

*It's Back ..... And It's About*

**T**ime

**A**nd

**R**elative

**D**imension

**I**n

**S**pace





Image copyright Paul Rhodes

## Contents

- Cover: **Tom Baker** in Studio  
(from *The Stones of Blood*)
- Page 2: **Editorial** and Credits
- Page 3: **"Risen from the Ashes"**  
The Longleat Exhibition
- Page 6: **In Conversation with -**  
Leslie Grantham
- Page 9: **Doctor's Mum tells all!**  
Our shock expose!
- Page 12: **Spin Doctor -**  
*Doctor Who* on vinyl
- Page 15: **Just another Machine with  
Delusions of Grandeur?**  
Visual Effects for the 90s
- Page 17: **Everything you ever  
needed to know about  
PANOPTICON, but couldn't  
be bothered to ask!**
- Page 22: **Celebrity Spot -**  
John Nathan-Turner
- Page 23: **Terry Nation - An Appreciation**

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## Editorial

"Can you imagine silver leaves waving above a pool of liquid gold containing singing fishes ... twin suns that circle and fall in a rainbow heaven ... another world in another sky? If you'd like to come with me, I'll show you all of this ... and it will be, I promise you, the duller part of it all. Come with me and you will see wonders that no human has ever dreamed possible ... or stay behind, and regret your staying until the day you die."

With that version of William Hartnell's classic speech, in June 1975 Andrew Johnson opened the first issue of **TARDIS** - possibly the first ever magazine devoted *solely* to *Doctor Who* - which has since appeared in various formats and at radically different publication rates (the most recent issue appearing *seven* years ago, in the Spring of 1990). Capturing (as they certainly do) the essence of the magic of *Doctor Who*, it seems only fitting that those words should herald the return of the magazine nearly seven years later.

And what has prompted its return? Well, as you all know, the BBCtv series *Doctor Who* disappeared from our TV screens in December 1989, ushering in the dark times of the early '90s until the appearance of the BBC/Universal 'TV-movie' last year. That film proves increasingly to have been an attempt by BBC Worldwide to re-launch the programme as a global American-style blockbuster a la *Star Trek/Wars* - an attempt which clearly failed, and which may prove to be *Doctor Who's* last gasp.

Please don't get me wrong - neither the **DWAS** Exec, my colleagues on the board of **DSL** nor I intend to reduce our efforts to cajole, persuade - even bully - the 'powers that be' to return the TV show to production. But from bitter experience we know that we cannot be sure of early success, and for as long as the show remains only a TV memory, its broad public appeal will continue to wane. That means that the future of its remaining commercial manifestations, (i.e. one-off radio plays, spin-off novels (whether published by Virgin or BBC Worldwide) and Marvel's *Doctor Who Magazine*) cannot be assumed. Prudence therefore requires that we 'come out to play' - or rather dedicate our efforts to improving and increasing the output of the **DWAS** itself. The absence of *Doctor Who* on TV means we *must* devise and stimulate our own entertainment simply to guarantee the survival of fandom.

Further, as some of you know already, **TARDIS** is, inter alia, the **DWAS'** original newsletter. After the creation of **Celestial Toyroom** to fulfil that role, **TARDIS** became the forum for less topical features and interviews. The magazine ceased production on the departure of Mark Wyman as editor, and many of its features were subsumed by **CT**. But the increasing dearth of news to report (while the hiatus in production of new *Doctor Who* continues) also creates an impetus for more of the features which are by tradition the preserve of **TARDIS**.

So **TARDIS** is back ... and to celebrate the fact, this month we have a host of brand new articles for your delectation and delight, intended to give those of you who have joined in the last seven years a flavour of what the magazine has always been about. Why? Because, like **CT**, **TARDIS** is a forum for *you* and we want to encourage *you* to write for it. All submissions will be gratefully received at the editorial address (see the contents column, left).

Until next issue .....

Andrew Beech

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When Andrew Beech rushed up to me at the Fitzroy Tavern last Christmas, poked a finger in my ribs and, with not a word of explanation, told me - no *instructed* me - "You're doing something!", before bounding off to collar some other hapless unfortunate, I shouldn't have been surprised. He is, after all, somewhat prone to such acts of disconcerting spontaneity. However, when he later explained (in a rare rational moment) that he wanted me to write something for this special re-launch issue of TARDIS I was, to coin a phrase, "thrilled and delighted" - particularly as he suggested that I should return to my DWAS roots (!) and report on the updated *Doctor Who* exhibition at Longleat House. Since it also just happens to be the tenth anniversary of my first ever feature on the exhibition for editor Neil Hutchings' Celestial Tea .. (oops, sorry!) Toyroom, how could I refuse? It's time to hear once again .....

# from the COSMIC CORRESPONDENT

## "Risen from the Ashes"

At Easter in 1973, the first permanent *Doctor Who* exhibition opened in the old stables' yard at Longleat House. At the time, *Doctor Who* was in the midst of its tenth anniversary festivities and enjoying a resurgence of popularity and attention. *The Three Doctors* had recently aired, leading to the fourth *Radio Times* cover feature in as many years and the promise of a special magazine for November.

Certainly no-one could possibly have predicted that an exhibition which then consisted of just one room and a handful of monsters would actually outlast the very programme it was designed to celebrate. Yet, whilst other bigger displays (and indeed the show itself) have come and gone over the years, the Longleat exhibition has endured - resembling at times some kind of distant outpost, steadfastly flying the flag for *Doctor Who* during its most turbulent and uncertain periods.

Twenty-four years on, it is still one of the most popular attractions on

the estate, drawing thousands of new and regular visitors each season.

Since its first major refit in 1975, when a new entrance and corridor extension was added to the existing 'TARDIS console room' area, the exhibition complex has changed very little. Barring minor cosmetic modifications the only major alteration was the incorporation of the previously separate 'Doctor Who Super Shop' into the main building in 1992. This year, however, things are rather different. In the wake of the fire which devastated the corridor section on 15<sup>th</sup> September last year, the entire exhibition has been refurbished and restructured. And what a difference it has made!

The first change became apparent as soon as I approached the Police Box portal. I have to admit that I was pleasantly surprised to find that you can now enter *and exit* the exhibition through the TARDIS - a nice touch, that, and one which is enhanced by the sudden (and quite alarming) sequence of flashing lights which activate automatically as you pass the ticket booth. Perhaps they're intended

to numb the senses, dulling any pain caused by the £1.50 entrance fee!

Penniless and temporarily blinded, I stumbled bravely on to discover probably the single most important change of all:- the route round the exhibition has now been reversed to begin with an anti-clockwise circuit of the console room. As someone who has visited the place more times than I care to remember, I found this simple move not only effective, but rather unsettling - it's not often that one is unexpectedly forced to view familiar surroundings from a completely different perspective.

At first glance, the console room appears to be virtually unchanged. The original layout of four main display 'windows' sited around the same purpose-built console remains, but the structure has been rebuilt entirely and restyled very subtly. New features include some narrow sections of roundelled panelling which slant inwards at the top of the walls towards a large centrally suspended disc littered with randomly flashing lights. The 'control panels' immedi-

ately below each window have also been updated; the rather archaic array of buttons, switches and levers (which predominated from the exhibition's early days) has now been replaced with an illuminated iridescent metal foil. This lends a considerably more futuristic air to the environment, but could be used to even greater effect as a background for some basic information about the exhibits. The device proved very successful at the exhibitions in the MOMI and the Bristol Exploratory, where pedestal-mounted 'fact files' combined with various push-button controls. It would certainly add to the exhibition experience for the general public, for whom a wall plaque bearing no more detail than simply a name, story-title and year of origin must surely mean very little.

Three of the four main display bays in the console room are occupied by menaces from the Doctor's past. They include the L1 Robot from *Trial of a Time Lord (TOATL)* two Tractators (topical, given the recent release of *Frontios* on BBC video, and atmospherically lit in a shiny black cave) and finally, five Cybermen in a brick-walled suburban street setting, complete with a red telephone box. This latter is an homage to the 1968 story *The Invasion*, but also celebrates the thirtieth anniversary (last year) of

the silver giants. The fourth bay contains a TV monitor which shows, on a continuous loop, the trailer which preceded the 1996 TV movie on the BBC video release, with the inclusion of some scenes from the film.

As if to assuage any feelings of disquiet which may have been caused by entering the sparsely lit corridor section after the console room (rather than before), the next display case on the right holds a reassuringly familiar assortment of masks, heads and other objects. These range from the Bandril ambassador (*Timelash*), a Cryon (*Attack of the Cybermen*) and a Silurian (*Warriors of the Deep*), to an Exxilon (*Death to the Daleks*), a Dum (*Robots of Death*) and even an odd cyber-boot! On the left you will find a showcase for two of the Cheetah people (*Survival*).

No *Doctor Who* exhibition would be complete without a Dalek, so it came as little surprise to find one on guard at the point where the corridor suddenly does a U-turn. This grey/black version is not alone, though, for alongside sits its creator Davros (now sporting a superbly re-crafted *Genesis*-style head, which looks excellent). There's just one problem: he seems to have mislaid his hand! With *both* arms tucked into his chair he appears either to be searching for something

that's fallen down inside, or ... (*that's quite enough of that, thank you!* - Ed).

The final section of corridor is home to no fewer than five new displays, in which a Mandrel (*Nightmare of Eden*), an Argolin (on loan to the exhibition from a generous private collector) and a Foamasi (both from *The Leisure Hive*), the Ancient Haemovore (*The Curse of Fenric*) and a new K-9 model are on view. The last of these is worthy of particular note.



Photo copyright Philip Newman

### This Robot Cleaner needs a thorough wash and brush-up

As mentioned above, the exhibition's radical overhaul was made necessary by the fire last year, which destroyed not only the original K-9 exhibit (in which the blaze is believed to have started), but also Kane and the Bio-Mechanoid (both from *Dragonfire*) and the Time Lords' space station from *TOATL*. Several other items were also damaged beyond repair, and the charred remains of two exhibits (a Street Cleaner from *Paradise Towers* (see photo, above) and the Terileptil android from *The Visitation*) comprise a special feature to commemorate that fateful Sunday last Autumn. The discoloured, misshapen form of the once-resplendent, highly decorated android is a particularly tragic and sobering spectacle, and quite ironic when one considers its fictional



Photo copyright Philip Newman

### A pair of Tractators lurk in their gloomy cavern

fate in the story in which it featured (see main picture, below).

Having reached the last exhibit, I had expected to arrive at the exit. However, there was one more example of the restructuring to come:- a newly installed (and very smart) shop area. Unlike its predecessors, the new shop is open-plan, allowing much more space (and time) to browse through the extensive range of merchandise on sale and, of course, to share a few words with Dallas Slade, the charming new 'TARDIS Commander'.

