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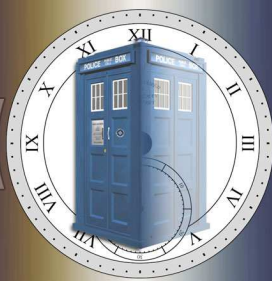
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**DOCTOR
WHO**
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THE SUN MAKERS

by Richard Farrell

Having lampooned television in *Carnival of Monsters*, Robert Holmes turned his biting satire on the tax system in *The Sun Makers*, and it's clear that someone at the Inland Revenue had gotten his back up. Holmes' ironic wit rises above the miniscule budget to make it very a very watchable call for revolution at teatime.



From the moment the Doctor and Leela land on Pluto (now colonised and illuminated by six artificial suns), it's clear that Robert Holmes has it in for the Inland Revenue - he must have had a hard time with one of his tax returns and doesn't miss an opportunity to satirise the system and paint those within it in a negative light. Gatherer Hade is pompous and totally devoid of compassion - he expects Cordo to work round the clock, without sleep if necessary, until his debt is cleared. The authorities release drugs into the air to induce anxiety in the population and fines are payable for being caught in the light of the suns. Then there's the introduction of unpaid overtime (probably mandatory for anyone writing for Doctor Who!), the public holiday of two hours (without pay), all adding up to the grinding oppression of the masses, denied even basic rights like sunlight and enough sleep.

In contrast, the tax collectors have everything and rule by virtue of their comparative wealth (which is, in essence, a plutocracy - hence the outer planet setting). The Gatherer has a desk made of wood, a material Cordo's never even seen but had 'learned about at the preparation centre'. The Collector is revealed to be a shrivelled sadistic creature to whom 'time is money'; he gets his job satisfaction from hearing the screams of his subjects and has no interest in their well-being should their 'branch' (Pluto) have to close. He's finally revealed to be nothing more than poisonous fungi (from the planet Usurius, no less), regarded by even the Doctor as a 'bloodsucking leech' - Holmes giving his spleen a good old vent at the conclusion of Episode Four.

The workers, like Cordo, have never considered where their taxes go and the Doctor and Leela are

the catalyst for changing their perception, encouraging them to grasp the view from above. The rebels with whom the Doctor, Leela and Cordo meet up don't work - they steal and if necessary, kill to survive. Initially they are unable to focus their energy towards a common goal, arguing and fighting amongst themselves. It is the Doctor and Leela, no doubt doing the work of Marx, who unite them and focus their energies to work for their common good.

Holmes' usual quickfire wit abounds in the story and keeps a rather thin plot bubbling along. For example when the rebels demand that the Doctor withdraws some money for them: 'Suppose I refuse to go?'; 'You die'; 'It was just a passing thought'. The writer paraphrases Marx (Mandrell: 'What have we got to lose?' Doctor: 'Only your claims') and even drops in some great ironic lines for Tom, such as when he's threatened with hot irons by Mandrell; 'That sort of subtle approach is always more effective than crude violence'. Then there's Leela's 'Perhaps everyone runs from the tax-man' (no doubt via corridor P45) and the Doctor's solution to Cordo's predicament - 'All you need is a wily accountant'.



It's very prescient that Holmes depicts the authorities tracking people on CCTV then, in the case of the Doctor, trumping up charges such as economic subversion and a history of violence. Not a bad prediction for a writer satirising the then-present day. Holmes' thrust is neatly summed up in the Doctor's words - 'Don't you think commercial imperialism is as bad

as military conquest?' - businessmen and global corporations invading territories and oppressing populations in a similar way. Holmes again uses the medium of television as a means of disseminating untruths; the Doctor fixes the CCTV so that the Gatherer sees images of him pacing up and down the same corridor when in fact he's off fermenting an uprising. The revolution is announced on television before it has actually occurred, in the hope of persuading the workers to side with the rebels' cause. Cordo, despite actually being one of the rebels, just believes what he hears over the tannoy without thinking about it first. Later on, the revolution becomes violent - Gatherer Hade is thrown off the building by the rebelling workers - the choice momentarily appears to be between Hade's oppression and their own mob rule, which in reality is no sort of choice. Once the system is overthrown, the Doctor clears off (as he did in Holmes' *The Krotons*), leaving Cordo, Mandrell and company to make their own decisions, now no longer work units but people. Having removed *The Company* from Megropolis One, the workers will now have to consider who will get the profit, a fact they have never previously addressed. Leela is as usual up for a bit of revolution, urging Mandrell and his people to 'rise up and slaughter their oppressors'. Initially it's only Cordo who will help, so she goads Mandrell to channel his aggression into something more useful ('prove you have a



heart as big as your mouth') and to work together. The only time she shows fear is when she's affected by the anxiety-inducing agent pumped into the air. She's shown to have enough initiative to mould the rebels into a unit - and taming Mandrell in the process - though she can't escape 70s stereotyping: she drives the hijacked truck backwards and still ends up needing the Doctor to rescue her. The Doctor's constant battle to civilise her continues (Doctor: 'Don't kill him, he hasn't done you any harm'; Leela: 'Then I shall kill him before he does'), with qualified success. The Doctor, meanwhile, is taken to the Correction Centre and ends up in a straitjacket - not before time, some might say.

This being Doctor Who, there's no point looking too closely at the science because it doesn't bear scrutiny: Pluto has a suitable atmosphere and gravity with six artificial suns to illuminate and heat it. Right... But we're not on Pluto for a science lesson. The science is eschewed in favour of some very sharp satire, witty wordplay and a thinly disguised call to revolution thrown in for any teatime viewers who should choose to pick it up.

It's difficult to imagine the stifling limitations put on one's imagination by a dwindling budget and spiralling inflation, but a decent director will invent out of pure necessity. There is a nice shot on the rooftop where Pennant Roberts favours Leela's knife in the foreground, suggesting perhaps that violence will not be far away. We just have to ignore the fact it looks like a multi-story car park. The cast have more life in them than usual but are condemned to bumble around with some very unconvincing sets and props. The design appears to be an attempt to pay homage to Metropolis which ends up resembling a Fisher Price Activity Centre with a Mayan twist. The guns just look like blocks of wood so if it's verisimilitude you're after, you won't find it here. And there's something about hair in Doctor Who - as in nobody bothers about it; so 70's Who has characters with 70's hairstyles, 80's Who ditto and so on. A hell of a lot of suspension of disbelief is required to get past the sideburns never mind the instrumentation which looks like it was borrowed from a playgroup.

But as usual with Holmes' Doctor Who, it's the writing that rewards, underpinned by strong performances. The writer's anger is the catalyst for some sharp dialogue and biting satire. It offers little in the way of realistic alternatives but is laced with enough irony and wit to make it eminently watchable.

END

THE DAVISON YEARS

A MADMAN WITH A (TELE) BOX

by **Hayden Gribble**

Moving swiftly on following the events of Logopolis, Hayden Gribble's quest to watch every Doctor Who story from the start sees him journey into the Fifth Doctor's adventures, where every part of deep space has a touch of the eighties about it...

Peter Davison was, for me, the first proper incarnation that I saw. Okay, that's a bit of a lie, because my first exposure came with the TV Movie in 1996 and I had met two Doctor's before him, but nonetheless, the Fifth Doctor was the first Doctor that I actually saw in a proper story. That summer, I was brought Snakedance as a gift, to watch as I recovered from an operation. Looking back now, it was those four episodes of psychological intrigue and the mystery of the Mara that made me want to complete the whole collection of Peter Davison on VHS. So, in a way, it's his fault that you're reading this article now, so blame him!

What I loved about re-watching the Fifth Doctor's adventures was the memories of those clunky old tapes from the nineties. The feeling of adrenaline in that final episode of Earthshock, the excitement of seeing an older version of the Brigadier in Mawdryn Undead and the sadness of Tegan's goodbye in Resurrection Of The Daleks. It had me back in the mindset of my ten-year old self and that feeling of nostalgia reminded me of a time when I was the only boy at school who knew what Doctor Who was.

