when *Doctor Who* regularly graced the cover of the *Radio Times*, when it won BAFTA awards and the casting of a new Doctor was a major news event, culminating in a specially commissioned and made programme to reveal Peter Capaldi as their new Time Lord (the appointment of companions is also seen as worthy of such high-profile exposure, demonstrated as recently as Pearl Mackie's decision to board the TARDIS which was marked by the showing of an original mini-adventure (*Friend from the Future*) during half time of a major football match. *Doctor Who* and football, eh, sharing the same airtime? When geek worlds collide indeed!) Even though fans have bickered about the quality of the show since its return, this is, more often than not, an internal, inclusive dialogue within *Doctor Who* groups and online communities. To the general population, for example, 2013's fiftieth anniversary celebrations were, if not totally accepted by all, understood and seen to be justified. Its popularity was assured and recognised and even those who don't like the genre were giving in their acknowledgement that fifty years marked a job well done. To the generations immediately behind that demographic, though, it wasn't always the case that the programme was as well recognised, and those times imprinted memories of criticism, both about the show and themselves, that have become deeply ingrained within their psyches, almost making defensive reactions to any slight

in the 'now' an instinctive, unbidden and automatic reaction. You see, *Doctor Who* was once not only untrendy, it was a tiny, dwindling entity with those who still loved it pointed at with metaphorical sticks and made to feel their isolation and weirdness on a daily basis. The notion that, one day, the whole planet would be joined together saying things like #SaveTheDay, or that the show would be mentioned in its fiftieth year, let alone being made and beamed around the globe, would have been greeted with a wistful, if incredulous raising of eyebrows.

Despite celebrating its twentieth anniversary in 1983, *Doctor Who* was living under the huge shadow of its 70s mainstream popularity and dominance and, ironically, started its slippery journey into ridicule in the story that immediately followed *The Five Doctors*, namely *Warriors of the Deep*. After the party, the hangover started to kick in. While it didn't register with viewers, or fans, at the time, the four-episode tale of Silurians and Sea Devils waging war on us, the ape upstarts, in a "on the page" politically astute take on the Cold War drew the attention of a certain Michael Grade as the Myrka was unleashed and painted the sea base walls green. The hastily constructed and painted costume was too cheap for him to take seriously, and from that point on he had designs to remove the Doctor from our screens. It is, famously, this story he used to showcase his dislike of the series and justify its condemnation to Room 101. *Warriors of the Deep* also coincided with a time in the show's history where it was guilty of navel-gazing to an indulgent and non-inclusive way. The previous season had seen champagne flutes raised to twenty years of *Doctor Who* history, but in a way that relied on too much foreknowledge of previous stories from long ago. The one-time mainstream Goliath was pleasing its fans to the point where the general audience was often left confused and isolated, even though large audiences still tuned in. This trend continued as Colin Baker took on the role (an appointment that didn't please Grade, or, it would seem, the show's Script Editor), with stories such as *Attack of the Cybermen* namedropping and

cross-referencing *Who's* timestream to the point of non-fan exclusion. When Grade cancelled/put on hiatus/gave the production team an eighteen month holiday mid-way through *The Two Doctors* being shown, it was announced on the BBC's flagship *Six O'clock News* and greeted with outrage by fans, but press campaigns aside, it's difficult to gauge the level of concern felt by those watching while scratching their heads. The story that came after *The Two Doctors*, *Timelash*, did not go a long way to disproving Grade's opinions of the show being tired and cheap. When it returned after those eighteen months, *Doctor Who* did move away from continuity-obsessed stories, especially from the point where Andrew Cartmell got his hands on the reins (and, even when he did use continuity, as in *Remembrance of the Daleks*, did so in a holding-the-viewers-by-the-hand-way that didn't drive the narrative), but the viewers did not return in the numbers previously enjoyed. Also, after one year back on Saturday nights, the programme was airing against *Coronation Street*, a swathe of potential casual viewers severed from any broadcast. This led to a moment when, mid-way through Season 26, a year after *Doctor Who's* twenty-fifth anniversary waved a timid, "Hello!" (a far cry from the whistles and bells only five years gone), JN-T asked for another publicity-driving press session as people were actively unaware the show was on television. Also, and it pains me say this, but by staying in the role for seven years, Tom Baker had become so imbedded within the role that anyone who followed him would pale in popular comparison, and the fact that sections of fandom were visibly



critical of those actors created an air where the outside viewer was left with a sensation of, "Well, if they don't like it, and they're fans, why should we bother with it?"

That, however, was then, and this is the post-2015 rejuvenation era, and one that has experienced an epoch as golden as that mighty decade known as the 70s, namely the Tennant era. And maybe therein lies a problem. Having established that the show is back in the mainstream, yet it is fair to say that *Doctor Who* is, presently, not as widely popular as it was during those Tennant years, or so it would seem, when those aforementioned shops groaned under the weight, and variety, of the merchandise that was produced. The late evening scheduling of Season 9 prevented a core element of the much-needed family audience from able to watch it during transmission, we are currently on a gap year as Moffat prepares his (but hopefully not Capaldi's) swansong set of episodes, which means that the everyday exposure to the level enjoyed during the Tennant years is absent, reducing the day-to-day awareness of the programme to the mass viewing audience. Coupled with this, there is, amongst some fans, an assumption that the darker tone of Series 9, with its internal referencing as layered and scalp-clutching as some of the strains that ran through Season 20 and its immediate successors, that it is dropping back into a more niche experience. Never the less, this is not necessarily the case. The show is massive in America and

other parts of the globe, AI figures are still impressively high, and lower viewing figures are not entirely attributable to the time slot but also the fact that, as time goes on, watching television live is decreasingly the way to experience a show. I-Player and box sets dominate many viewing habits now, and *Doctor Who* is no exception to this new trend. More importantly, the impact made by the show's triumphant return has not diminished to any extent that would make people slink back to the derisory opinions and name-calling that infiltrated common perception in the time before it came back. It is still OK to be *Doctor Who* fan, to actively mention it in general conversation and to Tweet about it. While not everyone will ever be a fan of the show (and nor should they be) the fact that so many are is a fact accepted by those outside the reach of its charms. It's like the relationship between *Doctor Who* and football referred to earlier. Not always the most obvious of bedfellows, despite the innate, obsessive nature of both, the fact that they recently were (not just the debut of Bill but in *The Lodger*) is testament to the fact that different fan bases can accept one another within their worlds. It's a case of trend and let trend, and long may it continue to be so.

Oh, and *Star Wars* fans, here's a bit of friendly cross-Universe banter. The Fourth is always with us, has been since 1974, before you had your new hope. And the force is definitely strong in *that* one. ▲



IT'S A BIT RANDOM!

with Kenny Smith

Editor of Vortex Magazine and the unofficial Big Finish companion 'The Finished Product'



KFC or McDonalds?

McDonald's – every time. My first 24-hour McD's experience came in Las Vegas at 4am in the Luxor Hotel with a gorgeous Australian girl. Love a burger.

Favourite Disney movie?

Can I cheat and say a Pixar one? In that case, *Toy Story 2*. Genius from start to finish. And Jessie's song always makes me cry. Every time.

Beatles or Stones?

Neither. I'm not a fan of 60s music – can I cheat again and say Pet Shop Boys? No? With a Sontaran meson cannon against my head, I'd say The Beatles, at a push.

Favourite pizza topping?

There used to be a restaurant where I live that did pizza bolognese. It was effectively mince pizza, smothered in bolognese sauce, but wow. Pizza perfection, topped with cheese.

Who was the best *Star Trek* captain?

Captain Sisko. *Deep Space 9* is the only *Star Trek* series I've ever watched from start to finish, and I love it to bits. I should get it on blu-ray.

K9 or Kameleon?

Oh, got to be K9. He was a huge part of my childhood and I've got both the large remote control models from Character Options at home. Love him. Affirmative!

Favourite movie trilogy?

Can I say the first three James Bond films – *Dr No*, *From Russia With Love* and *Goldfinger*? They're all really good movies and set the standard for everything that followed.

The Broons or *Oor Wullie*?