So, what are my overall impressions of this year's exhibition? Well, bearing in mind the physical limitations of the property, I think the Experience Design and Management team, headed by Lorne Martin and Martin (son of Bernard) Wilkie, have done a splendid job in creating something quite refreshing out of so familiar an environment. A more imaginative and atmospheric use of lighting (particularly in the console room, where a distinctly different aura now prevails) has augmented the structural

changes. So many of the costumes and props now reside permanently within the (admittedly far more spacious) premises at Llangollen that there is very little left for Longleat to choose from, which is a shame. Small wonder, then, that one of the bays contains nothing more than a solitary TV monitor! Nonetheless, in contrast to the museum-style layout of more recent exhibitions, Longleat still has the advantage of allowing the display of costumes and props within small recreations of their original TV setting. It is perhaps this fundamental difference which will prove to be the strength the Longleat exhibition needs to survive.

Next year this exhibition, which has played such a major role in perpetuating the *Doctor Who* legend, will celebrate its own Silver Jubilee. It may not be big ... it may not be the best ... but long may it continue!

This is the Cosmic Correspondent, for **TARDIS Magazine**, at the Longleat *Doctor Who* Exhibition.

Philip Newman.

## STOP PRESS:

We have heard recently that there is in preparation yet another celebration *Doctor Who* day on the Longleat estate. It is likely to take place in mid-August and may take as its theme the Twentieth Anniversary of K-9! Further confirmation will appear in Celestial Toyroom in due course.



Photo copyright Philip Newman

**That will teach him to mess with Nyssa!**

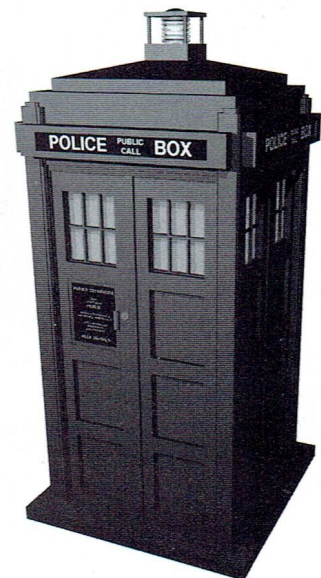
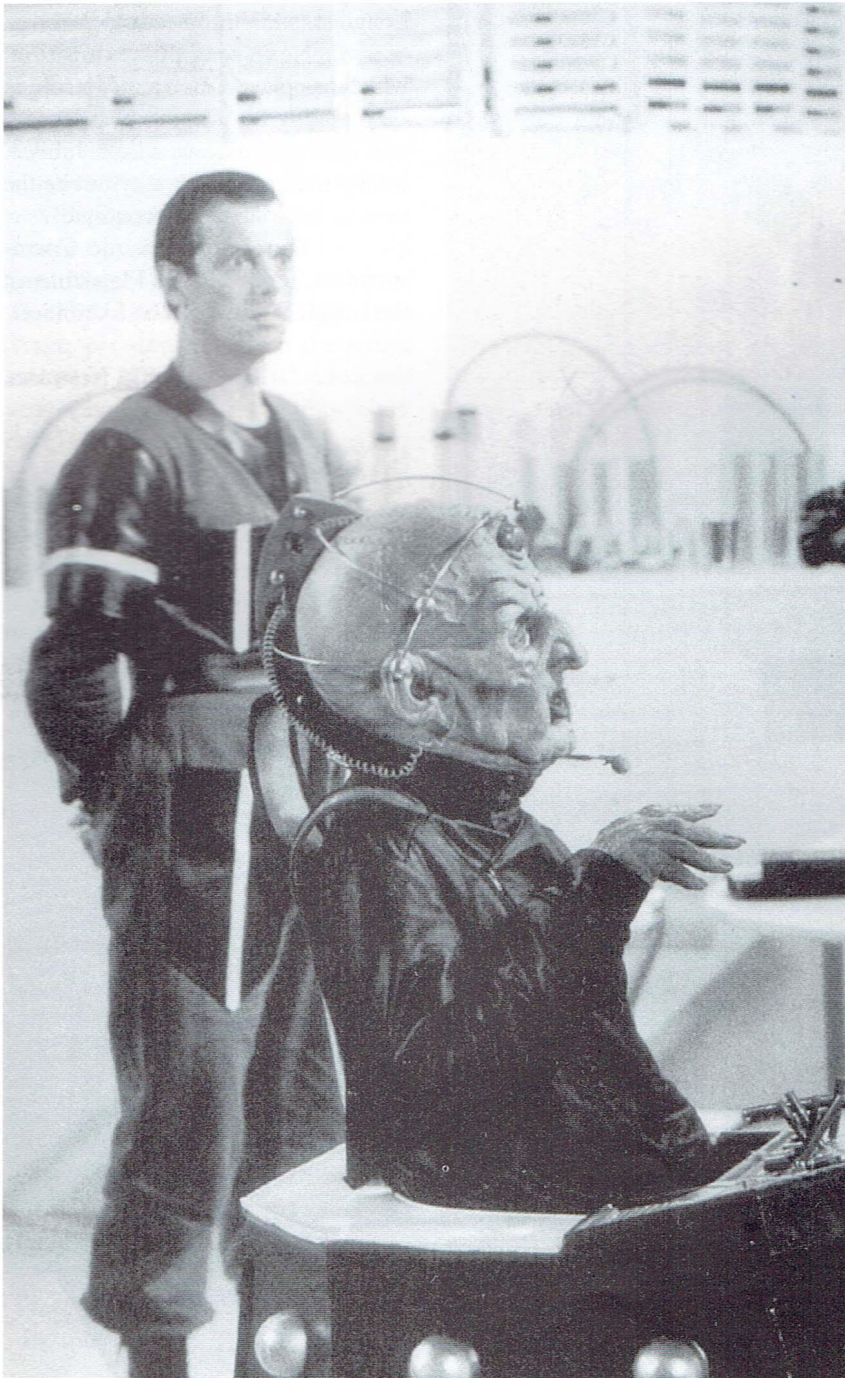


Image copyright Paul Rhodes

# In Conversation with ...

## Leslie Grantham

As an actor who became rather more famous after appearing in *Doctor Who* - for his portrayal of the sinister "Dirty Den" (Dennis Watts), former landlord of the "Queen Vic" in *EastEnders* - Leslie Grantham was rather overlooked in Press coverage of *Resurrection of the Daleks*. He is spotted on television less often these days, so intrepid TARDIS reporter (and Coordinator of the DWAS) Sarah Fowler tracked him down recently in darkest Canterbury .....



An 'unknown' Leslie Grantham with someone much more famous

... at the Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury on the 23rd November, 1996 to be precise, at the end of his grueling twelve week tour in *Dracula*. 'John the Scot' broached the subject of an interview for me, after Leslie, Micky (O'Donoghue), he and I had a nice dinner in a local restaurant (Mmm - ribs!).

"Certainly," Leslie responded, and we regrouped at the theatre an hour before the curtain went up. "What does your friend want to talk about? Sex? Drugs? Rock and roll?"

"Daleks!" John, prosaic in his retort, rolled the word as only the Scots can.

"Oh them ..." Leslie seemed dismissive, but then, after inviting me into his dressing room and insisting I took the comfy chair, he continued, "Fire away!" So off we went ...

What made you go into acting?

"I always wanted to be an actor, but for kids of my background - working-class scum of the earth - it was not the sort of thing you admitted to ... otherwise you'd be accused of being a fairy. So I said I was going to football (he supports West Ham), but I used to slip off and go to the theatre. I went every Saturday ... and then eventually, when I was older, someone said that I should try and do it professionally, and so I went to drama school."

Did you enjoy drama school?

"Yes I did, but it was a waste of time. You see, people go to these places thinking that they can just become actors, but that's not what it's about. You can't make people into actors, but drama schools are in the business of making money ... so they have to have an intake of, say 40 [students] ... and

so you might get to drama school even if you don't have the talent ... because they have to make up the numbers." He paused and grinned. "That said, they are useful, but don't stay three years! Stay one. That way you'll learn about projection and you'll learn to take the knocks ... 'cos that's what drama school does teach you, how to handle criticism..."

"I went there late in life, so I suppose it helped me lose my inhibitions. When you see these bright young things standing there being fried eggs, you think, 'Well if they can do it, so can I.' ... and you give it a go! So yes, it's useful, but only if you're talented."

Was it easy finding work when you left?

"Yes, I've been lucky. I've only had five months unemployment in 15 years."

So what was your first job?

"My first job was on a BBC Play for Today, a drama called Jake's End. Then I did a season of plays at Coventry ... then after that Jewel In The Crown. Then I did a fringe play with Matthew Robinson. He was the writer, and he liked what I did, and because of him I got the three episodes of Doctor Who. I was supposed to play the lead villain, but I wasn't a famous name, and the principal villain had to be a "name". When Matthew found out, he was unhappy at the decision and so gave me my choice of the other roles. I chose to play Kiston ... actually, it was because of Matthew that I got the part of Den [in EastEnders]. He was one of the production team, so I suppose you could say that Doctor Who got me into EastEnders."

What are your memories of the story [Resurrection of the Daleks]?

"I remember working with some really lovely people, like Rula Lenska. I remember it being fun and I remember thinking that only Rodney Bewes could die of PMT! I also remember that Matthew wanted to improve the production values to make the sets less wooden and plastic. Have you seen the sets at the BBC? It's not a rumour ... they do wobble!" [Oh no they don't - Ed!].

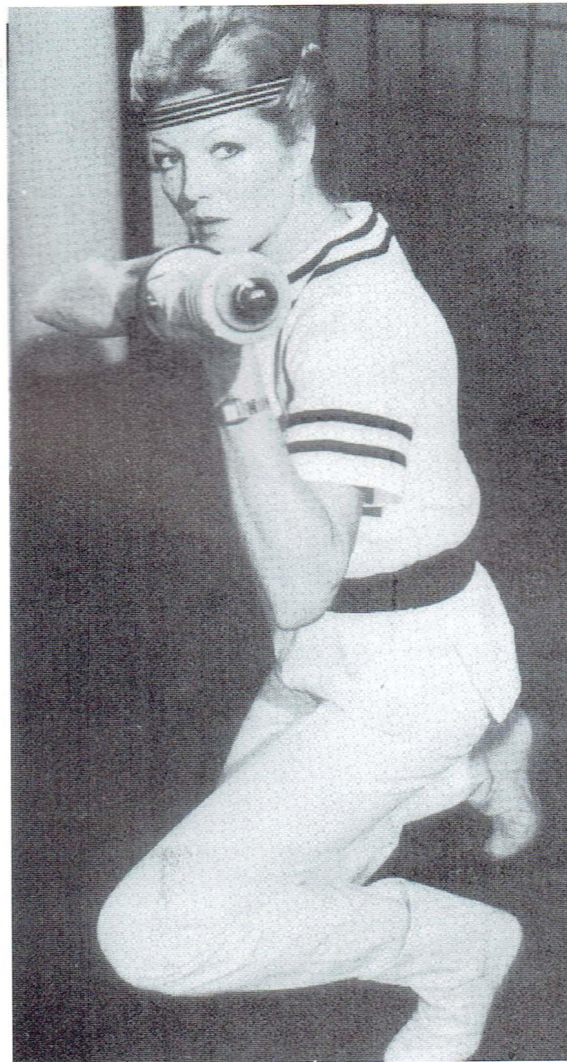
He paused ... and lowered his voice to a conspiratorial level. "In fact, they've even been known to fall over!" [Words fail me! -Ed]

Convention stories suggest that the main cast of Doctor Who went out of their way to make guests feel at home. Is that true?