From the tranquil planet of Castrovalva to a trip to Amsterdam and the return of many an old enemy to the dangerous world of Androzani Minor, the Fifth Doctor was a gentle Time Lord in an ever increasingly violent universe. He fought with his companions, saw countless lives destroyed before his eyes and all the while looked as though all he wanted was to hit a six at Lords, the Doctor was at an odds with the galaxy he has saved so many times. He was so much better than those he fought and he knew it, yet he continued to fight on, in the end saving his friend at the expense of his own life. But before all of that, let's have a look at his adventures...

The Peter Davison Years 1981-1984

622 Episodes in and Doctor Who celebrates its twentieth anniversary, but in all the partying and nostalgia, it loses touch with reality. Doctor Who was losing pace with the rest of eighties television. It still finds time though, to create some of the most unique stories the show has ever produced...

There are many things I love about the Davison years. For the very first time, the Doctor was young, not too many years older than the companions he travelled with which changed the whole dynamic of the relationships within the TARDIS. His stories become more violent, with more at stake for everybody concerned. For the first time in donkeys' years a companion actually loses his life

and the stakes and body counts become higher than ever before. The rug is pulled from beneath your feet many a time and the universe begins to have become darker than before.

When Adric dies in Earthshock, the Doctor is partly to blame. In the past, no matter how deadly they're travels become, the TARDIS crew always seem to waltz away with their lives but this time and for the first in a very long period, he fails. It also allows other terrible things to start happening to the Time Travellers on a more frequent basis. Tegan's procession under the influence of the Mara and Nyssa's contraction of the deadly Lazar's disease in Terminus, not to mention having a companion who's blackmailed into trying to kill him, the Doctor's life is threatened more and more as the stories go along. In contrast, this Doctor comes across as quite a gentle Gallifreyan.

I thought it would be difficult to continue my quest after the tower of Fourth Doctor stories there were, yet within a few minutes of his opening story, Peter Davison helps create a brand new Doctor to look up to again, to share a galaxy of adventures with and to delight the audience all over again. He is the latest in this chronological blockbuster we call Doctor Who. It is Davison and his fellow regulars efforts that make me look past the rushed scripts, the effects and monsters that didn't quite work out (urgh...The Myrka *face palm!*) and those clever clogs behind the scenes who managed to get the shows finished on time. None of this comes across in the finished product (with the odd exception, granted) and it's an era I'd happily watch and revisit again and again.



Peter Davison's skill as an actor breathes new life into the Doctor; at a time when we had just had the longest serving actor to play the part, the character of the Doctor is refreshed.

The era was also handed the boost of the show's biggest anniversary to date occurring in the middle of it.

Twenty years in and it looked as though Doctor Who was in safe hands. A good Doctor, a solid TARDIS crew and stories that on the whole seemed to be improving season by season. How sad it is that while we fans were revelling in the celebrations, Davison was planning to bow out and they were already looking at ways to take our favourite Time Lord of our TV screens. With Doctor Who becoming more and more action packed and violent, it looked as though the excuse the Beeb was looking for was about to rear its head.

As Doctor Number five lied dying on the TARDIS floor, saving his new friend's life and thus redeeming himself for not saving Adric's years earlier, another Doctor was waiting in the wings and Michael Grade's chopping knife was being sharpened...

Doctor Who became more violent...

No surprises that this be one of the main observations I made. The contrast with Davison's initially soft and vulnerable incarnation is that the body count begins to climb like the Saturn V towards the moon. He and his companions are forever walking into situations that already have the stench of death hanging in the air. Some stories feature a poor extra being killed off in the first scene of the whole story, even a whole ensemble in both The Visitation or Resurrection of the Daleks and Mawdryn Undead's main narrative includes a race whose main aim is to die.

I noticed that as his Doctor evolved, Davison also begins to get more hands on and seems to have had enough. He is exceptionally kick-ass in parts of Warriors of the Deep and even points a gun to the head of Davros at one point. He seems to join in with the physical side of things, even if none of his companions ever do. In the past there had been a strong male companion to do the dirty work for the Doctor, but Adric and Turlough were never meant to be physical, it wasn't in they're characters. And although the scripts became better in Season 21, it seems to be the main stumbling block that Doctor Who would have up against it, and spark its classic series downfall.



The Five Doctors is a flawed yet brilliant jewel in the shows crown...

When I was in my teens The Five Doctors was the first story that I bought on DVD. It was one of only two stories that my youngest sister wanted to borrow over and over again (Remembrance of the Daleks was the other) and I had to frequently go and fetch it back out of her room.

I love The Five Doctors. It's Doctor Who at its backslapping best and remains to this day the biggest on-screen celebration we have seen - well, until next year that is. It is unashamedly smug yet it's exciting to see so many familiar friends and foes from the past. Even though I had seen it many times before I still couldn't wait to see it again. My personal highlight is the way that Patrick Troughton and Nicholas Courtney fit straight back into their respective roles and that scene when they are being menaced by the Yeti always makes me chuckle. But another highlight is how well Peter Davison holds his own in the same court of his

predecessors. Although he is the youngest, he somehow seems older than the rest, more experienced in the ways of the universe and cements his place as a truly great Doctor. Oh to watch it when it first went out and look forward to that now legendary Longleat convention. I'm expecting something equally a brilliant next year that's for sure!

Yes it is a shame that Tom Baker chose not to take part and that William Hartnell was no longer with us. The story is a difficult one with a shopping list of characters and references to other stories to include but within lays one of the most undeniably delightful stories in the show's long history.

Davison's era has aged badly but certain stories are stone-wall classics...

What I'm saying here is, you take the show out of the eighties but you can't take the eighties out of the show. That's the problem with TV programmes that have been set in a specific time is they look very much like the period they were made in. The big hitters of the decade, like Dallas and Eastenders reflect that period, but with Doctor Who, no matter how far into the past of future you were, the supporting cast look as though they have come straight from a Duran Duran gig.

The same problem befalls the Pertwee era and it isn't a criticism as those making it arguably couldn't help injecting a bit of the present day into the show. Some of the incidental music, especially the electronic stuff from early in the Davison era, may have sounded impressive at a time when that stuff was brand new, but it doesn't mean that the stories suffer for it, well not most of the time.

In his three year spell, the Fifth Doctor's tenure can boast some of the best examples of eighties Who. I could watch Kinda, Earthshock, Snakedance, Enlightenment, The Five Doctors, Frontios and The Caves of Androzani until the cows come home. They belong to the years they were created in and possibly would not have the same impact if they had been made today or ten years previously to their original transmissions.

I rather enjoyed Time-Flight...

I may not make myself popular with that heading, but I honestly do not think that Time-Flight should be the worst Fifth Doctor story. There's too much going for it. Granted, it does follow perhaps the best eighties story of them all, and yes, it does lack the impact of a season finale, even if it does include the surprise, temporary departure of Tegan.

I found it a fun romp in space and the inclusion of the disappearing Concorde's in the plot made it interesting. Yes it does sag and flop here and there, but it does include the Master's most convincing disguise thus far and I think some corners of fandom should leave it alone. Okay so it's not a classic, but I still don't understand why it is hated so much.

The Fifth Doctor's time ends, just as it begins to get really exciting...

I really like the Fifth Doctor. He's a hero right to the last, but I do wish he had a longer run with only twenty stories to choose from and three years of adventures. It isn't a bad run, but Davison's Doctor for me only starts to really come to life in his last season. He just seems a bit more interesting and having an established team of companions with him helps.



There is a bit right at the beginning of The Caves of Androzani when they have just arrived on Androzani Minor and Peri asks the Doctor if they can go yet. When the Doctor replies 'Not yet' I think to myself 'Oh no, theres no escape now' and of course he goes on to meet his end on that violent planet. Of course, had I of got my own way and The Doctor and Peri would have left and not fallen into the politics and imminent death of the small planet, then the event of perhaps the greatest Doctor Who story of all would never have happened and The Twin Dilemma would have starred a very different Doctor, undiminished by a difficult regeneration. Now that would have been interesting.