Oor Wullie – gotta have respect for a guy who sits on a bucket for eighty years! Although I always fancied Maggie Broon...

Favourite season of *Who*?

Season 17. It turned me from an avid viewer into a fan, at the age of five. I love the Fourth Doctor, I love Romana, and I love K9. Alternatively, can I have the second Eighth Doctor season with Charley from Big Finish?

Best day of the week?

Friday. I work through my lunch hour for the rest of the week so I can finish at 2pm and collect my daughter from school on Fridays – so my weekend begins then. Yippee!

FICTION
SKULDUGGERY
by Fiona Moore
and Alan Stevens

This story was previously published in the anthology Shelf Life in 2008 and is set between the Kaldor City stories "Occam's Razor" and "Death's Head"

"Well," said Landerchild, "do you have something for me?"

"Presumably," said Carnell, "or I wouldn't have asked you to a second meeting."

"Don't be facetious. Are you going to provide me with a strategy, or are you going to pay me my share of the money from that scheme on which we employed you -" he paused for effect before continuing pointedly, "- the one which failed?"

Carnell sighed, leaning back in the tastefully understated black chair behind his desk. "The reason why the strategy did not work, Firstmaster, was that your group failed to provide me with all the information I needed," he said mildly. "There were two major variables of which I was left unaware, and really, I am only entertaining your request for further services out of a combination of generosity...and boredom."

To himself, Carnell acknowledged that the strategy of which Landerchild was speaking had not been his finest hour, although he also acknowledged in his own defence that it was difficult to have predicted the materialisation of a blue box out of thin air, but he would never have confessed as much to his client.

Landerchild failed to react to Carnell's needling, but simply looked unimpressed. Carnell wondered idly if this were a front or a genuine response.

"I don't hold much with this psychostrategy nonsense," said Landerchild. "I had my

doubts about employing you on the earlier project, from the beginning. The only reason why I'm coming to you now," he said, anticipating Carnell's question, "is because what I want is the death of Firstmaster Chairholder Uvanov, and I assume that you have a good knowledge of his vulnerabilities, since I know you do work for him at times."

Carnell spread his hands. "Client confidentiality, Firstmaster," he said, "I couldn't possibly acknowledge any involvement with Uvanov, regardless of whether I have worked for him or not."

"Yes," said Landerchild dismissively, "but as this confidentiality would be extended to any of your clients, I believe myself to be reasonably secure in employing you. Now what have you got for me?"

Carnell took his time replying. "The advantage which psychostrategy has in these cases over simply hiring, bribing or blackmailing an assassin," he said, appearing more interested in the position of the objects on his elegant desk than in his client, "is that it involves seeking out an individual with the motivation to effect the end you wish to achieve, and then pushing them in the desired direction, in such a way that they believe that they have acted of their own free will. Thus, the results of the successful strategy cannot be traced back to you – or to me, for that matter."

"So you're going to manipulate some fellow into killing him," Landerchild summarized bluntly.

Carnell seemed amused. "Well, you must know *somebody* with a grudge," he said. "I was under the impression that it was positively fashionable these days to hate the Company Chairholder."

This time, Carnell's barbs got through and Landerchild bristled. "My being here has nothing to do with fashion," he glowered. "It's because Uvanov is an unfit steward for the Company. His policies to date have been disastrous, and his handling of recent

crises shows a disturbing tendency to favour populism over common sense."

"He's also not a member of the Founding Families," Carnell pointed out mildly, "and god forbid that anyone of lower rank should possibly rise to such an exalted position."

"That's as may be," said Landerchild hastily, "but my concern is that the Company should be led by someone with the intelligence and training to do the job."

"Well, you may feel that way," Carnell said, "but there are a number of other Founding Family members for whom the issue of Uvanov's class is indeed deeply significant."

"It's too risky to use an aristocrat," Landerchild dismissed the implication. "Uvanov's paranoid about the Founding Families; he's suspicious of us as a general principle."

"But it would be a crime with two obvious motivators – jealousy and class consciousness – which could not be immediately traced back to you," Carnell pointed out. "Anyone investigating the crime would simply assume that the man was acting according to his own deeply-held principles." He waited for any further objections from Landerchild, then, receiving none, continued: "So what you need to do is to find someone, ideally a fairly minor Founding Family member, who is down on his luck, and who would be willing to take part in an assassination attempt against the Chairholder in exchange for money and an elevation – or, as might be, a restoration – of his position."

"It's still too risky," Landerchild said. "Those motivations are fairly general, and anyone investigating the matter might still come back to me. Remember, Uvanov's got that new bodyguard, and he's supposedly a lot less derelict in his duties than your average Company Security thug."

"No, but Kaston Iago's employment would cease immediately upon Uvanov's death. Should Iago decide to remain in the City afterwards, his professional interests are

likely to be directed by whoever should then decide to procure his services."

"What if Uvanov should survive the attempt?" Landerchild demanded.

"You think this strategy will fail?" Carnell asked, raising an eyebrow.

"After what happened last time, I want to be certain there's a contingency plan."

"All my strategies come with a built-in failsafe," Carnell said. "It's simple enough to ensure that Uvanov will not use Iago to investigate, by selecting an assassin with a known connection with Justina."

The possibility that Kaston Iago was having a relationship with Uvanov's executive assistant had not particularly occurred to Landerchild, though, when he thought back, Firstmaster Strecker *had* made some sort of remark to the effect that they had seemed rather close to one another at that party during the Firstmaster Murders. However, he did not want to let Carnell know that he hadn't been aware of this. "Of course," was all Landerchild said, smiling sourly. "So, Iago won't investigate. But what if Uvanov employs someone else?"

Carnell emitted a tiny sigh. "If Iago is out of the way, the task will inevitably fall to Uvanov's other main enforcer: Operations Supervisor Rull. Who will be occupied, for reasons I will go into in a moment, meaning that the investigation will be directed by Deputy Operations Supervisor Cotton. Your contact in Company Security, if I'm not mistaken." From the look on Landerchild's face, it was evident that he was not. "Who will therefore ensure that the investigation will come to nothing. As for Uvanov's own suspicions, the assassination will also be such that it could seem to be directed by someone who knows the facts about the Taren Capel incident in which Uvanov was involved when he commanded Storm Mine Four. Should the attempt fail, Uvanov will promptly suspect ex-Firstmaster Chairholder Diss Pitter of being behind it."

"I also am aware of the genuine facts of the Taren Capel incident," Landerchild cut in acidly. "What's to stop him suspecting me?"

"Too obvious a candidate," Carnell said. "Uvanov's paranoia does have its uses. He will immediately suspect the least likely person, and, since Pitter's been taking to his retirement so well..." he left the rest unsaid.

Landerchild evidently accepted this. "So the problem then is, how do you get someone close enough to shoot Uvanov, and also to somehow convey to Uvanov that this is the work of a person who knows about the Taren Capel incident while shooting him?"

Carnell allowed a slight hint of disappointment at Landerchild's evident lack of imagination to creep into his voice. "Shooting is a little *direct*, I feel," he said, "as well as raising the problem of how to get any sort of obvious weapon past Uvanov's security measures."

"So what are you proposing?"

"A skull."

Landerchild was about to let Carnell know his opinion of this idea, but then, since the psychostrategist had been making sense all along up to this point, he decided to give him the benefit of the doubt. "Whose skull?"

Carnell made a dismissive gesture. "At this point, it doesn't really matter. What matters is that it should be covered in contact poison, placed in a presentation box, and given to Uvanov under the guise of it being Taren Capel's skull, found in the ore hoppers of one of the Storm Mines."

"Thus providing the connection with the Storm Mine incident," Landerchild nodded sagely.

Carnell again allowed a hint of disappointment into his voice. "We don't actually want a *direct* connection with the Storm Mine incident," he said. "If Uvanov feels that there's too close a connection, he might begin to suspect that he is being led.

No, if the skull is said to have been found in an ore hopper, that does *imply* a connection with the Storm Mine incident, but also fits with the myth that Taren Capel walked away into the desert which is being embraced by so many cults these days. Uvanov won't know which direction it's coming from, which should keep him off balance just long enough for the skull to do its work."