"Yes, it is. The people on the set of Doctor Who were very nice, and that's something you only see in a few jobs. I met Peter [Davison] on the first day ... didn't see much of him after that, he was so busy doing interviews and things. I do remember the atmosphere was welcoming ... but there have been jobs when I felt like a spare part, something that the cat dragged in. When we started on The Paradise Club I didn't want anyone to have that feeling so everyone was invited to the read-through even if they only had one line. But on Doctor Who Matthew [Robinson] made me really welcome as did Terry Molloy - such a nice man."

What was it like working on a long running programme such as EastEnders?

"It was fun ... but it's a bit like stacking shelves in a supermarket. After a while it gets monotonous. I did 408 shows, and I was only supposed to do 12!"



**The delectable Rula Lenska, in aggressive pose**

Would you have liked to do anything different with Den?

"Yes. I would have liked to make him nastier - much nastier ... more like Davros ... but at the same time I would have liked him to show the rest of them the side he showed Michelle.

"I would also have liked him to die protecting someone ... probably stepping out in front of a car to protect Angie ..." He paused, and smiled conspiratorially, "... although the flowers were my decision".

Do you ever feel you would like to live down the image of Den?

"Oh good grief, no! It was a good part, and it's good to be recognised for something that was good ... take all the recent publicity about David Wicks, people saying "He'll never be Den". He's not Den, and that's the problem. They don't create any new characters, they just regenerate them ... 'the new Ena Sharples', 'the new Den', 'the new Angie' ... and it doesn't work. It would be nice if they could create new characters for a change."

Leslie then asked me what I thought of the Doctor Who TV Movie, before continuing, "I'd have cast Simon Callow as the Doctor ... and I wouldn't have had all those special effects. I'd just let the cameras follow him around."



### Davros - a blueprint for Den?

*You see, what the show needs is not someone younger, but another William Hartnell ... Richard Wilson would have made the perfect replacement, except of course he's too high profile now.*

*"Let me explain what I mean. William Hartnell was the best Doctor. I remember skiving off from school ... or was I sick? Anyway, there was this old black and white film and it was William Hartnell and he was so good, he made me want to be an actor ... what was I saying? ... Oh yes, William Hartnell was everyone's granddad ... grumpy - but nevertheless lovable - and for that reason it caught the imagination. We were finally out of the war ... at the end of the population boom ... television was new, but everyone knew the grumpy old grandfather - and knew what it was to want a better world ... we needed something to identify with. William's [Doctor Who] character was an identifiable part of our society, and our hopes for a better world."*

What did you think of the other Doctors?

*"Jon [Pertwee] was a lovely person ... but I remember thinking he was a bit cartoon-ish ... and the actors around him were also larger than life.*

*"Troughton played him too mysterious ... too esoteric, and I don't think that worked.*

*"I liked Tom. I was at college with Louise [Jameson] and used to go and see her on set. Tom was larger than life, but he didn't take anything away from the story.*

*"Colin ... [was] too much of a public school boy - too*

*much like [Billy] Bunter!*

*"Peter's Doctor ... lacked any personality - I didn't want to watch the show while he was the Doctor.*

*"Sylvester is quirky. Unfortunately, it was hidden ... the darkness comes from the writing, but it could have been so much more if Sylvester had been allowed to be more quirky. But his quiriness was hidden amongst other quirky actors, and so you never got the real Doctor."*

When the BBC took it off, had the programme run its full course?

*"Certainly not! Its problem was that it didn't progress ... a bit like Peter Pan never grew up ... all it had to do was make the adversaries bigger - if necessary computerized - and the production values should have kept up with the technical age and the viewers. The BBC fell down by not keeping up with the times. They needed to make use of different techniques ... take cars, for example, ... they improve - become more sophisticated. What you don't want ... is for a programme like Doctor Who to become like Crossroads - stuck in a time warp - and that's what it did. The production values should have moved with the times. He's a time traveller!!! But the stuff around him wasn't the right technology. They should have made more use of new techniques in production - blue screen should have been kept. They should have spent the money on the sets, not the credits. Look what they did with Casualty. First they changed [from film] to video, then they put a blue wash over it, then they put in tracking shots. It was still Casualty, but it wasn't the same programme."*

With the half hour call only minutes away, two last questions. If you could play any part ... be anybody ... who would you be?

*"I'd be a cowboy." He paused and grinned broadly. "Actually, I'd like to be - Davy Crockett ... be at the Alamo. That was an amazing period of history. The settlers were encouraged to inter-marry with the natives and have children. In fact they were encouraged to make a life for themselves, the more children, the more land. It was an ideal way of colonizing - everyone being equal ... and then along came the government, with a different set of values to force upon them. Is it any wonder the settlers fought to keep their independence?"*

If you could live in any time period other than mid-19th Century America, when would it be?

*"Now!" he said emphatically. "Out of any other times, it would have to be now. This is such an exciting period ... although there's a lot of poverty - too much poverty ... but every day is a buzz. Just think about it ... we've put a man on the Moon, there's the possibility of life on Mars, we keep discovering cures for things that used to kill ... everything's moving so fast. No, I certainly wouldn't like to live in feudal times or when there was starvation. In this Century you can go anywhere, do anything. It's nice and warm (I don't think I could live in a time without heating). Life now is exciting ... what people dream of, happens."*

The twenty minute call sounded. I left Leslie to his makeup and went out front of house, wishing that he'd been given a chance to direct Doctor Who - like his view of life, I think it would have been exciting!

Sarah Fowler



# Doctor's Mum tells all!

Last year came the *startling* revelation that the Doctor not only had a mother, but that she was *in fact* human! This prompted a nationwide, nay, a worldwide hunt for the lady. In a TARDIS *Exclusive*, our *Special Reporter* J. F. SEBASTIAN interviews the Doctor's Mother.

An overwhelming response to the preliminary test, published in December's *Celestial Toyroom*, prompted *rigorous* follow-up investigation by our team of experts (which resulted in a surprisingly low level of fatalities, all things considered<sup>1</sup>). Our extremely dedicated task-force of researchers were able to use the information to track down the Doctor's mother to a small cottage in a little Devonshire village where, finally, she agreed to talk to me.

The Doctor's mother is now a little old lady of 92 and, although I have agreed to conceal her full identity and precise location, she has allowed me to confirm that her name is Mrs Smith. This raises instantly the very strong possibility that "John Smith" - so often used by the Doctor as an apparent alias - really is his name. His mother was clear about it. "I've always called my youngest 'Johnny'," she told us.

Mrs Smith was born in 1904 in Devon, to a family of cabinet makers. "We used to do practically everything ... coffins, chests, wardrobes, cupboards. We were especially good at wardrobes, I remember." Can it be merely coincidence, then, that her son would end up spending so much time travelling through time and space in what is, to all intents and purposes, a blue wardrobe? Mrs Smith frowned at the question. "Oh no, we didn't ever do blue wardrobes ... that'd look horrible, that would. Oh, no. Definitely no blue wardrobes." And Johnny didn't go into them? "No, ... he were claustrophobic as a boy you know." (So it would appear that, yes, it is



All illustrations copyright Nigel Thomas

merely coincidence that the Doctor ended up spending so much time travelling through time and space in a blue wardrobe)

In 1928, Mrs Smith married a civil servant she had met while he was holidaying near her home the previous summer. "He was unlike anyone I'd ever met before," she said, attributing it to his work and life in London. When I put it to her that it might be because he was actually from another planet, she agreed this was a strong possibility ("Whatever you say dear"), with a curiously blank look - possibly as a result of some post-hypnotic suggestion?

Mrs Smith - admitting that her eyesight has been failing recently

("Well I am 92, dear") - showed me some photographs of the man she called 'Mr Smith'. Each of them purported to picture the same man, and yet they plainly showed a number of different subjects. In some of them the man has black hair, others show him with grey or white hair, in others we see a man totally bald. Some show a bearded man, in others he is moustachioed (and a variety of styles are on display), and in yet more he is clean shaven. In one of the photos 'Mr Smith' is a woman! (Mrs Smith said this was for a 'party', but it sounded a rather flimsy explanation to me) For goodness sake, some of the photos were in colour and some in black and white!



Mrs Smith claims these are all the same man...  
... surely only possible if he is a Time Lord?

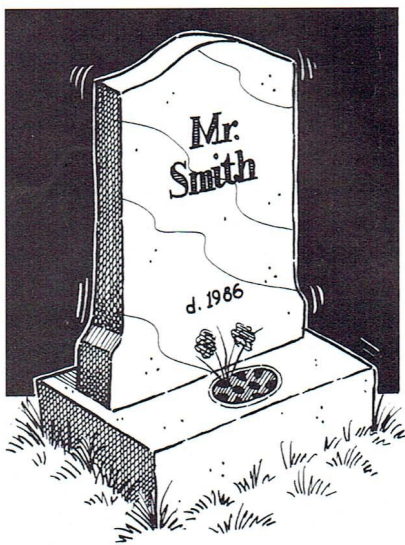
Mrs Smith insisted that these were all the same person, and so I am led to the inescapable conclusion that Mr Smith was a Time Lord, and therefore the father of the Doctor. I was also told that he would sometimes go off to "work" and come back looking "years older" after a "hard day at the office", or that a "visit to the hairdresser" could sometimes "take years off him" - clear indications, I feel, of time travel, regeneration, or both.

Mrs Smith moved to London with her husband, where they lived happily until he retired in 1964, when they moved back to Devon. There they had "a very peaceful retirement. He would look after the garden ..." (which, I can confirm, looked very nice) "... and I kept the cottage up nice" (also true). Mrs Smith told me that her husband 'died' in 1986. After a little forceful prompting, and with our photographer supporting her on one side and me on the other - Mrs Smith doesn't walk too well these days ("Well I am 92, dear") - she escorted us up the hill to the local graveyard, where she pointed out an apparently ordinary gravestone. Of course, as a dedicated investigative reporter<sup>2</sup>, I didn't take this at face value and investigated the monument further. My suspicions were vindicated when I felt a gentle trembling as I touched the stone. I asked the gardener, who was passing close by at the time, whether he had ever seen anything suspicious about the grave, but he couldn't hear me over the noise of the lawnmower-tractor he was driving.

Back at the cottage, I asked Mrs Smith to tell me everything she knew about her son, and not to leave anything out. She told me he was born in 1930, had worked very hard on the railways all his working life, and retired a couple of years ago to grow prize leeks. Did this mean, then, that the Doctor had finally achieved his childhood ambition to drive a train? "Oh no, Billy's not a doctor. He were a railway man, like I just told you ... weren't you listening? No, my youngest, Johnny, was the doctor."