Desert Island Story...

For all my gurning of The Five Doctors earlier it would have to be my Desert Island Story. It is essentially the Greatest Hits of Doctor Who (with the Raston Robot being the brilliant extra track) and Tom Baker's absence maybe like leaving 'Stairway To Heaven' off the track list but at least he is there in some form. Anthony Ainley's portrayal of The Master is also at its strongest, for once being less of a pantomime

villain and more the baddie we all knew he could be. It's brilliant.

Room 101 Story...

Arc of Infinity was terrible. I'm not quite sure why, but it just doesn't work. The return of Omega, Tegan and Gallifrey should make an interesting and entertaining story but it still comes across as dull and laborious. Even a trip to Amsterdam failed to pep it up. Only the final fifteen minutes are salvageable, the moment when Omega copies the Doctor's biological imprint to the end is fantastic, but that's it. Sorry Arc of Infinity, into the sin bin with you!

INTERVIEW

YOU AND WHO — JR SOUTHALL

by Ian Wheeler

*JR Southall compiled and edited the book **You and Who**, a collection of essays about Doctor Who in its many forms. Now he's come up with two volumes which feature nostalgic pieces about every episode of Doctor Who ever made. Ian Wheeler caught up with him...*

You describe yourself on Twitter as 'Author, scriptwriter, columnist, editor, podcaster, step-father, cat-lover, idiot.' How did you get into writing and editing?

Haha, that was kind of tongue-in-cheek, that Twitter thing. It's more of a joke about the fact that I seem to just let myself get into whatever the next project is, regardless. Although there are one or two projects on the boil... But you never know what's going to happen next. No, the thing is, I only joined the internet four years or so ago, sometime in 2008. And one of the first things I did was join lots of forums and see what people were saying about Doctor Who. And what I couldn't believe was how much moaning about it there was! So I'd post these long replies to people's grumbles and after a while, I thought, I should type these up properly as essays – so that's what I did. And people seemed to like them. I mean, prior to joining the internet, I'd written things before – stories and such, just on a manual typewriter. So I knew I could write, as it were. But I'd never written anything that a stranger had read before, and that was kind of a validation. It was almost like a permission to continue. It was because of one of those essays – on Gallifrey Base – that the editor of Starburst took me on.

In a nutshell, what is the appeal of Doctor Who for you?

You know, that's so hard to pin down, isn't it? I think personally, one reason is the sort of unlimited ambition of the series. It's not so much that it can do things other series can't, but that it does. We all know that the format doesn't have any boundaries, but even so, there has to be some kind of a template – the monster-of-the-week thing, for example. And Doctor Who – when it's good, and often even when it isn't – pushes at that template too. It's almost like a child that doesn't have any facility for self-editing, it just keeps trying new things, or new ways to do the same things. And then there's the longevity, the number of different writers and production teams who've taken charge. I think almost more interesting than the stories they tell, are the people who've chosen – or been chosen – to use this weird crazy-paving of a series as a kind of forum for their own interests. Look at Steven Moffat for example; he's basically taken the sort of over-involved storytelling of Coupling and reproduced a version of it in the Doctor Who world. It's completely insane and doesn't always make sense, but boy is it fun to watch. And fascinating to watch and try and figure out how and why, too. The appeal is on so many levels; that's the thing.

What other programmes do you like, sci-fi or otherwise?

'Otherwise,' to be honest! It's odd, having grown up as a massive Doctor Who fan that I'm not really 'into' much other sci-fi. I mean, I have an interest, but my favourite other programmes are things like Inspector Morse, and The West Wing. Oh and Rome, I really loved that! A shame it got cancelled after the second series, but sometimes it can be good that things are finite. I guess it feels like it's 'complete.' I'm a huge Stanley Kubrick fan as well, and of course he did 2001 and A Clockwork Orange, but the films of his that I really love are Paths of Glory and Barry Lyndon. My other big thing, having also been a huge John Wyndham fan as a kid – and I suppose this comes under sci-fi – is post-apocalyptic stuff, things like The Day of the Triffids, of course, but also things like No Blade of Grass. And the sci-fi element is probably the least important element with things like that, it's really about the people, about how they cope. My absolute other favourite TV series was always Survivors, and that was almost a soap opera about farming. I mean, 'extreme farming,' as it were. But it was always about the characters first and foremost.

How did the first You and Who book come about?

I was reading the things that people were writing about Doctor Who on various internet forums, and every now and then I'd come across a post that made me think about the series in a new way, or that was so well-written it made me see exactly what the person who'd written it was thinking – and I just thought to myself, someone should collect these together and make a book out of them. Because on a forum, they tend to sink to the bottom of the thread and get forgotten about. But then, logically, it seemed like that would probably be a nightmare, trying to get in touch with all these people and getting their permission – not to mention the fact that I didn't know how these forums worked and what the copyright implications might be. Like I said, I only joined the internet in 2008 so I was still totally new to all these things! But it seemed like such an obvious idea to try and do something like that, so being either too brave or too stupid not to try it myself, I started a few threads of my own advertising the idea of putting a book together of this kind of writing, and waited to see what would happen. And of course, one of the first things that happened was that people got suspicious, but I was promising any profits to charity and I was always clear about the fact that I was only intending to self-publish the book, so it wasn't going to be a 'professional' affair. And then within 24 hours, that legend that is Babelcolour had made a submission, and Tim Hirst got in touch and was talking about helping to publish the book. So that kind of felt like validation in a way, that other people were seeing that it was a good idea too.

What's been the most rewarding thing and the most frustrating thing about compiling the two new volumes? Did any of the submissions genuinely surprise you or make you look at a story in a totally different light?

Always, all the time. Actually, doing this second one, where we go through all the stories – every single one of them – and try and find reasons why they've connected with people, even things like Timelash, the really surprising thing has been that even stories I don't especially like have been bringing out an emotional response, just from reading

what people have had to say. Early on, one of the essays I got for the first book was one by Michael Russell, and he was talking about his first husband and watching The King's Demons on basically what turned out to be the day that his first husband died – or as near as dammit. And that was a big moment, seeing how Doctor Who has got into our lives to such an extent that we can measure those lives out by the stories. That was a big influence, a huge influence, on making me want to do the second book the way I did, knowing that the writing had the potential to be that powerful. I was hoping there'd be a lot more of that in the second book – not that specifically, God that would be unreadable! – but stories that made people connect with the series in that sort of way. And by and large, people have understood that, and that really is what the second book has become. It's astonishing. A guy called Tony Green as well, he wrote very much the same kind of thing. He wrote two essays for the first book and I saved one of them, knowing that if I possibly could I'd do this second book like this, and knowing this essay would be perfect for it. As for frustrating? Honestly, nothing, really. It's been an absolute joy, genuinely. When you read the book you'll see. You won't be able to keep a dry eye, not because it's sad – although it does have its moments – but because you'll recognise so many things and it'll take you back to your own past. It's like bottled nostalgia.

Have you any ideas for future volumes?

I'm not doing any more. I've handed it over to Chris Bryant, who came in and edited the second volume of this second book. I'd always planned to do three – hoped to do three, if things went well – before maybe letting somebody else take it on, and this 'every story' volume was going to be the third book, my last one. But because of the first thing, the first two books kind of got merged together, and then we were in the anniversary year and if this third book was to happen, it had to happen now. So in the end I only got to do two! But because this book got split into two volumes, it feels like I achieved what I wanted to and got three books out – albeit only two with my name on, of course. But there will be more, I'm pretty sure. I know Chris is eager to do one by himself and use his own ideas, and I think Miwk are happy for that to happen, they seem to be. Touch wood! I'm not sure what the format might be but I can't see it going back to being as loose as the first book. But then, that's one of the great things about this format, there's lots of scope to change it, as long as it keeps that basic idea of 'You' and 'Who'. And I'll always be around for advice, if Chris needs any – although I'm sure he won't. He said the other day he feels like Patrick Troughton. I guess that means I've gone out to pasture.