"So where do we get this convenient skull from then?"

"Well," Carnell smiled slightly, "before you get a skull, you first need to get a corpse."

"So where do we get this convenient corpse?"

Carnell let his smile widen. "Company Security," he said, "Forensics Division."

"They don't just have bodies lying around there, you know," said Landerchild.

"Oh, a corpse is easy enough to arrange," Carnell said. "What you need is for a rebel arms cache to be found in some out-of-the-way and sparsely populated location. A number of possibilities spring to mind, but the most ideal one would be a particular two-man research and ore processing station out in Zone Nine, on the edge of the Blind Heart Desert." Landerchild wondered what was special about this particular station, but decided to restrain his curiosity for the time being. "All you have to do is arrange for a consignment of, say, ten plasma rifles and assorted explosives to be delivered out there, then ensure that rumours of the existence of this consignment find their way to Supervisor Rull."

"And how will this consignment be arranged?"

"Through Cotton." Carnell implied that the answer was obvious. "He can supply the arms to your would-be assassin, who can arrange to have them placed in the station. And once the volatile Rull learns about the consignment, there should be not one but two corpses available. Meaning that Rull, as

I promised, will be too busy to investigate the assassination attempt, since he will be trying to find evidence to support his belief that the two research station operatives were involved with the rebels, and he will also be wanting to prevent the circumstances surrounding their deaths from being investigated too closely by anyone else, as he will want to ensure that he himself is not placed under suspicion of a double murder."

"And how will I get the skull off one of the corpses?" Landerchild asked.

Carnell's tone did not alter. "Again, through Cotton."

Landerchild frowned. "If anyone decides to investigate the decapitation of the corpse," he said slowly, "then the first thing they would do is ask whether there had been any unusual presences in Forensics during that time, meaning that the name of the Deputy Operations Supervisor would promptly come to light."

"Exactly," said Carnell, "which is why he won't be doing the actual acquisition of the skull. He will simply be putting pressure on someone in the Forensics Department who has something to hide, which is known to Company Security. From what I understand, there's quite a few people with antisocial habits in Forensics. Indeed, as the Head of Forensics is one of them, I'd suggest that Cotton start at the top. So to speak."

"I thought you said psychostrategists were above using blackmail?" Landerchild queried.

Carnell raised an eyebrow. "I never said that," he remarked. "What I said was that psychostrategy involves providing people with a plausible motive for action. In the case of the Head of Forensics, I'd say that blackmail would provide a very plausible motive for cooperating with your contact. Furthermore, it would also provide him with a motive for ensuring that his tracks are covered, so that the disappearance of the head cannot be traced back to him.

The plan Cotton will propose is that he will set up a false identity on the Company Security network, the identity of a Forensics technician with full documentation and backdated employment history. The corpse arrives; the Head of Forensics books it in under the name of the false technician; he relieves it of its head, boils the flesh off it and provides it to Cotton."

"Wouldn't it be simpler just to have the Head of Forensics book it in, and then have him killed?" Landerchild asked.

"As you said before, if anyone investigates the disappearance of the skull, they will be looking for anything suspicious occurring around Forensics, and another death is, if anything, even more suspicious than the unexplained presence of the Deputy Operations Supervisor. No, in his case I think we can definitely rely on blackmail to keep him quiet."

"What happens when someone discovers that the identity on the system is false? The trail would immediately lead back to either the Head of Forensics or to Cotton."

"Not necessarily," Carnell said. "There are a lot of people with the means to create a false identity on the system. Leaving aside the large number of individuals with the skills and experience in computer crime in this city who can be employed discreetly for a price, you have the Company personnel officers, Rull, Pitter, Uvanov – in fact, the entire Company Board have the ability to do so, and god knows there are enough disgruntled Founding Family members on the Board to provide suspects. And, if the record is properly backdated, there will be no telling who set up the identity, or when."

"I've thought of another problem," Landerchild said. "What's to stop Uvanov making the assassin take the skull out of the box himself, to prove it's not booby-trapped?"

Carnell smiled. "Nothing, indeed, that's what he *will* do. So we simply use a slow-acting

poison, and make the assassin think that he has consumed the antidote, to ensure that he complies with the plan. That way, at the end of the strategy, anyone involved who could possibly be linked back to you is either in your pay," – he ticked the items off on his fingers – "so closely implicated that they will have to keep quiet out of sheer self-preservation, or dead."

"Well, you do appear to have covered all eventualities," said Landerchild, rising and making as if to leave. "But I'll tell you this, Carnell: it seems like a dangerously overcomplicated scheme to me."

"If you follow the strategy to the letter," Carnell said, "then you should achieve the result you want."

"It had better work, because if it went wrong, it would be disastrous."

"Actually," Carnell remarked as the office door shut firmly behind Landerchild, "it will only work if it *does* go wrong."

Human nature, he reflected, made it impossible for anyone, and particularly

someone as arrogant as Landerchild, to follow such a strategy exactly. And even if Landerchild did not succumb to the temptation to modify his instructions somewhat, any strategy which was planned to such an elaborate degree that it allowed no flexibility whatsoever, was virtually guaranteed to go wrong at some point. Whatever Landerchild did, the outcome would undoubtedly be in Carnell's favour.

"Well," said Uvanov a few hours later, "do you have something for me?"

Carnell remarked smoothly, "Yes, in fact I do."

"What is it, then?"

Carnell's face betrayed nothing. "If you suspect that a relationship has developed between Iago and Justina," he began, "I would suggest setting up a test which would reveal, firstly, the nature of their connection, and, secondly where their first loyalties lie."

"And how will I do that?"

"By engineering what will appear to be an attempt on your own life..." ▲



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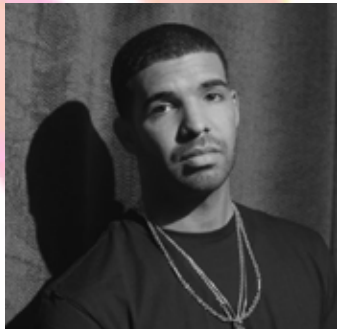
THE FINAL STRETCH AS WE LOOK AT THE NU WHO COMPANIONS...

Billie Piper
and
Rose Tyler
(because by then Doctor
Who had started casting
actual pop stars)



Rihanna
and
Martha Jones

Courtney Love
(shown in the
early 2000s)
and
Donna Noble



Drake
and
Mickey Smith



Kate Nash
and
Amy Pond



John
Barrowman
and
Jack Harkness

(See notes for
Rose above)

George Ezra Williams
(whose stardom, again,
slightly post-dates Rory's
era)

and
Rory Pond
(née Williams)





Selena Gomez
and
Clara Oswald



Corinne Bailey
Rae
and
Bill



SO THERE YOU HAVE IT! 43 COMPANIONS OVER MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY...

With very grateful thanks to David Brunt, Alan Stevens, James Gent, Gareth Kavenagh, and everyone else who helped out with advice and suggestions for identifying doppelgangers.

By Fiona Moore



REVIEW

DOCTOR WHO AND THE FESCAN THREAT by Christopher Samuel Stone

Reviewed by Allan Lear

The Fescan Threat is an interactive story of the kind that older readers (which is to say, readers around my age) will recognise under the brand name of Fighting Fantasy or Choose Your Own Adventure. This is a format which has never really gone away, having made the occasional appearance on the shelves in forms such as Kim Newman's excellent adult thriller *Life's Lottery* or Neil Patrick Harris's recent and inspired choose-your-own-autobiography.

It has not, however, appeared consistently for *Doctor Who*. In the nineteen eighties, titles such as *Crisis in Space* and *Invasion of the Ormazoids* made it briefly possible to be the Sixth Doctor, though sadly *Doctor Who Punches Michael Grade Really Quite Hard* was never able to find a publisher despite being arguably Ian Marter's finest literary achievement. Only with David Tennant's Tenth Doctor did the format return, with both he and Matt Smith featuring in interactive novels in a range known as "Decide Your Destiny". This has happily been continued with the recent release of two new books starring the Twelfth Doctor and under the heading of "Choose the Future books", but fans of all other Doctors are still in limbo, despite the fact that there is no logical reason why *Doctor Who* stories must feature only the current televisual incumbent of the role.