Realising that I had inadvertently strayed onto the 'wrong track', I asked her to tell me everything she knew about 'her Johnny', and not to leave anything out. 'Johnny' was born in 1936. "It was the easiest birth we

had, much smoother than Billy or Patricia, I can tell you.” This, I pointed out, probably laid the very early groundwork for the Doctor’s considerable later skill in escaping from every form of confinement. “Erm ... yes, dear, whatever you say”. Further confirmation came when Mrs Smith told me that, as a youngster, he was always climbing over the fence and running around. I asked her whether anyone had picked up on his two hearts? “No dear, do you think they would have?” I can only hypothesise that, with World War II happening at that time, the doctors probably had more pressing things to do.



We moved on to his school-days. She told me that he went to the local school where he was an adequate, though not outstanding, pupil. In his teens, though, “... he was a real charmer ... a bit of a ladies’ man. He seemed to have a different girlfriend every couple of weeks, and he broke a few hearts in his youth, I can tell you”. She smiled wistfully at the memory, and I commented on how different this was from his later life (i.e. without any noticeable romantic interest until very recently). “Yes, that were all very, very sad. It was such a shame about poor Joanna, such a shame.”

I was about to ask further about ‘Joanna’, but she dabbed her eyes with a handkerchief and insisted on moving on. “Johnny were evacuated during the War, and we didn’t see much of him in that time. Mr Smith was working for the War Office and I was helping at the factory, but he wrote us quite often to let us know how he was

doing ... and when he came back after he seemed all grown-up ... we hardly knew him!” It seems clear that this was when the Doctor’s father sent him to the Academy on Gallifrey - almost certainly without his mother’s knowledge. I asked her whether she’d ever been to Gallifrey, and she told me, “I don’t think so, dear. Is that in Ireland?”

After finishing his secondary schooling, the Doctor went to a medical school in Yorkshire. “Between you and me, it wasn’t one of the best ones ... but he did quite well at it, and joined a little practice near there when he finished. We were all very proud of him.” I asked whether he had any difficulties with human anatomy. “Well, it is a very complicated subject - anatomy you know - I think Johnny had some problems, but not more than anyone else, I think.” Medical school changed him considerably. Photo’s Mrs Smith showed me from before and after his studies clearly indicate a regeneration (the sudden appearance of a beard is, I feel, conclusive).

It was at this point in our conversation that I persuaded Mrs Smith to tell me about Joanna. “He met her ... Jo ... at Medical School. It were love at first sight I gather, and they were married the year after they both graduated. She were lovely then, and they had two sons - Thomas and Peter - who are both lovely.”

As TARDIS readers will imagine, I was somewhat taken aback by this startling revelation: a mother, a wife and children, all uncovered in one fell swoop by an award winning (bound to be, soon) investigative reporter, J. F. Sebastian, through dedicated and fearless probing and searching questions. A glittering and outstanding career is destined to stretch before him ... (Get on with it! - Ed) ... anyway, I asked her whether he had any difficulties balancing a family life with racing around the galaxy saving planets, civilisations and races from the universe’s evils and threats. “No dear. He was a very good doctor, but he left all the ‘emergencies’ at the surgery, and when he was home he was a great Dad. And if Joanna’s told you any different it’s all lies ... Lies!”

It transpires that the Doctor’s wife left him for one of the younger doctors in the practice, a few years after Peter was born. Mrs Smith seems

convinced that ‘poor Jo’ had mental problems and after the split was a changed person (was she too a Time Lord, I wonder?). This event had a searing effect on the Doctor which, I believe, prompted his subsequent crusade to save the universe. “He did throw himself into his work, that’s right.” Interestingly enough, I learned that the wife of one of the Doctor’s sons - Thomas - has had a daughter called Susan. Susan, of course, would be the Doctor’s granddaughter. (Need I say more?)

One thing had been gnawing away at the back of my mind and, under the pretext of making some tea, I crept up behind Mrs Smith and suddenly screamed loudly. This was a further attempt at scientific research, since I felt it was important to try and establish whether Mrs Smith was (as she had claimed throughout the interview) really human. My scream, then, was to try to induce a heart attack and a subsequent regeneration if she did indeed prove to be really a Time Lord after all. Unfortunately Mrs Smith is a little deaf - especially from behind - and it proved difficult to generate the level of shock necessary, so the results of the test proved rather inconclusive. I suspect, though, that she may be going a little senile (“Well I am 92, dear”), since she started laughing quite loudly.

I next asked to return to her relationship with the Doctor’s father. What was sex like with an alien from another planet, I asked her. Curiously, at this point Mrs Smith got rather irate, though I’m unsure exactly why, and threw me out. She didn’t even let me finish my tea. But I suppose that is the lot of us dedicated, selfless, very intelligent, witty and charming investigative journalists. Some people just can’t handle the spotlight of truth when it’s beamed at them.

I will not be resting on my laurels, though. The hunt is now on for the Doctor’s wife and children. Rest assured that when I do track them down - and I will, they can’t hide from me forever - you’ll read about it here first.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Any reduction in the DWAS membership figures this month is entirely coincidental.

<sup>2</sup> If Roger Cook is reading this, I am available.

<sup>3</sup> Unless, of course, a more prestigious publication or broadcaster calls (Panorama, perhaps?).

# Spin Doctor

*"He's right at home in outer space or sitting on top of a horse,"* declared Roberta Tovey in her 1965 single, 'Who's Who?', possibly one of the less memorable contributions to *Doctor Who* folklore on vinyl ... and there have been many such contributions made to that body of work over the last thirty years. In January this year, the magazine *Record Collector* published a lengthy feature on *Doctor Who*-related records, along with a reasonably accurate discography. Inspired by this, DWAS treasurer Paul Winter casts his own eye over some of the record industry's more famous, and infamous, output .....

And where to start, other than in 1964? ... when Decca records released a 7 inch single of the *Doctor Who* theme, penned by the late Ron Grainer and realised by Delia Derbyshire of the BBC Radiophonic Workshop. Dick Mills spoke about this record on many occasions, including at the BBC's *Doctor Who* Celebration at Longleat in 1983. He explained that, in order to prepare the theme for release as a longer version than that used on TV, the workshop personnel split it down into segments, labelling each one A, B, C (and so on). Then, using a very un-scientific method - manual tape-splicing - they put these segments together to make the record ... "Start with A, then B and C, then B again, add C, then another bit of A ...."

This record was followed by an early attempt to cash-in on the huge public reaction to *Doctor Who* when the Eric Winston Orchestra released a conventional big-band arrangement of the theme - maybe a good idea then, but no-one in their right mind would think of doing it nowadays.

Also in 1964, a band called 'The Earthlings' managed to get their record 'Landing of the Daleks' (b-side) banned by the BBC due to the inclusion of a Morse code SOS message on the backing track. Doubtless those who ran for the hills when Orson Wells announced that the Martians had arrived in his *War of the Worlds* radio broadcast would have all gone into a state of abject panic at the thought of the Daleks rampaging over London!

1965 saw the arrival of one of the greatest contributions to the world of 'Who' memorabilia. A 7 inch EP called 'The Daleks', curiously released as one of Gerry Anderson's *Century 21* productions (which presumably

came about because of the contemporaneous appearance of *The Daleks* comic strip in *TV21* magazine). This was basically an abridged version of part six of *The Chase*, one of Terry Nation's less inspiring contributions to the show (*You cheeky young whipper-snapper - I disagree violently!* - Ed).



It features a narration by David Graham, one of the actors who provided Dalek voices in their early stories, including *The Chase* (and, incidentally, voices for *Thunderbirds* characters, including *Brains* - Ed).

Delivered in a very serious 1960s "BBC type" voice, the narration is probably the best thing about the record. Apparently three versions were released, each featuring a different version of the theme, one of which was the previously mentioned Eric Winston arrangement.

Moving on to 1968, Frazer Hines took an awful risk with his career by recording a single called 'Who's Doctor Who?' This record's scarcity is doubtless due to the fact that very few people could actually bring themselves to buy it. When you hear the record, you begin to understand why. A heavy metal intro rapidly gives way to Frazer and his choir singing along to a very

jolly tune which informs us that, "... he has friends two-a-penny, he never thinks of money even though he hasn't any ...". The song then progresses on to the (very catchy) chorus, "... and we all say 'Who -ooo-ooo-ooo is Doctor Who? Where is he from and what does he do?'" Frazer's agent apparently persuaded him that the hotly tipped follow-up single 'Jamie's Awa' in his Time Machine' might not help along his career as much as he hoped. The release was abandoned and the world breathed a heavy sigh of relief. Frazer decided to stick to acting, which is where his talents undoubtedly lie.

In 1972, the great Jon Pertwee was well established in the role of the Doctor. Decca re-released their theme single and Jon made his own contribution, which has remained unmatched to this day. 'I am the Doctor' was released on the Purple label. Against a very dramatic (and very 1970s) version of the 'Who' theme Mr Pertwee recited lyrics which, we understand, he wrote himself:-

*"I cross the void beyond the mind,  
the empty space that circles Time.  
I see where others stumble, blind,  
to seek a truth they'll never find.  
Eternal wisdom is my guide,  
I am ... the Doctor.  
Thru cosmic wastes the TARDIS flies,  
to taste the secret source of life.  
A presence, science can't deny, exists  
within, outside, behind,  
the latitude of the human mind.  
I am ... the Doctor.  
My voyage dissects the course of Time.  
"Who knows" you say -  
but are you right?  
Who searches deep to find the light,  
that glows so darkly in the night.  
Towards that point, I guide my flight.  
As fingers move to end Mankind,*

*metallic teeth begin their grind.  
With sword of Truth, I turn to fight  
the satanic powers of the night.  
Is your faith beyond your mind -  
Know me - am I the Doctor?\**

(\*Lyrics reprinted from TARDIS  
Vol. 1, issue 3 - Feb. 1976)

Yes, you are Jon, and you always will be. A mere four years old back then, I was furious when my Dad would not buy the single for me. We were very poor and did not have a record player, so he thought it a waste ... but I knew we would get one, one day. Speaking about the record (which had just been re-released) in 1985 at PanoptiCon in Brighton, Jon expressed dissatisfaction with the final result. I still think it is wonderful.

1973, and in a rare display of commercial prowess, BBC Enterprises did a bit of cashing-in. They re-packaged the theme and released it on their own label, imaginatively called 'BBC Records' (later even more imaginatively renamed 'BBC Records and Tapes'). The first ever picture sleeve for the theme featured the TARDIS (in blue and white) against a spirograph pattern - the in-thing in 1973.