It seems to me you've created a totally new way of publishing Doctor Who books which is very democratic (lots of people get to contribute, some famous, many unknown) and yet still results in something of great quality. Do you think this could be a model for how books of this kind are compiled in the future?

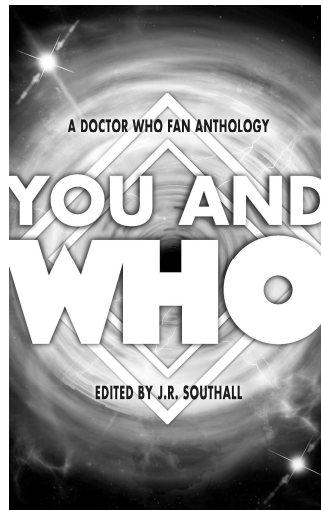
It's happening already, to a degree. I was told that when I first started You and Who, it was a kind of unique idea. Not unique, probably, but unusual. But by the time that first book got published – you know, the problems that the initial publisher had are well-catalogued, but thankfully Miwk stepped in – by the time the first one came out there were

other books, like Behind the Sofa and Outside In, that were kind of coming from the same place. But I still think there's something a bit different about the way in which You and Who is crowd-sourced, like an open invitation. You run the risk of people sending in rubbish, of course, but thankfully that hasn't happened. There were two essays I had to lose, but on both occasions only because they weren't appropriate, they were both very well written. People seem to understand that if it's going to be in a book, it had better be their best work – it's going to live 'forever,' after all – so you invariably get really good stuff

You're currently writing for the revamped Starburst magazine - to what do you attribute the title's long-running success?

That's a tricky one! I used to buy Starburst when I was a kid, you know – even though I didn't really have that much interest in the films it was talking about. But I just used to love the writing. Maybe that's it; maybe it's because, when I pick up other genre magazines, I never seem to read them and end up thinking I'd learned anything. I don't mean facts, dates and such, I mean about the way people think and the reasons why they do the things they do. One of the things about Starburst is, I'll read what the other writers have to say and every now and again I'll stop and go, 'Oh yeah,' like I've found something I'd never thought about before. It doesn't seem to pander to anyone, it seems quite happy to be nerdy and doesn't seem to pander to any kind of mainstream. I think it's always had that, although the quality did dip I think, somewhere in the middle there. But yeah, I wake up and I think to myself, 'That magazine you used to buy when you were a kid...?' And I can't quite equate that I'm writing for it now.

JR, thank you!



The two new books, which feature contributions from a number of people associated with DWAS, past and present, can be ordered at www.miwkpublishing.com. Proceeds go to Children in Need.

THE ROBOTS OF MANCHESTER

by Matthew Charlton

Reviewer Matthew Charlton checks out to see if a universe without the Doctor really does bear thinking about.

Robots of Death: The Stage Play

Manchester saw the launch of the first Greater Manchester Fringe – a 31 day festival of art, comedy, drama, dance and live theatre across the city in July. Spearheaded by award-winning Manchester pub The Lass O'Gowrie (responsible for productions of Halo Jones, Coronation Street: 1968, Porridge and an adaptation of Midnight amongst others), the basement club of Fab Café was transformed as a stage adaptation of "The Robots of Death" breathed new life into a classic Who story.

This adaptation, specially reworked and enhanced by Alan Stevens to switch the Doctor and Leela for devious assassin Kaston Iago and his long-suffering accomplice Elska Bayles (from Magic Bullet's Kaldor City series), successfully wove in material from Chris Boucher's original rehearsal scripts as well as new plot elements. Most of you reading this will know how the plot goes, but there were some changes to keep ardent fans on their toes, and for many attending who weren't so familiar with the source material, the unmasking of the villain caused many a shocked gasp.

Première at the start of the Fringe festival, Paul Darrow and Tracy Russell reprised their roles as Iago and Bayles for one electrifying performance only. Darrow brought his trademark swagger and style to Iago. The so-called "Darrow Day" gave attendees a truly unique, and unforgettable experience – and a perfect way to preview the two plays before the full cast run later that month.

With a minimalistic set (Fab's Star Trek 'bridge' DJ booth doubling up as the Storm Miner's bridge) in a venue that is clearly not used to staging drama, it was a roaring success for Doctor Who/Blake's 7 fans and general punters alike. Fast-paced with drama and humour and benefiting from tight direction, Robots of Death never really let up until the apocalyptic finale.

Marlon Solomon and Kate Millest (opposite) shone as Iago and Bayles. With clear chemistry between the two, Solomon's steely Iago with his acerbic one-liners was only softened up when partnered with the diminutive and charming D84 whilst Millest's Bayles was a convincing tour de force of energy and gave us girl power when working with Toos and Uvanov.

An exceptional supporting ensemble cast rounded out the production, with many of the early victims doubling up later in the play as robots. Interestingly, the bridge crew was all-female, even if by accident rather than design. Leni Murphy was the stand-out amongst a range of impressive young actresses, providing impeccable comic timing as the bemused Pilot Toos. Jessica Hallows effortlessly



stepped into Russell Hunter's shoes with an impressive and commanding presence as Uvanov. Will Jude Hutchby was pitch-perfect as the voice of the robots with his silky tones almost apologetic for the mayhem that the Vocs caused. Whilst there might have been the temptation to camp everything up – a more tongue in cheek approach was taken by the cast, which the audiences clearly enjoyed.

Costumes and props looked the part with the iconic robots (complete with masks as sculpted by Terry Cooper) gracefully striding amongst the audience. With a large cast to manage and demanding staging requirements, director Kerry Ely and her team have achieved what many would have thought impossible in this fine re-creation of a classic – another runaway success for Lass O'Gowrie Productions.

Storm Mine: The Stage Play

Storm Mine picks up eighteen months after Robots of Death. Bayles and Iago find themselves stranded on a nearly deserted Storm Mine. With Kaldor City quarantined, will Iago and Bayles witness the death of their world – or the beginning of a new one?

Marlon Solomon's Iago is now a ghostly figure in Bayles' subconscious. Like a little devil on her shoulder, his vengeful and unhinged nature came to the fore in a chilling performance. His waspish one-liners are even more venomous than before. Solomon expertly turned Iago around in a thought-provoking performance of the character.



Kate Millest continued to impress as Bayles. In Robots of Death, she was the one in control, almost

in her element. Here, Millest got the chance to show us her more vulnerable side as she is lost and alone. Despite wanting to make the best of her situation and try and solve the puzzle that is plaguing the Storm Mine, she is ground down by those around her. Energetic and dynamic, Millest is a very impressive and precise young actor, and surely has a strong future ahead of her.

Sean Mason played the deliciously lecherous Chief Mover who circled around a clearly uncomfortable Blayes adding another layer to the trap she found herself in. In the inverse of Robots of Death, the Storm Mine had an all-male crew; the only female image (other than Blayes) is V23.



I n d e e d , Morag Peacock's V23 was a fine creation and a wonderful performance. She nailed the servile robot voice down, but also managed to drip feed emotion into her performance – especially in her disturbing monologue about the recurring dream she had. V23 may hold the key to the whole plot,

and her change and transformation was fascinating to watch as her 'feelings' threatened to tear her apart.

Benjamin Patterson rounded off the cast as the Commander. Like a lost Captain Ahab, he is reduced to commanding the Mine as it circles round and round in its eternal figure of eight. Clearly a man in risk of losing his faculties, his permanently perplexed nature was brilliantly played by Patterson.

Storm Mine is not a play to shy away from making the audience work to consider its meaning. The recurring motif that "we're all in this together" could have so many interpretations – is it the gestalt's collective consciousness – or are all the crew of the Storm Mine just figments of Blayes' dying mind? There is no doubt that Storm Mine is a complex piece that functions on many different levels. Indeed, the sheer scale and ambition of the play has got to be respected, however, so should the efforts that Director Sam Al-Hamdani and his cast have gone to in order to bring it to the stage, and perhaps against the odds, it worked. There was much heated discussion after every performance as audiences deciphered the clues within.