Into the breach steps Mr Stone, who offers this story as a charity venture in aid of MIND, the mental health organisation. It retails at £19.99, which is quite a hefty sum for an amateur venture, so in what way does it justify such an investment?

Well, firstly, it's enormous. Fans of the Fighting Fantasy label might remember

that, in the early days at least, you won by skipping over the entire book and flicking to the final entry, inevitably number 400. Fighting Fantasy reissues currently sell for around £5.99. *The Fescan Threat* clocks in at a whopping 2001 entries, equivalent to five FF books at about a tenner cheaper and with one entry left over.

This scale is explained by *Threat's* other defining feature, which is ambition. Stone's idea of a *Doctor Who* escapade clearly requires it to be large in scope. So, this is not one long, rambling story told at tedious, repetitious length. Instead, it marks one story for each of the first ten Doctors (War Doctor excluded), each overlapping but each with his own unique pathway, taking place simultaneously across an entire solar system and against a backdrop of a threatened invasion of Earth.

Playing every Doctor, the dedicated follower will taste both success and defeat, will outwit the piscine adversary and be outwitted, will get to try out the TARDIS console and sonic screwdriver, and – most importantly – will die. Oh, how you'll die; in ways heroic, pathetic, maudlin, and, best of all, slapstick. One of my favourite things about these books was always finding new and imaginative ways to die. Should your taste, bizarrely, tend less towards the mortuary and more towards the living world, the story offers you plenty of scope for premortem activity. Ride a giant land crab across a desert to a shining saucer city. Freeze your Gallifreyan nadgers off in an ice-world prison cell. Spend relative years in a virtual dimension. Collude with resistance fighters, steal ancient stone idols from abandoned cyclopean monuments, have a jelly baby, topple an evil empire. Truly this is *Doctor Who* in the grand tradition.

Because of the complexity of the interweaving stories and the sheer magnitude of the endeavour, this book took me literally weeks to complete. I am talking about the kind of playtime one usually associates with a triple-A sandbox computer game rather than a simple book. Happily, despite being an amateur production, the novel is made to a

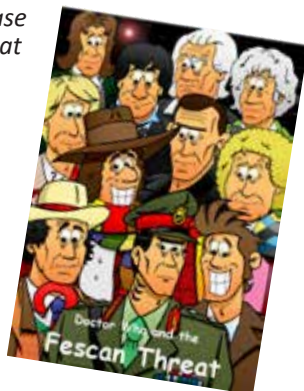
reasonably high standard and can survive a certain amount of wear without succumbing to the dreaded erectile dysfunction of the covers that is so typical of internet-published volumes.

With a reading time that can easily extend into months if done properly, one quails to imagine the number of man-hours that must have gone into constructing this book, but the end result is an absorbing and enjoyable playing experience that is so totally unlike anything else currently available as to be well worth doing for its own sake, as well as in support of an excellent charity. There are some minor typographical and compositing errors but nothing that affects the playing of the book, and certainly nothing that is not inevitable when one person is executing a design of this extent on his own. To quibble at length about them would feel like castigating the man who paints the Forth Bridge for getting Dulux silk gloss on his shoes.

I thoroughly enjoyed *Doctor Who and the Fescan Threat* and I highly recommend that you give it a try yourself. It's as much

entertainment as you'll find anywhere for the price, and I strongly believe that the sort of eccentric, single-minded passion on display in this project is exactly what fandom is about.

UPDATE: Since this review was written, Doctor Who and the Fescan Threat has sold out completely, raising a total of £700 for MIND. Congratulations to Christopher for this superb response. Should you wish to learn more about MIND and the work they do, or to donate to this excellent cause, please visit their website at www.mind.org.uk ▲



FICTION

A History of the Time War

3: THE DEATH OF DOCTOR WHO?

By Cardinal Turner

Secretary to President Rassilon of the High Council of Gallifrey

Despite his involvement during the Davros incident with the jaws of the Nightmare Child at the Gates of Elysium, as well as those incidents involving the Sontaran ordeal and the rulers of the universe (amongst others), the Doctor refused to fight in the Time War.

As war spread, the Dalek Empire was on red alert, with the Time Lords summoning

those in its sphere of influence to support Gallifrey's cause. The Universe was soon engulfed in the shadow of the Time War. Both sides became ruthless, deluded by their own sense of grandeur and superiority. In ending their non-interference policy, the Time Lords quickly became loathed by many lesser species, with some making no distinction in their hatred of Dalek and Time Lord.

Many Humans adopted this negative view of the Time Lords, one of whom was a lady called Cass, who was working as a pilot on a gunship. Whilst flying through the constellation of Kasterborous, complications began to arise in the bridge. Teleporting the rest of the crew to safety, Cass was left in charge of her ship, desperately signalling for help. Help did come, in the form of the Doctor.

Taking Cass by the hand, the Doctor led her to his TARDIS. However it was here that Cass realised that he was a Time Lord, and refused to go with him, preferring to die rather than go with a man who was, at least to her, threatening the very future of the Universe: of time itself. The Doctor informed her that he had refused to join in the War, despite the Time Lords' best efforts to enlist him. He helps where he can, but he will not fight.

This was not enough for Cass, but the Doctor was not going to leave in his TARDIS without her. It was the ultimate stalemate. The ship soon crashed into the nearby planet of Karn, where the legendary sisterhood found Cass and the Doctor. Both dead.

Taking their corpses to their Temple, the sisterhood recognised the body as the Doctor's. A member of the sisterhood, Ohila, a relative of Ohica who encountered the Doctor when in his Fourth Incarnation, produced a potion that could keep the Doctor alive for an extra four minutes. Desperately attempting to convince the Doctor to fight, Ohila was clearly distraught by the war. If the Sisterhood were afraid, he realised, then things must be pretty bad. Looking at the corpse of Cass, he wondered how things could have got so bad that a young woman like Cass would rather die than take help from a Time Lord. Realising that the Universe truly was at stake, the Doctor finally realised that the war had to stop, and that no one else but he could stop it. Knowing that this would break the promise he took back on Gallifrey all those centuries ago, he disowned his title, his very identity: Doctor no more. Ohila offered him a potion that would trigger the regenerative process, bring him back to life permanently. She had a selection of potions available, which allowed him to choose the kind of incarnation his next body would be. He chose 'Warrior'. When told that the process would hurt, he was glad. Breaking his promise was not something that he took lightly: it went against all of his principles. He wanted it to hurt.

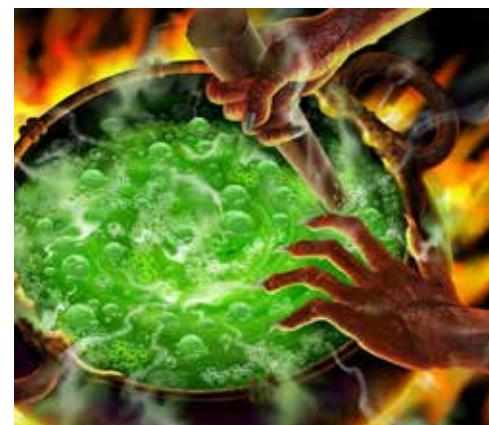
Taking the cup, he requested that all leave the room while he made the ultimate

sacrifice. Ashamed, he declared that he is doing this for his companions: for the greater good. The Universe needed a warrior to save it. There was nothing a Doctor could do any more. Though he was opposed to fighting, it was now the only option left, a means to an end. Unless he made the sacrifice and ended the war for good, whatever the cost to him or his people, the Universe would carry on burning at the hands of the two superpowers until nothing was left. He had to reject who he was, the man who failed to bring peace, in order to do what was right. The Doctor, by his very nature, had failed, since his own worldview had ensured the Dalek's supremacy in the first place. He could stand aside no longer: it was time he reluctantly accepted his duty.

He drank deeply. Screaming in agony, his face became engulfed with flame.

The process was soon over, and a new man stood in his clothes. A warrior. Walking over to Cass' body, he took her gun, declaring "Doctor no more".