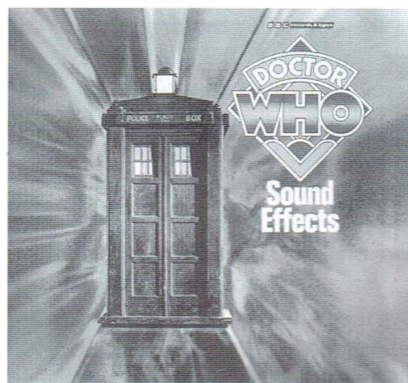


Later, the theme was again re-packaged with a monochrome sleeve showing the TARDIS in the time tunnel from the first Tom Baker title sequence (*The same picture was also used - in colour - for the 'Doctor Who Sound Effects' LP cover mentioned below - see illustration - Ed.*)

In 1976, Victor Pemberton returned to the world of *Doctor Who* to script *Doctor Who and the Pescatons*, a two-part story recorded specially for release as a record only by Decca. It featured Tom Baker as the Doctor, Elisabeth Sladen as Sarah, Bill Mitchell as Zor (the Pescaton leader - who sounds more like John Wayne than the

giant walking, talking man-eating fish he is supposed to be), and a host of marvellous sound effects and giant fish roars. Although the final version leaves something to be desired, it did translate into a rather good book when Target were becoming desperate for new titles to novelise. During the merchandise boom of the 1980/90s the story was re-released on CD by Silva Screen.

Still in the 1970s, for some years the Radiophonic Workshop had been releasing some rather interesting sound effects albums. At the suggestion of Dick Mills, volume nineteen became '*Doctor Who Sound Effects*', and so



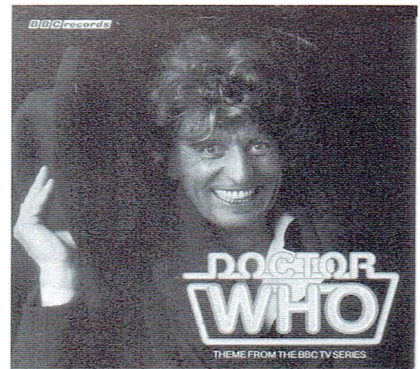
Styre's robot from *The Sontaran Experiment*, along with the Tesh handgun (three blasts) and Gallifreyan staser (two blasts) sat nicely alongside sounds of steam trains and the countryside in the vast Sound Effects range. The cover of this album is probably the best thing about it.

A group of session musicians calling themselves 'Mankind' released their own version of the theme in 1978. The realisation is very 1970s but nowadays regarded as something of a classic - it actually reached number 25 in the charts. A re-release in 1984 under the title '*Doctor Who - the Sequel*' did not make such an impact. In fact, the next chart success for *Doctor Who* was the Peter Howell version of the theme in 1980. However, prior to this, in 1979, there was released possibly the most exciting *Doctor Who* record ever, or so it seemed to me at the time.

*Destiny of the Daleks* was taking the TV ratings by storm (well ...) and to cash in on this BBC Records released an edited audio version of the 1975 story *Genesis of the Daleks*, narrated by Tom Baker. The album starts badly when the Doctor announces, "I

stepped from the TARDIS onto a bleak planet. All around the ground was ravaged ..." - we all *know* he did not have the TARDIS at that point. My complaint cannot be dismissed as nit-picking - much of the story which follows focuses on the attempts by the Doctor, Harry and Sarah to recover the time-ring device which they need to return them to the TARDIS when their mission to destroy the Daleks is over. That aside, the production is a good one, and at a time when repeats were limited to the previous year's stories, and video recorders were for rich boys only, the record was something to be treasured. Later, this same version of *Genesis of the Daleks* was re-released on cassette in a double pack, paired with the *Slipback* radio play from 1985. The *Slipback* release was apparently inspired by Dick Mills, who explained at the 1985 PanoptiCon that, having spelled out to BBC Records how they could take six radio episodes, put three on each side of a tape, and release it commercially, he was surprised to see them eventually grasp the concept and actually do it.

As mentioned above, Peter Howell's version of the *Doctor Who* theme was a success chart-wise in 1980, entering the top fifty for a short while. The 7 inch record was released in a colour sleeve featuring a close up of Tom Baker doffing his hat and giving the camera a big toothy grin.

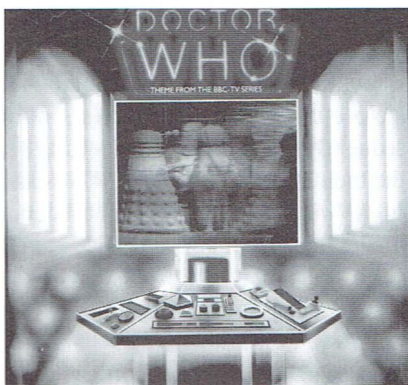


After Tom's departure from the show, this disc was re-packaged with a close-up of Peter Davison (and subsequently Colin Baker). Later in 1981, the theme from the *Doctor Who* spin-off *K9 and Company* was released, not on the BBC label but one called 'Solid Gold' (also part of the PRT Distributors group). The composition, by Ian Levine (a well-known *Doctor Who* fan, but also an established record producer

who has worked with groups such as Bananarama, Bronski Beat, the Pasadenas, Take That and Bad Boys Inc.), is frankly not very good, due in part to Peter Howell's electronic arrangement which Levine later claimed had surprised him, as he had written the theme for a "big band sound".

In 1985, Ian Levine made another entry into the *Doctor Who* record market. Falling into the 'infamous' rather than the 'famous' category, 'Doctor In Distress' is a record which probably did more to harm the Doctor's credibility than promote it. The show having been suspended by Michael Grade, this record was part of a massive media campaign to restore it. The campaign soon died out, and the record probably came too late. It featured a number of stars from the show (*who have paid me a lot of money to excise their names from this article - Ed!*), but sadly, most of the performers from the pop world were unknown to the general public. The proceeds went to a worthy cause, Cancer Relief, but the BBC refused to play the record on the grounds that it was not up to their artistic standards - a somewhat lame excuse given the nature of some of the records which they do play. The record had a Band-Aid style video to go with it, featuring the artists (who went under the name 'Who Cares'), but was ultimately a big flop. Levine has said since that he was less than happy with the finished result, but when it comes to promoting *Doctor Who* you cannot fault him for his efforts.

1986 saw the return of the show to TV together with a new theme arrangement by Dominic Glynn. This version of the music may not be the most shining composition, but the packaging is. Indeed, this release is best remembered for BBC Records method of marketing it.



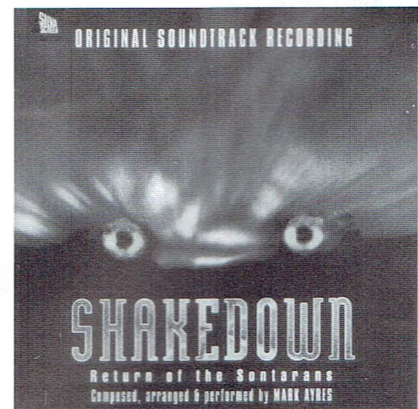
The twelve inch version, also featuring the original and the Mankind themes, was released in a colourful sleeve with a hologram of a number of 'Fine Art Castings' *Doctor Who* monsters which were quite popular at the time (*see bottom of previous column*).

A cassette was also released, mounted on a board version of the twelve inch single's sleeve. However, the BBC (in their wisdom) failed to promote the record at all. I cannot recall it once being mentioned during the transmission run of the *Trial of a Time Lord* series on TV. The 7 inch version, which might be expected to be the most popular commercially, was delayed. It did not appear when *TOATL* began screening, during the season, towards the end of it, or even for a long while afterwards. Finally it hit the shops in November 1987. Unfortunately, by this time Glynn's arrangement had been replaced by the Keff McCulloch version - but the BBC *did* manage finally to mention it on TV ... once! "If you would like a copy of the theme to last years series of *Doctor Who...*", said the announcer. Unsurprisingly, the record failed to make an impact.

When fans approached BBC Records about the release of the McCulloch arrangement, they were told that there would not be one. When asked why, a spokesman pointed (astonishingly) to the poor sales of the Glynn version! It is understood that Ian Levine's own label, 'Record Shack' explored the possibility of re-releasing the theme, but nothing ever came of that.

By this point, the merchandising boom was upon us all. It seemed that anything could have the *Doctor Who* logo on it. "Get your super *Doctor Who* fridge!" declared Neil Hutchings in his irreverent fanzine 'Androzani'. This meant still more 'Who-related records, and some even came from the hallowed halls of the BBC. In 1988, 'The *Doctor Who* 25th Anniversary Album' hit the shops, courtesy of BBC Records (*see overleaf for cover*). Celebrating the show's milestone, virtually every track came from Season 25 and the gifted pen of Keff McCulloch! (The only exceptions were the various earlier versions of the theme) This record included (at last) a very short version of Keff's own arrangement.

It seems that when the business side of the BBC brain got going, the imagination side shut down. A number of other records from the BBC which featured incidental music from the show (for example, '*Doctor Who - The Music*' (*see overleaf for cover*)) were deleted - indeed the whole of BBC Records shut down - paving the way for later re-releases by Silva Screen (who have themselves put out some original albums of music from *Doctor Who* and related productions).



Another example of the BBC's inability to get its act together is the double pack tape release of the radio play *The Ghosts of N-Space*, starring Jon Pertwee, which reached the shops some eighteen months *before* it was broadcast. Interviewed shortly before his death last year, Jon said that, in view of the previous play's success, he couldn't understand why they were not churning out several of them each year ... No, Jon, neither could we.

The number of *Doctor Who*-related records released over the years is staggering. Who could forget 'Tom Baker' by The Human League, 'Doctorin' the TARDIS' by the Timelords, and '*Doctor Who* is Gonna Fix It', by Bullamakanka (which we would forget if we could).

It seems fairly certain that we will be getting more 'Who-related releases for years to come yet, especially if Tom Baker does indeed become the next radio incarnation. Whether these recordings enter the Hall of Fame, or the Box of Infamy, we can only wait and see .....

Paul Winter

*N.B. Look over to the right for some of those other rare record covers which we thought you might like to see - Ed.*

# JUST ANOTHER MACHINE WITH DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR?

It is now eight years since the BBC produced any new *Doctor Who* itself. If the programme were to come back as an in-house production, how would it differ in the 1990s? Mike Tucker of the BBC Visual Effects Department has one or two ideas ...

A few years back, in 1987 to be precise, I had just completed my course in Theatre design and returned to the BBC Visual Effects department as a holiday relief assistant. I had all the training that I thought I would need:- I could work in wood, perspex and metal; I could paint and sculpt - all the skills that the job required. I never dreamed that I might one day need to be able to operate a computer.

Within months of getting back, I was working on my second *Doctor Who* serial, the introductory story for Sylvester McCoy, *Strange Matter* (later to become *Time and the Rani*). The effects designer allocated for the story was Colin Mapson, and I can remember him getting quite excited at the opening sequence.

As written, there was to be a pre-title shot of the TARDIS being bombarded by rays of energy, before crash landing on a planet's surface. With the motion control shot from the *Trial of a Time Lord* series in his mind, Colin had come up with a series of shots featuring a model TARDIS made out of fibreglass, which could be lit from within so that it would glow as the beams of energy hit it.

The entire sequence would have had to be motion controlled, with the energy beams added in post production. Out of necessity this would have been shot on 35 millimetre film and, although it was certain to be expensive, we were confident that we could make it look quite spectacular.