Storm Mine has been beautifully crafted and really challenges you to think about what you have seen. At times so specific but yet so vague it is an intense

piece that each person can come away from with their own interpretation of what has, or might not have, happened which is equally as valid as the next persons – not much fiction, let alone theatre can do that nowadays. I would wholeheartedly love to see further adventures with Solomon and Millest who have given us a strong alternate take on Iago and Blayes. Kaldor City was always one of the more enjoyably consistent spin-offs from Doctor Who; thanks to the Fringe I had the chance to see one of its most masterful chapters live.

You can visit Matthew's blog online at <http://thefictionstroker.wordpress.com>

Kaldor City CDs are available with a special offer for DWAS members! Individual CDs, including an autograph, will cost only £10, postage included, while the full series of six CDs (all autographed) will cost only £50, postage included (UK addresses). Autographs are: Occam's Razor- Peter Miles, Death's Head- Scott Fredericks, Hidden Persuaders- Brian Croucher, Taren Capel- Paul Darrow, Checkmate- David Collings, and Storm Mine- Gregory de Polnay.

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END

REMEMBERING LONGLEAT AND BLACKPOOL

by Ian Wheeler

I didn't attend the great Longleat celebration of 1983 (it was just too far away from my home in Cumbria) but I did visit the exhibition itself in the summer of 1987. Sylvester McCoy had just been announced as the new Doctor and, if I recall correctly, as my father drove us to Longleat I read in the paper that Doctor Who was going to be shown opposite Coronation Street! I wondered to myself whether our favourite show would be able to hold its own against the mighty soap opera...

When we arrived at Longleat there were various signs directing us to the exhibition and then I went around a corner and was confronted by the TARDIS with the Dominic Glynn theme tune blaring out for all to hear! The Keff McCulloch version was still under wraps at this point.

The first thing I saw when I went in the exhibition was the huge model of the space station from The Trial of a Time Lord season. And what an amazing model it was with so much detail to look at and enjoy. Next, there was a button you could push (or a handle to turn, I can't remember which!) to make a model of the TARDIS appear!

As I walked through the gloomy corridors, I was amazed to see Sil, Vervoids and many other characters I had seen on television. There was a strong bias towards Season 23 as it was the most recent season to be shown at that point.

It all ended in the TARDIS control room where a picture of Sylvester's face had recently been added to appear alongside the other Doctors on the TARDIS roundels

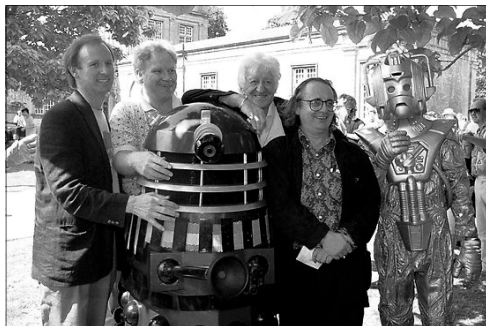
I then went round to the Doctor Who shop, run by two wonderful old ladies, and it really was a wonderland for a 14 year old fan like me. I stocked up on BBC postcards, back issues of DWM and laminated Andrew Skilleter art prints.

Later of course, Longleat would be the location of Paul McGann's publicity shots when he became the 8th Doctor in 1996 and the exhibition was also sadly the scene of a fire. Foolishly, Longleat closed the exhibition not too long before Doctor Who came back and the last I saw of the old exhibition building they were keeping bats in it!

As for Blackpool, I didn't visit the Doctor Who exhibition there in its 70s/80's heyday but I did go there when it re-opened in 2004. A local coach firm was doing a day trip to Blackpool so it seemed like a good opportunity to go. The exhibition looked a bit tatty because a lot of the props and displays had been used at exhibitions in London, Wales and Longleat and they were now a bit worse for wear. But it was certainly as fine a selection of rarities as you are ever likely to see. The console room was there again with a tribute to producer John Nathan-Turner who had died a year or two before. There

were Daleks, Cybermen, Davros, a Tetrax, the Nemesis statue and much, much more. Evan Bessie was there (or rather its replica McGuinty). The exhibition had quite a large floor space so there really was a lot to look at. Again, there was a shop and Dapol figures seemed to be the order of the day.

I have happy memories of both these exhibitions - both very different but both paying tribute to the show we all love in their own way!



Four Doctors and friends at one of the many Longleat days in the 1990s



The way in/out, depending when you visited!



Longleat House

THE MATRIX LAVA LAMP

THE TIME MEDDLER

by Tom Henry and Bell Tolley

A Liar's Guide to Doctor Who:
Tagline: Too much monk-y business!

Plot

Doctor Who, Stephen and Vicki land in Medieval England just before the arrival of the Normans. After carefully explaining to Vicki the events leading up to the Battle of Hastings, Doctor Who suggests they have a look round the nearest Anglo Saxon village. Clearly, something is up. The Anglo Saxon peasants they meet are driving around in Minis, using plastic hairdryers and rocking out to the sounds of John Smith and the Common Men, the sixties' most popular beat combo. After carefully explaining that medieval peasants did not have such things, Doctor Who suggests they go back to the TARDIS and debate who could be responsible for such a state of affairs. Doctor Who immediately suspects the Meddling Monk, one of his one people who gets his kicks dressing up as a monk and dicking about with the space time continuum. Doctor Who is furious. It is just one step from these people having pop music and hairdryers to them having atomic weapons. After carefully explaining what atomic weapons are, a basic outline of the science behind them, Doctor Who decides to track down the Meddling Monk and decides to give him a jolly good smacked bottom.



The Meddling Monk is relaxing in his nice little cosy flat with the telly on, the kettle on the boil and a nice medieval peasant lady doing the Hoovering for him. He rubs his hands with glee at the thought of the chaos that's going to be unleashed as soon as the Normans get there.

Doctor Who and his friends have a nice wander round the village looking for the Meddling Monk. They don't find him, but they make friends with a nice lady called Edith who gives them buttered rolls and a lot of mead. Doctor Who gets a bit merry and giggly on the mead and has to go into the lady's cowshed for a lie down, that goes on for three days. Time Lord hangovers go on a long time. Bored, Vicki and Stephen go for a walk, when they hear a Hoover. 'An anachronism! It must be the monk!' cries Stephen excitedly. After carefully explaining what an anachronism is, they knock on the door. The Hoovering lady shows them in. Stephen and Vicki question the monk about what he's up to. The

monk denies doing anything wrong or abnormal and throws them out, claiming that he has to do important monk-y things. Behind closed doors he is in a panic. Those two aren't medieval peasants. Medieval peasants do not know what an anachronism is. Doctor Who must have told them.

Back at the cottage, Doctor Who is making Edith a new spinning wheel to make up for vomiting on her best (and indeed, only) blanket. He offered to milk the cows, but cow-milking is no job for a man with a hangerover and Edith isn't willing to risk her best (and indeed, only) bucket. Doctor Who and Edith have a pleasant chat about the surrounding countryside and the various birds, trees and wild flowers that can be seen in the area. Once Doctor Who starts to feel a bit better Edith offers him some more of her rolls and they have a nice discussion about baking. Doctor Who has pretty much forgotten about Stephen and Vicki until they come bounding through the door and announcing that they have found the Meddling Monk. Doctor Who deduces that if he's got there then he must have a TARDIS. Doctor Who tells Stephen and Vicki to dress up as invading Normans to distract the monk. There's only two of them but if they make enough noise and shout in convincing enough French accents it should do the trick. Doctor Who decides he'll have a scout round for where the Monk might have parked his TARDIS.

Doctor Who wanders round the local graveyard until he comes to an unusually large grave with a door in it. Graves aren't meant to have doors. Doctor Who giggles to himself and wanders off to see whether his new friend Edith knows a good carpenter, preferably one who can carry the monk's TARDIS away single-handed.