Check out my website at <https://sites.google.com/view/anothertimeanotherworld> for features and articles on the Time War, as well as about all aspects of Doctor Who, as well as its spin-offs and other Sci-Fi such as Star Wars and Star Trek. Also check out the site for a new series of original Young War Doctor fiction, picking up where this edition of my chronicled history finishes... ▲



STARBURST INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2016

I'm sure most *Cosmic Masque* readers will be familiar with *Starburst*, the popular long-running magazine which has been covering all things sci-fi since 1977. Well, some bright spark has come up with the idea of doing a *Starburst* Film Festival and yours truly went along to find out what it was all about.

Now, although I love *Doctor Who*, I also like a whole load of other sci-fi related stuff so a more general event like this is ideal for me. The festival ran over three days but with a limited budget I decided to pop along on the Saturday which seemed to be the day with the strongest line-up.

The first panel I saw was a talk on the production of the first *Star Wars* movie (1977's *Episode IV: A New Hope*) by Peter Beale. No, not Pete Beale from *Eastenders*, Peter Beale who was Managing Director at Fox UK back in the day. Peter played a key role in the budgeting and planning of *Star Wars* and had some very interesting anecdotes to relate, including revealing that Alec Guinness's agent did not want him to appear in what he considered to be a 'B' movie! The talk was illustrated with slides of lots of rare and interesting photos and Peter spoke with fondness of R2D2 actor Kenny Baker, who had sadly passed away about a week before the event. Peter had also worked on such classics as *Lawrence of Arabia* and had many stories to tell.

Next up was a terrific talk from the guys at the Ray Harryhausen Foundation who maintain the archive and restore the collection of that sadly departed genius monster maker. A short film about Harryhausen's work, narrated by Fourth Doctor Tom Baker, was screened and there was also a chance to see some rare props, many of which had been found in Ray's garage after he died – we can all be grateful that he was a great hoarder! Hardly anything seems to have been thrown away.

Of particular interest were sketches which Ray did for a proposed *War of the Worlds* movie. Ray did preparatory work for many projects which sadly never went ahead and you can check out his *War of the Worlds* test footage on YouTube. Actress Caroline Munro was also on hand at the event to add her memories of Ray.

Next up for us was a *Doctor Who* Season 22 panel and script editor Eric Saward, writer Philip Martin and director Graeme Harper gave us some insights into that sadly overlooked season. Phillip felt that the series was quite adult at that point and that it should perhaps have been screened in a later timeslot, and he thought that later episodes with Sylvester McCoy were perhaps pitched at a younger audience. After watching the new crowd-funded episodes of *Thunderbirds* which look wonderful and are well worth checking out if you can, there was a screening of David Tennant's *Doctor Who* episode *School Reunion* (now ten years old!). Producer Phil Collinson and writer Toby Whithouse were happy to give us their insights and you were left feeling that the second season of the revamped *Doctor Who* really was something of a golden era. The chap leading the panel commented on how dated the computers look in the story but overall this is an episode which bears up well and provides us all with happy memories of companion actress Liz Sladen, who is sadly missed by all in the *Doctor Who* family.

After a quick chat with DWM archivist and old friend of DWAS Andrew Pixley, it was time to head home.

There was lots more to be seen which we were unable to catch up with, such as a screening of the James Bond classic *Licence to Kill* with its director John Glen on the Sunday.

Overall, this was a great event and we can but hope that the exercise is repeated next year. The venue, Manchester Metropolitan University, is near to the train station and easy to find, and their student bar was open offering cheap drinks and grub. Pop along next year if you get the chance! ▲

whotopia

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THE DOCTOR WHO PROJECT

Interview with Bob Furnell

by Grant Bull

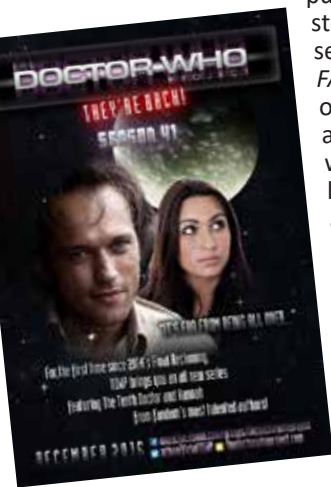
CM talks to man behind *The Doctor Who Project*, *Whotopia* and other such delights...

Firstly, I guess we should start with what 'The Doctor Who Project' is?

The Doctor Who Project, or TDWP as it's more commonly referred to, is an original fiction series based on the original 1963-89 series. TDWP centers on the continuing adventures of an alternative Doctor and his companions, currently our Tenth Doctor and companion, Hannah Redfoot. Stories are published as part of an overall season that concentrates on delivering a collection of short stories that sees the Doctor facing new and original situations in time and space.

The stories are written, edited and illustrated by fans for the enjoyment of our fellow fans. Some people might call this fan-fiction, but we tend to look at the stories as professional fan-fiction. We make no profit from the series and we do this because we love *Doctor Who*.

We have been publishing original *Doctor Who* fiction since 1999. To date have published over 120 stories and have won several *MediaWest FANQ awards* for our stories. I should also mention that we also publish a line of past Doctor adventures called *Brief Encounters* featuring television Doctors 1-7.



How was such a project born?

TDWP's creation goes way back to late 1998/early 1999 during the series 'Wilderness Years'. It's a long story, but to give you a shortened version...back in 1998 I was involved in a local fan group called TASC (Telefantasy Appreciation Society of Canada). We were sitting around bemoaning the fact that *Doctor Who* was no longer on television. We started joking around about what we would do if we were in charge of making the series, which lead me to point out that I'd recently discovered an online fifth season for the cancelled "Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman". I pointed out that a group of fans had got together and written a fifth season of the show and I thought if they could do that, why couldn't we do a *Doctor Who* version. Everyone agreed it would be a great idea, even though none of us had experience in publishing fan fiction.

Four questions were asked at the time:

What if *Doctor Who* had never been cancelled in 1989?

What if Seventh Doctor (Sylvester McCoy) hadn't regenerated into the Eighth Doctor (Paul McGann) in 1996?

What if the series was still in production today?

What would we do if we produced the series?

Myself and fellow TASC member Misha Lauenstein came up for a basis for the first season that would consist of six original stories written by various fan writers. Our first "season" would use the Seventh Doctor, as played by Sylvester McCoy, for the series' first two stories, after which the Seventh Doctor would regenerate into the project's very own Eighth Doctor, who would be played by a fictional actor by the name of Jeremy Banks-Walker.

For people that want to get involved how do they do so?

Because we publish two strands of fiction, the easiest way to learn how to get involved is to visit our website (www.thedoctorwhoproject.com) for details. We're always on the lookout for writers, artists, editors, etc.

How do you think the distribution of Fan Fiction has changed in the modern age?

Wow, a lot. When I got involved in *Who* fandom, in those days fanfic was published in either paper fanzines or spiralbound individual collections or stories. Now we have stories available to read online or in downloadable formats from places like Teaspoon, Fan Fiction Net, etc. or even from yourselves with the recently returned *Cosmic Masque*. Fanfic has even been made available for e-Readers and published as professionally published books like *The Temporal Logbook*, *Time Shadows* and the *Seasons of War* collection.

You've been involved in fandom and fan productions for a good number of years, how have you seen things evolve?

Fan products have evolved from producing very amateur-made products to extremely professionally-made and created products that rival and sometimes exceeds the quality that's produced by the big boys like the BBC etc.

Fandom has developed from where it was mostly in the UK or Australia to where you can find *Who* fans worldwide. It's gone from fun, intimate, friendly small groups to big entities like DWAS and DWIN to now where fandom seems to be entirely an online thing through websites, forums, chatrooms, etc. I'd have to say though, for me, as someone who first became a fan in and around 1981, I kind of preferred the days of fandom back then because it was a little more personal, where now, because it's mainly online, rather impersonal. I'm not knocking today's fandom at all because I do participate in a lot of aspects of it online. But I kind of miss those days.

What plans do you have for the future?