We were disappointed, then, to learn in the end that the sequence was going to be done with CGI [computer generated images - Ed] by Cal Video, who were handling the new McCoy title sequence. They already had a model of the TARDIS in the computer and it was a rela-

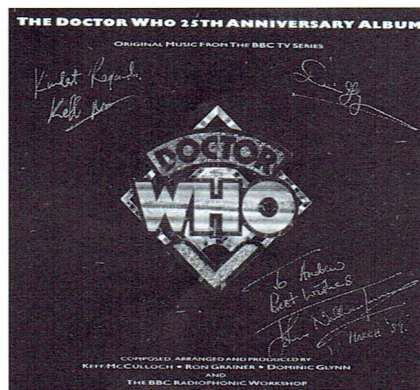
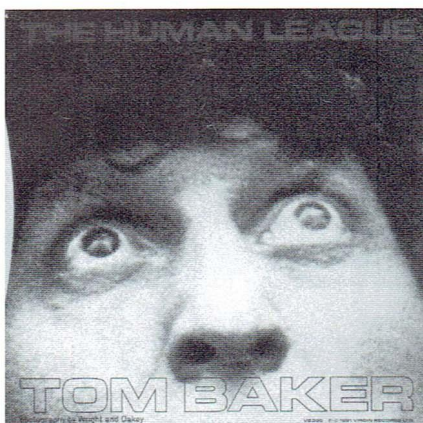


Mike Tucker at work in the BBC Visual Effects Workshop

tively simple task for them to do an extra sequence - and decidedly cheaper than the shoot that we had suggested. I can remember discussing with Colin the possibility of this sort of computer work taking over completely from traditional model work and the two of us coming to the conclusion that it never would. Whoops, wrong!

Back in 1987, the idea that computer technology might replace so many traditional film techniques was not considered even remotely. There had been a couple of attempts at extensive computer work in our field (notably the feature films *The Last Star Fighter* and *Tron*), but the results had been less than impressive. Ten short years later, that technology is present in everything from the most expensive feature film to the simplest TV programme.

There are still levels of expense, of course - no-one is pretending that *Jurassic Park* was cheap - but these days you can produce CGI effects that would not look out of place in *Babylon 5* on a home computer. Without a



shadow of a doubt, this technology is here to stay.

The BBC Visual Effects Department finally got its hands on CGI a few months ago, after Paul McGuinness, Alan ("Rocky") Marshall and I had been pestering our managers for months. We went on a training course to learn a programme called 'Alias Wavefront', a Silicon Graphics-based programme. Having completed the one year diploma course in four days (talk about a steep learning curve!) we returned to the department enthusing about the capabilities of the technology. Unfortunately Silicon Graphics workstations are a mite pricey, and we had to start looking for a cheaper alternative.

All three of us had become quite literate on Macintosh computers, but there wasn't an 'off-the-shelf' modelling and animation package that we could use. All that changed when Lightwave (the system used for *Babylon 5*) was launched for the Mac earlier this year.

With the sole exception of that classic opening shot from *Time and the Rani*, CGI never made it into *Doctor Who* - a shame, since it would have transformed the way that the programme was made. Shows which at first required shots of alien craft in space frequently had them dropped because there wasn't enough money to set up a separate film unit. These days we would be able to do each entire shot without camera operators, lights or even a sound stage.

With digital cameras - with which *Doctor Who* would undoubtedly have been recorded if it had continued - the possibilities of manipulating the images become quite endless. The feeble 'horde' of just six monsters could indeed become an invading horde, non-humanoid characters would be possible, and writers could have the confidence to write dinosaurs into scripts again without any danger of being embarrassed by the results!

Unfortunately, all this came too late for a series which seems cursed to be remembered forever for its 'rubbery monsters', 'yoghurt-pot spacecraft' and 'wobbly sets', rather than for design work which was forever pitted against rising costs and diminishing budgets.

We have had one glimpse of what could have been done with the new technology - the American TV Movie last year, with its CGI Skaro and Morpho-snake - but everything else about that project was so new and so different that the quality of the effects work went largely unnoticed.

I am frequently asked about my work on *Doctor Who* and what I felt about the American version of the show, with its big budget. My answer is always the same. We used to spend just over a million pounds to make fourteen episodes of *Doctor Who*; give us a fraction of the budget of the American show and, with the technology now available to us, we'll give you a programme that you will never forget. Future producers of the series, *please take note!*

Mike Tucker

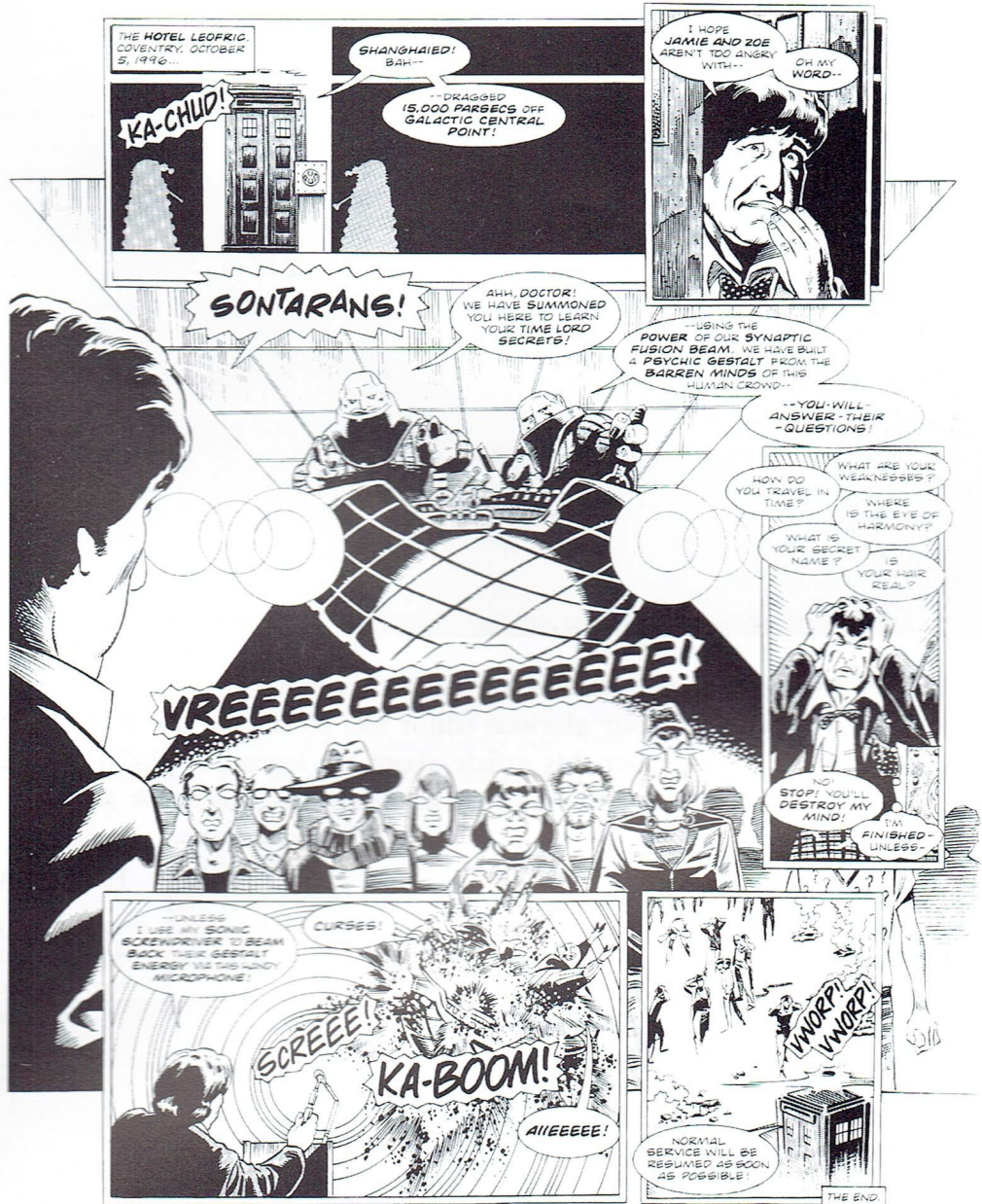


The BBC's first in-house TARDIS computer graphic, courtesy (and copyright) of Alan ("Rocky") Marshall



Turn the page, to discover ...

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G



STORY: ALAN BARNES ART: MARTIN GERAGHTY LETTERING: ELITTA FELL EDITORS: GARY GILLATT + SCOTT GRAY

Comic Strip copyright Andrew Beech

YOU EVER *NEEDED* TO KNOW ABOUT  
**PANOPTICON**

BUT *COULDN'T BE BOTHERED* TO ASK!



Image copyright Paul Rhodes

Undaunted by the poor response to his suggestion that you might all write in with questions (a total of *three* letters!), your glorious editor has plundered the DSL files for correspondence on past events to put together this article about the legendary PANOPTICON, the father of all *Doctor Who* conventions, which this year celebrates its *Twentieth* Anniversary.

## Budget - PANOPTICON '96

### Expenditure:-

Guest fees	£ 6,500
Guest/steward/crew rooms & meals	£ 3,750
Hotel hire	£ 3,000
A/V & VisFX	£ 3,250
Stage & sets	£ 1,250
Transport	£ 1,800
Booklet	£ 550
Reg packs & badges	£ 450
Postages	£ 200
Advertising	£ 1,500
Insurance	£ 500
	<b>£22,750</b>

### Income:-

600 Registrations (all rates averaged at £41 overall)	£24,600
Dealers' Room	£ 2,500
	<b>£27,100</b>
<b>Deduct VAT (at 17.5%)</b>	<b>£ 4,050</b>
	<b>£23,050</b>

Excess Income over Expenditure £ 300

## 1. Cost

The question most often asked is without doubt "Why does it cost so much to register?" The short answer is "... because the event is quite expensive to put on". Perhaps it will help you to understand if I give you some actual figures (rounded to the nearest £50) from the initial PanoptiCon '96 budget (*see box, left*).

It is, of course, very much a question of balance. After many years we have concluded that the most comfortable size for the event is 600 or so attendees. This makes it small enough to remain casual and friendly, but large enough for us to put on a good show. As the flagship convention, my colleagues and I try to make PanoptiCon, the most lavish (within reason) of them all, not just as to guests, but also (for example) staging (*see photo, right; those are original BBC props*).

But as you must appreciate, an event of that quality can only be held at a price - and in some ways we are the victims of our own success.

From the figures quoted above, the first point to note is that our turnover is large enough to legally oblige us to register for VAT (as should certain other organising bodies, but as far as I am aware they don't). Consequently, from every registration (at the averaged £41), we lose immediately £6.10 in VAT - so for every £41 you pay, we only have £34.90 to spend. (Thanks very much H. M. Customs & Excise!)

You will also see that by far the largest element of the cost equates to 'guest fees'. Obviously we negotiate as best we can, but we must ultimately come to terms with our guests - after all, an event without them would be rather dull.