The Meddling Monk hears some loud and unconvincingly French shouting outside, ruining his enjoyment of 'I Love Lucy'. He leans out of the window to complain about the noise and sees that it's those two anachronisms from earlier. He gets his henchmen (the Hoovering lady and her son Bernie) to grab them and drag them inside. Stephen gives the meddling monk a b*locking for meddling in human history. Stephen might not have many personality traits, but one of them is definitely the ability to deliver b*lockings. The Monk explains that he doesn't actually want to cause trouble; he's just interested in the possible effects of dicking about with history. He doesn't want to kill anybody, though he's got to admit it would be pretty funny if he did.

Doctor Who, Edith and her carpenter friend set about their work. Doctor Who asks Edith, just

speaking hypothetically, how she feels about the thought of her country being invaded tomorrow and her whole way of life changing. Edith goes quiet and thoughtful for a while. Doctor Who asks her, again hypothetically, if what they are doing now will actually enable the invasion to go ahead, destroying life as Edith knows it, just because to do otherwise would allow the monk to interfere with the lives of millions of people who have not been born yet. Edith remains quiet and thoughtful. Doctor Who tells Edith that there are no easy answers in all this, and compliments her on her rolls again. Stephen Taylor punches the Monk's henchman in the face and he and Vicki run out. The monk's hovering lady has overheard their conversation from earlier. She goes to her employer. Does he really not care if everyone she knows is killed? He always seemed like such a nice, jolly monk. Now he seems like a cold-blooded maniac who destroys lives just because he's bored. She walks out of his employ, saying that she will not operate the magic floor-sucking demon any more. The monk is put off at the thought of having to do his own housework and decides to go back to his TARDIS, which he finds on his return has been turned into a small and cramped wooden replica.



Production

The production team were facing numerous problems by the time of *The Time Meddler*. 'Actually it was mainly just the usual problem,' said Verity Lambert in an interview with Derek Deadman in *Political Memorabilia Collector*. 'We had no money, but as there'd just been an expensive story [*The Chase*] by that point we had even less than no money. So we needed to do something that could be set mainly in an empty field, and that we could do with about four people. We were kicking around ideas, a story set entirely in a lift was on, and at one point I think we were thinking of doing a Doctor Who story set entirely in the room we were sitting in at the time we were trying to think of a Doctor Who story, but that would have started a union dispute over who had the right to take a camera inside a BBC script office.'

Anyway, Dennis pointed out that there were fewer people in medieval England so if we did a story set in those days we could do one without needing too many actors.'

Dennis Spooner was roped into writing a historical story, but then disaster struck when he remembered how boring historical stories were. Spooner instantly fell asleep at his desk. Verity Lambert

shook him awake – they only had twelve hours before they were supposed to start filming, he had better get writing. Dennis Spooner had to think of a way of stopping the new story being an elongated Open University lecture aimed at eight year olds. 'I just about managed it,' he said on Derek Deadman's short-lived Sky One chat show. 'I mean I don't want to sound like I'm disparaging the pure historicals'. You need to eat your greens, but you can't just live on them. Anyway I wrote a story about a monk in 1066 and then made him a time traveller. It was before there were other Time Lords in the show but there had to be someone else with a TARDIS out there, it couldn't be just Doctor Who who had one. He probably nicked it from a dealership.'

The story would be the first full-length adventure to feature stripey-jumpered companion Steven Taylor. Peter Purves put in such an impressive performance as Steven that Maureen O'Brien was told to continue playing her character as an annoying child who occasionally forgot that she wasn't meant to be Irish, as the show now had a strong character who could cover up for the Doctor when William Hartnell forgot his lines or needed a contractual three-day lie down.

A scene of Doctor Who getting hammered for no particular reason with a nice Anglo-Saxon housewife was written in to cover this eventuality and the character of a smiley-faced woolly panda was hastily written in, in case the character of Steven didn't work out. Peter Butterworth was brought in to play the monk, having put in impressive comedy performances in the British films *Whoops!*; *Whoops, I'll Try That Again* and *Eek, That's Torn It!*

Did you know?

It's a common misconception that Peter Butterworth was cast in Doctor Who on the strength of his performance in the *Carry On* Films, but *The Time Meddler* actually pre-dates his earliest appearance in the series, in fact the *Carry On* team cast him on the strength of his performance as the Monk, and even considered him for the lead in *Carry on Time-Travelling*, their pastiche of Doctor Who that never made it to the screen due to copyright issues.

To make sure that this story's account of the Battle of Hastings was 100% accurate, Dennis Spooner went to Bayeux Cathedral and Tippedex out any bits of the Bayeux Tapestry that didn't tie in with it.



INTERVIEW

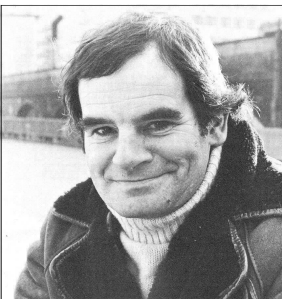
JOHNNY DENNIS

by Ian Wheeler

Ian Wheeler talks to Johnny Dennis who played Murray the coach driver in Delta and the Bannermen

Before we talk about Doctor Who, you've been presenting The Good Old Days at the City Varieties Theatre in Leeds for over two decades. This must be a source of great pride to you - how do you feel about that?

Privileged. I run to the theatre. Everybody loves this theatre because it has a soul. It has a heart. It was built in 1865 and was a number one music hall and I got involved with it towards the end of the television era of The Good Old Days show with Leonard Sachs. I would come up here the odd weekend to be in the show and it was a wonderful experience. The television show ran for thirty years and it was the top BBC show. But the BBC said 'we'll hit that on the head' which is sad because I think it had more in it. And then when we stopped doing the television version 20 years ago we decided to do the stage version. Barney Colehan was the man who produced the show. He was a radio producer from Manchester and then he also went on to do it's a Knockout. He was a legend.



Did you know that Leonard Sachs also appeared in Doctor Who (in Arc of Infinity)?

Did he really? I never knew that. He was a very fine actor. When Leonard didn't want to do it he suggested me. And it's been absolutely wonderful. I have worked with some of the great stars and it's something I look forward to all the time now especially as I've got more input into the show. And it really led me into Doctor Who in a strange way because the producer had seen me in music hall and thought they needed someone a bit like a taxi driver who never stopped talking. I remember going along to the audition at BBC Television Centre and I said 'Well, who's in it?' and they said 'Well, we've got Ken Dodd, Sylvester, Bonnie, and a list of great people and they said 'We've got a little bit of rehearsal in London and then we're going to take you to Barry, Wales to a holiday camp. And the minute we got there, there was a heatwave which was fabulous. We didn't actually stay in the camp - by this time it was closed down. I was the bus driver which was very good casting because I don't drive, but that didn't seem to bother anybody so they found this wonderful old 1950's bus.

Delta and the Bannermen had an amazing cast. Bonnie I knew from when she was nowt but a lass and we worked together again in music hall. Sylvester I'd always been a great fan of because I'd seen him as an actor and I thought he was really dangerous. I like edgy people, he was edgy. And then Stubby Kaye, one of the great Hollywood char-

acter men, who was an absolute delight. Hugh Lloyd, again another television legend, and Don Henderson as the heavy was brilliant. Brian Hibbard,



who sadly passed away last year, had this wonderful Elvis haircut with wonderful sideburns and crepe shoes. We had so much fun. It was very hot. We sat around sunbathing, played a lot of cricket and then off we went and with that team you had to be on your toes because these boys were experts. You had to watch your back because they would steal a scene from you so everybody was elbowing each other out of the way! Sylvester on the other hand played it very quietly and was in the middle of everything. Everybody bounced off him which was very clever because he was a very skilled actor. With that kind of cast the characters shot off the screen. We were staying at this little hotel down the road which was full of commercial travellers, and that was the only place where we could eat and drink. I remember Stubby Kaye going round all the tables doing jokes. If you walked by he said 'I'm working this table!' so he was 'on' all the time. Towards the end of the story there's a 1950s 'rave'. I had the most amazing outfit. It was silk and nylon I think. I had to dance with Bonnie. It was very funny and then we had the wrap party at the end of the shoot in the same ballroom at the holiday camp. I compered it as Murray. Sylvester did his tricks, Stubby did a song and dance and everybody did their bit. It was just wonderful and we wrapped up and we all left. There is a tape of it. The BBC used to give you outtakes as a souvenir. It was one of the happiest televisions I've ever done.