Oh gosh, quite a few. Right now, I'm busy overseeing the latest season of stories for TDWP, as well as several new *Brief Encounter* stories. I'm in the midst of putting together two special TDWP-related projects – one is a comic adaptation of *Blossom Core* from Season 29; the other is an omnibus edition of all the TDWP Christmas stories in one collection. I also edit and publish the fanzine *Whotopia* (www.whotopia.ca) with Jez Strickley of which we have a new issue due out any day now. I also recently started my own small independent publishing company – *Pencil Tip Publishing*. We've published two books to date – *The Temporal Logbook* and the *Sapphire and Steel Omnibus* – with several new books slated for publication including *Grave Warnings*, a horror short-story collection due out in the next month; along with a second volume of *The Temporal Logbook* – a *Doctor Who* short-story collection for charity for sometime in 2017; as well as a best-of omnibus featuring articles from the fanzine *Tellyvision*. I'm also currently working on developing a book series centring around a 1920s gentleman adventurer.

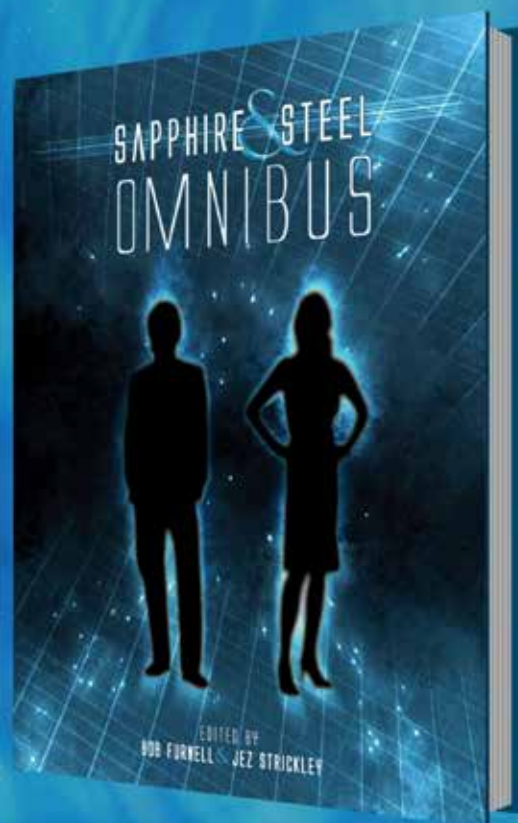
Where can we find details about The Doctor Who Project and your other Who-related creations?

If your readers are interested in learning more about TDWP they can visit the main TDWP website at www.thedoctorwhoproject.com. *Whotopia* can be found at www.whotopia.ca, while info about *Pencil Tip Publishing* can be found at www.penciltippublishing.com. All three entities can be found on Twitter, Facebook and there are links to the various projects' blogs on their websites. You can also find threads about all three on *Gallifrey Base* too.

Bob, thank you very much for your time. We look forward to enjoying your future works and keeping readers of CM up-to-date with them. ▲

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All proceeds from this publication will be donated in support of the Positive Living Society of British Columbia which is dedicated to empowering persons living with HIV/AIDS through mutual support and collective action.



REVIEW

THE TARGET BOOK

by David J Howe with Tim Neal

Review by John Davies

It's all very TARGET at the moment. DWM issue 499 is covering the range, there's a TARGET cover exhibition in London housing original cover artwork, and Christopher Bryant is working on Watching Books's upcoming volume, You on TARGET (for which I have contributed a piece on *The Face of Evil*). What is it about this series that is causing such a buzz in fan circles?

Let's set the scene.

You can usually gauge the age of someone you are talking to in a pub by the way they react to records that are playing. The guy who sniffs derisively as Justin Bieber wafts through the place but who immediately shows signs of wanting to play air guitar as Europe blasts from the sound system is clearly a child of the 80s, and the one that gets all wistful as Danny Boy signals the bar staff want to get home is revealed to be 80s boy's dad who just tagged along for a few pints. The same can be applied to *Doctor Who* gatherings and the mention of one word: TARGET. Any Beliebers's eye will glaze over, Danny Boy's last surviving fan will just be waiting for last orders at the bar later on, while anyone who still thrills to the strains of The Final Countdown will be instantly transported back to a time where TARGET meant so much to them. Their eyes will become distant as their lips form a reflective smile. Why? Because for people of that generation, TARGET was not only a word, not only meant a book range, it signified a passion: the sole connection to episodes of *Doctor Who* they vaguely remembered watching or had never seen. TARGET gave them a way to relive stories in a world before home entertainment. So, a book that chronicles the rise, falls and completion of the TARGET book range not only promises to be a wonderful keepsake for people of that

specific demographic, but also, and more importantly, to act as an essential guide of that era to fans across all generations.

Does *The TARGET Book* fulfil this daunting joint brief? The fact is that's a fairly rhetorical question, despite the question mark. We already know it does. It has done so before as this is a revamped reissue. However, is this a revisiting worthy of upgrading to, or is it a venture as unworthy of the time and effort spent on it as many a special edition movie release?

In what could be the quickest review in history, the answer is a resounding, 'Just take my money already!' emphatic, "Yes!" However, as much as that sentiment may please the authors, and publishers, of the book, it doesn't justify taking up column width here.

The TARGET Book was always a time capsule, but now it's been unearthed, expanded, the whole history documented and contains details of the current reprints and audio adaptations of the range, thus demonstrating that TARGET is, long after its initial printing time has ended, an ongoing entity, or 'thing' as the Internet would have it, and not simply a dusty relic for nostalgic fans. That said, even if it were solely a document of a range of books that once brought pleasure to millions during a point in time (and one brief moment of shared horror as the spine for *Doctor Who and the Mutants* had the word 'Doctor' abbreviated to 'Dr'), it would earn its rightful place in any collection. It is highly detailed, but never dry, as so many factual books can be, and it chronicles the times of every editor, office, change in direction, the highs and the numerous dips in the fairground ride in an engaging way. It also featured extremely honest contributions from many writers and artists who contributed to TARGET, showcasing every published cover (and many unpublished ones), as well as a fascinating insight into David Whittaker's planned approach to novelising *The Enemy of the World*.

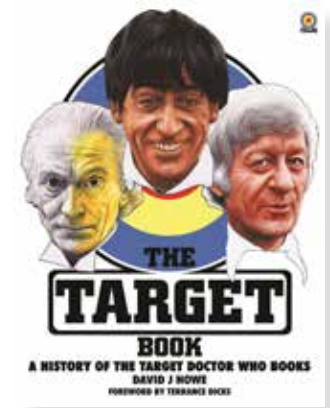
Other side-bar delights in the book include panels detailing the opening lines of certain books, the choice of chapter titles (obviously *Warriors' Gate* and *Terminus* don't appear in the latter) and, peppered throughout, charming examples of the descriptions used for both the Doctors and the TARDIS materialisation sound throughout the estimated 13 million copy selling range.

It's also fascinating to read extracts from reviews of the books from the time of their publication, both in terms of what they say and how it shows the gradual transition away from established literary critics to opinions from within the world of *Doctor Who* fandom itself: the TARGET generation. On a personal note, the inclusion of extracts from DWAS' *Celestial Toyroom* were especially pleasing as it shows how vibrant that organisation, now celebrating its fortieth anniversary, has always been.

Quite appropriately, the introductory duties and final words before the book goes on to discuss the other *Who*-related titles, fall to Terrance '64 out of the 156 published novelisations' Dicks. Or, as he is more commonly referred to, Uncle Terrance. If it wasn't for his sterling, sometimes taken for granted, work a lot of our childhoods would have been missing something crucial, a constant presence, almost a friend we looked forward to seeing the latest work of in the children's section of WH Smiths every month (older readers will have just shivered as they recall always having to go to that shelf, muttering, "It's not a kids' show!"). This is how he became an Uncle to the TARGET generation, and how he, rather like James Hilton's Mr Chips, taught countless children, especially to embrace reading. *The TARGET Book* deftly acknowledges the excellent endeavours of everyone who participated in turning television images into prized books, but it also serves as a true celebration of that Uncle. Without his adaptation of *Spearhead from Space* (*The Auton Invasion*), the first in-house TARGET book (*The Daleks*, *The Zarbi* and *The Crusaders* being reissues) doing so well, the printed world of *Doctor Who* could very well have been a different, and more

barren place. Almost as ruinous as the man Terrance opens *The Dalek Invasion of Earth* with...