Sadly, over the last ten years - as the 'novelty' of guesting at conventions has waned and the lack of theatrical work increased - those actors (or agents) who make the running in fee negotiations have managed to 'up' the rates by approximately 1,200%!

I should perhaps explain here that, in order not to offend guests, we pay fees within certain bands - there is a 'Doctor' rate, a 'companion' rate and a rate for everyone else. Each guest is paid equally within the relevant band (on the basis that their contributions to *Doctor Who* are broadly comparable). But this does mean that if we allow, say, a popular 'companion' to negotiate an increased fee, this has a knock-on effect throughout the band. Unfor-



Photo copyright Domintemporal Services Limited

### Four Doctors on stage together - at PanoptiCon, where else?

tunately, some actors have been aided in pushing up fees by the practice of other event organisers (who shall remain nameless) in paying wildly different fees - very large (i.e. four figure) ones for some actors - perhaps unaware that in so doing they are setting a dangerous precedent. Nonetheless, we have every reason to be proud of our own guest record (*see photo, above*).

Finally on the subject of cost, please note that if the 1987 PanoptiCon DWAS registration fees (£14 for one day, £25 for the weekend) had been increased in line with inflation, they would currently be £49.35 and £88.10 respectively - which makes the actual 1997 rates of £29 and £42 very good value (at *less than half* the equivalent price for a weekend ticket). So I think

we're doing quite a good job of keeping the price *down*.

## 2. Guests

One of the points I made above related to the guests, so perhaps it is sensible to deal next with other issues which concern them.

We often receive letters from fans either complaining or simply questioning why certain actors who have appeared in *Doctor Who* or production team members do not attend our events. Let me say first of all that it is our policy to exclude no-one from the world of *Doctor Who* from our invitation list. However, there are those who turn us down (time and again, in some cases).

On the whole, the reason for this is either that the invitee feels that he or she - perhaps unused to appearing before a crowd - would not enjoy the event, or sometimes the person demands a fee which we simply cannot afford. Sometimes these two factors inter-relate. While pursuing a particularly recalcitrant actor last year (I won't give a name, but I'm sure you can guess), I was informed by the agent that he would attend PanoptiCon - for a fee of £30,000! In the context of our budget (see above), clearly it would be impossible to pay a fee that size, but I surmised correctly that it wasn't the case that the actor wanted the money - the fee was proposed simply as a deterrent (to ensure that we could not afford to invite him).

As regards those who do attend, some of you believe that between in-

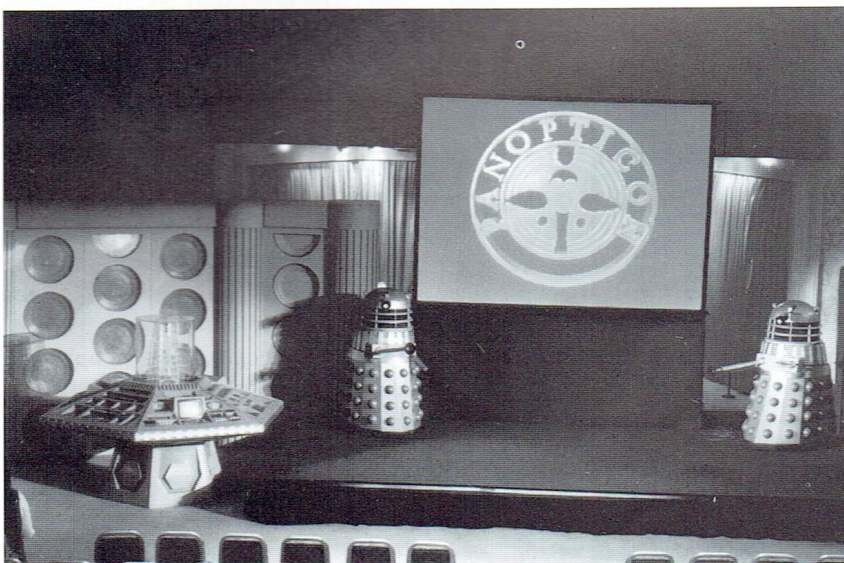


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### PanoptiCon '96 - The stage displays an original TARDIS set



Photo copyright Dominitemporal Services Limited

### Tom Baker - an elusive guest

interview panels we fiendishly lock them away from public view. The more sensible complain only that the guests do not socialise as much during their free time as you would like. With some guests, there is an element of truth in this last point - some of them are so nervous that it takes a lot of effort to persuade them to go on stage with an interviewer, let alone brave the public areas of the event. Others prefer to arrive for their panel interview, perhaps do an autograph session, and then leave immediately afterwards. It's all down to the personality of the individual.

Consequently, we always ensure that there is a 'green room' so that the guests can escape from the crowds if it is all getting too much for them, or wish to have a chat in private. But in general, nowadays, I think you will find that guests can be found in the public areas of the event rather more often than before.

Why so? Well, one advantage of having kept the same venue for the last six years (except 1993) - and there are others which I will mention below - is that, even with 600 attendees, the regular guests now know the hotel so well that they feel relaxed there. That feeling tends to rub off on the first time guests, and hence you will often find celebrities sitting quietly in the public bar on the ground floor during the afternoon and evening.

We don't announce the fact of course - a guest's drink at the bar is not a timetabled activity, and in all probability we don't even know they

are there - but if you can tear yourself away from the scheduled activities, you may get a pleasant surprise.

### 3. Venue

This is the subject of the second most frequently asked question. Why, after seven years, do we continue to hold the event at the Leofric Hotel in Coventry? I have already made one point about familiarity above; here are the others.

As regards hotels in general (and please bear in mind that we have held events at all manner of venues over the years), many attendees have written in over a long period. The vast majority have expressed a strong preference for the convention activities and accommodation to be located together - something which can easily be done in a hotel, but rarely on a college campus.

The Imperial College events of 1978 and 1986-88 are fondly remembered, but did prompt the comment "... *the venue should be changed. Imperial College is very inconvenient, being a long way from the nearest Underground station ... There are no fast food places and few shops nearby, which are useful alternatives to [the College's facilities] (I seem to remember that the cafeteria is only open for lunch anyway). Even the accommodation is separate from the main facilities ... and poor when compared to other universities, let alone hotels*".

Unfortunately, hotels in London are prohibitively expensive (as we found to our cost with PanoptiCon '93), and for a weekend event (including Friday afternoon for setting up and Monday morning for breaking down) the Leofric fee quoted in the 1996 budget above (which is, of course, discounted to reward us for returning year after year) would likely quadruple if we moved back to London - which would add *at least* a further £15 to the registration fee.

Bearing this in mind, and also the desirability of locating the event centrally in England (so that fans from the North, of whom there are many, would not have to travel further than their fellows in the South - as they did for the Brighton event in 1985), I started looking for our 1990 venue in Birmingham (where the PanoptiCons of the early 80s were held) and Coventry (a city I know well from my years at Warwick

University).

In terms of price, the Leofric Hotel was a clear winner, but the venue has other advantages too. All the conference rooms are situated on one floor (the first), which affords easier access to all and concentrates the event in a way that, say, the larger Piccadilly hotel in Manchester (venue of the upstart pretender *ManoptiCon* - only joking!), cannot.

Also, apart from the main hall, the Leofric's conference rooms have modular walls, which enable us to reconfigure the area when the focus of the event changes from year to year. Finally, on a lighter note, the first floor balcony windows form an entrance large enough to admit the TARDIS - a fact we discovered by chance in 1991.



Photo copyright Dominitemporal Services Limited

### The Leofric Hotel - suitable for a low-flying TARDIS

The hotel staff are another factor. It may not be apparent to the attendees, but the complexity of the schedule keeps my team and I fully occupied, which means that we must be able to rely on the hotel staff to do their job - fielding telephone calls and personal enquiries from Press and Public in addition to their usual duties looking after a much larger number of people than their usual residents.

To give just one example, the Novotel in Hammersmith let us down very badly over the celebrity buffet in 1993 - and there was nothing we could do about it. On the other hand, every time (so far) the Leofric has supplied a less expensive *three-course meal* which elicits praise from most of those who dine each year - on every occa-

sion when he joined us, Jon Pertwee commented how much the quality of the food (and the fact that it reached the table hot) impressed him.

So, granted there are not as many bedrooms as we would like (accommodation for 150 only), the car parking facilities are not ideal (shared with the main shopping complex) and the main hall can get very hot (hence the shifting of the event, when possible, to late September or October), but the other advantages far outweigh them.



Image copyright Paul Rhodes

#### 4. Activities

In recent years there have been one or two moans about our perceived 'padding' of the event by interspersing interview panels with videos, and the way we schedule more than one activity at the same time. The latter complaint is a bit strange - still, if we are to be criticised, I would rather it were for providing too much to do, rather than too little!

As to the 'padding' issue, we accept that the showing of episodes may seem pointless now that so many have been repeated on UK Gold or released on BBC Video. Consequently, we now tend to show only rare material - episodes from incomplete stories, pre-transmission edits (which usually contain additional material) or foreign episodes. But we do not show the material just because it is of great interest to some attendees (a point to which I will return later) - it also fulfils an important function in giving us time to set up the change-round from one panel to the next.

I did say that the video screenings are of interest to some, and this raises a point which explains our scheduling policy. In our experience there are a whole host of different reasons why fans come to PanoptiCon.

The high point of the event for some is anathema to others. Hence, whilst taking care not to overreach ourselves, we try to lay on as many of the requested activities as possible (including the screening of episodes) to cater for the maximum number of attendees. If we scheduled all the activities one after another, not only would we receive complaints about 'gaps' in the schedule (i.e. during the activities not appreciated by the complainant), but the event would take three or four days to stage (doubling the cost of holding it).

So we have to timetable some activities at the same time as others, trying always (of course) to vary the mix from year to year, so that regular attendees can exercise choice as to how they spend their time.

#### 5. The Future

But, twenty years on, surely the event is getting stale. Is there a place for PanoptiCon within fandom after all this time?

There have been one or two remarks in recent years to the effect that the event is becoming "staid and boring", but I think that there is still, undoubtedly, a future for PanoptiCon.

One of the reasons for the comments above is the fact that we do repeat some features from year to year. This is not due to lack of imagination - our involvement with *Downtime* in 1995 and the increased involvement in our event of the BBC Visual Effects Department (with their trademark pyrotechnics) should quell those rumours.

No, the reason is more simple. Whatever the cause, it is an incontrovertible fact that PanoptiCon is now not only so popular that it is over-subscribed every year, but also attracts an attendance which is approximately 50% new each time (and includes some children too young to remember the show ever going out live!). We must cater for those newcomers, as well as our die-hard supporters.

That is not to say that we will not innovate. Renewal is all the more essential if we are to keep flying the flag while *Doctor Who* is off the air. That said, the position as to new drama is unclear. The *Downtime* project was well-received on the whole, but so far video sales have recouped only half of the £56,000 cost. So the prospects of making another film of that kind are not good. But there are other possibilities, one of which I am actively pursuing for September this year.

Also, there are still one or two actors who have not graced us with their presence often, or at all (perhaps because they live abroad) - these are also prime targets for this year's event.