What are your memories of Ken Dodd?

Ken was on a tour and his scenes had to be done quickly. He'd done Shakespeare but he'd never done a television part and he was brilliant. We did

the location at night where he gets shot by Don and I remember this was three o'clock in the morning and I was sitting in his Volvo. The back of the Volvo was just full of tickling sticks and I sat with him for hours and hours and he said 'I'm very nervous,' and I said 'Ken, you've done it all mate.' Anyway he went on and he died brilliantly. He was shot very dramatically and it was an experience working with him.

The story seems to capture the 1950s very well.

It was very clever. A lot of care was taken and I seem to remember there was one outfit they showed me and I said 'Yes, I want that,' and when I put it on the director said 'No way.' It was way over the top. It was a lot of fun to do and I think for a lot of people it was fun to watch. It was so off the wall but that was ok. It's gone on to be of great interest



to people because I get letters all the time. The two things I'm really proud are that I've played the Palladium twice and I've been in Doctor Who. People wait for me at the stage door even now. I find that very touching. Everybody was so good in it. I think it needed somebody like Sylvester to be like a ringmaster and keep it all together. I'm thrilled for him. He's done the fool in King Lear. He's done a massive amount of theatre work. He never stops. I still see Sylvester quite a bit around London.

Some of the newspapers compared it to Hi-de-Hi! Were you aware of the comparisons?

Funnily enough, no. Jimmy Perry who wrote all of that was a great mate. But we weren't aware of that. I think Hi-de-Hi! was a great show

A lot of Doctor Who's are studio-based but Delta was mainly on location wasn't it?

We did nothing in the studio as far as I know. I remember dressing up as this blob. This thing shook about a bit then I morphed into Murray! Filming the bus sequences I just had to sit there and pretend to drive. But then this satellite kind of killed us all. We had a double piece of glass and they swung it straight at the windscreen. They said 'Don't worry,' I said 'Should I be worried?' They said 'Oh no, it will only hit the first piece of glass and nothing else will happen.' We tried to get it right on the first take and they swung this thing. It

went straight through the first sheet of glass, shattered that and then stopped on the second piece which saved everybody's faces and we had all the shots of people screaming in the background. All they were worried about was the coach. They weren't worried about damaging an actor!

What do you remember about the producer John Nathan-Turner?

He was wonderful. It was he who spotted me because he remembered me from the Player's Theatre. He was the residing genius over the whole thing.

I see you've worked with Michael Kilgariff (the Cyber Controller)?

I was his best man. He got married in America. We did a double act together in the halls. He's six foot seven, I'm five foot six. We started originally in the Players Theatre and then went in to management and then we went around the world and played amazing places. He's the big expert of all things music hall.

I believe you appeared in a sequel to The Great Escape?

Yes, The Great Escape II: The Untold Story. Or as I rather unkindly say 'the Last Word'! We shot in the then-Yugoslavia with the Yugoslavian army using real bullets which was interesting! It had the late Christopher Reeve and a host of European actors and big Hollywood stars.

You've been in some major TV shows over the years.

I did a lovely one with John Thaw called Mitch, in which I played his sidekick. He was a journalist, I was a photographer. It didn't take off which was sad. I think he was something special.

Why do you think Doctor Who has captured people's imaginations?

We all watched from behind the sofa. It had that effect on you and you never forget that experience. In a way you never grow up. It goes back to ancient mysteries because it uses folklore very cleverly. It does something that's out of your experience. As children we like to have that kind of fantasy. We don't want realism. Doctor Who has never been real. The thing that it has is great storytelling and wonderful actors. Anybody will tell you who has been lucky enough to be in a Doctor Who, it is a landmark thing to have done. So I'm very proud to have been a part of it.



Do you watch Doctor Who now?

I don't. No disrespect to anyone who's doing it but I'm not a big telly watcher. I'm out on the road a lot - I love to tour. I like films and I like historical things. I love radio. I know it's the 50th anniversary which is wonderful and this year is the 60th anniversary of the first Good Old Days so we're celebrating with lots of gala events.

THE FAN VIEW

by The Great Architect

All hail the Chief Caretaker!

Richard Briers (or Dickie as he was affectionately known) was unquestionably one of Britain's most popular actors.

In the 1970s, he became synonymous with *The Good Life*, a hugely popular BBC sit-com which told the story of Tom and Barbara who had turned their backs on the stresses of an ordinary 9 'till 5 existence to become self-sufficient and environmentally-friendly. The show echoed many of the ecological themes championed by Doctor Who producer Barry Letts in Jon Pertwee stories such as *The Green Death*, and was a hit with viewers of all ages. Briers became a national treasure.

He had done far more than that of course, working in the 60's with legends such as Ronnie Barker. And in the 80's, he went on to appear in another smash hit sitcom, *Ever Decreasing Circles*, starring alongside Penelope Wilton (Harriet Jones in *Doctor Who*) and Peter Egan (who has since worked for Big Finish).

Richard's character in *Ever Decreasing Circles*, Martin, was a fastidiously fussy man who, with clipboard often tucked under one arm and an obsession with rules and regularity, had much in common with the Chief Caretaker, the role for which *Doctor Who* fans remember him...

Paradise Towers is both loved and loathed by *Doctor Who* fans. I know that DWAS Press and Publicity spokesman Antony Wainer is a great champion of it. The actual script is very good but some of the decisions made by the production team – the costumes, the overt humour, Briers' Hitler moustache etc - meant that the story arguably did not fulfil its full potential. It could have been so much better with scruffier costumes for the Caretakers, more battered-looking Cleaners etc. I have often wondered what this story might have been like if Alan Wareing, who later directed Stephen Wyatt's other script *The Greatest Show in the Galaxy*, had joined the show a year earlier and had been able to play up the story's darker aspects.



For his part, Briers was unapologetic about his role as the Chief Caretaker, telling DWM: 'Doctor Who enabled me to overact, and I enjoy that. The producer worried that I wasn't taking the role seriously... He thought that I wanted to send up Doctor Who. I think he was frightened that I would start overdoing it...so I did! I thought I had leeway.' And

if one accepts that the show was going through a more comedic stage at that point, the combination of Briers and his Deputy, played by Clive Merrison, is in parts very effective. It's funny, but although you will often hear Who fans criticise the Chief Caretaker, you will never hear them say a word against Richard Briers. We, like the rest of the country, loved him.



It says a lot for Briers' standing that when he decided to move on from his regular role in the hugely popular BBC Sunday night drama *Monarch of the Glen*, the production team obviously felt that that there was only one actor in Britain big enough to replace him – a certain Tom Baker.....!!!

Briers did movies as well of course and was especially memorable in Kenneth Branagh's early 90's version of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. And for people of my age he will be forever remembered as the voice of Roobarb and Custard in the famous animated children's programme of the 1970's. He also performed a very memorable turn in the *Doctor Who* spin-off *Torchwood*. From my own point of view, as the Great Architect, I found the Chief Caretaker to be a loyal servant and a more than adequate host body when I decided to once again roam the corridors of *Paradise Towers*! Oh, how those corridors would have gleamed if I had only had more time! I was not at all impressed when the renegade Time Lord known as the Doctor attempted to impersonate me... and as for that meddling Pex and those nasty Kangs.....!!!



All hail the Chief Caretaker! All hail Richard Briers! Our favourite actor may be un-alive but his legacy will live forever.