More often than not with a factual book, they are used as a source, a go-to place to locate specific facts or see certain images. You can certainly use *The TARGET Book* in this way, indeed the end appendices will be getting that treatment a great deal from now on, but the buyer would miss out on an excellent, epic journey if they didn't embrace their inner TARGET and become a reader. Go on, pick it up, read from cover to cover and take the historical journey that started, Totters' Lane-like, at 4 Gloucester Road, South Kensington, London and ended sadly, but triumphantly when the last possible television story had been, to lesser or greater merit, transcribed or, more to the point, re-printed economically (*Talons of Weng-Chiang*? Take a bow). If you were part of that experience, you'll joyously relive your past, filling in gaps and learning things you couldn't have known at the time. If you are new to the whole premise of TARGET, then while I am slightly saddened that you didn't have the experiences of so many readers before you, I am envious of you encountering this element of the Whoniverse afresh. As someone with a penchant for saying, "Fantastic!" quite a bit once promised, it's "The trip of a lifetime!" ▲



The Target Book is available direct from telos.co.uk, or from Amazon.

A UNIQUE PRESENTATION by Ian Wheeler

As part of its fortieth anniversary celebrations this year, DWAS held a poll to establish fans' favourite Doctor, story, director etc. Some of the lucky winners received their awards at the society's The Capitol convention in May. This included a delighted Frazer Hines who received the award for Outstanding Contribution to Doctor Who.

With Big Finish's output getting ever more popular, it was only right that there should be a category for Favourite Audio Doctor. And it was no surprise to learn that the winner of this category was our very own Honorary President Colin Baker who has developed his portrayal of the Sixth Doctor superbly on audio.

Now, there was a problem as Colin was not going to be attending The Capitol – he had already committed to an event in my home town of Harrogate (Colin's good that way – when he says he'll do something, he honours that commitment). The event in question was the first ever Harrogate Comic Con. It was the first sci-fi event in the town to my knowledge and it was great to know that Colin was supporting it.

So, as The Capitol was happening in Surrey and Colin was up in Harrogate, I suggested to current DWAS Coordinator Paul Winter that he post the award up to me so I could present it to Colin. Paul did just that and the well-packaged award thankfully arrived in one piece.

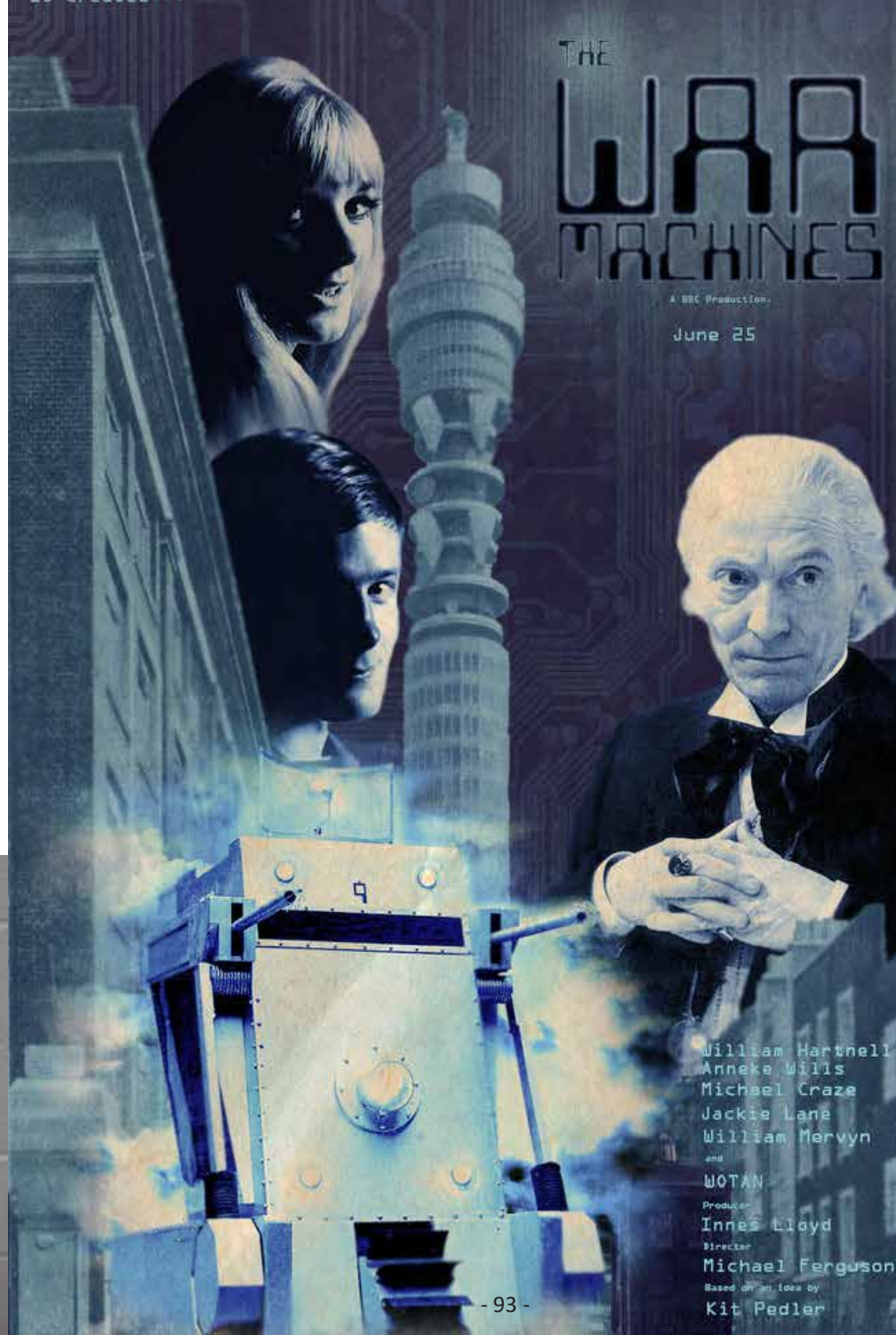
Come the day of the event, I wandered up to Colin's signing desk and presented him with the surprise award. He was genuinely delighted and admired the handsome glass trophy with obvious pleasure.

Paul Winter and his DWAS Exec colleague Dave Greenham had both suggested to me that it would be cool to get some 'phone footage of Colin saying thank you for the award to be played at The Capitol. I thought this was a great idea and would be just like on the Oscars or the BAFTAs when they say 'So-and-so can't be here today because he's filming in Swansea but we caught up with him earlier...' Colin was more than happy enough to record the footage and I emailed it down to Paul who was able to play it at the event.

Harrogate Comic Con proved to be very popular with local families and was a great success and whilst I'm sorry Colin was unable to get to The Capitol I'm glad he was up North with us! ▲



A Computer A.I rises to revolutionize the future.
But it became self aware and have plans of its own.
It wants to take over mankind.
It created...



INTERVIEW

PAUL MAGRS

by Ian Wheeler

Paul Magrs has written several *Doctor Who* novels for BBC Books, beginning with *The Scarlet Empress* in 1998. He has also written numerous audio stories for Big Finish and the BBC and is the creator of the popular character Iris Wildthyme.

When did you first start watching Doctor Who and which were your favourite Doctor and story?

My first memories are from the last year of Pertwee and the first year of Tom. I remember giant spiders sitting on the shelves of what I thought was a supermarket, and I remember a Sontaran's head collapsing like a burst football. Tom has always been my favourite Doctor, but I think, overall, my favourite story must be 'The Daemons'.

Were you involved in fandom in terms of going to conventions, local groups etc?

I never was! Loads of people I know now were involved in that kind of thing from very early on. I'm not sure we had much of that kind of thing going on in the North-East back then. I used to go to Timeslip comic shop in Newcastle and buy *Doctor Who* fanzines in the mid-Eighties and marvel at all of this activity.