The bottom line is that, whatever the eventual line-up, PanoptiCon '97 will be good fun for everyone. After all, that's why (just like the DWAS), it has achieved recognition as an official event by the BBC and their licensees (such as Marvel Comics).

And now I really must start processing those registrations .....

**Andrew Beech**

P.S. The first registration packs will be posted out at the end of May.

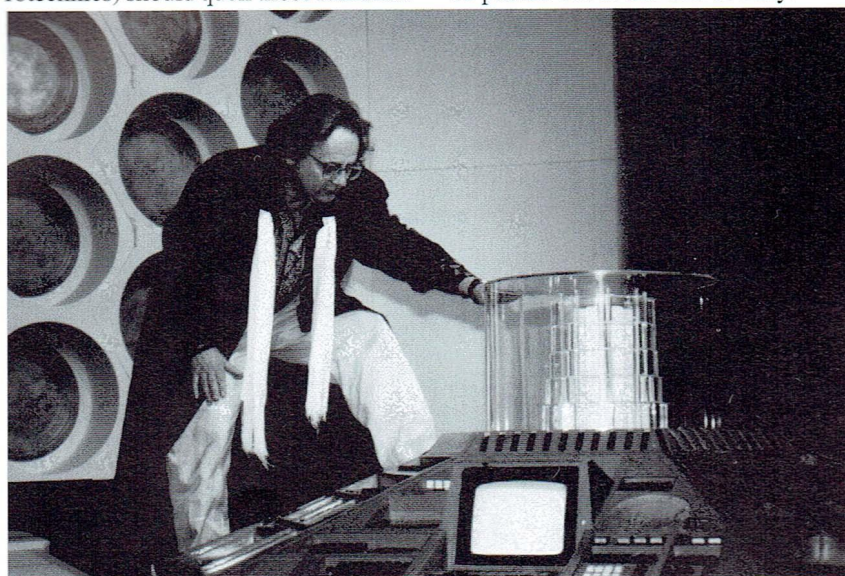


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**Life after death? Sylvester gets to grips with his old console**

... and finally (on the subject of PANOPTICON), to show once and for all just how the way we fans express ourselves can lead to trouble, a few words from our celebrity contributor this month, the irrepressible John Nathan-Turner!

Dear TARDIS,

Welcome back! You have been much missed.

A few months ago, a small group of former *Doctor Who* actors and production personnel were chatting away over a small Dubonnet and lemonade or three, and the topic turned to 'insults unwittingly (perhaps?) hurled at us by fans' - sometimes at convention gatherings - where those concerned had been blissfully unaware they had said anything even mildly offensive.

"Hello, Sophie. My goodness, you're looking rough!" set the ball rolling. Others from the group followed:

"Whatever made you think you could act?"

"I'd like to thank you for all your hard work ... but, to be honest, I didn't like any of it!"

"Why on earth didn't you pursue your other career? You would have been good!"

My favourite of the selection was:

"When I first saw you in *Doctor Who*, I really liked you ... but I soon realised you were not to be trusted, so I switched off and I've only ever watched you on video since!"

Something Pythonesque about that comment, I fear.

However, there is another side to the coin. Fans and viewers in general can be most flattering, and the strange comments are usually said most charmingly in any case.

Furthermore, we, the Theatre, Radio and TV professionals who have been involved with *Doctor Who*, are in a privileged position. Few actors and programme-makers get direct feedback, and it should be taken seriously, thence evaluated, and accepted or rejected. Often this process takes 'the twinkling of an eye'. Sometimes a comment can remain in your mind for a lengthy period.

I recall, at a lavish *Doctor Who* Ball in the United States, asking an attractive unknown lady to dance and the slow music thrusting us together. She whispered in my ear,

"I love your work!"

"Thank you very much."

"I love everything you do on *Doctor Who*."

"There are a great number of people involved in every story."

"But they're not you ... they're not YOU!"

"No, ... but all of them are invaluable to the production as a whole."

"... I want to have your baby!"

"I don't have one!"

"No. ... I want to carry your child!"

"Oh! ... I see ..... er ..... someone said there was lobster and crayfish at the celebration buffet! If we're not careful, it'll be gone in ... er ... the twinkling of an eye!"

John Nathan-Turner

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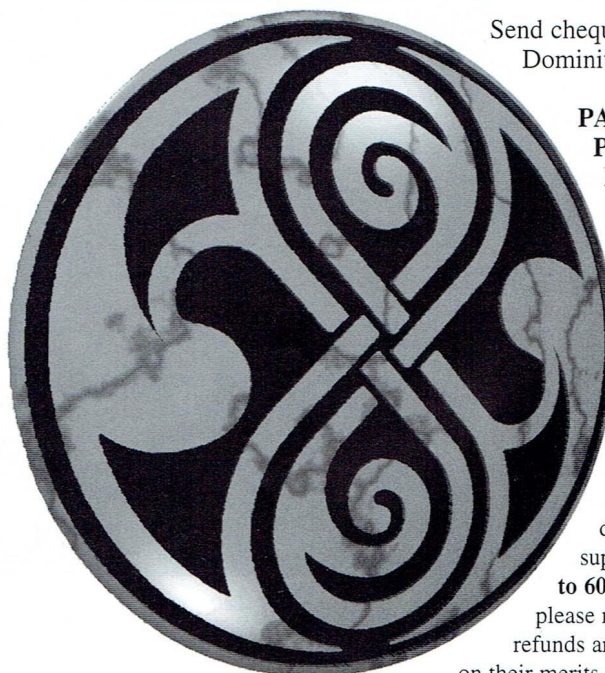
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Full Weekend £45

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(Overseas please add £1.50 to cover additional postage costs) For DWAS price, please quote your membership no. (reduction applies only to the actual member). **Half price** for accompanied children (under 13) - 2 children per adult. Special Leofric room rates are available on a first come, first served basis, but only after registration - full details and travel directions will be supplied. **Attendance is limited strictly to 600 persons.** For multiple bookings, please name each attendee. Cancellation refunds are at our discretion, will be considered on their merits and may be subject to an admin charge.

## Terry Nation - An Appreciation

On Sunday March 9th, 1997, Terry Nation passed away at the age of 66. He was a unique individual, having spent most of his life writing for television - not normally a medium which creates household names. Yet Terry was the first British scriptwriter to become a superstar, by creating the Daleks for *Doctor Who* in December, 1963.

I was nine years old at the time and, like so many of my contemporaries, I became obsessed with the Daleks instantly. I, too, bought every bit of Dalek merchandise which I could find and afford - and there was a lot of it! We all played at being Daleks - I even started writing my own Dalek stories. Daleks had infested the national imagination, and Terry suddenly became incredibly famous. Despite having killed them off in their first story, there was virtually no doubt that the Daleks would be back. Their second appearance, invading London the following year, cemented

their popularity and left indelible memories in the mind. Daleks patrolling famous landmarks, for example - and Robomen, their minds stolen by the Daleks, walking in unison like zombies. Further stories over the years only made them increasingly popular. Terry might move on to story-edit shows such as *The Saint* and *The Avengers*; the Daleks always returned.

Proving that this, his first success wasn't simply a fluke, Terry created the BBC tv series *Survivors*, which lasted three seasons, and then the astonishingly popular *Blake's 7*. Shortly after, Terry and his family moved to Hollywood, where he attempted to repeat his successes for American TV. A short stint on *McGyver* was followed by two study jobs in which he was paid a lot of money to write scripts and outlines which were never filmed. Frustrated by this, Terry retired.

Thus reads a short biography of Terry. It gives you an idea of what he did, but not of the person he was. I had the tremen-

dous privilege of working with him for nine years, and I learned a great deal about him in that time. He was a tremendously kind and generous man. I had contacted him in 1988 when approached about producing a *Doctor Who* book for an American publisher. I suggested a book on the Daleks, and that Terry should write it. When I contacted Terry, he thought the idea splendid, but didn't have the time to do it. "Why don't you write it?" he suggested.

As if I'd turn down such an offer! So write it I did, with Terry's input. He provided me with a wealth of material. He'd taken all of his work with him to California in packing cases, now stored in his garage. Terry never threw anything away, and it was all there somewhere, but in need of finding. His wife, Kate, would go out to the garage, hunt through the cases and pull out anything with Daleks in it for me. I might get a scrapbook of newspaper clippings his mother had made up about him, or a Louis Marx products catalogue. One mailing contained the pilot episode for *Doctor Who*, which Terry had been given as a guide (a version different from either of those actually recorded). I never quite knew what would turn up next.

We got along marvellously - so much so that when Terry was approached by W.H. Allen for the rights to novelise *The Chase* and *The Daleks' Master Plan* (which he'd previously refused them), he agreed on one condition: that I be allowed to write them. This was completely unexpected, and showed his faith in my abilities. He supported my writing from the very start - at this point I'd never had a word of fiction published professionally. I threw myself into the task, watching *The Chase* again ...

... which raised a problem. I hated the scene in episode one where Vicki and Ian talk about the magic castle, and I was dreading having to tell him I wanted

to change it. Then the scripts arrived, and I discovered that the scene wasn't there - it had been added by Dennis Spooner! In fact, Terry's scripts were much more serious and tightly-written than the filmed version. The same held true of *'Master Plan'* - so I didn't need to confront him. In any event, if ever I did want to make any changes, Terry would invariably reply: "You're the writer. Do what you feel works best for the story." - no ego, no unhelpful criticism. In fact, he enjoyed reading the manuscripts and gave me excellent advice.

This was Terry all over. At conventions, he would mingle happily with fans, constantly amazed that they regarded him with such awe. He took his work seriously, but never himself. He constantly told stories of his experiences - many very funny, since he'd once been a comedy writer - and often at his own expense. He never white-washed his motives or achievements, and was very self-deprecating.

Some people have said that Terry was greedy, but nothing could be further from the truth. He and his life-long agent, Roger Hancock, enforced his copyright in the Daleks not for the money, but to maintain their integrity. In fact, Terry was anything but greedy. I had proposed from the start a fifty-fifty split of the proceeds from any of the Dalek books which I wrote, and Terry was absolutely adamant that this was completely unfair - to me. He insisted on my taking a much larger share than he did because I was doing the writing.

Terry was amazingly patient and gentle with everyone (sometimes especially me!). In fact, the only three instances I can recall when Terry criticised anyone at all stemmed from the same situation: his belief that a producer didn't take his work seriously. Aside from the three producers concerned, I never heard Terry speak ill of anyone.

In short, Terry was not merely a creative genius, but also a lovely human being. He acted as my mentor and adviser on my early books, and he generously promoted my works - and this was all after I'd been critical of him in print! Instead of taking offence at my harsh words, as most people would have done, Terry simply took the time to explain his reasons and point of view. Needless to say, his calm, cheerful manner won me over completely.

We'll all miss his creative talents. I, and many, many others, will also miss a wonderful person. But we all have his legacy - the Daleks, *Blake's 7*, and all of the other shows he worked on - wonderful tales which will always haunt our imagination. And what better legacy could a man leave?

John Peel



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