Raymond Cusick (1928—2013) —Dalek Designer Remembered



It cannot have escaped your attention that Ray Cusick died recently. I had the fortune meet Ray on more than one occasion. He lived round the corner from me in Horsham, West Sussex (where DWAS is currently based). Back in 2005 I spent an afternoon with him talking about his career. This became the first interview of 2006 for CT, and you can read it again if you visit our website and select the 'Celestial Archive' section.

Ray's death attracted a lot of attention locally, and I spoke to the local press and radio on behalf of DWAS press spokesman Antony Wainer. It was I believe a surprise to a number of people to find that the man who made the Daleks what they are lived in their town. If you are able to pay a visit to my blog at the DWAS website you will find a link to some local tributes. In the meantime, please enjoy this short tribute to Ray...

Raymond Cusick, who designed the iconic Daleks has died aged 84. He passed away peacefully in his sleep on 21st February 2013, following an illness.

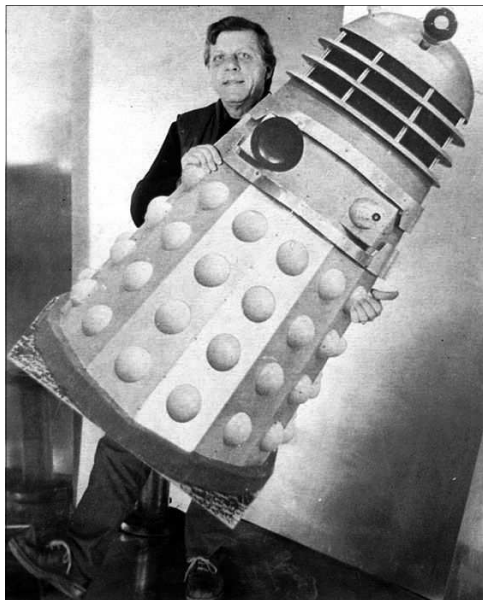
After trying his hand at teaching, working in the theatre and the army, Ray became a BBC designer in the 1962. He initially arrived as 'holiday relief' but soon became a permanent member of staff, working alongside future Hollywood director Ridley Scott, who sat at the next desk to him. Initially Scott was due to work on the Daleks with Ray, but Verity Lambert requested a single designer for continuity. Ray was thus given the task of creating the Daleks based on Terry Nation's script outline.

In his interview with Celestial Toyroom in 2005 Ray said; "When Doctor Who came along I jumped at the chance to work on it. It was exceptionally hard work though. The design department, in a discussion with a man called Jack Kine, who was head of visual effects, didn't want to take on the building of the many special props and models that Doctor Who would require. Doctor Who wanted a huge number of effects in each episode and they just weren't geared up to do that. Because of the heavy workload the crew faced, Jack Kine asked for

two extra designers but was turned down, and so Shawcraft Models of Uxbridge, owned by Bill Rogers, were contracted out to construct models.

When I had to come up with the Dalek I went to lunch with Bill and I remember sketching out my design for it on a napkin. I explained to him how it was intended to move and to demonstrate this I slid the pepper pot across the table. Or it might have been a salt pot – I'm not sure!"

The design was influenced by writer Terry Nation, who had seen the Georgian State Dancers perform



and he liked the way the women wore dresses that made them appear to glide across the floor. Terry told Ray he wanted the Daleks to move like that.

Despite the impression that may have been given over the years, from my own dealings with Ray I can tell you that he was always pleased when people sent him letters and things to sign. He was always very generous with his time when people were genuinely interested in his work—which of course extended beyond the Daleks—there were Mechonoids, fungoids, lots more one-off monsters as well as models, sets, and spaceships.

He may have seemed a dour man in his persona to those who met him at conventions or saw him on DVD documentaries but he always had a great sense of humour. He was also very knowledgeable in other areas and in his later years he was into military history and he did quite a bit of work with his local museum in Horsham. He undertook a lot of work looking into the 'Horsham Rifles' and was very interested in local history.

Jeremy Knight, Horsham Museum and Heritage manager, told The District Post; a local newspaper;

"He viewed the Daleks as his job but military history was his passion. In particular the French revolutionary wars and the Napoleonic wars. In 2000 I

decided to do an exhibition on the rifle brigade that was formed in Horsham in the 1800s, called Sharpe's Horsham. Ray did some work with us on the research for this exhibition. He provided us with a wealth of information which only people who are passionate about it could ever find."



In his 2005 CT interview, when asked about the new series Ray said "I have mixed feelings about the new Doctor Who. The Daleks aren't that changed apart from being made gold. My original intention was for them to be sleek and made to appear as if they had been constructed of a thin but strong alien material. But the overall design is still mine and it's great that over forty years later they are still there."

It is well known that whilst Terry Nation did very nicely out of the Daleks, Ray only ever received an ex-gratia payment from the BBC for his work. However, whilst there is no doubt this irritated him, I know that what Ray disliked more than anything else were the people that over the years, claimed to have had a hand in what was his own work.

On one occasion Ray was advised by a friend of his sister-in-law that a relative of theirs had designed the Daleks! It is probably appropriate to reiterate that the design of the Dalek machines, based on the outline of Terry Nation's scripts was undertaken by Ray Cusick, and nobody else.

Later on, when the new (fat) Daleks arrived in 'Victory of the Daleks' I contacted Ray and asked for his views, intending to include what he said in CT. In the end we did not publish his comments directly, but I can assure you he was not complimentary! I remember he finished off his letter by saying 'I am sure they will be in the shops in time for Christmas'. And indeed they were!

Ray intended to come along to our autumn 2012 event at Riverside Studios but had to withdraw because of his health. Sadly we will not get the chance to invite him again.

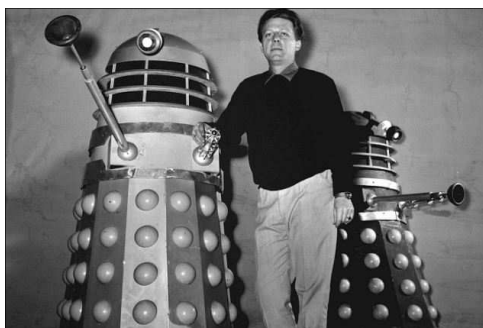
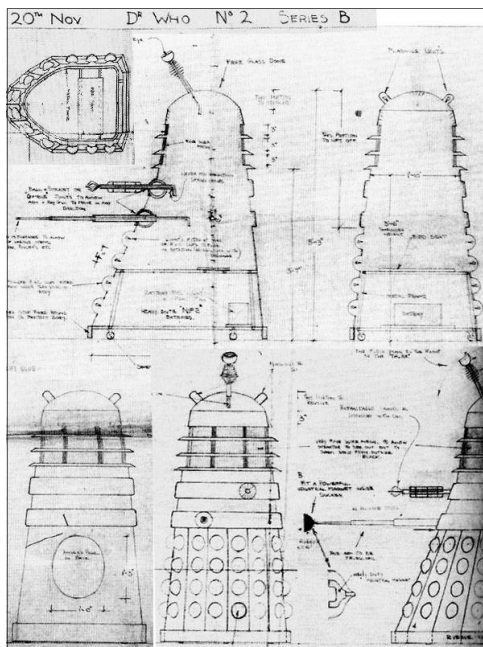
Ray was very proud of the Dalek stamp produced by the Royal Mail back in 1999. This year the Royal Mail will produce two further Dalek stamps as part of the 50th Anniversary commemorative set. It is a real shame that Raymond Cusick is not around to see those too.

Paul Winter



Royal Mail Commemorative Stamps 1999 (left) and 2013 (right)

Early Dalek design sketches 1963



DOCTOR
WHO



DALEKS - PETER CUSHING also starring BERNARD CRIBBINS · RAY BROOKS · JILL CURZON · ROBERTA TOVEY · ANDREW KEIR

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Executive Producers: J.P.E. 'Pecunia' - Produced by ALTON SUBOTSKY and MAX A. ROSENBERG - Directed by GORDON FLEMYNG - Screenplay by ALTON SUBOTSKY - From the BBC Television Serial by TERRY MATION - AN ARMP PRODUCTION - A BRITISH LION RELEASE THROUGH R.G.