Had you always wanted to be a writer? What was 'career plan B' if the writing/lecturing hadn't panned out?

I would have been an artist, I hope.

How did you go about getting your first Doctor Who novel published?

By then – in 1997 – I'd published a couple of mainstream novels. Then when I heard that the original *Who* novels were being relaunched by BBC Books, I thought I'd write in for the guidelines and see if I could come

up with an idea that would catch their eye. I wrote in just as Steve Cole was taking over and we talked and wrote to each other and he loved my ideas and my writing, luckily. We became great friends and he edited my books for a few years after that. We're still great pals now. I wrote a story for the first *Short Trips* anthology, and then came up with *The Scarlet Empress*, my first *Doctor Who* novel. It was a really exciting, fun time. A very creative atmosphere. I was allowed to bring all sorts of new things into the *Doctor Who* landscape – all these metafictional ideas and literary games, and investigating the idea of *Doctor Who* as a sea of stories and the Doctor as a fairytale figure who is quite conscious of that fact. I also brought in a lovely female time-travelling character who could answer back and be more than a match for the Doctor, and meet his various selves out of order and claim to be his old flame...

So why do you think the character of Iris Wildthyme has become so popular with the fans?

I think there's no ignoring her. She burst into the books and then the audios and she was like the Wife of Bath in *The Canterbury Tales*, or Mrs Slocombe in *Are You Being Served?* She's the spirit of carnival and subversion and she turns everything upside down. But I think people know that her heart is in the right place and that she's warm and well-meaning. She was invented at a time in the 1990s when Doctor Who had become rather dark and cynical, I felt. The Doctor was a godlike, manipulative being, operating from the margins of every story...and it had all become rather grim and heavy. I wanted Iris to come bundling in like your favourite, batty old aunty – to remind us that this was all supposed to be **fun**. She's the Time Meddler in drag.

Your Tom Baker audios for the BBC combined narration and dramatisation. Do you enjoy writing in that format?

Ever since I first listened to Radio 4's version of Lord of the Rings! I love radio drama that whispers in your ear, taking you from scene

to scene, fading from one scene to the next. It's like flying over the action, and then touching down in the most important scenes, and then taking off again... But practically, the reason we had a mix is that, as Audiogo saw it, Big Finish produced narrator-free audio drama and Audiogo produced talking books. With the *Nest Cottage Chronicles* we had to do something quite different, so that we weren't treading on anyone's toes. I liked it best when we had just the right mix of narration and dramatic scenes, but during the run of fifteen stories we went to every extreme – in style and content. What a very creative and exhausting time that was, too! They were wild and experimental – which is how it had to be for Tom's Doctor coming back, I think. His Doctor was never static and cosy on TV. The show's style changed every year. Of course we'd be trying different approaches when he came back, and it was very exciting.

One of the joys of the audios is the interaction between Tom and his housekeeper Mrs Wibbsey, played by Susan Jameson. Why do you think this works so well?

We gave him a whole new kind of character to interact with. It's so hard to find anything new to do in Doctor Who – there's been so much of it. But I'm so proud that we found something new and distinctive with this series. Mrs W was initially a kind of spooky, slightly sinister Mrs Danvers character, like in Daphne Du Maurier's *Rebecca*. But as time went by she softened – and this was all in collaboration with Sue Jameson and her brilliant performance – she gradually started revealing her more kindly side, beneath all the prickles. The Doctor had liberated her from the Cromer Palace of Curios and her enslavement to the alien hornets – and she was grateful for that. She was a happy housekeeper, by the end of it all.

Your new audios for Bafflegab (Baker's End starring Tom Baker) have a wonderfully macabre premise. Was the basic format your idea or Tom's?

Simon Barnard at Bafflegab contacted me last Christmas about coming up with a new project together. In recent years we've worked on some wonderful things – *Vince Cosmos* with Julian Rhind-Tutt, and then four Brenda and Effie adventures with Anne Reid. Simon wanted me to write for Tom Baker again – but this time, with Tom playing Tom Baker himself, and **still** have strange and alarming, macabre adventures. I was batting ideas back and forth with Tom by email, and I had written a story or two featuring various macabre creations, and then Tom was having ideas about goblins and a strange dream diary...and before I knew it I was outlining this whole series and writing a first episode... in which Tom fakes his own death, and reincarnation, and comes back as a large, dancing cat.

If you were to write a script for Doctor Who on TV and could pick any monster or enemy what would you go for?

I've a whole set of ideas floating in my head and my notebooks at any given time – all my most recent and usable *Doctor Who* ideas. I won't give any away here – because I'll hope to use them some time! But I'd love to see an adaptation of the 'pure historical' I wrote for Peter Davison's Doctor, *The Peterloo Massacre*. It's the anniversary of that event in 2019 and that's when they ought to do it! I think that would be breathtaking and horrifying on TV. Gutsy and political. That's what I'd like to see. I think for the TV show they need to have stories that bring the whole family on board, and make them laugh and feel scared and excited. The stories have to make you care about the characters – and the Doctor and companions shouldn't be too wisecracking and too clever for their own good. I think the audience needs to be able to follow what's going on, even if they don't have fifty-three years of *Doctor Who* lore at their fingertips. I'd be happy to write something that really stood by itself and that people remembered as distinctive and fresh, and unlike anything they'd seen before. That's always the aim, isn't it? (Failing that, I'd bring back Erato, the Creature from the Pit, and team him up with Sheila Hancock

and Bonnie Langford in a war against the Movellans.)

To end on a frivolous note, what's your favourite cheese?

Red Leicester, on toast.

Thank you, Paul!

A number of Paul's books are available from <http://obversebooks.co.uk/>▲

REVIEW

WHOVIAN DAD

by Pete May

Review by Grant Bull

Pete May has made me jealous in a creative way but I'm not going to hold that against him. *Whovian Dad* is as it sounds, the tale of a father obsessed with *Doctor Who* and his quest to inflict *Doctor Who* on his kids – as every good parent should. This to me is less of a book and more of a parenting guide. Take note, expectant mums everywhere... and yes, that includes you, Mrs Bull!

Pete's tales starts in the early days in a time called BC (before children) for all non-parents. We learn of Pete's introduction to the show as a youngster and read as his interest remains as he morphs into adulthood, applying it to everyday life which, for Pete, means journalism and pieces for *Loaded* magazine amongst others. Throughout this journey we are offered a charming overview of his thoughts on the Doctors and serials all in a tone which is a joy to read: the prose has a real casual feel to it, it flows as if the author is in your company regaling you down the pub.

Then come the kids, then comes the choices; forgo *Doctor Who* and become a boring, staid parent or introduce them to it and create a wonderful untouchable time entitled 'Father

and Son/Daughter time'. As you can tell I am a dad too, a Whovian Dad. I recall the magic moment when my oldest daughter Chloe came home from Dorchester Primary School and announced that she had been playing *Doctor Who* with her friends in the playground and that she had 'bagsyed' (I'm sure they still use that term) the character Rose on the basis that her middle name was Rose after my unforgettable Nan. I saw and seized that golden opportunity to introduce *Doctor Who* to my offspring and forge an unshakeable bond that would allow us TV time and trips to The Doctor Who Experience and signings at Forbidden Planet. Yes, before she knew it she was standing in a queue of delightful nerds (dad included) behind Tottenham Court Road waiting to met Peter Davison and Louise Jameson, though she had no idea who they were.

This book is a triumph. The more I read it, the more I wanted to read. I found myself agreeing with Pete's opinions on certain stories, nodding along with his observations. More importantly I wanted to know if Pete's kids stayed the test of time and honoured their dad's TV viewing tastes or whether teenage years said it wasn't 'cool' and they gave up. I won't spoil the outcome in any way as I encourage all, not just the parents out there, to pick this book up. I for one love reading people's personal recollections or connections with the show. This style has been popularised in the brilliant 'You & Who' series but whereas in that range you have a new author for each serial, here you have one man's journey and it's a fun trip.

Pete, you are a hero amongst dads, I salute you sir! ▲

Whovian Dad is available now from Amazon

